

East Devon Highways and Traffic Orders Committee

Wednesday 1st April 2020

Rail Bridge - Station Road Broadclyst

Report by Cllr Ray Bloxham - Broadclyst Division.

Recommendation: It is recommend that:

- a) Traffic light controls be installed to regulate alternate direction traffic flows over the railway bridge.**
- b) Build-outs be installed to provide a safety gap between traffic flows and the edge of the existing carriageway**
- c) Temporary traffic signals be installed in the interim whilst a permanent scheme is designed, costed and funding sought.**

Reasons for the recommendation.

1. Current traffic flows including a high volume of HGVs and school transport have difficulty in negotiating the bridge and larger vehicles are unable to pass each other resulting in reversing operations on the approaches both of which have steep gradients to the immediate side.
2. The bridge is constructed with an almost 90 degree bend with no visibility or warning of on-coming traffic.
3. There have been a number of collisions with existing barriers and recently a HGV left the road during a reversing manoeuvre.
4. There is no safety for pedestrians across the length of the bridge.
5. The carriageway on the southern side is immediately adjacent to and above a nursery with frequent movement of children and parents.
6. There is mounting concern from local residents and road users.
7. The western expansion of Cranbrook will add to the levels of vehicle movements.

8. Whilst it is accepted that it will take time to work up a scheme and secure funding, measures are required now and therefore the recommendation includes temporary traffic signals.

Background

Station Road is a narrow rural road which in recent years has seen considerable increases in traffic flows including increases in HGV and coach use. The rail bridge is narrow, subject to a sharp, near 90 degree bend and has no visibility nor warning of oncoming traffic. Larger vehicles are unable to pass each other on the bridge and most vehicles of any size have difficulty passing at the point where the bridge has a near 90 degree turn.

Station Road Broadclyst is the principle north - south link between Broadclyst and settlements to the north of Cranbrook and the B3174 which runs east - west to the South of the new town. The B3174 is the principle link between the east of Exeter, Cranbrook and settlements to the east and also provides direct access to the major employment sites at Hayes Farm (currently occupied by Amazon but only partially developed), the Lidl distribution centre, Sky Park and Exeter Science Park.

Lodge Trading Estate is located in Station Road just north of the railway. This employment site is essentially B8 business class use with two major haulage companies operating from this location with consequent continual HGV movements in both directions over the rail bridge.

East Devon Planning authority granted a change of use from retail to B8 for the former co-op store on the Lodge site. There were no objections to the change of use from the Highway authority and the former co-op store site is now occupied by a haulage and crane hire business.

Station Road is also a principle route for school transport to and from the local education establishments including Clyst Vale Community College.

The land immediately to the east of Station Road (south of the rail bridge) is designated as strategic development land for the western expansion of Cranbrook with an additional 930 homes and associated development expected in the near future. There is a live and validated planning application for this area 19/0260/MOUT and this land is also designated for development in the Cranbrook Development Plan Document currently before the Planning Inspector. Traffic flows are therefore expected to increase in the near future.

Station Road is not helpful to pedestrians with long stretches devoid of any footway or place of refuge. This is particularly so in the case of the rail bridge.

Particular concerns have been raised by the proprietors of Echoes Nursery which is located to the south of the bridge. They care for a large number of small children from 7am until 7pm daily. The building has been subject to a vehicle collision and the barrier above their site has also been struck and damaged.

There are constant complaints from local residents about traffic congestion on and around the rail bridge due to HGVs and other larger vehicles being unable to pass each other on the bridge leading to reversing manoeuvres which are potentially dangerous given the topography of the land either side of the bridge.

Proposal

The proposal as set out in the recommendations is to install traffic light controls on the bridge in order to create alternate traffic flows in each direction. This would prevent the frequently occurring situation where larger vehicles meet on the bridge and have to reverse.

Alternate single file traffic on the bridge would:

1. Enable the installation of build-outs or refuges for pedestrians;
2. Ensure there is separation between vehicles and the bridge edge - this would lower the risk of a collision with the barrier / bridge parapet and reduce the risk of a vehicle leaving the bridge over one of the steep sided boundaries.
3. Enable safer movement of parents and children around the nursery and cottages in Station Road as they would be able to make use of the traffic light phasing to negotiate across the road.

Financial Considerations

It is appreciated that these proposals would be costly to complete and there would be a need for designs to be properly costed and funded.

There may be opportunities to link this to the expansion of Cranbrook as that development would increase the traffic flows on this stretch of road.

(The planning application referred to above includes provision to re-route the most southerly stretch of Station Road through the western expansion of Cranbrook to meet the B3174 at a newly constructed roundabout. However the current proposals do not address any of the issues with the bridge).

In the interim it is recommended that temporary traffic lights be installed. This would alleviate the issues now and also allow time for the design, costing and funding work to progress.

Environmental Impact Considerations

Controlling the flow of traffic over the bridge as proposed would prevent the traffic hold-ups on the bridge and go some way towards a reduction of pollution from idling traffic and reversing traffic.

The proposals are very well supported locally and by the Parish Council as a means of regulating traffic flows over the bridge.

Equality Considerations

There are no adverse impacts on any particular group.

Public Health

Installation of traffic light controls would have a benefit to local residents, pedestrians and those using the children's nursery. There would be clear safety advantages and people would also feel safer.

Reasons for the recommendations

These are set out in the report. The recommendations are fully supported by Broadclyst Parish Council and are consistent with their emerging Neighbourhood Plan.

Ray Bloxham

County Councillor
Broadclyst Division

Appendices:

A - Location Plan

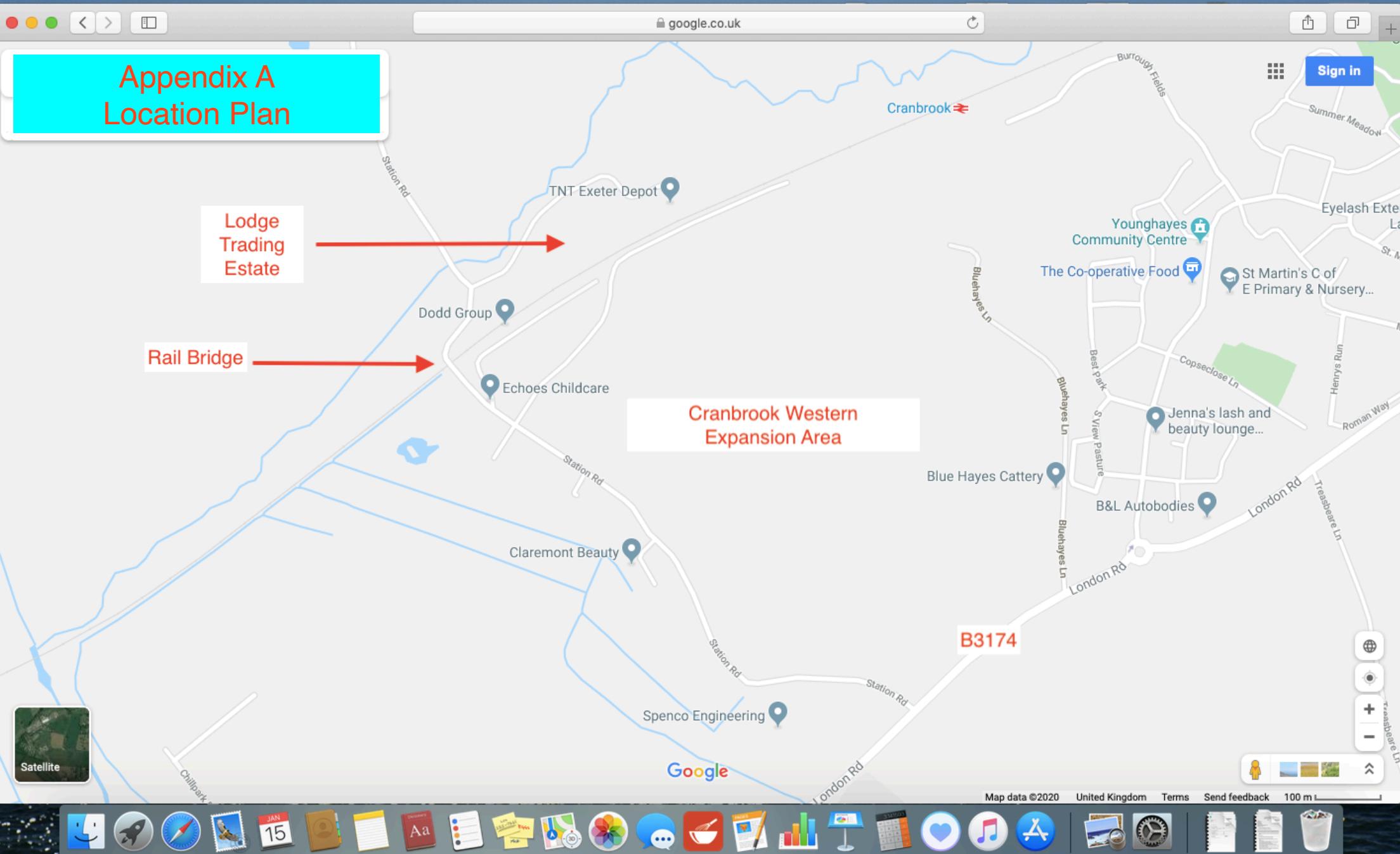
B - Western Expansion

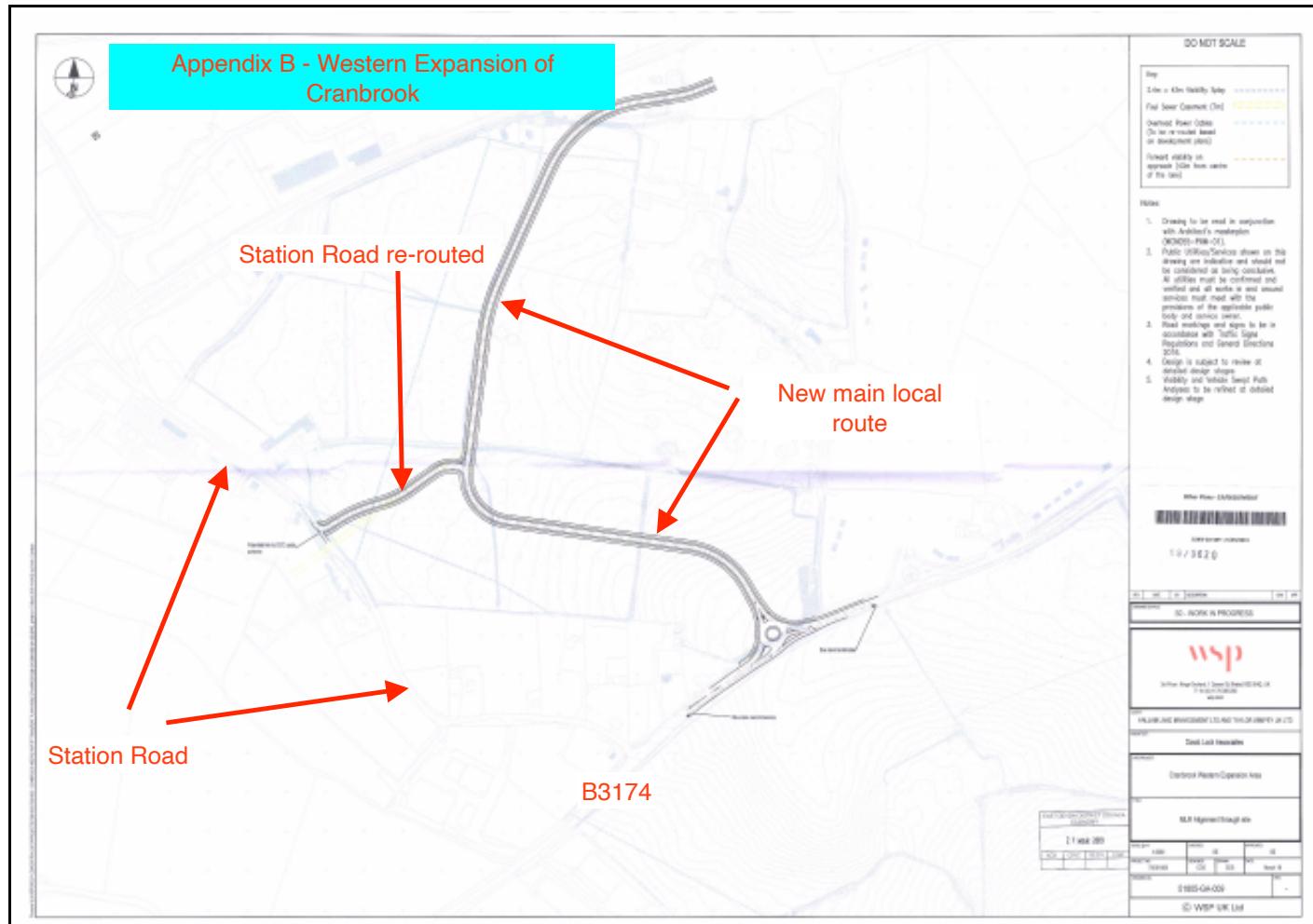
C - Photos from South (1)

D - Photos from South (2)

E - Photos from North

F - Photos of topography - south side





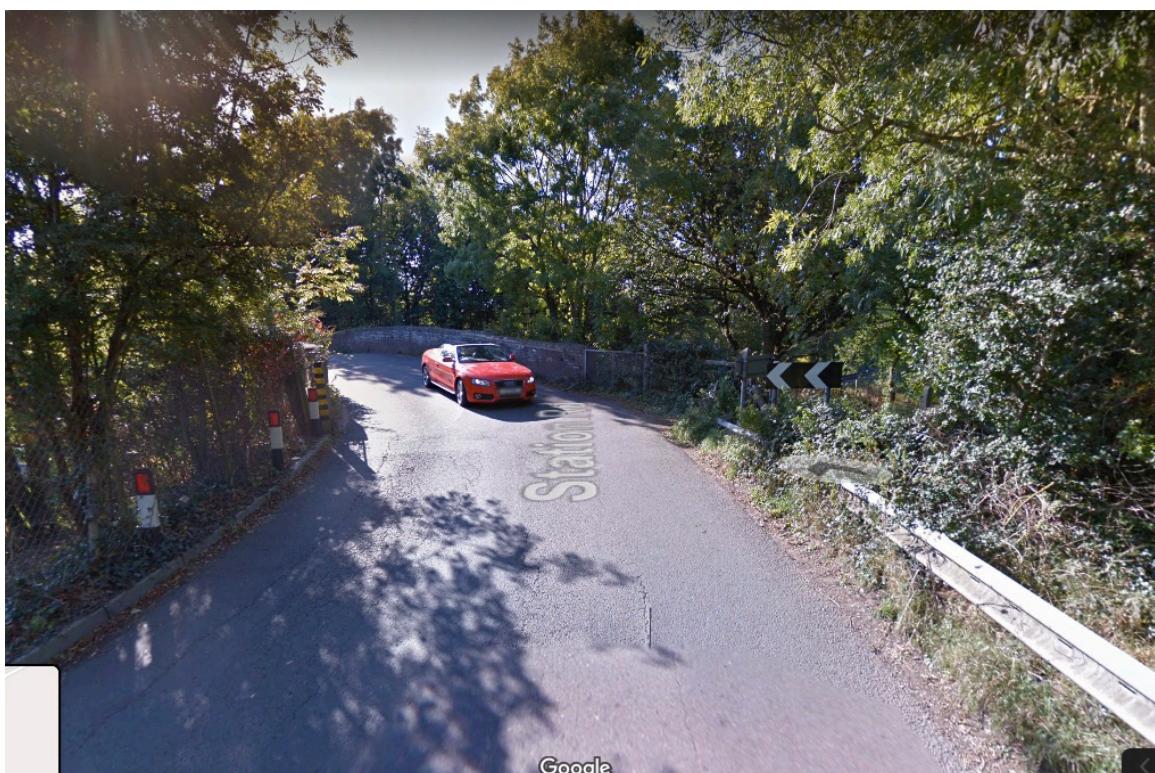
Appendix C - Approach from South (1)



Appendix D - Approach from South (2)



Appendix E - North Side approach



Appendix F - Topography South Side

