

MINUTES

meeting: **LICENSING COMMITTEE**

date: **12 SEPTEMBER 2012**

PRESENT:-

Councillor Dass (Chair);
Councillors Angus, Banger, Bolshaw, Clarke, Claymore, Inston, N A Patten, Mrs Patten, John Rowley and Judith Rowley

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:-

No apologies for absence had been received.

IN ATTENDANCE:-

R Edge	-	Section Leader, Licensing (General), Regeneration Division, Education and Enterprise Directorate
A Jervis	-	Head of Regulatory Services, Regeneration Division, Education and Enterprise Directorate
R Marshall	-	Solicitor, Governance Division, Delivery Directorate
D O'Brien	-	Section Leader (South), Regeneration Division, Education and Enterprise Directorate
C Parr	-	Licensing Manager, Regeneration Division, Education and Enterprise Directorate
S Walker	-	Section Leader (South), Regeneration Division, Education and Enterprise Directorate
O Sandhu	-	Apprentice Licensing Officer, Regeneration Division, Education and Enterprise Directorate
C W Craney	-	Democratic Services Officer, Governance Division, Delivery Directorate

Wolverhampton
City Council



PART I - OPEN ITEMS
(Open to the Press and Public)

Declarations of Interest

- 74 No declarations of interest were received relative to items under consideration at the meeting.

Minutes

- 75 Resolved:-
- (a) That the Minutes of the meeting held on 25 July 2012 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair;
 - (b) That the Minutes of the meetings of the Licensing Sub-Committee held on 13 July and 8 August 2012 be approved as a correct record and the acts, proceedings and recommendations contained therein be adopted.

Matters Arising

- 76 Councillor Claymore referred to Minute No. 63 (a) of the meeting of the Licensing Committee held on 25 July 2012 and enquired as to the latest position with Police representatives attending Licensing Hearings where they had negotiated with the Applicants or Premises License holders and agreed to add conditions to the License. C Parr, Licensing Manager, Regeneration Division, Education and Enterprise Directorate, advised that the relevant Police Inspector had been invited to attend a pre-meeting, immediately prior to this meeting, to discuss the current policy but, unfortunately, she had been unable to attend owing to illness. Arrangements would now be made for the relevant Police Inspector to attend the meeting of the Licensing Committee either in October or November 2012.

Schedule of Outstanding Minutes (Appendix 26)

C W Craney, Democratic Support Officer, Governance Division, Delivery Directorate, presented a report which set out a Schedule of Outstanding Minutes together with details as to when it was expected that reports on individual items would be presented for consideration.

- 77 Resolved:-
- That the report be received and noted;

Enhancing the City Night Time Offer (Appendix 27)

C Parr presented a report which detailed the six month pilot of the Taxi Marshalling Service, reintroduced from 1 April 2012, to enhance the night time offer of the City Centre. He drew to the attention of the Committee that during the period 1 April 2012 to 26 August 2012 the Taxi Marshalling Service had assisted 20,671 passengers to access Hackney Carriage services. The Taxi Marshalling Service also provided a useful source of information for the

Police in relation to anti-social behaviour and to Enforcement Officers from the City Council in respect, for example, overcharging by Hackney Carriage drivers. Statistical data indicated that since the re-introduction of the service, crime, particularly in the Market Street area, had reduced. It was now intended to continue the service until 31 March 2013. He circulated photographs which demonstrated the need for the service because, at peak times, the wait for a Hackney Carriage was up to 30 minutes with a one hour wait not uncommon in Market Street. He suggested that this evidenced that there were not sufficient Hackney Carriages operating in the City Centre at night time.

The Chair, Councillor Dass, drew to the attention of the Committee the evidence in the photographs of long queues waiting to access Hackney Carriages and suggested that this could be assumed to demonstrate the need for additional Hackney Carriages to operate in the City Centre at night time. The re-introduction of the service had also been supported by the Police and customers of the service. Councillor Claymore referred to the number of passengers assisted during the trial period and suggested that when the Committee undertook the night time visit it should make a point of including the Market Street area in the itinerary. The Chair, Councillor Dass, stressed the importance of the night time visit and encouraged Members of the Committee to attend.

Councillor N A Patten welcomed the report and opined that the service was working well. He referred to the recent protests from Hackney Carriage drivers and Operators but suggested that the photographs indicated that either more Hackney Carriages were required in the City Centre or that the existing Hackney Carriage drivers / Operators were not willing to work at night. Councillor John Rowley referred to the several new licensed premises which had opened during the summer in the City Centre and that the new premises had added to the night time economy offer with a broader range of visitors being welcomed to the City. He enquired as to whether the Officers had received any indication with regard to the reopening of the Oceana Night Club. C Parr commented that the Oceana Night Club had been a large venue which had been important to the night time economy but that, to date, he had not had any dialogue with prospective new tenants. He commented that an extensive capital outlay would now be required given that the building had been stripped of fixtures and fittings.

The Chair, Councillor Dass, invited the Officers to update the Committee on the current consultation exercise with the Hackney Carriage trade. C Parr reported that the problem which existed in the City related to supply and demand with there being an insufficient supply of Hackney Carriages for whatever reason. The delays encountered by visitors leaving the City discouraged visitors to utilise the night time offer with consequential effects on the night time economy. To date, four responses and a petition had been received from the Hackney Carriage trade and the Unite Trade Union. Comments had also been received from the Police and further responses were awaited from the Council's partners by Friday 14

September 2012. A meeting was to be held with representatives of the Hackney Carriage trade on 13 September 2012 and a record of the proceedings of that meeting would be incorporated in the response to the consultation which would be presented to the Licensing Committee in due course.

C Parr also referred to the presentation made to the meeting of the Licensing Committee on 25 July 2012 by the Interim Head of Commercial Development in connection with City Centre Regeneration. He suggested that the aims of the regeneration exercise were likely to be undermined with the current lack of Hackney Carriages. He reminded the Committee that under the revised Licensing Regulations the Council could impose a blanket closing time across the City Centre; a proposal which was likely to receive support from the Police. The problem with opting for such a blanket closing time would be that the current infrastructure could not cope with the exodus from the City at a fixed time.

A Jervis, Head of Regulatory Services, Regeneration Division, Education and Enterprise Directorate, advised that the Marshalling Service scheme addressed the problem and not the cause and that, given the financial implications involved with the scheme, he suggested that the other solutions which were available needed to be considered. Councillor Clarke referred to the photographs circulated at the meeting and the absence of Hackney Carriages in the photographs. C Parr advised that on the night in question only a fraction of the fleet, 28 – 30 vehicles out of the 170 operating within the City were operating.

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Resolved:-

That the report be received and noted.

Molineux Stadium Safety Advisory Group – Minutes (Appendix 28)

D O'Brien, Section Leader (South), Regeneration Division, Education and Enterprise Directorate, presented a report together with the Minutes of the Molineux Stadium Safety Advisory (MSSAG) Group meetings held on 6 March 2012 and 15 May 2012. He drew to the attention of the Committee various issues relating to particular matches held at the Molineux Stadium and to the production of an Operations Manual by Wolverhampton Wanderers Football Club in preparation for the issue of a new Safety Certificate later in the year. The Chair, Councillor Dass, enquired as to the response by the Police in relation to racial abuse incidents at football matches at the Molineux. D O'Brien advised that prosecutions would be likely to be proceeded with. The Chair, Councillor Dass, enquired as to the problems encountered with fans standing at football games. Councillor N A Patten advised that the problem was reducing but the issue which caused friction between home and away fans was that the away fans were allowed to stand whilst the no standing ban was enforced strictly amongst the home fans. He suggested that steps needed to be taken to enforce the no standing ban throughout the stadium.

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Resolved:-

That the Minutes of the meetings of the Molineux Stadium Safety Advisory (MSSAG) Group held on 6 March 2012 and 15 May 2012 be noted and endorsed.