
REPORT FOR: CABINET

Date of Meeting:	20 th June 2019
Subject:	Dockless E- Bike Cycle Hire scheme
Key Decision:	No
Responsible Officer:	Paul Walker – Corporate Director Environment
Portfolio Holder:	Varsha Parmar – Portfolio Holder for Environment
Exempt:	No
Decision subject to Call-in:	Yes
Wards affected:	All
Enclosures:	None

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

This report sets out how a dockless electric bicycle hire scheme could be beneficial for Harrow residents and some businesses with regards to encouraging cycling in line with the Council's Local Implementation Plan which supports the Mayor for London's Transport Strategy (MTS).

It would promote active travel and be helpful in encouraging modal shift which is a key component of the MTS. In addition it would help to improve resident's health and improve air quality. It would also help to meet the MTS of 80% of journeys by 2041 in London being made by foot, bike or public transport.

Recommendations:

Cabinet is requested to:

- (1) Approve the implementation of a dockless cycle hire scheme with the company, Lime, on a trial basis for a maximum of 1 year in the borough of Harrow.
- (2) Authorise the Portfolio Holder for Environment, following consultation with the Corporate Director, Community, to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding with Lime and to determine the future of the scheme after the trial period.

Reason: (For recommendation)

To allow the Council to implement a dockless e-bike cycle hire scheme for a one year trial basis.

Section 2 – Report

Introductory paragraph

- 2.1 Cycling numbers are continuing to increase across London and we have seen a rise in numbers in Harrow recently. The benefits of increasing the uptake of cycling are significant in terms of improving air quality, less congestion and a fitter and healthier population and would align with the Council's corporate priorities.
- 2.2 The Council's Transport Local Implementation Plan (LIP) and Walking, Cycling and Sustainable Transport Strategy aim to improve access to cycling for all Harrow residents and businesses and in particular sets out an ambition to introduce dockless cycle hire schemes in the borough to promote cycling as a convenient, healthy and enjoyable activity.
- 2.3 A dockless cycle hire scheme would assist in helping Harrow meet our cycle objectives. The potential to get more people to cycle in Harrow is evident from information supplied by Transport for London (TfL) and recent screen line surveys which show cycling is on the increase in the borough. It would open up cycling to those who do not own a cycle and would target the short destination journeys that may otherwise have been undertaken by car. It would also promote cycling as a leisure activity and provide an additional mode of transport for people to access local amenities.
- 2.4 Increased cycling amongst those who live and work in the borough would promote a modal shift away from the private car and encourage more active lifestyles that would help improve public health and air quality.

- 2.5 An analysis carried out by TfL indicated that the areas to the south of the borough, in and around Harrow Town centre, have considerable potential for cycle growth. It has also become evident recently that there are dockless cycles from neighbouring boroughs being left in the Harrow area and this would suggest that there is a potential local demand for such a scheme.

Options considered

- 2.6 The borough does not intend to procure a bike hire scheme but instead is looking for a viable bike hire operator that can be authorised to operate on the highway via a joint statement of intent set out in a memorandum of understanding (MoU).
- 2.7 The implementation of such a scheme is therefore predominantly reliant on the market resources available and interest from suppliers to mobilise in the borough. Currently there are only two suppliers of e-bikes in the market, Lime, which is established and operating within London, and Jump, which is new to the market but has no operational presence in London.
- 2.8 Within the borough's third LIP it is a policy to establish a dockless bike hire scheme to promote cycling. An approach by the operator, Lime, who is also operating in the two neighbouring boroughs of Ealing and Brent therefore represents a good opportunity to establish a local dockless bike hire scheme in Harrow.
- 2.9 There are no other viable options at this time to establish a dockless bike hire scheme.

Background

- 2.10 An electric bicycle also known as an e-bike is a bicycle with an integrated electric motor which can be used to assist propulsion. Many kinds of e-bikes are available worldwide, from those that only have a small motor to assist the rider's pedal-power to more powerful e-bikes which are closer to a moped style of functionality. All e-bikes, however, retain the ability to be pedalled by the rider and are therefore not classed as electric motorcycles.
- 2.11 Electric bicycles have rechargeable batteries and the lighter bicycles can travel up to 25 to 32 km/h (15 to 20 mph), depending on local conditions.
- 2.12 In May 2018 Harrow Council initiated a free trial with WestTrans to provide a small number of e-bikes to council staff. The aim of the trial was to see if e-bikes could play a role in shifting staff away from using the car for some shorter journeys in order to encourage modal shift.
- 2.13 The trial involved six e-bikes being made available to Council staff for a loan period of one month at a time. Over the first 6 months, the free trial

provided up to 36 members of staff the opportunity to hire an e-bike. The trial proved very popular and it has recently been extended for a further six months.

- 2.14 The e-bikes are fitted with GPS trackers to track the location of the bikes, the frequency of usage and to establish general route trends. This data is then uploaded to a secure cloud server. The results of the trial were very encouraging and this was evidenced by monthly feedback surveys. As a result of the trial, two participants purchased their own e-bikes at a reduced cost.
- 2.15 Civil Enforcement Officers (CEO's) within the Parking Operations Team also participated in the trial and found that they could carry out some of their duties more quickly and efficiently than on foot. As a direct result, the Team have also purchased their own e-bikes for use by the CEOs. They may purchase additional bikes in the future.
- 2.16 The trial has highlighted the significant potential that dockless e-bikes could have on travel modes in the borough. Because cycling is Harrow's weakest transport mode share in the borough a dockless e-bike scheme could encourage a sizeable uptake in cycling in the wider population.
- 2.17 The bicycles themselves are low maintenance, predominantly made of aluminium and contain a GPS tracker that enables users to find their nearest bicycle via their app and the cycle hire company to track the location of the cycle to identify poorly parked or potentially stolen bicycles so that their operations team can retrieve them. The bicycles are designed for short trips made by the general public, rather than for sporty, fast riding. The bicycles are compliant with UK standards, including lights and a basket for carrying small loads like briefcases, handbags or small amounts of shopping. The bicycles are quite heavy making lifting them quite difficult and there is an alarm which goes off should the bicycle be moved more than a few feet whilst locked.
- 2.18 Users need to sign up to the cycle hire providers terms and conditions, register an account and can then hire and pay for the use of cycles online via their mobile phone app.
- 2.19 The dockless e-bike scheme would involve free standing bicycles being made available for hire on-street which, unlike the Santander scheme in central London, do not require a large dock for the bicycles. The bicycles themselves feature an individual locking device which is unlocked through an app on the user's mobile phone. At the end of the journey the bicycle can be locked and simply left anywhere in a public location ready for its next use.
- 2.20 One of the main concerns highlighted with dockless bike schemes is how to regulate cycle parking so that the highway is kept safe for members of the public. In general cycle hire providers make available responsive resources to remove any bikes that are causing problems and also have the ability to use the mobile app to incentivise users to park responsibly by controlling the areas where bikes can be locked and

unlocked safely. This is a developing industry and providers are aware of the need for local authorities to ensure the safe operation of any scheme.

Lime Bike proposal

- 2.21 During the e-bike trial with WestTrans, the Council was approached by a dockless e-bike cycle hire company, Lime, so branded in the UK because of the distinctive colour of their cycles. They are a global Californian based dockless electric cycle hire company who were seeking a potential trial with Harrow Council.
- 2.22 A meeting was convened with representatives from Lime in October 2018 to discuss their proposition. Lime explained that they had recently started a free trial with Brent and Ealing Councils and they had introduced approximately 1,000 e-bikes into the two boroughs. These types of schemes operate more effectively when there is a wider catchment area to accommodate local demand and manage the stock of bikes on-street and the opportunity to offer a trial in Harrow has arisen because the three boroughs together would provide a logical holistic expansion of their operating area. This is beneficial to both users of the bikes and the company and provides an opportunity for Harrow to promote cycling in accordance with its policies.
- 2.23 Lime e-bikes can be hired by downloading the Lime App for free and unlocking the bike through the App for a small fee. The current fee is £1 to unlock the bike and around 15p per minute to hire. All bikes are fitted with GPS trackers which help users to establish the location of the bikes and the company operatives from Lime to know where the bikes are and when the bikes need recharging so they can be serviced. Lime bikes feature a 250 watt motor and have a top speed of around 15mph.
- 2.24 Lime employs permanent and temporary staff from within the local community and has a warehouse depot in West London. They provide a 24 hours / 7 days a week customer service and can geo fence cycle parking on the user App and can penalise riders for leaving bikes outside agreed designated zones.
- 2.25 The opportunity was taken to discuss the potential to encourage modal shift away from the car particularly as there are an increasing number of car free developments in the borough and currently underway in the town centre.
- 2.26 Following this initial meeting, officers from Harrow Council met with officers from Ealing and Brent to discuss how the scheme was operating in their boroughs and to establish what level of public up take they were experiencing. Additionally the potential problem of bikes being left on the highway causing obstruction was also discussed.
- 2.27 The feedback we received from both boroughs was positive and they confirmed that operationally the schemes were working well and both had seen a significant increase in the number of cycle trips both locally

and into adjacent boroughs including Harrow. The customer care element of the service had been good and any issues of potential obstruction were dealt with in a timely and efficient manner.

2.28 Both boroughs confirmed they had entered into a MoU with Lime to agree the principles of collaboration and the operating arrangements of the trial.

2.29 In the case of any unresolved disputes, Lime would be obliged to withdraw their operation in the London Borough of Harrow and remove all bikes and directly associated infrastructure from operation in the borough within two months following a formal request from Harrow Council.

Scheme implementation and Memorandum of Understanding

2.30 Officers met formally with representatives of Lime and the Portfolio Holder for Environment to discuss the introduction of a cycle hire scheme and a one year trial was supported. Following these discussions officers recommended that a MoU is developed with Lime for taking forward a trial starting in the summer 2019.

2.31 Lime has confirmed that they have the infrastructure in place and that they could mobilise the trial within that timescale. They have suggested that the initial roll out of the trial would start with 200 bikes in the borough.

2.32 The trial would enable both Lime and the Council to monitor the scheme closely and address any issues or teething problems. The main risk identified is likely be related to poor parking by users and anti-social behaviour by others (e.g. tipping over bicycles).

2.33 With regard to poor parking if users continually park their bicycles in inappropriate places then Lime can use the app to provide reminders or remove part of the user's deposit or charge extra for the hire. In persistent cases Lime can remove offenders from the scheme altogether.

2.34 The Council's role in the scheme is essentially permissive. It is proposed that the Council and Lime agree to the terms of a MoU, which will set out in detail the way in which the agreed system will operate.

2.35 For example, the Council will identify locations in which bicycles may or may not be left and Lime will set out the agreed way in which the scheme will operate. In this way the Council will ensure that the scheme will operate without causing any obstructions of the highway. Officers discussed marking out areas on the highway where bikes could be left or identifying areas where cycle stands / racks capacity was available to encourage the bikes to be parked in appropriate locations. This could be communicated to users through their App. Officers will work with Lime to establish suitable locations and user information.

- 2.36 As this is a scheme by way of mutual agreement the MoU will contain clauses which will allow the Council the option to end the scheme for any operator, requiring them to remove all their bicycles.
- 2.37 The performance of the scheme will be carefully reviewed after the 1 year trial has expired to determine the future of the scheme. The options available will be to cancel the scheme, make the scheme permanent or extend the trial for a period of time to allow further evaluation to be undertaken. It is recommended that the Portfolio Holder – Environment be given delegated authority to make this decision.

Enforcement issues

- 2.38 A key consideration with dockless bike hire schemes is the regulation and management of cycle parking on the highway. Some of the first dockless bike hire schemes trialled unfortunately resulted in users leaving bikes in unsuitable locations and causing hazards and obstructions which were a safety concern for pedestrians. Many boroughs had to remove bikes from the highway as a consequence of this. However, operators have subsequently responded to this situation and now actively manage any reports or complaints of obstruction and have local teams deployed to remove obstructions quickly.
- 2.39 The development of the scheme with Lime will involve agreeing and marking out suitable parking areas close to local amenities such as stations, shops or other suitable locations and utilising existing cycle parking infrastructure wherever possible. These areas would be replicated within the virtual mapping of the app operated by Lime so their users have clarity over where cycles can be safely left on the highway and which areas are prohibited. This can be enforced through charges or other sanctions within the terms of hire with Lime.
- 2.40 Officers will engage with stakeholders, including Councillors, over the proposed cycle parking areas to be used.
- 2.41 Another concern in some parts of the borough is the occurrence of illegal cycling on footways. This is a hazard to pedestrians and relies upon police enforcement to deter this activity. The limited resource available to the police does mean that their ability to regulate this illegal activity is unfortunately limited. In respect of the use of electric bikes in the borough there is concern that the faster speeds possible could compound this problem in areas where this illegal activity occurs.
- 2.42 Officers will discuss this issue with Lime and agree how any illegal use of their bikes can be regulated. It is clearly possible with the mobile technology on the bikes to establish the whereabouts of bikes in real time and therefore any reports of illegal activity can be tracked to users and any necessary warnings or sanctions applied. In this way this issue can be managed.

Staffing / workforce

2.43 The management of the cycle hire provider and the conditions in the MoU will be undertaken with existing staff resources within the Traffic, Highways & Asset Management Team.

Performance Issues

2.44 The cycle hire provider will provide regular updates and data on the usage and operation of the scheme in order to review its effectiveness by the Traffic, Highways & Asset Management Team.

2.45 Any public reports of operational difficulties or highway problems will be collated and kept under review and discussed with the cycle hire provider at regular liaison meetings.

2.46 A performance monitoring regime for the trial will be established with Lime in advance of the trial commencing which will consider:

- The total number of cycle trips generated in the borough,
- The spread of cycle trips across the borough identifying areas of low or high activity,
- The types of trip and duration (local, commuter, recreational, etc.),
- Use of cycle parking facilities and designated cycle parking areas,
- Incidents of obstructions on the footway,
- Incidents of illegal cycling on the footway,
- A review of complaints generally.

Environmental Implications

2.47 The third LIP which includes policies to introduce a dockless bike hire scheme underwent a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). This indicated that there are environmental benefits from delivering the works included. The main benefits are in improving air quality and also improving the population and human health. No negative environmental issues were identified as part of the SEA.

Risk Management Implications

2.48 Separate risk register in place? Yes. The implementation of a cycle hire scheme will be subject to a risk assessment.

2.49 The financial risk of the scheme lies entirely with the cycle hire provider and there is no financial risk to the Council.

2.50 There is a marginal possibility of a reputational risk to the Council if residents or businesses do not like the scheme and complaints are high and they associate the scheme with the Council. This can be managed firstly by introducing a trial scheme which will enable officers to review the scheme and suggest any necessary changes before its wider introduction and also through careful management of the

communications for the scheme to ensure that the scheme is identified as an independent initiative that accords with the Council's policies.

Procurement Implications

2.51 There are no procurement implications as the Council is not purchasing or commissioning a service or product.

Legal Implications

2.52 A cycle hire provider will require the authority of the Council as highway authority to operate a cycle hire scheme on the highway.

2.53 Under section 137 of the Highways Act 1980 it is an offence to obstruct the free passage along a highway without lawful authority or excuse. Any scheme proposed will therefore need to operate on the basis that bikes are left only where or in circumstances where they do not cause an obstruction or where express authority has been given. Any person that wilfully obstructs the free passage along a highway could be guilty of an offence and could be prosecuted.

2.54 Harrow Council will mitigate any potential occurrences of obstruction by requiring a cycle hire provider to sign an MoU. This would be based on TfL's code of practice and would explain how the agreed operation would work and set out certain operating conditions such as the level of public liability insurance the operator would need to cover public liabilities and the operating principles and preferred locations for cycle parking.

2.55 It should be noted that a MoU is not legally binding but that the Council as highway authority can withdraw its agreement for a scheme to operate on the highway at its discretion.

2.56 The service provided by the new provider, is at no cost to the Council so it is not necessary to procure this service under The Procurement Regulations 2015 and this Report complies with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules.

Financial Implications

2.57 There are no direct financial implications from the operation of an independent cycle hire scheme on the Council.

Equalities implications / Public Sector Equality Duty

2.58 The third LIP which includes policies to introduce a dockless bike hire scheme underwent an Equality Impact Assessment. The Council has had due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it as required under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010.

2.59 The following table show the impact of the proposed cycle hire scheme on protected characteristics.

Protected characteristic	Impact
Age (young and old)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive impact • Assisted propulsion will support and encourage users that are less physically strong to use cycles for everyday journeys

Council Priorities

2.60 The following table show the impact of the proposed cycle hire scheme that will support the Council priorities.

Council priorities	Impact
Building a Better Harrow	Improving the range of transport choices available
Supporting Those Most in Need	Facilitating cycle facilities that are easy and attractive to use
Protecting Vital Public Services	Facilitating public access to cycle facilities at no cost to the Council
Delivering a Strong local Economy for All	Using cycling to improve accessibility to local businesses and amenities
Modernising Harrow Council	Making use of mobile and green technology to promote cycling

Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance

Name: Jessie Man	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Chief Financial Officer
Date: 06/06/19		
Name: Greta O'Shea	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Monitoring Officer
Date: 07/06/19		

Name: Nimesh Mehta



Head of Procurement

Date: 10/06/19

Name: Paul Walker



Corporate Director

Date: 10/06/19

Ward Councillors notified: YES, as a part of LIP3

EqIA carried out: YES, as a part of LIP3

EqIA cleared by: Dave Corby,
Community - Equality
Task Group (DETG)
Chair

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Barry Philips, Transportation Manager, 020 8424 1649,
barry.philips@harrow.gov.uk

Background Papers:

Transport Local Implementation Plan 3

Walking, Cycling & Sustainable Transport Strategy

**Call-In Waived by the
Chair of Overview and
Scrutiny Committee** NO