

## **June – July NKDC Report**

**Reece Harrington**

### **A proposal to lift the restriction on cars older than 10 years to be used as taxis and for private hire is under consideration.**

The General Licensing Committee at North Kesteven District Council is set to review and amend its Hackney Carriage & Private Hire Licensing Policy, with a proposal to remove the upper age limit for vehicles licensed by the Council.

Currently the policy is not to licence any Hire Vehicle once it reaches its 10th anniversary of registration, unless it meets the exceptional condition criteria detailed within the policy. This age policy was previously introduced to offer some flexibility for the trade when licensing cars, balanced against the increased emissions concerns around older diesel vehicles.

But now, following the tightening of emissions criteria under the VOSA MOT requirements, along with future proposals to further tighten the national emissions standards, the committee believes that a relaxation of the current age policy will offer more flexibility for the trade, whilst ensuring that hire vehicles, (which require testing to MOT standard every 6 months) still meet the strict national emissions criteria.

### **An evening of celebration at the North Kesteven Building Excellence Awards.**

Some of the best examples of building excellence were championed at the annual awards for clients of North Kesteven District Council's Building Control service.

The 2023 North Kesteven Building Excellence Awards were an opportunity to bring together construction professionals, clients and Building Control technical experts demonstrating that the District of North Kesteven excels in creating new homes and buildings that are equal to – or in fact better than – other builds in the country.

The winning projects and professionals celebrated locally will now go on for consideration in the regional and, potentially, national awards, in contention with examples excellence from across the country.

North Kesteven District Council has an emphasis on building for the future, building for climate resilience and building to a Net Zero standard for improved lives and environmental wellbeing. This is carried through into the new Local Plan which informs building standards and principles for not only North Kesteven but also Central Lincolnshire partners and neighbours in West Lindsey and the City of Lincoln.

For more information and to view the full gallery of 2023 winners visit [HERE](#).

### **North Kesteven 'salutes our Armed Forces'.**

More than 300 years of combined service in the Armed Forces has been honoured through the presentation of Veteran's Badges, in a continuation of a long-held custom by the Council.

The 13 veterans of the British Armed Forces present at a celebratory lunch for Armed Forces Day had put in a collective 180 years of service between them, with individual contributions of between two and more than 37 years. Their badges were presented by North Kesteven District Council Leader Cllr Richard Wright who, as a veteran himself, said it was a deep pleasure to say, 'thank you for everything you have done'.

Additionally, Veteran's Badges have been sent to a further nine veterans who were unable to attend. Their collective service represents a further 130 years of contributions in theatres of war, in peace-keeping, community resilience, civil contingencies and countless other duties.

Engaged in the British Army, Royal Air Force, Royal Navy and Merchant Navy, through long-standing careers and stints in National Service, the breadth of their activities was described as characteristically varied and diverse.

The badge presentations followed the formal raising of the Armed Forces Day flag in the presence of serving personnel, forces families, service, veteran and civic representatives plus school children and the wider community gathered at Sleaford Market Place.

The purpose of Armed Forces Day and a programme of wider activity is for the community to show its support for the men and women who make up the Armed Forces community, whether serving personnel, their families, veterans or recruits and to celebrate and champion the role they play in strengthening and contributing to wider community life. North Kesteven's theme for 2023 was 'Saluting our Armed Forces: Past Present and Future'.

North Kesteven has the county's second highest proportion of veterans and people associated with the Armed Forces living locally.

For more information visit [HERE](#).

#### **Voter ID Initial Analysis.**

The Electoral Commission has completed their initial analysis on the impact of introducing Voter ID at the May local council elections.

To learn more about the early analysis and local information please follow this link [HERE](#).

#### **Parliamentary Boundary Review Changes.**

On Wednesday 28 June, the Parliamentary Boundary 2023 Final Parliamentary Boundary Review Changes was laid before Parliament.

To find more information including the changes for constituencies covering North Kesteven visit [HERE](#).

#### **Council air quality project extends to school buses and taxi firms.**

Drivers of school buses and taxi operators are being reminded to stop idling in their vehicles in a bid to boost public health and protect the environment, as North Kesteven District Council extends its 'Be Smart, Stop - Start' project.

As part of the clean air initiative, the Council has written to the District's two school bus contract-holders and 52 taxi and private hire operators, providing information and leaflets asking them to ensure drivers turn off their engines when waiting in their vehicles.

The campaign aims to raise awareness of the dangers of idling on public health and the environment, with children being disproportionately affected by vehicle pollutants such as oxides of nitrogen, carbon dioxide and particulate matter.

The Council campaign began through work with the William Alvey Primary School in Sleaford to stop parents from idling in their cars at school pick-up times.

Through the project, the Council provided the school with learning resources about the impact of cars idling on air quality, along with leaflets and branded air fresheners to serve as a constant reminder in parents' cars.

The project attracted national attention, even being featured on BBC Look North and BBC Breakfast News earlier in the year.

North Kesteven District Council plans to roll out this work to other schools and communities in a bid to improve air quality for all young people in the District.

This latest initiative accompanies ongoing monitoring at the school, with a special solar-powered 'Zephyr' air quality monitoring station having been installed outside the school in July 2022.

The data produced from this station shows that the air quality is at its best during school holidays, and at its worst at home-time when many parents collect their children in their cars.

Idling vehicles emit more pollutants than stopping and starting the engine, as the idling engine burns fuel less efficiently. Substances emitted include oxides of nitrogen and particulate matter such as PM2.5 which are small enough to pass into the bloodstream and organs. Carbon dioxide is also released which is a significant greenhouse gas contributing to climate change.

Exposure to these emissions can cause wide-ranging health issues such as breathing problems (including provoking asthma attacks), COPD, coronary heart disease, stroke, lung cancer, low birth weight, diabetes and diseases such as Alzheimer's and Parkinson's.

It is especially important not to idle near schools because research shows that exposing children to high levels of air pollution can stunt lung growth, as well as causing behavioural and mental health problems.

While there are many factors that influence air quality, cars idling is a cause that can be tackled by simple changes in driving habits.

Previous air quality projects include an awareness-raising poster competition which several local schools entered, with the winning designs printed up and displayed outside schools around North Kesteven.

The Council's Environmental Health Services produces a yearly air quality monitoring report in line with government guidance and the overall air quality in the District is deemed good. The report which can be viewed on the Council website summarises data from 22 sites throughout the North Kesteven area and although all sites meet the government Air Quality Standards and Objectives on average, with no exceedances of the NO<sub>2</sub> annual mean objective being recorded in the last five years, hotspots in areas where cars idle are still evident.

## **LGC Awards win.**

Last week North Kesteven District Council celebrated being recognised in the LGC Awards - as Housing category winner no less!

It's thanks to our colleagues and Members, who've worked hard together to deliver new Council homes that act on climate and develop standards including our own CO2-sy benchmark to guide more delivery of this going forward.

It's all built up from our successful past projects, methods and our work together with partners, to deliver climate action and meet the ongoing need for futureproof homes in North Kesteven.

Congratulations to all the LGC Award winners and nominees doing great things across local government.