

# **Licensing Committee Annual Report 2023/2024**

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### Introduction

The shared Public Protection Partnership (PPP) delivers a range of regulatory functions across Licensing, Trading Standards and Environment Health. Licensing however is distinct in the way that activities are overseen, and policy is set. Whilst all decisions related to the PPP go through the Joint Public Protection Committee (JPPC), each partner authority retains its individual Licensing Committee and sets licensing related policy and monitors performance. This requires careful co-ordination and that clear governance arrangements have been put in place to ensure that this happens.

The Shared Licensing Service considers applications and exercises a range of delegated authorities to issue, suspend, refuse, and revoke licences, consents, notices and permits in the name of the Council.

Many businesses require some form of authority in order that they can deliver a range of services and goods to residents and visitors to West Berkshire. Legislation requiring a licence/consent/notice/permit for a business activity is generally enacted in order to protect users of a service or the wider community such as those that might be affected due to their proximity to the licensed premises or their interaction with an individual licence holder. Animal Welfare licensing provisions are there to protect the health and wellbeing of animals in regulated settings such as kennels or performances. Good regulation properly implemented also provides a level playing field for the licensed sector.

It is acknowledged by the licensed sector that an effective licensing regime, soundly administered and founded on sensible and effective policies creates consumer confidence which in turn is positive for licence holders. The service is aware that the licensing function, whilst offering protection, can also act as a barrier to others who wish to deliver services or supply goods. Every effort is therefore made to assist businesses to understand and progress through the licensing process. The service delivers a number of functions including business advice, processing of applications, monitoring compliance and where necessary taking enforcement action.

The Licensing Service covers a wide range of statutory licensing, registration and enforcement functions. These functions cover premises which sell and supply alcohol or provide regulated entertainment or late-night refreshment under the Licensing Act 2003. The service also issues licences for gambling premises, gaming machines and lotteries under the Gambling Act 2005. In addition, licences, consents and permissions are also issued for a number of other activities including taxi and private hire drivers, vehicle and operator licences, animal breeding, boarding, performance and zoo licences, street trading, charitable collections, dermal licence for cosmetic piercing and scrap metal dealers.:

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### Governance

#### Licensing Committee

The [Licensing Committee](#) is responsible for setting the policy direction that forms the basis of licensing activity in the District. Under the Licensing Act 2003 and the Gambling Act 2005 there is a legal obligation for the Council to set key policies. In other areas the Council has a range of powers to set licence conditions and adopt sector specific policy positions. There is also a requirement for the Council to have a Licensing Committee of between 12 and 15 Members.

The Licensing Committee comprises 12 Members and the 2023/24 membership is set out below:

Liberal Democrat Group (7 Members)	<b>Phil Barnett</b> (Chairman), Billy Drummond, Nigel Foot, , Stephanie Steevenson, Jeremy Cottam, Justin Pemberton, Martha Vickers,
Conservative Group (3 Members)	<b>Paul Dick</b> (Vice Chairman), Paul Kander, Jane Langford
Minority Group (2 Members)	Clive Taylor, David Marsh

Following the annual Council meeting on the 09 May 2024 the 2024/25 membership of the Committee is as follows:

Liberal Democrat Group (7 Members)	Phil Barnett, <b>Jeremy Cottam</b> (Chairman), Billy Drummond, Nigel Foot, Justin Pemberton, Stephanie Steevenson, Martha Vickers
Conservative Group (3 Members)	<b>Paul Dick</b> (Vice Chairman), Paul Kander, Jane Langford
Minority Group (2 Members)	Clive Taylor, David Marsh

Over the 2023/24 period the Licensing Committee met on:

- the 25 May 2023 (Annual Meeting),
- the 10 July 2023,

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- 06 November 2023 and the
- 08 January 2024.

The Committee considered several matters including:

- the annual consultation and review of fees and charges,
- an update on the Community Alcohol Partnership (CAP),
- an update on the National Register of Taxi Licence Revocation, Refusals and Suspensions (NR3S),
- a review of the Statement of Licensing Policy,
- a review of Hackney Carriage Tariffs.

In terms of forward planning, in addition to the annual fees and charges and tariffs cycle, a number of policies and decisions including the following are scheduled for consideration during the 2024/25 cycle:

- Review of the Statement of Gambling Principles,
- Revision of the Draft Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy,
- Consideration of implementing site visits for Licensing Sub-Committees,
- Adoption of a Street Trading Policy.

The Forward Plan for the Licensing Committee will be discussed with the Chairman and Vice Chairman throughout the year and a copy can be found here: [Governance - PPP \(publicprotectionpartnership.org.uk\)](https://www.publicprotectionpartnership.org.uk). The Forward Plan is also a standing item on all Licensing Committee agendas.

### **Licensing Sub-Committee**

While the Licensing Committee carries out functions relating to policy formulation the Licensing Sub Committee determines certain licensing applications in line with the Scheme of Delegation agreed under the Licensing Act 2003 and the Gambling Act 2005.

For the purpose of determining applications under the Licensing Act 2003 and Gambling Act 2005 the legislation requires the membership of each Licensing Sub-Committee to be three Members of the Licensing Committee.

Regardless of the regime, all licences are processed in a similar manner. The application is received, checked and where required a consultation held. As a rule, any new application that attracts relevant adverse representation during the consultation period will be heard before a Licensing Sub-Committee. Applications made under the Licensing and Gambling Acts must be granted in the absence of representations.

Applications for taxi licences are currently determined by officers and any appeals have to be taken to the Magistrates' Court. The Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing

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Policy, once adopted, will revise the way appeals are dealt with.

The Licensing Act 2003 and Gambling Act 2005 prescribe responsible authorities that must be consulted and who may submit representations against a licence application. Responsible authorities include the police, fire service, trading standards, environmental health, planning, public health, safeguarding board relating to the protection of children from harm and the licensing authority itself. There is a requirement for applicants to place notices on site and advertise the application in a local newspaper.

During the 2023/24 financial year the Licensing Sub Committee met on seven occasions and a further five meetings were cancelled (due to successful mediation or applications being withdrawn) or adjourned after agenda publication.

Type of Application	Premise	Outcome
Premises licence	Bite Express Ltd, 63A Bartholomew Street, Newbury, RG14 7BE	Approved with Conditions
Premises licence	Racecourse Food & Wine, 4a Hambridge Road, Newbury, RG14 5SS	Approved with Conditions
Premises licence	Awberry Barn, Awberry Farm, The Green, Beenham, Berkshire, RG7 5NX	Approved with Conditions
Premises licence	The Boxford, Roodhill, Boxford RG20 8DD	Approved with Conditions
Premises licence	Newbury Premier, 3 Monument Close, Essex Street, Newbury RG14 6QW	Approved with Conditions
Premises licence	Coriander Club, 98 Royal Avenue, Calcot, Reading, West Berkshire, RG31 4UT	Approved with Conditions
Premises licence	Reloaded Nightclub, 7 Wharf Street, Newbury, RG14 5AN	Approved with Conditions

By way of comparison in 2022/23 the Sub-Committee was not required to meet, in 2021/22 six meetings were held, in 2020/21 the LSC met on two occasions, in 2019/20 six applications were heard, three hearings were held in 2018/19 and three in 2017/18.

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Parties to the hearings have a right of appeal to the magistrates' court. There were no appeals against decisions submitted in 2023/24.

### **Taxi and Private Hire Liaison Group Meetings**

The Group was set up to provide a forum to meet with and consider comments from representatives of the taxi trade and seek advice from Licensing Officers on a range of issues that affect existing and proposed licences, policies, tariffs, fees and other matters of common interest. The Group is also tasked with reporting back to the Licensing Committee with any recommendations for alterations to the existing or proposed licences, policies, tariffs and fees.

The Group comprises the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Licensing Committee, Members of the Licensing Committee, the Licensing Manager, Licensing Officers and representatives from the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Trade. The number of attendees from the Trade remains relatively low albeit that there has been a slight improvement in attendance at the meetings throughout the year. Officers continue to encourage trade representatives to attend the meetings and the notes are circulated to the trade and Licensing Committee to keep them abreast of discussions that have taken place.

During the 2023/24 financial year the Group met on the 23 October 2023. A range of issues were discussed although the main discussion item during these sessions was the Draft Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy. Ongoing cyclical discussions on fees and tariffs also take place at these meetings.

### **Training**

As this was the first year of the electoral cycle Induction training for Licensing Committee Members took place on the 31 May 2023.

The 2024/25 Annual Training Session took place on the 21 May 2024. All Members that were unable to attend the training will have the opportunity to review the training video and ask any questions of officers arising from it. In accordance with the Constitution all Members will need to attend the annual training before sitting on a Licensing Sub-Committee.

### **Resourcing**

The Licensing Service comprises both the Applications and Enforcement functions. The Team establishment comprises around 10 FTE (11 posts). Although the Team has been carrying a number of vacancies during 2023/24 by the end of July 2024 it will be fully staffed. The Service has recently successfully recruited: two Licensing Applications Officers, two Licensing Officers (one of who has recently completed his Level 4 Apprenticeship) and a Lead Licensing Officer who will be joining the Team soon.

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Additional support has also been provided to the Team by the Strategic Manager for the Case Management Unit and there is also around 0.25FTE in terms of policy and governance work to support the Committee and assist with policy development. The current staffing structure is attached at Appendix A to this report.

For the financial year 2023/24 the shared licensing service saw a shortfall in income of £98K. The shortfall is primarily due to falling licensing income. Addressing the licensing income shortfall was identified as a priority for 2023/24 in the Service Plan which was agreed at the January 2023 Joint Public Protection Committee meeting. The shortfall was mitigated by vacancies in licensing and other areas of the service combined with reduced spend on agency/casual staff in year.

One of the other most significant contributory factors to income shortfall is that the majority of statutory licensing fees have not been uplifted since circa 2011 and since 2005 for the Licensing Act fees.

The service will undertake a fundamental review in 2024/25 of the discretionary fees in the context of the reduced cohort of licence holders that provide the income base to deliver the service.

### Licensing Act 2003

This Act governs licensable activities which include the sale or supply of alcohol, regulated entertainment, and late-night refreshment provision in premises and at outdoor events including public houses, registered members clubs, late night bars, and night clubs, off licences, late night takeaways and restaurants.

The Act also governs licensable activities that take place in village halls, community centres, school halls and outdoor events where licensable activities are held.

Late night refreshment provision is the supply of hot food or hot drink to the public, for consumption on or off the premises, between 11pm and 5am.

The provision of regulated entertainment can include activities such as the performance of a play, an exhibition of a film, an indoor sporting event, boxing or wrestling entertainment, performance of live music, any playing of recorded music, a performance of dance, performance of live music and any playing of recorded music.

The Licensing Act 2003 is governed by four licensing objectives:

- Prevention of crime and disorder
- Prevention of public nuisance
- Public Safety



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- Protection of children from harm

Temporary Event Notices (TENs) are a facility under the Licensing Act 2003 where people can serve a notice on the council that states that they will be serving alcohol and/or providing regulated entertainment and/or late-night refreshment at a specified time.

As it is not an application or permit, no permission is sought. It is merely a notice served upon the licensing authority, the police and environmental health.

However, there are strict limits to the number of temporary event notices someone can serve, for how long the event can run and the number of people that can attend. There is the ability for either the Police or Environmental Health to serve an objection notice which would then lead to a hearing to determine if licensable activities at the event can take place.

The notice period required under the law is ten working days, not including the day the notice is received or the day of the event, and the objection window for the police and environmental health is just three working days. It therefore follows that these hearings would need to be set up and take place in a very short space of time.

There is the ability to serve a limited number of late temporary event notices. If these are objected to a counter notice is automatically served without recourse to the licensing sub-committee.

No hearings in respect of TENS took place during 2023/24.

The Licensing Act 2003 provides for an application to review a licence which can be brought by a responsible authority or any other person where a premises is undermining one or more of the licensing objectives.

The Licensing Team did not receive any requests to review a licence in 2023/24.

The number of licensed premises under the Act are in the table below with a comparison to previous years.

Type	At 31/03/2024	At 31/03/2023	At 31/03/2022	At 31/03/2021	At 31/03/2020
Personal Licence	2424	2336	2269	2207	2157
Premises Licence	520	N/a	509	465	458
TENs (total issued)*	421	352	379	71	610

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Club Premises Certificate	40	41	38	40	40
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Note: for TENs the figure given is the total number of notices / applications received within the calendar year

The Act places a responsibility on licensing authorities to adopt a [Statement of Licensing Policy](#) which sets out how the authority intends to promote the licensing objectives. The Statement of Licensing Policy (SoLP) must be reviewed at least every five years. The previous iteration of the policy was published in December 2018 and therefore had to be reviewed, adopted and published by December 2023. The new policy came into effect on the 01 December 2023. At the time of adoption, it was noted that the Act provides that during each five year period a licensing authority must keep its policy under review and make such revisions to it, at such times, as it considers appropriate. Revised S182 Guidance was issued on the 18 December 2023 and following the January 2024 Licensing Committee meeting a few further minor amendments were made to the SoLP.

There were 33 reports relating to premises licenses in 2023. 21 relating to locations in Bracknell Forest, 11 relating to premises in West Berkshire and 1 relating to a premises in Wokingham. 24% were concerning complaints (8), the other 76% related to requests for information or advice.

### Gambling Act 2005

Gambling facilities include bookmakers, bingo halls, amusement arcades, casinos and permits and permissions such as lotteries. There are three types of licences issued under this legislation premises licences, operators' licences and personal licences.

There are three licensing objectives that underpin this Act:

- preventing gambling from being a source of crime or disorder, being associated with crime or disorder or being used to support crime,
- ensuring that gambling is conducted in a fair and open way, and
- protecting children and other vulnerable persons from being harmed or exploited by gambling.

Applications under this legislation continue to be few and far between although Officers continue to work closely with the Gambling Commission to ensure compliance with licence conditions.

No hearings were conducted under this legislation in 2023/24.

Current permissions in force under this Act are:

Type	At 31/03/2024	At 31/03/2023	At 31/03/2022	At 31/03/2021	At 31/03/2020
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Small Society Lottery	97	129	116	108	108
Licensed Premises Gaming Machine Permit	8	8	8	9	10
Licensed Premises Gaming Machine Notice	81	83	83	83	84
Club Machine Permits	6	7	7	6	8
Club Gaming Permits	0	0	0	0	0
Gambling Premises	11	12	13	12	14

The Act places a responsibility on licensing authorities to adopt a [Statement of Gambling Principles](#) which sets out how the council will carry out its duties under the Gambling Act 2005. The Statement of Gambling Principles must be reviewed and published every three years. The current iteration of the policy was published in January 2022 and therefore must be reviewed, adopted and published by January 2025.

In 2023, the PPP received three new licensing applications relating to gambling and betting for premises in West Berkshire.

In 2023 the PPP received 37 licensing applications relating to small society lotteries in West Berkshire.

All recipients of permissions are required to complete a return to the authority. A significant number of small society lotteries relate to schools / Parent Teacher Friends Associations (PTFAs).

### Licensed Drivers, Operators and Vehicles

Legislation places a duty on the council for the licensing of Hackney Carriages ('taxis') and private hire vehicles, drivers of those vehicles and operators of those vehicles. The council understands the importance and responsibility it has, to ensure that licensed vehicles in the district are safe, comfortable, properly insured, and available where and when required, and that those involved in the trade are "fit and proper" to undertake the role.

Officers are seeking to finalise a second draft of the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy within the 2024/25 Municipal Year. The Draft Policy will be subject to a further consultation period prior to being recommended to full Council for adoption.

Officers and Members continue to work with the private hire and hackney trade to ensure effective communication and consultation takes place via the Taxi Trade Meetings.

Current data about number of licences issued is set out below:

Type	At	At	At	At	At
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	31/03/2024	31/03/2023	31/03/2022	31/03/2021	31/03/2020
Private Hire Operator	59	62	51	56	61
Private Hire Vehicle Licence	181	154	138	127	163
Private Hire Driver	155	107	100	106	130
Dual (HC & PH) Driver	177	178	184	193	247
Hackney Carriage Vehicle	181	118	123	133	153

In 2023, the PPP received 657 applications that related to the licensing of taxi / private hire drivers, vehicles. and operators 288 for Bracknell Forest and 369 for West Berkshire. This type of licensing accounted for 31% of all licensing applications received in 2023.

There were 147 reports relating to taxi drivers in 2023, 72 in Bracknell Forest and 75 in West Berkshire. 32% of reports related to complaints and 2% related to safeguarding concerns. The other 66% were regarding advice or information.

### Helping that Taxi Trade 'Go Greener'

It was agreed at the June 2022 Licensing Committee meeting that we would continue to report annually on initiatives adopted to help the taxi trade go greener. At the September 2022 Executive meeting Members agreed to introduce a fee based incentive scheme to help all forms of vehicles licensed by West Berkshire for public transport to go green.

The Executive agreed to a 100% remittance for electric private hire and hackney carriage vehicle fees and a 50% remittance for hybrid vehicles. It was agreed that the number of vehicles should not be limited but that the scheme should be subject to an annual review and be in place for a maximum of three years commencing 1st April 2023.

At the time of writing, since April 2023 when the subsidy came into effect, we have had 1 new electric private hire vehicle and 29 new hybrid private hire vehicles licensed and 5 electric and 8 hybrid private hire renewal applied for.

The Licensing Team continues to work closely with colleagues in the Environment Delivery Team to identify any further opportunities to support the trade to reduce their carbon emissions.

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The Council has contracts in place to deliver charge points in 'on street' locations and in other suitable locations such as car parks, community areas, taxi ranks etc. These contracts will enable the delivery of a range of charge points from slow to rapid in appropriate areas across West Berkshire. The trade is encouraged to submit requests for these charging points at locations that will best support them and their endeavours to decarbonise their activities. Feasibility studies, where appropriate, can then be commissioned. The team can be contacted via [ev@westberks.gov.uk](mailto:ev@westberks.gov.uk)

### Other Licences

As well as the main functions outlined above the Licensing Team also administers and enforces a wide range of other licences, registrations and permits current numbers of which are outlined below:

Type	At 31/03/2024	At 31/03/2023	At 31/03/2022	At 31/03/2021	At 31/03/2020
Animal Boarding Establishment and Dog Breeding	12	16	20	11	20
Home Boarding of Dogs Licence	39	34	33	26	31
Riding Establishment Licence	7	7	6	5	6
Pet Shop Licence	2	4	3	4	3
Keep or Train Animals for Exhibition	4	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a
Dangerous Animals	2	4	1	-	-
Zoo Licence	2	2	1	-	-
Scrap Metal Dealer Site	3	3	5	5	5
Scrap Metal Dealer - Mobile	1	3	3	5	4
Dermal Personal and Premises Registration	397	371	357	334	242
Hairdresser Registration	42	38	36	-	-
Street Trading Consent	17	26	25	20	24
Street Collections*	36	N/a	29	10	82
House to House Collections*	25	N/a	21	17	39
Caravan Licence	33	37	31	-	-
Licensable HMO	38	39	30	-	-

Note: for street collections and house to house collections, the figure given is the total number of notices / applications received within the calendar year.

### Street Collections

Street collections only cover the collections of cash. The regulation of other forms of collection such as direct debits is a matter for the Fundraising Regulator. All those that are issued permits to collect are required to file a return to the Council.

There were 36 applications received regarding street collections in 2023 in West Berkshire. All were granted.

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### **Scrap Metal Dealers**

There were 5 applications for scrap metal sites and collectors in 2023, 4 related to renewals and 1 was a new collector. There were 4 reports relating to scrap metal dealers in 2023, 2 in Bracknell Forest and 2 in West Berkshire.

This is a priority area for enforcement and joint visits take place with Thames Valley Police (TVP) to ensure the provisions of the legislation and licence conditions are being complied with, with particular focus on traceability, identification checks and cash payments.

### **House to House Collections**

The majority of House-to-House collections relate to charity bags. There have been issues identified previously around unauthorised collections. The larger charities have national exemptions from the need for local permissions.

In 2023 the PPP received 21 licensing applications relating to House-to-House collections in West Berkshire.

### **Street Trading**

Street trading consents are largely in place to ensure that the location is suitable and that controls are in place to manage a range of potential nuisance issues. In 2023 the PPP received 51 street trading consent applications. Of these 24 related to street trading consents in Bracknell Forest and 27 related to street trading consents in West Berkshire.

There were 19 reports in relation to street trading in 2023. 26% of reports were complaints (5), the other 74% related to requests for information or advice (14).

### **Dermal Personal and Premises Registration**

Operation Banba was a PPP project to ensure compliance, from businesses across our area, with The Botulinum Toxin and Cosmetic Fillers (Children) Act 2021. 53 test purchases were made via a phone call to businesses across Bracknell Forest, West Berkshire and Wokingham authorities, with an attempt to book an appointment for a child aged 16. Of the businesses contacted 43 confirmed they undertook the procedure. There were with 3 failures. All businesses were written to with advice.

### **Animal Breeding and Boarding**

There are a range of controls falling to the PPP around licensable activities involving the sale and keeping of animals. These include pet shops (sales normally conducted from home), regulated pet breeding, boarding and home boarding, kennels and catteries, riding establishments, zoos and animals involved in performance and display.

In 2023 there were 35 licensing applications in relation to animal boarding and day care

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facilities for West Berkshire.

There was 1 licensing application in relation selling animals as pets, for West Berkshire. There were also 1 licensing applications in relation to hiring and training animals for exhibitions in West Berkshire.

There were 9 reports relating to animal breeding in 2023 across both partner authorities, 4 were complaints and 5 were in relation to Information or advice.

### Service Requests

PPP Licensing data shows that it dealt with 345 (200 in Bracknell Forest and 145 in West Berkshire) service requests in 2023/24 which is a 27% increase when compared to the 312 service requests in 2022/23. For additional context there were 260 in 2021/22, 272 were received in 2020/21, 168 in 2019/20, 199 in 2018/19 and 210 in 2017/18. These are primarily requests for advice etc. This figure does not include licensing applications. A breakdown of Service Requests Data for West Berkshire is set out below:

Request Description	West Berks
Taxi/private Hire Driver	47
Premises Licence - Alcohol And Entertainment	11
Taxi/hackney Carriage Vehicle	28
Street Trading	8
Animals/birds	0
Taxi/hackney Carriage Operator	12
Animal Breeding	6
Animal Boarding	6
Special Treatments (dermal)	1
Pre Application Advice Request	2
Scrap Metal	2
Animal - Zoo	1
Temporary Event Notice	1
Animal - Pet Shop	0
Personal Licence	1
CD Referral to TS Department	0
Gambling Act	0
Club Premises Certificate	1
Animal - Riding Establishment	2
Hairdressers Registration	1
Animal - Dangerous Wild Animals	0
Lotteries	1
HMO	8
Caravans	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>145</b>

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### Licensing Challenges for 2024/25 and Horizon Scanning

There continue to be regular changes to legislation and guidance affecting the licensing arena.

#### **On-line Sales of Alcohol**

The rapid growth of on-line sales of alcohol is nationally becoming a hot topic, because of remote age verification. New technology is evolving to ensure that the person buying and receiving alcohol is 18 or older. The Service will continue to test and challenge this area of sales, to help prevent young persons' purchasing alcohol.

#### **The Licensing of Non-Surgical Cosmetic Procedures in England**

The world of cosmetic treatments is rapidly changing, and the present legislation does not provide adequate protection for the public. Local authorities lack adequate powers to regulate these emerging treatments. The Botulinum Toxin and Cosmetic Fillers (Children) Act 2021 made it an offence for a person to administer botox and fillers to under 18s and the Service undertook a series of underage sales test purchases.

Under the proposed new licensing scheme practitioners will need to be licensed to perform specific non-surgical cosmetic procedures and the premises from which they operate will also need to be licensed. The licensing scheme will ensure that those who offer specified procedures; are suitably knowledgeable, trained and qualified, hold appropriate indemnity cover and operate from premises which meet the necessary standards of hygiene, infection control and cleanliness. This area of work will have significant impact on resourcing within the Licensing Team when it comes into effect.

#### **The Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Bill, known as Martyn's Law**

Following the Manchester Arena terrorist attack and the development of Martyn's Law, all business settings will have a duty to protect the public. The consultation of this Bill concluded in March 2024. It is anticipated that the 'Protect Duty' will be implemented imminently albeit that it is still yet to be determined who the Regulator will be.

#### **Bird Keepers Registration Requirement**

In England and Wales, keepers are being encouraged to register their birds ahead of the legal deadline on 1 October 2024. Bird keepers will need to provide information, including their contact details, the location where birds are kept and details of the birds (species, number and what they are kept for). The government said the changes would help manage potential disease outbreaks, such as avian influenza and Newcastle disease, and limit any spread.

#### **Animals (Penalty Notices) Act 2022**

As of the 01 January 2024 penalty notices of up to £5000 can be issued for animal health and welfare offences. Offences includes keeping animals in a poor living environment,



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overdue TB testing or animal breeders operating without a licence. New legislation adds to existing enforcement measures to protect animals– including criminal prosecution for most serious offences.

### **Single-use Plastics**

The Environmental Protection (Plates, Cutlery, Balloon Sticks and Expanded and Extruded Polystyrene Food and Beverage Containers) (England) Regulations 2023 came into force last year and pro-active work was undertaken within the food sector to highlight the new rules. Going forward regular monitoring will be undertaken as part of the licensing and other inspection regimes and all complaints made to the Service will be considered and responded to.

## **Multi-agency Liaison and Joint Operations**

### **Safety Advisory Group (SAG)**

Licensing Officers are attendees at SAG meetings. The SAG comprises of representatives from West Berkshire Council, emergency services and other relevant bodies. The SAG meets at regular intervals, or when necessary to review event applications and advise on public safety. The role of the SAG is to provide advice to individuals and organisations planning a public event.

In 2023/24 the West Berkshire SAG considered documentation for 195 events.

### **Reducing Violence Against Women and Girls**

The PPP Licensing Service is part of a wider Thames Valley Police initiative looking at reducing incidence of harm affecting women and girls. The Team's specific area of input is with licensed premises and the management of risk within those premises.

### **Pubwatch**

Officers from the PPP regularly attend Pubwatch meetings alongside colleagues from Thames Valley Police and local businesses. The objectives of the groups are to tackle and prevent anti-social behaviour and criminal activity, promote safe drinking environments for customers and secure working environments for staff and improve communication and sharing information between licensee.

### **Institute of Licensing (IoL)**

The IoL is the professional body for licensing matters and is instrumental in providing access to case law and legislation updates, training, and information sharing. Licensing Officers regularly attend the quarterly regional meetings.

### **Joint Operations**

Joint operations with colleagues from Thames Valley Police and neighbouring authorities are regularly undertaken.

## Appendix A

### Community Alcohol Partnership

A new district wide Community Alcohol Partnership (CAP) was launched on the on 6th July 2023. The aim of the CAP, is to bring together and support local partnerships of councils, police, retailers, schools, health providers and community groups to reduce alcohol harm among young people, improve their health and wellbeing and enhance their communities. The CAP brings together organisations including West Berkshire Council, Thames Valley Police, schools, alcohol services and local retailers to reduce the crime, anti-social behaviour and harm caused by underage drinking.

### Communication and Engagement

The Service provides a range of advice and information sheets via the website. The West Berkshire website has appropriate links to relevant pages on the PPP website. The PPP has also expanded its social media presence with active Facebook and Twitter pages.

**Facebook:** [@PublicProtectionPartnershipUK](https://www.facebook.com/PublicProtectionPartnershipUK)

**Twitter:** [@PublicPP\\_UK](https://twitter.com/PublicPP_UK)

Protecting the public is at the heart of all work completed by the Licensing Team. The Team focuses on the four E's when working with licence holders:

- Engage,
- Educate,
- Encourage and
- if this fails we will then Enforce.

Officers regularly meet with applicants or licence holders to give guidance, such as attendance at Pubwatch meetings run by the trade. Additionally, Officers regularly meet with applicants or licence holders to ensure licence compliance and educate and encourage licence holders if they are found to be non-compliant. For example completing annual private hire operator inspections at their offices and taxi drivers at the ranks.

During the 2023/24 Municipal Year the following consultations were undertake:

- Consultation on the fees and charges
- Consultation on the Tariffs 2024
- Consultation on the Statement of Licensing Policy.

In addition, officers attended a number of events to promote the service and engage with our residents including:

- The Family Fun Day in Victoria Park on the 21 May 2023
- The Pangbourne Fete on the 10 June 2023
- The Thatcham Family Day on 25 June 2023

## Appendix A

- Hungerford Event on the 24 January 2024
- Lambourn Market Place on the 13 January 2024.

## Conclusion

It is good practice to provide an overview of information to Committee members, which enables them to be informed about licence applications, decisions made by the Licensing Committee and the Licensing Sub-Committee, automatic grants, enforcement action and future work planned by the licensing area. This information enables Members to be informed and to aid decision making in the future.

### Service Structure Chart

**Public Protection Partnership** | Bracknell Forest  
West Berkshire

