

Join your licensing committee

Why join your licensing committee?

Licensing gives councillors an opportunity to link into different strategic agendas within your council, whilst also providing an opportunity to play a more active role in operational decisions that affect your local area. There is plenty of scope to get stuck into licensing and make a real difference to your local community!

What do you do on a licensing committee?

Councillors navigate different licensing frameworks and implement them in a way that makes sense locally. Most of the time this focuses on areas including alcohol and entertainment, taxi and Private Hire Vehicles (PHV) (except in London) and gambling licensing.

You'll set the local licensing policy for the different licensing regimes, allowing the committee to take a strategic look across the activities that fall within each licensing framework and set out a vision for them.

Licensing committee members have the power to make decisions on individual licence applications, and can approve or refuse applications, revoke licences, or add conditions to licences through hearings and policy.



“I have been a member of our licensing (hearings) and licensing (general) sub-committees for the past four years and have found sitting on the hearings panels a very enjoyable and worthwhile experience. The cases that come before the panel are varied and certainly no two hearings are the same! Taking part in licensing hearings is a vitally important role for a councillor as often you are making decisions that directly affect people’s livelihoods. This has to be balanced with the responsibility for ensuring the safety of residents and upholding law and order.”

Cllr Liz Frost, Epsom and Ewell Borough Council

Where does licensing fit into a council’s work?

- **Community safety**

Licensing is crucial to community safety. Being on a licensing committee allows you to have significant influence over safety in the night-time economy. You can decide to place conditions on licences which stipulate training requirements for members of staff, require engagement in partnership working schemes, and seek to safeguard vulnerable customers. You can work with your local taxi and PHV trade to ensure drivers are the eyes and ears of your community and are able to spot the signs of a range of community safety issues, such as child sexual exploitation and county lines.

- **Place shaping**

Through setting your local licensing policy, you can help shape individual neighbourhoods, establishing some as vibrant, active areas late into the night, while other areas may become a centre for restaurants. You can help to regenerate the high street by promoting outside drinking and dining or boost your tourism offer by encouraging summer festivals.

- **Economic growth**

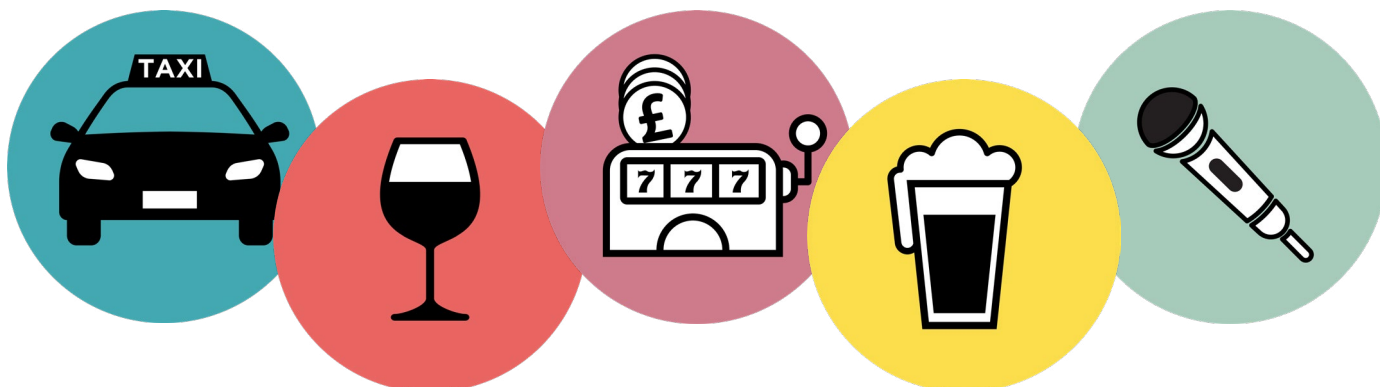
You can also take steps through your role on the committee to ensure there is sufficient support to help businesses navigate the licensing process, reducing their cost and time pressures and encouraging employment. You can set policies which encourage business involvement in accreditation and best practice schemes, highlighting these businesses as safe places to enjoy a night out and thereby driving footfall.

- **Inclusivity**

You can also work with your local taxi and PHV trade to ensure all residents are able to travel around your local area safely. You can ensure drivers have disability awareness training and take steps to ensure you have enough accessible vehicles in your fleet. You can also work with officers to ensure disabled passengers are receiving a good quality service, through enforcement activity and test purchase checks. There is also scope to promote inclusivity and accessibility approaches to wider trade groups and licensed premises.

“For me, licensing is at the heart of community engagement. Licensing sits as a key partner on anti-social behaviour meetings, our community safety executive and works closely with all our partner agencies on joint enforcement and compliance visits. Licensing joins the dots and has the intelligence and partnership contacts to combat a range of community safety issues, such as modern slavery, county lines, drink spiking, gambling harm and so much more. I love being on my licensing committee, and I’d really encourage any new councillor to give it a go.”

Cllr Jeanie Bell, St Helen’s Borough Council





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