

Committee(s): Strategic Planning and Performance Committee Police Authority Board	Dated: 5 September 2023 20 September 2023
Subject: Cyclist/ e-scooters- Update on City of London Police response	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	1- People are safe and feel safe
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	N/A
If so, how much?	N/A
What is the source of Funding?	N/A
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?	N/A
Report of: Commissioner of Police Pol_75-23	For Information
Report author: Sgt Stuart Ford & Chief Superintendent Rob Atkin, Local Policing	

Summary

At the Strategic Planning and Performance Committee on the 3rd May 2023, Members asked for an input at the next meeting of the Committee on what the City of London Police is doing in response to anti-social behaviour and offences perpetrated by cyclists and e-scooter riders in the City of London.

This report outlines the CoLPs response, highlighting a trial cycle squad response, deployments and outcomes.

Police Authority Board also requested an update on this matter (OR 9/2023/P) and so this report will also be submitted to PAB on the 20 September 2023.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to note the report.

Main Report

Background

1. At the last meeting of this Committee, Members asked for an update on the CoLPs response to offences committed by cyclists and e- sooter riders as this was an issue being raised regularly by their constituents and more widely at City of London resident meetings and local cluster panels.

Current Position

2. CoLP has been leading on a sustained response to this problem the outcomes for which are outlined in the report and the attached appendix 1. A Cycle squad has been formed which is currently 7 weeks into a 12-week trial period. The aim of this is to look at what difference the squad can make in the CoLP response to dealing with cycle and e- scooter enabled offences such as phone snatches, traffic offences and other anti-social behaviour that is committed on cycles and e-scooters.
3. Part of having a core dedicated cycle squad means directing our cycle asset to specific duties. Duties like Operation Niven, CoLP's operation to combat acquisitive crime, and particularly phone snatch crime, which is currently an issue London wide. The City has seen a significant reduction in this crime type of 75% in July 2023 (36) in comparison to July 2022 (143). The below table shows the downward trend.

Month	2022	2023	% change
May	85	84	-1%
June	106	70	-34%
July	143	36	-75%
Total	334	190	-43%

4. The Cycle Squad has followed suspects before they have had a chance to commit a crime and it appears that the message is getting out to offenders who use cycles to commit crime, but CoLP is still aware of offences happening on the CoLP/ MPS borders.
5. In relation to anti-social behaviour on cycles, mainly being committed by young people riding in groups. In July to September 2022, we saw 14 recorded incidents, and it is believed it was higher but underreported. In comparison in July 2023, we have had 3 reported incidents and there have been very few incidents in the hours the Cycle Squad has been on duty.
6. This means that cycle officers are out on patrol in specific areas, enabling them to engage with the public for longer hours. They are very visible and approachable for pedestrians and other cyclists and can concentrate efforts into a specific duty. This is a highly visible deterrent to anyone coming into the City to commit crime or traffic offences.
7. Since the start of the new Cycle Squad initiative just 7 weeks ago, part of the cycle officers taskings are to deal with anti-social behaviour (ASB) on cycles which has included concentrating on education and warnings to give cyclists an opportunity to improve on their behaviour. The setting up of Operation Lewis (operation to deal specifically with ASB / nuisance caused by cyclists) will continue to concentrate on this anti-social behaviour on cycles which will include all the offences detailed below. We have a 3- step plan around cycling offences as follows:

Step 1 – Education/Warning -taking detail of the cyclist on a TOR (Traffic Offence Report)

Step 2 – Education/Safe and Considerate Cycling course (still cost the cyclist £37.20)

Step 3 – Enforcement. Fixed penalty notice, at £50 up to the process to court where they can be fined a great deal more.

8. The Cycle Squad has been concentrating on Step 1 and has seen an improvement around the major routes and junctions. We will now be moving to Step 2 and Step 3.
9. By issuing a Traffic Offence Report (TOR) to any cyclist we stop that has committed an offence and also using this as a way of warning cyclists, it gives us a chance to engage with them and explain the reasons we are dealing with offences and to pass on a safety and crime prevention message. It also enables us to show where many of the offence hot spots are.
10. The Squad will also be carrying out crime prevention at the same time in the way of cycle security and phone security marking as part of Op Lewis set up to deal with this.
11. The response times are much quicker on cycles than an officer on foot and often during busy traffic times, quicker and more agile than the police vehicles, also making parts of the City more accessible which are not vehicle friendly. Additionally, in comparison to vehicles, not only is the cost of purchasing and maintaining the cycles a considerable amount less it is also completely environmentally friendly, which for a busy City is also of great importance. We are about to trial 2 lightweight e-bikes with the intention to have all of the Cycle Squad on e-bikes in the longer term. This links to the CoLP Fleet Strategy to have a more environmentally friendly fleet.
12. The Cycle Squad also has great working relationships with the Metropolitan Police Service and the Sergeant leading the Squad has been to other forces and Ambulance services to train their cycle officers and paramedics. This joint working approach means we are seeing paramedics working in the City alongside our cycle officers, which enhances the response.
13. Some of the statistics below from the first 7 weeks show how productive a small core cycle squad can be and will continue to be:
 - 1010 hours on the street
 - 2254 key messages (including crime prevention and cycle safety/enforcement)
 - 22 stop/search with a 57% success rate which is double the national average
 - 690 positive outcomes.
 - 904 Cycle offence warnings (TOR'S)
 - 94 Fixed penalty notices
 - 35 Intelligence reports
 - 35 e-bikes seized
 - 169 hours of TFL red route patrols

(Attached is Appendix 1 - a report showing the breakdown of these and other statistics)

14. Cycling offences are non-endorsable, which means just a fine is issued and offenders are not recorded on the police national computer. Officers either issue a verbal warning, ticket or will refer offenders to cycling improvement programs. Each offence is dealt with on its own merits – i.e. each case will be decided by the individual officer whether to proceed by warning or ticket.
15. Most of the offences dealt with are contravening a red automatic traffic light (ATL). Officers also issues tickets for cycling on the pavement and not having lights during dark hours. Also, occasionally other offences as listed below, but as stated these are always much more difficult to prove at court.

Cycle offences

Powers being used by officers in the City:

- Ride a Pedal Cycle on a Road Fail to Comply with a Red Light Traffic Sign Contrary to section 36 (1) of the Road Traffic Act 1988, the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2016 and Schedule 2 of the Road Traffic Offenders Act 1988.
16. This is the main offence that officers are currently enforcing. Cyclists going through red lights are associated with a number of road traffic collisions and injuries every year, especially injuries to pedestrians.
 - Section 163(2) of the Road Traffic Act 1988 which means “a person riding a cycle on a road must stop the cycle on being requested to do so by a constable in uniform”.
 - Careless Cycling which is under section 29 of the Road Traffic Act 1988. Where the riders standard of cycling falls “below that of a competent and careful cyclist”. This could be escalated to:
 - Dangerous Cycling which is under section 28 of the Road Traffic Act 1988, and this is where the riders standard of cycling falls “far below that of a competent and careful cyclist.
 - Cycling on a road or other public place whilst unfit through drink or drugs which is under section 30 of the Road Traffic Act 1988. Although cycle squad have not yet reported anyone for this offence it is something that is enforceable.
 17. Other offences officers can enforce is that of: cycling on a footpath (section 72 of the Highway Act 1835), carrying a passenger (unless the bicycle is constructed or adapted for the carriage of more than one person; section 24 of the Road Traffic Act 1988), holding onto a moving vehicle (section 26 of the Road Traffic Act 1988), failing to comply with road signs and offences in relation to the condition of the bicycles (including but not limited to the requirement for reflectors and light).

E-Bicycles and E-Scooters

18. E-Bicycles and E-Scooters are often used during the commission of crime (e.g. phone snatches) and many of these bicycles are not legal in the UK. There are many types of E-bicycles which include Electrically Assisted Pedal Cycles (EAPC) and Converted Conventional Bicycles (CCBs). Only EAPC bicycles are allowed to be used in public places in the UK, but they must abide by all road traffic legislation.
19. In order to be legal E-bicycles must: state their maximum power output on the motor (which should not exceed 250 watts), they must not be propelled by a motor beyond 15.5 mph.
20. Electrical assistance should only be provided whilst the rider is pedalling (unless travelling below 3.5mph). Bicycles that can be propelled without pedalling must be "type approved" if it can be propelled without pedalling (e.g. 'twist and go throttle') or it does not meet EAPC regulations. Without type approval these bicycles legally become a motor vehicle and therefore the rider must have insurance and driving licence and the vehicle should abide by all other road traffic legislation. It is currently impossible to insure E-bicycles and as such they should be seized under section 165 of the Road Traffic Act for having no insurance. Cycle Squad are actively seizing any E-bicycles that are illegal and pose a risk to the public and submitting intelligence in relation to E-bicycles (including those selling or converting conventional bicycles illegally).

Hire E-Bicycles

21. Examples of bicycle hire companies are Lime, Santander and Human Forest etc are also used in the commission of crime. These bicycles are often seen being used by shoplifters, phone snatchers, cycle thieves and are often used during incidents of Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB). These bikes are also relatively easy to steal, making offenders using them difficult to trace. As such, over the last 6 weeks cycle squad officers have been submitting intelligence reports to assist with the building of stop/search grounds and they have been developing a working relationship with the companies. This has allowed them to develop potential further lines of enquiry for investigators where hire bicycles have been used. They have also had numerous communications with the companies helping develop methods that will hopefully deter, detect and prevent further offences and offenders.

Next Steps

22. The Force will undertake a full evaluation of the work of the cycle squad in due course and based upon this, a decision will be made by the Chief Officer Team whether it will become a permanent fixture. CoLP will also be looking to deliver further training to ensure more officers on response and neighbourhoods are able to patrol on bicycles.
23. The City of London Corporation contract Parkguard about which an update was provided to this committee previously by the Director of Community and Children's Services. Separate work is underway to look at the feasibility of designating powers to Parkguard to be able to also deal with and issue penalties for offences relating to cycling – for example breaching the Corporation bye laws on the Barbican Estate.

Conclusion

24. From the attached slides and data it is evident that the introduction of a permanent cycle Squad that is focused on Cycling and e-bike related offences is having a positive effect across the City of London. Over the coming weeks we will look at the full evaluation and indeed, what we can do to further enhance the work of the squad, recognising that the response to ASB on cycles is best achieved with a fully integrated partnership approach. This will be supported with a bid to the Safer City Partnership to further enhance the work which will focus on activity under enforcement education, engagement and engineering the problem out, plus a comprehensive joint communications plan.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Cycle Squad Overview

Robert Atkin MBE

Chief Supt Local Policing

E: Robert.atkin@cityoflondon.police.uk