

# Briefing Notes

Committee name: Licensing Committee

Date: 3 March 2021

Responsible officer: Licensing Team Leader

This note contains information to keep Members informed of matters relating to the work of the Cabinet or a committee but where no decisions from Members are needed.

If Members have questions relating to matters shown, they are asked to contact the Officer indicated.

This briefing note updates Members on a number of debriefs resulting from Licensing Sub-committee hearings held.

The Licensing Service always strives to deliver the best possible service. An important aspect of this is to continuously review its work and performance and, based on learning from this, make improvements where necessary.

The Licensing Sub-committee hearings held in relation to 129-131 Promenade presented an opportunity for officers and Members involved to reflect and to implement improvements where necessary.

This briefing notes specifically updates the Committee on changes already implemented to improve service delivery but also matters proposed that will impact on the work of the Licensing Committee.

## Steps already implemented

Following an initial review of service and committee procedures, the following recommendations have already been implemented:

1. Revised and clearer guidance to applicants and licence holders - [https://www.cheltenham.gov.uk/info/40/licences\\_-\\_alcohol\\_entertainment\\_and\\_events/113/premises\\_licence](https://www.cheltenham.gov.uk/info/40/licences_-_alcohol_entertainment_and_events/113/premises_licence)
2. Standard inclusion on all future licensing reports will be a general compliance and licensing history overview

## Further changes to be implemented

At a subsequent debrief meeting following the second hearing of 129-131 Promenade on Tuesday 9 February 2021, the following further amendments to service and committee procedures were identified:

1. **Member training & development** – An opportunity has been identified to provide Members with specific training on how to chair a sub-committee. Feedback from Members was that, although there are several experienced Members on the committee, chairing a Licensing Act sub-committee presented additional challenges that Members would benefit from training on.

Officers will work to identify suitable training and report back to Members. It was noted that Member training has been scheduled in for May and this can, potentially, be used as an opportunity to deliver this training.

2. **Deferment of decisions for Licensing Act Sub-committees** – A recommendation to include, in the sub-committee procedure, discretion to defer a decision has been accepted by Members who took part in the debrief.

Officers are of the view that including the option to defer a decision would hold a number of benefits for Members including:

- a. Taking pressure of Members to make a decision whilst applicants and objectors are waiting; and
- b. It will allow Members the space to thoroughly consider the decision and record the decision notice with sufficient information and clarity.

Officers are working on the practical considerations for implementing this recommendation and will feedback to the committee in due course.

3. **Guidance for Members** – There was recognition that Members might benefit from a guidance note to assist them with the licensing committee process and advice on the requirements with regards to the relevance of objections and how these could be presented to a sub-committee.

Officers will work in this guidance and make arrangements to have this distributed to Members.

#### 4. **Other matters**

- a. Printed copies of the relevant licensing policies will be available for Chairs to refer to in hearings.
- b. Democratic Services are reviewing the functionality of virtual breakout rooms to improve the process and address issues that have arisen during the most recent hearing.
- c. Officers will have printed copies of the sub-committee pack as a reference to avoid confusion over page references.
- d. Officers will review the inclusion of plans in sub-committee reports to ensure the most relevant plans are included to avoid unnecessary confusion.

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