

Appraisal of Western Bypass Crossing at Plymouth Road, Totnes

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

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

Recommendation: It is recommended that Members determine which option that they wish to support from those outlined in section 3 of this report.

1. Background/Introduction

At the HATOC meeting on 23 November 2018 a petition was presented requesting an additional light-controlled crossing on the north arm of the junction between the Western Bypass and Plymouth Road in Totnes. Members requested that a report on the proposal be brought to this meeting.

2. Main Text/Proposal

The junction of Plymouth Road and the Western Bypass in Totnes is controlled by traffic signals. A light controlled crossing point on the south side of the junction was installed as a part of the Casualty Severity Reduction Scheme programme in 2006 to allow pedestrians to cross the Western Bypass safely. There are existing central traffic islands which allows pedestrians to cross the Western Bypass in two movements on both sides of the junction. The current layout is shown in Appendix I.

There is a pedestrian link from Collapark and Paige Adams Road that connects to the west side of the Western Bypass just to the north of the junction. Residents using this link and wishing to walk into Totnes either need to cross Plymouth Road to access the light-controlled crossing on the south side of the junction or cross on the north side using the central island.

Mrs Lawson presented a petition of 64 signatures to the meeting of this Committee on 23 November 2018 following a collision on 1 October 2018 which occurred when an 11 year old boy was crossing the Western Bypass on the north side the traffic signals and was hit by a vehicle. The petition asked for an additional light controlled crossing on the north side of the junction. There have been no other pedestrian collisions recorded at or near this junction in the past five years. An injury collision was recorded in 2014 involved a car hitting the back of motorcyclist in queueing traffic on the west side of the junction.

A staggered crossing in two separate signal controlled stages (one across the northbound lane and one across the two southbound lanes) could be introduced by increasing the length of time on the appropriate existing signal stages, this would have a negligible effect on the operation of the junction. However, there does not appear to be sufficient existing road width to add a staggered crossing. If either or both the existing crossing points are proposed to be straight through crossings, they would require an all red stage for vehicle movements at the junction, which would have a significant impact on traffic flows on both the Western Bypass and Plymouth Road.

The options are highlighted in the next section.

3. Options/Alternatives

Options available are:

- (a) To leave the current layout as it is.
- (b) To investigate the addition of a staggered two-stage crossing point on the north side of the junction. The two stages would be one crossing the northbound lane and one crossing the southbound lanes. However there does not appear to be sufficient existing road width to put in a staggered crossing with an enlarged central island and so this option may not be achievable.
- (c) To investigate the addition of a straight through crossing on both sides of the junction. Pedestrians would be able to cross in one movement but this would have a substantial impact on the traffic flows through the junction.
- (d) To investigate the options for putting in a crossing point to allow pedestrians to more readily cross the western arm of Plymouth Road to access the south crossing point on the Western Bypass. The options are likely to be limited by the width of the road. If this was signal controlled it would require an additional all red phase at the junction to stop people entering or leaving Plymouth Road, substantially reducing vehicle capacity at the junction.

4. Consultations/Representations/Technical Data

A letter and petition with 64 signatures was presented at the meeting of this Committee on 23 November, a copy of this is attached as Appendix II.

5. Financial Considerations

Any of the identified options will need a detailed design and study before the feasibility, costs and the implications on traffic flows can be fully considered. A feasibility assessment is to be commissioned funded through Section 106 contributions from local development. Delivery of a preferred option will be dependent upon clarifying the cost and identifying funding.

6. Environmental Impact Considerations

Option (b) would have a positive benefit for pedestrians, reducing the need to use a car, as it will aid crossing of this junction on the north side.

Option (c) would allow pedestrians to cross the southbound and northbound traffic lanes but would have a substantial impact on traffic flows and would increase traffic congestion and emissions from stationary traffic.

Option (d) will have a positive benefit for pedestrians as it will enable Plymouth Road to be crossed more easily to reach the light-controlled crossing point on the south side of the junction.

7. Equality Considerations

The requested crossing will have a positive benefit for pedestrians as it will aid crossing of this junction on the northern side. However, it will have a negative impact for car drivers as it will cause additional delays for traffic movements at the junction.

8. Legal Considerations

There are no specific legal considerations.

9. Risk Management Considerations

In her petition Anthea Lawson requests that action be taken before another collision occurs. There have been no other recorded pedestrian collisions at this junction in the previous five years.

Adding additional pedestrian phases to this junction will increase the delays for traffic and increase traffic congestion on the Western Bypass.

10. Public Health Impact

Changing the pedestrian crossing facilities at this junction may increase the number pedestrian journeys from the Plymouth Road area into Totnes.

11. Summary/Conclusions/Reasons for Recommendations

Options to improve provision for pedestrian crossing movements at this signal controlled junction are detailed in Section 3. The implications on safety and traffic flows will need to be carefully assessed as part of a feasibility study.

Meg Booth
Chief Officer for Highways, Infrastructure Development and Waste

Electoral Division: Totnes & Dartington

Local Government Act 1972: List of Background Papers

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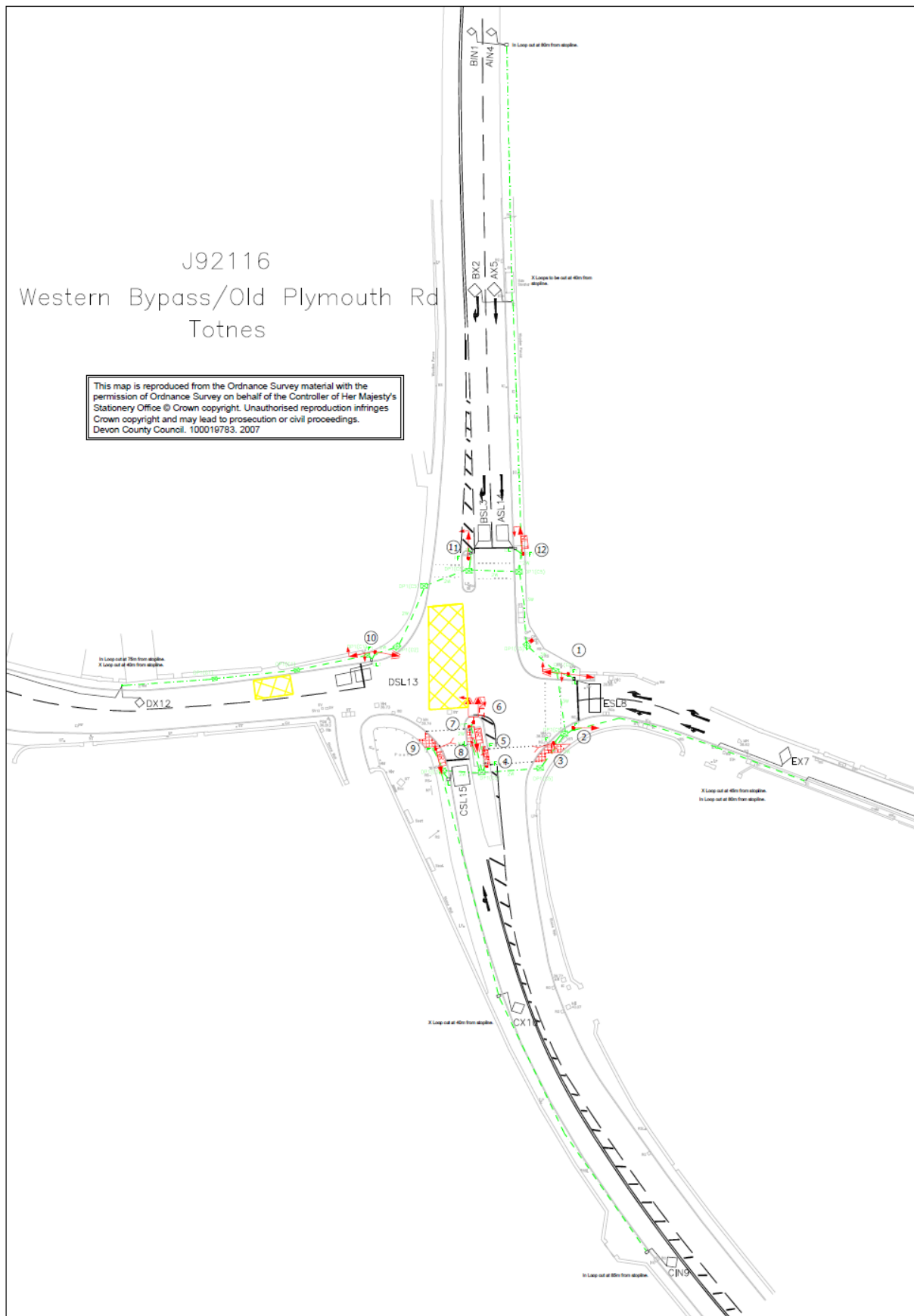
Tel No: 01392 38 3000

Background Paper	Date	File Ref.
None		

jf140319shh
sc/cr/Appraisal of Western Bypass Crossing at Plymouth Road Totnes
04 280319

**Appendix I
To HIW/19/35**

Plan of current junction layout



Letter and Petition presented by Anthea Lawson

Anthea Lawson



South Hams Highways and Traffic Orders Committee
c/o Councillor Roger Croad, Committee Chair

23 November 2018

Dear Councillors,

Re: urgent need for a pelican crossing of the Totnes Western Bypass at Plymouth Road on the north/downhill side of the junction

I am writing as a Totnes resident and a concerned parent, with the support of many of my neighbours in Farwell Road, Paige Adams Road and Lower Collapark/Collapark, to ask that your committee do what is necessary to agree and fund the installation of a pelican or other safe form of crossing where Plymouth Road crosses the Bypass out of Totnes.

An 11-year-old boy, Alfred Scott-Howarth was hit by a car while crossing the road there on the way home from school, at 3.45pm on 1st October. He is still recovering from his injuries, though fortunately they are not ultimately too serious. His mother's statement follows this letter.

For those of us who have to get small children across that junction several times a day, this accident appeared inevitable. And unless your committee acts to install a safe pedestrian crossing, the next more serious accident remains inevitable.

The car that hit Alfred was moving slowly, having only just moved off when the light turned green. The potential remains not only for a repeat of this scenario, but also for a much more serious collision involving a car moving very fast around the corner. It is our view that it is only a matter of time before somebody is seriously hurt or even killed. We don't want it to be our child, and we don't want it to be anyone else's child either.

This is why we organised the protest that was featured on the front of the Totnes Times on 12 October, and why we have collected more than 60 signatures for a petition calling for a safe crossing. We note that a safe crossing for this junction is already included in Totnes Town Council's 2014 'Traffic and Transport Policy.'

I have focused in this letter on getting children across the junction, but I could equally focus on the significant proportion of elderly residents of the affected roads, and how difficult it is to cross for those who cannot think or move quickly or easily.

Below is a brief summary of the problem.

- Residents of Farwell Road, Paige Adams Road, Lower Collapark and the eastern half of Collapark walk into town through the footpath at the top of Paige Adams Road, which emerges on the northwest corner of the Plymouth Rd/Bypass junction.

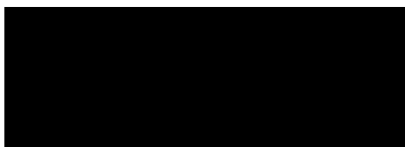
- While there is a pelican crossing of the Bypass on the south side of the junction, there is no safe way across Plymouth road on the western side to reach it.
- There is no gap in the traffic sequence to get all the way across the Bypass. The best option is to find a gap in one direction of traffic at a time, which leaves pedestrians stranded on a tiny island with no kerbs in the middle, barely wide enough for a buggy and the person pushing it, as lorries thunder past.
- In the absence of a pedestrian light, walkers are left to interpret the traffic lights. This is a lot to ask, especially for people who don't know the junction, or for children learning to cross roads by themselves. For example, the separate light for southbound traffic on the Bypass to turn right (westwards) into Plymouth Road is confusing for pedestrians. I have seen an extract from the police report for the recent accident where Alfred Scott-Howarth was run over, and it was on this part of the junction.
- Drivers emerging from Plymouth Road, from either direction, to turn north down the Bypass:
 - cannot see pedestrians waiting to cross;
 - cannot be seen by pedestrians trying to cross until they are already moving round the corner with only 2 or 3 metres of stopping distance;
 - are often accelerating hard at this point, either to catch the end of the green light they're using to turn, or because their lights have just turned green and they feel free to get moving;
 - are inconsistent in their use of indicators when making this turn, so it is impossible for pedestrians to judge whether they are going to turn and whether there's a chance to make a dash for it.

When I was collecting signatures for the petition we're bringing you, I learnt just how many of my neighbours are terrified of this junction. I realised, in these conversations, that the horrific mental images that assail me regularly, of my kids under the wheel of a vehicle, are widely shared. One woman who raised her children here, and hated crossing with them years ago, described how, now she's a grandmother, she *places herself in the path of the traffic from her grandson so the cars will hit her first*. People shouldn't have to do this.

There's describing the problem, and then there is experiencing it. Whenever I use that crossing with a friend who lives in another part of town, they are horrified at how dangerous it is; it really is apparent as soon as one crosses there. I urge you to please visit the site, particularly in the morning or afternoon rush hour, to experience the difficulties for yourselves.

And then, please, can you do what is necessary to install a pelican crossing before something truly awful happens and you find yourselves having to explain why you didn't do it after Alfred Scott-Howarth was hit by a car in October 2018.

Yours sincerely,



Anthea Lawson

Statement from Wendy Howarth, mother of Alfred Scott-Howarth, 11, who was run over at the Plymouth Road/Bypass junction on 1 October 2018

Alfred was just trying to cross the road on his way home from school. He couldn't see the lights clearly and didn't understand the feeder lane was just given the green light. The poor driver was just pulling away as Alfred tried to cross. Luckily she was at a slow speed and only caught him with the side of the car.

The emergency services initially thought Alfred had internal injuries and called the air ambulance as the nearest paediatric emergency unit is in Bristol. After assessment in the ambulance the paramedics decided he was less likely to have internal injuries so decided Torbay Hospital was the best option.

Alfred had hit the ground face first and was very lucky as he got away with a broken nose and severe bruising to his face and abdomen. It could all have been so much worse. He was in hospital for two days as there was still concern that he had internal bleeding. He then had to go back to hospital the following week to have his nose reset. He has missed three weeks of school and still cannot take part in physical activities while his nose heals.

At the time of the accident two men initially helped Alfred until the emergency services arrived. I would dearly like to thank them!

Two police cars, an ambulance, a paramedic first response car and an air ambulance attended the scene with a view to the air ambulance landing in the middle of the crossroads but this was stood down. Alfred's Dad was given a police escort to get him to the scene as he had to drive from Riverford farm where he works. Both myself and Alfred's brother ran from Maudlin Road to the scene. Totnes was gridlocked because of all this and so the ambulance had to 'blue light' to get through the stationary traffic.

Once at the hospital there was a large team emergency staff waiting for Alfred. I say all this because I want to illustrate the impact that Alfred's accident had on so many people. Myself and family have never been so scared, indeed Alfred's Dad fainted once at the hospital.

The driver of the car was distraught even though the police deemed it an accident with no fault on either party. We estimate over 50 people were involved in treating him. I am in awe of our emergency services and cannot thank them enough. The cost of all this to our emergency services must be staggering, and I write all this to show the impact on them and our town.

I have always worried about my children walking home from school because of traffic. I have lived here all my life and have watched my home town become more and more choked with traffic. This is a place where people live and walk and cycle yet priority is given to the car. The bypass /Plymouth Road junction is lethal and pedestrians need to be given priority. As an adult I am nervous crossing here. Children attempting to navigate the crossing are in particular danger as it is complicated to predict what is happening because of the different lanes active at different times.

It should be an absolute priority that a comprehensive crossing system is installed here. We should not have to wait until someone is killed before anything is done.

The police told me that they want a proper pedestrian crossing here but have been told more proof is needed of the safety problem. You now have that proof: what happened to my son shows that the junction is confusing and dangerous. Please, don't wait until you have worse proof than this.

DR SARAH WOLLASTON MP

Member of Parliament for Totnes



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

SW/ns

16th November 2018

To whom it may concern.

I met recently with constituents who set out the urgent need for a pelican crossing to be installed at the Totnes Western Bypass at Plymouth Road on the north/downhill side of the junction.

I agree that this measure would improve the safety of pedestrians in the area especially that of children, as I understand a child has recently been injured at this site. Ensuring safe crossing on this road is also beneficial from an environmental perspective as this will allow parents to feel more confident about their children walking to school rather than driving. This is both positive in terms of reducing vehicle pollution and from the point of view of encouraging people to either walk or cycle their journeys.

I do hope you are able to look favourably on this proposal.

Regards,



Dr Sarah Wollaston MP

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Residents campaign for a safe crossing



Contributed
Residents who live in Follaton, Totnes, close to the junction between Plymouth Road and the Western by-pass, say the junction is unsafe and are campaigning for a new crossing. See story on page 3



Healthy farming

An innovative project is aiming to tackle mental health issues in farming communities

See page 7

Respect for gulls

Maya Plass

argues that the often maligned gulls deserve a little more respect

See page 28



Council posts 209

New To Totnes