

**TO: LICENSING AND SAFETY COMMITTEE  
5 JANUARY 2017**

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**SAFEGUARDING TRAINING FOR TAXI DRIVERS AND OPERATORS  
(Chief Officer: Environment and Public Protection)**

**1 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 The Committee agreed at its meeting on 7 January 2016 to introduce a licence condition requiring mandatory training for drivers and operators. This was to be introduced once a suitable training package was in place to deliver this requirement.
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to inform the Committee of the outcome of the process to find a suitable training package and to seek its approval of implementation of the mandatory condition by supplier C from 1 April 2017 with a cost to attendees of £20.

**2 RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 That the Committee agrees that:
- i) **Mandatory safeguarding training for all new and existing drivers and operators is implemented from 1 April 2017**
  - ii) **That all existing drivers and operators must complete the training prior to the next renewal of their licence**
  - iii) **All new applicants must complete the training prior to the issue of a licence**
  - iv) **That the course, once passed, must be retaken by licensed drivers and operators and passed within a 3 year period**
  - v) **That Supplier C be appointed as the selected training provider for a period of 3 years**
  - vi) **That the fee to be charged will be based upon cost recovery, initially set at £20 and reviewed annually as part of the Council's fees and charges**
  - vii) **The taxi trade to be consulted further on the proposed course content prior to the 1 April 2017.**

**3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 This proposal is for a flexible and regularly delivered training package which provides a suitable level of understanding for those attending together with a test which will demonstrate an appropriate level of understanding. Cost is an important factor and the course as presented offers the best value for money whilst still delivering a course which is relevant and appropriate.

**4 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 4.1 Alternative suppliers were sought and their proposals would have meant a significant increase in the charge that the Council would have had to make to ensure cost recovery.

**5 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

- 5.1 Members will recall that they received a report in January 2016 recommending mandatory training for taxi drivers and operators on Child Sexual Exploitation and the protection of vulnerable adults, commonly referred to as "Safeguarding" This report arose because of comments firstly from the inquest into child sexual exploitation in Rotherham published in August 2014 and the subsequent inquest into similar matters

in Oxfordshire published in June 2015. In both cases there was clear evidence that licensed vehicles were regularly used to transport abused children. The Oxfordshire report drew upon the conclusions from both inquests and called for mandatory safeguarding training for taxi drivers and in November 2015 the Oxfordshire Safeguarding and Children's board published a framework document for the delivery of training.

- 5.2 At the Committee meeting on the 7 January 2016 members received details of the conclusions from those inquests and the proposal for mandatory training. The compulsory training is intended to raise awareness within the taxi trade of the lessons learnt from these inquiries so they can identify and report concerns, and that they as individuals can also avoid behaviour that might lead to inappropriate relationships with children. Members were informed on the 7 January 2016 that that since 2012 two taxi drivers within Bracknell Forest had had their licences revoked following evidence of inappropriate relationships with children. The Committee agreed to the introduction of mandatory training subject to the provision of a suitable training package and consultation with the taxi trade on the content of the course. Officers sought out three suitable training providers and at the Committee meeting on the 6 October 2016 the Committee agreed that officers should begin the process to finalise the course content with supplier C.
- 5.3 The supplier selected consists of training officers employed by Bracknell Forest, Reading, Wokingham and West Berkshire and who presently provide CSE training for a range of outside groups including Council staff. Their proposal is to provide training at venues throughout the geographical area that they cover. Applicants and licensed drivers / operators from any of those authorities will be able to select a course at the location and date that best suits their needs. As to the time of the course whilst previous experience has shown a course in the day is more popular consideration will be made of other times should demand be sufficient. The course will also be available to escorts employed in such areas as Home to School transport.
- 5.4 The licensing authority will operate upon a cost recovery basis and with present knowledge of likely numbers and patterns of attendance it is recommended that the fee is set initially at £20 per attendee with an annual review of charge to be undertaken to ensure cost recovery.
- 5.5 Attached to the report are draft documents which will be subject to further discussion with interested parties to ensure that they are clear and meet the objectives required prior to implementation in April 2017.
  - (i) PowerPoint presentation showing training content - Annex A
  - (ii) Pre-course information - Annex B
  - (iii) Example questions to be asked of attendees - Annex C
- 5.6 The course timeframe is set up to be up to 3 hours duration to allow for the training, topic discussions, questions and completion of the course test. Once running it maybe found that the course can be delivered within a shorter timeframe. If an attendee correctly answers 80% of the questions set they will pass the test. If they fail they will be required to re-take the course and repay the necessary fee.
- 5.7 On 18 November 2016 an email was sent to licence holders as at Annex D. The consultation closed on the 15 December 2016 and 2 responses were received and are attached as Annex E. The Bracknell Licensed Taxi forum has been invited to speak to the Committee about their response in line with the public speaking arrangements.

## **6 ADVICE RECEIVED FROM STATUTORY AND OTHER OFFICERS**

### Borough Solicitor

- 6.1 The legal provisions are identified within this report.

### Borough Treasurer

- 6.2 The intention is that all additional costs will be recovered by the Council and recharged to those undertaking the training

### Equalities Impact Assessment

- 6.3 The training provided will help suppliers of taxi services to understand potential issues with vulnerable groups including children and adults.

### Strategic Risk Management Issues

- 6.4 A failure to take action to protect children and enable the taxi trade to identify and report issues such as CSE would leave children and the Council at risk.

## **7 CONSULTATION**

### Principal Groups Consulted

- 7.1 Licence holders and groups working within the CSE field.

### Method of Consultation

- 7.2 The consultation took place by email contact with members of the trade and groups, inviting comments.

### Representations Received

- 7.3 Representations received from the taxi trade are attached as Annex E to this report. The Bracknell Forest Council LSCB CSE and Missing Strategic Sub Group received details of the proposed training at its meeting on the 15th December 2016 and were pleased with the progress that had been made. There was comment that the training proposed was appropriate for the audience intended, it was balanced in that it was directed to assist taxi drivers to protect vulnerable groups through identification and reporting of concerns and to assist them to adopt behaviours which avoid accusations of inappropriate relationships.

### Background Papers

Independent inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Rotherham. August 2014

Child Exploitation - Making a Difference - June 2015

Joint Operating Framework for Transporting Children/ Adults with care and support needs and Taxi Licensing in Oxfordshire November 2015

### Contact for further information

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