

**Medway Council**  
**Meeting of Licensing and Safety Committee**  
**Wednesday, 25 March 2026**  
**6.02pm to 7.40pm**

**Record of the meeting**

**Present:** Councillors: McDonald (Chairperson), Browne (Vice-Chairperson), Brake, Fearn, Jackson, Nestorova, Peake, Sands and Vye

**Substitutes:** Councillors:  
Mark Prenter

**In Attendance:** Nicola Couchman, Democratic Services Officer  
Katie Honeywood, Assistant Licensing Manager  
Emily Lane-Blackwell, Licensing Manager  
Nigel Jackson, Chairman, Medway Licensed Taxi Driver Association  
Mark Lees, Head of Community Protection, Gravesham Borough Council, Gravesham and Medway Shared Licensing Service  
Emily Whittaker, Regulatory Services Manager

**1 Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Howcroft-Scott and Kemp.

**2 Record of meeting**

The record of the meeting held on 9 December 2025 was agreed and signed by the Chairperson.

**3 Urgent matters by reason of special circumstances**

There were none.

**4 Declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests and other interests**

Disclosable pecuniary interests

There were none.

Other significant interests (OSIs)

There were none.

Other interests

There were none.

## 5 Pavement Licensing Update

### **Discussion:**

The enforcement strategy for pavement licensing was summarised for the Committee.

Members queried the number of businesses not complying with the policy and officers explained that this was difficult to quantify, and the lack of enforcement did not incentivise businesses to apply for a pavement licence. This had led to the creation of the strategy which would be implemented alongside a period of engagement, communication and education.

Members were concerned that officers would not have the time, resources and storage facilities to implement the proposed measures. Officers explained that enforcement would take place on set days and would be supported by the Street Scene Team who would work in partnership with Licensing to work with businesses and to remove and store furniture where necessary.

Members queried whether a contract was in place with the Street Scene Team and were informed that there was no formal contract, but a service level agreement had been agreed.

Members were concerned about the safety of residents and the number of other items for sale that caused problems blocking pavements in town centres.

Members requested that officers from the Street Scene Team be invited to attend the next meeting to provide clarity regarding the resources available to support the proposed enforcement strategy and that the issue be reviewed then. In the meantime, officers were encouraged to continue with the work they were planning to undertake.

### **Decision:**

- a) The Committee reviewed the work that had been undertaken to create a clear procedure for enforcing the Pavement Licensing Policy.
- b) The Committee deferred commenting on the proposed enforcement strategy until further clarification could be provided at the next meeting regarding the resources required to support the proposed enforcement strategy.

## 6 Post Consultation Review of the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy

### Discussion:

The Assistant Licensing Manager informed the Committee that a six week consultation period on the proposed policy had taken place following the Cabinet approval of the consultation methodology on 18 November 2025. Minimal changes to the policy were now proposed.

The Committee were informed that 11 individual responses had been received in response to the consultation and one response from the trade association, Medway Licensed Taxi Drivers Association (MLTDA), which included responses from 113 of their members.

The Assistant Licensing Manager explained that the changes to the policy were that section 1.14 of appendix C to the report had been amended to stipulate the accumulation of more than six points, a paragraph on the Equality Act 2010 had been added to the executive summary and P51 in appendix E had been amended to ensure more safety and comfort for passengers. It was proposed that the new policy would be implemented from 1 May 2026.

Nigel Jackson, Chairman of MLTDA, was invited to address the Committee and summarised four key concerns raised by members of MLTDA.

**Vehicle age limit** – The Committee were informed that the Department for Transport best practice guidance states that arbitrary age limits on vehicles may be inappropriate and some local authorities have removed them completely. The Chairman of MLTDA explained that an age limit had an impact on the retention of taxi drivers and impacted on financial viability.

Members recognised the impact a vehicle age limit had on the retention of taxi drivers and financial viability for taxi drivers and the majority felt that the conditions and standards imposed alongside the vehicle testing requirements were sufficient to ensure that vehicles were in good condition rather than relying on an upper age limit for vehicles. However, one Member did not agree with the recommendation to remove the age limit on vehicles.

**Door signage** – The Committee were informed that due to the large number of operators under one company name and issues with keeping door signage securely on vehicles, MLTDA members suggested that it was no longer fit for purpose and should not be required. The Committee discussed how signage enhanced safety by allowing passengers to identify vehicles and felt that the requirement for signage should remain in the policy.

**SP30 speeding offences** – The Chairman of MLTDA explained that if taxi drivers got six points on their DVLA licence then their taxi licence could be revoked with immediate effect. He explained that minor speeding offences could easily happen to any driver and could result in the loss of their livelihood.

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Officers explained that the level of DVLA points had been amended to more than 6 points so a driver could incur 6 DVLA points from 2 minor speeding offences and still retain their taxi licence, but it would be reviewed if they had more than 6 DVLA points.

Members urged taxi drivers to notify the Licensing Team if they did receive any DVLA points as failure to do so had been an issue for some drivers.

**The colour of Private Hire vehicles** – The Committee were informed that it was becoming increasingly difficult to source appropriate red vehicles to meet the colour requirement imposed for Private Hire vehicles and it was proposed that this should be amended to any colour but white as all Hackney Carriage vehicles must be white.

Members recognised the financial impact and difficulty for drivers in obtaining suitable vehicles in a specific colour however the chequered markings on Private Hire vehicles should remain as a requirement for all Private Hire vehicles.

### **Decision:**

The Committee considered the draft policy and provided recommended amendments to the Assistant Director, Legal and Governance and the Portfolio Holder for Community Safety, Highways and Enforcement, for consideration.

The recommended amendments were:

- i. That the age limit on vehicles (in section 3 of appendix A to the report) be removed so that vehicles are no longer subject to an upper age limit.
- ii. That section 5.2 of appendix A to the report be amended to remove the requirement for Private Hire vehicles to be red in colour and amended to state that Private Hire vehicles can be any colour but White.

## **7 Review of the Allocation of Committee Seats - Licensing and Safety Sub-Committees**

### **Discussion:**

The report was taken as read and Members did not have any queries.

### **Decision:**

The Committee approved the allocation of seats for Licensing Hearing Panels and Licensing 1982 Act Hearing Panels as set out in Appendix A to the report.

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**Chairperson**

**Date:**

**Nicola Couchman, Democratic Services Officer**

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