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for Transport

Lord Lucas
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Dear Lord Lucas,

Automated Vehicles Bill 2nd Reading – Follow Up Letter

Following the recent 2nd Reading debate on the Automated Vehicles Bill held on 28 November, I am writing to provide further clarity and detail on the points you raised in the debate and address questions where through time constraints and volume of issues, I could not respond directly in my closing speech.

Use of self-driving vehicles on rail lines

You raised a point around the potential use of self-driving vehicles on rail lines as a peripheral transport network.

The Bill regulates the use of road vehicles on publicly accessible roads and other public places. It does not change the regulatory frameworks for other vehicle types or for vehicles used exclusively on segregated routes or private land. The topic is therefore out of scope of the regulatory regime introduced by the Bill.

The UK is one of the first countries exploring the business case for connected and automated mobility (CAM) as a mass transit solution on segregated routes. £1.5 million of government funding for CAM mass transit feasibility studies - for which the first tranche will conclude in the coming weeks - will help us to understand the economic and societal benefits for underserved places; and particularly how the costs and benefits of CAM mass transit compare to existing public transport modes (including rail).

Following the launch of the first round of the competition, the UK Government (CCAV) engaged with some local authorities that had demonstrated an interest in increasing mass transit services through the DFT's Restoring Your Railway Ideas Fund.

Through these engagements, CCAV officials obtained anecdotal evidence that decommissioned railway routes may not be instantly convertible to deploy another mode of mass transit service, as many of them are no longer complete.

Within the CAM mass transit projects, two studies will provide Government with evidence on the feasibility of delivering a CAM mass transit service on decommissioned railway routes between Hertfordshire-St Albans and Bolton Transport Interchange-Royal Bolton Hospital.

Legislative and regulatory changes would be required if the proposed services in the feasibility studies were to be deployed in the future. Regulatory changes required to enable CAM services on segregated routes are outside the scope of the Automated Vehicles Bill. Officials are investigating the regulatory requirements for segregated routes with colleagues from Department for Transport, the Office for Rail and Road and the Health & Safety Executive.

Existing safety regulations will apply to automated vehicles that are not road vehicles or that are used on exclusively segregated routes or private land. Technical regulations being developed in support of the Bill may be useful to guide the development of off-road applications.

Information Exchange/Reporting of self-driving vehicle faults

You raised a point around the systems for reporting on the condition of the self-driving vehicle needing to be effective and quick.

The responsibility for repair and maintenance would largely be the responsibility of the User-in-Charge (UiC), No-User-in-Charge-Operator (NUICO) or registered keeper of the vehicle. However, we would expect that the automated driving system would be designed to detect faults that would affect its safe operation.

For example, the vehicle can perform self-checks to confirm when it was last serviced, and that the vehicle is free of faults (for example, its sensors are working) before enabling the self-driving feature.

We anticipate that self-driving vehicles will be 'connected', in the sense that they can send and receive information. The vehicle may be able to communicate faults and maintenance directly to an operator.

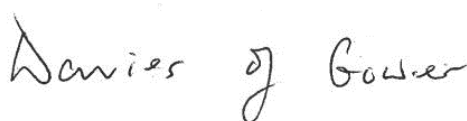
We do not foresee the need for any specialist infrastructure to enable the vehicles to be connected and to communicate with the vehicle operator or the vehicle manufacturer. We have not assumed new investment in the road infrastructure will be required to cater for such vehicles and we do not propose to rely on new forms of connectivity, either with other vehicles or with

the road infrastructure. We will, however, monitor developments and take these into account as they occur.

We also expect that information on routine servicing and maintenance is made available by the manufacturer to owners and operators of self-driving vehicles.

Once again, I thank you for your interest on these issues and for their participation in the debate. I understand that you will be meeting my officials on the 12th December. Please do not hesitate to get in touch with my office to request any further information.

I will place a copy of this letter in the Library of the House.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Davies of Gower". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first name "Davies" being more prominent than the second name "Gower".

LORD DAVIES OF GOWER