

Title of meeting: Traffic and Transportation Decision meeting

Date of meeting: 18 September 2020

Subject: Portsmouth rental e-scooter trial

Report by: Tristan Samuels - Director of Regeneration

Wards affected: All

Key decision: No

Full Council decision: No

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide information on the Solent Transport rental e-scooter trial proposal to government, and to seek approval to continue the development of the Portsmouth part of this trial.

2. Recommendations

It is recommended that the Cabinet Member for Traffic and Transportation:

- 2.1 **Approves the development of a rental e-scooter trial in Portsmouth;**
- 2.2 **Notes the contents of this paper, and that a further report will be brought back in advance of the launch of a Portsmouth rental e-scooter trial for approval.**

3. Background

- 3.1 As part of the government's response to COVID-19, and to support a 'green' restart of local travel to help mitigate reduced capacity on public transport, the Department for Transport (DfT) is fast tracking and expanding trials of rental e-scooters. The DfT considers that e-scooters offer the potential for fast, clean and inexpensive travel which can help to ease the burden on transport networks and allow for social distancing.
- 3.2 E-scooters are not currently legal for use on public land. On the 4th July 2020 new legislation came into force enabling the DfT to approve a number of trial e-scooter rental schemes.

4. DfT Specifications

- 4.1 Any DfT approved trial must start in October 2020 and last for 12 months. For the Solent area, it is proposed that there are four sub-projects in Portsmouth, Winchester, Southampton, and on the Isle of Wight. Please note that only one sub-project need meet the DfT's October launch date, which will be the start of the 12 month trial.
- 4.2 The following specifications have also been set out by the department, including:
- e-scooter vehicle specification, including that operators use automatic vehicle lights where possible,
 - speed limit,
 - the ability to travel where a bicycle can,
 - safety equipment (helmets and high visibility clothing) is advised but not mandatory,
 - users will be required to be pre-registered and hold a valid driving licence.
- 4.3 The DfT also recommend that providers offer app based training courses to users.
- 4.4 The e-scooter trials will in the most part be regulated in a similar way to electrically assisted pedal cycles (e-bikes), which can travel at a similar speed. As with pedal cycles, wearing helmets will not be mandatory and the e-scooters would be allowed on road (except motorways), in bus lanes (where road signs permit), cycle lanes and tracks. Trial e-scooters will not be permitted on pedestrian-only pavements.
- 4.5 The trial authority can decide on local restrictions, and work is currently underway to explore any areas of the city that may need to be restricted as part of the development of the scheme through more detailed investigations of routes, engagement with stakeholders and suppliers once appointed.

5. Solent Transport proposal to the Department for Transport

- 5.1 Solent Transport have been successful in being awarded £28.8m of funding from the Department for Transport's Future Transport Zones programme, in order to implement a programme of tests and trials of innovative approaches to transport, across the Solent area, from the 20/21 financial year through to 23/24. On the 29th June 2020, Solent Transport Joint Committee accepted the DfT's Future Transport Zone funding to deliver this programme.
- 5.2 The Department for Transport (DfT) recently announced an option for the right to bid to run e-scooter trials with Local Transport Authorities (LTAs). These permissions were granted with no dedicated funding and with the ambition of the schemes being commercially sustainable. The DfT has since suggested that funding may be applied via other funds if required, including the Emergency Active Travel Fund. All trials have, however, been awarded on the basis of no specific funding provided by DfT.

- 5.3 Following a review of areas of the Future Transport Zone (FTZ) that may not deliver as effectively due to the COVID-19 pandemic, some schemes have been delayed by a year. Solent Transport have been working closely with the DfT to allow for the reallocation of circa £900k from the reduced need of these parts of the FTZ to provide a subsidised set of e-scooter schemes across the four LTAs.
- 5.4 On 31st July 2020, Solent Transport submitted a proposal to the DfT asking for permission to operate an e-scooter trial in the Solent area, with four sub-projects in Portsmouth, Winchester, Southampton, and on the Isle of Wight. Only one sub-project need meet the DfT's October launch date, which will be the start of the 12 month trial.
- 5.5 The DfT have indicated they are largely content with the proposal, but require further details on which operator is to be appointed before a final agreement. A procurement process been led by Portsmouth City Council will conclude in October 2020, and Solent Transport will resubmit this information to DfT.

6. Portsmouth e-scooter trial

- 6.1 It is proposed that the e-scooter trial in Portsmouth could commence with an indicative number of 80 rental e-scooters located across an initial six sites in the city. The trial scheme will be for docked e-scooters only which are secured via a locking mechanism, ensuring considerate and secure parking of the e-scooters when not in use. The six locations proposed for the launch of the scheme are:
- Clarence Pier Esplanade Car Park
 - Cosham Interchange
 - Guildhall Square
 - Lakeside North Harbour
 - The Hard Interchange
 - Portsmouth Park & Ride
- 6.2 These sites are still undergoing full site investigations and will be finalised in due course. The total number of docking spaces will ensure there are available spaces at destinations for users to park in.
- 6.3 During the trial there will be scope within the project to increase the number of e-scooters and docks, introducing new locations across the city at key origin and destination points where short term e-scooter hire may be in demand, building a wider e-scooter network. Any increase would be dependent on demand and monitoring of the trial.
- 6.4 Relevant Traffic Regulation Orders would be required to permit e-scooters on routes within the city such as bus and cycle lanes. Some suppliers offer the ability to geo-fence e-scooters to permitted routes. No decision has been made at this stage as to whether Portsmouth will utilise this technology.

7. Stakeholder engagement

- 7.1 Solent Transport are undertaking engagement with key stakeholders at a regional level. Portsmouth City Council will also undertake local engagement with the police, and disability groups, as well as transport operators and interest groups.
- 7.2 This engagement will consider and focus on issues around enforcement of illegal e-scooter use, behaviour of e-scooter users and sharing of routes.
- 7.3 Both Portsmouth City Council and Solent Transport are undertaking engagement with Hampshire Police to work with them to ensure a consistent and clear approach to communications for the general public and trial users.

8. Frequently asked questions

- 8.1 Appendix A outlines some frequently asked questions regarding the Portsmouth e-scooter trial. This will be added to as the project develops and included on the Travel Portsmouth, Portsmouth City Council website.

9. Communications and Marketing

- 9.1 Portsmouth City Council is working with Solent Transport to deliver a clear and targeted marketing and communications plan aimed towards audiences specific to Portsmouth, and using Solent Go branding.
- 9.2 Key messaging will work consistently across the Portsmouth region to reassure users about the main benefits of the e-scooter trial from the outset - safety, reliability, cleanliness, ease of use and accessibility.
- 9.3 Strong and clear communications will be given on the legality of private scooters and how this rental scheme will be the only way that an e-scooter can be legally ridden on Portsmouth roads.
- 9.4 Information will be provided on which designated routes the e-scooters can utilise along with the main restrictions and limitations of each route.
- 9.2 The objectives for marketing communications will operate at both a regional Solent wide level and at a local level for Portsmouth's project. As a general principle we will have an overall approach that is flexible and responds to monitoring information about the schemes in terms of user attitudes, experience and uptake.

10. Procurement

- 10.1 The Council has commenced an Open Procedure to establish a multi-provider framework on behalf of Solent Transport for the provision of e-scooter hire schemes across trial areas. Subject to DfT approval, it is proposed that the council enter into a contract with the highest ranked framework bidder for the provision of the Portsmouth trial in order to commence the trial.
- 10.2 The successful operator will provide the necessary fleet, infrastructure, personnel and back-office systems to implement and manage the trial, including for the provision of data for the DfT and the council as well as the re-distribution and maintenance of the scheme assets in accordance with agreed service levels. The scheme is to be funded via the operator and via the funds made available from Solent Transport.

11. Reason for recommendations

- 11.1 In line with the emerging Local Transport Plan 4 and approved Transport Recovery Plan (2020), the creation of a network of docked e-scooters across the city would serve residents and visitors increasing the use of alternative transport modes and in turn reducing dependence on private car use.
- 11.2 The trial will promote e-scooters as a viable choice through providing the necessary infrastructure for residents, commuters and visitors to travel the city with ease while allowing docking in multiple locations across the city.
- 11.3 It will support a 'green' restart of local travel and help mitigate reduced public transport capacity. E-scooters offer the potential for fast, clean and inexpensive travel that can also help ease the burden on transport networks and allow for social distancing.
- 11.4 The trial will help Portsmouth develop an understanding of how shared micro-mobility can benefit local context and to contribute and information national agenda for possible wider introduction in the future.

12. Equality impact assessment and Integrated Impact Assessment

- 12.1 An Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) has been carried out which has identified the need for a full Equality Impact Assessment (EIA).
- 12.2 An initial Equalities Impact Assessment has been undertaken, however there is limited information to assess the impacts of the trial. Engagement is planned with visually impaired and disability groups which will provide further information to assess the impacts.

13. Legal implications

- 13.1 As part of the proposed routes pass over undesignated cycle tracks it will be necessary for those routes to be dedicated as highway open to all traffic as use of the scooters on cycle tracks is not permissible under the terms of the trial. The new routes will have to be subject to a TRO to prohibit use by motor vehicles.
- 13.2 As it is only intended to be a trial at this stage, it is proposed to seek an experimental traffic regulation order (ETRO). ETRO's can last for up to 18 months and can be made permanent should the trial prove to be successful
- 13.3 Although there is no obligation to consult with the general public before introducing an ETRO statutory notice must be given if it is intended to make the order permanent and any person may object to the making the order permanent within a period of six months from the date of such notice and any such objection should be taken into account when determining whether or not to make the order permanent when the ETRO expires.
- 13.4 Once all the necessary TRO's have been made and the contract signed the Transport Minister will have to issue in Administration Orders to make the use of the e-scooters lawful.
- 13.5 As soon as the order is made it will be lawful to use e-scooters approved under the scheme throughout the city for the trial period unless prohibited by a TRO.
- 13.6 The existing bus lane TRO will have to be amended if the use of e-scooters is to be permitted in those bus lanes.
- 13.7 If it is proposed to place docking stations opposite private businesses or residences it may be necessary to obtain their consent before doing so. Notice must be given at least 28 days before the apparatus is to be installed.

14. Director of Finance's comments

- 14.1 The costs to date associated with developing the e-scooter rental scheme have been met from existing cash limited resources. If after the tendering exercise the Council choose to further develop the scheme the costs of any scheme will be met by Solent Transport as set out in section 5 of this report. The soft market testing is ongoing and the exact business model under which any scheme will operate is as yet unknown.

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 Signed by:
 Tristan Samuels - Director of Regeneration

Appendices:

- Appendix A - Frequently asked questions
- Appendix B - Integrated Impact Assessment

Background list of documents: Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972

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
Transport Recovery Plan	https://democracy.portsmouth.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?AllId=13236
Government guidance on e-scooter trials	https://www.gov.uk/guidance/e-scooter-trials-guidance-for-users
Solent Transport Joint Committee papers	https://democracy.portsmouth.gov.uk/documents/g4512/Public%20reports%20pack%2029th-Jun-2020%2011.00%20Solent%20Transport%20Joint%20Committee.pdf?T=10
Portsmouth City Council e-scooter webpage	https://www.portsmouth.gov.uk/ext/parking-travel-and-roads/travel/e-scooters

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

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 Signed by:
 Councillor Lynne Stagg - Cabinet Member for Traffic and Transportation

Appendix A - Frequently Asked Questions

Question	Response
How fast will e-scooters be permitted to travel?	E-scooters will be limited to maximum of 15.5 mph and in some areas may be lower.
How do you prevent e-scooters being parked within inappropriate areas?	It is proposed that the Portsmouth e-scooter scheme will have docks, and if the e-scooters are not returned to the e-scooter dock a significant fine will be incurred.
How safe are e-scooters?	<p>The Department for Transport specify a standard that all e-scooters must meet as part of the trial.</p> <p>The routes promoted for use are those used by cycles which travel at a similar speed to e-scooters and limit integration with faster traffic.</p> <p>You should wear a cycle helmet when using an e-scooter. Helmets are recommended but are not a legal requirement.</p>
How will users understand how they must use the e-scooters responsibly and where they are permitted to travel?	The registration process is planned to include clear user training, with specific information regarding the use of e-scooters.
How will the police identify between legal (rental) e-scooters vs illegal (private) scooters?	A requirement of the e-scooter supplier will be to ensure their scooters are bright and clearly identifiable. This will make it clear to identify which e-scooter is part of the trial and which is a private e-scooter.
Will e-scooters pose a risk to vulnerable pedestrians?	Engagement with disability groups is integral to the planning and development of an e-scooter project in Portsmouth. User training, e-scooter design, designated routes and restricted speed limits will help to ensure that where e-scooters and pedestrians may share paths there is minimal risk. E-scooters will not be permitted on pedestrian only pavements.
How will underage use of e-scooters be prevented?	Strict verification and validation will be required from users when they register to use the e-scooter trial. For example, users must hold the appropriate entitlement on their driving licence.