

Dear Councillor

COUNCIL - WEDNESDAY, 3 NOVEMBER 2010

I am now able to enclose for consideration at the above meeting the following reports that were unavailable when the agenda was printed.

**Agenda Item
No.**

- (h) Licensing Committee - to follow (Pages 1 - 2)

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Licensing Committee

Report of the meeting held on 26th October 2010

Matters for Information

2. LICENSING ACT 2003 – STATEMENT OF LICENSING POLICY

The Panel has endorsed a revised statement of licensing policy under the Licensing Act 2003 prior to its consideration by Cabinet.

The second and existing statement came into effect on 7th January 2008 for a period of three years following its approval by the Council and consequently will need to be revised and approved to have effect from 7th January 2011.

The revised statement has been modelled on the existing document and amended to have regard to updated guidance issued by the Secretary of State and legislative changes that have taken place in the intervening period. Those changes include a mandatory code of practice for alcohol retailers, the provision for elected members to become interested parties for the purposes of making representations and applying for reviews, re-classification of lap dancing clubs so that they require a sex establishment licence and new mandatory conditions relating to the supply of alcohol.

A consultation has been carried out on the new draft statement which has elicited little response. Following consideration by the Cabinet at its meeting in November, the revised statement will be submitted to the Council for approval at the meeting to be held on 15th December 2010.

3. RE-BALANCING THE LICENSING ACT 2003

The Committee has been acquainted with details of a consultation paper issued by the Government on proposals to re-balance the Licensing Act and the legislative changes that are likely to result as a consequence.

The coalition government is of the view that the problems of irresponsible sales and drinking habits have not been resolved by the changes introduced by the Licensing Act and that there is insufficient flexibility in the system for licences to be reviewed or for discretion on the part of licensing authorities. The changes are expected to give a greater opportunity for local communities to ask for a review of the minority of premises where alcohol consumption is a cause for concern or problems of crime and disorder or public nuisance have arisen.

A response to the consultation which ended in September was endorsed by the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Committee before its dispatch.

4. SECRET GARDEN PARTY

The Committee has been acquainted with the outcome of the Secret Garden Party festival held in Abbots Ripton between 22nd and 26th July 2010.

As no objections were received, a licence in perpetuity was granted to festival organisers in January 2010 for a period of 5 days each year and there is now no formal opportunity for the licence conditions to be revisited unless an application for a review is made by one of the responsible authorities or an interested person, or a change to the licence conditions is applied for by the licence holder.

The festival itself attracted 26,000 people with licensable activities taking place throughout the event period. Officers from the Democratic and Central Services and Environmental and Community Health Divisions were on site for most of the event's duration in order to ensure that licence conditions were adhered to.

Pre and post event meetings have been held with the event organisers and other relevant organisations. The post event safety advisory group meeting highlighted a number of issues including a rise in criminal activity, security and medical care. A significant Police presence at the event was funded by the organisers but the popularity of the festival is thought to have attracted a small minority who target such events by way of thefts and others who tried to gain access without payment. Although a large number of people required medical care, both Hinchingbrooke Hospital staff and event paramedics were satisfied with the arrangements made on site to care for those in need of assistance. The issues identified at the meeting will be addressed by the organisers in association with the Licensing Section and other responsible authorities in advance of the 2011 event.

Although no letters of complaint have been received from local residents about the event, it is understood that some concerns have been raised with local parish councils and these are currently being investigated.

The event has become well known on the festival calendar and continues to be well managed with a high degree of co-operation on the part of the licence holder, the licensing authority and responsible authorities and is enjoyed by both local people and visitors to the District.

J T Bell
Chairman