

## **Licensing Committee – Meeting held on Thursday, 17th October, 2019.**

**Present:-** Councillors Davis (Chair), H Cheema (Vice-Chair), Anderson, Chaudhry, Dhaliwal, M Holledge, Mann, D Parmar, S Parmar, Sharif and Strutton

### **PART 1**

#### **6. Declarations of Interest**

None were declared.

#### **7. Guidance on Predetermination/ Predisposition - To Note**

Members confirmed that they had read and understood the guidance on predetermination and predisposition.

#### **8. Minutes of the Last Meeting held on 5th June 2019**

**Resolved** – That the minutes of the meeting held on 5<sup>th</sup> June 2019 be approved as a correct record.

#### **9. Licensing Sub Committee - Appointment of Designated Chair**

The Senior Democratic Services Officer reminded Members that Council meeting held on 26<sup>th</sup> September 2019 considered a report on revised proportionality and allocation of committee places following notice that Councillor Sharif was no longer a member of the Labour Group. These changes included Councillor Bains appointment to the Executive, which meant that he was no longer a member on the Licensing Committee. It was noted that Councillor Sharif was appointed to the Licensing Committee as an Independent Councillor.

At the meeting of Licensing Committee held in June 2019, Councillor Bains had been appointed as one of the designated Chairs for the Licensing Sub-Committee. It was also agreed that the Sub-Committee would be established where possible on a proportional basis (2 Labour and 1 Conservative Councillor). However, given the changes to the political make up of the Committee, it was proposed that the Sub-Committee comprise of 2 Labour Councillors and 1 Conservative or Independent Member. It was highlighted that whilst every effort would be made to ensure political proportionality, there may be occasions when the Conservative or Independent Member were not available to serve on the Sub-Committee; and in such an event the Committee give consideration to the Sub-Committee comprising of three Labour Members in order to meet statutory deadlines. Nominations were also sought for the appointment of one of the designated chairs to the Sub-Committee.

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### Resolved -

- a) That Councillor Dhaliwal be appointed to act as designated Chair of the Sub-Committee for the remainder of the 2019/2020 municipal year.
- b) That a Licensing Sub-Committee (drawn from the Members of the Licensing Committee) be established as required on a proportional basis (2 Labour and 1 Conservative or Independent Member). In the event that the Conservative or Independent Member are not available, the Sub-Committee will comprise of three Labour Members.

### 10. **Licensing Pre Application Advice, Application Assistance and 'Check and Send Service'**

The Senior Licensing Officer introduced the report, setting out the background and context for the introduction of licensing pre-application advice, application assistance and 'check and send service.'

From discussions with applicants, it was apparent that some were put off by the length of the application forms and the amount of technical information required in submitting an application. Although guidance was available on the website, the prescribed application process was inherently complicated mainly because it was linked to primary legislation and applicants did not always have time to consider the guidance that was available. In addition, officers routinely rejected incomplete or incorrectly served applications; which were then delayed or not resubmitted because applicants perceived the process to be too difficult and onerous. It was noted that investment in the Borough was invariably affected by this because without the necessary licence, businesses could not trade, which had implications in terms of inward investment, local economic growth and potentially depriving local communities of welcome amenities.

Members were informed that the fees for the new service were set at £75 per hour and that this rate had been approved by Cabinet at its meeting held on 17th June 2019. In response to whether other local authorities provided a similar service and charged a fee, the Senior Licensing Officer stated that 15 other local authorities provided pre-application advice and assistance for which a fee was charged. The fee had been formulated as part of the review of the Regulatory Service fees increase and set as the same formula that was approved and used by the Council's Trading Standards and Food and Safety Teams. It was clarified however that it was not mandatory to use this service and useful guidance notes and information was also available on the Council's website.

Responding to the number of applications that had not been completed properly during the previous year, the Committee were informed that four had been incomplete. It was anticipated that the majority of applicants wanting to use the pre-application advice service would relate to applications made under the Licensing Act 2003. The scheme would be monitored, detailing the amount of time spent on each application.

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Members welcomed and noted the details of the report.

**Resolved** – That the introduction of the discretionary Licensing pre-Application Advice, Application Assistance and ‘Check and Send Service’ be noted.

### **11. Members Attendance Record 2019/20**

**Resolved** – That details of the Members Attendance record 2019/20 be noted.

### **12. Date of Next Meeting - 13th February 2020**

The date of the next scheduled meeting was confirmed as 13<sup>th</sup> February 2020.

Chair

(Note: The Meeting opened at 6.30 pm and closed at 6.56 pm)