

Place and Resources Overview Committee**4 June 2026****e-Scooter Micromobility Rental Service
For Recommendation to Cabinet****Cabinet Member:**

Cllr J Andrews, Regeneration, Infrastructure and Growth

Local Councillor(s): Councillors for the Dorchester, Weymouth, Portland, Chickerell, Corfe Mullen and Upton areas of Dorset**Senior Leadership Team:**

J Britton, Executive Director for Place Services

Report author and job title: Christopher Whitehouse, Transport Planning Projects Team Manager**Email:** christopher.whitehouse@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk**Statutory Authority:** Dorset Highways**Report status:** Public (the exemption paragraph is N/A)**1. Executive summary**

- 1.1 This report outlines a proposal for Dorset Council to participate in the Department for Transport (DfT) sanctioned national e scooter rental trial in two defined areas: Weymouth, Dorchester, Portland and Chickerell; and Corfe Mullen and Upton.
- 1.2 In Corfe Mullen and Upton, the scheme would operate as an extension of the existing Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole (BCP) e-scooter scheme delivered by Beryl Bikes. In Weymouth, Dorchester, Portland and Chickerell, the Council would tender for an operator to ensure best value and alignment with local priorities.
- 1.3 The introduction of regulated e scooter rental schemes would provide Dorset Council with a controlled and lawful alternative to existing illegal private e-scooter use, whilst supporting wider transport, climate and accessibility objectives and offer an additional low carbon transport option to help address a number of existing transport challenges, including short car trips, congestion, carbon emissions, and access to employment and services in

areas where public transport options can be limited. Evidence from national trials and neighbouring authorities shows that well designed schemes can deliver meaningful modal shift from private car journeys, contributing to reduced emissions, improved air quality and increased transport choice.

- 1.4 However, this report also recognises that the scheme presents risks, particularly in relation to safety, equality impacts and reliance on external enforcement.
- 1.5 E-scooters are particularly suited to journeys of 1–5km, which account for a significant proportion of everyday trips currently made by car. When integrated with walking, cycling, e-bike schemes and public transport, they can support first and last mile journeys and help widen travel choice for people who do not have access to a private car. This includes young working people, apprentices, students, and people in lower paid or shift based employment, for whom transport costs and limited-service availability can be a barrier to accessing jobs, training and education opportunities.
- 1.6 For these groups, e-scooters can provide a flexible and affordable way to reach workplaces, transport hubs and town centres, particularly outside standard commuting hours when bus services may be infrequent. Improving access to employment and training supports inclusive growth, reduces reliance on lifts or car ownership, and helps retain younger people within local communities by improving access to opportunity.
- 1.7 Participation in the DfT trial would enable Dorset Council to actively manage e-scooter use within a regulated framework. While private e scooters remain illegal on public roads and spaces, they are already present in communities, creating unmanaged safety and enforcement challenges. A regulated rental scheme provides a legal, insured and speed limited alternative, with geofencing, parking controls and clear operator accountability.
- 1.8 The report considers safety, policing, equality and community impacts in more detail. Dorset Police support progression in principle, subject to strong safety controls. The Police and Crime Commissioner has raised concerns regarding public safety and policing impacts, which are acknowledged and addressed through proposed scheme conditions and governance arrangements. Both schemes would be fully funded by operators, with no capital or revenue cost to Dorset Council.
- 1.9 This report is presented to Place and Resources Overview Committee to enable detailed consideration, challenge and direction prior to any decision by Cabinet.

2. Recommendation(s)

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee:
- 2.2 Review and comment on the proposal to introduce e-scooter rental services in:
- Weymouth, Dorchester, Portland and Chickerell (via a competitively procured operator); and
 - Corfe Mullen and Upton (via an extension of the existing BCP scheme);
- 2.3 Examine the proposed delivery model, including the practical, legal and operational arrangements required to implement the scheme in accordance with Department for Transport (DfT) trial requirements;
- Provide direction and challenge on key aspects of the proposal including:
 - The sustainability of the proposed operating areas;
 - The adequacy of proposed controls relating to safety, parking and equalities impacts;
 - The extent to which reliance on police enforcement presents an acceptable risk.

3. Reason for the recommendations

- 3.1 The introduction of regulated e-scooter rental schemes supports Dorset Council's adopted strategic objectives, including those set out in the Local Transport Plan, Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy and Sustainable Transport Plan. These strategies prioritise reducing car dependency, cutting carbon emissions, improving accessibility, and expanding affordable low carbon travel choices, *including improved access to employment and training opportunities for people without access to a private car*
- 3.2 The recommended approach allows Dorset Council to shape and control e-scooter use through a regulated framework, rather than leaving existing illegal use unmanaged. A targeted concession model minimises financial and legal risk to the authority while allowing local learning ahead of potential national legislation.
- 3.3 The proposed approach enables the Council to test and evaluate the role of e-scooters in Dorset's transport network, contributing to national evidence ahead of any future legislative change.

4. Background

- 4.1 Dorset Council has received provisional permission from the Department for Transport (DfT) to participate in the national rental e scooter trial, currently scheduled to run until May 2028. By taking part in the trial Dorset Council will

make a vital contribution to shaping future legislation by examining how rental e scooters operate in real world conditions, including impacts on travel behaviour, carbon emissions, accessibility, safety and public perception.

- 4.2 The proposal is to introduce regulated e scooter rental schemes in two defined and targeted areas, selected because trip lengths, population density and existing infrastructure are most compatible with micromobility use. Participation in the trial enables Dorset Council to actively shape and control e-scooter use locally and may help reduce illegal private e-scooter use.
- 4.3 DfT guidance confirmed that rental e-scooters are only lawful within authorised trial areas and where operated through agreements with local authorities. Operators may only deploy vehicles where appointed by a local authority and with DfT approval.
- 4.4 E-Scooters within the trial must:
- Be insured and maintained by the operator.
 - Require users to hold a valid driving licence.
 - Meet national technical and safety standards.
 - Operate within defined areas and under local control measures.
- 4.5 Trials are currently authorised to continue until May 2028. A recent letter from the Simon Lightwood MP, Minister for Roads and Buses to Cllr Nick Ireland, Leader of Dorset Council has reinforced the Government's intention to legislate for micro-mobility but hints that there may be a delay to the current expected schedule from which it could be concluded that the trial period could be extended.

5. Operating Principles of the Scheme

- 5.1 The proposed rental e-scooter scheme will operate in accordance with Department for Transport guidance, permitting use on roads and cycle lanes where authorised, but prohibiting use on pavements and most cycle tracks unless these are formally redesignated and supported by amended Traffic Regulation Orders, requiring a review of existing infrastructure and legal frameworks to enable implementation.
- 5.2 Two delivery models are identified—a potential extension of the existing BCP Beryl scheme and a separately procured concession model for Weymouth, Dorchester and surrounding areas—supported by core operational controls including geofencing, speed limits, designated parking, mandatory driving licence validation and data sharing. Effective operation will depend heavily on well-managed parking arrangements and behavioural controls to minimise obstruction, alongside a combination of operator-led compliance measures

and statutory enforcement. However, the Council has limited direct enforcement powers, particularly in relation to offences such as pavement riding, creating reliance on Dorset Police and highlighting enforcement as a key risk, to be mitigated through technology, partnership working and operator sanctions

6. Strategic Case for Regulated E Scooters in Dorset

6.1 Reducing Short Car Trips, Congestion and Emissions

- 6.2 A high proportion of everyday car journeys in Dorset are under 5km. E scooters are well suited to this distance range and can provide an effective alternative where walking is impractical, cycling is unattractive, or bus services are infrequent. Supporting mode shift for short trips can reduce congestion in town centres, ease parking pressure and lower tailpipe emissions, directly contributing to Dorset Council's climate commitments.

6.3 Improving Access, Opportunity and Transport Choice

- 6.4 Evidence from national trials shows that rental e scooters are frequently used for first and last mile journeys to bus and rail hubs, commuting to employment not well served by public transport, and accessing education and local services. They can widen travel choice for people without access to a private car, including young workers, apprentices, students and people in lower paid or shift based employment.

6.5 Supporting Town Centres, Tourism and Local Economies

- 6.6 In Weymouth, Portland, Dorchester and Chickerell, tourism and seasonal activity place pressure on the transport network. Regulated e scooters can support local trips without adding to traffic volumes, reduce pressure on short stay parking, and facilitate movement between transport hubs, attractions and town centres, complementing walking and cycling.

6.7 Managing Existing E Scooter Use Through Regulation

- 6.8 Although private e scooters are illegal on public roads and spaces, they are already present in Dorset communities. A regulated rental scheme provides a legal, insured and speed limited alternative, with geofencing, parking controls and clear operator accountability. National evidence indicates that the vast majority of serious incidents have involved private, unregulated e scooters rather than rental schemes operating under DfT controls, reinforcing the safety case for managed provision.

7. Evidence from Comparable Schemes

- 7.1 As of 2025–2026, there are 17–18 Department for Transport (DfT)–sanctioned rental e-scooter trial schemes currently operating in England. All trials are operating under the national DfT framework and are currently

authorised to continue until May 2028, subject to compliance with strict safety, legal and monitoring requirements.

- 7.2 The neighbouring Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole (BCP) e-scooter scheme, in operation since 2023, provides a highly relevant comparator. The scheme has supported hundreds of thousands of trips, with user surveys indicating substantial replacement of short car journeys and measurable carbon savings. Its performance places it among the strongest performing DfT trial areas nationally, demonstrating that risks associated with rental e-scooters are manageable where strong controls, geofencing, maintenance and governance are in place.

8. Proposed Delivery Approach

8.1 Corfe Mullen and Upton

- 8.2 Corfe Mullen and Upton are currently served by a Beryl operated e-bike scheme forming part of the wider BCP micromobility network. Due to its limited scale, the area is not commercially viable as a standalone e-scooter scheme. It is therefore proposed that e-scooters are introduced as an extension of the existing BCP scheme, delivered by Beryl Bikes, enabling seamless cross boundary travel and operational efficiency.

8.3 Weymouth, Dorchester, Portland and Chickerell

- 8.4 In Weymouth, Dorchester, Portland and Chickerell, an existing bikeshare scheme already operates under concession. It is proposed that the Council tenders for an e-scooter operator, with procurement requirements placing strong emphasis on safety controls, parking management, data sharing, community engagement and responsiveness to local concerns.

9. Safety, Policing and Stakeholder Views

9.1 Dorset Police

- 9.2 Dorset Police support progression of a regulated rental e-scooter scheme in principle, subject to strong and enforceable controls. Key requirements include reduced speeds and no ride zones in busy pedestrian areas, robust parking arrangements, clear operator responsibility for managing misuse, licence verification and structured data sharing and governance arrangements.
- 9.3 National evaluation evidence indicates that safety outcomes for regulated rental schemes differ significantly from private e scooter use, with the majority of serious incidents nationally involving private, unregulated vehicles. This supports the position that a managed rental approach can reduce overall risk compared to existing unmanaged use.

9.4 Police and Crime Commissioner

- 9.5 The Police and Crime Commissioner has raised concerns regarding potential impacts on policing resources, antisocial behaviour, enforcement clarity and the indirect encouragement of private e-scooter ownership. These concerns are acknowledged and addressed through proposed scheme conditions, including clear accountability for operators, strong governance, ongoing engagement with Dorset Police, and the ability to amend or withdraw the scheme if impacts prove unacceptable.

9.6 Special Interest Groups including Disability Groups

- 9.7 An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) has been completed for the e-scooter proposal (appendix 5).
- 9.8 The EqIA identifies that the scheme has the potential to give rise to both positive and adverse impacts on persons with protected characteristic, in particular disabled people, including those who are blind, partially sighted or have mobility impairments.
- 9.9 Engagement with Dorset disability organisations, including Dorset Blind Association members, Royal National Institute for the Blind, (RNIB) Guide Dogs and local Equality, Diversity and Inclusion group representatives, highlights significant concerns regarding the potential impacts of rental e scooter schemes on the safety of blind, partially sighted and mobility impaired highway users. Key issues raised include the safety risks posed by fast moving and largely silent vehicles, inconsistent rider behaviour, and obstruction of footways caused by poorly parked e scooters and e bikes, which can restrict independent movement and increase anxiety, risk of collision and avoidance of journeys altogether.
- 9.10 National disability organisations, including RNIB and Guide Dogs, have consistently raised similar concerns in areas where e scooter trials are operating, calling for strong mitigations such as enforced bans on pavement riding, clearly defined and enforced parking locations, audible alerts, lower speed limits in pedestrian heavy areas, accessible reporting mechanisms, and meaningful early engagement with disabled people. While some individuals locally reported no negative experiences and noted that e bikes are more detectable than e scooters, the overall feedback emphasises that any introduction of e scooters in Dorset would need to be accompanied by robust design, enforcement and governance arrangements to ensure schemes do not disproportionately impact disabled residents or undermine accessibility and inclusivity.

9.11 National evidence from Department for Transport approved e scooter trials indicates that, for some people with limited mobility, rental e scooters can provide a practical and inclusive travel option where walking longer distances, cycling, or using conventional public transport may be difficult. Evaluations show that e scooters are commonly used by individuals who do not feel able to cycle due to balance, stamina or joint issues, but who can stand for short periods and benefit from throttle assisted, low effort travel.

9.12 Users report that e scooters can enable first and last mile journeys to bus stops, workplaces and local services, reducing reliance on lifts or taxis and increasing independence. Local authority evaluations, including in the West of England and London trials, have found that some users with limited mobility conditions value e scooters for their step free access, ease of hire, and ability to make short, time efficient journeys that would otherwise be a barrier, particularly in hilly or car dependent areas.

While e scooters are not suitable for all disabled people and do not replace the need for accessible public transport or adapted cycles, the evidence suggests that, when well regulated, they can form part of a broader, inclusive transport offer that expands choice and independence for certain groups who are currently underserved by existing modes.

10. Alternative options considered

Option	Description	Reason discounted
1. Do nothing	No participation in DfT trial	Leaves illegal use unmanaged; foregoes benefits
2. Dorset-wide scheme	Countywide rollout	Unsuitable for rural areas; higher safety risk
3. Council-operated scheme	Council owns and runs service	High cost and significant operational risk
4. Council-funded scheme	Public subsidy model	Not affordable; unnecessary
5. Delay participation	Await legislation	Users would miss out on the positive benefits of e-scooters. Missed opportunity to shape outcomes. No guarantee of how the legislation evolves.

11. Legal considerations

11.1 The scheme will operate within a defined legal framework comprising DfT trial regulations, Highway legislation and contractual arrangements. Key points include:

- Rental scooters are lawful only within DfT trial parameters.

- Use is restricted to roads and cycle lanes.
- In some cases, Traffic Regulation Orders must be updated to permit use in cycle lanes.

11.2 Provision of Facilities

11.3 The legal basis for parking and infrastructure will depend on the delivery model:

- Section 115B of the Highways Act 1980 will be engaged where infrastructure is provided directly by the Council.
- Section 115E of the Highways Act 1980 will be engaged where infrastructure forms part of a concession agreement.

11.4 Both routes may require frontager consultation.

11.5 Contractual Arrangements

11.6 The Council will require a contract or a variation to an existing contract for the delivery of the services with a service provider. Legal advice will be taken on the most suitable contractual arrangement to deliver the trial.

11.7 The Council intends to go out to tender for the Weymouth, Portland, Chickerell and Dorchester trial to ensure best value is achieved for the authority. The commercial concession contract position is generally that the Council would not make a payment to the provider directly but would allow the provider to generate income by charging the users. A concession contract must be procured in accordance with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules. The contract value shall be calculated on the anticipated income to the provider.

11.8 Through the contract with the provider, the Council shall determine appropriate sites for parking. In some situations these can be permitted within the highway providing the requirements of Section 115E of the Highways Act 1980 are complied with.

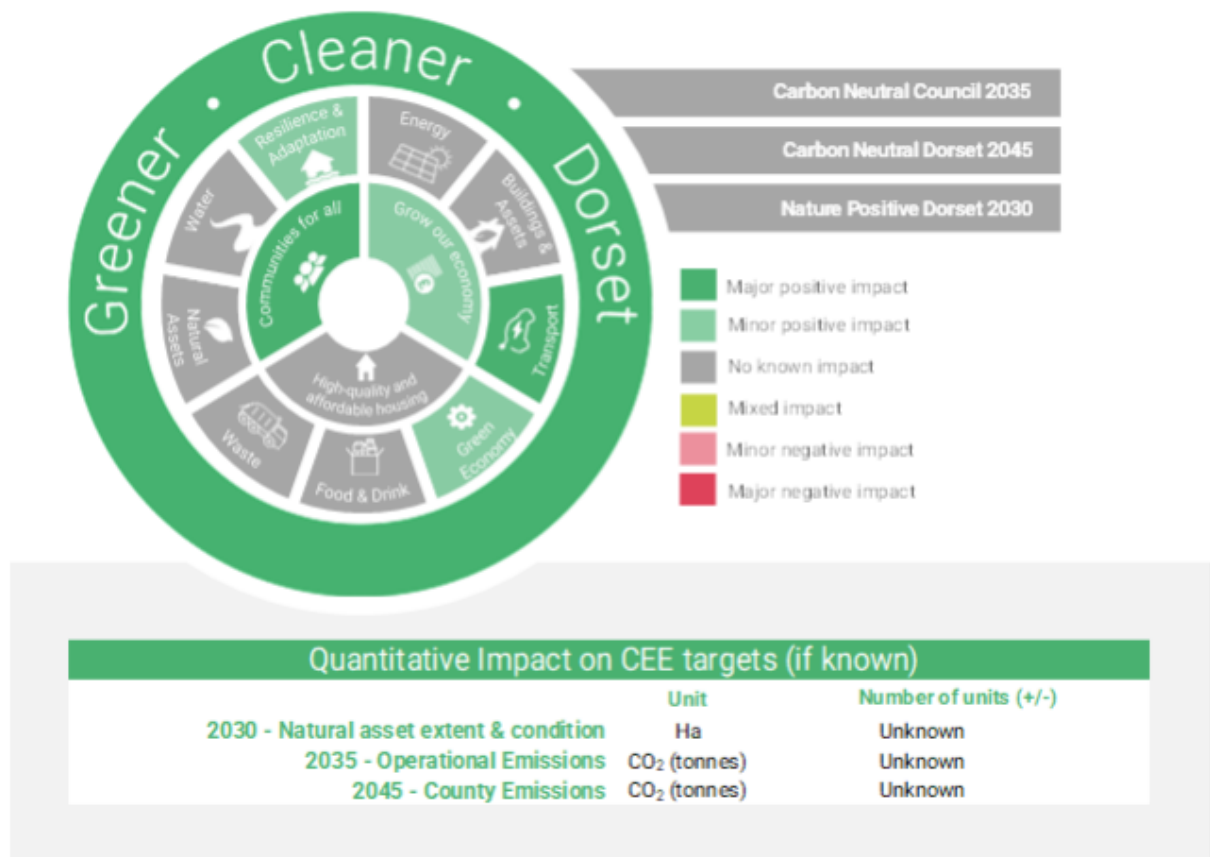
11.9 Where S115E does not apply, the Council may consider contractual licenses on land that is not highway. Parking bays not on the highway or Council land may require the supplier to enter into a separate arrangement with the land owner.

12. Financial implications

12.1 Both schemes would operate on a concession basis and be fully funded by operators. Dorset Council would incur officer time costs associated with procurement, governance, monitoring and the implementation of legal

requirements including any traffic regulation orders which incur a direct cost. Any revenue share is expected to remain modest and is not a determining factor in the recommendation.

13. Natural environment, climate & ecology implications



- 13.1 Regulated e-scooters can support reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and improvements in air quality by replacing short car trips. Environmental benefits will be maximised through careful management of fleet operations, vehicle lifespans and redistribution activity.

14. Well-being and health implications

- 14.1 Positive impacts include improved access, reduced travel costs and increased independence for some users. Risks relating to safety and pedestrian confidence are recognised and will be mitigated through speed limits, geofencing, parking controls, enforcement and ongoing monitoring.

15. Implications

- 15.1 No additional implications have been identified.

16. Risk Implications

- 16.1 The introduction of regulated e-scooter rental schemes presents a medium current risk, primarily associated with safety, compliance, public perception and operational oversight. With proposed mitigations and governance arrangements in place, the residual risk is considered low and manageable.
- 16.2 **HAVING CONSIDERED:** the risks associated with this decision; the level of risk has been identified as:

Current Risk: Medium

Residual Risk: Low

17. Equalities

- 17.1 A full Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken in line with the Public Sector Equality Duty and has informed the development of the proposed e-scooter scheme. The assessment identifies that the scheme is likely to have both positive and negative impacts across protected groups. While it has potential to improve access to affordable, flexible transport—particularly for younger people and those without access to a private car—it also raises significant concerns for disabled people, especially in relation to pavement obstruction, collision risk and reduced confidence in using public spaces.
- 17.2 The Council recognises that these risks could result in a disproportionate adverse impact on disabled users if not effectively managed. A package of mitigation measures is proposed, including designated parking, geofencing, speed controls, user education and operator-led enforcement, alongside ongoing engagement with disability groups. However, there are limitations to the Council's direct enforcement powers, with reliance on Dorset Police and user compliance representing a key residual risk.
- 17.3 The Public Sector Equality Duty will therefore continue to be applied throughout the trial, with ongoing monitoring of impacts, complaints and feedback. The scheme may be capable of meeting the Council's equality duties if mitigation measures are effectively implemented and maintained, but Members are asked to note that a residual risk remains, particularly relating to enforcement and unlawful use, and to consider whether this is acceptable in determining whether to proceed.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Maps of proposed E-scooter trial areas

Appendix 2: e-Scooter Briefing Report to Dorset Police

Appendix 3: Dorset Police response to the e-scooter proposal

Appendix 4: Police and Crime Commissioner Response

Appendix 5: e-Scooter Proposal Draft EqIA

Appendix 6: table of climate wheel outcomes

Appendix 7: Dorset e-scooter risk assessment

Appendix 8: E-scooter operating principles

Background papers

17.4 National Evaluation of E-Scooter Trials – Findings Report (DfT, 2022)

17.5 Link: [DfT Findings Report](#)

Summary: Provides evidence from UK-wide trials on safety, modal shift, and public perception. Highlights benefits such as reduced car use and improved transport equity, while identifying risks like collision rates and pavement riding—informing mitigation strategies for Dorset.

17.6 National Evaluation of E-Scooter Trials – Technical Report (DfT, 2022)

17.7 Link: [DfT Technical Report](#)

Summary: Offers detailed data analysis on usage patterns, environmental impact, and safety outcomes. Useful for benchmarking Dorset's scheme against national performance indicators.

17.8 Beryl E-Scooter Share – Bournemouth, Christchurch & Poole (BCP) Council

17.9 Link: [BCP E-Scooter Scheme](#)

Summary: Demonstrates strong operational performance, high usage, and significant CO₂ savings in a neighbouring area, supporting the case for Dorset's scheme viability.

18. Report sign-off

18.1 This report has been through the internal report clearance process and has been signed off by the Director for Legal and Democratic (Monitoring Officer), the Executive Director for Corporate Development (Section 151 Officer) and the appropriate Portfolio Holder(s)

19. Appendix 6

ACCESSIBLE TABLE SHOWING IMPACTS

Natural Environment, Climate & Ecology Strategy Commitments	Impact
Energy	No known impact
Buildings & Assets	No known impact
Transport	Major positive impact
Green Economy	Minor positive impact
Food & Drink	No known impact
Waste	No known impact
Natural Assets & Ecology	No known impact
Water	No known impact
Resilience and Adaptation	Minor positive impact

Corporate Plan Aims	Impact
Grow our economy	Minor positive impact
High-quality and affordable housing	Neutral impact
Communities for all	Major positive impact