

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
LICENSING AND APPEALS COMMITTEE
HELD ON 11 MARCH 2024 FROM 7.00 PM TO 8.30 PM**

Committee Members Present

Councillors: Peter Dennis, Catherine Glover, Sarah Kerr (Vice-Chair), Jordan Montgomery, Beth Rowland (Chair), Rachel Burgess, Michael Firmager, Jackie Rance, Abdul Loyes and Shahid Younis

Officers Present

Luciane Bowker, Democratic & Electoral Services Specialist
Neil Allen, Head of Legal
Keiran Hinchliffe, Licensing Service Manager

26. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted from Councillors Morag Malvern, Mike Smith and Bill Soane.

27. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 23 January 2024 were confirmed as a correct record, subject to the amendment below, and signed by the Chair.

That the following wording would added to the Licensing Policy:

New applications and renewal applications seeking licensable hours after 11pm are expected to put provisions in place for their staff working past 11pm by identifying workable solutions to facilitate safe travel home such as getting reimbursed taxi travel for late shift workers.

28. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

29. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no public questions.

30. MEMBER QUESTION TIME

There were no Member questions.

31. CUMULATIVE IMPACT ASSESSMENT FOR REMENHAM

The Chairman welcomed residents of the Remenham area who were in attendance to take part in the discussions about the consideration of a Cumulative Impact Assessment (CIA) for Remenham.

Keiran Hinchliffe, Licensing Service Manager read through the report that was set out in Agenda pages 11-14. The report set out the legislative framework and key considerations to enable the Committee make a decision on whether to proceed with a CIA for Remenham.

During the discussion of the item the following comments and questions were made:

- If the Committee decided to proceed with a CIA, this would not impact the events taking place this year;

- The CIA was expected to take 9-12 months to complete;
- The CIA would take evidence from this year's event, previous years' data and information from SAG meetings, followed by a public consultation;
- The findings of the CIA would be brought back to this Committee, probably in January or March 2025. This Committee would then make recommendations based on the findings of the CIA;
- Neil Allen, Head of Legal explained that in terms of governance, the Licensing and Appeals Committee was requested to make a decision as to whether to proceed with a CIA, at a later stage the Licensing and Appeals Committee would recommend the adoption of a Cumulative Impact Policy or not. The Licensing and Appeals Committee would then submit its recommendation for final approval by the Council;
- Keiran Hinchliffe explained that undertaking a CIA was a significant piece of work that would take a lot of resources. Many other stakeholders such as the police would also be involved in this process;
- Members asked about the cost of a CIA. The Committee was informed that the cost was unknown. However, there was already a lot of Officers' involvement in the management of summer events in Remenham, so it was possible that this work could be undertaken with the resources that were already in place for those events;
- Members wondered if implementing a CIA for Remenham was a good use of money, and were uncomfortable with the fact that the cost was unknown;
- Kieran Hinchliffe pointed out that even if the CIA did not result in the adoption of a Cumulative Impact Policy (CIP), there could be other positive outcomes that led to improvements in different ways;
- Members asked if the Remenham Farm Residents Association (RFRA) had been approached about contributing to the cost of the CIA?;
- There was indication that the Parish Council was willing to enter a conversation about a financial contribution towards the cost of the CIA.

The Chairman invited the RFRA to share their views with the Committee. Ron Emerson, Neil Brown and Michael Dudley addressed the Committee and some of the points they made are listed below:

- The residents thanked Members for the opportunity to take part in the meeting;
- The number of events the area had increased substantially over the years, with over 160 days of events taking place per year;
- As well as the days when events took place, there was disruption and pollution caused by setting up and taking down events;
- The residents' concerns had been raised many times before, Remenham had now reached a saturation point;
- The Remenham Parish Council was prepared to discuss a financial contribution towards funding the CIA;
- A CIA would give the Council more control over events in Remenham;
- The events took place in a small rural area and impacted on residents and on the general public's ability to enjoy the riverside;
- The Henley Festival and the Henley Regatta had less impact on the community than other events, because much of the equipment was already on site or could easily be brought in from Henley;
- During the Henley Regatta, there were many other licences along the river;
- There was a difficulty with transport due to the fact that the area was accessible via a single traffic lane, big trucks could easily get stuck;

- Due to the way the Licensing legislation operated, applications were dealt with in isolation;
- The residents had paid thousands to private companies to gather data in relation to noise pollution generated by events, and as a result the licence holders were now made to comply with noise restrictions (which were previously not being monitored by the Council);
- The residents have in the past asked for variations to licences in order to soften their impact on the environment;
- Although the events were seasonal, they went on from April to September – 6 months of the year;
- The Committee was encouraged to determine that a CIA be undertaken, so that it could make an informed decision about implementing a CIP and having more control over events;
- The residents had had to trigger a review of the Rewind Festival licence in the past because they did not have traffic management plan in place and traffic had been chaotic at times. The problem was solved as a result of the proactiveness of residents;
- There was an issue with the carbon footprint being created by these large events, public transportation to the area was limited. Perhaps a park and ride system could be introduced to manage the heavy traffic.

Members indicated that if a CIA was carried out, it would be used as a vehicle to enable solutions to issues arising from the events in the area, not as a means to stop activity.

In response to a question, the residents informed that the Rewind Festival was the most disruptive event due to the large vehicles involved in transporting the infrastructure to the area.

With regards to the Henley Regatta, the sporting event was not the problem, the issue was the number of other licences attached to the regatta event. But because the way the legislation worked, it was not currently possible to make the case that there were an excessive number of licences during the regatta event.

Residents asked if the presumption of refusal that a Cumulative Impact Policy would bring would apply just to new licences or if would it extended to variation applications? Keiran Hinchliffe explained that results of the CIA would determine the recommendation for the scope in a future policy.

Keiran Hinchliffe clarified that it was proposed that current staff resources be used to carry out the CIA, an external agency would not be used.

Councillor Younis suggested that the Council could make use of computer models to analyse data from various sources.

Neil Allen pointed out that all data would be considered in a CIA, this would include the data provided by licence holders too.

Ron Emerson stated that there was a company that was capable of measuring the carbon footprint of events, and that this data could be used to inform the Committee as part of the CIA.

Members were generally in favour of having a CIA undertaken but were concerned about the cost implications and the impact on other areas of licensing. They felt that regular monitoring of the process would be necessary for transparency and budget control. After a robust debate it was agreed that the Licensing and Appeal Committee would be best placed to carry out the monitoring of the implementation of the CIA.

In response to a suggestion, Keiran Hinchliffe stated that the CIA could only be undertaken by the Council, this task could not be shared with the RFRA. It was also clarified that it would not be possible to stop or freeze new applications whilst the CIA was undertaken.

Upon being put to the vote Members voted unanimously in favour of moving ahead with a CIA for Remenham.

RESOLVED That:

- 1) Officers are authorised to commence steps to collect and analyse evidence of cumulative impact of licensed premises and activity in the Remenham area;
- 2) The Licensing and Appeals Committee will be provided with regular reports, including actual and projected cost of the process and the impact of the work on the rest of the licensing activities.