

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO LICENSING COMMITTEE

meeting date: TUESDAY, 23 MARCH 2021
title: LICENSING ENFORCEMENT UPDATE
submitted by: MARSHAL SCOTT – CHIEF EXECUTIVE
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1 PURPOSE

1.1 To inform Committee of the current arrangements for enforcement in respect of the Council's responsibilities under the Licensing Act 2003.

1.2 Relevance to the Council's ambitions and priorities:

- Community Objectives – }
- Corporate Priorities – } Consideration of these issues will promote the Council's aim to be a well-managed Council.
- Other Considerations – }

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Members will recall approval of the Council's Statement of Licensing Policy 2021-2026 by Full Council on 15 December 2020. Included within that statement is a brief section on enforcement, emphasising the importance of partnership with the Police and other statutory bodies, and seeking to adopt a targeted approach in relation to high risk premises, and providing for a lighter touch in relation to low risk premises.

2.2 The Council's establishment was increased in 2020 in relation to planning and licensing enforcement from the equivalent of 1 full time post to 1½ full time posts. The Council was successful in recruiting a full time Planning and Licensing Enforcement Officer with vast experience of licensing in the local area. The other officer in post also has extensive experience of regulatory work.

3 ISSUES

3.1 The volume of licensing enforcement work has been relatively low during the Covid-19 pandemic. However, it is anticipated that this will alter as hospitality venues re-open with the incremental relaxation of the lockdown. This increased volume is likely to coincide with spring, which is a time when the number of planning enforcement complaints also tends to increase.

3.2 With the increase in the establishment, it is envisaged that there will be the opportunity for increased liaison with licence holders, to endeavour to educate them at an early stage and to try to reduce the need for formal action. However, such action is taken where necessary, if evidence is available of breach of conditions or a failure to uphold the licensing objectives. Where appropriate, enforcement staff will work in conjunction with the police, trading standards and environmental health officers to investigate issues.

3.3 A number of initiatives are under consideration, including:-
a) reintroduction of Pubwatch (with virtual meetings and less emphasis on banning individuals)
b) increased working relationship with the Police and liaison in relation to available legislation.

- c) closer working relationship with the Security Industry Authority and with SIA registered door staff
- d) closer working relationship with LCC Trading Standards with regard to allegations of underage sales including test purchasing
- e) evening visits to and checks at licensed premises including late night refreshment establishments
- f) additional structured meetings with licence holders of new premises before they open and with new DPSs where responsibilities and expectations can be discussed and agreed.

4 RISK ASSESSMENT

4.1 The approval of this report may have the following implications:

- Resources – No implications identified.
- Technical, Environmental and Legal – No implications identified.
- Political – No implications identified.
- Reputation – No implications identified.
- Equality & Diversity – No implications identified.

CONCLUSION

5.1 Committee is asked to note the content of the report.



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BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

For further information please ask for Stephen Barker extension 3216.