

Notice requesting to call in of Decision E3601 made by the Cabinet Member for Resources

Liveable Neighbourhoods: New Sydney Place and Sydney Road Traffic Regulation Order (TRO)

The undersigned Councillors wish to call in decision E3601 taken on 17 February 2025.

Decision:

- *The aim of the scheme, in line with the wider Liveable Neighbourhoods programme, is to encourage through traffic to remain on the main roads.*
- *Specifically, the aim of this trial is to prevent motorists from using New Sydney Place and Sydney Road as a shortcut to avoid the main roads, and to create a safer environment for everyone walking or cycling through the area.*
- *75% of the traffic using Sydney Road before the trial was through traffic. The trial has reduced the number of vehicles entering New Sydney Place by 85%, and Sydney Road by 70% (while maintaining vehicle access to homes).*
- *Traffic monitoring was carried out during periods when the A36 was open at Limpley Stoke, not during periods when the A36 was shut at Limpley Stoke for road works.*
- *Whilst the monitoring shows more vehicles using the A36 Beckford Road (a principle alternative route and part of the Primary Route Network) this has not translated into extended average queue lengths and / or journey times. The data shows that the change in queue length and journey times for those driving along the A36 is negligible.*
- *Those that used to drive through Sydney Road prior to the trial typically used to save, on average, between c.26 and c.40 seconds on their journey compared to staying on the main A36. They now have to use the main A36 and have seen an increase in journey time, but on average that increase is only between c.23 and c.41 seconds.*
- *In simple terms, moving the traffic from New Sydney Place / Sydney Road on to the main A36 has made no significant difference to the travel time on the A36.*
- *Air quality was monitored before and during the trial at 9 sites to ascertain whether the trial had a detrimental effect. There was no deterioration in air quality.*
- *Those responding to the consultation from outside of the scheme area and whose main mode of travel was a private motor car, expressed the greatest level of objection, citing congestion and increased pollution as the main themes for their objection.*
- *Those living closest to the scheme are most supportive citing reasons of how it has improved pedestrian and cyclist safety and improved the area.*

- *Stakeholder engagement through work with Sustrans and delivery of pop-up events has shown that whilst criticisms exist, there has been a shift in attitude to people being positive about the benefits of the scheme and facilitating walking and cycling in the scheme area. The Bath Walking Wheeling and Cycling Links project will further improve connectivity for pedestrians and cyclists to support the aim of the Liveable Neighbourhood programme to improve residential streets and encourage safe, active and more sustainable forms of travel.*

Reasons for Call In

While we support the urgent need to reduce pollution and tackle the climate and ecological emergencies, the projects, and schemes that B&NES undertake need to work for all:

1. This single member decision is unconstitutional – it is a key decision and should be presented as such.
2. The decision is widely opposed and does not satisfy the DfT guidance for consultation.
 - 76% oppose overall
 - 70% oppose in the affected area
 - The council, and the member for Transport has not engaged those suffering from the LN, only with those in support.
 - All 5 major businesses in the area oppose the LN.
 - First Bus oppose the LN.
 - The EQIA only concentrated on impact inside the LN, not on boundary roads – this may represent a breach of the Equalities Act.
3. Virtually all traffic using Sydney Road - 4,500 vehicles a day, have been displaced onto less safe roads:
 - Causing up to 50% increases in traffic.
 - Increased traffic will queue outside, or go past schools.
 - Diversion is onto less safe roads (Crashmap)
 - Will create £135k a year economic cost from delay from 1.4m vehicles, with 35 tonnes additional CO2 per year.

B&NES are pushing more traffic onto the main roads in the 5th most congested city in the UK.
4. The households who benefit are vastly outnumbered by those who suffer.
 - 87 households benefit,
 - 180 suffer on Darlington St, Sydney Place, and Beckford Road
 - 114 suffer on North Road and Cleveland Walk
 - 59 suffer on Sham Castle Lane and St Ann's Way
 - For the 1,700 residents of Bathampton, a principal route into Bath services (rail, supermarkets, RUH) has just been closed off.
 - Presently the new road layout fails cyclists turning on the Warminster Road and has increased vehicles on North Road, now making these roads more dangerous to active travel users.
5. The LN does not represent value for money.

- The delays alone will lead to a benefit-cost ratio of 0.5—meaning a return of just 50p for every £1 spent.
6. The trial data underestimates traffic on boundary roads.
 - The A36 has been under roadworks or completely closed throughout the trial- reducing 700-3000 vehicles a day from the LN area.
 7. The Reports do not support making the ETRO permanent.
 - The statement of reasons for the ETRO had no success criteria, giving the member Cabinet the opportunity to cherry pick data to support her arguments.
 - The decision brief fails to present an argument in favour of making the ETRO permanent.
 - The summary of outcomes entirely concentrates in the concluding remarks (para 7.4) on the benefits within the area being realised for the minority, rather than the considerable disbenefits suffered by the majority. The statement “without significant or intolerable displacement of traffic” beggars belief when traffic has increased by up to 50%.
 - The Press Release is even less balanced, using entirely cherry-picked data to suggest that the decision is a foregone conclusion. It also allows no freedom of choice for the single member decision.
 8. There is no sufficient evidence of any behaviour change in this report.
 9. It is our believe that understanding the implications of this individual LTN requires considering its cumulative effects, the data provided lacks a city-wide traffic management plan.

Signatories:

Councillors

Colin Blackburn (Lead)

Liz Hardman

Alan Hale

Lesley Mansell

Chris Dando

Tim Warren

Sarah Evans

Gavin Heathcote

Grant Johnson

Shaun Hughes

Robin Moss

Joanna Wright