

Report Title:	Public Bike Share
Contains Confidential or Exempt Information?	NO - Part
Member reporting:	Cllr Phillip Bicknell, Deputy Leader of the Council and Lead Member for Highways and Transport
Meeting and Date:	Highways, Transport and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Panel
Responsible Officer(s):	Ben Smith, Head of Commissioning Communities
Wards affected:	All

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REPORT SUMMARY

- 1 In September 2017, the Highways, Transport and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Panel asked the Task and Finish Group established to review the Cycling Action Plan to also consider the potential for a public bike share scheme in the Royal Borough.
- 2 Public bike share schemes allow members of the public to hire bicycles either for short, local journeys, or as part of longer journeys by public transport.
- 3 This report details the findings of the Task and Finish Group, which are based on: a review of existing bike share schemes; presentations from leading bike share providers; and industry guidance and best practice.
- 4 The Task and Finish Group supported the following approach: that a bike share scheme be deferred until 2021 when local cycle links to the town centres are improved; and that further work is carried out with members of the public and potential partners to gauge interest and consider how best to accommodate cross-boundary trips.
- 5 It is considered that a public bike share scheme could potentially be achieved at no / minimal cost to the council subject to market interest. However, this may be subject to securing sponsorship / advertising if a docked scheme is chosen.
- 6 Any scheme would need to be carefully designed to ensure that it takes account of local factors, such as the constrained road layouts in Maidenhead and Windsor town centres and security requirements in Windsor.
- 7 This report recommends that the Highways, Transport and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Panel notes the report and reviews and comments on the findings of the Task and Finish Group.

1 DETAILS OF RECOMMENDATION(S)

RECOMMENDATION: That Highways, Transport and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Panel notes the report and:

- i) **Reviews and comments on the findings of the Cycling Action Plan Task and Finish Group.**

2 REASON(S) FOR RECOMMENDATION(S) AND OPTIONS CONSIDERED

Operational Models

- 2.1 There are four main operational models for bike share schemes:
- Self-service (docking stations)
 - Self-service (dockless)
 - Rail station hubs
 - Lockers
- 2.2 **Self-Service (Docking Stations)** - Bikes are hired from / returned to fixed docking stations at key locations and convenient intermediate points. Bikes can be returned to any dock with spare capacity. Bikes need to be regularly redistributed to ensure availability across the network. Pricing encourages short trips (e.g. 30 minutes). The Santander Cycles scheme in London is an example of a docked scheme – this is operated by SERCO. Other providers include Hourbike and NextBike.
- 2.3 **Self-Service (Dockless)** – Dockless bikes are ‘free-floating’ rather than tied to fixed locations. Bikes are fitted with GPS trackers and customers use a smart phone app to find and unlock a bike. Users are provided with guidance about where to leave bikes and are incentivised to comply via a points scheme. Virtual docks can be set up at key locations to provide some certainty regarding availability of bikes. These use GPS ring-fencing rather than physical infrastructure. As with the docked schemes, bikes need to be regularly redistributed to ensure availability. Pricing generally encourages short trips (e.g. 30 minutes). Operators of dockless schemes include Mobike, Obike and Ofo.
- 2.4 **Rail Station Hubs** - These provide onward travel for rail passengers to enable them to reach their final destination. Bikes are hired from and returned to any station with a hire facility. Facilities are usually staffed and may be combined with bike shops / service centres. Prices are geared to all-day or even multi-day trips. Providers include Bike and Go in the UK and OV Fiets in the Netherlands.
- 2.5 **Lockers** - These are often located at railway stations and transport interchanges and are designed to facilitate onward travel. Lockers contain folding bikes, which are space efficient in terms of storage. Bikes can be hired from and returned to any locker site. As with railway station hub schemes, prices are geared to day and multi-day trips. Brompton is the main operator in the UK.
- 2.6 Most UK schemes use the docked or dockless self-service operating models, since these cater for the widest number of trips and therefore have the greatest commercial potential.
- 2.7 Advantages of docked schemes include:
- Good on-street visibility of docks, which act as effective marketing tools
 - Predictable bike locations
 - Users don't need smart phones to access the schemes
- 2.8 Disadvantages include:
- Significant capital cost of the docks
 - Planning permission may be required for docks

- Docks may need to be moved if not initially installed in optimum locations
- Potential difficulty in securing sponsorship
- Some schemes operate at a loss, requiring ongoing subsidy

2.9 Advantages of dockless schemes include:

- Schemes operate on a commercial basis
- No costly infrastructure required
- Greater flexibility for users
- The smart phone app can be used to drive good user behaviour

2.10 Disadvantages of dockless schemes include:

- Unpredictable bike locations
- Bikes can be left in undesirable locations
- Lacks the promotional benefit of on-street docks
- Users must have a smart phone to use the bikes

2.11 It should be noted that some providers are starting to move to a hybrid model with a mixture of docked and dockless operation. Also, some docked operations now allow bikes to be temporarily left next to a docking station if it is full – these are picked up when bikes are redistributed.

Financial / Management Models

2.12 There are three distinct financial / management models for bike share schemes:

1. **100% public** - The local authority pays all capital and revenue costs, sets the tariffs and takes the income. The operator is paid a fixed fee to run the scheme. This model is used for the Santander Cycles scheme in London.
2. **100% private** - The operator pays all costs, sets the tariffs and takes the income. This model is adopted by most dockless scheme providers.
3. **Partnership** - The local authority pays the initial capital cost and / or a subsidy to support the scheme, while the operator is responsible for generating commercial income through hires, advertising and sponsorship.

2.13 While a 100% public scheme allows a high level of control, the local authority bears all of the risk. Also, management is very resource intensive and it may be difficult for the equipment supplier and operator to share intellectual property.

2.14 A 100% private scheme places all of the financial risk on the operator. However, the local authority has less control over the scheme. Schemes may struggle to survive where operating conditions are less than ideal.

2.15 A partnership approach gives the local authority some control, but limits their financial risk. There is also the possibility of profit-share if the scheme is successful. However, these still require local authority resource to manage the contract and schemes may require on-going revenue support.

Assessing Potential

2.16 BikePlus has identified various factors as contributing to the success of bike share schemes around the world. These include factors that relate to the area in which the scheme operates, and others that relate to the design and operation of the scheme, local transport policies and funding commitment.

- 2.17 A highly visible and continuous cycle route network is identified as a key requirement. The lack of safe cycle routes to Maidenhead and Windsor town centres and railway stations is an issue, particularly in Maidenhead where the A4 and A308 represent significant barriers to cycling.
- 2.18 Work is progressing on the Maidenhead Station Access scheme, which includes an improved crossing of the A308 between the station and town centre, and a new cycle hub at the station. Also, a feasibility study and business case is due to be prepared for 'Maidenhead Missing Links'. This scheme will provide critical walking and cycling routes to and through Maidenhead town centre, including a new crossing of the A4.
- 2.19 As part of the Maidenhead Missing Links project, it is also proposed to undertake some market research to understand why people don't currently choose to cycle and the role that bike share could have in overcoming barriers around cycle ownership and bike security.
- 2.20 While Maidenhead's population is within the minimum range recommended by BikePlus, Windsor's population is below it. However, Windsor's visitor numbers may be sufficient to sustain a scheme and a joint scheme across Maidenhead and Windsor may have a sufficiently large market.
- 2.21 In addition to the generic factors identified by BikePlus, there are several local factors that should be considered:
- Maidenhead and Windsor have narrow roads and pavements which make it difficult to find locations to leave bikes without causing obstructing pedestrian routes.
 - Security issues in Windsor restrict the locations where bikes can be left.
 - Major events can lead to large increases in footfall on key routes for short periods when parked bikes could cause problems.
 - Existing levels of illegal cycling activity in pedestrianised areas could be exacerbated by a bike share scheme.
- 2.22 Conversations with leading docked and dockless bike share providers suggests that they could accommodate these additional requirements by:
- Designing docks / parking areas away from the most congested areas.
 - Having docks with minimal fixings that can be quickly removed for events.
 - Geo-fencing areas where users will be unable to terminate their hire.
 - Having a 'rapid response team' to remove bikes left in high risk locations.
 - Providing advice via phone apps about areas where cycling is prohibited
- 2.23 An additional factor that needs to be considered is how to cater for cross-boundary trips, particularly to Slough and Heathrow.
- 2.24 Slough already has its own bike share scheme which is self-service with docking stations. Expansion of the scheme would require docking stations in Windsor and rebranding.
- 2.25 Heathrow is investigating options for a dockless bike share scheme, which could cater for cross-boundary trips to and from the airport. The Royal Borough will need to engage with the airport and any operator that is appointed to ensure that their processes take account of security issues in Windsor. There may be opportunities to formally extend the scheme to the Royal Borough.

Table 1: Options

Option	Comments
Option 1: Commission a public bike share scheme to commence operation in 2018/19 on a commercial basis.	<p>This option is not recommended as current cycle links serving Maidenhead and Windsor town centres are incomplete.</p> <p>Also there has been no market research undertaken with potential partners to gauge likely demand for a scheme.</p> <p>Furthermore, if the Council were to introduce a scheme in isolation, then it would not cater for cross-boundary trips to places such as Slough and Heathrow Airport.</p>
Option 2: Open the Royal Borough to multiple BikePlus accredited operators and let the market dictate operation.	<p>In addition to the issues identified in Option 1 above, BikePlus recommends that multiple operators should not be considered for towns / cities with populations of less than 150,000.</p> <p>Also, this would lead to competition for cycle parking in town centres and around rail stations potentially leading to obstruction of pedestrian routes.</p>
Option 3: Defer the decision to introduce a public bike share scheme.	<p>This option is recommended as it allows the Council to: deliver critical links in the cycle route network; gauge potential interest amongst key partners; and explore the potential for a scheme that is able to cater for cross-boundary trips.</p>

3 KEY IMPLICATIONS

3.1 Key Implications of the recommendations are set out in Table 2.

Table 2: Key implications

Outcome	Unmet	Met	Exceeded	Significantly Exceeded	Date of delivery
Bike share scheme operational by:	Scheme not delivered / delivered after 30 June 2021	30 June 2021	31 May 2021	30 April 2021 2019	30 June 2021

4 FINANCIAL DETAILS / VALUE FOR MONEY

- 4.1 There are no financial implications on the budget. Further feasibility work could be progressed through the existing term contract with Project Centre. Also, conversations with providers of docked and dockless schemes suggest that there is potential for a scheme to be provided commercially. However, a docked scheme would require sponsorship / advertising income.

5 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Where public funding is offered in return for setting up and /or operating a bike share scheme, then a tender process will be required. However where a scheme is to operate commercially, then a more informal “Request for Proposals” could be issued where all operators are invited to outline what they could offer to satisfy a set of requirements to a defined timetable.
- 5.2 In terms of regulation, local authorities in England have no specific powers relating to bike-share schemes. However shared bicycles are subject to the same legal requirements and byelaws as other bicycles, and local authorities have powers to act if they are causing an obstruction or nuisance under section 137 (1) of the Highways Act 1980.
- 5.3 Other enforcement options may include:
- Enacting local byelaws.
 - Using Public Space Protection Orders under the Anti-Social Behaviour and Policing Act 2014.
 - Seeking an injunction against the scheme operator.
 - Invoking the Environmental Protection Act 1990 (section 33) if the bicycles could be regarded as abandoned and thus treated as waste.
 - Using street trading powers granted in the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982.
- 5.4 The Department for Transport is discussing with stakeholders the possible need for an agreed national standard for bike share schemes to ensure that they are introduced and managed appropriately. A group of the main bike share scheme providers have already signed up to the BikePlus Accreditation Scheme.

6 RISK MANAGEMENT

- 6.1 The key risks are set out in Table 4 below.

Table 4: Impact of risk and mitigation

Risks	Uncontrolled Risk	Controls	Controlled Risk
Large numbers of additional cyclists using heavily trafficked roads around Windsor and Maidenhead town centres.	More casualties resulting from road traffic collisions	Complete missing links in the cycle route network	No increase in casualties from road traffic collisions

Risks	Uncontrolled Risk	Controls	Controlled Risk
Lack of funding for cycling infrastructure	Missing links in the cycle route network are not delivered / not delivered in time	Develop the business case needed to secure funding for the Maidenhead Missing Links scheme from the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP)	The LEP would deliver up to 80% of funding for Maidenhead Missing Links.
A public bike share scheme requires public subsidy	Public funds are needed to help meet initial capital and / or ongoing revenue costs	Issue a request for proposals to test the market	The Council will have a clear idea of the scheme's commercial viability from the outset
Bikes are left in inappropriate locations	Bikes cause obstructions on the highway and potential security alerts	<p>Ensure that scheme providers are BikePlus accredited, which requires them to work in cooperation with the local authority.</p> <p>Ensure that the scheme is designed and operated so as to minimise / deal with issues promptly.</p> <p>Introduce the scheme for a trial period to evaluate the impacts of its operation.</p> <p>Undertake enforcement action as needed.</p>	Instances of bikes being left in inappropriate locations are minimised.

7 POTENTIAL IMPACTS

7.1 Public bike share schemes offer an effective means of getting people to start cycling / cycling more often. The Public Bike Share User Survey produced by BikePlus shows that 66% of users surveyed started to cycle or increased the amount they cycle as a result of a bike share scheme.

- 7.2 Bike share schemes are effective at encouraging women to cycle - women account for 41% of bike share trips compared with just 25% of all cycling trips.
- 7.3 Bike share can help to reduce the number of short car trips in urban areas – 23% of users surveyed said they previously used a car / taxi for their most frequent trip. Also, bike share is often used with public transport – 40% of respondents use bike share with the train and 25% with the bus. As such, they could contribute to improvements affecting traffic congestion and air quality.
- 7.4 However, there is also evidence of bike share taking trips from other sustainable modes of transport – 23% of surveyed users said they previously made their trip by bus and 44% said they previously walked.
- 7.5 Some bike share schemes can offer electric bikes as part of their schemes, which can be of particular benefit to elderly people and users with some minor mobility impairments.
- 7.6 Dockless bike share requires the user to have a smart phone in order to access the scheme. Clearly people without access to a smart phone may be disadvantaged. However, 85% of UK adults now have a smart phone, including 71% of 55-75 year olds Adoption rates are forecast to continue to rise.

8 CONSULTATION

- 8.1 The Cycle Forum was consulted on 09 April 2018.
- 8.2 This report will be considered by the Highways, Transport and Environment Overview & Scrutiny Panel in advance of Cabinet. Comments will be published for consideration.

9 TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

- 9.1 An indicative timetable for implementation is outlined in Table 5 below:

Table 5: Implementation timetable

Date	Details
June – July 2018	Liaison with neighbouring local authorities / Heathrow Airport
June – October 2018	Business case prepared for Maidenhead Missing Links
April 2018 – March 2020	Maidenhead Station Access scheme delivered
January 2019 – March 2021	Maidenhead Missing Links scheme delivered
January 2021	Request for proposals issued
April 2021	Scheme commissioned

10 APPENDICES

- 10.1 There are no appendices to this report.

11 BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

- 11.1 Details of the report to the Cycle Forum on 09 April 2018 can be found on the Council's website:
<http://rbwm.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s18942/Public%20Bike%20Share%202018-04-09.pdf>
- 11.2 Details of the BikePlus Accreditation scheme can be accessed via the CarPlus / BikePlus website: <https://www.carplusbikeplus.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/Public-Bike-Share-Accreditation-Criteria-2.5-130917-1.pdf>
- 11.3 The results of the Public Bike Share Users Survey 2017 are available on the CarPlus / BikePlus website:
https://www.carplusbikeplus.org.uk/project_page/pbs-users-survey-2017/

REPORT HISTORY

Decision type: For information	Urgency item? No	To Follow item?
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