

Licensing Committee Minutes

Thursday 29 June 2017

PRESENT

Committee members: Councillors Colin Aherne, Daryl Brown (Vice-Chair), Iain Cassidy, Vivienne Lukey, Frances Stainton, Guy Vincent and Natalia Perez (Chair)

Officers: Heidi Titcombe – Principal Solicitor, Patrick Crowley – Licensing Manager, Adrian Overton – Licensing Officer, Lisa White – Licensing Officer, Karen Layug – Licensing Officer, Cristina Perez-Trillo – Licensing Officer, Ainsley Gilbert, Committee Coordinator.

1. MINUTES

RESOLVED THAT:

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 June 2016 be confirmed and signed as an accurate record of the proceedings.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Adam, Alford, Culhane, Donovan, Karmel, Law and Schmid.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

4. ANNUAL LICENSING TEAM UPDATE

Patrick Crowley, Licensing Manager, introduced the Licensing Team's Annual Update. He explained that an additional administrator now worked in the processing team, which was shared with the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea. Hammersmith and Fulham still had two dedicated Licensing Officers, Adrian Overton and Lisa White. The Police had also had staffing changes with Stuart Ratcliffe being promoted to Inspector and moved to a different area. PC Michael Payne had also moved on to a different area of work. Two new police officers had been appointed to deal with licensing and they were very enthusiastic.

Patrick Crowley said that the team had carried out slightly fewer investigations than in 2015-16 but that the team had been involved in more regulatory action. More visits to businesses had taken place than in 2015-16.

The number of Gambling Premises in the borough had remained static in 2016/17.

Karen Layug explained that the team had made a number of improvements to their processes. Companies listed on licensing applications were now checked against the information held by Companies House. More information was now being recorded about fees to help the Council to comply with the new 2-part licensing fees regime. More information was generally being kept on premises to help officers with their work. Options were being explored for online applications and for improving information available through the website.

Patrick Crowley explained that after a long consultation exercise the Statement of Licensing Policy had been approved by Full Council and would come in to force on 3 July. The Statement of Gambling Policy would be renewed in 2019.

Mr Crowley explained that the Immigration Act 2016 had placed additional duties on the Council, with officers now having to check an applicant's right to work before processing their licensing application. The Home Office had also been added to the list of responsible authorities. There had also been a House of Lords Select Committee on the Licensing Act 2003 which had recommended radical changes, including the abolition of Licensing Committees and their functions be passed to Planning Committees. It was not considered that these changes would be made quickly, if at all.

Councillor Aherne said that he was concerned about the proposal to pass powers to the planning committee. He asked what opportunity there would be to comment on any plans and whether the Council could object to them. Patrick Crowley said that if the government accepted the proposals they would almost certainly issue a consultation, which the Council could respond to.

Councillor Aherne said that he was concerned about the attitude of Queens' Park Rangers football club towards the Council's investigation into breaches of their licence. Adrian Overton explained that the potential breaches were not able to be considered when the new licence was granted as the investigation was ongoing, however, the issue remained with the Council's lawyers.

The Chair asked why the joint visits with Customs and Immigration officers had been concentrated Uxbridge Road and Goldhawk Road. Adrian Overton explained that there was a concentration of small supermarkets and off licences in the area, which was the type of premises to be targeted.

The Chair thanked Council officers for their work throughout the year, and paid tribute to the work of Inspector Ratcliffe and PC Payne for their work on Licensing in the borough over many years.

5. LICENSING SUB-COMMITTEE PROCEDURE

Heidi Titcombe explained that since drafting the report she had become aware that the Licensing Committee's procedure had in fact been adopted at around the time the Licensing Act 2003 came into force. She said that she was aware that members had raised concerns about some of the proposed changes to the procedure and suggested that a working party of Councillors could meet with her to agree a new procedure.

Councillor Aherne said that he did have concerns about the potential impact of parts of the new procedure and proposed that an informal working group be set up to discuss the issues. Councillor Cassidy seconded the motion and it was agreed. Councillors Perez, Aherne and Vincent volunteered to be part of the group, whilst it was agreed that Councillor Karmel would be invited to join it. It was noted that any other interested Councillors would also be welcome.

Meeting started: 7.00 pm

Meeting ended: 7.25 pm

Chair

Contact officer: Ainsley Gilbert
Committee Co-ordinator
Governance and Scrutiny
☎: 020 8753 2088
E-mail: ainsley.gilbert@lbhf.gov.uk