

Minutes of a meeting of the **Licensing & Regulatory Committee** held at Thorpe Lodge, 1 Yarmouth Road, Thorpe St Andrew, Norwich on **Wednesday 12 December 2018** at **3pm** when there were present:

Mrs S C Gurney – Chairman

Mr R J Knowles

Mr D B Willmott

Mr Leon Davies of Zero Taxis (the applicant) attended the meeting for consideration of his application, accompanied by Amanda Cook from Hyundai (Business & Fleet Sales).

Also in attendance were Ms Tamsin Eddison (the Committee's legal advisor); the Food, Safety and Licensing Team Manager; the Technical Officer (Licensing Enforcement) and the Senior Committee Officer.

30 MINUTES

The non-exempt Minutes of the meeting held on 14 November 2018 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

31 LOCAL GOVERNMENT (MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS) ACT 1976 – PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLE LICENSING

Mr Leon Davies and Amanda Cook were in attendance for consideration of his application.

The Committee considered an application to make an exception to Private Hire Vehicle and Hackney Carriage Policy and Conditions in respect of the engine size of an eco-friendly vehicle.

The Private Hire Vehicle and Hackney Carriage Policy section 7 stated:

“The Council encourages the use of eco-friendly vehicles. Any application to licence a vehicle with an engine capacity of less than 1300cc will be considered on its own merits.”

On 30 May 2018, the Committee considered and granted an application by Mr Leon Davies and Mr James Phillips in respect of the licensing of an electrically powered vehicle, namely a Nissan Leaf. This decision was specific to the Nissan Leaf model.

The applicants had subsequently advised that their private hire business, Zero Taxis, was enjoying considerable success and they wished to license additional electrically powered vehicles which did not have an engine but instead relied on a battery which powered a motor. However, Nissan Leaf models were currently not readily available, hence the application for a Hyundai Ioniq. The Ioniq satisfied all other private hire vehicle licensing specification conditions and a number were currently licensed as private hire vehicles elsewhere. A copy of the specifications booklet was available at the meeting.

The Food, Safety and Licensing Team Manager presented his report in full and advised Members to establish the range of the vehicle and how long it took to charge etc.

Mr Davies advised that electric cars were a game-changer for the taxi service and his clients included Broadland District Council, Norfolk County Council as well as Shell UK etc. These vehicles were the only zero emission taxis in not only Norfolk but the whole of the East of England. He currently had two vehicles, both Nissan Leaf, and his intention was to increase his business and the range of cars operating.

In response to a question on the specification of the Hyundai vehicle, Ms Cook advised that the Premium SE was the “off the shelf” model and customers could purchase extras (eg leather seats) but these could be expensive. The Premium model worked out cheaper than buying a standard model with extras at an additional cost. Mr Davies confirmed that he would purchase the model which was available the earliest.

Regarding the charging facilities required, Mr Davies advised that two types were applicable – Combined Charging System (CCS) and a Chademo and he had both available. However, these were not unique to Hyundai and could be used by other vehicles. Both chargers had two points available and there were two sets of leads available in each of his vehicles.

In terms of the Hyundai Ioniq, this was similar to a Nissan Leaf, having seating for four. The charge period was 30 minutes on fast charge and seven hours for a full, slow, charge. Seven chargers were available in Norwich and 40 superchargers throughout Norfolk. In response to a question on reliability, Mr Davies confirmed that he carried out battery checks during the day and the vehicles had never been near to running out of power. The cars did not grind to a halt but provided warnings and would operate on “limp” mode with facilities like air-conditioning and the heating shutting down to conserve energy. He emphasised that the cars would never stop without warning.

In response to a question on whether he would have preferred to purchase another Nissan Leaf, Mr Davies stated that there were a few reasons why not – he had a good relationship with Amanda (from Hyundai); the Hyundai

vehicle had a range of 300 miles which exceeded the Nissan Leaf and it was cheaper than the Nissan. The Hyundai Kona was similar to a SUV, albeit more expensive than the Ioniq, but would provide a greater range enabling passengers from the oil / gas industry to be taken to Heathrow.

When asked how he could demonstrate public safety, particularly in terms of the life of the charged battery, and the area in which his drivers would operate, Mr Davies stated that the furthest journey undertaken so far was Stansted – he had charged his vehicle there and then made the return journey. In that area, there were 16 chargers within 15 miles and drivers used an app and live data to check their availability. Driving electric vehicles in the Norwich area was easy. In terms of energy efficiency, taking 4,000 miles on average per month, electric vehicles saved 26.4 tonnes of CO² compared to a conventional vehicle.

Mr Davies concluded that he intended to buy the vehicles and start operating with them as soon as possible and his longer-term goal was for five or six vehicles operating from new premises in January / February. He thanked Broadland officers for all their assistance.

Mr Davies, Amanda Cook, the Food, Safety and Licensing Team Manager and the Technical Officer (Licensing Enforcement) then left the meeting whilst the Committee discussed the application.

Having considered all of the information presented to them and having regard to public safety, Members

RESOLVED:

to grant the application and allow an exception to Private Hire Vehicle and Hackney Carriage Policy section 7 in order to licence the Hyundai Ioniq electrically powered vehicle as a private hire vehicle.

Mr Davies, Ms Cook, the Food, Safety and Licensing Manager and the Technical Officer (Licensing Enforcement) were then readmitted to the meeting and advised of the Committee's decision, following which Mr Davies and Ms Cook left the meeting.

Mr Davies was advised of his right of appeal to the Magistrates' Court within 21 days of receiving the written decision.

The Committee then proceeded to consider whether it wished to provide an exception for all electrically powered vehicles providing:

- (1) the vehicle was able to comply with the requirements of all other private hire vehicle licensing specification conditions;

and

- (2) the vehicle had a mileage range between battery charges which made it feasible and viable to operate as a private hire vehicle;

and

- (3) the owner and or operator of the vehicle had ready access to suitable battery charging points to facilitate the satisfactory operation of an electrically powered vehicle.

It was noted that as the committee was only meeting in its capacity as a hearing, comprising three Members, it did not have the authority to make the change to the policy. However, it could offer its support for the proposal.

Members concurred with the proposal as outlined above and

RESOLVED:

to refer the decision to the Licensing & Regulatory Committee with their full support.

32 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED:

to exclude the Press and public from the meeting for the remaining business because otherwise, information which was exempt information by virtue of Paragraphs 1, 3 and 7 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006, would be disclosed to them.

33 EXEMPT MINUTES

The exempt Minutes of the meeting held on 14 November 2018 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

Minute no: 27 – Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 – Private Hire Vehicle Driver Licensing

The Committee noted that the driver had made enquiries about submitting an appeal to the Magistrates' Court but had also made arrangements for his licence application fee to be returned.

Licensing & Regulatory Committee

*Minute no: 29 – Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 –
Private Hire Vehicle Driver Licensing*

The Committee noted that the driver had stated his intention to submit an appeal to the Magistrates' Court which would postpone his suspension which was due to commence on Friday 14 December.

The meeting closed at 3:40pm