



## Report to Leader (Transport portfolio)

**Decision Date:** 9 March 2022

**Reference number:** TR11.22

**Title:** **Active Travel Statutory Consultations Marlow and Southcourt**

**Cabinet Member(s):** Councillor Steve Broadbent, Cabinet Member for Transport

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**Ward(s) affected:** Aylesbury South East; Aylesbury South West; Marlow;

**Recommendations:**

- a. That the Leader of the Council authorise the permanent implementation of the Emergency Active Travel Fund trial schemes and related aspects as outlined in this report.
- b. To implement the Emergency Active Travel fund trial schemes in this report, that the Leader of the Council authorises the making of the relevant Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) for each scheme.
- c. That responders to the Statutory Consultation be informed of the Decision.

### Reason for decision:

The decision to permanently implement the prohibition of motor vehicles along part of Trinity Road, Marlow, is recommended to create a quieter street for everyone, encouraging cycling and walking whilst still maintaining vehicular access for residents and businesses. The responses received during the Statutory Consultation supported the proposals in the majority and the proposal has full local Member support as well as the support of Marlow Town Council.

The decision to permanently implement the trial measures in Southcourt, Aylesbury, are recommended as the scheme provides an important strategic active travel link for the town. The proposal overcomes the severed 'Jet Way' [Gemstone cycle network](#) route linking Stoke Mandeville (including the Hospital) and Southcourt to the town centre, as well as providing wider connectivity to destinations including the Rabans Lane Industrial Estate (employment) via the upcoming Emerald Way improvements and Waddesdon Manor (see Appendix A). It also provides an improved link to local primary, secondary schools and Aylesbury College and connects new housing development sites to the town centre. Without the re-routed Jet Way in place there would be no alternative cycle route between Stoke Mandeville, the hospital and the town centre (with cyclists having to remain on the main roads through heavily trafficked routes such as the gyratory).

The original Southcourt Emergency Active Travel scheme consisted of a wider set of measures and throughout the trial they received mixed responses. In response to this feedback the number of measures were reduced during 2021 and the current proposals are a further reduction. Overall, respondents to the traffic order consultation were opposed to the proposals and although it is still recommended that the scheme proceeds this is on the basis that there is a review after 12 months, with a focus on usage as well as a further evaluation of the issues raised by residents such as safety and a planned investigation to how the route may be further improved. Objectors raised a number of concerns with the proposals and the review will allow data and monitoring during this period to better understand usage and impacts of the revised scheme, which will be used to inform any potential future changes.

## **1. Executive summary**

As part of an investment from the Department for Transport (DfT), Buckinghamshire Council implemented a programme of temporary Emergency Active Travel Fund (EATF) schemes across the county. The schemes aimed to encourage residents to undertake more local journeys by foot and by bike, particularly during the pandemic, and could lead to longer-term benefits including reduced congestion, improved air quality, improved community cohesion and better public health. Schemes were introduced as trials, through Temporary Traffic Regulation Orders (TTROs), which can be in place for a maximum of 18 months.

Trial schemes have been undertaken and following review, it was recommended that the full EATF scheme at Trinity Road, Marlow, and elements of the EATF scheme at Southcourt, Aylesbury, were put to Statutory Consultation and potentially implemented once the consultation was reviewed. If made permanent the restrictions on motor vehicle movement will be made via a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) (see Appendix B).

## **2. Content of report**

- 2.1 Buckinghamshire Council is responsible for the highway network within its boundary; this includes the provision, management and enforcement of waiting restrictions.
- 2.2 There are two locations where trialled EATF proposals were put to Statutory Consultation: one in Trinity Road, Marlow, and the other in Southcourt, Aylesbury.

### ***Trinity Road, Marlow, proposals***

- 2.3 Buckinghamshire Council was approached by the South West Chilterns Community Board about the possibility of a "quietway" on Trinity Road (see Appendix C). A quietway uses point closures to prohibit traffic and help create a quieter street for everyone, encouraging cycling and walking. The scheme was implemented during April 2021 following an informal consultation (including letters distributed to over 1000 properties), as most feedback supported the scheme (58%).
- 2.4 Data usage shows a significant increase in walking and cycling since the trial scheme was introduced and no accidents attributed to the trial scheme. There is minimal displacement of traffic onto the wider network, the quietway provides quieter links to schools and the town centre and funding to make the scheme permanent has been provided by the South West Chiltern Community Board.
- 2.5 The trialled scheme in Marlow was put to Statutory Consultation to gain the views of the public, councillors, emergency services and other stakeholders as to whether they support the temporary measures being made permanent.
- 2.6 The Statutory Consultation for the proposed restriction of motor vehicles in Trinity Road, Marlow was undertaken between 10<sup>th</sup> December 2021 and 19<sup>th</sup> January 2022 (see Appendix D).

### ***Southcourt, Aylesbury, proposals***

- 2.7 The trial scheme in Southcourt, Aylesbury, was introduced in November 2020 and included improved cycle route signage and lining, installation of cycle lane segregation and temporary road closures. It provided improved links to some of the existing Gemstone cycle network and was identified through the DfT's Propensity to Cycle Tool (PCT) as a key link with local schools. In addition, it provided wider connectivity to destinations including the schools/College on Oxford Road, Waddesdon Manor and the Rabans Lane Industrial Estate (employment) via the upcoming Emerald Way improvements. The Jet Way cycle route connects Stoke Mandeville (a key location for new housing development) and the hospital via Southcourt to the town centre. This route was severed due to the level crossing closure a number of years ago, therefore the trial scheme formed a new route to serve this important link (for residents,

commuters, schools and hospital), with no alternative cycle route between Stoke Mandeville (new housing developments), the hospital and the town centre (with cyclists having to remain on road through unprotected/constrained routes such as the gyratory). Demand is expected to increase as the area becomes more developed with future housing sites. The aspects of the trial scheme that progressed to Statutory Consultation are the key elements required for the re-routed Jet Way route (plus link for schools), the remaining elements of the trial are being decommissioned (see Appendix E).

- 2.8 Feedback received during the trial allowed Buckinghamshire Council to amend some of the elements being trialled and to evaluate aspects to progress to Statutory Consultation. Due to feedback from both the public and local councillors (lacking support for the scheme), any contentious elements not vital for the Jet Way were removed from the overall scheme. Consequently, the measures at Chalgrove Walk, Thrasher Road (x2) and Chaloner Road will be decommissioned at the end of March 2022.
- 2.9 Elements taken to Statutory Consultation include a point closure on Old Stoke Road which prevents through vehicular traffic using Old Stoke Road/Clover Lane as a shortcut or “rat running” route. The point closure is located at a 90-degree bend (not a road junction), the road changes name at this bend. The point closure at this location restricts through traffic, with access to only pedestrians/cyclists (residents can access the road at the other end). The alternative vehicular route is via the roundabout at Taylor Road and Cottesloe Road. The other aspects progressed to Statutory Consultation were the segregated cycleway on Churchill Avenue and shared use paths on Churchill Avenue.
- 2.10 Sustrans (the cycling/walking charity) are completing a review of the wider Jet Way to understand whether any further improvements could be made to the route, including links to key destinations (e.g. Hospital, Stadium, Schools) etc. This work will help inform future funding opportunities (including developer contributions from new sites across the area), enabling further improvements to the diverted Jet Way. This work is due to be complete by autumn 2022.
- 2.11 Elements of the trialled scheme in Southcourt (as mentioned) were put to Statutory Consultation to gain the views of the public, councillors, emergency services and other stakeholders as to whether they support the temporary measures being made permanent.
- 2.12 The Statutory Consultation for the proposed restriction of motor vehicles between Old Stoke Road and Clover Lane was undertaken between 13<sup>th</sup> December 2021 and 19<sup>th</sup> January 2022. The mandatory cycle lane and shared use path were consulted on during this Statutory Consultation but are not subject to a Traffic Regulation Order if implemented (see Appendix F).

### ***Statutory Consultations***

- 2.13 In support of the Statutory Consultations, Transport for Buckinghamshire (TfB) distributed letters to properties (residential and commercial) in the vicinity where restrictions are proposed; this included over 1000 properties in Marlow and over 2500 in Southcourt. The letter included the methods by which the residents could obtain more information and provide feedback.
- 2.14 Notices and posters were placed on site informing the public of the statutory consultation on the road names affected and how they could obtain more information and provide feedback. The public notice was also advertised in the local press.
- 2.15 The reasons stated for implementing the proposals detailed in this report are:
- For avoiding danger to persons or other traffic using the road or any other road or for preventing the likelihood of any such danger arising.
  - For facilitating the passage on the road or any other road of any class of traffic (including pedestrians).

### ***Trinity Road, Marlow - Consultation responses and summaries***

|                |            |               |
|----------------|------------|---------------|
| <b>Support</b> | <b>262</b> | <b>68.68%</b> |
| Not Sure       | 4          | 1.06%         |
| Opposed        | 110        | 29.26%        |
| Total: 376     |            |               |

The responses received **in favour** of the Trinity Road proposals are summarised below:

- Pedestrians, comments included the footpath is too narrow and buggy/pram users and wheelchair users, who had to walk in the road prior to motor vehicle prohibition (pedestrian/vehicle conflict); the trial scheme improves this situation.
- Conflict between drivers due to that section of Trinity Road being narrow (drivers would often have disputes as the carriageway was too narrow for vehicles to pass, effectively rendering a one-way street).
- Mentions of Trinity Road previously being used as a 'rat run' so some in favour of the proposal are happy this has been eradicated through the trial scheme.
- Trinity Road feels safer for cyclists and pedestrians. Respondents shared they are more likely to use the road to walk or ride into/from town. There are several mentions of Trinity Road now being used by school children and parents as a 'safer' direct route with no worry of oncoming vehicles/children cycling on a narrow pavement.

- Observational comments including residents feeling there has not been an increase in traffic after the point closure of Trinity Road.

The responses received that **did not support** the Trinity Road proposals are summarised below:

- Comments received against the proposals focussed on concerns with increased traffic congestion in the vicinity especially on Wethered Road and the Dean Street junction (and a concern of increasing accidents).
- Several comments refer to the traffic being worse during school drop off and pick up times.
- Some of the respondents would support the proposal if alterations were made to Wethered Road; such as making it a Red Route, implementing double yellow lines along the length of Wethered Road or more protection at the junctions.
- Some respondents felt the route isn't used often and there has not been much change with regards to footfall on Trinity Road.
- Others referred to their belief that the road worked perfectly prior to the restrictions and there was no conflict between user groups.

See Appendix G.

Nearly 70% of responses are in favour of the scheme, highlighting public support. Data collected during the trial has showed an increase of 25% in cyclists and 30.75% in pedestrians, demonstrating positive impact on active travel as a result of the scheme and demand to retain it.

### ***Southcourt, Aylesbury - Consultation responses and summaries***

The consultation asked, "Do you support a permanent restriction of motor vehicles at Old Stoke Road/Clover Lane?"

The feedback was as follows (*via email, letter and the "Your Voice" website*):

|                |           |               |
|----------------|-----------|---------------|
| Support        | 21        | 23.60%        |
| Not Sure       | 9         | 10.11%        |
| <b>Opposed</b> | <b>59</b> | <b>66.29%</b> |
| Total: 89      |           |               |

The responses received **in favour** of the proposal to make the prohibition of motor vehicles permanent are summarised below:

- The comments in favour of the prohibition of motor vehicles were mainly based around safety. Comments stated that it was nice not to have traffic through that part of the estate/ “rat running” is reduced.
- There were also mentions of children being able to play in the area/walk and cycle and feeling safer due to reduced traffic.
- Some respondents felt pedestrian and cyclist use had increased at this location as a result.

The responses received that **did not support** the prohibition of motor vehicles at the corner point between Old Stoke Road and Clover Lane are summarised below:

- Several comments against this proposal included a view the restrictions are causing traffic jams and congestion along Cottesloe Road as well as a feeling some travel times have increased.
- Whilst many respondents who objected did not provide any comment on this specific aspect, some comments regarding other aspects of the EATF trial scheme / general parking and vehicular behaviour across Southcourt were received.

The consultation asked, “Do you support the introduction of a cycle lane on Churchill Avenue?”

The feedback was as follows:

|                |           |               |
|----------------|-----------|---------------|
| Support        | 11        | 11.96%        |
| Not Sure       | 2         | 2.17%         |
| <b>Opposed</b> | <b>79</b> | <b>85.87%</b> |
| Total: 92      |           |               |

There were no specific comments received in favour of the cycle lane (other than pedestrians and cyclists should be kept separate).

The responses received that **did not support** the cycle lane on Churchill Avenue are summarised below:

- There were concerns that the width of the road is narrow, oncoming lights at night or low sun can make the road difficult to navigate and a perception of no cyclists at all/no cyclist increase in using the lane.
- There were suggestions the bollards should be removed and replaced with road markings.

The consultation asked, “Do you support the introduction of shared use paths in Southcourt?”

The feedback was as follows:

|                |           |               |
|----------------|-----------|---------------|
| <b>Support</b> | <b>46</b> | <b>52.28%</b> |
| Not Sure       | 21        | 23.86%        |
| Opposed        | 21        | 23.86%        |
| Total: 88      |           |               |

Few comments, other than “I support” and “I feel safer cycling up a shared use path” were received. A “non-committal” response shared they felt pedestrians should be given priority on shared use paths. No comments specifically against this proposal were received.

See Appendix H.

The majority of responses are against the motor vehicle restriction at Old Stoke Road/Clover Lane and the segregated cycle lane on Churchill Avenue. There is slightly more than 50% support for the shared use paths. Key reasons for not supporting the scheme are increased traffic as a result of the vehicle restriction and road width/safety concerns on Churchill Avenue. During the trial period there have been no recorded injury collisions attributable to the scheme, and there will be monitoring during the first 12 months of the measures going permanent to understand usage and impacts of the revised scheme. Thames Valley Police are in support of the scheme and appropriate Safety Audits have also been completed.

There has been a more recent collision on Churchill Avenue on Monday 14<sup>th</sup> February 2022 involving motor vehicles. It will be some months before the causation factors of this collision are reported, however this along with any further collisions (and usage/impact data) will be considered in the 12-month review.

### **3. Legal and financial implications**

- 3.1 Section 122 of the Road Traffic Act 1984 places a duty on Buckinghamshire Council to secure the expeditious, convenient, and safe movement of vehicular and other traffic (including pedestrians).
- 3.2 The costs for the schemes are either met from government funding or Community Board contributions.



#### **4. Local councillors & community boards consultation & views**

- 4.1 The local councillors were communicated with prior, during and after the Statutory Consultations in Marlow and Southcourt. Councillors were invited to send in their comments regarding the proposals in their ward. Their views are summarised below (detailed comments in Appendix I):

##### **Trinity Road, Marlow**

Three Members cover the ward, all the support making the scheme permanent.

##### **Southcourt, Aylesbury**

Aylesbury South West; three Members cover the ward, summary of responses as below:

- Old Stoke Road – supports. Segregated cycleway and shared use paths – see additional comments.
- Old Stoke Road – neutral. Segregated cycleway – opposed. Shared use paths – supports.
- no comments received.

Aylesbury South East; three Members cover the ward, summary of responses as below:

- one comment received noting general support for active travel schemes subject to due consultation with residents but cannot comment on proposals as only minimal section in their ward.
- No other comments received.

Of those that responded, there is a mixture of support and concerns. As noted previously, the scheme will be reviewed after the first 12 months of the measures going permanent to understand usage and impacts of the revised scheme.

#### **5. Communication, engagement & further consultation**

- 5.1 Thames Valley Police (TVP) are supportive of the scheme in both Marlow and Southcourt, which has been confirmed in writing by Neil Biggs, Traffic Management Officer at Hampshire Constabulary and TVP Joint Operations Unit. Some suggestions were made to improve/enhance each scheme which were already planned to be incorporated into the final design.

- 5.2 The Fire and Ambulance services were also approached during the Statutory Consultation for both locations. However, no responses were received with regards to the proposals put forward. Further efforts have been made to contact them, but this has not provided any comments.

## **6. Next steps and review**

- 6.1 All consultees and responders to the statutory consultation will be contacted by either email or letter and will be informed of the decision and where they can find the details of the Statutory Consultation and the decision taken. This report will be published on the Council's web site.
- 6.2 If implemented, the enforcement of the restrictions would provide ongoing monitoring of the scheme. The scheme in Southcourt will be subject to more intensive monitoring over the next 12 months.

## **7. Background papers**

Appendix A – Aylesbury Active Travel Network (map).

Appendix B – Draft Amendment Order.

Appendix C – Trinity Road, Marlow (map).

Appendix D – Mapping Tile Marlow.

Appendix E – Southcourt aspects progressed to Statutory Consultation.

Appendix F – Mapping Tile Southcourt.

Appendix G – emailed, online and written responses to Statutory Consultation, Marlow.

Appendix H – emailed, online and written responses to Statutory Consultation, Southcourt.

Appendix I – full Councillor comments, confidential.

## **8. Your questions and views (for key decisions)**

- 8.1 If you have any questions about the matters contained in this report, please get in touch with the author of this report. If you have any views that you would like the

cabinet member to consider, please inform the democratic services team. This can be done by telephone 01296 382343 or email [democracy@buckinghamshire.gov.uk](mailto:democracy@buckinghamshire.gov.uk).

