

Licensing Committee

Thursday, 02 March 2017

7:30pm

Present:

Cllr Harold Craske (Chair)
Cllr Lesley Boycott (Vice-Chair)

Cllrs: Gurdip Ram Bungar
Sara Langdale
Jordan Meade
Leslie Pearton
Peter Scollard
Steve Thompson
Lee Croxton
Michael Wenban
Lyn Milner

Sarah Kilkie	Assistant Director (Communities)
Mark Lees	Licensing Manager
Colin Thompson	KCC Public Health Specialist
Ben Clarke	Committee & Scrutiny Assistant (Minutes)

50. Apologies for absence

An apology for absence was received from Cllr Valerie Ashenden. Cllr Lee Croxton attended as her substitute. An apology for absence was also received from Karen Hurdle.

51. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 29 September 2016 were signed by the Chair.

52. Declarations of Interests

No declarations of interest.

53. Public Health and the Licensing Act 2003

The Committee received a presentation from the KCC Public Health Specialist regarding public health and the Licensing Act 2003, identifying areas of prevalent drinking problems and conditions in the Borough (please see supplementary).

Following Members questions the KCC Public Health Specialist explained that:

- On slide 3 the 'benchmark' referred to in the key is the national average
- Binge drinking is classified as drinking over a certain amount of units (8 units) in one drinking session i.e a bottle of wine or three strong beers a night would be classified as binge drinking
- Currently a questionnaire called Identification and Brief Advice (IBA) is used by KCC Public Health which asks the user five questions about their alcohol intake and

determines what kind of drinker you are classified as, as well as associated health problems

- Public Health are more than happy to work with the ward Councillors in the areas of Gravesham that are most at risk of alcohol related health problems and to raise awareness of these issues
- The information is taken from the office of statistics and hospitals so it would not necessarily cover the street drinkers that congregate in Gravesham Town Centre however this is the same for all districts in Kent; measuring the actual alcohol intake of each person in Gravesham would be an impossible task
- The more deprived areas of Gravesham are the ones who are at more risk for alcohol specific conditions, as shown on slide 4 of the presentation
- This is the most up to date information KCC Public Health has on the subjects within the presentation and there have been no further predictions yet for under 18 specific hospital admissions past 2015
- In 2011 Public Health became a Responsible Authority, to be consulted under the Licensing Act 2003. Health, however, is not one of the licensing objectives of the Act and licences cannot be refused on the basis of health
- With regard to the suggestion of a pop up shop in high alcohol areas that informs people of the amount of units they are drinking, - funding would need to be set aside for it, but happy to look into working with Ward Councillors regarding the issue
- GP practices are a very good way of promoting health and sensible alcohol consumption., KCC have offered payments to local practices to offer the IBA assessments as they do in Thanet, but so far there has been a very low uptake
- The KCC Public Health Specialist explained that since the budget came to KCC, it has been ring-fenced until March 2018 but that there have been some reductions in the drug and alcohol services offered

The Assistant Director outlined a few additional points to Members:

- The Public Health staff at the Gr@nd have been trained to deliver IBA assessments
- KCC and districts (including Gravesham BC) are moving towards new 'district health deals' and an improved and more community based way of delivering their public health interventions. Partnership working will be key.
- A lot of work has gone into looking at how deprived areas can be better engaged and putting focus on creating more awareness and education in those areas.
- The recently revised Kent Alcohol Strategy will be going to the next meeting of the Dartford Gravesham and Swanley Health & Wellbeing Board
- Many things can be done in conjunction with other partnerships including raising drink awareness and working with local schools to teach about the dangers of alcohol abuse
- Public Health itself is not a licensing objective under Licensing Act 2003 so we need to look at health data and the way it links to the other objectives ie prevention of crime and disorder, prevention of nuisance, public safety and protection of children from harm. Alcohol related domestic violence would be an example of such a linkage.

The Licensing Manager advised that hospitals have a set of routine questions that they ask any person admitted into the hospital for alcohol related reasons often having more information on where they live and drink than the Police do.

Cllr Thompson expressed the view that there should be less regulation and more education. With education the public will be more aware of what the drink is doing to their health and the strain it puts on the economy.

The Committee thanked the KCC Public Health Specialist for the informative presentation.

54. Review of GBC Statement of Licensing Policy for Sex Establishment and Sexual Entertainment Venues

Members were presented with a proposed draft revised Statement of Licensing Policy for Sex Establishments and Sexual Entertainment Venues.

The Licensing Manager outlined the following points to the Committee:

- Having a published policy is not a statutory requirement for this type of licensing, but it is good practice. It aids transparency and consistency for both trade and public.
- The licensing policy sets out the expectations and procedures for the establishments to follow.
- The policy does not set a maximum limit as to how many sex establishments could be set up in the Borough. Each application would be determined based on its own merits.
- The policy was first adopted in October 2010, having been developed in conjunction with the Kent and Medway Regulatory Licensing Steering Group and there have been no significant changes to it as of yet
- The fees have increased this year with a 2% increase making new licenses cost £2,680 and £1,213 for a renewal

Cllr Thompson requested that in future all councillors within a ward that an application is submitted for should be alerted to it.

Cllr Milner assured the rest of the Committee that this already occurs as she received notification of the application for the Sex Establishment in Queen Street.

Cllr Scollard brought to the attention of the Licensing Manager a premises operating in Northfleet which may need to be licensed under this legislation

Members:

1. Approved and adopted the draft Gravesham BC Statement of Licensing Policy for Sex Establishments and Sexual Entertainment Venues (as attached at Appendix 2 to the report)
2. Agreed that the revised policy be published and to become effective from 1 April 2017

55. Demonstration of the new on-line street knowledge testing system for taxi drivers and viewing of the safeguarding/CSE video incorporated within that training

Members were shown a demonstration of the new online street knowledge testing system for taxi drivers as well as the safeguarding/CSE video. The CSE training

video was developed and jointly funded by several Kent authorities acting in partnership.

The Licensing Manager highlighted the following key points and answered Members questions:

- At the moment the taxi street knowledge tests are paper based; all of the tests are created and marked manually which is very time consuming and the possibility of human error exists.
- We are introducing an online test system called Classmarker. This system lets the Licensing Team design a pool of questions and then the system creates each test and handles all of the marking.
- The system is completely customizable, the questions can be updated at all times and it increases efficiency as the computer will mark all the tests immediately and the results can then be accessed by officers.
- At the moment the tests are currently handled in Committee Suite 4 and monitored by Licensing Officers. It is intended that the online tests would be conducted at the Gr@nd as they have a suitable room with 8 desks, each with a built in laptop and access to the internet.
- All taxis licensed by Gravesham have internal CCTV both for the safety of the passengers and driver. Currently footage is only available to Police on request and our own officers cannot access any of the CCTV footage themselves. This is under review.
- Uber do operate in Gravesham but the legislation is such that they do not need to be licensed by the Council,
- The Licencing Manager acts as one of the officer Safeguarding Champions for the Borough

Cllr Pearton proffered the idea that there should be an additional number separate to 101(the police non-emergency number) to report possible safeguarding crimes as this line is constantly busy and can take several hours to report anything.

The Chair thanked the Licensing Manager for his informative run through of the new street knowledge testing system.

Close of meeting

The meeting ended at 8:37pm.