

Item

MICRO-MOBILITY MANAGEMENT

To:

Councillor Alice Gilderdale, Deputy Leader (Statutory) and Executive Councillor for Community Wealth Building and Community Safety

Environment & Community Scrutiny Committee

05/10/2023

Report by:

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Non-Key Decision

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report responds to the motion on two-wheeled electric vehicle use considered at the Council's Annual General Meeting held on 25 May, and updates on the multi-stakeholder work continuing to improve on difficulties experienced.

2. Recommendations

The Executive Councillor is recommended to:

- a) Note the work undertaken thus far on this topic;
- b) Support further engagement work with stakeholders

3. Background

- 3.1 At its Annual General Meeting on 25 May 2023 Council considered a motion (13a) from Councillor Levien on the use of new two-wheeled electric scooters and mopeds. This motion outlined a number of difficulties being experienced as a consequence of poor behaviour by riders of these new forms of micro-mobility, and called on the Council to take a more pro-active role in their management.
- 3.2 Council resolved (by 33 votes to 0) that:

Council notes:

1. The rapid expansion in the use of novel, primarily electrically powered, two-wheeled vehicles, many of significant size and weight and capable of high speeds;
2. That this innovation, used responsibly, has the welcome potential to broaden travel opportunities;
3. The need to tackle growing antisocial use of these vehicles on Cambridge's roads, shared use paths, public spaces and footpaths, risking safety – particularly that of elderly and disabled people;
4. That apart from those vehicles expressly licensed by the Combined Authority, some of these types of vehicle remain illegal to use on public highways, and that as a result of little government regulation of these vehicles, there's a lack of clarity over their status;
5. That a large number of electric moped drivers are workers of food and other delivery companies, working on zero-hours or other insecure contracts in a gig economy which does little to ensure good working conditions for employees, and that these drivers are therefore incentivised to cut corners in the interest of speed as a result of this model.

Council believes:

A national regulatory approach needs urgently to be put in place to enable responsible use in appropriate places of vehicle classes assessed to be safe, and to prevent irresponsible use, empowering local authorities and the police to enforce accordingly.

Council welcomes:

That in the meantime the Council has commenced a three-way partnership with Cambridgeshire Police and the County Council to tackle the misuse of these vehicles in public places.

Council resolves:

1. To request a report to the Environment and Community Scrutiny Committee within the next 6 months on the progress of the three-way partnership, identifying means by which the city council and partners might take this forward, exercising influence over, and potentially co-ordinating, the best use of existing powers in a concerted fashion to mitigate the adverse, and channel the positive effects of the phenomenon, including but not limited to engagement with:
 - The Police on the use of existing enforcement powers;
 - Highways and Trading Standards at the County Council;
 - The city council's own services with responsibility for public open spaces, (building on the recent initiative for 'Respect' signage on Midsummer Common), environmental enforcement and community safety;
 - The Combined Authority as local sponsor of the Voi licensed pilot in Cambridge
 - Delivery companies whose services utilise the novel vehicles
 - Interest groups in the city representing established users of spaces now also used by novel vehicles.

2. To instruct the Chief Executive to write to the relevant government minister (copying in the city's MPs, the CPCA Mayor, the PCC and the LGA) in order to:
 1. Request the urgent creation of a national regulatory framework for the novel vehicles, which recognises the need for controls over safety and anti-social use and empowers local authorities and the Police to take effective enforcement action;
 2. Express the Council's concerns about the impact of the gig economy model on this issue and seek measures which also address that.

4. The Council's Role and Involvement

- 4.1 Council welcomed the motion outlining the concern of members and communities, noting various questions previously to Council, Scrutiny and Area Committees on this topic. Clearly micro-mobility offers great potential to enhance people's everyday travel choices in towns and cities and help tackle climate change, but irresponsible and unsafe use by some undermines public confidence and support.
- 4.2 In order to gain a better understanding of the potential benefits the Government has commissioned a number of e-scooter public hire trials across the UK, including here in Cambridge. The use of any other mechanically propelled scooters on public roads, cycle facilities and footways is, currently, against the law and can be reported to the Police. Whilst such machines can be purchased without difficulty, they should only be used on private land with the landowner's permission.
- 4.3 Addressing the issue of anti-social and unlawful use of various forms of micro-mobility is a complex matter that involves many organisations such as the City Council, County Council, Police, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority, Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, businesses, and community interest groups – all with different roles and jurisdictions. In order to provide reassurance, in late 2022 the Council initiated and led a multi-partner stakeholder working group to review areas of current difficulty, and to seek to identify potential mitigations where practicable. To date this work has already secured:
- Public engagement over community policing priorities, including direct dialogue with fast-food delivery providers and targeted enforcement activity against persistent offenders at known 'hot-spots'
 - Agreement and funding to trial signing promoting responsible behaviour on Midsummer Common – a multi-use green space with several paths crossing and an area of reported regular conflict between users.
 - Support for a countywide public information campaign focusing on the use of scooters and the law, similar to that undertaken elsewhere around the UK, and most likely to be led by the Cambridgeshire road safety Vision Zero Partnership, and Police.
 - Continuing liaison with and input to the national e-scooter trials being undertaken on behalf of the Department for Transport (DfT). Within Cambridgeshire and Peterborough this is being led by the Combined Authority and operator Voi.

- 4.4 At the end of 2022 the Combined Authority agreed to further extend their current contract with Voi for public e-scooter/ e-bike rentals until 31 May 2024, under new provisions by Government/ DfT. This is one of 24 such trials introduced nationally from 2020 through 11 different operators. DfT wished to allow more time to monitor and appraise the effectiveness of the existing trials, and also allow time to bring forward new legislation for a new vehicle category covering the use of low speed zero emission vehicles (LZEV) on public roads.
- 4.5 In taking this decision the Combined Authority recognised that such schemes provide a valuable addition to the urban transport scene that not only encourages a move away from polluting alternatives but expands convenience, encourages economic activity and – in particular through the ‘Voi for All’ scheme - offers affordable personal mobility to those without other transport choices and/ or on low incomes. Such schemes include a strict geo-fenced operational area with automatically mandated ‘no ride’ and ‘slow speed’ areas where necessary, along with advice and checks on user’s ability and eligibility to ride safely, with penalties including prohibition for poor behaviour.
- 4.6 All Voi units in the trial display clear number plates to help identify riders, with a maximum operating speed of 12mph for e-scooters and 15mph for e-bikes. The operational cap on e-scooter numbers is currently set at 850 units. DfT has recently agreed to expand the trial’s operational area to necklace settlements to the north of Cambridge (including Eddington, Girton, Histon, Impington and Milton) but without any increase in fleet size. This should help ensure that density within busy and congested areas of the city can be kept within manageable limits. Council officers will continue to work closely with partners to ensure the scheme continues to provide a good level of public service with appropriate safeguards.
- 4.7 Primary legislation to create a new Low speed Zero Emission Vehicle (LZEV) category would sit alongside those already in existence for Pedal Cycles, Electrically Assisted Pedal Cycles (EAPCs), Motor Vehicles, and Invalid Carriages. This broadly defined category would create a new flexible regulatory space for micro-mobility. Government is expected to use secondary legislation to decide which vehicles are placed into this category on a case-by-case basis, with e-scooters likely being classified as LZEVs first.
- 4.8 All subsequent rental schemes, including bike-share (such as Ofo and MoBike previously in Cambridge), e-bikes and e-scooters, would be

delivered through new licensing powers granted to transport authorities via this new secondary legislation. New powers for enforcing schemes would also be included, with licenses clearly setting out the standard conditions and requirements to be met.

- 4.9 Government has yet to set a timeline for this legislative process but, given the scope of the work and pressures on parliamentary time, it is not expected to be until 2024/ 25 and quite possibly later. This being the case it is entirely conceivable that powers will be extended to local transport authorities to continue with their existing trials beyond May 2024 where they wish to do so.
- 4.10 The following web links provide helpful information on the current legislative framework. Forms of 'e-moped', provided they are equipped with propelling pedals, are classed as Electrically Assisted Pedal Cycles (EAPCs) and, consequently, do not require number plates, direction and stopping indicators, licensing, tax, insurance nor an MOT.

[Electrically assisted pedal cycles \(EAPCs\) in Great Britain: information sheet - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/114111/eapc_information_sheet.pdf)

[Electric bikes: licensing, tax and insurance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/114111/electric_bikes_licensing_tax_and_insurance.pdf)

5. Update on Further Engagement Work, and Next Steps

- 5.1 The multi-stakeholder working group convened by the Council last met in early Spring 2023 and, following changes in organisational structures and personnel over the summer months, a further meeting is planned in the Autumn.
- 5.2 Council officers continue to meet regularly with colleagues from the Combined Authority, County Council, operator Voi and the Police to review the current e-scooter and e-bike rental trial. Voi have arranged two meetings (May and September 2023) also involving Cam Sight and the Cambridge branch of the RNIB, to better understand some of their concerns first hand.
- 5.3 A number of rental parking hubs have been reviewed in response to user and community feedback, with e-scooter racks trialed at several city centre locations to improve parking tidiness. Voi have also stepped up their controls to limit access to their service for those ineligible, to ensure

that riders are aware of where they can and shouldn't ride and to penalise or prohibit users that demonstrate repeated poor behaviour.

- 5.4 Voi, along with other rental operators across the UK and local authorities participating in trials, have written to the Prime Minister urging for timely assurances around Government's commitment to micro-mobility, including legislation that would regulate minimum safety standards and provide rental operating security beyond the current trial end date. Council officers have also been invited by Combined Authority colleagues to attend a meeting with DfT officials in early Autumn for an update on the broader national trials taking place, and where it is hoped there will be further clarity around future plans.
- 5.5 The Police continue to engage with the fast food and other delivery sector users of two-wheeled electric vehicles and are undertaking an extensive public information campaign throughout October 2023 advising of the legalities around their use.
- 5.6 The trial scheme to introduce signs raising awareness and promoting respectful behaviour on Midsummer Common is now agreed and the work ordered, which it is hoped will be completed during the Autumn. Some 23 path surface mounted signs will be installed at all entrances to the common and locations where paths cross.
- 5.7 Council officers have reviewed the legal basis for restrictions on the riding of pedal cycles in some open green spaces including Christ's Pieces, which date back many decades, and concluded that unfortunately this is insufficient for direct enforcement action to be taken against offenders at the present time. Voi units however are prevented from operating on the Pieces since it is excluded from the geo-fenced area.
- 5.8 A letter has been prepared for the Council's Chief Executive to send to The Right Hon Jesse Norman, MP, Minister of State (Decarbonisation and Technology), requesting an update on Government's plans to address current difficulties being experienced and highlighted in the motion to Council's AGM in May, along with a timeline for bringing forward new LZEV legislation. This will be sent following the Scrutiny meeting to include any new points that emerge from the discussion.
- 5.9 Officers have discussed with Combined Authority and County Council colleagues, and Voi, the potential for holding a further all-member briefing when there is further clarity around future plans. Voi have also offered to supplement this with a tour of their Cambridge depot where members

would be able to experience their operation first hand, and try the e-scooters and e-bikes for themselves should they wish to.

6. Implications

a) Equality and Poverty Implications

E-bikes, e-scooters and e-mopeds all provide additional transport options for residents, workers and visitors to Cambridge, enhancing personal mobility and reducing reliance on private motor vehicles. The rental trial being provided by operator Voi until the end of May 2024 offers a number of flexible pricing options to best suit user requirements, including the 'Voi for All' discount scheme for those on low incomes. Voi engage regularly and closely with local equalities groups, including the RNIB, to ensure their operation takes account of diverse needs.

b) Net Zero Carbon, Climate Change and Environmental Implications

Approaching 2.5m journeys have been made on Voi rental e-scooters and e-bikes since the trial scheme commenced in October 2020. Surveys undertaken by the operator suggest that approximately one-third of these would have previously been made by private motor vehicles.

c) Procurement Implications

There are no procurement implications for the Council.

d) Community Safety Implications

Enhancing personal mobility, particularly in active and sustainable ways, can make a very positive contribution towards fostering increased pride of place and community cohesion.

e) Consultation and communication considerations

There are presently no implications for the Council.

7 Background papers

Background papers used in the preparation of this report:

Council Annual General Meeting 25/05/2023 – minutes (Ref 23/33/CNLa)

8 Appendices

None.

9 Inspection of papers

To inspect the background papers or if you have a query on the report please contact:

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