

**This Council deeply regrets the decision of Somerset County Council (SCC) to announce cessation of the plan to possibly pedestrianise North Street/Bridge Street on the completion of the Third Way. It also regrets the halting of the consultation on the 4 options being considered for a comprehensive town centre pedestrianisation which could have been delivered when the Northern Inner Distribution Road (NIDR) had been built**

It notes that this decision could undermine the regeneration of Taunton's town centre at a time when there is a danger of losing its competitive edge over Exeter and Bristol as an attraction for retail business and economic development.

**This council also notes that the impact of this unilateral action undermines the basis of the partnership that has served Project Taunton so well. The decision further undermines the relationship between SCC and this council on Highway matters where consultation has always been strength of the goodwill between the 2 councils over many years. This council notes that the report to the cabinet member of the SCC that highway officers have highlighted the risk of more accidents happening if the Third way happens with no pedestrianisation. They also highlighted the risk to prosperity of the town. These concerns have been raised by professional officers and not politicians and the County Council cabinet member has not addressed either of them. We want to know what the County Council intends to do about these risks if they are determined to do nothing about pedestrianisation. We also note the total waste of time and money the County Council has made of a public consultation.**

**This council also notes that the axing of the “temporary” pedestrianisation of North Street/Bridge Street is likely to have a disproportionate cost/benefit effect on the economy of Taunton. It also believes that the temporary pedestrianisation was solely dependent on the completion of the Third Way and not the NIDR.**

**It therefore requests that the relevant Cabinet member from SCC be asked to appear before the next meeting of this Council's Community Scrutiny committee to explain the decision which is going to have such an adverse impact on Taunton's economic development and long term future.**

**It further asks the Executive of this council to undertake in conjunction with Project Taunton a consultation process to consider if temporary pedestrianisation of North Street/Bridge Street can be re-instated with the possibility of funding coming from internal sources and Growth Point funds and other form of finance available.**