

Annual Report from the Chair of the Licensing and Regulatory Committees

This is my second Chairman's report to Council, from Regulatory and Licensing Committees and, following last year's report, I thought it important for the Council to receive a report again this year.

The two committees work extremely hard, and I would like to thank my Councillor colleagues, for all the support they have given to me, since I became Chairman in September 2014, and for the amount of time and energy they give to ensuring the important work these committees have responsibility for is carried out professionally.

Regulatory Committee

Taxi Licensing

Taxi Licensing came into public view for all the wrong reasons in 2014 and since that time the Regulatory Committee has continued to work with officer colleagues in reviewing, refining and amending the policy to ensure that it is one which is transparent and robust. We will continue with this process, but have acknowledged that a period of stability is required whereby both the taxi trade and officers benefit from minimal changes.

Internal Audit Report

Internal audit have revisited the taxi licensing function and I'm pleased to be able to report that the outcome was good – the top rating. This reflects the incredible amount of work undertaken by the officer colleagues and continues to be monitored and reviewed by the Committee.

Taxi Licensing Policy

The Council adopted the Taxi Licensing Policy in September 2014 and the Committee was clear that it should not be allowed to stagnate and must continue to be improved. This has happened and has been reviewed four times during 2015/16.

Regulatory Sub-Committee

The Regulatory Sub-Committee has been very busy throughout the year and has conducted 56 hearings in relation to taxi licensing and taxi enforcement. My thanks to Councillor and officer colleagues who attended these important evening and daytime meetings.

Appeals

8 taxi drivers have appealed the decisions of either the sub-committee or officers. On 7 occasions the court upheld the council decision fully. 2 appeals are currently within the Court process.

Taxi Forum

The Taxi Forum was introduced as a way to interact with the drivers and operators and was positive to begin with. The trade is invited to contribute to the agenda but it has proved difficult to keep the meetings to the agenda items. Often the topic of conversation will be to respond to the questions posed about investigations and/or prosecutions or about individual driver's issues, neither of which are appropriate in this forum. We are considering ways of maintaining the interaction and developing the positive contributions, however, this may have to be in a different format for the future.

As I said before the Committee does not just deal with Taxis!

Village Greens

There have been a number of village green applications which have been heard by the Committee and a robust process for dealing with such applications has been agreed.

	A. N.	Date	Area	Stage	Applicant	area (ha)
6	VG6	unknown	Bletchley	R	unknown	0.14
103	VG103	unknown	Moulsoe	R	unknown	0.06
105	VG105	unknown	N' Crawley, N of parish church	R	unknown	0.1
106	VG106	unknown	N' Crawley, Lodge to Crawley Grange	R	unknown	0.1
107	VG107	unknown	N' Crawley, land E Rookery Farm	R	unknown	0.41
75	VG75	unknown	Ravenstone Playing Field	R	unknown	0.21
67	VG67	unknown	Shenley Brook End,	R	unknown	0.51
68	VG68	unknown	Shenley Brook End,	R	unknown	0.11
52	VG52	unknown	Sherington	R	unknown	0.13
7	VG7	unknown	Simpson, NW of Church St Thomas	R	unknown	0.03
8	VG8	unknown	Simpson, W of St Thomas church	R	unknown	0.15
15	VG15	unknown	Stony Stratford, Horsefair Green	R	unknown	0.22
5	VG5	unknown	W-on-the-Green, The Green (part)	R	unknown	3.3
11	VG11	unknown	W-on-the-Green, The Green (part)	R	unknown	2.67

Milton Keynes Council Applications

AN: - Application number

Registered

	AN	Date	Area	Stage	Applicant	ha	
1	TV1	16.10.12	Great Holm	R	Mr Ballantyne	0.13	Yes
2	TV2	29.01.13	Fenny Stratford	R	Mr T M James	0.02	No
3	TV3	18.03.14	Woughton Play Fields	I - D	Dr A S Humphries	14.59	
4	TV4	27.10.14	Passmore	C	Mr M Blomley	1	
5	TV9	18.11.14	The Paddocks	C	Mr P T McDonald	8.74	
6	TV10	27.02.15	Woughton Park	C	Mr S Bennet	1.17	

Key:

Stage: -	DM	Duly made
	V	Validation
	C	Committee
	CD	Committee Decision
	I	Inquiry
	R	Resolved
	RS	Resolved application successful
	RF	Resolved application Failed

The Committee has also continued to monitor the processes for determining village green applications and keep these updated and relevant, including the process for determining applications on Council land.

Licensing Committee

Gambling Policy

The Council is responsible as 'the Licensing Authority' under the Gambling Act 2005 to deal with applications for betting shops; casinos; bingo halls; amusement arcades; gaming machines; and lotteries at premises within its area.

There is a requirement for the Council to have a statement of gambling principles which has to be reviewed every three years. The latest review was adopted by Council in January 2016.

Casino

The Casino brings considerable amounts of income to the Council and the Committee has considered in detail how this money is being used within the Council to achieve the "greatest benefit".

Street Trading Policy

A lot of effort has been put into creating a new policy which will be reviewed in June following a comprehensive consultation with stakeholders.

Sex Establishments Policy

Proposed changes to the existing policy are under consultation with the process finishing this month before it is brought before the Committee.

Licensing Sub-Committee

The Licensing Sub-Committee has heard 8 license and street trading applications.

Finally I would like to express my personal thanks to all councillor and officer colleagues who have supported me in my role as Chairman. There have been some extremely difficult situations to contend with and I'm grateful for the support I have received.

My particular thanks to Councillors David Lewis and Chris Williams whose wise counsel has been invaluable. Officer colleagues at all levels in the departments we rely on, have come and others gone, as well as some re-organisations, but through out, the service has been consistent and professional. My thanks to all those in the Legal Department who have supported us and of course to Dino Imbimbo and Jane Crighton, without whom, the Committee would fall apart!

We are all working to ensure the residents of Milton Keynes can go about they lives safely and I urge my successors to never shy away from that aim, whatever the challenges that might be put in their way.

Councillor Catriona Morris
Chairman Licensing and Regulatory Committees