

Future High Street Fund - Torbay Road pedestrianisation trial summary

1. Background

1.1 introduction

Torbay Road was identified in the Future High Street Fund (FHSF) bid as a key street in Paignton town centre connecting the seafront and Paignton Green to the remainder of the town and in combination with Station Square as being important in setting the place for people in the area.

The FHSF programme looks to drastically improve key locations in Paignton town centre, including other locations benefiting from a share of the funding (Crossways, Victoria Centre, Paignton Picture House and Paignton Flood Defences).

The FHSF bid for Torbay Road was originally based on enhancing the pedestrian space and street scene, better connecting the town centre and seafront, whilst also ensuring retention of vehicular access. The bid to government did not include any plans for pedestrianisation.

Feedback from some community representatives, notably the Paignton and Preston Community Partnership, following the bid however was that Torbay Road should be fully pedestrianised (from the seafront to and including the section of Torbay Road over the level crossing up to the junction with Hyde Road). There were two consultations subsequently held in early 2022 by the Council and the Community Partnership which indicated overall support for pedestrianisation.

The Council proceeded to prepare plans to implement a trial based on a pedestrianised scheme, with the trial starting at the beginning of October 2022.

Following strong opposition from some Torbay Road traders, echoed by several enquiries and complaints captured during the trial, the Council subsequently carried out a further two trials in differing arrangements.

The following paragraphs provides a summary of the arrangements of the three trials, changes that we made, and observations and feedback which have been captured through various mechanisms and communication channels.

In summary, the three trial schemes are follows –

- **Trial 1 - Full Pedestrianisation of the whole of Torbay Road**
Station Square also pedestrianised up to the junction with Hyde Road.

- **Trial 2 – Partial Pedestrianisation**

Pedestrianisation of the western section from and including Station Square to the Queens Road / Garfield Road Junction. Access to all vehicles at the eastern section one-way from the seafront to the Queens Road / Garfield Road Junction.

- **Trial 3 – Enhanced / widened footway and access to all vehicles.**

The whole of Torbay Road opened-up, allowing access to all vehicles based on a one-way access from Hyde Road to the Queens Road / Garfield Road junction, and access from the seafront to the Queens Road / Garfield Road junction.

Each of the trials required an Experimental Traffic Regulation Order (ETRO).

An ETRO is a legal / statutory requirement which is advertised and allows members of the public to submit comments, suggestions, or objections in relation to it, based on the scheme/layout advertised, and implemented.

An ETRO requires a 6-month consultation period from the start of the ETRO being advertised. If changes/modifications to the scheme are made, such as for example introducing additional parking spaces, or a new scheme introduced, then the advertisement date is reset, and the consultation period restarts from the revised advertisement date.

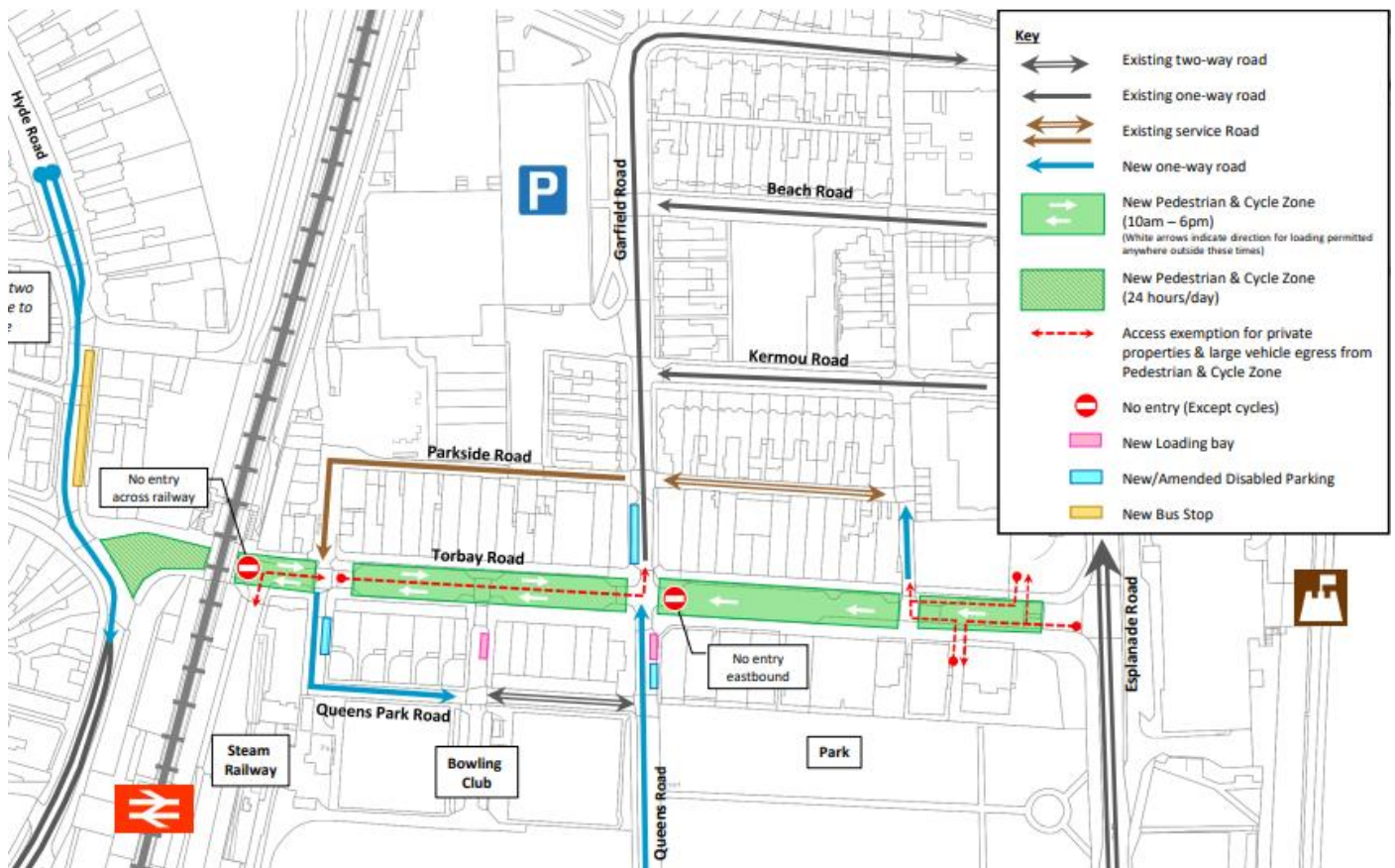
Alternatively, the trial can be terminated at any time.

The following paragraphs briefly describe the arrangements for each of the trials which have been implemented.

1.2 First Trial – Full Pedestrianisation

Scheme Description

Torbay Council was asked to implement a scheme which trialled full pedestrianisation of the whole of Torbay Road – closing the road to ALL vehicles (including over the railway level crossing), removing all on-street parking (including blue badge bays) with only limited access for deliveries (before 10am and after 6pm).



A copy of the above Movement and Spatial Plan is included as Appendix A.

Duration / Trial Period

The trial started in early October 2022 and finished in early February 2023.

Core Outputs / Changes

- Public Realm / Pedestrian Enhancements – all of Torbay Road zoned as pedestrian and cycle zone from the Esplanade to and including Station Square.
- General Vehicle Access – Closed to ALL traffic, restricted to emergency vehicles, and service/delivery vehicles at agreed, limited times 6pm to 10am. Vehicle access available, at all times, on neighbouring roads such as Queens / Garfield Road, Parkside Road and Queens Park Road.
- On-Street Parking – all general parking spaces removed and limited to neighbouring streets / local car parks.
- Blue Badge On-Street Parking – all blue badge bays on Torbay Road removed and limited to neighbouring streets.
- Deliveries / Loading - access, service, and delivery vehicles on Torbay Road restricted to agreed, restricted times of the day (6pm to 10am). Vehicle access available, at all times, on neighbouring roads.

- Impact on Station Square – area fully pedestrianised (access restricted to emergency vehicles only).

Key Issues / Observations

Whilst some initial challenges around health and safety and general access appeared to have settled in the early stages of the trial as the community and traders got use to the changes, there remained ongoing concerns and issues throughout.

During the trial, Torbay Council received 39 enquiries and complaints. This included enquiries / complaints into the Highways department (logged through its COMINO system) as well as general enquiries (including FOI requests).

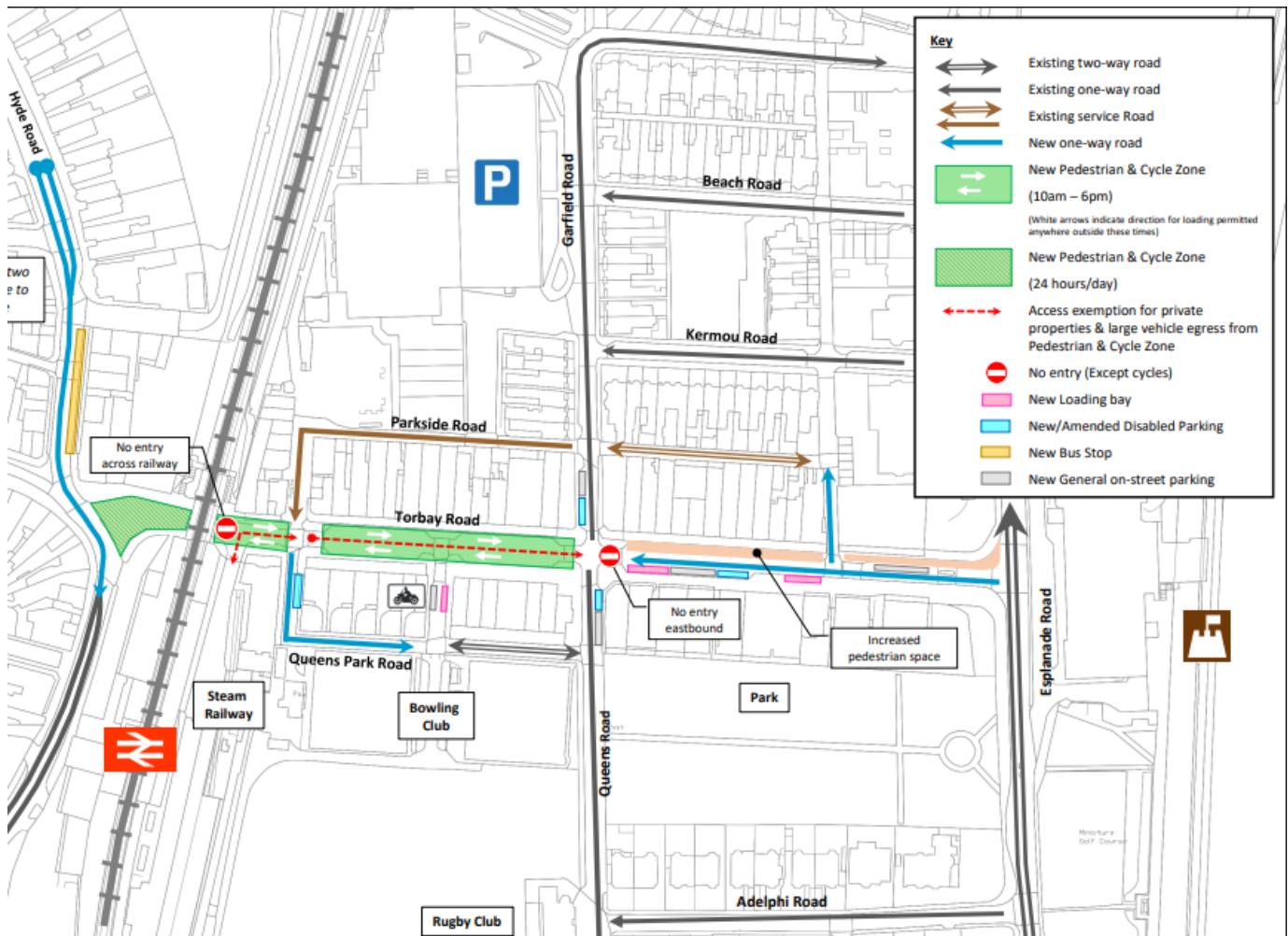
The key concerns and issues during the trial related to accessibility, with access completely restricted, and all the on-street parking and blue badge parking bays removed on Torbay Road with repercussions particularly with some traders reporting issues such as impact on loss of trade, impact on food delivery services and challenges around access, egress and deliveries. Restricted access on Torbay Road also resulted in challenges impacting periphery roads such as Queens Park Road and Parkside Road, as well as loss of residents overnight parking options.

After considering a range of feedback and concerns raised including strong opposition from some Traders a decision was made to finish the trial and proceed in a partial pedestrianised option (Trial 2).

1.3 Second Trial – Partial Pedestrianisation

Scheme Description

Following the first trial, the Council implemented a second trial to allow vehicles to enter Torbay Road from Esplanade Road to the Queens Road / Garfield Road Junction, whilst retaining the western section of Torbay Road including the level crossing area as a pedestrianised and cycle zone (similar to the first trial).



A copy of the above Movement and Spatial Plan is included as Appendix A.

Duration / Trial Period

Early February 2023 to early August 2023.

Core Outputs / Changes

- Public Realm / Pedestrian Enhancements – western section of Torbay Road zoned as pedestrian and cycle zone. Eastern section revised to allow traffic to enter Torbay Road from the Esplanade to the Garfield Road and Queens Road Junction.
- General Vehicle Access – All traffic allowed to enter Torbay Road at the eastern section. No general traffic allowed at the western section restricted to access, service, and deliveries (6pm to 10am).
- On-Street Parking – Parking re-introduced on the eastern section of Torbay Road and modifications to spaces to enhance parking options at the Garfield Road / Queens Road junction.
- Blue Badge On-Street Parking – Blue badge bays re-introduced on the eastern section of Torbay Road and modifications to spaces at the Garfield Road / Queens Road junction.
- Deliveries / Loading – Loading only bays re-introduced on the eastern section of Torbay Road. Access, service, and delivery vehicles on the western section of Torbay Road however limited to agreed, restricted times of the day (6pm to 10am). Vehicle access available (at all times) on neighbouring roads.
- Impact on Station Square – area fully pedestrianised (access restricted to emergency vehicles only).

Key Issues / Observations

The second trial re-introduced and responded to ongoing concerns around parking, blue badge parking and accessibility following the first trial by opening-up the eastern section of Torbay Road to all traffic.

Whilst the second trial alleviated some of those concerns some issues were still being reported. These were primarily connected with the western pedestrianised section of Torbay Road.

Common issues being reported were primarily around deliveries/access and egress (particularly for larger vehicles), delivery loading options and traffic movement challenges around periphery roads such as Queens Park and Parkside Roads.

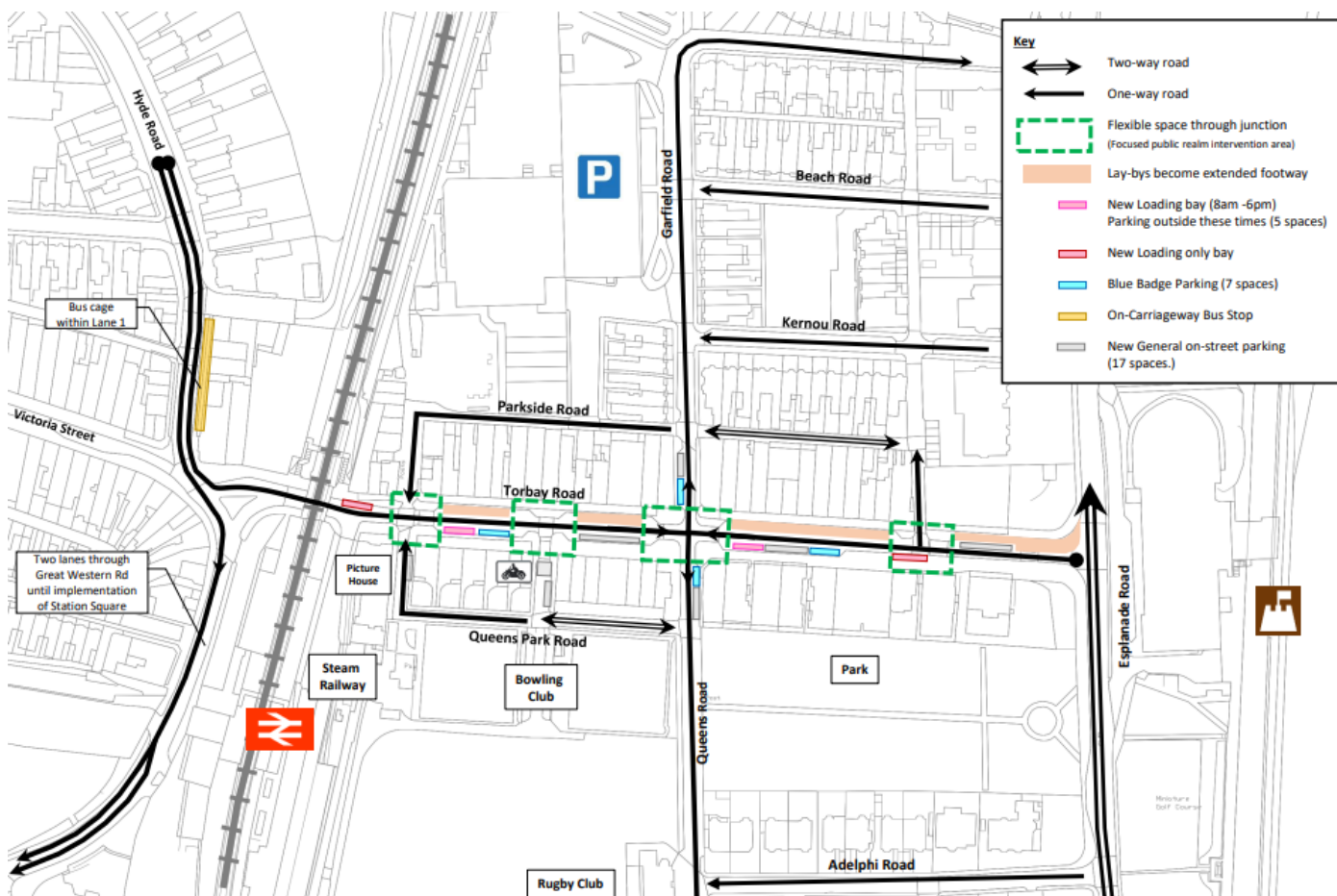
During the trial, Torbay Council received 15 enquiries and complaints.

Following feedback and observations the Council moved towards a third and final trial (i.e. the current layout).

1.4 Third Trial – Enhanced Footway / Access to All Vehicles.

Scheme Description

The whole of Torbay Road is open to all vehicles based on one-way access from Hyde Road to the Queens Road / Garfield Road junction, and access from the seafront to the Queens Road / Garfield Road junction; re-introducing more parking and loading bays primarily on the southern side of Torbay Road (right side of Torbay Road going to the seafront), whilst ensuring widened/enhanced footways focused on the northern side addressing the current restricted paving width.



A copy of the above Movement and Spatial Plan is included as Appendix A.

Duration / Trial Period

Early August 2023 and remains in place.

The ETRO Consultation Period was previously due to end 2nd February 2024 however modifications were made shortly after including re-introduction of more parking (which then reset the six-month commencement from 23rd August 2023 to 23 February 2024).

Core Outputs / Changes

- Public Realm / Pedestrian Enhancements – Widened / enhanced footways extending out by approximately 1.5 metres from the existing kerb line focused on the northern side of Torbay Road (left hand side going down to the seafront) from the junction with Hyde Road to the Esplanade. Pavement enhancements to the southern side however this side primarily gives way to parking and loading bays.
- General Vehicle Access
 - Torbay Road open to All traffic with no access restrictions (as per the movement plan).
 - Hyde Road near the Torbay Road junction was reverted from a one to two-lane system (whilst retaining the bus stop as an on-carriageway bus / coach stop).
 - Queens Park Road made one-way from Bowls club to Torbay Road to facilitate accessibility and movement.
 - Queens Road one-way system reversed from its junction with Adelphi Road to Garfield Road.
 - Retained access to all vehicles on surrounding roads.
- On-Street Parking
 - Parking bays re-introduced on the western section of Torbay Road.
 - Loading bay removed from outside Toymaster and replaced with parking.
 - Loading Bay TRO changes to allow for additional parking from the hours 6pm to 8am; supporting overnight additional parking options for local residents.
- Blue Badge On-Street Parking – re-introduced western section of Torbay Road.
- Deliveries / Loading – Loading Bays dispersed on Torbay Road from the level crossing to the Esplanade – no access or loading restrictions.
- Impact on Station Square – Single carriageway from Hyde Road onto Torbay Road only.

Key Issues / Observations

The current layout reflects incremental changes which have been made in response to feedback, observations and modifications captured during the previous two trials; opening-up Torbay Road to all traffic, re-introducing more parking (general and blue badge), ensuring adequate number of access/delivery bays to serve local businesses and unrestricted access which were common issues in both trials 1 and 2.

The trial was supported by a Road Safety Audit. A traffic monitoring survey conducted during the trial showed positive outcomes in terms of reduced traffic and a positive traffic calming effect, with speeds, on average, of 11 mph. For comparative purposes, speeds recorded over a same 7-day period pre-trial during 2028 showed recorded speeds, on average, of 15 mph.

During the trial, Torbay Council received only 8 enquiries and complaints.

The trial is aligned with the overall ambitions defined within the FHSF bid to improve the street scene whilst retaining access to vehicular traffic.