

Plymouth and South Devon Freeport – Delivery of spine road and pedestrian/cycle bridge

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

That the Cabinet be asked to:

- (a) approve the following schemes for tender subject to the resolution of legal and land assembly agreements, and planning consents
 - i) Spine road phase 1a as shown in Appendix 1
 - ii) Spine road phase 1b as shown in Appendix 2
 - iii) Pedestrian/cycle bridge as shown in Appendix 3;
- (b) advertise any necessary Traffic Regulation Orders and if no objections received, be made and sealed;
- (c) following receipt of planning consents that land acquisition is commenced by negotiation and approval is given to use compulsory purchase powers if required;
- (d) give delegated authority to the Director of Climate Change, Environment and Transport, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Highway Management and the Cabinet Member for Climate Change, Environment and Transport to award the construction contract for delivery of the Schemes in Appendix 1, 2 and 3 with a combined cost of £18.908m;
- (e) give delegated authority to the Director of Climate Change, Environment and Transport in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Highway Management, the Cabinet Member for Climate Change, Environment and Transport and the relevant Local Members to make minor amendments to the scheme, as required.

2) Background / Introduction

The Plymouth and South Devon (PASD) Freeport is one of eight current Freeports designated by Government and is led by Plymouth City Council in partnership with South Hams District Council, Devon County Council (DCC), and the private sector.

This is an ambitious programme aiming to create over 3500 jobs, and to play a crucial role in economic recovery and growth. The initiative is focused on creating high-value employment across key engineering and manufacturing sectors, delivering a Net Zero Programme and contributing to the county's levelling up agenda. At its core, the Freeport programme has three objectives:

1. National hubs for global trade and investment
2. Creating innovation in key specialism and growth sectors
3. Promoting regeneration through the creation of highly skilled jobs.

As part of the PASD Freeport, DCC is leading on the delivery of key infrastructure, specifically an extension to the existing highway to deliver a spine road to serve the Langage employment development, a pedestrian/cycle bridge over the A38 at the Deep Lane junction and upgrades to access into the Langage employment area. The delivery of the infrastructure is funded by £9.619million seed funding from the Freeport programme, and up to £14.289 million borrowing by DCC, which was approved at Full Council in February 2024. It should be noted that this funding includes an additional scheme for improvements to the Sandy Road/Holland Road roundabout, which is currently being developed and not included within this report, this scheme is estimated at £5 million.

3) Spine Road

The spine road is proposed to serve the Langage employment development and is to be delivered in two phases, referred to as phases 1a and 1b.

Phase 1a of the spine road, shown in Appendix 1, is a continuation of the existing Kingsway distributor road, which currently stops just south of the Langage Power Station on the eastern side of the Langage Business Park. The new road would directly serve the combined Langage customs and tax site, with future accesses into the site expected to be made directly from the spine road. These site accesses will be developer-delivered as and when the individual plots are built out as part of the required planning permission for the employment allocation. DCC has been working with the current landowner in the design of the road to ensure that it meets future development requirements. The Phase 1a employment allocation has outline planning permission and a reserved matters planning application for the road was submitted to South Hams District Council in February 2024 following constructive pre-application discussions with the district council.

The Council is committed to delivering the scheme by March 2025, therefore once planning permission is granted, it is proposed to progress to tender with the scheme, with the aim for works to start on site in November 2024, subject to agreements with landowners and satisfying subsidy control requirements in line with the terms of the funding.

Phase 1b of the spine road is a further continuation of the phase 1a spine road, with a planning application expected to be submitted in September 2024. Delivery timescales for this phase of the spine road are later due to different land ownership arrangements. It is expected that the landowner will not develop the site themselves, but there is developer interest in the site. The delivery of this section of the spine road will align with the future delivery of the employment development, expected to be in 2027.

As the layout of the employment development served by the phase 1b road is not yet known, the road has been designed to follow the southern boundary of the site. This has several advantages as it enables flexibility for the future development as it maximises the developable area. There are expected to be side roads and/or direct accesses from the spine road serving development parcels to the north of the road. This is considered achievable with the design and the detail for this will be considered as part of a future

planning application for the employment site. A further benefit is that it will allow an easier sustainable travel link between the spine road and the parallel, lightly trafficked old A38 road which serves access to Lyneham Inn and Ley Farm. This would provide more convenient access to the wider cycle network on Sandy Road including the planned new pedestrian/cycle bridge at Deep Lane.

4) Pedestrian/Cycle Bridge

The Vision for PASD is to act as an exemplar to achieve net zero significantly ahead of 2050 and a new pedestrian / cycle bridge supports the decarbonisation of transport by improving active travel options for short to medium distance journeys in the local area. The bridge will connect the new community of Sherford and the growing Langage employment development, providing safer access for active travel across the busy A38 Deep Lane junction. It will not only be an important scheme connecting new residents with the growing employment area, it will also connect existing communities in Plympton with Sherford and the range of services that will be delivered in the new town, thereby maximising opportunities to promote sustainable travel for existing trips.

The bridge is to be located on the eastern side of the A38 Deep Lane junction, adjacent to the existing road bridge. The proposals have been carefully developed to avoid impacting on the vehicular capacity of the existing junction. A future upgrade to the Deep Lane junction is expected to support full growth at Sherford and Langage and as such, the design of the bridge has sought to limit the potential for abortive works and delivery of a future highway capacity improvement scheme, whilst still ensuring the bridge provides an attractive, convenient and direct route for walkers and cyclists. Similarly, as part of the Sherford development, future upgrades to quality of the onwads walking and cycling infrastructure through to the new town are proposed, which are being funded and delivered separately by the developers.

A planning application for the scheme was submitted in December 2023. The planning application was recently withdrawn to consider comments relating to the adequacy of safe crossing facilities for pedestrians and cyclists. Appendix 3 shows the revised design, which includes widening on the slip road and signal crossings on both the slip road and B3416. Once planning permission is granted, a tender will be progressed, with the works expected to start on site in December 2024, subject to the necessary approvals.

5) Options / Alternatives

There are limited alternative options for phase 1a of the spine road. The road forms part of the outline planning permission for the development and connects into the existing 'Kingsway' highway. It has been designed to follow the eastern boundary of the site to maximise the developable area and provide adequate area for highway drainage with scope to also offer attenuation associated with future development. It is also in accordance with the masterplan for the site.

There is some additional flexibility for phase 1b spine road, although similarly it needs to connect into phase 1a. The approach which has been taken is for the road to follow the boundary of the development site. An alternative option would be to route the road through

the middle of the employment land allocation. This would be a constraint, with the road severing the developable land and potentially limiting the type and scale of development. Delivering the road close to the southern boundary enables both larger plots to be delivered or side roads to be created to the north to serve smaller employment units. Options to connect the phase 1b spine road back into Skywalker Road (the southernmost built out part of Langage Business Park) to create a loop with two points of vehicular access has also been discounted due to land ownership constraints preventing such a connection.

For the pedestrian/cycle bridge, alternative options were considered as part of a consultation undertaken between 13th December 2021 and 23rd January 2022. Three options were presented which had different route alignments, one to the east of the existing Deep Lane bridge, one adjacent to the existing bridge and one to the west of the existing bridge. The option of locating the bridge adjacent to the existing Deep Lane was the preferred option, supported by the highest number of respondents to the consultation. This is the option which is being progressed. Further information on the consultation can be found through the following link – [Deep Lane Junction A38 Cycle & Pedestrian Bridge - Have Your Say \(devon.gov.uk\)](https://www.devon.gov.uk/consultations/2021/12/13/Deep-Lane-Junction-A38-Cycle-Pedestrian-Bridge-Feedback)

6) Consultations

The schemes will be subject to formal consultation as part of the planning process. In addition, consultation has taken place with relevant stakeholders as part of the proposals. This includes meetings with the landowners and interested parties, and National Highways in relation to the A38 bridge. As identified above, a consultation has also been undertaken on the preferred location for the bridge.

7) Strategic Plan

The proposals are well aligned with a range of the Strategic Plan priorities, supporting the economy by facilitating delivery of employment development and enabling more walking and cycling to support the environmental benefits of sustainable travel. 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	Secure investment in transport infrastructure	+2 (Moderate positive)
	Maintain and, where necessary, improve our highway network and	+2 (Moderate positive)

	improve sustainable transport options	
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)

8) Financial Considerations

The total estimated cost for the schemes is £18.908m (this excludes Sandy Road/Holland Road roundabout). The schemes are to be funded by a combination of seed capital funding from the Freeport programme and borrowing by DCC. For the seed funding, Plymouth City Council (PCC) is the Accountable Body, with DCC entering into funding agreements with PCC, which allow DCC to make quarterly funding claims in arrears. We have entered into agreements for the design work, and the SEED funding for the Spine Road has been conditionally approved. The same is expected for the pedestrian/cycle bridge by summer 2024. As set out in the background above, approval is already in place for the Freeport programme including DCC borrowing. The borrowing will be reimbursed via business rates generated from the two tax sites – Sherford and Langage and the Council has entered into a Business Rates Sharing Agreement with South Hams which prioritises servicing any debt as the priority use of accrued business rates entered into by either Council.

The projected profile of expenditure is as follows:

	2023/24 £m	2024/25 £'000	2025/26 £'000	Total £'000
Spine Road				
Seed contribution	525	2,175		2,700
Borrowing			8,870	8,870
Total	525	2,175	8,870	11,570
A38 Deep Lane pedestrian/cycle bridge				
Seed contribution	490	3,179		3,669
Borrowing			3,669	3,669
Total	490	3,179	3,669	7,338
Total	1,015	5,354	12,539	18,908

The 2024/25 figure includes the approved 2024/25 budget of £2.568 million plus projected slippage of £2.786 million, from 2023/24.

9) Legal Considerations

Prior to entering into funding agreements for the seed funding, a subsidy control opinion is required for the spine roads to confirm that there is either no subsidy, or that any subsidy is acceptable. This is being progressed in parallel to the planning processes and evidence that the schemes meet the subsidy control tests will need to be in place before the schemes can be delivered. This is part of the terms of gaining final approval from Plymouth City Council, as Accountable Body, to draw down the seed capital funding.

As the A38 pedestrian / cycle bridge is across the A38, part of the Strategic Road Network, DCC will enter into a section 6 agreement of the Highways Act 1980 with the Secretary of State for Transport to have delegated functions to construct the bridge on highway which is the responsibility of National Highways.

For the pedestrian / cycle bridge, a small area of private land is required with negotiations ongoing and a section of National Highways network will be dedicated as highway to DCC. Traffic Regulation Orders will also be required for proposed signal-controlled crossings.

For the phase 1a spine road, discussions are progressing with the landowner to agree a licence for the land, which will determine the extent of maintainable highway once constructed and ongoing maintenance responsibilities. Discussions are also taking place with land agents to support progress with design proposals for the Phase 1b spine road, which are less time critical and will be delivered beyond March 2025.

10) Environmental Impact Considerations (Including Climate Change, Sustainability and Socio-economic)

The planning applications submitted, and to be submitted, consider the environmental impacts of the schemes and will all include the statutory ecological, landscape and environmental assessments.

For the A38 bridge, Biodiversity Net Gain is proposed as part of the planning submission. In the design of the spine road, ecological surveys were undertaken to review and update the ecological baseline and there was no requirement for European Protected Species (Great Crested Newts, dormouse or bats) or badger mitigation measures. Efforts have been taken to retain or translocate hedgerows where possible. A dark ecological corridor along the eastern boundary has been provided for connectivity of habitats and minimising effects on bat species. Landscape planting is proposed to create additional habitat opportunities for reptiles, amphibians, nesting birds, badgers etc. Environmental mitigation including street lighting designed to minimise light-spill onto retained habitats has also been considered in the scheme.

For wider environmental benefits, the spine road includes provision for pedestrians and cyclists, with the phase 1b spine road to create access for sustainable modes onto the old A38 road serving Lyneham Inn and Ley Farm, connecting with the National Cycle Network. Consideration has also been given to future use of the road by buses, should this form part of the public transport network at a later date. The pedestrian/cycle bridge provides a

crossing across the A38 connecting residential and employment locations, where no facility is currently provided. These measures will help to encourage sustainable modes of transport.

The schemes will support the delivery of the PASD Freeport, which seeks to deliver new jobs across all levels from entry level to higher skilled, which is expected to have a socio-economic benefit for the area. In addition, the PASD Freeport aims to deliver net zero emissions significantly ahead of 2050. This aim is embedded into the schemes which support the unlocking of the development, with consideration being given to reducing carbon at all stages of the design and in the context of these schemes, includes promoting improved access by sustainable modes.

11) 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 these particular schemes, 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/transport-infrastructure-plymouth-and-south-devon-freeport>. Improvements to the walking and cycling infrastructure is expected to support increased participation in active travel amongst less represented groups and is detailed in the report. More broadly, the employment development that is supported by the infrastructure will provide new jobs and opportunities, including increasing female representation in science, technology engineering and mathematics (STEM).

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

12) Risk Management Considerations

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

There are inherent risks within any scheme. To minimise the impact of risks, risk registers are in place for the schemes and are reviewed and updated regularly. Key risks for the schemes are considered monthly as part of the Langage Infrastructure Group meeting. Key

stakeholders attend these meetings including the PASD Freeport, National Highways and PCC. To minimise the financial risk of the scheme, suitable risk/contingency allowances will be identified for each scheme in advance of progressing to delivery.

There remains some design risk in advance of planning permission being granted for the schemes and road safety audits being completed; however, the principle of development is supported through the Local Plan process. The potential for design changes as part of these processes has been minimised as far as is possible through ongoing liaison with relevant stakeholders to identify potential issues in advance.

The approach with all land acquisition is by negotiation; however, in order to support the delivery of key public infrastructure to support economic development, it may be necessary to use compulsory purchase powers.

13) Summary

Approval of the recommendations in this report will enable schemes to be delivered to support the PASD Freeport. As well as facilitating the delivery of employment development, it provides facilities for sustainable travel, for both existing trips in the local Plympton area and future journeys between Sherford and Langage Business Park and the Freeport, which is in line with Freeport aims to achieve net zero carbon ahead of 2050. In developing the schemes, consideration has been given to the needs of future development and ensuring the schemes maximise development potential and avoid impacting on future planned infrastructure upgrades, including at the A38 Deep Lane junction. Progression of the schemes will allow the Freeport seed capital funding to be spent within the funding availability period, i.e. before the end of March 2025.

Meg Booth

Director of Climate Change, Environment and Transport

Electoral Divisions: Bickleigh & Wembury

Cabinet Member for Highway Management: Councillor Stuart Hughes, and

Cabinet Member for Climate Change, Environment and Transport: Councillor Andrea Davis

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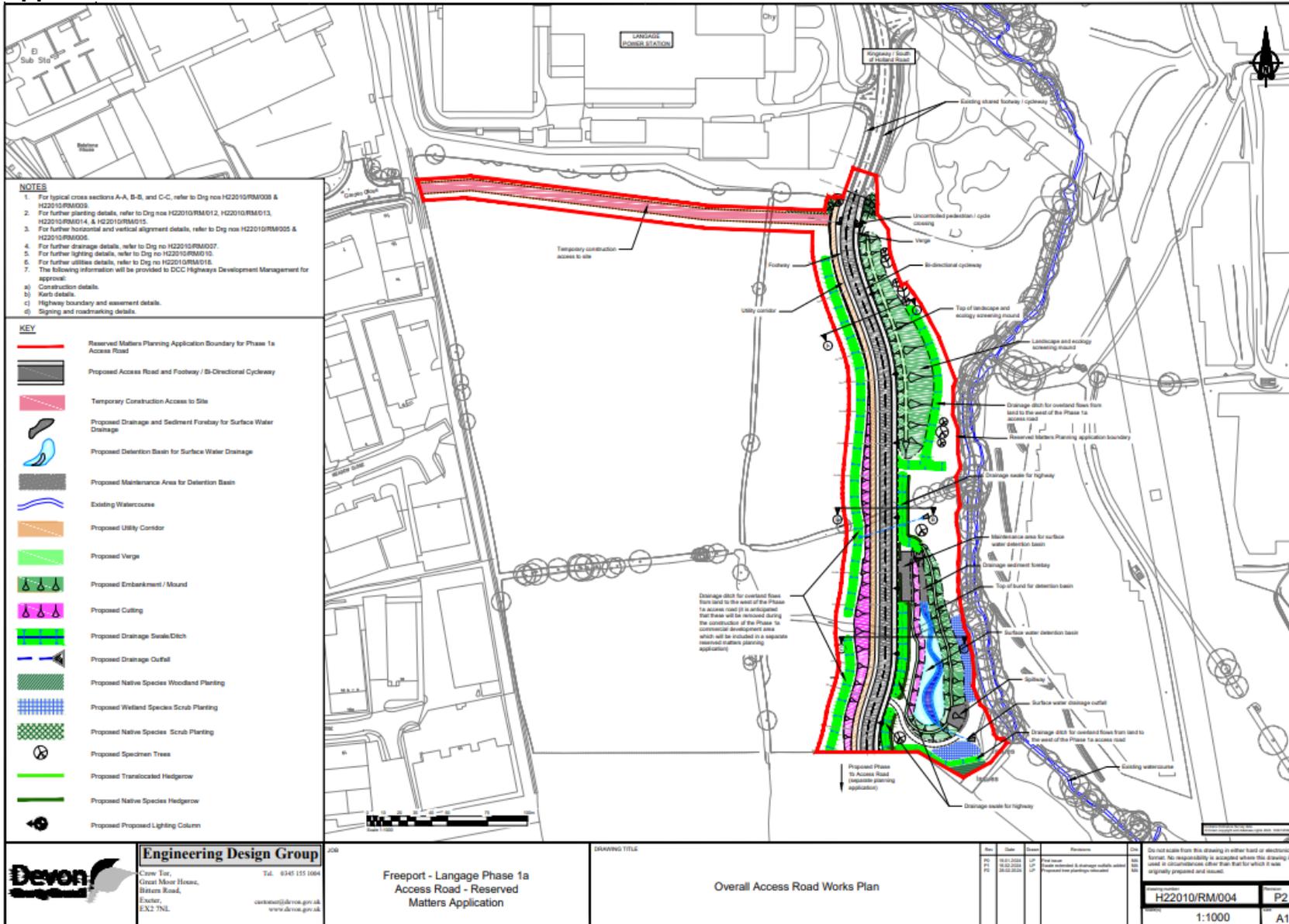
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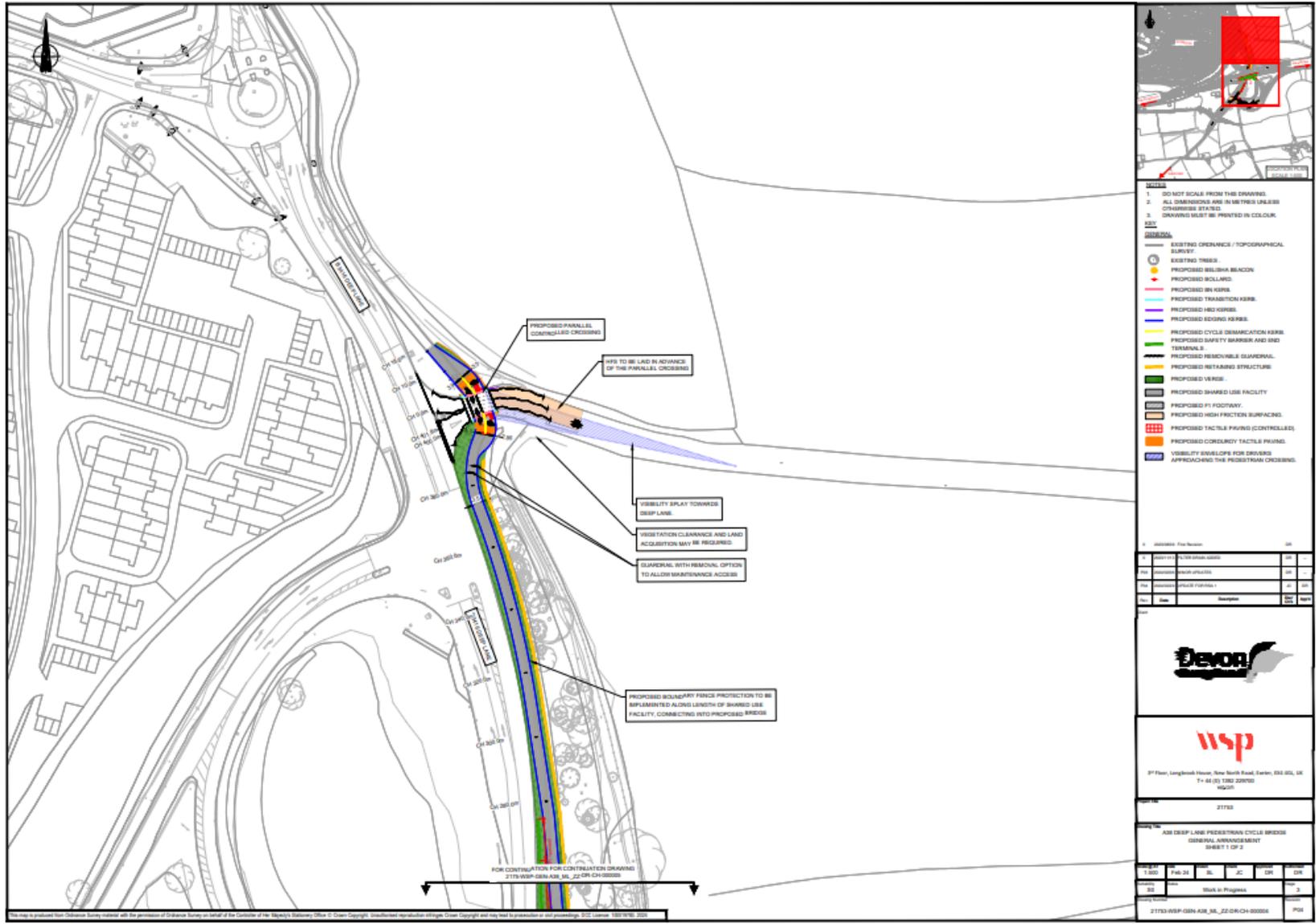
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Plymouth and South Devon Freeport – Delivery of spine road and pedestrian/cycle bridge -
Final

Appendix 1 to CET/24/25



Appendix 3 to CET/24/25



- NOTES:**
- DO NOT SCALE FROM THIS DRAWING.
 - ALL DIMENSIONS ARE IN METRES UNLESS OTHERWISE STATED.
 - DRAWING MUST BE PRINTED IN COLOUR.
- KEY:**
- EXISTING OPERANCE / TOPOGRAPHICAL SURVEY
 - EXISTING TREES
 - PROPOSED BELUSHA BEACON
 - PROPOSED BOLLARD
 - PROPOSED SW KERB
 - PROPOSED TRANSITION KERB
 - PROPOSED HD2 KERB
 - PROPOSED EDGING HS RBBS
 - PROPOSED CYCLE DEMARCATION KERB
 - PROPOSED SAFETY MARKER AND END TERMINALS
 - PROPOSED REMOVABLE GUARDRAIL
 - PROPOSED RETAINING STRUCTURE
 - PROPOSED VERGE
 - PROPOSED SHARED USE FACILITY
 - PROPOSED FT FOOTWAY
 - PROPOSED HIGH FRICTION SURFACING
 - PROPOSED TACTILE PAVING (CONTROLLED)
 - PROPOSED CONDUITY TACTILE PAVING
 - VISIBILITY ENVELOPE FOR DRIVERS APPROACHING THE PEDESTRIAN CROSSING

NO.	REVISION	DATE	BY	CHECKED
1	ISSUED FOR TENDER	15/02/2024
2	FOR CONSULTATION	20/02/2024
3	FOR CONSULTATION	27/02/2024



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21763

AN DEEP LANE PEDESTRIAN CYCLE BRIDGE
 GENERAL ARRANGEMENT
 SHEET 1 OF 2

NO.	DATE	BY	CHECKED	STATUS
1	15/02/24	ISSUED FOR TENDER
2	20/02/24	FOR CONSULTATION
3	27/02/24	FOR CONSULTATION

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