

LICENSING COMMITTEE

Date: 4 March 2015

Venue: East Northamptonshire House, Cedar Drive, Thrapston

Time: 7.30 pm

Present: Councillors:- **Glenvil Greenwood-Smith (Chairman)**
Pauline Bradberry JP (Vice-Chairman)

Tony Boto
Richard Gell
Roger Glithero
Barbara Jenney

Andy Mercer
Bob Nightingale
Rupert Reichhold
Anna Sauntson

406. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 September 2014 were approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

407. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies for absence were received.

408. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No Declarations of Interest were noted.

409. QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS UNDER COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 10.3

There were no questions submitted under Procedure Rule 10.3.

410. LICENSING LEGISLATION - UPDATE

The Health Protection Manager (HPM) presented a report outlining changes to the licensing legislation and guidance, and updated Members on licensing matters.

The Government had announced a series of changes to licensing legislation and guidance that would affect East Northamptonshire Council and the report provided an update on progress with the planned changes to the Licensing Act, taxi legislation and revised guidance.

The Government were now proposing to keep personal licences and were recommending that licences would last indefinitely, rather than the 10 years covered by current legislation. The new arrangement would commence on 6 April 2015.

Other changes that would be implemented through the Deregulation Bill for the Licensing Act were:

- Live (indoor and outdoor) and recorded music (indoor only) exemption for 0800hrs – 2300 hours and with an audience not exceeding 500 people. This meant that a licence would no longer be required for those activities unless a Licensing Panel included them as a licensable activity. This would have an impact, but not substantially, on income.
- Exemptions for local authorities, schools, hospitals, community premises, circuses, Greco roman or freestyle wrestling and incidental film. Again, this meant no licence would be required for these premises, which, again, would impact on income.

In addition there was new Licensing Act Section 182 guidance which related to the licensing process and would be published when the changes came into force.

The Policy & Resources Committee had agreed to the introduction of boat licensing, following a consultation with operators. A scheme had been introduced, with current operators being given a six month period in which to apply for their licences. The new regime would commence on 31 March 2015.

Some Taxi and Private Hire changes were being implemented through the Deregulation Bill, which were due to come into force on 6 April 2015. The changes within the legislation were:

1. Changing the duration of licences to 5 years
2. Changing the sub-contracting provisions for private hire vehicles

In 2015 a Tattoo Rating scheme to supplement the current registration requirements would be introduced. The rating scheme was a national initiative and rated tattooists between 1-4 dependent upon their hygiene controls. The risks of infection and disfigurement were substantial if correct hygiene methods were not applied. It was hoped that by introducing a rating scheme, it would give consumers more information when choosing where to go to have their tattoo. The scheme would be similar to the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme which resulted in significant improvements in hygiene standards in the food industry.

Implementation of each of the reforms would involve their own legal implications that would need to be considered in more detail when the provisions of the Act were commenced, and the reforms required local implementation. It was also expected that there would be an increase in noise complaints about premises as the activities would be unregulated. An increase in noise complaints had been experienced as a result of the live music exemption introduced early in 2014.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

411. COUNCIL PROCEDURES - TAXI LICENSING

The Chairman raised concerns about the robustness of the Council's procedures following recent events in Rotherham and Oxford. The Health Protection Manager advised that a future meeting had been arranged with the Police to discuss issues. It was important that East Northamptonshire Council's procedures were robust and would not leave the Council open to criticism. Following discussion, the Committee were satisfied that matters were being dealt with.

412 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

RESOLVED:

That the public and press be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items of business because exempt information, as defined under paragraphs 1 and 7 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 may be disclosed.

413. LICENSING ACTIVITY AND UPDATE REPORT

The Committee received a report detailing applications received under the Licensing Act 2003 in the previous six months, broken down into new licences and licence variations, Temporary Event Notices and personal licence applications received.

Unfortunately a representative from Northamptonshire Police was not present at the meeting to speak verbally of the details on crime related activity and A & E statistics within the district of East Northamptonshire for Quarters 2 and 3. However, the Licensing Enforcement Officer had attended to answer any questions from Members.

Discussion took place on the figures provided and it was noted that there had been a major improvement in the statistics for the District. The Committee wished it to be recorded their appreciation to Council officers for their continued successful work in working to reduce crime and crime related offences in the District.

RESOLVED:

That the contents of the report be noted.

As this was the Licensing Committee's final meeting prior to the District Council Elections, the Chairman thanked everyone for their efforts over the past 4 years.

Chairman