

14th December 2023

Joint submission regarding the 7.5t limit ETRO in Eye

1. The Parishes note that the Introduction on page 4 of Suffolk County Council's Feasibility Study, dated July 2021, describes the town of Eye but could easily be describing many of the parishes contributing to this submission.
2. There is no publicly available evidence that local businesses and haulage companies were consulted prior to the ETRO being introduced.
3. The design considerations on page 5 of the Feasibility Study include the following statement: *"Consideration also needs to be given to the impact of any measures on the wider network and surrounding communities"*. The following comment in an email from July 2023 would suggest that an impact assessment was undertaken, as the email clearly highlights that negative impacts for neighbouring areas were *"expected"*.

From:
Sent: 04 July 2023 08:58
To: Suffolk Lorry Route review
Cc:
Subject: RE: Eye ETRO restrictions - feedback so far
Attachments: 2023-07-04 Eye ETRO consultation results as at 4th July.docx; 2023-07-04 Eye ETRO consultation results as at 4th July.xlsx

Hi

Here are the latest results from the consultation, as before in two formats.

There are 46 completed responses so far and largely positive for Eye, although, as expected, less so for the impact on neighbouring areas. Good to see the majority of responses are from those travelling through Eye on a daily basis who will certainly be aware of the impact.

Regards

However, the outcome of any assessment is not included in the Feasibility Study neither is a copy readily available on Suffolk County Council's website. The Parishes would welcome sight of any impact assessments undertaken prior to the ETRO being introduced.

4. Page 31 of the Feasibility Study states: *"... a route may seem inappropriate for HGV use but there may be no other realistic alternatives. If there are no alternative routes, introducing a weight restriction will only displace problems on to similarly inappropriate roads"*. The Parishes would draw attention to the aforementioned similarities between Eye and surrounding parishes and one particular difference of note; the roads in Eye already benefit from 20mph speed limits which are proving difficult and complicated for other parishes to obtain.

5. Page 17 of the Feasibility Study states that: “Although the number of personal injuries is low the fear of injury within the town is high and increases as the number of large vehicles in the town increases year on year.” The Parishes would request that when reviewing the impact on the surrounding areas, Officers and Councillors bear in mind that the fear of injury has greatly increased in **all** areas, and especially those areas where existing, and now redirected, traffic is passing directly in front of primary schools.
6. It is not clear from correspondence with Suffolk Highways whether or not the ETRO is currently being fully enforced, and given that Suffolk Highway’s pre- and post- survey data has not yet been provided to the Parishes to enable a full review to be made ahead of the preparation of this submission, it is difficult for the Parishes to fully evaluate the current impacts. The Parishes do note that there has been an increase in large vehicles within their areas, and note that this may increase significantly if the ETRO is made permanent and fully enforced.
7. In addition, the large survey of the road network undertaken by WSP modelling on behalf of Suffolk County Council highlighted that the two junctions on the A140 which are most impacted by the ETRO were already experiencing significant issues and if the 7.5t limit is permanently introduced it will only serve to increase these issues.
8. The potential impacts of the proposed ETRO could also have been evaluated as part of the Suffolk Lorry Route review undertaken in July 2022 ahead of the ETRO being introduced.
9. The Feasibility Study indicates on pages 34-35 that to monitor and enforce the weight limit, should it become permanent, a CCTV system may be required at considerable costs. There is no indication how this would be funded given the already stretched budget of Suffolk County Council.
10. The Parishes are, separate to this submission, seeking information on how the ETRO has been funded to date, particularly noting that some of the funding appears to be coming from “corporate funding” and Mid Suffolk District Council:

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 28 June 2022 14:29
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: Eye HGV restrictions

Hi [REDACTED]

I think that after the design stage would be a good point to review. We have the following funding allocations confirmed:

- [REDACTED] Highways Locality Fund - £5k
- Eye Town Council - £5k (note different to your funding!)
- MSDC - £15k
- SCC (Corporate funding) - £25-30k

So I’m fairly confident there will be enough, but shouldn’t take that for granted!

Thanks,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
Head of Transport Strategy

Growth, Highways and Infrastructure
Suffolk County Council
[REDACTED]

11. The Parishes note that the existing 7.5t limit through the centre of the town forces large vehicles to turn into/from Magdalen Road, if the vehicles were able to access Broad Street from either end, there would be fewer building strikes and the large vehicles would be able to access the new large roundabout on the A140 at Brome.
12. The Feasibility Study Introduction refers to a turn restricting forward visibility for drivers causing issues when confronted by other large vehicles travelling in the opposite direction, vehicles 'inevitably' mounting pavements causing building strikes and putting pedestrians at risk. The Parishes note that there are no parking restrictions here and, on most occasions, there are multiple vehicles parked on the West to East carriageway causing vehicles to travel on the wrong side of the road.
13. The Parishes note the comments made in the following submission which concisely highlights the environmental issues of this ETRO and the concern of Eye residents themselves :

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, May 26, 2023 5:03 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: ETRO IN EYE TOWN CENTRE

 **EXTERNAL EMAIL: Don't click any links or open attachments unless you trust the sender and know the content is safe. Click [here](#) for more information or help from Suffolk IT**

The idea of banning lorries etc driving through Eye is ludicrous, as we are supposed to be supporting businesses, not making their haulage costs increase, which will probably show in more price rises for their products, not really helping the cost of living crisis!

The people moaning are residents who live on the suggested lorry route, they all knew when purchasing the properties that there's lorries driving past their houses, so why buy the property!

More worrying is that the town Councillor, who is the main instigator for this ridiculous idea is a well known Green political group supporter, which i find very hypocritical because making the lorries take a several miles detour is not only time and cost consuming, but just think of the carbon footprint this extra travelling by big diesel lorries is creating, not very Green at all is it!, or is she putting herself before the environment, once again, not very Green! Another ridiculous suggestion in the experiment is that some businesses will be given a exemption to drive through Eye, so the lorry in front can't come through, but the one behind can, what sort of arguments will that cause. Leave things as they are, and those that don't like it, move, or stop parking your cars on the narrow roads so the traffic can get through effortlessly.

Kind regards

[REDACTED]
Eye resident

14. The summary on page 16 of the Feasibility Study ends with the following statement: *"The aim of the Town Council is that any future measures in Eye Town keep large vehicles on the A140 to reach their destinations rather than picking their way through the small towns and villages and prevent traffic travelling east to west through the town to access the A140. This report considers the options to remove and reduce HGV traffic flows through Eye."* However, the outcome of the ETRO has been to push the vehicles in to the surrounding areas, which were already experiencing significant issues of their own, not onto the A140.

15. In summary, the Parishes submit that permanently introducing the 7.5t limit will have a significant adverse impact on the wider network and surrounding areas. This is supported by the County Council's own Feasibility Study which indicates that a weight limit is not the solution. The Feasibility Study provides many alternatives which do not appear to have been explored, some of which would not have affected the neighbouring parishes. Suffolk County Council's responsibility is to provide solutions for all areas not just one, especially when that one solution is to the detriment of the other areas. The ETRO should be ended immediately and the other options laid out in the Feasibility Study further investigated to seek a solution suitable for all areas.

Submitted by:

Odile Wladon

Clerk to: Stradbroke Parish Council & Thorndon Parish Council

On behalf of:

Brome & Oakley Parish Council

Debenham Parish Council

Denham Parish Council

Hoxne Parish Council

Stradbroke Parish Council

Thorndon Parish Council