

ANGUS COUNCIL

CIVIC LICENSING COMMITTEE – 1 JUNE 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) notes 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) agree that the Head of Legal and Democratic Services consults with local businesses permitted to conduct MOT testing to ascertain their willingness to provide vehicle inspections within Angus;
- (iii) agree that Angus Council adopt Dundee City Council's vehicle inspection checklist from a date to be determined by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services.

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 All vehicles licenced as taxis and private hire cars must pass a vehicle inspection test prior to being licensed, and annually thereafter, to ensure that they meet required standards. This testing was previously carried out by Tayside Police at the Forfar Police Station Garage. When the Forfar Police Station Garage closed in April 2015 agreement was reached with Dundee City Council that the testing would be carried out by them in Dundee.

3.2 This Committee, at its meeting on 23 February 2017, considered a report by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services in respect of the inspection of taxis and private hire cars (report 95/17 refers). Having considered the terms of that report, this Committee agreed:-

- (i) to note that Tayside Contracts had advised that they were unable to undertake taxi and private hire car vehicle inspections in Angus;
- (ii) to note that arrangements with Dundee City Council to use their testing facilities for Angus vehicles had worked well and would continue;

- (iii) to note that agreement has been reached with Dundee City Council to offer MOTs at the same time as vehicle inspections at a cost of £11; and
- (iv) that a consultation exercise be undertaken with the trade to ascertain their views on the current service and the possibility of local garages being used to carry out vehicle inspections.

3.3 Between 10 March 2017 and 10 April 2017, a consultation was undertaken regarding the inspection of taxis and private hire cars via the “Have Your Say” section of Angus Council’s website. Representations were invited from Taxi and Private Hire Car Operators in Angus regarding:

1. The current arrangements with Dundee City Council to use their testing facilities,
2. The agreement that has been reached with Dundee City Council to offer MOT’s at the same time as vehicle inspections,
3. The possibility of local garages being used to carry out vehicle inspections,
4. The agreement reached with Dundee City Council to offer MOT’s at the same time as vehicle inspections at a cost of £11 representing a significant financial benefit to the trade; and
5. Should Angus Council adopt Dundee City Council’s vehicle inspection checklist?

For completeness, a copy of the Angus Vehicle Inspection Checklist is attached as **Appendix 1** and the Dundee Vehicle Inspection Checklist is attached as **Appendix 2**.

A copy of the responses received will be circulated to members.

Members will note that:-

- (i) There was satisfaction with the service provided by Dundee City Council,
- (ii) The trade would wish to have the service provided in Angus,
- (iii) There was no consensus on the benefit of the £11 MOT; and
- (iv) Whilst there was some opposition to adopting Dundee City Council’s vehicle inspection checklist, there was support for reducing the minimum engine size to take into account more efficient engines and hybrid and electric vehicles.

4. CONCLUSION

4.1 Given the above, it is recommended that Committee:-

- (a) notes 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,
- (b) agree that the Head of Legal and Democratic Services consult with local business permitted to conduct MOT testing to ascertain their willingness to provide vehicle inspections within Angus; and
- (c) agree that Angus Council adopt Dundee City Council’s vehicle inspection checklist. This will ensure consistency in approach, better quality control and service improvements through efficiencies. Perhaps more importantly, it will

remove any minimum engine size requirements which 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.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 It is not considered that the terms of this report have any direct financial implications on the Council. The cost of vehicle inspections is met by the Council and forms part of the fee charged for applications for taxi and private hire vehicles.

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