



# Canterbury Electric Scooter Rental Trial Experimental Order Consultation

Consultation period:

Friday 30 October 2020 to Monday 3 May 2021

[kent.gov.uk/escootertrial](https://kent.gov.uk/escootertrial)



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## 1. Introduction

In July 2020, the Department for Transport (DfT) decided to fast-track its planned electric scooter (e-scooter) rental programme to encourage a “green restart” to local travel and help mitigate reduced public transport capacity during the COVID-19 pandemic. They also extended the trial area welcoming bids from any interested regions across the country.

In response to this, Kent County Council (KCC) working in partnership with Canterbury City Council, The University of Kent and Canterbury Christ Church University submitted a successful bid to take part in the trial.

The trial will take place in the City of Canterbury over a period of 12 months. The e-scooters will provide an environmentally friendly alternative to taking a car and will also help people get around town while remaining socially distant from others.

It is hoped that e-scooters will help to solve ‘the last mile’ problem, where journeys are too short for public transport to be efficient, but too long to walk. Many of these journeys have traditionally taken place in cars adding to congestion and carbon emissions. The scheme will help inform the government’s decision as to whether this form of travel should be sanctioned on the highway network and if so, in what way.

Throughout the trial we want to hear your views. This document provides information on why we are participating in the trial, how it will work and how you can have your say.

## 2. Why are we carrying out this trial?

KCC is committed to protecting the environment with an ambition to become carbon neutral by 2050. [The Kent Environment Strategy](#) and the [Kent and Medway Energy and Low Emissions Strategy](#) both set out priorities to reduce emissions and provide green infrastructure to make this possible.

In 2018, transport emissions accounted for a third of all carbon dioxide emissions ([2018 UK Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Provisional Figures: Statistical Release – Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy](#)). It is therefore important that KCC explores innovative transport projects to offer sustainable alternatives to car travel to help improve air quality whilst easing congestion on our roads.

The objectives of the trial are to:

- broaden the range of sustainable transport modes available to the public during and following the COVID-19 pandemic.
- reduce private car dependency by offering an accessible alternative sustainable travel mode.
- understand the impact of e-scooters, including their impact on safety (perceived and actual), travel choices, public attitudes and the economy. This data will help inform both national and local policy surrounding e-scooters.

The desired outcome of the trial is to:

- implement a commercially viable scheme (without public funding) that supports a sustainable shift from private motor vehicles and supports delivery of local and national policy.

### 3. How will the trial work?

The trial will be operated by Bird, a leading micro-mobility operator, which has been awarded the contract through a competitive tender process. Bird are pioneers of e-scooter sharing. Their mission is to partner with communities to help solve increasing congestion and decreasing air quality by getting people out of cars and onto environmentally friendly sharable e-scooters. Bird currently operates in more than 100 cities worldwide.

The trial is being funded at no cost to KCC, with all financial responsibility resting with the operator, Bird.

Safety has been our primary focus throughout the planning stages of this trial. We have been working with Bird to make sure that e-scooter users as well as other highway users are safe. We will therefore be introducing the rental e-scooters into the community slowly and in phases with safety mechanisms in place to reduce risk.

During the lead up to this trial, we have been engaging with Resident Associations, cycling groups and organisations working with or representing people with disabilities in Canterbury to try to understand how the trial may impact on them and how any concerns can be mitigated in our planning. This has been beneficial in informing how the project is taken forward.

Below we have provided information on each of the phases, along with some indicative timescales. During each phase we will be reviewing feedback to the consultation and monitoring data including e-scooter usage and incident and injury

reports. When we are happy that it is safe to do so we will move on to the next phase of the trial.

#### Phase 1 – November 2020 to January 2021

On launch, Bird will be operating a maximum of 100 e-scooters which will be located on the campuses of The University of Kent and Canterbury Christ Church University. During this phase, the service will be restricted to staff and students at both universities. The e-scooters will be restricted to travelling within the University of Kent's campus and along a predetermined route connecting both campuses helping the city's student population get between campuses without adding to congestion.

This is to allow us to assess any immediate implications the trial may have on road safety, in a controlled way. The route for this phase follows National Cycle Network Route 1 beginning at the University of Kent. Using the Eliot footpath, it connects to the St Stephens area of the city, through Beverly Meadow and over The Causeway towards Northgate. It then connects to Canterbury Christ Church University on North Holmes Road via Victoria Row and Artillery Street.

#### Phase 2 – February to April 2021

This phase focuses on expanding the trial area to include key destinations within the city centre. The route between the two universities will be widened to include Canterbury West train station to allow for sustainable first and last mile travel as part of the commute.

#### Phase 3 – May to July 2021

The area of operation will be expanded to cover the city centre, including Canterbury East train station and Canterbury bus station.

As the area of operation widens, additional provision for e-scooter parking will be made. Locations are to be determined in agreement with Bird and landowners. Consideration will be given to impacts on the city's historical environment and World Heritage status.

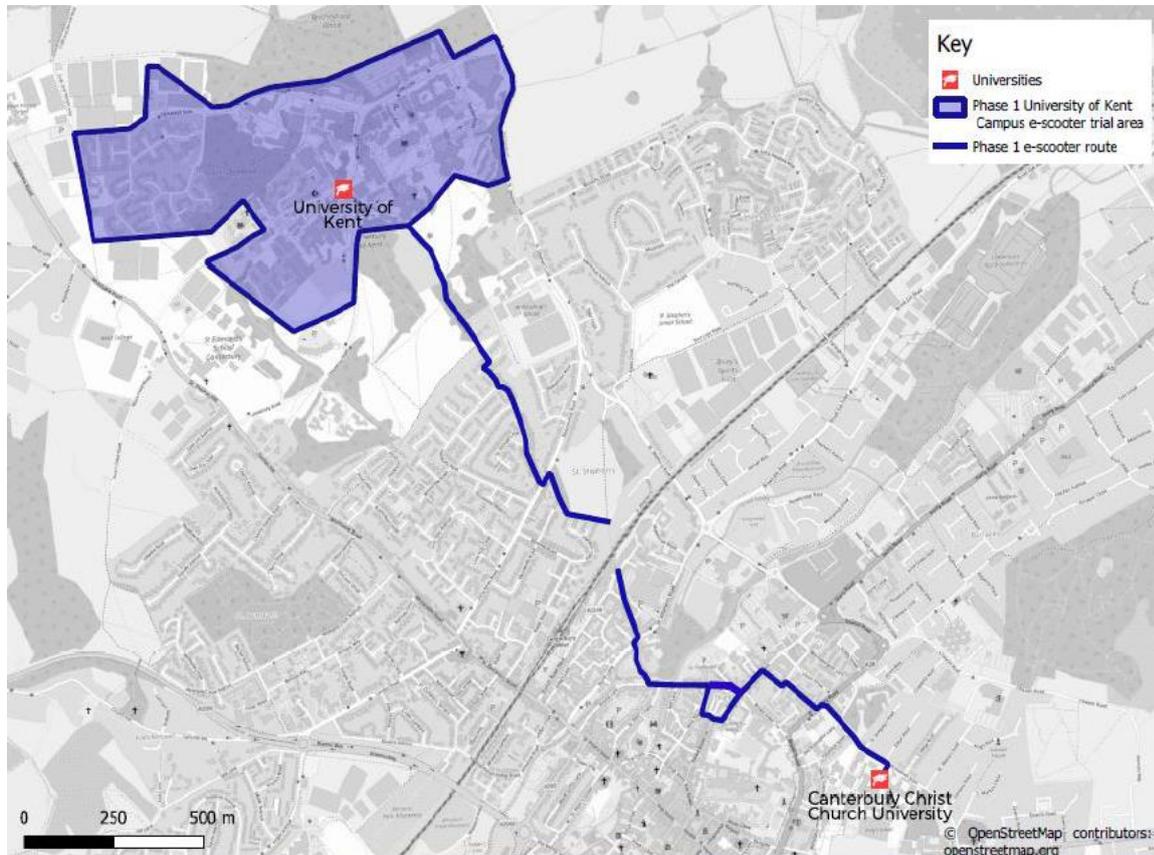
#### Phase 4 – August to October 2021

This will see the expansion of the trial area to include the city centre and broader urban area and will be available to all residents and visitors. 'Park and Scoot' hubs will be introduced at the city's three Park and Ride sites. You will be able to register to rent an e-scooter at via the Bird app and further details can be found in their [information document](#).

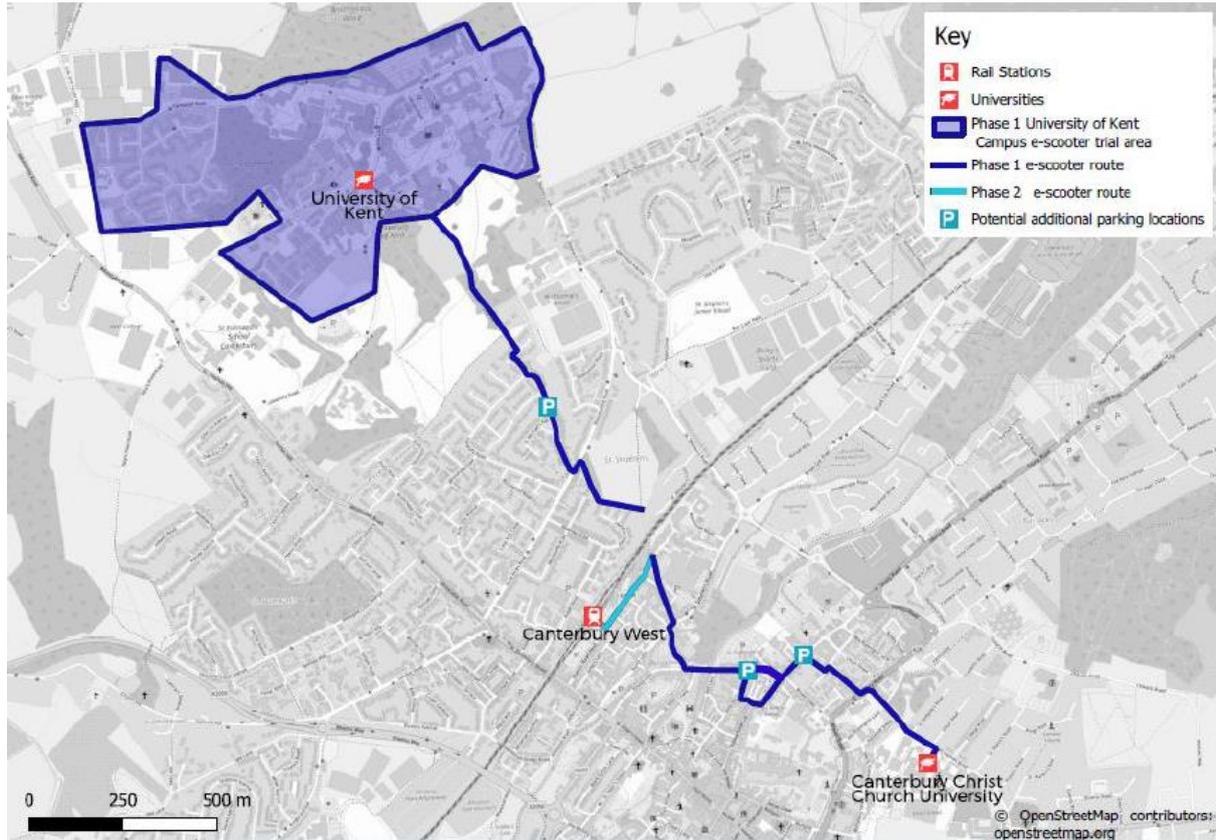
This final phase will widen affordable sustainable transport options for residents and visitors. It will provide an alternative transport option for people commuting to work in the Canterbury urban area and encourage use of the city's Park and Ride sites.

# Route maps

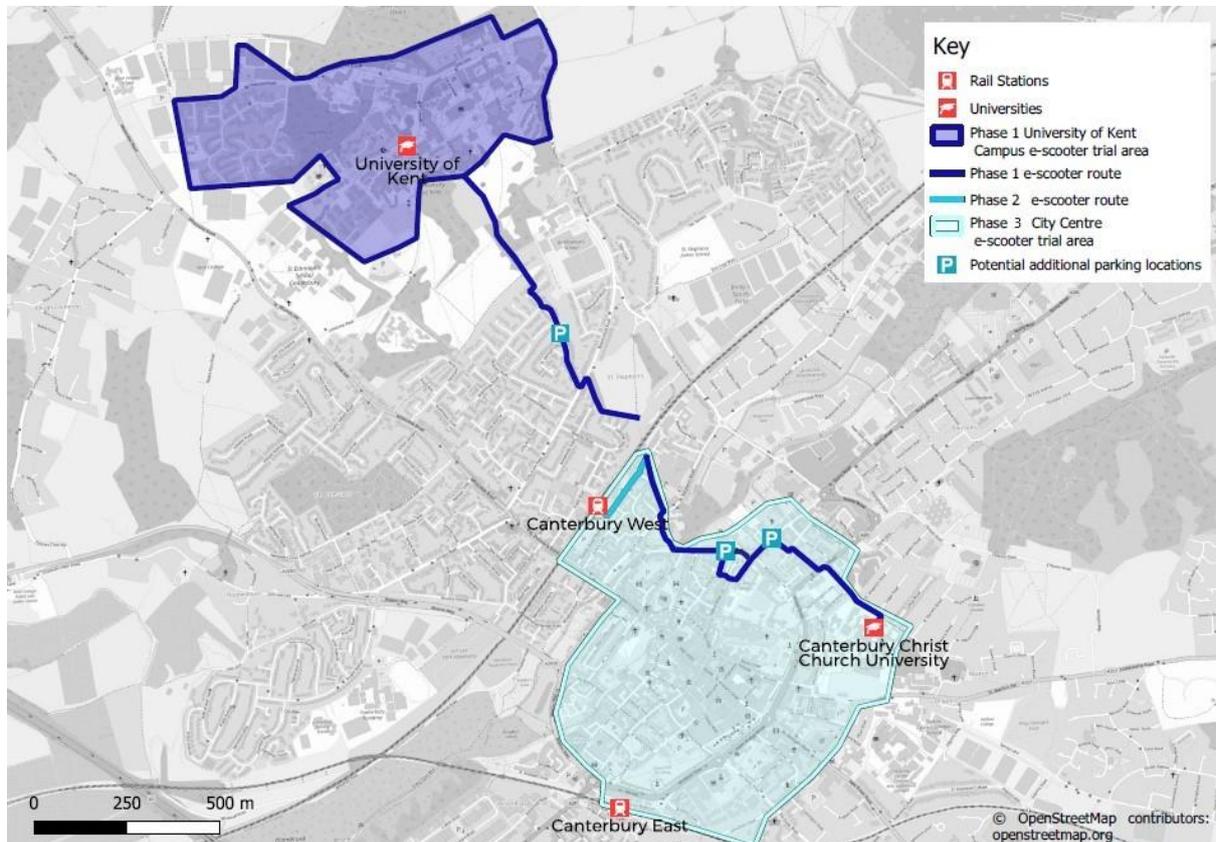
## Phase 1



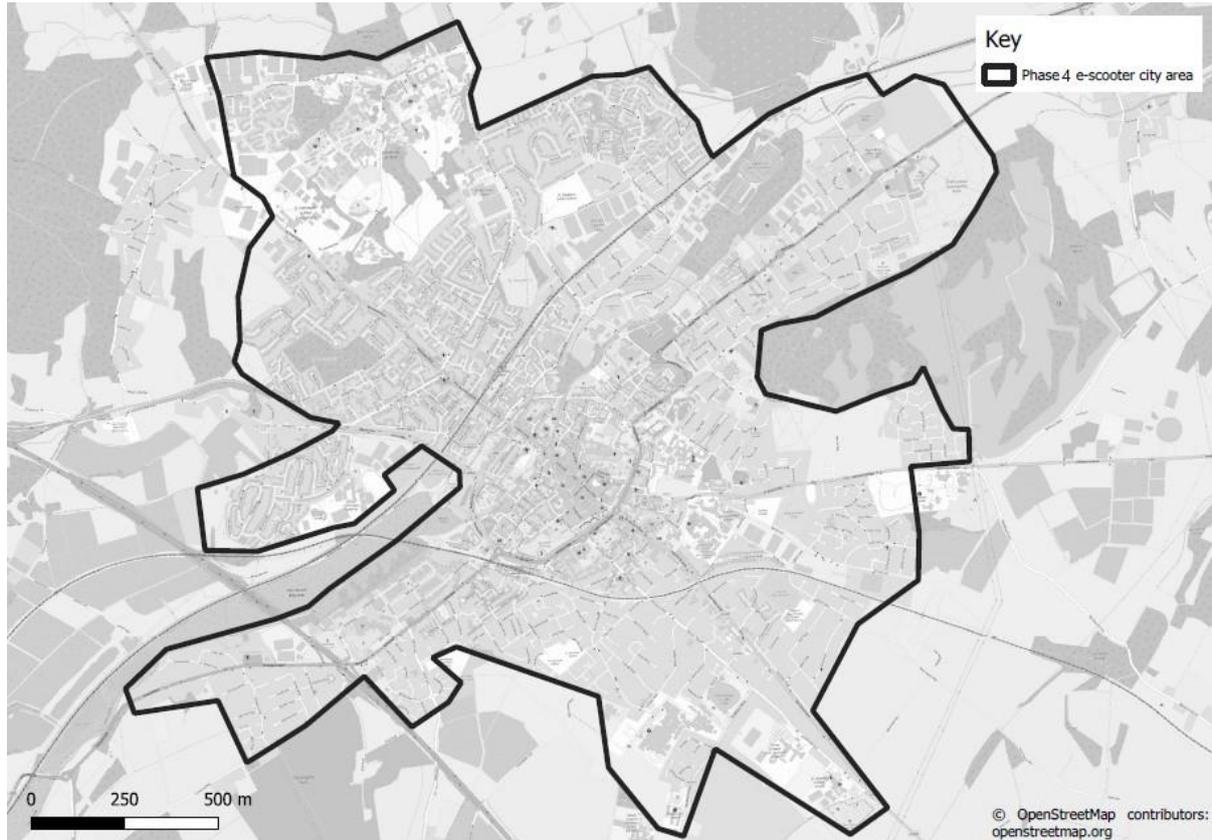
## Phase 2



## Phase 3



## Phase 4



### 4. How will we ensure that the trial is safe?

Throughout the course of the trial, e-scooters will only be sanctioned in the authorised zone and only if they are provided by Bird on a rental basis. Any private e-scooter use on the highway will remain illegal and this is enforceable by the Police.

During the trial, the rental e-scooters will use the same road space as bicycles, including cycle lanes and shared footpath/cycleways. They will not be allowed on the pavement or outside of the trial area. This is in line with the guidelines that the government has indicated. This change has been facilitated at a local level through an Experimental Traffic Regulation Order and at a national level through an Order of the Secretary of State under Sections 44 and 63 of the Road Traffic Act 1988.

We are working very closely with the DfT and Bird to ensure the trial requirements are met and that measures will be in place to provide a safe e-scooter rental service. All riders must hold a provisional or full drivers' licence and be over 18 before they can ride. The e-scooters used meet prescribed vehicle standards (see [3.1 Vehicle design: current position](#) and [8. Annex: Minimum technical requirements for e-scooters](#)). Safety measures include:

- Implementing geofencing technology to ensure the e-scooters can only function in the designated areas. This means that if a rider attempts to access areas that are off limits, such as pedestrianised zones, the motor will cut out, requiring the user to dismount and push the e-scooter.
- Ensuring the e-scooters are limited to a maximum speed of 15mph, with further speed reductions at specific locations and at certain times to reflect safety needs, for example, when there are high levels of pedestrian footfall.
- Ongoing checks to ensure riders are eligible to rent the e-scooters. This includes identity checks and driving licence checks.
- Ensuring that a high level of training is undertaken by the riders to make sure they understand the appropriate safety protocols required and that they adopt a high level of etiquette when sharing space on the highway. This training will be delivered in person and online.
- Providing free helmets to riders and incentives to use them. This is important as helmet use is not a legal requirement as part of the trial.
- Implementing measures to reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19. This includes daily sanitisation of the e-scooters with Public Health England approved disinfectant.
- Implementing measures to ensure sensible parking of the e-scooters to reduce 'street clutter'. This will be achieved through rider training, geofencing technology and a quick response rate of local staff.
- Limiting availability of the rental service during phase one of the trial between 07:00 and 21:00.
- Ensuring that any rider found to be using the service under the influence of alcohol will be barred from future use.

Measures will also be in place to allow members of the public to report any safety concerns directly to Bird. This will be possible through the Bird app, or via email at **Canterbury@Bird.co**. A telephone number is also currently being set up and will be added to the consultation webpage. Any issues reported through these means will be shared with KCC.

## 5. How can I give my views?

The Experimental Traffic Regulation Order, which will make the trial legal, runs for a total of 18 months. However, this will be broken down into stages, which will allow us to deliver the trial in phases. In the first six months, up until the 3 May 2021 we will look to deliver phases 1 and 2. If these are successful we will extend the Order and consultation period for a further six months to deliver phases 3 and 4, taking us to

the 1 November 2021. The remaining six months of the Order provides us with flexibility to extend the trial, should this be required by DfT.

This also means we can listen to your views throughout the trial and only move on to the next phase when it is safe to do so. These timescales are indicative. Dates may vary depending on feedback received and monitoring data. We will keep our website updated with any changes to these timescales.

The Experimental Traffic Regulation Order is available to view and give your response at [www.kent.gov.uk/escootertrial](http://www.kent.gov.uk/escootertrial) until Monday 3 May 2021.

Gathering and analysing public opinion is one of our strategic objectives for this trial. So whether you support or have concerns we want to hear your views. The information we receive will be used to inform the progression of the trial and will be integral to the overall evaluation. The results of the consultation, alongside other monitoring data, will be aggregated and shared with the DfT to help inform the decision of government in defining the future of e-scooters in the UK.

If you have any questions or require any of the consultation material in hard copy, please contact [escootertrial@kent.gov.uk](mailto:escootertrial@kent.gov.uk).

For alternative formats and languages please email [alternativeformats@kent.gov.uk](mailto:alternativeformats@kent.gov.uk) or call 03000 421553 (text relay service number: 18001 03000 421553). This number goes to an answering machine, which is monitored during office hours.

## 6. Frequently Asked Questions

During our conversations with community groups many questions have been raised. Below we have provided answer to the most frequently asked questions.

### **Q1. Are the e-scooters allowed to ride on the pavement?**

No, the e-scooters are only permitted to ride on the carriageway (not motorway) or on sections of the highway that cycles can use. These are shared pedestrian and cycle paths.

### **Q2. Will the e-scooters have a horn or bell to alert those with hearing impairments?**

Yes, the e-scooters will be fitted with a bell.

### **Q3. What speed will the e-scooters be allowed to travel at?**

The maximum speed permitted by the e-scooters will be 15mph. However, we will be implementing further reductions at certain points on the route and at certain times of the day to reflect high pedestrian footfall.

**Q4. Will the e-scooters have lights or reflectors?**

Yes, the e-scooters will all be fitted with headlights and taillights as well as reflectors.

**Q5. Can the e-scooters be parked anywhere the rider pleases?**

The rider will only be able to end their ride in certain parking locations that have been agreed between Bird and the landowner. This system has been designed to reduce the risk of the e-scooters being left in antisocial locations.

**Q6. During the trial, will privately owned e-scooters be legal to use on the road?**

No, only e-scooters provided on a rental basis by Bird will be legal to use on the road. All privately owned e-scooters will not be permitted on the highway. Violations to this are enforceable by the Police.

**Q7. Can anyone rent an e-scooter during the trial?**

No, there are a number of requirements that must be met. To rent an e-scooter, a driving licence or a provisional driving licence is required. The user must also be over 18 years of age.

**Q8. Are the e-scooters covered by an insurance policy?**

Yes, Bird hold all relevant insurance coverage as required and this has been approved by DfT.