

Stoke Hill Junior School – improved pedestrian access

Report of the Head of Highways and Traffic Management

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

Recommendation: It is recommended that approval be given for the scheme shown on attached plan no. B2300208/009, at an estimated cost of £68,000.

1. Summary

This report seeks approval for a proposed scheme to improve pedestrian access to Stoke Hill Junior School, Exeter.

2. Background/Introduction

The existing pedestrian access arrangements at Stoke Hill Junior School do not meet current disability standards. At present, the only separate pedestrian access to the school is via a narrow flight of steps which creates a barrier for disabled people and for parents with prams or buggies. The only alternative step-free access is via the main driveway. Although the school endeavours to restrict vehicular access to the driveway during the morning and afternoon peak periods, potential for collisions involving children and vehicles still exists. For pupils attending the school from the northern Pennsylvania area via Widecombe Way, access is particularly difficult as in addition to the problems outlined above, the pedestrian route also involves having to use a very narrow section of congested footway on the north-western side of Stoke Hill, directly adjacent to live fast moving traffic.

Data from the 2011 'School EcoCheck' census for Stoke Hill Junior School indicates that of the 302 (year 3 to year 6) children in attendance, 242 (over 80%) regularly walk to school. The purpose of this scheme is to improve the safety of these pupils, and to maximise the number of school journeys made by sustainable means by encouraging future intakes to continue to walk to school.

3. Proposals

Plan no. B2300208/009 shows the proposed scheme, which involves the construction of two new pedestrian accesses to the school, one near northern boundary of the site linking with the existing footpath from Widecombe Way and the other near the southern boundary which provides an improved access from Stoke Hill. Both links will provide new step-free and traffic-free pedestrian accesses to the school, and the Widecombe Way link will in addition provide a more convenient and direct link to the school, avoiding the need to use the existing narrow and congested footway in Stoke Hill.

It is planned to carry out the works during the summer holidays in order to avoid disruption to the school and to minimise any Health and Safety risks.

4. Consultation

The Headteacher and staff at the school have been closely involved in the development of these proposals and are fully supportive of the scheme. Consultation has also taken place with the Exeter City Council as Local Planning Authority, and as the owners of part of the land required for the northern link. Planning consent procedures are currently in progress. Negotiations are also continuing with the land required for the southern link, part of which is in private ownership.

In addition to the formal planning consultations, the Parks and Open Spaces Department of Exeter City Council have been consulted in detail regarding the ecological aspects of the scheme. For the Widecombe Way link, minimal advance vegetation site clearance works have been already been carried out, with the agreement of the City Council, in order to avoid the potential disruption of habitats during the bird nesting season. This involved the removal of a small cherry tree and a 3m length of boundary hedge at the location of the new access. The cherry tree was surveyed by the City Council who advised that it was showing signs of distended buttressing and that therefore the impact caused by the loss of this tree would be minimal. It has also been agreed that mitigation planting, to replace the lost tree, will be carried out within the same parcel of land. With regard to the short section of boundary hedge, this was surveyed by an ecologist both prior to and during the clearance works to ensure that no loss of habitat occurred.

5. Financial Considerations

The total estimated cost of the scheme is £68,000, for which financial provision has been made in the Department for Transport grant funded Local Sustainable Transport Fund (Access to Education) programme.

6. Sustainability Considerations

The provision of improved walking routes, helping to reduce dependence on private car use, is a key element in the County Council's sustainable transport policy.

7. Carbon Impact Considerations

The proposals should have a positive impact by encouraging more children to walk to school and reducing levels of car use.

8. Equality Considerations

No new policies are being recommended in this report and therefore an Equality Impact and Needs Assessment is not considered necessary.

9. Legal Considerations

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

10. Risk Management Considerations

This proposal has been assessed and all necessary safeguards or actions have been taken to safeguard the Council's position.

11. Public Health Impact

The scheme will have a positive public health impact by encouraging increased walking, with associated health benefits, and by reducing the risk of pedestrian road accident casualties.

12. Options/Alternatives Investigated

Various alternative schemes for providing improved pedestrian access to the school were investigated but the proposed scheme is considered to be the preferred option.

13. Reason for Recommendation/Conclusion

The proposed scheme will help to improve road safety and encourage more local journeys to be made by sustainable means.

Lester Willmington
Head of Highways and Traffic Management

Electoral Division: Duryard & Pennsylvania

Local Government Act 1972: List of Background Papers

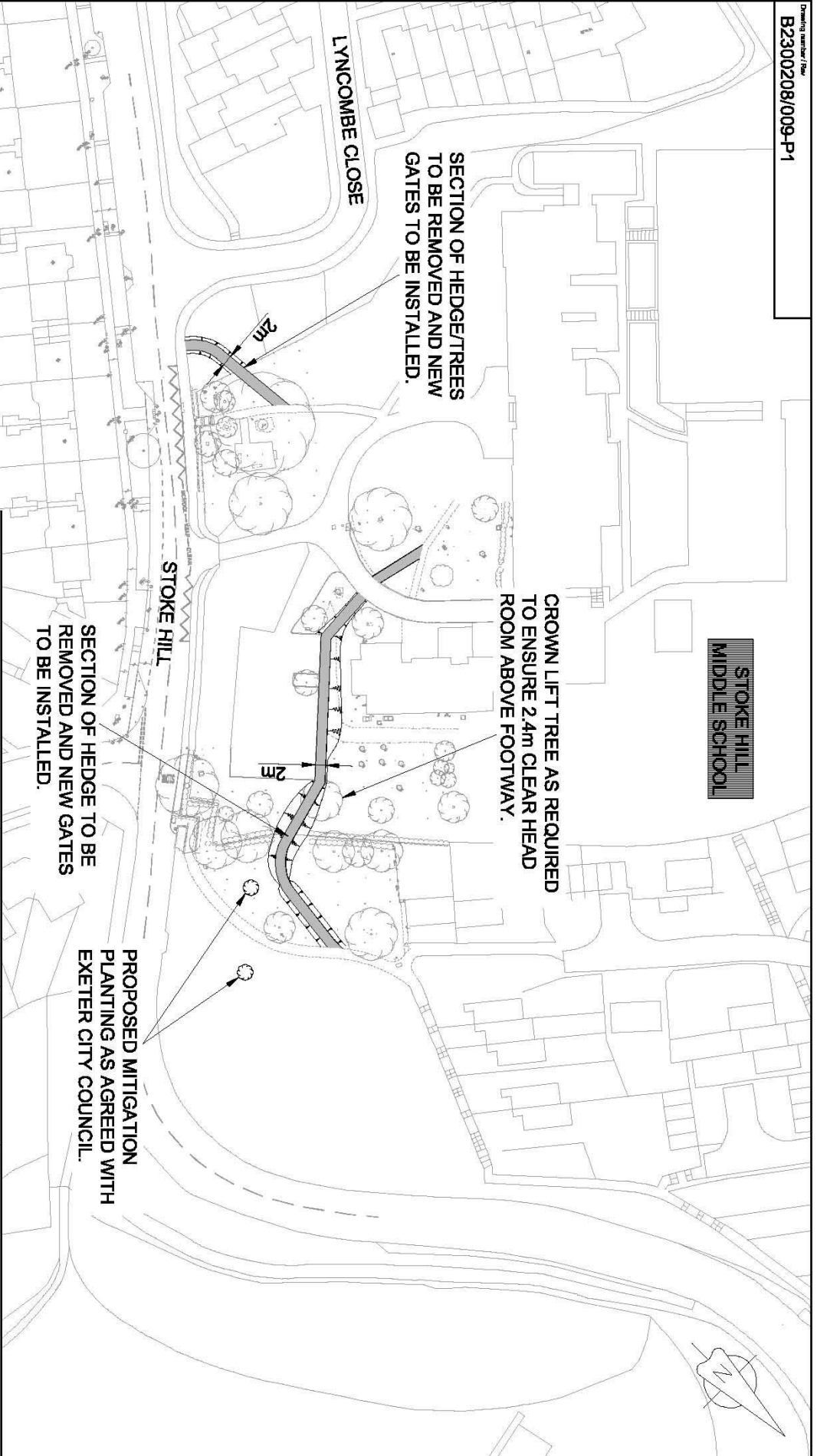
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Background Paper	Date	File Reference
None		

ro260213exh
sc/cr/stoke hill junior school improved pedestrian access
03 080313



KEY

■ PROPOSED FOOTWAY LINKS

■ EARTHWORKS

Contains Ordnance Survey data.
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Rev	Rev. Date	Rev. Description	Drawn	Checked/Approved	Project No.
P1	27/09/15	Additional tree included	LD	DB	KM
P0	15/09/15	Preliminary	LD	DB	KM

Chief
Devon
 County Council

Project
LSTF A TO E STOKE HILL JUNIOR SCHOOL REVISED ENTRANCE

1:1000 @ A4
 DO NOT SCALE



Drawing title
HATOC PLAN

Drawing number
B2300208/009

Rev
P1

PRELIMINARY

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 full terms and conditions.