

Title of meeting: Cabinet Member for Traffic and Transportation Decision Meeting

Date of meeting: 23rd November 2017

Subject: Portsmouth Cycle Hire

Report by: Tristan Samuels, Director of Regeneration

Wards affected: All

Key decision:

Full Council decision:

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 This report sets out the benefits of a cycle hire scheme in Portsmouth. Consideration is also given as to which model of cycle hire scheme would be most beneficial to the city's residents and visitors.

2. Recommendations

That the Cabinet Member for Traffic and Transportation:

- (1) Support the development of a floating bike hire scheme within Portsmouth and Delegates authority to the Director of Regeneration to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding with a cycle hire organisation, but that the City Council maintains an 'Observer Approach'
- (2) Agree the withdrawal from the existing Brompton Bike Hire dock at the Hard Interchange as this has not proved cost effective for the City Council.
- (3) Delegate responsibility to the Director of Regeneration, to consider the floating bike hire options available to Portsmouth and establish the best suited service provider for the city.

3. Background

- 3.1 Portsmouth is the most densely populated city in the UK outside of London, with approximately 212,000 residents living in an area of 40 sq km. This, coupled with the fact that the city has high visitor numbers, can lead to significant potential for congestion within the city.
- 3.2 Inactivity and obesity is also an issue within the city with an estimated 24.3% of adults (aged 16 and over) in Portsmouth being obese in 2013-2015 and the percentage of overweight (including obese) Year 6 pupils attending Portsmouth schools being higher

than the national average (Active Peoples survey via National Obesity Observatory, Public Health England).

- 3.3 Portsmouth is well suited to cycling due to its compact nature, its flat topography and its extensive 20mph road network. Increasing the number of people cycling in the city will increase a modal shift to more sustainable forms of transport, reducing the reliance on motorised vehicles which will help to tackle both these issues along with improving air quality and improving the physical and mental well-being of residents in the city.

4. Cycle Hire in Portsmouth

- 4.1 At present a Brompton Bike Hub is in operation at the Hard Interchange providing a bike hire facility for residents or visitors in Portsmouth. This involves registering on an App which can help people identify where the dock is. Users can then reserve a bike and pay a daily rate (from £3.50 per day) to use the bike and then return it to the same dock or another at the end point of the journey. At present this single dock receives limited use and does not provide value for money.

5. Benefits of a Cycle Hire Scheme

- 5.1 As well as the benefits to health and well-being and reduced congestion there are a number of other benefits attached to Portsmouth having an easily available and affordable cycle hire scheme:
- provide a new mode of transport to residents and visitors in Portsmouth that can connect to existing modes of public transport and improve choice and accessibility. This can help to fill gaps in the existing public transport network and add resilience if there are any problems with the existing services available;
 - increase the profile of cycling and also demonstrate a significant political commitment to the city's ambition to be a cycling city;
 - help to create a more cycling and walking focussed city with less motorised traffic. A scheme like this can help create momentum to introduce additional measures to benefit cyclists such as improve infrastructure;
 - remove barriers to cycling such as access to a bike and concerns over maintenance and theft. For example, Portsmouth has high levels of cycle theft which may put people off purchasing their own bike but with bicycles readily available through a cycle hire scheme would remove this barrier;
 - Improved journey time and journey time reliability when compared with other public transport modes across the city. Due to high traffic levels across the city journeys by motorised vehicles can sometimes be slow and a cycle hire scheme gives people the option at reducing this travel time by using a faster and more reliable form of transport;
 - Promoting tourism. The introduction of a cycle hire scheme would enable a greater freedom and accessibility for tourists who would be able to easily experience the sights and locations of interest across Portsmouth.

6. Cycle Hire Scheme options

- 6.1 Cycle Hire Schemes are becoming more common place across the world with the most recent boom seeing a number of schemes launch across the UK. Previously, these schemes have relied upon a purpose built docking station but more recently there has been a rise in schemes referred to as "floating" bike hire schemes. These have launched in Bristol, Leicester and most recently in Southampton.
- 6.2 The main difference between the dock system and the floating system is that the dock system requires the bicycles to be returned to a specific location so it can be secured to a compatible dock. In the case of the floating system this simply requires the user to leave the bicycle in a safe and courteous manner (ideally in a cycle parking zone) and the bikes have a self-locking system which requires no specific infrastructure to attach to.
- 6.3 The advantages of a dock system are:
- Structured storage at specific destinations which can be managed through discussions between service provider and PCC;
 - Future opportunities to co-brand the bicycles;
 - PCC would have control over dock installation as these would be required on highway in most cases;
 - Ability to hire more than one bike at once (four at most) which may be beneficial for tourists or families;

The disadvantages of a dock scheme are:

- People have to travel to a specific dock to collect and deposit the bike;
- More expensive form of bike hire (£1/30 mins and £10/24hrs);
- Specific space needs to be allocated on the highway, or private land, to accommodate the docks;
- Redeployment of bikes required to retain an even spread across the city;
- If travel patterns change, or they are not correctly sited, then the docks will require removal which can be costly and time consuming;
- If the scheme is unsuccessful the city council could be left with various docks across the network that are obsolete

6.4 The advantages of a floating scheme are:

- Bikes can be readily available anywhere across the city and their location is accessible through the service providers app;
- A cheaper form of bike hire (approx. £1/hr and £5/24hrs);
- When leaving a bike it does not need to be returned to a dock but left safely and conveniently which is more desirable than having to find a suitable dock, if there are none close to the journeys start or end point;

- Parking locations can be set by a process of geo-fencing which will allow the service provide to allocate specific locations across the city where parking of these bikes is considered acceptable;
- Data of use and travel patterns can be gathered from the service provider to better understand these patterns across the city.

The disadvantages of a floating scheme are:

- Potentially could set up in the city with no discussions with the city council, therefore limiting control for PCC;
- Bikes can be subject to vandalism and theft, as experienced in various locations where these schemes have been rolled out across the UK.;
- Bikes can be left anywhere, potentially obstructing highway, or on private land, causing a nuisance;
- Redeployment of bikes required to retain an even spread across the city;
- If the scheme is unsuccessful bikes could potentially be left in the city with no maintenance or management.

7. Conclusion

- 7.1 It is considered that the floating bike hire schemes are the best option for the city as they provide a more accessible and cheaper bike hire option than the docking equivalent. With accessibility and cost being proven barriers to cycling this provides a more likely option to increase numbers of people cycling in the city, bringing with it the benefits set out in Section 5 above.
- 7.2 Whilst there are potential risks to the floating schemes these can be mitigated by dialogue with the service provider and a Memorandum of Understanding between them and the city council. This will allow better control of where these bikes can be parked, processes for removing bikes if in inappropriate locations, maintenance requirements on the bikes and a process if the service provider were to decide to pull out of the city.

8. Equality Impact Assessment

An equality impact assessment is not required as the recommendations do not have a disproportionate negative impact on any of the specific protected characteristics as described in the Equality Act 2010 for the following reasons:

Reason 1: This facility is available to anyone who wishes, and is able, to cycle a full size adult bike through signing up to a mobile app and paying a subscription or one off fee. The only restriction is the availability of bicycles across the city.

Reason 2: This facility will not restrict access in any way to users of the highway network but will add value to the network by providing an additional cycle facility across the city.

9. Legal Implications

No significant legal implications arise from the proposals for the Council to enter into an initial MoU with a provider on an 'Observer' basis or the proposal to remove the existing Brompton dock.

The implications arising from the entering into a more permanent/established arrangement with a provider in due course will need to be considered once the details of the proposed scheme are known.

10. Director of Finance's comments

The financial impact of this paper is negligible:

No additional staff will need to be employed in order to support a Third Party Scheme

Ensuring that a MoU is in place will reduce the risks associated with any scheme and therefore any financial impact of those risks.

Removing the infrastructure for the current scheme will have a minimal cost, but will remove the need for any further investment from PCC.

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Signed by:
Tristan Samuels
Director of Regeneration

Background list of documents:

The following documents disclose facts or matters, which have been relied upon to a material extent by the author in preparing this report:

Title of document	Location

The recommendation(s) set out above were approved/ approved as amended/ deferred/ rejected by on

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Signed by:
Councillor Simon Boshier
Cabinet Member for Traffic and Transportation

(End of report)