

SOUTH NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL

LICENSING COMMITTEE

AN UPDATE ON LICENSING MATTERS

REPORT OF LICENSING TEAM LEADER

31 July 2012

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to provide the Committee with an update on licensing matters.

2 INFORMATION

2.1 Licensing Act

In April this year the legislation changed regarding temporary event notices and the word 'vicinity' has been removed in connection with representations to applications.

Although 'vicinity' is no longer used as a measure with regards to representations, the comments made must still be relevant to the application.

Late TENs were also introduced. These can only be submitted in exceptional circumstances and the notice period has been reduced from ten to five working days. In respect of both normal and late TENs, Environmental Health can now make representations as well as the police.

2.2 Gambling Act

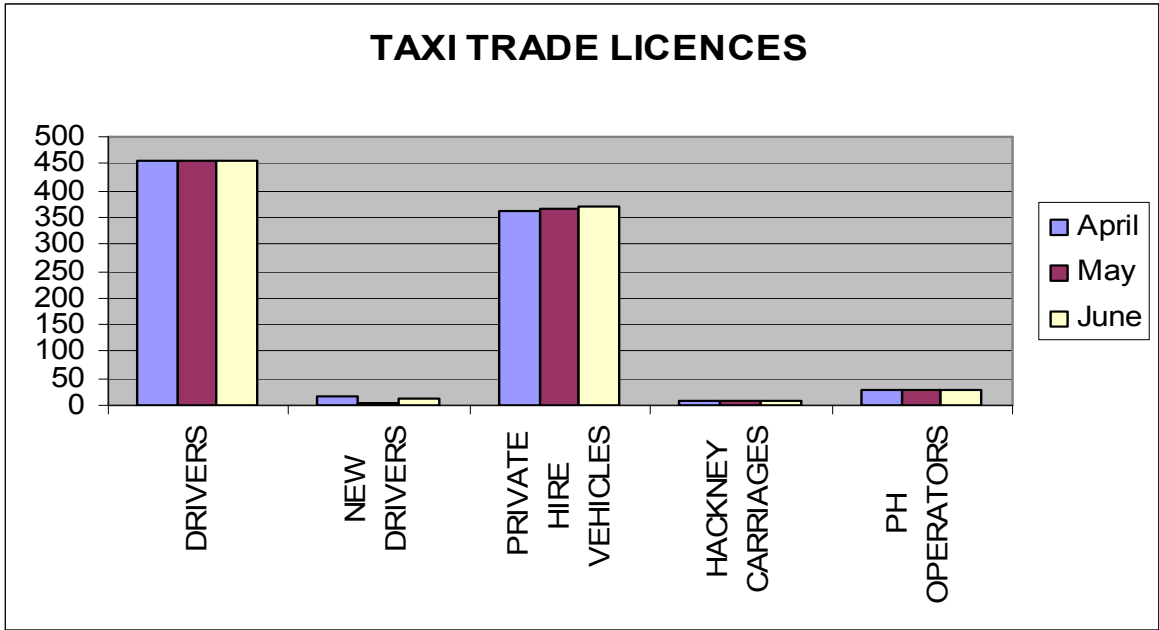
There have been no applications under the Gambling Act.

2.3 Taxi licensing

At the beginning of July there were:

- 457 licensed drivers with twelve new applications pending;
- 371 private hire vehicles;
- 7 hackney carriages (two of which are horse-drawn);
- 29 private hire operators.

The chart illustrates that there has been little variation in the numbers of licences in the past three months.

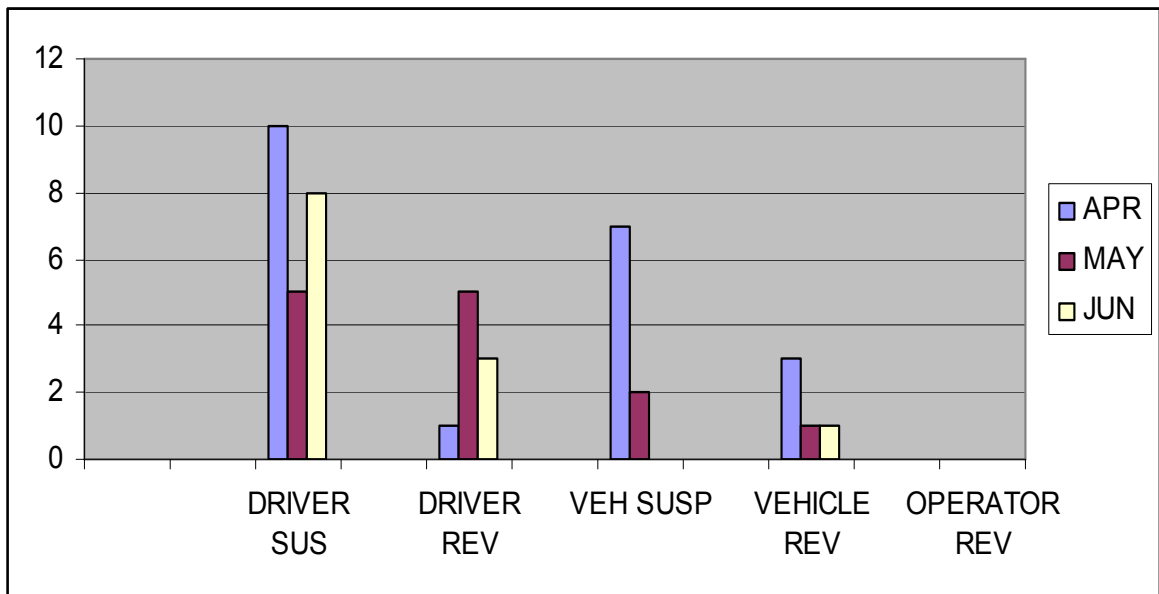


2.4 Enforcement

Taxi trade

A separate report was planned to give an update on joint enforcement work with taxi licensing officers from Milton Keynes Council. Unfortunately confirmation of approval of the report from Milton Keynes was not received in time for this committee and will be reported at the next meeting.

This chart shows the number of taxi trade licences suspended and revoked since the last report (March 2011):



Other licensing enforcement

There have been no other licensing issues.

Other Enforcement

A taxi driver was given a fixed penalty for throwing rubbish out of his car and into the Springfields' car park. He paid the £75 fine on 11th July.

2.5 Licensing hearings

A taxi driver appeared before the Licensing Sub-Committee on 12th June having exceeded his penalty point limit (some of which were as the result of his failing to report a collision with a parked car in the Springfields' car park). In accordance with the penalty point procedure he was suspended for 28 days.

2.6 Silverstone

The Licensing team issued special hackney carriage plates to four drivers wishing to use their private hire vehicles as taxis in the Silverstone area this year.

Special street trading consents were issued to five residents wishing to sell foodstuffs over the event dates. There were no issues with unlicensed street traders.

Following complaints about congestion and parking issues with taxis during last year's GP a taxi workshop for Northamptonshire Police was held in May and, there was a strong police presence in the village. Although there were reports of many taxis attempting to enter the village the extra police and Northamptonshire County Council enforcement staff helped to keep the area clear of buses, taxis and private hire vehicles as well as those of local resident's vehicles.

The majority of taxis and private hire vehicles parked in the correct location (along Brackley Road) in accordance with the traffic management plan, which the Licensing Team Leader had circulated to all SNC drivers and every surrounding council.

Work will continue to raise awareness with surrounding local authorities for next years events but hopefully the extra work this year will discourage opportunist drivers in future.

There was a complaint of excessive noise from an event on a small campsite. This turned out to be a charity function with a temporary event notice in place. This matter will be taken up by Environmental Protection officers for future events.

Licensing (and Health Protection) officers worked throughout the weekend and there were no specific licensing issues. Both Teams have received complimentary feedback from villagers about visits.

2.7 Taxi consultation

The Law Commission have set up an important consultation entitled 'Reforming the law of taxi and private hire services' which is due to end on 10th September. Arrangements are in hand for the Environmental Health Manager and Licensing Team Leader to meet with the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of this Committee in order to formulate a response from the Council.

The document is available at:

<http://lawcommission.justice.gov.uk/consultations/1804.htm>

Members are invited to forward any comments on the consultation to the Licensing Team Leader by 17th August.

3 RECOMMENDATION

The Committee is asked to note the items in paras. 2.1 – 2.7 and forward comments on 2.7 to the Licensing Team Leader.

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