

Cllr David Renard,  
Chairman, Environment, Economy, Housing and Transport Board  
Local Government Association  
18 Smith Square  
Westminster  
London SW1P 3HZ



21st August 2020

Dear Cllr David Renard

I am writing regarding the e-scooters hire schemes that some local authorities are considering, under the legal framework for trials introduced by the Government in June.

I have read the LGA's written evidence to the Transport Select Committee's inquiry on this topic. If I may say so, it seemed very balanced and appropriately cautious, considering the lack of public information on this issue and how the Government cut short the consultation and fast-tracked the legislation.

PACTS also submitted evidence to the Transport Select Committee. We expressed concerns, based on experience and research in other countries, about the safety of e-scooters for users and others (particularly pedestrians, the elderly and the visually-impaired). We also question their impacts on active travel and their overall transport and environmental value.

We recognise, however, that some schemes have started and that a number of other local authorities are investigating or intending to permit trials of e-scooters hire schemes.

We entirely respect their right to do as they see fit. My reason for writing is to try to see that the trials operate as safely as possible and that lessons are fully learned before any wider legalisation is goes ahead.

We anticipate that there will be strong local public and media reaction to the schemes – some positive and some negative. We would urge councillors to fully appraise themselves of the risks and benefits of e-scooters. The Transport Select Committee's evidence (oral and written) is a very good source. There is also a great deal that can be gleaned by simply searching the Internet – much of it quite concerning – from the experience of cities abroad where e-scooters are permitted.

If a council decides to go ahead with a scheme, we strongly recommend the following

1. Choose schemes where scooters are returned to a docking station and not those where scooters are likely to be left obstructing pavements and creating trip hazards and nuisance.
2. Specify scooters with a top speed of no more than 12.5 mph, with a power output of 250 Watts and a weight limit of around 25 KGs. These are perfectly adequate for most uses and safer for the users and for pedestrians. Indeed, most of those sold privately have this sort of specification.

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We strongly recommend against the faster, more powerful, heavier specification that the government has permitted.

3. Require the scooter operator to publish, in advance, an enforcement plan to show how misuse and abuse will be prevented and dealt with. This should be open to public and police scrutiny and examined before the scheme goes live.
4. Ensure that people (including those who are blind or visually-impaired, and those without ready access to the internet) can easily report incidents. This should be in real time, not at the end of some survey process. The reports should go to the council, not just to the scooter operator.

I would be very grateful if you would pass on this letter to your local authority members. If you or they would like to discuss it further, I would be happy to do so.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David G Davies', followed by a horizontal flourish.

David G Davies, Executive Director, PACTS [david.davies@pacts.org.uk](mailto:david.davies@pacts.org.uk)