

**LICENSING & PUBLIC PROTECTION COMMITTEE**

Tuesday, 29th October, 2024  
Time of Commencement: 7.00 pm

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**Present:** Councillor Joan Whieldon (Chair)

<b>Councillors:</b>	Johnson	Skelding	J Williams
	Barker MBE	Dymond	G Williams
	Heesom	Wright	Whitmore
	Sweeney	Allport	Brown

**Apologies:** Councillor(s) Adcock

**Substitutes:** Councillor David Hutchison (In place of Councillor Rupert Adcock)

<b>Officers:</b>	Matthew Burton	Licensing Administration Team Manager
	Geoff Durham	Civic & Member Support Officer
	Gillian Taylor	Housing Manager
	Jason Griffiths	Mobile Multi-Functional Team Leader

**1. APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received as listed above.

**2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN RELATION TO LICENSING MATTERS**

There were no declarations of interest stated.

**3. MINUTES OF A PREVIOUS MEETING**

**Resolved:** That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> September 2024 be agreed as a true and accurate record.

**4. FEES & CHARGES FOR VENUE LICENSING 2025-26**

The Licensing Administration Team Manager presented the report on the fees to be charged in relation to the licensing of scrap metal dealers, gambling and sexual entertainment venues.

Questions were raised and responses were provided by the officer as follows.

Cllr Brown asked about the origin of the 4% increase.

– This was in relation to general fee setting standards to cover for officers' wages increase.

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The Chair asked if fees applied by other authorities had been taken into account.

– There hadn't been any recent benchmarking done. The fees for sex establishments and scrap metal dealers were set to cover the actual costs considering the time required for officers to handle requests. The gambling fees were statutory and hadn't been amended.

**Resolved:** That the fees to be charged for the licensing of Scrap Metal Dealers, Gambling and Sexual Entertainment Venues for 2025-26 be agreed.

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### **5. GAMBLING ACT 2005 - REVIEW OF STATEMENT OF LICENSING PRINCIPLES**

The Licensing Administration Team Manager presented the report on the representations received in relation to the consultation on the draft Gambling Policy and the final version of the latter.

The Chair thanked the officer for the clarity and accessibility of the information provided. Members were invited to raise questions and comments.

Cllr J Williams enquired about the Gamcare response and if contact could be made with the charity through the Health, Wellbeing and Scrutiny Committee to make sure the Council was heading in the right direction.

The officer clarified that a local area profile was meant to identify sites with gambling activities and potentially vulnerable people such as school and certain religious premises. In the event sites and categories of people were deemed to be missing these would be sent out to the responsible bodies for comments.

The Chair asked how this would fit in with the submission of the proposal to Full Council on the 20<sup>th</sup> November.

The officer explained that the Local Area Profile would be a separate live document outside of the policy and be put together for operators to be aware of when they do their risk assessment which they were obliged to do.

Cllr J Williams reiterated his enquiry about involving the Health, Wellbeing and Scrutiny Committee.

It was agreed that there was no harm in submitting the Local Area Profile to the committee suggested and this could indeed be taken forward.

**Resolved:** 1. That responses received to the consultation exercise be considered.

2. That the updated Policy be presented for approval to Full Council at its meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> November 2024.

[Watch the debate here](#)

### **6. MINUTES OF LICENSING SUB COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

**Resolved:** That the minutes of the Licensing Sub Committee meetings held on 27<sup>th</sup> September and 9<sup>th</sup> October 2024 be received.

7. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN RELATION TO PUBLIC PROTECTION MATTERS**

There were no declarations of interest stated.

8. **PUBLIC SPACE PROTECTION ORDER - CAR CRUISING CONSULTATION RESULTS**

The Mobile Multi-Functional Team Leader presented the report on the car cruising consultation results.

The Chair praised the report and welcomed the inclusion of motorbikes.

Cllr Heesom seconded the Chair's statement.

The Deputy Leader also supported the proposal, adding that this was to address antisocial behaviours and not the use of motorbikes or car cruising.

Cllr G Williams highlighted the importance of making things clear for people when publishing surveys.

Cllr J Williams commented on the dangers of car racing at crossings and asked if the police would have authority to go on public land and prosecute.

The officer responded they were already entitled to do so and this would be an additional tool at their disposal to take action.

Cllr Brown said there were a lot of reports from residents on nuisance caused by mopeds on Council land and asked if these would be addressed.

The officer confirmed that motor bikes and mopeds were both included along with other vehicles.

The Chair concluded by saying that the proposal would be protective of legitimate motor bike riders carrying out their sport for interest and not being a public nuisance, adding that other authorities had similar regulations in place.

- Resolved:**
1. That the report be received and the results of the consultation noted.
  2. That the implementation of the 'Car Cruising' Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) be approved.

[Watch the debate here](#)

9. **PRIVATE HIRE & HACKNEY CARRIAGE FEES & CHARGES 2025-26**

The Licensing Administration Team Manager presented the report on the proposed taxi and private hire fees prior to these being sent out for consultation.

The Deputy Leader commented that the Council didn't make any profits on the fees and these were set for cost recovery only.

- Resolved:**
1. That the proposed fees be considered.

2. That the proposed fees be sent out for consultation.
3. That a further report be brought to Committee following the consultation.

[Watch the debate here](#)

**10. TAXI AND PRIVATE HIRE LICENSING POLICY 2025-30**

The Licensing Administration Team Manager presented the report on the Taxi and Private Hire Licensing Policy for 2025-30.

Cllr Brown commended the thorough piece of work undertaken including liaising with other authorities.

Members raised questions and the officer advised as follows.

The Deputy Leader enquired about door livery and types of vehicles.

– Private hire trade was mostly relating to app-based operators providing instant confirmation with the type of vehicle and registration number to be expected. Hackney carriage on the other hand needed to be easily recognizable, i.e. black vehicles with a white stripe at the top and waiting in a rank in a certain location.

Cllr G Williams asked for clarification about the proposal.

– There would still be a requirement for private hire vehicles to display a rectangular front plate along with a square one at the back.

Cllr G Williams expressed concerns about partially sighted people.

– Whether a door livery should be displayed or not was to be considered by members and for consultation.

Cllr J Williams enquired about whether Uber had to put any sign up.

– This was a private hire operator and would need to comply with the requirements set by each specific local authority. Currently in Newcastle-under-Lyme they would need to have a sign on both doors displaying their name and a green sign on their back passenger doors issued by the Council and saying they were a private vehicle that needed to be pre-booked along with plates at the front and the back. In Stoke-on-Trent it would be very similar, however things would be different in Wolverhampton where no signage was required except for the front and rear plates.

Cllr J Williams asked why providers would go to Wolverhampton to apply for a license.

– The law changed in 2015 allowing private hire bookings to be subcontracted from an operator in an area to a different operator in another area to allow for flexibility and a freer market. What happened was that operators got multiple licenses from multiple authorities and then subcontracted the work in between their different operators and drivers. While some local authorities had additional rules for private operators that wasn't the case in Wolverhampton which made it easier to get licenses there along with lower costs for renewing licenses.

Cllr J Williams wished for the policy to highlight that the providers would be lose their license in the event they fail to report an accident.

– There was a national data base keeping records of licenses that had been revoked or suspended in relation to road safety and public safety. In practice only a small proportion of drivers failed to report previous convictions or suspension of licenses when brought to committee. Every license holder would get a copy of the conditions along with a code of conduct which they were expected to read. A newsletter had also been sent in the past to inform them of policy changes and remind them of their obligations. Similar communications would be issued going forward.

Cllr Heesom asked if there was a limitation in time for operators to declare a change of address.

– This should be done within seven days.

**Resolved:** 1. That the proposed policy document be reviewed; and  
2. That the policy document be sent out for a 12 week consultation with the trade and relevant stakeholders before coming back to Committee for a final decision, be approved.

[Watch the debate here](#)

**11. MINUTES OF PUBLIC PROTECTION SUB-COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

**Resolved:** That the minutes of the Public Protection subcommittee meeting held on 9<sup>th</sup> October 2024 be received.

**12. DISCLOSURE OF EXEMPT INFORMATION**

There were no confidential items.

**13. URGENT BUSINESS**

There was no urgent business.

**Councillor Joan Whieldon  
Chair**

Meeting concluded at 8.20 pm