

# **General Licensing Committee**

**21 May 2025**

Publication of draft Pleasure Boat, Vessel and Boatperson Licensing Policy for consultation

## **For Decision**

**Portfolio Holder:**

Cllr G Taylor, Health and Housing

**Local Councillor(s):**

All Councillors

**Executive Director:**

R. Partridge, Acting Director of Public Health and Prevention

Report Author: John Newcombe

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**Report Status:** Public

**Brief Summary:**

To present the General Licensing Committee with a report to consider a new Pleasure Boat, Vessel and Boatperson Licensing Policy for public consultation.

**Recommendations:**

The committee is recommended to:

(a) agree the proposed draft Pleasure Boat, Vessel and Boatperson Licensing Policy for public consultation.

(b) authorise the Service Manager Licensing & Community Safety to make any further minor editorial changes to the proposed policy, prior to the document being issued for consultation

## **Reasons for Recommendations:**

A new draft Pleasure Boat, Vessel and Boatperson Licensing Policy has been drafted by officers to be published for consultation which would be fair, consistent and equitable across the Dorset Council area. This would give the Council, as Licensing Authority greater control over the licensing of pleasure craft and would ensure that all operators and boatmen are subject to the same application, enforcement and licence conditions regardless of where they trade.

There are currently existing licensing arrangements for Pleasure Boat Licensing in the former Purbeck and East Dorset Council administrative areas. Officers intend to introduce a new Pleasure Boat, Vessel and Boatperson Licensing Policy covering the whole of the Dorset Council administrative area.

### **1. Background**

- 1.1 Pleasure Boat Licensing is covered under s.84 of the Public Health Acts Amendment Act 1907 (as amended).
- 1.2 Arrangements for pleasure boat licensing exist in two of the predecessor Council areas; Purbeck and East Dorset. There are also separate licensing arrangements in place within our Harbour Areas at Weymouth, Bridport and Lyme Regis. There are currently no arrangements for pleasure boat licensing in other parts of the Dorset Council administrative area.
- 1.3 An overarching pleasure boat licensing policy is therefore required in order to ensure that watercraft let out to hire is safe and the boatmen who captain vessels on Dorset's waterways are competent and qualified.
- 1.4 The draft policy has been prepared in consultation with the Council's Harbourmaster who is responsible for Dorset's Harbours and the Council's Food Safety and Port Health Team who are the enforcing authority under the Health & Safety at Work etc. Act 1974.
- 1.5 Should the General Licensing Committee agree to recommend the publication of the draft policy for consultation. A full 12 week public consultation will take place which would also include existing licence holders, existing operators who may be affected, responsible authorities, partner agencies and town and parish councils.
- 1.6 Once the consultation has ended, a further report will be brought before the General Licensing Committee considering the responses received during the consultation period and any proposed amendments required as a result.

## **2. Financial Implications**

- 2.1 The introduction of the Dorset Council wide policy and associated administration and enforcement will utilise existing resources. There will be cost implications for adopting the new policy and administering the licensing regime however the fee structure will be set on a cost-recovery basis to cover the administration and processing of applications and any subsequent enforcement.

## **3. Natural Environment, Climate & Ecology Implications**

- 4.1 There are no negative implications arising from the recommendations contained within this report in terms of meeting the Council's climate change obligations.

## **4. Well-being and Health Implications**

- 5.1 There could potentially be an impact on the health and wellbeing of the public if controls are not implemented with traders operating unlicensed, and potentially unsafe pleasure craft hire or pleasure boat trips.

## **5. Other Implications**

- 6.1 There are no other implications arising from the recommendations contained within this report in terms of impacts on other service areas within the Council.

## **6. Risk Assessment**

- 7.1 HAVING CONSIDERED: the risks associated with this decision; the level of risk has been identified as:  
Current Risk: Low  
Residual Risk: Low

## **7. Equalities Impact Assessment**

- 8.1 An EqIA will be prepared as part of the policy consultation.

## **8. Appendices**

Appendix A: Predecessor Council arrangements

Appendix B: Draft Pleasure Boat, Vessel and Boatperson Licensing Policy

## **9. Background Papers**

S.94 Public Health Acts Amendment Act 1907

S.18 Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976