

Allowing non-physical guided transport modes to be authorised by a Transport and Works Act order: UTG response

Background

The Urban Transport Group (UTG) represents the seven largest city region strategic transport bodies in England, which, between them, serve over twenty million people in Greater Manchester (Transport for Greater Manchester), London (Transport for London), the Liverpool City Region (Merseytravel), Tyne and Wear (Nexus), the Sheffield City Region (South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive), the West Midlands (Transport for West Midlands) and West Yorkshire (West Yorkshire Combined Authority).

We also have the following associate members: Tees Valley Combined Authority, Strathclyde Partnership for Transport, West of England Combined Authority, Nottingham City Council, Translink (Northern Ireland), Transport for Wales and Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority.

Our members plan, procure, provide and promote public transport in Britain's largest city regions, with the aim of delivering integrated transport networks accessible to all.

Should you require any further information regarding this response, please contact Rebecca Fuller, Assistant Director, Urban Transport Group at rebecca.fuller@urbantransportgroup.org or 0113 251 7405.

Response

1a. Do you support or oppose a legislative change to allow for non-physical guidance systems to be authorised under the TWA?

Support/Oppose

Support. We welcome this amendment which has the potential to widen the range of rapid transit solutions available to transport authorities.

Buses, trams and trains are thought of as natural candidates for early automation given they typically follow predictable routes and can use segregated infrastructure (like bus lanes) designed to minimise encounters with conventional traffic and cut through congestion. This change to the TWA would help to facilitate the use of these technologies and open up more options for artificial segregation of sustainable transport modes to improve journey times and reliability.

The installation of non-physical guidance systems may also be less disruptive for other road users compared to physical measures, avoiding the need for the laying of tracks, for example. Potentially, it could reduce the overall costs of a system.

1b. If you oppose the above, please provide reasons for that view?

Not applicable.

2a. Is the proposed legislative change sufficient or not sufficient to capture all forms of non-physical guided transport systems that are currently on the market or close to being placed on the market?

Sufficient/Not sufficient

Sufficient. The proposed amendment ensures a wide range of innovative technologies can be considered by transport authorities.

2b. If not sufficient, please specify what more you consider might be needed together with any necessary explanation or information in support?

Not applicable.

3a. Do you have any safety concerns about authorising the use of new technology involving non-physical guidance systems via a TWA? Yes/No

We have no safety concerns regarding the use of a TWA to authorise non-physical guidance systems. However, as the consultation document points out, any vehicles using this technology would first need to demonstrate compliance with the relevant safety and security legislation as set out by the Health and Safety Executive and in the relevant road traffic and safety legislation, for example.

3b. If you do have safety concerns can you provide an explanation regarding these concerns?

Whilst we do not have any safety concerns around authorising the use of non-physical guidance systems via a TWA, public perceptions of safety in an environment where pedestrians and vehicles interact with an autonomous or non-physically guided transport system could present a perceived 'gap' in safety, requiring additional reassurance to promote confidence in the system.

4. Please provide any other comments you may have regarding the use of non-physical guidance systems or the proposed changes to the Guided Modes Order?



We welcome the proposed amendment as a means to widen the choice of rapid transit solutions available to transport authorities. Scheme promoters would remain responsible for demonstrating the viability, safety efficacy or other benefits of their proposals, including compliance with any relevant legislation.