

LICENSING COMMITTEE

9 March 2020

Present: Councillor S Bolton (Chair)
Councillor A Dychton (Vice-Chair)
Councillors N Bell, A Grimston, I Hamid, K Hastrick, P Jeffree,
A Khan (for minute number 17), R Martins, M Mills, G Saffery,
R Smith, D Walford and R Wenham

Officers: Head of Community Protection
Democratic Services Officer (JK)
Senior Licensing Officer (AY)

14 **Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillor Pattinson.

There was a change of membership for this meeting; Councillor Bell replaced Councillor Mauthoor.

Councillor Khan had sent his apologies that he would be delayed.

15 **Disclosure of interests**

There were no disclosures of interest.

16 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on the 15 January 2020 were submitted and signed.

17 **Licensing Sub-Committee minutes and update**

The committee received an update on the Licensing Sub-Committee hearing which had taken place since the last meeting of the Licensing Act 2003 Committee.

The minutes of the meetings held on 29 April 2019 and 23 January 2020 were submitted and signed.

Licensing Act 2003 - Annual Report

The committee received the report of the Senior Licensing Officer which outlined the issues, trends and applications that were seen in 2019.

The Senior Licensing Officer introduced the report and highlighted some key points. The number of premises and applications for temporary event notices had both increased. Additionally, there had again been few licensing sub-committees which reflected well on both the willingness of parties to mediate and the officers overseeing the process.

There had been a noticeable increase in changes to premises' designated premises supervisor. Members were advised that factors in this included high staff turnover in the leisure sector and new premises opening with an interim manager in place.

A number of smaller premises had applied for alcohol licences; while the number of licensed premises could not be capped, applications were reviewed by the responsible authorities who took account of the nature of the premises' locality. The planning department also received details of applications.

Following a question related to the number of complaints received about premises; officers agreed to circulate this information to the committee. The numbers of complaints were, however, low in comparison to other licences the council administered. Engagement with schemes such as Pub Watch and Best Bar None was good.

Officers noted that benchmarking the data in the annual report with other, potentially comparable, towns was not advised as there were too many variables which would impact the conclusions.

Discussing any national developments which would impact Watford, officers noted that the government may be looking to review the antisocial behaviour laws and this could impact the licensing regime. It was also possible that minimum unit pricing could be looked at again for England.

The town centre's licensing policy had been an effective tool to restrict certain activities in the town centre. Going forward, the council would be looking to encourage certain types of premises to reinvigorate the top of the town.

It was noted that where test purchases had taken place in Watford by Trading Standards, the council were not informed which premises had been tested.

RESOLVED –

that the annual report for 2019 be noted.

Action: Senior Licensing Officer

Chair
Licensing Committee

The Meeting started at 7.00 pm
and finished at 7.30 pm