

LICENSING AND SAFETY COMMITTEE
3 July 2008

ANNUAL REPORT 2007-08
(Director of Environment, Culture and Communities)

1 PURPOSE OF DECISION

- 1.1 This report covers the activities carried out by the Licensing Section during the municipal year 2007-08. It is brought to the Committee to consider and comment upon the work completed.
- 1.2 In addition the report also includes the proposed work plan for the section for the period 2008-09.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 That the Committee receives the report and

- i) notes the work carried out in 2007-08 and
- ii) agrees the work programme for 2008-09.

3 ADVICE RECEIVED FROM STATUTORY AND OTHER OFFICERS

Borough Solicitor

- 3.1 The Borough Solicitor is satisfied that no significant legal implications arise from this report.

Borough Treasurer

- 3.2 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

Impact Assessment

- 3.3 There are no direct consequences of this report for any group and no direct community safety implications.

Strategic Risk Management Issues

- 3.4 There no issues to consider.

Other Officers

- 3.5 None.

4 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 4.1 Attached as Annex A is a list of those licences, registrations, permits and consents that have been issued or processed by the Licensing Section within the last year. This is an indication of the number of transactions that the Section has with local businesses to enable those businesses to operate and for the users to feel confident and safe in their use.
- 4.2 Attached to the report as Annex B is a copy of the work plan for the Licensing Section in 2007-08. This plan was drawn up to reflect the activities to be carried out by officers within the section and to show how those activities relate to local and national priorities. The final column headed Comments details progress against the service action and target or measures set. Members are asked to note the work completed by officers over the past year.
- 4.3 Attached to the report as Annex C is a copy of the draft 2008-09 work plan for the Licensing Section. This work plan is slightly different in format to the 2007-08 plan and reflects the recently agreed Council priorities, medium term objectives and where applicable key actions. Additionally the final column identifies if there are any national or local priorities that impact upon those tasks. Members are asked to consider the proposed work plan and agree its content.
- 4.4 2007/8 was a busy year with respect to variations of premise licences. This in the main was directly attributable to the new smoking legislation that came into effect 1st July 2007. Many premises had conditions on their licences with respect to the use of outside areas after set times in the evening. These conditions had generally been applied to reduce noise and limit impact upon residential buildings in close proximity to the licenced premise. There was a need to come up with imaginative solutions to ensure that local businesses did not lose vital trade and that residents in the vicinity of the premises did not suffer degradation in their quality of life. The early indications are that working with businesses and residents we have reached a compromise that is delivering workable solutions and there have been very few complaints and no calls for the review of licences due to extended use of outside area for the purpose of smoking.
- 4.5 The year also saw the first review of premise licences. Two were taken for repeated sales of alcohol to children and the third for continual breaches of the crime and disorder objective. All the matters were dealt with by suspension of the licence by the Panel, and one matter has been appealed by the licence holder to the magistrate's court and at present is due for hearing in October 2008.
- 4.6 The year also saw the review of the licensing policy agreed by the Council back in January 2005 which has served the council and the community well in setting the framework for decisions under this legislation. Following an extensive consultation process a slightly revised policy was approved by the Council in January 2008 and will now guide decisions on licensed premise applications until January 2011 including those intended to be included within the redevelopment of the town centre.
- 4.7 The taxi trade over the last year has had to work with, and against increasing costs and slow economic growth. However numbers remain relatively constant with only two fewer hackney carriage, and seven private hire vehicles. On the issue of accessibility the numbers of fully wheelchair accessible vehicles has increased to 63% of the fleet with a further 20% giving improved access with a swivel seat. Only five vehicles now have no additional accessible provision and all of these will be replaced within the next 18 months.

- 4.9 The work programme for 2007/8 was in the main completed even though the team were short of a team member for the last quarter and the demand for new or varied premises licences was much higher than could have been anticipated. Additionally we had the introduction of the Gambling Premise licences which is over and above the programmed work.
- 4.10 The new work programme for 2008/9 sets out the programmed work for the year and looks to build upon the work we have already done to seek further gains in efficiency and effectiveness. It recognises the growing role of partnership by working across the council and with other agencies and looks to build upon the already well established arrangements.

Background Papers

Service Work Plan 2007-08

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