Hospitality Sector Council
4 November 2025 Meeting Minutes

1. Attendees

Co-Chairs:
Kate Dearden, Minister for Employment Rights and Consumer Protection

Karen Jones DBE, Pioneer Hospitality

Attendees:
Andy Slee (Society of Independent Brewers and Associates (SIBA)), Brian Perkins (ABInBev), Emma Heal (Lucky Saint), Emma McClarkin (British Beer and Pub Association (BBPA)), Jane Holbrook (Côte), Jane O'Riordan (Caravan, Flight Club, Turtle Bay), Kate Nicholls (UK Hospitality), Nick MacKenzie (Greene King), Rhys Mckinnell (Culture Quarter), Rob Pitcher (Revolution), Sarah Warby (Nando's), Steve Alton (British Institute of Innkeeping (BII)), Tim Doubleday (Burger King)

Officials in attendance:
Officials from Department for Business and Trade (DBT)

Apologies:
Andy Hornby (Restaurant Group), Joe Carberry (Deliveroo), Nisha Katona (Mowgli), Rich McGinnis (Circus), Shamil Thakrar (Dishoom), Simon Emeny (Fullers)

2. Summary of actions

Action	Owner
Complete the Innovation Working Group's hospitality tech stack survey	Members
Share local authority contacts with Sarah Warby	Members and DBT

3. Note of discussion

a) Welcome and introductory remarks

Karen Jones welcomed attendees and welcomed Minister Dearden to her new role.

Minister Dearden expressed enthusiasm for working with the council, highlighting personal connections to the sector and its importance for social mobility and local economies.

Minister Dearden also expressed commitment to amplifying the sector's voice across government and noted details referenced by the Chancellor on upcoming business rates reform set to be announced in the budget. She emphasised government's recognition of the sector's importance to driving growth and its readiness to work with the sector to address challenges.

b) State of the sector: opportunities and obstacles

Karen Jones led a discussion on the sector's current challenges and opportunities. She highlighted hospitality as vital for economic growth, social cohesion, and regeneration, with the sector showing strong entrepreneurial credentials and global appeal. Karen also noted challenges facing the sector, including employment costs, unresolved rent issues post-COVID, and reliance on price increases for growth.

Karen identified some key priorities for the sector: alleviating tax burdens, ensuring flexibility of the growth and skills levy and in forthcoming employment rights, and improved access to finance.

Members highlighted examples of how the sector provides opportunities for people of all backgrounds, such as supporting social mobility through training programmes for prison leavers and supported internships. They also discussed the positive impact hospitality businesses can have on local communities.

Members discussed the challenges facing small hospitality businesses, which are facing profit pressures, rising labour costs, and burnout among teams, while placing expansion plans on hold.

c) Working Group updates

The working group chairs were invited to update the council on their progress.

Innovation

Jane O'Riordan spoke of the workstreams taken forward following the Innovation Workshop held last year, including addressing the lack of knowledge awareness and technology advice for small and medium-sized enterprises within the sector and the barriers around utilising technology solutions currently available. A planned Hospitality Innovation Lab will work to solve some of the barriers to innovation adoption.

Sustainability

Tim Doubleday provided an update from the Biodiversity Group, which created a best practice toolkit featuring several case studies, to be used as a practical guide for businesses. Other areas of work include discussions on packaging reforms with Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, upcoming food waste initiatives, and energy efficiency projects under the Zero Carbon Forum.

Jobs and skills

Kate Nicholls updated the council on the work the group has been doing with the Department for Work and Pensions, which has seen success with the Hospitality Sector-Based Work Academy Programmes. The group has also been working on further developing and testing the Hospitality Skills Passport.

High streets
Sarah Warby spoke of the High Streets working group's interest in creating practical toolkits and engaging mayoral authorities for regeneration, seeking introductions to councils with appetite for collaboration.

d) Closing remarks and AOB
Minister Dearden and Karen Jones thanked attendees for their contributions and reaffirmed the council's commitment to collaborative working and constructive dialogue with government.

Date of next meeting
The next quarterly council meeting is due to be scheduled for February 2026.