

**PUBLIC PROTECTION COMMITTEE: 3 March 2015**

**Report of the Head of Regulatory and Supporting Services**

**APPLICATION FOR APPROVAL FOR THE FITTING OF ROOF MOUNTED  
DUAL SIDED LCD ADVERTISING ON TX1, TX2, TX4 HACKNEY CARRIAGES  
VEHICLES ONLY.**

**1. Background**

- 1.1 An application has been made by Mr Michael Smith Managing Director of Open Taxi Tops Ltd for approval to fit roof mounted dual sided LCD advertising screens to TX1, TX2 and TX4 Hackney Carriage vehicles. Mr Smith would also install an Air system, PC and Leisure battery in the boot of the vehicles that would free the adverts up from condensation. This would also enable the customers and driver to have internet access.
- 1.2 Mr Smith has been in the advertising industry for over ten years and has a large client base ranging from small businesses to Blue Chip companies and was granted approval for his roof mounted dual LCD screens by Liverpool City Council in December 2014.
- 1.3 This report is to provide details of the application to enable the application to be considered by Committee.

**2. Details.**

- 2.1 Mr Smith proposes to use dual-sided LCD top boxes on TX1, TX2 and TX4 Hackney Carriages. Mr Smith claims the signs will not interfere with the hire light which would still be clearly visible.
- 2.2 Mr Smith's indicates a number of benefits of this style of advertising, including providing an extra income stream for drivers and taxi companies.
- 2.3 Clearly it is vitally important for safety reasons that any object on the top of a vehicle should be mounted safely and Mr Smith has said that the LCD screens will be securely and permanently attached to the roofs of the hackney carriages. The email of application is detailed in Appendix A.
- 2.4 Mr Smith has provided the artwork showing samples of the type of advertisements provided. (see Appendix B).
- 2.5 Mr Smith has been requested to provide an example sign fitted to a vehicle available for inspection at the meeting.

### **3. Considerations**

3.1 At present all licensed vehicles are identifiable by an exterior licence plate issued by the Authority that must be displayed together with plate signs on the interior of the vehicle. The driver is also required to wear a numbered photo-identity badge and display a copy in the vehicle. The vehicle is also required by motoring law to display a registration plate. In addition to this, Hackney Carriages are immediately recognisable as are clearly marked as black with a white bonnet or all black in the case of vehicles which meet the Metropolitan Police Conditions of Fitness. All licensed drivers are vetted in respect of their criminal convictions and medically examined to ensure they are fit and proper persons.

3.2 In considering the appropriateness of the use of advertising equipment the Committee should consider the safety of the product and its suitability within a vehicle used for hire and reward and in particular may consider:

- Acceptability of the medium by fare paying passengers
- Whether the medium will cause confusion in distinguishing between Hackney Carriage and private hire vehicles.
- Whether such adverts will confuse passengers by distracting from the licence plate numbers displayed
- Type, size and design of the equipment
- Secure mounting and safety of the equipment
- The safe storage of any necessary controls, and any implications of this storage e.g. reduction of luggage compartment
- Effects on the suitability and comfort of the seating arrangement

3.3 The committee may also wish to take into account that a similar application was approved by Public Protection Committee in January 2006 in respect of illuminated roof-mounted advertising boxes on Hackney Carriages. The committee discounted the use of magnets and concluded that the boxes were to be affixed to the vehicles by bolts. The following additional Hackney Carriage Vehicle Licence Condition was introduced at that time:

“External advertising in the form of illuminated roof signs affixed to the vehicle in an approved manner is approved subject to the advertisement being approved by the Authority, in writing, prior to its use.”

The Authority would approve the use of triangular roof signs on hackney carriages where they are affixed to the roof securely by means of nuts and bolts and the advertising does not concern alcohol, smoking or sexual issues. The advertising media did not prove popular and their use has not been adopted.

3.4 In January 2008 an application was submitted by Marvin Mobile Media Ltd who had developed a more modern advertising top box that could be secured by adhesive pads which had been tested to withstand 150 mph winds. The applicant

provided technical details of various safety tests that had been carried out on the new system and the committee resolved to approve the application.

- 3.5 Regulations made under the Road Vehicles Lighting Regulations 1989 lay down requirements for the lighting of vehicles. In particular light showing from the rear of a vehicle may only be red subject to exemptions for certain circumstances (white light shown from a taximeter for example). The applicant would need to ensure that the equipment met the requirements of the legislation.

#### **4. Consultation**

The trade consultation procedure was undertaken in accordance with the consultation procedure on any policy matters. The draft reports intended for consideration were made available at the licensing offices for any interested party to provide written submissions.

#### **5. Achievability**

This report contains no equality personnel or property implications.

#### **6. Legal Implications**

- 6.1 As indicated in the Report, the Authority already permits the display of illuminated roof signs on hackney carriages.
- 6.2 Under Section 47 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 the Council may impose such conditions upon hackney carriage licences as it may consider reasonably necessary.
- 6.3 In particular the Council may require any hackney carriage licensed by it to be of such design or appearance or bear such distinguishing marks as shall clearly identify it as a hackney carriage.

#### **7. Financial Implications.**

- 7.1 This report does not result directly in any additional financial implications.

#### **8. Recommendation**

- 8.1 It is recommended that the Committee determine the application made by Open Taxi Tops Ltd to allow Dual sided LCD advertising top boxes on TX1, TX2 and TX4 hackney carriage vehicles.

**Dave Holland**

**HEAD OF REGULATORY AND SUPPORTING SERVICES**

This report has been prepared in accordance with procedures approved by Corporate Managers.

Background Papers: None



-----Original Message-----  
From: Open Magazine [mailto:  
Sent: 13 January 2015 12:08  
To: Hartrey, Claire  
Subject: OPEN Messenger

## APPENDIX A

Hi Claire,

I am Michael Smith, Managing Director of Open Taxi Tops Ltd, I spoke with Paul Walters today and he has told me to email you regarding our project OPEN Messenger

Over the past 18 months we've been researching, designing and developing this new innovation product, to put onto the public highway, as a new and target way of delivering digital content and messaging service to the general public. This will work by putting Dual sided LCD Screens onto the top of the Iconic Black Hackney Taxi. It'll be fitted onto the roof of the vehicle as a permanent fixture, whilst the boot of the vehicle will be fitted out with the Air system, PC and a Leisure battery. Working very closely with Liverpool City Council we have already had this APPROVED and will be launching the end of March 2015 with 30 screens. This entire concept has been developed and manufactured within the UK.

The Benefits that Open Messenger will bring to this city are very rewarding for all.

Employment

Taxi drivers

Extra revenue stream for rental of the roofs (£3000k p.a), Free WiFi & Charging point for the consumer.

Government

A new way to communicate news and information to the public.

A new landscape for our city.

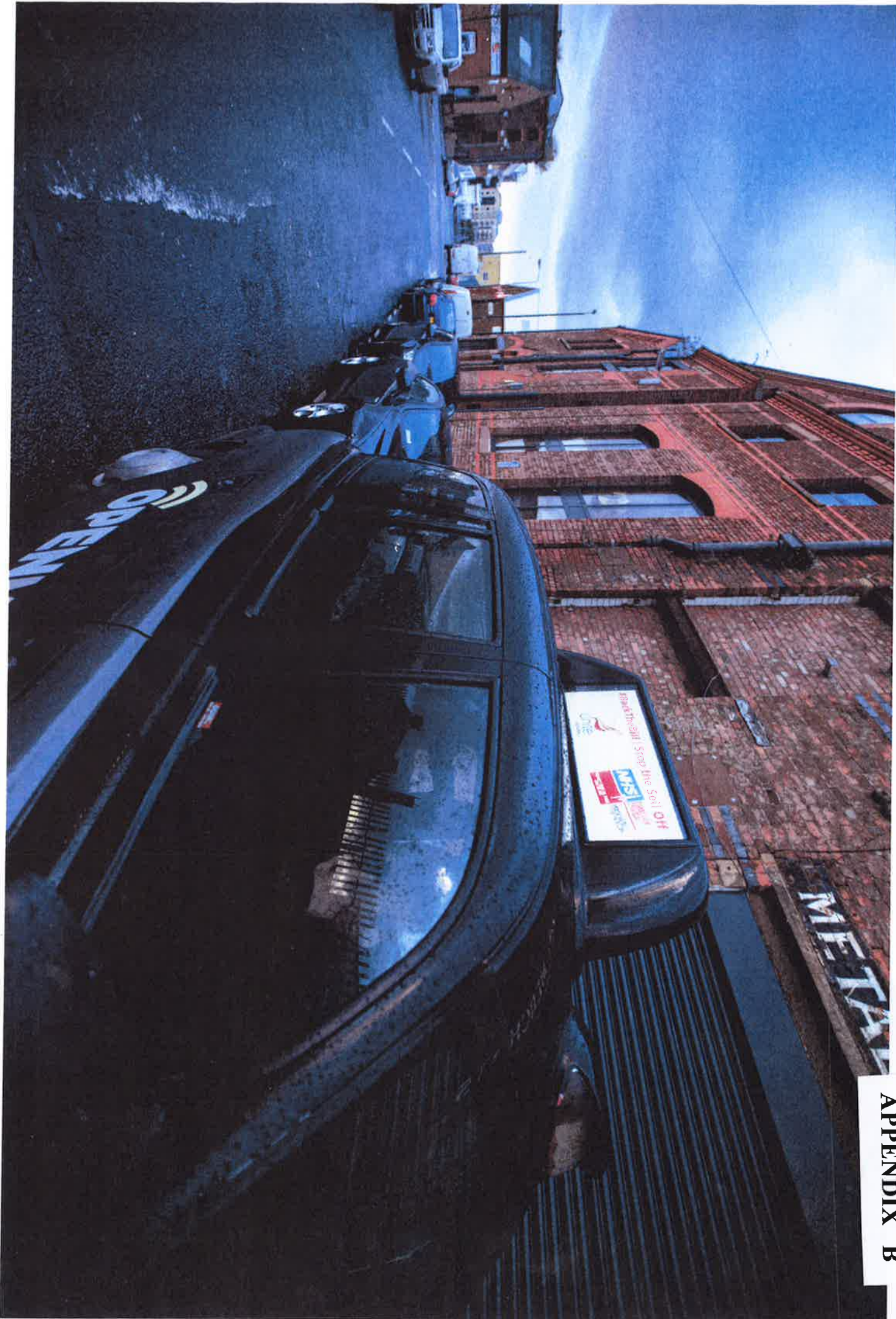
We've been a part of the advertising industry for 10 years and have a large client base ranging from SME's to Blue Chip companies. Now we have sort approval from LCC, we would like the opportunity to present this to Cardiff City Council and hopefully have our product launched in Cardiff come the summer of 2015. We would like to submit an application in order get onto the next available Licensing Committee hearing, to bring this exciting new technology to the city. We have passed all the relevant health & safety requirements needed and can bring these to the committee.

I have also attached some images as well.

Looking forward to your response.

Kind Regards,





APPENDIX B