

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the LICENSING AND PROTECTION COMMITTEE held in Meeting Rooms 0.1A and 0.1B, Ground Floor, Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon PE29 3TN on Wednesday, 4 December 2019.

PRESENT: Councillor S J Criswell – Chairman.
Councillors B S Banks, Mrs M L Beuttell, J R Clarke, Ms A Diaz, Mrs A Dickinson, Mrs S A Giles, Mrs P A Jordan, D J Mead and R J West.

APOLOGIES: Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors L W McGuire and Mrs P E Shrapnel.

MRS SUSAN WALFORD

At the start of the meeting, the Committee observed a few moments silence following the recent death of Mrs Susan Walford, the Council's former Operational Manager (Business).

MR JOHN TAYLOR

The Chairman welcomed Mr John Taylor, the newly appointed Chief Operating Officer for the District Council to his first meeting of the Committee. Members were informed that John's new responsibilities included Revenues and Benefits, Customer Services, Housing Needs and Resources, Planning Services, Community and the Document Centre.

11. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 19 June 2019 was approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

12. MEMBERS INTERESTS

No declarations were received.

13. PROPOSED PUBLIC SPACE PROTECTION ORDER FOR ST IVES

With the assistance of a report by the Community Resilience Manager (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Committee considered a proposal for the implementation of a Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) in St Ives under the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014.

The Committee were advised that the Order was being proposed in response to complaints from residents of 'boy racers' causing alarm, harassment and distress to those in the vicinity as well as anti-social behaviour as a result of consuming alcohol and was intended to cover (i) the Quay to the Bus Station and (ii) Warner's Park for a three year

period from 1 January 2020. Details of the proposed prohibitions contained with the order were set out in detail in Section 1.2 of the report and provided to Members of the Committee.

The Committee were informed that complaints regarding the problems associated with 'boy racers', anti-social behaviour and alcohol related disorder in St Ives have been reported to both Huntingdonshire District Council and Cambridgeshire County Council for a number of years and Police powers alone have not been capable of adequately addressing the issues. St Ives had previously been covered by a Designated Public Places Order which had been successful in addressing persistent complaints of street drinking, however this had expired in 2016. In terms of more recent issues, it was reported that during the period April to September 2019, a total of 60 incidents of anti-social activity in the St Ives area had been reported to the Police, details of which were outlined within the report at Section 2.4.

Members were informed that consultation had been carried out for a period of 35 days during September and October 2019 within the proposed areas with statutory consultees, identified relevant bodies, residents and businesses and the results suggest that there is overwhelming support for the proposed Order.

With regard to the enforcement of the Orders, the Committee were advised that Public Space Protection Orders could be enforced by Officers of the Constabulary as well as delegated Officers of the District Council. An assessment of the resourcing requirements had been undertaken and satisfactory resources were considered to be in place to respond to any emerging issues. District Council owned CCTV cameras located in the town would also be used to enforce the prohibitions retrospectively through the use of Fixed Penalty Notices.

In welcoming the proposals as a positive step to try to address the issues associated with 'boy racers' and anti-social behaviour within St Ives, the Committee were also pleased to note that this would be the first Public Space Protection Order proposed in Cambridgeshire which related to multiple issues which would send a clear message regarding the District Council's position.

Having noted that it would be possible to amend the order at any point during the three-year period through a process of consultation, the Committee also commented on the terms of the Order which required a person committing an offence to leave the designated area for a period of 24 hours and the potential implications should this area also include the offender's home address. Subject to clarification of this issue and the wording within the Order, it was unanimously

RESOLVED

that the implementation of a Public Space Protection Order under the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 for the areas of St Ives (as shown in Appendix A and B to the report now submitted) in response to persistent complaints of anti-social behaviour caused by 'boy racers' and the consumption of alcohol resulting in anti-social behaviour be approved with effect from 1 January 2020 for a three year

period.

14. MONITORING REPORT ON THE DELIVERY OF THE FOOD LAW ENFORCEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY PLANS

With the assistance of a report by the Acting Operational Manager (Business) (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Committee received an update on progress against the delivery of work on the Council's Food Law Enforcement and Health and Safety Service Plans during the period 1st June to 30th September 2019.

The Committee's attention was drawn to the Appendices to the report which contained the detailed performance information relating to the delivery of the Plans and Members noted that progress against predicted activity in two areas of the Food Law Enforcement Plan had moved from 'green' to 'amber' during the quarter. It was envisaged that these would improve as plans were in place to review the Alternative Enforcement Strategy and the need for proactive visits was being kept under review. Members were reassured to hear that inspections to higher risk (A-D category) premises remained on target.

With reference to the Food Law Enforcement Plan and general developments in this area, the Committee were advised that a set of video animations across a range of regulatory areas had now been completed by the Better Business for All partnership and was ready for launch in the New Year. It was also reported that the 'Register a Food Business Service' had not yet been rolled out by the Food Standards Agency and once this happened, decisions would need to be made as to how to adopt and integrate this system into the Council's current processes.

In terms of Health and Safety, the Committee were pleased to note that following a successful bid for funding to the Health and Safety Executive, an event for business had now been held, explaining what they need to do to be compliant and how this can be achieved by an in-house safety culture.

In reviewing the performance report and in response to a question regarding the resourcing of the service, the Committee were advised that the position of lead food officer was currently vacant, and it was hoped to fill this within the new year. In the interim period, temporary staff had been employed to assist with the workload.

In discussing the food hygiene rating system known as 'scores on the doors', the Committee were advised that there was no legal requirement for scores to be visibly displayed at a food premises. However officers did encourage businesses to display the notices in a prominent manner.

Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that progress on the delivery of the Service Plans for the period 1st June to 30th September 2019 be noted.

15. LICENSING AND PROTECTION SUB COMMITTEES

With the assistance of a report by the Elections and Democratic Services Manager (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Committee received and noted the details of three meetings of the Licensing and Protection Sub-Committee which had taken place between 3rd July and 25th September 2019.

In reviewing the contents of the report, the Committee received a verbal update on the outcome of three appeals against the decisions of the Sub-Committee and the Head of Service. Members agreed that this information should continue to be included within future reports.

With reference to the discussion at the last meeting regarding the number of suspensions of vehicle licences as a result of there being no proof of insurance cover, the Committee were advised that this continued to be an ongoing national problem. However following a recent review of their operating licence by the District Council's sub-committee, there had been improvements by one local company.

16. SUSPENSION AND REVOCATION OF HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE LICENCES

With the aid of a report by the Licensing Team (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Committee noted the details of actions which had been taken since the last meeting under delegated authority.

In reviewing the contents of the report, Members requested and received further details of the "top end inspection" of vehicles which was undertaken by the Constabulary if they had cause to pull over a licensed vehicle.

Members were reassured that the system of delegation enabled the Acting Operational Manager (Business) to take swift decisive action in consultation with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman if necessary.

17. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Committee noted that the next meeting would be held at 2pm on Wednesday 11 March 2020.

Chairman