

**LICENSING APPLICATIONS SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
2 APRIL 2026**

Present: Councillors Woodward (Chair), Tarar and Thompson

42. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 3 March 2026 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

43. 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.

44. APPLICATIONS FOR THE GRANT OF PRIVATE HIRE AND SCHOOL TRANSPORT VEHICLE DRIVER'S LICENCES AND REPORTS FOR THE CONSIDERATION OF THE SUSPENSION/REVOCATION OF PRIVATE HIRE AND SCHOOL TRANSPORT 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 Driver's Licence. Applicant: MM. (Appendix 1);
- An application for the grant of a Private Hire (School Transport) Driver's Licence. Applicant: MY. (Appendix 2);
- An application for the grant of a Private Hire Driver's Licence. Applicant: HL (Appendix 3);
- A report to consider the suspension/revocation of a Private Hire (School Transport) Driver's Licence. Driver: AMD. (Appendix 4);
- A report to consider the suspension/revocation of a Private Hire Driver's Licence. Driver: MB. (Appendix 5).

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

The cases at Appendix 4 included video evidence that members of the Sub-Committee had viewed prior to the meeting. Additional Information had been circulated to members of the Sub-Committee regarding the case at Appendix 3 after the publication of the agenda papers.

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

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

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

AMD did not attend the hearing and informed Nicola Butler via email during the meeting that he would be unable to attend and that the decision could be made in his absence.

MB attended the hearing, 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. Robert Smalley and Mike Harding Licensing Enforcement Officers, also attended the hearing, addressed the Sub-Committee and asked and responded to questions.

In reaching its decisions the Sub-Committee endeavoured throughout to strike a fair balance between the interests of the applicant 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 (RBC), this included but was not limited to:

- The Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions Act) Act 1976;
- The Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles (Safeguarding and Road Safety) Act 2022;
- The Equality Act 2010;
- The relevant Secretary of State's Guidance;
- RBC's Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy (February 2026), including the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicle Convictions Policy;
- The relevant RBC driver, vehicle and operator conditions and penalty points schemes;
- All of the documents provided for the meeting, including the video evidence provided in relation to the cases at Appendices 2 and 3, and the written Additional Informational circulated to the Sub-Committee by email in relation to the case at Appendix 1; and
- The Fit and Proper Person Test.

Resolved –

- (1) That, having taken into consideration the need to safeguard the public, the Sub-Committee concluded that it was appropriate and proportionate to grant the application for a Private Hire Vehicle Driver's Licence in respect of MM (case at Appendix 1) for a period of three years:

REASONS:

- (a) On 4 September 2025, MM had applied to the Council for the grant of a 3-year private hire vehicle driver's licence.
- (b) An enhanced DBS check had shown three previous convictions for assault, false imprisonment and robbery when MM was aged under 18.
- (c) MM did not declare any convictions on his application form.
- (d) MM's convictions engaged Sections 32 and 34 of the Council's Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Criminal Convictions Policy. Although MM's previous convictions were over 20 years old, the Council must consider his history as a whole. The police had been unable to provide the Council with any detail as to the circumstances of the offences but these were serious offences as was reflected by the sentences imposed.
- (e) MM attended the hearing. He was unrepresented. He apologised for his convictions and for his failure to disclose them in his application. As to the convictions, he pointed to the fact that they were committed when he was young and had led a blameless life since. He was now married with

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children. He failed to disclose the convictions because he believed that they would be deleted from his records after 10 years.

- (f) The Sub-Committee considered this case very carefully and took into account everything it had read, together with the representations it heard from MM. The legal adviser to the Sub-Committee drew its attention to the case of *Nottingham City Council v Farooq*. The Sub-Committee was advised that it was not entitled to review the merits of convictions recorded in prior criminal proceedings or to go behind those convictions. Further, even if the Sub-Committee was to find that the failure to complete the form fully and accurately was through to foolishness and ignorance, rather than deliberate deception, this would nonetheless not be a basis upon which it could be satisfied that MM was a proper person to hold a licence.
- (g) The Sub-Committee recognised that these were serious matters but accepted that MM had made positive steps to turn around his life. He had led a conviction-free life for over 20 years. The failure to disclose the convictions in his application was deeply regrettable. A driver's licence came with significant responsibilities to ensure that the driver was fully conversant with all conditions, policies and legal requirements to which the licence was subject. It was therefore the decision of the Sub-Committee that MM be granted a three-year private hire driver's licence.

(MM was advised of the right of appeal against this decision to the Reading Magistrates' Court. Any such appeal should be made within the period of 21 days from receipt of these written reasons.)

- (2) That, having taken into consideration the need to safeguard the public, the Sub-Committee concluded that it was appropriate and proportionate to refuse MY's application for the grant of a Private Hire (School Transport) Vehicle Driver's Licence as he was not a fit and proper person to hold such a licence. The Sub-Committee's reasons were noted as follows:

REASONS:

- (a) On 18 September 2025, MY had applied to the Council for the grant of a three-year private hire vehicle driver's licence. He had first applied to the Council for a school transport driver's licence in December 2023. At that time, it had been noted that he had two convictions for common assault dating back to May 2014, for which a sentence of imprisonment was imposed together with a 10-year anti-social behaviour order and a restraining order made under the Protection from Harassment Act which was still in place.
- (b) On 13 March 2026, MY had notified the Council that he wished to amend his application to one for a school transport driver's licence.
- (c) MY's enhanced DBS certificate, received on 13 March 2026, had confirmed his previous convictions and the sentence imposed.

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- (d) MY had the right to work in the UK until 7 July 2026. He stated that he would apply for the extension of his right to work closer to the expiry date.
- (e) MY attended the hearing. He was unrepresented. He appeared to suggest that he ought not to have been convicted. He was not able to give the Sub-Committee a clear explanation as to what it was he did that had led to the conviction. He was not able to tell the Sub-Committee who the restraining order was made to protect. He provided the Sub-Committee with a copy of a cell sharing risk assessment, presumably from when he went into custody.
- (f) The Sub-Committee considered this case very carefully and took into account everything it read, together with the representations it had heard from MY. The Sub-Committee was advised that it was not entitled to review the merits of convictions recorded in prior criminal proceedings or to go behind those convictions.
- (g) MY must be taken as a person who had two convictions for offences involving violence against the person for which a significant sentence of imprisonment had been imposed, together with an anti-social behaviour order and a restraining order. The restraining order was still in place. In the view of the Sub-Committee, the public would not be protected by the grant of a licence to an applicant who remained subject to a restraining order.
- (h) It was therefore the decision of the Sub-Committee that MY's application be refused.

(MY was advised of the right of appeal against this decision to the Reading Magistrates' Court. Any such appeal should be made within the period of 21 days from receipt of these written reasons.)

- (3) That, having taken into consideration the need to safeguard the public, the Sub-Committee concluded that it was appropriate and proportionate to refuse HL's application for the grant of a Private Hire Vehicle Driver's Licence as he was not a fit and proper person to hold such a licence. The Sub-Committee's reasons were noted as follows:

REASONS

- (a) On 2 March 2026, HL had applied to the Council for the grant of a Private Hire Vehicle Driver's licence.
- (b) An enhanced DBS check showed convictions from February 2017 for offences involving dishonesty, driving otherwise than in accordance with a licence and no insurance. A total of two months' imprisonment had been imposed together with a period of disqualification of 14 months.
- (c) HL only declared the conviction for no insurance on his application form.
- (d) On 4 March 2026, Council officers had requested an explanation for the convictions from HL. Initially, HL had stated that he had only declared the no insurance matter because all the offences had arisen from a single

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incident and he felt that disclosing the no insurance matter was sufficient. He subsequently explained that at the time, he did not have lawful immigration status and had obtained false documents to allow him to drive.

- (e) The Sub-Committee understood the circumstances of the offences to be that on 2 December 2016, HL had been stopped by police whilst driving in the vicinity of Heathrow airport. He had been found to be in possession of false driving licence and identity card, containing his photograph but issued in a false name. He had been driving a vehicle registered under a false identity.
- (f) HL's convictions had engaged Sections 43 to 45 of the Council's Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Criminal Convictions Policy. The policy was that any application for a licence involving previous convictions for offences of dishonesty would not be granted until at least seven years had elapsed since the completion of any sentence imposed. Although HL's previous convictions were now over seven years old, the Council must consider his history as a whole. These were serious offences as had been reflected by the sentences imposed.
- (g) HL attended the hearing. He was unrepresented. He apologised for his convictions and for his failure to disclose them in his application. As to the convictions, he pointed to the fact that he was now a different person. He had not been convicted since 2017. He had failed to disclose all the convictions because he believed that disclosing the no insurance matter was sufficient.
- (h) The Sub-Committee considered this case very carefully and took into account everything it had read, together with the representations it heard from HL. It had reminded itself that the paramount consideration in licensing was public protection and honesty was integral to protecting the public who used licensed vehicles.
- (i) Officers were concerned about the serious nature of these offences, and in particular, that HL had been willing to misrepresent his identity to deceive authorities. Whilst the convictions arising from that conduct dated back to 2017, officers were concerned that he had compounded the lack of honesty by his failure fully to disclose these convictions in his recent application form. The Sub-Committee noted that this failure had occurred in spite of the very clear declaration as to the truth of the information he had provided.
- (j) Taking both the convictions and the failure to disclose into account, the Sub-Committee was not satisfied that HL was a fit and proper person to hold a licence. It was therefore the decision of the Sub-Committee that his application be refused.

(HL was advised of their right of appeal against this decision to the Reading Magistrates' Court. Any such appeal should be made within the period of 21 days from receipt of these written reasons.)

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- (4) That, having taken into consideration the need to safeguard the public, the Sub-Committee concluded that it was appropriate and proportionate to suspend AMD's Private Hire (School Transport) Driver's licence to until he had taken and passed an extended driving assessment, or for the period of 14 days, whichever is the later.

The Sub-Committee's reasons were noted as follows:

REASONS

- (a) AMD was the holder of a current private hire (school transport) vehicle driver's licence granted by the Council on 6 December 2023 and expiring on 5 December 2026.
- (b) AMD had been referred to the Licensing Sub-Committee following a complaint from a member of the public alleging dangerous driving. The complaint was received by the Council on 15 January 2026 and concerned an incident said to have occurred at 9.15am that morning. AMD was alleged to have driven aggressively, bumper to bumper behind the complainant's vehicle in a 30mph area, beeping his horn and flashing his headlights and to have made several attempts to overtake the complainant's vehicle notwithstanding the speed limit and prevailing road conditions. He was also alleged to have got out of his vehicle whilst at traffic lights, approaching the complainant's vehicle, swearing at him and threatening him. At the request of officers, the complainant provided video recording on 22 January 2026.
- (c) Council officers had written to AMD on 21 January 2026 to notify him of the complaint and to invite his comments within a seven-day period. AMD did not respond within that time and on 29 January, he had been written to again reminding him of the seriousness of the allegation and allowing him a further three days within which to respond.
- (d) On 29 January 2026, an email had been received from AMD, in which, AMD stated that he had taken his responsibilities extremely seriously and had always conducted himself in a safe and professional manner. He had denied tailgating, driving aggressively or in a way intended to intimidate the other driver. Instead, he said that the other vehicle had been driven well below the speed limit and so he briefly flashed his headlights to alert the driver to his presence. Only when it had been safe to do so did he begin to position his vehicle to overtake the other vehicle but the other vehicle had been positioned in such a way as to prevent this. When both vehicles had been stopped at traffic lights, AMD said that he had exited his vehicle but only to check on the welfare of the other driver. He had denied swearing or behaving aggressively or threateningly.
- (e) Further footage had been received from the complainant on 20 February 2026 together with the complainant's response to AMD's account.
- (f) Officers had met with AMD on 9 February 2026. In the meeting, he had maintained his initial account of the incident, but after viewing the footage

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of the incident held by the Council at the time, he had admitted making a mistake, apologised and said that his behaviour would not be repeated. He had denied that his actions in exiting the vehicle could be interpreted as aggressive. He had accepted that he would have been unhappy if his children were being carried in his vehicle at the time but had stated that no children were involved, only the passenger escort. He had denied receiving any similar complaints previously.

- (g) On reviewing the Council's records, officers had noted that in November 2025, a similar complaint had been made about AMD. It had alleged that at around 8.15am in the morning, with children on board his vehicle and the vehicle displaying the yellow school sticker, AMD had been said to have driven across lanes in stationary and slow-moving traffic, sounding his horn without reason. The complainant had alleged that AMD was tailgating the complainant's vehicle and sounding his horn before speeding past the vehicle.
- (h) At the time of receiving the earlier complaint, officers had written to AMD inviting a response within seven days. No response had been received, and so officers had imposed six penalty points on his private hire driver's licence under the Council's penalty points scheme. The scheme provided a right of appeal against the imposition of points but no appeal had been made by AMD.
- (i) Officers had contended that AMD's driving had fallen well below the standard of a licensed private hire driver with the potential to endanger other road users. Furthermore, AMD had shown a lack of insight into his behaviour, failing to engage with officers within required timescales and minimising his culpability.
- (j) AMD's case had been due to come before the Licensing Sub-Committee on 3 March 2026. He had attended on that date but had requested an adjournment of the hearing because he had been unable to find someone to accompany him. His application to adjourn had been granted and the hearing had been put over to 2 April 2026. On the morning of this hearing, the Council had received an email from AMD again requesting an adjournment of the hearing because he had been taken ill overnight. An offer had been made to AMD to put back his hearing to later in the day so that he might be able to attend if he felt better. He did not attend and the Sub-Committee had resolved to proceed in his absence noting that a balance had to be struck between giving AMD a reasonable opportunity to attend and the interests of public safety in dealing with allegations of poor driving without undue delay.
- (k) The Sub-Committee had considered this case very carefully and had taken into account everything it had read and the video footage it had viewed. It had regard to the Department of Transport's statutory taxi and private hire vehicle standards, and particularly, the guidance on the "fit and proper person test". It viewed his behaviour very seriously and noted that officers attending had invited the Sub-Committee to give consideration to revoking his licence. There had been similarities between the behaviour reported in January 2026 and the behaviour

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reported in November 2025 such that the Sub-Committee felt that it must act to protect the public. It was therefore the decision of the Sub-Committee that AMD's private hire vehicle (school transport) driver's licence should be suspended, pending his attendance on and passing (at his own expense) an extended driving assessment, or for the period of 14 days, whichever was the later.

(AMD would be advised of the right of appeal against this decision to the Reading Magistrates' Court. Any such appeal should be made within the period of 21 days from receipt of these written reasons.)

- (5) That, having taken into consideration the need to safeguard the public, the Sub-Committee concluded that it was appropriate and proportionate to take no further action in respect of the Private Hire Vehicle Driver's Licence held by MB. The Sub-Committee's reasons were noted as follows:

REASONS

- (a) MB had first applied to the Council for the grant of a private hire vehicle driver's licence in 2018. A DBS check conducted at the time had disclosed a conviction for indecent exposure dating back to 1993.
- (b) MB had failed to disclose this conviction on his application in 2018.
- (c) MB's application had been considered in line with the Council's convictions policy in force at the time, and he had been granted a licence from 26 February 2020 to 25 February 2023. MB had then applied to renew his licence and again had not disclosed his previous conviction. That renewal application had been considered in line with the Council's policy and had been granted, resulting in a licence being issued from 26 February 2023 to 25 February 2026.
- (d) On 7 November 2023, the Council had adopted a new convictions policy, and this policy had been amended on 12 February 2026.
- (e) MB had applied to renew his licence on 13 February 2026 and again had failed to disclose the conviction. It might have been that MB felt that he did not need to disclose the conviction again, but the Sub-Committee must remind him that it was imperative to complete his application forms for renewal fully and accurately. The standard application form contained a very important declaration that the contents of the application were true.
- (f) The Sub-Committee noted that the current policy had, as it stated at Paragraph 7, "raised the bar". This had led to the referral of MB's case to the Sub-Committee to consider what action, if any, was to be taken in relation to the conviction in the light of Paragraphs 38 to 42 of the Policy concerning sexual offences.
- (g) MB attended the hearing. He was unrepresented. He recognised the fact that the Sub-Committee was not allowed to go behind the 1993 conviction, even though he denied that he committed the offence for which he was convicted. He pointed to the fact that he was under 18

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years old at the time of the conviction and he was now married with a family. He had now been licensed by the Council as a driver for over six years. He had not been convicted since 1993 and there was no history of complaints about his conduct of his licence.

- (h) The Sub-Committee considered this case very carefully and took into account everything it had read, together with the representations it heard from MB. It had reminded itself that the paramount consideration in licensing was public protection and its current convictions policy was an important tool in protecting the public.
- (i) In all the circumstances, however, the Sub-Committee had decided that it needed to take no further action in relation to the conviction in the light of its age, the penalty imposed at the time and MB's history as a licensed driver.

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

(The meeting started at 9.30 am and closed at 12.30 pm)