

TORRIDGE DISTRICT COUNCILLICENSING MEETINGCaddsdow Business Support Centre - Caddsdow Bideford EX39 3BEWednesday, 18 February 2026 - 6.30 pm

PRESENT Councillor C Bright (Chair)

 Councillor S Inch (Vice-Chair)

 Councillors T Elliott, P Hackett, W Lo-Vel, C Hawkins, K James,
C Wheatley and N Kenneally

ALSO PRESENT C Parkhouse - Lead Licensing Officer

 R England - Paralegal

 L Glover - Corporate Services Officer

 S May - Corporate Services Officer

2 Members of the public

183. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Lock.

184. MINUTES

It was proposed by Councillor Hackett, seconded by Councillor James and –

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting held on the 17th September 2025 be agreed and signed as a correct record.

(Vote: For – 8, Abstentions – 1)

185. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

Members were reminded that declarations of interest should be made as and when the specific agenda item to which they related was under discussion.

186. AGREEMENT OF AGENDA ITEMS PART I AND II

There were no Part II items.

187. URGENT MATTERS OF INFORMATION TO BE BROUGHT FORWARD WITH THE PERMISSION OF THE CHAIR AND THE COMMITTEE

There were no urgent matters.

188. TAXI DEMAND STUDY

The Lead Licensing Officer presented the report, the purpose of which was to provide the Committee with the results of the latest hackney carriage demand study.

The Chair invited a local taxi driver to address the committee. She explained that changing demand and customer needs mean some passengers cannot access the rank and must book by phone. As a result, taxi drivers must take phone bookings because rank work alone no longer provides a sufficient income.

The Chair invited the other local taxi driver to speak. He explained that increased traffic in the area has lengthened journey times for taxi drivers. He also noted that the vouchers issued by Torridge District Council can only be used for pre-booked journeys, meaning rank-based taxi drivers cannot benefit from them. He added that issuing more plates would increase competition during peak periods and would not address the issues identified in the Taxi Demand Study.

The Lead-Licensing Officer clarified that regulated working hours apply only to employees, not to self-employed individuals.

Members asked how long the limit of 49 Hackney Carriage licences had been in place. The Lead Licensing Officer explained that the restriction has existed for many years and has effectively met demand. He raised concerns about raising the cap, noting that once a licence is issued the authority cannot control drivers' working hours. This could lead to too many drivers working only during the most lucrative peak times, increasing competition and failing to resolve the issue.

The Lead Licensing Officer confirmed that the two licence plates reserved for wheelchair – accessible vehicles that were available at the time of the last demand study had been taken and were operating.

Councillor Hackett proposed to approve the recommendation within the report. This was seconded by Councillor Bright and –

Resolved:

That the Committee approve the retention of the limit of 49 plates for a further 3 year period.

(Vote: For – unanimous)

189. SMALL COMMERCIAL VESSEL POLICY

The Lead Licensing Officer presented the report, the purpose of which was to review and update the Authority's current licensing policy for small commercial vessels in use for sport or pleasure.

Members noted the report.

Councillor Hackett proposed to approve the recommendations outlined in the report. This was seconded by Councillor Kenneally and –

Resolved:

- 1. That Members approve the consultation process;**
- 2. That consultation on the draft policy be carried out over a 4 week period and the responses reported back to this committee at a future date.**

(Vote: For – unanimous)

190. CONSIDERATION OF THE FORWARD PLAN

Members noted the forward plan.

191. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

192. PART II (CLOSED SESSION)

There were no Part II items.

The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm and closed at 7.04 pm

Chair:

Date: