

Portfolio Holder Decision

Prohibition of Vehicles Order – Station Road, Kenilworth

Portfolio Holder	Portfolio Holder for Transport and Planning
Date of decision	17 February 2023
	Signed

1. Decision taken

- Recommendation:
- 1.1 That the Portfolio Holder for Transport and Planning approves the making of an Order, pursuant to section 1 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, the effect of which is to reproduce and continue in force indefinitely the provisions of ‘The Warwickshire County Council (Station Road, Kenilworth) (Prohibition of Vehicles) (Experimental Order) 2021’.

2. Reasons for decisions

- 2.1 On 11 November 2021, Warwickshire County Council made an Experimental Traffic Regulation Order, pursuant to sections 9 and 10 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, the effect of which was to:-
- 2.1.1 prohibit all vehicles from proceeding along a section of Station Road, Kenilworth, from its junction with Warwick Road, north-eastwards for a distance of 16 metres; and
 - 2.1.2 prohibit vehicles (with the exception of pedal cycles) from proceeding along a further section of Station Road, Kenilworth which extends from a point 16 metres north- eastwards of Warwick Road, north-eastwards for a 82 metres.
- 2.2 The Experimental Order commenced on 29 November 2021 and will expire on 28 May 2023.
- 2.3 The experimental scheme prohibited the misuse of the right turn ban at the junction of Station Road and Warwick Road, which was widely ignored by motorists. Additionally, the closure created a pedestrianised area for local businesses to utilise this space, creating a small pedestrian parklet.
- 2.4 The experimental scheme, has successfully reduced the number of near misses and collisions at this junction due to it being closed, and does not cause an

adverse environmental impact on traffic around the area. WCC is satisfied that the experiment was successful as it has mitigated the misuse of right turns onto Warwick Road, for which WCC frequently received reports of near misses and vehicles ignoring the prohibited right turn. In the experimental closure period, WCC monitored the traffic flow under normal, post COVID-19 conditions, and monitored the affect the closure had on this traffic. Naturally, as a road has been closed, traffic has been displaced to surrounding roads, including Abbey End, so whilst traffic using this road has increased, WCC have not reported any significant impacts on this road. If the permanent closure of the road is approved, a full safety assessment will take place on surrounding roads and any engineering measures installed as appropriate.

3. Background information

Reasons for the proposed scheme at this location

- 3.1 Station Road was initially closed temporarily in the summer of 2020, following initiatives from Central Government to encourage the public to return to High Streets following the first lockdown period, and to help local businesses, whilst following directives to maintain social distancing. Following the success of the COVID closures, at both mitigating the right turn issues at Warwick Road, and allowing for more space within this area, Kenilworth Town Council (“KTC”) were keen to explore the possibility of potentially keeping the closure, on an experimental basis, with a long-term vision of creating a pedestrianised area for extra seating and amenities for local businesses.
- 3.2 The initial temporary closure in 2020 throughout periods of lockdowns and covid isolations was not a true representation of traffic and pedestrian flow, so it was important to trial the closure in ‘normal’ traffic conditions and monitor the effects of the closure taking these factors into consideration. Warwickshire County Council (“WCC”) and KTC agreed that the closure appeared to deter and prevent motorists illegally turning right at the end of Station Road, onto Warwick Road. The growing number of motorists ignoring this right turn ban was posing as a high collision risk, which the temporary closure of Station Road helped to prevent.
- 3.3 The experimental scheme currently in place involves 16 metres of Station Road closed to motorists, to create a pedestrianised area. Prior to the full closure, chicanes created from large wooden planters have been installed to divert and slow traffic but maintain access for refuse vehicles and delivery vehicles who may deliver to the local businesses located within this section of the closure. If the 16 metre section which is closed to all vehicles is made indefinite, KTC have indicated a desire to pave this section of road to delineate the pedestrian only areas versus the areas of partial closure. This would be subject to separate discussions between KTC and WCC as to the cost and authorisation of any such paving works within the public highway. Any potential paving works that may be undertaken in the future is subject to funding being provided by KTC.
- 3.4 The intention for the experimental scheme to be made indefinite was consulted on in accordance with the relevant statutory regulations. This includes publishing a notice in the Leamington Spa Courier on 18 November 2021, public notices being

erected on site, scheme information being made available on WCC's website, and copies of the scheme documents being made available at Shire Hall. There was a period of six months commencing on 29 November 2021 and expiring on 29 May 2022 during which objections to the scheme being made indefinite could be submitted pursuant to the relevant statutory regulations.

3.5 A statement of reasons for proposing the experimental scheme is appended to this report in Appendix 1. A copy of the public notice is included in Appendix 2, the Experimental Order is included in Appendix 3, and the Consultation Plan for the scheme is included in Appendix 4.

3.6 Three letters of support were received to making the scheme indefinite, a full copy of these can be found in Appendix 6. Nine objections have been received to making the scheme indefinite from local residents. The full copy of objections can be found in Appendix 5 of this report. A basic synopsis and breakdown of common concerns of the objections are as follows:

- Concerns on diversion route for deliveries for Waitrose
- Concerns on extra stress on Abbey End Car Park
- Concerns of near miss collisions due to HGV deliveries on Station Rd
- Concerns that there is no economic benefit to the closure

3.7 Officer response to the above matters is as follows.

3.7.1 The routes for Waitrose have been unaffected by the closure of Station Rd. Deliveries are still permitted to all businesses within and around the closure, including Waitrose. Access to the residential apartment above the hairdressers is also still permitted. Officers were made aware of an issue with vehicle access when the chicanes were erected, and the issue was resolved on site at the time of the issue which was raised by the resident.

3.7.2 No extra traffic problems or adverse effects have been observed by, or reported to, WCC in respect of Abbey End Car Park.

3.7.3 Near miss collisions have not been observed by, or recorded by, WCC but are taken seriously. Pedestrians, as always, should take extra care of unloading vehicles, particularly those reversing. Whilst some objections argue that vehicles are left to reverse out of the closure, instead of being able to navigate left out onto Warwick Road, this was equally as tight of a manoeuvre and would result in large vehicles, such as refuse vehicles and HGVs, to over-hang the footway, resulting in pedestrians having to take extra care and precaution within this area regardless.

3.7.4 The economic benefit is that the extra space provided by the closure can be utilised by local businesses and charities in order to create a safe pedestrianised space for extra seating or stalls.

4. Financial implications

4.1 The scheme has been fully funded by Kenilworth Town Council budget, who have

partially used the 'Welcome Back' initiative budget from Central Government to fund the scheme up until this point. Any future works will solely be funded by Kenilworth Town Council and subject to separate discussions.

5. Environmental implications

- 5.1 The proposed indefinite scheme will prohibit the misuse of the right turn ban at the junction of Station Road and Warwick Road, resulting in fewer potential near misses and collisions. The pedestrianisation of this area will allow for local amenities to utilise this space with possible extra seating for the surrounding establishments, along with enhancing the public realms of the Town Centre.
- 5.2 Additionally, by creating a pedestrianised area, it can reduce fuel consumption – therefore increasing air quality and encouraging the use of active travel.

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Urgent matter?	<i>No</i>
Confidential or exempt?	<i>No</i>
Is the decision contrary to the budget and policy framework?	<i>No</i>

List of background papers

Appendix 1 Statement of Reasons
Appendix 2 Public Notice
Appendix 3 Experimental Traffic Regulation Order
Appendix 4 Consultation Plan Sheet 1 of 1
Appendix 5 Copy of Objections
Appendix 6 Copy of Letters of Support

Members and officers consulted and informed

Portfolio Holder – Councillor Wallace Redford

Corporate Board – Mark Ryder

Legal – Serena Cammish & Caroline Gutteridge

Finance – Virginia Rennie

Equality – Keira Rounsley

Democratic Services – Isabelle Moorhouse

Councillors – Clarke, Chilvers, Fradgley and D’Arcy

Local Member(s): Rik Spencer