

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.

Prime Minister to lead cross-government drive to defeat coronavirus

- New daily press conferences to keep public informed on how to protect themselves
- Meetings with manufacturing industry and calls with international leaders will drive forward efforts to curb the virus
- UK leading international efforts to develop a coronavirus vaccine and produce the medical equipment needed to help people recover

From tomorrow daily press conferences will be hosted by the Prime Minister and senior Ministers on the coronavirus pandemic, supported by scientific and medical experts including the Chief Medical Officer and Chief Scientific Adviser. The press conferences form part of the government's commitment to clarity and transparency in order to ensure British people are fully informed about the steps they can take to protect themselves and others.

A Downing Street spokesperson said:

The Prime Minister and this Government are committed to keeping the public informed every step of the way about what we're doing to fight the spread of coronavirus, when we're doing it and why we're doing it. At all times we will be led by the science to bring forward the right responses at the right time to this global pandemic.

On Monday morning the Prime Minister will speak to British manufacturers including Unipart Group to ask them to support production of essential medical equipment for the NHS. He will stress the vital role of Britain's manufacturers in preparing the country for a significant spread of coronavirus and call on them to step up and support the nationwide effort to fight the virus.

A Downing Street spokesperson said:

Preparing for the spread of the coronavirus outbreak is a national priority and we're calling on the manufacturing industry and all those with relevant expertise who might be able to help to come together to help the country tackle this national crisis. We need to step up production of vital equipment such as ventilators so that we can all help the most vulnerable, and we need businesses to come to us and help in this national effort.

On Monday afternoon the Prime Minister will also chair another meeting of the COBR emergency committee to coordinate the government's ongoing response to coronavirus. The meeting is expected to include discussion on current modelling of the outbreak and next steps on plans around shielding elderly

and vulnerable people, household isolation and mass gatherings.

Following his calls over the last few days with world leaders including President Trump, Chancellor Merkel, Prime Minister Abe, Prime Minister Conte and Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman the Prime Minister will continue his engagement with international partners to ensure a coordinated global response to the outbreak. Tomorrow all G7 leaders will participate in a call to discuss international efforts. The Prime Minister will encourage fellow leaders to support the World Health Organization response, provide funding and expertise for research that can ensure rapid progress to develop a vaccine, and drive forward support to mitigate the economic impacts of the crisis.

In the past few weeks the UK has shown leadership by providing up to £150 million to the IMF's Catastrophe Containment and Relief Trust to support the economies of developing countries affected by the virus, £50 million for the Centre for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations which is leading the global research and development of a vaccine, £25 million for further research into the virus including to develop a rapid test, and £10 million for the WHO's flash appeal for the outbreak.

PM call with Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman: 15 March 2020

The Prime Minister spoke to Saudi Arabian Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman this afternoon about the coronavirus pandemic.

The Prime Minister updated the Crown Prince on the steps the UK is taking, driven by scientific advice, to tackle the spread of the virus.

Both leaders agreed on the need for an internationally coordinated response to the outbreak, particularly on developing a vaccine and limiting the economic disruption caused by the pandemic. They resolved to work closely on this, including through the G20 Presidency which Saudi Arabia holds this year.

Joint Statement on the Ninth

Anniversary of the Syrian Uprising

Nine years ago today, tens of thousands of Syrians peacefully took to the streets calling for respect for human rights and the end of government corruption. Instead of heeding the Syrian people's legitimate demands, the Assad regime responded with a ruthless campaign of arbitrary arrests, detentions, torture, enforced disappearances, and violence. As the Syrian conflict enters its 10th year, the Assad regime's brutal pursuit of a military victory has displaced over 11 million people – nearly half of Syria's pre-war population – and killed more than 500,000 Syrians.

The Assad regime must accept the will of the Syrian people who demand and deserve to live in peace and free of shelling, chemical weapons attacks, barrel bombs, airstrikes, arbitrary detention, torture, and starvation.

We express our satisfaction at the liberation by the Global Coalition and the Syrian Democratic Forces of all territory once held by Daesh. However, the threat from Daesh remains, and we are resolved to continue our joint effort through the Coalition to ensure their lasting defeat. We are fighting terrorism with determination and are on the front lines of the fight.

But fighting terrorism cannot and must not justify massive violations of international humanitarian law or continued violence. The reckless military offensive by Assad, Russia, and Iran in Idlib only causes further suffering and an unprecedented humanitarian crisis, as medical and humanitarian infrastructures and workers, as well as civilians, are killed. In its latest bloody assault on Idlib, the Assad regime, backed by Russia and Iran, has displaced nearly one million civilians since December alone, the fastest displacement since the start of the conflict. For the latest ceasefire in northwest Syria to endure, a nationwide ceasefire must be established as called for in UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 2254.

Despite significant efforts by the international community, life-saving assistance is still not reaching large numbers of those in desperate need. As major donors since the beginning of the war, we will continue to support humanitarian assistance to the Syrian people, including through cross-border assistance which is a vital necessity, and we demand that all parties, particularly the Syrian regime and its allies, allow safe, unimpeded and sustained humanitarian access to all people in need in Syria. Yet, we will not consider providing or supporting any reconstruction assistance until a credible, substantive, and genuine political process is irreversibly underway. Absent such a process, reconstruction assistance for Syria would only entrench a deeply flawed and abusive government, increase corruption, reinforce the war economy and further aggravate the root causes of the conflict.

We encourage the international community to continue to provide assistance to Syria's neighbors to share the costs of Syria's refugee crisis. Displaced Syrians must be allowed to return voluntarily and safely to their homes, without fear of arbitrary detention, violation of rights and forced

conscription. Yet, the Syrian regime continues to prevent them from doing so.

We will continue to demand accountability for the atrocities committed by the Assad regime and we will continue our efforts to make sure that those who are responsible for crimes against humanity, war crimes, and other violations and abuses are identified and held accountable. The international community must come together to support the collection and release of documentation of violations and abuses of human rights and violations of international humanitarian law, including the critical work of the UN Commission of Inquiry; the UN International, Impartial, and Independent Mechanism for Syria; and the UN Secretary General's Board of Inquiry.

The military solution the Syrian regime hopes to achieve, with backing from Russia and Iran, will not bring peace. We reiterate our strong support for the UN-led process in Geneva and UNSCR 2254 to bring about a peaceful and stable Syria.

We – France, Germany, the United Kingdom, and the United States – demand that the Assad regime stop the ruthless killing and engage meaningfully in all aspects of UNSCR 2254, including a nationwide ceasefire, a reformed constitution, release of arbitrarily detained persons, as well as free and fair elections. A credible political process cannot be limited to attempts at convening a constitutional committee. All Syrian citizens, including citizens who are displaced persons and refugees, should be allowed to participate in free and fair elections, under UN supervision.

[Travel advice for the USA](#)

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