

Supplemental Items for Licensing Committee

Monday 3 November 2025 at 4.30 pm

**In The Council Chamber, Council Offices,
Market Street, Newbury**

Part I

Page No.

5. Feedback from the Taxi Trade Meeting

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Purpose:

To provide feedback from the meeting on the 27 October 2025.

Sarah Clarke.

Sarah Clarke
Executive Director - Resources

For further information about this/these item(s), or to inspect any background documents referred to in Part I reports, please contact Ben Ryan (Democratic Services Officer) on (01635) 503973

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www.westberks.gov.uk

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Update Following Discussions at the Taxi Trade Liaison Group

Committee considering report:	Licensing Committee
Date of Committee:	03 November 2025
Portfolio Member:	Councillor Tom McCann
Report Author:	Moira Fraser

1 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To provide the Committee with an update and raise any issues emanating from the most recent Liaison Group meeting.

2 Recommendation

- 2.1 That the Committee notes the report.

3 Implications and Impact Assessment

Implication	Commentary
Financial:	There are no specific financial implications arising from this report. Any follow up actions will be met from within existing resources.
Human Resource:	Attendance at these taxi trade meetings and any follow up actions will be met from within existing resources.
Legal:	There are no legal implications associated with these meetings. The trade meetings are not a legal requirement but are seen as good practice and allow a meaningful dialogue with the trade to reach agreement on a wide number of topics affecting them.
Risk Management:	There are no risk management issues associated with this report. A good working relationship with the trade can assist with minimising reputational harm to the Council.

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Property:	None			
Policy:	The trade meetings are an opportunity to discuss policy issues, but it is not a decision-making forum. Any policy changes would be taken to the Licensing Committee, Joint Public Protection Partnership Committee or Council in accordance with the Scheme of Delegation.			
	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Commentary
Equalities Impact:				
A Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?		✓		The forum is a platform to discuss any policy changes. Equalities Impact Assessments would be undertaken where changes to policies and or procedures were proposed.
B Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?		✓		The trade meetings are not a decision-making forum.
Environmental Impact:		✓		The trade meetings are not a decision-making forum.
Health Impact:		✓		The trade meetings are an opportunity to discuss issues of mutual interest and an opportunity for the trade to raise matters directly with the decision makers. It is therefore hoped that they would have a positive outcome for the wellbeing of members of the trade and ultimately of the residents that use their services.

ICT Impact:		✓		There is no ICT impact.
Digital Services Impact:		✓		None
Council Strategy Priorities:	✓			The provision of a viable taxi trade in the district will support a number of the priorities in the Council Strategy.
Core Business:		✓		Providing support to the taxi trade forms part of the business as usual for the Public Protection Partnership.
Data Impact:		✓		The report does not have a significant impact on the rights of data subjects.
Consultation and Engagement:	All Members of the West Berkshire Taxi Trade are invited to attend these meetings. While only a few have opted to attend the notes from the meetings are circulated to all members of the trade. The meeting is also attended by Members of the Licensing Committee.			

4 Supporting Information

Background

- 4.1 The Taxi and Private Hire West Berkshire Council Liaison Group (TTLG) was set up to provide a forum to meet with and consider comments from representatives of the taxi trade and seek advice from licensing officers on a range of issues that affect existing and proposed licences, policies, tariffs and fees and other matters of common interest.
- 4.2 The meeting held on the 27 October 2025 was attended by the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Licensing Committee as well as five other members of the Licensing Committee, and four members of the taxi trade as well as four officers.
- 4.3 Traditionally two meetings a year are held, one in October and one in January. Ad hoc meetings have been arranged throughout the year to discuss the Draft Taxi Policy.
- 4.4 Officers have circulated the notes of the October meeting to members of this committee and the trade, and they have been summarised as set out below:

2026/27 Fees

Update Following Discussions at the Taxi Trade Liaison Group

- 4.5 Officers explained to the trade that the draft fees, set out in a separate report on this agenda, had been considered by Members at the Joint Public Protection Committee (JPPC) meeting on the 06th October 2025.
- 4.6 The JPPC had agreed to recommend that the hourly rate be increased from £69 to £74 an increase of 7.2%. All fees are calculated using the hourly rate multiplied by the time taken to process that application.
- 4.7 It was noted that the private hire operator, and hackney carriage and private hire vehicle licence fees would be subjected to a statutory 28-day consultation exercise. The dates and methodology of the consultation would need to be agreed by this Licensing Committee.
- 4.8 The remainder of the fees would be subjected to any consultation undertaken by the council on the fees more generally. The trade would be informed in writing as to how they could participate in the statutory consultation.
- 4.9 The trade commented that they felt that some of the fees underestimated the time taken to process them. Officers explained that the time taken was reviewed annually and any changes would be factored into future fees.
- 4.10 The trade commented that the fees no longer included the remittance scheme associated with electric and hybrid vehicles. Officers explained that the scheme had originally been set up in 2022 with an implementation date of the 01 April 2023.
- 4.11 At the time it had been agreed that it would be in place for a maximum of three years. The current scheme was due to expire on the 31st March 2026. A decision had been taken at the July 2025 Licensing Committee meeting not to extend the scheme.
- 4.12 It was noted that this was ultimately a matter for Members to determine as any remittance scheme would have to be funded from corporate reserves if a budget could not be identified.
- 4.13 Should the Licensing Committee wish to recommend that the scheme be continued a decision would need to be made by the Executive. The decision would need to form part of the budget setting process, and the prioritisation of this proposal would need to be considered against other Council priorities and the wider financial position that the Council faces when setting its budget.

Matters Raised by the Trade

Public Register

- 4.14 The trade stated that the registers that had recently been published lacked consistency around trade names and ownership and could do with additional information relating to disabled access i.e. were vehicles side loading, rear loading, did they have ramps, platforms, winches, hoists, swivel seats etc, emission standards and the number of s
- 4.15 Officers stated that they would review the current registers and ascertain what additional information they could extract from the information management system and then republish the registers.

Fare Increase

- 4.16 The trade commented that they would bring a proposal to the January 2026 Licensing Committee once they had had the opportunity to ascertain what impact the Taxi Policy would have on their costs. Officers would work with the trade to develop a timetable factoring in the necessary decision-making scheduling.

Vehicle Testing

- 4.17 The trade had notified Licensing Officers that one of the authorised garages was no longer providing testing for hackney carriages and private hire vehicles. These garages undertake independent inspections for roadworthiness to a standard exceeding ordinary MOT requirement. They had also recently supplied the name of a garage who were willing to take on this work and they did not think that the Licensing Team had contacted the proposed replacement yet.
- 4.18 Officers confirmed that although the garage withdrawing from the list of approved garages had not contacted the Council, once alerted they had contacted the garage who indicated that they wanted to focus on repairs rather than MOTs. Officers agreed to remove the withdrawn contact from the list of authorised garages and contact the replacement garage as a matter of urgency. They would also write to other providers to see if they wished to be added to the list in due course.

Website

- 4.19 The trade commented that it could be confusing for some members of the trade. Once they logged onto the West Berkshire Council Licensing pages and clicked on the relevant licence, they were redirected to the Public Protection Partnership website Pages and online payments were made on the Bracknell Forest Council pages. Officers agreed to explore if the information on the various websites could be clarified to explain the redirection to assist the trade.
- 4.20 Overcoming the online payment issue would however take longer to resolve. The trade also asked if consideration could be given to including the fees associated with that application on the relevant pages rather than the central list currently used.

Any Other Business

- 4.21 The trade requested that the trade newsletter be reinstated. Officers noted that the communication officer role had been removed from the establishment in 2024 to balance the budget which had removed the capacity to undertake some of this work. Officers would however meet the following week with a view to producing a bi-monthly newsletter again.
- 4.22 The trade raised concerns about the perceived lack of visible enforcement especially at ranks including the train station. They wished to see additional enforcement including checking of West Berkshire hackney carriage and private hire vehicles and drivers. The trade commented that perhaps the fees could be reviewed with a view to funding a dedicated taxi enforcement officer post. Members requested that information around enforcement activity be brought to a future meeting.

5 Conclusion

- 5.1 The Group has been set up to provide an opportunity for the Taxi Trade, Members and Officers to meet to discuss a range of topics of common interest, to provide a forum to resolve issues and foster closer working relationships, to undertake informal consultation and then report back to the Licensing Committee.
- 5.2 The Chairman and the Vice Chairman therefore apologised for the recent treatment of the trade in relation to the preparation of the Taxi Policy and hoped that confidence could be restored and the relationship with the trade be restored.

6 Appendices

None

Background Papers:

None

Subject to Call-In:

Yes: ☐ No: ☒

Report is to note only



Wards affected: All

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