

## **GENERAL LICENSING COMMITTEE**

Tuesday, 21 October 2025

**PRESENT** – Councillors Kane (Chair), Ali, Crumbie, Mrs Culley, Curry, Donoghue, Dulston, Lawley, Mahmud, K Nicholson and Toms

**APOLOGIES** – Councillors Lee and Ray,

**ABSENT** – Councillors Haszeldine

**OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE** – Jim Langley (Principal Lawyer - Litigation), Brian Murray (Assistant Licensing Manager), Colin Dobson (Licensing Manager), Sgt C Dickenson (Durham Constabulary), James McAllister (Democratic Officer) and Marc Atkins (Lawyer (Litigation))

### **LG12 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest reported at the meeting.

### **LG13 TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THIS COMMITTEE HELD ON 9 SEPTEMBER 2025**

Submitted – the Minutes (previously circulated) of the meeting of the General Licensing Committee held on 9 September 2025.

**RESOLVED** – That the Minutes of the meeting of the General Licensing committee held on 9 September 2025 be approved as a correct record.

### **LG14 REVIEW OF POLICY AND CONDITIONS RELATING TO HACKNEY CARRIAGES, PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLES AND THEIR DRIVERS AND OPERATORS FOLLOWING CONSULTATION**

The Executive Director for Economy and Public Protection submitted a report (previously circulated) which invited Members to discuss and approve amendments to Darlington's Private Hire and Hackney Carriage Licensing Policy following public consultation.

The Licensing Manager spoke to the report, and informed Members that Darlington's Private Hire and Hackney Carriage Licensing Policy was last reviewed in January 2021, with amendments made to it in 2022 following an interim review. A public consultation period followed, and the feedback received informed amendments made to the policy in tandem with the best practice guide (updated in 2023). The Licensing Manager then outlined the public consultation methodologies included in the attached appendices of the report.

The Licensing manager outlined the recommended amendments detailed in the report, and Members entered into discussion surrounding the proposed changes – notably the implementation of Disability Awareness Training, future potential implementation of internal CCTV cameras in the vehicle (which will only be implemented should governmental legislation require such), mandatory option to pay by card (with cash payments still being accepted), signage, a points based system for minor discretions, and necessity for a fire extinguisher in each vehicle. The Licensing Manager also spoke to the relevant data collected

that supported the implementation of such, before providing further detail on the arguments for and against amending the policy to reflect the aforementioned requirements.

Discussion ensued amongst Members of the Committee, in addition to representation being made from a Member of the Darlington Taxi Trade – all of which informing the vote on the recommendation.

**RESOLVED** – That this Licencing Committee make recommendations to Full Council for amendments to this Policy following public consultation – with the view to mandate fire extinguishers in each vehicle.

Reason – To ensure that this policy remains fit for purpose, taking into account any legislative changes and guidance issued to local authorities.