

PART I

PROPOSED EXPANSION OF THE WATFORD BC BERYL BIKE SCHEME INTO CROXLEY GREEN, HERTS

(ADEIP)

1. Summary

1.1 Watford Borough Council (WBC) and Three Rivers DC (TRDC) have been working together to establish whether the Beryl Bike scheme could be expanded into Croxley Green to meet user demand and provide opportunities to promote sustainable transport. This report details the proposals and costs of the project and seeks Committee approval to proceed.

2 Details

2.1 The District Council promotes walking and cycling through its Cycling Strategy (2003, updated 2008) by developing improvements to local cycling and walking infrastructure. The strategy includes supporting initiatives to enable and encourage local people to walk and cycle (typically through travel planning and training). The Strategy contains three objectives:

- Maximise the use of cycles as a mode of transport, in order to reduce reliance on the use of private cars;
- Develop a cycle network which is safe, convenient, attractive and efficient, and so encouraging and enabling cycling;
- Ensure that the needs of cyclists are represented in transport, land use, health, education, leisure, and environmental proposals.

2.2 The Strategy is intended to promote cycling as a cheap, fun, healthy, reliable, and adaptable form of transport, available to almost everyone. The Strategy aims to develop a local network of cycle routes with ongoing investment in additions and improvements. New cycle parking facilities have been introduced around the district to support the development of various routes in each town.

2.3 The District Strategy is being reviewed to meet new standards for the provision of walking and cycling improvements set by Government in 2017. This revised Strategy, referred to as a Local Walking and Cycling Implementation Plan (LCWIP) has recently been out to consultation and the results of this consultation are awaited.

2.4 A core objective of the council's Corporate Framework is to strive towards net zero. The draft Climate Emergency and Sustainability Strategy Update 2023-27 includes the ambition for the district to achieve net zero by 2045. The Strategy identifies the need to increase sustainable modes of transport and active travel for residents and businesses. This is essential as 15% (82.7 Kt CO₂e) of district emissions in 2021 were caused by transport on A roads and minor roads¹

2.5 Watford BC currently run a bike share scheme, known as Beryl bikes and have worked with TRDC to establish whether the Beryl Bike scheme could be expanded into Croxley Green for a 2-year pilot project to meet user demand and provide opportunities to promote sustainable transport.

2.6 As part of Watford BC's ambitions to develop sustainable transport, one of the Mayor's commitments when he was first elected in 2018 was to create a new bike share (cycle hire)

¹ [2005-21-uk-local-authority-ghg-emissions-update-060723.xlsx \(live.com\)](#)

scheme. After a procurement exercise WBC made a decision to award the contract to Smidsy Ltd trading as Beryl for a period of 4 years on 9 September 2019 with an option to extend for an additional 2 years.

- 2.7 For WBC Beryl deployed 200 pedal bikes in March 2020 and 100 electric bikes (initially due in April 2020 but delayed due to Covid-19 and subsequently deployed over coming months) with 77 'Beryl bays' across the borough making provision for 150% of the number of bikes to ensure sufficient capacity for bike parking. Bikes are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, all year round, with KPIs in place to monitor Beryl's responsibility to maintain availability and balance the fleet.
- 2.8 In WBC Beryl own all the bikes and equipment, factoring the purchase of new parts for the bikes and upkeep of the fleet into their operational expenditure. At contract end Beryl are responsible for removing all bikes and Beryl bays, making good all locations to return them back to their original state. They are also to manage a handover of scheme data in compliance with the contract and data protection legislation at the time.
- 2.9 WBC consider the scheme a recognisable success as a flagship initiative for Transforming Travel in Watford, with over 33,000 users signed up to Beryl and over 350,000 journeys taken, covering 1.1 million total kilometres. The scheme has been well respected, not encountering the vandalism challenges seen elsewhere, and Beryl have taken a number of steps to establish local partnerships and deliver social value.
- 2.10 The scheme contributes to reducing air pollution, delivers an affordable mode of transport, and enables independence especially for those who cannot drive. CoMo UK's Annual Bike Share Report (2022) highlighted that bike share motivates people to pick up cycling, incentivises more frequent cycling, reduces carbon emissions and increases levels of physical activity.
- 2.11 Monitoring of demand and usage patterns by Beryl has indicated an opportunity to expand the scheme into TRDC, specifically Croxley Green as a pilot project. This would:
- Open up access to the Watford Beryl bike share scheme to residents of TRDC (Croxley Green)
 - Generate additional ridership/new users
 - Support sustainable transport initiatives to key public transport interchanges
 - Generate additional income (to be utilised by Beryl for scheme management/maintenance)
- 2.12 This pilot project would be achieved by the introduction of 15 Beryl ebikes (ebikes outperform pedal bikes in popularity and viability for this proposal) in 5 locations around Croxley Green (exact locations to be determined depending on land availability/ownership etc):
1. The Green/All saints
 2. Baldwins Lane North
 3. Baldwins Lane South
 4. Croxley Library
 5. Croxley Station/Watford Road
- 2.13 The availability of these locations is still to be determined as are exact details of how the bays are to be provided, although initially it is expected virtual bays painted on the floor will be trialled with more permanent infrastructure provided as a future option. Beryl Bikes staff will

collect bikes to charge as required. The location of the new zone and bays would be visible through the Beryl Bikes app.

- 2.14 Beryl bike staff would monitor the usage of the bikes to ensure the bikes and their locations are managed. The user costs would replicate WBC costs so this expansion is viewed as part of a comprehensive scheme. The costs would be:

£1.50 Pay as You Ride (PAY) tariff to unlock the bike and then 14p per minute

£1.50 Minute Bundle to unlock the bike and then a £20 for 400 minutes

- 2.15 The capital cost of this pilot project for expansion of the scheme with 15 ebikes into Croxley Green would be £45k. There is no revenue requirement. All revenue arising from the scheme would be utilised for bike maintenance and further project development.

- 2.17 At the end of the contract period, and if the contract with Beryl is not renewed the ebikes could be sold back to Beryl or repurposed for use by the Council. The understanding is that a full joint procurement exercise with WBC could be undertaken for a future scheme.

- 2.18 Depending on the timescales for agreeing to proceed and securing the bike locations, Officers are advised the scheme could be implemented by Spring 2024. It is anticipated no planning permission would be required for the scheme/bays as they would be permitted development but relevant landowner agreements would be required if the sites for the bays are not owned by TRDC.

- 2.19 Officers have identified existing capital budgets for this proposal but would also apply (retrospectively) for monies through the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). The next submission stage for the CIL process is January 2024 with decisions on any applications for CIL in this next application window determined in April 2024.

Options and Reasons for Recommendation

- 2.1 The opportunity to provide a pilot bike hire scheme in Croxley Green will encourage the use of cycling within the District and support the objectives of the Cycle Strategy and the Climate Emergency and Sustainability Strategy.

- 2.2 It is expected the scheme will deliver some of the positive outcomes for the residents of Three Rivers as have been seen in Watford in terms of environmental, health and wellbeing and leisure impacts. It is also recognised Beryl have delivered social value in their work with local charities and organisations.

- 2.3 A core issue impacting cycling in the District is the cycle infrastructure, with core components of the TRDC road system providing a hostile environment to cycling including the topography. There are routes in Three Rivers where interventions would likely significantly boost propensity to cycle and through the Council's emerging Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan these are being considered. However, this pilot project would assist in overcoming some of the current barriers to cycling.

3 Policy/Budget Reference and Implications

- 3.1 The pilot scheme will require an initial capital of investment of £45,000 from within existing sustainable travel capital programme budgets. It is intended to make a CIL application to the Council for this amount as part of the next CIL round. There are no ongoing revenue costs associated with the pilot scheme.

4 Financial Implications

- 4.1 This scheme would cost £45,000 for a 2-year pilot scheme. The 15 ebikes would be owned by TRDC and utilised/disposed of accordingly at the end of the contract term. There is no revenue budget commitment in respect of the pilot scheme.

4.2 The 2023/24 capital budgets for the development of the Cycling Strategy and other TPP budgets will be utilised for this pilot project. However, a retrospective future Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) application will be submitted in the new year to seek the funding for this project. The scheme will be managed within the existing budgetary provision.

4.3 Existing staff resource will be used to continue to investigate and deliver this project and costs associated with any scheme promotion will be within existing budgets.

5 Legal Implications

5.1 The Legal team have not had sight of WBC's contract with Beryl. Therefore, it is unknown whether the initial pilot scheme could be implemented by a process of WBC agreeing an extension to its existing contract to cover the provision of e-bikes at Croxley Green for TRDC. It has been suggested that this is a possible option, and it is one officers wish to explore as a possible route to implementation of the pilot scheme. An assessment needs to be made of what the current contract allows and any legal and procurement restrictions.

5.2 If the extension of WBC's existing contract to cover the pilot scheme proves not to be an option then TRDC could consider procuring its own contract (by its own procurement process or jointly with WBC) for the proposed pilot e-bike scheme. Any new contract (or contract extension) would need to ensure compliance with TRDC's Contracts Procedure Rules.

5.3 Additionally, TRDC may require management of the scheme by WBC and if this is required TRDC may need to enter into an agreement with WBC for the management of the pilot scheme. This is most likely to be required if it is possible to extend the current WBC contract to cover the pilot scheme.

5.4 The scope of WBC's existing contract, WBC's and TRDC's Contracts Procedure Rules and the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 will affect any procurement process and final contractual arrangements.

5.5 Final site locations will require the relevant permissions which will be sought with appropriate parties.

6 Community Safety

6.1 The location of the 'parking/bay' sites' will be designed to take account of safety implications.

7 Public Health

7.1 Cycling as a form of active travel and recreational exercise contributes towards general public health and is enabled and encouraged by these recommendations.

8 Staffing Implications

8.1 Existing Officer resource to be utilised to deliver the project with the support of WBC and Beryl bike staff, although it is noted there would be responsibility for an additional service/contract.

9 Equal Opportunities Implications

9.1 A Short Equalities Impact Assessment has been completed. Please see attached at Appendix A for more information on the implications.

10 Climate Change and Sustainability Implications

10.1 A sustainability impact assessment has been undertaken resulting in a score of:

Climate and Sustainability Impact Assessment Summary	
Homes, buildings, infrastructure, equipment and energy	3.00
Travel	3.80
Goods and Consumption	3.20
Ecology	3.20
Adaptation	#DIV/0!
Engagement and Influence	4
Total Overall Average Score	3.5

10.2 Beryl is a B Corp listed company, and thus part of a global community of businesses that meet high standards of social and environmental impact. B Corp organisations are scored every three years. Beryl gained B Corp status in 2018 and in June 2022 they increased their score from 83 to 89. The strong impact assessment of 3.5 reflects their approach to the circularity of the raw materials used in manufacture, the approach to extending the working life of the bikes as well as the carbon avoidance by encouraging active travel.

11 Communications and Website Implications

11.1 As the project evolves updates will be provided for the website and in future press releases. Officers will work with WBC Communications team for scheme launch.

12 Risk and Health & Safety Implications

12.1 The Council has agreed its risk management strategy which can be found on the website at <http://www.threerivers.gov.uk>. In addition, the risks of the proposals in the report have also been assessed against the Council's duties under Health and Safety legislation relating to employees, visitors and persons affected by our operations. The risk management implications of this report are detailed below.

12.2 The subject of this report is covered by the Regulatory Services Service Plan. Any risks resulting from this report will be included in the risk register and, if necessary, managed within this/these plan(s).

Nature of Risk	Consequence	Suggested Control Measures	Response <i>(tolerate, treat, terminate, transfer)</i>	Risk Rating <i>(combination of likelihood and impact)</i>
The pilot scheme will not progress if WBC do not extend their contract or if permission is not forthcoming for the proposed sites	The scheme would not progress within current timescales but Officers would continue to	Continue discussions with WBC and provider Monitor progress	Tolerate	4-6

Nature of Risk	Consequence	Suggested Control Measures	Response <i>(tolerate, treat, terminate, transfer)</i>	Risk Rating <i>(combination of likelihood and impact)</i>
	investigate opportunities			
There will be minimal take up of the scheme and the bikes will not be used	Bikes remain unused No cost implications for TRDC	A pilot project which will be monitored/reviewed prior to any further commitments/investment Close working with Beryl bikes and WBC to launch the scheme and monitor take up/use	Tolerate	4
15ebikes will remain at the end of the 2-year contract term	Ebikes will remain with no scheme to be utilised for	Close working with Beryl bikes and WBC to monitor take up/use and future opportunities Consider alternative uses for the ebikes i.e., Council staff	Tolerate	4

The above risks are scored using the matrix below. The Council has determined its aversion to risk and is prepared to tolerate risks where the combination of impact and likelihood scores 6 or less.

Very Likely Likelihood ▼ Remote	Low 4	High 8	Very High 12	Very High 16
	Low 3	Medium 6	High 9	Very High 12
	Low 2	Low 4	Medium 6	High 8
	Low 1	Low 2	Low 3	Low 4
	Impact Low -----> Unacceptable			

Impact Score

4 (Catastrophic)

3 (Critical)

2 (Significant)

1 (Marginal)

Likelihood Score

4 (Very Likely (≥80%))

3 (Likely (21-79%))

2 (Unlikely (6-20%))

1 (Remote (≤5%))

12.3 In the officers' opinion none of the new risks above, were they to come about, would seriously prejudice the achievement of the Strategic Plan and are therefore operational risks. The effectiveness of the management of operational risks is reviewed by the Audit Committee annually.

The remainder are therefore operational risks. Progress against the treatment plans for strategic risks is reported to the Policy and Resources Committee quarterly. The effectiveness of all treatment plans are reviewed by the Audit Committee annually.

13 Recommendation

13.1 That the Committee:

- i) Agree that the Council enter arrangements to deliver a pilot e-bike scheme working with Watford Borough Council and Beryl Bikes at a capital cost of £45,000.

- ii) Delegate authority on final sites within the areas outlined in the report to the Head of Regulatory Services in consultation with the Lead Member for General Public Services and Ward Councillors.
- iii) Delegate authority for approving and entering all required contractual arrangements to implement the pilot e-bike scheme to the Director of Finance in consultation with the Lead Member for General Public Services.
- iv) Agree that Officers pursue a future CIL application for the capital monies.
- v) That public access to Appendix 2: Part 2 be denied until the scheme is implemented.

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Data Quality

Data sources:

[2005-21-uk-local-authority-ghg-emissions-update-060723.xlsx \(live.com\)](#)

Data checked by:

Kimberley Rowley, Head of Regulatory Services

Data rating:

1	Poor	
2	Sufficient	X
3	High	

Background Papers

Beryl Bike presentation (October 2023)

WBC Committee papers

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Equality Impact Assessment

Appendix 2 – WBCs Contractual Terms with Beryl Bikes (**restricted**)