

STOCKTON-ON-TEES BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS

PROFORMA

Cabinet Meeting16th March 2017

1. Title of Item/Report

Licensing Service

2. Record of the Decision

Consideration was given to a report on the progress made by the Licensing Service over the last twelve months, and the planned activity going forward.

Over the past 12 months the Licensing Service had undertaken a period of review and progression. Clear local policies had been developed in line with legislation and consultation with users, including:

- The Private Hire and Hackney Carriage Policy January 2016
- The Licensing Act 2003 Statement of Licensing Policy January 2016
- Gambling Act 2005 Statement of Licensing Principles January 2016

There was strong evidence that this policy foundation was leading to positive outcomes. The Private Hire and Hackney Carriage Licensing Policy had removed 41 accident damaged vehicles from the fleet, trained over 500 drivers in safeguarding, encouraged an additional 49 new vehicles to be registered that comply to Euro 5 emissions, and following intelligence and complaints 19 drivers had been revoked or refused licenses. Training in safeguarding for Stockton licensees, door staff and those involved in the night time economy had been delivered to 80 attendees.

Licensing administration and business processes had been reviewed to ensure the effectiveness and efficiency of managing the issue of all licenses, permits and registrations. Improvements had been made to the licensing website as a proactive pre-application advice channel, and on-line application / payment portal. Improvements in the use of technology had been made including looking at the digitalisation of the Licensing Service and mobile working for officers

Intelligence routes had been identified and had been improved between

the Licensing Service and the Police, and the Licensing Service and the Stockton CCTV Centre, with an increase in contact and joint working between all. In addition work assessing how this intelligence was being used and ensuring it was used in a risk assessed prioritised way was ongoing. Compliance activity based on this intelligence was supporting the consideration of developing a purple flag scheme for Stockton's licensed premises within the Stockton Town Centre area. An event for Stockton's licensees, door staff and those involved with the night time economy would be planned, where information would be presented to attendees on the corporate vision of the Stockton Town Centre area, with a view to getting all concerned on board to improve services and promote the area.

Officers, Committee Members, Members and the Cabinet Member for Access, Communities and Community Safety completed a comprehensive four day training package provided by the Institute of Licensing. The four sessions covered Licensing Committees, Taxi Licensing, Licensing Act 2003 and Gambling Street Trading & Street Collections.

As an outcome of the training sessions a number of areas requiring further work were identified:

- The implementation of two separate Committees to deal with different parts of the Licensing regime. A table showing the functions of the two Committees is attached as Appendix 1.
- The need to consider the Licensing Services current consultation practices against actual consultation requirements in relation to the Licensing Act 2003 and applications received.
- To look at how Officers present Committee reports to members and for Officers to include any recommendations in those reports.
- To research the potential benefits of late night levy's which have been introduced by other Local Authorities.
- To research the work which has been carried out between other Local Authorities and alcohol retailers to work together in tackling street drinking and associated crime caused by this.
- To revisit the implementation of a Licensing Service penalty points system and licence suspension, as tools to ensure compliance of Private Hire Operators, Licensed Drivers and Licensed Vehicles and therefore improve conduct and service.
- Working with Private Hire Operators to encourage appropriate vetting procedures for unlicensed staff who have access to potentially sensitive information (i.e. call takers).
- Review of the current codes of conduct for licensed drivers.
- A Scrutiny review of gambling to understand the impact of Gambling in the community.

- The implementation of returns information from Street Collections, including the percentage of the collection which will go to charity, to be made available to the public via the website.
- To produce a set of standard procedures for the Committee process to ensure continued professionalization of the delivery of Committees

It was proposed the aforementioned work would be progressed over the next Municipal Year, further updates would be provided to Cabinet as appropriate and necessary.

RESOLVED that:-

1. The progress made by the Licensing Service over the past 12 months be noted.
2. The work identified which will enhance the Licensing Service further be noted.
3. Reasons for the Decision
To keep Cabinet Members informed of work and planned activity within the Licensing Service.
4. Alternative Options Considered and Rejected
None.
5. Declared (Cabinet Member) Conflicts of Interest
None.
6. Details of any Dispensations
N/A
7. Date and Time by which Call In must be executed
Midnight, 24 March 2017

Proper Officer
20 March 2017