

EAST HERTS COUNCIL

LICENSING COMMITTEE – 13 MARCH 2014

REPORT BY DIRECTOR NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

9. HERTFORD TAXI MARSHALS SCHEME REVIEW AND PROPOSAL FOR THE 2014-2015 SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT

WARD(S) AFFECTED: ALL

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**Purpose/Summary of Report:**

- To detail the success of the scheme, review the current Service Level Agreement (SLA) and consider any recommendations for 2014-2015 agreement.

**RECOMMENDATION FOR LICENSING COMMITTEE:** that

<b>(A)</b>	<b>Members make any recommendations they see necessary in respect of the 2014–2015 Service Level Agreement (SLA).</b>
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1.0 Background

1.1 A taxi marshal pilot scheme was introduced in Fore Street, Hertford in October 2005 on Friday and Saturday nights between the hours of 09.00pm and 03.00am. A new taxi rank was approved which incorporated the use of bus shelters for inclement weather after buses ceased to run.

1.2 The rank was quickly taken up by East Herts licensed Hackney Carriages who realised the benefits of a controlled rank for late night revellers.

1.3 People using the late night economy of Hertford also quickly realised the benefits of a marshalled rank where order was maintained and taxis were readily available.

1.4 Taxi Marshals have proved a valuable tool in tackling anti-social behaviour and tackling crime late at night when the pubs and clubs close, helping with dispersal from the town centre. The careful location and policing of the taxi rank has alleviated some of the anti-social behaviour in the area.

- 1.5 It was noticeable that the age of the people using Hertford late at night increased as people of all ages enjoyed the safer environment.
- 1.6 The Hackney Carriage drivers now enjoy a safer environment and as consequence remain working later into the night to ensure the safe dispersal of people from Hertford town centre.
- 1.7 The 2013 – 2014 Service Level Agreement (SLA) provides for two taxi marshals to be present at the Fore Street rank every Friday and Saturday night between 22:00 and 03:00.
- 1.8 The SLA is between Hertfordshire County Council, East Herts Council and Bradsec Securities who provide the marshals. 50% of the funding for the current financial year has been provided by Hertford Town Council which was then match funded (50%) by Hertfordshire County Council.
- 1.9 Bradsec Securities invoice East Herts Council on a monthly basis and the hours of the taxi marshals are checked against those recorded by the CCTV control room. Once the hours are verified the invoice is paid and then the Town Council are recharged for that amount.
- 2.0 Report
- 2.1 It has been identified that the current SLA does not contain any flexibility in relation to busy evenings in Hertford that don't fall on either a Friday or Saturday.
- 2.2 This has been discussed at Pubwatch and raised by the Police as an issue for Hertford on Sundays before Bank Holiday Monday's, Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve.
- 2.3 The Chair of the Licensing Committee was with the Police on New Year's Eve 2013 and witnessed for himself some of the issues that arise on these busy evenings if taxi marshals are not provided.
- 2.4 The Chair approached officers to see why marshals are not provided on these nights when the Town Centre is obviously going to be busy.
- 2.5 Officers had identified the need for taxi marshals on Christmas Eve and New Years Eve 2013 and had been in discussions with

Bradsec Securities who had confirmed they could provide marshals if requested but that this would be charged at time and a half.

- 2.6 The 2013-2014 Service Level Agreement specifically excludes any nights other than Fridays or Saturdays so additional funding needed to be sourced in order provide taxi marshals on these evenings.
- 2.7 The issue of funding was raised with Hertford Town Council but the additional funding was not forthcoming.
- 2.8 Officers have identified the following dates in 2014-2015 that would not be covered if the wording of the next SLA is not amended to include them:
- Sunday 20 April 2014, evening before Easter Monday Bank Holiday
  - Sunday 4 May 2014, evening before Early May Bank Holiday
  - Sunday 25 May 2014, evening before Spring Bank Holiday
  - Sunday 24 August 2014, evening before Summer Bank Holiday
  - Wednesday 24 December 2014, Christmas Eve
  - Wednesday 31 December 2014, New Years Eve
- 2.9 Bradsec Securities have confirmed that these additional shifts would be charged at time and a half. The total cost for these six evenings would be £1,350. This calculation is based on the current hourly rate but the hourly rate is likely to rise for the next SLA.
- 2.10 Hertfordshire County Council have been approached by officers regarding these additional evenings and have confirmed that they are currently planning to match fund 50% of the taxi marshal scheme, including the additional nights.
- 2.11 At the time of drafting the report officers have been unable to get confirmation from Hertford Town Council with regards to the additional funding to cover the six extra evenings detailed above.
- 2.12 Officers would suggest that Hertford Town Council is approached by the Chairman of the Licensing Committee and the Senior Specialist Licensing Officer to discuss the funding for the taxi marshal scheme in 2014-2015.

2.13 This will allow officers to enter negotiations regarding the SLA for the next financial year with a clear understanding of what is required.

### 3.0 Implications/Consultations

3.1 Information on any corporate issues and consultation associated with this report can be found within **Essential Reference Paper 'A'**.

### Background Papers

None.

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