

LICENSING COMMITTEE

Councillor Catherine Young (Chairperson)
* Councillor Keith Witham (Vice-Chairperson)

* Councillor Bilal Akhtar	Councillor Masuk Miah
* Councillor Amanda Creese	Councillor Patrick Oven
* Councillor Gillian Harwood	* Councillor David Shaw
* Councillor Catherine Houston	Councillor Katie Steel
* Councillor Bob Hughes	Councillor Cait Taylor
Councillor Tom Hunt	* Councillor Dominique Williams
Councillor Sandy Lowry	

*Present

L1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Tom Hunt, Sandy Lowry, Masuk Miah, Patrick Oven, Katie Steel and Catherine Young. Councillor Cait Taylor was also not in attendance.

L2 LOCAL CODE OF CONDUCT - DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS

There were no disclosures of interest declared.

L3 MINUTES

The minutes of the Licensing Committee held on 12 March 2024 were agreed and signed by the Chairperson as an accurate record.

L4 ANNOUNCEMENTS

Councillor Keith Witham explained that he was acting as Chairperson in place of Councillor Catherine Young (Chairperson) who had given her apologies owing to having recently had an operation. Councillor Witham wished to convey to Councillor Young on behalf of the Committee their get well wishes for a speedy recovery.

Councillor Witham also wished for it to be noted that an item on the licensing of mobile homes would be provided to the Committee at its meeting in November by the Private Sector Housing Manager.

L5 EXTENSION TO PAVEMENT LICENSING AND REVISION TO PAVEMENT LICENSING POLICY 2024-29

The Committee received a report from the Senior Specialist, Licensing, Mike Smith. The Council had taken over the pavement licensing functions in July 2020 from the County Highway Authority. Following the Covid restrictions in place at that time, this permitted the hospitality sector to place tables and chairs outside. This had proven to be very popular, not just in Guildford but around the country. Legislation had been subsequently extended each year until it was made permanent in March 2024. The Council's Policy had also been extended in line with each extension of the temporary legislation. The Council's Policy had now been updated to reflect the new procedures in place and revised Guidance published by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities in April 2024. The new policy was now recommended for approval and would be in place for the next 5 years.

The Committee discussed the topic and noted a query raised regarding the 1.5 metre space required to allow people to get past the tables and chairs, particularly noting the access needs for parents with buggies and wheelchair users. Did the 1.5 metres account for the proximity of bollards which may also be located close to the seating area and/or influence the siting of the tables and chairs? It was confirmed that the 1.5 metres would include the bollard location but was dependent upon the site context and would be agreed in consultation with the Highway Authority.

The Committee also noted the high number of A-Boards in Guildford town centre and the potential problems associated with their placement in causing a pavement obstruction. The Committee was advised that A-Boards were in fact the responsibility of the Highway Authority under S115 of the Highways Act. The Surrey Highways Authority had a complaints procedure for members of the public and associated guidance for businesses wishing to place A boards on the highway detailed on their website.

The Committee noted that the fee to businesses for a pavement licence had increased to £500 for first time applications, when it was previously capped at £100. In addition, it was observed that an application for a licence had to be decided within 14 days. Was the licensing department confident that they could turn around the applications in such a short space of time? It was confirmed that whilst the pavement licence fee had gone up, it better reflected overall costs for its administration. The fee was capped at £500 for first time applications only and then at £350 for renewals thereafter. A licence would then be in place for a period of two years. There was a total of approx. 40 licence holders currently

who would fall into the renewal category. Previously, under the old Business Act provisions, an application for a licence had to be consulted on within 7 days and then decided within the following subsequent 7 days. The new provisions had therefore increased the period of time to 14 days for consultation and then a further 14 days for the decision to be issued.

The Committee was interested to know if the licensing department had experienced any problems with the existing licence holders over the last four years. It was noted that the licensing department had received a few complaints about some locations but overall had been well received. The full statistics regarding this matter had been included in the licensing papers for its March 2024 meeting.

The Committee noted further concerns raised regarding the number of A-Boards located in Market Street creating access issues. Again, the Committee was advised that the Surrey Highway Authority managed the licensing of A-Boards and should be contacted regarding any such complaints: [Highways complaints - Surrey County Council \(surreycc.gov.uk\)](https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/highways-complaints)

The Committee noted the new permanent pavement licensing provisions and approved the updated Pavement Licensing Policy 2024-29.

L6 REVIEW OF HACKNEY CARRIAGE STANDS FOLLOWING NORTH STREET REDEVELOPMENT

The Committee received a report from the Senior Specialist, Licensing, Mike Smith. A large-scale redevelopment of North Street was due to take place in Guildford imminently. This would result in an impact upon some of the existing hackney carriage stands locations as follows:

- The removal of the current taxi rank on North Street outside Marks and Spencer due to the future pedestrianisation of North Street;
- The temporary closure of the current taxi rank on North Street outside the Friary Centre during a period of redevelopment works;
- The temporary adoption of the parking bays at lower High Street outside Vision Express as a taxi rank during a period of redevelopment works;
- The temporary adoption of the double yellow line at Bedford Road outside St James House as a nighttime taxi rank.

The Licensing department had held an initial scoping meeting with the Taxi Trade in May 2022 so to be able to give them the opportunity to suggest alternative temporary stands for taxi ranks for the day and nighttime economy. The Surrey

Highway Authority had also worked with the Council on identifying the alternative proposals as outlined.

The measures proposed were hoped would go some way in trying to mitigate some of problems with a reduction in the number of taxi ranks available overall. The next stage would be to enter into a period of consultation. If any objections were received, these would be reported back to the Licensing Committee and then to the Executive for consideration and approval, potentially in September/October 2024.

The Committee considered the proposals and noted a query raised regarding whether additional signage would be installed to assist members of the public in identifying where the new temporary taxi ranks were now located. It was confirmed that the new ranks would be signposted, and the roads marked up. The licensing department was also seeking funding to deploy marshals in directing people to the new locations and help prevent any potential for social disorder, managing vehicles at the locations and keeping Guildford safe. An update on whether the funding had been secured would be given to the Licensing Committee members by the Senior Specialist, Licensing, Mike Smith by email. In addition, the Trade would be updated via their Newsletter. The concerns of the Committee and desire of the Committee for funding to be provided to assist with the temporary arrangements was minuted.

The Committee noted that a total of 18 taxi rank spaces were being lost which was of concern, putting pressure on existing and reduced resources. It was reiterated that the Taxi Rank had also been invited to identify additional taxi rank spaces. After the redevelopment was completed, the number of taxi rank spaces could be reevaluated.

The Committee agreed to the proposals as outlined below, noting their support for additional funding to be secured so as to provide additional marshalling and licensing resource to manage the temporary arrangements, and subject to a period of consultation, recommended its approval by the Executive:

- The removal of the current taxi rank on North Street outside Marks and Spencer due to the future pedestrianisation of North Street;
- The temporary closure of the current taxi rank on North Street outside the Friary Centre during a period of redevelopment works;
- The temporary adoption of the parking bays at lower High Street outside Vision Express as a taxi rank during a period of redevelopment works;

- The temporary adoption of the double yellow line at Bedford Road outside St James House as a nighttime taxi rank.

L7 LICENSING COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee noted its work programme and agreed that an update on the licensing of mobile homes be included for consideration at their meeting in November 2024 by the Private Sector Housing Manager. This was in addition to this item being included in the Licensing Committee Annual Report for 2025. The meeting finished at 7.33 pm

Signed

Date

Chairman

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