

MINUTES

Present:

Councillor Sachin Mathur (Vice-Chair in the Chair) and Councillors Juliet Barker Smith, Juma Begum, Brandon Clayton, Andrew Fry, Sid Khan, Gary Slim and Paul Wren

Officers:

Vanessa Brown, Kiran Lahel (Worcestershire Regulatory Services) and Hazel Powell (Worcestershire Regulatory Services)

Democratic Services Officers:

Gavin Day

19. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors David Munro, Matt Dormer and Jennifer Snape

20. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest

21. PUBLIC SPEAKING

There was no public speaking.

22. REVIEW OF HACKNEY CARRIAGE TABLES OF FARES

The Principal Licensing Officer, Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS), presented the report to Members. The purpose of the report was to determine if any amendments were required to the Hackney Carriage Table of Fares.

Officers detailed that the council had a responsibility to set the maximum permitted rate which a driver could charge.

The last review of the Table of Fares was undertaken in March 2025 and following a recommendation from Officers, a new table of fares went into effect in June 2025.

Due to the recent amendment to the Table of Fares and having had regard to concerns raised around the cost of living effecting the work available for Hackney Carriage drivers, Officers did not recommend an increase.

Members were in support of the Officer's recommendation and respected that the trade did not want an increase, however, Members noted the recent geopolitical environment and the potential for rising fuel prices which could affect drivers. Members further noted that Officers and Members should be flexible to hold an additional meeting to discuss an increase if it was requested by the trade.

Members further requested that a verbal update be added to the licencing Committee in July regarding the matter to ensure that it was reviewed.

The report was noted by Members.

23. INFORMATION REPORT - HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE LICENCE RENEWAL UPPER AGE LIMITS

The Principal Licensing Officer, Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS), presented the report to Members. The purpose of the report was to inform Members of the Age renewal criteria and determine if any follow up actions were required.

Between February 2023 and February 2026, 95 applications were received and considered for renewal applications for vehicles outside of the Council's vehicle age policy. Of those applications, 9 were refused.

To get a greater understanding of how the Redditch Borough Council's age policy compared to other districts within and bordering Worcestershire, Officers undertook a benchmarking exercise, the results of the exercise were detailed on pages 29-30 of the Public Reports pack.

Officers noted that although the policy for Redditch Brough Council was of a greater complexity compared to other districts, there was no consensus as to how different authorities addressed the vehicle age policy, with different values and criteria being used.

Members were content with the policy and the process in place and noted that they were happy that the applications were being considered by Officers and the Engineer at Crossgates Depot who had a greater mechanical knowledge of the vehicle to draw on to make a decision.

Members expressed some concern regarding the cost of living and how it effected drivers, therefore, Members suggested that adding an additional year to all categories would be a way of supporting the trade.

Councillor Sid Khan proposed an alternative recommendation to direct Officers to consult with all relevant stakeholders to increase all the vehicle age limits by one year in regard to vehicles over the maximum age. The Alternative Recommendation was seconded by Councillor Gary Slim.

On being put to the vote it was:

RESOLVED that

Officers be directed to begin the process to undertake a consultation with all relevant stakeholders on increasing the age limits in regard to vehicle renewals by 1 year.

24. HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE DRIVER LICENCE APPLICATION PROCESS CHECKS

The Licencing and Support Services Manager, Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS), presented the report to Members. The purpose of the report was to inform Members of the checks that Officers undertake when processing a new application.

Officers undertake a number of checks when determining if a driver was a fit and proper person to hold a licence, the stages which a driver must complete were detailed at 3.3 on page 32 of the public reports pack.

The three main areas which could cause delays were;

1. Return of the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificate.
2. The NR3 check, which checks to see if the applicant has had an application refused, revoked or suspended.
3. Completion of the competency and safeguarding training.

Officers clarified that the DBS certificate often caused the longest delay, this was due to the check taking up to 6 weeks to return, although it was more common to be back within 1. Additionally, it was only sent to the applicant, and receipt was not always promptly relayed to the processing Officer, this necessitated regular contact with the applicant to try and minimise delays.

The issue was reduced by the applicant signing up to the update service which allowed Officers to view the most up to date DBS certificate. However, the update service had an ongoing cost,

although this was cheaper than having to pay for a new DBS certificate each time it was required.

Performance statistics which included timescales for processing applications, were reported to the WRS board meeting quarterly, the current statistics indicate that 97% of applications were completed within 5 days.

The report was noted and Members thanked Officers for the information and detailed that in their experience; in most cases there was no delay found when following up reports of delays and the system was functioning well. Members further commented that in situations where a delay was identified, Officers were quick to address the issue and proceed with the application.

25. WORK PROGRAMME

A verbal update report was added to the work programme for the July meeting to review the price of fuel and determine if a new Hackney Carriage table of fares was required.

Members were informed of the possibility of the July meeting being rescheduled to early June to accommodate a report which needed to be considered before the next full council meeting. However, this was subject to venue availability.

26. OFFICER UPDATE(S) - ENFORCEMENT AND APPEAL MATTERS

Officers detailed that a number of issues were raised to WRS regarding driver conduct, especially in relation to those divers licenced by other authorities. Therefore, Officers were looking at daytime enforcement options in conjunction with Wolverhampton District Council to assess the situation.

27. MINUTES

The PUBLIC and PRIVATE minutes of the Licensing Committee meeting of 8th December 2025 were presented to Members.

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the Licensing Committee meeting held on 8th December 2025 were approved as a true and accurate record and signed by the Chair.