



Bishop's Tawton Roundabout Improvement

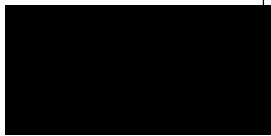
Design and Access Statement

July 2019

Product Sign Off Sheet

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1.0 - Introduction

The North Devon Link Road (NDLR) is the key strategic link connecting northern Devon to the rest of the country via Junction 27 the M5. The route is 70km long and comprises of the A361 from the M5 to Barnstaple which splits into the A39 'Atlantic Highway' to Bideford and northern Cornwall and the A361 to the northern Devon Coast.

The northern Devon area has one of the lowest levels of economic performance in the country and there has been a long-term local concern that the poor strategic transport connections are a key limitation to unlocking growth and do not match the expectations of the public and local businesses. This has been linked to the very low level of Gross Domestic Product in the area and has resulted in considerable pressure from the local public, businesses and politicians for improvements to the road network.

Improvements to the NDLR would facilitate Devon County Council's Strategic aims, which are to:

- Enhance the economic prosperity and competitiveness of northern Devon, both nationally and in line with other areas of Devon; and
- Support housing and employment development opportunities in northern Devon.

Devon County Council have developed a scheme of improvements and have subsequently been awarded funding to deliver these improvements to this strategic link. The scheme is split into the following two packages, the first of which has already been granted planning permission in early 2019:

- The widening (7.5km) of the carriageway between Portmore Roundabout (Barnstaple) and Filleigh Cutting (Nr. South Molton), including junction improvements at Landkey and West Buckland; provision of a footbridge; and associated works' and the junctions.
- The improvement of various junctions along the route (Buckleigh Road, Heywood Road, Westleigh, **Bishop's Tawton**, Hacche Lane and Borner's Bridge).

The Objectives of the scheme are:

- Reducing journey times for commercial and non-commercial journey purposes between:
 - Barnstaple and Bideford, (Significant congestion occurs at the key junctions on the corridor particularly at peak times.)
 - M5 and Barnstaple, (To improve connectivity between Bideford, Barnstaple and the wider transport network, including key access points to the national transport network (mainline stations at Tiverton Parkway, and Junction 27 of the M5), particularly in peak season)
- Improving highway safety through reducing the rate of fatal and serious accidents on the NDLR. (Accidents occur at various locations due to overtaking and junctions.)
- Improving network resilience through reducing the effects of accidents and incidents on the NDLR. (The nature of the road at 9.3 meters wide means any even small scale works or incident can mean a road closure.)
- These objectives are to be achieved while minimising adverse social and environmental impacts and, where possible, achieving net environmental benefits contributes towards those objectives.

In terms of improving the safety of the North Devon Link there are numerous strands as set out in Section 2.15.39 of the Outline Business Case¹. With regards to the current application the relevant strand is to “Improve Pedestrian and cycle Facilities at Junctions”. The objective of this is reduce the severance effect of the road and encourage greater use of pedestrian and cycling by providing segregated facilities in areas where traffic flows are the highest, the recent construction of a new bridge at Roundswell was the first element of this initiative, a new bridge is also proposed to connect Larkbear to Seven Brethren. The NDLR scheme includes further improvements to provide segregated facilities and reduce severance at:

- Borner’s Bridge
- West Buckland
- Landkey
- Bishop’s Tawton

This planning application has been produced and submitted in pursuance of the proposed improvements to the existing roundabout at Bishop’s Tawton (on the A361) between Barnstaple and Bideford. The proposed development at this location is described in section 3.0 of this document. The proposed development in the context of the wider scheme is shown in Figure 1-1 below.

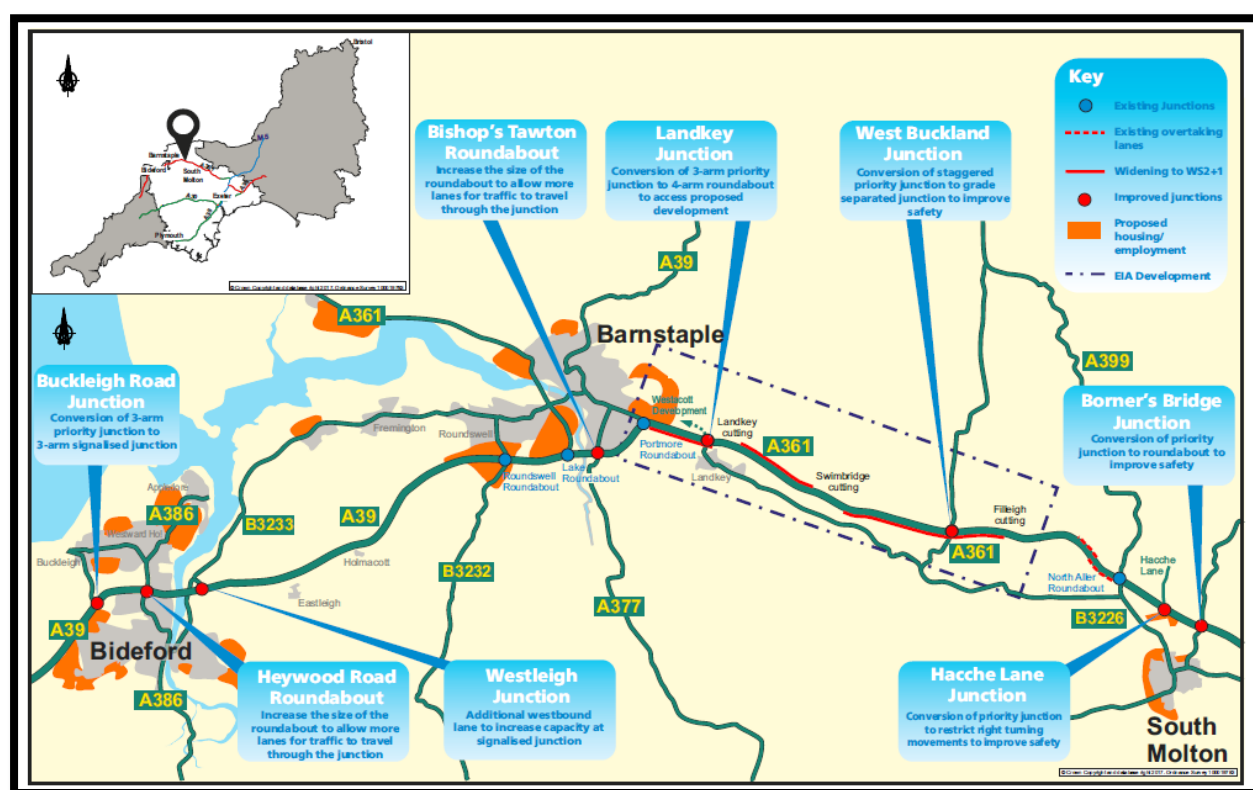


Figure 1-1: The wider scheme, including the proposed development

¹ <https://www.devon.gov.uk/ndlr/project-documents>

2.0 - Design

2.1 Site Appraisal

The site is located at the existing Bishop's Tawton Junction where the A377 and B3138 join the A361 Barnstaple Bypass. The existing roundabout was constructed in 1988 with some minor lane widening on the Western approach undertaken approximately 10 years later. The site is surrounded by a mixture of agricultural and residential land as well as an established landscaping corridor that falls within the existing highway boundary. (Fig i) The site is constrained by the two private dwellings to the North East and South West corners of the existing roundabout.



Figure 2-1: Aerial Mapping

2.2 Use

The use of much of the land (as highway land) will remain the same, however a very small amount of agricultural land will be required to implement the proposed junction improvements.

2.3 Layout, Scale and Appearance

The enlargement and improvement of the existing roundabout

Bishop's Tawton roundabout currently has only one straight ahead lane which severely limits the capacity, particularly in peak periods when the ahead movement is dominant. This currently leads to unbalanced lane usage and large queues and delays. The situation will only be made worse in future with the 17,000 dwellings and 85Ha of employment proposed in the North Devon and Torridge Joint Local Plan.

The existing roundabout is to be enlarged to provide an additional lane on the A361 through the roundabout, facilitating greater capacity at this junction. In addition, the A377 southern approach will also be widened to incorporate a longer lane, also improving capacity.

The implications of this for pedestrians and cyclists wishing to cross from Bishop's Tawton to Barnstaple or vice-versa is that there will be a wider carriageway to cross and with high volumes of traffic on a 60-mph road. Crossing two entry lanes is currently possible because the pedestrians can clearly see the approaching traffic and cross when traffic is queuing. However, the improvements will reduce queuing for traffic and pedestrians will have to cross two lanes on the exit. This can be difficult as it is not always clear which vehicles are carrying around the roundabout and which are turning off and is likely to be a safety issue.

It is therefore necessary to incorporate improved facilities for these non-motorised users in the proposed development

The provision of a new underpass to the west of the roundabout

A pedestrian/cycle subway is to be provided to enable safe passage across the A361 and has been designed to be an open and direct route to encourage additional usage (see Figure 2-2). The proposed underpass will be located to the west of the existing roundabout (crossing the A361 under the roundabouts western arm) and will be suitable for all potential user groups. To the south of the road access to the underpass will be provided by both steps and a Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) compliant ramp. To the north, access is provided solely by a shallow straight ramp (again DDA compliant), which allows visibility through the subway. To both the north and south, the underpass will tie in with existing footways. It is proposed that pedestrians using the eastern approaches on the north and south will be directed to cross safely to the west, ensuring that they use the underpass. The structure will be short in length and, due to topography on the west of the roundabout, will be largely open at either end, allowing high visibility and natural light into the underpass. Deterrents to antisocial behaviour such as anti-graffiti paint and good lighting will be implemented. Additional lighting has been designed (see Design and Access Statement) and will be incorporated into the ceiling, making the underpass attractive and aesthetically interesting. There is also the option for the local secondary school to create murals on the inside walls, should they choose to do so.

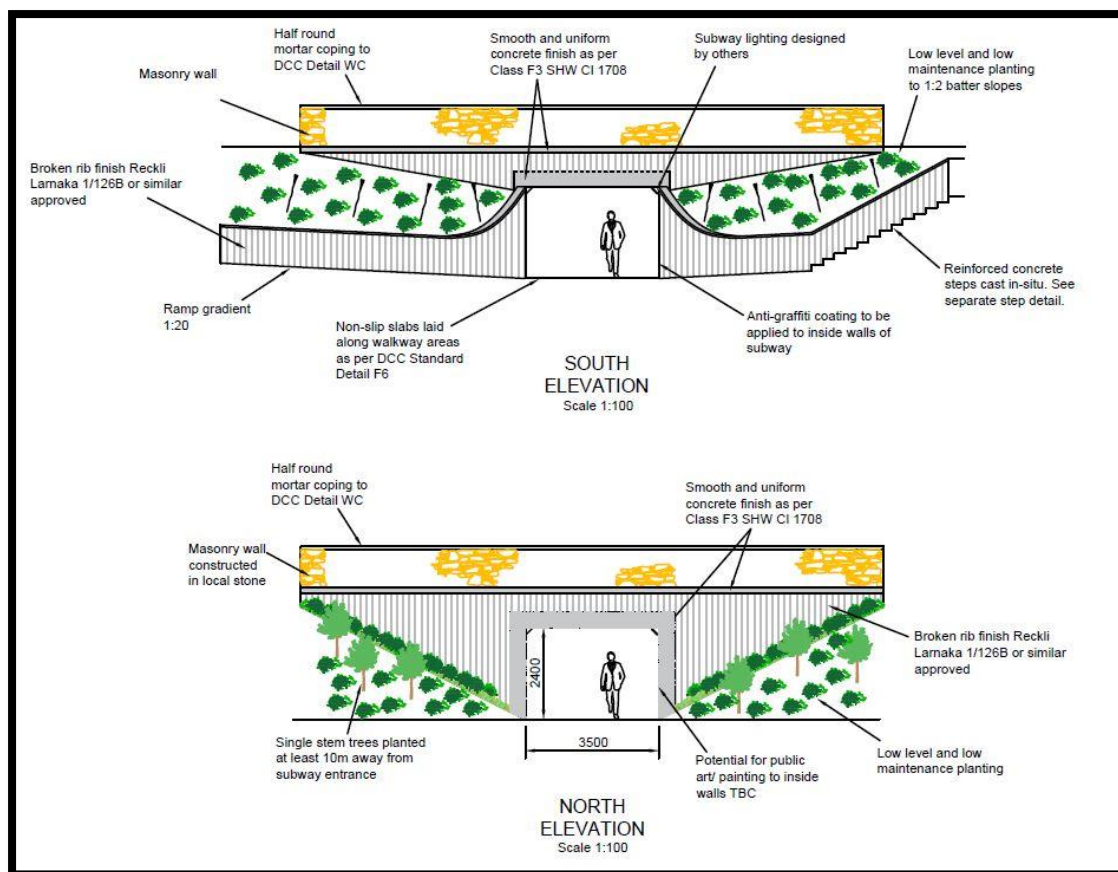


Figure 2-2: Proposed Underpass

Associated works (such as drainage and landscaping)

Some vegetation removal is proposed, the majority of which is located between the western arm of the roundabout and the rear of residential properties on Oatlands Avenue. In this location, a buffer of up to 10 metres of vegetation will remain to maintain visual screening to the adjacent residential properties. Wherever possible, the remaining vegetation will be reinforced with additional planting (see Figure 2-3). To the north of the western arm of the roundabout, an existing *Leylandii* hedge is proposed to be removed and replaced with native hedgerow. In the north western corner of the roundabout vegetation will need to be removed in order to construct the northern access to the underpass and maintain field access for the landowner. In this area, replacement woodland planting is proposed, along with wildflower grass seeding on both sides of the proposed footway. To the south of the western arm of the roundabout, vegetation removal is required to allow working space to install new water attenuation features and clearance of an existing ditch.

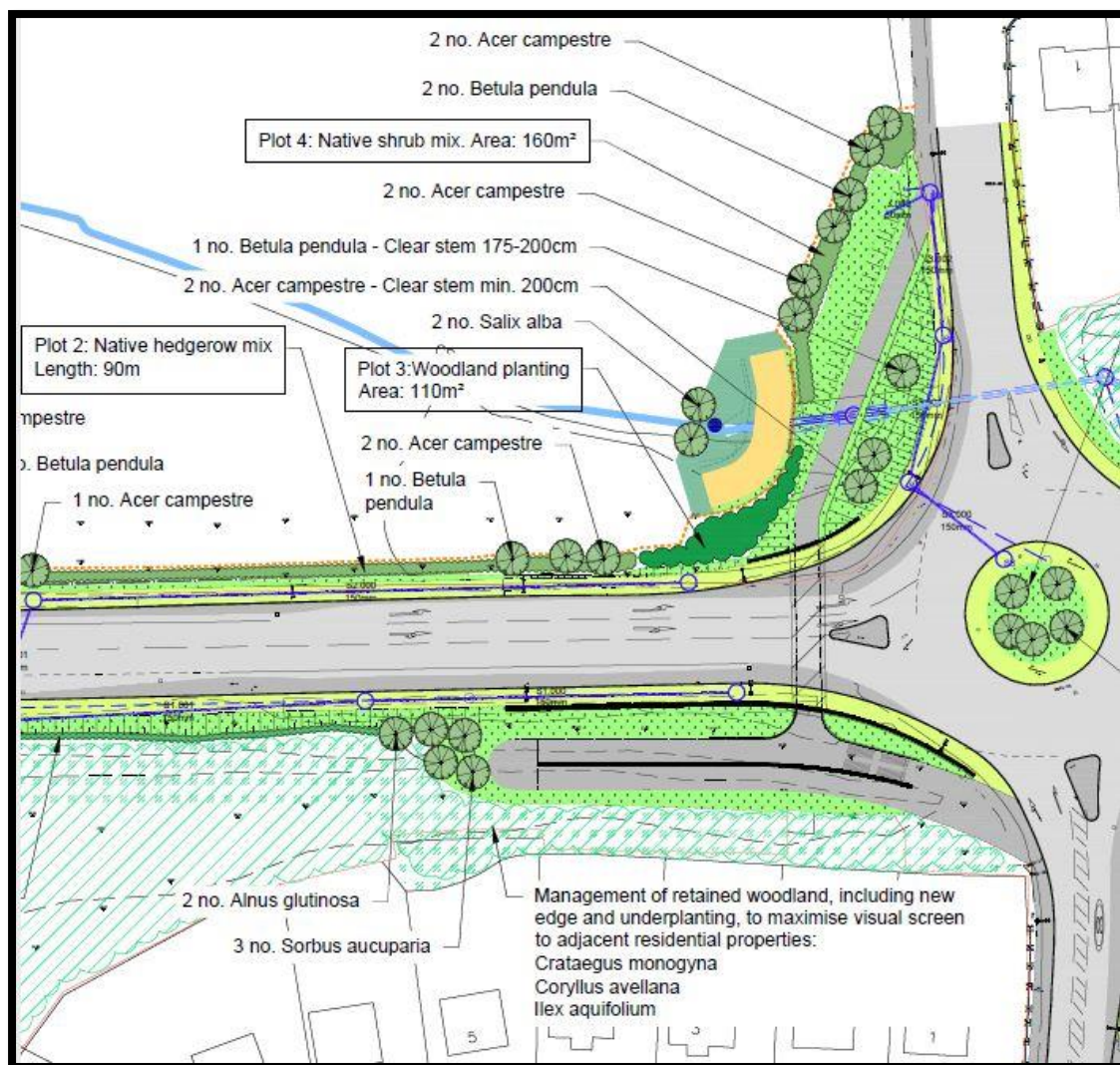


Figure 2-3: Proposed Planting around underpass (full plan reference: B23006DP/LAND/001 rev1)

The proposed highway drainage system has been designed to match or provide betterment on the current discharge rates inclusive of a 40% allowance for climate change. Incorporated into the proposals are new vegetated swales and ditches that utilise check dams to provide both storage and water quality improvements.

These same improvements are to be made to some of the existing ditches with the proposed landscaping providing further enhancement.

2.4 Sustainability

The North Devon and Torridge Local Plan 2011-2031 highlights the importance of both mitigating and adapting to climate change. Policy ST02 (Mitigating Climate Change) states that Development will be expected to make a positive contribution towards the social, economic and environmental sustainability of northern Devon and its communities while minimising its environmental footprint. The proposed development will facilitate safe crossing of the NDLR, encouraging sustainable travel to Barnstaple and The Park School for those living in Bishop's Tawton.

In accordance with policy ST03 (Adapting to Climate Change and Strengthening Resilience), the proposed development incorporates a drainage scheme that has been designed to match or provide betterment on the current discharge rates inclusive of a

40% allowance for climate change. Incorporated into the proposals are new vegetated swales and ditches that utilise check dams to provide both storage and water quality improvements. Additionally, it should be noted that green infrastructure links/ habitat connectivity is maintained through the scheme.

Good design is an important part of achieving sustainability in new developments. Sustainable design measures have been incorporated into the proposed development wherever possible. This includes:

- Sustainable Drainage – Incorporated into the proposals are Swales and Vegetated Ditches that utilise check dams to provide both storage and water quality improvements.
- Capping Material – Specification allows for the use of recycled materials.
- Surfacing Materials – Specification allows for the use of recycled materials.
- Street Lighting, Signing and Illuminated Bollards – All lighting will be specified as LEDs and bollards solar powered.

3.0 - Access

3.1 Policy Approach

The Development Plan comprises of the policies from North Devon and Torridge Local Plan 2011-2031 (Adopted 29 October 2018). Policy BAR (Barnstaple Spatial Vision and Development Strategy) supports provision of improvements to capacity at existing road junctions along the A39 and A361. This includes the Bishop's Tawton Roundabout. Whilst the Local Plan has a policy (BTA) relating to the spatial strategy for Bishop's Tawton, this policy does not generally relate to the development proposed. It does however support development that will not exacerbate the risk of flooding in the village. In this regard it is considered that the proposed development will not exacerbate flood risk.

Regard has been given to all other relevant policies in the development of the proposals, as outlined in Section 5 of the Planning Statement.

3.2 Consultation

Devon County Council has undertaken extensive community consultation in the development of the proposed scheme. This included a route-wide consultation in 2017² that identified an improvement around Barnstaple widening the existing carriageway to 4 lanes and enlarging the Bishop's Tawton junction. The consultation responses, as set out in the Report on Public Consultation September 2017, identified concern over the widening elements of the scheme.

Following submission of the Outline Business Case the widening of the road to 4 lanes around Barnstaple has not been included in the current Phase of improvements. However, improvements are to be made to the roundabout and the approaches to enable it to accommodate additional capacity for motorised vehicles. As part of the scheme it is recognised that it is necessary to incorporate a segregated crossing facility for pedestrians and cyclists.

² <https://www.devon.gov.uk/ndlr/project-documents>

Recognising this change a further consultation was carried out in 2018³ focussing on the options for the segregated pedestrian/cycle crossing facility. The summary of this consultation is included in Section 6.0 of the Planning Statement.

3.3 Pedestrian and Cycle Access

Existing Non – Motorised User (NMU) Routes.

The existing pedestrian and cycle routes can be seen on drawing P_08_PP_4A.

The current Pedestrian routes across the A361 consist of two uncontrolled crossing points immediately to the East and West of the existing roundabout. Pedestrians are required to cross a two-lane approach and single lane exit. Further crossing points are available across the A377 and Rumsam Road although visibility is limited in places and there is no facilities for cyclists.

An additional route exists for pedestrians and cyclists which uses the old access lane from the A377 which then diverts under the A361 Rumsam Bridge and subsequently follows along the top of the flood defence bank. Cyclists and pedestrians are directed to use the surfaced track which joins the end of Ladies Mile. Alternatively, pedestrians can continue along the flood bank by means of a stoned track to the old railway bridge. This route is isolated with some lengths enclosed between hedgebanks or overhanging tree canopies as well as being prone to flooding from adjacent fields.

Proposed Non – Motorised User (NMU) Routes

Following the North Devon Link Road Improvements Public Consultation undertaken 2017 it became apparent that pedestrian and cycle access across the A361 was a concern an enhancement to the crossing facilities would be needed in light of the planned alterations to the existing roundabout.

A further public consultation specifically for Bishop's Tawton was undertaken which introduced the inclusion of a pedestrian / cycle subway to the western side of the roundabout following an Options Appraisal Report. The full consultation can be accessed through this link <https://www.devon.gov.uk/ndlr/project-progress/consultation> .

The Options Appraisal and Consultation report⁴ is summarised within Section 6 of the Planning Statement.

Subsequently a layout has been produced that provides a direct, safe and assessable crossing point below the A361 which has been specifically designed to present an open and welcoming route. This has been achieved by avoiding the use of tall retaining walls as much as possible to reduce the well effect and careful landscaping to remove the perception of being hemmed in. The route complies with Part III of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) with ramps to the South and an at grade access to the North. Steps are also available to the South providing a more direct route for those able to use them.

There will be a comprehensive lighting scheme for the subway to provide a safe and attractive evening environment which will utilise LEDs throughout.

³ <https://www.devon.gov.uk/ndlr/project-documents>

⁴ <https://www.devon.gov.uk/ndlr/project-documents>

Further improvements involving widening of existing footways and the introduction of pedestrian refuges on the A377 and Rumsam Road will increase connectivity with existing pedestrian and cycle routes (See Figure 3-1).

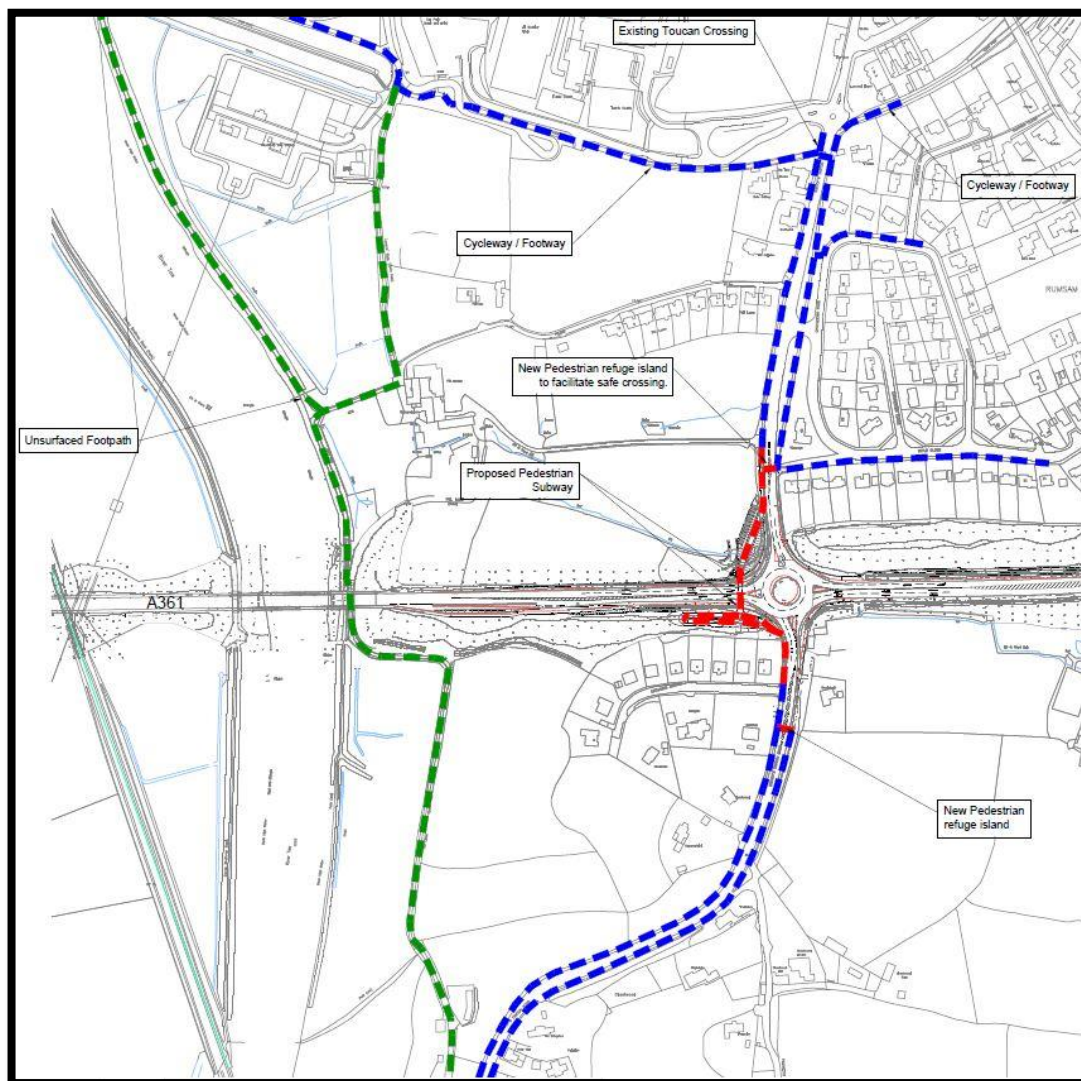


Figure 3-1: Cycle/Pedestrian Links