

## Licensing Committee

Thursday, 28 September 2017

7.30 pm

### Present:

Cllr Lesley Boycott (Chair)  
Cllr Karen Hurdle (Vice-Chair)

Councillors: Gurdip Ram Bungar  
Brian Francis  
Greta Goatley  
Sara Langdale  
John Loughlin  
Lyn Milner  
Leslie Pearton  
Peter Scollard  
Steve Thompson  
Jenny Wallace  
Michael Wenban

**Note:** Councillor: Robin Theobald was also in attendance

Mark Lees	Licensing Manager
Mike Crawford	Solicitor
Allan Glasson	Senior Environmental Health Officer
Stanley Mushawatu	Environmental Health Technician
Lauren Wallis	Committee Services Officer (minutes)

### 56. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Jordan Meade and Sarah Kilkie – Assistant Director (Communities).

### 57. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 2 March 2017 were signed by the Chair.

In relation to Minute 54 of the minutes, it was brought to the attention of the Licensing Manager that request had been made that, in future, when a licensing application was received by the Council all Councillors within the ward where the premises was located should be alerted to its receipt. The Licensing Manager apologised for overlooking this matter and undertook to ensure that it happened in future.

### 58. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

**59. To consider whether any items in Part A of the agenda should be considered in private or the items in Part B in public.**

None.

**60. Police Licensing Update - Oral Update**

The Chairman welcomed Police Constable Chris Hill from North Kent Police to the meeting.

The Committee received an oral update from PC Chris Hill who advised that the Police Licensing Team comprised 4 police officers (3 full time and 1 part time) and one civilian co-ordinator/administrator. The team was located in Medway and covered Medway, Swale, Dartford and Gravesham which comprised some 2,000 licensed premises and the team visited some of the more prominent premises on a weekly basis. The team had been recently restructured and there was no longer an allocated officer for each area. Instead, if enforcement action was required, a different officer to the usual would visit as it was difficult to build relationships with the premises if the same officer undertook the visits and the enforcement action. Members noted that the North Kent division was the only division that was structured in this way and PC Hill felt that it was working well within the limitations of the huge area the team had to cover and the corresponding lack of local knowledge.

Councillors were informed that every high risk premises had been informed of the contact details of the team and every call made to Council officers and the police and all visits made to the premises were recorded. A good relationship with high risk or prominent premises was paramount to enable the collection of intelligence to enable the police to deal with problems before they arose. Many premises sent a weekly email to the police team listing incidents, the number of customers, the number of customers ejected from the premises and the number of calls to the police and this information was recorded under the name of the premises. The team also checked 999 and 101 calls, custody suites and crime reports on a daily basis.

It was noted that drugs were a huge problem nationally and high risk venues were swabbed for the presence of illegal drugs on a regular basis and this information was passed to the licensee who was also given assistance and advice by the police on how to deal with the drug issue. The advice might include the benefits of having slightly sloping shelves, boxed in toilet cisterns, no lids on toilet seats, shelving being covered by carpeting or a thin layer of Vaseline for example. If the drug traces found at a premises remained high after this advice had been given, the Borough Council Licensing Team was contacted by the police. Members' attention was drawn to the use of locked drug boxes at high risk venues such as night clubs and large public houses. The boxes were usually situated near the access to the building and any drugs found by door supervisors or other members of staff after a body search were logged, placed into a completed evidence bag which was then sealed and put into the drug box. Only the police could access the box. It was noted that anyone refusing a body search would be refused entry to the premises.

The following responses were given to questions from Members:

- Intelligence collected from premises and police records was used to build up any patterns of high risk premises and repeat offenders with a focus on crime and disorder. Licensees were expected to work to minimise the risk of incidences such as

Grievous Bodily Harm, sexual assaults, drug and/or alcohol overdoses, stabbings etc.

- CCTV was used to monitor people leaving licensed premises to take or deal drugs. Premises supervisors and other staff watch for unusual patterns of behaviour with regard to drinking and drug-taking. Members were advised that a member of the public is at liberty to call the police if they are witness to illegal drug taking.
- If a person had been banned from a premises due to drug-taking activities and had returned to the premises, PC Chris Hill advised that the licensee should contact the police who would be able to remove the person using reasonable force. Landlords of licensed premises were also allowed to use reasonable force to protect their premises and customers if they wanted to. It was a balance between harm and risk. Known drug suppliers could also be denied entry.
- With regard to “raids” the Committee was advised that previously an exercise called Operation Pilot had been undertaken which included 10 officers and a couple of drug dogs who would target a number of high risk premises in an area and the premises would be placed under lockdown, the toilets locked and the whole area searched and swabbed. More recently, the premises visited in this way had been located in different areas as the advent of mobile phones had meant that likely premises in the same location were being forewarned. The North Kent team undertook 4 of these exercises per year.
- The night time economy had originally been policed by white van tag teams situated in areas of high risk such as town centres. This was no longer the case and the night time economy was now managed by response to 999 and 101 calls and the police would patrol areas between calls. This approach was not considered as effective as the tag teams. As a result, there was increased pressure on the police and Borough Council licensing teams and premises were encouraged and supported to self-manage.
- The Committee was advised that the Safer Street initiative would be returning to Dartford and Gravesend in the next month or so which meant one member of the police team would work until 4am every weekend.
- Members were advised that it was not part of the licensing authority’s responsibilities to recommend how many members of staff premises should have on duty. The onus was on the premises manager to manage the business.

The Chairman, on behalf of the Committee, thanked PC Chris Hill to attending the meeting and for a very interesting talk.

### **Close of meeting**

The meeting ended at 8.20 pm