

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**Minutes of the meeting of Licensing and Regulatory Committee held
at The Council Chamber, County Hall, The Rhadyr, Usk, NP15 1GA on Tuesday, 23rd
May, 2017 at 2.00 pm**

PRESENT: County Councillor B. Strong (Chairman)
County Councillor R.J. Higginson (Vice Chairman)

County Councillors: A. Easson, R. Edwards, D. Evans, L. Guppy, M. Lane, J. Pratt, R. Roden, J. Treharne and A. Webb

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

David Jones	Head of Public Protection
Linda O'Gorman	Principal Licensing Officer
Ioan Gealy	Solicitor
Richard Williams	Democratic Services Officer

APOLOGIES:

None

1. Election of Chair

We elected County Councillor B. Strong as Chair.

2. Appointment of Vice Chair

We appointed County Councillor R.J. Higginson as Vice-Chair.

3. Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest made by Members.

4. Confirmation of Minutes

The minutes of the Licensing and Regulatory Committee dated 11th April 2017 were confirmed and signed by the Chair.

5. Public Protection Performance report 2016/17

We received the annual performance report for Public Protection services. The Public Protection division comprises of Environmental Health, Trading Standards and Animal Health and Licensing.

In doing so, Members were informed that Cabinet had approved a report in March 2014 recommending budget reductions to Public Protection services for 2014/15 and subsequent years. In January 2015 Cabinet had asked for Public Protection performance to be reviewed regularly to assess any negative impacts.

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As a consequence, six monthly reports have been provided to Strong Communities Select Committee, together with annual reports to the Licensing and Regulatory Committee.

Performance over the twelve months of 2016/17 was identified and the following issues had been noted:

- The four service teams, for the vast majority of the services they deliver, meet the Authority's legal obligations in relation to Public Protection services.
- There have been some notable successes in 2016/17, for example, improving food safety and animal feed compliance, supporting major developments (A465) and events such as the Eisteddfod and Abergavenny Food Festival.
- Most proactive and reactive work is being undertaken professionally within prescribed response times. There are only a few exceptions, due to increased demand, such as some slippage in housing and private water inspections, which will be improved for 2017/18.
- Annual reports will continue to be made to this Committee to assess performance over time and help inform future priorities noting the competing demands.
- Services might struggle to take on any new statutory duties that protect the public and the environment. Therefore, funding must be sought to support any new work. In addition, where work is onerous on officer time, funding will be pursued from major developers.
- Future strategies for sustaining Public Protection services will be developed (to include further income generation and collaboration) locally, regionally and nationally.

Having considered the report, the following points were noted:

- In response to a question raised regarding the potential for the Authority to make money by providing pest control, it was noted that some authorities in the past did employ pest control officers (PCO's). The position in Monmouthshire County Council, however, was that these services were contracted out many years ago, therefore there are no former PCO's to provide a private service on behalf of Monmouthshire County Council.
- A Committee Member stated that a resident within his ward kept poultry which was attracting rats to the property. He had reported this matter to Environmental Health. It was noted that this matter would be investigated from an animal welfare perspective and also via a nuisance perspective.
- In response to a question raised regarding abandoned vehicles, it was noted that these matters would be raised with Gwent Police with a view to expediting a solution.

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- With regard to an issue raised regarding dog fouling, it was noted that Usk Town Council had taken on the issue of addressing dog fouling in the town, which was proving to be successful. Reliance on the community and the use of CCTV was a positive way of addressing this issue and a way of supporting environmental health officers.
- In response to a Member's question regarding landlords and agents and the responsibility they have towards their tenants and any bond that might be held, it was noted that it is a requirement of the landlord to properly secure the bond and if the property is left in a good condition by the tenant then the bond should be recoverable.
- In response to a question raised regarding human trafficking, it was noted that in terms of work places with potential exploitation, Environmental Health will check with the Immigration Authority and the Labour Abuse Authority regarding these issues.
- With regard to block street traders, it was noted that the conditions are made clear as to what the traders would need to adhere to. Best Practice has also been looked into with regard to the letting of stalls.
- In light of the events that had occurred at the Manchester Arena on the evening of Monday 22nd May 2017, it was noted that the Cabinet Member had made a statement to the press regarding future events at Caldicot Castle. Members were informed that a meeting, with appropriate Member and officers, will shortly be held to discuss upcoming events at Caldicot Castle.

On behalf of the Committee, the Chair thanked officers for presenting a comprehensive update report regarding public protection performance.

We resolved to receive the report and noted its content.

6. Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on 18th July 2017 at 10.00am.

The meeting ended at 3.10 pm.