

CET/24/94

Teignbridge Highways and Traffic Orders Committee
14 November 2024

Proposal to reopen the Upper Carriageway in Teignmouth over summer periods

Report of the Director of Climate Change, Environment and Transport

Please note that the following recommendation is subject to consideration and determination by the Committee before taking effect.

1) Recommendation

It is recommended that the Upper Den Carriageway remains closed through the summer period until further consultation on the proposals put forward by Teignmouth Town Council can be undertaken.

2) Background/Introduction

Teignmouth Town Council have requested that the Upper Den Carriageway remains open through the summer months. Currently it is closed for vehicles between the 1st May and the 10th September each year, and operates one way (south to north) for the remainder of the year. During the period when it is open parking is controlled by pay and display machines.

3) Main Text/Proposal

The Upper Den Carriageway in Teignmouth has been closed to motorised traffic over an extended summer period for several years.

The road lies between the Den and the beach. Both the beach and the open space in the Den area are popular with visitors and family groups. There are several uncontrolled crossing points on the road, providing the main route between the town and the beach.

The Town Council have now proposed that the road be reopened during the summer months to add additional parking capacity in the town. The on-street parking on the road is controlled by Pay and Display machines when it is open to vehicles. The attached report shows the measures that the Town Council have proposed, along with letters of support from the Managing Director of the Venus Café, a member of the public and the Chair of Teignmouth Chamber of Trade and Commerce.

The proposal would increase on street parking revenue for the County Council, currently there is no revenue over the summer period when the road is closed. However, it does raise safety issues and would conflict with some of the county council's policies, as set out in section 6.

Several events, such as the Teignmouth Air Show, take place over the summer period, which require the road to be closed on specific dates. If the road is reopened during the summer, it would have to be closed on specific dates for these events.

It is considered that it would be confusing for residents and visitors, who have been able to cross this road freely during the summer for several years.

A very similar proposal was brought before this committee on the 25th of July 2022, at that time it was resolved that the Upper Den Carriageway remain closed through the summer period.

4) Options/Alternatives

The options are:

- a) Allow the road to open during summer periods, so that it is open all year round.
- b) Retain the current road closure over summer periods.
- c) Undertake formal consultation on the proposals.

5) Consultations/Representations/Technical Data

The proposal has been made by Teignmouth Town Council and supported by the local Member, the Manager Director of the Venus Café, a member of the public, and Teignmouth Chamber of Trade and Commerce, who all favour the additional parking that the proposal would provide over the summer period, see Appendix 1.

Previously the town council has favoured closing the road over the summer period and has raised issues of camper vans and the emptying of waste into highways drains, which drain directly onto the beach.

Teignbridge District Council have recommended that further consultation be undertaken before any action is taken to reopen the road in the summer period.

Any permanent change to the current Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) that prevents access during the summer months would need to be advertised. It is estimated the following traffic orders would be required:

- a) An amendment to the current TRO to allow the road to remain open throughout the year.
- b) A TRO for the 20mph speed limit.
- c) A TRO to restrict larger vehicles, which could affect deliveries to businesses such as the pier and the Venus Café.
- d) A TRO to introduce no waiting at any time (DYLs) and amend the P&D parking bays.

Councillor Cox was asked by email if the Town Council would be undertaking any further consultation on the 29th July, but has not yet responded.

6) Financial Considerations

The proposal would increase the revenue from on street parking that the county council receives. However, if changes in the road layout are required, reducing the number of crossing points and introducing formal crossing points, there would be additional cost. Currently no budget has been identified. It is difficult to estimate the cost of the proposals as they have not been finalised and safety audited.

7) Environmental Impact Considerations

Devon County Councils Transport Strategy for the Market & Coastal Towns and Rural Area has five transport priorities, these are:

- Assist in supporting existing and future development of the towns.
- Work with the community to demonstrate a low carbon approach to travel.
- Improve accessibility by developing a core bus and rail service supported by community transport.
- Make Devon 'the place to be naturally active' through investment in the leisure network.
- Develop an approach to parking policy which supports the vitality of the town centre.

Teignmouth Town Council have stated that the road closure would have a positive impact on trade in the town.

Devon County Council declared a climate declaration and signed a Climate Declaration in May 2019. A key component of this is to support schemes that achieve "Reduction in road capacity where this supports sustainable travel or improves air quality". It is considered that reopening the Upper Den Carriageway in summer periods would conflict with this policy.

8) Equality Considerations

Opening up the road would allow additional vehicles to park in the town centre area, and availability of parking has been an issue in the past. However, it would prejudice against pedestrians walking to the beach, which would include many family groups.

9) Legal Considerations

When making a Traffic Regulation Order it is the County Council responsibility to ensure that all relevant legislation is complied with. This includes Section 122 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 that states that it is the duty of a local authority, so far as practicable, secures the expeditious, convenient and safe movement of traffic and provision of parking facilities.

10) Risk Management Considerations

Currently the road is closed for vehicles over an extended summer period, and both visitors and locals have been used to it being closed. There is a risk that people will not expect vehicles to be using the road during the summer months, and conflict could occur.

The RNLI Lifeguards use the Lifeboat Slipway in emergencies if they cannot launch from the front beach due to lack of sand at high tide. They currently drive down the upper den carriageway with the jet ski and quad bike to access the slipway in the summer, they would not be able to do this if it was open to other traffic.

This road is used by pedestrians, including family groups, to access the beach area. There is an increased risk of conflict if the road is reopened.

If drivers circulate around the Upper Den Carriageway, Den Crescent and Powderham Terrace, looking for available parking spaces, this could have a significant impact on traffic congestion in the town during the summer.

11) Public Health Impact

There is some concern that, if camper vans are parked on this road in the summer, waste material could be emptied into the highway drainage system. This system discharges onto the beach, and concerns have previously been raised about bathing water quality. The Town Council have asked for a ban on larger vehicles, to include camper vans, during the summer.

12) Summary/Conclusions/Reasons for Recommendations

The safety, environmental and policy issues have led to a recommendation that further consultation be undertaken and that, in the meantime, the road remains closed during the summer period.

Meg Booth

Director of Climate Change, Environment and Transport

Electoral Division: Teignmouth

Local Government Act 1972: List of background papers

Background Paper	Date	File Ref.
Local Transport Plan – Devon and Torbay Strategy 2011-26	April 2011	https://devoncc.sharepoint.com/sites/PublicDocs/Highways/_layouts/15/guestaccess.aspx?guestaccesstoken=4LCjQdQ%2bKwkzpWw6I8e%2bSSeVQKL0kJwGT4Ta8LAPGe0%3d&doid=06216b5c5f54845a49f02551a73933a1c
Devon Transport Infrastructure Plan – Delivering Growth in a low carbon environment	March 2020	https://devoncc.sharepoint.com/sites/PublicDocs/Highways/Roads/Forms/AllItems.aspx?id=%2Fsites%2FPublicDocs%2FHighways%2FRoads%2FTransport%2FPlanning%2F20401_TIP_V1%2E2%2Epdf&parent=%2Fsites%2FPublicDocs%2FHighways%2FRoads%2FTransport%2FPlanning&p=true&ga=1
Making Devon Greener – Responding to the Climate Emergency	Online	Responding to the climate emergency - Strategic Plan (devon.gov.uk)

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sc/cr/Proposal to reopen the Upper Carriageway in Teignmouth

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Appendix 1 to CET/24/94

Teignmouth Town Council Teignmouth Upper Den Carriageway Working Group Report

The group has met 3 times with additional input from DCC officers.

There is no shortage of people who want to come to Teignmouth, it's a very popular destination town with much to offer. Indeed, on any summer morning, there are queues of visitors making their way into town and many are sadly left disappointed that they cannot find a parking space and often leaving town to have a day out somewhere else.

The Chamber of Commerce, town and district councillors and various community minded groups do their utmost to promote Teignmouth by putting events on throughout the summer. All doing their very best to keep our town alive and thriving. These events also bring everyone together to help promote Teignmouth, a town with a great community spirit where people work together for the greater good.

One of the things that is holding prosperity back is the lack of parking. We are not alone as many places face the same problem, but we have a unique opportunity to rectify this, which would be cost-effective to facilitate. The Upper Den Carriageway holds approximately 100 cars and is ideally situated to serve the beaches, the newly refurbished playpark, the skate park and the town centre and the 100 car parking spaces are left empty from May to September, just when demand for parking is at its peak.

Opening the Upper Den Carriageway would provide an additional convenience for the elderly, or those with mobility issues, in that they can pull up safely and pop to the shops, the Doctors or pick-up prescriptions.

By not opening the Upper Den Carriageway it is depriving parents of being able to pull up alongside a safe pavement, where they can lift their children out of the car and onto the path in safety.

The working group has worked to mitigate the DCC HaTOC report of 25th July 2022. Which was upheld by the HaTOC committee.

The plan attached shows the proposal which comprises: -

General restrictions

Reducing the speed limit to 20MPH

2 x 20MPH signs at the entrance poles exist.

Not permitting larger vehicles (e.g. Campervans, this has the additional benefit of reducing the risk of campervan effluent being discharged down the drains which go directly onto the beach)) from using the carriageway.

2 x Car and Bike only (service vehicles exempt) signs at the entrance poles exist.

Notional crossing areas

At each of these 4 crossing areas

A look left and look right sign on the road

4.6M of double yellow lines on the oncoming side of each crossing area for visibility.

It is proposed to remove one car parking space each side of the road from the direction of the flow of the traffic to improve visibility at the crossing

Between each crossing area, along the length of the carriageway

on the road surface 4 x 20MPH repeater signs

on the road surface 4 x Adult and child repeater signs.

Costs

The working group does not have access to DCC costs for the various recommendations, however, it is estimated that DCC income would be in the region of £78,000 this is based upon 100 vehicle spaces at £6.50 per day for the additional 120 days of parking these changes would create.

(100 vehicles x 120 days x £6.50 per day = £78,000)

It is also understood that DCC parking revenue does not directly go into the highways budget.

A plan of the proposals is attached, together with letters of support from local businesses.

Therefore, Council is recommended to approve this report and ask the local member to place the request on the HaTOC agenda.



Dear Town Clerk

We recently purchased and took over The Captain's Table on The Promenade.

I am disappointed to find that the parking spaces on The Promenade are closed now for the Summer with the loss of approx. 100 parking slots. This has resulted in an immediate drop in sales and foot traffic.

The summer is critical to the financial success of any hospitality business. Limiting access and parking at the busiest time of year is not helpful. It reduces the appeal of Teignmouth as a destination. You may be aware that parking is often the biggest complaint from visitors to the South West, so I do not understand why this facility is not used when the town is at it's busiest. The Promenade already offers a substantial area for walking. In our limited time there, I have not seen any evidence that the parking area and the Carriageway is being used at all by pedestrians.

I would request that the Carriageway be kept open for traffic and parking to create a vibrant promenade all year round. Both the immediate and town centre businesses can only benefit from making this change. The increased income will benefit all our employees and will support increased spend in the local shops and restaurants. The sooner this can be achieved the better. The trading environment is not good currently and opening up the Carriageway will make an immediate positive impact.

Thank you.

Regards
Managing Director



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Dear Sir,

I would be grateful if you would forward this email to the members of the Upper Den Carriageway Working Party.

Thank You.

I am writing this email as a letter of support to The Upper Den Carriageway Working Party in its work to return traffic and thus parking to the carriageway all year round.

The arrangements for access and parking on the carriageway have a long history with various restrictions being applied over the past 50 years. During that time the nature of holiday making and thus the role of Teignmouth has changed considerably.

In the 60s and 70s many people arrived for a one or two week stay by coach or rail. The whole of what is now East Cliff Car Park was dedicated as 'The Coach Park' and Teignmouth was a 'Golden Rail Resort'. A large proportion of visitors stayed in the town. The Upper Den Carriageway was closed to traffic for the peak season only when there was considerable movement between the multiple evens on the Den and promenade.

I will not go through every variation during the following decades.

A decade or so ago there was considerable concern about the results of sea water sampling failing with the result that town beach did not comply with the Bathing Beaches Directive. A prime cause of this was identified as the Den Carriageway highway gullies. As these are designed to take only surface water this should not have been a problem. The source was thought to be waste water from camper vans many of which used to stay overnight on this road in those days. The decision was therefore taken to extend the summer closure to protect the bathing water quality.

Moving on with how Teignmouth operates these days for both residents and visitors the key factor is the high proportion of people wishing to access the town centre and the sea front by car. Before charging was introduced on the Carriageway all the parking spaces would be occupied by 8 am by those who worked in the town or leaving their car there to travel by train elsewhere to work. The current charging arrangements, when the Carriageway is open, are seen to be very beneficial to the economy of the town. The initial one hour free parking ensures that there will be a turnover enabling short visits to be made for shopping, the post office, for a newspaper and so on in addition to others being able to pay for a longer period. Should they wish to stay all day then that is provided for in the TDC off street car parks.

However the current extended closure is detrimental to the economy and affects the elderly and disabled in particular. As a nation we are getting older. We are blessed with a level and partly pedestrianised town centre. The Prom is long and level. The Den Carriageway is particularly useful for both the elderly and the disabled to access the town in general and the Prom in particular. It is greatly regretted that this facility does not exist in the summer months. (I guess at this point I should declare an interest as I am both elderly, disabled and a disability scooter user).

I believe therefore that the opening of the Carriageway throughout the year is important both for the economy of the town and for its accessibility its residents and visitors both old and young.

So how can this be achieved whilst at the same time taking account of the pollution and road safety concerns?

+ The most straight forward way regarding the pollution would seem to be to apply a traffic order restricting it to cars and deliveries only.

+ Perhaps additionally an overnight parking ban a review of road safety

+ could include:-

- * a lower speed limit . My preference would be 10mph but I suspect the Highway Authority (DCC) may object to that on enforcement grounds. So a compromise of 20mph would be acceptable.

- * a review of the crossing points to improve visibility of those waiting to cross including the removal of the closest parking space to the crossing point on the side from which traffic approaches.

- * extending the footway at the crossing points thus narrowing the width of carriageway to be crossed and making the pedestrians more visible to oncoming motorists. Road marking hatching could possibly have the same effect.

- * highlighting the crossing points with 20mph roundals

In conclusion, I believe it is time to acknowledge the changes in the way the economy works for both visitors and residents by opening the Upper Den Carriageway all year round to increase car parking capacity and improve accessibility.

Kind regards,

Dear Councillor Phipps and other Members of the Upper Den Carriageway Working Group

Following various discussions among the members of the Teignmouth Chamber of Trade and Commerce, the majority are of the opinion that the Upper Den Carriageway should remain open all year round.

We have carefully considered the many safety aspects in coming to this decision, but by applying certain well used safety techniques, by allowing parking all year round would bring increased revenue into the town, plus increasing the revenues for DCC.

We feel that by applying a reduced speed limit of 20mph, placing “childrens crossing signs” on the road at each crossing space, imposing a strict “car” only parking limit, no vans or Camper Vans and removing a space near to a crossing point, to improve visibility.

You could also have “Look Left” or “Look Right” markings on the road.

I unaware at this stage exactly how many extra parking spaces it would bring to the town, but i would have thought between 90 to 100, we must also take into account that it is more environmentally friendly to have these extra cars parked, rather than driving around the town looking for parking spaces. Or actually even worse and have potential customers and visitors thinking, “it’s pointless driving to shop in Teignmouth, there is no where to park” and driving to a retail park or resort, where they can park for free or parking is plentiful.

We need to make it easier for people who want to “pop” into town for an hour or so.

Although many will disagree, we are of the opinion that Camper vans should not be allowed to park anywhere along the promenade, including the Upper Den, apart from the visibility safety issue, they often take more space than a car, often park on the hard standing, have BBQs on the verges, I personally have witnessed on many occasions, waste pipes from the vans down the drains, or buckets and bowls being tipped down the drains. They also obtain a “free” water supply from the Resorts Office, which I assume the tax payers of Teignmouth pay for?

To conclude, the Teignmouth Chamber of Trade and Commerce, are fully supportive of the Upper Den carriageway being open and cars allowed to park all year round.

Regards

Chair
Teignmouth Chamber of Trade and Commerce