

**Narrative, network and nextbike**  
**Cardiff City Bike Share**  
A study in success



### **About the author**

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### **About the report**

This report is based on interviews with Cardiff cyclists carried out online and a field trip to Cardiff in August 2018 including interviews with:

- Cardiff City Council Transport and Planning Officer
- Cardiff University Facilities Manager
- Pedal Power Development Manager
- Group discussion with Cardiff Cycle City group

Membership and usage data for Cardiff, Glasgow and Milton Keynes bike share schemes was provided by nextbike.

In addition, it draws on the Propensity to Cycle Tool, the 2017 Public Bike Share User Survey (Bikeplus, now Como UK), Sustrans reporting, local government data and media and social media scanning.

Photographs of Cardiff nextbike docking stations and bikes were taken by the author in August 2018.

The report was commissioned and funded by nextbike UK in order to understand how different elements affect the use and success of a bike share scheme.

# Cardiff City Bike Share: narrative, network and nextbike

## A study in success

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# Foreword

In 2010, the first high profile and large scale docked public bike share scheme in the UK was launched in London. Whilst this scheme – now Santander Cycles – created a widespread recognition and understanding of bike share in the UK, some smaller schemes were already in operation. The Welsh capital city, Cardiff, had a bike share scheme which preceded the London one and operated from 2008 to 2010.

Over the last ten years, bike share has increasingly been welcomed by local authorities as it provides sustainable last mile travel and has demonstrated that it attracts new cyclists, and widens the demographic of those cycling. In addition, besides enabling multi-modal journeys, there is some evidence of modal shift from car use to bike use enabled by bike share.<sup>1</sup>

By the end of 2018 at least 26 locations in the UK had one or more bike share schemes, with 24,871 shared bikes available, enabling an average of 52,321 bike share trips per day<sup>2</sup>.

UK bike share schemes vary in set up – they may be ‘docked’ schemes with on-street station infrastructure from which bikes are hired and to which bikes are returned, or ‘dockless’ where bikes are not anchored to bike stations. Dockless bike share schemes use apps and mobile technology to manage bike hires and have varying rules about where bikes may be used and returned. There are also hybrids where bikes can be hired from both stations and also hired from or left in designated areas without on street station furniture. Some schemes include electric bikes.

Schemes are operated by a number of bike share operators usually in conjunction with the local authority either through a tender process or other agreement. The majority of areas support or contract a single operator however there are multiple operators in London, Oxford and Cambridge.

Operations are funded in a number of ways, ranging from entirely commercial business models to partially funded by government.

The commercial models are funded using investor capital (or loans) and derive income from charging users or monetising the system in other ways (including commercial sponsorship deals and advertising). Such schemes are generally dockless as the investment in infrastructure and partnership required to build docking stations requires a different approach.

Other schemes are funded through a blend of partnerships, grants, subsidies, advertising, sponsorship and user charging depending on the context, infrastructure requirements and agreements with local authorities.

The main operators in the UK are:

<b>Docked:</b>	Hourbike, nextbike, Serco and Smoove
<b>Dockless:</b>	Mobike, ofo, Yobike

Whilst advances in technology have made this diversity possible, there are still questions over the best way to contract, manage and run bike share operations.

Competition in some areas have created market failures. The proliferation of dockless schemes in Oxford was cited as the reason for the withdrawal of Oxonbike - the docked Hourbike run scheme in Oxford - which included electric bikes and was supported by the local authority to enable travel

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<sup>1</sup> Public Bike Share Users Survey Results 2017, Bikeplus

<sup>2</sup> 2018 figures provided by CoMo UK ([www.como.org.uk](http://www.como.org.uk))

between some key NHS and authority sites which were generating traffic and parking problems<sup>3</sup>. After Hourbike was withdrawn, however, ofo reduced the area served by its dockless scheme<sup>4</sup> in the area creating concerns that the remaining operators may not provide a stable scheme covering a sufficient area to meet transport goals or provide travellers with sufficient options.

Two of the dockless bike share operators, Mobike and ofo, have dramatically reduced their operating areas in the UK citing vandalism and theft (although commentators have speculated that other factors were in play). Another, smaller, dockless operator, Urbo, has suspended services 'temporarily'<sup>5</sup>. In other areas, some docked schemes report relatively low levels of usage.

With this in mind, it's clear that the development of bike share in the UK is not straightforward.

In this context, the 2018 launch of the Cardiff bike share scheme is extremely interesting.

Cardiff bike share is a docked scheme operated by nextbike as the result of a tendering process run by Cardiff City. It has a diverse funding base including partnership, sponsorship and income from use, and an agreed initial period of operation. The scheme was an almost instant success with more than double the UK average number of trips per bike per day.

Whilst the scheme was fortunate to have launched officially at the beginning of a particularly warm dry summer, other schemes also benefitted from favourable weather. Nextbike provided statistics from two schemes; Glasgow and Milton Keynes, over the same period for the purposes of analysis and comparison.

This report looks at the factors which have contributed to the success of the Cardiff scheme. It aims to tease out the contributions made by the physical characteristics of the place, the types of people using the scheme and the partners who created and run the scheme to identify any 'stand out' explanations for its success.

For the purposes of the report the scheme is compared with those in Milton Keynes and Glasgow (where usage statistics were provided). An analysis of media around the scheme is compared with the withdrawn Mobike scheme in Manchester which was launched the previous year.

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<sup>3</sup> Oxford Mail, 16 August 2018, Hourbikes shut down 'with immediate effect'  
<http://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/16438945.oxonbikes-shut-down-with-immediate-effect/>

<sup>4</sup> CycleOx Forum, 2 August 2018  
<https://groups.google.com/forum/#!topic/cyclox-forum/xrQglB-yA54>

<sup>5</sup> BBC News, 23 September 2018, Urbo: Bike-share scheme misses Ipswich return date  
<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-suffolk-45485620>

## Executive summary

Cardiff bike share scheme was formally launched in May 2018, after an extended process of tendering, consultation and a soft launch. This scheme has been exceptionally successful in terms usage.

Cardiff bike share  
average daily use at launch:

**4.27**

rentals per bike per day

UK average 2.10

This report investigates the factors at play in this success.

## Factors

The City of Cardiff bike share scheme is supported by an excellent combination of partners, people and place. Although local cycle groups would argue that the city needs more cycle infrastructure (and some areas are disconnected from the more established routes), the cycle infrastructure in the central core seems to have reached sufficient density to be attractive to people both living in and visiting the centre.

“As for how popular cycling is in Cardiff, it has got massively more popular in the last 3 years. When I started living in Cardiff 10 years ago I was usually the only bike around but now there are a lot of people commuting by bike, in all weathers and year-round too.”

*local cyclist – online interview*

Siting the docks was based on good evidence from cycling and commuting patterns, and by learning from a previous scheme which was withdrawn.

The scheme has been supported by a strong narrative which has been consistent and positive – both over time and between partners.



Figure 1: Central Cardiff bike station

## Place

Cardiff is a busy capital city and commercial, administrative and tourism centre. It has relatively well used and dense cycle infrastructure at its core. The scheme has been sited to be visible and with key flows and users in mind.

- Large visitor population – 21 million visitors annually.
- Commuter centre with 80% of commutes within city, nearly 90,000 commuters entering the city daily and over 32,000 leaving.
- University city with sites distributed across the city and no single campus.
- Higher propensity to cycle (compared to Milton Keynes, tool not available for Glasgow)
- Growing, dense and well used central network of cycle infrastructure.
- Station network relative to cycle lanes and flows is similar in Cardiff to Milton Keynes, implying that this has less of an impact than the overall conditions for cycling. The relative visibility of docks was not surveyed. Cardiff bike docking stations are designed to be visible on main thoroughfares and were easy to find.
- Active cycle groups working with and lobby Council and partners.
- Council has pro-cycling strategy and recognises the need to increase network of both cycling routes and the bike share scheme.



Figure 2: Cardiff Bay Barrage bike station

“There does seem to be a good uptake in non-car commuting, in my office of 18 people 9 don’t drive to work, and of those 5 people cycle. Hopefully with a further uptake when an office shower is installed.”<sup>6</sup>

## Partners

The partners are knowledgeable, competent, committed and enthusiastic, they promote the scheme with consistent messages. Bike share is supported both at political and at implementation level.

### City Council

- Ability to learn from the previous withdrawn scheme.
- Authority to site docks to benefit from visibility, infrastructure and ‘natural oversight’.
- High profile support at a political level.
- Consistent marketing messaging and public relations.

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<sup>6</sup> Cardiff cyclist written response

## University

- High level and high profile commitment.
- Existing transport plan and commitment to active travel. Students travel sustainably but staff less so. Specific aim to support bike share.
- Marketing messaging to staff, students and beyond.

## Pedal Power

- Enthusiasm for and ownership of the scheme maintenance and redistribution.
- Working cooperatively with police and partners.
- Keeping a high number of bikes in circulation.
- Good communications and use of social media.

## Nextbike

- Robust bikes and docking system.
- Branding is both professional and community focused.
- App and customer support.
- Finding positive partnerships.

## People

A broad spectrum of people is attracted by a visible scheme with connected cycling routes. Marketing has been targeted across business, university and broader demographics.

The Cardiff scheme has a higher number of non-member rentals than for other schemes implying that it is visible and attractive to visitors and other casual users.

“nextbikes get totally different people riding”

*local cyclist – online interview*

Amongst member rentals, there is a broad spread between organisations, between monthly and annual rentals and student rentals with no group overwhelmingly using the bikes. This implies that the marketing and messaging is reaching and relevant to a broad cross section of people and businesses in the centre of Cardiff.

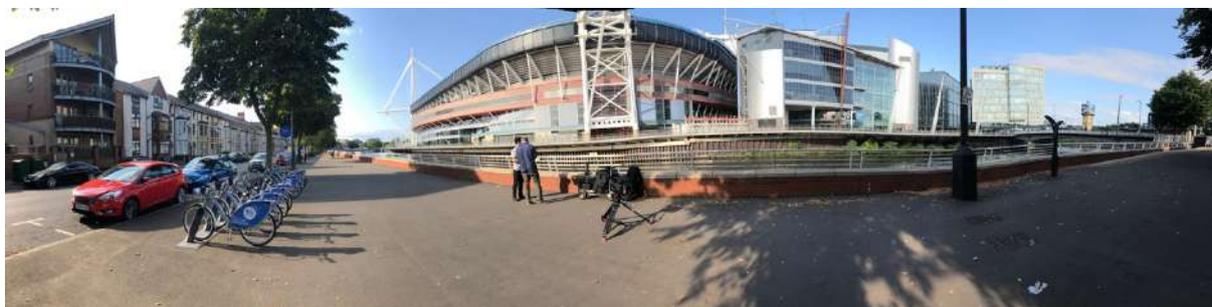


Figure 3: Cardiff Stadium bike station

## Narrative

Everyone is telling the same, positive story and the bikes feel 'owned'.

Speaking to people about the scheme one of the key words is ownership. There seems to be a collective feeling that the bikes belong to the city, to us rather than them. They can be seen being ridden across the city and notably not by one demographic or in one area.

The media is positive and there are (by and large) good things on social media. This is in contrast with the media around schemes like Mobike in Manchester which set up a very different discourse. Although it started with a positive media, the dockless nature of the Mobike scheme created a 'free for all' narrative around the bikes which seems to have been taken to heart. The media tone changed and quite quickly became critical of Manchester people who 'couldn't share' and 'spoilt' the scheme.

In Cardiff, even though some people have not returned the bikes correctly, the tone is different. There is broad collaboration between partners and users to protect and value the bikes. Whether this is inherent to a smaller city, capital city pride or more specific to the scheme is hard to tease out, however it is hard not to notice the virtuous circle this messaging produces.

## Conclusion

The high usage of the nextbike Cardiff bike share is unlikely to be due to one element alone, however, the investigation into the scheme points to a combination of important factors which have contributed to its success.

It is apparent that there is a virtuous circle between the people, place and partners which has built a fantastic narrative around the bike share scheme as well as a collaboratively designed network. The partners are deeply committed to the scheme and have created a broad sense of ownership which has facilitated excellent use of the scheme. These can be distilled into:

- Partnership between nextbike, Cardiff City Council and Cardiff University has attracted a loyal membership with excellent usage of the bike share scheme.
- The network works - docking stations are sited in high profile and visible locations which combines with the city cycling culture and infrastructure to enable a broad cross section of the population, including visitors to Cardiff, to use the scheme.
- The maintenance and redistribution team and the police have supported the sense that this is a scheme that is looked after and cared for.
- Nextbike has provided a comprehensive bike share system with booking and back office infrastructure which enables the reporting, customer service and health of the scheme to be monitored and maintained.

## Three key elements of success

This analysis points to there being no single element which guarantees success. Creating a successful scheme is complex and involved. However, during the research and analysis the following factors emerged as peculiar to the Cardiff scheme and essential to its success:

- Cardiff bike share is keyed into existing cycling culture and visible infrastructure at the core of the city
- Bike share is highly visible and accessible as a result of positive and creative partnerships
- Excellent and consistent communications across media and social media have built a constructive narrative around the scheme

# Cardiff, bikes and bike share

## Introduction

The Cardiff nextbike bike share scheme was officially launched on 25 May 2018 after a sustained build up. This included putting the scheme out to tender, announcing the winning bid, and a soft launch with trial customers culminating in the official launch.

The scheme was immediately widely used and popular. At the official launch, the scheme consisted of 250 bikes across 25 docking stations covering a 22km<sup>2</sup> area of central Cardiff.

The positive reception in the media and on social media was supported by an almost instant high rate of daily hires.

Month	Rentals per bike per day
May (25th)	3.17
June	4.24
July	4.64
August	3.78

Figure 4: Cardiff bike share rentals May - August 2018 (source: nextbike)

In the first three months (and 6 days) of operation, the Cardiff scheme achieved a grand total of 74,044 hires.

Whilst a warm, dry, summer will, no doubt, have contributed to the rate of hires, the Cardiff numbers compare very favourably with other, much more longstanding, schemes over the same (clement) period. For instance, for the two schemes for which nextbike provided figures for the purposes of comparison, Glasgow averaged between 1.9 and 2.7 rentals per bike per day over the same period and in Milton Keynes, bikes averaged less than one rental per bike per day. On average in the UK there are 2.10 bike share hires per bike per day<sup>7</sup>.



Figure 5: Cardiff City Council tweets regularly

<sup>7</sup> CoMo UK 2018 figures provided: 24,871 bikes made 52,321 trips per day

This element of the study looks at physical aspects of the city and the scheme, including some basic demographics to determine whether any of these factors stands out as reason for the success of bike share in the city.

The study is based on interviews with Cardiff City Council, Pedal Power, Cardiff cyclists, Cardiff University and nextbike. Additional information about usage was supplied by nextbike.

Demographic and cycling information was drawn from council publications, visitor organisations and the propensity to cycle tool. Where possible, Cardiff was compared with other cities hosting bike share schemes – Glasgow and Milton Keynes.

# People and place

## The city

Cardiff is a small city geographically bounded by major roads and hills, with the sea forming its south eastern limitation. The population of Cardiff is currently in the region of 361,000 and is projected to grow by an additional 72,900 people over the next 20 years<sup>8</sup>.

The central zone is flat although areas adjacent to Penarth on the coastal cliffs and the residential areas to the north are hillier.

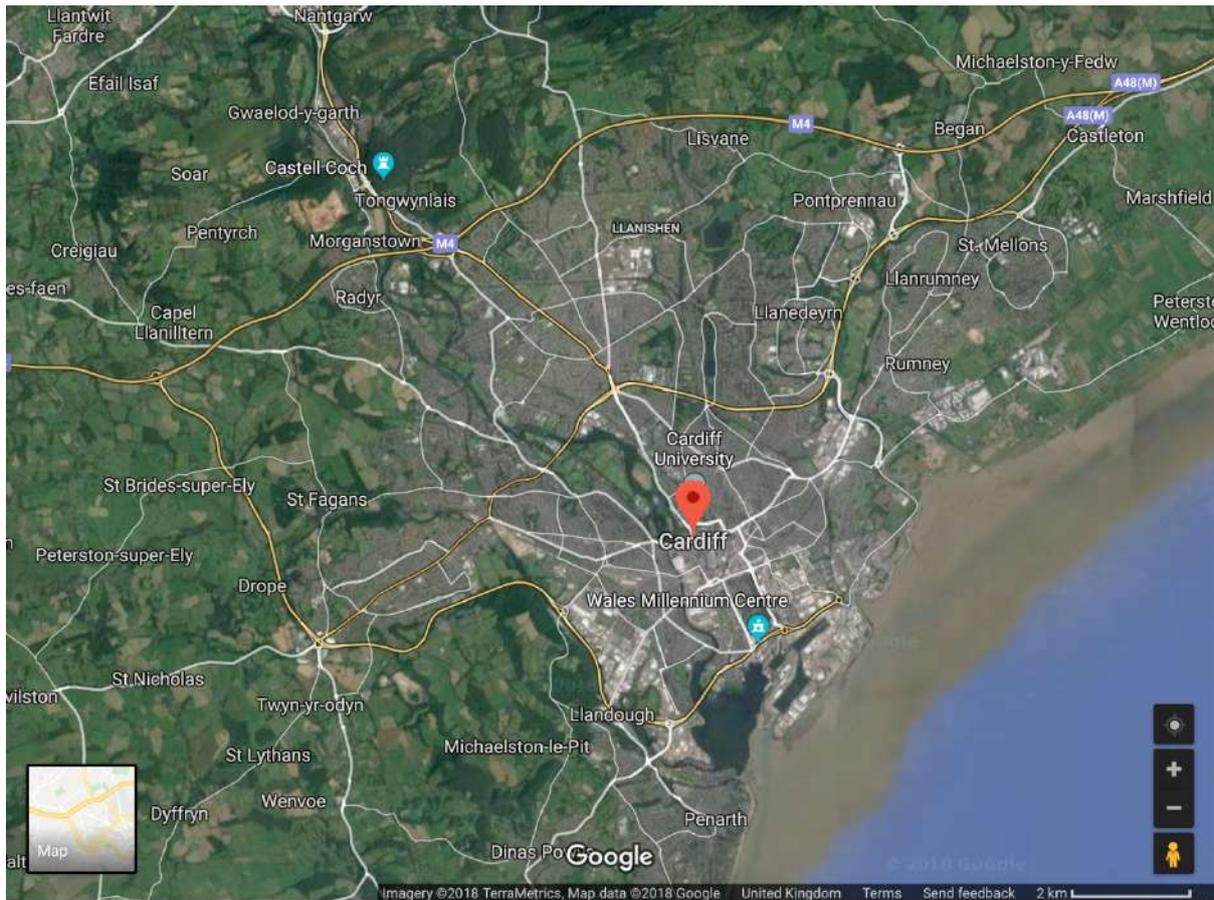


Figure 6: Google map showing Cardiff boundaries (M4, A4232 and coast) and built up area

Whilst 80% of commuters live and work within city, the city experiences an inflow of nearly 90,000 commuters per day with over 32,000 outgoing<sup>9</sup>. This means a net gain of over 56,000 people each day.

The travel to work area is very large and extends to the Vale of Glamorgan, Rhondda Cynon Taf and Caerphilly.

A 2017 Sustrans report, Bike Life Cardiff, details 12 million trips by bike annually, with about 7% of people cycling to and from work.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Cardiff in 2018, Cardiff Public Services Board, 2018 <https://www.cardiffpartnership.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/Cardiff-in-2018-Final-English.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> Stats Wales, Welsh Government, 2018 <https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Business-Economy-and-Labour-Market/People-and-Work/Employment/Commuting/commutingpatterns-by-welshlocalauthority-measure>

<sup>10</sup> Bike Life Cardiff 2017, Sustrans, 2017 <https://www.sustrans.org.uk/bikelifecardiff>

People in Cardiff are slightly more likely to think that cycling safety is good in their city – 34% compared to the average of 30% across the Sustrans Bike Life survey. Unfortunately, neither Glasgow nor Milton Keynes were included in the 2017 survey for comparison.

## Hilliness

Looking at basic landscape features shows that the three areas similarly flat – a largely flat profile makes cycling easier.



Figure 8: Cardiff Bay hilliness ([www.pct.bike](http://www.pct.bike))



Figure 7: Milton Keynes hilliness ([www.pct.bike](http://www.pct.bike))

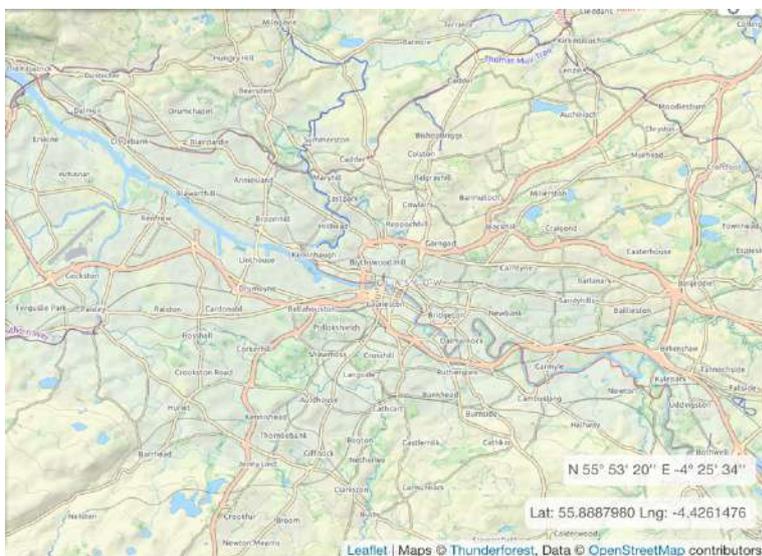


Figure 9: Glasgow hilliness profile ([www.elevationmap.net](http://www.elevationmap.net) as [www.pct.bike](http://www.pct.bike) does not cover Scotland )

Hilliness (or lack of hills) cannot be the sole explanation for the success of the Cardiff scheme. The elevation is similar in Milton Keynes and Glasgow, which are both much less successful scheme in terms of usage.

## Propensity to cycle

The Propensity to Cycle tool – which is currently only available for England and Wales - enables the cycle infrastructure, behaviour and flows to be inspected more closely and also allows comparisons between cities with bike share schemes. Differences between schemes emerge by comparing propensity to cycle characteristics however. By comparing existing levels of cycling in Cardiff and Milton Keynes it can be seen that Cardiff has a stronger existing base of cycling.

There is a greater propensity to cycle in Cardiff than in Milton Keynes. A central area of Cardiff has 10-14% of people cycling to work, whilst no area in Milton Keynes exceeds 6%. In addition, a wider area in Cardiff than Milton Keynes supports 4-6% of people cycling to work.

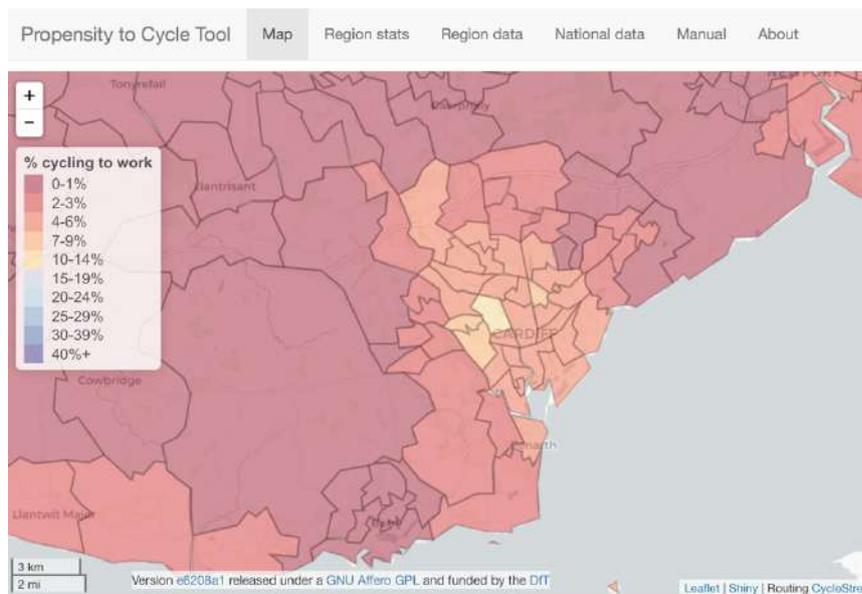


Figure 10: Cardiff propensity to cycle map ([www.ptc.bike](http://www.ptc.bike))

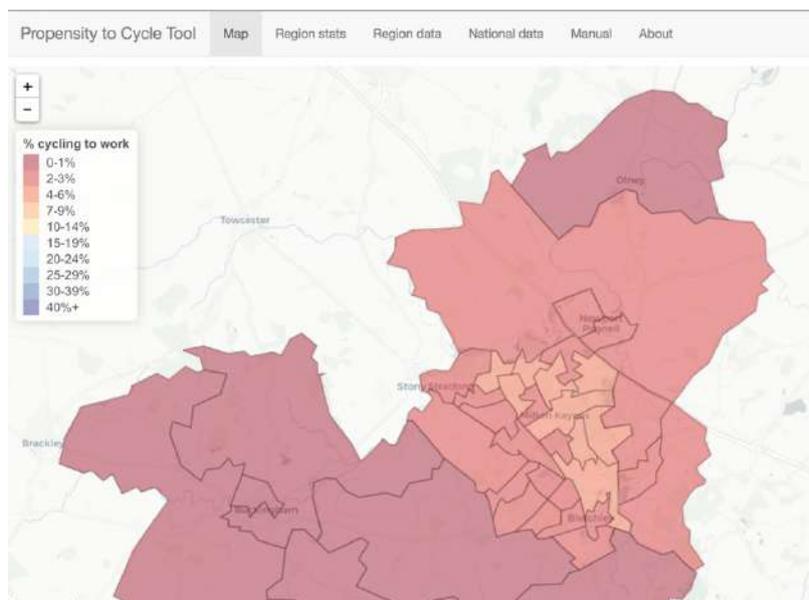


Figure 11: Milton Keynes propensity to cycle map ([www.ptc.bike](http://www.ptc.bike))

## Cycling routes

This higher propensity to cycle in Cardiff is also reflected in the routes cycled. There is a visibly higher density of journeys made by bike (on both fast and quiet) routes across the Cardiff scheme area. Whilst this network does not directly map to cycle ways it demonstrates that there are already strong 'desire lines' for cyclists which map largely to the area covered by the scheme. The journeys mapped by the propensity to cycle tool largely map to the presence of cycle infrastructure<sup>11</sup> indicating that it is well used. In addition, there is evidence that increased levels of cycling increases the overall safety of cycling<sup>12</sup> and it is possible that this effect is in play in Cardiff.

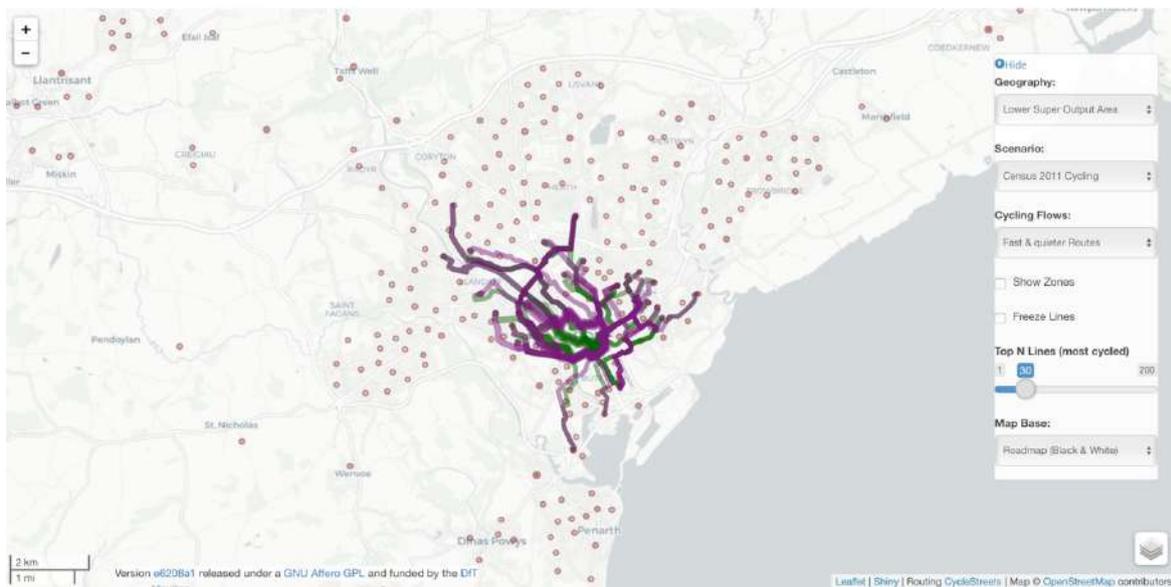


Figure 12: Cardiff cycle journeys (fast and quiet routes) ([www.pct.bike](http://www.pct.bike))

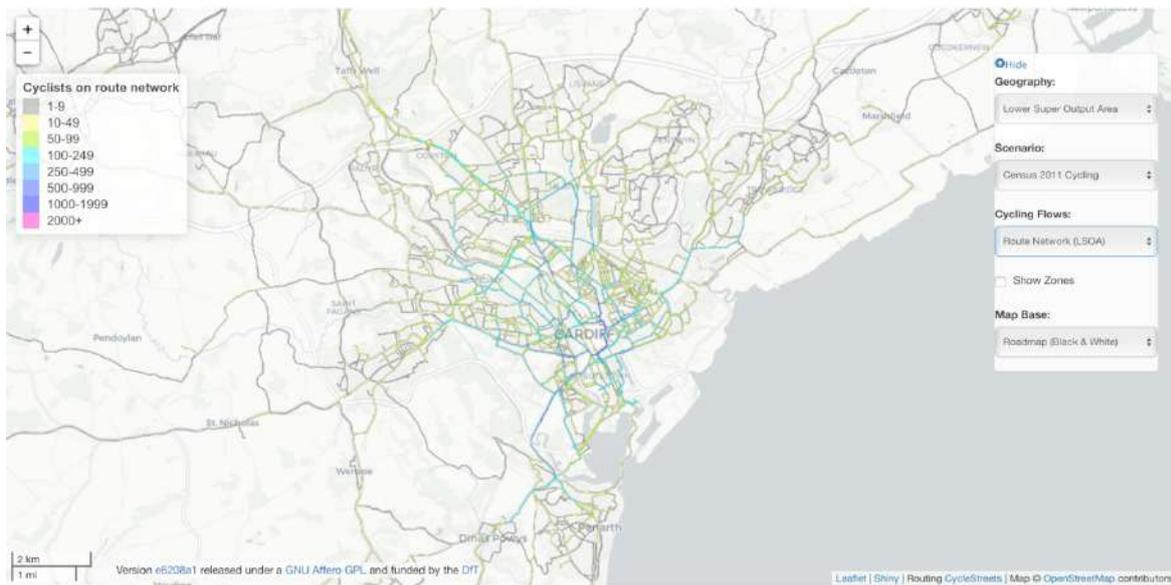


Figure 13: Cardiff propensity to cycle map including cyclist flows ([www.pct.bike](http://www.pct.bike))

<sup>11</sup> Cardiff Cycling and Walking Map 2016 ([https://www.cardiff.gov.uk/ENG/resident/Parking-roads-and-travel/Walking-and-cycling/Documents/Cardiff%202018\\_WEB.pdf](https://www.cardiff.gov.uk/ENG/resident/Parking-roads-and-travel/Walking-and-cycling/Documents/Cardiff%202018_WEB.pdf))

<sup>12</sup> Jacobsen PL Safety in numbers: more walkers and bicyclists, safer walking and bicycling Injury Prevention 2003; 9 : 205-209. (<https://injuryprevention.bmj.com/content/9/3/205>)



Figure 14: Excerpt of Cardiff Cycling and Walking Map, Cardiff City Council, 2015

In contrast, although Milton Keynes has a vast cycle network on paper (over 300km), this network is not as well used by cyclists. The cycling network (known as the Redways) is often routed via underpasses and parallel to roads. Much of it is shared use and may not necessarily take the shortest route between points. From observation, it is not entirely intuitive to use nor is its existence wholly obvious to the casual observer. It can be hard to know where you are going by bike which is a barrier for casual users or those taking up utility cycling.

This observation is borne out by the propensity to cycle tool analysis of Milton Keynes which shows that the network of journeys made by cyclists is much less dense – potentially signalling that the infrastructure in existence is less attractive to cyclists.

In addition, as cycling is less popular within Milton Keynes, there is less of the ‘critical mass’ effect to normalise cycling or increase its safety through increased numbers.

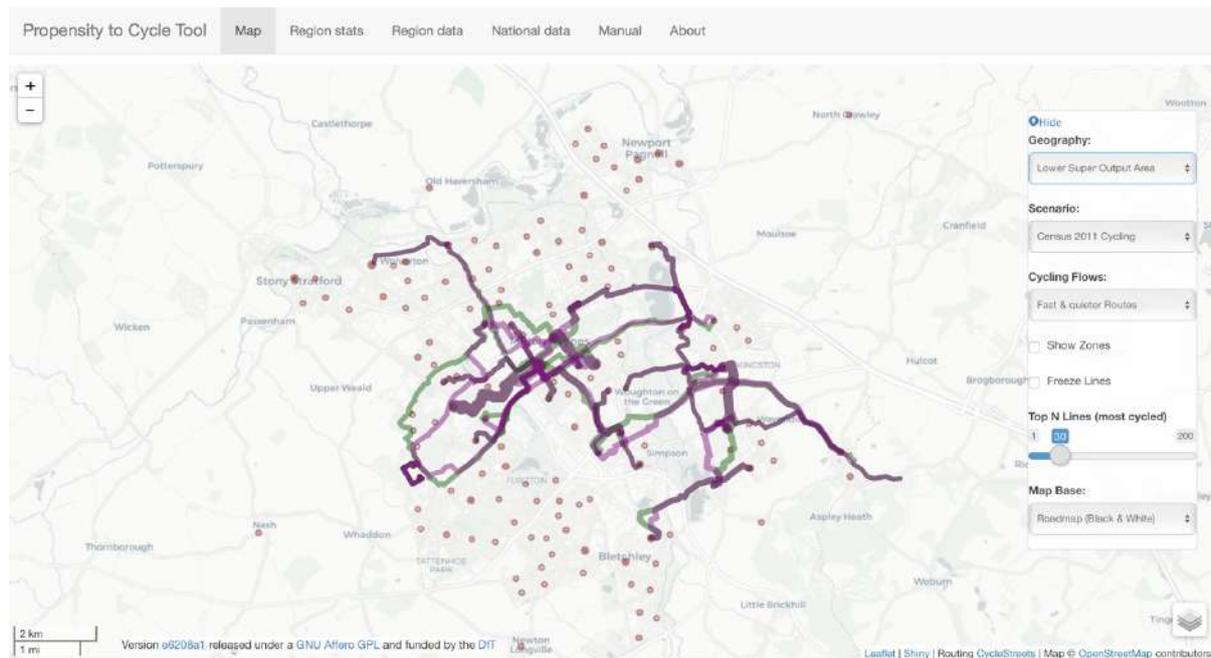


Figure 15: Milton Keynes cycle journeys (fast and quiet routes) ([www.pct.bike](http://www.pct.bike))

The combined network map produced by using the Propensity to Cycle Tool shows that there are greater flows of cyclists on routes in Cardiff. The indicative scale of use implies much more heavily used routes – particularly on the north south axis of central Cardiff – than in Milton Keynes.

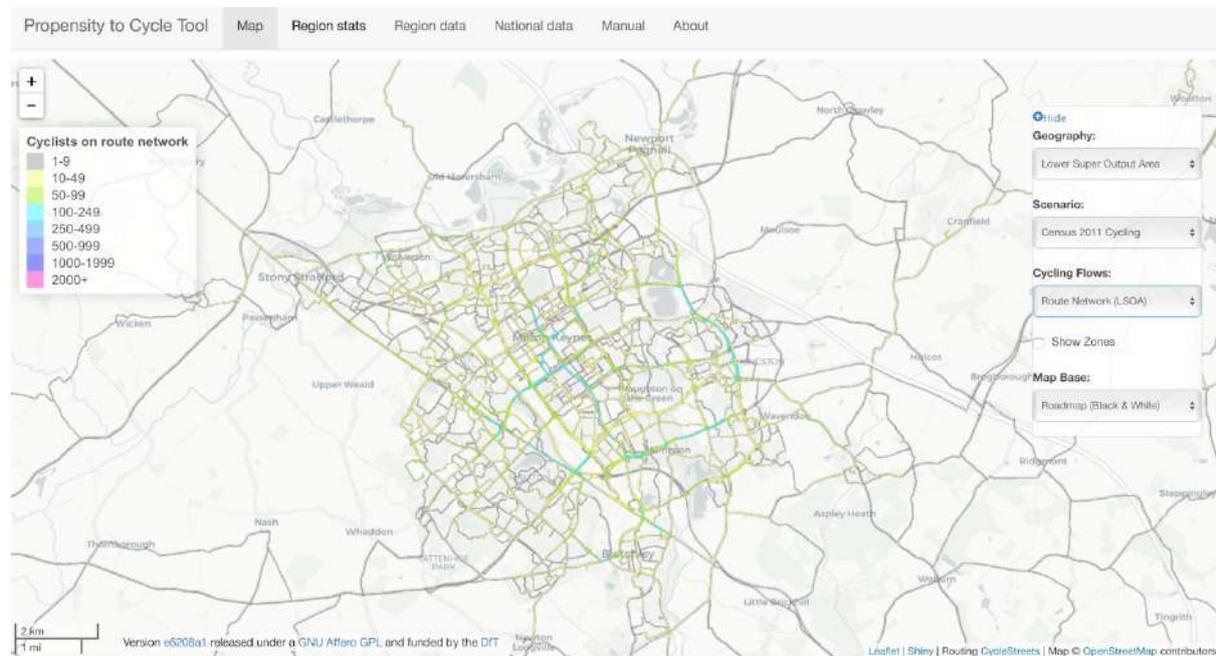


Figure 16: Milton Keynes propensity to cycle map including cyclist flows ([www.pct.bike](http://www.pct.bike))

The cycle route map for Glasgow is not directly comparable as it is a map of cycle ways produced by Open Cycle Map (the Propensity to Cycle Tool does not extend to Scotland so flows cannot be seen).

However the map of Glasgow is indicative that the network appears less dense than that in Cardiff. In addition, both Glasgow and Milton Keynes areas are larger than Cardiff – dispersing the network and indeed cyclists more widely.

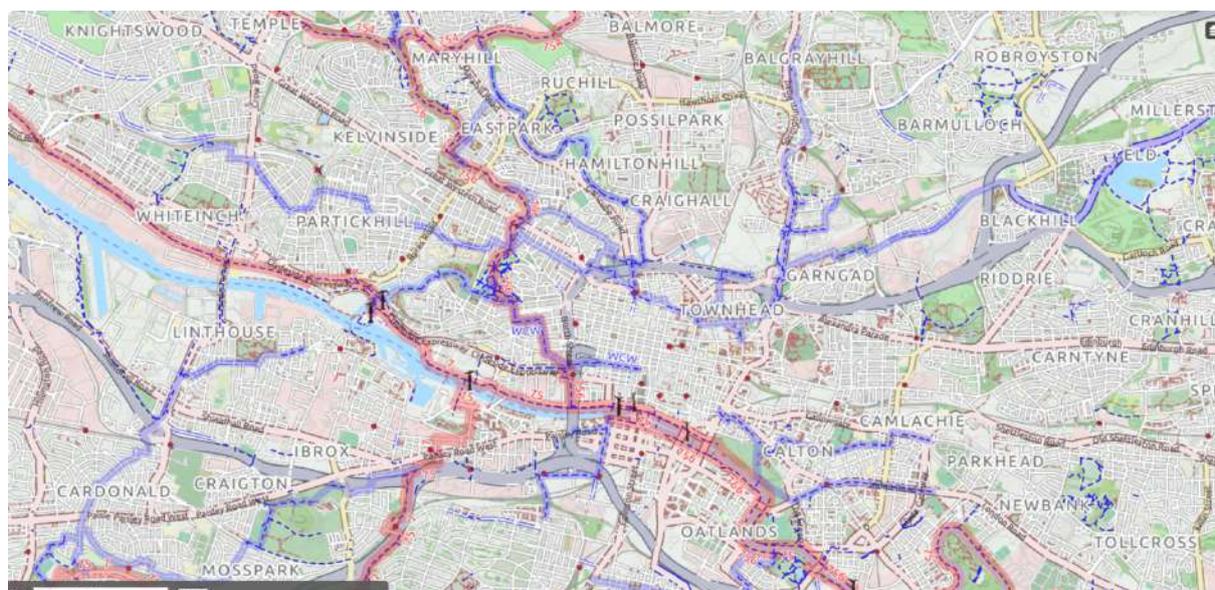


Figure 17: Glasgow cycling routes ([opencyclemap.org](http://opencyclemap.org))

## Bike share dock network

The bike share dock network in Cardiff (to 31 August 2018) covers a smaller area than Glasgow or Milton Keynes. Measuring the East West and North South axis for the schemes implies that Cardiff covers approximately 22km<sup>2</sup>, Glasgow 31km<sup>2</sup> and Milton Keynes 35 km<sup>2</sup>.

The Cardiff scheme is more compact, however bikes and bike stations are no more dense in Cardiff than in the other two schemes.

At launch, Cardiff had the least number of docks per km<sup>2</sup> (by a small margin) but slightly more bikes per dock (based on the actual numbers of bikes in circulation). Cardiff sat between Glasgow and Milton Keynes in terms of the number of bikes per km<sup>2</sup>.

	Docks per km <sup>2</sup>	Bikes per dock	Bikes per km <sup>2</sup>
Cardiff	1.13	6.5	7.38
Milton Keynes	2.03	6.3	12.73
Glasgow	1.19	5.0	5.97

Figure 18: Comparing Cardiff, Milton Keynes and Glasgow bike and dock density

Whilst bikes have to be available in sufficient numbers to be used, pure density and docking station statistics alone are unlikely to explain the high use of bikes in Cardiff. Given the similarities to other schemes the explanation is more likely to lie with other factors.

In terms of siting docks in line with demand, the areas covered by the network broadly reflect the cycle flows, routes and propensities in the Propensity to Cycle tool.



Figure 19: Cardiff nextbike station area (August 2018)

However, a similar story can be seen in Milton Keynes. Docks are sited in areas with higher cycling flows and routes.

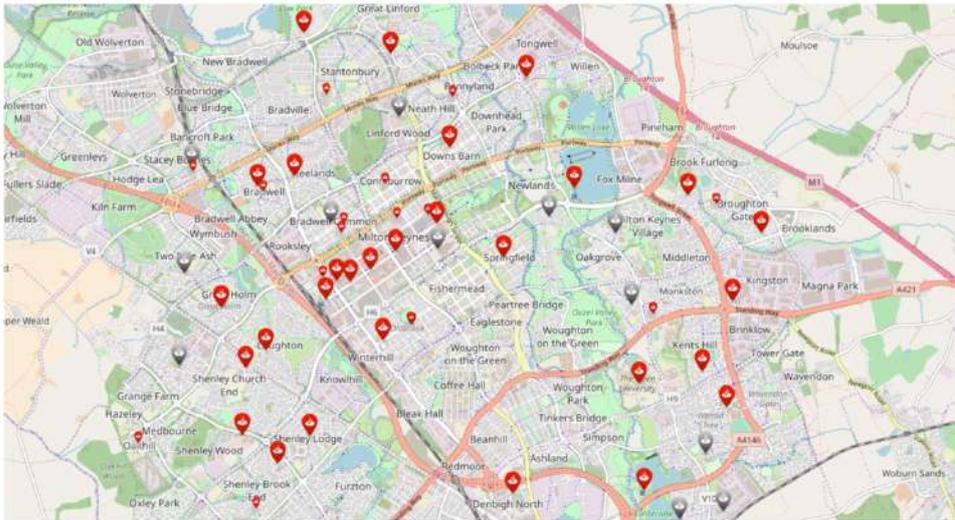


Figure 20: Milton Keynes nextbike station area (2018)

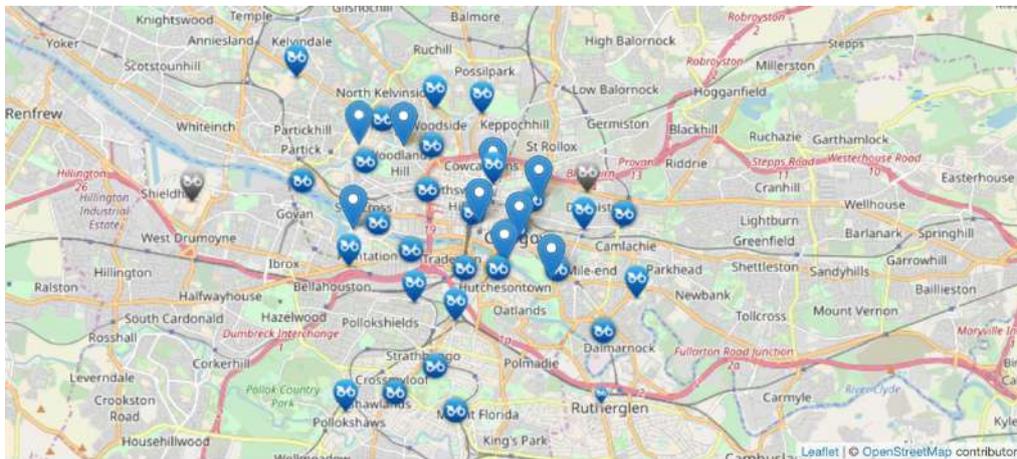


Figure 21: Glasgow nextbike station area (2018)

Comparing both Cardiff and Milton Keynes, it appears that the docks are well sited relative to cycling propensity. It is less easy to make this comparison in Glasgow without propensity to cycle data, however, the key central transport nodes are covered with a reasonably dense network of docking stations around it. It would be useful to do a full comparison of cycle infrastructure for Glasgow, as it is not apparent that cycle paths truly map to the bike share scheme.

## Conclusion

Comparing these maps, the siting of docks and the propensity to cycle information it appears that the better overall environment for cyclists in Cardiff would appear to be the point of difference.

The combination of physical characteristics in Cardiff, the pre-existing cycling culture and combined with the appropriate siting of bike share docks has created a positive set of factors. This contributed to the success of the scheme.

# Partners

## Cardiff City Council

Cardiff City Council is a unitary authority. Whilst 80% of commuters live and work within city, the city experiences an inflow of nearly 90,000 commuters per day with over 32,000 outgoing. This creates a net gain of over 56,000 people each day. The travel to work area is very large and extends to the Vale of Glamorgan, Rhondda cynn Taf and Caerphilly.

The City's strategic aim for transport is to 'capture' drivers before they reach the city centre and thereby prevent congestion at the city's core. It prices commuter / all day parking to engineer this behaviour with park and rides to the east and west (also where Cardiff City football club is) whilst enabling some short term 'priced to move' central parking.

The City Council sees a cycle hire scheme as complementing this policy. The current nextbike scheme is not its first attempt at bike share.

## Learning from experience

Cardiff had a small bike share pilot which ran for 2 and a half years between 2008 and 2011. The scheme was conceived as cost neutral to the council with the operator gaining any benefits from sponsorship, however only bids with costs to the council were received. The scheme was eventually enabled by a grant to support sustainable travel from the Welsh government – which enabled the council to 'sponsor' the scheme. It did not generate any income to the council. The operator pulled out for complex reasons and the bikes were given away.

Whilst this was perceived to some extent as failure by local people – which meant there was some scepticism when the new scheme was announced (see narrative section) – the withdrawal of the scheme meant that there was an opportunity for reflection and appraisal before the new scheme was commissioned.

In 2012 the Council commissioned a study into the scheme's withdrawal. It was carried out by Hyder consulting (now Arcadis) and included a strong element of thorough market research. The study looked at demand, cost, appropriate areas, the size of the scheme as well as theoretical business model approaches. However, over the subsequent three years no funding was forthcoming to relaunch the scheme.

More recently, however, bike share schemes have become aspirational and the political will to develop one has become greater, especially as the city has targets for clean air and modal splits. Officers were asked to develop an approach to licence a bike share scheme. Bids were invited on the basis of either:

- operator would find a sponsor
- operator only + Cardiff work with operator to find a sponsor
- sponsor proposal which would then find an operator
- operator risk

There were a number of bids and nextbike won on the basis of an operator risk model (plus partners). Nextbike went on to try and secure additional sponsorship but this was slow and the scheme was delayed.

Fortunately some capital from Welsh Government became available which enabled the bikes to be bought (and remain owned) by Cardiff City Council and leased back to nextbike. The scheme has local partnerships (the major one is with Cardiff University) but is still looking for an overall sponsor. It is

revenue neutral at the moment for the Council (apart from officer time). Significant sponsorship would enable future investment.

## The scheme

The scheme was anticipated as scalable with an original aspiration of 500 bikes and scalable upwards if funding permitted. The ultimate goal is 1000+ bikes and to include electric bikes to help cover the hillier areas on the perimeter of the city.

## Siting docking stations

Docking stations were planned using data from commuting movements, surveys and learning from the previous scheme based on:

- sites that had been previously well used;
- additional positions where people wanted them should it have expanded;
- at central nodes where people come into city;
- local centres, tourism and sporting venues.

Commuting patterns pointed to siting docks at hubs of rail stations – allowing people to cycle to and from rail stations – and at the Cardiff West park and ride (which additionally enables access to the football stadium).

In addition, the plans drew on work on propensity to ride carried out by a local cycle group. These factors point to mixed areas with several critical factors such as City Road, Albany Road and Wellfield Road area where there is a diverse mixture of students, families and shops. Areas of high occupancy flats are another factor taken into account, plus the City Hall area which combines big offices, hotels, and leisure facilities.

Local knowledge also helped develop the network – for instance boats arriving at the marina do not have transport to the city centre so a bike share station is provided. A system of community hubs also helped underpin choices.

The network was designed to ensure that no docks were more than 1km apart and that the docks worked along natural corridors.

In addition, the criteria for positioning were:

- Properly overlooked (eg outside police stations, has CCTV, lots of foot traffic creating 'natural surveillance').
- Available space given that Cardiff is a compact city. This meant some parking spaces were sacrificed for on street docking spaces. Off road docks were only sited where there was sufficient pavement space to ensure that the docks don't cause access issue for blind / disabled people. In addition, media cabinets and media boxes can't be obstructed.
- Easily seen and visible to users.
- Not encouraging people to cycle on a no cycling street (eg Queen St).

Positioning was helped by the fact that officers have substantial autonomy in decision making over issues in transport, streets and the environment. This facilitated a 'get things done' approach and ensured that the most appropriate positions were possible.

## Press and public relations

The City Council press office worked closely with nextbike. All press releases were jointly approved. The bulk of marketing however rests with nextbike (as it represents nextbike revenue/risk).

Previous experience has been that the local media looks for a negative if they can – so the team worked really hard on creative marketing to pre-empt negativity. There was a stream of consistent messages and press releases from the announcement of the scheme, through the launch and on an ongoing basis. This created a narrative about the scheme which extended for well over six months in advance of the launch.

There was some scepticism at the announcement of the new scheme, because the previous scheme had been withdrawn, however, this has largely fallen away since the launch.

## Cardiff University

Cardiff University has multiple sites distributed across central Cardiff, with student residences slightly outside the city centre. Students also live in a number of residential areas in the city. The University has surveyed staff and student travel habits. Its travel plan encourages active travel with an objective directing it to “consider options available for daily and annual cycle hire for staff and students”, liaise with Cardiff Council, and support an on street scheme.

### Sponsorship

This meant that there was an open door when Cardiff Council approached the university after awarding the bid. Sponsorship for the scheme was agreed for 5 years (with 2 potential extension periods). It guarantees yearly payments in return for:

- branding on first 500 bikes and on 52 initial hire stations and Cardiff nextbike webpages
- first refusal for sponsoring subsequent bikes
- all staff and students are entitled to free annual membership (which means they get free rentals up to 30 minutes)

In effect, staff and students can commute between sites which are within a 5 mile radius of city centre without cost.

### Marketing

The University also helped launch the scheme with students participating in a soft launch in March. Student Union sabbatical officers recruited over 60 students to help test a small scale roll out of 50 bikes and 5 docks.

The formal launch at the Senedd on 25 May 2018 was also strongly supported by the University, with Councillor Caro Wild, Sian Donovan, CEO of Pedal Power, and nextbike speaking at the launch, followed by a mass nextbike ride.

The scheme has been marketed through internal communications channels including staff and student newsletters and Yammer channels. New students also receive information about the scheme in their welcome packs.

The impact of this is that students make up 66% of members and 10% of total registrations (this includes both members and casual users). They make 38% of rentals by members (and 17% of all rentals). This is a substantial number – it contrasts with Glasgow where students of the two universities make up 50% of members, and 12% of total registrations but only 4% of rentals by members (3% of total rentals). The costs to students are the same in both cities so utilisation differences must be explained by other factors – it is possible, for instance, that the location of student residences in relation to the Glasgow network makes it less useful for typical student journeys. There may also be other factors such as the cycling network which play a part.

The scheme was launched as the term ended and with fewer students in Cardiff for the summer. Term time use is anticipated as even greater. There is a concern that it may not have sufficient bikes once students return at the start of the autumn term.

## Pedal Power

Pedal Power is the fleet maintenance and redistribution partner in Cardiff. The organisation is a charity which promotes inclusive accessible cycling and maintains a 250 strong accessible bike fleet available for inclusive bike rides and helping people with disabilities start or return to riding.

The Pedal Power workshop is the base for the nextbike fleet – which has 4 mechanics and 4 redistributive staff and managers (the team recently expanded to meet the requirements once the fleet expands to 500 bikes). Although the team working on nextbike is separate from the charity, there is informal cross fertilisation of skills and expertise between mechanics.

The team was excited at the instant use of the bikes – and extremely enthusiastic about keeping as many bikes in circulation as possible to meet the demand (sometimes 800 hires a day over the summer). The team estimates that there may be 20 bikes in the workshop at any time - mainly for general maintenance.

As the team is in charge of maintenance, they see any problems – theft or vandalism - first hand. Although there is some deliberate vandalism some of the damage they see looks like it is the result of the bikes being used by novice cyclists – locks dangling in spokes for example.

## Use patterns

Nextbike weekly reports show that the most popular commute is Central Station to Cardiff Bay. Then Llandaff Fields (a popular leafy suburb) into 4 city centre stations which implies these are used by office commuters. The team expects this to change as students return after the summer.

One interesting use is by Uber Eats and Deliveroo riders – they leave traces where they have taped foam pads to the bars so that they can add their own phones for directions.

Redistribution is busy work. The 15 bike university station (which also services the Welsh Government) is generally empty at 7am with 18 bikes by 9.30am. The team try and ensure there are 3 bikes at Llandaff Fields in the morning – and every evening there are 15 which have generally arrived from Cardiff Central, Churchill Way station and Cardiff Bay.

The Heath Hospital Campus has asked for a docking station because bikes were being left there (2-3 per day). This demand means that one of the new stations will be installed there. The team is hoping that the additional bikes will reduce the need for redistribution.

## Not docking

There has been lots of media coverage of the scheme so it's hard to be unaware of the scheme and how to use it – particularly that this is not a dockless system. However, the team wonders about the impact of dockless bike shares on people's expectations and whether that contributes to some of the bikes that are not docked in or near docks.

They have tried to keep message that the Cardiff bike share is a docked system very clear. Although if docks are full, there is the option to lock bikes next to a full station without incurring a penalty this the availability of this facility has been spread by word of mouth.

Where bikes are being left away from docks, Pedal Power start by sending reminder emails without levying a fine. However, after the first warning the fine for leaving bikes away from docks is £10 + £1 per km.

## Vandalism and maintenance

Maintenance issues seem to come through in phases. The first two months there was a real problem with spokes breaking on front wheels – then flat tires, left cranks falling off (due to a production issue which has now been fixed) and brakes tightening.

The main types of vandalism are people trying to take the bikes off the system and damaging the front locking plate to get into computer and cutting wires. Whilst this rarely succeeds, it is the most time consuming damage to fix.

Some of the maintenance is to deal with wear and tear issues. The high usage rate means that bikes are being worn more quickly than anticipated. Bikes are on average used for 2.5 hours per day so, for instance, handlebar grips look like years of use after 4-5 months. In addition, all the bikes require charging if they are not ridden so the team needs to keep an eye on the voltage of on board computers, however the bikes have been ridden so much that no bike has needed recharging over the summer.

## Theft

Theft has not been a big issue. Whilst there are usually 10 'missing' bikes at any given time so far they have they mainly reappeared. There have however, been 6 bikes marked as stolen in total. The scheme has settled down from 10-15 emails a day of 'non-legitimate hires' to 1-2 per week (including both software glitches and illegitimate use).

Whilst any loss is disappointing, it is important to compare this with other schemes – nextbike Milton Keynes reported over 50% of bikes vandalised or stolen at one point. Mobike complained the vandalism and theft prompted its withdrawal from Manchester with 10% of the fleet stolen or vandalised every month (fleet size reports varied but accounts suggest that means around 200 bikes per month<sup>13</sup>). Informal reports of 'warehouses' of spoilt Mobikes were also in circulation. In addition, one Mobike incident per day was reported to Manchester police<sup>14</sup> which supports this assertion.

The nextbike Cardiff attrition rate of 2 bikes per month is less than 1% of the fleet – which is good in comparison. However, the team is trying to keep losses as low as possible as there are currently no plans to top up the scheme (other than the planned expansion).

The team have a missing bike protocol which marks a bike that can't be found on the street as missing. The last customer gets an email and then it's handed to customer service and social media. The team has found a number of bikes through twitter – third parties will take photos and upload them and there's a great response.

The proactive searching, response on social media and interaction has helped ensure people know the bikes are 'looked after'.

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<sup>13</sup> Manchester first city in the world to lose Mobikes due to vandalism, Manchester Evening News, 5 September 2018 <https://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/greater-manchester-news/mobike-manchester-suspended-vandalism-refunds-15114335>

<sup>14</sup> Road CC, One Mobike incident a day was reported to Manchester police during bike share firm's time in city, 13 October 2018 <https://road.cc/content/news/249953-one-mobike-incident-day-was-reported-manchester-police-during-bike-share-firms>

One of the bikes was thrown into Cardiff Bay in July. The cricket club posted a picture of it looking forlorn and the response was outrage. That evening a team colleague who also works with British Red Cross went out in a rescue boat to fetch it.

Another bike was sprayed gold but police recovered and made a thing of recovering it and pointing out that it was still easy to recognise.

In addition, the police use nextbikes themselves, and are proactive in ensuring that they are not vandalised – and the Pedal Power number is on the wall at 2 police stations so any issues are followed up quickly. There is an additional network of Central Cardiff CCTVs monitored by a security company which gets in touch if they suspect misuse.

This collective approach has helped set up a different narrative to that surrounding less successful schemes.

## Conclusion

Extremely positive and proactive partners have created a strong narrative around the bike share scheme. This narrative has helped uptake through consistent marketing and messaging.

It also contrasts with some of the narratives around other contemporary schemes in the UK and can be seen to have a role in reducing theft and vandalism through a sense of ownership and care for the scheme.

Whilst the withdrawal of the previous scheme was perceived as a failure locally it created a body of knowledge and experience for the partners to draw on before launching the current scheme.

Combined with the Council officers' on the ground knowledge and experience and partnership with the University, this has created a network that works to facilitate trips around central Cardiff.

# People

Cardiff has a population in the region of 400,000. Whilst the unitary authority area's 2017 population was estimated to be 361,200, the Cardiff built up area population is 447,000. There are 44,000 students in Cardiff (with a total of 75,000 in the city region). In addition, there are in the region of 21 million annual visitors to Cardiff.<sup>15</sup>

The selected comparison schemes sit either side of Cardiff in terms of size and demographics. By comparison, the population of Milton Keynes is in the region of 250,000 (with an estimated student population of 10,000). Glasgow is a bigger city with around 600,000 inhabitants and in the region of 50,000 students. It attracts visitors in similar numbers to Cardiff. There were 21 million day visitors to Glasgow in 2015<sup>16</sup>. Visitor numbers were not available for Milton Keynes.

## Nextbike users

As this study is examining the high usage rate of bikes (i.e. the number of rentals per bike), this section examines the source of rentals – and whether Cardiff is different from other schemes.

Cardiff has the highest rate of non-member rentals of the three schemes examined. Non-members made 56% of rentals. This implies that the scheme is attractive to casual users – tourists, visitors and occasional users.

However, the scheme would not have the high rate of use without also having consistent use by members. Memberships form 15% of total registrations and make 44% of rentals. Discussions with a Cardiff cycling group suggested that regular cyclists would rent nextbikes for visiting friends and family or as part of social volunteering work (eg showing groups of refugees around the city), enabling people to cycle socially and in groups in the course of their normal activities.

Member usage can be broken down as follows:

- Student members (which form 66% of membership) make 17% of total rentals (and 38% of membership rentals).
- Annual memberships make up about 9% of memberships making 8% of total rentals and 18% of membership rentals.
- Monthly members make up 24% of membership making 19% of all rentals and make 44% of member rentals.

### Cardiff

Total rentals: 74,044 (March – August 2018)

Membership rentals: 32,444 – i.e. 44% of rentals

Registration-only rentals form 56% of rentals

**Memberships in Cardiff form 15% of total registrations and make 44% of rentals.**

### Milton Keynes

Total rentals: 99,565 (since launch – August 2018)

Membership rentals: 53,270 – i.e. 54% of rentals

Registration only rentals form 46% of rentals

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<sup>15</sup> Cardiff in 2018, Cardiff Public Services Board, 2018, <https://www.cardiffpartnership.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/Cardiff-in-2018-Final-English.pdf>

<sup>16</sup> The GB Day Visitor Statistics 2015, Visit Britain, [https://www.visitbritain.org/sites/default/files/gbdvs\\_annual\\_report.pdf](https://www.visitbritain.org/sites/default/files/gbdvs_annual_report.pdf)

**Memberships in Milton Keynes form 14% of registrations and make 54% of rentals.**

**Glasgow**

Total rentals: 525,799 (since launch – August 2018)

Membership rentals: 425,056 – i.e. 81% of rentals

Registration only rentals form 19% of rentals

**Memberships in Glasgow form 24% of registrations and make 81% of rentals.**

Whilst the Cardiff scheme is only recently launched, comparing these absolute numbers is potentially flawed. Taking one month – July 2018 – however confirms that there are significant differences between schemes in membership vs non-member usage.

	Total rentals	Member rentals		Non-member rentals	
Cardiff	24,645	10,706	<b>43%</b>	13,939	<b>57%</b>
Milton Keynes	4,055	1,935	48%	2,120	52%
Glasgow	26,381	15,738	60%	10,643	40%

Figure 22: Comparing member and non-member rentals for Cardiff, Milton Keynes and Glasgow for July 2018

**Visitor numbers**

Cardiff has a high number of visitors annually. Some of the use patterns (as well as ad hoc interviews) imply that there is good visitor use of the scheme.

Whilst Glasgow has similar visitor numbers, the nextbike scheme appears to be highly used by one corporate annual membership (the city council) and less so by casual users or other members. Without being directly able to compare cycling infrastructure (the propensity to cycle tool is not available for Scotland) it is difficult to explain this.

However, the cycle-friendly feeling on the streets of Cardiff, with lots of cycle parking and other cyclists in evidence, seems to increase the feeling of social acceptability of cycling and therefore visitors can use bikes without feeling that they're doing something odd, dangerous or unusual.



Figure 23: Cardiff nextbike dock – two other bike parking stations for personal bikes can be seen from this dock.

## Conclusion

There is a mix of users in Cardiff which is different from other schemes. It merits further study but the higher number of 'registration only' users implies more casual and - by implication - visitor use. The level of student use demonstrates both a positive partnership with the university and that the stations are situated appropriately to facilitate trips between university and residential sites. The healthy mix of memberships implies that the scheme is valued more widely in the Cardiff population.

## Narrative

One of the strong themes when talking to people about the nextbike scheme in Cardiff is a sense of ownership and broad support.

This section contrasts this extremely successful scheme with one of the least successful schemes in the UK – the Mobike Manchester scheme was withdrawn after just over a year.

In Cardiff, the story around the bikes has been told with a consistent message via nextbike, Cardiff City Council and Cardiff University. Media coverage has been positive – from the announcements about the bidding and selection process before the scheme was launched – through the launch and expansion. Even press about issues (empty racks and people not returning the bikes properly) have been broadly supportive.

Whilst some media suggests that customer use patterns (not returning bikes to docks) might be influenced by the advent of dockless bikes, the tone is very much about looking after the bikes, their popularity and utility in the city as well as emphasising ‘correct usage’.

There is a contrast between the pattern of media around nextbike and the Mobike launch and subsequent issues in Manchester. With the media emphasising that the dockless bikes were ‘not stolen’ at the outset, the tone is more of a free-for-all early on. This is then reined back in subsequent media (and quite quickly) but it seems that it wasn’t really possible to pull back from the ‘free range’ perception of the bikes. The media around them becomes increasingly negative and critical of public behaviour until they are withdrawn from the city.

## Conclusion

The narrative around the bike share scheme has the potential to affect its operation. Whilst it is hard to reach a definitive conclusion it is likely that the factors include:

- Long term communications strategy (starting almost a year from launch, continuing through launch and ongoing).
- Docks create a visible sense of ownership.
- There are rules from the start.
- Continual on message media from all partners, recruiting members through partners also creates a better network of ownership around the bikes.
- Use of Twitter.
- Diligent and proactive team ensuring that bikes out of use are rapidly turned round.
- Police have been positive and proactive in Cardiff, attending any suspicious activity quickly (it helps that some stations are close to police stations), and tweeting about bike locking. The initial slightly more hands off attitude of police in Greater Manchester after false 999 calls could have contributed to a different attitude to the bikes.

An illustration of the contrasting narratives which emerged around two different bike share schemes is set out in the appendix.

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A huge Chinese bike share scheme is coming to Manchester and Salford, and it's way better than Boris bikes, 12 June 2017

Some people are still confused about Mobikes - they are even calling the police, 12 July 2017

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Mobike is pulling out of Salford – 11 days out of launching in the town, 24 March 2018

Manchester first city in the world to lose Mobikes due to vandalism, 5 September 2018

### **The Guardian**

Manchester's bike scheme isn't working, because people don't know how to share, 16 July 2017

Mobike pulls out of Manchester citing theft and vandalism, 5 September 2018

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Take me to Wales, Cardiff takes bike-share to its heart, 18 June 2018

Wales Online, Cardiff's nextbike fleet to double in size as cyclists are abandoning them, 27 July 2018

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opencyclemap.org

google.com/maps

www.elevationmap.net

www.nextbike.co.uk

# Appendix

## A tale of two narratives

This appendix collates key media and social media about two contrasting bike share schemes and rates the media attitude to the scheme on the following scale. Whilst it is not a definitive compilation of media stories, it collates key highlights and aims to give a representation of the types and order of coverage.

Key:

positive

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+

neutral

0

-

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negative

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## Mobike Manchester

June 2017 – September 2018

June 2017

Early announcement

+++ Manchester Evening News 12 June 2017



July 2017

Post launch confusion

- Manchester Evening News 12 July 2017



Text:

The new bike rental scheme is proving popular in Manchester - but there's still some confusion over how it works.

Mobike bosses say the fact the bicycles are dockless - unlike London's Boris bikes - is puzzling some people and leading to reports to police that they have been 'stolen' or 'abandoned'.

One user told the M.E.N that she went to pick up a bike only to be informed by a nearby homeowner that they'd called 999.

Ella Wredenfors, a Mobike user from Chorlton , said she found a bike on the app's GPS map and was about to unlock it when she was warned away by a neighbour.

Ella said: "It was parked up just outside a house in Chorlton. When I went to move it, the owner stuck their head out the window and shouted at me. They said it was a dumped stolen bike and because the alarm went off when she tried to move it she called the police.

"I tried to explain but she wasn't listening to me and just kept saying the police were coming. So I found another Mobike to use.

"I think some people are really confused about how they work."

The M.E.N reported on Tuesday how there have been 17 reports of 'Mobike issues' since they were launched two weeks ago.

But the bike share firm says some 'abandoned' reports have come after users have parked them up in a public place, and within the Mobike rules.

Mobikes differ from Boris bikes in that they are dockless. With a wheel lock accessed through the app on your smartphone, they can be left in public places for the next user.

As long as they are not left in the way of traffic, in public buildings or on thoroughfares, the system allows a lot of flexibility.

A spokesman for Mobike said Mancunians and Salfordians had embraced the service, with up to 10 rides per bike per day since the launch.

He said there had been some issues with a minority of bikes, with GMP receiving 17 reports of Mobike issues.

But he added: "A number of these reports have been related to suspected - and mistaken - bike abandonment, reported by those unfamiliar with Mobike's innovative dockless sharing system.

"We have received strong support from Greater Manchester Police, as well as local councils, and will be continuing to work closely with both to ensure our scheme continues to best serve local communities and business in Greater Manchester.

"We would like to thank the public for their support of Mobike, and encourage them to provide any feedback on the scheme via [support.uk@mobike.com](mailto:support.uk@mobike.com)."

- **The Guardian 16 July 2017**

The image shows a screenshot of a Guardian article. On the left, there is a sidebar with the 'Opinion Cycling' logo, an email subscription link, and social media icons for Facebook, Twitter, and Email. Below these are the numbers '8951' and '911'. The main article title is 'Manchester's bike-share scheme isn't working - because people don't know how to share' by Helen Pidd. A portrait of Helen Pidd is shown on the right. Below the title, the text reads: 'There are bikes in the canal, in bins and in back gardens. You wouldn't blame Mobike for taking its remaining bicycles to a better behaved city'. At the bottom, there is a small photograph showing a person with a pink umbrella and another person in a white hoodie.

August 2017  
Explaining the scheme

+ Manchester Evening News 24 August 2017



Manchester Evening News NEWS ▾ IN YOUR AREA ▾ WHAT'S ON ▾ MAN CITY MAN UTD SPORT ▾ MORE ▾

# Mobike Manchester city bikes: How to use them, where are they and how to get the app

What are the orange bikes around Manchester? How to use the Boris-style bike hire scheme

SHARE     12 SHARES  45 COMMENTS

By **Charlotte Cox**  
14:17, 24 AUG 2017 UPDATED 19:28, 24 AUG 2017

NEWS

November 14 - May 2018  
Scheme coverage - sample Google News results

+ to - - -



### Manchester Mobikes: Cycles taken off streets for maintenance

BBC News - Nov 14, 2017

Greater Manchester's Mobikes have disappeared from the region's streets during an unannounced period of maintenance. Puzzled cyclists ...

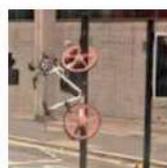
Are Mobike pulling out of Manchester? No, say Mobike. Here's what IS ...

International - Manchester Evening News - Nov 14, 2017

### Boardman criticises Mobike engagement as city looks to cycling future

Place North West - Sep 7, 2018

Bike sharing company Mobike this week announced that it would be withdrawing from Manchester due to the impact of vandalism, however ...



### Mobike left hanging from traffic light in city centre

Manchester Evening News - May 1, 2018

A Mobike was left hanging from a traffic light in Manchester city centre. The distinctive silver and orange hire cycle was spotted by a baffled ...



### Bike-sharing scheme Mobike is coming to Stockport

Manchester Evening News - Mar 8, 2018

To use the service, people have to download the Mobike app on their ... our contribution to Greater Manchester's cycling and environmental ...



### All 1000 Mobikes removed from Manchester... but they'll be back ...

road.cc - Nov 16, 2017

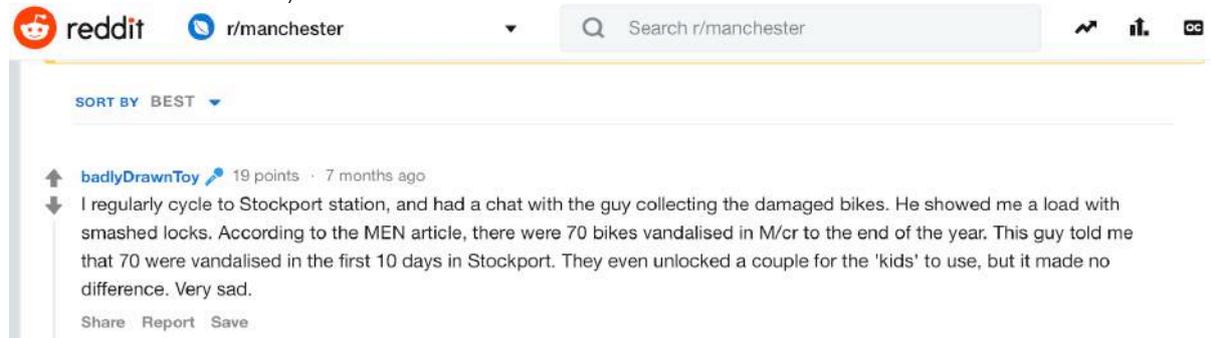
Steve Pyer, the firm's UK general manager, told the Manchester Evening ... In a statement, Mobike added that bikes would need to be parked ...

March 2018  
Decline of the scheme

Manchester Evening News 24 March 2018



With reddit commentary:



[https://www.reddit.com/r/manchester/comments/86vpt5/unsurprisingly\\_mobike\\_is\\_pulling\\_put\\_of\\_stockport/](https://www.reddit.com/r/manchester/comments/86vpt5/unsurprisingly_mobike_is_pulling_put_of_stockport/)

September 2018  
Closure of the scheme

The Guardian 5 September 2018





### Conclusion

The reporting of the Mobike scheme began in the month before launch and was positive at the outset. However, it quickly became less so and the last positive piece about it was published in the month following the launch. Subsequent media reports chart the scheme's decline and withdrawal.

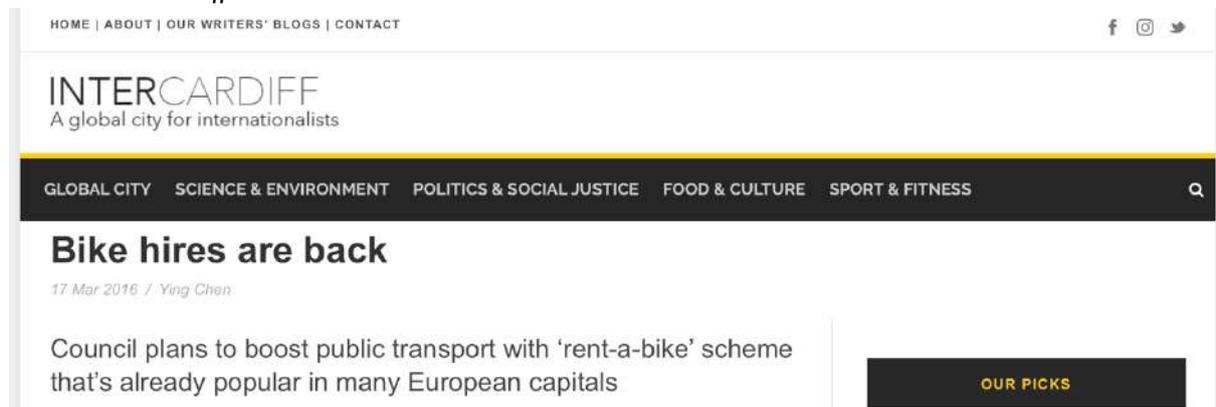
## Nextbike

March 2016 – September 2018

### March 2016

Initial plans for the scheme

#### + InterCardiff 17 March 2016



Text:

The transport ministry of Cardiff city council will soon offer a bike hire scheme with Boris bikes, the Santander sponsored service used for short journeys in London. From as little as £2 people will be able to cycle between several docking stations that will be built in the capital.

The scheme is the latest measure to boost cycling in the capital since Cardiff Council started [Enfys](#), a project that commits to cycle route network development. A previous attempt to bring bicycle hiring to Cardiff was tested in 2009, but had flopped. Justin Spinney, a Cardiff University lecturer and expert in urban geography, is hopeful it will be different this time.

"The key benefit of bike hiring is great for those who do not have space to store or purchase a bike. It also helps people who have to jump from one public transport to another without having to buy a folding bike," says Spinney who has been doing research on cycling for years.

"Cycling needs to be taken seriously and that means investing in the highest quality infrastructure," says Spinney. "It should also be able to accommodate increases in future cycling numbers."

According to the expert, the old Cardiff bike renting scheme failed because it tried to work with a budget that was too small.

"There were few docking stations and the bikes were not the best quality. Many of Cardiff's roads also need improvement as they are still too dangerous to cycle," says Spinney who believes planning and urban design for cycling is still poor in the Welsh capital.

<http://www.jomec.co.uk/intercardiff/global-city/bike-hires-are-back/>

## August 2017

Cycling plans and bike share scheme announced



Buzz 10 August 2017

Latest News TURNSTILE | LIVE REVIEW

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Added on August 10, 2017

Buzz

Cardiff, Cardiff City Council, Cycling, ELOUISE HOBBS, Feature, New Cycling Scheme, News

## NEW CYCLING SCHEME FOR CARDIFF | FEATURE

Text Size: Print This Page Send by Email



Cardiff City Council have vowed to take cycling seriously, and they are going to have to if they are going to reach their target of 50% of all journeys to be made by walking, cycling and public transport by 2021, rising to 60% by 2026 when the population of Cardiff is looking to reach nearly 800,000. After a year-long consultation, the City Council have now drawn up a plan so that they can make sure that Cardiff is "a city where cycling is a normal and practical choice for short trips for people of all ages and abilities". They hope

December 2017  
Nextbike announced

+++ *BBC News 19 December 2017*

The screenshot shows the BBC News website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the BBC logo, a search bar, and links for 'Your account', 'News', 'Sport', 'Weather', 'Shop', 'Reel', 'Travel', and 'More'. Below this is a red banner with the word 'NEWS' in white. Underneath the banner is a secondary navigation bar with links for 'Home', 'Video', 'World', 'US & Canada', 'UK', 'Business', 'Tech', 'Science', 'Stories', 'Entertainment & Arts', 'Health', and 'More'. A third navigation bar lists regional categories: 'Wales', 'Wales Politics', 'Wales Business', 'North West', 'North East', 'Mid', 'South West', 'South East', and 'Cymru'. The main content area features a large article titled 'Cardiff to get 250 cycles in public bike hire scheme' with a sub-headline '19 December 2017'. Below the title are social media sharing icons for Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, Email, and a 'Share' button. A video player thumbnail is visible below the text. To the right, a 'Top Stories' sidebar lists other news items: 'Google sacks dozens over harassment' (dated 2 hours ago) and 'Mail bombs 'may have come from...'

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-wales-south-east-wales-42420849>

March 2018  
Soft launch of the scheme coverage

+++ *ITV launch coverage 26 March 2018*

The screenshot shows the ITV News website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the ITV logo, links for 'Live TV', 'Shows', 'Categories', 'News', 'Help', and a search bar. Below this is a dark blue banner with the word 'NEWS' in white and links for 'Top stories', 'Your area', 'Topics', 'Sport', and 'Weather'. The main content area features a large article titled 'First wave of nextbikes arrive in Cardiff in bid to reduce congestion' with a sub-headline 'ITV REPORT 26 March 2018 at 6:00am'. Below the title is a large image showing several blue Nextbike bicycles parked in a row. To the right, a 'TOP STORIES' sidebar lists other news items: 'Warnings of wind and rain for Wales as Storm Bronagh becomes second storm of the season', 'Victim urges attacker to seek help after knife-point robbery', 'More people taking up apprenticeships in Wales', 'Gwrych Castle volunteer receives award from Prime Minister', and 'Anonymous donation helps 20-year-old walk again'.

+ to + + + additional news stories over time:



**This is how much Cardiff's new bike hire scheme costs and how it works**  
WalesOnline - 27 Mar 2018  
Hundreds of **nextbikes** will eventually be located around **Cardiff**, ready for ...  
Anyone can register to operator **nextbike** by downloading the app, ...



**The full list of nextbike locations in Cardiff**  
Wales247 (press release) - 25 May 2018  
**nextbike**, the world's most extensive bike-share operator, is launching an additional 200 bikes and 20 stations in **Cardiff** following the ...



**Are you a fan of Cardiff's nextbike? They want to hear from you...**  
Wales247 (press release) - 9 Aug 2018  
With cycling fever sweeping over **Cardiff** as residents embrace their brand-new bike share scheme, **nextbike** are now on the hunt for true fans to ...



**nextbike celebrates more than 15000 journeys in Cardiff**  
Wales247 (press release) - 14 Jun 2018  
As the county celebrates Bike Week (June 9-17), **nextbike** – the world's most extensive bike-share operator – is celebrating more than 15,000 ...



**First wave of nextbikes arrive in Cardiff**  
BQ Live - 27 Mar 2018  
"A bike hire scheme is a vital part of a true cycling city and I am delighted **nextbike** have recognised the great potential for cycling in **Cardiff**."



**Dozens of bikes will be available when Cardiff's new hire scheme ...**  
WalesOnline - 22 Mar 2018  
Julian Scriven, MD of **nextbike** UK, said: "It's exciting to see the bikes start to roll out in **Cardiff**. From reducing congestion and creating new jobs, ...



**Cardiff is seeing a huge cycling boom on back of city's new bike-hire ...**  
WalesOnline - 13 Jun 2018  
Since **nextbikes** were introduced in the city earlier this year locals and tourists have taken advantage of the cheap way to explore **Cardiff** in their ...



**First wave of nextbikes arrive in Cardiff in bid to reduce congestion**  
ITV News - 25 Mar 2018  
The first wave of **nextbikes** arrive in **Cardiff** today ahead of it's official launch in May, in a bid to reduce traffic and pollution. 250 bicycles across ...

## May 2018

### Nextbike social media supporting coverage

Sustrans Cymru Retweeted

**nextbike UK** @nextbikeUK · May 31  
Awesome coverage of our **Cardiff** launch by @WalesBusiness

"We believe **nextbike** are better than the London model, it is cheaper and has superior technology." - @CaroWild

**Bike Share Scheme Set to Boost Cycling to Work in Wales**  
Scores of cyclists took part in a mass ride through Cardiff on Friday to celebrate the expansion of the city's **nextbike** bike-share scheme.  
businessnewswales.com

3 5 31

## June 2018

Social media supporting scheme

0

### Tweet Police Cardiff 3 June 2018



+++

### Tweet Cardiff Council 14 June 2018



Media coverage of 15,000 trips

+++

### Take me to Wales 18 June 2018



BESPOKE WELSH HOLIDAY BREAKS FOR THE DISCERNING TRAVELLER



## Cardiff takes bike-share to its heart

Posted: 18th June 2018 By Robin Roberts

Cardiff is rapidly becoming the ideal place to tour on two wheels.

Nextbike – the world's most extensive bike-share operator – is celebrating more than 15,000 journeys in Cardiff in the first three months of launching the scheme in the Welsh capital.



## LET YOUR JOURNEY BEGIN



Send us details of your desires and we will draw up an individual programme of bespoke Welsh holiday breaks for you.

July 2018

Ongoing coverage and expansion plans

0 Wales Online 27 July 2018

The screenshot shows the top portion of a news article on the Wales Online website. The header is red with the 'WalesOnline' logo and navigation links for 'NEWS', 'IN YOUR AREA', 'WHAT'S ON', 'RUGBY', 'FOOTBALL', and 'MORE'. Social media icons for Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram are visible. The main headline is 'Cardiff's nextbike fleet to double in size as cyclists are abandoning them'. Below the headline is a sub-headline: 'The city's bike-hire scheme has been a huge success but users aren't returning their bikes correctly'. The article is attributed to 'Aamir Mohammed & Aamir Mohammed' and dated '16:51, 27 JUL 2018'. It has '29 SHARES' and '9 COMMENTS'. A 'NEWS' tag is in the bottom right corner.

Text

Some cyclists using Cardiff's nextbike scheme aren't returning their bikes to official stations, leading to empty racks across the city.

More than 7,000 people have signed up to the hugely popular bike-hire scheme since it launched earlier this year.

There were 250 bikes installed at 25 stations. But many people are now finding empty racks or bikes abandoned.

Those who don't return bikes are fined £10 and an extra £1 for every mile to the nearest station.

James Williams, 33, complained that there were no bikes for two consecutive days at Victoria Park, [Canton](#).

He said: "I use them every weekday for commuting to and from Cardiff central station from Victoria Park.

"Usually the problem is after work if you get into [Cardiff](#) too late and they've been taken, which is fine.

"But the past few days there's been none available because people aren't returning them to the designated bike racks.

"Generally using it has been okay, but if this continues I'll go back to other means of transport... or get my own bike."

Aled Price, 27, who uses them regularly, said: "The big racks in town are usually always empty or there are bikes there but haven't been returned properly, so they're useless.

"The last few times I've wanted to get a nextbike home after getting off the train, the racks are either empty or they're unavailable.

"I know it's new and I'm sure they'll iron everything out but it does get quite frustrating."

Nextbike say they are aware of the issue and are increasing their fleet of bikes.

They will also be expanding some of their most popular sites, such as Llandaff Fields.

Julian Scriven, nextbike UK managing director, said: "The scheme has been a massive success in Cardiff, with rentals per bike now reaching over five rides per bike per day.

"At peak times, we know that the demand for bikes is higher than the current fleet can keep up with.

"We're delighted to confirm that the scheme will double in size towards the end of August to 500 bikes.

"Another contributing factor is the way some customers are using the scheme. Customers are still getting used to having to return the bikes to an official station."

Nextbike say their top three stations in June in terms of rentals were Cardiff Bay, St John Street and Llandaff Fields.

Julian added: "Customers who repeatedly end rentals away from official docking stations will be fined, as per our T&Cs.

"This is to minimise clutter on the streets, which is very important in an historic city like Cardiff."

August 2018

Expansion coverage

+++

Wales 247 24 August 2018

Wales247.co.uk

Featured Cardiff Swansea Local News Business **These are the 27 new nextbike locations in Cardiff** Q

Home > Community > These are the 27 new nextbike locations in Cardiff



COMMUNITY | **CARDIFF**

## These Are The 27 New Nextbike Locations In Cardiff

 By **Rhys Gregory** — On **Aug 24, 2018** — Last updated **Aug 24, 2018** — 0 Comments

 Share     

**The locations of Cardiff's new nextbike stations have finally been revealed ahead of the scheme doubling in size next month.**

The 27 bike-share stations will start to be installed across the city from September 3rd, taking the city-wide docking network up from 25 to 52.

New docking stations will be installed in Llandaff, Grangetown, Heath, and Ely, as well as several around Cardiff University.

**+** [The full list of new nextbike locations](#)

nextbike, the world's most extensive bike-share operator, recently revealed the city's 16,000 registered users have already cycled an impressive 140,000km since the scheme was launched in March – 42 times the distance Geraint Thomas cycled in the Tour de France.

The bikes have also been used an average of five times per day and have been rented 53,000 times since they were first introduced into the city.

### Conclusion

Media about this scheme has been ongoing for two years (including for two years before launch) largely positive and supported by social media by key partners. Even where there have been difficulties with the scheme the reporting has been balanced between positive and negative making it neutral. The reporting has returned to positive with the expansion of the scheme and the high usage of the scheme.