



GOVERNANCE

Licensing - SAB Miller Scholars Programme

The SAB Miller Scholars Programme was established in conjunction with the British Institute of Innkeeping Awarding Body to provide opportunities for staff working at UK licensed premises to earn qualifications in responsible retailing.

The Award in Responsible Alcohol Retailing (ARAR) is primarily for bar staff. The two District Councils which have had the highest take up of the courses in the UK are Carlisle and Portsmouth.

Jim Messenger, Licensing Manager, was therefore invited to attend a presentation at the Houses of Parliament along with representatives from three licensed premises from Carlisle and a local licensing trainer, Peter Fulton. The event was also attended by Jonathan Lord MP and international directors of SAB Miller and the BII.

The three premises from Carlisle which were invited were all category winners, and two were overall winners, in this years Best Bar None Scheme. Both the ARAR awards and the Best Bar None Scheme raise the profile of Carlisle in the national arena and have played a part in raising standards in the licensing trade locally.

RESOURCES

Financial Services
2010/11 Final Accounts Process

The annual statement of accounts (subject to Audit) were scrutinised by the Audit Committee on 5th July and are currently subject to audit by the Audit Commission which will continue through to the end of September. The Audit Commission will report the outcome of the audit process through its Annual Governance Report which will be considered by the Audit Committee on 27th September, following which the Accounts will be formally approved by Members. This is now delegated to the Audit Committee as approved at the previous Council meeting. The statutory deadline for the completion of the audit and approval process is 30th September.

Strategic Planning

The Medium Term Financial Plan and Corporate Charging Policy, the Capital Strategy and the Asset Management Plan for 2012/13 onwards have been considered by the Executive and the Resources Overview and Scrutiny Panel. These are presented elsewhere on this agenda for formal approval by Council, and once approved, will inform the detailed work required to enable a balanced budget for 2012/13 to be approved by Council in February 2012. A timetable for the process will be prepared and reports on the core budgets, individual spending pressures and savings, and the charging reports will be considered by the Executive and the relevant overview and scrutiny panels in November and December.

Audit Services

The Audit Committee on 15th August received the Audit Services' progress report along with a copy of the Audit Plan which illustrated the work completed by the Audit Team for the 16 week period up to 22nd July 2011. The following key messages were noted by Members:

- The Audit Plan is on track - 171 days (32%) of the 535 total direct audit days expected in 2011/12 were delivered by 22nd July 2011, which is slightly above target for this position in the year (165 days - 31%).
- There has been good progress made on a number of the higher risk audit reviews along with work undertaken on the National Fraud Initiative (NFI) data matching exercise.
- All remaining audit work brought forward from 2010/11 has now been completed.

The Audit report on the ICT Security was presented to the Audit Committee on 22nd June 2009. This was a very detailed audit review which produced 49 audit recommendations. Since this time, Members of the Audit Committee have actively monitored this situation through the receipt of regular updates of the actions taken to address all audit recommendations. The monitoring update on 30th November 2011 advised Members that there were 4 recommendations which, at that time, were still to be fully implemented.

The current position was followed up in July 2011. It was concluded that all remaining audit recommendations have been appropriately actioned and no further follow up work is deemed necessary.

Matters arising from the review of HB Overpayments were discussed in detail and it was agreed that given the concerns raised, a prompt follow up of this review should be undertaken for the September meeting, with subsequent follow up reports undertaken on a regular basis until all audit recommendations have been fully addressed and the debt recovery procedures and performance has improved.

Property and Facilities

Asset Review Disposal Programme

An officer Working Group, chaired by the Acting Chief Executive, is co-ordinating the implementation of the property disposal programme which was approved by Council in January.

The project aims, through a period of rationalisation and consolidation, to create a portfolio which is based on fewer assets and is easier and less expensive to manage. Through reinvestment of capital receipts, and the release of embedded value, the portfolio will improve performance with the delivery of better yields and more rental income.

So far the disposal of 7 assets has been completed realising in excess £900,000, which is ahead of target projections. Sales have been conducted through a mixture of private treaty transactions and public auctions. Officers are continuing the work on bringing forward the next tranche of properties to the market, which importantly includes our asset at Morton.

The national firm of surveyors, Montagu Evans LLP, were appointed to bring the Superstore and District Centre site to the market. They will be advising the Council on operator / developer selection, the delivery route and mechanism, and negotiating transactional terms on behalf of the Council. Following a period of soft marketing to prospective purchasers, the site was publicly advertised and formally brought to the market in early September. Discussions are also well advanced with a consortium of sitting tenants wishing to acquire the Council's freehold interest in Willowholme Industrial Estate.

Accommodation Review

The aim of this project is to review our own accommodation to ensure the space we use matches our needs and is operating efficiently and cost effectively.

The project will deliver corporate standards for the space we occupy, optimise usage and increase capacity. It will reduce wasted space; identify savings and the potential to generate additional income or capital receipts.

Tenders are being evaluated for the Bousteads Grassing roadside building demolition and demolition is anticipated to commence around the end of August. A review of accommodation on the Ground and First floors of the

Civic Centre is also underway and accommodation is now ready for the passport office to move into the Customer Contact Centre on the ground floor.

Renewable Energy

Approval has been given to proceed with feasibility investigations into renewable energy projects. This will look to take advantage of the feed in tariffs for solar photovoltaic, hydro power at Holme head Bay and the renewable heat incentive at Longtown Community Centre.

Councillor J Mallinson
Governance & Resources Portfolio Holder