



General Licensing Committee Agenda

9.30 am Tuesday, 2 December 2025
Council Chamber, Town Hall, Darlington DL1 5QT

Members of the Public are welcome to attend this Meeting.

1. Introductions/Attendance at Meeting
2. Declarations of Interest
3. To approve the Minutes of the meeting of this Committee held on 21 October 2025 (Pages 3 - 4)
4. To approve the Minutes of the meetings of the General Licensing Sub Committee held on 21 October 2025 (Pages 5 - 6)
5. Application for/Renewal of Licence for Premises to be approved as a venue(s) for Marriages and Civil Partnerships - Hall Garth Hotel –
Report of the Assistant Director, Law and Governance and Proper Officer for Darlington Registration District.
(Pages 7 - 10)
6. Application for/Renewal of Licence for Premises to be approved as a venue(s) for Marriages and Civil Partnerships - Walworth Castle Hotel –
Report of the Assistant Director, Law and Governance and Proper Officer for Darlington Registration District.
(Pages 11 - 16)
7. SUPPLEMENTARY ITEM(S) (if any) which in the opinion of the Chair of this Committee are of an urgent nature and can be discussed at this meeting
8. Questions

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'A. Wennington', with a horizontal line underneath.

Amy Wennington
Assistant Director Law and Governance

Monday, 24 November 2025

Town Hall
Darlington.

Membership

Councillors Ali, Crumbie, Mrs Culley, Curry, Donoghue, Dulston, Haszeldine, Kane, Lawley, Lee, Mahmud, K Nicholson, Ray and Toms

If you need this information in a different language or format or you have any other queries on this agenda please contact James McAllister, Democratic Officer, Resources and Governance Group, during normal office hours 8.30 a.m. to 4.45 p.m. Mondays to Thursdays and 8.30 a.m. to 4.15 p.m. Fridays Email: james.mcallister@darlington.gov.uk or telephone 01325 403122

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 – Councillor 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.

GENERAL LICENSING SUB COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 21 October 2025

PRESENT – Councillors Kane (Chair), Donoghue, Lawley, K Nicholson and Toms

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

LGS26 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest reported at this meeting.

LGS27 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

RESOLVED – That, pursuant to Sections 100A (4) and (5) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the ensuing item on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in exclusion paragraphs 1 and 7 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act.

LGS28 PRIVATE HIRE DRIVER LICENCE APPLICATIONS FOR GRANT AND REVIEWS OF A HACKNEY CARRIAGE DRIVER LICENCE AND A PRIVATE HIRE DRIVER LICENCE (EXCLUSION PARAGRAPHS 1 AND 7)

The Executive Director of Economy and Public Protection submitted a report (previously circulated) to give consideration to a review of a Private Hire Driver Licence in light of a new conviction and a review of a Private Hire Driver Licence in light of an ongoing investigation by Durham Constabulary.

Ref 04/25

To give consideration to a review of a Private Hire Driver Licence in light of a new conviction.

The driver attended the meeting and responded to Members questions in relation to the above, and to why they felt that they were a fit and proper person to hold a Private Hire Driver Licence.

In reaching their decision, Members took into consideration the Council's Licensing Policy, which sets out the Council's stance on the Relevance of Convictions, Cautions, Reprimands, Fixed Penalties, Warnings and Complaints in assessing whether an applicant is a fit and proper person; the Council's Private Hire and Hackney Carriage Licensing Policy; and Section 61(1) of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976.

After careful consideration Members decided to revoke the Private Hire Driver Licence, with immediate effect, in accordance with sections 61(1)(b) and 61(2B) of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 in the interests of public safety. Members made this decision due to the fact that the driver was banned from driving for 23 months, and had been blown far over the legal limit when subjected to a breathalyser by Durham

Consutbulary.

RESOLVED – That the Licence be revoked under Section 61(1(b) of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976.

Ref 05/25

To give consideration to a review of a Private Hire Driver Licence in light of an ongoing investigation by Cheshire Police.

The driver did not attend the meeting and was therefore unable to respond to Members questions as to why they were a fit and proper person to retain a private hire driver licence.

In reaching their decision, Members took into consideration the Council's Licensing Policy, which sets out the Council's stance on the Relevance of Convictions, Cautions, Reprimands, Fixed Penalties, Warnings and Complaints in assessing whether an applicant is a fit and proper person; the Council's Private Hire and Hackney Carriage Licensing Policy; and Section 61(1) of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976.

After careful consideration Members decided to revoke the Private Hire Driver Licence, with immediate effect, in accordance with sections 61(1)(b) and 61(2B) of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 in the interests of public safety.

Members made this decision due to the nature of the alleged offence.

RESOLVED – That the Licence be revoked under Section 61(1(b) of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976.

**GENERAL LICENSING COMMITTEE
02 DECEMBER 2025**

**APPLICATION FOR RENEWAL OF LICENCE FOR PREMISES TO BE APPROVED AS A VENUE
FOR CIVIL MARRIAGES AND CIVIL PARTNERSHIPS**

THE HALL GARTH HOTEL, COATHAM MUNDEVILLE, DARLINGTON

Purpose of Report

1. To consider an application for the renewal of a licence to be an approved venue for civil marriages and civil partnerships in accordance with the provisions of:
 - (a) The Marriage Act 1949 (as amended by the Marriage Act 1994);
 - (b) The Civil Partnership Act (2004);
 - (c) The Marriage and Civil Partnerships (Approved Premises) Regulations 2005 and 2021; and
 - (d) The Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act (2013).

Summary

2. The Hall Garth Hotel is seeking to renew its licence as an approved venue for civil marriages and civil partnerships. The hotel's current approved premise licence is due to expire on 9 January 2026. The standard period for a licence as an approved venue for civil marriage and civil partnership is three years. The Hall Garth Hotel is seeking a renewal of its licence as an approved venue for civil marriages and civil partnerships to commence for three years following expiry of its existing licence from 10 January 2026 until 10 January 2029.

Information

3. The Hall Garth Hotel is one of Darlington's most popular venues for civil marriage and civil partnerships with ceremonies having always worked successfully and there have been no issues for the duration of this current licence which would adversely affect this application.
4. The Hall Garth Hotel has maintained its popularity as a venue for civil marriage and civil partnership ceremonies for many years and the hotel has an important role to play on the local and regional economy, attracting couples and their guests for weddings locally, regionally and nationally. The hotel has bookings for weddings for 2026, 2027 and 2028 which would require a continuation of its licence of civil marriages and civil partnerships beyond 9 January 2026.

5. The current locations and capacities hotel for civil marriages and civil partnerships at The Hall Garth Hotel are:

Room	Maximum Capacity
Summerson Suite	220
Brafferton Suite	120
Residents Lounge	25
Stables Bar Conservatory	40
Restaurant	40
Conservatory	50
The Lounge	30
The Secret Garden Gazebo	6 (unlimited guests outside of the gazebo)

Note:

The maximum capacity relates to guests and does not include the couple being married, the registrars, photographers, videographers or employees of the venue managing the event.

Most of the civil marriage and civil partnership ceremonies take place in either the Brafferton Suite or outdoors at the Gazebo with the remaining approved areas being licensed for business continuity purposes in the event of an emergency. Only one ceremony takes place per day at the hotel.

All the areas designated for civil marriages and civil partnerships at the Hall Garth Hotel are on the ground being fully accessible for guests with disability and mobility needs and all the indoor areas designated are on the ground floor.

6. The Hall Garth Hotel is seeking to renew its licence as an approved venue for civil marriages and civil partnerships for a further three years from 10 January 2026 to 10 January 2029.
7. The fee payable to the relevant Local Authority for the renewal of a licence for civil marriages and civil partnerships is £1925.00. The Hotel have been invoiced for this fee.
8. The local authority granting the licence as an approved venue for civil marriages and civil partnerships can specify the duration of the licence and attach any specific conditions to that licence. The standard licence for civil marriage and civil partnerships has historically been three years.

Financial Implications.

9. There are future bookings for marriage and civil partnerships at The Hall Garth Hotel beyond the expiry of the current licence on 9 January 2026 with ceremony bookings and advance payments having been made for ceremonies taking place in 2026 and 2027 and 2028.

Legal Implications.

10. The renewal of a licence to be an approved venue for civil marriages and civil partnerships to be held at The Hall Garth Hotel is required to meet existing contractual bookings beyond the current ceremony licence which expires on 9 January 2026.
11. The application a renewal of a licence for civil marriages and civil partnerships for a further three years which is the standard period of renewal.

Conclusions.

12. Members are asked to grant the renewal of the licence as an approved venue for civil marriages and civil partnerships to The Walworth Castle Hotel, Darlington for a three-year period with effect from 10 January 2026 to 10 January 2029.

Recommendations.

13. It is recommended that a licence as an approved venue for civil marriages and civil partnerships be granted to The Walworth Castle Hotel, Darlington for three years from 10 January 2026 to 10 January 2029 and that the places designated where civil marriages, and civil partnerships can take place and maximum capacity in those designated areas be:

Room	Maximum Capacity
Summerson Suite	220
Brafferton Suite	120
Residents Lounge	25
Stables Bar Conservatory	40
Restaurant	40
Conservatory	50
The Lounge	30
The Secret Garden Gazebo	6 (unlimited guests outside of the gazebo)

Note:

The maximum capacity relates to guests and does not include the couple being married, the registrars, photographers, videographers or employees of the venue managing the event.

Reasons.

14. To facilitate existing and future bookings for civil marriages and civil partnerships at, The Hall Garth Hotel, Coatham Mundeville, Darlington.

**Amy Wennington, Assistant Director, Law and Governance and
Proper Officer for Darlington Registration District**

Background Papers.

Application for renewal of a licence for civil marriages and civil partnerships from The Hall Garth Hotel.

Anthony Hall, Superintendent Registrar.

**GENERAL LICENSING COMMITTEE
02 DECEMBER 2025**

**APPLICATION FOR RENEWAL OF LICENCE FOR PREMISES TO BE APPROVED AS A VENUE
FOR CIVIL MARRIAGES AND CIVIL PARTNERSHIPS**

THE WALWORTH CASTLE HOTEL, WALWORTH, DARLINGTON

Purpose of Report

1. To consider an application for the renewal of a licence to be an approved venue for civil marriages and civil partnerships in accordance with the provisions of:
 - (a) The Marriage Act 1949 (as amended by the Marriage Act 1994);
 - (b) The Civil Partnership Act (2004);
 - (c) The Marriage and Civil Partnerships (Approved Premises) Regulations 2005 and 2021; and
 - (d) The Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act (2013).

Summary

2. The Walworth Castle Hotel is seeking to renew its licence as an approved venue for civil marriages and civil partnerships. The hotel's current approved premise licence is due to expire on 8 January 2026. The standard period for a licence as an approved venue for civil marriage and civil partnership is three years. The Walworth Castle Hotel are seeking a renewal of its licence as an approved venue for civil marriages and civil partnerships to commence for three years following expiry of its existing licence from 9 January 2026 until 9 January 2029.

Information

3. The Walworth Castle Hotel is one of Darlington's most popular venues for civil marriage and civil partnerships with ceremonies having always worked successfully and there have been no issues for the duration of this current licence which would adversely affect this application.
4. The Walworth Castle Hotel has maintained its popularity as a venue for civil marriage and civil partnership ceremonies for many years and the hotel has an important role to play on the local and regional economy, attracting couples and their guests for weddings locally, regionally and nationally. The hotel has bookings for weddings for 2026, 2027 and 2028 which would require a continuation of its licence of civil marriages and civil partnerships beyond 8 January 2026.

5. The current locations and capacities hotel for civil marriages and civil partnerships at The Walworth Castle Hotel are:

Room	Maximum Capacity
Reception Lounge	40
Ballroom Lounge/Breakfast Room	40
Ballroom	100
Cardinals Court	120
Hansards Restaurant	80
King James Suite	80
Library Tower	10
Prince Bishops Room	45
Dungeon	50 (access via stairs only)
Lady Palmer's Pavilion	6 and unlimited guests outside of pavilion

Note:

The maximum capacity relates to guests and does not include the couple being married, the registrars, photographers, videographers or employees of the venue managing the event.

Most of the civil marriage and civil partnership ceremonies take place in either the Ballroom, the Dungeon or outdoors at the Pavillion with the remaining approved areas being licensed for business continuity purposes in the event of an emergency. Only one ceremony takes place per day at the hotel.

From 2026 The Walworth Castle Hotel will also be offering outdoor civil marriages and civil partnerships in the woodland area which is within the hotel's grounds. This area fully accessible and an area within the woodland has been cleared and pathways and seating areas have been identified. The Marriage and Civil Partnerships (Approved Premises) Regulations of 2021 permit a civil marriage or civil partnership to be take place in any designated area within the boundary of the approved premise.

All of the areas designated for civil marriages and civil partnerships at the Walworth Castle Hotel are being fully accessible for guests with disability and mobility needs except the King James Suite and the Dungeon. There is no lift at The Walworth Castle Hotel and the King James Suite is on the first floor. The King James Suite is not offered for ceremonies and is one of several rooms licensed in the event of an emergency only and there are other ground floor accessible rooms available for emergencies should accessibility be a requirement in that emergency.

Civil marriages and civil partnership ceremonies do frequently take place in the Dungeon which is also not fully accessible with access only via a flight of steep stairs. Couples who book the Dungeon for their ceremony area advised of this restriction at the time of booking to advise guests.

6. The Walworth Castle Hotel is seeking to renew its licence as an approved venue for civil marriages and civil partnerships for a further three years from 9 January 2026 to 9 January 2029.
7. The fee payable to the relevant Local Authority for the renewal of a licence for civil marriages and civil partnerships is £1925.00. The Hotel have been invoiced for this fee.
8. The local authority granting the licence as an approved venue for civil marriages and civil partnerships can specify the duration of the licence and attach any specific conditions to that licence. The standard licence for civil marriage and civil partnerships has historically been three years.

Financial Implications.

9. There are future bookings for marriage and civil partnerships at The Walworth Castle Hotel beyond the expiry of the current licence on 8 January 2026 with ceremony bookings and advance payments having been made for ceremonies taking place in 2026 and 2027 and 2028.

Legal Implications.

10. The renewal of a licence to be an approved venue for civil marriages and civil partnerships to be held at The Walworth Castle Hotel is required to meet existing contractual bookings beyond the current ceremony licence which expires on 8 January 2026.
11. The application a renewal of a licence for civil marriages and civil partnerships for a further three years which is the standard period of renewal.

Conclusions.

12. Members are asked to grant the renewal of the licence as an approved venue for civil marriages and civil partnerships to The Walworth Castle Hotel, Darlington for a three-year period with effect from 9 January 2026 to 9 January 2029.

Recommendations.

13. It is recommended that a licence as an approved venue for civil marriages and civil partnerships be granted to The Walworth Castle Hotel, Darlington for three years from 9 January 2026 to 9 January 2029 and that the places designated where civil marriages, and civil partnerships can take place and maximum capacity in those designated areas be:

Room	Maximum Capacity
Reception Lounge	40
Ballroom Lounge/Breakfast Room	40
Ballroom	100
Cardinals Court	120
Hansards Restaurant	80
King James Suite	80
Library Tower	10
Prince Bishops Room	45
Dungeon	50
Lady Palmer's Pavilion	6 (unlimited guests outside of pavilion)
The Woodland	100

Note:

The maximum capacity relates to guests and does not include the couple being married, the registrars, photographers, videographers or employees of the venue managing the event.

Reasons.

14. To facilitate existing and future bookings for civil marriages and civil partnerships at, The Walworth Castle Hotel, Walworth, Darlington.

**Amy Wennington, Assistant Director, Law and Governance and
Proper Officer for Darlington Registration District**

Background Papers.

Application for renewal of a licence for civil marriages and civil partnerships from The Walworth Castle Hotel.

Anthony Hall, Superintendent Registrar.

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