

Crawley Borough Council

Minutes of Licensing Committee Wednesday 3rd September at 7.30 pm

Present:

Councillor B M Brockwell (Chair)

Councillor J Singh (Vice-Chair)

Councillors A G Brown, B J Burgess, ALI Burke, L Gilroy, S Kaur,
D P Kavanagh, B McCrow, B J Quinn, L A Seekings and
D J Shreeves

Officers Present:

Tony Baldock

Sharon Rana
Madeleine Shopland
Astrid Williams

Group Manager Food Licensing and
Occupational Health
Trainee Solicitor
Democratic Services Officer
Lawyer

Apologies for Absence:

Councillor B K Blake, R J Hull and C J Redmayne

5. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 4th June 2008 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

6. Members' Disclosure of Interests

There were no disclosures of interest.

7. Approval of the Food Service Plan 2008-2009

The Committee examined report ES/203 of the Head of Environmental Services. Members were reminded that a function of the Food Standards Agency was to monitor Local Authorities' enforcement of Food Safety. The Group Manager indicated that the Council was involved in food safety in relation to food inspections (Scores on the Doors) and complaints such as food poisoning. As Gatwick Airport was under its remit, it also had responsibilities relating to imported food that passed through the airport.

The Group Manager highlighted that there had been 438 programmed visits and 337 food complaints received in the last year. There were 188 notifications of infectious diseases. 335 programmed visits (plus any new properties) are scheduled for 2008-09.

Local Authorities are required under a framework agreement to produce a Food Service Plan, which is seen and approved by Members. The Plan looks back over the previous year (1st April 2007-31st March 2008) and forward to the coming year (1st April 2008-31st March 2009). In 2007, the Food Standards Agency undertook a major revision to the Code of Practice for Food Hygiene inspections to ensure it meets the requirements of the Compliance Code for Statutory Regulators. The Council's Food Service Plan details how the Food Safety Service will use the changes to promote hygiene compliance. This will compliment the Scores on the Doors scheme.

The Committee was informed that National Indicator NI184 measured the number of food premises deemed to be broadly compliant with food law. There are currently 817 food premises within Crawley. 490 of these (61%) presently meet the indicator target (premises scoring 30 or less). The Food Standards Agency target is that 65% of premises nationally reach the set target, with 75% of premises nationally, reaching the target by 2012.

The Group Manager emphasised that work was being undertaken to help premises owners and their staff better comply with food law. Training and advice would be encouraged and offered. The need for both enforcement and encouragement to improve compliance was highlighted. It was noted that in 2006 the Council has successfully bid for a grant from the Foods Standards Agency to assist in introducing local food operators to the Safer Food Better Business food safety model. 150 businesses had taken up training in 2007-08. Members were informed that the National Performance Indicator NI182 measures Business satisfaction with local authority regulatory services. Good feedback had been received so far.

The Group Manager briefly outlined the Scores on the Doors initiative. In response to Members' questions, the Group Manager indicated that the Scores on the Doors initiative was not mandatory. Members were pleased to note that the Council's Scores on the Doors webpage included the Pubwatch logo and gave the proprietors of the premises reviewed the right to reply.

The Committee asked a number of questions in relation to the Food Service Plan 2008-2009. The Group Manager confirmed that both landside and airside food venues at Gatwick Airport were inspected. Members were glad to learn that the Council and Gatwick Health Control had carried out samples of water on aircrafts. Members enquired whether food premises were closed down if cases of food poisoning were thought to relate to their products. They were informed that they could be, but only if it was thought that there was a significant risk to the public. It was necessary to prove that there was a definite connection between the premises and the food poisoning, which was often difficult. Many food complaints related to products rather the standard of hygiene. It was asked what was meant by 'Miscellaneous' under the list of notifiable diseases for April 2006-April 2008. The Group Manager stated that unidentified viral diseases were considered miscellaneous and that airlines are required to inform the local authority if a passenger has an infectious disease. Members were also notified that the Council was working with local GPs to identify premises where a number of people were working who were suffering from work related illnesses. The Committee enquired whether the Food, Infectious Disease & Occupational Health team were all paid by the Council. The Group Manager confirmed that they were but that a revenue grant was also received and that part of the work relating to imported foodstuffs was financed by those who were importing the products through Gatwick.

RESOLVED

That the Food Service Plan 2008-2009 be approved.

8. Approval of the Health and Safety Service Plan 2008-2009

The Committee considered report ES/202 of the Head of Environmental Services. The Health and Safety Commission requires all Local Authorities to create a service plan to set out how their statutory obligations regarding health and safety will be discharged. The Plan looks back over the previous year (1st April 2007-31st March 2008) and forward to the coming year (1st April 2008-31st March 2009).

The Council has Health and Safety responsibilities relating to health and safety inspections, accidents. As a Port Authority it also has responsibilities relating to sick airline passengers.

The Group Manager emphasised that there had been 225 accidents in the last year and 199 programmed Health and Safety visits. 185 visits were programmed for 2008-09.

The Group Manager stated that Crawley Borough Council had received a rating of 2 stars (out of 4) for its Health and Safety Service Plan. Areas where improvements were required were being addressed.

Members were informed that the Council had successfully undertaken work with the Health and Safety Executive into targeting hot spot areas for slips, trips and falls at Gatwick Airport.

The Committee thanked the Group Manager for his interesting presentation and commented that the team were doing a good job.

RESOLVED

That the Health and Safety Service Plan 2008-2009 be approved.

9. Closure of Meeting

With the business of the Committee concluded, the Chair declared the meeting closed at 8.20 p.m.

B M BROCKWELL
Chair