

LICENSING COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 17 September 2019

**Present: Councillor Backhouse (Chairman)
Councillors Woodward (Vice-Chairman), Atkins, Mrs Cobbold, Ellis, Funnell, Hill,
Lidstone, Noakes, Podbury, Pope, Thomson and Williams**

Officers in Attendance: Sharon Bamborough (Head of Licensing Partnership), Robin Harris (Interim Team Leader (Contentious)), Gary Stevenson (Head of Housing, Health and Environment) and Cheryl Clark (Democratic Services Officer)

Other Members in Attendance: None

CHAIRMAN'S INTRODUCTION

LC10/19 The Chairman opened the meeting, introduced Committee members and officers in attendance, and outlined procedural matters of the meeting. A minute's silence was held in memory of Councillor Dr Ronen Basu.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

LC11/19 Apologies for absence were recorded from Councillor Fairweather.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:

LC12/19 No declarations of interest were made.

NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS WISHING TO SPEAK (IN ACCORDANCE WITH COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 18):

LC13/19 There were no visiting members who had registered to speak.

MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

LC14/19 **RESOLVED** – That the minutes of the previous meeting dated 11 June be approved as a correct record.

LICENSING ACT 2003 - STATEMENT OF LICENSING POLICY

LC15/19 Miss Bamborough, Head of Licensing Partnership introduced and summarised this report, which proposed a minor review of the Council's Statement of Licensing Policy to include an additional section for outdoor events. In response to a member query, she reiterated comments made at an earlier committee meeting on 5 March 2019, that the proposal was simply to fill a gap within the Council's existing policy. Furthermore, it was clarified that this was intended only as a policy guideline and would not preclude one off events extending beyond the guide 23:00 finish time, subject to individual consideration and agreement.

RESOLVED – That the proposed amendment to the Statement of Licensing Policy (which will expire 6 January 2021) which was to include a new section on outdoor events, be agreed and recommended for adoption by Full Council on 25 September 2019.

LICENSING PARTNERSHIP UPDATE REPORT 2019

LC16/19 Miss Bamborough, Head of Licensing Partnership introduced and summarised this report, which provided an update on the performance and activity of the Licensing Partnership for members information. It was noted as commendable that performance targets had been maintained at Tunbridge Wells, without increasing existing staffing levels.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted for information only.

INTRODUCTION OF LICENSING PRE-APPLICATION ADVICE

LC17/19 Miss Bamborough, Head of Licensing Partnership introduced and summarised this report, which proposed the introduction in principle of charging for pre-application advice for certain types of licence applications as set out in Appendix A. It was also noted that the proposed fee levels would be included as part of the wider annual review of fees and charges in a future report to Committee, including Taxi Licensing fees.

In response to queries from members, Miss Bamborough explained that under the Licensing Act 2003, statutory fees had remained unchanged since 2005 and staff currently spent a considerable amount of time responding to inaccurate or incomplete applications, which might have been more effectively managed under a paid for pre-application scheme. She also clarified to members that the proposal was a matter of cost recovery and there was no intention of making a profit from the scheme.

RESOLVED – That the principle of the introduction of charging for pre-application advice for certain types of licence applications be agreed.

URGENT BUSINESS:

LC18/19 There were no matters of urgent business.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

LC19/19 **RESOLVED** – That the next meeting take place on Tuesday 3 December 2019, at 6pm.

NOTES:

1. For full details of the proceedings, an audio recording of the meeting is available on the Tunbridge Wells Borough Council website.
2. The meeting concluded at 6.35 pm.