

Cheltenham Borough Council

Pavement Licensing Policy

***2026

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1. Introduction

The Business and Planning Act 2020 ('the Act') introduced provisions designed to make it easier for premises serving food and drink such as bars, restaurants and pubs to seat and serve customers outdoors, maximising their ability to trade, assisting them to operate safely and promoting economic recovery in response to the impact of the global COVID-19 pandemic.

The Act created a regime for processing applications for 'pavement licences' to authorise businesses such as cafes, restaurants and bars to place furniture on the highway. This is a fast-track procedure to get the same permissions a business would previously have had from a Part 7A Highways Act permit, street trading consent and planning permission (change of use).

The Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 made the provisions of the Business and Planning Act permanent with effect from 31 March 2024.

This guidance will be kept under review and may be amended periodically as required. The government has also published their own [guidance on pavement licences](#).

The council must also have regard to its wider duties, including those under the Public Sector Equality Duty, Equality Act 2010, Human Rights Act 1998, Environmental Protection Act 1990, and the Crime and Disorder Act 1998.

Any businesses which apply for a pavement licence will also need to have regard to their own duties under the Equality Act 2010, such as their duty under section 29 of the Act not to discriminate in providing their service and the duty to make reasonable adjustments.

For the purposes of furniture covered by this regime, the Highways Act 1980 cannot be used as an alternative.

For those businesses which have an issued tables and chairs consent issued under the Highways Act 1980, they will be required to apply for a pavement licence under the Business and Planning Act before expiry. They will be permitted to pay the renewal fee as long as the application is made prior to expiration of their current licence.

2. Scope

2.1 Definition of pavement licence

A pavement licence is a licence granted by the local authority, or deemed to have been granted, which allows the licence-holder to place removable furniture over certain highways adjacent to the premises in relation to which the application was made, for certain purposes.

2.2 Eligible Businesses

A business which uses (or proposes to use) premises for the sale of food or drink for consumption (on or off the premises) can apply for a licence. Businesses that are eligible include: public houses, cafes, bars, restaurants, snack bars, coffee shops, and ice cream parlours.

A licence permits the business to use furniture placed on the highway to sell or serve food or drink and/or allow it to be used by people for the consumption of food or drink supplied from, or in connection with the use of the premises.

For any businesses that fall out of this scope and would like to display tables and chairs on the highway will need to apply for consent under the Highways Act 1980 (objects on the highway).

2.3 Eligible Locations

The Council is responsible for controlling certain objects/structures that are placed on a public highway.

At common law, a highway is defined to mean all roads, bridges, carriageways, cartways, horseways, bridleways, footways, causeways, churchways, and pavements *over which there exists a public right of passage, that is to say a right for all His Majesty's subjects at all seasons of the year freely and at their will to pass and repass without let or hindrance.*

Where such uncertainty exist, the test is whether there is a public right of passage where, at any time, members of the public can freely and at their will to pass and repass without let or hindrance, whether they do so or not is immaterial.

Therefore, if the proposed location is an area where any member of the public can pass over without hindrance, that area is likely to be considered highway and will for that reason fall within the Council's authority.

In light of the above and for the purpose of licensing objects/structures on the highway under the Highways Act, it is also immaterial whether the particular location is designated as private on, for example, a lease, whether the particular highway is privately maintained or situated under an overhang etc.

The only exception would be areas where that particular location has been designated as private under the Highways Act and the appropriate signage is on display.

A highway can be maintained either at the expense of the taxpayer or privately.

Each situation will be determined on individual merits, and this policy does not seek to provide an exhaustive list of areas and roads that are privately maintained public highway or private. However, it may be helpful to applicants to be aware of any such areas in the town centre for the purpose of clarity;

1. The Brewery Complex – Designated as private under the Highways Act
2. Montpellier Walk - Privately Maintained Public Highway
3. Rotunda Terrace - Privately Maintained Public Highway
4. The Courtyard - Privately Maintained Public Highway

A licence is not required for furniture sited on private land but would be required for any land that is a privately maintained public highway.

The licensed area is normally expected to be an area directly in front of and visible from the premises. The area should not extend beyond the width of its frontage unless there are exceptional circumstances.

2.4 Type of furniture permitted

The furniture which may be used is:

- counters or stalls for selling or serving food or drink;
- tables, counters or shelves on which food or drink can be placed;
- chairs, benches or other forms of seating; and
- umbrellas, barriers, heaters and
- other articles used in connection with the outdoor consumption of food or drink.

This furniture is required to be removable, which in principle means it is not a permanent fixed structure, and is able to be moved easily, and stored away when not in use. Furniture should also be of a type that is not likely to cause damage to the highway surface. Furniture should be non-reflective and of reasonable substance such that it cannot easily be pushed or blown over by the wind and thereby cause obstruction or a safety hazard.

The council would also expect the type of furniture to be 'in keeping' with the local area and compliant with the [design guide](#).

'A' boards are not a permitted type of furniture under the pavement licence and would need to be licensed under a permission to place an object on the highway.

2.5 Planning Permission

If a pavement licence is granted, or deemed to be granted, the applicant will also benefit from deemed planning permission to use the land for anything done pursuant to the licence while the licence is valid and remains in force.

3. Application and Determination of Pavement Licences

3.1 How to make an Application

An application for a pavement licence (either grant or renewal) must be made electronically (either by email or through the online applications portal) on the council's application form and accompanied by the following:

- Public liability insurance to a minimum value of £5 million
- Site plan to a suitable scale or with clear measurements showing:
 - property boundary and proposed boundary of area to be covered by the pavement licence (with a red line to indicate the area to be licensed)
 - building and kerb lines showing measurements of the clear space between the licensed area and any obstacles or the edge of the pavement/road
 - furniture layout
 - location and type of barriers to separate the licensed areas from the rest of the highway
 - position of any lighting columns, litter bins, road signs or other existing street furniture
 - scale of at least 1:100 (scale must be specified)

There is no provision to vary a licence and therefore any changes will require a new application.

An application will not be considered complete until the application form, all required documents (including satisfactory plan) and the application fee have all been received. The consultation period will commence the day after a complete application has been made.

Any invalid applications will be refused.

3.2 Fees

The fee for applying for a licence is £500. This charge covers administration and compliance costs. This is not refundable in the event that an application is deemed invalid, rejected, or a licence subsequently surrendered, suspended or revoked.

The fee for the renewal of a licence is £350. A renewal application is defined as one made before expiry of the previous licence by the same holder, for the same premises and on the same terms.

3.3 Consultation

The consultation period is 14 days (excluding public holidays), starting with the day after the day on which a valid application was made to the council.

The council will aim to publish details of the application on its website.

The Council is required by law to consult with the Highway Authority. In addition, the Council will consult with:

- Cheltenham Borough Council Environmental Protection team
- Cheltenham Borough Council Food, Health and Safety team
- Cheltenham Borough Council Green Space Development team
- Cheltenham Borough Council Parks team
- Cheltenham Borough Council Marketing team
- Cheltenham Borough Council Planning Enforcement team
- Cheltenham Borough Council Townscape team
- Cheltenham Borough Council Ward Councillors (the individuals that are elected for the area where the application is made)
- Gloucestershire Police
- Cheltenham BID
- Cheltenham Trust
- Ubico
- Inclusion Gloucestershire

This list may be subject to change, and the Council reserves the right to consult with any parties that it feels may be impacted upon by the proposal.

Members of the public and others listed above can contact the Council to make representations.

The Council must take into account representations received during the public consultation period and consider these when determining the application.

The Council has a further 14 days (excluding public holidays) once the consultation has ended to determine the application.

If the Council fails to determine the application within 28 days (excluding public holidays), the licence is deemed granted.

3.4 Site Notice

The applicant has to post a notice of the application the premises to which it relates, on the same day that they submit the application. The notice must be easily visible and legible to the public and the applicant must ensure the notice remains in place for the whole of the public consultation period as detailed above.

Applicants should record and retain evidence that they have complied with all requirements, including posting the notice at their premises. It is recommended that you take a photo of the notice on a mobile phone each day during the consultation period so that you can prove the notice was there for the required period.

A template Site Notice is shown as Appendix 1.

3.5 Site Assessment

The following matters will be used by the Council and consultees in considering the suitability of the proposal:

- public health and safety – for example, ensuring that uses conform with latest guidance on social distancing and any reasonable crowd management measures needed as a result of a licence being granted and businesses reopening;
- public amenity – will the proposed use create nuisance to neighbouring occupiers by generating anti-social behaviour and litter and
- accessibility – taking a proportionate approach to considering the nature of the site in relation to which the application for a licence is made, its surroundings and its users, taking account of:
 - any other temporary measures in place that may be relevant to the proposal, for example, the reallocation of road space. This could include pedestrianised streets and any subsequent reallocation of this space to vehicles;
 - whether there are other permanent street furniture or structures in place on the footway that already reduce access;
 - the impact on any neighbouring premises;
 - the recommended minimum footway widths and distances required for access by mobility impaired and visually impaired people as set out in Section 3.1 of [Inclusive Mobility](#), and
 - other users of the space, for example, if there are high levels of pedestrian or cycle movements.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to talk to neighbouring businesses and occupiers prior to applying to the Council, and so take any issues around noise, and nuisance into consideration as part of the proposal. Discussions with neighbours should consider any plans neighbouring businesses have also to place tables and chairs on the highway and plans for customers to queue outside.

3.6 Determination

At the end of the consultation period, the council has 14 days (excluding public holidays) to determine the application.

- If the council determines the application before the end of the determination period the council can:
- grant the licence in respect of any or all of the purposes specified in the application,
- grant the licence for some or all of the part of the highway specified in the application, and impose conditions, or
- reject the application.

If the council does not determine the application within the determination period, the application will be deemed to have been granted subject to any local conditions published by the council at the time the application is submitted.

The following are authorised to grant, refuse or revoke a licence:

Decision	Delegated to
Grant of an application where no objections have been received during the consultation period and application complies with adopted policy	All Officers within the Licensing Team
Grant or refusal of an application where objections have been received during the consultation period	Service Manager or Head of Service
Revocation of a licence	Licensing Committee

3.7 Approval of Applications

If the council chooses to approve the application, a pavement licence will be issued to which conditions will be attached. The licence will also contain specific details such as days and hours when furniture is permitted for use, and a copy of the plan to confirm the authorised positions for furniture.

Licences will be granted for two years unless there are good reasons for granting a licence for a shorter period, such as plans for future changes to the highway in that area.

If the council does not decide the application within the determination period, the licence which was applied for is deemed to be granted for two years with the standard conditions.

The council will generally only grant pavement licences to operate between 08:00 and 22:00.

Applicants wishing to operate outside these hours may wish to include additional information as to how they will prevent nuisance affecting nearby residents. The council also retains the right to specify permitted hours on the licence that are reduced from those specified above in appropriate circumstances.

Licences are not transferable, so a new application would be required to issue a licence to a new licence holder.

3.8 Refusal of Applications

If the site is deemed unsuitable for a Pavement Café, or if relevant representations are made which cannot be mitigated by conditions, then the application may be refused.

There is no statutory appeal process against a decision to refuse an application.

A business may apply again after refusal but will have to make a new application with an additional fee and address the concerns raised in the original application.

3.9 Variations

There is no provision in the legislation to apply for a variation of a pavement licence. Should the licence holder wish to vary the licence, they would need to submit a new application.

4. Conditions

The Council's standard conditions can be found at Appendix 2. In some cases, extra measures may be required. This will be determined when assessing any application, on a case-by-case basis, and the Council will confirm the reasons why any additional conditions have been imposed.

The Act contains two national conditions that all granted and deemed granted licences must adhere to if the Council fails to publish their own conditions, or the published conditions fail to make provision for observing the national conditions. The two conditions are:

- a no-obstruction condition
- a smoke free seating condition

The Council's published conditions make provision for these conditions, but for the sake of transparency, the national conditions are detailed in Appendix 3 to this document.

The Act also allows for the Secretary of State to produce, via Regulations, conditions for pavement licences, and to stipulate whether these conditions have effect as well as, or instead of, the conditions placed on a licence by the Council. If such conditions are created, this guidance will be amended to reflect them, and all licence holders will be notified of any changes this may create.

Where a Council sets a local condition that covers the same matter as set out in national conditions, then the locally set condition takes precedence over the national condition where there is reasonable justification to do so.

5. Enforcement

The highway authority retains the power under s.149 of the Highways Act 1980 to remove items on the highway which are a nuisance – whether they are licensed or not. This power is exercisable immediately in cases where the furniture causes a danger.

Where a business sites furniture for use by customers to consume food or drink without a licence, a notice may be served under 7A of the Act requiring the business to remove the furniture before a specified date, and to refrain from putting furniture on the highway without a licence. If furniture continues to be sited without permission, the council can remove the furniture and store it. The business will be liable for any costs associated with removal and storage, and the furniture will not be removed until such costs are paid in full. After 3 months of serving of the notice, the furniture can be disposed of as the council sees fit, which may include sale of the furniture with the proceeds applied towards the costs of storage.

Obtaining a licence does not confer the holder immunity in regard to other legislation that may apply, such as health and safety legislation, nuisance, food hygiene requirements and premises licence conditions under the Licensing Act 2003.

All enforcement activity by the council will be undertaken in line with our Enforcement Policy. Periodic inspections of premises with pavement licences will be made by the council to ensure compliance with the licence and conditions.

If there is a breach of a licence condition, the council may either revoke the licence, or serve a notice on the licence holder requiring them to take steps to remedy the breach within a specified time. If the licence holder fails to comply with a notice, the council may revoke the notice or take the steps itself and recover the costs of doing so from the licence holder.

The council may also revoke a licence where:

- (a) all or any part of the area of the relevant highway to which the licence relates has become unsuitable for any purpose for which the licence was granted or deemed to be granted - for example, the licensed area (or road adjacent) is no longer to be pedestrianised.
- (b) there are risks to health or safety – for example by placing tables and chairs too close together
- (c) the use of the highway is causing an unacceptable obstruction – for example the furniture preventing a wheelchair user from passing along the highway
- (d) there is anti-social behaviour or public nuisance
- (e) it comes to light that the applicant provided false or misleading statements in their application, or
- (f) the applicant did not comply with the requirement to affix the notice to notify the public for the relevant period.

Where a licence is revoked, full notice with reasons will be given.

In addition, licences can be amended (with the agreement of the licence holder) to remedy any concerns in respect of items (a) to (d) above.

The usual procedure for a breach of conditions will be a warning to comply and that further contravention will result in revocation of the licence. The licensee will be allowed reasonable time to comply. If the contravention continues or is repeated within the licence period, the

licence is likely to be revoked. If any breaches of conditions are serious enough in nature, the licence may be revoked without the warning letter stage.

6. Review Procedures

This Policy will be reviewed at least every 5 years or when changes occur in relevant legislation, the nature of Pavement Cafés change generally or as a result of local considerations within the Cheltenham Borough.

BUSINESS AND PLANNING ACT 2020

NOTICE OF APPLICATION FOR GRANT OF A PAVEMENT LICENCE

I / We(1)

Do hereby give notice that on (2)

I / we have applied to Cheltenham Borough Council for a pavement licence
at:

.....

..... (3)

Known as..... (4)

The application is for:

.....

..... (5)

To be used during the following periods (6):

	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
Start	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
Finish	:	:	:	:	:	:	:

Any person wishing to make representations to this application must send
these to the Licensing Team at Cheltenham Borough Council at
licensing@cheltenham.gov.uk by:

..... (7)

Details of the application can be viewed at www.cheltenham.gov.uk

Date (8)

Guidance notes on completing this notice of application

Complete the notice by putting the following information in the numbered spaces:

- (1) Name of the applicant
- (2) Date the application is made (submitted)
- (3) Postal address of the premises
- (4) Name the premises is known by
- (5) Brief description of application (e.g outdoor seating to the front of the premises for serving of food and drink).
- (6) Using 24 hour clock, enter proposed start and end times for the use of the furniture (use N/A for any days when furniture will not be used – please do not leave any of this section blank)
- (7) Last date for representations being the date 14 days after the date the application is submitted to the local authority (excluding public holidays)
- (8) The date the notice was placed (must be the same date as (2) above)

On the same day that the application is made, a completed copy of this notice must be fixed to the premises so that it is readily visible to, and can be read easily by, members of the public who are not on the premises. It should be secured so that the notice remains in place until the end of the 14 day public consultation period.

Failure to comply with this requirement may lead to the revocation of any licence granted or deemed granted.

Standard Pavement Licence Conditions

Please note that these conditions are not an exhaustive list. Each application will be considered on its own merits and individual, specific conditions may be attached where deemed appropriate.

Where a licence is deemed granted, the applicant is deemed to be a 'licence holder' and is required to comply with all of the below conditions. In such circumstances, references to 'licensed area' should be understood to mean the area proposed for licensing within the application.

1. The licence holder must ensure that no activity undertaken by them by the placing of furniture on the highway will:
 - (a) prevent traffic, other than vehicular traffic, from:
 - (i) entering the relevant highway at a place where such traffic could otherwise enter it (ignoring any pedestrian planning order or traffic order made in relation to the highway),
 - (ii) passing along the relevant highway, or
 - (iii) having normal access to premises adjoining the relevant highway,
 - (b) prevent any use of vehicles which is permitted by a pedestrian planning order or which is not prohibited by a traffic order,
 - (c) prevent statutory undertakers having access to any apparatus of theirs under, in, on or over the highway, or
 - (d) prevent the operator of an electronic communications code network having access to any electronic communications apparatus kept installed for the purposes of that network under, in, on or over the highway.
2. The licence holder must ensure clear routes of access are maintained, taking into account the needs of disabled people, and the recommended minimum footway widths and distances required for access by mobility impaired and visually impaired people as set out in the Department for Transport's [Inclusive Mobility](#) document.
3. Where the furniture to be put on the relevant highway consists of seating for use by persons for the purpose of consuming food or drink, the licence holder must make reasonable provision for seating where smoking (including vaping) is not permitted.
4. Furniture placed on the highway must be in accordance with the details and plans provided at the time of the application. No changes are permitted without prior approval from the council. This includes displaying all barriers to ensure that the pavement licence layout is compliant at all times.
5. The licence may be suspended where necessary to allow highway maintenance, any other necessary remedial work and special events to take place. In addition, the licence holder must comply with any request to remove the furniture due to an emergency

situation. A reasonable period of notice will be given to the licence holder where possible. The Highway Authority and/or council will not be liable for any loss of earnings arising out of the suspension of a licence.

6. Where a market is taking place, the pavement licence furniture must be removed except where an agreement has been reached by both operators and there is sufficient accessibility of at least 1.5 metres between objects.
7. Furniture must not be set out on the highway any earlier than half an hour before trading start, and the area must be closed and all furniture removed from the highway half an hour after the licence timings end. When not in use, all furniture must be stored securely inside a premises away from the highway.
8. If the furniture is (a) not removed outside the permitted hours or (b) located in breach of the licence, conditions or other regulatory requirements, the Highway Authority may remove and store or dispose furniture, at the cost of the licence holder and with no responsibility for safekeeping.
9. A clear route of access shall fall equally either side of the centre line of the highway to ensure the space available for tables and chairs is shared equally between premises on each side of the street. A clear pathway of at least 1 metre wide shall also be maintained to allow entry and exit from the premises.
10. Furniture must not protrude beyond the designated boundary of the licensed area or interfere with required vision lines for traffic and pedestrians.
11. The licensed area should be separated from the rest of the highway (for example, with a barrier or planters) to guide persons with a visual impairment around the area.
12. The licence holder shall ensure that the footway is not obstructed by patrons waiting to be seated, or by any other items of furniture or personal possessions of patrons.
13. The placement of furniture must not obstruct any emergency exits from the premises or any adjacent buildings, and emergency service vehicles must have access along all streets at all times, even in pedestrianised streets.
14. Any furniture shall be kept in a clean, safe and well-maintained condition. Any canopies or umbrellas must be adequately secured.
15. The licensed area must be kept clean and tidy at all times. This will include washing down the area and removing any refuse and litter on the highway in the immediate vicinity of the furniture.
16. No forms of musical entertainment (i.e. live music, recorded music and background music) are permitted in the area.
17. The licence holder must ensure that the licensed area is monitored regularly by staff to ensure compliance with the licence conditions and to ensure that the area operates in a safe and orderly manner to reduce the risk of nuisance.

18. The licence holder shall not allow their customers to cause any form of nuisance or annoyance to: (a) any other users of the highway (b) any neighbouring residents, or (c) any neighbouring businesses.
19. During hours of use, the licence holder or a nominated representative shall be available to receive and respond to nuisance-related complaints. A contact number shall be readily available to neighbouring residents and businesses upon request.
20. During the hours of darkness, suitable and sufficient lighting must be provided to ensure safe use of the area. Any proposals to provide additional lighting to the licensed area must be approved in writing by the Highway Authority.
21. The licence holder shall ensure that disabled persons and wheelchair users can be adequately served.
22. The licence holder is not permitted to make any fixtures or excavations of any kind to the surface of the highway without prior written approval from the Highway Authority. Any costs incurred as a result of damage to the highway or council property, due to the use of the area under this licence, will be recovered in full from the licence holder by the Highway Authority.
23. The front page of the licence and the approved plan must be prominently displayed on the premises so that it may be easily viewed.
24. The licence holder shall maintain a policy of public liability insurance indemnifying the council and Highway Authority against any injury or damage to any person or property and against any claim, liability, expense or damage arising by reason or in consequence of the use of the area under this licence. The policy shall provide cover of not less than £5 million in respect of any one incident.
25. At the end of the licence period or on revocation of the licence the licence holder must remove any tables, chairs and other furniture immediately and reinstate the highway to its former state and condition. If they fail to do so, the Highway Authority will be empowered to carry out such work of reinstatement and recover the costs of such work from the licence holder.
26. These conditions may be varied where necessary and the new conditions will come into effect upon written notification by the council.

National Conditions

[All section references are to the Business and Planning Act 2020]

No-obstruction condition

Section 5(5)

A “no-obstruction condition” is a condition that anything done by the licence holder pursuant to the licence, or any activity of other persons which is enabled by the licence, must not have an effect specified in section 3(6):

Section 3(6)

The effects referred to in subsection (5) are-

- a) preventing traffic, other than vehicular traffic, from—
 - i. entering the relevant highway at a place where such traffic could otherwise enter it (ignoring any pedestrian planning order or traffic order made in relation to the highway),
 - ii. passing along the relevant highway, or
 - iii. having normal access to premises adjoining the relevant highway,
- b) preventing any use of vehicles which is permitted by a pedestrian planning order or which is not prohibited by a traffic order,
- c) preventing statutory undertakers having access to any apparatus of theirs under, in, on or over the highway, or
- d) preventing the operator of an electronic communications code network having access to any electronic communications apparatus kept installed for the purposes of that network under, in, on or over the highway.

Smoke-free seating condition:

Section 5(6)

A “smoke-free seating condition” is a condition that, where the furniture to be put on the relevant highway consists of seating for use by persons for the purpose of consuming food or drink, the licence-holder must make reasonable provision for seating where smoking is not permitted.