

## **Chancel Lane Bridge Safety Improvements**

Report of the Head of Highways, Capital Development and Waste

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

**Recommendation: It is recommended that:**

- (a) this Committee considers an objection from the Devon Fire and Rescue Authority in response to the statutory consultation for the proposed Traffic Regulation Order required as part of a pedestrian safety scheme on Chancel Lane, Pinhoe;**
- (b) approves the revised scheme shown on displayed drawing, which is able to accommodate emergency vehicles up to 2.75m width; and**
- (c) the modifications to the traffic regulation orders be advertised as detailed in this report and the orders be made and sealed if no objections received.**

### **1. Summary**

This report seeks determination of an objection received by the Devon Fire and Rescue Service following consultation to secure a Traffic Regulation Order as part of a developer funded scheme to improve pedestrian safety and accessibility on Chancel Lane.

### **2. Background**

At its meeting on 13 July 2013, this Committee considered the report of the Head of Planning, Transportation and Environment (PTE/13/75) on a proposed 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.

It was resolved 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; and**
- (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 approved and, if no objections are received, be made and sealed.**

The proposed traffic regulation orders were advertised in December 2013/January 2014 and generated one objection from the Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service.

On Friday 27 June, an HGV contravened the existing length and weight restriction on Chancel Lane and in travelling over the railway bridge, struck the brick parapet damaging the structure and dislodging masonry. This resulted in the closure of the carriageway and the main Exeter to Waterloo railway line.

### **3. Proposal**

The original, approved, scheme included 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. 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.

Traffic Regulation Orders (TRO) will be required for the proposed 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 will 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**

Responses to consultation produced a letter from Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service formally objecting to the proposal, as follows:

"I am formally writing to you in relation to the proposed Width restriction under the Road Traffic Regulation Act on Chancel Lane Exeter.

The Fire and Rescue Authority (FRA) object to this proposal under the following grounds:

- The Existing Fire and Rescue attendance times will be increased by this proposal.
- The width restriction of 1.8m or 6 feet would prevent Fire emergency response vehicles and Ambulances from using this road to access incidents on the other side of the restriction.
- The resultant delay of one minute and ten seconds will put those affected by this delay to increased risk.

If this restriction proposal was delayed until the proposed build on Exhibition Way was completed then an alternative route for emergency vehicles to access the Beacon Heath/Harrington Lane area would be achieved and the FRA would no longer object.

The FRA do recognise that those affected by the delayed attendance time will still meet our targeted Emergency Response time of ten minutes using this route for Domestic and Non Domestic property fires type incidents and so request the above delay is implemented."

Following receipt of the objection, a meeting was convened with the designers of the scheme and revisions made to accommodate Emergency vehicles whilst best retaining the original objectives. The Fire and Rescue Authority was advised that the basic premise of the scheme remains the same, to introduce a width restriction along Chancel Lane in order to provide traffic calming and therefore improve pedestrian safety.

The main difference with the revised layout would be that the physical restriction is widened to 2.75 metres as opposed to the original proposal of 2 metres. A surface treatment comprising of flush kerbs, coloured surfacing and road markings would be applied within the

narrowings to provide a visual-only narrowing of 2 metres. It is intended that the legal signed width restriction would be 2 metres with the exception of emergency vehicles.

Although it is appreciated that the proposed width does not fully meet that which the FRA request, which is for 3.7 metres for emergency vehicles, smaller emergency vehicles would still be able to use the route to provide immediate response.

Every attempt to meet the requirements of all stakeholders has been made.

Upon further consultation, the FRA confirmed that should Chancel Lane be made inaccessible to the Fire Service, there are alternative routes available to the Beacon Heath area that will allow them to meet the standards they are set in terms of response time. However, the Fire Service would still object to the proposals on the basis that taking an alternative route will increase response time and, given that Beacon Heath is considered to be a high risk area, this is unacceptable. In summary, should the scheme proceed and the revised details be advertised as part of the traffic order process, the Fire Service would object to the proposals.

## **5. Financial Considerations**

The estimated cost of the scheme is now £78,000 funded largely from developer contributions, which includes additional 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 movement 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. 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 if the scheme were to be 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 the objection received regarding the Traffic Regulation Orders. The traffic regulation order relating to width restrictions and to revoke the length restriction will be carried out 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.

## **11. Public Health Impact**

The scheme will have a positive public health impact by improving safety and encouraging more children to walk to school.

## **12. Options/Alternatives**

If the Committee considers the impact on response times by the Fire and Rescue Service outweighs the immediate benefits of the scheme to vulnerable road users the scheme could be deferred until completion of the future link from Exhibition Way to Beacon Heath, when an alternative route for emergency vehicles would be available.

## **13. Reasons 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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## **Electoral Division: Pinhoe & Mincinglake**

### Local Government Act 1972: List of Background Papers

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Background Paper	Date	File Ref.
1. Exhibition Way Link Road Consultation Report	May 2012	<a href="http://www.devon.gov.uk/exhibition-way-consultation-report-may-2012.pdf">http://www.devon.gov.uk/exhibition-way-consultation-report-may-2012.pdf</a>

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