

Briefing Note

Title: 2022-23 Quarter 4 Report to South Staffordshire Council**Date: 18 May 2023****Prepared by: Greg Bickerdike****Job Title: Licensing Manager****Intended Audience:** Internal ☐ Partner organisation ☒ Public ☒ Confidential ☐

Purpose

To report to South Staffordshire District Council on the status of taxi licensing.

Background

On 1 April 2022, South Staffordshire District Council (SSDC) delegated its taxi licensing function to City of Wolverhampton Council. As part of this delegation, quarterly reports were agreed. This report covers quarter four (Q4) of 2022-23: January, February and March.

Update

A new contract is in place with Idox, the software supplier for the online application system and back-office administration. This will allow greater digital development of these platforms, allowing for a smoother experience and hopefully reducing fees further.

The vehicle inspection booking system is live since 1 February, with no issues since launch. This allows proprietors to choose an available appointment convenient to them.

On 27 March 2023, a Licensing and Regulatory Subcommittee was held where four licence applications were referred for determination by South Staffordshire Councillors. Members resolved to refuse two private hire driver licence applications and revoke an existing private hire vehicle operator licence. One of the applicants voluntarily surrendered their licence prior to the hearing taking place.

Since 27 April 2023, licensing authorities across the country have been required by the 'Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles (Safeguarding and Road Safety) Act 2022' to record all licence refusals, revocations and suspensions on the National Register for Revocations, Refusals and Suspensions (NR3S). This has been easy for City of Wolverhampton Council to implement, as it was already recording all revocations and refusals on the NR3S' predecessor.

On 7 March, the trade working group was restarted. Representatives from the trade attended and a productive meeting was held, with issues addressed. Another meeting is scheduled for 6 July 2023.

An online register of wheelchair accessible vehicles is now available at <https://www.sstaffs.gov.uk/licensing-and-permits/taxi-and-private-hire-vehicles/information-passengers>. This is automatically updated every day.

The Council has responded to the Department for Transport survey, which will publish its annual statistics online of licence numbers.

The procurement exercise to supply new driver badges and vehicle plates is still ongoing and contracts are expected to be in place by the next committee meeting.

The Council eagerly awaits the publication of the Department for Transport's 'Taxi and private hire vehicle best practice guidance', expected this summer. The Committee has already agreed to consult on policies and procedures following their review in light of this guidance.

Statistics for Q4

Licence Holders

Licence Type	Currently licensed (total)	Received (incl. renewals)	Granted	Refused
Hackney Carriage Driver	0	0	0	0
Hackney Carriage	1	0	0	0
Dual Driver	1	0	0	0
Private Hire Vehicle Operator	25	7	6	0
Private Hire Driver	165	23	20	0
Private Hire Vehicle	142	84	80	0

Enforcement Action

Licence Type	Surrendered	Reviewed	Suspended	Revoked
Hackney Carriage Driver	0	0	0	0
Hackney Carriage	0	0	0	0
Dual Driver	0	0	0	0
Private Hire Vehicle Operator	1	2	0	1
Private Hire Driver	0	1	0	1
Private Hire Vehicle	0	0	1*	0

*vehicle suspensions are as a result of vehicles being involved in road traffic accidents.

Planned Compliance Operations - 2023

April	Codsall, Penkridge, Cheslyn Hay, Great Wyrley, Coven, Weston
May	Wombourne, Essington, Penkridge, Wombourne, Brewood, Base audits Penkridge and Wombourne.
June	Codsall, Penkridge, Cheslyn Hay, Great Wyrley, Coven, Weston (Base audits X 3)
July	Codsall, Penkridge, Cheslyn Hay, Great Wyrley, Coven, Weston (Classic Ibiza event on Saturday 15 July 2023) (Base audits X 3)
August	Wombourne, Essington, Penkridge, Wombourne, Brewood, Festival Event Saturday 19 August 2023
September	Codsall, Penkridge, Cheslyn Hay, Great Wyrley, Coven, Weston (Prom Spectacular event on Saturday 9 September 2023) Base Audits X 3
October	Wombourne, Essington, Penkridge, Wombourne, Brewood, Bilbrook Base Audits X 3

November	Codsall, Penkridge, Cheslyn Hay, Great Wyrley, Coven, Weston (Base audits X 3)
December	Wombourne, Essington, Penkridge, Wombourne, Brewood, Bilbrook Base Audits X3

- 4 base audits carried out on Casper Cars, Image Cars, Codsall and Perton Cars (twice).
- 22 Proactive high visibility patrols conducted across the region.
- 41 Vehicles checked. 3 issued with defect notices (no operator signage) 1 vehicle Suspended.

One safeguarding complaint for an operator/driver was received and actioned within one working day. These licences were reviewed and revoked.

Corporate Complaints

Should any applicants or licence holders be dissatisfied with the service provided, they are entitled to make a corporate complaint to Wolverhampton's Customer Feedback team.

	Upheld at Stage One	Upheld at Stage Two	Upheld by Ombudsman	Not responded to within SLA
Corporate Complaints	0	0	0	0