

REGULATORY AND LICENSING COMMITTEE

25 SEPTEMBER 2023

PRESENT:

Councillors Salter (Vice-Chair), Anketell, Ashton, Bragger, Checkland, Coe, L Ennis, Evans and Henshaw

8 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies of absence were received from Councillors Warfield, Leung and Yeates (Chair).

9 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest made.

10 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the previous meeting, held on 20th June 2023, were taken as read and approved as a correct record by the Chair.

Confirmation was sought regarding whether the legislation applied to footpath diversion Fradley 42 may need changing as discussed at the last meeting and it was noted that this would be clarified and the Committee informed.

11 POLLING PLACES REVIEW

The Committee received a report on the forthcoming review of all parliamentary polling districts and polling places which was required every five years. It was reported that the next review must be completed by 31 January 2025 and although planned to be undertaken as soon as possible, the Parliamentary By-election in Tamworth currently underway had meant resources had been moved to that so it was planned to start the more formal review after the PFCC elections in May 2024.

Members discussed whether it was possible to ensure that residents would be aware of polling stations being moved including highlighted on poll cards. In response to members questions, it was reported that the template for poll cards were set in statute so no change could legally be made but all stations were shown on the bottom of each one and any amended details were flagged. Officers appealed for all electors to check and confirm their polling location at each election and not assume it was the same as the last.

The Committee went on to discuss the concerns about location of poll stations being in inappropriate areas, causing access and safeguarding concerns, members went on and discussed possible alternatives of other poll stations for future use.

Members discussed that there was often difficulty using schools as polling stations but suggested that in some cases only using part of the school grounds allowed residents to vote and the school to remain open. It was also noted that in some situations where schools are used, appropriate entrances should be open (where this does not cause safeguarding concerns) so the station is accessible for all.

The Committee addressed concerns about the accessibility and the distance to and from polling stations for certain residents. It was raised that in some cases it was restricting people

from voting as they were unable to walk such a distance losing their opportunity to vote in person. Members were advised of the serious consideration by the returning officer in selecting appropriate sites and local knowledge of members in identifying them.

In response to Members suggestions, it was reported that the main concern around the use of mobile stations, other than the cost, was the safety and the availability of them. It was discussed that all mobiles were there for a week which left people reluctant to have them on site as damage and reduced access for other activities could be caused within that time frame. It was also reported that not mobile stations of a suitable size were not always available to hire for the time frame and at the scale that would be necessary to ensure accessibility in all areas.

RESOLVED: (1) That the attached project plan and programme for the review be approved; and

(2) That any further issues the Committee considered relevant to include within the review for the impending Parliamentary by-election and ready for PFCC elections in May 2024.

12 ADOPTION OF REVISED CONDITIONS FOR PAVEMENT LICENCES

The Committee received a report requesting amendments to the conditions attached to current pavement licences in order to simplify them, enable the Council to better assert and protect the rights of the public to the use and enjoyment of the highway, and remove references to restrictions that existed during the pandemic.

Members discussed and agreed that careful assessments were undertaken before issuing licences and they be monitored after.

In response to members and their questions about the number of complaints received it was confirmed that there were very few received and that the service did constantly monitor all areas as part of their normal duties. It was confirmed that they were also looking into recent cases where vehicles unloading close to outdoor seating areas took up spaces that then left little room for pedestrians.

Overall, the Committee did agree that the new conditions were more relevant and usable for both licensees and Council.

RESOLVED: That the proposed pavement licence conditions be approved.

13 EXTENSION OF AND AMENDMENTS TO THE PUBLIC SPACES PROTECTION ORDER FOR DOG CONTROL

The Committee received a report on the Council's current dog related Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) which was due for review which would expire on August 2024. It was noted that any decision on renewal or amendment to the PSPO would have to be decided before that date. The report also proposed a way forward in ensuring relevant stakeholders were consulted on what might reasonably be included in the renewed PSPO, prior to the proposals going to formal public consultation.

Members discussed the possibility that in busy areas dogs must stay on short leads and in bigger areas such as parks/fields that there were areas for no dogs, not just children's play areas as current.

It was reported that it may be difficult to enforce some suggestions as it could be difficult to keep dogs away from certain areas of land and there needed to be proof of the dog owner having the intent to commit the offence. It was discussed that feedback from the public and dog owners must be taken into consideration and balanced when creating proposals.

RESOLVED: That a non-statutory general consultation exercise take place with Parish Councils in order to obtain views on the various possible dog related Public Space Protection Orders (PSPOs), prior to those views being brought back to this Committee with recommendations or options on how to proceed.

14 WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee noted the contents of the work programme for 2023-2024. It was agreed that officers would work with the Chair to see if any items could be moved to better balance the workload of upcoming meetings.

(The Meeting closed at 6.38 pm)

CHAIRMAN