

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the LICENSING AND PROTECTION COMMITTEE held in the Committee Suite, Burgess Hall, Westwood Road, St Ives PE27 6UW on Wednesday, 22 September 2021

PRESENT: Councillor S J Criswell – Chairman.

Councillors B S Banks, J R Clarke, Mrs A Dickinson, L W McGuire, K I Prentice and R J West.

APOLOGIES: Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors Mrs S A Giles, Mrs P A Jordan, D J Mead and B M Pitt.

11 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 30th June 2021 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

12 MEMBERS INTERESTS

No declarations were received.

13 MONITORING REPORT ON THE DELIVERY OF THE FOOD LAW ENFORCEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY SERVICE 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 made against the delivery of work on the Council's Food Law Enforcement and Health and Safety Plans during the period 1st April to 30th June 2021.

The Committee were informed that progress made during the period had once again been impacted by the ongoing Covid Pandemic. The suspension of planned food safety inspections by the Food Standards Agency (FSA) had had a direct impact on the delivery of the Food Law Enforcement Plan. However, following the recommencement of inspections in June 2022, Members were advised that the FSA had now issued a recovery plan with the expectation that the backlog of inspections of Category A and B premises would be completed by the end of June 2022. It was further reported that food sampling inspections would re-commence in January 2022 and it was intended to run a food hygiene training course for local businesses shortly.

The Committee discussed the proposals to catch up with the backlog of all programmed food hygiene inspections. In response, Members were advised by the Acting Operational Manager (Business) that he was confident that the Authority could comply with the recovery plan set by the FSA for the high-risk premises with the remainder being completed by April 2023. This would be

assisted by the recent employment of two experienced members of staff, which meant that the inspection team would now be fully resourced for the first time in several years. It was not considered cost effective or appropriate at this time to recruit temporary staff to address the backlog.

In response to a question regarding the remote 'virtual' inspections that the Service had been undertaken within the previous 18 months, the Committee received an explanation of this process and the actions which would be undertaken should any urgent issues be identified. Members were also advised that the results of these remote inspections would be used to risk assess and identify those premises which required inspection more urgently now than physical inspections had resumed.

In relation to the delivery of the Health and Safety Service Plan, the Committee were advised that the majority of complaints and requests for service were concerning Covid-19 related issues and these were expected to continue to occupy the majority of the Council's Health and Safety work for the foreseeable future.

Having expressed their thanks and appreciation to all those employed within the service during the difficult preceding 18 months, it was

RESOLVED

that progress on the delivery of the two Service Plans for the period 1st April to 30th June 2021 be noted.

14 HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE LICENCES - DECISIONS UNDER DELEGATED AUTHORITY

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.

Members were pleased to note that the Licensing Team had seen an overall improvement in general compliance from both Operators and Proprietors with regards to licensing terms and conditions.

In reviewing those cases which had been referred to appeal, Members sought and received further information on the appeal against the revocation of a Private Hire Operator's Licence which had been upheld by Magistrates in May 2021.

15 MR MYLES BEBBINGTON

Having noted that this would be the last meeting attended by the Acting Operational Manager (Business), the Committee placed on record their appreciation to Mr M Bebbington for his work, advice and support during his time at Huntingdonshire District Council. Members wished him well for his future retirement.

Chairman