

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND OPERATIONS

ORIGINATING SECTION: PUBLIC PROTECTION SERVICE

REPORT TO : LICENSING COMMITTEE 24 January 2023

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. RECOMMENDATION

That members note the report.

3. KEY ISSUES

3.1 Joint operational work

Licensing and Environmental Health Officers have worked with Lancashire Police and BwD Children's Services on Operation Latimer. On 19 December visits were carried out at three businesses – 2 in Blackburn and 1 in Darwen following concerns around possible child sexual exploitation (CSE).

During the visits business owners and staff were spoken to and educated about CSE and the premises were inspected to ensure they were complying with health and safety, licensing and hygiene requirements.

A 43-year-old man from Blackburn was arrested on suspicion of an Immigration offence.

3.2 Officer revocations

In quarter 3 of 2022/23, 2 drivers have had their hackney/private hire drivers' licences revoked by officers for issues which needed immediate action.

3.3 Appeal results

Since the last Licensing Committee 2 appeals against the decision of officers or general licensing sub-committees to revoke private hire vehicle driver licences have concluded. The Magistrates Court agreed with the decision made by the Licensing Sub-Committee and awarded costs against the driver of £1500. This is now subject to a further appeal to the Crown Court. The appeal against the officer decision was withdrawn with costs awarded of £2844.

3.4 Blackburn with Darwen Taxi Forum meeting

At November's meeting of the Taxi Forum the focus was on the consultation on the proposed amendments to the Council's Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy. A report on the outcome of the consultation is on the agenda for the Full Licensing Committee.

3.5 Complaints to Licensing Team

During the period 21 complaints have been made to the Licensing Team – 17 related to taxi/private hire licensing and 4 were about alcohol or late night hot food licensed premises.

The most common complaints were about verbal abuse/threatening behaviour by licensed drivers and refusal to take passengers with guide dogs or making additional charges for carrying passengers using wheelchairs.

Environmental Health have also received 2 complaints about noise and disturbance emanating from licensed premises.

3.6 Routine work carried out

The following table provides figures on some of the key work carried out from 1 October 2022 to 31 December 2022.

Vehicle licences processed – hackney carriage and private hire	497
Driver licences processed – new and renewal applications	137
Licensing Act licences processed These are new licences, variations to existing licences and changes to designated premises supervisor	33
Temporary Event Notices processed	41
Animal Welfare Licences processed	2
Street trader	2

3.3 National Issues

Licensing Committee Member Resources

The Local Government Association has published a range of resources and handbooks to help councillors with their role sitting on licensing committees.

The resources include:

1. **Licensing committee training videos** available in this link:
<https://www.local.gov.uk/topics/licences-regulations-and-trading-standards/licensing-committee-training-videos>

In order to effectively administer the licensing system, it is crucial that members are fully trained before sitting on a committee, and these videos are designed to support that process. These videos focus on some key areas of licensing: alcohol and entertainment, taxi and private hire vehicle, and gambling.

2. **E-learning: licensing module**

<https://www.local.gov.uk/our-support/leadership-workforce-and-communications/councillor-development/councillor-e-learning>

This series of e-learning modules includes one on Licensing.

4. RATIONALE

To inform members of the Licensing committee about the key work carried out by staff working within the Council's Public Protection and Environmental Health Service where there is a connection with businesses and people needing a licence from the Council. It also provides an update on some national licensing issues.

5. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

None.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

None.

8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

None

9. CONSULTATIONS

None

10 . CONTACT OFFICER

Denise Andrews – Business Compliance and Licensing Manager
Telephone 01254 585585