



REGULATORY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Regulatory Committee held on Monday 20 October 2025 at 6.30 pm in Council Chamber, Third Floor, Southwater One, Telford, TF3 4JG

Present: Councillors I Preece (Chair), J Jones, N Page, H Rhodes, K L Tomlinson, R Tyrrell and P J Scott

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

Apologies: Councillor C Chikandamina

4 Declarations of Interest

None.

5 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 26 June 2025 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

6 Delegated Authority for Wolverhampton City Council

The Service Delivery Manager - Registrars, Public Protection, Legal & Democracy presented the Delegated Authority for Wolverhampton City Council report which sought approval for the authorisation of officers of another licensing authority to undertake compliance functions under Section 68 and 73 of the Local Government Act (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, as amended and also sought approval to delegate authority to the Director: Policy & Governance, in exceptional circumstances, to approve the continued licensing of a wheelchair-accessible Private Hire Vehicle beyond the standard age limit of 12 years, up to a maximum of 15 years. This delegation would apply only to purpose built or suitably modified vehicles that met the requirements set out under the Criteria for Exceptional Condition detailed in Appendix 1 to the report.

The Licensing Authority had recently received confirmation that Licensing and Night-Time Economy Officers had been granted delegated authority by Wolverhampton City Council under Section 101(1) of the Local Government Act 1972 permitting them to discharge functions on behalf of another local authority. The delegation provided authority under Sections 68 and 73 of the



Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 (as amended) for Officers to undertake the inspection and determination of a vehicle's fitness and offences of obstructing authorised officers during investigations as set out in the report.

Members were informed that this report set out reciprocal working arrangements for a range of measures working alongside neighbouring authorities within a legislative landscape. The Deregulation Act set out that as long as a vehicle, driver and operator were all licensed with a single authority, work could be undertaken wherever they wanted. The report set out how this would be practically managed by a sensible approach to enable the control of vehicles within the borough.

There were currently 443 private hire vehicles licensed with Wolverhampton with 237 of these having Telford addresses and a large number of these worked within the borough.

During a vehicle inspection, assessments would be undertaken using the relevant conditions. The Officers had received suitable training and Members would be heartened to learn that the disparity in the gap between the authorities had narrowed and there were few differences meaning that an unsafe vehicle in the borough would also be deemed unsafe in Wolverhampton. By offering the reciprocal roadside checks it ensured that when local drivers were operating elsewhere the public were kept safe.

The Regulatory Committee was also asked to consider granting delegated authority to officers to consider applications to extend the vehicle age limit in respect of purposefully adapted wheelchair accessible vehicles to 15 years. The current policy had a maximum age limit of 12 years for licensed vehicles from the date of first registration. During the last year there had been three applications requesting to extend the vehicle limit which involved submitting an application to be considered by a sub-committee of the Regulatory Committee. By granting delegated authority this would ensure that the applications could be dealt with swiftly and without the need to convene a sub-committee. There were currently 14 licensed vehicles maintaining accessibility across the borough and it was important to keep that level and increase where possible.

During the debate some Members felt that this was a valuable exercise and asked who would pay for the checks in each area or would this be reciprocated. The collaborative working was considered baby steps but in the right direction. It was felt that more disabled taxis were needed to ensure better accessibility and the proposals were welcomed. Other Members considered that the delegated authority would enable the council to act more swiftly in order to prevent uncertainty and reassure local operators and asked if the delegated powers would be rolled out to Shropshire and South



Staffordshire. A question arose as to what the differences were in the licensing process that made someone more likely to apply for a licence in another area and were minibuses included within this delegation and could they be used for wheelchair users.

The Service Delivery Manager - Registrars, Public Protection, Legal & Democracy explained that vehicle checks were already undertaken and it was no more onerous to stop one or two extra private hire vehicles and there would not be a big financial burden. Because of the joined up approach and relationships that had been built, any complaints passed between the authorities would be taken seriously and any action such as a referral or revocation would be reported. The licensing function was self-funding and the proposal was seen as a stepping stone to where the council would like to be with neighbouring authorities. In relation to working in partnership with other local authorities, the council had reached out to both neighbouring authorities but the process would need to be clear in its terms of use in order to protect residents and ensure that people within the borough were kept safe. Both the speed of processing applications and the ability to complete applications online had been a big factor in terms of where someone would choose to apply. Minibuses up to 8 seats could be wheelchair adapted but would require a PSV licence once they reached 9 seats. Those local authorities with large fleets of private hire vehicles were able to reduce the cost of licences because the licensing function had to be self-funding. This had in turn also meant some authorities became more attractive for drivers seeking to lower their licensing costs. For every Council there was a balancing act exercise to manage fees in order to stay competitive whilst processing applications in a timely manner.

Following the debate it was, unanimously:

RESOLVED – that:

a) the delegation of authority to Wolverhampton City Council Compliance Officers be approved; and

b) the delegation of authority to the Director: Policy & Governance (and their onward delegation,) for the renewal of purpose-built or suitably modified wheelchair-accessible Private Hire Vehicles be approved.

The meeting ended at 6.57 pm

Chairman:

Date: Thursday 26 March 2026