

Rifford Road Two-Way Cycle Track: Exeter North-South Strategic Cycle Route E12

Report of the Director of Climate Change, Environment and Transport

Please note that the following recommendations are subject to consideration and determination by the Cabinet (and confirmation under the provisions of the Council's Constitution) before taking effect.

1) Recommendation

It is recommended that the Cabinet be asked to:

- (a) approve construction of the Rifford Road two-way cycle track in Exeter as shown in Appendix 1 at an estimated cost of £1,700,000;
- (b) give delegated authority to the Director of Climate Change, Environment and Transport in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Highway Management and Local Member to approve minor changes to the scheme.

2) Background/Introduction

A new two-way (bidirectional) cycle track along Rifford Road in Exeter is being developed by Devon County Council and will form a crucial part of the north/south strategic cycle route E12 and connecting with other strategic cycle corridors delivered in recent years. The scheme passes through one of the most deprived wards in Exeter and will provide links with the neighbourhood centre of Wonford where there are wider city plans to redevelop its leisure facilities. The scheme will complement aspirations to boost physical activity in one of the city's highest areas for inactivity and poor health by enabling more people to walk, wheel, scoot and cycle for everyday journeys in the city.

Route E12 is illustrated in Fig 1 below and closely follows the alignment of Exeter's Northbrook watercourse. As a result, for a hilly city, the route is comparatively flat. There is currently an absence of coherent north/south cycling routes within the city. This strategic route creates improved links between residential areas and key employment sites as well as improving public transport connectivity at Pinhoe and Marsh Barton rail stations. In addition, this route could be used as part of education journeys to several primary and secondary schools in the city.

The proposed route intersects with strategic route E9 which is an east – west cycle route that runs from Pynes Hill via Ludwell Lane and Dryden Road to the Royal Devon and Exeter Hospital and on to the city centre.

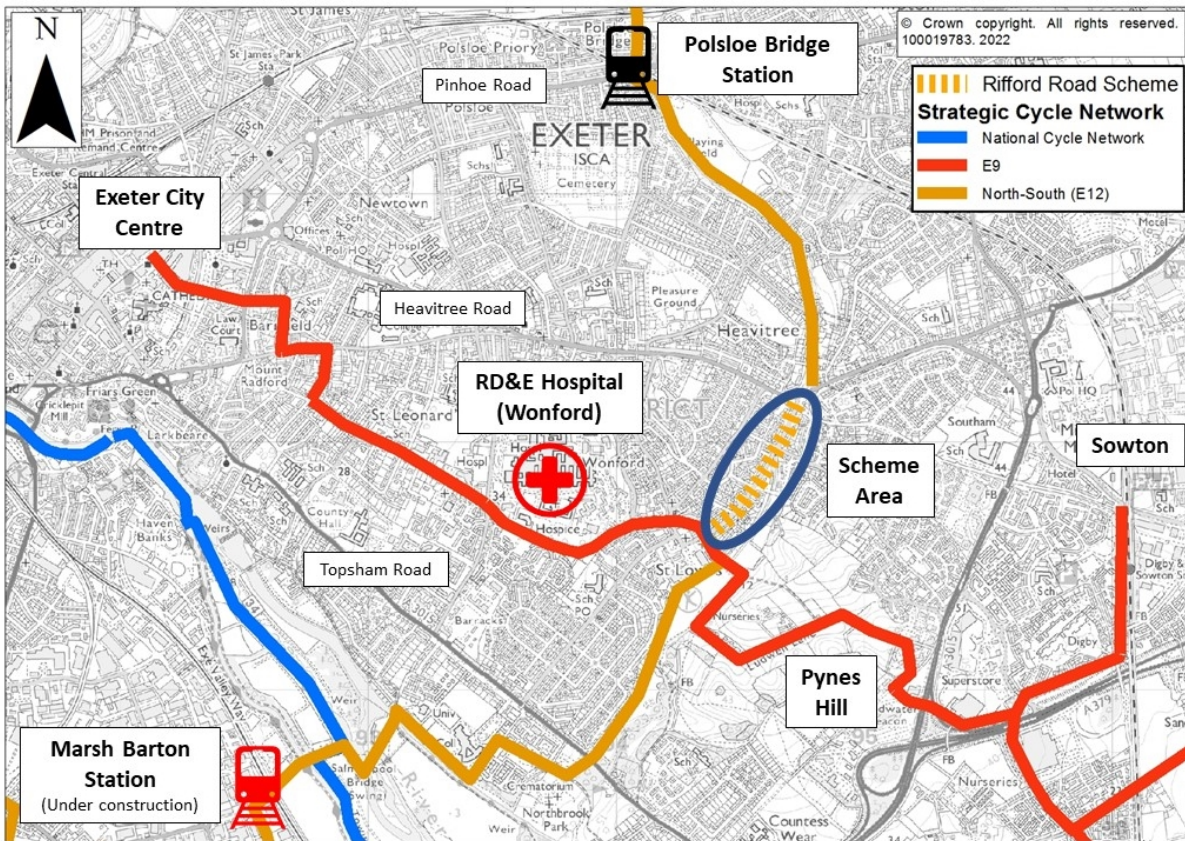


Fig 1: Route of E12 and the Rifford Road scheme proposal

Following approval of the relevant Traffic Regulation Orders by the Exeter Highways and Traffic Orders Committee (HATOC) on 16 January 2023, approval is sought from Cabinet to deliver a scheme to construct a two-way cycle track.

3) Proposal

This report seeks approval to proceed with construction of a new 700 metre two-way cycle path along the east side of Rifford Road between its junction with Honiton Road and Ludwell Lane. At present there is no dedicated provision for cyclists along Rifford Road, which carries approximately 7,000 vehicles daily and so it is unattractive for cycling.

The scheme also includes measures to make it easier and more comfortable for people to walk or use wheelchairs on Rifford Road. A full scheme drawing is shown in Appendix 1. The proposals are detailed below.

Honiton Road to Quarry Lane

An interim solution is proposed on this 50m section with minimal works, pending a future funding application to Active Travel England for a larger scheme to continue high quality provision and link across Honiton Road to the existing cycle track on Sweetbrier Lane. The principle of this approach was agreed in discussion with Active Travel England as part of the Active Travel Fund tranche 3 design approval process.

The interim works will involve the upgrade and extension of a short section of shared use path from the existing toucan (pedestrian/cycle) crossing of Honiton Road to and across the junction of Quarry Lane. The radius of the junction of Quarry Lane is being reduced and a

raised table installed, incorporating clear side road priority for people walking and cycling. Making the crossing level, improves comfort for people using wheelchairs and other mobility aids.

Quarry Lane to Ludwell Lane

South of the junction of Quarry Lane the shared use path transitions to segregated provision with a footway and two-way cycle path for approximately 600m. The segregated section will use raised trapezoidal kerbing as recommended in design guidance and meaning people who are blind or partially sighted can identify the edge of the cycle path (see Fig 2 for a standard cross section).

The cycle path will also be a buff (sand) coloured surface, providing an additional visual reference identifying the cycle path.

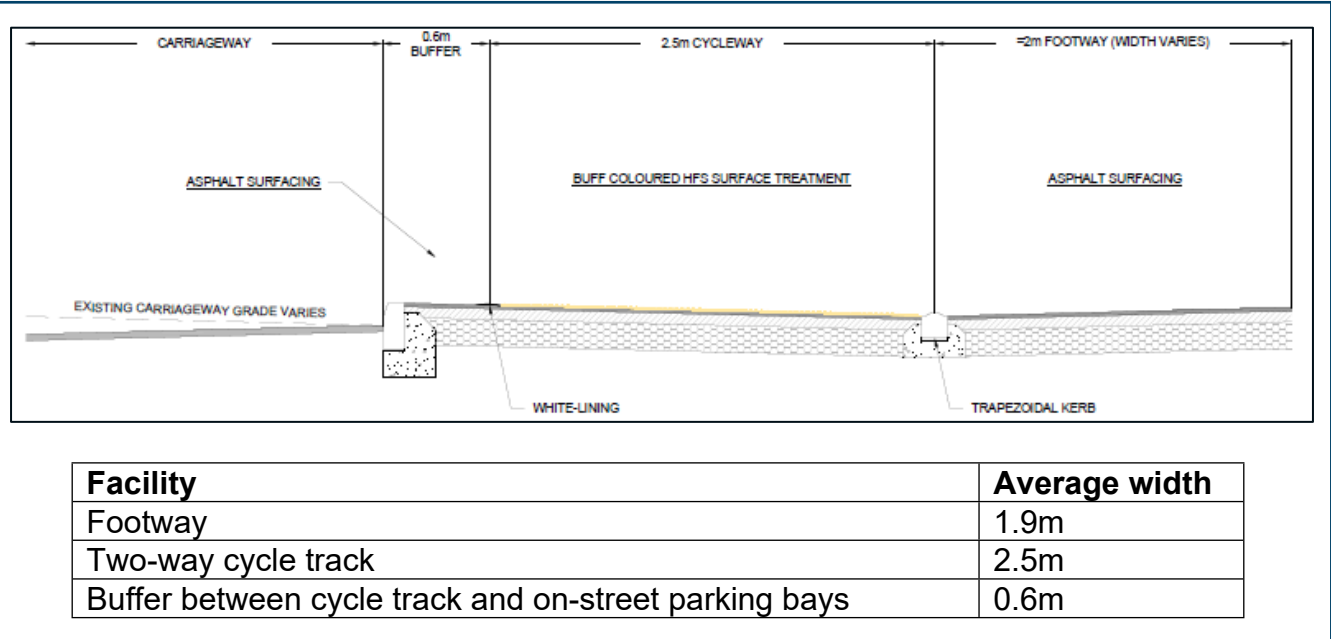


Fig 2: Typical scheme cross sections

Side road priority crossings for people walking and cycling across the junctions of Lethbridge Road, Woodwater Lane and 2 minor unnamed junctions are proposed with benefits as described for the Honiton Road to Quarry Lane section.

To deliver a cycle path and consistent width footway, unnecessary central hatching has been removed for the length of the scheme. As vehicles will use the centre of the carriageway (previously hatched), some re-surfacing of the carriageway is required. Vehicle lanes on Rifford Road measure 3.10m width in either direction, and so are able to accommodate buses and occasional HGVs. 16 of the 122 existing on street parking spaces will be removed to enable the scheme. 4 of these spaces are needed to provide dropped kerbs for new driveways, which will address some of the loss of on-street parking.

Reduced carriageway width means existing pedestrian islands will be replaced with informal raised table crossings. A formal parallel crossing allowing walking and cycling across Rifford Road is also proposed at the junction of Lethbridge Road.

The location of bus stops on Rifford Road has not been affected. The design of these bus stops across the bi-directional cycleway is being discussed with groups representing disabled users as part of the final detailed design.

Ludwell Lane Roundabout

An interim solution has been proposed with a transition from segregated route back to a shared use path for a short section on the approach to Ludwell Lane roundabout. At this point, cyclists have the option of following the E9 cycle route or following a short length on road before joining the existing shared use path that runs through Wonford Playing fields towards the Riverside Valley Park and Exe Estuary. Development funding has been sought via Active Travel England to progress the final phase scheme, which could incorporate local place making enhancements and complement plans to redevelop local leisure facilities in the Wonford neighbourhood.

4) Options/Alternatives

A number of options were considered at the preliminary design phase.

Do Nothing

Traffic levels on Rifford Road are in excess of 7,000 vehicles a day and include a mix of buses and HGVs. This creates an intimidating environment for all but the most confident people cycling, creating a barrier to increasing active travel in the area. Using the latest design guidance this would mean that Rifford Road could not be included as part of strategic route E12, effectively preventing the whole route from being delivered.

On road advisory lanes

On road advisory cycle lanes are cycle lanes which are bounded by broken white lines, typically along the edge of the carriageway, with no formal obligation for vehicles not to enter them.

The spatial requirements for on road advisory lanes on Rifford Road would require the loss of a considerable amount of parking and reconfiguring of the carriageway. In addition, traffic levels of over 7,000 vehicles and the fact that Rifford Road is used by buses and HGVs means advisory lanes would not be a preferred solution as it would not provide the level of protected segregation according to the latest design guidance.

With flow segregated cycle lanes

With flow segregated cycle lanes would see a single segregated cycle lane along each side of Rifford Road with the cycle flow direction matching that of the adjacent carriageway. The spatial requirements for 'with flow' segregated cycle lanes on Rifford Road would require the loss of a considerable amount of on-street residential parking and substantial construction costs, potentially doubling the cost of the preferred scheme option. Continuity is an important aspect of cycle route design and as the previous scheme on Sweetbrier Lane is a two-way track, having a different 'with flow' cycle lane configuration on Rifford Road would not be a suitable option. It also doesn't preclude other future potential changes.

5) Consultations/Representations/Technical Data

A public consultation on the scheme proposal was held during March and April 2022. A survey was hosted online on Devon County Council's 'Have Your Say' pages with paper copies available on request. This was complemented by a community drop-in session and webinar. The full consultation report is available to view here –

<https://www.devon.gov.uk/haveyoursay/consultations/rifford-road-cycle-track/>

The consultation was promoted via:

- Letters sent to approximately 800 households in the vicinity of the scheme with residents of Rifford Road receiving a leaflet containing a scheme plan.
- A press release with subsequent publicity.
- Posters were also put up in a number of prominent locations around the local area.
- Stakeholders were also informed of the consultation.

293 responses were received from members of the public. The ages of respondents ranged from under sixteens to people aged over 75. Responses were also received from 6 stakeholders/local organisations.

Headline results

Overall, the proposed scheme was well supported, with 58% of respondents stating they would use it, 34% stating they would not use it and 8% stating they may use it.
Of respondents that currently drive down Rifford Road, 48% stated they would use the proposed cycle path, with a further 10% indicating they may use it. This indicated the potential for modal shift following the scheme.
The segregation of pedestrians and cyclists was supported, with many wanting full segregation to be extended, instead of having shared use paths at each end of the scheme.
The proposed removal of approximately 17 (reduced to 16) car parking spaces to facilitate the cycle path is a contentious issue as many residents feel the current number of parking spaces is inadequate. Some respondents were concerned that this situation will be made worse with the removal of spaces following delivery of the scheme.
Concerns were raised regarding changes to the road layout on Rifford Road. Many indicated that a scheme previously implemented nearby (on Sweetbrier Lane) has prevented two-way traffic flow, and wanted assurances this will not be the same in Rifford Road.
The crossing of Honiton Road, connecting the proposed scheme to Sweetbrier Lane and the wider north-south cycle route, was suggested for improvement, as currently the waiting island is too narrow for bikes to use.

The road humps, parallel crossing and Traffic Regulation Orders for the scheme were advertised during November and December 2022 and were subsequently approved at the 16 January 2023 Exeter HATOC meeting.

6) Strategic Plan

The scheme is well aligned with a range of the Strategic Plan priorities by improving the environment to enable more walking, cycling and encourage more sustainable lifestyles. 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)
	Prioritise sustainable travel and transport	+3 (Large positive)
	Encourage sustainable lifestyles	+3 (Large positive)
Investing in Devon's economic recovery	Maintaining 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	+3 (Large positive)
Helping communities to be safe, connected and resilient	Enable a range of transport options, including public transport	+2 (Moderate positive)

7) Financial Considerations

The overall cost of the scheme is estimated to be £1,700,000. It forms part of Active Travel Fund Tranche 3 from the Department for Transport, which has funded a number of other sections of route E12, E9 and E3 over the last 2 years.

The financial year profile and funding sources are set out below: -

Funding Source	Prior Years Expenditure £	2023/24 Projection £	Total £
Local Transport Plan grant	37,519	542,799	580,318
Active Travel grant	91,005	874,398	965,403
Developer contributions	15,000	139,279	154,279
Total	143,524	1,556,476	1,700,000

Developer contributions have been received from the Matford Green and Holland Park developments.

The 2023/24 Local Transport Plan grant contribution is £27,796 from highways maintenance and £515,003 Integrated Transport Block.

8) Legal Considerations

The lawful implications of the proposal have been considered in the preparation of this report.

When making a Traffic Regulation Order 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 and provision of parking facilities. This includes provisions for pedestrians and cyclists. The statutory consultation has been carried out on the proposed waiting restrictions in line with the Local Authorities' Traffic Order (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996 and the road humps in line with the Highways Act 1980. Public notice of the parallel crossing has also been advertised in line with Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 and authorisation has been granted by the Department for Transport to install a parallel crossing on a road hump.

It is considered that the proposals comply with section 122 of the Act as they seek to encourage sustainable modes of travel which will reduce CO₂ emissions and improve air quality.

9) Environmental Impact Considerations (Including Climate Change)

The proposed scheme is expected to reduce carbon emissions through enabling more people to choose walking and cycling for everyday journeys in Exeter, encouraging reduced car use that will have a positive impact in helping to deliver the objectives of Devon's Carbon Plan. The scheme will also contribute towards the aim set out in the Exeter Transport Strategy of 50% of work trips originating in Exeter being made on foot or by cycle.

There are limited opportunities within the scheme to incorporate planting. A number of locations are still being investigated and if feasible this will be incorporated at the detailed design.

10) Equality Considerations

Where relevant, in coming to a 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

in relation to the protected characteristics (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership (for employment), pregnancy and maternity, race/ethnicity, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation).

A decision maker may also consider other relevant factors such as caring responsibilities, rural isolation or socio-economic disadvantage.

In progressing this particular scheme/proposal, an Impact Assessment has been prepared which has been circulated separately to Cabinet Members and also is available on the Council's website at <https://www.devon.gov.uk/impact/rifford-road-two-way-cycle-track-impact-assessment-december-2022/>

Members will need to consider the Impact Assessment for the purposes of this item.

The impact assessment for this scheme notes the potential to advance equality of opportunity for those without access to a car, by enabling and giving enhanced priority to people walking, cycling and wheeling. The Wonford area, through which the Rifford Road scheme travels, was identified as a priority community for boosting physical activity as part of the Exeter and Cranbrook Sport England Local Delivery Pilot ('Live and move') programme. These priority neighbourhood areas have high levels of entrenched physical inactivity and poor health, therefore the provision of improved walking and cycling provision should help people incorporate physical activity into their daily travel habits.

The proposals help advance equality of opportunity for people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't in numerous ways, for example, they will:

- Improve the ease and comfort across side roads for people using wheelchairs, other mobility aids or push chairs, which may improve their experiences of travelling around the city.
- The route will form part of routes connecting to schools and thereby offer safer walking and cycling routes for young people.
- Enable disadvantaged groups to gain access to training and employment opportunities.
- Enable people of all ages to enjoy being active for leisure and sport.
- Improve access to help people better connect with their communities and engage in social activities.
- Contribute to physical and mental health and wellbeing among the older population by providing an active means and independent mobility.
- Help to tackle health problems, such as those associated with inactivity.

11) Risk Management Considerations

This proposal has been assessed and all necessary safeguards or action have been taken/included to safeguard the Council's position.

A Stage 1 Road Safety Audit has been conducted for the proposed design scheme with recommendations being incorporated into the detailed design. A stage 2 Road Safety Audit has been completed, and comments have been addressed in the design. A further Stage 3 Road Safety Audit will be undertaken once construction is complete.

The type of buff-coloured surface treatment of the cycle track will be further reviewed as part of the detailed design process. This is to minimise risks associated with repair or replacement putting pressure on future maintenance funding whilst ensuring the scheme design provides appropriate reference to aid people with visual impairment.

The financial estimate for the scheme is based on the current design and includes assumptions regarding preliminaries, utilities and drainage that are still undergoing design.

Should the cost of the scheme escalate there is an option to deliver the project in two phases, depending on available funding. This has been considered from the outset of design. These phases are:

- **Phase 1:** Honiton Road to Woodwater Lane
- **Phase 2:** Woodwater Lane to Ludwell Lane

12) Summary/Conclusions/Reasons for Recommendations

Approval of the recommendations in this report will enable construction of a scheme that will segregate both pedestrians from cyclists and cyclists from vehicles on a busy transport corridor. The high-quality two-way cycle path forms an essential component of the strategic north/south cycle route E12 connecting residents in an area with high levels of physical inactivity and poor health to employment, education, public transport and leisure opportunities across Exeter.

Delivery of this scheme will build upon Devon County Council's progress with enabling more active travel and a modal shift away from the private car to more sustainable modes, aligning well with the County Council's Climate Emergency declaration and the aims outlined in the adopted Exeter Transport Strategy.

The route is being delivered in an area identified in work with Sport England where there is a need to increase levels of physical activity. Walking and cycling to work or school is one of the best ways of incorporating exercise into peoples' daily habits and this scheme will also complement wider plans to redevelop leisure facilities in the Wonford area.

Meg Booth

Director of Climate Change, Environment and Transport

Electoral Divisions: Wonford & St. Loyes, all in Exeter

Cabinet Member for Highway Management: Councillor Stuart Hughes

Local Government Act 1972: List of background papers

Nil

Contact for enquiries:

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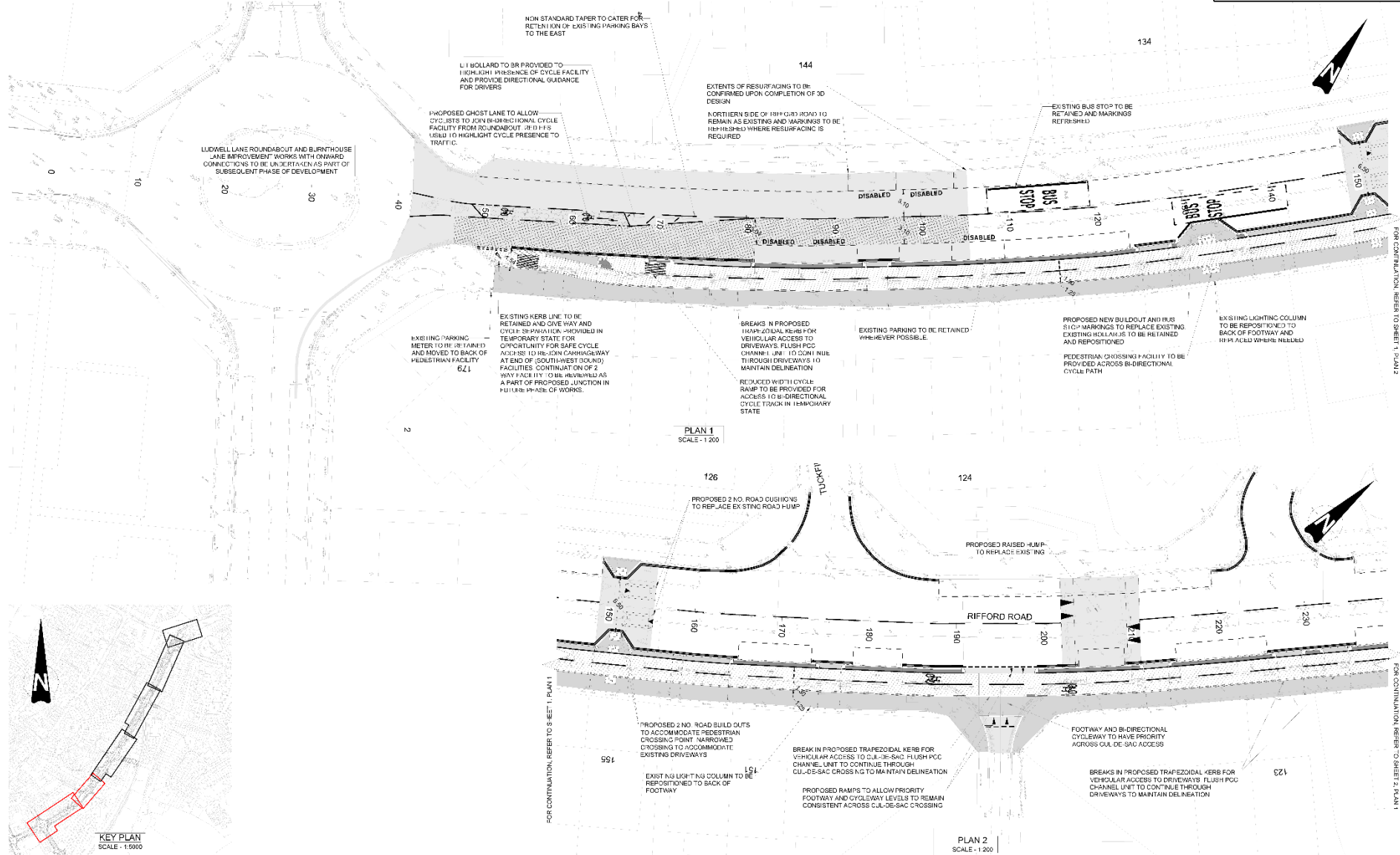
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Rifford Road Two-Way Cycle Track: Exeter North-South Strategic Cycle Route E12 - Final

Appendix 1 to CET/23/35 (1 of 3)

DO NOT SCALE



KEY	PROPOSED BI-DIRECTIONAL CYCLEWAY	PROPOSED BUFFER	PROPOSED ROAD MARKINGS	PROPOSED BUFFER TACTILE PAVING (UNCONV. HOLE CROSSING POINT)	PROPOSED RED TACTILE PAVING (CONTROLLED CROSSING POINT)	PROPOSED BI-DIRECTIONAL CYCLEWAY	PROPOSED FOOTWAY	PROPOSED SURFACING IMPRINT	PROPOSED HIGH FRICTION SURFACING	PROPOSED CARRIAGEWAY RESURFACING/RECONSTRUCTION	PROPOSED DELIMITATION BEACONS	PROPOSED STREET FURNITURE TO BE RELOCATED/REPLACED
[Symbol]	[Symbol]	[Symbol]	[Symbol]	[Symbol]	[Symbol]	[Symbol]	[Symbol]	[Symbol]	[Symbol]	[Symbol]	[Symbol]	[Symbol]

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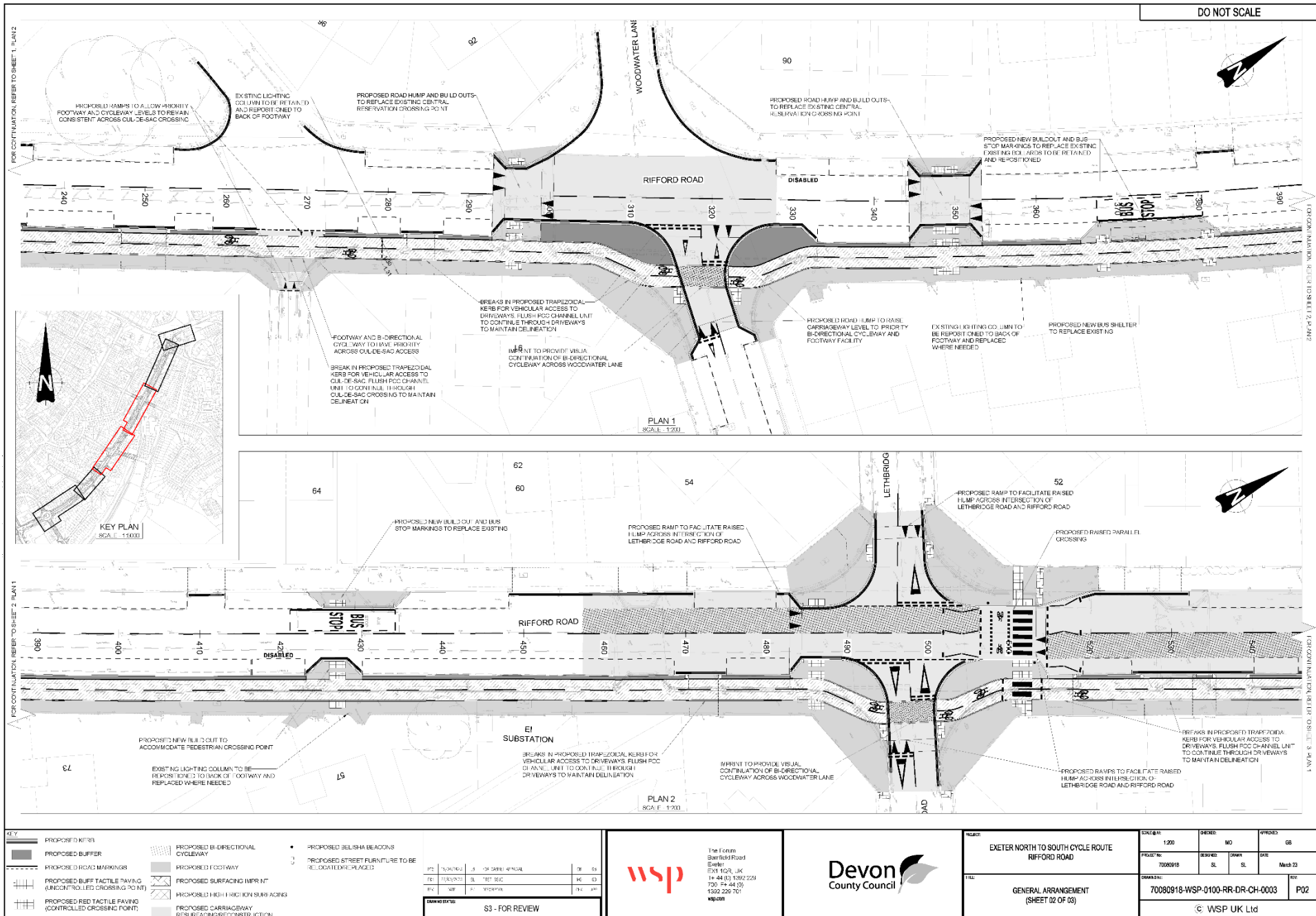
Devon County Council

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TITLE:	GENERAL ARRANGEMENT (SHEET 01 OF 03)

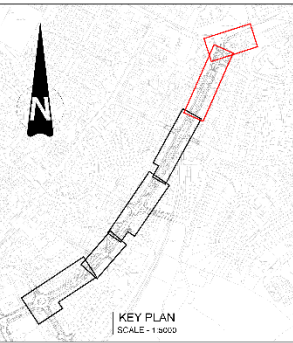
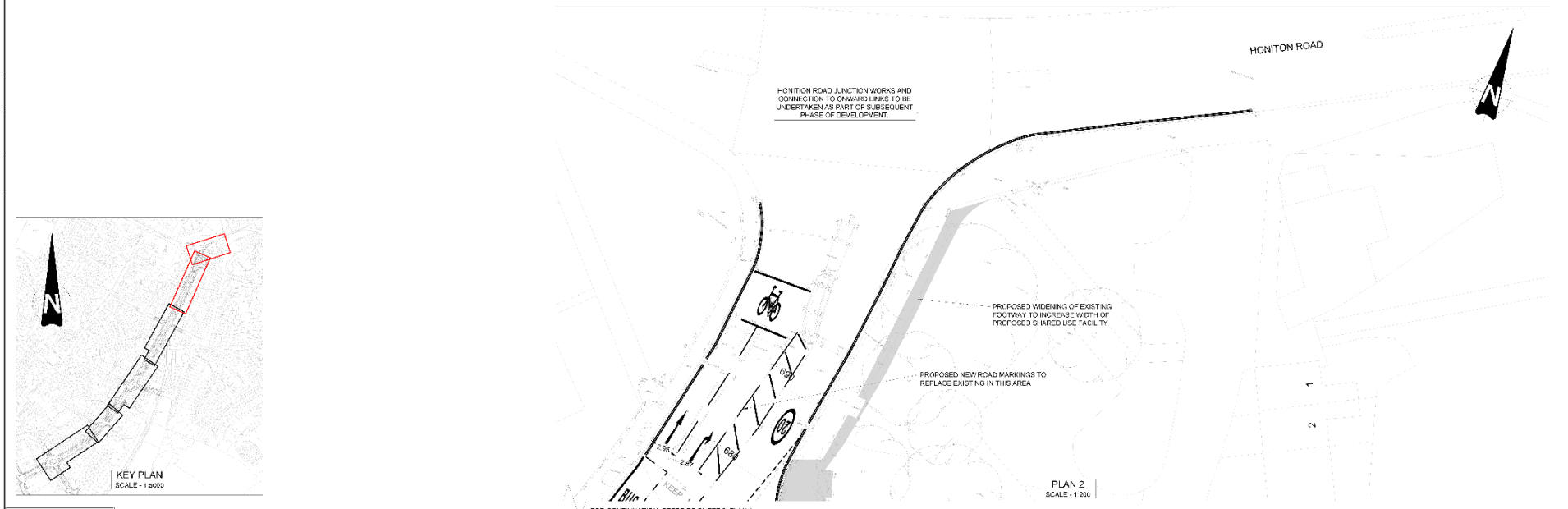
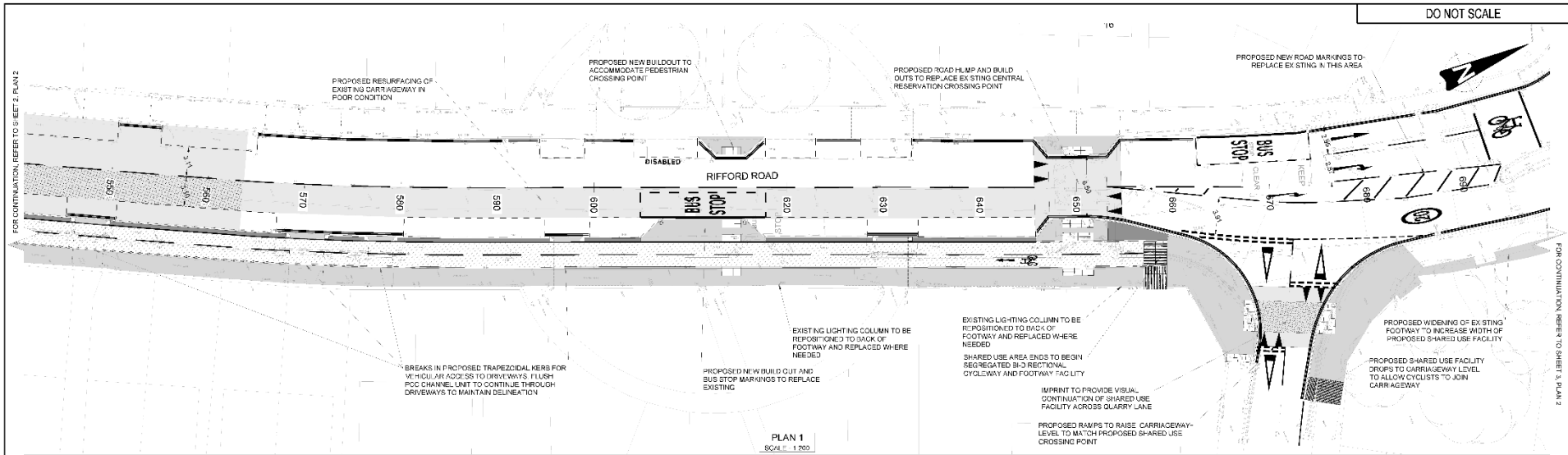
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S3 - FOR REVIEW

Appendix 1 to CET/23/35 (2 of 3)



Appendix 1 to CET/23/35 (3 of 3)



KEY	PROPOSED BELISHA DEACONS	PROPOSED STREET FURNITURE TO BE RELOCATED/REPLACED
PROPOSED BUSHES	PROPOSED BI-DIRECTIONAL CYCLEWAY	PROPOSED BELISHA DEACONS
PROPOSED BUFFER	PROPOSED FOOTWAY	PROPOSED STREET FURNITURE TO BE RELOCATED/REPLACED
PROPOSED ROAD MARKINGS	PROPOSED SURFACING IMPRINT	PROPOSED BELISHA DEACONS
PROPOSED BUFF TACTILE PAVING (UNCONFINED CROSSING POINT)	PROPOSED HIGH FRICTION SURFACING	PROPOSED STREET FURNITURE TO BE RELOCATED/REPLACED
PROPOSED RED TACTILE PAVING (CONTROLLED CROSSING POINT)	PROPOSED CARRIAGEWAY RESURFACING/RECONSTRUCTION	PROPOSED BELISHA DEACONS

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PROJECT:	EXETER NORTH TO SOUTH CYCLE ROUTE RIFFORD ROAD			
TITLE:	GENERAL ARRANGEMENT (SHEET 03 OF 03)			

SCALE:	1:200	DATE:	MO	YEAR	66
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