



A380 South Devon Link Road (Kingskerswell Bypass)

Public Inquiries

Proof of Evidence

Overview and Scheme Development

Volume 1: Summary

by

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This Proof of Evidence is presented in the following documents:

Volume 1	Summary	DCC/SUM/1
Volume 2	Text	DCC/P/1
Volume 3	Appendices	DCC/A/1

Contents

		Page
1	INTRODUCTION	1
2	BACKGROUND	1
3	NEED FOR THE SCHEME	2
4	DEVELOPMENT OF THE SCHEME AND ALTERNATIVES	5
	CONSIDERED	
5	INTEGRATED TRANSPORT STRATEGY	6
6	CONSULTATIONS	7
7	CONSENTS AND AUTHORISATIONS	8
8	EXCHANGE COMMON LAND	8
9	COMPLIANCE WITH THE HUMAN RIGHTS ACT	9
10	CONCLUSIONS	9

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 My name is Paul Ewings. I am a Chartered Engineer, being a Member of the Institution of Civil Engineers and registered with the Engineering Council. I hold the post of Chief Engineer Highways and Traffic in the Environment, Economy and Culture Directorate of Devon County Council, a post I have held since 1994. My responsibilities include the development and delivery of the County Council's highways capital programme. I have had 35 years experience of highway engineering projects.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 The existing A380 from its junction with the A38 Exeter to Plymouth Trunk Road west of Exeter to Torbay forms the key strategic link connecting Torbay, Newton Abbot and surrounding communities to the rest of the South West Region to the north and east and the national network beyond. This section of the A380 is classified as a National Primary Route and it is also identified as one of eight Regionally Significant Routes in the South West in the Regional Spatial Strategy.

2.2 Between Torquay and Newton Abbot the village of Kingskerswell sits astride the A380. This section of the A380 is a single carriageway, whilst the remainder of the A380 northwards from Penn Inn to the junction with the A38 is dual two lane carriageway. Similarly the routes into Newton Abbot from Penn Inn and into Torquay from Kerswell Gardens are also dual two lane carriageways. The Torbay Ring Road

section of the A380 is single carriageway as it leaves Kerswell Gardens but quickly changes to dual two lane carriageway towards Marldon.

2.3 The Penn Inn to Kerswell Gardens section of the A380 is the most heavily trafficked section of the A380 with an average daily traffic flow in 2008 of 33,022 vehicles, of which 7.5% were heavy goods vehicles. It also has personal injury accident rate for the period 2004 – 2008 of 0.46 accidents per million vehicles kilometres compared to a national average of 0.23.

2.4 The result of this high volume of vehicles having to pass through Kingskerswell is severe traffic congestion and significant journey time unreliability throughout the year. This high level of congestion results in a significant number of drivers using minor sub standard routes parallel to the A380, bringing safety, noise and congestion impacts into these sensitive areas also. The A380 through Kingskerswell was declared an Air Quality Management Area by Teignbridge District Council in November 2005.

3 NEED FOR THE SCHEME

3.1 The existing A380 between Newton Abbot and Torquay is classified as a National Primary Route and identified as a regional strategically significant route. However, for many years the route has failed to function effectively in these roles due to congestion, poor journey time reliability, displacement of traffic to inappropriate minor roads and poor conditions for public transport. The A380 Newton Abbot to Torquay

Corridor Study, completed in 2000, confirmed the long held view that the route was failing to perform its function. Traffic volumes were found to be extremely high for a single carriageway road with a daily traffic profile which showed almost constant traffic volumes through the working day in both directions. This level of traffic volume combined with the existing capacity restraints has resulted in traffic growth on this section of the A380 being just 0.08% since 1988.

- 3.2 The effect of this capacity limitation and resultant congestion is to attract a significant number of drivers to make use of alternative lower standard parallel routes. This results in highly undesirable volumes of traffic on these routes, particularly at peak periods, with resultant negative impacts on safety, vulnerable road users and the environment.
- 3.3 The current and historic inability of the A380 corridor to accommodate existing reasonable demands for travel, with an acceptable level of reliability and dependable journey times demonstrates a continuing failure to meet its local and regional transportation role, including its role as a public transport corridor for busses. If improvements are not undertaken the volume of traffic using sub standard alternative routes will continue to increase due to traffic growth resulting from planned development. Consequently, there would be a continuing deterioration of the quality of life in Kingskerswell and the surrounding area arising from severance, noise and pollution.
- 3.4 The current iteration of the future Regional Spatial Strategy indicates a future growth requirement for new dwellings in Torbay of 15,000, an

increase of 24.2%, together with an increase in Newton Abbot of 8,000, an increase of 44.4%. The Government has also designated Torbay and Teignbridge as New Growth Points, where the Government has made finance available to help accelerate the delivery of housing and employment.

3.5 If the Scheme was not built, flows on the A380 would only rise by 1,000 to 2,000 vehicles per day, or 5%, not surprising given the highly constrained existing conditions. However, flows on minor parallel routes would rise substantially, with the highest rise being 3,800 vehicles, or 54% on Kingskerswell Road. Flows on St Marychurch Road would rise by 3,200 vehicles, or 37%. There would also be similarly high levels of growth on the A379 Teignmouth Road and the A381 Totnes Road. Such a high level of growth, particularly on the minor routes closest to the corridor would be very damaging, given the already high levels of traffic currently using these routes to avoid the A380 and the impacts that are being caused.

3.6 The scheme is therefore a necessity if the Growth Point and Regional Spatially Strategy plans are to be accommodated by the local transport network.

3.7 Gross Domestic Product levels in Torbay are below the regional and national averages and also low when compared to other areas of Devon which perform at a level close to the national average. Earnings levels are 28% below the average for England and Wales and 18% below the South West average. In 2004 Torbay's Gross Value Added score was

61% of the UK figure. Growth between 1995 and 2004 was 18.7%, compared with the South West average of 61.6% and the UK average of 58.1%. Torbay's ratio of income per head between 1995 and 2005 fell in relation to the national average, from 74.4% in 1995 to 63% in 2005. The manufacturing sector also fell from 13.0% to 7.4% during this period. Torbay is dependent on the A380 as its major highway link to the strategic road network. The constraints that the existing conditions present have a clear link to the economy of Torbay.

4 DEVELOPMENT OF THE SCHEME AND ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

- 4.1 Whist a route for a bypass of Kingskerswell has been recognised and protected in successive strategic and local plans the fundamental change in transport policies regarding the provision of new highways required that a fundamental review should be undertaken before progressing any further. This review took the form of a multi-modal corridor study for the A380 between Newton Abbot and Torquay and was undertaken by the consultants Halcrow Fox.
- 4.2 The study developed a range of transport options for appraisal including schemes to encourage modal shift, traffic management and control systems, on-line highway schemes and off-line highway schemes.
- 4.3 The study concluded that in order to improve the overall conditions in the A380 corridor a bypass was needed but that it should form part of a package of measures for the corridor. The study went on to conclude

that such a bypass should pass to the west of Kingskerswell, all other routes having proven to be inferior, and that further study was required to develop an effective environmental mitigation strategy.

- 4.4 The Scheme as proposed is the result of that further detailed work and incorporates a full package of environmental mitigation measures. The effectiveness of these measures was considered during the planning application process, having been described in detail in the accompanying Environmental Statement, and the Scheme has the benefit of conditional planning approval.

5 INTEGRATED TRANSPORT STRATEGY

- 5.1 The Scheme forms part of a package of measures for the A380 corridor which were developed as part of the multi-modal corridor study. These measures have been divided into a short term, medium term and longer term strategy. The short term measures being those that could be delivered ahead of the Scheme completion, the medium term measures being those that could be delivered either alongside the Scheme delivery or once the Scheme has been completed and the longer term measures considered for delivery in the following five years or so.
- 5.2 This strategy relies on the delivery of the Scheme to allow the full benefits to be realised and the Scheme is fundamental to the effective operation of the strategy.

6 CONSULTATIONS

- 6.1 Consultation with statutory and non-statutory bodies has been ongoing throughout the development of the Scheme.
- 6.2 At the end of the consultation period on the planning application all statutory objections had been withdrawn.
- 6.3 The issue of need was addressed and considered as part of the process of granting planning permission for the Scheme.
- 6.4 Public consultations have been undertaken at key stages in the scheme development; in 2002 following development of the corridor strategy, in 2004 through the planning application procedure and in 2008 prior to making the Orders.
- 6.5 Many of the landowners are well known to Devon County Council and have been approached over an extensive period of time. More recently landowners have been engaged in the formal Statutory Referencing procedure as part of the preparation of the Orders. In accordance with paragraph 24 of Circular 6/04, the Acquiring Authority (AA) is seeking to acquire the land necessary for the Scheme by negotiation. These negotiations will continue in parallel with the formal compulsory purchase procedures.

7 CONSENTS AND AUTHORISATIONS

7.1 In order to construct the Scheme a number of other consents and authorisations will be required. These have been, will be, or are in the process of being obtained.

7.2 Delivery of the Scheme is unlikely to be blocked by any impediment to implementation.

8 EXCHANGE COMMON LAND

8.1 The Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) includes an area of 8,778 square metres of Common Land which forms part of Kerswell Down which comprises 190 square metres of car park and access road, 4,060 square metres of quarry and 4,528 square metres of woodland.

8.2 The CPO also includes an area of land for Exchange Land. This area comprises a total 8,778 square metres and would provide replacement woodland together with an additional 4,250 square metres of woodland.

8.3 Whilst the public currently enjoy access to the Exchange Land these rights are considered to be precarious and therefore it is considered that the Exchange Land is equally advantageous to that required for the scheme. However, to put the matter beyond doubt the Acquiring Authority has resolved to acquire a further area of Exchange Land, of 8,778 square metres, and Orders are currently being prepared.

9 COMPLIANCE WITH THE HUMAN RIGHTS ACT

9.1 The requirements of the Human Rights Act have been complied with and met.

10 CONCLUSIONS

10.1 Devon County Council and Torbay Council are totally committed to the delivery of the South Devon Link Road scheme as part of an integrated transport strategy for the A380 corridor.

10.2 I conclude that there is a compelling case in the public interest for the delivery of the Scheme.