
GENERAL LICENSING COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the Meeting held in the Council Chamber, Swale House, East Street, Sittingbourne, Kent, ME10 3HT on Thursday, 20 February 2020 from 7.00pm - 7.30pm.

PRESENT: Councillors Cameron Beart, Derek Carnell (Chairman), Roger Clark, Richard Darby, Simon Fowle, Lee McCall, Paul Stephen, Eddie Thomas and Tony Winckless (Vice-Chairman).

OFFICERS PRESENT: Mohammad Bauluck, Philippa Davies, Della Fackrell, Robin Harris and Chris Hills.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Councillor Richard Palmer (Cabinet Member for Community).

536 EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE

The Chairman ensured that those present were aware of the emergency evacuation procedure.

537 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 31 July 2019 (Minute Nos. 174 – 178) were taken as read, approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

538 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No interests were declared.

539 PUBLIC SESSION

There were no requests from the public to speak at this meeting.

Part B Minutes for the General Licensing Committee to decide

540 GAMBLING ACT 2005: LOCAL AREA PROFILE

The Cabinet Member for Community was invited to introduce the item and he thanked the officer for the report.

The Committee considered the report for the addition of a Local Area Profile (LAP) to the current Statement of Principles – Gambling Act 2005. The Licensing Officer explained that the Gambling Commission recommended that Local Authorities undertook a LAP to examine the risks associated with gambling. He said that the information gained from the process would provide a better understanding of where gambling premises were located and increase awareness of any identified risks. The Licensing Officer explained that since 6 April 2016, gambling operators had been required to undertake risk assessments for their premises, taking into account

the nature and characteristics of the local area. He outlined the general aims of the LAP as noted in Appendix I to the report: the Draft Gambling Act 2005 Swale Local Area Profile, and said that the information received would provide a footing for the decision-making process in gambling contexts. The Licensing Officer gave an overview of the adverse harm that gambling had on individuals, communities, deprived areas, and vulnerable people, both health wise and financial and explained that the impact could be short-term or long-term. The Licensing Officer outlined the measures that Councils could take in sharing data, and sign-posting to support services. He drew Members' attention to the various maps in the document showing locations of gambling premises, and where gambling counselling was sited. The Licensing Officer also referred to the statistics in the Appendix of who had contacted the counselling group, with the age of the gambler, gender and the debt that they were in. There was also information on the location of recovery centres, crime, at or near gambling premises, deprived areas, and the location of religious institutions in relation to gambling premises.

The Licensing Officer summarised and said that this was not a finished document and the LAP would develop over time with increased intelligence. The process would encourage a proactive approach to risk which was likely to reduce compliance and enforcement action.

Members were invited to ask questions and make comments.

In response to a question on the maps, the Licensing Officer confirmed that each location where there was a gaming permit was indicated on the map. Members were also advised that online bingo was not regulated by the Council.

A Member noted that Town Councils were not listed on page 7 of the report as proposed consultees, and requested that they be added so that both Town and Parish Councils were consulted. The Member also added that the most up-to-date information needed to be included, as there was a premises indicated on the map that was no longer there.

In response to a question, the Contentious Team Leader explained that although there might be a perception that there were more betting shops in the high street than in previous years, this was not the case, and there were actually less. He said the largest amount of betting was carried out online, which the Gambling Commission regulated, not the Council.

Resolved:

(1) That the Committee recommends to the Council that the revision of the Gambling Act 2005 Statement of Principles 2019 – 2022 includes the Local Area Profile.

(2) That the draft Local Area Profile for public consultation be approved and officers carry out a consultation over a 12-week period.

541 STREET TRADING POLICY

The Cabinet Member for Community was invited to introduce the item and he thanked the officer for the report.

The Committee considered the report which set-out information and guidance on a new draft Street Trading Policy which required Members' comments and approval prior to formal consultation. The Licensing Officer explained that the Council regulated street trading in the Borough, and on 23 July 2010 Swale Borough Council (SBC) designated all streets in the Borough as 'consent streets' and as such any street had to obtain a street trading consent from the Council. The Licensing Officer said that the existing Street Trading Policy, approved by the Council in July 2013 was attached as Appendix I to the report, with the reviewed draft Street Trading Policy at Appendix II. She referred to the amendments to the Policy, outlined in paragraph 3.3 of the report, and explained that there would be a 12-week consultation period. The Licensing Officer added that fees had not changed since 2013 and these would also be reviewed. She explained that the proposals would make the Policy more robust, and the Policy would be submitted to Full Council later in the year for adoption.

Members were invited to ask questions and make comments.

A Member asked for more information about the fees charged to event organisers. The Licensing Officer explained that the individual store holder at an event was now required to obtain their own consent. This protected the event organiser from being responsible for something the stall holder might do that later led to further action being taken by an agency. She stated that if the fees were set appropriately, they would not be more prohibitive than they were now, but the system would be more structured. She added that applications needed to be submitted in good time to enable them to be processed.

Resolved:

- (1) That it be noted that the report and appendices would also be presented to the Policy Development and Review Committee.**
- (2) That the draft Street Trading policy as attached at Appendix II to the report be approved for a formal consultation period of 12-weeks.**
- (3) That delegated authority be given to the Resilience and Licensing Manager to make any amendments required by Members to the draft policy.**

542 TAXI ROAD SAFETY - DISCUSSION ITEM

The Resilience and Licensing Manager introduced this discussion item. She explained that she had been in discussion with the Cabinet Member for Community about the Kent Fire and Rescue Road Safety Experience in Rochester. She asked for Members views on whether they thought this course should be made available or mandatory to taxi drivers in the Borough.

Members made the following comments;

- This experience should be made mandatory;
- we should consider sending a few drivers from a large taxi firm;
- the Council controlled the Taxi Policy, but the drivers were not the Council's employees, however, they could be encouraged to attend;
- attendance at the event could be added as a mandatory to Licensing Sub-Committee driver suspensions;

- we should consider working with other authorities to send our taxi drivers with theirs;
- this was an excellent scheme, and an eye-opening experience; and
- taxi-drivers would not have to attend, unless it was included in the Policy.

The Licensing Officer briefly outlined other courses that could be relevant to taxi drivers in the Borough, which included customer care, disability awareness, and a driving test.

Resolved:

(1) That the points raised in this item be noted and looked into further.

Chairman

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All Minutes are draft until agreed at the next meeting of the Committee/Panel