

LGA submission to DfT's Future of transport regulatory review

3rd July 2020

Please note that as advised in the consultation document organisations are only required to respond to questions that they feel relevant to them.



Question 2.1

Do you think micromobility vehicles (such as those in Figure B) should be permitted on the road? Please explain why.

1. We would support the trialling of micromobility vehicles on UK streets to better understand the impact they would have.
2. There are a number of potential benefits that we can see - for example they could lead to a reduction of carbon emissions if they allow people to electrify short trips. There are obvious carbon benefits if we can move short car journeys towards electric micromobility technology.
3. Similarly, there will be public health benefits to some of these technologies especially if they are combined with active travel. It is difficult to understand the impact these technologies would have on mode share. The only way we can gain robust evidence of how they affect travel patterns in the UK context would be through trialling them in a variety of different urban and rural areas.
4. We note there is a later question on the anticipated transfer from other modes. We do not feel in a position to answer that on the basis of international comparisons alone. The impact on different modes is likely to be a function of the current use of modes in any transport network and that is very different in the UK compared to European cities where initial trials have taken place.
5. It is also likely to be very different across places within the UK with different infrastructure, transport provision and spatial design. Whilst there are important lessons to be learned from previous studies that have taken place internationally, we would support a wide variety of UK trials incorporating different types of locations to get an understanding of how these technologies will interact with UK transport networks.
6. We can also see how these technologies might be deployed to funnel people towards public transport corridors for longer trips. They might offer a last mile solution to agglomerate passengers to help support the long-term viability of public transport networks. Public transport viability is a particular concern given the impact that COVID 19 has had on operators. We would particularly be interested in whether micromobility technologies could be used in integrated transport offerings and as part of mobility as a service technology.
7. We must also acknowledge that these technologies are already in use on our streets. Although not road legal in the UK micromobility vehicles can be legally purchased in the UK for use on private land. This prohibition is not widely understood and electric scooters and other vehicles are regularly seen on public streets. Whilst councils discourage the illegal use of these technologies it has been difficult to prevent their widespread use. We would welcome a regulatory framework that allows for their safe use but also allows us to

Submission

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communicate a simple message about when they are allowed and how they can be operated safely.

Question 2.2

If you can, please provide evidence to demonstrate the potential:

- a) Benefits of micromobility vehicle use.
 - b) Risks of micromobility vehicle use.
8. Previous trials have identified a risk that micromobility technology may replace other active travel journeys. As we have stated these findings come from trials in other transport systems so we would be wary of over interpreting this data. However it is clearly a risk to be mindful of when evaluating the trials of these technologies in the UK.
 9. If micromobility technologies are introduced for shared use we have plenty of applicable evidence from the roll out of cycle hire schemes. We are aware of the potential risks and pitfalls of these kinds of schemes that would need to be avoided.
 10. Considerable evidence can be accessed through Como UK and other industry bodies. One overriding concern we would have is that schemes that did not co-operate with the local highway authority had many more problems and a much greater risk of failure than those that did.
 11. We welcome the Government's approach for e-scooter hire schemes of ensuring the operators will only be allowed to enter a trial if they have the support of the local highway authority. We believe this is an important approach to avoid issues like abandoned vehicles cluttering and obstructing pavements and vehicles being used on inappropriate routes. We would want any future regulatory regime to include these kinds of safeguards.

Question 2.3

If micromobility vehicles were permitted on roads, would you expect them to be used instead of:

Vehicle type	Often	Sometimes	Never
Private vehicles			
Taxi or private hire vehicles			
Public transport			
Delivery vehicles			
Cycling			
Walking			
Other (please specify)			

12. We believe any answer to this question is highly dependent on the model of ownership that was being used and the design of the schemes that allowed their use. There is clearly a use case for micromobility technologies replacing all these modes in different contexts however we are unable to profitably make blanket assumptions that ignore the design of any particular scheme and transport network.

Question 2.4

- a. In your opinion, which of the following micromobility vehicles should be permitted, if any, on roads, lower speed roads, and/or cycle lanes and cycle tracks?

All types Electric scooters Electric skateboards

Self-balancing vehicles

Electrically assisted cycle trailer

Segway

Other (please specify)

13. We do not believe it is possible to say definitively which types of footways, cycle lanes and roads it is safe to deploy micromobility on. In the first instance it should be determined by trial schemes.
14. Footways and cycle lanes are different widths and are differently segregated from each other and the highway in different contexts. Whereas deployment of micromobility may be safe in some contexts it may not in others. We would urge the government to allow these decisions to be taken by highways authorities practically within the area of their own trial as they will be best placed to determine a safe approach.

Buses, taxis and private hire vehicles

Question 3.1

Should an updated regulatory framework for flexible bus services allow for each category of service to be regulated differently? If so, how do you think it should be regulated differently?

15. We believe there needs to be a complete re-examination of the operation of the bus industry in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. Given that most public transport provision in the medium term will only be sustainable with significant public subsidy we think it is time for a reappraisal for the role the state plays in the public transport. Even before the crisis significant public subsidy was directed both directly and indirectly into the sector and so an appraisal of all of the funding streams and how they could work together is timely.
16. We believe that the result of such a review would show that different models of ownership, partnership, commercial operation and wider integration into other services would be beneficial. Different places have different needs and would benefit from different approaches. We believe that a re-appraisal of the regulatory framework may be necessary as a result of this work.

Question 3.8

Do you think the Bus Service Operators Grant (BSOG) should be adjusted to accommodate the development of flexible bus services? If so, how?

17. The future of the Bus Services Operators Grant should be part of a reappraisal of public transport as mentioned above. We have long believed that if BSOG were fully devolved to councils they would be able to better target it towards socially necessary services supporting communities at risk of being cut off or improving connectivity for isolated communities. This regime

could easily incorporate flexible bus services in areas where that would be a more appropriate option than a conventionally scheduled service.

Question 3.12

- a) What areas of the bus, taxi and private hire vehicle (PHV) framework should we consider in future stages of the Future of Transport Regulatory Review?
 - b) How else, in your view, can the Government support innovation in the bus, taxi and PHV sectors?
18. This review should be seen as an opportunity for government to bring forward a Taxi Reform Bill which looks both at what is needed now and in the future.
19. As markets change and develop, so too regulation and regulators must adapt and it is vital that any new legislation has the flexibility to keep up with the pace of change. However, the immediate priority must be to respond to the challenges local authorities are facing now. The taxi and private hire vehicles (PHV) market has changed beyond recognition since the existing framework was introduced and will continue to evolve. The LGA urges government to take the much needed step of modernising outdated taxi and PHV legislation and introduce a Reform Bill to ensure we have a regulatory framework that is fit for purpose and protects the travelling public.
20. A particular issue for many local areas and licensing authorities has been the growth in out of area working over recent years. There needs to be national minimum standards introduced for taxis and PHVs to align licensing and safety standards across the country, while retaining local flexibility for councils. Councils also need national enforcement powers so they can take action against any vehicles operating in their areas irrespective of where they are licensed. Further work also needs to be done to address the limited oversight of drivers of public service vehicles (PSV).

Mobility as a Service (MaaS)

Question 4.1

In your opinion, in the development of Mobility as a Service platforms, what should be the role of local authorities, central government, or other transport authorities? Please provide details.

21. As a part of our review at the role of the state and local government in public transport we believe there is a case for different tiers of transport authorities acting as overall commissioners of integrated transport offers. This would in turn allow integrated ticketing as we have seen for the past two decades in London. Mobility as a service could easily be integrated into this public transport offer in a way that maximises the efficiency of the transport network as a whole.

Question 4.2

- a) Can you provide evidence for further measures that are required for the standardisation and interoperability of data, for example the routing, ticketing and timetabling data, to deliver Mobility as a Service?
22. This could be done in a new model of integrated transport as discussed elsewhere.

Question 4.3

In your opinion, is the roll out of the integrated style of ticketing required to facilitate Mobility as a Service prevented by any regulatory or commercial barriers? If so, please provide details.

23. The difficulty of setting up integrated ticketing offers for authorities outside of London shows that there is an obvious problem with these kinds of solutions for deregulated commercial operators. These problems are not insurmountable and the progress towards integrated ticketing outside of London has shown this.
24. However, there is an in-built incentive for commercial operators not to share data with each other and public authorities as they directly compete for patronage. The deregulated commercial model of operation has acted as an impediment to integrated tickets across operators and across modes.

Question 4.9

- a) Can you provide any further evidence of the positive or negative impacts of Mobility as a Service on active travel and/or sustainable modes? Please provide examples.
25. Integrated public transport and active travel are two sides of the same coin and policies that encourage and incentivise the take up of public travel will necessarily increase active travel legs. This is a simple function of the fact almost no journeys have public transport stops or stations as their start and end point.
26. Public transport almost always involves an active leg which means that there is a potential for a mobility as a service product which easily allows passengers to integrate ticketing and get easy to understand timetable and route information being an important policy intervention for active travel.

Local leadership of new transport services

Question 5c.1

With regard to managing new transport technologies and services, are there powers currently held by national government which you think should be devolved to local authorities, combined authorities or the Greater London Authority? If so, please provide evidence and examples.

27. Councils will be in the best position to regulate their own transport networks and we need to be given access to the technological solutions that will allow us to do so. We need to be given access to the full suite of powers in the Traffic Management Act 2004 including part 6. We also need to end restrictions of councils use of CCTV in parking and road management. If we are to effectively harness transport technology the government must allow councils access to all possible technological solutions to regulate traffic and ensure our networks run as efficiently as possible.

Question 5d.1

Are there any specific, urgent areas of the regulatory framework that you feel we are not addressing through the eight workstreams already announced for the Future of Transport Regulatory Review? Please provide evidence.

28. The LGA has called for a reform to the TRO process in order to make it quicker, simpler and less bureaucratic. There has been work done by the department in order to ensure that TROs are machine readable and in a position to support a transition towards autonomous vehicles. The LGA has been supportive of this work but we believe we should be moving faster towards reforms of the system. In particular the current publicity requirements

put an unnecessary burden on councils and it has been proven with the temporary changes requirements during the COVID crisis that a new approach could be successful. We would urge the government to prioritise further reform in this area.