

DONCASTER METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

LICENSING COMMITTEE

THURSDAY, 18TH JUNE, 2020

A MEETING of the LICENSING COMMITTEE was held at the VIRTUAL MEETING VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS on THURSDAY, 18TH JUNE, 2020, at 10.00 am.

PRESENT:

Vice-Chair - Councillor Iris Beech

Councillors Duncan Anderson, Steve Cox, Neil Gethin, John Gilliver, Martin Greenhalgh, Charlie Hogarth, David Nevett and Frank Tyas.

APOLOGIES:

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Kenneth Keegan, Bev Chapman, Nikki McDonald and Ian Pearson.

3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST, IF ANY.

There were no declarations made at the meeting.

4 MINUTES OF THE LICENSING COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 1ST APRIL, 2020.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday, 1st April, 2020 be approved as a true record.

5 STATEMENT OF LICENSING POLICY - LICENSING ACT 2003 CUMULATIVE IMPACT ASSESSMENT.

Members considered a report that outlined the outcome of the consultation undertaken regarding the existing Cumulative Impact Area in Doncaster. There were three areas to be reviewed, with the Committee required to make a decision as to whether these remain in place or be removed, or amended.

These areas had to be reviewed every three years, and these had now reached the time for determination by the Licensing Committee. The three cumulative impact areas covered specific streets and areas, which, when a licensing application was made in this area, could provide further strength in refusing or improving an application.

There were three areas currently within the Cumulative Impact Zone, these being as detailed below:-

Area 1 Doncaster Town Centre –

- Bradford Row

- Cleveland Street
- Hall Gate
- High Street
- Market Place
- Priory Walk
- Silver Street

Area 2 Town Ward –

- Broxholme Lane
- Christ Church Road
- Copley Road
- Highfield Road
- Nether Hall Road

Area 3 Bawtry Town Centre –

- Church Street
- Grasswood Lane / Dower House Square
- High Street
- Market Place
- Scot Lane
- Swan Street
- Wharf Street

Members were provided with information from Andy Collins; Public Health was in attendance at the meeting and was able to provide a wealth of information of alcohol statistics across Doncaster and in the three Cumulative Impact Areas (CIA). Through the course of the consultation South Yorkshire Police and Public Health had both responded in favour of keeping these in place as it was reported that alcohol admissions to hospital and other related health issues and complications were continuing to rise as well as anti-social behaviour and alcohol related crimes.

Members of the Committee discussed at length the three areas individually and raised a number of questions and concerns that were answered by officers present at the meeting in depth.

A number of questions were raised, including what effect alfresco drinking following the end of the current Covid-19 lockdown would have on problems in the area and if it would further amplify the number of people drinking on the streets and such like. However, Members were assured that the number of people would remain steady as no new licences would be granted, it would just be temporary amendments to those already in place to allow alfresco licences. Additionally, this would hopefully not be long-term and only in the short term whilst the country recovered from the pandemic.

Questions were also posed as to how many licences had been granted in the past three years, and if these had caused any problems. However, Members were informed that the CIA did not allow for blanket refusals and actually looked to strengthen the quality of those applications coming forward in order that the conditions were stronger and more stringent.

The discussion held by the Committee was thorough and covered all the issues of concern that Members had either collectively about Doncaster as a whole or each individual area.

RESOLVED that the Committee considered the evidence received during the consultation and made the following decision in relation to each respective Cumulative Impact Area:-

- 1) Area 1 – The Committee resolved to keep the Cumulative Impact Area in Place for the Town Centre area due to the rising figures of alcohol related crime and health issues in this area of town. By keeping this in place, it would look to ensure that the risk of these figures rising further were minimised and controlled;
- 2) Area 2 – with regard to the Lower Wheatley Area, Members resolved to keep the Cumulative Impact Area in place due to the rising figures of alcohol related crime and health problems in this area of the Borough. By keeping the CIA in place, it would look to ensure that the risk of these figures rising further was minimised and kept under control; and
- 3) Area 3 – Members resolved that the Cumulative Impact Area in Bawtry Town Centre remain in place as it would look to ensure that the quality of the establishments opening in Bawtry was good and would control the rising crime statistics in this area as well as the alcohol related health problems that were rising across the Borough.

6 GENERAL LICENSING UPDATE - COVID 19.

Members considered a report that provided an update on the steps taken by the Licensing Authority during the Covid-19 Pandemic to maintain a number of services.

The report outlined a number of points to the Committee as to how this was being done and in particular highlighted the following points:-

- All licensing applications to be done on line
- More information provided on the Licensing web pages to ensure that the public were kept updated with regard to applications
- Members and Parish Councillors were provided with the correct link to check for applications being submitted on regular basis
- The use of virtual technology had enabled the Committee to move to virtual meetings during this period ensuring that applications could still be heard within the relevant timeframes.

One of the main points highlighted to Members was the issue of Vehicle Testing for licensed hire vehicles. As a result of measures brought in by the Government in light of Covid-19, MOTs that fell in the period had been given a six-month extension to allow for the closure of motor garages throughout the pandemic.

As a result of this, there was now a large backlog of licensed vehicles requiring their MOTs / Vehicle test undertaking. Licences were issued on the understanding that the vehicles were properly checked and obviously now there was the concern that vehicles were not roadworthy. However, the Committee were assured that whilst the

North Bridge depot, who were responsible for undertaking the checks were still limited in the number of cars they could see each week, they were now working through the backlog. In response to concerns from Members with regard to where the liability fell if an accident occurred, Officers assured the Committee that it was expected that the driver was still held responsible and their licence, and their employers licence would be at risk. They would be held to account if this occurred, as they would be in a position where they were risking public safety.

Members noted that a list of all drivers whose vehicles had fallen into this category would be prioritised and it was endeavoured that progress be made in a timely manner.

RESOLVED that Members note the steps detailed within the report that have been taken by the Authority with regard to the ongoing situation with Covid-19 in order to allow businesses and services to adapt and therefore continue to operate.