

Cheltenham Borough Council

Licensing Committee – 6 March 2019

Make-up of Licensing Committee

Report of the Licensing Team Leader

1. Executive Summary and Recommendation

- 1.1 In 2016 Council passed a resolution directing officers, in consultation with the Licensing Committee, to carry out a review of the committee's structure and meeting arrangements.
- 1.2 On 12 April 2017 the Licensing Committee approved a revised committee structure to become effective from September 2017.
- 1.3 Under the Licensing Committee's revised structure, two sub-committees, each of five members, were established to discharge the committee's substantive business such as individual applications, reviews and other relevant matters. The full committee meets quarterly, acting as consultee to Cabinet / Lead Member on policy matters, establishing sub-committees and dealing with relevant briefings, training, updates and policies and reviewing performance.
- 1.4 The intention was that the membership of the sub-committees would rotate on an annual basis to maintain competency, experience and balance attendance requirements.
- 1.5 A request for a review of the revised structure has been made. The purpose of this report therefore is to give the full committee an opportunity to consider and debate the request for a review.

1.6 The Committee can:

- 1.6.1 Resolve to keep the current structure (as outlined in 1.3); or
- 1.6.2 Resolve to change the current structure either reverting back to the previous structure (see 2.1) or to another structure as agreed by the committee.

1.3 Implications

- 1.3.1 Legal

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2. Background

- 2.1 Prior to 12 April 2017, the Licensing Committee operated as one full politically balanced committee consisting of 10 Members. The full Licensing Committee was responsible for discharging the council's licensing function with one ad-hoc sub-committee being responsible for Licensing Act applications.

3. Rationale for 2017 review

- 3.1 **Proportionality** – The structure sought to balance, in a more proportionate way, the work priorities of the Licensing Committee.

- 3.2 **Member development & resilience** – The old structure and means of operation resulted in gaps in Members’ skills and knowledge. Some Members have gained more experience in specific areas of licensing and chairing committees as a result of the current meeting arrangements.
- 3.3 This in turn has, at times, caused difficulties with finding suitable experienced Members to sit on and/or chair committees.
- 3.4 **Accountability and transparency** – Beyond reactively determining applications, the Licensing Committee did not operate in a proactive way. This is primarily because the committee’s old setup and reactive workload left it with very little scope to be proactive in terms of, for example, policy development, strategic and operational scrutiny and quality training.
- 3.5 Through dividing the workload and responsibility each sub-committee would have more scope and opportunity to be more focussed and proactive but always under the oversight of the full committee.
- 3.6 **Place shaping** – The Licensing Committee has a recognised role to play in place shaping and economic development in the town particularly through its influence and implementation of local policy. The role will become increasingly important and significant as it supports the Place and Economic Development’s commercial transformation work and the emerging place strategy.
- 3.7 The committee review and subsequent proposal will also assist the Licensing Committee to operate more effectively in this capacity because the current issues identified above (3.1.3) could be overcome under the proposed new structure.

4. Constitution

- 4.1 Under part 3E of the council’s constitution, the licensing committee can decide whether to establish sub-committees.
- 4.2 As such, it is within the committee’s remit to (re)organise itself without the need to make changes to the constitution or refer the matter to Council.

Background Papers

Service Records

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