

LICENSING AND SAFETY COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 18th April, 2007 at 6.00 p.m.

In a 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 Gary Clarke
Councillor Anthony Harris
Councillor Robbie Robinson
Councillor John Rochelle
Councillor Graham Wilkes

1085/07 **Apologies**

Apologies for non-attendance were submitted on behalf of Councillors Cassidy, Micklewright and Tweddle.

1086/07 **Minutes**

Resolved

That the minutes of the meeting held on 24th January, 2007, a copy having previously been circulated to each Member of the Committee, be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

1087/07 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

1088/07 **Local Government (Access to Information) Act, 1985 (as amended)**

Members were advised that, since the agenda had been prepared, advice had been received that Item 5 on the agenda relating to an application for a street trading consent to be renewed under Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 1982, should be considered in the private session under Paragraphs 1, 2 and 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act, 1972 (as amended)

Resolved

That the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the item set out in the private agenda for the reasons set out therein and Section 100A of the Local Government Act, 1972.

1089/07 **Street Trading Review - Scoping Exercise**

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

(see annexed)

The report was outlined by Mr. John Beavon who advised Members that the purpose of the report was to outline the scope and timescale of the intended street trading review across Walsall Borough, with a view to making recommendations to Cabinet on any matters arising which may contribute to a review of policy and issues relating to highways enforcement.

A discussion followed with Members comments being recorded as follows:-

- Street cafés would enhance the street scene
- The initial artist's impression of Civic Square showed parasols, each public house could be asked to have different coloured parasols and a rental charge should be made by the Council
- With regard to A frames and extended shops, officers should talk to Walsall Mobility, Walsall Society for the Blind and other disability groups
- The appearance of the Civic Quarter was currently a mess and, if the Council was serious about re-generating the area, there would be a need to look at how this was done on the continent
- The Town Centre has no greenery/grass and looks like a concrete jungle
- There was a need to look wider than town and district centres but the review should be welcomed. Revenue was a secondary point but the cost of the review needed to be identified
- There needed to be a bit more colour in the Town Centre
- The timescale for the review needed to be identified

- Both the legal and illegal aspects of street trading needed to be looked at, particularly the illegal traders operating outside the Illuminations. To achieve the continental look, there would be a need to look at the quality of stalls. Also, consideration needed to be given to the provision of electricity for street traders as was done on the continent, to prevent the use of generators. This should be funded by businesses, although the Council could set the quality. There should be adequate lighting, street entertainment, buskers all to blend in with the environment and there was a need to have a broader and higher vision with themes and facilities provided in all of the district centres, not just Walsall Town Centre. It was suggested that markets could be in different locations giving different perceptions

Mr. Beavon thanked Members for their contribution to the report and responded by indicating that the only cost of the review would be officer's time. The review would be undertaken as part of officer's normal duties. Member's comments would be taken on board, as would consultations identified in the report. With regard to the timescale, it was anticipated that this would be completed by October, 2007, the results of the consultations would go to the Licensing and Safety Committee prior to submission to Cabinet. He went on to say that the review was aimed at all district centres, not just Walsall Town Centre. He re-iterated that the only cost would be officer's time and that this had not been costed out as an exercise, and that relevant comments would be considered on matters that are the responsibility of the Committee. The remaining comments could be taken on board to influence other responsible bodies.

Resolved

- (1) That the proposed terms of reference and the timescale for the review be endorsed;
- (2) That a future report detailing the findings of the review and comments relating to future options, technical feasibility and aestheticity be received;
- (3) That this issue also be discussed with all LNPs;
- (4) That subsequently, the findings of the consultation exercise be referred to Cabinet.

1090/07 **Taxi Marshalling Scheme**

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

(see annexed)

Mr. Beavon outlined the report and, in doing so, indicated that a security firm would be employed to manage proposed marshals.

Members were advised that such a scheme had already worked in Birmingham, Oldham and Sutton Coldfield and there was a need to make the town safer for both citizens and taxi operators. The pilot scheme was being financed by money allocated from Local Area Agreements fund and was due to begin on 27th April, 2007.

Resolved

That the report, and the objectives contained therein, be received and endorsed and that it be noted that the scheme will commence in April, 2007 and will run for an initial pilot period of three months.

1091/07 **Rationalisation of process for the issue of Taxi/Private Hire Licences**

It was noted that this item had been withdrawn from the agenda.

1092/07 **Private Session**

Exclusion of Public

Resolved

That, during consideration of the remaining item on the agenda, the Committee considers that the item for consideration is exempt information for the reasons set out therein and Section 100A of the Local Government Act, 1972 and accordingly resolves to consider that item in private.

Summary of Matters considered in Private Session

Application for a street trading consent to be renewed under Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 1982

The Committee considered an application for the renewal of a street trading consent and made a decision thereon.

(Exempt information under Paragraphs 1, 2 and 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act, 1972) (as amended)

Termination of Meeting

The meeting terminated at 7.31 p.m.

Chairman

Date