

Brighton & Hove City Council

Cabinet

Agenda Item 167

Subject: E-scooter trial consultation report

Date of meeting: Thursday, 23 April 2026

Report of: Cabinet Member for Transport & City Infrastructure

Lead Officer: Name: Corporate Director- City Operations

Contact Officer: Name: Matthew Thompson

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Ward(s) affected: (All Wards);

Key Decision: Yes

Reason(s) Key: Is significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more electoral divisions (wards).

For general release

1. Purpose of the report and policy context

- 1.1 To seek approval under delegated powers to add an e-scooter trial to the existing Beryl BTN Bike hire scheme
- 1.2 The proposal to introduce e-scooters into the Beryl micromobility fleet directly supports the Council Plan 2023–2027 by expanding sustainable, low-carbon travel choices that contribute to creating an accessible, clean, and sustainable city, as set out under Outcome 1. By improving affordable transport options and widening access to flexible mobility across the city, the initiative aligns with Outcome 2's ambition to build a fair and inclusive city where people feel safe and welcome.
- 1.3 The scheme also reinforces Outcome 3 by encouraging healthier, more active lifestyles and reducing pollution through alternatives to short car trips. Incorporating e-scooters within an integrated, data-driven Beryl system further supports Outcome 4, which emphasises innovation and well-run council services.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Cabinet agrees to note the outcomes of the public consultation on the proposed e-scooter trial and the Council responses for the trial as set out in section 5 of the report and Appendices 1 & 2.
- 2.2 Cabinet delegates authority to the Corporate Director City Operations in consultation with the Cabinet Member, Transport and City Infrastructure, to implement and run a new e-scooter trial in accordance with Department for Transport requirements.

- 2.3 Subject to the matters set out in the Part 2 report Cabinet agrees to delegate authority to the Corporate Director City Operations in consultation with the Cabinet Member Transport and City Infrastructure, to enter into the necessary contractual arrangements with the current Bikeshare scheme operator Smidsy (trading as Beryl) for the implementation and operation of the scooter trial and to enter into an extension of the existing Bikeshare scheme (incorporating the scooter trial) for up to two years to cover the period to 30 September 2029.

3. Context and background information

- 3.1 On 16 October 2025, Cabinet authorised an application to the Department for Transport to apply for permission to begin a new e-scooter trial in 2026 as an add-on to the current bikeshare scheme. A public consultation running alongside the application was also authorised. A full financial analysis of the benefits to the Council of adding e-scooters was also requested. (See Part 2 report, Appendix 1).
- 3.2 An application for permission to run a new e-scooter trial was submitted to the Department for Transport on 21 October 2025. Provisional approval to proceed was granted on 22 January 2026. Final Department for Transport approval will be granted subject to evidence of consultation with disability groups and Sussex Police approval. The operator must submit a fleet management plan, details of antisocial behaviour measures, and a map of the e-scooter trial area. Following the public consultation, the recommendation via this report is that the trial proceeds.
- 3.3 The Department for Transport has confirmed there is no obligation to proceed with the proposed trial if elected members do not approve it. Should the trial proceed, the current end date for all UK trial schemes in terms of the legislative framework nationally for e-scooter use as part of trial areas is May 2028. Use of private e-scooters on the public highway remains illegal and would continue to be the case whether an area is undertaking an e-scooter trial or not.

4. Analysis and consideration of alternative options

- 4.1 A full analysis of the arguments for and against, and options for, a proposed e-scooter trial was set out in the 16 October 2025 cabinet report. The options considered were to not proceed with a trial at all; to consider wider options for procurement, or to proceed with a trial with the existing operator for the BTN Bikeshare scheme.
- 4.2 The council must continue to service the original borrowing used to purchase the fleet until April 2029 regardless of whether the scheme runs or not. This borrowing cost created ongoing annual budget pressure. The Part 2 report sets out detailed arguments for extending the contract with Beryl and the commercial negotiation points involved. The extension needs to match the potential 5–6-year total street life of that fleet, so the Council can maximize its return from that initial investment. The bikes rely on Beryl controllers and software to operate as a hire fleet so they cannot be

transferred to another operator. Adding scooters to that offer increases the income to the council during the same period, further reducing overall budget pressures. The scheme continues to deliver many congestion, health & wellbeing, carbon emission reductions and air quality benefits. Usage data shows the offer for residents and visitors is increasing in popularity.

- 4.3 A financial appraisal of Beryl’s new parent company will be required and must satisfy financial and legal hurdles before any deal for e-scooters can be entered into.

5. Community engagement and consultation

- 5.1 A public consultation on the proposed trial proposal ran from 10 November to 21 December 2025. Letters were sent to properties located close to the proposed e-scooter sites, inviting people to go online to the council’s ‘Your Voice’ consultation platform to fill in the consultation survey. Paper copies of the survey were also available. Beach hut owners in the vicinity of proposed seafront e-scooter locations were also contacted via the council’s Seafront team. In addition, 398 stakeholder groups, relevant council officers and all of Brighton and Hove’s ward councillors were contacted about the consultation.

- 5.2 The consultation started with questions on how survey participants categorized themselves and their travel habits. It then asked for responses, suggestions and comments on proposed safety features of the trial, vehicle designs, no go- and go-slow zones, and hire locations. It concluded with a request for any other comments and asked if respondents were interested in trying a scooter as part of the trial. There was a mixture of open text boxes and closed questions. Equalities questions were also asked. A full list of all questions is available as a supporting document on request. The consultation received a total of 1293 responses which included 16 stakeholders and 6 ward councillors.

Table 5.1 Concerns by theme & Council responses

Theme	What respondents said	What we are already doing	What else we will / could do
Vehicle safety features	Strongest support was for technology to detect illegal passengers, pavement riding, and sound alerts for blind and partially sighted pedestrians. Other suggestions included helmets, hi-vis / protective gear, sensors, horns, hub parking, and lights.	Reports of illegal passengers and pavement riding feed into a three-strikes process that can lead to account deletion. Bells, lights, and hub parking. Work is being explored on sound devices with input from blind and partially sighted groups. A helmet campaign and	Publicise the reporting route more clearly, encourage witnesses to record time/location/vehicle ID, test the accuracy and cost of sensor technology, offer hi-vis at events, and review learning from York’s previous helmet hire scheme.

		incentives targeted at younger riders.	
Rider behaviour and enforcement	A large number of comments focused on unsafe rider behaviour, enforcement , potential misuse/bypassing of controls , and wider concerns about anti-social behaviour, crime , and Highway Code infringements , including phone and earbud distraction.	The three-strikes sanctions process , GPS-controlled speeds and hire zones, support for Sussex Police enforcement activity, licence requirements at sign-up, ongoing ID checks, and a Friday/Saturday midnight–5am hire ban . Number plates and GPS tracking also support enforcement.	Consider targeted police action days and review whether the phone holder feature should be removed.
Speed and insurance	Respondents asked for slower daytime speeds, lower speeds for new users , and raised a number of questions about insurance .	12.5 mph daytime speed , with a 6.5 mph weekday curfew / go-slow setting , and third-party insurance. App will signpost users to personal injury policy providers.	Add council webpage signposting to Cycling UK insurance advice. No further speed actions were listed in the table.
No-go and go-slow zones	There was broad support for both 24-hour and timed no-go / go-slow zones but also repeated concern about how well they will be enforced . Respondents suggested additional areas; some wanted a few areas to be stricter, while others argued some restrictions were unfair or too extensive.	Seven 24-hour no-go zones including skate parks and pump tracks. Geofencing and GPS enforcement are being tested. Some locations suggested are already covered, including parts of the seafront and Undercliff.	Test the technology thoroughly before launch, consult Churchill Square owners, test additional locations where feasible, assess viability of more go-slow areas, seek feedback from Sussex Police after the first summer, and review no-go / go-slow lists after one year / first summer .
Hire locations	Support was strongest for hire points near Brighton Station , the i360 and Palace Pier . Suggested additional locations included Falmer universities, Seven Dials and Fiveways . Main concerns were obstruction, congestion , and possible anti-social behaviour.	Proposed hire locations are designed as racks or corrals , and riders can be fined if they end hires outside these locations. Some locations near Seven Dials, Hove, Preston Park, and the seafront are already proposed.	Monitor congested locations during peak summer, ask universities to review their decisions after the first academic year, and review possible suburban and central sites after the first summer.

<p>Wider concerns about vulnerable pedestrians and public safety</p>	<p>Risk to vulnerable pedestrians, anti-social behaviour, crime, and whether enforcement would be strong enough.</p>	<p>Existing mitigation includes bells, sound alerts, lights, indicators, no-go/go-slow zones, curfews, number plates, GPS tracking, and enforcement processes.</p>	<p>Review police collision reports involving pedestrians after one year.</p>
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(See Appendix 1 for full consultation analysis, and Appendix 2 for a broader summary of the key feedback and what we are already proposing / what additional actions could be taken in light of feedback received).

5.3 As is common with most transport-related consultations, the council does not seek a referendum on proposals. Out of 1293 respondents, 721 (55.8%) did not indicate whether they were in favour of the trial or not. Of those who did note comments of this nature in the open text question however, 434 (33.5%) respondents said they were not in favour and 138 (10.7%) were.

5.4 Ward Councilors

Six ward councilors responded to the consultation questions and four left additional open text comments. One questioned the lack of a ‘referendum’ style question, while others raised concerns about obstruction, age restrictions for users, accident data from other schemes, pricing, the trial duration, helmets, protective clothing. One member asked where hire sites would be located in their ward, but a no-go zone covering the entire ward is proposed because of technical limitations the gps used to enforce no go zones. (These need to be tested on site once the trial is authorized). Responses to the consultation feedback above reflect some of those answers, and further information on all the other points raised can be found in the initial report to Cabinet dated 16 October 2025.

5.5 Stakeholder group comments in the Consultation

Sixteen stakeholder groups responded to the consultation and 12 of these left open text comments.

Two disability campaign groups expressed concerns about safety and equalities. Other comments cited risks to the elderly, disabled pedestrians, children and pets. These issues have been addressed by the proposed safety measures consulted on.

Some stakeholder groups were in favour of the trial for sustainability reasons, noting the shift from car use in other trials as well as the potential for creating easier access to public transport and multi-modal journeys. Concerns were raised about speeds in pedestrian spaces, and the lack of awareness about 2023 highway code changes giving pedestrians right of

way at side junctions. A separate awareness campaign on this issue using Dept for Transport materials has already been approved to take place in the city during Spring 2026.

Other concerns included women's personal safety, gender equality and disability (including those excluded from driving for medical reasons). These are addressed in the Equalities Impact Assessment. A phased plan for e-scooter introduction was suggested, and this will be incorporated into planning for the trial.

5.6 Sussex Police

Sussex Police expressed general support provided DfT trial guidelines are followed. The Council supports Sussex Police enforcement activity on criminality and e-scooters and unregulated vehicles, but as their response makes clear, there is a legal basis for the proposed hire e-scooter trial.

5.7 Other stakeholders

Both University of Brighton and University of Sussex have decided not to review their bans on e-scooter use on their land, so hire sites are not permitted by these landowners. The University of Brighton's ban may mean a no-go zone is necessary north of Coombe Road because pathways on the Moulsecoomb campus are too close to the Lewes Road to allow e-scooters to pass by but not enter key routes on university land. Testing will establish the limits of geofencing technology and controllers and will be the decisive factor here.

5.8 Overall, the consultation provided a wide range of views and valuable insight into how a potential e-scooter trial should be designed and managed. Respondents highlighted key issues relating to safety, proposed locations, enforcement expectations, and the need for clear communication about how the trial would operate.

5.9 Stakeholder and ward councillor feedback similarly reflected a mix of concerns—particularly around impacts on vulnerable pedestrians, equalities considerations, speeds, and site placement—alongside recognition of the potential sustainability and transport-integration benefits.

5.10 While views varied, the consultation has been instrumental in shaping a more robust, better-targeted trial design, and the trial period itself will provide further opportunities to monitor impacts and address any emerging issues. As the scheme would be a trial, there would be opportunities for feedback during the trial period to ensure any concerns continue to be addressed.

6. **Financial implications**

6.1 There is no borrowing pressure associated with the implementation of this scheme as the capital requirement will be met by LTP grant funding. Projections on e-scooter scheme are positive, and it is anticipated the Council will cover its capital outlay within 2 years.

- 6.2 Surplus generated from this will be applied against the costs of the wider bikeshare borrowing, which currently sit at £295k per annum up until 2030, when the repayments will cease.
- 6.3 The part 2 of this report contains a full breakdown of costs and implications with the current provider.

Name of finance officer consulted: David Wilder. Date consulted 25 February 2026

7. Legal implications

- 7.1 The E-scooter trial will require a variation of the existing contractual arrangements governing the BikeShare service provision between the parties, and then an extension and variation of such arrangements, as further set out below.
- 7.2 To extend the current Bikeshare service provision, the Council and the contracting party, Smidsy Ltd (company number 07831245) will need to enter into a new call-off agreement under the existing Framework Agreement for the supply of Pedal Bikes, E-bikes and the operation of Bike Share Schemes, entered into on 14 December 2022 (“**the Framework**”). The Call-Off should be entered into and prior to expiry of the Framework, i.e. on or before 13 December 2026.
- 7.3 **To add the e-scooter service to the Bikeshare service provision:**
- the existing call-off agreement entered into on 14 December 2022 would need to be varied initially, so that the e-scooter service can be piloted prior to the commencement of a new call-off;
 - a new Call-Off can then extend the current Bikeshare scheme and include provision for the e-scooter service.
- 7.4 The e-scooter service can be incorporated without need for a new procurement because the Framework refers to the Council’s ability to extend services to cover e-scooters. For example, clause 4.5 of the Framework stipulates that ‘the Council ... shall be entitled to require the Operator to provide E-scooters as part of its Scheme and shall order this requirement by formally notifying the Operator in writing setting out the number of E-scooters it requires.’

Name of lawyer consulted: Jane Woods

Date consulted (02/04/26):

8. Risk implications

- 8.1 The top three risks from the trial and the measures proposed to manage them are:
- Injuries to riders – vehicle designs are in line with the safety features in Beryl’s 2025 e-scooter specification; all riders must have a provisional or full drivers’ license; sign up and randomized checks, Helmet reminders and incentives; no-go and go-slow zones; speed restrictions in busy areas.

- Injuries to other vulnerable road users – design features include number plates and lights on vehicles; obstruction targets for the operator; pavement bans; no go zones; training offers.
- Misunderstanding – police liaison, press releases; dedicated web page with data and study links; comms strategy clarifying differences between privately owned e-scooters and hire fleets.

9. Equalities implications

- 9.1 The Equalities Impact assessment concludes that the proposed e-scooter trial has the potential to deliver positive benefits by providing an additional affordable, lower-carbon transport option for short journeys and first/last-mile trips, with particular potential to improve modal choice and access for some younger adults, commuters, visitors and certain disabled users who may find scooters easier than pedal cycles in the city's topography and conditions.
- 9.2 The assessment identifies significant equalities risks, particularly for disabled people, blind and visually impaired people, older residents, women, carers, children and other pedestrians, arising from concerns about pavement riding, poor parking, obstruction, safety, harassment, and reduced confidence in using public space independently. The evidence also suggests that, without careful design and mitigation, the scheme could reinforce existing inequalities in shared micromobility, as likely uptake is skewed towards younger men while barriers relating to cost, digital access, licensing, public visibility, and perceptions of safety may limit participation among women, lower-income residents, racially minoritised groups, LGBTQI+ people and other under-represented communities. The Equality Impact Assessment therefore concludes that the trial should proceed with caution, subject to robust controls on siting, parking, enforcement, monitoring and targeted inclusion measures to ensure that benefits are realised without creating disproportionate adverse impacts on protected groups.
- 9.3 Recommended actions as a result of the Equalities Impact Assessment include: hold co-design and impact review sessions with key stakeholder groups; collect additional rider data on protected characteristics and trip purpose with quarterly reviews to check on improvements in representation amongst users; launch a six month inclusion programme with targeted offers for groups likely to be under-represented; identify off campus hubs to incentivise student use with offers; ensure the annual Rider report survey is more flexible on when it can be completed; monitor and publish information on KPI performance on obstruction and enforcement action against rule breakers; and set milestone points and escalate restrictions if vulnerable groups are being negatively impacted.
- 9.4 Affordability remains a key concern for many groups. The proposed tariff for e-scooters is set out at Appendix 3. Minute bundles purchased in advance of use provide a significant saving on e-scooter hire compared to the 'Pay as you ride' tariffs. Specific groups will be targeted with promotions. The full Equalities Impact Assessment is available as background documents item 2.

10. Sustainability implications

- 10.1 A 2024 report by CoMoUK indicates that shared e-scooters play a meaningful role in shifting travel behaviour, with 21% of users replacing car trips and a further 21% substituting bus journeys, while 44% regularly combine e-scooters with other shared or public transport modes. Although 26% of users report replacing some walking trips, 25% of active shared micromobility users walk more often, and 27% say they now cycle more, with 30% using both bikes and e-scooters interchangeably.
- 10.2 Despite e-scooters having a higher lifecycle carbon footprint than e-bikes, the carbon savings from reduced private vehicle and taxi use outweigh these costs, even in locations with larger shifts away from walking, such as the Isle of Wight. The new Beryl scooter model proposed for trial includes higher-capacity batteries enabling up to 20 rides per charge, reducing the need for recharging, and cutting service-vehicle trips, thereby improving the scheme's overall sustainability.

Figure 10.1
Modal shift to Beryl bikeshare away from cars, vans, taxis & motorcycles

Time period	Ebike KMS (distance)			Pedal bike KMs (distance)		
	Car & Van	Motorbike	Taxi	Car & Van	Motorbike	Taxi
Feb 24 to Jan 25	41525	5667	22256	11832	1615	6342
Feb 25 to Jan 26	60275	5673	44497	15703	1478	11593
Total distance replaced	101800	11340	66753	27535	3093	17935
	Ebike journeys			Pedal bike journeys		
	Car & Van	Motorbike	Taxi	Car & Van	Motorbike	Taxi
Feb 24 to Jan 25	14442	1971	7740	4287	585	2298
Feb 25 to Jan 26	22170	2087	16367	6305	593	4655
Total journeys replaced	36612	4058	24107	10592	1178	6953

These figures are based on Bikeshare user reports in in-app smartphone surveys when rides end. Distance indicates a health benefit from replacing those kilometres with cycling. Ebikes are known to encourage extra journeys and further distances. Journeys indicate a congestion reduction and air quality & emissions benefits from motorized traffic reduction.

11. Health and Wellbeing Implications:

- 11.1 In addition to the sustainability points above, the CoMo UK 2024 report found:

- 16% of active e-scooter users said that e-scooters provide them with exercise
- 26% of shared e-scooter users say their e-scooter usage provides them with mental health benefits. This increased to 49% where the user declared some form of disability
- 25% of active users of shared bikes and/or e-scooters walk more often or much more often since starting to use shared micromobility

Other Implications

12. Procurement implications

- 12.1 There are no procurement implications. There is an existing Bikeshare framework which anticipated the potential for an e-scooter add-on and was signed in December 2022. Social Value is already reported annually as a KPI for the scheme, but this will be a key part of the Comms strategy

13. Crime & disorder implications:

- 13.1 Sussex Police have expressed their support for a trial which complies with all Department for Transport requirements. The Bikeshare framework requires data sharing with the police whenever they request information, and the Council has committed to keeping them updated with a communication plan and all outcomes of the trial on a regular basis. The consultation reveals widespread anxiety about perceptions of crime and disorder associated with illegal e-scooters, derestricted e-bikes and unregistered e-mopeds. Hire fleets offer an alternative legal option for use on the public highway and can use GPS and controller technology to enforce trial rules and mandatory rules in the Highway Code.

14. Conclusion

- 14.1 The consultation has highlighted a broad mix of views, ranging from strong support for the safety features as well as the wider benefits of a hire e-scooter scheme, to concerns about safety, enforcement and the impacts on vulnerable road users. Overall, the consultation did not identify barriers that would prevent the proposed trial from progressing.
- 14.2 The feedback does emphasise the need for clear communication about proposed safety measures, better public awareness of Highway Code changes, and careful monitoring of trial impacts. In response, the trial design has been strengthened through additional attention to proposed go-slow and no-go zones, refined site locations, further liaison with Sussex Police, and ongoing engagement with disability groups and landowners. Taking these considerations forward and noting the Department for Transport's provisional approval and the national trial end-date of May 2028, it is appropriate for the Council to proceed with the planned introduction of a controlled, phased e-scooter trial from 31 May 2026. Doing so will allow the city to test the benefits of e-scooters under a managed scheme, address identified risks through communications and technology and generate robust

evidence to inform future decisions while supporting the wider objectives of the Council Plan.

Supporting Documentation

1. Appendices

1. Consultation report
2. Summary of consultation feedback and what is already proposed / what additional actions could be taken following feedback
3. **Proposed Tariff & Promotions for scooter in BHCC trial**

2. Background documents

1. Cabinet report 16 October 2025.
2. Full list of consultation questions
3. Equalities Impact Assessment – Beryl BTN Bike hire e-scooter trial. (File Ref: City Ops-Apr 2026-E-Scooter Trial FINAL).
4. CoMo UK Shared Micromobility Report 2024-v02

