

Decision Pathway – Report



PURPOSE: Key decision

MEETING: Cabinet

DATE: 24 January 2023

TITLE	Combined E-scooter & E-bike on-street rental scheme.		
Ward(s)	Citywide		
Author: Matthew Barrett	Job title: Group Manager – Sustainable Transport		
Cabinet lead: Cllr Alexander, Cabinet Member for 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: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. To approve implementing a combined e-scooter and e-bike on-street rental scheme for Bristol, which will form part of a wider regional scheme co-ordinated by the West of England Combined Authority (WECA). This scheme will incorporate the next phase of the government’s e-scooter trials and will cover rental operations up until the legalisation of e-scooters and new powers are granted to manage micromobility rental schemes in the longer-term.2. To approve a move to formalised rental parking managed by Bristol City Council, including the principle of on-road parking hubs, and to start to deliver formalised parking subject to available funding, and to bid for funding for a large-scale rollout of parking hubs where opportunities arise.			
Evidence Base: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The current e-scooter rental scheme is part of a national trial. Of the 31 trial areas Bristol & South Gloucestershire is the most popular scheme in the country attracting over 7.3 million rides totalling 19 million km of travel since the trial started in October 2020. More than 300,000 people have tried riding a scooter in Bristol during that time. The scheme has significantly improved transport choices for many people, and has been particularly popular with younger people, providing them with a convenient and flexible new mode of travel to use in the city. For much of the trial period the scheme only covered parts of the city, but has recently been extended to operate city-wide and enabling many more residents and visitors to Bristol to benefit from the scheme. Discounts for people on low incomes and other groups has also helped more people access the scheme.2. Following the popularity of the initial 12 month e-scooter trial the Government has extended the trial period several times and has announced plans to legalise e-scooters and to introduce powers to regulate e-scooter and bike rental schemes. It has extended the e-scooter trials to at least May 2024 when the new powers are expected to come into force.3. In addition, a significant number of operators have expressed an interest in setting up e-bike rental schemes in Bristol. Adding e-bikes to the rental market will improve the range of travel options for residents and visitors and will extend the benefit of the current rental scheme to a much wider range of people. E-bikes are better suited for longer trips and tend to be used more by older people than e-scooters, as well as having			

health benefits through active travel. A number of other UK cities already have combined e-bike and e-scooter schemes.

4. In addition to the personal benefits to riders, the e-scooter / e-bike rental scheme aligns with a number of the Council's strategic policy objectives by improving transport choice and helping to fill a gap in provision between public transport and private car use and offering improved access to services, employment and leisure. It also has the potential to contribute to reduced congestion, climate change objectives, the economy, and addressing inequality through providing improved affordable travel options.
5. The trial has identified some ongoing issues including around parking, rider-behaviour and lack of availability of e-scooters in some areas, which the proposals for next phase of the scheme will seek to address.

Proposal

6. It is proposed to replace the current e-scooter scheme with a combined e-scooter and e-bike rental scheme for the sub-region including Bristol, to be managed by WECA in partnership with the local authorities (in a similar arrangement to the current trial). Having a single operator covering bikes and scooters will be easier to manage operationally than multiple companies sharing the same parking spaces. A new scheme would require a tender process with an operator appointed in Spring / Summer 2023. The current WECA contract with Voi will be extended until the new contract starts to enable the current service to continue.
7. A new tender and contract will provide an opportunity to address some of the issues that have arisen during the first phase of the e-scooter trials including around parking and rider-behaviour. Experience gained over the next phase operating a combined scheme will inform any plans for a permanent scheme following legalisation and new regulatory powers being introduced.
8. It is proposed to formalise rental parking hubs bringing them under Bristol City Council control and physically marking the parking locations. The current model of unmarked virtual parking spaces on pavements selected by the e-scooter operator resulted from the original e-scooter trial being set up at short notice and only being planned to run for 12 months. With government plans to legalise e-scooters and for rental schemes to operate in the longer-term a more effective parking management regime is required.
9. It is proposed that the majority of parking hubs are sited on roads rather than on pavements. This will address some of the issues around pavement clutter and obstructions that have occurred during the first phases of the trial, and will improve access for the many areas of the city that currently have little or no provision owing to insufficient pavement space to accommodate parking hubs. This will have the benefit of opening up the scheme to better serve people in all areas of the city as well as relieving conflict on pavements which in many cases are busy and not the best location for scooter parking. Designs for low-cost on-road parking hubs are being developed based on designs currently being used in London.
10. Pavement parking hubs will still be used where parking can be accommodated without causing obstructions and where on-road solutions are not possible- e.g. on primary routes and key routes in the city centre. Virtual hubs may also still be used to trial locations before they are formalised or where temporary parking is required.
11. Rolling out formalised parking across the city will require significant investment which will be sought from WECA, and a phased delivery approach. Some parking hubs can start to be delivered in the short term by incorporating parking into the design of transport and highways schemes and as part of new developments, however until funding for new parking hubs becomes available many hubs will remain on pavements. It is proposed that the rental scheme operator will pay a fee to use the formalised parking hubs which will be levied through the Council's Fees and Charges process.

Finance

12. The costs of Council officer resources to support the scheme and oversee parking will be paid by WECA who plan to re-charge this cost to the scheme operator. Supporting the scheme is estimated to require a full-time technical officer plus additional senior officer and management time which will require a contribution of £80,000 p.a. to cover staff costs and overheads based on 2022/23 salary costs. Future years costs will increase in line with pay awards.
13. The initial contract period for the rental scheme will be 2 years so the contribution will total £160,000 (+ any subsequent pay adjustment). There will be an option to extend the contract at the end of that period by up to two further 12-month periods. This will provide flexibility to cover any delays to legislation and to amend or extend the scheme depending on what the new rental scheme powers look like.
14. Linked to this new phase of the scheme, additional capital funding will be sought via WECA to deliver a citywide rollout of formalised parking. Further work will be undertaken to develop more detailed parking proposals and bids for funding for formalised parking bays. Any future large-scale rollout of parking will require further Cabinet approval once the details and costs have been established.
15. This paper seeks approval to start introducing formalised parking provision where parking hubs can be incorporated into existing projects including transport and highways schemes, and through the Planning process for new developments.
16. It is proposed that the rental scheme operator will be charged an annual fee for the use of all formalised parking hubs. This fee for this will be set through the Council's Fees and Charges Schedule to be introduced in time for the new contract in spring 2023.

Cabinet Member / Officer Recommendations:

That cabinet:

1. Approves the proposal to work with WECA to deliver a combined e-scooter and e-bike rental scheme covering the interim period up until any permanent scheme is introduced following new powers to regulate schemes.
2. Approves the principle of providing formalised rental parking managed by Bristol City Council, including on-street parking hubs and charging for the use of parking at a rate which will not have a detrimental impact on parking income.
3. Authorises the Executive Director Growth and Regeneration to take all steps required to deliver the combined e-scooter / e-bike scheme including formalising operating agreements with WECA and delivering formalised rental parking where opportunities arise within existing programmes.
4. Authorises the Executive Director Growth and Regeneration in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Transport to bid for capital funding to deliver a large-scale rollout of rental parking.

Corporate Strategy alignment:

1. Contributes to objective TC1- Transport and connectivity

City Benefits:

The expansion will provide additional travel options to a significant number of city residents and visitors, and will improve connectivity within and to and from the outer areas of the city, including improving links to areas which have low levels of accessibility and suffer from transport deprivation.

Consultation Details:

Consultation with equalities and stakeholder groups has been ongoing through WECA-led e-scooter trial, and has sought views on e-bikes as well. The headline issues raised have been:

1. That parking hubs should be on roads rather than pavements, and should be clearly marked (which this report recommends)
2. Issues around user behaviour – which fall under WECA's remit as contract manager, and the scheme operator

rather than Bristol City Council's supporting role.

There will be ongoing engagement with key stakeholders and equalities groups through the next phase of the rental scheme which will be co-ordinated by WECA as part of its role managing the broader sub-regional scheme and the stakeholder group that it has set up.

Background Documents:

Government e-scooter trials guidance:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/e-scooter-trials-guidance-for-local-areas-and-rental-operators/e-scooter-trials-guidance-for-local-areas-and-rental-operators>

Bristol City Council Shared Mobility position statement

<https://www.bristol.gov.uk/files/documents/1204-shared-mobility-policy-statement/file>

Revenue Cost	£160k over 2 years	Source of Revenue Funding	WECA (from operator charges)
Capital Cost	£ n/a	Source of Capital Funding	n/a
One off cost <input type="checkbox"/>	Ongoing cost <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Saving Proposal <input type="checkbox"/>	Income generation proposal <input type="checkbox"/>

Required information to be completed by Financial/Legal/ICT/ HR partners:

Finance Advice:

The report seeks Cabinet approval to deliver an interim combined e-scooter and e-bike rental scheme while a permanent scheme is introduced following the adoption of new powers to regulate these schemes and to bid for capital funding to deliver a large-scale rollout of rental parking.

The cost of the interim measure has been calculated at 2022/23 prices to be £160k over the initial 2-year period of the contract or £240k if the additional 12 months option is implemented (figures exclude staff pay inflation, which could be an additional £24k depending on agreed rates at the time).

All costs of this interim scheme will be recovered from WECA who have agreed to meet these costs.

The interim scheme is expected to generate additional income through charging the operator an annual fee for the use of all formalised parking hubs. The exact fees are yet to be finalised but should be linked to the potential income that parking hubs would have generated under normal car parking use. The fee for this will be set through the Council's Fees and Charges Schedule and should be agreed by the Councils Parking service with responsibility for such activities.

Finance Business Partner: Kayode Olagundoye, Finance Business Partner, 11 January 2023

2. Legal Advice: There are no specific legal implications arising from this report. Legal support will be required in connection with the governance agreement to support the implementation of the proposals.

Legal Team Leader: Joanne Mansfield, Legal Team Leader, 6 January 2023

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

IT Team Leader: Alex Simpson – Senior Solution Architect 11 January 2023

4. HR Advice: I have reviewed the Cabinet report and can confirm that there are no HR implications, save the minor additional staff resourcing that the scheme will require.

HR Partner: Chris Hather, HR Adviser, 11 January 2023

EDM Sign-off	Stephen Peacock, Executive Director Growth and Regeneration	11 October 2022
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Cabinet Member sign-off	Councillor Alexander, Cabinet Member for Transport	13 October 2022
For Key Decisions - Mayor's Office sign-off	Mayor's Office	19 December 2022

Appendix A – Further essential background / detail on the proposal	NO
Appendix B – Details of consultation carried out - internal and external	NO
Appendix C – Summary of any engagement with scrutiny	NO
Appendix D – Risk assessment	NO
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