

## Statement and update in respect of Common Law Police Disclosure

I would like to take this opportunity to update the committee and the public about a common law police disclosure issue that was identified earlier in the year, and our response to it.

Regarding the exempt items that were considered by the Miscellaneous Licensing Sub-Committee on Wednesday, 6 October 2021, these concerns were followed up by a letter to the Chief Constable, copied to the Police and Crime Commissioner and others, expressing our concern about the delay in the licensing authority being informed of the initial arrest, and requesting a meeting. That meeting has now taken place, and I would like to update the committee on the actions that have been taken as a result of this incident.

The meeting with Gloucestershire Constabulary established that the reason that the allegations were not reported to the Council in June 2021, is that at that time, the Police were unaware that the individual was a licensed driver. Following constructive dialogue, Gloucestershire Constabulary will be working with licensing officers to ensure that in future, more effective information sharing occurs between the Police and Licensing Authorities. We all understand that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and of the need to work constructively to identify where improvements can be made.

Since this is a national issue affecting every licensing authority and police force, a letter has also been sent to the Home Office for the attention of The Rt Hon Kit Malthouse MP, in his role as Minister for Crime and Policing<sup>1</sup>. Lord Jones of Cheltenham was also kind enough to ask a written Parliamentary question about common law police disclosure<sup>2</sup>.

I would like to reassure the public that Cheltenham Borough Council's licensing processes are based on the highest possible standards in light of the prevailing legislation and national guidance. We are confident therefore, that taking a Cheltenham licensed taxi, or private hire vehicle, is as safe as we can reasonably ensure.

The Council has a robust Taxi Licensing Policy and performs background checks on all drivers via the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), the Driver Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) and the National Register of Revocations and Refusals (NR3), to name but a few, and requires drivers to undertake mandatory safeguarding training. Where issues are identified with any safeguarding process, we will always seek to work constructively with our partners to improve those processes.

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<sup>1</sup> Redacted copy available

<sup>2</sup> <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-12-08/HL4800/>