

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.

Recommendation: It is recommended that the Upper Den Carriageway remains closed through the summer period.

1. 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 1 May and 10 September each year. During the period when it is open parking is controlled by pay and display machines.

2. Main Text/Proposal

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

The road lies between the Den and the beach. Both the beach and the open space in the Den area is popular with visitors and family groups. There are a number of 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 in order 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 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 councils policies, as set out in section 6.

A number of 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 a number of years.

3. Options/Alternatives

The options are:

- (a) Allow the road to open during summer periods.
- (b) Retain the current road closure over summer periods.

4. Consultations/Representations/Technical Data

The proposal has been made by Teignmouth Town Council and supported by the local Member and Teignmouth Chamber of Trade, who all favour the additional parking that the proposal would provide over the summer period. 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.

The proposal is opposed by Teignbridge District Council for the following reasons:

- (a) There are safety concerns as the multiple crossing points on this road are used by large numbers of families, and others. The District Council feels that the road could not be reopened unless formal crossing points are added.
- (b) The “feel” of the area would be changed, as it would be dominated by vehicles rather than pedestrians, and this could impact visitor decisions.
- (c) It could affect the safety of the resort team, who use the area in the summer for bin cleaning and other roles.
- (d) It may prevent the use of the café seating associated with the former Beachcomber Restaurant, which it is proposed to reopen after a number of years, and affect its viability.
- (e) Campervans and emptying waste into highway drains could affect the excellent bathing water classification, leading to the loss of the prestigious blue flag.
- (f) It contravenes the County Councils and District Councils policies of promoting less polluting modes of transport and creating areas for pedestrians.

Any permanent change to the Traffic Regulation Order that prevents access during the summer months would need to be advertised.

5. 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 crosses, there would be a substantial extra cost.

6. 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 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.

7. 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.

8. Legal Considerations

The lawful implications/consequences of the proposals/recommendations/proposed course of action have been considered and taken into account in the preparation of this report.

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.

9. Risk Management Considerations

Currently the road is closed for vehicles over an extended summer period, and both visitors and locals will 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.

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.

It is intended that the former Beachcomber restaurant will reopen, currently the outside seating area is on the opposite side of this road. Staff at the restaurant would have to regularly cross the road with trays of food and drinks to access the outdoor seating area.

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.

10. 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.

11. Summary/Conclusions/Reasons for Recommendations

The safety, environmental and policy issues have led to a recommendation that the road remains closed during the summer period.

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Local Government Act 1972: List of Background Papers

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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%2bKwkzpWw6l8e%2bSSeVQKL0kJwGT4Ta8LAPGe0%3d&docid=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%2FTransport%2F20401_TIP_V1%2E2%2Epdf&parent=%2Fsites%2FPublicDocs%2FHighways%2FRoads%2FTransport%2FTransport%2F20401_TIP_V1%2E2%2Epdf&p=true&ga=1

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**Appendix 1
To CET/22/37**

