



LICENSING COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Licensing Committee held on Thursday 19 December 2024 at 6.00 pm in Council Chamber, Third Floor, Southwater One, Telford TF3 4JG

Present: Councillors J Thompson (Chair), S Handley (Vice-Chair), A J Burford and P J Scott

In Attendance: S Hardwick (Lead Lawyer: Litigation & Regulatory), J Clarke (Senior Democracy Officer (Democracy)), R Phillips (Registrars, Public Protection, Legal & Democracy Service Delivery Manager) and A Singh (Licensing & Night-Time Economy Manager)

Apologies: Councillor E Aston, L Parker, K T Tomlinson and R Tyrrell

LIC9 Declarations of Interest

None.

LIC10 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting of the Licensing Committee held on 24 October 2024 be confirmed and signed by the Chair.

LIC11 Taxi Licensing Restricted Operator Vehicle Dual Driver Licences Report

The Director: Policy & Governance presented the Taxi Licensing – Restricted Operator, Vehicle & Dual Driver Licences report. Members were asked to consider the introduction of restricted licences for operators, vehicles and drivers to ensure that the Council's offer to the private hire market was compelling.

Currently, Private Hire Drivers Licences with Telford and Wrekin Council were issued with no restrictions on their use, other than as prescribed in legislation. This report sought to introduce a restricted Operators, Vehicles and Private Hire Drivers Licence for use in pre-determined areas of work.

It was hoped that offering restricted licences to operators and drivers would allow the Council to ensure its offer to the private hire trade reflected the nature of their business whilst also ensuring public safety, which was a priority of the Council to ensure licences were proportionate and effective.



It was now emerging that many operators were employing drivers directly to only carry out defined types of private hire work, ie home to school transport, services for the elderly and other contracted work. By restricting the licence the Council and the operator could ensure that only the allocated work was undertaken which would reduce the potential for drivers to take on other work not in the operator's model of operation. Restricted licences would ensure quick resolutions in situations where a driver chose to operate outside of their permitted use.

Members were asked to consider granting delegated authority to the Director: Policy & Governance to agree and attach any conditions deemed necessary to ensure public safety to such restricted licences on a case-by-case basis and make determinations as to any pre-licensing requirements which may be necessary.

During the debate, some Members considered that this proposal may not be as attractive to drivers, but it may be more an advantage for operators and asked why this was important. It was also asked how the licences would be policed. A question was raised in relation to how many cases of drivers working outside of their licence had occurred during the last 12 months.

The Director: Policy & Governance confirmed that some drivers only wanted to undertake specific work as this was more straight forward and less challenging than those a varied passenger base might bring and there was an appetite for this amongst drivers. It was useful for operators in respect of business expedience for them as there were not the same training requirements and they would not have to bear the cost of irrelevant training sessions. In relation to the policing of the licences, this would be undertaken in exactly the same way via agency exercises checking badges as well as checking vehicles and licence conditions. The council also received reports from the public. This gave the council a greater assurance than it currently had with self-employed drivers as operators would remove drivers who from their service if necessary. This gave a greater level of control for the licensing authority and the employer.

The Service Delivery Manager - Registrars, Public Protection, Legal & Democracy explained that operators who carry out specific work employ drivers directly and they would only be licensed to carry out the designated work and having limitations on their licence would reinforce the drivers position if someone tried to flag them down. In relation to drivers working outside of their licence, the employer could raise this as a disciplinary matter.

The Licensing & Night-time Economy Manager explained that there were protocols in place to investigate any complaints. An audit would be taken of the log of journeys and there would be multi-agency stops and plying for hire stops where vehicles and licences were checked. There was no way to stop it



happening but through DBS and pre-application checking, dishonesty by drivers would be picked up. In relation to drivers driving outside of their licence conditions, there had been one prosecution during the previous 16 month period and a number of stops in relation to plying for hire.

Upon being put to the vote it was, unanimously:-

RESOLVED: that

- a) the introduction of a Restricted Operator, Vehicle & Private Hire Drivers Licence, by way of an amendment to the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy be approved; and
- b) delegated authority be granted to the Director: Policy & Governance to agree and attach any conditions deemed necessary to ensure public safety to such restricted licences on a case-by-case basis and make determinations as to any pre-licensing requirements which may be necessary.

LIC12 Licensing Team Update

The Licensing & Night-time Economy Manager gave a brief update on the work on the Licensing Team over the last six months.

The Team continued to receive applications covering many areas including alcohol and street licences.

During 2025, the team would continue to protect the public through the licensing framework and by using schemes such as:

- Licensing Security and Vulnerability Initiative (LSAVI)
- Ask Angela
- CCTV within taxis

Timely advice for businesses would also be provided and the officers would keep up to date with any new legislation in order ensure effective services for businesses and members of the public.

Following the Inquiries into the Manchester Arena and London Bridge Bombings, Martins Law would come into force in 2026.

In 2026, work would be undertaken in relation to best practice in relation to private hire licences and Multi Agency work with MATES would be planned in.

Stakeholder groups such as pub watch, the taxi trade and White Ribbon/serious violence groups would continue to meet.



Site visits to licenced premises would be undertaken with Members and the Compliance Officers would go through the processes undertaken by the team during their daily work.

The Licensing Security and Vulnerability Initiative (LSAVI) initiative was being actively promoted and this was a tool to help a premises to be a safe and secure environment for staff and local communities.

During the debate, some Members asked that in terms of capacity in relation to work due to be undertaken and pressures that the local authority currently faced, was staff capacity sufficient and should Members have any worries or concerns around this.

The Director: Policy & Governance explained that although there was a lean authority, the team had undertaken changes during the last few months with experienced and enthusiastic team members. The ways of working were being progressed and would be prioritising resident safety and compliance with the licensing regime. Extra resources would always be welcome, but it was considered that there was currently sufficient resource, but the team would not want a reduction in the current staffing levels. The team were able to respond and address any issues if required.

The meeting ended at 6.23 pm

Chairman: _____

Date: Tuesday 13 May 2025