

## E3 Strategic Cycle Route: Emergency Active Travel Measures

### Report of the Head of Planning, Transportation and Environment

Please note that the following recommendations are subject to consideration and determination by the Committee before taking effect.

Recommendation: It is recommended that

- (a) In relation to Homefield Road and Park Place:
  - (i) a traffic regulation order for prohibition of motor vehicles on Homefield Road and the adjacent service road, be advertised, and, if no significant objections received, be made and sealed;
  - (ii) a traffic regulation order for contraflow cycling on Park Place, Heavitree be advertised, and, if no objections received, be made and sealed;
  - (iii) the proposed changes to Homefield Road and Park Place , indicatively shown in Appendix I and Appendix II, are approved for construction at a combined estimated cost of £45,000, subject to the outcome of the traffic order consultation; and
  - (iv) the Head of Planning, Transportation and Environment be given delegated powers, in consultation with the Chair of HATOC and the local member, to make minor amendments to the scheme details.
- (b) For Chard Road, Vaughan Road and the Heavitree/Whipton Area:
  - (i) The current point closure on Vaughan Road in vicinity of the railway bridge be removed, and
  - (ii) further consultation be carried out with the local community to determine next steps for Chard Road, and
  - (iii) up to £50,000 be allocated from Tranche 2 of the Emergency Active Travel Fund to support further consultation with the local community to determine alternative solutions to support strategic walking and cycling aspirations for Whipton and Heavitree Areas and to trial access changes and monitoring of measures, and
  - (iv) the Head of Planning, Transportation and Environment given delegated powers, in consultation with the Chair of HATOC and the local member, to approve measures for implementation.

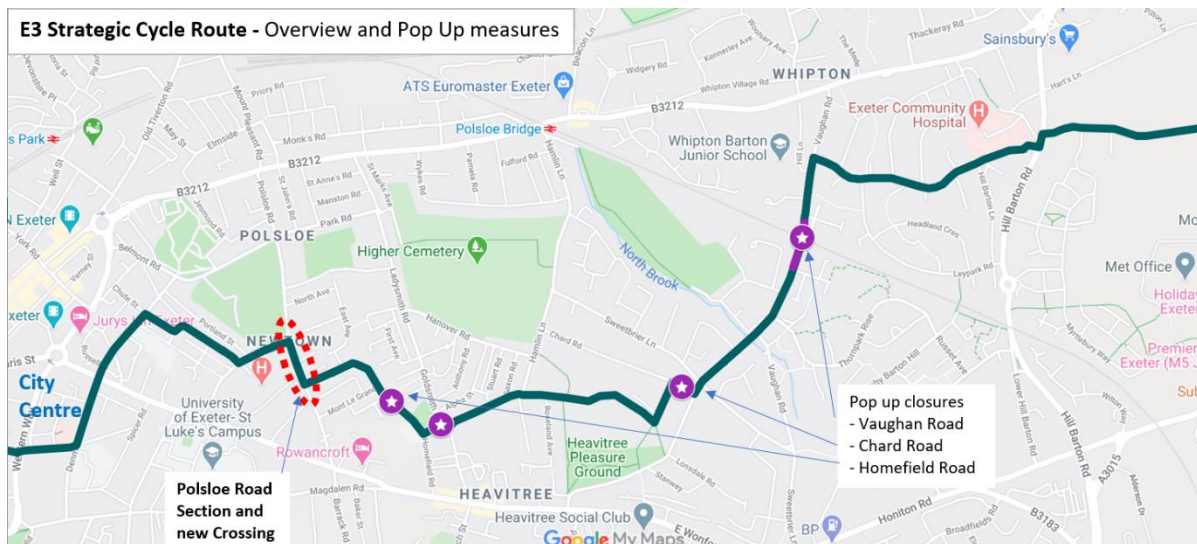
### **1. Background/Introduction**

The E3 strategic cycle route from the Redhayes Bridge heading west through Whipton, Heavitree and towards the City Centre is part of Exeter's strategic cycle network, that was approved by Cabinet on 8 June 2016. The route takes advantage of using quiet streets, providing convenient links between communities in Heavitree and Whipton with schools, open space and job opportunities, avoiding use of the main roads of Heavitree Road and Pinhoe Road.

The Exeter strategic cycle network is central to achieving the target of 50% of trips to be made by walking and cycling in the draft Exeter Transport Strategy 2020-2030 and in supporting the County Council's commitments to reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Following the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, local authorities have been required by Government to provide additional pedestrian and cycling facilities. Several 'pop-up' (temporary) changes were implemented along the E3 route, providing a safer corridor for cycling and to attempt to 'lock in' increases in active travel observed during the period of lockdown. These included point closures on Homefield Road, Chard Road and Vaughan Road and the relaxation of one-way restrictions for cyclists on Park Place, Heavitree.

Proposals for a new parallel crossing and improved cycle facilities on Polsloe Road were also approved at the July HATOC committee and the scheme is currently out for consultation. An overview of the E3 route and pop-up measure are shown in the map below.



All responses received on the pop-up measures have been logged. These provide an indication of public feeling towards the each of the changes and have informed the next steps set out in this report.

## 2. Proposal

The proposed next steps for the Emergency Active Travel Fund measures on the E3 route are to:

- make permanent the changes at Homefield Road and Park Place;
- remove the current point closure Vaughan Road;
- Retain the Chard Road point closure while we seek views on this as part of the area wide consultation to identify a preferred next;
- Seek wider views across Heavitree and Whipton about what changes people would like to see to their streets to try and create low-traffic, neighbourhoods and a safer environment for all road users.

## Homefield Road and Park Place

Following positive feedback on the temporary closure, this report seeks approval to advertise the necessary traffic regulation order to support the construction of a permanent point closure to vehicles on Homefield Road, a point closure at the western end of the rear alley between Ladysmith Road and Homefield Road and to make permanent the contraflow cycling on Park Place (enabling two way cycling).

This will include physical works to install more permanent measures at the location of the current point closure, as illustrated in Appendix I, with appropriate signage. The closure of the alleyway would be implemented with a single bollard at the western end of the alleyway at the junction with Homefield Road. Changes to signage and road markings would also be required to make road users aware of the restrictions.

On Park Place, height extensions will be needed to the existing no entry signposts to ensure the required clearance is achieved under the new except cycles signage. This is illustrated in Appendix II.

## Vaughan Road

The change to Vaughan Road has been the Emergency Active Travel Measure for which the most negative feedback has been received. In particular, concerns about the difficulty of accessing properties on Bodley Close and Clifford Close and impact on carers visiting elderly residents in these residences. Recognising the concerns of residents, it is proposed to remove the current point closure.

The Vaughan Road closure has, however, noticeably reduced through traffic in the area, in particular at the Whipton Lane end of the Hamlin Lane playing fields where a significant number of pedestrians and cyclists access a major green space in the city and proposed E3 and E12 strategic cycle route intersect. The County Council would therefore carry out further consultation following the changes to understand the impacts on local residents and all road users and see if an alternative solution would be more acceptable.

## Area Wide Consultation

The Government's announcement of the Emergency Active Travel Fund initiative in May sought rapid deployment of temporary pop-up measures and it is recognised that only limited advance notification was possible.

Going forward we want to get the wider input of residents to help identify the most suitable changes to the highway environment to make the residential streets in Whipton and Heavitree better places to live, work and play. Such measures must also support the wider city aspirations for increasing active travel through the creation of attractive, safer routes for pedestrians and cyclists, linking residents with schools, jobs and public open spaces.

An area-wide consultation is proposed across the Heavitree and Whipton area. Through this, residents are able to identify particular problems, suggest solutions and provide comment on a range of choices for certain proposals. We would also seek further views from the local community on the next steps for Chard Road.

Feedback received could then help to identify certain interventions (such as point closures, one way, bus gates) which could subsequently be implemented as trial measures and tested on the network.

### **3. Traffic Data**

A set of traffic counts have been undertaken following the temporary changes to access in the Heavitree area to try to identify the impact on cycling of the pop-up closures. Comparing against other urban/commuter parts of the city where cycle numbers have been typically down 25%<sup>1</sup> the Heavitree counts shows a small increase in cycle numbers from the year before. The counts also found flows of over 500 cyclists a day at the Vaughan Road/Georges Close junction, indicating this has proven to be an attractive and well used part of the cycle network.

In addition, surveys in the vicinity of St Michaels Primary school in September 2020, recorded 72 cycle movements between 8- 9:30, up by 50% from the 48 recorded two years earlier. In combination with the pop-up measures, there has also been the Dragon project painted on the highway outside the school to support a change in the appearance and function of the highway so as to reduce traffic and calm speeds through the area.

Monitoring data should be treated with some caution as the unprecedented events of the last 6 months have resulted in significant changes to travel behaviour and traffic volumes with many people being encouraged to work from home reducing peak hour commuting by all modes. To that extent, the Department for Transport guidance on monitoring of the EATF schemes suggests any monitoring should be carried out post lockdown once conditions have returned to normal and a fair comparison can be made with pre-lockdown behaviours.

### **4. Consultation**

Responses received since the pop-up measures were implemented show that the Homefield Road point closure and contraflow cycling on Park Place have generally been well received. Views on Chard Road have been mixed whereas a larger proportion of objections was received in response to the Vaughan Road closure. This has informed the approach for the next steps of the project, and consultation on each of the individual schemes set out below.

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<sup>1</sup> Reported increases in cycling have been focused on routes with a higher leisure usage, such as Exe Estuary Trail

## Homefield Road and Park Place

Those in favour commonly cited reduced noise, pollution, improved road safety for pedestrians and cyclists, a safer environment for children to play in, enhanced community spirit and improved quality of life. This was particularly evident around the Homefield Road point closure, where the traffic reduction was said to have made the green space between Regents Park, Mont Le Grand and Bicton Place a considerably more pleasant location.

A key aim of the schemes was to increase the attractiveness of walking and cycling, although the schemes delivered benefits over and above their impacts on pedestrians and cyclists, including increased peace and quiet on nearby roads, so pedestrian/cycle traffic through the closure points should not be considered the sole metric of the schemes' effectiveness.

Those raising concerns highlighted that residents sometimes had to drive further, increasing fuel costs and journey times, and, in the view of some respondents, increasing congestion on adjacent roads. It was also suggested that the schemes had delivered little benefit, as few pedestrians or cyclists were observed passing the closure points.

If this report's recommendations are approved, a Traffic Regulation Order would need to be formally advertised before any final decision could be made on making the restriction permanent.

## Vaughan Road

Vaughan Road is the only one of the E3 pop up schemes where we have received more negative responses than positive. Strong concerns have been raised about the impact on access to residential properties and knock on impacts on Thornpark Rise. It is therefore proposed to remove the Vaughan Road closure.

## Chard Road

Feedback on Chard Road to date has been largely positive, although impact on alternative routes (i.e. reassigned traffic to Sweetbriar Lane) and poor appearance of the filter have been raised as issues. It is proposed to retain the current scheme and to seek views on this as part of the area wide consultation to identify a preferred next step.

Any further changes will be discussed and agreed under delegated powers, by the Head of Planning, Transportation and Environment in consultation with the Chair of HATOC and the local member.

## **5. Financial Considerations**

The measures proposed in this report have an estimated cost of £95,000, comprising a mix of capital and revenue funding. In terms of the individual elements

The permanent closure of Homefield Road and Park Place is estimated to cost £45,000 and would be funded from Emergency Active Travel Fund tranche 2.

The area wide consultation would require up to £50,000 of revenue funding, again funded by the Emergency Active Travel Fund tranche 2 allocation.

In the event that Devon County Council does not secure the tranche 2 funds, then we would have to put on hold the area wide consultation and delay delivery of Homefield Road until an alternative funding source was found.

## **6. Environmental Impact Considerations**

The measures proposed in this report are designed to encourage walking and cycling, particularly for short trips within residential areas, enabling convenient, safer access to schools, public open space and jobs.

There may be slight negative impacts at certain locations, due to traffic being displaced onto other roads and increasing distance travelled on some car journeys. However by creating better conditions for walking and cycling, and supporting the aims of the draft Transport Strategy for 50% of trips by walking and cycling, it is expected that some people will choose to switch modes rather than simply changing their driving route, meaning total traffic on the road network is expected to reduce as a result of the schemes. It is therefore expected that the schemes will deliver environmental benefits and contribute to the County Council's commitment to reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

## **7. Equality Considerations**

The proposed measures would improve road safety for pedestrians and cyclists, which would encourage greater participation walking and cycling amongst younger people, older people and those with disabilities. Previous research and feedback has indicated that these groups feel less confident in cycling on busy roads and may feel excluded from participating in active travel.

Where vehicle access is restricted, this may negatively impact on those drivers who require a car to access facilities, although key services are still accessible from main radial and ring road routes nearby. Therefore, overall, the proposals are expected to advance equality of opportunity.

## **8. Legal Considerations**

The permanent point closure of Homefield Road, the service road and contraflow cycling on Park Place will require a statutory consultation in accordance with The Local Authorities' Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996.

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, which states that it is the duty of a local authority, so far as is practicable, to secure the expeditious, convenient and safe movement of traffic and provision of parking facilities.

Further temporary measures would be introduced through Temporary Traffic Regulation notices and/or Temporary Traffic Regulation Orders.

## **9. Risk Management Considerations**

As discussed above, multiple elements of the proposals include legal considerations and consultations. The progression of schemes to construction will be subject to the approval of the statutory and public consultations.

## **10. Public Health Impact**

The proposed upgrades to a strategic cycle route and reducing traffic volumes in residential areas will improve pedestrian and cyclist safety and encourage active travel, increasing activity levels, reducing air pollution and contributing to general health and wellbeing.

## **11. Options/Alternatives**

Views on alternatives for Homefield Road including relocation of the closure point or the reversion to the previous arrangements were received in the consultation but were less popular than making the temporary closure at the current closure point permanent. A road closure using signage alone was not considered appropriate due to likely reduced levels of compliance thus reduce the benefits of the scheme. To date we have only proposed signed closures where they are located on existing bus routes.

The trial on Park Place has had little negative feedback suggesting this is a viable, and simple solution. Other alternatives are likely to be more expensive and any measures to further reduce vehicle traffic, such as making it a cul-de-sac, would likely cause disproportionate inconvenience to Park Place residents.

In relation to Vaughan Road, other options include relocating the closure to an alternative location. A closure in vicinity of the Vaughan Road/Georges Close/Whipton Lane junction would reduce the inconvenience to vehicle access under the current closure and contribute towards reducing through traffic in the area. However, it is instead recommended that any further options will be considered as part of the wider consultation exercise.

Finally, the proposed measures are proposed to be grant funded through the Emergency Active Travel Fund. If Devon were not to proceed, there is a risk that we could not identify alternative uses within the March 2021 timescales for spending the funding. Additionally, this would likely to delay the completion of the E3 route, as opportunities to trial improvements would be lost, which would hinder efforts to encourage greater active travel.

## 12. Summary/Conclusions/Reasons for Recommendations

The permanent changes build on already trialled measures, and potential impacts have therefore been live tested. Where there has been less public support for a change, we have listened to feedback and propose to remove the least popular of the changes and going forward a wider engagement approach is proposed to help develop a more suitable proposal for the area. Where there has been positive feedback through the trial, we have sought to make the measures permanent.

The proposals represent the next steps for the E3 cycle route, route, which is an aspiration of the County Council and help to provide safer and more attractive routes for pedestrians and cyclists accessing schools, jobs and public open space, thus supporting healthy lifestyles.

The improvements align well with the emerging Exeter Transport Strategy and the Sport England Local Delivery Pilot for Exeter. It also builds upon the County Council's COVID-19 response to encourage continued active travel and the County Council's commitment to reducing carbon emissions.

Dave Black  
Head of Planning, Transportation and Environment

### **Electoral Divisions: St Sidwells and St James, Heavitree and Whipton Barton**

Local Government Act 1972: List of Background Papers

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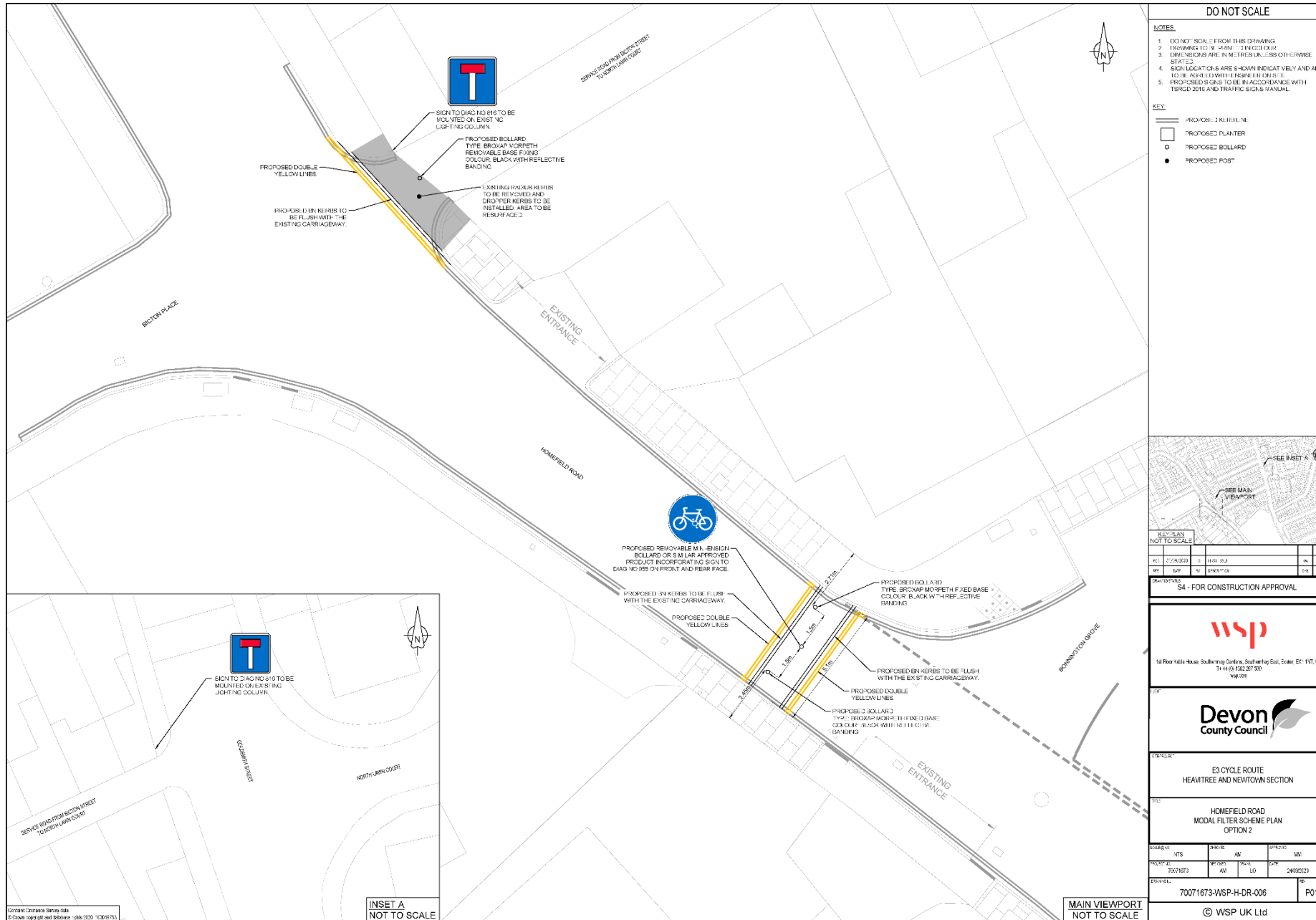
Tel No: 01392-383000

| Background Paper | Date | File Reference |
|------------------|------|----------------|
| 1. None          |      |                |

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sc/cr/E3 Strategic Cycle Route Emergency Active Travel Measures



# Appendix I To PTE/20/27



DO NOT SCALE

- NOTES
1. DO NOT SCALE FROM THIS DRAWING
  2. DRAWINGS TO BE PRINTED IN LARGER DIMENSIONS ARE IN METRES UNLESS OTHERWISE STATED
  3. SIGN LOCATIONS ARE SHOWN INDICATIVELY AND ARE TO BE ADJUSTED WITH THE DESIGN CONSULTANT
  4. SIGN LOCATIONS ARE SHOWN INDICATIVELY AND ARE TO BE ADJUSTED WITH THE DESIGN CONSULTANT
  5. PROPOSED SIGNS TO BE IN ACCORDANCE WITH TSGRD 2016 AND TRAFFIC SIGNS MANUAL

- KEY
- PROPOSED KERB LINE
  - PROPOSED PLANTER
  - PROPOSED BOLLARD
  - PROPOSED POST



| REVISION |            |    |      |      |                    |
|----------|------------|----|------|------|--------------------|
| NO.      | DATE       | BY | CHKD | APPD | DESCRIPTION        |
| 1        | 27/06/2020 | DM | DM   | DM   | ISSUE FOR APPROVAL |

94 - FOR CONSTRUCTION APPROVAL

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**Devon County Council**

ES CYCLE ROUTE  
HEAVYTREE AND NEWTOWN SECTION

HOMEFIELD ROAD  
MODAL FILTER SCHEME PLAN  
OPTION 2

| DATE     | REVISED | BY | CHKD | APPD |
|----------|---------|----|------|------|
| 27/06/20 | 01      | DM | DM   | DM   |

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# Appendix II To PTE/20/27



4. SIGN LOCATIONS ARE SHOWN INDICATIVELY AND ARE TO BE AGREED WITH ENGINEER ON SITE.  
5. PROPOSED SIGNS TO BE IN ACCORDANCE WITH TSSRD 2016 AND TRAFFIC SIGN MANUAL.



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|-----|------------|-----|--------------------|
| NO. | DATE       | BY  | DESCRIPTION        |
| 1   | 15/10/2020 | WSP | ISSUED FOR COMMENT |
| 2   | 16/10/2020 | WSP | REVISED            |

STATUS: 80 - WORK IN PROGRESS

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PROJECT: E3 CYCLE ROUTE HEAVITREE AND NEWTOWN SECTION

TITLE: PARK PLACE SCHEME PLAN

|            |      |         |      |           |
|------------|------|---------|------|-----------|
| DATE:      | REV: | DESIGN: | APP: | APPROVED: |
| 15/10/2020 | 01   | WSP     | WSP  | WSP       |
| 15/10/2020 | 02   | WSP     | WSP  | WSP       |

PROJECT NO: 70071673-WSP-H-DR-001