

Meeting date: 22 April 2021
Report to: Cabinet Member for Environment and Highways



Subject/report title: West Midlands Cycle Hire Scheme in Solihull

Report from: Head of Highway Management

Report author/lead contact officer: Paul Tovey / Walter Bailey

Wards affected:

- All Wards | Bickenhill | Blythe | Castle Bromwich | Chelmsley Wood |
 Dorridge/Hockley Heath | Elmdon | Kingshurst/Fordbridge | Knowle |
 Lyndon | Meriden | Olton | Shirley East | Shirley South |
 Shirley West | Silhill | Smith's Wood | St Alphege

Public/private report: Public

Exempt by virtue of paragraph:

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To provide an update on the West Midlands Cycle Hire scheme, which is being promoted by Transport for West Midlands, and seek approval to introduce cycle hire stations on the public highway in Solihull.

2. Decision(s) recommended

2.1 The Cabinet Member is asked to:

- (a) Note the details of the West Midlands Cycle Hire scheme, along with progress to date,
- (b) Agree that Transport for West Midlands can install cycle hire docking stations at the 10 sites listed, subject to informing residents and businesses in the vicinity, and
- (c) Approve that going forward the Head of Highway Management has the delegated authority to approval future Cycle Hire Docking Station applications with TfWM and refer any sites where objections are received to Cabinet Member for consideration.

3. Matters for Consideration

- 3.1 The Transport for West Midlands (TfWM) team has recently partnered with Serco Limited to bring forward a cycle hire scheme for the West Midlands. The scheme is very similar to the “Boris” bike scheme that has been operating successfully in London for a number of years.
- 3.2 The scheme is supported by a 5-year contract and if key performance indicators are met, there is an option for an additional 3 years. The contract includes for provision of the equipment and a service agreement for the rebalancing of cycles between docking stations, general maintenance, management and promotion of the scheme. The TfWM team is responsible for monitoring and evaluation of the scheme.
- 3.3 TfWM has plans to operate the scheme across all 7 West Midlands Local Authorities, deploying approximately 1,500 (1,350 mechanical and 150 electric) cycles for hire across the region. The cycles will be available from docking stations of up to 10 cycles located at places of interest, or where there is a potential to increase the amount of journeys undertaken by sustainable modes of transport.
- 3.4 Roll-out of the scheme was approved by the West Midlands Combined Authority in November 2020 and the project team has already successfully deployed hundreds of cycles in the Wolverhampton and Coventry areas. Solihull is their next preferred location to roll-out the scheme.

4. What options have been considered and what is the evidence telling us about them?

- 4.1 This scheme has excellent links with the Council’s sustainable travel priorities and net zero carbon target and it is anticipated that this project will help the Council meet these objectives.
- 4.2 With approximately 100 cycles being initially made available for Solihull there are numerous options of where best to deploy the cycles in the first tranche. The Serco project team together with the Council’s Highway Management team have worked closely to shortlist the following 10 sites:
 - Solihull Train Station
 - Station Road near junction with Lode Lane
 - High Street near Drury Lane
 - Greswolde Car Park, Knowle
 - Blossomfield Road near Solihull College
 - Lode Lane near Solihull Hospital
 - Shelly Farm car park, Hillfields
 - Moat Lane, outside Council Depot

- A41 Warwick Road at Dovehouse Parade shops
- Malvern Park car park

- 4.3 With strong links to the Council's Local Walking and Cycling Improvement Plan, the recently constructed Wild Life Ways routes and the two main corridors identified in the Active Travel Tranche 2 programme, these sites will establish a basis from which to grow the scheme across other key locations in the borough over the next 12 to 18 months.
- 4.4 All of these locations are within the public highway, permissible under permitted development rights and have minimal impact on adjacent residential or business premises. It is therefore suggested no formal consultation is necessary, but properties within 50m of the docking stations will be written to providing details of the scheme, its objectives and contact points should there be in operational problems.
- 4.5 The docking stations are self-contained, are not fixed to the surface of the highway, therefore they are easily relocated in the event of issues emerging or usage is below expectations.
- 4.6 Whilst tranche 1 of the scheme focuses on Solihull Town Centre, looking ahead expressions of interest have already been received from businesses around the N.E.C. and Airport, providing a service to visitors using Birmingham International Railway Station. This area would be the next preferred zone to develop the scheme and from there it could easily be expanded to provide connection out to Marston Green, Chelmsley Wood Town Centre and other parts of the north of the Borough. The Council has already provided some good quality cycle infrastructure, more is planned and this scheme would work well with those facilities too in the future.
- 4.7 With this in mind, opportunities to secure additional cycles and docking stations will present themselves over the next 12 to 18 months as the scheme continues to roll-out across the region. Three approaches for governance of the scheme have therefore been considered. Individual reports seeking approval to each preferred docking station location; annual update reports as part of the Highway Management reporting process and the setting up delegated authority to the Head of Highway Management to approve applications in future, with any sites receiving objections being referred to Cabinet Member for consideration.

5. Reasons for recommending preferred option

- 5.1 This type of cycle hire scheme has proven to work well in other parts of the country and as a member of the West Midlands Combined Authority, this Council has already supported bringing such a scheme to the region.
- 5.2 The 10 locations identified in paragraph 4.2 provide an opportunity to see how this scheme could benefit the residents of Solihull and encourage them to consider travelling more sustainably in the future. These 10 docking stations, together with approximately 100 cycles will be part of the sustainable travel tool kit being used by the Travel Demand team that will be out in the communities to help promote the benefits and use of this scheme.
- 5.3 The potential health and well-being benefits for people who do more physical activity

are well documented now and this scheme will provide an opportunity for Solihull residents to experience those benefits from themselves.

- 5.4 With regard to future governance of the scheme, the benefits of introducing delegated authority to the Head of Highway Management will enable the team to react to opportunities that may arise in the future to secure more cycles for hire in the borough sooner. Having a clear escalation process is also important and therefore, it is recommended that any sites where objections are received are referred to Cabinet Member for consideration at future decision-making sessions.

6. Implications and Considerations

- 6.1 State how the proposals in this report contribute to the priorities in the [Council Plan](#):

Priority:	Contribution:
<p>Economy:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Revitalising our towns and local centres. 2. UK Central (UKC) and maximising the opportunities of HS2. 3. Increase the supply of housing, especially affordable and social housing. 	<p>The projects economic benefits have been considered and approved by the West Midlands Combined Authority.</p>
<p>Environment:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Enhance Solihull's natural environment. 5. Improve Solihull's air quality. 6. Reduce Solihull's net carbon emissions. 	<p>The overall environmental benefits have been considered and approved by the West Midlands Combined Authority.</p> <p>The scheme will help contribute toward Solihull specific air quality and net carbon emissions reduction targets.</p> <p>There will though be localised environmental dis-benefits associated with the provision of the docking stations but these will be sensitively located to minimise the impact on any adjacent property.</p>
<p>People and Communities:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Take action to improve life chances in our most disadvantaged communities. 8. Enable communities to thrive. 9. Sustainable, quality, affordable provision for adults & children with complex needs. 	<p>The project's 'people benefits' have been considered and approved by the West Midlands Combined Authority.</p>

6.2 Consultation and Scrutiny:

- 6.2.1 The scheme has not been reviewed by the Council's scrutiny board process but has been approved by the West Midlands combined Authority and the region's Senior Transport Officers Group.
- 6.2.2 It is not proposed to carry out any formal consultation prior to the roll-out of the scheme in Solihull. It is proposed to carry out an engagement process in the vicinity of the of the docking stations to provide residents and stakeholders with details of the scheme, contact points in case of any operational matters and an opportunity to feed into TfWM's evaluation and monitoring process.

6.3 Financial implications:

- 6.3.1 The TfWM Cycle Hire Scheme is self-funded, therefore, there are no direct financial implications for Solihull Council as a result, except for the provision of some officer time to help with the identification of suitable locations for the docking sites, recording them on the asset database and providing appropriate links on the website to support the promotional activity.
- 6.3.2 The detailed site layouts are still being designed, however, there may be a need to provide small areas of tarmac hardstanding or grass-crete protection. If this is the case the TfWM team have asked the council to fund and carryout this work which is expected to be in the region of £3k to £5k. If required, this can be funded from within the Highway Management Local Transport Plan capital allocation.

6.4 Legal implications:

- 6.4.1 None

6.5 Risk implications:

- 6.5.1 The project risks are being managed by the TfWM team.

6.6 Equality implications:

- 6.7 None anticipated at this stage but this subject will be included in the schemes monitoring and evaluation process

7. List of appendices referred to

- 7.1 Appendix A – WM Cycle Hire Scheme images
- 7.2 Background papers used to compile this report
- 7.3 None

8. List of other relevant documents

- 8.1 A presentation will be provided at the Cabinet Decision-making session.