

**Report to LICENSING COMMITTEE**

## **LICENSING UPDATE**

**Portfolio Holder:**

Councillor Taylor: Cabinet Member for Housing & Licensing

**Officer Contact:** Nasir Dad

**Report Author:** John Garforth

**29<sup>th</sup> October 2024**

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**Reason for Decision**

The reason for this report is to request that Members note the activities of the Licensing Team since April 2024.

**Recommendations**

Members are asked to note the report.

**LICENSING UPDATE**

**1 Background**

- 1.1 The Council, acting in its role as Licensing Authority carries out a arrange of statutory functions including taxi and private hire licensing, alcohol, entertainment and late night refreshment, gambling, and street trading.
- 1.2 This reports sets out the activities of the licensing team since April 2024 together with outlining the challenges and demands on the service.

**2 Alcohol, Entertainment and Late Night Refreshment**

- 2.1 The team continues to advise, issue, and ensure compliance with a range of premises licences issued under the Licensing Act 2003.
- 2.2 There has been one hearing since April 2024 as detailed below:
  - Kobe Ruger, The Greaves Building, Hartshead Street, Oldham OL4 5EE  
Application granted with amended conditions.
- 2.3 Officers continue to advise and respond to complaints about licensed premises and undertake inspections to ensure compliance with conditions.

**3 Taxi and Private Hire**

- 3.1 There has been a total of 906 new applications received for dual driver licences since April 2024.
- 3.2 The total number of licences now in force are detailed below with comparison figures from May 2023.

<b>Licence Type</b>	<b>October 2024</b>	<b>May 2023</b>
Dual drivers' licence	3088	1305
School contract drivers	86	95
Private hire vehicles	1756	1030
Private hire operators	90	38
Hackney carriage vehicles	85	85

- 3.3 As Members will see from the above figures, the significant increase in licensed drivers has placed an additional burden on Officers within the team. A recruitment exercise is underway to bolster the team with the additional Officers needed in order to meet demand, including extending opening hours of our service reception.
- 3.4 The additional vehicles being licensed has also meant an increase in testing capacity at our testing station at Moorhey Street is required. A third bay is currently being built and then extra test slots will be available for booking. In addition, a waiting room and CCTV viewing of the testing bay has been installed.
- 3.4 Officers are working towards the implementation of a new service database and front facing driver application and account system which we hope to deliver late 2025. This will improve efficiency and speed of processes and hopefully make it easier for service users to handle their applications.
- 3.5 Current statistics for vehicle tests since April 2024 are as follows:

Hackney Carriages	Pass = 49 (64%)	Fail = 28
Private Hire	Pass = 1098 (64%)	Fail = 627
Main reasons for failure	Brakes Suspension Tyres Condition of interior	
Missed tests.	140	

- 3.6 Since April 2024 there have been 36 hearings before the Drivers Panel. The breakdown of outcomes are detailed below.

Applications granted	Applications refused	Licences Suspended	Licences Revoked	NFA
4	21	3	7	1

- 3.7 In addition, there have been 4 delegated revocation decisions made by Officers for urgent matters.
- 3.8 One of the above delegated revocations followed a successful prosecution on 19<sup>th</sup> September 2024 of an unlicensed driver who was disqualified from driving by the court for 2 years and ordered to pay a fine and costs totaling £4671.

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3.8 In July 2024 a vehicle compliance operation was undertaken in partnership with Greater Manchester Police and VOSA. The results of that operation are outlined below:

Total vehicles checked	18
Hackney carriages checked	2
Private hire vehicles checked	16
Pass	5
Fail for minor defects	10
Failed and Suspended	3

4 **Options/Alternatives**

4.1 Not applicable.

5 **Consultation**

5.1 Not applicable.

6 **Financial Implications**

6.1 Not applicable

7 **Legal Implications**

7.1 Not applicable

8 **Appendices**

8.1 None