

Bristol City Council
Minutes of the Licensing Committee

23 August 2021 at 10.00 am



Members Present:-

Councillors: Marley Bennett (Chair), Chris Davies, Richard Eddy, Emma Edwards, Katy Grant, Lorraine Francis, Jonathan Hucker, Philippa Hulme, Ellie King, Brenda Massey and Guy Poultney

Officers in Attendance:-

Nick Carter, Lynne Harvey (Legal Adviser) and Abigail Holman (Licensing Policy Adviser)

1. Welcome, Introductions and Safety Information

The Chair welcomed all parties to the meeting, including Councillor Emma Edwards who had recently been appointed as a member of the Licensing Committee.

Members noted arrangements for vacating City Hall in the event of a fire alarm interrupting proceedings.

2. Apologies for Absence.

Apologies for absence were received from the following Councillors:

Councillor Sarah Classick
Councillor Paul Goggin
Councillor Fi Hance
Councillor Chris Windows

1. Declarations of Interest

There were no Declarations of Interest for this meeting.

1. Minutes of Previous Meeting held on 26th May 2021

It was noted that these minutes were not yet available due to the clerk being on long-term sick leave. Members were advised that they would be formally approved as a correct record at the next Licensing Committee meeting.



1. Public Forum

There was no Public Forum for this meeting.

1. Amendment to Licensing Committee Rules to Permit Remote Meetings - Report of the Service Director (Legal and Democratic Services)

The Chair introduced this report and asked the Licensing Team Leader to explain how the proposed amendment to the Licensing Committees rules would work to permit remote meetings.

The Licensing Team Leader made the following points:

- Existing legislation permitting remote Licensing Committee meetings had ended on 9th May 2021. Since then, all meetings of the Licensing Committee had taken place as physical meetings
- Officers were proposing that the Committee approve changes to Licensing rules to permit remote hearings. A decision on whether or not to hold a remote hearing would be made following consultation between Licensing Officers and the Chair of the Committee and with the agreement of all parties involved in any particular hearing
- Working from home would allow access via alternative means such as smart phones in the event that a remote meeting was agreed. The Appendix of the report setting out the Licensing Procedure Rules identified a number of significant changes that were proposed.

The Committee noted that the technology had worked well and had been an improvement in situations where an item had been withdrawn at very short notice before the meeting.

In response to questions and issues raised by Councillors, the Licensing Team Leader made the following points:

- There was not yet a possibility for holding hybrid meetings due to the limitations caused by technology in the City Hall as it was at the moment. However, it was noted that proposals to investigate this were currently being considered. The Committee's Legal Adviser confirmed that, in the event that members approved the proposed amendments, these would be sufficient to allow any hybrid arrangements to automatically be included within these
- During the period of remote meetings, there had been some change in the number of supporting responses since it was more accessible and straightforward for many of them, particularly as it had enabled access from remote locations and avoided travel
- Any concerns about access for older people or people who might find the technology difficult would be considered on a case by case basis. All discussions about holding remote hearings would take place in consultation with the Chair
- The proposed change would be a permanent one. However, not all meetings would be remote. Flexibility to hold physical meetings as required would remain.



- The mechanism for approving any decision to hold a remote meeting was outlined – it would be formally agreed between the Trading Standards and Licensing Manager and the Chair of the Committee. It was likely to apply in situations where decisions simply required noting or where all parties had reached agreement informally beforehand on a particular application or Temporary Event Notice request
- Licensing Committee Rules: LCR12 – the reference to “ruling to the Chair to be final” should be amended to read “ruling of the Chair to be final”
- Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) Paragraph 1.2: The reference to workforce and service users would be amended to clarify that this would apply to all Councillors on the Licensing Committee

Councillor Richard Eddy moved, seconded by Councillor Brenda Massey that the recommendations contained in the report be approved and to also include the amendment to the wording in LCR12 and to clarify the EIA as set out above.

Upon being put to the vote, it was

RESOLVED (unanimously) – that the Licensing Committee Rules are amended as set out in Appendix A and as indicated in the above motion to facilitate remote hearings.

Meeting ended at 10.20 am

CHAIR _____

