

LICENSING COMMITTEE

5 January 2015

PRESENT: Councillor Mrs Brandis (Chairman); Councillors Mrs Bloom, Cooper, Hawkett, Huxley, Lambert, Mills, Mrs Renshell, and Sir Beville Stanier.

APOLOGIES: Councillors Mrs Blake and Vick

1. MINUTES

RESOLVED -

That the Minutes of 8 September 2014 be approved as a correct record.

2. REVIEW OF THE LICENSING POLICY

The Licensing Act 2003 (the Act) required the Licensing Authority to prepare and publish a statement of its licensing policy every five years. Until 2011 this had happened every three years. Although the Licensing Authority had until 2016 to review the current policy, it was felt that due to a number of significant changes in legislation and statutory guidance a review should take place before 2016.

The current policy had proved successful, particularly as it applied to Aylesbury town centre not only in contributing to a continuing fall in crime and disorder (a Community Safety Partnership priority) but also assisting in the development of the town centre in line with the Council's Strategic Town Centre Vision. The saturation policy had been commended by the Association of Town Centre Management's Purple Flag award for the town centre.

The intention of the reviewed policy was to reflect the Council's vision for the night time economy particularly in the town centres and promote standards by setting out expectations of business practice through licensing mechanisms. A restraint policy had worked successfully in Aylesbury town centre and a policy restraining later hours was being sought for Buckingham town centre, based on complaints received from a number of sources and applications received for premises in Buckingham town centre over the years.

The draft policy had been attached as an appendix to the report. The draft not only included changes to the law but also reflected changes in Government policy in respect of licensing. The current Government had abandoned the previous Government's experiment with longer licensing hours and current policy and guidance now empowered Licensing Authorities to introduce restrictions on hours and implement strategies to meet the needs of the local area, based on local knowledge.

All responsible authorities, District Councillors, the County, Town and Parish Councils and the licensed trade would be consulted on the draft policy and meetings would be held for licensees and other parties for the town centres of Aylesbury and Buckingham. The consultation process would last for 12 weeks in line with Government guidance. The final draft would go before the Environment and Living Scrutiny Committee, before being brought before Licensing Committee for final approval and recommendation to Full Council at a later date in 2015.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the Members noted the first draft of the Council's Licensing Policy Statement and asked that their comments be incorporated into the draft policy before the consultation period commenced.