

LEGISLATIVE & INDUSTRY UPDATE - OCTOBER 2025

Committee	Licensing Committee
Officer	Legal Services
Wards	All

HEADLINES

This report advises the Licensing Committee of the recent legislative, case law and industry updates under the functions within its remit.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Licensing Committee notes the report.

Licensing Act 2003

Update to Statutory Guidance under Section 182 of the Licensing Act 2003

Statutory Guidance under Section 182 of the Licensing Act 2003 was updated on 27 February 2025. The guidance, issued by the Home Office, provides direction to licensing authorities in England and Wales and must be considered when exercising licensing functions.

Key Changes

Clarification on Off-Sales

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the government passed regulations allowing licensed premises to sell alcohol for takeaway, delivery and to drink in pavement areas, without making a formal application to vary their premises licence, this lapsed on 31 March 2025.

The Statutory Guidance update reinforces the continued application of the Business and Planning Act 2020 provisions, allowing premises licensed for on-sales to also make off-sales (e.g., takeaway, delivery, or adjacent pavement consumption) without requiring a licence variation (see paragraph 8.65).

Spiking Awareness

New provisions encourage licensing authorities to consider spiking prevention measures when reviewing applications or imposing conditions. Operators are advised to implement staff training, incident reporting protocols, and customer safety initiatives to address drink and needle spiking risks (see paragraphs 2.7 and 10.10).

Reinforcement of Licensing Objectives

The update reaffirms the importance of the four statutory licensing objectives: prevention of crime and disorder, public safety, prevention of public nuisance, and protection of children from harm. Licensing authorities must continue to have regard to these objectives when making decisions.

Licensing Taskforce

The Licensing Taskforce was established in April 2025 and involved a joint initiative which took place between government, industry, police, and local authorities, to review the Licensing Act 2003 and address long-standing concerns about inconsistency, complexity, and barriers to growth in the licensing industry.

The initiative concluded in May 2025, issuing a report with 10 priority recommendations, most of which were accepted by the government (in late July 2025), subject to consultation and further development.

No definitive date has been set since for implementation of these recommendation, further work and public consultation will be required before any changes are introduced. The government's intention is to proceed with the necessary work to implement the accepted recommendations in addition to considering potential changes to the Section 182 guidance.

Some of the key recommendations were:

A National Licensing Policy Framework (NLPF)

The aim of introducing an NLPF is to improve consistency and transparency across local authorities. Whilst an NPLF will provide national direction it would also be careful to preserve local discretion. If introduced, its implementation is expected that to reduce disputes and judicial reviews.

Licence “Amnesty”

One-time opportunity to modernise and remove outdated conditions from existing licences.

Longer Licensing Terms for Pavement Areas

Intended to give businesses greater certainty and support long-term planning.

Temporary Event Notice (TEN) Reforms

Review of current limits to allow greater flexibility for operators. Proposed increase to 25 TENs covering 30 days per premises.

Strengthening the “Agent of Change” Principle

Ensures new developments near existing venues bear responsibility for mitigating noise and disruption, aligning licensing with planning law. The reforms will make it easier to convert disused shops into hospitality venues, and protect long-standing pubs, clubs, and music venues from noise complaints by new developments.

Hospitality and Night-Time Economy Zones

Support for designated zones to promote economic growth and cultural activity. Includes fast-tracked permissions for alfresco dining, street parties, and extended hours.

Removal of Hard-Copy Advertising Requirements

Proposal to eliminate the need for local newspaper notices for alcohol licence applications.

Devolving licensing powers to The Greater London Authority (GLA)

The GLA is actively advocating for devolved licensing powers to unify and modernise the fragmented licensing system across London boroughs. This initiative is part of a broader strategy to support the capital's hospitality, culture, and night-time economy, which contributes over £40 billion annually to the UK economy. The GLA's proposal and the pilot programme are designed to be London-wide in scope, with the potential to affect all boroughs, including Hillingdon, depending on future rollout and collaboration.

The GLA's August 2025 report outlines several systemic issues with the existing borough-led licensing regime:

- Fragmentation: Each borough operates its own licensing policies, leading to inconsistency and confusion for businesses.
- Inequality: The system disproportionately affects SMEs and operators from protected characteristic groups due to uneven enforcement and procedural complexity.
- Lack of Evidence-Based Decision-Making: Licensing decisions are not always grounded in consistent data or economic impact assessments.
- Barriers to Growth: Businesses cite licensing as a major obstacle to later opening hours, al fresco dining, and cultural programming.

The GLA proposes a strategic licensing framework:

- Set city-wide standards and guidance.
- Ensure consistency in decision-making.
- Promote economic development and cultural vibrancy.

GLA Licensing Reform – Pilot Scheme

The pilot scheme for strategic licensing powers for the Mayor of London is currently being devised by the Government and the Greater London Authority (GLA) following an announcement in April 2025. While a start date for the pilot hasn't been specified, the scheme aims to give greater clarity and consistency to businesses by devolving new strategic licensing powers to the GLA, which could grant the Mayor of London "call-in" powers to review and potentially overturn borough-level licensing decisions in strategic nightlife zones.

Industry News & Updates

Sentencing Bill

On 3 September 2025 the government introduced the Sentencing Bill to Parliament, unveiling a series of criminal justice reforms that could have significant implications for local licensing enforcement, particularly in relation to pub bans and alcohol-related offences.

The Sentencing Bill complements wider government efforts to improve public safety through licensing reform. Recent consultations have explored measures such as restricting the sale of high-caffeine energy drinks to children and tightening controls on late-night venues. Together, these initiatives reflect a growing emphasis on preventative regulation and community-level intervention.

Gambling Act 2005

The Gambling Commission circulates a regular bulletin for licensing authorities outlining changes in legislation and any enforcement action taken. The latest bulletin can be found here: [September LA Bulletin](#)

The Gambling Levy Regulations 2025

The Gambling Levy Regulations 2025 came into force on 6 April 2025 introducing a mandatory statutory levy on licensed gambling operators in the UK. The reform shifts the funding model for research, prevention, and treatment of gambling-related harm from voluntary contributions to a required annual payment based on an operator's revenue. All licensed gambling operators are subject to the levy, with first payments due by 1 October 2025.

Key details include:

- Remote (online) operators: 1.1% of Gross Gambling Yield (GGY)
- Land-based casinos and betting shops: 0.5%
- Bingo halls and adult gaming centres: 0.2%
- Family entertainment centres and niche providers: 0.1%
- Society lotteries and external lottery managers: 0.1%
- Operators owing less than £10 in levy are exempt

The levy is expected to raise £90–100 million annually, distributed as follows: 50% for NHS treatment services, 30% for prevention initiatives, and 20% for research into gambling harms.

The Gambling Act 2005 (Operating Licence Conditions) (Amendment) Regulations 2025

The Gambling Act 2005 (Operating Licence Conditions) (Amendment) Regulations 2025 introduced stake limits for online slot games.

Stake limits are age-dependent:

- £5 per spin for players aged 25 and over (effective 9 April 2025)
- £2 per spin for players aged 18–24 (effective 21 May 2025)

These limits apply exclusively to online slot games and are now mandatory conditions for Remote Casino Operating Licences. Operators must ensure compliance across all platforms.

Local Authority Coalition on Gambling Licensing Reform (2025)

The coalition of 40 local authorities is a cross-party group of UK councils and local leaders campaigning to give local governments more power to regulate high-street betting and gambling. The coalition, which includes members from across England, gained momentum in 2025 by formally urging the government to make critical changes to gambling legislation.

The coalition seeks to empower councils with greater control over gambling premises to better protect community welfare and address local concerns. Licensing authorities currently have limited power to refuse licenses, a policy that critics describe as "aim to permit." The coalition wants the power to refuse licenses based on clear evidence of potential community harm.

Key Demands Supported by Hillingdon

Hillingdon Council supports the coalition's six-point reform plan, which includes:

- Placing all gambling premises within a single planning use class to enable local control.
- Requiring councils to consider health and social impacts when determining licence applications.
- Introducing a statutory levy on gambling operators to fund treatment, education, and research.
- Implementing stricter controls on gambling advertising and promotions.
- Aligning licensing decisions with local public health data.
- Enhancing transparency and accountability in gambling regulation.

Implications for Local Policy

If the proposed reforms are enacted, Hillingdon Council may gain powers to:

- Reject new gambling licence applications based on public health and community welfare.
- Limit clustering of gambling venues in vulnerable areas such as Hayes Town Centre.
- Enforce local restrictions on gambling advertising and promotions.
- Integrate public health data into licensing decisions and policy reviews.

Council Motion – September 2025

On 11th September 2025, Hillingdon Council unanimously passed a motion to join the coalition. The motion was introduced by Councillor Peter Curling, Leader of the Hayes Independent Party Group, in response to public concern over the proliferation of betting shops in Hayes Town Centre. Councillor Eddie Lavery, stated: *"This is not a call for a full ban... but a request to the government to step up and make changes to legislation that will give councils the power to decide what's best for their residents."*

Hillingdon's involvement in the coalition reflects its commitment to safeguarding residents and promoting responsible gambling regulation. The council will continue to monitor legislative developments and contribute to national discussions on reforming the Gambling Act 2005.

Gambling Act 2005 (Monetary Limits for Lotteries) Bill

The Bill seeks to remove monetary limits on the proceeds from lottery operating licences under the Gambling Act 2005, specifically targeting charity lotteries. It aims to allow unlimited fundraising through licensed charity lotteries.

Key Provisions

- Clause 1: Removes the £5 million per draw and £50 million per calendar year cap on ticket sales for charity lotteries.
- Clause 2: Requires the Gambling Commission to amend conditions on existing lottery operating licences to reflect the removal of the cap.

- Clause 3: Grants the Secretary of State power to make consequential amendments to other legislation via statutory instrument.
- Clause 4: Applies to England, Wales, and Scotland. Commencement date to be set by regulation.

Rationale and Expected Impact

The Bill addresses the limitations imposed on charity lotteries that restrict their fundraising potential. Removing these caps is expected to unlock an estimated £175 million in additional charitable funding over five years. It simplifies operations for large charity lotteries that currently use multiple trusts to circumvent caps. Importantly, the Bill does not increase prize limits, which remain at £25,000 or 10% of proceeds, capped at £500,000.

Schedule 3 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982 in respect of Sex Establishment Licences

No further legislative changes/notable cases/industry updates.

Scrap Metal Dealers Act 2013

No further legislative changes/notable cases/industry updates.

Street Trading – London Local Authorities Act 1990

No further legislative changes/notable cases/industry updates.
