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## BRECKLAND COUNCIL

### At a Meeting of the

## LICENSING COMMITTEE

Held on Wednesday, 20 October 2021 at 10.00 am in  
The Breckland Conference Centre, Anglia Room, Elizabeth House, Walpole Loke,  
Dereham, NR19 1EE

### PRESENT

Cllr Marion Chapman-Allen (Chairman)	Cllr Susan Dowling
Cllr Tina Kiddell (Vice- Chairman)	Cllr Keith Martin
Cllr Tristan Ashby	Cllr Philip Morton
Cllr Claire Bowes	Cllr Taila Taylor
Cllr Mike Brindle	

### Also Present

Cllr Gordon Bambridge

### In Attendance

Josie Hoven	- Licensing Team Leader
Julie Britton	- Democratic Services Officer

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#### **33/21 MINUTES (AGENDA ITEM 1)**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 21 July 2021 were agreed as a correct record.

#### **34/21 APOLOGIES (AGENDA ITEM 2)**

None.

#### **35/21 URGENT BUSINESS (AGENDA ITEM 3)**

None.

#### **36/21 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS (AGENDA ITEM 4)**

None declared.

#### **37/21 NON-MEMBERS WISHING TO ADDRESS THE MEETING (AGENDA ITEM 5)**

Councillor Bambridge, the Executive Member for Waste & Environment and Portfolio Holder for Licensing was in attendance.

#### **38/21 REVISED TAXI POLICY AND PROCEDURES (AGENDA ITEM 6)**

Josie Hoven, the Licensing Team Leader provided Members with a

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detailed overview of the report.

Members were being asked to review the responses to the revised Taxi Policy following a public consultation that was held between 26 July and 5 September 2021 and recommend the final revised version to Full Council for adoption, for implementation on 3 January 2022.

It was noted that all taxi and private hire licence holders and consultees were contacted via email or post and the consultation was also available on the Council's website.

Only two responses had been received.

Councillor Morton supported the revised Policy but remained disappointed that the Policy had not been able to include standards in respect of reducing exhaust emissions and the vehicle age policy that was included in 2019 as he felt this would help in terms of climate change. He was pleased to hear; however, that this would be reviewed at a later date alongside the Council's Sustainability Strategy to help tackle climate change.

The Chairman advised that Officers were very aware of these valid concerns, but during these past 18 months, the pandemic had greatly affected drivers in terms of their business and therefore the Council was working with them to ensure that nothing was too restrictive that would have a detrimental effect on their livelihoods.

Councillor Dowling drew attention two points raised in the consultation in respect of tinted windows and asked if this had been resolved. Members were informed that this had not been included but would be reviewed in the vehicle specification next year. The current window tint policy was there for public safety, but as expected the vehicle specifications had changed a great deal since 2007 and therefore would be kept under review.

Councillor Dowling also asked about language issues and if the regulations could be understood by all drivers and whether this had caused any issues in the past. Members were informed that this had been raised as a recommendation by the Department for Transport (DfT) but Breckland Council had not experienced any issues on this matter but again this would be kept under review. Also, every driver was interviewed by the Licensing Team in the first instance to go through the relevant documentation and policies and a licence would not be issued if the Team had any language concerns.

In response to a further concern, the Licensing Team Leader explained that enhanced DBS checks were carried out to mitigate any possible imitation issues.

Councillor Ashby had noticed that only two consultation responses had been received and according to the report all taxi and private hire licence holders and consultees had been contacted and suggested to him that the document had probably been met with much agreement, and hence why the number of responses had been so low.

Members were informed that no positive responses had been received but

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this was quite common in the taxi trade. Meetings had also been held and information was probably spread by word of mouth.

Councillor Kiddell, the Vice-Chairman concurred with the all the aforementioned comments as being in the trade herself most drivers, if they had an issue with the Policy, would make it known. As for the tinted windows issue, many drivers had explained to her that vehicles that they wished to purchase came with leather seats that were easier to clean, and was the preferred option, and automatically came with tinted glass and therefore was an issue for them.

Councillor Bambridge, the Portfolio Holder for Licensing stated that he was happy with the Policy as revised and thanked Members for their input.

No further questions were asked, and it was:

**RESOLVED** to **RECOMMEND** to Council that the final revised Taxi Policy be adopted.

**39/21 NEXT MEETING (AGENDA ITEM 7)**

The arrangements for the next meeting on Wednesday, 12 January 2022 at 10am in the Anglia Room were noted.

The meeting closed at 10.25 am

CHAIRMAN