

MINUTES of a meeting of the LICENSING COMMITTEE held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Coalville on WEDNESDAY, 3 OCTOBER 2018

Present: Councillor R Ashman (Chairman)

Councillors J Clarke, J G Coxon, D Everitt, T Eynon, L Goacher, R Johnson (Substitute for Councillor N Clarke), A C Saffell, S Sheahan, N Smith, A V Smith MBE and M Specht

Portfolio Holder: Councillor A V Smith MBE

Officers: Mrs L Arnold, Mr A Cooper, Mr L Mansfield and Mrs R Wallace

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors N Clarke, J Hoult, G Jones, K Merrie, P Purver and V Richichi.

**2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

**3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held on 21 February 2018.

It was moved by Councillor M Specht, seconded by Councillor J Clarke and

RESOLVED THAT:

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 February 2018 be approved and signed by the Chairman.

**4. REVIEW OF GAMBLING ACT STATEMENT OF LICENSING POLICY**

The Environmental Health Team Manager presented the report to Members, highlighting the consultation undertaken and the proposed changes regarding the Local Area Profile at section 11 of the draft policy. He also apologised that the draft policy document at appendix 1 did not include the usual track changes, this was due to a technical error.

In response to a question of clarity from Councillor J Clarke, the Environmental Health Team Manager explained that the number of gambling premises in Coalville town centre should be five rather than six as printed in the report, this was due to the recent closure of an adult gaming centre in the area. This would be corrected in the final report to Council.

Councillor S Sheahan raised concerns regarding online gambling and the fact that there was no reference to it within the report. The Environmental Health Team Manager explained that this was not a function of the District Council and was regulated by the Gambling Commission.

Councillor T Eynon understood that there was an absence of evidence to suggest that there were any problems with gambling activity in North West Leicestershire but in her opinion there were two very important organisations that had not been consulted. These were Nottingham Health Care Trust and Turning Point. She believed that they would be able to provide more accurate information on the issue. The Environmental Health Team Manager explained that the team had consulted all those advised to, but took the comments on board and agreed to add the organisations to the list of consultees in future.

Chairman's initials

Councillor D Everitt also suggested the addition of the Citizens Advice Bureau to the list of consultees. He felt that the picture given by the current consultees was a superficial one as he believed many of the problems with gambling had gone underground with the availability of online gambling.

The Environmental Health Team Manager reported that GambleAware had commissioned a piece of work, due to be completed in 2019, regarding Local Area Profiles. If the study revealed a problem with gambling for North West Leicestershire, the local profile would be updated accordingly.

Councillor N Smith asked if any of the consulted organisations ever reported individuals with gambling problems. The Licensing Team Leader reported that very few complaints were received regarding gambling establishments and this year there had been none at all. Councillor N Smith commented that the lack of reports from the premises themselves on any problems due to gambling activity, could possibly be due to the amount of money being made from customers affected. The Licensing Team Leader assured Members that licence holders had a duty of care to assist people with obvious problems.

Councillor M Specht referred to a recently reported national problem regarding the usage of fixed odds betting terminals. He commented that he had visited a number of premises and he did not see any customers constantly sat at the machines. He was pleased that the report supported this view as there did not seem to be a problem of this nature in North West Leicestershire.

It was moved by Councillor J G Coxon, seconded by Councillor J Clarke and

RECOMMENDED THAT:

Council approve the Statement of Licensing Policy at its meeting on 13 November 2018.

RESOLVED THAT:

The authority to update the Local Area Profile be delegated to the Head of Community Services in consultation with the Portfolio Holder.

## **5. LICENSING TEAM SERVICE UPDATE**

The Licensing Team Leader presented the report to Members, summarising the work delivered by the team in regards to policy review, street trading, taxi vehicles and drivers, and public events. Further to the report he updated Members that the first time pass rate for vehicles was currently up to 70 percent and that another licence revocation had occurred the previous week due to the driver's inappropriate use of pepper spray on a passenger.

In relation to the granting of taxi driver licences, Councillor R Johnson asked if there was a way to cross reference with other Council's regarding past history. The Licensing Team Leader reported that there was a register currently being compiled across all councils and North West Leicestershire was due to be signed up by the end of the year.

Councillor N Smith was pleased that the Council was being included on the national register as he felt it was a good thing to be able to check a potential driver's history. He also raised concerns regarding the inappropriate driving of licensed drivers in Ashby as it was very dangerous and asked if there was anything that could be done to tackle it. The Licensing Team Leader reported that a lot of monitoring had been undertaken in Ashby with action being taken on drivers. He explained that there was a warning system in place to address the problem but there were no complaints at the moment.

Chairman's initials

Councillor N Smith urged Members to report any incidents regarding the behaviour of taxi drivers as he believed it made a real difference.

The Community Services Portfolio Holder thanked officers for all of the work undertaken during the World Cup as it was a very difficult time due to the issues in Ashby when England were playing. She felt that the closure of Market Street and the advice given to shop owners regarding early closures worked very well. The Licensing Team Leader reported that the conditions placed on the White Heart Public House during the World Cup would remain on the licence for when events such as those were held again. The Chairman also thanked the Councillors who agreed to sit on the hearings at very short notice to resolve the issues in Ashby during that time.

Councillors M Specht and A C Saffell congratulated the officers and police for the work undertaken in Ashby during the World Cup as it was a very positive outcome with a good example of joint working.

Councillor J G Coxon also congratulated officers and felt that they had reacted well in a very short space of time. He asked if other premises had been reviewed to counteract any similar problems in the future. The Environmental Health Team Manager explained that the process to review a licence was normally instigated by an incident and he would not look at adding conditions to a licence where there was a good history of compliance. He added that at the time of the incidents in Ashby, all of the other licensed premises were visited and all of them were compliant.

Councillor A C Saffell asked if officers were still unable to access social media as this was where complaints tended to be left rather than being reported to officers. The Legal Advisor explained that it was possible to gain access but it had to be authorised through the ICT team which was not always a quick process. However, she assured Members that the Legal Team did have access to social media and anything relevant was passed to officers.

Regarding the conduct of taxi drivers, Councillor M Specht encouraged Members to take photographs and report it to officers. He explained that he had recently encountered a taxi driver parked in a disabled bay on more than one occasion and even though he had spoken to the driver about it and threatened to report him, he was still doing it. He had now reported the taxi driver to the Licensing Team who had already received many complaints. The Licensing Team Leader provided an update that the driver had now received a final warning and had been advised that anything further would result in being brought before a Sub Committee.

The Chairman thanked officers for the report and informed Members that in future, a service update would be provided by email rather than considered by the Committee.

It was moved by Councillor A C Saffell, seconded by Councillor J G Coxon and

RESOLVED THAT:

The report be noted.

The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm

The Chairman closed the meeting at 7.23 pm