

FAREHAM

BOROUGH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Licensing and Regulatory Affairs Committee

(to be confirmed at the next meeting)

Date: Tuesday, 30 March 2021

Venue: Microsoft Teams Virtual Meeting

PRESENT:

Councillor M J Ford, JP (Chairman)

Councillor T M Cartwright, MBE (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors: I Bastable, Mrs S M Bayford, Miss S M Bell, F Birkett,
Mrs P M Bryant, T Davies, J S Forrest, L Keeble, Mrs K Mandry,
Ms S Pankhurst, R H Price, JP and Mrs C Heneghan

**Also
Present:**



1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor S Cunningham.

2. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Licensing and Regulatory Affairs Committee meeting held on 14 January 2021 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

3. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no Chairman's announcements.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made at this meeting.

5. DEPUTATIONS

There were no deputations made at this meeting.

6. UPDATE ON LOCAL POLICE LICENSING MATTERS

Councillor J Forrest joined the meeting at the start of this item.

The Committee received a verbal update on local police licensing matters by PC Jason Pearce, the local police Licensing Officer.

PC Pearce reported that it has been a very strange and very different year in respect of licensing committees with all areas of work focused on Covid-19. Licensed premises have either closed or remained open with restrictions in place and it has been a challenge to find the right balance between supporting premises through such a difficult financial period and ensuring public safety has been maintained.

The majority of premises have been compliant with the various rules throughout the year but where difficulties have been encountered, tried and tested techniques have been used to deal with them. This approach has been successful and has limited the need to use enforcement measures.

The Council, as the Licensing Authority, is the lead in terms of business premises and the police have worked with council officers in a supporting role in dealing with Covid-19 enquiries. There have been excellent lines of communication with both the Licensing Team and the Environmental Health Team, and this compares very favourably against the experience of other colleagues in the force.

PC Pearce commented that, having worked in different areas across the County there have been inconsistencies in the perspectives of different Licensing sub-committees, ranging from revoking licenses for breaches of

Covid-19 rules to considering it inappropriate to consider licensing matters during the Pandemic.

Moving forward towards removing restrictions, premises will be allowed to serve alcohol in outdoor seating areas only from the 12 April. They will be allowed to serve alcohol indoors from 17th May and from 21st June all restrictions will be removed. This will bring some challenges, particularly in respect of the European Football Championship as the third game is scheduled to take place after the 21st June when there will be no restrictions in place. The Police are aware of the difficulties this may bring and are resourced to deal with them.

Generally speaking, as restrictions are eased, the police approach will be to work closely with businesses to support them to get back on their feet. There are a couple of initiatives that they would like to progress later this year – Hotel Watch which is based around welfare and vulnerability and also a Defibrillator Scheme which aims to get defibrillators in to all licensed premises as survival rates are significantly increased where treatment is given in the first 10 mins of an attack.

PC Pearce concluded by saying that despite it being a difficult year, there is now a move towards business as usual and it is hoped that by this time next year, normal licensing procedures will be back in place.

Several members put forward their thanks to the police for all the hard work they have done over the last year under such difficult circumstances.

It was announced that PC Pearce will soon be leaving his role as the Licensing Officer for Fareham. Members will have the opportunity to meet the new Licensing Officer, PC Neil Cotton, in due course. On behalf of the Committee, the Chairman thanked PC Pearce for all the work he has done, over what has been a considerable period of time, and wished him well for the future.

RESOLVED that the Licensing and Regulatory Affairs Committee notes the content of the update on police licensing matters.

7. FAREHAM & GOSPORT ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH PARTNERSHIP

This item was brought forward and heard after item 5 on the agenda in order to allow time for PC Jason Pearce to connect to the meeting to present an update on police licensing matters.

The Committee received a presentation by the Head of Environmental Health on the Fareham and Gosport Environmental Health Partnership. A copy of the presentation is attached as Appendix A to these minutes.

The presentation began by outlining the structure and scope of the partnership, the different teams across it and the areas of work that they cover. It went on to explain the financial arrangements of the partnership and how it is set up so that costs are split 50/50 between the two councils and that each council retains the income it generates.

The presentation then went on to provide headline statistics for the work carried out over the past year. There were 572 Covid-19 related enquiries, many of which related to premises that were open that shouldn't have been, or from business owners seeking clarity on the rules. Very few food inspections have been carried out over the year, although the higher risk work has been dealt with. Guidance will hopefully come from the Food Standards Agency later in the year as to how the backlog should be dealt with. Approximately 3,000 complaints have been dealt with across the partnership – a significant proportion of these have been neighbour complaints, particularly around the issue of noise. The Partnership has also managed to deal with nearly 400 pest control appointments which has involved some of the most dangerous and high-risk pieces of work that have been carried out by officers.

There have been 233 out of hours call outs throughout the various lockdown periods. 303 taxi drivers, 229 vehicles and 252 premises have been licensed. The number of licensed drivers and vehicles is slightly lower than usual as some drivers have decided to retire earlier than expected and some second job drivers have also decided not to continue due to the reduction in available business. Drivers and vehicles have been re-licensed when badges and plates have come up for renewal and drivers have been allowed to put their licenses on hold throughout lockdown periods.

The presentation finished with a summary of current issues that the partnership faces, such as dealing with enquiries about changes to restrictions, running the different types of Covid-19 testing sites, managing temporary event license applications against a backdrop of not knowing what future rules might be and dealing with post-Brexit food export certification.

During discussion, Members requested that the individual breakdown of complaint figures and the split of income generated be provided for each Council so that the position in respect of Fareham was more evident.

Several Members put forward their thanks to the Head of Environmental Health and his team for the hard work that has been put into keeping services running through such a difficult time.

RESOLVED that the Licensing and Regulatory Affairs Committee notes the content of the presentation.

8. FINAL REVIEW OF WORK PROGRAMME 2019/21 AND DRAFT WORK PROGRAMME 2021/22

The Committee considered a report by the Head of Environmental Health which gave a review of the Committee's Work Programme for 2019/21 and the draft Work Programme for 2021/22.

Members requested that a further update on Police Licensing matters be added to the March meeting of the Work Programme for 2021/22.

It was noted that as it likely there will be new members appointed to the Committee in the new municipal year, a training session will need to be arranged to ensure Members understand their responsibilities under the Licensing Act 2003.

RESOLVED that the Licensing and Regulatory Affairs Committee:

- (a) notes the progress on actions arising from the meeting of the Committee held on 14 January 2021, attached as Appendix A to the report;
- (b) notes the Work Programme for the 2019/21 municipal year, attached as Appendix B to the report;
- (c) subject to the addition of the items outlined above, approves the proposed draft Work Programme for 2021/22, attached as Appendix C to the report; and
- (d) agrees to submit the proposed draft Work Programme for 2021/22 to Council for approval.

(The meeting started at 6.00 pm
and ended at 7.07 pm).