

## Cheltenham's approach to supporting licensed premises through the pandemic

CLlr Dr David Willingham, Chair of Licensing Committee

Jason Kirkwood, Senior Licensing Officer



## Introduction

- Impact of the pandemic
- CBC's 'New Deal'
- Local business support measures
- National measures
- Practical steps taken
- Open discussion for feedback on experiences from elsewhere



## Friday 19 March 2020 - Gold Cup Day



## Cheltenham Borough Council's Response

- CBC formulated the Cheltenham Recovery Strategy – a local new deal for Cheltenham.
- CBC's reworking of Franklin Roosevelt's 'New Deal' following the Great Depression.
- Under which sat the Business, ENTE and Licensing work stream, and the Licensing Recovery Plan.



## Overarching Strategy - Principles

- Inclusive growth through investment in the area.
- Continue to be commercially focussed.
- Show strong leadership in investing for growth.
- Use data and tech to make business decisions.
- Provide strategic coordination.
- Invest and develop staff.
- Create action plans to underpin each priority.



## Priorities

Progress would be measured against:-

- Revitalising the economy.
- Well being and creating strong communities.
- Being a modern, efficient and responsive council.
- Working with service delivery partners.
- Ensuring a secure financial future.



## LICENSING RECOVERY PLAN

## Policy

Reviewing Licensing Policies to:-

- Allow best use of the public realm to allow businesses to reopen.
- Increase the provision of tables and chairs in outdoor areas.
- Ease restrictions on 'A' boards.



## Advice/ Support

To assist business in complying with restrictions:-

- Provide support to business as widely as possible and easily accessible.
- Work with partners to share important information/ best practise.
- Ensure good availability of officers to provide advice.

## Communication

Engagement with the licensed trade through effective communication to highlight:-

- The economic support packages available to help keep their businesses solvent during closure.
- The recovery planning which CBC was undertaking.



## Furthermore

- Licensing inspections – reduce the burden on businesses.
- Pre- app service – to support applicants.
- Regulation – working with partner agencies to provide advice or take action against premises to ensure a level playing field for all.

## SERVICE DELIVERY



## Advice and Support (1)

- The BID hosted webinars.
- EHOs, Police and Licensing Officers were engaged to provide up to date information/ support.
- Recovery newsletters were started 16 June 2020 and continue (19 in total).
- Signposting to practical/ technical advice, grants, risk assessment advice, etc.



## Advice and Support (2)

- More targeted *trade bulletins* were produced.
- From 15 June 2020.
- Topics included – selling alcohol through apps, takeaways, deliveries – to provide clarity.
- Before national relaxations, we worked with the Police to give detailed advice to make minor variations to allow off – sales.



## Public Realm (1)

- Locally we relaxed the table and chairs consent scheme in July.
- We relaxed our enforcement of A – boards to help certain businesses raise their profile.
- The BID/ CBC/ Glos Highways worked on a number of schemes to widen pavement areas and increase outdoor space for tables and chairs.



## Public Realm (2)

- We implemented the pavement licence scheme very promptly and had built up a latent demand by promoting its implementation.
- Existing consents for tables and chairs were given 4 months *free* to account for closures/ delayed reopening.



## Other Steps

- Sensitivity in discussing late annual fee payments.
- Liaising with the Police and all local authorities in Gloucestershire through weekly meetings.
- Offering mediation through video conferencing on contested premises licence applications.



## Conclusion

- Cheltenham had a clear recovery strategy from early in the pandemic.
- This drove the implementation of practical steps to support business.
- Which was supported on the ground with comprehensive advice and support.
- We worked in partnership with the Police, the BID, Environmental Health, county Highways.

