

Barnstaple Longbridge Junction Scheme

Report of the Director of Climate Change, Environment and Transport

Please note that the following recommendations are subject to consideration and determination by the Committee before taking effect.

1) Recommendation

It is recommended that:

- (a) the scheme shown in Appendix 1 is approved in principle for public consultation; and**
- (b) subject to the outcomes of public consultation, the necessary Traffic Regulation Orders are advertised;**
- (c) the Director of Climate Change, Environment and Transport be given delegated powers, in consultation with the Chair of HATOC and the local member to make amendments to the scheme details for a preferred scheme for approval at a future meeting of Devon County Council's Cabinet.**

2) Summary

The scheme aims to improve pedestrian and cycle facilities through the Longbridge Junction by rationalising vehicle movements through this junction and the Station Road Roundabout to make crossings easier for people walking, wheeling and cycling to and from the town centre.

The scheme removes the left turn for vehicles from the Longbridge to Seven Brethren Bank and the right turn from the opposite approach. This allows for the removal of all traffic signals and the replacement of only one signalised crossing of the main A3125 at the end of the Longbridge.

This report seeks in principle support for the scheme shown in Appendix 1 to be consulted upon with the public including key stakeholders.

3) Introduction

The recently approved Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) for Barnstaple with Bideford and Northam identifies a high priority route for cycling between Roundswell and Pilton via the Longbridge. Public consultation on this was very positive with 110 out of 131 responses (84%) supporting the entire route. However, the consultation did not provide the level of detail to understand what specific improvements could be achieved at the junctions to support increased walking, wheeling and cycling.

Subject to HATOC approval, a public consultation on the proposed scheme will take place. The outcomes of this will influence any amendments to the design, ahead of a

Cabinet decision to approve the works including cost of the scheme. The aims are to commence works in 2024.

The scheme will play a vital role in enabling active travel, helping to keep people healthy and reduce greenhouse gas emissions from transport. This will also aid with the government's aim for 50% of short urban trips to be by walking or wheeling by 2030.

The existing junction arrangement significantly hinders ease of access for walking, wheeling and cycling between the rail station, retail park and the town centre (see Appendix 2). The Longbridge Junction signals are beyond their design life and the bulbs used are no longer manufactured. These signals need upgrading by being replaced with more modern designs, or as proposed – removed entirely. This is therefore an opportunity to address both a critical maintenance pressure while also delivering an enhancement in active travel infrastructure in the town.

4) Proposal

Approval is sought in principle for the scheme shown on plan 21163-03-00 in Appendix 1 which is a preliminary design that has been subject to stage one road safety audit. Subject to the results of the public consultation, further design amendments may be necessary and traffic regulation orders will need advertising as well as a stage two road safety audit.

The proposal includes:

- New and improved segregated walking and cycling paths and areas of shared use paths connecting multiple existing paths together.
- Removal of multiple traffic signals and replacement with a priority junction and one new signalised crossing of the main road for pedestrians and cyclists.
- Changes to the road layout and removing vehicles turning left from the Longbridge to Seven Brethren Bank.
- Changes to the road layout and removing vehicles turning right from the A3125 into Seven Brethren Bank.
- Narrowing of Seven Brethren Bank road on pedestrian and cyclist desire line and building of raised table crossing.
- Changes to the markings and layout of the Station Road roundabout so that on the approach from the Longbridge vehicles in the left lane will turn left only, and the right hand lane will be for vehicles straight ahead (to Sticklepath Terrace), ahead/slight right (towards Sticklepath) and U-turn (towards town centre).
- From discussions with the Local Member the crossing of Station Road adjacent to the Roundabout will also be improved.

The improved walking and cycling links are needed as this junction is the intersection for five key walking and cycling routes:

- To the north is the new path alongside the river through the Anchorwood Bank housing development and onto the Tarka Trail,
- To the south is the path to the leisure centre and onto the Iron Bridge, part of the NCN3 route.
- To the west are links to the train station and up the hill towards ASDA. One link goes between Halfords and the Barnstaple Retail Park car park (the official route of NCN3), another on the roundabout side of Halfords – both go onwards to the

train station and link to the recently built parallel crossing (zebra for pedestrians and cyclists).

- To the east is the link to the town centre over the Longbridge. This is one of the busiest walking and cycling routes in the area, but is constrained by the width of the bridge. The footways are 1.8m at their narrowest (in the middle of the bridge) and cyclists have to use the carriageway with a large volume of vehicles. This is part of the NCN3 route and official link to NCN27 (Tarka Trail to Braunton).

Traffic counts have shown the following number of users on the Longbridge:

Thursday 13th October 2022

Towards Town Centre			Towards Seven Brethren	
Total	Peak Hour		Peak Hour	Total
2,522	291 (4pm to 5pm)	Pedestrians	268 (3pm to 4pm)	2,391
115	48 (8am to 9am)	Cycles on footway	52 (3pm to 4pm)	109
163		Cycles on road		198
8,696	891 (5pm to 6pm)	Vehicles	755 (4pm to 5pm, and 5pm to 6pm)	7,535

Further modelling work is taking place and more detailed analysis will be provided as part of the public consultation and any future reports for decision making purposes.

The road network in this area is already congested at peak times, and there is insufficient room to create additional road space for vehicle capacity. With the additional level of housing approved to be built and more planned, a 'decide and provide' approach is to be taken in this area instead of the more traditional 'predict and provide' approach. This means that to cater for new growth, it is decided how travel should take place and provision made for that, instead of predicting how many people want to drive and providing for that. If proper walking and cycling links are provided, people will use it for everyday trips.

The proposal has been designed in accordance with the principles of the current guidance on walking and cycling LTN1/20. This includes that routes should be safe, direct, coherent, attractive and comfortable.

With traffic growth constrained due to existing queues and delays in the peak periods, additional growth in the town needs to be accommodated through reducing the need to travel and improving pedestrian and cycle links. Peak hour pedestrian flows are near to 300, and this is expected to continue to grow along with cycling numbers as development expands. Improving access will also attract more people to consider walking, wheeling or cycling for shorter-distance journeys. In accordance with guidance LTN1/20 this level of active travel would require segregated pedestrian and cyclist links, and this scheme has been designed with some segregated facilities and can easily be adapted to fit with any future plans to enhance accessibility for pedestrians and cyclists using the Longbridge.

5) Options/Alternatives

The only other alternative option is a simple replacement of the existing traffic signals by the traffic signals team, which would continue to create barriers for people walking, wheeling and cycling through needing to navigate a circuitous route involving multiple, inconvenient crossings.

The proposed scheme could be considered a phase 1 of a possible larger scheme that would involve potential upgrades to the Longridge on the upstream side; however, this would require significant external funding. The improvements described in this report are beneficial as a standalone scheme and has been designed to adapt to any future enhancements on the Longbridge.

6) Consultations

Consultation was carried out on the principle of improved cycle and pedestrian facilities between the Hospital and Roundswell as part of the approved Barnstaple with Bideford and Northam Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan and were well supported. Those consultations did not consider detailed proposals described in this report.

The recommendation is to carry out a public consultation on this scheme.

7) Financial Considerations

The estimated cost of the scheme will be finalised following public consultation and further design; however the cost will likely be funded by section 106 contributions from the Anchorwood development.

As described, the existing traffic signals are at the end of their life and require replacement and a small part of the scheme total would be funded by the traffic signal maintenance budget

8) Legal Considerations

To introduce a controlled crossing, the Council is required to issue a public notice in accordance with Section 23 of The Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984.

When introducing new traffic schemes it is the County Council's responsibility to ensure that all relevant legislation is complied with. This includes Section 122 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 that states that it is the duty of a local authority, so far as practicable, secures the expeditious, convenient, and safe movement of traffic and provision of parking facilities. While this scheme will result in additional delay to some motorists, it is designed to reduce journey times for others including but not limited to public transport users.

Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) shall be required for the proposed changes to the junction, specifically:

these being the prohibition of motor vehicles turning left from the A3125 Longridge to Seven Brethren Bank and the opposite vehicular movement turning right from the A3125 to Seven Brethren Bank.

If the scheme is supported through public consultation, this report recommends that approval is given for the advertisement and consultation of the necessary TROs.

The public and statutory bodies (e.g. emergency services) will be notified of the restrictions with a public notice placed in the local press. It may be necessary to come back to this committee for consideration of any objections/representations to the TROs.

9) Environmental Impact Considerations (Including Climate Change)

The proposed scheme will greatly improve pedestrian and cyclist facilities at the Longbridge Junction making it easier and more attractive for people to make journeys by walking or wheeling.

In 2017 28% of Devon's (Devon, Plymouth and Torbay) greenhouse gas emissions came from on road transport. Devon County Council has declared a climate emergency and adopted the Devon Carbon Plan aiming to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2030. Getting more people to walk and cycle will help to achieve this aim, and also keep people healthier and happier for longer. Encouraging people to walk and cycle more will only be possible if the necessary infrastructure is in place.

The proposed scheme will result in changes to vehicle flows in the area due to the proposed changes to the road network. The proposed changes at the roundabout are likely to mitigate the removal of turns into Seven Brethren Bank, however it is likely to result in some localised changes to queuing in the vicinity of the proposal. It should be noted that significant queuing already occurs with the current road layout at peak periods but that there is an overall benefit by enhancing accessibility and strengthening the active travel links between the rail station, retail park and the town centre.

Bus routes will be unaffected by the proposed scheme changes, as none use Seven Brethren Bank.

10) Risk Management Considerations

The proposal will have an ongoing requirement for the Council to maintain the new crossing, however there will be a reduction in overall maintenance of traffic signals due to removing the traffic signals for the right turning traffic movements. 22 existing signal poles will be removed, and depending on the detailed design, approximately 4 new poles will be installed.

The proposal is considered to reduce risk to the travelling public on the public highway by providing new facilities for pedestrians to cross the carriageway designed to recent active travel design guidance LTN1/20.

11) Public Health Impact

Almost every aspect of people's lives impacts on their health, including the quality of transport infrastructure. Enabling active travel, especially walking and cycling, can reduce length of time lived in ill health, and reduce premature death. By increasing opportunities to use active travel we can enable people to become active as part of their everyday life. People in the most deprived areas can find themselves marginalised with reduced mobility options where they are limited in choice for transport – this can impact on their health. Providing additional options through

active travel provides more choice and opportunities to level up access and improve population health.

12) Summary

Approval is sought for approval in principle of the scheme to go to public consultation. There are significant health and active travel benefits by improving pedestrian and cycle facilities through the Longbridge Junction. Rationalising vehicle movements through this junction and at the Station Road Roundabout enables fewer crossings and more direct, convenient routes for walking, wheeling and cycling.

The scheme proposed changes to the road network and the removal of almost all traffic signals at this junction will be funded mostly by section 106 contributions and will deliver maintenance budget savings by removing equipment from the highway.

Meg Booth

Director of Climate Change, Environment and Transport

Electoral Division: Barnstaple South

Local Government Act 1972: List of background papers

Background Paper Nil

Contact for enquiries:

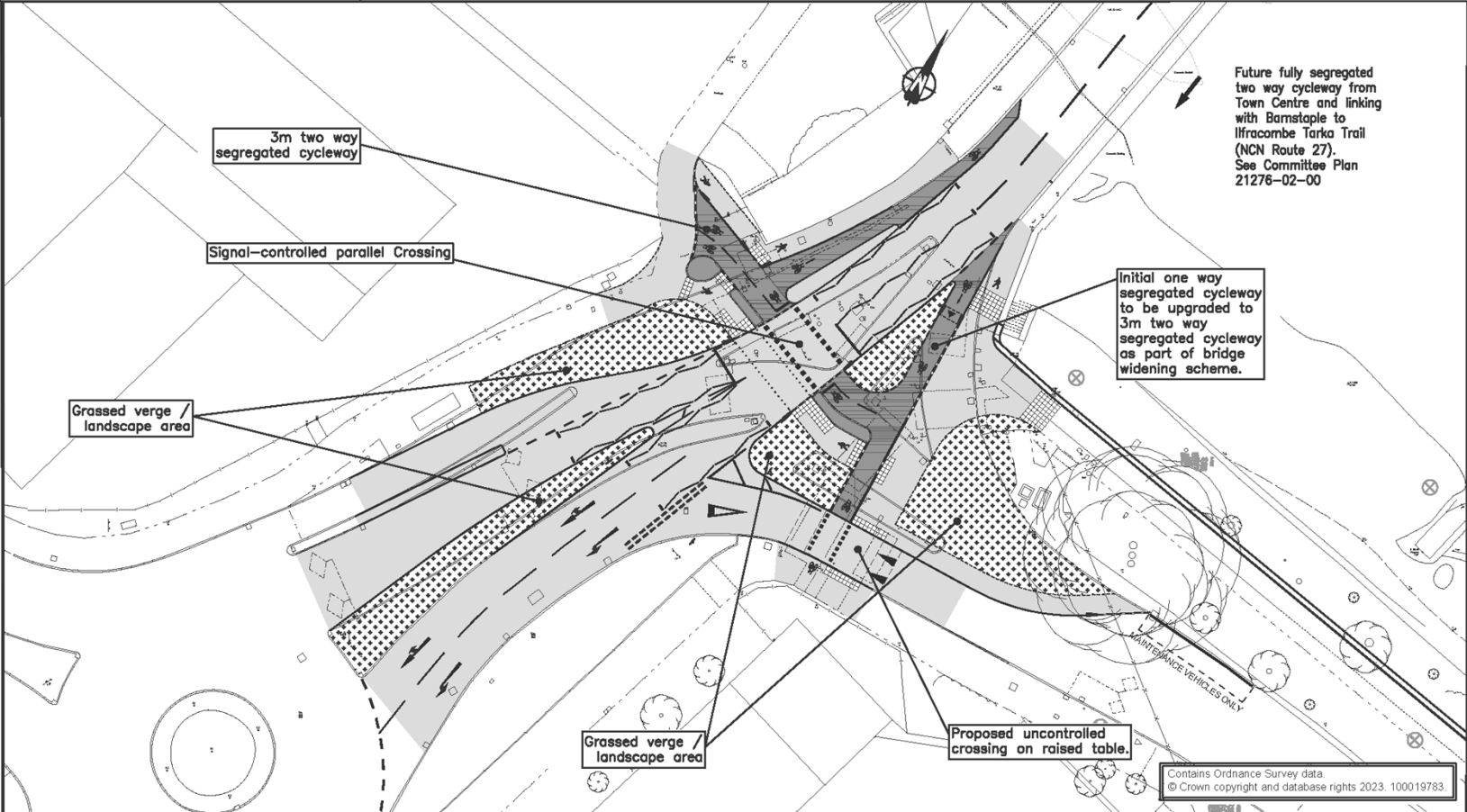
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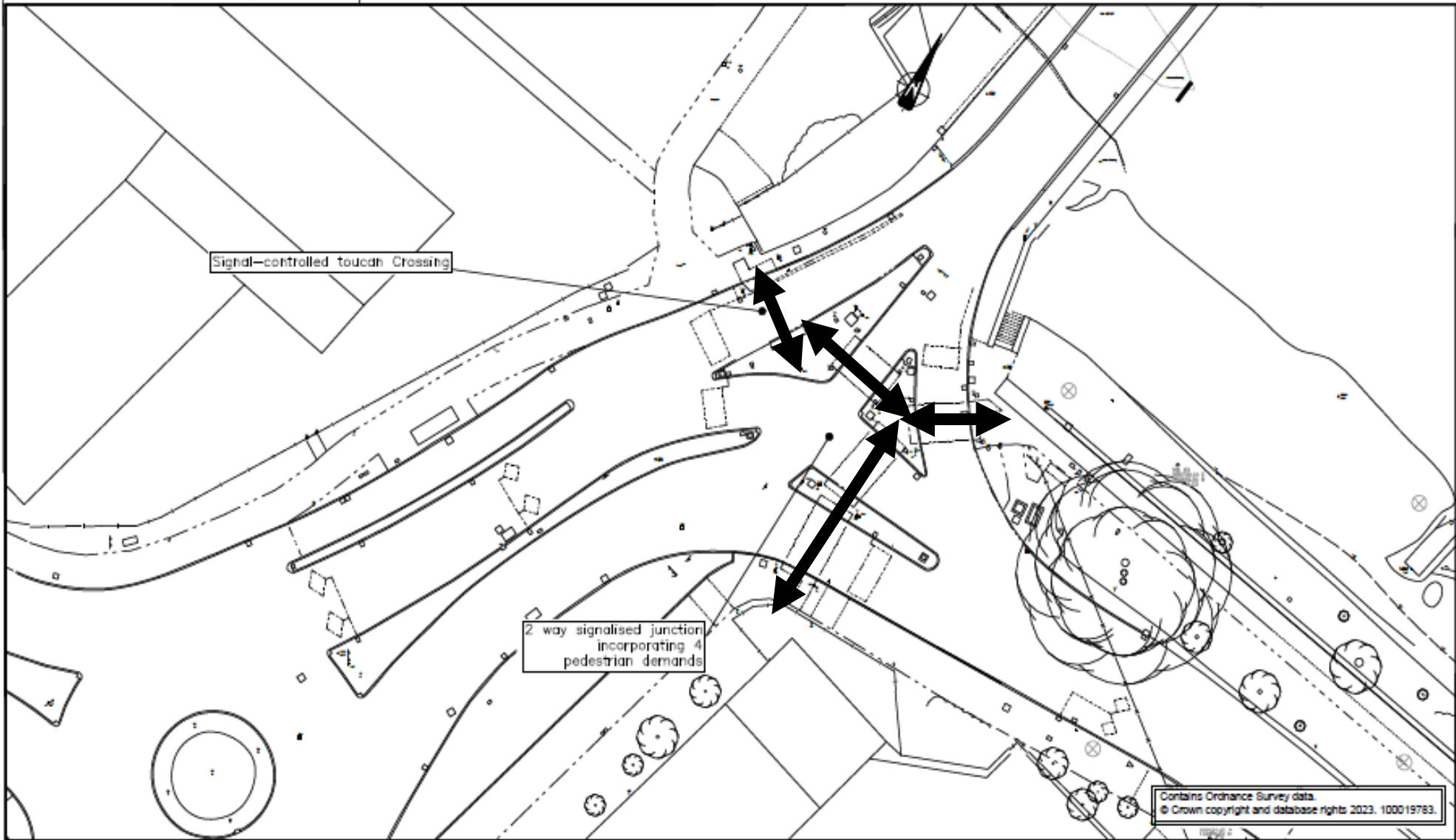
Appendix 1 to CET/23/40



	Engineering Design Group	Cabinet		date	scale
		job/title/proposal Seven Brethren Junction Changes Preliminary proposals - Subject to consultation.		April 2023	NTS
				number	21163-03-00

Appendix 2 to CET/23/40: Existing layout and crossing facilities

Roads A4 FRAME Committee landscape - Version 2.0



Engineering Design Group

Cabinet	date	scale
job/title/proposal	June 2023	NTS
Seven Brethren Junction Changes Existing Layout		
number		
21163-04-00		