

REPORT TO POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE : 13 NOVEMBER 2008

CROSS-SERVICE PASSENGER VEHICLE OPERATION

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To seek authority to harmonise current practices and policies relating to the use of Council minibuses and to replace the current minibus permit system for driving in-house passenger vehicles with the Community Transport Association (CTA) MiDAS minibus driver assessment scheme.

2 Background

- 2.1 A Kaizen Project was undertaken on week commencing 15 January 2007 on Cross-Service Passenger Vehicle Utilisation to address various issues, including the current system for minibus driver assessment.
- 2.2 Three of the key outcomes from the Kaizen were:-
- (i) to introduce a Minibus Code of Practice and Regulations;
 - (ii) to standardise driver training for all in-house bus drivers, which would be implemented on a rolling programme; and
 - (iii) to investigate the cost benefits of training Council staff to become MiDAS trainers and driving assessors.
- 2.3 Following the initial Kaizen Week, various work streams have been initiated with a view to achieving the Kaizen Team goals and key outcomes.
- 2.4 In August 2007, Education, Learning and Leisure in-house mainstream school transport drivers and vehicles were transferred to the Public Transport Unit (PTU) of Transportation and Infrastructure. Subject to staff consultation, it is proposed that Social Work and Housing in-house drivers and minibuses will, in turn, transfer to the PTU, allowing for centralised and integrated operation of all in-house passenger vehicles.
- 2.5 These proposals were brought before the meeting of this Committee of 18 September (Branch 21 refers), and a number of issues were raised by Members that required further clarification. The report was deferred at that time.

3 Proposals

- 3.1 It is proposed that all existing policies and practices regarding the operation and use of Council in-house minibuses be harmonised, as detailed in Appendix A of the report and that, in particular, the CTA MiDAS driver training qualification be adopted as the standard required for drivers of Council owned minibuses, with effect from 1 February 2009.

4 Discussion

4.1 Internal Fleet Use and Operation

- 4.1.1 As a consequence of the previous dispersed management of the in-house passenger fleet, there are varying policies, procedures and practices in place across Aberdeenshire.
- 4.1.2 In order to both harmonise the relevant policies, procedures and practices and, in turn, provide internal and external users and potential users of the vehicles with a single reference source on correct vehicle operation, a 'Minibus Code of Practice and Regulations' will be produced, the main aspects of which are outlined in Appendix A to this report.
- 4.1.3 In reviewing the operation of Council minibuses, the opportunity has been taken to update a number of longstanding Council policies, which have been highlighted by the Community Transport sector and others as sources of concern. For example, it is proposed that the maximum speed of operation be increased from 40 mph to 60 mph on motorways and dual carriageways and to 50 mph on other unrestricted roads, reflecting current views on best practice.
- 4.1.4 The document also incorporates standardised hire rates and standardised hire conditions, including references to vehicle breakdown and emergency procedures and to Disclosure Scotland checking of drivers.
- 4.1.5 In addition, it is also proposed that the longstanding requirement to pass a Council minibus driving assessment in order to drive an in-house passenger vehicle be superseded by participation in the national CTA MiDAS minibus driver training and assessment scheme, with effect from 1 February 2009.
- 4.1.6 The only exception would be for holders of PCV Licences who are currently automatically eligible for a Council minibus permit and who would not be required to undertake the MiDAS training and assessment in order to drive a non-accessible Council minibus. As of September 2008, all new PCV drivers are required, through legislation, to hold a PCV Certificate of Professional Competence (CPC), with existing drivers required to obtain this qualification within five years. The PCV Driver CPC includes training modules similar to that of the CTA's MiDAS Scheme and also involves an element of refresher training every five years.

4.2 MiDAS Training and Assessment Scheme

- 4.2.1 The CTA MiDAS minibus driver training and assessment scheme, as well as incorporating a practical driving test, also includes driver training that has been designed to enhance minibus driving standards and promote the safer operation of minibuses.
- 4.2.2 MiDAS operates on a cascade approach. CTA has appointed a number of training agents who provide training for minibus Driver Assessor/Trainers (DATs) nominated from member organisations. A DAT can then assess the competence of other minibus drivers, and provide them with training on how to safely use a minibus.

4.2.3 Whilst Aberdeenshire Council are members of CTA and the Council's current minibus assessor is a qualified DAT, it is proposed that both internal and external drivers be directed to the four MiDAS approved DAT centres operated by Community Transport groups within Aberdeenshire. This approach will result in a more appropriate use of internal staff resource whilst, in turn, assist these Community Transport groups in maintaining financial sustainability.

4.2.4 Organisations joining the MiDAS scheme are required by the CTA:-

- (i) to assess and train all new drivers to the MiDAS standard from the date of joining;
- (ii) to assess and train all existing drivers within a period of 12 months from that date (this may be extended in exceptional circumstances); and,
- (ii) to allow drivers holding MiDAS certificates issued by other organisations, to drive their minibuses without the need for re-assessment – although local insurance conditions will always have to be fulfilled, and vehicle familiarisations undertaken.

4.2.5 Given the high number of existing Council minibus permit holders, a 12 month exemption from MiDAS training and assessment has been negotiated with CTA for existing local voluntary sector approved drivers and Council drivers.

4.3 MiDAS Consultation

4.3.1 The proposal to supersede the existing Council permit system with participation in the MiDAS training and assessment scheme was the subject of consultation with the voluntary sector in late 2007. The consultation document forms Appendix B.

4.3.2 Although details of the proposal were sent to all known existing users of Council minibuses and publicised through the CVS Network, written responses were only received from seven individuals/organisations. Their comments are summarised in Appendix C.

4.3.3 The majority of the respondents were positive about the proposed enhanced training regime. However, two main concerns/objections were highlighted: (i) the higher costs involved; and, (ii) the potential loss of existing drivers who for a variety of reasons might not be prepared to be (re-)trained and re-assessed.

4.3.4 Whilst the training and assessment costs (£60-£70 excluding vehicle hire) are higher than the current assessment at £20, these are considered to offer value for money, given the additional (5-8 hours) training. Indeed, a similar assessment to that currently undertaken in-house in Aberdeenshire is outsourced by Aberdeen City Council to First Aberdeen, at a 'market rate' to candidates of £50 for a one-hour assessment. The above costs exclude the provision of a vehicle for the assessment. The Community Transport groups have advised that currently most candidates prefer to be assessed in the vehicle they usually drive, however, if a vehicle is required, an additional charge of approximately £2-£3 per candidate may be incurred. Should the

proposal be agreed, every endeavour will be made to minimise the impact by advising groups of potential grant funding.

- 4.3.5 The impact upon the number of available volunteer drivers is also acknowledged. However, it is considered that any additional difficulty individual voluntary groups may experience in retaining or recruiting drivers should be balanced by the benefits of raised driver training standards across the voluntary sector in Aberdeenshire. The enhanced interaction across the community transport and voluntary sectors will also raise the opportunity for the sharing of the driver pool should it become limited.

5 Area Implications

- 5.1 The proposals if adopted will apply across all Areas of Aberdeenshire.

6 Policy and Sustainability Implications

- 6.1 It is recommended that the Council's existing policies and procedures regarding the operation and use of Council in-house minibuses be harmonised, as detailed in Appendix A of this report.
- 6.2 The proposals to adopt the MiDAS training and assessment scheme and revise other policies relating to the operation of Council minibuses have been subject to Multi Equality and Diversity Impact Assessments.

7 Staffing Implications

- 7.1 There are no substantive staffing implications associated with this report. However, it is worth highlighting that all Council in-house minibus drivers will require to undertake MiDAS training and assessment.

8 Financial Implications

- 8.1 Adoption of the CTA MiDAS driver assessment scheme as the standard required to drive any Council passenger vehicle of nine seats or over will have financial implications to both the Council and the voluntary sector. Currently, a one-off charge of £20 is levied for the Council minibus driver assessment, whilst in contrast the CTA MiDAS driver training and assessment is approximately £60 - £70, reflecting the additional training component. Refresher training, on a four- yearly basis, is also part of the MiDAS scheme and entails additional recurring costs amounting to £40 every four years.
- 8.2 It is estimated that the cost to the Council of MiDAS training and assessing all existing permanent and relief drivers is of the order of £16,600, including the costs of relief staff cover and travel expenses. These costs will be spread over two financial years and it is anticipated that any additional staff training costs associated with adoption of the MiDAS scheme will be offset by additional income as a consequence of harmonisation of vehicle hire rates. It is not possible to predict accurately the additional costs that will be incurred by the voluntary sector as a consequence of the proposal for the Council to join the MiDAS scheme. However, for the initial assessment and training, and based upon our knowledge of the level of hiring groups in the sector, this is estimated at up to £10,000 per annum across Aberdeenshire.

- 8.3 Additional driver training requirements are an inherent part of risk management and may reduce the risk of personal injury or damage to the Council's fleet of vehicles.
- 8.4 The proposal to replace the in-house Council minibus permit assessment scheme, which is currently overseen by the Principal Officer (Infrastructure and Information), will also result in loss of income amounting to approximately £1,400 per annum. However, this income loss will be outweighed by the staff time released, which can be re-focused on core activities.
- 8.5 Standardisation of hire standards across Aberdeenshire to reflect the approximate true operational costs will result in a small increase in the income stream from this activity. In progressing the proposal to standardise minibus hire rates to external organisations, a Multi Equalities Impact Assessment has been undertaken and ameliorating action identified.
- 8.6 The available information on the hire charges currently being levied by both the Council and Community groups, suggests that a range of situations exist from entirely free hires through to 50p a mile, excluding fuel, and 80p including fuel. With the co-ordinated approach that will be delivered through the Integrated Unit, it should be possible to more accurately assess these costs and, therefore, carry out a future review of charges. Any small voluntary groups found to be adversely affected by the changes in hire charges will be, wherever possible, advised of grant funding opportunities which could minimise the impact of the changes.

9 Consultations

- 9.1 In developing the proposals, the Cross-Service Kaizen Team visited various offices, day care centres and educational establishments across Aberdeenshire to ascertain details of the current methods of service delivery and to seek views on potential improvements.
- 9.2 Consultation has taken place with the CTA regarding the proposal to replace the current assessment scheme with the MiDAS minibus driver training, and assessment scheme and a 12 month period of grace for existing Council minibus permit holders has been negotiated.
- 9.3 The voluntary sector has been consulted in relation to the MiDAS proposal, the outcome of which is outlined in section 4.3 and Appendix C. Consultation has also taken place with the voluntary sector on the proposed revised vehicle hire rates and associated hire conditions, with the two responses received summarised in Appendix D.
- 9.4 The proposal to require all Council in-house minibus drivers to undertake MiDAS training and assessment has been subject to formal Union consultation and no objections have been raised.
- 9.5 The proposed changes to Council policy were the subject of reports to the six Area Committees. All Area Committees agreed the proposals, however, although most welcomed the recommended policy revisions, a number of concerns were raised, particularly in relation to the increased costs that would be incurred by the voluntary sector as a consequence of adopting the MiDAS

driver training and assessment scheme. Comments and issues raised by the Area Committees are summarised in Appendix E to the report.

- 9.6 The Directors of Finance, Education, Learning & Leisure, Housing & Social Work and Law & Administration have been consulted and are in agreement with the report. The Kaizen Champion has also been consulted and is in agreement with the report.

10 Recommendations

10.1 It is recommended that the Committee:-

- 1 approve the proposed revised Council minibus policies, practices and procedures, as summarised in Appendix A to the report; and,**
- 2 adopt the CTA MiDAS driver qualification as the standard required for all drivers of Council owned minibuses, with the exception of those drivers who hold a PCV licence in the case of non-accessible vehicles.**

Iain Gabriel
Director of Transportation and Infrastructure

Report prepared by Iain Smart, John Shinnie and Richard McKenzie
3 November 2008
CSPVO.131108

MINIBUS POLICIES, PRACTICES AND PROCEDURES : SUMMARY OF KEY PROPOSALS

New or substantially revised policies and practices are highlighted in bold.

The policies, procedures and practices apply to the operation of Council in-house vehicles by Services and external organisations, as appropriate. They also extend to external minibuses when undertaking non-commercial activities operated by or on behalf of the Council.

1. Training and Assessment

Drivers of non-accessible minibuses must hold a valid CTA MiDAS Certificate (accessible or non-accessible vehicle) or a valid PCV Driving Licence (Aberdeenshire Council Minibus Driver Permits will remain valid until 1 October 2009).

Drivers of accessible minibuses must hold a valid CTA MiDAS Certificate (Aberdeenshire Council Minibus Driver Permits will remain valid until 1 October 2009).

Where a risk or passenger need assessment has identified the need for a **formal passenger assistant(s)**, they **should have undertaken CTA PATs training**.

Where Council approval is given for the use of a trailer, **the driver will be required to have undertaken appropriate training in its use**.

2. Vehicle Hire by External Organisations

All organisations must be registered with the Council as an approved user.

All organisations must complete the relevant Hire Form(s) and accept the Terms and Conditions of Vehicle Hire.

Drivers must declare any traffic offence convictions or relevant physical/medical conditions.

All drivers and passenger assistants involved in transporting vulnerable children or adults must have been subject to a satisfactory Enhanced Disclosure Scotland check.

3. Minibus Hire Conditions

The Council will levy a standard hire charge to all external organisations: 50p a mile (subject to a minimum hire charge of £10), to be reviewed annually and amended in line with transport cost inflation.

Vehicles must be returned with a similar level of fuel as provided at the commencement of the hire – failure to do so will involve a charge for fuel used and **an administration charge of £30, to be reviewed annually.**

Vehicles must be returned in a similar condition to that when uplifted, with the hiring organisation liable for any malicious or undeclared damage.

The hirer is responsible for the collection and return of the vehicle keys to the hiring office or any other location designated by the Council.

Any misuse of the vehicle may result in an organisation being removed from the Council's register of approved users.

All charges are subject to VAT.

4. Vehicles

All minibuses operated in the course of the Council's business or by bodies acting on behalf of the Council must:-

- be adequately insured;
- be properly maintained;
- have a valid MOT;
- display a valid Road Tax Disc; and,
- if appropriate, display a Section 19 Small Minibus Bus Permit, Section 22 Community Bus Permit or a PSV O Licence Disc.

5. Section 19 Operation

In most circumstances, Council minibuses will be operated under the auspices of Section 19 of the Transport Act, 1985, which necessitates that:-

- Any charge levied must be on a non-profit basis.
- The vehicle can only be used to carry specified classes of passengers and not the general public.
- Drivers must hold the appropriate driving licence entitlement.

6. Driver Requirements

In addition to the training and assessment requirements set out in 1 above:-

All drivers must be registered with the Council as an approved driver.

Drivers must be over 21 years of age, have held a valid driving licence (manual gearbox) for a minimum of two years and have the appropriate driving licence entitlement.

All fines, penalty points and convictions associated with any road traffic offence must be declared. The Council reserves the right to preclude any driver's from operating a Council minibus where they have committed a serious road traffic offence(s) or have accumulated an inappropriate number of penalty points.

Drivers involved in carriage of wheelchair users must have undertaken the appropriate MiDAS (accessible vehicle) training.

Only drivers and passenger assistants with appropriate MiDAS (accessible vehicle) or PATS training are permitted to operate passenger lifts or ramps.

Drivers on reaching their seventieth birthday must, on an annual basis, provide an appropriate medical certificate confirming they are medically fit to drive a minibus **and undertake a MiDAS refresher course.**

The Council reserves the right to require any driver to undertake an appropriate medical examination and/or undertake any additional training or re-assessment, as deemed appropriate.

7. Driver Responsibilities

The driver is responsible for ensuring the minibus is roadworthy before use.

The driver should, prior to use:-

- plan the journey;
- be fit and able to drive;
- ensure the minibus is suitable for the passengers carried;
- conduct a pre-drive vehicle safety check; and
- conduct an unladen moving brake test.

The driver should ensure all luggage and equipment is safely stored and secured and that all aisles and doorways are kept clear. He/she should also ensure that all doors are secure, but not locked, before driving off.

All passengers must only be uplifted and set down at safe locations. The driver (or passenger assistant) must supervise boarding and alighting, and other than emergency situations, any rear door should only be used by passengers who find it difficult for mobility reasons to use the side door.

The driver must, for each journey, enter all relevant details in the Vehicle Log Book, including any vehicle defects or damage.

Drivers must not drive when suffering from fatigue or when under the influence of alcohol or drugs (including prescription and over the counter medicines which impair their ability to drive).

Drivers should ensure that seat belts are used by all passengers and that children under three years of age use an appropriate approved child restraint system.

Whilst helpful to carry a mobile phone on the vehicle, this should be switched off at all times when driving.

Drivers should adhere to the Council's recommended driving hours.

In the event of a breakdown, the Council's procedures must be followed.

In the event of an accident/incident, the Council's procedures, including when appropriate those relating to emergency evacuation, must be followed.

8. Organisation Responsibilities

In addition to those responsibilities outlined above, the organisation has an overall responsibility for ensuring safe operation of the minibus(es).

All organisations should undertake an appropriate risk assessment of their minibus operation and drivers prior to use and should maintain appropriate records.

Organisations are responsible for ensuring that all their drivers and passenger assistants who are involved in transporting vulnerable persons have undertaken a satisfactory Enhanced Disclosure Scotland check.

Organisations should ensure they are fully aware of any passengers that have special requirements and, if necessary, provide an appropriately qualified passenger assistant(s).

Organisations should ensure that all journeys are appropriately planned in advance in terms of time and distance, taking into account driver and passenger comfort.

9. Operational Restrictions

Vehicles should not exceed the following Council speed restrictions (unless a lower speed limit is specified):

- **60 mph on motorways and dual carriageways; and**
- **50 mph on all other roads.**

Passenger loadings should never exceed the seating capacity of the minibus.

The use of trailers and/or roof racks is prohibited, unless authorised by the Council.

With the exception of guide dogs and hearing dogs, no animal should be carried on the vehicle, unless authorised by the Council.

Smoking and the consumption of alcohol is prohibited on all minibuses.

Council minibuses must not be operated on un-made up roads or any off-road location, unless authorised by the Council.

Operation outwith 50 miles of Aberdeenshire may be restricted unless the organisation can confirm that an appropriate roadside assistance and recovery agreement is in place.

Operation outwith the UK mainland is not permitted without prior Council approval.

CONSULTATION ON ABERDEENSHIRE COUNCIL MINIBUS DRIVER ASSESSMENTS

Since the 1980's, anyone wishing to drive a Council minibus has had to first pass a minibus driving assessment.

Following a review of the policies and procedures regarding the use of Council minibuses, the Council is proposing a change to the longstanding requirement that all drivers of Aberdeenshire Council minibuses must hold an Aberdeenshire Council minibus driver permit.

In replacing the current 'minibus driving test', it is proposed that the Council join the Community Transport Association (CTA) MiDAS driver training and assessment scheme.

The CTA MiDAS scheme is a national scheme which is acknowledged as Best Practice. The scheme involves driver training as well as a practical test of driving ability, which is very similar to the Council test. Unlike the Council's minibus driver permit system, MiDAS minibus drivers are also required to undertake refresher training every four years.

The CTA describe the scheme as follows:-

MiDAS is the Minibus Driver Awareness Scheme, organised by the Community Transport Association U.K. (CTA), which promotes a nationally recognised standard for the assessment and training of minibus drivers. It is a membership based scheme that has been designed to enhance minibus driving standards and promote the safer operation of minibuses.

MiDAS operates on a "cascade" approach. CTA has appointed a number of training agents, who provide training for minibus Driver Assessor/Trainers (DAT's) nominated from member organisations. A DAT can then assess the competence of other minibus drivers, and provide them with training on how to safely use a minibus.

DAT's are trained on how to undertake a minibus driving assessment in an objective and consistent manner, how to structure on-road assessments, provide "classroom based" safety training, and refresher training. The safety training, which can be delivered on a group or individual basis, uses key learning points from a number of areas:-

- Legal Responsibilities of a Minibus Driver
- Passenger Safety
- Child Passenger Safety
- Defensive Driving
- Manual Handling Awareness
- Health and Safety Awareness
- Accident and Emergency Procedures
- Personal Safety for Drivers.

Each DAT is given a comprehensive trainer's manual which includes all the information from the course, along with audio visual material needed to run the safety training sessions.

Drivers who successfully complete the MiDAS assessment and training programme will receive a nationally recognised certificate valid for four years, as well as the option of obtaining the comprehensive "MiDAS Driver's Handbook".

Further information on MiDAS is available at www.communitytransport.com

Four Aberdeenshire Community Transport groups have (or will have) qualified Driver Assessor/Trainers (DATs) and have expressed a willingness to provide a MiDAS training and assessment service for local voluntary groups. These are:-

- Banffshire Partnership in Boyndie, near Banff;
- Buchan Dial-a-community Bus in Maud;
- Mearns Community Transport Group in Laurencekirk; and,
- Ballater Royal Deeside Ltd in Ballater.

Whilst the adoption of the CTA MiDAS scheme is likely to increase costs for some groups, it will bring various benefits over the current scheme:-

- drivers will be trained to Best Practice standards;
- there will be the provision of refresher training;
- drivers will hold a qualification that is widely recognised both locally and nationally;
- new drivers coming to Aberdeenshire who already hold a MiDAS certificate will not be required to sit a local driving test; and,
- income generated from the driver training and assessment will go to local voluntary groups.

The cost of MiDAS training and assessment is approximately:-

- £60 to drive a non-wheelchair accessible vehicle (inclusive of approximately six hours training) and
- £70 to drive a wheelchair accessible vehicle (inclusive of approximately nine hours training).
- Refresher training will cost approximately £40 every four years.

These higher costs, when compared with the current Council test, are due to the level of training involved.

Should the proposal be adopted, anyone with an accessible MiDAS qualification would be permitted to drive any Aberdeenshire Council minibus, whilst those with a non-accessible MiDAS qualification would be restricted to driving non-accessible minibuses.

The proposal is to adopt MiDAS with effect from 1 January 2008, but it is understood that such a transition cannot take place overnight. Council officers are, therefore, in discussion with the CTA to agree a transition period between the two schemes. It is anticipated that existing drivers will be granted a 12-15 months 'period of grace',

during which they can complete the MiDAS qualification and, therefore, continue to drive Council minibuses.

It is considered that participation by Aberdeenshire Council in the CTA MiDAS scheme will bring safety and other customer care benefits to all those involved in the hiring and operation of Council minibuses.

The views of the voluntary sector on the proposal to adopt the MiDAS scheme are sought and any comments should be forwarded to:-

**The Public Transport Unit
Woodhill House
Westburn Road,
Aberdeen
AB16 5GB**

by 8 October 2007.

Alternatively comments can be forwarded by e-mail to
public.transport@aberdeenshire.gov.uk

CONSULTATION RESPONSES ON THE MIDAS PROPOSAL

Individual/ Organisation	Comment	Response
Mearns Community Centre	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. MiDAS scheme excellent with acknowledged driver training benefits. 2. Cost is the main concern – could be prohibitive for voluntary sector. 3. Could MiDAS be rolled out – to new drivers first. 4. May lose older drivers unwilling to be tested. 5. Advised that two current drivers felt insulted by the proposal. 6. Acknowledged that the present level of training is minimal. 7. Considered the current 40 mph speed limit for Council minibuses unsafe (particularly on dual carriageways). 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Noted 2. The higher costs are acknowledged – organisation has been advised of possible sources of grant funding. In the case of employed persons, costs would be met through the Social Work training budget. 3. Partial/incremental participation in MiDAS is not permitted. 4. Acknowledged, however, it is considered that all drivers should be trained to the same standard, irrespective of age. 5. The MiDAS scheme is predicated on the benefits of refresher training. 6. Noted. 7. This matter is addressed in the proposed 'Minibus Code of Practice and Regulations'.
Weekend Respite Project	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Welcome more comprehensive training and adoption of 'national' scheme. 2. Availability of local training centres advantageous. 3. Higher cost a concern. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Noted. 2. Noted. 3. The higher costs are acknowledged – organisation has been advised of possible source of grant funding.

<p>Gateway Centre</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Welcome adoption of MiDAS. 2. Higher costs but consider that these are outweighed by additional training benefits – the costs are, therefore, considered reasonable. 3. Highlighted potential benefit of national standard 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Noted. 2. Noted. 3. Noted.
<p>D C M MacDonald</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Objected to the implication that existing drivers require training/re-training. 2. Envisages losing experienced drivers (e.g. due to time commitment and cost of training). 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The MiDAS scheme is predicated on the benefits of refresher training. 2. Acknowledged, however, it is considered that all drivers should be trained to the same standard.
<p>Kemnay Community Learning Group</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Concern over higher cost. 2. May lose experienced drivers, given duration of training, particularly in the case of volunteers in full-time employment. 3. Consider their existing training procedures and Council minibus assessment sufficient. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The higher costs are acknowledged. There are possible sources of grant funding. In the case of employed persons, costs would be met through the Social Work training budget. 2. Acknowledged, however, it is considered that all drivers should be trained to the same standard. 3. See 2 above. Also the MiDAS scheme is considered Best Practice.
<p>Aberdeen Schools Rowing Association</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. No comments but sought clarification on various aspects of the proposal, eg: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Will PCV licence holders be exempt? b. What is proposed regarding trailer towing? c. Will 'bulk' discounts be available from training bodies? d. Is there sufficient training capacity? e. Why does the Council 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.a. PCV drivers will be exempt from MiDAS. (PCV Drivers as of September 2008 will require to undertake CPC training every five years). b. To tow a trailer, a driver must hold a Class D1E licence, and it is proposed that additional training will be compulsory, as is the case currently with 'in-

	<p>not adopt the 'European' requirement that all minibus drivers hold a PCV?</p>	<p>house' drivers.</p> <p>c. 'Bulk' discounts may be available at the discretion of the training bodies.</p> <p>d. Assurances have been given by the Community Transport Groups involved that arrangements will be made to cater for anticipated demand, although voluntary groups will need to be encouraged to spread their training requirements across the 'period of grace'.</p> <p>e. The Council would not wish to withdraw the ability of many volunteers to drive Council minibuses, however, it is mindful of the Health and Safety implications and considers the CTA MiDAS scheme, which is acknowledged as Best Practice, would provide the appropriate training and assessment.</p>
<p>Macduff Parish Church</p>	<p>1. Concern over higher cost.</p>	<p>1. The higher costs are acknowledged. There are possible sources of grant funding.</p>

CONSULTATION RESPONSES ON PROPOSED VEHICLE HIRE RATES AND ASSOCIATED HIRE CONDITIONS

Individual/ Organisation	Comment	Response
Macduff Old Folks Association	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Never paid for hires and proposed hire rates will preclude travel by older people on tight budgets. 2. Suggest range of charges linked to financial resources of hiring organisation/group. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Groups found to be adversely affected by the changes in hire charges will be, wherever possible, advised of grant funding opportunities which could minimise the impact of the changes. 2. Differential charge rates would be administratively cumbersome.
Macduff Parish Church	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Never paid for hires and may necessitate introducing charges to users. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Groups found to be adversely affected by the changes in hire charges will be, wherever possible, advised of grant funding opportunities which could minimise the impact of the changes.

APPENDIX E

COMMENTS ON PROPOSED POLICY CHANGES BY THE AREA COMMITTEES

Area Committee	Committee Decision	Comments raised
Banff and Buchan 19 August 2008	Agreed report	Agreed to recommend to Policy and Resources Committee proposals as per report.
Marr 19 August 2008	Approved report	<p>Agreed:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) to support the revised Council Minibus Policies, Practices and Procedures as detailed in the report and, in particular, the proposal that the CTA MIDAS Driver Qualification be adopted as the standard required for all drivers of Council owned minibuses, with the exception of those drivers who hold a PCV licence in the case of non accessible vehicles, (2) that Councillor Stroud be provided with a list of voluntary organisations using Council minibuses, (3) to ensure that sufficient time was available for re-training of volunteers to minimise any adverse impact, (4) to welcome the availability of funding and assistance to voluntary organisations to re-train; and, (5) that further clarification be provided on the "inappropriate number of penalty points" which would preclude a driver from operating a Council minibus.

<p>Buchan 26 August 2008</p>	<p>Approved report</p>	<p>Agreed to accept proposals as per report</p>
<p>Garioch 26 August 2008</p>	<p>Noted report</p>	<p>Committee: (1) welcomed the introduction of the training; and the higher standard required; and, (2) would like officers to seek ways to allow community groups to access funding for the training.</p>
<p>Formartine 2 September 2008</p>	<p>Approved report</p>	<p>Requested that service undertake an assessment of the impact of the new proposals on the voluntary sector by ascertaining the likely number of drivers that will be lost from organisations.</p>
<p>Kincardine and Mearns 2 September 2008</p>	<p>Approved report</p>	<p>Agreed: (1) to approve the recommendations in the report; and, (2) to look for funding support for volunteer drivers.</p>