



DERBY CITY COUNCIL

TAXI LICENSING AND APPEALS COMMITTEE 18 October 2006

Report of the Director of Environmental Services

NARROWBAND WIRELESS BROADCAST TV SCREENS IN HACKNEY CARRIAGES ('CABTIVATE')

RECOMMENDATION

- 1.1 To consider in principle the approval of broadcasting narrowband wireless transmissions to public display screens located in licensed hackney carriages in Derby.
- 1.2 To consider the system manufactured by Cabtivate Media Systems Ltd to transmit data to public display screens located in licensed hackney carriages in Derby.

MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION

- 2.1 Permission has been sought by Cabtivate Media Ltd to install flat screen wireless TV in taxis. The screens and equipment are located within the driver compartment behind the driver's head. The TV screens are viewed by passengers through the plastic bulkhead and play moving images for advertising. They also play 'content', which consists of weather, news reports, pop videos and local and public information. Systems may also play digital TV channels such as 'Entertainment Today'.
- 2.2 The systems are automatic and commence once the vehicle ignition is turned on. The driver has no influence as to the content of the material being viewed. The displayed material is updated remotely by the company supplying the system, using satellite technology. The systems are generally updated monthly, although it could be more frequently. The images are played on a continuous loop, the length of which can be set by the company according to the average journey time. Typically the loop would be between 6 and 20 minutes.
- 2.3 The Cabtivate System cannot be switched off by the driver, although they can pause the system allowing them to communicate with the passenger as and when required.
Passengers can, however, switch both the sound and visual display off. This requirement accommodates those passengers who may be affected by flickering screen images which may induce fits, or passengers who do not wish to view the advertisements. Failure to incorporate this requirement is likely to lead to conflict between passengers and drivers, and may lead to complaints to the licensing authority.

- 2.4 Officers suggest that any display screen system approved in principle by members must be capable of being switched off by the passenger and must also have pre-set levels of sound control so as not to distract the driver whilst he/she is driving. The controls must be clearly visible during daylight hours and be illuminated at all other times. These controls must be situated near the passenger seats such that a passenger does not need to leave the seat (or unfasten a seat belt) to operate them. Instructions (in the form of a notice) should also displayed so that passengers know how to switch off the TV.
- 2.5 Any taxi advertising should adhere to the standards agreed by this committee (see appendix 3). The manner in which images on the TV systems are remotely and rapidly updated raises a practical issue as to how prior approval could be given for advertisements. The Cabtivate website allows remote access for council officers to view all advertising content prior to display. However, it is unlikely that officers will have time to view this content on a regular basis, although they may be able to audit the content from time-to-time. Cabtivate acknowledge this concern in their literature, noting that the regular changing nature of images also creates demands on officer time if prior approval is to be given to each advertisement.
- 2.6 If members approve this type of advertising in principle the taxi advertising policy will need to be amended. The hackney carriage licence conditions will also need to be amended to provide appropriate safeguards.

**For more information
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None

Background papers:

List of appendices:

Appendix 1 – Implications
Appendix 2 - Application Letter from Cabtivate Media Ltd
Appendix 3 - Criteria for advertising on Hackney Carriages agreed by
Licensing and Appeals Committee in January 2002

IMPLICATIONS

Financial

1. None

Legal

2. **It** is for the Council to satisfy itself about the appropriateness of the proposal. Approval would oblige the Council to have reached a determination that the criteria for such approval meets the legislative requirement to safeguard the interests of the public. Although there is no legal obligation to accept the proposal, the grounds of any refusal are potentially challengeable by way of judicial review.

Personnel

3. There are resource implications if officers are required to pre-approve the advertising material before transmission in each case.

Equalities impact

4. None

Corporate Objectives and Priorities for Change

5. The proposal supports the council's priority of delivering excellent services, performance and value for money.