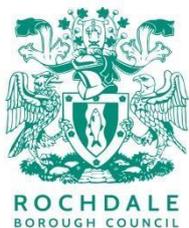


Report to Cabinet



Date of Meeting	9 th February 2021
Portfolio	Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Sustainability
Report Author	Richard Chapman
Public/Private Document	Public

Rochdale Borough E-Scooter Trial - Permission to Tender and Appoint an Operator

Executive Summary

1. This report is seeking approval for the Council to conduct a tender process to appoint a supplier to provide the scooters, implement and operate a 12 month e-Scooter Trial in the Borough.

Recommendation

2. That Cabinet
 - Note the Council was one of a number of successful local authorities in an application to Government to operate a pilot e-scooter scheme
 - Support the implementation of a 12 month e-Scooter Trial to operate in the area focussed around Rochdale Railway Station, Rochdale Town Centre and other key amenities in the town to be implemented by 31st March 2021 and end on 31st March 2022,
 - Authorise Officers to commence a tender process to seek a supplier and operator for the e-Scooter trial and to enable this to be implemented no later than 31st March 2021,
 - Delegate to the Assistant Director (Legal and Governance) to execute the necessary legal agreements and contact awards, and

- If the pilot scheme is deemed to have been successful, support a six month extension until 31st September 2022 to enable the Council to undertake a further procurement process to award a Borough wide long term contract for an e-Scooter scheme to be rolled out on a phased basis across the Borough.

Reason for Recommendation

3. The Council submitted an Expression of interest to operate an e-Scooter Trial in the Borough to the Department of Transport (DfT) in August 2020. The DfT supported that Expression of Interest and asked the Council to develop, seek an operator and obtain the required orders to implement a trial. The Council has been working with Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM), on the details of the trial and the procurement documents and procedure. The DfT announced at the start of 2021 that e-Scooter Trials should be in place and operating by 31st March 2021. Cabinet approval is required at this stage to fulfil those deadlines and implement the trial.

Key Points for Consideration

4. This e-Scooter Hire scheme is to trial a model for shared mobility across the Borough focussing initially on Rochdale and provides a sustainable travel option to / from employment areas, town centres and local amenities to:-
 - widen choice for short journey connectivity to / from transport hubs;
 - ease pressure on public transport services while social distancing continues and capacity of services is restricted;
 - offer an alternative to making short journeys by car;
 - provide an alternative travel option in areas where other transport services are difficult to access and for commuter journeys outside usual public transport operation hours;
 - provide an introduction and “stepping stone” to active travel by providing users with greater confidence on the road;
 - as a trial, provide information and evaluation material to guide future development of shared mobility schemes in the Borough and across Greater Manchester. Explore the integration opportunities with other transport modes and understand how to ensure safety for all.

The e-Scooter trial will provide a dockless short-term hire scheme with defined geo-fenced parking zones with vehicles cutting out at these locations. When ending their journey riders must park their e-Scooter in a designated parking zone which will be provided at key locations across the trial area, before their journey transaction closes. Journey verification uses a combination of GPS tracking and photo identification.

The trial will enable the Council to work with the successful operator to understand how e-Scooters interact with pedestrians including people with impaired mobility, cyclists and other vehicles as well as operational infrastructure and system issues such as fault detection, charging and the distribution of e-Scooters. Safety is a primary concern for all bodies involved in the trial and will be reflected in the agreement with the successful operator.

This trial will incorporate lessons learned from previous dockless micromobility schemes. E-Scooter users will face similar challenges to cyclists when using roads with vehicles limited to a maximum speed of 15.5 mph (similar speeds to that of the average occasional cyclist). The successful operator will be expected to promote the wearing of cycling helmets when using vehicles and provide clear and comprehensive safety information via their mobile application. Users, who must hold a provisional or full driving licence, will be required to go through this information before being permitted to use an e-Scooter. Safety Information reminders will also be displayed to users at the start of each journey.

A social media public awareness campaign will explain how e-Scooters should be used safely and what constitutes illegal use including restrictions on the use of privately owned e-Scooters in public spaces. Pedestrians, particularly those with restricted mobility or impaired vision will be considered at risk from irresponsible use of e-Scooters. The trial will be required to impose no-go and low-speed zones enabled by geo-fencing and include areas where there are high levels of footfall, near busy pedestrian crossings and other areas where e-Scooter use is deemed unsafe eg major routes without unsegregated pedestrian / cycling facilities, public squares and buildings.

The RNIB's policy notes and the Parliamentary Advisory Committee on Transport Safety will be applied to inform parking and operational locations particularly where there is no cycleway segregation. E-Scooters will be fitted with high-visibility front and rear lighting and a user operated audible warning.

Shortlisted operators will be invited to an online supplier event later this month where they will be expected to provide more detail and insight on the specifics of the trial in the Borough through a presentation and Question and Answer (Q&A) session at an online event. They will need to demonstrate an understanding of local opportunities and challenges. Both the written submission and the presentation / Q&A session will be assessed based on the marking criteria by officers and members from Rochdale Borough Council and TfGM.

Alternatives Considered

The project will support the recently approved GM Transport Strategy and Rochdale Local Transport Plan objective to ensure that at least half of all journeys of less than two kilometres within the Borough are made by sustainable modes of travel. It will also support work to address the Council

declaration of a Climate Emergency. This 12 month time limited e-Scooter Trial scheme seeks to find out whether a shared micro-mobility scheme can operate successfully. If it is not successful it will end on 31st March 2022. If successful and Members conclude that a pilot scheme be extended, the Council would seek to continue the scheme by a further 6 months. This would allow for a longer term contract to be put in place to continue the scheme, and to scale up and roll out a wider project to other strategic locations across the Borough such as major employment sites, transport hubs and centres.

The other alternative is to not take up the DfT's decision to progress the trial.

Costs and Budget Summary

5. It is anticipated that the successful operator will incur most of the costs of providing vehicles, implementing and operating the scheme. The Council has made provision of up to £20,000 to prepare and implement any Temporary Traffic Regulation Orders to allow the trial to be implemented and any other requirements to enable the trial to take place. It will also be used to carry out a more comprehensive procurement process to provide a longer term contract to continue the trial should this be desirable.

Risk and Policy Implications

6. The DfT have encouraged Local Authorities to submit proposals for E-Scooter and other shared micro-mobility schemes and they have amended legislation to permit these trials to be implemented and a number are already operating in towns and cities across the UK. A similar project has recently commenced in Salford.

Consultation

7. The trial is to assess the impact of introducing a new contemporary form of transport so the Council has worked with and been supported by Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM). This will continue and Members will receive further updates on the success of the scheme as the trial progresses. The Council has had representation from the Royal National Institute for the Blind (RNIB) who have safety concerns for people with impaired vision, however as this is a trial then no formal consultation is required.

The remit of the trial is for users, stakeholders and the public to provide views on the scheme to inform the decision on whether the trial becomes a longer term initiative.

Background Papers	Place of Inspection
-------------------	---------------------

8. Here you should detail any background papers –	<p>e-Scooter Trial Proposal for Rochdale Borough Note Procurement Docs\Rochdale e-Scooter Trial Proposal Note - 14-1-2021.docx</p> <p>Draft Brief to appoint Rochdale e-Scooter Trial Operators Procurement Docs\Draft Brief to appoint Rochdale EScooter Trial Operators - 21-1-2021.docx</p> <p>Scorecard for e-Scooter Trial Selection Panel online event Procurement Docs\Scorecards for e-Scooter Trial Selection Panel Rochdale Borough - 13-1-2021.docx</p>
---	--

For Further Information Contact:	<p>Mark Robinson mark.robinson@rochdale.gov.uk</p>
---	--