

A380 South Devon Highway: 50mph Speed Limit Boundary

Report of the Chief Officer of Highways, Infrastructure Development and Waste

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

Recommendations: It is recommended that:

- (a) Approval is given to advertise the proposed Traffic Regulation Order;**
- (b) if no objection is received, the Traffic Regulation Order as advertised, be made, sealed and implemented; and**
- (c) if objections are received, the proposed Traffic Regulation Order is reviewed.**

1. Background/Introduction

The South Devon Highway was opened to the public on 15 December 2015. It is a dual carriageway that was built to by-pass Kingskerswell and reduce journey times between Torbay and Newton Abbot/Exeter.

When the South Devon Highway was opened, a 50mph speed limit was introduced on the A380 between a point approximately 600 metres north of Penn Inn and a point approximately 400 metres north of Hamelin Way.

During the Stage 4 Road Safety Audit (RSA) for the South Devon Link Road, it was observed that drivers' speeds at the approach to Penn Inn are high. This reduces their manoeuvre time to move to the correct lane which increases the likelihood of there being a collision. The recommendation within the RSA is to extend the 50mph speed limit on Besigheim Way further north for traffic approaching Penn Inn.

This report outlines the proposal to move the 50mph speed limit boundary on the northern end of the South Devon Link Road in order to improve compliance with the existing speed limit and to facilitate the change of lane at the approach to Penn Inn junction.

2. Proposal

To reduce traffic speeds and to reduce the likelihood of a collision on the South Devon Highway and on Besigheim Way (specifically on the southbound approach to the Penn Inn junction), it is proposed that the speed limit boundary is moved further north on Besigheim Way. This will increase the area in which motorists must drive at the 50mph speed limit and will allow motorists additional time to change lane when approaching the Penn Inn junction.

The proposal consists of moving the two 50mph speed limit terminal signs for the southbound traffic, which are currently located 610 metres north of the junction with Penn Inn, to 1110 metres north of the same junction. The proposed location for these signs are marked on the plan in Appendix I.

In addition to moving the speed limit boundary, it is necessary to install an additional speed limit repeater sign.

3. Consultations/Representations/Technical Data

In the Stage 4 Road Safety Audit, the audit team raised as problem 8.2:

‘Three of the six collisions on approach to the southbound Penn Inn diverge have either involved late decisions and sudden manoeuvres from the nearside lane to the offside leading to loss of control, or rear end shunts resulting from sudden braking downstream traffic and drivers not reacting to rapidly developing queues of traffic. Observations on site show tyre tracks from the Penn Inn diverge across the diverge nose onto the flyover and a demolished sign.

‘The sharp braking and late manoeuvres of drivers from the nearside to offside lane indicate that approach speeds are likely to be high and drivers are not being given enough advance signing (that only the offside lane continues south to Torquay) to make manoeuvres safely. These late manoeuvres are manifesting into additional queueing traffic....

‘...the 50mph terminal north of Penn Inn could be relocated further north to maximise drivers time manoeuvre to the correct lane prior to the diverge.’

On 26 July 2018, the HATOC committee discussed the HATOC report No. HIW/18/57 which related to the introduction of average speed cameras on the South Devon Highway. The HATOC Committee resolved that the principle of installation of Average Speed Cameras on the South Devon Highway be approved and that the formal approval for funding of the proposal be sought from Cabinet.

During the Cabinet Meeting on 12 September 2018, the introduction of average speed cameras on the South Devon Highway was discussed, referring to the HATOC report No. HIW/18/57. The Cabinet Member for Highways Management commented that ‘since the opening of the road, there had been local concern around speed and enforcement with speeding creating added risk to other highway users as well as unwanted noise for those who lived nearby’.

The Cabinet Members resolved that *‘the proposals for the installation of Average Speed Cameras on the A380 South Devon Highway, with associated changes in signing and any necessary amendments to the Traffic Regulation Order, be formally approved at an estimated cost of £285,000, with the capital costs to be met from the South Devon Highway capital scheme budget and the revenue costs from the highway revenue budget’.*

This proposal to move the 50mph boundary will not affect the introduction of average speed cameras currently programmed to be installed in the winter of 2018/19. However, it should be noted that there will now be a section of the 50mph limit not covered by the cameras at the northern end of the road. This section will give drivers the opportunity to ensure they are at the correct speed after changing from the national speed limit to the 50mph speed limit.

4. Financial Considerations

The proposal is estimated to cost £8,000 which incorporates a 20% contingency. The funding will come from the capital allocation for the South Devon Link Road.

5. Environmental Impact Considerations

The environmental issues associated with excessive speeds are:

- Increased road noise
- Reduction in air quality

It is likely that there will be a reduction in traffic speeds on this dual carriageway with this increased 50mph zone, which will decrease the road noise and improve the air quality.

6. Equality Considerations

There are no negative equality impacts recognised. There is the positive effect of reducing health inequality by improving air quality in this area.

7. Legal Considerations

The changes to the speed limit will require a statutory consultation in line with the legislation before a final decision can be made on whether to implement the proposal.

The enforcement of the traffic speeds is the responsibility of Devon and Cornwall Police. The signage and TRO are the responsibility of Devon County Council.

When making a Speed Limit 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.

8. Risk Management Considerations

There is a risk that there will be objections by motorists who do not approve of the 50mph speed limit on this section of the South Devon Link Road. Some members of the public believe that the current speed limit is conservative for the type of road and given the design, should have a higher speed limit. This could lead to a higher number of infractions and complaints when the speed limit boundary is moved.

9. Public Health Impact

This proposal was a recommendation from the Stage 4 Road Safety Audit for the South Devon Link Road to improve safety along this section of the road.

The relocation of the speed limit boundary is expected to lead to reduced speeds along Besigheim Way, which if there were to be a collision, should be less severe due to the lower speeds. The local residents will also benefit from reduced noise and air pollution.

10. Options/Alternatives

Other locations for the speed limit boundary were discussed. However, it was decided due to various parameters such as, visibility, available space to install the proposed signs, distance from the Penn Inn junction; that the location for the new speed limit boundary marked on the plan in Appendix I is the most suitable location.

11. Summary/Conclusions/Reasons for Recommendations

A recommendation of the Stage 4 Road Safety Audit for the South Devon Link Road is to move the speed limit boundary further north of Penn Inn.

The proposal seeks to move the 50mph speed limit boundary on Besigheim Way to 1,110 metres to the north of the junction of Penn Inn (500m north of the existing location). This should lead to slower traffic speeds on approaches to the Penn Inn junction and on the northern end of the South Devon Link Road. This should improve the safety of motorist on this road and improve the local area by decreasing air and noise pollution.

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Local Government Act 1972: List of Background Papers

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Background Paper	Date	File Reference
HATOC Report – A380 South Devon Highway: Average Speed Cameras	26 th July 2018	HIW/18/57
Cabinet Meeting Minutes – Item 224	12 th July 2018	

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Appendix I
To HIW/18/82

Proposed 50mph speed limit relocation drawing

