

Guidance for Community Bike Share Schemes



SECTION 04

People and places



04: People and places

This section helps you think about who could be involved in your scheme and their roles, ways to support your riders and how knowing your area can help with project development.



Know your area

Integration with other provisions

It can be useful to know how your scheme may complement or integrate with existing provisions in the area, depending on your scale or objectives. It might be worth researching whether the bike share scheme could integrate with existing transport provisions to cater for first and last mile journeys (such as from the users' home to a train station).

Community assets

Are there local suppliers you could use for different aspects of the scheme? For instance, supplying equipment, running training or providing storage space if required. This could make it easier when setting up the scheme, drawing on local skills and securing community buy-in. It is a good idea to build positive relationships with local suppliers as they can support and be part of the delivery of your scheme.

Useful partnerships

Establishing a project partnership can help with the success of a scheme. They can take different forms, such as a formal partnership between a community group and a council, with an official sponsor or local business. Some of the reasons for this include:

- Community development often faces capacity challenges so partnerships can provide more resources
- There are many components to running a scheme and you might not have all the skills and resources at your disposal
- Engagement and publicity are critical to a scheme's success, so partnerships can expand the reach of your advertising
- Any bike recycling centres, remakery type organisations are useful to partner with where skilled people are involved in these organisations and are a great ally for cost effective maintenance
- You may need permissions for certain aspects of the projects such as storage
- Partnering with other organisations can help expand ridership through promoting to specific organisations, and partners then becoming advocates for the project

What partnerships are useful depends on your objectives. We recommend you think about who you need to make your scheme happen. Creating a list of tasks so that resource and capacity requirements can be established is helpful. For example, would officially partnering with a Business Improvement District help your scheme, if you are keen for the scheme to sometimes be used by tourists? If you want to provide bikes as an option for people travelling to an island without your car, it might be useful to advertise this through Visit Scotland.

However, be aware of spreading yourself too thin. Engaging a broad range of partners may seem great on paper, but adapting to multiple partner processes and working styles can be challenging.

See Cycling Scotland's [Access to Bikes report](#) for typical partnership approaches.

Making it official

If you do pursue a partnership, you will more than likely require a memorandum of understanding and/or partnership agreement to be written up, in which you outline the expectations, roles and responsibilities of everyone involved. More information on this can be found on the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations [website](#).

A note on ownership of assets

This refers to the physical elements of your scheme, for example storage, bikes and related equipment. Because some community schemes might have multiple partners, being clear on who owns the assets is an important part of setting up your scheme. Ownership has implications for insurance, liability and what happens if the bikes get damaged, and who covers any potential costs. Always keep receipts and records relating to asset purchase and management. Be aware of funding conditions that may be attached to assets.

The team

It is important to consider who will have responsibility for different aspects of the scheme and this can help with planning and budgeting. Fleet size, budgets and your agreed outcomes and objectives can help determine who may be required. For example, if you are setting up a bike fleet of 4 within a volunteer led organisation, capacity requirements and tasks for running the scheme may be simpler than a large community hub's fleet of 16 e-bikes.

The below table provides a snapshot of the capacity allocated to different approaches of running schemes in Scotland as of December 2020. Sometimes it is difficult to establish true capacity requirements if a scheme is integrated into a larger operation and therefore tasks get absorbed into existing systems of the governing organisation.

Example of resource capacity of schemes

How	Example / type of organisation running the scheme	Scheme details	Jobs required	Staff capacity
Volunteer led	Dunblane Development Trust - small voluntary based organisation with grant funding	5 e-bikes loaned out to the community Kept in a community hall Access is via an online booking system then physical handover of bikes	Taking bookings Maintenance of bikes Road cycling training through guided rides	7x volunteer trustees
Employed project coordinator	Huntly Development Trust - Green Travel Hub Bike Shack (bike recycling centre) for maintenance	14 (22 by 2022) e-bikes and 4 individual lockers with power Facebook page, email or phone call to book - booking system is work in progress Physical handover of bikes or padlock keys to the 4 lockers	Bookings Scheduled maintenance Marketing Events Procurement Reports	2.5-3 days a week*

*A note from their Project Coordinator: 2.5-3 days a week dealing with bikes specifically, but important to note that they work flexitime, so one week could be a full day doing admin, then a hire in an evening, a Sunday morning, a Thursday afternoon, then meeting with maintenance team once a week. Then general email responding etc.

This approach is adapting to the need of users e.g. as most want to borrow bikes after 4pm, the Project Coordinator makes this possible. However some projects may need to provide set times if they have little capacity / funding to provide this flexibility.

Task list

To help think about capacity required for running your scheme, we have developed a [template task list](#) that should be considered. You can use this as a planning tool for your project.

These tasks are arguably as important in small size schemes as larger fleet schemes. How you undertake each task may differ though, for example having a more advanced integrated booking system for a large fleet with different payment structures compared to a simple Google Calendar process.

TOP TIP:

For volunteer run projects you might want to consider having a bike project steering group to ensure an extra layer of responsibility, task distribution and guidance on how to develop the scheme

Users of the scheme

Understanding the potential needs of your users can impact the way you develop your scheme, which should come from your feasibility work. You may already have an idea of who your target audience will be, or you may be setting up a scheme for anyone in the general area to use a bike.

For both scenarios, the inclusion of questions in your early engagement surveys or focus groups can help to determine who potential users may be. See our [survey template](#) for examples of survey questions.

The below table provides an overview of ideas for supporting your riders so they have the best experience possible.

Ideas for supporting your users

	How	Suggested supporting documents
Access	<p>Multiple contact and payment options (phone, email, in person)</p> <p>Extra offerings for users: e.g. child seat, bike racks, adult stabilisers, trailer etc.</p> <p>Low income areas might require free or low cost access to the bikes</p> <p>See this specific guidance on adaptive bikes</p>	<p>Welcome pack including simple instructions on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- using the bikes- hiring process- pricing structures- useful contact information
Cycling Support	<p>Offer training through group or one-to-one led rides</p> <p>Offer users to be accompanied by a 'cycle buddy' to boost confidence</p> <p>If community members do not speak English, marketing materials may need to be in different languages e.g. ELREC and Bikes for All have created a range of materials in different languages</p> <p>Provide discounts / free bike rides / free membership</p>	<p>Route advice, for example an active travel map highlighting key routes</p> <p>Provide info on cycling skills e.g. through Cycling Scotland's Essential Cycling Skills booklet</p> <p>Signposting to other sources of support</p>
Community involvement	<p>During early phase workshops or surveys ask community members how they want the scheme to be developed</p>	<p>Surveys / focus groups / meetings</p> <p>Advertise workshops and hold engagement days (see community engagement strategy in section 2)</p>

If you want to find out more about how and why to support your riders, the successful project Bikes for All has detailed their learnings in a [summary report](#).

For a project example find out more about [Dunblane Development Trust](#).



Dunblane Development Trust

Managing membership

When setting up your scheme it is useful to think through how you will manage and communicate with your members. It is important not to bombard them with too much information, but you may want regular communication to update them on the scheme, let them know of any upcoming events, remind them about practical issues e.g. doing the '[M-check](#)', and inform them of any changes such as pricing. If you have an annual membership fee, you will also need to contact them at its renewal time.

When deciding how to communicate with your users, it is important to consider the following:

- What is the best way of communicating with them? For example, will you do things through email or phone? Consistency is important but so is potentially using different channels for different types of users.
- You may have a different strategy for engaging new members as opposed to communicating with existing members.

- Data protection and storage: Decide what data (if any) you will you keep hold of – and make that clear to users. It is useful to keep email addresses of users to collect feedback and advertise upcoming events. All your data processing needs to be compliant with GDPR, with clear indication of how their data is used and stored. For more information on setting membership fees see the **Money, money, money** section.

Supporting documents:

- It can be useful to have a record of who has become a member - [click here](#) for a template of a membership application form
- User agreement form (which users sign before taking out a bike) [example](#)

Next steps:

This section has hopefully given you some ideas for developing the scheme to suit your users and your area, as well as outlining who will be involved and what they will be doing. You are now ready to head over to **Money, money, money** to find out how to fund it!



Further help and support from CoMoUK

CoMoUK is the national charity for the public benefit of shared mobility. Founded in 1999, CoMoUK enters its third decade with a depth of expertise and research into shared transport and the built environment.

CoMoUK can provide bespoke information and support on how to set up and develop your community bike share scheme. This includes:

- Helping you to think about business cases and project plans
- Providing examples of best practice and case studies
- Sign posting you to other parties and relevant organisations
- Providing advice on potential sharing solutions for your scheme (such as booking and billing)

To find out more about how we can help you, please contact scotland@como.org.uk for details.

Please also see our website como.org.uk for further information and to sign up to our newsletter and forums.

Find out more about CoMoUK and collaborative mobility online at como.org.uk

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