

Update on Micro-mobility Trials

Summary

1. The decision for York to participate in the Department for Transport's (DfT) e-scooter trials was made on the 8th September 2020 and has been successfully running with the inclusion of e-bikes since. The current trial end date is 31st March 2022.
2. The Department for Transport (DfT) have set out an extension of the current e-scooter trials until the 30th November 2022. The extension of the trial by the DfT allows extra time for the department to gather additional data to inform future national legislation.
3. This paper provides an update and review of the e-scooter and e-bike trials in York so far, and sets out whether to continue with the trial.
4. The recommendations in this report relate to the City of York Council's (CYC) participation in the Department for Transport's micro-mobility trial. The decision relates to continuing with the trial past the existing contract end date.

Recommendations

5. The Executive Member is asked to:
 - i. To continue with the micro-mobility trial, in line with the DfT extension and that the current operator (TIER) will remain the sole provider in York until the end of the trial period

Reason: continuation of the trial in York until the 30th November 2022 in line with the DfT's expectations provides important feedback to the creation of national guidelines. It allows the approx. 6,000

current users making 20,000 trips a month to continue using the sustainable methods of transport to get around the city.

- ii. To approve the generation of a permanent Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) for the scheme as the Experimental Traffic Regulation Order (E-TRO) will expire in March.

Reason: the experimental Traffic Regulation Order that allows E-scooters to the list of permitted vehicles allowed to travel wherever cycles are permitted expires in March and cannot legally be extended.

- iii. Reason: To confirm that e-bikes to use CYC cycle racks with capacity restrictions so that there is plenty of space for other cycles at all times.

Reason: Allowing e-bikes (not e-scooters) to use cycle racks around the city will encourage adoption of cycling by making journey start and end points convenient an accessible to more people. This will also make e-bikes accessible to residents living in York's outer villages such as Haxby & Poppleton where scooter parking has not been easy to identify.

Background

6. The decision for York to participate in the Department for Transport's (DfT) e-scooter trials was made on the 8th September 2020 and has been successfully running with operator TIER with the inclusion of e-bikes since. The current trial end date is 31st March 2022.
7. Since the trials began over 150,000 trips have been taken on the e-scooters an e-bikes by over 25,000 riders. The busiest month in 2021 was October when 2,500 users were riding on a weekly basis. There have only been 10 accidents, resulting in minor injuries only.
8. Every Month CYC report back to the DfT on usage and incidents. The DfT have requested that trial areas including York extend the period from March 2022 to November 2022 so that further data can be collected. The data and feedback provided will then be used by the government to inform national guidance and regulation around e-scooters.
9. As a new form of transport the Experimental – Traffic Regulation Order effectively adds E-scooters to the list of permitted vehicles allowed to travel wherever cycles are permitted. This would lapse in March if not made permanent which is what the Executive Member is asked to approve.

Consultation

10. A wide range of stakeholders are engaged with the micro-mobility trials. Two such examples are the University of York and York Hospital who have been consulted throughout and are supportive of a trial. The University are interested in how the trial can support student travel across campus, into the city centre and reduce car travel, whilst the Hospital are also interested in how e-scooters and e-bikes support patient and staff travel given limited parking.
11. The Experimental Traffic Regulation Order was advertised at the start of the trial and has been in place for 18 months since with no objections.
12. Consultation with other groups including York Sight Loss Council to ensure the service does not adversely impact those with a visual impairment.
13. Consultation with North Yorkshire Police on a regular basis to improve the service and tackle any issues caused by the service.
14. Local land owners such as Sustrans have been consulted throughout to ensure appropriate authority and feedback on use of the E-Scooters and E-bikes is obtained.
15. Monthly updates are given at a stakeholder meeting with parties such as those just listed, in order to inform of new plans, current uptake and actions from their feedback.
16. Internal to the Council, Transport Systems, Transport Policy, Network Management, Street-works Planning and Parking Services teams have been consulted and kept informed of the trial operations.
17. For parking locations on adopted highway, council officers review new proposals and share appropriate spots with the local ward councillors to have input before rolling out.
18. In December 2021 TIER launched 'Citizens Lab'. A website whereby anyone can 'drop a pin' on a map of York with comments such as where they would like more services or where they have noticed problems. This has been advertised on Council social media, TIER campaigns and shared with all ward councillors.

19. For extra provision of e-cycle parking, the York Cycle Campaign will be consulted to help identify suitable parking rack locations and offer advice on setting capacity limits at particular racks.
20. University of York are happy to allow e-bikes at other cycle racks as they have a significant amount of racks on campus which they are happy bikes will be able to access.
21. To date, neither TIER nor the Council have received a single complaint about 'poor bike behaviour' in relation to the e-bikes. Signalling that an increase in bikes would be a smooth transition.

Options

22. **Extend the micro-mobility trial to November 2022 and allow TIER e-bikes to use other cycling parking spots.**
23. If this Option is chosen, the micro-mobility trial would be extended from 31 March 2022 to 30 November 2022. All required statutory process would be put in place such as a DfT Vehicle Special Order (VSO), the current experimental TRO would have to be made permanent and a contract extension with TIER implemented.
24. E-bikes would have their start and end locations extended beyond the E-Scooter locations to other cycling infrastructure. Council & TIER would consult with the Cycle Campaign and other stakeholders on the best locations to use/avoid to manage capacity. Locations would then have to be approved by CYC with limitations on numbers such that there is always provision for other users.
25. The work we do in identifying racks and monitoring demand will highlight the 'easy wins' opportunities to drive forward the agenda for increasing cycling infrastructure.
26. TIER would not initially increase the E-bike fleet but spread out the current fleet. A slow and controlled approach which has been demonstrated to work well previously.
27. E-Scooters would remain tied to TIER parking locations.
28. **Extend the micro-mobility trial to November 2022 but don't allow TIER e-bikes to use other cycling parking spots.**
29. If this option is chosen, everything in Option 1 would be put in place with the exception of the e-bikes. E-bikes would continue to only be parked at

TIER locations and journeys could not start and end at other cycle parking infrastructure.

30. Do not extend the micro-mobility trial to November 2022

31. If this Option is chosen, the DfT will be informed that CYC have chosen not to continue with the trial. TIER will be informed that permission to operate in York would cease at the end of the current trial period.

32. TIERs E-Scooters and E-bikes would be removed from the city and the E-TRO would be allowed to expire with no replacement.

Analysis

33. Extend the micro-mobility trial to November 2022 and allow TIER e-bikes to use other cycling parking spots.

34. Advantages:

- CYC continue to have contributions to national guidance on E-Scooters, supporting York's national profile as a leading City in sustainable travel and getting an important say on regulation that will affect the City in the future.
- The average 20,000 sustainable trips on e-bikes and e-scooters per month could continue.
- Increasing the number of places bikes can park will mean we can expand the service to areas of the City and outer villages where finding e-scooter parking has not been possible.
- The number of conveniently located parking bays is the limiting factor for people accessing the service at present. Making the service more convenient will see an increase in trips, which will in turn allow us to better understand the impact on modal shift.
- This will make active travel more accessible and convenient for thousands of residents. Nice timing with the arrival of Active Travel England offices.

35. Disadvantages:

- Agreeing and managing cycling capacity would take some additional CYC officer time.

36. **Extend the micro-mobility trial to November 2022 but don't allow TIER to use other cycling parking spots.**

37. Advantages:

- CYC continue to have contributions to national guidance on E-Scooters, supporting York's national profile as a leading City in sustainable travel and getting an important say on regulation that will affect the City in the future.
- The average 20,000 sustainable trips on e-bikes and e-scooters per month could continue.

38. Disadvantages:

- Misses the opportunity to facilitate further take up of cycling through more widely accessible e-bikes.

39. Option 3 – Do not extend the micro-mobility trial.

40. The trial would end on 31/03/2022 with e-scooters and e-bikes removed and the contract with TIER ended.

41. Advantages:

- A small amount of CYC officer time saved going forward.

42. Disadvantages:

- The DfT will be disappointed to lose out on further data for a city like York.
- The average 20,000 trips on e-bikes and e-scooters per month being enjoyed by users of the service would no longer be available.

Council Plan

43. The trial contributes to the City of York's Council Plan priorities of getting around sustainably. The council's priority of a cleaner and greener city and the commitment to be carbon neutral by 2030;

Implications

Financial

The trial will continue to be managed within existing resources and TIER has all responsibility for financing the service.

Human Resources (HR)

There are no Human Resources implications.

Equalities

44. An equality impact assessment has been carried out (the link is in the background papers below) and is reviewed at regular intervals when significant changes are made. An example of this includes the introduction of e-scooter parking racks which are planned for 2022.
45. TIER work closely with York Sight Loss Council to ensure the service does not adversely impact those with a visual impairment and has led the way in developing a warning sound when E-scooters are in operation.
46. TIER hosted a 'meet an e-scooter' event for York Sight Loss Council members. The event was a success, well attended by representatives from local disability groups with their friends and family to better understand the technology that supports the safe operations of the e-scooter trial in the city. Other similar events are planned for 2022.

Legal

47. TIER entered into a concessionary arrangement with the Council to deliver the trial under which the Council entrusted the delivery of the e-scooter and e-bike hire service to TIER.
48. TIER have product liability insurance that covers injury and damage as a result of defective scooters and have third-party liability insurance to cover damage and injury to third parties caused by scooters ridden by their customers.

Crime and Disorder

49. On the ground, street rangers monitor vehicles regularly. CYC & TIER work closely with the local police and a unique form allows the police to alert TIER of an instance of disorderly riding, whereby rider accounts can be blocked by TIER.

50. CYC and TIER deal with all reports of disorder received directly by reviewing each case and taking measures such as banning riders when appropriate.
51. To date, there have been 150+ examples of TIER issuing warnings or blocking accounts in response to disorderly riding. This is 0.1% of total trips.

Information Technology (IT)

52. There are no IT implications.

Property

53. There are no Property implications.

Transport

54. A Project Officer from the CYC transport team will continue to oversee the trial, reporting back to the DfT monthly.

Risk Management

55. The trials risks and issues are recorded within CYC and TIER risk registers and managed by the CYC transport team and TIER respectively.

Contact Details

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Report
Approved

Date 03/02/2022

Specialist Implications Officer(s) List information for all
Patrick Looker – Finance Manager

Wards Affected: List wards or tick box to indicate all

All

For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers:

All relevant background papers must be listed here.

Annexes

Information on the Government E-Scooter trials for local areas:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/e-scooter-trials-guidance-for-local-areas-and-rental-operators/e-scooter-trials-guidance-for-local-areas-and-rental-operators>

Link to TIER Citizens Lab: <https://tier.citizenlab.co/en/projects/tierinyork>

Information on Vehicle Special Orders: <https://www.vehicle-certification-agency.gov.uk/other-certification/vehicle-special-orders/>

Equality Impact Assessment:

<https://www.york.gov.uk/downloads/file/6156/equalities-impact-assessment-escooters-and-ebikes-march-2021>

List of Abbreviations Used in this Report

DfT – Department for Transport

CYC – City of York Council

E-TRO – Experimental Traffic Regulation Order

TRO – Traffic Regulation Order

VSO – Vehicle Special Order