

Merton Active Travel and Merton Centre for Independent Living welcome the introduction of bike hire schemes in Merton. These have the potential to significantly increase travel by bicycle, with the wide range of benefits this brings, including reducing air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions and improving people's health and wellbeing.

Bike hire schemes are particularly beneficial for one-way journeys, where there is limited bike storage or people wanting to try cycling in Merton without committing to purchasing a bicycle.

Dockless bikes are likely to be a key part of the cycle provision in Merton, due to both the lower initial costs and the lower densities of housing in some parts of Merton. Badly parked dockless bikes have the potential to cause obstruction, particularly to Disabled People. Merton Centre for Independent Living highlight that bikes obstructing access is no more of a problem than wheelie bins, recycling boxes, fly-tipping, street furniture, and illegally parked cars.

As such, we welcome the plans for Merton Council and designated bike hire providers for active management of dockless bike hire schemes, including designating zones where they bikes should be parked, clear accountability on bike hire companies to move obstructively-parked bicycles and sanctions (fines/bans) for users who persistently park obstructively. Fines should be sufficiently punitive to incentivise users to be considerate about where they leave a bike once they are finished with it.

It is important that Merton Council communicate with residents about dockless bikes, including the benefits of these to residents and the environment. It is also vital that the council clearly communicates to residents how to report a bike obstructing access, and that this needs to be straightforward to ensure that Merton remains accessible to all.