

Agenda item	7.1
Report no	HLC/004/21

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee: THE HIGHLAND LICENSING COMMITTEE

Date: 12 January 2021

Report title: Application for the grant of a taxi driver's licence – Robert Walker (Ward 6 – Cromarty Firth)

Report by: The Principal Solicitor – Regulatory Services

1. Purpose/Executive Summary

1.1 This report relates to an application for the grant of a taxi driver's licence.

This item is subject to a formal hearing procedure

2. Recommendation

2.1 Members are asked to determine the application in accordance with the Council's hearings procedure.

3. Background

3.1 The Highland Council has resolved that in terms of the Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982 (the "Act") a licence will be required for the driving of a taxi. A licence for the same is issued by the Highland Council and is valid for the whole Council area.

4. Application

4.1 Robert Walker applied for the grant of a taxi driver's licence on 11 February 2020.

4.2 The application was circulated to both Police Scotland and the Council's Trading Standards Service.

4.3 There have been no objections received in relation to the application.

4.4 In terms of the abovementioned Act the Licensing Authority have twelve months from receipt of the application to determine the same, therefore this application must be determined by 10 February 2021. Failure to determine the application by this time would result in the application being subject of a 'deemed grant' which means that a licence would require to be issued to Mr Walker for a period of 1 year. The application is before this Committee as this is the last meeting before the determination date expires.

5. Immigration Act - Right to work check

5.1 All applicants for a taxi driver's licence must undergo a right to work check. At the time of writing Mr Walker has still to undertake the right to work check.

6. Taxi driver's knowledge test

6.1 Mr Walker has sat the knowledge test once scoring 72% in the Highland Section, (pass mark is 75%), and 52% in the local section (pass mark is 85%).

6.2 The Council's policy in respect of a taxi driver's knowledge test states that an applicant is permitted a maximum of three attempts.

6.3 Due to the current restrictions relating to Covid-19 staff have been unable to arrange a date for Mr Walker to re-sit the knowledge test.

7. Determining issues

7.1 Paragraph 5(3) of Schedule 1 of the Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982 states that a licensing authority may refuse an application to grant or renew a licence where:

- (a) the applicant or anyone else detailed on the application is not a fit and proper person;
- (b) the activity would be carried out by a person other than the applicant who, if he had made the application himself, would have been refused;
- (c) where the licence applied for relates to an activity consisting of or including the use of premises or a vehicle or vessel, those premises are not or, as the case may be, that vehicle or vessel is not suitable or convenient for the conduct of the activity having regard to

- (i) the location, character or condition of premises or the character or condition of the vehicle or vessel,
 - (ii) the nature and extent of the proposed activity,
 - (iii) the kind of persons likely to be in the premises, vehicle or vessel,
 - (iv) the possibility of undue public nuisance, or
 - (v) public order or public safety; or
- (d) there is other good reason for refusing the application.

If required the Principal Solicitor – Regulatory Services will offer particular advice on the criteria relating to this particular application.

7.2 Separately, section 13(3A) of the Act, inserted by the Immigration Act 2016, prohibits licensing authorities from granting a taxi or private hire car driver's licence to any person unless first satisfied that the person is not disqualified from working in the UK by reason of his or her immigration status.

7.3 In addition, section 13(5) of the Act provides that a licensing authority may require an applicant for a taxi driver's licence to take a test of his knowledge of the area to which the licence is to relate, of the layout of roads in that area and such other matters relating to the operation of a taxi as the authority consider desirable, and the authority may refuse to grant a licence to a person who does not satisfy them that he has adequate knowledge of any of these matters.

7.4 A copy of this report has been sent to Mr Walker who has been invited to state his case.

8. Policies

8.1 The following policies are relevant to this case:

Standard taxi driver's licence conditions. A copy of these can accessed at https://www.highland.gov.uk/directory_record/738739/taxi_and_private_hire/category/501/taxi_and_private_hire or a hard copy can be supplied where requested.

9. Implications

9.1 Not applicable.

Date: 8 December 2020

Author: Laura Gunn

Background Papers: Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982