

**Decision Session – Executive Member for Transport and Planning 12 July 2018**

**Decision to be made in consultation with the Executive Member for Environment**

Report of the Corporate Director of Economy and Place

**A Bike-share scheme for York**

**Summary**

1. This report considers the introduction of a ‘Bike Share’ scheme for York. The report outlines how a scheme might be introduced, highlighting changes which have occurred in the bike share sector over the last two years and reflecting on how the industry has developed across the United Kingdom.
2. The report asks the Executive Members to give their support to the appointment of an industry partner who will deliver a bike share scheme which will meet the standards required by the Council and its key partners.

**Recommendations**

3. The Executive Member for Transport and Planning, in consultation with the Executive Member for Environment is asked to approve option B:
  - a) Agree to the undertaking of a procurement exercise to secure a dock-less bike share scheme for York for an initial one year period. The scheme must not require ongoing public sector revenue to ensure its continued operation;
  - b) Delegate authority to officers to agree the detailed specification of the scheme with key York partners (LNER, University of York, York NHS Trust and York St John University) and with the preferred Scheme provider.

Reason: To develop and deliver the best possible bike share scheme for York which will meet the needs of users and other stakeholders.

## Background

4. 'Bike share' schemes are becoming increasingly common in the UK. 'ComoUK' (collective mobility UK) broadly define bike share as "any setting where cycles are pooled for multiple users". Models include Public Bike share (PBS): Self-service on-street docking stations, workplace pool bikes, railway station hubs, loans, lockers and peer to peer sharing.' ([www.como.org.uk](http://www.como.org.uk))
5. Figure 1 below shows the spread of bike share schemes established across the UK. Some towns and cities have one scheme, with a small number having several. A scheme will be introduced in Leeds in 2018.

Figure 1



6. Following the introduction of bike share schemes in other towns and cities across the UK, York's councillors requested that feasibility work be undertaken for the introduction of such a scheme in York. £50k was made

available as a contribution to a possible scheme launch. A bike share scheme would provide the opportunity for visitors to the City and locals / workers who were not 'bike available' to make journeys around York by bicycle.

## **Types of Bike share scheme**

7. There are two main types of scheme available: the traditional Docked system and the more recent Dock-less systems.

### Docked bike systems

8. Up to 2016, the only option available to local authorities was a 'docked' bike scheme (akin to the Santander, or 'Boris-Bike', scheme in London). There are numerous examples of these across the UK, the most widespread being provided by 'HourBike', operating in Southend and Northampton amongst other places and 'Nextbike' operating in Stirling and Portsmouth.
9. A docked system requires dedicated parking areas to be identified around the City and docking stations to be installed at each. Each bicycle has to be collected from and returned to a docking station. In docked schemes the technology tends to be located in the docking station and therefore each station needs a power supply and a means of communicating with the 'back-office' admin system.
10. The Council previously considered the introduction of a bike share scheme in 2014 and came very close to implementation. Unfortunately, shortly after undertaking a tendering exercise the chosen operator went into administration before the scheme could be delivered and the project was not taken any further.

### Dock-less bike solutions

11. The main difference between a dock-less and docked solution is that the technology is integral to the bike as opposed to being housed in a docking station. This removes the need for a docking station and possibly for any type of cycle rack as the technology controls the bike's integral lock and all dock-less bikes tend to have 'kick-stands' to enable

them to be parked in areas where there are no racks.

12. Unlike a number of older 'docked' bike share schemes, dock-less bikes are generally managed using smart phone apps. This enables the user to sign up for a scheme, locate their nearest available bike, unlock the bike and pay through their own phone.
13. The 'rent-a-bike' market continues to evolve. In addition to dock-less and docking station systems, schemes which lease bikes to individuals for a monthly fee are emerging. These solutions give the user the certainty of bike availability, but with a monthly fee rather than the full bike purchase cost.
14. 'Peer to peer' bike rental has also emerged as an increasingly popular model. Peer to peer rental operates in a similar fashion to schemes enabling house or flat rentals to third parties when the owner is on holiday, or renting their driveway for parking.
15. Whilst it is accepted that either of these, or other possible bike rental schemes, could emerge in York it is not proposed that these are explored further as part of the launch of a bike-share scheme for York.

### **Consultation**

16. In the preparation of this paper, the Council has engaged with a number of bike share operators and local authorities where bike share schemes are delivered around the UK.
17. The Council has identified that input and support is required from the following key stakeholders if a bike share scheme is to be launched in York:
  - LNER (operator of York Station and the East Coast mainline)
  - University of York
  - York NHS Trust
  - York St John University
18. In-principle support for the delivery of a Bike share scheme has been secured from these organisations. In addition, consultation has also been undertaken with:

- 'Make it York' (as the body responsible for promotion of York's visitor offer);
  - The York Bid
  - York Walk and Cycle Forum
  - The York Cycle Campaign
19. In the preparation of tender documents, views will also be sought from:
- Groups representing people with mobility impairments (such as the York Blind and Partially Sighted Society);
  - Representatives from bike retailers;
  - Representatives from Como UK (the body representing much of the bike share industry);
  - Parties implementing counter-terrorism measures.

## Options

20. The following options are presented for the Executive Member's consideration:

### **Option A**

Work with key partners and a Bike share operator to deliver a Bike share scheme for York employing docking stations.

### **Option B**

Work with key partners and a Bike share operator to deliver a dock-less Bike share scheme for York.

### **Option C**

Work with key partners to scope the principles of a Bike share system but enable the procurement exercise to determine whether it the scheme should be dock-less or should employ docking stations.

### **Option D**

Do not proceed with the introduction of a Bike share scheme.

## Analysis of options

### Options A to C

21. The key benefits of a Bike share scheme lie in the air quality and health improvements they would afford to users (and the wider York population), the improvement of sustainable transport choice and the potential to reduce congestion in the York area. A scheme also means residents

would no longer need to buy and store a bike to be able to have cycling as one of their travel options, this would be very useful to people who live in rented accommodation where secure cycle storage is seldom supplied by landlords.

22. Part of the success of a bike share scheme lies in the existence of effective infrastructure. Many off road and on road cycle facilities already exist across the Authority area. The forthcoming delivery of the new Scarborough Bridge, transformation of York Station and its surrounds and delivery of the York Central and Community Stadium developments make this an appropriate time to introduce a bike share scheme.

23. The key beneficiaries (or users) of such a scheme have been identified as:

- a) The student population – many of whom do not bring a bicycle with them to University and are frequent travellers between the various university campuses, the city centre and other amenities (e.g. York Hospital);
- b) Workers in the city arriving at York Station (or the Park & Ride sites) who may not be able to easily bring their bike on the train, but could make the 'last mile' of their journey using a bike-share bicycle;
- c) Workers employed by businesses with multiple sites across the city who may be required to travel between sites;
- d) Visitors / tourists to the city who may wish to explore the wider city by bicycle (for instance along the riverside paths, etc);
- e) Businesses who could potentially bulk buy credit for such a system to enable their employees (and visitors) to travel around the City.
- f) Local cycle businesses may be able to partner up with a chosen operator to deliver the service and repair of the fleet of bicycles.

24. The key challenges in the introduction a scheme have been identified as:

- a) Parking – Consideration needs to be given to how parking of the bike share bikes can be managed in such a way that the conservational sensitivities of the City are not undermined. Equally important is concern surrounding any potential reduction of space available for

existing cyclists to park their cycles and also for non-cyclists who might have concerns about the perceived or actual street clutter resulting from a bike share scheme. Finding suitable locations where sufficient space is available and is located where users can get reasonable access whilst taking into consideration the above points will be a challenge. A system by which residents or businesses can report poorly parked cycles will need to be put in place to enable the bikes to be moved to an appropriate location in a timely fashion;

- b) Availability – Ensuring that the bicycles are well maintained and are available in the locations where potential users will wish to collect them from (e.g. York Station, Park & Ride sites etc). Both of these criteria will involve a degree of ‘hands-on’ management to ensure that bicycles are re-balanced throughout the day to ensure they are available at key journey commencement locations;
- c) Security / theft – From a supplier perspective, this means accepting that there may be some vandalism or theft (particularly in the initial post-launch period) but having measures in place to mitigate the likelihood of criminal activity. From the perspective of the local authority, this means avoiding a situation where the system ceases to be ‘dependable’ due to the paucity of bicycles available. From a reputational perspective, regular vandalism of the bikes (and their slow repair) should be avoided as undoubtedly this would de-value the network.
- d) Safety – Ensuring that the bike share bikes are safe for users to ride, are well maintained and that there is a robust reporting mechanism available for the reporting of defects is key to the success of any scheme. Further, that the Council and its key partners work closely with the Operator, potentially to offer cycle training for would-be users (an extension to our current adult ‘Urban Cycle Skills’ offer). Most operators tend to partner up with a local cycle shop business to service and repair the fleet of cycles.
- e) Regulation / Competition – the Council, as the Highway Authority, will need to ensure user and operator compliance to either our own or adopted industry standards.

## **Option A**

25. By its very nature, in a City with the potential space constraints which York has (particularly in the city centre), a docked bike solution would be difficult to accommodate. As space in and around the city is in great demand and there are relatively few suitable sites for new cycle parking the Council might need to convert some of the city's existing cycle parking sites to docking stations giving local cyclists less choice about where they can park and potentially deterring some people from cycling into the city centre if they have no confidence that they can find a suitable place to park their bike.
26. There would also need to be a significant investment to provide the docking station infrastructure (including a power supply), some or all of which may need to be provided by the council. Further, the maintenance requirements of this solution would potentially be greater due to the need to maintain not only the bikes, but the docking stations as well. Most docked bike solutions require ongoing revenue to maintain them. If this is not from the local authority, it is from third parties such as Higher Education establishments or the NHS.
27. A docked bike share scheme would help to restrict / control where the bikes are left around the City. It should also be noted that in spite of the proliferation of dock-less schemes, some areas are still choosing docking station schemes (most recently in the West Midlands).

## **Option B**

28. Availability of the dock-less option has resulted in a widespread increase in the total number of bike share schemes across the UK. These have, in turn, resulted in an increase in the number of people cycling in towns and cities across the country.
29. Initially, dock-less bike share schemes were problematic. A small number of bike-share operators introduced their bikes (in some cases, of very poor build-quality) to cities/ suburbs without any consultation with the local highway or transport authority. Users could start or finish their bookings anywhere and little attention was paid to the need to avoid



creating highway obstructions when bikes were left virtually anywhere.

30. Dock-less bike share providers have quickly recognised the importance of engaging with local authorities to ensure that their schemes are designed in such a way that they are in keeping with the ambitions and requirements of the transport authorities and other key stakeholders in the areas concerned.
31. The dock-less bike share providers engaged with to date have indicated that they are now moving to identifying areas where bike share users are encouraged to park their bikes. In sensitive areas these can be marked out with highways signage indicating that the area is for the parking of bike-share bikes.
32. Virtual parking areas can be created which a user would have to park the bike in to activate the locking mechanism. These virtual parking areas can prevent bikes being left in inappropriate locations. Many operators now encourage responsible parking of bikes through financial incentives with points being awarded or deducted for good or bad parking. Rewards such as free hires can be offered for gaining the required number of points or warnings issued if customers drop below a specified threshold. Customers can have their Membership withdrawn after receiving a number of warnings.
33. One of the attractions of the dock-less bike share solution for both the local authority and its key partners is the cost. Currently, the majority of dock-less bike share schemes do not require any ongoing revenue from the local authorities.
34. Local authorities do need to be involved at the outset, however, to agree the ground rules for a scheme, to manage stakeholders, to identify suitable hub sites and to assist with identification of maintenance partners, etc.
35. The Council's key partner organisations have indicated that given the potential capital investment and physical space required for docking stations, their preference would be for a dock-less solution.

## Option C

36. Preparatory work by the Council indicates that a dock-less bike share solution would be the most likely to succeed in York. It is clear, however, that there are a number of operators who offer bike share with docking stations and it may be that there is a solution that the Council has overlooked. To this end, the Executive Members may be of the view that it would be preferable to allow the tender process to inform the technical solution, albeit that the tender would still require that a scheme be delivered at zero ongoing operating cost to the Council or its key partners.

## Option D

37. The Executive Members may take the view that, in light of some of the difficulties experienced by other towns and cities in the country in the implementation of bike share schemes that the Council should not progress with this initiative at this stage. Should the Executive Members decide to progress with a scheme, it is intended that any agreement between the Council and an Operator would have break clauses and a one year initial period stipulated to enable a scheme to be discontinued should this be required.

## Council Plan

38. The plan is built around 3 key priorities:

**Working together**, engaging with key City partners to deliver a bike share scheme which works for its users and which fits the unique character of the city of York.

**We improve**, by ensuring that we learn from the experiences of towns and cities elsewhere in the UK in the introduction of a bike share scheme for York.

**We make a difference**, by increasing mobility, increasing active travel and reducing congestion. City of York Council is urging everyone who lives or works in York to move more, as part of a major citywide campaign to get people across the city healthier and happier

[www.movemoreyork.co.uk](http://www.movemoreyork.co.uk)

**A prosperous City for all:** Enabling people without access to a bicycle to travel inexpensively across all parts of the York area.

**A focus on Frontline Services:** Delivering a new service for residents and visitors to the City at very little cost to the York taxpayer.

**A Council that listens to residents**

Residents of York, North Yorkshire and East Riding have registered their views concerning the future provision of this service.

39. **One Planet Aims** – This local bus service is the most viable sustainable travel option linking the villages served to both the York Designer Outlet and York city centre.

40. **Implications**

**Financial –**

A one off £50,000 allocation has been made by the Council for the delivery of a bike share scheme for York. Initial supplier engagement indicates that an ongoing revenue stream is not required for the delivery of a bike share solution.

**Options A and C**

Without the securing of a separate revenue stream (e.g. from advertising), it is unlikely that a docking station bike share solution would prove affordable. Docking stations will vary in cost depending on how many locking points are available at each but will probably cost at least £1K per locking point. For a city-wide scheme the costs would quickly reach six figures to accommodate the number of bikes needed to make a scheme viable.

**Options B and C**

For a dock-less solution, the £50,000 allocation could be used for the delivery of additional cycle parking or for the provision of marked and signed bays to advise the public of locations where dock-less bikes should or could be parked. This would be particularly important in more sensitive / historic locations around the City. Alternatively the funding could be used to help launch and promote the scheme.

## **Option D**

Selection of option D would require that the allocation made as a contribution to the delivery of a bike share scheme be re-allocated to an alternative transport scheme.

### **Human Resources – N/A**

**Equalities** – In the introduction of a bike share scheme, consideration will be given to the impact that the bicycles or any ancillary equipment has for users of the public highway. Members of the York Blind and Partially Sighted Society will be consulted throughout the implementation of the scheme.

It is intended that adult sized bicycles will be used for the York bike share scheme. These will be accessible to men and women. It is not intended that children's bicycles or bicycles specially adapted to be ridden by people with disabilities will be introduced as part of this scheme.

### **Crime & Disorder N/A**

**Information Technology** – The delivery of a bike share scheme could introduce the opportunity for greater monitoring of journeys around the city and therefore more targeted investment of capital resource to deliver improvements where they will be most needed and used.

Information from a bike share scheme may also help to inform and shape the Council's Smart Travel Evolution Programme.

### **Property – N/A**

### **Other Physical - N/A**

## **Risk Management**

41. In compliance with the Council's risk management strategy the risks arising from the recommendations have been assessed, as below 16 and therefore require monitoring only.

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**Specialist Implications Officer(s)** List information for all

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**Wards Affected:** List wards or tick box to indicate all

**All**

**For further information please contact the authors of the report**