

Public Document Pack

Date of meeting Friday, 20th July, 2012
Time 10.00 am
Venue Committee Room 1. Civic Offices, Merrial Street,
Newcastle-under-Lyme, Staffs ST5 2AG
Contact Julia Cleary ext 2227

Licensing Sub-Committee

AGENDA

PART 1- OPEN AGENDA

- | | | |
|---|---|---------------|
| 1 | Human Rights Guidance Notes | (Pages 1 - 2) |
| 2 | Natural Justice Guidance Notes | (Pages 3 - 4) |
| 3 | Procedure to be followed by the Sub-Committee | (Pages 5 - 6) |
| 4 | Covering Report Cross Heath News | (Pages 7 - 8) |

5 PART 2

6 DISCLOSURE OF EXEMPT INFORMATION

To resolve that the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following representations because it is likely that there will be a disclosure of exempt information as defined in Schedule 12A, Paragraphs 3, and 7 of the Local Government Act 1972.

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|---|--|-------------------|
| 7 | Application For Review From Staffordshire Trading Standards | (Pages 9 - 30) |
| 8 | Evidence for Review submitted by Staffordshire Trading Standards | (Pages 31 - 136) |
| 9 | Representations received from Staffordshire Police | (Pages 137 - 150) |

Members: Councillors Eastwood, Hambleton and Mrs Winfield

'Members of the Council: If you identify any personal training / development requirements from the items included in this agenda or through issues raised during the meeting, please bring them to the attention of the Committee Clerk at the close of the meeting'

Officers will be in attendance prior to the meeting for informal discussions on agenda items.

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GUIDANCE NOTES

HUMAN RIGHTS ACT 1998

In considering allegations against Members you should have regard to the provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998 which embody the rules of natural justice.

Rights and Freedoms to be considered when determining matters

ARTICLE 6: RIGHT TO A FAIR TRIAL

1. In the determination of his civil rights and obligations or of any criminal charge against him, everyone is entitled to a fair and public hearing within a reasonable time by an independent and impartial tribunal established by law. Judgement shall be pronounced publicly, but the press and public may be excluded from all or part of the trial in the interest of morals, public order or national security in a democratic society, where the interests of juveniles or the protection of the private life of the parties so require, or to the extent strictly necessary in the opinion of the court in special circumstances where publicity would prejudice the interests of justice.
2. Everyone charged with a criminal offence shall be presumed innocent until proved guilty according to law.
3. Everyone charged with a criminal offence has the following minimum rights:
 - (a) to be informed promptly, in a language which he understands and in detail, of the nature and cause of the accusation against him;
 - (b) to have adequate time and facilities for the preparation of his defence;
 - (c) to defend himself in person or through legal assistance of his own choosing or, if he has not sufficient means, to pay for legal assistance, to be given it free when the interests of justice so require;
 - (d) to examine or have examined witnesses against him and to obtain the attendance and examination of witnesses on his behalf under the same conditions as witnesses against him;
 - (e) to have the free assistance of an interpreter if he cannot understand or speak the language used in court.

ARTICLE 8: RIGHT TO RESPECT FOR PRIVATE AND FAMILY LIFE

1. Everyone has the right to respect for his private and family life, his home and his correspondence.
2. There shall be no interference by a public authority with the exercise of this right except such as is in accordance with the law and is necessary in a democratic society in the interests of national security, public safety or the economic well being of the country, for the prevention of disorder or crime, for the protection of health or morals, or for the protection of the rights and freedoms of others.

ARTICLE 10: FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

1. Everyone has the right to freedom of expression. These rights shall include freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart information and ideas without interference by public authority and regardless of frontiers. This Article shall not prevent States from requiring the licensing of broadcasting, television or cinema enterprises.

2. The exercise of these freedoms, since it carries with it duties and responsibilities, may be subject to such formalities, conditions, restrictions or penalties as are prescribed by law and are necessary in a democratic society, in the interests of national security, territorial integrity or public safety, for the prevention of disorder or crime, for the protection of health or morals, for the protection of the reputation or rights of others, for preventing the disclosure of information received in confidence, or for maintaining the authority and impartiality of the judiciary.

ARTICLE 14: PROHIBITION OF DISCRIMINATION

The enjoyment of the rights and freedoms set fourth in this Convention shall be secured without discrimination on any ground such as sex, race, colour, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, property, birth or other status.

NB This is not a substantive right, but comes into play if other rights are likely to have been infringed. The prohibition is wide, but not exhaustive

ARTICLE 1: OF THE FIRST PROTOCOL PROTECTION OF PROPERTY

Every natural or legal person is entitled to the peaceful enjoyment of his possessions. No one shall be deprived of his possessions except in the public interest and subject to the conditions provided for by law and by the general principles of international law.

The preceding provisions shall not, however, in any way impair the right of a State to enforce such laws as it deems necessary to control the use of property in accordance with the general interest or to secure the payment of taxes or other contributions or penalties.

NB Possessions, in this context, includes the right to apply for a licence, the right to hold and retain a licence and the goodwill of a business.

NOTE In this context it is also particularly important for members to observe the rule against bias.

GUIDANCE NOTES

NATURAL JUSTICE AND FAIRNESS

These are the principles used in the determination of just or fair processes and stem from the common law legal system.

According to Roman law, certain basic legal principles were so obvious that they should be applied universally without the need to be enacted into the law.

The rules of natural justice are now regularly applied by courts in both common law and civil law jurisdictions.

Natural justice operates on the principles that man is basically good, that a person of good intent should not be harmed and one should treat others as they would like to be treated.

Natural justice includes the notion of procedural fairness and may incorporate the following guidelines:-

- A person accused of a crime, or at risk of some form of loss, should be given adequate notice about the proceedings (including any charges);
- A person making a decision should declare any personal interest they may have in the proceedings;
- A person who makes a decision should be unbiased and act in good faith. He therefore cannot be one of the parties in the case, or have an interest in the outcome. This is expressed in the Latin maxim, *nemo iudex in causa sua*: “no man is permitted to be judge in his own cause”;
- Proceedings should be conducted so they are fair to all the parties – expressed in the Latin maxim, *audi alteram* : “let the other side be heard”;
- Each party to a proceeding is entitled to ask questions and contradict the evidence of the opposing party;
- A decision-maker should take into account relevant considerations and extenuating circumstances, and ignore irrelevant considerations;
- Justice should be seen to be done. If the community is satisfied that justice has been done they will continue to place their faith in the courts.

Where a person’s legal rights are concerned, the principles of natural justice are bolstered by Article 6 of the European Convention on Human Rights which is now incorporated into domestic law.

THE RULE AGAINST BIAS

It is elementary to the rules of natural justice that the deciding body is to be free from bias.

The rule is that the body must be and be seen to be impartial, independent and disinterested.

There are two broad categories of bias:

- (a) Actual Bias: when the decision-maker has an economic interest in the outcome of the case (also known as a material or pecuniary interest) subject to the De Minimum doctrine;
- (b) Reasonable Apprehension: unbiased appearance is an essential part of procedural fairness. The test is whether, having regard to the circumstances, a well informed person (“reasonably informed bystander”) would consider that the interest might have an influence on the exercise of the decision-maker’s duties.

PROCEDURE FOR REVIEW TO BE FOLLOWED BY THE LICENSING SUB-COMMITTEE AT A REVIEW HEARING

NOTE:

All hearings will normally be held in public. However, the Licensing Sub-Committee may exclude the public from all or part of a hearing where it considers that the public interest in so doing outweighs the public interest in the hearing or that part of the hearing taking place in public. A party or that party's representatives may be treated as a member of the public and therefore excluded from the meeting for all or part of the hearing, and all parties have the right to be represented and to call witnesses.

The Clerk to the Committee will have the right to ask questions on behalf of the Committee of any party to the proceedings.

PROCEDURE:

1. The Chair of the Sub-Committee will open the meeting and introduce the members of the committee and call upon the parties to identify themselves and their representatives and to identify any witnesses they intend to call.
2. The Chair of the Sub-Committee will call upon the Clerk to the Committee to explain to the parties the procedures which will be followed at the hearing. Unless the Chair directs otherwise, each party will normally have a maximum period of one hour in which to give further information and call any witnesses in support of their case. In every case, all parties will have an equal maximum period.
3. The Chair of the Sub-Committee will then normally call upon the interested party or the responsible authority which has made the application for a review, to provide evidence in support of their application.
4. The holder of the premises licence will then have an opportunity to question that party or responsible authority.
5. Members of the Sub-Committee will then have the opportunity to question that party or responsible authority.
6. Any person who has made relevant representations will then call any witness in support.
7. The holder of the premises licence will then have an opportunity to question that witness.
8. Members of the Sub-Committee will then have the opportunity to question that person.
9. Stages 6 to 8 will then be repeated for each person making relevant representations.
10. The holder of the premises licence will then have the opportunity to give evidence in response to the application and in response to the relevant representations which have been made.

11. The interested party or responsible authority will then have an opportunity to question the holder of the premises licence.
12. Members of the Sub-Committee will then have the opportunity to question the holder of the premises licence.
13. Stages 10 to 12 will be repeated for any witnesses on behalf of the holder of the premises licence.
14. The interested party or responsible authority will have the right to address the sub committee.
15. The holder of the premises licence will have the right to address the Sub-Committee in summing up his case.
16. All parties will then leave the room while the Sub-Committee consider their decision.
17. The Sub-Committee will normally make their determination at the conclusion of the hearing, but when this is not possible, will make its determination as soon as possible and in any event the decision will be communicated in writing to all parties.

Agenda Item 4

APPLICATION FOR THE REVIEW OF A PREMISE LICENCE UNDER SECTION 51 OF THE LICENSING ACT 2003

CROSS HEATH NEWS, 121 Liverpool Road, Newcastle under Lyme, Staffs, ST5 9ER.

1. Details of Application

- Applicants:** Brian Mycock, Trading Standards Manager, Staffordshire County Council.
- Premises:** Cross Heath News
- Location:** 121 Liverpool Road, Newcastle under Lyme, Staffs, ST5 9ER.
- Application for:** Review of Premises Licence in relation to the following licensing objectives:
- **The prevention of crime and disorder**
 - **The Protection of Children from Harm**

2. GROUNDS FOR REVIEW:

This application to review relates to the failure of the premise to meet the Licensing Objectives for the Prevention of Crime and Disorder and the Protection of Children from Harm.

Responsible Authority:

Section 13 (4) of the Licensing Act 2003 and Regulation 7 of the Licensing Act 2003 (premises Licences and Club Premises Certificates) Regulations 2005 makes a local weights and measures authority a Responsible Authority for the purposes of the legislation. Staffordshire County Council is a weights and measures authority and that function is carried out by the Public Protection Trading Standards Team.

Prevention of Crime;

By virtue of Schedule 4 of the Licensing Act 2003 offences under Section 14 of the Food Safety Act 1990 involving alcohol are relevant when considering a personal licence. Such offences can lead to the suspension or forfeiture of a personal licence.

Revised Guidance Issued by the Department for Culture Media and Sport in March 2010 also covers the possibility of reviews that arise in connection with crimes not directly linked with licensable activities. The Guidance states that the Licensing Authority should ensure that the Crime Prevention objective is promoted. The Guidance goes on to say the Secretary of State considers certain offences should be taken seriously these include the supply of smuggled tobacco and alcohol and copyright matters.

The history of this premise and the Premise Licence Holder and Designated Premise Supervisor, indicates a general disregard of the law which raises questions as to whether the business is managed in accordance with the promotion of the Licensing Objectives.

3. CONSULTATION

Representations have been received from Staffordshire Police.

4. **POLICY CONSIDERATIONS**

a) Licensing Objectives

The Licensing Act 2003 requires the Council to carry out its various licensing functions so as to promote the following four licensing objectives:-

- (i) the prevention of crime and disorder
- (ii) public safety
- (iii) the prevention of public nuisance
- (iv) the protection of children from harm

(b) Policy Statement

The Licensing Act 2003 required the Council to publish a "Statement of Licensing Policy" that set out the policies the Council will generally apply to promote the licensing objectives when making decisions on applications made under the Act.

The Council made a number of policy decisions in its Statement of Licensing Policy. The following policy decisions are relevant to this application:-

The Prevention of Crime and Disorder The Protection of Children from Harm

(c) Statutory Guidance

National guidance which promotes best practice ensuring consistent application of licensing powers and promotes fairness and equal treatment and proportionality came into force on 28 June 2007.

Copies of the Council's Statement of Licensing Policy and the Government's Statutory Guidance will be available at the Sub-Committee meeting.

The Sub-Committee are asked to note that they may not modify the conditions or reject the whole or part of the application merely because they consider it desirable to do so. It must actually be necessary in order to promote the licensing objectives.

5. **COMMENTS**

In making their decision on the application, the Sub-Committee are also obliged to have regard to Statutory Guidance and the Council's own Statement of Licensing Policy. The Sub-Committee must also have regard to all the representations made and the evidence they hear. However the Sub-Committee must disregard any objections that do not relate to the promotion of the four licensing objectives.

The Sub-Committee must take such of the following steps as they consider necessary for the promotion of the licensing objectives as set out in paragraph 4(a) above:-

- (a) to modify the conditions of the licence;
- (b) to exclude a licensable activity from the scope of the licence;
- (c) to remove the designated premises supervisor;
- (d) to suspend the licence for a period not exceeding three months;
- (e) to revoke the licence.

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3, 7 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

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Agenda Item 8

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