



Subject:	Performance Update on Belfast Bikes Scheme
Date:	7 th December 2022
Reporting Officer:	John Greer, Director of Economic Development
Contact Officer:	Fintan Grant, Assets Development Manager Ashleigh Fox, Assets Development Officer

Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Some time in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

Call-in	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues
1.1	To update Members on the performance of the Just Eat Belfast Bikes scheme in the second quarter (1 July to 30 September 2022) of year 7 of operation.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	The Committee is requested to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• note the update of the Just Eat Belfast Bikes performance for Year 7 Q2 (June to September 2022);• note the update to the notice of motion regarding free access for young people;• note the progress with regard to phase one and phase two expansion.

3.0	Main report
3.1	<p data-bbox="256 212 448 241">Background</p> <p data-bbox="256 264 1445 595">The Belfast Bikes scheme was launched in 2015 as part of Belfast City Council's physical investment programme. The Department for Regional Development provided initial capital funding for the scheme as part of their Active Travel Demonstration Projects budget. The scheme was launched with a network of 30 docking stations and 300 bikes. The scheme has been operated by NSL continually since inception using bikes and supporting infrastructure from 'Nextbike by TIER'. The scheme currently operates with 573 bikes (including those in reserve for new stands) and 50 docking stations.</p> <p data-bbox="256 667 624 696"><u>Expansion of the Scheme</u></p> <p data-bbox="256 719 1417 848">At CG&R on 12 May 2021 it was agreed that an additional four Belfast Bikes docking stations would be deployed using DFI Active Travel funding. Installation began in Q1 and current status is as follows:</p> <ul data-bbox="304 875 1406 1155" style="list-style-type: none"> - Lisnasharragh Leisure Centre was installed on 7 July 2022 and is operational; - Olympia Leisure Centre was installed on 25 October 2022 and is operational; - Kennedy Centre installation has been delayed due to supply chain issues, and is expected to be operational by mid-December; - Waterworks installation has been delayed due to supply chain issues, and is expected to be operational by mid-December. <p data-bbox="256 1178 1417 1256">Council officers are currently liaising with the operator and supplier to improve the supply chain issues for future installations.</p> <p data-bbox="256 1328 1437 1509">At CG&R on 9 June 2021 it was agreed to proceed with an additional 15 docking stations. An investment of approximately £525,000 is required, based on cost estimates from previous network expansions. At SP&R on 18 June 2021 members agreed for £500,000 to be invested in the expansion proposal.</p> <p data-bbox="256 1581 1445 1659">A procurement exercise is ongoing for the design and installation of eight stations in Phase 1 (to be installed 2022/23):</p> <ul data-bbox="304 1682 1034 1861" style="list-style-type: none"> - North: Yorkgate and Shore Road - West: St Mary's College and Shankill Road - South: Lisburn Road and Malone Road - East: Castlereagh Road, Upper Newtownards Road. <p data-bbox="256 1883 1142 1912">Seven stations will follow in Phase 2 in the following year (2023/24).</p>
3.2	
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3.5	<p>As previously agreed by the committee, discussion and agreement through Area Working Groups is required to determine exact locations and consider those against the Site Expansion Matrix as outlined in Appendix 2. These site options and discussions with Area Working Groups commenced in November.</p>
3.6	<p><u>Operational Performance</u> Availability</p> <p>Following challenges sourcing replacement bike parts earlier in the year, supplies and bike availability significantly improved during Q2. Average daily bikes on the street during Q2 was 340.</p>
3.7	<p>An additional 180 bikes have been purchased to facilitate the ongoing docking station expansion, so availability levels are expected to further increase in coming months.</p>
3.8	<p><u>Membership</u></p> <p>There were 75,129 registered Belfast Bike users at the end of Q2.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Q2 'Pay as you go' (PAYG) memberships was the most popular form of membership, accounting for 95% of users. • Annual memberships accounted for 5% of users. There is an ongoing trend of users switching from annual membership to PAYG. • Casual memberships have greatly reduced, accounting for less than 1% of memberships, due to the introduction of PAYG.
3.9	<p><u>Journeys</u></p> <p>There have been 1,292,583 journeys since the scheme was launched including 56,175 journeys during Q2 Year 7.</p> <p>Although this is a decrease of 23% from the same period in Year 6 (which was an exceptionally busy year for the scheme), journeys during this period increased by 12% against Q2 average since the scheme commenced.</p>
3.10	<p><u>Vandalism</u></p> <p>Members will be aware that vandalism is an ongoing problem. Upgrades to the forks to help prevent the unauthorised removal of bikes has been successful however, damage is now being caused to the rear wheels while bikes are being forced from docking stations. There have also been instances of bikes being set on fire and damaged beyond repair.</p>

3.11	<p>There were 130 instances of vandalism in Q2. Vandalism costs payable by the Council for this period is £17,201. This figure is significantly higher than the quarterly average (£5,314).</p>
3.12	<p>Members should note that generally the number of vandalism incidents has decreased in recent years, however vandalism costs have increased due to the higher cost of parts associated with a higher quality of bike. Bikes were upgraded to 'SMART' bikes in 2021. For comparison, in the same period in 2017, there were 243 instances of vandalism at a cost of £6,032 i.e. higher incidents but at a lower cost. See Appendix 1 tables 2 and 3 for annual comparison.</p>
3.13	<p>Members should also note that following the upgrade to 'SMART' bikes, the amount of theft has decreased due to GPS tracking in the bike allowing for recovery. The operator is very proactive at retrieving missing bikes.</p>
3.14	<p>The bikes operator continues to deliver operational improvements and community engagement initiatives with PSNI to help decrease vandalism incidents.</p>
3.15	<p><u>Subscriptions and Usage Revenue</u></p> <p>Income from fees and charges in Q2 was £71,608.</p> <p>Year to date income from fees and charges is £123,699. This is 29% higher than average for this period.</p>
3.16	<p><u>MARCOMMS</u></p> <p>Marketing activity during Q2 included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advertising campaign including radio, digital and outdoor; • Full page advert in City Matters magazine (circulation of 160k homes); • Council-led press release on new station at Lisnasharragh Leisure Centre with additional stations to follow. Media coverage included Belfast Live, North Belfast News (front page), Andersonstown News, South Belfast News and South Side Advertiser; • Additional media and social media coverage included NIfamilybloglife, NI Travel News Online, Insider Media, 4ni.co.uk; • Social media updates across all Belfast Bikes channels on new station at Lisnasharragh Leisure Centre with additional stations to follow.

3.17	Belfast Bikes currently has 5.1k followers on Twitter; 1.7k on Facebook; and 1.1k on Instagram.
3.18	<p><u>Operator contract</u></p> <p>NSL continues to operate the Belfast Bikes scheme, with a contract renewal available until 2024. Council staff are reviewing the scheme and will make future recommendations for the management, operation and potential expansion of the scheme as part of a new procurement package.</p>
3.19	<p><u>Sponsorship</u></p> <p>Council officers are currently assessing procurement options for a new sponsor of the scheme.</p>
3.20	<p><u>Response to Notice of Motion</u></p> <p>Following a Notice of Motion from Councillor O’Hara the Committee agreed on 4th March 2020 to investigate “ <i>as part of the current strategic review of the Belfast Bikes Scheme, consideration be given to granting free access to young people 25 years of age and under to the scheme</i>”.</p>
3.21	<p>Belfast Bikes operator, NSL, added date of birth (D.O.B.) as an essential criteria for users from 13 October 2022. It would be prudent to wait approximately six months to allow the majority of users to upgrade their information before accurate age demographics can be determined.</p>
3.22	<p>However, initial reports indicate the 49% of users fall within the ‘25 and under’ age group. Providing free usage to under 25’s is likely to have a significant detrimental impact on revenue generated from the bike scheme, which directly contributes to operating costs.</p>
3.23	<p>Alternative proposals for discounted rates for certain users (e.g. young people, students, corporate discounts) are being explored. The current operator has advised that while discounted offers are complicated to be added to the system, they can be done. The application of these is being finalised and it is hoped trials will commence in the coming months.</p>
3.24	<p><u>Update on Covered Cycle Stands city-wide</u></p> <p>Whilst Covered Cycle Stands are not part of the Belfast Bikes scheme, both initiatives are aligned to the Bolder Vision with a focus on improvements in the active travel provision and</p>

<p>3.25</p> <p>3.26</p> <p>3.27</p> <p>3.28</p> <p>3.29</p> <p>4.0</p>	<p>infrastructure across the city. Covered Cycle Stands are part of the Active Travel Enablers project.</p> <p>Phase 1</p> <p>Under the Dfl Sustainable and Active Travel elements of the DfC Covid-19 Revitalisation Programme, 10 covered cycle stands were funded city-wide. Locations were agreed in previous CGR Committee and the status is as follows:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="256 456 1385 972"> <tr> <td>Gasworks</td> <td>Installed July 2022</td> </tr> <tr> <td>St. George's Market</td> <td>Stand delivered but still awaiting Dfl approval</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Grosvenor Community Centre</td> <td>Installed September 2022</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Shankill Leisure Centre</td> <td>Installed July 2022</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Belmont Park</td> <td>Installed August 2022</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Inverary Community Centre</td> <td>Installed August 2022</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Belfast Zoo</td> <td>Installed August 2022</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Waterworks</td> <td>Installed August 2022</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Belvoir Activity Centre</td> <td>Installed August 2022</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Mary Peter's Track</td> <td>Installed September 2022</td> </tr> </table> <p>Phase 2</p> <p>Members received an update on the Dfl funding for the Active Travel Enabling Projects in March 2022 that outlined the projects, budget and timeframe for delivery. In terms of the covered cycle stands, officers drew upon the priority areas identified by Sustrans, and these locations were also assessed in terms of the deliverability within the timeframe as well as the key criteria aligned to cycle infrastructure provision.</p> <p>Following a procurement process, a supplier has been appointed for the next 10 covered cycle stands being delivered in-year.</p> <p><u>Financial & Resource Implications</u></p> <p><u>Finance</u></p> <p>There are no specific financial or resource implications contained within this report.</p> <p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications</u></p> <p>None</p>	Gasworks	Installed July 2022	St. George's Market	Stand delivered but still awaiting Dfl approval	Grosvenor Community Centre	Installed September 2022	Shankill Leisure Centre	Installed July 2022	Belmont Park	Installed August 2022	Inverary Community Centre	Installed August 2022	Belfast Zoo	Installed August 2022	Waterworks	Installed August 2022	Belvoir Activity Centre	Installed August 2022	Mary Peter's Track	Installed September 2022
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	<p>Appendices – Documents Attached</p> <p>Appendix 1: Belfast Bikes - Performance Data Q2 2023-23</p>																				