
MEETING	GAMBLING & LICENSING ACTS COMMITTEE
DATE	6 JUNE 2008
PRESENT	COUNCILLORS WISEMAN (VICE-CHAIR, IN THE CHAIR), AYRE, D'AGORNE, SUE GALLOWAY, HORTON, RUNCIMAN, TAYLOR AND WISEMAN (VICE-CHAIR)
APOLOGIES	COUNCILLORS ALEXANDER, CREGAN, FUNNELL, HYMAN, MERRETT, MOORE, ORRELL AND REID

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were invited to declare at this point in the meeting any personal or prejudicial interests they might have in the business on the agenda. No interests were declared.

2. MINUTES

With reference to Resolution 1 of Minute 10 (Revision of Statutory Guidance to Licensing Act 2003), Officers confirmed that letters had been written to Government departments and MPs as requested. Members indicated that they would like to be notified of any replies. With reference to Resolution 3 of Minute 10, it was noted that the update on alcohol reduction schemes had been delayed pending publication of a Government report, and was likely to be brought to the Committee in October or November.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the last meeting of the Committee, held on 5 October 2007, be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

It was reported that there had been no registrations to speak at the meeting under the Council's Public Participation Scheme.

4. IMPACT OF THE LICENSING ACT 2003 AND HEALTH ACT 2006 (SMOKE FREE PREMISES) ON THE LICENSING TRADE

Members considered a report which provided an update on the current national and local position regarding the impact on licensed premises of the Licensing Act 2003 and the Health Act 2006 (Smoke Free Premises). It also provided information on action being taken by enforcement officers to ensure compliance with the conditions attached to premises licenses.

An evaluation of the Licensing Act, published in March 2008 by the Department for Culture, was annexed to the report. This concluded that the Act was having a beneficial impact upon residents, policy and local councils. In York, over 180 hearings had been dealt with since the introduction of the Act. However, only 4 supermarkets had secured a 24 hour licence and many premises had reverted to closing at 11pm. Crime and disorder levels, after an initial drop, had remained stable, although the issue of noise continued to be a concern. Local benefits had included better partnership working and introduction of the Cumulative Impact Zone in the City centre. A licensing enforcement project had been established to undertake pro-active night time monitoring and enforcement action. During the past 12 months 101 multi-agency inspections had taken place, resulting in the closure of 6 premises due to a breach of conditions. Three premises had been subject to a review.

With regard to the Health Act, there had been few problems in implementing the provisions in licensed premises. Most complaints and enquiries had concerned smoking shelters. There had been an increase in the number of variations for premises, due to the need to secure external smoking facilities. Where this was not possible, and patrons had to smoke on the footpath or highway, there had been problems with noise and litter. In such circumstances, licensees were advised that they were responsible for patrons' behaviour in the immediate vicinity of their premises. Officers provided support, via personal visits and written guidance, with the aim of ensuring a 'win / win' position for both residents and licensees.

Members discussed what could be done to address the issues of alcohol abuse, noise from licensed premises and the licensing of activities in village and community halls. It was agreed that there was a need to avoid duplication of effort and ensure that the Committee acted within its remit. In view of this, Members asked that further information be circulated regarding:

- Action being taken by the PCT to reduce drinking levels
- Manchester City Council's Licensing Enforcement Project
- Call outs of the Noise Abatement Team to incidents involving drink
- The opinion of the Local Councils Association on the system of licensing village and community halls and any problems involved

The issue of drug testing for door staff was also raised and Members asked that a suggestion be made to the Security Industry Authority (SIA) that they consider this idea.

RESOLVED: (i) That the contents of the report be noted and that Members have regard to this information when exercising their duties under the Act.

REASON: So that Members remain informed on local and national trends.

(ii) That Members' comments and suggestions, as recorded above, be noted and that Officers circulate the additional information requested.¹

REASON: To enable the Committee to monitor action being taken to address the issues discussed.

Action Required

1. Circulate information requested and make the suggestion to SIA KS

S Wiseman, Chair

[The meeting started at 2.00 pm and finished at 2.40 pm].