

Runnymede Borough Council

LICENSING COMMITTEE

27 June 2017 at 7.30pm

Members of the Committee present: Councillors Mrs J Gracey (Chairman), D W Parr (Vice-Chairman) J Broadhead, Mrs D V Clarke, Mrs E Gill, Mrs M T Harnden, S A Lewis and P Sohi.

Members of the Committee absent: Councillors S M Mackay and P B Tuley

96 FIRE PRECAUTIONS

The Chairman read out the fire precautions.

97 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 5 April 2017 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

98 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor P B Tuley

99 2017 ANNUAL REPORT

The Committee noted the 2017 annual report on matters in respect of the Licensing Act 2003 and the work of the Licensing Section.

Members reviewed the service statistics for 2016/17. In comparison with previous years, the number of Premises Licenses (233) and Club Premises Certificates (34) had fallen slightly, whilst the number of Temporary Event Notices (TENs), had increased to 180, despite the introduction of the Deregulation Act 2015. There had been only one Hearing during the year and Members were pleased to note there continued to be no appeals against decisions made, nor any prosecutions, since 2011/12, when such statistics began to be reported to the Committee. Seven new premises licences and 54 new Personal Licenses were granted in 2016/17 and 5 licenses had been surrendered.

Details of the new licenses and those surrendered were noted. Further information in respect of TENs was provided. This showed that schools and colleges gave the most TENs and commercial premises the least. Most activity across all these areas had been in the Chertsey wards. Members were pleased to note that the majority of TENs activity was not contentious and that premises with 24hrs opening had not caused a problem in terms of greater enforcement or numbers of complaints.

The distinction between the Planning process and that of Licensing was noted. Often a premises had different terminal hours for Planning and licensable activity. Where possible, Officers encouraged applicants to mirror their opening hours.

In terms of Enforcement and Inspections, there had been 13 intelligence led inspections during 2016/17. Officers found that early engagement with applicants often resulted in a positive relationship and compliance from the start. Officers planned to carry out joint inspections with other Responsible Authorities, such as the Immigration Service in 2017/18. This was partly due to additional duties placed on the authority by the Immigration Act 2016 to carry out 'right to work' checks and inform the Home office about licensing applications.

Officers would be able to give a more accurate picture of the nature of this work and the time it took to fulfil duties in next year's annual report.

The Committee was advised that Pub Watch continued to be a vital part of the relationship with premises licence holders and attendance had improved since Officers had written to all the borough's premises licence holders and Designated Premises Supervisors. Officers agreed to give Members of the Committee as much notice as possible of forthcoming Pub Watch meetings so that they could support the process.

Members were frustrated that the Licensing Service continued to show a deficit (£52,415 in 2016/17). This was because the Council was unable to set Licensing fees locally and so cover costs more effectively.

Officers summarised the legislative changes that had affected Licensing in 2016/17. Apart from the Immigration Act 2016, and the Policing and Crime Act 2017, the Alcohol Wholesaler Registration Scheme (AWRS) was likely to have an impact on the trade. Officers confirmed that from 1 April 2017, all businesses that traded and retailed in alcohol would have to ensure that they only dealt with UK wholesalers that were registered with the HMRC. This was to combat alcohol fraud.

The Committee thanked Officers for the depth of work undertaken, including the informative and up to date web pages they maintained and the amount of work achieved by one full time Senior Licensing Officer, supported by a full time administrative member of staff, recently returned to Licensing from Customer Services.

Chairman

(The meeting ended at 7.36 pm)