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ENVIRONMENT AND SAFETY COMMITTEE

20 MAY 2021

Present: Councillors Bishop (Chair), Cox (Vice-Chair), Hay, Marlow-Eastwood and Roberts.

152. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None received.

153. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None received.

154. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting held on 18th March 2021 be approved as a true record.

155. NOTIFICATION OF ANY ADDITIONAL URGENT ITEMS

None received.

156. TAXI LICENSING POLICY REVIEW AND INCLUSION OF THE STATUTORY GUIDANCE ISSUED BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR TRANSPORT TO PROTECT CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE INDIVIDUALS.

The Licensing Lead Officer, Mr Bryant, introduced a report to review the draft Statement of Taxi Licensing Policy and to implement changes in policy following the introduction of the Statutory guidance issued by the Department for Transport in June 2020.

Mr Bryant explained that the Department for Transport recommends all licensing authorities make publicly available a cohesive policy document that brings together all their procedures on taxi and private hire vehicle licensing. This should include but not be limited to policies on convictions, a 'fit and proper' person test, licence conditions and vehicle standards. When formulating a taxi and private hire vehicle policy, the primary and overriding objective must be to protect the public.

The council drafted a policy document and consulted on it from the 25th January 2021 until 15th March 2021. The consultation was open to the public as well as the Taxi trade and displayed on the council website, emailed to the trade direct and placed on all council social media. The council received detailed responses from the trade and other interested parties.

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Mr Bryant gave a precis of the policy document and responded to questions from the Committee.

Councillor Roberts proposed approval of the recommendation, seconded by Councillor Cox.

RESOLVED (unanimously):

The Committee reviews the proposed Hastings Borough Council Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy, including the proposed implementation of the changes in process in light of the new 2020 Statutory guidance issued by the secretary of state for transport and agree the new policy.

Reasons:

- A) The Secretary of State for Transport has issued new Statutory Guidance to Local Authorities on the exercising of taxi and private hire licensing functions, Hastings Borough Council does not currently have an all-encompassing Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy and it is now a requirement and best practice to do so.
- B) The Guidance sets out a framework of policies that, under section 177(4), of the Policing and Crime Act 2017, licensing authorities must have regard to when exercising their functions. These functions include developing, implementing and reviewing their taxi and private hire licensing regimes.
- C) The Department recommends all licensing authorities make publicly available a cohesive policy document that brings together all their procedures on taxi and private hire vehicle licensing. This should include but not be limited to policies on convictions, a 'fit and proper' person test, licence conditions and vehicle standards. When formulating a taxi and private hire vehicle policy, the primary and overriding objective must be to protect the public. The importance of ensuring that the licensing regime protects the vulnerable cannot be overestimated.
- D) To enable the Licensing Committee to review the proposed changes and to consider and approve changes as identified following public consultation.

(The Chair closed the meeting at 19.16pm)