

MINUTES

Present:

Councillor Nic Pioli (Chair), and Councillors Roger Bennett, Brandon Clayton, Matthew Dormer, Sharon Harvey, Joanna Kane, Gary Slim and Monica Stringfellow

Officers:

Vanessa Brown and Hazel Powell (of Worcestershire regulatory Services)

Democratic Services Officers:

Gavin Day

11. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Juliet Barker Smith and Wanda King.

12. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Monica Stringfellow declared in relation to Agenda Item 5 (Minute No15) in that she knew the objector. She retired from the Committee for the duration of the item and took no part in the debate or decision thereof.

13. MINUTES

The minutes of the Licensing Committee meeting of 4th June 2026 were presented to Members.

RESOLVED that

The minutes of the Licensing Committee meeting held on 4th June 2026 be approved as true and accurate record and signed by the Chair.

14. PUBLIC SPEAKING

At the invitation of the Chair, Mr Phillip Bladen addressed the Committee in relation to Agenda Item 5 (Minute No15), Hackney Carriage Tables of Fares – Request for variation.

Chair

15. HACKNEY CARRIAGE TABLE OF FARES - REQUEST FOR VARIATION - CONSIDERATION OF OBJECTION RECEIVED

The Principal Licensing Officer, Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS), presented the report to Members. The purpose of the report was to consider an objection received regarding the proposed variation to the Hackney Carriage Table of Fares.

Officers detailed that following a request from the trade, the Licensing Committee considered a proposed variation to the Hackney Carriage Tables of Fares on 5th June 2024 and it was resolved to undertake a consultation regarding the proposed variation.

As per the required procedure, the variation was initially advertised with a closing date of 24th June 2026 within a local newspaper. However, due to an administrative error in the table, there was need to readvertise with updated figures, the new closing date was 29th July 2026.

One objection was received to the table published in the original advertisement, Officers clarified that although the figures were changed between the adverts and therefore, the proposed example table outlined in page 22 was incorrect, the nature of the objection remained the same and should Members decide to adopt the table proposed by the objector, a suitable version would be drawn up with the correct values.

The nature of the objection was in relation to the use of both Metric and Imperial Measurements within the Table. The objector proposed that the table should only include Metric Values. There was no objection to the figures contained within, only in the table format.

The use of metric units was outlined in the Units of Measurement regulations 1995 and excluded metric units from road signs, with Miles and yards remaining the lawful unit of measurements for distance and speed. Officers clarified that as a Taximeter used measurements of distance and speed it was the stance of WRS that it fell within the exemption.

The stance was further supported by the acknowledged expert in Hackney Carriage Licensing, James T H Button, who noted in his publication "Button on Taxi's: Licensing Law and Practice" that in relation to fares "it is permissible for the metric equivalent to be shown as well." highlighting that, in his opinion, imperial units should be used with the inclusion of metric if it was deemed appropriate. Therefore, it was decided to include both units within the table with Miles as the primary unit.

Members questioned who would have to pay for the recalibration work on the Taximeters installed in the vehicles should there be a change to metric units, Officers replied that the cost would be picked up by the licence holders.

Members were not in support of altering the Table of fares to only include metric units and stated that the traveling public were generally more familiar with the use of Miles rather than kilometres. However, it was also noted that the table included both units of measure to assist those who may not be familiar with Miles/Yards, Members expressed that this was the most appropriate format for the travelling public within the Borough.

With no objection being received in relation to the figures within the table and proposed increase, Members had no reason to refuse the request for variation from the trade and on being put to the vote it was:

RESOLVED that

the varied table of fares as shown at Appendix 1 on page 19 of the Public Reports pack be brought into force with effect from 24 August 2026.

16. HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLE AGE LIMITS – CONSIDERATION OF RESPONSES TO CONSULTATION

The Principal Licensing Officer, Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS), presented the report to Members. The purpose of the report was to consider the responses to the consultation regarding the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicle Age Limits.

Officers detailed that on 9th March 2026, the Licensing Committee directed Officers to undertake a consultation on increasing the age limits in relation to renewal applications for licenced private hire and hackney carriage vehicles.

The consultation took place between 20th April 2026 and 15th June 2026 using an online survey tool, it was also advertised on the website, and a link was shared with relevant stakeholders detailed in paragraph 3.4 of the report. There was a total of 130 responses received, 83% of which were in support of the increase.

Officers confirmed that the consultation was only in relation to the age for vehicle renewal applications and was not for new vehicles joining the fleet.

Officers clarified the following after questions from Members

- That the 108 of the 130 respondents identified themselves as “licence holders”.
- That some errors were identified on page 28 of the reports pack in that the percentages added up to greater than 100%. Officers assured Members that the data was accurate and that this was an error in how the system calculated the percentages.

Members did not believe that the sample size was very compelling. Especially when considering that the number of responses in Favor was very similar to the number of licence holders who had a strong vested financial interest in wanting the additional year. Members further speculated that if more Members of the public had responded then the results may have come out differently. However, they accepted that they could only consider the data before them which was a consultation strongly in Favor of raising the age limits.

Members expressed some concern regarding the state of vehicles in the fleet and that raising the age limit could lead to a degradation of the standard of the vehicles licenced. However, it was also accepted that the state of any vehicle was down to the owner and was often unrelated to the age of the vehicle. This was often seen during the Licencing Sub-Committee meetings with some vehicles being kept in exceptional condition, regardless of age.

Members were assured that with the 6 monthly safety inspections in place; and with officers undertaking the inspections at Crossgates in conjunction with the Taxi Engineers, there were appropriate checks to ensure vehicles remained safe.

Consideration was given to the financial constraints faced by Licence holders and the strong competition from other Local Authorities and companies such as Uber. Members were sympathetic to these increases but noted that raising the age limits would not likely have a large impact and that further work was needed by the Executive and the future unitary authority to try and retain and expand the pool of Licenced drivers.

On being put to the vote it was:

RESOLVED that

the revised hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicle age limits as detailed on pages 49 and 50 of the Public Reports pack be adopted with effect from 1st September 2026.

17. WORK PROGRAMME

No additions/amendments were proposed to the work programme. The Chair stated that should Members have anything to add or be considered at the next meeting on 19th October 2026, they should contact Democratic Services.

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

There were no enforcement matters.

The Meeting commenced at 7.00 pm
and closed at 7.43 pm