

**To:** Tonbridge & Malling Joint Transportation Board  
**By:** KCC Highways and Transportation  
**Date:** 17<sup>th</sup> June 2024  
**Subject:** High Street, Wouldham Experimental Traffic Regulation Order  
**Classification:** For Recommendation

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Summary: This report provides an update to the experimental scheme in Wouldham, where a 'no entry' restriction has been installed at the junction of School Lane and High Street.

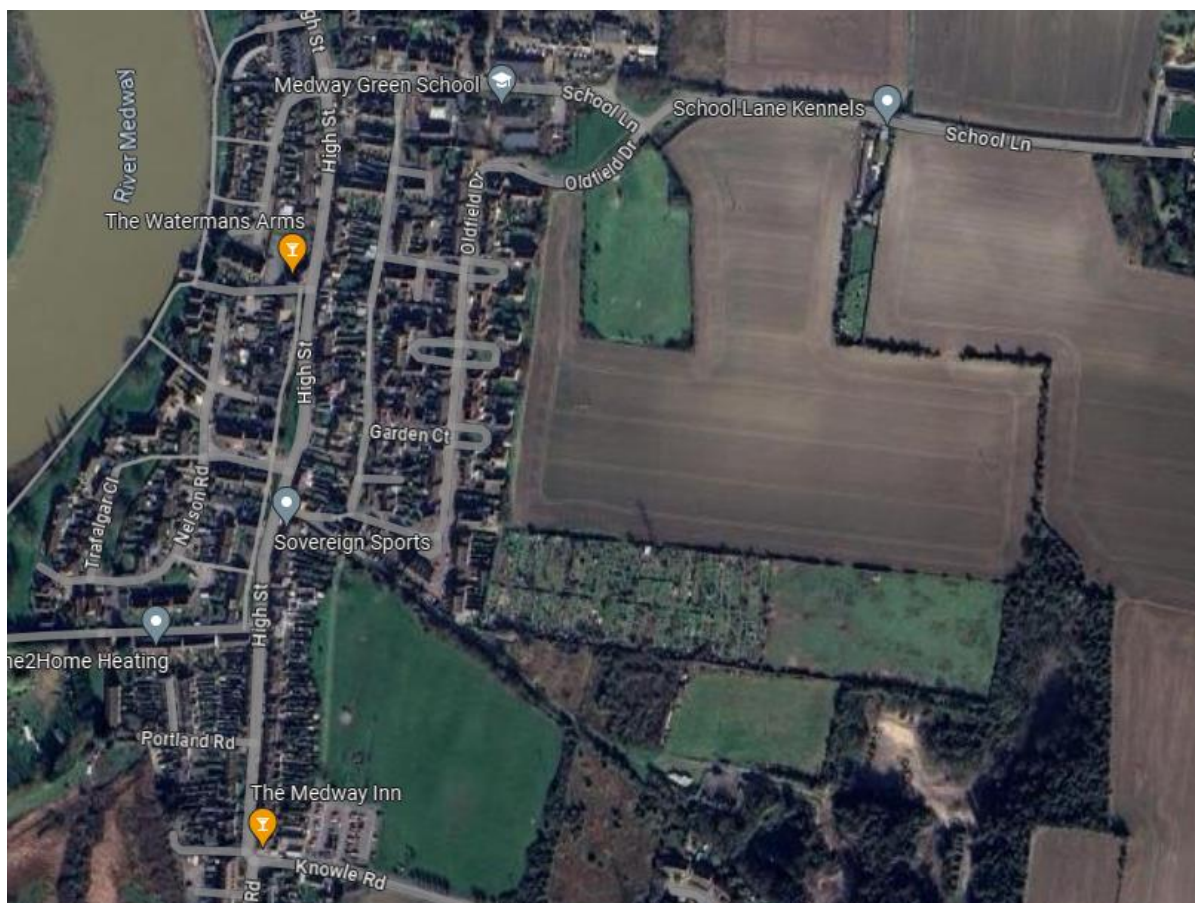
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### Context and background

High Street, Wouldham is a relatively narrow road linking Knowle Road with School Lane. In recent years, the construction of Peters Bridge (creating a new link from the A228 across the River Medway) and the Peters Village development has led to an increase in the amount of traffic using High Street, and concerns have been raised by Wouldham Parish Council (WPC), Kent County Council (KCC) Member Andrew Kennedy and residents.

Although KCC provided funding to implement this trial scheme, the work has been carried out at the request of WPC, who is acting as the scheme promoter.

Wouldham High Street is a residential road which narrows at its southern end where a number of terraced properties directly front the public highway. A number of residential side roads and cul-de-sacs are accessed directly from the High Street including Walter Burke Avenue, Portland Road and Rectory Close. There is limited on street parking on High Street, and the road forms part of a bus route serviced by Nu-Venture. An aerial photo of the site is shown below:



The Experimental Traffic Regulation Order (ETRO) aimed to restrict the number of vehicles travelling southbound on High Street, reducing congestion and the subsequent pollution from vehicle emissions.

### **Consultation Process**

The following promotional activities were undertaken to support the delivery of the public consultation:

- promotion through Wouldham and Burham Parish Council websites
- email sent to stakeholder organisations
- a press release was issued
- consultation posters displayed in local area
- Letter drops to all registered properties in the Wouldham and Burham area
- Social media post promoting the consultation

A webpage was created for the consultation. Copies of the consultation material could be downloaded from this webpage or posted on request.

During the consultation there were:

- 5,682 visitors to the consultation webpage with the page being viewed 12,457 times
- 295 downloads of the consultation leaflet
- 37 downloads of the Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)
- 109 downloads of the Word version of the consultation questionnaire.

The social media posts were seen by 74,008 people at least once, with the posts being displayed on someone's screen 292,389 times. The posts generated 4,016 clicks through to the consultation webpage.

People were asked to provide feedback via a consultation questionnaire, which was available online and in a paper version on request.

### **Consultation Outcomes**

There was a total of 304 responses to the consultation. Of those 190 supported the experimental scheme, and 114 objected. The highest proportion of respondents were Wouldham residents (124). Of these, 81 supported the scheme and 43 objected to the proposals.

With regard to the modes of transport used, the highest proportion of respondents to this question most frequently travelled by private car as a driver (156). Of those 83 supported the scheme and 73 objected to the proposals.

Summarising the key outcomes of the objections made:

35% of objectors stated that the scheme has too much impact on the adjacent road / communities and businesses. This may be due to the length of the diversion route to reach the lower end of the High Street.

16% stated that driving further via the diversion route caused an increase in pollution and was inconvenient.

The remaining reasons given covered a variety of subjects, with no significant common themes identified.

Requests were made for an exemption for cyclists/equestrians to travel through the 'no entry' gateway, as well as buses. This can be included if the scheme is to be made permanent.

### **Data Analysis**

8% of respondents outlined that there was a lack of enforcement of the 'no entry' gateway. Camera enforcement may be possible in Wouldham High Street in future, but that will likely be some time away. Police enforcement is also unlikely to be readily available.

Wouldham Parish Council (WPC) carried out a 2-hour AM peak traffic survey in May 2023 which identified 490 vehicles travelling southbound on High Street. A repeat of the survey was carried out on 12 December 2023 (during the same 2-hour window) and recorded 78 vehicles. This represents an 84% reduction in traffic volumes southbound, dropping from one vehicle every 15 seconds to one every 92 seconds, on average.

Although not certain, the 84% reduction in southbound traffic can be approximated to be the level of compliance with the 'no entry' restriction. Given the current lack of formal enforcement, this appears to be a good result.

### **Next Steps**

Alternative options have been discussed with WPC and discounted for a variety of reasons, so this scheme is the only current viable option. If the project is not made permanent, the 'no entry' order will be removed, with traffic movements returning to their previous arrangements. The change of priority, however, can be left in situ.

### **Officer Recommendation**

The scheme appears to have been largely well-received, with KCC having had no contact from the public relating to the project since the consultation closed in November 2023. As such, the trial looks to have been successful and therefore it is recommended that the ETRO for both the 'no entry' point and accompanying 'no right turn' restrictions at Scarborough Lane and Church Street be made permanent. This would include an amendment to exempt cyclists and equestrians from the 'no entry' restriction. The conversion of School Lane to 'one way' has been removed from the scheme, and it is not recommended to reinstate that element of the project.

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