

**MINUTES of MEETING of PLANNING, PROTECTIVE SERVICES AND LICENSING COMMITTEE
held BY MICROSOFT TEAMS on WEDNESDAY, 28 SEPTEMBER 2022**

Present: Councillor Kieron Green (Chair)

Councillor John Armour	Councillor Mark Irvine
Councillor Jan Brown	Councillor Andrew Kain
Councillor Amanda Hampsey	Councillor Liz McCabe
Councillor Graham Hardie	Councillor Peter Wallace
Councillor Fiona Howard	

Attending: Stuart McLean, Committee Manager
Sheila MacFadyen, Senior Solicitor
Fiona Macdonald, Solicitor
Paul Cowin, Applicant

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Audrey Forrest, Daniel Hampsey and Paul Kennedy.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. CIVIC GOVERNMENT (SCOTLAND) ACT 1982: APPLICATION FOR GRANT OF A TAXI CAR LICENCE (P COWIN, HELENSBURGH)

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. In line with recent legislation for Civic Government Hearings, the parties (and any representatives) were given the options for participating in the meeting today. The options available were by video call, by audio call or by written submission. For this hearing the Applicant opted to proceed by way of audio call and joined the meeting by telephone.

The Chair outlined the procedure that would be followed and invited the Applicant to speak in support of his application.

APPLICANT

Mr Cowin advised that he was seeking a Taxi Operator Licence for a taxi that he and his wife would drive. His wife had recently been granted a Taxi Driver Licence and he had held his own licence for 3½ years. He said that he has, up till now, been driving a private hire car which was a hybrid vehicle. He advised that over the last 8 months, since Covid restrictions ended, the demand for taxis in the Helensburgh and Lomond area has been strong. He pointed out that there were still 3 less taxis in the area than there were when the LVSA survey was carried out. He referred to being told of complaints being made to the Council about the number of taxis available in Helensburgh. He said that he regularly dropped customers off at the train station and people were regularly waiting for taxis. He explained that he had to drive away and leave them as he was not permitted to pick up passengers with his current licence. He referred to the location of the train station being within an empty triangle of the town with the station closing the gates and hiring security

guards. He advised that it was a quiet part of the town. He said he would like to add a visible taxi to the streets which would be available for immediate hire. He advised that this additional taxi licence should have a minimal effect on other taxi drivers' income as he also worked for Trident Taxis, which he said, was the biggest operator in the town and he would not be solely relying on work from the street.

MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

Councillor Green asked how many taxis were operating in the Helensburgh and Lomond area at the moment and how many were operating pre Covid. The Council's Solicitor, Fiona Macdonald, advised that as of September 2022 there were 45 taxis operating in the Helensburgh and Lomond area.

Councillor Hardie referred to Mr Cowin advising of complaints from the public about a lack of taxis and he asked Officers if they had received any complaints. Both Council Solicitors advised that they were not aware of any complaints being made.

Referring to Councillor Green's earlier question, Ms Macdonald confirmed that when the LVSA survey was carried out there were 48 taxis operating in the Helensburgh and Lomond area. She advised that they did not have figures for immediately before Covid.

SUMMING UP

Applicant

Mr Cowin referred to his comment about complaints and advised that his customers had told him they had written to the Council about having to wait a long time for a taxi. He confirmed that he could not provide any evidence of these complaints.

Mr Cowin confirmed that he had received a fair hearing.

DEBATE

Councillor Hardie advised that having used taxis in Helensburgh and having had to wait at times, he was aware of the situation. He advised that he would have no hesitation in granting this licence after noting the difference in the number of taxis operating now compared to when the LVSA survey was carried out.

Councillor Green advised that he was likeminded.

DECISION

The Committee unanimously agreed to grant a Taxi Car Licence to Mr Paul Cowin and noted that he would receive written confirmation of this from Legal Services within 7 days.

(Reference: Report by Head of Legal and Regulatory Support, submitted)