# London’s dockless bike surge during Tube strikes prompts push for safer cycling infrastructure



During the recent Tube strikes in London, the surge in the use of dockless hire bikes, such as Lime, highlighted the significant potential of cycling to serve as a safe and convenient mode of transport in the city. Tom Fyans, the CEO of The London Cycling Campaign, remarked on how the strikes demonstrated cycling's ability to effectively move large numbers of people, while also exposing the gaps in infrastructure. He pointed out that many areas in London still lack genuinely safe and comfortable routes for cyclists, and that the capacity on existing cycle routes is urgently insufficient to meet growing demand.

This trend aligns with broader data showing a sharp rise in cycling across parts of London, especially in the City of London’s financial district. Recent figures reveal a 57% increase in cycling journeys over two years, with bicycles now outnumbering cars by two to one during daytime hours. The growth has been driven largely by a 340% spike in dockless e-bike use, including brands like Lime and Forest, which now account for 17% of all bikes in the area. These statistics underscore the rising popularity of micromobility solutions and their convenience for short urban trips.

However, with the increasing presence of dockless bikes comes a corresponding challenge: the management of bike parking and its impact on public space. The City of London Corporation has outlined measures to ensure responsible bike-sharing, amidst concerns about bikes being left inappropriately on pavements and obstructing pedestrians. Transport for London (TfL) has ramped up enforcement through a new policy threatening fines against operators whose bikes are parked outside designated areas. This move seeks to balance the benefits of dockless schemes with the need to maintain safe and accessible streets for all users.

In tandem with these developments, the Mayor of London has introduced a comprehensive Action Plan aimed at encouraging more residents to cycle. The plan includes expanding established initiatives like the Santander Cycles scheme, which has recorded over 10 million hires in recent years. This effort is part of a broader vision outlined by the Greater London Authority to transform the capital into the world's leading big cycling city. Goals of this strategy include expanding the cycleway network, reducing road danger, and increasing the accessibility of cycling, all contributing to a significant 70% growth in cycling in the City of London since 2017 and a 20% rise in daily cycle journeys since 2019.

Transport for London’s commitment is further demonstrated through its Dockless Bike Share Code of Practice, which sets out operational standards for e-bike companies. This code is designed to ensure that bike hire services complement London's public transport rather than conflict with it, promoting safe and sustainable transport alternatives while addressing concerns such as congestion and pedestrian safety.

The recent surge of dockless bike usage during strike action reinforces the potential for cycling to play a pivotal role in urban mobility. However, the continuing need for expanded infrastructure, regulated operation, and increased cycle capacity reflects the complexity of integrating cycling as a mainstream transport option in a bustling metropolis like London. The challenge now will be ensuring that investments and policies keep pace with the growing enthusiasm for cycling while managing the urban environment responsibly.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.standard.co.uk/news/transport/london-cycling-lime-tube-strike-b1249502.html)
* Paragraph 2 – [[2]](https://www.standard.co.uk/news/transport/bikes-cars-city-of-london-square-mile-cyclists-b1224006.html), [[6]](https://www.london.gov.uk/programmes-strategies/transport/cycling-london)
* Paragraph 3 – [[3]](https://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/services/streets/dockless-cycle-hire-in-the-city-of-london), [[4]](https://www.cyclingweekly.com/news/fines-threatened-in-clampdown-on-'problematic-parking'-of-e-bikes-in-london)
* Paragraph 4 – [[5]](https://www.london.gov.uk/press-releases/mayoral/action-plan-to-get-more-londoners-cycling), [[6]](https://www.london.gov.uk/programmes-strategies/transport/cycling-london)
* Paragraph 5 – [[7]](https://tfl.gov.uk/corporate/publications-and-reports/dockless-bike-share-code-of-practice)
* Paragraph 6 – [[1]](https://www.standard.co.uk/news/transport/london-cycling-lime-tube-strike-b1249502.html), [[5]](https://www.london.gov.uk/press-releases/mayoral/action-plan-to-get-more-londoners-cycling)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/transport/london-cycling-lime-tube-strike-b1249502.html> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/transport/bikes-cars-city-of-london-square-mile-cyclists-b1224006.html> - This article reports a 57% increase in cycling journeys in the City of London over two years, with bikes now outnumbering cars two to one during the day. The surge is partly attributed to a 340% rise in the use of dockless e-bikes, such as Lime and Forest, which now constitute 17% of all bikes in the area. The data highlights a significant shift towards cycling in London's financial district, underscoring the growing popularity and convenience of dockless hire bikes.
3. <https://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/services/streets/dockless-cycle-hire-in-the-city-of-london> - The City of London Corporation provides information on managing dockless cycle hire schemes within the city. It outlines the challenges posed by inappropriately parked bikes and the steps taken to address these issues, including potential future legislation to regulate on-street micromobility schemes. The article emphasizes the importance of collaboration with operators to ensure safe and responsible bike-sharing practices in the urban environment.
4. <https://www.cyclingweekly.com/news/fines-threatened-in-clampdown-on-'problematic-parking'-of-e-bikes-in-london> - Transport for London (TfL) has introduced a new enforcement policy targeting the improper parking of e-bikes. The policy threatens fines against companies that allow their bikes to be parked outside designated areas. With over 30,000 dockless e-bikes available in London, including operators like Lime, Forest, and Tier, TfL aims to ensure that bike-sharing services operate responsibly and do not obstruct public spaces.
5. <https://www.london.gov.uk/press-releases/mayoral/action-plan-to-get-more-londoners-cycling> - The Mayor of London has launched a comprehensive Action Plan to encourage more residents to take up cycling. The plan includes expanding the Santander Cycles scheme, which has been instrumental in increasing cycling participation, with over 10 million hires recorded in the year prior to the announcement. The initiative aims to make cycling more accessible and appealing to a broader demographic across the capital.
6. <https://www.london.gov.uk/programmes-strategies/transport/cycling-london> - The Greater London Authority outlines its vision to transform London into the world's best big cycling city. Collaborating with Transport for London (TfL), boroughs, and communities, the strategy focuses on expanding the Cycleway network, reducing road danger, and making cycling more accessible. Achievements include a 70% increase in cycling in the City of London from 2017 to 2024 and a 20% rise in daily cycle journeys since 2019.
7. <https://tfl.gov.uk/corporate/publications-and-reports/dockless-bike-share-code-of-practice> - Transport for London (TfL) has developed a code of practice for dockless cycle hire operators to ensure their services complement London's public transport network. The code outlines expectations for operators, including engagement, operational safety, parking, and data requirements. It aims to make cycling more accessible and attractive while preventing negative impacts on other road users and pedestrians.