



Leicester
City Council

Minutes of the Meeting of the
LICENSING AND PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

Held: MONDAY, 15 NOVEMBER 2021 at 5:30 pm

P R E S E N T:

Councillor Singh Johal (Chair)

Councillor Fonseca

Councillor Westley

Councillor Gee

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1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Byrne, Govind, Pickering and Shelton.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made.

3. MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE

NOTED:

The membership of the Licensing and Public Safety Committee for the 2021-22 municipal year as follows:

Councillor Singh Johal	Chair
Councillor Byrne	Co-Vice Chair
Councillor Pickering	Co-Vice Chair
Councillor Cank	
Councillor Fonseca	
Councillor Gee	
Councillor Govind	
Councillor Shelton	
Councillor Westley	
1 Non-Group Place Vacancy	

4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED:

that the minutes of the meeting held on 9th February 2021 be approved as a correct record.

5. PETITIONS

The Monitoring Officer reported that no petitions had been submitted in accordance with the Council's procedures.

6. QUESTIONS, REPRESENTATIONS, STATEMENTS OF CASE

The Monitoring Officer reported that no questions, representations and statements of case had been submitted in accordance with the Council's procedures.

7. REVIEW OF STATEMENT OF LICENSING POLICY

The Director of Neighbourhood and Environmental Services submitted a report to obtain the Committee's views and observations on the proposed Licensing Policy for February 2022 to February 2027. The Committee was asked to provide comments on the proposed policy and the proposals for the special policy on cumulative impact, to assist when setting the policy for 2022 to 2027 at Full Council.

The Licensing Team Manager (Policy and Applications) presented the report. It was noted that the policy had been re-written to make for easier understanding in regards to the wording, and included the new Sections 7 and 8 that were derived from the collaboration with Public Health, Leicestershire Police and the Noise Team. The Policy had been out to public consultation which included licence holders / members of the public and other interested parties, and comments had been received regarding the proposed areas of special interest and the retention (or not) of the CIZs.

The following additional points were noted:

- Members discussed and requested the Licensing Team present the recent changes in a more simplified way, such as the use of bold font, section headings and page number references. The Chief Licensing Officer suggested Members review the appendix attached at Page 63 to the document, particularly section 7 and 8, but would take the comment into consideration in the time period leading up to Full Council. It was noted the Policy had been completely re-written so the changes applied could not be shown easily, but the Policy had been made easier to read.
- In terms of partnership working, the authority had received contributions to the policy from the Public Health Team, which outlined what they were doing to address the impact of alcohol on the health and wellbeing of the residents in Leicester. The authority also worked closely with the Police, Noise Team and licensing partners.
- Officers had taken the opportunity to include matters, such as Public Health,

who were now a consultee with regards to alcohol impact. Also, the policy now included areas of special interest, which would highlight particular spots of the city where applicants would be expected to address specific local circumstances in their operating schedules.

- There was concern by Members over the rise of street drinking and anti-social behaviour in both standard public areas and CIZs (Town Hall, Clock Tower, Beaumont Lees, Belgrave Gate, Evington, Narborough Road), with alcohol being bought from off-licence shops to be consumed outside the premises. It was asked if the Police brought to the Authority's attention areas where there were particular issues, namely around shopping areas. The Chief Licensing Officer clarified that Police were responsible for the safety and control of such incidents, with the Licensing Team and the Council being solely responsible for the provision of licences for establishments.

If there was an issue with a specific premise, a review application could be made by the Police or another responsible authority, or by any person, based on one or more of the licensing objectives defined in the Licensing Act 2003. If there was a problem within an area not caused by a licensed premises then the duty would fall to the Police to investigate and control.

- The Licensing Team Manager (Policy and Applications) stated that the areas of Special Interest were areas where evidence of ongoing alcohol abuse and excess consumption had been provided, either through collaboration with the Police or Council officers, or through feedback from the public.
- Members agreed to liaise with the Police over their concerns of street drinking and anti-social behaviour in their respective wards, as well as to encourage more contact with the Council's Licensing Team, as reports of anti-social behaviour and the unregulated sale of alcohol happening in Members' wards was not being addressed.
- Members were informed that evidence was required for an area to be considered as a CIZ. Due to the coronavirus pandemic the up-to-date evidence did not appear to support CIZs and therefore, Licensing were looking at areas of Special Interest in conjunction with the Noise Team, Police and Licensing Enforcement Team. It was noted that justification for CIZs would be reviewed in 12 months time.
- Members expressed anxiety over the reduction of numbers in the Police Force in the City, since 2010.
- Members unanimously agreed that safety standards in public on the streets had been deteriorating and the resources available to the Council was disproportionate to the scale of the problems being faced. Members resolved that it was in the interests of the public to tackle those problematic areas instead of solely taking a passive response in ensuring the public safety by diverting foot traffic away from these problem areas.

- Overall, the Committee was happy with the Policy and changes made.

The Chair thanked the Licensing Officers for the report.

RESOLVED:

That:

1. the comments be noted and taken into further consideration by the Licensing Team.
2. the Licensing Team review the list of Areas of Special Interest in light of the Committee's concerns around street drinking and anti-social behaviour.
3. the possibility of a future conference between the Council, Police, Noise Team, retailers and the public be considered to tackle problematic behaviour and street drinking in the city.

8. GAMBLING POLICY 2022-2025

The Director of Neighbourhood and Environmental Services submitted a report to the Licensing and Public Safety Committee. It was noted the Council was required to publish its statement of Gambling Policy at least four weeks before it took effect, with the current statement of gambling policy due to expire on 31 January 2022.

Members were recommended to make any comments on the proposed policy and the consultation responses prior to the proposed policy being reported to Full Council on 25 November for approval.

The Chief Licensing Officer presented the report. It was noted that consultation has taken place with responsible authorities and existing gambling licence holders. Members were informed that the Gambling Act 2005 had come into effect in 2007. In looking at the guidance from the Gambling Commission there were no key issues of significance in the Council's Gambling Policy that required changing.

Members of the Committee were informed that, as had been discussed at the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Commission meeting, Local Authorities might consider having a "no casino" policy. It was noted that Leicester had licences for up to three casinos in the city, of which two were currently in use. After discussion, Members did not support the Authority having a 'No Casino' policy and proposed no changes to the draft Gambling Policy.

Members further discussed the suitability and unsuitability of locations of gambling establishments. Members concluded that they did not believe that the draft Gambling Policy should be changed with regards to the sensitivity of locations of gambling premises and recognised that each case would be discussed on its own merits.

The Chair thanked the officer for the report.

RESOLVED:

That the Licensing and Public Safety Committee:

1. did not support the 'No Casino' policy and proposed no changes to the draft Gambling Policy;
2. did not feel it necessary to amend the draft Gambling Policy with regards to the sensitivity of the location of gambling establishments;
3. proposed no other changes to the draft Gambling Policy and referred the report to Full Council on 25 November 2021 for approval.

9. TAXI STRATEGY

The Director of Neighbourhood and Environmental Services submitted a report for noting to inform the Committee Members of progress in relation to the Taxi Strategy.

The Chief Licensing Officer presented the report. It was noted that the progress of the Taxi Strategy had been reduced due to work associated with the pandemic, however it was reported the Strategy was not far from conclusion, and Members would have the opportunity to view the Strategy prior to final approval by the City Mayor.

During discussion around the report, the following observations and comments were made:

- Hackney Carriage fares were significantly more expensive than those of privately hired vehicles, which could lead to a drastic decline in hackney carriage usage over other means of private transport. Members hoped to level the playing field in regard to the fares of Leicester Hackney carriages, to match those of private hire taxi services. The Chief Licensing Officer reported that the market controlled Private Hire costs and that the Council was not involved in setting those fares. The Council set maximum tariffs for hackney carriages and those had not been reviewed for some time. A request for a review of fares would have to come from the trade.
- Members acknowledged the tremendous efforts of taxi drivers and operators during the Coronavirus Pandemic, especially for their services in assisting the elderly and delivering food parcels to those in quarantine.
- The use of bus lanes for private hire services was discussed by Members, who queried whether it would be beneficial for public and transportation services to share the operation of bus lanes. There were conflicting views for and against, with the majority of Members against private hire usage, due to potential traffic congestion of bus lanes.
- Members discussed the potential usage of CCTV operations in Taxi and Hackney Carriage vehicles. It was noted that discussion on CCTV in vehicles would be a piece of work that would commence once the Strategy

was approved, but acknowledged that if it were made mandatory, it would cost the vehicle licence holder.

- It was noted there was no imminent law change to prevent drivers licensed outside of the City Council authority from operating in the city.

The Chair noted the valid comments from Members and the information provided by the Officer. He added that he would like to see more consultation with Hackney Carriage drivers, who had to pay upwards of £60,000 for a car and should be classed as professional drivers and transport for the city.

The Chair thanked the Chief Licensing Officer for the report.

RESOLVED:

1. That the report be received and the comments noted.

10. CLOSE OF MEETING

There being no other items of urgent business, the meeting closed at 7.01pm.