

Cabinet Member for City Services

29th September 2021

Name of Cabinet Member:

Cabinet Member for City Services – Councillor P Hetherton

Director Approving Submission of the report:

Director of Streetscene and Regulatory Services

Ward(s) affected:

All Wards

Title:

Remove requirement for Mercedes Vito Taxis to have the Low Speed Manoeuvrability System (LSMS) (which permits the “turning circle”)

Is this a key decision?

No - although the proposals affect more than two electoral wards, the impact is not expected to be significant.

Executive Summary:

This report provides information for the Cabinet Member for City Services to assess the requirement for Mercedes Vito Taxis to have the Low Speed Manoeuvrability System (LSMS).

Recommendations:

Cabinet Member for City Services is requested to:

- 1) Approve that Euro 4 Emission Mercedes Vito hackney carriage vehicles must have the Low Speed Manoeuvrability System (LSMS) decommissioned on safety grounds.
- 2) Approve that Euro 5 and Euro 6 Emission Mercedes Vito hackney carriage vehicles must have the Low Speed Manoeuvrability System (LSMS) decommissioned where Whitley Depot's MOT testers identify faults.
- 3) Approve that decommissioning must be undertaken by an approved agent of Mercedes Benz, to return the vehicle back to its original steering design.
- 4) Agree that this policy will apply to the current licensed fleet of Mercedes Benz Vito hackney carriage vehicles which comply with the London Conditions of Fitness of safety. Vehicles already registered will be allowed to continue to be licensed in line with other licensing requirements.
- 5) Agree that any new Euro 4 Emission Mercedes Vito hackney carriage vehicles will no longer be licensed.

List of Appendices included:

Appendix A – Emails from Unite and the Trade to support removal of requirement for the turning circle in Mercedes Vito HCVs, and to show the cost of replacing the LSMS system.

Background papers:

None

Other useful documents

None

Has it been or will it be considered by Scrutiny?

No

Has it been or will it be considered by any other Council Committee, Advisory Panel or other body?

No

Will this report go to Council?

No

Report title: **Remove requirement for Mercedes Vito Taxis to have the Low Speed Manoeuvrability system (LSMS) (which permits the “turning circle”)**

1. Background

- 1.1 Coventry City Council's policy for hackney carriage vehicles is that they abide by London's Conditions of Fitness i.e. vehicles capable of having a full turning circle. Currently this includes the LTC/LEVC models TX2, 4 and TX, the Nissan Dynamo and the Mercedes Vito Taxi with the 180-degree turning circle.
- 1.2 Following representations with the trade and Unite Union (the body that represents hackney carriage and private hire drivers in Coventry) taxi licensing was made aware of safety issues concerning the LSMS which permits the turning circle and also the problem of a lack of outlets that can repair this system.
- 1.3 The taxi trade has stated that the LSMS system is not fit for purpose as it keeps breaking down and is difficult and expensive to repair.
- 1.4 Currently, the only outlet that can repair this system is the KPM dealership in London where replacement actuators can take three weeks of waiting and then cost between £2k and £3k for the pair. This has also been compounded by Penso in Siskin Drive, Coventry, who carried out the original conversions to these vehicles when new, going into liquidation on 17 May 2021. In view of the safety concerns and limited supply the disablement of the LSMS is considered necessary.
- 1.5 In a report dated 9 January 2018 Reading Borough Council agreed to remove the requirement for Euro 4 Emissions Mercedes Vito Taxis to have the LSMS system, due to safety concerns.
- 1.6 Manchester City Council have also dispensed the requirement for all Mercedes Vito Taxis to have this turning circle due to the LSMS system causing mechanical faults.
- 1.7 Under the Council's Emissions Policy for Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicles all the Mercedes Vito Taxis with the 180-degree turning circle will be phased out during 2024 when their licence expires as there are no current models being produced with the converters, Penso, going into liquidation. In 2024 renewal vehicles will have to be Zero Emission Capable and there is no model with that capability.

Proposals

2. Taxi Licensing Policies

- 2.1 That the Cabinet Member for City Services approves that Euro 4 Emission Mercedes Vito hackney carriage vehicles must have the Low Speed Manoeuvrability System (LSMS) decommissioned on safety grounds. In addition, that Euro 5 and Euro 6 Emission Mercedes Vito hackney carriage vehicles must have the Low Speed Manoeuvrability System (LSMS) decommissioned where Whitley Depot's MOT testers identify faults. Decommissioning must be undertaken by an approved agent of Mercedes Benz, to return the vehicle back to its original steering design. This policy will apply to the current licensed fleet of Mercedes Benz Vito hackney carriage vehicles which comply with the London Conditions of Fitness of safety. Vehicles already registered will be allowed to continue to be licensed in line with other licensing requirements. Any new Euro 4 Emission Mercedes Vito hackney carriage vehicles will no longer be licensed.
- 2.2 This policy if approved will apply to the current licensed fleet of Mercedes Benz Vito hackney carriage vehicles dispensing in the London Conditions of Fitness, as stipulated above, on the grounds of safety and supply. Any future Euro 4 Emission Mercedes Vito hackney carriage vehicles will no longer be allowed to be licensed.

- 2.3 That the LSMS is decommissioned by an approved agent of Mercedes Benz with the replacement of the rear wheel steer trailing arms with original Mercedes Benz rear suspension or trailing arm units (new ones). Disposal of rear steering equipment including the button in the driver's compartment (which should be replaced by a cover plate). Complete disconnection and re-sealing of wiring so it cannot be used again. The vehicle to have a full 4-wheel alignment. That the vehicle proprietor provides the Council with documentary evidence that the work has been carried out as specified above.

3. Results of Consultation undertaken

After meetings between taxi driver representatives of Unite Union, the body representing the taxi trade in Coventry, the Head of Fleet & Waste Services and the Senior Taxi Licensing & Enforcement Officer and their concerns it was agreed that their concerns (at Appendix A) would be looked at together with reports from Reading Borough Council and Manchester City Council regarding the hackney carriage Mercedes Vito vehicles.

4. Timetable for implementing this decision

- 4.1 Following the recommendation being approved.

5. Comments from Director of Finance and Director of Law and Governance

5.1 Financial implications

Taxi Licensing is a ring-fenced budget and all costs are recovered via charges to the Taxi Trade.

5.2 Legal implications

There are no other legal implications to consider.

6. Other implications

6.1 How will this contribute to the Council Plan (www.coventry.gov.uk/councilplan/)?

It will help to facilitate improvements in the taxi services available to the people of Coventry, which will contribute towards ensuring that vehicles are fit and proper and that passenger and driver safety is maximised.

6.2 How is risk being managed?

Through established reporting and governance arrangements.

6.3 What is the impact on the organisation?

None

6.4 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

None

6.5 Implications for (or impact on) climate change and the environment

None

6.6 Implications for partner organisations?

None

Report author:**Name and job title:**

Mick Coggins
Senior Licensing & Enforcement Officer

Service:

Streetscene & Regulatory Services

Tel and email contact:

Tel: 024 7697 1997

Email: mick.coggins@coventry.gov.uk

Enquiries should be directed to the above person.

Contributor/approver name	Title	Service Area	Date doc sent out	Date response received or approved
Contributors:				
Sarah Elliott	Head of Fleet and Waste Services	Streetscene and Regulatory Services	27/08/2021	27/08/2021
Liz Knight	Governance Services Co-ordinator	Law & Governance	27/08/2021	01/09/2021
Names of approvers for submission: (officers and members)				
Cath Crosby	Lead Accountant – Business Partnering	Finance	31/08/2021	31//08/2021
Roy Hammond	Criminal & Licensing Solicitor	Law and Governance	31/08/2021	31/08/2021
Andrew Walster	Director of Streetscene and Regulatory Services	-	27/08/2021	17/09/2021
Councillor P Hetherton	Cabinet Member City Services	-	31/08/2021	31/08/2021

This report is published on the council's website: www.coventry.gov.uk/councilmeetings

O'Keeffe, Simon

From: Gill, Major
Sent: 19 July 2021 10:44
To: O'Keeffe, Simon
Subject: Mercedes Vito rear wheel steering

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From: mohammed [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, July 2, 2021 3:04:22 AM
To: major.gill@unitetheunion.org <major.gill@unitetheunion.org>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Mercedes Vito rear wheel steering

EXTERNAL SENDER. Do not open any links or attachments unless you were expecting them from this sender. DO NOT provide your username or password.

Hi major

I bought a Mercedes Vito in march 2021 and the vehicle has been driven since getting plated on the 23 March 2021. When taking into inspection (cab autos took it in) it failed on stabiliser link which was fixed on the day and took it in the 3pm re-test.

The cab passed with an advisory saying one of my actuators had a play but i have had no problems in driving it only until few weeks ago the rearwheel steering made a bleep noise and it was indicated that rear wheel had slightly moved out of position after hitting a pothole they tend to be Very sensitive on rough roads. I managed to get the vehicle to cab autos and after putting it on the ramp we immediately got one of the rear tyre was out of place luckily I had no passengers and the problem was fixed for free as i am a regular customer of theirs. Since then it has been fine, I have seen few Vito driving towards me and it seem like the vehicle is gliding sideways but asked the drivers individually whenever i met them they never noticed which is bizan.e.

I do strongly believe for the shon period of time remaining with vitos (2024/25 we should be allowed to have a permanent solution as in a fixed bar installed in that way the vehicle will be safer.

The reason no one mentioned it before because we as the drivers never had the opportunity to raise this issue and most importantly no one to hear our concern, also many years ago money was coming in so drivers were able to afford it but now the circumstances have changed especially over the pandemic we all went through.

Last but not least the stock are getting limited even if we call Mercedes there is a few weeks wait for the parts and as from KPM as they don't sell much euro 5 (2012-16 models) they mainly do euro 6 and if parts are needed it will have to be euro 6 parts which are really expensive and in some cases you might have to upgrade the actuators and the electric side to a eur06 model which is nearly €5k.

Customers especially the wheelchair users love the Vito because of the enormous space and for the electric wheelchair you can turn it facing the rear windscreen as the way it should be.

Mohammed Amjad

O'Keefe, Simon

From: Gill, Major
Sent: 19 July 2021 14:58
To:
(YKeeffe,
Subject: Fwd: [EXTERNAL] Mercedes Vito Rear Steering

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From: Iqbal Dedat [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2021 10:08:50 AM
To: major.gill@unitetheunion.org <major.gill@unitetheunion.org>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Mercedes Vito Rear Steering

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Mercedes Vito Rear Steering Problem

RPM is the only garage to fix the rear steering, which is situated in London. They can only do this if they have the parts otherwise taxi drivers are put on a waiting list, which can take 2-4 weeks. Furthermore, sourcing the parts and getting the rear steering fixed has become difficult since the Penso Company in Coventry, which designs the actuator, has gone in liquidation.

KPM used to give 12 months warranty but this has now been reduced to only 3 months, which may indicate a lack of confidence in their parts. The cost of replacing an actuator is £1 500 plus the cost of labour so taxi drivers could potentially be paying £3000 plus labour to fix the rear steering. We could be made to pay additional costs if there are further issues after 3 months due to the shortened warranty. This is simply not a feasible amount for taxi drivers to pay especially since the pandemic has had a significant negative impact on taxi driver's earnings.

The main reason why I purchased the Mercedes Vito taxi was because it is a 6-seater vehicle, which allows plenty of room for wheelchair access. Unfortunately, the costs outlined above may exceed the value of my vehicle and it is something that I, along with hundreds of taxi drivers across Coventry, can simply not afford. Please can you consider the impact that enforcing these checks will have on the livelihoods of taxi drivers.

O'Keeffe, Simon

From: Gill, Major
Sent: 19 July 2021 10:42
To: O'Keeffe, Simon

Subject: Hi mr Virk taxi driver over 30 years, I bought my Vito Mercedes 2 years ago I updated my taxi cause emmision issue . One of the reason I bought .Vito taxi Hackney carriage do not check rear steer(ng wheel, . Recently 'in January Hackney...

1 Get Oiltlook for Android

From: Avtar Virk [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, July 1, 2021 10:00:13 PM
To: major.gill@unitetheunion.org <major.gill@unitetheunion.org>

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Hi mr Virk taki driver over 30 years, I bought my Vito Mercedes 2 years ago , I updated my taxi cause emmision issue . One of,the reason I bought Vito taxi Hackney carriage do not check rear steering wheel .Recently in Jamiary Hackney carri...

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DO NOT provide your username or password,

Sent from my iPhone

O'Keeffe, Simon

From: Gill, Major
Sent: 19 July 2021 10:42
To: O'Keeffe, Simon
Subject: Fwd: [EXTERNAL] Vito rear wheel steering

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From: andrew mcfadyean [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, July 1, 2021 10:40:42 PM
To: major.gill@unitetheunion.org <major.gill@unitetheunion.org>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Vito rear wheel steering

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*There has been a lot of issues with the rear Wheel steering in the past with Vito drivers and to be honest we are classed as professional drivers and we don't need rear wheel steering we could work without it my name is Andrew mcfadyean badge no late no

O'Keeffe, Simon

From: Gill, Major
Sent: 21 July 2021 13:31
To: O'Keeffe, Simon
Subject: Fwd: [EXTERNAL] Fw: Mercedes Vito
Fw: Mercedes Vito

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From: Narinder Johal [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2021 1:47:25 PM
To: major.gill@unitetheunion.org <major.gill@unitetheunion.org>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Fw: Mercedes Vito

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2

Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android

Forwarded message

From: "Narinder Johal"
To: "major.gill@unitetheunion.org <major.gill@unitetheunion.org>
Sene Mon, 19 Jul 2021 at 12:12 pm
Subject: Mercedes Vito

My name is Narinder Johal, I have been a serving Hackney carriage driver in Covent1Y for over 26 years and hope to continue doing so for many years to come.

I have always had taken great pride in Coventrys reputation as the home of the black cab and the councils policy to only license purpose built vehicles as hackney's in our City. Many a time ifs come as a surprise to visitors to the City at the Station that Coventry has "London cabs" as taxis and that they're made locally.

From a personal perspective going forward from 2025 onwards I will be investing in an electric vehicle to continue working. In the meantime I own and drive a Mercedes Vito which has been modified to allow it, when functioning correctly, to complete the 25ft required turning circle. However, as has been brought to the attention of the Council, this modification has caused issues which require an expensive rectification with no guarantee of success. With only one garage in the whole country able to complete. any necessary work.

Given the influx of out oftown vehicles working in Coventry, which have severely hit the trade and the impact of the coronavirus these are challenging times for everyone not just for those in the cab trade. However, the strain has certainly been felt so it's with that in mind I would ask the council to give serious thought in making an amendment to it's "terms & conditions" for vehicles licensed as haqkney carriages.

Given the short time remaining for the Vitos to continue operating as taxis in Coventry I believe the money spent. in rectifying the Rear Wheel Steer would be better invested in electric vehicles going forward from 2025 & before.

Thankyou for taking the time to consider this issue.
Mr N Johal.

2.

~~O'Keefe, Simon~~

From: Gill, Major
Sent: 21 July 2021 13:31
To: O'Keefe, Simon
Subject: merc vito RWS
Attachments: VITO RWS.pdf

3 **Get Outlook for Android**

From: major.gill@unitetheunion.org <major.gill@unitetheunion.org>
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2021 10:51:24 AM
To: simon.okeeffe@unitetheunion.org <simon.okeeffe@unitetheunion.org>
Subject: Fwd: [EXTERNAL] merc vito RWS

4 **Get Outlook for Android**

From: nasir farooq [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, July 12, 2021 11:05:10 PM
To: major.gill@unitetheunion.org <major.gill@unitetheunion.org>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] merc vito RW

EXTERNAL SENDER. Do not open any links or attachments unless you were expecting them from this sender. DO NOT provide your username or password.

Good Evening Major

Please find attached the email regarding the vito rws.

Regards
Nasir

Virus-free. www.v.avast.com

Birmingham Taxi Repairs

To whom it may concern

11/07/2021

We are a established taxi repair specialist garage and have been working on hackney carriage vehicles for over 30years,

Recently we have had a increase in the Mercedes Vito taxi with the rear wheel steering conversion becoming faulty and not working.

We have had vehicles that have been bought to us on a recovery truck where the RWS has malfunctioned causing the rear wheels to lock where one wheel is straight and the other is Lurned inwards or outwards thus causing the vehicle to be very dangerous to drive.

Spare parts for the RWS in the earlier vehicles like the 111 models are now obsolete you cannot buy the new steering actuators as they are no longer manufactured.

We have tried sourcing them from various suppliers in the U.K but with no luck, even the second hand option is not viable as most of the ones available don't workbecause of water damage and wear and tear.

If we are lucky and we manage to source a working second hand unit which is very rare they can be anything upwards from £450 each and that is with no warranty.

I have recently had vehicles from Coventry who have been suspended on the m. o.t due to the RWS not working one taxi has been in my garage for nearly 5 weeks due to the RWS not working and no motors are available still at this time.

The RWS function in my opinion is very flawed system and can be dangerous in certain circumstances, a fully working system will only operate when the vehicle speed is under 5 mph and when you are doing a 3 point turn it has to be operated manually by pushing a button at standstill and if it malfunctions you will be unable to safely drive your vehicle out of oncoming traffic, in other words it is quicker and safer to do the manoeuvre without using the RWS function. If you require and further information or need to contactme my email and phone number are at

the bottom of this letter.

Regards

Nasir Farooq

Birmingham Taxi Repairs 56 Green lane
5DB Mob:07966403093 Email:
Birminghamtaxirepairs@gmail.com

Tel:01217668963 Birmingham B9

O'Keefe, Simon

From: Gill, Major
From:
Sent:

To:
Subject: FW: HCV questions

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From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, July 12, 2021 10:55:39 AM
To: Major Gill <major.gill@unitetheunion.org>
Subject: EXTERNALLY: HCV questions

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I have received this back from Liverpool Council

Original message

From: "IRoberts, Thomas (Mechanic)" <Thomas.Roberts@liverpool.gov.uk>
Date: 12/0 53 GMT+00:00
To
Subject: HCV questions

Hello Mr Hussain,

Liverpool City Council do not enforce the 25 ft turning circle on Hackney Carriages.

We have a approved list off-lackney Carriages licensable within Liverpool;

Metro Cab

Lti Fairway, Tx1, Tx2, Tx4, LEVC

Ford Tourneo FX8, Tourneo Pro-cab

Peugeot E7

Mercedes Vito Penzo, Vito M8

Renault/Vauxhall NX8

As for the rear wheel steering Mercedes Vito, due to Liverpool City Council not having the 25ft turning circle, the rear wheel steering was never approved.

If you wished to licence a rear wheel steering Mercedes Vito, the vehicles rear wheel steering system must be removed and replaced with the OEM system.

Liverpool City Councils conditions of fitness can be found on Liverpool.gov.uk.

Kind Regards,

Thomas Roberts

Thomas Roberts | Taxi Compliance and Vehicle Officer Apprentice | Taxis | Street Trading & Misc Licences | Licensing & Public Protection

Liverpool City Council 1 6th Floor | Venture Place | Sir Thomas Street | Liverpool | LI 6BW | T: 0151 233 3015 | E: Licensing@Liverpool.gov.uk

Postal address:

Liverpool City Council | Cunard Building | Water Street | Liverpool | L3 1 LH



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O'Keefe, Simon

From: Gill. Major
Sent: 14:58
To:
Subject: Vito Rare wheel steering Appeal

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From: vaninderpal randhawa [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, July 18, 2021 8:34:32 PM
To: major.gill@unitetheunion.org <major.gill@unitetheunion.org>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Vito Rare wheel steering Appeal

EXTERNAL SENDER. Do not open any links or attachments unless you were expecting them from this sender, DO NOT provide your username or password.

Dear Sir [Madam

I am requesting to remove this requirement to have Rare wheel steering on Vito
It's of no benefit to the passengers or to the driver

All the years I have driven Vito I never have to use even
once

It's unnecessary cost to the Taxi drivers.

I don't understand why we have to have 25ft turning circle
it's more safer to do three point turn then a U Turn in the
Road

There are no other public transportation where there is no requirements which vehicle to buy or it should
have 25ft tuning circle why Taxis?

This policy is punishing drivers with the unnecessary costs for something that
They never going to use

I hope council is in favour of safe driving

And make an informed decision and not blindly supporting one company .like LTI
It's against the Law for council to go in favour of one company

I request Council to Change this policy so Vito can be driven as Taxi without the Rare wheel steering.

Kind Regards .
Vaninder Randhawa

Sent from my iPhone

O'Keeffe, Simon

From: Gill, Major
Sent: 19 July 2021 10:49
To: Simon
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Rear steering plate number

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From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, July 6, 2021 4:30:48 PM
To: major.gill@unitetheunion.org <major.gill@unitetheunion.org>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Rear steering plate number [REDACTED]

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Hi

It's been problems i bean to London as well,they haven't checked it last twelve years why now no need for it

Kind Regards
Paramjit Singh

Sent from my iPhone

O'Keeffe,
O'Keeffe, Simon

From: Gill, Major
Sent: 19 July 2021 10:45
To: Simon
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Jaswinder Dulai Merc Vito RWS
Attachments: To Whom it may.pdf

5

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From: Jaswinder Dulai [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, July 4, 2021 6:00:53 PM
To: Gill, Major <Major.Gill@unitetheunion.org>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Jaswinder Dulai Merc Vito RWS

EXTERNAL SENDER. Do not open any links or attachments unless you were expecting them from this sender. DO NOT provide your username or password.

Best Regards Jaswinder
Dulai
Mob:

[REDACTED]

Sent from my iPhone

■ To Whom it may concern,
My name is Jaswinder Singh Dulai and I'm hacłáley can-iage taxi driver and owned Mercedes Vito for the last 20 months.

■ I bought this vehicle because this is 6 seater and it's good for wide wheelchairs to turn around.

The rear wheel steering (RWS) are very dangerous and not safe white driving on the road. I have . had to disengage this mechanism white driving due to danger it poses, not only to myself but also . my passengel*. Since I have disengaged this, I feel safer while driving the vehicle. I'm unaware of . any driver who uses this mechanism on a regular basis due to the danger they pose..

My RWS is working and to keep it working I use it after a week at my house. But one day when I was testing then my one rear tyre back to stiaight but one was in full turning lock. If this is happens . then you can't move your cab even one feet, So then I left up 2 rear wheels on jack and then that wheel back on right spot. RWS is very dangerous for the driver and passengers too if it's happens on the busy road and there is repairing issue too because the company who modified the RWS is bankrupt and there is no parts available on the market and no repair gamge in the Midlands.

We are working for passengers safety but this issue is very dangerous for the driver and passengers .too and they cause increase tyres wear and costing us more. .

If you require any furthet information and would like to discuss further Plz don't hesitate to get in contact to me

Best Regards
Jaswinder Dulai

O'Keeffe, Simon

From: Gill, Major
Sent: 19 July 2021 10:44
To:

Mobile: [REDACTED]
Email: [REDACTED]
Registration: [REDACTED]
Plate no: [REDACTED]

19 2021 10:44
Simon

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Mercedes Vito rear wheel steering

6

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From: mohammed [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, July 2, 2021 3:04:22 AM
To: major.gill@unitetheunion.org <major.gill@unitetheunion.org>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Mercedes Vito rear wheel steering

EXTERNAL SENDER. Do not open any links or attachments unless you were expecting them from this sender. DO NOT provide your username or password.

Hi major,

I bought a Mercedes Vito in march 2021 and the vehicle has been driven since getting plated on the 23 March 2021. When taking into inspection (cab autos took it in) it failed on stabiliser link which was fixed on the day and took it in the 3pm re-test.

The cab passed with an advisory saying one of my actuators had a play but i have had no problems in driving it only until few weeks ago the rear Wheel steering made a bleep noise and it was indicated that rear wheel had slightly moved out of position after hitting a pothole they tend to be very sensitive on rough roads. I managed to get the vehicle to cab autos and after putting it on the ramp we immediately got one of the rear tyre was out of place luckily I had no passengers and the problem was fixed for free as i am a regular customer of theirs. Since then it has been fine.

I have seen few Vito driving towards me and it seem like the vehicle is gliding sideways but asked the drivers

individually whenever i met them they never noticed which is bizarre.

I do strongly believe for the short period of time remaining with vitos (2024/25 we should be allowed to have a

permanent solution as in a fixed bar installed in that way the vehicle will be safer.

The reason no one mentioned it before because we as the drivers never had the opportunity to raise this issue and most importantly no one to hear our concern, also many years ago money was coming in so drivers were able to afford it but now the circumstances have changed especially over the pandemic we all went through.

Last but not least the stock are getting limited even if we call Mercedes there is a few weeks wait for the parts and as from KPM as they don't sell much euro 5 (2012-16 models) they mainly do euro 6 and if parts are needed it will have to be euro 6 parts which are really expensive and in some cases you might have to upgrade the actuators and the electric side to a eur06 model which is nearly \$5k,

Customers especially the wheelchair users love the Vito because of the enormous space and for the electric wheelchair you can turn it facing the rear windscreen as the way it should be.

Mohammed Amjad

O'Keeffe, Simon

From: Gill Major
From: Gill Major
Sent: 10:46
To: O'Keeffe,
Subject: Fwd: [EXTERNAL] Fwd: Rear wheel steering
Attachments: Taxi Invoice.pdf

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From: Kulvir Brar [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, July 5, 2021 7:15:20 AM
To: Gill, Major <Major.Gill@unitetheunion.org>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Fwd: Rear wheel steering

EXTERNAL SENDER. Do not open any links or attachments unless you were expecting them from this sender. DO NOT provide your username or password.

To Whom it may concern,

My name is Kulvir Singh Brar, and I have been a licensed Hackney Carriage taxi driver for 15 years. The vehicle I use is the Mercedes Vito.

I'm writing today to express my severe dissatisfaction with the rear wheel steering (RWS) legislation due to the dangers it poses to taxi drivers and the passengers, I experienced my taxi moving left and right due to the failure in this system.

Furthermore this system has increased my maintenance costs for tyres as they are being worn out a lot faster than they should. I experienced a feeling of the tyres about to fall out due to this mechanism failing then due to their being no mechanism who can work on this system I had to travel to London on 29/06/21 to mechanic there and when I came back *it stopped working again then on 01/07/21 I had to travel to London again and get this problem sorted. There aren't any new parts but second hands so the problem can still be there in the future. I have attached the invoice of my recent-repair from London showing how expensive it is and -its not good when the Taxi business is not at it's best state.

Kind Regards,

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Kulvir Singh Brar
Badge Numb
Taxi Plate No.
Taxi Reg:

2a Three Co/ts Lane

Bethna/ Green London

MR BROW

6.1 €2 6JL
6.1.1 T: 0207 033 6638

[Redacted]

E: nige/@e2taxi.co.uk

/NVO/CE NO

DATE 28/06/2021

MILEAGE

L,q,r NO: 9504 94

6.1.1.1 VEHICLE
REGISTRATION

	AMOUNT
Carry out wiring repairs to rear steering system Replaced o/s actuator assy	250.00
REAR STEERING OPERATION SWITCH	20.00
ACTUATOR	350.00
SUB TOTAL	
VAT TOTAL	620.00

O'Keeffe,
[REDACTED]

From: Gill, Major
Sent: 19 July 2021 10:47
To: O'Keeffe, Simon
Subject: Fwd: [EXTERNAL] Jaswinder Dulai _ RWS_Vito _ Plate no [REDACTED]
Attachments: To Whom it may 2.pdf

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From: Jaswinder Dulai [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, July 5, 2021 7:29:57 PM
To: Gill, Major <Major.Gill@unitetheunion.org>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Jaswinder Dulai _ RWS_Vito _ Plate no [REDACTED]

EXTERNAL SENDER. Do not open any links or attachments unless you were expecting them from this sender. DO NOT provide your username or password.

Best Regards
Jaswinder Dulai
Mob: [REDACTED]

Sent from my iPhone

To Whom it may concern

My name is Jaswinder Singh Dulai and I'm hackney carriage taxi driver and owned Mercedes Vito for the last 20 months.

I bought this vehicle because this is 6 seater and it's good for wide wheelchairs to turn around.

The rear wheel steering (RWS) are very dangerous and not safe while driving on the road. I have had to disengage this mechanism while driving due to danger it poses, not only to myself but also my passengers. Since I have disengaged this, I feel safer while driving the vehicle. I'm unaware of any driver who uses this mechanism on a regular basis due to the danger they pose.

My RWS is working and to keep it working I use it after a week at my house. But one day when I was testing then my one rear tyre back to straight but one was in full turning lock. If this happens then you can't move your cab even one foot. So then I left up 2 rear wheels on jack and then that wheel back on right spot. RWS is very dangerous for the driver and passengers too if it happens on the busy road and there is repairing issue too because the company who modified the RWS is bankrupt and there is no parts available on the market and no repair garage in the Midlands.

We are working for passengers safety but this issue is very dangerous for the driver and passengers too and they cause increase tyre wear and costing us more.

If you require any further information and would like to discuss further please don't hesitate to get in contact to me.

Best Regards Jaswinder Dulai

Mobile: [REDACTED]
Email: [REDACTED]
Registration: [REDACTED]
Plate no: [REDACTED]

Mobile:

O'Keeffe, Simon

From: Gill, Major
Sent: 19 July 2021 10:44
To: O'Keeffe, Simon

O'Keeffe/
Subject: Fwd: FW: Mr mohammed ajmal

7 Get Outlook for Android

From: Mohammed Ajmal [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, July 2, 2021 12:59:27 AM
To: Major Gill <major.gill@unitetheunion.org>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] FW: Mr mohammed ajmal

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----- Original message -----

From: Mohammed Ajmal [REDACTED]
Date: 01/07/2021 00:19 (GMT+00:00)
To: Major Gill <majorgi1104@gmail.com>
Subject: Mr mohammed ajmal

Mr mohammed ajmal.
Mercedes Vito taxi owner
Reg [REDACTED]

I have been a taxi driver for more than 35 years

I am concerned about the rear wheel steering system on my Mercedes taxi
As I am having problems to get parts for the htaxi

The only place is in London company name KPM TAXI PARTS they are the
only ones who can repair this system

I have tried all the local garages but they don't have parts or understand the system on the taxi
When I bought the taxi, it was a better buy because it was a 6 seater and also good for disabled chairs
Low emissions aswell

Better on fuel consumption
Lower on road tax than a tx4.
It's more spacious than the tx4.

That's why I paid that much money for this Mercedes Vito taxi
I had paid E24,000 at that time 4 years ago

I can't get pans
To replace the rear system

I have to upgrade the rear actuators to euro 6 spec that would cost near cost E3,500 from only kpm garage in
London

They only warranty the patts for 3 months only due it being used as a taxi
The running costs are too much now As there isn't much
work I am struggling as it is

If the council allows us to put solid bars it will it bring down my running costs down

The cost rear tyres, ball joints wear out,keep getting it tracked and the expensive actuators

The system in my view isn't needed and so expensive

As similar Mercedes Vito are used as private hire in Coventry,they don't have the rear wheel steering
Please can raise this issue with the Coventry taxi licensing office.

Thank

O'Keeffe, Simon

From: Gill, Major
Sent: 19 July 2021 10:43
To: O'Keeffe, Simon
Subject: Fwd: [EXTERNAL] Vito rear wheel steering
Attachments: Screenshot_20210627-194224_Google.jpg

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From: andrew mcfadyen [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, July 1, 2021 10:50:31 PM
To: major.gill@unitetheunion.org <major.gill@unitetheunion.org>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Vito rear wheel steering

[EXTERNAL SENDER. Do not open any links or attachments unless you were expecting them from this sender. DO NOT provide your username or password.]

We are classed as professional drivers and don't need the rear wheel steering. It just makes it harder for us to try and get parts, I paid \$450 for a second hand actuator in the past and I've read that they don't feel safe on the motorway I've sent an attachment my badge no is [REDACTED] d plate

appears that the Mercedes V8 is still

having problems with the rear wheel

steering even after the upgrade, it seems

that the activators are still playing a role

even after KPM have upgraded the

systems, it appears that the activators

aren't quite up to the grade 8Ma 120 12

Mercedes KPM Rear Wheel

Steering | SuperCabby

boofeatu | edsnippets

| DF-

ppets



Feedback

To whom it may concern,

My name is Karmjeet Singh, a hackney carriage taxi driver, and the owner of a Mercedes Vito for 26 months.

The Mercedes Vito was purchased for good intentions on insurance purposes, greater comfort and legroom for passengers including 6-seater capacity, and convenience for wheelchair passengers in which the black cab T)(could not provide.

The Rear Wheel Steering (RWS) poses a greater risk while driving on the roads. Due to the danger it poses, I've felt safer disengaging this mechanism to protect myself and my passengers however I'm not aware of any other drivers who've had to resort to this measure.

On another serious note, the RWS also causes increased tyre wear meaning the total mileage decreases to 4000-5000 miles eventhough this should last to 15,000 on average. Due to liquidation of the company Penso, there are no nearby repair shops within the West Midlands area or other close-by areas to repair this flaw causing us to make long distance trips to London while carrying onboard the same risk.

Because of the limited availability and high expense of the parts, only used parts are being installed in the taxis causing the same issues again and again with no warranties given by the mechanics in London.

I have travelled to London 7 times within the 26 months including twice this year due to the same reason of mechanical faults appearing, however the same faults are re-emerging in a cycle. Evidence is attached as receipts from the London mechanics.

If any further information is required, please do not hesitate to get in touch with myself.

Kind regards,

Karmjeet Singh

le: [REDACTED]
: [REDACTED]
er plate: [REDACTED]

Mobile:
Email:

Number
plate

E2

2a Three Colts
Bethnal C
Lo
E.
T: 0207 033
E: nigel@e2taxi.
07946
723

A & N TAXI REPAIRS LTD
2A THREE COLTS LANE
LONDON
M: 02579 TID: 0470
AED: A0001000031010

Mr SINGH

VISA DEBIT
VISA DEBIT
PAN: [REDACTED] 00

SALE
CARDHOLDER COPY
PLEASE KEEP THIS RECEIPT
FOR YOUR RECORDS

DATE 01/06/2021

VAT NO: 119 9504 94

INVOICE NO
MILEAGE

VEHICLE REGISTRATION

REPLACED REAR

AMOUNT £60.00
Verified by PIN
THANK YOU
12:10 01/06/21 001950
AUTH CODE: 001950

	AMOUNT
	60.00

sug TOTAL

SOLEÄIÖTD

90 00

SUB TOTAL 390 00

VAT 78.00

TOTAL **468.00**

To Whom it may concern,

My name is Manjinder Singh Samz and U am hackney canriage taxi driver and have owned a Mercedes Vito for the last 18 months.

The Irear wheel] steeling (IRWS) alre very dlanngelrous andi not safe while dlivüng cn the [roads. Il have had to disengage this mechanism while driving due the danger it poses, not only to myself but also my passengers- Since I have disengaged this, I feel safer while driving the vehicle. I am unaware of any driver who uses this mechanism on a regußar basis due to the danger they pose.

I would also like to point out they cause increase tyre wear and meaning they only last approximately 4000 miles when they should last on average 15,000 miles. As am sure you are aware the company who created this RIMS mechanism (Penso) are no longer in business and trading meaning there is no car repair shop within the Midlands region that can repair this mechanism which further issues.

If you require any further information or would like to discuss further please do not hesitate to get in contact with myself.

Kind Regards

Manjinder Singh Samra

Mobile: [REDACTED]

Email: [REDACTED]

Number Plate: [REDACTED]

Sukwinder Singh
[REDACTED]

Monday 28th June 2021

To whom it may concern,

I am a Hackney driver badge number [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] drive a VITO taxi

RE [REDACTED] plate number [REDACTED]

RE

In short I have been a Hackney driver since 1995. Between 1995 and 2001, I drove a fairway and between 2001 and sept 2020, I drove TXI. As mentioned, I am currently driving a VITO.

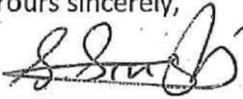
I am writing in today to express my view regarding the rear wheel steer on my VITO taxi and why it is not needed:

- * For me, as a driver to use this feature I have to be in standstill, which is not only a hazard to myself but other users on the road. It is not always possible to be standstill.
- * When trying to use the feature, I can often be an obstacle to other drivers. This causes them to horn and get frustrated.
- * When trying to use this feature, you press the button and slowly start to move. However, it is not practical to move less than 5mph. Again, it is a hazard to all on the road.
- * Unlike other taxis, the VITO is limited to only having rear wheel steering when driving forward. This feature is inactive in reverse. This is very impractical.
- * When using this feature and trying to move fast, the VITO automatically disables the feature and rendering you from being able to move whilst using the feature. Resulting in a normal 3 point turn.

Being an experienced driver with over 25 years in the industry, I do have the ability to function without this feature. Similar to other competent drivers..

I hope I have been able to express that this feature is not practical and I am able to function without it.

Yours sincerely,



Sukhwinder Singh

O'Keeffe, Simon

From: Gill, Major

Sent: 21 July 2021 13:31
To: O'Keeffe, Simon
Subject: Fwd: [EXTERNAL]

8.1 [Get Outlook for Android](#)

From: Mohinder Shoker [REDACTED]
sent: Monday, July 19, 2021 12:06:52 PM

To: major.gill@unitetheunion.org <major.gill@unitetheunion.org>
Subject: [EXTERNAL]

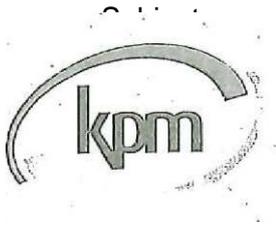
EXTERNAL SENDER. Do not open any links or attachments unless you were expecting them from this sender. DO NOT provide your username or password.



O'Keeffe, Simon

From:
Sent:

Gill, Major
03 August 2021 10:21
O'Keeffe, Simon
Fwd: [EXTERNAL]



KPM Automotive Ltd

164-172 LUKIN STREET
LONDON
E1 0BN

Tel: 020
7377 2182
Fax : 020
7247 3863

Web: www.kpmautomotive.co.uk

VEHICLE REGISTRATION [REDACTED]
MERCEDES BENZ VITO TAXI

QUOTATION

RWS UPGRADE E3,372

Many thanks

Kind.Regards

Sara

SARA DACOSTA
AFTER SALES DIRECTOR

O'Keeffe, Simon

From:

Gill, Major

Sent:

03 August 2021 10:21

O'Keeffe, Simon

Subject:

Fwd: [EXTERNAL]

Registered address: 2-4 Hemming Street, London, E1 5BL

Danict-prpd in Fnnland R Wales NO. 09281265

O'Keeffe, Simon

From: Gill, Major
Sent: 03 August 2021 10:21
O'Keeffe, Simon
Subject: Fwd: [EXTERNAL]

To: Motor Issues

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O'Keeffe, Simon

From: Gill, Major
Sent: 03 August 2021 10:21
O'Keeffe, Simon
Subject: Fwd: [EXTERNAL]

From: Tara Maroke [REDACTED]
sent: Thursday, July 29, 2021 11:12:44 PM

To: major.gill@unitetheunion.org <major.gill@unitetheunion.org>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Motor Issues

EXTERNAL SENDER. Do not open any links or attachments unless you were expecting them from this sender. DO NOT provide your username or password.

Dear Sir/Madam,

I have been at home off work since June 22nd 2021 due to no fault of my own as my Taxi vehicle has failed it's MOT due to rear wheel steering.

The motor parts for this vehicle are no longer available as they are obsolete. The motors that were suggested as a viable replacement do not function. Asides from this motor issue, the vehicle is fully functional. I am willing to purchase the parts but the previous company that were in production of the motors have gone into liquidation.

Please can you advise a solution to this problem and help myself and many other Taxi drivers in a similar predicament a way of resuming work

Yours sincerely,

Mr. Sohan Singh Maroke

I

01
O'KEEFE, SIMON

O'Keeffe, Simon

From: Gill, Major
Sent: 03 August 2021 10:21
O'Keeffe, Simon
Subject: Fwd: [EXTERNAL]
To:

Vito rear wheel turning. I have my Vito for more than year and half i never used it even it's working it's very scary to use it and also it's very expensive to repair and as work situation now a days hardly people can afford it but Ota..

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From: Balwinder Singh

Sent: Wednesday, July 28, 2021

To: major.gill@unitetheunion.org <major.gill@unitetheunion.org>

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Vito rear wheel turning. I have my Vito for more than year and half i never used it even it's working it's very scary to use it and also it's very expensive to repair and as work situation now a days hardly people can afford it but otherwi...

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Sent from my iPhone

O'Keeffe, Simon

From: Gill, Major
Sent: 03 August 2021 10:21
O'Keeffe, Simon
Subject: Fwd: [EXTERNAL]

To: RWS issues

From: Harinder Virk [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, July 28, 2021 11:08:37 AM

8.2 Get Outlook for Android
From: Harinder Virk
Sent: Wednesday, July 28,
To: major.gill@unitetheunion.org <major.gill@unitetheunion.org>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] RWS issues

EXTERNAL SENDER. Do not open any links or attachments unless you were expecting them from this sender. DO NOT provide your username or password.

To whome it may concern

My name is Harinder Singh Virk ,I am Hackney driver and I have owned Mercedes Vito more than 2years.

The rear wheel steering (RWS) are very dangerous and not safe while driving . I have had to disengage it due to danger it poses to myself and customers.

I bought above vehicle due to it's 6 seater capability and more legroom and wheelchair access also. Unfortunately due to RWS repair cost and parts unavailability currently simply beyond affordability. Especially since the pandemic has had negative impact on taxi driver's earnings, .

Kind regards,
Harinder Singh Virk

Sent from my iPhone

O'Keeffe, Simon

From: Gill, Major
Sent: 03 August 2021 10:21
O'Keeffe, Simon
Subject: Fwd: [EXTERNAL]

1

O'Keeffe, Simon

From: Gill, Major
Sent: 03 August 2021 10:21
O'Keeffe, Simon
Subject: Fwd: [EXTERNAL]

To:

Re: Inspection

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From: muhammed hanif [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, July 28, 2021 10:16:36 AM
To: major.gill@unitetheunion.org <major.gill@unitetheunion.org>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Re: Inspection

EXTERNAL SENDER, Do not open any links or attachments unless you were expecting them from this sender. DO NOT provide your username or password.

Hello

I had my inspection back in March, the inspection failed because of the rear wheel steering on my Mercedes Vito. I called KPM in London they told me they were not available for the next two weeks, I called another garage who charged me f1200 to fix the rear steering wheel and they also kept the taxi to repair the part for a whole week. I had no means of coming back to Coventry and had to get a taxi from London back to Coventry. I did not realise the part was going to be so expensive and unreliable too, otherwise I would not have bought this vehicle. I am worried that I would have to pay a further E20002500 in the next inspection, as the rear steering wheel has stopped working and the warranty has expired. This is a great concern to me as I am not in a financial position to buy another taxi.

Many thanks

Muhammed
Hanif Plate

No: [REDACTED]
O'

o:

:T
Mercedes vita RWS

[Get Outlook for Android](#)

Sent:

From:

Sent: Tuesday, July 27, 2021 5:37:06 PM

Tuesday, July 27, 2021 5: 7:06

To: major.gill@unitetheunion.org <major.gill@unitetheunion.org>

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Mercedes vito RWS

EXTERNAL SENDER. Do not open any links or attachments unless you were expecting them from this sender. DO NOT provide your username or password.

I am a licensed Hackney carriage driver who has been driving a mercedes Vito for the last 4-5 years. Until Jan 2021 coventry Council MOT garage did not check RWS on my vehicle which has been taken for test on atleast 7-8 occasions.

Know the council are starting to check which I feel is unacceptable as if it was part of there licensing conditions then the RWS should have been checked from the beginning. Coventry taxi licensing had not put any kind of suspension on the RWS prior to 2021 so why know are they checking.

Drivers like myself invested in these vehicles due to them being more reliable,better access for disabled passengers and more comfortable to drive,since Penso which are the company who done the Taxi conversion on these vehicles has gone into administration it is very hard to get hold of any parts which are for the RWS and drivers have to take the vehicles to London as no garage in the Midlands can do RWS work.I feel that the council knowing this should suspend with immediate effect all 'checking of RWS .I hope that with the support of other Vito drivers you and unite union can come to some agreement with the council on this matter. Thank you

Mohammed Qasim