

Changes to **Thornbury High Street**

CONSULTATION DOCUMENT



Background

Why are we making changes?

The council's priority is to help protect residents against coronavirus and save lives. We are still at a critical point in the Covid-19 pandemic and it is vital that everyone continues with social distancing, practicing good hand hygiene as well as self-isolation at home and getting tested if they have symptoms in order to manage the spread of the virus. By following these guidelines we will be able to continue easing measures when safe to do so and reduce the potential need for further restrictions to be put back in place due to new outbreaks.

We have a duty to support residents, businesses and visitors return to make our public places safer and we have introduced a number of measures in high streets, in our parks and open spaces, outside schools, at public transport stops and at pinch points on busy commuter routes.

On 9 May 2020 the Department for Transport issued statutory guidance of the reallocation of road space to encourage cycling and walking and enable social distancing. Measures need to be taken quickly given the urgent need to change travel habits before the 'restart' following lockdown takes full effect. At the time of this consultation's launch we are still required to practise 'social-distancing' and the expectation is that this will continue for the foreseeable future.

As non-essential shops continue to reopen, more people are using our high streets and there is a need for more space on footways. Shops, restaurants and cafes may need to trade outside immediately in front of their premises and have space for customers to queue outside if necessary. We also need to provide extra space for people to get around safely and be able to maintain social distancing, whether on foot or by bike.

The lockdown response to the Covid-19 pandemic has led to people using vehicles less and taking daily exercise more; we saw traffic reduce to the same level as it was in the 1950s and cycling in some locations is double pre-Covid-19 levels. We now have a unique opportunity to keep the benefits of active travel, reduced air pollution and reduced carbon emissions.

Many people will be returning to Thornbury for leisure, shopping and work and we want to make sure they can do so safely. We have an opportunity to make a positive difference to Thornbury High Street and we are keen to hear your views of how best to make it happen.

What temporary changes have we made?

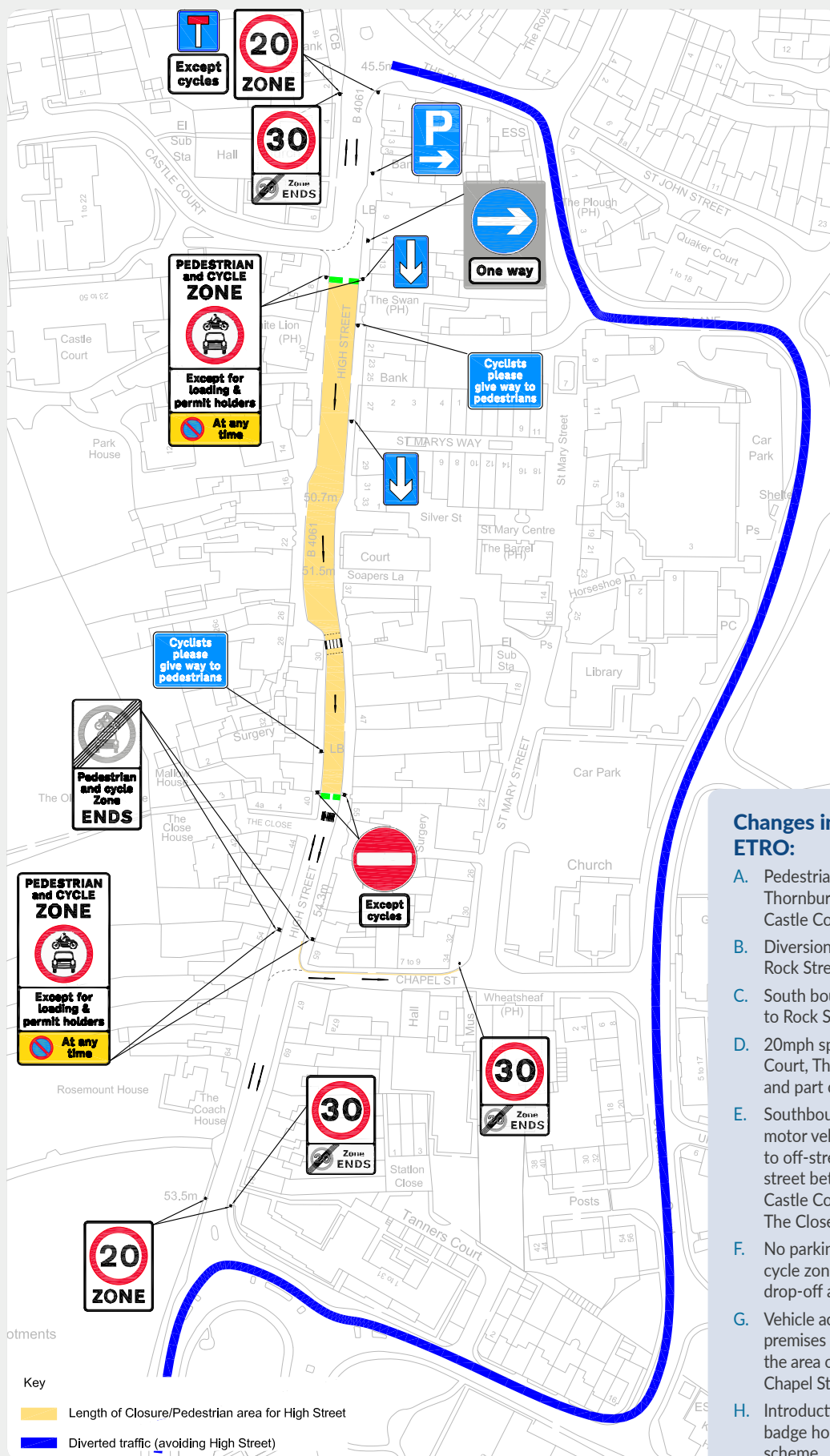
We are trialling pedestrianisation of the high street to enable safe social distancing and to open opportunities for outside seating areas for pubs, cafes and restaurants as well as future events to create a vibrant and safe shopping destination.

South Gloucestershire Council put in place a *Temporary Traffic Regulation Notice* to close Thornbury High Street to traffic from Sunday 7 June. This was done using temporary traffic management (barriers, cones and signs) with support from a security company to ensure pedestrian safety. This immediately enabled pedestrians to use the road and footway to socially distance when walking and queuing.

During this initial closure period we listened to the views of residents and organisations on how the emergency changes were working. Where necessary we made changes. For example allowing delivery vehicles to enter through a three-metre gap in the soft closure using a one-way system to aid the shops in receiving their deliveries and access to properties. The pedestrian and cycle zone was extended further south, near the junction with Chapel Street to accommodate a wider footway and seating outside the Maltings Public House. The speed limit has been reduced to 20mph to ensure the safety of pedestrians and cyclists. We will continue the pedestrianisation of Thornbury High Street using an **Experimental Traffic Regulation Order** (ETRO) and start a six-month public consultation on whether these or other changes should be made permanent. We want to hear from different groups to tell us how these changes affect them and how they want the high street to work in the future.

An initial Equality Impact Assessment has been prepared that considers the overall impact of the council's place response on protected characteristic groups. As a result of that assessment an Accessibility Features Checklist has been developed to be used by all future schemes and the completed checklist for the Thornbury scheme is available with the consultation documents.





Future possibilities for Thornbury High Street

The temporary pedestrianisation gives the opportunity to enhance the character of the High Street. For example it could be used all year round to create a safe, vibrant environment for shopping, social activities and events, attracting visitors and increasing trade for local businesses. We would like to hear your views about the future of Thornbury High Street.

Seasonal use of open, pedestrianised space

- Markets: Christmas / craft / farmers and local produce markets
- Festivals: music, religious celebrations such as Easter, children's shows during school holidays
- Historic or cultural events: arts trails and exhibitions, flower shows, military parades

Eating and drinking outdoors

- Food stalls or night markets
- Outdoor seating areas

More attractive green spaces

- More trees and flowers
- Street art
- Small spaces for children's play areas or a 'beach'

Other improvements

- Improved pavements
- Cycle parking



How can I find out more and have a say?

A public consultation will be open for six months and anyone can make comments, submit support, objections or suggestions and give us feedback on the changes. The council will in due course consider all submissions and other information collected during the trial, before deciding on whether or not to make the changes permanent. This will happen within 18 months of commencement of the trial.

We will be getting in touch with local groups between August 2020 and January 2021 to hear their feedback. If you would like to arrange a session with council officers for your group, and we have not contacted you in the next few weeks, please do get in touch.

Whilst we will be doing our best to fully engage with the public during this consultation there are some **criteria which must be met for formal responses to the ETRO**:

- The planters and signs will all be put in place over the next few weeks in line with the plan. Once people have become familiar with the revised layout and you have had opportunity to see the effects they have had, please submit your response.
- Comments must be sent to us in writing and should preferably be submitted using the online questionnaire which will be available on the consultation page until 31 January 2021 (although email and letter responses will also be accepted).



- Respondents who wish to formally submit an objection will need to state on what grounds they object to the measures being put in place indefinitely.
- It is possible to submit multiple pieces of feedback in support or objecting over the six months; for this reason, we ask those who formally comment to provide both their name and address so that only the most recent submission is taken into account for decision making purposes. Please note that all specific representations received may be considered in public by the council and that the substance of any representation together with the name and address of the person making it could become available for public inspection. However for general consultation responses, you do not have to provide identifying details and the content of general responses will remain fully anonymous and confidential; it is up to you to decide whether to provide an anonymous and confidential consultation response or a formal objection to the ETRO.
- Plans and Statement of Reason are available on our consultation webpage: www.southglos.gov.uk/thornburyhighstreet
- Respond to our online survey: www.southglos.gov.uk/thornburysurvey
- Paper copies of the consultation survey can be requested by calling **01454 868 000**, and plans can be viewed at the Patchway One Stop Shop by appointment.
- For written submissions by other methods please Quote reference **L3/DFA/STOP/PT.6609**
- Email: placefeedback@southglos.gov.uk
- Write to:
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Governance and Democratic Services,
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