

NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

LICENSING COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 17 June 2014

PRESENT: Councillor Malpas (Chair); Councillor Hill (Deputy Chair); Councillors Conroy, Eales, Larratt, Marriott, Sargeant and Stone.

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors Hibbert and Mennell.

The Chair welcomed Councillors Larratt and Marriott as new members of the Committee. He then paid tribute to former members of the Committee, Councillor Ford and the late Councillor Wire DL for all their work on the Committee.

2. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 29 April were agreed and signed by the Chair.

3. DEPUTATIONS / PUBLIC ADDRESSES

Mr A Gallone was granted leave to address the Committee in respect of item 9 – Becket's Park Street Trading Consents.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

5. MATTERS OF URGENCY WHICH BY REASON OF SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES THE CHAIR IS OF THE OPINION SHOULD BE CONSIDERED

The Senior Licensing Officer informed Members that there were a number of cases involving Hackney and Private Hire drivers which needed to be considered before the next meeting of the Committee, on 22 July. He was intending to set up a special meeting of the Committee between 8 and 11 July in the daytime to consider these cases. The licence renewal for the Urban Tiger also needed to be considered and it was suggested that this could be heard on the same day as the drivers' cases. The Democratic Services Officer would contact members to seek a date, which only required the Committee's quorum (4 members), as a minimum, to be present.

6. BETTING SHOPS AND FIXED ODDS BETTING TERMINALS

The Senior Licensing Officer updated the Committee on the situation locally and advised of national development in relation to Betting Shops and Fixed Odds Betting Terminals (FOBTs), including test purchasers to see if under 18s could use FOBTs. This followed an initial report to the Committee on 10 December 2013 when Members had expressed concerns regarding FOBTs. He stated that the betting shop companies had expressed concerns at the results of the test purchases and had arranged a meeting with him to discuss the issues.

Members referred to the minutes of the meeting on 10 December 2013 and stated that they had wanted proactive action in respect of FOBTs. They asked that central government be lobbied on the issue. Attention was drawn to the minutes of full Council on 28 April 2014 when a motion had been passed to write to the government on this matter.

Members expressed concerns at the proliferation of FOBTs and the prominent locations and

branding of betting shops. They asked for a map showing the location of betting shops across the town, which the Senior Licensing Officer undertook to provide. Comments were also made by Members that betting shops should have a membership scheme to prevent use of the facilities by under age gamblers, and that the Council should have a betting shops policy incorporated into Licensing and Planning policies.

The Chair stated that he would produce a letter to send to central government, expressing the Committee's concerns regarding FOBTs and the spread of betting shops in town centres. The letter would include the points made at this meeting and the one held on 10 December 2013. He would aim to produce this letter before the next meeting of the Committee, on 22 July 2014.

RESOLVED:

1. That new legislation, once in force, be utilised and the Licensing service be supported in the continuance of its monitoring, enforcement and regulatory functions, as set out at option 3 of the officer's report.
2. That the Local Government Association and central government be lobbied to reconsider the position in relation to stakes and prizes associated with FOBTs.
3. That the Licensing team be asked to investigate how a licensing policy for betting shops could be formulated and present a report to the Committee's meeting on 23 September 2014.

7. TOWN CENTRE STREET TRADING CONSENTS

The Senior Licensing Officer presented a report asking the Committee to formally resolve to publish a notice of intention to establish street trading consents in the town centre, as set out in his report.

RESOLVED:

1. That with effect from: 1 November 2014:
 - (i) The Town Centre area of Northampton be adopted as a Street Trading Consent area.
 - (ii) That the Licensing Department have delegated authority to issue Occasional Street Trading Consents for 3 to 6 days to traders requesting to trade at Council organised or Council approved or community events. (These to be issued no more than six times per year at each location and would be to a single trader, larger groups or markets would fall under the Northampton market provisions. when events take place.
2. That should the recommendations be adopted, prior to granting a consent the specific location of any Occasional Street Trading Consent site be delegated to the Senior Licensing Office, which would enable the activity in the Town Centre to be assessed, following consultation with the relevant departments at the time of the application and, any safety issues can be taken into consideration prior to any consent being granted.

8. REVIEW OF HACKNEY RANKS

The Senior Licensing Officer presented a report seeking approval for the extension of an existing Hackney rank, the creation of a new town centre rank and the location of three night time ranks, as set out in the officer's report. He tabled an amended plan as the one in the

agenda was incorrect.

Members expressed a number of concerns during consideration of the item, as summarised below:

- The parking spaces on George Row were used by people to access County Hall and the Tourist Information Office and any taxi rank there should be night time only;
- The parking spaces in mercer's Row should be retained;
- There was a need for a taxi rank in Victoria Street to support the National Express services now beginning and ending journeys there. The connections between Victoria Street and the new bus station were disjointed and difficult for people with disabilities and should be integrated;
- A taxi rank near the new bus station was not considered necessary as most of the journeys to and from there were short haul, although Members understood why the drivers favoured a rank in that location;
- There were some concerns about creating a rank in Bridge Street in respect of anti-social behaviour there at night, although it was appreciated this was where many people gathered at night;
- Concern was expressed at the loss of disabled parking spaces in Bradshaw Street when the new bus station was built;
- The possibility of creating ranks in St Giles Street, the section of Abington Street to be de-pedestrianised, and that part of Abington Street from Dychurch Lane to the Market Square were suggested. Other areas for consideration included Castilian Street and Guildhall Road.

In answer to Members' questions the Senior Licensing officer stated that the highway authority had not objected to the proposals in the report when he had met them.

RESOLVED:

1. That the officers be requested to:
 - Amend the proposals for a taxi rank in George Row to night time only;
 - Look again at the possibility of including a taxi rank in Victoria Street;
 - Look at other suitable sites for taxi ranks in the town centre, bearing in mind members' comments as summarised above.
2. That the proposals in the report be supported for consultation, with the exception of George Row.
3. That the officers should consult with the highways authority on an integrated highways strategy for the town centre.

9. BECKET'S PARK STREET TRADING CONSENTS

Mr Gallone, who been given leave to address the Committee, said that the Becket's Park site was being designated as a premium one but it would take five years to establish trade to that level. He asked if trailer access to the site could be established from the beginning and not introduced later. He would be prepared to make a contribution to the preparation of the site in return for a reduce level of rent. In answer to questions he stated that it would be necessary to sell tea and coffee to obtain the most benefit out of the site and this was difficult to do from an ice cream van.

The Senior Licensing Officer stated that no objections had been received to the consultation approved by the Committee at its meeting on 29 April 2014 to the intention to adopt a street

trading consent site in Becket's Park. There might be some delay in preparing the site, to allow tree roots to be checked to ensure they will not be not damaged when the site was created.

In answer to Members' comments and questions the Senior Licensing Officer responded as summarised below:

- The licensed trader would be given keys to unlock the posts to enter and exit the site. There would be one point of entry and a different exit point;
- The site would initially be a premium one. It would be the remit of the trader to provide evidence from trading that the site should not be a premium one;
- An ice cream van regularly traded from near the site without consent, which suggested that the location was a profitable one;
- Existing traders had received preferential treatment for sites when street trading consents had been adopted by the Council in 2003 and he suggested that the same situation should apply in this situation.

Members expressed concerns that there was an option whereby a part of a trader's initial fee could be waived pending a contribution from the trader towards any preparation work required for the site. It was suggested that this might create difficulties for traders unable to make such a contribution.

RESOLVED:

1. That following formal consultation and with effect from 1 August 2014 a street trading consent site be adopted in Becket's Park, Northampton near to the junction of Nunn Mills Road and Bedford Road, and be designated a "Premium" consent site.
2. That the option whereby a part of a trader's initial fee could be waived pending a contribution from the trader towards any preparation work required for the site be removed.

The meeting concluded at 7:22 pm.