



LICENSING COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Licensing Committee held on Tuesday 13 May 2025 at 6.00 pm in Council Chamber, Third Floor, Southwater One, Telford TF3 4JG

Present: Councillors G C W Latham-Reynolds (Chair), S Handley, J Thompson, K L Tomlinson and R Tyrrell

In Attendance: R Phillips (Registrars, Public Protection, Legal & Democracy Service Delivery Manager) 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) Regulatory) and J Clarke (Senior Democracy Officer (Democracy))

Apologies: Councillor L Parker, E Aston, A J Burford, H Rhodes and P J Scott

LIC13 Declarations of Interest

None.

LIC14 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting of the Licensing Committee held on 19 December 2024 be confirmed and signed by the Chair.

LIC15 Taxi Licensing - Restricted Operator, Vehicle & Dual Driver Licences

The Service Delivery Manager - Registrars, Public Protection, Legal & Democracy presented the Taxi Licensing – Restricted Operator, Vehicle & Dual Driver Licences report which sought Member approval to formalise and agree the new policy which included details regarding the licences and the relevant fees. Members were also asked to consider an amendment to the existing Taxi Licensing Policy in relation to window tints in order to ensure the policy was brought into line with the legal requirements of a road-worthy vehicle.

At the Licensing Committee held in December 2024, the Committee approved the introduction of restricted licences for vehicles, operators and drivers undertaking home to school transport contractors or care contracts.



Fees for Private Hire restricted licences had been calculated on a cost neutral basis and included administration and enforcement costs at £112 for one year or for three years costing £130.

An amendment to the Privacy Window requirement, detailed in policy, was proposed. This had been requested by the trade due to the existing 34% light transmission standard which restricted the use of some vehicles where manufacturers' tints were applied. This impacted on availability for use of the full range of the most cost-effective vehicle solutions. Officers had considered the impact that the change of tint would have and felt there was no risk to public safety.

The proposed changes of policy and fees would bring the Council into line with other regional licensing authorities. It would also bring forward economic benefits by encouraging more drivers to apply for a private hire vehicle licence which, in the longer term, would improve availability across the borough.

During the debate, some Members welcomed the report which sought to protect residents and keep people safe and secure whilst using private hire vehicles and hackney carriages. Questions were raised in relation to the number of operators who had schools and care contracts, whether current operators were likely to opt for a new licence, was the new offer likely to attract more drivers and what was the advantage of a one year licence at a cost of £112 compared to a three year licence which was only £18 more expensive.

The Service Delivery Manager – Registrars, Public Protection, Legal & Democracy responded that the Council had one of the largest programmes of CCTV and worked in partnership with the Police and Crime Commission and the Police. In relation to contracts, this was currently a little unknown and the offer reflected that, the level of risk was appropriate in relation to the way the operators undertook the work and further reports would be brought to the Committee. The contract work was a niche market, but it was important to have an offer which reflected the needs of operators, particularly those who were new to the borough. The SDM confirmed the position with regards to the deregulation of taxi licensing, that the Council did share information with other authorities but with regard to encouraging others back it was not about making it easy but making sure our offer was out there. It was hoped this would attract more operators back to the area and give the Council greater control. Fees were based on a cost recovery basis and if costs were not covered then they could be reviewed the following year.

The Licensing & Night-Time Economy Manager confirmed to Members that there were currently 300 vehicles, 350 drivers and 24 operators licenced within the borough.



Upon being put to the vote it was, unanimously:

RESOLVED: that

- a) the adoption of the Restricted Operator, Vehicle & Private Hire Drivers Taxi Policy and conditions of licence be approved;**
- b) the fees for vehicles and drivers' licences applying for restricted licences be approved; and**
- c) an amendment to the current Taxi Licensing Policy to allow for manufacturer fitted window tints of 30% or above light transmission on windows rear of the B pillar and no "after market" tint film to be permitted for the reasons be approved.**

The meeting ended at 6.27 pm

Chairman:

Date: Thursday 26 June 2025