

# TEWKESBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL

<b>Report to:</b>	Licensing Committee
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	18 February 2021
<b>Subject:</b>	Licensing Update
<b>Report of:</b>	Interim Environmental Health Manager
<b>Corporate Lead:</b>	Head of Community Services
<b>Lead Member:</b>	Lead Member for Clean and Green Environment
<b>Number of Appendices:</b>	Three

## **Executive Summary:**

This report provides the Committee with an update on the licensing service including the impact of COVID-19, implementation of the audit action plan and approval of a revised Hackney Carriage Tariff for 2021/22.

## **Recommendation:**

- 1. To NOTE the impacts of COVID-19 on the service including the implementation of the audit action plan.**
- 2. To APPROVE the revised Hackney Carriage Tariff for 2021/22 as set out at Appendix 2.**
- 3. To APPROVE the extension of the consultation period on street trading applications being reduced to five days to be reviewed in line with the government's road map at the Committee's next meeting in June 2021.**

## **Reasons for Recommendation:**

To ensure the Committee is informed of the current position of the service and implement a revised Hackney Carriage Tariff as the current one expires on 31 March 2021.

## **Resource Implications:**

Resources are being considered as part of the Licensing Service Review.

## **Legal Implications:**

None directly arising from this report.

## **Risk Management Implications:**

There is a risk that online applications are delayed.

There is a risk that the impacts of COVID-19 will mean that the service is unable to deliver and meet targets.

**Performance Management Follow-up:**

The outcomes of the service review will be reported to the next Committee.

**Environmental Implications:**

Online applications will have a direct impact on environmental considerations by reducing the use of paper.

**1.0 INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND**

**1.1** This report examines how the licensing team can deliver a substantive and responsive service efficiently both as part of the recovery from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and over a longer term. The report includes a service update, the current position on actions following an audit of the service in 2019 and a revised tariff for Hackney Carriages as the current tariff expires on 31 March 2021.

**2.0 SERVICE UPDATE**

**2.1** The licensing service has continued to be seriously impacted due to COVID-19 and significant and long-term sickness within the team which has affected both officers. Two interim Licensing Officers appointed on a contract basis until 31 March 2021 left in December and further recruitment was required with two replacement contract officers commencing in January 2021.

**2.2** A review of the service was agreed at the last Committee and is ongoing. The team is currently dealing with a backlog of applications and reports on relevant policies and fees and charges are presented separately to this Committee for approval.

**2.3** The team is working with Business Transformation for the implementation of online applications to commence from April 2021.

**2.4** Applications for new private hire drivers were restarted in August when COVID secure facilities to interview applicants in the office were put in place. This has now been stopped in line with the current lockdown.

**2.5** The service has not had the capacity to carry out enforcement or inspections of premises. Further implications on resources are identified in separate reports relating to residential mobile home sites, animal licensing and taxi licensing all of which will be taken into account as part of the review of the service.

**2.6** The government proposes to set out its road map for recovery for the next 12 months on 22 February 2021 and it is anticipated that this will detail the gradual re-opening of business. Those relating to hospitality directly impact on the licensing service and work has continued with Police Licensing and Environmental Health on enforcement and COVID related matters.

**2.7** The consultation period for street trading applications was reduced to five working days with the agreement of the Licensing Chair and Vice-Chair. This was extended until 31 March 2021 by Committee in November 2020. It is recommended that this is extended and reviewed at each Committee in line with the government's road map.

**2.8** There has been no change in requirements under the Licensing Act 2003 nor the Gambling Act 2005.

### **3.0 REVIEW OF AUDIT ACTION PLAN**

3.1 There are four outstanding actions within the plan, attached at Appendix 1, these all relate to actions within the uniform system. Two actions are now completed, and work is ongoing in relation to the remaining two items.

### **4.0 REVIEW OF HACKNEY CARRIAGE TARIFF**

4.1 The Hackney Carriage Tariff has been reviewed and consultation undertaken to agree proposed revised charges for 2021/22. The revised proposal is detailed at Appendix 2.

### **5.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

5.1 None.

### **6.0 CONSULTATION**

6.1 None.

### **7.0 RELEVANT COUNCIL POLICIES/STRATEGIES**

7.1 The Council's Corporate Plan.

### **8.0 RELEVANT GOVERNMENT POLICIES**

8.1 None.

### **9.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (Human/Property)**

9.1 Forms part of the licensing review.

### **10.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS (Social/Community Safety/Cultural/ Economic/ Environment)**

10.1 None.

### **11.0 IMPACT UPON (Value For Money/Equalities/E-Government/Human Rights/Health And Safety)**

11.1 Forms part of the licensing review.

### **12.0 RELATED DECISIONS AND ANY OTHER RELEVANT FACTS**

12.1 None.

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**Background Papers:** None

**Contact Officer:** Interim Environmental Health Manager Tel: 01684 272155  
Email: [kath.stent@teWKesbury.gov.uk](mailto:kath.stent@teWKesbury.gov.uk)

**Appendices:** 1 - Licensing Audit Action Plan.  
2 – Hackney Carriage Tariff.