

LICENSING COMMITTEE

Monday, 15 November 2021

PRESENT – Councillors Akhtar (Chair), Casey, Gee, Salton, Brookfield, Taylor, Fazal and Fielding

OFFICERS – Denise Andrews (Licensing Manager), Shelagh Lyth (Solicitor) and Firoza Hafeji (Governance Officer)

RESOLUTIONS

1 **Welcome & Apologies**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies were received from Councillors Desai and M Hussain.

2 **Declaration of Interest**

Declaration of interest was received from Cllr Denise Gee for Item 5 on the agenda, “*Consultation on Gambling Act 2005 – Revision of Statement of Policy 2022*”, for the nature of interest as a holder of a BwD Licence for Charity activity of ELHT & Me, East Lancashire Hospitals NHS Trust. The license was for raffles and lottery tickets.

3 **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 26th January 2021 were approved as a correct record and were duly signed by the Chair.

4 **Update on the work of Public Protection and Environmental Health Service**

Members were updated on the work of the Council’s Public Protection and Environmental Health Services (PPS) where there was a connection with businesses and persons who required a licence from the Council. It also provided an update for Members on national policy changes and proposals affecting licencing work.

Taxi Forum

The latest meeting of the Taxi Forum took place on 9th September 2021 and the main issues discussed were highlighted as:

- Stone throwing incidents. The Police confirmed that a small number of incidents had been reported. Trade were encouraged to report in all incidents to Police so that a picture could be established of the scale of the problem and affected areas.
- A member of staff from the Council’s Community Safety Team attended to advise trade about reporting in hate related crimes.
- MOT testing provision and the fees for licences and testing were to be reviewed.

Taxis

A joint operation with Police was carried out on 10th July 2021 and all the vehicles stopped were found to have the correct licences in place.

Systems for accepting new applications for Private Hire and Hackney Carriage Driver licences was now fully operational after being suspended during Covid-19 related restrictions.

Events

Licensing staff were involved in dealing with licence applications to cover the 2021 Darwen Live event in early October. Work was undertaken to ensure licences and safety procedures were in place for bonfire events.

Darwen venue complaints

Members heard that over recent months there had been complaints about a small number of venues in Darwen. The complaints were mainly about noise disturbance, particularly as venues had been making more use of outdoor spaces to help to control the spread of Covid-19. Licensing staff worked with officers in Environmental Protection and were planning to try to resolve the cause of the complaints.

Alcohol licenses

There had been an increase in the number of licence transfer and variation applications over recent months due to a number of businesses changing hands and a small number of new businesses opening up.

National issues

The Committee were informed that in July 2021 the Local Government Association issued an updated version of the Councillor Handbook: Taxi and Private Hire Licensing. The handbook was updated to include new statutory standards published by the Department for Transport in July 2020.

RESOLVED – That the Committee noted the report.

5 Consultation on Gambling Act 2005 - Revision of Statement of Policy 2022

Members were informed of the proposed consultation being undertaken from 5th November 2021 to 12th December 2021 about the revision of the Gambling Act 2005 Statement of Policy.

Members were recommended to note the report and put forward any recommendations that they may have for inclusion in the revised policy.

The Licensing Authority, on behalf of the Council, were currently consulting on a revised Policy Statement for the Gambling Act 2005. Copy of the proposed policy was included within the agenda.

The Public Protection Service was consulting on a national and local level with businesses and organisations affected by the policy. The residents of the Borough had been consulted via the Council's website and through Resident Associations.

The licensing objectives were outlined as:

- Preventing gambling from being a source of crime or disorder, being associated with crime or disorder or being used to support crime
- Ensuring that gambling is conducted in a fair and open way
- Protecting children and other vulnerable persons from being harmed or exploited by gambling.

RESOLVED – That Members noted the report and put forward any recommendations that they may have for inclusion in the revised policy.

PART II - THE PRESS AND THE PUBLIC MAY BE EXCLUDED DURING CONSIDERATION OF THE FOLLOWING ITEMS

RESOLVED – That the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items in view of the fact that the business to be transacted was exempt by virtue of Paragraph 3 of Part 1 contained in Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

6 Minutes of the Licensing Sub Committees

The Committee received the proceedings of the following Sub Committees:

General Licensing Sub Committee held on 8th June 2021

General Licensing Sub Committee held on 13th July 2021

General Licensing Sub Committee held on 10th August 2021

RESOLVED – That the proceedings of the Sub Committees as outlined above were approved as a correct record and were duly signed by the Chair.

The Chair on behalf of the Licensing Committee thanked Mrs Firoza Hafeji for all her hard work over the previous years supporting the Committee and wished her all the best for the future in her new post.

Signed:

Date:

Chair of the meeting
at which the minutes were confirmed