
CENTRAL LICENSING COMMITTEE 9/03/26

Attendance:

Councillors: Alan Jones Evans, Gwilym Evans, Annwen Hughes, John Brynmor Hughes, Gareth Tudor Jones, Edgar Wyn Owen, Huw Rowlands, Elfed Williams, Gwynfor Owen, Meryl Roberts, Hefin Underwood and Gareth Williams

Officers: Gwenan Mai Roberts (Licensing Manager), Andrew Parry (Trading Standards and Licensing Manager), Nia Grisdale (Legal Services Manager), Jac Evans (Solicitor) and Lowri Haf Evans (Democracy Services Officer)

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors Arwyn Herald Roberts and Angela Russell

Councillor Anwen Davies had been unable to join due to technical issues.

2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

No declarations of personal interest were received from any members present.

3. URGENT ITEMS

None to note

4. MINUTES

The Chair signed the minutes of the previous meeting of this committee, held on 1 December 2025, as a true record.

5. LICENSING SUB COMMITTEE MINUTES

The minutes of the Central Licensing Sub-Committee held on 18 November 2025 and 1 December 2025, were submitted and accepted for information purposes.

6. CENTRAL GOVERNMENT REFORM OF THE PREMISES LICENSING SYSTEM - NATIONAL LICENSING POLICY FRAMEWORK

The Licensing Manager submitted a report providing a summary of the changes that the Central Government reform of the premises licensing system would impact on policy and local Licensing decisions in Gwynedd.

It was explained that the Central Government, through its Task Force that was responsible for reforming Licensing, had shown over the years that more pressure was placed on public safety and crime prevention, under the statutory licensing

objectives, and less focus on business resilience and growth.

In response to the finding, it was noted that the Task Force's main initial recommendations were to create a National Licensing Policy Framework (NLPF) to provide strategic non-statutory guidance for licensing authorities in England and Wales with the aim of modernising licensing practices, supporting economic growth and maintaining community protection through proportionate, evidence-led regulation.

The Central Government requested evidence and the views of stakeholders during a public consultation period in October 2025, with emphasis on evidence relevant to the sale of alcohol (pubs, nightclubs and entertainment under the Licensing Act 2003). Cyngor Gwynedd responded to the request, as well as the majority of other authorities in England and Wales and organisations such as the Welsh Local Government Association, North Wales Police and Public Health.

It was reported that the statutory guidance for Local Authorities (published under s182 Licensing Act 2003) continued to be in force but had recently been reviewed by the Home Office Revised Guidance. It was reiterated that the strategic guidance ensured that the core principles highlighted by the National Licensing Policy Framework must be considered locally when informing Statements of Licensing Policy and making decisions on Licensing applications. It was elaborated that the proposed amendments included facilitating better cooperation between Local Authorities and the hospitality industry; as well as better alignment between regeneration, planning and licensing objectives.

Reference was made to how the Framework would apply to the National Licensing Policy and local licensing decisions in Gwynedd, and to the need for effective collaboration with the Planning Service. Attention was also drawn to the responsibilities and duties of officers and Members when making decisions in Central Licensing Sub-committees. Despite the need to continue to conduct necessary safety measures, it was noted that the National Framework emphasised that there was a need for a dual method of community protection under the four licensing objectives when considering supporting regeneration, investment and economy growth.

The licensing authorities would be required to demonstrate that the strategic direction of their Statements of Licensing Policy addressed and considered the National Licensing Policy Framework. However, the expectation was that this was not necessary until the next review of the Statement to Licensing Policy in 2029.

The members thanked the officer for the report.

Observations arising from the ensuing discussion

- Safeguarding children was a priority
- Any system must ensure that safeguarding and safeguarding health were the main considerations at licence hearings - concern that these amendments would lead to a direction that would undermine this

In response to a question regarding which Government was responsible for the amendments, the Licensing Manager confirmed that the United Kingdom Government's Task Force had led on the work, and she was unaware whether Welsh Government had responded to the short consultation held during October 2025. However, she elaborated that the Welsh Local Government Association had submitted comprehensive observations highlighting concerns on how the

Framework would be implemented in Wales.

In response to an observation regarding the economic growth considerations at licensing hearings and the Central Licensing Sub-committees had effectively already considered economic matters, it was noted that the Government had alleged that there were inconsistencies in arrangements by Authorities and therefore the measures were submitted to address these.

In response to an observation on how decisions under the new guidelines could cause difficulties in rural areas, it was noted that the Authorities' officers, the Police and stakeholders had noted that a system that provided more flexibility e.g. for pubs to hold outdoor entertainment, could lead to an increase in offences and anti-social behaviour; whilst doing nothing to address the density of the cases could possibly have a negative impact on community well-being.

RESOLVED

- **To approve the general strategic direction of the National Licensing Policy Framework in respect of decisions made by its Sub-committee, and**
- **To approve to incorporate the strategic direction of the Framework into the next review of the Statement of Licensing Policy in 2029.**

The meeting commenced at 10.00 am and concluded at 10.25 am

CHAIRMAN