

Licensing Committee Minutes

Wednesday 9 July 2014

PRESENT

Committee members: Councillors Alan De'Ath (Chair), Daryl Brown (Vice-chair), Michael Adam, Colin Aherne, Michael Cartwright, Steve Hamilton, Michael Adam, Hannah Barlow, Iain Cassidy, Larry Culhane, Vivienne Lukey and Guy Vincent

Officers: Patrick Crowley (Bi-borough Licensing Manager), Valerie Simpson (Bi-borough Head of Environmental Health (Licensing & Trading Standards)), Heidi Titcombe (Principal Solicitor (Planning Highways Licensing, Bi-borough Legal Services)) and Sue Perrin (Committee Co-ordinator)

1. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED THAT:

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 July 2013 were confirmed and signed as an accurate record of the proceedings.

2. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Alford.

3. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

4. **ANNUAL LICENSING REPORT**

Valerie Simpson presented the annual licensing report, which provided a summary of the licensing team's staffing levels and performance for the financial year 2013/2014; an update on service improvements; the Alcohol Licensing Strategy 2012/2015; the licensing team service review and legislative changes.

The report set out the licensing team's performance in respect of the different types of licensing application; sub-committee hearings, the reasons for these hearings and the decisions; and appeals. There had been 24 licensing sub-committee hearings for new, variation and review applications in comparison with 32 in 2012/2013. There had been a small number of appeals. This area of work

could take up a considerable amount of time and it was carefully monitored in light of the decisions made and the facts of each case.

There had been a change in approach to tackling and detecting non-compliance in licensed premises by acting on intelligence. Officers had worked closely with the Licensing Police Sergeant, who had worked actively with local businesses and helped them to develop action plans to address issues

There had been a decrease in the number of gambling premises in the borough.

Ms Simpson outlined the service improvements which included improvements to the Council's Public Access to allow service users to view premises license details and current licence applications online. Applicants could now apply and pay online for nine types of license application.

There had been no policy changes since the previous committee.

The report set out the priorities for the following six months, including ongoing work to improve local pubwatch schemes and an update on the service review. There was a bi-borough Licensing Manager and licensing officers from the two boroughs would be able to share experiences and work jointly. However, the separate sovereignty of the two boroughs would be retained.

There would be further benefits and service improvements when the integrated licensing administration team was in place and officers co-located.

Ms Simpson then responded to members' queries.

There was a zero-tolerance policy in respect of underage drinking. However, if there were mitigating circumstances such as a new person in post, good training records, no previous complaints or breaches of license conditions, a simple caution might be deemed appropriate. Ms Simpson emphasised that there was a formal record of a simple caution. Other actions included a licensing review, whereby more stringent conditions could be attached and monitoring of the premises. There had been a number of prosecution cases during the year.

The appeal by Olympia Food and Wine, 9 Hammersmith Road had been withdrawn as a new application for a similar license had been granted without objection. There had been no evidence that the applicant was connected to the original premises.

The locations where there had been a reduction in gambling premises would be provided. It was believed that there had been an increase in high street betting shops.

Action: Valerie Simpson

The potential link between increased crime and fixed slot machines, at which money could be lost extremely quickly was noted.

In respect of the bi-borough team and the capacity to carry out enforcement work, Ms Simpson responded that the Hammersmith & Fulham team comprised three

officers and that it was quite a demanding borough. The service review would allow the licensing team to move to a structure whereby the licensing officers would reduce the level of administration which they currently undertook and focus on committee meetings, enforcement and supporting businesses to achieve compliance.

Savings had already been made in respect of the bi-borough manager post and in the long term, efficiency savings were envisaged.

Underage drinking was a borough wide problem. Accreditation training for licensing officers was being explored. This would enable them to issue fixed penalties, should it not be possible for the police to attend a premises.

RESOLVED THAT:

The report be noted.

Meeting started: 7.00 pm
Meeting ended: 7.30 pm

Chair

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