

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND LEISURE

ORIGINATING SECTION: PUBLIC PROTECTION SERVICE

REPORT TO: LICENSING COMMITTEE 15 November 2021

TITLE : UPDATE ON THE WORK OF PUBLIC PROTECTION AND ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SERVICE

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the work of the Council's Public Protection and Environmental Health Service (PPS) where there is a connection with businesses and persons who require a licence from the Council. It also provides an update for members on national policy changes and proposals affecting licencing work.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That members note the report.

3. KEY ISSUES

3.1 Taxi Forum

The latest meeting of the Taxi Forum was on 9 September 2021. The meeting was chaired by Cllr P Akhtar and in attendance were representatives from the hackney and private hire trade, Police and council licencing staff. The main issues discussed were:

- Stone throwing incidents. The Police confirmed that a small number of incidents had been reported. Trade were encouraged to report in all incidents to Police so that a picture can be established of the scale of the problem and affected areas.
- A member of staff from the Council's Community Safety Team attended to advise trade about reporting in hate related crimes.
- MOT testing provision and the fees for licences and testing. These are to be reviewed.

3.2 Taxis

A joint operation with Police was carried out on 10 July 2021. All vehicles stopped were found to have the correct licences in place.

The system for accepting new applications for private hire and hackney carriage driver licences is now fully operational after being suspended during Covid 19 related restrictions. Additional driver training and knowledge test sessions have been made available to help accommodate any backlogs.

3.3 Events

Licensing staff were involved in dealing with licence applications to cover the 2021 Darwen Live event in early October. Monitoring visits were also carried out during the event.

Work is taking place to ensure licences and safety procedures are in place for bonfire events.

3.4 Darwen venue complaints

Over recent months there have been complaints about a small number of venues in Darwen. Complaints are mainly about noise disturbance, particularly as venues have been making more use of outdoor spaces to help to control the spread of covid 19. Licensing staff have worked with officers in Environmental Protection and planning to try to resolve the cause of the complaints.

3.5 Alcohol licences

There has been an increase in the number of licence transfer and variation applications over recent months. This has come about as a number of businesses change hands and a small number of new businesses have opened up.

3.6 National Issues

Local Government Association Councillor Handbook

In July 2021 the LGA issued an updated version of the *Councillor Handbook: Taxi and Private Hire Licensing*. It can be found in this link:

<https://www.local.gov.uk/publications/councillor-handbook-taxi-and-phv-licensing-2021>

The handbook has been updated to include new statutory standards published by the Department for Transport in July 2020.

4. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

None.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

None.

7. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

None

8. CONSULTATIONS

None

9. CONTACT OFFICER

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