

**LICENSING APPLICATIONS SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
16 DECEMBER 2025**

Present: Councillors Woodward (Chair), Edwards and Mitchell.

33. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meetings held on 28 October 2025 and 27 November 2025 were confirmed as correct records and signed by the Chair.

34. 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.

35. APPLICATIONS FOR THE GRANT AND RENEWAL OF HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLE DRIVER'S LICENCES AND REPORTS TO CONSIDER THE SUSPENSION/REVOCAION OF HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLE DRIVER'S LICENCES

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

- An application for the grant of a Private Hire Vehicle Driver's Licence. Applicant: AM. (Appendix 1);
- An application for the renewal of a Private Hire Vehicle Driver's Licence. Licence Holder: SH. (Appendix 2);
- A report to consider the suspension/revocation of a Hackney Carriage Vehicle Driver's Licence. Licence Holder: CM. (Appendix 3);
- A report to consider the suspension/revocation of a Private Hire Vehicle Driver's Licence. Licence Holder: AJ. (Appendix 4); and
- An application for the renewal of a Private Hire Vehicle Driver's Licence. Licence Holder: AJ. (Appendix 5).

Summaries detailing the circumstances relating to each of the cases were attached to the report at Appendices 1 to 5.

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

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

CM attended the hearing and was represented by Adonis Daniel. Both addressed the Sub-Committee and responded to questions. CM's wife also attended the hearing.

AJ attended the hearing and was accompanied by their daughter KJ. Both addressed the Sub-Committee and responded to questions.

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Nicola Butler, Senior Licensing Enforcement Officer, presented the reports to the Sub-Committee and asked and responded to questions. Mike Harding and Ben Williams, Licensing Enforcement Officers, also attended the hearings and asked and responded to questions.

In relation to the cases set out in Appendices 4 and 5, copies of Additional Information that had been provided by AJ to Licensing Officers had been circulated to members of the Sub-Committee by email ahead of the meeting.

In relation to the cases set out in Appendices 4 and 5, the parties present for the hearing agreed to hear the cases together as the decisions required related to the same matter.

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. The Sub-Committee also gave due consideration to the written material contained in the paperwork, the oral evidence provided at the meeting, 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 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 (November 2023);
- 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 the application for a Private Hire Vehicle Driver's Licence in respect of AM (case at Appendix 1) be granted as sought, subject to the issue of a written warning regarding AM's future conduct and the need for honest dealings with the public and with Licensing.

REASONS:

- (a) In coming to its decision the Sub-Committee took into account the relevant legislation and the written and oral evidence presented at the hearing.
- (b) The Sub-Committee endeavoured throughout to strike a fair balance between the interests of the Applicant and the concerns of Licensing Enforcement Officers, but its overriding consideration was the safeguarding of the public.

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- (c) The Sub-Committee heard from Licensing Officers and from the Applicant.
- (d) The Sub-Committee were concerned that the Applicant had not revealed his convictions for driving matters, including the major conviction for driving without insurance, but accepted the Applicant's explanation for the offences and for the failure to note them on the application.

(AM was advised of their right of appeal)

- (2) That the application for the renewal of the Private Hire Vehicle Driver's Licence held by SH (case at Appendix 2) be granted, subject to the issue of a written warning regarding SH's future conduct and the need for honest dealings with the public and with Licensing.

REASONS:

- (a) In coming to its decision, the Sub-Committee took into account the relevant legislation, the relevant caselaw, and considered the written and oral evidence presented to it at the hearing.
- (b) The Sub-Committee heard from Licensing Officers and from the Applicant.
- (c) The Sub-Committee noted that SH had wrongly answered "no" to the question "*have you ever been refused a driver's licence/vehicle licence/operator's licence or had such a licence suspended or revoked by Reading Borough Council or any other council?*"
- (d) The Sub-Committee noted that honesty was a vital component of every fit and proper person to hold a Private Hire Vehicle Driver's Licence, and the Sub-Committee was concerned both at the Applicant's behaviour in the Fareham test, and by their failure to admit to the refusal on their renewal application.
- (e) The Sub-Committee was however reassured by the Applicant's explanation, including their personal circumstance at the time, which it accepted.
- (f) The Sub-Committee found that, on balance, SH was a fit and proper person to hold a licence.

(SH was advised of their right of appeal)

- (3) That the Hackney Carriage Vehicle Driver's Licence held by CM (case at Appendix 3) be revoked with effect from the end of 21 days notice of the

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decision being given to the driver, due to the Sub-Committee not considering CM to be a fit and proper person to hold such a licence, and for the following reasonable causes pursuant to Section 61 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976:

REASONS:

- (a) In coming to its decision the Sub-Committee took account of the relevant legislation and carefully considered the written evidence and oral evidence presented to it at the hearing.
- (b) The Sub-Committee endeavoured throughout to strike a fair balance between the interests of CM and the concerns of Licensing Officers, but its overriding consideration was the safeguarding of the public.
- (c) The Sub-Committee noted CM's long history of enforcement interaction with the Council's Licensing Team, dating from November 2006 up to October 2025, noting that the instances listed included a suspension, nine written warnings and seven verbal warnings, not including the five incidents that gave rise to the current hearing.
- (d) The Sub-Committee noted that three of the recent incidents had occurred after CM's performance meeting with officers that had resulted in the issuing of a final warning.
- (e) The Sub-Committee noted that the pattern and consistency of complaints against CM were mutually supporting and left CM's position untenable.
- (f) The Sub-Committee found that when answering questions, CM sought to minimise the impact of his transgressions, placed the blame on others, and found it difficult to take responsibility for his own actions. The Sub-Committee was not convinced that CM would mend his ways.
- (g) The Sub-Committee found that, for the reasons set out above, CM was not a fit and proper person to hold a Hackney Carriage Vehicle Driver's Licence and therefore revoked the licence.

(CM was advised of his right to appeal against the decision to Reading Magistrates' Court, Civic Centre, Castle Road, Reading, RG1 7TQ, within 21 days, starting from the day he was notified by the licensing authority of the decision.)

- (4) That, with regard to the Private Hire Vehicle Driver's Licence held by AJ (cases at Appendices 4 and 5), the Sub-Committee grants the application for renewal, but suspends the licence for four weeks for the reasons set out below. The grant of the renewal application was also subject to the condition that AJ successfully completes and passes the extended driving assessment

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by 3 February 2026. If AJ fails to do so within the specified time, no licence shall be issued, and the application shall be deemed refused.

REASONS:

- (a) In coming to its decision, the Sub-Committee carefully considered the written evidence and oral evidence presented to it at the hearing.
- (b) The Sub-Committee endeavoured throughout to strike a fair balance between the interests of Applicant and the concerns of Licensing Enforcement Officers, but its overriding consideration was the safeguarding of the public.
- (c) The Sub-Committee heard from Licensing Officers and from the Applicant, AJ, and his daughter.
- (d) The Sub-Committee noted that it had allowed AJ to keep his Private Hire Vehicle Driver's Licence, the last time he was before the Sub-Committee on 23 September 2025 when it had required AJ to complete an accredited remedial driving assessment as soon as one was available, and with a reasonable time as defined by the Licensing Team. The Sub-Committee noted that AJ had failed to do so, having booked himself onto the wrong course.
- (e) The Sub-Committee was concerned that AJ had not declared his 2023 speeding conviction and penalty points, noting that he had declined to engage with the Licensing Team about this issue when it had been raised.
- (f) The Sub-Committee noted that it was AJ's son who had completed the application form, and that he had been told of the conviction before doing so, but that he had not remembered to include it.
- (g) The Sub-Committee noted Private Hire Vehicle Condition 19.2, which gave a maximum of 28 days for any driver to notify the Licensing Team of any motoring conviction, and that AJ had failed to do so.
- (h) The Sub-Committee were concerned that AJ was actively deciding not to abide by his licence conditions, or by the decisions taken by Reading Borough Council officers or the Licensing Sub-Committee.
- (i) The Sub-Committee required immediate engagement with its decisions by AJ and gave him one last chance to conform to expectation by booking and completing the right course before the end of 3 February 2026.
- (j) Accordingly, the Sub-Committee allowed AJ to renew his licence but suspended it for four weeks until he had completed the Taxi Driver

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Remedial Training course, which was to be completed before 3 February 2026. If AJ failed to pass the course, within the specified timeframe, the licence would not be renewed, and the application will be deemed refused.

(AJ was advised of his right to appeal against the decision to Reading Magistrates' Court, Civic Centre, Castle Road, Reading, RG1 7TQ, within 21 days, starting from the day he was notified by the licensing authority of the decision.)

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

(The meeting started at 5 pm and closed at 8.22 pm)