

Taxis Committee – 11th February 2009

Report of the Interim Director of Law and Property

Introduction of a Road Passenger Vehicle Driving NVQ level 2 course in partnership with Dudley College.

Purpose of Report

1. To inform the committee of the introduction of a NVQ (level 2) Course in Road Passenger Vehicle Driving to be offered to private hire and hackney carriage drivers in the Borough.

Background

2. Over the past twelve months the Licensing Section have become aware that there is a NVQ training course available for licensed taxi and private hire drivers. The aim of the course is to increase levels of customer service, raise levels of Health and Safety in both awareness and practice, increase understanding of current legislation for owners and drivers and introduce a minimum level of competence in all these areas. An explanatory scheme of work in relation to the Road Passenger Vehicle Driving is attached to this report as appendix 1.
3. Following the success of the in-house drivers' training course for the conveying of the disabled the Licensing Officer asked Brian Shipley and Tom Trickett, Licensing Enforcement Officers, to explore the possibility of the council providing the course for the trade.
4. In November/ December 2008, Mr Shipley and Mr Trickett consulted with the West Midlands advisor for 'Go Skills', Neighbouring Licensing Authorities and possible course providers.
5. An analysis of the information gained from the consultation process indicated that the most efficient method of course provision would be the council entering into a partnership with Dudley College.
6. Accordingly, a series of meetings were arranged with Mr George Orr and Mr Terry Guy of Dudley College throughout December 2008 and January 2009 to explore the possibility of implementing an NVQ (level 2) Course for the taxi and private hire trade.

7. It was agreed that a three month pilot project would be developed which would maximise the skills and resources of both organisations with Dudley College providing: -
- A classroom and a base for the practical elements of the course at the Brierley Hill Campus.
 - Teaching Materials
 - Access to funding (Train to Gain)
 - Access of trainers
 - General Administration
 - Support to candidates where appropriate in literacy, numeracy and English as a second language
- And the Licensing Section providing: -
- Access to taxi and private hire companies
 - Skills and expertise
 - Delivery of a large percentage of the underpinning knowledge for the NVQ by Licensing Enforcement Officers
8. The three-month pilot project will target a hundred candidates and run from February to April 2009. Both partners throughout its duration will monitor this project regularly and a review will be conducted at the end of the three months period to assess whether the course should be implemented.
9. Mr Shipley and Mr Trickett will attend this meeting to answer Members queries about the course.
10. This application falls within the Council's responsibility for Taxi and Private Hire Licensing which has a direct link to the Council's key corporate priority that safety matters.

Finance

11. There are no financial implications to the Council. Dudley College will pay the council an hourly rate for the enforcements officers' time. The rate will be agreed between Dudley College and the councils' Finance Directorate.

Law

12. The Town Police Clause Act 1847 governs the licensing of Hackney Carriages and the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 Governs the licensing of both private hire and hackney carriages.

Equality Impact

13. This report complies fully with the Council's policy on equal opportunities.
14. The licensing of Private Hire and Hackney Carriage vehicles and drivers will impact on children and young people through their transportation in licensed vehicles.
15. There has been no consultation or involvement of children and young people on developing these proposals.

Recommendation

16. That the committee note the contents of this report.



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INTERIM DIRECTOR OF LAW AND PROPERTY

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List of Background Papers