

**Committee:** Licensing & Environmental Health

**Title:** Driver DVLA Check Review

**Date:**

Thursday

02 October 2025

**Report Author:** Jamie Livermore, Licensing & Compliance Manager, 01799 510326

**Item for decision:**  
Yes

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## Summary

**1.1.** This report is to advise Members of the results from the Trade consultation for the proposal to increase the check frequency of DVLA driving licences held by licensed Taxi and Private Hire Drivers from annual to six-monthly.

## Recommendations

**2.1.** Members are asked to determine whether to approve or reject the increase in DVLA check frequency from annual to six-monthly.

## Financial Implications

**3.1.** There are no financial implications to the Council, however the approval of this proposal would result in a £14.40 increase to the overall cost borne by licensed Taxi and Private Hire Drivers over the course of a three-year licence period.

## Background Papers

### 4.1.

- Appendix A – Trade Consultation Responses
- Background Paper A- [Driver DVLA Check Review - Report at Licensing & Environmental Health Committee 17 June 2025](#)

## Impact

### 5.1.

Communication/Consultation	A Trade wide consultation was held between Friday 15 August and Friday 12 September 2025. Licensees were directed to an online survey where they were asked whether to support or not support the proposals, including an opportunity for any feedback to their responses to assist Members in their determination.
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Community Safety	<p>DVLA licence checks are conducted at grant/renewal of licence and at intermittent periods throughout the licence duration. It is widely recognised that such checks are critical to ascertaining the 'fit and proper' status of a licence applicant and/or holder.</p> <p>Any increase in check frequency would naturally mean that the Council has more regular access to DVLA licence status of its drivers.</p>
Equalities	<p>Under the general equality duty as set out in the Equality Act 2010, public authorities are required to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation as well as advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.</p> <p>The protected grounds covered by the equality duty are: age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, and sexual orientation. The equality duty also covers marriage and civil partnership, but only in respect of eliminating unlawful discrimination.</p> <p>The law requires that this duty to have due regard be demonstrated in decision making processes. Assessing the potential impact on equality of proposed changes to policies, procedures and practices is one of the keyways in which public authorities can demonstrate that they have had due regard to the aims of the equality duty.</p> <p>Licensing Policies and Licensing decisions must all have regard to the Council's Equalities duties.</p>
Health and Safety	<p>The fundamental purpose of the private hire and hackney carriage licensing regime is to establish a position where passengers can use these vehicles with a high degree of confidence about their safety. This principle is at the heart of the Statutory Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Standards.</p>

	Licensing authorities are required to have in place arrangements that reflect the importance of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and vulnerable adults
Human Rights/Legal Implications	Conditions and charges may be challenged in the High Court (Judicial Review) or by complaint to the Local Auditor. It is therefore important that the process the Council follows is fair, open, and transparent
Sustainability	None
Ward-specific impacts	None
Workforce/Workplace	The proposed change can be managed from within the current resource although the Licensing Committee are asked to note the potential future projects and the current capacity of the service.

## Situation

**6.1.** Members are asked to refer to the report presented before them on the 17 June 2025 – **Background Paper A**.

**6.2.** The Committee approved in principle an increase to the frequency of checks of DLVA driving licences held by licensed Taxi and Private Hire Drivers subject to a Trade wide consultation that would be returned to Committee for further consideration should any objections be received.

**6.3.** The Trade wide consultation was held between Friday 15 August and Friday 12 September 2025. Licensees were directed to an online survey where they were asked whether to support or not support the proposals, including an opportunity for any feedback to their responses to assist Members in their determination.

**6.4.** The consultation attracted a total of 241 responses. 75 (31%) of respondents supported the increase whilst 166 (69%) did not support the increase.

Do you support an increase in automatic DVLA licence checks carried out by the Council from annually to six-monthly?



**6.5.** A total of 184 respondents provided feedback on their reason/s for or against support. The full list is attached at **Appendix A**.

### Most Common Response Reasons

1. **Financial Burden / Cost is Too High (Very Frequent)**
  - Many drivers say they already struggle with costs (fuel, insurance, maintenance, licence fees, compliance courses, etc.).
  - Doubling the fee from £14.40 → £28.80 is seen as unfair and unaffordable, especially for part-time or low-income drivers.
  - Some call it a “cash grab,” “money-making exercise,” or “stealth tax.”
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2. **Current Rules Already Require Self-Reporting (Very Frequent)**
  - Drivers must report endorsements within 7 days under existing licence conditions.
  - Many argue that this makes six-monthly checks unnecessary duplication.
  - Suggestions: enforce penalties for those who fail to self-report instead of penalising everyone.
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3. **Unfair to Penalise All for a Small Minority (Frequent)**
  - Widespread frustration at being made to pay because “a few bad drivers” don’t follow the rules.
  - Calls for targeted checks only for drivers with points, complaints, or past issues.
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4. **Responsibility Should Fall on Council or Employers, Not Drivers (Frequent)**
  - Many suggest the council should absorb the cost, include it in existing licence fees, or make companies pay.
  - Several proposed random spot checks or use of DVLA’s real-time services instead.
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5. **Industry Pressures Already Severe (Frequent)**
  - Drivers cite falling earnings due to Uber/other operators, high cost of living, and lack of council enforcement against illegal operators.

- Some suggest the council should focus on tackling unlicensed drivers instead of raising costs on compliant ones.
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- 6. **Support for More Checks – But Not at Driver’s Expense (Occasional)**
  - A minority say more frequent checks improve safety and passenger confidence.
  - Even many of these supporters argue the cost should not be passed on to drivers.
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- 7. **Public Safety Arguments (Less Common)**
  - A smaller group agree with six-monthly checks as necessary for safeguarding and improving trust in the trade.
  - Some compare it to MOTs or suggest even quarterly checks if safety is the goal.
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- 8. **Alternative Solutions Suggested (Occasional)**
  - Targeted checks only for drivers with points.
  - Use of DVLA continuous monitoring.
  - Random spot checks.
  - Shared or reduced costs.
  - Penalties/fines only for non-reporting drivers.

## Overall Balance

- **Majority view:** Oppose doubling costs — main concern is financial burden in an already struggling trade.
- **Strong recurring point:** Existing self-reporting rules make extra checks redundant.
- **Smaller minority:** Support more frequent checks, but most still say costs should not fall on drivers.

**6.6.** Whilst Licensing Officers would not wish to sway the determination of the Committee either way, they would offer the following comments particularly regarding the existing licence condition to self-report and use of the free GOV.UK check service.

Reliance on honesty is clearly risky and is a significant reason for the grounds of the proposal. Drivers are conditioned to self-report driving endorsements and convictions within seven days but it is evident that some fail to do so whether deliberately or accidentally. If an individual is found to have deliberately failed to report an endorsement, appropriate action will be considered, and this may be treated as an aggravating factor when determining their suitability to hold a licence.

Officers also recognise there is a free DVLA checking service on the GOV.UK site, but it requires drivers to provide a unique check code each time, and for Officers to manually perform the process. This route would not only put the Licensing Authority back in the same position of relying on drivers to comply, but it also creates significant extra staff workload. Any additional resourcing would have to be recovered through increases to licence fees, which would somewhat negate the extra cost argument.

**6.7.** Members are asked to consider the responses to the consultation and determine whether it is appropriate and proportionate to increase the frequency of DVLA checks from annual to six-monthly.