

Report to Licensing Committee

LICENSING UPDATE

Report of Executive Member for Housing & Licensing

Officer Contact: Nicola Lord

20 October 2026

Reason for Decision

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

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 range of statutory functions including taxi and private hire licensing, alcohol, entertainment and late-night refreshment, gambling, and street trading.

1.2 This report sets out the activities of the licensing team since April 2026 together with outlining the challenges and demands on the service.

2. Alcohol, Entertainment & 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 have been two hearings since April 2026 as detailed below:

Premises	Application	Outcome
Dessert Point, 793 Ashton Road	Grant of a premises licence WITHOUT alcohol	Granted with amended timings
Northern Roots, Kings Road	Grant of a premises licence WITH alcohol	Granted the application as applied for

2.3 Officers continue to advise and respond to complaints about licensed premises and undertake inspections to ensure compliance with conditions.

3. Taxi & Private Hire

3.1 There have been 725 new applications received for dual driver licences since April 2026.

3.2 The total number of current licences are detailed below with comparison figures from previous periods.

Licence Type	Oct '26	Feb '26	Oct '25	Feb '25	Oct '24	May '23
Dual Drivers	5,138	4,654	4,418	3,433	3,088	1,305
School Contract Drivers	16	73	73	79	86	95
Private Hire Vehicles	3,073	2,712	2,177	1,880	1,756	1,030
Private Hire Operators	157	115	115	93	90	38



Hackney Carriage Vehicles	85	85	85	85	85	85
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3.3 The Service continues to receive high levels of dual driver applications. A recently approved restructure is currently being implemented to increase the resource and resilience within the Service.

3.4 The rise in licensed drivers continues to lead to a rise in private hire vehicle applications. The Committee approved the requirement for mid-year tests to be carried out by any DVSA approved testing station, with first or annual tests being carried out at the Councils in-house testing depot, Moorhey Street.

3.5 The data on vehicle testing at Moorhey Street can be seen below.

Licence Type	April - Oct 2026	2025-2026	2024-2025	2023-2024	2022-2023
Hackney Carriage	14 pass 10 fail 58% pass rate	65 pass 51 fail 57% pass rate	103 pass 60 fail 63% pass rate	117 pass 61 fail 66% pass rate	115 pass 62 fail 65% pass rate
Private Hire	971 pass 983 fail 50% pass rate	1796 pass 1754 fail 53% pass rate	2101 pass 1439 fail 59% pass rate	1716 pass 958 fail 64% pass rate	911 pass 706 fail 56% pass rate

3.6 The breakdown of the reasons for failures, and the total number of fails in each category can be found in the table below. This covers 1 April 2026 to 5 October 2026.

Reason for Failure	Sum of Number of Fails
Obligatory rear lamps	257
Headlamp aim	252
Suspension	214
Tyre condition	206
Service brake condition	154
Doors	111
Plates affixed securely	103
Obligatory headlamps	97
Condition of vehicle	89
Obligatory front lamps	71



3.7 Since April 2026 there have been 36 hearings before the Drivers Panel. The breakdown of outcomes is detailed below.

Granted	Refused	Suspensions	Revocations	Immediate revocations	Written warning	No further action
7	8	7	0	9	4	1

3.8 In addition, there have been 10 delegated decisions made by Officers for urgent matters.

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