

# West Midlands e-scooter trial

## Sustainability and Transport O&S committee

21/10/2020

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# Key developments to date



- The Department for Transport announced that year-long trials of e-scooters will be permitted across the country as a response to the COVID-19 challenges and the limited public transport capacity due to social distancing.
- Transport for West Midlands acts as the coordinating authority for a trial spanning across the West Midlands.
- The two main objectives of the trial is to learn about the challenges of running an e-scooter trial and to offer a viable alternative to public transport while social distancing measures are still in place.
- Following a procurement process, Voi were selected as the single operator for the West Midlands trial.
- The trial kicked off on the 10<sup>th</sup> of September in Birmingham and Coventry, focusing on the city centres in both places.

# Issues with Coventry trial and response



- A number of issues related to inappropriate use and parking of e-scooters emerged soon after the trial launched in Coventry, so the local council in collaboration with Voi decided to pause the trial five days after its launch.
- As precaution, Voi decided to scale down the Birmingham trial at the end of first week of operations in order to better monitor and respond to any safety issues.
- The actions they took involve:
  - Reduction of fleet size (from 200 to 50),
  - Reduction of maximum speed limits (15.5mph max to 8mph)
  - Limiting operating hours (from 24/7 to 6am to 6pm)
  - Increasing the number of street 'ambassadors' who monitor use on street

# Focus on safety



- The trial is currently focused on the urban core, but e-scooters are permitted to be used in the entire area bound by the Birmingham ring road.
- In collaboration and agreement with BCC and TfWM, Voi are taking a number of measures to address safety issues and concerns, such as:
  - Continuous consultation with the WM police, key stakeholders and businesses.
  - Funding additional police force to enforce appropriate use of e-scooters in the streets of Birmingham
  - Launching information campaigns for users on how to ride properly and according to the rules
  - Funding research on inclusivity and accessibility
  - Giving away free helmets
  - Deploying technologies to detect pavement riding
  - E-scooters are regularly cleaned and operation is COVID-19 safe, as stipulated by the procurement contract

# Continuous testing and next steps













- The e-scooters are programmed to adhere to specific rules which automatically slow down e-scooters in specific areas, don't allow e-scooters to enter specific areas (geofencing), and encourage users to park in specific parking zones.
- BCC and TfWM run on-the-ground tests of how the e-scooters operate in order to identify potential issues, such as the geofencing not working or speed limits not applying.
- These tests have allowed us to expand the fleet size to 75, the maximum speed limit to 10mph, and the operating hours to 6am-8pm.
- We are planning to expand the fleet and the scale of the trial in the period leading up to Christmas in order to capture areas in the north and south of the city, around the key cycling corridors.

# Birmingham trial expansion

## Birmingham north trial area

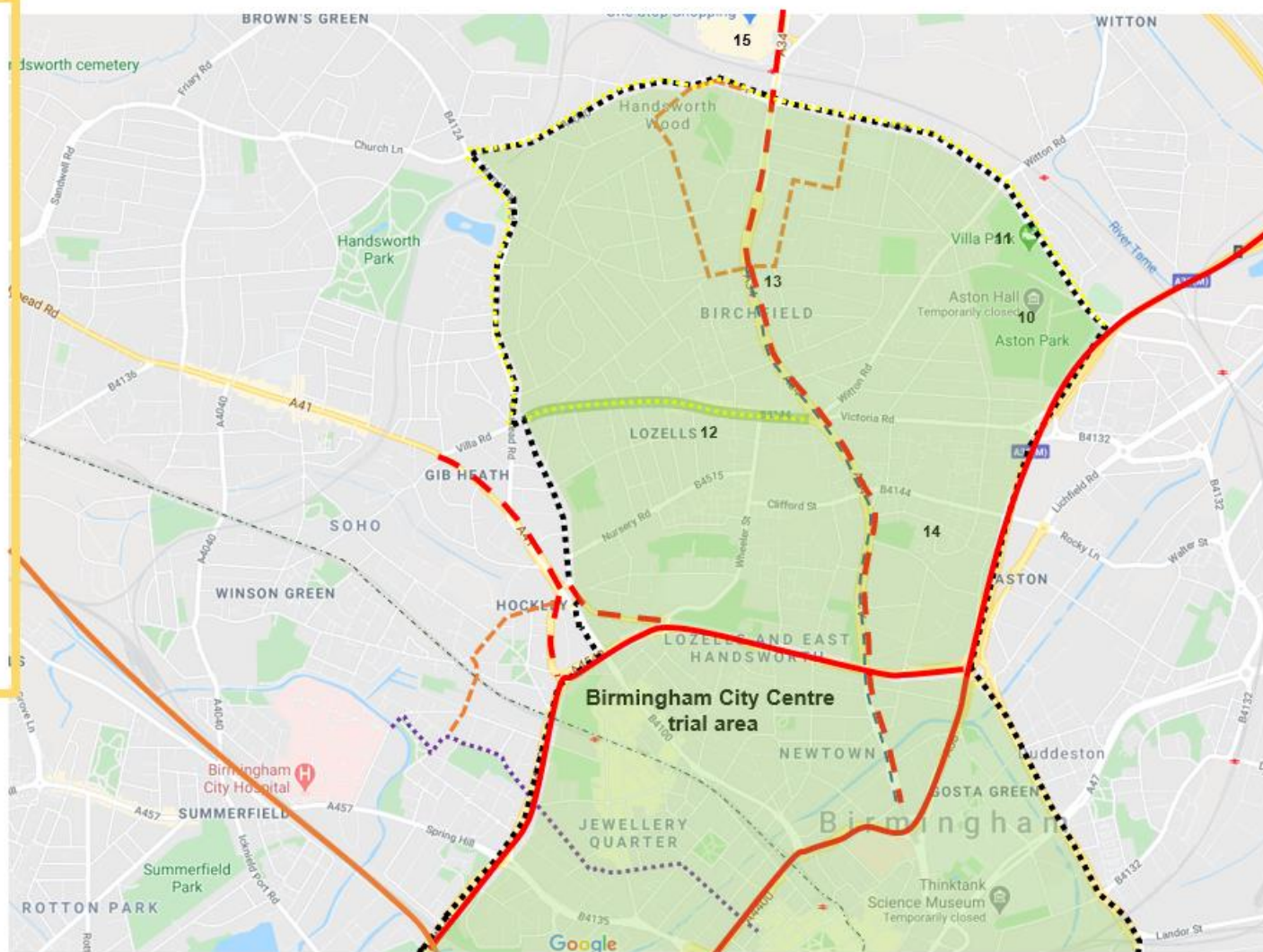
### Key:

-  E-scooters are strictly prohibited from using the ring road, A38 through the city centre.
-  E-scooters not allowed along the canal towpaths.
-  Designated parking locations only/ quick recovery zone
-  Blue routes
-  Avoid
-  Do not use the carriageway. Use dedicated crossing facilities only and blue cycle routes.
-  Tram line/ Avoid
-  Trial area boundary
-  Pop-up cycle lane
-  Advisory route

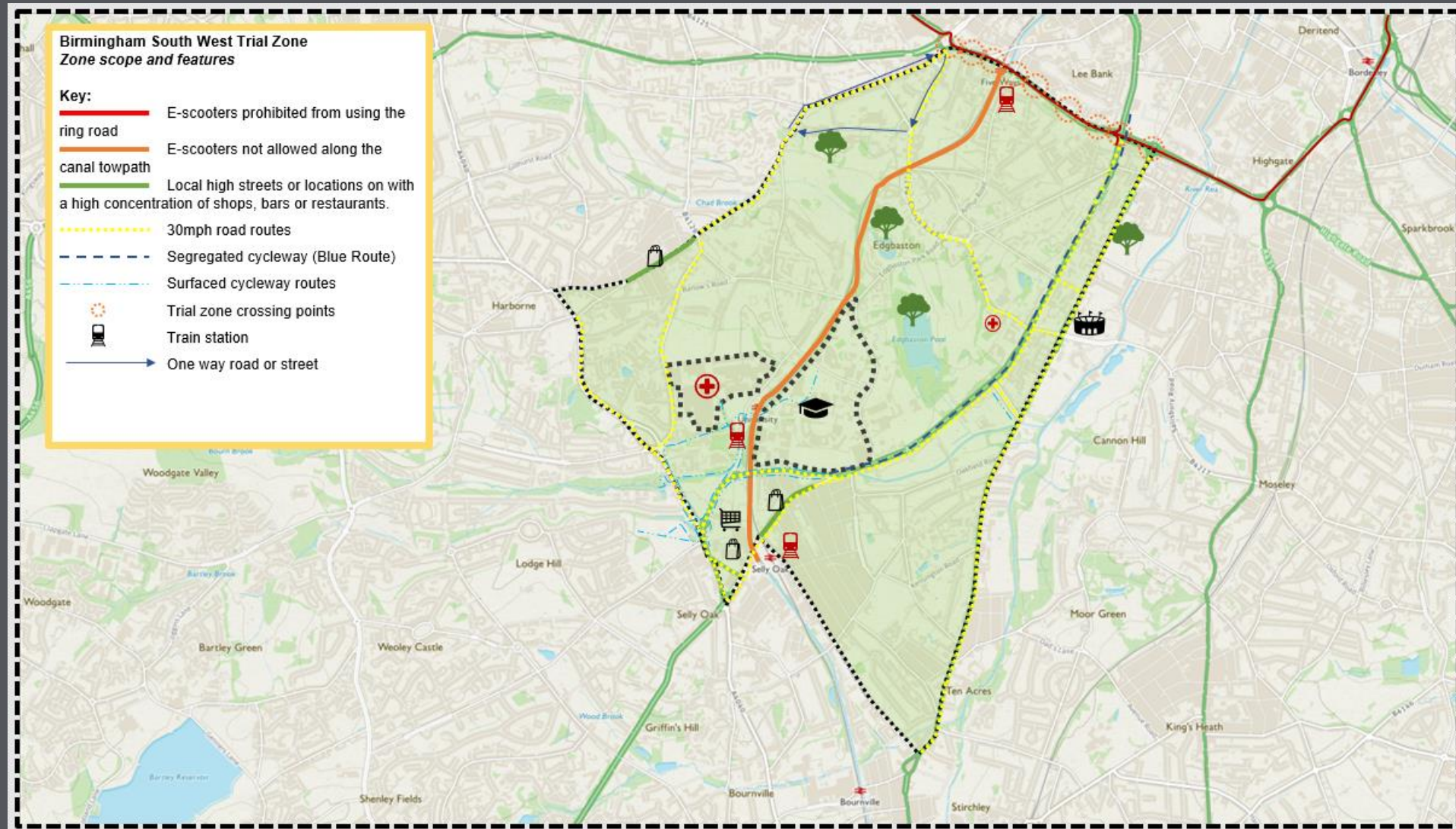


Train station

- 10 Aston Park
- 11 Villa Park Stadium – No e-scooters on match days
- 12 Lozells low traffic neighbourhood
- 13 Blue route ends, use advisory routes
- 14 Geofence shared footways/ cycleways in residential areas
- 15 One stop shopping centre



# Birmingham trial expansion



# Key statistics so far

- Voi report on key usage statistics weekly. Some of the key statistics are listed below:
  - The levels of ridership are very high, showing strong interest in the service.
  - 1<sup>st</sup> week: 8,437 rides & 18,876kms travelled (fleet size = 200)
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> week: 2,670 rides & 5,453kms travelled (fleet size= 50)
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> week: 2,182 rides & 4,001kms travelled (fleet size= 50)
  - There have been no serious incidents reported.
  - There have been 15 non-serious incidents reported.
  - Voi have blocked 15 user accounts because of inappropriate use of e-scooters.

(last updated 09/10/20)

# Q&A

