

Annual Report of the Licensing Committee



Chair's Foreword

Chair's introduction

As Chair of the Licensing Committee, I am pleased to report on the work of the Licensing Committee and of the officers in Taxi and General Licensing which support the Committee's work.

The Council's Licensing Committee deals with many aspects of licensing and most of its work continues to be discharged on its behalf through delegated powers granted to officers.

Over the last year the Licensing teams have collaborated with partners to ensure license holders are compliant and meet their responsibilities.

Taxi licensing has seen a notable increase in the number of new driver applications, reflecting a renewed interest in the trade and the ongoing demand for licenced transport services.

General licensing has successfully conducted 202 targeted enforcement visits, reflecting our firm stance on compliance and our support for responsible licensing.

Looking ahead, we remain committed to upholding the principles of fairness, transparency and community safety that underpin our licensing objectives.

I would like to thank the team, our partners and all of those who have contributed to this important area of work.



Introduction to the Licensing Committee

What is the role of the Committee

The purpose of the Licensing Committee, which is established by the Council each year is to determine all matters in relation to the Council's powers and duties under the following Acts and Regulations: -

- Town Police Clauses Act 1847.
- Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976.
- House to House Collections Act 1939.
- Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982.
- The Police, Factories etc. (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1916.
- Consumer Credit Act 1974.
- Safety of Sports Grounds Act 1975.
- Part II of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1972.
- Licensing Act 2003
- Gambling Act 2005
- The Policing and Crime Act 2009
- Scrap Metal Dealers Act 2013

Who sits on the Committee?

Membership of the Licensing Committee for 24/25 was as follows: -

Licensing Committee 1:

Councillor John Giles (Chair)
Councillor Nagi Daya Singh
Councillor Dalel Singh Bhamra
Councillor Sohail Iqbal
Councillor Ian Chambers
Councillor Richard Jeffcoat

Licensing Committee 2:

Councillor Jag Singh (Vice Chair)
Councillor Ellen Fenton
Councillor Abid Hussain
Councillor Muhammad Loan
Councillor Bill Gavan
Councillor Richard Jeffcoat



Licensing Committee 3:

Councillor Jennifer Hemingway (Vice Chair)

Councillor Ashley Lewis

Councillor Elaine Giles

Councillor Thomas Johnston

Councillor Richard Jeffcoat

How does the work of the Committee Contribute to the Council Plan?

Living in Sandwell	The work of the Licensing Committee enforces key council policies and provides an effective response to local issues as they arise.
Thriving Economy in Sandwell	The work of the Licensing Committee both enforces and contributes to providing safe and accessible transport across the Sandwell Borough. Licensed vehicles transport residents throughout the Borough including taking children to and from school and residents to and from work. Many of the licensed drivers live and work within the Borough of Sandwell.

Committee Development Activity

Training has been provided to all members of the Committee on the following topics:

- Licensing Act 2003
- Taxi and Private Hire Licensing

The training included licensing procedures, natural justice, understanding the risks of child sexual exploitation, disability and equality, the committee process as well as any additional issues deemed locally appropriate.

Legislation Reference

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- House to House Collections Act 1939
- Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982
- The Police, Factories etc. (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1916
- Consumer Credit Act 1974
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- Part II of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1972
- Licensing Act 2003
- Gambling Act 2005
- Scrap Metal Dealers Act 2013
- The Policing and Crime Act 2009

Committee Activity Overview

Taxi Licensing

During the municipal year 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025, the Licensing Committee considered 35 cases relating to the grant of new licence applications in line with the Private Hire and Taxi Licensing Policy and the renewal and review of existing licences. A table of the decisions made is detailed below:

Date	Grant	Grant with warning	Warning	Licence Suspended	Refuse	Revoke	Adjourn	No. of cases	Licensing Sub Committee
16/7/24		1	1		1			3	1
22/7/24	1				1		1	3	2
5/8/24					1			1	3
2/9/24	1	1			1			3	1
16/9/24			2		1			3	2
30/9/24			1	1	2			4	3
14/10/24				1	2		1	4	1
4/11/24		1			1			2	3
16/12/24	1						1	2	3
13/1/25				1		2		3	1
27/1/25			1	1 + warning	1			3	2
24/2/25					2			2	1
24/3/25								2	3
Total No of Cases/ Decisions	3	3	5	4	13	2	3	35	



Delegated Officer Decisions

Reason	Municipal year 2024/25
Licensed drivers who had their licence revoked with immediate effect on the grounds of public safety	1
Licensed drivers who have had their licence suspended with immediate effect as their DBS certificate has expired	1
Licensed drivers who were issued with 21days delayed suspension for failure to sign up to the DBS update service	156
Licensed drivers who had their licence suspended with 21 days delayed suspension as their medical certificate had expired	13
Licensed drivers who had their licence suspended with immediate effect as they were not medically fit	12
Warning letters issued due to failing to declare minor road traffic endorsements	5
Drivers issued with an exemption certificate from carrying guide and assistance dogs due to a medical condition	6
Warning Letters issued at conclusion of a complaint investigation	12
Section 68 Vehicle immediately Suspended as vehicle not fit to be used	249
Section 60 Vehicle suspended with 21 days to put defects right	113

NR3s Register (National Register of Driver Refusals, Suspensions and Revocations)

From April 2023, each Licensing Authority was required to check all driver licence applications whether it be a new application or a renewal application against the National NR3s register. In the event that a decision is made to either suspend, refuse or revoke a driver licence on the grounds of public safety, then the driver details must be added to the National Register. Sandwell made the decision to add all refusals and revocations from 2018 onwards, with many of these decisions being made by the Licensing Sub Committee.



Actions	Municipal Year 2024/2025
Number of checks undertaken prior to licence issue	813
Refusals added to the Register	14
Revocations added to the Register	4
Suspensions added to the Register	16

Number of Licences

The numbers below are for the issued licences for the year 24/25 broken down by licence type.

Licence Type	Total Number of licences as at 31/3/24	Total Number of licences as at 3/4/25
Private Hire Operator	41	44
Private Hire Driver	1013	1038
Hackney Carriage Driver	12	11
Dual Licence Holder	289	292
Private Hire Vehicle	1114	1098
Hackney Carriage Vehicle	59	49

Enforcement Activity

The licensing enforcement team participated in 12 multi-agency stops that were organised by the Police within Sandwell and neighbouring authority areas. During these stops Sandwell licensed vehicles were checked for compliance with policy conditions.

During 24/25, a total of 206 complaints were recorded and investigated, complaints included accident damage to vehicles, standard of driving, drivers conduct and behaviour, alongside referrals from the police.



General Licensing

Detailed in the table below is a breakdown of the type of applications considered by the Licensing Sub Committees during the municipal year 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025.

Reviews

Agency triggering review	Total 2024/25
Trading Standards	1
Police	6
Court order	0
Environmental Health	0
	Total 7

Reasons for review	Total 2024/2025
Serious Crime and Disorder	7
Crime, disorder, and Public Safety	0
	Total 7

Other hearings	Total 2024/25
Grant application	6
Vary premises license application	3
Sex Establishment applications	2
Temporary Event notices	2
Expedited review	5
Scrap Metal	0
Personal	2
	Total 20

Delegated officer decisions

The table below states the total number of delegated officer decisions on Licensing applications.

Decision Type	2024/25
New Premises licences	27
Minor Variations	23



Full Variation	2
Vary Designated Premises Supervisor	113
Transfer Premise Licence Holder	50
Licences surrendered	6
Licences suspended	41
Change of name/address Premises Licence	18
Personal licences	163
Change of name/address Personal Licence	55

Number of Licences

The numbers below are the current registered licences for the municipal year 2024/25 broken down by licence type.

Licence type	Total number of current licences for 2024/25
Premises licences	970
Personal licences	4836
Casino	2
Bingo	6
Alcohol Licenced Gaming Machine Permit (ALPGM)	39
Adult Gaming Centre (AGC)	11
Betting (BET)	41
Betting Premises (TRACK)	1
Unlicensed Family Entertainment Centre (UFECP)	2
Family Entertainment Centre (FEC)	0
Club Machine Permit (CMP)	9
Sexual Entertainment/Establishment Venues) (SEV)	2
Scrap Metal	46
Temporary event notice (TEN)	148



Policy Position

Scrap Metal Policy

The Scrap Metal Dealers Act 2013 (“the Act”) gives the Council responsibility for the licensing of scrap metal dealers and enforcement of the licensing regime alongside the police. The General Licensing team has delegated powers to administer this function and to date, the council has administered the scrap metal licensing regime in accordance with the criteria set out in the Act. However, the council is developing its own policy to reflect the requirements under the Act.

The Act requires anyone who deals in scrap metal to obtain and display a relevant licence. The Act gives the police and local authorities more powers of entry, and inspection, as well as allowing a more thorough application process where licenses can be refused and subsequently revoked if dealers are deemed ‘unsuitable.’

A policy for determining the suitability of an applicant for a scrap metal licence will be completed and in place by the end of this municipal year.

Statement of Licensing Policy

The Licensing Act 2003 requires every Council to have a ‘Statement of Licensing Policy’ which includes information outlined in the Secretary of State’s Statutory Guidance to Licensing Authorities in England and Wales. The Council’s Statement of Licensing Policy provides advice and guidance to the Licensing Authority when exercising its statutory functions as a Licensing Authority under the 2003 Act. The Policy is an essential tool to assist Responsible Authorities (mainly Regulators) and the Licensing Committee during the decision-making process to ensure that the decisions reached are sound, and robust enough to withstand an Appeal or judicial challenge. The Council’s Statement of Licensing Policy has been reviewed, and a new policy was published in April 2025.

Gambling Act Statement of Principles

Sandwell’s Gambling Act 2005 statement of principles was implemented in May 2022. The Gambling Act 2005 requires Sandwell Council, as the Licensing



Authority, to prepare a statement of principles to be applied when exercising the functions under the Act.

Section 349 of the Gambling Act 2005 (“the Act”) requires licensing authorities, before each successive three-year period, to prepare a statement of principles that they propose to apply in exercising their functions under the Act, during that period, and to publish the statement.

An updated Statement of Principles has been produced and was published in April 2025.

Enforcement Activity General Licensing)

The General licensing team has worked closely with our partners to ensure ongoing compliance across all licenced premises. Collaborative efforts have focused on proactive engagement and regulatory compliance to ensure public safety. A total of 202 enforcement visits have been carried out across licensed premises, most premises were found to be compliant with follow up action taken where necessary.

Alongside enforcement visits, the team has supported Trading Standards on 50 underage test purchase exercises across the Borough and participated in the Councils Safer 6 campaign.

The team worked with HMRC on a programme of visits checking compliance with gaming machines in licenced premises. A total of 17 visits were conducted during 2024/25, advice and guidance was provided in order to bring the premises into compliance.



Looking Ahead

The Private Hire and Hackney Carriage Licensing Policy is due for review by 2027. Work has commenced to review the policy with the aim of this being completed by 2026.

General Licensing will conduct the necessary consultation and engagement to implement a Scrap Metal policy for Sandwell.

For General Licensing the team will seek to improve software systems to enable the introduction of an online function for the processing of licensing applications, creating efficiencies and an improved customer journey.

Concluding Remarks

The Committee conducts its role with a view to ensuring the public are kept safe from harm. In making its decisions, the Committee puts this perspective at the forefront of its decision making. This should provide further assurance to the public that the Council views the safety of its citizens as paramount in conducting this function.

Members and officers are constantly reviewing Council Policy and delegations to reduce committee time and further improve the level of service offered to license holder's alongside contributing to the Councils Corporate Plan.

