E-scooters: the Bicycle Association position

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The cycle industry contributes significantly to making the UK a cleaner, healthier place through the supply and maintenance of bikes and e-bikes for transport, leisure and sport. The Bicycle Association (BA) estimates this contribution to be worth at least £5.4 billion per year in taxes, jobs, congestion and pollution reduction, and benefits to public health.

The cycle industry's products are extremely safe and reliable, conforming to long established and regularly updated product safety standards. And riders of all ages can enjoy using their cycles under a clear regulatory framework around their use on road and in public places. The product safety regulations and usage framework together enable cycle industry companies to be confident that they are acting responsibly, with legal certainty, and in full agreement with the Bicycle Association's own Code of Practice, to which all the Association's members sign up.

The clear regulatory framework does not in any way stifle innovation. Within the simple e-bike rules, for example, the cycle industry has developed a huge range of increasingly sophisticated vehicles, with further innovative technical developments underway (e.g. internet-connected smart bikes, anti-lock braking, e-cargo cycles).

Thus, with regard to e-scooters, a new and fast-growing product category, the industry's first priority is to stress the need for a similarly clear regulatory framework for these vehicles, covering both product safety and usage on the public highway, if their use is to be permitted.

The BA recognises the potential for new forms of micromobility (that is, light electric personal mobility vehicles, potentially including e-scooters) to provide lower-impact, more space-efficient alternatives to cars. Alongside cycling and walking they have potential to help decarbonise transport, and to tackle pollution and traffic congestion. And if legalised for use on-road, new forms of micromobility should help stimulate further national and local Government investment in safe, separated cycle lanes which would also contribute to the further growth of cycling.

- **However, 'Active Travel' – that is, walking, unassisted scooting, wheeling, pedal cycling, and electrically-assisted cycling, offers *unique* health benefits, such that the appeal of these modes must be safeguarded, as detailed below.**

The current situation where micromobility vehicles already available on the UK market (such as e-scooters) are legal to sell, but not legal for consumers to use on-road, needs urgent resolution.

Retailers are obliged[1] to make their customers aware of the legal usage limitations, but nonetheless the UK has seen considerable volume of e-scooter sales, with over 800k units sold since 2018.

The BA also recognises that other new forms of micromobility are being developed internationally, and that in the absence of a suitable framework for their legal use, a similar issue of "legal to sell but not to use" may arise for new designs, as it has for e-scooters. A new regulatory framework to accommodate both current and future non-pedalled micromobility vehicles is necessary.

We therefore support in principle a framework which permits the legal public use of particular new forms of micromobility, under the following conditions:

- That a comprehensive regulatory framework should be in place to ensure product safety and so that there is a clear, fair and uniform standard for responsible manufacturers, suppliers and retailers to adhere to. Strong technical requirements[2] should be in place to make each type of vehicle as roadworthy and safe as possible, both for riders and other road users.
- That if permitted to be used on cycle lanes or in shared-use areas, powered micromobility vehicles should not (though e.g. excessive relative speed, or acceleration) threaten, imperil or deter active travel users.
    - **When considering regulating the maximum speed and acceleration for "twist and go" throttle-controlled vehicles which may use cycle facilities, the benchmark should be the typical speed and acceleration of an unassisted pedal cyclist.**
- That each type of micromobility device has distinct requirements (for both construction and regarding how it may be legally used on the road) to address risks specific to its design.
    - **The well-proven and internationally adopted current regulations for pedal cycles and electrically assisted pedal cycles (EAPCs) must not be compromised by regulations intended for novel types of vehicle.**
- That if and when micromobility vehicles become legal to use on the road, rules for their use are communicated effectively to the public, including by updating the Highway Code.

[1] Under The Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations 2008: https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2008/1277/regulation/6

[2] These requirements should cover aspects including maximum speed and power/acceleration, braking, stability, functional safety, structural integrity, electrical safety, lighting, audible warnings and any necessary markings and user information.