

Report to:	Licensing and Regulatory Committee	Date of Meeting:	Monday 12 June 2024
Subject:	Taxi Licensing Annual Report 2023/24		
Report of:	Head of Highways and Public Protection	Wards Affected:	(All Wards);
Portfolio:			
Is this a Key Decision:	N	Included in Forward Plan:	No
Exempt / Confidential Report:	No		

Summary:

To report the progress of the Taxi Licensing service during 2023/24.

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:

Resource Implications (Financial, IT, Staffing and Assets):	
The cost of the service is wholly recovered from the ring-fenced Taxi Licensing Trade Account (Revenue Budget BD12).	
Legal Implications:	
Equality Implications: There are no equality implications	
Climate Emergency Implications:	
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: Ensure the safety of the travelling public.
Facilitate confident and resilient communities: Supporting independent travel of vulnerable adults and protection of children travelling to school
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 (FD7667/24) and the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer (LD5767/24) 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 applications processed during 2023/24;

Workloads processed by One Stop Shop staff in 2023/24

Vehicles:

New	1,401
Renewal	5,173
Transfer	89
Variation or Change	496
Total	7,159

Drivers:

New Drivers Licensed	597
<i>*New Drivers Licensed – after lapsing</i>	185
Renewals	2,823
Total	3,605

Knowledge Tests:

Tests offered	1,463
Tests booked	1,330
Failed to Attend	206
Failed test/Void	595
Passed test	529

2.2 On 1 April 2024, the total number of live licences was 11,190 compared to 10,717 on 1 April 2023.

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 53 cases relating to new applicants. Out of these cases, 21 were granted, 23 are pending 9 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 2023/24 the panel considered 56 cases which led to 35 revocations.
- 3.5 Typical reasons for revoking a current licence holder include the possession or supply of drugs, violence, sexual offences, driving offences including drink & drug driving and assistance dog refusal.

4. Hackney Carriage & Private Hire Vehicle Checks

- 4.1 During 2023/24, the Taxi Licensing Unit carried out a total of 676 inspections. A total of 235 advisory defect notices were issued which were mostly for bodywork condition. The team also issued a total of 186 stop notices in relation to 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. Requests for Service

- 6.1 The service dealt with 846 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

- 6.2 The total number of requests for service has increased by 8 over 2023/24 totals.

