



# East Cambridgeshire District Council

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## Meeting: Licensing Committee

Time: 10:00am

Date: Wednesday 18 March 2026

Venue: Council Chamber, The Grange, Nutholt Lane, Ely, CB7 4EE

Enquiries regarding this agenda: Patrick Adams

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## Committee membership

**Quorum:** 5 members

### Conservative members

Cllr Christine Ambrose Smith  
Cllr Lavinia Edwards  
Cllr Mark Goldsack  
Cllr Martin Goodearl (Vice-Chair)  
Cllr Keith Horgan  
Cllr Julia Huffer (Chair)

### Conservative substitutes

Cllr Bill Hunt  
Cllr Kelli Pettitt  
Cllr Alan Sharp

### Liberal Democrat and Independent members

Cllr Charlotte Cane  
Cllr Lee Denney  
Cllr Mark Inskip  
Cllr John Trapp (Lead Member)  
Cllr Christine Whelan  
Cllr Gareth Wilson

### Liberal Democrat and Independent substitutes

Cllr Chika Akinwale  
Cllr Christine Colbert  
Cllr Lorna Dupré

**Lead Officer:** Stewart Broome, Licensing Manager

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## Agenda

### 1. Apologies and substitutions

[oral]

- 2. Declarations of interests** **[oral]**
- To receive declarations of interests from Members for any items on the agenda in accordance with the Members Code of Conduct.
- 3. Minutes** **Page 5**
- To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the meeting of the Licensing Committee held on 11 February 2026.
- 4. Chair’s announcements** **[oral]**
- 5. Consultation on Local Transport Authorities and the Licensing of Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles** **Page 9**
- To finalise the Council’s response to the Government’s consultation on the transfer of responsibility for taxis and private hire licensing from District Councils and Metropolitan Borough Councils to Local Transport Authorities (“LTA’s”) in England, as part of an effort to curb “out of area” working.
- 6. Licensing Manager’s Update**
- To inform Members of the ongoing work of the Licensing Authority and emerging matters.
- 7. Forward agenda plan**
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## Notes

1. Members of the public are welcome to attend this meeting. If you are visiting The Grange during normal working hours you should report to the main reception desk. If you come to an evening meeting please enter via the door in the glass atrium at the back of the building.

Admittance is on a “first come, first served” basis and public access will be from 30 minutes before the start time of the meeting. Due to room capacity restrictions, members of the public are asked, where possible, to notify Democratic Services ([democratic.services@eastcamb.gov.uk](mailto:democratic.services@eastcamb.gov.uk) or 01353 665555) of their intention to attend a meeting.

The livestream of this meeting will be available on [the committee meeting’s webpage](http://www.eastcamb.gov.uk/node/3236) ([www.eastcamb.gov.uk/node/3236](http://www.eastcamb.gov.uk/node/3236)). Please be aware that all attendees, including those in the public gallery, will be visible on the livestream.

2. The Council has adopted a ‘Purge on Plastics’ strategy and is working towards the removal of all consumer single-use plastics in our workplace. Therefore, we do not provide disposable cups in our building or at our meetings and would ask members of the public to bring their own drink to the meeting if required.
3. Fire instructions for meetings:
  - if the fire alarm sounds, please make your way out of the building by the nearest available exit, which is usually the back staircase or the fire escape in the Chamber and do not attempt to use the lifts
  - the fire assembly point is in the front staff car park by the exit barrier

- the building has an auto-call system to the fire services so there is no need for anyone to call the fire services

The Committee Officer will sweep the area to ensure that everyone is out.

4. Reports are attached for each agenda item unless marked “oral”.
5. If required, all items on the agenda can be provided in different formats (such as large type, Braille or audio tape, or translated into other languages), on request, by calling main reception on (01353) 665555 or e-mail: [translate@eastcambs.gov.uk](mailto:translate@eastcambs.gov.uk)
6. If the Committee wishes to exclude the public and press from the meeting, a resolution in the following terms will need to be passed:

“That the press and public be excluded during the consideration of the remaining item no(s). X because it is likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if members of the public were present during the item(s) there would be disclosure to them of exempt information of Category X of Part I Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).”

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# East Cambridgeshire District Council

## **Minutes of a Meeting of the Licensing Committee**

Held at The Grange, Nutholt Lane, Ely, CB7 4EE at 10:00am  
on Wednesday 11 February 2026

### **Present:**

Cllr Christine Ambrose Smith  
Cllr Christine Colbert (Substituting for Cllr Cane)  
Cllr Lee Denney  
Cllr Lavinia Edwards  
Cllr Mark Goldsack  
Cllr Martin Goodearl  
Cllr Keith Horgan  
Cllr Julia Huffer (Chair)  
Cllr Mark Inskip  
Cllr John Trapp  
Cllr Christine Whelan  
Cllr Gareth Wilson

### **Officers:**

Patrick Adams – Senior Democratic Services Officer  
Stewart Broome – Licensing Manager  
Maggie Camp – Director Legal

## **24. Apologies and substitutions**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Charlotte Cane. Cllr Christine Colbert attended as a substitute for Cllr Cane.

## **25. Declarations of interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

## **26. Minutes**

The Committee received the Minutes of the Licensing Committee meeting held on 19 November 2025 and the two Licensing (Non-Statutory) Sub Committees held on 10 September 2025.

It was resolved unanimously:

- A)** that the Minutes of the Licensing Committee meeting held on 19 November 2026 be confirmed as a correct record and be signed by the Chair, subject to the following amendments:
- In the fourth paragraph of minute 21 on page 5 the word “taxis” be amended to “private hire vehicles”.
  - In the fifth paragraph of minute 21 on page 5 the penultimate sentence to read “Cllr Mark Inskip also supported the proposed increases in table 1 and suggested that it was right to include details of the options in tables 2 and 3 in the report.”
- B)** That the Minutes of the two Licensing (Non-Statutory) Sub Committees on 10 September 2025 be confirmed as a correct record and be signed by the Chair.

## **27. Chair’s announcements**

There were no Chair’s announcements.

## **28. Consultation on Local Transport Authorities and the Licensing of Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles**

The Licensing Manager, Stewart Broome, presented a report, AA139 previously circulated, which informed the Committee of a Government consultation on the transfer of responsibility for taxis and private hire vehicles licensing from District Councils and Metropolitan Borough Councils to Local Transport Authorities (LTAs) in England as part of an effort to curb “out of area” working. The Licensing Manager expressed doubts whether reducing the number of taxi licensing authorities would address this issue, as there would still be movement between the authority areas. He explained that whilst there would be economies of scale by reducing the number of taxi licensing authorities, there would also be diseconomies of scale by reducing the number of licensing applications that the other licensing authorities would have to process. This could result in a reduction in charges for the trade but an increase in costs for the councils that would no longer be processing taxi licence applications.

Cllr Julia Huffer expressed concern regarding this consultation, which appeared to ignore the issues of enforcement, safety or maintaining the standards of the service.

It was noted that this change could result in fewer hackney carriages in rural areas, which meant that residents would have to rely on booking private hire vehicles.

In reply to Cllr Gareth Wilson, the Licensing Manager explained that he did not expect the new licensing arrangements to come into effect until after the Local

Government Reorganisation had concluded in April 2028. He suggested that the timing of the consultation was questionable.

In reply to Cllr Mark Goldsack, the Licensing Manager explained that licensing officers and a manager would have to be transferred over to the Combined Authority, creating vacancies at the new unitary authorities.

In reply to Cllr John Trapp, the Licensing Manager stated that private hire vehicles tended to provide transport to children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), as the journeys needed to be booked in advance.

In reply to Cllr John Trapp, the Licensing Manager explained that the taxi fees charged by the Council had reduced due to economies of scale and it was therefore possible that fees would reduce further if the Combined Authority became responsible for all taxi licensing in Cambridgeshire. However, it was likely that removing taxi licensing from the other authorities in the county would increase costs due to diseconomies of scale.

In reply to Cllr Mark Inskip, the Licensing Manager expressed concern regarding both the capacity of the Combined Authority to deliver the licensing service and the plans for appeals to be determined by the magistrates' court instead of by sub-committees, meaning that there would be no councillor involvement in these decisions.

In reply to Cllr Christine Ambrose Smith, the Licensing Manager explained that licensed drivers could register with Uber or a similar application software to receive bookings, but only if their Licensing Authority licensed Uber as an operator. The Council does not licence Uber at present. The Licensing Manager acknowledged that safety standards varied by area and he hoped that the amount of deviation could be reduced.

It was agreed that the Committee should receive a report on responding to the consultation at its next meeting on 18 March 2026.

The Committee **Noted** the report.

## **29. General Licensing Update**

The Licensing Manager presented this report, AA140 already circulated, which informed the Committee of the work of the Licensing Authority and emerging matters. He explained that 5,708 cases had been processed in 2025, which was almost 4,500 more than in 2024. This was due to an increase in the number of taxi licence applications. 96% of these applications were being processed electronically and so this was not impacting on any other service at the Council. This had also reduced the charges being made to applicants, as savings were being made through economies of scale and the Council was not permitted to make a profit. 10 licences had been revoked, which was a very small proportion of the licences granted.

The Licensing Manager explained that the Tobacco and Vapes Bill was being discussed by the House of Lords and was likely to become law in 2026 and commence in 2027. Under the Health and Care Act 2022 a mandatory licensing scheme for non-surgical cosmetic procedures, including tattooing and piercings was being introduced by the Government. This was unlikely to come into effect until after the new unitary authorities had been set up under the Local Government Reorganisation arrangements in 2028.

The Committee **Noted** the report.

### 30. **Forward agenda plan**

The Committee received its Forward Agenda Plan.

It was resolved:

That the Forward Agenda Plan be noted with Consultation on Local Transport Authorities and the Licensing of Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles to be added to the list of items for the meeting on 18 March 2026.

The meeting concluded at 11:06 am

Chair.....

Date.....

**Title: Consultation on Local Transport Authorities and the Licensing of Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles**

Committee: Licensing Committee

Date: 18 March 2025

Author: Stewart Broome, Licensing Manager

Report number: AA166

Contact officer: Stewart Broome, Licensing Manager  
[stewart.broome@eastcambs.gov.uk](mailto:stewart.broome@eastcambs.gov.uk), 01353 616287, SF204, The Grange, Ely

**1.0 Issue**

1.1 To finalise the Council's response to the Government's consultation on the transfer of responsibility for taxis and private hire licensing from District Councils and Metropolitan Borough Councils to Local Transport Authorities ("LTA's") in England, as part of an effort to curb "out of area" working.

**2.0 Recommendations**

2.1 To agree on the wording of the answers to questions one to four and thirteen to fifteen contained in **Appendix 1**, and

2.2 To instruct officers to submit the agreed answers to the Government's LTA consultation prior to the 1 April 2026 deadline.

**3.0 Background**

3.1 Responsibility for licensing Hackney Carriage drivers and vehicles and Private Hire driver, vehicles and operators currently rests with approximately 263 District Councils and Metropolitan Borough Councils, each of which has their own licensing policy and conditions. Of these there are 164 District Councils, 62 Unitary Authorities, 36 Metropolitan Borough Councils and Transport for London.

3.2 Each authority has responsibility in respect of licences which it has issued, however, drivers and vehicles from outside an authority's area may quite legitimately be used for services in that authority's area.

3.3 Under the Transport Act 2000, LTA's are responsible for formulating transport policies and publishing them through a local transport plan. East Cambridgeshire District Council falls within the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority LTA which includes the District Councils in the Greater Cambridgeshire area along with Peterborough's Unitary Authority and the County Council. There are 70 LTA's in England in total.

## AGENDA ITEM 5

3.4 On 8 January 2026 the Government launched a consultation exercise inviting comments on the correct level of regulating taxi and private hire licensing, namely, LTAs or Unitary Authorities (post Local Government Reorganisation).

### 4.0 Summary

4.1 On 11 February 2026 Members received report AA139 setting out the consultation's contents and noted its contents. Members also resolved to prepare draft responses to questions one to four and thirteen to fifteen of the LTA consultation to be discussed at the next Licensing Committee.

### 5.0 Conclusion

5.1 Members are asked to discuss the draft responses contained in **Appendix 1** and agree any amendments they wish to see.

### 6.0 Additional Implications Assessment

6.1 In the table below, please put Yes or No in each box:

<b>Financial Implications</b>  <b>No</b>	<b>Legal Implications</b>  <b>No</b>	<b>Human Resources (HR) Implications</b>  <b>No</b>
<b>Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)</b>  <b>No</b>	<b>Carbon Impact Assessment (CIA)</b>  <b>No</b>	<b>Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA)</b>  <b>No</b>

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#### **Background Documents**

English Devolution White Paper - [English Devolution White Paper - GOV.UK](#)

#### **Location**

Room SF204  
The Grange,  
Ely

#### **Contact Officer**

Stewart Broome  
Licensing Manager  
(01353) 616287

## Appendix 1

**Question 1: Any one-off costs? If so, what would the one-off costs to your authority be for? How much would the costs be? Please provide a monetary value in pounds, if possible, otherwise the resource time required in hours.**

It is impossible to answer this question, as it impossible to ascertain with any degree of certainty what the one-off costs of migrating taxi licensing to LTAs may produce at this time, as the Licensing Authority will be forming a Unitary Authority over the next two years, and costs will be affected by this process. However, it is considered that the areas we would expect to see one off costs are redundancy payments and recruitment costs.

**Question 2: Any ongoing costs? If so, what would the ongoing costs to your authority be for? How much would the additional costs be? Please provide a monetary value in pounds, if possible, otherwise the resource time required in hours.**

It is impossible to answer this question, as it impossible to ascertain with any degree of certainty what the on-going costs of migrating taxi licensing to LTAs may produce at this time, as the Licensing Authority will be forming a Unitary Authority over the next two years, and ongoing costs will be affected by this process.

However, whilst it is not possible to state with certainty, at present every taxi licence holder pays towards fixed costs the LA incurs such as, staffing and software licensing fees etc, in the same other licence holders have to, and if there are fewer licence holders contributing to these fixed costs because of taxis being moved to LTAs, then the remaining licence holders will need to pay higher contribution levels to ensure the LA can still function, or the tax payer will be required to subsidise businesses by way of covering these Licensing Authority operating costs.

**Question 3: Any one-off savings? If so, what would the savings to your authority be for? How much would the savings be? Please provide a monetary value in pounds, if possible, otherwise the resource time required.**

It is impossible to answer this question, as it impossible to ascertain with any degree of certainty what the one-off savings of migrating taxi licensing to LTAs may produce at this time, as the Licensing Authority will be forming a Unitary Authority over the next two years, and one-off savings will be affected by this process. However, it is anticipated that there will be no one-off savings as a result of migrating taxis to the LTA, as taxi income is set at cost recovery.

**Question 4: Any ongoing savings? If so, what would the savings to your authority be for? How much would the savings be? Please provide a monetary value in pounds, if possible, otherwise the resource time required.**

It is impossible to answer this question, as it impossible to ascertain with any degree of certainty what the on-going savings of migrating taxi licensing to LTAs may produce at this time, as the Licensing Authority will be forming a Unitary Authority over the next two years, and ongoing savings will be affected by this process. However, given that taxi income is set at levels designed to be cost recovery, and all existing operating costs would still be incurred by a Licensing Authority to administer the remaining licensing regimes such as, alcohol, entertainment, scrap metal, gambling etc, it is not anticipated that there will be any savings.

**Question 13: Should all local transport authorities be responsible for taxi and private hire vehicle licensing? Why?**

As a committee we strive to uphold standards of both vehicles and drivers so that fare paying passengers are safe and comfortable. To that end, taxi licensing is about more than just cost and how much can be saved by reducing the number of authorities who oversee the issue of licences.

As a Licensing Committee it is part of our responsibility to ensure the safety of passengers and drivers alike. Some of the most vulnerable people in our society rely on taxis to take them to school and to hospital appointments; to safely deliver them home after a night out, to assist the elderly and infirm with their shopping, and it is our duty to ensure that the people performing that function are 'fit and proper'. We also have a duty to ensure that our drivers are protected from violent or aggressive passengers.

Another responsibility as a Licensing Committee is to hold hearings when complaints are made. We listen to both sides, weigh the evidence and reach our conclusions. This process is carried out by elected members not officers of the council. This is a cornerstone of the rights of taxi licence holders and the travelling public to be heard by an unbiased panel of members.

It is the opinion of this Council that moving taxi licensing to LTAs will not remove the issues of "cross bordering" and "licence shopping" that have been created in recent years by technology and deregulation. Whilst LGR or migrating taxis to LTAs will reduce the number of boundaries, there will still be in the region of 70 boundaries and the likelihood of differing fees, standards and expected turnaround times between these remaining authorities, which are the true factors driving licence shopping. The ability to sub-contract and sub-contract bookings to an unlimited extent presents huge challenges for enforcement, and this will not be addressed by moving taxi licensing away from post LGR Unitary Authorities and giving it to LTAs. Drafting legislation to create national standards for drivers and vehicles, standardising fees and implementing service standards or KPIs for the new Unitary Authorities to abide by is a far better way to achieve the outcomes that everyone wishes to see.

As a committee and as a District Council all members are in complete agreement that this is a false economy that will potentially result in placing members of the public in harms way and should be abandoned as a really bad idea.

**Question 14: Are there wider economic benefits in making all local transport authorities responsible for taxi and private hire vehicle licensing? If so, what are they?**

Without knowing exactly how any migration will be legislated for, this is impossible to answer with any degree of certainty. However, if LTAs were to become responsible for taxi licensing the most obvious economic benefit that could be achieved would be a possible lowering in licensing fees for the trade, due to greater economies of scale in some areas of the country. It is worth noting that some licence holders could end up paying more than they currently do for the same licences due to the change.

**Question 15: Are there other costs in making all local transport authorities responsible for taxi and private hire vehicle licensing? If so, what are they?**

Without knowing exactly how any migration will be legislated for, this is impossible to answer.