

Minutes of the Licensing Committee

25th January, 2013 at 10.00am
at the Sandwell Council House, Oldbury

Present: Councillor Allen (Chair);
Councillor Silvester (Vice Chair)
Councillors Cherrington, Dr Crumpton, Dhallu,
Eaves, Hadley, Piper, Tranter, A Underhill and
Wilkinson.

Apology: Councillor E A Giles.

1/13 **Minutes**

Resolved: that the minutes of the meeting held on 14th September, 2012, be confirmed as a correct record.

2/13 **Annual Report of the Licensing Committee and Licensing Panels for the 2011-12 Municipal Year**

The Committee considered the proposed Licensing Committee and Licensing Panel Annual Report for the 2011-2012 municipal year.

It was noted that Council, on 18th May 2010, approved role descriptions for committee and panel chairs and that these role descriptions included a responsibility to report periodically to Council on the performance of their duties.

Members discussed the annual report and concluded that it included the pertinent points required to enable Council to gain an understanding of the business conducted.

Resolved: That the Licensing Committee/Licensing Panel Annual Report for the 2011-2012 municipal year be presented to Council on 5th March 2013.

3/13 **Home Office Consultation on Delivering the Government's Policies to Cut Alcohol Fuelled Crime and Anti Social Behaviour**

It was reported that the Home Office had issued a consultation paper in November 2012 setting out proposals for delivering the Government's policies to cut alcohol fuelled crime and anti social behaviour.

In the consultation document, the Government expressed the view that the majority of people enjoyed a drink without causing trouble but that there were a significant number who did not.

The consultation set out a number of proposals which were designed to tackle issues around alcohol-related crime and disorder and anti social behaviour, including changes to the Licensing Act 2003.

The consultation sought views on five key areas:-

- minimum unit pricing;
- a ban on certain 'multi buy' promotions;
- a review of the mandatory conditions;
- introducing 'health' as a licensing objective;
- cutting red tape for responsible businesses.

The Government maintained that its proposals were not about stopping the sensible, responsible drinking which supported public houses and clubs within the community, created thriving town centres and provided employment and growth, but was primarily aimed at reducing harmful drinking.

The views of the Committee were now sought in response to the consultation, in order to meet the 6th February 2013 response deadline.

The Committee identified the following issues to be included within the response:-

- definition of a unit of alcohol - no one understood what a unit was;
- would the minimum price work and was it set at the right level?
- what happened to the additional income, it would be beneficial to receive more funding towards enforcement;

Licensing Committee – 25th January, 2013

- would the minimum price assist in reducing the targeted area (harmful drinkers)?
- minimum price was good in principle, however, it was felt that more research was required;
- there was a concern that businesses would reap the benefit from the increased price with no impact on the reduction of harmful drinking;
- it would be difficult for shops to have multi-buy offers with the minimum price, however, it would not prevent them having other special offers on alcohol - it was difficult to enforce irresponsible promotion;
- guidance needed to be clear - no grey areas;
- age limit should be increased to 21;
- local issue - it would be preferred if local authorities were given powers to target problem premises;
- ancillary sales did not appear to be an issue;
- there needed to be strict parameters on what businesses did (such as community centres, etc.);
- registration of outlets would be beneficial so that only problem premises were targeted;
- motorway service areas should not be allowed to see alcohol;
- hotels on motorway service areas should be allowed to see alcohol to their guests;
- personal licences should be renewed every ten years.

It was agreed that the Area Director - Homes and Communities would consult with the Chair of the Committee in relation to the final response to the Home Office which would, once finalised, be circulated to members of the Committee.

Resolved: That, in consultation with the Chair of the Licensing Committee, the Area Director - Homes and Communities submits the response to the Home Office Consultation on Delivering the Government's Policies to Cut Alcohol Fuelled Crime and Anti Social Behaviour, to meet the deadline of 6th February, 2013.

(The meeting ended at 11.50am)

Contact Officer: Trisha Newton Democratic Services Unit 0121 569 3193
