

Briefing Notes

Committee name: Licensing Committee

Date: 06 September 2017

Responsible officer: Philip Cooper

This note contains information to keep Members informed of matters relating to the work of the Cabinet or a committee but where no decisions from Members are needed.

If Members have questions relating to matters shown, they are asked to contact the Officer indicated.

Enforcement and Compliance (taxi and private hire) Update The Festival - March 2017

Background

The 2017 Cheltenham Festival ("The Festival") took place between 14th and 17th March, attracting more than 260,000 people to the racecourse with a consequential impact on the town centre and other areas of the Borough. Many of the people using the racecourse and the town over the 4 day event made use of Cheltenham's taxi and private hire trade. For illustrative purposes, the numbers of people using the Promenade taxi rank alone during the Festival were as follows:

Tuesday	1233
Wednesday	1411
Thursday	2107
Friday	3230

With the popularity of the Festival growing each year, there has been a concerted effort by the council, the police and the racecourse to proactively manage the event. As in previous years, CBC council officers, with support from Gloucestershire Constabulary and licensing enforcement officers from Gloucester City and Tewkesbury Borough Councils, worked day and night to target, among others, unlicensed taxi drivers who came to Cheltenham to illegally ply their trade. Several members of the Licensing Committee accompanied the officers on their duties.

A total of 15 individual drivers were reported for the offence of illegally plying for hire, which is the highest number of any race meeting in Cheltenham to date.

Subsequent action

Of 15 drivers investigated, officers successfully identified and made contact with all but one. 11 were interviewed under caution under the provisions of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act (PACE), of whom:

- 1 accepted a formal caution for the offence
- 6 were not proceeded with for evidential reasons, i.e. there was insufficient evidence and / or it would not be in the public interest to proceed
- 4 have been prosecuted for the offence

Of the 4 prosecutions, 2 have so far been heard in court, with the following outcomes:

Case 1. Guilty plea by letter. Fined £100 for plying for hire, £300 for driving without the correct insurance and 6 penalty points. He was also ordered to pay £30 victim surcharge and £250 costs.

Case 2. Guilty plea by letter. Fined £200 for plying for hire, £700 for driving without the correct insurance and 6 penalty points. He was also ordered to pay £70 victim surcharge and £250 costs.

The remaining 2 cases are awaiting court dates. Once the outcome of these is known, officers will prepare a media release as well as a newsletter for the taxi and private hire trade.

Contact Officer: Philip Cooper

Tel No: 01242 775200

Email: phil.cooper@cheltenham.gov.uk