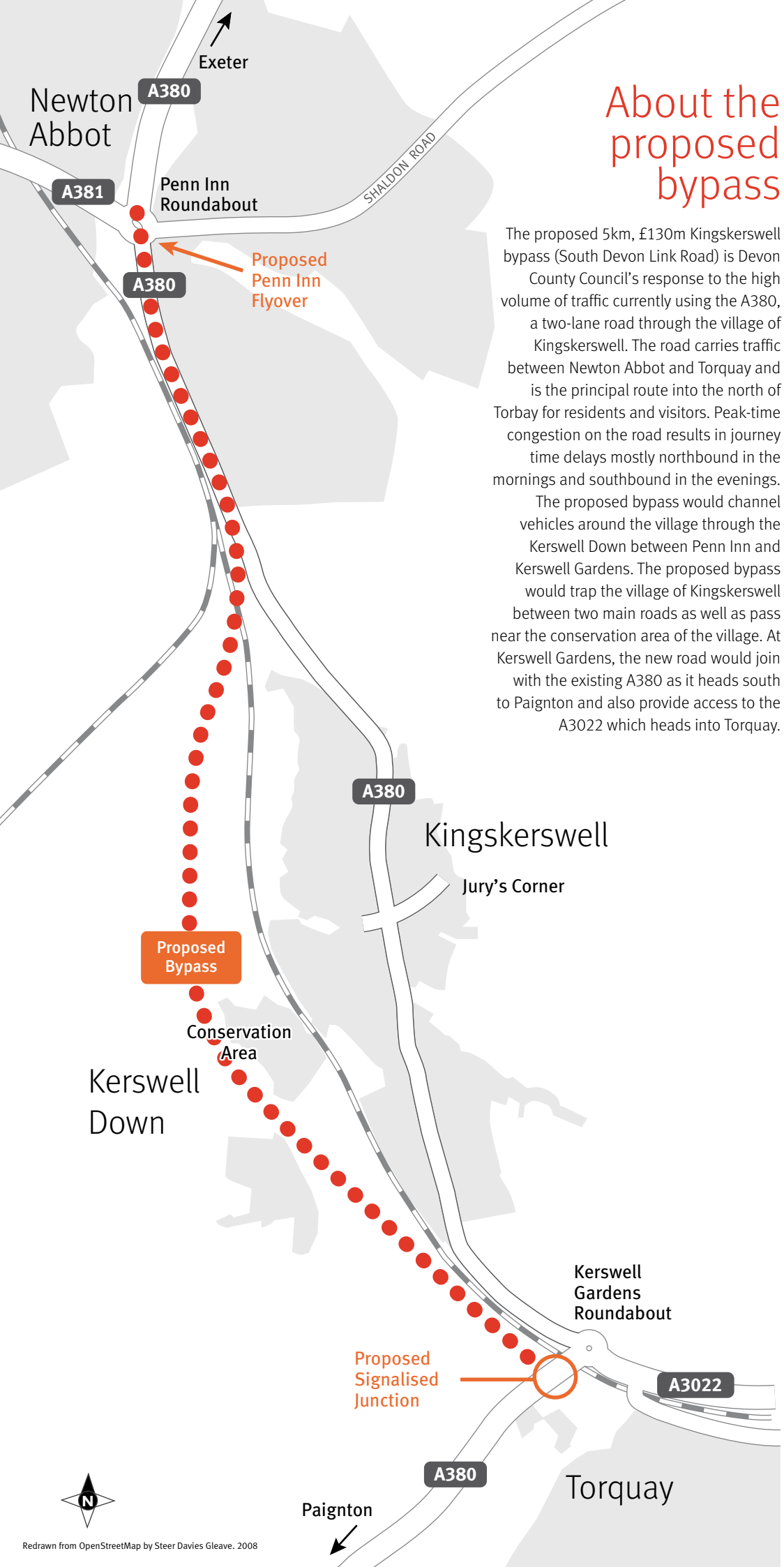
KINGSKERSWELL BYPASS

Alternatives to the bypass at less than half the cost

KINGSKERSWELL ALLIANCE



About the proposed bypass

The proposed 5km, £130m Kingskerswell bypass (South Devon Link Road) is Devon County Council's response to the high volume of traffic currently using the A380, a two-lane road through the village of Kingskerswell. The road carries traffic between Newton Abbot and Torquay and is the principal route into the north of Torbay for residents and visitors. Peak-time congestion on the road results in journey time delays mostly northbound in the mornings and southbound in the evenings. The proposed bypass would channel vehicles around the village through the Kerswell Down between Penn Inn and Kerswell Gardens. The proposed bypass would trap the village of Kingskerswell between two main roads as well as pass near the conservation area of the village. At Kerswell Gardens, the new road would join with the existing A380 as it heads south to Paignton and also provide access to the A3022 which heads into Torquay.

Why look at other options?

Construction of additional road space is not the answer to traffic congestion on the A380. Accommodating traffic in this way is an attempt to treat the symptom of the problem, rather than addressing its cause. Instead, measures that optimise the functioning of the existing road space and increase the use of alternative modes should be introduced. Such measures would be far less costly than the new road scheme and would contribute to a reduction, rather than transferral, of traffic. The bypass would cause substantial environmental damage, cutting through Kerswell Down to the west of Kingskerswell which is an area of significant biodiversity. The volatile nature of oil prices linked to the considerable changes in travel patterns as a result, ensures that we should consider other options instead of building new roads.

Building the bypass would be against both regional and local policy. The draft Regional Spatial Strategy (2006-2026) states that the South West's ecological footprint is unsustainable at present. According to the strategy, transport accounts for 28 per cent of the region's CO2 emissions, with road transport dominating that total. To reduce these emissions, the strategy advocates demand management measures and improvements to public transport. The bypass is neither of these and would result in an overall increase in greenhouse gas emissions according to its major scheme business case. Our proposals will reduce CO2 emssions and improve the A380 Air Quality which is an issue locally.

Further, Policy Tran 5 of the Regional Planning Guidance (2001) states that authorities should make more efficient use of highway space in order to achieve a modal shift towards sustainable transport modes.

The Regional Transport Strategy notes the importance of reliable journey times for efficient movement in the region, but stresses that the link between improved journey times within the region and economic growth is weaker compared with movements in and out of the region. Indeed, improved connectivity between settlements can have undesirable effects, such as an increase in the number of people commuting over long distances. The strategy states explicitly that the maintenance of reliable journey times, rather than improved journey time or speeds, is the priority.

The Devon Structure Plan (2001-2016) sets out the county's overall approach to planning for development, land use and the protection of the environment. Under Policy TR1 of the Structure Plan the following strategic priorities are set out:

- Manage travel demand.
- Promote sustainable travel and modal choice.
- Minimise the impact of travel on the environment.

Policy TR3 of the Structure Plan states that travel demand will be managed so that unnecessary travel is minimised, sustainable travel promoted and road space used effectively.

The objectives and targets of Devon's Local Transport Plan (2006-2011) also focus on minimising growth in traffic and encouraging the use of sustainable modes. The Plan includes proposals for changing travel behaviour and managing travel demand which should be targeted at the A380 which is defined as a sustainable transport corridor.

What might we do instead?

Smarter choices – changing the way we travel

A comprehensive programme of smarter choices measures introduced across Teignbridge and Torbay should be applied to promote the use of sustainable modes. Chapter 2 of the Devon Local Transport Plan recognises that the provision of better information and options aimed at helping people to reduce their car use would substantially reduce traffic congestion at peak times and can be achieved in three ways.

First, public transport, walking and cycling should be promoted to commuters and business travellers across Teignbridge and Torbay districts through workplace travel planning initiatives. In participating organisations, single occupancy car use can be reduced by between 10 and 25 per cent, according to the Department for Transport's Making Smarter Choices Work report.

Second, at peak times, 'school run' traffic is estimated to account for one in five vehicles on the road. In Torbay, 43 per cent of school children are driven to school (*Torbay Local Transport Plan 2006 - 2011*), therefore a focus on encouraging parents and children to use an alternative mode for the journey to school is needed. Successful school travel plans can result in car use reductions of up to 20 per cent for the journey to school (*Changing the Way We Travel, DfT, 2005*).

And finally, a programme of personal travel planning focused on the Newton Abbot – Torquay corridor should be introduced to promote the range of transport options available to residents for their journeys. This could be linked to a wider travel awareness campaign to promote public transport and encourage the use of local facilities (thereby reducing the need to travel). The cost of this three-fold smarter choices package would be marginal in comparison with the bypass scheme and good results could be achieved for less than £1.5million.

Public Transport

The main objective for public transport should be to 'put the passenger first' through high quality public transport facilities and reliable services whilst ensuring that the wider needs of the community are met.

Improved bus services and infrastructure

The Torbay bus network is already the subject of a quality bus partnership between the operator Stagecoach Devon and Torbay Council but more can still be done to make the use of these services more attractive. Options include:

- Quality Bus Corridors (enhanced bus priority measures and higher quality vehicles) with the potential for Bus Rapid Transit (BRT);
- Additional bus services and better connections to where people want to go such as medical facilities, shopping centres and places of employment;
- Upgrades to bus stops to make them more accessible for the mobility impaired; and
- Better transport interchange with railway stations and park & ride facilities.

Although there are a number of ideas here that extend beyond Kingskerswell, the measures described here could be delivered for approximately £5million and their positive impacts would be felt well beyond Kingskerswell.



Reopen Kingskerswell Railway Station

Devon's Local Transport Plan states that local rail journeys are particularly important for commuting, education and recreational trips and reports a 16.7 per cent growth in passenger numbers on local services over the last five years. The reopening of Kingskerswell station (closed in 1964) would offer journey times of around 4 minutes to both Torquay and Newton Abbot. The reopening of the station, along with enhancements to railway services and infrastructure throughout the area could provide an alternative to the car for commuters and tourists and may significantly relieve congestion on the A380.

A panel hearing as part of the development of Devon's Local Transport Plan noted that Kingskerswell was amongst the best of all station reopening schemes proposed in the area. The capital cost of reopening the station would be a fraction of the cost of the bypass, at approximately £10million.

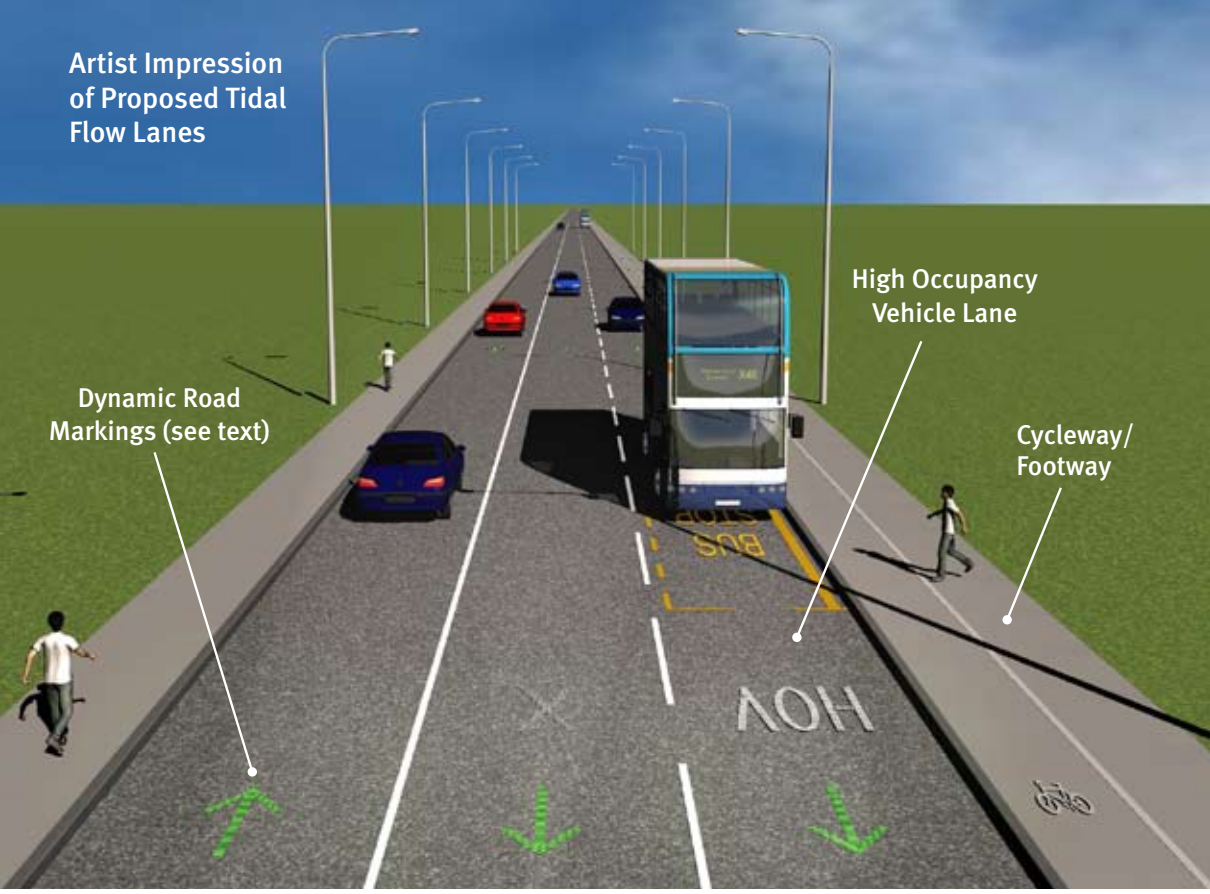
Traffic Engineering

Having encouraged as much traffic as possible to switch to other modes, a good deal can still be done to improve the way the remaining traffic flows on the A380. Managing the corridor by considering a range of opportunities along the A380 could be highly effective in fulfilling its potential. We have identified a number of solutions that can be used to solve the problems.

Congestion Management

The large number of vehicles passing through Kingskerswell and the surrounding area with little or no control suggests that a congestion management strategy using Intelligent Transport Systems along with some common sense would be appropriate here.

There are a number of techniques for controlling traffic within a congested traffic environment using technology along with physical measures. Further exploration of ideas such as queue relocation and storage, the application of traffic signals, driver information systems and vehicle detection within an Urban Traffic Control (UTC) system should be undertaken.



Penn Inn Roundabout

The Penn Inn Roundabout provides a vital connection to Newton Abbot from Kingskerswell and other towns such as Exeter, Torquay and Paignton as well as the greater south-west region. The roundabout can become extremely congested not only due to traffic flows but also due to the complex traffic movements, Sainsbury's supermarket and nearby Industrial Estate. Our proposals include using a tunnel under the roundabout to provide for the through A380 movements and to simplify the other junctions in the area. This would reduce congestion and delay to traffic heading to and from Newton Abbot on the A381 as well as enable our congestion management proposals along the corridor.

For an investment of approximately £25million we would expect to achieve the following benefits:

- Removal of the A380 through traffic from the roundabout thereby potentially reducing delay and queuing at the gyratory;
- provide bus priority and queue management systems at the roundabout;
- Through the use of existing highway land, the creation of an opportunity for better management of movement as well as the physical appearance of the land for public use;
- Substantially reduce visual intrusion compared to the flyover currently proposed for the Bypass;
- Provide an opportunity for bus stop facilities at the nearby Sainsbury's supermarket;
- Connection with the proposed National Cycle Network proposed by Sustrans for the area potentially through a new route in the Aller Valley to provide a safer and more pleasant route.

The A380 in Kingskerswell

The existing A380 streetscape within Kingskerswell could be much better managed for all road users, not just drivers. It is an important transport link to other towns but it is at the same time a destination for the people of Kingskerswell that plays an important part in their daily lives.

To aid vehicular movement, particularly during peak hours, we propose to provide an additional traffic lane that can switch direction in time with the traffic demand. There is sufficient space available to accommodate these three lanes as well as dedicated cycling and pedestrian space on the footways. An example of a potential arrangement is shown above.

The system would be controlled using dynamic road markings which are road markings that can be turned on and off using LED (Light Emitting Diode) technology. This technology has been in use in the Netherlands, Germany, Norway and Spain with trials currently taking place within the UK. Dynamic road marking would enable traffic lanes to be assigned to traffic when congestion occurs without the need for unsightly overhead gantries. One of the lanes could be designated as a HOV (high occupancy vehicle) lane to provide benefits for vehicles with more than two passengers and to provide priority for public transport. This would be a further incentive for more efficient use of the car.

The approximate cost of the work on the A380 through Kingskerswell would be £7million.

Jury's Corner
A hotly debated issue is the Jury's Corner junction in the centre of the village on the A380 near the Kingskerswell Primary School. Jury's Corner is often the point at which congestion manifests itself within the village. However, the junction provides an important crossing point for pedestrians and enables some key manoeuvres for vehicles.

The application of congestion management strategies along the A380 in Kingskerswell would lessen the severity of queuing at the junction as part of generally better management of traffic through Kingskerswell. A further option would be the provision of a pedestrian underpass beneath the A380 to the south of the junction which would allow pedestrian movements across the A380 to be removed from the junction and more 'green time' to be allocated to vehicle flows.The approximate cost for our proposals would be approximately £2million.

Kerswell Gardens
The roundabout at Kerswell Gardens would be reconstructed with the provision of slip lanes from the A3022 to Paignton and Paignton to the A380 north. These slip lanes would reduce conflict and therefore, congestion with an indicative cost of £1.5million.

What is the potential cost of the work?
These schemes would cost in the region of £50 million in 2008 prices, significantly less than the £130 million for the proposed bypass.

What happens next?
The proposals we have put forward show real potential to improve the situation on the A380 whilst complying with wider local and regional policies. We are aiming to create a sustainable transport corridor that increases transport choice for people. We do not want to shift the problem elsewhere without treating the underlying causes as a bypass would do.

Our proposals are over 60% less than the cost of the proposed bypass whilst doing a fraction of the damage, yet promoting other transport choices and solutions. Fair and thorough assessment of these ideas is needed. Let us remember that, if it went ahead, the Kingskerswell bypass could not be undone.

We call on Devon County Council and the Department for Transport to consider our proposals and to halt the progress of the bypass until they have done so.

How you can get in touch and lend your support
Please get in touch with us to lend your support to our proposals if you believe that the existing transport system can be much better managed and recognise that the provision of a bypass is an outdated concept in Kingskerswell.

Write to us at:
e info@kingskerswellalliance.org.uk
w kingskerswellalliance.org.uk

For more information on the Kingskerswell Alliance, please contact us at:

e info@kingskerswellalliance.org.uk

www.kingskerswellalliance.org.uk

Prepared for Kingskerswell Alliance by steer davies gleave