

Transportation Advisory Note

Project: **Proposed Highway Improvements – Bampton,
Devon**

Subject: **Access & Highway Appraisal**

Date: **27th February 2021**

Overview

This Transportation Advisory Note roughly outlines suitable and hopefully achievable minor improvements to the road network within the town, specifically Castle Street (B3227). I attended site with Simon Fouracres on 12th February 2021.

The suggestions listed below are from north to south across the town centre and are a starting point for discussion, with councillors within Bampton Town Council. Finalised, agreed proposals can be presented to Devon County Council as the local highway authority for comment and hopefully agreement.

It should be noted that any works within the public highway will require the highway authority's approval and may be subject to Road Safety Audit and possibly S278 Agreement (Highways Act).

Town Gateway

The first issue to consider is the speed of vehicles entering Bampton southbound. Better known as 'village gateways' this simply a clear indication of entering the town with reiteration of the 30mph, Normally a 'gateway' would literally feature 'gates' or fences but in this location it could only be achieved on one side where there is available verge. Plates 1 & 2 overleaf give an example of a gateway and my idea whereby red surfacing with a 30 roundel painted on would alert approaching drivers. I have also shown count down lines, but these could be replaced with the better known dragon's teeth.

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Plate 1 – Example Village Gateway



Plate 2 – Mock-Up For Bampton With Count Down Markers

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The red surfacing and 30 roundel could also be repeated outside the access to Castle Grove.

Simon brought my attention to vehicles exiting the town centre sometimes straying over onto the opposite side of the road, cutting the corner and beginning to speed up. I believe this could be helped simply by introducing new centre line markings – see Plate 3 below.



Plate 3 - Emerging Visibility South West From Proposed Access

Before looking at Castle Street further, Simon highlighted the issue re pedestrian access to the new playground and football pitch on the B3190. I was a little alarmed that when the new children’s playground was put in that the highway authority did not advise re safe pedestrian access, with emerging visibility to the right being particularly poor. There is a simple solution here whereby either a solid or painted build-out could be provided within the existing highway, which currently, due to the hedge alignment, is not tracked (ie used) by passing southbound vehicles – see Plate 4 overleaf which demonstrates the clear visibility improvement. This could be supplemented again with the same red surface material, perhaps with the playground symbol highlighted in white, to alert approaching drivers.

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Plate 4 – Unused Carriageway Looking North

The main issue, ie Castle Street, is a little harder to resolve, given the constraints of narrow footways and carriageway, flanked by terraced housing with direct pedestrian (and one vehicular) access. The passage of HGV's appears to cause the major problem and Simon did query re a weight limit for route but I believe this would be problematical due to the status of the B3227 and the need for town centre shops and pubs requiring deliveries.

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Clearly, HGV's are mounting and damaging the footways in a couple of areas which, again, I am surprised the highway authority have not sought to resolve given the continuous expense of maintenance/repair.

Ideally, one would simply widen out the footways and restrict the street to single vehicle width with priority of passage provided to one side. I understand however, that the residents who currently park in the street would strongly object to this as the majority would lose their only parking provision. It does beg the question though, what would be better for their safety and quality of life of course.

An alternative I tabled was that we remove parking within the centre of the street straddling the property with the garage opening. This central area would be the passing place for large vehicles, if needed and vehicles approaching from both directions would need to give way on the short approaches where on-street parking would be retained. I believe that neither approach should be granted right of way so drivers will approach with care and hopefully consideration. The two banks of parking could be permitted on opposite sides of the carriageway to create a 'chicane' thereby removing the straight through view for approaching drivers, helping to reduce their speed (there may be an issue however of opposing drivers being unsighted due to the parked cars – this would be clarified by a detailed design. The central area would need to be large enough to enable an HGV to enter, approx 15m.

Moving on to the 3 arm junction (Castle, Fore & Back Street) this is clearly vehicle dominated with wide junctions making crossing distances excessive and unsafe for pedestrians. There are sections of the carriageway which aren't tracked by the majority of smaller vehicles and only in fact by larger HGV's, towing vehicles etc. These areas could be constructed as 'run over' areas which the majority of the time pedestrians waiting to cross can wait safely, have better visibility of approaching traffic and shorter crossing distances. Visual constriction of the carriageway would also help lower drivers speed. These areas (see Plate 5 overleaf) could be simply white lining or preferably some raised area (with flush kerbs) constructed in granite setts or the like – whichever the highway authority would wish of course.

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Plate 5 – Overrun Areas Available For Pedestrian Use.

The same could be applied to Newton Square where pedestrians encounter issues and danger crossing from/to the local shop. Plate 6 overleaf demonstrates what area could be used as a pedestrian 'island' simply by reinstatement of the white lining, or of course this could be a different overrun surface. Similar treatment of the area opposite the shop, currently used for parking could also be altered.

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Plate 6 – Newton Square

Finally, I believe that the 30mph limit begins far too far south out of the town and I only saw one 30mph repeater sign. Vehicles are travelling down hill and should be reminded of the speed limit.

Summary & Conclusion

I believe a number of cheap alterations could be made to the local highway network to improve conditions and safety for pedestrians within the town centre but I would welcome any feedback/queries any councilor may have. I would not propose that the council commission any schemes to be drawn up at this time, not until the Highway Authority have been consulted for its views. This TAN should suffice as an initial step to opening a dialogue.

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