

# Local Government Association briefing Autonomous and Electric Vehicles Bill Second Reading, House of Commons Monday 23 October 2017



## Key messages

- The Autonomous and Electric Vehicles Bill provides an opportunity to promote greener transport options by increasing the access and availability of charge points for electric cars and enabling drivers of automated cars to be insured on UK roads. This follows the Government's commitment to ensure nearly all cars and vans on our roads are zero emission by 2050
- The Government's ambition to encourage the development of autonomous and electric vehicles is a positive step to improving transport technology. It is vital the Government engages with local authorities on how we can best accommodate the transition to autonomous vehicles.
- The Government's intention to encourage the use of electric vehicles will go some way to helping to tackle the UK's problem with air quality. We are calling on the Government to produce clear guidance on how to reach the target of approximately 100 per cent ultra-low-emission vehicles by 2050, as the target isn't outlined in the proposed legislation.
- Autonomous vehicles may have a role to play in meeting the low-emissions target but on their own they are not the answer to tackling air pollution. Councils need a range of powers and devolved funding to allow them to further tackle poor air quality.
- Councils should be given the power to combat congestion hot spots. This includes measures to promote alternative travel, such as cycling, walking and public transport. A comprehensive congestion strategy would help tackle the issue.
- It is important that the regulations to introduce charge points does not penalise innovative councils who have already installed charging infrastructure by imposing large new costs upon councils to upgrade existing infrastructure.

## Autonomic and Electric Vehicles Bill

The Automated and Electric Vehicles Bill seeks to increase the access and availability of chargepoints for electric cars, while also giving the government powers to make it compulsory for chargepoints to be installed across the country at filling stations and enabling drivers of automated cars to be insured on UK roads.

As advances in transport technology continue and trials become more extensive, it is critical that councils are consulted on the implications, and are able to shape

# Briefing

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outcomes and take up the opportunities offered by future transport, such as, through the use of autonomous and connected vehicles.

Automation and electrification could reduce the costs of motoring respectively making transport as a whole far cheaper. Whilst this would be a welcome development it is likely to lead to a massive increase in the number of journeys taken and corresponding increases in congestion.

We need to prepare for this potential strain on our infrastructure and ensure that these developments are not stifled by the need to manage the significant increase in traffic.

### **Funding for local transport**

Since 2000, there are nearly eight-and-a-half million more vehicles now on the road, adding to congestion and road maintenance issues, such as potholes, wear-down of road markings, and increasing general wear and tear.

Local authorities need to have the same long term funding certainty for their transport budgets that Highways England and Network Rail are given by the Government. Both have five year funding programmes which allow them to make long term commitments to strategic projects. Longer term certainty has allowed Greater Manchester to deliver a programme of improvements to its public transport system. All local authorities need the same level of commitment in order to plan the same kind of strategic projects to improve congestion on local road networks.

This is why we are calling on the Government to develop a fully funded plan to help councils deliver the desperately-needed local road improvements we need. This should include matching the extra growth in tax take with the funding it provides councils. This would see councils having up to an additional £418 million a year to spend on filling potholes, easing congestion and protect vital bus routes.<sup>1</sup> Only with long-term funding can councils deliver roads truly fit for the 21st Century.

### **Tackling congestion and air pollution**

Congestion can have a significant impact on our towns, cities and communities, and act as a drag on local growth. Worse still, it can lead to toxic air and reduced quality of life.

Good air quality is vital for our health and quality of life as well as the environment. Councils are playing a pivotal role in tackling air pollution. These measures include encouraging the use of electric vehicles with recharging points, promoting cycling, managing borough-wide air pollution monitoring networks, pioneering the concept of low-emission zones, planning for new places in ways that improve air quality, and engaging with businesses to increase awareness and reduce their environmental impact.

Councils should be able to switch their focus from simply monitoring air quality to also devising solutions to tackling poor air quality. This needs to be supported by government policy at a national level.

Our recent [report on tackling congestion](#) shows the innovative approaches that

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<sup>1</sup> Department for Transport, [Boost for electric and driverless car industry as government drives forward green transport revolution](#), 18 October 2017

councils are taking, for example through promoting alternative modes of travel, smart use of data, managing demand and through smarter and pooled investment. With traffic forecasted to rise by up to 55 per cent by 2040, we are calling on the Government to outline a comprehensive congestion strategy to tackle the issue.

### **Further information**

LGA report: [A country in a jam: tackling congestion in our towns and cities](#)

LGA media release: [Spend rising fuel and motoring tax income on improving local roads - councils urge government](#)

[LGA responds to Government announcement on lane rental for utility companies](#)

Department for Transport, [Boost for electric and driverless car industry as government drives forward green transport revolution](#), 18 October 2017