

Boston Borough Council

Minutes of a meeting of the **Licensing Committee** held in the Committee Room - Municipal Buildings, West Street, Boston, PE21 8QR on Tuesday 23rd September 2025 at 2.00 pm.

Present:

Councillor Lina Savickiene, in the Chair.

Councillors Councillor Suzanne Welberry, Richard Austin BEM, John Baxter, James Cantwell, Stuart Evans, Paul Gleeson, Jonathan Noble and Helen Staples.

Officers:

Senior Licensing Officer and Democratic Services Team Leader.

6 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Neil Drayton, Andy Izard and Stephen Woodliffe.

[Councillor Richard Austin BME entered the meeting at 2.01pm prior to consideration of the above item.]

7 Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were received.

8 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 10th June 2025 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

9 Public Questions

No questions were received.

10 Licensing Act 2003 Draft Statement of Licensing Policy

The Committee considered a report by the Senior Licensing Officer, Anna McDowell, which set out the responses received following public consultation on the draft Statement of Licensing Policy. The consultation had run for eight weeks from 23rd June 2025, and one response had been received, from Lincolnshire Police.

The Senior Licensing Officer summarised the key points raised by Lincolnshire Police, which included requests for:

- Additional wording at Section 4 to reference the Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) and to expect applicants to demonstrate knowledge of the area in which their premises are situated.
- The development and publication of a pool of model conditions for applicants, to be provided as a standalone document rather than appended to the policy.

- Inclusion of guidance at paragraph 4.1.3 to encourage applicants to ensure that at least 75% of windows into retail areas remain free from obstruction.
- Additional wording at paragraph 4.4 to include all forms of government-issued digital ID as acceptable for age verification.
- Additional paragraphs in Section 13 to clarify that the Licensing Authority would take a serious view of criminal activity, including offences outside the direct scope of the Licensing Act, and would strongly consider revocation of licences where such activity was evidenced.
- Guidance under Section 35.3 to recommend that premises selling alcohol for consumption off the premises within the PSPO area consider affixing waterproof labels to containers, detailing the premises' name and address.

The Senior Licensing Officer advised that the suggested amendments had been incorporated into the draft policy in green text for ease of reference, and that the Committee was invited to consider and determine any further amendments before recommending the policy to Council for adoption.

Members discussed the report and commented as follows:

- Members noted that only one response had been received to the consultation, from Lincolnshire Police, and queried the extent of the consultation. Officers confirmed that all responsible authorities, parish councils, and relevant trade representatives had been consulted, and the consultation had also been publicised on the Council's website.
- Members raised concerns regarding the practical enforcement of the window visibility, and the proportionality of such conditions. Officers advised that any conditions imposed must be proportionate, enforceable, and relevant to the individual premises.
- Members discussed the enforceability of labelling requirements, and the proportionality of such conditions. Advice was given that the Statutory Guidance issued under S182 of the Act states that conditions cannot seek to manage the behaviour of customers once they are beyond the direct management of the licence holder and their staff but may impact on the behaviour of customers in the immediate vicinity of the premises. Officers advised that any conditions imposed must be proportionate, enforceable, and relevant to the individual premises and the potential benefit must be weighed up against the potential burden on the premises licence holder.
- The Committee considered whether the policy should make certain measures compulsory, but it was noted that statutory guidance did not permit the imposition of standard conditions except where appropriate to individual cases.
- Members raised concerns regarding the practical enforcement of the window visibility and labelling requirements, and the proportionality of such conditions. Officers advised that any conditions imposed must be proportionate, enforceable, and relevant to the individual premises.
- The Committee discussed the inclusion of digital ID as an acceptable form of age verification, noting that government guidance on digital ID was expected imminently.
- Members supported the inclusion of additional wording to clarify the Licensing Authority's approach to criminal activity, including the sale of illicit goods, immigration offences, and persistent sales of alcohol to minors.
- Officers undertook to add a link to the Council's guidance on minor variations to the policy, as suggested during the discussion.

The Chairman invited the Committee to consider each of the proposed amendments in turn. The Committee agreed to:

1. Include additional wording at Section 4 to reference the PSPO and require applicants to demonstrate knowledge of the area.
2. Develop and publish a pool of model conditions as a standalone document.
3. Include guidance at paragraph 4.1.3 regarding window visibility.
4. Add digital ID to the list of acceptable documents for age verification.
5. Include additional paragraphs in Section 13 regarding criminal activity and licence reviews.
6. Add guidance under Section 35.3 regarding waterproof labelling of alcohol containers.

The Chairman invited the Committee to consider each of the proposed amendments in turn. Each recommendation was discussed and voted on individually by the Committee. Once all recommendations had been considered, the Committee proceeded to vote on the recommendations as a single package, which was agreed.

The recommendations were proposed by Councillor John Baxter and seconded by Councillor Helen Staples.

Resolved:

That the proposed policy be approved for referral to Council for adoption and publication.

[Councillor Helen Staples left the meeting at 2.27pm, during consideration of the above item.]

The Meeting ended at 2.30 pm.