# Forest advances inclusive e-bike policies with Sight Loss Council collaboration in London



E-bike operator Forest has taken significant steps to enhance accessibility for visually impaired individuals in London through its ongoing collaboration with the London Sight Loss Council (SLC). Recently, members of Forest’s policy, people, and customer service teams participated in a ‘Simulation Spectacles’ walk and vision awareness session, led by the SLC. This immersive experience involved navigating busy London streets wearing simulation spectacles that replicated various eye conditions, providing the Forest team with firsthand insight into the everyday challenges faced by blind and partially sighted pedestrians.

The session also featured direct testimony from Haren Thillainathan, a member of the Sight Loss Council, who shared his personal experiences of commuting and navigating the capital with visual impairment and the impact of e-bike operations on accessibility. This initiative is part of Forest's broader commitment, demonstrated earlier this year when it became the second operator to sign the SLC's e-bike charter. This charter requires operators, local authorities, and stakeholders to adhere to six principles designed to safeguard blind and partially sighted pedestrians from hazards related to e-bike use.

Forest has been proactive in implementing practical measures to support these commitments. Actions include increasing the availability of dedicated parking bays, specifically positioned on carriageways rather than footways to reduce obstructions, maintaining a dedicated phone line, and placing QR codes on bikes to facilitate easy reporting of improperly parked or abandoned e-bikes. Alex Berwin, Head of Policy at Forest, emphasised the value of the partnership, stating, “Our partnership with the Council – and our commitments to its e-bike charter – remain central to our operations across London. We know more needs to be done, and we look forward to continuing our relationship as we build an inclusive service.”

The SLC’s e-bike charter outlines several key directives aimed at enhancing street safety and accessibility. Among its recommendations are the provision of designated parking bays on carriageways wherever feasible, the establishment of a monitoring framework to ensure the swift retrieval of abandoned or poorly parked bikes, and the creation of universally accessible means for visually impaired and digitally excluded residents to report incidents. The charter also calls for reasonable maximum weight and speed restrictions on e-bikes and the installation of audible alerts, such as horns or bells, to warn pedestrians. Additionally, it encourages collective efforts to curb pavement riding through technological trials and stronger police enforcement.

This approach reflects wider collaborative efforts within the e-bike industry to address concerns raised by the sight loss community. Prior to Forest’s involvement, Lime was the first e-bike operator to sign the charter in late 2024, adopting similar measures including refreshed in-app messages to promote considerate parking and direct communication with users about parking etiquette. In early 2025, Voi followed as the third signatory, launching a 'responsible e-bike pilot' in London to tackle pavement clutter and related issues.

The sustained engagement between Sight Loss Councils and these operators underscores the ongoing need to balance the benefits of micro-mobility with the imperative of street safety, particularly for vulnerable pedestrians. Nicki Guy, Senior Engagement Manager at Thomas Pocklington Trust, praised Forest’s openness to the simulation experience, highlighting how firsthand understanding of the issues raised by poorly parked e-bikes — including trip hazards and risks to independence — is essential for fostering accountability and driving meaningful improvements.

As e-bike use continues to grow, Sight Loss Councils maintain a focus on working with operators and local authorities to develop parking policies and regulatory frameworks that protect the confidence and autonomy of blind and partially sighted residents. The commitments embodied in the e-bike charter represent a vital step towards inclusive street environments and safer urban mobility for all users.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://airqualitynews.com/cars-freight-transport/forest-steps-up-accessibility-with-sight-loss-council-collaboration/)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://airqualitynews.com/cars-freight-transport/forest-steps-up-accessibility-with-sight-loss-council-collaboration/), [[2]](https://www.sightlosscouncils.org.uk/news/forest-signs-our-e-bike-charter/)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://airqualitynews.com/cars-freight-transport/forest-steps-up-accessibility-with-sight-loss-council-collaboration/), [[2]](https://www.sightlosscouncils.org.uk/news/forest-signs-our-e-bike-charter/), [[5]](https://www.sightlosscouncils.org.uk/campaigns/streetsforall/e-bikes-and-e-scooters/e-bike-charter/)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://airqualitynews.com/cars-freight-transport/forest-steps-up-accessibility-with-sight-loss-council-collaboration/), [[5]](https://www.sightlosscouncils.org.uk/campaigns/streetsforall/e-bikes-and-e-scooters/e-bike-charter/)
* Paragraph 5 – [[3]](https://www.sightlosscouncils.org.uk/news/our-work-with-e-bike-operators-to-increase-street-safety/), [[6]](https://www.sightlosscouncils.org.uk/news/lime-signs-sight-loss-council-e-bike-charter/)
* Paragraph 6 – [[4]](https://www.sightlosscouncils.org.uk/news/voi-signs-slc-e-bike-charter/), [[1]](https://airqualitynews.com/cars-freight-transport/forest-steps-up-accessibility-with-sight-loss-council-collaboration/)
* Paragraph 7 – [[1]](https://airqualitynews.com/cars-freight-transport/forest-steps-up-accessibility-with-sight-loss-council-collaboration/), [[7]](https://www.sightlosscouncils.org.uk/campaigns/streetsforall/e-bikes-and-e-scooters/)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://airqualitynews.com/cars-freight-transport/forest-steps-up-accessibility-with-sight-loss-council-collaboration/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.sightlosscouncils.org.uk/news/forest-signs-our-e-bike-charter/> - In February 2025, Forest became the second signatory of the Sight Loss Council's e-bike charter, committing to six key principles aimed at ensuring the safety of blind and partially sighted pedestrians. The collaboration focuses on reducing issues related to the misuse and poor parking of e-bikes and e-scooters, with Forest implementing measures such as dedicated parking bays and a dedicated phone line for reporting obstructive bikes. The partnership underscores Forest's commitment to providing an equitable and inclusive service for the entire community, particularly those with accessibility needs.
3. <https://www.sightlosscouncils.org.uk/news/our-work-with-e-bike-operators-to-increase-street-safety/> - Sight Loss Councils have collaborated with e-bike operator Lime to enhance street safety for blind and partially sighted individuals. Initiatives include refreshing in-app messages to encourage considerate parking and sending communications to all registered users highlighting parking etiquette. These efforts aim to address concerns about e-scooters and e-bikes obstructing pavements, thereby improving the safety and independence of visually impaired pedestrians.
4. <https://www.sightlosscouncils.org.uk/news/voi-signs-slc-e-bike-charter/> - In February 2025, Voi became the third e-bike operator to sign the Sight Loss Council's e-bike charter, committing to six key principles designed to protect blind and partially sighted pedestrians. The charter was developed in response to growing concerns about e-bikes cluttering pavements and streets, and Voi's commitment aligns with its launch of a 'responsible e-bike pilot' in London, aiming to address these issues.
5. <https://www.sightlosscouncils.org.uk/campaigns/streetsforall/e-bikes-and-e-scooters/e-bike-charter/> - The Sight Loss Council's e-bike charter addresses the safety concerns posed by the increasing use of e-bikes and e-scooters, particularly regarding abandoned or poorly parked vehicles creating trip hazards for blind and partially sighted pedestrians. The charter advocates for measures such as providing designated parking bays, implementing reporting and monitoring frameworks for e-bike providers, and ensuring universally accessible ways for visually impaired individuals to report incidents, aiming to make streets safer for all users.
6. <https://www.sightlosscouncils.org.uk/news/lime-signs-sight-loss-council-e-bike-charter/> - In November 2024, Lime became the first e-bike operator to sign the Sight Loss Council's e-bike charter, committing to six key principles to ensure the safety of blind and partially sighted pedestrians. The charter was developed in collaboration with Sight Loss Councils and Thomas Pocklington Trust, addressing concerns about e-bikes obstructing pavements and streets. Lime's commitment includes providing designated parking bays and implementing reporting frameworks for e-bike performance.
7. <https://www.sightlosscouncils.org.uk/campaigns/streetsforall/e-bikes-and-e-scooters/> - Sight Loss Councils are working with e-scooter and e-bike operators, as well as local authorities, to ensure appropriate parking policies are in place in e-scooter rental trial areas. This collaboration aims to address the challenges posed by the lack of regulation around shared e-scooters and e-bikes, which have been reported to impact blind and partially sighted people's confidence in navigating streets independently and safely.