

**Report to:** Overview and Scrutiny Committee

**Date of meeting:** 21 October 2021

**Report author:** Head of Leisure & Environmental Services

**Title:** Review of the Bike Hire Scheme (Sustainable Transport Contracts) Year 1 (2020 - 2021)

## 1.0 Summary

1.1 This report provides a summary of the Sustainable Transport Contracts with the following partner:

- Bike Hire Scheme – Beryl Bike

1.2 This report provides information to Overview and Scrutiny Committee members on the performance of the Bike Hire scheme as part of the sustainable transport programme during Year 1 (March 2020 - March 2021).

### 1.3 **Headline figures to Date (August 2021: Year 1 plus 5 months of Year 2)**

- 146,727 journeys completed since scheme launch (March 2020 – August 2021)
- 508,319km travelled
- 74 bikes bays installed across the borough
- 18,407 users of the bike share scheme
- Watford Junction remains the most popular bay by both origin and destination
- 96% of journeys end in a bay

1.4 Customer usage data demonstrates that ridership although impacted, benefited from increase in people cycling when lockdown hit and new people tried the bike hire scheme who otherwise might not have leisure use.

1.5 Appendix 1 details the actual ridership numbers against the projected figures. The appendix also contains the result of a recent customer satisfaction survey which asked about the alternative modes of transport that would have been used if the customers had not accessed the bike hire scheme.

1.6 The customer satisfaction survey results demonstrated that the bike hire scheme has encouraged \*14.96% of users away from cars, bike and van usage (Appendix 1).

1.7 The analysis of the management data and performance against the KPI's show that the Covid lockdowns have had an impact on the projected ridership of Bike Hire scheme as government advice required people to work from home and not use public transport. The usage data show that the majority of use is during the lockdown periods was leisure use rather than the planned commuter ridership for the scheme.

- 1.8 Following the success of the Watford Borough Council scheme two other Hertfordshire local authorities are looking to introduce a bike hire scheme. During the last 12 months the council has also agreed a corporate sponsorship agreement with Camelot.
- 1.9 Appendix 2 details the Beryl Bike pricing and unlocking fees, bike design, the different types of bike bays in use and their locations across the borough.
- 1.10 Appendix 3 provides an overview of the Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) for the Bike Hire contract. Appendix 4 gives a comparison with other councils who have a contract with Beryl.
- 1.11 In line with the Public Procurement Notice issued in 2020 the council has continued to financially support the different organisations as set out in the contract. The authority has undertaken to meet its contractual obligations during the lockdown period and paid the organisation the funding identified in this report. This approach has ensured that the contractor remained financially viable.
- 1.12 The impact on service delivery (ridership) during the lockdown period will be reviewed as part of the regular partnership monitoring of the SLA and KPI's over the next 12 months and will feature in the Year 2 report next year.

## 2.0 Risks

<b>Nature of risk</b>	<b>Consequence</b>	<b>Suggested Control Measures</b>	<b>Response</b> (treat, tolerate, terminate or transfer)	<b>Risk Rating</b> (combination of severity and likelihood)
The contractors do not deliver contract and service specification outlined in the contract	The facility or services is not available for residents and customer to use	Regular contract monitoring by the council to review the contract and KPI'S requirement are being met by the contractor	Treat	Unlikely (2) x High (3) = rating of 6
Contractor organisation goes into administration	As above	As above  Regular review of contractors accounts	Tolerate	Unlikely (2) x High (3) = rating of 6

Contractor merges with another provider or is taken over by another company/charity	Could have no impact on the service  Or New company tries to alter the contract/SLA and KPI's which impacts on the programme or service	As above  Option to terminate the Contract early	Tolerate	Unlikely (2) x High (3) = rating of 6
Death or injury to a customer/user or member of staff	Distress to injured parties  Reputational risk to council and contractor in failings in health and safety compliance is identified	Regular partnership monitoring by the council to review the health and safety and contract requirements are being met and reviewed by the contractor	Treat	Unlikely (2) x High (3) = rating of 6
Another wave of Covid 19 and future local lockdowns	The facility or services is not available for residents and customer to use	Regular partnership monitoring by the council to review the health and safety and contract requirements are being met and reviewed by the contractor	Tolerate	Unlikely (3) x High (3) = rating of 9

### 3.0 Recommendations

- 3.1 To review the report and supporting information and consider whether any further action is required.

**Further information:**

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**Report approved by: Alan Gough Group Head of Community & Environmental Services**

## 4.0 Detailed proposal

4.1 As part of Watford's ambitions to develop sustainable transport, one of the Mayor's manifesto commitments was to improve public transport across the Borough. Watford's roads are very congested during peak travel periods, lengthening journey times, impacting air quality, putting pressure on car parking capacity and hampering sustainability efforts. These issues will only increase as Watford's residential and working population continue to grow, putting further pressure on an already stretched transport network and infrastructure. There is an over-reliance on the use of private vehicles, taxis and the network buses have few priority lanes on the roads.

4.2 The sustainable transport contracts aimed to relieve the congestion on Watford's roads, parking, promote more sustainable modes of travel and improve air quality, particularly in the light of the additional housing growth for Watford. The programme's objectives are to:-

- Encourage a change in the way we use local transport as 'a way of life'
- Improve Watford as a sustainable transport town
- Improve accessibility and mobility within the town
- Improve health and wellbeing

4.3 Due to its compact urban nature (approx. 8 square miles), Watford lends itself more sustainable transport systems that are expandable and scalable as demand increases. Therefore a Bike Hire scheme was introduced to enabling those that live, work, visit, and play in Watford to use a sustainable and good value mode of transport throughout the borough.

4.4 A bike share scheme, operated by Beryl was introduced in Watford with a launch date of 2 March 2020. The contract runs from 22 October 2019 – 30 March 2024. The Council may extend this contract by agreement with the supplier for a further period of 2 years.

4.5 A Bike Share Client Group was set up soon after the contract start date that included Officers from other authorities operating bike share schemes including Bournemouth, Christchurch & Poole Council, Herefordshire Council, and Norfolk Council. The aim of this group is to meet regularly to discuss highlights, opportunities and issues with individual bike share scheme contracts, share knowledge and experience and provide a network of support.

### 4.6 **Headline figures to Date (August 2021: Year 1 plus 5 months of Year 2)**

- 146,727 journeys completed since scheme launch (March 2020 – August 2021)
- 508,319km travelled
- 18,407 users of the bike share scheme
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#### 4.7 The different types of Bikes and other features:

- 200 pedal bikes and 100 ebikes
- Safety features include Beryl's laser-light – giving road users such as pedestrians and vehicle drivers advance notice when a bike is approaching, enhancing visibility at night by up to 97%.
- A brake light feature to warn other road users when a Beryl bike user is slowing down.
- Front LED light.
- Ebike batteries are swapped on the street meaning there is no requirement for utilities to be installed at the bays.
- Hire is completed for the majority of rides using the smartphone app but there is the ability to hire a bike if a user does not have a smartphone.

4.8 The council is working on a number of transport initiatives that fit within an overall Sustainable Transport programme and support the delivery of a number of our key Corporate Plan priorities by being fully accessible, more affordable and leveraging digital technology. They will embody Watford's corporate framework to achieve our ambition and 'improve the availability, awareness and choice of sustainable transport options to make Watford a greener and cleaner town for everyone.'

4.9 The quality of services commissioned by the council are monitored on a regular basis. As part of the oversight and governance arrangements a joint 'Risk Register' between the council and the different contractors has been developed and is monitored and reviewed on a 6 monthly basis. A rolling programme of reports and presentations to Portfolio Holders and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) has been agreed to ensure that elected members and Leadership Board are kept informed and updated regarding the progress and the performance of the Sustainable Transport Contracts.

4.10 Appendix 1 details the individual contractor's (Beryl Bikes) actual performance against the projected numbers and other contract KPIs during the Year 1 (March 2020 - March 2021).

## 5 Implications

### 5.1 Financial

5.1.1 The total budget for the bike hire scheme is £828,560. The scheme is split between £443,560 capital and revenue budget of £385,000.

5.1.2 The table below details the contract information.

<b>Contract Name</b>	<b>Revenue subsidy Year 1</b>	<b>Revenue subsidy Year 2</b>	<b>Revenue subsidy Year 3</b>	<b>Revenue subsidy Year 4</b>	<b>Actual Revenue Subsidy spent to date - Year 1 and 6 Months of Year 2</b>
<b>Bike Hire Scheme – Revenue</b>	£148,000	£138,000	£99,000	£0	£217,814.39 this figure is in line with the anticipated revenue spending for the timeframe
<b>Capital investment – Bikes and Bays</b>	£443,560	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

5.1.3 There is no fixed monthly subsidy but there is an annual subsidy. The subsidy is calculated per ride, decreasing throughout the contract term to the point where a zero subsidy is paid in Year 4. Beryl invoice monthly based on total rides and are expected to provide projected figures for each financial year so that this can be monitored.

## 5.2 **Legal Issues** (Monitoring Officer)

5.2.1 The Beryl Bikes contract was procured in accordance with the Public Contract Regulations 2015

## 5.3 **Equalities, Human Rights and Data Protection**

5.3.1 An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has been undertaken for the three Sustainable Contracts in 2019 to establish whether there are any emerging needs that are not addressed through the contract. If there are emerging needs identified during the period of the three contracts that are not currently met, consideration will be given as to whether these are a District Council responsibility, align with the council's corporate objectives and whether council funding or grant aid is required in order to commission the service.

## 5.4 **Staffing**

5.4.1 There are no changes to WBC staffing arrangements identified in this report

## 5.5 **Accommodation**

5.5.1 There are no changes identified in this report relating to WBC office/town hall accommodation.

## 5.6 **Community Safety/Crime and Disorder**

5.6.1 There are no Community Safety/Crime and Disorder implications or issues identified in this report

## 5.7 **Sustainability**

5.7.1 These proposals form part of the council's wider sustainable transport programme/strategy. The programme's objectives are to:-

- Encourage a change in the way we use local transport as 'a way of life'
- Improve Watford as a sustainable transport town
- Improve accessibility and mobility within the town
- Improve health and wellbeing

## **Appendices**

1. Review of performance/ridership against projected usage Yr. 1 – 2020 - 2021
2. Pricing and unlocking fee, bike design, types of bays and their locations
3. Review of the KPI's - Yr. 1 – 2020 – 2021
4. Comparison LA Beryl Bike Hire Scheme

## **Background papers**

- Sustainable Transport Contracts - Cabinet report 18 October 2018