

E4 Cycle Route (Phase 3) – Cycle and Pedestrian bridge across Summer Lane, Exeter: Approval to Construct

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: It is recommended that Cabinet

- (a) Approves, in principle, and subject to planning permission being granted, the construction of an improved pedestrian/cycle route and a bridge over Summer Lane, as outlined in Appendices 2A and 2B, at an estimated cost of £1,305,000;**
- (b) Delegates authority to the Head of Planning, Transportation and Environment, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Highway Management and relevant local Members, to make minor amendments to the scheme details and, to approve for construction once planning permission has been granted.**

1. Summary

The principle of a strategic cycle network for Exeter was endorsed by Cabinet on 8 June 2016. It was also agreed by Cabinet that work should continue with the development of the Network, giving priority to E4 cycle route between Monkerton and the City Centre.

This report seeks approval, subject to the granting of full planning consent, to construct a walking and cycling bridge over Summer Lane providing improvements to 100 metres of existing route.

2. Background/Introduction

The County has a strong record of delivering pedestrian and cycle infrastructure. These high quality segregated routes in Exeter are particularly well used by a range of users and cycle counters show that this continues to increase. See Appendix 1 for an overview of Exeter's strategic cycle routes.

The E4 route between Redhayes Bridge (Monkerton) and the City Centre and the University's Streatham Campus is designed to deliver a high-quality route for all users. The E4 route has been divided up into four phases and each phase broken down into individual sections.

This report seeks approval for Phase 3 (Section 8), which is a 100-metre section including a bridge across Summer Lane. At present, the existing cycle route includes steep gradients, blind corners and the need to cross Summer Lane 'at grade' via a signalled crossing, which involves a detour via Exeter Arena entrance.

Potential improvements to the remaining sections of the E4 cycle route are being developed.

3. Proposal

An overview of the design for the cycle and pedestrian bridge across Summer Lane is shown in Appendix 2A and 2B.

The proposals predominantly consist of an 18m span, 4.5m clear width bridge for pedestrians and cyclists over Summer Lane, with ramps on either side that will connect to the existing paths in Exhibition Fields and Bettys Mead Playing Fields. These paths are part of the E4 Cycle Route, and are due to be improved as separate projects. Access to Summer Lane from the existing path will be maintained after the bridge is constructed to enable connections to the local schools and properties in the area.

The proposed western approach ramp to the bridge would be approximately 55m in length and the eastern approach 22m, both of which will be approximately 5m in width. The ramps would have a maximum gradient of 1:20 to ensure they are not overly challenging for those less able to cycle and parents with pushchairs or people with physical disabilities. The parapet on top of the wall and along the bridge would be a standard steel pedestrian guardrail, painted green with LED downlighting. Lighting columns will also be installed to the west and east of the ramps to improve security.

The proximity of the railway is major constraint and consequently the existing Western Power Distribution (WPD) compound located in the south-eastern corner of Willowbrook School Playing Field would be relocated to the north of its existing location to accommodate the span of the bridge.

Three mature willow trees would be removed from the eastern side of Summer Lane and one mature oak tree from the western side. The planting and landscape proposals include reinstatement of a hedge and provide for the planting of five silver birch trees to the south of the proposed bridge and a further four trees will be planted on the existing bank between the car park and cycleway as mitigation.

4. Consultations/Representations/Technical Data

Consultation for the Exeter cycle routes began in early 2015 and involved discussions 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.

Outline proposals for the bridge over Summer Lane were presented together with the proposals for Exhibition Way and Pinhoe Road as part of a public consultation between 15th October and 19th November 2018. The consultation was posted on the Council's Have Your Say website. Local residents, nearby business, stakeholders and a number of community groups were contacted separately as part of this consultation.

For the bridge element, the response to the proposals has been positive. No negative responses have been received. Eleven out of 53 respondents specifically said that they liked the design and thought it was a good idea. A small number of responses (four) questioned why the path would be shared, rather than segregated; however, this would be inconsistent with the adjoining paths through Bettys Mead and Exhibition Fields, which were not segregated due to the varying width of path.

Proposals were also presented to Exeter HATOC where Members commended the scheme, noting the provisions for people with disabilities and efforts to remove obstacles as far as practicable.

5. Financial Considerations

The overall construction cost of the proposal is estimated to be £1,305,000.

£871,398 of the funding will come from the National Productivity Investment Fund (NPIF) that the County Council were successful in securing for a package of improvements

including continued progress with the E4 cycle route and match funded by £433,602 Section 106 contributions from the Brickworks development. In order to meet the requirements of the NPIF grant funding, the scheme must be delivered in financial year 2019/2020. Construction of the bridge is scheduled to start in the Summer 2019 and should take up to 9 months to complete.

6. Environmental Impact Considerations

The scheme will increase the attractiveness of cycling, walking and provide facilities for a range of other users. This will allow better access to the parks in the area and reduce the growth of car use, reduce carbon emissions and limit reduction of air quality.

Ecological surveys have been undertaken for areas where trees are to be removed and vegetation clearance is required. No other protected species are to be affected by the works. All trees are to be removed outside of the bird nesting season which is from March to September. If the trees are to be removed inside the bird nesting season, then the works need to be undertaken under the supervision of a qualified ecologist.

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.

In progressing this particular scheme element, an Impact Assessment has been prepared which has been circulated separately to Cabinet Members and also is available on the Council's website at: <https://new.devon.gov.uk/impact/>, which Members will need to consider for the purposes of this item.

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 across side roads, which may improve their experiences of travelling around the city.
- Serve a number of schools and will thereby offer safer routes for young people.
- Enable disadvantaged groups to gain access to training and employment.
- 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.

8. Legal Considerations

The lawful implications/consequences of the proposals/recommendations/proposed course of action have been considered and taken into account in the preparation of this report and formulation of the recommendations set out above.

A full planning application has been submitted for the proposal and the construction of the footbridge and any conditions will be adhered to.

9. Risk Management Considerations

In the development of the project, a series of project risk assessments have been carried out. The risks identified have been managed and the remaining risks are as follows:

- Objections to the Planning Application
- Work involving Statutory Undertakers apparatus become protracted
- Network Rail imposes restrictions or introduces requirements that cause delay
- Adverse weather and bird nesting season in Spring potentially impacting on construction programme.

From the consultation that has taken place to date, and the positive ongoing liaison with key stakeholders, e.g. Network Rail, and Statutory undertakers, we do not anticipate difficulties with the above risks that couldn't be dealt with subsequent to the approval of this report and in accordance with the recommendations.

Assuming that planning consent is granted at the end of January, we can then proceed with the tree works so as to avoid the bird nesting season and therefore continue to deliver the scheme to the National Productivity Investment Fund grant funding timescales.

A detailed estimate is in place which incorporates allowances for Risk and Optimism Bias. The contract will be sent out to a mini tender between the contractors on the Framework for Minor Engineering Works and a suitable contractor will be selected.

10. Public Health Impact

The scheme is subject to Road Safety Auditing. Stage 1 Road Safety Audits has been undertaken, and the items raised were addressed in the detailed design phase. Once the detailed design is progressed further, a Stage 2 Road Safety Audit will be undertaken, and the items raised will be addressed in the construction phase. Following construction, a Stage 3 Audit will be undertaken to assess the completed scheme and its impact on users from a safety perspective.

There are several academic papers and research that demonstrate the clear links between increased cycling and improved public health, including lower death rates and lower risk of heart problems and depression.

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

11. Discussion

The construction of the proposed walking and cycling bridge over Summer Lane supports economic growth, public health and sustainable transport targets. It reflects previous Cabinet decisions and is set to provide a new class of cycle facility in Exeter and Devon.

12. Options/Alternatives

Two different options were considered in the early design stages relating to the type and location of the proposed facility and the state of the existing facilities. One was a bridge with a 4.5m width and the other was a bridge of 3m width. The brief for the E4 Cycle route specifies that designs should seek to achieve the highest quality walking and cycling design in order to provide a step change in cycling facilities. This has informed the proposed width of 4.5m for the bridge, which will be suitable for the design cycle flow and cater for pedestrians and a range of other users.

The cost in providing a narrower bridge would not be significantly lower than the proposed 4.5m bridge and, while a narrower bridge may be able to accommodate the anticipated users soon after completion, it would be sensible to build in the additional capacity now to match the ambition for the route.

The other option was to allow for cyclists to continue to use the Exeter Arena entrance and Toucan crossing before continuing along a relatively narrow section of shared use path on the western side of Summer Lane. This section of path would be substandard and would result in conflicts between pedestrians and cyclists particularly in the peak periods where city centre trips mix with high numbers of people travelling towards the local schools.

13. Reason for Recommendation/Conclusion

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 proposal offers all user groups better quality facilities, segregated from traffic and provide linkages between densely populated residential areas and key work, education and leisure destinations.

Progression of this cycle and pedestrian bridge as part of the E4 route is key to seamlessly join together other existing sections of the cycle route. It will take advantage of available National Productivity Investment Fund funding and will continue the momentum built with the other sections of the route. The scheme, when completed, could be used as a showcase route to attract further funding, and shows that the Council is proactive in enabling and promoting cycling and walking as a key mode of transport.

Dave Black
Head of Planning, Transportation and Environment

Electoral Divisions: All in Exeter

Cabinet Member for Highway Management: Councillor Stuart Hughes

Chief Officer for Communities, Public Health, Environment and Prosperity, Dr Virginia Pearson

Local Government Act 1972: List of Background Papers

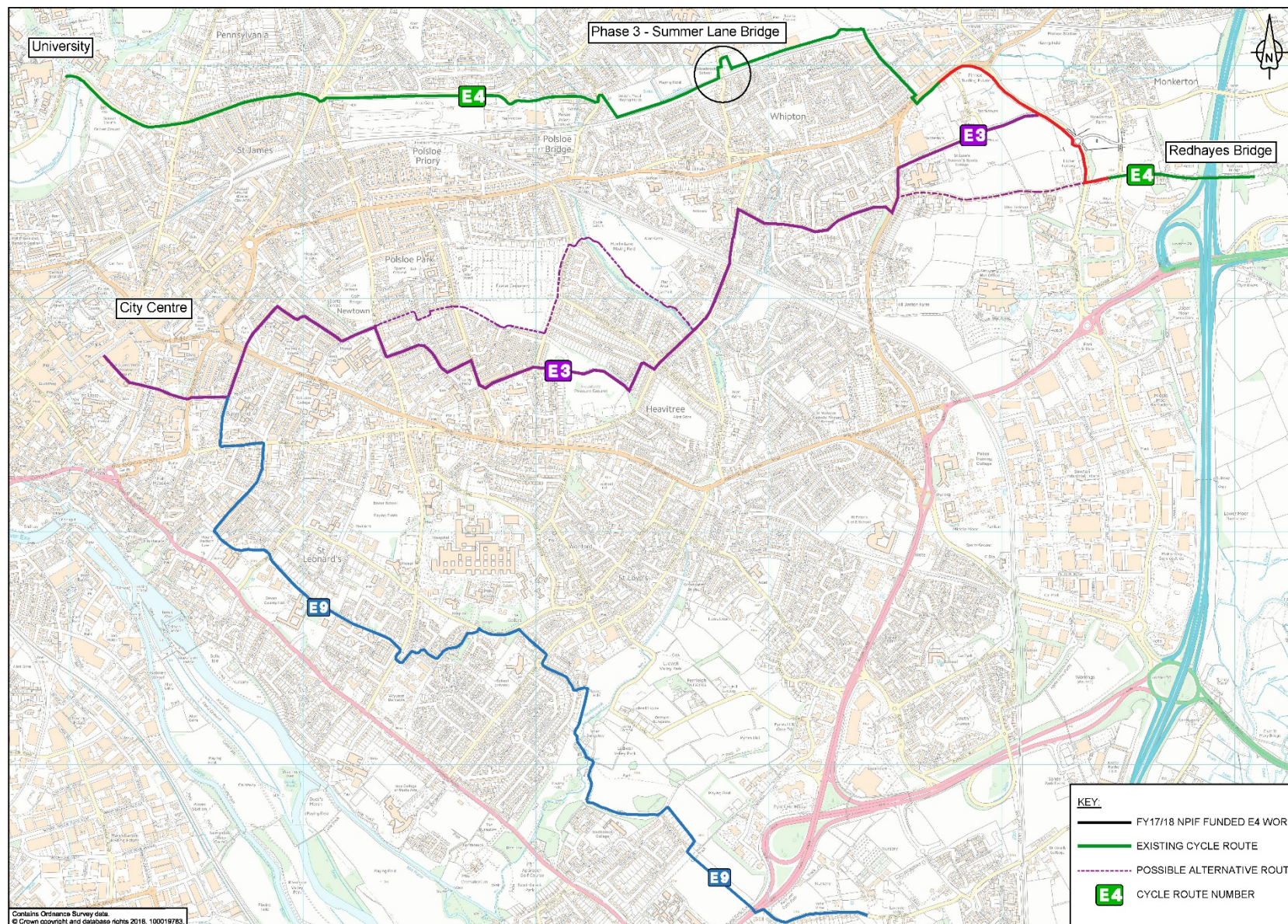
Contact for enquiries: Liz Holloway

Room No. Lucombe House, County Hall, Exeter. EX2 4QD

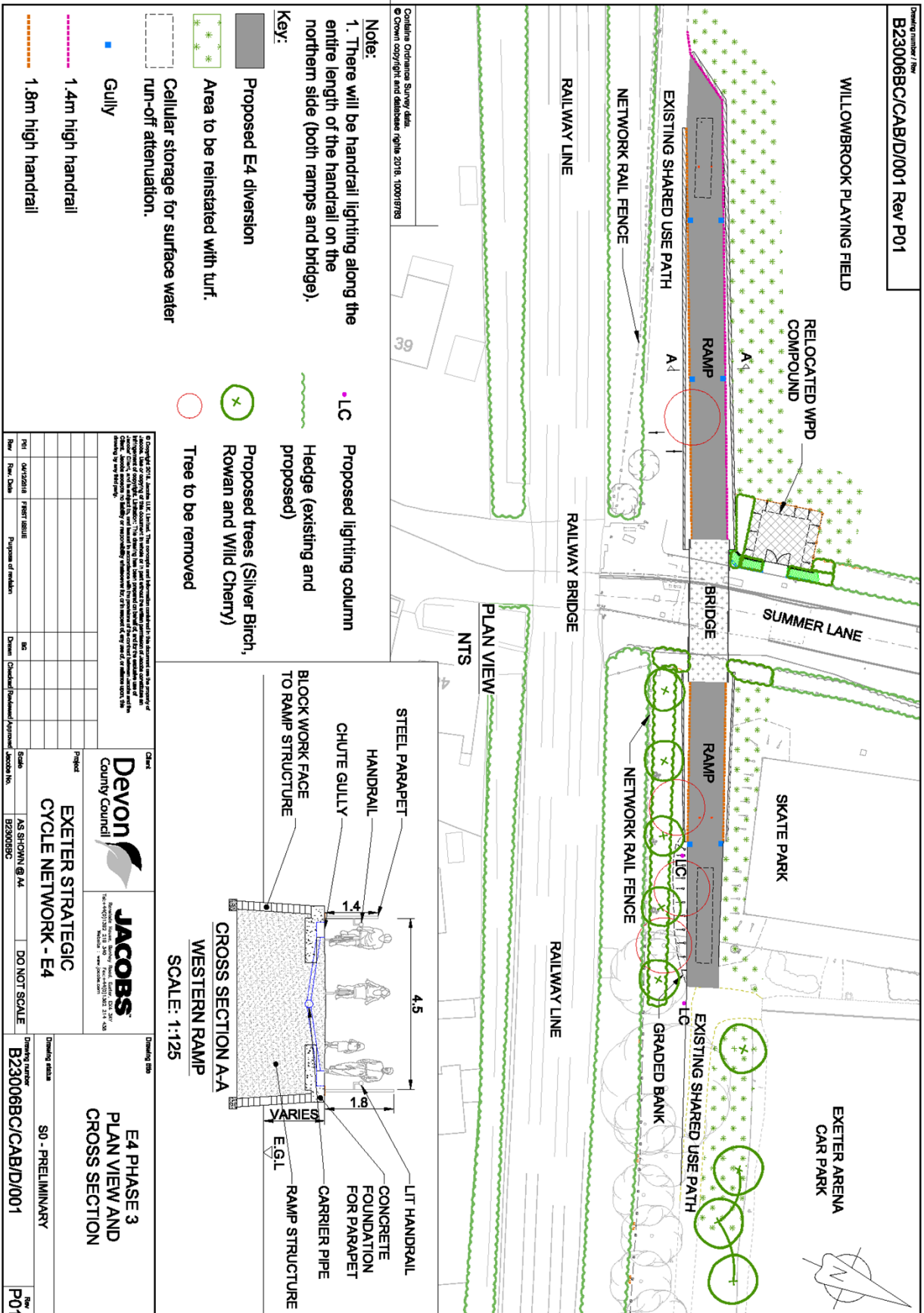
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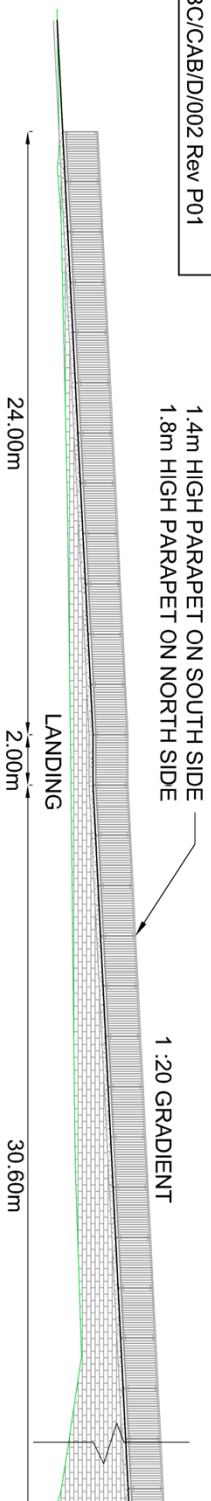
Background Paper	Date	File Reference
Impact Assessment	13 December 2018	https://new.devon.gov.uk/impact/

Exeter East West Cycle Routes

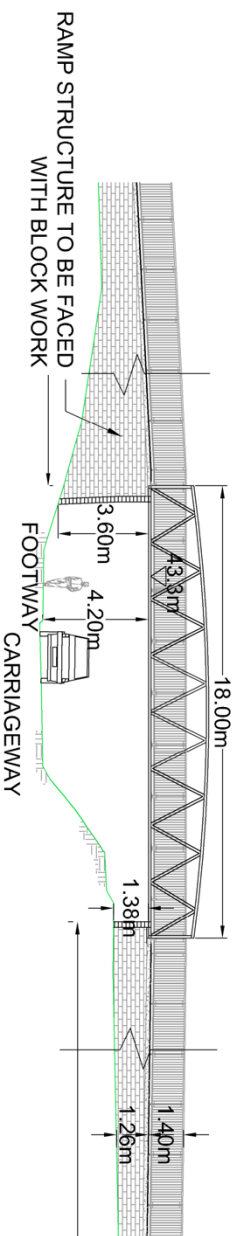


Bridge Design Overview

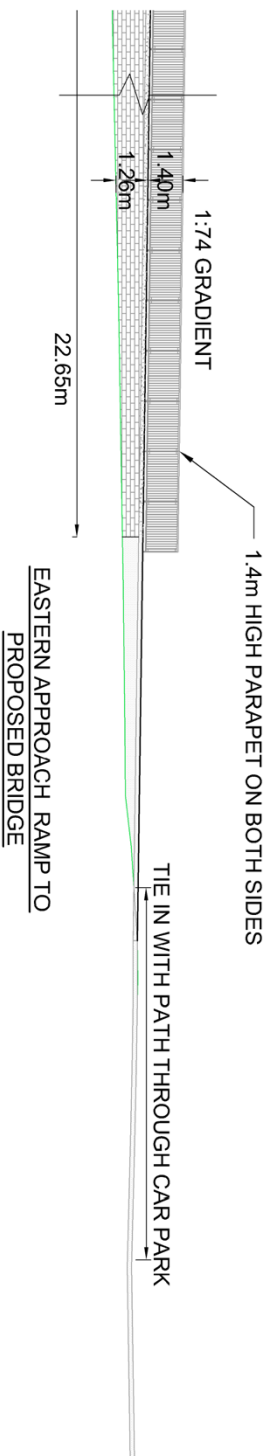




WESTERN APPROACH RAMP TO
PROPOSED BRIDGE



PROPOSED BRIDGE



- Note:
1. E.G.L taken from topographical survey.
 2. For plan view, see drawing B23006BC/CAD/D/001.

Key:

Existing Ground Level

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Project EXETER STRATEGIC CYCLE NETWORK - E4				Drawing status S0 - PRELIMINARY		Drawing number B23006BC/CAB/D/002	
Scale 1:250 @ A4				DO NOT SCALE		Rev P01	
Purpose of revision				Drawn		Rev Date	
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