

Waste and Street Scene Policy Committee – 21 June 2023

Questions Received from Members of the Public

Name	Question	Member(s)
<p>James Martin (on behalf of Disability Sheffield)</p> <p><i>(not present at the meeting to ask his questions)</i></p>	<p>Q: Noting the proposed change to remove Grab Handles as a requirement from the Hackney Carriage Vehicle – Rear loading specification. This raises concerns for non-wheelchair disabled users needing to board from a side door. A clear and firm support to assist both in getting the measure of the vehicle (Visually Impaired) and aid boarding for varying mobility difficulties it seems is being undervalued by the removal of this regulation.</p> <p>Please can the committee consider retaining the requirement for grab rails and ensuring they are high visibility. Assuming the issue is the lack of such rail at the rear load entrance, then removing the requirement from that entrance seems more appropriate?</p> <p>Secondly, can the committee confirm whether any vehicles have already been exempted prior to the policy change and whether these were temporary awaiting today’s decision, or not?</p> <p>To note: I am surprised the community were not able to a clear and specifically discussed input on implications to this on Wednesday’s Access Liaison Group meeting focusing on licensing. Whilst I understand the pragmatism in why the policy decision has been offered we must remember that there are other needs beyond Wheelchair Users that must not be neglected. I sincerely hope that it will prove practical to ensure licensees are able to retrofit if necessary a suitable Grab Handle, or highlight a pre-existing one. Please do let us know if we can help in quantifying impacts of any pre-existing handles suitability in-lieu of a Grab Rail.</p> <p>Answer: The requirement for grab handles are still required on side-loading wheelchair accessible vehicles due to the increased floor height and the nature of the passenger area – such vehicles require passengers</p>	<p>Cllr Joe Otten, Chair of the Waste and Street Scene Policy Committee</p>

	<p>to manoeuvre themselves to a seat and may require grab handles to do this.</p> <p>Rear-loading vehicles have a lower floor height with a more compact rear passenger area, akin to that of a private hire vehicle, where grab handles are not required.</p> <p>Some rear-loading vehicles, such as certain VW Caddy models do not, and cannot have grab handles installed. If installed then the effectiveness of the airbags may be compromised and passengers in danger of being injured if they were deployed – this has been confirmed by the Council’s Test Station manager.</p> <p>Where rear-loading vehicles are manufactured with grab handles, it would be expected that they remain in place and not removed.</p> <p>At present, seven vehicles have been granted an exemption for grab handles, all of which were determined by the Licensing Sub-Committee. We currently have around 30 rear-loading vehicles licensed.</p> <p>However, I recognise the issue raised here merits more consideration and I have asked for a meeting with Mr Martin and licensing officers to discuss this issue further.</p>	
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