

Frequently Asked Questions about Mobikes

The council is aware that a recent intensification of operations by the dock less bike hire company Mobike in the Chiswick area has caused some concerns around obstruction of the highway and the look and feel of the street scene. In response we have provided the following answers to frequently asked questions about the scheme below.

When will the trial period in Chiswick be finished?

The council has signed a voluntary agreement with Mobike to allow the scheme to operate in the borough until February 2019. Legal discussions are ongoing as to whether the highway authority ultimately has the power to restrict trading activity by such companies. London Councils are working together to develop a by-law to ensure this is the case, but this is unlikely to be in force before 2020. It is clear though that we are permitted to remove bikes if they are fully obstructing the highway and preventing passage.

What sort of feedback is the Council getting and how will it evaluate whether this scheme should be retained?

We receive and record all feedback sent to the traffic@hounslow.gov.uk inbox. The Traffic & Transport service will undertake an assessment of the comments received as the end of the trial period is approached to determine the way forward. We have received a number of concerns that the scheme is leading to more 'street clutter'. However, we have also received positive feedback by users of the bikes who value the opportunity to access bicycles across a wide area and make trips quickly, at low cost and in a healthy and sustainable way.

Does the council engage with Ealing about its experience with Mobikes?

Yes, officers from the council have had many conversations with their counterparts at Ealing about the scheme. To date, the feedback from Ealing has been generally positive and indeed we understand that they are in negotiations with a further dockless bike hire company about allowing them to operate in their borough.

Does the council accept that allowing these bikes to be abandoned wherever the user feels like it is not only adding to street clutter, but can endanger pedestrians etc.?

We are aware of reports that Mobikes have been left outside of hub locations, which are marked in the app, for longer than the 72hour 'stagnation' threshold. At this point they should be relocated back to a hub. We have worked with Mobike to promote 'good parking practice' to users but understand there have been instances where bikes are left inconsiderately. We are encouraging the operator to step up their monitoring of this.

What does the council propose to do about these complaints?

We are recording all feedback for review as we approach the end of the trial period. We have also asked Mobike to attend the next meeting of the Chiswick Area Forum on 5 February to listen directly to community concerns. They have confirmed that they are happy to attend.

Is there any ongoing contact between the providers of these bikes and the council?

Council officers have regular contact with MoBike where we raise community concerns and discuss how the scheme is working (including review of data such as the number of trips made etc).

How much has the Mobikes scheme cost the Council. Where does the financing come from?

The scheme operates without any cost to the Council.