Licensing Service

Proposed Workplan 2026

Achievements since/from previous plan:

- Licensing Service relocated to Lancaster Town Hall
- Updated Statement of Gambling Policy – Gambling Act (3-year policy)
- Licensing Fees Review - annual requirement
- Hackney Carriage Fare Review – annual requirement (no adjustment since 2023)
- Unmet Demand Survey – Deferred to 2027/28
- Late-night refreshment compliance project
- Appointment of f/t Licensing Officer and Senior Licensing Officer

Project	Scope	Reason	Risks	Timeline	Progress – March 2026
Review Vehicle Licensing Procedures, Inspections and Maintenance	Vehicle Licensing, including length of licence, testing standards and the products used require review.	To align digitalisation with efficient, streamlined products and processes	Application standards and processes	Ongoing	Trade consultation survey held and results available. Decisions to be taken at Licensing Committee March 2026.
Review Private Hire and Hackney Carriage Licensing Policy	The policy was implemented by Licensing committee in April 2022. It brought together all existing policies, application standards, specifications and expectations of licence-holders of Private Hire and Hackney Carriage Licensing into one document.	Policies require regular reviews, particularly in light of significant changes to process/applications.	Information provided is out of date and incorrect.	Will need to align with digitalisation project and vehicle licence review	Licensing Manager maintains a running list of matters requiring review or attention as part of the review. Updates actioned eg. Roof-signs/wheelchair

					accessible vehicle PHO condition Planned for June LC 2026.
Multi-Agency Vehicle Operation	Planned Operation with partner agencies, Lancashire Constabulary/DVLA/VOSA. Provides an opportunity to complete a high number of vehicle inspections, check compliance with licence conditions. The trade will not be notified of when the operation will be conducted, if requested they will be required to present their vehicle for inspection.	To ensure the licensed fleet of HC/PHVs are mechanically fit and roadworthy. Additionally, that condition/signage requirements are met	Members of the trade become complacent regarding compliance with licence conditions, leading to a poorly maintained fleet.	Summer 2026	Licensing Officers will plan the operation, involving DVLA/traffic police. Date(s) tbc.
Review of Street Trading Policy	To liaise with colleagues in Economic Development, Public Realm and Food Safety Team regarding potential improvements to the current street trading policy in respect of consent/ licence and prohibited streets for street trading. Ensure that permitted street traders are subject to appropriate public safety checks Formal consultation regarding any proposed changes	The current policy does not take account of where on permitted streets trading can take place. To help ensure a balanced and level playing field approach between high street businesses and mobile street traders To help avoid mobile traders locating outside	Some mobile traders may lose income and become unsustainable. Enquiries receive conflicting information/unclear application process etc.	Summer 2026	Licensing Committee to approve re-designation of street in Lancaster and Morecambe and make district “consent” streets. Report to LC March 2026

		inappropriate locations e.g. schools Options to introduce a charging policy and increase revenue			
Scrap Metal Compliance and Enforcement Activity	Ensure all those operating in/around the District have the relevant licences To improve compliance and standards in the District. Facilitate a multi-agency approach, involving internal and external partners	It has been highlighted that the number of licensed Scrap Metal Dealers has reduced since legislation/licensing requirements in 2013. Compliance visits and spot checks have not been conducted in previous years due to other service priorities	Illegal activity in the District increases, putted added pressure on colleagues in other departments and external partners eg. Police	Throughout 2026	With the recruitment of a f/t Licensing Officer and potential 3rd. Capacity of service could allow for further compliance works from lower risk activity.
Digitalisation of Licensing Service	The Licensing service were part of an OBR/People 2 project to look at digitalisation. The outcome of the project was reported to the Councils Cabinet. A set of recommendations have drafted and working groups set up to address the actions required.	To streamline application processes, making a positive customer experience, with streamlined, clear instructions and information available.	The service will not meet the needs of its licence-holders/ users.	Ongoing throughout 2026/27	All taxi applications now hosted online. Need to assess appetite to move LA03 apps online, or halt and await outcome of LGR/align with paired LAs.
Review of Hackney Carriage Rank Provision	A full Hackney Carriage stand review has been required for a number of years and has been highlighted as part of the most recent unmet demand survey.	To improve availability of Hackney carriages to the public	Failure to review ranks regularly will lead to issues of non-compliance and or	Ongoing	Contact was made with Highways Officer. It was advised that the costs of the review

		To prevent misuse of current stands by members of the public.	out of date signs and lines. The trade requires ranks in suitable locations.		would have to be met by LCC, they are significant, roughly 12k. 2024 improvements made to Arndale HC stand. 2025 Lancaster Bus Station and Brock St updates a priority. Intention to tackle outdated stand signs/lines as/when identified to keep costs minimal.
Promote Commercial Services	To promote paid service "Licensing Direct" and Personal licensing training courses.	To assist business start-ups and existing licence holders. Ensure valid applications are applied for every time. Reduce time spent by Officers amending applications and liaising with applicants.	Reduced capacity in team to meet demand (Staffing Levels/Sickness/Annual Leave) Sourcing Trainers	Ongoing	Licensing Officers offering paid services as/when applicable. Non-priority.

Hackney Carriage Fare Review Annual Requirement	Methodology and frequency of fare reviews was determined by the Council Cabinet in April 2022.	To ensure fares reflect the cost of living.	Further decrease in availability of drivers/vehicle in the District – licensed trade becomes unsustainable.	November 2026	Review will begin using RPI from November 2026. Trade will be consulted on preferred options – Fares maintained 2024/2025/2026, with many of the trade believing an uplift would be detrimental.
Licensing Fees Review	Licensing Manager to conduct a full Licensing fee review based on full cost recovery.	Licensing Fees should allow for full cost recovery, it is important to regularly review fees on that basis.	Legal Challenge - Judicial review	Early 2027	Set in line with budget New fees to take effect from March 2026.
Planned programme of inspections and compliance matters	As capacity has increased in service, a planned programme of inspections and targets have been agreed.	To ensure minimum service standards and greater level of compliance across all service areas	Non-compliance increases and formal enforcement action considered. Proactive rather than reactive in prioritising resources.	Throughout 2026	Licensing Officers have programmed and completed inspections of 4 largest PHO offices. LOs tasked with at least 5 vehicle inspections per week. Inspection of gambling premises scheduled/pro-formas identified (GC)

Colour coding Key (Priority)

	Lowest Priority
	Medium Priority
	Highest Priority

Colour coding Key (Progress)

	On track or completed
	Behind schedule but progressing ok
	Significantly behind schedule, delayed, at risk or no progress