

NICKIE AIKEN MP
CITIES OF LONDON AND WESTMINSTER



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Trudy Harrison MP

Department for Transport
Great Minster House
33 Horseferry Road
London
SW1P 4DR

30 August 2022

Dockless Bikes: Hazardous Parking

Dear Minister,

I appreciate that the Department for Transport is working incredibly hard to ensure that everyone has affordable access to convenient methods of public transport. Cycling is one such method and also a clean, green and healthy alternative to car use and other types of transportation. An initiative I certainly welcome.

Rental e-bicycles and e-scooters are becoming increasingly popular with local people and visitors alike in Central London. This follows the successful roll-out of the “Boris Bikes” some years ago by Transport for London.

As a Conservative, I welcome market competition to ensure the cost of hiring such vehicles is competitive for users and also the quality of customer service is kept high. However, it appears that over recent weeks a number of companies have chosen to dump a significant number of such e-bicycles and e-scooters across my constituency without any thought for pedestrian safety.


I have received a number of complaints from constituents, recently coupled with evidence showing e-bicycles in particular blocking the public highway. This is combined with a growth in the number of users leaving bicycles and e-scooters in unsuitable places once they have completed their journey. For example, on street corners blocking dropped kerbs, and across pavements blocking access. This is occurring in local neighbourhoods and areas of high footfall such as Oxford Street and Regent Street alike.

Not only does this irresponsible behaviour pose a risk to pedestrians, it has an immense impact on mobility and wheelchair users and blind and partially sighted members of our community, who are unable to get around these obstacles without making dangerous detours and sometimes having to use the road.

Cycling is the way forward, but we must ensure our pavements are not blocked and that there is not a free for all attitude taken by companies renting these e-bicycles and e-scooters. I would therefore be grateful if your department would consider calling for the dockless bike share code of practice, published by Transport for London (TfL) in 2018, to be urgently reviewed and updated to reflect the increased concern about the hazards of irresponsible parking. Perhaps the TfL could incentivise dockless bike share operators to double down on their efforts to strengthen user awareness and compliance with their parking guidelines, by requiring them to publicly disclose their data on casualty numbers. This would be an advancement of Section 10.2 of the code of practice, which "recommends" that operators grant the relevant Borough and TfL access to their data where and when required. I also suggest that TfL be encouraged to add greater emphasis to Section 7.5 of the code which states the operator "will be liable to pay all associated reasonable costs" whenever the Borough or Emergency Services have to seize a bike that is parked in an obstructive, unsafe area. Dockless bike share companies could also be encouraged to heavily penalise users who park illegally and irresponsibly. The forthcoming Transport Bill offers an excellent opportunity to grant relevant new powers.

I appreciate that the Department for Transport is working with dockless bike companies, such as Lime, Tier and Dott, to ensure that their customers are aware of the responsible ways to park their bikes. I would be grateful if the Department could accelerate this work to ensure the safety of all pavement users.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nickie Aiken". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a period at the end.

Nickie Aiken MP

Cities of London and Westminster