

Committee: Licensing & Environmental Health
Title: Enforcement & Compliance Update

Date:
Thursday
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Item for decision:
No

Summary

1.1. This Enforcement Update report is to inform the Committee of the enforcement and compliance activities carried out by Licensing Officers during the period of 1 May to 31 August 2025.

Recommendations

2.1. It is recommended that Members note the contents of this report.

Financial Implications

3.1. There are no financial implications arising from this report. The Licensing service is unique compared to other teams within Regulatory Services in that the service charges fees for the various permissions administered with the aim for the Council to be able to recover its costs.

Background Papers

4.1. None

Impact

5.1.

Communication/Consultation	None
Community Safety	Licensing matters must be dealt with within strict, statutory timescales with a clear separation of duties between the officer 'administering' an application and the officer acting as the responsible authority, with a view to avoiding corporate risk and more importantly protecting the public. In addition with respect to enforcement activity the Council must act in a fair and even handed manner.

<p>Equalities</p>	<p>Under the general equality duty as set out in the Equality Act 2010, public authorities are required to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation as well as advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.</p> <p>The protected grounds covered by the equality duty are: age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, and sexual orientation. The equality duty also covers marriage and civil partnership, but only in respect of eliminating unlawful discrimination.</p> <p>The law requires that this duty to have due regard be demonstrated in decision making processes. Assessing the potential impact on equality of proposed changes to policies, procedures and practices is one of the keyways in which public authorities can demonstrate that they have had due regard to the aims of the equality duty.</p> <p>Licensing Policies and Licensing decisions all have regard to the Council's Equalities duties.</p>
<p>Health and Safety</p>	<p>Licensing matters must be dealt with within strict, statutory timescales with a clear separation of duties between the officer 'administering' an application and the officer acting as the responsible authority, with a view to avoiding corporate risk and more importantly protecting the public.</p>
<p>Human Rights/Legal Implications</p>	<p>Unlike most other areas of 'regulation' there are distinct responsibilities on the Council in its role as the 'licensing authority' under many different areas of licensing. This is not just simply relating to the processing of applications, but also includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • setting the local framework through a statement of licensing policy • considering applications with a view to promoting the licensing objectives under

	<p>the Licensing and Gambling Acts, or the public protection and economic growth aspects of other licensing regimes. • undertaking inspection and enforcement activities to ensure conditions of licences are being met, and to ensure that any operator whom requires a licence has one • maintaining the required statutory registers.</p> <p>The principal work areas, the Licensing Act and Taxi and Private Hire regimes set out very clearly a legislated obligation for the Council to carry out its duties to promote the licensing objectives (preventing crime and disorder, preventing nuisance, public safety and protecting children). The statutory guidance also requires that the Council be sufficiently resourced to achieve this aim.</p>
Sustainability	None
Ward-specific impacts	None
Workforce/Workplace	None

Situation

6.1. This report outlines the statistics and general activities of the compliance and enforcement team during the latest period of the 1 May 2025 to 31 August 2025.

6.2. There were an approximate total of 43 proactive taxi and private hire related visits to a range of sites including schools, Stansted Airport, Audley End Railway station as well as towns in and out of the Uttlesford District. This amounted to 51 checks of drivers and 103 checks of vehicles licensed by UDC.

6.3. Of the checks carried out on drivers, there were a range of lower-level compliance issues identified including the failure to display ID.

6.4. Of the checks carried out on vehicles, there were again a range of lower-level compliance issues identified which includes failure to display signage and/or failure to display signage in the appropriate place. However, one vehicle was suspended with immediate effect for having been found with a tyre displaying a tread depth below the legal limit.

6.5. The compliance issue referenced above did not warrant further action beyond verbal and/or written warnings, though will be considered in the event of further breaches.

6.6. 21 of the checks relating to drivers and vehicles were conducted as part of the 'taxi meter day' provided by Officers for proprietors of UDC Hackney Carriage vehicles to have their fare meters amended following the Committee's approval of a new tariff earlier in the year.

6.7. There were an additional 7 visits made to the offices of Private Hire Operators where their records were inspected for compliance with UDC rules and regulations. There were no concerns raised resulting from these inspections.

6.8. Of the 9 visits made to Stansted Airport, 6 were dedicated 'touting' operations in partnership with TfL and Police colleagues. 8 individuals were found to be suspected of touting, all of whom were either unlicensed or registered with TfL.

6.9. With regards to licensed premises, further Pubwatch meetings have taken place for the Saffron Walden, Great Dunmow and Stansted Mountfitchet areas and have had regular attendance from Licensing and Community Safety Officers, providing a valuable opportunity for information sharing between the premises and partners.

6.10. Visits were made to 78 premises where Officers checked for compliance with licence conditions and advice was given to staff where necessary. Visits were a combination of ad-hoc and in response to issues such as the failure to display the licence and the status of the DPS. Members are advised that no significant issues have been identified, and any lesser matters have been dealt with through sufficient Officer engagement.

6.11. One Personal Licence was revoked by the Licensing Panel following a request by Essex Police after the individual concerned had been convicted of drink driving, which is considered as a 'relevant offence' under the legislation.

6.12. In respect of hackney carriage and private hire drivers, there have been 4 licence revocations and 175 licence suspensions. These are broken down as follows;

- 2 of the revocations were made by the Licensing Panel on the 7 August, whilst the other 3 were made using delegated powers of the Environmental Health Manager (Commercial) in conjunction with the Chair & Vice-Chair of the Licensing & EH Committee.
- Of the 175 suspensions approximately 74% were as a result of failure to maintain an active subscription to the DBS Update Service. Most of the remaining suspensions were due to medical reasons.

6.13. In respect of licensed hackney carriage and private hire vehicles, there have been 131 licence suspensions.

- 84 (64%) vehicles were suspended following either the failure of their compliance tests or having not taken a compliance test by the required deadline. The other reasons range from failure to provide evidence of valid insurance and from damage suffered to the vehicle.

6.14. A total of 22 recorded complaints have been received during this period. These are broken down as follows;

- 16 complaints relating to drivers. The majority of these were found to be unsubstantiated, and those which were substantiated resulted in minor action dealt with at Officer level.
- 6 complaints relating to licensed premises. Some of these remain ongoing though at the time of writing there is no evidence to suggest any licensing offences.

6.15 It is good practice to provide an overview of information to Committee Members, which will thus enable Members to be informed about licence enforcement action including suspensions and revocations, and future work planned by the licensing area.

6.16 This information enables Members to be informed and to aid decision making in the future.