

Cherwell District Council

General Licensing Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the General Licensing Committee held at 39 Castle Quay, Banbury, OX16 5FD, on 22 October 2025 at 6.30 pm

Present:

Councillor Rebecca Biegel (Chair)

Councillor Nick Cotter

Councillor Dr Henry Elugwu

Councillor Lesley McLean

Councillor Ian Middleton

Councillor Chris Pruden

Councillor Douglas Webb

Councillor John Willett

Councillor Barry Wood

Substitute Members:

Councillor Simon Lytton (In place of Councillor Robert Parkinson)

Councillor David Rogers (In place of Councillor Fiaz Ahmed)

Apologies for absence:

Councillor Fiaz Ahmed

Councillor Phil Chapman

Councillor Robert Parkinson

Officers:

Jan Southgate, Health Protection, Compliance & Licensing Manager

Christine Pegler, Lead Licensing Enforcement Officer

Amanda Ward, Licensing Enforcement Officer

Sian Parsons, Licensing Technical Officer

Saba Ahmed, Trainee Solicitor

Aaron Hetherington, Principal Officer - Electoral Services Lead

Patrick Davis, Democratic and Elections Officer

Officers Attending Virtually:

Denzil Turbervill, Head of Legal Services

Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest

4 **Minutes**

The Minutes of the meetings of the Committee held on 15 April 2025 and 21 May 2025 were agreed as correct records and signed by the Chair.

5 **Chair's Announcements**

There were no Chair's Announcements.

6 **Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

7 **New Cherwell District Council Taxi Licensing Policy**

The Health Protection, Compliance and Licensing Manager submitted a report to seek approval from the General Licensing Committee for the New Cherwell District Council Taxi Licensing Policy.

In introducing the report, the Health Protection, Compliance and Licensing Manager outlined the changes that has been made to the policy following the outcome of the initial consultation.

In introducing the report, the Health Protection, Compliance and Licensing Manager explained that the new draft policy introduced changes which were designed to bring the Council's policy more in-line with the current Department of Transport guidance, improve safety, inclusion, compliance and enhance incentives for cleaner vehicles. A consultation had taken place in the summer and all feedback considered which resulted in several changes to the draft policy.

In response to questions regarding wheelchair accessible vehicles, the Committee was advised that there were currently fifty wheelchair accessible vehicles registered and the Council was trying to increase this number by offering incentives such as longer vehicle age limits.

In the course of the discussion, Committee members queried the status of vehicles operating in the Cherwell area that were licensed by other local authorities which would have different policies and standards. The Health Protection, Compliance and Licensing Manager explained that legislation did not prevent this and it was not just an issue in the Cherwell district. The Committee requested that, if possible, their concerns were relayed to the relevant Central Government departments.

In response to concerns raised by the Committee relating to the increase in the age limit for vehicles, it was explained that Department of Transport best practice recommended removing vehicle age limits altogether which meant the Council's policy was stricter than national guidance.

Following a question regarding the potential use of video capture or CCTV systems in vehicles, the Committee was advised that this was not a requirement of the new policy as it was difficult to implement the sealed systems that were compliant with legislation to prevent tampering of evidence. The Committee was assured that the current vetting system of drivers was extremely robust.

In response to a question regarding the fee to process taxi licences across different councils, the Health Protection, Compliance and Licensing Manager explained that Cherwell's fees were based on cost recovery and were similar to other councils in Oxfordshire. Whilst some local authorities did charge less, it was not possible to comment on the rationale applied by these authorities.

Following questions surrounding the process of revoking licences, the Health Protection, Compliance and Licensing Manager clarified the process and advised that details of revoked licences was shared with other authorities via a national database to ensure a driver could not obtain a licence in another local authority area. The council's internal points system was being tightened so that points remained on the driver's record for three years rather than the current one year period.

Resolved

- (1) That the post consultation Cherwell District Council Taxi Licensing Policy be approved for adoption by Cherwell District Council.

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New Cherwell District Council Street Trading Policy

The Health Protection, Compliance and Licensing Manager submitted a report for the Committee to consider and agree a draft Street Trading Policy for consultation with Oxfordshire Country Council as the Highways Authority, Thames Valley Police, Environmental Health, Fire Authority, along with other Stakeholders including Current Licensees, Local Ward Councillors, and Parish and Town councils. Following consultation and any changes deemed necessary, the Policy would be submitted to the Committee for approval.

In introducing the report, the Health Protection, Compliance and Licensing Manager explained that the current Street Trading Policy was last reviewed in 2019. A new draft Street Trading Policy had been produced which was more comprehensive, reflected changes in legislation, guidance issued to local authorities and incorporated new standard conditions. The new draft Street Trading Policy also removed pavement licensing as this was now covered by different legislation. A draft Pavement Licence Policy would be considered at the next agenda item.

In response to a question, the Health Protection, Compliance and Licensing Manager confirmed that the Street Trading Policy applied to both static and mobile street traders. As part of the application process, the new policy

contained a requirement for consultation with businesses and residents within 100 metres of where the proposed trading would take place.

Resolved

- (1) That the new draft Cherwell District Council Street Trading Policy be approved for consultation with the trade and members of the public.

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New Cherwell District Council Pavement Licence Policy

The Health Protection, Compliance and Licensing Manager submitted a report which presented a draft Pavement Licence Policy for consultation with Oxfordshire County Council as the Highways Authority, Thames Valley Police, Environmental Health, Fire Authority, along with other Stakeholders including Current Licensees, Local Ward Councillors, and Parish and Town councils. Following consultation and any changes deemed necessary, the Policy would be submitted to the Committee for approval.

In introducing the report, the Licensing Enforcement Officer explained that whilst there was no statutory requirement to have a Pavement Licensing Policy, having a transparent Policy was good practice. The Council's current Pavement Permits (Tables & Chairs) policy was part of the combined Street Trading Policy and had last been reviewed in 2019. The new draft Pavement Licence Policy was a standalone policy that reflected current legislation. A review of the fee structure had also been undertaken.

In response to a question regarding the proposed new fees that would be applicable from the 2026/27 financial year, the Licensing Enforcement Officer explained that fees were set locally, and it was for each licensing authority to determine the charge. Fees were capped at a maximum charge of £500 for first time applications and £350 for renewal applications. The Licensing Authority had reviewed costs associated with granting Pavement Licences for a maximum of two years resulting in the proposed fees based on cost recovery, £242.50 for new applications and £182.50 for renewals. The fees would be consistent for all applicants.

In response to Members' comments regarding the use of vapes which was not included in the draft Pavement Licence Policy, the Committee was advised that regulations relating to the use of vapes were not explicitly included in the existing smoke free legislation and could therefore not be included in the Policy.

In response to a question relating to how the space requested for outdoor seating was defined, the Licensing Enforcement Officer explained that the application process required submission of a site plan with clear measurements showing the relevant boundaries for which consent was sought.

Resolved

- (1) That the new draft Pavement Licensing Policy be approved for consultation to ensure that it reflects the current Government guidance, and input from relevant consultees.

The meeting ended at 8.10 pm

Chair:

Date: