

Briefing Note

Title: 2023-24 Quarter 1 Report to South Staffordshire Council

Date: 17 January 2024

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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 three (Q3) of 2023-24: October, November and December.

Update

The government has published its Best Practice guidance. This is significant and covers almost all areas of taxi licensing. A 12-week consultation has been launched, which covers the following topics:

- Inclusive service plans
- Driver medical certification
- Private hire drivers working with multiple operators
- Removal of signage on private hire vehicles
- Certificates of Good Conduct
- Daily walkaround checks of vehicles
- Removing age limits in place of an emissions limit
- Driver training every licence renewal
- Defining assistance dogs
- Allowing MOT certificates from any testing station
- Private hire vehicle operators as agent/principle

The consultation can be read and responded to at <https://consultation.wolverhampton.gov.uk/licensing/taxiconsultation2023/>. The results of the consultation will be presented to the committee for consideration.

The South Staffordshire private hire industry continues to grow, with a quarterly increase of three private hire vehicle operators, 30 private hire drivers and 14 private hire vehicles.

New contracts have been signed with licence plate and driver badge suppliers. The new driver badges are expected to be issued to all drivers from April 2024.

Statistics for Q3

Licence Holders

Licence Type	Currently licensed (total)	Received	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	32	1	3	0
Private Hire Driver	234	34	43	0
Private Hire Vehicle	188	40	46	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	0	0	0
Private Hire Driver	0	0	0	0
Private Hire Vehicle	0	0	0	0

*vehicle surrenders have been as a result of vehicles being involved in road traffic accidents.

Compliance Operations

October 2023	Licensing input to local policing team.
November 2023	Himley Hall Bonfire Night
December 2023	Operator base audits/compliance patrols as below
January 2024	Compliance patrols as below
February 2024	Joint patrols with local policing team test purchase op
March 2024	Equalities Act Test Purchase Operation

Compliance patrols have taken place in Codsall, Cheslyn Hay, Great Wyrley, Penkridge, Brewood, Coven, Essington, Huntington, Weston-under-Lizard, Bilbrook, Wombourne, Himley, Perton and Featherstone.

There have been no safeguarding complaints not actioned within one working day.

Wolverhampton assisted South Staffs Officers with the Bonfire night event at Himley Hall on 4 November and provided training to Codsall Policing team on 25 October.

During December we audited the last of operators meaning that all licensed operators apart from one in South Staffordshire have now been audited over the past 12 months. No major issues identified.

Over the coming months we intend to work with Codsall Local policing team to conduct high visibility joint enforcement patrols, we will also undertake an Equalities Act test purchase operation to ensure that operators/drivers comply with their legal obligations.

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