

Licensing Policy Committee

Minutes of a meeting held on 20 November 2023

Acting under Delegated Powers

Present: Councillors Grimshaw (Chair), Davies, Evans, Flanagan and Leech

LPC/23/05 Minutes

Decision

To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting held on 31 October 2023.

LPC/23/06 Statement of Licensing Policy 2023 - 2028

The Committee considered the report of the Director of Planning, Building Control and Licensing which presented the proposed final revised Statement of Licensing Policy to set out how the Authority's licensing duties would be carried out, in line with the requirements of the Licensing Act (2003).

The Committee was invited to recommend that, at its 29 November 2023 meeting, Council approves the revised policy for publication having regard to the responses that were received following consultation as well as any recommendations from the Licensing Committee.

The Principal Licensing officer introduced the report outlining the reasons for the Licensing Committee's recommendation to include indicative area boundary maps for the Fallowfield and Withington Special Policies and to amend the names of special policy areas to reflect a specific area as opposed to an entire ward. A recommendation was also made concerning a delegation to the Director of Planning, Building Control and Licensing in consultation with the Chair of Licensing be duly endorsed to establish a commitment to annual reviews in consultation with ward members and officers to consider any changes that may be required for special policy areas. The outcomes of the publication were included at Appendix 1. It was subsequently recommended that the revised policy be endorsed by the Committee prior to ratification at the upcoming Full Council meeting.

In response to a question about the proposal that the annual review be undertaken in consultation with ward members, the Principal Licensing Officer explained that whilst the final format of that process had not yet been fully established, it would likely be focussed on evidence gathering exercises. Information would therefore be sought from ward members, neighbourhood teams, and existing resources. Any proposed policy changes would then need to be considered and agreed by this committee as well as the Licensing Committee before any amendments could be implemented.

There was a discussion about the challenge of implementing a change to the characterisation of venues and the importance of a fully aligned and joined up

approach across the planning and licensing regimes with a focus on residents' experience. It was recognised that some businesses were likely to have some degree of overlap in terms of its characterisation and that venues could typically switch character over the course of an evening. One of the key aspects of the approach would therefore require careful consideration of the role that alcohol consumption may play in the operation of such premises. Future consideration would therefore be given to how officers can promote greater detail of the nature of the business being provided by applicants in the application form. He added that the policy would also seek to reflect expectations around the extent of information that applicants should be setting out in terms of the detail about proposed business on the application form so that a greater understanding of the focus of the proposed business could be achieved.

The Committee conveyed its thanks to the officers in quickly responding to earlier concerns over the implementation of a ward-based approach and the preference for an area-based focus. It was also suggested that consideration be given to the involvement of the Communications team to raise awareness about the changes within revised policy, with particular reference to ward members where a special policy area was in place to advise them of changes applicable to their area. This communication would be in addition to the statutory requirement to annually publish the Statement of Licensing Policy in a stand alone document. The Committee agreed to this.

Decisions

1. To agree the revised Statement of Licensing Policy and recommend that Council approves the policy for publication, having had regard to the responses received to the consultation and the recommendations by the Licensing Committee.
2. To delegate authority to the Director of Planning, Building Control and Licensing in consultation with the Chair of Licensing to establish a process to consult with ward members in respect of proposed changes to special policy areas in their ward.
3. To request that the Director of Planning, Building Control and Licensing explores the feasibility of working in consultation with the Communications team to raise awareness about agreed policy changes, with particular reference to ward members where a special policy area was in place to advise them of changes that apply to their area.