

BOURNEMOUTH, CHRISTCHURCH AND POOLE COUNCIL
LICENSING COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Meeting held on 22 October 2025 at 10.15 am

Present:-

Cllr D A Flagg – Chairman

Cllr A Keddie – Vice-Chairman

Present: Cllr A Chapmanlaw, Cllr P Hilliard, Cllr M Howell, Cllr J Richardson
and Cllr L Williams

Cllr Farquhar – Attended via MS Teams

16. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A Filer, C Matthews and P Sidaway.

17. Substitute Members

There were no substitute members.

18. Declarations of Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

19. Public Issues

There were no public questions, statements, or petitions for this meeting.

20. Review of the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Driver, Vehicle and Operator Policies

The Licensing and Trading Standards Manger presented a report, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and a copy of which appears as Appendix A to these Minutes in the Minute Book.

The Committee was informed that the report outlined updated policy proposals for BCP Council's taxi and private hire licensing, incorporating feedback from a public consultation held between 3 March and 28 April 2025.

The existing policies, adopted in June 2021 following the formation of BCP Council, covered three areas:

- Driver licensing
- Vehicle licensing

- Operator licensing

Since their adoption, there had been updates to statutory standards, best practice guidance from the Department for Transport, and legislative changes. In line with statutory requirements, licensing policies should be reviewed every five years.

The revised policy aimed to:

- Improve public safety
- Protect vulnerable individuals
- Ensure vehicle accessibility
- Promote environmental sustainability
- Support the local economy

The updated policies provided a clear framework to guide fair, transparent, and consistent decision-making by officers and elected members.

Results from the public consultation were detailed in the Research and Consultation Team Report (dated 25 June) and included as Appendix 6 to the Report.

The Committee noted public concerns about the increasing presence of non-BCP Council licensed vehicles operating within the BCP area. The Deregulation Act 2015, allowed private hire operators to subcontract bookings to operators licensed in other local authority areas, whereas previously, subcontracting was restricted to within the same licensing area. The Institute of Licensing (IoL) was advocating for legislative changes to restrict cross-border hiring but no new legislation had been introduced to address this issue. Members of the public could report complaints concerning cross-border vehicles online via the BCP Council's complaint system.

Driver Policy Feedback

Hackney Carriage Licence Quantity Restrictions:

The Committee was asked to consider removing the restriction on the number of new Hackney Carriage licences in the Bournemouth and Poole areas. The Department for Transport's best practice guidance (Nov 2023) advised against imposing quantity limits, recommending regular reviews if restrictions were in place.

It was noted that:

- Removing the restriction would align BCP Council with national best practice.
- Existing licences remained unallocated, suggesting no negative impact from lifting the cap.

- Cost savings from no longer needing unmet needs surveys would be reflected in annual licence fees.

RESOLVED that the Licensing Committee agree that quantity restrictions should not be imposed, allowing anyone who meets the criteria to apply for a Hackney Carriage licence.

Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle (WAV) Requirement:

The Committee was asked to consider whether to remove the requirement for all new Hackney Carriage vehicles to be wheelchair accessible, so that any approved vehicle could be licensed as a Hackney Carriage.

It was noted that:

- Public feedback highlighted the importance of equitable access and concerns about vehicle availability.
- Although WAVs were more expensive to maintain, the policy was amended to support affordability:
 - WAVs must be Euro 6 compliant
 - Must have no more than 100,000 miles, compared to the standard 60,000 miles for non-WAVs
- Nationally, wheelchair users represented 2% of the population but made twice as many licensed vehicle trips.
- Maintaining WAV availability would improve transport accessibility, independence, and quality of life for disabled passengers.

RESOLVED that the Licensing Committee agreed to retain the requirement that all new Hackney Carriage vehicles must be wheelchair accessible.

Minimum WAV Requirements for Operators:

The Committee was asked to consider whether Operators (who take pre-bookings for journeys) should have a minimum number of WAVs in their fleet:

It was noted that:

- Most large operators already included WAVs.
- Vehicles used for contract work had to be wheelchair accessible.
- Drivers not undertaking contract work were not required to have WAVs.
- Enforcement of a minimum number of WAVs would be challenging.
- There had been a low level of complaints regarding a lack of WAVs.
- The topic would be discussed at a future trade meeting, as suggested by Taxi Trade representative, Mr David Lane.

RESOLVED that the Licensing Committee would not change the policy and there would be no requirement for Operators to have a minimum number of Wavs in their fleet.

The Licensing and Trading standards Manager then took the Committee through the recommended changes to the Drivers Policy, Vehicle Policy and Operators Policy, which were highlighted in bold. It was noted that there was no change to the Operators policy following consultation feedback, except for the way in which applications for app-based companies could apply.

Members considered the revised draft policy proposals, having regard to the consultation responses and feedback, and each proposal was accepted.

RESOLVED that the Licensing Committee accept the draft policy proposals, including those detailed above, and that a final version of the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Driver, Vehicle and Operator Policies for adoption by Full Council on 9 December 2025.

21. Forward Plan

The Licensing and Trading Standards Manager took members through the Committee's Forward Plan, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and a copy of which appears as Appendix 'B' to these Minutes in the Minute Book.

The following updates were provided:

- Review of Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Driver Vehicle and Operator Policies – The policies had been reviewed and approved by the Licensing Committee and would go to full Council for adoption on 9 December 2025. This item could now be removed from the Forward Plan.
- The Pleasure Boats and Boatpersons Licensing Policy - Following informal consultation with stakeholders, a revised draft policy would now be considered by the Licensing Committee on 11 December 2025. Public consultation would commence in 2026.
- Review of Statement of Licensing Principles - Gambling Act 2005 – No guidance from the Gambling Commission had been received so this had not progressed. It was highlighted that a full review of the policy was due in 2027 and as a 'light touch' policy review had already taken place this year the Licensing and Trading Standards Manager requested that this item be removed from the Forward Plan until such time that it was ready to be brought forward in 2027.
- Review of Licensing Fees – A review of the Council's licensing fees would be considered by the Licensing Committee on 11 December and would need to go out to public consultation.

Committee Briefings and Training Sessions 2025

Chair training for current and prospective chairs of Licensing Sub-Committees would take place after the close of Licensing Committee on 11 December 2025.

A cumulative impact zone briefing would take place after the close of Licensing Committee on 12 March 2026.

Members of the Committee were asked to contact the Clerk should they have any future training requirements or areas which they would like more information on, and this would be scheduled to take place following the end of a future meeting.

RESOLVED that the Forward Plan be approved with the following amendments:

- I. **Review of Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Driver Vehicle and Operator Policies to be removed as completed; and**
- II. **Review of Statement of Licensing Principles – Gambling Act 2005 be removed from the Forward Plan and be brought back for consideration in 2027 when the next full review was due.**

The meeting ended at 11.25 am

CHAIRMAN