

LICENSING AND SAFETY COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 24th January, 2007 at 6.00 p.m.

Conference Room at the Council House, Walsall

Present

Councillor Keith Sears (Chairman)
Councillor Joan Barton
Councillor Leslie Beeley
Councillor Joan Beilby
Councillor Arthur Bentley
Councillor Barbara Cassidy
Councillor John Rochelle
Councillor Graham Wilkes

1078/07 Apologies

Apologies for non-attendance were submitted on behalf of Councillors Gary Clarke, Anthony Harris, Cath Micklewright, Robbie Robinson and Bill Tweddle.

1079/07 Minutes

Resolved

That the minutes of the meeting held on 6th December, 2006, a copy having previously been circulated to each Member of the Committee, be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

1080/07 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

1081/07 Local Government (Access to Information) Act, 1985 (as amended)

There were no items on the agenda which the Committee considered should be dealt with in private session.

1082/07

Gambling Act, 2005

With the aid of a DVD, the Head of Law, Mr. Tony Cox, gave a brief presentation on the Gambling Act, 2005. In doing so, he indicated that two areas of gambling activity had been specifically excluded from the Act, Spread Betting, which would remain regulated by the Financial Services Authority and the National Lottery, which was operated and regulated under the National Lottery Act, 1993.

The licensing regime, established under the Act, consisted of Operator's Licences which are granted to gambling operators; Personal Licences which are issued to key members of the gambling operator's staff; and Premises Licences which permit the gambling activity authorised by the Operator's Licence to take place at specific premises. Operator and Personal Licences would be granted by the new Gambling Commission whereas Premises Licences would be dealt with by Local Authorities.

Mr. Cox circulated explanatory notes in support of the presentation:-

(see annexed)

A period of questioning followed.

Resolved

That the presentation be noted.

1083/07

Taxi Matters

(a) Application for discreet plates on private hire vehicle - Kabal Hussain

The report of the Head of Public Protection was submitted:-

(see annexed)

Members were advised that, under the conditions attached to the grant of a licence for limousines and special event vehicles, this was an issue to be dealt with by the Committee, not one of the Taxi Licensing Sub-Committees.

Members were also advised that Mr. Hussain had still not provided details of his contracts.

Resolved

That the application for discreet plates on a private hire vehicle by Kabal Hussain be refused until such time as Mr. Hussain provides evidence of his contracts.

(b) Private hire and hackney carriage driver training for existing licence holders

The report of the Head of Public Protection was submitted:-

(see annexed)

Resolved

That approval be given to the use of the Training Programme for existing drivers as an alternative to revocation or suspension of licences where it is merited and that the conditions attached to the grant of private hire and hackney carriage drivers licences be amended accordingly.

(c) Postal service of Committee Reports

With the approval of the Committee, a report was submitted:-

(see annexed)

The report was urgent so that the procedure for the postal service of Committee reports to applicants could be revised to ensure the minimum of delay in consideration of the reports at Committee and to bring the process into line with the Courts, who now issue all summons by first class post.

Resolved

That, with immediate effect, the initial delivery of Committee reports to drivers and applicants for licences be by first class post and, in the event that the drivers/applicants do not attend the meeting to which they have been invited, invitations to attend subsequent meetings be delivered by hand.

1084/07

Licensing Act, 2003 Implementation Impact Review

The report of the Head of Public Protection was submitted:-

(see annexed)

Members felt that, in the current financial climate, it would be more prudent to hold the Conference at Walsall Town Hall.

Resolved

- (1) That the findings of the review be noted;
- (2) That the intention to hold a joint Conference on 22nd March, 2007 in Walsall, to which all Members of the Licensing and Safety Committee will be invited to attend, be noted;

- (3) That officers be recommended to hold the Conference at Walsall Town Hall, in the light of the current financial climate;
- (4) That officers be requested to commence the review of the Council's Licensing Policy now so as to take into consideration as wide a consultation as possible;
- (5) That extensive benchmarking be carried out with recognised 'best in practice' Authorities.

Termination of Meeting

The meeting terminated at 7.19 p.m.

Chairman

Date