

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Licensing
Committee held at Council Chamber,
Surrey Heath House, Knoll Road,
Camberley, GU15 3HD on 14 June 2023**

+ Cllr Valerie White (Chairman)
+ Cllr Rob Lee (Vice Chairman)

+ Cllr Louise Ashbery	+ Cllr Jonathan Quin
+ Cllr Kel Finan-Cooke	Cllr Bob Raikes
- Cllr Gordon	- Cllr John Skipper
+ Cllr Nirmal Kang	+ Cllr Pat Tedder
+ Cllr Ying Perrett	+ Cllr Kevin Thompson

+ Present

- Apologies for absence presented

Officers Present: Frances Soper, Paula Barnshaw, Nathita Fleet, Nick Steevens

22/L Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Skipper and Gordon.

23/L Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 15 February 2023 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

24/L Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

25/L Food and Safety Service Plan

The Committee were presented with the Food and Safety and Health and Safety Service Plan 2023/24 Report and asked to approve the service plan for 2023/24. The Plan contributed to the 5 Year Strategy and the Councils 2023/24 Annual Plan.

The FSA (Food Standards Agency) mandated Local Authorities to have food safety service plans, ensuring adherence to national standards. Approval from the member forum was advised for transparency and accountability. LAs (Local Authorities) and the HSE (Health and Safety England) enforced health and safety laws, with the Council responsible for making enforcement arrangements.

In Surrey Heath, the food safety service is responsible for the inspection of 704 food businesses, remaining static compared to the previous year (706 22/23). This was due to an increase in home-based businesses during the lockdown (19/20: 624 premises).

In 2022/23, the Food and Safety Team:

1. Conducted 433 visits to food premises, including programmed inspections and advisory, sampling, and intelligence gathering visits.
2. 98% of food premises achieved a Food Hygiene Rating of 3, 4, or 5 (Satisfactory, Good, or Very Good).
3. Investigated 52 complaints about food or food premises and handled 125 cases of foodborne infectious diseases.
4. Took 25 food samples for laboratory analysis for bacterial standards.
5. Served 7 formal notices for hygiene improvements under the Food Safety Act.
6. Closed a restaurant following a significant food poisoning outbreak, with a pending prosecution for a hygiene offences.
7. Obtained £10,000 in imported food grant funding from the FSA and conducted checks on imported food, identifying non-compliance with labelling regulations and the presence of pesticides and banned substances.

The headlines for the Health and Safety (H&S) service are as follows:

1. The Council enforces H&S for approximately 1400 businesses in the Borough, covering offices, retail, hospitality, and leisure services.
2. The H&S service provided compliance advice, investigated complaints and accidents, conducted proactive visits, and took necessary enforcement action.
3. Resources were focused on high-risk activities with poor control measures, aligning with HSE requirements.
4. In 2022/23, the Health and Safety Team:
 - Conducted 313 interventions, including handling 24 complaints/enquiries and 36 workplace accident notifications.
 - Implemented a proactive gas safety enforcement initiative in catering premises, contacting 184 businesses, issuing 32 formal notices for unsafe appliances and unqualified engineers.
 - Collaborated with event organizers for 24 public events, ensuring effective risk management and chairing multi-agency Safety Advisory Group meetings for larger events.
5. Priority work in 2023/24 focuses on high-risk areas outlined in the HSE National Code, including electrical safety in hospitality settings, inflatable amusement device usage, and attractions involving animal contact.

Members discussed how the plan supported local businesses, and the process of improving businesses who had low FSA scores. Businesses that fell short were provided with guidelines on how to meet requirements and a timeline for doing so. Re-visits were carried out to ensure compliance and these visits would be an opportunity for businesses to request help with meeting requirements. Further visits to improve the Food Hygiene Rating were subject to a fee of £195.

Businesses were not obligated to display to consumers their Food Hygiene Rating and were not required to self-report violations of Food Safety regulations but some premises had contacted the Council for advice.

RESOLVED that the Food Safety and Health and Safety 2023/24 Service Plan be approved.

26/L Pavement Licence Report

Members received the Pavement Licensing Report, addressing the expiration of existing Pavement Licences in the Borough on September 30, 2023. The licensing system aimed to facilitate outdoor seating for hospitality venues on safe highways.

Plans were underway to permanently transfer Pavement Licences from Surrey County Council to Surrey Heath Borough Council following enactment of the Business and Planning Act.

Through the pandemic, the £100 fee for Pavement Licences was waived. It was proposed to reinstate the fee for new applications from October 1, 2023, to September 30, 2024.

Key points discussed included:

1. The consideration of waived fees for charities and CICs.
2. The cost of administering a Pavement Licence was estimated to be £500.
3. Encouraging a more vibrant culture in Surrey Heath through increased Pavement Licences could have increased footfall.
4. It was agreed that the £100 fee was acceptable for commercial businesses.
5. A further report would be brought to the Committee once the Levelling Up Bill was passed to agree the structure and duration of Licences.
6. Pavement Licences run from the 1st October to 30th September, and businesses would need to re-apply yearly.

RESOLVED that the Fee for applications for a Pavement Licence be reinstated under the provisions of the Business and Planning Act 2020 from 1 October 2023 with the exception of Community Interest Companies and Charitable Organisations.

27/L Licensing Act 2003 - Summary of Decisions

The Committee received details of the decisions taken under delegated powers in respect of licence applications where no representations had been received from the responsible authorities or any other persons.

Members discussed the number of Temporary Event Notices that could be applied for.

The Committee noted the summary.

28/L Licensing Committee Work Programme 2023/24

Members noted the work programme.

Chairman