

Committee: Licensing & Environmental Health

Date:

Title: Enforcement Update

11 July 2023

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Summary

1. This Enforcement Update report is to inform the Committee of the compliance and enforcement activities carried out by Licensing Officers during the period of 1 January 2023 to 31 May 2023.

Recommendations

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

Financial Implications

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

Background Papers

4. None

Impact

- 5.

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. This report outlines the statistics and general activities of the compliance and enforcement team during the latest period of the 1 January 2023 to 31 May 2023.
7. On the 30 March, 5 Licensing Officers from UDC attended a 'taxi tout' operation at Heathrow Airport in partnership with TfL and Met Police colleagues. The operation commenced at 9am and began with a briefing on the plan of action and how any suspected touts were identified and dealt with. The role of UDC Officers was on this occasion to shadow and gain an understanding of how such operations are conducted, with the intention of mirroring similar practice at Stansted Airport. Whilst a long day, it was productive and Officers gained the understanding that they were hoping for.
8. This led to UDC's own operation on the 6th April in which Licensing Officers worked in collaboration with the Stansted Airport Policing unit. Whilst there was no action that resulted in any further formal action, the team were able to disrupt a number of touts from carrying out any unlicensed activity. The majority of UDC's licensed vehicles carry out home to school contract work, but during the impending school summer holidays the team aim to dedicate time to carrying out an increased number of airport tout operations, the results of which will be shared in the next enforcement update report.
9. Visits were made to 26 different education sites across Essex, Suffolk, Norfolk, Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire, and a total of 74 checks were made on both vehicles and drivers. Of those, 21 issues were identified though none warranted any immediate action.
10. 8 of UDC's licensed Operators have had inspections carried out where booking records were checked for compliance with the Council's Licensing Policy. All were found to be satisfactory.
11. With regards to licensed premises, there have been 6 Pubwatch meetings during this period including at Saffron Walden, Great Dunmow and Stansted Mountfitchet. The meetings have allowed for dialogue between premises, the Licensing Authority, Essex Police and UDC's safeguarding representative, and all have engaged positively. The rollout of the DISC phone app remains in the jurisdiction of the Police Licensing Team, though progress continues and it is expected that all three Pubwatch schemes will have full access before the end of the summer months.
12. In respect of licensed hackney carriage and private hire drivers, there have been 0 licence revocations and 45 licence suspensions. These are broken down as follows;
 - Of the 45 suspensions, 36 were due to not subscribing as required to the DBS Update Service, 2 were due to medical conditions which meant they may not have complied with Group 2 DLVA medical standards, 1 had not taken the driver training course by the required deadline, 1 had failed their driver training

course, and 1 was as a result of new information on their DBS certificate. Lastly, 2 drivers were issued with suspensions by the Licensing Panel.

13. In respect of licensed hackney carriage and private hire vehicles, there have been 73 licence suspensions.

- 56 vehicles were suspended following either the failure of their compliance tests or having had not taken a compliance test by the required deadline, and 12 suspensions were issued following being involved in accidents and the associated damage, and 5 were due to the failure to provide proof of relevant insurance certificates by the required deadline.

14. A total of 30 complaints have been received during this period. These are broken down as follows;

- 20 complaints relating to drivers. The majority of these were found to be unsubstantiated, and those which were resulted in minor action dealt with at Officer level.
- 2 complaints related to vehicles, both of which were due to licence plates allegedly not being displayed correctly.
- 2 complaints related to Operators. Neither of these required further formal action.
- 2 complaints relating to licensed premises. 1 was with regard to a noise issue but this was resolved following a visit and advice given to the premises supervisor. 1 was with regards to the lack of a pavement permit, which resulted in a report being made to the Essex County Highway department.
- 4 complaints related to alleged unlicensed activities. All but one have been resolved internally by Officers, with the one remaining being a case of an unlicensed driver, where the circumstances warranted no more than an official warning letter.