

Totnes Experimental Traffic Order

Report of the Head of Highways and Traffic Management

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

Recommendation: It is recommended that the Committee note the results of the recent County Council consultation and agree that, Option 2, Reversal of flow on Station Road and Lower Fore Street, should be implemented for an experimental period as soon as is practicable. Where possible the proposal should be implemented in conjunction with the Wales and West Utilities works planned for January to March 2013.

1. Summary

The report summarises the results of traffic surveys, casualty collision investigations and recent public consultations regarding the extent of traffic using Fore Street and High Street Totnes illegally and recommends a course of action to address the situation.

2. Background

Fore Street and High Street Totnes have been subject to a Prohibition of Motor Vehicles, Except for Access, Order for many years but also provide Parking and Loading Bays which are highly valued by businesses and the community.

The Access Only Restriction has historically proven very difficult for the Police to enforce as any drivers found to be travelling through without stopping can claim to have been looking unsuccessfully for a parking place.

Traffic Surveys undertaken in December 2011 have shown that over a third of traffic using Upper Fore Street and High Street exits at either Plymouth Road or Cistern St in 5 minutes or less. This is traffic which could easily use the Southern Area Access Road or the A385 Station Road Corridor.

Over many years the Police have reported a recurring pattern of injury collisions on Fore Street and High Street involving vehicles in collision with pedestrians and several improvement schemes designed to enhance the pedestrian environment in conjunction with planned maintenance works have now been introduced. However, a review of casualty collisions between 1 January 2009 and 31 December 2011 has revealed that another seven injury collisions have been reported by the Police in that period with one of these classed as Serious. Of the seven collisions reported over this period, 4 of the drivers failed to stop.

In March 2012, a proposal to introduce an Experimental Right Turn Ban from High Street into Plymouth Road was postponed in order to allow Totnes Town Council make their views clear on ways to reduce illegal through traffic. The matter was raised at the South Hams HATOC on Friday 20 April 2012 under Standing Order 23(2).

Details of the Town Council's engagement with local groups and its consultation exercise are given in Appendix I

3. Proposal

Wales and West Utilities have announced their intention to renew a High Pressure Gas Main on High Street Totnes between the junction of Castle Street and the eastern South Street junction. The works will require the closure of High Street to through traffic, are programmed to commence during the first week in January 2013 and will last for three months. In order to facilitate deliveries to commercial premises on High Street, the contractor has proposed reversing the flow of traffic on Station Road and Lower Fore Street to allow large delivery vehicles to exit Fore Street via The Plains Roundabout. This system has been successfully employed previously when High Street has been closed to through traffic for extended periods.

It is proposed that the kerbing works and traffic calming necessary to implement an Experimental trial of Option 2 should be investigated in detail whilst the closure of High Street is in place to minimise disruption to traffic and if practicable the full experiment should be introduced for a period of up to 18 months when the High Street is reopened. If Option 2 proves impractical on engineering grounds or the costs significantly exceed those anticipated, then in consultation with the Chairman and local Member it is proposed that Option 1a should be introduced on an experimental basis when the road is reopened.

4. Consultations

The County Council has now consulted on three options which are described below:

1a – Experimental Right Turn Ban from High Street (The Narrows) into Plymouth Road (Engineered). This option would see a temporarily engineered Right Turn Ban introduced making the route from The Plains through to the Plymouth Road Traffic Signals impossible for most vehicles. [See Appendix II Plan](#)

1b – Experimental Right Turn Ban from High Street (The Narrows) into Plymouth Road (Signed only). As Option 1a but signed only. [See Appendix III Plan](#)

2 – Experimental reversal of traffic flow on Station Road. This option would reverse the flow of traffic on Station Road and Lower Fore Street presenting drivers wishing to access the Plymouth Road signals with the option of using either the Southern Area Access Road (St Katherines Way) or the Coronation Road Roundabout. Vehicle tracking has been undertaken at the junction which indicated that a 10m long Rigid Lorry would be able to negotiate the right turn from Station Road into Upper Fore Street at the “King Bill” Corner. Kerbing works and removal of street furniture would be required to achieve this. [See Appendix IV Plan.](#)

Totnes Car Free Day

Initially an Exhibition of the three proposals was undertaken on 20 September 2012 to take advantage of Totnes Car Free Day. Only 18 questionnaires were filled in on the day with some people preferring to take questionnaires away with them to complete later. A further 17 responses were later received by post. It is believed that several of the postal responses were completed by people who did not attend the exhibition. The results are tabulated below.

	At the Exhibition	Postal	Total Votes
Option 1a	4	3	7
Option 1b	2	0	2
Option 2	9	10	19
Do Nothing	0	3	3
1a + 1b	1		1

1a + 1b + 2		1	1
1a + 2	2		2
Total	18	17	35

October and November Consultation

A further online consultation was undertaken between Monday 29 October and Friday 9 November. A press release and subsequent article appeared in the local newspaper supplemented by interviews on local radio. The consultation also appeared on the Homepage of Devon County Council's website for the period of the consultation.

All of the exhibition material including vehicle count data, accident data, explanations and plans showing the proposals was available online and respondents were asked to vote for their preferred option. In addition, a further manned exhibition of the proposals was undertaken on Tuesday November 6th at the Civic Hall Totnes. The results of the consultation were as follows. Full details of the postcodes and comments received are available in Appendix V along with a summary and critique of issues raised as part of the consultation in Appendix VI and a plan showing Consultation Votes by Area's Appendix VII. Appendices V, VI and VII are all available in supporting information.

	At the Exhibition	Online	Total Votes
Option 1a	10	25	35
Option 1b	5	11	16
Option 2	54	70	124
Do Nothing	11	10	21
1a + 2	1		1
1b + 2	5		5
1a + 1b	1		1
Total	87	116	203

Representations

The three proposals consulted upon had been discussed with Totnes Town Councillors who, whilst agreeing to the consultation process and options presented also stated that their views were personal and that they were unable to represent the views of the Town Council officially. At its meeting on Monday 5 November it is reported that Totnes Town Council voted not to accept the results of the County Council Consultation. (Minutes of the meeting are not available at the time of printing but will be reported at the Committee meeting.)

Traffic Data

Traffic Volume Data collated from the December 2011 Surveys is shown in Appendix VIII. Speed Data collected at the same time indicated that the average speed of traffic on High Street between the Arch and Church Square was 14.8mph. The speed at which 85% of drivers travelled at or below was 19mph indicating that compliance with the 20mph zone is good.

Traffic servicing shops and dwellings or seeking to park is more likely to be travelling at lower speed than illegal through traffic.

Casualty Data

Between January 2004 and December 2006, 12 injury collisions were reported by the Police. These were all classed as Slight but all involved pedestrians in collision with motor vehicles. The opportunity was then taken to introduce a casualty reduction scheme on Lower Fore

Street in conjunction with planned maintenance works and this approach was later extended to the Church Square area of High Street as part of an enhancement scheme.

Initially it appeared that these measures had been successful with only 2 Slight casualty collisions reported between 1 January 2007 and 31 December 2008, only one of which involved a pedestrian. However, a review of casualty collisions between 1 January 2009 and 31 December 2011 has revealed that another seven injury collisions have been reported by the Police in that period with one of these classed as Serious. Of the seven collisions reported over this period, 4 of the drivers failed to stop.

Details of the collisions can be seen in Appendices IX, X, XI, XII and XIII in supporting information.

5. Financial Considerations

The costs of introducing Option 2 experimentally are not currently known but will be investigated prior to the start of the Wales & West Utility works in January 2013. An initial budget of up to £40,000 has been made available from the Local Sustainable Transport Fund budget. The costs of introduction Option 1a would be in the region of £2,000.

6. Sustainability Considerations

The proposal is experimental and could potentially lead to no change. However, the goals of the scheme are to reduce both the level of illegal traffic, risk to vulnerable road users and enhance the economic and cultural life of the town

7. Carbon Impact Considerations

Reduction in illegal through traffic is likely to reduce carbon emissions in the main shopping area of the town.

8. Equality Considerations

There are no equality considerations implicit in the proposals. An Equality and Impact Needs Assessment will be carried out prior to implementation of the scheme

9. Legal Considerations

If introduced, the Experimental Traffic Order will comply with the provisions set out in the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 and its related regulations.

10. Risk Management Considerations

No risks have been identified. A Road Safety Audit will be carried out as part of the detailed design of the proposal. The proposal is experimental and can be quickly reversed if required.

11. Discussion

Option 1a could be implemented quickly and relatively cheaply. It is likely to be effective in limiting illegal through traffic and, although concerns have been voiced that it might displace casualty collisions to the Cistern St/Kingsbridge Hill junction, the argument that traffic would be more likely to displace to the Southern Area Access Road is also persuasive. Solutions to the difficulties pointed out in relation to "Bob the Bus" might also be explored if the matter were looked at in more detail. As this option would be introduced experimentally, any adverse effects could be closely monitored and the scheme amended very quickly if required. This option secured only a 17% approval from the DCC Consultation.

Option 1b could again be implemented cheaply and removed very quickly. The Town Council Consultation referred specifically to this option which 55% of those voting were against. 8% of responses to the DCC consultation were in favour of this option.

Option 2 can be implemented but the best method and costs for undertaking the scheme still need to be investigated. Any Traffic Calming required on station Road could be installed using temporary products specifically designed for that purpose. 61% of responses favoured this option.

A location plan of the options and proposed Wales and West Utility Works is shown in Appendix XIV

12. Options/Alternatives

Alternative options are discussed in the report above and are all achievable. Retaining the status quo is not an option as it would indicate that both the level of traffic using Fore Street and High Street illegally and the injuries sustained by pedestrians in collision with vehicles are seen as acceptable.

13. Reason for Recommendation/Conclusion

The recent public consultation undertaken by the County Council has indicated that 61% of respondents were in favour of Option 2.

In addressing the continuing pattern of casualty collisions the scheme will fulfil the Highway Authority's obligations under S 39 of the Road Traffic Act 1988.

The proposal meets the overall Local Sustainable Transport Fund objectives in breaking the link between economic growth, carbon and congestion and improving access to employment across the areas by more sustainable modes.

Lester Willmington
Head of Highways and Traffic Management

Electoral Divisions: Totnes Rural

Local Government Act 1972: List of Background Papers

Contact for enquiries: Mike Jones

Room No. ABG Lucombe House

Tel No: (01392) 382178

Background Paper	Date	File Reference
1. Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984		http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1984/27/contents
2. Road Traffic Act 1988		http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1988/52/contents
3. Reported Road Casualties in Great Britain 2010		http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20120926002851/http://assets.dft.gov.uk/statistics/releases/road-accidents-and-safety-annual-report-2010/rrcgb2010-02.pdf

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Totnes Experimental Traffic Order

Appendix I : Details of Totnes Town Council Consultation.

In March 2012, a proposal to introduce an Experimental Right Turn Ban from High Street into Plymouth Road was postponed in order to allow Totnes Town Council make their views clear on ways to reduce illegal through traffic. The matter was raised at the South Hams HATOC on Friday 20th April 2012 under Standing Order 23(2).

The Town Council engaged with local groups and a number of alternative proposals were discussed. Several of the options suggested were assessed and could not be supported by the County Council. These are detailed below :-

- **Restrict Access to “The Narrows” and Reversal of Flow on Castle Street**

There are several reasons why this would not be acceptable to the Highway Authority but the main ones relate to the concerns for the residents of Belmont Terrace, Priory Hill etc over traffic diverting along these very narrow roads and the increased likelihood of damage to Northgate Arch and the retaining walls alongside the middle part of Castle Street. Traffic would access the A385 at the existing junction opposite the Station Access road adding to the congestion on Station Road.

- **Restrict Access to Upper Fore Street and High Street**

This would be a form of partial pedestrianisation and require a barrier and access control system to be in place. Rising bollard systems have been used in other towns across the UK to achieve this. Unfortunately, the bollards require a large pit over 2 metres deep for the pumping system and for them to drop into. On Fore Street Totnes there is no room to achieve this due to a large main sewer which take up most of the road width. Other forms of access control were also explored but were not considered sustainable as they would need to be manually operated. Unlike other towns, very few properties, either residential or commercial have rear access for deliveries so access along Fore Street and High Street will always be required.

- **Automatic Number Plate Enforcement Cameras**

This is not currently a Home Office approved application of the technology outside of London apart from in Bus Lanes. The requirement for Devon County Council to take up additional powers along with the large setup and running costs involved would preclude this as an option in the foreseeable future.

- **Restrict Access from the A385 through Bridgetown**

It was considered that might be the topic of another dialogue with Bridgetown Residents as this could potentially inconvenience them the most. This option only has the potential to divert a small percentage of traffic currently using Fore St and High St illegally.

- **Do Nothing**

DCC has a Statutory Duty under the Road Traffic Act 1988 to act now that it has identified that casualties are occurring. Doing nothing is therefore not an option.

The three remaining options are :-

1a – Experimental Right Turn Ban from High Street (the Narrows) into Plymouth Road (Engineered). This option would see a temporarily engineered Right Turn Ban introduced making the route from The Plains through to the Plymouth Road Traffic Signals impossible for most vehicles

1b – Experimental Right Turn Ban from High Street (The Narrows) into Plymouth Road (Signed only). As Option 1a but signed only.

2 – Experimental reversal of traffic flow on Station Road. This option would reverse the flow of traffic on Station Rd and Lower Fore St presenting drivers wishing to access the Plymouth Rd signals with the option of using either the Southern Area Access Rd (St Katherines Way) or the Coronation Rd Roundabout. Vehicle tracking has been undertaken at the junction which indicated that a 10m long Rigid Lorry would be able to negotiate the right turn from Station Road into Upper Fore Street at the "King Bill" Corner. Kerbing works and removal of street furniture would be required to achieve this.

Totnes Town Council Consultation :-

Totnes Town Council undertook a consultation in May and June 2012.

The following question was asked.

Do you agree that the experimental traffic order should be implemented to ban all traffic, except cyclists and community buses, from turning right into Plymouth Road at the top of High Street? Respondents were asked for a Yes or No answer only.

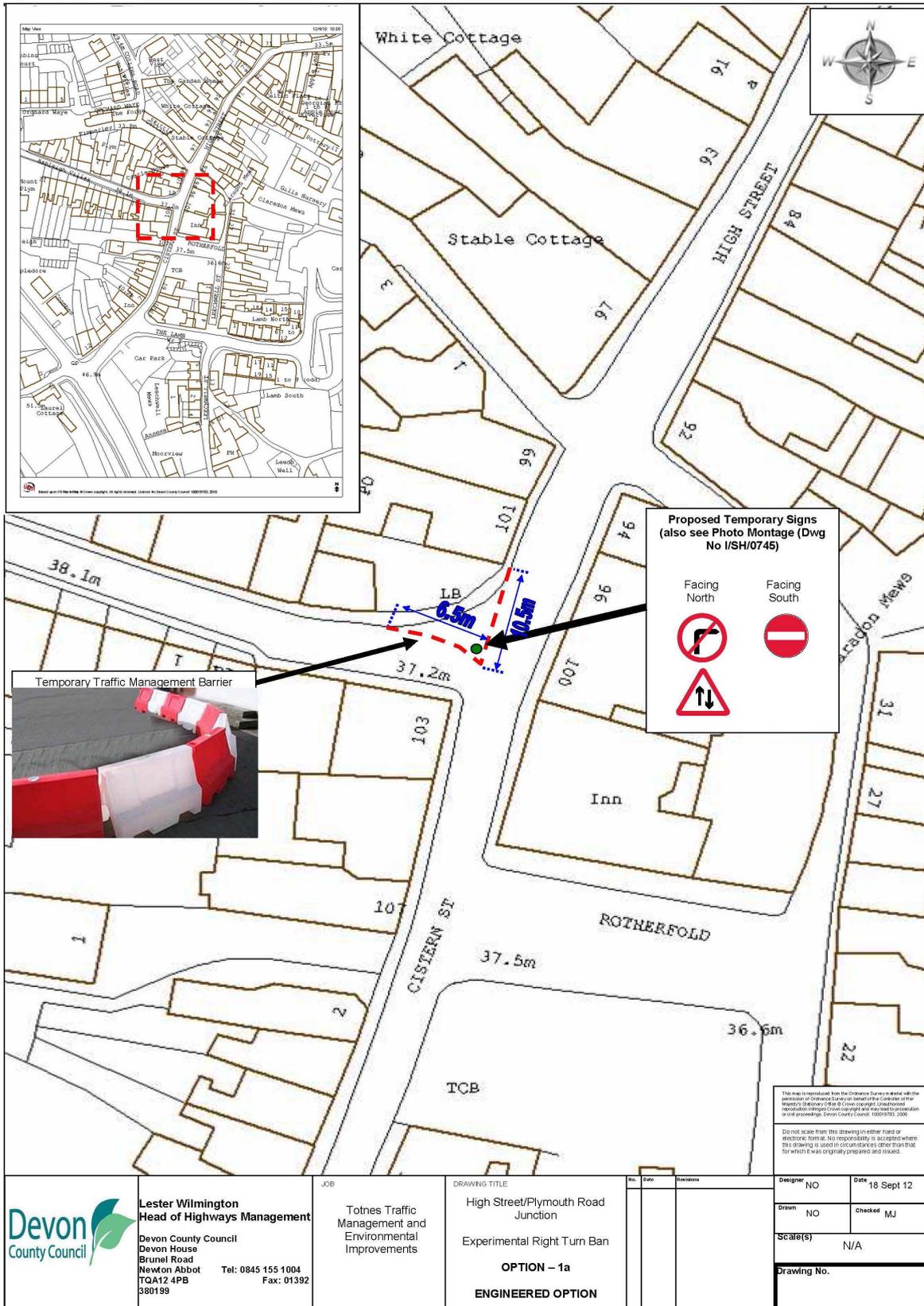
This in effect asked for a yes or no response to implementation of Option 1b, which, whilst easily implemented, has the disadvantage of relying on signing only, an approach which is already seen to be ineffective on Fore Street and High Street.

The numbers responding to the consultation were impressive as a percentage of the population of the town. However, as respondents were only asked to enter a postcode, there is no way of verifying that most responses were from Totnes residents or to ensure that only one vote was recorded from each respondent. The results of the consultation were as follows:-

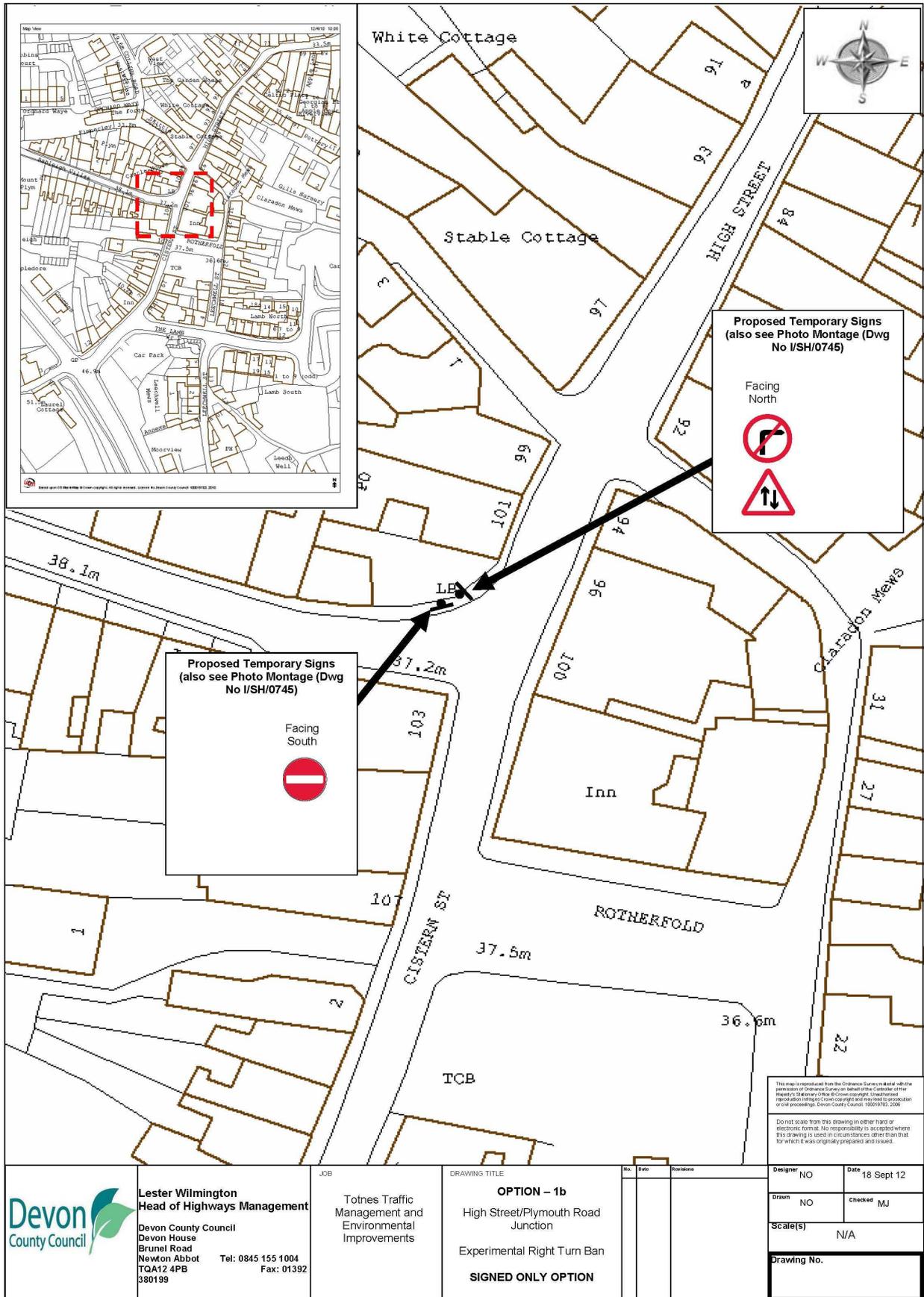
	Yes	No	Incomplete Vote	Total Votes
Paper vote	45	169	6	219
Online vote	166	209	90	465
Total	211	378	96	685
% of vote	31%	55%	14%	100%

Devon County Council expressed concern that the consultation only considered a single proposal and that many of the responses could not be attributed to single individuals or organisations. Discussions with Town Councillors then took place and it was agreed that the remaining three options should be prepared for public consultation and that this should be undertaken by the County Council with names and addresses of respondents required

Appendix II To HTM/12/71



**Appendix III
To HTM/12/71**



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JOB
Totnes Traffic Management and Environmental Improvements

DRAWING TITLE
OPTION - 1b
High Street/Plymouth Road Junction
Experimental Right Turn Ban
SIGNED ONLY OPTION

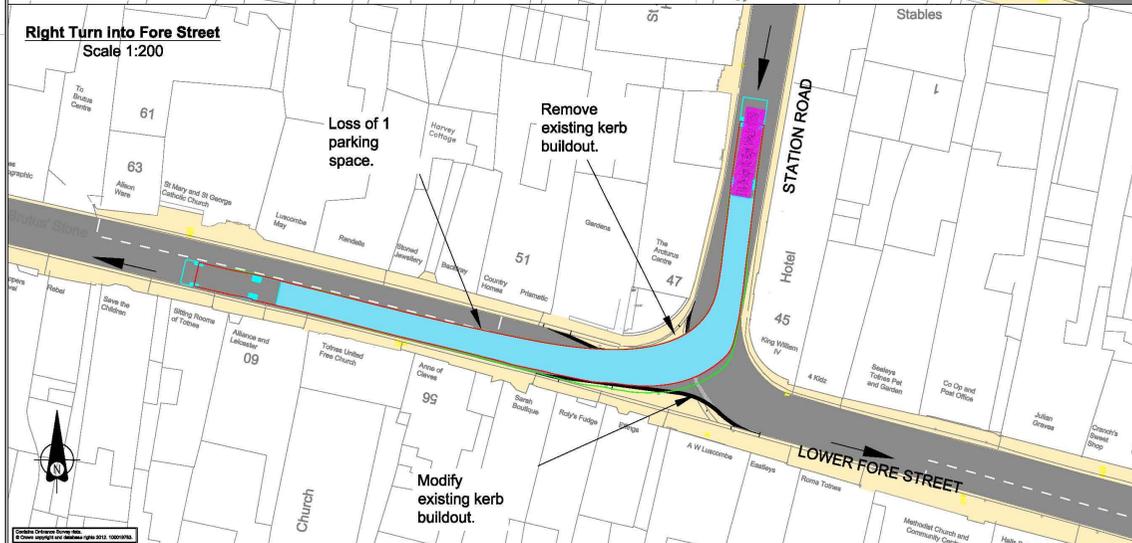
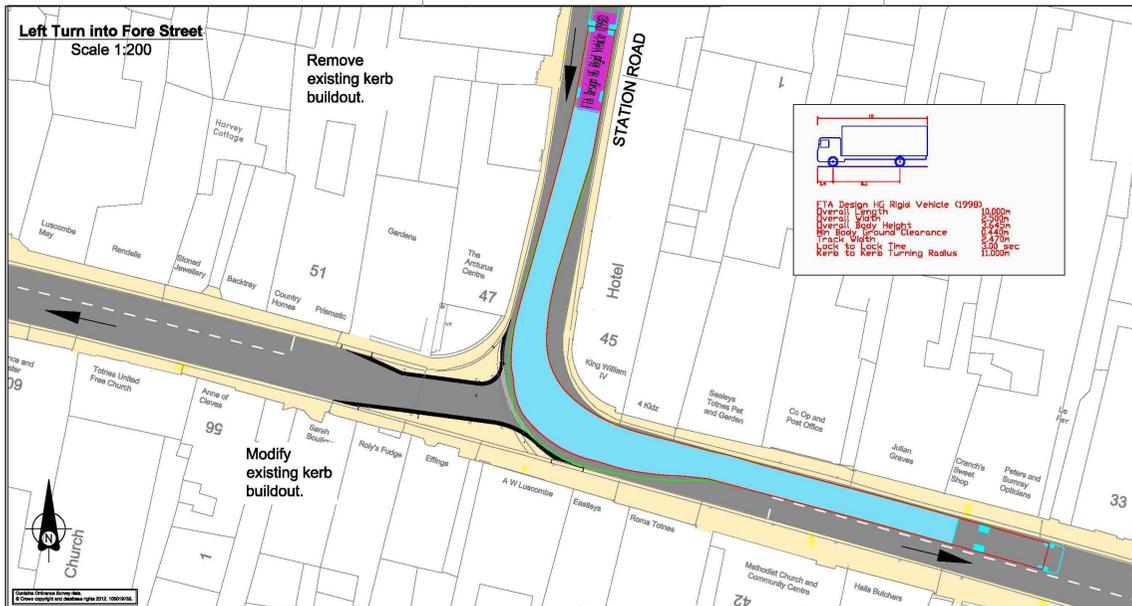
No.	Date	Revisions

Designed	NO	Date	18 Sept 12
Drawn	NO	checked	MJ
Scale(s)	N/A		
Drawing No.			

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Appendix IV To HTM/12/71



OPTION 2 : REVERSAL OF FLOW ON STATION ROAD AND LOWER FORE STREET

This option would prevent drivers from travelling directly from The Plains Roundabout to the Plymouth Road Signals via Fore Street and High Street but still allow legitimate access to properties and businesses via the Coronation Rd Roundabout.

The measure would also prevent drivers from using Fore Street and Station Rd as a short cut to access the Coronation Rd Roundabout. The traffic survey in December 2011 indicated that a significant number of drivers might be doing this.

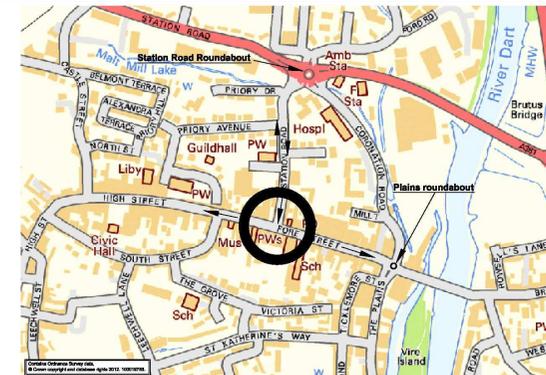
Large Articulated HGV's would not be able to access Fore St via Station road. The vehicle tracks on the drawings show how the largest possible vehicle, a 10 metre long Large Rigid HGV, could negotiate the "King Bill" corner. Most deliveries on Fore Street and High Street use smaller vehicles than this.

Removal of some of the pavement outside the Arcturus Centre would be required along with removal of one parking space on Upper Fore Street.

This option could be introduced experimentally for a period of up to 18 months over which time its effects could be fully evaluated. If at the end of the consultation it is decided that the experiment has not worked then the current layout would be re-established.



View of lower Fore Street from the Plains Roundabout



Location Plan

Engineering Design Group
Devon County Council
 Matford Offices
 County Hall
 Topsham Road
 Exeter
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 Tel. 0845 155 1004
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FORE STREET AND HIGH STREET
 TOTNES
 TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT PROPOSALS

DRAWING TITLE
 OPTION 2: REVERSAL OF FLOW ON
 STATION ROAD AND LOWER FORE STREET

No.	Date	Revisions

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Design	CHKD	Date
Drawn	FH	September 2012
Checked		

As shown **A1**
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APPENDIX VIII

