

	Decision of the Cabinet Member for Cleaner Streets, Transport and Public Realm (Cllr Promise Knight)
	Report from the Corporate Director of Neighbourhoods & Regeneration
Micromobility in London update and new 12-month Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Lime for the continuation of rental e-bike operations in Brent	
Wards Affected:	All
Key or Non-Key Decision:	Key
Open or Part/Fully Exempt: (If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act)	Part Exempt – Appendix 1 is exempt as it contains the following category of exempt information as specified in Paragraph 3, Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, namely: "Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)"
List of Appendices:	Appendix A – Draft MoU – Lime and Brent Council (Exempt from Publication) Appendix B – Equality Impact Assessment
Background Papers:	None
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1.0 Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report sets out the current position with and plans for micromobility (rental e-bikes and e-scooters) in London, including proposals by Transport for London (TfL) for a single, centralised London-wide Micromobility Contract, which will introduce tougher controls for their operation in the capital and replace the current patchwork of individual borough contracts and agreements.
- 1.2 The report also provides an update on micromobility operations in Brent – principally rental of e-bikes - including details of operators, coverage and usage, and highlighting some of the key issues and challenges that have arisen - and recent changes introduced to address these. The report recommends that ahead of the introduction of the London-wide Micromobility Contract, the Council enters a new 12-month Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the micromobility operator Lime Technology Limited for the continuation of rental e-bike operations in Brent, which will introduce new controls on how the scheme is managed and operated in the borough, in turn bringing greater benefits to Brent residents, and generating an annual income stream for the Council for delivering future transport, highways and public realm improvements.

2.0 Recommendation(s)

2.1 That the Cabinet Member for Cleaner Streets, Transport and Public Realm, having consulted with the Leader:

- (i) Notes the content of the report regarding the current position with and plans for micromobility in London, including proposals by Transport for London (TfL) for a London-wide Micromobility Contract;
- (ii) Delegates authority to the Corporate Director Neighbourhoods and Regeneration, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Cleaner Streets, Transport and Public Realm, to:
 - a) enter into a revised 12-month Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Lime Technology Limited (“Lime”) to enable the continued operation of rental e-bikes in Brent pending the implementation of a London-wide Micromobility Contract, and to approve and execute any extensions, renewals or ancillary documents associated with the MoU; and
 - b) identify and approve a programme of transport, highways and public realm improvements and initiatives to be funded from the fees and charges paid by Lime under the MoU.

3.0 Detail

3.1 Contribution to Borough Plan Priorities & Strategic Context

3.1.2 The proposals in this report around micromobility align with the Borough Plan priorities around making the borough cleaner and greener, and creating a healthier Brent. In particular, the Borough Plan includes a commitment to removing the barriers people face to becoming physically active. This includes making cycling more accessible and inclusive, delivering enhanced active travel infrastructure, and designing out crime and anti-social behaviour.

3.1.3 The proposals in the report link to and aligns with the priorities and ambitions of several key Council plans and policies including:

- **Inclusive Growth Strategy:** Identifies the need for a range of infrastructure improvements and supporting measures to be made including an improved public realm, the provision of cycle parking, and cycle hire schemes.
- **Brent Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy:** Details how improving the sustainability of our transport – in particular moving away from private car usage and towards walking and cycling, is key to helping resolve the climate emergency and improving air quality in the borough.
- **Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy:** Outlines how helping people to stay healthy (including encouraging more physically activity) is key to addressing long-standing health inequalities in the borough and improving the health and wellbeing of Brent’s residents. Improving access for people with a disability to places is also a key strategy commitment.

- **Brent Local Plan:** With a focus on achieving 'good growth', the Plan requires new development to reduce reliance on private cars and to encourage more trips by active modes of travel. Policy BT1 (Sustainable Travel Choice) in particular sets out how the Council will prioritise active and sustainable travel over private motor vehicles.

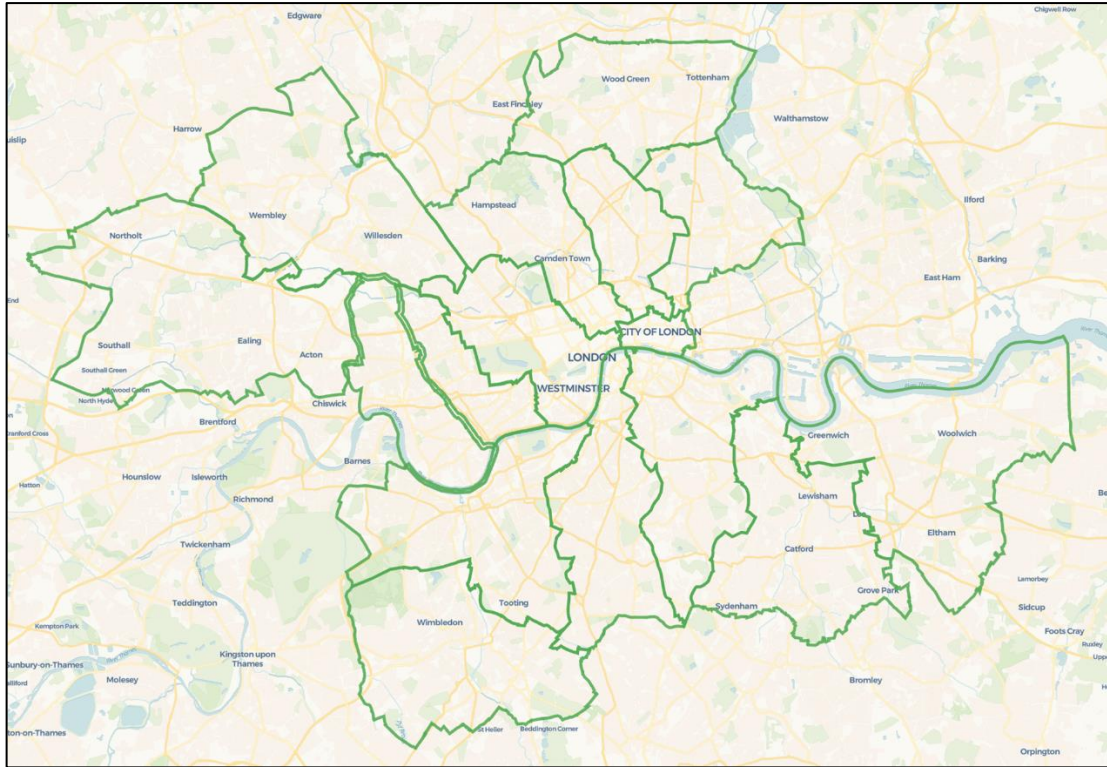
3.2 Background

- 3.2.1 Micromobility – principally in the form of rental e-bikes and e-scooters - has grown in popularity in recent years and now forms an integral part of London's transport mix, supporting both the Mayor of London's and the Council's strategic objectives for modal shift to healthy and sustainable travel. However, the lack of join-up between TfL's ongoing rental e-scooter trial and rental e-bike services, as well as the currently unregulated nature of micromobility, has created a patchwork approach and given rise to concerns over how schemes are managed and their impact - particularly on the public realm.
- 3.2.2 TfL and London boroughs have long seen the need for more coordinated action and a clearer strategy when it comes to rental of e-bikes and e-scooters. The English Devolution and Community Empowerment Act, which passed into law in April 2026, introduces significant new licensing powers for local authorities around these modes. Under these new powers, TfL is planning to introduce a single London-wide Micromobility Contract for rental e-bikes and e-scooters which the Council has previously indicated it will join.
- 3.2.3 An e-bike rental scheme, managed by Lime, has been operating in Brent since November 2019 under a series of MoUs and informal agreements with the Council. Despite proving extremely popular with users, the scheme does still give rise to complaints about how it operates, with regular calls for more to be done to address concerns around inconsiderate and unsafe cycle parking and use. Ahead of the introduction of the London-wide Micromobility Contract, the Council is proposing to enter a new 12-month MoU with Lime which will introduce new controls on how the scheme is managed and operated in the borough, whilst bringing greater benefits to Brent residents.

Micromobility in London

- 3.2.4 Micromobility schemes – in the form of rental e-bikes and a trial of an e-scooter hire scheme, have been successfully introduced across large parts of London in recent years, providing an additional sustainable transport option for people living and working in the capital. These modes have been particularly popular in outer London where the Santander cycle hire scheme does not operate (and where there are currently no plans for further TfL funded expansion).
- 3.2.5 There are currently four main micromobility operators – Lime, Forest, Voi and Bolt – who operate a mix of rental e-bike and e-scooter schemes in 23 London boroughs under a series of MoUs or contracts with individual Councils. Lime is by far the biggest operator in London, currently operating in 16 boroughs (see Figure 1, below).

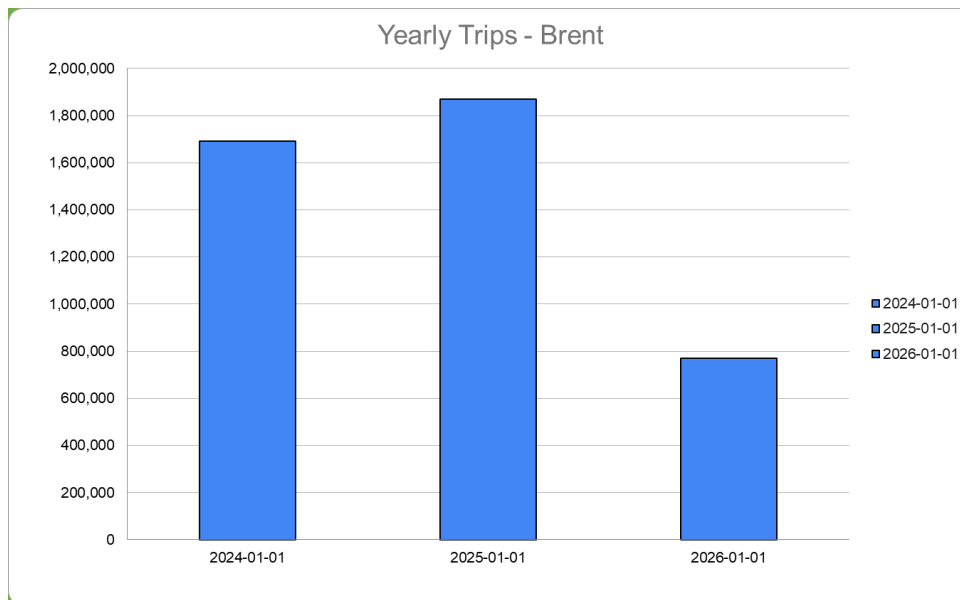
Figure 1: Lime Operations in London



Lime Operations in Brent

- 3.2.6 Lime currently operates around 500 bikes deployed across the borough, with the aim of providing residents and visitors with a healthy, sustainable and convenient alternative to travelling by car. The scheme works under an ‘informal parking’ model, meaning that bikes can be hired and returned anywhere on the public highway whilst the Council and Lime work to create a network of dedicated parking bays.
- 3.2.7 In the six years that it has been operating in Brent the scheme has become an established part of the borough transport network and has proved extremely popular with users who cite it as being a convenient mode of travel for short journeys. Data from Lime has revealed a year-on-year increase in ridership with around 1.7 million trips made within the borough in 2024 and nearly 1.9 million made in 2025. Interim data for 2026 indicates that around 800,000 trips had been made in Brent by the end of May 2026 (see Figure 2, below).

Figure 2: Brent Yearly Trips



Current Position/Next steps

3.2.8 Despite the popularity of the Lime e-bike rental scheme in Brent, there have been challenges with the way it operates, with a common cause of complaint being the inconsiderate/unsafe parking of bikes – particularly on footways. In November 2024, Lime agreed to a series of commitments to improve their operations in the borough including:

- Reducing the size of their fleet in the borough by a third - from 750 to 500 bikes - while other improvements were made.
- Funding the creation of 175 designated parking bays, in priority areas, providing space for up to 1,400 e-bikes.
- Implementing 'low' or 'no' parking zones in certain areas to prevent the build-up of large numbers of bikes.
- Introducing 'slow zones' around busy areas like Wembley Stadium and High Road and a dedicated events plan for the stadium.
- Increasing the number of Lime cyclist patrollers and parking wardens on-the-ground to ensure that any issues reported are dealt with quickly.
- Removing poorly parked bikes within two hours when reported via email.
- Reinvesting fines from poor parking back into the community through the council's Together Towards Zero grant scheme.
- Creating a forum to meet quarterly and offering monthly cycle training sessions for residents.

3.2.9 These changes have resulted in a noticeable improvement in performance and a corresponding reduction in the number of complaints the Council receives. However, it is acknowledged that the scheme still creates problems and remains a concern for some residents. In addition, several other micromobility operators, including Forest and Voi, have begun operating informally in parts of the borough, adding to the need to revisit current arrangements.

The London-wide Micromobility Contract

3.2.10 TfL and London boroughs have been working together to develop proposals for a single, centralised contract for rental e-bikes and e-scooters covering the whole of London. Details of how the scheme would operate and be managed and timescales for implementation are still to be confirmed, but the aim is to launch the scheme in early 2028. The Micromobility Contract will build on the experience of the ongoing London e-scooter trial and replace the patchwork of individual borough e-bike contracts and MoUs that are currently in place.

New Lime MoU

3.2.11 It is proposed that the Council enters a new MoU with Lime which sets out more stringent requirements for their continued operations in the borough ahead of the introduction of the London-wide Micromobility Contract in 2028. The new MoU sets out both Operator and Council responsibilities and requirements around different aspects of scheme operations such as fleet size, bike availability, parking, fees and charges, scheme monitoring, enforcement arrangements and environmental and community responsibility requirements. The conditions and requirements in the MoU have been the subject of extensive discussions with Lime and are in line with current best practice and adopt many of the arrangements in place in other London boroughs and which are likely to be included as part of the London-wide Micromobility Contract.

3.2.12 A copy of the MoU is included in Appendix A to this report. Among the main operational conditions and requirements proposed include:

- Initially capping fleet size at 1,200 bikes, increasing to 1,500 after 6 months subject to the completion of additional parking bays and meeting key performance indicators/targets. To prevent an over-supply of bikes and problems with overcrowding in parking bays, fleet size will be capped at 85% of total available parking capacity.
- Maintaining dedicated staffing in the borough proportionate to the size of the operational area and agreed fleet size, with any changes in staffing levels to be agreed with the Council. The operator will also be required to make an annual payment to cover the cost to the Council of employing a dedicated staff member to project manage the scheme.
- Introducing and maintaining through geofencing 'No Parking Zones' covering the entire borough, ensuring that rides can only be ended within designated parking bays. Any bike parked outside of a designated parking bay is required to be removed by the operator within 2 hours of notification, with the Council reserving the right to charge the operator for its removal, storage and disposal if this timeframe is not adhered to.
- For the safety of all users, the Council has designated all borough parks and recreation grounds as 'Go Slow Zones' for hire bikes, with the operator required to ensure that the speed of bikes is reduced when taken into these areas.
- Making an annual payment to the Council towards the costs of resourcing, implementing, maintaining and monitoring transport, highways and public realm measures and activities related to the operation of the scheme.

- Ensuring that all bikes made available for hire are serviced and maintained regularly to ensure they are roadworthy, safe to operate, adequately charged and clean. Bikes that are damaged, not operable or are unsafe for any reason are to be removed from service immediately.
- Providing users and the public with the means to report issues through the app, by email or by phone, and to make easily available on the operator website/app comprehensive and clear information to users on how and where to ride and park bikes safely and considerately.
- Producing an Environmental Management Statement summarising how the environmental impact of scheme operations will be minimised/mitigated.
- Collaborating with the Council to deliver the following as part of its Community Responsibility requirements:
 - making an annual payment towards the costs of cycle training sessions for Brent residents;
 - co-hosting a quarterly residents forum and promoting cycling events/initiatives;
 - working with the Council to provide opportunities for employment and skills training within the organisation for Brent residents, and developing/funding bespoke 'Ride for Jobs'/'Ride for Health' schemes to help get more people into work and increasing physical activity.
- Developing and implementing a Wembley Events Management Plan setting out specific requirements around scheme operations and parking at Wembley Stadium/Arena on event days.
- Working with the Council to establish 'Equity Zones' in those parts of the borough with low levels of cycling that target any concessionary fare schemes and/or grant PAYG discounts to users to encourage cycling.
- Exploring piloting/launching new bike models in the borough as part of a wider fleet refresh.

3.2.13 It is proposed that the MoU will operate for an initial 12-month period, with scope to extend for a further 12 months if the proposed London-wide Micromobility Contract has not started. At such point as the London-wide Micromobility Contract commences, the MoU will be terminated.

Options Assessment

3.2.14 This report proposes that the Council enters a new 12-month MoU with Lime as a means of improving the management arrangements between the Council and the hire bike operator and securing a range of concessions for the benefit of Brent residents. Lime has been selected based on its established presence in Brent and neighbouring boroughs, large existing customer base, its varied customer offer, and its improved operational performance in recent years. However, the nature and format of the MoU is such that it could be easily entered into with other micromobility operators should the Council decide to replace Lime and/or seek additional operators to meet increased demand or offer a broader service to residents.

3.2.15 With legislation enabling local authorities to license and regulate micromobility still in its infancy, MoUs have been shown to be a practical and robust solution. They are currently used by most other London boroughs who have micromobility schemes in operation, offering flexibility as a management tool, and can be easily updated/amended through a deed of variation by agreement between parties if the situation warrants. This is a useful facet in a fast-developing area of transport.

3.2.16 As an alternative to an MoU, a formally procured operator contract was considered, but discounted. Whilst a formal contract would have been legally binding, the handful of boroughs who have entered such agreements have experienced difficulties in monitoring performance and enforcing agreements – in part due to the lack of/unreliability of data from operators and the absence of formal legislation around micromobility. In addition, the timescales involved in undertaking a formal procurement exercise – likely 10-12 months to award of contract - could result in the Council losing out on considerable fee income and concessions for residents as it continues to operate under the existing agreement. The lengthy procurement timetable could potentially result in abortive work with operators unlikely or unwilling to enter a formal contract so close to the launch of a London-wide contract.

4.0 Stakeholder and ward member consultation and engagement

4.1 The development of the new MoU has been informed by ongoing engagement with Brent's diverse communities – principally through a quarterly Residents' Forum - as well as wider feedback received as part of previous Council consultations – including on the Brent Active Travel Implementation Plan. It has also been the subject of extensive cross-department engagement with the Council's Parks/Leisure, Public Health, Neighbourhood Management, Healthy Streets & Parking and Highways teams. This has helped ensure that it reflects the genuine needs and desires of those who live and work in the borough, aligns with the Council's wider transport, environmental, public realm and public health priorities, and will contribute to bringing about real and lasting change. The conditions and requirements in the MoU have been the subject of extensive discussions with Lime and are also in line with current best practice and adopt many of the arrangements in place in other London boroughs.

4.2 Public and Ward Member consultation on the roll-out of dedicated parking bays for rental e-bikes has previously been undertaken and further consultation will be carried out ahead of the introduction of any new parking bays. Feedback from these consultation exercises has also helped inform the development of the MoU, including suggestions on fleet size and locations for new dedicated parking bays and 'go-slow' zones.

5.0 Financial Considerations

5.1 As detailed in Section 3 above, Lime will be required to make an annual payment to the Council towards the costs of resourcing, implementing, maintaining and monitoring transport, highways and public realm measures and activities related to the operation of the scheme comprising:

- a 'resourcing fee' to cover the cost to the Council of employing a dedicated staff member to project manage the scheme;

- an ‘access fee’ (comprising a ‘location fee’ per dedicated parking bay and a ‘fleet size fee’ charged per cycle deployed in the borough) to cover the cost of managing/monitoring the day-to-day operations of the scheme; and
- a ‘training’ fee towards the costs of providing cycle training sessions for Brent residents.

- 5.2 Funding to cover the costs associated with providing new/upgraded dedicated parking bays and supporting infrastructure in the borough is currently available from several sources including the TfL Micromobility Parking Fund – through which the Council was awarded £96,000 in 2026/27. Lime has also established the ‘Lime Parking Fund’, which the Council can apply to.
- 5.3 Whilst user fees and charges are set by the operator, following discussions with Lime it is proposed to establish ‘Equity Zones’ in those parts of the borough with low levels of cycling where existing concessionary fare schemes and/or grant PAYG discounts to users will be targeted to encourage the take-up of cycling.
- 5.4 The MoU sets out that the Council reserves the right to remove, store and, if required, dispose of any rental cycle if not removed by Lime within specified timescales. Where this is the case, Lime will be liable for the cost.
- 5.5 As these fees are new to the Council, it is important that the VAT treatment is applied correctly. Accordingly, VAT advice has been sought from Ernst & Young to confirm the appropriate accounting treatment. At the time of reporting, we are still awaiting a response.

6.0 Legal Considerations

- 6.1 The Council has power to enter into the proposed Memorandum of Understanding (“MoU”) pursuant to the general power of competence under section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 and section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972, which enables the Council to do anything incidental or conducive to the discharge of its functions.
- 6.2 Cabinet is requested at paragraph 2.1(ii), to delegate authority to the Corporate Director of Neighbourhoods and Regeneration, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Cleaner Streets, Transport and Public Realm, to finalise and enter into the MoU and any extensions, renewals and associated documentation. This delegation will also enable the Corporate Director to identify and approve a programme of transport, highways and public realm improvements funded through the arrangement.
- 6.3 The proposed arrangement is structured as a non-exclusive MoU (Appendix A) rather than a public contract. Notwithstanding its title, the MoU is intended to be legally binding in respect of its operative provisions. As there is no exclusivity or guaranteed level of business, and the MoU regulates primarily the operation of a dockless, app-based service on the public highway, it is not considered to fall within the scope of the Procurement Act 2023. In light of the above and the interim nature of the arrangement, pending the proposed Transport for London

("TfL") London-wide Micromobility Contract, a procurement exercise has not been undertaken.

- 6.4 The MoU is proposed for an initial term of 12 months, with provision for extension if required. The MoU includes termination provisions allowing either party to terminate on notice, without prejudice to accrued rights.
- 6.5 TfL is progressing proposals for a single London-wide micromobility contract to replace borough-level arrangements. The Council will need to consider transition arrangements in due course, including termination of the MoU and alignment with the TfL contractual framework.
- 6.6 The MoU provides for the payment of fees by Lime to the Council. Officers are satisfied that the Council has the necessary powers to charge and receive such fees in connection with the exercise of its statutory functions.
- 6.7 The MoU includes provisions relating to liability, indemnity and insurance. The operator is required to maintain appropriate insurance and indemnify the Council against claims arising from the operation of the scheme, except where arising from the Council's negligence or breach of statutory duty. Any limitations of liability are subject to applicable legal constraints.
- 6.8 The operator is required to comply with all applicable legal and regulatory requirements, including data protection legislation, the UK Bribery Act 2010 and other relevant statutory obligations. The MoU also includes provisions relating to confidentiality, information sharing and compliance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and Environmental Information Regulations 2004.
- 6.9 The MoU is governed by the laws of England and Wales and includes a dispute resolution procedure requiring escalation between the parties prior to the commencement of formal proceedings, except where urgent relief is required.
- 6.10 TfL is expected to procure the London-wide contract through a competitive tender process. The timing and governance arrangements for borough participation are not yet confirmed.
- 6.11 The proposed MoU provides a lawful and proportionate interim framework to regulate micromobility operations within the borough pending implementation of a London-wide arrangement.

7.0 Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Considerations

- 7.1 S149 of the Equality Act 2010 provides that the Council must have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic, and those who do not.
- 7.2 An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has been undertaken as part of the development of the proposals and is included at Appendix B to this report. The EIA identifies a range of positive impacts from the proposals, particularly in improving access to active travel, supporting healthier lifestyles and contributing to improved air quality. This is of relevance in Brent, where poor

health and inactivity are significant challenges, with high levels of obesity among both adults and children, and where increased cycling can play an important role in improving health outcomes and reducing inequalities. Encouraging the shift away from private vehicle use is also expected to contribute to improved air quality, which will benefit residents more widely, particularly children, older people and those with respiratory conditions.

- 7.3 The EIA also highlights how the introduction of dedicated parking bays for rental e-bikes will help improve the accessibility and inclusiveness of our streets, particularly for the elderly and disabled people; whilst targeted cycle training and concessionary fare schemes to promote cycling will benefit certain under-represented groups, including certain ethnic minority groups.
- 7.4 However, the EIA identifies potential negative impacts, notably for disabled people, older residents and parents or carers, arising from poorly parked or fallen bikes obstructing footways and creating barriers to movement. There is also potential for adverse impacts linked to changes in kerbside use, which may affect some groups who are more reliant on car travel.
- 7.5 To mitigate these potential impacts, the proposed MoU includes measures including mandatory designated parking bays, geofenced controls and requirements for the timely removal of incorrectly parked bikes, supported by enhanced monitoring and enforcement. These measures are expected to reduce these impacts. On balance, it is considered that the positive impacts outweigh the potential adverse impacts, subject to effective implementation, ongoing monitoring and continued engagement with affected communities.

8.0 Climate Change and Environmental Considerations

- 8.1 Supporting and encouraging active travel – in particular increased uptake of cycling, is seen as key to helping resolve the climate emergency and improving air quality in the borough and is a key area of focus within theme two of the Brent Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy (KAF: Moving away from petrol and diesel vehicles).
- 8.2 The MoU includes a requirement for Lime to produce an Environmental Management Statement summarising how the environmental impact of scheme operations in Brent will be minimised/mitigated. This will cover information on how and where cycles are manufactured, maintained and disposed of, how bike deployment and redistribution is conducted, and levels/sources of energy consumption.

9.0 Human Resources/Property Considerations (if appropriate)

- 9.1 It is proposed to recruit a dedicated staff member to manage the Council's micromobility programme and oversee Lime's operations in Brent. The full cost of this will be met by Lime as part of its annual fees/charges payments.

10.0 Communication Considerations

- 10.1 The new MoU will be accompanied by a joint publicity campaign between the Council and Lime to raise awareness of the new arrangements/requirements.

Appendices

Appendix A - Draft MoU - Lime and Brent Council (Exempt from Publication)

Appendix B - Equality Impact Assessment

Report sign off:

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