

Private hire driver accused of creating false documents

An Edinburgh private hire driver has been accused of falsifying documents so he could continue operating.

Shakti Singh faced having his licence suspended as a result when he went before a meeting of the council's Licensing Sub-Committee on Tuesday.

Council officials have refused to disclose the outcome of the closed doors meeting however – despite the report being made available to the public.

In the report, published online, officials said Mr Singh was no longer considered “a fit and proper person” to hold a licence following “an admission of deliberate falsification of a licence document” by Mr Singh.

The council was first contacted in April by ride-hailing app Bolt, through which the driver operated, to report the alleged incident.

Bolt, which requires its drivers to provide proof of both themselves and their vehicles being fully licensed, said Mr Singh “had uploaded a potentially falsified document,” adding that as a result it had suspended his account and he was unable to accept bookings.

At an interview with council officers in May he then “admitted to changing the expiry date on the private hire car licence document before submitting it to Bolt,” the report said.

It added Mr Singh stated that because the original owner of the vehicle had sent him the original licence document dated 2023 "he thought he could change the date to 2024".

The report continued: "This appears to be an admission of deliberate falsification of a licence document and amounts to inappropriate behaviour for a person working as a licensed driver.

"It is sufficiently serious to call into question Mr Singh's continued fitness to hold a licence, and hence the request for suspension of the licence.

"The directorate recommends that the licence is suspended on the grounds that Mr Singh is no longer a fit and proper person to be the holder of the licence."

Mr Singh was invited to attend the council's licensing sub-committee on Tuesday when a final decision was to be made on whether he should be allowed to continue operating as a private hire driver.

Despite the report outlining the allegations being available to read online, the meeting was held in private and the council said it was unable to confirm how councillors voted.

The Local Democracy Reporting Service was previously informed that press and members of the public would be able to attend the sub-committee at the City Chambers, but we were asked to leave ahead of the meeting starting and were told the meeting was to be held in private.

Edinburgh Council later said that as the meeting was held in private the results also had to be kept confidential.

by Donald Turvill, Local Democracy Reporter.

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