




# London Borough of Hounslow

<b>Report for: ACTION</b>	
<b>Contains Confidential or Exempt Information</b>	<b>Y</b>
<b>Key Decision</b>	<b>N</b>

<b>Report Title</b>	E-Bike Scheme Review (Area 2)
<b>Name and title of Chief Officer</b>	Melanie Fontinelle, Acting Director Environmental Services Davina Millership, Assistant Director for Transport and Parking
<b>Directorate</b>	Regeneration, Housing and Environmental Services
<b>Name and title of any Cabinet member consulted</b>	Councillor Katherine Dunne, Portfolio holder for Climate, Environment and Transport
<b>Member conflict of interest or Disclosable Pecuniary Interest?</b>	Councillor Dunne declared that she is a member of the London Cycling Campaign. This is not a disclosable pecuniary interest and so does not affect her involvement in this decision.
<b>Deadline for call-in</b>	This report is not subject to call in as it is not a key decision.
<b>Implementation Date (if not called in)</b>	13 December 2024
<b>Affected Wards</b>	Hounslow Central, Hounslow East, Hounslow Heath, Hounslow South, Hounslow West, Isleworth, Osterley & Spring Grove
<b>Approved by</b>	

## 1. Recommendations

The Assistant Director of Transport & Parking is asked to:

1. note the findings of the e-bike parking bay review for Area 2 as set out in this report;
2. make permanent the dockless e-bike parking bays listed in Appendix A (Schedule 1) of this report, in the relevant Experimental Traffic Management Orders (ETMOs) related to Area 2 of the scheme;
3. Commence consultation on any new e-bike parking bays that are identified as part of the review process, as part of a permanent traffic order, including those relocations and additions identified in Appendix A (Schedule 2 and 4) and during subsequent discussions with Ward Members and the Cabinet Member.
4. Instruct removal of any e-bike parking bays that are identified in Appendix A (Schedule 2) as being no longer required due to the need for relocation.

## 2. Report Summary

- 2.1. In April 2023, Cabinet approved the introduction of a boroughwide dockless e-bike rental scheme on a trial basis and delegated authority to the Assistant Director of Traffic, Transport & Parking to agree specific bay locations and to take the necessary steps to implement the scheme on a trial basis via Experimental Traffic Management Order (ETMO).
- 2.2. Between June and November 2023 the Council implemented its dockless e-bike hire trial in phases, delivering over 260 dedicated e-bike parking bays across the borough from which users can hire and return the e-bikes. As well as supporting a sustainable mode of travel in alignment with the Council's Corporate Plan priorities, the scheme helps to minimise the risk of inconsiderate/inappropriate e-bike parking, reinforced through the issuing of fines and user bans by the operator.
- 2.3. In July 2024, as part of the [Cabinet report on the Kerbside, Cabinet](#) approved that the e-bike trial be extended so that data for a full 12-month period could be evaluated in each of the three e-bike areas. The Cabinet report also delegated authority to the Assistant Director Traffic, Transport & Parking, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Environment & Climate Change, to make permanent the ETMOs associated with the e-bike scheme, subject to the satisfactory review of a full 12 months of data from each scheme area, a further review of e-bike parking bay locations and consultation with ward members.

- 2.4. This evaluation included e-bike operator data and feedback from residents and ward members. The review is being undertaken in three stages to reflect the introduction of the scheme in three areas of the borough. This Chief Officer decision report relates to Area 2, which covers Hounslow wards, Isleworth, and Osterley & Spring Grove.
- 2.5. Operator data shows significant growth in utilisation levels; by September 2024 the scheme had grown to 23,250 active users and over 93,400 trip starts in the borough. This represents a 132% increase in ridership and 100% increase in active users over 16 months. Data from Lime shows that parking compliance now consistently sits above 95% each month, with officers continuing to push for further improvements where necessary.
- 2.6. Feedback from Ward Members and residents has also been analysed, and whilst the majority of bays are proposed to be retained, some amendments are required to address concerns. It is recommended that across Area 2, 66 bays are retained, 11 bays relocated, 5 bays removed and 4 bays added, subject to further consultation on any relocations/additional bays.
- 2.7. As such, this Chief Officer Decision Report seeks approval to make permanent the locations detailed in Appendix A (Schedule 1) of this report, concluding the ETMO process. Any new or amended locations will be subject to a new statutory consultation process.
- 2.8. The cost of proceeding with the recommendations set out in this report is expected to be approximately £4,000. With these costs to be met from operator income this is considered to represent good value for money for the Council.

### **3. Background and links to Corporate Priorities**

#### **Background**

- 3.1. Within the last few years, dockless e-bike rental schemes, have been successfully introduced across significant parts of London. These have either been instigated through formalised arrangements between boroughs and operators, or sometimes without borough consent, given the limited legislative powers that currently exist for dockless bikes.
- 3.2. Until May 2023, the Council did not have an agreement or Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in place with any dockless bike operator, although Lime had been operating an unauthorised free-floating scheme in parts of the borough. Free floating means the e-bikes could be parked wherever the user saw fit, rather than in a dedicated parking bay.

- 3.3. Having formal arrangements in place with dockless bike hire companies can enable boroughs a stronger role in shaping how the scheme operates and reduce the risk of issues arising. It enables the borough to agree areas of the footway/kerbside that are designated for this purpose. This in turn helps to minimise the risk of inconsiderate/inappropriate parking, when reinforced by operators issuing user fines/bans accordingly.
- 3.4. In response to the free-floating scheme, [Cabinet approval](#) was obtained on 18 April 2023 for a formal dockless e-bike hire scheme to be trialled across the borough, with up to 300 dedicated e-bike bays overall. Cabinet delegated authority to the Assistant Director Traffic, Transport & Parking to agree specific locations for the rental bays, following consultation with Ward Members. Prior to scheme implementation, residents and businesses in the vicinity of the scheme also received a letter outlining the plans, with details of how to provide feedback on the scheme as part of the statutory process.
- 3.5. As summarised in the table below, the borough was divided into three geographical areas for the purposes of implementing and managing scheme operations. The bays were implemented in four phases between June and December 2023, through four associated experimental traffic management orders (ETMOs). These were put in place for an initial six months, with the possibility of extension to up to 18 months. The Council signed an MoU with Lime bikes to enable implementation of the trial.
- 3.6. This Chief Officer Decision report relates to the bays in Area 2 of the scheme. A decision on the bays in Area 1 was taken in November 2024.

Area	Wards	Phase
1	Chiswick and Brentford wards	Mostly Phase 1, but some bays in Phases 3 and 4
2	Hounslow wards, Isleworth, Osterley & Spring Grove	Mostly Phase 2, but some bays in Phase 3
3	Bedfont, Cranford, Feltham, Hanworth and Heston wards	Mostly Phase 3, but some bays in Phase 4
All	Minor amendments to the scheme completed across all areas in autumn 2023	Phase 4

- 3.7. It should be noted that in the absence of dedicated bays for the e-bikes, local authorities do not currently have the power to prevent operators from deploying a free-floating fleet (i.e. e-bikes not parked in dedicated bays) in the borough. This is expected to change under the new Transport Bill that is being developed by government, but the timescales for this are uncertain. The borough, along with London Councils, has written to Simon Lightwood MP, the MP for Local Transport, to lobby for regulation.
- 3.8. TfL, London Councils and London boroughs are exploring the design of one coordinated future scheme to manage dockless e-bikes and e-scooters in London, through a contract, to improve parking, while increasing the quality and sustainability of services in London. The borough has expressed an intent to join this scheme.
- 3.9. TfL recently announced they are planning to take enforcement action against e-bike operators who deploy bikes outside designated parking places on red routes and TfL land. TfL's offer to test this approach will inform London Boroughs' implementation of similar measures and Hounslow will monitor this pilot carefully to help define our own, local approach.

### **Trial Review Process**

- 3.10. As part of the ETMO process, the Council is required to collect feedback for the first 6 months of the trial, at a minimum. Prior to scheme implementation, residents and businesses in the vicinity of the scheme received a letter outlining the plans, with details of how to respond to the ETMO consultation.
- 3.11. The 16 July 2024 [Cabinet report](#) recommended that the e-bike trial be extended so that data for a full 12-month period could be evaluated in each of the three e-bike areas. This gave residents the opportunity to try using the e-bikes across all seasons and provide feedback on the scheme.
- 3.12. In July 2024, Cabinet delegated authority to the Assistant Director Traffic, Transport & Parking, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Environment & Climate Change, to make permanent the ETMOs associated with the e-bike scheme, subject to the satisfactory review of a full 12 months of data from each scheme area, a further review of e-bike parking bay locations, consultation with ward members and implementation of the amendments set out in the Cabinet report, such as the introduction of a further operator and updated Memorandum of Understanding.

### **Corporate Priorities**

- 3.13. The e-bike scheme is part of Hounslow's Kerbside Strategy, which was approved by [Cabinet on 16 July 2024](#). The Kerbside Strategy is part of the Council's ambitious plans for a healthier, greener and safer Hounslow, as detailed in the Corporate Plan. The Kerbside Strategy will complement Hounslow's new Transport Plan, reimagining our streets for the benefit of more residents, businesses and visitors, providing a comprehensive overview of all transport priorities in Hounslow. The Kerbside Strategy considers how to better balance different kerbside uses, including dockless e-bikes, helping to create safe, healthy, liveable and multi-functional streets for all ages and abilities.

## **4. Proposal and Rationale**

### **Trial Review Methodology**

- 4.1. As of September 2024, each e-bike area has been active for over 12 months. Officers have reviewed the trial data (from Lime) and assessed feedback from members, residents, and businesses regarding parking bay locations.
- 4.2. Where requests have been made to remove or relocate a bay, officers have conducted a review to assess safety and functional criteria. This includes the following:

- **Obstructions to Vehicular Movements:** Bays should not significantly impede the flow or movement of vehicles in the area, for instance by narrowing the carriageway compared to their former use.
  - **Sightline Issues for Vehicular Traffic:** Bays should not worsen sightlines for drivers, compared to their former use (typically vehicle parking), which is crucial for road safety.
  - **Safety of Bike Users:** Bays located in high traffic areas or at junctions should not pose unacceptable risks when retrieving/parking bikes.
  - **Impact on Pedestrian Flow:** Bays should not disrupt pedestrian 'desire lines' or cause crowding in high-footfall areas.
  - **Environmental Concerns:** Any potential impact on local greenery, drainage, or nearby wildlife habitats must be considered.
  - **Utilization:** Consistently high utilisation may suggest the need for an additional bay in the vicinity. However, if a bike bay shows consistently low usage\*, this has also been reviewed to see if relocation/removal of the bay might be warranted. This needs to be carefully balanced against whether this would have a detrimental impact on the overall e-bike parking network and user confidence in the scheme. In these cases, a longer period of assessment may be appropriate. *\*Bays that did not achieve at least 30 trip starts in a month (July-Sept 2024) have been flagged for review.*
- 4.3. General comments related to e-bike operations, such as mis-parked bikes, noise complaints, anti-social behaviour, etc. tend not to be site-specific as these may occur in any parking bay. As such, they were not considered reasons to remove/relocate a bay, unless there were site specific considerations.
- 4.4. Ward Members were consulted on the results of the review in November/December 2024, which informed this decision report.

### **Summary of Boroughwide Trial Results**

- 4.5. The emerging results from the trial scheme are positive, particularly when compared to the unauthorised free-floating scheme that was in operation up to June 2023.
- 4.6. **Users and Ridership:** At the start of the trial in June 2023, there were around 11,500 active Lime users in Hounslow and just over 40,000 trips started in the borough that month. By September 2024, the scheme had grown to 23,250 active users and over 93,400 trip starts in the borough. This represents a 132% increase in ridership and 100% increase in active users over 16 months.

- 4.7. **Trip Length and Duration:** The average Lime bike trip in Hounslow is around 2.3 km and lasts about 10 minutes. That means in September 2024 alone, e-bike scheme users starting a trip in Hounslow travelled approximately 220,000+ kilometres.
- 4.8. **Parking Compliance:** Scheme monitoring shows that 95% of trip ends are parked compliantly. Users who do not park within a bay at the end of their trip face a fine, the level of which increases after each use up to £20, before they are ultimately banned from the scheme. Since January 2024, an average of around 500 users per week were fined for improper parking in Hounslow. This number has dropped from over 1,000 fines per week in August 2023, mirroring improvements in parking compliance rates. Lime acknowledges that there is always likely to be a degree of user error that will be difficult to eliminate completely given the volume of trips starting and ending in the borough.
- 4.9. **Operator Response Times:** The Council's agreement with Lime sets out operator response times dictating how quickly the operator is expected to respond to issues such as mis-parked or damaged bicycles. Where a Lime bike is damaged/not operational (but not causing an obstruction), it must be removed within 24 hours from the time of receipt of notification and repaired before returning to the fleet. Where a Lime bike presents a danger or obstruction, it must be removed within 2 hours from the time of receipt of notification. Council staff monitor response times and to date Lime has been meeting the required timelines.

### **Summary of Area 2 results and proposals**

- 4.10. Appendix A summarises the full list of e-bike parking bays proposed to be retained (Schedule 1), relocated (Schedule 2), removed (Schedule 3), and/or added (Schedule 4), as a result of the review process. The review process and results are outlined in more detail in Appendices B - D. Appendix B provides an overview of the e-bike scheme, data analysis, and borough-wide trial results. Appendix C provides a summary of community comments received along with officer responses. Appendix D includes an assessment of utilisation at each location and Ward Member comments in light of this data. It should be noted that Appendix D is exempt from publication as it contains commercially sensitive information. Based upon this review, the majority of the e-bike bays in Area 2 are recommended to be made permanent, with a small number of relocations/removals/additions. The table below summarises the number in each category in each ward.



Ward	Total Parking Bays installed	Bays to be Retained	Bays to be Relocated	Bays to be Removed	Bays to be Added	Total (post-review)
Hounslow Central	12	12	0	0	0	12
Hounslow East	5	5	0	0	0	5
Hounslow Heath	13	11	1	1	1	13
Hounslow South	11	8	1	2	3	12
Hounslow West	14	12	2	0	0	14
Isleworth	9	8	1	0	0	9
Osterley & Spring Grove	18	10	6	2	0	16
<b>Total</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>81</b>

4.11. Any bays listed to be retained in Appendix A will be made permanent in conclusion to the Experimental Traffic Management Order process.

- 4.12. Any bays listed to be relocated will not be made permanent as part of this process, but will instead be subject to a new consultation process as part of a permanent traffic order. The process for removal and subsequent relocation of these bays will depend on the reason for relocation. Existing bays with safety/traffic flow concerns will be removed from the TMO. Bays without these concerns will be retained while consultation occurs on the new location; once the new location is confirmed, the existing bay will be removed. Residents and businesses in the vicinity of the proposed locations will be consulted prior to a decision being taken via a letter drop. Any new bays that are proposed in addition to existing/relocated bays will also be subject to this same process. This will be the subject of a separate Chief Officer Decision report once the consultation has concluded.
- 4.13. Any new or relocated bay locations will be in keeping with the original location and design principles of the scheme, as set out in the April 2023 Cabinet report (section 3.3) and June 2023 Chief Officer Decision report, whilst taking account of any learnings from the review. Desktop and site checks will be carried out by Senior Parking Engineers to determine site suitability.
- 4.14. Where existing e-bike bays are not to be retained, they will not form part of the permanent traffic order and the Council's contractors will be instructed to remove these by blacking out the markings.

#### **Other Options Considered:**

- 4.15. During the location review process, where necessary, an assessment of alternative locations was undertaken, and the most appropriate location put forward based on the criteria identified above. The need to maintain sufficient network density to ensure scheme users are able to find a convenient parking location, thereby reducing the risk of abandoned bikes, was also an important consideration.
- 4.16. An alternative option would have been to remove the dedicated e-bike parking bays and revert to a free-floating scheme. However, this is likely to result in an even higher volume of bikes abandoned in dangerous or unsuitable locations. Whilst not perfect, the existing scheme is considered to represent an improvement compared to the previous free-floating operations before the e-bike trial was implemented in June 2023.

#### **5. Risk**

- 5.1. There is a risk that where bay relocations or additional locations are proposed, if these are not supported at consultation and there is no viable alternative, this would result in a reduction in the number of bays in the network. In turn this may lead to an increase in the volume of abandoned bikes if users cannot find a convenient location to return their bike to.

## **6. Financial Implications**

- 6.1. The estimated cost of implementing the recommendations detailed in this report is expected to be approximately £4,000, which is expected to be incurred in 2024/25. This includes the cost of placing adverts in the paper to make the experimental traffic order permanent (for those e-bike bays that are recommended to be retained), the cost of bay removal where required, and the cost of undertaking statutory consultation on any new and relocated bay locations. This cost will be met from the income that has been received from e-bike operations to date this financial year, which is in alignment with the income projections that were set out in the July Cabinet report on the Kerbside Strategy. As part of the Council's Memorandum of Understanding with Lime, Lime are obliged to pay for use of the bays through an annual service charge and monthly vehicle fees.
- 6.2. Any new/amended locations will be the subject of a further Chief Officer Decision report post consultation, with anticipated costs to be detailed at this stage. Again, it is expected that the cost of these changes will be met from e-bike operator income.

## **7. Legal Implications**

- 7.1. In April 2023, Cabinet approved the introduction of a boroughwide dockless e bike rental scheme on a trial basis for 6 months from completion of the boroughwide rollout and delegated authority to the Assistant Director of Traffic, Transport & Parking to agree specific bay locations for the first three phases of the scheme and take the necessary steps to implement the scheme on a trial basis via Experimental Traffic Management Order (ETMO).
- 7.2. The management of the operation of e-bikes within Hounslow will be exercised by the Council in accordance with regulations issued by the DfT.
- 7.3. Section 15 of the Greater London Council (General Powers) Act 1974 enables the Council to authorise, by resolution the parking of mechanically propelled vehicles (eg e-bikes) on the footway.
- 7.4. The Council as local highway authority has powers of removal and seizure of non-compliant dockless bikes under the Highways Act 1980. This is a function that is available which the council can exercise if and when necessary.

## **8. Communities, Equalities and Health Implications**

- 8.1. A full EQIA has been carried out as part of the draft Kerbside Strategy, which includes e-bikes. On balance, the council expects the scheme to have a positive impact. The scheme is intended to bring an additional more accessible mobility option to residents, including those with protected characteristics, offering a more affordable alternative to ownership.

- 8.2. The primary concern is regarding bikes being abandoned outside of the bays and being parked obstructively, which has a particular impact on wheelchair/pram/pushchair users and to blind or partially sighted users. However, the provision of dedicated bays has helped to minimise the risk of bikes being parked dangerously or inconsiderately on footways, compared to the free-floating scheme that previously operated in the borough. We have seen improvements in parking compliance as users adjusted to the new scheme rules, with parking compliance (i.e., the percentage of bikes parked within a dedicated parking bay) averaging 95% over the past 12 months.

## **9. Climate Emergency Implications**

- 9.1. Almost a third of households in the borough don't own a car and rely on walking, cycling or public/shared transport to get around. Those that own a car are also likely to use alternative modes for at least some of their trips, which is to be encouraged if the council is to meet its climate change pledges. This means that a careful and considered rebalancing of the kerbside would be beneficial to support these aims, as set out in the Kerbside Strategy. The Council encourages operators to consider their environmental footprint, for instance encouraging operators to move to the use of electric vehicles for the redistribution of e-bikes and ensuring that e-bike batteries that have reached the end of their life are recycled or disposed of appropriately.

## **10. Other Implications**

- 10.1. There are no other implications arising from this report.

## **11. Value for Money Assessment**

- 11.1. The July 2024 Cabinet report sets out how the fees due from operators will be used to fund the anticipated costs arising from implementation of the scheme. The cost of implementing the decisions set out within this report is not expected to exceed £4,000.

## **12. Implementation Plan**

- 12.1. For those e-bike bays that are recommended to be retained, the ETMO will be made permanent following COD approval, by early January 2025.
- 12.2. Consultation on the new and relocated bays is scheduled to commence in early 2025, with implementation of any subsequently approved bays likely to commence in spring 2025.

## **13. Comments on behalf of the Chief Financial Officer**

- 13.1. The cost of implementing the proposals in this report is estimated at £4,000. These costs along with the estimated costs for the implementation of recommendations arising from the review of the Borough wide e bikes trial scheme in other areas of the Borough are expected to be met from the income generated (invoiced to date) by the e bike trial.

## **14. Comments of the Monitoring Officer**

14.1 The Monitoring Officer is satisfied that that the proposals outlined in this report represent a lawful approach to the introduction of a boroughwide dockless e-bike rental scheme on a trial basis. Further to the delegations set out in the Cabinet Report July 2024, the Chief Officer has the authority to make the decision recommended in this report. On the 26 November 2024, Full Council approved a new financial threshold for decision making. Where a proposal is below a revenue threshold of £250,000 or below a capital threshold of £500,000 then the decision is now not a published decision on ModGov. So, this E-Bike Scheme Review (Area 2) decision is one which is not a publishable decision, as the financial implications of the proposal fall below the above thresholds. However, this report and decision should be retained and recorded by the service area as part of good governance and record keeping.

## **15. Appendices**

Appendix A – E-Bike Bay Decision Summary (Area 2)

Appendix B – E-Bike Scheme Review Overview (Area 2)

Appendix C – Summary of Comments (Area 2)

CONFIDENTIAL Appendix D – Utilisation data and member comments (Area 2)

## **16. Background Information**

[E-bike trial Cabinet report](#) (April 2023)

[Kerbside Strategy Cabinet report](#) (July 2024)

[Chief Officer Decision report](#) – E-bike trial Area 2 (June 2023)

[Kerbside Strategy 2024](#)

REPORT ENDS