

Minutes

Licensing Committee
Monday, 15 December 2025



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL

Committee members present

Councillor Robert Leadenham (Vice-Chairman)
Councillor Helen Crawford
Councillor Jane Kingman
Councillor Susan Sandall
Councillor Elvis Stooke
Councillor Max Sawyer

Officers

Karen Whitfield, Assistant Director
(Leisure, Culture and Place)
Ayeisha Kirkham, Head of Service
(Public Protection)
Heather Green, Licensing Manager
Kim Robertson, Legal Advisor (LSL)
Lucy Bonshor, Democratic Officer

Other Members

Councillor Paul Fellows

32. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Harrish Bisnauthsing, Councillor Pam Bosworth, Councillor Patsy Ellis, Councillor Philip Knowles and Cllr Rhea Rayside.

Councillor Rayside was substituted by Councillor Max Sawyer.

33. Disclosure of interests

None disclosed.

34. Minutes of the meeting held on 30 September 2025

The minutes of the meeting held on 30 September were proposed, seconded and agreed.

35. Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy – following receipt of feedback and review

The Licensing Manager introduced the report which concerned feedback and the Senior Managements review of the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy.

The current Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy was adopted in June 2024 following updated Guidance issued by the Department of Transport in November 2023. The Policy was fundamental to protecting public safety and keeping people from harm and provided a framework upon which the Authority delivered its statutory functions relating to hackney carriage and private hire licensing.

The November Department of Transport response document was non-statutory best practice guidance and complemented the statutory standards.

Various updates had been brought back to the Committee in respect of:

- Fees & driver recruitment
- English Test
- Driver proficiency Test
- Cross border/out of area licensed drivers as this impacted on businesses due to potentially cheaper/less regulated regimes operated by other Licensing Authorities as there was no national taxi policy or charging regime.

The Senior Management Team had considered the impact on both fees and out of area licensing and appreciated the tight market that licensed drivers and operators worked within. Time and motion studies as well as benchmarking with other local authority licensing regimes had been undertaken.

Licensing authorities were responsible for deciding their own policy and making decisions on individual licensing matters, applying the relevant law and any other relevant considerations. Licensing authorities must give due regard to the Statutory Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Standards 2020 (updated 25 November 2022) and Updated Guidance (November 2023), the latter being guidance as opposed to statutory.

Any amendments to update the existing Policy made by the Licensing Committee would require approval by Full Council.

To pro-actively support the South Kesteven licensed drivers, operators and vehicle owners the following amendments to the policy were proposed:

- **Knowledge Test** – removal of the knowledge test requirement, removing a cost for new applicants.

The rationale for this was based on the fact that out of area drivers would not have this understand and with the prevalence of navigational aids this was potentially an unnecessary requirement and did not apply to renewing drivers.

As part of the knowledge test, Officers currently questioned drivers around their understanding of the highway code and policy which would not be undertaken if this element was removed from the policy.

- **English Test** – This was to remain in the policy; however, the cost was to be subsidised by South Kesteven District Council for all first tests. If a first test was failed, then further tests would be chargeable.

The rationale for retaining this test was based upon the Department of Transport guidance outlining that language proficiency assisted drivers in their work and passenger understanding.

- **New drivers entering the profession** – The provision of a one year licence for drivers entering the profession.

This supported feedback received on the difficulty in recruiting new drivers. The Statutory Taxi Standards outlined when a shorter licence term than three years could be considered:

“Any shorter duration licence should only be issued when the licensing authority thinks it is appropriate in the specific circumstances of the case. If a licensee has requested one ,or where required (for example, when the licence holder’s leave to remain in the UK is time-limited) or when the licence is only required to meet a short-term demand – they should not be issued on a probationary basis”.

- **Delegated Authority** – that the Constitution is amended to enable delegated authority to be granted to the Chief Executive and Portfolio Holder to make minor changes to the Policy.

In the past there had been minor number and wording updates where previous errors had been found as well as an update in respect of the use of third parties to complete DBS Enhanced checks as South Kesteven was no longer a Responsible Authority (the number of DBS checks per year were below the DBS threshold following the introduction of the online DBS Update Service).

Members were in agreement of the proposed amendments and the consensus of all the Members present were in agreement that the proposals be recommended to Full Council.

Decision

That the proposed changes as outlined within the report be recommended to Full Council for approval.

36. Street Trading Policy

The Committee received a verbal update from the Assistant Director (Leisure, Culture and Place).

At their meeting in July the Committee were informed that the Street Trading Policy had been suspended for six months to allow the Policy to be refreshed.

An updated refreshed Draft Policy was submitted to a Joint meeting of the Environment OSC and the Rural and Communities OSC on 10 December 2025.

The consensus at the joint meeting of the Members present was:

- To remove the designation of South Kesteven as a whole and designate specific streets in the four main town centres.
- Remove private land from the definition of Street
- Detailing how convictions disclosed on a DBS or application will be considered
- The introduction of a one-off event consent to assist and encourage local events
- Amend the consultation requirements, to enable more discretion as to when and who are consulted, dependent upon the duration of the consent and location.

At the joint meeting there was a lot of discussion in the subject of DBS checks and therefore the Chief Executive has decided to extend the suspension of the Street Trading Policy to allow more work to be undertaken in respect of refreshed Policy.

A Member Working Group was to be convened to discuss the issue of DBS checks and both the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Licensing Committee would be invited to attend. It was also stated that a legal opinion in respect of the refreshed policy was being sought and it was hoped that the Working Group would be convened early January 2026.

The Committee felt that the proposal of a having a Working Group was a sensible way forward and noted the current position.

37. Any other business which the Chairman, by reason of special circumstances, decides is urgent.

None.

38. Close of meeting

The Vice-Chairman wished everyone a Happy Christmas and a Happy and Healthy 2026 and closed the meeting at 2:16pm.