

LICENSING COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 28 NOVEMBER 2023

Present: Cllrs Emma Parker (Chairman), Jon Andrews (Vice-Chairman), Mike Barron, Derek Beer, Susan Cocking and Brian Heatley

Apologies: Cllrs Les Fry, Cathy Lugg, David Morgan, Kate Wheller and Sarah Williams

Also present: Cllr Jon Orrell (Ward Member)

Officers present (for all or part of the meeting):

Aileen Powell (Licencing Team Leader), Elaine Tibble (Senior Democratic Services Officer), John Newcombe (Service Manager for Licensing & Community Safety), Lara Altree (Senior Lawyer - Regulatory) and John Miles (Democratic Services Officer)

Officers present remotely (for all or part of the meeting):

27. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 October 2023 were confirmed and signed.

28. **Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests were made at the meeting.

29. **Public Participation**

There were no questions or statements from the public.

30. **Statement of Gambling Licensing Policy 2024-2027**

The Service Manager Licensing & Community Safety introduced the report and advised that Dorset Council, as Licensing Authority under the Gambling Act 2005, was required to publish a Statement of Gambling Licensing Policy at least every three years. The revised policy had been published in draft format, for a period of public consultation and the Committee was requested to review the responses received during the consultation and consider the proposed amendments to the policy.

There were just minor amendments to the policy, the Service Manager Licensing & Community Safety advised that due to the deadline dates for the implementation of the policy, officers had not been able to do a 12 week consultation but it had been full and proper and considered the views of a wide range of people and

organisations, he highlighted the proposed changes to the committee members, in particular at 13.27 of the policy to address proposed measures for protecting and supporting vulnerable people within the regulatory remit of the Licensing Policy.

In response to one of the consultation comments, the Service Manager Licensing & Community Safety addressed the matter of Gambling Support Services and the revised figures recently published by the Gambling Commission which were higher than first estimated. He sought to liaise with Dorset Health colleagues to look at what support was available for Gambling Addictions and to ensure that it was adequate and in the right places.

In response to member questions the Service Manager Licensing & Community Safety advised that there were a number of bodies part financed by the gambling industry and there had been some in roads, but gambling was still a big problem, he was keen to look at what was being done locally and look at what further resources and improvements could be implemented.

Proposed by Cllr Andrews, seconded by Cllr Heatley

Decision:

- 1) That the responses received during the consultation period had been reviewed and**
- 2) The proposed amendments to the draft Statement of Gambling Licensing Policy considered.**
- 3) That the Licensing Committee recommends that Full Council adopts the draft Statement of Gambling Licensing Policy.**

31. Statement of Licensing Policy - review of Cumulative Impact Area

The Service Manager Licensing & Community Safety presented the report and explained that the policy used to be reviewed every three years but following a relaxation of the rules was now reviewed every five years.

However, the Statutory Guidance issued under section 182 of the Licensing Act 2003 advised that any Cumulative Impact Area(s) (CIA) contained within the policy were reviewed, as a minimum every three years.

CIAs were designated to cover particular areas of stress amounting from a proliferation of licensed premises. The Statement of Licensing Policy contained one CIA in Weymouth Town Centre. There was a rebuttable presumption that any new applications, or applications to substantially alter existing permissions, would be refused unless the applicant could demonstrate to the Authority that the proposals would not add to the existing problems in the area.

Licensed premises had suffered since Covid and large numbers were closing in England and Wales. and officers had been having a bit of a re-think. A four-week consultation had revealed that 80% of respondents were in favour of retaining the CIA and some suggested expansion to other areas.

The Service Manager Licensing & Community Safety proposed a full review of the CIA to determine if it was working, did it restrict growth, should it be expanded etc. Alcohol disorder had fallen and if Dorset Council wanted to attract investment to the town then a full review was recommended to obtain statistics and further evidence. Weymouth was a safe place to go out at night time and a number of measures were already in place to support the night time economy.

There was a worrying trend of premises closing and in response to member questions the Service Manager Licensing & Community Safety re-iterated that there were a large number of good and robust licenced premises and he wanted to bring Weymouth back to it's heyday and encourage investment to the night time economy. There had not been many refusals for new applications as the CIA did deter new investment.

Councillor Jon Orrell, the Ward Member addressed the committee in support of keeping the CIA in place. He mentioned the evolution of drinking culture which had become more family friendly in recent years.

Proposed by Cllr Andrews, seconded by Cllr Heatley

Decision:

- 1. The responses received during the consultation period were reviewed and**
- 2. the review of the Cumulative Impact Area contained within the Statement of Licensing Policy was considered.**
- 3. To make recommendations to Full Council in relation to the Cumulative Impact Area contained within the Statement of Licensing Policy.**
- 4. That a further report into the long term effects of retaining the Cumulative Impact Area be commissioned as part of the next policy review.**

32. Urgent items

There were no urgent items.

33. Exempt Business

There was no exempt business.

Duration of meeting: 10.00 - 10.43 am

Chairman

.....