

GROWTH, ENVIRONMENT AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	AGENDA ITEM No. 6
10 March 2021	PUBLIC REPORT

Report of:	Steve Cox, Executive Director – Place and Economy	
Cabinet Member(s) responsible:	Cllr Peter Hiller, Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning and Commercial Strategy and Investments	
Contact Officer(s):	Lewis Banks, Transport and Environment Manager	Tel. 01733 317465

E-Scooter review

RECOMMENDATIONS	
FROM: – Steve Cox, Executive Director, Place and Economy	Deadline date: <i>n/a</i>
<p>It is recommended that Growth, Environment and Resources Scrutiny Committee either:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Recommends that Cabinet introduces an e-scooter trial in Peterborough OR</i> • <i>Recommends that Cabinet awaits the outcome of the trials that are happening nationally before deciding whether e-scooters should be introduced in Peterborough</i> 	

1. ORIGIN OF REPORT

1.1 During a meeting of Full Council on 29th July 2020 the council resolved to consider whether to introduce e-scooters, with the proper licensing and agreements, as one alternative form of transport to the motor vehicle to reduce carbon emissions.

2. PURPOSE AND REASON FOR REPORT

2.1 A national e-scooter trial is currently underway in a number of areas across England. The council has the opportunity to participate in the final phase of a trial that is currently being delivered through the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA), due to conclude in October 2021.

This paper provides an overview of the e-scooter trial currently underway in Cambridge to enable the Committee to make an informed recommendation as to whether or not the Council should participate in the trial.

In addition, this paper provides the Committee with an update following the launch of an eBike scheme in Peterborough earlier this year.

2.2 This report is for the Growth, Environment and Resources Scrutiny Committee to consider under its Terms of Reference Part 3, Section 4 - Overview and Scrutiny Functions, paragraph No. 2.1 Functions determined by Council:

5. Transport, Highways and Road Traffic

3. **TIMESCALES**

Is this a Major Policy Item/Statutory Plan?	NO	If yes, date for Cabinet meeting	N/A
---	-----------	----------------------------------	-----

4. **BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES**

- 4.1 To support a green restart of local transport in the UK and help to mitigate reduced public transport capacity, the Department for Transport (DfT) fast tracked 27 e-scooter trials last summer, details on the trials including locations can be found on the DfT [website](#).

This is a national trial which is being funded by the DfT and is due to end in October 2021. Therefore, the council will need to decide soon whether it wants to participate in this trial or whether to instead await the outcome of the trials from DfT.

- 4.2 The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA) took the decision to participate in the trials and the e-scooter trial in Cambridge, focussed on the city centre, commenced in October 2020. It was recognised by the CPCA that launching a trial at this time would mean that the results would be directly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic but crucially, by following the Government's advice for social distancing and safe travel on public transport, the trial would also increase transport options for the public.

The trial in Cambridge started with 50 e-scooters. This has gradually grown based on user demand, working in collaboration with Cambridge City Council and Cambridgeshire County Council to integrate e-scooters into the city transport network. This gave the Combined Authority, e-scooter users and the public time to become accustomed to e-scooters in the city and ensures that the scheme can grow based on usage. Crucially, limiting initial numbers makes it easier to monitor the initial operations to understand user compliance and behaviours including safety and to ensure an understanding of mandatory parking zones.

Since the launch, over 20,000 rides have been conducted using the scooters, equating to approximately 48,000km. Research is currently being conducted amongst users to understand whether an alternative mode of transport has been replaced by an e-scooter as a mode of transport with surveys being undertaken at the 6 and then 12 month stage. Early indications shows a good rate of adoption which over time will be monitored as the trial continues with a full report submitted to the DfT as part of the trial.

- 4.3 Advances in battery technology in recent years have led to increasing numbers of e-scooters and other forms of motorised micro mobility for private ownership alongside fleets for commercial rental schemes.

Similar to the recent launch of the dockless eBike hire schemes, including one in Peterborough (detailed below), many rental e-scooter schemes do not require parking infrastructure making them free-floating, which has the increased benefit of flexibility in journeys and possible behavioural changes and modal shift. However, there can be an impact on the public realm as dockless bikes increase street clutter and can cause obstructions if parking and deployment is left unregulated. The current eBike trial in Peterborough (and the eBike/e-scooter trial in Cambridge) is being run in partnership with Voi technologies following a procurement exercise carried out by the CPCA. The procurement would allow e-scooters to be trialled in Peterborough.

Voi technologies is a Swedish company who is a micro-mobility operator who specialise in e-scooters and is currently operating in a number of European cities. Voi Technology is aiming to create a system of electrically powered scooters around urban centres to provide an affordable, and sustainable way to commute while helping people to reduce their carbon footprint.

The eBike trial in Peterborough launched on 20th January 2021. The trial has seen the introduction of 20 bikes. The bikes work by 62 with mandatory parking locations, the following

[link](#) shows the exact location of the mandatory parking zones. The parking zones are easily amended to add or remove locations dependant on demand and feedback from local residents.

In January the bikes were used 87 times. At the end of the trial in October a decision will be made by the CPCA to continue.

To combat this issue, the council's eBike trial has adopted the mandatory parking zones approach which uses geo-fencing to ensure bikes are parked in preapproved locations only. The council would adopt the same approach for a potential e-scooter trial.

5. CONSULTATION

5.1 Whilst some consultation has taken place with a small number of groups, a decision would be needed on whether a wider consultation should take place prior to an e-scooter trial being undertaken with the following stakeholders:

- Further detailed discussions with: Disability forum, RNIB, Cycle forum, Chamber of commerce, Sustrans.
- Address concerns raised nationally by disability groups.
- The Peterborough Cycle Forum

5.2 Whilst consultation has not been comprehensively undertaken in Peterborough at this stage there are a number of interventions included within the CPCA trial that seek to address concerns. This includes:

- Pavement riding, this can be hazardous for pedestrians, especially those who may have disabilities. To combat this the CPCA trial has introduced ambassadors who are the 'on the ground' face of the scheme, offering support to users in the field and focussing on cleaning, maintaining and moving the e-scooters. If an instance of pavement riding is seen then the user is given a warning and a three strike system is in place to act as a deterrent. However, the likelihood of witnessing an e-scooter being ridden illegally is low.
- Speed has also been cited as a possible hazard, the scooters which are used in the trial have a maximum speed of 15mph which is in line with the government guidelines for e-scooters.
- Disability groups have raised concerns about parked e-scooters causing trip hazards and a barrier to accessibility. Whilst the CPCA trial e-scooters are dock less, the location where they can be parked is somewhat limited as mandatory parking zones are enforced through geo-fencing and e-scooters that are parked outside of a mandatory parking zone will continue to charge the user.
- General anti-social behaviour is another concern raised during the consultation. All users in the trial are required to provide valid ID in the form of a drivers' licence or passport and furthermore users are also required to have a valid payment method on the account. As a result any user who is identified as riding illegally or in an anti-social manner could be banned.

The benefits of undertaking a trial locally is that the scooters used are clearly branded and therefore it is possible for enforcement officers and the police to clearly recognise permitted versus illegal use of privately owned scooters.

6. ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES OR IMPACT

6.1 This paper provides an update on e-scooters and discuss next steps regarding participation. Current trials are still ongoing nationwide and as a result information on the positives and negatives of the trials is limited. Furthermore, the DfT report and recommendations on the legalisation of e-scooters has not yet been produced and is not expected until winter 2021.

7. REASON FOR THE RECOMMENDATION

- 7.1 Due to the ongoing pandemic there is a need to provide alternative means of transport where users can travel safely, sustainably and in line with government guidelines. The national trials are time limited so the council needs to decide whether it wants to participate in the trials as they are due to end in October 2021.

The trials would have no financial cost to the council and a supplier has already been selected by the CPCA however as mentioned above limited consultation has been conducted and concerns have been raised by some groups on the safety of e-scooters and the potential dangers they pose to other road users.

9. IMPLICATIONS

Financial Implications

- 9.1 There are no financial implications for the council.

Legal Implications

- 9.2 There are no legal implications directly with the council as the only relationship the user has is with the scheme operator (Voi) who in turn is licensed by DfT

Equalities Implications

- 9.3 There is the possibility that the introduction of the e-scooter trial could have a negative impact on vulnerable road users such as people with disabilities and the elderly.

Rural Implications

- 9.4 There are no Rural implications

Carbon Impact Assessment

- 9.5 The scheme will see the introduction of e-scooters in Peterborough, the scooters are a more sustainable alternative to single occupancy car journeys this will have a positive impact on emissions. The Voi scooters have swappable batteries generates **18.9 g CO₂e per pkm**. To put this into perspective, the average emissions levels of new cars in the EU is 120.4g CO₂/km.

10. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

- 10.1 *The DfT approved 27 e-scooter trials in the summer of 2020, the trials are due to run until October 2021, details of the 27 trial area plus additional information on e-scooters can be found on the DfT website:*

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/e-scooter-trials-guidance-for-users>

- 10.2 *There are currently 62 mandatory parking zones for eBikes in Peterborough, these zones are subject to change and can be amended to remove existing or include new locations dependant on feedback, details of the mandatory parking zones can be found using the following link:*

<https://www.google.co.uk/maps/d/viewer?ll=52.582460383972176%2C-0.23980686261219075&z=14&mid=1vamPW4Pfpkn7XcxDH5yeB7XEZPOwxLwA>

11. APPENDICES

- 11.1 *None.*