Dear Lilian

Thank you for your letter of 3 December, about the Task and Finish Group’s report on Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle (PHV) Licensing.

We are currently considering the recommendations made by the Chair of the Task and Finish Group and the comments of the other members, and will publish a Government response shortly. Until that response has been published I am unable to confirm the Government’s position on any changes to legislation.

However, I would wish to reassure you and the other members of the Transport Select Committee that Government recognises that there are important issues in this sector that need addressing; it was for this very reason that the Task and Finish Group was established. In recent years there have been instances of serious failings in licensing which have failed passengers. Many of the recommendations in the Chair’s report aim to improve safety, and while many of them can be implemented immediately by licensing authorities using their existing powers, I acknowledge that Government has a leadership role to play. The statutory guidance that will shortly be consulted upon will propose a range of robust measures and standards that we consider all authorities should adopt.

The taxi and PHV trade has already undergone rapid change as passengers and the trade adopt new technologies and I am very aware of the impact these have had on traditional business models. Technology is continuing to evolve and it will be important to ensure that any changes to primary legislation can be adapted to future developments in this area.
We will therefore also consider how any legislation interacts with the potential outcomes of the Future of Mobility Grand Challenge, your Committee’s report on Mobility as a Service and the Law Commission’s review of the regulatory framework to enable the safe deployment of automated vehicles in the UK.

Yours Sincerely

NUSRAT GHANI