



Meeting: Transport Working Party

Date: 31st January 2012

Wards Affected: Tormohun

Report Title: Rock Walk Highway Improvements – Review of Scheme

Executive Lead Contact Details: Sue Cheriton

Supporting Officer Contact Details: Ian Jones

1. Purpose

- 1.1 This report is to review the decision to change the highway layout on Torbay Road, Torquay, adjacent to Rock Walk and consider whether the scheme should remain in place or be reverted back to its original 'dual carriageway' arrangement.

2. Proposed Decision

- 2.1 That a consultation exercise is progressed to consider ending the current arrangement for the A379 Torbay Road, Torquay, adjacent to Rock Walk with a view to reinstating the previous dual carriageway traffic arrangement and increasing the on street parking provision.

3. Action Needed

- 3.1 A recommendation from this Working Party is required to determine whether the traffic arrangement at this location should remain and become permanent or whether a consultation exercise should be progressed with a view to reinstating the previous dual carriageway arrangement.

4. Summary

- 4.1 The current traffic arrangements on this section of Torbay Road were implemented prior to the summer of 2011 following a full consultation with stakeholders and the public, which was the subject of a report to the Transportation Working Party on 6th November 2009.
- 4.2 The current layout has been in operation since June 2011.

Supporting Information

5. Position

- 5.1 An Issues Paper was presented to the Transportation Working Party on 6th November 2009. This outlined proposals to change the existing dual carriageway

traffic arrangement on the section of Torbay Road, Torquay, adjacent to the Rock Walk Improvements, which were in progress at that time along with the results of a public consultation carried out on the proposed changes.

- 5.2 The scheme to allow two way traffic to flow on the landward side of the road with a service lane with parking on the Seaward side followed the implementation of a temporary two way arrangement during the Rock Road improvements works. During this time there were many comments that traffic flow had improved due to the removal of obstructions caused by vehicles maneuvering in and out of the on - street parking spaces on both sides and that the resulting traffic congestion had been reduced.
- 5.3 A consultation exercise was carried out, which resulted in the majority of respondents being in favour of the changes.
- 5.4 Following the approval of the Working Party, the scheme was fully implemented in June 2011 using the minimum amount of engineering works to provide a scheme, which would effectively work on a semi-permanent basis. The scheme has now been in operation for 2 consecutive summer periods and therefore is due for a review and consideration of whether the layout should be continued, have any further alterations or be reinstated to its original layout.
- 5.5 The scheme resulted in a reduction of available on street parking provision from a total of 90 spaces down to a length that originally would have provided a maximum of 55 on street spaces. The consultation did however show a need for additional servicing provision and this resulted in the final scheme providing 35 on street parking spaces, 4 disabled spaces, a combined loading/Taxi bay, a coach dropping off point and a coach parking bay.
- 5.6 The scheme has improved traffic flow through this section of road, however there have been some safety issues raised during the period of operation. The layout has been known to confuse pedestrians when crossing from the seaward side to the central reservation and subsequently crossing into the landward carriageway and not anticipating two-way traffic. Since implementation there have been 4 reported slight injury collisions involving pedestrians and 1 slight injury collision involving a cyclist. Warning signage is in place however there is evidence that visitors to the area have been confused by the layout. It should however be noted that the original layout did also have some reported collisions and as such reverting back to this layout does not necessarily constitute a reduction of risk to the public.
- 5.7 The current scheme cost approximately £90,000 to implement, however reversal would cost in the region of £45,000 if no additional engineering improvements or facilities were introduced as a result.
- 5.8 As a starting point for this review the Mayor has requested details on the success of the existing scheme and the options for providing additional on-street parking provision. Officers investigated the feasibility of widening the Seaward carriageway to allow for echelon parking spaces, however this only provided an additional 8 spaces at a cost of approximately £55,000. The Princess Theatre were also contacted and whilst they had some minor comments, appeared to be reasonably pleased with the operation of the current layout, however they did have concerns about the lack of a crossing facility adjacent to the theatre, which has not been

considered due to the resulting reduction to parking provision.

5.9 The mayor has subsequently requested that this review is considered by the Working Party as soon as possible.

5.10 Whilst officers are recommending the progression of a consultation to consider reinstating the original road layout, members should be mindful that officers would also advise that both the current and original layouts are workable in highways terms. It is also worth noting that at the time of the original approval it was proposed that the seaward carriageway could be further utilised to host events, which to date has not materialised.

6. **Possibilities and Options**

6.1 Members may recommend that the traffic arrangement of Torbay Road, Torquay should be reinstated as the original dual carriageway arrangement. This would however require consultation prior to implementation.

6.2 Members may consider that the current traffic arrangement should remain in its present form and be considered for making more permanent when funding allows.

6.3 Members may consider that the current arrangement should continue for a further summer season following which the scheme can be reviewed again.

7. **Preferred Solution/Option**

7.1 Highways officers do not have a preferred option as both layouts are workable, however officers would recommend that a decision is progressed and therefore the option shown in 6.1 would be the preferred option.

8. **Consultation**

8.1 The current arrangement was subject to a full consultation exercise and therefore consultation will be required with affected stakeholders prior to any decision to change is implemented. A full public exhibition event should not however be required.

9. **Risks**

9.1 The additional parking provision is likely to provide additional parking income from this section of highway. There is a risk however that the additional on street provision will cause some displacement of vehicles from car parks, especially in the evenings when the on street parking is free and this may result in the additional income not fully materializing and not covering the costs of the changes in the short term.

9.2 There is a risk that the return of the traffic arrangement to 'dual carriageway' will adversely affect traffic flow in this area and increase traffic congestion in the area.

9.3 There is a risk that if a decision on the future of this section of road is delayed then this may result in the developers improvements to the frontage of the former Palm Court Hotel requiring alteration in the future at public expense.

Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Current scheme layout

Additional Information:

None.

Documents available in Members' Rooms:

None.

Background Papers:

Report to Transportation Working Party 6th November 2009