

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE LICENSING COMMITTEE

MONDAY 10TH NOVEMBER 2025, AT 6.00 P.M.

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

Officers: Mrs. V. Brown, Ms. K. Lahel, Worcestershire Regulatory Services, Mrs. P. Ross and Mrs S. Woodfield (observing)

11/25

APOLOGIES

There were no apologies for absence.

12/25

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest on this occasion.

13/25

MINUTES

The minutes of the Licensing Committee meeting held on 21st July 2025 were submitted.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Licensing Committee meeting held 21st July 2025, be approved as a correct record.

14/25

CCTV IN TAXIS - RESPONSES RECEIVED FROM THE TAXI TRADE

Following on from the Licensing Committee meeting held on 21st July 2025, whereby Members were asked to consider mandating CCTV in taxis. Members had sought further reassurance and had requested that the Licensing and Support Services Manager, Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS), conducted a light touch consultation with the Taxi Trade to better understand their thoughts and opinions in respect of mandating CCTV in taxis.

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

The Licensing and Support Services Manager, (WRS) introduced the report and in doing so informed Members that currently only a small number of licensing authorities (8%) had so far made it a legal

requirement for all taxi and private hire vehicles to be fitted with mandatory CCTV systems. Those authorities had been able to demonstrate through evidence and intelligence that such a policy was necessary. More recently these had included Barnsley Council, Portsmouth and Southampton, Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire District Council. Swindon Borough Council had mandated CCTV in taxis but had reversed this decision due to a number of challenges. There were no local authorities across Worcestershire that had mandated CCTV in taxis.

As requested by Licensing Committee Members, Officers had liaised with the Bromsgrove taxi representative regarding the installation of CCTV in hackney carriage and private hire vehicles. In response, the trade representatives had agreed with the proposal in principle and had acknowledged the potential benefits for both licence holders and passengers, particularly in enhancing safety and accountability. However, they expressed serious concerns that the associated costs and administrative requirements would be too prohibitive at the present time.

The taxi trade representative had explained that the taxi and private hire trade was facing significant financial pressures due to rising operational costs, increased competition from online platforms and vehicles and drivers licensed by other local authorities, and a general downturn in passenger demand. These challenges made it difficult for drivers and operators to commit to any additional expenditure, even for initiatives that they supported in theory. The representatives also highlighted the need for further consultation and potential financial support or phased implementation to make such measures more viable for the trade.

To obtain further information Officers had carried out an informal survey with the current 103 Bromsgrove licence holders to ascertain whether they firstly already had CCTV, if they would agree with a mandatory policy on CCTV and if they had any comments to add.

There were 30 responses received to the consultation. 63% of respondents said that they would not welcome the introduction of a mandatory policy on CCTV. 30% of respondents said yes and 2% said they 'didn't know'.

Analysis of the comments as to why licence holders did not feel they supported a mandatory policy included the high cost of installation and a number of respondents asked that if funding was available then they might consider it. Of the 30 respondents that replied 8 already had CCTV installed, under the Council's voluntary CCTV option.

As a result of some of the comments received during the consultation, Officers had carried out some further research on the cost of systems that met the required National Standards. The current cost for the equipment itself was £500 plus an installation cost of between £100-£150.

At a current Transport Committee in parliament CCTV was discussed at length and there were concerns raised that local authorities were mandating CCTV in vehicles without clearly understanding the technology and that they did not understand that CCTV was for the safeguarding of the travelling public and not the driver.

Members stated that the report was good and that Officers had done exactly what Members had requested.

However, some Members questioned as to why the general public had not been asked about mandating CCTV in taxis, as the relevant people who used taxi services.

In response the Licensing and Support Services Manager, (WRS), highlighted that it was not a formal consultation, as Members had only requested that a light touch consultation be carried out with the taxi trade.

The Licensing and Support Services Manager, (WRS), reassured Members that should any further information come forward Officers would review that information and would revisit the Statutory Taxi Standards undertaken in 2022. Officers were continually working with partner agencies, but to date, there was currently no evidence for the need to mandate CCTV in taxis.

Further discussion followed on the following points:-

- The 63% of respondents, to the light touch consultation, who had replied that they would not welcome the introduction of a mandatory policy on CCTV.
- Rising operational costs.
- The cost implications of installing CCTV.
- Increased competition that Bromsgrove taxi drivers were facing from on-line platforms and vehicle and drivers licensed by other local authorities.
- CCTV being used for the safeguarding the travelling public and not for safeguarding drivers, as detailed in paragraph 3.13, page 6 of the Supplementary Agenda Pack.

In response the Licensing and Support Services Manager, (WRS), informed the Committee that drivers had to undertake mandatory safeguarding training, which provided information with regards to safeguarding themselves. Drivers could still install CCTV in their vehicles, provided they notified the Council, under the Council's voluntary CCTV option.

Members agreed that by mandating CCTV in taxis this would put local drivers under further pressure and there was currently no evidence for mandating CCTV in taxis.

Members suggested if the Licensing and Support Services Manager, (WRS), could possibly research if any authorities who had mandated CCTV had seen a decline or an increase in the number of people travelling by taxi, had the mandating of CCTV made the travelling public feel any safer?

In response the Licensing and Support Services Manager, (WRS), commented that they were happy to do some research.

RESOLVED that the updated report on mandating CCTV in taxis, be noted.

15/25

LICENSING COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee considered the Work Programme for 2025/26.

Members raised and briefly discussed a number of potential items for inclusion on the Licensing Committee Work Programme, as follows:-

- a) Worcestershire Regulatory Services, Taxi Licensing, Application and Renewal Process
- b) Information on the Districts Taxi Fleet:-
 - Number of Electric vehicles
 - Number of Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles
 - Are the number of taxis in the district in decline, proportionality compared to other districts.
- c) Feedback from the Taxi Association on the number of taxi ranks in the District, are there enough spaces? Are they under used with a decline in the number of taxis within the District?

Members were happy for the Licensing and Support Services Manager, (WRS), to provide information on the Districts Taxi Fleet (b), and the number and usage of the taxi ranks in the District (c); as detailed in the preamble above, to be emailed to all Licensing Committee Members.

RESOLVED that

- a) a report on Worcestershire Regulatory Services, Taxi Licensing, Application and Renewal Process be presented to the next meeting of the Licensing Committee, and
- b) the Licensing Committee Work Programme 2025/2026 be updated to reflect this.

16/25

TO CONSIDER ANY OTHER BUSINESS, DETAILS OF WHICH HAVE BEEN NOTIFIED TO THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF LEGAL, DEMOCRATIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT 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.

17/25

ANY ENFORCEMENTS / APPEALS UPDATES

There were no Enforcement / Appeals updates.

The meeting closed at 6.42 p.m.

Chairman