

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
LICENSING COMMITTEE HELD IN THE
COUNCIL CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS,
HERTFORD ON WEDNESDAY 7 JANUARY
2026, AT 7.00 PM

PRESENT: Councillor M Connolly (Chair)
Councillors N Cox, T Deffley, A Holt,
S Marlow, G McAndrew and C Redfern

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Michele Aves	- Committee Support Officer
Oliver Rawlings	- Service Manager (Licensing and Enforcement)
Stephanie Tarrant	- Assistant Director for Democracy, Elections and Information Governance
Paul Thomas-Jones	- Service Manager – Environmental Health
Gina Winn	- Licensing Officer

274 APOLOGIES

There were apologies for absence from Councillors Townsend and Woolcombe, and from The Executive Member for Wellbeing.

275 MINUTES - 18 JUNE 2025

It was moved by Councillor Redfern and seconded by Councillor Marlow that the Minutes of the Licensing Committee meeting held on 18 June 2025 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

After being put to the meeting and a vote taken the motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Licensing Committee meeting held on 18 June 2025 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

276 MINUTES - LICENSING SUB-COMMITTEE, 26 SEPTEMBER 2025

It was moved by Councillor McAndrew and seconded by Councillor Marlow that the Minutes of the Licensing Sub-Committee meeting held on 26 September 2025 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

After being put to the meeting and a vote taken the motion was declared CARRIED. It was noted that Councillor Holt abstained from the vote.

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Licensing Sub-Committee meeting held on 26 September 2025 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

277 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair welcomed all to the meeting and reminded participants to use their microphones when speaking. The webcast of the meeting can be viewed at [Licensing Committee - 7 January 2026 - YouTube](#)

278 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

279 ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH REGULATED AND LICENCED ACTIVITIES PERFORMANCE UPDATE

The Service Manager (Environmental Health) introduced the report which gave an overview of the work carried out by Environmental Health. He highlighted the key points

within the report and reminded Members that in February of 2024 the Council was placed on Stage 1 of the Food Standard Agency's (FSA) Performance Improvement Process (PIP), which required the production of an action plan to address identified shortfalls. He said that following the approval and monitoring of this action plan he was pleased to report that the FSA had closed their engagement with the Council in December 2025.

The Service Manager (Environmental Health) answered questions regarding food premises, staffing resilience, performance assurance and other licensable activities.

Members were advised that all high-risk category A – C food premises were now being inspected within target times.

Members heard that the 'deep dive' review planned for the Environmental Health Department later in the year would include staff capacity and resilience, and that the team was currently being supported by both trainees and contractors (the latter as agreed by the former Chief Executive).

Members were told that reporting data gave a better understanding of the pressures on the Department, and an early warning of any failures. The Service Manager (Environmental Health) said that, due to capacity, the monitoring was currently focussed upon core operational priorities.

Members heard that with regard to 'other licensable activities', such premises were both actively inspected and inspected reactive to complaints.

The Service Manager (Environmental Health) said that he would provide further information about the next Environmental Health performance update to Members outside of the meeting and gave assurance that potential threats to the service were monitored by Leadership Team within the Corporate Risk Register.

The Chair thanked the Service Manager (Environmental Health) for his report for his team's work with the FSA, noting that the Committee had been kept fully informed of progress throughout the process. She welcomed the planned 'deep dive' of the Department and the Committee continuing to receive update reports.

Councillor McAndrew said that he had several recommendations which he wished to be passed on to the Executive Member for Wellbeing.

The Committee Support Officer confirmed that if these recommendations were sent to her, she would forward these onto the Executive Member for Wellbeing.

It was moved by Councillor Cox and seconded by Councillor Marlow that the recommendations, as detailed, be approved. After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – that (A) the performance of Environmental Health with regards to regulated and licenced activities pertaining to food premises be considered and scrutinised and any comments passed to the Executive Member for Wellbeing for consideration; and

(B) the performance of other activities regulated and licenced activities by Environmental Health be considered, and any comments passed to the Executive Member for Wellbeing for consideration.

280 REVIEW OF LICENSING ACTIVITY FOR QUARTER 1 OF 2025-26 FINANCIAL YEAR

The Licensing Enforcement Officer introduced the report, highlighting the key points within it, which gave Members an overview of the Licensing activity from the first quarter of the 2025/26 financial year.

The Licensing Enforcement Officer and the Service Manager (Licensing and Enforcement) answered

questions relating to complaints, enforcement, taxis and private hire, pavement and street trading, performance data and reporting (including trends and pressures).

Members heard that the Licensing Department had a good working relationship with licenced premises, and good connections with the Police. It was explained that any concerns highlighted were dealt with by way of compliance visits, in preference to enforcement, and that no complaint trends were being seen - with the complaint relating to the Tamarind Tree (as detailed within the report) viewed as an isolated incident. It was anticipated that recent recruitment within the Department would free up capacity for further compliance and enforcement work.

Members were told that complaints relating to Taxi and Private Hire vehicles mainly related to driver's training needs and minor compliance issues. They heard that drivers did receive comprehensive training, and issues, such as vehicle roof lights, were usually rectified within 24 hours - with drivers acknowledging their mistakes.

It was confirmed that sanctions were not viewed as the best approach, but when used were consistent and proportionate, using a stepped approach - often tailored to a driver, with few revocations occurring. It was further explained that the Department had carried extensive work with garages undertaking Vehicle Condition Certificates (VCC) and that it was a consideration that these inspections may be taken back in house.

Members heard that establishments which did not have pavement licenses for external furniture and/or have obstructive furniture, and unlicenced street traders were visited by officers, and if non-compliant would have tables and chairs removed/be prosecuted. It was noted however that some premises without pavement licences remove such furniture post visitation but do not then apply for licences – due to the cost involved.

Members were advised that the Department consistently met performance targets and in relation to emerging

trends – a decline in the number taxi and private hire drivers was being seen. They heard that work had been undertaken to negate the risks associated with large volume festival events and premises with pavement furniture and no public liability insurance.

The Chair confirmed that the Committee were aware of the Licensing Department's compliance approach and were kept informed by officers. Consideration was also given to training for Committee Members.

It was moved by Councillor Cox and seconded by Councillor Marlow that the recommendations, as detailed, be approved. After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – that members review and comment on the Licensing activity from the first quarter of the 2025-26 financial year (01 April 2025 – 30 June 2025).

281 REVIEW OF LICENSING ACTIVITY FOR QUARTER 2 OF 2025-2026 FINANCIAL YEAR

The Licensing Enforcement Officer introduced the report, highlighting the key points within it, which gave Members an overview of the Licensing activity from the second quarter of the 2025/26 financial year. It was noted that the quarter historically saw an increase in complaints - due better weather meaning more open doors and windows.

Members were given further information about the service request at the Blackbirds Public House - where a fire exit being padlocked had been witnessed by officers, and assurance of the Department's excellent working relationship with the Fire Authority.

The Licensing Enforcement Officer and the Service Manager (Licensing and Enforcement) answered questions relating to complaints (including persistent 'hot spots'), licence monitoring, taxi and private hire vehicle maintenance, street trading and risks.

Members heard that there was not a general pattern to complaints, with swift intervention when they were received leading to compliance. It was explained that complaints (including those which came via the Council website) were filtered by staff to ensure that they were directed to the correct department - with Licensing and Environmental Health using the same software.

Members were told that licences were monitored to ensure compliance, with the Police pivotal for information sharing. It was noted that 'hot spots' – such as Bishop's Stortford Train Station and its taxi rank, were problematic due to its location/operation and not repeat offenders.

Members heard that, as discussed during Agenda Item 7, taxi and private hire vehicle maintenance was of a good standard with no current concerns regarding the fleet. In relation to street trading - officers again echoed their comments from Agenda Item 7, with assurance given that action was taken against unlicensed traders swiftly, or immediately if dangerous/ nuisance. It was also confirmed that the 'risks' relating to large volume festival events and premises with pavement furniture and no public liability insurance remained at Quarter 2.

It was moved by Councillor Cox and seconded by Councillor Redfern that the recommendations, as detailed, be approved. After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – that members review and comment on the Licensing activity from the second quarter of the 2025-26 financial year (01 July 2025 – 30 September 2025).

282 URGENT BUSINESS

There were no urgent items.

The meeting closed at 8.03 pm

Chairman

Date