

Decision Pathway – Report



PURPOSE: Key decision

MEETING: Cabinet

DATE: 05 April 2022

TITLE	Geographical Expansion of the E-scooter on-street rental trial		
Ward(s)	Citywide		
Author: Matthew Barrett	Job title: Group Manager – Sustainable Transport		
Cabinet lead: Cllr Alexander, Cabinet Member Transport	Executive Director lead: Stephen Peacock, Executive Director Growth and Regeneration		
Proposal origin: City Partner			
Decision maker: Cabinet Member Decision forum: Cabinet			
Purpose of Report: 1. To approve extending the current on-street e-scooter rental trial operating area to cover the whole of Bristol.			
Evidence Base: Background: 1. The current on-street e-scooter rental scheme is part of a Department for Transport (DfT) trial in over 30 towns and cities. The West of England Combined Authority (WECA) are co-ordinating the trial in the sub-region as there was an existing funding source under the Future Transport Zone Programme. WECA hold the contract with the scooter operator (Voi) and report to DfT. The local authorities are working in partnership with WECA and Voi and are primarily assisting with operational management issues such as parking. The trial scheme was launched in October 2020, and currently will run until the end of November 2022. 2. The purpose of the trial is to identify factors for success and potential issues in operating on-street rental schemes. This will inform the DfT's recommendations on whether to legalise e-scooters and determine what form that may take and what powers cities may need to manage schemes effectively. 3. One of the main objectives of the trial is to test the demand for rental e-scooters. The scheme has proved very popular, particularly amongst younger people who form most of the ridership, and it has greatly improved travel choices for many people. The Bristol scheme has much higher usage than many other trial cities- over 200,000 people have tried riding a rental e-scooter, and there have been more than 3.5 million rides and nearly 10 million km travelled in the Bristol / South Gloucestershire area since the scheme launched in October 2020. The full fleet of e-scooters has not been in operation for most of the trial period so the usage figures for 2022 are expected to be much higher. 4. Another objective of the trial is to identify any operational issues and how best to manage these. Significant progress has been made in tackling some of the issues encountered in the early stages of the trial such as overcrowding of parking locations and poor parking and rider behaviour, and these have reduced significantly as the scheme has become more established. Improvements to Voi's parking management systems and messaging to riders have significantly reduced the level of parking issues, and work will continue throughout the rest of the trial to improve these further and to address issues of poor rider behaviour.			

Operating area and proposed expansion:

5. The current operating area for the on-street rental scheme covers around 65% of the Bristol City Council area. It is proposed to extend the trial area to cover the entire city. The lease scooter element of the trial already covers the whole city.
6. Expanding the operating area will increase the range of travel options to a greater number of city residents, and will improve access to and from a number of areas that suffer from transport deprivation.
7. The expansion will also provide an opportunity to test and evaluate rental scooters at a citywide scale and gain first-hand experience that will inform the approach taken to manage any potential permanent schemes in the future, and to develop operating frameworks that meet the needs of the city.
8. The proposed expansion will be in two phases- expansion in the North West of the city first, followed by the southern part of the city around a month later (provisionally timetabled for April and May 2022 respectively) (see APPX A – operating areas map).
9. This will add an additional 39km² to the Bristol operating area. It is estimated that an additional 500-900 e-scooters and around 600 parking hubs will be required to serve the expanded area.
10. All of the new parking hubs will be virtual (identified on Voi's app and not physically marked on-street) and will be managed by Voi's GPS and parking management systems, and will have a cap set which will limit the number of e-scooters that can be parked at each location.
11. There are no proposals for physical infrastructure, construction or changes to the Highway as part of this expansion. A number of options for formalised marked parking locations are currently being evaluated and will be developed into a rental-parking management plan.
12. The DfT operating paperwork already includes permission to expand the scheme to cover the whole of Bristol should BCC / WECA decide to do this.

Risks:

13. There are some potential risks involved in expanding the trial area, which are mainly low-level logistics issues relating to operating over a larger geographical area. The e-scooter operator has given assurances that they will scale up their operational resources to support the expanded trial area and that they will be proactive in re-distributing their scooters to ensure sufficient coverage and minimise any parking pressures. (Appendix D).

Resources

14. The expanded e-scooter operating area will require an increase in BCC staff resources to support operationally. It is estimated that this will cost an additional £15k for the remainder of the trial. The staff costs of supporting the trial and managing the on-street operations are currently covered by WECA as part of the Future Transport Zone (FTZ) programme and are currently around £50k p.a. The additional £15k staff costs for the expansion will also be covered by WECA through the FTZ programme for the remainder of the trial period. If this cost is insufficient, then a request will be made for additional funding from WECA.
15. The WECA funding agreement is currently in place until the trial ends in November 2022. If there is a further extension after November then new funding would need to be put in place, which could be further funding from WECA or a charge to the e-scooter operator.

Monitoring

16. Monitoring of the expanded area will be incorporated into the WECA e-scooter monitoring and evaluation programme and reporting to the DfT. Any local issues will be captured and will inform the Council's approach to any schemes or future programmes that may follow on from this trial.

<p>Cabinet Member / Officer Recommendations:</p> <p>That Cabinet:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Authorise the Executive Director Growth and Regeneration to take all steps required to expand the current on-street e-scooter rental trial operating area to cover the whole of Bristol until 30th November 2022.
<p>Corporate Strategy alignment:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Contributes to objective TC1- Transport and connectivity
<p>City Benefits:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The expansion will provide additional travel options to a significant number of city residents and visitors, and will improve connectivity to and from the outer areas of the city, some of which have low levels of accessibility and suffer from transport deprivation
<p>Consultation Details:</p> <p>As this is a trial there is ongoing consultation and feedback which feeds into the strategic and operational management of the scheme and the reporting to the DfT. This process is led by WECA who are managing the e-scooter trial. There is an established e-scooter equalities stakeholder group (facilitated by WECA) which meets regularly to feed into the trial. This group has been consulted on the proposed expansion of the Bristol operating area – see Appendix B.</p>
<p>Background Documents:</p> <p>Government Guidance on e-scooter trials.</p> <p>E-scooter trials: guidance for local authorities and rental operators - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</p>

Revenue Cost	Estimated additional £10-£15k for the duration of the trial	Source of Revenue Funding	WECA Future Transport Zone funding- to cover additional City Transport officer time.
Capital Cost	£ 0	Source of Capital Funding	e.g. grant/ prudential borrowing etc.
One off cost <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Ongoing cost <input type="checkbox"/>	Saving Proposal <input type="checkbox"/>	Income generation proposal <input type="checkbox"/>

<p>Required information to be completed by Financial/Legal/ICT/ HR partners:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Finance Advice: This report seeks Cabinet approval to extend the current trial on e-scooters from the existing limited trial locations to now cover the entire city area. This widened scheme will last until the end of the current trial period of a further 9 months. 2. There will be additional staffing costs to support the extension of the trial to cover this wider area. Based on the costs being incurred by the existing trial, it is expected that the extension will cost up to an additional £15k. This is a finite sum as the existing trial will cease at the end of the trial period. Any extension beyond the current period will be subject to new bids and new funding. 3. There will be additional staffing costs to support the extension of the trial to cover this wider area. Based on the costs being incurred by the existing trial, it is expected that the extension will cost up to an additional
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4. There will be no space provided for scooter parking as part of this element of the project – all parking will be virtual parking with no markings and those locations are not formally allocated by BCC. As a result, there is no potential loss of parking revenue. However, it should be noted that there is a potential risk of scooters being parked in on-street meter bays in situations where the virtual bays are over-subscribed. This risk needs to be monitored and where necessary, paid for bays considered as part of any permanent introduction of this pilot scheme.

Finance Business Partner: Kayode Olagundoye, Finance Business Partner, 14th March 2022

2. Legal Advice: There are no specific legal implications arising from the extension to the e-scooter operating area as it is part of the on-going trial being managed by WECA on behalf of Bristol and the other participating Local Authorities.

Legal Team Leader: Joanne Mansfield, Team Leader 24th February 2022

3. Implications on IT: I can see no implications on IT in regard to this activity.

IT Team Leader: Gavin Arbuckle – Head of Service Improvement and Performance, 24 February 2022

4. HR Advice: I can confirm there are no HR implications evident in these proposals

HR Partner: Chris Hather, HR Adviser, 21 February 2022

EDM Sign-off	Stephen Peacock, Executive Director Growth and Regeneration	27 January 2022
Cabinet Member sign-off	Cllr Donald Alexander, Cabinet Member Transport	3 February 2022
For Key Decisions - Mayor's Office sign-off	Mayor's Office	7 March 2022

Appendix A – Map of proposed expansion areas	Yes
Appendix B – Details of consultation carried out - internal and external	YES
Appendix C – Summary of any engagement with scrutiny	NO
Appendix D – Risk assessment Scheme is managed by WECA not BCC and risk management sits with WECA.	YES
Appendix E – Equalities screening / impact assessment of proposal	YES
Appendix F – Eco-impact screening/ impact assessment of proposal (YES
Appendix G – Financial Advice	NO
Appendix H – Legal Advice	NO
Appendix I – Exempt Information	No
Appendix J – HR advice	NO
Appendix K – ICT	NO
Appendix L – Procurement	NO