
Licensing and Protection Panel

Report of the meeting held on 25th June 2013

Matters for Information

1. FOOD SAFETY SERVICE PLAN 2013/14

The Panel has considered an executive summary of the proposed Service Plan for Food Safety 2013/14. The Plan has been developed to comply with the requirements of the Food Standards Agency and incorporates the aims and objectives of the service, the resources available and a review of work undertaken during the previous year.

Approval of the Plan is reserved to Council and as such was approved at the meeting on 26th June 2013.

2. HEALTH AND SAFETY ENFORCEMENT PLAN 2013/14

The Panel has endorsed the content of the Service Plan for Health and Safety Enforcement for 2013/14. The Plan has been developed in accordance with guidance issued by the Health and Safety Executive.

The Panel has noted that as a consequence of an unplanned reduction in staff resources and the allocation of Officer time to two workplace accidents, one of which had been fatal, there had been a reduction in the total number of inspections visits and revisits carried out by the service. Available resources also were directed toward high risk premises and some projects identified in the Plan were scaled down or postponed. However despite these problems the service still delivered many of the targets and outcomes identified in the 2012/13 Plan.

It was anticipated that the reduced budget for 2013/14 would be sufficient to meet the demands of the service although in the event of a complex legal case, the Panel acknowledged that additional funds would be required.

3. DRIVING STANDARDS AGENCY - DRIVER TESTING

In response to two written complaints from hackney carriage and private hire operators, the Panel has been updated on the situation regarding waiting times for Driving Standards Agency (DSA) tests for private hire and hackney carriage drivers.

Having been reminded of its previous decision to approve the transfer of driver testing from in-house to the Department of Transport's DSA from January 2012, the Panel has been advised of the benefits of using the DSA which include high standards and consistency of qualified and approved examiners. External testing also has reduced the risk to the Council of legal challenge.

Although understanding the concerns of operators and drivers, having been advised of the actions being taken by the DSA to address the situation and given the expected reforms on taxi licensing, the Panel remains of the opinion that national standards should continue to apply to testing.

4. REPRESENTATION ON ORGANISATIONS

The Panel has appointed a number of representatives to outside organisations for the ensuing Municipal Year.

5. LICENSING AND PROTECTION APPLICATIONS SUB-GROUP.

The Panel has noted details of the eleven meetings of the Applications Sub-Group that had taken place between 26th July 2012 and 15th May 2013.

6. FEES AND CHARGES

The Panel has been acquainted with details of fees and charges for licences, permits and registrations when issued by the Legal and Democratic Services Division during the period 1st April 2013 to 31st March 2014. Members noted that in order to cover its reasonable costs an increase of 2.5% has been applied to all fees, with the exception of taxi licensing which has been increased by 7.5% due to the increased costs involved.

J W Davies
Chairman