

The Licensing Partnership – Annual Update

Final Decision-Maker	LICENSING COMMITTEE
Lead Head of Service	John Littlemore, Head of Housing and Regulatory Services
Lead Officer and Report Author	Sharon Bamborough, Head of the Licensing Partnership
Classification	Public
Wards affected	ALL

Executive Summary

To note the performance of the Licensing Partnership as contained within the report.

Purpose of Report

Noting

This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:

1. That the performance of the Licensing Partnership as contained within the report be noted and that the Head of the Licensing Partnership be asked to continue to provide an annual update on the Licensing Partnership activity to the Licensing Committee each municipal year.

Timetable

Meeting	Date
Licensing Committee	15 September 2022

The Licensing Partnership – Annual Update

1. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Impact on Corporate Priorities	<i>No implications have been identified</i>	Sharon Bamborough – Head of the Licensing Partnership
Cross Cutting Objectives	<i>No implications have been identified</i>	Sharon Bamborough – Head of the Licensing Partnership
Risk Management	<i>No implications have been identified</i>	Sharon Bamborough – Head of the Licensing Partnership
Financial	<i>No implications have been identified</i>	Sharon Bamborough – Head of the Licensing Partnership
Staffing	<i>No implications have been identified</i>	Sharon Bamborough – Head of the Licensing Partnership
Legal	<i>No implications have been identified</i>	Legal Team
Information Governance	<i>No implications have been identified</i>	Sharon Bamborough – Head of the Licensing Partnership
Equalities	<i>No implications have been identified</i>	Sharon Bamborough – Head of the Licensing Partnership
Public Health	<i>No implications have been identified</i>	Sharon Bamborough – Head of the

		Licensing Partnership
Crime and Disorder	<i>No implications have been identified</i>	Sharon Bamborough – Head of the Licensing Partnership
Procurement	<i>No implications have been identified</i>	Sharon Bamborough – Head of the Licensing Partnership
Biodiversity and Climate Change	<i>No implications have been identified</i>	Sharon Bamborough – Head of the Licensing Partnership

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Council is a member of the Licensing Partnership with Tunbridge Wells Borough Council, London Borough of Bexley and Sevenoaks District Council, 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.
- 2.2 The Licensing Partnership has completed 12 years of working together, with London Borough of Bexley becoming a partner as of 31st October 2016.
- 2.3 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.
- 2.4 This report is an annual update on the performance and activity of the Licensing Partnership.

2021 – 2022 Performance report

- 2.5 The performance of the Licensing Partnership has been generally good despite the challenges of the past two years of moving the processing of work to be done by staff mostly working from home during the lockdowns and beyond.
- 2.6 The indicators for each of the four authorities and the combined Licensing Partnership results are attached as **Appendix A**.

- 2.7 This has been another challenging year due to the Pandemic and its after-effects (but not as challenging as the previous one), but we are returning to normal.
- 2.8 The general processing and consultation on applications within timeframe has been maintained but where there have been times when performance may not have hit targets this would have been due to various factors, such as the usual annual leave, and staff vacancies/recruitment/training.
- 2.9 The Partnership handled a large amount of work in 2021/22, applications 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 newer 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, 9140 applications, notices, permits and other pieces of work were received / carried out across the partnership.
 - From this total, over 2655 pieces of work were for Maidstone.
 - 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, Maidstone's share of processing work accounted for approx. 27% of the work of the entire partnership in 2021/22.
 - Over **27,350** emails were received in the main Licensing inbox and actioned for all four partners – Maidstone's share was 7,261.
 - Just under **10,000** calls were received to main licensing hotline and dealt with by the Hub team for all four partners - Maidstone's share was approx. 2400.

3. Performance against Service Plan objectives 2021/22

- 3.1 Objective 1: *To oversee and lead the Licensing Partnership to deliver efficiency savings and achieve performance targets.*
- 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.
 - 1:1 meetings and regular face to face meetings with staff are carried out routinely.
 - The Licensing Partnership Board meets 4 times a year.

Performance against the targets is included in **Appendix A**

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

Result: We have not received any requests or expressions of interest during this year and have not actively pursued any.

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

- Review (ongoing) processes and procedures of Hub team officers and streamline / change to save time on unnecessary record keeping.
Result: Achieved
- A move towards paper free workplace for Hub team.
Result: Achieved (resulting in time savings and reduction in costs).

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

- The library of online forms should be implemented across the four partners – to include new forms for Bexley (Special Treatments) and any updates needed for existing ones.
Result: Testing on-going, not in use yet - it has not been possible to achieve this in year due to the demands on officers not having spare capacity to do testing in the time frame initially planned.
- Complete testing and go live with electronic record management system, Enterprise (from Idox).
Result: Achieved – system has gone live though further development desired.

3.5 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

3.6 Objective 6: *Revision of Policies & Procedures*

- Complete the review of Gambling Policies across the Partnership in readiness for January 2022 when they must come into force.
Result: Achieved
- Continue the review of street trading policy at Maidstone regarding designation of street trading pitches.
Result: Completed
- Continue the review of the Hub Team Admin procedures and update where necessary.
Result: Achieved but included in new 2022/23 service plan as there are always requests from partners to review certain practices or procedures.
- To review taxi policies in Maidstone, Tunbridge Wells and Sevenoaks as needed.
Result: Achieved
- Adapt procedures and requirements in the face of the Coronavirus pandemic to support the trade whilst adhering to regulations.
Result: Achieved

3.7 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 any H&S workplace requirements related to the 2020 pandemic are adhered to and workable solutions are in place.
Result: Achieved and on-going

The new service plan for 2022/23 is attached as **Appendix B**

4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 To note the information and ensure the Licensing Committee are updated on the performance of the Licensing Partnership.
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5. RISK

- 5.1 There are no risks as it is for information only.
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6. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

- 6.1 Not applicable.
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7. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

- 7.1 Not applicable as this report is on performance for the previous financial year.
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8. REPORT APPENDICES

- Appendix A: Performance data
 - Appendix B: Service plan for 2022/23
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9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None