

Action on Petitions

ACTION TAKEN ON PETITIONS

Council Members are asked to note the actions taken in relation to the under mentioned petitions which were presented to Council:-

(i) Petition to Council with regard to an application for a licence to sell alcohol at the former Cauld Lad Public House – Presented to Council on 24 January 2018

Detail of the Petition

The following petition, signed by 229 residents, was presented to Council on 24 January 2018 by Councillor Foster:

“All residents strongly object to a new shop in the Cauld Lad for anti-social behaviour”

Background

On 8 January 2018 the Council received an application for a licence for off sales of alcohol from a unit in the former Cauld Lad Public House in Caithness Road, Sunderland.

The Licensing Act 2003 requires, when an objection to such an application is received, that the licensing authority, in this case the Council, must hold a hearing to determine whether a licence should be granted.

Actions taken in response

In accordance with the Council's procedures, the petition was reported to the Licensing Sub-Committee on 22 February 2018.

The Sub-Committee considered the petition and other evidence and decided to grant the application for a licence. In doing so, the Sub-Committee stated that they took into account the Council's Statement of Licensing Policy and the fact that the police were content with the application. The Sub-Committee considered that there were sufficient conditions proposed as to the method of operation of the premises in order to prevent problems arising and that the evidence of anti-social behaviour put forward could not be directly attributed to the sale of alcohol.

In accordance with the law, a notice of this determination, which gave details of the reasoning for the decision of the Sub-Committee, has been given to the lead petitioner.

The Ward Councillors and lead petitioner have been advised of the outcome.

(ii) Petition to Provide a Bus Service to Gildacre Fields, Southwick - Presented to Council on 24 January 2018

Detail of the Petition

The following petition, signed by 94 residents, was presented to Council on 24 January 2018 by Councillor Chequer:

“We the undersigned are residents of the new development of Gildacre Fields and Bardolph Drive (and surrounding area) – a total of 130 flats and bungalows – in Southwick, Sunderland. All the residents are either and/ or elderly, disabled or over 55 years.

We do not at present have close by either easily reached bus stops or a regular during the day bus service which we could use to go to and from Sunderland city Centre or further without having to pay for taxis.

It must be noted that not all elderly and/or disabled people are able to afford to run a car or to regularly use taxis to reach hospitals, doctor’s surgeries or shopping centres.”

Background

The petition was initially forwarded to the bus operator Stagecoach and to Nexus for their response. Details of their deliberations and eventual response are outlined below.

The City Council does not have any legal or financial responsibility for bus services. The City Council’s powers in this context are limited to influencing or lobbying the commercial operators and requesting Nexus to secure additional services to make good any gaps in the commercial network. In either instance the final decision on whether to provide a service will rest with the operator or Nexus.

Gildacre Fields is an extra-care development located at the junction of Faber Road and Carley Hill Road. Extra Care housing provides older people with choice, independence, control and privacy. The development provides an environment where residents can continue to live independently, secure in the knowledge that they can be supported by a team of professional people. In this context the ability to travel independently and spontaneously is very important. It is also important that residents can receive visitors and a good bus service helps with this.

At the time the development was planned and constructed it was relatively well served by buses with the Go North East service X36 operating along Carley Hill Road and Stagecoach service 18/19 operating a short walk away along Thompson Road. Service X36 was withdrawn completely in the summer of 2017 whilst service 18/19 has been reduced to an hourly service 18. The clearance of the former Hahnemann Court, where many current Gildacre Fields residents used to live, affected the viability of bus services in the area prior to the new developments being completed.

The closest and most frequent service serving this area is Stagecoach service 16 which operates on a 10 minute frequency for much of the day and provides a link to local facilities at Southwick Green as well as the City Centre and other parts of the City. Service 16 is routed via Shakespeare Street and Faber Road and so does not stop directly outside Gildacre. The nearest stops are in Shakespeare Street and Beaumont Street.

The issue had previously been raised via Julie Elliot MP but hadn't been satisfactorily resolved due to difficulties in relocating bus stops. At the time, the bus operator was unwilling to divert service 16 due to reliability issues elsewhere on the route.

Actions to Resolve the Problem

In advance of the petition being received, this matter had also been raised by the former Southwick Ward Councillor, Norma Wright. As a consequence of this a meeting was held on site on 10 January 2018. This was attended by the Ward Councillors, Gildacre Fields residents, and officers from Stagecoach, Nexus and the City Council.

Residents were given the opportunity to outline the difficulties they encountered due to the lack of easy access to a bus service.

Stagecoach responded that they were prepared to divert service 16 along Faber Road and Emsworth Road instead of Shakespeare Street. This was, however conditional on changes that had recently occurred in Redhill Ward proving successful and not unduly inconveniencing residents there.

Discussions with Redhill Ward Councillors suggested that in general they would have no objection to a diversion to serve Gildacre Fields. However there were anecdotal reports of difficulties for residents in the Bunny Hill area and they requested that the position continue to be monitored in relation to any potential negative impact on residents there.

As a result of this, Stagecoach is proposing to divert service 16 to serve Gildacre Fields with effect from the June/July timetable change. This will be subject to bus stops being installed and that the change will be monitored both to ensure that there are no negative effects elsewhere on the route, particularly further out in Redhill and also to ensure that the new stops are well used. Nexus are currently making arrangements for new bus stops on Faber Road outside of Gildacre Fields.

The Ward Councillors and lead petitioner have been advised of the outcome.

(iii) Petition to install bollards or a traffic management scheme at Kingarth Avenue, Prince's Avenue, Queen's Avenue, King's Avenue and Prince's Avenue - Presented to Council on 21 June 2017

Detail of the Petition and Background

The following petition, signed by 48 residents, was presented to Council on 21 June 2017 by Councillor Howe:

"Petition – Kingarth Avenue, Prince's Avenue, Queen's Avenue, King's Avenue and Prince's Avenue

Request to install bollards to the north end of the above street to prevent drivers other than residents and visitors from using the streets, or, the introduction of a community parking management scheme to these streets."

Actions to Resolve the Problem

After consideration by Council Officers, the outcome of the petition is as follows:-

To decline the element of the petition requesting the installation of bollards but that this area be included within a new programme of Community Parking Management Schemes to be considered by Planning and Highways Committee in 2018- 2019.

In addition, options will be considered for further Traffic Management mitigation in parallel with proposals for the mixed use development to the west of Whitburn Road and north of Dykelands Road.

The Ward Councillors and lead petitioner have been advised of the outcome.