

Newton Abbot, Queen Street – Pedestrian Enhancements Public Consultation Outcomes and Next Steps

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:

- (a) the proposals shown in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 are noted and supported by this Committee, prior to approval for construction at Cabinet in due course;
- (b) following consultation, the Traffic Regulation Orders shown in Appendix 2, are advertised; and
- (c) the Director of Climate Change, Environment and Transport be given delegated powers, in consultation with the Chair of HATOC and the local member to make amendments to the scheme details for a preferred scheme for approval at a future meeting of Devon County Council's Cabinet.

1. Introduction/Background

This report details a package of proposals for pedestrian and public realm enhancements alongside traffic management changes on Queen Street, Newton Abbot. This follows a public consultation in May/June 2022 and seeks support for the scheme proposals so that the associated Traffic Regulation Orders can be advertised. Due to the cost of the scheme, any final approval decision for its construction will be taken at Cabinet, subject to the TROs being approved. Figure 1 below shows the corridor identified for improvement.

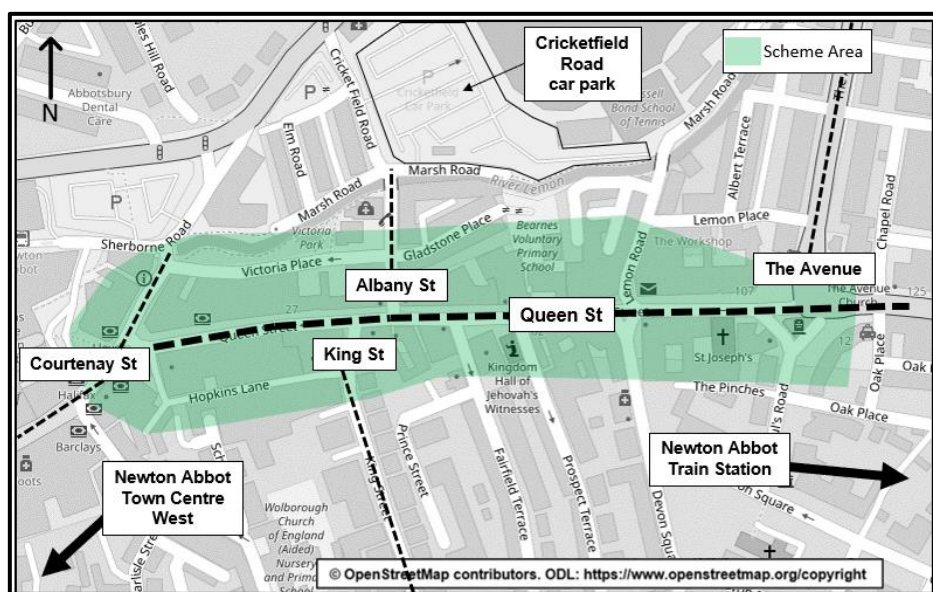


Figure 1: Scheme Area and Geography

Queen Street, Newton Abbot has an extensive number of shops, independent businesses and services. However, the corridor is dominated by motorised vehicles with a significant amount of space allocated to through traffic and on-street parking, particularly west of The Avenue. This arrangement means that footways are narrow in places and the street, and its side roads, can be difficult to cross. Overall, there is limited space and facilities for pedestrians who are the dominant users of the Town Centre shopping area. There is a real need for intervention to tackle these problems and create a better urban environment for people visiting Newton Abbot Town Centre and to help reduce carbon emissions in response to the climate emergency.

Teignbridge District Council (TDC) secured funding from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities' Future High Street Fund (FHSF) in May 2021. The wider FHSF package seeks to make Newton Abbot Town Centre a pedestrian friendly place with good active transport connections, increased leisure and entertainment opportunities, a high quality market and retail offering, and an enhanced night time economy. As the highway authority, DCC supported the bid to Government and are helping to enable the walking and cycling elements of the funding package to be realised in close partnership with TDC. These proposals form part of the FHSF scheme.

Proposals were presented to this Committee in March 2022, where approval was given to progress to a public consultation in order to understand local residents', shoppers' and business' views. Working with Teignbridge District Council, and in consultation with the Local Member and Chair of HATOC, officers refined and updated the proposals prior to the public consultation, which are detailed below.

Following the outcomes of the public consultation, it is now recommended that the proposals, as presented at consultation, are supported to enable the required Traffic Regulation Orders to be advertised. Subject to a positive outcome on the TROs, the scheme would then be presented to Cabinet for scheme cost and construction approval. It should also be noted that TDC's Full Council has also given its approval to proceed with enhancements at Queen Street as part of the FHSF project.

2. Proposals

The proposals are a package of measures to enhance Queen Street, Newton Abbot between Courtenay Street and The Avenue and neighbouring side roads. Proposals were originally developed by TDC, as part of the FHSF bid to Government. As the highway authority, DCC officers have supported the development of proposals in partnership with TDC. The proposals, as presented at public consultation, are shown in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2, and a summary is also detailed below. Please note that proposals shown in red dashed boxes, in the appendices, are part of the future plans for the corridor, outside the scope of the recommendations of this report.

Widened Footways – Widened footways will give pedestrians more space to move and access shops/services, also improving access for mobility scooters, buggies etc. The focus is at the western end of Queen Street, between Courtenay Street and Albany Street. The southern footways will also be widened between Albany Street and the existing zebra crossing.

Improved Crossings – Crossings at side roads will make junctions safer and easier to cross, with priority given to pedestrians instead of vehicles. Pedestrian priority raised tables will be provided at every side road between Devon Square and Hopkins Lane,

excluding Lemon Road, meaning crossings will be level with footways. A narrower carriageway, partnered with a reduced speed limit, will make Queen Street itself easier to cross. A new zebra crossing west of the War Memorial will also provide a new formal crossing opportunity.

Enhanced Greening & Seating – Enhanced greening and seating is central to making the corridor a more appealing destination. New in-ground tree planting is proposed on the northern footway between Courtenay Street and Albany Street. This will be complemented by the relocation of existing flower poles from the northern footway to the southern footway at the same location. A new double-headed flower pole is also proposed at the King Street junction. Between Albany Street and Prospect Terrace, two double-headed flower poles are proposed, one to the west of Fairfield Terrace and one to the west of Prospect Terrace on the southern footway. Two benches and planters are also proposed on the southern footway between Fairfield and Prospect Terrace.

Public Transport & Cycle Provision – The existing bus stop outside the Catholic Church will be enhanced to create a bus lay-by. A reduction in general traffic will make access by bike more attractive. Whilst cycle trips will remain westbound only from The Avenue, north/south movements will be enhanced through the removal of traffic to/from King Street. New cycle parking is also proposed. Proposals will complement separate FHSF proposals, already approved by this Committee, to improve the National Cycle Network Route 2 which runs parallel to Queen Street. Working as a wider package, enhancements to public transport and cycling provision will help strengthen active travel and bus connectivity with Newton Abbot's town centre and support climate change decarbonisation objectives.

The proposals detailed below will require Traffic Regulation Orders to be put into effect, as shown in Appendix 2. Approval is sought to advertise these orders and undergo a statutory consultation.

Parking Changes – To deliver these transformational improvements, approximately 55% of on-street parking is proposed to be removed, within the scheme area, including the removal of all on-street parking between Courtenay Street and Albany Street. On-street disabled parking will increase overall within the scheme area.

Loading Changes – Currently, loading outside of loading bays is permitted on-street at restricted times. The proposals will only permit loading at restricted times from designated loading bays. The number of these bays will be increased in the scheme area and will include a flexible loading bay on Queen Street, immediately west of King Street.

Traffic Removal – Removal of general traffic from the corridor is central to achieving a transformational, attractive pedestrian environment, with reduced carbon emissions and better air quality. It is proposed to restrict access on Queen Street, west of Albany Street, to buses, cycles and restricted hours loading. Taxis would be able to access this area to stop to pick up or set down passengers. Drivers of vehicles displaying a blue badge would also be able to access to stop and pick up or set down a disabled person. Through traffic will be encouraged to remain on The Avenue and general traffic accessing Queen Street will then be routed north on Albany Street when leaving Queen Street. There will be no motorised vehicular access between King Street and Queen Street, however, space for a turning head will be provided at the top of King Street. Hopkins Lane will be made one-way northbound.

Speed Limit – A new 20mph speed limit is proposed between The Avenue and Courtenay Street, this will further enhance the environment for visitors and enhance safety for Bearnese Voluntary Primary School.

The exact specification of these proposals is a result of officers working closely with TDC and listening to the views of the Committee following its meeting in March 2022. As a result of this work, greening and seating proposals have been enhanced substantially. Working with specialist landscape architects ensured that greening proposals are now at the heart of achieving a substantially improved urban environment on this key town centre corridor.

Further to this, the scheme extent was reduced so that proposals now focus on the western end of the corridor, where there is the greatest density of shops, services and footfall. This change was made as a result of an updated scheme cost estimate provided after this Committee met in March 2022. Increased scheme costs, compared to earlier designs progressed by TDC in 2020, arose due to higher quality design specifications aimed at achieving the transformational pedestrian environment, particularly at the scheme's western end, partnered with the increased cost of construction.

Proposals support and align with a range of national Government strategies. Pedestrian and cycle improvements are in line with the Government vision for active travel set out in its Gear Change document and LTN 1/20 guidance. Enhancements to public transport also firmly support the Government's Bus Back Better strategy and the package also complements the Decarbonising Transport Plan at the national level, as well as Devon's emerging Carbon Plan. At a local level, the Newton Abbot and Kingsteignton Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) is included in the scheme extent; removing traffic from the corridor will contribute towards air quality improvements.

3. Consultations

The proposals presented in the report have undergone significant public and stakeholder consultation at every stage of project development.

Teignbridge District Council Public Consultation (June 2020) – Full details available at: <https://www.teignbridge.gov.uk/community-and-people/major-projects-and-regeneration/future-high-street-fund/queen-street-pedestrian-and-access-proposals-feedback-from-june-2020-engagement>.

Stakeholder Consultation (December 2021/January 2022) – Meetings with internal officers, TDC members, representatives from Newton Abbot Town Council (NATC) and a local stakeholder group.

Newton Abbot Town Council (Ongoing) – Project team have met regularly with NATC representatives, a briefing meeting was also held directly with NATC Councillors in April 2022 prior to the public consultation going live.

Public Consultation Arrangements (29 April to 24 June 2022) – Joint consultation with TDC. Consultation materials may be accessed on the consultation website – devon.cc/queen-street-newton-abbot. Over 1,000 letters were issued to residents and approximately 150 letters were sent to businesses. Businesses were also issued a scheme update leaflet the week before the consultation. Community hubs were sent posters. Adverts were placed in local newspapers and press releases were issued by

DCC and TDC. A targeted Facebook advert was also commissioned. Public and business webinars were hosted and an online drop-in was also held. Businesses were separately offered a one-to-one meeting with the project team. An unmanned public exhibition was also set up in Newton Abbot Library for the duration of the consultation.

Public Consultation Outcomes (May/June 2022)

A summary of the key outcomes of the joint TDC public consultation, as approved by this Committee, are detailed below, alongside a rationale for next steps. A comprehensive public consultation summary report is available to view on the project website – devon.cc/queen-street-newton-abbot.

Public Responses

- **Representation** – The number of public responses was good, a total of 943 questionnaires were received.
- **Pedestrian Enhancements** – The consultation demonstrated good support for the pedestrian enhancement elements of the proposals. 50% supported pavement widening, outweighing 42% that disagreed. Approximately 50% supported side crossings at all locations, again outnumbering those that disagreed (approximately 30%).
- **Greening & Seating** – Respondents showed strong support for the proposals to enhance greening and seating; between 40% and 55% supported each specific proposal, significantly outweighing those that disagreed (approximately between 20% and 25%). Tree planting along the northern footway was particularly well supported.
- **Changes for Motorised Vehicles** – Proposals to implement a 20mph speed limit over the scheme length were strongly supported (62%). Changes to access were more mixed. Proposals to restrict access west of Albany Street were marginally against; 49% disagreed compared to the 42% that agreed. 49% disagreed with the proposal to restrict traffic between King Street and Queen Street, outnumbering those that agreed at 38%.
- **Parking Changes** – Overall, there was opposition against on-street parking removal; 51% disagreed with the proposal, though a significant proportion supported proposals (40%). This outcome is caveated by respondents' reported usage of parking; 60% reported that they park on Queen Street on a monthly or less than monthly basis, of these 33% never park on Queen Street.

Business Responses

- **Representation** – Business turnout was overall low, with 23 businesses responding out of approximately 90 businesses, west of The Avenue on Queen Street. A further 23 businesses responded outside this extent. The majority of businesses chose not to engage with the consultation, despite best endeavours to engage them, including receipt of consultation materials and offers of project team meetings.
- **Overall Opinion** – The businesses that did respond, overall, did not support the proposals. Reasoning for lack of support were generally concerned about proposals being bad for business and opposition against parking removal.

The outcomes of the most recent public consultation demonstrate that there is support for pedestrian enhancements and the provision of new greening and seating. These scheme elements are central to delivering a transformational enhanced environment, which is more attractive for residents/shoppers and businesses in Newton Abbot Town Centre. It is expected to support increased pedestrian footfall into the Town Centre, appealing to a

wide range of visitors and improved access for active travel modes and public transport in response to the climate emergency.

The scarcity of available highway means there is not enough width to deliver the significant public realm improvements, whilst also retaining present levels of on-street parking provision and existing vehicle access. Furthermore, an analysis of parking demand and supply has highlighted that a reduction in provision can be accommodated – ticketing data indicates that a significant number of spaces are unoccupied. A significant proportion of on-street parking (approximately 45%) will remain under the proposals and there are also alternative nearby off-street parking facilities in the vicinity of Queen Street. Figure 2 below shows nearby off-street parking facilities, totalling approximately 830 spaces, significantly outweighing the comparative proposed reduction in Queen Street on-street provision (~33 spaces).

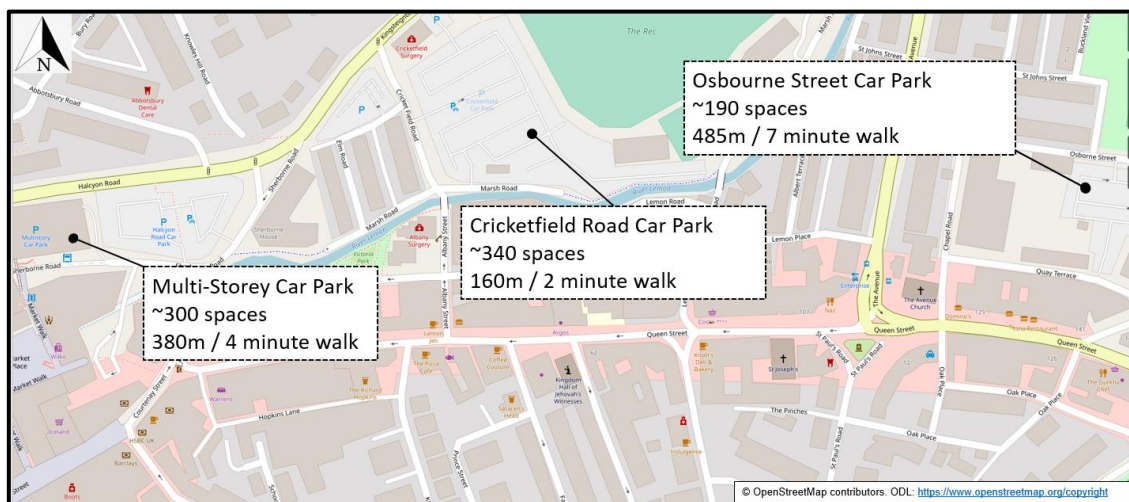


Figure 2: Nearby Off-Street Parking

The public consultation highlighted that the majority visit Queen Street for between 30 and 90 minutes, therefore, the convenience and proximity of the existing car parks to Queen Street is considered very reasonable. Cricketfield Road car park (2-minute walk) ticket data suggests that during peak times, the car park is used at approximately 2/3 capacity, excluding permit holder parking.

It is therefore recommended that proposals, as presented at consultation, proceed with the advertisement of the TROs. Officers will work with the Local Member and the Chair of HATOC, to make minor amendments to scheme details during final stages of design and subsequent Traffic Regulation Order statutory consultation. Communication with Newton Abbot Town Council and local businesses will continue as the project then proceeds to construction, pending future Cabinet approval.

4. Options/Alternatives

Do Nothing – To keep the status quo would be to maintain traffic dominance within Newton Abbot Town Centre. Although on-street parking would continue to be convenient, this would continue to be to the detriment of the pedestrian environment. Town centre visitors would not benefit from the better walking, cycling and bus links or the additional footway space and seating to improve accessibility and allow people to spend more time enjoying the area's shops and services. This option would be out of step with the ambitions of the recently endorsed Heart of Teignbridge Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan, which seeks to respond positively to the climate emergency and

improve the health and wellbeing of local residents. This option would also risk the delivery of the wider FHSF package, which may result in Newton Abbot Town Centre not receiving substantial Government investment at this time. This has the potential reputational damage for securing future funding for schemes.

Scaled back scheme – A scaled back scheme could omit the proposed changes to vehicle access, most notably west of Albany Street. This option would limit the transformational nature of the public realm proposals, not addressing difficulties for pedestrians needing to cross Queen Street, or delivering benefits to local bus services. This scheme, by being a compromise, would fall short on the level of ambition for creating a better pedestrian environment for all and responding positively to the climate emergency.

5. Strategic Plan

Proposals are well-aligned with a range of Strategic Plan priorities and actions. The scheme seeks to prioritise active and sustainable travel over private motorised traffic, whilst still maintaining access for those that rely on it. The proposals' contribution towards enhancing the public realm will make Queen Street a more attractive destination for shopping, dining and for the community to meet. This will help support a green economic recovery from COVID-19.

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	Support a green recovery from COVID-19	+2 (Moderate positive)
Responding to the climate emergency	Prioritise sustainable travel and transport	+3 (Large positive)
Responding to the climate emergency	Encourage sustainable lifestyles	+3 (Large positive)
Investing in Devon's economic recovery	Secure investment in transport infrastructure	+2 (Moderate positive)
Improving health and wellbeing	Give people greater opportunities for walking and cycling to increase their physical activity	+2 (Moderate positive)
Helping communities to be safe, connected and resilient	Enable a range of transport options, including public transport	+1 (Slight positive)

6. Financial Considerations

The latest project cost estimate is in the region of £1.1m, which includes approximately 23% optimism bias and 30% project risk. The total estimated scheme budget is £967,000. The funding shortfall will be resolved at the next stage of design when project risk confidence will increase and if necessary minor amendments to the scheme details will be progressed.

The vast majority of funding will be realised through the Government's FHSF grant, this allocation is expected to be £685k. TDC have also allocated £81k to the scheme. DCC have committed to contributing £200,000 Local Transport Plan (LTP) to the walking and cycling elements of the FHSF package, as set out in the Transport Capital Programme update approved by Cabinet in September 2021. This contribution is not exclusively linked to Queen Street improvements and may be used as contribution towards other transport elements of the FHSF delivery. This arrangement between DCC and TDC has been agreed through the signing of a Funding Agreement. It should be noted that FHSF Government allocation for the 2023/24 financial year is indicative and will be subject to the outcome of a Government spending review.

Due to the anticipated cost of the scheme, approval for construction will need to be sought from Cabinet in due course, subject to approval of the TROs.

7. Legal Considerations

The proposed changes to amend on-street parking/loading and restrict general vehicle access, including appropriate signage, would be introduced through Traffic Regulation Orders. The permanent orders require a public consultation and statutory bodies (e.g. emergency services) are notified of the restrictions. A public notice is placed in the local press. The report recommends that approval is given for the advertisement and consultation of the necessary TROs.

Enhanced greening is expected to be maintained by Newton Abbot Town Council, however, this arrangement will be subject to their formal agreement and, where necessary, an appropriate maintenance agreement.

8. Environmental Impact Considerations (Including Climate Change)

The proposals set out in this report will improve active travel provision for visitors to Queen Street, encouraging reduced car use. Public transport access is maintained and enhanced, ensuring that proposals support sustainable travel options. It is recognised that some local traffic may have to divert creating longer journeys, however, it is also expected that some users will switch modes rather than simply changing driving route. Alternative parking facilities are on the edge of the town centre and may represent a shorter travel distance for many drivers who would otherwise use the one-way section of Queen Street.

Proposals to enhance greening along the corridor will serve to encourage biodiversity within an existing urban environment. During the detailing design phase, the use of recycling materials and reducing the volume of earthworks will be considered with the aim of reducing carbon emissions.

Overall, the reallocation of road space from motorised vehicles to active travel users is expected to have a positive environmental impact, contributing toward tackling climate

change. Proposals are expected to cut carbon and deliver air quality benefits, towards the Newton Abbot and Kingsteignton Air Quality Management Area (AQMA), which is included in the scheme extent.

9. 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.

In progressing this proposal, an Impact Assessment has been prepared and has been published at: <https://www.devon.gov.uk/impact/>. This Impact Assessment has been updated, reflecting the new scheme details agreed since the last meeting of this Committee and presented at public consultation.

The Impact Assessment highlights that, overall, the environment will be improved for people with additional mobility needs. Proposed crossing improvements and widened footways will make the area safer and more accessible for all users, in particular for those using wheelchairs or mobility scooters. Crossings will be raised at side roads to improve accessibility. Blue Badge holder parking provisions will increase overall in the area and approximately 45% of on-street parking in the area is proposed to remain. Bus services will also be retained, with improved access to the town centre expected to particularly benefit younger people and older people who may not have access to a car or be confident driving into the centre of town.

10. Risk Management Considerations

A stage 1 road safety audit (RSA) has been undertaken and a response document will be progressed in due course. The problems raised are minor and will be addressed at the detailed design phase of the scheme. Issues concerning the proposals marked for delivery under the FHSF include: additional road markings, traffic calming on Victoria Place and visibility improvements at the location of the proposed zebra crossing. Localised carriageway widening is also recommended at the western extent to allow cycles to travel safely around stationary buses. Further changes to the design will be subject to a stage 2 RSA and could be agreed through delegated powers.

TDC will need to submit a Project Adjustment Request to DLUHC in order to obtain approval for changes to the project details.

The FHSF Government grant allocation must be spent by the end of March 2024, this timescale is challenging and the project team may need to request an extension.

11. Public Health Impact

The scheme will have a positive public health and wellbeing impact by improving facilities for active travel for shoppers and residents accessing Queen Street, encouraging reduced car use and boosting people's health and physical activity. Proposals are also expected to deliver air quality benefits, towards the Newton Abbot and Kingsteignton Air Quality Management Area (AQMA), which is included in the scheme extent.

12. Summary

The proposals recommended for approval in this report have been designed to make Queen Street a more attractive, safe and healthy place for visitors and businesses. The improvements to the pedestrian environment, with reduced dominance of vehicles, aim to make everyone feel safe and welcome, with more spaces for pedestrians to enjoy and access shops and services, with improved accessibility for all, cleaner air and less pollution. The public consultation demonstrates support for public realm enhancement of the area and therefore it is recommended that the TROs are advertised to enable the scheme to progress.

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Electoral Division: Newton Abbot North

Local Government Act 1972: List of Background Papers

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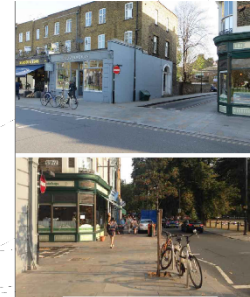
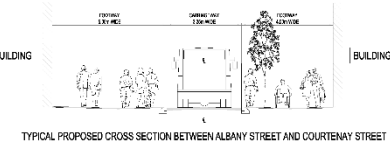
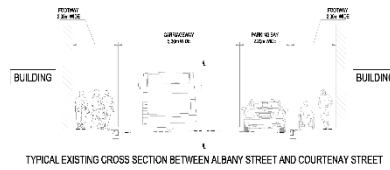
Background Paper	Date	File Reference
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sc/cr/Newton Abbot Queen Street Pedestrian Enhancements Public Consultation
Outcomes and Next Steps
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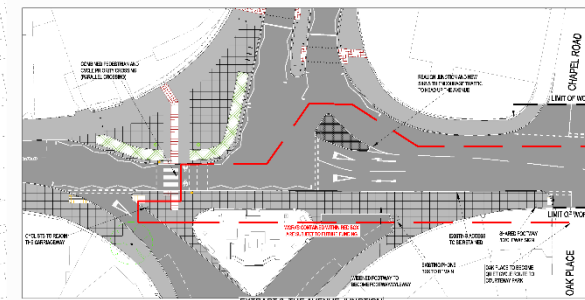
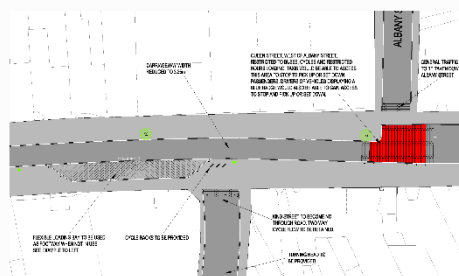
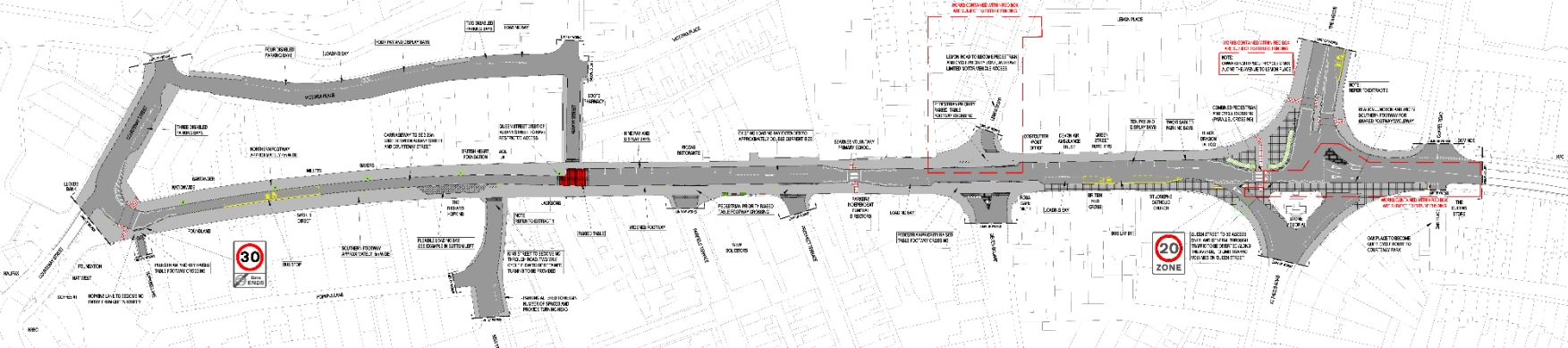
Appendix 1 To CET/22/34

QUEEN STREET NEWTON ABBOT ENHANCEMENT SCHEME



- KEY:
- FOOTWAY
 - CARRIAGEWAY
 - LOADING AREA
 - RAISED TABLE
 - RAMPS
 - EXISTING FLOWER POLE
 - PROPOSED FLOWER POLE
 - PROPOSED DOUBLE HEAD FLOWER POLE
 - EXISTING PLANTER
 - PROPOSED PLANTER
 - EXISTING TREE
 - PROPOSED TREE
 - PROPOSED BENCH

WEST END OF QUEEN STREET



Appendix 2 To CET/22/34

