

ANGUS COUNCIL

CIVIC LICENSING COMMITTEE – 10 AUGUST 2017

INSPECTION OF TAXIS AND PRIVATE HIRE CARS

REPORT BY SHEONA C HUNTER HEAD OF LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

ABSTRACT

This Report relates to the inspection of taxis and private hire cars in the Angus area.

1. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Committee:-

- (i) note the progress made in consulting with local MOT garages about the possibility of vehicle inspections being carried out within Angus;
- (ii) note that representations have been received in respect of the vehicle engine classification contained in the current Angus Vehicle Inspection Checklist; and
- (iii) agree with immediate effect to remove the vehicle engine classification restriction from the current Angus Vehicle Inspection Checklist.

2. ALIGNMENT TO THE ANGUS COMMUNITY PLAN/SINGLE OUTCOME AGREEMENT/CORPORATE PLAN

This report contributes to the following local outcome(s) contained within the Angus Community Plan and Single Outcome Agreement 2013-2016:

- (i) Angus is a good place to live in, work in and visit; and
- (ii) Our communities are safe, secure and vibrant.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 This Committee, at its meeting on 1 June 2017, considered a report by the Head of Legal and Democratic Service in respect of the Inspection of Taxis and Private Hire Cars (Report 165/17 refers. Having considered the terms of this report, the Committee determined:-

- “(i) to note the responses received in relation to the consultation exercise undertaken with the trade to ascertain their views on the current vehicle inspection service provided by Dundee City Council and the possibility of local garages being used to carry out vehicle inspections;
- (ii) that the Head of Legal and Democratic Services consult with local businesses permitted to conduct MOT Testing to ascertain their willingness to provide vehicle inspections within Angus;
- (iii) to defer adopting Dundee City Council’s Vehicle Inspection check list to allow clarification on a number of issues; and
- (iv) that a further Report be submitted to a future Civic Licensing Committee detailing the responses received in relation to the forthcoming consultation exercise.”

- 3.2 Committee is asked to note that all MOT garages identified from the list of MOT stations for the Angus area held by the DVSA have been written to and invited to express an interest in providing vehicle and MOT testing within Angus. A closing date for responses has been fixed for **31 August 2017**. Responses will be collated and presented to a future meeting of this Committee.
- 3.3 Since the meeting of this Committee on 1 June 2017, representations have been received regarding the requirement in this Council's current Vehicle Inspection Checklist in relation engine size classification.
- 3.4 Angus Council's Vehicle Inspection Checklist applied to Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle licences specify that to be licensed a vehicle must have an engine classification of not less than 1600 cc. It is recognised that technological advances have meant that vehicle engines are more efficient and that smaller engines are now able to adequately power vehicles capable of transporting the driver and four or more passengers and with the required luggage space. In addition, it is acknowledged that removing the engine capacity requirement (whilst retaining passenger number and luggage capacity requirements) will pave the way for the introduction of hybrid and electric vehicles in Angus and permit the licensing of vehicles with smaller engines and less harmful emissions.
- 3.5 Concern has been expressed that delays in implementing changes to the Council's Vehicle Inspection Checklist in respect of this particular issue is prejudicing both the trade and the environment in that operators are being forced to replace vehicles with vehicles that are not as environmentally friendly and has higher emissions than the vehicle they would wish to put on.
- 3.6 In light of the above, officers undertook to invite the Committee to amend the Council's Vehicle Inspection Checklist to only remove the engine capacity requirement with immediate effect.
- 3.7 This particular issue has become entwined with other issues being:-
- (i) The review of Angus vehicle inspections being conducted by Dundee City Council in Dundee and the possible performance of this function by MOT garages in Angus; and
 - (ii) The review of the entire Vehicle Inspection Checklist applied to Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle licences and the possible adoption of the Vehicle Inspection Checklist applied to vehicles by Dundee City Council.
- 3.8 It is submitted that the change referred to above will not prejudice the ongoing reviews referred to above and will assist both the trade in broadening the type of vehicles that can be licenced and the Council in setting standards which will reduce the carbon footprint of the taxi and private hire trade in Angus.

4. CONCLUSION

- 4.1 Given the above, it is recommended that Committee:-
- (i) note the progress made in consulting with local MOT garages about the possibility of vehicle inspections being carried out within Angus,
 - (ii) note that representations have been received in respect of the vehicle engine classification contained in the current Angus Vehicle Inspection Checklist; and
 - (iii) agree with immediate effect to remove the vehicle engine classification restriction from the current Angus Standard Conditions.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 It is not considered that the terms of this report have any direct financial implications on the Council.

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