
Newbury town centre Experimental Pedestrian Zone hours - revocation

Committee considering report:	Individual Executive Member Decisions
Date of Committee:	14 August 2026
Portfolio Member:	Councillor Stuart Gourley
Report Author:	Gareth Dowding
Forward Plan Ref:	ID4823

1 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To inform the Executive Member for Environment and Highways of the responses received during a statutory consultation that was necessary in order to revoke an [Experimental Traffic Regulation Order](#) (ETRO) made on 6th May 2025 and to seek approval of officer recommendations. The ETRO extended the operational hours for the Newbury town centre Pedestrian and Cycle Zone from 10am-5pm to 10am-11pm daily for a maximum trial period of 18 months
- 1.2 The revocation is necessary in order to bring the experimental scheme to an early close.

2 Recommendation

- 2.1 That the Executive Member for Environment and Highways approves the proposals as set out in Section 8 of this report, namely that:
- (a) The Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) that completed its statutory consultation between 11th June and 3rd July 2026 giving effect to revoking the Experimental TRO be Sealed and that the Pedestrian Zone return to the previous daily operational hours of 10am to 5pm, in accordance with the Executive Decision made on 21st May 2026 to allow vehicular traffic to enter the Pedestrian and Cycle Zone at 5pm from September 2026 onwards.
- (b) The respondents to the statutory consultation be informed accordingly.

3 Implications and Impact Assessment

Implication	Commentary
Financial:	The implementation of the physical works would be funded from existing Capital budgets as part of the Network

	Management team's approved Minor Works Programme for 2026/27.			
Human Resource:	Whilst not creating an immediate or significant financial pressure, the amendment to existing traffic signs places additional workload on the officers responsible for inspecting and maintaining them.			
Legal:	Before making the Order the Council, as Highway Authority, must consider all objections made and which have not been withdrawn. All objections must be considered with an open mind and once assessed should be formally accepted or rejected. All objectors must be notified in writing of the decision on whether (a) the TRO is made as advertised, (b) is modified or (c) is abandoned. Where any substantial modifications are proposed, the authority is required to inform those likely to be affected by such modifications and give them the opportunity to make representations which must again be considered. Should a decision be made to proceed, the Traffic Regulation Order will need to be sealed by the Legal Services team.			
Risk Management:	If implemented the project will be managed in accordance with the Environment Department's approach to risk management.			
Property:	None arising from this report.			
Policy:	The consultation was in accordance with the Council's consultation procedure.			
	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Commentary
Equalities Impact:				
A Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?		X		N/A

B Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?	X			Mobility impaired and elderly: The proposals will help improve vehicular access to the town centre amenities which are used by the disabled with mobility issues in particular.
Environmental Impact:		X		Whilst the creation of a traffic-free area in the town centre in the evenings should have encouraged more active travel, which would have had a net improvement environmentally, there was no firm evidence to support this actually took place to any great extent and the knock-on effect of this scheme and the increase of traffic on the routes traffic that had been displaced because of this proposal diminished slightly this potential net improvement.
Health Impact:		X		The proposal may have encouraged active travel options within the town centre but it created less opportunities on the network where traffic had been displaced to, so an overall net increase has not been achieved.
ICT Impact:		X		N/A
Digital Services Impact:		X		N/A
Council Strategy Priorities:		X		N/A
Core Business:		X		N/A
Data Impact:		X		N/A

Consultation and Engagement:	Local stakeholders, statutory consultees and road users were consulted on the proposals by way of statutory advertisement, Street Notices and online Consultation and Engagement Hub. Affected Ward Members have been sent this report for comment. The following responses have been received: Councillor Any further comments received following publication of this report will be reported verbally at the Individual Decision meeting.
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4 Executive Summary

- 4.1 The purpose of this report is to inform the Executive Member for Environment and Highways of the responses received during a statutory consultation that was necessary in order to revoke an [Experimental Traffic Regulation Order](#) (ETRO) made on 6th May 2025 and to seek approval of officer recommendations. That ETRO extended the operational hours for the Newbury town centre Pedestrian Zone from 10am-5pm to 10am-11pm daily for a maximum trial period of 18 months.
- 4.2 The revocation is necessary in order to bring the experimental scheme to an early close.
- 4.3 Comments indicating objections, support and neutral positions for the proposals were received during the public consultation period. This report summarises the responses and makes recommendations to the Executive Member on what should be implemented as a result of this consultation.

5 Introduction/Background

Introduction

- 5.1 Newbury town centre first became pedestrianised in 1998, with restrictions that prohibited all motor vehicles except buses and taxis entering between 10am and 6pm. Subsequent Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) made amendments to also exclude buses and taxis and in 2011 the operational hours for the Pedestrian and Cycle Zone were adjusted and reduced to 10am-5pm.
- 5.2 Those operational hours remained in place until May 2025 when an ETRO came into force which specifically extended the evening operational times from 5pm, to 11pm.
- 5.3 This change of hours was the result of extensive [pre-trial consultation](#) held between 12th September and 5th November 2024 and was a Council commitment that was planned in the [Council Strategy 2023-2027](#).
- 5.4 ETROs are made under Sections 9 and 10 of the [Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984](#) (RTRA 1984) and are an effective method that allow Local Authorities to trial traffic management and parking schemes in a 'live' setting for a maximum period of 18 months, during which time the actual positive and negative effects can be monitored and feedback from the public can be gathered. A key benefit of an ETRO is that it gives

the community the opportunity to experience proposed restrictions, rather than being asked to comment on a theoretical proposal before it being made permanent

- 5.5 The ETRO that was made as a result of the pre-trial consultation feedback came into operation on 19th May 2025, with an 18 month effective date until 19th November 2026.
- 5.6 The first 6 months period of an ETRO is when comments and objections can be submitted by way of public consultation and decisions can subsequently made on whether to adjust the trial, continue with it, or remove it entirely. At the end of the 18 month period the scheme either becomes permanent or the ETRO expires and the scheme is removed.

Background

- 5.7 The statutory consultation and advertisement for the initial 6 month period of the ETRO proposal was undertaken between 8th May and 19th November 2025. 3,150 responses were received during that period. These were considered during the [Executive Meeting held on 21st May 2026](#).
- 5.8 The decision made during that Executive Meeting was that the ETRO should be removed early and the pedestrianised timings should revert back to 10am-5pm from September 2026. Ending the ETRO early would have to be subject to a further statutory process.
- 5.9 The statutory consultation and advertisement of the proposal was undertaken between 11th June and 3rd July 2026 and is the consultation on which this report is based.
- 5.10 At the end of the statutory consultation period a total of 1,019 respondents had provided their comments of either objection, support or recording a neutral position to the proposals via the WBC Consultation and Engagement Hub, or directly to the Traffic & Road Safety team.
- 5.11 There were 248 objections received, however of those responses there were 35 that gave no additional supporting detail or reason for the objection. These were discounted. It is a requirement under current legislation (Section 8(3) to Local Authorities' Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996) that persons objecting to Traffic Order proposals must state the grounds on which their objection is made. This was made clear in the Consultation & Engagement Hub and the response survey for anyone wishing to respond.
- 5.12 The final responses were therefore recorded as 213 objections, 744 in support of the return to the 10am-5pm closure and 27 indicating a neutral position.
- 5.13 Thames Valley Police indicated they had no objection and recorded a neutral position on the proposal.
- 5.14 Appendix B provides the full extract from the survey responses of all the objection comments received.
- 5.15 Appendix C provides the full extract from the survey responses of all the comments in support of the proposal and comments indicating a neutral position.

6 Summary of responses

6.1 The key points from the objections received (Appendix B) are summarised below:

- (a) Overall, respondents largely said the 11pm extended pedestrianisation would make Newbury town centre safer, cleaner and more attractive, supporting evening activity, outdoor hospitality and a calmer public space. Concerns focused on traffic displacement, access for drivers and Blue Badge holders, business impacts and whether outdoor café culture is viable year-round. Many favoured a compromise, such as later reopening, different weekday/weekend arrangements or seasonal hours, while also calling for better management of deliveries, parking, enforcement, crossings, e-bikes, scooters and cyclists

6.2 The key points received in support of the proposals (Appendix C) are summarised below:

- (a) Most comments support reverting pedestrianisation to 10am–5pm, mainly to improve traffic flow, reduce congestion and pollution on the A339, restore evening access for disabled and less mobile visitors, taxis, deliveries and pick-ups, and make the town centre feel busier and safer after dark. Many felt the extended 10am–11pm restriction had not clearly boosted businesses, footfall or outdoor dining and felt that the trial had been detrimental to businesses in the town centre due to a lack of passing trade and whether outdoor café culture is viable throughout the year, although a smaller number favoured longer pedestrianisation for pedestrian safety, active travel and a more pleasant shopping environment.

7 Options for consideration

7.1 The option open to this consultation is that Revocation Order is not made, in which case the ETRO will naturally expire on 19th November 2026.

8 Proposals

8.1 That the Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) that completed its statutory consultation between 11th June and 3rd July 2026 giving effect to revoking the Experimental TRO be Sealed and that the Pedestrian Zone return to the previous daily operational hours of 10am to 5pm in accordance with the Executive Decision made on 21st May 2026 to allow vehicular traffic to enter the Pedestrian and Cycle Zone at 5pm from September 2026 onwards.

8.2 That the respondents to the statutory consultation be informed accordingly.

9 Conclusion

9.1 The response to this consultation, with 75.6% of respondents in favour of a return to the 5pm operational hours and 21.7% raising objection (with a further 2.7% indicating a neutral position) demonstrates a clear confirmation of the decision made by the Executive on 21st May 2026.

Appendices

Appendix A – Equality Impact Assessment

Appendix B – Consultation responses (Objections only) – (full extracts from Consultation & Engagement Hub survey).

Appendix C – Consultation responses (Support and Neutral comments only) – (full extracts from Consultation & Engagement Hub survey).

Corporate Board's recommendation

Not applicable.

Background Papers:

N/A

Subject to Call-In:

Yes: ☒ No: ☐

- | | |
|---|--------------------------|
| The item is due to be referred to Council for final approval | ☐ |
| Delays in implementation could have serious financial implications for the Council | ☐ |
| Delays in implementation could compromise the Council's position | ☐ |
| Considered or reviewed by Scrutiny Commission or associated Committees or Task Groups within preceding six months | ☐ |
| Item is Urgent Key Decision | ☐ |
| Report is to note only | ☐ |

Wards affected: Newbury Central

Officer details:

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West Berkshire Council Equity Impact Assessment

TEMPLATE

March 2023

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Section 1: Summary details

Directorate and Service Area	Place Directorate – Highways & Transport (Network Management)
What is being assessed (e.g. name of policy, procedure, project, service or proposed service change).	Extended Pedestrianisation Hours in Newbury – early removal of ETRO and reversion to the original pedestrianisation restrictions (10:00–17:00), with a refresh of the Newbury Town Centre Masterplan to consider any future permanent arrangements.
Is this a new or existing function or policy?	Existing. The recommended decision restores the pre-trial pedestrianisation restrictions that were in place in Newbury town centre prior to the ETRO (10:00–17:00). The Masterplan refresh will consider any future changes through a separate, comprehensive engagement process.
Summary of assessment Briefly summarise the policy or proposed service change. Summarise possible impacts. Does the proposal bias, discriminate or unfairly disadvantage individuals or groups within the community? (following completion of the assessment).	This EQiA considers the recommended decision within the accompanying report on the extended pedestrianisation trial (ETRO) in Newbury town centre. The recommendation is to remove the ETRO early and revert the pedestrianisation restrictions to the original hours (10:00–17:00) from September 2026, alongside a refresh of the Newbury Town Centre Masterplan to develop any future permanent arrangements through comprehensive engagement. Because the recommendation returns to the pre-trial restrictions (i.e. no change from the original arrangements that previously operated), the decision itself is not expected to introduce new or additional adverse impacts for people with protected characteristics compared with the baseline position. Any equality-related issues identified during the ETRO trial (notably access for some disabled and older people during extended hours) are not being progressed as part of the recommended decision. The Masterplan refresh provides an opportunity to work with stakeholders (including accessibility groups) to shape any future proposals and associated mitigations.

Completed By	Andy Alty, Network Manager, Highways and Transport.
Authorised By	Jon Winstanley, Service Director, Environment (West Berkshire Council)
Date of Assessment	17/07/2026

Section 2: Detail of proposal

Context / Background Briefly summarise the background to the policy or proposed service change, including reasons for any changes from previous versions.	Extended pedestrianisation hours in Newbury town centre were introduced as a trial using an Experimental Traffic Regulation Order (ETRO) made on 6 May 2025 and effective from 19 May 2025. The trial extended the pedestrianised period to 10:00–23:00 to improve safety, encourage active travel and support the evening economy, aligned with the Council Strategy 2023–27. A statutory consultation to end the ETRO early ran between 11th June and 3rd July 2026 and generated 1,019 responses, with 21.7% objecting, 75.6% in favour and the remainder neutral.
Proposals Explain the detail of the proposals, including why this has been decided as the best course of action.	Proposed decision: • End the Experimental Traffic Regulation Order (ETRO) for extended pedestrianisation hours early. • Revert the pedestrianised timings in Newbury town centre to 10:00–17:00 from September 2026 (reflecting the original restrictions that operated prior to the trial). • Take forward consideration of any future permanent pedestrianisation arrangements through a refresh of the Newbury Town Centre Masterplan, supported by a comprehensive engagement process with residents, businesses and representative groups (including the Disability Access Forum and night-time economy stakeholders).
Evidence / Intelligence	Evidence and intelligence considered includes:

List and explain any data, consultation outcomes, research findings, feedback from service users and stakeholders etc, that supports your proposals and can help to inform the judgements you make about potential impact on different individuals, communities or groups and our ability to deliver our climate commitments.	• Statutory ETRO consultation feedback (1,019 responses), including themed analysis of comments on access, safety, the public realm and the evening economy. • Stakeholder engagement, including discussions with Newbury BID and identification of issues raised by accessibility stakeholders. • Transport capacity checks referenced in the report indicating the A339 corridor operated within capacity overall. • Independent economic analysis referenced in the report (Beauclair), indicating Newbury's town centre performance broadly mirrored national trends, with no definitive evidence linking observed variation directly to the pedestrianisation trial.
Alternatives considered / rejected Summarise any other approaches that have been considered in developing the policy or proposed service change, and the reasons why these were not adopted. This could include reasons why doing nothing is not an option.	Options considered in developing the recommendation included: • Do nothing (allow the ETRO arrangements to continue until it expires naturally): not recommended because it would perpetuate a trial arrangement that was introduced experimentally and which has generated significant objection. The recommended approach ends the ETRO early and returns to the original restrictions (10:00–17:00), while a Masterplan refresh considers any future change.

Section 3: Impact Assessment - Protected Characteristics

Protected Characteristic	No Impact	Positive	Negative	Description of Impact	Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts	Action owner* (*Job Title, Organisation)	Timescale and monitoring arrangements
Age	☒	☐	☐	The recommended decision returns to the original pedestrianisation restrictions that operated prior to the ETRO trial (10:00–17:00). As such, no new age-related impacts are anticipated compared with the pre-trial baseline. Consultation feedback on the ETRO trial identified that some older people experienced difficulties with access and convenient set-down/collection when restrictions were extended into the evening; those extended restrictions are not being progressed.	Ensure the reversion to original restrictions is clearly communicated (including access/parking information). Use the Masterplan refresh engagement to understand older people's access needs and to inform any future proposals and mitigations if changes are brought forward.	Network Manager (Highways), West Berkshire Council	Reversion implemented from September 2026. Engagement and monitoring through the Masterplan refresh programme.
Disability	☒	☐	☐	The recommended decision removes the	Communicate the reversion to the original	Network Manager	Reversion implemented

Protected Characteristic	No Impact	Positive	Negative	Description of Impact	Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts	Action owner* (*Job Title, Organisation)	Timescale and monitoring arrangements
				ETRO and returns to the original pedestrianisation restrictions (10:00–17:00) that were in place prior to the trial. Accordingly, the decision is not expected to create new or additional disability-related impacts compared with the pre-trial baseline. The ETRO consultation identified that some disabled people experienced difficulties during the extended restricted hours (including Blue Badge access and safe set-down/pick-up in the evening). Those extended-hour restrictions are not being progressed as part of this recommendation.	restrictions clearly (including access/parking information) in accessible formats. Use the Masterplan refresh engagement (including with the Disability Access Forum and other accessibility stakeholders) to identify and address access needs and to develop appropriate mitigations should any future changes be proposed.	(Highways) with Masterplan lead officers, West Berkshire Council	from September 2026. Engagement and monitoring through the Masterplan refresh programme; review if future proposals are developed.

Protected Characteristic	No Impact	Positive	Negative	Description of Impact	Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts	Action owner* (*Job Title, Organisation)	Timescale and monitoring arrangements
Gender Reassignment	☒	☐	☐	No specific impacts identified. The proposals relate to highway access arrangements and are not expected to affect this characteristic differently from the general population.	Not applicable beyond standard inclusive communications.	Network Manager (Highways), West Berkshire Council	N/A
Marriage & Civil Partnership	☒	☐	☐	No specific impacts identified.	Not applicable beyond standard inclusive communications.	Network Manager (Highways), West Berkshire Council	N/A
Pregnancy & Maternity	☒	☐	☐	Potential impact on parents/carers with pushchairs if access to convenient drop-off and safe crossing points is reduced during restrictions; the improved pedestrian environment	Maintain safe, step-free pedestrian routes and crossings; ensure clear information on access and nearby parking/set-down. Monitor feedback during consultation and early implementation.	Network Manager (Highways), West Berkshire Council	N/A

Protected Characteristic	No Impact	Positive	Negative	Description of Impact	Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts	Action owner* (*Job Title, Organisation)	Timescale and monitoring arrangements
				may be beneficial for families.			
Race	☒	☐	☐	No specific impacts identified.	Not applicable beyond standard inclusive communications.	Network Manager (Highways), West Berkshire Council	N/A
Sex	☒	☐	☐	No specific impacts identified.	Not applicable beyond standard inclusive communications.	Network Manager (Highways), West Berkshire Council	N/A
Sexual Orientation	☒	☐	☐	No specific impacts identified.	Not applicable beyond standard inclusive communications.	Network Manager (Highways), West Berkshire Council	N/A

Protected Characteristic	No Impact	Positive	Negative	Description of Impact	Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts	Action owner* (*Job Title, Organisation)	Timescale and monitoring arrangements
Religion or Belief	☒	☐	☐	No specific impacts identified.	Not applicable beyond standard inclusive communications.	Network Manager (Highways), West Berkshire Council	N/A

Section 3: Impact Assessment - Additional Community Impacts

Additional community impacts	No Impact	Positive	Negative	Description of impact	Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts	Action owner (*Job Title, Organisation)	Timescale and monitoring arrangements
Rural communities	☒	☐	☐	No specific impacts identified for rural communities beyond general changes to traffic routing when	Monitor any displacement/traffic routing issues through TRO consultation feedback and post-	Network Manager (Highways), West	During and after TRO implementation (6–12 months).

Additional community impacts	No Impact	Positive	Negative	Description of impact	Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts	Action owner (*Job Title, Organisation)	Timescale and monitoring arrangements
				travelling to/through Newbury town centre.	implementation monitoring.	Berkshire Council	
Areas of deprivation	☒	☐	☐	No specific impacts identified. General impacts may relate to travel time and cost of accessing the town centre (e.g., parking, public transport and walking routes).	Ensure consultation materials are accessible and widely promoted; consider any issues raised relating to affordability/transport access when finalising TRO arrangements.	Network Manager (Highways), West Berkshire Council	During TRO consultation and for 6 months post-implementation.
Displaced communities	☒	☐	☐	Not applicable / no specific impacts identified.	N/A	Network Manager (Highways), West Berkshire Council	N/A

Additional community impacts	No Impact	Positive	Negative	Description of impact	Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts	Action owner (*Job Title, Organisation)	Timescale and monitoring arrangements
Care experienced people	☒	☐	☐	No specific impacts identified.			
The Armed Forces Community	☒	☐	☐				

Section 4: Review

Where bias, negative impact or disadvantage is identified, the proposal and/or implementation can be adapted or changed; meaning there is a need for regular review. This review may also be needed to reflect additional data and evidence for a fuller assessment (proportionate to the decision in question). Please state the agreed review timescale for the identified impacts of the policy implementation or service change.

Review Date	17/07/26
Person Responsible for Review	Andy Alty, Highways Network Manager
Authorised By	Jon Winstanley, Service Director Environment

EDI employee related EQiA's should now be sent to Human Resources hrenquiries@westberks.gov.uk.