

SWT Licensing Committee - 9 March 2020

Present: Councillor Kelly Durdan (Chair)

Councillors Sarah Wakefield, Marcus Barr, Paul Bolton, Caroline Ellis, Libby Lisgo, Mark Lithgow, Anthony Trollope-Bellew, Ray Tully, Simon Coles (In place of Marcia Hill) and Vivienne Stock-Williams (In place of Andy Milne)

Officers: Clare Rendell and John Rendell

Also Present: Councillor Chris Booth

(The meeting commenced at 6.15 pm)

14. Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors H Farbahi, M Hill, S Lees, A Milne and M Peters.

Councillor S Coles substituted for Councillor M Hill and Councillor V Stock-Williams substituted for Councillor A Milne.

15. Minutes of the previous meeting of the Licensing Committee

(Minutes of the meeting of the Licensing Committee held on 16 September 2019 circulated with the agenda)

The Licensing Specialist gave the Committee an update from the previous meeting on the current position with the statement made by a member of the public and that he had sought legal advice and was waiting for a written answer from him to send. Councillors requested that the response was distributed to the Committee for information and training purposes.

Resolved that the minutes of the Licensing Committee held on 16 September 2019 be confirmed as a correct record.

16. Declarations of Interest

Members present at the meeting declared the following personal interests in their capacity as a Councillor or Clerk of a County, Town or Parish Council or any other Local Authority:-

Name	Minute No.	Description of Interest	Reason	Action Taken
Cllr M Barr	All Items	Wellington	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr P Bolton	All Items	Minehead	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr C Booth	All Items	Wellington and Taunton Charter	Personal	Spoke

		Trustee		
Cllr S Coles	All Items	SCC & Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr C Ellis	All Items	Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr L Lisgo	All Items	Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr M Lithgow	All Items	Wellington	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr V Stock-Williams	All Items	Wellington	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr R Tully	All Items	West Monkton	Personal	Spoke and Voted

17. Public Participation

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

18. Licensing Quarterly Update Report

During the discussion, the following points were made:-

- Councillors queried the flux in table 4.8 and what would 'normal' service levels look like.
The Licensing Specialist advised that normal would be anywhere above the red line, luckily there had only been a minor flux but he wanted to aspire to be above the 95% line for service levels.
- Councillors queried whether the flux had been caused by staffing levels.
The Licensing Specialist confirmed that yes it had been due to staffing.
- Councillors hoped that the staffing levels were back up to a full contingency and praised the team for the work they did.
- Councillors queried what priority level work would be carried out next and what progress had been made on updating documents, such as accessibility to taxis.
The Licensing Specialist had developed a work plan and designated access was on the list but due to the nature of the work, that item was categorised as green and low level. There were other policies that needed work to be done first, those included harmonising the old Taunton Deane and West Somerset taxi policies and street trading policies. He hoped that now the staffing levels were back to normal, there would be resilience to work on more strategic work.
- Concern was raised that the staffing levels were still not stable and Councillors asked how they could ensure that staff were appointed to the Licensing Department as the Committee wanted to achieve more.
The Licensing Specialist advised that he was due to meet with the Director for External Operations to discuss the work plan for the Licensing Department and statistics for the department and welcomed any feedback from the Committee and invited Councillors to join him at the meeting.
- Councillors queried how the new disclosure barring system was chosen.
The Licensing Specialist advised the Licensing Officer went through the procurement process set by the Council.

Resolved that the Committee noted the report.

19. **Statements of licensing policy for the Licensing Act 2003 and Gambling Act 2005 Report**

During the discussion, the following points were made:-

- Councillors requested clarification on whether the policies were the new documents for Somerset West and Taunton.
The Licensing Specialist confirmed that yes they were the new documents that had been aligned from the previous Taunton Deane and West Somerset policies.
- Concern was raised that the Unparished area of Taunton had not been included in the consultation and requested they be listed for future work.
Yes they would be added to the list of consultees for future use.
- Councillors queried who set the Sunday Trading Rules on the sale of alcohol for shops and supermarkets.
The Licensing Specialist advised that was set by Central Government and there was separate Act that gave guidance on Sunday trading.
- Concern was raised on the reactive nature of enforcement matters for Licensing.
The Licensing Specialist advised that there had been changes in the ways of working as a result of staffing levels and wanted to be transparent about how enforcement work was carried out.
- Councillors stressed the need for the community to know how enforcement work was carried out so that they could assist in notifying the Council of any breaches.
The Licensing Specialist agreed and advised that licences could be suspended due to any non-payment of licensing invoices, as the Finance Department kept them notified of payments received, follow up work would then be carried out on the relevant premises and applicant.
- Councillors queried whether the officers were confident that all CCTV cameras had the appropriate signage on them.
The Licensing Specialist advised there was still work to be done on signage but that it related to CCTV owned by the Council. A review had been carried out which highlighted the work to be done.

Resolved that the Licensing Committee approved the two draft policies (subject to any minor amendments, if appropriate) attached at appendices 4 and 6, in readiness for the Full Council meeting in March 2020.

20. **Access to Information - Exclusion of the Press and Public**

Resolved that the press and the public be excluded from the meeting for the item numbered 7 on the Agenda as the items contained exempt information as defined in Paragraph 2 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, and the public interest in withholding the information outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information to the public.

21. **Complaint received by a member of the Licensing Committee**

The Licensing Committee debated a complaint received and agreed that conditions should be placed on the licence in question.

(The Meeting ended at 7.10 pm)