

LICENSING COMMITTEE 10TH JULY 2007

PRESENT: Councillor Pacey (The Chair)
Councillors Brown and Sutherland (The Vice-chairs)
Councillors Astill, Bava, Capleton, Duffy, Gay,
K. Jones, S. Jones, Radford and Wise

APOLOGIES: Councillors Green, Jukes and Popley

5. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee on 5th June 2007 were confirmed as a correct record and signed.

6. DISCLOSURES OF PERSONAL INTEREST

No disclosures of interest were made.

FUNCTIONS UNDER THE LICENSING ACT 2003

7. LICENSING ACT 2003 – COMPLAINTS AND ENFORCEMENT – WORKING WITH THE POLICE

At its meeting on 16th October 2006, the Committee had considered the Council's position in dealing with complaints and enforcement issues under the Licensing Act 2003 and the need to improve the working relationship with the Police in that respect, with representatives of Leicestershire Police attending the meeting to assist the Committee. An extract from the minutes of that meeting outlining the Committee's discussions and decisions in respect of the matter was submitted (item 4 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

Prior to the meeting of the Committee on 5th June 2007, the Deputy Director of Partnerships and Customer Services had outlined briefly the role and past work of the Committee as many members were new to the Council following the local elections on 3rd May 2007. The Committee had considered that it would be useful to follow up the previous discussions referred to above.

Therefore, Inspectors M. Cuddihy and C. Yallop and Sergeant I. Stone of Leicestershire Police attended the meeting to assist the Committee's further consideration and follow up of this matter, together with the Council's Deputy Director of Partnerships and Customer Services, the Licensing Manager and the Licensing Enforcement Officers.

Representatives of the Police and officers responded to issues raised by the Committee as follows:

- (a) Information was provided on the reorganisation of local policing units in Charnwood which had taken place in January 2007.
- (b) Reference was made to the decision of the Committee on 16th October 2006 that liaison meetings be held between Police Licensing Sergeants, the Council's Licensing Officers, the Chair and Vice-chairs of the Committee and a representative of the Council's Environmental Health Service. The Committee needed to consider whether such an arrangement remained its favoured option for ensuring regular liaison between the Council and the Police. An informal meeting involving Council Licensing and Environmental Health Officers and the Police had been held on 14th June 2007 and had been very useful in exchanging information and discussing particular premise licences. Another such meeting was proposed for August 2007 and appropriate representatives of the Committee could be involved in that, if the Committee so wished.
- (c) It was proposed to set up, in September 2007, a Joint Action Group type arrangement for Loughborough, further details of which were outlined. That might represent a useful way forward in providing a more structured liaison arrangement between the Police and the Council and could include representation from the Committee.
- (d) There was a good working relationship between the Police and the Council, with much valuable work having been achieved, particularly over the last six months.
- (e) Concerns regarding a particular premise in Loughborough Shelthorpe ward not complying with all of the conditions of its licence and the effect that that non-compliance was having on the local community were recognised. Details were provided of the measures being taken in that respect, both by the Council's Licensing Officers and the Police, together with discussion on how local councillors could assist with that.
- (f) In general, councillors and local residents should report concerns regarding non-compliance with premise licence conditions to the Council's Licensing Officers, contact details for whom were provided. The response that could be expected when such a concern was reported was outlined. The provision of such information and evidence was important if action was to be taken. The Police had a role to play in matters such as the anti-social behaviour and crime which could result from liquor licensed premises. Information needed to be provided on a problem if it was to be dealt with, including in respect of a particular problem which had been referred to with alcohol in Syston which could not be attributed to a premise licence. Town and parish councils could usefully interact with the local policing unit in such matters.

- (g) Discussions which took place at any informal liaison meetings between the Police and Council representatives could be reported in summary to the Committee as part of a standing item on the Committee's agenda, if it so wished.
- (h) It was confirmed that a Police objection had been made to a premise licence application for a premise in the adjacent district of Blaby submitted by an applicant who had lost a premise licence for a premise in Anstey in 2006.
- (i) Reference was made to the uncertainty which could be caused for both the Police and local residents as a result of premises having licences allowing them to be open to a certain time, but sometimes choosing to close earlier than that.
- (j) The single non-emergency number (SNEN) for telephoning the Police (101) was not operational in Charnwood. The roll-out arrangements for the initiative were not known for this meeting. It was understood that it had been a decision of the Council not to subscribe to the initiative, although the particular reasons for that and the current position in that respect were not known for this meeting. The Council's Head of Community Safety could be asked to provide information in that respect.
- (k) Concerns that people sometimes had difficulty contacting the Police on the existing non-emergency number of (0116) 222 2222 and the confidence issues that that could cause were recognised. Reference was made to the availability of the Crimestoppers telephone number.

The Chair referred to difficulties which he considered some residents had in contacting the Police to arrange discussions on local problems. He also considered that any liaison meetings between the Council and the Police should provide the opportunity (i) to register with the Police particular local concerns or problems being experienced and (ii) to inform the Council of the issues and circumstances it should be bearing in mind in its licensing role. Although it was appropriate to limit councillor representation at liaison meetings to perhaps the Chair and/or Vice-chairs of the Committee, any councillor could pass details of licensing concerns in the ward they represented to be highlighted at those meetings.

RESOLVED

1. that the representatives of Leicestershire Police be thanked for attending the meeting and taking part in the discussion on the matter;
2. that the Deputy Director of Partnerships and Customer Services be asked to arrange a first liaison meeting between Police Licensing Sergeants, the Council's Licensing Officers, a representative(s) of the Council's Environmental Health Service, the Chair and Vice-chairs of this Committee,

and, if possible, a representative(s) of Leicestershire Trading Standards, a provisional date in that respect being Wednesday, 29th August 2007;

3. that a standing item be included on future Licensing Committee agendas to enable a summary of discussion at the liaison meetings referred to in resolution 2. above to be reported to the Committee;
4. that the Council's Head of Community Safety be asked to report to a future meeting of the Committee the position in respect of the SNEN (101) initiative, given the use that might have in respect of reporting and recording complaints relating to licensed premises.

LC/

Note:

No reference may be made to these minutes at the Council meeting on 3rd September 2007 unless notice to that effect is given to the Head of Democratic Services by five members of the Council no later than five days following the publication of the minutes.