

Western Road, Ivybridge Parking Relocation

Report of the Head of Planning, Transport and Environment

Please note that the following recommendations are subject to consideration and determination by the Cabinet (and confirmation under the provisions of the Council's Constitution) before taking effect.

Recommendations: That

- (a) the preferred scheme be approved to proceed to tender;**
- (b) the Head of Planning, Transportation and Environment be given delegated powers, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Highway Management and the local member, to make minor amendments to the scheme details;**
- (c) required Traffic Regulation Orders are advertised and, if no objections are received, be made and sealed;**
- (d) the scheme be approved for construction at an estimated cost of £450,000, subject to the funding being confirmed.**

1. Summary

Western Road Ivybridge is the main arterial entry and egress from the Town. It currently suffers from congestion and is an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA). The main contributor to these problems is the width restriction caused by the parked cars. A public consultation was held from 14 January 2019 to 3 March 2019 to consider a scheme which relocates the existing on-street car parking on Western Road, Ivybridge to alleviate these problems. This report considers the outcomes of this and makes a recommendation for a preferred scheme.

2. Background/Introduction

Western Road AQMA

Western Road, Ivybridge was declared an AQMA in 2009 due to poor levels of Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂) in breach of the national objective levels. The main cause of the elevated levels of NO₂ is believed to be associated with road transport. The on-street parking provision between the A38 roundabout and Marjorie Kelly Way roundabout creates a pinchpoint and causes 'stop-start' conditions where the carriageway narrows, preventing two-way flow of traffic. The gradual build-up of queues causes congestion and the idling of engines waiting to pass creates a build-up of NO₂. Traffic modelling has demonstrated that the removal of the on-street parking would smooth flows of traffic along Western Road. The removal of the existing bottleneck would reduce levels of pollution and form an important element of alleviating the poor air quality within the AQMA.

Devon County Council Air Quality and Congestion Task Group

On 26 September 2017, the Corporate, Infrastructure and Regulatory Services Scrutiny Committee resolved to set up the Air Quality and Congestion Task Group. Whilst air pollution concentrations are generally low in Devon compared with urban areas in the rest of the UK, it does have some hotspots where there are severe air pollution and congestion problems. This includes Ivybridge. One of the recommendations of the Task Group was that "DCC continues to implement the measures outlined in the Devon and Torbay Local

Transport Plan (2011-2026) and continues to review the progress of the measures implemented". A recent update in January 2019 to the Corporate, Infrastructure and Regulatory Services Scrutiny Committee highlighted that the Local Transport Plan is supporting a scheme proposal to remove on-street parking and footpath improvements on Western Road.

A Clean Air Strategy for South Hams and West Devon

In April 2018, South Hams District Council consulted on 'A Clean Air Strategy for South Hams and West Devon: Incorporating the Air Quality Action Plans', which included measures identified by Devon County Council which could be implemented to meet the air quality objectives in the district. One of the identified schemes was to remove the on-street parking on Western Road.

3. Proposal

Existing Conditions

Western Road is an important route in Ivybridge, connecting the town centre with the A38. However, it is also part of a residential area of the town, with properties lining the road on both the northern and southern side.

The northern edge of the Western Road carriageway has 22 on-street car parking spaces. These are included within the Devon County Council Ivybridge permit area 'C' and are well used throughout the day. However, the width of the carriageway combined with the on-street parking provision prevents two-way flow of traffic. Queues build-up, particularly in peak times, as drivers wait for an opportunity to pass the parked cars. The idling of engines and variable speeds have resulted in an AQMA being designated along the road.

The footpath provision on both the northern and southern side of Western Way are of variable, sub-standard widths with limited crossing opportunities. Vehicles are often aligned close to the kerb to maximise passing opportunities, resulting in pedestrians being in close proximity to passing traffic.

Scheme Proposals

The scheme proposes to introduce double yellow lines where parking is removed on Western Road. The 22 on-street car parking spaces will be relocated to the verge between Wayside and Western Road. The spaces will be aligned to the east of the verge and will also utilise the footprint of the old fire station building which will be demolished as part of the scheme. A footway will be provided in front of the new spaces and a new footway connection will be provided east of the fire station building to connect to the Western Road footway. This will remove the existing on-street pinchpoint and enable two-way flow of traffic along Western Road. The smoother traffic flows and reduction in idling engines will address the existing air quality issues.

It is proposed that the new spaces are retained in the existing Ivybridge zone 'C' permit area, ensuring that the spaces represent a 'like for like' replacement of the existing spaces on Western Road. Those who can currently park on Western Road will be able to park in the new spaces. This will also ensure that the scheme does not introduce an unacceptable impact on the availability of spaces in zone 'C'. To enable this, the land which forms the footprint of the car park will need to be transferred from South Hams District Council ownership to Devon County Council. Devon County Council will then undertake enforcement, maintenance and assume all liability associated with the car park.

The northern footway along Western Road between the fire station and Marjorie Kelly Way roundabout will be widened to a minimum of 2m, except for a short pinchpoint of width 1.8m. A zebra crossing is proposed between Park Street and Clare Street, with some widening

included on the southern footway to accommodate this. These elements of the scheme will improve the environment for pedestrians, with safe and convenient walking routes and crossing facilities provided. Addressing the existing sub-standard provision for active travel will also help to encourage modal shift for short distance trips in the local vicinity.

The new Western Road carriageway between the old fire station building and Marjorie Kelly Way will be narrowed to 6m in width. This will provide the necessary space for footway widening, whilst also ensuring the width is appropriate for the 30mph, urban road. The opportunity to resurface some of the existing carriageway will also be taken. The combination of a 6m carriageway and the provision of a zebra crossing will help control the speed of vehicles using the road and improve the safety of the environment for all users.

A preliminary scheme plan is provided in Appendix I to this report.

4. Consultations/Representations/Technical Data

Consultation Method

A public consultation was held between 14 January 2019 and 3 March 2019 which presented scheme options for the layout of the new car park as well as options for the permitting of the spaces. The consultation was posted on the Council's Have Your Say website. Local residents, nearby businesses, and a number of community groups were contacted separately as part of this consultation. Proposals were also presented to Ivybridge Town Council and a drop-in public exhibition was held at Ivybridge Library which was attended by over 140 people.

In total 102 questionnaires were received during the consultation period. These responses showed overall support for the need to improve traffic flow along Western Road (77% of respondents agreeing with this). A Public Consultation Report has been prepared and is available on the website at:

<https://devoncc.sharepoint.com/:b:/s/PublicDocs/Highways/EfWOfdEIYotMg4sNzCU7Uh4BBFeWLwS6m0P8RTQvPln0ZQ>

Parking Layout

The consultation responses helped inform the options selected for the recommended preferred scheme. Two options were presented for the layout of the parking spaces;

- **Option A:** parking spaces relocated along the entire length of the Wayside verge, with the fire station footprint providing a pedestrian enhancement area
- **Option B:** parking spaces relocated on the fire station footprint and some of the Wayside verge, resulting in the retention of more greenspace.

Option B was preferred by the majority of respondents, due to the preservation of more greenspace and it was felt this was a better use of the fire station footprint. This is the layout recommended as the preferred scheme.

Management and Permitting of Spaces

Views were also sought on a number of permitting and management options;

- **Inclusion within existing Ivybridge parking permit zone 'C':** to be managed by Devon County Council's permit scheme
- **Allocation of spaces to specific houses:** to be managed by a South Hams District Council permit scheme
- **Leaving parking spaces unallocated.**

The option of retaining the parking spaces within the existing Ivybridge parking permit zone 'C' was preferred by 64% of respondents. This option is the closest to the existing scenario and would ensure those with existing permits for zone 'C' will be eligible to park in the new spaces. The alternative options would not mitigate the impact of losing 22 spaces from the existing permit area and would result in an unacceptable detrimental impact. This is therefore the proposed management and permitting arrangement in the preferred option. Negotiations and consultation are currently taking place with the landowner, South Hams District Council.

Rose Cottage Bus Stop

Views were also sought on the potential relocation of the Rose Cottage westbound bus stop. The existing bus stop is on the western end of Western Road, on the approach to the A38 roundabout. The proximity to the roundabout limits overtaking opportunities, causing queueing and delays which block back into the signalised junction. A possible location for the bus stop was identified on the east of the signalised junction, opposite the eastbound bus lay-by. However, views were mixed on the support for this, with no majority view identified. Furthermore, additional design work has been undertaken since the close of the public consultation which has identified a number of safety concerns associated with the proposed bus stop location. It is therefore proposed that this is not included in the preferred scheme, with the potential to revisit bus stop improvements as a future scheme for Western Road.

Design Amendments

Following the end of the public consultation, views and suggestions were analysed and resulted in several design amendments. In particular, there were concerns raised by the public in relation to the potential for increased speeds along Western Road, with the on-street parking acting as a natural speed deterrent currently. The associated safety impacts on pedestrians was also raised, with the traffic running closer to the pedestrian environment without the parked cars forming a 'buffer'. In addition, it was felt the crossing facilities were inadequate given that traffic would be moving more freely and at higher speeds.

Whilst it is the intention that the scheme improves the traffic flow, it is not the intention that traffic speeds will significantly increase. Instead, the overall speeds should be more consistent and without start-stop conditions. However, it is recognised that the scheme should not improve air quality at the expense of safety for all users of Western Road. Amendments were therefore made to add a zebra crossing and widen the pavement from a minimum width of 1.6m to a minimum width of 2m. The carriageway width was also reduced to 6m, resulting in some further pavement widening on both sides of the road. These measures will contribute towards an environment which encourages vehicles speeds appropriate for the 30mph urban road which serves as both a key route to the town centre but a residential area.

5. Financial Considerations

The overall construction cost of the proposal is estimated to be approximately £450,000. This includes the construction of the new car park, demolition of the firestation building, widening of the footways, provision of a zebra crossing, relevant Traffic Regulation Orders and some carriageway resurfacing. The scheme will be funded through a combination of Local Transport Plan funds and Section 106 contributions received or expected from various developments including Stowford Mill, Cornwood Road and Woodland Road Phase 2.

The scheme will not commence, until the package of funding has been confirmed and agreed with the County Treasurer.

6. Environmental Impact Considerations

The key scheme objective is to improve the air quality of the Western Road AQMA through improved traffic flow. By removing the existing pinchpoint and enabling two-way traffic flow, engine idling will be reduced, and smoother speeds will be achieved.

In addition, the scheme will increase the attractiveness of walking and provide facilities for a range of other users. This will allow better access to the town centre and local amenities, including schools, and contribute towards discouraging short distance vehicle trips, reducing carbon emissions and improving the air quality of the area.

The scheme does involve the loss of greenspace and trees, albeit less than the alternative parking layout. It is suggested that this is mitigated through some improvement to the remaining greenspace with some form of planting or landscaping. In addition, the removal of a local eye-sore will be achieved through the demolition of the fire station building.

7. Equality Considerations

Where relevant to the decision, the Equality Act 2010 Public Sector Equality Duty requires decision makers to give due regard to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other prohibited conduct;
- advance equality by encouraging participation, removing disadvantage, taking account of disabilities and meeting people's needs; and
- foster good relations between people by tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.

Taking account of age, disability, race/ethnicity (includes Gypsies and Travellers), gender and gender identity, religion and belief, sexual orientation, pregnant women/new and breastfeeding mothers, marriage/civil partnership status in coming to a decision, a decision maker may also consider other relevant factors such as caring responsibilities, rural isolation or socio-economic disadvantage.

This may be achieved, for example, through completing a full Equality Impact Needs Assessment/Impact Assessment or other form of options/project management appraisal that achieves the same objective.

In progressing this particular scheme/proposal, an Impact Assessment has been prepared which has been circulated separately to Cabinet Members and also is available on the Council's website at <https://www.devon.gov.uk/impact/western-road-ivybridge/>, which Members will need to consider for the purposes of this item.

8. Legal Considerations

The lawful implications/consequences of the proposals have been considered and taken into account in the preparation of this report and formulation of the recommendations set out above.

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.

It is considered that the proposals comply with Section 122 of the Act as they seek to reduce NO₂ emissions and improve air quality, whilst ensuring that suitable parking facilities which replicate the existing provision as far as possible.

9. Risk Management Considerations

The scheme cost estimate makes allowance for 20% contingency. However, it is noted that some amendments may be required to the scheme which could impact the scheme cost. Whilst the contingency should be sufficient to cover this, there is a risk the scheme cost estimate could increase. These cost increases will need to be met through further developer contributions, as and when development comes forward in the local area, or through Devon County Council Local Transport Plan budget.

A Road Safety Audit Stage 1 has been commissioned, and this may result in some design changes. However, it is expected that these will be limited given early informal consultation has been undertaken with the Road Safety team.

Western Power Distribution have not yet been consulted with regards to potential issues constructing the car parking over power cables in the verge. This may result in cost increases if issues are identified.

An agreement needs to be met with South Hams District Council with regards to the transfer of the land for the car park and the permitting arrangements of the new spaces. Should an agreement not be made, this could result in the scheme being unable to progress.

10. Options/Alternatives

Do Nothing

Should no scheme be delivered to remove the on-street parking on Western Road, it is anticipated that the existing problems caused by the pinchpoint will persist. This will result in the air quality of the area remaining above acceptable thresholds and the AQMA will remain. With allocated development taking place in Ivybridge during the Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan period, the vehicle demand in the town could be expected to increase. Over time, electric vehicles may become a more popular choice of vehicle and represent a greater proportion of the vehicles using Western Road. However, this is unlikely to have a significant improvement to air quality along Western Road in the short term.

A number of alternatives are identified in the South Hams District Council 'Clean Air Strategy'.

Southern Link Road

The delivery of a southern link road has been suggested as an option to alleviate traffic from the town centre and provide an alternative access to the A38 from the new developments in the east of Ivybridge. However, traffic forecasts evidence that this option provides limited relief in the key town centre roads, including Western Road. A significant volume of future traffic within Ivybridge would remain unaffected by the provision of a southern link road.

There are a number of additional constraints which make the delivery of the road unachievable at the present time, including:

- Location within flood Zone 3,
- Environmental impact of an intrusion into the countryside,
- No development in the Local Plan south of the A38 to provide a catalyst for the link road,
- Not included in the current Local Plan, and
- Significant third-party land acquisition.

A southern link road would therefore be a high cost solution with limited benefits and significant constraints.

New East of Ivybridge A38 Junction

This has previously been promoted by Ivybridge Town Council, however, it is not supported by Highways England due to the proximity of the existing junction at Ivybridge and an insufficient demand on the current junction or a proposed population serving the new junction. The associated costs of providing a new junction onto the A38 would be significant and require development well above that allocated in the current local plan to support it. The air quality impact of this option is similar to the Southern Link Road, with limited traffic utilising the proposed improvement as opposed to the existing routes through Ivybridge.

Promotion of Ultra Low Emission Vehicles (ULEVs), Green Travel Vouchers and Green Travel Planning

New developments are currently requested through Section 106 agreements to promote a variety of measures which contribute towards encouraging sustainable travel and as a result limit their air quality impact. However, these measures alone are unlikely to have a significant impact on air quality.

11. Reason for Recommendation/Conclusion

The proposed scheme would significantly improve the air quality of the designated AQMA in Western Road, Ivybridge through the relocation of on-street parking. Improving the traffic flow and enabling two-way traffic will reduce the build-up of NO₂ emissions and reduce congestion. The construction of a new car park on the verge between Wayside and Western Road would ensure those who use the Western Road parking have a suitable alternative.

The scheme would also provide enhanced provisions for active travel, with footway widening and a new zebra crossing included in the proposals. This will improve the perceived safety and convenience of alternatives to private car use for short distance trips, further adding to the potential for improved air quality in the area.

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Local Government Act 1972: List of Background Papers

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Background Paper	Date	File Reference
1. A Clean Air Strategy for South Hams and West Devon: Incorporating the Air Quality Action Plans	April 2018	https://www.southhams.gov.uk/article/3902/Air-Quality

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|----|---|---------------|---|
| 2. | Ivybridge Transport Study –
Development and Transport
Study Traffic Forecasting
Report | May 2018 | https://devoncc.sharepoint.com/sites/PublicDocs/Highways/Roads/Forms/AllItems.aspx?id=%2Fsites%2FPublicDocs%2FHighways%2FRoads%2FTransport%20Planning%2FIvybridge%20Forecasting%20Report%202D%20Development%20and%20transport%20study%20traffic%20forecasting%20report%2Epdf&parent=%2Fsites%2FPublicDocs%2FHighways%2FRoads%2FTransport%20Planning&p=true&cid=7e411a10-99b7-4919-985c-620cdc2eaabd |
| 3. | Impact Assessment | 23 April 2019 | https://www.devon.gov.uk/impact/western-road-ivybridge/ |

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Appendix I To PTE/19/21

