



Department for Transport

Baroness Newlove of Warrington
Victims' Commissioner for England and Wales
5th Floor
70 Petty France
London
SW1H 9EX

From the Parliamentary
Under Secretary of State
Guy Opperman MP

Great Minster House
33 Horseferry Road
London
SW1P 4DR

Tel: 0300 330 3000
E-Mail: guy.opperman@dft.gov.uk

Web site: www.gov.uk/dft

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Dear Baroness Newlove,

Thank you for your letter of 23 November to the Secretary of State, about the creation of a Road Safety Investigation Branch. I am replying as the Minister for Roads and Local Transport and apologise for the delay in responding.

You may be aware that on 8 November, the Government introduced to the House of Lords the Automated Vehicles Bill; this proposed legislation includes measures to enable the creation of a capability within my department to investigate road safety incidents involving automated vehicles. However, this does mean that we will not be creating a wider road safety investigation function in DfT at this time.

This change in focus away from creating a Road Safety Investigation Branch reflects the need to focus on future technologies, assuring their safety before and during their deployment on our roads. New technologies are changing the types of vehicles on our roads, and the way we use our roads; we need to ensure we have a robust regulatory and safety framework in place to ensure these new technologies are developed and deployed safely.

Having the capability to independently investigate incidents involving self-driving vehicles will enable safety lessons to be identified, and recommendations implemented to prevent future incidents. This was a key recommendation in the joint report of the Law Commissions of England and Wales, and Scotland.

I would like to assure you that my Department remains committed to engaging meaningfully with stakeholders on how we develop this capability.

Road safety remains a priority for this Government, and we continue to work to improve the safety of our roads. This includes £147.5m funding for improvements to the country's most dangerous roads, strengthening the legislative and enforcement regime for motoring offences, and piloting new initiatives identified through the Roads Policing Review.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your collaboration with the Road Safety Division within my department, and for your vitally important work as Victims' Commissioner for England and Wales.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Guy Opperman', is centered below the text 'Best wishes,'.

GUY OPPERMAN MP

MINISTER FOR ROADS AND LOCAL TRANSPORT