

## COUNCIL MEETING – 23 FEBRUARY 2017

### REPORT OF THE SERVICES COMMITTEE

17 January 2017

Present: Councillors G Lawman (Chairman), Hallam (Vice-Chairman), Skittrall and Watts

Also present: Mrs L Elliott, (Head of Finance), Mrs G Chapman, (Principal Community Support Manager), Mrs A Wilcox, (Principal Environmental Health Manager), Mrs C A Mundy, (Democratic Services Officer) and Miss N Harewood, (Governance Officer).

#### 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

**RESOLVED** to note that apologies for absence were received from Councillors Maguire, Scanlon and Stevenson.

#### 2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

**RESOLVED** to note that in accordance with the Localism Act 2011, the council's code of conduct and the council's constitution, the following declaration was made.

Councillor	Min. no.	Report Title	Reason
Lawman G	4	Operational policy and conditions governing taxi and private hire licensing.	Other – has a relationship with a private hire company

#### 3. CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 27 SEPTEMBER 2016

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Services Committee held on 27 September 2016 be confirmed and signed.

#### 4. REVIEW OF OPERATIONAL POLICY AND CONDITIONS GOVERNING TAXI AND PRIVATE HIRE LICENSING

The annexed circulated report of the Head of Planning and Local Development was received in relation to informing members of the results of the consultation exercise on the draft policy and conditions.

Appended to the report was a summary of the consultation responses along with the draft operational policy and appendices.

The consultation had resulted in 16 responses being received; 14 from licensed drivers/operators, one from the Wellingborough Hackney Carriage

Association and one from the office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Northamptonshire. Particular reference was made to the introduction of the following:

- an Exceptional Vehicle Age Policy;
- the use of CCTV within licensed vehicles;
- medical checks on drivers;
- door signage on vehicles – no use of magnetic signage;
- the defined colour of hackney carriage vehicles being mid-yellow;
- wheelchair accessible hackney carriage vehicles and the loading thereof;
- permission for one bluetooth earpiece only.

Members asked questions of the Principal Environmental Health Manager for the purpose of clarity, particularly around the fees charged and discrimination regarding the disabled. She responded to these queries explaining that as a general rule private hire vehicles were cheaper than hackney carriages and that drivers were not allowed to discriminate regarding the disabled and had to fulfil travel requirements. She was also planning training for licence holders on the Disability Act.

Councillor Lawman advised that anyone who was unhappy with the service provided by a taxi driver should report it to the licensing section.

A query was also raised with regard to operator records and whether computerised records could be changed or overwritten and whether the information was 'backed up' and secure, with a suggestion that this could be added to the policy. The Principal Environmental Health Manager confirmed that she would add this provision to the policy.

**RESOLVED** that the updated policy and conditions governing Taxi and Private Hire licensing be implemented from 1 April 2017.

## **5. REVIEW OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH ENFORCEMENT POLICY**

The annexed circulated report of the Head of Planning and Local Development was received to update members on the results of the consultation exercise on the reviewed Environmental Health Enforcement Policy and to seek approval to the updated policy, which was appended to the report.

The report detailed the six week consultation that had taken place between 14 October 2016 and 25 November 2016. No responses had been received to the consultation and it was therefore proposed that the policy be adopted.

**RESOLVED** that the Environmental Health Service Enforcement Policy be approved.

## **6. PUBLIC SPACES PROTECTION ORDER (PSPO)**

The annexed circulated report of the Head of Finance was received to seek approval to consult on the terms of a potential Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO).

The proposed provisions of the PSPO were appended to the report.

The original Designated Public Protection Order had been introduced in 2009 to cover the town centre and adjacent street and had allowed police officers to confiscate alcohol if anti-social behaviour was being caused by the effects of alcohol consumption. This order would lapse in October 2017 following the introduction of the Anti-Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act which had come into force in 2014. This Act gives the power to replace the DPPO with a PSPO which are designed to stop individuals or groups of people committing ASB in a public place. Restrictions could be placed on an area where activities had a detrimental effect on the quality of life of local people. Evidence would be needed to support any measures introduced.

The dog control orders would also lapse but would automatically convert to PSPOs, but the scope of the orders would also need reviewing.

It was also suggested that the consultation should include reference to the policing of unauthorised parking. The chairman informed the meeting that the Parking Working Group would be discussing this issue.

It was proposed that a consultation be carried out on the PSPO area, which mirrors the current town centre boundaries and the provisions relating to the management of dogs, though other interested parties, such as parish councils would be consulted. The consultation would be for a period of six weeks starting at the beginning of February and running until mid-March.

**RESOLVED** that:

- (i) a consultation be carried out by officers regarding the introduction of a Public Spaces Protection Order;
- (ii) a further report be received later in the year to consider whether to implement a Public Spaces Protection Order and, if so, what particular provisions any proposed order should include, taking into account the responses to the consultation.

Chairman

The meeting concluded at 7.40pm.

