

<b>REPORT TO:</b>	Licensing Committee
<b>DATE:</b>	19 <sup>th</sup> June 2023
<b>LEAD OFFICER:</b>	Head of Planning, Public Protection and Countryside Services
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<b>SUBJECT:</b>	Update on the Work of the Licensing Section in 2022/23

## **1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 To update Members of the work of Licensing Officers.

## **2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

2.1 This report provides information on the work in respect of the functions of the Licensing Section and includes licences issued, complaints and service requests received and other activities completed during 2022/23.

## **3. POWER TO MAKE THE DECISION**

3.1 No decision required.

## **4. BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

4.1 The report is broken down into two main sections, namely operational and management matters.

## **5. ISSUES AND FINDINGS - OPERATIONAL MATTERS**

### **5.1 Alcohol and Entertainment**

5.1.1 Currently there are 501 licensed premises – 113 on sales; 132 off sales; 212 both on/off sales – and 172 Late Night Refreshment establishments, 31 of which are solely serving late night refreshment. Personal licence holders amount to 1393.

5.1.2 There were 16 complaints from the public in relation to licensed premises and the vast majority of those were linked to issues in relation to noise nuisance but also issues in respect of antisocial behaviour and underage sales. These have been dealt with in collaboration with our services and appropriate action or advice given where necessary or are ongoing.

5.1.3 During the year there have been applications for: -

- 8 new premises

- 40 transfers of licence
- 9 variations of conditions or licence details
- 77 variations of Designated Premises Supervisor.
- 210 temporary event notices.
- 68 new personal licences and 22 changes to personal licence details

5.1.4 Licensing Officers continue to work alongside partners – North Wales Police, Immigration Enforcement Officers and other Denbighshire teams, such as Health & Safety, Food Safety and Trading Standards – to conduct joint visits where necessary, including for this reporting year, joint visits to off licences in respect of underage sales of alcohol.

5.1.5 Licensing Officers continue to meet regularly – usually once each week – with North Wales Police colleagues to identify and deal with emerging issues following the principles laid out in the Statement of Licensing Policy e.g. Level 1 engagement / Level 2 Action Plans.

## 5.2 Hackney and Private Hire Licensing.

5.2.1 Currently there are

- 219 Hackney Carriage Vehicles of which 10 are wheelchair accessible
- 49 Private Hire Vehicles of which 10 are wheelchair accessible
- 14 Private Hire Operators
- 17 Private Hire Drivers
- 268 Dual Drivers

5.2.2 There have been 20 taxi related complaints during the year on matters including unlicensed vehicle / non-compliant vehicle, illegal parking, careless driving, abusive / inappropriate behaviour and smoking in a vehicle. Appropriate action was taken or is ongoing at officer level.

5.2.3 During the year there have been 34 new applicants for a licence to drive private hire / hackney carriage vehicles. Three applications were withdrawn at the applicants request and seven licensed drivers surrendered their licence. Additionally, during the year one driver had their licence revoked and another had their licence suspended.

5.2.4 Outside the usual compliance testing of vehicles ad hoc checks were conducted on 106 vehicles at a variety of locations – schools, taxi ranks and roadside. One third (33%) had defects, although the overwhelming number related to minor non-safety elements of conditions.

5.2.5 During the year Officers had reason to issue vehicle suspension notices for vehicles on 23 occasions. Whilst some relate to compliance failures at programmed inspections or roadside checks there is a number which relate to road traffic collisions and awaiting repairs.

## 5.3 Gambling, Gaming and Lotteries

5.3.1 In the current reporting year there are:

- 5 Adult Gaming Centres
- 3 Family Entertainment Centres
- 3 Bingo Premises Licence
- 12 Betting shops
- 1 Club Gaming Permit
- 7 Club Machine Permit
- 7 Unlicensed Family Entertainment Centre Gaming Permits
- 11 Licensed Premises Permit
- 82 Registered Lotteries

5.3.2 There was one complaint made against the practices of a licensed premises which was not upheld.

#### 5.4 Street Trading

5.4.1 There have been no applications for a street trading permit in this reporting year.

5.4.2 Three complaints were lodged concerning street trading practices, all of which have been resolved.

#### 5.5 Charity Collections

5.5.1 There have been:

- 12 permits for house to house collections
- 7 permits for street collections

5.5.2 No complaints were received in respect of house to house collections and one complaint concerning street collections. This was resolved.

#### 5.6 Scrap Metal

5.6.1 There have been seven applications this current year for scrap metal licence; 3 sites and 4 collectors, one of which is a new collector. It should be noted these licences run for 3 years.

5.6.2 There have been two complaints in respect of scrap metal issues, all concerning potential unlicensed activity and ongoing.

#### 5.7 Service Requests / Freedom of Information

5.7.1 During the year there were:

- 415 service requests recorded across the range of functions carried out by the Licensing Team where information or advice etc. have been requested and given, and
- 20 Freedom of Information requests, relating to a range of matters, were received and had an appropriate response. There has been one subject access request, again with an appropriate response.

## 5.8 Overall workload results

### 5.8.1 During the year there were:

- 222 inspections, primarily around vehicles, licensed premises for alcohol and gambling, and
- Over 5,000 interactions with Licensing Officers including those linked to inspections and complaints as well as other interactions with businesses and public, e.g. telephone calls, letters, notices and so on.

## 5.9 Communications

5.9.1 Frequent, direct communications (primarily via email) has frequently with licensees Licensing Officers continue to publish periodic newsletters to the taxi industry locally.

## 6. **MANAGEMENT MATTERS**

### 6.1 Policies

6.1.1 A number of policy reviews have been started during the year, most notably those relating to taxis, including the tariff, and the Statement of Gambling Policy. Officers have drafted a revised forward work plan and will continue to update Members on that at each committee hearing.

### 6.2 Fees

6.2.1 At the time of writing the fees and charges for administering the taxi licensing regime have not changed although a review will take place in 2023.

### 6.3 Future Additional Workload considerations

6.3.1 As has been the case for a number of years, Welsh Government are continuing to review the way taxi licensing regime is regulated and administered. The publishing of the White Paper in April outlines some WG thinking and officers will continue to work with their peers nationally and the WG to ensure robust and workable requirements are considered. Officers will update Members as is necessary.

6.3.2 Officers are exploring further opportunities to enable a more efficient process for applicants for the variety of licences issued. The Service has recently moved the administration and application of taxi related processes, namely Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificates, DVLA driving licence checks and Knowledge Tests, to a bespoke online process. Officers will be working on implementing the online applications and public registers facility during the year.

6.3.3 Officers are arranging professional development training for Licensing Committee Members. Additionally, to support continuing Member development, Officers can accommodate any requests from any Committee Member interested in shadowing Officers on their duties.

## **7. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 7.1 That the committee:
  - a. note the activity report for this year, and
  - b. note and comment on the contents of this report.