

To: **General Purposes Licensing Committee**

Date: 21 May 2025

Report of: Director of Law, Governance and Strategy (Monitoring Officer)

Title of Report: Appointment of General Purposes Licensing Casework Sub Committees

Summary and recommendations	
Decision being taken:	To establish four General Purposes Licensing Sub-Committees for the 2025-26 Council Year to deal with the casework flowing from the Committee’s own responsibilities.
Key decision:	No
Cabinet Member:	N/A
Corporate Priority:	A Well Run Council.
Policy Framework:	None.

Recommendation(s): That the General Purposes Licensing Committee resolves to:	
1.	Agree that the casework hearings for hackney carriage, private hire or other driver or vehicle licences, street trading consents and sex establishment licences should be determined by sub-committees on the basis of the Powers and Duties of GPL Sub-Committees at Appendix 1.
2.	Establish four sub-committees of three members, as set out in table 1 of the report, and agree the membership, each to undertake the casework of the General Purposes Licensing Committee as set out in Appendix 1.
3.	Agree that substitution is permitted on each of the four Sub-Committees but that substitutes must be from the General Purposes Licensing Committee.
4.	Agree the meeting dates and time listed below.

Information Exempt From Publication	
N/A	N/A

Appendix No.	Appendix Title	Exempt from Publication
Appendix 1	Powers and Duties of General Purposes Licensing Casework Sub-Committees	No

Introduction and background

1. The General Purposes Licensing Committee (GPL) is asked to establish four Sub-Committees to deal with casework with terms of reference as set out in the Council’s Constitution and in Appendix 1 of this report.
2. The objective of the structure is to broaden membership and allow the development of skills and experience deficit while retaining consistency in decision making. The Local Government and Housing Act 1989 (Section 15) (“The Act”) requires that the sub-committee needs to be politically balanced. The current composition of the Council means that each sub-committee of 3 should comprise 1 member from the largest group (Labour), 1 member from the second largest group (Liberal Democrats) and 1 member from the third largest group (Green).
3. The Council’s Constitution (14.2) requires that when appointing to Sub-Committees where political balance requirements apply, the Council or Committee making the appointment will have regard to the nominations made by political groups and will only deviate from appointing those members in exceptional circumstances with reasons.
4. In line with Political Proportionality, the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Committee are normally appointed as the Chairs of the four Sub-Committees, as per Table 1 below. Before February 2024, the Chair was a member of the Administration (Labour). Since then, the Chair of the Committee has been a member of the Oxford Community Independent Group.
5. In May 2024, the General Purposes Licensing Committee voted to have four non-politically balanced General Purpose Licensing Casework Sub-Committees.
6. The Committee may once again decide to disapply political proportionality, as described in the Council’s Constitution and within the Act. This would be where members debate and find reasons to establish exceptional circumstances and agree to abandon the requirement of political proportionality through a formal vote. This means no member should vote against it for the decision to stand. If this is achieved, the Committee must then appoint four sub-committees, each comprising of three Members from any political group.
7. Sub-Committees would be established as below, with 10 out of 15 GPL members able to participate. Any member of the Committee can act as substitutes on any sub-committee, provided they have completed the compulsory training, scheduled for Thursday, 4 June 2025. The allocation of sub-committee membership is listed in Table 1.

Table 1: Allocation of the Membership of each sub-committee.

Sub-Committee	Chair	Membership
A	GPL Chair (Councillor 1)	Councillor 3 Councillor 4
B	GPL Vice-Chair (Councillor 2)	Councillor 5 Councillor 6
C	GPL Chair (Councillor 1)	Councillor 7 Councillor 8
D	GPL Vice-Chair (Councillor 2)	Councillor 9 Councillor 10

8. The Committee is recommended to appoint the Committee Chair and Vice-Chair as Councillor 1 and Councillor 2 respectively. In the absence of the Chair or Vice-Chair, one of the three Sub-Committee Members chosen by the Sub-Committee may act as Chair.
9. Allocating meeting dates for each sub-committee means that members can diarise their meetings. If a meeting is cancelled, it would mean that the particular sub-committee would not meet, and the next meeting would be as scheduled.
10. Additional Sub-Committees can be called as and when required, upon consultation with the Director of Law, Governance and Strategy and the Chair of the Committee or Sub-Committee.
11. Meetings of the sub-committees are scheduled to start at 6.00pm on the dates listed in Table 2, along with the allocated sub-committee.

Table 2: Schedule of sub-committees for the 2025-2026 municipal year

Date	Sub-Committee	Date	Sub-Committee	Date	Sub-Committee
9 June 2025	A	13 October 2025	A	16 February 2026	A
23 June 2025	B	17 November 2025	B	16 March 2026	B
21 July 2025	C	8 December 2025	C	13 April 2026	C
8 September 2025	D	19 January 2025	D		

Alternative Options Considered

12. The Committee can agree to follow the Council's Political Proportionality, as per The Act, however, they would need to take advice from the Committee's Legal Advisor and Committee and Member Services Officer if the Chair of the Committee was not from one of the Council's three largest groups (Labour, Liberal Democrats, Green).

Financial implications

13. There are no financial issues arising from this report.

Legal issues

14. The legal issues, including the Committee's responsibilities for implementing the Council's Street Trading Policy 2023 and the relevant policies on the relevance of warnings, offences, cautions and convictions in relation to Grant, Renewal, Suspension or Revocation of Hackney Carriage / Private Hire Driver & Vehicle Licences, & Private Hire Operator Licences are covered within the report.

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Background Papers:	
1	Local Government and Housing Act 1989 (Section 15) https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1989/42/section/15
2	Oxford City Council Constitution Part5WhocarriesoutCouncilresponsibilities.pdf
3	Oxford City Council Constitution Part7RolesofdecisiontakingcommitteesupdatedJune2022.pdf
4	Oxford City Council Constitution Part14OtherCommitteecedures.pdf
5	Oxford City Council Constitution Part26Councillorsallowances.pdf