

Policy and Sustainability Committee

10.00am, Tuesday, 1st October 2019

Bike to Work Scheme

Executive
Wards
Council Commitments

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 The Policy and Sustainability Committee is recommended to note the report on the promotion and employee support available for our Bike to Work Scheme, and our medium to longer term plans to grow the scheme and encourage more employees to cycle to work.

Stephen S. Moir

Executive Director of Resources

Contact: Katy Miller, Head of Human Resources

Human Resources Division, Resources Directorate

E-mail: Katy.Miller@edinburgh.gov.uk | Tel: 0131 469 5522

Report

Bike to Work Scheme

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 This follow up report to Committee is in response to a Council Motion from Councillor Main and an addendum from Councillor Brown requesting further work to promote and encourage employees to take advantage of our Bike to Work Scheme. This includes our medium to longer term plans to increase uptake, what we are doing to lift the £1,000 cap internally to enable the purchase of e-bikes, and how we can open up the scheme to include small to medium bike providers, thereby providing greater choice for Council employees.

3. Background

- 3.1 The Council's Bike to Work Scheme is well established.
- 3.2 The scheme provides well documented benefits relating to personal health and wellbeing. It also contributes to Climate Emergency carbon reduction targets and reducing pollution that is harmful to health.
- 3.3 The current contract with retailer Evans Cycles is due to expire in October 2020.
- 3.4 The Council has a well-established procurement processes in place, which ensure compliance with regulation and good practice, which will be followed in the run up to the expiry of the current contract.

4. Main report

- 4.1 The Bike to Work Scheme is part of our salary sacrifice offering and allows the purchase of a bike up to the value of £1,000 with a payback period of 12 months. As a salary sacrifice scheme, participants benefit from an income tax saving on the purchase of the equipment.
- 4.2 Participants in the scheme have access to facilities, such as secure cycle parking, a work station to fix punctures (Waverley Court only), lockers, showers and changing areas. These facilities vary across our main sites and we are gradually working to improve them. There are also two electric bikes available at Waverley Court for staff to use for travel to meetings.

- 4.3 Scheme promotion is currently through a range of channels (see Appendix 1). We held our first Bike Breakfast at Waverley Court on Cycle to Work day (8th August), and our e-bike trial (where e-bikes were lent to staff for three to five days at a time to assess effectiveness and as an alternative to using a fleet car or other mode of transport) completed on the 7th August. The trial was fully booked within 24 hours of being promoted on the Orb. Sixteen employees took part, using the e-bikes mainly for commuting to and from work. We are also liaising with Just Eat Cycle Hire regarding the possibility of creating a simple booking system for bicycle travel for meetings, and we are planning to hold more 'led cycles'. These are supervised cycles with a trained cyclist to help people gain confidence with cycling.
- 4.4 Incentives and activities also support promotion of the scheme. These include a Bicycle User Group (BUG) to provide updates to scheme users, bicycle and training and maintenance sessions, Dr Bike drop in sessions for any bicycle issues, and active travel challenges.
- 4.5 The 2017 travel survey results are a baseline upon which we consider future progression towards active and sustainable modes for staff travelling to Council buildings. Currently 10% of our employees cycle to work and our aim is to increase that to 12% by 2020. We are currently in the process of finalising the Council's Travel Plan. This will cover travel planning for the whole of the Council, drawing on previous Travel Plans, initiatives and working practices, and will set out a number of high level aims and objectives, which will consider the following: improving cycle facilities at the six main Council sites (Waverley Court, City Chambers, the four locality offices); increased promotion of e-bikes (particularly when we are able to confirm our approach to the removal of the £1000 cap); continuing our work to create a cycle friendly workplace and achieve our Cycle-Friendly Employer award at all six main sites (we currently have this award at Waverley Court and the South east Locality Office); and making better use of our cycling champions by engaging more actively with them to create a proper cycling network/community across the Council.
- 4.6 We will continue with ongoing promotion and communication for all colleagues, including our 'hard to reach' employees who do not have access to email or the Council intranet. We are also improving how we package our wellbeing offering to make it clearer to our people what is available to them. The current Bike to Work Scheme is part of a range of wider employee wellbeing initiatives and benefits. The current contract is due to expire in October 2020. As such, the re-tendering process will follow our agreed procurement process related to the needs of our employees in line with our initiatives and employee benefits.
- 4.7 The specification will consider broader employee benefits and the resources required to administer the scheme. An analysis of cost and quality will be undertaken including an assessment of the whole life cost. This includes internal resource costs, rebates payable and typical cycle cost to the employee. Consideration will also be given to the ease of administration, range of cycles offered, access, marketing, promotion, community benefits and sustainable operation.

- 4.1 Following the recent decision by the UK Government to lift the £1,000 cap on bike to work salary sacrifice schemes, we are exploring the possibility of moving onto Evans Cycles' new bike to work scheme from the existing scheme currently in place. This new scheme offers the opportunity to raise the cap on our Ride to Work scheme from £1000 to up to £5000. This would allow our employees to purchase e-bikes through the scheme, the cost of which is around £2500 upwards per bike. There is minimal contractual impact in moving schemes, however it is essential to complete the necessary due diligence to assess the risk associated with this. This is particularly pertinent given that Evans Cycles had a change of parent company last year. This due diligence is being undertaken collectively by HR, Legal and Procurement, and includes requesting detail on Fair Works Practices and finances at Sports Direct for assessment as well as determining the precise content of contractual changes required. If after completing this due diligence, we are able to move onto the new scheme and lift the £1000 cap, we will promote this change to our employees through a communications campaign, as well as our other existing promotional channels.
- 4.2 Regarding opening up the scheme to include independent bike providers in the retender once the current contract ends, we will need to identify approaches to potential procurement of suppliers. Following this due process, a recommendation will be made based on a cost/benefit analysis. This could result in either the collation of all staff benefits into an arrangement with a national provider who does all administration for multiple staff benefits and contracts with several bike shops as part of that arrangement, or keeping all staff benefits separate. The latter would mean that for the Ride to Work scheme, we would consider alternatives such as multiple provider direct contracts, where the Council requirements in relation to rebates and operational arrangements must be met so limited further administration is required by Council staff.

5. Next Steps

- 5.1 The Active Travel Team will continue to support the promotion of the scheme and facilities available to employees.
- 5.2 We will complete our due diligence and make a recommendation regarding the removal of the £1,000 cap and potentially moving onto the new Evan Cycles scheme for the remainder of our contractual agreement with them to allow employees to purchase e-bikes.
- 5.3 We will make further recommendations later this year as part of a broader employee benefit offering. This may include a benefits platform, which includes cycle to work and we will consider opening up the scheme to independent bike providers as part of this work.
- 5.4 A Procurement Requirements Form (PRF) shall be submitted to enable the retender and any data analysis on procurement routes and options to be scheduled.

6. Financial impact

6.1 There is no direct financial impact arising from this report.

7. Stakeholder/Community Impact

7.1 Employees continue to benefit from the salary sacrifice scheme.

8. Background reading/external references

8.1 N/A

9. Appendices

9.1 N/A

Appendix 1 – Ride to Work Scheme 12 month plan

