

East Herts Council Report

Licensing Committee

Date of Meeting: 18 June 2025

Report by: Jonathan Geall - Head of Housing & Health

Report title: Review of licensing activity for Quarter 4 of 2024-25 financial year

Ward(s) affected: All

Summary – Quarterly reports are presented to Licensing Committee to ensure the supervision of key areas of regulation and allow the members to review the evidence to ensure the council is fulfilling its responsibilities.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR Licensing Committee:

- (a) That members review and comment on the Licensing activity from the fourth quarter of the 2024-25 financial year (01 January 2025 – 31 March 2025)**

1.0 Proposal(s)

- 1.1 That the report is considered by members of the Licensing Committee.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 The council's Licensing and Enforcement Team covers Hackney Carriage and Private Hire licensing, alcohol, entertainment and late-night refreshment licensing and notices, along with more infrequent applications relating to, among other things, scrap metal dealing, pavement licensing, street trading and gambling.
- 2.2 This report presents data from the fourth quarter of the 2024 - 2025 financial year (01 January 2025 – 31 March 2025) on processing and enforcement, delegated decisions, and on Licensing Sub Committee involvement on licences, notices, and

permits and applications including:

- alcohol, entertainment, and late-night refreshment licences under the Licensing Act 2003;
- gaming under the Gambling Act 2005;
- taxi drivers, vehicle proprietors and operators under the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 and the Town Police Clauses Act 1847.

3.0 Reason(s)

Complaints handling

- 3.1 Members have previously requested that details be provided in relation to any trends in the types of complaints received.

Licensing Act

- During Q4 there was one complaint relating to an incident of indecent exposure at a licensed venue in Hertford. Enforcement attended the premises and spoke to the premises license holder and gave advice on how to deal with safeguarding issues.

- 3.2 It is worth bearing in mind that enforcement of licensing conditions is not a statutory matter, it is a discretionary function for individual councils to choose to provide should they wish. To date, the council has chosen to have a licensing enforcement function. It is the council's part time licensing enforcement officers along with the support of the senior licensing and enforcement officer who have been undertaking increased out of hours observations in the evenings and at weekends, including into the early hours of Sunday mornings, to address the increase in complaints. Out of hours working allows officers to witness any issues and reach a conclusion regarding the validity of a complaint.

Hackney carriage and private hire

- 3.3 The enforcement team's work involves ensuring that all documentation for taxi drivers and vehicles is received, therefore ensuring licenses are valid. The enforcement team ensures that people with expired documents are suspended until they produce the required proofs.
- 3.4 Licensing Enforcement now check all the Vehicle Condition Certificates and MOT documentation to ensure that our vehicle inspection standards are being continually met. This is to ensure authorised garages are working in line with the Councils vehicle standards.
- 3.5 In Q4, no Licensing Record Points (LRP) were issued. This is the scheme which was implemented to aid in a stepped approach to compliance relating to licensed drivers, vehicles, and operators.
- 3.6 In Q4, fourteen complaints were received in relation to private hire and hackney carriage licences, these related to:
- Careless driving. Both drivers involved were spoken to and given words of advice.
 - A driver refusing to allow a passenger to pay using a card machine.
 - Damaged or faulty rooflights, which have all now been replaced.
 - Issues around Bishop's Stortford Train Station with continued complaints from a driver licensed to another

authority over issues such as raised lettering on number plates. We have spoken with all drivers concerned and resolved the issues.

Street trading and pavement licenses

3.7 In Q4 three complaints were received regarding street trading.

- Illegal street trading of meat products from an unlicensed van. The owner was spoken with and now has the correct licence in place.
- Burger van was trading without a licence in layby of A10. Visited and spoken with the owner who now has the correct licence in place.
- Ice cream van being parked too close to secondary school in Bishop's Stortford. Vendor was spoken to and reminded of the rules regarding proximity to school locations and warned to apply for Street Trading Licence.

3.8 Two complaints were received regarding pavement licenses in Q4.

- Both complaints related to furniture being stored on the highway when not in use.

Charity collections

3.9 No complaints were received in Q4.

Performance monitoring

3.10 The figures for the quarterly performance indicators for licensing for Q1, Q2 and Q3 are detailed in the table below.

Performance indicator – cumulative (reported quarterly) within the	2023/2024 target	Q4 2024-25 performance
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year unless otherwise stated		
Percentage of valid personal licences processed within 2 weeks	90%	95%
Percentage of valid temporary event notices processed within 72 hours	90%	98%
Percentage of applications for new and variation of premises licences processed within 2 calendar months (from date of validation to date of determination)	90%	100%
Percentage of driver's licences issued within 30 working days of validation	90%	100%

3.11 Performance data for Q4 can be found at **Appendix A**.

4.0 Options

4.1 To not provide the members of the Licensing Committee with quarterly reports. This option has been dismissed at previous meetings as it would not allow members to oversee this area of regulation.

5.0 Risks

5.1 None identified by author.

6.0 Implications/Consultations

Community Safety

Proper scrutiny of the work of the Licensing & Enforcement team helps to ensure that policies and procedures promote community safety.

Data Protection

None

Equalities

None

Environmental Sustainability

None

Financial

None as any work either carried out or proposed will be possible within existing budgets.

Health and Safety

Some parts of the regulatory regimes covered in this report contribute to health & safety by ensuring standards are maintained.

Human Resources

None

Human Rights

None

Legal

None

Specific Wards

None

7.0 Background papers, appendices and other relevant material

- 7.1 **Appendix A** – Performance data from 01 January 2025 – 31 March 2025. Including figures for applications and granted licences, notices, and other permissions.

Contact Member

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