



**Submission to the Transport Select Committee
Securing the future of the sustainable transport sector
May 2020**

Introduction

This submission sets out some of the issues facing the sustainable transport sector as a result of the Covid-19 crisis and highlights some measures that could be introduced to ensure the viability of the sector at this difficult time. Covid-19 presents significant operational challenges for sustainable mobility. It is essential that the sector is given the support it needs to survive, be available to consumers and continue to drive air quality and congestion improvements as the recovery from the Covid-19 crisis progresses. The priority for government and industry must be to ensure that innovation in the transport sector continues to be at the forefront policies during and as we recover from the Covid-19 crisis. Innovation is a crucial part of reaching our country's sustainability goals and, while progress has been made in recent years, Covid-19 cannot stall momentum in achieving goals of reduced private car usage and increased shared mobility solutions.

Background

The sustainable mobility sector encompasses operators of bike share, bike hire, car club, car rental, digital mobility platforms alongside traditional public transport providers such as rail and bus. The membership of the Urban Mobility Partnership includes operators across all of these modes.

Sustainable travel in the UK has been growing in importance for consumers and policy makers. It is essential that the potential of this sector is harnessed properly to allow the government to achieve its environmental targets. This is particularly the case for local authority driven policy agendas which require improvements in air quality and reductions in congestion across urban areas. The UK has been making significant progress in this area. The average distance travelled by car has decreased by nine percent over ten years (2005-2015), whilst the distances travelled by sustainable transport modes, such as cycling, bus and train, have increased by nearly 50%. However, it still remains the case that over 60% of all trips are completed in either private cars, vans or taxis. Similarly, many local areas are still not achieving air quality targets and have significant challenges to encourage consumers to switch to sustainable travel.

Within this market, the Covid-19 crisis has had a significant impact on the sustainable travel sector. Although the sector was growing across the UK, since the Covid-19 lockdown has been introduced, many operators have seen very significant falls in revenue. The industry relies on the revenue from consumer journeys and the fall in the amount of consumer travel has, unsurprisingly, impacted the sector. This could have a significant effect on the ability of the sustainable mobility sector to grow and support national policy objectives to secure long-term reductions in congestion and air quality improvements.





Sector support

We propose the following measures are implemented to safeguard the future of the sustainable mobility sector:

- 1. Sustainable transport recovery forum.** In order to support the recovery of the sector, the government should convene a new sustainable travel recovery forum to discuss support measures with the industry and to understand what guidance or interventions may be needed. This forum should be convened as a matter of urgency to ensure the long-term viability of the sector.
- 2. Continue to incentivise innovation in the sustainable transport sector.** While restrictions remain in place, it is important that multi-modal transport continues to develop. This will ensure that the transport sector enables mobility solutions for the public that can best serve public safety as we come through the Covid-19 crisis, as well as supporting a levelling up programme across the UK regions. Supporting the implementation of Mobility-as-a-Service (MaaS) solutions will be an important part of this and UMP recommends that there should be an increased roll out of MaaS pilots, particularly where possible in conjunction with essential workers while Covid-19 restrictions are eased. A MaaS application where people can plan, book and pay for a journey which uses multiple modes of transport all in one place has the potential to significantly improve consumers ability to make the shift to more sustainable journeys. This could also be a crucial element to securing a safe recovery from Covid-19, whilst preventing an increase in private car use.
- 3. Sustainable transport permit fees.** In some locations, car club operators and other sustainable transport operators such as bike hire pay permit fees to local authorities to allow vehicles to be stationed in designated bays or road locations. These fees continue to be payable whether or not the modes are utilised. These charges are effectively the equivalent to business rates and are having a significant impact on the sector at a time when utilisation of vehicles is much reduced. The government should urgently act on how it can compensate local authorities for a suspension of these fees during the Covid-19 outbreak. Similarly, for any Penalty Charge Notices levied on vehicles which are stranded due to the outbreak.
- 4. Operating during recovery period.** Although restrictions in the UK remain in place, it is important to anticipate the progressive relaxation of the lockdown and put in place preparations to allow the sustainable travel sector to operate. This includes introducing guidance to allow social distancing, demand management and safe conditions for workers and consumers. Many sustainable transport modes have an important role to play in the recovery process; for example, car club, car rental and bike sharing can support social distancing. Similarly, on demand technology for bus travel and the use of smaller buses can also support the recovery process.
- 5. Continue long term planning for sustainable transport.** In order to continue the momentum behind innovative and forward-thinking mobility systems in urban areas, there is a need for clear, long-term funding decisions to be made to incentivise long-term planning by local areas and city planners. There is also a need for further overarching strategies from government to drive the development of best practice across the UK, to take advantage of the learning opportunities





between major urban centres and to encourage investment in new urban mobility technologies. The government must continue and increase its commitment to this policy area to ensure the future growth and impact of the sector. This is also vital to ensure that much-needed investment is continued in the parts of the UK that are looking for a programme of levelling up and transport improvements.

About UMP

The Urban Mobility Partnership (UMP) is a coalition committed to providing long-term leadership and near-term solutions to improve future urban mobility. Our innovative partnership represents the breadth of the urban mobility landscape. We were founded to ensure that effective policy at a national, regional and local level, combined with new technology, supports better mobility and helps tackle the major challenges of congestion, air quality and climate change.

