

Cheltenham Borough Council

Full Licensing Committee

Minutes

Meeting date: 4 March 2026

Meeting time: 5.00 pm - 7.30 pm

In attendance:

Councillors:

Councillor Dr David Willingham, Councillor Angie Boyes (Vice-Chair), Councillor Dilys Barrell, Councillor Steve Harvey, Councillor Tabi Joy, Councillor Dr Helen Pemberton, Councillor Julie Sankey, Councillor Dr Steve Steinhardt and Councillor Barbara Clark

Also in attendance:

Vikki Fennell (Senior Lawyer, One Legal), Michelle Bignell (Licensing and Public Protection Manager) and Jacob Doleman (Licensing Officer)

1 Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillor Wheeler.

2 Declarations of interest

There were none.

The committee praised the Licensing Team for their work on a recent case involving a driver that had been appealed at the Magistrates Court and then the Crown Court. The case had been found in the Councils favour and the Council were awarded £4180 in costs.

3 Public questions

There were none.

4 Minutes of the previous meeting

All minutes were approved unanimously.

5 Local Government Act 1972

The Chair read the following statement:

That in accordance with Section 100A(4) Local Government Act 1972 the public be excluded from the meeting for the remaining agenda items as it is likely that, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, if members of the public are present there will be disclosed to them exempt information as defined in paragraph 1 and 2, Part (1) Schedule (12A) Local Government Act 1972, namely:

Paragraph 1; Information relating to any individual

Paragraph 2; Information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual

Approved unanimously and the meeting entered exempt session.

6 Review of a hackney carriage driver's licence

The Licensing Officer introduced the report as published.

Members asked the officer questions, the responses are as follows:

- There were two distinct incidents of noncompliance in the same day, therefore two strikes would be issued separately.
- It is made clear to drivers that they have to declare convictions and they have to sign to say they have read the policy, which is where this information is.

The response to the driver question to the officer was that the two incidents that were on the same day were on the 21st October 2025, one was being parked on a taxi rank and the other being that the vehicle had no top light.

The driver addressed the committee and stated that he was sorry and the he hadn't had to attend a committee before.

His responses to Member questions were as follows:

- He had dropped his passengers on the road and was not displaying his top light as was doing a job for Uber at the time.
- He was driving on the motorway and took the light off before he started driving on the motorway.
- He stated that he came on the motorway from Bristol and when he was near Junction 12 he saw a job from Uber and collected the passengers without stopping to put the top light back on the vehicle..
- The right side of the road that he was seen on is the rank and on the other side of the road is closed, which is why he used the rank.
- He explained that he knew that he wasn't allowed to park in the rank.

- He stated that when he got the points on his licence on 26th September 2024 (which were for speeding on the motorway) he asked his son to contact the Council and he didn't, he was aware that this was a problem and he did declare them 18 months later when he reapplied.

The licensing officer at this point explained to the committee that although the driver did ask for an interpreter it is not something that the Council would provide and order for a driver deemed to be fit and proper there is an English proficiency test so it is assumed the driver would have basic knowledge to be able to understand but there is nothing to stop him bringing someone to the committee to help him with the proceedings.

- He didn't bring anyone with him to the committee to act as an interpreter as he was too ashamed, his daughter could not attend due to fasting and his son could not attend, he has tried to sort it out himself.

The licensing officer explained that a vehicle once it is licensed should always have the top light and plate on and should always be compliant.

- He explained that he thought that his son had sent an email explaining about the points as he had asked him to, this was not the case and as he thought that his son had done it for him he didn't need to do it himself.

The Licensing officer explained to the committee that they do not have to be informed of any incidents electronically, a person can come into the offices to complete the relevant paperwork, so lack of access to email should not be a problem.

The driver was then given the final right to reply where he stated the following:

- He asked that the committee would be lenient as this is the first time he has had to appear at a committee.
- He apologised and stated that he would be more careful in the future.
- He is trying his best and his only income is as a taxi driver, he is 54 and has not done any other job.

The committee adjourned to make their decision.

The committee returned and the Chair gave the decision as follows:

The committee stated that the starting point for a matter like this is a written warning and a requirement for the driver to undertake a driver interview to go through the reasoning with him and explain what is expected of him going forward as a private hire driver.

The committee stated that this decision was a proportionate one given the circumstances. The driver has done wrong, he will be given a warning and the committee deemed the further interview would be the correct action to make him more fit and proper.

The committee agreed that it was happy to renew his private hire driver licence due to expire tomorrow.

The committee advised him to bring someone with him to the interview to help him interpret at the interview

The fact that he failed to display his top light, stopped on rank and failed to declare, are all things he should have known.

The point was made to the driver that it is more embarrassing for the driver to lose his licence than have someone with him at interview who could assist him. The committee reminded the driver that after the interview if he comes before the committee again it is likely to be a more serious outcome but the committee is not fettering its discretion.

7 Review of a Hackney Carriage Driver's Licence

The Licensing Officer introduced the report as published.

After Member and driver questions to the officer, and the driver and his solicitor addressing the committee and then answering Member questions, the committee adjourned to debate the matter and made their decision.

After the adjournment the Chair delivered the committees decision as follows: The committee takes the Equality Act very seriously and financial safeguarding of the general public so to take no action is not suitable.

The Committee consider revocation would be too excessive based on the information before the committee, and the insufficient evidence suggests suspension is not an option for the committee at this time.

Therefore the unanimous decision of the committee was that

A written warning would be given and this would be passed on to integrated transport

The Committee delegated to the licensing team a suitable course at the drivers expense to suit the issues in the case around financial safeguarding and for the driver to re do the safeguarding course again at his own expense which would cover the issues raised in relation to the Equality Act. The committee stated that both of these tests were to be undertaken within 3 months – and all certificates to handed into licensing team.

The driver was reminded of his right of appeal to the local magistrates court within 21 days of the decision.

8 Any other items the Chairman determines urgent and requires a decision

There were none.

9 Date of next meeting

Next meeting of the Full Committee 3rd June 2026.