Extension of Exe Estuary Walking and Cycling Route to Dawlish Town Centre – Phase 1 and 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:
(a) that the scheme design shown in Appendix I as drawing numbers B12037_37 and 38 be approved for construction at an estimated cost of £621,485;
(b) that the Head of Planning, Transportation and the Environment, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Highway Management and Flooding Prevention and the Local County Council Member, be given delegated authority to make minor amendments to the scheme design.

1. Summary

This report seeks approval for a proposed scheme to enable the extension of the Exe Estuary walking and cycling route into Dawlish Town Centre.

2. Background/Introduction

The Exe Estuary trail has recently been extended following the opening of the key section between Turf Lock and Powderham, with a further improvement currently being constructed between the current off-road section and Hazelwood Drive in Dawlish Warren. There are some off-road sections existing between Dawlish Warren and Exeter Road in Dawlish but there is no safe and attractive cycle link into the town centre itself. This means that Dawlish is potentially losing out on the economic benefits created by the Exe Estuary route.

The scheme detailed in this report forms part of a collection of schemes to eventually link Dawlish Warren to Piermont Place in Dawlish Town Centre, forming part of the successful CCF (Coastal Communities Fund) bid. Longer term it is planned to extend the route further into Teignmouth town centre to link up with the planned Teign Estuary route to Newton Abbot.

3. Proposal

The proposed scheme, shown in Appendix I as drawing numbers B12037_37 and 38 involves the creation of a shared use footway/cycle route on the south western side of Exeter Road.

This is achieved in Exeter Road by widening and converting the existing footway along Exeter Road from the present termination of the off-road section opposite 47 Exeter Road to directly opposite Charlton House Flats. At this location, the proposed path continues through the grounds of Lanhernes, on the property side of the wall bounding the highway, until its point adjacent to the Bus Stop opposite No13 Exeter Road. At this point the new footway breaks through the wall and joins the route of the existing footway to the entrance of
Lanhernes. Whilst the improvements are chiefly aimed at cyclists, a number of the sections will provide improvements for pedestrians as well. A separate report in spring 2016 will bring forward detailed proposals to construct the next section through the remainder of Lanhernes to the rail station and town centre.

A new zebra crossing to the east of the Elm Grove Road junction is provided as part of the scheme. This will help users accessing the route from properties to the north of Exeter Road including Dawlish Community College and new developments to the north to access the cycle route. The crossing is integral to anticipated future junction improvements linked to planned development in the area. The northbound bus stop is moved slightly to accommodate this.

The works in this report are proposed to be carried out between January – May 2016, funded through the CCF. They have been programmed to deliver the CCF schemes outside of the main tourist season to minimise disruption. The remaining works in the town centre are expected to be constructed in autumn 2016.

4. Consultations/Representations/Technical Data

The CCF bid was compiled in conjunction with Dawlish Town Council, Teignbridge District Council and Sustrans. Representatives from all three organisations along with Devon County Council and the Town Centre Manager form the project board for the CCF, reporting back directly to their organisations on scheme details and progress. There has also been support from Dawlish Transition Ambition from the development of the early scheme concept through to developing the detailed scheme design.

A letter detailing the proposals was circulated to Dawlish Town Council, Teignbridge District Councillors, Gatehouse School, Dawlish Community College, local businesses via the Dawlish Chamber of Trade and residents adjacent to the scheme. Further separate consultation has taken place with Teign Housing which is supportive of the scheme as the land owner at Lanhernes.

Representations were received from three residents of San Remo Terrace along Exeter Road. The residents from San Remo Terrace access the existing footway on Exeter Road via flights of steps from their properties and expressed concern that they may come into conflict with fast moving cyclists when exiting their properties as no visibility exists. A site meeting was undertaken to address their concerns and subsequently an adjustment of the design has taken place to allay their concerns.

The local member, Councillor John Clatworthy, attended the site meeting with San Remo Terrace residents to represent his constituents.

An additional representation was received from a resident in a property neighbouring San Remo terrace with similar concerns regarding visibility when exiting his driveway onto the footpath. Again, a site meeting was undertaken with the resident and subsequently an adjustment of the design has taken place to allay his concerns.

5. Financial Considerations

The total estimated cost of Phase 1 and 2 of the scheme is £621,485, which will be funded £64,585 from the Local Transport Plan grant and £556,900 through the CCF grant.
6. **Environmental Impact Considerations**

The scheme will be built predominantly within the existing highways boundary; therefore will have minimal environmental impacts.

A section of the scheme running through Lanhernes will be new footway on an existing grassed area. A planning application has been submitted to Teignbridge District Council for the lowering of the wall adjacent to Lanhernes, as shown in Appendix I on drawing no B12037_38. This wall is within a conservation area.

7. **Equality Considerations**

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.

This may be achieved, for example, through completing a full Equality Impact Needs Assessment/Impact Assessment or other form of options/project management appraisal that achieves the same objective.

An Impact Assessment has been prepared, a copy of which 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](http://www.devon.gov.uk/index/councildemocracy/decision_making/cma/index_exc.htm)

This concluded that while there are a number of challenges to delivering access for all on such a steeply graded route and local environment, the net impact was a substantial improvement and widening of access to larger groups of people. Where the route was not suitable for a user, an alternative signed option would be provided and the availability of bus services parallel to the route highlighted.

8. **Legal Considerations**

The lawful implications and consequences of the proposals have been considered and taken into account in the preparation of this report.

9. **Risk Management Considerations**

The lawful implications and consequences of the proposals have been considered and taken into account in the preparation of this report.
10. Public Health Impact

The scheme is likely to have a positive public health impact by encouraging increased levels of walking and cycling with associated health benefits. The scheme is not just aimed at bringing visitors into the town centre. It forms part of an expanding network which is planned to connect up new and existing residential areas in the town with key facilities including the rail station, town centre, primary schools and the Community College as well as enabling town residents to access the Exe Estuary Trail without needing a car. It will therefore help to improve the health of a wide range of people within the town.

The route also runs through the Dawlish Air Quality Management Area and will support the action plan to address the air quality issues which affect people’s health.

11. Options/Alternatives

The possible option of an on-road cycle lane was considered, but the recommended scheme is considered to be the best solution for the age groups and experience of cyclists likely to be using the facility.

12. Reason for Recommendation/Conclusion

The proposed measures will improve safety for cyclists and pedestrians using this route and will encourage more local journeys to be made by sustainable means.

The scheme will also support the local economy by encouraging more visitor trips to Dawlish town centre.

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Head of Planning, Transportation and Environment

Electoral Division: Dawlish

Cabinet Member for Highway Management and Flood Prevention: Councillor Stuart Hughes

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Local Government Act 1972: List of Background Papers

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Background Paper Date File Reference

Nil

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