

Bristol Walking Alliance (BWA) is one of the stakeholders that are being asked about the proposed trial of e-scooters in the WECA region. Here are our comments on limiting how e-scooters can be used in different areas.

For the proposed trial of e-scooters in the WECA region, the e-scooter operators propose their built-in geofencing technology will limit the use of e-scooters to help avoid illegal or anti-social behaviour. However, we understand that the technology, based on GPS as used in mobile phones, has constraints on its accuracy and therefore may offer a false sense of security.

For example, we have been told it will not be possible to distinguish whether an e-scooter is driving on the pavement or on an adjacent road or cycle lane. Geofencing will only be applicable in general areas.

One of the findings of the trial should be to demonstrate how accurately geofenced areas can be drawn. Another finding should be whether e-scooter users take the unfortunate attitude that they can do anything as long as the geofencing does not limit it.

With the above in mind, and with the proviso that geofenced areas can be altered during the trial if necessary, we suggest the following approach to defining the initial areas.

No scoot

We suggest busy shopping or social gathering or recreation areas where there is no motor traffic, even if designated as shared-use with pedal cycles, should be designated as **No scoot**. For example, this would include the pedestrian Broadmead shopping area, Millenium Square, Anchor Square, all of the Centre except where there are marked cycle routes, and all parks except where marked cycle routes go through them.

No park

To avoid e-scooters being left in places that block the footway, we suggest **No park** covers everywhere except explicitly designated parking areas. We have not yet been told how many of these parking areas will be designated, nor where these areas are likely to be, so don't know how restrictive this might be.

Go slow

All shared-use spaces and routes in the city centre and in local high streets should be **Go slow**. Pedestrians and e-scooters going at 15mph should not be sharing the same space. For example, this would include Queen Square, Castle Park, the marked cycle routes in the Centre, around the Harbourside, across Gaol Ferry Bridge.

We realise that on some shared-use routes, particularly radial commuter routes, it may be inappropriate to impose speed restrictions on e-scooters that are more onerous than those on bicycles. This, for example, might be the case for the Bristol-Bath Cycle Path, Concorde Way, Festival Way etc. However, it should be made clear to e-scooter users, as for cyclists, that on these shared-use routes they must give way to pedestrians and must pass pedestrians at low speed. The behaviour of e-scooter users on these routes should be explicitly monitored as part of the trial.

We see the biggest danger to pedestrians to be e-scooter users who illegally use pavements. However, since pavements are almost always next to roadways, geofencing cannot be used to constrain this behaviour.

If e-scooter users come to rely on being automatically slowed or stopped when they infringe allowable behaviour, geofencing may only add to the problems of enforcement.

Bristol Walking Alliance
2 October 2020

enquiries@bristolwalkingalliance.org.uk