

Autonomous Passenger Vehicles in London

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Key information

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https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f9_RQIp_q2U

Investigation aims and objectives (Terms of Reference)

Several trials of autonomous passenger vehicles (more commonly known as driverless taxis or robotaxis) are underway in London in 2026, with operators aiming to launch commercial services by the end of the year. In this investigation, the Committee will:

- Explore whether and how autonomous passenger vehicles could be licenced for commercial operations in London, and what role the Mayor and TfL should play in this.
- Understand the impact of autonomous passenger vehicles, particularly in regard to employment in the taxi and wider private hire vehicle sectors, interactions with other road users and the ambitions in the Mayor's Transport Strategy, including 'Vision Zero', a traffic reduction of between 10 to 15 per cent, and the target for 80 per cent of all trips to be made by active modes or public transport.

Key issues

- In June 2025, the Department for Transport (DfT) announced that it would fast-track “small scale ‘taxi- and bus-like’ services without a safety driver” to take place in spring 2026 before a wider potential roll out in 2027. Several companies, including Uber and UK company Wayve, are seeking to obtain regulatory approval to transport passengers in automated vehicles in London as soon as this year.
- Waymo, an Alphabet-owned company, which is also seeking approval for passenger trials, began testing on London roads without passengers and with a driver at the wheel this year. Its current fleet comprises 100 vehicles. Other operators have not confirmed how many vehicles they are planning to deploy.
- Autonomous passenger vehicles are a common sight in some US cities. Waymo has reported that it is currently providing approximately 500,000 paid rides every week, using over 3,000 vehicles deployed across 11 US cities. The company’s average weekly trips have grown tenfold over the last two years. Unofficial estimates from 2025 suggest that Waymo accounts for around one in four ride-hailing trips in San Francisco, surpassing the market share of Lyft.
- Research carried out by automotive data firm HPI found that while Londoners were the most trusting of self-driving technology of respondents from all UK regions, its survey of over 2,000 UK adults found that 79 per cent of Londoners would not trust a driverless car or feel comfortable about travelling in one, while only 21 per cent of Londoners would. The results also showed that 35 per cent of all those surveyed had concerns about the reliability of the technology.
- Some experts have also raised concerns around entrusting key elements of London’s transport system to private companies, resulting ‘proprietary lock-in’, whereby transport in a city could become overly dependent on (in some cases foreign) private companies. The Government in 2022 found that CAVs are attractive targets for cyber attacks and that ensuring cyber security is essential when developing them. There is a risk of terrorist attacks causing large-scale chaos across the transport network and cyber attacks targeting a vehicle’s hardware with the aim of disabling it until a ransom is paid.

Key questions

- Who is responsible for licensing autonomous passenger vehicles in London and what role do the Mayor and TfL play in this?
- How close are commercial operators to deploying autonomous passenger vehicles for hire in London?
- Are autonomous passenger vehicles compatible with London’s strategic transport goals in the Mayor’s Transport Strategy?
- What are the principal risks associated with autonomous passenger vehicles in London, and can they be mitigated?
- To what extent are autonomous passenger vehicles accessible to all Londoners?
- Are there any benefits that autonomous passenger vehicles could offer in London, and how likely are those benefits to be realised in London?
- What lessons can London learn from trials and deployments elsewhere?
- What role should TfL and the Mayor play in the development and oversight of autonomous passenger vehicles?
- What do Londoners think about autonomous passenger vehicles?

Call for Evidence

As part of this investigation, the Committee has launched a [Call for Evidence](#), inviting those with knowledge of this topic to respond.

If you are responding on behalf of an organisation, in a professional capacity, or have knowledge of this topic, please send your submissions to scrutiny@london.gov.uk. Please use ‘**Transport Committee call for evidence**’ as the subject title.

The deadline for submission is **26 June 2026**.

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