Tithebarn Link Road Phase 2

Report of the Head of Planning, Transportation and Environment

Please note that the following recommendations are subject to consideration and determination by the Cabinet (and confirmation under the provisions of the Council’s Constitution) before taking effect.

Recommendations: It is recommended that:
(a) the scheme shown on drawing A11008/16 at an estimated cost of £6.9m be approved;
(b) a planning application be submitted to East Devon District Council for the scheme shown on drawing number A11008/16;
(c) any Traffic Regulation Orders required be advertised and, if no objections are received, be made and sealed;
(d) the Head of Planning, Transportation and Environment, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Economy, Growth and Cabinet Liaison for Exeter, be given delegated authority to make minor amendments to the scheme design, following consultation;
(e) subject to securing planning and environmental consents, approval be given to proceed to construction for the section of the link road scheme shown on drawing A11008/17 at an estimated cost of £2m.

1. Summary

The Tithebarn Link Road phase 1 scheme is due for completion in June 2015. This report is seeking design and scheme estimate approval for the 2nd phase of the full link road scheme which will connect Science Park Drive (north) with the old A30 near Blackhorse. This scheme will ultimately replace the interim route, which will use Science Park Drive and will mitigate development traffic impacts at M5 Junction 29. The aim is to submit the reserved matters application for the scheme in June 2015 and, subject to securing planning permission, commence construction on a section of the link road later this year in order to support housing delivery in East Devon at Redhayes (part of the Tithebarn Green development).

2. Background/Introduction

The scheme will help unlock development and achieve the following objectives:
- Provide direct access to new housing development sites.
- Improve access to new employment sites, unlocking a significant number of jobs.
- Remove local car trips to ease congestion and improve network resilience on the strategic road network.
- Enable a primary bus route that will connect Cranbrook, Skypark, Science Park and Monkerton with the city centre.

Substantial growth is planned in the Exeter and East Devon growth point area. The East of Exeter Access Strategy has successfully implemented significant transport infrastructure, including Clyst Honiton bypass, Junction 29 improvements and phase 1 of Tithebarn Link Road.
Currently, the only way to travel by car between the major development sites in Exeter on the western side of the M5 and the growth area in East Devon to the east is via junction 29 and Moor Lane roundabout. The Honiton Road corridor and Moor Lane roundabout is nearing capacity in the peak periods and modelling work indicates that further development traffic beyond the committed development would increase queuing back towards junction 29. The full Tithebarn Link Road connects Cumberland Way to the old A30 via the existing bridge over the M5 on Tithebarn Lane. This provides a bypass to the busy Honiton Road corridor, relieving impacts at Junction 29 and delivers access to consented housing development at Tithebarn Green and Mosshayne.

The Tithebarn Link Road is being delivered in 2 phases and unlocks the 2nd phase of Science Park, approximately 5,800 dwellings and 3,000 jobs in the Monkerton (Exeter) and West End area of East Devon. The first phase between Cumberland Way and the northern access to Science Park Drive is on site and is due for completion in early June 2015 (Cabinet report PTE/13/58). In order to deliver a route that bypasses Junction 29 and mitigate impacts on the Strategic Road Network, an agreement was secured with Science Park Company to make use of the Science Park Drive on an interim basis until the full link road was delivered (Cabinet report PTE/15/10). The Science Park Drive works are due to be complete by the summer 2015.

This report relates to the 2nd phase of the Tithebarn Link Road east of the motorway, which directly unlocks 900 dwellings at Mosshayne and further growth at Cranbrook, beyond the consented 3,500 dwellings. Completion of this route will allow Science Park Drive to be stopped up as a public highway and revert back to a private road with a campus-style environment.

3. Proposal

Scheme Description

The full Tithebarn Link Road scheme was included in the Tithebarn Green outline planning permission and connects Cumberland Way west of the M5 to the old A30 at Blackhorse via the existing Tithebarn Lane bridge. This report seeks approval for the section from Science Park Drive through to the old A30 near Blackhorse, with accesses off it into the proposed development at Redhayes, which will also serve the recently approved Mosshayne development.

The road will be 6.5m wide and will be designed in accordance with the Design and Access Statement for the Tithebarn Green planning application. It will serve a strategic purpose in terms of relieving traffic impacts on the Strategic Road Network but will be designed to incorporate public realm features and walking and cycling facilities as the route passes through a neighbourhood and provides an important link between housing, jobs and leisure opportunities. The design minimises cut and fill along the route and only passes through Eagle One land (who will be a joint applicant for the reserved matters application). The access junctions serving new development will be priority junctions with ghost islands and the connection with the old A30 will be a signalised junction.

Pedestrian and cycle crossings are located on desire lines and offer attractive and convenient links to key destinations. The route will provide a primary bus corridor between Cranbrook and the city centre, passing through the middle of the Monkerton development area. The scheme will also allow Blackhorse Lane to become a largely traffic free route, west of the properties on Blackhorse Lane, which will strengthen sustainable access between Cranbrook, Science Park, Skypark and Exeter City Centre.
As part of wider aspirations for a district heat network serving the Monkerton masterplan area, the link road will also make provision for heat pipes along its length for future connection to the development areas.

**Traffic Orders**

The link road will need to cross Blackhorse Lane, a largely narrow, rural lane which links Langaton Lane to the old A30 and provides access to houses and a kennels business. It is proposed that residents living on Blackhorse Lane will have vehicular access via the junction with Honiton Road, with a prohibition to motor vehicles west of the westernmost property. This will enable the lane to become largely traffic free and continue west across Science Park, forming part of the high quality cycle corridor, which links towards the city via the Redhayes bridge.

It is proposed that the Sunnymead Boarding Kennels is served off Langaton Lane, which runs north / south and will connect to the link road at the northern point. These proposals are nevertheless subject to consultation with the affected properties and may be amended depending on the outcome of the discussions.

**Land Negotiations**

The link road passes through land owned by Eagle One. There is a signed S106 agreement from Eagle One specifying the handover of the land required for the link road to Devon County Council.

**Link Road Delivery**

Subject to securing planning and the necessary environmental mitigation consents, it is possible to construct an early stage of the link road scheme, which would unlock housing development at Redhayes (part of the Tithebarn Green outline permission). This would support housing delivery within East Devon. The section of link road that would be constructed as an early stage is between the northern access to Science Park Drive and the northernmost side road serving the Redhayes (see drawing A11008/17). It is anticipated that the remainder of the route will be completed by 2018 as per the terms of the Tithebarn Green S106. There is currently a funding shortfall for the whole route; however, negotiations are advanced with developers for the Mosshayne development to secure the necessary funding.

**4. Consultations/Representations/Technical Data**

The Tithebarn Link Road formed part of the planning application from Eagle Homes Ltd for the Tithebarn Green development (12/1291/MOUT), which included a formal consultation process. There were no specific objections to the link road from statutory consultees. The Highways Agency recognised the importance of the Tithebarn Link Road, noting concerns that without the link road there would be an unacceptable impact on the A30/M5 Junction 29 resulting from traffic queued back from Moor Lane roundabout. The application was approved subject to conditions, which prevented occupation of the development until the Tithebarn Link Road works connecting Cumberland Way and Honiton Road (old A30) were complete.

The link road scheme has been discussed with local members for Pinhoe and Mincinglake in Exeter and Broadclyst and Whimple in East Devon and they are supportive of the scheme. The link road was included in the Pinhoe Area Access Strategy submitted to East Devon District Council’s Local Plan Examination in Public, where it was considered critical to relieving traffic impacts and unlocking growth as described above.
There will be further opportunity for public consultation through the Reserved Matters planning application for the link road.

5. Financial and Resource Considerations

The second phase of the Tithebarn Link Road, shown on drawing A11008/16 is estimated to cost £6.9m. It is proposed that in order to bring forward housing delivery within East Devon at Redhayes, an early stage of the link road is constructed during 2015/16. This is estimated to cost £2m and will be forward funded out of the £5.3m developer contributions that have been secured from the Cranbrook, Science Park and Tithebarn Green developments. Negotiations are at an advanced stage with developers for the recently consented Mosshayne development, which will fund the shortfall for the link road. No works will be commenced for the remainder of the link road until the full funding is in place.

6. Sustainability and Equality Considerations

Proposals to prohibit motor vehicles on a section of Blackhorse Lane would create a largely traffic free lane that would support the County Council’s aspirations for a high quality east-west cycle corridor between the city centre and Cranbrook via Redhayes Bridge.

Where relevant to the decision, the Equality Act 2010 Public Sector Equality Duty requires decision makers to give due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other prohibited conduct; advance equality by encouraging participation, removing disadvantage, taking account of disabilities and meeting people’s needs; and foster good relations between people by tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.

Taking account of age, disability, race/ethnicity (includes Gypsies and Travellers), gender and gender identity, religion and belief, sexual orientation, pregnant women/new and breastfeeding mothers, marriage/civil partnership status in coming to a decision, a decision maker may also consider other relevant factors such as caring responsibilities, rural isolation or socio-economic disadvantage.

An Impact Assessment has been produced for the proposals and measures have been taken to include facilities for vulnerable road users including people with disabilities or reduced mobility so that they can cross the link road safely. In particular, this includes the section of link road near where the village centre is planned and on the route of the high quality East-West cycle corridor.

A copy of the Impact Assessment has been circulated to Cabinet Members, and is available alongside this report on the Council’s website at: http://www.devon.gov.uk/index/councildemocracy/decision_making/cma/index_exc.htm

7. Carbon and Economic Impact Considerations

The completion of phase 2 of the link road is expected to reduce journey times by managing congestion on the busy Honiton Road corridor, with an improved flow of traffic. This may see slight improvements in carbon emissions. Section 2 of the report outlines the level of economic growth that this road will deliver.
8. **Legal Considerations**

Any traffic regulation orders must be advertised in accordance with the Local Authorities’ Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996.

9. **Risk Management Considerations**

The key risks relate to traffic regulation orders, planning and finance. Land searches indicate that all land is within Eagle One control and is therefore not considered a risk to the project.

Objections to the traffic regulation orders are a potential risk to the delivery of the scheme. The delivery programme has allowed sufficient time to advertise, consult and respond to any objections.

The County Council will be submitting a joint reserved matters planning application with Eagle One, who secured outline planning permission for the link road as part of its Tithebarn Green consent. Discussions with district council planners through the design stage have been held to minimise the risk of delay.

In order to commence construction of the link road, it would be necessary for the County Council to forward fund S106 payments due from Tithebarn Green/Cranbrook. Although this carries some risk, development at Cranbrook is progressing rapidly and phases 1 and 2 of the Tithebarn link road will directly serve Tithebarn Green development parcels at Monkerton and Redhayes. In the event that external funds are not received, then the spend will instead have to be financed from corporate resources such as receipts or internal borrowing. This risk is considered to be low as the housing has planning permission and housebuilders have been appointed for the Monkerton and Cranbrook developments.

10. **Public Health Impacts**

Section 6 describes the walking and cycling opportunities that arise from the Tithebarn Link Road, which will encourage people to use healthier modes of travel to school or work. The link road will be well lit and will incorporate Manual for Streets design principles. In addition, there is likely to be fewer accidents at Moor Lane roundabout due to the reduction in traffic using this busy corridor.

The road will have a positive impact upon air quality as it will better distribute traffic between the major radial routes into Exeter City Centre.

11. **Options/Alternatives**

**Do Nothing**

A decision not to build phase 2 of the link road would result in the continued use of Science Park drive for all public traffic. This was only designed and agreed with Science Park to be an interim measure to allow strategic developments to progress, including the MET Office Supercomputer on Science Park itself. Longer term, there were concerns that through traffic using the Science Park campus would impact on its attractiveness to potential Science and Technology businesses moving to the site. For these reasons, doing nothing is not considered an option.
Alternative alignments

Several alignment options were considered; however, the current design is the most deliverable, as it minimises cut and fill and only involves one landowner.

12. Reason for Recommendation/Conclusion

The scheme will help address future issues of traffic queuing back from Moor Lane roundabout, which are expected to impact on the operation of Junction 29. It will therefore provide greater resilience on the local and strategic road network, which is consistent with the aims of the Local Transport Plan. It will serve as a major bus corridor and will also help create a high quality strategic cycle corridor between Exeter City Centre and Cranbrook.

The completion of the link road will allow a substantial amount of development in the draft East Devon Local Plan to come forward and allow Science Park Drive to revert back to a campus-style environment, which would be attractive to investors. It will also facilitate the upgrading of the high quality walking and cycling corridor linking Cranbrook to the city centre via Redhayes bridge.

Dave Black
Head of Planning, Transportation and Environment

Electoral Divisions: Broadclyst and Whimple; Pinhoe and Mincinglake

Cabinet Member for Economy, Growth and Cabinet Liaison for Exeter: Councillor Andrew Leadbetter

Strategic Director, Place: Heather Barnes

Local Government Act 1972: List of Background Papers

Contact for enquiries: Jamie Hulland

Room No. Lucombe House, County Hall, Exeter. EX2 4QD

Tel No: (01392) 383000

Background Paper Date File Reference

Nil

jh230415cab Tithebarn Link Road Phase 2
hk 06 300415