

Licensing and Regulatory Committee Annual Report 2022/2023

This is my second annual report as Chair of the Licensing and Regulatory Committees.

I would like to thank all the members of the Committees and Sub-Committees for their support, assistance and patience in dealing with some difficult and complex issues. I would also like to thank officers from Democratic Services, Legal and Licensing and Regulatory Services. The smooth working of the committees and sub-committees is due to the experience, skill and diligence provided by Jane Crighton, so special thanks to Jane.

The work of each of the Committees during 2022/23 is summarised below, together with an indication of the areas the Regulatory Committee would be focussing on in 2023/24.

Councillor Keith McLean
Chair

Licensing Committee

(a) Fee Levels

The authority reviewed the fee levels it charges under the Gambling Act 2005 to ensure they remained reasonable in line with the legislation and guidance available. Revised fees will come into effect in April 2023.

(b) Licensing Sub-Committee

The Sub-Committee sat twelve times in the last year to consider the following applications:

- (i) 8 x New Premises Licences.
- (ii) 3 x Variation to a Premises Licence.
- (iii) 1 x Review of a Premises Licence.

of which ten licences were granted with conditions; one was granted without conditions; and one was upheld.

A number of hearings were arranged but cancelled at late notice following resolution of concerns prior to consideration by the Sub-Committee.

- (c) The Licensing team have undertaken a project to ensure online retailers of alcohol are appropriately licensed. Further work will continue next year and perhaps beyond due to the change in shopping habits.
- (d) The Licensing team are currently undertaking work to ensure premises supplying Late Night Refreshment are appropriately licensed, visiting 60 venues. As above, further work will continue next year and perhaps beyond due to the change in shopping habits.

- (e) The Licensing team played a significant role in the public safety, event management, and permissions in respect of the Women's Euros held at Stadium MK in July 2022, the Red Bull Home Run in December 2022 and are currently processing a new premises licence for the National Bowl.
- (f) A test purchase programme for age restricted goods is being undertaken across the city.

Licensing Committee Services 2023/24 Plan

The day to day work of the team will continue, but the following item will be woven into the work as a project:

Statutory Review of Statement of Licensing Principles (Licensing Act)

Regulatory Committee

Licensing Element of Regulatory Services

- (a) Regulatory Fees
 - A review of most non-statutory Regulatory fees was undertaken for implementation in April 2023.
 - The new fees have been calculated to ensure cost recovery.
- (b) The Regulatory Committee endorsed a revised Street Trading Policy for Milton Keynes.
- (c) The Regulatory Committee endorsed a revised Scrap Metal Policy for Milton Keynes.
- (d) The Regulatory Committee will consider a revised Sexual Entertainment Venue Policy at its meeting in March 2023.
- (e) Regulatory Sub-Committee
 - The Sub-Committee sat twice in the last year to consider a Street Trading Consent renewal and a Scrap Metal Licence renewal.

Regulatory Services 2023/24 Plan

The day to day work of the Regulatory team will continue, but the following items will be woven into the work as projects:

- (a) Children's Performance, Chaperone and Work Permit Policy
 - To complete a review in 2023.
- (b) To undertake a project regarding the correct regulation of skin piercing premises and persons within Milton Keynes.
- (c) To inspect all scrap metal dealers in Milton Keynes in 2023/24.

Taxi Licensing

Introduction

2022/23 has been a very busy year for the taxi and private hire trade in Milton Keynes due to the post Covid-19 economic recovery and subsequent Council policy initiatives on signage, advertising, fares, fees and carbon reduction.

Regulatory Committee Outcomes

1. In February 2022 the regulatory committee approved¹ a new door signage policy where the Council supplies the door signs for private hire vehicles at a cost of £3.50 each. The new door signs are currently being issued to each private hire vehicle proprietor on the grant / renewal of their licence and should be fully implemented by July 2023.
2. In July 2022 minor policy changes were ratified by the Regulatory Committee in regard to driver exemptions and the age of wheelchair accessible vehicles. These changes were made in accordance with section 5.1.1 of the policy as they came into operation in April 2022.
3. In July 2022 the Regulatory Committee decided to procure an unmet demand survey in regard to the hackney carriage vehicle limit. The Committee will consider the survey results in 2023/24.
4. In July 2022 the Regulatory Committee approved² hackney carriage fare increases of 20% (Tariff 1) and 10% (Tariff 2). These increases were requested by the hackney carriage trade and there were no public objections to them.
5. In July 2022 the Regulatory Committee approved³ third-party (commercial) advertising on private hire vehicles. Under this policy operators and private hire vehicle proprietors, like hackney carriages, will be able to make an advertising application and pay a fee to the Council who will consider the proposal prior to approval.
6. In November 2022 the Regulatory Committee approved a 17% increase for driver fees and a 9% increase for vehicles⁴ and operators⁵ fees to commence on 1 April 2023. The driver increase included a 9% inflationary increase plus a further 8% increase to cover criminal record checks every six months (instead of every three years).

¹ Subject to Executive approval

² Subject to Executive approval

³ Subject to Executive approval

⁴ Subject to Executive approval

⁵ Subject to Executive approval

Taxi / Private Hire Engagement

In March 2022 the Chair and Vice-Chairs of the Regulatory Committee, Cabinet member for Customer Services and officers met with the taxi and private hire trade to discuss proposed policy changes regarding the hackney carriage vehicle limit and licensing more electric / hydrogen powered vehicles by 2030.

In November 2022 the Chair and Vice-Chairs of the Regulatory Committee, Cabinet member for Customer Services and officers met with the Milton Keynes Taxi Association and discussed:

- the proposed hackney carriage survey;
- Station Square toilet;
- ranks;
- communicating with officers;
- fees;
- tariff fares; and
- signage.

Summary

The changes made in 2022/23 will continue to provide a safe way to travel for the people of Milton Keynes and its visitors. These changes will also benefit the taxi and private hire trade by potentially increasing their income in order to cope with cost-of-living increases.

Proposed work packages for 2023/24 will include:

- a review the unmet demand survey results on the hackney carriage limit and a possible recommendation to the Executive;
- promoting more electric / hydrogen powered vehicles;
- changes to driver medical assessments; and
- fees (annual).