

REPORT OF THE STRATEGIC DIRECTOR PLACE

TO
GROWTH & PROSPERITY SCRUTINY PANEL

ON

28TH NOVEMBER 2022

TITLE: Continuation of the Trial Period of the E-scooter Trial in Salford

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

A trial of rental e-scooters was proposed by the Department of Transport (DfT) and available to any local area that expressed an interest. Salford City Council and Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) submitted to DfT a successful proposal for an e-scooter trial in Salford in September 2020. Following a comprehensive two-stage selection process giving consideration to a range of factors including safety, understanding of local issues, data sharing, and vehicle design, Lime were selected by the Council to operate the trial and have operated the e-scooters within Salford since the start of the trial.

Usage to date has been strong, particularly since the introduction of the Gen4 scooter with over 450,000 trips being made by 85,000 unique users covering a distance of more than 500,000 km to date. Despite high usage, anti-social behaviour and vandalism levels have remained low, parking compliance within designated zones is extremely high, and there have been only two minor incidents reported. This is thanks to a highly collaborative working relationship between the Salford City Council, TfGM, Lime, Greater Manchester Police, and several charities and not-for-profit groups.

The trial was originally scheduled to run for a period of one year ending in October 2021. The DfT have since extended the trial to March 2022 and then to November 2022. The DfT have now confirmed that trials will be further extended from 30th November 2022 to 30th March 2024 to allow further time for legislation for the use of e-scooters to be drafted.

1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The DfT originally proposed the trial of e-scooters in early 2020, inviting local authorities to express interest in operating a trial scheme. Salford City Council along with TfGM proposed a trial to take place starting in October 2020.
- 1.2 The trial was initially proposed in three phases, phase 1 being wholly on University of Salford campus, phase 2 extending to Media City with use on public highways and phase 3 extending the area of operation from the University of Salford, Salford Quays to the boarder with Manchester City Centre and all areas in between.
- 1.3 Under the DfT proposal the trials were originally due to last for a period of 12 months until October 2021, in order that a report on the trials could be drafted and sent to ministers to draft legislation for the use of both hired and private e-scooters, with the anticipation that legislation would shortly follow the conclusion of the trial period.
- 1.4 The trial was subsequently extended from 1st October 2021 to 31 March 2022 and then until 30th November 2022 so that further time could be given to considering the interim DfT report by ministers before drafting legislation.
- 1.5 The DfT has subsequently confirmed that the trial period has now been extended until 30th May 2024 due to a backlog of legislation, with the trial carrying on in the same format as previous extensions.
- 1.6 It was agreed by Strategic Director, for Place at the Property and Regeneration briefing on 14th March 2022 that the trial could continue as previously agreed with a further extension until November 2022, together with any further extensions to the trial period to match any extension of the trial period proposed by the DfT. Therefore, no formal decision is required by the Strategic Director to increase the length of the trial.
- 1.7 The Strategic Director, for Place also agreed for an expansion in the e-scooter trial area to encompass Weaste and Seedley wards to allow use of the e-scooters in and around Salford Royal Hospital. This additional phase was launched in mid-October 2001 and has seen an increase in the overall use of the e-scooters.
- 1.8 In May 2022 it was agreed to upgrade the scooters in the trial to the Gen4 model. The main differences between this model and the previous model were:
 - Improved GPS and ride technology,
 - Swept back handlebars for a better ride,
 - Dual breaking, rather than a rear foot brake,
 - Dual kickstand to reduce parked scooters from being knocked over,
 - Swappable battery,
- 1.9 E-Scooters provide a flexible and green alternative mode of travel for shorter trips, particularly first and last journey trips connecting to transport hubs and local attractions. The Salford e-scooter trial has improved accessibility between

the University of Salford, central Salford, and MediaCityUK, enabling student, residents and visitors to easily get around the borough and stimulating a green restart to the local economy.

- 1.10 In addition to a comprehensive DfT monitoring and evaluation programme, TfGM and the University of Salford's Sustainable Housing and Urban Studies Unit and Healthy Active Cities research group has carried out a survey of riders to provide greater insight into the impacts of micro mobility schemes in the city-region. The University of Salford have issued a report of their study on users of the e-scooters and the perception of e-scooters to member of the public.
- 1.11 Lime currently operates up to 500 e-scooters at any one time, although this figure will always be lower due to e-scooters retained for routine maintenance. This figure was increased in May 2022 following the introduction of the new model and the expansion of the trial area.
- 1.12 Initially Salford City Council were the only authority within Greater Manchester to trial the use of e-scooters. Rochdale have since followed Salford's lead and set up a similar scheme in March 2021, also partnering with Lime. Although this scheme was not extended following the March 2022 extension.

2.0 OVERVIEW OF TRIAL PERFORMANCE

- 2.1 The availability of this new mode in Salford has proved very popular, evidenced by high levels of usage and independent research conducted by the University of Salford and supplements restricted public transport capacity in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, while offering a way to travel that is naturally socially distanced.
- 2.2 Since October 2020, the trial has expanded in phases, starting with the University of Salford Peel Park campus, and now covering a 14km² area to the east of the city bounded by the Manchester-Salford border, the River Irwell, and east to the Salford Royal Hospital.
- 2.3 To date, more than 180,000 trips have been made in Salford through the scheme, by over 50,000 users, covering a distance of more than 325,000km. Lime has reported that of the daily trips over 90% are made by existing users. Showing that some users are using the e-scooters as a regular preferred mode of transport.
- 2.4 There has been a high utilisation rate of 3.7 trips per vehicle per day, which compares favourably with more established micromobility sharing schemes such as the Santander Cycle Hire scheme in London that has utilisation rates of around 2.4 per e-scooter per day. The average distance for trips is 1.5km, while the average duration is around 19 minutes, an average speed of 6kph.
- 2.5 The scheme requires users to end their journeys in designated 'virtual docks', enabled through on-board GPS tracking, and parking compliance has been over

90%. We are looking into making parking bays more visible to indicate that they are for hired e-scooters to help further promote parking compliance.

- 2.6 As part of the trial where the use of e-scooters were permitted on a shared footway with the permittance of pedal cycles, we were advised that a new ETRO would be required for the use of e-scooters. Experimental TRO's were created in November 2020 which allowed the use of e-scooters on the shared footways within the trial areas. The original ETROs expired in May 2022 and a new ETRO is being progressed.
- 2.7 Following a discussion with SCC's legal team it was agreed the most prudent way forward was to create a new ETRO which would cover any signed shared footway, cycle track or cycle path within Salford, when a scooter is used in accordance with the terms and conditions of the operator's hire agreement. This will allow for any potential expansion of the trial area in the extended trial period without further ETROs.
- 2.8 When any permeant legislation is introduced a full review of the ETO and TROs within Salford will be carried out to see how any future hire scheme can be operated with approved legislation.
- 2.9 The most popular routes are between Middlewood Locks and Chapel Street, as well as between the University of Salford's Fredrick Road campus and Manchester City Centre boarder. We are working with Lime, Peel, and highway officers to increase parking locations in and around Salford Quays to try and encourage more trips to Salford Quays. Once the Trafford Road cycleway works are complete this will also allow further trips to be made to Salford Quays.
- 2.10 Lime have agreed with Salford Royal Hospital to operate the e-scooters within the campus. The new expanded area will give hospital works and patients an additional travel option to the hospital, as well as opening up further areas for use. Following discussions with the hospital they are looking to promote the use of e-scooters in March when the weather improves.
- 2.11 The trial has had only a few minor issues, with regards to theft, vandalism and antisocial riding. Lime have a team of rangers, who constantly monitor the e-scooters a, collect e-scooters when their battery needs recharging, as well as moving any e-scooters not parked correctly back to the correct parking locations. Lime have managed to recover e-scooters taken out of the trial zone with the aid of the GPS tracking within each e-scooter.
- 2.12 Where riders have been seen to be using the e-scooters without the proper license requirements or have been riding the e-scooters in an inappropriate manner, riders have been either given a warning or had their account blocked if required.
- 2.13 With the introduction of Gen4 scooter with the swappable battery, there has been an increase in battery thefts from scooters. Lime have been working GMP to help identify those responsible and reduce the number of incidents.

- 2.14 We have had only a handful of complaints from members of the public. These seem to stem from April/May 2021 onwards, and reflect the extended operational areas, the increase in the number of e-scooters being made available along with the reduction in stay at home requirements. Lime has responded to complaints and reduced the number of e-scooters in certain areas at certain times of the day to reduce issues with members of the public.
- 2.15 The complaints seem to be very general in nature, rather than any specific incidents, mainly regarding pavement riding and a few issues with the pavement parking. While riders are given information as to how to ride the e-scooters and where to ride them, it is difficult to enforce the issue of pavement use.
- 2.16 It should also be noted that while we have had complaints about inappropriate e-scooter use, when these when looked into a majority of the complaints are linked to privately owned e-scooters, rather than the Lime scooters (which are white rather than the more common black models). All of the e-scooters have a 3 or 4 digit number so that any issues with a specific e-scooter can be reported back to Lime directly. Any person reporting a complaint are asked to make a note of the time and location of any specific incidents and feed the back to Lime directly to be investigated.
- 2.17 SCC's ETA cycle lane schemes and other on street improvements, have provided further traffic free routes that e-scooter riders can also utilise. Lime are additionally working on post ride pavement detection software, which will allow specific messaging to be directed at any riders that are seen to be riding on pavements.
- 2.18 A review of the e-scooter parking locations has been carried out it was found that the majority of e-scooters were parked appropriately, with a few instances of e-scooters being parked outside of the bays. SCC have and are continuing to work with Lime to try and identify further parking locations which are appropriate, being on a wide footway where they will not be placed within the natural path of pedestrians using the footway to cause an obstruction.
- 2.19 We have seen only two reported accidents associated with the e-scooter use. With one involving a rider being knocked off while passing in between standing traffic and a further incident of a rider travelling in the cycle lane on Chapel Street and was knocked off by a pedal cycle rider travelling in the wrong direction. All incidents are reported to the DfT as part of the ongoing monthly reporting process.
- 2.20 Lime and the University of Salford have organised first ride events for new students at the start of each academic year. The first ride events have helped students to familiarise themselves with the e-scooters as well educate them to the laws surrounding the use of the e-scooters on the road.
- 2.21 SCC have worked with trading standards, where we have found that private companies are operating an e-scooter business within Greater Manchester. This has helped to educate the private business to the requirements of the

usage of e-scooters on the public highway and reduce the number of private e-scooters operating in Salford.

- 2.22 Greater Manchester Police have also focused on the use of private e-scooters on the public highways. A number of e-scooters have been seized by GMP, with targeted media campaigns to highlight the fact that the usage of private e-scooters is illegal without the landowners' consent.

3.0 Next Step for the Trial

- 3.1 As stated above the trial has been extended until 31st May 2024 in order to provide enough time to enable legislation to be formulated and agreed by central government. It is unclear what will happen if this date is reached, and legislation has not been enacted. It is anticipated that the trial within Salford will continue until this date with further decisions with regards to the trial being made closer to the end of the trial period.
- 3.2 A new ETRO will be created to cover any future expansion of the trial area within Salford. The original trial agreed with the DfT an operational area that covered the whole of Salford, in order that future expansions could take place. The ETRO will last until the end of the new extended trial period. It is anticipated that permanent legislation will be in place following this period and a review of the requirements for TROs regarding the use of e-scooters, both publicly hired and private use will be carried out.
- 3.3 We are looking expanding the operational area along Eccles New Road to link Weaste and expanding into Eccles town centre, as well as a link to the train station from the hospital. We are currently waiting for Road Safety Officers to carry out a risk assessment to help understand any potential risk of using the scooters over the tram tracks at Weaste Metrolink stop and along the Eccles New Road route.
- 3.4 Consideration has also been given to other potential area within Salford that the scheme could expand to, and these will be discussed with the Lead Member as and when they have been identified.
- 3.5 TfGM hold their disability reference group meeting once every three weeks, where any issues which may affect those with disabilities are discussed. Lime and other operators are looking at trialling e-scooters with a sound to warn pedestrians close by the scooter's operation.
- 3.6 Lime are developing a parking stand which we are looking to trial in key locations to help with parking. Scooters would be placed within the stand although the stand would not have mechanisms to lock the scooters to the stand. While the stands can help to minimise scooters parked outside the parking bays they would reduce the number of scooters that could be parked in any location.

3.7 We are also working with Lime, Road Safety Officers and colleagues from Parking Services to see where we could trial an on highways parking bay rather than location parking bays on the adopted pavement as the current arrangement.

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WARDS TO WHICH REPORT RELATES:

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