



Response to the consultation “Future of Urban Mobility” September 2018

from
The Bicycle Association of Great Britain

The **Bicycle Association of Great Britain (BA)** is the national body representing the cycling industry in the UK. www.bicycleassociation.org.uk

Introduction:

The Bicycle Association of Great Britain (the BA) is pleased to have the chance to respond to the Department for Transport’s call for evidence on consultation on the Future of Urban Mobility and to help shape the Department’s strategy for the future. We believe that the UK’s transport sector is going to rapidly change in the coming years, but also that the bicycle (including new innovations such as e-bikes) has a crucial part to play in this. Cycling is a solution to many of our major challenges, from traffic, to poor air quality, to obesity and should be a central consideration when making transport policy fit for the future. New cycling technology, such as the e-bike, should also be considered as one end of a new low or zero emissions vehicles market – an innovative sector that the UK has the opportunity to lead.

The BA is the national body representing the cycling industry in the UK. BA member companies cover all main sectors of the industry: manufacturers, distributors, retailers, services, and other major commercial sectors such as dockless bike share; and have a key role, and stake, in getting more people cycling.

Question 1

We have identified above the main technologies and trends that we believe will affect urban mobility in the coming decades. Are there any missing?

As mentioned under ‘New modes’ (p.12), e-bike sales are projected to rapidly rise, and the Bicycle Association believe that they will play a central role in the way people and goods move around in the future.

E-bikes are already helping more people to cycle, including older people and those traditionally less inclined to cycle, as well as disabled people. Over time, however, e-bikes and other forms of cycling (including the growing market in bike sharing) should be part of a growing “mobility as a service” offer. Increasingly, commuters will need to use different forms of transport for different stages of their journey.

The last mile of these journeys will often be by bike or on foot. We expect to see, for example, e-bikes used seamlessly with electric cars (with an e-bike being kept in the boot of a car, and both charging at the same time, before the driver using that bike to complete their journey). Government policy needs to encourage this and ensure cycling and e-bikes are a core consideration when developing policy relating to electric and low/zero emission vehicles.

As well as e-bikes, e-cargo bikes should be considered as a nascent technology which have the potential to provide a solution to clean growth and green transportation of goods. The DfT has recently launched a consultation into financial support for e-cargo bikes. The Bicycle Association is developing a response to this consultation, alongside partners including the UK Cycle Logistics Federation.

A recent report by Transport for London said that the phenomenon of online shopping has led to a 13% increase in kilometres travelled by light goods vehicles (LGVs) in London, while eCommerce package deliveries are also set to grow by between 6% and 9% each year in the UK. The greater use of bicycles, including e-bikes (bicycles with an electric engine), can help reduce this growing congestion problem and encourage the business to grow and local economies to develop in a more sustainable way.

A study by the EU Cyclelogistics programme found that 51% of all urban motorised trips related to carrying goods have the potential to transfer to cargo bike. Should this ambition be realised, more than half of goods deliveries could be moved to a near—zero emissions transport option in the very near future. This could have a transformative effect on both current and future rates of air pollution.

By investing in high-quality cycling infrastructure like cycle superhighways, goods and people are able to move quicker through cities, especially during peak times and using less space than roads. According to the European Cyclists' Federation, following the opening of cycle superhighways in London in 2016, 46% of road users were able to travel using just 30% of the road space.

Across the UK, we have already seen the introduction of low-emission zones and other efforts to improve air quality and make our urban centres more “people-friendly”. Wider uptake of cycling, including e-bikes and e-cargo bikes, can play an important part of delivering this vision. However, for these benefits to be maximised, cities need to be designed to include sufficient infrastructure for cycling – both in terms of traditional cycling lanes and storage facilities, but also in terms of connected and smart technology.

E-bikes are also preparing to interact with emerging ‘smart’ and ‘connected’ systems in cities. There is the potential to link e-bikes and e-cargo bikes to road infrastructure, other vehicles and to wider systems via the internet. Possibilities include dynamic routing to avoid congestion or pollution hotspots, active safety warnings e.g. of HGV movements nearby. The Bicycle Association and e-bike supplier industry is engaging on this issue via its membership of the European cycle trade association umbrella body CONEBI and the World Bicycle Industry Association at UNECE in Geneva.

A final impact worth considering for the future of urban mobility is the ability to deal with future climate change and more extreme weather patterns. Bicycles and e-cargo bikes are a uniquely resilient solution in extreme weather, able to flexibly route around problems, operate in conditions of fuel shortages, and to support emergency services. Even power supply outages (which will take down many more ‘high tech’ solutions) are not problems which would impact bikes or e-bikes (which can be ridden without e-assist if necessary). So, to increase the UK’s strategic resilience in light of these trends, the Government should ensure a strong cycle logistics sector is in place longer term.

Question 2

We want our urban infrastructure to support these trends and deliver benefits to society. What changes are required to urban infrastructure?

The BA believes there is a need for much greater investment in urban cycling-related infrastructure in order to fully realise the potential of cycling as a mode of transport for the future. Increasingly, our urban centres and the areas surrounding schools and places of work, will need to be designed around people, rather than cars. In future, this might mean an increase in cycle lanes and other changes to roads, including a greater amount of pedestrianised or cycling-and-walking-only space.

There are many benefits associated with cycling, from improved public health and wellbeing, (The World Health Organisation estimates that cycling can provide the UK with £1bn per annum in health benefits) to reducing air pollution and congestion (emission output related to bikes is among the lowest of LEVs).

Compared to other European countries e.g. Denmark and the Netherlands, roads in the UK are far more dangerous for cycling. A recent survey by Cycling UK found that safety was the single largest barrier to greater cycling uptake in the UK. On average in the UK, just 4% of pupils aged five to 16 cycles to school, compared to c.40% in Holland and c.81% in Denmark.

The Association believes that planning processes should prioritise the inclusion of adequate cycling infrastructure in each planning application e.g. cycle lanes around schools. This should include appropriate cycling routes as well as other infrastructure, such as more widely available cycle lanes and safe bike parking in both residential, business and retail developments. The Association would like to see the introduction of new national minimum design standards to ensure all cycling investment is spent on high quality infrastructure.

Question 3

What evidence do you have to enhance our overview of the impacts of these trends on cities and their use of urban space? Are any impacts missing?

The Bicycle Association is currently producing new research on the benefits of e-cargo bikes which will be available in October and will be shared with the Department for Transport.

There are also less easily quantified impacts of a modal shift to cycling which should not be overlooked, including: the 'normalising' effect of increased cycle use, making non-cyclists more likely to see it as an acceptable mode, the quality of life benefits for residents in areas where an increasing proportion of traffic is silent, relatively low-speed and with riders able to interact and converse with those around them directly. In addition, if streets become more liveable, they are more likely to support interactive communities (tackling loneliness) and also support vibrant local economies (tackling the decline of the high street).

We also believe that there will be considerable economic and commercial benefits of having urban, work and education centres which are not polluted and congested. This is something that greater uptake of cycling can deliver. By increasing the 'liveability' factor and making areas of the UK that currently suffer from considerable traffic or air pollution more attractive places to be. This could, for example, mean making retail areas more attractive to customers, or making business regions more attractive places to locate businesses compared to international alternatives.

Question 4

What possible market failures might emerging technologies and trends give rise to that could require intervention by Government?

Currently, many of the costs surrounding motorised forms of transport e.g. pollution and danger on roads are passed on to wider society and the environment. This represents a failure of the market as these costs are not being applied equitably. In order to address these market failings, the BA welcomes initiatives such as Clean Air Zones, Congestion Charging and recommend that further measures should take this further so that modes are properly incentivised. Electric cars, for example, still cause congestion even if they have no exhaust emissions, and this should be internalised in the costs which users see when making transport mode decisions.

The Government's ambition, included in the *Road to Zero* strategy, is for the UK to be at the heart of the global zero and low emission vehicles industry. However, the Government's focus in this area is currently on electric cars, despite a wide range of innovators and manufacturers turning their attention to e-bikes. The e-bike sector has the potential to help deliver the benefits foreseen in the *Road to Zero* strategy, but without Government intervention to bring us in line with the rest of Europe, the UK risks falling behind our neighbours and losing an opportunity to play a leadership role in low emission vehicles.

Unlike in other parts of Europe where the uptake of e-bikes is much larger, in the UK, their full potential is not being realised. One of the main reasons for this is that the Office for Low Emission Vehicles (OLEV), part of the Department for Transport and Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, does not currently recognise e-bikes as "low emission vehicles". The Bicycle Association is calling for OLEV to recognise the potential of e-bikes to positively impact our transport systems, and public health, and to help ensure they are seen as a policy priority.

Low emission vehicles, such as electric cars, currently receive significant Government support – including financial subsidies. The Bicycle Association believes the Government should look again at the support it offers to e-bikes. Providing a subsidy for e-bikes, alongside electric cars, would kick-start public awareness of e-bikes and drive their mass uptake – just as they have in the rest of Europe. This would reduce pollution, road congestion and unlock health benefits created by cycling.

For example, in 2017, France announced a flat 200 Euro subsidy for e-bike and e-cargo bike purchases. The success of this led to Paris announcing a 600 Euro subsidy for e-bike and cargo bike purchases, leading to a 90% increase in sales. Based on a recent projection from Cycle Europe France, e-bikes will have a 35% market share in France in the next seven years.

Question 5

We are committed to a transport network that works for everyone. What role should Government play in helping ensure that future transport technologies and services are developed in an inclusive manner?

The Government should ensure that as well as embracing high-tech solutions, existing accessible modes are allowed to deliver their full potential. Walking is perhaps the most accessible form of transport, with very low-cost implications. The cost of buying a bicycle is also low and is not frequently a barrier. This allows many people to have easy and affordable access to jobs and services.

Meanwhile, cycling on adapted bikes is possible for very many people with mild physical disabilities. An urban infrastructure with wide, separated cycle lanes also hugely benefits disabled people – either in wheelchairs, in handcycles or on adapted bikes. In London alone, a recent report by Wheels

for Wellbeing found that 15% of disabled people use a cycle to get around compared to 18% of non-disabled people. Ensuring that e-bikes and other bikes used by disabled people are able to be taken on other forms of transport (including buses and trains) is essential to creating an inclusive travel system for the future.

Question 6

How can Government ensure that future urban transport systems support people's wellbeing and flourishing, healthy communities?

The BA, along with other leading cycling and walking organisations in the UK recently announced its 'Moving the Nation' manifesto outlining new measures to prioritise cycling and walking in our towns and cities. The manifesto unveils a new vision of a future where everybody in the UK can live, work and play in places that are healthy, vibrant and that make walking and cycling the natural choice for short journeys. The five steps outlined in the manifesto are:

- Speed - Lower default speed limits to 20mph for most roads in built up areas and 40mph for the most minor rural roads to make our roads and streets safer for everyone.
- Space - Adopt and ensure consistent application of existing 'best-in-class' infrastructure design standards to create safe, attractive and inviting places for people of all ages and abilities.
- Safety - Revise the Highway Code to improve safety for people walking and cycling, particularly at junctions.
- Priority - Prohibit pavement parking to create safer and more accessible streets.
- Culture - Provide cycle training for all children during their primary and secondary school years and embed a culture of walking and cycling throughout the school curriculum.

The Bicycle Association also supports the adoption of these proposals. This would ensure that cycling and walking, crucial forms of transport for health, wellbeing and air quality, maintain their central position in UK transport in the future.

In supporting people's wellbeing, new technology such as e-bikes also allow people of all ages and abilities to get around independently, door to door. They appeal to non-cyclists, older people, people anxious about ability or fitness, or people wanting to arrive somewhere sweat-free e.g. workplaces without shower facilities. They overcome other "traditional" barriers to cycling – hills, distance, carrying luggage; shopping or even commercial cargo is also easy on an e-bike.

In supporting healthy communities, e-bikes provide a number of public health benefits: E-bikes are a near zero emission transport option and can play a vital role in tackling dangerous and illegal air quality when they replace car trips in our towns and cities. An urban future dominated by automated cars is often seen as a solution to today's car clogged towns and cities. However, this would exacerbate the health issues arising from an inactive population. E-bikes can play a part in changing this alongside conventional bikes and walking; e-bikes open up cycling to a whole new audience. As outlined elsewhere in this consultation response, it is therefore essential that the government does more to encourage the use of e-bikes in the UK.

Question 7

What role should Government play in understanding, shaping and responding to public attitudes to emerging technologies and services?

In other parts of the UK, the benefits of e-bikes and cycling generally are being encouraged by Government. In June this year, Transport Scotland announced a £1.3m funding pot to drive the uptake of e-bikes. The scheme will allow an interest free loan covering the new cost of an e-bike of up to £3,000, with a four-year repayment programme. A further e-Bike Grant Fund will distribute some £700,000 to Scottish councils, public sector bodies and community groups in order to generate e-Bike pool schemes, build in secure parking and to buy safety equipment. Furthermore, £100,000 extra from this scheme will drive a demo scheme at community centres, Home Energy Scotland advice centres and active travel hubs around the country. These demos very often result in a desire to purchase, as has been found elsewhere.

In the UK, around 200,000 regular bikes are currently bought each year under the cycle-to-work scheme. However, the price limit for the scheme, currently £1,000 or below, excludes the vast majority of e-bikes, which is acting as a barrier to uptake. In line with the recent proposal by Transport Minister, Jesse Norman, the BA recommend increasing the price limit of the scheme, or to exclusively include e-bikes which will help encourage greater uptake.

The UK Government can replicate these efforts in order to encourage greater public understanding of, and interest in, cycling and new technology such as e-bikes. From a policy perspective, this must mean greater consideration of cycling and walking in Government policy such as the Road to Zero strategy and the broader industrial strategy. In practice, demonstration schemes such as those found in Scotland, and subsidies for e-bikes as have been introduced across Europe, can transform the public's view of e-bikes and cycling in general.

Question 8

What changes do you expect to the mobility-related labour market? How can Government best support people and businesses affected by these changes?

Cycling is already transforming the labour market. Deliveroo, for example, employs more than 15,000 people and many of these riders work on bikes. Other courier companies are also increasingly hiring cycle couriers. The ongoing Department for Transport consultation on last mile delivery and e-cargo bikes recognises this change in the labour market.

If the costs of motorised transport are increasingly borne by the operators of vehicles (e.g. through higher taxes for higher emitting vehicles), rather than wider society, it is likely that costs for operators would rise. However, cost parity or even reduction would then be possible through shifting to low-impact modes such as LEVs or e-cargo bikes for last mile delivery (see separate consultation response). The use of more, smaller and lighter vehicles is likely to involve a rise in delivery-related employment, with opportunities open also to younger people who may not have learned to drive. Employees using e-bikes or e-cargo bikes in the mobility sector will also enjoy health benefits, compared to sedentary driving occupations.

Question 9

What other actions should Government prioritise to help people, businesses and cities prepare for the future?

Cycling is proven to have many benefits to children's health and fitness, achievement at school and wider environmental advantages. Despite this, fewer and fewer children have the chance to cycle.

There are a number of reasons for this, from young people not being trained to ride bikes, to concerns about safety and lack of available infrastructure.

The Government's Childhood Obesity Strategy recently committed extra funding for Bikeability, the Department for Transport's cycle training scheme aimed at pupils in year 5 and 6. Cycle training gives children the confidence and skills needed to cycle on today's roads, helping them to keep fit and to learn a skill that will stay with them for life. However, there is still a significant inequality across the country, in the number of children able to access this training. Currently around one third of children in England do not have access to Government-funded cycle training. Also, bike ownership for 5-16-year olds has fallen by 8% in the last decade. The BA recommends that the Government prioritise providing universal access to cycle training in schools, a vital life skill that will help ensure the next generation are prepared for active mobility in the future.

Question 10

Which 'missions' in the areas we have identified could be most effective in driving innovation and investment? Please refer to the criteria suggested in paragraph 2.6.

In regard to cleaner freight: Among the "Grand Challenges" in the UK's Industrial Strategy are clean growth and the future of mobility. E-cargo bikes are uniquely placed in the Lightweight Electric Vehicles (LEV) sector to help meet these challenges. Their application can support the evolution of our cities into efficient, liveable and high-tech hosts for smart business growth, while also providing flexible, accessible mobility for goods and people of all ages. And unlike many other solutions which require further costly development or infrastructure to be practical, e-cargo bikes are available immediately to deliver fast progress at low cost towards the Government's "Road to Zero" strategy.

E-cargo bikes also have the additional benefit, for last mile delivery purposes, of being small enough to bypass (and not cause) congestion, and to be far more flexible than larger vehicles for drop-off parking. They are even able to be pushed by a rider on foot in pedestrian areas, and are resilient to extreme weather, fuel shortages and more.

In regard to liveable cities: Increased uptake of e-cargo bikes could to a significant extent remove the need for vans and larger sized vehicles in urban areas. In turn, this would reduce issues of congestion, air quality and vehicle noise pollution, and reduce the subjective feeling of danger from road traffic which would otherwise be imposed on people in these areas by delivery vehicles. Active travel for shorter journeys would become a more attractive option for personal mobility. City centre pedestrianisation would be enabled to an extent more widespread than is currently possible.

Already, urgent needs to address air quality and vehicle emissions are leading to road closures, clean air zones and even combustion engine bans across the UK and Europe. Our competitor countries are developing zero emission alternatives fast: the UK cannot be left behind.

Question 11

How should Government funding be targeted to help UK innovators build and scale transport solutions?

The BA is calling for the Office for Low Emission Vehicles to recognise the value of e-bikes and help ensure they are seen as a priority by including them within its definition of low emission vehicles. In addition, to support the initiatives to foster the growing UK cycle logistics and e-cargo bike industry, as detailed in our separate response. This includes measures to support local authorities in e-cargo bike service procurement and in adapting cities for efficient cargo bike use.

Any queries or for further information please contact:

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