

WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL CABINET

7th May 2024

**Cabinet Member for Environment, Transport, Highways and Waste:
Councillor Phil Larratt**

Report Title **Response to Scrutiny Review of E-Scooters**

Report Author **Nick Henstock, Assistant Director Highways and Transport**

List of Approvers

Monitoring Officer	Catherine Whitehead	16/04/2024
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List of Appendices

None

1. Purpose of Report

1.1. This report presents further detail regarding the proposals made in the Place Overview and Scrutiny committee report presented at Cabinet in March 2024 and update for Cabinet on the progress that has already been made in relation to the proposals.

2. Executive Summary

2.1 Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee presented a report to Cabinet in March 2024 outlining proposals to address issue that were identified during their task and finish group activity that reviewed the operation of the E-Scooter trial being conducted in West Northamptonshire. The

report also recommended that the E-Scooter trial should continue, subject to the issues being addressed.

- 2.2 Work has already begun to implement these recommendations in line with the responses included in the March 2024 Cabinet report.
- 2.3 West Northamptonshire have confirmed to the DfT the intention to continue with the E-Scooter trial, subject to Cabinet endorsing this report and agreeing an extension to the current contract with Voi.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Cabinet/Committee:
 - a) Endorse the continuation of the E-Scooter trial
 - b) Note the further detail regarding the proposals made in the Place Overview and Scrutiny committee report presented at Cabinet in March 2024.
 - c) Note the update on the progress made in relation to these proposals.

4. Reason for Recommendations (NOTE: this section is mandatory and must be completed)

- 4.1 The recommendations are required in order to ensure the Cabinet properly responds to the review of the E-scooter trial carried out by the Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The recommendation to endorse the continuation of the e-scooter trial aligns with the recommendations made by the committee and further detail on specific recommendations is set out elsewhere within this report.

5. Report Background

- 5.1 A motion was proposed at the meeting of full Council held on 28 September 2023 regarding issues experienced by residents resulting from the E-Scooter trial in West Northamptonshire. By a majority vote, full Council agreed to refer the motion to the Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee for their consideration.
- 5.2 Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee convened a task and finish group to consider the effectiveness of the VOI E-Scooter Trial in West Northamptonshire. The task and finish group considered a significant amount of evidence over a six-week period, including the results of a public survey which received 2663 responses.
- 5.3 Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee presented a comprehensive report to Cabinet in March including the following recommendations:

Recommendation 1:

That the trial of the VOI E-Scooter is continued to May 2026 but there is a need for improvements and a Road Map for development of the improvements should be a condition of any contract extension offered.

The Road Map should address:

- 1 Review the current scheme to seek improvements and changes in respect of Geo-fence areas where:
 - Speed controls and restricted zones to be reviewed and extended ;
 - E-Scooters cannot be parked on an individual basis in specific key locations (i.e., Disabled access and emergency access points).
- 2 That parking is reviewed to improve end location via use of improved technology (AI) and infrastructure (parking frames) are implemented where appropriate.
- 3 That new and emerging technology is assessed, and timescale set for the implementation in regard:
 - Eliminating twin riding.
 - Preventing E-Scooters from riding pavements.
- 4 That E-Scooter safety is reviewed improving visibility at night, ensuring registration numbers are more visible and that campaigns and messaging to existing riders are increased and more regular in regard to best practice and also to include the wearing of helmets.
- 5 That a review of the complaints' procedure is undertaken with the aim of improving the process of tracking complaints via a reference number with timely action and communication.

Recommendation 2:

That a new governance and project management process is set up to include West Northants Council, VOI and Northamptonshire Police. That the terms of reference for this group include the management and monitoring of progress of items included in the Road Map.

Recommendation 3:

That Officers produce a suite of KPI's for Cabinet to review which will provide transparency in relation to the numbers of complaints, actions taken and enforcement

Recommendation 4:

That Cabinet considers setting up a regular all Member Quarterly forum that will provide context and challenge for improvement and improved communications

Recommendation 5:

That Cabinet reviews enforcement to ensure all resources available to the Council, Police and VOI are aligned and efficient and that any enforcement actions can be aligned and the results fully communicated and released.

Recommendation 6:

That Officers investigate best practice from other areas and where applicable implemented to include a review of future policies and infrastructure identified as part of the local plan process once subject to government approval.

Recommendation 7:

That Cabinet has oversight and puts in place monitoring (period in review) of the Trial.

Recommendation 8:

That Cabinet is requested to provide a report to Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee at the conclusion of the E-Scooter Trial that identifies progress and issues for discussion.

- 5.4 In response to these recommendations, officers have been working with Voi and the contract management team to put in place measures that relate to these recommendations.
- 5.5 **Recommendation 1:** DfT have been informed our WNC's intention to continue with the E-Scooter trial and work to implement improvements has begun.
- 5.6 A review of Geofenced areas has taken place and agreement has been reached to introduce new speed controls and restricted zones.
- 5.7 Parking reviews have commenced and already the outputs of this include a no parking zone in the Drapery and new parking zones created on Bradshaw Street and Mercers Row. Realtime photo validation of E-Scooter parking has been extended across the whole of Northampton – previously this was limited to the town centre.
- 5.8 Voi have committed to continuing development of technologies to eliminate twin riding and pavement riding, however it is not currently possible to place a timeframe on this.
- 5.9 Voi have reviewed the visibility of their fleet at night and will be rolling out an amended livery with additional reflective areas on their E-Scooters in May and June.
- 5.10 The contract management team are working with Voi to agree the contract extension which is required from the end of May in order to allow Voi to continue operating in West Northamptonshire. The contract management team will monitor the performance of the trial over the extension period. The contract will continue to include a termination clause that allows the contract to be terminated with 2 months notice.
- 5.11 A review of the complaints procedure will be taking place over the coming summer and the outcome will be communicated so that residents are aware of the most appropriate methods for them to raise issues with Voi.
- 5.12 **Recommendation 2:** New governance has been implemented, WNC's Transport and Strategy Development Manager meets with Voi monthly along with the contract management team and the police. Additionally quarterly meeting have been diarised with Voi, the Assistant Director for Highways and Transport and the police.
- 5.13 **Recommendation 3:** KPIs relating to the contract will be reviewed at the quarterly governance meetings.
- 5.14 **Recommendation 4:** Six monthly meetings with members have been diarised.
- 5.15 **Recommendations 5 & 7:** Cabinet will receive an annual report regarding the operation of the trial and progress of the items included in the roadmap.

- 5.16 **Recommendation 6:** Officers continue to seek out best practice in all respects and any future policies will be based on this best practice. The Local Transport Plan development will include consideration of infrastructure to support the use of E-Scooters which could be implemented once there is an understanding of the legislation that will govern their usage.
- 5.17 **Recommendation 8:** At the conclusion of the trial period a report will be presented to Cabinet that will consider the trial's success. Place Overview and Scrutiny will have the opportunity to scrutinise the report at this time.

6. Implications (including financial implications)

6.1 Resources and Financial

- 6.1.1 The extension of the E-Scooter trial has implications only with regards to the officer time associated with the management and governance of the contract with Voi.

6.2 Legal

- 6.2.1 There are no specific legal implications arising from this report.

6.3 Risk

- 6.3.1 There are no significant risks arising from this report.

6.4 Consultation and Communications

- 6.4.1 The Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee carried out consultation, no further consultation has taken place.
- 6.4.2 West Northamptonshire Council is working with Voi, Northants Police and North Northamptonshire Council to adopt a proactive communications strategy which shares essential safety messaging across online and offline platforms. The organisations will continue to work in partnership to promote responsible riding and inform the public of the use of e-scooters.

6.5 Consideration by Overview and Scrutiny

- 6.5.1 This report is responding to the Place Overview and Scrutiny committee report presented at Cabinet in March 2024.

6.6 Climate Impact

- 6.6.1 The extension of the E-Scooter trial will allow for the continued benefits that have been gained as a result of E-Scooter usage in West Northamptonshire. Current data shows a net benefit from the scheme with further analysis to take place.

6.7 Community Impact

6.7.1 VOI E-Scooters are available for all those over the age of 18 to hire within West Northamptonshire

7. Background Papers

7.1 None.