

Crawley Borough Council

Minutes of Licensing Committee

Tuesday, 15 September 2020 at 7.00 pm

Councillors Present:

M G Jones (Chair)

B J Burgess (Vice-Chair)

M L Ayling, D Crow, F Guidera, J Hart, K L Jaggard, G S Jhans, K McCarthy, J Millar-Smith
and C J Mullins

Officers Present:

Heather Girling

Democratic Services Officer

Kareen Plympton

Health, Safety and Licensing Team Leader

Jess Tamplin

Democratic Services Support Officer

Astrid Williams

Senior Lawyer (Solicitor)

Kate Wilson

Head of Community Services

Apologies for Absence:

Councillor B A Smith

Absent:

Councillor D M Peck

1. Disclosures of Interest

The following disclosures of interest were made:

Councillor	Item and Minute	Type and Nature of Disclosure
Councillor B J Burgess	Environmental Health and Licensing Update – COVID-19 and Beyond (Minute 4)	Personal Interest – Member of West Sussex County Council
Councillor Crow	Environmental Health and Licensing Update – COVID-19 and Beyond (Minute 4)	Personal Interest – Member of West Sussex County Council

Councillor Jones	Environmental Health and Licensing Update – COVID- 19 and Beyond (Minute 4)	Personal Interest – Member of West Sussex County Council
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2. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Licensing Committee held on 20 January 2020 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

3. Public Questions

There were no questions submitted by members of the public.

4. Environmental Health and Licensing Update - COVID-19 and Beyond

The Committee received an update from the Team Leader for Health, Safety and Licensing which set out the actions and accomplishments of the department since the previous meeting of the Committee in January 2020.

An overview of Crawley Borough Council's response to the Coronavirus pandemic was provided. The Committee was informed of the successes of the Help Hub and Distribution Hub in providing an effective triage service, packaging and delivery of food parcels, and prescription distribution services to vulnerable residents throughout the borough. The Council had also paid grants to over 900 businesses in Crawley.

The Committee was introduced to the new 'Keep Crawley COVID Secure' scheme which was to be launched in the coming weeks. The scheme would work with food/licensed premises to identify safe business practices. Measures such as sharing COVID-19 risk assessments with the Council and complying with NHS Test and Trace (among others) would certify certain premises as being COVID secure.

The Committee heard that fees for table and chair pavement licenses had been waived to allow eateries to seat more customers outside, to better prevent the spread of Coronavirus. Premises with outside seating were being monitored to assess any noise impact on local residents.

It was noted that taxi licensing staff had adapted to remote working (e.g. meetings with licensed vehicle drivers were held via virtual meeting software) and that applications and renewals were continuing to be processed. Payment of licensing fees had been deferred to relieve financial burdens on licensed drivers, but these were now being recovered. The Council had agreed a policy regarding the voluntary installation of clear plastic screens in licensed vehicles as a safety precaution against COVID-19.

The Committee then discussed the following matters:

- In response to a concern regarding personal details given as part of NHS Test and Trace, it was confirmed that premises throughout Crawley should ensure that information is kept confidential. The Committee also noted that licensed premises were advised that any customer providing incorrect details (such as a false name) to NHS Test and Trace should be refused entry to the premises.

- The Government had proposed the introduction of local COVID-19 marshals to ensure compliance with the latest Coronavirus guidance, but information about the role was currently vague and the Council was awaiting further details from the Government.
- The Environmental Health and Licensing team was aware of an increase in fly tipping across Crawley and a number of fixed penalty notices had been issued. A campaign was currently being developed with West Sussex County Council and other organisations which would aim to reduce fly tipping. The Committee would be notified of the campaign's progress in the future.
- The Crawley Household Waste Recycling Site remained closed due to Coronavirus and a fire earlier in the year. The facility's re-opening date was to be determined by West Sussex County Council.
- It was confirmed that the cost of installing a clear protective screen in a licensed vehicle was met by the driver, but this cost was nominal. The Committee also heard that screens were not made compulsory as they may inhibit other safety measures in some licensed vehicles (e.g. airbags). It was suggested that protective screens may potentially be included in future licensed vehicle policy if appropriate safety checks were fulfilled.
- It was agreed that staff from the Environmental Health and Licensing team and from all departments of the Council had gone 'above and beyond' to ensure that the individual needs of Crawley residents were met.

RESOLVED

That the update was noted, and that the Committee's gratitude to the Council officers involved in the Help Hubs throughout the Coronavirus pandemic be recorded.

Closure of Meeting

With the business of the Licensing Committee concluded, the Chair declared the meeting closed at 8.28 pm

M G Jones
(Chair)