

Meeting of:	Public Protection Licensing Committee
Date of Meeting:	Tuesday, 06 February 2024
Relevant Scrutiny Committee:	Homes and Safe Communities
Report Title:	Application to Permit the use of Corporate Branding on Vehicles Owned by Veezu
Purpose of Report:	To Determine whether to Permit the use of Corporate Branding on Vehicles Owned by Veezu
Report Owner:	Miles Punter, Director of Environment & Housing
Responsible Officer:	Kirsty Evans, Licensing Team Manager
Elected Member and Officer Consultation:	None
Policy Framework:	This is a matter for the Public Protection Licensing Committee
Executive Summary:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This report is for members to consider a request to permit the use of corporate branding on vehicles owned by the Veezu Group. 	

Recommendations

1. It is recommended that the Committee consider the request by Veezu and determine whether to permit them to use a corporate livery on vehicles that are owned by Veezu.

Reasons for Recommendations

1. An exemption is required from some of the Private Hire Vehicle Conditions of Licence relating to advertising.

1. Background

- 1.1 The Licensing Department have received an application from Veezu to permit a corporate branded livery on vehicles that are owned by the Veezu Group.

- 1.2 The current [Private Hire Vehicle Licence Conditions](#) relating to advertising states:

Signage

26. No signs, notices or advertisements shall be displayed in, on or from the vehicle unless first approved in writing by the Licensing Authority.

27. Only approved company logos may be used.

28. The approved logo together with the company telephone number(s) may only be displayed on the rear passenger doors of the vehicle. An additional logo may be fitted to the bonnet of the vehicle provided it is painted or firmly affixed to the bonnet (but cannot be used alone).

29. Any commercial advertising shall not be offensive or untruthful and shall comply with the Advertising Standards Code of Practice.

30. No application for commercial advertising shall be considered by the officer unless a detailed drawing of the advert is submitted.

31. Any permitted commercial advertising shall only be displayed on the area behind the rear passenger doors but not on any window of the vehicle.

- 1.3 Full details of Veezu's application, including their justification for this request is contained in **Appendix A**.

- 1.4 A digital impression of the corporate livery intended to be used is contained in **Appendix B**.

2. Key Issues for Consideration

- 2.1 At present any advertisements on private hire vehicles licensed in the Vale of Glamorgan must first have approval from the Licensing Authority. Officers have delegated authority to provide approval but as a full livery has been requested on all Veezu vehicles, members are requested to determine this application.

- 2.2** Private hire vehicles in the Vale of Glamorgan must display the licence identification plate on the rear of the vehicle, a window licence in the vehicle's windscreen and door stickers on each of the front doors which all identify the vehicle as a private hire.
- 2.3** It is not mandatory for private hire vehicles to advertise or display the operator for whom they are connected to, and they may choose not to display an operator.

3. How do proposals evidence the Five Ways of Working and contribute to our Well-being Objectives?

- 3.1** This report has been screened for evidence of the Five Ways of Working and how it may contribute to our Well-being Objectives.
- 3.2** Prevention and collaboration: the purpose of this regulatory function is to protect the public and ensure businesses comply with licence terms and conditions. The proposal supports a Welsh Government initiative.

4. Climate Change and Nature Implications

- 4.1** None.

5. Resources and Legal Considerations

Financial

- 5.1** There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

Employment

- 5.2** None.

Legal (Including Equalities)

- 5.3** Under Section 48 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 the Council may impose such conditions upon private hire licences as it may consider reasonably necessary.
- 5.4** Under Section 48 of the same Act, a private hire vehicle cannot be of such a design and appearance as to lead any person to believe that the vehicle is a hackney carriage. Officers do not consider that the proposed livery would result in the public mistaking those vehicles with a hackney carriage.

6. Background Papers

None



Ms. Agostini-Green,
Senior Licensing Officer,
Licensing Team,
Vale of Glamorgan Council,
Civic Office,
Holton Road,
Barry,
CF63 4RU

10 November 2023

Dear Ms. Agostini-Green and Officers

This application is in respect of Private Hire Vehicles which are owned by the Veezu Group as part of its fleet management only, and which are associated to the Operators trading name, within the Vale of Glamorgan licensing district. The material appearance will not cause any confusion with the approved appearance of Vale of Glamorgan licensed Hackney Carriage vehicles.

If the approval process requires formal approval by Elected Members, the vehicle to be presented to Members, as an example of the wrap appearance, is not currently licensed by the Vale of Glamorgan Council and the application is not in respect of this vehicle but a policy approval of the corporate wrap.

The attachment to this email is representative of the corporate wrap.

In respect of your licensing conditions, we would make the following observations. (Members will be advised by your legal officer that as a policy, exceptions can be made to that policy when appropriate and a policy is not totally binding.)

To support the application, with reference to the relevant Vale of Glamorgan licensing conditions:

Vale of Glamorgan Conditions for Private Hire Vehicles

Type of Vehicle

4. The vehicle shall not be white with a black bonnet. Any vehicle with a licence granted from January 2009 shall not be white, with the exception of minibus type vehicles, which may be white.

Response: The wrap does not change the clear primary black colour of the vehicle.

Specification of vehicle

(j) Paint work - To be one uniform colour and in good condition to the satisfaction of the Licensing Authority.

Response: The addition of the corporate signage does not significantly impact on the primary black colour, which remains obvious.

27. Only approved company logos may be used.

Response: This is the formal application for that approval. The supportive evidence is contained in the paragraph entitled 'The Wider Context', below.

28. The approved logo together with the company telephone number(s) may only be displayed on the rear passenger doors of the vehicle. An additional logo may be fitted to the bonnet of the vehicle provided it is painted or firmly affixed to the bonnet (but cannot be used alone).

Response: I think the wording of this condition had in mind earlier forms of advertising consisting of square magnetic or adhesive plates that are significantly different to the form of wrap, and which may be considered to sit outside of the current condition.

29. Any commercial advertising shall not be offensive or untruthful and shall comply with the Advertising Standards Code of Practice.

Response: We understand the necessity for conformity within the licensing context, particularly around Advertising Standards Agency compliance; maintaining the image of the Council in respect of some forms of advertisement that do not compliment the status of the licensing district, or the necessary controls on appearance to maintain the professional image of the licensed trade and the licensing environment.

However, we do not consider that this design causes conflict with any of those points and is uncontentious and is already approved in other licensing districts in South Wales, the Southwest and the Midlands.

30. No application for commercial advertising shall be considered by the officer unless a detailed drawing of the advert is submitted.

Response: Please see attached. The wrap is professionally produced and fitted to a high standard.

31. Any permitted commercial advertising shall only be displayed on the area behind the rear passenger doors but not on any window of the vehicle.

Response: The wrap does not intrude onto windows, mirrors. Vehicle registration marks nor any of the Councils issued plates or notices which always remain in public view.

The wider context:

Prior to undertaking the transition to corporate signage an independent Research Group carried out a market evaluation of the wrap comparable to the general appearance of current licensed vehicles. Participants were recruited from Veezu's passenger base, supplemented with additional external recruits. These additional recruits were taxi passengers in the same area. Across both recruitment pools, we ensured a mix of women-only and also mixed groups, covering a wide range of ages and usage occasions.

Research groups lasted approximately 60 minutes. In each group, participants were shown both the existing and proposed new Veezu look and feel, including the car wrap design.



We believe that higher the instant recognition of a pre-booked vehicle is, safeguarding and general standards of personal safety, particularly for women, vulnerable Groups and people with visual impairments, are significantly enhanced.

The car wrap design was overwhelmingly positive. Particularly among women, the distinctiveness of the hot coral was an added layer of reassurance that the taxi was credible, reliable and above all, safe.

The results from 150 respondents concluded that:

- Their biggest concern on taxi/PHV safety is around knowing which company to use and recognising the vehicle, particularly in areas people are less familiar with.
- When shown different vehicles, Veezu was overwhelmingly chosen by both men and women as the most distinctive and recognisable.
- This was more pronounced for women. 73% of female respondents identified the Veezu vehicle as the most distinctive and recognisable.
- The survey strongly validates the rationale for a Veezu car wrap being a powerful safety feature.

Delegated Decisions by licensing officers form part of the day-to-day administrative duties of officers but if this application is required to be brought before Members on the basis that it is an application outside of the conditions and that it is not for a singular vehicle, but a fleet application, and as such may need the wider overview of Elected Members.

Usually, Councils are alert and sensitive to a wide variety of possible conflicts or concerns which vehicle signage could cause to communities, but in this application, we feel there is nothing which raises such concerns or conflicts with the Council's licensing policy or conditions. On the contrary it is felt that the easier recognition of a vehicle which has been booked through a particular operator is a positive move, not only for the public, but Enforcement Officers also.

Drivers trying to enter the licensing market face economic challenges on many fronts and the opportunity for potential drivers to rent new and compliant vehicles from the Group is attractive and growing. Such progression also gives the Council greater assurance that there is stronger oversight of the vehicle's maintenance schedule, in line with the manufacturer's warranty, by the fleet management team of Veezu Business Services.

Driver Partners are further attracted to the newer, environmentally cleaner vehicles displaying the wrap because of other discounts available to them in their association with Veezu. On a final point, the brand image of the wrap will be clearly associated with the decision of the Veezu Group to move away from all petrol or diesel cars to an entirely environmental approach on its fleet management.

We would be grateful if suitable arrangements could be made with the Licensing Committee for this application to be formally considered if necessary.



Thank you for accommodating this request.

Kind regards, Desmond.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "D. A. Broster".

Desmond Broster
National Director – Safeguarding & Licensing
Veezu

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