

To: Members of the Licensing
Committee

Date: 7 June 2018

Direct Dial: 01824 712568

e-mail: democratic@denbighshire.gov.uk

Dear Councillor

You are invited to attend a meeting of the **LICENSING COMMITTEE** to be held at **9.30 am** on **WEDNESDAY, 13 JUNE 2018** in the **COUNCIL CHAMBER, COUNTY HALL, RUTHIN.**

Yours sincerely

G Williams
Head of Legal and Democratic Services

AGENDA

PART 1 - THE PRESS AND PUBLIC ARE INVITED TO ATTEND THIS PART OF THE MEETING

1 APOLOGIES

2 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR

To appoint a Chair of the Licensing Committee for the ensuing year.

3 APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIR

To appoint a Vice Chair of the Licensing Committee for the ensuing year.

4 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Members to declare any personal or prejudicial interests in any business identified to be considered at this meeting.

5 URGENT MATTERS AS AGREED BY THE CHAIR

Notice of items which, in the opinion of the Chair, should be considered at the meeting as a matter of urgency pursuant to Section 100B(4) of the Local Government Act, 1972.

6 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING (Pages 9 - 14)

To receive the minutes of the Licensing Committee held on 8 March 2018 (copy enclosed).

PART 2 - CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

It is recommended in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, that the Press and Public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item of business because it is likely that exempt information as defined in paragraphs 12 and 13 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A of the Act would be disclosed.

7 REVIEW OF A LICENCE TO DRIVE HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLES - DRIVER NO. 510126 (Pages 15 - 48)

To consider a confidential report by the Head of Planning and Public Protection (copy enclosed) seeking members' review of a licence to drive hackney carriage and private hire vehicles in respect of Driver No. 510126.

PART 1 - THE PRESS AND PUBLIC ARE INVITED TO ATTEND THIS PART OF THE MEETING

8 REQUEST FOR ADVERTISING ON A HACKNEY CARRIAGE VEHICLE (Pages 49 - 56)

To consider a report by the Head of Planning and Public Protection (copy enclosed) seeking members' determination of a request from a Hackney Carriage Proprietor for approval to display emblems on his licensed vehicles.

9 UPDATE ON THE HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE CONVICTION POLICY (Pages 57 - 88)

To consider a report by the Head of Planning and Public Protection (copy enclosed) updating members on the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Drivers Conviction Policy.

10 LICENSING COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME 2018/19 (Pages 89 - 92)

To consider a report by the Head of Planning and Public Protection (copy enclosed) presenting the committee's forward work programme for approval.

MEMBERSHIP

Councillors

Joan Butterfield
Hugh Irving
Alan James

Melvyn Mile
Arwel Roberts
Rhys Thomas

Brian Jones
Richard Mainon
Barry Mellor

Tony Thomas
Huw Williams

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All Councillors for information
Press and Libraries
Town and Community Councils

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LICENSING COMMITTEE PROCEDURE FOR THE DETERMINATION OF HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLE DRIVER LICENCE APPLICATIONS AND REVIEWS OF EXISTING LICENSED DRIVERS

STEP	DESCRIPTION
1.	The Chair to welcome and introduce the applicant/licence holder to all parties present.
2.	Solicitor to ask the applicant/licence holder to confirm that he/she has received the report and the Committee procedures. If applicant confirms same, move onto step 4.
3.	If it should occur that the applicant/licence holder states that the report has not been received, then such matter will be addressed at this stage. Members may wish to consider adjourning the matter, for a short period, in order for the applicant/licence holder to read the report.
4.	Head of Planning and Public Protection (or representative) briefly introduces the application/review
5.	The applicant/licence holder is requested to present his/her case The applicant/licence holder can call any witnesses he/she chooses in support of the application, for which advance notice should have been given to the Licensing Officers.
6.	Committee Members can question the applicant/licence holder and or his witnesses
7.	Technical officers are invited to present any findings (Licensing/Community Enforcement, First Contact Team (Social Services), School Transport.)
8.	The Committee Members followed by the applicant/licence holder can ask questions of the technical officers
9.	The applicant/licence holder will be invited to make a final statement, if they so wish
10.	The following will be requested to leave the meeting whilst the application/review is discussed by Members – the applicant/licence holder, all third parties, Head of Planning and Public Protection, technical officers NB The only people remaining should be – Committee Members, translator, committee’s legal adviser and the minute taker

11.	The committee members will consider the application/review taking into account the evidence heard
12	Should Committee Members prove it necessary to recommence the asking of questions and recall any party to provide further information or clarification, all persons who have withdrawn from the meeting will be invited to return. After the question(s) have been determined all third parties will be asked to withdraw again for Members to consider all evidence.
13.	When the Members have reached their decision, all parties will be recalled and the applicant/licence holder will be informed of the Members decision by the Chairman.
14.	The Chair will inform the applicant/licence holder of the decision reached. This will include any specific conditions or penalties which may have been imposed. If necessary the Council's Solicitor to provide further clarification of the decision and its implications to the applicant/licence holder.
15.	If the decision is to refuse or there is a decision to suspend or revoke, the Council's Solicitor to inform the applicant/licence holder of the right of appeal to the Magistrates' Court (the decision letter will also include these details).
16.	For an existing licensed driver (issued by Denbighshire), and the decision involves a resolution by the Committee to suspend or revoke the existing licence, Members may do so under either: 1. Section 61 (2A) of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976. 2. Section 61 (2B) of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976. This decision will have IMMEDIATE EFFECT and can only be used when the grounds for suspension/revocation are a public safety matter. The Solicitor will explain to the licence holder the implications of the decision.
17.	The applicant/licence holder will be informed of the decision in writing as soon as practicable.
18.	The applicant/licence holder will be invited to discuss any matter they are unsure of with Licensing Officers after the Committee

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2000

Code of Conduct for Members

DISCLOSURE AND REGISTRATION OF INTERESTS

I, *(name)*

a *member/co-opted member of
*(*please delete as appropriate)*

Denbighshire County Council

CONFIRM that I have declared a ***personal / personal and prejudicial** interest not previously declared in accordance with the provisions of Part III of the Council's Code of Conduct for Members, in respect of the following:-
*(*please delete as appropriate)*

Date of Disclosure:

Committee *(please specify)*:

Agenda Item No.

Subject Matter:

Nature of Interest:

*(See the note below)**

Signed

Date

*Note: Please provide sufficient detail e.g. 'I am the owner of land adjacent to the application for planning permission made by Mr Jones', or 'My husband / wife is an employee of the company which has made an application for financial assistance'.

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LICENSING COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Licensing Committee held in the Council Chamber, County Hall, Ruthin on Thursday, 8 March 2018 at 9.30 am.

PRESENT

Councillors Joan Butterfield, Hugh Irving (Chair), Alan James (Vice-Chair), Brian Jones, Melvyn Mile, Arwel Roberts, Peter Scott, Rhys Thomas, Tony Thomas and Huw Williams

ALSO PRESENT

Solicitor (AL), Public Protection Business Manager (IM), Licensing Officer (NJ) and Committee Administrator (KEJ)

1 APOLOGIES

Councillor Barry Mellor

2 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

No declarations of interest had been raised.

3 URGENT MATTERS AS AGREED BY THE CHAIR

No urgent matters has been raised.

4 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the Licensing Committee held on 6 December 2017 were submitted.

***RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on 6 December 2017 be received and confirmed as a correct record.*

5 INTRODUCTION OF A LIST OF DESIGNATED WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBLE VEHICLES

The Public Protection Business Manager submitted a report (previously circulated) regarding changes introduced by the Equality Act 2010 and seeking approval to introduce and maintain a list of wheelchair accessible vehicles.

The Equality Act 2010 permitted local authorities to retain a list of all vehicles licensed as a hackney carriage or private hire vehicle which met the requirements of a wheelchair accessible vehicle and placed further obligations on drivers and/or proprietors of those vehicles, creating offences for breaches and discrimination against wheelchair users. Details of the duties to be imposed on drivers of designated vehicles under the Act had been provided within the report together with details of exemptions and an approximate timescale for publication of the list. Formal statutory guidance from the Department of Transport had been issued

(attached as an appendix to the report) asking local authorities to introduce the relevant parts of the Equality Act in order to provide protection for wheelchair users.

Members considered the contents of the report and advice contained in the Equality Act 2010 and the Department of Transport's guidance and welcomed the new provisions in order to better protect the rights of wheelchair users and create improvements and safeguards against discrimination when using licensed vehicles. It was noted that previous complaints had been brought before the committee with regard to services provided by licensed wheelchair accessible vehicles which would be addressed under the new provisions with penalties imposed for breaches of responsibilities placed on drivers and owners in that regard.

RESOLVED that members –

- (a) *approve the introduction of a published list of wheelchair accessible vehicles;*
- (b) *delegate the setting of the implementation date to the Public Protection Business Manager in consultation with the Public Protection Manager and Chair of the Licensing Committee, and*
- (c) *instruct officers to report back to the Licensing Committee during 2018 with information on the prepared list.*

6 PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE EXISTING HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLE SPECIFICATIONS

The Licensing Officer submitted a report (previously circulated) detailing proposed amendments to the existing hackney carriage and private hire vehicle specifications for members' consideration.

Since implementation of the revised hackney carriage and private hire vehicle policy in July 2017 feedback from the licensed trade had highlighted the need for greater clarity with regard to the vehicle specification relating to doors, and the section relating to wheelchair accessibility had been considered too restrictive and may have unintended consequences on the taxi industry. Consequently officers had proposed an amendment to the relevant paragraphs in the vehicle specification (as detailed within the report) which would better reflect the authority's requirements for licensed vehicles relating to doors and allow greater flexibility in terms of wheelchair access availability to benefit the licensed trade and travelling public.

Members considered the proposed amendments and assurances were sought that the proposed changes would not leave the authority open to further challenge. Officers explained that the revisions provided greater clarity; increased the range and number of vehicles suitable for licensing purposes, and provided greater flexibility in terms of equipment available for facilitating wheelchair access. Consequently members were satisfied with the proposed modifications and it was –

RESOLVED that the amendments to the hackney carriage and private hire vehicle specifications as detailed in paragraphs 4.7 and 4.9 of the report, as reproduced below, be approved with immediate effect –

- Sections 3.11.1 & 6.5.1 – “All saloons, estates or purpose built taxi vehicles shall have at least four side-opening doors, which may be opened from the inside and the outside. Minibuses, transits and people carrier type vehicles shall have at least three doors not including any tailgate rear doors”
- Sections 3.14.1 & 6.8.1 – “A ramp or ramps, or appropriate lifting equipment, for the loading of a wheelchair and passenger shall be available at all times for use at the nearside or rear passenger door”

7 GAMBLING ACT 2005 - REVIEW OF STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES

The Licensing Officer submitted a report (previously circulated) presenting the final draft of the Council’s Statement of Principles for the Gambling Act 2005 for adoption and implementation with effect from 1 April 2018.

There was a statutory requirement to review the Statement of Principles every three years and the draft document had been developed by the six licensing authorities in North Wales to ensure consistency in matters relating to gambling issues and functions. The draft document had been approved for public consultation by the Licensing Committee in September 2017 and no responses had been received.

Officers responded to members’ questions regarding the administration and enforcement relating to gambling activities and clarified the role of the licensing authority and Gambling Commission in that regard. There were no particular issues of concern relating to the regulation of gambling within the county and action was generally taken in response to intelligence received with no standard inspection regime for gambling activities, and operators generally conformed to legislative requirements. In response to further questions officers also clarified the licensing requirements with regard to large pay-out gaming machines and small society lotteries and raffles. It was noted that there was no casino within the county and the council had previously resolved not to permit applications for casinos. Members noted that no representations had been received following the consultation process and the content of the draft document remained unchanged. Consequently it was –

RESOLVED that the Statement of Principles as presented and attached as appendix to the report be adopted and implemented with effect from 1 April 2018.

8 UPDATE ON CONVICTION POLICY AND CONDITIONS FOR HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE DRIVERS AND OPERATORS

The Public Protection Business Manager submitted a report (previously circulated) updating members on progress with the review of policies associated with Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Drivers’ Conviction Policy and Private Hire Operators.

Members were advised of the work being undertaken by a national working group to develop a national model on the suitability of applicants and licensees in relation to hackney carriage and private hire vehicle licensing which had recently been subject to a national consultation which ended on 10 March 2018. It was expected that the draft would be further developed and released later in the year. In addition

Welsh Government had recently completed a consultation on taxi and private hire vehicle licensing in Wales and further work would follow on from that process. Both work streams would have an impact on the licensing process nationally and locally and reference was made to the council's engagement within that process.

The Committee agreed it would be preferable to engage in the consultations with a view to developing the national models prior to considering the relevance to the council's own taxi licensing policies. However questions were raised regarding the potential for conflicting outcomes from the two work streams given that one was being undertaken by the UK Government and the other by Welsh Government. Whilst there was potential for differences generally between the two administrations officers provided assurances that the work streams in this particular case focused on different areas of licensing legislation with the national working group focusing on a universal conviction policy and the Welsh Government focusing on the taxi and private hire vehicle industry in Wales.

The Chair highlighted the need for a national revocations database to stop drivers obtaining a licence elsewhere if they had been banned or refused in a particular area. Officers advised of informal arrangements with neighbouring authorities to share information in that regard but confirmed that work was underway to introduce a national register of licence refusals and revocations which could be used by local authorities as part of the application process in assessing driver suitability. Members were pleased to note that the introduction of a national revocations database was imminent and asked to be kept informed of progress in that regard.

RESOLVED that members –

- (a) *acknowledge the contents of the report, and*
- (b) *instruct officers to report back to the Licensing Committee on the work of the national working group and the Welsh Government as further progress was made to allow members to consider the relevance to the council's taxi licensing policies.*

9 REVIEW OF STREET TRADING POLICY

The Licensing Officer submitted a report (previously circulated) informing members on progress with the review of the current street trading policy in Denbighshire.

In 2015 the Licensing Committee authorised officers to review the existing street trading policy in order to address difficulties with the regime and suggest improvements to better regulate and support street trading within the county. A draft policy was considered by the Licensing Committee in December 2016 and it was agreed that an initial consultation be undertaken with City, Town and Community Councils along with internal council departments. Comments received as a result of that initial consultation had been incorporated into the draft Street Trading Policy which had been subject to public consultation. No comments had been received as a result of that public consultation exercise. However feedback from individuals and teams within the council had raised further issues for consideration and in September 2017 the Licensing Committee asked that further

discussions take place with local “fixed” traders, street traders, communities and the wider council teams prior to finalising a policy for consideration. Work was currently ongoing to devise a strategy using social media and face to face questionnaires, along with the council’s website, to contact and invite feedback from key members of the community in order for a policy to be drafted which had been subject to a through engagement and consultation process.

Members noted progress with the review of the Street Trading Policy and efforts being made in order to engage with specific individuals and groups who may be directly affected by the policy. The importance of developing a robust, fit for purpose policy for the towns and communities in the county was highlighted and for transparency officers agreed to report back on the list of consultees and their contributions in formulating the final policy document for members’ consideration.

RESOLVED that officers be authorised to continue work with the relevant groups and individuals and present a draft policy for presentation at a future meeting of the Licensing Committee.

10 LICENSING COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME 2018

A report by the Head of Planning and Public Protection was submitted (previously circulated) on the Licensing Committee’s future work programme for 2018.

The following matters were raised –

- the Chair and Councillor Tony Thomas (Lead Member for Licensing) had recently accompanied Licensing Officers and North Wales Police on a joint regulatory operation in the north of the county which had involved visits to a number of licensed premises in the early hours of the morning. The operation had been worthwhile with a good rapport between licensees and officers and support and co-operation between all parties. Some concern was raised regarding evidence of drug use at licensed premises and within the wider community and officers reported upon measures being undertaken through a multi-agency approach to address that issue. Reference was made to the remit of the Licensing Committee in this regard and their responsibilities under the Licensing Act. Whilst drug use was predominantly a police matter members asked to be kept informed of any developments officers became aware of in addressing that issue
- the Chair and Councillor Alan James (Vice Chair) had met with officers to undertake the review of application forms as requested by the committee and reference to the disclosure of convictions had now been made clearer for applicants – the new forms would be introduced shortly
- reference was made to the half day training session on taxi licensing scheduled for 9.00 a.m. on 19 April 2018 in County Hall, Ruthin and members were encouraged to advise officers if they had any specific additional training needs.

Members were satisfied with the content of the work programme and it was –

RESOLVED that the Licensing Committee’s forward work programme as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report be approved.

The meeting concluded at 10.30 a.m.

By virtue of paragraph(s) 12, 13 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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REPORT TO:	Licensing Committee
DATE:	13 June 2018
LEAD OFFICER:	Head of Planning and Public Protection Services
CONTACT OFFICER:	Howard Birnie licensing@denbighshire.gov.uk 01824 706431
SUBJECT:	Request for Advertising on Hackney Carriage Vehicles

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1** To consider a request from Mr William Curry, who is an established Hackney Carriage Proprietor, for approval to display emblems on his licensed vehicles.
- 1.2** To clarify the policy requirement in respect of paint finish for hackney carriages

2.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1** In accordance with delegated authority, Officers are able to approve such requests in line with current policy.
- 2.2** Whilst Officers have delegated authority to approve requests as described at 2.1 above, this particular request has raised concerns with officers and therefore has not been approved at officer level.
- 2.3** Having received such a request, Members are asked to consider the details contained in this report to assist them in determining whether this request should be approved

3.0 POWER TO MAKE THE DECISION

- 3.1** Town Police Clauses Act 1847.

4.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 4.1 Mr. Curry has approached the Council with a view to applying for permission to display a large Welsh Flag emblem covering the bonnet area on his licensed vehicles, as shown in Appendix A. Please note these are computer generated images and not photographs of the vehicles as they stand.
- 4.2 The Council's existing policy and vehicle specification (5.6, 6.2 and 7.6) sets out the acceptable requirements relating to paintwork, signage, advertising and livery of Hackney Carriage Vehicles. Relevant extracts of these sections are provided at Appendix B to this report.

5.0 CONSIDERATION

- 5.1 Members should first note that section 6.2.2 appears incomplete when compared alongside the similar policy requirement for private hire vehicles. Specifically, the requirement for a private hire vehicle is, at 3.8.2, "The paint work shall be of a professional finish and be one consistent colour over the whole of the vehicle's bodywork". Members may want to consider if this requirement was intended to be replicated in the hackney carriage specification.
- 5.2 Officers wish to highlight to Members the requirements relating to Signs and Notices. Whilst a company name / telephone number can be displayed on the side/ rear of a vehicle no other signs, emblems or notices shall be displayed inside or outside a vehicle without specific written permission from the Council.
- 5.3 Members will wish to consider whether all types of sporting emblems and patriotic signage are acceptable to be displayed on licensed vehicles in general. For example, a request may be received to display allegiance to a sports team or country which may attract unwelcome attention, or increase the potential for criminal behaviour,
- 5.4 Whilst Mr. Curry's request may not automatically fall outside the requirements as detailed above, Officers consider that Members should be given the opportunity to give the matter their consideration in this instance.
- 5.5 When Members considered a request to display smaller emblems at their Meeting in September, 2017 it was **RESOLVED** that –

(a) the request to display emblems be granted as applied for, and

(b) future requests to display emblems be considered individually on their own merits.

The reasons for the Licensing Committee's decision were as follows –
“Having considered the report and Applicant's submission members were satisfied that it was appropriate for the emblems to be displayed on the vehicle as applied for. It was acknowledged that particular emblems of this type may attract unwanted attention but members considered that a policy change was not required and that each request should be determined on its own merits.”

6.0 RECOMMENDATION

6.1 Members consider the request to display the emblems and take one of the following options:

- approve the request as applied for, or
- refuse the request.

6.2 Members consider the policy requirement comments at 5.1 above and confirm the intended sentence to be either:

- The paint work shall be of a professional finish; or
- The paint work shall be of a professional finish and be one consistent colour over the whole of the vehicle's bodywork

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Request for Advertising on Hackney Carriage Vehicles – Appendix A

Licensing Committee – 13th June 2018





5.6 SIGNAGE/ADVERTISING/LIVERY

- 5.6.1 It is important that the public should be able to identify and understand the difference between a Hackney Carriage and a Private Hire Vehicle.
- 5.6.2 Vehicle identification plates are a key feature in helping to identify vehicles that are properly licensed. All licensed vehicles shall display one plate at the front and one on the rear of the vehicle
- 5.6.3 A Hackney Carriage licensed by the Council must carry an illuminated roof-mounted sign. The roof sign must state "Taxi/Tacsi" and must be illuminated when plying for hire.
- 5.6.4 Details of any signs or advertising requested to be placed on a Hackney Carriage Vehicle shall be submitted to the Licensing Section for due consideration as to content. If the advertising is not approved by the officer then the advertising request will be referred to the Licensing Committee for its consideration.

6.2 BODY

- 6.2.1 The vehicle shall have no exterior visible signs of previous significant damage ie deep scratches
- 6.2.2 The paint work shall be of a professional finish
- 6.2.3 The bodywork shall have no significant signs of corrosion. Corrosion includes visible rust and signs of rust by virtue of the paintwork being blistered.

7.6 SIGNS AND NOTICES

- 7.6.1 A Proprietor may display on the side and/or rear of the vehicle,

below window level, the company name under which the vehicle is operated and/or its telephone number, but no other signs, emblems or notices shall be displayed either outside or inside the vehicle without specific written permission from the Council.

7.6.2 Any Proprietor wishing to use or sell space on the vehicle for the advertising of another company/business must first apply to the Council with a draft advert for consideration. Only one authorised advert will be permitted

7.6.3 Such adverts must not:

- i) contain anything religious or political
- ii) advertise alcohol or tobacco
- iii) be pornographic or offensive to good taste
- iv) promote discounted fares, or
- v) advertise jobs

REPORT TO:	Licensing Committee
DATE:	13 th June 2018
LEAD OFFICER:	Head of Planning and Public Protection
CONTACT OFFICER:	Senior Technical Officer (Licensing) 01824 706433
SUBJECT:	Update on Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Conviction Policy

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To update Members on the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Drivers' Conviction Policy.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 Members have scheduled an update on the progress on the policy associated with Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Drivers' Conviction Policy.

3. POWER TO MAKE THE DECISION

- 3.1 No decision required.

4. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 4.1 The council, as part of its function of the licensing of hackney carriage and private hire drivers, has established a Conviction Policy so as to guide applicants and officers on expectations relating to relevance of convictions etc.
- 4.2 The current Conviction policy was last reviewed in 2014.
- 4.3 Members will recall that they agreed that the current policy should be reviewed as part of their forward work programme.
- 4.4 Since this was added to the forward work programme there has been a significant amount of work by a national working group, namely the Institute of Licensing (IOL) consisting of a wide spectrum of stakeholders with an interest in taxi licensing, to develop a national model on the

suitability of applicants and licensees in the hackney carriage and private hire vehicles.

- 4.5 The final version of the IOL's Policy was published in April of this year, and Members will recall that during their recent Member training facilitated by James Button, the IOL's policy was discussed and Members were keen for an update on the policy at the next scheduled meeting. For Members information a copy of the IOL's policy is attached at Appendix A.
- 4.6 The intention of the national policy was for as many local authorities to adopt the document to standardise the minimum requirements for determining whether applicants were suitable to becoming a licence taxi driver.
- 4.7 Officers have made enquiries with neighbouring authorities to establish whether there was an intention to adopt the National" IOL" policy throughout North Wales. On initial enquiry only Anglesey have expressed an interest in adopting the IOL policy.
- 4.8 As it appears that adoption may not be wide spread across North Wales, Members should be made aware that there is a risk in Denbighshire being the only Local Authority in North Wales to adopt the IOL's policy, as applicants who may not meet the requirements of the policy could apply to any other neighbouring authority that has not adopted the national policy and, if granted, could still operate in Denbighshire under some circumstances.
- 4.9 Members should be aware that the Licensing Technical Panel (Wales), a forum of local authority Licensing officers, have also had a discussion around the IOL's National Relevance of Conviction Policy, both positive and negative comments have been received, however all agreed that there was a need to scrutinise this policy further so as to establish any variation and its potential impact before the Panel could support the adoption throughout Wales.
- 4.10 In addition to the IOL's extensive work in developing a robust conviction policy, over the next few months, the Welsh Government will be bringing forward a white paper that will set out proposals for how they think licensing should work in Wales. It remains that the Welsh Government hope that they will be in a position to introduce legislation into the National Assembly for Wales before the end of this current Assembly term.
- 4.12 The Welsh Government have suggested that the IOL's policy or

something similar would probably find its way into any new legislation for Wales.

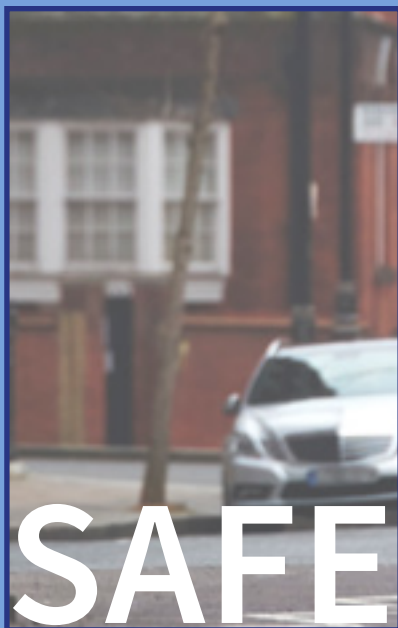
- 4.13 In the meantime, should Members be minded to wait for the outcome of the Welsh Government White Paper, the Council's existing Conviction Policy could be reviewed to ensure any areas of ambiguity are removed or clarified.

5.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 5.1 Members authorise officers to continue to assess the impact on the adoption of the Institute of Licensing Relevance of Conviction Policy alongside the Welsh Government's review and report back to a future committee meeting.
- 5.2 Members instruct officers to review the current Conviction Policy and report back to the next Committee meeting.

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Guidance on determining the suitability of applicants and licensees in the hackney and private hire trades



April 2018

 Institute of Licensing

Produced by the Institute of Licensing in partnership with:



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Foreword

The function of licensing is the protection of the public. A member of the public stepping into a motor vehicle driven by a stranger must be able to trust the driver. Are they honest? Are they competent? Are they safe? Are they trustworthy? When we transact with others, we usually have time and opportunity to make such assessments. When we transact with taxi drivers, we don't. Therefore, we must, and do, rely on the licence as the warranty of the driver's safety and suitability for the task at hand.

It follows that a licensing authority has an onerous responsibility. In making decisions regarding grant and renewal of licences it is, in effect, holding out the licensee as someone who can be trusted to convey the passenger from A to B in safety. That passenger may be you, or your elderly mother, or your teenage daughter, or a person who has had too much to drink, or who is vulnerable for a whole host of other reasons.

Everybody working in this field should acquaint themselves with the facts of the Rotherham case, which stands as a stark testament to what can happen when licensing performs its safeguarding role inadequately. But the extremity of that appalling story should not distract us from the job of protecting the public from more mundane incompetence, carelessness or dishonesty. The standards of safety and suitability do not have to be set as a base minimum. To the contrary, they may be set high, to give the public the assurance it requires when using a taxi service. It is good to know that one's driver is not a felon. It is better to know that he or she is a dedicated professional.

Crucially, this is not a field in which the licensing authority has to strike a fair balance between the driver's right to work and the public's right to protection. The public are entitled to be protected, full stop. That means that the licensing authority is entitled and bound to treat the safety of the public as the paramount consideration. It is, after all, the point of the exercise.

Therefore, this guidance is to be welcomed. It rightly emphasises that any circumstance relating to the licensee is potentially relevant, provided of course that it is relevant to their safety and suitability to hold a licence. It provides useful and authoritative guidelines to licensing authorities as to how they ought to approach their important task of making determinations about the safety and suitability of drivers and operators.

While, of course, licensing is a local function, it seems absurd that precisely the same conduct might result in a short period without a licence in one district, and a much longer period in a neighbouring district. If a driver is suitable in district A, they are surely suitable in district B, and vice versa. If, as is hoped, this guidance becomes widely adopted, this will result in a degree of national uniformity, which serves the public interest in consistency, certainty and confidence in the system of licensing. Adherence to the guidance may also provide protection to licensing authorities on appeal.

The guidance is therefore commended to licensing authorities. It is hoped that, in due course, it will sit at the elbow of every councillor and officer working in taxi licensing.

Philip Kolvin QC
Cornerstone Barristers

April 2018

Chapter 1: Introduction

- 1.1 This guidance has been produced by the Institute of Licensing working in partnership with the Local Government Association (LGA), Lawyers in Local Government (LLG) and the National Association of Licensing and Enforcement Officers (NALEO), following widespread consultation. We are grateful to all three organisations for their contributions. This guidance is formally endorsed by all of those organisations.
- 1.2 The overriding aim of any Licensing Authority when carrying out its functions relating to the licensing of Hackney or Private Hire Drivers, Vehicle Proprietors and Operators, must be the protection of the public and others who use (or can be affected by) Hackney Carriage and Private Hire services.
- 1.3 The relevant legislation provides that any person must satisfy the authority that they are a fit and proper person to hold a licence and that is a test to be applied after any applicant has gained any reasonably required qualifications¹. It is the final part of the process of an application when the decision is made, whether by a committee, sub-committee or an officer under a Scheme of Delegation. It involves a detailed examination of their entire character in order to make a judgment as to their fitness and propriety.
- 1.4 If a licence holder falls short of the fit and proper standard at any time, the licence should be revoked or not renewed on application to do so.
- 1.5 There is no recent Statutory or Ministerial guidance as to how such decisions should be approached or what matters are relevant or material to a decision. This guidance complements the LGA's Taxi and Private Hire Licensing Councillor's Handbook and any forthcoming Government guidance. Local authorities should also be aware of the forthcoming National Anti Fraud Network database on refusals and revocations of hackney carriage and private hire licences.
- 1.6 This document is intended to provide guidance on determining suitability, taking into account the character of the applicant or licensee. It can then be used by local authorities as a basis for their own policies: in particular it considers how regard should be had to the antecedent history of the applicant or licence holder and its relevance to their 'fitness and propriety' or 'character'. As with any guidance it need not be slavishly followed but it provides a starting or reference point from which decisions can be made taking into account the particular merits of each case.
- 1.7 A licensing authority policy can take a 'bright line approach' and say "never" in a policy, but it remains a policy, and as such does not amount to any fetter on the discretion of the

¹ Except vehicle proprietors. In those cases there is no "fit and proper" requirement, but the authority has an absolute discretion over granting a licence.

authority. Each case will always be considered on its merits having regard to the policy, and the licensing authority can depart from the policy where it considers it appropriate to do so. This will normally happen where the licensing authority considers that there are exceptional circumstances which warrant a different decision. This approach was endorsed by the High Court in *R (on the application of Nicholds) v Security Industry Authority*².

- 1.8 In Chapter 2 this Guidance explores the current thinking behind an individual's tendencies to reoffend. It is clear that this is not an exact science and that there is no meaningful and precise statistical evidence that can assist in the setting of policy. Given the important function of licensing to protect the public, any bar should be set at the highest level which is reasonable, albeit subject to the exercise of discretion as is set out in paragraph 1.7 and Chapters 3 and 4.
- 1.9 This Guidance contains no detailed list of offences. All offences are allocated to a general category such as 'dishonesty' or 'drugs'. This prevents it being argued that a specific offence is not covered by the Policy as it 'is not on the list' and also prevents arguments that a firearm is more serious than a knife and should lead to differentiation. In each case, appropriate weight should be given to the evidence provided.
- 1.10 This Guidance cannot have the force of legislation, new or amended; the need for which is both abundantly clear to, and fully supported by the Institute and the other organisations working with it. It is intended to help local authorities achieve greater consistency so that applicants are less able to shop between authorities. It is acknowledged that this cannot be fully achieved without the imposition of national minimum standards.
- 1.11 In preparing this document the Institute's Working Party has consulted with and considered the issues from all perspectives including, Councillors, Licensing Officers, Lawyers, the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Trades, Academics, the Probation Service and the Police.

² [2007] 1 WLR 2067

Chapter 2: Offenders and Offending - An Overview

- 2.1 The aim of local authority licensing of the taxi and PHV trades is to protect the public'.³ With this in mind, Public Protection must be at the forefront of the decision maker's mind when determining whether an individual is considered a "fit and proper person" to hold a licence.
- 2.2 This section aims to provide a brief overview of public protection, how to determine risk and factors to be considered when an applicant seeks to demonstrate a change in their offending behaviour.
- 2.3 The licensing process places a duty on the local authority to protect the public. Given the nature of the role, it is paramount that those seeking a living in the trades meet the required standards. As the previous offending behaviour can be considered as a predictor in determining future behaviour as well as culpability, it is essential that the decision maker considers all relevant factors including previous convictions, cautions and complaints and the time elapsed since these were committed.
- 2.4 There has been extensive research into the reasons behind why some individuals commit crimes, why some learn from their mistakes and stop offending whilst others find themselves in a cycle of repeat offending. Several theories have evolved over many years offering insight into the reasons behind offending behaviour. One common theme is that no two crimes are the same and that risk cannot be eliminated, or the future predicted. What can be done, is to examine each case on its individual merits, look at the risks involved along with any change in circumstances since any offences were committed to assist in making the decision.
- 2.5 A key factor when considering an application from an individual with any convictions, cautions or complaints recorded is Public Protection. This includes assessing the risk of re-offending and harm⁴. Risk assessment tools are regularly employed by those who are responsible for managing individuals who have committed offences. Local Authorities are not always privy to this information so it is important when they are making decisions around suitability that they have an understanding of offending behaviour and risk of re-offending in generic terms.

³ DfT "Taxi and Private Hire Licensing – Best Practice Guide" para 8

⁴ Kemshall, H. (2008). Understanding the Management of High Risk Offenders (Crime and Justice). Open University Press

- 2.6 Flaud⁵ noted that risk is in principle, a matter of fact, but danger is a matter of judgment and opinion. He goes on to note that risk may be said to be the likelihood of an event occurring; danger may be the degree of damage (harm) caused should that event take place⁶.
- 2.7 The National Offender Management Service refers to risk in two dimensions. That being the likelihood that an offence will occur, and the impact / harm of the offence should it happen. Generally, when making a decision around probability and likelihood of re-offending, consideration is needed towards static and dynamic factors.
- 2.8 Static factors are historical and do not change such as age, previous convictions and gender. They can be used as a basis for actuarial assessments and are fundamental in considering an individual's potential to reoffend in future⁷. For example, recent published statistics revealed that 44% of adults are reconvicted within one year of release. For those serving sentences of less than twelve months this increased to 59%⁸. It is also widely accepted that generally persons with a large number of previous offences have a higher rate of proven reoffending than those with fewer previous offences⁹.
- 2.9 Dynamic factors are considered changeable and can vary over time. They include attitudes, cognitions and impulsivity¹⁰. It is documented that the greater their unmet need, the more likely an individual is to re-offend. When considering whether an individual has been rehabilitated, it is important to have regard towards the motivation behind their offending and dynamic risk factors present at the time, against the steps taken to address such factors thus reducing the risk of re-offending.
- 2.10 It is of note that problems and/or needs are more frequently observed in offender populations than in the general population¹¹. Many of these factors are interlinked and embedded in an individual's past experiences. This can impact upon that person's ability to change their behaviour, particularly if the areas identified have not been addressed or support has not been sought. Needs will vary from individual to individual and will rely upon their level of motivation and the nature of the offence committed.

⁵ Flaud, R. (1982). Cited in, Gendreau, P., Little, T. and Goggin, C. (1996). A meta-analysis of the predictors of adult offender recidivism: what works! *Criminology*, 34, 557-607.

⁶ Gendreau, P., Little, T. and Goggin, C. (1996). A meta-analysis of the predictors of adult offender recidivism: what works! *Criminology*, 34, 557-607.

⁷ Craig, L. A. and Browne, K. B (2008). *Assessing Risk in Sex Offenders: A Practitioner's Guide* Paperback.

⁸ Ministry of Justice (2017) *Proven reoffending statistics: July 2014 to June 2015*, London: Ministry of Justice.

⁹ Ministry of Justice (2015): *Transforming Rehabilitation: a summary of evidence on reducing reoffending*. London: Ministry of Justice.

¹⁰ McGuire, J. (2008). A review of effective interventions for reducing aggression and violence. *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences*, 363(1503), 2577-2597

¹¹ Nash, M. (1999) *Police, Probation and Protecting the Public*. London: Blackwell Press.

Risk of re-offending:

- 2.11 The issue of recidivism and increase in serious crime rates has given rise to extensive publications, theories and changes in legislation with many focusing upon the need for more rehabilitation projects as a means of reducing re-offending rates. Central to the rehabilitation of offenders is the concept of criminogenic needs. This has been described by the National Offender Management Service as “any area where the offender has needs or deficits, in which a reduction in the need or deficit would lead to a reduction in the risk of re-conviction. An individual’s ability to address and reduce such needs relies heavily upon their motivation to change and desist and often takes place over a period of time”¹².
- 2.12 Kurlychek, 2007 in her study noted that “a person who has offended in the past has been found to have a high probability of future offending, but this risk of recidivism is highest in the time period immediately after arrest or release from custody and, thereafter, decreases rapidly and dramatically with age”¹³.
- 2.13 A consistent finding throughout criminological literature is that male offenders tend to desist from crime aged 30 years and over¹⁴. It is well documented that the change occurs for various reasons; for example, as a result of successful treatment, natural maturation or the development of positive social relationships¹⁵. Female offenders are also considered more likely to desist from offending as they mature. The peak age of reported offending for females was 14 compared to 19 for males¹⁶.
- 2.14 Desisting from crime for people who have been involved in persistent offending is a difficult and complex process, likely to involve lapses and relapses. Some individuals may never desist¹⁷. As a result, it is important for individuals to evidence change in their behaviour before they can be considered to present a low or nil risk of re-offending. Often the only way of achieving this is through lapse of time.
- 2.15 The longer the time elapsed since an offence has been committed, the more likely the individual will desist from crime. It is noted that the more a life is lived crime-free, the more one comes to see the benefits of desistance¹⁸. Demonstrating a change in offending behaviour and an ability to make effective choices takes time and comes with some

¹² National Offender Management Service (2016). Public Protection Manual Edition. Proven Reoffending Statistics Quarterly Bulletin, October 2015 to December 2015

¹³ Kurlychek, M C, Brame, R (2007). Scarlet letters and recidivism: Does an old criminal record predict future offending? University of South Carolina.

¹⁴ Serin, R, C. and Lloyd, C.D (2008). Examining the process of offender change: the transitions to crime desistance. 347-364.

¹⁵ Nash, M. (1999) Police, Probation and Protecting the Public. London: Blackwell Press.

¹⁶ Trueman, C.N. (2015). Women and Crime. The History Learning Site. Ingatestone: Essex.

¹⁷ Farrell, S (2005). Understanding Desistance from Crime: Emerging Theoretical Directions in Resettlement and Rehabilitation (Crime and Justice) Paperback.

¹⁸ Maguire, M., Morgan, R. and Reiner, R. (2002). The Oxford Handbook of Criminology. 3rd Edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

ambiguity for those who have committed offences. A study in 2007 looking into previous convictions and the links to re-offending concluded that “individuals who have offended in the distant past seem less likely to recidivate than individuals who have offended in the recent past”¹⁹.

- 2.16 Although it is not possible to determine the future behaviour of an individual, taking steps to reduce risk and protect the public can be achieved by following correct processes and guidance. Having regard to an individual’s previous behaviour and their potential to cause harm as a result of the choices they have made plays a significant part when making a decision as to whether to grant a licence. Being able to evidence change in behaviour will involve consideration of the circumstances at the time of the offence, steps taken to address any issues identified and that person’s ability to sustain such change. This can be a long process that can only be achieved over time.

¹⁹ Kurlychek, M C, Brame, R (2007). Scarlet letters and recidivism: Does an old criminal record predict future offending? University of South Carolina.

Chapter 3: 'Taxi' Licensing Overview

- 3.1 Taxis are used by almost everyone in our society occasionally, but they are used regularly by particularly vulnerable groups: children; the elderly; disabled people; and the intoxicated, and a taxi driver has significant power over a passenger who places themselves, and their personal safety, completely in the driver's hands.
- 3.2 Local authorities (districts, unitaries and Welsh Councils) and TfL are responsible for hackney carriage and private hire licensing.
- 3.3 The principal legislation is the Town Police Clauses Act 1847 and the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976. The purpose of taxi licensing is detailed in the DfT *"Taxi and Private Hire Licensing – Best Practice Guide"* para 8 which states:
- "The aim of local authority licensing of the taxi and PHV trades is to protect the public."
- 3.4 Within the two licensing regimes, there are 5 types of licence: hackney carriage vehicle; private hire vehicle; hackney carriage driver; private hire driver and private hire operator.
- 3.5 In relation to all these licences, the authority has a discretion over whether to grant. Whilst there is some guidance issued by the DfT, there are no national standards.
- 3.6 Drivers and operators cannot be granted a licence unless the authority is satisfied that they are a "fit and proper person" to hold that licence (see Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 ss 51 and 59 in respect of drivers; s55 in respect of operators).
- 3.7 There are no statutory criteria for vehicle licences; therefore, the authority has an absolute discretion.
- 3.8 In each case, the authority has powers to grant a licence, renew it on application and, during the currency of the licence, suspend or revoke it.
- 3.9 What is the role of each of these, and how do authorities determine an application, or take action against a licence?

Taxi Drivers

- 3.10 The term "taxi driver" encompasses two different occupations: hackney carriage drivers and private hire drivers. "Taxi driver" is therefore used as a broad, overarching term to cover both hackney carriage and private hire drivers. In each case there are identical statutory

criteria to be met before a licence can be granted and many authorities grant “dual” or “combined” licences to cover driving both types of vehicle.

- 3.11 An applicant must hold a full DVLA or equivalent driver’s licence, have the right to work in the UK, and be a “fit and proper” person²⁰.
- 3.12 The driving licence element is a question of fact. Although there are some issues with foreign driving licences, ultimately a person either has, or does not have a driving licence.
- 3.13 An applicant must also have the right to remain, and work in the UK²¹.
- 3.14 Again, this is ultimately a question of fact and the local authority should follow the guidance issued by the Home Office.²²
- 3.15 It is the whole issue of “fit and proper” that causes local authorities the most difficulties. It has never been specifically judicially defined but it was mentioned in *Leeds City Council v Hussain*²³. Silber J said:
- “... the purpose of the power of suspension is to protect users of licensed vehicles and those who are driven by them and members of the public. Its purpose [and], therefore [the test of fitness and propriety], is to prevent licences being given to or used by those who are not suitable people taking into account their driving record, their driving experience, their sobriety, mental and physical fitness, honesty, and that they are people who would not take advantage of their employment to abuse or assault passengers.”
- 3.16 This is reflected in a test widely used by local authorities:
- ‘Would you (as a member of the licensing committee or other person charged with the ability to grant a hackney carriage driver’s licence) allow your son or daughter, spouse or partner, mother or father, grandson or granddaughter or any other person for whom you care, to get into a vehicle with this person alone?’²⁴
- 3.17 It is suggested that the expression “safe and suitable” person to hold a driver’s licence is a good interpretation which neither adds nor removes anything from the original term of “fit and proper” but brings the concept up to date.

²⁰ Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976. Section 51(1) covers private hire drivers, and section 59(1) covers hackney carriage drivers.

²¹ Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 S51(1)(a)(ii) in respect of private hire drivers and S59(1)(a)(ii) in respect of hackney carriage drivers.

²² “Guidance for Licensing Authorities to Prevent Illegal Working in the Taxi and Private Hire Sector in England and Wales” - Home Office, 1st December 2016 available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/licensing-authority-guide-to-right-to-work-checks>

²³ [2002] EWHC 1145 (Admin), [2003] RTR 199

²⁴ Button on Taxis – Licensing Law and Practice 4th Ed Bloomsbury Professional at para 10.21

3.18 How can a local authority assess and then judge whether or not someone is safe and suitable to hold a drivers' licence?

3.19 The local authority has the power to require an applicant to provide:

“such information as they may reasonably consider necessary to enable them to determine whether the licence should be granted and whether conditions should be attached to any such licence.”²⁵

This “information” can include any pre-conditions or tests that they consider necessary

3.20 Some of these are universal, such as medical assessments²⁶. Others are required by some authorities, but not others. These include:

- Enhanced DBS certificates and sign-up to the update service;
- Knowledge tests;
- Driving tests;
- Disability Awareness;
- Signed Declarations;
- Spoken English tests.

3.21 The provision of information in these terms can satisfy the local authority that a person has the skills and competencies to be a professional driver to hold a licence. However, the concepts of safety and suitability go beyond this. There is the character of the person to be considered as well.

3.22 Both hackney carriage and private hire drivers are exempt from the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. This means that there are no “spent” convictions and that any and all criminal convictions (apart from “protected convictions” and “protected cautions” where they have been declared²⁷) can be taken into account by the local authority in assessing safety and suitability, but only relevant spent convictions should be considered by the decision maker²⁸.

3.23 All Applicants/Licensees should be required to obtain an Enhanced DBS Certificate with Barred Lists checks²⁹ and to provide this to the Licensing Authority. All Licensees should also be required to maintain their Certificates through the DBS Update Service throughout the currency of their licence.

²⁵ Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 s57(1)

²⁶ See Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 s57(2)

²⁷ “Protected convictions” and “protected cautions” are single, minor and elderly matters that do not appear on any DBS Certificates.

²⁸ See *Adamson v Waveney District Council* [1997] 2 All ER 898

²⁹ “For Taxi [driver] Licensing purposes the correct level of check is always the Enhanced level check, with the Adults and Children’s Barred list check. Other Workforce should always be entered at X61 line 1 and Taxi Licensing should be entered at X61 line 2” DBS email 31st August 2017.

- 3.24 If any applicant has, from the age of 10 years, spent six continuous months or more living outside the United Kingdom, evidence of a criminal record check from the country/countries covering the relevant period should be required.
- 3.25 Local authorities should have a policy to provide a baseline for the impact of any convictions, cautions or other matters of conduct which concern a person's safety and suitability³⁰.
- 3.26 The character of the driver in its entirety must be the paramount consideration when considering whether they should be licensed. It is important to recognise that local authorities are not imposing any additional punishment in relation to previous convictions or behaviour. They are using all the information that is available to them to make an informed decision as to whether or not the applicant or licensee is or remains a safe and suitable person.
- 3.27 There are occasions where unsuitable people have been given licences by local authorities, or if refused by the authority, have had it granted by a court on appeal.
- 3.28 Often this is because of some perceived hardship. Case law makes it clear that the impact of losing (or not being granted) a driver's licence on the applicant and his family is not a consideration to be taken into account³¹. This then leads to the question of whether the stance taken by local authorities is robust enough to achieve that overriding aim of public protection.
- 3.29 However, all too often local authorities depart from their policies and grant licences (or do not take action against licensees) without clear and compelling reasons. It is vital that Councillors recognise that the policy, whilst remaining a policy and therefore the Authority's own guidelines on the matter, is the baseline for acceptability. It should only be departed from in exceptional circumstances and for justifiable reasons which should be recorded.
- 3.30 One common misunderstanding is that if the offence was not committed when the driver was driving a taxi, it is much less serious, or even if it was in a taxi but not when passengers were aboard. This is not relevant: speeding is dangerous, irrespective of the situation; drink driving is dangerous, irrespective of the situation; bald tyres are dangerous, irrespective of the situation. All these behaviours put the general public at risk. Violence is always serious. The argument that it was a domestic dispute, or away from the taxi, is irrelevant. A person who has a propensity to violence has that potential in every situation. Sexual offences are always serious. A person who has in the past abused their position (whatever that may have been)

³⁰ As recommended by the DfT "Taxi and Private Hire Licensing – Best Practice Guide" para 59

³¹ *Leeds City Council v Hussain* [2002] EWHC 1145 (Admin), [2003] RTR 199 and *Cherwell District Council v Anwar* [2011] EWHC 2943 (Admin)

to assault another sexually has demonstrated completely unacceptable standards of behaviour.

- 3.31 Applicants may claim that they have sought employment in other fields and been precluded as a result of their antecedent history particularly if that contains convictions. They therefore seek to become a licensed driver as an occupation of last resort. This is unacceptable as the granting of a licence would place such a person in a unique position of trust. The paramount responsibility of a licensing authority is to protect the public, not provide employment opportunities.
- 3.32 Licensees are expected to demonstrate appropriate professional conduct at all time, whether in the context of their work or otherwise. Licensees should be courteous, avoid confrontation, not be abusive or exhibit prejudice in any way. In no circumstances should Licensees take the law into their own hands. Licensees are expected to act with integrity and demonstrate conduct befitting the trust that is placed in them.
- 3.33 There are those who seek to take advantage of vulnerable people by providing services that they are not entitled to provide; for example, by plying for hire in an area where they are not entitled to do so. Licensees are expected to be vigilant of such behaviour and to report any concerns to the Police and the relevant licensing authority. Passengers should feel confident to check that the person offering a service is entitled to do so. Licensees should willingly demonstrate that they are entitled to provide the offered service by, for example, showing their badge.
- 3.34 As a society, we need to ask the question “who is driving my taxi?” and be secure in the knowledge that the answer is “a safe and suitable person”. The vast majority of drivers are decent, law abiding people who work very hard to provide a good service to their customers and the community at large. However poor decisions by local authorities and courts serve to undermine the travelling public’s confidence in the trade as a whole. Unless local authorities and the courts are prepared to take robust (and difficult) decisions to maintain the standards the local authority lays down, and in some cases tighten up their own policies, the public cannot have complete confidence in taxi drivers. This is detrimental to all involved.

Private Hire Operators

- 3.35 A private hire operator (“PHO”) is the person who takes a booking for a private hire vehicle (“PHV”), and then dispatches a PHV driven by a licensed private hire driver (“PHD”) to fulfil that booking. All three licences (PHO, PHV and PHD) must have been granted by the same

authority³². A local authority cannot grant a PHO licence unless the applicant has the right to work in the UK and is a fit and proper person³³.

- 3.36 As with taxi drivers the role of the PHO goes far beyond simply taking bookings and dispatching vehicles. In the course of making the booking and dispatching the vehicle and driver, the PHO will obtain significant amounts of personal information. It is therefore vital that a PHO is as trustworthy and reliable as a driver, notwithstanding their slightly remote role. Hackney carriages can also be pre-booked, but local authorities should be mindful that where that booking is made by anybody other than a hackney carriage driver, there are no controls or vetting procedures in place in relation to the person who takes that booking and holds that personal information.
- 3.37 How then does a local authority satisfy itself as to the “fitness and propriety” or “safety and suitability” of the applicant or licensee?
- 3.38 Spent convictions can be taken into account when determining suitability for a licence, but the applicant (or licensee on renewal) can only be asked to obtain a Basic Disclosure from the Disclosure and Barring Service.
- 3.39 Although this is by no means a perfect system, it does give local authorities a reasonable basis for making an informed decision as to fitness and propriety of an applicant or existing licensee.
- 3.40 To enable consistent and informed decisions to be made, it is important to have a working test of fitness and propriety for PHOs and a suitable variation on the test for drivers can be used:
- “Would I be comfortable providing sensitive information such as holiday plans, movements of my family or other information to this person, and feel safe in the knowledge that such information will not be used or passed on for criminal or unacceptable purposes?”³⁴
- 3.41 There is a further point to consider in relation to PHOs and that concerns the staff used on the telephones and radios. There is no reason why a condition cannot be imposed on a PHO licence requiring them to undertake checks on those they employ/use within their company to satisfy themselves that they are fit and proper people to undertake that task and retain that information to demonstrate that compliance to the local authority. Any failure on the part of the PHO to either comply with this requirement, or act upon information that they

³² See *Dittah v Birmingham City Council*, *Choudhry v Birmingham City Council* [1993] RTR 356 QBD

³³ Section 55(1) Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976

³⁴ Button on Taxis – Licensing Law and Practice 4th Ed Bloomsbury Professional at para 12.35

obtain (thereby allowing unsuitable staff to work in positions of trust), would then have serious implications on the continuing fitness and propriety of the PHO.

- 3.42 Care should be taken in circumstances where a PHO Licence is sought in the name of a limited company, partnership or other business structure that all the requirements applicable to an individual applicant are made of each director or partner of the applicant organisation³⁵. Only by so doing can a decision be made as to the fitness and propriety of the operating entity.

Vehicle Proprietors

- 3.43 Similar considerations apply to the vehicle proprietors, both hackney carriage and private hire (referred to here generically as “taxis”). Although the vehicle proprietor may not be driving a vehicle (and if they are they will be subject to their own fitness and propriety test to obtain a driver’s licence), they clearly have an interest in the use of the vehicle. They will also be responsible for the maintenance of the vehicle, and vehicles that are not properly maintained have a clear impact on public safety.
- 3.44 Taxis are used to transport people in many circumstances, and are seen everywhere across the United Kingdom, at all times of the day and night, in any location. Therefore, taxis could provide a transportation system for illegal activities or any form of contraband, whether that is drugs, guns, illicit alcohol or tobacco, or people who are involved in or are the victims of illegal activity, or children who may be at risk of being, or are being, abused or exploited.
- 3.45 In relation to both hackney carriages and private hire vehicles, the local authority has an absolute discretion over granting the licence³⁶ and should therefore ensure that both their enquiries and considerations are robust. It is much more involved than simply looking at the vehicle itself and it is equally applicable on applications to transfer a vehicle as on grant applications.
- 3.46 Again, this is not an exempt occupation for the purposes of the 1974 Act, but exactly the same process can be applied as for private hire operators – Basic DBS, statutory declaration and consideration of spent convictions. This can then be used in the light of a similar policy in relation to suitability as the authority will already have for drivers and PHOs.
- 3.47 A suitable test would be:

“Would I be comfortable allowing this person to have control of a licensed vehicle that can travel anywhere, at any time of the day or night without arousing suspicion, and be

³⁵ See s57(1)(c) of the 1976 Act.

³⁶ S37 of the 1847 Act in relation to hackney carriages, section 48 of the 1976 Act to private hire vehicles.

satisfied that he/she would not allow it to be used for criminal or other unacceptable purposes, and be confident that he/she would maintain it to an acceptable standard throughout the period of the licence?”³⁷

³⁷ Button on Taxis – Licensing Law and Practice 4th Ed Bloomsbury Professional at para 8.98

Chapter 4: Guidance on Determination

- 4.1 As is clear from the overview of Offenders and Offending above, there is no evidence which can provide precise periods of time which must elapse after a crime before a person can no longer be considered to be at risk of reoffending, but the risk reduces over time. In light of that, the suggested timescales below are intended to reduce the risk to the public to an acceptable level.
- 4.2 Many members of our society use, and even rely on, hackney carriages and private hire vehicles to provide transportation services. This can be on a regular basis, or only occasionally, but in all cases passengers, other road users and society as a whole must have confidence in the safety and suitability of the driver, the vehicle itself and anyone involved with the booking process.
- 4.3 Ideally, all those involved in the hackney carriage and private hire trades (hackney carriage and private hire drivers, hackney carriage and private hire vehicle owners and private hire operators) would be persons of the highest integrity. In many cases that is true, and the vast majority of those involved in these trades are decent, upstanding, honest and hard-working individuals. Unfortunately, as in any occupation or trade, there are those who fail to conform to those standards.
- 4.4 The purpose of this document is to offer guidance on how licensing authorities can determine whether a particular person is safe and suitable either to be granted a licence in the first place or to retain such a licence. As outlined above, a policy can be robust, and if necessary, say never, and each case is then considered on its own merits in the light of that policy.

Pre-application requirements

- 4.5 Licensing authorities are entitled to set their own pre-application requirements. These will vary depending upon the type of licence in question but can include some or all of the following (these are not exhaustive lists):

Vehicles:

- Basic DBS checks;
- Specifications e.g. minimum number of doors, minimum seat size, headroom, boot space etc;
- Mechanical tests and tests of the maintenance of the vehicle e.g. ripped seats etc;
- Emission limits/vehicle age limits;
- Wheelchair accessibility requirements.

Drivers:

- Enhanced DBS checks with update service;
- Checks made to the National Anti Fraud Network database on refusals and revocations of hackney carriage and private hire licences (when available);
- Medical checks;
- Knowledge of the geographic area;
- Spoken and written English tests;
- Disability awareness training;
- Child sexual exploitation and safeguarding training.

Operators:

- Basic DBS checks;
- Details of their vetting procedures for their staff;
- Knowledge of the licensing area.

- 4.6 In relation to each of these licences, the licensing authority has discretion as to whether or not to grant the licence.
- 4.7 Drivers and operators cannot be granted a licence unless the authority is satisfied that they are a “fit and proper person” to hold that licence (see Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 ss 51 and 59 in respect of drivers; s55 in respect of operators).
- 4.8 There are no statutory criteria for vehicle licences, therefore the authority has an absolute discretion over whether to grant either a hackney carriage or private hire proprietor’s licence.
- 4.9 “Fit and proper” means that the individual (or in the case of a private hire operator’s licence, the limited company together with its directors and secretary, or all members of a partnership³⁸) is “safe and suitable” to hold the licence.
- 4.10 In determining safety and suitability the licensing authority is entitled to take into account all matters concerning that applicant or licensee. They are not simply concerned with that person’s behaviour whilst working in the hackney carriage or private hire trade. This consideration is far wider than simply criminal convictions or other evidence of unacceptable behaviour, and the entire character of the individual will be considered. This can include, but is not limited to, the individual’s attitude and temperament.

³⁸ Section 57(2)(c) of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 allows a local authority to consider the character of a company director or secretary, or any partner.

- 4.11 Convictions for attempt or conspiracy will be regarded as convictions for the substantive crime. A caution is regarded in exactly the same way as a conviction³⁹. Fixed penalties and community resolutions will also be considered in the same way as a conviction⁴⁰.
- 4.12 It is important to recognise that matters which have not resulted in a criminal conviction (whether that is the result of an acquittal, a conviction being quashed, decision not to prosecute or an investigation which is continuing where the individual has been bailed) can and will be taken into account by the licensing authority. In addition, complaints where there was no police involvement will also be considered. Within this document, any reference to "conviction" will also include matters that amount to criminal behaviour, but which have not resulted in a conviction.
- 4.13 In the case of any new applicant who has been charged with any offence and is awaiting trial, the determination will be deferred until the trial has been completed or the charges withdrawn. Where an existing licensee is charged, it will be for the licensing authority to decide what action to take in the light of these guidelines.
- 4.14 In all cases, the licensing authority will consider the conviction or behaviour in question and what weight should be attached to it, and each and every case will be determined on its own merits, and in the light of these guidelines.
- 4.15 Any offences committed, or unacceptable behaviour reported whilst driving a hackney carriage or private hire vehicle, concerning the use of a hackney carriage or private hire vehicle, or in connection with an operator of a private hire vehicle will be viewed as aggravating features, and the fact that any other offences were not connected with the hackney carriage and private hire trades will not be seen as mitigating factors.
- 4.16 As the licensing authority will be looking at the entirety of the individual, in many cases safety and suitability will not be determined by a specified period of time having elapsed following a conviction or the completion of a sentence. Time periods are relevant and weighty considerations, but they are not the only determining factor.
- 4.17 In addition to the nature of the offence or other behaviour, the quantity of matters and the period over which they were committed will also be considered. Patterns of repeated unacceptable or criminal behaviour are likely to cause greater concern than isolated occurrences as such patterns can demonstrate a propensity for such behaviour or offending.
- 4.18 Most applicants or licensees will have no convictions and that is clearly the ideal situation. In relation to other people, it is accepted that human beings do make mistakes and lapse in their conduct for a variety of reasons, and it is further accepted that many learn from experience and do not go on to commit further offences. Accordingly, in many cases an isolated

³⁹ This is because a caution can only be imposed following an admission of guilt, which is equivalent to a guilty plea on prosecution.

⁴⁰ This is because payment of a fixed penalty indicates acceptance of guilt, and a community resolution can only be imposed following an admission of guilt.

conviction, especially if committed some time ago, may not prevent the grant or renewal of a licence.

- 4.19 It is also important to recognise that once a licence has been granted, there is a continuing requirement on the part of the licensee to maintain their safety and suitability. The licensing authority has powers to take action against the holder of all types of licence (driver's, vehicle and operator's) and it must be understood that any convictions or other actions on the part of the licensee which would have prevented them being granted a licence on initial application will lead to that licence being revoked.
- 4.20 Any dishonesty by any applicant or other person on the applicant's behalf which is discovered to have occurred in any part of any application process (e.g. failure to declare convictions, false names or addresses, falsified references) will result in a licence being refused, or if already granted, revoked and may result in prosecution.
- 4.21 As the direct impact on the public varies depending upon the type of licence applied for or held, it is necessary to consider the impact of particular offences on those licences separately. However, there are some overriding considerations which will apply in all circumstances.
- 4.22 Generally, where a person has more than one conviction, this will raise serious questions about their safety and suitability. The licensing authority is looking for safe and suitable individuals, and once a pattern or trend of repeated offending is apparent, a licence will not be granted or renewed.
- 4.23 Where an applicant/licensee is convicted of an offence which is not detailed in this guidance, the licensing authority will take that conviction into account and use these guidelines as an indication of the approach that should be taken.
- 4.24 These guidelines do not replace the duty of the licensing authority to refuse to grant a licence where they are not satisfied that the applicant or licensee is a fit and proper person. Where a situation is not covered by these guidelines, the authority must consider the matter from first principles and determine the fitness and propriety of the individual.

Drivers

- 4.25 As the criteria for determining whether an individual should be granted or retain a hackney carriage driver's licence are identical to the criteria for a private hire driver's licence, the two are considered together.
- 4.26 A driver has direct responsibility for the safety of their passengers, direct responsibility for the safety of other road users and significant control over passengers who are in the vehicle. As those passengers may be alone, and may also be vulnerable, any previous convictions or unacceptable behaviour will weigh heavily against a licence being granted or retained.

- 4.27 As stated above, where an applicant has more than one conviction showing a pattern or tendency irrespective of time since the convictions, serious consideration will need to be given as to whether they are a safe and suitable person.
- 4.28 In relation to single convictions, the following time periods should elapse following completion of the sentence (or the date of conviction if a fine was imposed) before a licence will be granted.

Crimes resulting in death

- 4.29 Where an applicant or licensee has been convicted of a crime which resulted in the death of another person or was intended to cause the death or serious injury of another person they will not be licensed.

Exploitation

- 4.30 Where an applicant or licensee has been convicted of a crime involving, related to, or has any connection with abuse, exploitation, use or treatment of another individual irrespective of whether the victim or victims were adults or children, they will not be licensed. This includes slavery, child sexual exploitation, grooming, psychological, emotional or financial abuse, but this is not an exhaustive list.

Offences involving violence

- 4.31 Where an applicant has a conviction for an offence of violence, or connected with any offence of violence, a licence will not be granted until at least 10 years have elapsed since the completion of any sentence imposed.

Possession of a weapon

- 4.32 Where an applicant has a conviction for possession of a weapon or any other weapon related offence, a licence will not be granted until at least 7 years have elapsed since the completion of any sentence imposed.

Sex and indecency offences

- 4.33 Where an applicant has a conviction for any offence involving or connected with illegal sexual activity or any form of indecency, a licence will not be granted.
- 4.34 In addition to the above, the licensing authority will not grant a licence to any applicant who is currently on the Sex Offenders Register or on any 'barred' list.

Dishonesty

- 4.35 Where an applicant has a conviction for any offence of dishonesty, or any offence where dishonesty is an element of the offence, a licence will not be granted until at least 7 years have elapsed since the completion of any sentence imposed.

Drugs

- 4.36 Where an applicant has any conviction for, or related to, the supply of drugs, or possession with intent to supply or connected with possession with intent to supply, a licence will not be granted until at least 10 years have elapsed since the completion of any sentence imposed.
- 4.37 Where an applicant has a conviction for possession of drugs, or related to the possession of drugs, a licence will not be granted until at least 5 years have elapsed since the completion of any sentence imposed. In these circumstances, any applicant will also have to undergo drugs testing at their own expense to demonstrate that they are not using controlled drugs.

Discrimination

- 4.38 Where an applicant has a conviction involving or connected with discrimination in any form, a licence will not be granted until at least 7 years have elapsed since the completion of any sentence imposed.

Motoring convictions

- 4.39 Hackney carriage and private hire drivers are professional drivers charged with the responsibility of carrying the public. Any motoring conviction demonstrates a lack of professionalism and will be considered seriously. It is accepted that offences can be committed unintentionally, and a single occurrence of a minor traffic offence would not prohibit the grant of a licence or may not result in action against an existing licence. Subsequent convictions reinforce the fact that the licensee does not take their professional responsibilities seriously and is therefore not a safe and suitable person to be granted or retain a licence.

Drink driving/driving under the influence of drugs/using a hand-held telephone or hand held device whilst driving

- 4.40 Where an applicant has a conviction for drink driving or driving under the influence of drugs, a licence will not be granted until at least 7 years have elapsed since the completion of any sentence or driving ban imposed. In these circumstances, any applicant will also have to undergo drugs testing at their own expense to demonstrate that they are not using controlled drugs.
- 4.41 Where an applicant has a conviction for using a held-hand mobile telephone or a hand-held device whilst driving, a licence will not be granted until at least 5 years have elapsed since the conviction or completion of any sentence or driving ban imposed, whichever is the later.

Other motoring offences

- 4.42 A minor traffic or vehicle related offence is one which does not involve loss of life, driving under the influence of drink or drugs, driving whilst using a mobile phone, and has not resulted in injury to any person or damage to any property (including vehicles). Where an applicant has 7 or more points on their DVLA licence for minor traffic or similar offences, a licence will not be granted until at least 5 years have elapsed since the completion of any sentence imposed.
- 4.43 A major traffic or vehicle related offence is one which is not covered above and also any offence which resulted in injury to any person or damage to any property (including vehicles). It also includes driving without insurance or any offence connected with motor insurance. Where an applicant has a conviction for a major traffic offence or similar offence, a licence will not be granted until at least 7 years have elapsed since the completion of any sentence imposed.

Hackney carriage and private hire offences

- 4.44 Where an applicant has a conviction for an offence concerned with or connected to hackney carriage or private hire activity (excluding vehicle use), a licence will not be granted until at least 7 years have elapsed since the completion of any sentence imposed.

Vehicle use offences

- 4.45 Where an applicant has a conviction for any offence which involved the use of a vehicle (including hackney carriages and private hire vehicles), a licence will not be granted until at least 7 years have elapsed since the completion of any sentence imposed.

Private Hire Operators

- 4.46 A private hire operator (“an operator”) does not have direct responsibility for the safety of passengers, other road users or direct contact with passengers who are in the private hire vehicle (except where they are also licensed as a private hire driver). However, in performing their duties they obtain and hold considerable amounts of personal and private information about their passengers which must be treated in confidence and not revealed to others, or used by the operator or their staff for criminal or other unacceptable purposes.
- 4.47 As stated above, where an applicant has more than one conviction, serious consideration will need to be given as to whether they are a safe and suitable person.
- 4.48 Operators must ensure that any staff that are used within the business (whether employees or independent contractors) and are able to access any information as described above are subject to the same standards as the operator themselves. This can be effected by means of the individual staff member being required by the operator to obtain a basic DBS certificate. If an operator is found not to be applying the required standards and using staff that do not meet the licensing authority’s overall criteria, that will lead to the operator’s licence being revoked.

- 4.49 As public trust and confidence in the overall safety and integrity of the private hire system is vital, the same standards will be applied to operators as those applied to drivers, which are outlined above.

Vehicle proprietors

- 4.50 Vehicle proprietors (both hackney carriage and private hire) have two principal responsibilities.
- 4.51 Firstly, they must ensure that the vehicle is maintained to an acceptable standard at all times.
- 4.52 Secondly, they must ensure that the vehicle is not used for illegal or illicit purposes.
- 4.53 As stated above, where an applicant has more than one conviction, serious consideration will need to be given as to whether they are a safe and suitable person to be granted or retain a vehicle licence.
- 4.54 As public trust and confidence in the overall safety and integrity of the private hire system is vital, the same standards will be applied to proprietors as those applied to drivers, which are outlined above.

Acknowledgements

In December 2015, the Institute of Licensing established a working party to look at the creation of a model or standard set of guidelines in relation to assessing the suitability of applicants and licence holders in relation to taxi drivers, operators and vehicle proprietors, taking into account the character of the applicant or licensee.

The core project group comprised:

- Stephen Turner, Solicitor at Hull City Council, Licensing Lead for Lawyers in Local Government and Vice Chair of the North East Region IoL (Project Group Chair)
- Jim Button, Solicitor at James Button & Co and President of IoL
- Philip Kolvin QC, Cornerstone Barristers and Patron of IoL
- John Miley, Licensing Manager for Broxtowe Borough Council, National Chair for NALEO and Vice Chair of the East Midlands Region IoL
- Linda Cannon, previously Licensing Manager for Basingstoke & Dean and Hart Councils, and now private licensing consultant and Chair of the South East Region IoL
- Phil Bates, Licensing Manager for Southampton City Council
- Sue Nelson, Executive Officer of IoL

This Guidance is the result of the work of the project team and includes consideration of antecedent history of the applicant or licence holder and its relevance to their 'character' as well as consideration of convictions, cautions and non-conviction information.

The Institute is delighted to have the Local Government Association, the National Association of Licensing and Enforcement Officers and Lawyers in Local Government contributing to and supporting this project with IoL.

The Institute is also grateful to others who have contributed to the work of the project group, including former probation officer Hannah Jones (now Housing Officer at Flintshire Council) who has assisted the group in providing the chapter on 'Offenders and Offending'.

This project has been further enhanced by invaluable contributions from the following individuals and organisations:

- Ellie Greenwood and Rebecca Johnson, Local Government Association
- Tim Briton, Lawyers in Local Government
- Ben Atrill
- Suzy Lamplugh Trust
- Councillor Richard Wright, North Kesteven District Council
- Professor of Criminology Fiona Measham, Durham University
- Councillor Philip Evans, Conwy County Borough Council
- Councillors Catriona Morris and Mick Legg, Milton Keynes Council
- Louise Scott Garner
- Jenna Parker, Institute of Licensing

Finally, grateful thanks go to all those who responded to the initial fact-finding survey and the subsequent consultation on the draft guidance.

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National Association of Licensing and Enforcement Officers (NALEO). www.naleo.org.uk

REPORT TO:	Licensing Committee
DATE:	13 th June 2018
LEAD OFFICER:	Head of Planning and Public Protection
CONTACT OFFICER:	Public Protection Business Manager licensing@denbighshire.gov.uk 01824 706451
SUBJECT:	Forward Work Programme 2018/19

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.2 To provide Members with an update on the Forward Work Programme.

2.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2.1 A proposed Forward Work Programme is attached, at Appendix A, for Members to consider and approve.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

3.1 Members will be aware that at a previous Licensing Committee, Members approved a rolling 12 month process for their Forward Work Programme.

3.2 Members will note that the agenda for today's meeting does not have any reports in line with the previously proposed Forward Work Programme. This is due to officers' focus being on updating data files following migration from one database to another.

3.3 Given this is a key part of the council's business officers are proposing that they continue with this data update over the summer and autumn months so that they can ensure the core business is capable of adequate monitoring and also allow for effective renewal notifications, efficient responses to Freedom of Information requests and public register enquiries.

3.4 Officers wish to confirm that any unplanned business i.e. driver hearings will continue as necessary.

4.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 4.1 For Members to approve the proposed Forward Work Programme, as detailed in the Appendix.

Licensing Committee

Work Programme

Committee Date	Report	Comment
December 2018	Penalty Points Procedure	Update
	Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Driver Conviction Policy	Update
March 2019	Intended Use policy	Review
	Private Hire Exemption policy	Review
June 2019	Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Driver / Operator Conditions/policy	Update
September 2019	Street Trading policy	Update
	Street Collection policy	Review
	House to House Collections policy	Review

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