

REGULATORY AND LICENSING COMMITTEE

2 OCTOBER 2017

PRESENT: Councillors B.W. Yeates (Chairman), Mrs Constable, Drinkwater, Mrs Evans, Miss Fisher, Leytham, Salter, Mrs Stanhope MBE and A. Yeates

AN APOLOGY FOR ABSENCE was received from Councillors Mrs Bacon, O'Hagan (Vice-Chairman), Miss Shepherd.

... **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

... **MINUTES**

Subject to the inclusion of Councillor Mrs Stanhope MBE as present, the minutes of the meeting held 4th July 2017, as printed and previously circulated were taken as read, approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

... **STREET COLLECTIONS 2018**

The Committee received a report on the requesting approval on the allocation of Street Collection Permits for 2018.

It was reported that any organisation that was not on the approved list was checked by officers to ensure they were a registered charity and the final decision being made by the Committee Chairman or Vice-Chairman in his absence. It was reported that there was currently no policy framework in place in issuing street collection permits and this was planned to be rectified for next year.

Fraudulent collections was discussed and there was concern that people act like they are collecting for these organisations when they are not. It was noted that there was not the resource to go out and check either from the council or the charity themselves. It was noted however that the other means of identification like id badges could be considered during the policy framework creation.

- RESOLVED:** (1) That permits be issued by the licensing team to those charities listed in **APPENDIX A** of the report in accordance with the criteria and procedures set out in section 3 of the report; and
- (2) That the Chairman of Regulatory & Licensing Committee or Vice Chairman of Regulatory & Licensing Committee in their absence have discretion to approve the allocation of permits to organisations not listed in Appendix A of the report.

... **NEW ENFORCEMENT MEASURES TO TACKLE 'ROGUE LANDLORDS'**

The Committee received a report seeking approval for a new Annex to the Council's Regulatory Services Enforcement Policy which detailed new enforcement measures designed to deal with 'rogue landlords' in line with the Housing and Planning Act 2016.

It was reported that there was around 750 privately rented properties that have the highest category hazards and imminent risk to tenants. It was also reported that the Private Sector Housing Officer within Environmental Health has dealt with on average around 230 complaints and whilst some landlords were proactive in managing their properties, some were quite poor and a challenge in gaining compliance. Currently prosecution was the final resort however the Housing and Planning Act 2016 has introduced the option of issuing civil penalties.

The Committee noted that not all aspects of the new powers had come into force however they were expected in the near future. It was also noted that the charging table for penalties had been jointly devised and adopted or soon to be adopted by all of the Staffordshire Local Authorities. It was noted that landlords could appeal these penalties at a tribunal and the charging table may change if many of these appeals are successful. It was finally reported that income made from penalties would be ring-fenced for further private rented housing enforcement.

Members asked if there was a sufficient level of resource to carry out these new powers and it was reported that these civil penalties could be given in place of going to court and so are likely to be no more onerous for officers than the current system. It was also reported that currently there was not the resource to be proactive and the income from penalties would help rectify this.

The Committee was surprised that there was not a requirement for a national or local register for all landlords except for Houses of Multiple Occupancy (HMO). It was noted that this would make tracking consistently criminal landlords easier.

- RESOLVED:** (1) That the new Enforcement Annex be approved;
and
- (2) That the Head of Regulatory Services, Housing and Wellbeing be given delegated authority to authorise relevant officers in relation to the new powers.

... **WORK PROGRAMME**

The work programme was considered.

RESOLVED: That the Work Programme as submitted be agreed.

(The meeting closed at 6.40 pm)

CHAIRMAN