

**The Essex County Council (Head Street, High Street, North Hill & Middleborough, Colchester)
(Experimental Bus Lane) Order 2013**

**The Essex County Council (East Stockwell, Cowdray Crescent, George Street, Maidenburgh Street
& West Stockwell Street, Colchester) (Experimental Prohibition of Motor Vehicles) Order 2013**

Statement of Reasons

These TROs were originally introduced in March 2013 as part of a package of measures to remove general traffic from the High Street. They were suspended in April 2013. The orders reinstate four elements of the March 2013 experimental orders. It is proposed that the experimental orders will run to September 2014, eighteen months from March 2013 as per the original orders.

The consultation period for the original orders concludes on 17 September 2013, given these changes it is proposed to extend the consultation period to 17 December 2013.

The March 2013 scheme also introduced a series of complementary waiting and access restrictions. These will not be re-instated as part of the orders.

The Experimental Traffic Regulation Orders will reduce the appeal of Colchester High Street as a through route for general traffic, thereby reducing the volume of traffic. The main objectives for this removal of traffic are:

- 1) To improve the pedestrian environment in the high street by reducing traffic volume.
- 2) To improve Public Transport reliability in the Town Centre, in advance of the Park and Ride service becoming operational.
- 3) To encourage Colchester residents to use more sustainable means of transport for short journeys, which will have benefits for both public health and the environment.

It is proposed that enforcement cameras will be introduced to encourage adherence to the bus lane orders.

The vehicle prohibition on Cowdray Crescent is proposed to prevent drivers using Cowdray Crescent to access Queen Street without contravening the bus lane restriction. This will be enforced using bollards. It is noted that this will have an impact on the tourist coaches. Provision has been made for tourist coaches on East Hill.

It is believed that these orders will benefit the air quality within the Colchester Town Centre Air Quality Management Area (AQMA). It is noted that the proposals may lead to increased traffic in Brook Street, however the proposals introduced in March 2013 did not show a dramatic reduction in the air quality of Brook Street.

The TROs being reintroduced are part of the experimental scheme introduced in March 2013. Whilst sharing objectives with the original scheme, this iteration of the scheme does not restrict access for general traffic to the High Street in order to limit the impact that the scheme has on deliveries.

A stakeholder group has been set up to specify what constitutes a 'successful' experiment and to monitor the experimental orders.

The success of any experiment will be based on improvements to:

- a. Public transport journey time reliability
- b. Public transport patronage
- c. Air quality within the High Street
- d. Footfall within the High Street
- e. Public perception of the High Street environment
- f. The viability of High Street as a commercial area.

Weighed against any significant disbenefits to:

- a. Traffic volumes on the strategic roads around the town centre
- b. Traffic volumes and collision records within the Dutch Quarter
- c. Air quality in the Mersea Road and Brook Street AQMAs

Additional metrics may be introduced by the stakeholder group during the experimental period, to address any issues that become apparent.