

LICENSING PARTNERSHIP UPDATE REPORT 2022/23

Licensing Committee - 29 June 2023

Report of: Chief Officer Planning and Regulatory Services

Status: For Information

Key Decision: No

Executive Summary: This report is an annual update on the performance and activity of the Licensing Partnership

This report supports the Key Aim of: Sustainable Economy

Portfolio Holder: Cllr. Margot McArthur

Contact Officer: Sharon Bamborough, Ext. 7325

Recommendation to Licensing Committee :

To note the performance of the Licensing Partnership as contained within the report and to ask the Head of the Licensing Partnership to continue to provide an annual update on the Licensing Partnership activity to the Licensing Committee each municipal year.

Reason for recommendation:

To ensure the Licensing Committee are updated on the performance of the Licensing Partnership.

Introduction and Background

- 1 The Council is a member of the Licensing Partnership with Maidstone Borough Council, Tunbridge Wells Borough Council and London Borough of Bexley, which provides line management responsibilities to their respective licensing enforcement teams and an administration team at Sevenoaks to carry out the processing of licence applications, notices, permits and representations.
- 2 The Licensing Partnership has completed 13 years of working together, with London Borough of Bexley becoming a partner as of 31st October 2016.
- 3 This arrangement provides each council with sovereignty over its policies and decision making processes whilst operating within a partnership that gives resilience and capacity to deal with the fluctuating demands on the service through the year.

- 4 This report is an annual update on the performance and activity of the Licensing Partnership.

2022 - 2023 Performance report

- 5 The performance of the Licensing Partnership has been generally very good.
- 6 The indicators for each of the four authorities and the combined Licensing Partnership results are attached as **Appendix A**
- 7 This has been more of a return to normal following the previous two years (which were challenging due to the Pandemic and it's after- affects).
- 8 The general processing and consultation on applications within timeframe has been maintained but there will have been times when performance may not have hit targets. This would have been to various factors, such as the usual annual leave as well as staff vacancies/recruitment/training.
- 9 The Partnership handled a large amount of work in 2022/23, application volumes were still down in certain areas on the previous years due to the Pandemic, (for example, very few temporary event notices were submitted compared to a normal year). However, other new areas of work were required which kept the teams busy. The performance measures should be read in conjunction with the entire volumes of work delivered. The headlines of the performance are as follows:
 - In this time period, over 9615 applications, notices, permits and other pieces of work were received / carried out across the partnership.
 - From this total, over 2732 pieces of work were for Sevenoaks.
 - Taking into account the different amounts of time needed for different types of applications, and the differing nature of the work carried out for some of the partners, Sevenoaks' share of processing work accounted for approx. 28% of the processing work of the entire partnership in 2022/23
 - Over **25,740** emails were received in the main Licensing inbox and actioned for all four partners, Sevenoaks' share was 8154
 - Just under **7,800** calls were received to main licensing hotline and dealt with by the Hub team for all four partners. Sevenoaks' share was 2296

Performance against Service Plan objectives 2022/23

11 **Objective 1:** *To oversee and lead the Licensing Partnership to deliver efficiency savings and achieve performance targets*

a) This is ongoing and performance is monitored on a weekly and monthly basis. Please see Appendix A for a report on Key Performance Indicator targets.

b) 1:1 meetings and regular face to face meeting with staff are carried out routinely

c) the Licensing Partnership Board meets 4 times a year.

Performance against the targets is included in Appendix A

12 **Objective 2:** *Be open and proactive about undertaking of licensing functions for other local authorities.*

Result: achieved. We have had discussions with two other authorities but this has not lead to any further expression of interest.

13 **Objective 3:** *Seek further efficiency savings in processes and use of online facilities*

- Continuous review of processes and procedures of Hub team officers and streamline / change as and when requested by partner officers

Result: achieved (resulting in time savings and reduction in costs)

14 **Objective 4:** *Ensure all online forms are implemented and in use by customers and explore other software solutions*

- The library of on line forms should implemented across the four partners - to include new forms for Bexley (Special Treatments) and any updates needed for existing ones

Result: *part achieved:* several new forms have been introduced this year and further development ongoing as legislation changes / procedures change

- Further development of the electronic record management system, Enterprise (from Idox)

Result: achieved - Enterprise is live and under constant review as we use it and make decisions on additional functionality. A new Document Management system has also gone live.

- 15 **Objective 5:** *Undertake a programme of training for Members and officers. Ensure all new Members on each Licensing Committee receive appropriate training.*

Result: training has been given as and when required

- 16 **Objective 6:** *Revision of Policies & Procedures*

- SB to liaise with relevant staff at LBB to start the planning (data analysis) for review of Cumulative Impact Policy due in June 2023, and keep under review to ensure the data will be ready for the following year

Result: not achieved yet - plans in place but delayed due to legal query - advice now received - should be referred to October Licensing Committee

- Continue the review of the Hub Team Admin procedures and update where necessary

Result: achieved

- To review taxi policies in Maidstone, Tunbridge Wells and Sevenoaks as needed.

Result: achieved

- To continue to take part in the Kent and Medway Energy and Low Emissions Implementation Plan lead by KCC (for SDC/MBC/TWBC only)

Result: achieved Act 2005 Policies across the Partnership in readiness for January 2022 when they must come into force

- 17 **Objective 7 - Health, Safety and Well Being of Staff**

- Ensure risk assessments are carried out and reviewed as appropriate and at least once a year.

Result: achieved

- Ensure 1:1 meetings are carried out on a regular basis.

Result: achieved

- Ensure staff have complied with any employer requirements in terms of completing workstation assessments both in office and at home if working from home occurs.

Result: achieved

The new service plan for 2023/24 is attached as **Appendix B**

Key Implications

Financial

Financial implications have been dealt with in the body of the report.

Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement.

This is a report to update on the progress of the Licensing Partnership. There are no legal implications as it is for information only.

Equality Assessment

The information contained within this report have a remote or low relevance to the substance of the Equality Act. There is no perceived impact on end users.

Appendices

Appendix A - Performance data

Appendix B - Service plan for 2023/24

Background Papers

None

Richard Morris

Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Officer - Planning & Regulatory Services