

# REGULATORY AND LICENSING COMMITTEE

1 MARCH 2023

## PRESENT:

Councillors B Yeates (Chair), Checkland (Vice-Chair), Barnett, Cross, Eagland, L Ennis, Evans, Ray, Salter, Mrs Tranter and Warfield

## 20 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

## 21 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor L. Ennis declared an interest as an employee of St Joseph & St Theresa Catholic Primary School.

Councillor Evans later declared an interest as Chair of the Board of Governors for Chase Terrace Primary School.

## 22 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the previous meeting, held on 28 September 2022, were taken as read and approved as a correct record by the Chair.

## 23 POLLING PLACES - LOCAL ELECTIONS 2023

Christie Tims (Assistant Director Regulation & Enforcement) presented the report to the committee. She noted that the authority will need to comply with new regulations set out in the Elections Act 2022. The council has tried wherever possible to avoid using schools, however there are several locations where this is unavoidable. Ultimately a polling location is legally required, and voters cannot be disenfranchised through the absence of a suitable location.

Members were informed of the national campaign around voter ID that went live end of January. The council will include an information leaflet with council tax letters; advertisements within the free delivery papers that go to households; leaflets to parish clerks; information on poll cards. The Joint Waste service will also work to provide information to houses that require special assistance. In response to member questions it was confirmed that QR codes, BSL and braille versions of the information were being worked on too.

It was confirmed that election planning had been picked up on this occasion by the Governance Team with support from the Customer Services Team. On site appointments could be made by individuals unable to access application systems online. There will also be additional training for polling supervisors and staff can be redeployed throughout the day.

**RESOLVED:** Members approved the polling stations proposed at Appendix A for use by the Returning Officer in the 2023 District and Parish elections.

## 24 TAXI LICENSING UPDATE

Ms Tims took the committee through the presentation on Taxi Licensing. The presentation was previously given to the Audit & Member Standards committee after their questions on a

specific issue of the policy. It was stated that the current 93-page policy need to be more succinct and accessible, with conditions clearer and upfront so drivers are aware of them. There is also an emerging narrative from drivers highlighting the impact of the cost of living crisis, exacerbated by the rates and vehicles set out in the policy.

Members questioned what levers the council can pull to impact this area. The labour and bureaucracy intensive application process was highlighted as something that can be made slicker to attract new drivers. The age requirement of vehicles is currently the biggest factor in forcing drivers to other locations.

Ms Tims confirmed the environmental protection team do carry out spot checks to ensure drivers on the taxi rank are licensed and operating as they should. There is also dedicated reporting line and a campaign to raise awareness of these issues being planned for the summer.

**RESOLVED:** Members noted the contents of the Taxi Licensing Presentation.

## 25 EVENTS & STREET TRADING UPDATE

Ms Tims took the committee through the presentation on Events & Street Trading. It was noted that a significant amount of work had been conducted over the past couple of years on the back of the events policy. There are exciting new events coming this year, but some minor issues remain with street trading due to changes of business models following the Covid-19 pandemic recovery.

Ms Tims set out a number of hypothetical options to the committee, regarding how changes could be made to the existing policies. These included:

- Unadopting the relevant legislation so there is no control over street trading within the district;
- Excluding some streets that are currently consented;
- Excluding council owned land from streets that are currently consented;
- Excluding all land owned by key partners as a consented street;
- Adopting an approach where a street trading consent is given to event organisers and they then take responsibility for ensuring that the traders at the event operate legally and safely;
- Removing the requirements for individual traders to each have their own Public Liability Insurance and allow this to be covered by an overall event organiser policy.

Members noted that public liability insurance has been an issue raised with them by residents. Exceptions for small towns and parishes were suggested as possible options. Members expressed reluctance to leave regulation to event organisers. They suggested that work should be done in tandem with parish councils as they have blanket public liability policies.

Follow up information on Martyn's law was provided to the committee and the presentations circulated to members.

**RESOLVED:** Members noted the contents of the Events & Street Trading Presentation.

## 26 WORK PROGRAMME

The committee was informed that the work program had been updated to reflect the change of date of the next meeting.

(The Meeting closed at 7.45 pm)

CHAIR