

Street Traders Meeting 10 February 2020

This meeting was attended by approximately 40 current street traders (including the Chair of the Birmingham Street Traders Association), Field Support Officer from the National Market Traders Federation (representing the Traders), Birmingham City Council's Head of Licensing, Street Trading and Markets) and two Street Trading Enforcement Officers.

All current street traders (including match day traders) had been offered the meeting and had been informed that it would be a briefing on the consultation.

At the commencement of the meeting the attendees were again informed that this was a briefing and that consultation comments needed to be made in writing (paper and pens were available) or through the online consultation. The National Markets Traders Federation representative explained she was at the meeting to represent the traders as were Mr X and Mrs X who represented Birmingham Street Traders Association. The meeting took the form of a briefing with a question and answer session at the end. It lasted one and a half hours. Sajeela Naseer agreed that the following two specific points would be taken away as part of the consultation feedback which Birmingham City Council would consider:

Preferential application process for current street traders

Attendees requested that current street traders should not have to apply for trading locations where they are already working and have worked for many years if not decades and have built up a clientele. They feel that they or the livelihoods of current traders are at risk from the policy and new traders. They feel current traders should not have to apply under the new policy or that they should be given first preference. If they did not comply with the rules that location could then be offered to new traders.

Automatic renewal

It was felt that existing street traders should not have to apply for renewal under the proposed policy, but should be allowed a new consent without the requirement for a renewal application unless they had broken the rules. The reasons given for this were: related to the cost of purchasing trading units without having any guarantee of tenure for a substantial amount of time, the difficulty in getting a mortgage without being able to prove ongoing employment.

Sajeela Naseer said at the meeting that she was not aware of any other Local Authority that had a renewal process that guaranteed renewal. The representative from National Markets Traders Federation asked at the meeting if Birmingham City Council would further consider this request if the NMTF could provide other policies that reflected the traders request regarding renewal. The Head of Licensing, Street Trading and Markets said she would happily look at any other policies but that the fact that another authority was doing something did not necessarily confirm it was legal.

To date nothing has been received (13 August 2020).

Other comments in writing at the end of the meeting

"I have been trading in Birmingham for 39 years and feel that I shouldn't need to apply for my pitch every 12 months."

"I want a meeting for football traders."

"I don't think anyone else should apply for my pitch. I want a meeting just for football traders."

"Continuity of position is a must we have served and represented this city for 32 years."

"Re write your policy, be fair."