

E4 Cycle Route – Eastern Fields – Betty's Mead Playing fields, Phase 2: Approval to Construct

Report of the Head of Planning, Transportation and Environment

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

Recommendation: It is recommended that the committee give approval to construct the proposed works to the E4 cycle route at an estimated cost of £213,000.

1. Background/Introduction

Exeter is building a good reputation for cycling, which is increasingly seen as an attractive leisure activity and a viable alternative to car travel. The 2011 census data showed Exeter as having almost double the average proportion of people walking and cycling to work, 6%. The County Council's Cycling and Multi-Use Trail Network Strategy outlined targets to increase the percentage of journeys to work by bike to 12% by the next census in 2021. High quality routes which provide links between growing residential areas and new and existing employment sites will help to meet this target and allow better access to the city centre for employment, retail, improved access to education, and encourage more leisure trips.

A network of proposed cycle routes was put forward by Devon County Council in its 2015 Cycling and Multi-Use Network Strategy. These routes were further refined to a series of higher quality routes radiating out from the city centre in The Exeter Cycle Strategy, which was brought to Cabinet in 2016. In this meeting, it was agreed that the E4 route between Redhayes Bridge and the University's Streatham Campus would be made a priority. Redhayes Bridge is the main multi-use link connecting Exeter to the airport, Cranbrook, the Science Park and other development to the east of the City.

Improvements to the section of the E4 cycle route between Exhibition Way and Bettysmead Playing Fields off Beacon Lane is presented for approval to construct in FY 18/19 and are to follow the completion of Phase 1 on Cumberland Way in July 2018.

This improved cycle infrastructure will help to meet the aims and objectives of national and local plans and strategies.

The main drivers for development of cycle routes in Exeter are:

- Providing opportunities to access the growth to the east and south of the city by cycle and on foot. This would allow residents from these areas to have improved access to education, employment, retail and leisure facilities.
- Healthy living – obesity has become one of the UK's major public health issues, with the number of people who are obese doubling in the last 25 years.
- Devon's population is ageing – walking and cycling can contribute to physical and mental health and wellbeing among the older population by providing an active means of independent mobility.

- Improved cycle infrastructure will increase the appeal of the city, making it more resilient to the effects of growth and allowing residents to be safer, healthier and better connected.
- The routes will provide facilities for all pedestrian and mobility impaired users. Allowing improved access to a range of facilities of a network of higher quality routes

2. Proposal

The overall aim of this proposal is to deliver improved pedestrian and cycle facilities on the route between Exhibition Way and Bettysmead Playing Fields, Beacon Lane. The proposed works consist of 3 components:

- Section 6 is located at the entrance to Bettysmead Playing Fields. Currently, there is poor visibility from Beacon Lane into the car park and there are no facilities to separate pedestrians and cyclists from the traffic. The proposal seeks to widen the entrance to enable the introduction of a raised shared use path.
- Section 7 is located along the path through Bettysmead Playing Fields leading to Summer Lane. Currently, there is poor visibility on part of the route due to the path curving twice sharply in opposite directions which creates conflicts between users from opposite directions when they use the most direct route. The proposal seeks to widen the path where possible and to realign the path to provide a more direct line to increase the safety of the pedestrians and cyclists using this route. Additional maintenance work is proposed to crown lift trees and improve drainage.
- Section 9 is located along the path through Exhibition and Eastern Fields. Currently, the path is narrow and meanders sharply through trees which creates conflicts between users on this route due to the lack of space. The proposals seek to widen the path to 3.5m where possible with local 2.5m narrowings where trees constrain the path to make it safer and more accessible to all users.

Appendix I shows detailed scheme drawings of the three sections.

3. Consultations/Representations/Technical Data

Consultation for the Exeter cycle routes began in early 2015 and involved discussions held with Local Members, Exeter City Council, cycling groups, Cabinet and the wider public. Through this process, the routes were agreed and prioritised and the approval to undertake design was granted by Cabinet in 2016.

The Cumberland Way and Pinhoe Road section of the E4 route was presented to cabinet in September 2017 and approval to construct granted.

The design of these cycle route improvements has been consulted upon throughout its evolution with relevant stakeholders such as DCC's maintenance team and Exeter City Council. Once a suitable design had been reached, it was audited via a Road Safety Audit.

Regarding the construction, local businesses, residents and other necessary consultees will be informed of the proposed works and necessary traffic management, when the programme is fixed, to further inform the public.

4. Financial Considerations

The estimated cost for delivery of these three sections including all design, construction and supervisory works is £213,000. The construction component for this estimate is £182,000 and includes a 10% contingency.

The scheme will be funded from the National Productivity Investment Fund grant.

5. Environmental Impact Considerations

The improvement of the cycle facilities will promote and increase the number of people travelling in a sustainable way such as walking and cycling. This will reduce traffic congestion and CO₂ emissions and improve air quality in the surrounding areas.

The removal of 10 trees has been proposed under these works. 5 of these were identified by the arboricultural survey for safety reasons and the remainder are essential for the works. The ecological survey has shown no reason that these trees cannot be removed and there are no Tree Protection Orders (TPOs) in place. Planting will be undertaken to mitigate the loss of these trees.

6. 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.

The proposals meet equality requirements in numerous ways, for example, they will:

- Provide improved routes not just for cyclists but also other non-motorised users.
- Allow people who use wheelchairs or people pushing prams to have easier access, which may improve their experiences of travelling around the city.
- Enable disadvantaged groups to gain access to training and employment opportunities.
- Enable people of all ages to enjoy being active for leisure and sport.
- Improve access to help people better connect with their communities and engage in social activities.
- Contribute to physical and mental health and wellbeing among the older population by providing an active means of independent mobility.
- Help to tackle health problems, such as those associated with obesity.

7. Legal Considerations

There are no specific legal considerations.

8. Risk Management Considerations

No significant risks have been identified.

9. Public Health Impact

The scheme is subject to Road Safety Auditing. Combined Stage 1 and 2 Road Safety Audits have been undertaken, and all items raised have been addressed. Following construction, a Stage 3 Audit will be undertaken to assess the completed scheme and its impact on users from a safety perspective.

The proposals will encourage people to walk and cycle, and so play a part to help people stay healthy and reduce the long term burden on the NHS.

Offsetting cars journeys and reducing congestion will contribute to reducing air pollution which is better for cyclists, residents and pedestrians.

10. Options/Alternatives

A number of alternatives were considered in the early design stages relating to the type of facility proposed and the state of the existing facilities.

The status quo on this section of the E4 cycle route is generally a narrow shared use path with areas of poor visibility and no formal facilities at the entrance to Bettysmead Playing Fields.

The provision of a fully segregated facility was considered however this would have required retaining structures incurring significant costs and would have resulted in the loss of dozens of trees changing the nature of the parks.

The option of a 3.5m wide shared use path with local narrowings to 2.5m which has been proposed was deemed to provide the best compromise between high quality cycle facilities and maintaining trees and the pleasant nature of the existing path in this area.

11. Summary/Conclusions/Reasons for Recommendations

There is a need to encourage more people to take up cycling and walking to support increased physical activity and the continued growth of the city. The proposals offer all user groups better quality cycling and provide linkages between densely populated residential areas and key work, education and leisure destinations.

Progression of this section of the E4 route to construction is required to take advantage of available NPIF funding and build on the improvements to the E4 route constructed on Cumberland Way. The E4 route is to set a standard for strategic cycle routes in Exeter and across the County.

Dave Black
Head of Planning, Transportation and Environment

Electoral Divisions: All in Exeter

Local Government Act 1972: List of Background Papers

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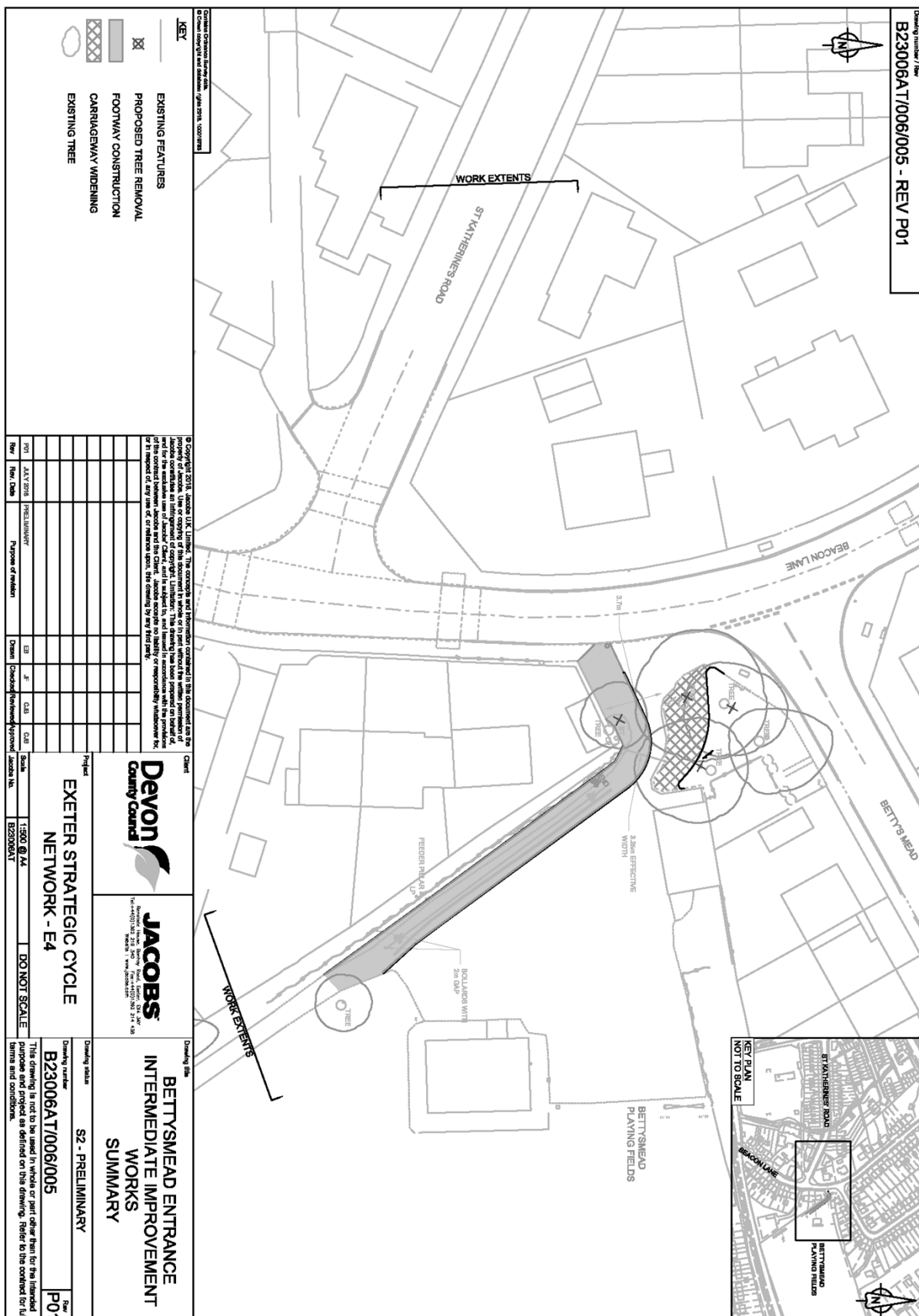
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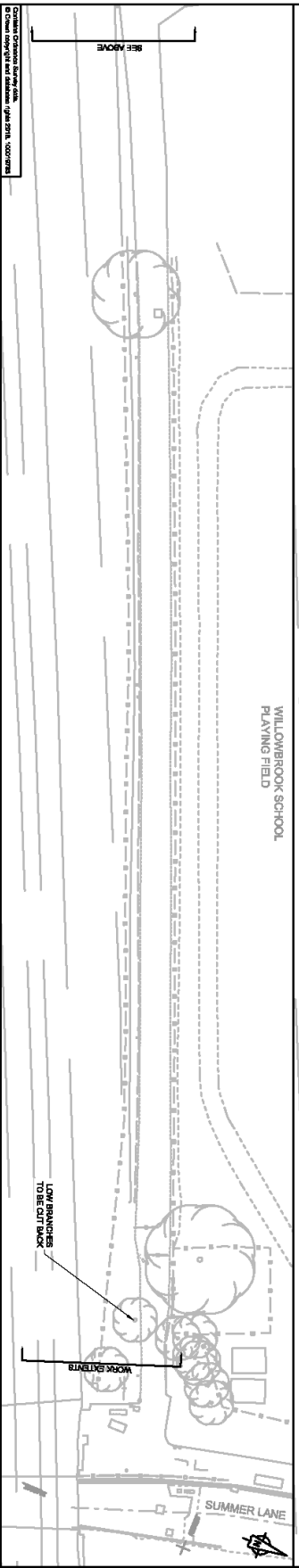
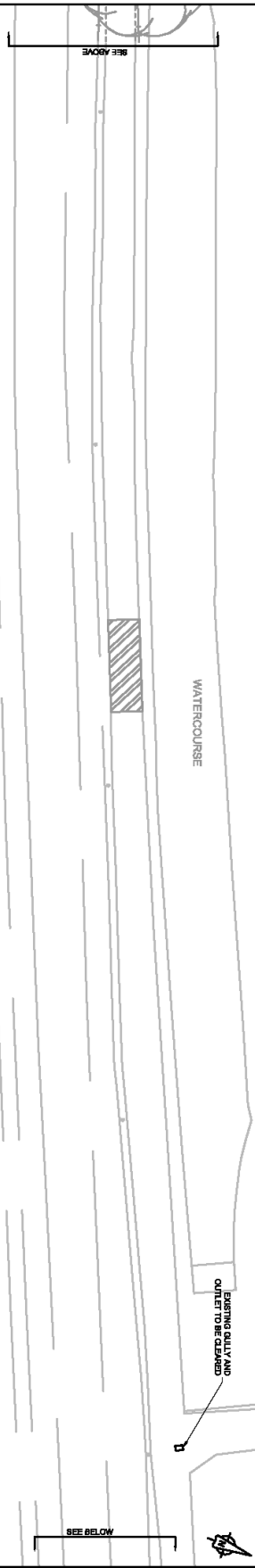
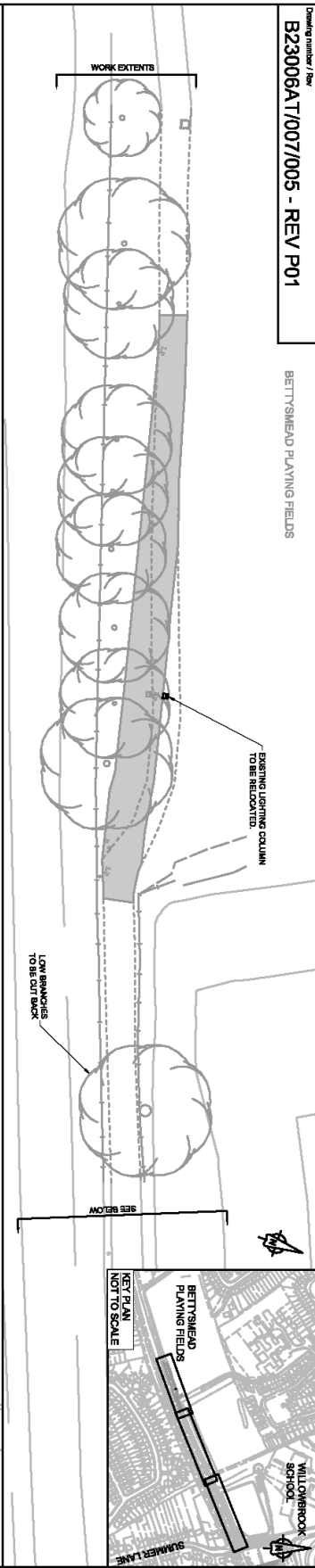
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Background Paper	Date	File Reference
1. Impact Assessment		

lh250718exh

sc/cr/E4 Cycle Route Eastern Fields Betty's Mead Playing fields Phase 2 Approval to Construct
02 250718





EXISTING FEATURES

FOOTWAY REALIGNMENT

FOOTWAY RESURFACING TO PONDING

EXISTING TREE

[illegible]

Devon
County Council

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**BETTYSMEAD PATH
INTERMEDIATE IMPROVEMENT
WORKS**

EXETER STRATEGIC CYCLE

NETWORK - E4

Scale	1:500 @ A4	DO NOT SCALE
Location No.	B23006AT	

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.

