

**BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL**

**REPORT OF THE ACTING DIRECTOR OF REGULATION AND ENFORCEMENT  
TO THE LICENSING AND PUBLIC PROTECTION COMMITTEE**

**SEPTEMBER 2018**  
**ALL WARDS**

**REQUEST TO INTRODUCE ADVERTISING ROOF SIGNS  
FOR HACKNEY CARRIAGE VEHICLES**

1. Summary

- 1.1 The Licensing Service has received a request from Mr Nick Smith and Mr Charles Jepson in respect of Wedooh Ltd, seeking permission to install 'taxitop' rooftop advertising signs on Birmingham licensed hackney carriage vehicles.
- 1.2 A similar request was considered and refused by the former Licensing Committee on 20 February 2008 and another on 13 July 2016.
- 1.3 Wedooh Ltd has submitted a presentation in support of his request, which is attached as appendix 1 to this report.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 The Committee should consider the proposal put forward by Wedooh Ltd taking into account the current conditions of licence relating to advertising and either approve or refuse the request.
- 2.2 If the Committee is minded to agree the request, consideration should be given to adopting the recommendations made at 5.1 in this report.

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### 3. Background

3.1 Birmingham City Council has a set of standard conditions which apply to hackney carriage vehicles. Those conditions specify the locations in and on a vehicle which may be used to display advertisements. There is presently no provision in the current conditions of licence for hackney carriage vehicles for roof top advertising installations.

3.2 The current conditions also place restrictions on the subject matter which may appear in those advertisements as detailed in the extract from conditions reproduced below:

16(i) No advertisement shall be displayed upon the interior or exterior of a hackney carriage vehicle which contains, promotes or involves drugs, alcoholic drinks, politics, nudity (partial or otherwise) or sex (including articles or products associated with birth control) without the permission of the City Council.

16(ii) No advertisement which has been prohibited by the Advertising Standards Agency shall be displayed upon the exterior or interior of any Hackney Carriage.

16(iii) No advertisement shall be displayed in such a manner as to contravene the Road Traffic Acts or Road Vehicle (Construction and Use) Regulations for the time being in force.

16(iv) Any advertisement displayed upon the exterior of a hackney carriage shall be located either upon:

- a) the whole vehicle (whole livery) except in the case of Mercedes Eurocab, Peugeot Euro 7 or Fiat Eurocab vehicles;
- b) each side of the vehicle;
- c) the rear windscreen, provided that an advertisement shall only be displayed on the rear windscreen if the advertisement is printed upon a transparent screen which does not obscure the driver's view and further, that the vehicle is fitted with side or wing mirrors;
- d) on the hubcaps of the vehicle.

NB – Only **one** advertisement is allowed on any **one** location on the vehicle. For this purpose, both doors constitute **one** location.

16(v) The proprietor shall maintain the advertisement in a clean and tidy condition and shall further remove any advertisement which is damaged, defaced, or out of date.

16(vi) No advertisement shall be displayed within the interior of the vehicle unless it is located upon the underside of the tip-up seat within the

vehicle or displayed via an electronic media system with prior consultation with the Licensing Committee

- 3.3 Although taxitop applications have been considered and refused on two previous occasions, this is a new product which has not been considered by this Committee and members are not bound in any way by those historical decisions. The application submitted by Wedooh Ltd should be considered purely on its merits.

4. The application

- 4.1 The Wedooh submission advises extensive safety testing of the product was required before deployment of the equipment in London. Details are included on the Technical – Safety pages of the attached submission.
- 4.2 The document includes an overview of the proposed method of operation, as well as suggestions as to how Birmingham City Council messages could be displayed, including urgent messages in the event of a local emergency.
- 4.3 Wedooh advise proprietors of participating vehicles will be offered 25% of the net advertising revenue (excluding any commissions which have to be paid to agencies) generated by their advertisement. This has worked very well in London where drivers have felt themselves to be a part of the business. Wedooh hope to replicate a John Lewis style model where participants feel an ownership of the business and actually benefit from the revenues that are generated.
- 4.4 Mr Smith and Mr Jepson have been invited to present their proposal and to answer any questions members may have in respect of their application.

5 Suggested Additional Requirements

- 5.1 If after due consideration, members agree to the proposal to allow installation of roof top advertising signage on Birmingham hackney carriage vehicles, officers make the following recommendations:
- i. Any advertisement displayed via a roof top installation must comply with the Committee's standard advertising requirements with respect to content.
  - ii. No additional advertising media is to be displayed or installed in or on the vehicle at the same time as the roof top advertising unit. Taxi radio circuit or app booking service logos may be displayed in a single location on both sides of the vehicle, but must not be larger than 30 cm<sup>2</sup>.
  - iii. Permission should be specific to this equipment and not seen as a general permission to introduce roof top advertising.
  - iv. Installation and removal must only be carried out by the Weedoooh nominated installer.

- v. Amendments to hackney carriage vehicle conditions will be required to include the new advertising location and to formalise restrictions and requirements.

6. Implications for Resources

- 6.1 No implications have been identified.

7. Implications for Policy Priorities

- 7.1 The contents of this report contribute to the protection, safety and welfare of residents and visitors to the City by ensuring that licensed hackney carriage vehicles are compliant with required vehicle standards.

8. Public Sector Equality Duty

- 8.1 No specific issues have been identified

**ACTING DIRECTOR OF REGULATION AND ENFORCEMENT**

Background Papers: Nil