

# LICENSING COMMITTEE

Date: 15 June 2016

Venue: East Northamptonshire House, Cedar Drive, Thrapston

Time: 7.30 pm

Present: Councillors:- **Glenvil Greenwood-Smith (Chairman)**  
**Barbara Jenney (Vice-Chairman)**

<b>Tony Boto</b>	<b>Andy Mercer</b>
<b>Richard Gell</b>	<b>Geoff Shacklock</b>
<b>Helen Howell</b>	<b>Peter Wathen</b>
<b>Dorothy Maxwell</b>	<b>Pam Whiting</b>

## APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Roger Glithero JP and Gill Mercer.

## 51. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 7 March 2016 were approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

## 52. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

## 53. QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS UNDER COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 10.3

No questions had been received under Procedure Rule 10.3.

## 54. TAXI POLICY REVIEW

The Interim Health Protection Manager presented a report which provided the Committee with the consultation responses received following a six week consultation period for proposed changes to the Taxi Licensing Policy documents.

At the meeting in March 2016, the Committee discussed in detail proposed changes to the taxi policy and agreed, that subject to required changes being made, that the Policy and Resources Committee be recommended to approve the documents to go out for a six week consultation period. This was approved by the Policy and Resources Committee and the consultation documents were made available on the Council's website and the consultation period ended on 13 May 2016.

At the end of the consultation, seven responses had been received and ranged from a couple of issues to a full in depth review of the policy with several pages of comments. The documents had also been reviewed by legal services and colleagues around the County to ensure that they were in line with legislation and guidance.

A number of comments had been received about the requirement to provide and maintain a suitable fire extinguisher in the vehicle and following consideration of these comments it was now proposed to reduce the size of the required extinguishers to 1kg.

Comments had also been received about the requirement that children under the age of 13 would be prohibited from using a front passenger seat. The Council was aware that this requirement may cause issues with drivers who had County Council school transport contracts. The County Council had their own set of requirements for those contracts, but it was felt to be a reasonable requirement as an overriding policy. It was accepted that the County Council contracts may be different but the aim of the requirement was to try and minimise child sexual exploitation issues.

The Psychoactive Substances Act 2016 had just come into force and this may require the alcohol and drugs section in the Criminal Records Policy to be rewritten to make it compatible with the new legislation.

In response to a question about when drivers and operators were required to inform the Council of any changes, it was confirmed that the working day requirement was the Council's working days e.g. not weekends or bank holidays.

It was questioned how people whose first language was not English were dealt with. It was confirmed that the Knowledge Test was delivered in writing, so drivers were able to read English. When the draft Policy was considered by the Policy and Resources Committee a question was asked about a mandatory English assessment and officers were considering papers provided by Bedford Borough Council. However, some elements of their policy was already contained within our Knowledge Test, which all drivers now had to go through.

#### **RECOMMENDATION TO POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE:**

That, subject to amendments being made, the revised Taxi Policy documents be approved.

#### **55. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS**

##### **RESOLVED:**

That the public and press be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item of business because exempt information, as defined under paragraph 7 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 may be disclosed.

#### **56. LICENSING ACTIVITY AND UPDATE REPORT**

The Interim Health Protection Manager presented a report which detailed the licensing activity and accident and emergency statistics.

##### **RESOLVED:**

To note the licensing activity and update report.

**57. LICENSING – THE POLICE PERSPECTIVE**

PC Bryan, Northamptonshire Police, supported by the Licensing Enforcement Officer, gave a presentation on the Police's perspective to licensing.

Officers undertook to provide the Committee with information on the number of appeals which went to the Magistrates Court and how East Northamptonshire compared to other local authorities.

**58. PREVIOUS PANEL DEBRIEF**

The Committee reviewed the outcomes of previous panels.

It was suggested that it may be helpful to provide guidance for parish and town council on how to respond to licensing consultations.

**Chairman**