

REPORT TO COUNCIL
22 JULY 2026

REPORT OF CORPORATE
MANAGEMENT TEAM

Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council

Licensing Act 2003 - Statement of Licensing Policy Review 2026

Summary

Under the Licensing Act 2003 local authorities must develop and review their Statement of Licensing Policy at least every five years. The revised policy provides a pragmatic and fair approach to all those working within the licensable activity sector, whilst continuing to meet the statutory obligations under the Licensing Act 2003. Cabinet will be considering this report at its meeting on 16 July 2026 and is being asked to make the following recommendation to Council.

Recommendations

That Council agree the proposed Statement of Licensing Policy.

Detail

1. A copy of the proposed Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council Statement of Licensing Policy can be found at: [Stockton Statement of Licensing Act Policy 2026](#)
2. The proposed policy reflects legislation, best practice and integrates the recently published [National Licensing Policy Framework](#) which is a strategic vision for a modern, permissive licensing system that safeguards communities while enabling hospitality and leisure to thrive, and is aligned with the licensing objectives which are:
 - the prevention of crime and disorder
 - public safety
 - the prevention of public nuisance
 - the protection of children from harm
3. The proposed policy supports the Councils vision and priorities and includes information on:
 - Martyn's Law (Protect Duty)
 - Illegal employment practices
 - Local alcohol related harm
4. The proposed policy reinforces our commitment to:
 - Partnership working including Pubwatch
 - Proactive enforcement around alcohol harm including underage sales and early morning sales

- Engagement and compliance with the trade including the Reducing the Strength scheme
 - Developing a responsible retailer guide that can be updated and remain current outside of the 5 year policy cycle
5. For statutory consultation the proposed policy was circulated for response to:
 - Responsible authorities under the Licensing Act 2003 including the Police
 - All members
 - Internal and external stakeholders
 - All current licence holders in the hospitality trade
 6. The proposed policy was advertised to the public on the licensing website and social media pages. Comments were to be received by 31 May 2026.
 7. No comments objecting to the proposed policy were received.
 8. Supportive comments were received from the Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner (OPCC) via the Cleveland Unit for the Reduction of Violence (CURV). The comments and proposed additional policy wording are attached as Appendix 1.
 9. The matter was referred to the General Licensing Committee on the 9 June 2026. The committee agreed unanimously on the revised Statement of Licensing Policy and the positive impact of the Reducing the Strength Scheme was acknowledged.

History and Background

10. The [Licensing Act 2003](#) places a statutory requirement on all Local Authorities to develop a Statement of Licensing Policy, and policies are to be reviewed at least every five years.
11. The Statement of Licensing Policy guides how the Council exercises its responsibilities when issuing licences for the sale of alcohol, regulated entertainment, and late-night refreshment.
12. The table below shows the current number of licensed premises under the Licensing Act 2003:

Licensed Premises (Licensing Act 2003)	24-25	25-26	Difference
Total alcohol licensed premises	470	462	-8
Alcohol - authorised for on and off sales	221	217	-4
Alcohol - authorised on sales only	83	81	-2
Alcohol - authorised off sales only	166	164	-2
Late night refreshment only	65	64	-1
Regulated entertainment only	46	46	-
Total Number of Licensed Premises	581	572	-9

13. All decisions must support the four equal-weight licensing objectives, as advised by the Section 182 [guidance which accompanies the Act](#), these objectives underpin every part of the policy to ensure that Stockton-on-Tees continues to promote safe, responsible, and well-managed licensed activities.
14. The current Statement of Licensing Policy can be found at:

www.stockton.gov.uk/alcohol-and-entertainment-licences

Additional Information

15. During the consultation [The Crime and Policing Act 2026](#) received Royal Assent, the Act is wide ranging and primarily police focused, but it does have several direct and indirect implications for local authorities, particularly across community and licensing related functions.
16. To ensure the policy document is relevant and up to date, officers may implement amendments or additions, in consultation with and subject to the agreement of the Chair of the Statutory Licensing Committee, provided such changes do not result in any material alteration to the overall intent or scope.
17. The policy review has been undertaken with full consideration given to the follows the Councils design principals:
 - **Put communities at the heart of everything we do**
The policy prioritises the needs and concerns of residents by promoting the licensing objectives and ensuring community impact and feedback are central to decision making.
 - **Has a 'place-based' approach**
The policy reflects local characteristics by using tools such as area-specific evidence to respond to the distinct needs and risks within different parts of the borough.
 - **Has efficient processes and be digital by design**
The policy supports streamlined, transparent and accessible licensing processes, including the use of digital systems to submit, manage and determine applications efficiently.
 - **Uses data and intelligence to inform our decision**
Decisions under the policy are informed by robust data and intelligence from responsible authorities, ensuring an evidence based approach.

Community Impact and Equality and Poverty Impact Assessment

18. The Licensing Act 2004 has been a statutory duty for local authorities since 2003, and effects the whole Borough. The proposed changes will bring benefits for the community, licensing service, the existing licensed trade and future licensed trade.
19. An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed and signed, [reference: 0334](#). No major change is required because of the EPIA.

Corporate Parenting Implications

20. The report does not contain corporate parenting implications.

Financial Implications

21. The fees associated with the Licensing Act 2003 are statutory set and have not been review since 2003, the fees do not form part of the Councils approved Budget and Medium-Term Financial Plan.

Legal Implications

22. The implementation and operation of the Statement of Licensing Policy will be done in accordance with the Licensing Act 2003 and associated guidance.

Risk Assessment

23. The risks associated with the Statement of Licensing Policy are mitigated by the administration and enforcement provisions of The Licensing Act 2003 and associated guidance.

Wards Affected and Consultation with Ward/ Councillors (refer to Concordat for Communication and Consultation with Members)

24. All members including the Cabinet Member for Access, Communities and Community Safety have been consulted.

Background Papers

Consultation response and proposed additional wording

[Appendix 1 consultation responses and proposed policy wording.docx](#)

The Licensing Act 2003

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2003/17/contents>

Section 182 Guidance (February 2025)

Statutory guidance issued by the Home Office provides comprehensive direction on promoting the licensing objectives, handling applications, reviews, and enforcement.

www.gov.uk/government/publications/explanatory-memorandum-revised-guidance-issued-under-s-182-of-licensing-act-2003

National Licensing Policy Framework for the hospitality and leisure sectors

Strategic vision for a modern, permissive licensing system that safeguards communities while enabling hospitality and leisure to thrive.

www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-licensing-policy-framework-for-the-hospitality-and-leisure-sectors

The Crime & Policing Act 2026

Introduces a wide range of measures to strengthen the response to antisocial behaviour, retail crime, and serious violence. Increases expectations around partnership working, data sharing, and proactive enforcement, while providing stronger legal mechanisms to support community safety and protect town centres.

www.gov.uk/government/collections/crime-and-policing-act-2026

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