

Greenway Travel Limited

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23rd March 2016

Mr Nigel Marston
Licensing Manager
South Somerset District Council

Dear Nigel,

On behalf of my Company, Greenway Travel Limited, and acting as one of its Directors, I would like to make a formal application to be granted an exception to the current requirement that all new and replacement licenced hackney carriages in the SSDC area be WAV (Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles).

Background

Let me say at the outset that myself, my company and all of my staff firmly believe in the principles behind the Equality Act and of the sound and solid objectives behind the Council's decision to increase the number of WAVs available in the region. However, the old adage of "where there is a demand, there will be a supply" exists here. We live in a rural community where there is a very limited visiting population and as such virtually every resident is aware of what is available and what is not. This includes WAVs. Our vehicles spend a great deal of time on the rank at Yeovil Junction Station – a key gateway for visitors to Yeovil. We have never, ever, been approached by a disabled person in a motorised wheelchair that would necessitate a WAV. We have, however, been approached many, many times by passengers in conventional collapsible wheelchairs which we can – and do - comfortably accommodate. I can also state that in the three years since our start and the many thousands of telephone calls we have received, we have only been asked perhaps four or five times if we can carry wheel chairs – of any nature. To date, we have never had to decline a customer who is disabled.

Unique Business Model

I formed this company in 2013 with the intention of giving environmentally aware customers, both private and commercial, a real, demonstrable alternative to conventional taxis. We invested in new vehicles that were, and are still, the best and most appropriate ULEV (Ultra Low Emission Vehicle) to be used as a taxi. Since that time we have striven to promote our company and I believe we now have a maturing, established business providing a real alternative for the future sustainability of our area. We now have a solid and expanding client base, both corporate and private, who choose to use us because of the very real difference our vehicles can make to reduce pollution. However, to continue to grow our business we need to increase our fleet size and to replace older vehicles with newer ones.

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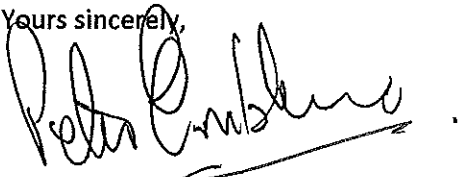
New Licensing Policy

Since our inception there have been changes to the SSDC licensing policy that requires all new and replacement hackney carriages to be WAVs. Notwithstanding my comments in the opening paragraph, we would be happy, indeed keen, to adhere to this policy, if a vehicle existed which met our ULEV criteria. There is currently no such vehicle in existence, nor is there one in the planning stages. A leading WAV supplier in our area, Brotherwood, does have a WAV based on a purely electric van under trial, but the very limited range of the vehicle and the total lack of any electric charging infrastructure in this area rules it out for us to use as a taxi. To our knowledge there is no other appropriate vehicle in existence.

Conclusion

I therefore formally request that Greenway Travel Limited be granted an exception to the current licensing policy requirement which states that only WAVs be considered for licensing as taxis on the basis that we are a unique operator in this area, pre-dating the requirement by some two years or so, and that no such vehicle exists that would allow us to maintain our company ethos.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Peter Embling', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Peter Embling
Director