

Corporate Committee 12 December 2023

Dockless bikes - Update on work to mitigate the impact of hire bikes on pavements

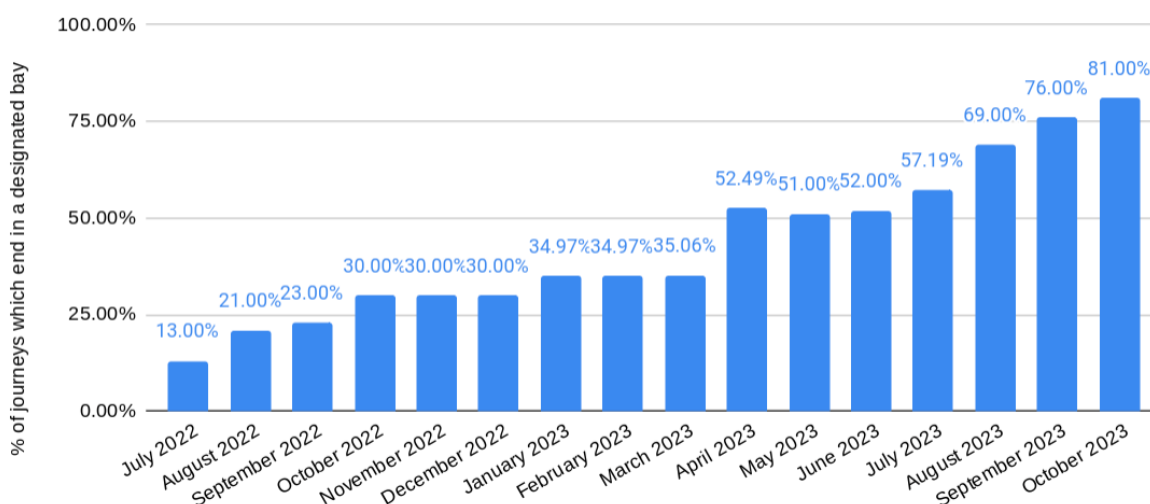
Lime is the sole operator for dockless hire e-bikes in Hackney, and their contract commenced in July 2022 with a duration of two years and the option to extend by a further two. Other hire bike facilities in the borough include Santander Cycles which includes bikes and e-bike hire and Beryl which operates e-cargo bike hire. This update concerns the impact of dockless hire e-bikes on pavements in Hackney.

Parking compliance rates refer to the percentage of users who end their journey within a designated bay and the Council is working within the operator Lime (the Operator) to improve parking compliance within the borough.

The provision of designated parking bays has been identified as a key measure to achieving high parking compliance rates in the borough. To date **121 cycle hire bays have been installed, funded by Lime, with a target of a further 280 in the next 2 years.**

In tandem with provision of more designated parking bays, officers hold monthly contract management meetings with Lime and among other KPIs, Lime must report on compliance rates. In October 2023, parking compliance was 81% meaning that **81% of journeys ended within a designated parking bay**, up from 13% at the scheme launch. The increase in compliance has roughly tracked the increase in provision of marked bays (which have doubled since the launch date).

Parking Compliance



The journeys which do not end in a bay trigger a warning or fine to be issued to the user. The fine system is tiered with a warning issued in the first instance, £2 for second offence, £5 for third offence, £10 for fourth offence and £20 and ban for a fifth and final offence.

An issue which affected parking compliance in Spring and Summer of 2023 was cases of users bypassing the Lime App by half locking the bike brakes (i.e. using the bikes without

having hired them through a 'hack' method promoted online). This caused an increase in poor parking compliance as users were able to leave the bikes without receiving a warning or fine via the app. In October this year Lime completed a retrofit of 100% of their London fleet so that this means of accessing the Lime bike is no longer possible. Anecdotal evidence suggests that this has led to an improvement in the number of bikes left on the footway.

The Council is also monitoring the impact of bikes from other companies being left inside the borough. Officers have previously reported to this committee on the powers the Council has to enforce, although that approach is a last resort as it is expensive for the Council and takes operatives away from other important duties. Direct communications with operators have to date been successful leading to removal of bikes from operators within response times. To date the council has not had to resort to charging operators for the impounding of bikes.

Officers have also had success applying pressure on operators through the industry body CoMoUK.

Hackney is seen as a leader, and is involved in devising London-wide standards and we carry a good degree of influence with industry operators.

Cycle hire is proving to be popular among users, and London is not seeing the same degree of impact on its pedestrian environment as other main cities, so while there is still room for improvement, officers believe this is manageable with improvements to the current regime (which are ongoing) and the continued roll out of dedicated bays.

Future developments - accelerating bay implementation

The demand for e-bike cycle hire in Hackney is exceptional and officers work closely with Lime to ensure fleet size is managed to a size proportionate to the cycle hire parking spaces available in the Borough.

With a constant pressure from high user demand to increase the number of available parking spaces, officers are exploring ways to accelerate the provision of parking spaces. This includes exploring the use of space on certain pavements to be used as additional parking bays either as a short-time measure or in some cases as a long-term measure.

Criteria is being developed alongside Living Streets, and will only allow bays where the pavement (or public realm) is well suited (.e.g very wide, or already features other types of cycle parking). The core objective is to site the vast majority of cycle hire bays in the carriageway, but the option of additional locations, especially where there is clear user preference, is expected to improve compliance as the goal is to make it clear to users where they can park safely.

Note: Officers note that the committee have asked for usage figures, however, these figures are commercially sensitive as they would - by simple proxy - disclose the commercial performance of the operator. Given the committee's interest on this item is in the impact the bikes have on the pedestrian environment, the KPI relating to parking compliance is considered a better indicator of the impact the bikes are having in this regard.