

<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Old Town and North Laine Experimental Traffic Orders</b>		
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	<b>16<sup>th</sup> November 2021</b>		
<b>Report of:</b>	<b>Executive Director, Economy, environment &amp; Culture</b>		
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Name:</b>	<b>David Fisher</b>	<b>Tel: 01273 292065</b>
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<b>Ward(s) affected:</b>	<b>Regency, St Peters and North Laine</b>		

**FOR GENERAL RELEASE**

**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND POLICY CONTEXT**

- 1.1 To consider the objections and representation received in relation to the Old Town and North Laine Experimental Traffic Regulation Orders (ETROs).

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- 2.1 That, having taken account of all duly made objections and representations to the Old Town Experimental Traffic Order, the Committee approves action being taken to make this order permanent.
- 2.2 That having taken account of all duly made objections and representations to the North Laine Experimental Traffic Order In so far as it relates to Sydney Street, the Committee approves action being taken to make this order permanent with adjustments to the closing times to 11am-6pm every day.
- 2.3 That having taken account of all duly made objections and representations to the North Laine Experimental Traffic Order in so far as it relates to Gardner Street, the Committee approves action being taken to not make this order permanent allowing the ETRO to lapse and the road return to the previous Traffic regulation order.

**3. CONTEXT/ BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- 3.1 In July 2020 as part of the Council's response to the Covid-19 pandemic and following successfully securing grant allocation the Council implemented experimental traffic orders in the Old Town and North Laine area of the City.
- 3.2 The areas affected by the Old Town Order include Middle Street, Boyces Street, Duke Street, Ship Street, Black Lion Street, Prince Albert Street, Meeting House Lane, Market Street, Bartholomews, East Street, Little East Street and Kings Road.
- 3.3 The areas affected by the North Laine Order include Sydney Street and Gardner Street.

## **The Old Town ETRO**

- 3.4 This order made several changes to the area, these include.
- Restricting traffic to access only and still allowing Taxis and cyclists
  - Closing the junction of Black Lion street and Prince Albert Street
  - Removal of all Pay and Display bays in the area
  - Changes to loading bay provisions
  - Increasing the number of Blue Badge bays in the area and adjusting times
  - Restricting access to vehicles on Ship Street between Duke Street and North Street
  - Restricting vehicle access to Market Street between 11am -5pm
- 3.5 The reduction of paid parking spaces allowed the Council to widen footways throughout the Old Town area. This not only supported social distancing but also allowed businesses to expand their outside areas to support their economic recovery in line with central government changes to legislation. The widened footways reduced the dominance of cars improving the ability to walk through the area.

## **The North Laine ETRO**

- 3.6 The North Lane order adjusted the timings of the road closures on Sydney Street. The previous timings only covered weekend and bank holiday closures. These changed to extending the prohibition of driving on Sydney Street to Monday- Saturday 10am-7pm and Sundays and Bank Holidays 11am-5pm
- 3.7 In addition the North Laine order adjusted the timings of the road closures on Gardner Street. The previous timings only covered weekend and bank holiday closures. Initially these changed to extending the prohibition of driving on Gardner Street to Monday- Saturday 10am-7pm and Sundays and Bank Holidays 11am-5pm. Following the implementation of the ETRO it became clear that these changes restricted access to residents with Blue Badges and the Blue Badge bays in Gardner Street. The order was amended to allow Blue Badge Holders access Monday-Friday.
- 3.8 The closure of Sydney Street during the week allowed businesses to expand their outside areas whilst still maintaining social distancing.
- 3.9 Previous access only restrictions in Sydney Street had meant that it was often used as a cut through, the closure has halted this practice.
- 3.10 The reduction of traffic on Gardner Street has also attempted to create more space for social distancing and allow businesses to expand their outside spaces.

## **4. ANALYSIS & CONSIDERATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

### **Old Town ETRO**

- 4.1 The only alternative option would be not to make the provisions of the ETROs permanent and so returning the roads to their previous position of being open to

all traffic. This would take place on or before 9<sup>th</sup> January 2022 as this is maximum time allowed for the experimental order. This would be contrary to the wishes of the local businesses in the area who are supportive of this measure and the thousands of pedestrians who make use of it on a weekly basis.

- 4.2 The widened footways would need to be removed and businesses with increased outside areas would lose the extra space. The removal of the footways would cost in the region of £100k to remove.
- 4.3 The numbers of vehicles using the area would increase as paid parking would return, the amount of Blue Badge parking would reduce.

#### **The North Laine ETRO**

- 4.4 Sydney Street, The only alternative option would be not to make the provisions of the ETROs permanent and so returning the roads to their previous position of being open to all traffic. This would take place on or before 9<sup>th</sup> January 2022 as this is maximum time allowed for the experimental order.
- 4.5 Gardner Street, The alternative would be to make the order permanent, this would allow the situation where the road is difficult to use by Blue Badge holders and is also often abused by other vehicles.

### **5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION**

- 5.1 The full Old Town ETRO was advertised on 2nd July 2020 via signs in the local area, on the council's Website and social media. A link to the ETRO was also emailed to over 2000 businesses in the area via the Brighton Improvement District. The closing date for comments was 4<sup>th</sup> June 2021
- 5.2 The official consultation to the Old Town Order attracted 23 responses.
- 5.3 The objections range from restricted access to loss of parking and loading bays. The comments received are detailed in the attached appendixes with any mitigating measures taken listed alongside.
- 5.4 The full North Laine ETRO was advertised on 1st July 2020 via signs in the local area, on the councils Website and social media. A link to the ETRO was also emailed to over 2000 businesses in the area via the Brighton Improvement District. The closing date for comments was 21<sup>st</sup> March 2021
- 5.5 The Official Consultation to the North Laine Order attracted 10 responses.
- 5.6 The objections to the North Laine Order raised range from loss of loading access to restrictions for taxis. Detailed in the attached appendixes.
- 5.7 Although not part of the official consultation we also received a large amount of correspondence from various stakeholders highlighting concerns about access for disabled users, cyclists, and the affects the changes had had on neighbouring roads in the North Laine Area.

- 5.8 Because of this officers have carried out further engagement with stakeholders including traders, residents, disability groups, access groups and active travel representees to gather a better insight into the affects of the North Laine ETRO
- 5.9 This engagement showed that whilst the changes were generally supported they have also caused problems.
- 5.10 Allowing access to Blue Badge holders to Gardner Street has created a difficult mix of demands on the street. The traders have not been able to expand to the same extent as those in Sydney Street so have not benefited from the reduction of vehicles.
- 5.11 Although Blue badge holders are allowed to access the street they have found doing so difficult with traders items restricting access to blue badge bays or the street looking like it was closed.
- 5.12 Removing the disabled bays would severely impact local residents.
- 5.13 As Gardner Street is not closed to all traffic the space is not as welcoming and pedestrians can be caught unawares by approaching vehicles.

## **6. CONCLUSION**

- 6.1 The trial scheme in Old Town has generally been met with positive feedback. The widened footways and reduced traffic make the area more welcoming to pedestrians and businesses have been able to make use of these extra spaces. As such officers recommend that the scheme be made permanent.
- 6.2 The trial in Sydney Street has had a positive impact both on the street creating a more welcoming space but also by stopping rat running through Sydney Street.
- 6.3 The trial in Gardner Street has not succeeded in creating a space that is balanced and suitable for all users and should be removed.
- 6.4 The impacts of the changes in North Laine alongside the Valley Gardens project have highlighted the need for a further project in the North Laine area.

## **7. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:**

### Financial Implications:

- 7.1 There are no financial implications for the approval of the Old Town ETRO apart from the continued loss of parking revenue estimated at £120k per year. If the order is not approved the cost of reinstatement of the original TRO will be in the region of £100k
- 7.2 With regard to the two North Laine ETRO's if they are not approved then there will be some minor signage costs estimated at less than £1k. If they are approved then the cost of the TROs will come from within existing officer time.

*Finance Officer Consulted: Jeff Coates*

*Date: 20/10/2021*

### Legal Implications:

- 7.3 An Experimental Traffic Order cannot continue in force for more than 18 months (s9 Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984). A permanent TRO is required to enable the provisions of an ETRO to continue in force indefinitely. In determining whether a permanent TRO should be made the traffic authority must give consideration to any duly made objections to the ETRO (Reg. 13 Local Authorities' Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996).

*Lawyer Consulted: Hilary Woodward Name*

*Date: 22/10/21*

Equalities Implications:

- 7.4 The council carried out a full EIA into its Covid-19 transport Changes.

Sustainability Implications:

- 7.5 There are no Sustainability implications.

Brexit Implications:

- 7.6 There are no Brexit implications

## **SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION**

### **Appendices:**

1. Old Town ETRO
2. North Laine ETRO
3. Plans
4. Consultation Comments

### **Background Documents**

- 1.
- 2.

