

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL**LOCAL COMMITTEE (RUNNYMEDE)****DATE: 23 MARCH 2015****LEAD OFFICER: ANDREW MILNE****SUBJECT: EGHAM HIGH STREET CONSULTATION****DIVISION: ENGLEFIELD GREEN****SUMMARY OF ISSUE:**

The Local Committee has agreed that a public consultation should be undertaken to seek public views about the existing pedestrian zone in Egham High Street and a number of proposals relating to it.

This report provides details of the consultation undertaken and the views expressed in response to it.

RECOMMENDATIONS:**The Local Committee (Runnymede) is asked to agree that:**

- i) The existing pedestrian zone is retained with the same hours of operation (11am to 4pm) and exemptions but is extended to also apply on Sundays;
- ii) Authorisation is given to advertise a notice, the effect of which will be to extend the pedestrian zone to also operate between 11am and 4pm on Sundays;
- iii) Authorisation is given to the Area Team Manager in consultation with the Chairman of the Local Committee and Local Member to resolve any objections received in connection with the proposal;
- iv) Subject to no objections being maintained, the order be made and the proposed change to the pedestrian zone implemented;
- v) Subject to the provision of funding, a more effective method of controlling access to the pedestrian zone (such as an electronic gate or bollard) is designed and introduced; and
- vi) The views expressed about the proposals relating to cycling, taxi ranks and parking are noted and taken into account in any decisions on changes to these aspects of the High Street.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:

The majority of responses (87%) received to the consultation were in support of the existing pedestrian zone being retained with the introduction of a more effective method of enforcing the restriction (such as an electronic gate or bollard).

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The Egham Chamber of Commerce support retaining the pedestrian zone and have requested that it is extended to also include Sundays. The level of activity in the High Street on Sundays has increased significantly since the pedestrian zone was first introduced and therefore the requested extension is being recommended.

The introduction of a more effective method of enforcing the pedestrian zone will help resolve the ongoing problems with vehicles illegally entering the High Street during the times when access is restricted to pedestrians only.

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND:

- 1.1 The section of Egham High Street between its junctions with Wetton Place and Church Road (eastern junction) is currently restricted to pedestrians only from Monday to Saturday between 11am and 4pm. The restriction is enforced by gates located at the start of the pedestrian zone.
- 1.2 During the times the pedestrian zone applies, all vehicles are prohibited from travelling along this section of the High Street. This includes ridden pedal cycles (although cyclists may dismount and push their cycles).
- 1.3 There are a limited number of exemptions to the restriction including emergency service vehicles on operational duty. However, there is no exemption for disabled drivers, taxis or vehicles making deliveries/collections from properties within the pedestrian zone (with the exception of royal mail vehicles).
- 1.4 Outside of the hours that the pedestrian zone applies, vehicles can travel one-way (eastbound) along the road and there is a 20mph speed limit. Traffic calming measures have been installed to help reduce vehicle speeds.
- 1.5 There are a number of loading bays and parking areas within the High Street.
- 1.6 The pedestrian zone has been in place since the early 1990s and many changes have taken place since that time. The opening of the new Waitrose Store and Travelodge Hotel is also likely to bring further change to the nature of the High Street.
- 1.7 In addition, a number of issues have been raised about the pedestrian zone and the way it is currently enforced. These include the following:
 - Runnymede Borough Council's Parking Enforcement Officers and local Police Officers try to ensure the gates remain closed during the times when access is restricted to pedestrians only. However, the gates are not locked. As such, they can easily be opened and the restriction is subject to significant abuse. This results in regular complaints about vehicles illegally accessing the High Street during the restricted hours.
 - There are regular reports of vehicles entering the High Street from the eastern end against the one-way system despite road markings and signs indicating no entry.

- Some traders think that the pedestrian zone has an adverse impact on their income and that removing it to allow vehicular access at all times would lead to increased numbers of customers using local businesses.
 - Taxi drivers would like taxi ranks provided in the High Street and to have access at all times.
 - The restriction can cause difficulties for the disabled and those with limited mobility since disabled drivers and taxis are not permitted access during the restricted times.
- 1.8 In response to the above issues, the Runnymede Local Committee has agreed that the existing arrangements in the High Street should be reviewed to see whether they still best meet the needs of shoppers and local businesses or whether changes should be considered.
- 1.9 A public consultation has therefore been undertaken. As part of the consultation views were sought about the pedestrian zone and a number of existing proposals (relating to cycling, parking restrictions and the provision of taxi ranks) that apply to this section of the High Street. Further details about these proposals and the consultation can be found in the consultation leaflet attached as Annex 1 to this report.
- 1.10 As part of the public consultation the following were undertaken:
- A consultation leaflet and questionnaire (with pre-paid envelope) was delivered to businesses on Egham High Street between its junctions with Church Road (western end) and Hummer Road.
 - A public exhibition was held at Egham Library from 27 January 2015 to 20 February 2015 where questionnaires were available (as well as pre-paid envelopes for those that wished to complete the questionnaire at a later date).
 - An electronic version of the consultation leaflet and questionnaire was available on the County Council's website.
 - Posters were erected in Egham High Street and on notice boards in Costa Coffee, The Museum/Literary Centre and the United Church of Egham to publicise the consultation and public exhibition. Posters were sent to the Royal Holloway University and Strodes College so they could be circulated/displayed. Details of the consultation were included on the Borough Council's Website.
 - Large road signs were erected in Egham High Street and a press release issued to also help publicise the consultation.
- 1.11 Copies of the consultation leaflet and questionnaire are attached as Annexes 1 and 2 to this report.

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| 2. ANALYSIS: |
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- 2.1 A total of 630 completed questionnaires were received during the consultation which is a very good response and suggests significant public interest in the issues being consulted about.
- 2.2 The following provides a summary of the responses provided. (Note: In some cases respondents did not answer all questions and therefore some totals do not match the overall number of responses received).

2.3 **Description of what respondents do in Egham:**

Live – 410 (65% of replies)

Work - 148 (23% of replies)

Study - 31 (5% of replies)

Shop - 357 (57% of replies)

Run a business - 48 (7.5% of replies)

Note: Respondents were asked to tick each option that applies.

2.4 **Pedestrian Zone**

- Keep existing pedestrian zone (with improved enforcement) – 529 (87% of replies)
- Remove pedestrian zone and allow traffic at all times - 79 (13% of replies)

2.5 **Cycling**

If the existing pedestrian zone is retained:

- 332 respondents (55%) would prefer all cycling is prohibited when access is restricted to pedestrians only.
- 172 respondents (29%) would support cycling but only in the direction of the one way system.
- 95 respondents (16%) were in favour of cycling at all times and in both directions.

If the pedestrian zone were removed:

- 485 respondents (88%) would be in favour of cycling only being permitted in the direction of the one-way.
- 64 respondents (12%) would support cycling in both directions.

2.6 **Taxi ranks**

Proposed introduction of taxi ranks if pedestrian zone is retained:

- Location 1: 303 in favour (59% of replies), 210 against (41% of replies)
- Location 2: 136 in favour (30% of replies), 323 against (70% of replies)

[www.surreycc.gov.uk/Choose an item.](http://www.surreycc.gov.uk/Choose%20an%20item)

- Location 3: 119 in favour (26% of replies), 335 against (74% of replies)

Proposed introduction of taxi ranks if pedestrian zone is removed:

- Location 1: 188 in favour (48% of replies), 201 against (52% of replies)
- Location 2: 114 in favour (31% of replies), 254 against (69% of replies)
- Location 3: 91 in favour (25% of replies), 273 against (75% of replies)

Details of the locations of the proposed taxi ranks can be found in the consultation leaflet attached as Annex 1 to this report.

2.7 **Parking Restrictions**

If the existing pedestrian zone is retained:

- 470 respondents (86%) were in favour of restrictions remaining unchanged.

If the pedestrian zone were removed and traffic allowed at all times:

- 309 respondents (81%) were in favour of introducing 30 minute maximum stay car parking in the existing parking areas.

3. OPTIONS:

3.1 There are 3 options that can be considered in respect of the pedestrian zone:

- Retain the existing pedestrian zone with the same hours of operation (Monday to Saturday, 11am to 4pm) and exemptions.
- Retain the pedestrian zone but with amendments (e.g. different hours of operation and/or exemptions)
- Remove the pedestrian zone and allow vehicles to access the High Street at all times.

4. CONSULTATIONS:

4.1 A number of key local stakeholders were contacted directly to advise them of the consultation and invite their comments. These included Runnymede Borough Council, Royal Holloway University, Surrey Police, Surrey Fire and Rescue, South East Coast Ambulance Service, Egham Resident's Association, Runnymede Access Liaison Group, Egham Chamber of Commerce, Hackney Carriage Drivers' Association, Waitrose and Strodes College.

4.2 Runnymede Borough Council has confirmed that the consultation was considered by its Corporate Management Committee which felt it would not be appropriate to support either option (removing or retaining the pedestrian zone) without knowing the outcome of the consultation and the general consensus of opinion amongst interested parties. However, the Committee

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resolved the following which forms the Borough Council's formal view on the consultation:

- i) It is considered premature to remove the pedestrian zone until the wider impacts of the Waitrose store on the town centre as a whole can be assessed;
- ii) If the pedestrian zone within Egham High Street is retained, the existing gate be replaced with an electronically operated bollard or gate, which could be linked to and operated by, Safer Runnymede [subject to costs being borne by Surrey Council of installation and maintenance];
- iii) The proposed taxi ranks are supported;
- iv) No objections are raised to permitting two-way cycling in the High Street, if restrictions are retained;
- v) Whatever the outcome of the consultation, parking bays in the High Street be made available for 30 minutes between 08:00 and 18:00 hours, Monday to Saturday to facilitate proper enforcement and the Traffic Regulation Order be appropriately amended

4.3 The Egham Chamber of Commerce have made the following comments in response to the consultation:

- The car free period in the High Street be revised to Monday to Sunday from 11.30am to 3pm.
- The barrier be replaced with a more sophisticated system (raising bollards) with possible offsite control placed in the hands of Runnymede BC (Safer Runnymede) if practicable. Access for exempt vehicles to be allowed with a smart card?
- Explore methods for preventing access to the eastern end of the High Street (raised teeth allowing only egress from the west)
- Better enforcement of the parking regime once the new system in place
- Access for those with mobility and disability difficulties be reviewed

4.4 The note provided by the Chamber of Commerce which is attached as Annex 3 to this report provides further information about the reasons for its comments.

4.5 Surrey Fire and Rescue Service have confirmed their operational crews have reviewed the consultation and have no concerns to raise from their perspective.

4.6 Surrey Police responded highlighting concerns about vehicles accessing the pedestrian zone from its eastern end and requesting consideration is given to introducing further measures to deter motorists from doing this.

5. FINANCIAL AND VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS:

- 5.1 Further detailed investigation will need to be undertaken to establish the cost of introducing a more effective method of controlling access to the High Street. Depending on the type of system introduced there may also be ongoing operating costs.
- 5.2 At present no funding has been allocated and therefore a source of funding will need to be identified for the following:
- to design, introduce and maintain an improved system of controlling access to the pedestrian zone.
 - to advertise and make a new Traffic Regulation Order to extend the pedestrian zone to include Sundays.
 - to introduce new signs to indicate that the pedestrian zone applies every day of the week.

6. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS:

- 6.1 There are no Equalities and Diversity implications.

7. LOCALISM:

- 7.1 The views of the local community have been sought as part of the public consultation undertaken.

8. OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

| Area assessed: | Direct Implications: |
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| Crime and Disorder | No significant implications arising from this report. |
| Sustainability (including Climate Change and Carbon Emissions) | No significant implications arising from this report. |
| Corporate Parenting/Looked After Children | No significant implications arising from this report. |
| Safeguarding responsibilities for vulnerable children and adults | No significant implications arising from this report. |
| Public Health | No significant implications arising from this report. |

9. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 9.1 On the basis of the replies received in response to the public consultation the following can be concluded:
- 9.2 Who were responses received from:
- The majority of responses were received from people who live and shop in Egham.
- 9.3 Pedestrian Zone:

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There is significant support for the existing pedestrian zone to be retained together with the introduction of more effective measures to control access to the High Street during the restricted times. 87% of respondents favour this option as do the Egham Chamber of Commerce (although they have suggested some changes to the hours the pedestrian zone operates).

9.4 Cycling:

There is little support for the introduction of two-way cycling regardless of whether the pedestrian zone is retained or removed (only 16% of respondents favoured its introduction if the pedestrian zone is retained and 12% if it is removed).

If the pedestrian zone is retained the majority of respondents (55%) would prefer cycling to remain prohibited during its hours of operation.

9.5 Taxi Ranks:

The large majority of respondents were against the introduction of the taxi ranks at locations 2 and 3 regardless of whether the pedestrian zone is retained or removed.

Views about the proposed taxi rank at location 1 differ between scenarios with a greater level of support (59%) if the pedestrian zone is removed. This compares with 48% of respondents in favour if the pedestrian zone is removed.

9.7 Parking Restrictions:

There is significant support (87% of respondents) for the existing parking restrictions to remain unchanged if the pedestrian zone is retained.

If the pedestrian zone were to be removed the large majority of respondents (81%) favour the introduction of 30 minute maximum stay parking in the existing parking areas.

9.8 On the basis of the views expressed during the public consultation this report recommends that the existing pedestrian zone is retained (with the same hours of operation and exemptions) and that a more effective method of controlling access to this section of the High Street (such as an electronic gate or bollard) is introduced.

9.9 However, in response to a request from the Egham Chamber of Commerce, it is recommended that the pedestrian zone is also extended to apply on Sundays. This recommendation reflects the increase in activity in the High Street on Sundays since the pedestrian zone was first introduced.

9.10 The Chamber of Commerce also requested that the hours of pedestrianisation are revised to apply from 11.30am to 3pm (from the existing 11am to 4pm). It considers this would better meet business needs (by increasing the period when there is passing trade and when deliveries can be made) whilst maintaining a car free zone at times when the greatest number of pedestrians visit the High Street.

- 9.11 Amending the times of the pedestrian zone as requested would mean that vehicles could travel along the High Street for a large part of the shopping day. This would undermine the benefits of the scheme to pedestrians. It is therefore recommended that the existing, and long established, hours of pedestrianisation are retained.
- 9.12 It is recommended that the Local Committee ensures the views expressed about cycling, taxi ranks and parking restrictions are taken into account in any decisions on changes to these aspects of the High Street.

10. WHAT HAPPENS NEXT:

- 10.1 Initially a source of funding will need to be identified.
- 10.2 Subject to approval and the provision of funding,
- a new Traffic Regulation Order will be advertised for the proposed extension of the pedestrian zone to include Sundays. A period would then be allowed for any objections to be submitted in response to the proposal. Any objections received would then have to be considered.
 - more effective measures to control access to the High Street will be designed and introduced.
- 10.3 The findings of the consultation will be referred to:
- Runnymede Borough Council so the views expressed about the proposed taxi ranks can be considered as part of a statutory consultation that will also have to be undertaken about the proposals.
 - The Member Task Group for Egham Major Schemes so it can consider the views expressed about cycling in the High Street in relation to cycle improvement measures proposed as part of the Egham Sustainable Transport Package.
 - Surrey County Council's Parking Team so the views expressed about the parking restrictions can be considered before any proposals for this section of the High Street are presented to the Local Committee.
- 10.4 Subject to agreement that the pedestrian zone is extended to include Sundays and that more effective access control measures are introduced, the changes will be publicised prior to their implementation and local traders will be contacted directly. Details of any changes relating to cycling, parking restrictions and the provision of taxi ranks would be included in the information publicised.

Contact Officer:

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Consulted:

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Local residents/traders/shoppers/employees. Runnymede Borough Council, Royal Holloway University, Surrey Police, Surrey Fire and Rescue, South East Coast Ambulance Service, Egham Resident's Association, Runnymede Access Liaison Group, Egham Chamber of Commerce, Hackney Carriage Drivers' Association, Waitrose and Strodes College.

Annexes:

Annex 1 – Egham High Street public consultation leaflet.

Annex 2 – Egham High Street public consultation questionnaire.

Annex 3 – Note regarding comments from Egham Chamber of Commerce.

Sources/background papers:

Highways Update report presented to the Runnymede Local Committee at its meeting held on 1 December 2014.
