

Church Street  
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 in Church Street, Widcombe 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 the road 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](http://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 79 responses to the Through-traffic Restriction Trial ETRO Consultation on Church Street, Widcombe, Bath and the level of support was as follows:

- 45 respondents (57%) supported the ETRO;
- 5 respondents (6%) partially supported the ETRO; and
- 29 respondents (37%) objected to the ETRO.

Among the reasons respondents supported the scheme was because they felt the area was safer and quieter, it stopped through traffic and encouraged more walking and cycling.

Among the reasons respondents objected to the scheme was because they felt it would cause congestion elsewhere, specifically at Widcombe, and that vehicles had to travel further, increasing journey times and pollution on other roads and negatively impacting other residents outside Church Street.

A few respondents made alternative suggestions such as applying a one-way system or a peak-time only restriction.

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 in Church Street, Widcombe, Bath for a minimum of six months and a maximum of 18 months, using an Experimental Traffic Regulation Order (ETRO).

An ETRO allows people to experience the proposed restriction in-situ before giving their feedback during a minimum 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 Church Street as an inappropriate shortcut between Ralph Allen Drive and Widcombe Hill, and to ensure this narrow, residential street offers a safer, healthier environment for those walking and cycling through the area. Vehicle access to homes, businesses or the church 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 Church Street area.

With a view to fast tracking experimental trials on through-traffic restrictions in some areas, the council identified several 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 Church Street 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 Church Street.

The background about the trial is available on the B&NES website: <https://beta.bathnes.gov.uk/church-street-and-prior-park-road>. This includes the co-design workshop report, available here: [Church Street Liveable Neighbourhoods \(LN\)](#)

In **August 2022**, residents in the Church Street and Prior Park area were asked whether they specifically supported a trial of a through-traffic restriction in Church Street and feedback was gathered from the community on a preliminary design.

Residents were notified of this public engagement by letter and more information, including an accompanying 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 ETRO trial in the **Autumn of 2022**. The outcome of the engagement is available here: [public engagement report and single member decision](#).

## 2.3 Scheme details

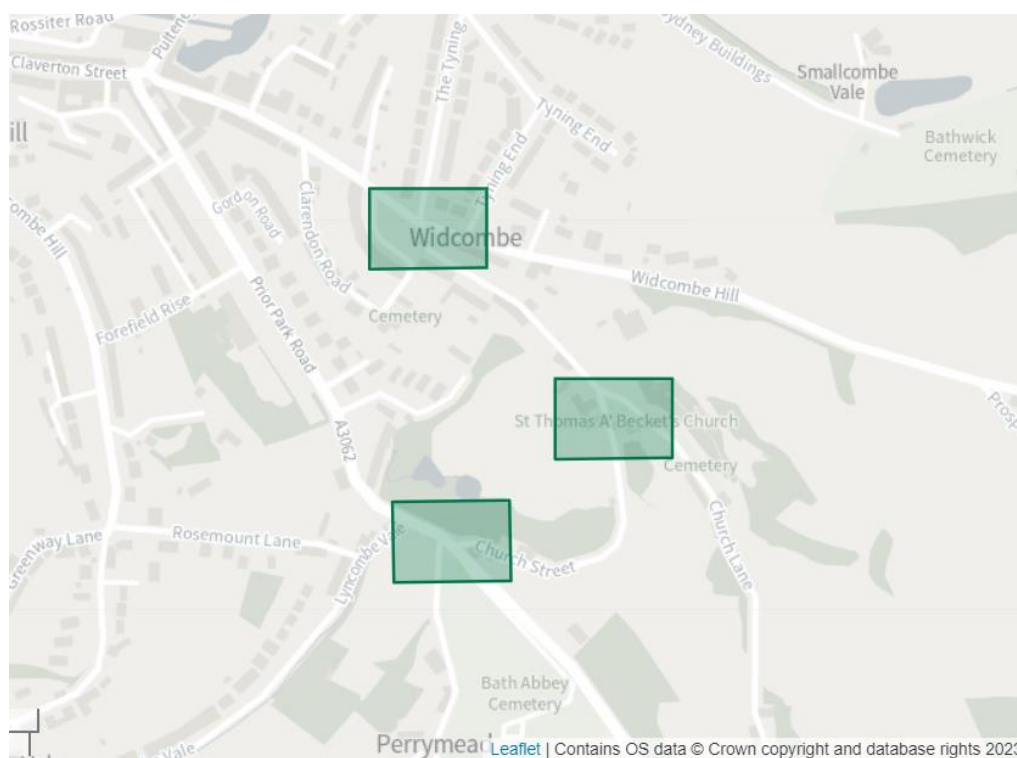
The trial introduced a modal filter – in this case two sets of drop-down bollards – on either side of St Thomas a Becket's Church and Widcombe Manor to stop vehicles passing through. **See Figure 1**. This filter is designed to allow pedestrians, cyclists, people with pushchairs and those driving mobility scooters to pass through, but not unauthorised vehicles.

Vehicle access (including for delivery vans and larger vehicles) is available from either side of the filter via Ralph Allen Drive or Widcombe Hill. There is space in front of each set of bollards so that vehicles can turn and exit using the same route. New double yellow lines were provided in front of the bollards located south of the church (with access to Ralph Allen Drive) to create a turning space.

The emergency services, church leaders, drivers of some service vehicles and administrators for the National Trust can drop the bollards to gain access when required.

Advance-warning signs alert motorists that they cannot use Church Street as a through route.

**Figure 1: Location of Church Street advance signage and modal filters either side of St Thomas a Becket's Church**



Source: Church Street through-traffic restriction trial (ETRO consultation) | Bath & North East Somerset Council: (<https://beta.bathnes.gov.uk/church-street-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 changes were made during the trial.

- No changes were made to the design of the trial
- Parking bays outside homes at the Widcombe Hill end of Church Street had parking bay lines refreshed to encourage responsible parking during the trial to improve access for vehicles along the narrow street

## 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 on the council's website throughout the consultation at [www.bathnes.gov.uk/LNPilots](http://www.bathnes.gov.uk/LNPilots) (Church Street and Prior Park ETRO consultation). These consultation web pages remain live until a decision is made on the future of the through-traffic restriction.

Residents in the Church Street and Prior Park Road areas were sent a letter two weeks prior to 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 Church Street 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](http://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 79 responses to the proposed Experimental Traffic Regulation Order on Church Street, Widcombe, Bath. Respondents were asked if they were happy to answer equality monitoring questions, 38% (n=30) answered yes to completing the questions.

A total of 30 respondents provided a date of birth, these were then categorised to match B&NES age categories. Table 1 provides an overview of the age groups, eight respondents were aged between 25 and 44 years old, 14 aged between 45 and 64 and eight were aged over 65.

**Table 1: What is your age?**

<b>Age Group</b>	<b>Number</b>
Under 25	0
25 to 44	8
45 to 64	14
Over 65	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>

Table 2 shows that of the 30 respondents to answer the monitoring questions, 17 identified as female and 12 as male.

**Table 2: What is your gender?**

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Number</b>
Male	12
Female	17
Prefer not to say	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>

A total of 24 respondents stated that they did not have a health condition or illness that affected their ability to carry out day to day activities. Five respondents stated that they did have a health condition or illness, of these, two stated it affected their daily activities a lot.

## 4. Analysis

### 4.1 Support of the trial scheme

Just over half (57%) of the 79 respondents support the Experimental Traffic Regulation Order (ETRO), with a further 6% saying they partially support it. The remaining 38% of respondents object to the proposals as seen in Table 3.

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

	Number	Percent
Support	45	57
Partially support	5	6
Object	29	37
<b>Total</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>100</b>

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 48 respondents provided comments with reasons why they 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)
Reduced traffic in the scheme area	24
Makes the area safer / more pleasant to walk / cycle	21
Stopped rat running	13
Road is quieter	13
Encourages more walking and cycling	12
Road is safer generally	9
Safer for children / elderly	9
Reduced accidents / damage	8
Generally improved the street	6
Improved the environment	3
<b>Total comments received</b>	<b>48</b>

### 4.1.1 Open ended comments: supporting the scheme

The main reason for support of the trial, was the reduction in traffic (n=24).

*“Because it has reduced Church Street traffic and provided a better environment.”*

*“As a resident of Church Street, the traffic has reduced significantly.”*

*“There has been a dramatic reduction in vehicle traffic in Church Street.”*

Due to the reduction in traffic, responses also noted that the area feels safer and more pleasant for walking and cycling (n=21).

*“I like the scheme very much. I work on Church Street and during my breaks it is so peaceful to go for a walk there without worrying about traffic. Before it was so busy, I wouldn't walk.”*

*“Lovely to be able to use Church Street for walking and cycling with children (especially linking to the two tunnels cycle route) with far fewer cars. Makes this historic and interesting road much more peaceful and enjoyable.”*

The ETRO has stopped 'rat-running', meaning that the road is quieter (n=13 for each theme).

*“Long overdue to stop rat running. Making the area better for residents.”*

*“Church Street is really peaceful now that cars don't use it as a rat run anymore.”*

Respondents felt that the trial scheme encourages more walking and cycling (n=12).

*“The introduction of bollards on Church Street has been a positive improvement for the road overall. It has created a much nicer environment for pedestrians, cyclists and dog walkers and I regularly see children playing on their way to the local school.”*

Safety was also a reason for supporting the ETRO, with comments noting that the 'road is safer generally' with other respondents noting that it was now 'safer for children and elderly' (n=9, respectively).

Other comments noted that there were less accidents and damage to cars (n=8), that the street was 'generally more improved' (n=6), had 'improved the environment' (n=3) due to a reduction in vehicular traffic travelling in the area.

## 4.2 Objections to the trial scheme

Overall, 31 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**

	<b>Object (Number)</b>
Will displace traffic / causes congestion elsewhere	13
Causes more traffic at Widcombe	10
Negatively impacts wider Bath residents	8
Causes more pollution / vehicles travel further	8
Increases journey times	7
Disrupts local traffic	4
Negatively impact businesses / church	4
Negatively impact residents	3
Increases traffic / congestion	3
Unfair to drivers	2
Negatively impacts those with a disability / elderly	2
No alternative / viable public transport available	2
The scheme is unnecessary	2
Negatively impacts mental / physical health	1
Forces drivers to Clean Air Zone	1
Permits are expensive	1
<b>Total comments received</b>	<b>31</b>

#### 4.2.1 Open ended comments: objecting to the scheme

The main concern identified was that the trial displaced traffic on to neighbouring roads and created congestion on these roads, (n=13).

*“While the road has seen some reduced traffic, and no doubt some houses will prefer this, the knock-on effects are generally detrimental. Turning especially on the Widcombe Terrace, Church Street end, can be difficult, where vehicles are parked badly in the parking bay near the church”*

*“It will create more traffic on other roads and much longer for residents to access their own properties”*

*“Liveable neighbourhoods appear to be a postcode lottery. If you live on other roads neighbouring the closure, you are subject to more traffic diverted your way which just isn't fair. It also means the alternative routes get more congested and cars travel further in the city and end up idling for longer producing more pollution. Specifically with this closure directing more traffic toward Widcombe seems madness”*

Respondents noted that there were concerns that the trial scheme negatively impacted roads, with Prior Park Road, Ralph Allen Drive, Claverton Down Road mentioned as being used as alternative routes.

There were also concerns raised regarding the traffic travelling in Widcombe, (n=10), that the trial scheme forced traffic into Widcombe at areas which were already subject to high traffic volumes.

*“I understand concerns about speeding and two-way traffic in a narrow street. However, if you close off all smaller roads you simply funnel traffic down the bigger roads leading to jams, congestion, noise and pollution. We've really noticed the extra traffic from intervention this on Widcombe Hill, Prior Park Road, Lyncombe Hill and Pulteney Road.”*

*“I am a resident of Bath, and I think that one of the main issues in the city is traffic. The double roundabout by the Coop in Widcombe is a particularly bad place for traffic, at several times of the day. By blocking Church Street, even more cars are directed towards Widcombe. This has the result of worsening the traffic there for everybody.”*

Concerns have been raised that the trial scheme negatively impacts wider Bath residents, (n=8).

*“You are shutting a Public Highway to create a private road for the favoured few.”*

*“I feel you are cutting off the church from the community. It is part of the village of Widcombe. Church Street is not part of an exclusive gated community.”*

Other comments noted that the trial scheme was unfair to drivers, negatively impacted those with disability / elderly, that there was no alternative /viable mode of transport available and that thought the scheme was unnecessary, (n=2 respectively).

### 4.3 Suggestions for changes to the proposals

A total of 5 respondents stated that they partially supported the trial scheme, however 12 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)
Propose an alternative method of road closure (moveable bollards / one way)	7
Concerns over emergency vehicle access	4
Area is subject to over parking / poor parking	4
Concerns over delivery vehicle access	1
<b>Total comments received</b>	<b>12</b>

Respondents suggested alternative methods of traffic management (n=7), these suggestions included making Church Street **one-way** to traffic to reduce the number of vehicles travelling through on the narrow road and having moveable bollards to be used at peak times (e.g., 15:00-17:00), when through-traffic is of key concern. It was

felt these suggested alternatives would allow residents to access Church Street and help to avoid their extended journey times.

There were also concerns over emergency vehicles accessing the road (n=4) and a comment regarding delivery vehicle access, which alternative methods of road closure may address. Although it should be noted that the emergency services, church leaders, drivers of some service vehicles and administrators for the National Trust will be able to drop the bollards to gain access when required, as detailed on the ETRO consultation website.

There were also concerns with over parking and poor parking (n=4), particularly along Church Street, which some respondents felt had not been addressed as part of the scheme. Comments noted that there was limited resident parking and confusion over parking bays, which could be addressed using double yellow lines or time restricted parking bays for Bath visitors.

## 4.4 Information about the proposals

More information on the trial and the ETRO can be found at [www.bathnes.gov.uk/LNPilots](http://www.bathnes.gov.uk/LNPilots) (Church Street ETRO). The council's Liveable Neighbourhoods team can be contacted by emailing [LNPilots@bathnes.gov.uk](mailto:LNPilots@bathnes.gov.uk), or by calling **01225 394 025**

