

Summary of progress made against the Licensing Team's key strategic and operational business objectives during 2021/22

COVID-19

The team continued to focus on supporting the recovery of the hospitality sector post-pandemic, developing a strategy to assist businesses as trading recommenced. The City of London Alfresco Eating and Drinking Policy was reviewed and updated in July 2021 and approved by your Committee. A review of the Safety Thirst Scheme is underway, taking into consideration measures that will assist businesses to recover. The revised Scheme is expected to be fully implemented by July 2022.

Licence fees

The financial implications for licensing income due to the pandemic were determined and used to inform the review of fees for Gambling, Sex Establishments, Street Trading and MST licences. Proposals for the revised fees were presented to and approved by the relevant Committees. A major review of licence fees for tables and chairs on the highway is in process, awaiting further information on potential government plans to maintain some form of pavement licences, based upon the Business and Planning Act 2020.

Licensing Policies

The City of London's Licensing Policy was reviewed and a revised five-year Policy commencing in January 2022 was produced and approved by your Committee in July 2021. The review process considered the Counter Terrorism Security Advisor's advice and the potential implications of areas being determined as cumulative impact zones.

Online application forms

Currently, Gov.UK provide many of the online application forms. This was due to end in March 2022 but has now been extended with the probability that a new Government scheme will take its place. Under the circumstances, plans for an in-house system have been suspended awaiting confirmation of the Government's intentions.

Petticoat Lane Market

Good progress was made in relation to the regeneration the market with officers playing an active role in the project. Temporary licences have been issued to traders and the top end of the market has now been filled. This includes food stalls following the installation of appropriate electricity supplies. Timescales for many of the project's objectives are dependent upon action by third parties, and further relevant actions will be taken when possible.

Operational objectives

The team met the statutory requirements for the administration of new/renewal applications and associated enforcement activity in relation to the following licence types: Premises; Massage and Special Treatment (MST); Tables and Chairs; Gambling; Street Trading; and Miscellaneous. As charity collections gradually re-commenced following the pandemic, officers liaised with the City of London Police with regard to illegal collections.