

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
LICENSING COMMITTEE HELD IN THE
COUNCIL CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS,
HERTFORD ON THURSDAY 26 MARCH
2015, AT 4.30 PM

PRESENT: R Beeching (Chairman)
Councillors P Ballam, K Crofton, J Jones and
M McMullen

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Lorraine Blackburn	- Democratic Services Officer
Robin Clark	- Licensing Enforcement and Community Safety Manager
Oliver Rawlings	- Senior Specialist Licensing Officer

624 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of
Councillors D Andrews, W Ashley, E Bedford, E
Buckmaster, Mrs R Cheswright, G Cutting, Mrs D Hone, P
Ruffles, J Taylor and K Warnell.

625 MINUTES – 20 NOVEMBER 2014

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the meeting held
on 20 November 2014 be approved as a correct
record and signed by the Chairman.

626 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman stated that this was the last meeting of
three held during the civic year. He was very
disappointed to see so few Members in attendance and
commented that the meeting could well have been

inquorate when there was important business to discuss. Members voiced their concerns that so many Members had submitted apologies.

627 LICENSING SUB-COMMITTEE – 23 JANUARY AND 12 FEBRUARY 2015

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Licensing Sub-Committee meetings held on 23 January and 12 February 2015, be received.

628 DRAFT REVISED STATEMENT OF LICENSING POLICY

The Director of Neighbourhood Services submitted a report that presented Members with a draft revised Statement of Licensing Policy under the Licensing Act 2003. The Chairman stated that the Policy was an excellent piece of work and thanked the Officer for the report which covered everything that the Committee had been working on for the last year and which would make an enormous change to East Herts.

The Senior Specialist Licensing Officer provided a summary of the key changes, the detail of which was set out in the report. The Chairman was pleased to see the impact of licensing on public health detailed in the policy. He referred to the funding which would shortly become available from Hertfordshire County Council to support public health initiatives including any analytical research needed for the licensing function.

Councillor J Jones stated that the information contained in the paragraph “About East Herts” should contain a preamble regarding the date, e.g. “as of” as the statistical information would soon become out of date. This was supported. Members also suggested that the word “blight” be removed from the Policy Approach statement (paragraph 7). This was also supported.

Councillor J Jones referred to the proliferation of outdoor tables at locations throughout the District and how this

obstructed pavements. The Senior Specialist Licensing Officer explained that Hertfordshire County Council had been contacted and asked for a copy of those businesses who had applied for and been granted permission to locate tables outside on pavements, but that they had not provided this information. The Senior Specialist Licensing Officer said that East Herts had approached the County Council regarding taking over the granting of pavement licences. County Council had agreed in principle to signing an agency agreement to that affect. Members supported a suggestion that Officers continued to pursue the agency agreement with Hertfordshire County Council to take on the responsibility of licensing those businesses requesting and/or having outdoor tables.

Members debated the issue of charging for pre-application advice. The Senior Specialist Licensing Officer stated that this was in line with what other services were doing including planning and trading standards. This was being investigated.

The Chairman referred to the paragraph on “Creating Family Friendly Town Centres”. Members supported the suggestion that Buntingford (High Street, Church Street) and Sawbridgeworth (Bell Street, London Road and Knight Street) be included in the policy. This was supported.

In response to a query by Councillor K Crofton regarding noise nuisance and enforcement, Officers advised that action was taken appropriate to relevant legislation and Government guidance to secure compliance. Officers advised that the revised policy addressed the issue in terms explaining to applicants what steps may be expected, for example sound proofing their buildings. The Senior Special Licensing Officer advised that he hoped the revised policy would provide the guidance to encourage responsible operators into the District.

The Chairman referred to tourism in the District and how more needed to be done to encourage this.

In response to a query from Councillor K Crofton, the Senior Specialist Licensing Officer advised that the document would be sent out for consultation with key stakeholders to ensure that the Policy was robust, before being submitted to Council for approval on 29 July 2015.

In response to a query from Councillor P Ballam, the Senior Specialist Licensing Officer assured Members that the consultation document would be widely available both online and hard copies for those without internet access.

The Committee gave their wholehearted support to the revised Licensing Policy and asked Officers to continue to work with Hertfordshire County Council regarding the District taking on responsibility for pavement licensing.

RESOLVED – that (A) the amended Licensing Policy be supported for the purposes of consultation; and

(B) Officers work with Hertfordshire County Council with regard to the District taking on responsibility for pavement licences.

629 CONSIDERATION OF PUBLIC FUNDRAISING ASSOCIATIONS (PFRA) RESPONSE TO SUGGESTED AMENDMENTS TO DRAFT SITE MANAGEMENT AGREEMENT

The Director of Neighbourhood Services submitted a report informing Members of the Licensing Committee about the details of discussion undertaken with the Public Fundraising Associations (PFRA) regarding site management agreements for East Herts District.

The Senior Specialist Licensing Officer advised that there was no legislation to control direct debit collections.

Members agreed that Maidenhead Street be excluded from the Hertford Site Management Agreement (SMA)

during redevelopment and that the South Side of Ware High Street be included in the Ware SMA. Members also agreed that Officers visit Ware High Street with Members who had expressed concerns.

The Committee received the report.

RESOLVED – that (A) Maidenhead Street be excluded from the Hertford Site Management Agreement (SMA) during redevelopment; and

(B) the South Side of Ware High Street be included in the Ware SMA and that Officers visit Ware High Street with Members who had expressed concerns.

630 LICENSING ACTIVITY – QUARTER 4 OF 2014

The Director of Neighbourhood Services submitted a report providing an update on processing licences, enforcement activity and the implementation of the Service Plan for Quarter 4 of 2014.

The Senior Specialist Licensing Officer asked Members to note that the total number of Licensing Sub-Committee hearings was up to 31 December 2014 and not as shown. He stated that some licensing procedures had been changed in order to achieve a speedier response, e.g. documentation needed from garages now amended so that the responsible individual could submit this information.

The Committee received the report.

RESOLVED – that the report be received.

631 ATTENDANCE AT LICENSING SUB-COMMITTEE

The Executive Member for Community Safety and Environment submitted a report detailing Members' attendance at Licensing Sub-Committees including those

attending as observers.

The Committee received the report.

RESOLVED – that the report be received.

632 VOTE OF THANKS

The Chairman thanked Officers and Members for their ongoing support of the Licensing function. He said that he had enjoyed his role as Chairman and again thanked the Officers for updating the Licensing Policy adding that this would provide both the District and applicants with definitive guidance.

The meeting closed at 5.40 pm

Chairman
Date