

## Proposal for a Community Micromobility Service in Northstowe

Based at the Pilot Smart Travel Hub, Stirling Fields Community Space, Northstowe Phase 2

### Background

Cambridge Electric Transport (CET) has operated its Bizbike Community E-bike service in Northstowe since January 2020. For the first two years, the service was supported by Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC) through S106 funding, in partnership with South Cambridgeshire District Council (SCDC). This provided a subsidy of £2,000 per month (paid quarterly), enabling rider fees to be kept deliberately low at £0.50 per 30 minutes to encourage uptake.

When this subsidy ended after two years, CET continued operating the service from the cycle shelter at Pathfinder School. During this period, the scheme was cross-subsidised by CET's other community e-bike projects (funded through the South Cambridgeshire Zero Carbon Communities Fund) and by our staff cycling contract with Cambridge Science Park.

Operating in this bootstrapped mode limited our ability to invest in marketing and community outreach, and usage declined. We also experienced bike theft and vandalism, which further impacted viability.

These challenges directly informed the development of CET's **Smart Travel Hub** concept, designed to provide a more resilient, secure and user-friendly foundation for shared micromobility services.



Current Community E-bike service based at bike shelter near Pathfinder School.

### The Smart Travel Hub Concept

The Smart Travel Hub has been designed with the following core objectives:

- **Enhanced security:** bright lighting, CCTV, and smart digital locks operated through the rider app.
- **Seamless user experience:** integrated gate and bike unlocking within the same app, alongside ambient lighting that gently brightens when users enter the Hub.

- **Low-carbon operation:** reduced grid dependency through on-site solar generation and a battery power bank.

CET has received a grant from the CPCA Business Growth & Social Impact Investment Fund to build and trial a pilot Smart Travel Hub in Q1 2026. We are partnering with Intelligen as our technology partner for this project. We first connected at the Mobility Hub Summit in Bristol (October 2025), followed by a site visit to Northumberland in December, where we confirmed that Intelligen had already developed much of the technology required for our Hub concept (see [www.intelligen.energy](http://www.intelligen.energy)).

**Below are graphics of the hub, with an optional parcel locker attached.**



### **Proposed Pilot Project**

We are currently in discussions with South Cambridgeshire District Council, Smarter Journeys and Cambridgeshire County Council regarding siting the pilot Hub at the Keepmoat community facility in Northstowe Phase 2, subject to approval by Homes England.

The Hub design also allows for optional additions such as parcel lockers to support last-mile deliveries and local services.

### **How the service will operate**

The proposal builds on CET's existing Community E-bike service, with the addition of 4–6 new e-bikes located at the Smart Travel Hub in Phase 2.

Residents will be able to use the service for:

- Local trips within Northstowe
- Journeys along the guided busway east and west
- Commuting to Cambridge Science Park or Cambridge North Station (with bikes secured in designated lock-up facility)

The service will operate via CET's existing Bizbike app, which has been in continuous use and development since January 2020. The aim is for riders to unlock both the Hub and the bikes through the same app interface.

Bikes must be returned to one of the Northstowe hubs on the day of hire, ensuring availability for other users and simplifying fleet management.

### Proposal to Cambridgeshire County Council

Our longer-term vision is to evolve the service into a fully inclusive community micromobility offering. This would progressively incorporate cargo bikes and, in later phases, quadricycles and other light vehicles - supporting a wide range of ages, abilities and travel needs. We would welcome the opportunity to integrate cargo bikes from CCC's eCargo Bike Try Before You Buy programme.

Based on our previous operational experience in Northstowe, CET proposes applying to CCC for subsidy funding of £2,000 per month for an initial three-year period to support relaunch and early adoption of the Smart Travel Hub service.

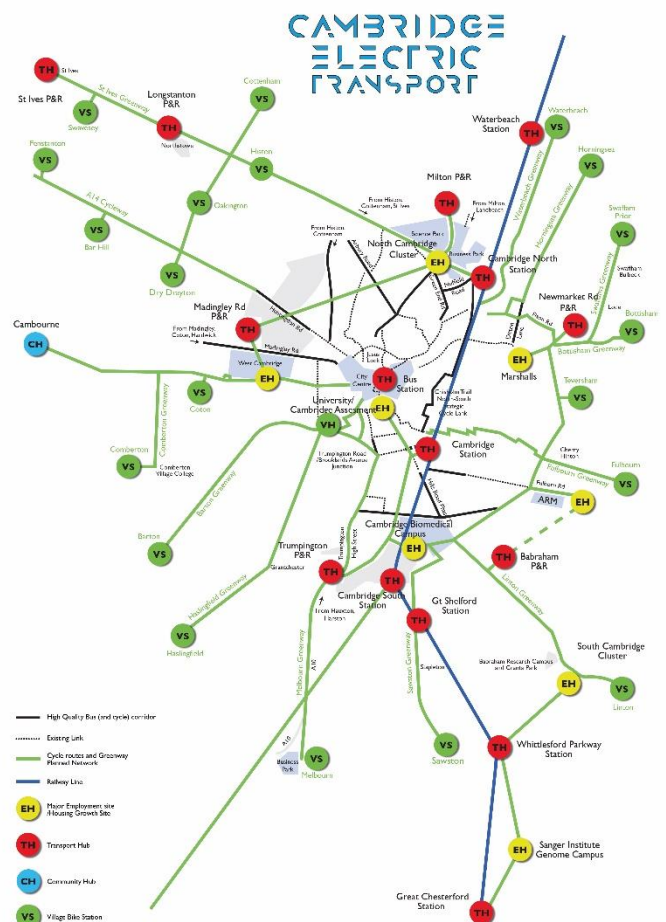
During this period, we would:

- Gradually increase rider fees to move the service toward greater financial self-sufficiency
- Actively pursue sponsorship and longer-term funding partnerships
- Build usage through targeted community engagement and promotion

Our aim is to establish a robust, scalable model that can expand over time, increase commercial viability, and deliver lasting social, environmental and mobility benefits for Northstowe.

### Longer-term vision

Our vision is to develop a network of hubs, including all the Park&Rides, Cambridge city centre, train stations, Greenway routes and surrounding villages, to create a safe and inclusive micromobility service that serves a wide range of residents not currently able or willing to use standard commercial bikeshare services like Voi.



**Outline 3-year budget and outcomes**

<b>Rides per Year</b>	<b>Rider Fee (per 30-min)</b>	<b>Revenue (30-min average)</b>	<b>CCC Subsidy</b>	<b>Expected CO<sub>2</sub> Savings</b>	<b>Inclusion Benefits</b>
2026 1,200	£0.50–£0.75	£600–£900	£24,000	0.6 tonnes	Community access, families, elderly, low-income users
2027 2,500	£0.75–£1.00	£1,875–£2,500	£24,000	1.3 tonnes	Expanded inclusivity, cargo bike trials for deliveries, disabled users
2028 4,000	£1.00–£1.25	£4,000–£5,000	£24,000	2.1 tonnes	Full inclusive service, families, commuters, cargo delivery, all ages & abilities

**Notes:**

- CO<sub>2</sub> savings calculated based on estimated car trips replaced by e-bikes (modest average 2 km per trip).
- Gradual increase in rider fees balances affordability and sustainability.
- Inclusion benefits reflect access for diverse user groups, supporting social equity and active travel goals.
- This proposed level of subsidy will enable us to expand the range of vehicles at both hubs to include 3- and 4-wheel e-bikes. We would like to do trials with 3Scooters by Supersmith (see photo), as well as the CitiPod, the 4-wheel e-bike we are developing.



**The 3Scooter by Supersmith**



**CitiPod prototype with advisory board members**

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