



Cabinet Member for Communities

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Chesham Town Councillors
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Dear Chesham Town Councillors,

I am writing to provide clarity regarding the Experimental Traffic Regulation Order (ETRO) implemented in Chesham town centre and to outline the reasoning behind the proposed next steps. Given recent discussions and local engagement, it is important to restate the context, the evidence gathered, and the implications of not continuing with the current arrangements.

1. Background and Rationale for Change

Prior to the introduction of the ETRO, the traffic management arrangements within Chesham town centre particularly around the High Street, Market Square, and key pedestrian priority areas had increasingly become misaligned with current usage patterns and community expectations. The previous layout contributed to conflicts between vehicles and pedestrians, created unreliable access for loading, and did not adequately support the town centre's commercial and environmental objectives.

The pedestrian zone within The Broadway was withdrawn, as national legislation states that due to the operation of a scheduled bus service throughout the day, this road cannot be classified as a pedestrian area. Historically only HGVs were permitted to travel through the pedestrian zone at all times for the purposes of loading and unloading to premises, but under the ETRO all vehicular access is now restricted to accessing the pedestrian area during designated time windows each day. This proposal seeks to reduce the likelihood of pedestrian and vehicular conflict during peak hours. In addition, the proposal seeks to support local businesses which rely on loading and unloading to their premises by private vehicles.

The ETRO was introduced to test a more balanced approach that enhances pedestrian safety, supports local businesses through clearer loading arrangements, and manages traffic flow more effectively using measures such as restricted vehicle access, no waiting at any time (double yellow lines), loading-only areas, an extension to the taxi bay, the withdrawal of the one way system at set locations, introduction of no entry restrictions and pedestrian priority zones as shown in the published ETRO proposals.

2. Changes Introduced and Feedback Received

Under the ETRO, the following core changes were implemented:

- Adjustments to pedestrian zones and no-motor-vehicle restrictions at peak times.
- Loading only area and taxi bay (shared use)
- Strengthened enforcement of the High Street/Church Street and Market Square to restrict all vehicular access.

- Revised access arrangements for permit holders and goods vehicles to reduce the likelihood of vehicular and pedestrian conflict.
- The introduction of market trader access/parking permits for improved management of permitted vehicles within the pedestrian zone.

Feedback received during the consultation period has been generally positive. In the first consultation 128 comments were received and in the second consultation we received 1325 comments.

Some respondents noted improvements to safety, reductions in vehicle conflict within pedestrian areas, and clearer wayfinding for both motorists and visitors. Business feedback indicated that while a small number of operators expressed concern over bedding-in, most found the revised permitted loading times workable when properly communicated.

3. Planned Adjustments in Response to Consultation Feedback

In addition to the statutory ETRO consultation, Buckinghamshire Council undertook a second consultation to gather further feedback. This additional consultation was necessary because the road markings and signage were not installed within the timeframes associated with the initial consultation. Following the installation of all signs and road markings, the second consultation provided a further opportunity for residents and businesses to respond to the ETRO as implemented.

In response to the feedback the options going forward are:

- To make the ETRO permanent, as advertised;
- To make the ETRO permanent and remove the event and trader permit proposals/charges.
- To allow the ETRO to expire which means reverting to the original restrictions.

These refinements aim to preserve the benefits already observed while addressing the practical concerns that emerged during the trial period.

4. If the ETRO is not converted into a Permanent TRO

If the ETRO is not progressed into a permanent TRO, we cannot retain it and several consequences must be considered:

- The town centre would revert to the previous configuration, reintroducing the issues that the ETRO was explicitly designed to address.
- Pedestrian safety and accessibility gains for non-goods vehicles would be lost, impacting smaller businesses that rely on loading and unloading to their premises by private good vehicles. Additional costs would be incurred to reinstate the restrictions that were removed.
- A designated loading/unloading bay will be withdrawn, which serves the numerous business premises on The Broadway.
- The opportunity to implement a modern, evidence-based approach to traffic management aligned with wider town centre regeneration and sustainability objectives would be significantly delayed.
- The Council would need to seek alternative measures to enforce problematic parking and vehicle movements that the ETRO currently regulates.

Given these implications, converting the ETRO to a permanent TRO with the proposed traffic management arrangements and withdrawal of the permit charges remains the option most consistent with the community feedback, town centre vitality, and long-term traffic management objectives.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S J Bowles', with a horizontal line underneath.

Councillor Steve Bowles

Cabinet Member for Communities