

**NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**CORPORATE LEADERSHIP TEAM'S**  
**REPORT TO LICENSING & PUBLIC PROTECTION COMMITTEE**

17<sup>th</sup> March 2026

**Report Title:** The National Licensing Policy Framework for the hospitality and leisure sectors

**Submitted by:** Licensing Lead Officer and Service Director – Regulatory Services

**Portfolios:** Finance, Town Centres & Growth

**Ward(s) affected:** All

<b><u>Purpose of the Report</u></b>	<b><u>Key Decision</u></b>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
To update Members on the recently publish policy document “The National Licensing Policy Framework for the hospitality and leisure sectors”.			
<b><u>Recommendation</u></b>			
<b>That Committee:</b> 1. Note the contents of the report.			
<b><u>Reasons</u></b>			
In November 2025 the Government published The National Licensing Policy Framework for the hospitality and leisure sectors document which aims to set out a strategic vision for a modern licensing system.			

**1. Background**

- 1.1** In April to May 2025 the Government carried out a ‘Licensing Policy Sprint’ process that established taskforce made up on Government, industry, police and local authority representatives whose aim was to provide recommendations for updating the licensing system “...*that fosters vibrant hospitality, night-time economy, creative and cultural industries*”.
- 1.2** The taskforce published a report that contained 10 priority recommendations that supported their aims, which were:
1. National Licensing Policy Framework;
  2. ‘amnesty’ to modernise and streamline licences;
  3. Hearings and Appeals;
  4. Remove local newspaper advertising requirement;
  5. Improve licensing process and conditions for outdoor areas;
  6. Increase entitlement maximum for Temporary Event Notices (TENs);
  7. Sunset clause on blanket hours;
  8. Arbitration, evidence and data protocol;

- 9. Festivals and events; and
- 10. Agent of Change.

- 1.3 In August 2025 the Department for Business & Trade (DfBT) published a response to the taskforce's report. Copies of the initial report and DfBT response can be viewed at the link contained at 15.1 of the report.
- 1.4 In respect of recommendation 1 and the introduction of a National Licensing Policy Framework (NLPF) the DfBT responded by welcoming the recommendation and acknowledged the merits in having a framework providing a clear national direction whilst preserving local discretion for decision making. The remaining 9 recommendations are subject to further review and consultation.

## 2. Issues

- 2.1 In November 2025 DfBT published the NLPF, which can be viewed via the link contained at 15.2 of the report. It is important to note that the framework has no statutory footing and as such local authorities (LAs) are not bound to its contents nor is there requirement to have regard to it.
- 2.2 It confirms that the four licensing objectives remain vital to the successful implementation of the licensing system but also promotes that licensing should support broader ambitions for economic and business growth. It states that licensing should complement planning and regeneration schemes and promote a more predictable and proportionate regime, boost local economies and communities, whilst reducing regulatory burden.
- 2.3 The NLPF is broken down into 7 sections:
  - 1. Foreword;
  - 2. Introduction;
  - 3. Scope of the Framework;
  - 4. A national framework for a balanced licensing system;
  - 5. Implementation;
  - 6. High Streets and Communities; and
  - 7. Monitoring, evaluation and review.
- 2.4 In respect of section 3, the scope of the framework, it is confirmed that the NLPF is exclusively for premises that have 'on-trade' activities such as 'on-sales' of alcohol, regulated entertainment or late-night refreshment. It is not applicable to premises where the sole offering is 'off-trade' such as off-licences, supermarkets and delivery only services.
- 2.5 Section 4, a national framework for a balanced licensing system, confirms that NLPF is classed as non-statutory guidance. It also highlights the move away from alcohol-centric premises to more experiential activities, and the need for the licensing system to remain flexible enough to allow for responsible parties to diversify and manage the changing landscape. It stresses that LAs, central government and industry need to work in partnership to support resilience, growth, regeneration and organisational shift. It invites LAs to 'take a strategic, place-based approach that supports long-term success for businesses and communities alike'.

- 2.6** Section 5, implementation, provides recommendations as to how the strategic steer of the NLPF can be implemented within existing powers and resources. It includes suggestions as to how LAs can act predictably, consistency and support growth by encompassing the NLPF in revisions of Statements of Licensing Policy. Section 5 also confirms that blanket conditions are not suitable, and LAs should take an enabling, risk-based approach when dealing with responsible operators.
- 2.7** Section 6, high streets and communities, summarises the important role hospitality and leisure businesses have within communities, and considerations on the benefits of tackling crime and ASB to support these businesses, and the importance of community health and wellbeing.
- 2.8** Section 7, monitoring, evaluation and review, deals with the government's intention to review the framework after 6 months as to whether any further clarification is required and will then be subject to further periodic reviews.

### **3. Recommendation**

- 3.1 That Committee:**  
**Note the contents of the report.**

### **4. Reasons**

- 4.1** The Department for Business and Trade have published non-statutory guidance for licensing authorities, which although do not have a statutory footing, is aimed at providing a national strategic steer for the existing licensing system.

### **5. Options Considered**

- 5.1** No other options were considered.

### **6. Legal and Statutory Implications**

- 6.1** No legal or statutory implications were highlighted when drafting this report.

### **7. Equality Impact Assessment**

- 7.1** Not applicable.

### **8. Financial and Resource Implications**

- 8.1** No finance and resource implications were highlighted when drafting this report.

### **9. Major Risks & Mitigation**

- 9.1** Not applicable.

## 10. UN Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDG)

### 10.1



## 11. One Council

Please confirm that consideration has been given to the following programmes of work:

**One Commercial Council**

*Supporting businesses inline with the recommendations and suggestions within the NLPF may result in a commercial benefit for operators within the Borough.*

**One Digital Council**

*There are no implications on the one digital council strategy from considering the NLPF when making licensing decisions.*

**One Sustainable Council**

*There are no implications on the one sustainable council strategy from considering the NLPF when making licensing decisions.*

## 12. Key Decision Information

12.1 Not applicable.

## 13. Earlier Cabinet/Committee Resolutions

13.1 Not applicable.

## 14. List of Appendices

14.1 None

## 15. Background Papers

15.1 [Licensing taskforce report and government response - GOV.UK](#)

15.2 [National Licensing Policy Framework for the hospitality and leisure sectors](#)