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BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE LICENSING COMMITTEE

MONDAY 21ST JULY 2025

AT 6.00 P.M.

PARKSIDE SUITE, PARKSIDE, MARKET STREET, BROMSGROVE,
WORCESTERSHIRE, B61 8DA

MEMBERS: Councillors J. Clarke, A. M. Dale, J. Elledge,
D. J. A. Forsythe, B. Kumar, D. Hopkins, C.A. Hotham,
R. J. Hunter, P. M. McDonald, B. McEldowney,
S. A. Robinson, K. Taylor and P. J. Whittaker

AGENDA

1. Election of Chairman
2. Election of Vice-Chairman
3. To receive apologies for absence and notification of substitutes
4. Declarations of Interest

To invite Councillors to declare any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests or Other Disclosable Interests they may have in items on the agenda, and to confirm the nature of those interests.

5. To confirm the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting of the Licensing Committee held on 24th March 2025 (Pages 7 - 16)
6. Review of Mandating CCTV in Taxis (Pages 17 - 56)
7. Deregulation Act 2015 and its effect on Taxi and Private Hire Licensing (Pages 57 - 66)
8. Licensing Committee Work Programme (Pages 67 - 68)
9. To consider any other business, details of which have been notified to the Head of Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services prior to the commencement of the meeting and which the Chairman, by reason of special circumstances, considers to be of so urgent a nature that it cannot wait until the next meeting.
10. To consider, and if considered appropriate, to pass the following resolution to exclude the public from the meeting during the consideration of items of business containing exempt information:-

RESOLVED: that under Section 100 I of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, the public be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part I of Schedule 12A to the Act, as amended, the relevant paragraph of that part, in each case, being as set out below, and that it is in the public interest to do so:-

<u>Item No.</u>	<u>Paragraph</u>	
11	5	"

11. Any Enforcements / Appeals Updates

J. Leach
Chief Executive

Parkside
Market Street
BROMSGROVE
Worcestershire
B61 8DA
11th July 2025

**If you have any queries on this Agenda please contact
Pauline Ross
Democratic Services Officer**

**Parkside, Market Street, Bromsgrove, B61 8DA
Tel: 01527 881406
Email: p.ross@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk**

**If you have any questions regarding the agenda or attached papers,
please do not hesitate to contact the officer named above.**

Notes:

**Although this is a public meeting, there are circumstances when the
Committee might have to move into closed session to consider exempt
or confidential information. For agenda items that are exempt, the
public are excluded from the meeting.**



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BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE LICENSING COMMITTEE

MONDAY 24TH MARCH 2025, AT 6.00 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillors J. Elledge (Chairman), J. Clarke, A. M. Dale, D. J. A. Forsythe, D. Hopkins, B. Kumar, P. M. McDonald, B. McEldowney (substituting for Councillor C. A. Hotham), D. J. Nicholl (substituting for Councillor S. M. Evans), and S. R. Peters

Officers: Mr. M. Howarth, Ms. M. James and Mrs. P. Ross

23/24

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors H. J. Jones, R. E. Lambert, S. A. Robinson, S. M. Evans with Councillor D. J. Nicholl substituting and C. A. Hotham with Councillor B. M. McEldowney substituting.

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DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

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MINUTES

The minutes of the Licensing Committee meeting held on 11th November 2024 were submitted.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Licensing Committee meeting held 11th November 2024, be approved as a correct record.

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PRIMATE KEEPER LICENSING

The Interim Principal Licensing Officer, Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) presented a report on the Primate Keeper Licensing; and in doing so informed the Committee that the Animal Welfare (Primate Licences) (England) Regulations 2024 were made in March 2024 and were due to take effect from 6 April 2025. The regulations introduced a new licensing regime for those that kept primates in England.

The Animal Welfare (Primate Licences) (England) Regulations 2024 was due to come into force in two phases on 6 April 2025 and 6 April 2026. Giving keepers of primates 12 months to get the required licence.

Under these regulations, the Council would be responsible for considering and determining applications for licences as well as undertaking compliance and enforcement activities.

The RSPCA estimated that there were up to 5000 primates that were owned privately in Britain. The most commonly kept species were believed to be common marmosets, tamarins and squirrel monkeys.

Primates were highly intelligent, long-lived animals who formed intricate social relationships with each other and experienced emotions, and suffered in a similar way to humans. Meeting the complex physical and behavioural needs of these wild animals in captivity was incredibly difficult and even modern zoos and research facilities, with all of their resources and expertise, were still trying to overcome serious welfare problems.

Some of the consistent areas of concern for primates kept as pets that could cause serious suffering were:

- Social isolation
- Early weaning
- Cramped and inappropriate housing
- Poor diet

Animal welfare organisations, including the RSPCA and Born Free had campaigned for over 20 years to end the keeping of primates as pets.

At the 2019 general election, the Conservative, Labour and Liberal Democrat manifestos all contained commitments to ban the keeping of primates as pets.

Following the Conservative victory at the 2019 general election, a call for evidence was undertaken in which 98.7% of respondents expressed support for a ban on keeping, breeding, acquiring, gifting, selling or otherwise transferring primates, apart from persons licensed to keep primates to zoo-level standards.

Measures to end the keeping of primates as pets was then included in the DEFRA “Action Plan for Animal Welfare” and formed part of the Animal Welfare (Kept Animals) Bill laid before Parliament. However the government took the decision in May 2023 to drop this bill amid concerns about “scope-creep.” The government announced that they would instead bring forward measures contained in the bill individually during the remainder of the Parliament.

In June 2023, DEFRA consulted again on making regulations under section 13 of the Animal Welfare Act 2006 to introduce a licensing regime and high standards of care and welfare for primates kept as pets.

On 5 March 2024, the Animal Welfare (Primate Licences) (England)

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Regulations 2024 were made under section 13 of the Animal Welfare Act 2006. This was the same primary legislation under which licensing regimes had previously been implemented for those involved in:

- Selling animals as pets
- Providing or arranging for the provision of boarding for cats or dogs
- Hiring out horses
- Breeding dogs
- Keeping or training animals for exhibition

It would then become an offence to keep a primate in England without a licence from 6 April 2026. The only exemptions to the requirement to hold a licence would be where the primates concerned were being kept in a licensed zoo or a place specified in a licence under section 2C of the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986.

Applications for licences could be made from 6 April 2025 onwards. The licensing authority for the purposes of the regulations was the local authority in whose area the premises at which a primate was kept or was to be kept were situated.

On receipt of an application for a licence, the local authority would be required to arrange for a suitable person to inspect the premises specified in the application to determine whether the licence conditions were likely to be met if the application were to be granted.

The licence conditions that must be met were set out in Schedule 1 of the regulations and would be supported by detailed guidance that would be given by the Secretary of State in accordance with regulation 20. The conditions would set high care and welfare standards similar to those that were required to be met when primates were kept in licensed zoos.

The regulations also contained provisions relating to inspections and enforcement. A local authority who had granted a primate licence may, during the licence period, arrange for a suitable person to inspect the premises specified in the licence to determine whether the licence conditions were being met and must do so at least once in that period unless the licence was granted for a period of less than one year.

It would be an offence for a licence holder to fail to comply with a licence condition. The offence carried a penalty of an unlimited fine. Local authorities would also have the power to serve a 'rectification notice' as an alternative to prosecuting a licence holder who failed to comply with a licence condition.

A rectification notice must:

- state that the local authority considered that the holder of the licence was failing to meet a licence condition, and why;
- specify the steps that the local authority considered that the holder of the licence needed to take to comply with the licence condition;
- specify a period not exceeding two years in which those steps were to

be taken (“the rectification period”).

Where a rectification notice was given, the local authority could not bring proceedings for non-compliance with any of the licence conditions identified in the notice before the end of the rectification period and if the required steps were taken during the rectification period, no proceedings could be brought subsequently for that non-compliance. The local authority may extend the rectification period, and may do so more than once, so long as the rectification period as extended did not exceed two years.

A local authority who had granted a primate licence may also revoke or vary the licence if the local authority was satisfied that the holder of the licence had failed to:

- comply with a licence condition;
- allow access for an inspection;
- pay a fee charged; or
- take the steps specified in the rectification notice.

This reference to varying a primate licence means varying it by:

- reducing the number of any primates of any species that was authorised to be kept under the licence; or
- removing any species of primate specified in the licence

Officers were currently preparing for the implementation of the regulations. A dedicated webpage had been created on the Council's website to provide information about the new licensing requirements. The webpage would continue to be developed as further information became available. The implementation of the licensing regime would also be publicised with the help of the Council's Communications Team.

An application form was currently being developed and proposed fees had been calculated as follows:

Application for the grant of a licence	£366.00
Application for renewal of a licence	£300.00
Application for variation of a licence	£267.00
Inspections fees	£182.00

Back-office systems were also in the process of being updated to enable applications to be logged and processed and to enable licences to be issued.

Officers were also working to try and gather information and intelligence from relevant professionals and the public in order to try and identify any primates that were being kept in the Council's area and those keepers who needed to apply for a licence.

Members' attention was drawn to the Recommendations, as detailed on page 19 of the main agenda pack.

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In response to questions from Members, the Council's Legal Advisor referred to page 23 of the main agenda pack, as follows:-

'The Secretary of State may require a local authority to provide any of the following information to the Secretary of State:

- the number of primate licences in force in the authority's area;
- the number of primates by species in the authority's area kept under primate licences;
- the level of fees charged by the authority under the regulations;
- any other information relating to the discharge of the authority's functions under the regulations that the Secretary of State may reasonably require.

The Secretary of State may require any relevant information is provided within such period as they may reasonably require, which must be at least a period of one month from the date on which the information was requested.'

In response to a further query, the Interim Principal Licensing Officer clarified that dependent on whether a 1 year, 2 year or 3 year licence was applied for, that a higher level of requirement would be needed for licences issued for a period longer than one year.

The Interim Principal Licensing Officer, explained that she was not aware of any National Publicity Campaign on Primate Keeper Licensing. As detailed in the report, the RSPCA estimated that there were up to 5,000 primates owned privately in Britain. The number of primates kept in Worcestershire was unknown, however, WRS officers would use information gathered and intelligence.

WRS Licensing officers were fully trained under the Animal Welfare Act 2006, however, should the Guidance give responsibility to Licensing officers, then the Interim Principal Licensing officer would check if officers needed to undergo additional training and any potential costs involved.

Officers responded to questions on:-

- Recovery of costs via licence fees if an animal licensing specialist was required.
- How the proposed licence fees were calculated.
- Noise nuisance from primates.
- Tracking and monitoring primates being sold, especially being sold illegally.

Members were further informed that WRS officers would liaise with the Council's Communications Team with regard to getting the message out on the new licencing regime for primate keepers.

The Interim Principal Licensing Officer further explained that WRS were

Often asked by Central Government for data on premises, gambling and taxi licences. However, officers were unsure if data on primate licensing would be requested or shared centrally. Furthermore, the Licensing Authority would not be responsible for removing primate, the primate if removed, would be moved to a location that met the required statutory guidance.

Officers would provide guidance and educate people seeking compliance to keep primates, by giving assistance to people to ensure that they were complaint. With regard to prosecution, as detailed in the report, a rectification notice would initially be given requiring steps to be taken to comply with a licence.

Members questioned what would happen should a licence not be issued or Revoked, who would be responsible for the removal of any primates. The Interim Principal Licensing Officer stated that until the guidance was released this question could not be answered. It could be the Local Authority working in conjunction with animal specialists or other agencies responsibility such as the RSPCA.

RESOLVED that the contents of the report and the implications of the Animal Welfare (Primate Licences) (England) Regulations 2024 on the Council, be noted.

RECOMMENDATION that the fees applicable to Primate Keeper Licences be set, as follows:-

Application for the grant of a licence	£366.00
Application for renewal of a licence	£300.00
Application for variation of a licence	£267.00
Inspections fees	£182.00

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MANDATORY SAFEGUARDING TRAINING FOR LICENSED HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE DRIVERS - RESPONSES RECEIVED

The Interim Principal Licensing Officer and the Councils' Legal Advisor both drew Members' attention to an amendment to the date shown in the recommendation as follows:-

'That with effect from 1st July 2025 each time a licence holder renews their licence they must undertake safeguarding training delivered by the Council's approved training provider prior to submitting their renewal application'.

Following on from the Licensing Committee meeting held on 22nd July 2024, whereby Members had approved that a 12 week consultation be undertaken, with relevant stakeholders and the public on whether to introduce a requirement, that all drivers who held a licence issued by the Council authorising them to drive hackney carriage and / or private hire vehicles would have to undertake mandatory safeguarding awareness training before renewing their licences.

Members were now being asked to consider the responses received to that consultation.

The Interim Principal Licensing Officer, Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) informed Members that consultation on the two proposed policy amendments had taken place, and that it comprised of a survey which was made available to complete online via the Council's website and was promoted by the Council's Communications Team, across a range of channels.

Information on the consultation, along with details on how to respond were sent directly to:-

- Bromsgrove District Council licensed drivers, vehicle proprietors and private hire operators
- National Private Hire and Taxi Association
- Licensed Private Hire Car Association
- West Mercia Police
- Safer Roads Partnership
- West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner
- Worcestershire County Council - Relevant contacts at Worcestershire County Council, including those responsible for safeguarding children and adults and arranging home to school transport
- Relevant interest groups, including those that represent people with disabilities and the elderly
- Relevant local business groups
- District, Town and Parish Councillors

Members were further informed that in total 22 responses had been received to the online questionnaire. Of the 22 respondents, 12 were holders of a taxi/private hire driver licence, 1 response was received from a user of hackney carriage and private hire vehicles, 5 were from local councillors. 4 responses had been received from other independent responses from external bodies which included responses from West Mercia Police, the Crime Commissioner and a Police Licensing Officer.

In response to question 3, 40.9% of respondents indicated that they agreed with the Councils proposal to introduce mandatory safeguarding awareness training for all existing hackney carriage and private hire drivers as a requirement for renewing their licence. 54.6% disagreed.

There were 11 detailed responses received in relation to making the training mandatory, with seven of the respondents opposed to the implementation of Safeguarding Refresher Training. Four of the eleven respondents welcomed the proposal believing it offered protection to transport users. The majority of concerns raised were around the training having already been received by the drivers, albeit many years ago. The comments for the proposal had taken into consideration that

taxi drivers were our eyes and ears and dealt with the most vulnerable in our society. Therefore, knowing what to do in various situations came with many benefits.

In summary, the consultation results from those who had expanded on their responses, highlighted a mixed reaction to the introduction of safeguarding awareness refresher training for all existing licence holders from 1 April 2025.

When asked directly should the proposed refresher training be implemented, 40.9% were in favour; 45.5% opposed; and 13.6% had no firm opinion.

Officers were aware that some drivers would have undertaken safeguarding training previously and that the proposed 3-yearly update would reflect changes in guidance and legislation. The cost of the updated provision to supply these important updates would be kept to a minimum, improving standards for our drivers, service users and the Council.

The cost of this mandatory safeguarding training was £20.00 per applicant and would cover the 3-year licensing period. This was considered very good value, and therefore any consideration of the Council subsidising the cost of this training had been discounted. This also created a consistent approach to applying this policy to all drivers.

In response to questions from Members the Interim Principal Licensing Officer commented that yes there was a risk that licensed drivers who were not in favour of having to undertake safeguarding refresher training could apply for a license with another authority. Wolverhampton City Council (WCC) required drivers to undergo safeguarding training. The Interim Principal Licensing Officer agreed to find out if WCC required licensed drivers to undergo safeguarding refresher training.

The Council's Legal Advisor further commented that safeguarding refresher training reminded licensed drivers of their responsibility for safeguarding their passengers, especially those who were vulnerable.

Bromsgrove District Council maintained exceptionally high standards and prided themselves of this.

Member stated that they welcomed the safeguarding refresher training.

In response to further questions the Interim Principal Licensing Officer explained that the safeguarding refresher training would be 'in person' training for potentially 2 hours. Drivers would be able to attend any scheduled training session.

The Interim Principal Licensing Officer further undertook to find out the number of licensed drivers that would have to undertake the

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safeguarding refresher training and agreed to provide Licensing Committee Members with this information.

As detailed in the preamble above, the Chairman took the opportunity to remind Members of the amended date in the recommendation, from 1st April to 1st July 2025.

RESOLVED that

- a) an amendment to the existing Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Driver Licensing Policy, as set out below, be approved:

‘That with effect from 1st July 2025 each time a licence holder renews their licence they must undertake safeguarding training delivered by the Council’s approved training provider prior to submitting their renewal application’.

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LICENSING COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME - MARCH 2025

The Committee considered the Work Programme for 2024/2025.

RESOLVED that the Licensing Committee Work Programme for 2024/2025, be noted.

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TO CONSIDER ANY OTHER BUSINESS, DETAILS OF WHICH HAVE BEEN NOTIFIED TO THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, LEGAL, DEMOCRATIC & PROPERTY SERVICES PRIOR TO THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE MEETING AND WHICH THE CHAIRMAN, BY REASON OF SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES, CONSIDERS TO BE OF SO URGENT A NATURE THAT IT CANNOT WAIT UNTIL THE NEXT MEETING

There was no urgent business.

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ANY ENFORCEMENT / APPEALS UPDATES

There were no Enforcement / Appeals updates.

The meeting closed at 7.07 p.m.

Chairman

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Review of Mandating CCTV in Taxis.

Relevant Portfolio Holder		Councillor K. Taylor
Portfolio Holder Consulted		No
Relevant Assistant Director		Simon Wilkes – Director of Worcestershire Regulatory Services
Kiran Lahel	Job Title: Licensing and Support Services Manager Contact email: kiran.lahel@worcsregservices.gov.uk Contact Tel: 01562 738067	
Wards Affected		All
Ward Councillor(s) consulted		No
Relevant Council Priority		
Non-Key Decision		
If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting.		

1. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Members are asked to note the contents of the report.

2. **BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 On the 1st September 2022 Bromsgrove District Council introduced The Statutory taxi and private hire vehicle standards ('The Standards'). The Standards were published in July 2020 and included the use of CCTV as an area for Local Authority discussion.
- 2.2 This authority has a voluntary CCTV option already in place for all vehicle owners. On introduction of the policy in 2022 officers advised that they would monitor intelligence and engage with partners to ensure the policy remained in line with what the data was showing us.
- 2.3 Officers advised they would bring back a report once the policy had been embedded and would then review the decision to ensure the authority was doing what it needed to in protecting the general public.

3. **OPERATIONAL ISSUES**

- 3.1 In February 2019 The Department for Transport (DfT) carried out a consultation exercise to gather views and evidence on measures for

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inclusion within their statutory guidance for licensing authorities “Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Licensing: Protecting Users”. The guidance was published to assist local licensing authorities in England and Wales which have responsibility for the regulation of the taxi and private hire vehicles, on how their licensing powers can be exercised in order to safeguard children and vulnerable adults.

- 3.2 The Guidance which went through a consultation process and was then published in 2020 sets out a framework of policies that licensing authorities “must have regard” to when exercising their functions. These functions include developing, implementing, and reviewing their taxi and PHV licensing regimes, one of which is installation of CCTV in licensed hackney carriage and private hire vehicles.
- 3.3 The consultation document acknowledged the potential risk to public safety when passengers travel in taxis and PHVs and stated that it was the DfT’s view that CCTV can provide an additional deterrence to prevent this and investigative value when it does. They state that the use of CCTV can provide a safer environment for the benefit of taxi/PHV passengers and drivers by: -
- deterring and preventing the occurrence of crime
 - reducing the fear of crime
 - assisting the police in investigating incidents of crime
 - assisting insurance companies in investigating motor vehicle accidents
- 3.4 At the present time it is noted that only a small number of licensing authorities have so far made it a legal requirement (7%) for all taxi and private hire vehicles to be fitted with mandatory CCTV systems. These authorities have been able to demonstrate through evidence and intelligence that such a policy was necessary. More recently these have included Barnsley Council, Portsmouth and Southampton, Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire District Council. Swindon Borough Council did mandate it but reversed the decision due to a number of challenges.
- 3.5 The initial Guidance highlighted that licensing authorities who legally require the installation of CCTV systems in taxis and PHV will be fully responsible for any data obtained; they in effect become the “System Operator” and the “data controller”.
- 3.6 An extract of the final guidance relating to the installation of CCTV in licensed vehicles can be seen at “**Appendix 1**”.
- 3.7 As part of the consultation on the Statutory Taxi Standards undertaken in 2022 officers proposed that if this element of the standards was to be

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considered in detail, then it would need to be looked at as a separate project. Officers advised that there would be a lengthy consultation process required to ensure all stakeholders are included in any discussions if taken forward.

- 3.8 The Local Government Association in an effort to assist those local licensing authorities considering regulating the use of CCTV in licensed vehicles have published further guidance “Developing an approach to mandatory CCTV in taxis and PHVs”. This guidance touches on many of the points which have been considered by Members previously. A copy of the LGA guidance is attached at “**Appendix 2**”.
- 3.9 The responses received from the consultation undertaken by Bromsgrove District Council between 12 February 2019 and 22 April 2019 on its draft Hackney Carriage and Private hire licensing policy did not lead officers to believe that CCTV was an area to be explored further by officers.
- 3.10 The current policy that came into effect on 1st September 2022 has been consulted upon and states that the Council recognises that CCTV systems can act as an additional safeguard, providing protection, confidence and reassurance to the public when they are travelling in a hackney carriage or private hire vehicle as well as to drivers, who can also be victims of violence and abuse.
- 3.11 Current policy allows the proprietor of any vehicle that it has authorised to be used as a hackney carriage or private hire vehicle to install CCTV cameras in their vehicle subject to the following requirements:
- No installation of a CCTV system shall take place within a licensed vehicle unless the proprietor of the vehicle has notified the Council in advance.
 - All CCTV systems which are installed into licensed vehicles must be compliant with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 2018. The system must also be compliant with the Information Commissioner’s requirements in respect of registering the system and the capturing, storing, retaining and using any recorded images.
- 3.12 Initial enquiries by officers have revealed that the cost to purchase and install CCTV equipment in hackney carriage and private hire vehicles can be anywhere in the region of £500 to £1200. Many local

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authorities state the minimum equipment specification and also provide an approved suppliers list.

- 3.13 All Licensing authorities are asked to consider if local circumstances suggest that having CCTV as part of the condition of a licence will have a positive effect. DfT and the Local Government Association (LGA) both stress that consultation in the driver community is essential. At this point in time only a small minority of authorities have imposed this rule. Mainly those that have experienced cases of child exploitation.
- 3.14 Officers have assessed the complaints data received into WRS and the context of information received alongside the data from the current WRS Strategic assessment. On evaluation it is evident that the number of complaints received are more directed at driver behaviour or vehicle standards than they are connecting a driver to a serious offence or safeguarding issue such as assault, sexual assault, sexual harassment, or substance misuse.
- 3.15 The introduction of safeguarding training for taxi drivers has also been introduced in order to mitigate such situations and covers both drivers' personal safety and safeguarding responsibilities.
- 3.16 Officers have a proactive working relationship with West Mercia police colleagues and taxi matters are discussed regularly and their intelligence analysts have also examined their own data and complaints information and there is no evidence that has been presented to officers whereby a change in the Council's current position is necessary.
- 3.17 Imposition of a blanket requirement to attach CCTV as a condition to a licence is likely to give rise to concerns about the proportionality of such an approach and will therefore require an appropriate strong justification.
- 3.18 Other Local Authorities have chosen this route as stated above as evidence has proven that there is a problem however officers have a presence at both the North Worcestershire Safeguarding Partnership meeting and Safer Worcestershire Board where information regarding complaints can be analysed and any concerns discussed in an open forum.
- 3.19 Some Local Authorities have taken an alternative view like Bromsgrove District Council and operate a voluntary CCTV scheme which allows vehicle proprietors the choice of whether they wish to install CCTV equipment in their licensed vehicle. However, should they choose to install the equipment they are required to adhere to the Council's adopted CCTV policy, in which it specifies an approved system and an approved supplier. The policy also gives details on the rights of

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privacy, Data Protection, Human Rights and the management of information etc. Wolverhampton City Council, Leeds City and Telford and Wrekin Council all have taken this approach.

- 3.20 It is important to note that if the officers in partnership with external agencies felt there was a requirement for mandating CCTV in taxis they would bring the data and evidence to consider without delay to the Licensing Committee in order to proactively safeguard the travelling public.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1.1 The costs associated with carrying out any recommended consultation will be met from existing budgets held by Worcestershire Regulatory Services.
- 4.1.2 The cost associated with the introduction of CCTV equipment and ongoing running costs will need to be met by the licence holder or by alternative means.

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5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 All CCTV systems which are installed into licensed vehicles must be compliant with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 2018. The system must also be compliant with the Information Commissioner's requirements in respect of registering the system and the capturing, storing, retaining and using any recorded images.

6. OTHER - IMPLICATIONS

Relevant Council Priority

- 6.2 Any policy introduction would need to have regard for and align with the Council's corporate policy in relation to data protection and information management.

Climate Change Implications

- 6.3 There are no Climate change implications

Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 6.4 The Licensing Committee will ensure it has regard to the desirability of exercising its functions regarding the need to eliminate discrimination and to increase equality of opportunity. On this occasion no Equality Implications have been identified.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 7.1 If the council fails to review its policy in line with the Department for Transport's recommendations it may be challenged by the Police and Crime Commissioner and Department for Transport through audit or policy review.

8. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Appendix 1 Extract of the final DFT guidance on CCTV
Appendix 2 A copy of the LGA guidance

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9. REPORT SIGN OFF

Department	Name and Job Title	Date
Portfolio Holder	Please record the name of the relevant Portfolio Holder who has signed off the report here.	Please give the date they signed off the report here.
Lead Director / Assistant Director	Please record the name of the relevant lead Director / Assistant Director who has signed off the report here.	Please give the date they signed off the report here.
Financial Services	Please record the name of the relevant Officer in Financial Services who has signed off the report here.	Please give the date they signed off the report here.
Legal Services	Please record the name of the relevant Officer in Legal Services who has signed off the report here.	Please give the date they signed off the report here.
Policy Team (if equalities implications apply)	If applicable, please record the name of the relevant Officer in the Policy team who has signed off the report here.	If applicable, please give the date they signed off the report here.
Climate Change Team (if climate change implications apply)	If applicable, please record the name of the relevant Officer in the Climate Change team who has signed off the report here.	If applicable, please give the date they signed off the report here.

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In-vehicle visual and audio recording – CCTV

- 7.7 Government has acknowledged the potential risk to public safety when passengers travel in taxis and private hire vehicles. It is unfortunately the case that no matter how complete the information available to licensing authorities is when assessing whether to issue any taxi or private hire vehicle licence, nor how robust the policies in place are and the rigor with which they are applied, it will never completely remove the possibility of harm to passengers by drivers.
- 7.8 The Department's view is that CCTV can provide additional deterrence to prevent this and investigative value when it does. The use of CCTV can provide a safer environment for the benefit of taxi/private hire vehicle passengers and drivers by:
- deterring and preventing the occurrence of crime;
 - reducing the fear of crime;
 - assisting the police in investigating incidents of crime;
 - assisting insurance companies in investigating motor vehicle accidents.
- 7.9 All licensing authorities should consult to identify if there are local circumstances which indicate that the installation of CCTV in vehicles would have either a positive or an adverse net effect on the safety of taxi and private hire vehicle users, including children or vulnerable adults, and taking into account potential privacy issues.
- 7.10 While only a small minority of licensing authorities have so far mandated all vehicles to be fitted with CCTV systems, the experience of those authorities that have has been positive for both passengers and drivers. In addition, the evidential benefits of CCTV may increase the level of reporting of sexual offences. According to the [Crime Survey for England and Wales](#) only 17 percent of victims report their experiences to the police, 28 percent of rape or sexual assault victims indicated that a fear they would not be believed as a factor in them not reporting the crime. The evidential benefits CCTV could provide are therefore an important factor when considering CCTV in vehicles.
- 7.11 The mandating of CCTV in vehicles may deter people from seeking a taxi or private hire vehicle licence with the intent of causing harm. Those that gain a licence and consider perpetrating an opportunistic attack against a vulnerable unaccompanied passenger may be deterred from doing so. It is however unfortunately the case that offences may still occur even with CCTV operating.
- 7.12 CCTV systems that are able to record audio as well as visual data may also

help the early identification of drivers that exhibit inappropriate behaviour toward passengers. Audio recording should be both overt (i.e. all parties should be aware when recordings are being made) and targeted (i.e. only when passengers (or drivers) consider it necessary). The recording of audio should be used to provide an objective record of events such as disputes or inappropriate behaviour and must not be continuously active by default and should recognise the need for privacy of passengers' private conversations between themselves. Activation of the audio recording capability of a system might be instigated when either the passenger or driver operates a switch or button.

- 7.13 Imposition of a blanket requirement to attach CCTV as a condition to a licence is likely to give rise to concerns about the proportionality of such an approach and will therefore require an appropriately strong justification and must be kept under regular review. More information and guidance on assessing the impacts of CCTV and on an authority mandating CCTV is annexed to this document (Annex – CCTV guidance).

Annex – CCTV Guidance

It is important to note that, in most circumstances, a licensing authority which mandates the installation of CCTV systems in taxis and private hire vehicles will be responsible for the data – the data controller. It is important that data controllers fully consider concerns regarding privacy and licensing authorities should consider how systems are configured, should they mandate CCTV (with or without audio recording). For example, vehicles may not be exclusively used for business, also serving as a car for personal use - it should therefore be possible to manually switch the system off (both audio and visual recording) when not being used for hire. Authorities should consider the Information Commissioner's view on this matter that, in most cases, a requirement for continuous operation is unlikely to be fair and lawful processing of personal data.

The Home Office '[Surveillance Camera Code of Practice](#)' advises that government is fully supportive of the use of overt surveillance cameras in a public place whenever that use is:

- in pursuit of a legitimate aim;
- necessary to meet a pressing need;
- proportionate;
- effective, and;
- compliant with any relevant legal obligations

The Code also sets out 12 guiding principles which, as a 'relevant authority' under section 33(5) of the [Protection of Freedoms Act 2012](#), licensing authorities must have regard to. It must be noted that, where a licence is granted subject to CCTV system conditions, the licensing authority assumes the role and responsibility of 'System Operator'. The role requires consideration of all guiding principles in this code. The failure to comply with these principles may be detrimental to the use of CCTV evidence in court as this may be raised within disclosure to the Crown Prosecution Service and may be taken into account.

The Surveillance Camera Commissioner (SCC) has provided guidance on the Surveillance Camera Code of Practice in its '[Passport to Compliance](#)' which provides guidance on the necessary stages when planning, implementing and operating a surveillance camera system to ensure it complies with the code. The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) has also published a [code of practice](#) which, in this context, focuses on the data governance requirement associated with the use of CCTV such as data retention and disposal, which it is important to follow in order to comply with the data protection principles. The SCC provides a [self-assessment tool](#) to assist operators to ensure compliance with the principles set out in the Surveillance Camera Code of Practice. The SCC also operate a [certification scheme](#); authorities that obtain this accreditation are able to clearly demonstrate that their systems conform to the SCC's best practice and are fully compliant with the Code and increase public confidence that any risks to their privacy have been fully considered and mitigated.

The [Data Protection Act 2018](#) regulates the use of personal data. Part 2 of the Data Protection Act applies to the general processing of personal data, and references and

supplements the General Data Protection Regulation. Licensing authorities, as data controllers, must comply with all relevant aspects of data protection law. Particular attention should be paid to the rights of individuals which include the right to be informed, of access and to erasure. The ICO has provided detailed [guidance](#) on how data controllers can ensure compliance with these.

It is a further requirement of data protection law that before implementing a proposal that is likely to result in a high risk to the rights and freedoms of people, an impact assessment on the protection of personal data shall be carried out. The ICO recommends in [guidance](#) that if there is any doubt as to whether a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) is required one should be conducted to ensure compliance and encourage best practice. A DPIA will also help to assess properly the anticipated benefits of installing CCTV (to passengers and drivers) and the associated privacy risks; these risks might be mitigated by having appropriate privacy information and signage, secure storage and access controls, retention policies, training for staff how to use the system, etc.

It is essential to ensure that all recordings made are secure and can only be accessed by those with legitimate grounds to do so. This would normally be the police if investigating an alleged crime or the licensing authority if investigating a complaint or data access request. Encryption of the recording to which the licensing authority, acting as the data controller, holds the key, mitigates this issue and protects against theft of the vehicle or device. It is one of the guiding principles of data protection legislation, that personal data (including in this context, CCTV recordings and other potentially sensitive passenger information) is handled securely in a way that 'ensures appropriate security', including protection against unauthorised or unlawful processing and against accidental loss, destruction or damage, using appropriate technical or organisational measures.

All passengers must be made fully aware if CCTV is operating in a vehicle. Given that audio recording is considered to be more privacy intrusive, it is even more important that individuals are fully aware and limited only to occasions when passengers (or drivers) consider it necessary. The recording of audio should be used to provide an objective record of events such as disputes or inappropriate behaviour and must not be continuously active by default and should recognise the need for privacy of passengers' private conversations between themselves. Activation of the audio recording capability of a system might be instigated when either the passenger or driver operates a switch or button. As well as clear signage in vehicles, information on booking systems should be introduced. This might be text on a website, scripts or automated messages on telephone systems; the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) has issued guidance on privacy information and the right to be informed on its website.

Developing an approach to mandatory CCTV in taxis and PHVs

Foreword

Councils work hard to ensure that only those fit to drive taxis and private hire vehicles (PHVs) are licensed to do so, and the vast majority of drivers across the country work hard to provide a good service to their passengers, many of whom rely on this vital service.

However, we cannot avoid the fact that over recent years there have been a number of high profile cases of licensed drivers abusing their passengers' trust, including serious cases of child sexual exploitation (CSE).

It is vital that licensing teams understand how they can contribute to the safeguarding agenda. We have various tools at our disposal to enhance safeguarding in our licensing work, including introducing a requirement for CCTV systems in licensed vehicles.

A number of councils have taken the decision to mandate CCTV systems, whether cameras or cameras and audio recording, as a way to further safeguard passengers and drivers. First and foremost, the presence of CCTV acts as a deterrent to criminal or other poor behaviour, but it also provides vital evidence in situations where an incident has been reported, which otherwise may have been one person's word against another.

It is incumbent on all of us to review our policies and procedures to make certain we are taking all possible steps and using the tools available to us to protect the vulnerable. We have developed this guidance to bring together some of the questions that authorities may want to consider if they are thinking about introducing a mandatory CCTV policy for licenced vehicles in their area.

The guidance reflects on approaches taken by authorities which already mandate CCTV and on the importance of striking a balance between passenger safety and privacy, reflecting the position of the Information Commissioner and Surveillance Camera Commissioner as the regulators. It is intended to be used as a starting point for exploring some of the key issues and how these might apply at a local level.

We hope you find it useful.



Councillor Simon Blackburn
Chair, LGA Safer and Stronger Communities Board

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Introduction

Taxis and private hire vehicles (PHVs) are a vital part of local transport networks. Alongside their importance to the local night-time and visitor economies in particular, they are a key way of supporting more vulnerable local residents; for example by transporting children to and from school or providing a door-to-door service for elderly and disabled users, many of whom would otherwise struggle to access local amenities. The number of journeys made using taxis/PHVs continue to rise and in 2018 the number of licenced vehicles reached a record high of 285,400.

The key role of licensing authorities is to ensure a safe and effective local taxi and PHV service and, following recent cases where taxis and PHVs were used to facilitate appalling instances of child sexual exploitation (CSE) this area of councils' work has been under intense scrutiny. Both Professor Alexis Jay and Dame Louise Casey CB's reports into CSE in Rotherham highlighted the vital role that effective regulatory and enforcement functions play in preventing and disrupting CSE. In response, councils have been reviewing existing taxi and PHV licensing policies to ensure the right measures are in place to protect members of the public when using taxis/PHVs.

As part of broader work to strengthen safeguarding measures within the taxi/PHV service, some licensing authorities have begun to look at the use of in-vehicle cameras and audio recording (CCTV systems) and a small number of authorities already mandate the use of CCTV systems in licenced vehicles.¹

¹ Licensing authorities who have mandated cameras in vehicles are: Brighton and Hove, East Riding, Exeter, Gravesham, Portsmouth, Warrington and Worthing. Those mandating both cameras and audio are: Cambridge, Herefordshire, Rossendale, Rotherham, and Southampton.

Many more councils allow the use of CCTV systems in taxis/PHVs or have a voluntary scheme in place – latest figures² from the Department for Transport (DfT) show around 95 per cent of councils allow the use of CCTV in taxis/PHVs.

Whilst there has been relatively little guidance published which relates specifically to the use of CCTV in taxis/PHVs, there is a range of more general advice which it is important for authorities to be aware of. The Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 (PoFA) implemented the Home Secretary's Surveillance Camera Code of Practice (SC Code)³ which provides guidance on the appropriate and effective use of surveillance camera systems by 'relevant authorities' and is particularly significant. As relevant authorities (under s.33 of the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012) licensing authorities have a statutory duty to demonstrate regard to the SC Code where cameras are deployed in public places⁴, which includes taxis/PHVs.

The SC Code is designed to provide a framework for those operating and using surveillance camera systems to ensure use of surveillance is proportionate and transparent, and the systems used are capable of providing good quality images (or other information) which are fit for purpose.

² www.gov.uk/government/statistics/taxi-and-private-hire-vehicle-statistics-england-2018

³ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/282774/SurveillanceCameraCodePractice.pdf

⁴ 'Public place' has the meaning given by S.16(b) of the Public Order Act 1986 and is taken to include any highway and any place to which at the material time the public or any section of the public has access, on payment or otherwise, as of right or by virtue of express or implied permission.

The code sets out 12 guiding principles and where a licensing authority is considering mandating CCTV systems in taxis/PHVs they must have particular regard to guiding principle one, which is: 'Use of a surveillance camera system must always be for a specified purpose which is in pursuit of a legitimate aim and necessary to meet an identified pressing need'. The code is clear that a mandatory policy around CCTV systems in taxis will require strong justification and should be kept under regular review.

Reference to the use of CCTV systems in taxis/PHVs is made in existing best practice guidance published by the Department for Transport (DfT) in 2010, which suggests that local authorities encourage its use. It is likely that the DfT's new statutory/best practice guidance, due for consultation in early 2019 will say more about the use of CCTV in taxis and PHVs in relation to the role it can play in safeguarding both passengers and drivers.

Terminology

Some local authorities use the term taxi camera, instead of CCTV as they feel this may be misleading to the public, invoking the idea of surveillance and suggesting that footage is being monitored live. However, for clarity we use the term CCTV throughout this document.

Purpose of LGA guidance

Amongst those councils that already mandate CCTV systems, there is a range of different requirements around how and when the systems are used, and the types of systems that can be fitted. It is important that individual licensing authorities make their own decisions about what the best approach to CCTV is, based on the local context. The intention of the Local Government Association's (LGA) guidance is to outline some of the key issues to consider for authorities who are exploring mandating the use of CCTV systems in taxis/PHVs.

The guidance aims to help local authorities to comply with their legal responsibilities when considering mandating CCTV and is based on guidance from key organisations such as the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO), the Surveillance Camera Commissioner (SCC) and the experience of councils who already require CCTV in taxis/PHVs. The document also touches on some of the ongoing debates about the proportionality of requiring CCTV. The guidance reflects changes to legislation brought in by the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), implemented in the UK via the Data Protection Act (DPA) 2018.

The document is more heavily weighted towards the practical issues that councils will need to consider in implementing a mandatory approach to CCTV, rather than the safeguarding justification for doing so. This is because councils will need to make their own assessment of whether CCTV is the right solution based on the local context.

This guidance makes reference to a number of licensing authorities which have already mandated the use of CCTV. We thank all the councils involved in the development of this document for their help.

Alongside reading this guidance, authorities may also wish to consult experts within your councils about the deployment of CCTV in taxis/PHVs; this could be the person who manages your town centre CCTV scheme and/or your data protection officer.

Overview – benefits and challenges of CCTV in taxis/PHVs

There is an inherent, structural vulnerability relating to taxis and PHVs: getting into a taxi/PHV, an individual puts themselves under the control of a stranger in a confined space with no physical control over where they are taken. The primary role of the licensing regime is to manage this risk, in particular by satisfying themselves that only those who are fit and proper to do so hold a licence.

CCTV systems can act as an additional safeguard, providing protection, confidence and reassurance to the public when they are travelling in a taxi or PHV as well as to drivers, who can also be victims of violence and abuse. Mandating CCTV has been seen by some authorities as a proactive preventative measure that can be taken to protect passengers and drivers. It can act as a deterrent to committing an offence as people are more likely to police their own behaviour. Where an offence has taken place the images/audio recording that CCTV systems capture can provide important evidence in a criminal investigation.

Some licensing authorities have introduced voluntary, rather than mandatory, CCTV schemes. However there is evidence that there has been limited take up of these, even where authorities have offered to pay for a percentage of installing the system. Mandating CCTV will by definition ensure greater take up, and can also lead to greater consistency, with authorities able to set out and oversee clear specifications, guidelines and procedures on a range of issues including the type of systems used and information governance.

Sheffield pilot scheme

Following a string of attacks against drivers in the city, in December 2006 Sheffield piloted a CCTV scheme. The pilot involved 33 vehicles (eight taxis and 25 PHVs) and ran for six weeks, three weeks without cameras and three weeks with a camera fitted, with drivers reporting back at the end of the six week trial.

A subsequent report based on drivers' feedback suggested that there had been a large reduction in incidents from an average of one in seven fares to less than one in 100 fares, with a very significant reduction in incidents of threats and violence. In addition to the benefit to drivers there was some positive anecdotal feedback from passengers, particularly lone females, who said that they felt safer when there was a camera installed.

Report of the Sheffield taxi safety camera pilot study (February 2007)
www.calderdale.gov.uk/nweb/COUNCIL.minutes_pkg.view_doc?p_Type=AR&p_ID=3412

Key considerations

It is useful be aware of some of the key considerations as well as challenges that councils may face with plans to introduce mandatory CCTV systems both from members of the public, regulators and the trade.

Views of the trade

Many areas across the country will have active taxi/PHV trade groups or associations who may oppose plans to mandate the use of CCTV systems. Reasons could include the financial burden of installing CCTV systems that meet the agreed specification or invasion of drivers' privacy. It is therefore important to work with the trade as early as possible when considering a policy on CCTV systems, and ensure that key messages around why this approach is being considered, and the potential benefits to drivers, are clearly communicated. Issues raised by the trade can then be considered and where possible addressed as plans develop.

Sections of the taxi/PHV trade have already challenged some licensing authorities around mandatory CCTV. In some cases legal challenges have been brought. However, at the time of writing, magistrates have so far rejected challenges where councils were able to demonstrate that they had taken issues raised by the trade into consideration when developing policies.

The intrusive capabilities of CCTV means that there will need to be careful consideration of the impact it will have on privacy and how it can be used in a way that is sensitive and transparent so as to maintain both drivers and the public's confidence in its use. Proposals will need to clearly set out how privacy issues have been considered and how any issues raised have been mitigated. Consideration of these issues will need to be demonstrated through a data protection impact assessment (DPIA), which is required to be carried out before the roll-out of any intrusive surveillance system, including CCTV. The Surveillance Camera Commissioner has worked with the Information Commissioner's Office to develop a surveillance camera specific impact assessment template (updated in October 2018) available on the Surveillance Camera Commissioner's website.⁵ Both privacy issues and legal requirements around data protection are discussed in full later in this guidance.

5 www.gov.uk/government/publications/privacy-impact-assessments-for-surveillance-cameras

Whilst the focus is often on how CCTV systems positively impact on passenger safety, there is also a strong argument for the benefits it has for drivers' safety. As well as acting as a deterrent, CCTV systems will also help to provide evidence in case of an incident being reported. Authorities will be familiar with cases where an incident has been reported by a passenger relating to a drivers conduct or vice versa which are extremely difficult to prove. Footage from CCTV systems can provide vital evidence, and even prevent drivers from losing their licence if an accusation is proven to be false. However, compliance with the PoFA and the SC Code is vital if CCTV evidence is to be used in court.

In some places the trade have actively called for the council to introduce CCTV in taxis/PHVs to protect drivers' safety. Whilst based on only a small sample, analysis of a pilot scheme in Sheffield (see case study, page 6) suggested that, where taxis/PHVs were fitted with CCTV systems, there was a significant reduction in incidents. More recently in 2012, Brighton and Hove Council surveyed drivers asking whether they agreed with the current policy of all vehicles having CCTV, six months after the policy was introduced. Seventy-two per cent of hackney carriage drivers and fifty four per cent of private hire respondents were supportive of the policy.⁶

Early engagement with the trade can be useful in understanding their experiences and what particular issues they face in the local area, information gathered can form part of an evidence base for a policy and DPIA. This will also ensure compliance with guiding principle three⁷ of the SC Code which requires meaningful consultation with groups impacted upon by CCTV. Collating statistics and any incident data relating to taxis/PHVs from your local police force will also help to build a picture of the local context to inform an impact assessment.

6 See page 119 <https://present.brighton-hove.gov.uk/Published/C00000116/M00004177/AI00030770/Enc1forHackneyCarriageUnmetDemandSurveyv2.pdf>

7 There must be as much transparency in the use of a surveillance camera system as possible, including a published contact point for access to information and complaints.

Other benefits to drivers of installing CCTV include the potential to realise savings on insurance premiums, which may help to offset the upfront cost of purchasing and installing the systems. For example, some insurance providers have offered drivers who have forward facing cameras fitted in addition to the interior ones, a reduction to their insurance premiums of around 10 –to 15 per cent (a saving of around £200-£250 per year). Rotherham estimated that the average saving on insurance would pay for the cost of the CCTV system within two years. The initial cost of CCTV systems can also be offset against tax (for those drivers who reach the income tax threshold).

In practical terms considering the cost of CCTV systems and how this can be managed is something that can be done as part of an implementation schedule discussed on page 24. Giving drivers enough of a lead-in time before CCTV systems have to be fitted will enable them to save up or stagger the cost.

Privacy and proportionality

The use of CCTV is intrusive and its use is subject to data protection and human rights laws. Members of the public, drivers, the Surveillance Camera Commissioner (SCC) and the Information Commissioners Office (ICO) may all raise concerns about the impact of mandatory CCTV systems on privacy, and this has been a key issue for licensing authorities that have already mandated CCTV in taxis/PHVs.

The Surveillance Camera Commissioner's blog on CCTV in taxis⁸ provides a useful summary of the broad legislative framework that local authorities need to consider, including the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA) and the PoFA 2012. The Commissioner's speech to the National Association of Taxi Drivers in 2015 also provides helpful context.⁹

Councils will need to think through the privacy implications of mandating CCTV and satisfy themselves that where they choose to mandate CCTV, they have adequate justification for choosing this approach and that they meet the requirements of legislation and associated codes of practice on privacy, proportionality and data protection. However, while there are steps that can be taken to try to ensure compliance with the overarching framework and codes, licensing authorities will ultimately be making an assessment about what they consider to be proportionate in balancing the right to privacy with duties to safeguard the public. There are various tools provided by the SCC which will help when considering the implementation of CCTV in taxis including the Buyers' Toolkit¹⁰

which is an easy-to-follow guide for non-experts who are considering the use of a CCTV system, and the Passport to Compliance¹¹ which is a set of documents that will guide authorities through the relevant principles within the SC Code and will help to ensure a system complies with the code.

Different authorities may take different views on CCTV and what is considered to be a proportionate approach may differ from one area to another, depending on the local context: each policy and DPIA should be explicitly linked to local circumstances.

Some authorities have implemented policies that require mandatory CCTV only when a vehicle is in use as a taxi or PHV, ie there is a 'switch off' facility for when a vehicle is being used for private purposes. Others have sought a 24/7 approach in which CCTV automatically operates when an engine is running, regardless of whether there is a passenger in the vehicle. It is worth noting that the Information Commissioner has addressed this specific point in a recent blog post¹² suggesting that a requirement for continuous recording when a vehicle is being used in a private capacity is likely to

8 <https://videosurveillance.blog.gov.uk/2018/08/28/cctv-in-taxis-are-you-talking-to-me>

9 www.gov.uk/government/speeches/surveillance-camera-commissioners-speech-to-the-national-taxi-association-agm

10 www.gov.uk/government/publications/surveillance-camera-commissioners-buyers-toolkit

11 www.gov.uk/government/publications/passport-to-compliance

12 <https://ico.org.uk/about-the-ico/news-and-events/blog-continuous-cctv-in-taxis-where-do-councils-stand>

The role of councillors

be unlawful and unfair. Where the ICO has been made aware of councils implementing this approach, they have advised that the requirement for continuous recording is likely to be disproportionate to the problem it is trying to address.

Authorities may also take different approaches to the use of audio recording, which is generally considered by the ICO to be more invasive of privacy than cameras and will therefore require much greater justification.

These are issues about which there are different and, to some extent, philosophical views about what constitutes the appropriate balance between privacy and safeguarding. The ICO has looked closely at, and previously challenged, some licensing authorities on the CCTV policies they have implemented where it believes these go too far in terms of invasion of privacy or have not been adequately justified. This is discussed later on.

Therefore, although determining what is proportionate will need to be assessed by individual councils, looking at areas that have already mandated CCTV is helpful in indicating the balance that has been taken elsewhere. Councils will need to ensure when considering what is an appropriate and proportionate approach to CCTV that this is based on evidence of issues identified in the local area.

The next chapter provides more detail about data protection, privacy and information governance but the key point is that during the process of developing a proposal for mandatory CCTV systems, authorities will need to demonstrate that thought has been given to what the impacts on privacy might be and, where necessary, how these can be mitigated.

Likewise once a decision has been made to introduce mandatory CCTV, careful consideration needs to be given to the processes and procedures that are put in place to safeguard the data captured to ensure compliance with data protection legislation as well as the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 and other relevant legislation.

The close involvement of councillors and ensuring there is political buy-in throughout the policy development process is vital and councillors will need to be equipped with the evidence they need to determine whether or not mandatory CCTV is appropriate. Councillors' key role in providing political accountability for decisions is particularly important where proposals may attract some opposition. Several areas have had significant pushback from the taxi and PHV trade which includes members coming under pressure from these groups. In areas that have mandated CCTV, political support has been extremely important in delivering new policies.

Whilst the trade are a vital part of the local economy, it is important to remember that passengers should be at the centre of a licensing authority's taxi licensing policies and processes, something which was highlighted in Dame Louise Casey's review into Rotherham, which noted; 'The safety of the public should be the uppermost concern of any licensing and enforcement regime: when determining policy, setting standards and deciding how they will be enforced.'¹³

Ultimately it will be councillors who should make a decision around mandating CCTV in taxis/PHVs so officers will need to ensure they have the necessary information to make an informed decision. The SCC has produced a guide to the SC Code which is available on his website.¹⁴

¹³ See page 103

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/401125/46966_Report_of_Inspection_of_Rotherham_WEB.pdf

¹⁴ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/498895/SCC_Councillors_Guide_-_February_2016.pdf

Developing an approach to CCTV

The data protection impact assessment (DPIA)

The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) states that a data protection impact assessment (DPIA) must be carried out prior to the roll-out of any intrusive surveillance system. CCTV in taxis and licensed vehicles is likely to be one such system and authorities will need to be able to demonstrate that they have conducted a DPIA to the ICO.¹⁵

The critical starting point is for licensing authorities to be very clear about the problem that needs to be addressed and be able to justify why they consider mandating CCTV in taxis/ PHVs to be an effective solution. Authorities may want to show why CCTV, rather than a potentially less intrusive solution, is required. This is a key component of principle one of the SC Code and the SCC's Buyer's Toolkit¹⁶ can help determine the justification for CCTV in taxis or whether there may be another solution to issues that have been identified.

Where councils have identified that CCTV may be a suitable option, they will need to consider what the appropriate approach to this is. This will necessarily start with developing a rationale for mandating CCTV, relevant to the local context and lead on to considerations about whether there is a need for both camera and audio recording, and when these may be required to operate.

Councils may feel that the inherent vulnerability relating to taxis/PHVs where sometimes vulnerable people are unaccompanied in a car with a stranger means that mandatory CCTV can be justified as a proactive and preventative measure. However, the ICO and SCC are unlikely to consider that the simple basis of high profile CSE cases in Rotherham and elsewhere as being a proportionate justification for implementing CCTV in other parts of the country.

The assessment of proportionality and the justification for this needs to be relevant to the local circumstances in which the policy will apply, so a local evidence base will need to be developed to support any proposal. This could include data from the licensing team around any specific cases where the presence of CCTV could have been beneficial, or any intelligence or incident data from police relating to taxis/PHVs.

Thought should therefore be given to what the particular vulnerabilities are in the local context, as authorities are used to doing in other areas of licensing, such as alcohol. For example, consideration could be given to the following:

- Is there significant use of taxis in the evening or late at night as part of the night-time economy? Both passengers and drivers could be increasingly vulnerable if passengers are under the influence of alcohol.
- Is there significant use of taxis by children and young people to/from school or activities? Again, concerns about vulnerability could be more prominent where lots of children/young people are relying on them for transportation.

¹⁵ More information about DPIAs can be found on ICO's website <https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-the-general-data-protection-regulation-gdpr/accountability-and-governance/data-protection-impact-assessments>

¹⁶ www.gov.uk/government/publications/surveillance-camera-commissioners-buyer toolkit

- Is there evidence of, statistics around crime involving PHVs/taxis, for example attacks on drivers?
- Is there evidence of complaints where the use of CCTV would have helped?

The DPIA also sets out measures that can be taken to mitigate any risks identified. It is important to note that where a DPIA identifies 'high risk' and there are not measures that can be taken to reduce this, authorities will need to consult the ICO before proceeding further. Ultimately this will help to inform the approach councils decide to take.

This is even more important if audio recording is being considered. As noted above, audio recording is regarded as more intrusive than video and therefore will need further justification. For example, an assessment might reveal that there are certain times when vulnerability is increased, such as in the early hours of the morning, and therefore there could be a strong argument for audio recording at these times, but not necessarily at others.

As the regulator, the ICO has successfully challenged councils on policies which they feel have not been justified, as in the Southampton case discussed in the next section. A robust assessment of necessity and risk through a DPIA and seeking legal advice could help avoid enforcement action by the ICO. In addition the SC Code is clear that mandating CCTV as a licensing condition will need a strong justification.

Consultation and engagement

Consultation and engagement are critical steps when considering deploying CCTV and even more critical when mandating its use and can help to shape the scope of the policy. The SCC's Passport to Compliance document includes sections on effective consultation in this area.

Consultation and engagement provides an opportunity to identify any concerns the public, the trade or other key stakeholders might have about proposals, these can then be addressed as proposals develop. Evidence of this process will be important to show how the licensing authority has had regard to balancing public protection and individual privacy, a necessary part of complying with the legislation.

Consultation and engagement with key stakeholders should be undertaken in line with your own council's consultation guidelines and it is an important step in the DPIA. A robust consultation process may help to avoid challenge further down the line. In Rotherham, the extensive consultation and engagement the council undertook was used as evidence when the council was legally challenged on their policy.

Key stakeholders are those who are most likely to be directly affected by the proposals, or groups representing their interests. These might include:

- Surveillance Camera Commissioner (Home Office) and Information Commissioner's Office
- councillors
- taxi/PHV trade bodies, operators and drivers
- residents
- specific taxi/PHV user groups
- suppliers of audio visual equipment
- local authority CCTV manager
- local police force.

Analysis of consultation responses will help to build an evidence base and identify the potential impact of mandating CCTV. Early engagement with the trade in particular is likely to be key to identifying what they see as the key issues and will give authorities the opportunity to shape a proposal which addresses any concerns. It is also important to have early discussions with the SCC and ICO.

Data protection, privacy and information governance

As discussed earlier it is important for councils to consider the potential impact of mandating CCTV on privacy and demonstrate through a DPIA that the approach to how/when CCTV systems are required to be used strikes a proportionate balance between privacy and safeguarding.

There are also steps that need to be taken to make sure that personal data which is being processed – which includes any visual or audio recording collected – is kept safe and secure. The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA) regulates the use of ‘personal data’ and licensing authorities will need to take steps to ensure a policy is developed that complies with GDPR and DPA to avoid any potential challenge or enforcement action. In practice this means that authorities need to think about data privacy from the outset, it should not be an afterthought.

The regulatory framework

There is a range of legislation and codes of practice around surveillance and data protection that are relevant for the use of CCTV systems in taxis/PHVs, these are set out in Appendix three. The Surveillance Camera Commissioner (SCC) and the Information Commissioner (ICO) both are the key regulators on the use of CCTV in taxis/PHVs.

Guidance from the Surveillance Camera Commissioner (SCC)

A good starting point when considering introducing a mandatory policy is the Surveillance Camera Code of Practice¹⁷ (SC Code), which includes 12 guiding principles which should apply to all surveillance camera systems, including CCTV in taxis/PHVs. Local authorities have a statutory duty to ‘pay due regard’ to the SC Code under the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012.

In deciding to mandate CCTV systems and defining how they should be used, licensing authorities act as a ‘system operator’, and as such will need both to be aware of and adopt these principles.¹⁸ In particular, principle one states that CCTV surveillance must be for a specific purpose, in pursuit of a legitimate aim and necessary to meet an identified pressing need. Policies should also be kept under review to ensure that the use of CCTV remains justified and proportionate and continues to meet its stated purpose (principles two and 10 of the SC Code refer to this).

There are several tools issued by the SCC which support authorities both to comply and demonstrate compliance with the SC Code. This includes the Passport to Compliance, which acts as a guide through the various questions that can be asked to help evidence that due regard has been paid to the impacts a policy will have and that risks identified have been mitigated.

¹⁷ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/204775/Surveillance_Camera_Code_of_Practice_WEB.pdf

¹⁸ www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/204775/Surveillance_Camera_Code_of_Practice_WEB.pdf

The SCC's self-assessment tools¹⁹ will also assist authorities to demonstrate publicly their compliance with the Code once CCTV is installed and operating. Councils can also apply for the Commissioner's third party certification mark, which demonstrates compliance with the SC Code.²⁰

Failure to pay due regard to PoFA and the SC Code risks undermining the evidential integrity of any recordings derived from CCTV systems, should these need to be used as evidence in criminal or civil proceedings.²¹

Guidance from the Information Commissioner

Whilst the SCC regulates surveillance cameras, the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) regulates personal data and is responsible for enforcing compliance with privacy and data protection legislation. The ICO has separate guidance and codes, such as the CCTV Code of Practice²², to help organisations to comply with data protection legislation. The ICO's code does make reference to the SC Code and in complying with the SC Code authorities will have gone a long way to complying with the ICO's code already.

Given the ICO has challenged some of the authorities that have introduced mandatory policies it is recommended that authorities ensure they are fully compliant with both the DPA and PoFA. A summary of the key requirements is outlined in the following sections.

¹⁹ They can be accessed by the following link:
www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/524525/Self_assessment_tool_v3_WEB_2016.pdf

²⁰ www.gov.uk/government/publications/surveillance-camera-code-of-practice-third-party-certification-scheme

²¹ Local authorities should note section 33(3) and 33(4) of PoFA – that the SC Code is admissible in evidence in criminal and civil proceedings and where the SC Code hasn't been given due regard a court or tribunal should take this into account. The CPS are updating their disclosure manual (September 2018) – the Surveillance Camera Commissioner has blogged about this:
<https://videosurveillance.blog.gov.uk/2018/07/17/disclosure-the-importance-of-complying-with-the-surveillance-camera-code-of-practice/>

²² <https://ico.org.uk/media/for-organisations/documents/1542/cctv-code-of-practice.pdf>

The ICO has been clear that if CCTV systems are to be mandated as part of the conditions of a licence, there will need to be a strong justification, and the policy must be reviewed regularly, especially where audio recording is being used in addition to cameras.

The law is clear that the use of CCTV and audio in taxis must be proportionate to the risk presented, and councils will need to set out a clear justification of why they believe there is a need for visual and audio recording if applicable. The main rationale for using audio recording in taxis/PHVs is that this would pick up any inappropriate conversations between passengers and drivers, for example when they are carrying children. Authorities will need to assess whether audio recording is necessary based on local circumstances, and be able to justify this.

As discussed earlier, authorities will be required to undertake a DPIA to demonstrate that the impact of CCTV systems in taxis/PHVs on privacy has been carefully thought through and the statutory obligations placed upon the council to comply with GDPR have been appropriately addressed. The ICO provide detailed guidance on DPIAs on their website²³ and the SCC has also issued a number of helpful tools.²⁴ The process of completing these assessments will also support councils in evaluating what a proportionate use of CCTV systems in taxis/PHVs might look like in the local context.

The ICO also encourages cameras be capable of providing a privacy friendly solution, for example where audio is used, both drivers and passengers should have independent controls for activating it. Once activated, authorities will need to consider how long audio recording should continue, and measures will need to be put in place to make sure recording is discontinued before other passengers enter the vehicle.

On the basis that there is adequate evidence and justification for a given approach, the ICO has in some cases taken the view that it is

²³ <https://ico.org.uk/media/for-organisations/documents/1595/pia-code-of-practice.pdf>

²⁴ www.gov.uk/government/organisations/surveillance-camera-commissioner

acceptable for cameras to be on permanently whilst the vehicle is being used for business purposes, but must be capable of being switched off when the vehicle is used in a private capacity. The Commissioner's blog details their position that where a taxi is being used by a driver for their own private or domestic purpose, continuous recording is likely to be unlawful, unfair and excessive under data protection legislation and in breach of Article 8 of the Human Rights Act 1998.²⁵

The ICO's work on this is currently ongoing, particularly around the issue of continuous recording when the taxi is being used privately by the driver. To assist with this work, the ICO is engaging with a number of licensing authorities and further advice will be published by the ICO once this work has concluded.

When looking at what practical measures can be put in place to mitigate concerns around privacy, a robust download policy which clearly sets out the tightly-defined conditions/circumstances under which footage can be downloaded from the CCTV system will be key. The policy should also demonstrate that any data held is kept securely and for a defined period of time in line with duties under GDPR.

Following guidance from the SCC and ICO and engaging with both organisations will help licensing authorities to balance privacy and safeguarding in a justifiable and proportionate way.

Rotherham Council's taxi camera policy

Suitable equipment, capable of recording both audio and video, must be installed in all licensed vehicles. The system must meet or exceed the council's specification for taxi camera systems and must be operational at all times that the vehicle is being used as a licensed vehicle (ie for the carriage of fare paying passengers). The system does not need to be operational during other times (for example when being used for domestic purposes).

²⁵ <https://ico.org.uk/about-the-ico/news-and-events/blog-continuous-cctv-in-taxis-where-do-councils-stand>

Video recording must be active at all times. Audio recording must be active in any of the following circumstances:

- An unaccompanied child (ie under 18) or vulnerable adult is being carried in the vehicle.
- Where the driver and customer are involved in a dispute or the driver feels threatened by the behaviour of a passenger. Activation of audio recording must be triggered by the driver pressing a switch/button. Audio recording will continue until such time as the button/switch is pressed again. This switch will activate/deactivate audio recording independent of the passenger's audio activation button/switch.

There must also be the facility for the passenger to activate audio recording (independent of the driver) should the passenger wish to do so. Activation of audio recording must be triggered by the passenger pressing a switch/button. Audio recording will continue until such time as the button/switch is pressed again. This switch will activate/deactivate audio recording independent of the driver's audio activation button/switch.

Once activated (by either passenger or driver), the audio recording must continue for an uninterrupted period until it is deactivated. There must be an indicator located within the vehicle that is clearly visible to the passenger and clearly shows that audio recording is taking place.

At the end of the journey when the passenger leaves the vehicle, audio must be deactivated before another passenger enters the vehicle. If appropriate it must be reactivated should any of the situations above arise in relation to this new journey.

Rotherham's policy was developed in view of the SC Code and ICOs code of practice and in consultation with both regulators.

Source: Hackney Carriage & Private Hire Licensing Policy (p.25)

www.rotherham.gov.uk/downloads/file/2473/rotherham_mbc_taxi_and_hackney_carriage_policy

Audio recording

The use of audio recording is considered more intrusive of privacy than cameras and requires strong justification. Where authorities opt to mandate audio recording, the justification for this will need to be clearly set out in the DPIA and the hours of operation of audio recording in particular should be considered carefully. The ICO's code includes a useful set of questions that must be thought through before audio recording is considered:

- Is there a pressing social need and do you have evidence that this need must be addressed?
- Have you considered other less privacy intrusive methods of addressing the need?
- Have the alternative options been reviewed and is there evidence to show that the only way to address the issue is through the use of audio recording?
- Have you got a clear specification for the audio system to ensure appropriate privacy and the necessary quality of recording?
- Is the public aware when audio recording is taking place, and how they can activate it?

In practical terms, the ICO has suggested that an audio recording system that allows recording to be switched on and off easily is a 'privacy friendly solution', as it does not require continuous recording and therefore mitigates the potential risk of recording excessive amounts of information. Again the local context will be important in determining what is appropriate.

Southampton Council's policy on the use of audio recording was challenged by the ICO for breaches of the Data Protection Act. The tribunal's view was that the requirement for continual 'blanket' audio recording in licensed vehicles was disproportionate, with the impact on the right of privacy outweighing any positive impact it may have on public safety or reducing crime. The tribunal's report can be read here: www.southampton.gov.uk/moderngov/documents/s18170/Appendix%204.pdf

As a result of this Southampton amended their requirements around audio recording and adopted a more targeted scheme. Southampton's policy sets out circumstances when audio recording should be activated based on times of day, types of customer (for example, children or vulnerable adults) and the use of panic buttons.

Similarly, Rossendale council's policy determines specific times when audio recording is required to be activated. This includes whenever an unaccompanied child (ie under 18) or vulnerable adult is being carried in the vehicle, or if there is a dispute with a passenger, or a driver feels threatened by a passenger's behaviour.

Information governance

Alongside considerations about when and what information should be captured, a key part of managing obligations under GDPR is what happens to the information captured. Information governance is the term used to describe the policies, procedures and processes implemented to manage information that is collected, in this case those visual and audio recordings captured by CCTV systems.

Councils therefore will need to cover how data is kept secure when it is held within a system in the vehicle, at the point of download, and once information is downloaded.

Who has responsibility for the control of data captured on CCTV systems?

In terms of who has responsibility for information captured by CCTV systems in taxis/PHVs, GDPR defines a data controller as the individual or organisation which has ultimate responsibility for how personal data is collected and processed.

The ICOs position is that in most circumstances it is the council which is the data controller, not an individual taxi driver and this position is set out in the Commissioner's blog post.²⁶ This is due to the fact that in mandating CCTV the council will usually be responsible for the purpose of the processing and defining how and when systems should be used, and how data is processed.

Data controllers are required to register with the ICO. In most cases councils will already be registered with the ICO as data controllers, but registration will need to be updated to reflect new use of personal data where a taxi/PHV CCTV policy is adopted. Authorities should engage with data protection officers within your own organisations to discuss this.

Where a council chooses to use a third party service provider as remote storage for taxi/PHV CCTV data, or to process or manage the CCTV data, the third party will act as a 'data processor'. A formal written contract is required between the data controller and data processor covering security arrangements, retention/deletion instructions, access requests and termination arrangements. For more information, the ICO has a detailed guide around the roles of data processors and data controllers:

<https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-the-general-data-protection-regulation-gdpr/accountability-and-governance/contracts>

As data controller the licensing authority is ultimately responsible for how images/recordings are stored and used, determining in what circumstances the images should be disclosed and for complying with all relevant data protection legislation. This can all be set out in a download policy, as set out in the next section.

Developing a data download policy

Licensing authorities will need to put in place clear policies around how information captured will be protected throughout its lifetime, ie from when it is recorded to when it is either downloaded or destroyed, this should be in the form of a download policy.

How CCTV systems capture and store information

When activated, cameras and audio equipment will record data which is automatically saved onto a memory recording system, like a memory card. The recording system and memory card (or other image memory recording system) are hardwired into the vehicle, and need to be securely stored within the vehicle, away from public access, and should be tamper proof.

Recordings should be stored on the internal memory for a defined period of time set out by the licensing authority, for example 31 days. After this period of time, unless there has been a request for download, the recordings should be over-written or destroyed.

The images contained in the recording device can only be downloaded by an authorised officer of the council or police officer. Where data is downloaded, there should be clear guidelines for how long this data is then be kept and how it is stored.

The ICO's code of practice sets out detailed information about how information should be stored, viewed and disclosed. This guidance is outlined briefly below, but councils are advised to read the code of practice in full.²⁷ Principles six, seven and nine of the SC Code also cover the storage and use of images captured from CCTV in taxis.

²⁶ <https://ico.org.uk/about-the-ico/news-and-events/blog-continuous-cctv-in-taxis-where-do-councils-stand>

²⁷ <https://ico.org.uk/media/for-organisations/documents/1542/cctv-code-of-practice.pdf>

For example, a download policy should set out clearly:

- that the licensing authority is responsible for the control of data captured by CCTV systems in taxis/PHVs
- how the information should be used and the circumstances in which it may be downloaded
- to whom it may be disclosed
- how long it should be kept for.

Recorded material should be stored in a way that maintains the integrity of the information so councils will need to ensure that the information is secure and where necessary, encrypted. Encryption can provide an effective means to prevent unauthorised access to images processed in a surveillance system. The encryption of data needs to be considered both when it is 'at rest' and 'in transit', ie when the data is being moved from the recording device in the vehicle to another server.

CCTV systems should be installed in a way that allows data to be secured in a locked 'data box' inside a vehicle as well as being encrypted. Council's may want to consider compiling a list of permitted installers in the area so they can be confident that installation requirements have been met and data is secure.

Attention must also be given to the data that is downloaded and extracted. Councils will need to make provision for this data which is likely to involve separate storage arrangements, different retention periods and potentially different access controls. For example, when footage is captured on a device, it will usually be over-written after a given time period. However where footage is downloaded, for example to investigate an incident, this will be stored separately on a server for as long as is needed for investigation and possible prosecution purposes. This will generally need to be kept for longer than footage which is not accessed.

Integrity of images

Principle 11 of the SC Code relates to the importance of processing data in a way that retains its integrity (ie its accuracy and consistency) and this will need to be addressed in relation to the images/audio recordings captured by CCTV in taxis. This is of particular importance should any of this data be used as evidence for a prosecution in the criminal justice system.

It is important that there are effective safeguards in place to ensure the integrity of recorded images and information that is stored, so that it can be used for its intended purpose. For example ensuring that time, date and location of recordings (known as meta data) is recorded reliably, and that compression of data does not reduce its quality.

It is also important to ensure that data is recorded and stored in a format that allows it to be shared with ease with appropriate law enforcement agencies when relevant. If this cannot be readily achieved it may undermine the purpose of having CCTV in the first place. Data therefore needs to be in a format that is easily shared, that can be readily exported and then stored and analysed without any loss of its integrity. In particular:

- a system user should be able to export images and information from a surveillance camera system when requested by a law enforcement agency
- the export of images and information should be possible without interrupting the operation of the system
- the exported images and information should be in a format which is interoperable and can be readily accessed and replayed by a law enforcement agency
- the exported images and information must preserve the quality.

Data retention

A download policy should set out how long data will be retained by the licensing team. This should cover the time that data needs to be kept for on the recording device within the vehicle, as well as how long the licensing authority will retain data in the event that it is downloaded. It is worth thinking through what the appropriate retention period might be for different scenarios. For example, downloading data as part of routine enforcement activity for the purpose of checking that the system is operating correctly will necessitate a shorter retention period than downloads relating to a serious incident.

Authorities will need to ensure that their information governance policies are updated to make reference to the CCTV data retention period and the rationale for it. Principle six of the SC Code covers the retention of images captured from CCTV in taxis setting out that images should not be retained for any longer than is absolutely necessary.

Dealing with requests for downloads

The majority of the time, data will be deleted or over written without the need to download it. However, there will be certain circumstances when data will need to be downloaded from the system, for example if an incident occurs or during enforcement inspections of vehicles.

As set out on page 17, a download policy should be developed to set out the prescribed circumstances in which data will be downloaded. The policy will also need to set out where, and by whom downloads can be undertaken. Most policies will specify that data downloads should be conducted in the presence of at least two relevant people, one of those being a member of council staff who has been trained in the download of data from the system, and in the requirements of the policy.

Downloads might ordinarily take place at a council facility, but may on occasion be at another location. This should be described in the download policy.

Procedures should be put in place to check that any request for data is in an appropriate format detailing the powers that allow the release of the data and providing all the information required to ensure the correct footage can be identified. The request for download must state the approximate time of the event/occurrence and only the timescale relevant to the specific incident will be downloaded, decrypted and thereafter stored.

It is also recommended that a dedicated computer should be used to facilitate downloads from data boxes, and where downloaded footage can be securely kept until it can be transferred onto a dedicated secure storage system held by the licensing team. A working copy can be produced and given to the requesting authority/subject or retained by the investigating officer. The ICO has published an information sharing code of practice and recommends that the data flows for this process be documented in the DPIA: https://ico.org.uk/media/for-organisations/documents/1068/data_sharing_code_of_practice.pdf

Whilst the amount of download requests will vary from authority to authority, the expectation is that the presence of CCTV should reduce the number of incidents in taxis/PHVs and that therefore requests for downloads should be a relatively infrequent occurrence.

Council enforcement officers will need to be able to use the system to access and extract information where disclosure is appropriate so consideration will need to be given to what additional training might be necessary.

Extract from Southampton Council's download policy

The policy outlines that data will only ever be downloaded on four occasions:

- where a crime report has been made involving the specific vehicle and the police have formally requested that data
- when a substantive complaint has been made to the licensing authority regarding a specific vehicle/driver and that complaint is evidenced in writing (and cannot be resolved in any other way)
- where a data request is received from an applicant, eg police or social services, that has a legitimate requirement to have access to the data requested to assist them in an investigation that involves a licensed vehicle or driver
- to fulfil a Subject Access Request that is compliant with the Data Protection Act.

Subject access requests

GDPR gives individuals certain rights over their personal data, including the right to access personal data, to know how their data is being used and to object to the way their data is used. Requests from passengers for a copy of footage/audio recordings is referred to as a Subject Access Request (SAR). The SC Code (principle four) sets out that there must be clear responsibility and accountability for all surveillance camera system activities including images and information collected, held and used.

Information for individuals about how they can request access to any recordings (personal data) captured by CCTV systems in taxis/PHVs will need to be provided, and a process for responding to requests set out.

Councils will need to put in place provisions for dealing with SARs and the circumstances in which these requests will be accepted or refused. Whether accepted or refused, SARs require a response within one month of receipt.

Third party requests

A third party request essentially captures any other requests, which can include members of the public making a complaint, and the police. There is a slightly different process for dealing with requests for downloads from third parties. Where information is requested by the police, for example if a passenger has made an accusation about a taxi/PHV driver, or a driver is making allegations of threatening behaviour against passengers this will need to be dealt with as a 'third party' request.

Once council officers are satisfied that the request is legitimate arrangements should be made with the owner of the licensed vehicle for the vehicle to attend the designated premises where a download can take place, for example a council facility. If it is not practical then a member of the licensing team should attend the location of the vehicle or data box to facilitate the download. It is good practice for any download to be carried out in the presence of at least two relevant people, which could be two members of the licensing team.

The council would need to consider the reasons a third party is requesting the information and then identify if they have a lawful basis to disclose it. However, the DPA 2018, similarly to the DPA 1998, provides an exemption that allows the disclosure of information for the prevention or detection of crime or the apprehension or prosecution of offenders (Schedule 2 Part 1 Section 2).

Privacy notices

Under GDPR, individuals have the right to be informed about the collection and use of their personal data. This is a key transparency requirement under GDPR.

Privacy notices are used to inform the public about the collection and use of their personal data. In terms of CCTV recording in taxis/ PHVs, privacy notices will need to set out why camera/audio recording is being used, how long data will be kept for, who will be able to access it and how to make a complaint.

Privacy notices will need to be prescribed by the council. Under GDPR (article 13 and 14) certain information is required to be included in a privacy notice. These are the:

- name and contact details of the licensing authority
- contact details of the authority's data protection officer
- purpose of the processing
- lawful basis for the processing
- recipients or categories of recipients of the personal data
- retention periods for the personal data
- rights available to individuals in respect of the processing
- right to lodge a complaint with a supervisory authority.

More information is available on the ICO's website²⁸ and principle three of the SC Code also refers to the need for transparency in the use of surveillance cameras.

All of the above considerations are also addressed within principle nine of the SC Code which sets out the SCC's expectation that surveillance camera system images and information should be subject to appropriate security measures to safeguard against unauthorised access and use.

²⁸ <https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-the-general-data-protection-regulation-gdpr/individual-rights/right-to-be-informed>

Implementation and enforcement

Having considered safeguarding and privacy issues, and consulted on proposals to implement a mandatory CCTV policy, licensing authorities will need to develop clear policies outlining the agreed approach to CCTV systems. These should set out expectations for how these will be used, and how non-compliance will be tackled.

What should be included in a licensing policy?

Councils will need to update their existing taxi/PHV licensing policy to include new provisions for CCTV systems. The LGA encourages all licensing authorities to have an overarching taxi/PHV policy, but where they do not, a standalone policy in relation to CCTV should be developed.

The key things to cover in a policy are:

- that a CCTV system must be installed in all licensed vehicles
- that CCTV systems must meet the council's prescribed specification
- when and how CCTV systems are to be used
- reference to how the system can be activated by drivers/passengers and that there must be an indication that audio recording is in use
- information about fair processing which should be included on notices in vehicles with further information available on the council's website
- implementation timescales for new provisions
- that the system complies with relevant legislation.

Details of the system specification and implementation schedule can be provided as supplementary documents. Licensing authorities will need to ensure corporate information governance policies are also updated to include the use of CCTV data in taxis/PHVs.

Conditions of authority's taxi/PHV driver and vehicle licences will also need to be updated to reflect new requirements for CCTV.

Camera specification and installation

Principle eight of the SC Code of practice is clear that councils, as surveillance camera operators, should consider any approved operational, technical and competency standards relevant to a system and its purpose and work to meet and maintain those standards – there are a list of recommended standards on the SCC website.²⁹ It is up to individual councils to decide the extent to which they prescribe exactly what a CCTV system will need to do, but it is helpful to have a minimum standard which cameras/audio need to meet so drivers are clear about the requirements that systems need to meet. This will act as a guide for drivers when they are purchasing cameras.

Again, the SCC's Buyers' Toolkit and the Passport to Compliance documents will also provide a good guide when considering specifications.

²⁹ www.gov.uk/guidance/recommended-standards-for-the-cctv-industry

Systems should also comply with relevant legislation and standards. Council's should satisfy themselves that the supplier is able to provide the relevant technical files for the entire system, including any ancillary equipment, and that the product is either CE or E marked if type approved. Test certificates provided by the manufacturer, particularly if outside of the EU, may not be sufficient for this purpose.

Clearly the cost of CCTV systems will depend on the specification a council has agreed and consideration should be given to how requirements can be balanced against the cost to drivers. In Rotherham, the taxi trade argued that the cost of systems that met the specification were too high and that this should be picked up by the council. However, the council considered that the systems represented a reasonable and legitimate business cost and noted the ability for the driver to offset costs. Elsewhere, some local authorities have identified funds to support drivers with the cost of installing systems.

The specification for CCTV systems will need to be set out either within a policy or as a separate annex. It is also helpful to set out a list of systems which meet the requirements of the policy and where these can be purchased. This may require some initial scoping work to ensure cameras that meet requirements are readily available and suppliers are able to meet the demand of the fleet size.

Installation of systems should be done by an installer approved by the local authority so that cameras/audio equipment are safe and secure. Including a list of approved local installers is one way to ensure this happens.

Communicating changes to drivers and members of the public

Using an effective communication strategy to raise awareness of the introduction of mandatory CCTV is important and there should be a proactive effort to make sure both drivers and operators, as well as the public are clear on exactly what the changes are, and the implications of these. Whilst drivers should already be aware of plans following earlier consultation, it is important that rules, policies and procedures are put in place ahead of implementation, and that all licensed drivers are informed, for example by letter, to ensure they fully understand the requirements that they will need to comply with. This should also give them an opportunity to prepare and budget for new requirements. Training could be offered to drivers around their responsibilities and how to deal with questions from passengers.

The public should also be informed about new proposals for example via press releases and other routine communications. To comply with data protection legislation and PoFA, all vehicles with CCTV systems fitted will need clear signage to let the public know that they are being recorded, and how they can find out more information, or make a request for a data download. The forms of this signage should be prescribed in your download policy. Detailed information should also be published on the council's website, and reviewed at least annually.

Implementation schedule

Developing and publishing an implementation plan is important and shows that new requirements are being introduced fairly and in a way that minimises the impact of potentially costly changes on the licensed trade.

Once a policy has been approved, it may be fair to say that requirements will have immediate effect in relation to new applications. Thought should be given to what a reasonable amount of time to install cameras in existing licenced vehicles would be and whether any exemptions might be appropriate, for example if vehicles are in their last year of operation due to age limit requirements.

One possible approach could be that vehicles with existing licenses are required to be fitted with CCTV within a defined amount of time, eg 18 months from the policy go live date or alternatively, there could be a requirement for vehicles to have CCTV installed at point of renewal following the go live date. Enforcement officers can then check that systems are installed correctly and working properly as part of the renewal process.

Adopting this type of staged approach will help to reduce the impact on CCTV system suppliers and installers, and also ensure that licence holders have sufficient time to source, purchase and install a system prior to the requirement taking effect.

Enforcement

The effectiveness of CCTV as a measure to improve safeguarding is reliant on enforcement activity to identify those who are not complying with the agreed policy, for example by not switching the systems on when they should be. If there is evidence that cameras are not being used in the agreed manner, steps will need to be taken to address this, in line with those set out in the council's policy.

The functionality of CCTV systems should be checked as part of routine enforcement activity although no one but the relevant council officer or where applicable authorised staff from the data processor should be able to access this data. In a similar way to how footage from CCTV systems in licensed premises is checked, a designated officer will need to check that the camera and audio functions are being used in line with local requirements. Officers will therefore need to be trained in functionality of the systems which meet the specification. It is worth considering what training needs will be required at the outset so that resources can be allocated to make sure officers have relevant training. Principle 11 of the SC Code covers this point.

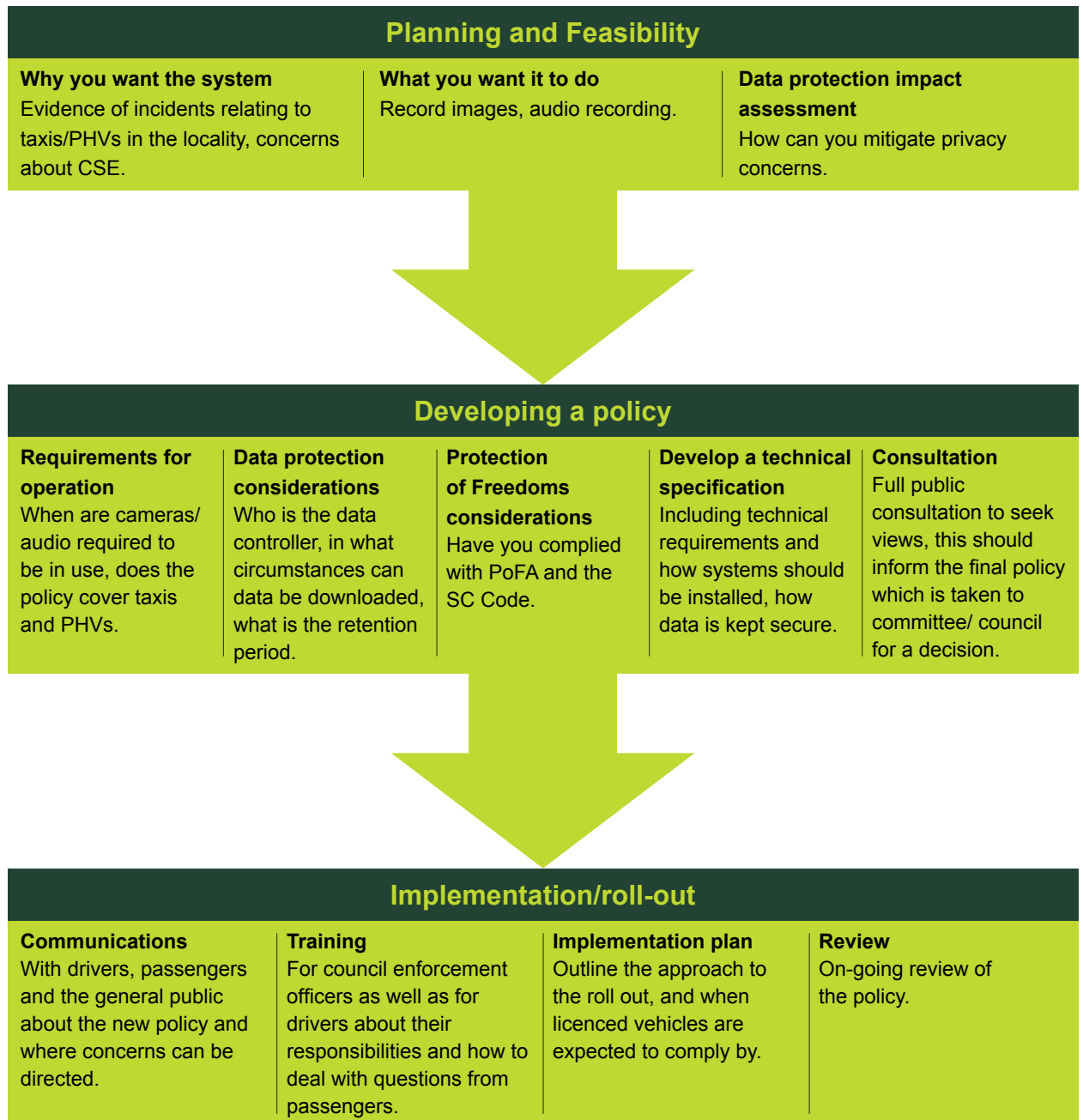
Reviewing CCTV policies

Principles two and 10 of the SC Code set out that there should be regular reviews of CCTV systems to ensure that their use remains justified and proportionate in meeting its stated purpose.

By regularly checking CCTV systems you can make sure the cameras are working correctly, that footage can be downloaded correctly and so on. It is best practice to carry out reviews at least annually and this can be done for every camera or the entire system. The Surveillance Camera Commissioner's self-assessment tool is useful when carrying out a review and it is best practice for the outcome of the review to be published.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Flow chart



Appendix 2: Glossary

Surveillance camera systems

The statutory definition for a surveillance camera systems is set out in Section 29(6) of the 2012 Act³⁰ and is taken to include: (a) closed circuit television (CCTV) or automatic number plate recognition (ANPR) systems; (b) any other systems for recording or viewing visual images for surveillance purposes; (c) any systems for storing, receiving, transmitting, processing or checking the images or information obtained by (a) or (b); (d) any other systems associated with, or otherwise connected with (a), (b) or (c).

A system operator is the person or persons that take a decision to deploy a surveillance camera system, and/or are responsible for defining its purpose, and/or are responsible for the control of the use or processing of images or other information obtained by virtue of such system.

A system user is a person or persons who may be employed or contracted by the system operator who have access to live or recorded images or other information obtained by virtue of such system.

Date protection impact assessments (DPIA)

A data protection impact assessment (DPIA) is a process which helps to identify and minimise the data protection risks of a project. Under GDPR, a DPIA is required to be undertaken for 'high risk' processing which includes mandatory CCTV in taxis.

The DPIA will need to outline the purpose of the processing, assess the necessity and proportionality of a specified approach, as well as assess the potential risks to individuals and how these could be mitigated.

Data controller

A data controller determines the purposes and means of processing personal data.

Data processor

A processor is responsible for processing personal data on behalf of a controller

Data protection officer (DPOs)

DPOs assist you to monitor internal compliance, inform and advise on your data protection obligations, provide advice regarding data protection impact assessments (DPIAs) and act as a contact point for data subjects and the supervisory authority. All public authorities are required to have one.

³⁰ The Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 (PoFA)
www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2012/9/part/2

Appendix 3: Links to useful resources and guidance

Information Commissioner's Office

Guidance on Data Protection Impact Assessments

<https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-the-general-data-protection-regulation-gdpr/accountability-and-governance/data-protection-impact-assessments/>

Blog: 'Continuous CCTV in taxis – where do councils stand?'

<https://ico.org.uk/about-the-ico/news-and-events/blog-continuous-cctv-in-taxis-where-do-councils-stand>

Data protection code of practice for surveillance cameras and personal information

<https://ico.org.uk/media/for-organisations/documents/1542/cctv-code-of-practice.pdf>

Guidance on the role of data controllers and processors

<https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-the-general-data-protection-regulation-gdpr/accountability-and-governance/contracts/>

Individual rights

<https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-the-general-data-protection-regulation-gdpr/individual-rights/>

Surveillance Camera Commissioner

Surveillance Camera Code of Practice

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/204775/Surveillance_Camera_Code_of_Practice_WEB.pdf

Passport to compliance: these documents will guide authorities through the relevant principles within the Surveillance Camera Code of Practice. It sets out the necessary stages when planning, implementing and operating a surveillance camera system to ensure it complies with the code.

www.gov.uk/government/publications/passport-to-compliance

Self-assessment tool

www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/524525/Self_assessment_tool_v3_WEB_2016.pdf

Third party certification

www.gov.uk/government/publications/surveillance-camera-code-of-practice-third-party-certification-scheme

Buyers' Toolkit

An easy-to-follow guide for non-experts who are thinking about buying a surveillance camera system and want to ensure they buy an effective system that does what they want it to do.

www.gov.uk/government/publications/surveillance-camera-commissioners-buyers-toolkit

Blog 'CCTV in Taxis – are you talking to me?'

<https://videosurveillance.blog.gov.uk/2018/08/28/cctv-in-taxis-are-you-talking-to-me/>

Speech to the National Association of Taxi Drivers

www.gov.uk/government/speeches/surveillance-camera-commissioners-speech-to-the-national-taxi-association-agm

Useful case studies from the Commissioner

www.gov.uk/government/collections/surveillance-camera-code-of-practice-case-studies



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We consider requests on an individual basis.

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DEREGULATION ACT 2015 AND ITS EFFECT ON TAXI AND PRIVATE HIRE LICENSING

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor K. Taylor
Portfolio Holder Consulted	No
Relevant Assistant Director	Simon Wilkes – Director of Worcestershire Regulatory Services
Report Author	Job Title: Licensing and Support Services Manager Contact email: Kiran.lahel@worcestershire.gov.uk Contact Tel: 01562 738067
Wards Affected	All
Ward Councillor(s) consulted	No
Relevant Council Priority	
Non-Key Decision	
If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting.	

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

1.1 **Note the contents of the report and the implications of the Deregulation Act 2015 on Taxi & Private Hire Licensing.**

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 At a meeting in mid-2024 with the Taxi Representatives in Bromsgrove, concerns were raised by Bromsgrove's hackney carriage trade members regarding the rising number of Uber vehicles which were entering and working in and around the district. Concerns were also raised in relation to the regulations which were implemented that allow Uber to operate in other local authority areas, under its current business model.

2.2 As the majority of these Uber private hire vehicles are licensed by Wolverhampton City Council (WCC) Licensing Officers wrote to WCC asking for support and have since carried out joint enforcement activity in Bromsgrove's Night Time Economy with WCC officers. The enforcement activity was to ensure that any vehicles licensed by WCC entering and working in the district, were meeting the requirements set out in this report and working within the regulations.

2.3 Members more recently have requested a reminder of the legislation that was introduced that enable Uber's operating model.

3. KEY ISSUES

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Taxi legislation

- 3.1 The relevant legislation governing hackney carriage and private hire licensing is highlighted at 3.2 to 3.5 of this report. At present there are no immediate plans by government to either review, replace or introduce updated legalisation to govern hackney carriages or private hire vehicles.
- 3.2 The main pieces of legislation which govern taxi and private hire licensing are:
- The Town Police Clauses Act 1847 (TPCA47)
 - The Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 (LGMPA76)
- 3.3 The 1847 Act provides duties relating to hackney carriage vehicle's which have transferred to district councils over the years and the adoptive provisions of the 1976 Act relating to both hackney carriage and private hire trades that have been taken up by virtually all local authorities in order to ensure that the public have reasonable access to taxi and private hire vehicle services, as they play an important part in local transport provision.
- 3.4 The main aim of licensing taxi and private hire vehicles and drivers is to "Protect the Public" by ensuring that any drivers licensed are "Fit and Proper" and that vehicles are "Suitable, Safe and Comfortable". The legislation provides a broad framework for the licensing of drivers, vehicles and operators but the detail of how this is done, including standards and conditions, is the responsibility of individual Local Authorities through their adopted policies. It is widely cited that this legislation is out of date and due for reform. Limited reform has already taken place in part by way of the Deregulation Act 2015.
- 3.5 Section 46 of the 1976 Act requires that any private hire operators, vehicles and drivers operating in a controlled district must be licensed and hold all three licences with the same local authority. However, this does not mean they are restricted to physically operating in only that local authority.
- 3.6 The 1st October 2015 saw the implementation of the Deregulation Act 2015. Section 11 of the Act inserted two new sections (55A and 55B) into the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 in relation to the sub-contracting of bookings from one private hire vehicle operator to another. This was a major amendment to the 1976 Act affecting taxi and private hire drivers and operators as it permitted the sub-contracting of bookings from one private hire vehicle operator to another who can be licensed by a different local authority. The Act therefore allowed taxi and private hire companies to change the way in which they operate.

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- 3.7 It has always been the case that a taxi or private hire vehicle had the “right to roam” meaning that they are not limited or restricted to simply working within their controlled district, this meant that a driver and vehicle licensed by a Local Authority could work anywhere in the country on a pre-booked basis. It has also always been the case that a resident of one area could make a booking with a private hire operator licensed in a totally different area and that an operator could lawfully accept the job and dispatch a driver and vehicle licensed by their local authority into the local authority area where the passenger wanted to be picked up.
- 3.8 The Deregulation Act 2015 however, further enabled a private hire operator licensed by one Local Authority to accept a booking and then sub-contract it to another operator licensed by a different Local Authority (previously they could only sub-contract to an operator licensed by the same Council as them).
- 3.9 Whilst on the face of it this did not appear radical, it meant that private hire operators throughout the UK could set up satellite offices in a neighbouring area and operate under a licence issued by that local authority, therefore they could essentially sub-contract work to themselves and then dispatch both a vehicle and driver licensed by that local authority to undertake bookings coming into a central location.
- 3.10 Since its implementation in 2015, many private hire operators have taken advantage of the freedoms which the Deregulation Act 2015 introduced. Companies have set up satellite offices in other cities and neighbouring districts and are now sub-contracting private hire bookings to themselves and dispatching a vehicle and driver licensed by that local authority.
- 3.11 The Government’s intention when implementing the Deregulation Act 2015 was to encourage free trade across district council borders, which inevitably has led to the current situation within UK. The Government does not see this as problematic, as it has achieved what it intended to with the introduction of the Act, so it is not a loophole as many people seem to state, hence within Bromsgrove District Council it is now commonplace to see vehicles and drivers licensed by other Local Authorities undertaking pre-booked journeys.
- 3.12 Various elements of the taxi trade have expressed concerns at the risk that unsafe vehicles or unfit persons may be trading in Bromsgrove, because they are not licensed locally. Whilst this is an understandable perception as there can be significantly different provisions between local authorities for licences, for vehicles in particular, and members can make different decisions in relation to whether an applicant’s previous convictions make them a fit and proper person to be a driver. However, as yet the WRS licensing team has yet to identify any significant threat to the local public from these changes.

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- 3.13 The National Taxi Standards introduced in September 2022 created a National Register of Taxi Licence Revocations and Refusals (NR3). NR3 contains information relating to any refusal to grant, or revocation of a hackney carriage/private hire driver licence. This information is important in the context of a subsequent application to another Authority for a drivers' licence by a person who has had their licence refused or revoked in the past. All of the licensing authorities within Worcestershire, including Bromsgrove, have signed up to and are utilising NR3.

Plying for hire

- 3.14 "Plying for hire" refers to the act of a vehicle stopping to pick up a passenger for hire and reward when that passenger hasn't pre-booked the journey through a licensed private hire operator.
- 3.15 Concerns have been raised by Bromsgrove's taxi drivers that vehicles and drivers licensed by other local authorities are plying for hire in Bromsgrove. As explained earlier in this report, providing that a private hire vehicle and driver (and operator) are properly licensed by a Local Authority they can wait in any location for a booking to be dispatched to them quite legally. A recent legal case taken by Reading Borough Council against Uber drivers licensed by TfL who were waiting in Reading for bookings has confirmed that, as long as they are not actively "plying for hire," a private hire or hackney carriage vehicle can wait anywhere for a booking, providing that they are parked lawfully.
- 3.16 Officer interaction with private hire drivers and vehicles in the Bromsgrove area, indicate that the drivers licensed by other authorities do appear to be simply waiting for passenger bookings to be allocated by their respective companies. However, issues have arisen when these vehicles have allegedly parked or waited near or even on taxi ranks. Officers are monitoring this matter and following up where necessary any reports of persistent or repeat offending with the respective local authorities and licence holders.

Uber and App based private hire booking systems

- 3.17 Uber Technologies Inc. is an American international transportation network company with headquarters based in San Francisco, California. The company develops, markets and operates the Uber mobile app, which allows consumers with smartphones to submit a trip request which is then routed to Uber drivers who use their own cars to complete the booking. Essentially it is an online booking service for private hire vehicles.
- 3.18 Using GPS, they detect your location and connect you with the nearest driver. You can also request a specific type of car if you prefer - such as

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a luxury ride or a straightforward private hire vehicle. The app texts you when the driver arrives, and you can check the identity of the driver against who actually shows up.

- 3.19 By May 2015, the service was believed to be available in 58 countries and 300 cities worldwide.
- 3.20 It should be noted that Uber is not the only smartphone app to have been developed to help connect passengers and taxi / private hire service providers. Other examples of companies operating in the UK include Bolt, Veezu, Addison Lee, Bounce, Kabbee and Gett. There are also app-based companies set up in Worcestershire.
- 3.21 The activities of Uber have sometimes provoked controversy in some countries with questions raised about the legalities of their operating model. However, within the UK it should be stressed that Uber appears to be operating entirely lawfully within the private hire licensing regimes provided for in London by the Private Hire Vehicles (London) Act 1998 and in the rest of England and Wales under the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976.
- 3.22 The Uber website at www.uber.com/legal/gbr/terms states that Uber is the holder of a Private Hire Vehicle operator licence in each of the jurisdictions in which it operates, and accepts bookings at its registered address and/or operations centre, via private hire bookings made by the Uber App.
- 3.23 Over the years Uber have expanded its operation in England and Wales beyond London and the company now has licences to operate in Manchester, Leeds, Birmingham, Bristol, Newcastle, Sheffield, Wolverhampton and many other local authority areas. The company's expansion has been rapid and indications are that it will continue to grow and will seek to expand its services into other towns and cities throughout England and Wales.
- 3.24 As with all licensed private hire operators, Uber can dispatch vehicles and drivers to carry out work anywhere in the country, providing that the vehicle and driver that is allocated the booking is also licensed with the local authority that issued the relevant private hire operator licence.
- 3.25 Due to the relaxation on sub-contracting rules for private hire vehicles that came into effect on 1st October 2015, Uber can also sub-contract bookings to other licensed private hire operators in other local authority areas so that the operator can dispatch an appropriately licensed vehicle and driver.

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- 3.26 As bookings are made via the smartphone app, it is difficult to see how it can be proven precisely in which local authority areas Uber is “making provision for the invitation and acceptance of bookings for private hire vehicles” and therefore where it needs to obtain licences from, however enquiries with Birmingham City Council and Wolverhampton City Council have revealed that Uber has an operating base in both areas that is used in connection with their private hire operator’s licence there.
- 3.27 The emergence of Uber and other smartphone taxi booking apps has highlighted the urgent need for reform of the outdated taxi and private hire legislation that struggles to cope with regulating this area of licensing due to modern technological advances like smartphones and the internet, which were not around in 1976.
- 3.28 Uber vehicles and drivers, can now regularly be found working in the and around Worcestershire, including Bromsgrove. Officers have and will continue to engage with Wolverhampton City Council if any issues are identified by intelligence or enforcement operations.

Geofencing

- 3.29 Geofencing is a virtual boundary, set around a specific area such as a city, airport, or a particular area and is used by app based private hire booking companies such as Uber. When a private hire vehicle enters or exits this defined area, the system detects it using GPS or other location services on the driver's device. Once the vehicle crosses the boundary, certain actions can be triggered, such as sending notifications to the driver, logging the entry/exit time, or updating the status of the vehicle.
- 3.30 For app based private hire booking companies this can help their dispatchers know when vehicles are available in a specific area, allowing for quicker allocation of a booking. It also ensures that vehicles are operating within permitted areas, helping to enforce local regulations and safety standards. For customers it provides real-time updates on the proximity of their booked vehicle, which has been proven to improve service reliability and satisfaction.
- 3.31 At a meeting with Taxi representatives the trade representatives put forward a request for the council to contact Uber, asking them to limit their operation in the Bromsgrove area as the business competition is affecting Bromsgrove’s hackney carriage drivers’ income. Officers have recently made contact with representatives of Uber, who state that they have no intention of limiting their operations in any UK’s districts.
- 3.32 There is no legal framework to restrict or limit private hire operations in the UK and one UK local authority which attempted to restrict the operation of private hire vehicles within their district, found themselves

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the subject of a Judicial Review in the high Court. The outcome of the Judicial review resulted in the Council having to remove any restrictions which they had put in place.

- 3.33 Officers will continue to monitor the activity of these vehicles and drivers, to ensure that they are operating lawfully and in accordance with current taxi law and regulations.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The trade has indicated that the introduction of deregulation and Uber have had a negative impact on the trade and income.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 These are outlined in the main body of the report and outline the impact of the Deregulation Act 2015.

6. OTHER - IMPLICATIONS

Local Government Reorganisation

- 6.1 The Government White paper have acknowledged that Taxis and private hire vehicles are an important part the transport networks and some of the most vulnerable groups in our society rely on them. They recognise the concerns about out-of-area working by private hire vehicles and are exploring how best to address these concerns. As part of this, they will be in due course consulting on whether to make all Local Transport Authorities (including Strategic Authorities) responsible for taxi and private hire vehicle licensing.

Relevant Council Priority

- 6.2 The Council's priority is to keep the residents of Bromsgrove District Safe and any policy discussion regarding Taxi's must align with the Council's key priorities.

Climate Change Implications

- 6.3 No Implications

6. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 6.1 Licensing officers acknowledge the impact that the Deregulation Act has had on the trade and the report outlines the proactive work licensing officers will continue to do with the intelligence team and using NR3 to try and limit the risk to the travelling public in Bromsgrove.

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7. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

8. REPORT SIGN OFF

Department	Name and Job Title	Date
Portfolio Holder	Please record the name of the relevant Portfolio Holder who has signed off the report here.	Please give the date they signed off the report here.
Lead Director / Assistant Director	Please record the name of the relevant lead Director / Assistant Director who has signed off the report here.	Please give the date they signed off the report here.
Financial Services	Please record the name of the relevant Officer in Financial Services who has signed off the report here.	Please give the date they signed off the report here.
Legal Services	Please record the name of the relevant Officer in Legal Services who has signed off the report here.	Please give the date they signed off the report here.
Policy Team (if equalities implications apply)	If applicable, please record the name of the relevant Officer in the Policy team who has signed off the report here.	If applicable, please give the date they signed off the report here.
Climate Change Team (if climate change implications apply)	If applicable, please record the name of the relevant Officer in the Climate Change team who has signed off the report here.	If applicable, please give the date they signed off the report here.

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LICENSING COMMITTEE

21st July 2025

LICENSING COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2025/26

21st July 2025

- CCTV in licensed hackney carriage and private hire vehicles
- Deregulation Act 2015 and its effect on Taxi and Private Hire Licensing

Closed Session

- Any Enforcement / Appeals Updates – (verbal)

8th September 2025

- Review of Street Trading Policy

Closed Session

- Any Enforcement / Appeals Updates – (verbal)

10th November 2025

Closed Session

- Any Enforcement / Appeals Updates – (verbal)

16th March 2026

Closed Session

- Any Enforcement / Appeals Updates – (verbal)

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