# London's e-bike boom accelerates amid Tube strike turmoil



Electric bike usage in London has surged significantly amid ongoing London Underground strikes, as commuters seek alternative transport options to bypass the disruption. Lime, a leading operator of rental e-bikes and e-scooters, reported a more than 50% increase in trips during peak travel hours on Monday and Tuesday. Specifically, trips between 7am and 11am jumped by 58% on Monday and 50% on Tuesday compared to the previous week. Additionally, the length and duration of journeys increased, suggesting many commuters relied on Lime bikes for entire commutes rather than just first or last-mile travel.

The strikes, orchestrated by thousands of Rail, Maritime and Transport union (RMT) members, have brought considerable disruption to Tube services across the capital. The rail walkouts stem from disputes over pay, working hours, and shifting patterns and are estimated to have cost the London economy approximately £230 million in direct losses, with further indirect financial impacts anticipated. As a result, many Londoners turned to alternatives such as bikes, buses, and river boats to maintain their routines.

Lime's UK and Ireland policy director, Hal Stevenson, explained that the data reflects how their e-bikes have plugged gaps left by unavailable public transport. In response, Lime has ramped up operations, with teams on standby to keep vehicles in service through battery replacements and rebalancing efforts. They have also increased foot patrols to manage high-demand areas and ensure availability.

This spike forms part of a broader shift in urban mobility patterns. Recent industry reports highlight that dockless bike-sharing services, including Lime and Forest, have seen major surges in demand during the strikes. Forest, for instance, recorded a tenfold increase in app downloads, while Lime noted nearly a 50% increase in trips. Meanwhile, traditional bike hire usage by Transport for London experienced a decline, contrasting with the rise in Lime's services, which have grown steadily by around 10% monthly since their launch in London five years ago. Lime's e-bikes have completed over 12 million trips in the city between 2019 and 2023, focusing deployment on areas with lower public transport accessibility and higher deprivation.

However, the growth of dockless e-bike usage has also brought challenges, particularly related to parking and public space management. The City of London Corporation recently seized over 100 e-bikes from Lime and Forest during a two-week operation aimed at addressing complaints about bikes being left obstructing pavements and creating hazards. Firms were charged approximately £235 per bike for their release, resulting in fines totaling around £25,000. This crackdown underscores ongoing tensions between promoting micromobility solutions and maintaining urban order, renewing calls for London-wide regulations to better manage dockless vehicle numbers and prevent anti-social parking.

The increased reliance on e-bikes during transport strikes demonstrates their growing role in London’s transport ecosystem, allowing commuters to adapt quickly to service disruptions. Nevertheless, balancing this mobility option with effective management remains an important consideration for city authorities and operators alike.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.irishnews.com/news/uk/lime-bike-trips-spike-as-londoners-seek-alternative-travel-amid-tube-strikes-PNAKIDDYNNLSFKFSVYN55NPIFE/), [[4]](https://www.moveelectric.com/e-bikes/rail-strikes-rental-e-scooter-and-e-bike-usage-set-surge)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.irishnews.com/news/uk/lime-bike-trips-spike-as-londoners-seek-alternative-travel-amid-tube-strikes-PNAKIDDYNNLSFKFSVYN55NPIFE/), [[2]](https://www.reuters.com/sustainability/sustainable-finance-reporting/london-commuters-turn-bikes-boats-tube-strike-enters-second-day-2025-09-09/)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://www.irishnews.com/news/uk/lime-bike-trips-spike-as-londoners-seek-alternative-travel-amid-tube-strikes-PNAKIDDYNNLSFKFSVYN55NPIFE/), [[3]](https://www.ft.com/content/ffa16e07-b83f-40a6-af1d-b9b2902a67db), [[4]](https://www.moveelectric.com/e-bikes/rail-strikes-rental-e-scooter-and-e-bike-usage-set-surge)
* Paragraph 4 – [[6]](https://www.transportxtra.com/publications/local-transport-today/news/74551/tfl-bike-hire-use-falls-by-a-third-while-lime-on-the-rise-in-capital)
* Paragraph 5 – [[5]](https://www.standard.co.uk/news/transport/lime-forest-ebikes-seized-pavements-release-fee-city-of-london-corporation-b1210227.html)
* Paragraph 6 – [[1]](https://www.irishnews.com/news/uk/lime-bike-trips-spike-as-londoners-seek-alternative-travel-amid-tube-strikes-PNAKIDDYNNLSFKFSVYN55NPIFE/), [[3]](https://www.ft.com/content/ffa16e07-b83f-40a6-af1d-b9b2902a67db), [[4]](https://www.moveelectric.com/e-bikes/rail-strikes-rental-e-scooter-and-e-bike-usage-set-surge)

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.irishnews.com/news/uk/lime-bike-trips-spike-as-londoners-seek-alternative-travel-amid-tube-strikes-PNAKIDDYNNLSFKFSVYN55NPIFE/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.reuters.com/sustainability/sustainable-finance-reporting/london-commuters-turn-bikes-boats-tube-strike-enters-second-day-2025-09-09/> - During a London Underground strike, commuters turned to alternative transport methods, including bikes, buses, and boats. Electric bike-sharing services like Lime reported significant increases in usage, with Lime noting a 58% rise in trips during Monday's morning peak compared to the previous week. The strike, organized by the RMT union, is driven by disputes over pay, working hours, and shift patterns. The disruption is expected to cost the London economy £230 million directly, with further indirect losses. ([reuters.com](https://www.reuters.com/sustainability/sustainable-finance-reporting/london-commuters-turn-bikes-boats-tube-strike-enters-second-day-2025-09-09/?utm_source=openai))
3. <https://www.ft.com/content/ffa16e07-b83f-40a6-af1d-b9b2902a67db> - During a major London Underground strike, dockless bicycles emerged as a key alternative transport solution, significantly mitigating the disruption. Unlike previous strikes, this one coincided with the widespread availability of app-based rental bikes, notably from Lime and Forest, which saw massive surges in demand—Forest experienced a tenfold increase in app downloads, while Lime reported nearly 50% more trips. Transport for London also saw notable increases in bus usage and Elizabeth Line ridership. However, chaotic scenes of scattered dockless bikes in central London raised logistical challenges for providers. ([ft.com](https://www.ft.com/content/ffa16e07-b83f-40a6-af1d-b9b2902a67db?utm_source=openai))
4. <https://www.moveelectric.com/e-bikes/rail-strikes-rental-e-scooter-and-e-bike-usage-set-surge> - Lime, the winner of this year’s Move Electric Innovation Award, experienced a sharp rise in demand for both its e-scooter and e-bike services in London during the strike that affected the London Underground on Monday June 6. Lime says that trips using its e-scooters and e-bikes were up a combined 44 per cent compared to the previous Monday, with the number of new accounts created up 144 per cent and the number of first trips taken rising 150 per cent. 'The last time there was a tube strike in London, we saw trips on that day increase by more than 95 per cent compared to the same day the previous week,' said Alan Clarke, Lime’s senior director of public policy. 'Everybody wants to see the tube functioning to its full extent but whenever there’s a strike or disruption it’s a great opportunity for people to try a new form of environmentally friendly transport.' ([moveelectric.com](https://www.moveelectric.com/e-bikes/rail-strikes-rental-e-scooter-and-e-bike-usage-set-surge?utm_source=openai))
5. <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/transport/lime-forest-ebikes-seized-pavements-release-fee-city-of-london-corporation-b1210227.html> - More than 100 Lime and Forest e-bikes that were blocking pavements in central London have been seized by council officials. The City of London Corporation, the local authority for the City’s 'Square Mile' financial area, seized the bikes and charged the firms a fee of £235 per bike before allowing them to be recovered. It said more than 100 of the dockless bikes were removed from the streets over a two-week period because they had been left in areas where they caused an obstruction or presented an 'immediate danger to others'. This means the dockless bikes firms will have been fined in the region of £25,000 to get their bikes back. It is the latest controversy to hit the dockless bike industry, which has seen a huge growth in the use of hired e-bikes in London amid calls for the introduction of Londonwide rules to curb their numbers and tackle anti-social parking. ([standard.co.uk](https://www.standard.co.uk/news/transport/lime-forest-ebikes-seized-pavements-release-fee-city-of-london-corporation-b1210227.html?utm_source=openai))
6. <https://www.transportxtra.com/publications/local-transport-today/news/74551/tfl-bike-hire-use-falls-by-a-third-while-lime-on-the-rise-in-capital> - Use of Transport for London’s hire bikes has fallen 33% while electric bikes provided by micromobility firm Lime continue to rise, new figures reveal. TfL data shows that its bikes were hired 2,353,062 times between April and June 2023 compared with 3,512,311 times between April and June 2022. Meanwhile, Lime said that usage of its e-bikes have risen, on average, by 10% a month since the service was launched in the capital five years ago. Lime said there have more than 12 million trips made on its bikes by 1.25 million different customers in London between January 2019 and March 2023. About 40% of Lime e-bikes are deployed in areas with low public transport accessibility while half of the bikes are provided in areas of higher deprivation, it added. ([transportxtra.com](https://www.transportxtra.com/publications/local-transport-today/news/74551/tfl-bike-hire-use-falls-by-a-third-while-lime-on-the-rise-in-capital?utm_source=openai))