



LICENSING COMMITTEE

4.35pm-6.05pm

19 June 2008

Present: Councillors Driver (Chair), Banham, Cannell, Dylan, Jago, Lay, Ramsay and Stephenson

Apologies: Councillors Hooke and Little (A).

1. APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIR

RESOLVED to appoint Councillor Ramsay as Vice Chair for the New Civic Year.

2. MINUTES

RESOLVED to agree the accuracy of the minutes of the Licensing Committee held on 6 December 2007.

3. GAMBLING ACT 2005

Tony Arnold, Compliance Manager for the Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire division of the Gambling Commission attended the meeting for this item.

Mr Arnold explained the structure of the Gambling Commission and it's 3 statutory objectives as follows:-

- Keeping crime out of gambling (drugs, fencing, money laundering etc)
- That all gambling is seen to be fair and open
- The protection of children, under 18's and other vulnerable people

The Gambling Commission worked in liason with Licensing Authorities on a wide number of issues, gave advise where required and accompanied Licensing Officers on visits to premises. It dealt with all kinds of betting in casinos, bookmakers, arcade machines, public houses and also personal licences.

The Gambling Commission dealt with Personal and Operating Licenses and Licensing Authorities dealt with Premises Licenses. Establishments were required to obtain an Operating License before applying for a Premises License for which they had to comply with a number of conditions including having written policies in place.

Mr Arnold advised that a consultation document had been issued on split premises and informed members of the rules on gaming machines in these premises. He said

that the legislation regarding split premises was complicated and Licensing Authorities had different guidelines for what constituted as a barrier between areas.

Discussion ensued about the cost of the Operating and Premises Licenses, the problems with internet gambling affecting businesses such as bingo halls and if there was any support offered to compulsive gamblers. A compulsive gambler was able to self-exclude themselves from a premises but this could cause legal problems and was practically very difficult to manage. In response to a query regarding the smoking ban, the Senior Licensing Officer said that he was able to give advice to premises as to what constituted a smoking shelter.

Mr Arnold answered questions about how gaming machines were checked and regulated and how some had electronic systems attached so any discrepancies were recorded. He explained the different rules for the limit on poker games in casinos, clubs and public houses and how bingo operating licenses worked.

RESOLVED to note the report and thank Mr Arnold for his presentation.

4. EVALUATION OF THE IMPACT OF THE LICENSING ACT 2003

The Senior Licensing Officer presented the report referred to the report issued by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), evaluating the impact of the Licensing Act 2003.

The Senior Licensing Officer advised that since the Act came into force there had been a reduction in violent crimes and that the police had wide ranging powers that enabled them to instantaneously close premises. He said that due to recent legislation surrounding alcohol licenses, financial compensation could be sought from premises which would support more officers.

The Senior Licensing Officer said that the public could seek a review of a license if they felt that a premises was attributing to irresponsible behaviour. Any new applications for premises licenses were widely publicised and the local community were able to raise any concerns before the application was determined. He also advised that the Government was reviewing the way that current applications for the variation of premises licenses were processed.

Discussion ensued about the sale of alcohol to young people, sales by supermarkets and problems arising from people drinking at home and then venturing out intoxicated. The Senior Licensing Officer said that if a person was seen to be intoxicated a premises could prevent them from entering. If a person was arrested as a result of anti-social behaviour then before they were released, they could see a Counsellor to try to ascertain if they had a drink or drug problem to try to help them.

RESOLVED to note the report and thank the Senior Licensing Officer for his contribution.

5. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Chair referred to a visit that had taken place on 7 December 2007 to the nightclubs, bars and the SOS Bus in the Prince of Wales Road area. He suggested that a similar visit should be organised to public houses in another part of the City.

After a discussion, it was agreed that members should visit public houses in the Earlham Road/Unthank Road area and be accompanied by an enforcement officer.

RESOLVED to ask the Committee Officer in liason with the Senior Licensing Officer, to make the necessary arrangements for the Committee to visit public houses in the Earlham Road/Unthank Road area one evening before September.

6. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

RESOLVED to ask the Committee Officer to check the date of the next meeting and to circulate details to all members of the Committee.

CHAIR