

CABINET

URN: 22-248

Report Title: E-Scooter Trial

Report to: Executive Leadership Team and Cabinet

Date of meetings:

14 February 2024: ELT

4 March 2024: Cabinet

Responsible Cabinet Member: Cllr Daniel Candon

Responsible Director / Officer: Executive Director of Place, Natasha Hayes / Project Manager, Tracey Read

Is this a Key decision? No

Date added to Forward Plan of Key Decisions if a Key Decision:



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY / INTRODUCTION FROM CABINET MEMBER

This report is to update Members on progress of the e-scooter trial and sets out recommendations to approve the extension of the e-scooter trial to May 2026, appoint a new e-scooter operator for the remainder of the trial and to extend the geographical service area.

RECOMMENDATIONS :

That Cabinet :

- 1) to note progress of E-Scooter trial
- 2) to note extension of the trial to 31st May 2026
- 3) to approve the procurement of a new operator
- 4) to approve the expansion of the geographical service area
- 5) to approve the expansion of the e-scooter fleet
- 6) to approve the introduction of e-bikes

1. Background and Introduction

- 1.1 In July 2020 the Government announced local authorities could apply to become an E-Scooter trial area. This followed a public consultation that ran from 18 May 2020 to 2 June 2020. This consultation is part of the 'Future of transport regulatory review' for which the Government are running a call for evidence, which includes seeking evidence on micromobility vehicles (including e-scooters), flexible bus services, and mobility as a service.
- 1.2 The feedback from the consultation set the rules for e-scooters and their users. The trials are being used to assess whether e-scooters should be legalised in the UK.
- 1.3 Before the Government can decide whether to fully legalise them and determine the rules that should apply, they need to understand their impacts. That means gathering evidence on their safety, how people use them, whether the potential benefits can be realised, and how to manage the downsides. Therefore, controlled trials will run in many places.
- 1.4 E-scooters offer the potential for clean and inexpensive travel that can also help to ease congestion on the roads – especially short journeys which would otherwise be undertaken by car.

- 1.5 Trials began in September 2020 and initially could run for up to 12 months, the DfT have since extended the end date allowing trials to run for 5.5 years to May 2026.
- 1.6 After Member sign off (at the Great Yarmouth Transport and Infrastructure Members Group), the Great Yarmouth Borough Council E-Scooter Trial application was submitted to the Department of Transport on 28th August 2020 and approved on 19th October 2020. Submission was made as part of the Town Deal Connectivity Delivery Group.
- 1.7 Progress of the trial is reported to the Great Yarmouth Transport and Infrastructure Members Group and relevant cabinet Member via the E-Scooter OWG.
- 1.8 Confirmation has been received by NCC Highways Department that the e-scooter trial in Great Yarmouth can be managed locally, there is no involvement needed by NCC Highways in terms of permission or delegated decisions, however, the project team works closely with NCC Highways and representatives attend the E-Scooter OWG meetings.
- 1.9 Two stakeholder engagement sessions were held, 19th and 24th November 2020, including stakeholders from local disability and vulnerable user groups. The stakeholder engagement helped inform the trial and was used as evidence for amending TRO's.
- 1.10 A Members engagement session, for wards affected by the e-scooter trial service area, was held on 1st December 2020 and both Leaders were in full support.
- 1.11 Following an options appraisal on E-Scooter providers presented to ELT on 16th September 2020, Ginger were appointed as the provider for the Great Yarmouth trial.
- 1.12 NPLaw have made amendments to identified TROs to allow E-Scooter use along cycle paths.

2. Progress to Date

- 2.1. The trial launched 30th March 2021.
- 2.2. Please see below some statistics for the trial from launch up until 30th December 2023:
 - Total unique riders: 18,000 (988 in December 2023)
 - Total Ginger app sign-ups: over 30,000 since launch
 - Journeys to date: 160,700
 - Average distances per ride: 2.7 km, 19 minutes
 - Total mileage: 360,000 miles (that's scooting around Earth 14 times!)
 - Total CO2 emissions saved: 90 tonnes
 - % of point to point rides (from launch): 85% overall since launch, 92% this past month
 - Most popular bays are: Crown Road, Frederick Lane and Market Gates parking bay (when looking at 2023 data)
 - The busiest Great Yarmouth rider has 1,012 journeys under their belt
 - Total Bays: 102 (additional bays can be added where needed based on feedback and demand)
 - Rider Demographics (Male / Female / Transgender / Non-Binary, Disabilities, etc.): two thirds of users are male, average age for a rider is 31 years, 47% of respondents have an annual income of less than £19,999
 - Users banned: 11
 - Warnings issued: 113 warnings issued by text
 - Only three serious incidents reported (serious incident defined as an accident that required medical attention)

- 2.3. Since launch Ginger have been instructed to move 12 parking bays based on feedback received by local residents. Ginger can implement these changes within 24 hours of instruction. We will continue to act on feedback throughout the trial to ensure its safety and effectiveness.
- 2.4. Dismount zones have been implemented in the Marketplace, Victoria Arcade, St George's Park, Great Yarmouth Seafront Beach side promenade, Marine Parade running alongside Pleasure Beach, St Nicholas Car Park, Pleasure Beach Gardens, the A47 and Gorleston High Street.
- 2.5. Nplaw have amended the temporary TROs in place for the trial; the TROs are now permanent allowing e-scooter use in all cycle and shared-use lanes.
- 2.6. Reports of misuse have reduced considerably over the course of the trial as users become more comfortable with the e-scooters. Ginger is receiving very few reports of misuse and complaints in comparison to the high usage.
- 2.7. Ginger report back to the Department for Transport on any incidents reported to them involving a suspected privately owned e-scooter.
- 2.8. Ginger responds to all reports of misuse and can identify the user by time, date and location. Warnings or bans are issued depending on the severity of the misuse. Ginger will continue to react to all reports of misuse, complaints, and requests.
- 2.9. There has also been some very positive feedback, including requests for additional e-scooters and bays, particularly within the residential areas of Bradwell and Gorleston for commuter use.
- 2.10. GY Police are continuing with their operation, 'Operation e-Scooter', carried out to raise awareness of legalities of e-scooters. On average one privately-owned e-scooter is seized per month. This is an ongoing operation, and the Police will continue to report back to the Officer Working Group on progress.
- 2.11. Privately-owned e-scooters are illegal to use on public land and if caught, the rider could face a £300 fine, their e-scooter confiscated and points on their driving licence if they have one. The police will continue to relay this message.

3. Appointment of a new operator and addition of e-bikes

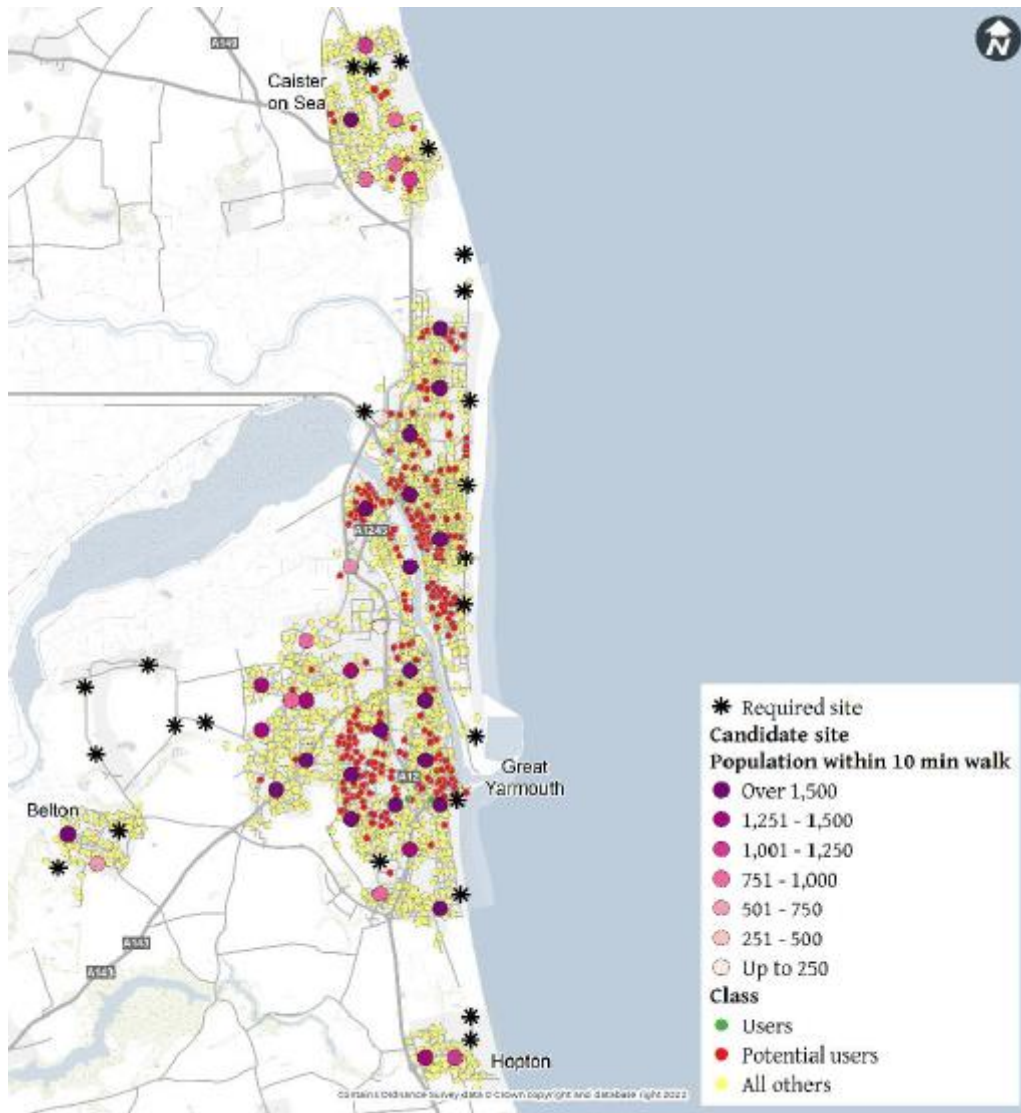
- 3.1. Ginger informed GYBC late January 2024 that the organisation has failed to secure the investment needed to be able to continue the trial for a further two years; this is due to repeated extensions to the trial and uncertainty around timings for e-scooter legislation. Ginger ceased operation at 11.59pm 31st January 2024.
- 3.2. Ginger is continuing dialogue with investors but are unable to confirm securing investment or a timeframe for doing so.
- 3.3. To continue the trial, a new operator will need to be appointed for the duration of the trial extension. There are a further 11 operators approved by DfT for the UK trials, all of which will have the opportunity to tender for the Great Yarmouth trial operation. The E-Scooter Officer Working Group will evaluate the tenders, in conjunction with the portfolio holder,

with a final report and recommendation taken to The Great Yarmouth Transport and Infrastructure Members Working Group for final approval of operator.

- 3.4. Tenders will be assessed based on the following criteria: DfT trial compliance including safety requirements, Infrastructure options i.e. type of bay/prohibited areas etc, provider services such as maintenance/user surveys etc, Cost for the users and, lastly, track record of delivery in other LA areas.
- 3.5. NCC have partnered with Beryl, who also operate on the Isle of Wight. As with some other operators, Beryl also offer an e-bike service which falls outside of the regulations of the e-scooter trials.
- 3.6. E-bike schemes are operated within DfT regulations and must be fully compliant with DfT regulations around speed and safety. E-bikes are restricted to 15.5mph and, like e-scooters, must undergo regular safety checks, be insured and identifiable.
- 3.7. E-bikes will allow different types of users to access micromobility; statistics from NCC's scheme show that riders range from 25yrs to 75yrs. The NCC scheme has seen 6520 e-bike rides in January 2024, and 78,000 for the past year (Jan – Dec 2023).
- 3.8. The addition of an e-bike scheme, alongside the e-scooter trial, will likely show a dramatic shift in people using micromobility, replacing shorter car journeys. Providing micromobility options will encourage greater use of e-transport schemes.

4. Extension to the Trial, geographical area and fleet size

- 4.1. DfT have announced that the e-scooter trials have been extended by a further two years until May 2026. This is to allow DfT to gather further evidence where gaps are identified, building on the findings of the current evaluation.
- 4.2. Given the further extension to the trial and recognizing that trials have evolved and are proving to be successful in terms of numbers of users switching to micromobility, Department for Transport have relaxed the project adjustment process for authorities to make changes to the geographical boundaries and fleet size. DfT recognize that changes need to be made to enable the trial evaluation to reflect the evolution, need and demand of the trials. Department for Transport have set a deadline of 5th April for project adjustment submissions.
- 4.3. In September 2022, NCC commissioned a feasibility report looking at the expansion of micromobility across Norfolk. The feasibility, undertaken by WSP, identifies that Great Yarmouth is a different prospect to the other locations. While there is a large enough population to potentially support micromobility, there is also a large number of visitors each summer to visit one of the many holiday parks. With the river running through the town, it makes walking to locations potentially longer due to getting to the bridge – a bike, e-scooter or e-bike would cut that journey time considerably.
- 4.4. WSP used the same model used in other areas of Norfolk, to select sites that would benefit from micromobility schemes based on where people live, but also added a large number of additional sites to take in the holiday parks, tourist sites, and all along the sea front for holiday makers to get around, the sites are identified below:



- 4.5. WSP recommended that the e-scooter scheme was expanded to Caister in the North, Hopton in the South, and Belton and Burgh Castle in the West. The project team recommend that a project adjustment request is submitted to DfT to request expansion of the service area to the Borough Council boundary to allow flexibility in expanding the service area. The service area will only be expanded based on feasibility evidence.
- 4.6. There are a large number of Potential Users in Great Yarmouth, and these could be supplemented by tourist visitors in peak holiday months. A scheme to work with the holiday parks could create increased demand.
- 4.7. Following approval from the Economic Development Committee on 31st January 2022, GYBC, in partnership with Ginger, applied to DfT for a project adjustment to enable the fleet number to be increased to 250. DfT approved an increase to 150 e-scooters, which have been in operation since June 2023. There has been a significant increase in usage since the additional e-scooters have been distributed across the service area, particularly in residential areas.
- 4.8. With an extension to the geographical boundary, as recommended within the WSP feasibility report, additional fleet numbers will be required to service the wider area, demand in the

current service area exceeds the current maximum of 150 e-scooters. To ensure effective coverage of the proposed extended geographical boundary, the project team are proposing a request to DfT to raise the number of e-scooters to 400.

- 4.9. Any increase to the number of deployed e-scooters will be based on data collected by the service operator on the need and demand for e-scooters. 400 e-scooters will not be deployed across the trial area at once; there will be a gradual increase over a period of time until need and demand is met, any increase to number of deployed e-scooters will also be driven by feedback and any complaints and/or rise in number of reports of misuse.
- 4.10. An increase to fleet size also means that wear and tear on e-scooters is kept to a minimum, and other e-scooters are available to replace those taken away from the trial for repairs, this will also ensure all bays have available e-scooters, which with the current fleet size is not possible.
- 4.11. NCC, funded by the Capability Ambition Fund via Transport England, are producing a Norfolk-wide feasibility report on shared micromobility. The report will cover Great Yarmouth and will be useful in terms of evidencing need and demand for shared micromobility services. Although the micromobility feasibility studies are led by NCC, GYBC will continue to operate an individual service which will be managed locally, NCC Highways involvement is not required in terms of permission or delegated decisions.
- 4.12. There have been no further updates from Central Government on timeframe for decisions on legislation for e-scooters since the Queen's Speech in May 2022 where it was announced the Government's intention to introduce legislation on the future of transport in the new parliamentary session as part of a Transport Bill. DfT anticipate using powers to create a new independent low-speed, zero emission vehicle (LZEV) category, and to subsequently create regulations that will legalise e-scooters under new rules, as well as proposing new powers for local transport authorities to manage rental operations for pedal cycles, e-cycles and e-scooters through a rental permit scheme. DfT will continue to engage with local authorities while legislation is being developed and will also consult publicly before any secondary regulations for e-scooters and the rental schemes are made.
- 4.13. The move towards a new regime means that the trials continue to have significant value, as well as providing a practical example of how better regulation can encourage responsible use. DfT continue to gather trip data and monthly incident reports to inform policy development.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1. The trial poses no financial implications to the Council. All costs associated with the trial will be accepted by the operator.

6. Risk Implications

- 6.1. No risk to GYBC. No commitment to the provider beyond the trial period.

- 6.2. Provider will produce a risk assessment and continue to monitor risks associated with the trial.

7. Legal Implications

- 7.1. The tendering process for the appointment of a new operator will follow public procurement regulations.
- 7.2. The successful operator will be contracted via MOU for the term of the trial. The MOU will be reviewed if further trial extensions are implemented.

8. Conclusion

- 8.1. This report is to update Members on progress of the e-scooter trial and sets out recommendations to approve the extension of the e-scooter trial to May 2026, appoint a new e-scooter operator for the remainder of the trial, to extend the geographical service area to the Borough Council boundary and to expand the fleet numbers to 400 to cover the expanded geographical service area as well as the introduction of e-bikes to expand the Great Yarmouth micromobility offer and encourage greener transport options.

9. Background Papers

CONFIDENTIAL NCC Report: Norwich Micromobility Expansion

Areas of consideration: e.g. does this report raise any of the following issues and if so how have these been considered/mitigated against?

| Consultations | Comment |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| Monitoring Officer Consultation: | As part of ELT review |
| Section 151 Officer Consultation: | As part of ELT review |
| Existing Council Policies: | |
| Equality Issues/EQIA assessment: | EQIA to be undertaken at the point of procurement inception |