

## **Mosshayne to Cranbrook Walking and Cycling route**

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) a planning application be progressed for the walking and cycling route between Mosshayne Lane and Cranbrook, shown in Appendix 1;**
- (b) approval be given to progress with land acquisition by agreement for the walking and cycling route between Mosshayne Lane and Cranbrook as shown in Appendix 1; and**
- (c) the Director of Climate Change, Environment and Transport be given delegated powers, in consultation with the Chair of HATOC and the local members, to make minor amendments to the scheme details.**

## **1. Introduction**

Devon County Council is proposing to construct a 1.5km off road walking/cycling route from Station Road at the Western edge of Cranbrook to Mosshayne Lane, connecting to the proposed Clyst Valley Trail. The route will also become part of the Exeter Cycle Network, strategic routes E3 and E4 that connects Cranbrook to the city centre via the Mosshayne and Redhayes developments. The route is included in the Exeter Transport Strategy and is one of the off-site walking and cycling enhancement routes identified in Policy CB6 of the Cranbrook Plan Development Plan Documents (DPD) as necessary for further development at Cranbrook.

The existing shared use infrastructure along the London Road B3174 is inadequate for the expected demand and not compliant with current guidance, nor suitable for all users. There is significant growth taking place with almost 10,000 homes being built along the corridor between Cranbrook and the M5 (including Mosshayne and Redhayes) and almost 10,000 jobs at SkyPark, Exeter Logistics Park and Exeter Science Park. This scale of growth will increase traffic volumes on the B3174, making the current route unattractive for people to use to access employment, education or leisure opportunities. The new route will provide an attractive and direct alternative link away from traffic between Exeter and the Exeter and East Devon Enterprise Zone (Cranbrook, SkyPark), enabling short to medium distance journeys to be converted to active travel.

## **2. Proposal**

The 1.5km long shared use path will be 3.5m wide and will be suitable for pedestrians, people with disabilities and cyclists.

The path will link up the Mosshayne development/Mosshayne Lane through an agricultural field where short sections of boardwalk will be needed over an area of potential flooding. A bridge will be required across the river Clyst after which the route will run parallel to the railway line.

A small number of young trees will need to be replaced and/or relocated to allow for the path to pass through the 10m safeguarded land behind Exeter Logistics Park (Lidl and Amazon depots) which runs parallel to the railway line.

The last section will pass across the recently acquired Clyst Meadow land and will link up to Station Road, near Cranbrook. The project team are working in partnership with East Devon District Council who now own Clyst Meadows to ensure that proposals in the area join up seamlessly, helping people access the Meadows and also that this becomes an attractive and enjoyable part of the route.

Once the route meets Station Road, it will link into the future proposed Bluehayes development, which is the western phase of Cranbrook. Future development will provide a crossing of Station Road, after the route continues to Cranbrook/Cranbrook railway station.

The following project milestones have been established:

Milestone	Date
Land negotiations and acquisition.	In progress. Some land secured through S106 agreements and heads of terms being finalised for the remaining sections.
Planning application.	Winter 2023
Detailed design.	2023
Contract documents and tender.	Winter 2023 - Spring 2024
Works construction (subject to funding).	24/25 - 25/26

**3. Options/Alternatives**

Alternative options included:

Not providing the route

This would rely upon the existing shared use path that runs parallel to the B3174 between Cranbrook, SkyPark, Exeter Logistics Park, Clyst Honiton and Exeter Science Park. The existing facility along this route is substandard and it would unlikely increase the number and diversity of people who may consider cycling, particularly as the Old London Road B3174 becomes busier with vehicular traffic as future phases of development are delivered in the Exeter and East Devon Enterprise Zone.

Due to land constraints, it is not possible to upgrade the existing facility.

#### 4. Consultations/Representations

No public consultation has been held on this specific proposal. However, it has been included as a proposed scheme in the Exeter Transport Strategy. Reference to the proposed route has been made in the Broadclyst Neighbourhood Plan which was recently consulted upon. As stated above, the route is identified as necessary in the Cranbrook Plan DPD which was recently adopted following several stages of public consultation. The planning application will provide a further opportunity for people to express their views on the detailed proposals.

Resident surveys shows that 25% of car commutes from Cranbrook are to Sowton Industrial Estate, with these trips travelling via the A30/M5 J29, which is a sensitive part of the Strategic Road Network operated by National Highways. Sowton is approximately 5km away from Cranbrook, a distance that is easily commutable by cycle and with favourable topography.

Cycle count data collected on Redhayes Bridge shows an increase of over 50% in cycling trips between 2014 and 2019. It is expected that this route will become increasingly popular for leisure and commuter trips as the Clyst Valley Trail develops and growth expands east of the motorway.

#### 5. Strategic Plan

Proposals are well aligned with a range of Strategic Plan priorities and actions. The scheme seeks to promote and create more opportunities for active travel, encouraging sustainable lifestyles.

The scheme helps **respond to the climate emergency** by prioritising sustainable travel and encouraging sustainable lifestyles. Improving sustainable transport options, is also a key action under the **investing in Devon's economic recovery** strategic plan priority. Constructing the path will give people greater opportunities for walking and cycling, thus increasing physical activity which addresses the priority to **improve health and wellbeing**. The scheme will also help **communities to be safe, connected, and resilient** by enabling a range of transport options to improve access to services and jobs and tackling social isolation.

#### 6. Financial Considerations

Ongoing design work will be funded from developer contributions.

The future delivery of the scheme is likely to be funded through a combination of local developer contributions and external funding bodies.

Local developer contributions have already been identified in the Cranbrook Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

Other contributions will be sought from external funding sources such as National Highways and Active Travel England.

Investment in walking, cycling and wheeling has been boosted following the publication of Gear Change and the establishment of Active Travel England. More external grant funding opportunities for active travel are expected and this scheme would have a strong case given its location in supporting the scale of growth at Cranbrook and the Exeter and East Devon Enterprise Zone (including Exeter Science Park and SkyPark).

## **7. Legal Considerations**

For the sections of route crossing open land, a planning application will be required, with Devon County Council as the determining planning authority.

The majority of land is already safeguarded under S106 agreements, with a parcel in East Devon District Council (EDDC) ownership. EDDC have agreed to transfer the required land for the path to Devon County Council. There are some land parcels along the route that would need to be obtained through negotiation with third parties.

## **8. Environmental Impact Considerations (Including Climate Change)**

The scheme is expected to reduce carbon emissions through encouraging greater levels of commuting, education and recreational pursuits by active travel and reduced reliance on motorised vehicles.

Emission reductions will also result from leisure trips using the route that would otherwise involve a car journey elsewhere. There are clear benefits enabling local people to access green infrastructure including the proposed Clyst Valley Trail, which will ultimately link into the Exe Estuary Trail. The new walking and cycling route would allow easier access between Exeter and Cranbrook for a wider group of people who would not ordinarily use the substandard shared path along B3174 London Road. More people, particularly younger age groups, will have greater access to employment/training and education opportunities without incurring the costs of driving or public transport.

Ecological and environmental surveys have been undertaken which identified a number of protected species in the scheme area. Appropriate mitigation will be required for the final scheme.

The route crosses a flood plain and the two tributaries of the river Clyst requiring raised boardwalks. A bridge will be required across the river Clyst.

## **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.

Decision makers will take account of protected characteristics in coming to a decision.

The proposed infrastructure would enhance equality of opportunity by providing additional traffic free paths which may be more attractive to families, young children, elderly people or people with disabilities who may feel safer partaking in outdoor exercise using traffic free paths. It may also enable people without access to a car (ie. young people) to access jobs, education, or leisure opportunities more easily with greater independence.

An Impact Assessment has been prepared and is available to view on the County Council's impact assessment website.

## **10. Risk Management Considerations**

The principal risks are linked to obtaining land and planning consent. Through the design process, efforts will be taken to minimise ongoing maintenance costs, i.e. through use of longer lasting recycled plastic for the boardwalk section of the route.

Obtaining funding for this project is a risk. We are working with East Devon District Council to incorporate the scheme within their Infrastructure Delivery Plan to ensure funding can be secured through future development.

Other contributions will be sought from external funding sources such as National Highways and Active Travel England. Early conversations have been held with National Highways to explore potential for funding through their Designated Funds. Given the scale of future development in the area, there is a strong strategic case to demonstrate the benefits of delivering a high quality active travel route to mitigate impacts on the A30/M5 strategic road network.

Investment in walking, cycling and wheeling has been boosted following the publication of Gear Change and the establishment of Active Travel England. More external grant funding opportunities for active travel are expected and this would have a strong case given its location in supporting the scale of growth at Cranbrook and the Exeter and East Devon Enterprise Zone (including Exeter Science Park and SkyPark).

## **11. Summary/Reasons for Recommendations**

The recommendations in this report will enable development of a high quality, direct walking and cycling route between Cranbrook and Mosshayne Lane, enabling access to the proposed Clyst Valley Trail and onwards connections into Exeter via strategic routes E3 and E4 through the Mosshayne/Redhayes developments and over the Tithebarn and Redhayes cycle bridges. Specifically, the report seeks approval to firstly progress a planning application for the trail, which will involve further design and investigations and secondly progress with land acquisition.

With the scale of development in the Exeter and East Devon Enterprise Zone putting pressure on the transport system, there is a need to provide attractive active travel routes to encourage mode shift for short to medium distance journeys. This proposal will help minimise car use and enable healthier, more active lifestyles, also expanding the diversity of people walking, cycling, and wheeling.

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**Electoral Division: Broadclyst**

**Local Government Act 1972: List of Background Papers**

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Background Paper	Date	File Ref.
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Nil

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sc/cr/Mosshayne to Cranbrook Walking and Cycling route  
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