

Committee: Licensing & Environmental Health

Date:

Title: Enforcement Update

12 July 2022

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Summary

1.1. This Enforcement Update report is to inform the Committee of the enforcement activities carried out by Licensing Officers during the period of 12 February 2022 to 30 June 2022.

Recommendations

2.1. It is recommended that Members note the contents of this report.

Financial Implications

3.1. There are no financial implications arising from this report.

Background Papers

4.1. None

Impact

5.1.

Communication/Consultation	None
Community Safety	None
Equalities	None
Health and Safety	None
Human Rights/Legal Implications	None
Sustainability	None
Ward-specific impacts	None
Workforce/Workplace	None

Situation

6.1. During the latest period, the benefits of the new enforcement officer have been evidenced as proactive compliance and enforcement work has significantly increased, though still factoring in the limitations from the past couple of years. Through persistent efforts, the team are establishing relationships with the Local Education Authorities who issue contracts to Private Hire Operators licenced to Uttlesford in order to obtain the list of schools that our drivers and vehicles work at. At the time of writing, compliance checks have been carried out at 23 different schools across various county areas as well as Essex. During those checks, a total of 54 drivers and vehicles have been seen. A few advisories for minor issues were given for vehicles and one immediate suspension due a faulty side door.

6.2. Aside from school contracts, the team are frequenting Stansted Airport more regularly and are in the process of setting up large joint working operations with Essex Police and neighbouring Licensing Authorities, so that drivers and vehicles can be checked for compliance and any potential offences such as 'taxi touting' can be identified and dealt with appropriately. The team participated in 'Operation Henderson' at the airport, which was in relation to Child Sexual Exploitation awareness. Information leaflets were handed out to any taxi driver encountered.

6.3. With regards to licensed premises, we are still just slightly short of being able to confirm a Pub Watch scheme in Saffron Walden, though it should be very soon as on a recent round of visits between Police and Licensing Officers a potential chairperson for the group has been identified. The schemes in Great Dunmow and Stansted are running efficiently. 5 premises have been visited at least once following complaints received from residents, and at the time of writing all concerns are being controlled.

6.4. Several members of the Environmental Health team including two from Licensing attended and successfully passed an Essex Police Community Safety Accreditation Scheme (CSAS) course, meaning they now have specified low level powers to enforce against issues such as anti-social behavior, littering and dog fouling, amongst others. They can request the name and address of offenders and in some circumstances issue Fixed Penalty Notices. While these are not usually part of the day to day role, it enables more efficient joint working across the whole of the Community Safety Partnership.

6.5. There have been 4 Private Hire Operator inspections conducted during this period and any minor issues found were dealt with appropriately.

6.6. In respect of licensed hackney carriage and private hire drivers, there has been 9 licence revocations and 5 licence suspensions. These are broken down as follows;

- 3 revocations were made with immediate effect under delegated powers by the Chair of the Licensing & Environmental Health Committee and Licensing Manager. All were as a result of significant safeguarding concerns that needed urgent action. The remaining 5 revocations were made by the Licensing Sub-Committee in May.

- 3 suspensions were as a result of Medical and/or DBS certificates not being received from the driver by the required date, or for identified medical conditions.
- 1 suspension was due to a driver who had failed to provide evidence of having taken a driving proficiency test in line with the Council's suitability policy for drivers with an accumulation of 9 or more points on their DVLA licence.
- The 1 remaining suspension was imposed by the Licensing Sub-Committee in March.

6.7. In respect of licensed hackney carriage and private hire vehicles, there have been 45 licence suspensions.

- 25 vehicles were suspended following the failure of their compliance tests. 15 vehicles were suspended as they had not taken a compliance test by the required deadline, and 3 suspensions were issued following accidents and associated damage, all of which have now been repaired.

6.8. A total of 35 complaints have been received during this period. These are broken down as follows;

- 21 complaints relating to drivers. The complaints mostly relate to either driving standards or driver behavior, with most being dealt with at Officer level.
- 9 complaints relating to vehicles. These mostly consist of parking matters.
- 5 complaints relating to premises, referenced at 6.3.