
LICENSING AND PROTECTION PANEL

Report of the meeting held on 21st June 2005

Matters for Information

1. SERVICE PLAN FOR HEALTH AND SAFETY ENFORCEMENT

The Panel has considered the executive summary of the draft Service Plan for Health and Safety Enforcement for 2005/6. The Plan has been developed in accordance with guidance issued by the Health and Safety Commission and contains sections on the aims and objectives of the service and the resources available, together with a review of the work undertaken in the previous year.

The Panel has authorised the Director of Operational Services to approve the final content of the 2005/06 Service Plan for Health and Safety following consultation with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Panel.

2. FOOD SAFETY SERVICE PLAN 2005/06

The Panel has considered an executive summary of the proposed Service Plan for Food Law Enforcement for 2005/06. The Plan has been developed to comply with the requirements of the Food Standards Agency (FSA) and incorporates the aims and objectives of the service and the resources available, together with a review of the work undertaken during the previous year.

Members have been informed that the format of the Service Plan remains similar to that of the previous Plan, and that a new consolidated FSA Code of Practice has been included to pilot an alternative enforcement strategy to revise the frequency of inspections of smaller premises in the District.

A separate report on the subject appears on the agenda for the Council to consider. The Panel has therefore endorsed the Service Plan for Food Law Enforcement for consideration by the Council.

3. AIR QUALITY REVIEW AND ASSESSMENT – DETAILED ASSESSMENT OF NITROGEN DIOXIDE

The Panel has been advised of the actions taken by the District Council to review and assess local air quality as required by the Environment Act 1995, together with the outcome of a detailed assessment into nitrogen dioxide in Huntingdonshire.

Members have been reminded that the previous annual progress report of air quality in the previous year had indicated that concentrations of nitrogen dioxide were close to the annual mean objective at a number of locations in Huntingdon and St Neots. The findings necessitated more detailed assessments of nitrogen dioxide which have confirmed that the annual mean objective is unlikely to be met in Huntingdon close to the A14 trunk road, the inner ring road and Stukeley Road/St Peter's Road and in a small central area in St Neots. Members have been advised that the assessment has also identified additional locations near the A1 and A14 with high levels of nitrogen dioxide that are the subject of further detailed work which is scheduled for completion by the end of July.

As a result, the Panel has noted that Air Quality Management Areas will have to be declared for the affected areas by the end of November 2005 and action plans made by April 2007 containing proposals to remediate the situation. Where necessary, this will involve partnership working with external agencies such as the Highways Agency.

Having been informed that the next review and assessment will take place in April 2006, the Panel has authorised the Head of Environmental Health Services to publish the findings of the detailed assessment report and to proceed to declare Air Quality Management Areas as required.

4. ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR ACT 2003: IMPLEMENTATION OF PROVISIONS RELATED TO HIGH HEDGES

The Panel has been acquainted with the implementation of recent legislation in relation to high hedges which has come into force on 1st June 2005.

The Panel has been advised that initial indications suggested that a significant number of people may seek action under the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003, but that as yet Government funding is unlikely to be forthcoming and expenditure by the Council will have to be recovered from the fees that are recovered.

In view of the limited resources available and the fact that the legislation requires the procedure to be used by the public as a last resort, the Panel has agreed that a fee of £450 be set in respect of complaints, under the Act and that a full refund of fees be made if a Tree Preservation Order is placed on a tree or trees within a hedge which is subject to a complaint under the Act. Members have also authorised Officers to carry out various functions under the Act.

5. PAVEMENT CAFES

The Panel has considered amendments to the conditions pertaining to consents for pavement cafes issued by the Council. Members have been informed that the existing conditions permit the consumption of alcohol unrelated to the consumption of food outside premises until 11pm but having regard to the potential implications for

public nuisance, the Panel has agreed to amend the conditions so as to permit the consumption of alcohol only as an ancillary to the consumption of food and to limit the operating hours from 09.00 hours to 21.00 hours.

6. REPRESENTATION ON ORGANISATIONS

The Panel has appointed a number of representatives to outside organisations for the ensuing Municipal Year.

J M Sadler
Chairman