

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE LICENSING COMMITTEE

12TH JANUARY 2015 AT 6.00 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillors C. J. Spencer (Chairman), K. A. Grant-Pearce (Vice-Chairman), J. S. Brogan, M. T. Buxton, S. J. Dudley, J. M. L. A. Griffiths, H. J. Jones, R. J. Shannon, S. P. Shannon, L. J. Turner and P. J. Whittaker

Officers: Mrs. S. Sellers, Mr. D. Etheridge, Mr. R. Savory and Ms. R. Cole

27/14 **APOLOGIES**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor P. A. Harrison

28/14 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations of interest were received.

29/14 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Licensing Committee held on 10th November 2014 were received.

Councillor R. J. Shannon requested that it be noted that at this meeting he had stated that the Worcester Road taxi rank was not being used.

RESOLVED that, subject to the above comment, the minutes be approved as a correct record.

30/14 **SITE MANAGEMENT AGREEMENT BETWEEN BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL AND PUBLIC FUNDRAISING REGULATORY ASSOCIATION**

The Committee considered a report containing an update on further progress and negotiations with the Public Fundraising Regulatory Association (PFRA) with a view to entering into a site management agreement to help to regulate face to face fundraising in Bromsgrove Town Centre.

The Senior Licensing Practitioner, Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) reminded Members of the background to this issue and of the discussion which had taken place at the previous meeting on a draft agreement with the PRFA. At the previous Meeting, Members had felt that the number of days on which face to face collections could be undertaken in Bromsgrove High Street

should be restricted to two per week. The PFRA had indicated that following discussion with its membership, it was felt that three days per week were required.

In accordance with the discussion at the Committee meeting, further negotiations had subsequently taken place with the PRFA and it was reported that the organisation had now agreed to restrict collections to two days per week (Mondays and Wednesdays).

It was reported that the PRFA had requested that the operation of the agreement be reviewed after it had been in operation for six months. At that stage there would be an assessment of any adverse impact on fundraising within Bromsgrove. Members were in agreement with these proposed arrangements and it was noted that the PRFA would be expected to provide robust evidence of any decline in the level of fundraising at the end of the six month period should this be the claimed situation.

It was felt that in view of adverse comments previously received from members of the public in relation to the frequency of face to face fundraising activities within the High Street, it would be useful if appropriate publicity on the new arrangements could be arranged with the Council's Communications Team.

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the contents of the report and the updated draft Site Management Agreement be noted; and
- (b) that the Head of Worcestershire Regulatory Services be authorised to sign the updated Site Management Agreement on behalf of the Council.

31/14

DRAFT STREET AMENITY POLICY

The Committee considered a report and accompanying draft Street Amenity Policy in respect of the pedestrianised section of Bromsgrove High Street. At this stage officers were requesting permission to undertake more formal consultations with those businesses which would be affected.

The introduction of the Policy and the accompanying licensing regime would enable management of High Street Café Areas to be undertaken in a cohesive way. The Town Centre Regeneration Programme Manager outlined the benefits of an updated Street Amenity Policy which included the opportunity to improve the appearance and vibrancy of the High Street and to improve ease of movement and access for all.

It was noted that the adoption of the Policy would enable a structured a positive approach to actively designing Street Café Areas into Bromsgrove High Street. It was proposed that licensing process could be undertaken locally at District level by WRS on behalf of this Council, rather than by Worcestershire County Council Highways Department.

It was reported that officers had already discussed the matter on an informal basis with the owners or managers of the businesses which would be affected by the Policy. The reaction had been positive, with the “chain” outlets being used to similar regimes in other areas of the Country. The more local, individual businesses had also seen the advantages of the introduction of a scheme which would improve the appearance of the High Street but which would be administered locally.

It was noted that the proposed fee structure, which had been part of the initial informal discussions, would enable WRS to cover their costs involved in the administration and enforcement of the scheme. The fees would also be part of the formal consultation if this was agreed to by Members. Formal consideration of the fees would be a matter for the Cabinet following the consultation period.

Members were generally supportive of the proposal to formally consult on the draft Policy. The use of “A” Boards which were employed by a variety of businesses for advertisement purposes was queried. Officers advised that “A” Boards would not be controlled under this Policy and this would need to be revisited separately at a later date if required. It was confirmed however that no Town Centre in the County was covered by an “A” Board Policy.

There was a detailed debate and Members raised a number of issues to which officers responded. These included:

- Premises Licences – coverage of the outside areas;
- Legislation in respect of smoking;
- Enforcement of the Policy, including responsibility for cleaning;
- Legislation in respect of music;
- Appropriate levels of fees

It was noted that the results of the consultation would be reported to the Committee at its next meeting on 23rd March 2015.

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the Draft Street Amenity Policy as set out in Appendix 1 to the report be noted and approved for the purposes of consultation;
- (b) that officers be authorised to carry out formal consultations on the Draft Policy between 19th January 2015 and 2nd March 2015 and to report back to the Licensing Committee on 23rd March 2015 on the results of the consultation.

32/14

LICENSING COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee considered the Work Programme for the remainder of 2014/2015.

RESOLVED that Licensing Committee Work Programme be noted.

33/14

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

With the agreement of the Chairman there was an update in relation to the provision for Taxis whilst major works were being undertaken at Bromsgrove Railway Station. This had been raised at the previous meeting (Minute 26/14 refers) when Members had expressed concerns regarding traffic congestion at the Railway Station, part of which was caused by the fencing off of an area of land previously used for Taxis to wait.

Members stated that the problem was still on going with Taxis and other vehicles parking in inappropriate places and causing further congestion.

Officers reported that following discussions with the relevant parties a formal request had been made for a temporary Taxi parking area to be marked out at the station and arrangements were in hand for this to be implemented. It was hoped this would help to alleviate the position pending the completion of the Railway station project. This was noted.

The meeting closed at 7.25 p.m.

Chairman