

2024 NTBCC AGM - Licensing Annual Report

Alcohol Licensing

Following up on last year's positive decision by the Licensing Board to start webcast the business section of their meetings, sadly this hasn't been extended further – namely to individual applications. There's been another small improvement however, whereby anyone wishing to make their representation directly to the Board can now choose to do so in person, or remotely.

The processing of Alcohol licence applications was suspended for much of H2 2023, seemingly to redirect all effort from the Licensing Service teams onto tackling the large volumes of STL Licensing applications, upon the STL Licensing scheme came into effect on 1 October 2023. (see Civic Licensing)

The new **Statement of Licensing Policy** came into effect on **30 November 2023**. The changes were fair and on balance, representative of NTBCC's views.

Overprovision forms the subject of a **Supplementary Statement of Licensing Policy** and is getting assessed separately. The 2018 Assessment of Overprovision continues to form part of the Board's Statement of Licensing Policy meanwhile. Overall, the presumption against grant in an area of overprovision appears to have led to higher standards for any business seeking to trade or vary their operations, for the applications that were monitored within NTBCC area. Consequently, NTBCC supports this process and believes that it should continue, especially in mixed use areas.

A trend appears to be developing whereby premises seek to add an outdoor area to their licensed footprint. Could this be the inadvertent consequence of the Licensing Board's **crackdown on repeated applications for Occasional Licences** that would have been running in excess of 6 months? (and been supplemented by Tables & Chairs permits so as to serve alcohol outside previously)

Last, **Planning Section 50 Certificates** were added to the Council's Planning Weekly Decision List, at NTBCC's request. This was intended to provide better visibility on upcoming Alcohol licensing applications. However, this improvement was short-lived and needs to be reinstated.

Civic Licensing

The **Short-Term Let (STL) Licensing** scheme came into effect on **1 October 2023**. By the end of October, the Council's Licensing Service had received a total of 3,600 applications, of which around half were for entire properties being used as STL. An annual review will get carried out later this year, after 12 months of operation of operation of policy and enforcement. No issues have been observed or reported within NTBCC area. A key concern was about the Council's ability to assess that applications for Home Letting weren't made to disguise Secondary Letting, so as to flout the requirement of obtaining the associated planning permission. We were given some reassurance that this hadn't been observed by the Council.

All hosts and operators must have a licence by **1 January 2025**. This had to be further delayed as the result of the subsequent Judicial Review that took place, and concluded in early December.

NTBCC also responded to the consultation on **Street Trading, Markets Operators and Mobile Trading**. The outcome of this consultation is unknown however.

Last, the long awaited upgrade of the **Licensing system** 'Civica APP' to 'Civica Cx' appears to have been long forgotten about?

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