

# **East Herts Council Report**

## **Licensing Committee**

**Date of Meeting: 12<sup>th</sup> May 2026**

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

**Report title: Review of licensing activity for Quarter 3 & 4 of 2025-26 financial year and end of year summary**

**Ward(s) affected: All**

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

## **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR Licensing Committee:**

### **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 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 third and fourth quarter of the 2025 -2026 financial year (01 October 2025 – 31 December 2025) & (01 January 2026 – 31 March 2026) 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 service requests received.

#### *Licensing Act*

**During Q3, 5** service requests were received.

- **Cricket Club:** A complaint was received from a resident regarding excessive noise from a cricket club on the evening of the 20 September 2025 until 01:00hrs on the morning of the 21 September 2025. The club was contacted and made aware that the marquee that had been erected on site was not covered by a TEN, as the TEN submitted on the 05 September 2025 had been invalid.

All licensable activities that took place in the marquee and licensable activities continuing after midnight at the club house, was unauthorised licensable activity.

The club received a warning regarding unauthorised licensable activity and causing noise nuisance, which also detailed the possible enforcement action should it happen again. No further complaints have been received.

- **Stort Biltong, Bishops Stortford:** A complaint received from a resident that the owners of Stort Biltong were having BBQs at Millars One, Southmill Road with rowdy behaviour. The initial complaint said the BBQs were outside the shop, but it was at the entrance to Millars One next to Southmill Road.

It was alleged the premises was selling alcohol to their customers to drink at the BBQ. The premises licence in place allowed for off sales only and it is noted that consumption is not licensable. However, the licence did have a condition that prohibits the selling of single cans/bottles of alcohol. Officers visited the premises and spoke with the premises licence holder/ DPS. The complaint was discussed, and the licensing conditions were explained. The licence holder was very receptive of the advice given and the premises submitted a minor variation to amend the conditions of the licence to avoid unintentional breaches.

It was also explained to the Premises licence holder/DPS that they would need to apply for a street trading licence to

sell food to the public. Although food registered for the items sold in the shop, they were not aware that a licence was needed to trade outside the premises. The premises took all the steps suggested to become compliant and trade safely. No further complaints have been received, and a follow up call will be made about street trading early spring/summer when BBQs are likely to begin again.

- **King William IV Pub, Sawbridgeworth:** Complaint received from resident regarding large red commercial bins in the road outside the premises, noise from people shouting in the street and customers of the pub parking outside residents' homes and meaning they were unable charge their electric vehicle. The complaint was investigated but none of the issues raised could be addressed through the licensing regime. During the investigation officers attended the premises to see the issues the complainant had described. On attending no large red commercial bins were seen in the road, and parking was at a premium as the road is short and narrow. There were no markings restricting parking outside the resident's home, so the premises customers were parking legally.

The complainant was asked to provide timings of when the noise occurred and to confirm if it was definitively caused by customers of the pub. The complainant was advised to keep a noise nuisance diary to record when disturbances occurred. No response was received from the complainant.

- **Quattro Lounge, Hertford:** Complaint that the tables and chairs used by customers, were being stored outside the premises in breach of a condition. The premises licence requires that table and chairs are to be rendered unusable after 23:00hrs. The DPS was contacted and the tables and chairs removed. No further complaints were received regarding the furniture.
- **The Knight St Vault & Queens Head, Sawbridgeworth:** A complaint was received from a resident that on walking past both premises, the doors were witnessed wedged open and loud music was heard coming from both premises on separate occasions. The complaint was received in December 2025. However, this was relating to noise disturbance in July 2025. As this complaint was received a significant period after the event, it was decided to monitor the situation, and visits have been planned to both premises.

The complainant has been in contact with Environmental Health regarding noise issues with both premises and has completed noise nuisance diary sheets. The complainant has been made aware that enforcement will be investigating the issues further and visits are scheduled for both premises at the end of January 2026.

**During Q4, 1 service request was received.**

- **The Blackbirds, Hertford:**

A complaint was received from a female that the landlady of the premises had assaulted another customer. The complaint was quite complex, with parties being known to each other and further information was needed before an investigation could take place. The complainant was asked if the assault had been reported to the police, but no response was received. It was decided to shut the service request down as there was no evidence to continue investigating the allegation.

- **Suspension Letters – Overdue Annual Fees Q4**

15 Suspension letters for overdue annual fees have been sent via post or email to premises. All premises have paid in full, apart from one premises that were suspended for failure to pay.

### ***Hackney carriage and private hire***

3.2 The licensing enforcements 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.

3.3 Licensing Enforcement checks that all the Vehicle Condition Certificates (VCC) and MOT documentation are provided to ensure that our vehicle inspection standards are being continually met.

3.4 **In Q3, 25** Licensing Record Points (LRP) were issued between **5** drivers.

- 8 points issued for Illegal parking. The two drivers were given 4 points each for breaching a Traffic Regulation Order

(TRO) by one parking on double yellow lines and one on zig zags on a pedestrian crossing.

- 9 points issued to a driver due to misconduct. The incident took place at the Bishops Stortford train station and was between two East Herts drivers over a fare. It was alleged that the driver on the rank refused to take two men due to them being intoxicated, so another driver decided to take the two men. This caused an argument between the two drivers, and the incident was recorded on a mobile phone by one of the drivers. This showed the other driver to be aggressive and intimidating. After dropping off the fare, the driver decided to return to Bishops Stortford station and continue the argument. The driver that took the fare was issued with 9 licensing record points due to his behavior/conduct which fell below East Herts standards.
- points issued to a driver for working in the early hours of the morning, with no plate displayed on the back of his vehicle. The vehicle was licensed but the driver had the plate in the back window. The legislation requires it to be on the outside rear of the vehicle.
- points issued to a driver for failing to get a VCC document for his vehicle prior to the expiry of the previous certificate.

**In Q4, 130** Licensing Record Points (LRP) were issued between **25** drivers.

- Majority of drivers received an average of 4 licensing record points due to late documents i.e. VCC's, MOT's and insurance. All points issued to drivers will remain on their records for 24 months. Should 12 points be reached by an individual in the 24-month period, their fitness and propriety to remain licensed will be reviewed.
- 1 driver reached a total of 16 licensing record points due to late vehicle documents. The driver is a proprietor of a number of vehicles, and his fitness and propriety will now be reviewed by the Director of Communities in consultation with the Chair of the licensing committee.
- 1 driver received 6 licensing points for unacceptable standard of driving. The driver was witnessed mounting the pavement outside a school to avoid waiting in traffic.
- 2 drivers were issued with a total of 12 points each for failure to notify the licensing authority of any motoring convictions

during the period of licence. The requirement is to report any conviction (within 48 hours of receiving it) Both driver's fitness and propriety will be reviewed by the Director of Communities in consultation with the Chair of the licensing committee.

- 1 driver reached a total of 9 points on his DVLA driving licence and was notified that he would need to complete the council's approved driving test. This was completed and passed on request of licensing enforcement.

**3.5 In Q3, 10** service requests were received in relation to private hire and hackney carriage licenses, these related to:

- Complaint regarding a driver demanding cash for a fare from Hertford to Sele Farm due to card machine having no service. Driver interviewed and his conduct discussed; no further action was taken.
- Driver interviewed due to his conduct in relation to another driver. Issued licensing record points (see 9 licensing record points above)
- Complaint from a Taxi company in Buntingford that a new company with a similar name was taking work and receiving bad reviews. Customers making bookings were not being made aware that it was a different company and thought they were booking a fare through an established company. Owner of new company interviewed, and no further complaints have been received.
- A complaint received that a driver was seen asleep at the wheel of their licensed vehicle. This was investigated and the driver interviewed. A medical had recently been received and there was no evidence of narcolepsy or medical issues. The driver was reminded to take adequate rest within their working pattern. No further complaints have been received.
- A complaint was received regarding a booking that had been arranged for a drop-off and collection at Heathrow airport. Subsequently on the passengers' return, the booked vehicle did not turn up. Although it was not an enforcement matter a call was made to the office.
- An incident of touting by an East Herts Driver at Heathrow airport was reported to enforcement by the Met Police. This driver is known to them, and they are currently dealing with

the driver, as this is his second offence of touting. They are keeping us updated with any action taken.

- A complaint received from an East Herts driver about another driver for parking on double yellow lines in Bishops Stortford. Photographic evidence was received of the vehicle, and the driver was issued with licensing record points.
- A complaint received regarding a driver working in the early hours at the Bishops Stortford train station without a plate on the back of the vehicle. Photographic evidence was received, and the driver was issued licensing record points.
- A complaint received regarding a driver parked on zig zag lines at Bishops Stortford train station. Photographic evidence submitted and licensing record points issued.
- A complaint received about a booking made with an operator and a fare quoted incorrectly. Due to an office error the passenger was charged double. The complainant had already spoken with the operator but wanted to see if enforcement could take any action. It was explained that we have no enforcement powers over bookings, but a call was made to the operator to see if the booking could be honored and a refund could be considered.

**In Q4, 8** service requests were received in relation to private hire and hackney carriage licenses, these related to:

- Complaint received of a driver working without plate displayed on the back of his vehicle over New Year. Driver spoken with and provided evidence of plate displayed on the back of his vehicle.
- Complaint received regarding a taxi with his registration plate obscured by signage. Driver was contacted and this was rectified.
- Complaint received from a councillor that she had witnessed an East Herts Driver, mounting the pavement twice outside a primary school. This was dealt with by a warning and the issuing of 6 licensing record points.
- Complaint a driver was working with no plate displayed. Driver issued with licensing record points.
- Complaint received that a driver had been witnessed not securing his handbrake securely whilst buying

logs at Hatfield Forest. Driver spoke with and advised him to read the Taxi handbook.

- Complaint received that a driver had been involved in a road rage incident. The driver was invited in for interview and asked to give his account. Driver issued with a warning and licensing record points issued.
- Complaint from a driver that another driver is plying for hire on a private rank. More work to be done around the Bishops Stortford train station in the coming weeks.
- Complaint from driver that a Broxbourne licensed vehicle has been seen plying for hire in the district. Broxbourne notified and investigated the driver involved.

### ***Vehicle Condition Certificates Completed in House***

As of 1<sup>st</sup> April 2026, vehicle condition certificates will be completed in house. The decision was made due to garage vehicle checks falling below East Herts' standards.

Bringing the vehicle checks back in-house will allow officers to make sure vehicles are of a high standard and address vehicle cleanliness, damage and plate and roof light issues swiftly.

### ***Street trading and pavement licenses***

3.6        **In Q3 2** 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 of a business trading at this location. 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 street trading consent.

- Hertford market 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 and is compliant.

**In Q4**, 2 service requests were received regarding street trading:

- Both complaints received regarding street trading in Hertford. This has been an ongoing issue. Evidence has been gathered of non-compliance, and the trader is being given options to avoid revocation of a street trading consent.

**In Q3**, no service requests were received in relation to Pavement licences.

**In Q4**, no service requests were received in relation to Pavement licences.

### ***Charity collections***

3.7 No service requests were received regarding either house-to-house or street collections in **Q3**.

No service requests were received regarding either house-to-house or street collections in **Q4**.

### ***Performance monitoring***

3.8 The figures for the quarterly performance indicators for licensing for Q3 & Q4 are detailed in the table below.

<b>Performance indicator – cumulative (reported quarterly) within the year unless otherwise stated</b>	<b>2025/2026 target</b>	<b>Q3 &amp; Q4 2025-26 performance</b>
Percentage of valid personal licences processed within 2 weeks	90%	97%
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%

3.9 Performance data for Q3 can be found in **Appendix A**.

3.10 Performance data for Q4 can be found in **Appendix B**.

3.11 A summary of annual performance for the 2025-26 financial year can be found in **Appendix C**.

#### **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 arising from the report.

### **Equalities**

None arising from the report.

### **Environmental Sustainability**

None arising from the report.

### **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 arising from the report.

### **Human Rights**

None arising from the report.

### **Legal**

None arising from the report.

### **Specific Wards**

None arising from the report.

## **7.0 Background papers, appendices and other relevant material**

- 7.1 **Appendix A** – Performance data from 01 October 2025 – 31 December 2025. Including figures for applications and granted licences, notices, and other permissions.
- 7.2 **Appendix B** – Performance data from 01 January 2026 – 31 March 2026. Including figures for applications and granted licences, notices, and other permissions.
- 7.3 **Appendix C** – Performance summary for the financial year 2025-26.

**Contact Member**

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