



LICENSING SUB-COMMITTEE

THURSDAY 8 JANUARY 2026

TAXI AND PRIVATE HIRE MATTERS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. Mr Paul Venables currently holds a Private Hire Driver's licence with East Suffolk Council which he has held since 3 December 2024. The current licence expires 30 November 2027.
2. Prior to the grant of a Private Hire Drivers licence, Mr Venables appeared before the Licensing Sub Committee for determination of his suitability to be licensed as a result of obtaining two speeding offences prior to application. Those speeding offences were within 2 years of application, therefore he did not meet the Council's Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy at that time.
3. The Council's Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy states:

More than one conviction/caution for a minor traffic offence, including a driver awareness course, within the last 2 years will normally merit refusal of a new application and a further application should not normally be considered until a period of at least 3 years, free from convictions/cautions/endorsements, has elapsed.

Where an existing driver receives 2 speeding offences, within a 3-year period, either accumulating penalty points onto a DVLA driving licence or a requirement to attend a speed awareness course, a warning letter will usually be issued.

If a further speeding offence occurs within that 3-year period, the licensee will be expected to undertake a satisfactory driving standards assessment with the Council's approved assessor.

If further speeding offences are received after a driving standards assessment and within a 3-year period, further enforcement action will be considered which may include the matter being brought before a Licensing Sub-committee.

4. On 28 November 2024 the Licensing Sub-Committee departed from the Council's Policy and granted Mr Venables' application having considered Mr Venables to be a fit and proper person to hold a private hire licence.
5. Since obtaining a licence with this authority, Mr Venables has incurred two further speeding offences. 1 April 2025 and 1 October 2025.
6. In-line with the Council's enforcement protocol if further speeding offences are received after a driving standards assessment and within a 3-year period, the licensing team consider the matter should be brought before a Licensing Sub-Committee.
7. The Licensing Sub-Committee will need to determine whether Mr Venables remains a fit and proper person to continue to hold a Private Hire Driver's licence issued by East Suffolk Council, taking account of the provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998, the content of this report, and having listened to what the licensee has to say in his support.

In conclusion

Mr Venables has accumulated two speeding offences since his licence was granted on 3 December 2024, having already obtained 2 speeding offences prior to making an application. In line with the Council's Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy, Mr Venables was required to undertake a driving assessment for the speeding offence of 1 April 2025, which he successfully passed, however on 1 October 2025 he received a second speeding offence, therefore the Licensing Team consider determination is required by the Licensing Sub-Committee to consider whether he remains a fit and proper person to continue to hold a Private Hire Driver's licence with East Suffolk Council

The Council has a duty to ensure so far as possible that those licensed to drive hackney carriage and private hire vehicles are suitable persons to do so, that they are safe professional drivers, with good driving records and adequate experience.

<p>Category of Exempt Information and reason why it is NOT in the public interest to disclose the exempt information.</p>	<p>This report is to be considered during the CLOSED part of the Agenda because it contains exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 1 and 2 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.</p> <p>It is considered that the public interest in not disclosing the exempt information outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information because the report contains information which relates to an individual and information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual.</p>
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<p>Wards Affected:</p>	<p>All</p>
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Cabinet Member:	Councillor Jan Candy Cabinet Member with responsibility for Community Health
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Supporting Officer:	Max Cockrell Licensing Officer Email address: Max.Cockrell@eastsoffolk.gov.uk
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1. LICENSEE

- 1.1 Mr Paul Venables of 3 Marbella Green, Lowestoft NR33 8LX currently holds a Private Hire Driver's licence with East Suffolk Council, which he has held since 3 December 2024. The current licence expires 30 November 2027.
- 1.2 Mr Venables currently works for London Community Hire Services which specialises in school contract work.
- 1.3 DVLA driving licence summary. **Appendix A**

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Mr Venables made application for a Private Hire Driver's licence on 26 September 2024.
- 2.2 On application Mr Venables declared two speeding offences. One offence occurred between 1 ½ to 2 years ago, where he was offered a driver awareness course. The second offence occurred on 4 April 2023, where he received 3 penalty points and a fine for the offence of exceeding the statutory speed limit on a public road.
- 2.3 On 28 November 2024, Mr Venables appeared before the Licensing Sub-Committee as he did not meet the Council's Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy for minor speeding offences. **Appendix B**
- 2.4 The decision by the Licensing Sub-Committee was to depart from the Council's Policy and granted Mr Venables' application having considered Mr Venables to be a fit and proper person to hold a private hire licence. **Appendix C**
- 2.5 On 6 May 2025, the Licensing Team received notification from London Hire Community Services of Mr Venables speeding offence. **Appendix D**
- 2.6 On 14 May 2025, the Licensing Team acknowledge receipt of notification to Mr Venables and requested confirmation of the outcome of the offence, once received. **Appendix E**
- 2.7 On 18 July 2025, the Licensing Team sent a letter to Mr Venables advising as no further correspondence had been received a DVLA driving licence check was carried out which confirmed the speeding offence of 1 April 2025 for exceeding the statutory speed limit on a public road (SP30), where 3 penalty points were endorsed on Mr Venables DVLA driving licence. Mr Venables was advised in line with the Council's Hackney Carriage and Private Hire

Licensing Policy he would be required to undertake a driving assessment with the Council's appointed assessor Mr Gosden. **Appendix F**

2.8 On 20 August 2025, Mr Venables undertook a driving assessment, Mr Gosden reported:

*Mr Venables is a very experienced driver who is also the holder of an HGV1 licence. He has also been licensed as a private hire driver with East Suffolk Council since September 2024. He now has three speeding convictions - two while driving an HGV and one when driving a private hire vehicle (it seems he attended a speed awareness course for the first offence). As a result of these convictions, he was required to have his driving assessed again. He gave a safe and generally very smooth drive during which he showed good road sense and above average ability and while some faults and mistake were evident, they were of a minor nature and nothing which gave me any cause for concern. However, he is very aware of the situation he finds himself in and knows what the consequences are likely to be should he re-offend in the future. R. Gosden. Result - pass. **Appendix G***

2.9 On 21 October 2025, Mr Venables contacted the Licensing Team to advise he had received a Notice of Prosecution for a pending speeding offence. On 21 October 2025 confirmation was sent to Mr Venables advising to comply with his licence conditions and declare the offence in writing and provide a summary and the outcome of the offence. Mr Venables was advised in line with the Council's Policy he would be required to appear before the Licensing Sub-Committee. **Appendix H**

2.10 On 14 November 2025, Mr Venables sent confirmation of the offer of a National Speed Awareness course which is booked for 21 January 2026. **Appendix I**

2.11

Speeding Offence History		Obtained
2022 Speeding Offence (unknown dates) declared on application	whilst driving HGV	Driver awareness course
4 April 2023, Expiry 4 April 2026	whilst driving an HGV	3 penalty points (SP30)
1 April 2025, Expiry 1 April 2028	Whilst driving a PHV	3 penalty points (SP30)
1 October 2025	Whilst driving personal vehicle	SP40 offered a driver awareness course to be taken 21.1.2026

2.12 Mr Venables has provided a summary of how the speeding offences occurred:

While working for London Hire on 01/04/25 on an afternoon school run, I was approaching Hadiscoe Village Hall. I was slowing down from 40mph to 30mph. Unfortunately, I was doing 34mph when I was recorded on a mobile speed camera. It was a case of not slowing down quick enough.

On the 1 October 2025 I was taking my wife to James Pagett hospital for her weekly appointment. She has Crohns disease and has to have weekly checks on her electrolytes and have treatment by IV.

I was on the A47 dual carriageway the speed limit being 70mph approaching the roundabout where the speed limit reduces to 40mph. It was a lack of concentration as my wife was in

*urgent need of a toilet and getting to the point where she was unsure of her being able to make it safely with no personal embarrassment. **Appendix J***

- 2.13 From a pattern of previous driving offences and the failure to take on board guidance and advice from the Council's approved assessor, the Licensing Team consider the requirement for an appearance before the Licensing Sub-Committee for determination of Mr Venables fitness to continue to hold a Private Hire driver's licence.

3. POINTS FOR CONSIDERATION

- 3.1 The Council's Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Conviction Policy states. **Appendix K**

Minor traffic offences

More than one conviction/caution for a minor traffic offence, including a driver awareness course within the last 2 years will normally merit refusal of a new application and a further application should not normally be considered until a period of at least 3 years, free from convictions/cautions/endorsements, has elapsed.

Where any existing licensed driver receives nine points or above on their DVLA licence, they will be expected to undertake a driving standards assessment with the Council's approved assessor. The cost of the assessment must be borne by the licensed driver.

Any motoring conviction while licensed demonstrates that the licensee may not take their professional responsibilities seriously. However, it is accepted that offences can be committed unintentionally, and a single occurrence of a minor traffic offence may not necessitate the revocation of a taxi or private hire vehicle driver licence providing the authority considers that the licensee remains a fit and proper person to retain a licence. Subsequent convictions reinforce the fact that the licensee does not take their professional responsibilities seriously and appropriate enforcement action will be taken.

- 3.2 The Licensing Team consider Mr Venables has been given adequate advice and warnings prior to obtaining and holding a Private Hire Driver licence and is disappointed that he has failed to heed the advice given.
- 3.3 Although Mr Venables notified the Council of the speeding offence of 1 October 2025, this was not within the required period of seven days in writing as required by the conditions of a driver's licence.
- 3.4 The Council's policy advises licence holders that offences are not considered less serious just because they were committed when they were not driving a taxi/private hire vehicle or working in their capacity as a licensed driver.
- 3.5 The Council has a duty to ensure so far as possible that those licensed to drive hackney carriage and private hire vehicles are suitable persons to do so, that they are safe professional drivers, with good driving records and adequate experience

4. GOVERNANCE IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 In accordance with the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, Part II Section 59, the Sub-Committee should consider whether Mr Paul Venables is a fit and proper person to hold a Private Hire Driver licence or Hackney Carriage Driver Licence.
- 4.2 The Human Rights Act 1998 came into force on the 2 October 2000. The Sub-Committee is urged to have careful regard of its provisions. It is unlawful for a public authority (this expression includes local authorities) to act in a way which is incompatible with a human right. However, case law makes it clear that safeguarding of the public has an overriding priority over a person's human right to make a livelihood.
- 4.3 As far as the licensee's right to a fair hearing is concerned (Article 6), the licensee has a right to be heard by the Licensing Sub-Committee. If the licence is suspended or revoked, there is a right of appeal to the Magistrates' Court.
- 4.4 In assessing the impact of human rights the Sub-Committee must seek to strike a balance between the right of the proprietors in the business to hold the licence and the public safety implications of the behaviour under consideration.
- 4.5 Mr Venables has been invited to attend the meeting and has been informed of his right to be represented.

5. FINANCIAL AND GOVERNANCE IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no financial implications.
- 5.2 The law in this matter is the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 section 61 and the Human Rights Act.

6 OTHER KEY ISSUES

- 6.1 Not applicable.

7. CONSULTATION

- 7.1 Not applicable.

8 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 8.1 No other options other than recommendation.

9 REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 9.1 The Licensing Committee has an overarching duty to protect the travelling public. The Sub-Committee must therefore take into account all relevant information and its own Criminal Records Policy in order to arrive at a balanced decision.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Licensing Sub-Committee, having read and heard all the information presented to it at the hearing, and with the overarching duty to protect the travelling public in mind, make findings of fact and then determine whether Mr Paul Venables is a fit and proper person to hold a Private Hire Driver licence or Hackney Carriage Driver licence within the East Suffolk district.

BACKGROUND PAPERS – None

APPENDICES

Appendix A	DVLA driving licence summary
Appendix B	28 November 2024 – Licensing Sub-Committee Report
Appendix C	28 November 2024 – Licensing Sub-Committee' Decision
Appendix D	6 May 2024 – Notification of speeding offence
Appendix E	14 May 2024 – Email to Mr Venables
Appendix F	18 July 2024 – Letter to Mr Venables
Appendix G	20 August 2025 – Mr Gosden's driving assessment report
Appendix H	21 October 2025 – Notification of a speeding offence and letter to acknowledge
Appendix I	14 November 2025 – Notification of a speed awareness course
Appendix J	Mr Venables summary
Appendix K	The Councils Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Conviction Policy