

Report to Rochdale North Township Committee



Date of Meeting	9 th March 2021
Portfolio	Neighbourhoods
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Rochdale e-Scooter Trial Approval to Raise an Experimental Traffic Regulation Order

Executive Summary

1. Following recent Cabinet approval for procurement, implementation and operation of an intended e-scooter trial in the Borough (9th February 2021), this Report is seeking approval of the Rochdale Townships (North and South) to raise the necessary Experimental Traffic Regulation Order (ETRO).

Recommendation

2. Township is asked to...
 - Note that following the Council's successful application to Government for 12-month trial operation of a rental e-scooter scheme, Cabinet recently granted approval to commence the procurement process for an appropriate rental operator to supply and manage the Council's pilot scheme.
 - Note that although specific details are yet to be confirmed, it is envisaged that the trial area will encompass a 1 mile radius of the Town Centre, including the Railway Station and other key amenities. The trial period is intended to commence on 31st March 2021.
 - Note that only those e-scooters to be supplied and operated (with the necessary insurance for riders) through the trial rental programme will be legally permitted to use the public highway. Privately-owned and operated e-scooters shall be excluded.
 - Note that the Council needs to ensure that all relevant TRO's (for cycle lanes and for any specific cycle tracks which would need to be re-designated) are changed on an experimental basis to formally accommodate legal access and use by rental e-scooters.
 - Provide approval for Highways to commence the process of necessary legal amendment through the raising of an ETRO for the e-scooter trial.

Reason for Recommendation

3. For the approved local trials, Government has amended the relevant legislative framework and meanings for “cycle lanes”, together with any associated facilities that may be used by cyclists, to permit their shared use by e-scooters.

Although existing cycle lane signs and road markings do not need amendment nor the provision of supplementary information, the Council does however need to update all of its existing cycling-related TRO's across the trial area by means of an ETRO to include wording that permits use by rental e-scooters.

Key Points for Consideration

4.
 - Currently, e-scooters (given their motorised propulsion) fall under the legal definition of a “motor vehicle” and accordingly their use on the public highway is governed by the Road Traffic Act. This specifically requires riders to be appropriately licenced and hold insurance and this has historically resulted in significant limitations on use.
 - In seeking to broaden sustainable travel alternatives and reduce the potential burden on public transport for local journeys, the Government under current coronavirus legislation has promoted and is supporting trials across the UK to evaluate operation and use of rental e-scooter schemes.
 - Trial schemes commenced in mid-2020 and are ongoing currently across more than 25 local authority areas. Their objective is to evaluate operational opportunities and risks together with identifying appropriate mitigation that may support a wider future roll-out. Beyond the trials, this could include possible regulatory changes which may treat e-scooters more similarly to conventional and electrically assisted pedal cycles.
 - Evidence from other local authorities engaged already in rental e-scooter trials has confirmed that they are typically promoting schemes by way of an ETRO sitting outside and without detriment to the established TRO / consolidation process.
 - An ETRO covering the Rochdale trial area will require statutory engagement and following approval, will introduce a public consultation exercise for a period of up to 6-months. Feedback received during this engagement period will be reviewed and reported back to this Township.
 - The ETRO would extend for a period of 12-months covering duration of the trial but may be withdrawn at any time.
 - Although no changes are necessary for existing cycle lane signs or road markings, the trials will need to consider the need and costs for any associated infrastructure and scheme publicity, including possible user information signage and facilities for e-scooter parking.

Costs and Budget Summary

5. As reported recently to Cabinet, it is anticipated that the successful e-scooter scheme operator will incur most of the costs, by providing approved vehicles, and in implementing and operating the scheme.

The Council has made provision of up to £20,000 for procurement, identification of additional supporting measures, and to prepare and implement the ETRO necessary to support the trial.

Risk and Policy Implications

6. Government has already amended relevant legislation and is promoting these trials to broaden sustainable travel opportunities for local travel. Accordingly, it is supporting all participating local authorities in an advisory capacity through regular engagement across all aspects of scheme implementation, operation, monitoring and evaluation. Given the already widespread levels of authority participation, including a trial ongoing locally in Salford, risk is considered to be low.

Consultation

- 7.
- The remit of the trial is for users, stakeholders and the wider public to provide their views to help inform longer-term local and national decision-making.
 - The Rochdale trial has recently received Cabinet approval.
 - The Council, as with other neighbouring GM authorities, is engaged and being supported by Transport for Greater Manchester.
 - The ETRO process will formally invite statutory and public consultation for a period of circa 6-months and Members will be kept updated.

Background Papers

8. e-Scooter Trial Proposal for Rochdale Borough Note Procurement
(Docs\Rochdale e-Scooter Trial Proposal Note - 14-1-2021.docx)

Draft Brief to appoint Rochdale e-Scooter Trial Operators Procurement
(Docs\Draft Brief to appoint Rochdale EScooter Trial Operators - 21-1-2021.docx)

Scorecard for e-Scooter Trial Selection Panel online event Procurement
(Docs\Scorecards for e-Scooter Trial Selection Panel Rochdale Borough - 13-1-2021.docx)

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