



Committee: LICENSING COMMITTEE

Date: THURSDAY, 7 JANUARY 2021

Venue:

THIS WILL BE A VIRTUAL MEETING

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Time: 1.00 P.M.

A G E N D A

1. **Apologies for Absence**

2. **Minutes**

Minutes of meeting held on 8 October 2020 (previously circulated).

3. **Items of Urgent Business authorised by the Chair**

4. **Declarations of Interest**

To receive declarations by Councillors of interests in respect of items on this Agenda.

Councillors are reminded that, in accordance with the Localism Act 2011, they are required to declare any disclosable pecuniary interests which have not already been declared in the Council's Register of Interests. (It is a criminal offence not to declare a disclosable pecuniary interest either in the Register or at the meeting).

Whilst not a legal requirement, in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 9 and in the interests of clarity and transparency, Councillors should declare any disclosable pecuniary interests which they have already declared in the Register, at this point in the meeting.

In accordance with Part B Section 2 of the Code Of Conduct, Councillors are required to declare the existence and nature of any other interests as defined in paragraphs 8(1) or 9(2) of the Code of Conduct.

Matters for Decision

5. **Policy Amendment - Duration of Licences**

Report of the Licensing Manager – (report withdrawn)

6. **Services Update - Covid Pandemic (Pages 3 - 5)**

Report of the Licensing Manager

Exclusion of the Press and Public

7. **Exempt Item**

The Committee is recommended to pass the following recommendation in relation to the following item:

“That, in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business, on the ground that it could involve the possible disclosure of exempt information, as defined in paragraph 1 of Schedule 12A of that Act.”

Councillors are reminded that, whilst the following item has been marked as exempt, it is for the Committee to decide whether or not to consider it in private or in public. In making the decision, Councillors should consider the relevant paragraph of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, and also whether the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information. In considering their discretion, Councillors should also be mindful of the advice of Council officers.

8. **Determination of Renewal Application, Dual Drivers Licence (Pages 6 - 26)**

Report of the Licensing Manager

ADMINISTRATIVE ARRANGEMENTS

(i) Membership

Councillors Colin Hartley (Chair), Mel Guilding (Vice-Chair), Mandy Bannon, Roger Dennison, Merv Evans, Kevin Frea, Mike Greenall, Joan Jackson, Abi Mills and Jean Parr

(ii) Queries regarding this Agenda

Please contact Liz Bateson, Democratic Services - email ebateson@lancaster.gov.uk.

(iii) Changes to Membership, or apologies

Please contact Democratic Support, telephone 582170, or alternatively email democraticsupport@lancaster.gov.uk.

KIERAN KEANE,
CHIEF EXECUTIVE,
TOWN HALL,
DALTON SQUARE,
LANCASTER, LA1 1PJ

Published on 18 December, 2020.

LICENSING COMMITTEE**Pandemic Update – Licensing Service
7 January 2021****Report of Licensing Manager****PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To update the Committee in respect of the work undertaken by the Licensing and Public Protection services during the Covid-19 Pandemic.

The report is public

RECOMMENDATIONS

- (1) **That the Committee note the report**

Report

The Chairman and vice-chair requested that the Committee be updated with the work undertaken by Licensing and Public Protection teams during the covid-19 pandemic.

Working with businesses and compliance checks

- During the first lockdown and the introduction of trading restrictions for businesses, the Food and licensing teams have worked closely with businesses to help them understand the restrictions as well as how to operate safely and legally. Guidance notes, advice papers, and website updates have been used to help businesses understand the regulations and how to protect customers, themselves and their staff.
- The advice and support offered has been significant and at times very time consuming, going beyond the conventional relationship between businesses and the public protection services. However, it was clear from the beginning these were unprecedented challenges being faced by businesses and the public which required a response that went beyond the conventional.

Business advice and support

There has been a range of advice and support offered to businesses, including:-

- Routine calls and e-mails from businesses seeking general Covid safety advice and information
- Frequently Asked Questions updates published on the Council website
- Trade specific summary documents and guidance based on Covid regulations published and issued to businesses via e-mail
- Virtual Business forum
- Design and production of various advice leaflets and posters

- Video “pod cast” on how to conduct a risk assessment
- Guidance on safe and effective cleaning
- Guidance on effective cleaning products (specifically focussed on sanitisers suitable for killing the Coronavirus)
- Attending Pub Watch meetings to advise on safe opening of the pubs
- Regular summary updates to licensed businesses outlining and explaining trading restrictions under the Tier system
- Advice and signposting of businesses to grants and financial assistance available

Private Hire and Taxi Licensing

- We have also changed the way we operate to keep staff and the public safe by reducing one to one contact with businesses and licence holders, whilst at the same time changing or relaxing standards to allow businesses and services to continue to operate. For example, utilising existing documents held on file for taxi applications, ensuring MOT extensions were applied to vehicle licences and allowing fast track applications.
- The introduction of the legal requirement for passengers to wear a face mask in licensed vehicles has led to a handful of complaints from members of the public, unaware that it is only an advisory measure for drivers. Lancaster City Councils communications have assisted in ensuring such updates are in the public domain and routinely updated.
- Vehicle testing has been reintroduced and the Councils vehicle maintenance unit are operating a full testing regime.
- New driver training programmes have been recommenced at Lancaster and Morecambe College. The Committee approved an amendment to policy to allow for private medicals to be accepted, this position will be reviewed in one year.
- The Council is now able to process new driver applications and driver renewal applications are being processed and licences/ ID badges issued via the postal system.

Feedback from businesses

- Our approach across the Licensing service and the food team has generally received support and thanks by businesses. Whilst there have been some complaints and dissatisfied comments, our response and support to businesses has been broadly welcomed and recognised as being fair, supportive and consistent.

Covid Compliance visits

- The licensing and food teams have not only been proactive in business support, but has also conducted many advice visits, compliance checks, and taken enforcement action using powers available under the Coronavirus regulations and health and Safety at Work Act.
- The approach to enforcement has followed the Council's standard intervention protocols, escalating from advice, warning, and formal enforcement action where required, including the informal and formal closure of 4 licensed premises where

Covid safety controls were inadequate and the business had failed to positively respond to earlier interventions.

- From July the 4th when the pubs and restaurants reopened, the team have conducted approximately 1,500 compliance visits to premises. The visits were mainly conducted in the evenings and at weekends. The visits were made by Council Public Protection staff, but with the support of Lancashire Police.

Covid Safe award scheme

- The scheme was developed by Lancaster City Council to help provide public assurance that it was safe to return to our high street shops. Although there are a few similar schemes operating across the Council, the Lancaster scheme was the first to be launched by a Local Authority and has received national recognition by Government as an example of good practice.
- Full details of the scheme are on the Council's website Lancaster.gov.uk/covid-safe
- At the time of writing, there are just over 100 businesses that have been awarded the Covid Safe award and we expect the number to grow over the next few weeks.

Conclusion

During these unprecedented times, the licensing and public protection teams have worked exceptionally hard to advise and support businesses and licence holders at each stage of the pandemic, assisting to reduce the infection rate locally. Examples of pro-active measures have been implemented and used as best practice nationally.

CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT (including Health & Safety, Equality & Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, Sustainability and Rural Proofing):	
LEGAL IMPLICATIONS Legal services have been consulted and make no comments	
FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS No financial implications arise from the content of the report	
OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS, such as Human Resources, Information Services, Property, Open Spaces Not applicable	
BACKGROUND PAPERS	Contact Officer: Jennifer Curtis Telephone: 01524 582732 Email: jcurtis@lancaster.gov.uk Ref:

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By virtue of paragraph(s) 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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