

## **Church Street Experimental Traffic Regulation Order (ETRO): Summary of outcomes**

This summary reviews the headlines from the consultation, traffic and air quality monitoring survey reports that were prepared to inform a decision on the through-traffic restriction trial in Church Street, Widcombe installed in November 2022.

We have prepared four reports (attached as appendices to the single member decision report):

- Appendix A - A traffic monitoring report relating to baseline and post-installation data.
- Appendix B - An air quality report relating to baseline and post-installation data.
- Appendix C - A report on the ETRO public consultation relating to the six-month period between November 2022 and May 2023.
- Appendix D - A report on the outcomes of the detailed end-point survey in September/October 2023 (specifically for residents living near the trial).

These reports are available to read using links available at [www.bathnes.gov.uk/ChurchStreetETRO](http://www.bathnes.gov.uk/ChurchStreetETRO)

### **ETRO six-month public consultation between November 2022 and May 2023**

There were 79 responses received within the six months of the consultation. The level of support (in summary) from those that chose to respond to the survey was:

- 45 respondents (57%) supported the ETRO
- 5 respondents partially supported the ETRO and
- 29 respondents (37%) opposed the ETRO.

### **Residents detailed end-point survey September/October 2023**

There were 125 responses to the residents' end-point survey conducted after the trial had been in place for at least six months. The level of support was:

- 79 respondents (63%) support the trial scheme.
- 42 respondents (33%) oppose the trial scheme and
- 4 respondents were undecided.

Additionally, three-fifths of respondents of the total number (60%) agreed that the trial scheme has positively impacted them and their household, with 46% strongly agreeing. Close to one-third of respondents disagreed with this statement (31%), with 26% strongly disagreeing.

Residents on Church Street itself were more likely to agree that the trial scheme had a positive impact on them and their household, compared with residents on neighbouring streets.

Of those 125 respondents, 29 said they lived on Church Street and 25 of those 29 agreed that the scheme has had a positive impact on themselves and their area.

All respondents were given an opportunity to comment on why they supported or opposed the scheme. The reasons cited for supporting or opposing the six-month trial were similar in the ETRO public consultation (November 2022 to May 2023) and the residents end-point survey (conducted in September/October 2023).

### **Reasons for supporting the trial:**

- The area and the road felt safer, especially for children, pedestrians and cyclists.
- It is now pleasant to walk and cycle and has encouraged more active travel.
- It has prevented 'rat-running', and residents commented that there was less traffic.
- It was perceived that the speed of traffic on the road has slowed since the introduction of the trial; and
- It was perceived to have a positive impact on noise, atmosphere, and cleanliness and therefore the residents' quality of life.

### **Reasons for not supporting the trial:**

- It was perceived to displace traffic and cause congestion elsewhere, especially Widcombe Hill.
- It was perceived to increase journey times by car.
- It was perceived to negatively impact those who do not live on the street.
- It was perceived to increase air pollution; and
- It was perceived to create issues with parking.

### **How do views compare with the traffic monitoring data?**

#### **About the monitoring**

- Baseline traffic data was collected for seven consecutive days from 3 October to 9 October 2022 to gain average daily counts before the trial started in November 2022.

- Post-installation traffic data was collected for seven consecutive days from 18 to 24 April 2023 and again from 3 to 9 October 2023
- By comparing post-installation average daily counts with baseline data, we can assess the impact of the trial. We did not collect data during school or university holidays or other times that impact significantly on average traffic flows.
- Please note that for the purpose of this summary we are comparing baseline data with October 2023 data plus daily averages collected over a full week (7 days), unless stated otherwise. You can read the full report for further details.

### **Reduction of traffic on Church Street:**

The baseline traffic monitoring data from October 2022 (pre-trial) shows us the extent to which this residential street is used as a through route:

- Just over half the vehicles entering Church Street from Ralph Allen Drive were found to be using this route as a through route (75 out of 142 vehicles observed on monitoring cameras).
- Around a fifth of vehicles entering Church Street from Widcombe Hill were found to be using the route as a through route (23 out of 113 vehicles observed on monitoring cameras).

The number of vehicles using Church Street as a through-route has now dropped to zero, as expected and per the intention of the trial.

Data collected in April 2023 (post-installation) shows the number of vehicles entering the road for access each day also fell when compared with pre-trial data.

- The number of vehicles entering Church Street from Ralph Allen Drive fell by two thirds from 142 to 50 vehicles on average, each day.
- The number of vehicles entering Church Street from Widcombe Hill fell by a third from 113 vehicles to 72 vehicles on average, each day.

### **Active travel on Church Street:**

Data comparing baseline with post-installation data shows only small increases in walking and cycling trips.

From St Thomas Church towards Widcombe Hill:

- The number of cyclists increased from 13 to 16 cyclists on average, each day.
- On the same stretch, the number of pedestrians dropped from 90 to 86 pedestrians on average, each day.
- However, over the 5-day working week, we note an uplift in walking from 78 to 83 pedestrians, as well as cycling (from 13 to 18 cyclists) on average, each day.

A similar pattern is noted for active travel uplift on the stretch from St Thomas Church towards Ralph Allen Drive following the trial's introduction.

- 4 more pedestrians a day were recorded (from 74 to 78) and 2 more cyclists a day, on average (from 11 to 13 cyclists).
- Over the 5-day average there was an increase of 12 pedestrians each day from 62 to 74 and 2 cyclists (from 11 to 13).

## **Increase in traffic on surrounding roads**

A concern raised in responses to both surveys was the effect the scheme would have on displacing traffic to surrounding roads.

Out of the 70 responses to the ETRO public consultation held between November 2022 and May 2023, there were 23 comments about increases in traffic elsewhere, of which 10 were specifically about Widcombe Hill.

Out of the 125 responses to the residents' end-point survey in September/October 2023, 29 mentioned this displacement of traffic to other roads.

The 7-day average traffic monitoring data from October 2022 (pre-trial) and again in October 2023 (post-installation) shows that in terms of the principal alternative routes for traffic, volumes increased in one area and dropped in another.

### Widcombe Roundabout area

- In October 2023, vehicles travelling from Prior Park Road into Widcombe increased by 44 vehicles per day (on average) compared with baseline data (from 136 to 180 vehicles).
- In October 2023, vehicles travelling from Widcombe Hill into Prior Park increased by 33 vehicles per day (on average) compared to baseline data (from 181 to 214 vehicles).

### Ralph Allen Drive area

- In October 2023, vehicles travelling northbound on Ralph Allen Drive increased by 150 vehicles per day (on average) compared with baseline data (from 2901 to 3051 vehicles).
- In October 2023, vehicles travelling southbound on Ralph Allen Drive increased by 72 vehicles per day (on average) compared to baseline data (from 3022 to 3094 vehicles).

### Widcombe Hill

- In October 2023 there were fewer vehicles using Widcombe Hill than in October 2022 (pre-trial). Eastbound, there was decrease of 375 vehicles per day, on average (from 2379 to 2004 vehicles). Westbound, there was a decrease of 1385 vehicles per day, on average (from 2635 to 1250 vehicles).
- In October 2023, 1760 fewer vehicles travelled on Widcombe Hill on average, each day, in total, compared to October 2022 (pre-trial).

## **How do views compare with air quality monitoring data?**

In the ETRO public consultation, eight respondents commented that they were concerned that the proposals would increase air pollution. This was also mentioned by 17 respondents in the residents' end-point survey.

Levels of nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) were monitored in the Church Street, Widcombe High Street, Prior Park Road (two locations), Church Street and Widcombe Hill areas:

- Widcombe High Street saw a **6% reduction** from 16 to 15 µg/m<sup>3</sup> as an annual average and Widcombe Hill also saw a **6% reduction** from 17 to 16 µg/m<sup>3</sup> as an annual average.
- Prior Park Road saw a **9% reduction** from 22 to 20 µg/m<sup>3</sup> as an annual average and the second location saw a **19% reduction** from 16 to 13 µg/m<sup>3</sup> as an annual average.
- Only Church Street saw an **increase in NO<sub>2</sub> concentrations** from 9 to 10 µg/m<sup>3</sup> as an annual average (11% increase).

All these readings are well below the Government legal limit of nitrogen dioxide (40 µg/m<sup>3</sup>) and are not seen as cause for concern when considering the impact of the trial, especially when considering typical seasonal variations in air quality levels.

### Parking on and around Church Street

There were comments from 15 out of the 125 respondents to the residents' end-point survey about the impact the trial restriction has had on parking.

Parking was not monitored as part of the trial however comments were gathered about the impact of the trial on parking during the end-point survey with residents:

- Two-thirds of residents (65%) who responded to the survey felt being able to find a parking space on Church Street had improved or stayed the same and just over half (58%) felt this was also the case on neighbouring streets.

Note: this data can only be considered indicative and not representative of the demographic profile of the area. This is because residents chose whether to respond to the survey.

### Conclusions

The purpose of the trial was to prevent motorists from using this narrow, residential street as a shortcut to avoid the main roads; and to provide a safer environment for walking and cycling through the area.

#### Trial objectives

There has been a significant reduction in the numbers of vehicles accessing Church Street since the restriction was installed. For example, just over half the vehicles entering Church Street from Ralph Allen Drive were found to be using it as a through route prior to the trial.

This number has now dropped to zero, as expected and per the intention of the trial. Fewer vehicles are also driving into Church Street for access and residents have commented that traffic along Church Street is slower.

This narrow street is now safer and quieter for residents, pedestrians, and cyclists but we note that there are only small increases in walking and cycling when comparing post-installation and baseline data.

### **Traffic impacts**

The traffic monitoring data shows that the introduction of the restriction has reduced through-traffic on Church Street, without a significant increase in traffic volumes on the alternative routes, specifically the principle alternative route from the junction of Prior Park Road and Widcombe Hill. There is also less traffic on Widcombe Hill since the introduction of the restriction.

### **Air Quality**

Air quality monitoring data shows there has been a marginal increase in NO<sub>2</sub> concentrations on Church Street, but all surrounding areas saw larger reductions in NO<sub>2</sub> concentrations. Because all these readings are well below the Government legal limit of 40 µg/m<sup>3</sup>, they are not seen as cause for concern.

### **Level of support**

It is noted that there is good support for the trial among those that chose to respond to surveys with 63% of respondents to the end-point survey stating that they supported the trial, and three-fifths of respondents (in total) agreeing that the trial scheme has positively impacted them and their household.

On balance, it is felt that the trial has successfully reduced the excess traffic on this residential road without significant displacement of traffic onto neighbouring roads.

In addition, there has been no significant impact on the environment in terms of air pollution and it has provided a safer route for walking and cycling by virtue of fewer vehicles; benefiting households and others that choose to walk or cycle this route.

### **Further information**

To obtain a link to the single member decision report (SMD), and the full reports attached as appendices to the SMD, please go to

<https://beta.bathnes.gov.uk/church-street-through-traffic-restriction-trial-etro-consultation> or via [www.bathnes.gov.uk/ChurchStreetETRO](http://www.bathnes.gov.uk/ChurchStreetETRO)