



Northumberland

County Council

Your ref:

Our ref:

Enquiries to: Heather Bowers

Email:

Heather.Bowers@northumberland.gov.uk

Tel direct: 07873 700 976

Date: Wednesday, 5 February 2025

Dear Sir or Madam,

Your attendance is requested at a meeting of the **LICENSING & REGULATORY COMMITTEE** to be held in **COUNCIL CHAMBER - COUNTY HALL** on **WEDNESDAY, 12 FEBRUARY 2025** at **1.30 PM**.

Yours faithfully

Dr H Paterson
Chief Executive

To Licensing & Regulatory Committee members as follows:-

J Beynon, T Cessford, E Chicken, J Foster, B Gallacher, C Hardy, C Humphrey, JI Hutchinson (Chair), S Lee, K Parry (Vice-Chair), C Seymour, A Sharp, M Swinbank and A Wallace



Dr H Paterson Chief Executive
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AGENDA

PART I

It is expected that the matters included in this part of the agenda will be dealt with in public.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2. MINUTES

(Pages
7 - 10)

Minutes of the meeting of the Licensing Committee, held on Wednesday 18 December 2024, as circulated, to be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

3. DISCLOSURE OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Unless already entered in the Council's Register of Members' interests, members are required where a matter arises at a meeting;

Which **directly relates to** Disclosable Pecuniary Interest ('DPI') as set out in Appendix B, Table 1 of the Code of Conduct, to disclose the interest, not participate in any discussion or vote and not to remain in room. Where members have a DPI or if the matter concerns an executive function and is being considered by a Cabinet Member with a DPI they must notify the Monitoring Officer and arrange for somebody else to deal with the matter.

Which **directly relates to** the financial interest or well being of a Other Registrable Interest as set out in Appendix B, Table 2 of the Code of Conduct to disclose the interest and only speak on the matter if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting but otherwise must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain the room.

Which **directly relates to** their financial interest or well-being (and is not DPI) or the financial well being of a relative or close associate, to declare the interest and members may only speak on the matter if members of the public are also allowed to speak. Otherwise, the member must not take part in discussion or vote on the matter and must leave the room.

Which **affects** the financial well-being of the member, a relative or close associate or a body included under the Other Registrable Interests column in Table 2, to disclose the interest and apply the test set out at paragraph 9 of Appendix B before deciding whether they may remain in the meeting.

Where Members have or a Cabinet Member has an Other Registerable Interest or Non Registerable Interest in a matter being considered in exercise of their executive function, they must notify the Monitoring Officer and arrange for somebody else to deal with it.

NB Any member needing clarification must contact monitoringofficer@northumberland.gov.uk. Members are referred to the Code of Conduct which contains the matters above in full. Please refer to the guidance on disclosures at the rear of this agenda letter.

- 4. REGULATION OF EVENTS** (Pages 11 - 14)

To review licences determined over the last Quarter by the Licensing & Regulatory Subcommittee and delegated officers.
- 5. QUARTERLY ACTIVITY UPDATE** (Pages 15 - 24)

Northumberland County Council has a statutory responsibility to administer and enforce various licensing schemes in its local area.

This report provides Licensing and Regulatory Committee with an update on licences determined over the last Quarter by Subcommittee and delegated officers.
- 6. REVIEW OF FEES AND CHARGES FOR THE HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE LICENSING SCHEME** (Pages 25 - 30)

Northumberland County Council has a statutory responsibility to regulate hackney carriage ('taxi') and private hire activities by administering and enforcing a local licensing scheme.

Following review, this report outlines proposals to increase the fees it charges by 5% to keep pace with inflationary impacts and to maintain the principle of cost recovery.
- 7. REVIEW OF HACKNEY CARRIAGE FARES** (Pages 31 - 40)

Northumberland County Council has a statutory responsibility to regulate hackney carriage ('taxi') activities by administering and enforcing a local licensing scheme.

This report sets out the law applying to the setting of fares for hackney carriages and provides the outcome of the annual review undertaken by officers.
- 8. FUTURE MEETINGS**

To seek agreement from the Committee for future meetings to be held quarterly rather than bi-monthly.
- 9. URGENT BUSINESS**

To consider such other business as, in the opinion of the Chair, should, by reason of special circumstances, be considered as a matter of urgency.

IF YOU HAVE AN INTEREST AT THIS MEETING, PLEASE:

- Declare it and give details of its nature before the matter is discussed or as soon as it becomes apparent to you.
- Complete this sheet and pass it to the Democratic Services Officer.

Name:		Date of meeting:	
Meeting:			
Item to which your interest relates:			
Nature of Interest i.e. either disclosable pecuniary interest (as defined by Table 1 of Appendix B to the Code of Conduct, Other Registerable Interest or Non-Registerable Interest (as defined by Appendix B to Code of Conduct) (please give details):			
Are you intending to withdraw from the meeting?		Yes - <input type="checkbox"/>	No - <input type="checkbox"/>

Registering Interests

Within 28 days of becoming a member or your re-election or re-appointment to office you must register with the Monitoring Officer the interests which fall within the categories set out in **Table 1 (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests)** which are as described in "The Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012". You should also register details of your other personal interests which fall within the categories set out in **Table 2 (Other Registerable Interests)**.

"Disclosable Pecuniary Interest" means an interest of yourself, or of your partner if you are aware of your partner's interest, within the descriptions set out in Table 1 below.

"Partner" means a spouse or civil partner, or a person with whom you are living as husband or wife, or a person with whom you are living as if you are civil partners.

1. You must ensure that your register of interests is kept up-to-date and within 28 days of becoming aware of any new interest, or of any change to a registered interest, notify the Monitoring Officer.
2. A 'sensitive interest' is as an interest which, if disclosed, could lead to the councillor, or a person connected with the councillor, being subject to violence or intimidation.
3. Where you have a 'sensitive interest' you must notify the Monitoring Officer with the reasons why you believe it is a sensitive interest. If the Monitoring Officer agrees they will withhold the interest from the public register.

Non participation in case of disclosable pecuniary interest

4. Where a matter arises at a meeting which directly relates to one of your Disclosable Pecuniary Interests as set out in **Table 1**, you must disclose the interest, not participate in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation. If it is a 'sensitive interest', you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest, just that you have an interest.

Dispensation may be granted in limited circumstances, to enable you to participate and vote on a matter in which you have a disclosable pecuniary interest.

5. Where you have a disclosable pecuniary interest on a matter to be considered or is being considered by you as a Cabinet member in exercise of your executive function, you must notify the Monitoring Officer of the interest and must not take any steps or further steps in the matter apart from arranging for someone else to deal with it.

Disclosure of Other Registerable Interests

6. Where a matter arises at a meeting which **directly relates** to the financial interest or wellbeing of one of your Other Registerable Interests (as set out in **Table 2**), you must disclose the interest. You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting but otherwise must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation. If it is a 'sensitive interest', you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest.

Disclosure of Non-Registerable Interests

7. Where a matter arises at a meeting which **directly relates** to your financial interest or well-being (and is not a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest set out in **Table 1**) or a financial interest or well-being of a relative or close associate, you must disclose the interest. You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting. Otherwise you must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation. If it is a 'sensitive interest', you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest.

8. Where a matter arises at a meeting which **affects** –
- a. your own financial interest or well-being;
 - b. a financial interest or well-being of a relative or close associate; or
 - c. a financial interest or wellbeing of a body included under Other Registrable Interests as set out in **Table 2** you must disclose the interest. In order to determine whether you can remain in the meeting after disclosing your interest the following test should be applied
9. Where a matter (referred to in paragraph 8 above) **affects** the financial interest or well- being:
- a. to a greater extent than it affects the financial interests of the majority of inhabitants of the ward affected by the decision and;
 - b. a reasonable member of the public knowing all the facts would believe that it would affect your view of the wider public interest

You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting. Otherwise, you must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation.

If it is a 'sensitive interest', you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest.

Where you have an Other Registerable Interest or Non-Registerable Interest on a matter to be considered or is being considered by you as a Cabinet member in exercise of your executive function, you must notify the Monitoring Officer of the interest and must not take any steps or further steps in the matter apart from arranging for someone else to deal with it.

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL LICENSING AND REGULATORY COMMITTEE

At a meeting of the **Licensing and Regulatory Committee** held on Wednesday,
18 December 2024 at 1:30 pm.

PRESENT

Councillor I Hutchinson
(Chair, in the Chair)

MEMBERS

J Beynon
T Cessford
B Gallacher
C Hardy
S Lee

C Seymour
A Sharp
M Swinbank
A Wallace

OFFICERS

H Bowers
M Bulman
T Hardy
C MacDonald

Democratic Services Officer
Solicitor
Licensing Manager
Business Compliance & Public
Safety Manager

Press: 1

12. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Chicken, Foster, Humphrey and Parry.

13. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Licensing and Regulatory Committee held on Wednesday 23 October 2024, as circulated, be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

14. QUARTERLY ACTIVITY UPDATE

Members were provided with an update on licences determined over the last quarter by the Subcommittee and delegated officers.

Ch.'s Initials.....

At the meeting on 23 October, the Committee received information outlining licences that had been granted and renewed over the previous quarter.

Included within the Appendix of the report for the quarter July to September 2024, were licences determined by Subcommittee and delegated officers. Also included was a comparison of the previous year.

The officers were thanked for the work carried out in providing the figures.

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

15. DECISION-MAKING SCHEME

As requested by members at the last committee meeting, the schematic form provided attached to the report provided clarity on how decisions were made within the Authority.

Members were provided with an explanation of the approach to decision making and how this linked to the adopted legal scheme of officer delegation.

In response to a query, members were informed that the Committee was charged with making recommendations on policy and any recommendations made would be presented to Cabinet for approval.

A member welcomed the report but stated that concerns had been raised at the previous meeting about the change in the decision-making process for licensing and regulatory committee and would not support the schematic chart in its current form.

Some concerns were raised regarding lack of communication of events to Ward Councillors and whether the Licensing Team was debriefed following an event, the Committee was assured that this was the case.

In response to lack of communication, Local Councillors and Parish Town Councils were not statutory consultees and were not required to be consulted on any events.

All the concerns raised would be taken on board.

RESOLVED that the Committee endorse the schematic included in the Appendix to the report.

16. PASSENGER VEHICLES NOT WITHIN SCOPE OF THE LICENSING SCHEME

Members were provided with an information report requested by the Committee outlining the law relating to passenger vehicles that were not within the scope of the taxi and private hire vehicle licensing scheme for local authorities.

A vehicle used for hire or reward that seated up to 8 passengers was legally considered to be a regulated taxi or private hire vehicle which were small vehicles licensed by the local authority, including vehicles involving executive travel, chauffeur services, limousines and some school and day centre transport services.

A vehicle used for hire which seated 9 or more passengers was legally considered to be a public services vehicle (PSV), such as buses and coaches, licensed by the area Traffic Commissioner and administered by the Driver and Vehicles Standards Agency (DVSA).

Exemptions available to relaxation to the applicable licensing schemes were outlined in paragraph 5.3 of the report.

In response to queries regarding road worthiness and public safety, members were informed that although there may be exemptions outside of the MoT scheme for older vehicles, however, this did not apply to the policy requirement adopted by the Authority for the licensing of hackney carriage or private hire vehicles.

Members thanked the officers for an informative report.

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

17. CERTIFICATION OF SPORTS GROUNDS

Members considered a report outlining the framework for the regulation of sports grounds and sought approval for the development of a specific policy.

The Authority was responsible for regulating sports grounds and the Committee had a responsibility for certifying those sports grounds that fell within the scope of the regulatory framework.

Major incidents had occurred over the years at sports grounds nationally that had shaped legislation to improve public safety e.g., The Safety of Sports Grounds Act 1975 was introduced following the disaster at Ibrox Park, Glasgow in 1971 and The Fire Safety and Safety of Places of Sport Act 1987 was introduced following the fire at Valley Parade, Bradford in 1985.

Sports grounds not falling within the scope of the above regulatory framework were otherwise regulated by the Authority under health and safety and fire legislation.

In Northumberland there were a number of sports grounds across the county that varied in nature:

- Designated sports grounds – none
- Regulated stands – two venues

- Others – A broad range including non-league football clubs in Alnwick, Ashington, Bedlington, Blyth, Morpeth, Poneland, Prudhoe and Hexham racecourse.

Members were assured that the Authority’s obligations in relation to regulations were being adhered to.

The Authority had indicated its plans to strengthen its approach to the regulation of events that took place in the county and the intended future approach was set out in a report presented to Cabinet in September 2024. Attached as Appendix to the report.

In response to questions from members relating to monitoring of stands - Environmental Health were responsible for the health and safety of the stands.

With reference to what powers the Council had in relation to safety at a Temporary Event Notice, members were informed that the Safety Advisory Group did not have any enforcement power but more of a partnership approach. Any events would be reviewed afterwards.

RESOLVED that the information be noted and the proposal to develop a specific policy covering the regulation of sports grounds, as outlined in section 5 of the report be agreed.

18. FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME FRAMEWORK

Members were asked to review the future work programme for the remainder of the municipal year.

RESOLVED that the contents of the report be noted.

19. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

RESOLVED that the future dates be noted.

20. URGENT BUSINESS

The Committee was informed that a Government White Paper on the Devolution Deal would possibly affect future regulation of Hackney Carriage and Private Hire vehicles. Officers were currently considering the information.

CHAIR _____

DATE _____



Northumberland County Council

Licensing & Regulatory Committee

Wednesday 12 February 2025

Regulation of Events

Report of Councillor Councillor Gordon Stewart, Cabinet Member for Looking After our Communities

Responsible Officer Graeme Binning, Chief Fire Officer and Director of Public Protection

1. **Link to Key Priorities of the Corporate Plan**

The regulation of events cuts across all of the priorities included in the Council's Corporate Plan.

- It supports **Achieving Value for Money** by ensuring that we provide a scheme that works efficiently and delivers the best customer experience.
- It supports **Tackling Inequalities** by ensuring that we provide the scheme is delivered taking into account the needs of our communities.
- It supports **Driving Economic Growth** by ensuring that we provide a scheme meets the needs to support the county to prosper.

2. **Purpose of report**

Northumberland County Council ('the Authority') has a statutory responsibility to regulate sports grounds. Committee has specific responsibility for certifying those sports grounds that fall within the scope of a regulatory framework.

At its last meeting Committee considered a report which included information about the Authority's wider approach to the regulation of events. This report seeks to provide additional information.

3. **Recommendations**

Committee is recommended to receive a presentation from the Authority's Strategic Community Safety and Partnerships Manager.

4. Forward plan date and reason for urgency if applicable

Not applicable.

5. Background

5.1 Introduction

Northumberland County Council ('the Authority') is responsible for regulating sports grounds. Licensing and Regulatory Committee ('the Committee') has specific responsibility for certificating those sports grounds that fall within the scope of a regulatory framework.

5.2 Context

At its last meeting Committee considered a report which included information about the Authority's wider approach to the regulation of events. Officers advised that the Authority's work on regulating sports grounds was in the process of being aligned to strengthening work the Authority was undertaking in relation to the regulation of events more widely.

The item prompted specific interest and scrutiny from members. Overall, Committee was keen to learn more about how this work was progressing.

The development and introduction of the new approach to regulating events is being led by the Stronger Communities service which sits within Public Health directorate with oversight from Cabinet.

The Strategic Community Safety and Partnerships Manager will be in attendance at Committee to deliver a short presentation aimed at updating members.

5.3 Next steps

At its last meeting Committee resolved to oversee the development of a policy for the certification of sports grounds.

The information presented will help shape members' thinking and inform the Committee on how that policy is designed.

6. Options open to Committee and reasons for the recommendations

6.1 The recommendations at section 3 of this report invite Committee to receive the presentation.

6.2 Section 5.3 highlights the reasons Committee has been invited to do so.

7. Implications

Policy	There are no policy implications arising directly from this report. Committee will be consulted on future policy development and invited to make recommendations.
Finance and value for money	There are no financial implications arising directly from this report. The costs of undertaking the regulatory activity and associated matters are met from existing revenue budgets.
Legal	There are no legal implications arising directly from this report.
Procurement	There are no procurement implications arising directly from this report.
Human resources	There are no human resources implications arising directly from this report.
Property	There are no property implications arising directly from this report.
The Equalities Act: is a full impact assessment required and attached?	Not required. Assessing compliance with the public sector equality duty are considered specifically in relation to the administration and enforcement of the licensing activity.
Risk assessment	Risks associated with administering and enforcing the licensing activity are managed and monitored through the corporately adopted risk management framework and within the Public Protection Service.
Crime and disorder	There are no crime and disorder implications arising directly from this report. A key objective of the licensing activity is to promote good practices with respect to management of sports grounds.
Customer considerations	There are no customer consideration implications arising directly from this report.
Carbon reduction	There are no carbon reduction implications arising directly from this report.
Health and wellbeing	There are no health and wellbeing implications arising directly from this report. The licensing activity promotes good practice in public safety.
Wards	All Wards

8. **Background papers**

[Sports grounds certification, report to Licensing & Regulation Committee, 18 December 2024](#)

[Proposal for a New Approach to the Delivery, Regulation and Strategic Support of Events within Northumberland, report to Cabinet 17 September 2024](#)

[The UK Good Practice Guide to Working in Safety Advisory Groups, Revision 2019, Emergency Planning College](#)

[Guide to safety at sports grounds \('the Green Guide'\), Sixth edition 2018, Sports Grounds Safety Authority](#)

9. **Links to other key reports already published**

Not applicable

10. **Author and Contact Details**

Colin MacDonald, Business Compliance and Public Safety Manager
Email: colin.macdonald@northumberland.gov.uk



Northumberland County Council

Licensing & Regulatory Committee

Wednesday 12 February 2025

Quarterly Activity Update

Report of Councillor	Councillor Gordon Stewart, Cabinet Member for Looking After our Communities
Responsible Officer	Graeme Binning, Chief Fire Officer and Director of Public Protection

1. **Link to Key Priorities of the Corporate Plan**

Administering and enforcing licensable activity cuts across all of the priorities included in the Council's Corporate Plan.

- It supports **Achieving Value for Money** by ensuring our licensing schemes work efficiently and deliver the best customer experience.
- It supports **Tackling Inequalities** by ensuring our licensing schemes are delivered taking into account the needs of our communities.
- It supports **Driving Economic Growth** by ensuring our licensing schemes meet the needs to support the County to prosper.

2. **Purpose of report**

Northumberland County Council has a statutory responsibility to administer and enforce various licensing schemes in its local area.

This report provides Licensing and Regulation Committee with an update on licences determined over the last Quarter by Subcommittee and delegated officers.

3. **Recommendations**

Committee is recommended to consider and note the information contained in this report.

4. **Forward plan date and reason for urgency if applicable**

Not applicable.

5. **Background**

5.1 Introduction

Northumberland County Council ('the Authority') is responsible for administering and enforcing various licensing schemes in place covering the local area. The Authority's Constitution has established the Licensing and Regulatory Committee ('the Committee') and has delegated a number of powers to it.

The Committee is therefore responsible for oversight of licensing matters relating to a wide range of business sectors. For example, licensing schemes covering trading activity involving; the keeping of animals, street trading, tattooists and taxi and private hire.

The terms of reference of the Committee and its powers have previously been discussed in detail with members.

5.2 Looking back over previous months

At recent meetings Committee has received information outlining licences that had been granted and reviewed looking back over the previous Quarter of the financial year.

This has been well received and it was agreed as part of the development of a work programme framework such information would be presented regularly to provide Committee with oversight of the licensing schemes it has responsibility for.

Included in the **Appendix** to this report is a look back over the last Quarter (October to December 2024) on licences determined by sub-committee and delegated officers.

5.3 Consideration by Committee

Committee is invited to consider the information presented.

6. **Options open to Committee and reasons for the recommendations**

- 6.1 The recommendation at section 3 of this report invites Committee to consider and note the contents of the report.

- 6.2 Committee can make supplementary suggestions as it deems appropriate to enable it to meet the responsibilities delegated to it.

7. Implications

Policy	There are no policy implications arising directly from this report.
Finance and value for money	There are no financial implications arising directly from the report.
Legal	There are no legal implications arising directly from this report.
Procurement	There are no procurement implications arising directly from this report.
Human resources	There are no human resources implications arising directly from this report.
Property	There are no property implications arising directly from this report.
The Equalities Act: is a full impact assessment required and attached?	Not required. Assessing compliance with the Authority’s public equality duty is considered specifically in relation to the administration and enforcement of each licensing scheme.
Risk assessment	Risks associated with administering and enforcing each of the licensing schemes are managed and monitored through the corporately adopted risk management framework and within the Public Protection Service.
Crime and disorder	There are no crime and disorder issues arising directly from this report. A key objective of each licensing scheme is to prevent crime and promote public safety.
Customer considerations	There are no customer consideration implications directly arising from this report.

Carbon reduction	There are no carbon reduction implications arising directly from this report.
Health and wellbeing	There are no health and wellbeing implications arising directly from this report.
Wards	All Wards

8. Background papers

Appendix: Quarterly activity report, October – December 2024

9. Links to other key reports already published

Not applicable

10. Author and Contact Details

Colin MacDonald, Business Compliance and Public Safety Manager
Email: colin.macdonald@northumberland.gov.uk

Tasmin Hardy, Licensing Manager
Email: tasmin.hardy@northumberland.gov.uk

APPENDIX 1a

Quarterly Licensable Activity –October – December 2024

Hackney carriages and private hire

Licensable Activity	Number of licences Issued during the period	Number of licences issued for the same period in 2023	Total number of licences currently active
Hackney carriage	79	78	273
Private hire vehicle	157	130	570
Hackney carriage drivers'	73	50	435
Private hire drivers'	135	116	747
Private hire operators	18	13	100
Other information	4 authorisations given to use alternative testing facilities. Licensing Officer vehicle suspension notices issued.		

Animal Activity licensing

Licensable Activity	Number of licences Issued during the period	Number of licences issued for the same period in 2023	Total number of licences currently active
Animal boarding	12	14	127
Pet shops	5	1	14
Dog breeding	1	0	15
Keeping/training animals for exhibition	2	2	16
Riding establishments	0	2	9
Other information	Nothing by exception to report.		

Other types

Licensable Activity	Number of licences Issued during the period	Number of licences issued for the same period in 2023	Total number of licences currently active
Caravan site	2	2	171
House to house collections	6	11	N/A
Street collections	33	20	N/A
Scrap metal collector	2	3	16
Scrap metal site	1	2	7
Street Trading	12	12	76
Tattoo, acupuncture, ear piercing, permanent makeup etc. - personal	28	190	348
Tattoo, acupuncture, ear piercing, permanent makeup etc. – premises	38	9	239
Zoo	3	1	4
Other information	Nothing by exception to report.		

APPENDIX 1b

Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Zone Information November 2024

Licensable Activity	Alnwick	Berwick	Blyth Valley	Castle Morpeth	Tynedale	Wansbeck
Hackney Carriage Driver	11	67	137	63	108	47
Hackney Carriage Vehicle	6	38	81	50	22	76
Private Hire Operator (located in zone)	13	10	19	9	19	19

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Schedule of Subcommittee Decisions

19 November 2024

Issue: Hackney carriage driver application
Decision: Granted (following adjournment from August hearing)
Information: DBS information included that required consideration.

Issue: Hackney carriage driver application
Decision: Granted
Information: DBS information included that required consideration.

Issue: Hackney carriage driver application
Decision: Refused
Information: DVLA information that required consideration.

Issue: Private hire driver application
Decision: Adjourned
Information: DVLA and DBS information that required consideration.

Issue: Hackney carriage and private hire driver disciplinary
Decision: Retention of licence
Information: DLVA information that required consideration.

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Northumberland County Council

Licensing & Regulatory Committee

Wednesday 12 February 2025

Review of fees and charges for the hackney carriage and private hire licensing scheme

Report of Councillor Councillor Gordon Stewart, Cabinet Member for Looking After our Communities

Responsible Officer Graeme Binning, Chief Fire Officer and Director of Public Protection

1. Link to Key Priorities of the Corporate Plan

Licensing hackney carriage and private hire activity cuts across all of the priorities included in the Council's Corporate Plan.

- It supports **Achieving Value for Money** by ensuring that we provide a scheme that works efficiently and delivers the best customer experience.
- It supports **Tackling Inequalities** by ensuring that we provide the scheme is delivered taking into account the needs of our communities.
- It supports **Driving Economic Growth** by ensuring that we provide a scheme meets the needs to support the county to prosper.

2. Purpose of report

Northumberland County Council has a statutory responsibility to regulate hackney carriage ('taxi') and private hire activities by administering and enforcing a local licensing scheme.

Following review, this report outlines proposals to increase the fees it charges by 5% to keep pace with inflationary impacts and to maintain the principle of cost recovery.

3. Recommendations

Committee is recommended to accept the proposal to increase the fees the Authority charges for maintaining the hackney carriage and private hire licensing scheme and endorse commencement of the required public consultation exercise.

4. **Forward plan date and reason for urgency if applicable**

Not applicable.

5. **Background**

5.1 Introduction

Northumberland County Council has a statutory responsibility to regulate hackney carriage ('taxi') and private hire activities by administering and enforcing a local licensing scheme.

The legislation relevant to this licensing scheme permits local authorities to set fees for hackney carriage and private hire vehicles, operators and drivers' licences. The principle is one of cost recovery and fees charged therefore must be reasonable.

5.2 Context

The Northumberland Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy states the fee structure it has adopted will be reviewed annually as part of the Authority's budget setting process.

Fees for drivers are not subject to statutory consultation

However, fees for hackney carriages and private hire vehicles and their operators are subject to statutory consultation. When a variation is proposed, it is a requirement that the local licensing authority:

- Publishes a notice setting what is proposed, and
- Allows at least 28 days to receive objections.

Furthermore:

- If no objections are made, these need to be appropriately considered, and
- If no objections are made (or are withdrawn), a date can be set for the proposal to come into effect.

Although statutory consultation is not required for drivers' licences, it is considered best practice to adopt a consistent approach by seeking feedback on all licence types using the formal process.

5.3 Proposed next steps

Following consultation with the section 151 officer it has been recommended, in order to keep pace with inflationary impacts and to maintain the principle of cost recovery, that fees are increased by 5%.

In accordance with the adopted officer delegation scheme, it is proposed the Director of Public Protection (the Chief Fire Officer) undertakes public consultation, in line with the approach outlined in section 5.2 above, to proceed with the recommendation.

Members will see this proposal presented to the Council meeting on 19 February, subject to approval by Cabinet, as part of the Authority’s budget setting process.

The table in the **Appendix** to this report outlines the effect of the proposal on each fee that it charges.

6. Options open to Committee and reasons for the recommendations

- 6.1 The recommendations at section 3 of this report invite Committee to accept the proposal.
- 6.2 Section 5.3 highlights the reasons Committee has been invited to do so.

7. Implications

Policy	The proposal meets with the requirements of the Northumberland Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy to review fees annually.
Finance and value for money	The proposal seeks to maintain the principle of cost recovery as outlined in the main body of the report.
Legal	Statutory consultation is required prior to introducing a variation of the fees charged by the Authority. This is outlined in the main body of the report.
Procurement	There are no procurement implications arising directly from this report.
Human resources	There are no human resources implications arising directly from this report.
Property	There are no property implications arising directly from this report.
The Equalities Act: is a full impact assessment required and attached?	Not required. Assessing compliance with the public sector equality duty are considered specifically in relation to the administration and enforcement of the licensing activity.

Risk assessment	Risks associated with administering and enforcing the licensing activity are managed and monitored through the corporately adopted risk management framework and within the Public Protection Service.
Crime and disorder	There are no crime and disorder implications arising directly from this report. A key objective of the licensing activity is to promote public safety and safeguard the travelling public.
Customer considerations	There are no customer consideration implications arising directly from this report. Licensees and future applicants will be able to transparently see the approach adopted by the Authority in relation to the fees it charges.
Carbon reduction	There are no carbon reduction implications arising directly from this report.
Health and wellbeing	There are no health and wellbeing implications arising directly from this report. The licensing activity promotes public safety.
Wards	All Wards

8. Background papers

Appendix: Schedule of licence fees charged with a 5% uplift.

[Local Government \(Miscellaneous Provisions\) Act 1976, section 70](#)

[Northumberland Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy, updated June 2024](#)

9. Links to other key reports already published

Not applicable

10. Author and Contact Details

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APPENDIX

Schedule of licence fees charged with a 5% uplift.

[square brackets denotes the actual uplift before rounding]

Fee	Current	Proposed
Annual vehicle fee (including door insignia and plate)	£241	£253 [£253.05]
Replacement plate	£23	£24 [£24.15]
Replacement insignias	£9 each	£9 [£9.45]
Vehicle transfer between licensees fee	£33	£35 [£34.65]
Operator (five years)	£502	£527 [£527.01]
Operator (one year)	£110	£116 [£115.50]
Driver annual fee (including badge)	£85	£89 [£89.25]
Driver fee (two year licence)	£122	£128 [£128.10]
Driver fee (three year licence)	£159	£167 [£167.95]
Additional drivers for Hackney Carriage and Private Hire	£30	£32 [£31.50]
Replacement badge	£12	£13 [£12.60]
Driver knowledge test (initial test)	£23	£24 [£24.15]
Driver knowledge test (re-sit)	£23	£24 [£24.15]
DBS admin fee	£23	£24 [£24.15]

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Northumberland County Council

Licensing & Regulatory Committee

Wednesday 12 February 2025

Review of Hackney Carriage Fares

Report of Councillor Councillor Gordon Stewart, Cabinet Member for Looking After our Communities

Responsible Officer Graeme Binning, Chief Fire Officer and Director of Public Protection

1. **Link to Key Priorities of the Corporate Plan**

Licensing hackney carriages cuts across all of the priorities included in the Council's Corporate Plan.

- It supports **Achieving Value for Money** by ensuring the licensing scheme works efficiently and delivers the best customer experience.
- It supports **Tackling Inequalities** by ensuring the licensing scheme is delivered taking into account the needs of our communities.
- It supports **Driving Economic Growth** by ensuring the licensing scheme meets the needs to support the county to prosper.

2. **Purpose of report**

Northumberland County Council has a statutory responsibility to regulate hackney carriage ('taxi') activities by administering and enforcing a local licensing scheme.

This report sets out the law applying to the setting of fares for hackney carriages and provides the outcome of the annual review undertaken by officers.

3. **Recommendations**

Committee is recommended to agree that there be no change to the table of fares applying to hackney carriages in Northumberland.

4. Forward plan date and reason for urgency if applicable

Not applicable.

5. Background

5.1 Introduction

Northumberland County Council ('the Authority') is responsible for the licensing of hackney carriages in its local area. One of those statutory duties is to set the maximum fares that can be charged and all other charges in connection with a hire.

5.2 Context

Under section 65 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 ('the 1976 Act'), local licensing authorities have the power to determine the charges that may be made in respect of journeys undertaken in a hackney carriage. These are expressed in a table of fares, commonly known as the taxi tariff, which sets out the *maximum* prices that can be charged.

The Authority has no control over what fares are charged for private hire services, that being a matter for negotiation between the hirer and the operator. Where a hackney carriage is being used to provide private hire services, the fare cannot exceed those amounts included in the table of fares.

The table of fares in place in Northumberland is included in **Appendix 1** to this report. There are four key elements:

- The day or time of day
- The flag fall
- Intervals at which the fare increases
- Additional charges that can be levied.

The Northumberland Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy ('the Policy') commits the Authority to reviewing its table of fares annually, or more frequently taking into account emerging circumstances - in other words the economic climate. The last review was undertaken in February 2024 leading to no changes being made.

If the Authority proposes to vary the table of fares for hackney carriages, the 1976 Act requires it to:

- Place a notice in at least one local newspaper setting out the variation, and
- Allow a period of at least 14 days within which objections to the variation can be made.

5.3 Annual review

Committee will be aware of the recent inflationary impacts on the cost of all goods and services due to international trading conditions. Prices have undoubtedly risen and that will of course impact directly on the local hackney carriage trade.

The cost of taxi services however is highly price sensitive to the cost of fuel. **Appendix 2** includes information about weekly road fuel price trends from January 2020 to January 2025. The cost of petrol and diesel is at its lowest point since January 2023. At that time, Committee resolved to increase the table of fares by 5%, with no variation being proposed the following year as fuel prices fell back.

The Authority has not received any representations from the trade seeking a variation at this time although dialogue is continuing to take place.

5.4 Next steps

It is proposed that no changes are made to the Authority's table of fares as a result of this annual review. However, officers will continue to monitor market conditions shaped by any proposals put forward by the trade in continuing discussions.

6. **Options open to Committee and reasons for the recommendations**

6.1 The recommendation at section 3 of this report invites Committee to make no change to the table of fares for hackney carriages.

6.2 Section 5.3 highlights the reasons for the recommendation.

7. **Implications**

Policy	There are no policy implications arising directly from this report. The Policy as it relates to the setting of hackney carriage fares is set out in the main body of the report.
Finance and value for money	There are no financial implications arising directly from this report. The costs of undertaking the annual review and associated matters are met from existing revenue budgets.
Legal	There are no legal implications arising directly from this report. The legal framework as it relates to the setting of hackney carriage fares is set out in the main body of the report.
Procurement	There are no procurement implications arising directly from this report.

Human resources	There are no human resources implications arising directly from this report.
Property	There are no property implications arising directly from this report.
The Equalities Act: is a full impact assessment required and attached?	Not required. Assessing compliance with the public sector equality duty are considered specifically in relation to the administration and enforcement of the licensing activity.
Risk assessment	Risks associated with administering and enforcing the licensing activity are managed and monitored through the corporately adopted risk management framework and within the Public Protection Service.
Crime and disorder	There are no crime and disorder implications arising directly from this report.
Customer considerations	There are no customer consideration implications arising directly from this report.
Carbon reduction	There are no carbon reduction implications arising directly from this report.
Health and wellbeing	There are no health and wellbeing implications arising directly from this report.
Wards	All Wards

8. Background papers

Appendix 1: Northumberland Table of Fares

Appendix 2: Weekly road fuel prices – long term trend chart

[Local Government \(Miscellaneous Provisions\) Act 1976, section 65](#)

[Northumberland Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy, updated June 2024](#)

[Petrol and diesel prices, January 2025 Department for Energy Security and Net Zero](#)

9. Links to other key reports already published

Not applicable

10. Author and Contact Details

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Hackney Carriages Official Fare Charges
Section 65 Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976

TARIFF 1

For the first 500 yards or part thereof	£2.70
For each subsequent 82 yards or part thereof	10p
Waiting time: per 30 seconds or part thereof	20p

TARIFF 2: Between 11pm and 7am and all day Sundays and Public Holidays

For the first 500 yards or part thereof	£3.30
For each subsequent 65 yards or part thereof	10p
Waiting time per 30 seconds or part thereof	20p

TARIFF 3: Between 6pm on 24 December and 3am on 27 December and between 6pm on 31 December and 3am on 2 January

For the first 500 yards or part thereof	£5.30
For each subsequent 82 yards or part thereof	20p
Waiting time: per 30 seconds or part thereof	40p

TARIFF 4 (More than four passengers)

For the first 500 yards or part thereof	£3.10
For each subsequent 82 yards or part thereof	10p
Waiting time: per 30 seconds or part thereof	20p

TARIFF 5: (More than four passengers) Between 11pm and 7am and all day Sundays and Public Holidays

For the first 500 yards or part thereof	£3.60
For each subsequent 65 yards or part thereof	10p
Waiting time per 30 seconds or part thereof	20p

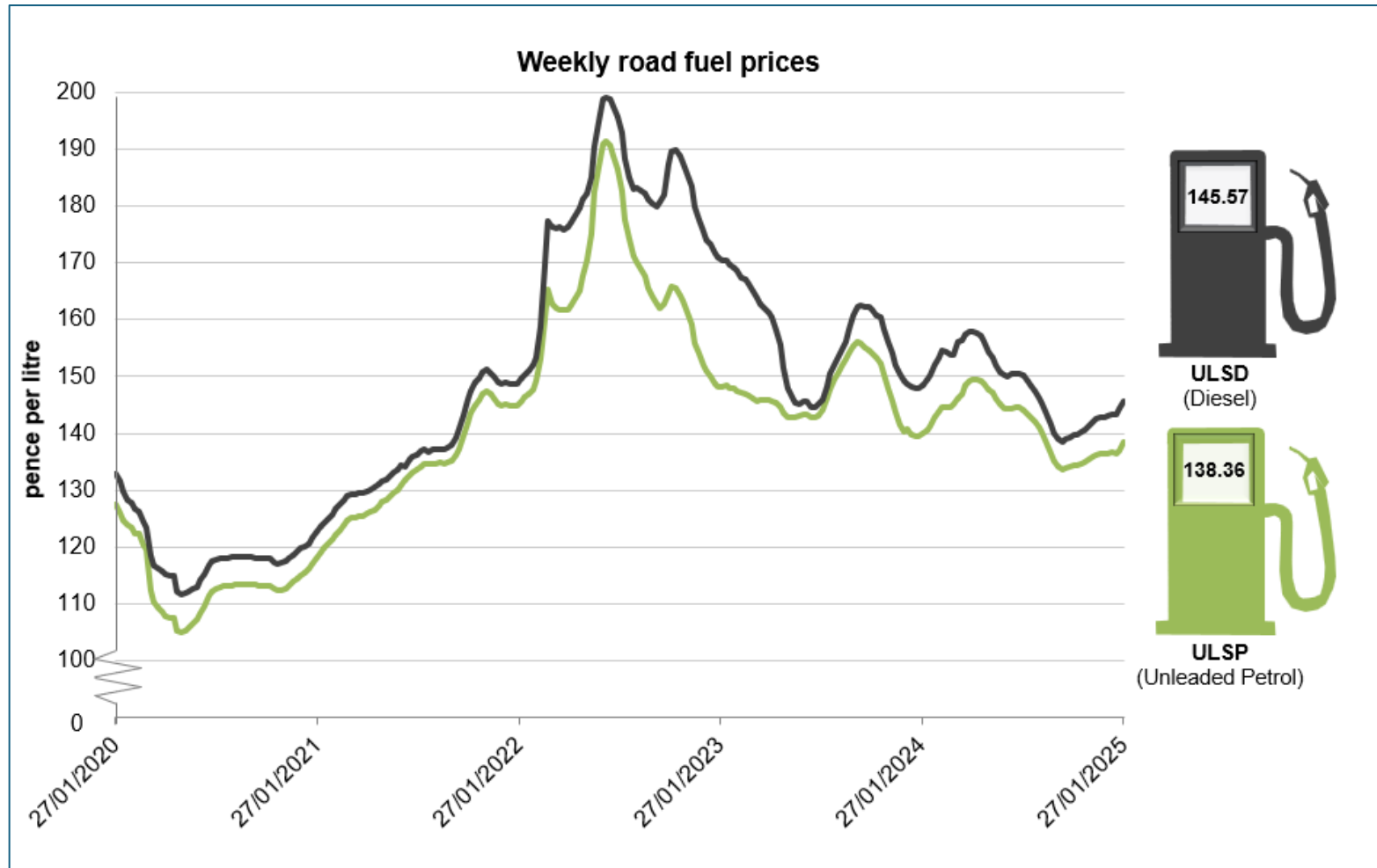
TARIFF 6: (More than four passengers) Between 6pm on 24 December and 3am on 27 December and between 6pm on 31 December and 3am on 2 January

For the first 500 yards or part thereof	£5.30
For each subsequent 82 yards or part thereof	20p
Waiting time: per 30 seconds or part thereof	40p

Soiling Charge (except children under 14 years of age)	£63.00
Dogs (excluding guide dogs) or other animal	£1.10
Each item of luggage, pram, wheeled trolley	£1.10

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Weekly Road Fuel Prices - Longer term Trend Chart



Source: Department for Energy Security and Net Zero: Petrol and diesel prices, January 2025

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