

LICENSING COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Meeting held on 4 July 2018 at 4.30pm

In The Council Chamber, West Somerset House, Williton

Present:

Councillor R Lillis Chairman
Councillor D Westcott Vice-Chairman

Councillor I Aldridge
Councillor S Goss
Councillor A Kingston-James
Councillor R Thomas

Councillor K Turner
Councillor N Thwaites
Councillor T Venner

Members in Attendance:

Councillor H Davies

Officers in Attendance:

Licensing Manager (J Rendell)
Licensing Officer (A Evens)
Democratic Services Officer (C Rendell)

LEP1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Councillors I Jones and J Parbrook.

LEP2 Minutes of the meeting held on 14 March 2018

(Minutes of the Meeting of the Licensing Committee held on 14 March 2018 – circulated with the Agenda.)

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Licensing Committee held on 14 March 2018 be noted.

LEP3 Declarations of Interest

Members present at the meeting declared the following personal interests in their capacity as a Member of a County, Parish or Town Council:

Name	Minute No.	Member of	Action Taken
Councillor I Aldridge	All	Williton Parish Council	Spoke and voted
Councillor S Goss	All	Stogursey Parish Council	Spoke and voted
Councillor A Kingston-James	All	Minehead Town Council	Spoke and voted
Councillor R Thomas	All	Minehead Town Council	Spoke and voted
Councillor K Turner	All	Brompton Ralph Parish Council	Spoke and voted
Councillor T Venner	All	Minehead Town Council	Spoke and voted

Councillor D Westcott	All	Watchet Town Council	Spoke and voted
Councillor H Davies	All	Somerset County Council	Spoke

LEP4 Public Participation

No members of the public had requested to speak on any item on the agenda.

LEP5 Licensing Update Report

The purpose of the report was to keep the Council's statutory Committee up to date on the activities of the Council's Licensing Service, changes to legislation, current consultations and other general licensing matters.

A summary of the activity and performance of the Licensing Service since the last meeting of the Committee was as follows:-

The performance of the Licensing Service was measured against the number of applications that were completed within 14 days of them being determined. Between 1 January and 31 March 2018, 97.2% of applications had been completed within the 14 day timescale.

Members were provided with a comparison of the numbers of applications received for each of the regimes administered by the Licensing Team between January and March 2018 and the numbers of licences in force and notices given as at 21 June 2018.

The Licensing Manager advised the Committee on the sad news that Leigh-ann Fumagalli was due to leave the department as she had been seconded to another job within the Council. She would be sadly missed and he was in the process of holding discussions with HR to recruit a replacement so there would be a limited impact on the service delivery.

The Institute of Licensing had published a guide on determining the suitability of applicants and licensees in the taxi and private hire trade. The aim of the guide was to try to achieve a level of consistency across local authorities. The guide would assist officers in developing a single taxi licensing policy across Taunton Deane and West Somerset, in readiness for the formation of the New Council.

Section 182 of the Licensing Act 2003 required the Secretary of State to issue guidance to licensing authorities in regard to how to discharge their functions. The Home Office had the responsibility and in April 2018, it had published a revised document. Sections in relation to cumulative impact assessments and hearings, amongst others, had been updated.

During the discussion the following points were raised:-

- Concern was raised on the staffing levels and whether there would be cover provided in the Williton office.
The same amount of cover should be provided. If staff were not in the office, they could always be contacted via the telephone or email and they worked within the core hours. The Licensing Team were able to answer queries for both Councils and customers had been encouraged to book an appointment prior to visiting the offices. The team had adopted an agile way of working.

- Clarification was requested on the Shadow Council arrangements, the Transformation Project and the new structure.
Information was given on the recruitment process, the new structure, how staff would work in the future and the meetings that had been set up for the Shadow Authority.
- Members highlighted that there was a lot of work to be carried out prior to the formation of the New Council to align all of the policies used by the Licensing Team.
The Licensing Team would check and challenge all the policies used across both Councils. The gambling and licensing act policies would be worked on over the next couple of months and then work would be carried out on the taxi policies.
- Members suggested instead of the retention of district areas, the taxi trade could use urban and rural areas instead. Technology could be introduced that could identify what roads were being driven on and alter the tariffs accordingly.
The taxi drivers would need to be consulted on what proposals could be made on areas and tariffs. Taunton Deane had a Taxi Forum and the Licensing Manager hoped to introduce a similar forum within West Somerset. Zones might not prove to be practical and the Council wanted to encourage growth and new businesses.
- Members requested an update on the Hinkley Point Accommodation item that had been discussed at the Licensing Committee held on 28 November 2017.
An update would be circulated to the Committee Members.
- Members praised the team for all their hard work.

RESOLVED that Committee:-

- a. Noted the update report; and
- b. Approved the creation of a Joint Licensing Committee to meet when required to sign off revised policies for the New Council.

(The meeting closed at 6.10pm.)