

# SHEFFIELD CITY COUNCIL

## Licensing Committee

### Meeting held 16 January 2014

**PRESENT:** Councillors Clive Skelton (Chair), Nikki Bond, Roger Davison, Neale Gibson, Adam Hurst, Stuart Wattam, Cliff Woodcraft and Joyce Wright

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#### **1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

1.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Jenny Armstrong, David Barker, Jillian Creasy, George Lindars-Hammond, Denise Reaney and Nikki Sharpe.

#### **2. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS**

2.1 No items were identified where resolutions may be moved to exclude the public and press.

#### **3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

3.1 There were no declarations of interest.

#### **4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

4.1 The minutes of the meetings of the Licensing Sub-Committee held on 11<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup>, 21<sup>st</sup>, 25<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> November and 2<sup>nd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> December, 2013 were approved as correct records.

#### **5. LICENSING ACT 2003 - MULTI-AGENCY SAFEGUARDING WORK**

5.1 The Committee received a report of the Chief Licensing Officer providing a summary of the training and support schemes delivered to businesses in Sheffield by responsible authorities on the subject of safeguarding children.

5.2 Present at the meeting were Benita Mumby (Licensing Manager, South Yorkshire Police), Greg Ward (Enforcement Officer, Trading Standards), Julie Hague (Licensing Project Manager, Safeguarding Children Board), Andy Ruston (Senior Licensing Officer), Louise Slater (Solicitor to the Committee) and Jennie Skiba (Democratic Services).

5.3 Andy Ruston presented the report and Julie Hague gave a presentation regarding the work of the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Partnership. Julie Hague gave Members a brief history of the Partnership and outlined its aims and the benefits of working together as Responsible Authorities. She stated that officers representing Sheffield had been invited to speak at Westminster last year to promote a hotel awareness campaign about child sexual exploitation and other local authorities have since adopted Sheffield's approach on this and other

licensing issues in relation to safeguarding children and young people.

- 5.4 Benita Mumby then referred to the Test Purchase Strategy which was set out in Appendix A to the report. She informed Members that the Strategy had been put in place in 2008 and was aimed at tackling under-age drinking in the City. Benita stated that offenders failing the first test purchase faces a fine or is given the option of attending a responsible retail of alcohol course and a workshop offering multi-agency training for Safeguarding Children at Licensed Premises. If an offender re-offends a second time, again the offender faces paying a fine and is expected, rather than offered the opportunity, to attend the courses. After a third failure, the offender's licence is referred to the Licensing Sub-Committee. Benita Mumby added that in the majority of cases, licensees tended not to re-offend after the first failure and that of three cases that were referred to the Sub-Committee, only one of them had their licence was revoked.
- 5.5 In response to questions from Members, Julie Hague then explained the "bailment scheme". She stated that the Scheme was developed to prevent young people using false identification to access adult venues or to purchase alcohol underage. She went on to state that door security staff were being trained to confiscate suspected false ID and report the incident to the Police, and then the aim was to educate young people about the legal consequences and risks of using false ID. She also stated that bar staff are also being trained to identify underage drinkers and are becoming more vigilant. She added that notices would be served on any licensed premises if it was found that they were still selling alcohol to someone who was intoxicated.
- 5.6 Greg Ward stated that he does a lot of pro-active work regarding under-age sales. He produced a pack which is available to businesses containing information about age-restricted sales, the importance of a "refusals" book, information on fake identification and the dangers of counterfeit alcohol, and all the information that is necessary for a due diligence scheme to be in place via training and advice and ensuring retailers act responsibly. Businesses are also encouraged to become members of the Responsible Retailer Scheme, which is run by Trading Standards and is free to join.
- 5.7 Greg Ward then referred to the sale of the drugs known as "legal highs" and the work being carried out to identify stockists and warn them of the dangers of these products. He stated that there is no mandatory age-restriction requirement for premises to sell such products and therefore no test purchases are made. In response to questions, Greg Ward stated that he used to visit schools to educate pupils about the dangers of alcohol and drugs, but financial constraints now prevent this. He added that unfortunately these products can be sold anywhere i.e. petrol stations, newsagents, etc.
- 5.8 In response to questions from Members, Julie Hague stated that the multi-agency partnership work with a range of professionals as well as the licensed trade, to try and ensure that people are safe from the effects of drugs and alcohol. She stated that the secondary schools in Sheffield have copies of the 'Substances And You' educational resource which highlights the risk of substance misuse and also educates young people about misusing fake ID and the potential impact of their

actions both personally and on people running licensed businesses. She produced a factsheet that has been produced by the Young Advisors Group and has been posted on social networks to deter young people from trying to use false ID to access adult products or venues.

- 5.9 Julie Hague stated that the Responsible Authorities are working in partnership with the taxi and private hire trade to support drivers in recognising vulnerable passengers so that they provide an appropriate service. Training sessions are delivered as part of the BTec course undertaken by new applicants for driver licences. The training also advises drivers how to maintain records and work to a 'Code of Good Safeguarding Practice' so that they can evidence they are responsible in relation to working with vulnerable passengers. She had received a favourable response from the trade.
- 5.10 Julie Hague also stated that she was working with hotels in the City and across South Yorkshire, with a view to preventing them from being misused by criminals and that currently 27 hotel managers had been trained with regard to identifying risks such as child sexual exploitation and human trafficking. In addition to this, the multi-agency team deliver training to a variety of premises managers looking at the risks relating to dangerous or inappropriate behaviour and how to provide a safe, family friendly environment in line with the licensing objectives. Julie added that licensed businesses in Sheffield as a whole had responded very favourably to the workshops and schemes run by the Responsible Authorities.
- 5.11 RESOLVED: That the public and press and attendees be excluded from the meeting before further discussion takes place on the grounds that, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted, if those persons were present, there would be a disclosure to them of exempt information as described in paragraph 5 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, as amended.
- 5.12 Louise Slater reported orally, giving legal advice on various aspects of the report and presentation now made.
- 5.13 At this point in the proceedings, the meeting was re-opened to the public and press and attendees.
- 5.14 RESOLVED: That, following consideration of the report and the presentation now made, the Committee:-
- (a) requested officers to investigate further with regard to any bye-laws which may exist to assist Responsible Authorities regarding age-restricted products;
  - (b) requested officers to contact the Clerk to the Magistrates with regard to arranging a meeting to discuss closer understanding and working between the Magistrates and the Authorities; and
  - (c) expressed its support for the work of the Responsible Authorities towards promoting the licensing objective of safeguarding children.