



Alcohol and entertainment licensing

Alcohol and entertainment licensing is a core responsibility of a licensing authority. There are a number of important issues committee members ought to think about whilst leading this work. This tip sheet provides a brief overview of the role, along with some best practice ideas.

Further information can be seen in our [councillor handbook on the Licensing Act 2003](#).

Determine licence applications

- **Make decisions on individual licence applications**

The primary role of a (sub) committee is to consider whether a licence application is likely to undermine one or more of the licensing objectives in the light of any relevant representations that may have been made about it. Committee members are also able to add conditions to licences to address any representations where appropriate and necessary.

- **Check if responsible authorities are engaging with the licensing process where required**

Representations from responsible authorities, such as directors of public health, environmental health, and the police, often provide information that is extremely helpful to councillors and helps to ensure decisions are being made after considering all available evidence. If you do not receive these representations, you could consider contacting relevant officers to request more engagement in the



future (though you cannot ask for comments on a matter before the committee where the consultation period has passed, and the responsible authority did not initially comment).

Review your statement of licensing policy

- **Shape your statement of licensing policy**

The statement of licensing policy is an opportunity to take a strategic look across all licensable activities within your area and set out a vision for them to enable effective decision making. The decisions made in application of this policy can enhance an area's economy, public health, safety and cultural appeal to tourists and visitors from surrounding areas. It is also an opportunity to address potential safeguarding issues in the night-time economy, for example, indicating a council's zero tolerance approach to spiking or sexual harassment.

- **Consider if it is appropriate to use cumulative impact assessments, or other tools to manage issues in the night-time economy**

If authorities have evidence that the high number or density of licensed premises in a particular area is having a detrimental effect on one or more of the licensing objectives, the licensing authority may consult on a cumulative impact assessment (CIA). A CIA is essentially an evidence-based tool for licensing authorities to limit the growth of licensed premises in a problem area. Many licensing authorities have CIAs in place, so committee members should be aware if their council has one. Other tools are also available, such as the late-night levy.

Ensure licensing is linked into different strategic agendas within the council

- **Work with Cabinet members who may have an interest in tackling alcohol harms**

Cabinet members for areas like health and wellbeing or community safety are also likely to be interested in tackling alcohol harms and alcohol fuelled violence and antisocial behaviour. Cabinet member engagement can help drive progress within the council and ensure alignment with the council's wider priorities.

- **How can alcohol and entertainment licensing be more integrated into the wider work of the council?**

Can licensing be brought into the cabinet member for community safety's portfolio? Can licensing officers sit on community safety partnerships? Are licensing officers involved in regeneration projects? Licensing can help join the dots between different council priorities.

- **Ensure there is alignment between licensing and planning policy**

Planning is an important consideration when thinking about what you want your licensing policy to achieve. Your licensing policy should reflect your Local Plan's

core planning documents, and likewise the Local Plan policy's planning documents should reflect what you want to achieve with your licensed premises. Whilst there is a clear distinction and separation between licensing and planning in terms of their remit, councillors have a key role in ensuring that these two different services are joined-up and aligned.

Work with external partners

- **Support and encourage partnership working schemes**

Schemes like best bar none, purple flag, pub watch, or other local schemes can drive safety in the night-time economy and help ensure residents can enjoy a night out safely. The LGA recommends that councils reference partnership schemes and training packages in their statement of licensing policy to demonstrate they are a core part of how councils manage their night-time economy.

- **Consider how well you are working with local partners**

Do your licensing officers have good relationships with officers in neighbouring councils? Are you sharing good practice? Do you work closely with colleagues in the police, or with your Police and Crime Commissioner? Developing these relationships can really assist with enforcement activity.

- **Engage with the licensed trade**

Meet with licensed businesses, operators within the industry and unions, and invest your time in them to better understand how you can work in partnership to support well run businesses. This will be well received and can help secure trade buy in for council initiatives.

Improve your knowledge

- **Ensure you take advantage of any training opportunities**

This is a good way of ensuring you are aware of current issues in licensing and that you are able to discharge your duties on the licensing committee to a high standard. Regular officer training should also be encouraged.



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