

Somerset West and Taunton Council

Community Scrutiny Committee – 25 May 2022

Somerset West and Taunton, Department for Transport Scooter Trial (Review of the learning, feedback and strategy to date)

This matter is the responsibility of the Executive Member for Climate Change

Report Author: Sue Tomlinson, Programme Manager for Climate Change

1 Executive Summary / Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The scooter trial in Somerset West and Taunton is an approved scheme which forms part of the Department for Transport scooter trials, launched in July 2020.
- 1.2 The Department for Transport is collecting data from all trial areas and this data will inform decision making regarding any new legislation.
- 1.3 The Somerset West and Taunton trial went live 30 October 2020 in Taunton and 5 June 2021 in Minehead. All trials are due to end 30 November 2022.
- 1.4 This report provides an update on the scheme based on questions raised by the Community Scrutiny Committee.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 There are no recommendations within this report; the detail is for information only.

3 Background

- 3.1 To support a 'green' restart of local travel and help mitigate reduced public transport capacity, in July 2020 the Department for Transport made regulation allowing trials of rental scooters to be fast tracked and expanded.
- 3.2 All trial proposals had to come from local authorities and the deadline to express an interest in taking part was 31 August 2020.
- 3.3 Scooter operators were only able to take part in the trials through a local authority procurement exercise and with necessary permission from the Department for Transport.
- 3.4 The Department for Transport confirmed the Somerset West and Taunton trial by issuing

a Vehicle Special Order for the scheme.

- 3.5 Trials are now live in 31 local authority regions across England and the Department for Transport have a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation programme underway to assess the safety of scooters and their wider impacts.
- 3.6 The Somerset West and Taunton trial is managed by our scooter rental operator Zipp Mobility.
- 3.7 Scooters fall within the statutory definition of a motor vehicle, and the Department for Transport has defined a subcategory for an scooter.
- 3.8 The scooters used with in the Somerset West and Taunton trial have passed the Department for Transport minimum technical requirements and are tracked by GPS and geofencing, controlled via a dashboard managed by Zipp. The scooters will only work inside of the agreed service area for Taunton and Minehead, these areas are identified on the maps within Appendix B.
- 3.9 The original expiry date for the Somerset West and Taunton trial was 25 October 2021, but all trials were extended by the Department for Transport until 31 March 2022, this was to take account of the slower start to trials because of the pandemic.
- 3.10 Trials were extended further in October 2021 by the Department for Transport to the 30 November 2022, and new Vehicle Special Orders have been issued for this change.
- 3.11 Extending the trials allows the Department for Transport to fill the data gaps, make necessary changes to ensure the trials are as safe as possible and establish best practice for shared micromobility services.
- 3.12 The Department for Transport were due to issue an interim report late last year, this report will now not be published. Ministers have decided to publish all findings as part of a final report, rather than issue a standalone publication with interim findings as originally planned. The evaluation contractor prepared an interim report with data up to June 2021. The decision not to publish was taken on the basis that this report no longer had the latest findings and the final report is due to be published shortly, although we do not currently know when.
- 3.13 The Department for Transport updated their guidance for local authorities and rental operators on the 22 February 2022. [E-scooter trials: guidance for local authorities and rental operators - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/guidance/e-scooter-trials-guidance-for-local-authorities-and-rental-operators)
- 3.14 The Queen's Speech on Tuesday 10 May 2022 announced the Government's intention to introduce legislation on the future of transport in the new parliamentary session as part of a Transport Bill.
- 3.15 The current regulations for scooters still apply, and importantly private e-scooters remain illegal to use on public roads.
- 3.16 This week's announcement does not mean a change to the rental trials. The trials will continue to run until 30 November 2022. No decision has been made about what will happen to trials after that date.

4 Escooter Usage

4.1 Zipp provide weekly usage stats for both schemes, the table below shows the cumulative figures up to 8 May 2022.

	Taunton	Minehead
Total Number of Rides	92,618	19,550
Total Distance Travelled	182,003 miles	30,458 miles
Average Trip Length	2.08 miles	1.68 miles
Average Trip Duration	00:15:37	00:16:14
Average Speed	7.98 mph	6.23 mph
Total Time Spent on Scooters	24,114 hrs	5,287 hrs
Users	12,364	7,506

4.2 The operating hours for the Somerset West and Taunton escooters were originally 6:30am until 10:30pm, this was changed in November 2021 to 5:00am until 10:30pm. Outside of these times the escooters are turned off and cannot be used.

4.3 Using daylight hour data from the WorldData website, total rides across both schemes during 2021 for daytime were 54,684 which equates to 74% of all rides and night-time rides were 19,044 which equates to 26% of all rides, see Appendix C for more detail.

5 Age of Users

5.1 All escooter users must be at least 16 years of age with a minimum of a provisional driving licence, which is used to verify their identify when they register as a new user on the Zipp App. Zipp use a third party for this verification process.

5.2 Whilst the minimum legal age to ride an escooter is 16 the number of registered users at that age is very low, currently 150 in Taunton which is 1.21% of all Taunton users and 23 in Minehead which is 0.31% of all Minehead users.

5.3 The number of rides for those aged 16 is also very low with 1,609 in Taunton which is 1.74% of all rides for Taunton and 135 in Minehead which is 0.69% of all rides in Minehead.

5.4 The table below shows the age range of those users who ride escooters the most. Most rides in both Taunton and Minehead are by users within the 21-30 age range.

Age Range	Taunton		Minehead	
	Scheme Started 30 October 2022		Scheme Started 5 June 2021	
	Number of Riders	Percentage of Riders	Number of Riders	Percentage of Riders
16-20	3109	25.15%	1697	22.61%
21-30	4895	39.59%	3294	43.88%
31-40	2689	21.75%	1499	19.97%

41-50	1103	8.92%	624	8.32%
51-60	482	3.90%	315	4.19%
61-70	78	0.63%	67	0.89%
71-80	8	0.06%	10	0.14%
Totals	12,364	100%	7,506	100%

5.5 The table below shows the age of user and the number of rides for each of the top 10 users in both Taunton and Minehead.

Rank	Taunton Scheme Started 30 October 2020		Minehead Scheme Started 5 June 2021	
	Age of User	Number of Rides	Age of User	Number of Rides
1	28	306	21	387
2	46	277	18	301
3	39	261	31	185
4	21	260	17	180
5	35	254	56	142
6	21	237	35	137
7	18	229	18	126
8	23	214	19	120
9	29	205	17	116
10	21	203	35	114

5.6 See Appendix D for graphs related to age of users.

6 Carbon Savings

6.1 The Department for Transport has been collecting data from a user survey (currently this data is not widely available and is yet to be published in their final report) using this information Zipp have been able to calculate indicative carbon savings by using the miles of all rides where the rider answered that they would have taken a car as either a driver or a passenger, had they not taken an scooter.

6.2 The table below shows indicative carbon savings to date of 41.4 tonnes for Taunton and 1.4 tonnes for Minehead.

Taunton Carbon Savings	
Total Miles	182.003
Emissions Per Mile	0.404 kg *
Average Distance Replacing Car Journeys	56%
Indicative Replaced Emissions	41.4 Tonnes

Minehead Carbon Savings	
Total Miles	30,458
Emissions Per Mile	0.404 kg *
Average Distance Replacing Car Journeys	12%

Indicative Replaced Emissions	1.4 Tonnes
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*0.404kg comes from the United States Environmental Protection Agency

- 6.3 Based on the post ride survey 15% of journeys have replaced a private car journey.
- 6.4 In addition, 15% of journey responses were '*I would not have made this journey*', which is an indicator that escooters are maybe encouraging people to get out and about.
- 6.5 The post ride survey was a nationwide survey introduced by the Department for Transport in July 2021 and it ran until the end of March 2022. During this time 100,000 data points were collected and the survey has now closed.

7 Parking Bay Usage and Journey Flow

- 7.1 The Somerset West and Taunton trial uses virtual parking bays where escooters are located across the service area. Each parking bay is identified on a map within the Zipp App and is geofenced, which means a rider must return the escooter to a specific area to end their ride. There are no infrastructure requirements for these bays, which are identified on the ground by a painted rectangle to help users locate them.
- 7.2 Taunton currently has 57 escooter parking bays and Minehead has 27. Users can start and end a ride at any of the parking bays, they do not need to ride the escooter back to where their journey started.
- 7.3 Journeys have been categorised as circular, which is where the journey started and ended at the same parking bay, and non-circular, which where the journey started and ended at different bays.
- 7.4 Appendix E shows a heat map of all journeys and a breakdown of the top circular and non-circular routes for Taunton and Minehead.

8 Changes During the SWT Trial

- 8.1 Some of the first local authority trials went live as early as July 2020, which meant there was the opportunity for Somerset West and Taunton and Zipp to implement lessons learnt from those early days. As a result, both the Taunton and Minehead schemes started with a small number of escooters. Zipp have grown the size of their fleet, based on demand, slowly throughout the trial. Taunton started with 25 scooters and currently has a maximum fleet size of 100 and Minehead started with 15 and currently has a maximum fleet size of 50.
- 8.2 Zipp have implemented several changes during the trial, most importantly they have introduced safety measures that include individual vehicle registration numbers and safety information stickers on every escooter within their fleet. Somerset West and Taunton made a small financial contribution from the Carbon Neutrality and Climate Resilience budget to support this implementation.
- 8.3 Safety street signs were launched in Minehead in September 2021, these are in prime positions along the seafront and within the town. The signs have been designed in association with Avon and Somerset Constabulary and are there to help users and non-

users understand the rules and enforcement. Funding came from the 'Reopening High Streets Safely' fund.

- 8.4 The same signage has now been implemented in Taunton town centre too.
- 8.5 Operating hours have been amended and extended so that the scooters are usable between the hours of 5:00am and 10:30pm, this has given more convenient access to early morning commuters.
- 8.6 As demand has grown more parking bays have been added to both service areas. Zipp often receive requests from members of the public and local businesses for more parking bays, and we have a process in place to assess and approve these requests.
- 8.7 Zipp have also launched a variety of promotional schemes including free rides for NHS staff during lockdown, 10% off rides for world car free day, 1 day, 7 day and 30 day passes, refer a friend scheme, and they have also supported the Taunton litter picking group with free user credit. The most recent promotional schemes have been to support International Women's Day and the Eat Festival in Minehead and Taunton.
- 8.8 The frequently asked questions have been improved and are available on both the Somerset West and Taunton scooter webpage and the Zipp website.
- 8.9 Following a recent audit of all scooters within their fleet, Zipp have implemented a new weekly maintenance and recording schedule.
- 8.10 The Department for Transport updated their guidance for local authorities and rental operators on the 22 February 2022. The update includes enhancing safety measures and improving public perceptions, and Somerset West and Taunton officers are working with Zipp to address the additional requirements.

9 Insurance Cover

- 9.1 During the trials scooters are classed as motor vehicles, meaning there is a requirement to have insurance and the correct type of driving licence. It is the responsibility of the scooter operator to ensure there is motor insurance in place.
- 9.2 Zipp have motor insurance through ZEGO, and the cover is for social, domestic and personal use for any vehicle within the Zipp Mobility UK Ltd fleet, leased to a user approved by ZEGO in accordance with their underwriting criteria. The level of cover is liability to third parties and personal accidents. Sum insured per claim, third party property damage: £1.2m, bodily injury: unlimited, death: £45k, repatriation: £4.5k, permanent total disablement: £45k and permanent partial disablement £45k.
- 9.3 There is an extension of cover for Somerset West and Taunton but only insofar as Somerset West and Taunton are legally liable for any accidents occurring on their private property, and strictly subject to the same terms, conditions and exclusions as are set out in the policy and which apply to any user.
- 9.4 Zipp also have professional indemnity for public and products liability, employers' liability, directors' and officers' liability, corporate legal liability, cyber 1st & 3rd party losses

and cyber-crime & fraud liability cover in place.

10 Incidents and Accidents

10.1 The Avon and Somerset Constabulary, Traffic Management Supervisor reports all scooter incidents across their force area to Somerset West and Taunton and Zipp monthly. The table below shows all scooter related calls from members of the public to the police, both trial related and non-trial related (private use) that have been reported since November 2020. In general, these reports are wide ranging, and the majority are incidental to the report, e.g. the offender for a theft/burglary/damage etc had made off on an scooter.

	Taunton Scheme Started 30 October 2020		Minehead Scheme Started 5 June 2021	
	Non-Trial Related	Trial Related	Non-Trial Related	Trial Related
November 2020	4	5	N/A	N/A
December 2020	3	3	N/A	N/A
January 2021	4	9	N/A	N/A
February 2021	10	1	N/A	N/A
March 2021	7	3	N/A	N/A
April 2021	12	0	N/A	N/A
May 2021	13	0	N/A	N/A
June 2021	23	0	2	1
	Taunton and Minehead		Taunton and Minehead	
	Non-Trial related		Trial Related	
July 2021	27		2	
August 2021	13		2	
September 2021	16		2	
October 2021	5		0	
November 2021	13		2	
December 2021	14		5	
January 2022	27		1	
February 2022	23		3	
March 2022	13		8	
April 2022	24		6	

10.2 The increase of trial related calls in March and April 2022 have been due to component theft.

10.3 During the trial Zipp have issued 43 final warnings in Taunton and 25 in Minehead, for reasons such as pavement riding, a rider allowing someone else to use their account, riding dangerously or riding with a passenger. Zipp have also banned 8 users in Taunton and 1 in Minehead, these have been due to reckless riding or riding with a passenger

following a previous warning, and an incident of fraudulent card use.

- 10.4 Zipp have reported 6 incidents in Taunton and 1 in Minehead to their insurance company since the start of the trial, of these cases 3 have resulted in a visit to the hospital at the time of reporting, and the police were present at the incident in Minehead. All cases have been classified as crash/impact by the insurance company, and to date none of these cases have resulted in claims, however 6 cases have a status of open, which means the insurance company may still be gathering information or they may be unable to contact the involved parties.

11 Zero Ebikes

- 11.1 The Zipp zero ebikes are out of scope of this report, they do not form part of the escooter trial and therefore Somerset West and Taunton do not have any contractual agreement in place with Zipp.

12 Links to Corporate Strategy

- 12.1 Our Environment and Economy - work towards making our District carbon neutral by 2030 - deliver projects based on a Carbon Neutrality and Climate Resilience Plan that work toward this goal.

13 Finance / Resource Implications

- 13.1 There are no finance / resource implications related to this report; the contract with Zipp has no cost to Somerset West and Taunton or our residents.

14 Legal Implications

- 14.1 Somerset West and Taunton have a contract in place with Zipp for them to manage the scheme for the duration of the trial, until 30 November 2022.
- 14.2 The Queen's Speech on Tuesday 10 May 2022 announced the Government's intention to introduce legislation on the future of transport in the new parliamentary session as part of a Transport Bill.
- 14.3 Baroness Vere of Norbiton added more detail to this in the House of Lords, outlining that one aim of the Transport Bill will be to create a new regime for regulating micromobility. Further details will be announced over the coming months.
- 14.4 The Department for Transport have confirmed that the Government intends to create a new, low-speed, zero-emission vehicle (LZEV) category which is independent from the cycle and motor vehicle categories, covering both new vehicles that are familiar to us today, such as escooters, and vehicles that have yet to be invented.
- 14.5 New powers, to be set out in the Transport Bill, would allow the Government to decide

which vehicles fall into this category in future and establish how they should be regulated to make sure that they are safe for users, pedestrians, and other road users, while still facilitating growth and innovation. The primary benefit of this is that the new framework would be more adaptable, enabling regulations to keep up with this fast-moving sector and evolving user behaviours.

- 14.6 The Department for Transport anticipate using the powers within the Bill to subsequently create regulations that will legalise scooters, but under new rules. These rules would include robust technical requirements and, most likely, a set of requirements for users.
- 14.7 The Bill will also propose new powers for local transport authorities to shape and manage rental operations, for pedal cycles, e-cycles, and scooters. The details of this scheme will be set out in subsequent regulations.
- 14.8 The Department for Transport will consult publicly before any secondary regulations for scooters and the rental schemes are made. This means that no final decisions about regulations have been made, nor will they be until such point that the Transport Bill becomes law.
- 14.9 The current regulations for scooters still apply, and importantly private e-scooters remain illegal to use on public roads.
- 14.10 This week's announcement does not mean a change to the rental trials. The trials will continue to run until 30 November 2022. No decision has been made about what will happen to trials after that date.

15 Climate and Sustainability Implications

- 15.1 The scooter trial supports the Council's climate emergency declaration and ambitions to work towards making our district carbon neutral by 2030.
- 15.2 Scooters are a green form of public transport which can help to reduce carbon emissions when used to replace journeys that would otherwise have been taken using a traditional internal combustion engine vehicle, such as a car or van.

16 Equality and Diversity Implications

- 16.1 An equalities impact assessment was carried out as part of the Somerset West and Taunton bid submission to the Department for Transport, in August 2020.
- 16.2 The assessment identified; *the possibility of negative impact, real or perceived, of this proposal exists in relation to people who share the protected characteristic of 'Disability' and particularly those who are blind or partially sighted.*
- 16.3 We therefore approached the Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB) for advice and used their published material on the subject.
- 16.4 We consulted with the RNIB, Somerset Sight, The Macular Society and Compass

Disability prior to submitting our bid to the Department for Transport. Since then, Somerset West and Taunton officers and Zipp colleagues have had joint monthly review meetings with representatives from these groups.

- 16.5 Somerset West and Taunton and Zipp have also jointly attended a 'blind walk' in both Taunton and Minehead organised by the RNIB to help us understand and appreciate the obstacles those who are visually impaired face every time they come into town.

17 Social Value Implications

- 17.1 Zipp Mobility were procured as part of the Somerset West and Taunton bid submission to the Department for Transport, in August 2020.
- 17.2 When appointed in October 2020 Zipp recruited locally for their operatives, who are responsible for the day-to-day operations of the scheme. Zipp now have 3 full time employees across the district.
- 17.3 The contract with Zipp has no cost to Somerset West and Taunton or our residents.

18 Partnership Implications

- 18.1 There are no partnership implications; Somerset West and Taunton officers have a strong working relationship with Zipp senior managers and local operatives.

19 Consultation Implications

- 19.1 The Department for Transport held a public consultation related to defining an escooter, its maximum speed and power, and setting the rules that users must follow in escooter trials. The consultation ran from 18 May 2020 to 2 June 2020.
- 19.2 The outcome and summary of responses are available online [Legalising rental e-scooter trials: outcome and summary of responses - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/legalising-rental-e-scooter-trials-outcome-and-summary-of-responses)
- 19.3 The Department for Transport will consult publicly before any secondary regulations for scooters and the rental schemes are made. This means that no final decisions about regulations have been made, nor will they be until such point that the Transport Bill becomes law.

Democratic Path:

- **Scrutiny Committee – Yes (25th May 2022)**
- **Executive – No**
- **Full Council – No**

Reporting Frequency: Once only

List of Appendices

Appendix A	Escooter Trial – Service Areas
Appendix B	Escooter Trial – Usage After Dark
Appendix C	Escooter Trial – Age of Users
Appendix D	Escooter Trial – Parking Bay Usage and Journey Flow

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