

**Southlands
Through Traffic Restriction Trial
(November 2022 to June 2023)**

**Experimental Traffic Regulation
Order (ETRO) Consultation
Report**

Bath & North East Somerset Council

November 2023

Quality information

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1. Executive summary

In November 2022, Bath & North East Somerset (B&NES) Council introduced a through-traffic restriction trial on Southlands, Weston, Bath, for a minimum of six months and a maximum 18 months using an Experimental Traffic Regulation Order (ETRO).

The purpose is to trial the impact of a through-traffic restriction to prevent motorists from using Southlands as an inappropriate shortcut, and to ensure this narrow, residential street offers a safer, environment for those walking and cycling through the area.

More information on the scheme is outlined below and a full summary of the trial is available online at www.bathnes.gov.uk/LNPILOTS (and in print on request).

An online and printed questionnaire was available during the first six months of the trial to collect feedback from respondents. It was available until mid-June but is no longer available to the public.

The information presented in this document includes details of the trial and the analysis of the feedback collected during this six-month period.

There were 322 responses to the Through-traffic Restriction Trial ETRO Consultation on Southlands, Weston, Bath and the level of support was as follows:

- 85 respondents (26%) supported the ETRO;
- 8 respondents (2%) partially supported the ETRO; and
- 229 respondents (71%) objected to the ETRO.

Among the reasons respondents supported the scheme was because they felt the area was safer and quieter, especially for children and the elderly. It was perceived to have stopped 'rat-running', reduced traffic in the area, and made the road and area feel safer and more pleasant for walking and cycling.

Among the reasons respondents objected to the scheme was because they felt it had displaced traffic to cause congestion elsewhere. They felt journey times had increased and the trial scheme was perceived to cause more pollution with vehicles having to travel further. This was seen to negatively impact residents.

A few respondents made alternative suggestions which centred around parking, whether this was to have residents parking permits to prevent non-residents from parking or to improve hospital parking. It was felt a lot of traffic and parking problems stemmed from staff and patients using Southlands to park for the hospital.

The purpose of this report is to deliver feedback and evidence about the through-traffic restriction trial to support Bath & North East Somerset council in their final decision-making process. Residents will be informed of the final decision by letter and the decision will be posted online and in a council media release.

2. Introduction

On 11 November 2022, Bath & North East Somerset (B&NES) Council introduced a through-traffic restriction trial on Southlands, Weston, Bath for a minimum of six months and a maximum of 18 months, using an Experimental Traffic Restriction Order (ETRO).

An ETRO allows people to experience the proposed restriction in-situ before giving their feedback during a six-month public consultation. An online questionnaire was available until June 2023, which was also available on request in print and alternative formats. Before a decision is made, residents are also being given the opportunity to complete a more detailed end-point survey on its impact (Sept-Oct 2023).

2.1 Aims of the scheme

The aim of the scheme is to trial the impact of a vehicle restriction that prevents motorists from using Southlands as an inappropriate shortcut and to ensure this narrow, residential street offers a safer, healthier environment for those walking and cycling through the area. Vehicle access to homes and businesses is retained, although it does require some drivers to use alternative routes.

2.2 Background (previous consultations)

During a public consultation in 15 Liveable Neighbourhood areas in **December/January 2021/22**, residents reported that anti-social driving and through traffic were concerns for the Southlands area.

With a view to fast tracking experimental trials on through-traffic restrictions in some areas, the council identified five locations across Bath and North East Somerset where residents had expressed high levels of support for such restrictions to tackle anti-social driving. A trial on Southlands was included in this shortlist.

During the **Spring of 2022**, co-design workshops were run with residents from each of the 15 Liveable Neighbourhoods. Specific solutions for a range of traffic-related issues were discussed and proposed in more detail for each area, including validation of the idea for a through-traffic restriction on Southlands.

The background about the trial is available on the B&NES website: <https://beta.bathnes.gov.uk/southlands-area-weston>. This includes the co-design workshop report, available here: [Southlands Liveable Neighbourhoods \(LN\)](#)

In **August 2022**, residents in the Southlands area were asked whether they specifically supported a trial of a through-traffic restriction on Southlands, and feedback was gathered from the community on a preliminary design. Residents were notified of this public engagement by letter and more information, including the questionnaire, was available online and in print on request. During this engagement key stakeholders such as the emergency services, waste and highways departments were consulted on the possible impacts of the trial.

Following this engagement, a decision was made to proceed with the trial in the **Autumn of 2022** under an ETRO. The outcome of the engagement on the proposal for an ETRO consultation is available here:

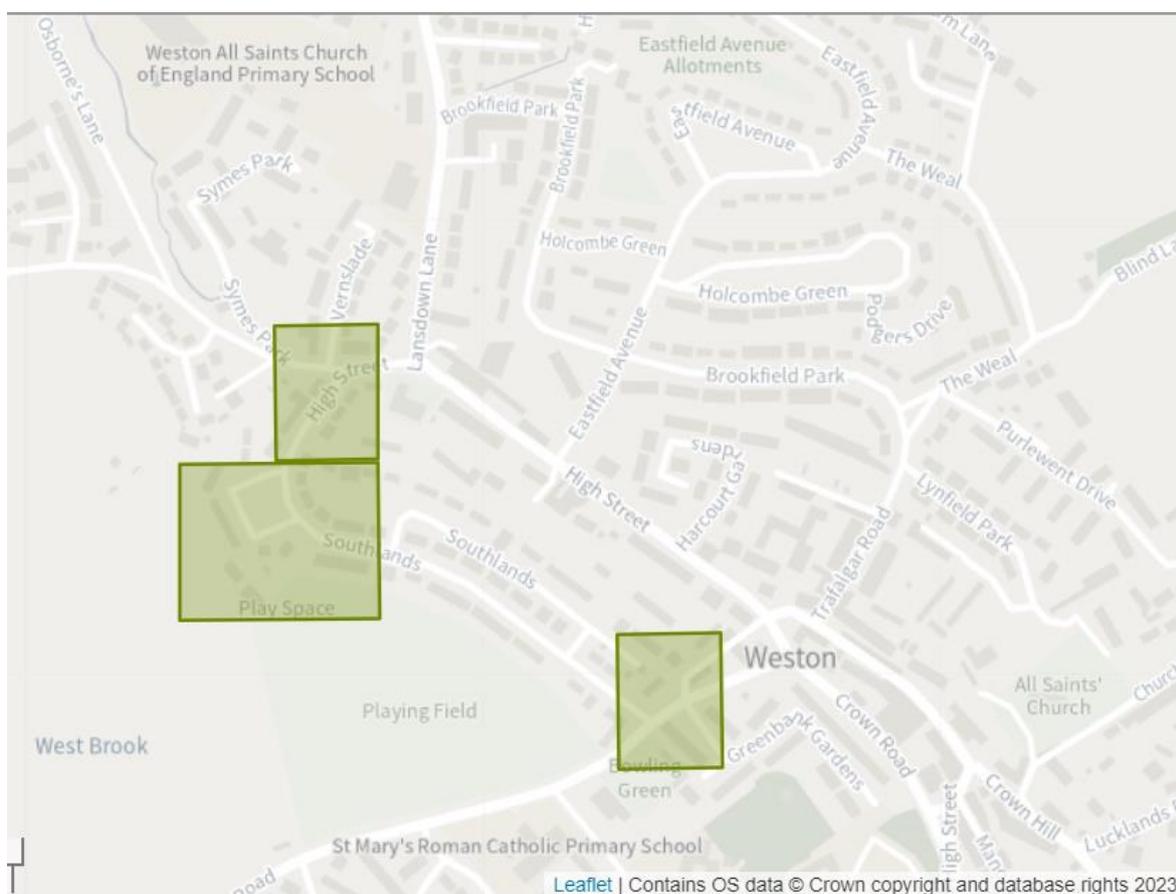
<https://democracy.bathnes.gov.uk/mglIssueHistoryHome.aspx?lId=35896&Opt=0>

2.3 Scheme details

The trial introduced a modal filter – in this case a set of temporary, wooden planters – on the road outside nos. 126 and 128 Southlands (near the cul-de-sac). See Figure 1. This filter is designed to allow pedestrians, cyclists, people with pushchairs and those driving mobility scooters to pass through, but not un-authorized vehicles.

- Residents and visitors to homes northwest of the modal filter can drive into Southlands via Lansdown Lane/the High Street. Those living in or visiting homes southeast of the filter can enter via Penn Hill Road.
- The emergency services and other key services were made aware of the access and exit routes.
- Turning space for vehicles allows vehicles to exit Southlands using the same route they used to enter.
- Advance-warning signs alert motorists that they cannot use Southlands as a through route.

Figure 1: Location of Southlands advance signage and modal filter



Source: *Southlands through-traffic restriction trial (ETRO consultation)* | Bath & North East Somerset Council
(<https://beta.bathnes.gov.uk/southlands-through-traffic-restriction-trial-etro-consultation>)

2.4 Scheme adaptations during the six-month trial period

The scheme was regularly reviewed during the six-month trial period and the following change was made during the trial.

- Removal of a parking bay in front of the restriction to provide additional room for vehicles to perform a three-point turn.

2.5 The ETRO consultation and questionnaire

A full summary of the proposals, including an interactive map (Figure 1 above) and project timeline, was available at www.bathnes.gov.uk/LNPILOTS (Southlands ETRO consultation). These consultation web pages remain live until a decision is made on the future of the through-traffic restriction.

Residents in the Southlands area were sent a letter two weeks prior to the installation of the modal filter informing them of the decision to run the trial for a minimum of six months. This letter included full details of the scheme including its design on a map.

To inform the wider public of the trial, the ETRO notice was also published in the local press and was the subject of a council press release and subsequent social media coverage. Notices were also erected in the vicinity of the trial on Southlands which directed the public to the full summary of the proposals and provided a contact telephone number and email address for enquiries.

The public consultation questionnaire was available on the web site (and in print and alternative formats on request) for just over six months from 11th November 2022 to 16th June 2023. (Note: this was slightly longer than the intended minimum six-month period planned due to the local elections in April/May and a period of [purdah](#)).

The questionnaire enabled respondents to state their level of support for the ETRO and the opportunity to explain any reasons they have for not supporting the proposals.

3. Methodology

3.1 Receiving responses

The consultation questionnaire was hosted on the council's website www.bathnes.gov.uk/LNPilots. To ensure inclusivity, Bath & North East Somerset Council accepted responses via email and the hard copy questionnaire as well as via the online survey.

3.2 Thematic coding

All free-text responses were grouped into themes to allow meaningful analysis.

Throughout the report, quotes from the free text responses have been used to illustrate the points raised. Quotes have been selected to best show the essence of what was said for each theme. For ease of reading, any clear and obvious typos or spelling errors have been corrected.

3.3 Analysis and reporting

The consultation was open to all and, therefore, respondents were self-selecting. This, coupled with the fact respondents could choose which of the questions they answered, means the results and responses should be viewed as indicative of the wider population and any identified sub-groups rather than representative.

As respondents were not obliged to answer all questions in the questionnaire, the percentages shown only include those that responded to each question. The number of people who answered each question is shown in the tables under "Number", percentages are only used where responses exceed the value of 50.

3.4 Response

3.4.1 Respondent Overview

There were 322 responses to the proposed Experimental Traffic Regulation Order on Southlands. Respondents were asked if they were happy to answer equality monitoring questions, 37% (n=119) answered yes to completing the questions.

A total of 119 respondents provided a date of birth, these were then categorised to match the council's age categories. Table 1 provides an overview of the age groups. Four respondents were under 25, 48 respondents were between 25 and 44 years old, 51 were aged between 45, and 64 and 14 were aged over 65.

Table 1: What is your age?

Age Group	Number
Under 25	4
25 to 44	48
45 to 64	51
Over 65	14
Prefer not to say	2
Total	119

Table 2 shows that of the 119 respondents to answer the monitoring questions, just over half identified as female (n=68) and slightly under half as male (n=46).

Table 2: What is your gender?

Gender	Number
Male	46
Female	68
Prefer not to say	5
Total	119

A total of 84 respondents stated that they did not have a health condition or illness that affected their ability to carry out day to day activities. Twenty-seven respondents stated that they did have a health condition or illness, of these, 11 stated it affected their daily activities a lot.

4. Analysis

4.1 Support of the trial scheme

Just over three-quarters (71%) of the 322 respondents oppose the Experimental Traffic Order Regulation (ETRO), with a further 2% saying they partially support, the remaining 26% of respondents support to the proposals as seen in Table 3.

Table 3: Do you support or object to the Experimental Traffic Regulation Order?

	Number	Percent
Support	85	26
Partially support	8	2
Object	229	71
Total	322	100

All responses were provided by members of the public except one respondent who replied on behalf of an organisation, this organisation is included in the total count.

A total of 85 respondents provided comments with reasons why they would support the trial scheme. Table 4 provides a breakdown of the themes which arose from these reasons, with some respondents mentioning more than one theme.

Table 4: Reasons for supporting the scheme

	Support (Number)
Safer for children / elderly	26
Stopped rat running	18
Road is safer	18
Reduced traffic in the trial scheme area	16
Makes the area safer / more pleasant to walk / cycle	16
Generally improved the street	11
Encourages more walking and cycling	8
Road is quieter	8
Improved the environment	8
Reduced speeding	8
Support the need for a consultation / to provide feedback on trial scheme	5
Total number of comments received	85*

*One respondent stated that they support the trial scheme, however provided suggestions rather than reasons why they supported the trial scheme. Suggestions made by all respondents are shown in Section 4.3.

4.1.1 Open ended comments: supporting the scheme

The main reason for support of the trial scheme, was that it made the area 'safer for children / elderly' (n=26), in particular walking to school or the park.

"Improving safe non-vehicular access to schools and other amenities such as the playground is good for children's health."

"Safety of the children on their way to school."

Respondents have commented that the ETRO had 'stopped rat running' and 'made the road safer', (n=18 respectively).

"It's stopped the road being used as a rat run, because it was always dangerous leaving the recreation field onto Southlands."

"Prevents rat-running, encourages cleaner, safer streets for all."

Respondents also stated that it 'made the area safer / more pleasant to walk / cycle', (n=16).

"I think all efforts to make cycling and walking safer and to encourage it should be carried out."

Some commented there had been 'reduced traffic in the trial scheme area' (n=16).

"I like it as so far it reduced the amount of traffic in Southlands, also there are fewer speeding cars and it's safer to cycle and walk."

"Because since the bollards I personally feel there has been less traffic going up southlands. So, the bollard are doing the job it is supposed to do."

4.2 Objections to the trial scheme

Overall, 220 respondents provided comments with reasons why they would object to the trial scheme. Table 5 provides a breakdown of the themes which arose from these reasons, with some respondents mentioning more than one theme.

Table 5: Reasons for objecting to the scheme

	Object (Number)
Will displace traffic /causes congestion elsewhere	72
Increases journey times	53
Causes more pollution / vehicles travel further	49
Negatively impact residents	39
Favours wealthy residents / privatisation / divides the community	27
Negatively impacts mental / physical health	26
Doesn't solve parking issues / makes parking issues worse	25
Increases traffic / congestion	24
Negatively impact lifestyle / isolates residents	24
The trial scheme is unnecessary	18
Residents unable to park	17
Causes dangerous driving behaviour / manoeuvres	14
The trial scheme is a waste of money	14
Negatively impacts those with disability / elderly	14
Unfair to drivers	7
Negatively impact businesses / church	7
No alternative / viable public transport available	3
Disrupts local traffic	1
Negatively impacts wider Bath residents	1
Permits are expensive / increase in cost	1
General objection without giving more detail	1
Total number of comments received	220*

*Nine respondents stated that they object to the trial scheme, however provided suggestions rather than reasons why they object to the trial scheme, suggestions made by all respondents are shown in Section 4.3.

4.2.1 Open ended comments: objecting to the scheme

The main concern identified was that the trial scheme 'displaces traffic / causes congestion elsewhere', with specific concern over the High Street, (n=72).

"Pushing more traffic onto the already congested High Street."

"Having the planters on Southlands has made more traffic on High Street."

“All it does is move more traffic onto the High Street, which is very congested already, this has a detrimental effect on those living on the high street and their air quality.”

Respondents commented that there were concerns that the trial scheme ‘increases journey times’ (n=53) and that the trial scheme ‘causes more pollution / vehicles to travel further’, (n=49).

“It’s horrendous. Alternative route creates more pollution since I’m spending at least 30 extra minutes a day on High Street with my engine on, crawling to get to the other end of Southlands.”

“I have to drive further to get where I want to go now. I used to be able to drive along Southlands to the High Street to get up Lansdown Lane. Now I have to drive onto Penn Hill Road and turn left and all the way along the High Street which is unnecessary and adds to the congestion. The High Street is too narrow to cope with the extra traffic.”

Respondents also noted that the trial scheme ‘negatively impact residents’ (n=39)

“It’s an eyesore and more importantly causes even bigger issues for those that live near to the barrier.”

“The scheme will not achieve its objectives. It will only cause difficulty for Southlands residents and visitors.”

There were concerns that the trial scheme ‘favours wealthy residents / privatisation / divides the community’, (n=27).

“It is dividing the community, deliberately putting obstructions in resident's paths and making their lives harder and more miserable without any additional benefits to the local community.”

“Dividing the community, makes it far harder for local community to move around”

Concerns were raised that the trial scheme ‘negatively impacts mental / physical health’ (n=26), by causing stress and anxiety due to increasing journey times which has resulted in residents being late.

“I object because it makes me super anxious at the thought of always being late for everything and no babysitter wants to help me now that I am always late, and the road makes me really angry.”

“It makes me depressed and stressed everyday with my journeys taking a lot longer and it isn’t safer anyway and it is making everything so much worse.”

Some respondents noted that the trial scheme ‘doesn't solve parking issues / makes parking issues worse’, (n=25). Respondents noted that parking was previously an issue in Southlands, due to the proximity of Royal United Hospital (RUH), and staff parking.

“I grew up in Weston Village and have never used Southlands as a rat run, the issues regarding traffic arise from the staff that work at the RUH and park in all of the nearby roads including Southlands.”

“The main issue with southlands is the RUH staff using it as a car park. This has not stopped. Southlands is still full of cars that do not belong to residents.”

Respondents noted that the trial scheme ‘negatively impacts lifestyle and isolates residents’ (n=24, respectively).

“It’s totally selfish to isolate Southlands people from the rest of the world. First the bus route is eliminated, then the road is closed. My mental health has taken a dip since the planters reduced the visits, I had from my support workers. I was already isolated as it is because the bus no longer is an option.”

4.3 Suggestions for changes to the proposals

A total of eight respondents stated that they partially supported the trial scheme, however 74 respondents made suggestions for the scheme, irrespective of their level of support. The suggestions made are shown in Table 6 with some respondents making more than one suggestion.

Table 6: Suggestions to the scheme proposals

	Suggestions (Number)
Concerns over emergency vehicle access due to congested streets	30
Suggestion for alternative ways to improve the trial scheme (e.g. cycle lanes / hospital parking / provide permits)	21
Suggestion to resolve parking concerns (over parking/ poor parking)	19
Concerns over delivery vehicle access	14
Propose an alternative method of road closure (moveable bollards / one way / double yellow)	6
Needs better enforcement (traffic wardens, speed, double yellow lines)	5

Total number of comments received: 74

Given the proximity of Southlands to the Royal United Hospital, respondents noted ‘concerns over emergency vehicle access due to congested streets’, (n=30).

“I also have concerns about emergency services being delayed as a result.”

“Emergency services vehicles could potentially lose vital time and risk getting caught up in the increased traffic on nearby roads.”

Respondents that suggested alternative ways to improve the trial scheme (n=21) or using alternative traffic management that would allow the road to remain open, this included speed bumps.

“We need parking permit scheme as non-residents will park and other residents will be unable to.”

“Speed bumps or similar traffic calming measures could have been used.”

“I am very upset that these planters are such a horrible solution to a non-existent problem - and if there were concerns, they could have been tackled with other means such as community speed watch or other methods.”

Respondents felt that the trial scheme did not address the main challenge of the area which is the area is subject to ‘over parking / poor parking’, (n=19).

“It’s not helped with the parking problem and also the planters need to move back as not enough space for large vehicles to turn around”

“Our problem on Southlands isn’t people driving through to avoid the High Street it’s dangerous parking and speeding.”

“There is already a problem with illegally parked vehicles and illegal long-term camping on these roads. The proposed changes are likely to make the problem worse and cause harm to the area in their present form.”

4.4 Criticism of the consultation

In addition to the suggestions, 37 respondents provided a criticism of the consultation or criticised the lack of consultation.

“Lack of democratic decision making and the fact that the majority of people voted against the scheme. Decision made by one person.”

“I object because this consultation is biased and undemocratic. Do a proper balanced review and include ‘partially object’ so all views are valid, and you can’t skew results by using ‘partially support’ to boost the scores in your favour.”

4.5 Information about the proposals

More information on the trial and the ETRO can be found at www.bathnes.gov.uk/LNPilots (Southlands ETRO). The council’s Liveable Neighbourhoods team can be contacted by emailing LNPilots@bathnes.gov.uk, or by calling **01225 394 025**.

