



NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

10 June 2013

BRIEFING NOTE:

LICENSING RESTRUCTURE

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Licensing Team were transferred into the Directorate of Customers & Communities (formerly Environment and Culture) as part of the council's wider restructure in 2008. The team initially sat within the Regulatory Services section of Public Protection, but was transferred to Community Safety, located in the CSP Unit based in Fish Street in 2009. This enabled the service to work alongside and establish closer working links with the Police Licensing Team and link in with the wider community safety agenda, whilst still retaining its independent focus.
- 1.2 In order to fully integrate and formalise the administrative activity across the Community Safety Team and establish clear administrative and enforcement functions for licensing a decision was made to restructure the Licensing team.
- 1.3 The need for the restructure arose from a strategic review of Licensing that was undertaken, which identified that greater capacity in senior officer support for licensing matters and enforcement activity would be achieved through this process.
- 1.4 This restructure also enabled the realignment of budget to increase capacity within the licensing/enforcement function.
- 1.5 The new structure reflected the need to respond to the political appetite to provide a greater enforcement role for licensing, coupled with a strong emphasis on partnership working.
- 1.6 The proposal focussed on clearly defining the Enforcement and Administration roles of the Licensing function, enabling a clear definition of roles and improved performance. This saw the realignment of the supervisory responsibilities for the Licensing Administration Team under the Community Safety Administration and Project Officer, and the creation of 3 Senior Licensing Officer posts (appendix 1).

2 UPDATE/INFORMATION

- 2.1 The newly restructured Licensing Team came into place on 1 May 2012 (appendix 2).
- 2.2 One of the first tasks of the newly established team was to respond to the recommendations from the strategic review of the service. From this review 8 recommendations were identified:

R1 Define and communicate a clear service vision, outlining its purpose through strategic objectives

Performance indicators for Licensing team have been developed and agreed; regular team meetings take place, with set agenda ensuring all key areas of business are covered. All members of the Licencing committee receive a weekly activity brief which includes delegated decisions made by officer.

R2 Define a clear governance framework inclusive of quality management
Delegated Powers have been reviewed and updated, and are all held on a central Licensing database. Index sheet has been drawn up, listing all powers and identifying review dates.

R3 Route all calls through the Contact Centre

This is currently being reviewed, as it bears a financial cost to the service, which could result in a reduction of administration support for the team.

R4 Design the administrative process for taxi and hackney carriage licensing to achieve efficiencies through channel shift

Customer Journey process mapping undertaken to help inform delivery of service. Contact made with other LA Licensing teams to source examples of 'best practice'. Changes already put in place for appointments system and location of One Stop Shop desk to enable more effective and efficient delivery of service. Further web development has been undertaken and online applications being progressed.

R5 Develop Lalpac software to realise process efficiencies and enable effective case work management

Visits to Coventry and Oxford Licensing teams' undertaken and best practice shared both ways. New information recording template has been established and went 'live' in April. Annual report, detailing a wide range of service delivery will be available in June 2013; this will become an annual occurrence.

R6 Undertake workforce development and succession planning to enable greater flexibility in the Licensing role

Review completed and new structure in place from 01.05.2012. There is now increased enforcement capacity and a clear split between the admin & Senior Licensing Officer/Enforcement. Appropriate training and development has been put in place for officers where relevant.

R7 Develop a risk based approach to enforcement with a greater emphasis on education and prevention

Rolling programme of Licensing Enforcement activity is now in place, ensuring continued close working with partner agencies. Review of taxi licensing conditions has been completed and adopted. New Safety

Awareness course for first time Private Hire flagging offenders has been successfully piloted and has now been adopted. Taxi Induction course for new drivers continues to be held on a regular basis. Involvement in Best Bar None assessments continues.

R8 Maximise income from annual invoicing and reduce debt recovery costs

Following legislative changes for liquor licences, new process have been agreed and adopted, resulting in historic arrears now being collected. Close liaison with the Finance Exchequers team and improved invoicing has resulted in a significant reduction in arrears. Chip and Pin system is now in place, and has enable a speedier delivery of service to our customers. All staff are trained on the Agresso system and central recording system for Licensing.

3 Performance Activity 2012/13

<u>Licences Granted</u>		<u>Enforcement Activity</u>		<u>Courses held</u>	
Liquor Licences Various	638	Taxi Misc (Multi-Agency checks, vehicles checks, flagging, warning letters)	385	Taxi Driver Induction Course	8
Temporary Event Notices	401	Driver Cautions	47	Hackney Driver Tests	8
Taxi Licences Granted	122	Driver Suspensions	5	Safety Awareness Courses	2
Street Trading Licences	20	Licensed Premises Visits	77		
Car Boot	63	Suspensions of Liquor Licences	17		
Sex Establishments	4	Best Bar None Assessments	12		
House to House Collections	37	Street Trading/ Car Boot/ Sex Establishments Visits	70		
Street Collections	54				
Total	1339	Total	613	Total	18

During 2012/13 over 2200 appointments were undertaken with taxi drivers, which average out to over 10 appointments per day, 4 days per week.

4 CONCLUSIONS

The review and restructure of the Licensing function has resulted in a clear structure being established, ensuring clarity between the administration and enforcement elements of the service. A more effective and efficient 'front office' service is now provided for our customers, and a clear and structured approach is taken to enforcement activity, placing an emphasis on education and prevention.

5 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 Content of the briefing paper noted and accepted.
- 5.2 Annual Licensing report is presented to Overview & Scrutiny on an annual basis, commencing in June 2014.

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on behalf of Councillor Jamie Lane, Chair, Overview & Scrutiny

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