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Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles (Safeguarding and Road Safety) Bill

- This Bill would mandate councils to share information on refusals, suspensions or revocations of licences on a database such as NR3.
- The Bill would also make it compulsory for councils to report concerns about out of-area drivers. Authorities would need to report concerns to the authority which licensed the driver in question. These authorities would then be required to make a decision about whether or not a driver's licence should be suspended or revoked.

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Taxi licensing - guidance

- The Home Office has published its [taxi licensing guidance](#) to reflect changes around the right to work checks.
- HMRC has published information to help [licensees](#) and [licensing bodies](#) to prepare for new tax checks that were introduced by the Finance Act 2021.
- This will be a new addition to the checks that licensing bodies already have in place and it will need to be completed when people are renewing their licences to drive or operate taxis/ PHVs or deal in scrap metal. The changes will apply in England and Wales from April 2022.

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Gambling licensing

- The LGA has submitted evidence to the Gambling Act review, focusing on our long standing asks around the need for greater powers for councils to be able to approve, or reject, applications for local premises.
- LGA Safer and Stronger Communities Board lead members have written to the new Gambling Minister, Chris Philp MP, to welcome him into his new role.
- We are working closely with DCMS and the Gambling Commission on the Gambling Act Review and will respond to the White Paper when it is published.

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Pavement licensing

- In the Build Back Better High Streets strategy, the Government announced its intention to consider whether and how to build on the temporary pavement licence provisions introduced by the Business and Planning Act 2020 on a more permanent basis
- The LGA sought views from councils on which aspects of the pavement licence regime under the Business and Planning Act 2020 councils found helpful, as well as what works well from the original Highways Act pavement licensing regime, and issues councils would like DLUHC to consider as it begins work on this issue.

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Pavement licensing

- We submitted a position paper to DLUHC outlining councils views to inform their early thinking on what a permanent regime might look like.
- Officials have advised that they are in the process of briefing the new Local Government Minister, Kemi Badenoch MP, on the pavement licensing regime.
- It is likely that a permanent regime will require primary legislation and DLUHC are scoping out different options. It may be that a further extension of the temporary regulations is required whilst work on a permanent regime continues.

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Animal welfare legislation

- The Government's Action Plan for Animal Welfare, published in May 2021, details a range of measures to improve animal welfare in the UK.
- The Government will implement these proposals through a programme of primary legislation during this parliamentary session, including the Animal Welfare (Sentience), Kept Animals, and Animals Abroad Bills, secondary legislation, and other non-legislative measures.

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Animal welfare legislation

- The Animal Welfare (Kept Animals) Bill
 - This Bill includes provisions to deliver a number of reforms relating to kept animals, including farm animals, companion animals, and kept wild animals.
 - For companion animals, the Bill seeks to address the issue of illegal imports by introducing powers to apply restrictions to imports of certain pet animals on welfare grounds through secondary legislation. The Bill also decreases the number of pets that can travel in a single non-commercial movement.
 - For kept wild animals, the Bill prohibits the keeping, breeding, sale and transfer of primates without a specific primate licence. The Bill also amends the Zoo Licensing Act 1981 to increase penalties for non-compliance and provide local authorities with better tools for enforcement.

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Regulatory services task and finish group

- At the end of 2020, DLUHC convened a regulatory services task and finish group to look at the demands being placed on environmental health, trading standards and licensing services.
- The group considered:
 - the impact of the pandemic on workloads
 - the need for a comprehensive forward look of the new demands being placed on services, and for a consistent process for departments to highlight these
 - current and future resourcing, capacity and qualification routes
 - cost recovery across the services
 - how to ensure coordination across the many different departments with an interest in the services

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Regulatory services task and finish group

- With new responsibilities continuing to be added to regulatory teams, the Group called for:
 - Additional resources that enable councils to increase capacity
 - A mechanism for reaching agreement across government departments about which competing priorities should be prioritised, given the lack of capacity to absorb new duties without disrupting the delivery of existing duties.
 - Without this agreement, the flexibility and freedom for councils to determine all programmes of activity according to local need and intelligence.

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Regulatory services task and finish group

- The group made three key recommendations to address the future sustainability of these services:
 - 1) Boost the future pipeline of qualified officers through a dedicated apprenticeship fund
 - 2) Invest in regional support networks
 - 3) Enable councils to recover more of the costs of running regulatory services

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Regulatory services task and finish group

- It is disappointing that the Government did not proceed with the recommendation of the regulatory services task and finish group to create a dedicated fund to support the recruitment of apprentices in environmental health and trading standards in the spending review.
- The lack of measures to address pressures in regulatory services in the spending review risks worsening the challenges in the coming years.
- The LGA will continue to advocate for the recommendations of the task and finish group moving forwards.

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LGA update

- We are refreshing our licensing offer to assist councils with the process of inducting new members onto licensing committees.
- We will be updating our e-learning module which will cover the principles of being on a licensing committee.
- We will also be developing a series of short, interactive videos in which we provide various licensing scenarios for members to work through.

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LGA update

- To complement this, we are also looking into running another Leadership Essentials Course in March 2022.
- If we can ever help with anything, please get in touch – jade.hall@local.gov.uk or ellie.greenwood@local.gov.uk

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