



Subject:	Belfast Bikes
Date:	10 May 2017
Reporting Officer:	Donal Durkan, Director of Development
Contact Officer:	Maggie McNally, Strategic Programme Manager

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
1.1	The purpose of the report is to give an update on the Belfast Bikes Scheme since its launch in April 2015 and to update Members on key management issues related to the scheme.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	The Committee is asked to: – Note and approve the update on the Belfast Bikes.

- Note that a further report on progress will be presented to the City Growth and Regeneration Committee in June 2017.
- Approve the request to hold a workshop with Members in late June 2017, to update on the strategic review of the scheme.

3.0 Main report

3.1 Background and update of Scheme as of Year End 2017

The Belfast Bikes Scheme was launched on 27 April 2015. To date there are 41 stations in the City with the biggest concentration in Belfast City Centre. As of Year End March 2017, the scheme has 4,930 annual subscribers and 5,302 casual users. There were a total of 223,688 journeys in this year bringing the overall total to 407,210 rentals.

	April 15 – Mar 16	April 16 - Mar 2017
Annual	3,504	4,930
Casual	2,400	5,302
Journeys	183,522	223,688

3.2 As previously approved by Committee, there are a further 2 stations funded under the Building Successful Communities Fund planned for the North and West Belfast (located at Carlisle Circus and Twin Spires, Falls Road) and 3 funded by Urban Villages (locations still to be agreed).

3.3 As of Year End March 2017, revenue income was £25,064 and total revenue costs were £466,474. This includes the cost of theft and vandalism for Year 1 (£1805) and Year 2 (£18,807).

3.4 Members will be aware that there has been a significant increase in the level of vandalism in year 2, as illustrated by the figures above. The seriousness of the recent theft and vandalism has resulted in 210 of the 576 bikes being out of operation due to either theft or vandalism.

3.5 Whilst hotspots have been identified earlier in the year and action taken e.g. removal of bikes at certain stations overnight, the problem has become more widespread and all stations have been impacted to a greater or lesser extent.

3.6 To date the PSNI has issued two community resolution orders with one pending, one case

of vandalism/theft has been referred to the Public Prosecution Service and two cases are pending.

3.7

Strategic Review

The Bike Scheme is very popular and this has resulted in a number of requests to extend the scheme across the City. However, the recent additions to the scheme have demonstrated the need to undertake a strategic review of the scheme before any further developments take place. This review will work at a number of elements including how to resolve the vandalism challenge, pricing policy, policy for deciding the locations for any future expansion of the scheme and opportunities for alignment with wider city developments (e.g. link to new regeneration schemes, partnerships with major conferences), and future financing options, including sponsorship.

3.8

A Members' workshop will be set up in June 2017 to update Members on progress to date on the strategic review, including recommendations for the future operation of the scheme.

3.9

Given the current issues around theft and vandalism, officers are progressing a number of specific activities in parallel with the strategic review. These include:

- ITS Quality Review: Intelligent Transport Services (ITS) were commissioned, as part of the Strategic Review, to conduct a quality review of the Belfast Bike Cycle Hire Scheme equipment and technology. A report has been produced and is being examined by the review team. Whilst no major failings in respect of the equipment and technology were identified several recommendations for improvement were identified and these are being examined and rolled out.
- Exploring technology solutions: Officers are working with the Smart Cities Team and external partners such as the universities, PSNI and technology specialists to pilot options that will lead to a reduction in vandalism and theft and the recovery of bikes not returned to docking stations. It is envisaged that the first pilot exercise will go live in June 2017. Members will be up to date on progress as the pilot exercise progresses. In addition, the theft and vandalism issue is one of the "City Challenges" that was looked at as part of a hackathon event in the City on 29 April 2017.
- Improvement of Signage: The scheme operator NSL is currently seeking costs and options for additional signage that can be displayed at the docking stations. This signage will be highly visible and will advise users either of the security measures that are in place (if appropriate) or of the penalties that may result from theft or vandalism.
- Security cameras and CCTV: Officers are exploring a range of options including

	<p>mobile CCTV to patrol certain areas, static CCTV for specific stations or even dummy cameras which may act as a deterrent.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Access to the Council’s Community Safety Wardens: Officers have engaged with the Community Safety Wardens and agreement has been reached for them to pay particular attention to certain hot spots and to inform the PSNI of any issues. - Additional Visibility of the Operator: NSL have agreed, as an interim measure, to increase their levels of presence at the stations. This clearly has contractual and financial implications and will need to be considered as part of the strategic review. - Exploring Opportunities to Improve the Infrastructure: Officers have been engaging with the bike suppliers to explore opportunities to improve the security of the bikes. <p>3.10 In addition to these remedial measures, a number of additional activities are being undertaken as part of the work on the strategic review. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Implementation of the recommendations identified as part of the ITS quality review of the equipment and technology (see point 3.9). - Exploring additional stakeholder engagement: Officers are considering whether improved stakeholder engagement, involving partners such as PSNI and key community organisations might limit the theft and vandalism issues that have arisen in recent times. <p>3.11 <u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></p> <p>The costs of the individual elements will be identified as part of the ongoing work on the strategic review. Members will be advised of the financial implications as well as the impact on the current programme budget.</p> <p><u>Equality and Good Relations Implications</u></p> <p>3.12 No specific equality or good relations implications.</p>
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	None