

Regulatory Committee

1.15pm, Monday, 8 January 2018

Licensing Performance Update

Item number	6.4
Report number	
Executive/routine	Executive
Wards	All
Council Commitments	

Executive Summary

Placing customers at the heart of the service and increasing customer satisfaction are key priorities for the Licensing Service. Publishing performance data is a key step in achieving transparency and responding to the needs of customers.

A performance framework was agreed at the Regulatory Committee in 2015. The Committee last received an update in [February 2017](#), and this report provides a further update on the performance to date.

Licensing Performance Update

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 It is recommended that the Regulatory Committee:
 - 1.1.1 notes the report;
 - 1.1.2 notes progress to date against agreed performance targets; and
 - 1.1.3 agrees to receive an update report in six months.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Licensing Service has undergone a comprehensive review to modernise and improve service delivery. To date this has included a full structure review, a range of improvements to customer service, installation of a new software system (APP), a major review of all fees and charges, and an ongoing workplan to update and implement licensing policy changes.
- 2.2 In addition, the Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) inspection team integrated with the service. New legislation has increased the team's responsibilities around immigration and new policies including criminal records checking.
- 2.3 The introduction of agreed performance measures and targets was a key aspect of the improvement programme. A range of performance indicators were approved by the Regulatory Committee in [February 2015](#) and these are listed in appendix 1. The list is in addition to a number of corporate targets, e.g. complaint handling and freedom of information requests. These performance indicators remain applicable today.
- 2.4 A report outlining the performance of the service is presented to Committee approximately every six months, with the last report having been considered in February 2017.
- 2.5 Demand on the service varies throughout the year, with significant peaks around major festivals. Key renewal dates can also cause surges in demand. Management of these variable service demands is an ongoing challenge for the service.

3. Main report

Measure (1) – no. applications received

- 3.1 There was an overall increase of 4% in applications received compared with last year's total, rising from 21,356 in 2015/16 to 22,141 in 2016/17. This continues a long-term trend since 2012.
- 3.2 The last three months of the year also saw an increase in demand for Taxi/Private Hire Cars and driver licences. These increased by 21% on the comparative period in the previous year. On 1 December 2016 the responsibility for checking immigration status moved from the Home Office to the Licensing Service, and a new policy on criminal conviction checking was introduced. It may be that the drivers were seeking licences prior to the date these policies were implemented.
- 3.3 The number of applications received from April to November 2017 is attached at Appendix 3. The total number of applications over that period is just over 13,500.

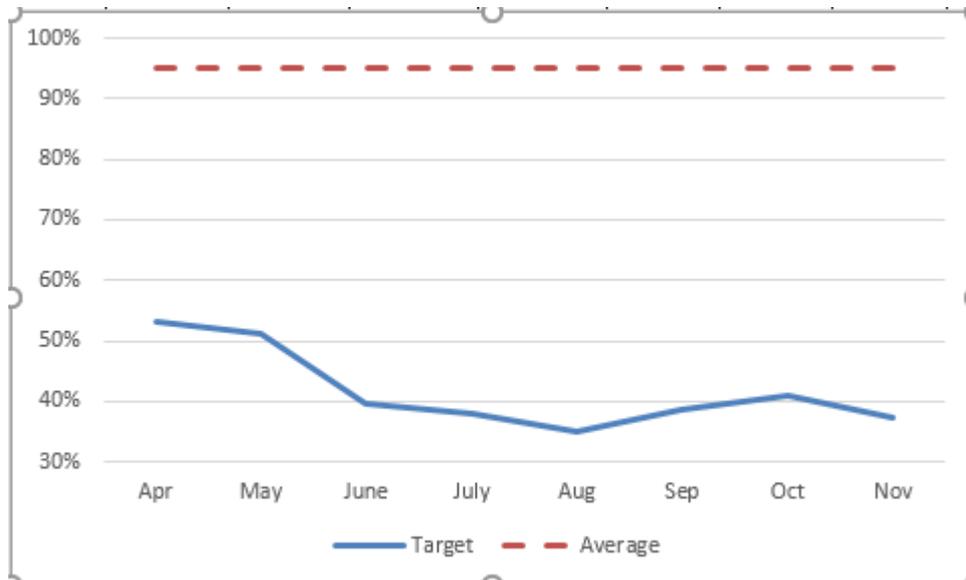
Measure (2) – time taken to process applications

Table 1: Applications completed within 72 days (target: 90%)



Measure (3): Time taken from application receipt to sending out consultation requests to relevant services

Table 2: Applications completed within 7 days (target: 95%)



3.5 The combination of factors described below had a major impact on service performance over the period:

- Pressures discussed above affected the ability of the service to maintain the delivery standards and which affected the key performance indicators.
- The introduction of new statutory duties in relation to the Immigration Act 2016 - all licensed drivers (circa 5,500) now require a personal interview as part of the application process. This was the subject of a report to the Regulatory Committee on [19 September 2016](#). Interviews commenced on 1 December 2016. The detailed preparation, system and process redesign required to implement these checks had a significant impact on workload and affected performance.
- Process improvements in preparation for the imminent 'channel shift', which will provide online application functionality and payment facilities had to be completed in order to meet Council deadlines. The functionality had to be tested, and the significant investment was required to complete a data cleansing exercise. This work, which is essential preparation for future service improvements, is complete. The testing and data cleansing will need to be reviewed again when the project progresses.
- All student halls of residence, flats and purpose built accommodation renew their HMO licences on 31 December each year. This front-loads the application process, and the service is challenged to meet the demand of the very short timescales in this area.

- Integration of the Inspection Team from Private Rented Services into the Licensing Service meant that some service redesign activities required to be undertaken and this affected service levels.
- Following the move to a new virtual platform, a negative impact on the ICT system was discovered. This created additional work whilst an alternative solution was found. This significantly affected performance. Members are assured that ICT and CGI are working with the service to resolve any outstanding issues.
- The Council Transformation programme had previously restricted the Private Rented Services team. Work was being entered onto a system which was then required to be integrated with the Licensing ICT system. This continued until December 2016, meaning that six months' work had been entered on an incompatible system. This had to be re-entered onto the Licensing ICT system during this period.

Service improvements

3.6 The service is committed to achieving consistent and sustained high standards of performance. Work is underway to ensure that the service in future will meet the service demand and improvements will include:

- ICT improvements;
- Service 'channel shift' imminent;
- Improved and increased communication with trade groups; and
- Regular customer satisfaction surveys.

4. Measures of success

4.1 A range of performance measures are in place to improve performance and deliver excellent customer service:

- More efficient service;
- Improved response times; and
- Improved customer satisfaction.

5. Financial impact

5.1 The service activity outlined in this report are met from the Place directorate budget and income from licensing activities is ring-fenced for the administration of licences and does not form part of the Council's revenue budget.

6. Risk, policy, compliance and governance impact

- 6.1 The agreed reports and performance measures improve the governance of the Licensing Service, they reduce risk and improve the transparency of service performance.

7. Equalities impact

- 7.1 The contents and recommendations neither contribute to, nor detract from, the delivery of the three Public Sector Equality Duties
- 7.2 The contents and recommendations described in the report do not deliver any outcomes relating to the ten areas of rights, nor do they enhance or infringe them.

8. Sustainability impact

- 8.1 There is no environmental impact arising from the contents of this report.

9. Consultation and engagement

- 9.1 Not applicable.

10. Background reading/external references

- 10.1 [Licensing Review and Performance](#) February 2015
- 10.2 [Licensing Performance Update](#) November 2015
- 10.3 [Licensing Performance Update](#) June 2016
- 10.4 [Licensing Performance Update](#) February 2017

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11. Appendices

11.1 Performance measures

11.2 No. applications received Apr 2017 – Nov 2017

Appendix 1

Measure	Indicator	Target
1. The total number of licence applications received	Under headings of HMO, Taxi and Civic (applications). Compared to previous years.	N/A
2. The time to complete the processing of applications	Percentage completed within 72 days using Civic, Liquor and Taxi/PHC licence types.	90% within 72 days
3. Time taken from application receipt to sending out requests for a consultation response to all services relevant to each application	Percentage completed within 7 days using the main licence types.	95% within 7 days

Appendix 2

2016/17	November	December	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	Total
Civic	296	220	341	213	268	184	369	299	285	251	122	251	246	3345
HMO	595	952	498	537	629	325	251	300	270	344	331	324	549	5905
Liquor/Gam	453	425	510	512	446	491	475	438	500	554	630	580	505	6519
Taxi	665	491	490	562	730	465	629	606	496	506	476	608	682	7406
Total	2009	2088	1839	1824	2073	1465	1724	1643	1551	1655	1559	1763	1982	23175

