

## **Licensing Committee**

# **Licensing Annual Report**

## **Report of Executive Member for Housing & Licensing**

Officer contact: John Garforth – Trading Standards & Licensing Manager

4<sup>th</sup> June 2024

### **Executive Summary**

The purpose of this report is to inform Members of the activities undertaken to discharge the Council's Licensing function during the period 1 April 2023 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024.

### **Recommendations**

That Members:

- 1) Note the report; and
  - 2) Consider the implications of the report in future licensing decisions
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**Licensing Annual Report**

**1 Purpose of the report**

1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform Members of the activities undertaken to discharge the Council's Licensing function during the period 1 April 2023 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024.

**2 Team Objectives**

2.1 There are two strategic objectives that relate to Licensing

2.2 To work with businesses to ensure they are licensed and compliant. This covers:

- Proactively licensing premises and individuals engaged in alcohol supply, entertainment and late-night refreshment.
- Participation in Pubwatch schemes, partnership projects and joint, intelligence led inspections to ensure licence conditions are not being breached.
- Promotion of the four licensing objectives and three gambling objectives.

2.3 The second relates to ensuring safe passenger journeys, in safe licensed vehicles with safe licensed drivers. This covers:

- Undertaking inspections of licensed vehicles.
- Vetting new applicants for licences to ensure they are fit and proper
- Ensuring that passengers are safe in vehicles by responding to complaints and investigating offences and breaches of conditions

### 3 Licensing Act 2003

3.1 The Licensing Act 2003 is governed by four licensing objectives: -

- Prevention of crime and disorder
- Prevention of public nuisance
- Public Safety
- Protection of children from harm

3.2 Numbers of licensed premises under the Act are in the table below with a comparison to previous years.

TYPE	Year ending 31.03.24	Year ending 31.03.23	Year ending 31.3.22	Year ending 31.3.21	Year ending 31.3.20
Premises Licences for alcohol	542	508	534	528	587
Premises Licences non-alcohol	121	118	126	123	142
Club Premises Certificates	49	49	50	53	61
<b>Premises Total</b>		<b>675</b>	<b>710</b>	<b>704</b>	<b>790</b>
Personal Licences	3331	3214	3142	3060	2987
<b>Licensing Act Total</b>	<b>4043</b>	<b>3889</b>	<b>3852</b>	<b>3764</b>	<b>3777</b>

3.3 There have been five applications considered by the Licensing Premises Panel in the last twelve months.

Grandpa Greene's, Uppermill Park	New Premises Licence with Alcohol	Application approved
Ivy Business Centre	Temporary Event Notice	Application refused

Wumz Cuisine	New Premises Licence with Alcohol	Application approved
The Old Library Café & Bar	Variation to Premises Licence	Application partially approved
Woodlands Café	New Premises Licence with Alcohol	Application approved with amendments

#### 4.0 **Gambling Act 2005**

4.1 Applications under this legislation continue to be few and far between although Officers continue to work closely with the Gambling Commission to ensure compliance with licence conditions.

4.2 Current permissions in force under this Act are:

Bingo	1
Adult Gaming Centre	5
Betting Shops	21
Club Gaming Permit	1
Club Machine Permit	12
Alcohol licensed premises machine permits	19
Gaming machine notifications in pubs	158
Small Society Lotteries	74

## 6 **LICENSED DRIVERS AND VEHICLES**

### **Licences and Hearings**

6.1 Officers continue to work with the private hire and hackney trade to ensure effective communication and consultation takes place. Elected members also attend these forums.

6.2 Below are details of the applicants and drivers brought before the Drivers Licensing Panel over the last twelve months.

6.3 The Licensing Drivers Panel usually sits monthly to hear applications for new taxi licences, renewal applications or reviews of existing licences where there are offences or conduct issues recorded.

6.4 Since May 2023 a total of **54** determinations by the Panel which are broken down as follows:

Month	Granted	Suspended	Refused	Revoked
Jun 2023	2	1		
Jul 2023	2		2	
Sep 2023	3			1
Nov 2023	2		1	
Dec 2023	2		3	1
Jan 2024	3	1	4	1
Feb 2024	6	1	7	
Mar 2024	6		5	
<b>Total</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>3</b>

- 6.5 In addition there have been six emergency delegated decisions taken where driver licences have been revoked with immediate effect by the Trading Standards & Licensing Manager.

Appeals lodged from those decisions are as follows:

Appeals withdrawn	0
Appeals dismissed by the court	0
Appeals allowed	0
Appeals still pending	0

- 6.5 Details of the number of licences in force are detailed below: -

LICENCE TYPE	May 2024	May 2023	May 2022	May 2021	May 2020	May 2019
Private Hire Vehicle Licence	1483	1030	1002	953	1046	1055
Private Hire Operators Licence	75	38	31	31	29	35
Dual drivers' licence	2466	1305	1299	1311	1366	1362
Hackney Carriage Vehicles	85	85	85	85	85	85
<b>Total</b>	<b>4109</b>	<b>2458</b>	<b>2417</b>	<b>2380</b>	<b>2526</b>	<b>2537</b>

## 7 Vehicle testing data

7.1 Data showing details of pass/fail rates of licensed vehicle mechanical compliance tests is extracted below.

Hackney Carriage		Private Hire	
Pass	Fail	Pass	Fail
<b>2020 (Apr '20 – Mar '21)</b>			
57 (46%)	66 (54%)	791 (51%)	754 (49%)
<b>2021 (Apr '21 – Mar '22)</b>			
108 (54%)	93 (46%)	1092 (52%)	1021 (48%)
<b>2023 (Apr '22 to Mar '23)</b>			
115 (65%)	62 (35%)	911 (56%)	706 (44%)
<b>2023 (Apr '23 to Mar '24)</b>			
117 (66%)	61 (35%)	1716 (64%)	958 (36%)

7.2 The main reasons for failure can be seen in the table below:

Failure Type	Number of Failures
Body/boot interior	136
Condition of vehicle	127
Direction of indicators	134
Headlamp aim	237
Obligatory lamps	632
Plates securely affixed	118
Service brake condition/efficiency	247
Suspension	240
Tyre condition	227

## 8 Other licences

8.1 As well as the main functions outlined previously in this report the Licensing Team also administers and enforces a wide range of other licences, registrations and permits current numbers of which are outlined below.

Licence type	Number in Force
Marriage Premises	8
Sex shops	1
Second hand dealers	38
Scrap metal sites	31
Scrap metal collectors	4
Street trading consents/licences	39
Pavement licences	7
Animal Activity Licences	22

## 9 Future challenges and changes

9.1 There continue to be regular changes to legislation and guidance affecting licensing together with consultations; the summaries of which are detailed below:

- Making the temporary pavement licence legislation permanent. This came into effect on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024. This will require work to calculate and set the new fees in line with this as well as creating the new application process. These are now expected to be granted for 2 years unless a there is a compelling reason not to.
- Awaiting consultation on the Governments levelling up agenda to review to the number of taxi licensing authorities.
- The Taxi & Private Hire Vehicle Best Practice Guidance has now been issued. Regular review of our practices against this and Statutory Guidance takes place to ensure we are compliant or following best practice.

## 10 Current Projects

10.1 Projects underway or due to start in the coming months include:

- Reviewing hackney carriage ranks, licence release policy and unmet demand.
- Review of Licensing IT capabilities to improve the service and experience of applicants and encouraging self-serve functions where possible.
- Implementing new vehicle testing to include the issue of MOT Certificates.
- Review of testing facilities to increase capacity for the anticipated rise in incoming vehicle applications over the coming 12 months.

- Review of Licensing Fees to ensure we are working on a cost-recovery basis and reducing fees to ensure best value for applicants.

11 **Legal Services Comments**

11.1 None- Information report

12 **Co-operative Agenda**

12.1 The licensing process is in place not only to protect the public but also to support and where necessary regulate businesses within the Borough.

13 **Environmental and Health & Safety Implications**

13.1 None

14 **Equality, community cohesion and crime implications**

14.1 None

15 **Equality Impact Assessment Completed?**

15.1 No

16 **Key Decision**

16.1 No

17 **Key Decision Reference**

17.1 N/A

18 **Background Papers - None**

19 **Appendices - None**