

Licensing Committee

Monday 19th July 2021

MINUTES

Present:

Councillor Salman Akbar (Chair), Councillor Lucy Harrison (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Karen Ashley, Tom Baker-Price, Joanne Beecham, Michael Chalk, Aled Evans, Andrew Fry, Julian Grubb, Ann Isherwood and David Thain

Also Present:

Imran Altaf

Officers:

Vanessa Brown and Dave Etheridge

Democratic Services Officers:

Jess Bayley-Hill

1. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies for absence.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. MINUTES

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meeting of the Licensing Committee held on 8th March 2021 be approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Chair.

4. PUBLIC SPEAKING

Mr A. Nazir attended the Licensing Committee meeting to speak on behalf of the Redditch Taxi Association, under the Council's public speaking rules, and commented on the proposals for the creation /

Chair

amendment of stands for hackney carriages, in connection with Minute Item No. 6.

5. STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES FOR THE GAMBLING ACT

The Senior Practitioner (Licensing), Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS), presented a report on the subject of the Statement of Principles for the Gambling Act.

The Committee was informed that the Council was a Licensing Authority under the terms of the Gambling Act. As such, the Council could issue licences for a diverse range of related services, including small society lotteries, gaming machines and bingo halls.

The Council was required to have a Statement of Principles, under the terms of the Gambling Act. This Statement of Principles had to be refreshed by the Council every three years. The Council had previously agreed the existing Statement of Principles in 2018. The new Statement of Principles would need to be approved in time to come into effect from January 2022 onwards.

There had been very few changes to gambling legislation or to the statutory guidance to Licensing Authorities issued by the Gambling Commission since 2018. Therefore, Officers were anticipating that only minor changes would be required to the Council's Statement of Principles. This included:

- Amendments to the introduction to update factual information, such as details relating to local demographics.
- Making reference to the Safeguarding Children Partnership in respect of that body's role as a consultee on matters relating to children and young people.
- The inclusion of information about the new Betting and Gaming Council, which had been formed following the merger of the previous British Bookmakers and Casino Forum organisations.

In reviewing the Statement of Principles, the Council was required to consult with a number of responsible bodies. This included Public Health England, Worcestershire County Council and West Mercia Police. The consultation process would be advertised in the local press and on the Council's website. As only minor changes were likely to be required, Officers were proposing that the consultation period should be six to eight weeks in length. The feedback received during the consultation process would be reported for Members' consideration at a meeting of the Licensing Committee later in the year.

Following the presentation of the report, Members discussed the decision-making process that would need to be followed in terms of updating the Statement of Principles. Members were advised that the Licensing Committee would review the consultation feedback and proposed changes at a meeting on 8th November but did not have the authority to determine the final content of the Statement of Principles. Instead, recommendations would need to be made by the Licensing Committee to the Council meeting due to take place on 15th November, where a final decision would be taken.

Members noted that the documents provided contained the changes suggested by Officers but these had not been specifically highlighted. To ensure clarity for Members, it was agreed that a copy of the draft policy detailing the changes in track changes, should be circulated for Members' consideration after the meeting.

During consideration of this item, Members noted that at paragraphs 10.5 and 10.6 of the draft policy reference was made to the role of the Public Health team in terms of assisting the Licensing Authority. Members agreed that these paragraphs should specify that Worcestershire County Council's Public Health team was the relevant body that was referred to in this instance.

RESOLVED

that subject to the amendment detailed in the preamble above, to approve the revised draft Statement of Principles for the purpose of consultation with relevant parties.

6. VERBAL UPDATE ON ENGAGEMENT WITH STAKEHOLDERS IN RELATION TO PROPOSALS FOR THE CREATION / AMENDMENT OF STANDS FOR HACKNEY CARRIAGES

The Senior Practitioner (Licensing), WRS, provided a verbal update in respect of engagement with stakeholders in relation to proposals for the creation / amendment of stands for hackney carriages. In introducing the report, Officers explained that private vehicles, including licensed private hire vehicles, could not park on hackney carriage stands. Only licensed hackney carriage vehicles could park on these stands.

Members were advised that in January 2020 the Committee had considered a report on the subject of the current location of hackney carriage stands. The Committee had then asked Officers to consult with stakeholders about options for change, including:

- The potential to introduce a hackney carriage stand at Redditch Train Station as part of the redevelopment work on the site.
- The potential to introduce a hackney carriage stand at the Alexandra Hospital.
- The potential to change the existing hackney carriage stand on Unicorn Hill and the possibility of moving this stand to Bates Hill.

There had been some delay in respect of progressing with this consultation process. This had partly been caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. However, in summer 2020 work had begun in respect of the consultation process.

A meeting had been held in the autumn at Bates Hill with representatives of Worcestershire County Council's Highways Department, which had identified some flexibility in relation to Unicorn Hill. There had been a further delay when the engineer had identified issues which it had been felt would prevent action from being taken but it subsequently transpired that this was no longer an obstacle.

In the summer of 2020 correspondence had been sent to the Worcestershire Hospitals Acute NHS Trust in respect of the suggested hackney carriage stand at the Alexandra Hospital. However, no response had been received from the Trust to this correspondence and Officers suggested that this appeared to indicate there was no support from the Trust for the introduction of a hackney carriage stand at the hospital.

Officers had met with representatives of the company that managed parking at Redditch Train Station to discuss the potential to introduce a hackney carriage stand at the station. During these discussions, the potential for hackney carriage drivers to pay a license fee to operate from a rank at the station had been noted. This arrangement was in place in some, though not all, train stations in the West Midlands.

Officers were aiming to present a more detailed written update on this process at a future meeting of the Licensing Committee. Members would subsequently need to undertake a formal consultation process in respect of any proposals. As part of this process, hackney carriage drivers needed to be consulted.

RESOLVED that

the report be noted.

7. WORK PROGRAMME

Officers confirmed that there had been no amendments to the Licensing Committee's Work Programme since the publication of the agenda for the meeting.

RESOLVED that

the contents of the Licensing Committee's Work Programme be noted.

The Meeting commenced at 7.00 pm
and closed at 7.35 pm

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