

<b>Report to:</b>	Licensing and Regulatory Committee	<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	Monday 12 June 2023
<b>Subject:</b>	Taxi Licensing Annual Report 2022/23		
<b>Report of:</b>	Assistant Director of Place (Highways and Public Protection)	<b>Wards Affected:</b>	(All Wards);
<b>Portfolio:</b>	Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services		
<b>Is this a Key Decision:</b>	N	<b>Included in Forward Plan:</b>	No
<b>Exempt / Confidential Report:</b>	No		

**Summary:**

To report the progress of the Taxi Licensing service during 2022/23.

**Recommendation(s):**

- (1) Note the contents of this report, and
- (2) Request that similar reports be brought on an annual basis

**Reasons for the Recommendation(s):**

In order that the Licensing & Regulatory Committee can have an overview of the work carried out by the Taxi Licensing Service.

**Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:** (including any Risk Implications)

None

**What will it cost and how will it be financed?**

**(A) Revenue Costs**

The costs associated with producing Taxi Licensing Performance Reports will be met from existing service budgets.

## (B) Capital Costs

There are no direct capital costs associated with the recommendations in this report.

### Implications of the Proposals:

<b>Resource Implications (Financial, IT, Staffing and Assets):</b>	
The cost of the service is wholly recovered from the ring-fenced Taxi Licensing Trade Account (Revenue Budget BD12).	
<b>Legal Implications:</b>	
<b>Equality Implications:</b> There are no equality implications	
<b>Climate Emergency Implications:</b>	
The recommendations within this report will	
Have a positive impact	N
Have a neutral impact	Y
Have a negative impact	N
The Author has undertaken the Climate Emergency training for report authors	Y
There are no proposals in this report that that will alter any impact on climate change	

### Contribution to the Council's Core Purpose:

Protect the most vulnerable:
Facilitate confident and resilient communities:
Commission, broker and provide core services: Provide update on taxi licensing service provision.
Place – leadership and influencer:
Drivers of change and reform:
Facilitate sustainable economic prosperity:
Greater income for social investment:
Cleaner Greener

**What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?**

**(A) Internal Consultations**

The Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services (FD.7358/23) and the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer (LD.5458/23) have been consulted and any comments have been incorporated into the report.

**(B) External Consultations**

None

**Implementation Date for the Decision**

N/A

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**Appendices:**

There are no appendices to this report

**Background Papers:**

There are no background papers available for inspection.

## **Background**

- 1.1 The Taxi Licensing Service comprises two distinct service elements:
  - a) The licensing function, administered through the Council's One Stop Shop (OSS); and
  - b) The 'Enforcement' function provided by the Environmental Health and Licensing Section.
- 1.2 Policy is determined and reviewed by the Council's Licensing & Regulatory Committee and client feedback provided by an established trade consultation regime.
- 1.3 The primary role of taxi licensing is to ensure the safety of the travelling public by ensuring the drivers, operators and vehicles meet standards of safety and good conduct.
- 1.4 To become a licensed driver in Sefton, all new applicants must satisfy the following;
  - A full driving licence. A driver record check is compulsory to check current entitlement to drive
  - A full vocational (DVLA Group II) medical examination obtained via the applicant's General Practitioner or a registered Doctor provided they have access to the applicant's medical records at the time of the examination. Medicals are currently required on first licensing, on reaching 45 years of age, then 55 years of age and on reaching 65 years of age and every 3 years thereafter.
  - A "fee-paid" satisfactory Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) "Enhanced" disclosure. EU applicants may be permitted a short-term licence provided they can produce a "Certificate of Good Conduct" from their last country of residence until an "Enhanced" DBS certificate can be provided.
  - It is a requirement of all new driver applications to take a 'Knowledge of Conditions Test'. This must be obtained without the aid of an interpreter and the pass mark is 70%
  - Evidence that the applicant is legally entitled to work in the UK
- 1.5 All vehicles must obtain a 'certificate of compliance' from an approved testing station which is the equivalent of the current Department for Transport MOT plus extra checks on the condition and appearance of the vehicle.

## **2. Licence Numbers**

- 2.1 The table below shows a summary of licence numbers in force during 2022/23;

### Licence Totals 2022/23

Type	Apr-22	May-22	Jun-22	Jul-21	Aug-22	Sep-22
Hackney Carriage Driver	279	266	273	278	275	277
Hackney Carriage Vehicle	249	252	250	256	255	255
Private Hire Driver	5,362	4,993	5,042	5,116	5,177	5,233
Private Hire Operator	70	73	75	77	78	80
Private Hire Vehicle	4,459	4,487	4,525	4,579	4,620	4,606
<b>Total</b>	10419	10071	10165	10306	10405	10451

Type	Oct-22	Nov-22	Dec-22	Jan-23	Feb-23	Mar-23
Hackney Carriage Driver	275	274	275	274	275	273
Hackney Carriage Vehicle	248	253	253	252	248	249
Private Hire Driver	5,233	5,247	5,262	5,259	5,284	5,308
Private Hire Operator	79	80	81	82	87	87
Private Hire Vehicle	4,669	4,716	4,758	4,750	4,733	4,782
<b>Total</b>	10504	10570	10629	10617	10627	10699

- 2.2 The total number of licences increased by 280 over the year. During 2021/22, the total number of licences decreased by 60.

### 3. Driver Licence Appeals, Breaches and Panel Decisions

- 3.1 Before the Council grants any driver licence, applicants must demonstrate they are a 'fit and proper person' to hold that licence. The Council requires all drivers (new and renewals) to obtain an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) report which will contain information about any criminal records including motoring convictions.
- 3.2 If the applicants report potential breaches of Council Policy, then the application will normally be refused. If an applicant appeals this decision, the first step in the decision-making process is for the Council to review the original decision made during the application process at the One Stop Shop.
- 3.3 A review of the original decision is considered by a panel of officers who review the application data and hear representations from the applicants. The appeals panel have considered details of 83 cases relating to new applicants. Out of these cases, 52 were granted, 16 are pending, 1 was granted on appeal and 13 were refused due to convictions relating to violence and drugs.
- 3.4 The panel also considers reports and allegations of misconduct by existing licence holders. In 2022/23 the panel considered 56 cases which led to 33 revocations.
- 3.5 Typical reasons for revoking a current licence holder include the possession or supply of drugs, violence, sexual offences and driving offences including drink & drug driving.

### 4. Hackney Carriage & Private Hire Vehicle Checks

4.1 During 2022/23, the Taxi Licensing Unit carried out a total of 626 inspections – 601 of these were on private hire vehicles and 25 on hackney carriage vehicles. A total of 178 defect notices were issued which were mostly for bodywork condition.

## **5. Prosecutions**

5.1 The Taxi Licensing Unit has prosecuted 2 unlicensed operators using uninsured vehicles and there is currently one prosecution pending relating to unlicensed operating.

## **6. The Knowledge Test**

6.1 Council invigilated knowledge tests were reintroduced in August 2022. During 2022/23, 403 tests have been carried out with a pass rate of 49%.

## **7. Requests for Service**

7.1 The service dealt with 838 various requests for service, complaints or enquiries. The most common types of enquiries are as follows;

- new operator enquiries & checks
- exemption certificate applications & enquiries
- general requests for advice
- document irregularities
- unlicensed activity complaints
- driving style complaints
- complaints regarding driver conduct or appearance
- lost property enquiries
- vehicle advice requests
- overcharging complaints
- vehicle accident reports
- notification of convictions
- public body enquiries
- solicitor enquiries
- plate/livery enquiries

7.2 The total number of requests for service has decreased by 204 over 2022/23 totals.

## 8. One Stop Shop

### Vehicle Licences

	Private Hire Vehicles				Total Private Hire
	New	Renewal	Transfer	Variation (Vehicle Change)	
<b>Apr-22</b>	88	229	12	35	364
<b>May-22</b>	115	381	7	31	534
<b>Jun-22</b>	149	418	8	42	617
<b>Jul-22</b>	135	331	6	35	507
<b>Aug-22</b>	107	331	5	28	471
<b>Sep-22</b>	146	472	3	41	662
<b>Oct-22</b>	153	448	4	54	659
<b>Nov-22</b>	128	406	6	41	581
<b>Dec-22</b>	68	242	5	27	342
<b>Jan-23</b>	85	371	3	35	494
<b>Feb-23</b>	134	390	8	31	563
<b>Mar-23</b>	97	325	8	33	463
	1405	4344	75	433	6257

<b>Hackney Carriage Vehicles</b>					<b>Total</b>
<b>New</b>	<b>Renewal</b>	<b>Transfer</b>	<b>Variation (Vehicle Change)</b>	<b>Total Hackney Carriage</b>	
0	24	4	8	36	400
0	43	3	4	50	584
0	31	2	9	42	659
0	37	2	7	46	553
0	21	4	28	53	524
0	38	3	8	49	711
0	31	5	7	43	702
0	38	4	9	51	632
0	20	0	1	21	363
0	30	1	5	36	530
0	34	1	5	40	603
0	28	3	2	33	496
0	375	32	93	500	



## Driver Licences

	Private Hire		Hackney Carriage Driver		Total
	New	Renewal	New	Renewal	
<b>Apr-22</b>	34	366	1	14	415
<b>May-22</b>	47	416	5	28	496
<b>Jun-22</b>	70	193	3	14	280
<b>Jul-22</b>	89	169	1	10	269
<b>Aug-22</b>	112	155	1	7	275
<b>Sep-22</b>	25	166	0	12	203
<b>Oct-22</b>	68	143	0	9	220
<b>Nov-22</b>	88	153	3	11	255
<b>Dec-22</b>	63	171	0	10	244
<b>Jan-23</b>	83	168	2	10	263
<b>Feb-23</b>	99	153	1	6	259
<b>Mar-23</b>	247	186	4	11	448
	1025	2439	21	142	

8.1 **Vehicles.** The One Stop Shop (OSS) have continued to process all vehicle licence applications and renewals throughout the past year. This is all done electronically without the need to visit the OSS.

8.2 **Drivers.** Driver licences are now renewed following an appointment in the OSS. The OSS has also issued a total of 668 new driver licences during 2022/23.

## 9. Summary & the Year Ahead

9.1 Service provision will need to be reviewed to adapt to demands on the service whilst the introduction of an online booking system is in progress.

10 **Recommendation(s):**

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- (2) Request that similar reports be brought on an annual basis