

Minutes

Licensing Committee

Venue: Council Chamber - Civic Centre, Doncaster Road, Selby, YO8 9FT

Date: Monday, 14 February 2022

Time: 10.00 am

Present: Councillors R Sweeting (Chair), J Chilvers (Vice-Chair), I Chilvers, C Pearson, J Mackman, J Cattanach, P Welch and K Franks

Officers present: Jade Reynolds, Solicitor (present remotely via Teams), Sharon Cousins, Licensing Manager, Drew Fussey, Operational Service Manager; and Dawn Drury, Democratic Services Officer

20 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors D Brook and J Duggan. Councillor K Franks was in attendance as a substitute for Councillor Duggan.

21 MINUTES

The Committee considered the minutes of the meetings held on 16 August and 15 November 2021.

RESOLVED:

To approve the minutes of the Licensing Committee meetings held on 16 August and 15 November 2021.

22 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

There were no disclosures of interest.

23 CHAIR'S ADDRESS TO THE LICENSING COMMITTEE

The Chairman started his address by wishing all Members and officers a Happy New Year and welcomed them back to the first Licensing

committee hearing of 2022.

The Chair informed Members that the meeting had been convened for officers to provide an update to the Committee on the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and the implications for the Council's Licensing Team.

24 THE IMPACT OF THE COVID-19 GLOBAL PANDEMIC AND IMPLICATIONS ON THE LICENSING SERVICE

The Licensing Manager presented the report, which asked the Committee to note how the licensing landscape had changed over the previous two years due to the Covid-19 pandemic; the impact this had on licence holders, and the number of licence applications and complaints received by the authority.

The Committee noted that the first United Kingdom national lockdown in response to the Covid-19 pandemic began in March 2020, at which time all committee hearings were postponed, and did not resume until August 2020. During this period the majority of businesses and public places were closed, and officers of the council were required to work from home.

Members heard that the workload for the Licensing Team throughout this period had focused on licenced premises with many enquiries received from licensees for advice, support and guidance. In addition, officers carried out visits to licensed premises in relation to covid compliance, in accordance with government guidance at that time; and to ensure that premises were continuing to abide by the licensing legislation and promote the licensing objectives.

The Licensing Manager explained that officers had continued to provide critical regulatory services which included the processing of applications for new and renewal licenses across a full range of licensing functions. Members acknowledged that there had been a 120% increase in the amount of premises licence applications received and licensing sub-committee hearings had also shown an increase.

Members was informed that the Council had adapted quickly to the new ways of working during the pandemic and many of the practices adopted had helped to improve the standard of the licensing service; to include online applications, issuing of electronic licenses, and regular email updates on any upcoming licensing amendments for licensees.

The Committee noted that, as per the statutory requirement, the Gambling Policy 2022 and Selby's Taxi Licensing Policy were both out for public consultation at the present time.

Finally, in terms of Selby's taxi licence holders, the Committee was informed that the taxi trade had suffered greatly during the periods of lockdown, with licence holders surrendering licenses and leaving the taxi trade to find alternative employment. It was noted that this had impacted

on the number of complaints received by the authority as there were fewer customers and less drivers and vehicles.

The pandemic had also had an impact on the number of first-time driver licence applications with other drivers being less likely to change their vehicle, particularly in relation to high-end executive vehicles which, in the first instance, would normally be considered at Committee, where officers did not have delegated authority to make the decision.

Members noted that due to the pandemic and fewer applications meeting the criteria to reach Licensing Committee, that although Licensing hearings were programmed into the Committee calendar monthly, if there was no business for the Committee to consider then these may need to be cancelled.

Members queried if taxi drivers had received any form of support from the Government during lockdown, it was confirmed that the government had made grants available, upon application, for the licensed trade, however this area of work was undertaken by the Council's Revenue and Benefits team rather than the Licensing team.

The Chair thanked officers for their continued hard work.

RESOLVED:

To note the update.

The meeting closed at 10.08 am.