

## **Newton Abbot Exeter Road Improvements**

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.***

### **Recommendation: That:**

- (a) the scheme layout shown on drawing DWG B15013/43 (attached to the report at Appendix 2) be approved to proceed in line with the recommendations below;**
- (b) authority be given to obtain the land required for the scheme, including Compulsory Purchase Orders if necessary;**
- (c) any necessary Side Roads Orders and Traffic Regulation Orders are advertised and if no objections received, be made and sealed;**
- (d) a tender exercise is undertaken for construction of the scheme, with award of tender only when funding is secured; and**
- (e) the Head of Planning, Transportation and Environment, in consultation with the Local Member and relevant Cabinet Member, be given delegated authority to make minor amendments to the scheme design.**

## **1. Summary**

This report seeks approval to proceed with land acquisition, side roads orders and a tender exercise for a scheme to widen the existing footway and highway between Whitehill Close and Churchills Roundabout on the A382, Newton Abbot. This is part of the wider A382 Corridor Improvement Scheme between the A38 and Newton Abbot and the Newton Abbot East – West Shared Use Path improvement strategy which when complete will form a high-quality access to the town and future developments.

## **2. Background**

The scheme is based upon achieving the following objectives:

- Deliver development to the west of Newton Abbot;
- Improve safety on the A382; and
- Encourage the use of sustainable modes of transport.

### Current Issues

The A382 is a key route connecting Newton Abbot at Churchills Roundabout with the A38 on the Strategic Road Network at Drumbridges roundabout. The existing road is of a low standard with poor alignment, high traffic flows and poor facilities for pedestrians or cyclists.

The section of the A382 into Newton Abbot town centre approaching Churchills Roundabout is busy and slow moving at peak times. The collision rate on the A382 is 297 collisions per billion vehicle kilometres for the period between 01/01/2014 and 31/12/2018, which is 17% higher than the national average of 254 collisions per billion vehicle kilometres for this type of road. On the A382 between Whitehill Cross and Churchills roundabout there were four slight collisions between 01/01/2014 and 31/12/2018, however it should also be noted that there was a fatality on this section in 2012 where a pedestrian was struck by a vehicle.

The footway is of a low standard along this section and is as narrow as 1.05 metres in places. In addition, the road width is also narrow with a stone wall on one side which results in traffic passing very close to the footway and even large vehicles mounting the footway to pass each other. The footway is too narrow to allow use by cyclists who are currently forced to use the road. There is a need for cycle route improvements in this area to tie into existing routes and improve access to Newton Abbot rail station, local secondary schools and nearby employment sites.

### Future Development

Teignbridge District Council's adopted Local Plan sets out proposed residential and employment developments in the area between 2013 and 2033. In the Heart of Teignbridge (Newton Abbot, Kingsteignton and Kingskerswell), 6,000 homes and 11,000 jobs are included.

This features a large amount of development to the west of Newton Abbot, including new development at Whitehill, Forches Cross and Houghton Barton. These developments will have direct access onto the A382 resulting in an increase in travel demand (both vehicular and pedestrians/cyclists) on the A382 into Newton Abbot. In addition, this section of road will also be affected by vehicles from other development sites in and around Newton Abbot accessing the A382.

## **3. Proposal**

### Scheme Description

The proposals for improving the section of the A382 between Whitehill Cross and Churchills roundabout, known hereafter as the Exeter Road Improvements, are: (shown on a map in Appendix 1):

- Widening of the highway to 6m
- Widening of the footway to a 3.5m shared pedestrian and cycle path
- New pedestrian refuge island to the north of Whitehill Close.

Providing additional carriageway width will improve highway safety and improve carriageway capacity.

The shared path will improve pedestrian and cycle facilities to encourage sustainable travel, providing adequate space for pedestrians and cyclists to use the path safely. This will improve accessibility for new and existing residents.

The pedestrian refuge island at Whitehill Close will enable residents from Whitehill Close, Orleigh Avenue and Orleigh Park to safely access bus services on the A382.

The Exeter Road Improvements are one phase of the wider A382 Corridor Improvement scheme which includes realignment and widening of the A382 and a new shared pedestrian and cycle path between Drumbridges roundabout and Whitehill Cross. The Exeter Road shared path will continue from Church Path/Whitehill House drive through the new Whitehill development and out to Whitehill Cross, to join up with the proposed path alongside the A382. The Exeter Road Improvements will contribute to improved safety, journey times, resilience and reliability as a result of the overall A382 Corridor Improvements.

To support current and future sustainable travel in and around Newton Abbot, Devon County Council (DCC) is currently delivering a shared use path improvement scheme, known as the "Newton Abbot East-West Shared Use Path". Some sections of the route along the A383 Ashburton Road are already complete and one section is currently under construction. The

Exeter Road Improvements will tie in with existing routes to facilitate sustainable travel in and around Newton Abbot.

#### **4. Consultations, Representations and Technical Data**

The Teignbridge Local Plan, adopted in May 2014, contains reference to support for “widening the A382 Bovey Tracey road between Newton Abbot and Drumbridges roundabout at the A38 and separate cycle lanes” to improve connectivity and accessibility within the Heart of Teignbridge. It also states that “the widening of the A382 between Newton Abbot and Drumbridges is considered necessary to improve the capacity of the existing lanes to ensure that the road can accommodate the future growth and to provide opportunities for new cycle links.”

A public consultation on the Exeter Road Improvements was conducted between Friday 5 October and Friday 2 November 2018, as part of the Newton Abbot East – West Shared Use Path. During the consultation members of the public were invited to share their views on the scheme including whether Exeter Road needs the proposed improvement and whether they preferred an option of widening to the east or to the west of Exeter Road. The consultation was advertised by a consultation leaflet delivered to nearby properties, on the DCC public website, on the “Have your say” DCC consultation finder and through a DCC news centre press release.

The majority of responses received were positive towards the scheme (62%); of the negative responses received (38%) the comments related to:

- Concerns over cost and value for money
- Traffic disruption during construction
- Safety concerns for pedestrians and cyclists using the proposed facilities
- New Jetty Marsh II scheme needed (*see Section 13*)

The preferred option among respondents who identified an option was to widen Exeter Road to the east (88%).

#### **5. Land Assembly**

Private land belonging to six land owners will be required for this scheme. DCC has engaged with landowners from an early stage and will attempt to acquire the land through negotiation, however Compulsory Purchase Orders may be required if an agreement is not reached with one or more land owners.

The six land owners affected are all substantial properties which back onto the A382. The amount of land required will have an impact on the rear gardens and bring the road closer to the properties.

#### **6. Environment**

The Exeter Road Improvements are within or adjacent to the highway, and therefore would be undertaken as permitted development. As such the scheme is designed to minimise its environmental impact. However, there are several trees alongside the road on both sides. A number of large specimens that may be regarded as veteran trees on the east side would have to be felled to make way for the widening of the road. Discussions will take place with the Local Planning Authority on how best to mitigate this environmental impact.

There is an existing wall which is of historical interest, some of the stone can be recycled and reused.

There may be a minimal noise and/or visual impact from the Exeter Road Improvements and mitigation measures such as acoustic fencing could be implemented if required to reduce the environmental impact.

## **7. Financial Considerations**

The Scheme is estimated to cost £2.4m. The funding is likely to come from several sources, including The Local Transport Plan, The Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership and developer contributions through Teignbridge District Council's Community Infrastructure Levy.

## **8. Sustainability and 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.

Age, disability, gender identity, race, religion and belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership, and pregnancy and maternity should be considered in coming to a decision. A decision maker may also consider other relevant factors such as caring responsibilities, rural isolation or socio-economic disadvantage.

An Impact Assessment has been prepared, a copy of which has been circulated to Cabinet Members, and is available on the Council's website at:

<https://new.devon.gov.uk/impact/published/>

The scheme will have a positive impact on pedestrians and cyclists with the provision of a new shared pedestrian and cycle path and improved pedestrian access from Whitehill Close to bus services on the A382, enabling sustainable travel from residential areas to Newton Abbot town centre.

In economic terms the scheme will contribute to facilitating development and travel along the A382, which will have a beneficial impact upon the local economy by enabling employment and housing development in the area to proceed with mitigated impact.

## **9. Carbon Impact Considerations**

Widening the highway will reduce conflicts between large vehicles resulting in an improvement to traffic flow and therefore fuel efficiency of engines, reducing certain emissions including carbon.

An increase in people changing mode from the private car to walking and cycling is anticipated by the construction of the shared use path which will have a positive impact on air quality.

## **10. Legal Considerations**

The lawful implications of the recommendations have been considered and considered in the formulation of the recommendations set out above.

## **11. Risk Management Considerations**

The scheme is subject to the normal engineering risks. A quantified risk assessment has been undertaken and these risk costs have been included in the scheme estimate.

## **12. Public Health Impact**

The scheme is subject to a Road Safety Audit with Feasibility and Stage 1 Safety Audits now complete.

The scheme includes the provision of a shared pedestrian/cycle path which will encourage physical activity.

## **13. Options and Alternatives**

Two options have been considered for the Exeter Road Improvements of the road being widened either to the east or west side of the carriageway. A number of factors were considered in selecting the chosen option of widening to the east side. Those in favour of the east side were:

- Public consultation – preference for widening to east.
- Construction issues – shorter road closure required for construction on the east side.
- Heritage – existing walls of historical interest on both sides which can be reused. A Pillbox on the western side would require moving or demolition if widened to the west.
- Safety – the eastern widening features improved visibility for access from Church Path/Whitehill House drive and other properties.

Factors in favour of the west side were:

- Impact on properties – fewer properties affected (5) and properties are further away from the retaining wall.
- Environment – a number of large specimens which may be regarded as veteran trees are present on both sides, however there are fewer on the western side.

As part of the A382 Corridor Improvements there are wider plans for a new road connection from Whitehill Cross to West Golds Way (known as Jetty Marsh Phase II). When completed this new connection will result in a reduction in traffic on Exeter Road, reducing congestion and further improving pedestrian and cycle safety. This scheme remains a priority and is continuing to be progressed alongside the Exeter Road Improvements. The scheme will tie in with the widening improvements on the A382 between Drumbridges and Whitehill Cross.

## **14. Reason for Recommendation**

The A382 is the main connection between Newton Abbot and the A38 on the Strategic Road Network. Exeter Road forms part of this route and is the gateway to the town. An improvement to this section will bring it up to modern standards capable of fulfilling the aspirations of the town in terms of growth and provision for cyclist/pedestrians. The scheme is consistent with the aims of the Devon and Torbay Local Transport Plan 3 with regard to economic growth.

Dave Black  
Head of Planning, Transportation and Environment

## **Electoral Divisions: Newton Abbot North**

Cabinet Member for Infrastructure, Development and Waste: Councillor Andrea Davis

*Chief Officer for Highways, Infrastructure Development and Waste: Meg Booth*

Local Government Act 1972: List of Background Papers

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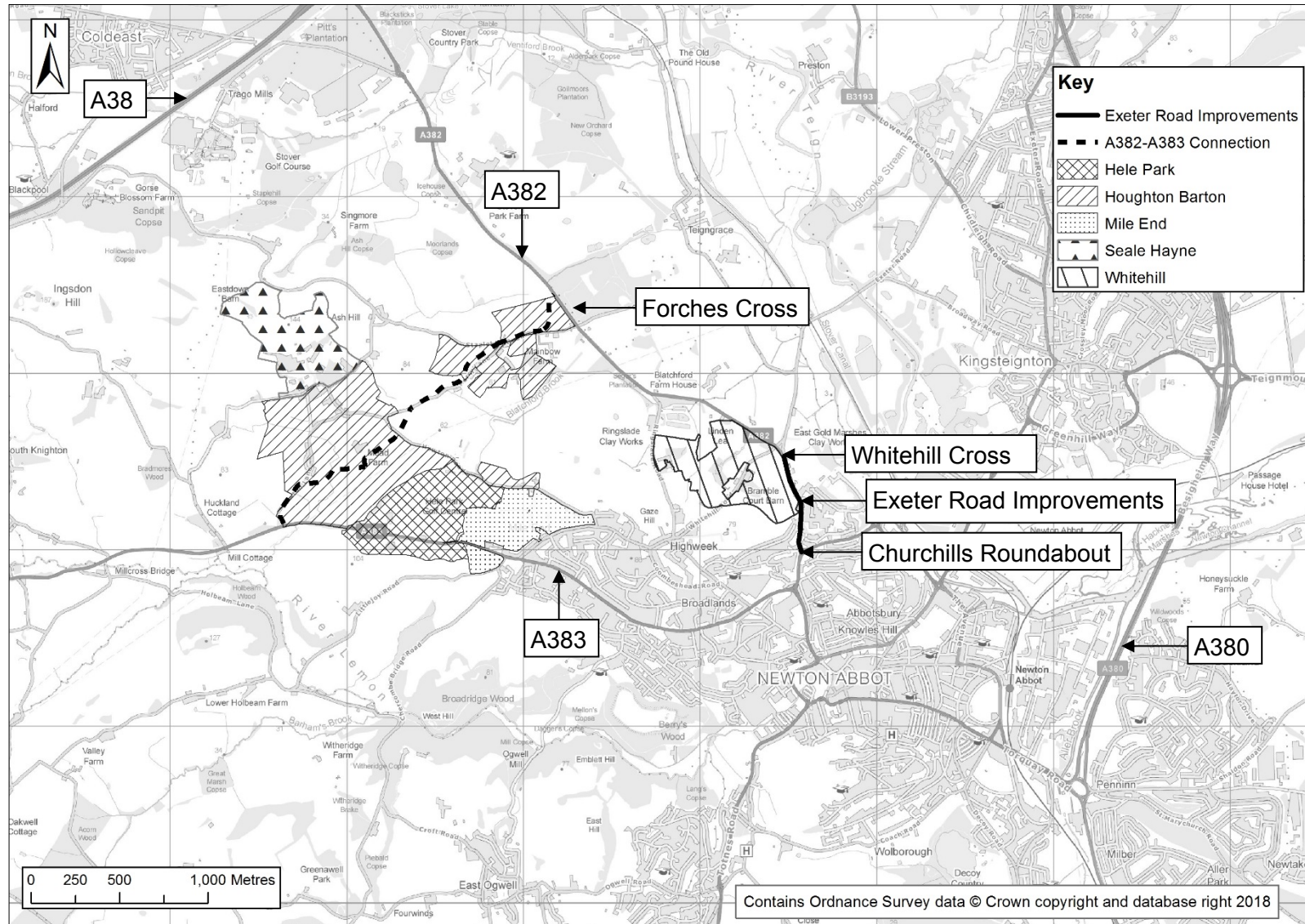
Background Paper	Date	File Ref.
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Nil

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## Location Plan





Scheme Drawing

