

16th February 2015

Replacement of Vehicle – HCVL 599

Dear Sir,

I am fully aware of the vehicle conditions as made by Plymouth City Council. I am also aware of the maximum length of 5 meters.

As I am sure you are aware, I am taller than average. At 6ft 4in I do not consider myself a giant, but it does give me a problem as a Taxi Driver. Whilst driving most vehicles is not a problem for short periods, prolonged bad posture does give me back and leg problems.

To my chugrin I find that the providers of Taxis can't provide an "Off the shelf" solution for me. One provider is prepared to make a bespoke vehicle to give me the required space in the drivers position. Whilst the preferred vehicle would be under the 5 meters requirement, it may then produce a restricted space in the passenger compartment as the flip seat behind the driver would also move back.

I am renowned amongst Taxi Drivers, Licensing Officers and the Disabled as the Driver with the "Can do" attitude towards the wheelchair bound passengers. I am keen to retain this position.

I have asked the provider to do the following:

The conditions in Plymouth are here <http://www.plymouth.gov.uk/homepage/transportandroads/publictransport/taxilandprivatehirehackneycarriagevehiclespecifications.htm> and you will see on the first page the 5M maximum vehicle length.

I will go with my tape measure to 2 of my most awkward Wheelchair users and ask if I can measure them. One is tall, the other fairly prone - so pretty long. This will take a while.

I would prefer 2 (long) telescopic ramps, even if it means keeping those that I have got. Under floor ramps, whilst easier to use can be too short to reduce the angle to get passengers in and out. They also reduce headroom by 2 inches or more.

I would like forward and backward facing options for wheelchair users, some with Carer's prefer or need rear facing, most prefer forward. Wheelchairs will have to be on the nearside, moving the screen back may prevent prams and the like unloading on the offside, this is a problem I have currently and I can continue to deal with.

With regard to ambulant access, I prefer full width steps and I also prefer Manual and not electric options. Running boards are allowed but I do not like them.

I do not want a meter but I do want the loom fitted and ready.

I will make a written application to exceed the 5m maximum length. Next meeting of the Council Committee is 19 March (too late for this Thursday) and I will know on that day if I can have the LWB.

It is possible that the SWB would still be suitable, if the tip seat behind me is far enough away from the rear seat. I am happy for the Bandit Screen to come forward on the passenger side to accommodate two flip seats and at the same time to allow wheelchair access and turning room. This would be achieved by an exaggerated "S" bend. I realise that the anchor points for the screen would have to be the door pillars.

Thanks for your time on this, I really hope we can do business.

You will note that I am trying to accommodate even more wheelchairs than I do currently by moving the screen forward on the nearside. You can also see that I would prefer the SWB option. I do need the agreement in principle for the LWB however, this vehicle would be 5.34M and I would therefore request that my application be heard on its own merit by the Taxi Committee if devolved powers do not permit your Office taking the decision.

Yours faithfully,



Christopher R Wildman,
Plymouth Hackney Driver H0919.

[REDACTED]

19th February, 2015.

Reference:- Replacement of Vehicle – HCVI. 599

Dear Mr. Hughes,

I am writing to you at the request of Mr. Christopher Wildman in regard to his application for a replacement taxi.

Chris, unfortunately is trying to resolve three issues that are at odds with each other. First a driving position that can accommodate his height in a safe and comfortable manner; secondly a passenger compartment that will accommodate people with a wide diversity of disabilities and finally, if possible, meet these aspirations within the Council's requirement that taxis do not exceed 5 metre in length.

As a full time wheelchair user I need taxis that are capable of accommodating my prone posture in either a forward or rearward position with both the wheelchair and myself properly strapped down. Currently Chris's taxi meets my need. If, however, this was reduced then I would be unable to travel by taxis. Naturally I find that prospect very concerning.

I have known Chris for some years and never doubted his professionalism and competence. His choice of using long channelled ramps has given him a mechanical advantage when loading clients who use wheelchairs, particularly if they are heavy or have some particular need, it also ensures that the wheelchairs passes smoothly into the compartment.

It is recognised that no two disabilities are the same; each requiring help that is individual to the particular individual. I fully support Chris's application for a bespoke taxi because it fits the same logic and, if permitted, would enable the widest range of people with disabilities to travel by taxi.

Yours Sincerely,

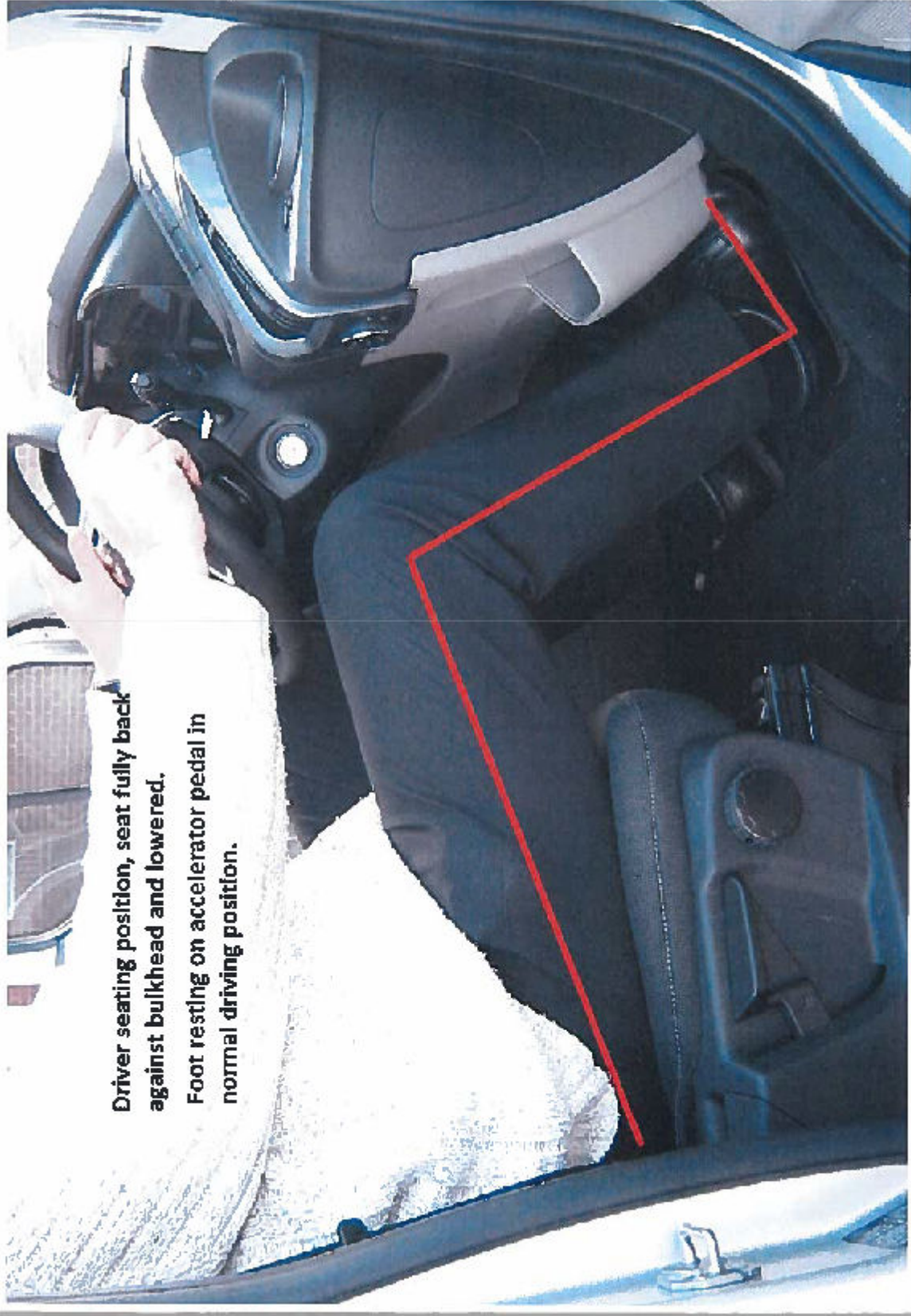
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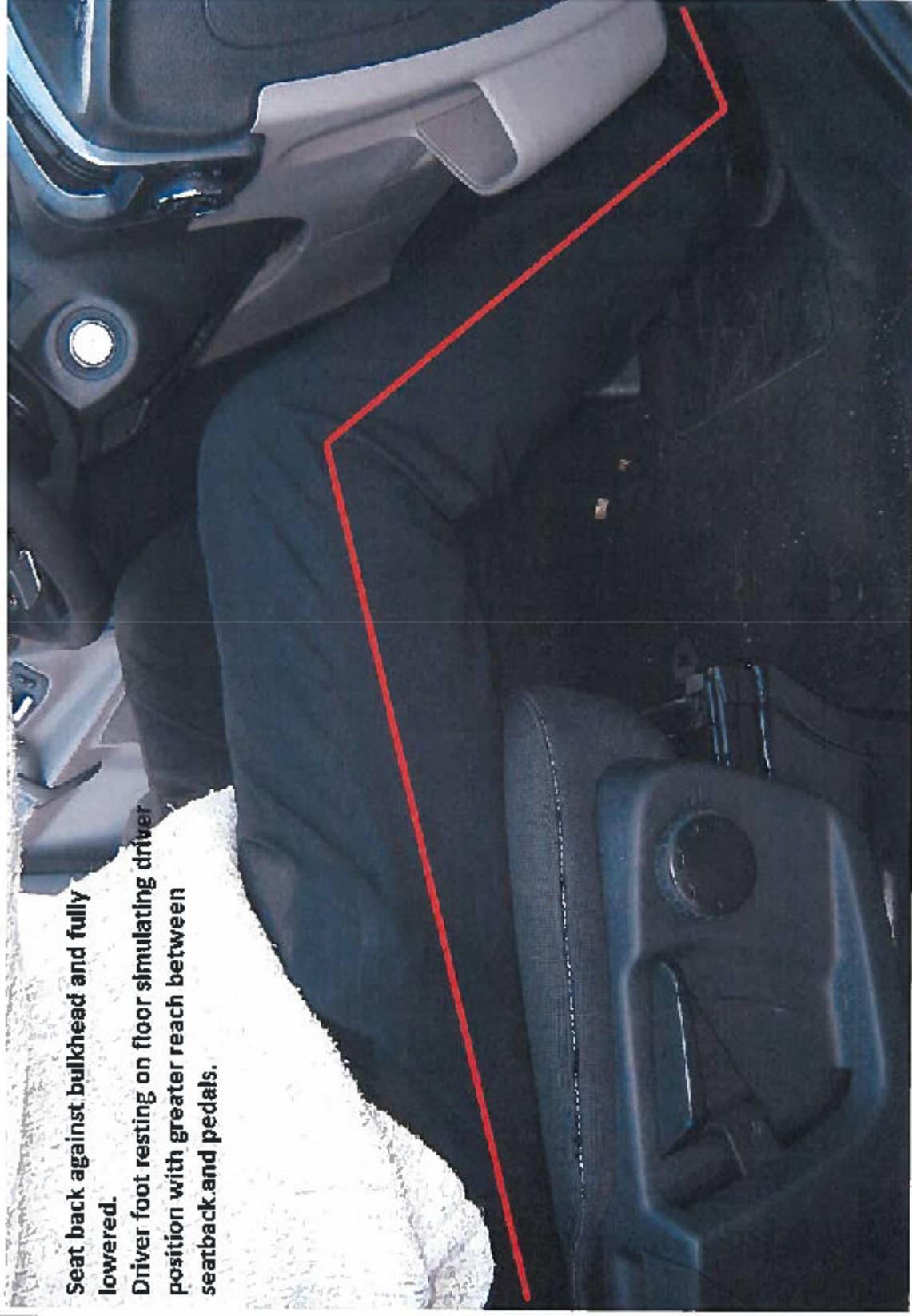
Driver seating position, seat fully back against bulkhead and lowered.

Foot resting on accelerator pedal in normal driving position.



Seat back against bulkhead and fully lowered.

Driver foot resting on floor simulating driver position with greater reach between seatback and pedals.

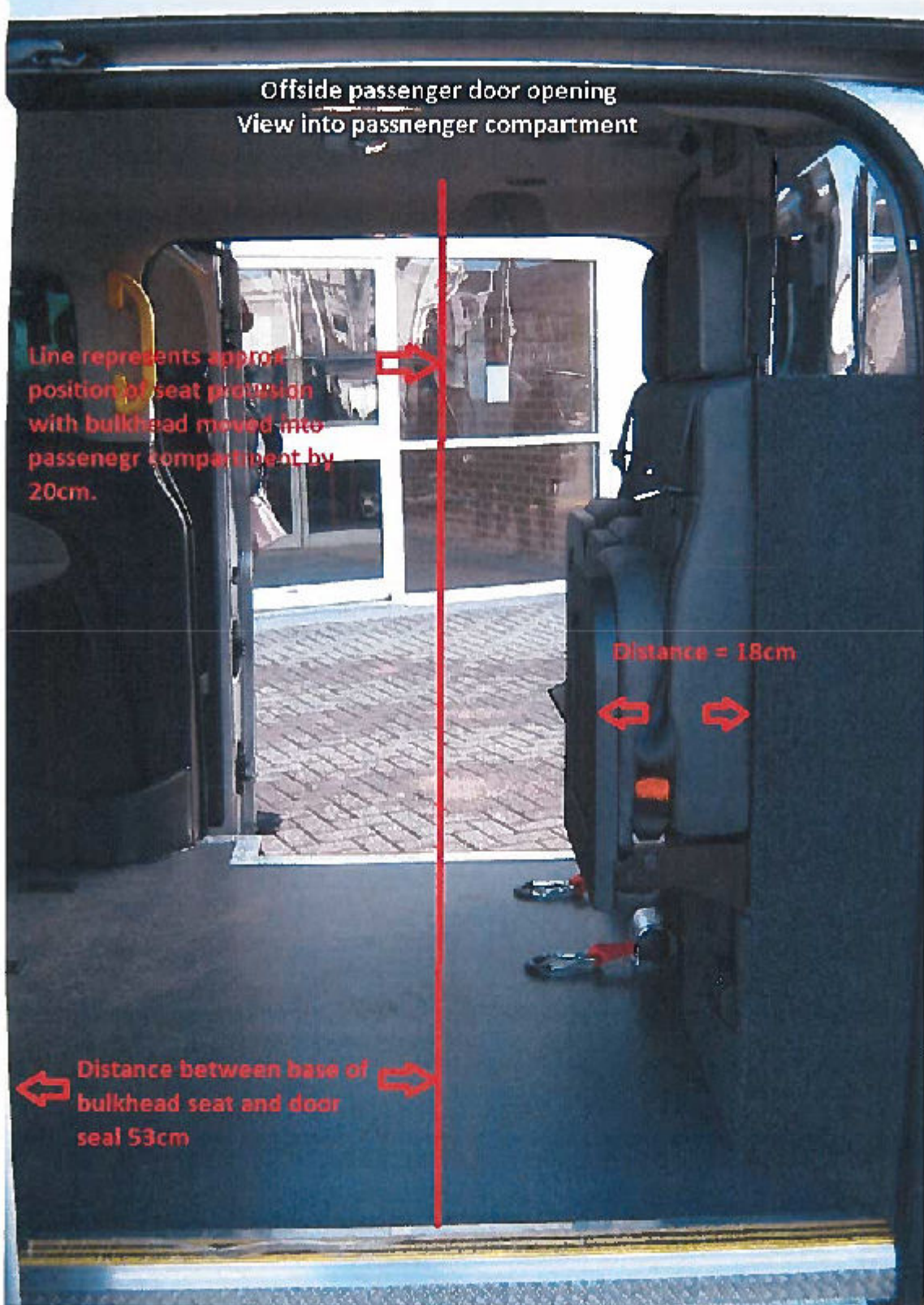


Offside passenger door opening
View into passenger compartment

Line represents approx
position of seat provision
with bulkhead moved into
passenger compartment by
20cm.

Distance = 18cm

Distance between base of
bulkhead seat and door
seal 53cm





Offside passenger door opening
View into passenger compartment

Distance approx 53cm

Position of seat when bulkhead moved 20cm into passenger compartment.