



Committee

Strategic Licensing Committee

Date and Time

7 October 2026
Public

Review of the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy 2027 to 2031

Cabinet Member:	Councillor Roger Evans – Portfolio Holder for Finance	
Lead Director:	Richard Philips Service Director - Legal & Governance (Monitoring Officer)	
Service Area:	Transactional Management and Licensing	
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Electoral Divisions Affected	All	
Key Decision?	Not Key Decision	
Cabinet Forward Plan	Not Applicable	
Report considered by	Strategic Licensing Committee 7 October 2026	

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. This report sets out the proposed Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy 2027 to 2031 (the Policy) for consideration following review of the existing policy, relevant legislation and statutory guidance, operational experience and consultation feedback. It seeks the Committee's endorsement of the proposed policy, subject to any agreed modifications, for onward consideration and final approval.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. The Committee considers all the responses submitted during the consultation period as set out in **Appendix A** and notes the officer's summary as set out in **Appendix B**.
- 2.2. The Committee agrees, subject to any necessary modifications, the proposed Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy 2027 to 2031 as set out at **Appendix C** to come into effect from 1 April 2027.

3. Background

- 3.1. The existing Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy came into effect on the 1 April 2023 and is due to expire on 31 March 2027. As a result, Officers sent notification of an informal consultation to the trade inviting submissions about possible amendments that Trade representatives would like to be included within the revised policy. This was sent out by email to the trade on 24 November 2025 and closed on 21 December 2025.
- 3.2. Submissions were received and officers considered the comments made along with the additional proposals.
- 3.3. The Policy was then revised taking into account the changes in guidance and legislation and in consideration of the officers' summary of the informal comments made by Trade representatives.
- 3.4. The revised policy was then formally consulted upon for a 12-week period from 6 April 2026 to the 28 June 2026.
- 3.5. A Taxi Forum was held on the 29 May 2026 to provide the trade with the opportunity to discuss the policy and any amendments they may be considering submitting as part of the consultation. Notes from the Taxi Forum can be seen in **Appendix A** at **Document 30**.
- 3.6. The consultation welcomed and encouraged all interested parties to provide feedback in relation to the content of the whole policy asking for any suggested improvements that could be made to the policy, which would support hackney carriage and private hire businesses.
- 3.7. In addition, there were two specific questions put to the trade representatives. The Trade were asked if they would;
 - support the mandating of the installation of CCTV systems in hackney carriage and private hire vehicles.
 - support mandating the availability of contactless payments in hackney carriage and private hire vehicles.
- 3.8. There were 1046 emails sent out to the trade and only 29 responses were received. Of those responses 10 supported the mandating of the installation of CCTV and 8

did not support it. 13 supported the mandating of contactless payments and 4 did not support it.

- 3.9. A few responses were received in relation to the Age and Emissions section of the Policy, including requests from trade representatives for additional time to licence vehicles. These representations have been carefully considered, particularly the financial challenges faced by drivers and proprietors when investing in replacement vehicles and seeking to secure a reasonable return on that investment. However, while the requests received in respect of vehicle age and emissions are acknowledged, it remains important that the Policy continues to support a progressive reduction in the adverse impact of vehicle emissions on the environment and on the health and wellbeing of our communities.

4. Summary of Main Proposals

- 4.1. The main proposal is to endorse the revised Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy 2027 to 2031, subject to any modifications agreed by the Committee, and to recommend that it progresses to Cabinet for final consideration, adoption and implementation. The Policy has been reviewed to ensure it reflects current legislation, Department for Transport guidance, operational experience and feedback received through informal and formal consultation with the licensed trade.

The revised policy;

- 4.2. Maintains a clear, transparent and up-to-date licensing framework to support consistent decision-making, proportionate enforcement and legal compliance when determining driver, vehicle and operator licences.
- 4.3. Strengthens safeguarding and public protection arrangements by retaining robust 'fit and proper person' criteria, enhanced checks, information sharing requirements and the use of national databases relating to refusals, suspensions and revocations.
- 4.4. Incorporates relevant statutory and best practice guidance, including the Department for Transport's Statutory Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Standards, best practice guidance and requirements arising from the Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles (Safeguarding and Road Safety) Act 2022.
- 4.5. Recognises the additional duties placed on drivers, operators and the Council under the Equality Act 2010, including the need to support passengers with disabilities, maintain designated wheelchair accessible vehicle arrangements and operate appropriate medical exemption processes.
- 4.6. Continues to support improvements in air quality and environmental outcomes through proportionate vehicle age and emissions standards, while recognising market availability, financial pressures and the specific challenges associated with wheelchair accessible vehicles.

- 4.7. Provides a policy basis that reduces the risk of inconsistent decisions, successful legal challenge, reputational harm and weakened safeguarding oversight after the current policy expires on 31 March 2027.
- 4.8 Considers the consultation responses received on CCTV, contactless payments, vehicle age and emissions standards, and balancing trade feedback with public safety, accessibility, affordability, environmental and community wellbeing considerations.

5. Alternative Options

- 5.1 The Committee could propose further amendments before the policy progresses or could decide not to endorse the policy. Further amendments would need to be assessed for legal compliance, public safety, equality, health and well-being, environmental and financial impacts. Not replacing the current policy would create uncertainty when it expires and would weaken the Council's ability to demonstrate current, transparent and consistent licensing standards.
- 5.2 The absence of a clear and legally robust policy framework, or any uncertainty about the Council's ability to rely on the Policy, may also limit the Council's ability to enforce licence conditions effectively. This could undermine the Council's capacity to secure compliance by drivers, vehicle proprietors and operators, weaken its ability to take timely and proportionate action where concerns arise, and consequently reduce the effectiveness of the licensing regime in safeguarding passengers, vulnerable people and the wider public.

6. Key risks and Opportunities

- 6.1. If the Council fails to prepare and publish such a policy the Council will be open to criticism; in particular from those parties whom the Council seeks to licence. Without a policy, officers and Members will find it extremely difficult to make appropriate and consistent licensing decisions and to take proportionate enforcement action. As a consequence, the Council will face significant difficulty in justifying the way it has reached licensing decisions and taken enforcement action.
- 6.2. This will result in the Council failing to adequately deliver its safeguarding responsibilities and would reduce its ability to directly, and in partnership with other agencies, tackle child sexual exploitation. Furthermore, the Council's ability to control overall compliance of the hackney carriage and private hire trade will be hampered and there is the increased risk of:
- successful appeals by applicants who have had their licences suspended or revoked;
 - service complaints to the Local Government Ombudsman;
 - judicial review; and
 - legal challenge to any criminal proceedings instituted by the Council.
- The reputation and professionalism of the Council would clearly be at risk.

- 6.3. Conversely, by preparing and publishing a policy, the Council demonstrates that it takes its hackney carriage and private hire licensing role seriously. It creates transparency for all stakeholders, recording the manner in which the Council intends to undertake its hackney carriage and private hire licensing responsibilities. Furthermore, it provides the Council with a basis for a robust defence to any challenges that may be encountered in respect of decisions made and enforcement action taken. It also demonstrates commitment to and compliance with the Regulators' Code.
- 6.4. The proposed policy is consistent with national guidance on hackney carriage and private hire licensing and is deemed to be best practice.
- 6.5. Whilst there is no legal duty specifically placed on the Council to consult with respect to this policy, it is good practice to do so and is in line with the Department for Transport's (DfT) 'Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Licensing: Best Practice Guidance' (November 2023).

Risk	Mitigation	Link to Strategic Risk
Inconsistent or legally vulnerable licensing decisions if the policy is not updated.	Adopt clear, current criteria supported by legislation, guidance, training and documented decision-making.	Legal, governance and reputational risk.
Safeguarding or public-safety harm caused by unsuitable licence holders.	Apply robust fit-and-proper tests, enhanced checks, information sharing and proportionate enforcement	Safeguarding and community safety.
Financial or operational pressure on the licensed trade arising from revised standards.	Use consultation evidence, proportionate implementation periods and clear guidance.	Economic and service-delivery risk.
Failure to meet accessibility duties or the needs of passengers with disabilities.	Retain statutory accessibility requirements, designated vehicle arrangements and exemption processes	Equality and legal risk.
Opportunity to improve air quality and encourage cleaner vehicles.	Maintain proportionate emissions and vehicle standards, taking account of market availability and wheelchair-accessible vehicle constraints.	Climate and public-health priorities.

7. Council Priorities

- 7.1. The proposed Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy 2027 to 2031 supports the Shropshire Council Corporate Plan 2026 to 2030 by contributing to the Council's overall aims of improving outcomes for people, communities, the local economy and the environment. In particular, the policy supports safer and healthier communities by strengthening safeguarding, public protection and road-safety standards; promotes equality, accessibility and social inclusion through

duties relating to passengers with disabilities and wheelchair accessible vehicles; supports a fair and sustainable local economy by providing a clear, proportionate and transparent regulatory framework for the licensed trade; and contributes to environmental objectives by encouraging improvements in vehicle emissions and air quality.

- 7.2. The policy is therefore aligned to the Corporate Plan priorities as follows: healthy people, by safeguarding children, young people, adults with care and support needs and other vulnerable passengers; healthy communities, by supporting safe, accessible and reliable local transport services across Shropshire; a healthy economy, by giving licence holders, applicants and operators a consistent framework within which to operate and plan; and a healthy environment, by maintaining proportionate standards that support cleaner vehicles and reduced emissions while recognising the practical and financial pressures affecting the trade.

8. Financial Implications

- 8.1. The financial implications associated with the recommendation are limited to the employee costs associated with undertaking the consultation exercise and any costs of publishing the revised Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy. These costs are recovered through the licensing fees.

9. Legal and HR implications

- 9.1. The Council must discharge its hackney carriage and private hire licensing functions in accordance with the Town Police Clauses Act 1847, the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, the Equality Act 2010, the Human Rights Act 1998, the Regulators' Code and other relevant legislation and guidance. A clear policy assists lawful, consistent and proportionate decisions while allowing each case to be considered on its merits.

10. Electoral Division Implications

- 10.1. This policy has countywide application and does not give rise to implications limited to a particular electoral division.

11. Health, Social (including "Child Friendly Shropshire") and Economic Implications

- 11.1. The Policy specifically takes account of the Council's safeguarding responsibilities, particularly in relation to children and adults (including those with care and support needs). The Policy significantly increases the criteria that must be satisfied before a person will be deemed a 'fit and proper person' to drive a hackney carriage or private hire vehicle.
- 11.2. Through agencies working together and sharing information, we aim to identify and prevent sexual exploitation, modern slavery and human trafficking to protect children, young people and adults (including those with care and support needs)

and disrupt related activities in order to take action under relevant licensing legislation and, where appropriate, to prosecute perpetrators of abuse.

- 11.3. The criteria continue to be set against the findings of the Independent Enquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Rotherham, Oldham and Newcastle-upon-Tyne, the Independent Inquiry into Telford Child Sexual Exploitation, National Audit on Group-Based Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, and the Southport Public Inquiry, and considers the wider implications of modern slavery, trafficking and exploitation.
- 11.4. The Department for Transport (DfT) developed the Statutory Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Standards¹. The standards introduced a set of core minimum standards to improve regulation of the taxi and private hire vehicle sector. The revised policy includes the requirements as set out in the standards.
- 11.5. The Policy significantly increases the criteria that must be satisfied before a person will be deemed a 'fit and proper person'. Drivers of hackney carriage or private hire vehicles, private hire operators and those who hold a vehicle licence as a vehicle proprietor will continue to be required to meet the robust criteria that was implemented in 2023. This criteria has been further enhanced by the inclusion of the standards which will be applied to each application.
- 11.6. The DfT Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles (Safeguarding and Road Safety) Act 2022². This Act and the subsequent guidance³ are focused on supporting compliance and ensuring that checks are made with other Local Authorities regarding an applicant's previous licensing history and the requirement for Licensing Authorities to record previous refusals, suspensions and revocations on a central database. This allows additional enquiries to be made with the Local Authority about the circumstances surrounding the refusal, suspension or revocation before a determination is made on an application. The new duties came into effect on 31 May 2022 and the revised policy has incorporated the requirements.
- 11.7. The Equality Act 2010 (the Act) and the DfT Access for wheelchair users to Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles – Statutory Guidance published on the 20 June 2022 has put significant additional responsibilities on operators and drivers of passengers with disabilities to ensure that the passengers needs are fully supported throughout their journey. Furthermore, there are additional requirements for the Council to maintain a list of designated wheelchair accessible vehicles and to have a process for which drivers can apply for a medical exemption from the duties imposed by the Act.

12. Equality and Diversity Implications

- 12.1. An Equality, Social Inclusion and Health Impact Assessment (ESHIA) has been undertaken, utilising evidence already held by the service area and the results of

¹ Department for Transport, Statutory Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Standards July 2020 Statutory & Best Practice Guidance for taxi and PHV licensing authorities (publishing.service.gov.uk)

² Department for Transport Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles (Safeguarding and Road Safety) Act 2022 [Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles \(Safeguarding and Road Safety\) Act 2022 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2022/12/section/1)

³ Department for Transport Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles (Safeguarding and Road Safety) Act 2022, Statutory Guidance [Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles \(Safeguarding and Road Safety\) Act 2022 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/taxis-and-private-hire-vehicles-safeguarding-and-road-safety-act-2022-statutory-guidance)

the public consultations, as well as drawing upon previous impact assessments in regard to the proposed Policy.

- 12.2. The Council has utilised the ESHIA in order to consider children and young people who are looked after by Shropshire Council and the families of children in need, as well as young people leaving care, when considering the Protected Characteristic grouping of 'Age', and with respect to adults with care and support needs, e.g. adults with learning disabilities, when considering the Protected Characteristic grouping of 'Disability'.
- 12.3. For all the nine Protected Characteristic groupings, the impact is rated as low to medium positive; notably, with respect to 'age', 'disability', and 'sex', the impact is anticipated as 'medium positive'. The impact is also rated as 'medium positive' for people for whom there are safeguarding concerns, given the greater ability of the Council to fully demonstrate that it robustly tackles exploitation, abuse, modern slavery and human trafficking of children and vulnerable adults, and the likely improvements overall to public safety under the proposed changes, bringing particular benefits for vulnerable households. As such, this relates to the additional local groupings we seek to think about in Shropshire in regard to the circumstances in which they find themselves. These are 'social inclusion', 'carers' and 'Young People Leaving Care. For our other local grouping of 'Veterans and Serving Members of the Armed Forces and their Families, for whom we seek to give due regard under armed forces legislation, the impact is considered to be low to medium positive.
- 12.4. Note, however, that except for 'age', 'disability', and 'sex', the impact is likely to be neutral – neither positive nor negative – with no anticipated need to take actions to mitigate or enhance the impact. The full ESHIA document can be found at **Appendix D**.
- 12.5. The proposed policy aims to ensure that the human rights of applicants, licence holders and the public who use hackney carriages and private hire services are protected. However, it is recognised that it is a fine balance to ensure that this is achieved for all parties involved. Nevertheless, the policy has been written to assist the Council to comply with the Human Rights Act 1998 and to avoid the risk of adverse Human Rights Act implications as a result of undertaking the hackney carriage and private hire licensing function.

13. Climate Change, Biodiversity and Environmental Implications

- 13.1. Nationally, there continues to be a significant drive to improve air quality and it is acknowledged that motor vehicle emissions continue to be the primary cause of poor air quality and that this impacts on human health and the environment. The Council needs to continue to promote measures that improve air quality including reducing the emissions from Hackney Carriages and Private Hire Vehicles.
- 13.2. Vehicle emissions affect air quality, health and the environment. The policy provides an opportunity to encourage cleaner vehicles through proportionate age and emissions standards while recognising vehicle availability, cost and the particular market constraints affecting wheelchair-accessible vehicles.

- 13.3. The Council now has the opportunity to continue to lead the local community and further reduce the impact that vehicle emissions have on the local environment and human health by continuing to support stringent standards that reduce emissions from Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicles. The Council's Director of Public Health fully supports actions that improve air quality as air quality is an indicator in the Public Health Outcomes Framework.
- 13.4. Whilst recognising the importance of continuing to reduce harmful emissions from Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicles and in response to requests from trade representatives to allow for an extension to the age requirements of cleaner less polluting vehicles. The proposed Policy has been amended and consideration continues to be made to ensure that the revisions to the age requirements of the Policy continues to have a positive effect of further reducing levels of air pollution.
- 13.5. It should be noted that on the 1 April 2021 the Council required all hackney carriage vehicles to be wheelchair accessible and due to the nature of the type of vehicles they are, there are a limited number of less polluting vehicles available. Therefore, considering feedback from the trade, limited availability and production lead times for electric wheelchair accessible vehicles a separate section of the policy has been included to allow for an extended time for proprietors to replace their vehicles.

14. Background Papers

1. Town Police Clauses Act 1847.
2. Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976.
3. Equality Act 2010.
4. Human Rights Act 1998.
5. Legislative and Regulatory Reform Act 2006 and the Regulators' Code.
6. Department for Transport statutory standards and current best-practice guidance for taxi and private hire vehicle licensing authorities.
7. Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles (Safeguarding and Road Safety) Act 2022 and associated statutory guidance.
8. National Register of Taxi Licence Revocations, Refusals and Suspensions arrangements.
9. Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy 2023 to 2027.
10. Shropshire Council Corporate Plan 2026 to 2030.
11. Department for Transport, Statutory Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Standards July 2020 Statutory & Best Practice Guidance for taxi and PHV licensing authorities (publishing.service.gov.uk)
- 12.¹ Department for Transport Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles (Safeguarding and Road Safety) Act 2022 [Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles \(Safeguarding and Road Safety\) Act 2022 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2022/12/contents)
- 13.¹ Department for Transport Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles (Safeguarding and Road Safety) Act 2022, Statutory Guidance [Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles \(Safeguarding and Road Safety\) Act 2022 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/taxis-and-private-hire-vehicles-safeguarding-and-road-safety-act-2022)
14. Department for Transport's (DfT) 'Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Licensing: Best Practice Guidance' (November 2023) [Taxi and private hire vehicle licensing best practice guidance for licensing authorities in England - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/taxi-and-private-hire-vehicle-licensing-best-practice-guidance-for-licensing-authorities-in-england)

15. Independent Enquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Rotherham 1997 – 2013 [Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Rotherham \(1997 - 2013\) – Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council](#)
16. Independent Inquiry into Telford Child Sexual Exploitation [Telford & Wrekin Council | Independent Inquiry into Telford Child Sexual Exploitation \(IITCSE\)](#)
17. National Audit on Group-Based Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse [child sexual exploitation and abuse](#)
18. The Southport Public Inquiry [The Southport Inquiry: Phase 1 report - GOV.UK](#)
19. Joint Serious Case Review Concerning Sexual Exploitation of Children and Adults with Needs for Care and Support in Newcastle-upon-Tyne [Final JSCR Report 160218 PW.PDF](#)
20. Independent Review into Historic Child Sexual Exploitation – Oldham [Read the Independent Review into Historic Child Sexual Exploitation | Read the Independent Review into Historic Child Sexual Exploitation | Oldham Council](#)

15. Appendices

Appendix A – Consultation Responses

Appendix B – Officer Analysis of Consultation Responses

Appendix C – Proposed Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy 2027 to 2031

Appendix D – Equality, Social Inclusion and Health Impact Assessment