

<b>LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN</b>	<b>WARDS:</b> All
<b>REPORT TITLE:</b> Dockless Bike Hire Scheme – Progress Update 2025	
<b>REPORT OF:</b> Director of Environment and Sustainability	
<b>FOR SUBMISSION TO:</b> Culture and Environment Scrutiny Committee	<b>DATE:</b> 24 <sup>th</sup> February 2025
<b>SUMMARY OF REPORT</b>	
<p>In May 2023, a <a href="#">Culture and Environment Scrutiny Committee</a> meeting took place in which dockless bike hire operations, and in particular parking management of such bikes in the borough, was discussed. The committee requested that the issues raised in that meeting were brought back to a further Scrutiny committee in around 6-months' time to report on the actions and progress that had been made during that period.</p> <p>In line with this request, an update was provided at the Culture and Environment <a href="#">Scrutiny committee meeting of January 2024</a>. At that meeting, operators were requested to provide: (i) borough specific evidence to the level of mode shift and the wider sustainability impact of e-bike shared micromobility and (ii) information on carbon life cycle of their e-bikes.</p> <p>Following those two reports, the Culture &amp; Environment Scrutiny Committee requested a further review of dockless bike hire operations in the Borough as part of the 2024/25 work programme. This report provides the information requested previously and also key further updates on the dockless e-bike hire scheme in Camden accordingly.</p> <p><b>Local Government Act 1972 – Access to Information</b> No documents that require listing have been used in the preparation of this report.</p> <p><b>Contact Officer</b> Sarah Slade Principle Transport Planner (Parking Policy, Projects, and Shared Mobility) 5 Pancras Square, London N1C 4AG  Tel: 020 7974 5120</p>	
<b>2. RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	
<p>That the committee notes and comments on the contents of this report, including the actions being taken to ensure that the E-bike hire scheme in Camden continues to meet its stated aims, providing benefits to the multiple users of the service in the Borough, and that any negative impacts of the scheme are minimised.</p>	

Signed:



Richard Bradbury, Director of Environment and Sustainability

Date: 12 February 2025

## 1. Background

- 1.1. The Dockless Bike Hire (DBH) scheme plays a significant role in advancing the sustainable travel and related policies and objectives within Camden and across London including:
  - Mayor's [Transport Strategy \(MTS\)](#).
  - The [Camden Transport Strategy](#) whose vision to transform transport and mobility in Camden, enabling and encouraging people to travel, and goods to be transported, healthily and sustainably.
  - [Camden Clean Air Action Plan 2023-2026](#)
  - [Camden Climate Action Plan 2020-2025](#)
- 1.2. Within the Camden Transport Strategy (CTS), adopted by full Council in 2019, a commitment was made (“Measure 2I”) to “Support, promote and expand cycle hire systems [including] further developing dockless bike hire programmes – as a tool for creating viable alternatives to car ownership and use”.
- 1.3. The CTS is delivered in 3-yearly “Delivery Plan” cycles, which are brought to the Culture and Environment Scrutiny Committee for review ahead of consideration by Cabinet. The most recent of these, for the period for 2025/26 to 2027/28, was brought to the Culture and Environment Scrutiny Committee on 11<sup>th</sup> November 2024, ahead of approval by Cabinet on 13<sup>th</sup> November 2024.
- 1.4. Within that 3-year Plan, it was noted that “shared mobility, and micro-mobility, is an increasingly important part of the transport mix in the Borough” and with respect of dockless bike hire the Council committed to “continue to expand the current provision of 208 dockless bike/e-scooter bays in the Borough...with an ambition to deliver a minimum of a further 10 bays”. The Council also committed to “continue to work with operators to further improve parking bay compliance levels, including to (a) investigate the opportunity for technical solutions to reduce the risk of spillover of vehicles outside of marked bays...and (b) auditing existing bays/designs to ensure both capacity is sufficient for current/expected volumes of vehicles and that bay design minimises the risk of bikes being parked obstructively on the periphery of marked bays”.
- 1.5. Camden currently has contracts with 2 operators to operate DBH in the borough (Forest and Lime) which began in May 2023. The contracts are for an initial contract period of 2 years with the option of two extensions of a further 1 year each (2+1+1).
- 1.6. The DBH scheme has been brought to the Culture and Environment Scrutiny committee meetings twice (in May 2023 and January 2024). Topics discussed at these meetings included:
  - How and where users were parking e-bikes, including:
    - How this was not happening appropriately on some instances.
    - The impact on the public and other stakeholders; and
    - How both council officers leading on delivering this scheme and operators were tackling this.
  - The sustainability of e-bikes:
    - Whether E-bikes were as sustainable as claimed.
- 1.7. Further details of these two meetings can be accessed using the links below:
  - [Link 1](#) – for the May 2023 meeting; and
  - [Link 2](#) – for the January 2024 meeting.

- 1.8. At the January 2024 Culture and Environment Scrutiny committee meeting, the below actions were assigned to the operators:
- To provide borough specific evidence to the level of mode shift and the wider sustainability impact of e-bike shared micromobility.
  - To provide information on carbon life cycle
- 1.9. This report includes the operator responses to those actions and also provides updates on key areas of Camden's DBH scheme, including further details of parking management as alluded to in the 3-year Delivery Plan for 2025-2028 as noted above.

## **2. Operator Responses to the actions from last meeting**

- 2.1. The following operator documents are appended to this report in response to the actions from the last scrutiny meeting:
- Forest Modal Shift 2024
  - Forest Sustainability Report 2023
  - Lime Modal Shift report 2024
  - Lime Sustainability Carbon Lifecycle

More information on Limes' sustainability work can be found on the links below, including annual carbon inventories and life cycle assessments:  
<https://www.li.me/why/sustainability/reports-and-policies>. A third party assessment/analysis report of Limes life cycle assessment is here: [https://cdn.li.me/content/uploads/Review-statement\\_LIME\\_2023\\_JSERRE\\_vf.pdf](https://cdn.li.me/content/uploads/Review-statement_LIME_2023_JSERRE_vf.pdf)

## **3. Update on notable developments in the DBH Sector and in Camden specifically**

### Steep Growth in Usage

- 3.1. The use of DBH services within Camden has grown significantly since the service was first introduced in 2019. DBH rides have increased from an average of 127,000 rides (prior to the current contracts being in place) to an estimated average of 330,000 rides per month in 2024. Both of these figures are just rides starting within the Borough of Camden and exclude trips ending in the Borough or Camden being used as a "ride-through" location. In 2024, there were a combined total of almost 4 million trips taken by DBH in Camden.
- 3.2. The Lime Access scheme provides discounted rides to Job Seekers, emergency workers, students, apprentices and 60+ Oyster, Freedom and Veteran card holders. It is used by over 1000 users each month in Camden. Forest gives 60 minutes free riding for residents of Camden to get to job interviews and in 2024, gave away 4.8 million free minutes in Camden.
- 3.3. Further details can be found in the operators reports contained in Appendix E (Forest Scrutiny Report Jan 2025) and Appendix H (Lime Culture and Environment Scrutiny Committee February 2025). Dockless bike hire growth has been a contributing factor to overall cycle mode share in Camden increasing from around 3.5% (2017) of all resident trips to just over 6.5% (2023).
- 3.4. This strong ridership growth therefore supports Camden's objectives to encourage more cycling (alongside walking), which in turn can help reduce pressure on both road networks and over-crowded public transport. The popularity of the services provided reflects the use of dockless bikes for our residents and visitors to access jobs, services, leisure facilities and for other purposes. But it is also noted that the increased demand for DBH has also put some pressure on our network of designated parking bays (and associated public

realm/public amenity impacts) and there have also been other issues which are explained further in section 4.

#### Exploration of a London-wide E-bike service

3.5. Transport for London (TfL) is currently working with local authorities in London, and London Councils, on the exploration of a future framework for a London-wide DBH and E-scooter scheme in which boroughs could choose to participate in. Camden has confirmed to TfL, the intention to consider joining a coordinated future scheme to manage dockless E-bikes and E-scooters in the borough if these proposals were to go ahead. This is based on the following potential benefits of such a scheme:

- It would promote a unified approach to micromobility services, ensuring consistency in regulations and user experience across the city.
- Consistency of rules across a wider service area would make it easier for users to understand and abide by them. This could help to reduce non-compliant parking and improve safety.
- DBH services would be accessible to the broadest range of Londoners.
- It would help contribute to London's net zero vision to reduce carbon emissions as well as help improve air quality and prioritise active and sustainable travel.
- It would increase the potential to reduce car use in London and connect with public transport.
- Less Camden resource requirements to manage contracts.

#### Government Consideration of Regulation of Micromobility

3.6. While there is still no current legal framework in place for the operation of dockless hire bikes, officers wrote to the Minister for Local Transport (Simon Lightwood MP) in November 2024, advocating for legislation to be brought in to help manage some of the issues facing DBH services.

3.7. In December 2024, the government published the [English Devolution White Paper](#) which includes the following clause:

*Local Transport Authorities will be empowered to regulate on-street micromobility schemes (like hire bikes), so local areas can shape these schemes around their needs, connect people to public transport, and tackle the scourge of badly parked cycles and e-cycles.*

3.8. Following this (in January 2025), the government launched a consultation on regulating on-street micromobility (OSM) schemes, which sought views on proposed licensing approaches.

3.9. Camden welcomes the introduction of regulations as it would help us to manage the DBH scheme. The Council has submitted a response to the above consultation expressing its support for regulation and sharing its views based on the Council's experience as a borough at the forefront of these schemes (Camden was one of the first boroughs to introduce parking bays for the DBH scheme and one of the first boroughs in London to have formal contracts with DBH operators, as opposed to just a "Memorandum of Understanding").

#### A reduction in the number of operators providing hire E-bike and E-scooter services

3.10. A number of dockless bike (and E-scooter) hire operators have ceased operation in London. This has resulted in the Council's current contracted suppliers Lime and Forest, being the only providers of large scale hired dockless e-bike services in London at the

present time. The Council are aware of some smaller, [localised operations](#) taking place provided by other operators in specific neighbourhood areas.

#### Camden Dockless Bike Hire Contract Extension

- 3.11. In May 2025, the initial 2-year period for Camden's DBH contracts will expire and the Council has to have made a decision on whether or not to extend these contracts by a further +1 year. Under the terms of the contracts, Camden is required to provide 3-months' notice to the operators of this decision and therefore Camden has needed to make this decision in early February 2025.
- 3.12. On 10<sup>th</sup> February 2025, a decision was taken by the Director of Environment and Sustainability that a 1-year extension be granted to the DBH operators based on the following:
- The benefits of a shared DBH scheme to residents and visitors to Camden.
  - Competitive user pricing for rides that begin within Camden
  - The Social Value offered through the contracts (see section 2.11 of Appendix B)
  - Performance data (see section 4.2 below)
  - Ongoing, and new, mitigations to some of the issues that have arisen from the operations of these services
- 3.13. Further information on this decision, made by the Director of Environment and Sustainability in line with contract standing orders, can be found on the councils website.

#### **4. Update on issues around DBH in Camden**

##### Rides being allowed in some instances to end outside of bays

- 4.1. When dockless hire bikes first appeared in Camden in August 2019, DBH companies were initially able to operate in a "free-floating" way (i.e., not confined to specific parking bays). When the current DBH contracts came into force in 2023, it was a stipulation within them that all rides were expected to begin and end within a designated parking bay. The contracts also state that parking compliance (where rides end within a bay) must be above 90% for both operators.
- 4.2. The table below shows that both operators have reached high levels of parking compliance with the 90% compliance target being met for >70% for Lime and >94% for Forest since July 23 when data for both operators became available. In the last 12 months (Nov 23-Nov 24) compliance has been above the key performance indicator (KPI) of 90% for every month except one in both cases. Council officers are working with operators to make sure that actions are in place to ensure this KPI is consistently met going forward (see Section 5 for details).

	Lime	Forest
Month	Parking Compliance	Parking Compliance
May-23	79%	-
Jun-23	83%	-
Jul-23	83%	94%
Aug-23	86%	93%
Sep-23	84%	91%
Oct-23	87%	93%
Nov-23	91%	95%
Dec-23	95%	96%
Jan-24	95%	96%
Feb-24	96%	91%
Mar-24	97%	93%
Apr-24	96%	90%
May-24	97%	93%
Jun-24	96%	91%
Jul-24	96%	92%
Aug-24	96%	94%
Sep-24	95%	92%
Oct-24	93%	89%
Nov-24	89%	92%

#### Overspill of vehicles in some locations

- 4.3. As a result of a combination of increased parking-bay compliance and the number of rides (and bikes) increasing, overspill remains an issue at some bays, particularly in the vicinity of key trip generators, for example universities, and in particular (though not exclusively) in the south of the borough. Other “hotspot” areas for parking bay overspill are locations around Hampstead Heath, particularly on warm summer days when use of bikes increases significantly.
- 4.4. Another contributing factor to overspill in some bays is where the operator's technology may not function as expected in certain areas, usually due to GPS drift caused by the presence of tall buildings. This can affect the accuracy of the GPS systems used to ensure that DBH users can only end their ride within a designated parking bay and may lead to some rides being allowed to end outside of bays.
- 4.5. Whilst officers have seen an improvement to the number of bikes scattered on streets and locations a long way from bays, the overspill issues at some bays and ability for some rides to end just outside the bays can and has caused some significant disruption in some locations. Some examples of these impacts include:
- A wheelchair user being unable to cross the street in a location where the bay spillover had blocked a dropped kerb and crossing.
  - Vehicles overspilling from a bay and blocking entrances, or private driveways.
  - Creating a general public nuisance by preventing ease of access along pavements, especially for some disabled or elderly people.

#### User behaviour

- 4.6. There is evidence that user behaviour has improved as it goes hand in hand with parking compliance however there are still some issues especially in high demand areas where there is overspill in bays which can be attributed to user behaviour.

#### Hacked bikes

- 4.7. At the last meeting, Lime was experiencing issues with some people using their bikes without paying, by hacking the locking mechanism and partially disabling it enough to be able to ride the bike. This issue appears to have been successfully addressed, and Officers no longer receive complaints about this.

#### Non-Contracted operators in the borough

- 4.8. Since the last Scrutiny Committee update, there have not been any reported cases of vehicles from other operators, not in contract with Camden, being abandoned within the borough and so it appears that this issue has also been resolved.

### **5. Actions being undertaken to address outstanding issues**

#### Contract Management

- 5.1. Council officers continue to work closely with both operators as part of contract management to address the outstanding issues outlined in Section 4. This includes fortnightly operational meetings to discuss any issues or updates, a monthly strategic meeting, and monthly report packs that are provided by both operators which includes information including ride data, parking compliance stats and user fines information.
- 5.2. For locations with recurring issues associated with DBH, the following actions are taken:
- Separate meetings with operators (in addition to the fortnightly meetings) are held to discuss the issues.
  - The locations are added to a high priority bay list which means that operators need to monitor them more closely and conduct more frequent visits.
  - The Camden enforcement officer will include the location on his list of locations to check more frequently, report any issues to the operator and tidy vehicles.
  - Operators are, at various times, asked to draw up action plans setting out how they will address specific issues in specific locations.
  - An officer from the council's team that manages the DBH scheme will attend the site to assess and understand the extent of the issue and assess the impact of actions taken.
  - A CCTV survey is sometimes commissioned to monitor the location for a period of time to understand the nature of the issues e.g. how often a bay overflows and the impacts of this.
- 5.3. Officers will continue this approach and investigate applying all levers within the contract including those we have not previously used such as the council's removal of bikes parked in an unsafe manner and charging the operator for this. We are currently investigating how this could be done.
- 5.4. Although the contract KPI for parking compliance is 90%, we will be looking for this to be as close to 100% as possible during the remaining period of the contract by employing a range of measures set out in this report.
- 5.5. Both operators have committed to a number of additional measures in their action plans to address issues. These include:
- Additional on-street resource
  - Decreased deployment in some of the busiest bays
  - New technological solutions
  - Rider incentives
- 5.6. Further information from both operators on how they are addressing issues can be found in Appendix E and Appendix F of this report.

- 5.7. Operators have been granted a further +1 year extension to May 2026 as per section 3.12 above. We will use ongoing contract management and KPI performance assessments to help assess whether at the end of that year we will seek a further, final +1 year extension or terminate the contracts at that point. We will also continue to liaise with TfL and LC as it may be, we end our contract and join theirs if up and running at that point.

#### Increasing the number of DBH bays

- 5.8. Camden is one of the leading boroughs on installing a network of designated bays for DBH and is continuing to increase the number and size of parking bays help to mitigate certain issues seen with DBH such as bay overspill. The increasing numbers of rides that the borough is seeing means that Camden needs to continue to expand its network of bays to meet increasing demand, especially in more popular destinations such as the South of the borough. The availability of sufficient bays in the right locations, can lead to a reduction in bay overspill as more convenient parking options are available for users. Officers have recently installed a further 9 new bays and extended 10 bays as part of phase 8 of bay delivery with further capacity to be included in phase 9 (5 new bays and 25 extensions) and phase 10 (31 new bays and 6 extensions) coming forward in 2025. This will bring the total number of bays in the borough to 253 subject to consultation and approval. We have also been working with TfL to deliver bays on TfL land and with operators to deliver bays on private land, to further extend the network.

#### Lobbying for regulation

- 5.9. Camden will continue lobbying the government for the regulation of micromobility schemes if this is not introduced following the recent White Paper consultation. It is anticipated that regulation would give the Council more powers to tackle the negative impacts of DBH schemes, whilst continuing to enable the positive impacts/benefits of the scheme.

#### Supporting London-wide micromobility scheme options

- 5.10. Camden will continue to support any efforts to introduce a London-wide scheme by (i) sharing the knowledge the Council possesses based on our experience and (ii) investigating the feasibility of joining any such schemes for the reasons set out in section 3.2.

#### Technological Interventions to encourage more compliant parking

- 5.11. Operators are considering further technological interventions to encourage more compliant parking. Forest are now working to trial technology that will deliver enhanced accuracy for mandatory parking bays, and support existing GPS accuracy which can be unreliable in terms of accuracy in some built-up areas. The visual positioning technology will scan the surrounding area and there are initial claims it can deliver accuracy of up to 30cm. Lime have committed to new technology including an artificial intelligence (AI) end-trip photo review to detect and prevent poor parking in real time. They are also piloting and development improvements to GPS to address issues with GPS drift.
- 5.12. Camden officers are also working with Lime to investigate installing Bluetooth beacons in some priority bays to address issues with GPS drift. If trials go well, the Council hopes to roll this out in 2025.

#### Mystery Shopping/audits

- 5.13. Parking compliance and other data is supplied to the Council from the operators on a monthly basis but to support the Councils ability to accurately monitor the schemes, Council officers also conduct in-house testing and audits. Officers routinely carry out spot checks on different sites across the borough and will continue, going forward, to undertake "mystery



shopper” audits on bays and bikes in the borough to assess vehicle numbers, tidiness, and parking compliance.

- 5.14. Data that has been collected during these audits has been fed back to the operators at the earliest opportunity with the request that any actions that may be required are put into place immediately. It should be highlighted that the Council performs audits anonymously and without advance warning, which serves as an additional monitoring tool that is not affected by external influence.

#### Reporting issues

- 5.15. Members of the public can report any issues through various channels, including direct contact with the Council or operators, as well as the online reporting tool [Fix My Street](#). This application streamlines the reporting process by allowing users to submit issues with DBH which are then forwarded to the appropriate operator for resolution.
- 5.16. As part of the contract, the operators are contracted to a maximum of an hour recovery (from point of written notification) of bikes that are obstructing the public highway. This requirement is applicable during the hours of 07:00 to 22:00 Monday–Sunday and any bikes reported outside of these hours must be collected the following morning within 2 hours.

#### Rider education and user behaviour

- 5.17. Operators already have systems in place to encourage compliant parking and educate their users including in-app rider education messages, warnings, fines, and ultimately bans for continued non-compliance. Forest reports that Monthly warnings and fines have increased to around 6% of rides a month in December (matching a compliance rate of 94%), leading to improved user behaviour and reduced complaints per rides. Both operators have a progressive fine policy which ranges from a warning for a first offence to a possible £20 fine or ban for persistent violations.
- 5.18. Both operators are also looking into incentivising their users to remove bikes from overcrowded locations by offering discounts and other rewards.

### **6. Finance Comments of the Executive Director Corporate Services**

- 6.1 The DBH operators (Lime and Forest) provide electric dockless bike hire services in Camden to residents and visitors.
- 6.2 Both operators pay Camden council a guaranteed income plus a share of their revenue income. Funding is not required from Camden to run the service.
- 6.3 The combined expected guaranteed income plus revenue share from both operators would be in line with the Council’s expectations.
- 6.4 The income is expected to be reinvested in the Transport Strategy delivery plan.
- 6.5 The new contract extension will run from May 2025 – May 2026.

### **7. Legal Comments of the Borough Solicitor**

- 7.1 In May 2023, a [Culture and Environment Scrutiny Committee](#) meeting took place in which dockless bike hire operations, and in particular parking management of such bikes in the borough, was discussed.

- 7.2 Further to that meeting an update was provided at the Culture and Environment [Scrutiny committee meeting of January 2024](#). At that meeting, operators were requested to provide: (i) borough specific evidence to the level of mode shift and the wider sustainability impact of e-bike shared micromobility and (ii) information on carbon life cycle of their e-bikes.
- 7.3 Following those two meetings, the Culture & Environment Scrutiny Committee requested a further review of dockless bike hire operations in the Borough as part of the 2024/25 work programme. This report provides the information requested previously and also key further updates on the dockless e-bike hire scheme in Camden accordingly.
- 7.4 The report recommends and requests that the committee notes and comments on the contents of this report, including the actions being taken to ensure that the E-bike hire scheme in Camden continues to meet its stated aims, providing benefits to the multiple users of the service in the Borough, and that any negative impacts of the scheme are minimised. The recommendation and request is permissible in accordance with the Constitution of the Council.

## **8. Environmental Implications**

- 8.1 Encouraging cycling is a key part of the council's measures to reduce the environmental impact of travel in Camden, as cycling and walking are the lowest emission forms of transport. However, not everyone has the means to own a bicycle. By providing a bike hire service in Camden, these services are assisting our residents' stakeholders to overcome this key barrier by improving their access to bicycles.

- 8.2 A [report](#) by the International Transport Forum (ITF) states that

*Shared micromobility has made significant progress in terms of sustainability as operators have addressed the impacts of their fleets and operations on the environment. Leasing models are particularly attractive from a lifecycle environmental impact perspective.*

- 8.3 DBH services also help to fulfil the Citizens' Assembly recommendation as set out in the [Climate Action Plan](#) of 'Enabling electric transport with infrastructure and incentives'.

## **9. Appendices**

Appendix A – Dockless Bike Hire Parking Management report May 2023  
Appendix B – Dockless Bike Hire Parking Management report January 2024  
Appendix C - Forest Modal Shift 2024  
Appendix D - Forest Sustainability Report 2023  
Appendix E – Forest Scrutiny Report Jan 2025  
Appendix F - Lime Modal Shift report 2024  
Appendix G - Lime Sustainability Carbon Lifecycle  
Appendix H - Lime Culture and Environment Scrutiny Committee February 2025

**Paper ends**