

Licensing Committee

Wednesday, 4 March 2015

7.30 pm

Present:

Cllr John Loughlin (Chair)
Cllr Richard Smith Vice-Chair)

Cllrs: Valerie Ashenden
Jean Averibou
Gurdip Ram Bungar
Harold Craske
Jane Cribbon
Leslie Hills
Lyn Milner
Leslie Pearton
Derek Sales
Makhan Singh

Sarah Kilkie	Assistant Director (Communities)
Christina Hills	Senior Licensing Officer
Chief Inspector Simon Alland	North Kent Police
Carlie Plowman	Committee Services Officer

17. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Greta Goatley and William Lambert.

18. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 5 March 2014 were signed by the Chair.

19. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were made.

20. Local Alcohol Action Area Project

The Assistant Director (Communities) informed the Committee that in October 2013 the Home Office wrote to Local Authority Chief Executives to invite expressions of interest in taking part in a Local Alcohol Action Area (LAAA) project which aimed to offer up to 20 boroughs nationwide assistance with combating drink-fuelled crime and disorder and the damage caused to people's health. Work in the LAAA's was also to focus on promoting diverse night-time economies.

The Council submitted an expression of interest and in February 2014 the Home Office announced that the Council had been successful in achieving a place in the pilot project.

A multi- agency LAAA Group was established to develop and agree a Delivery Plan that included a range of activities aimed at:-

- reducing alcohol-related crime and disorder; and
- promoting growth by establishing a diverse and vibrant night-time economy.

Whilst a fundamental part of the Delivery Plan was to address the above, it was also felt that there were a number of other factors that contribute to both improving community safety more generally as well as how safe people feel. Therefore, the Delivery Plan was formulated to ensure that as many of these factors were addressed as possible and took a staged and structured approach by concentrating efforts within 5 areas of focus:-

- Prevention;
- Control;
- Treatment;
- Public Perception and Diversification; and
- Communication.

The Assistant Director (Communities) advised that during the life of the project considerable progress had already been made in respect of each of the areas of focus and apprised the Committee of the actions taken to date which were also detailed in the report for Members' information.

The Committee was advised that the project finishes at the end of March and the Home Office intend to report on the work and successes achieved by all the boroughs in the summer of 2015.

The Committee acknowledged the good work undertaken to date and put forward the following suggestions:-

- the short film advertising Gravesend's night-time economy be shown on the screens within the Reception area and if possible, on the screen at the side of Tesco's;
- as part of advertising Gravesend's night-time economy, consideration be given to encouraging Spotlites and local Tea Rooms to stay open later;
- activities for young people (such as youth clubs) be pursued and promoted in order to prevent gathering; and
- the continuation of improving the cleanliness and appearance of the town through projects such as Gravesham in Bloom and Enforcement Operation.

21. Annual Police Report

Chief Inspector Simon Alland informed the Committee that Kent Police have been working closely with the Council and other local agencies on those actions detailed in the LAAA Delivery Plan and the key priorities of the Community Safety Partnership (CSP).

In 2015-16, Kent Police will continue to focus on the above.

Chief Inspector Simon Alland advised that Kent Police were also currently:-

- working with the Council to consider the use of the new Public Space Protection Orders introduced by the Anti-Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014; and
- in discussion with Kent Equality Cohesion Council regarding the establishment of youth provisions/projects.

Members were invited to raise any questions that they may have.

The Committee thanked Chief Inspector Simon Alland for attending the Committee and providing an oral update.

22. Further changes to the licensing requirements of regulated entertainment and other matters under the Licensing Act 2003

The Senior Licensing Officer informed the Committee that in “The Plan for Growth” published alongside the Budget in 2011, the Government announced that it intended to reduce the licensing burden for live music performance and bring forward proposals to reduce licensing burdens imposed on other forms of entertainment regulated by the Licensing Act 2003.

The Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) has been implementing these deregulatory measures through changes in legislation in four phases:-

- The Live Music Act 2012 conditionally deregulated live music in certain venues and circumstances and came into effect on 1 October 2012;
- The Licensing Act 2003 (Descriptions of Entertainment) (Amendment) Order 2013 partially deregulated plays, dance and indoor sporting events, and came into force on 27 June 2013;
- Clause 58 of the Deregulation Bill currently before Parliament seeks to deregulate the exhibition of film in community premises; and
- The Legislative Reform (Entertainment Licensing) Order 2014 comes into force on 6 April 2015 and will deregulate certain types of regulated entertainment in defined circumstances.

The proposed changes were detailed in the report for Members’ information.

With regard to the deregulating of recorded music in relevant alcohol licensed premises, the Committee expressed concern regarding potential noise nuisance to the community.

The Senior Licensing Officer advised the Committee that there was other legislation in place that gives powers to Local Authorities and the Police to deal with noise nuisance and reminded Members of the role of the Licensing Panel.

23. Personal Licence renewals under the Licensing Act 2003

The Senior Licensing Officer advised the Committee that Personal Licences and the procedure to be followed were established under the Licensing Act 2003.

A personal licence authorises individuals to supply or to authorise the supply of alcohol from establishments with a premises licence.

All personal licences last for a period of 10 years and the first personal licences due for renewal in Gravesham will occur in March 2015.

The Senior Licensing Officer advised that the Government was currently working to remove the requirement for personal licence holders to renew their licence every 10 years through the Deregulation Bill, which is currently before Parliament. This will result in anyone with a personal licence being able to hold it for their lifetime subject to it not being forfeited or surrendered.

Due to the Deregulation Bill currently being before Parliament, new arrangements and guidance have been introduced to ensure that personal licence holders whose licences will expire before the enactment of the Bill are not disadvantaged by the changes. This has been accompanied with guidance to Local Authorities on how this is to be managed.

The proposed changes together with the interim arrangements were detailed in the report for Members' information.

The Senior Licensing Officer advised that personal licences cost £37.00 and that due to the deregulation of the renewal process the anticipated income to the Council will be lost.

24. Minutes of Licensing Panel

The Minutes of the Licensing Panels held on Monday 21 July 2014 and Thursday 28 August 2014 were noted.

Close of meeting

The meeting ended at 9.20pm

Christina Hills

The Chair stated that this would be the last meeting attended by Christina Hills, the Council's Senior Licensing Officer, before her retirement at the end of March 2015.

The Committee thanked Christina Hills for her service to the Council and wished her well on her retirement.