

**NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**CORPORATE LEADERSHIP TEAM'S**  
**REPORT TO LICENSING & PUBLIC PROTECTION COMMITTEE**

17<sup>th</sup> March 2026

**Report Title:** Government Consultation on proposals to make taxi licensing the responsibility of Local Transport Authorities

**Submitted by:** Licensing Lead Officer & Service Director – Regulatory Services

**Portfolios:** Finance, Town Centres & Growth

**Ward(s) affected:** All

<b><u>Purpose of the Report</u></b>	<b><u>Key Decision</u></b> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
To notify Members of an open consultation that seeks views on making all local transport authorities in England responsible for taxi and private hire vehicle licensing.	
<b><u>Recommendation</u></b>	
That Committee:	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Note the contents of the report; and</li> <li>2. Agree that Officers submit a response to the consultation having considered Officers' proposed information.</li> </ol>	
<b><u>Reasons</u></b>	
The Government have recently opened a consultation that seeks views on making all local transport authorities in England responsible for taxi and private hire vehicle licensing. This is currently only the position in London and in Unitary Authorities. If Government proposals went forward then the taxi licensing regime would move from lower tier authorities to upper tier, or strategic authorities where they exist.	

**1. Background**

- 1.1 The taxi licensing regime is underpinned by two main pieces of legislation, the Town and Police Clauses Act 1847 (the 1847 Act) and the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 (the 1976 Act), which places the responsibility in England upon lower tier authorities in areas where they exist, or in their absence the unitary authority. The exceptions to this are London and Plymouth.
- 1.2 Within Staffordshire there are nine taxi licensing authorities (LAs), the eight District/Borough authorities and Stoke-on-Trent City Council. Staffordshire County Council are the Local Transport Authority (LTA) for the entire County other than the Stoke-on-Trent area.

- 1.3** Under the current structure of Local Government within Staffordshire, the proposal to move the responsibility from LAs to LTAs would condense the number of responsible authorities from nine into two.
- 1.4** The consultation follows on from a commitment in the English Devolution White Paper, published in December 2024, where the proposal was first put forward to devolve responsibility for taxi licensing to LTAs.

## **2. Issues**

- 2.1** The taxi and private hire licensing regime is multi-faceted and complex and has always been the responsibility of LAs, however the appropriate level of local licensing has not been considered in this time. Currently every LA has their own policy requirements and criteria that fit their local needs. There are 263 LAs responsible for taxi licensing in England.
- 2.2** This consultation sits alongside multiple other current Government workstreams, including:
- Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) and English Devolution programmes;
  - Taxi Licensing Framework call for evidence which is reviewing the fitness of the current regime; and
  - English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill which has a clause proposing the implementation of 'National Minimum Standards' for taxi licensing.
- 2.3** The Department for Transport believe that the proposals could help reduce the occurrence of out of area working and the factors that induce it, and better match enforcement resources.
- 2.4** The licensing regime has not kept pace with environmental, technological, legal or engineering advancements and is no longer considered to be fit for purpose in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Hence the multitude of recent Government consultations which have the aim of updating the regime and future proofing for all parties involved in it.
- 2.5** The consultation was opened on 8<sup>th</sup> January 2026 and closes on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2026.
- 2.6** The consultation details that there are currently 70 LTAs in England but note that this may change as a result the LGR and devolution programmes. A map is available as 'map 1' within the consultation document. LTAs have responsibility for creating local transport policies and plans, which must promote 'safe, integrated, efficient and economic transport' having particular regard to older people, disabled people and those with mobility issues.

- 2.7** Within the reasoning it is stated that people will live, travel, work and socialise across local authority borders and LTA areas better reflect local travel patterns. It suggests that the benefits of the proposal would:
- Greatly improve consistency in licensing standards;
  - Remove the factors that induce drivers to licence away from the area they live and intend to work in; and
  - Increase in area working.
- 2.8** It is noted that the impact the proposals may have on LAs is unknown, particularly with the LGR and devolution programmes still ongoing. This consultation seeks views from all LAs, as well as all others that may be affected, with a focus on the financial implications.
- 2.9** Officers have drafted a response to the consultation, which is attached as **Appendix A**. It is based upon the current position that the LTA is Staffordshire County Council and not any new LTA that may be created by LGR. In brief, officers' have identified both costs and savings implications of the proposal and these broadly relate to staffing, software and consumables. It has proven difficult to place a monetary value or resource time on these aspects as it considered that the consultation document does not provide sufficient information to allow for this to be calculated.
- 2.10** The consultation questions are fixed and have a steer towards why the proposal should go ahead rather than any negative implications. Officers' have attempted to convey the importance of the proposals being considered alongside the other Government workstreams, and not in isolation. It is the Officers' opinion that reducing the number of authorities responsible for taxi licensing would only be beneficial alongside other measures, such as new legislation and national absolute standards, to improve consistency across the sector for regulators, the trade and the customer that use it.

### **3. Recommendation**

- 3.1 Note the contents of the report; and**
- 3.2 Agree that Officers submit a response to the consultation having considered Officers' proposed information.**

### **4. Reasons**

- 4.1** The Council are currently responsible for administering and enforcing the taxi licensing regime within the Borough. Should the proposals from this consultation move forward then there may be significant impact and implications for the Council staff as well as the licensees and customers of the sector. Failure to respond will mean that the Council's views and experiences will not be considered when the Government make their decision

## 5. Options Considered

- 5.1 To not respond to the consultation.
- 5.2 For officers to respond to the consultations without Member input.

## 6. Legal and Statutory Implications

- 6.1 There are no legal or statutory implications from responding, or not, to the consultations. The result of the consultations will be reported back to the Committee as appropriate.

## 7. Equality Impact Assessment

- 7.1 Not applicable.

## 8. Financial and Resource Implications

- 8.1 There are no resource implications identified in responding to the consultations other than officer time which will be met through existing capacity.
- 8.2 Should the proposals move forward then there would be both financial and resource implications for the Council, as covered in the draft response. The level of this is unknown at this stage but will be reported back to this Committee if appropriate.

## 9. Major Risks & Mitigation

- 9.1 There are no major risks or mitigations identified in responding, or not, to the consultations.

## 10. UN Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDG)



**11. One Council**

Please confirm that consideration has been given to the following programmes of work:

**One Commercial Council**

*There are no implications on the one commercial council strategy from responding to the consultation. The results of the consultation may result in costs and/or savings to the authority.*

**One Digital Council**

*There are no implications on the one sustainable council strategy from responding to the consultation.*

**One Sustainable Council**

*There are no implications on the one digital council strategy from responding to the consultations.*

**12. Key Decision Information**

12.1 Not applicable.

**13. Earlier Cabinet/Committee Resolutions**

13.1 Not applicable.

**14. List of Appendices**

14.1 Appendix A – Officers’ draft consultation response.

**15. Background Papers**

15.1 [Local transport authorities and the licensing of taxis and private hire vehicles - GOV.UK](#)

15.2 [English Devolution White Paper - GOV.UK](#)