

<b>LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN</b>	<b>WARDS:</b> All
<b>REPORT TITLE</b> Dockless Bike Hire Parking Management	
<b>REPORT OF</b> Director of Environment and Sustainability	
<b>FOR SUBMISSION TO</b> Culture and Environment Scrutiny Committee	<b>DATE:</b> 16 <sup>th</sup> May 2023
<p><b>SUMMARY OF REPORT</b></p> <p>The <a href="#">Camden Transport Strategy (CTS)</a>, adopted by the Council in 2019, sets out a range of policies and measures to reduce inessential motor vehicle trips in the Borough, and to boost healthier, more sustainable modes of travel including walking and cycling. Cycle hire systems are one such measure that the strategy and supporting Cycling Action Plan commits to.</p> <p>Currently, and in line with the CTS, the operator “Lime” has an agreement with the Council to operate dockless bike hire (DBH) services in the Borough. It is, at the time of this report, the only operator with such an agreement. However, contracts were awarded to two DBH operators on 25<sup>th</sup> April 2023 following the conclusion of a competitive tendering exercise. Parking management is a key part of the operations. Whilst usage of Lime bikes has continued to grow rapidly, and in doing so supporting our objectives to shift more trips to cycling, Officers and Members have also received numerous complaints about Lime bikes being poorly and inappropriately parked on pavements and other areas reserved for pedestrians. This can have a negative impact on the public realm, while being detrimental to pedestrian comfort and safety.</p> <p>The Culture and Environment Scrutiny Committee has therefore asked for the parking management issues being raised to be discussed in further detail. This report discusses the issues being raised and mitigation measures being put in place by Lime, and the Council, to help address them.</p> <p><b>Local Government Act 1972 – Access to Information</b> No documents that require listing were used in the preparation of this report.</p> <p><b>Contact Officer:</b> Sam Margolis, Head of Transport Strategy and Projects 5th Floor, 5 Pancras Square, London, N1C 4AG Telephone: 020 7974 6934 Email: <a href="mailto:sam.margolis@camden.gov.uk">sam.margolis@camden.gov.uk</a></p>	
<p><b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b></p> <p>That the Committee notes and comments on the issues set out in the report and identifies any further information it would like to receive, and potential further mitigation measures and monitoring activities they might like to see explored.</p>	

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Signed:  
Gillian Marston Executive Director Supporting Communities

Date: 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2023

## **1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 Lime has an agreement with the Council to operate dockless bike hire (DBH) services in the Borough, under a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU – see section 2). It is the only operator, currently, with such an agreement. Parking management is a key part of the operations. Officers and Members have received numerous complaints about Lime bikes being poorly and inappropriately parked on pavements and other areas reserved for pedestrians. This can have a negative impact on the public realm, while being detrimental to pedestrian comfort and safety.
- 1.2 The Culture and Environment Scrutiny Committee has therefore asked for the parking management issues being raised to be discussed in further detail. This report discusses the issues being raised and mitigation measures being put in place by Lime, and the Council, to help address them.
- 1.3 It should be noted that the Council recently issued a tender, under a competitive procurement process, for two DBH operators in the Borough to replace the current MoU arrangements, with the intention to begin with the two appointed operators in Spring 2023. The tender specification included KPIs that relate to this report – including, for example, the requirement that a minimum 90% parking bay compliance should be achieved by the two appointed DBH operators. The tender process is now complete, and contracts were awarded on 25<sup>th</sup> April 2023. It is important to note that the comments, issues, and mitigations noted in this report relate entirely to the current operational arrangements with Lime, and not the competitive tendering process alluded to above.
- 1.4 The report detailing the decision to award formal contracts to two DBH operators can be found [here](#) on the Council’s website.

## **2. Background to Dockless Bike Hire operations and current usage in the Borough**

- 2.1 A key objective of the CTS is to improve cycling facilities for those living, visiting, and working in the Borough. The provision of DBH parking bays contributes towards achieving that objective. Data from TfL shows that more than half of households in Camden do not own their own bike. Whilst we have a number of schemes in place to support long-term bike ownership, including cycle loan and secure cycle parking initiatives, access to hire bikes is an important part of the mix in providing opportunities for our residents, as well as visitors to the Borough, to cycle. Accordingly, the Cycling Action Plan, a daughter document of the CTS, includes an action that we will “monitor, and expand where suitable, the existing dockless bike hire offerings in the Borough.”
- 2.2 61% of the 381 Camden residents responding to the CTS consultation stated that they agreed with the principle of reallocating road and kerb-side space away from motor vehicles in favour of more sustainable modes.

- 2.3 Policy 1c of the CTS states that “the Council will change how road space is allocated, including reducing kerbside space for parking/loading provision, and reallocating carriageway space to active, sustainable travel modes, if necessary, to enable and encourage people to walk and cycle, to improve road safety and deliver enhancements to the public realm”.
- 2.4 Chapter 3 of the CTS ‘presents the Council’s vision and objectives for travel and transport in Camden, and the policies and measures that will deliver them. They are also designed to contribute to wider local economic, social, health and environmental policy outcomes both for the Borough and for London’. Objective 2 is to ‘reduce car ownership and use, and motor traffic levels in Camden’. Policy 2c states that the Council will ‘develop and implement a range of initiatives that promote and provide attractive, convenient and safe alternatives to private cars and other forms of motor traffic’. Measure 2i states that the Council will ‘support, promote and expand cycle hire systems – including working with TfL and developers for extensions to Santander Cycle Hire in Camden and further developing dockless bike hire programmes – as a tool for creating viable alternatives to car ownership and use’.
- 2.5 DBH operations in the Borough also help support the [Camden Citizens’ Assembly on the Climate Crisis](#) recommendation of “Enabling electric transport with infrastructure and incentives.”
- 2.6 In line with the above strategies, the Council entered a year-long trial with dockless bike hire (DBH) operators Lime and Jump on 1st August 2019 (which has since been extended with Lime, as below). A memorandum of understanding (MOU) was agreed with each operator. Bikes could be hired through their respective apps and used in a similar fashion to Transport for London (TfL) Santander hire bikes. However, dockless hire bikes did not have to be picked up or dropped off in marked parking bays as none had been provided at that time. This created problems at various locations where bikes were being parked on sections of public realm designed for pedestrian movement.
- 2.7 Lime took over Jumps’ global operations in June 2020 and relaunched their fleet in London in July 2020 after a brief suspension due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, there is currently only one operator, Lime, providing DBH services in Camden (since July 2020).
- 2.8 There are various operators currently providing dockless bike hire (DBH) services in London. These include Dott, Human Forest, Lime, and Tier. As mentioned above, Lime is the only operator, currently, with an agreement with the Council to operate services in Camden, although Human Forest has an agreement with the King’s Cross Estate for their bikes to be parked on private land under their ownership. As mentioned in paragraph 1.3, contracts have recently been awarded for two DBH operators in the Borough.

- 2.9 The Council worked in partnership with Lime and consultants to analyse bike location data to determine areas of high demand for DBH bikes in the Borough. This led to the creation of a network of circa 190 dedicated parking bays for DBH bikes across the Borough in accordance with the CTS and the Mayor's Transport Strategy (MTS). This is the largest DBH parking bay network in London with a density of 1 bay per 200 metres radius south of Euston Road and 1 bay per 250 metres radius north of Euston Road. The bays were prioritised based on high footfall, bike hire usage and the need to minimise clutter on footways for the benefit of pedestrians. This was especially important to allow for social distancing during the Covid-19 pandemic. Indicative locations of DBH parking bays created to date and proposed as part of the next phase are provided as Appendices A and B respectively.
- 2.10 The network of DBH bays, which also accommodates rental e-scooters owned by Dott, Lime, and Tier, helps users to pick up or drop off hire e-bikes and e-scooters, supporting and promoting micro-mobility modes as an alternative to public transport and motor vehicles. A photo of a DBH parking bay is provided below in Figure 1.



Figure 1: Photo of a DBH parking bay as discussed in this report

- 2.11 Lime has an industry-leading affordability program that provides discounted rides to those who qualify. Lime was the first to introduce discounted e-bike and e-scooter rides, starting in 2018, with a goal of breaking down barriers to sustainable transportation to more communities. Lime has 2,000+ Camden "Access" (concession pass) users in the Borough. This has been beneficial to residents on low incomes who might not have otherwise been able to afford to travel by bike.
- 2.12 Officers have been working with Lime since the network of DBH parking bays was created to ensure that users park their bikes in those bays at the end of

trips. Lime is responsible for enforcing parking compliance and issues warnings and fines directly to users for non-compliance via in-app messaging.

- 2.13 Officers meet with Lime regularly to discuss DBH operations in the Borough. Lime is currently deploying circa 1,000 hire bikes in the Borough. They have indicated that each of their bikes typically generates on average 4 hires per day within the Borough, and there has been evidence of strong growth in usage of the bikes, Borough-wide, over the last 12 months.
- 2.14 Lime DBH bike usage in Camden for the last 4 months is provided below in Table 1 (data for April unavailable at the time of writing).

Camden weekly compliance report: Last 4 months				
Usage	December 2022	January 2023	Feb 2023	March 2023
Trip numbers	91,162	115,471	133,145	148,690
Users	31,972	33,392	38,608	41,054

Table 1: Lime DBH bike usage in Camden – December 2022 to March 2023

- 2.15 The data in Table 1 indicates significant growth in the number of users and the number of trips taking place in the Borough over the past 4 months. Officers anticipate this growth continuing into the Summer.
- 2.16 DBH operations are proving to be a successful way, alongside construction of our infrastructure schemes, of boosting cycle use in the Borough, thereby helping to contribute to wider transport, climate, and air quality goals. Examples of increases in cycle flows including DBH bikes at locations where we have introduced key cycle route infrastructure improvements in the Borough are shown in Table 2 below. This shows significant growth of DBH bike usage at all scheme locations listed, especially Prince of Wales Road and York Way.

Covid-19 Trial Cycle Lane Scheme	Change in all cycle flows (pre-scheme compared to trial)	Change in DBH cycle flows (pre-scheme to trial)
Prince of Wales Road	+70%	+684%
St. Pancras Way	+200%	+246%
Chalk Farm Road	+192%	+93%
York Way	+127%	+750%
Gray's Inn Road	+130%	+208%

Table 2: Increases in cycle flows including DBH bikes at cycle route infrastructure schemes

### **3. Parking Management – Arrangements, Issues & Mitigations**

#### **(i) Parking management arrangements in Camden**

- 3.1 With respect of managing the parking of DBH bikes, the Council initially operated a “free floating” model for DBH operations in Camden from August 2019. This allowed Lime and Jump to “deploy” (position for use by customers) their bikes, and allow their customers to park them, on pavements so long as pedestrian routes remained unobstructed. However, the Council started a transition to a dedicated parking bay model when the first phase of bays were introduced in August 2020. This model has been fully operational since the final phase of installations was completed in October 2021.
- 3.2 The majority of the circa 190 dedicated parking bays in the Borough are on street (i.e., carriageway) (90%) rather than on pavements (10%). The intention of creating the bays on the carriageway was to remove large numbers of DBH bikes from the pedestrian environment.
- 3.3 The agreement (MoU) with Lime requires them to “deploy” their bikes in dedicated parking bays only. Officers are satisfied that this requirement is being adhered to. The agreement also requires Lime bikes to be parked in dedicated parking bays only at the end of trips. Lime is responsible for enforcing parking compliance with its customers.

#### **(ii) Issues with current parking bay compliance**

- 3.4 Unfortunately, parking compliance has been and remains a problem across the Borough. There are a number of factors that have led to this problem. One of these is inaccurate or outdated global positioning technology. Rental scooters in London have more accurate global positioning technology and hence higher rates of parking bay compliance. This shows that high parking bay compliance can be achieved with a dockless micro-mobility system which gives Officers confidence that the problems with DBH bikes can be overcome.
- 3.5 Another factor in parking compliance is customers either being unaware of the requirement to park the bikes in dedicated bays or simply ignoring the requirement. Officers feel that these problems can be mitigated in various ways including in-app rider education messages, warnings, fines, and ultimately bans for continued non-compliance.
- 3.6 Lime has also been experiencing problems with people using their bikes without paying, whereby the locking mechanism on their bikes is partially disabled by users. The bikes do not benefit from electric power assist and are difficult to pedal in such situations. Officers have observed people riding Lime bikes which have been hacked and note that riders are unable to achieve desired speeds (circa 12.5 mph). Officers feel that bikes which are hacked like this are often dumped, rather than parked, in inappropriate locations on the public realm.

3.7 Officers are acutely aware of the problems with poor parking compliance, and the factors for this discussed above, and have been having regular discussions with Lime in an effort to address them. A further meeting was held with Lime in March 2023 where a number of actions were discussed and agreed. These are discussed below.

**(iii) Mitigations and actions to improve parking bay compliance**

3.8 Officers and Lime have been undertaking audits of locations where problems with parking compliance have been raised. This is helping to identify hotspots which Lime can then address via targeted monitoring and enforcement.

3.9 Lime has identified a specific hardware fix to address the problem of bikes being hacked and used illegally and is aiming to introduce this to their fleet of bikes by the end of May 2023.

3.10 Lime acknowledges that rider education and technology updates have an important role to play in driving up parking compliance (riders parking in dedicated bays). They are currently working to improve rider education via their website and in-app messaging. Examples of rider education messages via in-app messaging are provided as Appendix C. They have also committed to introducing technology updates to their bikes which will make it easier for them to identify bikes that have not been parked in bays and therefore need to be collected and redeployed. Lime is aiming to introduce these updates by the end of May 2023.

3.11 Lime has a progressive discipline policy for poor user behaviour and currently issues warnings and fines starting at £2 and increasing to £5, £10, and £20, and ultimately bans to riders where evidence points to bikes not being parked in bays. Since the aforementioned meeting in March 2023, parking compliance figures for the Borough have increased from 67% to 76%. Officers anticipate the technology updates currently being developed making a significant improvement to this.

3.12 Lime has also committed to increasing the size of the Camden specific out of warehouse operations team and increasing the frequency of patrols in the Borough. This includes the deployment of 5 additional rangers operating in the Borough, taking total dedicated team size to 15, a 50% increase on the previous size. These 5 new team members will be specifically focused on redeploying bikes back into bays. Officers will monitor the impact of this increased provision in improving the speed with which poorly parked bikes are being redeployed to dedicated parking bays.

3.13 Lime is now providing Officers with a weekly report covering the following data:

- Number of warnings, fines, and bans
- Parking compliance levels
- On-street audits
- Trip numbers
- Trips started in the borough



- User numbers
- Task response time
- Vehicle availability
- % tipped over vehicles
- Incidents of antisocial behaviour
- Lime access users/trips

3.14 Officers will be carefully monitoring the above data on a weekly basis and assessing the impact of the additional mitigation measures being implemented both by Lime and the Council, to assess the impact on overall parking bay compliance.

3.15 Data provided by Lime and Officer observations indicate that many of the existing DBH parking bays in the Borough are often full or overflowing with bikes and scooters due to significant demand for these modes of transport. The Council is proposing to create 18 new DBH parking bays and extend 4 existing DBH parking bays at various locations across the Borough. These are shown indicatively in Appendix B. The proposals were taken through public and statutory consultation from 16<sup>th</sup> March 2023 to 6<sup>th</sup> April 2023. A report is currently being prepared for consideration by the Chief Engineer. If approved, the new and expanded DBH parking bays, once created, will provide additional capacity where it is needed most. Officers feel that this will help to address problems with parking compliance by providing additional capacity for rental bikes and scooters.

3.16 The Council is also planning to increase the number of DBH parking bays in the Borough to 280 by Spring 2025. This will, subject to consultations and approvals, also help to address problems with parking compliance by providing additional capacity for rental bikes and scooters. It would also increase the density of DBH parking bays in the Borough, while making it easier for residents and people who work in or visit the Borough to access rental bikes and scooters.

3.17 As noted in section 1, the Council is currently in the process of entering formal contracts with 2 DBH operators to provide services in the Borough. This will allow a number of key performance indicators, including parking compliance, to be monitored. Officers feel that this will give the Council more control when compared to the existing memorandum of understanding (MOU) with Lime.

#### 4. Timetable and Next Steps

4.1 A summary of the proposed timetable for implementation of dockless bike hire (DBH) parking management mitigation measures is outlined in Table 3 below.

Date	DBH Parking management mitigation measure
30 <sup>th</sup> April 2023	Deployment of 5 additional rangers operating in the Borough.
31 <sup>st</sup> May 2023	Rollout of specific hardware fix to address problem of bikes being hacked.

<b>Date</b>	<b>DBH Parking management mitigation measure</b>
31 <sup>st</sup> May 2023	Complete rider education and global positioning technology updates.
31 <sup>st</sup> May 2023	Signing of contracts with Human Forest and Lime relating to DBH operations in the Borough for the next 3 years.
May 2023 onwards	Ongoing monitoring by Officers including weekly progress meetings with Lime and review of weekly progress reports.
June 2023	Construction of 18 new DBH parking bays and expansions to 4 existing DBH parking bays, consulted on in March and April 2023, subject to approval of the Chief Engineer (decision report and appendices being prepared at the time of writing).

*Table 3 - proposed timetable for implementation of DBH parking management mitigation measures*

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

- 5.1 The report discusses the issues being raised around the parking management of dockless hire bikes and mitigation measures being put in place by Lime, and the Council, to help address them.
- 5.2 Through these measures and actions (set out in section 3) both the provider and the Council is looking to mitigate any potential future risks and issues caused by non-compliant parking.
- 5.3 There are no significant financial implications for the Council in the implementation of these measures and actions.

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

- 6.1 Legal comments are incorporated in the report.

## **7. Environmental Implications**

- 7.1 The dockless bike hire (DBH) operations discussed in this report are having positive benefits to the environment due to trips being made by bike rather than by motor vehicle, thereby resulting in reduced emissions from vehicles on roads in Camden. This is one of the broad themes of the Council's Clean Air Action Plan (CAAP) which states:

- *We will work towards a modal shift away from private vehicles towards walking, cycling and public transport, and enabling a switch from combustion engine vehicles to electric vehicles where vehicle use is unavoidable. This will be achieved by improving cycling and walking infrastructure throughout the Borough (for example, cycle lanes, road crossings, and cycle storage hangars), implementing new bus priority measures and other schemes to boost public transport use, installing*

*electric vehicle charging points, and by reviewing and improving parking policy and other policies and processes to promote and encourage sustainable and active travel.*

7.2 The DBH operations are also having potential positive benefits to the environment due to the potential for reducing carbon dioxide emissions. The Council's Climate Action Plan (CAP) states:

- *The Climate Action Plan necessitates a shift away from combustion engine vehicles and heating systems, both of which are significant contributors to air pollution in the Borough. The Climate Action Plan also seeks to encourage healthier travel options such as walking and cycling, which also bring public health benefits.*

7.3 Transport contributes significantly to emissions in London. The replacement of more polluting trips by journeys made by e-bike will have a benefit in terms of local air quality, CO2 savings and reduced congestion on roads in the Borough, compared to other transport options where fossil fuels are used. In developing the Climate Action Plan, the Citizens Assembly made 17 recommendations for Camden. These can be viewed [here](#) on page 16 of the Climate Action Plan. One of the recommendations was “enabling electric transport with infrastructure and incentives”, which this project demonstrably helps to achieve.

## **8. Summary**

8.1 Cycle hire systems, both docked (TfL – Santander) and dockless (DBH – currently Lime) are an important part of our mix of high quality, sustainable travel options that provide alternatives to overcrowded public transport systems and private motor vehicles. The rapidly increasing use of these systems is a testament to the popularity amongst users – both residents and visitors to the Borough. However, it is fully acknowledged that with growth has come considerable challenges, particularly with respect of the impact on our public realm and pedestrians of non-compliant parking. This is an issue that Officers have attempted to resolve through a number of prior actions, and mitigations currently being implemented. Officers will continue to carefully monitor the impact of those mitigations and would be keen to return to Culture and Environment Scrutiny Committee later this financial year to provide an update on progress on the mitigation measures and monitoring data.

## **9. Appendices**

Appendix A – Map of existing DBH parking bay network

Appendix B – Map of proposed expansion to DBH parking bay network

Appendix C – Examples of Lime in-app messaging re parking of bikes

**REPORT ENDS**