

**MINUTES of MEETING of PLANNING, PROTECTIVE SERVICES AND LICENSING COMMITTEE
held BY MICROSOFT TEAMS on WEDNESDAY, 23 AUGUST 2023**

Present: Councillor Kieron Green (Chair)

Councillor John Armour	Councillor Mark Irvine
Councillor Gordon Blair	Councillor Andrew Kain
Councillor Jan Brown	Councillor Liz McCabe
Councillor Amanda Hampsey	Councillor Luna Martin
Councillor Graham Hardie	Councillor Peter Wallace

Attending: Stuart McLean, Committee Manager
Fiona Macdonald, Solicitor
William Currie, Applicant

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

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

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. CIVIC GOVERNMENT (SCOTLAND) ACT 1982: APPLICATION FOR GRANT OF TAXI CAR LICENCE (CURRIE TAXIS, ALEXANDRIA)

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 Mr Currie joined the meeting by telephone.

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

APPLICANT

Mr Currie advised that he has been driving taxis in the Helensburgh area for 4 years in someone else's car. The contract is a 50:50 split with 50% of everything he earns going to the owner of the car. He said that he understood that the car owner had no plans to replace him as a taxi driver so in theory the taxi fleet would be down one car before he started out on his own.

Mr Currie advised that he knew Helensburgh well and that he enjoyed working there and got on well with his customers. He said that he would like the security of having his own taxi plate and car.

MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

Councillor Green asked Mr Currie if he knew if the person that owned the car he currently drove would be surrendering his taxi plate. Mr Currie said he did not think so. He

explained that the owner held his own taxi licence so could drive the car if he wanted to. He advised that the owner had other full time employment but may retire from that job and work as a taxi driver at that point.

Councillor Green sought and received confirmation from the Council's Solicitor, Ms Macdonald, that there were currently 46 taxi cars in the Helensburgh and Lomond area compared to 48 when the LVSA survey was carried out.

Mr Currie referred to demand for taxis at the weekend and commented that 46 taxis were never out at the same time. He advised that his customers complained that it was difficult to get taxis at certain times. He advised that having worked in Helensburgh for 4 years he knew when the busy and quiet times were. He said that he tended to work at night when people found it difficult to get a taxi. He said there were only so many taxis from the Trident Office, where he currently worked, that came out at night.

Councillor Hardie sought and received confirmation from Mr Currie that he believed there was a lack of taxis in the town at certain times. He said it tended to be quieter during the week, during the day. He advised that there tended to be more taxis available during the day compared to at night as there were limited drivers working at night. He said that it was very difficult to get a taxi after 1 or 2 am as most taxis stopped at that time when the licenced premises closed.

SUMMING UP

Applicant

Mr Currie said it was his intention that this would be full time employment for him and that he planned to work 6 or 7 nights per week as opposed to others that only worked 2 or 3 nights per week. He said that he knew when the busy times were and that he would make himself available at those times. He said he would like to do this, not only to make money, but to provide a service to the public.

Mr Currie confirmed that he had received a fair hearing.

DEBATE

Councillor Green referred to the number of taxis in the Helensburgh and Lomond area being less than when the LVSA survey was carried out and that to his mind that would indicate that he would be in favour of granting this licence as there appeared to still be demand there.

Councillor Blair agreed. He commented that Mr Currie had been working for 4 years and knew the area well and he hoped that he would provide an excellent service to his customers.

DECISION

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

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