

Licensing and Safety Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 5 April 2023 in the Council Chamber at the Council House, Lichfield Street, Walsall at 6.00pm.

Present: Councillor B. Bains
Councillor C. Bott
Councillor S. Cooper
Councillor K. Hussain
Councillor P. Kaur
Councillor A. Nawaz
Councillor S. Nasreen
Councillor K. Sears
Vacancy

In Attendance: Mr P Gordon, Director Resilient Communities
Mr S. Alom, Team Leader, Licensing
Ms S. Heath, Community Protection Officer
Mrs H. Owen, Democratic Services Officer

11/23 Appointment of Chair for this meeting

In the absence of the Chair, Councillor Gandham and the Vice-Chair, Councillor Samra, nominations were sought to chair this meeting only and the outcome was as follows:

Councillor Cooper – 3 members voting in favour
Councillor Nawaz – 6 members voting in favour

Councillor Nawaz in the Chair

12/23 Welcome and changes in membership

Councillor Nawaz welcomed everyone and reported the following changes in membership:

Councillor Waters - substitution for Councillor Samra
Councillor Sears - appointed to the vacancy allocated to the Conservative Group

In response to a question from members, the Democratic Services Officer, Mrs Owen confirmed that both Councillor Waters and Councillor Sears had received the relevant training appropriate to the Licensing Committee.

Introductions took place. and a quorum of members present in-person was established.

13/23 **Apologies**

Apologies were received from Councillor Gandham and Councillor A. Hussain.

14/23 **Minutes of the last meeting**

Resolved:

That the minutes of the last meeting held on 22 February 2023 copies having previously been circulated to each member of the Committee, be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

15/23 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest

16/23 **Local Government (Access to Information) Act, 1985**

There were no items to be considered in private session

17/23 **Gambling Act 2005 – Revised Statement of Principles**

The Team Leader, Licensing, Mr S. Alom presented a report which sought approval of a revised Statement of Principles issued under section 349 of the Gambling Act 2005

(see annexed)

In presenting the report, Mr Alom referred to paragraph 3.7 of the report and confirmed that two responses to final consultation were received.

Mr Alom responded to questions from members and expanded upon the information in the report particularly around the method of consultation undertaken, the licensing process for establishments and actions to support gambling addiction. He assured members that the Licensing team would work closely with the Community Protection team and the police to undertake joint enforcement visits to ensure that establishments were complying with the policy, including the safety of vulnerable persons and that periodic reports would be provided to members. He also confirmed that on-line gambling businesses had to be “attached” to a Local Authority for licensing purposes.

With regard to complaints relating to gambling establishments, Mr Alom said that very few complaints were received as the gambling licences were expensive to obtain and businesses were keen to ensure that their operations did not jeopardise their licences. Notwithstanding this, he said that should establishments be causing concern locally, other related local authorities where that business operated would be informed.

It was **Moved** by Councillor K Hussain, duly **seconded** and upon being put to the vote was:

Resolved (unanimously)

- 1) To recommend to Council that the revised Statement of principles for the period 2023/26 be approved.
- 2) That the Licensing Service as part of its ongoing desire to protect the health of the communities of Walsall, work with partners both internal and external to raise the profile of organisation, charities and services that can assist those who may suffer harm because of gambling.

18/23 **Walsall Town Centre, Night Time Economy and control of licensed premises opening hours**

The Director, Resilient Communities Mr P. Gordon presented a report which responded to a request from the Leader of the Council for the committee to revisit matters regarding the control of closing times for licensed premises previously considered on 22 February 2023, in the light of recent events within the town centre night time economy. In addition, the report sought the view so the committee regarding the provision of knife detection equipment and bleed kits at premises that were open in Walsall Town Centre's night time economy.

(see annexed)

A discussion took place with members balancing a potential detrimental effect of an Early Morning Restriction Order upon the night time economy including the impact on young people and the need to address the safety and fears of the public given recent events in the town centre. Members concluded that further information and data should be collected and submitted to the committee to provide sufficient information to enable members to make an informed decision on whether to pursue the introduction of an EMRO in the town centre.

Members were keen to pursue the introduction of bleed kits and knife detection equipment in town centre premises open during the night time economy hours and asked that consultation with businesses should be undertaken without delay. Mr Gordon advised many businesses had already installed such equipment and that officers would continue to work proactively with those and other businesses accordingly.

It was **Moved** by Councillor Nawaz, duly **seconded** and

Resolved (unanimously)

- 1) That a further report be submitted to the committee with data and evidence to determine if there are recurring problems such as high levels of alcohol-related crime and disorder in specific areas at specific times;

serious public nuisance; and other instances of alcohol-related anti-social behaviour which is not directly attributable to specific premises, to determine if an early morning alcohol restriction order (EMRO) is appropriate.

- 2) That the committee wishes to pursue the introduction of knife detection equipment and bleed kits in Walsall town centre premises open during the night time economy, referred to in paragraph 6.0 of the report, and that a report regarding the implication of this be submitted to the committee accordingly.

19/23 **Work Programme**

The work programme was submitted for information.

Resolved

That the work programme be noted.

Date of next meeting: To be confirmed

The Meeting terminated at 7.24pm

Chair:

Date: