

To: **General Purposes Licensing Committee**

Date: 27 May 2026

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 2026-27 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:
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Agree to vote against the requirement for each of the General Purposes Licensing Casework Sub-Committees to follow the Council's political proportionality. 2. Appoint as many General Purposes Licensing Casework sub-committees of three members as there are combinations of three members in the total number of members of the Committee, 3. Note the Sub-Committees' powers and duties for hackney carriage, private hire or other driver or vehicle licences, street trading consents and sex establishment licences as set out in Appendix 1 to this report. 4. Agree the dates on which the Sub-Committees will meet.

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 the provision for as many 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 composition of the Council following the of the 2026 Local Election meant that each sub-committee of 3 should comprise 1 member from the largest group (Labour), 1 member from the second largest group (Green) and 1 member for the third largest group (Liberal Democrats).
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 both May 2024 and May 2025, the General Purposes Licensing Committee voted to have non-politically balanced General Purpose Licensing Casework Sub-Committees.
5. 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 can then appoint as many sub-committees as there are combinations of three members, each comprising of three Members from any political group.
6. Any member of the Committee can attend any sub-committee, provided they have completed the compulsory training, scheduled for Wednesday, 10 June 2026. A training session on Street Trading licensing has been scheduled for Thursday, 11 June 2026.
7. Meetings of the sub-committees are scheduled to start at 6.00pm on the dates listed in Table 1, along with the allocated sub-committee.

Table 1: Schedule of sub-committees for the 2026-2027 municipal year

15 June 2026	14 September 2026	18 January 2027
22 June 2026	19 October 2026	15 February 2027
20 July 2026	16 November 2026	15 March 2027
3 August 2026	7 December 2026	19 April 2027

8. 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 under the Special committee provisions listed at 14.6 (c) of the Council's Constitution.

Alternative Options Considered

9. 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 on which groups are eligible to attend the sub-committees.
10. The Committee can also agree to appoint fixed sub-committees, however, this was not considered to be appropriate as while this has been the practice for previous years, substitutions have been required for most sub-committees held in the municipal year 2025-2026. Having flexibility with the sub-committee membership, along with no requirement for abiding by the Council's political proportionality allows for better attendance throughout the year.

Implications of Local Government Reorganisation

11. There are no implications arising from Local Government Reorganisation arising from this report.

Financial implications

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

Legal issues

13. 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.

Level of risk

14. If the Committee does not vote to abandon political proportionality, then there is a risk that a smaller number of Members can attend the Sub-Committee and determine applications.
15. Under legislation, substitutes are not allowed for the General Purposes Licensing Committee, thus not allowed to be appointed to the Sub-Committees, and there is a requirement for all 15 Members appointed to have received the training. If any Member fails to attend the training, then the number of suitable members able to attend the sub-committees would be reduced.
16. If the Committee doesn't appoint any sub-committees as listed within the recommendations, then there is a risk that no applications can be determined as per the requirement in the Council's Constitution.

Equalities impact

17. No equalities issues have been identified in relation to this report.

18. All Members are required to approach each application with a fair and open mind, with no pre-determined bias.

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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 Part5WhocarriesoutCouncilresponsibilities2025.pdf
3	Oxford City Council Constitution Part7Rolesofdecisiontakingcommittees2025.pdf
4	Oxford City Council Constitution Part14OtherCommitteeprocedures2025.pdf
5	Oxford City Council Constitution Part26Councillorsallowances2025.pdf