

## **Appendix B – Pedestrianisation Trial Consultation Summary**

### **1 Background**

#### **1.1 Extension of Pedestrianisation Hours**

The trial extending pedestrianisation hours in Newbury Town Centre began on May 19, 2025, and is set to run until November 2026, under an Experimental Traffic Regulation Order (ETRO). The hours have been lengthened from the previous schedule of 10:00 AM to 5:00 PM to the new hours of 10:00 AM to 11:00 PM. This report provides an overview of the first six months of the consultation period, covering the affected areas: Bartholomew Street (north), Bridge Street, Northbrook Street, Mansion House Street, Wharf Street, and Market Place in Newbury.

#### **1.2 Rationale for the Trial**

The proposal enabled the Council to trial the extension of pedestrianisation in Newbury Town Centre to deliver the aspirations set out in the Newbury Town Centre Masterplan developed by Hemmingway Design and with significant input from local residents and stakeholders. This outlines a strategic vision for the area's future. Specifically, the trial advances Principle 3 (Prioritizing pedestrians and active travel modes), Principle 6 (Creating vibrant and flexible public spaces for community use and events), and Principle 7 (Supporting local businesses and enhancing the evening economy). By extending pedestrianisation hours, the initiative fosters a welcoming, accessible town center that encourages sustainable travel, facilitates community activities, and strengthens local hospitality and retail businesses. These objectives reflect the Masterplan's commitment to making Newbury Town Centre more lively, inclusive, and economically resilient.

The trial reduced conflicts between motorized and non-motorized traffic during the hours of 5:00 PM to 11:00 PM. By limiting vehicle access during these times, the initiative aims to provide a safer, traffic-free environment for town center users in the late afternoon and evening. The trial is also intended to encourage sustainable and active travel options. Additionally, the extended pedestrianisation is expected to create safer and more pleasant outdoor spaces for customers of local hospitality businesses, facilitate outdoor community events, enhance the visitor experience, and support the local economy.

#### **1.3 Public Consultation Process**

As part of the decision-making process, members of the public were invited to provide feedback to the Council regarding the potential permanent adoption of the changes. Respondents could express their support, register a neutral position, or object to the proposed changes. The consultation period concluded on November 20, 2025.

### **2 Results of the Public Consultation**

2.1 Whilst the majority of respondents objected to the Experimental Traffic Regulation Order, a significant number of responses acknowledged the positive aspects of the scheme. Many respondents highlighted benefits such as improved safety for

pedestrians, a more vibrant evening atmosphere, and enhanced opportunities for local hospitality businesses and community events. Some noted that the extended pedestrianisation hours would encourage sustainable travel and provide a more welcoming environment for visitors, ultimately supporting the local economy and making the town centre a more pleasant place to spend time.

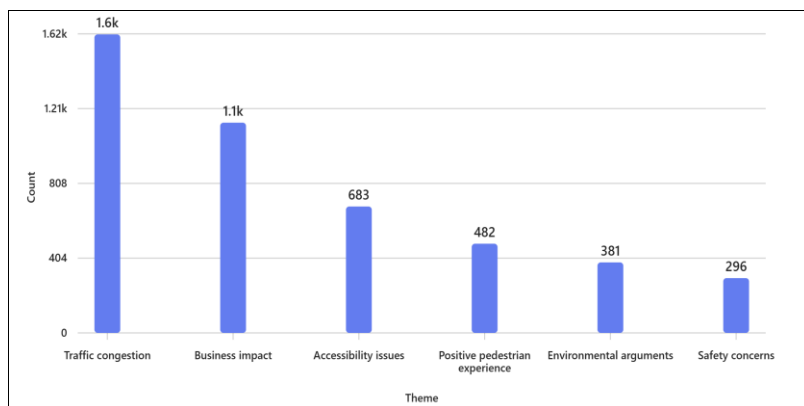
## Summary of Results

### 2.2 Responses

<b>Responses:</b>		<b>%</b>
Object	2,396	76.79
Support	603	19.33
Neutral	127	4.07
<b>Total:</b>	<b>3,120</b>	

### 2.3 Themes

<b>Themes:</b>		<b>%</b>
Traffic congestion	1,613	35.13
Business impact	1,136	24.74
Accessibility issues	683	14.88
Positive pedestrian experience	482	10.50
Environmental arguments	381	8.30
Safety concerns	296	6.45
<b>Total:</b>	<b>4,591</b>	

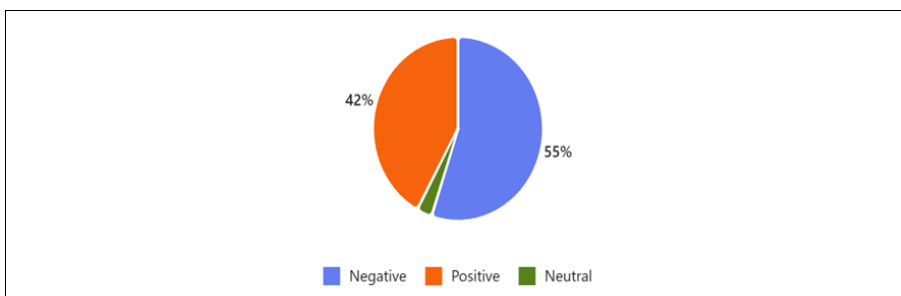


2.4 Whilst there were concerns raised regarding increased congestion and traffic flow on the A339, technical observations confirm that the A339 junctions operated within their designated capacity. As shown in the capacity check, even during peak hours, the observed flows remained well below the theoretical limits for a dual carriageway of this type. Although certain junctions may approach tighter thresholds at specific times, overall, the corridor was not found to be overloaded, and further signal analysis would be required to assess any critical movements in detail.

## Sentiment

2.5 Despite a majority of objections, a substantial proportion of respondents expressed positive sentiment, highlighting tangible benefits arising from the extended pedestrianisation hours. Improved pedestrian safety and comfort, reduced noise and air pollution, enhanced town centre ambience, and greater potential for outdoor dining and social activity were consistently highlighted. Many respondents expressed strong support for a more people-focused town centre environment, particularly during evenings and warmer months.

Sentiment:		%
Negative	1,724	55.26
Positive	1,314	42.12
Neutral	82	2.63
Total:	3,120	



2.6 Of those who submitted objections, 16.7% (399) raised concerns relating to disabled access (including references to mobility needs and/or Blue Badge access), 4.3% (103) expressed concern about taxi access, and 8.4% (201) referenced potential impacts on access for deliveries. The Council recognises the importance of maintaining safe and suitable access arrangements for all users and operational requirements. As the proposals are progressed, the Council will consider and, where appropriate, implement mitigation measures to address these issues, which may include refinements to layout and signage, provision of appropriate loading/servicing arrangements, and operational controls to ensure access is effectively maintained.

2.7 Key insights:

- (a) Most objections focus on traffic congestion on A339 through the town and the effect on surrounding roads. Others say that economic harm is being caused to local businesses through loss of trade and cite delivery and collection issues. There were accessibility concerns for disabled and elderly visitors, with Blue Badge access and safe drop-off points being recurring issues. Safety fears were expressed, especially after dark when, it was said, the town feels deserted and incidents of antisocial behaviour are more likely to occur.
- (b) Supportive comments described an improved pedestrian experience, cleaner air, reduced noise and a safer environment for families and children.
- (c) However, seasonality matters with many suggesting that consideration be given to only extending the pedestrianisation hours in the summer months.

**Positive Feedback on Extended Pedestrianisation Hours**

## 2.8 The most mentioned locations in the positive feedback were:

- (a) **Northbrook Street** – was described as safer and more pleasant without cars, making it easier for pedestrians to cross from one side to another. Residents reported quieter evenings and an improved quality of life. Suggestions were made for more greenery and improved seating. However, there were concerns about cyclists and e-scooters still using the space.
- (b) **Market Place** – was highlighted as a prime area for outdoor seating and events. There was positive feedback on the current café culture and potential for its expansion. Suggestions were made to enhance the experience with live music, night markets and seasonal events.
- (c) **Corn Exchange** – Attendees at evening shows found it easier and safer to access the building. It also provided visitors with an improved dining experience before performances.
- (d) **Bartholomew Street** - Residents noted reduced noise and an improved living environment.
- (e) **Kennet Centre** – extended pedestrianisation is seen as key to this future development and supports the approved plans for development.
- (f) **Specific Venues** – These venues were mentioned by respondents: *Cobrizo Lounge, Cote, Lusso, Hatchet Inn, Elephant at the Market, Games Café, and Ezzo Café*. Respondents enjoy outdoor seating and want more from other establishments.

## 2.9 Personal examples:

*“Since the trial, the high street has felt much safer. We walk through town daily, and with fewer cars in the evenings, it’s cleaner, quieter, and more pleasant.”*

**Safer Evening Walks**

*“It makes a lot of difference to walk on Northbrook Street after work without dodging cars and breathing fumes. The benefit to residents outweighs losing a shortcut for drivers.”*

**Improved Quality of Life for Residents**

*“I have sat outside the Corn Exchange on a summer afternoon with family. Before, the noise and fumes from cars made it unpleasant. Now it’s peaceful and enjoyable.”*

**Enhanced Social Experience**

*“I noticed people with limited mobility and wheelchair users seemed more relaxed without cars rushing through the centre.”*

**Support for Vulnerable Groups**



- (b) **Business Impact** - Restaurants and pubs are losing trade due to lack of convenient access. Takeaway collections are disrupted, with delivery drivers facing delays and unsafe parking.
- (c) **Accessibility** - Disabled and elderly visitors are unable to access restaurants, the Corn Exchange, and shops. Blue Badge holders consider themselves excluded, raising concerns about the Council's obligations under the Equality Act.
- (d) **Safety** – The town centre is described as “unsafe” and “intimidating” after dark. There are reports of antisocial behaviour and speeding e-scooters in pedestrian zones, coupled with a perceived lack of policing.
- (e) **Seasonal Relevance** – The extended hours are seen as unnecessary in winter, with few people venturing outdoors after 6pm. Suggestions are made for a seasonal approach to be taken, i.e. April–September only.

## 2.12 Personal examples:

*“I finish work at 5.30pm and am responsible for collecting my daughter from her after-school club, which ends at 6.00pm. Prior to the change, I could reach her school in 15 minutes. Now it often takes 30+ minutes, causing late fees and leaving my daughter upset. This daily stress is taking a toll on my family life and mental wellbeing.”*

**Working Parent Struggling with School Pick-Up**

*“When visiting restaurants/pubs in Newbury, I ask my husband to pick me up around 8.30–9pm. Previously, I could be picked up safely in the Market Place, but now I have to walk to other parts of Newbury that aren't as well-lit or safe.”*

**Safety Concerns for Evening Pick-Ups**

*“As a young woman living within the pedestrianisation zone, I can no longer get taxis or lifts home before 11pm. I now must walk much further in empty streets, which does not feel safe.”*

**Impact on Resident Living in Pedestrian Zone**

*“As the owner of The Rectory Clinic, staff commuting is significantly affected. Several team members now face long delays, and patients find it harder to access the clinic.”*

**Business Owner Facing Operational Challenges**

*“As a plumber working on the high street, I can't park near properties after 5pm. I often need multiple trips for tools, and walking five minutes each time makes jobs unviable.”*

**Tradesperson Losing Work**

*“Half of our sales depend on takeaways and deliveries. If customers can't access the restaurant easily, they won't bother, and small independent restaurants will suffer.”*

**Head Chef Concerned About Takeaway Sales**



## Parking Concerns Expressed in the Consultation on the Extension of Pedestrianisation Hours

2.14 This section summarises responses related to parking issues raised in the consultation:

- (a) **High Parking Charges** - Strong criticism that expensive parking discourages visits and harms businesses.

*“The high parking charges will reduce the footfall to the town and consequently more businesses will close.”*

- (b) **Accessibility and Convenience** - Complaints about difficulty accessing car parks for quick visits or takeaways.

*“Delivery drivers cannot park outside the shop except for first thing in the morning... I now have to use a trolley from Kennet Centre car park.”*

- (c) **Impact on Evening Economy** - Calls for free or reduced evening parking to encourage dining and shopping.

*“Combine pedestrian high street with free after 4pm and weekends parking. And the high street might have a chance.”*

- (d) **Disabled Access** - Concerns that removal of drop-off points and reliance on distant car parks disadvantages Blue Badge holders.

## 3 Implications and Impact

### Impact on Businesses of Extended Pedestrianisation Hours

#### 3.1 Responses

Responses:		%
Responses Analysed	2,650	
Responses Mentioning Business Impact	1,440	54.34

3.2 This section summarises specific examples of how businesses have been affected, grouped by theme. Named businesses are highlighted where mentioned.

- (a) **Positive Impacts on Footfall or Outdoor Seating** – were noted, with seeing eateries moving in such as Lusso, taking advantage of the extended hours. Both the additional *Lusso* location and *Poppins* are mentioned as prime examples of businesses benefiting from outdoor seating. One respondent said that sitting outside at *Cobrizo Lounge* without the noise and fumes of traffic has been wonderful.
- (b) **General Business Concern** – included sentiments such that extended pedestrianisation was damaging the hospitality business in Newbury; that Newbury was once a bustling town, but since there are no vehicles in the evening, all that seems to have stopped. Also, it was noted that there are not a great number of

hospitality venues in the pedestrianisation route that would fully utilise the availability of extended hours.

- (c) **Safety concerns** – reported by businesses that many visitors expressed concern about safety in the evenings due to the lack of vehicles.
- (d) **Increased Costs or Inefficiencies** – with delivery drivers now having to park illegally or far away, making collections harder and reducing income and restaurants losing takeaway trade because customers cannot access easily.

### Motorist Bias in Negative and Neutral Responses

<b>Responses:</b>		<b>%</b>
Responses Analysed	2,155	
Responses Showing Motorist Bias	924	42.9

3.3 The purpose of this section is to highlight patterns of motorist-centric views expressed in opposition to extended pedestrianisation and to assess the implications for policy and engagement. Motorist-bias is defined as responses prioritising car convenience (e.g., quicker routes, drop-offs) while ignoring pedestrian, cyclist, disabled, or community needs. 42.9% of negative / neutral responses exhibit motorist bias. Common keywords include drive, traffic, shortcut, commute, drop-off and parking. Very few of these responses mention safety, accessibility or environmental benefits.

3.4 Key characteristics of motorist bias exhibited in the consultation responses include:

- (a) **Town Centre Framed as a Traffic Corridor** - Many respondents describe the ‘High Street’ primarily as a route for through-traffic rather than a shared public space.

*“Trying to drive from one side of the town to the other is very awkward and time consuming when Northbrook St is closed.”*

- (b) **Dismissal of Pedestrian and Social Benefits** - Frequent rejection of alfresco dining, evening economy, and safety improvements.

*“The idea that Newbury will be alfresco is absolute rubbish. Have the road open at 5pm makes the town a lot safer.”*

- (c) **Focus on Journey Times and Convenience** - Emphasis on delays, congestion, and perceived inefficiency of alternative routes.

*“Hurts traffic flow and general access for little benefit. Cuts one end of the town off from another.”*

- (d) **Minimal Reference to Accessibility or Vulnerable Users** - Responses rarely acknowledge the needs of pedestrians, cyclists, or disabled people.

*“Your proposal just serves to clog up the A339 without any real benefit to the town centre.”*

- 3.5 It is important to recognise motorist bias because there are implications for taking the policy forward.
- (a) **Risk of Perceived Imbalance** - Vocal opposition may reflect car-centric priorities rather than broader community needs.
  - (b) **Communication Challenge** – There is a need to reframe debate on the issue around shared benefits (safety, air quality, evening economy).
  - (c) **Engagement Strategy** - Target messaging to explain why pedestrianisation supports inclusive access and long-term vitality.