

## **Access to Information Arrangements**

### **Exclusion of access by the public to Council meetings**

Information Compliance Ref: LGA-2325199
Meeting / Decision: Licensing Sub-Committee
Date: Thursday 15 <sup>th</sup> May 2025
Author: Holly Woodrow
<b>Exempt Report Title: Consideration of Fit and Proper status -</b>  Exempt Appendix Title(s): <b>Exempt Annex A - Current Licence</b> <b>Exempt Annex B - 2025 Complaint Correspondence</b> <b>Exempt Annex C - Vehicle Inspection Documents</b> <b>Exempt Annex D - 2024 Similar Complaint Correspondence</b> <b>Exempt Annex E - 2015 Complaint Correspondence</b> <b>Exempt Annex F - Second 2015 Complaint Correspondence</b> <b>Exempt Annex G - 2017 Complaint Correspondence</b> <b>Exempt Annex H - 2018 Complaint Correspondence</b> <b>Exempt Annex I - 2023 Complaint Correspondence</b> <b>Exempt Annex J - 2016 Letter</b> <b>Exempt Annex K - 2022/2024 Correspondence</b> <b>Exempt Annex L - 2022 Warning</b> <b>Exempt Annex M - 2023 Warning</b> <b>Exempt Annex N - 2017 Customer Feedback</b> <b>Exempt Annex O - 2022 Customer Feedback</b> <b>Exempt Annex P - May 2024 Customer Feedback</b> <b>Exempt Annex Q - October 2024 Customer Feedback</b> <b>Exempt Annex R - Bath &amp; North East Somerset Policy on Hackney Carriage &amp; Private Hire Licensing Standards for Drivers, Vehicles and Operators</b>

The report and appendices contain exempt information, according to the categories set out in the Local Government Act 1972 (amended Schedule 12A). The relevant exemption is set out below.

Stating the exemption:

1. Information relating to any individual
2. Information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual
3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular

person (including the authority holding that information)
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The public interest test has been applied, and it is concluded that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosure at this time. It is therefore recommended that the report and appendices be withheld from publication on the Council website. The paragraphs below set out the relevant public interest issues in this case.

### PUBLIC INTEREST TEST

If the Sub-Committee wishes to consider a matter with press and public excluded, it must be satisfied on two matters.

Firstly, it must be satisfied that the information likely to be disclosed falls within one of the accepted categories of exempt information under the Local Government Act 1972. The officer responsible for this item believes that this information falls within the following exemptions and this has been confirmed by the Council's Information Compliance Manager.

The following exemptions are engaged in respect to this report:

1. Information relating to any individual
2. Information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual
3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)

Exemptions 1 and 2 above must be considered in conjunction with the Principles of the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA). It is considered that disclosure of the information in this report would breach the first principle of the DPA, which requires personal data to be fairly and lawfully processed.

Secondly, it is necessary to weigh up the arguments for and against disclosure on public interest grounds. It is considered that there is a public interest in information about individuals applying for taxi licences in the area, and in particular, information as to the backgrounds of those individuals.

Other factors in favour of disclosure include:

- furthering public understanding of the issues involved;
- furthering public participation in the public debate of issues, in that disclosure would allow a more informed debate;
- promoting accountability and transparency by the Council for the decisions it takes;
- allowing individuals and companies to understand decisions made by the Council affecting their lives and assist individuals to challenge those decisions.

However there is a real risk that the first Principle of the DPA will be breached by this disclosure, and that the individual/s concerned could bring a successful action against the Council if the disclosure occurred. Therefore it is recommended that exemptions 1 and 2 in Schedule 12A stand. The Council considers that the public interest is in favour of not holding this matter in open session at this time and that any reporting on the meeting is prevented in accordance with Section 100A(5A)

Due to the factors outlined above, further consideration has not been given to the application of exemption 3 of Schedule 12A.