



SIDMOUTH CYCLING CAMPAIGN

Sidbury Walking and Cycling Scheme

Eastern Route

Summary

This paper outlines a suggested alternative to the currently proposed route from Sidford to Sidbury. Our alternative is based on the eastern route proposed by Devon County Council in 2015, but with some significant amendments.

Introduction

We (Sidmouth Cycling Campaign) fully support the intention of Devon County Council to provide a safe route for active travel between Sidford and Sidbury and are pleased to see the scheme progressing. However, it is important that the path is fit for purpose and well used. We believe the best long-term solution should be found, even if the work has to be done in phases.

DCC are currently consulting on proposals for Phase 1 of a walking and cycling route from Sidford to Sidbury, on the western side of the main road.

We have submitted a response to the current consultation (see Appendix 1). Our response was generally against the current DCC proposals, for a number of reasons. Our most important objection related to the safety of inexperienced cyclists at the northern end of the route, potentially joining the narrow main road at speed.

DCC previously submitted a planning application in 2015 for a route on the eastern side of the main road (See Figure 1 below). This application was withdrawn due to a number of constraints.

We suggest that DCC should revisit their previous proposals for a route on the eastern side, as this has the potential to create a safe off-road route into the centre of Sidbury. We include, below, details of a revised route that may overcome some of the constraints that led to the previous application being withdrawn.

Suggested Eastern Route

The main difficulties and constraints with DCC's previous proposal for the eastern route appear to relate to the northern end, where a boardwalk was proposed to bring the path up to the main road. Figures 2 and 3 (below) show a suggested revised alignment that would avoid the need for the boardwalk, by following a lower alignment.

Objections to the previous proposal related to attractiveness, personal safety, environment, flooding, land and cost. We believe these objections can be at least partly satisfied by our suggested revised route as follows:

1. Attractiveness: The proposed route on the east side of the Main Road is more attractive as it is flatter than the western route and would be used by more people as it connects into the centre of Sidbury.

2. Personal Safety: Concerns have been raised about the personal safety of people using the path and desirability of natural surveillance from the road, as both the proposed western and eastern routes would be hidden from the main road by hedges. However, whilst surveillance may be desirable, it's not been a particular concern for the many users of the Exe Estuary Trail and other routes constructed away from roads throughout the county.

3. Environment: The previous eastern route appears to have been discounted due to the amount of vegetation that would be required to bring it up to the road at its northern end. However, this objection could be overcome by removing this connection and continuing the path at a lower level northwards towards Sidbury (as shown on Figure 3).

3. Flooding: The eastern route follows the edge of land which is classified as Flood Zone 3. This implies that there is a chance of flooding of about 3% each year. However, this could be an acceptable cost for creating an attractive path, for the following reasons:

The River Sid is a small catchment with a relatively short time to peak, which means that flooding occurs shortly after significant rainfall. Residents of Sidbury are well aware of this as they are used to the main road becoming impassable after heavy rainfall and they would probably accept a similar frequency of flooding on the proposed path. In addition, visitors to the area are unlikely to be using the path during heavy rain.

Similar cycle paths have also been built by Devon County Council in flood plains. Examples include the Exe Estuary Trail south of Turf Lock and the path adjacent to Shutterton Brook at Dawlish Warren.

4. Land: The eastern route would probably require negotiation with multiple landowners, but this shouldn't be a deciding factor in the choice of route. In addition, it's been 8 years since the previous planning application for this route so it's likely that some of the landowners will have changed.

5. Cost: We understand that the western route is being proposed as a cheaper option, although there is no indication that either route has been costed. Our suggested alignment for the eastern route removes the need for an expensive boardwalk, so that it is likely to be of a similar cost to the currently proposed western route.

Conclusion

We request that DCC consider our suggested alignment for the route from Sidford to Sidbury on the eastern side of the main road. We believe it addresses many of the constraints identified by DCC in their previous proposal.

We would be pleased to discuss this further.

Figure 1 – DCC proposal for Eastern Route submitted for Planning Approval in 2015

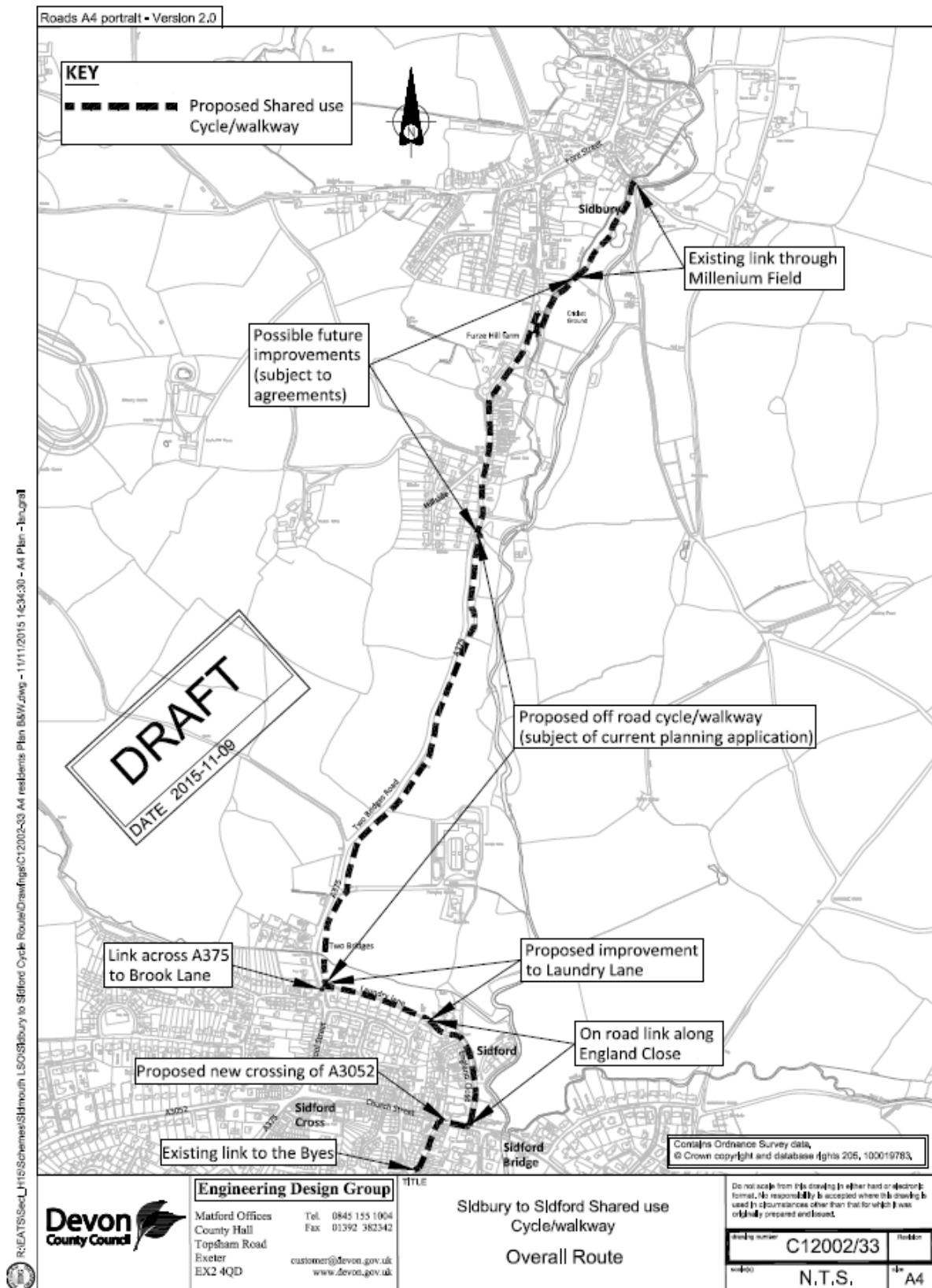


Figure 2 – Area of suggested revised alignment

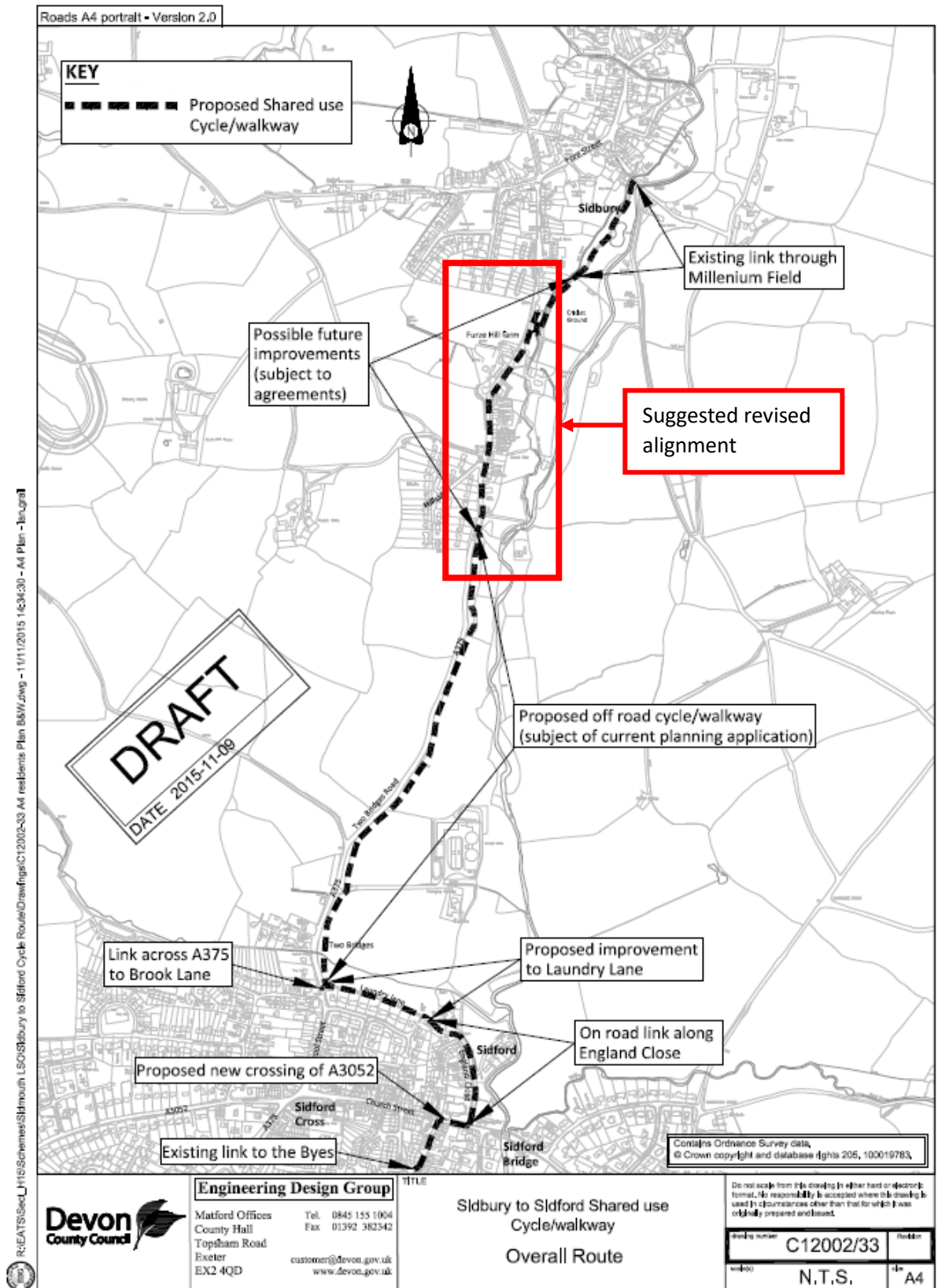
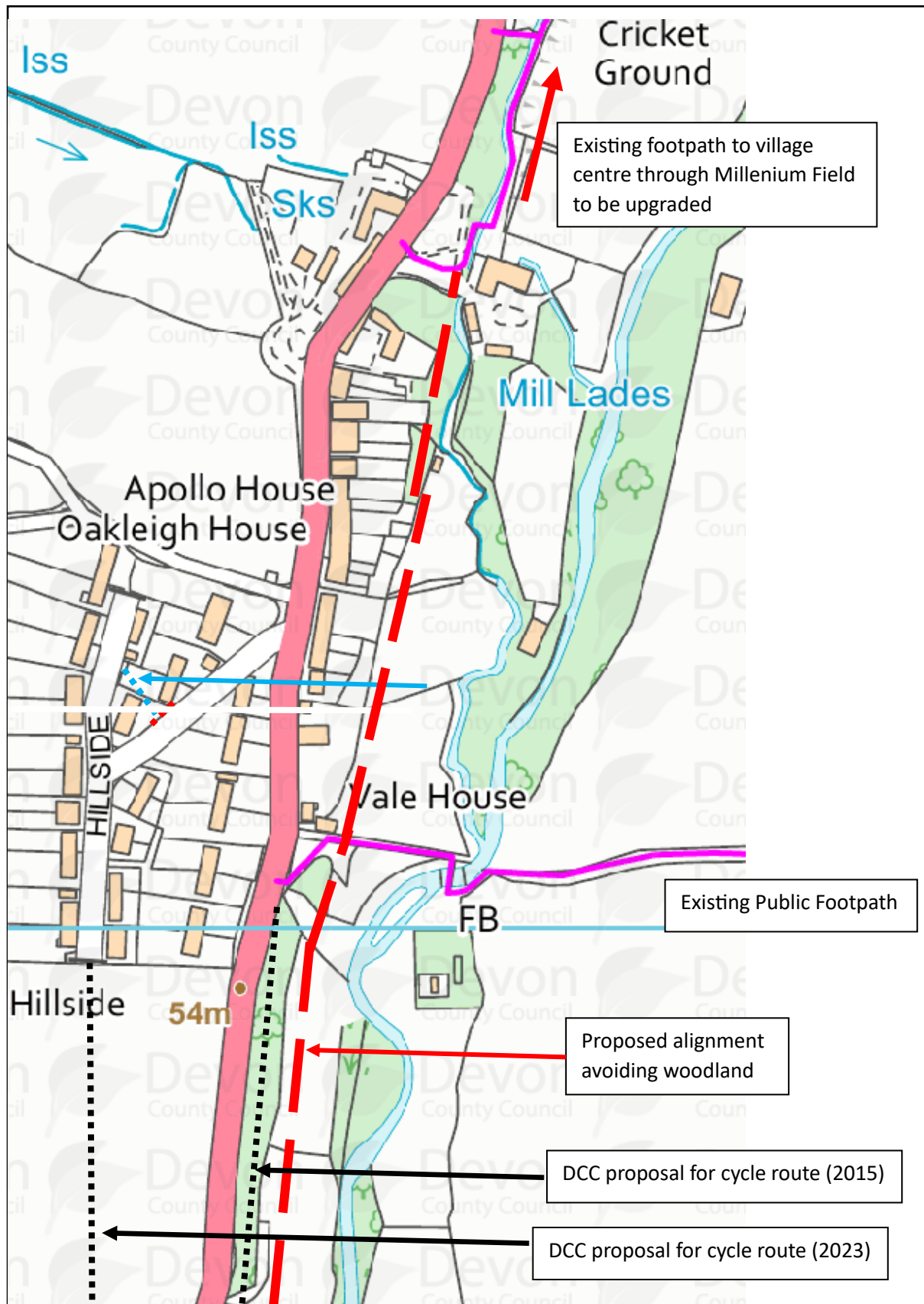


Figure 3 – Suggested revised alignment



Appendix 1 – Consultation response from Sidmouth Cycling Campaign



Sidbury Walking & Cycling Scheme

Consultation Response Form

Please note that any additional feedback can be sent to:
transportplanning@devon.gov.uk

1. Are you responding as: *

- An Individual/Household
- Organisation

2. If responding on behalf of an organisation please state which below:

Sidmouth Cycling Campaign

3. Post Code: *

EX10 8JF

4. On a scale of 1-5 how supportive are you of the proposed development : *

- 5 - I am fully supportive of the proposed development.
- 4 - I am generally supportive of the proposed development.
- 3 - I am neither in favour nor against the proposed development.
- 2 - I am generally against the proposed development.
- 1 - I am fully against the proposed development.

5. Please state the reason for your choice for question 4:

We fully support the intention to provide a safe route for active travel between Sidford and Sidbury, but are against the current proposal for the following reasons:

1. **Safety:** The proposed route follows the existing 100m long access road from upper Hillside down to the main road. This road has a steep gradient of about 10% that could readily result in the dangerous situation of inexperienced cyclists joining the busy main road at speed.
2. **Hill:** The steep gradient of the access road to upper Hillside would be difficult for children to cycle up.
3. **Potential White Elephant:** The current proposal is for Phase 1 of a possible larger scheme to connect to Sidbury Village Centre. However, in itself, Phase 1 could become a White Elephant, only used by the few residents of Hillside who might want to travel to Sidford.
4. **Lack of Connectivity:** Both Phase 1 and Phase 2 of this scheme fail to provide a quiet traffic-free route from Sidford to the village centre of Sidbury; Phase 1 joins the busy main road at a point where its narrow and lacking a footway. Phase 2 extends the path to Furzehill, which also lacks a quiet traffic-free route to the village centre. In addition, there appear to be insurmountable practical difficulties in ever achieving a safe cycle route from Furzehill to the village centre.

We are aware of the previous proposal by Devon County Council for a path from Sidford to Sidbury on the eastern side of the main road and strongly favour this route for the following reasons:

1. **Attractiveness:** The proposed route on the east side of the Main Road would be more attractive as it is flatter than the western route and would be used by more people as it would connect into the centre of Sidbury.
2. **Personal Safety:** Concerns have been raised about the personal safety of people using the path and the desirability of natural surveillance from the road, even though both the proposed western and eastern routes would be hidden from the main road by hedges. Whilst surveillance may be desirable, it's not been a particular concern for the many users of the Exe Estuary Trail and the other routes constructed away from roads throughout the county.
3. **Environment:** The previous eastern route appears to have been discounted due to the amount of vegetation that would be required to bring it up to the road at its northern end. However, this objection could be overcome by removing this connection and continuing the path at a lower level northwards towards Sidbury.
4. **Flooding:** The eastern route follows the edge of land which is classified as Flood Zone 3. This implies that there is a chance of flooding of about 3% each year. However, this could be an acceptable cost for creating an attractive path, for the following reasons:

The River Sid is a small catchment with a relatively short time to peak, which means that flooding occurs shortly after significant rainfall. Residents of Sidbury are well aware of this, as they are used to the main road becoming impassable after heavy rainfall and they would probably accept a similar frequency of flooding on the proposed path. In addition, visitors to the area are unlikely to be using the path during heavy rain.

Similar cycle paths have also been built by Devon County Council in flood plains, south of Turf Lock on the Exe Estuary Trail and adjacent to Shutterton Brook at Dawlish Warren.

5. **Land:** The eastern route crosses 3 parcels of land, which would potentially require negotiation with 3 landowners, but shouldn't be a deciding factor in the choice of route.
6. **Cost:** We understand that the western route is now being proposed as a cheaper option, although there is no indication that either route has been costed. We have a proposal for the eastern route that we would be pleased to discuss further that would remove the need for an expensive boardwalk.

6. Do you have any other comments you would like the Council and their consultants to take into account when developing the proposal?

We fully support the intention to provide a safe route for active travel between Sidford and Sidbury and are pleased to see the scheme progressing. However, it is important that the path is fit for purpose and well used. We believe the best long-term solution should be found, even if the work has to be done in phases.

We have some information and ideas for the whole scheme that we will submit separately, by email, as they include options for Phase 2.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed works.

Roy Russell
On behalf of Sidmouth Cycling Campaign