

M MINUTES

meeting: **LICENSING COMMITTEE**

date: **22 MAY 2013**

PRESENT:-

Councillors Bishan Dass (Chair), Harman Banger, Alan Bolshaw, Ian Claymore, Craig Collingswood, Susan Constable, Mark Evans, Keith Inston and John Rowley.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:-

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Mrs Patricia Patten, Neville Patten and Rita Potter.

IN ATTENDANCE:-

R Jervis	-	Director of Public Health
R Marshall	-	Solicitor
E Moreton	-	Section leader (Licensing)
C Parr	-	Licensing Manager
L Banbury	-	Democratic Support Officer

Wolverhampton
City Council



Declarations of Interest

1. No interests were declared.

City Centre Pubwatch Scheme

2. The Chair agreed to bring this item forward on the agenda to enable Mr Keasey to withdraw from the meeting following its consideration. The item had been included at the request of Mr Keasey who was the current Chair of the Pubwatch scheme.

Mr Keasey advised the Committee of a proposal made by the Police and Licensing Authority, at a recent Pubwatch meeting, for the trade to adopt a voluntary minimum pricing strategy for the sale of alcohol. A subsequent Pubwatch meeting had been held, without the attendance of the Responsible Authorities, to discuss the proposal. Unfortunately no consensus had been achieved and the proposal for a voluntary agreement had therefore been abandoned. Mr Keasey had attended this Committee meeting to ascertain the views of the Councillors in regard to this issue and their intentions in regard to the regeneration of the City's night-time economy. He drew attention to the loss of trade due to the current economic situation and the specific difficulties being experienced by small independent traders.

The Licensing Manager advised that the suggestion for a voluntary code was aimed at dealing with irresponsible drinks promotions with a proposed threshold of £1 per drink and that officers had been mindful not to have a negative impact on trade. Irrespective of the implementation of a voluntary code, Responsible Authorities would deal with irresponsible drinks promotions by way of review of the individual Premises Licence or in accordance with relevant legislation via the Courts. The Licensing Manager drew attention to some of the work of the Council aimed at supporting the night time economy, citing the examples of the Taxi Marshalling Scheme and reform of the Hackney Carriage service. He further made reference to the forthcoming 'Slam Dunk' festival which would hopefully stimulate trade in the City and discussions with a representative of 'Wonderland' who were taking over the 'Oceana' premises, at a meeting of the Responsible Authorities Forum.

The Committee were sympathetic to the problems currently being experienced by the licensed trade in the City and acknowledged that reducing the price of alcohol was merely a 'quick fix' solution. It was suggested that the trade should carry out some customer research to ascertain the needs of patrons with a view to providing a competitive market. The Licensing Manager undertook to ascertain the availability of Council Officers who might be able to offer support in regard to any research carried out. It was agreed that a progress update be presented to the Committee in six months' time.

It was suggested that it might be useful for a trade representative of the Pubwatch scheme to accompany the Committee on their annual visit to the Night-time Economy with the Police and Council Officers. It was agreed that an appropriate amendment to the protocol would be considered at agenda item 7.

Minutes

3. Resolved:-

(a) That the minutes of the meeting held on 17 April 2013 be approved as a correct record.

(b) That the minutes of the meeting of the Licensing Sub-Committee held on 29 April 2013 be approved as a correct record and adopted.

Review of a Premises Licence – Empire Suite, Ward Street, Wolverhampton

4. Pursuant to minute 59 of the minutes of the meeting held on 17 April 2013, the Licensing Manager advised that, as of the previous weekend, the outstanding fire safety issues had not been rectified.

Schedule of Outstanding Minutes (Appendix 1)

The Democratic Support Officer submitted a report, which set out a schedule of outstanding minutes together with details of when it was expected that reports on individual items would be presented for consideration.

5. Resolved:-

That the report be received.

Review of Decision Making (Appendix 2)

The Licensing Manager presented a report, which sought endorsement of an approval to the proposed decision making process and delegations in relation to categories 2 and 3 decision making powers.

6. Resolved:-

(a) That the proposals contained within section 2 of the report, relating to categories 2 and 3 decisions, be endorsed and approved.

(b) That category 3 decision making powers be delegated to the Strategic Director for Education and Enterprise.

(c) That the schedule attached at Appendix 1 to the report, which includes further proposed delegations from the Strategic Director for Education and Enterprise to officers, be noted.

(d) That annual delegation reports be presented to the Committee at the beginning of the municipal year.

Licensing Committee Night-time Economy Visits Protocol (Appendix 3)

The Licensing Manager presented a report, which sought approval of the proposed protocol for Licensing Committee night-time economy visits.

7. Resolved:-
That the protocol for Licensing Committee night-time economy visits as attached at Appendix A to the report be approved, subject to inclusion of attendance by a trade representative of the Pubwatch scheme where appropriate.

Alcohol Strategy: Progress Update (Appendix 4)

The Director of Public Health presented a report, which provided an update on the implementation of the Wolverhampton Alcohol Strategy 2011/2015, highlighting performance against the outturn for 2012/13, together with the revised action plan for 2013/2014 following a review of the Strategy Action Plan undertaken early 2013.

The Committee acknowledged the difficulties experienced by Public Health, as a Responsible Authority, due to the lack of a health related licensing objective under the 2003 Act. They noted, however, that the Public Health function in Wolverhampton was extremely proactive, compared to other authorities in the West Midlands, with regard to dealing with issues under the Licensing Act.

Responding to a Councillor's questions, the Director undertook to raise the issue of inconsistency regarding the times of day that particular premises sell alcohol in neighbouring authorities at the Responsible Authorities Forum.

8. (a) That the report be received and the Action Plan for 2013/2014 endorsed.
- (b) That a further update be presented in six months' time and that individual goal leads attend the meeting to provide information on their area of work.

Licensing Committee – Decision Tracking (Appendix 5)

A summary of issues considered by the Committee during the 2012/2013 municipal year was prevented for information.

9. Resolved:-
That the report be received.