



Department
for Transport

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From the Secretary of State
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Our Ref: MC/436497

2 October 2023

Dear Mr Sugarman,

Thank you to you and your co-signatories for your letter of 6 September to the Prime Minister, about ensuring our transport network is ready for the future. He has asked me to reply on his behalf.

The Department strongly agrees that we need to create a regulatory environment for the safe and successful use of these technologies on all parts of the country's road network and has made progress in a number of areas outlined below. As you are aware, legislation has not been introduced in the third parliamentary session, as originally envisaged, due to other pressures.


However, the Government remains committed to legislating on the future of transport and we will bring forward legislation, when parliamentary time allows. This was reaffirmed in the HM Government Response to Sir Patrick Vallance's Pro-Innovation Regulation of Technologies Review on digital technologies. I am afraid it would not be appropriate to comment on the content of the programme and specific timing of the Government's legislative priorities ahead of the King's Speech.

You may be interested to learn about the Department's intentions and future plans in the areas you mentioned:

- Self-driving vehicles: In August 2022 the Government published 'Connected & Automated Mobility 2025: Realising the benefits of self-driving vehicles in the UK', setting out the Government's vision to enable the deployment of self-driving vehicles in the UK by 2025. This includes bringing forward proposals for a comprehensive regulatory, legislative and safety framework. The Government remains committed to this vision and intends to introduce primary legislation when parliamentary time allows.

- Rail industry reforms, such as smart ticketing: The Plan for Rail set out how Government investment will radically reform and improve fares and ticketing for passengers. As you will have seen in the latest announcement, we are continuing to deliver on that commitment with an extension of contactless pay as you go (PAYG) to 53 more stations by the end of this year. Furthermore, we announced trailblazer devolution deals with local authorities to trial and develop PAYG on rail in Manchester and the West Midlands. We will announce further details on these trials in due course. Part of this will include exploring integrating fares with other modes of transport in the regions. We are also investing in the wider roll out of Barcode ticketing. This is available on many routes and we are investing to roll it out across outstanding areas of the network, including c2c, Southeastern and Govia Thameslink Railway, by the end of this year.
- E-scooters & e-bikes: The Government intends to introduce legislation for micromobility vehicles and create a new Low-speed Zero Emission Vehicle (LZEV) category, distinct from the cycle and motor vehicle categories, when parliamentary time allows. Options for e-scooter regulations to be made under the proposed new LZEV legal powers are currently being considered and the Government will consult on any new regulations before they come into force. In addition to creating the LZEV category, the Government intends to create a new licensing framework for rental micromobility operations, that would give local transport authorities the additional powers they need to shape and manage cycle, e-cycle and e-scooter rental schemes in their areas. The Department will consult publicly before any new arrangements come into force.
- Mobility as a service (MaaS): We have funded the development and launch of MaaS platforms through our £92 million Future Transport Zones, with some services already operating as a result of this funding, such as Breeze in the Solent area. We have also recently (August 2023) published a code of practice for MaaS. This code is aimed at platform developers, transport operators, and local authorities to help guide the development of these services while maintaining high standards for users. The code provides a range of recommendations on regulatory compliance, accessibility, data sharing, and consumer protection. The Government continues to support the development of MaaS and will look for further opportunities to continue this support.

Yours sincerely,



The Rt Hon Mark Harper MP

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR TRANSPORT