

New transport tech to be tested in biggest shake-up of laws in a generation

- call for evidence on UK transport laws launched to make journeys greener, easier and smarter
- £90 million to trial tech including medical drone deliveries and e-scooters in 4 areas across UK
- review will address how people across England can book buses on their phone in the same way as private hire vehicles

The government has today (16 March 2020) launched a [consultation to make journeys easier, smarter and greener](#) through new technology as part of the Future of Transport regulatory review.

The review will consider how we make small changes to our everyday travel decisions and whether we could choose to walk, cycle, bus or one day scoot instead of take the car.

Alongside the review, a £90 million funding boost will lead to trials of new transport innovation in 3 new 'future transport zones'. The zones will provide real-world testing for experts, allowing them to work with a range of local bodies such as councils, hospitals, airports and universities to test innovative ways to transport people and goods.

The 3 new zones set to receive a share of the funding are in Portsmouth and Southampton, the West of England Combined Authority, and Derby and Nottingham – they will all join the existing West Midlands future of transport zone.

One of the projects tested will see drones carrying medical supplies from clinics on the Isle of Wight to hospitals on the mainland. This will help speed up diagnoses by cutting out time spent journeying on ferries and roads. Once trials are complete, the drones could eventually be used to transport chemotherapy kits to save time and potentially lives.

The government will also consult on the use of e-scooters and the impact they may have on UK transport. Requirements for both e-scooters and those using them are being explored to make sure they are safe for use on roads. This includes a minimum age and vehicle standards as well as insurance requirements. The review will also consider if local authorities should have extra powers to manage the impacts of e-scooters on public space, for example where they can be parked.

Transport Secretary Grant Shapps, said:

We are on the cusp of a transport revolution. Emerging technologies are ripping up the rulebook and changing the way people and goods

move forever.

Our groundbreaking future of transport programme marks the biggest review of transport laws in a generation and will pave the way for exciting new transport technology to be tested, cementing the UK's position as a world-leading innovator.

This review will ensure we understand the potential impacts of a wide range of new transport modes such as e-scooters, helping to properly inform any decisions on legalisation. Funding these new zones across the country will also help us safely test innovative ways to get around, creating a greener future transport system for us all.

The government is also exploring how to test emerging technology in bus, taxi and private hire vehicle services, which could make journey planning and payment simpler and more seamless. For example, by reviewing regulations which could make it easier for bus services to operate in a similar way to on-demand taxis or private hire vehicles. The new winning future transport zones in the UK will test a range of innovations and discover new ways to help people and goods move around, including:

West of England Combined Authority will test innovative tech to bring together people, operators and authorities. The aim is to introduce booking platforms, giving people access to book one journey across multiple modes of transport through the click of a button. They will also work to trial self-driving cars to transport people between Bristol airport, central Bath and the Northern Arc.

Portsmouth and Southampton will test how new tech can improve travel in car-dominated areas outside of major cities and provide the ability to plan journeys through smartphone apps. New options for last-mile deliveries for freight will also be trialled including e-cargo bikes in cities, and using drones for medical deliveries.

Derby and Nottingham have been granted more than £15 million to invest in new 'mobility hubs' that integrate and encourage more widespread uptake of public transport, bike hire, car clubs and electric vehicles. It will also create a website and an app to improve information about transport choices and simplify payments for people when travelling.