

Briefing Note

Tuk Tuk's, Rickshaws and Disabled People

Background

Derby has a long history of involving and working with disabled people on important issues in relation to the accessibility of the City.

The City was at the forefront nationally of only issuing hackney carriage licenses to accessible vehicles, many years before it was a requirement of Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) legislation.

Also recognised is the importance to particularly sensory impaired people of vehicle free pedestrianised streets. The Council recognised this important principle recently when it reaffirmed its decisions of some years ago to prohibit cycling in St Peter's Street.

This commitment has resulted in increased opportunities and choice for disabled people in travel options and a safer and more accessible external environment. It is with this background that we must now consider the issue of the possible operation of Tuk Tuk's and Rickshaws in the City.

Tuk Tuk's and Rickshaws

Disabled people in the City many of them representing organisations across the City and County are aware that the issue of the possible use of both Tuk Tuk's and Rickshaws is under active consideration. This consideration appears to be in relation to providing mainly a transport link between the southern edge of the City Centre and the Cathedral and Lanes Quarter.

Disabled people are supportive of such a link. Older and disabled people are the very people who need assistance to travel between various destinations in the City Centre, but for many such people an accessible mode of transport is required. It is felt by many disabled people and their organisations that Tuk Tuk's and Rickshaws don't and can't deliver the levels of access required to facilitate their use by all. Disabled people are of the view that either mode of transport isn't a serious attempt to deliver meaningful transport links in the City Centre but rather a gimmick to help promote various City locations.

There are also concerns that consideration will be given to allowing either or both Tuk Tuk's and Rickshaws to use pedestrianised streets. This when the Council has previously supported and appreciated the concerns and advice of disabled people and kept many City Centre streets traffic free.

The licensing position of the vehicles appears to be complex but I feel I have to highlight the concerns disabled people are articulating to me about the possible approval for use by the public of either or both of the vehicle.

Indeed, members of the Council's Disabled People's Diversity Forum and the Chair's of both Derby Access Group and Derby Disability Network have expressed their concerns about any proposals to approve either or both modes of transport for public use. They feel that any approval would not sit well with Council's responsibilities and duties under Disability Discrimination Act and Disability Equality Duty legislation.

Local disabled people are asking the Council to reject these inaccessible modes of transport and work with them on developing accessible answers, which will deliver transport for all to City Centre destinations.

Mick Watts
Access Officer

31 March 2008