

Sweetbrier Lane/Whipton Lane Roundabout pedestrian and cycle improvements

Report of the Director of Climate Change, Environment and Transport

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

Recommendation: It is recommended that the Committee:

- (a) approve the construction of the proposals for Sweetbrier Lane/Whipton Lane roundabout, as shown in Appendix 1, at an estimated scheme cost of £60,000; and**
- (b) delegate authority to the Director of Climate Change, Environment and Transport, in consultation with the Chair of this Committee and local County Councillor, to make minor variations to the scheme as required.**

1. Summary

The roundabout at the junction of Sweetbrier Lane and Whipton Lane is a recent and historic site for collisions involving vulnerable road users. During the 5-year period 2016-2020, 5 of 7 casualties recorded at the junction were cyclists, despite cyclists making up less than 10% of road users. Several of the collisions involved vehicles travelling north-west to south-east across the roundabout (i.e. along Sweetbrier Lane) colliding with cyclists.

Approval is sought to construct a scheme to reduce vehicular entry speeds on the Sweetbrier Lane arms of the roundabout, thus addressing the underlying causes of collisions. It is intended that this will improve road safety in a residential area and support cyclists using the E3 strategic cycle route.

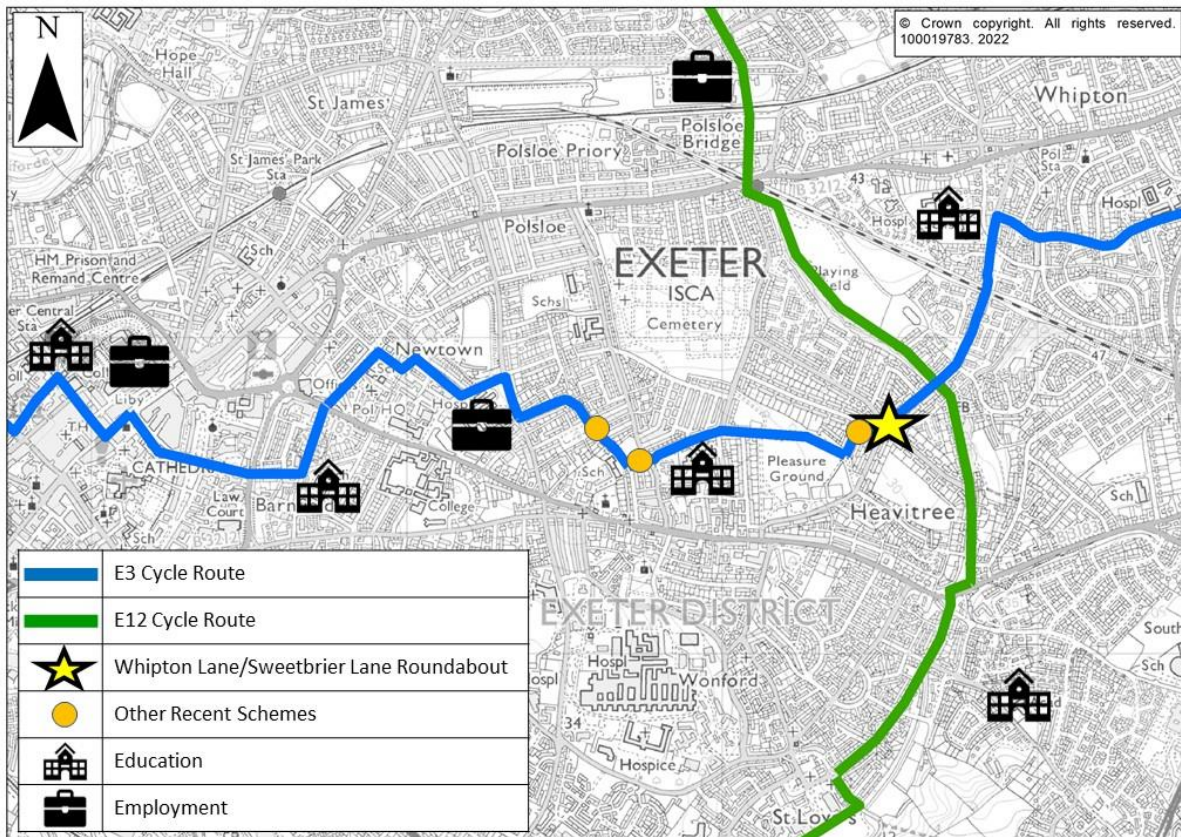
2. Introduction

The Sweetbrier Lane/Whipton Lane roundabout forms part of the E3 strategic cycle route, which connects Redhayes Bridge, Whipton and Heavitree to Exeter city centre. Slightly northeast of the roundabout, the E3 route connects with the E12 cycle route, which offers onward connections to Polsloe Bridge and Morrisons in the north, and Wonford, the Exe Estuary Trail and Marsh Barton in the south. However, in recent years there have been several collisions at the roundabout involving cyclists, hence a traffic-calming scheme has been developed to improve safety for pedestrians and cycles.

As shown in the map below, the scheme would complement other recent schemes on the E3 route, including:

- Installation of modal filters on Homefield Road and Chard Road, reducing traffic volumes on these roads; and

- Relaxation of one-way restrictions on Park Place to allow cyclists to travel contra-flow (westbound), providing a more direct route for cyclists.



3. Proposal

Subject to approval of this report's recommendations, raised tables would be constructed on the north-western and south-eastern arms of the roundabout. This would help reduce entry speeds on the Sweetbrier Lane approaches, addressing road safety issues at the junction, which have disproportionately impacted pedal and motorcyclists in recent years. Additional drainage would also be added on the sides of tables which surface water falls towards.

4. Options/Alternatives

The raised tables proposed for the Sweetbrier Lane/Whipton Lane roundabout have been chosen to address the underlying collision history, specifically to reduce speeds on the 2 entry arms where traffic speeds have most significantly contributed to collisions. Providing additional raised tables and/or formal crossing facilities is feasible, although would add to the costs of the scheme and need further funding, which would delay delivery of the safety scheme.

An alternative option of major changes to the junction, such as changing the junction type (e.g. to a crossroads) and/or placing the whole junction on a raised table could also address the collision issues, but is likely to be significantly more expensive and would not represent good value for money.

Signage alone could help provide some mitigation, but is unlikely to significantly alter driver behaviour or speeds of many vehicles, so unlikely to fully resolve the underlying collision issues.

5. Consultations/Technical Data

Previous Consultations

A public consultation on these proposals, along with wider measures to support walking and cycling, was undertaken as part of the Heavitree and Whipton Local Streets consultation in Autumn 2021.

In total, nearly 1,400 responses to the consultation were received. Of these respondents, some 790 respondents provided comment on the Sweetbrier Lane/Whipton Lane roundabout proposals. The majority of respondents supported the proposals, with less than 30% disagreeing.

In addition to expressing the extent of their agreement with the proposals, approximately 370 respondents provided text comments further explaining their opinions. The most frequently-made comments are summarised below (note: some responses referred to multiple themes).

Comment	Responses
Proposals would improve safety	116
Proposals would reduce traffic speeds	109
Proposals would have little benefit	65
Proposals would encourage active travel	63
Crossings should be provided on all arms	41
Proposals would create danger/chaos	22
Tiger/zebra crossings should be provided	15
Set crossings back from roundabout	14
Ensure easy to use on cycle	9
Remove existing traffic filters	8

TRO & Road Hump Consultation

The proposed road humps at the Sweetbrier Lane/Whipton Lane Roundabout were advertised alongside changes at the Whipton Lane/Georges Close junction. 5 responses were received and are summarised and addressed in Appendix 2.

Collision Data

In the five-year period between 2016 and 2020, there were 7 collisions at the roundabout, 2 of which resulted in serious injuries and 5 of which resulted in slight injuries. This collision rate is higher than would be expected given the roundabout's residential location and traffic volumes. Contributory factors include drivers not looking and coming into the roundabout too fast, with the gradient on some approaches also increases entry speeds.

5 of the 7 recorded casualties were pedal cyclists, with collisions frequently involving drivers travelling east-west (i.e. along Sweetbrier Lane) across the roundabout striking cycles. However, according to 2021 data, cyclists make up less than 10% of road users at the roundabout, meaning the cycle casualty numbers are very disproportionate. Consultation feedback suggests that there have also been numerous 'near-misses' involving cyclists at the roundabout.

6. Strategic Plan

The scheme is well-aligned with several actions within the Strategic Plan, as it would improve the highway network by addressing a known road safety issue. As cyclists have been disproportionately impacted by collisions at the roundabout, improving road safety at this location would be expected to particularly benefit cyclists, and thus make cycling a more attractive option for journeys in the area. This may in turn lead to increased cycling levels, reducing greenhouse gas emissions and increasing physical activity levels. The scheme will also leverage funding from housing developers in addition to Devon County Council's own funds to improve transport infrastructure.

The table below summarises how the proposals would impact achievement of relevant Strategic Plan actions according to a seven-point scale, whereby -3 represents a large negative impact and +3 represents a large positive impact.

Strategic Plan priority	Strategic Plan action	Alignment
Responding to the climate emergency	Prioritise sustainable travel and transport	+2 (Moderate positive)
Investing in Devon's economic recovery	Secure investment in transport infrastructure	+1 (Slight positive)
Investing in Devon's economic recovery	Maintain and, where necessary, improve our highway network and improve sustainable transport options	+2 (Moderate positive)
Improving health and wellbeing	Give people greater opportunities for walking and cycling to increase their physical activity	+1 (Slight positive)

7. Financial Considerations

The scheme is expected to cost up to £60,000, which includes design costs, staff time and public notices for the Sweetbrier Lane/Whipton Lane Roundabout and Whipton Lane/Georges Close junction schemes and construction cost.

Expenditure during this financial year will be funded by £14.1k and £9.5k S106 from Matford Green and Hill Barton Farm, respectively. The remaining balance (up to £20k) will be funded from Local Transport Plan funds from the Casualty and Severity Reduction programme.

8. Legal Considerations

The legal implications of the proposals have been considered in the preparation of this report.

The statutory consultation on the proposed road humps has been carried out in line with The Highways (Road Humps) Regulations 1999. This includes a public notice placed in the local press and statutory bodies (e.g. emergency services) being notified of the consultation, which was conducted in December 2021 – January 2022.

When introducing a highways scheme, it is the County Council's 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, to secure the expeditious, convenient and safe movement of traffic (including pedestrians and cyclists) and provision of parking facilities.

9. Environmental Impact Considerations (Including Climate Change)

The proposed road humps would reduce vehicle speeds, which in some instances may lead to localised increases in vehicle emissions. However, in reducing vehicle speeds the proposals would provide a safer environment for pedestrians and cyclists, particularly at an identified collision location, and help to encourage sustainable travel. This modal shift from the private car to walking and cycling may help reduce total emissions from transport.

10. 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.

This scheme is expected to reduce disadvantage to cyclists at this location, by reducing vehicle speeds and thus reducing the risk of harm to cyclists and other road users. It will also help meet the needs of pedestrians crossing the road, by providing raised crossings across the Sweetbrier Lane arms of the roundabout.

11. Risk Management Considerations

The scheme has been developed through liaison with the Road Safety Team and is expected to have significant benefit by addressing an identified existing issue. A Stage 2 Road Safety Audit (RSA) will be undertaken on the scheme prior to any works taking place. Under recommendation (c) above, minor scheme amendments in response to the RSA can be agreed through delegated powers.

12. Public Health Impact

The scheme is likely to have a positive public health impact by reducing collisions at this roundabout, and thus reducing associated injury and illness. It will also support those walking or cycling in the area, encouraging use of these modes and thus boosting physical activity levels.

13. Summary

The proposed scheme comprises road humps on the Sweetbrier Lane approaches to the Sweetbrier Lane/Whipton Lane roundabout, along with drainage improvements. It would provide a cost-effective means of improving road safety at a location with an atypically high collision rate, particularly for cyclists. It would support cyclists using the E3 strategic cycle route, and provide an informal crossing for pedestrians, thus making active travel a safer and more attractive option.

Meg Booth
Director of Climate Change, Environment and Transport

Electoral Division: Heavitree & Whipton Barton

Local Government Act 1972: List of Background Papers

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Tel No: 01392 383131

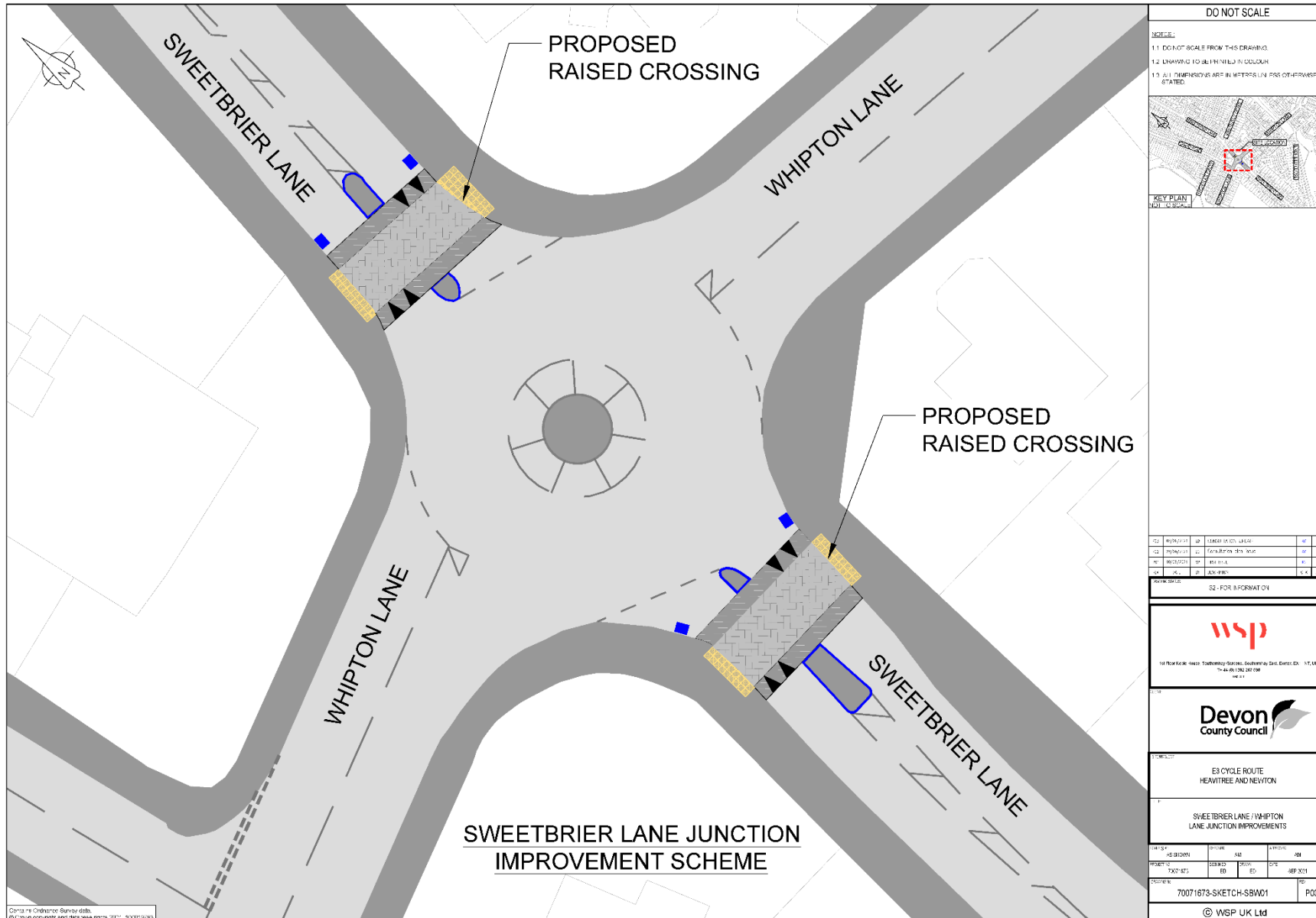
Room: Transport Planning, Matford Offices, County Hall, Exeter EX2 4QD

Background Paper	Date	File Reference
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Nil

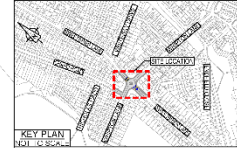
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Scheme Plan



DO NOT SCALE

- NOTES:
- 1.1 DO NOT SCALE FROM THIS DRAWING.
 - 1.2 DRAWING TO BE PRINTED IN COLOUR
 - 1.3 ALL DIMENSIONS ARE IN METRES UNLESS OTHERWISE STATED.



02	DESIGN	02	DESIGN OF CIV. WORKS	02	02
03	DESIGN	03	CONSTRUCTION TECH. SPEC.	03	03
04	DESIGN	04	EST. BILLS	04	04
05	CONSTRUCTION	05	CONSTRUCTION	05	05

FOR MORE INFORMATION



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E3 CYCLE ROUTE
HEAVITREE AND NEWTON

SWEETBRIER LANE / WHIPTON
LANE JUNCTION IMPROVEMENTS

DATE	BY	CHECKED	APPROVED
02/03/2022	ASB	AM	AM
PROJECT NO.	70071673	SECTION	ED
DATE	02/03/2022	SCALE	1:1000
PROJECT NO.	70071673-SKETCH-SBWO1	DATE	02/03/2022

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Summary of Representations

Comment	Devon County Council Response
Respondent 1 – Heavitree Area	
<p><u>Objection</u></p> <p>Respondent objects stating the proposed works are a waste of time and money. States there have been a few safety issues and incidents which were also raised from a pressure group, but this was exaggerated.</p>	<p>In the five-year period between 2016 and 2020, there were 7 collisions at the roundabout, 2 of which resulted in serious injuries and 5 of which resulted in slight injuries. This collision rate is higher than would be expected given the roundabout's residential location and traffic volumes.</p>
Respondent 2 – Resident of Whipton Lane	
<p><u>Objection</u></p> <p>Concerned that the construction of the Road Hump at the junction of Whipton Lane and Georges Close will be in the middle of their driveway and the property opposite, concerned of turning into and out of driveway.</p>	<p>View noted, it is not proposed to implement the road hump on Whipton Lane at this time. If it is going to be progressed, the design will be reviewed and updated with a new statutory consultation at that time.</p>
Respondents 3 & 5 – Residents of Sweetbrier Lane	
<p><u>Objections</u></p> <p>Both respondents object to the northern road hump on Sweetbrier Lane as they currently suffer flooding at their properties and worry that the installation of a road hump will increase the quantity of surface water.</p>	<p>The northern road hump on Sweetbrier Lane will have a Road Safety Audit undertaken in response to risk of flooding highlighted. The proposed scheme will incorporate some drainage improvements, to be installed during the installation of the road hump. These improvements would improve the capacity of drainage systems and reduce the risk of water ponding adjacent to the properties.</p>
Respondent 4 – Resident of Sweetbrier Lane	
<p><u>Objection</u></p> <p>The respondent objects to the No Waiting At Any Time along Whipton Lane due to displacement of parking on to Sweetbrier Lane.</p>	<p>View noted, the proposed restriction is to prevent parking in the vicinity of the junction, however it is not proposed to implement it at this time.</p>