

Chancel Lane Bridge Safety Improvements

Report of the Head of Planning, Transportation and Environment

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

Recommendation: It is recommended that:

- (a) the scheme shown on drawing numbers B2300119\CHAN\0007 Rev P3 and B2300119\CHAN\0008 Rev P1 be approved for implementation at an estimated cost of £60,000;**
- (b) the advertising of Traffic Regulation Orders associated with the scheme shown on plans B2300119\CHAN\0007 Rev P3 and B2300119\CHAN\0008 Rev P1 be supported and, if no objections are received, to make and seal the Orders.**

1. Summary

This report seeks approval for a developer funded scheme to improve pedestrian safety and accessibility on Chancel Lane by reducing speeds on the approaches to the railway bridge and discouraging larger vehicles from using the route with the use of bollards at either end.

2. Background

At the southern end of Chancel Lane is a narrow bridge over the railway line with poor visibility to oncoming pedestrians, cyclists and traffic. There are currently no footpaths and there is only enough room for one vehicle to pass safely in some places, which makes it less safe for pedestrians using the bridge daily. Although there is no record of collisions on the bridge, the route is perceived (and recognised) to be unsuitable for the mix of pedestrians, cyclists and drivers who use it daily.

Safe access across the bridge between Chancel Lane and Venny Bridge is a concern for pedestrians. In addition a further concern raised by Pinhoe Primary School parents is crossing Chancel Lane itself between the Mansell Construction and Thursby Walk. This link via the footpath just north of Thursby Walk forms part of the strategic cycle route which runs past Exeter Arena, Eastern Fields and east towards Broadclyst and connects through to the school.

As part of the recently developed Cold Storage Depot residential development, the S106 agreement provided for the developer to undertake works to improve Chancel Lane to be agreed with Exeter City Council (ECC). Devon County Council decided that the original scheme was not practical, and concluded that a toucan crossing in this location was unsuitable based on the local road characteristics, traffic volumes and pedestrian/cycle activity. Officers have used a DfT-approved mathematical formula used by many authorities, which concludes that a toucan crossing would be a disproportionate solution for the local area. Further details are provided in Options/Alternatives considered.

As a result of the revised scheme, Devon County Council suggested that a variation to the S106 agreement should be agreed between Taylor Wimpey and ECC. ECC have agreed the terms of the variation and funds have now been paid by the developer. The funds would be used towards the scheme being promoted in drawings B2300119\CHAN\0007 Rev P3 and B2300119\CHAN\0008 Rev P1.

Scheme approval was deferred at the April committee in order to carry out further consultation with Primary School representatives on the recommendation of the local member. A meeting was held with the incoming local County Councillor, one of the City Councillors and representatives from the school, including the deputy head of Pinhoe Primary School and governors/parents/local residents. Following this meeting, minor amendments to the scheme have been taken on board. This is described further in section 4.

3. Proposal

Attached plans no. B2300119\CHAN\0007 Rev P3 and B2300119\CHAN\0008 Rev P1 shows the proposed scheme, which includes narrowing the carriageway to 2.0m clear width with bollards at both ends of the bridge. This will limit the number of larger vehicles using this route, although consultation will be undertaken with the emergency services regarding the exact layout of the bollards and addressed through the detailed design. There is also a priority give and take arrangement at either end of these routes to help manage traffic flow and keep speeds down. One of the concerns is traffic speeding up as cars travel downhill either side of the bridge. The pinchpoint should mean that speeds are significantly reduced at the pedestrian/cycle crossing points.

There are also minor footway improvements crossing from the bottom of Chancel Lane towards Thursby Walk. The existing kerbing has been realigned to narrow the entrance to the estate and enable a narrower crossing point for pedestrians linking through to the footway/cyclepath connecting through to Wilcocks Road. The footway on the western side of Chancel Lane has not been extended across the verge into the Mansell Construction access road (which forms part of the strategic cross city cycle route passing Eastern Fields/Exeter Arena) as this is in private ownership. As part of the Ibstock brickworks planning permission, the pedestrian/cycle access connection to the proposed scheme will be completed.

Traffic Regulation Orders (TRO) will be required for the 6'0" width restriction and for the minor changes to the extent of the double yellow lines at the junction with Venny Bridge. The existing 32' length limit and 7.5T weight limit will no longer be required following the scheme implementation. The signs concerning these orders will be removed and the orders may be revoked.

A Stage 2 road safety audit has been carried out on the proposed scheme, with agreed amendments taken into account in the final design.

4. Consultations and Technical Data

In agreement with the local member, consultation on the scheme was included at the Exhibition Way Link Road exhibition in February/March 2012. Although the virtual footway element has since been dropped from the scheme on traffic policy grounds, the principles of the scheme, including restrictions to larger vehicles and improved pedestrian crossings at either end remains the same.

Two drop-in consultation events attracting over 300 local residents were held at Pinhoe Primary School and St James' School. These events displayed information on the different routes for the Exhibition Way link road (main purpose of the consultation) as well as the Devon County Council safety scheme for Chancel Lane Bridge. Survey feedback was received from over 150 people. Excluding people who had no preference on the scheme, 83% of people either strongly supported or supported the scheme with 17% either opposing or strongly opposing. In addition to the survey responses, a bundle of 88 letters (and 122 signatories) was received expressing an objection to closing Chancel Lane to through traffic.

A meeting was held with representatives from the school on 5 June. It was explained that a toucan crossing would be a disproportionate solution to providing a safe crossing of Chancel Lane. A HATOC report in January 2010 explained that toucan crossings are only suitable on

roads with moderate traffic flow and heavy pedestrian/cycle flows. The relatively low levels of traffic and sporadic peaks of demand for people wanting to cross Chancel Lane pedestrian/cycle crossings would not create problematic pedestrian/vehicle conflicts. This was explained with reference to traffic count data and the PV^2 calculation, which is a standard DfT method of assessing pedestrian/vehicle conflicts. It was also explained that it would not be possible to install signals and also provide the narrowing of the carriageway. Road safety officers' advice suggests that where signals are not in regular use, it may result in a less safe environment for pedestrians and cyclists. From a safety engineering perspective, the county council would be reluctant to provide a facility that would not be well used by one group of road users, e.g. if few pedestrians use a formal crossing, drivers begin to get complacent and don't expect a pedestrian to use it or the lights to change. Conversely, if few vehicles use the facility then pedestrians and cyclists can get complacent and not use the control box.

Representatives from the school generally accepted the reasons for not installing a toucan. It was also recognised that a large number of residents from the wider Pinhoe and Mincinglake area had previously shown support for the scheme through the Exhibition Way Link Road consultation in March 2012. The group did however ask officers to investigate the following minor amendments to the scheme:

- building out the pedestrian crossing on the Thursby Walk side of the road (or alternative measures) to improve visibility past parked cars of pedestrians looking to cross
- marking/signage on the carriageway to increase driver awareness of pedestrians or cyclists crossing, e.g. school crossing image or 20mph roundel
- on the southern side, moving the narrowing/bollards away from the Venny Bridge junction
- checking that pushchairs and visually impaired people have safe access (dropped kerbs) over the build outs to avoid needing to pass through the 2m wide carriageway pinchpoint
- addressing the vegetation issues on the Chancel Lane bridge (on Network Rail land)

Appendix I shows that visibility of pedestrians at the crossing on the Thursby Walk side would be enhanced as the crossing is further away from the parked cars. Furthermore, the vegetation would be cut back to help improve visibility. Other options to further narrow the road carriageway were discounted given its proximity to the bollards. Also, widening Thursby Walk rather than on the western (Ibstock) side would result in a poorly aligned kerbline between the cycle route and Chancel Lane.

Although on-road signage marking is not recommended, the scheme now includes a coloured surfacing on the crossing of Chancel Lane, which is in keeping with calming measures within a 20mph zone. This contrast of colours will make it clearer to drivers approaching the bridge that they are nearing a pedestrian/cycle crossing.

The bollards have been moved further away from the Venny Bridge junction. This will allow greater stacking space for cars. This has required an extension of the footway connecting from Venny Bridge. The islands have also been designed to be wider on one side to allow pushchairs/wheelchair-users to bypass the narrowed road carriageway.

A vegetation notice against Network rail is being pursued, providing a plan detailing the extent of vegetation to be cut back along Chancel Lane from Thursby Walk to Venny Bridges.

5. Financial Considerations

The estimated cost of the scheme is £60,000, including design fees works and costs associated with the Traffic Regulation Order (TRO). A deed of variation to the original Section 106 has been agreed and developer funding is in place to enable the county council to carry out the works this financial year.

6. Sustainability Considerations

The scheme is expected to improve pedestrian and cycle safety by removing a number of HGV movements and providing a less attractive north-south cross city route for general traffic.

Evidence suggests that the proposed traffic management changes to provide a narrower crossing point for pedestrians is an proportionate measure, taking into account the vehicle numbers, pedestrian/cycle movements and safety concerns in the area.

7. Carbon Impact Considerations

The proposals should have a positive impact by encouraging more children to walk to school and helping to reduce levels of car use and HGVs through a residential area. Reduced HGV movements on Chancel Lane is also anticipated to offer air quality benefits.

8. Equality Considerations

No new policies are being recommended in this report. The improvements are anticipated to improve safety and accessibility for all road users with. No adverse impacts on any particular group are therefore expected. As the proposals include narrowing of the carriageway and build outs, plans will be forwarded to the Guide Dogs Exeter Mobility Team to ensure that once the scheme is completed, local residents' guide dogs are trained in using the new traffic management layout.

9. Legal Considerations

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

The proposed works are subject to the resolution of any objections received regarding the Traffic Regulation Orders. The traffic regulation order relating to width restrictions and to revoke the length restriction on the road must be advertised in accordance with the Local Authorities' Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996.

10. Risk Management Considerations

This proposal has been assessed and all necessary action has been taken to safeguard the Council's position.

The greatest risk was in Exeter City Council failing to secure the developer funding relating to the scheme; however, since the last HATOC this has now been resolved. Devon County Council is ready to implement the scheme, subject to the outcomes of the consultation on the traffic orders.

11. Public Health Impact

The scheme will have a positive public health impact by improving safety and encouraging more children to walk to school. Pinhoe Primary School has a high proportion of children dropped off by car and it is anticipated that this scheme will make the routes to school more attractive on foot/by cycle, thereby promoting more healthier modes of travel.

12. Options/Alternatives

Toucan Crossing

Installing a toucan crossing was rejected partly following the road safety audit but also using the PV² formula, which is a well established calculation used to help assess what appropriate

intervention might be, ranging from 'do nothing', to narrowing the carriageway/installing refuges, to providing formal crossing facilities. The formula evaluates the potential for conflicts to occur between vehicles and pedestrians over the survey period. The analysis concluded that a toucan crossing would not be a proportionate measure and is unlikely to represent good value for money.

The Stage 2 Road Safety Audit did not consider it suitable to install a toucan crossing on this section of Chancel Lane. Although speed is a concern, this would be helped by the proposed buildouts limiting both the speed and size of vehicles using the route.

Virtual Footway along the whole length of the bridge

Previous drawings have shown virtual footways marked by a white edgeline for the whole length of the bridge. This reduced the vehicle carriageway to a consistent 4.2m along its length between the bollards at either end. The footway varied between 1.8m at its widest and 0.8m at its narrowest. A virtual footway is not recommended as it is not contained within the TSRGD or authorised by the DfT and so cannot be implemented on the county council's roads, if there is another alternative. Virtual footways give the impression to pedestrians that it is safe to walk within the white line; however, there is still a risk, particularly where there is insufficient carriageway width for two vehicles to pass, for drivers to cross into the footway. This was also discussed with representatives from the school who agreed that it would be preferable on safety grounds without the white lining.

14. Reason for Recommendation

The Chancel Lane improvement scheme is a developer-funded scheme, which will improve safety and accessibility for all road users. This is a proportionate solution to reduce the number of HGVs using the rail bridge and will reduce speeds on the approaches to and from the bridge. There are sound traffic policy and technical reasons why alternative options have been rejected. Furthermore, the scheme is recommended as it has gained support from local residents at the consultation event in March 2012, which attracted over 300 local residents. The proposed scheme also incorporates a number of suggestions put forward by representatives from Pinhoe Primary School.

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Local Government Act 1972: List of Background Papers

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Background Paper	Date	File Reference
1. Exhibition Way Link Road Consultation Report	May 2012	http://www.devon.gov.uk/exhibition-way-consultation-report-may-2012.pdf

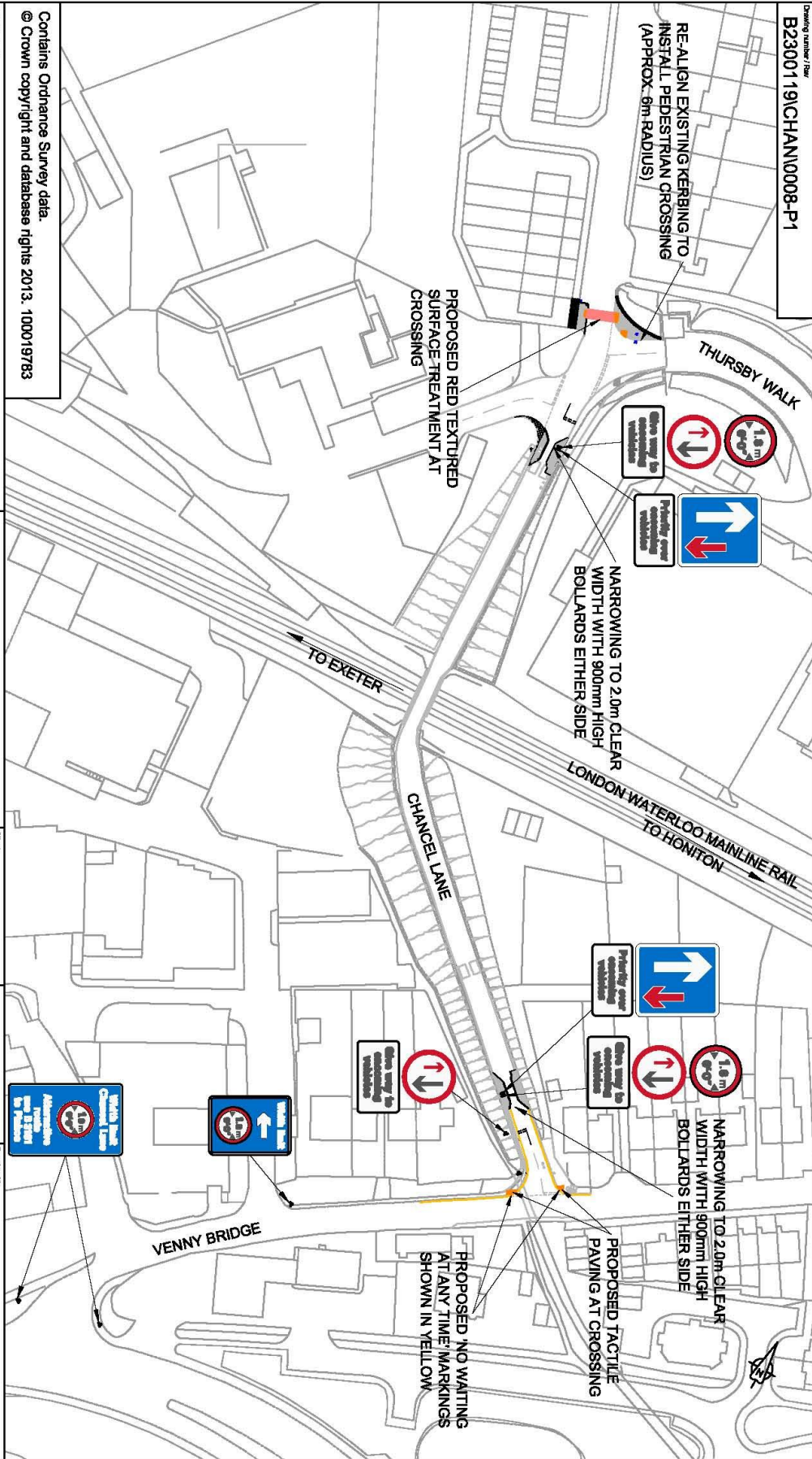
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sc/cr/chancel lane bridge safety improvements

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Appendix I
To PTE/13/75

Drawing number: P1
B2300119\CHAN\0008-P1



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- NOTES**
1. WIDER AREA SIGNING NOT SHOWN. DETAILED PROPOSALS CAN BE VIEWED ON DRAWINGS B2300119\CHAN\0001 AND B2300119\CHAN\0006.
 2. ALL SIGNS ON BUILD OUT TO BE EXTERNALLY ILLUMINATED.

Rev	Rev. Date	Purpose of revision	Drawn	Checked	Approved	Scale
P1	20/04/19	Initial layout provided	LD	OB	OB	
P0	21/04/19	Preparation				

		Project CHANCEL LANE FOOTWAY	Drawing status PRELIMINARY
		Scale 1:1250 @ A4 DO NOT SCALE	Drawing number B2300119\CHAN\0008 This drawing is not to be used in whole or part other than for the intended purpose and project as defined on this drawing. Refer to the contract for all terms and conditions.