

LICENSING COMMITTEE INFORMATION SHEET
27 AUGUST 2024

TYPE OF APPLICATION: Application for an exemption from the *Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle Policy*

APPLICANT: Garry Joseph McNulty (T147)

INFORMATION NOTE

Date Wheelchair Assistance Exemption Granted- NONE

Mr McNulty is seeking an exemption to the Committee Policy that states that any new grant application for a taxi must be for a Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle (WAV) and that only a WAV can ever be licensed on such a licence.

The Committee has before it an email from Mr McNulty indicating the grounds under which he is seeking the exemption.

Mr McNulty is currently a licence holder of a Taxi Vehicle Licence T147 and is requesting to change his current vehicle to a saloon/estate car.

Should the Committee be minded to grant the exemption the applicant is aware that he will be required to submit an application for the substitution of a new vehicle on to the Taxi Licence.

COMMITTEE GUIDELINES/POLICY

Licensing Committee policy states that any new grant application for a Taxi Licence must be for a WAV vehicle.

From:

Sent on: Friday, May 10, 2024 12:58:13 PM

To: Licensing <Licensing@aberdeencity.gov.uk>

Subject: Plate change application

Dear Members of the Licensing Committee,

I hope this letter finds you well. My name is Garry McNulty, and I am writing to request a personal representation to discuss my application for a saloon taxi plate with the exemption from the wheelchair accessibility mandate, as outlined in the current taxi regulations.

I understand and fully support the significance of accessibility for individuals with disabilities. However, I am seeking an exception to this rule to provide a saloon taxi service in our community. There is a notable demand for this service, particularly among individuals who seek a more accessible and convenient transportation option.

I assure you that my vehicle will be meticulously maintained and kept in excellent condition, adhering to the current hackney conditions. My intention is to introduce a hybrid vehicle onto the roads, a type not readily available as a Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle (WAV).

I am committed to ensuring the safety and comfort of all passengers, including those with disabilities. However, it is worth noting that there are certain disabilities not adequately catered for by existing WAV vehicles. I currently have two regular customers who are deaf, my ability to communicate through sign language means they text myself to book, hence my request for an exemption.

Allow me to provide additional context for my request. I have been a qualified taxi driver since 2005 and have invested significantly in purchasing five separate taxis, adhering to regulations at the time. The condition to convert all existing saloon plates to WAV plates was never enforced, a decision I supported wholeheartedly.

In the current financial climate, sourcing an affordable WAV vehicle is exceedingly challenging. The cost of a straight replacement vehicle has surged by 75%, while even saloon cars have seen an increase of around 50%, making it difficult to find an economically viable WAV option.

Considering this may potentially be my final taxi purchase, I aim for the vehicle to last a decade. As a driver with nearly twenty years of service, I would feel unjustly treated if a significant purchase today were to render me ineligible due to subsequent policy changes, leaving me unable to afford putting a saloon car on the road.

With my current vehicle reaching 9 years of age, I find myself spending increasingly more time off the road. This impediment hampers my ability to fulfil my role as a licensed driver and restricts my capacity to provide essential services to the public, especially considering my tenure as a driver spanning nineteen years. I am keenly aware of the importance of efficient transport hubs in keeping passengers moving smoothly. Having a

saloon with a yellow plate would also allow me to continue to service our taxi ranks at peak times.

I respectfully urge the committee to consider my application for a saloon taxi plate with an exemption from the existing rule mandating wheelchair accessibility for all taxis. I am grateful for your time and attention to this matter and eagerly await the opportunity to discuss this further.

Additionally, I would like to emphasize the extent to which I regard my role as a taxi driver as that of an ambassador for the City of Aberdeen. Over the years, I have actively participated in numerous fundraising initiatives, charity events, and community projects aimed at enhancing the well-being and cohesion of our city.

As a passionate advocate for our community, I have dedicated considerable time and effort to various charitable causes, including local youth programs, initiatives supporting the elderly, and fundraising events for medical research and support organizations. My involvement in these activities underscores my commitment to making a positive impact beyond the confines of my professional duties.

Moreover, my interactions with passengers from all walks of life have afforded me valuable insights into the diverse fabric of our city. I take pride in representing Aberdeen to visitors and ensuring that their experience reflects the warmth, hospitality, and vibrancy that characterize our community.

In light of my unwavering dedication to serving both residents and visitors alike, I am confident that granting an exemption for a saloon taxi plate would enable me to continue contributing positively to the city's reputation and vitality. Thank you once again for your attention to this matter.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Garry McNulty