



Park Bridge: Urgent road safety proposal

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Contents

Introduction	2
Why urgent action is needed	2
The proposed solution	3
What this means for residents and visitors	6
Evidence and case studies from similar schemes	7
Conclusion	8
FAQs	9

Introduction

Park Bridge is a historic village within the Medlock Valley, straddling the boundary of Tameside and Oldham. Once the site of a globally significant ironworks, the area is now home to a thriving residential community, heritage assets, and recreational spaces enjoyed by visitors from across Greater Manchester.

For years, residents in Park Bridge have been calling for urgent action to address the danger and risk to life posed by the road through our village. Now, we are at a critical point where this dangerous situation can no longer be ignored.

2025 has seen a record number of dangerous incidents on the road running through Park Bridge, in fact, Between 10 August and 6 September 2025, there were four serious road traffic collisions alone, including one fatality. These incidents are not isolated. They are the inevitable result of narrow lanes, designed in the horse-and-cart era, being used as a cut-through route by speeding and rat-running vehicles. Residents, children, and visitors face unacceptable daily risks simply walking, cycling, horse riding or driving through the village.

Why urgent action is needed

A. Community Safety

- Fatality and collisions: Four serious incidents in under a month (10 August – 6 September), as well as several others in 2025, demonstrate the urgent risk to life
- Narrow, unsuitable roads: Waggon Road, Mill Brow, Dean Terrace and Alt Lane funnel all access through tight lanes, endangering pedestrians, cyclists, horse riders, and families
- Daily risks: Residents, including elderly and disabled residents face speeding and rat-running traffic at all times of day, without restrictions, further tragedies are inevitable

B. Environmental Protection

- Air quality: High traffic volumes generate nitrogen dioxide and particulates, harming children's lungs and vulnerable residents
- Noise pollution: Vehicle noise disrupts sleep, wellbeing, and community life
- Climate commitments: Both Tameside and Oldham Council have declared a climate emergency. Restricting unnecessary car journeys in Park Bridge is a clear, measurable step towards meeting these pledges
- Greater Manchester Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS): The LNRS emphasises reducing traffic dominance to allow nature recovery, cut emissions, and improve air quality. An Experimental Traffic Regulation Order in Park Bridge would directly contribute to these regional priorities

C. Heritage Conservation

- Unique heritage site: Park Bridge is a heritage site of national importance, and sits within a conservation landscape
- Damage from traffic: Vibrations, congestion, and pollution threaten the structural integrity of heritage assets and erode the rural character of the valley.
- Statutory duty: Under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, councils must preserve and enhance heritage assets and their setting. Failing to act on traffic pressures is inconsistent with this duty

D. Active Travel Benefits

- Walking and cycling: Restricting through-traffic will make Park Bridge safer and more welcoming for pedestrians and cyclists
- Healthy lifestyles: Encouraging active travel reduces car dependence, improves public health, and supports Greater Manchester's Bee Network strategy for connected walking and cycling routes
- Access to nature: A low-traffic Park Bridge will act as a safer gateway to the Medlock Valley trails, enhancing opportunities for outdoor recreation and wellbeing, consistent with LNRS goals for community health

The proposed solution:

ETRO with ANPR Enforcement

We propose an immediate introduction of a mandatory 20mph speed limit on all roads in Park Bridge and supporting signage, to reduce preventable risk, followed by the introduction of an Experimental Traffic Regulation Order (ETRO) for Park Bridge, enforced via Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) cameras positioned at the start of Alt Hill Road, Dean Terrace and the single track Alt Hill Lane access to the village.

What an ETRO Offers:

- Immediate relief: Can be introduced quickly to trial restrictions for up to 18 months
- Flexibility: Can be adjusted based on community feedback
- Evidence-based decision: Provides data on safety, air quality, and compliance to support a permanent order

Why ANPR is Essential:

- Effective enforcement: Police resources cannot cover daily monitoring; ANPR provides consistent, fair enforcement

- Behaviour change: Penalty Charge Notices encourage compliance, not revenue generation
- Revenue reinvestment: By law, revenue must be reinvested into transport and environmental improvements, ensuring funds benefit the local community

What this could look like in effect

Exhibit A – Access to Park Bridge, car parks and Heritage Centre still available and open to visitors

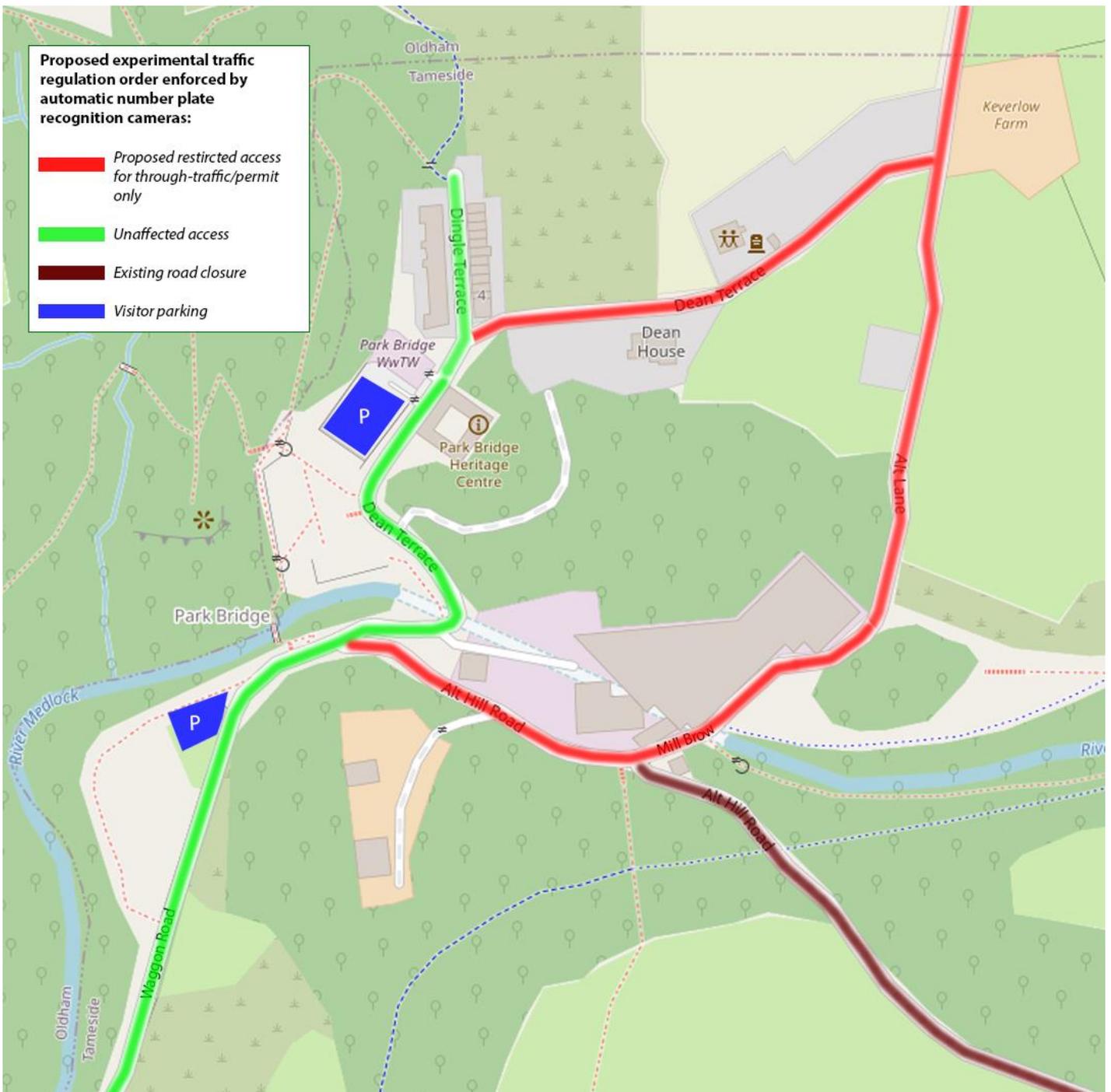
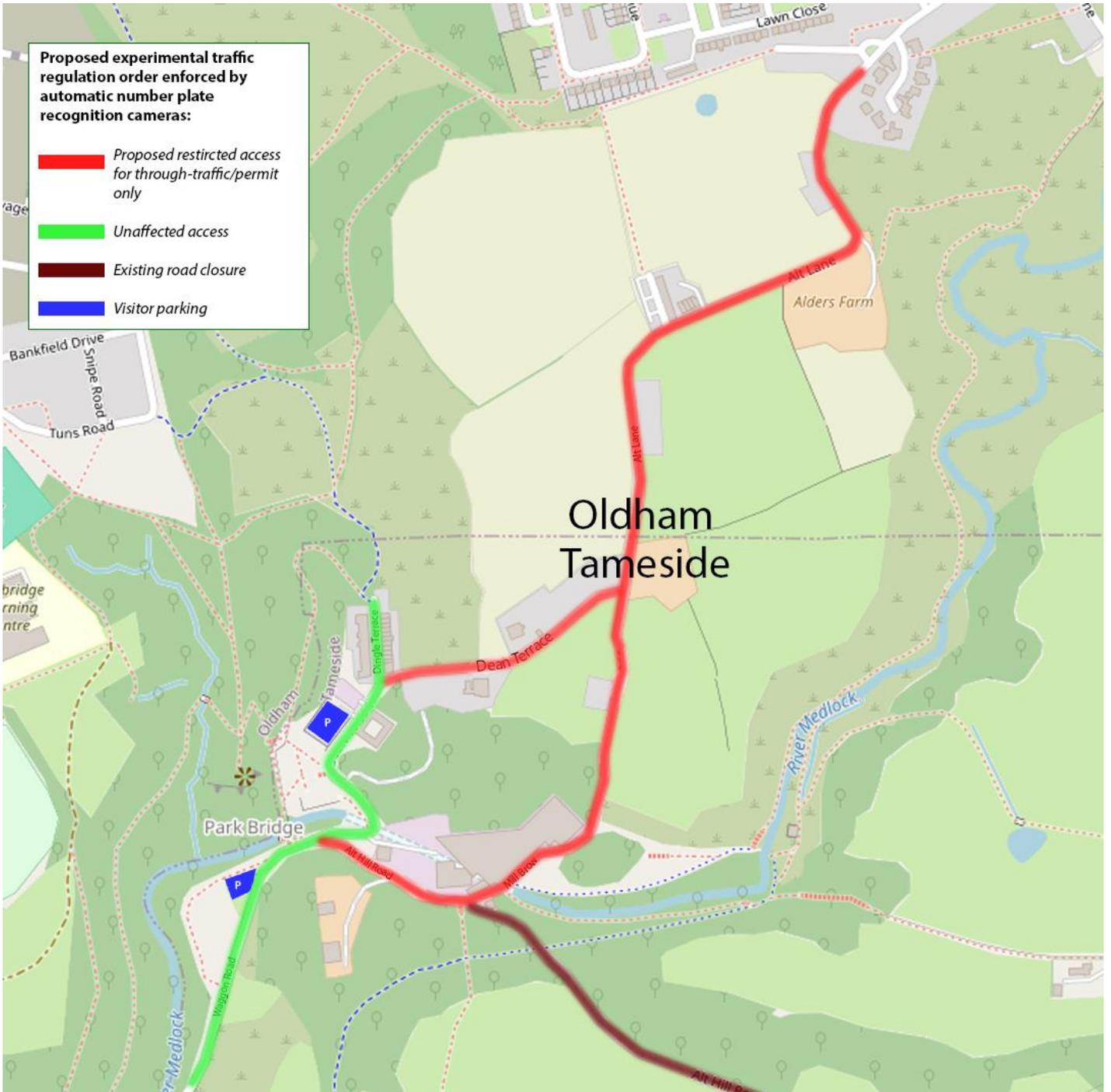


Exhibit B – Access to Park Bridge, car parks and Heritage Centre still available to visitors, but cut-through to Alt estate and Abbey Hills Road is prevented, Oldham/Tameside boundary highlighted



What this will mean for residents

- Safer streets with fewer speeding vehicles and less rat-running
- Cleaner air and quieter environment, improving health and wellbeing
- Heritage protection, with reduced damage to listed buildings and conservation areas
- Access maintained for residents via a permit, emergency services, and permitted vehicles (resident guests, tradespeople, carers)
- ANPR enforcement targets non-compliant through-traffic

What this will mean for visitors

- Visitor access remains open: The proposed enforcement area is not located on routes to the public car park. Visitors will still be able to drive in, park, and enjoy the natural beauty of Park Bridge
- A safer and more welcoming experience: Families, walkers, cyclists, horse riders and heritage tourists will benefit from quieter, less congested streets with the restriction of the cut-through access
- Improved environment: Cleaner air and preserved landscapes will enhance the visitor experience

Alignment with council powers and duties

- Government legislation: Since May 2022, local authorities outside London can adopt Part 6 powers of the Traffic Management Act 2004 to enforce moving traffic offences via ANPR
- Council practice: Councils already use similar powers for school streets, parking and bus lanes; this is simply an expansion of existing enforcement
- Policy alignment: An ETRO with ANPR enforcement in Park Bridge supports:
 - Tameside and Oldham's Climate Emergency declarations
 - Greater Manchester's Clean Air and Bee Network strategies
 - Greater Manchester's Local Nature Recovery Strategy (2025), which calls for reducing car dominance, cutting emissions, restoring nature, and improving access to green spaces for community health
 - Statutory duties to protect residents, reduce road danger, and preserve heritage

Evidence from other ANPR-enforced schemes

Park Bridge is not alone in facing the challenge of unsafe, unsuitable roads carrying excessive traffic. Across the UK, local authorities have successfully used ANPR cameras and Experimental Traffic Regulation Orders (ETROs) to restrict through-traffic, improve safety, and protect historic environments.

Proven Case Studies

- **London Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTNs):**

Over 113 LTNs across London use ANPR cameras to restrict cut-through traffic. A nine-year study found a 35% reduction in all road injuries and a 37% drop in deaths or serious injuries, preventing around 600 injuries and 100 serious or fatal incidents. These schemes are now broadly supported by residents, with twice as many in favour as opposed.

- **East Oxford and Cowley LTNs (Oxfordshire):**

Introduced under ETROs in 2022, these schemes use ANPR at filter points, allowing access for residents, emergency services, and permitted vehicles. This demonstrates how ANPR can balance safety with controlled local access, exactly what Park Bridge requires.

- **Durham City Congestion Charge (2002):**

ANPR cameras restricted traffic in the historic core of Durham. Within a year, vehicle use dropped by 85% on narrow medieval streets, improving safety and dramatically enhancing the visitor experience in a World Heritage setting.

- **Bath Clean Air Zone (2021):**

Enforced by ANPR cameras, Bath's Clean Air Zone has reduced NO₂ pollution by around 25%. The scheme protects a sensitive heritage city centre while improving air quality and encouraging sustainable travel.

- **School Streets (National):**

Hundreds of School Streets across the UK use ANPR enforcement to restrict vehicle access during school hours, including consultation, pilot and permanent sites at schools in Oldham. These have improved child safety, reduced emissions, and encouraged walking and cycling to school.

Lessons for Park Bridge

These examples show that:

- ANPR enforcement is effective: It achieves compliance where signage or police enforcement alone cannot
- Safety improves significantly: From London to Durham, the evidence shows clear reductions in collisions and injuries
- It's already on our doorstep and having a positive effect in Oldham with the council's school streets measures
- Heritage is protected: Historic areas such as Durham and Bath demonstrate that restrictions enhance, rather than limit, visitor appeal
- Access is maintained: ANPR schemes can be tailored to permit residents, emergency services, and visitors while restricting dangerous through-traffic
- Active travel is encouraged: By reducing vehicle dominance, these schemes create safer, more attractive conditions for walking and cycling

Our requests

We call on Tameside and Oldham Council to:

1. Immediately introduce a mandatory 20mph speed limit on the roads in Park Bridge
2. Confirm or secure Part 6 enforcement powers
3. Introduce an ETRO in Park Bridge to restrict through-traffic
4. Install ANPR cameras at highlighted key entry points to ensure fair and effective enforcement
5. Engage residents, emergency services, community groups and local businesses during consultation

Conclusion

Park Bridge is a unique heritage village that deserves protection from unsafe and unnecessary traffic. With several serious road traffic incidents in 2025, including a fatality, the situation has become intolerable.

An ETRO with ANPR enforcement is the fastest, fairest, and most effective way to:

- Safeguard lives
- Protect the environment
- Encourage walking and cycling
- Preserve the village's historic character

This action directly supports Greater Manchester's Local Nature Recovery Strategy, the Bee Network, and the council's climate and safety commitments.

Frequently asked questions (FAQs)

Will residents still be able to access their homes by car?

Yes. ANPR enforcement is designed to stop non-compliant through-traffic, not prevent residents from reaching their homes.

How would a residents' permit work? Would I have to pay?

Residents should not be expected to pay to access their own homes. Councils running ANPR schemes typically create a free permit or exemption list by vehicle registration number. Once your car is registered, the cameras recognise it and you are not fined.

What about if I have a guest visiting?

Most councils operating ANPR restrictions provide a way for residents to register guest vehicles temporarily (for example, through an online portal). This ensures visitors can still access your home without receiving a fine.

What about emergency vehicles?

Emergency services (ambulance, police, fire) are always exempt. Their vehicles are automatically recognised and allowed access.

What about delivery drivers, tradespeople, or carers?

Exemptions can be extended to include essential services. Delivery companies, carers, and regular service providers can be registered or given timed access. For one-off deliveries (e.g. furniture), councils typically allow residents to log the vehicle in advance so it isn't penalised.

Will visitors still be able to come to Park Bridge and use the car park?

Yes. The enforcement section will not block access to the main car park. Visitors will still be able to arrive, park, and enjoy the area.

Isn't this just a way for the Council to raise money through fines?

No. The purpose is to encourage compliance and improve safety. By law, any revenue from penalty charge notices must be reinvested into local transport and environmental improvements.

Why ANPR cameras instead of speed bumps or signs?

Enforcement without cameras is ineffective. Police cannot monitor daily traffic, but ANPR provides consistent, fair enforcement and ensures restrictions actually work.

Why trial it with an ETRO instead of making it permanent straight away?

An Experimental Traffic Regulation Order (ETRO) allows the Council to test restrictions for up to 18 months, gather real-world data, and listen to community feedback before deciding whether to make it permanent.

How does this support wider priorities?

This proposal supports Tameside and Oldham's climate emergency commitments, Greater Manchester's Bee Network, and the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (2025), all of which emphasise reducing car dominance, improving air quality, and protecting heritage and biodiversity.