

## **Report to Exec members: FAQs**

**Topic:** E-scooter and e-bike trial (Department for Transport initiative), in the context of the COVID\_19 Economic Recovery and Transport Recovery plans.

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### **FAQs**

#### **The DfT's micro-mobility trials**

##### **What are the micro-mobility trials?**

The Department for Transport (DfT) have brought forward and extended e-scooter trials, to aid response to COVID measures, and to inform future legislation on e-scooter use.

The trial would be for 12 months and would provide essential insights for the council on how e-scooters and e-bikes contribute to the transport mix in York, as well as learning from other local authorities and data collected by the Department for Transport.

##### **Why have the DfT fast tracked trials?**

The DfT have brought forward and expanded e-scooter trials to support a 'green' restart of local travel and to help mitigate the impact of reduced public transport capacity. The trials will help to inform future changes in legislation on e-scooter use.

The DfT see e-scooters as offering the potential for fast, clean and inexpensive travel, which will help to ease the burden on transport networks and allow for social distancing. They also offer an alternative transport mode in the long-term.

##### **What are e-scooters?**

E-scooters are designed around a traditional kick scooter but have an electric motor allowing the user to coast between 4mph (walking speed) and 15mph. E-scooters provide an attractive alternative for short commutes and journeys or sightseeing (~3 mile distances or less). This allows users to travel standing on the e-scooter, using the handlebar to control acceleration and braking. The e-scooters would be available on short-term hire (pay per minute), with monthly bundles available.

##### **Who would be delivering the service?**

A procurement exercise has been undertaken to identify the preferred supplier. This award is subject to member approval of the e-scooter trials.

## **When would the trial begin?**

If the trial is approved, the preferred supplier would introduce e-scooters to the City in mid-end September in line with DfT deadlines for the trial. The preferred supplier would offer e-bikes towards the end of 2020. A low number of e-scooters would be introduced to start, increasing numbers over a few weeks in line with demand and approval from CYC, once comfortable with street operations.

## **Which stakeholders have already shown interest?**

Through initial discussions, York Hospital and the University of York are supportive of a trial. The Hospital are interested in how e-scooters and e-bikes could support patient and staff travel given reduced parking due to construction on site from September 2020. The University are interested in how the trial can support student travel across campus and reduce car travel, as students return to campus from mid-September 2020.

## **How would the service be managed?**

The preferred supplier would be responsible for providing, operating and maintaining the e-scooter fleet. This includes ensuring there are systems in place to monitor e-scooters and be able to use rebalancing to ensure demand is met; operating a 24/7 service; and maintenance of e-scooters.

## **What is the expected uptake of e-scooters?**

Demand for e-scooters in the Tees Valley, the UK's first e-scooter trial (commenced July 2020), has been higher than expected. In Münster, Germany (York's twin city) they have around 800 e-scooters and pre-COVID had roughly 23,000 trips per week in the summer (with ~17,000 trips per week in August 2020).

## **Micro-mobility trials in York**

### **How does the trial support York's local objectives?**

The multi-mobility proposal for e-scooters and e-bikes contribute to support COVID response and contribute to the City of York's local objectives, including;

- the council's ambition to create a people-focused city centre;
- the council's commitment to be carbon neutral by 2030;
- the council's history of delivery and ambition for sustainable travel, including provision of on-demand and shared transport;
- the council's plans for addressing air quality, including through modal shift;
- the introduction of the UK's first voluntary clean air zone in January 2020, initially targeting buses that frequently pass through the city;

- the adoption of our Public EV Charging Strategy in March 2020 to expand EV charging infrastructure;
- the council's ambition to be a leader in intelligent transport systems (STEP), connected and autonomous mobility and future mobility;
- COVID-19 response and providing safe sustainable alternatives to support public transport.

For York in the short-term, e-scooters would support sustainable transport measures as the city centre, businesses and the universities re-open following COVID restrictions. Adherence to social distancing has led to reduced bus capacity, with usage also low. Car use is being promoted as a safe form of travel, alongside active travel (walking and cycling). E-scooters provide an alternative option to car use into and around the city centre, supporting commuter travel.

### **What are the benefits of York participating in the trial?**

Introducing a shared micro-mobility rental scheme as part of a trial offers the opportunity to bring e-scooters and e-bikes into York's transport mix in a small-scale, controlled, closely monitored environment. The trial would provide us with the opportunity to understand the market, user behaviour and perception of micro-mobility transport within York by non-users and users. The trial periods would also provide the opportunity to understand how best to integrate e-scooters and e-bikes and how these complement other transport options in the city.

Support would be offered by the DfT, who would provide a toolkit and engage with the Council's communications team to ensure messaging is aligned with Government priorities, of which safety is paramount.

Regular contact with other local authorities running trials would enable us to learn from trials in other areas, and where we may look to make changes to our operations.

### **Are CYC able to adjust operations or stop the trial?**

Participating in the trials allows for e-scooters and e-bikes to be introduced to the city of York in a controlled manner.

CYC would have full control of the trial, and would work in partnership with the preferred supplier on how the e-scooter and e-bike scheme would run. The council would have control over parking locations, the rate of deployment of e-scooters and e-bikes, the service area, and identification of variable speed zones. Regular contact and meetings with the preferred supplier and council officers would ensure any adjustments can be made through the duration of the trial. The preferred supplier are also able to provide data to help CYC make informed decisions on the trial.

As CYC would have control over various aspects including parking locations, we are able to be sensitive to parking areas required for cycling.

CYC would have control over how operations are deployed and would be able to stop the trial at any point in consultation with the DfT.

The trial could be paused or halted at any time if any significant issues (defined as those that could not be resolved as part of the trial by the project team) were to arise.

### **How would the service be evaluated?**

The DfT are undertaking their own evaluation of the trials. This would be shared with participating local authorities. CYC are also able to gain access to this data. This evaluation will broadly cover;

- Safety of e-scooters;
- Who is using them;
- The impact on the transport system (modal shift, integration with other transport modes);
- Public perceptions of e-scooters;
- Outcomes seen in differing areas;
- Lessons learned from implementation.

## **E-scooters and users**

### **What is the maximum speed of scooters and how would this be controlled?**

The maximum speed of an e-scooter is capped at 15.5mph. This is a requirement set by the DfT. As part of the procurement process, the preferred supplier identified how they are able to restrict speed on certain areas of the city for safety of users and non-users.

### **Who is able to ride an e-scooter?**

As part of DfT requirements, users must hold at least a provisional driving licence to ride an e-scooter (with some international licences also accepted).

### **Where would e-scooters be able to ride?**

The DfT have stated that e-scooters would be treated similarly to electrically-assisted pedal cycles (EPACS) as they have a similar road presence. E-scooters would therefore be allowed to ride on roads and cycleways but not pavements.

### **How do we ensure rider safety and safety of non-users?**

The preferred supplier have set out how they will educate users about riding safely and appropriately, including encouraging helmet use. They have also set out measures they have to ensure safe parking, including having designated and signed parking bays.

The preferred supplier are also able to use geo-fencing to restrict e-scooter access and/or speed on certain streets within the city centre, such as the footstreets. This will improve safety in areas of high pedestrian usage.

### **What insurance is in place?**

The preferred supplier meet the DfT requirements for insurance, and are able to provide third party cover.

### **How would hygiene be considered in response to COVID-19?**

The preferred supplier have outlined a robust process and measures it has in place in response, and to address, COVID-19. These measures ensure the safety of both users and staff of the preferred supplier. They also ensure that e-scooters will be cleaned on a regular basis and users will be reminded of guidance on hand cleansing.

## **Impact of e-scooters and e-bikes in York**

### **How would scooter use be restricted in unsuitable areas (e.g. pavements and the footstreets)?**

As outlined above, the preferred supplier are able to set up geo-fenced zones to restrict e-scooter access (e.g. to the footstreets), and are able to educate users on how to ride safely.

### **How would we address e-scooters contributing to street clutter?**

The approach to safe parking in York will be to adopt a system of designated parking bays (which instructs the user where to park) rather than a dockless system (this is where the e-scooters are left at the user's discretion). This approach will reduce street clutter and includes the use of designated, signed parking bays which will ensure that e-scooters can only be parked in these locations. Users will incur penalties if not parked in the correct place. Generally the e-scooters have stands which ensure they are kept upright and technology can be used to identify fallen e-scooters.

## **Engaging with and informing stakeholders**

### **How would the e-scooter scheme be advertised across the city?**

The e-scooter scheme would be advertised across the city through the City of York Council and the preferred supplier's communication channels. A communications plan has been drawn up, and CYC would work with the preferred supplier and the Department for Transport on informing and educating the public on the trial. The DfT would provide a comms toolkit and ensure our messaging aligns with national messaging on safety.

## **What is the impact on the blind and partially sighted, elderly people and those with small children? How are concerns being addressed?**

Concerns have been raised by the RNIB and other national organisations around the impact of e-scooters on the blind and partially sighted. The RNIB have outlined recommendations for local authorities and e-scooter providers.

Council officers and the preferred supplier recognise the need to mitigate the impact of e-scooters on this group and have addressed a number of the recommendations set out by the RNIB for introducing e-scooters. These include, but are not limited to:

- Designated, signed parking bays for e-scooters;
- Restricting access to certain areas and slow zones;
- Systems in place to encourage safe and appropriate parking, with systems in place to respond to poor parking.

CYC and the preferred supplier have also engaged with local organisations in York to discuss how their operations may affect those with sight loss (see Annex 3).

## **Have the police been consulted and what are their views?**

CYC have been in discussions with North Yorkshire police who can see the benefits of the trial for the city. The preferred supplier outlined how they would respond to concerns, with the North Yorkshire police responding positively.

## **The preferred supplier and CYC relationship**

### **How much officer time and resource would be needed to participate?**

The preferred supplier would be responsible for funding and managing all operational aspects of the trial. This would include providing, operating and maintaining the e-scooter fleet.

CYC have been in contact with colleagues in Münster (York's twin city) and the Tees Valley to understand impact on officer time.

Münster have had an e-scooter rental scheme for a year, with Tees Valley operating e-scooter rentals since July 2020. Discussions with colleagues suggest that prior to, and during launch, there would be a need for officer support to enable coordination and exchange with the preferred supplier and other stakeholders. However Münster note that now e-scooters are established, there is minimal officer time, with one complaint a week on average that can be managed in a few minutes, alongside event-related phone calls or meetings.

As a requirement of participating in the DfT trials, officers would need to compile a report to the DfT every 6 weeks outlining data and learnings, with regular meetings with the preferred supplier also proposed to track progress and identify any challenges.

**How would the preferred supplier manage the e-scooter service to ensure operations are sustainable, aligning with CYC's carbon neutral 2030 target?**

The preferred supplier have measures in place that ensure sustainability is considered within the operation of its e-scooters. These include how e-scooters will be rebalanced and maintained, the longevity of the e-scooters and their post-life use, and how they will employ staff.