

Report to: Licensing and Enforcement Committee



Date of Meeting 8 April 2026

Document classification: Part A Public Document

Exemption applied: None

Review date for release N/A

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## **Committee Update – Licensing Act 2003, Gambling Act 2005, Taxi & Private Hire Licensing & General Licensing**

### **Report summary:**

This report provides an update on the activities of the Licensing Service under the Licensing Act 2003, Gambling Act 2005, Taxi and Private Hire Licensing and General Licensing including Street Trading and Pavement Licensing.

### **Is the proposed decision in accordance with:**

Budget                      Yes  No

Policy Framework      Yes  No

### **Recommendation:**

That the report be noted.

### **Reason for recommendation:**

To keep the Licensing and Enforcement statutory Committee up to date with current arrangements relating to the Licensing Service.

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### **Portfolio(s) (check which apply):**

- Assets and Economy
- Communications and Democracy
- Council, Corporate and External Engagement
- Culture, Leisure, Sport and Tourism
- Environment - Nature and Climate
- Environment - Operational
- Finance
- Place, Infrastructure and Strategic Planning
- Sustainable Homes and Communities

### **Equalities impact Low Impact**

If choosing High or Medium level outline the equality considerations here, which should include any particular adverse impact on people with protected characteristics and actions to mitigate these. Link to an equalities impact assessment form using the [equalities form template](#).

### **Climate change Low Impact**

**Risk:** Choose a risk level; Low Risk

**Links to background information** [e-bulletin 16 March - Gambling Commission newsletter](#)

**Link to [Council Plan](#)**

Priorities (check which apply)

- A supported and engaged community
  - Carbon neutrality and ecological recovery
  - Resilient economy that supports local business
  - Financially secure and improving quality of services
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## Report in full

### 1. Licensing Act 2003 – Applications received, licences issued, premises visited and number of hearings.

1.1 The reporting period refers to the period from the date of the last meeting 11 February 2026 to the date of writing this report, 24 March 2026. This will be referred to as the reporting period.

The table below shows the amount of Licensing Act 2003 applications received during the reporting period.

### Applications Processed

#### Application Type

New Premises Licences	11
Variations (Full)	0
Minor Variations	2
DPS Variations	8
Transfers	3
Temporary Event Notices (TENs)	87
New Personal Licences	6
Personal Licence Change of Address	2
Personal Licences Lost/Stolen	1
Cancellation of Premises Licences	5
Premises Licences Lost/Stolen	1
Premises Licences – Suspensions Lifted	2

1.2 A total of three premises of interest have been visited during the reporting period.

1.3 During the reporting period no Licensing and Enforcement Sub-Committee hearings have taken place for applications made under the Licensing Act 2003.

1.4 Representations were received in respect of one application for the grant of a premises licence; however, these representations were withdrawn through mediation.

## 2. Pavement Licensing

- 2.1 The new policy for Pavement Licensing was approved by the Licensing and Enforcement Committee on 11 February, this report will be presented to Cabinet for approval.
- 2.2 At the time of writing this report a total of 29 pavement licences are in operation across the district.
- 2.3 Work continues to take place to check pavement licences across the district to ensure compliancy with specified and approved furniture, duration of the pavement licence and the distance from the furniture to the kerb to ensure access to all persons is not compromised.
- 2.4 We have received two complaints during the reporting period regarding pavement licences allegedly operating beyond their timings as set out in the licence and persons having tables and chairs on the public highway without a pavement licence. These matters are currently being dealt with and one nighttime visit has taken place.

## 3. Gambling Act 2005

- 3.1 The Gambling Commission circulates a regular bulletin for licensing authorities outlining changes in legislation and any enforcement action taken. The latest bulletin can be found at 'links to background information'.
- 3.2 A total number of eight licensed gambling premises have been visited during the reporting period, the inspections included unlicensed family entertainment centres (UFEC), adult gaming centres (AGC), Bingo premises and alcohol on licensed premises holding gaming machine permits.
- 3.3 No further update on the publishing of the Guidance to Licensing Authorities has been received from the Gambling Commission.

## 4. Taxi & Private Hire Licensing

- 4.1 Day to day taxi and private hire licensing administration continues to be busy. The tables below show the number of licences currently in use and the number of outstanding applications.

4.2

Year	Taxi Driver Licences	Taxi Vehicle Licences	Private Hire Drivers	Private Hire Vehicles	Private Hire Operators
March 2025	133	128	51	40	27
June 2025	134	127	52	40	28
November 2025	131	126	55	42	31
February 2026	135	126	56	44	31
March 2026	135	126	56	43	31

4.3

New HCD	Renewal HCD	New HCV	Renewal HCV	Transfer HCV	New PHD	Renewal PHD	New PHV	Renewal PHV	Transfer PHV	New PHO	Renewal PHO
10	2	0	0	1	4	0	2	0	0	1	0

## **4 Revocations, suspensions & refusals**

- 4.1 During the reporting period, licensing officers have suspended two vehicle licences, one vehicle was involved in an accident, and the other vehicle requires a vehicle inspection report.
- 4.2 All revocations, suspensions and refusals are entered into the National Register of Revocations, Refusals and Suspensions, it is mandatory for local authorities in England to input details of individuals whose driver licences have been revoked, suspended or refused.
- 4.3 During the reporting period there have been no entries to the National Register of Revocations, Refusals or Suspensions.

## **5. Local Transport Authorities and the Licensing of Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles**

- 5.1 A meeting with other Devon Local Authorities and the Devon and Torbay Combined County Authority (CCA) took place on 16 March. This was to discuss the joint response from the Devon Local Authorities and the response from Devon and Torbay CCA, in response to the consultation from the Department of Transport to seek feedback on the potential benefits and challenges of making all local transport authorities responsible for the licensing of taxi and private hire vehicles. This consultation ends on 1 April 2026.
- 5.2 Below are the main points from the draft response from the Devon Local Authorities.
  - Transferring taxi and private hire licensing from district councils to local transport authorities would create substantial initial costs, including staff transfers, legal changes, and merging multiple IT systems. Ongoing costs are also likely to rise, as councils would lose shared-cost efficiencies and the flexibility of multi-disciplinary licensing teams. The anticipated savings are minimal, since taxi licensing is intended to be cost-neutral, and enforcement savings are uncertain.
  - The proposal does not address the core problems in the current system, particularly inconsistent national standards and cross-border hiring. The document argues that meaningful improvement requires modernised legislation, national standards, or potentially a national licensing model rather than simply shifting responsibilities to transport authorities.
  - There are also risks to service provision—especially in rural areas, where drivers may migrate to urban centres—and challenges around staffing, local fee-setting, and emission requirements. While some economies of scale could be realised, these would be better achieved through broader local government reorganisation or national reform rather than this partial restructuring.
- 5.3 The Devon and Torbay CCA will be submitting a response to the consultation.

## **6. The Taxi Table of Maximum Fares**

- 6.1 At a meeting of the Licensing & Enforcement Committee on the 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2025, the Committee resolved to proceed no further with the drafting of a new hackney carriage fare setting procedure at that time. The Licensing Team were instead asked to continue collecting trade data with a view to re-visiting this decision in June 2026.

The Committee instead determined to review the table of maximum fares using existing fare setting methodology and, a new table of maximum fares came into effect on the 10<sup>th</sup> October 2025. The Chair reaffirmed the Committee's opinion that small, annual, increases to the fare tariff were preferable to infrequent, larger adjustments.
- 6.2 While the Licensing Team has continued to collect trade data throughout 2025/26, further detailed consultation with the taxi trade has not been possible due to increased levels of work and staff shortages within the team. In addition, Local Government Reorganisation and the recent Government consultation about transferring the responsibility for taxi and

private hire licensing to the Local Transport Authority (referred to above) raises uncertainty about the future relevance of any such fare setting procedure for East Devon.

The taxi trade remains divided on whether a fare increase is necessary in 2026.

- 6.3 The East Devon Taxi Association has indicated that they are likely to request a small fare increase on behalf of their members due to rising trade costs, including higher UK petrol and diesels costs driven up by recent increases in wholesale oil and gas prices. Other members of the trade however have expressed concerns that any further fare rise may price out customers.

The Licensing Team therefore proposes to bring a further report to the next Licensing & Enforcement Committee, recommending that work on a fare-setting procedure be deferred until more is known about any transfer of licensing responsibilities. The report will also include an option for the Committee to consider a 2026 fare review using the existing fare setting methodology.

## **7. Street Trading Consents**

- 7.1 At the time of writing this report 21 street trading consents are in operation across the district. These include sole traders and traders as part of an event not held under premises licence. At the time of writing this report 18 applications are in progress, this increase in applications is due to the number of organised events in the spring and summer months, which require additional street trading consent.
- 7.2 The team continue to remain vigilant to traders operating across the district without holding a consent and have contacted these traders when complaints have been received.
- 7.3 A draft version of the summary review of the existing Street Trading Policy will be available for Members to consider at a later meeting, with the outcome of the recent public consultation.

## **8. Staffing within the Licensing Team**

The recruitment of the two Licensing Officer vacancies is currently in progress. The interest in both posts has been high, and 43 applications have been received so far. The closing date for both vacancies is 5 April 2026.

The team continue to work hard in ensuring all applications are dealt within the statutory timescales and the workflow into the team remains high.

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### **Financial implications:**

There are no financial implications

### **Legal implications:**

There are no legal implications.