

Cullompton Town Centre Relief Road

Report of the Head of Planning, Transportation and Environment

Please note that the following recommendation are subject to consideration and determination by the Cabinet (and confirmation under the provisions of the Council's Constitution) before taking effect.

Recommendation: It is recommended that Cabinet

- (a) approves the preferred route for the relief road;**
- (b) approves the development and submission of a planning application for the relief road;**
- (c) agrees that delegated authority be given to the Head of Planning, Transportation and Environment, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Infrastructure, Development and Waste, to make minor amendments to this scheme;**
- (d) approves an increase to the Planning, Transportation and Environment 2019/20 capital programme of £250,000, funded by external contributions.**

1. Summary

Cullompton Town Centre Relief Road is a scheme to reduce traffic flow in Cullompton High Street and facilitate the future development of the Town. It is a long-term aspiration of the County to deliver the scheme. The progress of the scheme has been thwarted for a number of environmental and economic reasons. However, the economic situation has changed as Mid Devon District Council has the opportunity of funding from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. As a result, a consultation on options has been undertaken and this report summarises the reasons for the preferred route being chosen and details of why the scheme should be taken forward to a planning application submitted to Mid Devon District Council.

2. Background/Introduction

The Cullompton Town Centre Relief Road (previously referred to as the Cullompton Eastern Relief Road) is included in the Devon County Council Transport Infrastructure Plan – Delivering Growth to 2030 and is required to relieve congestion within Cullompton High Street, improve air quality and a catalyst to the future economic growth of the High Street. The scheme will allow proposed development within the town to come forward, including the first phase of the Culm Garden Village.

Devon County Council have been working closely with Mid Devon District Council to develop possible options for the relief road. This resulted in three options being taken to public consultation in 2018. The results of this consultation, along with more detailed technical work resulted in Option B, along the railway side of the Cullompton Community Association (CCA) fields, being the preferred option and this was agreed by Mid Devon's Cabinet on 31 January 2019.

3. Proposal

Three options for the alignment of the relief road were considered;

- Option A – through the middle of the CCA fields
- Option B – along the railway side of the CCA fields
- Option C – crosses M5 and railway and connects to Honiton Road.

A fourth option was considered, similar to option C but closer to the motorway on the eastern side; however, this was considered unacceptable by the Environment Agency because of the impact on the functional floodplain, river channel and increased flood risk. A plan of these four options are included in Appendix A.

Having considered each of the elements, the project team have determined that Option B is the preferred route. This is based on Option B being the favoured option of the local community, it does not segregate the majority of the CCA fields from the town centre and affected sports clubs have indicated a willingness to work with DCC to get the best outcome.

4. Consultations & Representations

A public consultation was carried out on the options for 6 weeks during September and October 2018. The consultation consisted of online content supported by 6 exhibitions where members of the public could discuss their concerns with the project team. 617 questionnaire responses were received, with 77% of respondents recognising the need for a relief road. When asked which option they preferred, 45% of people chose Option B close to the railway line. This compared to 15% for Option A, 27% for option C and 14% not wanting a relief road. Three alternative alignments were proposed during the public consultation and these will be reviewed as part of the detailed design stage.

The CCA is a Registered Charity formed in the 1970s, it is custodian of the CCA fields. The fields are owned by the people of the Town and play host to many events. The fields are run entirely by volunteers who do a variety of jobs such as litter picking, garden maintenance and general maintenance. The CCA consider the scheme as a threat to the fields.

5. Financial Considerations

The cost of developing the design and producing a planning application for the preferred route is likely to be £250,000 and the cost of this will be funded by Mid Devon District Council. Mid Devon Council have identified that £210,000 monies are currently available to spend, with a further sum up to the total of £250,000 expected. The budget will be initially capped at £210,000 until a further agreement with Mid Devon District Council is forthcoming.

Mid Devon District Council also have a Housing Infrastructure Fund bid (HIF) for the cost of the scheme being considered by Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. For this scheme to progress and grasp the opportunity of funding there is an urgent need to progress the scheme.

6. Environmental Impact Considerations

The road will be constructed through several land owners including the CCA fields and within the floodplain. This is a sensitive environment. Some ecological surveys and flood modelling have been undertaken. It is probable that further work will have to be carried out on these aspects together with a detailed assessment of the impact of the scheme on the CCA fields. English Heritage, Archaeology, townscape and landscape will also be

considerations. A full Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) will be carried out to support the planning application and used to identify appropriate mitigation and compensation.

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.

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.

This may be achieved, for example, through completing a full Equality Impact Needs Assessment/Impact Assessment or other form of options/project management appraisal that achieves the same objective.

In progressing this particular scheme/proposal, an Impact Assessment has been prepared which has been circulated separately to Cabinet Members and 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.

8. Legal Considerations

The main legal issues are the impact on the CCA fields, consideration of public open space issues and working with/relocation of the sports facilities.

9. Risk Management Considerations

The Cullompton Town Centre Relief Road has been a long-term aspiration of the County, District and Town Council. A consultation has taken place and a potential route identified. Progressing a planning application is the next step to see if a route can be delivered and clearly identify and quantify the risks involved.

10. Public Health Impact

No direct impact on public health has been identified. However, removing traffic out of the High Street will improve the air quality in Cullompton Town Centre.

11. Options/Alternatives

There were three alternative alignment options considered for the relief road. Option A passed through the middle of the CCA fields, cutting the green space in half and separating a large proportion of it from the town centre. This option was not supported by members of the public.

Option C passed over the M5 and connected to Honiton Road. This option is vastly more expensive and would take a lot longer to develop a design and construct. The town will need a strategic intervention in the future to accommodate all the development proposed in

the town, but a short-term solution is required to mitigate the impacts of development coming forward now. This was raised by a number of respondents to the consultation. The relief road is considered phase 1 of the transport plan for the town.

Option D also crossed the motorway and connected to Honiton Road much closer to Junction 28. However, this option would have too much of an impact on the floodplain and was considered unacceptable to the Environment Agency.

12. Reason for Recommendation/Conclusion

The preferred option offers best value for money while minimising the impact on the environment and the CCA fields. The scheme will help to reduce traffic in the High Street, improving air quality, enhancing the town centre and enable future development to take place as identified in the Local Plan.

Dave Black
Head of Planning, Transportation and Environment

Electoral Divisions: Cullompton & Bradninch

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

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

Local Government Act 1972: List of Background Papers

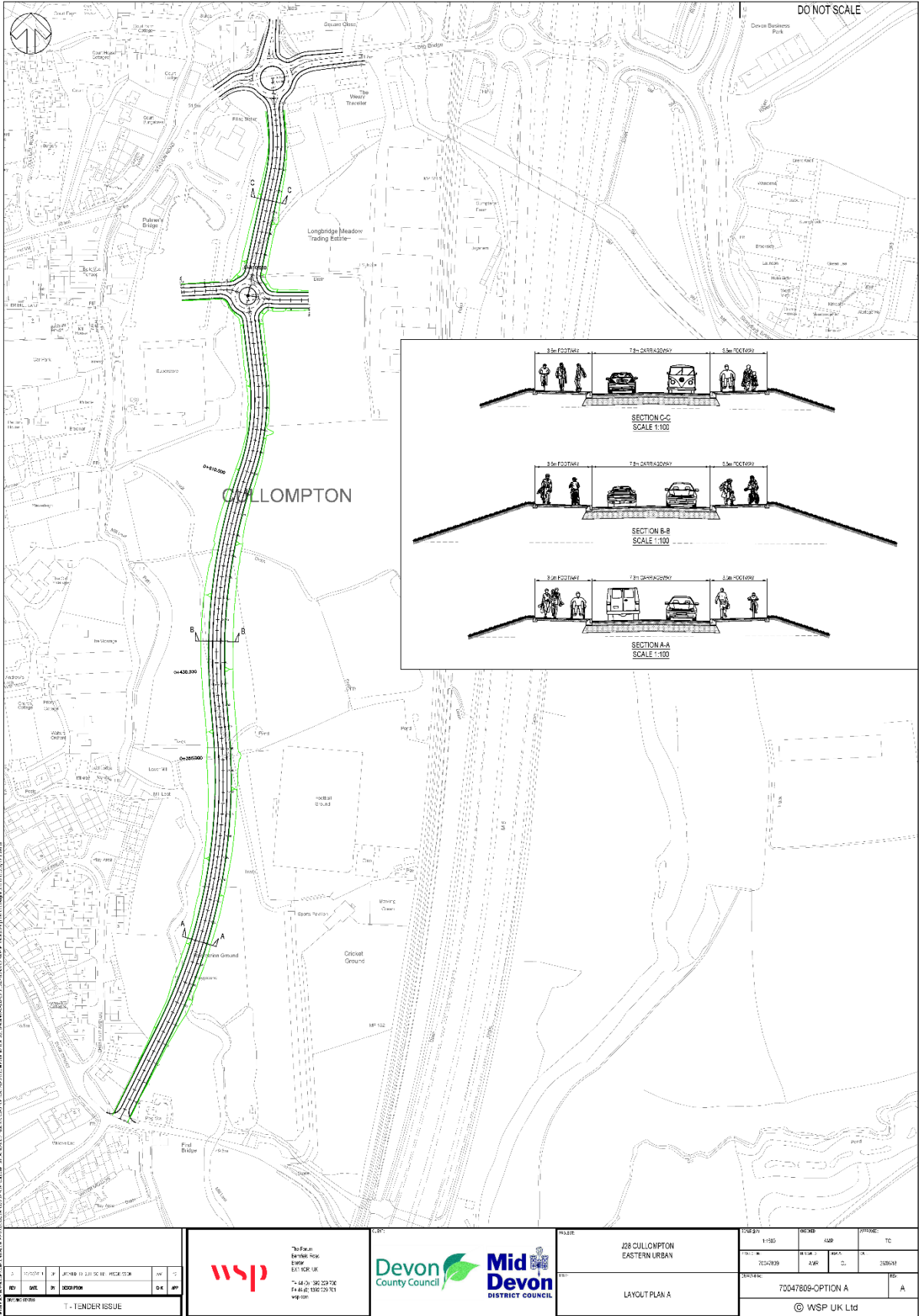
Contact for enquiries: Stuart Jarvis

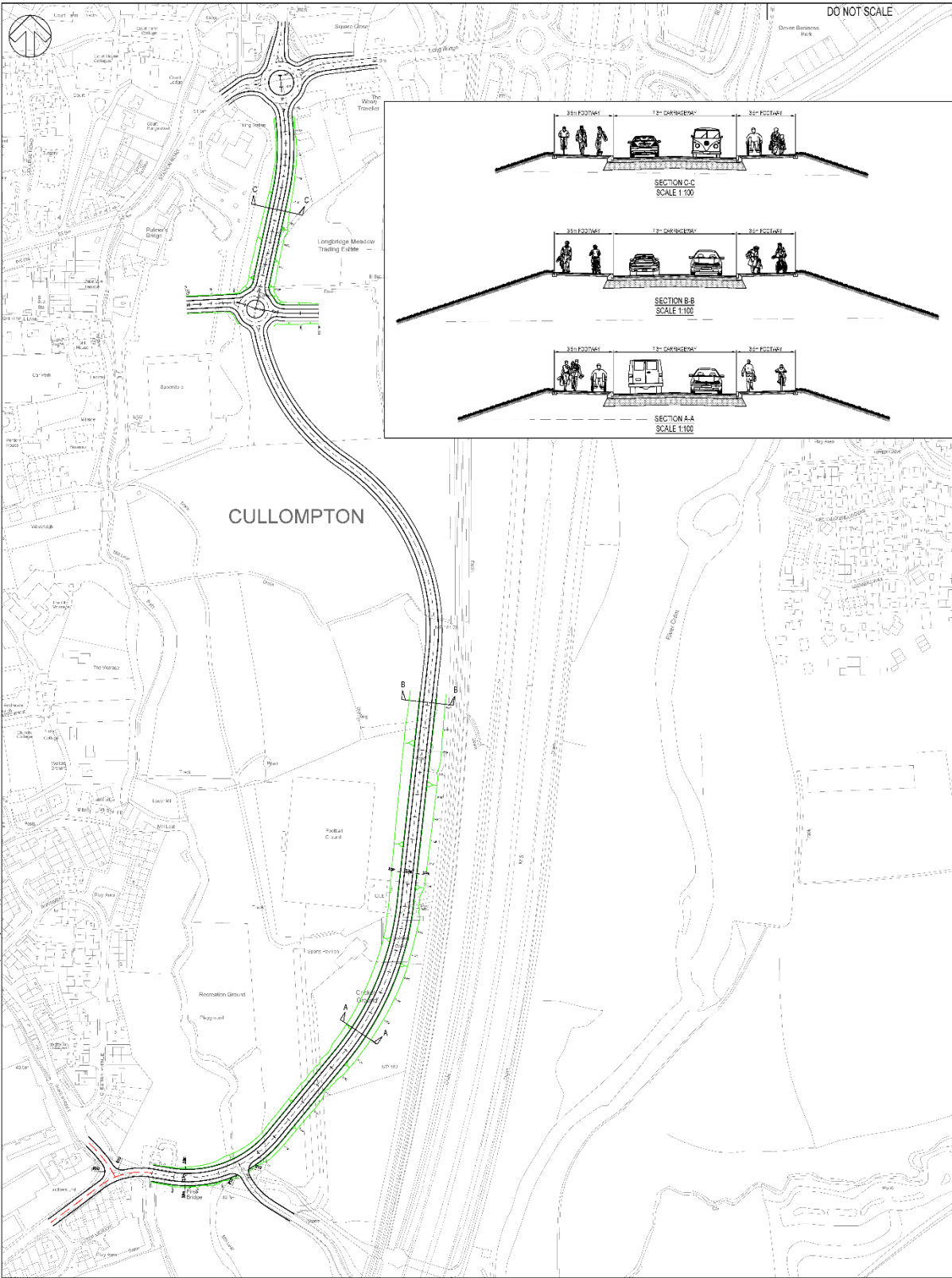
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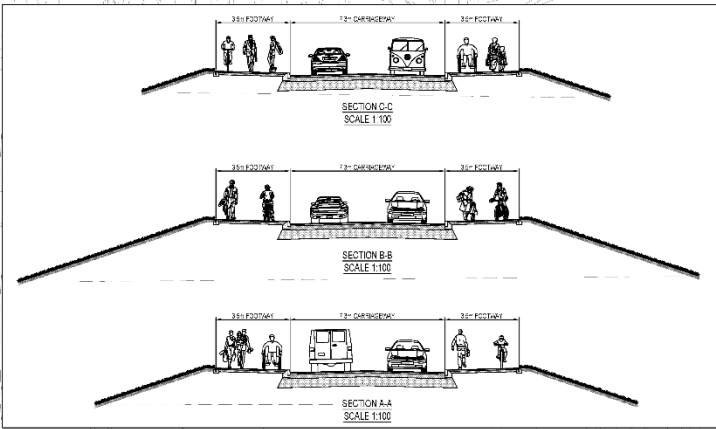
Background Paper	Date	File Reference
1. Impact Assessment	February 2019	

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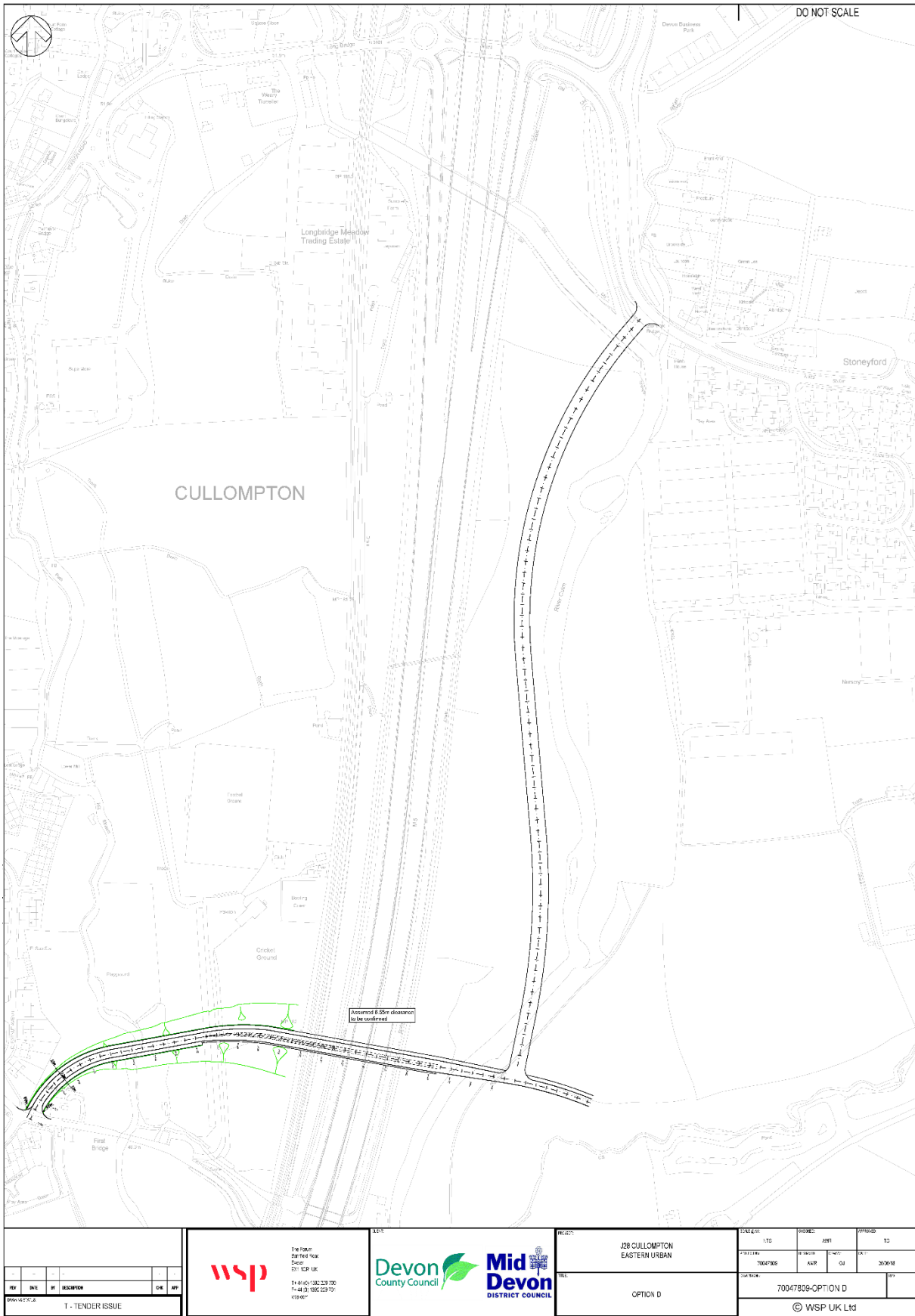


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