

Park and Change facility, nr Exeter Science Park: Approval to Construct

Report of the Head of Planning, Transportation and Environment

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.

Recommendation: It is recommended that Cabinet:

- (a) approves the construction of a Park and Change site near Exeter Science Park, as shown in Appendices 1 and 2, at an estimated cost of £2,241,787;**
- (b) delegates authority to the Head of Planning, Transportation and Environment, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Infrastructure Development & Waste and relevant local Members, to make minor amendments to the scheme details.**

1. Summary

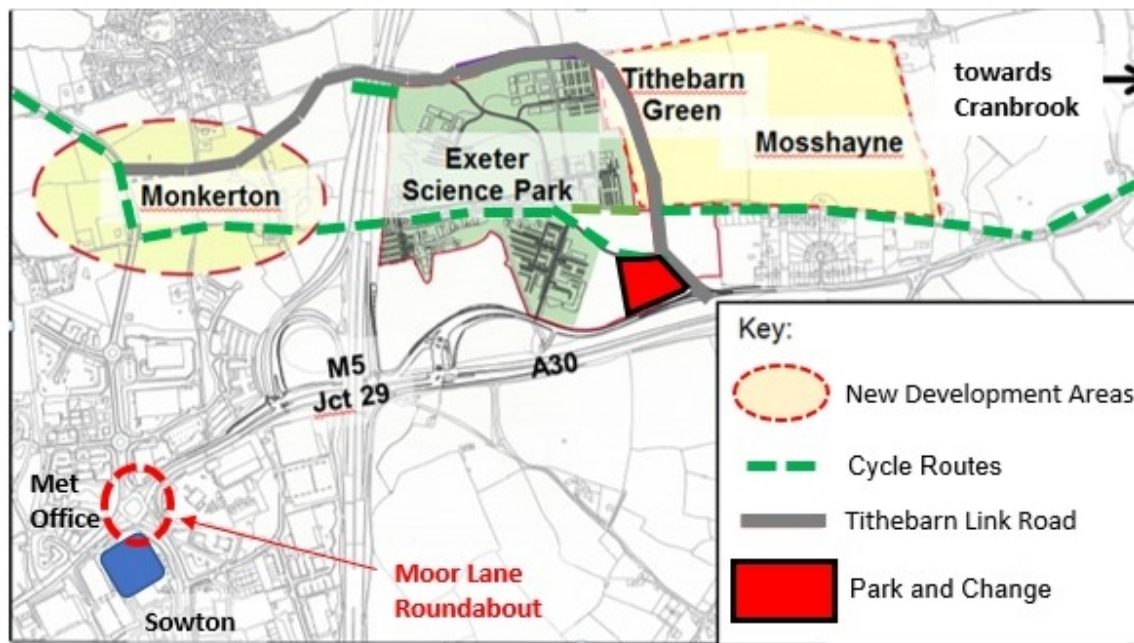
This report seeks approval to construct the Park and Change site on the eastern side of Exeter Science Park. The scheme is part of the successful National Productivity Investment Fund bid package, which is also delivering the Moor Lane roundabout improvement, Exeter cycle route improvements and the expansion of the Co-Bikes electric bike¹ hire scheme. It is also receiving funding from the Exeter and East Devon Enterprise Zone, which has also funded an enhanced bus service to Exeter Airport and the Long Lane improvements, recently approved by Cabinet.

2. Background/Introduction

The Park and Change will enable drivers to park on the edge of the city and switch to cycle, bus or car share, helping relieve pressure on Moor Lane roundabout, the A30 Honiton Road and busy city radial routes, which experience congestion at peak times. The scheme received planning approval as part of the Tithebarn Green development in October 2018.

There is significant growth in housing and jobs on the eastern edge of Exeter, with several large developments coming forward including Cranbrook (c.8,000dw), Tithebarn Green/Mosshayne (1,500dw), Monkerton (2,500dw) and jobs at Science Park (c.2,000) and SkyPark (6,000). This will collectively put increased pressure on the A30/Honiton Road approach to M5 Jct 29.

¹ <https://www.co-bikes.co.uk/>



To support this growth, there have been several recent improvements to boost sustainable travel for people travelling into Exeter from its wide travel to work catchment. A new rail station at Cranbrook and enhancements to local bus services mean that connectivity between East Devon towns and the jobs in Exeter and within the wider Enterprise Zone has improved in recent years. For more local journeys (i.e. within 5km), the cycle infrastructure has been upgraded and continues to expand towards the city centre. For some journeys, particularly those in rural parts of the County, the option to use rail, bus or cycle is not possible due to factors including remoteness, lack of availability / frequency of services etc. This proposal seeks to provide a solution to reduce the impacts of car-borne journeys by specifically intercepting private car trips before they impact on the worst part of the network in terms of congestion and air quality.

3. Proposal

The scheme shown in Appendices 1 and 2 will provide 300 parking bays, including 16 bays for disabled people. Six of the parking bays will be dedicated to electric cars but with ducting to enable further expansion in the future. The charging points will be delivered as a design build finance operate contract as part of the £1.3m Devon Low Carbon Energy and Transport Technology Innovator project, which secured £0.8m European Regional Development Funding and commenced in November 2019.

There will also be secure cycle lockers, capable of storing up to 20 bicycles which will enable commuters to store their bicycles overnight, increasing the attractiveness of park and cycle. The lockers will be managed and maintained by a private company with users able to rent the lockers as with current arrangements at other Park and Ride sites. In addition, as part of the planned expansion of the electric bike hire scheme, a new dock for 6 electric bikes will be delivered. There is scope to expand such facilities should they prove successful.

A new footway/cycleway along the southern side of Anning Road from the Park and Change entrance to Babbage Way will be constructed, which will allow cyclists to connect into the E4 high quality cycle route as well as a path providing access to the old A30. These connecting paths enable onward access to Exeter Business Park, Sowton Industrial Estate and the city centre via Redhayes Bridge over the M5.

The site will have approximately 15-minute frequency buses travelling past the site on Anning Road and on the C832 Old Honiton Road. Improved crossing points to access existing stops are included as part of the proposals. Exeter and East Devon Enterprise Zone has recently funded an enhancement to the Service 56 'CONNexIONS' bus service, which means that users of the Park and Change will benefit commuters working at the Lidl depot, SkyPark and Exeter Airport as well as people travelling towards the city.

The high-quality campus-style environment created at Exeter Science Park has also influenced the design of the Park and Change site, with extensive landscaping and planting (trees, hedges, grass and thicket) to enhance the habitat for wildlife, as well as improve the appearance and security for people making use of the car park. Surface water will be drained via a combination of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems and will discharge into two, new infiltration basins within the southern part of the site.

The site will be secured overnight with a lockable gate and there is the option to introduce pay and display machines at a future date, which would help cover ongoing maintenance costs associated with the site.

4. Consultations/Representations/Technical Data

The Park and Change was formally consulted upon at outline stage as part of the Tithebarn Green development and again as part of the Reserved Matters planning submission, which was approved in October 2018 with support from key stakeholders.

5. Financial Considerations

The overall construction cost of the proposal is estimated to be £2,241,787. Of this, £0.440m related to the acquisition of land.

The project forms part of the Exeter Eastern Corridor National Productivity Investment Fund (NPIF) Government Grant package of schemes, which have previously been approved by Cabinet. The Exeter and East Devon Enterprise Zone has also contributed funding to the Park and Change scheme.

The Park and Change is the final project to be funded through the NPIF initiative, and will be funded by:

Funding Source	Prior Years £	2019/20 £	2020/21 £	Total £
Developer contributions	57,196			57,196
NPIF Grant	72,674	730,179	26,738	829,591
Enterprise Zone			1,355,000	1,355,000
Total	129,870	730,179	1,381,738	2,241,787

The budget includes a 20% contingency therefore costs in excess of the estimated proposal are a very low risk. If they were to materialise these would be met by existing Local Transport Plan grant funding.

6. Environmental Impact Considerations (including Climate Change)

The proposal responds positively to the need to reduce the number of private car journeys travelling into Exeter and impacting on the worst parts of the network in terms of congestion

and poor air quality. It particularly targets people travelling from rural parts of the County, offering improved alternative access choices including cycle, bus or car share.

The facility will also include electric vehicle charging points, which will be delivered by the Devon Low Carbon Energy and Transport Technology Innovator project. This programme is designed to encourage increased uptake of ultra-low emission vehicles by increasing electric chargepoint availability across the County.

The lighting proposals seek to utilise LED lanterns which provide both safety (reduced maintenance) and environmental advantages (directionality) and aid in ensuring that the lighting is well controlled and does not contribute to sky glow or cause light pollution/obtrusive light.

As part of the commitment to meet high environmental standards, materials used in the construction have been selected from sustainable sources, including:

- 100% recycled aluminium in the lighting columns
- Recycled material in the manufacture of the 'grasscrete' type surface
- Recycled material in the manufacture of the kerb units

Extensive planting and hedgerow creation are aimed at integrating the scheme into the local landscape setting as much as possible and will enhance the habitat for wildlife.

A Construction Environmental Management Plan has also been prepared, which places requirements on the contractor to manage the impacts on air quality; ecology; waste; landscape; site; noise; sustainability; traffic; water; and energy.

7. 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.

In progressing this particular scheme element, 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/park-and-change-facilities-nr-exeter-science-park/>, which Members will need to consider for the purposes of this item.

In order to ensure that the site is accessible and inclusive for all users, the scheme has been designed to include 5% of parking dedicated for disabled people and with new, shared-use paths internal and external to the site to ensure that there is continuous access on footway/cycleways to minimise the need to cross roads and connect into existing paths on Anning Road and on the old A30. In addition, lighting and CCTV has been included in the proposals to increase security and surveillance for customers who may feel vulnerable accessing their vehicle in the evenings. Planting proposals help also soften the appearance of the car park and create a more pleasant environment for all customers.

8. Legal Considerations

The lawful implications/consequences of the proposals/recommendations/proposed course of action have been considered and taken into account in the preparation of this report and formulation of the recommendations set out above.

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.

There are no traffic orders required for these works and the junction does not fall within the Exeter Air Quality Management Area (AQMA).

9. Risk Management Considerations

The key risks for such infrastructure projects relate to land acquisition, planning, environmental impact, funding and cost overruns during construction. These risks are considered to be low and the approved budget also includes a 20% contingency.

A number of these have been resolved, with planning approval in place and the land having been secured on a long-term lease early in 2019. There is funding in place to enable its delivery and there will be regular project meetings to monitor its progress and risk register once construction commences.

Construction would likely start in February 2020, which would mean most of the works taking place during good weather months, helping minimise disruption to the scheme. Being largely off the public highway, on undeveloped land, no significant risks have been identified.

10. Public Health Impact

The Park and Change will provide secure cycle lockers and a cycle hire scheme and so is expected to have a positive impact on public health as it will encourage physical activity as part of peoples' journeys. Physical activity guidelines indicate that adults and older adults need at least 150 minutes of moderate intensity or at least 75 minutes vigorous intensity activity per week. Many employees in the city work in sedentary jobs and this project is a great opportunity to promote active travel and enable people to lead healthier, physically active lifestyles.

11. Options/Alternatives

The County Council is implementing the Park and Ride scheme which was included as part of the Tithebarn Green development outline planning permission.

The planning consent permits use of the site as a park and change facility, park and ride facility and / or a public car park. Our priority was to maximise the choice of sustainable alternatives for people travelling into Exeter and to jobs east of the city, which is why the site is being promoted as a Park and Change, including options to cycle or car share as well as make use of local bus services.

12. Reason for Recommendation/Conclusion

The Park and Change forms part of a package of measures, which are being delivered by the County Council as part of the successful bid for Department for Transport National Productivity Investment funding. Along with the cycle improvements, the electric bike-hire expansion and the Moor Lane roundabout improvements it is intended to help relieve pressure on a critical transport node/corridor at M5 Junction 29. Collectively, the package of schemes will enable continued growth of housing and jobs on the eastern edge of the city. Specifically, the Park and Change will encourage people to switch to more sustainable,

healthier modes of transport thereby minimising the negative impacts of congestion and poor air quality on Exeter's radial corridors.

Dave Black
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Electoral Divisions: All in Exeter

Cabinet Member for Infrastructure, Development & Waste: Councillor Andrea Davis

Chief Officer for Communities, Public Health, Environment and Prosperity, Dr Virginia Pearson

Local Government Act 1972: List of Background Papers

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Background Paper	Date	File Reference
Impact Assessment	26 November 2019	https://www.devon.gov.uk/impact/park-and-change-facilities-nr-exeter-science-park/

jh261119cab Park and Change facility nr Exeter Science Park Approval to construct
hk 05 291119

Park and Change scheme



Park and Change, including details of external works

