

Licensing Committee Report

Item
No. 4

10 JUNE 2003

Report of: Head of Regulation

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Title: LICENSING ACT 2003 PROGRAMME OF WORK

1. Decision Required

- 1.1 To note the outline programme of work required to be undertaken by the Committee this year to prepare for the introduction of the new alcohol and entertainments licensing regime.

2. Supporting Information

- 2.1 The Government is on course to radically reform the country's licensing laws. The new Licensing Act 2003 is likely to be passed this summer. It is anticipated that the changes will come fully into place by the middle of 2004. These changes represent a significant enlargement of the licensing responsibilities of local authorities. In the future, the local authority will grant premises licences to authorise the sale or supply of alcohol; the provision of 'regulated entertainment'; and provision of late night refreshment (sale of hot food or drink between 11.00 p.m. and 5.00 a.m.).
- 2.2 Currently the Council licences fewer than 100 premises for entertainment or late night refreshment. This number is predicted to rise to nearly 500. In addition, the Council will have to administer a system of temporary event notices for small, occasional events.
- 2.3 In addition, each licensing authority will become responsible for licensing individuals who are to sell alcohol, either on their own or someone else's premises. Personal licence holders in Thurrock could number over 1000.
- 2.4 Though still liable to change, the timetable as it is currently known is as follows:
Early July 2003: Act receives Royal Assent
Between July 2003 and December 2003: Local authorities to prepare Licensing Policy
1 January 2004: 1st transitional date for existing licence holders to register their licences under the new system and to apply for variations.

July 2004: 2nd transitional date, when the new licensing system commences.

- 2.5 Regulation Department has kept itself informed of these developments as the Licensing Bill has passed through Parliament, however much preparation is still required to achieve an efficient transition, including securing adequate resources to deliver the new service.

- 2.6 Whilst the major period of activity for Committee Members can be expected to come next year, there will be some business for the Licensing Committee in the coming months. Probably the most significant action will be to assist in the development of a 'Statement of Licensing Policy'. This document must be formally adopted by the authority prior to the first transition day and then every 3 years.
- 2.7 A useful guide to what needs to be put in place has been produced by LACORS. (This is attached at ap4a **Appendix A**).
- 2.8 Officers will regularly brief the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Committee on progress. The current key dates as far as the Licensing Committee is concerned are as follows (though changes are possible):
- **31st July 2003** - Licensing Committee Meeting: Presentation by Officers of new Licensing System and expectations on how it will affect Thurrock.
 - **3rd September 2003** - Member training seminar
 - **16th October 2003** - Licensing Committee Meeting: Presentation of draft local Licensing policy statement.
 - **4th November 2003** - Licensing Committee Meeting: Approval of final draft of policy and recommendation to Council to approve policy. Adoption of procedural rules following new regulations.
 - **26th November 2003** - Ratification of policy at Full Council.

Background Documents

There are no background documents