

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
TAXI LICENSING COMMITTEE
HELD AT NELSON TOWN HALL
ON 22ND MAY 2025**

PRESENT –

Councillor N. Ashraf (Chair)

Councillors

*S. Ahmed
N. Butterworth
M. Iqbal
B. Newman
K. Salter
M. Strickland*

Also in attendance

*Councillor M. Adnan
Councillor Y. Iqbal*

Officers present

<i>Neil Watson</i>	<i>Assistant Director, Planning, Building Control and Regulatory Services</i>
<i>Jackie Allen</i>	<i>Taxi Licensing Manager</i>
<i>Emma Barker</i>	<i>Legal Services Manager</i>
<i>Imtiaz Ahmed</i>	<i>Taxi Enforcement Officer</i>
<i>Lynne Rowland</i>	<i>Committee Administrator</i>



The following persons attended the meeting and spoke on the item indicated –

<i>Mohammad Akram</i>	<i>Revised Taxi Licensing Policy – Taxi Safety</i>	<i>Minute No.5</i>
<i>Zaheer Ahmed</i>		

1. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Members were reminded of the requirements of the Member Code of Conduct concerning the declaration of interests.

2. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIR

That Councillor B. Newman be appointed Vice-Chair of the Committee for the municipal year 2025/26.

3. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no questions from members of the public.

4. MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meetings held at 6.00 p.m. and 7.00 p.m. on 26th February 2025 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

5. REVISED TAXI LICENSING POLICY – TAXI SAFETY

The Assistant Director, Planning, Building Control and Regulatory Services submitted a report and revised Taxi Licensing Policy.

The Policy had been updated following meaningful discussions with the trade and set out proposals and amendments agreed by the Taxi Licensing Committee Vehicle Safety Working Group.

The Committee was asked to agree the Policy for a six-week consultation process. The revised Policy, with any comments from the consultation, would then be submitted to Council for adoption.

Members' attention was drawn to the key proposals and, in answer to questions, clarification was provided on various sections of the draft Policy. It was noted that trading name door signs were optional, but that door signs incorporating the licence number, pre-booking information and how customers could make a complaint to the Council were mandatory. The trade would continue to be consulted on the wording for these.

The Committee specifically discussed the proposal around vehicle testing and frequency which proposed an annual MOT test, issued from any garage, and a six-month taxi test from one of the Council's approved testing stations. It was suggested that this be amended to one MOT test per year for vehicles less than eight years old, increased to two tests per year for any vehicle that failed, and for any vehicle over eight years old. The general view was that this testing frequency would be acceptable if applied to vehicles less than/over six years old rather than eight.

It was further suggested that the licensing of accident write-off vehicles should be subject to receipt of an acceptable independent engineer's report.

RESOLVED

- (1) That, subject to an amendment to paragraph 4.10 relating to vehicle testing and frequency and the inclusion of reference to vehicle write-offs, the revised Taxi Licensing Policy be agreed for a six-week consultation process.
- (2) That the revised Taxi Licensing Policy, with any comments from the consultation, be submitted to Council for adoption.

REASON

- (1) *In order to ensure that adequate measures are implemented to improve vehicle safety standards in Pendle.*
- (2) *To adopt the Taxi Licensing Policy following consultation.*

6. TAXI LICENSING STRUCTURE AND FEES

(The Taxi Licensing Manager and Taxi Enforcement Officer withdrew from the meeting during consideration of this item.)

The Assistant Director, Planning, Building Control and Regulatory Services submitted a report for Members to consider and agree on the recommendations to the Executive on the level of fees charged for Taxi Licensing and on the staff structure to support the service.

It was reported that the fees for Taxi Licensing had not been reviewed since they were set in 2016. Since that time a number of changes had occurred which would influence the level of fees. These principally revolved around the level of licensed drivers and vehicles in Pendle and the staffing structure needed to cater for the increase in work. It was noted that, in 2016 there were circa 460 licensed drivers. This had risen to over 800. There was also the recent licensing of Uber in Pendle resulting in a significant increase in interest from new applicants.

The costs associated with the proposed new structure had been assessed in line with the CIPFA guidelines on accounting and the fees had been set against the costs of the proposed new structure.

The overall costs for the type of licences that the Council administered were included in tables 1-4 of the report and a full list of proposed fees was included as an appendix. A proposed change to the staffing structure was also included for consideration.

It was acknowledged that the number of licensed drivers was currently increasing and that the proposed staffing structure may not be adequate to support the service. However, increased staffing levels would result in a rise in fees and there was no guarantee that the licence numbers would remain. It was therefore felt that the current proposal was the most appropriate at this time.

RECOMMENDATION

- (1) That the Executive be recommended to note that this Committee -
 - agrees in principle to adopt the level of fees as set out in Appendix 1 to the report; and
 - notes the additional staff resources to meet the increased workload as set out in paragraph 9 in the report.
- (2) That the Executive be recommended to agree that the proposed licence fees set out in Tables 1-4 and Appendix 1 be advertised, under Sections 53 and 70 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 for a period of 28 days to allow for any objections to be received.

REASON

- (1) ***In order to update the level of fees so that the Council recovers its costs for administering taxi licensing.***
- (2) ***To ensure that the service is adequately resourced so that there is enough staff capacity to undertake the service and that users can receive a good and effective service.***

- (3) ***To comply with the requirements of the Local Government (Miscellaneous) Provisions Act 1976.***
- (4) ***In order to progress the adoption of the new fees and service structure to the Executive.***

7. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

RESOLVED

That in pursuance of the power contained in Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) the public and press be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the next item of business on the grounds that if a member of the public and press were present during consideration of the item, there would be disclosure to them of exempt information relating to the financial or business affairs of a particular person/persons.

8. INTERVIEWS

(a) Report on GU

The Assistant Director, Planning, Building Control and Regulatory Services submitted a report in respect of GU. GU attended for interview with one representative.

RESOLVED

That GU's application for the grant of a private hire driver's licence be refused.

CHAIR _____