

Medway Council
Meeting of Licensing and Safety Committee
Tuesday, 14 December 2021
6.00pm to 6.22pm

Record of the meeting

Subject to approval as an accurate record at the next meeting of this committee

Present: Councillors: Browne, Carr, Mrs Diane Chambers (Chairman), Fearn (Vice-Chairman), Sylvia Griffin, Hackwell, Kemp, McDonald, Prenter and Mrs Elizabeth Turpin

In Attendance: Mandy Francis, Licensing Manager
Vicky Nutley, Assistant Head of Legal Services
Stephen Platt, Democratic Services Officer

540 Apologies for absence

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Mahil.

541 Record of meeting

The record of the meeting held on 13 July 2021 was agreed and signed by the Chairman.

542 Urgent matters by reason of special circumstances

There were none.

543 Declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests and other interests

Disclosable pecuniary interests

There were none.

Other significant interests (OSIs)

There were none.

Other interests

There were none.

544 Annual report on Compliance and Enforcement

Discussion:

The Committee considered a report which incorporated compliance and enforcement annual reports from Licensing and the Environmental Services as Appendices A and B respectively.

The Licensing Manager advised the Committee that the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and resulting lockdowns had been that compliance and enforcement inspections and visits carried out by the Licensing team were on a reactive, intelligence led and risk-rated basis. However, proactive inspections and visits had now resumed in partnership with relevant agencies, the most recent being with the Immigration Service.

Asked why it appeared that only two taxi inspections had taken place in 2019/20, the Licensing Manager explained that these were in response to complaints that had been received. Garage inspections were carried out on all licensed vehicles on an annual basis for plating with an interim inspection carried out after 6 months. The low number of Temporary Event Notice inspections was due to the low number of complaints received.

With reference to scrap metal dealers, the Licensing Manager was asked if the Council worked with the Environment Agency on enforcement action. She advised that the Environment Agency maintained a register of licenced scrap metal dealers and waste suppliers and the Environmental Enforcement team would liaise with the agency regarding legal action if anyone was found not to have the required licence. The Licensing Manager was also asked if there had been any analysis of the reasons why a complaint could not be fully investigated due to a lack of evidence. It was suggested that there might be a need for greater guidance on what evidence was required when submitting a complaint. The Licensing Manager agreed to include analytical data in relation to all complaints received and to discuss with Environmental Services how the analysis for Scrap Metal and Street Trading could be built into their future reports.

Decision:

The Committee noted the reports at Appendices A and B of the agenda report and requested that future reports include a breakdown of why complaints were not fully investigated due to a lack of evidence.

545 Gravesham and Medway Shared Licensing Service Update

Discussion:

The Committee received an update report on the shared licensing service between Gravesham and Medway. This included an overview of the use of resources; performance risks and emerging issues; new ways for working and value for money; and workforce development.

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Asked about the hybrid working arrangements within the service, the Licensing Manager explained that two members of staff were in the office every day with the rest working remotely and that this arrangement had proved very successful. Consideration was currently being given to how best to fill a vacancy within the service.

The Licensing Manager commended her team for their hard work and diligence during what had been a very difficult and challenging period. Members noted the challenges that the team had faced due to the Covid pandemic and also a staff vacancy and praised staff for their efforts and achievements during this time. The Chairman asked the Licensing Manager to pass on to staff the thanks of the Committee.

Decision:

The Committee noted the report at Appendix A to the agenda report.

546 Review of membership of the Sub-Committees

Discussion:

The Committee considered a report requesting that it review the membership of its sub-committees following the change in the allocation of seats on the Committee agreed by Full Council on 7 October 2021.

Decision:

That the size, allocation of seats and memberships of the Licensing Sub-Committee, Licensing Hearing Panels and Licensing 1982 Act Hearing Panels remain as set out in Appendix 1 to the agenda report.

Chairman

Date:

Stephen Platt, Democratic Services Officer

Telephone: 01634 332011

Email: democratic.services@medway.gov.uk

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