

EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL COMMITTEE MINUTES

Committee: Licensing Committee **Date:** Wednesday, 12 November 2008

Place: Council Chamber, Civic Offices, High Street, Epping **Time:** 2.05 - 3.35 pm

Members Present: Mrs P Brooks (Chairman), Mrs P Richardson (Vice-Chairman), K Angold-Stephens, R Barrett, D Dodeja, Mrs R Gadsby, Ms J Hedges, R Morgan, Mrs P Smith and J Wyatt

Other Councillors: -

Apologies: Mrs S Clapp, M Cohen, J Hart and Mrs M McEwen

Officers Present: A Mitchell (Assistant Director Legal Services), R Ferriera (Assistant Solicitor), K Tuckey (Senior Licensing Officer), C Wiggins (Safer Communities Manager), L Cole (Legal Services Officer), D Baker (Planning Officer) and G J Woodhall (Democratic Services Officer)

Also in attendance: J Baldwin, R Phillibrand and S Werrett (Essex Police)

15. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest pursuant to the Council's Code of Member Conduct.

16. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

It was noted that there was no other urgent business for consideration by the Sub-Committee.

17. STRATEGIC REVIEW OF LICENSING OBJECTIVES

The Committee received a presentation from Detective Chief Inspector Baldwin of Essex Police regarding the Police initiatives in respect of licensed premises within the Epping Forest District. The Committee was informed that the aim of the meeting was to ascertain what the Police could do more effectively to help the Licensing Committee achieve both the Council's and Essex Police's objectives.

The Chief Inspector outlined the four objectives for partnership working between Essex Police and Epping Forest District Council:

- (i) to reduce the frequency and opportunity for alcohol related incidents requiring partnership involvement;
- (ii) to safeguard members of the community who wish to lawfully attend licensed premises;
- (iii) to prevent and deter offenders from committing anti-social behaviour or criminal acts; and

(iv) to remain committed to providing recommendations, information, guidance and local partnership intelligence to all those involved in the management of licensing in the Epping Forest District.

In the previous twelve months there had been 593 alcohol related crimes, of which approximately 500 had involved injury to a resident. Essex Police wanted Licensees to understand that alcohol related incidents would not be tolerated. There had also been approximately 50 drink-driving offences recorded and an additional 837 alcohol related incidents. On 85 occasions, the person concerned had been too drunk to be interviewed and had to be retained in custody. Details were given of the six operations currently being undertaken by Essex Police, on which information was restricted for operational reasons.

The Chief Inspector outlined the measures that could be undertaken to ensure a safer District. These included greater community cohesion through listening and responding to residents' concerns, shared partnership objectives as part of the "Safer, Cleaner, Greener" initiative, and implementing the "Pubwatch" and "Behave or Be Banned" schemes throughout the District via the "Safer Bars" Accreditation scheme. The Committee were informed that implementation of the "Behave or Be Banned" scheme was at least a year away, however a "Pubwatch" scheme was being launched in Waltham Abbey on 18 November 2008.

The Chief Inspector concluded by outlining his vision for the future of policing licensing within the District. This would include the promotion of a closer working relationship between the Council and Essex Police, the launching of "Pubwatch" within the District in stages, more structure for visits to licensed premises within the District with plans to visit at least one hundred per year, provide more recommendations and input to applications before the Licensing Sub-Committees including better information and intelligence, and improving liaison with the media through positive publicity.

In response to questions from the members of the Licensing Committee, the Chief Inspector acknowledged that Essex Police had not attended enough Licensing Sub-Committees in the past to make representations about applications for particular premises, and to assist the Sub-Committees in better decision making. Internal procedures were being examined so that Essex Police could respond better when considering applications.

The Committee felt that more information should be proffered by the Police regarding offences committed at licensed premises. The Chief Inspector accepted that places where such offences were committed should be policed more proactively and that the Police should exercise their powers to request a licence to be reviewed at an establishment more often. If an establishment stayed open later then generally there would be no extra offences committed but that they would be spread out over a greater time period; which also presented an overtime issue for the Police. It was not known whether water pipes were covered by the anti-smoking legislation. The Chairman thanked the Chief Inspector for his attendance and looked forward to better cooperation between the Council and Essex Police in the future.

18. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Committee noted that the next meeting was scheduled for Wednesday 15 April 2009 at 2.00pm in the Council Chamber.

CHAIRMAN