



# Licensing committee chair and vice-chair

As licensing committee and sub-committee chairs and vice-chairs, you have a crucial role in the licensing process, including being responsible for ensuring hearings are conducted properly and that effective decisions are made. Beyond making decisions on individual licence applications, you can also raise the profile of licensing and ensure it is linked into different strategic agendas within your council. This tip sheet provides a brief overview of the role, along with some best practice ideas.

Further detail can be seen in [our councillor handbooks](#).

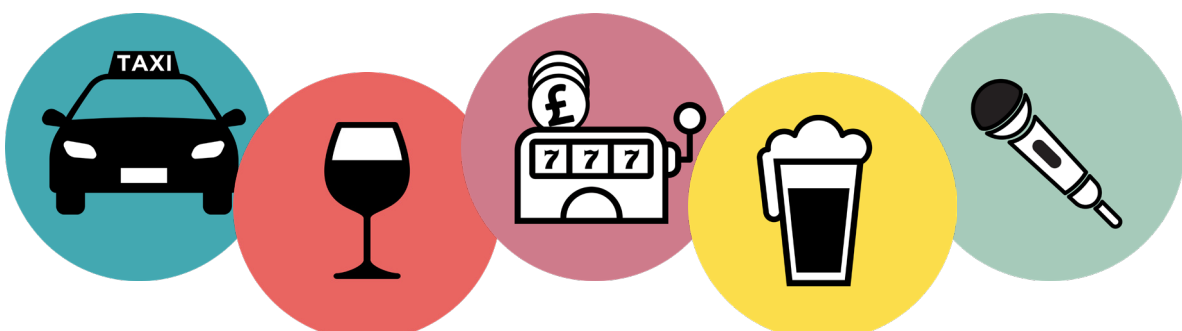
## Think about how licensing is viewed and operates within your council

- **Raise the profile of the work of the licensing committee**

Issue press releases on different initiatives, take motions to full council, and talk about your work on the committee in political group meetings. Make licensing interesting!

- **Shape your licensing policies**

Committee members set the local licensing policy for the different licensing regimes (some of which are then signed off at full council), allowing the committee to take a strategic look across the activities that fall within each licensing framework and set out a vision for them. For example, do you want more outside drinking and dining to drive footfall on your high street or town centre? Do you want to implement



measures to help the net zero agenda in your taxi licensing policy? Do you want to include measures to promote safety in the night-time economy, such as referencing spiking and other risks in your statement of licensing policy? Licensing policies can have crucial place shaping and community safety implications, so make sure this is considered when setting your licensing policies and engage with the relevant teams and cabinet members within your council. Licensing policies can also drive consistent decision making and enable applicants to understand what the council's licensing priorities are.

- **Think about where licensing sits within your council**

Can you better integrate licensing into other areas of the council's work? For example, where does licensing sit at cabinet/committee level; can licensing be brought into the cabinet member for community safety's portfolio if it isn't already? Can/do licensing officers sit on community safety partnerships? Are licensing officers involved in regeneration projects? Licensing can help join the dots between different council priorities if you take the opportunity to do so.

## Ensure your committee is well run and high performing

- **Consider how well-trained members of your licensing committee are**

Do you work with democratic services officers to mandate training requirements to ensure committee members are well-trained and able to deliver their duties to a high standard? Should / do you have ongoing training requirements? Well trained committee members who fully understand the council's licensing policies and are able to scrutinise and ask questions of applicants is an essential part of the licensing process.

- **Use your licensing officer's expertise**

Ask questions and develop a good working relationship. Licensing officers can be your eyes and ears and help you to spot opportunities to enhance the influence of your committee. But don't be afraid to push back if you do not feel your licensing officer is listening to you.

- **Ask for feedback**

Licensing officers can often provide useful feedback on how your committee is performing. This can help to improve the committee's decision making.

## 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 and benchmarking your council's work? Are officers working closely with colleagues in the police, and/or you with your Police and Crime Commissioner? Developing these relationships can really assist with developing a shared approach, as well as with enforcement activity.

- **Engage with the licensed trade**

Meet with the licensed trades, meet with unions, value licensed taxi/PHV drivers and licensed businesses, and invest your time in them. This will be well received and can help secure trade buy in for council initiatives.

## Stay positive

- **Be pro-active and keep chipping away**

There is plenty of scope to get stuck into licensing and make a real difference to your local community!



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