

**Request by Member for Scrutiny Review
2012/13 Work Programme**



Please complete the form below to request consideration of your issue by the
Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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| Proposers Name: James Hart | Date of Request 17.8.12 |
| Supporting Councillors (if any): Sylvia Watson | |
| Summary of Issue you wish to be scrutinised: <p>I would like to propose that the ONS committee set up a task and finish panel to look into restructuring the running of the council's licensing committee on a trial basis for the 2013/14 council year. Specifically, the proposal is to consider licensing applications in a very similar way to the way in which planning applications are decided by the council:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Move the meetings to the evening so that councillors with full time jobs can join the committee. 2) Create south, east and west licensing sub-committees so that local councillors with essential local knowledge can decide the cases. 3) In cases involving nightclubs, pubs or shops applying for changes to the hours in which they are licensed to sell alcohol, the relevant town, district and county councillors, and the nearest 50 residential properties to the application premises, should be informed by letter to make them aware that an application has been submitted. | |
| <p align="center">NOTE: ENTRIES BELOW RELATE TO ISSUE CATEGORIES OF THE PICK PROCESS. PLEASE REFER TO THE EXPLANATORY NOTES TO THIS FORM FOR FURTHER INFORMATION</p> | |
| Public Interest Justification: <p>The current system is far from satisfactory given the size and diversity of the district. Under the current system it is not unusual for councillors drawn from the rural north of the district to be called upon to decide upon licencing applications that have a very big impact upon the lives of residents living in towns such as Loughton or Buckhurst Hill. The councillors deciding these cases may never even have visited Loughton or Buckhurst Hill late on a Friday or Saturday night and therefore lack the essential local knowledge to decide these cases.</p> <p>Many of the council's 58 councillors have full-time jobs and their working commitments prevent them from joining committees, like the licensing committee, that meet during working hours. The licensing of nightclubs and pubs, and the knock-on effect on our high streets on Friday and Saturday nights, is too big an issue to effectively dis-enfranchise working age councillors from attending these meetings and representing their ward members when these cases are decided by the council.</p> <p>The vast majority of local residents don't even know that a local nightclub or pub has submitted an application for extensions to their licensing hours until they read about the decision of the licensing committee in the local press. Many residents feel</p> | |

passionately about this issue and feel powerless to influence the outcome of cases. Evening meetings would enfranchise working age residents as well as working age councillors.

Impact on the social, economic and environmental well-being of the area:

Council Performance in this area (if known: Red, Amber, Green):

Keep in Context (are other reviews taking place in this area?)

Office Use:

Pick score:

Considered By OSCC: