

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

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COMMITTEE	LICENSING
DATE	1 <sup>ST</sup> SEPTEMBER 2015
DIRECTOR	ANGELA SCOTT (INTERIM)
TITLE OF REPORT	TRAINING FOR TAXI DRIVERS
REPORT NUMBER	CG/15/97
CHECKLIST RECEIVED	Yes

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1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The report seeks to inform the Committee of the potential benefits of training for taxi drivers and the proposals for consultation with the trade on training requirements.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

That the Committee:-

- (i) note the contents of this report;
- (ii) instruct officers from Legal and Democratic Services to carry out further investigations into the requirements for taxi driver training and undertake consultation with the trade; and
- (iii) instruct officers from Legal and Democratic Service to report back to Committee on the outcome of (ii).

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications at this stage albeit there may be increased costs at a later date for both drivers and the licensing authority if training is introduced.

4. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

None.

## 5. BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES

### BACKGROUND

In October 2013 the Aberdeen City and Shire Tourism Partnership working in partnership with Visit Aberdeen, Aberdeen Inspired and other agencies launched the Aberdeen City and Shire World Host Destination Initiative with a view to obtaining World Host Destination status for the Grampian region as a whole.

The World Host Destination status is a customer service standard that has been developed to raise the standard of customer service delivery across a region's visitor economy. It uses training programmes to improve the visitor experience and set a new bench mark for customer excellence. The ultimate aim is to strengthen the quality of tourism and establish Aberdeen City and Shire as a world-class tourist destination and deliver a boost to the local economy.

Taxi drivers will often be the first service providers visitors to the city will come into contact with. The taxi trade has therefore been identified as a crucial part of the World Host initiative and there is a recognition that a taxi driving training programme will be required if the city of Aberdeen is to obtain World Host Destination status from the World Host organisation.

The Best Practice Guidance for Taxis and Private Hire Cars 2012 from the Scottish Government also commends the introduction of vocational training for drivers and any conditions of licence that seek to raise standards within the trade.

The benefits of a training programme for the customer are clear. By having trained drivers, the customer experience will be improved and there will be an increased confidence in the service. However a training programme will also be of benefit to members of the trade by raising standards of service, increasing customer loyalty, improving business performance and reducing complaints. It is hoped that it may also improve job satisfaction and boost self-esteem for drivers by giving them a chance to obtain a recognised qualification.

At its meeting on 11th June 2015, members of the Taxi Consultation Group were asked for their general views on taxi driver training. Those present were supportive of the idea but took the view that it would require further consultation with the taxi trade as a whole given the implications for drivers. All were in agreement that any training would have to be mandatory.

## TRAINING PROGRAMMES

There are a number of taxi driver training courses currently on offer from various learning facilities. The cost and contents of the courses vary. A number of licensing authorities in Scotland have imposed or are considering imposing mandatory training requirements on taxi drivers.

To give an example, the Licensing Committee of Dundee City Council have imposed a mandatory requirement that all taxi drivers be trained to Scottish Vocational Qualification (SVQ) level 2 standard or equivalent by 31st May 2017. Two courses have been approved by the authority; an SVQ level 2 course run by Unite the Union and a vocational related qualification run by Dundee & Angus College which meets the knowledge requirements of SVQ level 2 in Road Passenger Transport. The cost of each course is believed to be in the region of £400 and the duration approximately seventy hours. It is understood however that the Unite course is free to members of the union.

The Aberdeen City Licensing Committee could similarly require drivers to obtain SVQ or equivalent qualifications through Unite or a local college. North East Scotland College currently offers a World Host training course on the principles of customer service which can lead to an SVQ level 2 customer service qualification.

Alternatively a course could be developed through the World Host programme. At the aforementioned meeting of the Taxi Consultation Group there was a view expressed that the trade should have a role in delivering the course. Other issues such as the length of time a training certificate will remain valid in terms of a taxi driver's licence will also require to be considered.

It is therefore proposed that officers investigate further the options for taxi driver training and undertake consultation with the trade. Officers will then be in a position to report to Committee at a later date with proposals for taxi driver training requirements.

### 6. IMPACT

Corporate – The proposals for taxi driver training fits in with the Aberdeen City and Shire World Host Destination Initiative and the Visit Aberdeen objectives which seek to establish a taxi driver training programme.

Public - The report will be of interest to residents of Aberdeen who use taxis as well as visitors to the city. The intention of a taxi driver training programme is to improve the customer experience and increase customer satisfaction.

The recommendations will have a neutral effect on the protected characteristics and an Equality and Human Rights Assessment is therefore not required at this stage.

7. MANAGEMENT OF RISK

There are no identified risks in the recommendations at this stage.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Summary of Introduction to the Role of the Professional Taxi and Private Hire VRQ course - Dundee and Angus College

Summary of Worldhost: Principles of Customer Service SVQ Course – North East Scotland College

Scottish Government Best Practice Guidance for Taxis and Private Hire Cars 2012

9. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

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