

Notes of workshop with representatives of Devon County Council, Teignbridge District Council, Bishopsteignton Parish Council and the Teign Estuary Trail Campaign Group on 11 September 2023 at 3.30 pm at County Hall, Exeter

Present (in person):

Cllr Kate Benham, Arron Carpenter, Hannah Clark, Cllr David Cox, Jordan Facey, Cllr Andrew MacGregor, Cllr Henry Merritt (Chair), Judith Sharples, Estelle Skinner, Cllr Gary Taylor, Cllr Martin Wrigley

Present (online):

Cllr Keeley Gearon, Cllr Stuart Hughes, John Penaligon

Apologies:

Neil Blaney, Cllr Jackie Hook, Cllr Nina Jeffries, Cllr John Nutley, Cllr Ron Peart

1. Welcome and introductions

The Chair welcomed everyone and thanked them for attending. Attendees introduced themselves. The Chair advised that representatives of Bishopsteignton Parish Council and the Teign Estuary Trail Campaign Group had been meeting regularly with representatives of Devon County Council and Teignbridge District Council for a number of years to receive updates on progress. At the last meeting in July, it had been suggested that a workshop session be arranged to explore whether it would be possible to begin work on one section of the Trail between the urban edge of Teignmouth and the Passage House Hotel using currently available funding.

2. Update from DCC

Hannah Clark reported that the Teign Estuary Trail remains a priority for DCC but, in any scheme of this nature, there are 3 key challenges which must be overcome:

- Getting planning permission;
- Acquiring land;
- Securing funding.

In the case of the Teign Estuary Trail, conditional planning permission was secured in December 2021. Physical delivery must commence by or before December 2031 in order for the approval to remain valid. External funding will be required to construct the Trail but there are no live government funding opportunities that DCC can pursue at present and bids for external funding are unlikely to succeed until the land, or some of the land, is acquired. DCC currently has £400k in the capital programme and plans to increase this by a further £250k subject to Cabinet approval when the capital programme is considered in October 2023. If agreement cannot be reached with landowners, DCC could only exercise its CPO powers once it has secured the funding required to purchase the land.

John Penaligon provided an update on the current position regarding landowner negotiations. It was noted that council funding used to purchase the land was likely

to be treated as 'match funding' in any bids for government funding to construct the Trail (unless any particular fund specifically states this is not permitted).

Jordan Facey provided a breakdown of the current estimated costs of approximately £38 million across three phases:

Phase 1 - Morrisons to eastern edge of Bishopsteignton

Phase 2 - Eastern edge of Bishopsteignton to Flow Lane

Phase 3 - Flow Lane to Passage House Hotel

It was noted that these costings include 25 years' maintenance, as well as construction costs, and costs for meeting biodiversity net gain. It is based on 2022 rates/costs. It does not include an amount for optimism bias (which is considered as part of funding bids).

A discussion then took place on which section of the Trail should be considered top priority for a phased approach of delivery. It was noted that the most dangerous section of the A381, where the greatest local benefits would be unlocked, is between Bishopsteignton and the Ware Barton roundabout due to the bends and gradients and lack of pavement (however, the full extent of benefits will be realised only by delivery of the entire route). Representatives of the Campaign Group and Parish Council felt that this should be prioritised if possible. The potential to progress the section between Morrisons junction and the eastern edge of Bishopsteignton was noted, as this section is largely under public ownership. Further design work is needed on this section. Cllr Cox also pointed out that the section between Morrisons and Teignmouth town centre also needs addressing. The preferred route alignment for this section is not yet defined.

3. Update from TDC

Cllr Wrigley reported that TDC was reviewing its capital programme as part of the annual budget. There is a consideration for up to £1.5m of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) to be earmarked for prospective use towards delivery of the Teign Estuary Trail. This funding is not yet approved and would require either Full Council or Executive Committee consideration and approval for any specific uses.

It was noted that, if the DCC and TDC capital programme allocations are approved, this would enable landowner negotiations to acquire the land to proceed much more effectively. It was noted that a footpath / permissive path provision could be an early, interim approach whilst progressing towards securing funding for phased scheme construction, if necessary.

It was proposed that, as local town and parish councils have their own CIL allocations, they should be asked to consider using some of their CIL towards the cost of the Trail. This would be of notable benefit for evidencing the strong local support via funding bids.

It was agreed that there was a strong case for using CIL funding to support the Teign Estuary Trail delivery given the extra traffic that new housing development would generate on the already busy and constrained A381.

It was also noted that it may be possible to access other funding such as the Valencia Landfill Communities Fund.

4. Next steps

Hannah Clark agreed to draft a proposal that can be shared with local town and parish councils.

Estelle Skinner said she would need to confirm agreement from TDC Executive and Shadow Executive councillors with relevant portfolios and, subject to this and a full Councillor update, then prepare a report for Full Council on 28th November 2023 with relevant recommendations to provide further support to the Teign Estuary Trail project delivery.

It was agreed to hold a further meeting following the TDC full Council meeting on 28 November. This will take place on **Wednesday 29th November at 10.30am at Bishopsteignton Community Centre.**