

**NORTH DEVON COUNCIL**

Minutes of a meeting of Licensing and Community Safety Committee held at Barum Room - Brynsworthy on Thursday, 12th May, 2022 at 6.30 pm

PRESENT: Members:

Councillor York (Chair)

Councillors Bulled, Cann, Gubb, Henderson, Pearson, D. Spear, L. Spear and Tucker

Officers:

Legal Advisor and Public Protection Manager

**10. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Biederman, Campbell, Chesters, Hunt and Yabsley.

**11. TO APPROVE AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 12 APRIL 2022**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 12 April 2022 (circulated previously) be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

**12. ITEMS BROUGHT FORWARD WHICH IN THE OPINION OF THE CHAIR SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BY THE MEETING AS A MATTER OF URGENCY**

The Chair had received an update on a business whose premises licence had been revoked at a sub-committee hearing and invited the Public Protection Manager to update the Committee. The activities that had taken place at this premises highlighted an issue that is a problem nationally.

It was noted that the Committee agreed to instruct the Public Protection Manager to draft a letter to the relevant Government department lobbying for a change in legislation to allow Local Authorities recourse to take action on Premises continuing activities without a Licence.

**13. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

There were no declarations of interest announced.

**14. REPORT OUTLINING A PROPOSAL TO INTRODUCE AN ANIMAL LICENSING POLICY**

The Committee considered a report outlining a proposal to introduce an Animal Licensing policy (circulated previously), by the Public Protection Manager.

Lee Staples, Licensing Consultant gave the Committee the following points from the report:

- New animal licensing regulations came into force in 2018. This consolidated numerous other pieces of legislation into five animal activity categories.
- A public facing star rating system was now applicable with the option to pursue a 4 or 5 star rating with the accomplishment of higher welfare standards.
- The Local Authority would have to determine the suitability of an applicant to hold a licence to look after animals and proposals for how this was to be carried out was detailed in the proposed policy.
- A consultation to gain input and ideas from the public would be sent out to all Parishes via the clerks, current holders of licences and the general public.

The following responses were given to questions asked:

- There had been no consultation with Local Authorities on the introduction of a star rating system and the most a new business could be awarded was low with the view that they could work towards improved status within a three month period.
- The star rating awarded to a licence holder would be displayed for the public to see. No further information would be on display but more information could be obtained online.
- The new regulations gave the Local Authority more professionalism and confidence to make their ratings assessments as well as the ability to determine to refuse applications.
- There was no mention of how many dogs could be walked by a person at any one time. This was a potential feature of a Public Safety Protection Order (PSPO) and when that was next due for review this could be examined. The other option would be to introduce local by-laws.
- There was no record of complaints made to the Licensing Team about out of control dog walkers. This maybe something held by the Environmental Health Team or the RSPCA.
- Resourcing to cover the new workload had been highlighted by an internal Licensing audit as an area of concern.
- Work was underway to enhance application and inspection forms. In terms of improving efficiency, the improved declaration section surrounding documentation that was a pre-requisite of gaining a licence was likely to be beneficial. It was intended to be more robust, in terms of moving forward, with regard those documents expected to be available on the day of an inspection.
- It was not anticipated that there would be many sub-committees needed for the determination/review of an application.

RESOLVED that an 8 week public consultation be carried out on the proposed Animal Licensing policy.

Chair

The meeting ended at 7.27 pm

NOTE: These minutes will be confirmed as a correct record at the next meeting of the Committee.