

**LICENSING APPLICATIONS SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
27 NOVEMBER 2025**

Present: Councillors Woodward (Chair), Stevens and Thompson.

Apologies: Councillors

29. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

Resolved –

That, pursuant to Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), members of the press and public be excluded during consideration of the following item of business as it was likely that there would be disclosures of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 1, 2, 3 and 5 specified in Part 1 of Schedule 12A (as amended) to that Act.

30. REPORTS FOR THE CONSIDERATION OF THE SUSPENSION/REVOCATION OF PRIVATE HIRE, SCHOOL TRANSPORT AND HACKNEY CARRIAGE VEHICLE DRIVER'S LICENCES

The Sub-Committee considered a report that set out the cases relating to the following:

- A report to consider the suspension/revocation of a Hackney Carriage Vehicle Driver's Licence. Licence Holder: CCM (Appendix 1).
- A report to consider the suspension/revocation of a Private Hire School Transport Vehicle Driver's Licence. Licence Holder: MS (Appendix 2).
- A report to consider the suspension/revocation of a School Transport Vehicle Driver's Licence. Licence Holder: MS (Appendix 3).

Summaries detailing the circumstances relating to each of the cases were attached to the report at Appendices 1 to 3.

CMM and their daughter, Ms M, attended the hearing and requested that the hearing be deferred until a later date to allow his legal representative to attend.

MS attended the hearing, addressed the Sub-Committee and responded to questions.

Mike Harding, Licensing Enforcement Officer, presented the reports to the Sub-Committee and asked and responded to questions. Ben Williams, Licensing Enforcement Officer attended the meeting and asked and responded to questions.

In the case of MS (Appendices 2 and 3) the Sub-Committee, MS and officers had been provided with links to view video evidence, marked as appendices 5, 7, 8 and 9, that related to the incident described in the case summary. The Sub-Committee, MS and officers confirmed that they had all viewed the video clips prior to the meeting.

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In reaching its decisions the Sub-Committee endeavoured throughout to strike a fair balance between the interests of the applicants and licence holders and the concerns of the Licensing Officers, but its overriding consideration was to the safeguarding of the public.

In coming to its decisions, the Sub-Committee also gave due consideration to the written material contained in the paperwork, the oral evidence provided at the meeting, the video evidence (for the case at Appendices 2 and 3), and to relevant legislation, guidance and the policies of Reading Borough Council, including but not limited to:

- The Town Police Clauses Act 1847;
- The Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions Act) Act 1976;
- The Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles (Safeguarding and Road Safety) Act 2022;
- The Secretary of State's Guidance;
- The Equality Act 2010;
- Reading Borough Council's Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicle Convictions Policy;
- Reading Borough Council's Hackney Carriage driver and vehicle conditions;
- Reading Borough Council's private hire driver, vehicle and operator conditions;
- The Fit and Proper Person Test.

Resolved –

- (1) That consideration of the suspension or revocation of the Hackney Carriage Vehicle Driver's Licence held by CMM be deferred until the meeting of the Licensing Applications Sub-Committee to be held on 16 December 2025.
- (2) That the Private Hire Vehicle Driver's Licence held by MS be revoked with immediate effect, on the basis that MS was not a fit and proper person to hold the licence.

REASONS

- (a) In coming to its decision, the Licensing Sub-Committee had taken into account the relevant legislation, the Reading Borough Council Licensing Policy and considered carefully the written evidence, the video evidence submitted, and the oral evidence presented to it at the hearing.
- (b) The Sub-Committee noted that complaints had been received before and after the Final Warning was issued. A total of six complaints had been received in seven months. Three complaints received in twelve months was considered a cause of concern by the Licensing team.
- (c) The Sub-Committee noted that the complaints had been made by RBC officers, other drivers, officers from other Local Authorities, and members of the public.
- (d) The Sub-Committee was concerned by the allegation of homophobic behaviour. The Sub-Committee did not accept the account of MS, that this was a false and malicious allegation because they were Muslim.

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MS did not put forward any evidence that they had received any Islamophobic comments from the passenger.

- (e) The Sub-Committee was concerned by the reports of erratic and unsafe driving. It was not usual for Licensing officers to receive complaints about the standard of driving by Private Hire drivers.
- (f) The sub-committee did not accept the account of MS, that each of these complaints were also false and malicious allegations, made because they are Muslim.
- (g) The Sub-Committee was concerned that MS had only been licensed as a PHV driver for two years. It noted that they had received penalty points shortly after they had gained their licence, and did not have a long period of driving with no complaints, to back up their assertion that their driving was of an acceptable standard.
- (h) The Sub-Committee was concerned that MS offered to improve their driving, but did not accept that there was any area of their driving that required improvement.
- (i) The Statutory Guidance sets out the test for fitness to hold a licence, and the sub-committee was not satisfied that MS met that test.
- (j) In light of all of the above, the sub-committee found that MS was not a fit and proper person to hold a Private Hire Vehicle driver's licence. The licence was therefore revoked with immediate effect under section 61 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 for reasons of public safety.

APPEAL

- (K) MS was advised of their right of appeal
- (3) That the School Transport Vehicle Driver's Licence held by MS be revoked with immediate effect, on the basis that MS was not a fit and proper person to hold the licence.

REASONS

- (a) In coming to its decision, the Licensing Sub-Committee had taken into account the relevant legislation, the Reading Borough Council Licensing Policy and considered carefully the written evidence, the video evidence submitted, and the oral evidence presented to it at the hearing.
- (b) The Sub-Committee noted that complaints had been received before and after the Final Warning was issued. A total of six complaints had been received in seven months. Three complaints received in twelve months was considered a cause of concern by the Licensing team.

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- (c) The Sub-Committee noted that the complaints had been made by RBC officers, other drivers, officers from other Local Authorities, and members of the public.
- (d) The Sub-Committee was concerned by the allegation of homophobic behaviour. The Sub-Committee did not accept the account of MS, that this was a false and malicious allegation because they were Muslim. MS did not put forward any evidence that they had received any Islamophobic comments from the passenger.
- (e) The Sub-Committee was concerned by the reports of erratic and unsafe driving. It was not usual for Licensing officers to receive complaints about the standard of driving by Private Hire drivers.
- (f) The sub-committee did not accept the account of MS, that each of these complaints were also false and malicious allegations, made because they are Muslim.
- (g) The Sub-Committee was concerned that MS had only been licensed as a School Transport Vehicle driver for two years. It noted that they had received penalty points shortly after they had gained their licence, and did not have a long period of driving with no complaints, to back up their assertion that their driving was of an acceptable standard.
- (h) The Sub-Committee was concerned that MS offered to improve their driving, but did not accept that there was any area of their driving that required improvement.
- (i) The Statutory Guidance sets out the test for fitness to hold a licence, and the sub-committee was not satisfied that MS met that test.
- (j) In light of all of the above, the sub-committee found that MS was not a fit and proper person to hold a School Transport Vehicle driver's licence. The licence was therefore revoked with immediate effect under section 61 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 for reasons of public safety.

APPEAL

- (k) MS was advised of their right of appeal

(Exempt information as defined in paragraphs 1, 2, 3 and 5)

(The meeting started at and closed at 10.49 am)

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