

East Herts Council Report

Licensing Committee

Date of meeting: 07 January 2026

Report by: Cllr Vicky Glover-Ward, Executive Member for Planning and Growth

Report title: Review of Licensing Activity for Quarter 2 of 2025-2026 Financial Year

Ward(s) affected: (All Wards);

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 first quarter of the 2025-26 financial year (01 July 2025 - 30 September 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 first quarter of the 2025 - 2026 financial year (01 July 2025 – 30 September 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) Service Requests

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

Licensing Act

During Q2 7 service requests were received. This is related to:

- **The Mexican, 102, High St, Ware.** A-board displayed on pavement, causing pedestrian obstruction. Complainant advised to speak with Hertfordshire Highways.
- **Jacoby's, 13-15, West St, Ware.** Complaint received from the police. Loudspeakers were erected at the front of the premises in Tudor Square, for a weekend resident DJ. The DPS was visited by enforcement officers at the premises and made aware that the current premises license did not cover the premises to play music outside. A Temporary Event Notice was to be put in place for future outside DJ events. No further complaints were received after the visit.
- **Quattro Lounge, Unit 4, Bircherley Green, Hertford.** Complaint received from a resident regarding noise levels of customers from the premises. The resident asked for the licensing hours to be amended from 12am to 11pm. An email was sent to the complainant to explain that no breaches had taken place as all licensable activity had ceased at Midnight. The complainant was advised of the process of reviewing the licence.

One of the noise issues at the premises was the scraping of chairs and tables at the front of the premises. A condition on the license stated that table and chairs are to be rendered

unusable after 11pm. A visit was made to the premises by enforcement officers, and the DPS was spoken to. He was aware of the condition and was making every effort to comply with the condition. No further complaints were received after the visit.

- **Blackbirds, 15-17, Parliament Square, Hertford.**

Complaint received from a resident regarding noise issues. This was investigated and subsequently found that the premises was not in breach of their license. Noise issues were being dealt with by Environmental Health.

The premises were visited by enforcement officers on the evening of 15.08.2025 and it was noticed that a fire exit had been padlocked shut whilst the premises were open. The fire authorities were alerted, and the premises visited and spoken with. A meeting was requested with the DPS of the premises and enforcement officers visited to speak with her about storing tables and chairs on the pavement, and to discuss the padlocking of the fire exit. Both issues had been rectified before the meeting took place. No further complaints have been received.

- **The Castle PH, 38, Castle St, Bishops Stortford.**

A complaint received from a nearby resident about noise issues from a smoking area at the back of the pub, and people congregating at the front of the premises with customers leaving the premises past midnight. A meeting was arranged with the DPS of the premises with enforcement officers. The residents' issues were discussed with the DPS and how changes could be made. The DPS went away and made changes to the day-to-day running of the premises.

An email was received on 14.09.2025 from the complainant to say how much better noise levels had been since the changes were implemented. A great outcome to a noise issue for an East Herts resident.

- **Proove, Ground Floor, 3 Parliament Square, Hertford.** An anonymous complaint was received that no license was in

place at the premises. This was investigated and found to be incorrect. A transfer and change of DPS application have been made for the premises by the new owners.

- **Sawbridgeworth Football Club, Crofters, Sawbridgeworth.** An anonymous complaint was received the club was not licensed to sell alcohol. This was investigated and found to be incorrect. The premises is licensed to sell alcohol under a club premises license.

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 officers who have been undertaking increased out-of-hours observations in the evenings and at weekends, including into the early hours of Sunday mornings. Out-of-hours work 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 necessary 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 proof.
- 3.4 Licensing Enforcement checks all the Vehicle Condition Certificates (VCC) 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 council's vehicle standards.
- 3.5 In Q2, 4 Licensing Record Points (LRP) were issued to a driver. This was for illegal parking. The driver was given points for breaching a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) by parking on the pavement causing an obstruction to pedestrians near to the Bishops Stortford train station.

3.6 In Q2, 9 service requests were received in relation to private hire and hackney carriage licenses, these related to:

- A Hackney Carriage driver plying for hire at Bishops Stortford Train Station. The driver was spoken to and given 4 Licensing Record Points for breaching a Traffic Regulation Order. No further complaints were received.
- Private Hire driver using the Hackney Carriage rank to stop outside of Wetherspoons, Bishops Stortford. The driver was spoken to and given a verbal warning. No further complaints were received.
- A complaint received from a member of the public that he had been refused a taxi journey home by a driver at the front of the taxi rank, because it was a short journey. The driver was invited in for an interview and given a warning as no evidence was found he had refused the fare. Words of advice given.
- A complaint received from a driver/operator that data protection had been breached from another operator. This was investigated and the operator was given advice on how to deal with the data breach.
- 3 complaints received regarding the incorrect displaying of plates on vehicles. All drivers were contacted and asked to bring their vehicle in for an inspection. All drivers complied and no further action was taken.
- 1 complaint received that a vehicle registration plate had been repaired using a black marker. The driver was given 7 days to replace the registration plate; it was rectified within 24 hours. No further action was taken.
- Enforcement officers completed a taxi rank inspection on Friday 15th August 2025 in Hertford. At the Railway St rank, a vehicle was spotted by enforcement officers with damage to the left side of the vehicle. The owner of the vehicle was contacted and asked to bring the vehicle in for inspection. He was given 7 days to get the vehicle repaired but the driver had the vehicle repaired within 24 hours.

Street trading and pavement licenses

3.7 In Q2 two service requests were received regarding street trading.

- A complaint was received regarding a resident in Piggott's Way, Bishops Stortford selling cookies and cakes from a small shed on the boundary of their property.

This has been investigated, and evidence was found on Facebook promoting a business trading at this location. Although the business was food registered, they did not have a street trading licence in place. A letter and email were sent, and a visit took place to the address when no contact was received from the owner. This is ongoing and further enforcement action will be considered if they continue to trade without a licence.

- Hertford market flower stall - Complaint received that the stall owner was dumping rubbish in council bins. Attempts to contact the complainant have been made to get them to submit a witness statement to support the allegation but no response has been received. The stall holder has been contacted regarding the need to have a trade waste agreement in place.

3.8 Two service requests were received regarding pavement licenses in Q2.

- Tilly's Gelato, Hertford - a complaint received about tables and chairs on the highway and being moved into the service road area by customers. The pavement license that was in place has now expired and a new license needs to be applied for. Premises visited and advice given, but no application has subsequently been received. Follow-up visits are planned.
- Coffee Lab, Bishops Stortford – a complaint received from a councilor that a new café had opened in Potter St, Bishops Stortford, with table and chairs on the highway. This was investigated and the premises visited. The owner had already applied, and the application was being processed at the time.

Charity collections

3.9 No complaints were received regarding either house-to-house or street collections in Q2.

Performance monitoring

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

Performance indicator – cumulative (reported quarterly) within the year unless otherwise stated	2025/2026 target	Q2 2025-26 performance
Percentage of valid personal licences processed within 2 weeks	90%	93%
Percentage of valid temporary event notices processed within 72 hours	90%	95%
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 Q2 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 July 2025 – 30 September 2025. Including figures for applications and granted licences, notices, and other permissions.

Contact Member

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