

LICENSING & PUBLIC PROTECTION COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 10th May, 2023
Time of Commencement: 7.00 pm

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Present: Councillor Andrew Parker (Chair)

Councillors:	Whieldon	Wilkes	Allport
	Barker MBE	Adcock	J Williams
	Heesom	Dymond	G Williams
	Sweeney	Wright	Brown

Apologies: Councillor(s) S White and Skelding

Substitutes: Councillor David Hutchison (In place of Councillor Craig Skelding)

Officers:	Matthew Burton	Licensing Administration Team Manager
	Geoff Durham	Mayor's Secretary / Member Support Officer
	Anne-Marie Pollard	Solicitor
	Michelle Hopper	Senior Partnerships Officer
	Jason Griffiths	

Also in attendance:

1. **APOLOGIES**

2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN RELATION TO LICENSING MATTERS**

There were no declarations of interest stated.

3. **MINUTES OF A PREVIOUS MEETING**

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 21st March 2023 be agreed as a correct record.

4. **LICENSING ACT 2003: REGULATORY EASEMENTS CONSULTATION**

The Licensing Administration Team Manager introduced a report on a Home Office consultation as to whether or not the temporary alcohol licensing provisions enacted in the Business and Planning Act 2020 should be made permanent.

As the closing date for the consultation was before the committee meeting the consultation response had already been submitted after seeking advice from the Chair and portfolio holder on matters it related to.

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Comments were made and responses were provided as follows:

- Cllr Whieldon highlighted the importance of having special permissions. – It was clarified that one set of provisions should not take precedence over another as they had separate regimes.
- Cllr J. Williams wondered whether the provisions would affect premises in the town centre. – In relation to this specific consultation it didn't make any difference on whether a premise could apply for one or have one granted. The question was whether or not premises' license that would normally cover the building itself could be extended automatically so the conditions and the timings would then reflect upon the pavement license.

The Deputy Leader shared his view that the provision were an excellent idea to encourage people to come to the town centre.

Resolved: That the content of the report and consultation responses be noted.

[Watch the debate here](#)

5. MINUTES OF LICENSING SUB COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Resolved: That the minutes of the Licensing Subcommittee meeting held on 21st March 2023 be received.

6. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN RELATION TO PUBLIC PROTECTION MATTERS

There were no declarations of interest stated.

7. TAXIS AND PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLES (SAFEGUARDING AND ROAD SAFETY) ACT 2022

The Licensing Administration Team Manager provided an update on the Taxi and Private Hire Vehicles (Safeguarding & Road Safety) Act 2022 provisions in relation to recording of taxi refusals, revocations and suspensions on a central database which came into force on the 27th April 2023.

Members expressed their satisfaction over the piece of legislation and database.

Resolved: That the contents of the report be noted.

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8. UPDATE ON RESULTS OF TAXI LICENSING APPEALS

The Licensing Administration Team Manager shared the results of Taxi Licensing Appeals that had been considered since last reported to the Committee.

Cllr Whieldon asked if there was a process to track related wasted costs. A process was indeed in place for administrative costs (about £100 to £150 a month) with invoices being issued to individuals by the Finance team.

The Deputy Leader wished to congratulate and thank the team for what appeared to be an efficient and successful process. Cllr J. Williams also expressed his support and the importance of putting passengers' safety first.

Resolved: That the contents of the report be noted.

[Watch the debate here](#)

9. PUBLIC SPACE PROTECTION ORDER PUBLIC CONSULTATION UPDATE

The Mobile Multi-Functional Manager presented an update report on the public consultation relating to the proposed partial and full Rights of Way's closures. There were no proposed changes following the consultation that had been conducted. The support from the committee was sought to conclude a final 6 weeks consultation.

Members commented as follows:

- Cllr Heesom expressed her support to the proposal.
- Cllr G. Williams asked about whether maintenance was undertaken and if measures were in place to prevent residents to dump rubbish in the gated areas. – It was confirmed that it was indeed the case and that a public space protection review was undertaken every three years.
- Cllr J Williams wished to know whether officers had been in contact with the Street Scene to address overhanging trees in the Park / Newcastle 143 and if signposting could be put in place for cyclists coming from May Bank. – Tree maintenance and pruning were carried out on a yearly basis and the team was liaising with land owners as required. Signposting was also being discussed.
- The Chair asked if this would apply to the two other locations mentioned in the report. – It was confirmed that overgrown vegetation from neighbouring properties was being addressed in conjunction with private properties owners.
- Cllr Whieldon asked if it was possible to have a street sweeper to go and clean the gated areas to prevent further hazard. – The Council was working closely with Aspire Housing within the framework of a joint venture. Options were notably being explored to utilise their caretaking services and linking them with street scene teams.

Resolved: - That the content of the report be noted.

- That the conduction of a final 6 week public consultation for a proposed PSPO for the borough be approved.

[Watch the debate here](#)

10. PUBLIC SPACE PROTECTION ORDERS: PARKS AND OPEN SPACES

The Mobile Multi-Functional Manager presented the report on Public Space Protection Orders advising members of options and seeking permission to consult residents on revised Public Spaces Protection Orders for parks and open spaces in relation to dog control and anti-social behaviour.

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The order was drafted to be as flexible as possible and enabled a local authority to effectively target enforcement. Options were twofold:

- take no action, which would allow the current dog control orders to cease in October 2023 and not be replaced; this would remove all controls and thus eliminate the need for investigation and enforcement with potential savings however may result in standards of public places being reduced and increase risks of conflict between dog owners and other users.
- amend proposed controls prior to the consultation: members may wish to change the proposed scope for the controls such as the requirement to carry bags or limit the number of dogs which could be walked in specific areas; including other controls proportionate to the location and evidence based may also be considered; the types of locations where the controls apply could finally be amended.

Risks associated with each option would need to be taken into consideration.

Members raised comments and responses were provided as follows:

- Cllr G. Williams expressed concerns about how many dogs one person was allowed to take out at once. – The maximum six dogs' provision was indeed one of the most controversial and members were welcome to suggest amendments to be taken to public consultation.
- Cllr Hutchison asked whether it was possible to add open spaces to the list provided in appendix B. – Yes any missed location could be suggested.
- Cllr Sweeney wondered why some of the areas were highlighted in yellow and what the LEAP code stood for. – The code was referring to the type of play areas and the yellow highlight was for a type of open spaces.
- Cllr Adcock said that doing nothing did not sound like an appropriate option considering the potential dangers relating to any dogs and wished to support the recommendation.
- Cllr Dymond asked what enforcement would be brought about for the measures. – There were currently two dog wardens in the Mobile Multi-Functional team and training was provided to other members of the team as well as town rangers to gain the required skills. Residents were also encouraged to report issues online and provide photographic evidence whenever possible.
- Cllr Whieldon suggested there could be dog parks. – This could be considered indeed and members were welcome to suggest potential suitable locations.
- The Chair asked whether options like in North Wales where dogs were only allowed to go on the beach from 1st October to 30th April could be taken into consideration; signs were displayed providing a direct phone number to report anyone bringing their dog during the summer season. – It was confirmed that seasonal access to certain locations could be looked at. Processes to make it easier for members of the public to report issues and for these to be addressed efficiently were also being reviewed.

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- Cllr J. Williams warned against the risk that measures taken against irresponsible dog owners could disproportionately affect responsible dog owners respectful of the public space. – Dog owners would be encouraged to take part in the consultation so that a balance could be found.

Resolved: That the launching of a consultation on a proposed public spaces protection order as detailed in Appendix A be approved.

[Watch the debate here](#)

11. DISCLOSURE OF EXEMPT INFORMATION

There was no disclosure of exempt information.

12. URGENT BUSINESS

There was no urgent business.

**Councillor Andrew Parker
Chair**

Meeting concluded at 8.25 pm