



Launch of Bolt e-bikes in Sligo Town

 Sligo, County Sligo

In the summer of 2022 Bolt launched their pilot shared electric bike scheme in Sligo, marking the first Irish electric bike service. The launch in Sligo was part of Bolt's wider mission to deploy 16,000 electric bikes across Europe in 2022.

In Spring and Summer 2023 Bolt will add an additional 30 electric bikes to Sligo, bringing the total to 100. The bikes are available at over 50 designated parking zones across the town, which cost €0.15 per minute.



Interview Questions and Responses

How did you agree the key objectives that you wanted your project to deliver?

The Government of Ireland are currently prioritising the development of e-bikes, e-scooters and transport hubs. Sligo County Council undertook a call to the market to develop and attract industry experts to develop a pilot e-bike scheme.

How did you decide upon a single project idea that could deliver against those objectives?

There is a specific mandate in national government legislation for County Councils to provide clean mobility solutions. The Government of Ireland contacted Sligo County Council directly to develop the project.

The project idea aligns with the Sligo County Council Climate Action Plan and the need to increase to 500,000 walking and cycling journeys per day in Sligo.

Describe the process by which you achieved consensus around objectives and projects. Has that consensus held or does it remain challenged by some in the community? If so, how are you dealing with that?

There have been no objections to the pilot to date. If there are objections, Sligo County Council would directly consider them and consider community input.

How did you approach planning and project management around your selected idea?

Bolt manages the planning and project management activities as the operator of the pilot. Sligo County Council transport team met with Bolt bi-weekly at project launch and now on a monthly basis to manage the project.



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Continues overleaf

How has that stood the test of time through the project? Have you had to revise your plans. How have you managed that process?

There has been a collaborative approach taken with Bolt. Sligo County Council took a lot of direction from Bolt initially. There was a process of joined up thinking and collectively identified certain areas of high take up and e-bike parking spaces were targeted over time.

How did you identify a funding need?

There was a low amount of funding required for marking e-bike parking areas which was low cost and the National Transport Authority provided funding for line marking under its Active Travel Investment Grants.

Sligo County Council are currently examining charging locations for 4 e-bike chargers and that cost is a larger capital investment.

As this is a pilot scheme, Bolt is undertaking the project on a commercial basis for 12 months. The initial capital investment into the e-bikes and operations and maintenance is the responsibility of Bolt.

How have you managed the process of initiating the pilot?

Sligo County Council identified industry leaders and wrote directly to companies to invite to bid and launch a pilot. The County Council actively advertised the opportunity directly to potential suppliers and enabled Bolt's initial interest.

What have been the hardest difficulties to overcome and how did you overcome them?

Parking areas and locating them was the biggest challenge. Sligo County Council identified hotspots such as an industrial estate or key employment centre using software provided by Bolt.

However, some parking bays are only large enough for 12 bikes and 4 may turn up, others may have none at all turning up. The demand was mapped on a GIS system using an internal resource. This enabled the adjustment of parking space accordingly and splitting of demand.

Has the project team managed to stay true to the original project vision? If not, why not? If it has, how has this been achieved?

The pilot has stayed true to the vision. Sligo needed an e-bike system which was assessable and to enable small journeys inside in Sligo and there has been a large-scale uptake.

What have been the biggest learnings from the delivery of your project?

Advertise the opportunity to see which industry firms are interested and procure a service provider which has a proven track record, ideally an established international firm.

Provide information on usage to enable funding bodies and industry to understand your usage during the pilot, this enables communities and County Councils to highlight success on a monthly basis and to gain strong consensus. Firms such as Bolt can capture this data.

What decisions, or elements of organisation have been the most important in the delivery of your project?

The first key decision was to advertise to the market.

The second key decision was working with Bolt to co-design the pilot and launch with a reasonable number before scaling to a number which suited Sligo.

The next key decision is potentially working towards a more formal arrangement with Bolt.

What were the most important sources of advice and guidance as you moved through the different phases of the project?

Knowledge and expertise in developing e-bike pilots currently lies with industry experts such as Bolt who were critical in developing the project. Leading firms developing e-bike projects were identified through desk research when inviting firms to develop and launch the pilot.

Key contact

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Links

Facebook: <https://zh-tw.facebook.com/boltireland/posts/516806326793207/>

Independent Sligo: <https://www.independent.ie/regionals/sligochampion/news/sligo-to-get-an-extra-30-e-bikes-from-bolt-to-bring-total-to-100-42363668.html>

RTE: <https://www.rte.ie/news/business/2022/0516/1298287-bolt-to-launch-pilot-e-bike-service-in-sligo/>