

At a meeting of the Licensing Committee held in Council Chamber, Allerdale House, Workington on Monday 31 January 2022 at 2.30 pm

Members

Councillor Ron Munby MBE (Chair)
Councillor Allan Daniels
Councillor Hilary Harrington
Councillor Elaine Lynch
Councillor Colin Sharpe

Councillor Peter Kendall (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Peter Gaston
Councillor Adrian Kirkbride
Councillor William Pegram
Councillor Alan Smith

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Herbert Briggs, Councillor Nicky Cockburn, Councillor Malcolm Grainger, Councillor Anthony Markley and Councillor Alan Tyson

Staff Present

G Collinson, C Fleming and G Roach

351. Minutes

The minutes of the following meetings were signed as a correct record:

Licensing Committee on 16 November 2021;

Licensing Panel on 12 March, 23 September and 12 October 2021;

Licensing Regulatory Panel on 12 November and 10 December 2021.

352. Declaration of Interests

None declared.

353. Questions

None received.

354. Licensing Compliance

The Senior Specialist – Licensing and Compliance Officer submitted a report which sought to update the Committee on the work undertaken by the temporary Licensing Compliance Officer since August 2021.

Face to face visits were being made to as many licensed premises across the Borough as possible in a six month period, the objective being to complete an audit questionnaire on each assessing the current situation in the premises following the Covid-19 lockdown, to consider other business restrictions imposed by Covid-19 Regulations (and whether those were being complied with) and to establish whether any amendments to the licence were required. Members were informed that the visits were very successful and being well received by the businesses.

It was highlighted that an important aspect of the work was in identifying any premises which had closed/no longer existed where the licence had not been surrendered, as those were still generating annual fees resulting in the amount of debt owed to the Council being falsely inflated and unrecoverable.

A solution to the problem offered to the Committee was to have those licences revoked. This would require a review of the licence instigated by the Licensing Authority acting in its capacity as a Responsible Authority and each application would be taken to a Licensing Panel in due course. Members were asked to consider the option and decide on whether to approve the process.

Members asked questions on timescales and length of time taken for revisits, comparisons with other local authorities with the same issues and the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Councillor P Kendall moved the recommendations as set out in the report. This was seconded by Councillor C Sharpe.

A vote was taken, the motion was unanimously agreed.

Resolved

That –

1. The work completed by the Temporary Licensing Compliance Officer as detailed in the report be noted;
2. The Licensing Authority, acting as a responsible authority, be approved to instigate applications for review of premises licences where it could be shown the premises/businesses had closed or had multiple licences. Including the writing off of outstanding debts where they were considered unrecoverable.

Councillor P Kendall left the meeting

355. Statutory Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Standards

The Senior Specialist – Licensing and Compliance submitted a report which sought to update members of the statutory guidance issued by the Government relating to taxi and private hire vehicles.

The Council would be required to review its taxi licensing policies and standards so that as a minimum they met the standards outlined in the Department for Transport document.

Councillor E Lynch moved the recommendations as per the report; this was seconded by Councillor A Daniels.

A vote was taken, the motion was unanimously agreed.

Resolved

That –

1. The content of the Statutory Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Standards issued by the Department for Transport be noted;
2. A full review of current policy and procedure to determine the necessary amendments required by the new standards be approved;
3. Members agreed to further reports detailing changes to existing terms and conditions of Hackney Carriage, Private Hire and Private Hire Operators' licences;
4. The Licensing Department will amalgamate the associated requirements of the licences outlined in paragraph 2.3, into a policy that encompasses the statutory standards.

The meeting closed at 3.40 pm