**Risk Management**

**Introduction**

This document outlines the main risks associated with opening and operating a cycle rental scheme in Brighton. Each risk has been assessed for Likelihood and Impact, which are combined to produce a Priority score. Higher scores indicate risks that require more immediate attention.

Scoring system:

* 1 = least likely / least impactful
* 5 = most likely / most impactful

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| **Risk** | **Category** | **Description** | **Likelihood** | **Impact** | **Priority** | **Mitigation** |
| Reputation Damage | Reputation | Negative incidents, poor service, or tech issues can spread quickly via media/social platforms. | 3.5 | 4.5 | 15.75 | Proactive service, rapid issue resolution, maintenance, highlight sustainability |
| Theft | Operational | Theft risk from targeted locations; GPS/tracking reduces likelihood, but impact remains high. | 3.5 | 4.5 | 15.75 | GPS tracking, tamper-resistant parts, app unlock, rapid response |
| Maintenance Issues | Operational | Wear & tear from high seasonal usage; faults like flat tyres, broken chains. | 4 | 3.5 | 14 | Proactive maintenance, rapid repairs, spare parts inventory |
| Vandalism & Misuse | Operational | High misuse risk due to students, nightlife, and tourists; bikes may be dumped or damaged. | 3.5 | 3.5 | 12.25 | Robust design, dock incentives, monitoring, community engagement |
| Regulatory Barriers | Regulatory | Council approval needed for bays/permits; delays could occur. | 3 | 4 | 12 | Early council engagement, compliance, highlight sustainability |
| Health & Safety | Operational | Risk of accidents or injuries; liability claims or negative media possible. | 3 | 4 | 12 | Safety guidance, helmet promotion, regular safety checks, insurance |
| Weather & Seasonal Demand | Market | Coastal climate and tourism seasonality affect usage; high summer demand, low winter. | 4 | 3 | 12 | Flexible pricing, marketing, commuter incentives, seasonal promotions |
| Overcharging & Tech Failures | Operational | App/docking errors can erode trust; refunds usually issued. | 3 | 3.5 | 10.5 | Reliable systems, testing, refund policy, quick support |
| Competition Pressure | Market | Beryl main operator: future entrants may limit market share or slow growth. | 3 | 3.5 | 10.5 | Sustainability branding, local partnerships, service differentiation |
| Supply Chain / Material Risk | Operational | Delays or quality issues in recycled plastics or components could affect production and costs. | 3 | 3.5 | 10.5 | Diversified suppliers, quality checks, contingency stock, advance planning |

**Detailed risk descriptions and justifications**

Vandalism and misuse

* + Are recurring challenges for bike rental schemes across the UK. While there are no high-profile reports of widespread vandalism of Beryl bikes in Brighton so far, comparable schemes in Bristol and Cardiff faced severe issues, with operators reporting that up to 50% of the fleet was vandalised or damaged within weeks of deployment, ultimately forcing suspensions. Brighton presents a risk profile that could expose bikes to similar misuse, given its large student population, vibrant nightlife, and high tourist turnover — all factors that increase the likelihood of careless or deliberate damage. Typical issues include bikes being left in rivers, abandoned in inappropriate places, or deliberately damaged. Beryl’s design mitigates some of these risks, with robust construction and dock-based return incentives, but misuse remains a visible issue in reviews (e.g., complaints about bikes being dumped or unavailable). The likelihood is therefore medium–high (3–4), while the impact is also medium–high (3–4), as sustained vandalism could lead to higher maintenance costs, reduced fleet availability, and reputational harm if bikes are frequently seen in poor condition or misused in public.

Theft

* + Theft is a critical risk for any bike rental scheme, but its likelihood must be considered in context. In Brighton, recent reports highlight the theft of regular bikes including a violent incident at Brighton Marina where six e-bikes were stolen and the relocation of a seafront rack due to repeated targeting by thieves. These cases demonstrate the prevalence of cycle theft in the city. However, Beryl bikes are designed with enhanced security compared to private bicycles: they are heavier, fitted with GPS tracking, use tamper-resistant parts, and can only be unlocked via the app. These features reduce the ease of theft, suggesting that while the risk remains, the likelihood is lower than for privately owned bikes. That said, the impact of theft would still be high, given the high replacement costs of fleet bikes, potential service disruption, and reputational damage if users perceive the scheme as unsafe or unreliable. Overall, theft in Brighton should be scored as medium–high likelihood (3–4) but high impact (4–5).

Maintenance Issues

* + Maintenance is a consistent operational challenge for bike rental schemes. Although there are no widely reported Brighton-specific incidents of large-scale breakdowns, user reviews of Beryl bikes in the city frequently mention issues such as flat tyres, broken chains, or e-bikes without charge being left in bays. Evidence from other schemes shows the scale of this risk: in London, two-thirds of Santander Cycles required repair within the first six months of operation, highlighting how quickly wear and tear accumulates in high-usage fleets. For Brighton, heavy seasonal demand during summer and high turnover from tourists and students will place additional strain on the bikes, further increasing the likelihood of faults. The likelihood of maintenance failures is high (4), while the impact is medium–high (3–4): service interruptions reduce user trust, increase operating costs through repairs and replacements, and can create reputational damage if users repeatedly encounter faulty or unavailable bikes. A strong and proactive maintenance regime will therefore be critical to sustaining the reliability of the scheme.

Overcharging and Tech failures

* + Overcharging and tech glitches have been reported in Brighton (Beryl) and in other schemes like Santander Cycles and Lime, often caused by bikes not locking correctly or app/docking errors. While refunds are usually issued, even small billing mistakes can erode user trust and spread quickly online. The likelihood is medium (3), as software and hardware issues are inevitable, and the impact is medium (3–4) due to both customer frustration and added admin costs. Reliable systems and quick refunds are essential to protect reputation in a competitive market.

Weather and seasonal demand

* + Brighton’s coastal climate and strong seasonality in tourism mean demand for bike rentals fluctuates heavily. Summer months see a surge from visitors, while winter brings reduced ridership due to rain, wind, and fewer tourists. The likelihood is high (4), as seasonal drops are predictable, and the impact is medium (3), affecting revenue but not the system’s overall viability. Mitigation could include flexible pricing, local commuter-focused marketing, and partnerships to maintain year-round usage.

Regulatory Barriers

* + Bike rental schemes in Brighton require coordination with Brighton & Hove City Council, especially around bay locations, street clutter, and alignment with the city’s transport strategy. While Brighton has shown strong support for active travel, delays or restrictions on permits and planning could slow rollout. The likelihood is medium (3), as council approval is structured but not guaranteed, and the impact is high (4), regulatory pushback could stall or reshape operations. Early engagement with the council and alignment with sustainability goals help mitigate this.

Competition pressure

* + Brighton currently has Beryl BTN Bikes as the main operator, with no confirmed presence of Lime e-bikes or other major national competitors, though media reports suggest that micro-mobility expansion remains a possibility. Competition could arise if new entrants target the city, potentially affecting user adoption, pricing, or revenue. Brighton’s high student population, tourist traffic, and cycling culture make it attractive to competitors, increasing the likelihood of market pressure over time. The likelihood is therefore medium (3), and the impact is medium–high (3–4), as established schemes or new entrants could limit market share and slow growth.

Reputation damage

* + The success of a bike rental scheme depends heavily on public perception, which can be influenced by user experiences, media coverage, and social media sentiment. Negative incidents—such as frequent vandalism, theft, maintenance issues, tech glitches, or poor customer service—can quickly erode trust, reduce usage, and generate adverse publicity. Brighton’s dense student population, high tourism, and active online communities increase the likelihood of reputational harm spreading rapidly. The likelihood is medium–high (3–4), and the impact is high (4–5), as sustained negative perception could hinder growth, discourage partnerships, and affect council support.

Health & Safety

* + Bike rental schemes inherently carry the risk of accidents and injuries for users, particularly in busy urban areas like Brighton with mixed traffic, high tourist volumes, and cyclists of varying experience. Accidents could lead to personal injury claims, negative media coverage, or reputational harm. The likelihood is medium (3), as e-bikes are designed with safety features, but user behaviour and traffic conditions are unpredictable (especially students). The impact is high (4), given the potential legal, financial, and reputational consequences of accidents.

Supply Chain / Material Risk

* + Using recycled plastics and specialized components introduces supply chain vulnerability. Delays in sourcing materials, quality issues, or cost fluctuations could slow production, increase expenses, or affect the environmental credibility of the scheme. The likelihood is medium (3), since recycled plastics can be less predictable than conventional materials, and the impact is medium–high (3–4), as production delays or cost increases could affect launch timelines and pricing.

**Conclusion**

This structured risk assessment demonstrates the scheme’s preparedness for launch. By identifying potential risks and outlining clear mitigation strategies, the scheme is positioned to be resilient, sustainable, and low risk for investors. Quantifying key risks ensures that operations are safe, reliable, and scalable within Brighton’s unique environment.