

**Report of the Service Director Culture,  
Housing and Regulation to the  
General Licensing Regulatory Board  
to be held on the 24 February 2016**

**BMBC Licensing Service – Update of Practices/Policies in Response to  
the Casey Report into Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) in Rotherham &  
Internal Audit Taxi & Premise Licensing Review**

**1. Purpose of Report**

This report has been prepared in response to the publication of the Alexis Jay and Louise Casey reports into CSE in Rotherham and findings from a recent internal audit review focusing upon both taxi and premise licensing. It will provide an update in relation to the Council's Licensing Services current state of play and continued proposed review of policy and procedures.

**2. Background**

BMBC's Licensing Service has a number of robust policies and procedures in place to ensure those licensed to drive licensed vehicles are 'fit and proper' and in doing so, ensuring the safety of passengers and members of the public alike.

Whilst such policies and procedures exist, the publication of the above aforementioned papers and subsequent findings from an internal audit review has provided an opportunity for the Licensing Service to look at its internal practices and identify where improvements can be made.

**3. Current Position**

This in turn has led to the formalisation of liaison with South Yorkshire Police (SYP) and the Safeguarding Children's Services. Whilst in the past strong, albeit, informal, links have existed between such teams, these links have been strengthened with the formalisation of action meetings organised to discuss issues relating to safeguarding.

A review of hackney carriage and private hire driver licence conditions has also been undertaken to capture the mandatory requirement for all licensed drivers to undertake safeguarding training. Furthermore, a complete review of the Council's Guideline Policy in relation to Criminal Convictions and application process will be undertaken to build upon and strengthen how the Council deals with drivers/applicants who have been convicted or investigated for sexual offence(s). The revision of such policies and procedures along with the creation of a full taxi licensing policy will, in turn, strengthen the stance taken in dealing with cases relating to safeguarding.

#### **4. Proposal**

**Below is an outline of key actions undertaken by the Licensing Service:**

- Regular submission of Casey Report update papers to the GLRB on 6 May 2015, 19 October 2015 and 24 February 2016 – links to Casey Report Action Plan
- GSX email account established for the secure exchange of sensitive data relating to CSE – links to Casey Report Action Plan
- Quarterly Provider meetings attended by the Licensing Service – first meeting held 01.02.16 and attended by Safeguarding Children's Services and SYP and other partner organisations – links to Casey Action Plan
- Formulation of a information sharing protocol between the Council and SYP ensuring the timely exchange of sensitive data – links to the Casey Report Action Plan
- Delivery of Elected Member training (including an element of safeguarding) on 14 October 2015, relating to the duties and functions contained within the General Licensing & Statutory Regulatory Board – links to Casey Report Action Plan
- Safeguarding training delivered to all new driver applicants from 2 February 2016 – links to Internal Audit Review Recommendation 1.3
- General Licensing & Statutory Regulatory Board Terms of Reference reviewed to ensure Elected Members role and responsibilities in relation to safeguarding is explicit – links to Internal Audit Recommendation 1.1

- Taxi checklist procedure in place for the approval/authorisation of all taxi licence applications from December 2015 – links to Internal Audit Recommendation 2.1
- Continual liaison with SYP regarding the planning of proactive enforcement operations – links to Internal Audit Recommendation 3.1
- Development of procedures in relation to the undertaking of taxi and premise licence inspections from November 2015 – links to Internal Audit Recommendation 3.2

**In addition, the Licensing Service will ensure:**

- Guideline Policy in relation to criminal convictions and application process to be reviewed capturing drivers/and or applicants convicted or investigated for sexual offences – links Internal Audit Recommendation 1.1 (September 2016)
- Revision of hackney carriage & private hire driver licence conditions to incorporate the mandatory requirement to undertake safeguarding training – links to Internal Audit Review Recommendation 1.3 (April 2016)
- New/existing GLRB Members to receive safeguarding training on 25 February 2016 – links to Internal Review Recommendation 1.3
- All existing drivers to receive CSE/Safeguarding training over a rolling programme of time – links to Internal Audit Action Plan 1.3 (April 2016)
- Development of a Taxi Licensing Policy, encompassing full revised application criteria and convictions policy – links to Casey Report Action Plan (September 2016)
- Monthly CSE Strategy meetings attended by the Head of Service – links to Casey Report Action Plan

**5. Background Papers**

No background papers

**6. Officer Contact**

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