

E3 Strategic Cycle Route: Polsloe Road Parallel (Pedestrian and Cycle) crossing.

Report of the Head of Planning, Transportation and Environment

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

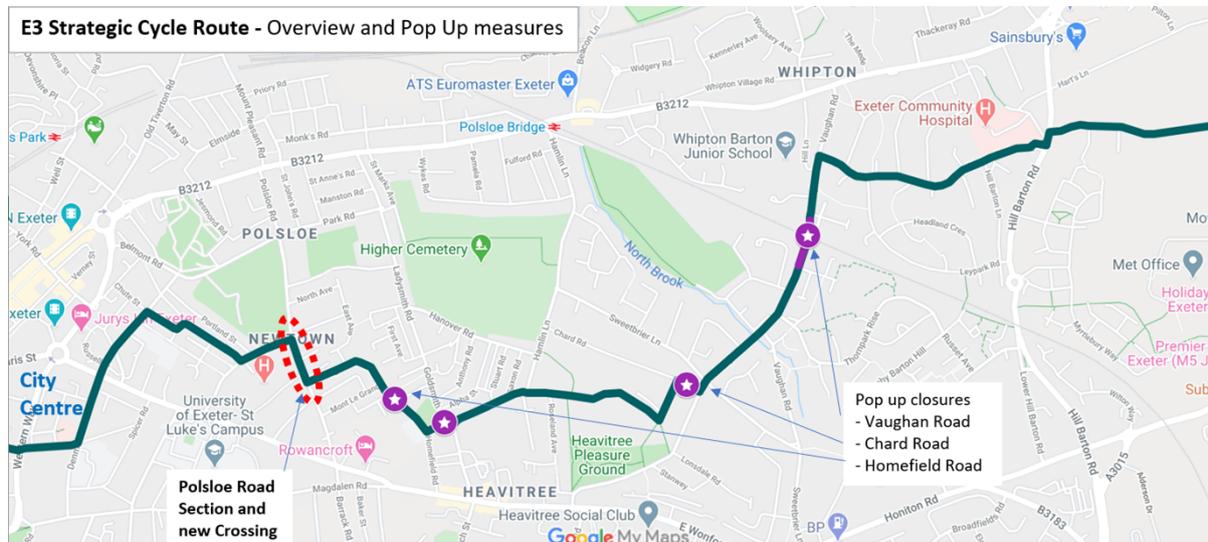
Recommendation: It is recommended that:

- (a) a traffic regulation order for the removal of parking on Polsloe Road be advertised and, if no objections received, be made and sealed; and**
- (b) the proposed improvements shown indicatively in Appendix I, is approved for construction at an estimated cost of £250,000, subject to the outcome of the traffic order consultation; and**
- (c) the Head of Planning, Transportation and Environment be given delegated powers, in consultation with the Chair of HATOC and the local member, to make minor amendments to the scheme details.**

1. Background/Introduction

The E3 strategic cycle route which runs from the Redhayes Bridge, west through Whipton, Heavitree and towards the City Centre is part of Exeter’s strategic cycle network that was approved by Cabinet on 8 June 2016.

At this location the E3 Cycle Route follows Regents Park, along and then crossing Polsloe Road and continues along Gladstone Road. A map illustrating the E3 strategic route is shown below. The junction with Gladstone Road provides access to the Heavitree hospital, supermarket and onward travel towards the city centre, and riverside. There is currently no formalised crossing facility for pedestrians and/or cyclists at this location.



Overview Map of E3 Strategic Cycle Route

Polsloe Road is a busy road with two-way peak hour flows of up to 700 vehicles an hour and is unattractive to less confident cyclists. The provision of a new crossing and cycle facilities from Regents Park to Gladstone Road would provide a safe and attractive facility for all users and deliver an extension of the E3 route into Newtown and towards the city centre.

Sections of the E3 route have recently been provided through some 'pop-up' changes to promote active travel following the COVID-19 pandemic. This includes a point closure on Homefield Road which has significantly reduced traffic on Regents Park and created a quiet, low-traffic street environment that is attractive for pedestrians and cyclists.

2. Proposal

This report seeks approval for a parallel crossing for the E3 Cycle Route on Polsloe Road near Gladstone Road and improvements along Polsloe Road to provide a cycle facility from Regents Park to the new crossing. Widening is also proposed on the north eastern end of Gladstone Road to provide a safe transition into Gladstone Road.

To provide the new facilities, sections of on-street parking along the northern side of Polsloe Road will need to be removed. The exact parking changes will need to be refined through the Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) process, but options to offset this are discussed further in section 3 below.

The scheme will include new road markings, High Friction Surfacing on approaches to the crossing and the installation of zebra crossing belisha beacons.

The scheme is anticipated to form part of the package of permanent measures in the Tranche 2 funding of the Emergency Active Transport Funding and support active travel targets in the emerging Exeter Transport Strategy and supporting climate emergency declaration interventions.

3. Parking Impacts

To provide the proposed crossing and upgraded cycle facilities require the removal of the existing on-street parking outside numbers 57-65 Polsloe Road. This parking consists of 9 spaces of pay and display that applies 10am to 4pm Monday to Friday, with an exemption for residents in the S2 resident parking permit area.

There are 9 properties fronting this length of Polsloe Road, 5 of which are split into flats making a total 21 addresses within these 9 properties. Four of these properties have rear parking and there are currently 17 live residents parking permits issued to these addresses.

These spaces are conveniently located for the adjacent properties and observed to be typically 75% -100% utilised on most weekday evenings.

There is however scope to mitigate any loss of these spaces, by either amending the traffic order to allow S2 permit holders to use spaces on Gladstone Road and/or providing some additional spaces in the locality (i.e. amending existing restrictions on South Avenue). The spaces on Gladstone Road are typically very lightly used outside hospital hours and a new crossing would provide safe and suitable access to these spaces.

The detailed parking arrangements will need to be consulted on, and any amendments agreed through delegated authority with the local member.

4. Consultation

Statutory consultation will have to take place for changes to residents parking. As the statutory consultation involves the residents along Polsloe Road it is proposed to hold the public consultation and the statutory consultation at the same time.

This would provide an opportunity to seek to address any parking requirements alongside any design changes arising from consultation.

This report includes a recommendation to construct subject to the outcome of the consultation and approval with the local member.

5. Financial Considerations

The scheme is estimated to cost £250,000 and would be funded through the following package:

- £58,284 from S106 from Tithebarn Green
- £191,716 from Emergency Active Travel Fund (tranche 2)

The County Council has an indicative allocation of £1.3m for tranche 2 of the Emergency Active Travel Fund and would seek £191,716 of this towards the scheme.

The scheme will require a statutory consultation by the end of which we would hope to have clarity on the amount received through Tranche 2 funds. Having been successful in securing 100% of the tranche 1 funding, we believe there is a low risk of not securing the money through the Emergency Active Travel Fund. However, if we were unsuccessful, we would consider using LTP funding in future year programs or future S106 from development East of Exeter.

6. Environmental Impact Considerations

Construction of the cycle and pedestrian paths will improve walking and cycling encouraging active travel, reducing car use and improving people's health and fitness. The addition of a new crossing will introduce delay for some vehicles. However, the use of a parallel crossing, rather than signals, minimises the negative impact arising from this.

Overall the proposals are expected to have a positive impact on the environment and in supporting the County Council's commitment to reducing carbon emissions.

7. Equality Considerations

The proposed crossing would provide a formal facility where pedestrians and cyclists have priority. This would assist pedestrians and cyclists of a wide range of abilities and confidence levels to cross the carriageway more safely and improve access to jobs and amenities.

The removal of parking outside the front of properties could have a negative impact on accessibility. However, the alternative to allow parking in Gladstone Road is felt to provide a suitable alternative with the improved crossing facility.

8. Legal Considerations

When making a Traffic Regulation Order it is the County Council responsibility to ensure that all relevant legislation is complied with. This includes Section 122 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 that states that it is the duty of a local authority, so far as practicable, secures the expeditious, convenient and safe movement of traffic and provision of parking facilities.

To introduce the new parallel crossing, the Council will be required to issue a public notice in accordance with Section 23 of The Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984.

9. Risk Management Considerations

Changes to parking are required to provide the new crossing and improve cycle facilities along Polsloe Road. Although the scheme proposed mitigation in terms of allowing S2 permit holders to park on Gladstone road, the statutory consultation may highlight other considerations that may need to be accommodated in any design.

The type of cycle facility from Regents Park and the proposed crossing will need to provide an appropriate balance for different road users. A new segregated cycle facility would provide a higher standard facility on the north of Polsloe Road, but the narrowing of carriageway to achieve this could give rise to safety impacts as larger vehicles have to pass closer to pedestrians on the narrow footway on the southern side. Widening of the pavement to provide a shared pedestrian and cycle path would retain suitable width for traffic to pass on Polsloe Road but may result in more conflict between pedestrian and cyclists. It is recommended that the preferred facility is determined following consultation and agreed through delegated authority with the local member.

The provision of a formal pedestrian and cyclist facility is expected to improve safety for vulnerable road users. The proposal would be subject to the road safety audit process, although it is proposed that a Stage 2 Safety Audit (required on detailed design) is not undertaken until any amendments arising from the consultation have been considered.

10. Public Health Impact

The proposed upgrades to a strategic cycle route will improve pedestrian and cycle crossing safety and encourage active and sustainable travel, increasing activity levels, reducing carbon emissions and contributing to general health and wellbeing.

11. Options/Alternatives

The crossing was initially proposed as a temporary crossing; however, the traffic order legislation only allows parking suspension and does not allow temporary changes to be made to parking restrictions, i.e. relocating bays to the adjacent parking permit area. The progression of a permanent scheme and associated TROs allows the change for the resident parking issues to be properly addressed as part of the scheme.

A standalone crossing would improve pedestrian access, but would not however provide a safe facility for cyclists on Polsloe Road. As a busy road, the current facilities may not be attractive to less confident users. Providing an improved cycle facility along Polsloe Road alongside the crossing will help to address that.

12. Summary/Conclusions/Reasons for Recommendations

The proposal effectively addresses the requirement for a pedestrian and cycle crossing of Polsloe Road and represents the next phase in the delivery of the E3 Cycle route. The proposed works will improve access for pedestrians and cyclists and support healthy lifestyles.

The improvements aligns well with the aspirations of the emerging Exeter Transport Strategy, the County Council's encouragement of active travel in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the County Council's commitment to reducing carbon emissions.

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Local Government Act 1972: List of Background Papers

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Background Paper	Date	File Reference
1. None		

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