

## 15 July 19 – Micromobility Roundtable

### Summary

E-scooter companies spoke of the demand for e-scooters (demonstrated by existing use) and that they improved choice for road users (particularly for short journeys or for first/last mile). The companies have seen a range of regulations across different cities. Paris, Stockholm, Tel Aviv and Munich were cited as good examples.

The local authorities were generally in favour of e-scooters, mainly for the opportunities to move people out of cars and for the environmental benefits they could see (linked to clean air zones). However, there were concerns about discarded vehicles being left on pavements, safety on roads with potholes and street furniture, and powers for local authorities to licence scooter hire companies. All were keen to be involved in pilots.

Other user groups were generally supportive of e-scooters for increased choice and improving accessibility. They were keen for the review to look at e-scooters as part of the wider work on road use.

There was consensus that decent vehicle standards should be set. Germany have recently done this and have the best standard scooters. The comparison with e-bikes was made as a good starting point for regulating e-scooters.

User behaviour will be a problem for a range of reasons: helping people understand when scooters may be used, and how; through user inexperience with the devices; and on current use setting bad habits before potential regulatory changes are made. Helmet use was discussed at length, focussing on mandatory helmet use being a barrier to people switching to e-scooters.

On road space, there was support for allowing e-scooters in cycle lanes and on road. Some scooter providers said they wouldn't allow e-scooters on the pavement (with no dissenting voices).

Existing illegal scooter use focussed on the need for users to be made aware of where they can and cannot use their scooters. This illegal use was cited as evidence of the demand for legalising e-scooters.

Other points raised but not in detail:

- A launch of e-scooters should be accompanied with a responsible rider campaign.
- A question whether data from e-scooter use could be used to achieve other aims.
- Whether there should be a limit on the number of scooter providers in each city/region.

All attendees were keen to work with the Department, provide additional information or data to help us reach decisions and to assist trials of e-scooters.

The minister summed up by saying we need to examine the issues in detail and welcome their assistance. All options, including not legalising e-scooters, remain an option.

1. Ministers opening comments

2. SCS comments

Aim is to launch a consultation by end of the year covering the general approach to regulation and guidance. We will be looking to host workshops in the next few weeks to get into greater detail. We're also exploring how we can work within existing regulations to trial micromobility devices.

3. Discussion

**XXXXXXXX XXXXX, VOI** - VOI operate in 32 cities, 11 countries. They have seen good examples and bad examples of e-scooter use. For them, safety is about three things: vehicle standards, operators being professional, suitable infrastructure (such a painted parking zones)

**XXXXXXXX XXXXXXXXX, Bird** - There is a question on whether they should be individually owned/used or shared use? Tel Aviv is a good example – they had no regulation but e-scooters were being used, and they introduced regulations to set some initial parameters such as speed limits, max weight etc. E-scooters are used in 'alternate lanes' along with cycles and other types of light vehicle, but not where people walk.

**XXXXXX XXXXXXXXX, circ** – circ operate in 11 countries and 35 cities. Rather than e-scooters, the device that is unsafe is the car. Micromobility makes the roads safer by reducing the number of cars.

**Chris Boardman, Greater Manchester Combined Authority** – e-scooters don't pollute, they reduce congestion and are an efficient use of space – so they are supportive of them. We should not conflate danger with annoyance; there are 20,000 e-scooters in Paris and there has been one fatality. TfGM wants to create a regulatory sandbox and would be willing to take part.

**XXXXXXXX XXXXXX, Wind** – Products need to be suitable for a sharing model. E-scooter companies are in the process of building their own, more durable models including with swappable batteries.

**Minister** – we would want to regulate lighting, speed, braking, noise etc. But what groups would be adversely affected? E.g. pedestrians, disable users

**XXXX XXXXXXXXXX, Halfords** – There is massive demand for devices. Halford are selling for off-road use only. We should also consider use of e-scooters outside of cities where there is no cycling infrastructure.

**XXXXXXXXXX XXXXX – Bolt Mobility** – She has been using e-scooters in Miami where there are wide pavements and wide streets. They do not want e-scooters used on the pavement. Geofencing allows them to identify areas where scooters can't be used and the technology can slow down the scooter and give voice commands that the e-scooter cannot be used in a certain place. We are now educated on what is safe (from experiences elsewhere). This is an opportunity to regulate as users will use them anyway.

**XXXXXX XXXXX, Transport Focus** – We also need to focus on other road users. Transport Focus represent consumers and other pavement users. They have to be represented and want to be part of the discussion. Asked about the data being collected: where does this go and can it be used for the public good/broader aims?

**XXXX XXXXXXXXXX, Sustrans/Walking and Cycling Alliance** – Looking from a climate change point of view, e-scooters are a step forward for three reasons. 1. They encourage road use away from the car. 2. They improve choice and accessibility to transport. 3. There can be benefits to society and economy. He says cities that accommodates e-scooters well will also accommodate cycling and walking well.

**Minister** – Government is encouraging active travel.

**XXXXXX XXXX, AA** – There is a role for e-scooters to offer an alternative to cars, like e-bikes. E-bike regulation would be good starting point for micromobility. Their polling with members indicates they don't want them on the pavement but are content with them on roads or cycleways. For other types of micromobility devices, Segways, balance boards etc shouldn't be on the road. We should differentiate between types of micromobility devices. We need to define what we mean by e-mobility.

**XXXXXXXXXX XXXXXXXXXX, Bolt** – Bolt are involved in ride hailing services and e-scooters. E-scooters are useful for journeys less than two miles. Their experience elsewhere has seen movement from ride sharing towards e-scooters. Bolt have agreements to share data with city authorities e.g. in Paris.

**XXXX XXXXXXXXXX, TfL** – Anecdotally 1/3 of e-scooter journeys in Paris would previously have been cycling/walking journeys. We should avoid missing this opportunity to make more journeys sustainable. Further to the comments

already made about safety and construction standards for e-scooters, wheel size and ground clearance of e-scooters also need to be considered.

**Minister** – Should users wear helmets?

**XXXX XXXXXX, TfL** – We also need to address user ability and behaviour. There is not a substantial evidence base, and most published studies to date are limited in scope but one study from the US on A&E admissions following e-scooters accidents showed that over half of users had made fewer than 10 journeys and of the total admissions, 1% wore helmets and half had head injuries, hence there is a need to consider rider training.

**XXX XXXX, West of England Combined Authority** – There is time pressure for cities to reach air quality and emissions mandates. E-scooters are a carrot that works alongside ULEZ sticks. Experience from bike sharing schemes is that bikes are left all over the place and create an annoyance for people. There are questions on where should they be stored? The authority is happy to host a pilot.

**Minister** – What was the experience of London and shared cycles?

**XXXX XXXXXX, TfL** - TfL are developing a regulatory approach to this to allow boroughs to specify parking areas for shared cycles.

**XXXXXXX XXXXXX, ABI** – They agree that we should look at overall road safety impacts, not just e-scooter safety. There is potentially an increase in road users presenting a danger, either e-scooter users to other road users, or from motorists etc presenting a risk to e-scooter users. There would be two routes of liability for e-scooter providers: either the e-scooter user themselves or the service provider.

**XXX XXXX, JUMP** – There is an opportunity here for public transport and to address falls in bus use. Parking and charging locations near large transport hubs would allow e-scooters to be an option for first/last mile travel.

**XXXXXXX XXXXXX, VOI** – Different cities have a mix of obligations for vehicles or providers. The best example is from Germany. They have now classified and regulated the vehicle, meaning they now have the best vehicles (also Israel and Switzerland). Scooters are usually limited to 14/15mph. Helmets are not usually required but are compulsory below 15 years old. In Switzerland, e-scooters are treated as bicycles.

**XXXX XXXXXX, Lime** – The key question will be for government to decide - is this something the public wants and will it improve cities? On issues such as helmets, if Government decides the answer is yes, then it ought to make these vehicles as usable as possible. Issues about requirements for scooter

providers can be overcome, but the key will be to provide a regulatory regime that is easy for users.

**Minister** – We do not mandate helmets as cycles don't routinely go as fast as other vehicles.

**XXXXXXX XXXXX, CoMoUK** – CoMo have experience of shared bike. Their interest is in mobility in the round and moving people between modes. They are examining the possibility of mobility hubs.

**XXXXXXX XXXXX, Chartered Institution of Highways and Transportation** – E-scooters are an opportunity and shouldn't be addressed piecemeal. Changing infrastructure to make streets useable will have a financial impact. CIHT have done a review into shared space in which they considered how we categorise road space, e.g. requiring car drivers to behave differently in different parts of the city.

**XXXXXXX XXXXXXXX, Bird** – Asked if there be opportunity for UK government to learn from others? There are different mindsets in different countries, e.g. car drivers assuming ownership of roads. Safety will come from getting vehicles off roads. Clutter issues are due to lack of space provided for non-car uses. In some cities they are repurposing car parking spaces for other uses such as e-scooter parking. There needs to be help to shift the mindset of road users.

**XXXXXXX XXXXXXXX, Rideables.org** – Rideables.org are an advocacy group for all personal electric vehicles. We should delineate between vehicle requirements and what is required for sharing schemes, which can be tweaked at local level. People are already widely using e-scooters.

**XXXXXXX XXXXXXXX, Tier** – They have experience from Germany. There was a lack of understanding among users of how e-scooters could be used, e.g. many thought they could use the scooters after drinking. People form certain behaviours early and this will stick, even if we regulate for something else later.

**XXXX XXXX, RAC** – RAC have no problem with e-scooters. Their research shows people are looking for alternatives to cars. The interaction between cars and scooters needs to be taken into account, e.g. possible changes to highway code.

**Chris Boardman, Greater Manchester Combined Authority** – Government needs to determine what outcome they want from the review. There are 250 million car journeys of less than 1km in the Greater Manchester region –

people want to use scooters. On requiring helmets, this may cause people to remain in cars, ultimately harming more people than the helmets would save.

**XXXXXXXX XXXXXX, Wind** – There should be a national framework for the vehicle. Other element can be delegated to cities who have individual circumstances. They can also deliver parking zones.

**Steve Gooding, RAC Foundation** – They want roadworthy vehicles, responsibly used by qualified people. The concerns they hear are about vehicles being used irresponsibly. Whatever regulations are in place, they need to be enforced.

**Minister** – The police do the enforcing and set their priorities. There is likely to be an increased focus on e-scooters from media. It's agreed that nobody is likely to dissent from having vehicle standards. How do we enforce their responsible use?

**XXXXXXXX XXXXX, VOI** – Paris, Munich and Stockholm are examples of good requirements for operators. There should only be 2-3 operators per city, not 8 or more.

**XXXXXX XXXXXXXXX, circ** – In Germany they have seen underage drivers being non-compliant. The launch of e-scooters should accompany responsible riding campaigns.

**Minister** – Should the public purse pay for these?

**XXXXXX XXXXXXXXX, circ** – Would be willing to contribute to safety campaigns. Further things to be addressed for e-scooters – making them able to carry luggage and being able to withstand bad weather.

**XXXX XXXXXXXXXX, Halfords** – The attitude of those who own their own e-scooters is different to those who hire them, e.g. less willing to discard them on pavements.

**XXXXXXXX XXXXXXXXX, Bird** – Once regulated, e-scooters can also be taxed.

**XXXXXXXXXX XXXXX – Bolt Mobility** – Bolt Mobility have drivers who pick up, check and redistribute scooters. They don't want them just laid out on the pavement.

**XXXXXX XXXXXXXXX, circ** – Scooter providers need to attend the vehicles to charge them, so they aren't left discarded.

**XXX XXXX, West of England Combined Authority** – There needs to be some kind of licensing system with clear obligations on operators, with the ability to fine operators.

**XXXX XXXXXX, TfL** – The suggestions being made sound like potential safeguards for trials, and TfL has suggested sandbox powers to allow us to be able to try new initiatives.

**Minister** – The Department needs to gather research/data to make informed decisions, including potentially conducting trials. There is not enough awareness on current law. How do we make that clear?

**XXXXXX XXXXXXXXX, circ** – Retailers must inform current users on the law. Invited minister to Germany to see e-scooters.

**XXXXXXX XXXXXXXXXX, Bird** – There is a need to educate, but this would work better if e-scooter users could be told when they would be able to use them, or what steps DfT is taking to test them. Bird have data to provide to DfT.

**Chris Boardman, Greater Manchester Combined Authority** – The trial work with TRL on implied zebra crossings is a model approach that could be used for e-scooters.

**XXXXXXX XXXXXXXX, Rideables.org** – To address the current situation, there can either be an enforcement stick or a harm-reduction approach (such as temporary regulations, e.g. on helmet use). The current rules incentivise pavement use as the fines are lower than for using vehicles on the road.

**XXXXXXXXXX XXXXX – Bolt Mobility** – Trials must be comprehensive, but the technology allows them to be fenced in). The community aspect will only be felt if trials are on road. Operators must have the opportunity to be involved in the trials.

**XXXX XXXXXXXXX, Sustrans/Walking and Cycling Alliance** – Example of Boris bikes; these were mostly used by tourists and drivers treated them differently from other cyclists/road users.

**XXXXXXX XXXXXXXXX, Bird** – The biggest nuisance on the road is cars. They are glad to hear the review will assess the evidence. There are a huge number of e-scooter journeys that go well but aren't reported on.

#### 4. Closing comments

**Minister** – There are too many fatalities on the road. The Government is looking to promote active travel and is looking to reduce emissions. We

understand that infrastructure is expensive. We will do everything we can to reduce the risk of accidents and irresponsible vehicle use.

Vehicle regulation is important. We need to consider the rules for where e-scooters could be used on the road and manage impacts e.g. littering. Helmet use will attract attention.

We don't want to make decisions in silos. There will likely need to be compromise in some areas, but we welcome the assistance of everyone in reaching decisions. It is likely that primary legislation will be needed if we are to make changes, which will mean convincing sceptics.

There is no guarantee on the outcome of the review - prohibition is still an option.

Welcome assistance from stakeholders and need to work together