

Appendix 3 – Formal response from Dorset Police regarding the e-scooter scheme proposal

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposal to introduce a hire e-scooter scheme in Dorset. I sit on the working group for BCP and was part of Beryl e-scooters into Christchurch,

Research shows that hire e-scooters could provide useful transport benefits. They offer an alternative for short journeys without relying on cars, which may help reduce congestion and emissions. They can also improve access to public transport and support travel in areas where bus services are limited. In addition, a regulated hire scheme may reduce illegal private e-scooter use by providing a safer and lawful alternative. However, these benefits must be balanced against important safety and community concerns.

Key Safety Concerns

Collisions are a significant issue. E-scooters operate in spaces shared with both vehicles and pedestrians, increasing the risk of incidents. A further concern is under reporting: many collisions, particularly those involving minor injuries, are not reported to police, meaning the true scale of harm may not be fully understood. Antisocial behaviour is another concern. Experience in other areas shows problems such as pavement riding, poor parking that blocks footways, and irresponsible riding in pedestrian areas and around the nighttime economy. These behaviours disproportionately affect vulnerable people, particularly Dorset's large elderly population. Many town centres also have narrow pavements and historic layouts, increasing the likelihood of conflict between pedestrians and e-scooters. The operator in BCP deals with anti-social riding by way of a ban or a warning but the reporting of offences is low, and work needs to be done to increase reporting to operator.

Safety Controls and Risk Reduction

If the scheme proceeds, strong safety measures should be introduced. Geo-fencing should ensure scooters automatically slow in higher risk areas, reduced speeds in busy pedestrian zones, and 'no ride' zones where necessary.

High risk locations should be clearly identified in partnership with neighbourhood policing teams and local stakeholders. Areas with higher collision rates, vulnerable road users, or persistent antisocial behaviour should have targeted speed restrictions and controls to reduce the risk of serious injury. It should also be agreed from the offset that speed reduction will be put in place in the immediate footprint of large scale event which attract a high amount of foot traffic. Time of day restrictions should also be considered, particularly to reduce the risk of intoxicated riding late at night. I would suggest e-scooters are not available between the hours of 2200 –

0500 hours. E-scooters should only be permitted on roads with a speed limit of 30mph or less.

Ride scheme operators tend to use bays already in place for the hire bikes, sometimes these are not appropriate for e-scooters as they are within a prohibited zone, this should be considered when deciding on rental bays. The hierarchy of road users puts pedestrians at the top and this should be considered when implementing the scheme.

Roles and Responsibilities

Clear accountability is essential. The hire operator should take the lead in handling minor offences such as underage riding, pavement riding, and other minor careless or inconsiderate riding. Council and police websites should direct such reports to the operator in the first instance so problems can be resolved quickly without creating unnecessary demand on police resources. Police representatives should sit on the scheme panel and regularly review usage levels, collision data, complaints, and emerging safety concerns, with review periods agreed by the local authority.

Licensing and Eligibility Checks

Licensing processes require greater clarity. When users upload a driving licence, it must be clear what checks are undertaken, how authenticity is verified, and whether follow up checks occur after account creation. There have been cases where disqualified drivers have still accessed hire e-scooters. This risk should be addressed at the point of hire. Ongoing eligibility checks should also be considered so users who later become disqualified cannot continue riding.

Education and Communication

Public information will be critical if the scheme is introduced. Clear guidance should explain where e-scooters can legally be used, the rules and responsibilities for riders, and how collisions or safety concerns can be reported. Simplifying reporting processes may also help address current under reporting. Seasonal safety campaigns would further reduce risk. For example, winter campaigns encouraging riders to be visible and use appropriate clothing would be beneficial.

Hire e-scooters could deliver transport benefits and help reduce illegal private use. However, implementation should only proceed with strong safety controls, protection for vulnerable and elderly residents. With the above safeguards in place, risks can be better managed while enabling potential benefits.

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