

| REPORT TO          | ON           |
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| SCRUTINY COMMITTEE | 8 MARCH 2018 |

September 2017



| TITLE   | REPORT OF     |
|---|---------------|
| GENERAL LICENSING COMMITTEE – IMPLEMENTATION PLAN | PETER HAYWOOD |

|                              |    |
|------------------------------|----|
| Is this report confidential? | No |
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**1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

This report is intended to provide members of the Scrutiny with an explanation of the origins of the Implementation Plan; its development over the past year; and a year-end assessment of progress since the inception of the Plan in March 2017.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

Scrutiny members are requested to:

2.1 consider and comment upon the attached copy of the latest Implementation Plan.

**3. CORPORATE PRIORITIES**

The report relates to the following corporate priorities

|   |  |  |   |
|---|--|--|---|
| Clean, green and safe                                     |  | Strong and healthy communities               |   |
| Strong South Ribble in the heart of prosperous Lancashire |  | Efficient, effective and exceptional council | x |

**4. BACKGROUND TO THE REPORT**

4.1 During 2015, South Ribble Borough Council’s Licensing Section was the subject of considerable media and political attention as a result of concerns surrounding the processing of applications for Hackney Carriage and Private Hire driver licences.

4.2 In seeking to address these concerns, the work of the Licensing Section has been subjected to a number of audit exercises. These include reports from:

- South Ribble Borough Council Internal Audit team;
- South Ribble Borough Council Scrutiny members; and
- Wilkin Chapman solicitors.

4.3 In addition, during March 2017 the Council invited Commissioner Mary Ney of Rotherham MBC to undertake an evaluation of this authority’s Licensing procedures against national best practice. Commissioner Ney (who had responsibility for ensuring that Rotherham MBC worked closely with the police to disrupt criminality and to support robust law enforcement)

produced a checklist of good practice for Licensing teams; this was also studied and included in the Implementation Plan as appropriate.

- 4.4 All of the above reports identified in sections 4.2 and 4.3 above approached the concerns about the Section's work from a slightly different perspective. For instance, the Internal Audit report tended to focus on the officer implementation of processes to ensure that licences were granted appropriately, whereas the Wilkin Chapman report and input from Commissioner Ney emphasised other aspects such as the importance of member training and data sharing.
- 4.5 The content of all these reports was equally valid but, given their alternative perspectives, it was considered necessary to pull the contents of the differing documents together into a composite action plan. The result of officers' efforts is attached for members' consideration as Appendix 1.

## **5. IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**

5.1 The first version of the Implementation Plan was presented to members of the General Licensing Committee in March 2017. It consisted of 30 items, which were "RAG rated" (Red / Amber / Green) to facilitate members' consideration of the rate of progress against stated deadlines. The first version presented to members showed that 5 items were rated as green (complete); 12 were rated as amber (in progress); and 13 items were still to be commenced.

5.2 Since March 2017, the Implementation Plan has been through 24 iterations and – as an evolving document – the number of actions has risen to 33. The three items added over the course of 2017 are:

- D11 (relating to the revised format for hearing panels consisting of 3 elected members);
- D12 (introduction of a Mobile Homes Licensing Policy); and
- T9 (forthcoming review of Gambling Policy).

5.3 Given that the Plan is flexible and required to respond to changes in circumstances, other changes have been adopted throughout the last 12 months – eg in light of resource constraints it has been necessary to change certain timescales in order to reflect matters of the highest priority.

5.4 The Plan has been presented to members of the General Licensing Committee for consideration and monitoring on a regular basis. Members have been generally supportive of officers in terms of progress made against the Plan.

5.5 Of the 33 actions identified in the current Plan:

- 25 are now shown as green / complete (76%);
- 5 are shown as amber / in progress (15%); and
- 3 are yet to be commenced (9%).

## **6. SUMMARY**

6.1 It is pleasing to report that steady incremental progress has been made in implementing the Implementation Plan over the past 12 months. Collectively, officers and members have worked hard to arrive at the point where the overwhelming majority of actions can now be identified as complete (76%) with a further 15% in progress. The 3 items still to be commenced are all resource-intensive and their implementation will require a full-time manager to be in post. Given resource constraints, this is a commendable effort which has led

to the introduction of more robust administrative procedures and a safer environment for local residents.

## 7. WIDER IMPLICATIONS AND BACKGROUND DOCUMENTATION

### 7.1 Comments of the Statutory Finance Officer

The report relates to progress made on the implementation plan and therefore there are no direct financial implications. The costs of the Licensing service, including the Head of Licensing post are included in the Council's revenue budget forecasts.

### 7.2 Comments of the Monitoring Officer

Officers and members have worked hard in the last 12 months to achieve the majority of actions identified within the implementation report. It is imperative that this work continues, so as to ensure that the Licensing Section meets its statutory obligations.

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Other implications:</b>                   |  |
| ▶ <b>Risk</b>                                | It is imperative that the Implementation Plan is implemented, thereby enabling the Licensing Section to continue to improve its process and procedures and demonstrate that statutory obligations are being met. |
| ▶ <b>Equality &amp; Diversity</b>            | None   |
| ▶ <b>HR &amp; Organisational Development</b> | None   |
| ▶ <b>Property &amp; Asset Management</b>     | None   |
| ▶ <b>ICT / Technology</b>                    | None   |

## 8. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Appendix 1 – Implementation Plan V24

SMT Member's Name – Peter Haywood  
Job Title – Revenues Manager

|                |                 |                  |
|----------------|-----------------|------------------|
| Report Author: | Telephone:      | Date:            |
| Peter Haywood  | 01772<br>625575 | 20 February 2018 |