



accidents don't have to happen

On-Street Micromobility Rental Framework

RoSPA's response to the Department for Transport's consultation

Jan 2025



Response to the Department for Transport's consultation: On-street Micromobility

Introduction

This is the response of The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) to the Department for Transport's consultation. We have no objection to our response being reproduced or attributed.

Caitlin Taylor, Road Safety Manager.



Response to the Department for Transport's consultation: On-street Micromobility

The Department for Transport introduced their consultation survey with the following:

We plan to empower elected local leaders regulate On-Street Micromobility (OSM) schemes to maximise their benefits and limit their negative impacts. The proposed scope of the types of schemes to be regulated are those whose vehicles are parked on public land and/or are particularly impacting pedestrians in shared street space. Initially, this regulatory framework would cover shared cycles and e-cycles. It is designed to be expanded to cover other vehicle types and operations in the future as necessary, particularly those which similarly impact upon pedestrian space.

It is our view that there are problems with how these schemes currently operate, including insufficient local influence over schemes, an imbalance of access to information, market uncertainty, and geographic inequity. In our view, there are potential benefits to shared micromobility, including reducing inactivity, greener transport, and better integrated transport systems. There are also potential disbenefits such as obstructive parking and antisocial behaviour. We are looking to strike a balance in its regulatory approach to allow local areas to maximise these potential benefits and minimise disbenefits, helping this emerging market to flourish in a way which works for whole communities.

The underlying principles for the proposed regulatory intervention to ensure its functionality and effectiveness are: consistency, adaptability, proportionality, enforceability, and accountability. In its assessment of how best to maximise benefits, minimise disbenefits, and align with these principles, we have settled upon licensing for OSM schemes as its preferred option.

The proposed licensing approach would require a licence to operate an OSM scheme, and to operate a scheme without a licence would be a criminal offence. Local authorities would be designated as 'licensing authorities' and be responsible for issuing licences in their area. As part of this proposed approach, the Secretary of State for Transport would set some minimum standard conditions common to all licences to ensure all schemes operate under a baseline level of safety and effectiveness. Licensing authorities could then add their own bespoke conditions to best align OSM schemes with local needs and priorities. An area in which we recognise a particular need to balance differing local interests is in the provision of parking for OSM schemes, especially where responsibilities belong to different tiers of local government. The proposed solution for ensuring adequate parking provision for licensed schemes is a legal duty for local highway authorities to cooperate with licensed schemes and licensing authorities.

We are also interested in views at this point on the necessity of a bespoke appeals process in relation to OSM licensing decisions.

At this stage, we are seeking to consult only on key aspects and broad principles of this overall approach. The finer detail, such as how a licensing framework would operate on a practical level, would be set out in secondary legislation following the provision of powers to do so by parliament in primary legislation. Further consultation on such details will be carried out before regulations are made to enact this regulatory framework.

Question:

To what extent do you agree or disagree that the types of operations we expect to be covered by a new framework is appropriate?



Response to the Department for Transport's consultation: On-street Micromobility

RoSPA response

Strongly Agree: we support the regulation of Shared Micromobility Schemes, as this would improve regulations and uniformity around safety.

The Department for Transport survey stated:

Initially, this framework would cover shared cycles and e-cycles. It is designed to be expanded to cover other vehicle types and operations in the future as necessary, particularly those which similarly impact upon pedestrian space.

Examples of schemes that are not envisaged to fall within the scope of this framework might include a group of residents wishing to share a cycle, a shop that rents out a small fleet of cycles stored on private property, or a business that leases vehicles on a longer-term basis to be used in a similar way to a private vehicle.

There is no intention to include motor vehicle hire in the scope of this policy. There are existing regulations around parking, insurance and fleet maintenance for motor vehicles.

Question:

What, if any, additional micromobility scheme types that you think should be exempted from in the scope of this policy?

RoSPA response

None.

Question:

What, if any, additional micromobility scheme types that you think should be included from in the scope of this policy?

RoSPA response

Schemes involving emerging vehicles (e.g., e-scooters) parked or operating in public spaces should be included as they pose similar risks to safety.

Question

What, if any, additional micromobility vehicle types that you think should be excluded from in the scope of this policy?

RoSPA response

None

Question:

What, if any, additional micromobility vehicle types that you think should be included from in the scope of this policy?



Response to the Department for Transport's consultation: On-street Micromobility

RoSPA response

E-scooters and other electric personal transport devices as they are already widely used and present safety challenges.

The Department for Transport survey stated:

Shared micromobility is a relatively new transport mode, offering people a quick and convenient way of travelling and we have identified key opportunities of the mode if managed effectively.

We consider that this form of transport can offer three key opportunities:

- 1. Reducing inactivity – shared micromobility allows users to access public transport more conveniently and potentially replace short distance car journeys. These micromobility journeys can be more active than car journeys.*
- 2. Greener transport – micromobility vehicles have zero emissions at the point of use, offering a more environmentally friendly transport option than private cars.*
- 3. Creating an integrated transport system – shared micromobility schemes can make public transport offerings more accessible to users if located to serve less well-connected areas.*

Any regulatory intervention should, where possible, seek to encourage usage that maximises these opportunities.

Question:

To what extent do you agree or disagree that shared cycles, shared e-cycles and shared e-scooters present an opportunity to reduce inactivity, create and integrated transport system and create a greener transport network?

RoSPA response

Category	Statement	Response
Shared Cycles	Reduce inactivity	Strongly Agree
	Create an integrated transport system	Agree
	Create a greener transport network	Strongly Agree
Shared E-Cycles	Reduce inactivity	Strongly Agree
	Create an integrated transport system	Agree
	Create a greener transport network	Agree



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Shared E-Scooters	Reduce inactivity	Agree
	Create an integrated transport system	Agree
	Create a greener transport network	Agree

The Department for Transport survey stated:

Safety is the government's priority. Any proposed regulations must also account for the potential risks from on-street micromobility (OSM) schemes and aim to mitigate them to the greatest extent while promoting the opportunities. We consider that the two main risks are:

1. *Obstructive (and potentially dangerous) parking.*
2. *Anti-social behaviour.*

Question:

To what extent do you agree or disagree that shared cycles, shared e-cycles and shared e-scooters present a risk of obstructive parking and anti-social use?

RoSPA response

Category	Statement	Response
Shared Cycles	Obstructive Parking	Agree
	Anti-Social Use	Agree
Shared E-Cycles	Obstructive Parking	Agree
	Anti-Social Use	Agree
Shared E-Scooters	Obstructive Parking	Strongly Agree
	Anti-Social Use	Agree

The Department for Transport survey stated:

We set vehicle standards in distinct separate regulations following a robust process of evidence gathering, vehicle testing, and consultation. The inherent safety aspects of any future vehicles will be considered fully separately from the proposed intervention to manage OSM schemes. Therefore, we are seeking views here on the risks of shared micromobility operations as a model, rather than risks of specific vehicle types.



Response to the Department for Transport's consultation: On-street Micromobility

Question

What, if any, other significant risks do you believe are presented by on-street micromobility schemes?

RoSPA response

Inadequate rider training and awareness of traffic laws. Lack of protective gear, increasing the risk of injury. Conflicts between micromobility users, pedestrians, and vehicles.

The Department for Transport survey stated:

Currently, there is no legal requirement to seek permission from local authorities to operate an OSM scheme.

The proposed approach of licensing would provide the legal mechanism needed to ensure local authorities have the power to shape shared micromobility schemes and ensure they work for local people, and also to intervene promptly and decisively to tackle any issues which arise.

Under this approach, the Secretary of State for Transport would set minimum standards to be included in all licences which are largely expected to relate to the objective of ensuring the safe and effective operation of all schemes. These minimum standards would ensure that less experienced and/or smaller licensing authorities can be confident when issuing licences that the schemes will be operating safely and effectively.

Licensing authorities would be able to add further bespoke conditions to allow them the flexibility to ensure shared micromobility schemes work as well as possible for local communities and help them to meet their local transport objectives and priorities. Schemes would need to comply with the conditions set out in their licence or risk having that licence revoked. Operating a scheme without a licence would be a criminal offence.

Question:

To what extent do you agree or disagree that a licensing framework is an essential part of effectively controlling OSMR schemes?

RoSPA response

Strongly Agree

The Department for Transport survey stated:

Per current proposals, the highest tier of devolved local government would grant licences for their jurisdiction. This would be for the purpose of allowing on-street micromobility schemes to be able to operate on a more region-wide basis to create a consistent, integrated transport system which reflects the nature of user journeys. Where one exists, this will be the Strategic Authority (such as Transport for London or Liverpool City Region Authority) and in other cases where there is no Strategic Authority, this might be the city council (for example Leicester City Council).

Question:

Assuming a licensing framework is implemented, to what extent do you agree or disagree that the 'licensing authority' should sit at the highest level of local government?



Response to the Department for Transport's consultation: On-street Micromobility

RoSPA response

Agree

The Department for Transport survey stated:

Licences would contain a number of minimum standard conditions that would be non-negotiable and common to all licences.

This is designed to ensure minimum acceptable standards of safety and operability are met in all schemes, regardless of the experience or capability of the licensing authority, whilst also providing consistency to operators.

The nature of minimum standards set by the Secretary of State have yet to be decided but could include enforcement measures as well as safety and accountability mechanisms.

Question:

To what extent do you agree or disagree that it would be beneficial to have minimum standard conditions that would be common to all licences for a given vehicle type (for example e-cycles)?

RoSPA response

Strongly Agree

The Department for Transport survey stated:

Licensing authorities would also have the ability to add in bespoke conditions to suit local needs and priorities. For example, the number of vehicles allowed may need to vary across cities and areas of different sizes.

These conditions could include caps on:

- *vehicle fleet size*
- *precise operating area*
- *limiting operations at certain times of day*

Question:

To what extent do you agree or disagree that licensing authorities should be able to set their own bespoke conditions in addition to minimum requirements set centrally?

RoSPA response

Agree

Question:

To what extent do you agree or disagree that licensing authorities ability to add bespoke local conditions should be limited to specific aspects of shared scheme operation?



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RoSPA response

Agree: Local authorities should have the flexibility to address specific safety and operational concerns unique to their area, provided they align with the national baseline.

The Department for Transport survey stated:

We are considering whether a dedicated appeals process is needed for licensing decisions. This would mean some decisions could be appealed without resorting to the courts, which could be more accessible and less costly than court proceedings. This could reduce the burden on the judicial system but could also mean appeals of licensing decisions would be more readily made. More appeals could increase the process burden on licensing authorities.

The detail of how an appeals process could work would be decided at the secondary legislative stage if we decide such a process is necessary. At this stage, we are only seeking views on whether such an appeals process is necessary in principle.

Question:

To what extent do you agree or disagree that a dedicated process for on-street micromobility schemes is necessary?

RoSPA response

Agree

The Department for Transport survey stated:

One area in which we recognise a particular need to balance differing local interests is in the provision of parking for OSM schemes, especially where responsibilities for licensing and managing street space respectively would belong to different tiers of local government.

The proposed solution to ensuring adequate parking provision for licensed schemes is a duty for local highway authorities to cooperate with licensed schemes and licensing authorities to provide adequate parking.

Question:

To what extent do you agree or disagree that a legal duty on local highway authorities with parking powers, would be sufficient to ensure adequate parking for on-street micromobility schemes?

RoSPA response

Neither agree nor Disagree

Question:

What in your view, if any, are the current barriers to providing adequate parking for on-street micromobility schemes?



Response to the Department for Transport's consultation: On-street Micromobility

RoSPA response

Lack of dedicated space and funding. Insufficient collaboration between local authorities and scheme operators. Poor enforcement against unsafe or obstructive parking.

Question:

What, if any, other essential aspects do you think we will need to consider at the primary legislation stage to ensure a licensing framework will function effectively?

RoSPA response

To ensure a licensing framework functions effectively, it is essential to establish clear enforcement mechanisms for non-compliance, with strong powers for local authorities to address violations of safety rules by both operators and users. Mandatory rider safety education should be implemented, ensuring riders are properly educated on helmet use, speed limits, and safe riding practices. Additionally, infrastructure and design standards must be in place, with guidelines for safe docking, parking, and designated riding areas to minimise conflicts with pedestrians and vehicles. It is also important to require safety technology, such as speed-limiting systems, and enhanced visibility features like lighting to protect users and the public. Comprehensive data-sharing requirements should be established to ensure operators share trip and safety data with local authorities for ongoing monitoring. Finally, regular safety evaluations should be conducted to allow for timely adjustments to the licensing framework based on safety outcomes.

RoSPA has no further comments to make on the consultation process, other than to thank the Department for Transport for the opportunity to comment. We have no objection to our response being reproduced or attributed.

