

General Licensing Committee

A meeting of General Licensing Committee was held on Tuesday 25th November 2025.

Present: Cllr Eileen Johnson (Chair), Cllr Mick Moore (Vice-Chair), Cllr Jim Beall, Cllr Marc Besford, Cllr Diane Clarke OBE, Cllr Robert Cook, Cllr John Coulson, Cllr Jason French, Cllr Lynn Hall (Sub for Cllr Elsi Hampton), Cllr Mrs Ann McCoy, Cllr Andrew Sherris and Cllr Hilary Vickers

Officers: Natalie Hodgson, Sarah Whaley, Polly Edwards, Leanne Maloney-Kelly (DoAH&W), Ellie Russell and Niall Watson (Adults, Health and Wellbeing)

Also in attendance: Applicant - 073050, Applicant - 073050's Son, Simon Walker (Driver - 073050), Driver - 157829, Driver - 120764 and David Wilson (Driver - 120764)

Apologies: Cllr Elsi Hampton and Cllr Hugo Stratton

GLC/23/25 Evacuation Procedure

The evacuation procedure was noted.

GLC/24/25 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

GLC/25/25 Exclusion of the Public

RESOLVED that under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

GLC/26/25 Minutes

RESOLVED that the minutes of the General Licensing Committee meetings which were held on 29 July and 30 September 2025 were approved and signed as a correct record.

GLC/27/25 Private Hire Driver Application – 073050

Members were asked to consider and determine the fitness applicant - 073050 for a private hire driver licence who had previously been revoked by this authority. The matter has been deferred from a previous meeting when applicant - 073050 was unable to attend due to a family bereavement.

Applicant – 073050, his son and his representative Simon Walker attended the meeting and were given the opportunity to make representation.

Committee papers and reports had been provided to all relevant parties prior to the meeting.

The report detailed the following:

- A copy of, a Common Law Police Disclosure (CLPD) from Cleveland Police relating to applicant - 073050.
- A copy of an email and supporting documents relating to an alleged incident against applicant – 073050.
- A copy of a decision and revocation letter to applicant – 073050.
- A copy of applicant – 073050's application including a DVLA check code
- A copy of a redacted Storm report stating no further action (NFA), would be taken against applicant – 073050 in relation to the alleged incident.
- A copy of CCTV stills which were taken during the alleged incident involving applicant – 073050.
- A copy of a police disclosure and warning letter to applicant – 073050.
- A copy of a transcript interview with Licensing Officers and applicant – 073050.

The Chair introduced everyone present and explained the procedure to be followed during the hearing.

The Committee Members were presented with the officers' report and had the opportunity to ask questions of both the officers, applicant – 073050 and his representative Simon Walker.

The Committee heard that applicant - 073050 had previously been licenced with the authority from August 2008, until his licence was revoked in August 2024. The Committee heard that during August 2024, disclosure was received from Cleveland Police, confirming that applicant - 073050 was arrested for causing grievous bodily harm with intent to do grievous bodily harm, and affray. Members were also informed that Cleveland Police had made a decision to take no further action (NFA) against applicant – 073050, and the incident was closed under Outcome 15 where the victim supports prosecution, but police decide not to proceed due to evidential limitations.

The Committee reviewed all the information provided and considered the submissions made by both applicant – 073050, his representative and the licensing officer, as well as CCTV footage which was shown during the hearing.

The main topics discussed were as follows:

- Applicant – 073050's representative explained in detail the alleged incident against applicant – 073050, giving his clients version of events to the Committee informing Members that applicant -073050 was trying to peacefully break up an incident, however, was attacked and then acted in self-defence. Applicant – 073050's representative also highlighted that Cleveland Police had taken NFA and that the incident was without precedent, nothing previous and nothing subsequently.

- Applicant – 073050’s representative raised questions as to whether any evidence had been submitted contrary to applicant – 073050 submissions, and if not then applicant – 073050 should have his licence reinstated.
- Applicant- 073050’s representative gave a brief overview of applicant – 073050’s good character. He held a clean driving licence, had transported tens of thousands of passengers during his 17 years’ experience as a taxi driver within Stockton Borough. He was honest, sober, courteous, mentally and physically fit, he had worked hard, paid his taxes and had never been charged with any criminal offence, all of which should confirm to the Committee that he was a fit and proper person to hold a private hire drivers licence, and which was the test that Members should base their decision on.
- Members discussed the content of the CCTV footage that was shown during the hearing and sought clarity over some parts of the footage, particularly a weapon which the police had stated was a bicycle chain which applicant – 073050 was seen carrying and swinging at another individual who was also involved in the incident. This was refuted by applicant – 073050’s representative who explained it was not a bicycle chain but a red and white plastic interlinked chain, and there was no clear evidence to say that applicant – 073050 had hit anyone with the chain. Applicant- 073050’s representative did state however that it was clear that applicant – 073050 had been hit as seen in the photographic evidence, hence why he was defending himself.
- A brief discussion was had around 2 previous complaints received against applicant – 073050 in June 2020 and October 2022. Members felt that this highlighted applicant – 073050 did not have an exemplary record. Applicant – 073050’s representative informed the Committee that in terms of the complaint reported in June 2020, this was not substantiated and even though applicant – 073050 refuted the complaint he still received a warning letter.
- Members had regard to the Committee papers, which had been circulated prior to the hearing and presented to them, in addition to the oral submissions made by the Licensing Officer and the applicant’s representative as well as the CCTV footage .
- The Committee raised concerns at the claim’s applicant – 073050 had made referring to himself as a peacemaker during the incident, however it was clear from the CCTV footage viewed during the hearing that applicant – 073050 had exited his vehicle and moved towards the ongoing disorder; the Committee found no evidence of peacekeeping by applicant – 073050. The Committee noted that applicant – 073050 involved himself in the incident, moved towards the violence and took an active part arming himself with a chain. The Committee did not feel that it was relevant whether the chain was metal or plastic nor how applicant – 073050 came to be holding the chain.
- Applicant – 073050 had not given any reason for becoming involved in the incident and the Committee found applicant – 073050’s behaviour with the chain to be very concerning. Applicant – 073050 was clearly visible on the CCTV footage, intentionally swinging the chain towards a younger male. The Committee noted that there was no evidence of applicant – 073050 attempting to diffuse the situation in any way, nor removing himself from the situation.

The Committee members were not satisfied that they would allow people for whom they care to enter a vehicle with applicant – 073050, due to their concerns about his behaviour during the incident. It was further noted that applicant – 073050 did not appear to have any insight into his behaviour, considering himself to have acted as a peacemaker, when it was clear to the Committee that this was not the case.

The Committee further noted that applicant – 073050's account of how he came to be in possession of the chain differed in interview from in his submission in August 2024. It was also believed, on the balance of probabilities, that applicant – 073050 was disingenuous during interview when he claimed to have no recollection of swinging the chain. The Committee found it difficult to believe that applicant – 073050 would not remember doing this, when he could remember being in possession of the chain.

Ultimately, the Committee did not believe that applicant – 073050 was a fit and proper person to hold a private hire vehicle drivers licence due to their concerns outlined above. The Committee were unanimously satisfied that applicant – 073050's application should therefore be refused.

RESOLVED that applicant – 073050's application for a private hire drivers' licence be refused for the reasons as detailed above.

GLC/28/25 Private Hire Driver - 157829

Members were asked to consider and determine the continued fitness of combined hackney carriage and private hire driver – 157829 who had received convictions and failed to declare those convictions as per his licence conditions.

Combined hackney carriage and private hire driver – 157829 was convicted of 'Using a vehicle uninsured against third party risks' (IN10) during June 2025, receiving 6 points on his DVLA licence.

Combined hackney carriage and private hire driver – 157829 attended the meeting and was given the opportunity to make representation.

Committee papers and reports had been provided to all relevant parties prior to the meeting.

The report detailed the following:

- A copy of combined hackney carriage and private hire driver – 157829's annual declaration and DVLA Check code.
- A copy of a letter from Cleveland Police to combined hackney carriage and private hire driver – 157829 of the Conditional Offer of a Fixed Penalty.
- A copy of an interview transcript with combined hackney carriage and private hire driver – 157829 and licensing officers.

The Chair introduced everyone present and explained the procedure to be followed during the hearing.

The Committee Members were presented with the officers' report and had the opportunity to ask questions of both the officers and combined hackney carriage and private hire driver – 157829.

Combined hackney and private hire driver – 157829 appeared before the Committee for determination of his continued fitness to drive hackney carriage and private hire vehicles, following his conviction for driving without insurance and his failure to declare this.

The Committee had considered all the information before them and listened to what the licensing officer, and combined hackney and private hire driver – 157829 had said to them.

The main topics discussed were as follows:

- Combined hackney carriage and private hire driver – 157829 gave an account of the circumstances surrounding his conviction of 'Using a vehicle uninsured against third party risks' (IN10) during June 2025, resulting in receiving 6 points on his DVLA licence. Combined hackney carriage and private hire driver – 157829 informed Members that he had just taken his own private car for an MOT which had failed. Following that he had arranged a tow truck to come and pick it up, however due to traffic congestion the tow truck could not get to the car, so combined hackney carriage and private hire driver – 157829 went to move the car 2 roads down from where the car had failed it's MOT to allow the tow truck to get to him however the driver of the tow truck was going to increase the price. Whilst moving the vehicle he got stopped by the police. Combined hackney carriage and private hire driver – 157829 did not appreciate his private car would be related to his taxi and therefore did not inform the Licensing Team. Combined hackney carriage and private hire driver – 157829 was offered a conditional offer of a fixed penalty by Cleveland Police which he took incurring the 6 penalty points. Combined hackney carriage and private hire driver – 157829 appreciated he was responsible.

Despite combined hackney and private hire driver – 157829's conviction and failure to declare it, the Committee did not feel that it was appropriate to take any action against combined hackney and private hire driver – 157829's licence as they believed that he had made a mistake.

The Committee had determined that combined hackney and private hire driver – 157829 would be issued with a written warning as to his future conduct and reminded combined hackney and private hire driver – 157829 that he must comply with the conditions of his licence, particularly in relation to notification and insurance requirements.

RESOLVED that combined hackney and private hire driver – 157829 be issued with a written warning as to his future conduct and fully comply with the conditions of his licence for the reasons as detailed above.

GLC/29/25 Combined Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Driver - 120764

Members were asked to consider and determine the continued fitness of combined hackney carriage and private hire driver – 120764, who had received convictions and failed to declare those convictions as per his licence conditions.

Combined Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Driver – 120764’s new DBS certificate had been issued and had new convictions under the Insolvency Act 1986:

Combined hackney carriage and private hire driver – 120764 and his representative David Wilson attended the meeting and were given the opportunity to make representation.

Committee papers and reports had been provided to all relevant parties prior to the meeting.

The report detailed the following:

- A copy of a letter from the Disclosure and Barring Service informing combined hackney carriage and private hire driver – 120764 a status change on his DBS certificate.
- A copy of an interview transcript with combined hackney carriage and private hire driver – 120764 and licensing officers.
- A copy of various letters to combined hackney carriage and private hire driver – 120764 from Cleveland Magistrates Court and Teesside Magistrates Court.
- A copy of a previous warning letter from the Licensing Service to combined hackney carriage and private hire driver – 120764.

The Chair introduced everyone present and explained the procedure to be followed during the hearing.

The Committee Members were presented with the officers’ report and had the opportunity to ask questions of both the officers, combined hackney carriage and private hire driver – 120764 and his representative David Wilson.

The main topics discussed were as follows:

- Combined hackney carriage and private hire driver – 120764’s representative explained the circumstances surrounding combined hackney carriage and private hire driver – 120764 being convicted on a guilty plea under Insolvency Act 1986, relating to applying for bankruptcy and failing to declare gift/transfer/charge on property. Combined hackney carriage and private hire driver – 120764 had gifted equity to his brother when his brother bought combined hackney carriage and private hire driver – 120764’s house and had also taken on the mortgage for the property. Combined hackney carriage and private hire driver – 120764’s failed to disclose the gift online as he did not know he had gifted anything as he owed his brother the money, therefore he did not realise he had done anything wrong. If combined hackney carriage and private hire driver – 120764 had realised these were offences he would have reported it to the Licensing Service straight away

Combined hackney carriage and private hire driver – 120764’s representative informed Members that combined hackney carriage and private hire driver – 120764 contacted the Licensing Service as soon as he had received the letter from DBS informing him there was a change in his circumstances.

The Committee had considered all the information before them and had listened to what the licensing officer, and combined hackney carriage and private hire driver – 120764's representative had told them.

Despite combined hackney carriage and private hire driver – 120764's failure to declare convictions, the Committee did not feel that it was appropriate to take any action against combined hackney carriage and private hire driver – 120764's licence as they believed that he had made a mistake as opposed to being dishonest.

The Committee had determined that combined hackney carriage and private hire driver - 120764 would be issued with a written warning as to his future conduct and reminded that combined hackney carriage and private hire driver - 120764 must comply with the conditions of his licence, particularly in relation to notification requirements.

RESOLVED that combined hackney carriage and private hire driver - 120764 be issued with a written warning as to his future conduct and fully comply with the conditions of his licence for the reasons as detailed above.

Chair: