

Hospitality Sector Council 23 June 2026 Meeting Minutes

1. Attendees

Co-Chairs:

Kate Dearden, Minister for Employment Rights and Consumer Protection

Jane O’Riordan, Co-Chair, Hospitality Sector Council

Attendees:

Nesil Caliskan, Minister for Devolution, Faith and Communities

Andy Slee (Society of Independent Brewers and Associates (SIBA)), Emma Heal (Lucky Saint), Emma McClarkin (British Beer and Pub Association (BBPA)), Jonathan Davies (Levy), Dame Karen Jones (Hawksmoor), Kate Nicholls (UK Hospitality), Nick MacKenzie (Greene King), Peter Marks (NEOS Hospitality), Rhys Mckinnell (Culture Quarter), Rob Pitcher (Revolution), Sarah Warby (Nando’s), Steve Alton (British Institute of Innkeeping (BII)), Tim Doubleday (Burger King), Thomas Heier (Jobs & Skills Committee), Tom James (Bill’s)

Officials in attendance:

Officials from Department for Business and Trade (DBT)

Apologies:

Jane Holbrook (Côte), Shamil Thakrar (Dishoom), Simon Emeny (Fullers)

2. Summary of actions

Action	Owner
Organise a follow-up working session on growth levers.	Jane O’Riordan/DBT
Circulate working group updates to members following the meeting.	Working group chairs/DBT
Consider a members’ meeting ahead of the next HSC meeting.	Jane O’Riordan/DBT

3. Note of discussion

a) Welcome from Co-Chairs

Minister Dearden welcomed attendees, thanking Minister Caliskan for joining to discuss the upcoming High Streets Strategy. Minister Dearden assured members that the government recognises the importance of the sector. She also thanked members for their contributions to the Growth Levers report, welcoming the upcoming discussion.

Jane O’Riordan welcomed new members, Peter Marks and Jon Davies, and thanked Karen Jones for her work as Co-Chair of the council. Jane confirmed that actions from February’s meeting had been completed.

b) High Streets discussion

Minister Caliskan reaffirmed government’s commitment to the hospitality sector. She emphasised the importance of the sector for thriving towns and high streets and welcomed views from members on the High Streets Strategy.

Members were keen to support and continue engagement and highlighted some of the ongoing work to capture views from both the retail and hospitality sectors. They highlighted how hospitality has traditionally played a key role in high streets, driving investment and providing job opportunities.

Members shared their views on how the high streets strategy can help hospitality and high streets grow, including issues related to access to finance, planning and licensing barriers.

c) Growth Levers Report

Jane O’Riordan introduced the Growth Levers work, explaining that the report sought to prioritise recommendations for Government according to impact and feasibility. She noted that further modelling and validation were underway and proposed an additional working session to refine the recommendations.

Minister Dearden thanked members for their work on the report, welcoming the evidence base and further conversations. She recognised hospitality could provide a solution to wider economic and social challenges, including social mobility, youth employment and place-based growth.

d) Milburn Review

Jane O’Riordan invited members to give their thoughts on the Milburn Interim Report, bringing attention to some of the reports key findings.

Members noted the decline in entry-level opportunities, including traditional Saturday jobs, and emphasised the importance of flexible work for young people, students and those entering employment. It was noted that employers remained willing to hire and support more young people but were constrained by increasing financial pressures, especially the rising employment costs of hiring young people.

They also noted that labour shortages were increasing reliance on existing staff, with implications for resilience and retention. Members also raised challenges for employers, particularly SMEs, in managing mental health, disability and sickness absence. Members called for stronger alignment across DBT, DWP and DfE.

e) Closing remarks and AOB

Jane O’Riordan confirmed the next steps: a follow-up working session on growth levers; circulation of working group updates; and consideration of a potential members’ meeting ahead of the next scheduled HSC meeting.

Minister Dearden thanked members for the discussion and committed to continued cross-Whitehall coordination to align labour market, skills and high street strategies.

Date of next meeting

The next quarterly council meeting is due to be scheduled for 19th October 2026.