

# **DRAFT**

**Note:** These Minutes will remain DRAFT until approved at the next meeting of the Committee

## **LICENSING COMMITTEE**

### **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 6 JULY 2026**

**Councillors Present:** Jeremy Cottam (Chairman), Paul Dick (Vice-Chairman), Billy Drummond, Nigel Foot, Paul Kander, Tom McCann, David Marsh, Stephanie Steevenson, Clive Taylor, and Martha Vickers

**Also Present:** Moira Fraser (Principal Officer for Policy and Governance) and Mark Groves (Lead Licensing and Enforcement Officer)

**Apologies for inability to attend the meeting:** Councillor Phil Barnett

**Councillor Absent:** Jane Langford

#### **PART I**

##### **1. Minutes**

Subject to the inclusion of absent Members, the Minutes of the meeting held on 24 March 2026 were approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Chairman.

The Minutes of the meeting held on 14 May 2026 were approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Chairman.

##### **2. Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest received.

##### **3. Minor Changes to the Licensing Policy Arising from Amended S182 Guidance**

The Committee considered a report (Agenda Item 4) concerning the minor changes being made to the Statement of Licensing Policy following the issuing of updated Home Office's Statutory Guidance under Section 182 (S182) of the Licensing Act 2003.

The Principal Officer for Policy and Governance introduced the item and highlighted that the current policy had been adopted in November 2023 and would need to be reviewed by December 2026. The Council was also required to review the policy on an ongoing basis in light any changes, such as updates to the S182 Guidance. Since its adoption, the Government has made four such changes to the S182 Guidance.

These changes included a reversion of Temporary Event Notices (TENs) parameters to pre-COVID limits, a commitment to taking each application on its own merits, considering economic benefits when determining an application, and ensuring applications are suitable for their immediate locality. As the amendments to the Policy reflected these changes, the Committee were encouraged to adopt the recommendation.

In response to a point about the change to the TENs, the Committee noted that the Government had not increased the fees that the Licensing Authority would receive to accommodate the increased work derived from these changes.

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Overall, as the Committee was satisfied with the report, they agreed to note the minor changes to the Licensing Policy.

### 4. **West Berkshire Council Licensing Annual Report 2025-26**

The Committee considered a report (Agenda Item 5) concerning the annual Licensing Report for 2025/26.

The Principal Officer for Policy and Governance introduced the item and highlighted that it was an annual report and set out information relating governance and resourcing information, information about the various licenses the Council issued, communication and engagement, and joint working and horizon scanning.

It was also highlighted that there was a proposal to amend the Terms of Reference for the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing trade meetings, restricting membership to the Chairman, Vice-Chairman, and relevant Portfolio Holder. This proposal had been supported by the representatives of the trade and Officers supporting these meetings.

Members had several questions about the proposed amendment to the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire trade meeting membership, with some raising concerns about the lack of Minority Group representation and the potential that they would no longer be made aware of the discussions or the outcomes of these meetings. In response, the Chairman highlighted that all Members should feed questions to the meeting through himself or the Vice-Chairman, and he requested that Officers circulate both the minutes and agendas of these meetings to all Licensing Committee Members.

Overall, as Members accepted the revised membership, and as the Committee was satisfied with the annual report, they agreed to approve the recommendations.

**RESOLVED:** That the Committee:

1. Notes the Annual Report 2025/26 as set out in Appendix A to the report.
2. Considers the current membership of the taxi trade meeting and agrees the draft revised Terms of Reference for the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Trade meetings as attached as Appendix B to the report.

### 5. **Operational Approach to Fireworks**

The Committee considered a report (Agenda Item 5) concerning the Council's operational approach to fireworks.

The Principal Officer for Policy and Governance introduced the item and highlighted that Council's current approach was formalised through the adoption of a Policy in 2021 and was drafted as a response to the RSPCA's 'bang out of order' campaign.

The proposal presented to the Committee was a re-formatted document which contained a number of minor changes. Members noted that the Public Protection Partnership were responsible for several, but not all, aspects of fireworks sales, storage, licensing and use. This included the sale, use, safety, age restriction, storage, noise, and social media communications around fireworks. Specifically, some key requirements were highlighted, such that the sale of fireworks was only permissible between the 15 October to the 10 November, 26 – 31 December, and three days before Diwali and Chinese New Year, and that they cannot be used between 11pm and 7am.

Members discussed the impact of fireworks in their wards, with some having more complaints about noise nuisance than others. In response to residents making complaints about noise between the 11pm–7am fireworks it was noted that enforcement

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was generally undertaken by the police and should be reported here: [Report antisocial behaviour | Thames Valley Police](#).

Officers would also work on some publicity around this to go alongside the approval of this report by the Joint Public Protection Committee in October.

In response to a question about the extent of the complaints received around fireworks, the Committee were assured that this was not a significant issue in the district. In addition, it was confirmed that the Licensing Authority conducted checks of approved sellers to ensure that they were not selling certain grades of fireworks beyond their license. The Committee also inquired into if professional displays needed to have a license, and about if the Council had a policy in place to cover a fireworks event on WBC own land. However, the Officer indicated that she would come back to them on these technical points.

Overall, as the Committee were satisfied with the report, they agreed to approve the recommendations.

**RESOLVED:** That the Committee:

1. Considered the standardised operational approach already undertaken by the Public Protection Service in relation to fireworks across all three partner authorities.
2. Recommend that the Joint Public Protection Committee adopt the revised approach at the October meeting.

### 6. Forward Plan

As Members were satisfied with the Forward Plan as presented, they agreed to note the items scheduled for the next meetings of the Committee.

The Committee noted that the next ordinary meeting was scheduled for 2 November 2026, but that a proposed Extraordinary Meeting was being planned for the 7 September 2026.

*(The meeting commenced at 5.30pm and closed at 6.00pm)*

**CHAIRMAN** .....

**Date of Signature** .....