

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF ENVIROMENT AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

TO:	LICENSING APPLICATIONS SUB-COMMITTEE 3		
DATE:	8 FEBRUARY 2018	AGENDA ITEM:	4
TITLE:	UPDATE ON WORK CARRIED OUT BY LICENSING IN 2017		
LEAD COUNCILLOR:	CLLR HACKER	PORTFOLIO:	CULTURE, SPORT AND CONSUMER SERVICES
SERVICE:	PLANNING DEVELOPMENT & REGULATORY SERVICES	WARDS:	BOROUGHWIDE
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1. PURPOSE AND SUMMARY OF REPORT

- 1.1 To inform the Licensing Applications Sub Committee 3 of the work carried out by licensing officers during 2017.

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 That the report be noted.

3. POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.1 Officers periodically provide Committee with a report informing them of the various functions and actions carried out by the Licensing team. Officers have prepared updates on cases and figures in respect of work carried within the Borough of Reading.

4. PROSECUTIONS:

- 4.1 Officers compiled thirty four taxi and private hire prosecutions in 2017 (eighteen in 2016). The number of UBER drivers working in the Reading area increased dramatically in October 2016, legal advice was sought and a view was taken that the UBER drivers were plying for hire in the Borough of Reading. The result of taking action against illegal plying for hire by UBER drivers has been two convictions under test purchase conditions and seven plying for hire cases which are ongoing. Prosecution cases can take anywhere between 8 months and a year

to be determined, so the majority of 2017 cases are yet to be heard in the courts.

4.2 LICENSING ACT 2003

4.2.1 INSPECTIONS AND REVIEWS

During 2017 Officers inspected 246 licensed premises, including pubs, nightclubs, off-licences and late night refreshment houses (takeaways). Breaches in conditions were found in all categories of licence, most notably in respect of off-licences for failing to notify of changes of ownership and change of Designated Premise Supervisor (DPS).

Officers working with Thames Valley Police and the Immigration Service carried out forty three inspections of premises, nineteen of which were found to have illegal workers on the premises (twenty six persons in total). Twelve premises were reviewed, resulting in seven revocations, five having further conditions on their licence.

4.2.2 APPLICATIONS

Officers considered the following applications;

- Thirty grants of premise licence applications
- Sixteen variations of premise licence applications
- Fifty one premise licence transfers
- 209 variations to the designated premises supervisor licence applications
- Thirty eight minor variations
- 503 Temporary Events Notices (99 late TENS)
- 141 personal licences

The above applications resulted in twenty two reports to the licensing committee of which twelve were reviews. Two of the review decisions were appealed to the Magistrates Courts.

4.3 HACKNEY CARRIAGE & PRIVATE HIRE

4.3.1 PRIVATE HIRE OPERATORS

Private hire operator's inspections are carried out to ensure operators are keeping records correctly and complying with the conditions attached to their operator's licence. Thirty Seven operator inspections were carried out in 2017 recording mostly minor issues however; one operator was referred to committee, resulting in the private hire operator's licence not being renewed.

4.3.2 PRIVATE HIRE AND HACKNEY CARRIAGE VEHICLE INSPECTIONS

During 2017, officers working with Thames Valley Police carried out eleven small and two large pre-planned operations, the objective was to identify vehicles and drivers that did not comply with the regulations. In total 402 vehicles and drivers were inspected. Officers also carried out 237 random on street inspections. These vehicle inspections produced 405 report forms requiring

drivers and owners of vehicle to attend to the issues raised, such as over ranking, faulty lights etc.

4.3.3 PRIVATE HIRE AND HACKNEY CARRIAGE DRIVER COMMITTEE REPORTS

During the year the licensing committee considered twenty five reports, these reports covered a wide range of issues from driver behaviour to policy documents.

4.4 COMPLAINTS /REQUEST FOR INFORMATION:

4.4.1 During 2017 officers processed 224 complaints/requests. These ranged from serious allegations of inappropriate behaviour to lost property.

4.5 SAFETY ADVISORY GROUP (SAG)

4.5.1 During the year, monthly Safety Advisory Group (SAG) meetings are held to review applications for the wide variety of events held in Reading. The SAG is made up of officers from various sections of the council and officers from regulatory bodies such as the fire service and Police. SAG advice on how to hold a safe event and provides best practices to applicants. Reading Festival is the largest event with a 95,000 capacity.

4.6 OTHER PERMITS AND LICENCES

Officers have also dealt with other applications/issues such as gambling, lotteries, street collections (104 permits), sexual entertainment venues, scrap metal licences, caravan sites and pavement café licence.

5.0 CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

5.1 Ensuring that premises and licenses drivers are crime free, safe and contributes towards the Council's strategic public safety aims.

6.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 None arising directly from this report.

7.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 None arising directly from this report.