

**MINUTES of MEETING of PLANNING, PROTECTIVE SERVICES AND LICENSING COMMITTEE
held BY MICROSOFT TEAMS on WEDNESDAY, 22 JUNE 2022**

Present: Councillor Kieron Green (Chair)

Councillor John Armour	Councillor Fiona Howard
Councillor Jan Brown	Councillor Willie Hume
Councillor Audrey Forrest	Councillor Mark Irvine
Councillor Amanda Hampsey	Councillor Liz McCabe
Councillor Graham Hardie	Councillor Luna Martin

Attending: Patricia O'Neill, Governance Manager
Sheila MacFadyen, Senior Solicitor
Colin Stroud, Applicant

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Daniel Hampsey, Paul Kennedy and Peter Wallace.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. CIVIC GOVERNMENT (SCOTLAND) ACT 1982: APPLICATION FOR GRANT OF A TAXI CAR LICENCE (C STROUD, BALLYGRANT, ISLAY)

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 video call and joined the meeting by Microsoft Teams.

The Senior Solicitor, apologised for the circulation of the wrong taxi survey report to the Applicant and the Committee. She advised that the correct survey report by LVSA was issued the day before this meeting to both the Applicant and the Committee. She further advised that as 14 days notice of the correct survey was not given to the Applicant clarification on whether or not he would wish to proceed with the hearing today was required.

The Applicant confirmed that he had read the correct survey report and was content to proceed with the hearing today.

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

APPLICANT

Mr Stroud advised that he has lived on Islay for 9 years and was a former tour guide with Bunnahabhain Distillery and has used taxis and private hire for this purpose. He explained that on the island there was a massive demand for taxis and said that since

Covid several taxis were no longer operating. He commented that one Operator who had passed away had 3 or 4 cars on the road. He advised that a lot of people coming to the island could not get taxis and a lot of the private hires were tied up with distillery tours. He believed the island was 8 cars down since 2 years ago. He advised that he lived on the north of the island where there were no taxis as most were based out of Bowmore and Port Ellen and drivers from there did not want to come so far north. He advised that he would like to work for himself and said that the demand was there for another taxi, if not more.

MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

Councillor Hume referred to Mr Stroud advising that the island was 8 taxis down. He asked how many taxis were initially on the island. Mr Stroud said there were 7 or 8 companies with, he would say, a maximum of 20 cars.

Councillor Forrest asked the Senior Solicitor how many licences were currently on the island and also asked if she was aware of a drop in cars. Mrs MacFadyen advised that when the LVSA survey was carried out there were 7 taxis and now there were 6. She said that she did not have a breakdown figure of how many private hire cars were on the island as the figure of 36 covered the whole of the Mid Argyll, Kintyre and the Islands area.

Councillor Green asked why the Applicant was applying for a taxi licence rather than a private hire licence. Mr Stroud advised that with a taxi licence he would be able to be flagged down. He said that driving through Bowmore and Port Ellen you could see people wanting to flag you down. He advised that a taxi licence would give him the flexibility to be waved down and take a fare.

Mr Stroud then provided a list of those taxi and private hire operators he believed were no longer working. Mrs MacFadyen advised that some of these may have held onto their licences. She confirmed that she would check to see if they were still operating so that this information could be provided to the Committee in future, if required.

SUMMING UP

Applicant

Mr Stroud advised that there was a huge buzz on the island and that people were struggling to get a taxi even through private hire. He said that when he was working at Bunnahabhain he was aware of people having to walk 5 miles to the Port Askaig ferry. He said that he would like to help alleviate this shortage.

When asked, Mr Stroud confirmed that he had received a fair hearing.

DEBATE

Councillor Armour advised that he knew the island well and that he knew how difficult it was to get transport. He said that he thought Mr Stroud's summing up was spot on and that another taxi was absolutely necessary. He confirmed that he was happy to support this application and wished Mr Stroud all the best in getting his licence.

Councillor Hampsey echoed what Councillor Armour said. She advised that she had spent time on Islay and had personal experience of the issues of transport. She thought

this licence was greatly needed on the island and confirmed that she was happy to support the application.

Councillor Forrest commented that this was an island with a lot of tourism and confirmed that she would also support this application.

Councillor McCabe confirmed that she would also support this application.

Councillor Hume said that he fully supported the application and commented that people should not have to walk 1, 2 or 5 miles.

Councillor Green referred to the LVSA report which mentioned that dead mileage was a feature of transport on the island as well as the difficulty of responding to bookings. On this basis, and in line with the other comments made, he advised that he was supportive of this application.

Councillor Armour commented that an application for a taxi licence rather than a private hire licence was correct in his opinion as part of the problem in remote areas was seeing private hire vehicles driving by with no customers in them and not being able to flag them down.

DECISION

The Committee unanimously agreed to grant a Taxi Car Licence to Mr Stroud 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)