

Licensing Committee

Annual Licensing Activity Report 2025



PLYMOUTH
CITY COUNCIL

Date of meeting: 02 February 2026

Licensing Activity Report (January 2025 to December 2025)

Lead Member: Councillor Sally Haydon (Cabinet Member for Community Safety, Libraries, Events, Cemeteries & Crematoria)

Lead Strategic Director: Professor Steve Maddern (Director of Public Health)

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Your Reference: GHO/LIC/LAR/2026

Key Decision: No

Confidentiality: Part I - Official

Purpose of Report

This report provides Members with oversight on how the Licensing Service has delivered its statutory responsibilities over the last calendar year and how enforcement activity has contributed to the achievement of the licensing objectives.

It summarises licensing activity, enforcement interventions, partnership working and policy development between 1st January 2025 and 31st December 2025, highlighting key outcomes, emerging trends and areas of risk. The report also outlines planned priorities for 2026 to support effective governance and future decision-making by the Licensing Committee.

Recommendations and Reasons

Members are asked to note the contents of this report, which demonstrates how licensing enforcement activity has been targeted to reduce crime and disorder, protect public safety, minimise nuisance, and safeguard children and vulnerable persons.

The report provides evidence of effective partnership working, proportionate enforcement, and continuous improvement in regulatory practice, enabling Members to assess service performance and identify priorities for the coming year.

Alternative options considered and rejected

None identified

Relevance to the Corporate Plan and/or the Plymouth Plan

This report aligns with the delivery of the Council's priorities, particularly in the following areas:

I. Working with the Police to Tackle Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour:

The activities of the Licensing Team contribute to the framework through which the Licensing Authority and the Police collaborate to promote and ensure the achievement of the licensing objectives, with a focus on reducing alcohol-related crime. The licensing objectives are as follows:

- Prevention of Crime and Disorder
- Promotion of Public Safety
- Prevention of Nuisance
- Protection of Children from Harm

2. Keeping Children, Adults, and Communities Safe:

The work of the Licensing Team supports the regulatory framework governing the sale of alcohol, the provision of certain entertainment, and late-night refreshment. This ensures that Plymouth remains a friendly and welcoming city, where individuals feel safe. It also plays a crucial role in protecting children, young people, and adults from harm.

Implications for the Medium-Term Financial Plan and Resource Implications:

Compliance with statutory duties as part of the licensing function is delivered within existing budgets. Licence fees and charges are reviewed annually with the Licensing Service and are set in line with national guidance. The council aims to recover all costs associated with criminal investigations and successfully defended appeals in the Magistrates' Court..

Financial Risks

None, as above

Legal Implications

(Provided by IW)

No legal implications identified

Carbon Footprint (Environmental) Implications:

None identified

Other Implications: e.g. Health and Safety, Risk Management, Child Poverty:

* When considering these proposals members have a responsibility to ensure they give due regard to the Council's duty to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination and promote good relations between people who share protected characteristics under the Equalities Act and those who do not.

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Appendices

*Add rows as required to box below

Ref.	Title of Appendix	Exemption Paragraph Number (if applicable) <i>If some/all of the information is confidential, you must indicate why it is not for publication by virtue of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by ticking the relevant box.</i>						
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
A	Enforcement Activity Report							
B	Equalities Impact Assessment (Not applicable)							
C	Climate Impact Assessment (Not applicable)							

Background papers:

*Add rows as required to box below

Please list all unpublished, background papers relevant to the decision in the table below. Background papers are unpublished works, relied on to a material extent in preparing the report, which disclose facts or matters on which the report or an important part of the work is based.

Title of any background paper(s)	Exemption Paragraph Number (if applicable)														
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Sign off:

Appendix A

Enforcement Activity Report

1.0 Introduction

1.1 This report has been prepared to provide Members of the Licensing Committee with a comprehensive overview of the activities undertaken by agencies responsible for regulating licensable activities. Particular focus is given to the management of the Evening and Night Time Economy (ENTE). The report also details the work carried out by the Licensing Team during the period from 1 January 2025 to 31 December 2025.

1.2 The Miscellaneous Team is a small but highly dedicated team. The structure can be seen in Figure 1 below:

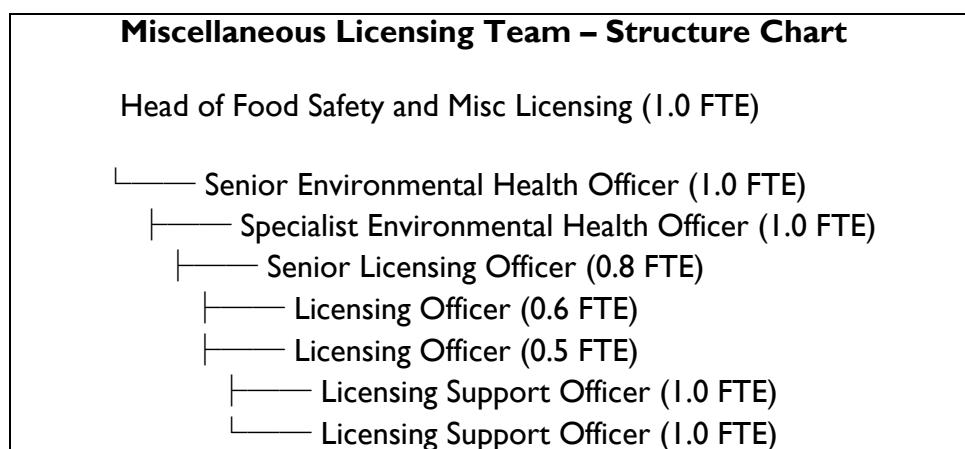


Figure 1:

1.3 Between 1 January 2025 and 31 December 2025, a total of 1,355 applications were received and processed.

1.4 Applications received cover the following areas:

- Alcohol and entertainment
- Gambling
- Sex Establishments
- Petroleum
- Explosives
- Animal welfare
- Charitable collections
- Scrap metal
- Caravan licensing
- Body and Beauty Art

2.0 Licensing Act 2003

2.1 Licensing Officers, supported by administrative staff, are responsible for delivering all aspects of the licensing function as prescribed by the Licensing Act 2003. This includes the receipt, validation, processing and determination of a wide range of applications, as well as providing advice to applicants, responsible authorities and other stakeholders.

Officers also ensure that statutory timescales are met, that consultation requirements are complied with, and that decisions are made in accordance with the Council's Statement of

Licensing Policy and relevant guidance. The number of applications processed by Officers during the 2025 calendar year and the four preceding years is set out in Table I below.

Licence Type	21/22	22/23	23/24	24/25	25/26
Applications, Transfers, Variations and Suspensions etc.	613 (+ 204 suspensions)	523 (+ 244 suspensions)	691 (+ 166 suspensions)	636 (+ 121 suspensions)	703 (+ 126 suspensions)
New Personal licences	145 + 111 Change of address apps	154 + 91 Change of address apps	79 + 99 Change of address apps	85 + 82 Change of address apps	95 + 95 Change of address apps
TEN's	217	398	444	355	345

Table I: Application Numbers by Years

2.2 Responsible authorities continue to make formal representations in relation to licensing applications. In many cases, applicants accept the advice provided, which supports effective mediation. Committee Members are kept informed of all applications resolved through mediation via an annual Committee report. During the reporting period, Environmental Health submitted representations on 10 applications, all of which required negotiation. Police representation figures are detailed separately within the Police Report.

2.3 Figure 2 below illustrates the number of premises inspections undertaken by the Licensing Team during the most recent calendar year and the previous three-year period, excluding complaint-led and enforcement visits. As shown, the number of inspections has more than doubled over the four-year period following the Covid-19 pandemic. This increase reflects the reinstatement of proactive inspection activity after the lifting of pandemic restrictions, alongside changes to staffing and working practices that have enabled Officers to deliver a higher volume of planned, risk-based inspections in support of the licensing objectives.

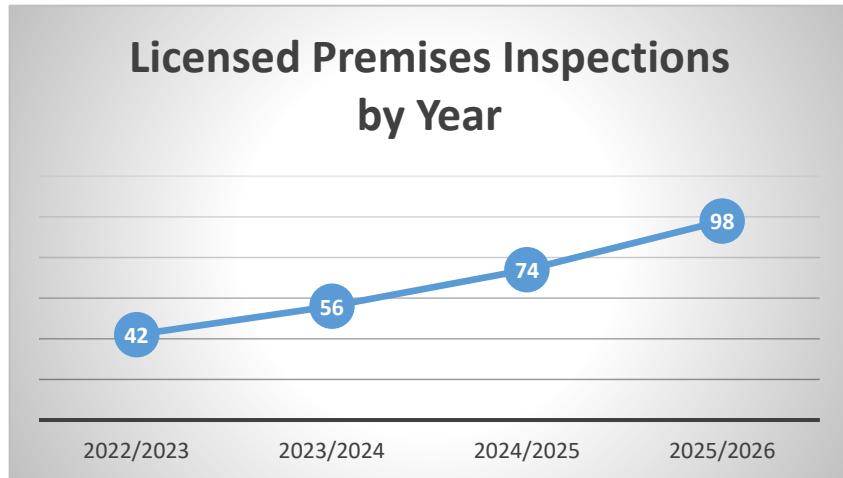


Figure 2: Premises inspections undertaken by PCC's Licensing Team

2.4 Table 3 below shows the number of applications, variations or reviews that went before Licensing Sub-Committee.

	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24	24/25	25/26
Apps or Variations	2	8	3	7	4	3
Premise Licence Review	3	0	1	1	3	1
Expedited Reviews	1	0	0	1	0	0

Table 3

3.0 Licensing Policy

3.0 The Licensing Act 2003 requires the Authority to prepare and publish a Statement of Licensing Policy every five years. The adopted policy provides the statutory framework for determining applications made under the Act and informs how the Authority discharges its functions in relation to the legislation. The policy also serves as guidance for all parties involved in the licensing process, including applicants, licence holders, responsible authorities, and members of the public who wish to make representations.

3.1 The current Statement of Licensing Policy was adopted by Full Council on 29 January 2024 following a period of public consultation. The policy took effect on 1 April 2024 and will remain in force until 31 March 2029. The policy can be accessed via the following link: [Licensing Policy](#)

4.0 Cumulative Impact Areas

The Cumulative Impact Assessment (CIA) is reviewed on a three-year cycle, with the most recent review completed in December 2024. While no immediate changes were made to the existing CIA areas at that time, the available evidence does not support the continued long-term designation of Stoke as a CIA area. Following consultation with the Police and other statutory stakeholders, it was therefore agreed that the Stoke CIA would be retained on a transitional basis and formally reviewed with a view to revocation at the next scheduled assessment, due by December 2027. Unless future evidence demonstrates a material change in circumstances, the intention is to remove the Stoke CIA.

5.0 Public Safety and Public Nuisance

5.1 The number of noise complaints relating to licensed premises increased from 92 in 2024 to 130 in 2025. This rise is primarily attributable to the change from financial-year to calendar-year reporting. A further contributory factor is a modest increase in complaints associated with a higher number of events held during the year, particularly at Central Park Event Space (20 complaints) and the Ruckfest event at Plymouth Albion (11 complaints).

5.2 Where noise complaints are received, Environmental Health Officers continue to follow an escalation process, engaging with the responsible individual at the earliest opportunity to allow for prompt resolution without the need for formal action. In most cases, the complaint is resolved through an action plan or minor variation, with the agreement of the licensee. Officers coordinate out-of-hours

visits as necessary to address any noise or public nuisance originating from licensed premises, ensuring prompt resolution.

4.4 Officers continue to work in partnership with licensed premises to develop and implement action plans designed to mitigate adverse impacts on residents. This remains a key area of focus four years on from the post-Covid-19 reopening period, particularly considering the increased use of outdoor areas, with many establishments having expanded these spaces and continuing to apply for pavement licences.

5.0 Protection of Children from harm

5.1 The Police, Trading Standards, and the Licensing Team continue to collaborate in efforts to reduce young people's access to alcohol, both from on-licences and off-licences, through neighbourhood interventions and providing guidance to retailers.

5.2 The Licensing Team and Police Licensing meet with Devon Trading Standards to coordinate test purchases, based on intelligence and complaints received.

5.3 Businesses are supported in minimising the potential for underage sales and are encouraged to adopt a Challenge 25 policy. All licensed premises in Plymouth are provided with free access to the regional underage sales web-based toolkit, "No Proof of Age No Sale (NPOANS)," for staff training, and all are regularly reminded of this valuable resource.

6.0 Prevention of Crime and Disorder

6.1 A review of the premises licence for Union Street Food and Wine was submitted on the grounds of the prevention of crime and disorder. The application was considered by the Licensing Sub-Committee on 13 November 2025, at which point the Sub-Committee resolved to revoke the premises licence. An appeal against this decision has since been lodged with Plymouth Magistrates' Court, and an initial hearing to consider the appeal has been listed for 12 March 2026.

Committee members are referred to the police report covering the 2025 calendar year, attached at Appendix B. The report has been compiled by the Police Alcohol Licensing Team and provides relevant information in relation to the crime and disorder licensing objective over the last two financial years. An officer from the team has been invited to attend the meeting to present the report and respond to any questions from the Committee.

7.0 Gambling Policy

8.1 Licensing Officers, supported by administrative staff, are responsible for overseeing gambling premises such as casinos, betting shops, adult gaming centres, and bingo halls, in line with the Gambling Act 2005. These premises are inspected annually to make sure they are operating in accordance with legal and licensing requirements.

8.2 The Gambling Act 2005 requires the Council to review its Statement of Gambling Policy every three years. The next review would normally set the policy for the period January 2025 to January 2028. However, in late 2023 the Gambling Commission and HM Government ran public consultations on proposed changes to gambling regulation. Some of these proposals could affect how local authorities carry out their licensing duties. At the time of writing, the Government has not yet confirmed the outcome of these consultations, and new statutory guidance has not been published.

8.3 As updated statutory guidance is not yet available, the Council carried out a review of the existing Statement of Gambling Policy. This confirmed that the current policy remains up to date and compliant with existing legislation and guidance. As a result, and with the agreement of the Gambling Commission and approval at the January Full Council meeting, it was agreed that the current policy will continue to apply from January 2025. The policy will be reviewed again once the Government publishes the new statutory guidance.

9.0 Sex Establishments

9.1 Currently, Plymouth City Council licenses one lap dancing club and one sex shop. During the forthcoming year the Licensing Team will review, consult and update the Council's Sex Establishments Licensing Policy which prescribes the Authorities controls on the legitimate operation of sex establishments and that such businesses that are a legitimate part of the retail and leisure industry.

10.0 Partnership Working

10.1 The Licensing Team is actively involved in several multi-agency groups that support the promotion of the licensing objectives. By working in partnership with various stakeholders, the team aims to achieve these objectives. These groups include:

10.2 Responsible Authorities Meetings

The responsible authorities convene regularly to discuss enforcement options and develop strategies for addressing 'problem premises.' Establishments operating within the Evening and Night-Time Economy (ENTE) continue to receive proactive guidance from enforcement agencies, including Licensing, Environmental Health, Fire Service, Trading Standards, and the Police, with the aim of fostering a responsible ENTE. Interventions involve both unannounced and scheduled visits to evaluate licensed premises' adherence to licensing conditions and other relevant workplace regulations. Officers from all enforcement agencies conduct joint inspections, where appropriate, to ensure a coordinated approach to enforcement is maintained. This collaborative effort demonstrates to licensees and designated premises supervisors that the agencies work together. Additionally, enforcement agencies carry out night-time inspections to assess the compliance of licensed premises with their regulatory obligations.

10.3 Multi-Agency Groups

The Licensing Team is an active member of Safer Plymouth, as well as the Evening and Night-Time Economy Group (ENTE), the Alcohol Harm Reduction Subgroup, the Predatory Males in the ENTE Group and the Destination Plymouth Group.

10.4 Plymouth Pubwatch

The Licensing Team and the Police continue to support the Plymouth Pubwatch scheme. Pubwatch schemes are local, independent groups composed of individuals working in licensed premises, with the primary objectives of tackling and preventing anti-social behaviour and criminal activity, promoting a safe drinking environment for customers, ensuring secure working conditions for staff, and enhancing communication and information-sharing among licensees. Plymouth's Pub watch scheme is highly active, organising various safety and awareness campaigns and supporting initiatives aimed at improving safety within licensed premises. Pubwatch meets monthly, with ongoing support from the Licensing Team, which provides updates and advice.

10.5 Purple Flag

The Licensing Team continues to actively support the Purple Flag accreditation, which recognises excellence in safety, partnership working, and diversity within the night-time economy. The award brings clear benefits to a range of Council services, partner organisations, and the wider community. In 2025, Plymouth successfully retained its Purple Flag status following an interim assessment, securing the award for the ninth consecutive year. Work has now commenced with partners and stakeholders to prepare for the full application and assessment due later this year.

As part of the assessment process, Plymouth was evaluated against a range of criteria that contribute to creating a safe and welcoming city for residents and visitors. These included the availability of emergency help points, the Safe Bus service, ongoing work to tackle Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG), and the night bus service that operated during the previous year. Purple Flag areas are recognised for offering a vibrant, diverse, and well-managed evening and night-time economy, with a strong focus on safety and wellbeing.

Plymouth's Purple Flag status is supported through close collaboration between a wide range of partners. These include the Council, Devon and Cornwall Police, licensed premises such as pubs, restaurants, and entertainment venues, as well as retail and transport operators. Additional support is provided by voluntary and operational services, including street pastors and taxi marshals, all of whom contribute to making Plymouth a safe, welcoming, and successful city at night.

10.6 Devon Licensing Officers Group (DLOG)

Plymouth Licensing Officers attend and actively participate in the Devon Licensing Officers Group (DLOG) and other regional licensing forums. These groups provide a valuable platform for information-sharing, peer support, and joint problem-solving on licensing matters of mutual interest. Engagement with DLOG supports a consistent and coordinated approach to licensing across Devon and Cornwall, helping to align local policies and practices, respond collectively to emerging issues, and promote best practice across the region.

10.7 Safety Advisory Groups

The Council collaborates with event organisers to maintain reasonable standards of public safety at events and to promote the wellbeing of the public, officials, event organisers, and performers. The Plymouth Sports Advisory Group (SAG) and the Plymouth Event Safety Advisory Group (PESAG) serve as platforms for organisers to share their event plans and receive feedback from relevant agencies. The Environmental Health and Licensing Team currently chairs the PESAG and is a core member of the SAG.

10.8 Institute of Licensing

The professional body for licensing matters has played a crucial role in providing access to case law, legislative updates, training, and facilitating information sharing. The Licensing Team is a member of the Institute of Licensing (IOL) and participates in regular training sessions and legislative updates, offering a local authority perspective on several key legislative changes.

10.9 Community Alcohol Partnership

The Licensing Authority supports the alcohol industry in demonstrating its commitment to promoting responsible drinking by ensuring that the sector does not encourage young people to consume alcohol. A Community Alcohol Partnership (CAP) is a Community Interest Company (CiC) that brings together and supports local partnerships, including councils, police, retailers, schools, health providers, and community groups, with the aim of reducing alcohol-related harm among young people, improving their health and wellbeing, and enhancing their communities. As a member of the Plymouth CAP, the Licensing Authority actively supports the vital work of preventing underage drinking and mitigating alcohol-related harm to young people.

Further information on C.A.P initiatives can be found at: [Community Alcohol Partnerships](#)

10.10 Miscellaneous Groups

The Licensing Team continues to engage in multi-agency collaboration on safeguarding initiatives, as well as projects addressing:

- Modern slavery
- Child sexual exploitation,
- Organised Crime
- Hate Crime
- Predatory Behaviour in the ENTE

11.0 **Work Initiatives for 2025-2026**

11.1 The work initiatives for 2025–2026 will support the promotion of the licensing objectives as set out in the Licensing Act 2003, as follows:

11.2 Prevention of Crime and Disorder

- Continued joint working between responsible authorities to share intelligence, agree enforcement strategies and target high-risk premises and activities within the ENTE.
- Delivery of risk-based inspection programmes across licensed premises, gambling premises and other licensed activities to identify and address non-compliance at an early stage.
- Delivery of alcohol and gambling test purchasing operations to deter underage sales and unlawful activity.
- Ongoing partnership work to detect, deter and disrupt modern slavery, child sexual exploitation, predatory behaviour and organised crime linked to licensed premises.
- Support for Best Bar None, Pubwatch and Purple Flag initiatives to promote high standards of management, crime prevention and good practice within the ENTE.

11.3 Public Safety

- Chairing and coordinating the Event Safety Advisory Group (ESAG) to ensure that events are appropriately planned, managed and delivered safely.
- Supporting licensed businesses and event organisers to meet public safety requirements, including through advice, inspections and multi-agency oversight.
- Working with partners and businesses to support the implementation of the Protect Duty (Martyn's Law), enhancing preparedness and proportionate security arrangements. (See 11.1 below).

- Undertaking inspections of caravan sites, mobile homes, petroleum storage, fireworks retailers and other licensed activities to ensure public safety standards are met.

11.4 Prevention of Public Nuisance

- Targeted enforcement and compliance activity at premises identified as contributing to noise, disorder or nuisance within the ENTE.
- Regular multi-agency meetings to review patterns of complaints, incidents and intelligence and to coordinate proportionate responses.
- Supporting Purple Flag accreditation and partnership initiatives that promote a well-managed city centre and reduce late-night nuisance impacts on residents.
- Ongoing monitoring of licensed premises through inspections and complaint investigation to address nuisance issues promptly.

11.5 Protection of Children from Harm

- Delivery of alcohol and gambling test purchasing operations to prevent underage sales and access.
- Enforcement activity and intelligence-led operations to identify and disrupt child sexual exploitation and other safeguarding risks associated with the ENTE.
- Continued engagement with the Community Alcohol Partnership and other safeguarding forums to promote responsible retailing and awareness.
- Review of relevant licensing policies, including sex establishment licensing and gambling policy considerations, to ensure appropriate safeguards for children and young people.

12.0 Potential Future Licensing Administration and Regulation Impacts

Several emerging and proposed national regulatory changes have the potential to place additional statutory and administrative responsibilities on the Licensing and Environmental Health functions. These developments may have implications for service capacity, resources, and future work planning, subject to the introduction of enabling legislation and statutory guidance.

12.1 Protect Duty 'Martyn's Law'

The Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Act 2025, also known as Martyn's Law, received Royal Assent on Thursday 3 April 2025. The legislation seeks to enhance national security and reduce the risk to the public from terrorism by improving the protection of publicly accessible premises and venues. Martyn's Law will require those responsible for qualifying premises to assess the risk of terrorism and implement appropriate and proportionate mitigation measures. The legislation is intended to ensure that organisations are better prepared, capable of responding effectively, and clear on the actions required in the event of a terrorist incident. Enhanced protection is anticipated to be achieved through measures such as improved security arrangements, staff training, and clearer governance and reporting processes. The Licensing Team will work collaboratively with partner agencies and engage with licensed premises and other affected businesses throughout the implementation of the Protect Duty, supporting awareness, compliance and effective delivery of the new requirements.

12.2 Licensing of Tobacco, Vaping and Nicotine Products

The Government has indicated its intention to introduce a national licensing scheme for the retail sale of tobacco products, herbal smoking products, cigarette papers, vapes, and other nicotine-related products. The scheme is expected to be implemented through regulations and to apply to both online and in-person retailers. Once introduced, the sale of these products without

the appropriate licence, or in breach of licence conditions, may constitute a criminal offence or be subject to civil financial penalties. The introduction of such a scheme would be likely to place additional licensing, compliance and enforcement responsibilities on local authorities. Further details regarding the scope of the scheme and local authority duties are awaited from the Government.

12.3 Hairdressers and Barbers

The hairdressing and barbering industry in the UK are currently largely unregulated. There are no general licensing requirements and no statutory obligation for practitioners to hold prescribed qualifications. Although the Hairdressers Registration Act 1964 provides for a register of qualified hairdressers, registration remains voluntary. Should statutory regulation or a mandatory licensing or registration scheme be introduced in the future, the administration and enforcement of such arrangements would be likely to fall within the remit of the Environmental Health and Licensing Team, given its established role in business regulation, public health protection and compliance monitoring. Any such change would have implications for workload and resourcing.

12.4 Regulation of Funeral Directors

The funeral director industry remains unregulated in the UK. However, following recent high-profile cases involving malpractice and the improper handling of human remains, the Government is considering the introduction of statutory regulation of the sector. Should a regulatory framework is introduced, it is anticipated that responsibility for administration, inspection and enforcement would be assigned to local authorities, most likely through Environmental Health and Licensing services. This would represent a significant new regulatory responsibility for the service.

12.5 Regulation of Non-Surgical Cosmetic Procedures in England

The Government has indicated its intention to introduce statutory regulation of non-surgical cosmetic procedures in England, including treatments such as botulinum toxin injections, dermal fillers and other aesthetic procedures. The sector is currently subject to limited regulation, despite the potential risks to public health and safety. Proposals under consideration include licensing or registration requirements for practitioners and premises, minimum training and competency standards, and enhanced enforcement powers for local authorities. Should such a regulatory framework be introduced, it is anticipated that responsibility for licensing, compliance, inspection and enforcement would fall to Environmental Health and Licensing services. The introduction of regulation in this area would represent a significant new work stream for the service, with implications for staff capacity, training requirements and inter-agency working.

12.6 Monitoring of Legislative and Policy Developments

The Licensing Team will continue to monitor legislative and policy developments in these areas and will provide further updates to Committee Members as Government proposals are clarified and implementation arrangements are confirmed.

13.0 Conclusion

13.1 This report provides Committee Members with an overview of the range of initiatives, regulatory activity, and enforcement operations undertaken by the Licensing Team and the Police Alcohol Licensing Team in relation to the evening and night-time economy during 2025. The information

presented is intended to support Members in understanding current activity and to inform future decision-making.

13.2 The report also outlines planned work for the forthcoming year and highlights how partner agencies will continue to work together to ensure that available resources are used effectively and targeted where they will have the greatest impact.

Appendix B

Police Report calendar year 2025