

Minutes of a meeting of the Licensing and Gambling Acts Committee on Monday 9 February 2026

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Committee members present:

Councillor Miles (Chair)	Councillor Waite
Councillor Clarkson	Councillor Lygo
Councillor Ottino	Councillor Upton
Councillor Jupp	Councillor Muddiman
Councillor Mundy (Vice-Chair)	Councillor Rehman
Councillor Azad	Councillor Rawle
Councillor Taylor	

Officers present for all or part of the meeting:

Hannah Carmody-Brown, Committee and Member Services Officer
Alison Daly, Legal Advisor
Jonathan Malton, Committee and Member Services Manager
Richard Adams, Community Safety Service Manager
Emma Thompson, Senior Licensing Compliance Officer
Katie Thorp, Senior Licensing Compliance Officer

Apologies:

Councillor Yeatman and Councillor Sandelson sent apologies.
It was noted that Councillor Mundy would be joining late.

30. Declarations of interest

None.

31. Minutes of the previous meeting

The Licensing and Gambling Acts Committee resolved to **approve** the minutes of the meeting held on 22 September 2025 as a true and accurate record.

32. Addresses by members of the public

None.

33. Councillor addresses on any item for discussion

None.

34. Review of the Cumulative Impact Assessment and Special Saturation Policy

The Director of Law, Governance and Strategy (Monitoring Officer) had submitted a report to confirm the decision of the Committee on the 22 September 2025 in relation to the Cumulative Impact Assessment and to determine the Special Saturation Policy.

The Committee and Member Services Manager introduced the report and outlined the recommendation for Members to reaffirm their previous decision made in September. Relevant legal advice and reasoning for the report being returned to the Committee was also outlined.

Councillor Clarkson joined the meeting.

The Chair invited questions from the Committee.

Councillor Taylor queried whether the Committee was permitted to consider matters beyond just the licensing objectives when reaching their decision. The Legal Advisor explained that the Committee must seek an evidence-based decision in relation to the licensing objectives and can consider information which they believe supports this.

Councillor Muddiman requested data which had been updated since September 2025. The Senior Licensing Compliance Officer (KT) noted that since September 14 new premises licenses had been issued, 8 of which were within the SSP areas. The Committee also heard that 1 had been determined by a Sub-Committee, 9 were granted with agreed conditions, and 4 were granted as applied for; no applications had been refused in the period since September. Furthermore, 1 application for a minor variation, and 5 full variation applications were received, of which all were granted; 3 of these were in the SSP areas. The Senior Licensing Compliance Officer (KT) noted that 5 applications are currently pending.

Councillor Muddiman asked whether data was available to compare the number of applications with and without the SSP for a similar duration of time. The Senior

Licensing Compliance Officer (KT) clarified that the only data available for comparison was that of when the SSP was in place for the previous 3 years before it expired.

Councillor Muddiman queried whether there had been an increase in the number of applications since the SSP expired, to which the Senior Licensing Compliance Officer (KT) noted the numbers of new applications having been steady and only a smaller number of variations to licenses having been requested.

Councillor Ottino queried whether the conditions attached to recent applications had been mostly from the police, and whether there had been a lot of resistance from applicants to these. The Senior Licensing Compliance Officer (KT) confirmed they were mostly TVP agreed conditions and noted that many positive conversations between the police and applicants had taken place.

The Chair asked whether the licenses applied for in SSP areas since its expiry had increased the density of licence holders, or whether the density remained similar as people reapply for previously licensed premises which may have stopped operating. The Senior Licensing Compliance Officer (KT) explained that of the 14 new premises applications received since September, only 8 had been within the city and none have been within East Oxford.

Councillor Upton noted that an advantage of having an SSP in place is that it supports better and earlier engagement between applicants and relevant authorities. It was asked whether this had reduced since September, to which The Senior Licensing Compliance Officer (KT) noted that early engagement still takes place via pre-consultation conversations with the responsible authorities.

Councillor Ottino requested evidence from the police about crime related to the SPP areas since September and asked whether any other complaints had been received. The Senior Licensing Compliance Officer (KT) noted only additional complaints about SIA door staff, and it was noted that these are referred elsewhere. The Committee also heard that the Licensing Authority receive weekly reports from the police which have not shown an increase in relevant crime.

Councillor Taylor requested officers' opinion on whether there has been any real difference without the SSP in place to which The Senior Licensing Compliance Officer (KT) stated that there was no data to either confirm or reject the question. The Community Safety Service Manager noted that more analysis of data could be done to determine this question, however the Committee heard that there had been no significant expansion to the nighttime economy and trends would loosely suggest there is less crime at present in comparison to historic periods. The Community Safety Service Manager reiterated that more analysis would need to be done to be sure of the impacts on public safety.

Councillor Ottino requested more information relating to the complaints about SIA door staff and whether the police required more door staff without the SSP in place. The Senior Licensing Compliance Officer (ET) explained that data on this is held with the SIA and the Licensing Authority could not comment.

Councillor Rehman noted that evidence does not demonstrate an influx of applications since the expiry of the SSP, or an increase in issues relating to the protection of the public. On this basis, it was asked whether having the SSP as an extra layer could be advisable in order to support the licensing objectives.

Councillor Mundy joined the meeting.

The Community Safety Service Manager provided a summary of how matters relating to the SSP have changed over time, and a summary of why it was a useful tool when first introduced. The Committee understood that officer opinion remains objective and must be supported by the data, therefore it was for Members to determine whether they believed the SSP could be a useful tool. The Community Safety Service Manager also reminded the Committee of upcoming changes linked to Local Government Reorganisation.

Councillor Rehman sought to clarify whether officers believed that an SSP is a helpful tool for achieving the licensing objectives. The Community Safety Service Manager reiterated that when new, the SSP had an obvious impact as it was used to deny applications more regularly. However, now, relationships between the Licensing Authority and applicants have matured and good conversations regularly occur with responsible licence holders; as such, the impact of the SSP may now be less than it once was; nevertheless, it can still retain some benefits, especially for new applicants.

Councillor Rawle sought to clarify that in the past year, the officers' recommendations in the report still stand and that the other responsible authorities still maintain the same views. The Community Safety Service Manager confirmed this.

The Chair sought to clarify that if the Committee resolved to reaffirm their previous decision from September, whether a CIA to consider new data could still be commissioned without the need to introduce a new SSP. The Legal Advisor confirmed that a CIA could take place without the need for an SSP to be implemented, either by officer decision, or a request from the Committee. Members were reminded of the prerequisite requirement for a CIA to be completed ahead of an SSP being implemented. A summary of the licensing objectives was provided by the Legal Advisor and the distinction between the two SSP areas was emphasized.

Councillor Ottino queried why the maps produced within the CIA remain the same and requested specific information in relation to some examples, including The Black Swan venue on Crown Street. It was also asked whether the scope of areas to be considered

within the CIA could be expanded and changed in the future. The Community Safety Service Manager explained that the reports are driven by evidence led analysis and data from a variety of sources including the police; using this, the CIA and SSP is then formulated.

Councillor Mundy sought to clarify how the CIA and SSP is applied to licence variations. The Community Safety Service Manager confirmed that each application is considered on a case-by-case basis and there are no automatic or blanket requirements required by having an SSP in place; the Committee and Sub-Committees have discretion.

The Chair invited the Committee to debate the recommendation in the report.

Councillor Taylor expressed his view that the previous decision should be reaffirmed but requested that new data be brought forward via a new CIA assessment to a future Committee.

The Legal Advisor clarified that the previous SSP had expired. Should the Committee vote not to reaffirm their previous decision, then they would be able to return to the existing Cumulative Impact Assessment as part of their decision making to inform whether they consider there to be a need for an SSP in order to uphold the licensing objectives.

Councillor Muddiman asked whether the Committee could vote to adopt a new SSP within this meeting. The Committee and Member Services Manager clarified that a new SSP would be required to come to a future meeting for consideration. The Committee was advised to first consider their determination regarding the recommendation in the report.

Councillor Clarkson expressed her view that the previous decision be reaffirmed, noting that Oxford city is now a different place to that which it was when an SSP was first required and introduced. Councillor Clarkson noted her view that restrictive policies should not be in place when not required.

Councillor Rehman expressed his view that the previous decision should not be reaffirmed and also recommended that more data be brought forward for the Committee's consideration. Councillor Rehman emphasised the importance of public safety ahead of business prosperity and recognised an SSP as an additional layer of support for this.

Councillor Rawle noted that although not present at the previous meeting of the Committee, she would have been minded to support the officers' recommendation and therefore, recognised the SSP as an enabling policy for the Council to

meet its licensing objectives. Councillor Rawle noted that there is no sufficient evidence to support the removal of a tool, which is helpful.

Councillor Ottino clarified that the SSP has not been in place for a year since it expired and suggested that a review with a broader scope of evidence should take place. Councillor Ottino expressed his preference to reaffirm the previous decision of the Committee.

Councillor Jupp emphasised that the Committee is entitled to consider factors other than the licensing objectives, including political party policies, but that it must also remain open-minded. In relation to the CIA as it is, Councillor Jupp echoed Councillor Ottino's comments, noting that it is out of date and contains incomprehensible maps. The Committee heard that he did not believe the policy to be fit for purpose, and any future review via a CIA must be reflective of the challenges on the ground. Councillor Jupp echoed Councillor Taylor and Councillor Clarkson's comments and supported waiting for the collection and analysis of further data; he also noted that restrictive policies should be avoided where possible. Councillor Jupp queried whether it is possible for the Committee to vote on the SSP areas separately, if the decision were not reaffirmed. The Legal Advisor and Committee and Member Services Manager confirmed this but also noted it would be contingent on the outcome of the vote on the recommendation.

Councillor Taylor asked whether the Committee could consider factors other than just the licensing objectives when reaching their determination. The Legal Advisor emphasised that any decision taken by the Committee must be evidence-based and considerate of whether an SSP would support the licensing objectives, however, should Members feel that other factors are relevant to this consideration, then they may also be considered. The Committee heard that evidence should not be disregarded when a decision is being reached.

Councillor Muddiman expressed her view that based on the evidence, there had been no increase in the number of licenses issued without an SSP for around a year and there is no suggestion that not having an SSP in place has a negative impact on the nighttime economy. Taking into account the context of the SSP over time, as noted by officers during this meeting, Councillor Muddiman recognised the stable and cooperative relationships that are now in place between licence holders and the Licensing Authority, but also the use of the SSP as a tool for engaging with new applicants. Councillor Muddiman noted her disagreement with the previous decision of the Committee and expressed her wish that it not be reaffirmed; she also requested more data to be presented to a future Committee.

Councillor Mundy supported Councillor Muddiman's comments and emphasised that the licensing objectives should be the Committee's primary concern, as well as noting that the policy should support a healthy nighttime economy. As such, he expressed a preference not to reaffirm the Committee's previous decision. Councillor Mundy discouraged the Committee from considering political considerations when voting on the recommendation.

The Chair focused on the evidence presented to the Committee within the CIA and referenced here awareness of residents who experience negative impacts from the nighttime economy. The Committee heard that she viewed the SSP to be a useful tool and would not be voting to reaffirm the previous decision of the Committee. The Chair also requested that additional data be brought back to inform any future policy with consideration for the licensing objectives.

Councillor Upton recognised arguments on both sides of the debate and acknowledged the historic use and value of the SSP, whilst also supporting the idea that unnecessarily restrictive policies should not be pursued. Councillor Upton expressed her preference that the decision from the previous Committee be reaffirmed and requested that future discussions address the matter if the need arise.

Councillor Miles proposed an additional recommendation to also bring a new CIA to the next meeting of the Committee to allow a review of the evidence.

When put to a vote on the first recommendation, 9 Members voted in favour, and 2 Members voted against, and 2 Members abstained. The recommendation was agreed.

Councillor Taylor proposed that the Committee reaffirm its decision of the 22 September 2025 to not renew the Cumulative Impact Assessment and Saturation Policy covering the City Centre and East Oxford areas, noting that the matter is a decision for Committee with no onwards requirement for a decision by full Council; Councillor Lygo seconded.

When put to a vote on the second recommendation, 7 Members voted in favour, and 6 Members voted against. The recommendation was agreed.

The Licensing & Gambling Acts Committee resolved to:

1. **Reaffirm** its decision of the 22 September 2025 to not renew the Cumulative Impact Assessment and Saturation Policy covering the City Centre and East Oxford areas, noting that the matter is a decision for Committee with no onwards requirement for a decision by full Council;
2. And to **recommend** that an updated CIA is brought to a future Committee for consideration.

35. Licensing Act 2003 and Gambling Act 2005 Licence Fees and Charges for the 2026/27 financial year

The Deputy Chief Executive for Citizens and City Services had submitted a report to seek agreement on the licence fees for 2026/27 where the council has discretion over the level of fee charged.

The Senior Licensing Compliance Officer (KT) introduced the report, noting that the Committee were being asked to recommend the Council to approve the licence fees and charges for the forthcoming financial year. The Committee heard that all fees under the Licensing Act are set by statute and cannot be amended whilst fees under the Gambling Act are either set by statute and not able to be amended or are set to the statutory maximum. As such, no substantial increase was proposed to ensure financial stability to license holders in the present economic climate. The Senior Licensing Compliance Officer (KT) explained that the only minor fee increases proposed was for miscellaneous charges, as noted in appendix one.

The Chair invited questions on the report; there were none.

When proposed by Councillor Lygo and seconded by Councillor Jupp, the Committee voted unanimously in favour of the recommendation.

The Licensing & Gambling Acts Committee resolved to:

1. **Recommend** to Council to approve the License Fees and Charges for 2026/27 as per the Licensing Act 2003 and Gambling Act 2005 as set out in Appendix 1.

36. Dates of future meetings

The Committee noted the dates and times of future meetings.

The meeting started at 6.00 pm and ended at 6.55 pm

Chair
2026

Date: Wednesday 27 May

When decisions take effect:

Cabinet: after the call-in and review period has expired

Planning Committees: after the call-in and review period has expired and the formal decision notice is issued

All other committees: immediately.

Details are in the Council's Constitution.