

Runnymede Borough Council

LICENSING COMMITTEE

9 April 2008 at 7.30 p.m.

Members of the Committee present: Councillors J M Edwards (Chairman), Mrs P I Broadhead (Vice-Chairman), R J Edis, Mrs E Gill, R N Jones, C Knight, D W Parr and N Stewart.

Members of the Committee absent: Councillor Ms R E Haylor

635. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 24 January 2008 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

636. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Ms R E Haylor.

637. FINANCIAL MONITORING STATEMENT

(Ref: Minutes of Licensing Committee, January 2008, page 690, para. 488)

Members received the Financial Monitoring Statement for the services under the remit of the Licensing Committee. It was noted that a savings target of £5,000 had been set for 2009/10, although the likelihood of achieving that level of savings was limited given that fees and charges were largely set by statute and some were actually lower than those set under the previous Licensing regime.

Members expressed concern that financial assistance from central Government had not been forthcoming with regard to off-setting the costs incurred during implementation of the Licensing Act 2003 and Gambling Act 2005. Officers agreed to pursue this once more and submit a progress report to the next meeting of the Committee in June 2008.

Members were informed that the current thinking around examining the potential for joint working with other local authorities in the North West Surrey cluster might occasion some modest savings depending on what form the joint working took.

The Committee was advised to address specific questions in respect of budgetary allocations not within the purview of Environmental Protection to the Director of Finance.

638. LICENSING ACT 2003 – SUMMARY OF MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

The Committee was advised of a recent Ministerial Statement issued by the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport as an evaluation of the impact of the Licensing Act 2003 and signposting future initiatives to reduce alcohol related harm.

Members noted that the Statement was very much a general observation and were encouraged that the 'Review' system, acknowledged as a powerful tool, was being exercised in a proportionate and effective way in Runnymede.

Members also noted the following changes confirmed by the Government to take place with immediate effect. These were to:-

- make it easier to review premises where local intelligence suggests there is a problem.
- encourage the imposition of tougher sanctions on those found to be breaching their licensing conditions.
- change the offence of persistently selling alcohol to a person under 18 from three strikes to two strikes in three months.

- support the police and local authorities to identify problem hot spots by ranking geographical areas and concentrations of premises on the basis of the risk they present to crime and disorder, public nuisance and children; and
- recommend for further investigation the possibility of introducing a new red card and yellow card alert system. A yellow card will put a problem premises on immediate probation together with tough and uncompromising sanctions and a red card will lead to the withdrawal of the licence.

The Committee agreed that the new Licensing regime brought more accountability and involvement of the community in licensing decisions.

639. LICENSING ACT 2003 – APPEAL – CARLTON NEWS (BEST ONE), NEW HAW

The Committee noted receipt of a letter from the local Police following the review, revocation, appeal and reinstatement with conditions of the Premises Licence of Carlton News, The Broadway, New Haw.

Members were content that the situation appeared to have shown improvement with fewer incidents of youth alcohol related anti-social behaviour and crimes of violence in the New Haw and Woodham area.

The Police were very pleased with the partnership working between themselves and the local authority in this case.

Members recalled the hearing at which it was resolved that the premises licence in question be revoked and were also keen for the 'refusals' book (where sales had been refused to a particular individual with details) to be inspected by Officers more regularly to make sure it was up to date.

The Committee requested Officers to investigate a similar problem in the Addlestone area associated with a local shop and congregations of youths who appeared to have been drinking. Members also asked that measures be taken to encourage better training of shop workers to avoid selling alcohol to under-age youths through the issue of a general/specific letter to local retailers which also highlighted the importance of the 'refusals' book.

Officers confirmed that new and refresher training for Licensing Members would take place after the elections in May, and that in the meantime, Members of the Committee would be invited to the next 'Pubwatch' meeting in the borough.

Chairman

(The meeting ended at 8.10 p.m.)