

**LICENSING APPLICATIONS SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
4 AUGUST 2026**

Present: Councillors Woodward (Chair), Leng and Saadat.

8. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meetings held on 11 June 2026, 18 June 2026, 2 July 2026 and 8 July 2026 were confirmed as correct records and signed by the Chair.

9. 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.

10. HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE LICENSING - APPLICATIONS AND CASES TO CONSIDER THE SUSPENSION/REVOCATION OF 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. Driver: AR. (Case at Appendix 1).
- An application for the grant of a Private Hire (School Transport) Driver's Licence. Applicant: AA. (Case at Appendix 2);
- An application for the renewal of a Hackney Carriage Vehicle Driver's Licence. Driver: MS. (Case at Appendix 3).
- A report to consider the suspension/revocation of a Hackney Carriage Vehicle Driver's Licence. Driver: KB. (Case at Appendix 4).

The Sub-Committee considered detailed reports on each case set out at Appendices 1 to 4. Further information relating to Appendix 1 had been circulated on 31 July 2026, and further information relating to Appendix 2 had been circulated on 3 August 2026.

AR attended the hearing accompanied by a representative of the Reading Taxi Association. Both addressed the Sub-Committee and responded to questions. At the outset of the hearing, AR requested that consideration of their case be deferred until September 2026 to enable their legal representative, who was currently on leave, to attend and represent them.

AA had informed Licensing Officers in advance of the hearing that they would be unable to attend and did not appear before the Sub-Committee. The Sub-Committee noted that AA's case had previously been deferred at the meeting held on 2 July 2026 and decided that it would be appropriate to determine the case in AA's absence.

MS attended the hearing accompanied by their daughter who assisted with translation. Both addressed the Sub-Committee and responded to questions. Part way through the hearing,

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MS requested that the proceedings be deferred to allow them time to obtain legal representation.

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

Nicola Butler, Senior Licensing Enforcement Officer, presented the reports to the Sub-Committee and answered questions.

Robert Smalley, Senior Licensing Enforcement Officer, and Anthony Chawama, Mike Harding and Ben Williams, Licensing Enforcement Officers, also attended the hearing, addressed the Sub-Committee, and answered questions.

In the case of AR (Appendix 1), a witness to the incident referred to in the report attended the hearing accompanied by their mother. The Sub-Committee thanked them for attending and consulted them regarding AR's request to defer.

In the case of KB (Appendix 4), Licensing Officers advised the Sub-Committee that, when applying for a Hackney Carriage Driver's Licence, KB had declared the two convictions received in 2009 but had failed to declare the convictions received in 2019 relating to plying for hire.

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 Criminal Convictions Policy;
- The relevant RBC driver, vehicle and operator conditions and penalty points schemes;
- All of the documents provided for the meeting, including the Additional Informational circulated to the Sub-Committee by email in relation to the cases at Appendix 1 and Appendix 2; and
- The Fit and Proper Person Test.

Resolved –

- (1) That, having considered AR's request for a deferral, the Sub-Committee determined that the review of the Hackney Carriage Vehicle Driver's Licence in respect of AR be deferred until the provisionally scheduled meeting on 22 September 2026, to enable their legal representative to be able to attend the hearing to represent them;

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- (2) That the application in respect of AA for a Private Hire (School Transport) Driver's Licence be granted, subject to the condition that they successfully passed an extended remedial driving assessment (being the 3.5 hour course referred to in the report) within three months of the grant of the licence, at AA's own expense, and provided evidence of having passed the assessment to the Licensing Team and that, in the event that satisfactory evidence of AA having passed the extended remedial driving assessment was not provided to the Licensing Team within three months of the grant of the licence, the matter be referred back to the Sub-Committee for a review of the licence;
- (3) That, having considered MS's request for a deferral in order to obtain legal representation, and being unwilling to proceed with the review whilst they remained unrepresented following that request, the Sub-Committee determined that the application for the renewal of the Hackney Carriage Vehicle Driver's Licence in respect of MS be deferred until the meeting scheduled for 13 August 2026 to allow sufficient time for them to identify and instruct a legal representative;
- (4) That the Hackney Carriage Vehicle Driver's Licence held by KB be revoked on the basis that KB was not a fit and proper person to hold such a licence, the revocation shall take effect from the end of 21 days' notice from the date on which notice of the decision is formally given to KB in writing, 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 into account the relevant legislation, the Council's licensing policy and considered carefully the written evidence and the oral evidence presented to it at the hearing;
- (b) The Sub-Committee noted the two 2009 convictions, as set out in the report, but did not place undue weight on those convictions;
- (c) The Sub-Committee noted the Hackney Carriage licence had only been issued because Licensing Enforcement were not informed of the application and that KB did not disclose their more recent offending history;
- (d) The Sub-Committee noted that KB made an assertion during the hearing that the account of them plying for hire in August 2025 was incorrect but later admitted that this did not match their admissions in PACE interview, this cast further doubt about their honesty;

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- (e) The Sub-Committee were concerned to note KB's history of plying for hire. One offence would be serious, but three incidents, two in 2018 and one in 2025, showed a willingness to put passengers at risk;
- (f) The Sub-Committee noted the inherent dishonesty in not disclosing their previous convictions when making the application for their Hackney Carriage Vehicle Driver's Licence;
- (g) The Sub-Committee did not accept KB's assertion that they had simply missed the 'previous convictions' questions on the application form, the Sub-Committee noted that KB's first account was that they had completed the form themselves, and only later did they suggest that they had taken advice from a colleague;
- (h) The Sub-Committee noted KB's admission in the hearing that they had not read their licensing conditions in the almost 12 months since they had held their Hackney Carriage Vehicle Driver's Licence;
- (i) The Statutory Guidance set out the test for fitness to hold a licence and the Sub-Committee was not satisfied that KB met that test;
- (j) In light of the above, the Sub-Committee found that KB was not a fit and proper person to hold their Hackney Carriage Vehicle Driver's Licence and therefore revoked the licence.

APPEAL

KB was informed that they could appeal against the decision to Reading Magistrates' Court, Civic Centre, Castle Road, Reading, RG1 7TQ within the period of 21 days beginning on the day on which they were notified by the Licensing Authority of the decision appealed against.

(The meeting started at 5 pm and closed at 7.25 pm)