

LICENSING AND GAMBLING ACTS COMMITTEE

Wednesday 22 February 2012

COUNCILLORS PRESENT: Councillors Clarkson (Chair), Brett (Vice-Chair), Brundin, Goddard, Lygo, Sanders, Sinclair and Campbell.

OFFICERS PRESENT: Mathew Metcalfe (Democratic and Electoral Services), Julian Alison (Licensing Team Leader), Tony Payne (Licensing and Development Manager) and Daniel Smith (Law and Governance)

12. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Colin Cook, Gwynneth Royce, Bob Timbs, and David Williams.

13. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None declared.

14. CITY CENTRE POLICE INSPECTOR - KATY BARROW-GRINT

The Committee welcomed Katy Barrow-Grint, City Centre Police Inspector, to the meeting.

Katy Barrow-Grint said that she had joined the Team in June 2011 and had spent six months reviewing the Team. Her key priority was to reduce crime that was important to the community by working in partnership with the community and other bodies. She said that her Team had been working with the Council on multi-agency visits to premises and making it clear that these premises had to work with the Police. This had resulted in quarterly meetings now taking place and greater communication with the premises.

Katy Barrow-Grint said that a recent operation called "Operation Bedtime" had taken place, whereby Officers attended premises specifically to deal with fake ID's. When these were found, Officers tried to establish where they had come from and informed the parents of those with fake ID's. She also highlighted the issue of thefts in licensed premises which linked in with Pub Watch, which was now fully operational in the City centre with 26 premises in the scheme. She added that while the Police supported Pub Watch this was a scheme run by the trade.

Other initiatives being worked on included the "Best Bar None Scheme" which was much like the Purple Flag Scheme, and to ensure that incidents of racism were reported as this was currently an under reported crime. She added that Thames Valley Police had recently reviewed their approach to the Council's Special Saturation Policy and that in relation to licensing hearings Officers would now present information to the Council which was focused on cumulative impact, remembering that if an increase to cumulative impact was likely there was a presumption against granting.

Councillor Brett asked what happened when a taxi driver was arrested for a serious crime. In response Katy Barrow-Grint said that while the system currently in place had worked well so far, there would now be specific Officers who would be informed who would then pass this information to the Council. She further added that she was looking to implement further changes to improve the process.

Councillor Brett asked what the Police was doing to reassure premises that when an incident was reported, it would not be held against them. In response Kay Barrow-Grint said that this would not be the case and it was about open communication between the premises and the Police.

Councillor Campbell said with regard to the Special Saturation Policy (SSP) that he would be concerned if Police evidence was to be limited because of the presumption within the SSP. It was difficult for Councillors to make a decision on a presumption rather than on data. In response Katy Barrow-Grint said that each case was dealt with on a case by case basis.

Councillor Goddard welcomed the initiatives outlined by Katy Barrow-Grint, but was concerned that Officers tended to move from one position to other on a frequent basis. In response Katy Barrow-Grint said that this was the nature of the service, but hoped that the initiatives would become entrenched and continue.

Councillor Goddard asked what was being done to ensure that the priorities for Oxford were not lost in the priorities for the wider area. In response Katy Barrow-Grint said that any priorities for Oxford were part of the wider priorities for the whole of the Thames Valley Police Force.

Councillor Sinclair welcomed the quarterly meetings held with licensed premises, but asked how many attended. In response Katy Barrow-Grint said that her meeting was primarily directed towards the City centre pubs and clubs.

Councillor Sinclair raised the issue of language schools and their impact on the City centre. In response Katy Barrow-Grint said that there were a number of initiatives that the Police were involved in with other agencies in a multi-agency approach.

The Committee agreed:

- (a) To thank City Centre Inspector Katy Barrow-Grint for attending the meeting;
- (b) To invite City Centre Inspector Katy Barrow-Grint to attend a further meeting of the Committee in six months time;
- (c) To ask City Centre Inspector Katy Barrow-Grint if minutes from the quarterly meetings could be made available to members of the Licensing and Gambling Acts Committee for information.

15. UPDATE ON LICENSING AUTHORITY ACTIVITY BETWEEN SEPTEMBER 2011 AND DECEMBER 2011

The Head of Environmental Development submitted a report (previously circulated, now appended) which informed the Committee of the progress made by the Licensing Authority under the Licensing Act 2003 and Gambling Act 2005 between September 2011 and December 2011.

Julian Alison introduced the report and took the Committee through the activities.

Councillor Brett asked why Councillors could not hear licensing applications if the applications were for premises in their own wards, yet they could decide planning applications within their own wards. He suggested that this difference be dropped from the Policy.

In response Daniel Smith said that he would take the request back to the Head of Law and Governance and seek advice and inform Members of the outcome.

Councillor Goddard pointed out that the note of the Licensing Sub Committee decision shown on page 35 of the Agenda did not include the Chair of that hearing. Daniel Smith said that he recalled the hearing had been chaired by Councillor Cook and that Councillor Goddard had been one of the other members.

The Committee agreed to note the report.

16. RESPONSE TO HOME OFFICE CONSULTATION: RELAXATION OF LICENSING HOURS FOR QUEENS JUBILEE

The Head of Environmental Development submitted a report (previously circulated, now appended) which updated members regarding the response sent by the Licensing Authority to the Home Office consultation: Relaxation of Licensing Hours for the Queen's Diamond Jubilee.

The Committee agreed to note the report.

17. PROPOSALS TO EXAMINE HOW TO DEAL WITH THE PROBLEMS OF LATE NIGHT DRINKING

The Head of Environmental Development submitted a report (previously circulated, now appended) which asked the Committee to consider and respond to the Government's consultation on its proposals to deal with "the problems of late night drinking".

The Committee agreed:

- (a) To note the report;
- (b) To delegate authority to the Head of Environmental Development to draft a response and present to the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Licensing and Gambling Acts Committee for final approval before submitting to the Home Office.

18. FEES AND CHARGES 2011/12

The Head of Environmental Development submitted a report (previously circulated, now appended) which sought agreement of the licence fees for 2012/13 where the Council had discretion over the level of fee charged.

The Committee agreed:

- (a) To note the licence fees set by statute;
- (b) To approve the Licence Fees for 2012/13 as set out in the report subject to the Head of Environmental Development seeking clarification on the percentage increase of either 4% or 4.5% so as to bring these in line with the Licence Fees set by the General Purposes Licensing Committee.

19. MINUTES

The Committee agreed to approve the minutes (previously circulated) of the meeting held on 19th October 2011.

20. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The Committee noted that its next meeting would be on Monday 28th May 2012.

The meeting started at 6.20 pm and ended at 7.25 pm