

Public Agenda Pack



Notice of Meeting of

LOCAL COMMUNITY NETWORK - EXMOOR

Thursday, 11 January 2024 at 7.00 pm

The Moorland Hall - Cutcombe, Wheddon Cross TA24 7DL

To: The members of the Local Community Network - Exmoor

Chair: Councillor Steven Pugsley
Vice-chair: Councillor Mike Ellicott (Exford PC)

Brompton Ralph PC	Brompton Regis PC	Brushford PC
Clatworthy PC	Cutcombe PC	Dulverton PC
Exford PC	Exmoor PC	Exton PC
Huishchampflower PC	Luccombe PC	Luxborough PC
Oare PM	Porlock PC	Selworthy & Minehead WO PC
Skilgate PC	Timberscombe PC	Treborough PM
Upton PC	Winsford PC	Withypool & Hawkridge PC
Wootton Courtenay PC		

Somerset Highways
Somerset Community Council Village Agents
Avon and Somerset Police Crime Commissioner – Mark Shelford
Avon and Somerset Exmoor Neighbourhood Policing Team
Exmoor National Park Authority
Exmoor Young Voices
Exmoor Hill Farming Network
Somerset Connect / Minehead Eye

For further information about the meeting, including how to join the meeting virtually, please contact Sam Murrell sam.murrell@somerset.gov.uk or Exmoorlcn@somerset.gov.uk.

All members of the public are welcome to attend our meetings and ask questions or make a statement **by giving advance notice** in writing or by e-mail to the Monitoring Officer at email: democraticservicsteam@somerset.gov.uk by **5pm on Friday, 5 January 2024**.

The LCN team want everybody to have the opportunity to take part in the LCN meetings and have booked appropriate venues with accessibility requirements in mind. If you have specific access needs, and are at all concerned, please contact the LCN Team so they can provide reassurance or seek solutions beforehand: lcn@somerset.gov.uk.

Issued by (the Proper Officer) on Wednesday, 3 January 2024

AGENDA

Local Community Network - Exmoor - 7.00 pm Thursday, 11 January 2024

Core Membership (Pages 5 - 6)

Click here to join the online meeting (Pages 7 - 8)

1 Introductions and opening comments (Pages 9 - 10)

2 Apologies for Absence

To receive any apologies for absence.

3 Declarations of Interest

To receive and note any declarations of interests in respect of any matters included on the agenda for consideration at this meeting.

(The other registrable interests of Councillors of Somerset Council, arising from membership of City, Town or Parish Councils and other Local Authorities will automatically be recorded in the minutes: [City, Town & Parish Twin Hatters - Somerset Councillors 2023](#))

4 Public Question Time

The Chair to advise of any questions, statements or petitions received that are not covered by items on the agenda for the meeting on which members of the public have requested to speak.

5 Notes from the Previous Meeting (Pages 11 - 24)

To approve the notes from the previous meeting.

6 Update on Actions from the Previous Meeting

To discuss matters arising from the notes not covered in later agenda items.

7 Annual Update from the Avon & Somerset Police Crime Commissioner, Mark Shelford

The role of the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) is to be the voice of local people in policing and hold the Chief Constable to account. The aim of all PCCs is to ensure the delivery of an effective and efficient police service within their force area.

8 Avon and Somerset Neighbourhood Policing Update

9 Somerset Council Financial Update (Pages 25 - 28)

An update to provided on the latest financial position of Somerset Council.

10 Exmoor LCN Highways Subgroup Update (Pages 29 - 82)

To include:-

- An update on the B3224 Roundwater, Cutcombe capital scheme.
- An update on the Devolved Funding Jetting Schemes.

11 Exmoor National Park Authority

12 Dates of Future Meetings

Exmoor LCN Date - The Moorland Hall, Cutcombe	Proposed Highways Sub-Group Date - Dulverton Sports Pavilion
Thursday 11 January 2024 at 7pm	Friday 23 February 2024, at 10am
Thursday 7 March 2024 at 7pm	Friday 19 April 2024, at 10am.
Thursday 9 May 2024 at 7pm	

Dates for Housing and Economic Development subgroups to be confirmed.

Core Membership

Unitary Councillors:

Councillor Frances Nicholson

Councillor Steven Pugsley

City, Town and Parish Councils (one voting member from each):

Brompton Ralph

Brompton Regis

Brushford

Clatworthy

Cutcombe

Dulverton

Exford

Exmoor

Exton

Huish Champflower

Luccombe

Luxborough

Minehead Without

Oare

Porlock

Selworthy

Skilgate

Timberscombe

Treborough

Upton

Winsford

Withypool and Hawkridge

Wootton Courtenay

Other Stakeholders (one voting member from each):

Avon and Somerset Police

NHS

Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue

Education

Spark Somerset

Society Local Council Clerks

Somerset Association Local Councils

Somerset Activity Sports Partnership

Community Council for Somerset

Citizens Advice
Department of Work and Pensions
Somerset Rivers Authority
Somerset Local Nature Partnership
Business Chamber
Exmoor National Park
Exmoor Young Voices
The Hill Farming Network
Somerset Skills and Learning
Visit Exmoor
West Somerset Flood Group
Home Start West Somerset
Onion Collective
Sustrans

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[+44 1823 772277,,685787999#](#) United Kingdom, Taunton

Phone Conference ID: 685 787 999#

[Find a local number](#) | [Reset PIN](#)

To alert the Chair of the meeting, that you would like to speak, please raise your hand using the raise hand function. The Chair will invite you to speak and advise you when to click unmute in order to do so. Please can I remind you to click mute once you have finished speaking to avoid unnecessary background noise. Everyone joining remotely is invited to have their cameras on, but if the broadband bandwidth becomes a problem you may be asked to turn them off.

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Chairs Schedule

Local Community Network – Exmoor

Thursday 11 January 2024 at 7:00pm

The Moorland Hall, Cutcombe

Welcome to this evening's meeting of the Exmoor Local Community Network.

I would like to advise everyone present that, should the fire alarm sound, you should leave the building immediately via one of the fire exits which are clearly signposted. You should not return to the building for any reason until you have been advised it is safe to do so.

Can I remind everyone to please put your mobile phone on silent mode and keep the phone away from the microphones to minimise interference.

The meeting will be hybrid and therefore when speaking please remember to speak clearly into your nearby microphone, so everyone online and in the room can hear us.

To alert me, the Chair of the meeting, that you would like to speak, please raise your hand. For those joining via Teams, please use the raise hand function. I will invite you to speak and advise you when to click unmute in order to speak. Please can I remind you to click mute once you have finished speaking to avoid unnecessary background noise. Everyone joining remotely is invited to have their cameras on but if the broadband bandwidth becomes a problem we may ask you to turn off your cameras.

Please can I also request that when speaking, you say who you are and make your points as succinct as possible to allow for the smooth running of the meeting, and can I also take this opportunity to remind you to be polite and treat each other with respect at all times.

Thank you

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Local Community Network Meeting Notes

Meeting Title: Local Community Network - Exmoor

Date: Thursday, 9 November 2023

Time: 7:06pm – 9:21pm

Location: The Moorland Hall - Cutcombe, Wheddon Cross TA24 7DL

Chaired by: Cllr Steven Pugsley (Chair)

LCN core membership attendance:

Name:	Representing
Mike Ellicott, (Vice-Chair)	Exford Parish Council
Cllr Frances Nicholson	Somerset Council
Sally Baker	Brompton Ralph Parish Council
Jan Aldridge (Clerk)	Brushford Parish Council
Sally Moran,	Clatworthy Parish Council
Jon Levenson	Cutcombe Parish Council
Francis Schott	Exmoor (also called Simonsbath)
Stephen Kimsey	Huish Champflower Parish Council
Mark Bolland	Luxborough Parish Council
Duncan McCanlis	Porlock Parish Council
Scilla Barney	Selworthy & Minehead without PC
Dan Barber	Skilgate Parish Council
Katy Attwater	Timberscombe Parish Council
Colin Wilkins	Winsford Parish Council

Tony Howard
Andrew Bray
Will Lock,
Wayne Stokes
Paul Matcham

Withypool & Hawkridge PC
Wootton Courtenay PC
Exmoor Young Voices
CCS Village Agent
Connect Somerset / Minehead Eye

Officer attendance:

Name:

Jeff Brown
Sam Murrell
Tom Parkinson
Kevin Bridgwater
Kali Martin
Beccy Brown

Representing

Interim LCN Lead Officer
Interim Link Officer
ICT Specialist
SC Highways Area Manager
SC Highways Area West
SC Employment and Skills

Other attendees:

Name:

Patricia Bainbridge (Clerk)
Norma Martin (Clerk)
Roger Foxwell / Eric Norman
Anne Sparling
Stephen Colson
Lesley Webb (Clerk)
Rebecca Tomlin (Clerk)
Mel Hammond

Representing

Brompton Ralph PC
Clatworthy PC
Cutcombe PC
Luxborough PC
Porlock PC
Timberscombe PC
Withypool & Hawkridge PC
CCS Village Agent

Virtual attendees:

Name:	Representing
Kate Hellard	SC LCN Development Manager
Colin McDonald	SC Exmoor Rural Housing Enabler

Summary of discussion:

Agenda Summary of key points of discussion and outcome: Action by: item:

Item 27: **Apologies for Absence**

Clare Pound (Homestart), Christine Dubery, Margaret Rawle & Nick Thwaites (Dulverton TC), Fran A'Brook (Upton PC), Julian Soltau (Withypool PC) PCSOs Katherine Williams, Linda Moden & Michelle Haimes, Sarah Buchanan (Brompton Regis) Janette Webber (Exton PC), Ruth McArthur (ENPA).

Item 28: **Declarations of Interest**

None were declared.

Item 29: **An Update on Somerset Council's current financial position.**

Somerset Council's LCN Development Lead, Kate Hellard brought forward an urgent item following the circulation of a letter to parishes from the Leader, Bill Revans. Due to the requirement for parishes to set their precepts and consider all budget pressures the letter had been sent as a matter of urgency. The letter had been distributed to all clerks, but some parishes within the Exmoor LCN had yet to see it.

It was requested that the letter was re-circulated to the parish clerks and Chairs within the Exmoor LCN once again. (Sam Murrell sent this on Friday 10 November). A copy of the letter can be viewed on this [link](#).

The general consensus of the Exmoor LCN was one of disappointment, with the parishes considering that Somerset Council was using this as a "dumping opportunity to offload

assets". Questions were also asked about how the financial shortfall had arisen so quickly into the first year of Somerset Council's tenure, and that the whole unitary exercise had been a waste of time!

Jon Levenson – (Cutcombe PC) – This was very disappointing as most parishes were prudent when setting their precepts. They tried to build up small reserves as a contingency, but devolution would quickly divest them of those reserves and then hit the council taxpayers. Some parishes were very small and had a very limited tax base. What happened to the services in those areas?

Katy Attwater (Timberscombe PC) – Most of the smaller parishes did not have the staff, skills or expertise to handle devolution of assets and services. More information was needed so that the parishes could make an informed choice.

The Chair highlighted that amongst the list of devolved services to parishes was the Highway Steward scheme and taking on responsibility for a variety of Highway services. Although Exmoor had pioneered the Highways pilot, which had been very successful it was never envisioned that this service would be completely devolved down and hit the Parish precepts. The pilot had involved the parishes feeding in their work to the Highway Steward who was a paid operative of Somerset Council's contractor.

The model suggested in the letter seemed to lean more towards the parish lengthsman scheme, which had been trialled in the past and which some parishes still subscribed to. (This was currently managed by Dulverton TC). When the scheme was first launched the district and county councils both paid a contribution alongside the parishes. Over time however, this stopped leaving the parishes to pick up the financial burden. Only a few of the parishes now used the service of the lengthsman.

The Chair agreed that a special LCN meeting may need to be called as the financial picture emerged. Those parishes who wish to know more about devolution should address their queries to devolution@somerset.gov.uk. This is a dedicated email address.

Item 30: **Public Question Time**

There were no public statements or questions presented in advance of the meeting.

Item 31: **Notes from the Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the previous meeting were accepted as a true record and unanimously agreed.

Item 32: **Update on Actions from the Previous Meeting**

There were no matters arising. All updates and actions would be covered under later agenda items.

Item 33: **Avon and Somerset Police Update**

The Police had tendered apologies but a written statement was submitted in advance and read out by the clerk.

Over the past 3 months the Exmoor beat team have been busy with the general day to day work and have also been heavily committed with a few individual people/families which has taken a lot of resources and time.

Mini Police

PCSO's Michelle and Linda have been working closely with 15 Year 4 pupils from 3 schools (Cutcombe, Exford, and Timberscombe) on a 9-week Mini Police programme.

The sessions have been lovely to get the children involved. Their work has included a social action project and the children chose Farm Watch as a focus. The group were lucky enough to visit a local farm in Exford where the children conducted a Farm safety check and registered the Farm for the Farm watch scheme. They also marked items with the unique Selecta DNA.

They also were taken to the ASP Wilfred Fuller Training site where the children had an interaction with the Police dogs, Road safety, The mounted section, and Drones.

The children and adults thoroughly enjoyed the visit, and it was a great way to peek behind the scenes and show how the different Police units work.

Crime Figures for the past 3 Months

ASP have had 93 Reported crimes overall for the whole of the Exmoor area.

There have been some rural crimes where rural vehicles have been stolen. This is currently under investigation by PC James Calloway. The team will visit victims of crime and try to gather intelligence where possible to help colleagues with any investigations moving forward.

PCSOs Michelle and Linda will be attending Dunster by Candlelight on Saturday 2nd December and Dulverton by Starlight on Sunday 3rd December. The beat team will be patrolling the events with Community engagement.

The team are always looking at signing up new farms and small holdings to the ASP Farm and Horse watch so please spread the word. It's a completely free scheme and literally takes a couple of minutes to fill out the form. Once completed it will be sent off and then participants will receive notifications concerning any farm rural related crime. Farm Watch members are also provided with free gate signage and this can be replaced if needed in the future. ASP have a range of signs including signs to warn dog walkers to put their dogs on leads. (This is of course especially important around livestock).

The beat team can be contacted on
Linda.Moden@avonandsomerset.police.uk
Michelle.Haimes@avonandsomeset.police.uk
James.Calloway@avonandsomerset.police.uk

Please can ASP remind you to report any crimes and incidents via 101 or on the online reporting portal on the website. It is important not to leave reports on individual officer's answer phones as this can lead to delays in contact and recording. The team will happily get back to you upon return for rest days or commitments but unfortunately their phones are not 24/7.

The police would like to remind everyone that they still have a wanted person in the Minehead area.

Richard Scatchard (also known as Richard Dunlop) is a 70-year-old male: Approximately 5ft 11ins of average build with short grey hair, normally clean shaven (however this may have changed since last seen). He has a Scottish accent. It's believed Scatchard could be using a distinctive electric bicycle-Grey Gepida Albion Curve which has a pink front tyre rim, flowers on the rim of the rear tyre and green and yellow electrical tape around the handlebars. He is wanted on recall to prison and considered a risk to the public especially women he forms relationships with. If there is a potential sighting please do not approach, but phone 999.

Cllr Nicholson stated that it would be good to have some more strategic oversight of the pressing issues, rather than the very localised crime figures.

Cllr Pugsley reminded the meeting that the Police Crime Commissioner (PCC), Mark Shelford is due to attend the January meeting, to provide his annual update.

Following the LCN meeting, PCSO Linda Brooks sent out the [ASP Exmoor Neighbourhood Beat team newsletter](#). This has been circulated to the parishes.

Item 34: **Connect Somerset / Minehead Eye**

Paul Matcham provided an update on the work he undertakes in respect of the [Minehead Eye](#) and Connect Somerset.

Minehead Eye is a community centre with a particular emphasis on youth engagement work. It is not a publicly funded facility but instead relies on grants and fund raising to operate. Paul explained that Somerset Council contributes very little to the Minehead Eye, and the majority of council money comes from the parish councils. The Eye operates 7 youth clubs in outreach locations of West Somerset and holds afterschool clubs. It also provides a meeting point for home-schooled children and facilitates a counselling service. The Minehead Eye also hosts other organisations including Homestart, the health visitors and some social prescribing groups.

Connect Somerset is a partnership between various organisations which aims to link and offer early help assistance to residents and their families. There are 12 Connect Somerset Champions working across Somerset. Paul identified that working with LCNs and the Primary Care Networks (PCNs) would be essential going forward. Connect Somerset primarily centred on the Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise (VCFSE) sector, and was looking at how their roles could be developed and provide examples of good practice.

Paul had prepared a presentation, and it was requested that the slide pack was shared for attendees to view at their leisure. The presentation slides can be viewed [here](#).

There were no questions or comments arising, and Paul was thanked for his time. He subsequently left the meeting.

Item 35: **Highways Subgroup Update**

B3224 Repairs at Roundwater, Exford – The vegetation clearance to prepare the site prior to the main works taking place had been successfully completed. This had been carried out under a full road closure for a period of two weeks, in association with Openreach who were also doing work in this area. Devon Streetworks had had a road closure in operation just over the border and this had run concurrently with the work at Roundwater. It was agreed that this was not an ideal situation but there was a very narrow window of opportunity to get these ecological works completed.

A public meeting is due to be held on [Wednesday 29 November](#) at the Moorland Hall, to provide more information on the scheme. This will commence at 7.30pm but doors will open at 7pm. Most of the parishes agreed to hold their questions until this event, rather than occupy time at the LCN meeting.

Reactive Works – Due to recent bad weather events and the need for the Highways Team to respond to emergency repairs and patching, the planned maintenance programme had been pushed behind schedule. This included the resurfacing works that were due to take place at Dunkery. Reactive safety works would always take priority, and the team would tackle the

planned works once the conditions were favourable and the resources were available.

Timberscombe PC – There had been recent vandalism on highways road signs within the parish. (Signs had been pulled up, defaced or twisted to face the wrong way). These had been attended to and reported to the Police. The Police could not record it and issue a crime number as the property was not the responsibility of the parish council. (The Highways Team asked that Timberscombe pass on the details to them, so that they could report it). It was queried whether other parishes had experienced the same issues, but none had recently.

Winsford PC – There was a query regarding lack of access to Emergency Vehicles during a recent road closure. This can be alleviated via liaison with the appropriate contractor. It was agreed that this would be explored more fully during the public meeting on the 29 November.

Cutcombe PC – Cllr Jon Levenson praised the volunteer Jeremy Davies, who worked on the Exmoor Fingerpost project. Jeremy coordinated the volunteer response and took responsibility for painting and maintaining some of the fingerposts himself. It was requested that a formal thank you was sent to Jeremy from the LCN to thank him for his good work. This was endorsed by the Chair, Cllr Steven Pugsley.

Luxborough PC – Cllr Mark Bolland asked for an update on a recent report to the Bridges Team. It was explained that emergency works often took precedent over items that were deemed less urgent. Kali Martin agreed to follow this up outside the meeting and report back.

Exford PC – Concerns were raised about recent building works in Exford which resulted in scaffolding providing a partial obstruction on the Highway. The Highways Team stated that all reputable licenced scaffolding companies would be aware of the correct procedures and H&S regulations that needed to be complied with. If there were any future concerns then they should be reported to the Highways Team as a matter of urgency. If the scaffolding was not compliant, then enforcement action would be taken to remove the obstruction and the

contractor could be fined. All scaffolding companies should undertake the correct survey prior to the work commencing to ensure highway safety.

Withypool Drainage – It was asked if any further progress had been made on the drainage issues in the parish? It was reported that the Flood Risk Team (Civil Contingencies) were now taking enforcement action. A legal notice would be served which would escalate matters and the respondent would need to act accordingly.

Winsford PC – Were aware that the bin audit had taken place, but were concerned about who would take responsibility for placing the new bins and clearing around the existing which were covered in foliage? The winter maintenance team would liaise with the Highway warden in each parish and get the bins sited and filled. It was suggested that if any of the parishes needed undergrowth around the bins cleared, they used the Highway Steward.

Winter Maintenance – It was essential that the green routes were adequately gritted to ensure that key routes which served the school buses, commuters and business traffic were safe for highway users. It was also important that the red routes were prioritised to ensure that smaller communities were not isolated during cold spells.

Devolved Funding – Dulverton Town Council had utilised the services of a sub- contractor and had undertaken a survey of the jetting requests. Following on from the submission of his findings, a purchase order has been raised to facilitate the jetting and gully clearing up to an agreed amount. This also includes the disposal of all waste material. It is important that this work is delivered and paid for in this financial year from the devolved **revenue** account. Given Somerset Council's financial position there would be no further funding of this kind allocated.

Capital – Money in the Capital pot was earmarked to assist with a Traffic Management scheme in Dulverton High Street, and the installation of a 20mph speed limit in Cutcombe. (Not for a Speed Indicator Device as previously reported). These requests had been made during 2022 and were taking time to deliver due

to the required consultation period.

Item 36: **Economic Regeneration Subgroup Update**

The LCN accepted the recommendations made by the Economic Regeneration subgroup.

Comments arising included:-

- The need for parishes to undertake a survey of their respective areas to determine who had connectivity and who didn't? This could then be used to challenge providers who did not have evidence of the existing gaps in rural areas. Cllr Andrew Bray, (Wootton Courtenay PC) had already provided a form for this purpose in his parish and agreed to share this with the wider group. It was agreed that it made sense for all the parishes to have a working model that would ensure consistency with the mapping exercise.
- The need for regular early years childcare to be a priority, thus assisting working parents to return to work. (This had been done in the past via Beccy Brown, Employment and Skills and it was envisioned that this could be developed further).
- ENPA was praised for the work highlighting the need for a rural economic regeneration worker, who could link businesses to funding opportunities and provide support.
- Cllr Andrew Bray also highlighted that there would be a business network event at the Moorland Hall on 23 November 2023. This is a ticketed event hosted by ENPA. [More information can be found on this link.](#)

Future meetings would be diarised shortly.

Item 37: **Affordable Housing Subgroup Update**

Colin McDonald thanked the ENPA for hosting the inaugural Housing Subgroup meeting at Exmoor House, Dulverton, and for explaining the work of the Arc Report. The slides can be viewed [here](#).

The LCN approved the recommendations that were listed in the report but with amendment as follows:-

- The recommendation for parishes to identify empty dwellings in their area to be changed to identify “suitable empty sites for development” in their parish. (This would be new work, as opposed to duplicating work already carried out by the Council Tax register). It was recognised that this was taking place in some areas, but the work to be expanded and include prospective self-build sites.

Other discussion items included:-

- The Arc report was detailed but only included those parishes within the ENP. Brompton Ralph, Huishchampfflower and Clatworthy fell outside this boundary so statistics would need to be included for those villages.
- There was a meeting of the Exmoor Rural Housing Network on Wednesday 13 December at Exmoor House.
- Most of the vacancies on Exmoor for social housing are provided by Magna Housing Association (86%). It was suggested that lobbying Magna to give reasonable preference to families with a local connection to the parish would be a good idea. This would ensure sustainability of local communities including school attendance and rural businesses.
- Cllr Pugsley explained that he had been lobbying the Council for ring-fencing the Council Tax collected on second homes to be earmarked as a reserve for spending specifically in the areas where it was collected. This would provide much needed funding to some of the more rural areas that had a high proportion of second home ownership.

Future meetings had yet to be diarised.

Item 38: **Exmoor National Park Authority**

In the absence of an ENPA officer Cllr Pugsley provided a verbal update on the latest position of the National Park.

Due to Financial pressures the ENPA was planning on reducing the number of Committee meetings to 4 in a municipal year.

They were also going to reduce the size of the planning committee to 12 members and reduce the number of planning

meetings. It is likely the Scheme of Delegation will be changed to accommodate these amendments.

Due to lack of staff capacity the Exmoor Consultative and Parish Forum scheduled for the Thursday 23 November has been cancelled.

Item 39: **Dates of future meetings**

It has been requested that the proposed Exmoor LCN meeting of the 9 May 2024, is postponed to a later date. Details of the revised meeting dates will be made available as soon as they are available.

Information on the Public meeting to provide an update on the B3224 Highways repair at Roundwater, can be viewed [here](#).

Contact officer for meeting: Sam Murrell sam.murrell@somerset.gov.uk.

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Parish Update

12 December 2023

Dear Colleagues

Asset and Service Devolution Update

Thanks to those of you who responded to the recent letter sent to all parishes from the Leader of Somerset Council, Cllr Bill Revans, (8 November 2023).

The level of engagement has been extremely positive to date. Please be assured that all correspondence is being considered and if we've not written back yet, we will be in touch soon. Thank you for your patience.

Addressing the range of responses

Local councils in Somerset differ in size and character, and we've received a wide range of responses that reflect this. We're addressing these in a number of ways.

General enquiries: For the more general requests for information, we've set up dedicated pages on our website, which we will add to, during the coming weeks and months.

You'll find the resource here: [City, Town and Parish Councils \(somerset.gov.uk\)](https://www.somerset.gov.uk/city-town-and-parish-councils) Please bookmark the link, and don't forget to revisit it, as these pages will be frequently updated.

Specific requests: We're working with colleagues across the Council to respond to the more specific requests you've sent us, relating to assets and/or services in a particular location. It will take us a little time to answer all those queries.

Proposals: Devolution has been under consideration for a while now, and some local councils have already worked up proposals they are keen to progress with us.

You'll understand that in these cases, in the context of the financial emergency, we'll be prioritising these proposals as they're the ones likely to deliver the significant savings we need, and mitigate the impact of service reductions on our communities.

You asked, we listened

The offer to discuss devolution opportunities isn't time limited. We will continue to welcome all interest and enquiries, and to listen and assist where we can.

For example, take your recent request for an extension to submitting precepting responses. We are delighted to report this has now been agreed. We previously requested information by January 19, 2024. Now we can offer an extension of **5pm on February 2, 2024**.

An email with your 24/25 council tax base and precept demand form was issued to parishes on Friday by our finance colleagues, which confirms all the above. (Please note, February 2 is the final deadline. Local councils responding after this date may not receive funds in April, so please complete the forms when you get to them in your inbox).

Service costings

Whilst it will take time to collate granular detail of service costs, we are able to provide indicative information about some services in which local councils have expressed the most interest, which may help with your budgeting considerations. We will add to this list, as more costings information becomes available.

Highways Steward: Many local councils have been watching the progress of the Highways Steward, piloted in the Exmoor Area. The scheme delivers minor works within the capability of a single fully trained and qualified operative. This has enabled responsive resolution of issues relating to verge maintenance, highway surface water drainage maintenance, weed removal, sign cleaning and vegetation management.

There is potential for local councils across Somerset to buy into this service, which would bring the additional benefit of close links with the Highways Service and would address concerns about taking on health and safety and insurance obligations.

There is flexibility in how the service is commissioned; no minimum number of Stewards - and contracts can start from April 1st or at any time during the year. The minimum contract length is one year, and each Steward needs to be fully funded to work in a sensible geographic area.

It is possible for a parish to 'buy' one whole Steward for their individual parish, to pool resources with a local cluster of parishes within an LCN area, to consider a full time or a half time Steward for their parish or cluster, sharing the other half with a neighbouring parish cluster or LCN area.

A single Highways Steward, with a vehicle and all of the tools and equipment, costs £50,000.

We are also considering whether other operational activities could become part of such a model over time. For example, some local councils already have in place a *parish lengthsman scheme*. If this is of interest, we would be happy to signpost you to one or more of those councils.

Public Toilets: As you are aware from previous correspondence, Somerset Council's current public toilet provision is a service that is potentially at risk.

Indicative costs to run a block of toilets are estimated between £30K-40K.

Grass Cutting: Somerset Council charges £40-£70 per hour for a grass cut. A typical parish recreation ground would take up to two hours.

Devolution and the financial emergency timetable

- A strategy for addressing the financial emergency, including a new 'vision' for a sustainable Somerset Council, has been agreed.

You'll find the papers here:

[Agenda for Executive on Wednesday, 6th December, 2023, 10.00 am - Modern Council \(somerset.gov.uk\)](#)

Go to Item 11: p222 to p224. Plus, points 81 and 82 on p229 and p230.

- An outline Business Case will come to the January 2024 meeting of the Executive.
- A consultation on next year's budget launched on Monday. Please complete the survey as it will really help Members decide what activities are most important to our communities.

The link is here: [Budget Consultation 2024/2025 - Somerset Council - Citizen Space](#)

It's important to reiterate that formal decisions about which services may cease or be reduced have not yet been made by Somerset Council.

- The Executive will consider the 2024/5 budget at its January and February meetings.
- The final decisions on these proposals will be taken by Full Council in February 2024.

Contact and engagement

We will continue to update you over the coming weeks through our regular fortnightly meetings, and would ask you to continue to engage with us about asset and service devolution within that forum and via the inbox devolution@somerset.gov.uk

Thanks again for your positive and collaborative engagement. We're grateful for your continued partnership approach to helping us all to support our communities.

Alyn Jones

**Executive Director
Strategy, Workforce and Localities**

Sara Skirton

**Service Director
Partnerships and Localities**

ENDS

**Minutes of the Exmoor LCN Pilot Highways Subgroup
Held on Friday 24 November 2023,
At Dulverton Sports Pavilion from 10.00am – 1.30pm**

Present:

Cllr Steven Pugsley (Chair)	Somerset Council (SC)
Cllr Frances Nicholson	SC
Luke Green / Ryan Chamberlain	SC
Kate Brown	SC
Kevin Bridgwater	SC
Kali Martin	SC
Patrick Watts Mabbott	Exmoor National Park
Christine Dubery / Margaret Rawle	Dulverton Town Council
Sarah Buchanan	Brompton Regis (Brendon Hills)
Roger Foxwell	Cutcombe PC (Top Rep)
Sam Murrell (Project Officer / Clerk)	SC

1. Apologies

Mike Ellicott (Exford PC), Jeremy Hickman (Exford PC) Andrew Turner (SC), Paul Nation (SC), Craig Gowan (SC), Andrew Bray (Vale Rep), Bev Norman. Craig had submitted his highways reports and these would be picked up in his absence by Kevin Bridgwater and Kali Martin.

2. To review the Minutes and Action Points of the previous meeting on Friday 22 September 2023.

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as a true record. Matters arising: -

- **Luckwell Bridge** – A site visit had been undertaken and the problem of a displaced pipe was noted. Unfortunately, due to lack of revenue funds and other work taking priority, this would not be considered as urgent.
- **Visibility of signs on the Highway** – Kate Brown was thanked for forwarding on the schedule which demonstrated good practice.
- **Beulah Chapel vegetation clearance** – Sarah Buchanan said that the visibility at this junction was much improved.

3. Somerset Council's Financial Position – what does this mean for the Highways Pilot?

A letter from Bill Revans had been sent out to the parishes prior to the Exmoor LCN meeting. This had listed some services which could be devolved to parishes including the work currently undertaken by the Highway Steward. The letter can be viewed [here](#).

The Exmoor Highways pilot would be officially stood down on the 31 March 2024. A new model of operating the Highway Steward would go forward from the 1 April 2024, which the parishes could subscribe to. It was stressed that parishes would not be taking on any additional work or subscribing to the scheme until the proper costs were known. It was a difficult time because they were already precepting and had no idea of how

the scheme would be managed going forward. The letter raised a lot of additional questions about service level agreements, and what was already being delivered as a statutory minimum. (Hinted at double precepting!?)

It was agreed that although the Highway Steward scheme would need to be evaluated by the parishes, there was a genuine will to continue with the Highways sub-group. This had proven to be an effective method of communicating with Somerset Council and the Highways officers present said they found it of value.

The subscription to parish online had ceased at the end of October. It was for the individual parishes to determine whether they wished to continue using the service.

The devolved funding money would not continue in the new financial year. It was important that all committed expenditure was spent, to ensure delivery of outstanding schemes. The next major project was the jetting and gully cleaning which was being progressed by Dulverton Town Council.

4. Scheme Promotion / Review and Update

In Craig's absence updates were provided by Kevin Bridgwater and Kali Martin. The schedules had been provided in advance of the meeting.

- **Drainage Schemes**

Matters arising – severe weather could push back the schedules, and the work taking place at Roundwater would result in long delays. The team would work closely with local communities to minimise the impact.

- **Resurfacing Schemes**

The team were working with Winsford PC to ensure that emergency vehicle access was retained during the resurfacing work at Edbrooke Road.

Work on the Dunkery Hill Road at Cutcombe has been deferred until the Roundwater scheme is completed.

- **Completed Scheme at Exebridge to Allers Down Lane**

Deemed a success. 100m of Wessex Water pipeline was replaced and snagging work was completed. Despite Devon CC also carrying out Highways work on their network at the same time just over the border, the team worked hard to ensure that school buses could get through and the network kept moving. The carriageway will need resurfacing at some point, but not a priority now.

- **Public Utility Works (LG)**

Luke Green advised that in light of the large capital scheme taking place on the B3224 at Roundwater, there were no other utility schemes being scheduled at present, and some were being delayed minimising disruption on the network.

- **Timberscombe** – The WWA pipeline replacement on the A396 will take place under lights. The contractor will do the main village first and then do the main road. Cllr Nicholson stressed that access to Timberscombe school needed to be maintained. Luke was in the process of coordinating a meeting with all stakeholders.
 - **Dulverton** - A vulnerable person living just outside Dulverton had a contaminated water supply (due to an oil spillage) and this would result in a 3-day road closure. Cllr Christine Dubery wanted to know more details as this could have a direct impact on Dulverton Starlight.
 - **Hopcott Road, Minehead to Porlock** – Would be operating under traffic lights due to the laying of a gas main for a new housing development.
 - **Watersmeet, Devon** – This was over the border, but when works were undertaken would involve a significant diversion into Somerset including Carhampton.
 - **Carhampton** – Commencing March 24, patching works to take place to reinstate the Highway.
 - **Simonsbath** – During the meeting, the Highways team were made aware that there was a problem with a retaining wall at Simonsbath. The wall was being inspected and emergency works had started.
- **Traffic Management Schemes (KB)**
Kate reported back on various ongoing issues that are progressing: -
 - **Cutcombe** – The lining for the 20mph had been completed. Signs when they were erected should be above head height if mounted on the pavement.
 - **Exford** – The TRO was in place. All traffic regulation orders were now on hold until the new financial year.
 - **Porlock** Parish Council had requested that the “no waiting” tick marks that were refreshed on the High Street were removed. Also TRO on disabled bay in the village. This needs to be advertised as part of the legal process. Kate Brown was asked to liaise with Stephen Colson to ensure collaboration with the parish council. Other work in Porlock included KEEP CLEAR markings outside the allotments and refreshing the white line to prevent cars parking in Parson Street.
 - Following a site visit on **Winsford** Hill with ENPA concerning the ponies, it was suggested that rumble strips and signage were implemented to reduce speed across the moor. Cllr Margaret Rawle asked if there would be any capital devolved funding available to finance this scheme? It was made clear that there was not.

Kate also advised that the Traffic Management team had undertaken some statistical work on road safety accidents across each LCN area. It was

agreed that this would be interesting and was asked to share the information.

Bridges and Structures – Patrick Watts Mabbott advised that he thought the bridge protection netting at Tarr Steps was set too high and did not prevent logs and debris from hitting the bridge. If it could be set lower, it might prevent the stones becoming displaced.

5. Update on the B3224 Exford Road Slippage

The public meeting had been booked for the Moorland Hall on the 29 November. Doors would open at 7pm and the meeting would commence at 7.30pm, chaired by Cllr Pugsley. It would take the form of a presentation about the project, followed by a Q&A session. It was going to be attended by the Somerset Council Bridges & Structures team, the design consultant (WSP) and the civil engineering contractor (Walters).

Cllr Pugsley asked for an invitation to the pre-meet which was taking place online via teams on the 28 November. Luke Green forwarded him the invitation.

The Chair asked that members of the Highways sub-group attended to show their support for the scheme and assist on the evening. He was concerned that any adverse publicity or local opposition would result in the funding being diverted elsewhere and the B3224 would not be fixed.

He also asked Sam Murrell to arrange for a known senior Highways operative such as Andrew Turner (or Alyn Jones) to be present. He hoped this would provide some gravitas to the meeting, and support officers. He was aware that the majority of the officers attending on the night were not known to the parishes, and this could cause some unrest.

Sam advised that the meeting date had been circulated in local parish magazines, on the Council's website and in the press. Individual stakeholders, businesses, landowners and parishes had been emailed to ensure they were aware of the venue, date and time.

6. Exmoor Pilot Update

- **Highway Steward (HS)**

It was agreed that the Highway Steward pilot had worked well but was now changing to a different way of operating more akin to the parish lengthsman scheme. Dulverton Town Council already contracted a lengthsman and co-ordinated work on behalf of some of the neighbouring parishes. There was uncertainty about whether the revised working would be something the Exmoor LCN would want to adopt.

It was considered essential that the Highway Steward had good local knowledge and was adequately trained to operate on the Highway. Questions were raised about how his work would be scheduled and who would supervise and oversee the work programme.

The “best fit” for sharing the costs of a Highway Steward was Area 13 (Minehead & Watchet LCN), and Cllr Pugsley said he would contact the Chair/Vice Chair of the LCN to establish how they could collaborate.

- **Devolved Funding – Jetting requests (Revenue)**

Dulverton Town Council (Christine Dubery) had been working with a sub-contractor on inspecting and progressing the jetting requests received up until the 30 June.

Christine had tasked a contractor to look through the schedule and provide costings and feedback on the work. He had provided this based on site visits around the district. This had subsequently been checked with the Area Highways office who had given the go-ahead for the listed works to proceed.

She was concerned that whilst on-site the contractor would be asked to undertake additional work that was not listed which would push up the costs. It was very important that each parish had an available contact that could meet the contractor and pin-point the problem areas so that his valuable time was not wasted. It was agreed that the parishes would be emailed prior to the work commencing asking for these details.

It was agreed that he would concentrate only on the jetting works, which were listed in the schedule. As well as the immediate costs associated with the work, there was also the disposal of waste fee which was an unknown quantity. Preliminary clearance work could be carried out in anticipation of his visit, and in some instances, it looked like the Highway Steward had been doing this in the Winsford area. It was also stressed that in certain situations there was a responsibility for landowners to clear drainage ditches and outfalls so that the water could flow freely. This would involve machinery and was outside the scope of a single operative.

Dulverton Town Council had been paid £300 to cover the inspection fees and costs already incurred. A purchase order had been raised to pay Dulverton Town Council to proceed with the jetting requests. Christine stated she was waiting for the money to be deposited before proceeding with the work, bearing in mind the Council’s current financial situation.

- **Small Works (Capital)**

A proportion of the Capital budget had been spent on the supply of Grit Bins. There was money remaining which could be used to fund identified projects that had been submitted in the previous year. There would be no funding available after March 31, 2024.

Dulverton – (High Street outside Acorn Antiques). Priority Give Way traffic management installation. (Previously a bollard was requested but existing street scene could not accommodate this). Kate Brown is now progressing and awaiting costs.

Cutcombe – Traffic Regulation Order. Extension of 20mph speed limit. Cutcombe are awaiting costs but have already paid deposit and part funded. It was agreed that some match-funding could be made from the devolved funding budget once costs are known. Kate Brown asked to forward the costs as soon as possible.

7. Winter Maintenance

The Highway Steward had been proactively clearing the vegetation from grit bins in various parishes, in anticipation of them being filled.

Cllr Pugsley advised that as filling of the grit bins was not a statutory service of Somerset Council but was a priority on the Exmoor Highways network this might be one area that parishes should consider precepting for.

8. Recommendations to the Exmoor LCN (SP)

- To continue with the Highways sub-group meetings beyond the life of the pilot scheme which is due to end on the 31 March 2024. This to be supported by the area parish representatives and the relevant Highways officers from Somerset Council.
- The Exmoor LCN considers working with the neighbouring LCN area of Minehead and Watchet to share the services of a Highway Steward. This to be evaluated once costs are known and the operational procedures are finalised.

Feedback to Somerset Council – It was vitally important that the work of the Exmoor LCN was fed back to Somerset Council so that it influenced the decision-making process. This would ensure that communities were not adversely economically disadvantaged by the activities of the Council and could inform on how local works could be undertaken to minimise disruption. An example quoted was that during the recent utilities work undertaken in Dulverton when the roads were closed or diverted, there had been a 30% reduction in takings for High Street businesses. Over a continued period, this was unsustainable.

9. Dates and Venues for meetings going forward

The public meeting to inform communities on the B3224 Roundwater Scheme to be held at the Moorland Hall on 29 November. Doors open at 7pm for a start at 7.30pm.

Exmoor LCN Date – The Moorland Hall, Cutcombe	Proposed Highways Sub-Group Date – Dulverton Sports Pavilion
Thursday 11 January 2024 at 7pm	Friday 23 February 2024, at 10am
Thursday 7 March 2024 at 7pm	Friday 19 April 2024, at 10am.
Thursday 9 May 2024 at 7pm	

10. Meeting closed at 1:20pm

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B3224 Roundwaters' Steel Sheet Piled (SSP) Retaining Wall Embankment Stabilisation Scheme.

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29th November 2023_{Rev6}



Somerset
Council

Welcome

Welcome, on behalf of Somerset Council, to this presentation for the “B3224 Roundwaters’ Steel Sheet Piled (SSP) Retaining Wall Embankment Stabilisation” scheme.

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I know you all would like to join me in expressing our thanks to colleagues from SC, WSP and Walters for joining us this evening.

May I ask you all to reserve questions until the “Time for Questions” section at the end of this evening’s presentation.

Thank you.

Evening's Format

- Introductions
- Background (Led by SC)
- Myths and Misconceptions (Led by SC)
- Actions Being Progressed (Led by SC)
- The Journey So Far (Led by SC)
- The Design (Led by WSP)
- The Construction (Led by Walters Group)
- Time For Questions (Questions from the floor)
- Finish 9:00pm

Introductions

Somerset Council

- **Paul Tucker** – Bridges and Structures' Service Manager
- **Paul Nation** – Bridges and Structures' Team Leader and Senior Bridge Engineer (Lead Scheme Officer)
- **Ross Matthews** – Bridges and Structures' Team Leader and Senior Bridge Engineer (Lead Site Officer)

Introductions

Somerset Council

- **Luke Green** – Principal Street Works Officer
- **Sam Murrell** – Specialist Town & Parish Liaison Officer

Introductions

WSP's Design Team (Consultant)

- **Rob Benson** – Geotech/Structures Design Lead
- **Chris Uzzell** – Highways/Drainage Design Lead

Introductions

Walters Group's Construction Team (Contractor)

- **Jim Webb** – Regional Director
- **Richard Scammell** – Contracts Manager
- **Dan Harrison** – Project Manager
- **Joe Sullivan** – Site Agent

Background

- During the autumn of 2021 the embankment supporting the B3224, between Exford and Wheddon Cross at Roundwaters, collapsed.
- This occurred following storm and rainfall events that caused a large tree to fall and a significant portion of the embankment and carriageway to fail.
- A single lane closure was subsequently installed to prevent highway users running close to the exposed and unstable carriageway edge and the steep drop beyond.



Background

- Traffic management is still in place.
- WSP (the Council's Consultant) was engaged in May 2022 to undertake a feasibility study and a steel sheet piled (SSP) retaining wall stabilisation has been designed.
- The design includes road drainage improvements, culvert repairs, new outfalls to Larcombe Brook, Vehicle Restraint System and carriageway resurfacing.
- This solution was presented to the LCN on 19th May 2023 and circulated to the affected landowner.



Myths and Misconceptions

There have been some “soundbites” in circulation.

- This is a Capital scheme. The reports about the Council’s financial situation are in respect of Revenue funding and funded schemes. The funding for this scheme is secured.
- Traffic Management has been on site since October 2021, just over two years. A long time but not the three years quoted recently.
- Safety is paramount – squeezing traffic through the construction site is not safe and will be unfeasible (more on that later).

Myths and Misconceptions

- Weekend working.
- Night working.
- Why not keep the temporary Traffic Lights in place permanently?

Actions Being Progressed

- Openreach Cable Realignment Works – this will take place on week commencing 2nd January 2024 in advance of the main works.
- Ordinary Water Course Consent – EA consultation ongoing.
- Diversion Route and Rat Running – Special signage and consideration to both Oldrey Lane and Thorne Lane being undertaken (More on diversion routes later).

The Journey So Far

Some of the activities that have been undertaken up to this point are, in no particular order:

- ✓ Approval in Principle (AIP)
- ✓ Arboricultural Survey and Report
- ✓ Contractor Engagement
- ✓ Design
- ✓ Environmental and Ecological Advance Site Activities
- ✓ Existing Openreach Poles Moved
- ✓ Feasibility and Options Study

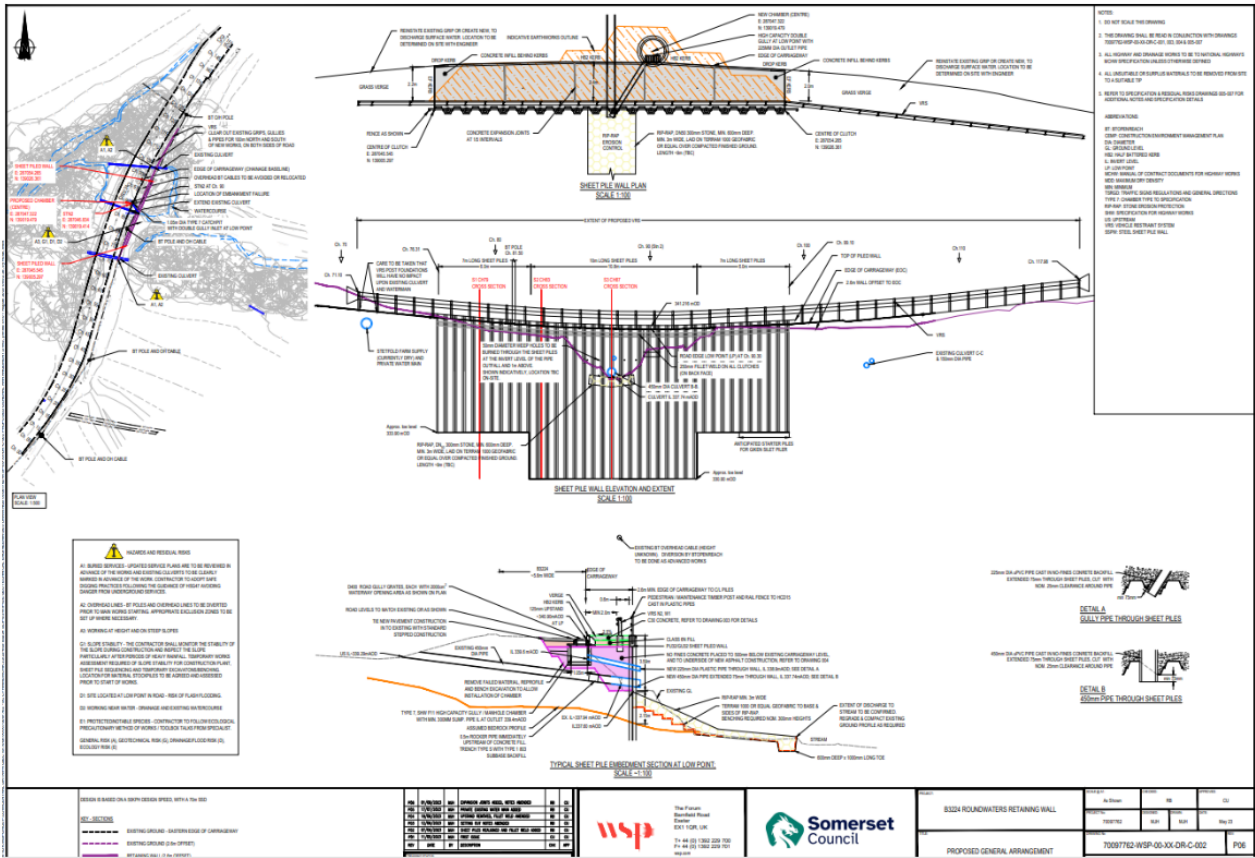
The Journey So Far

- ✓ Ground Investigation and Report
- ✓ Liaison and Updates with Local Community Network (LCN), Councillors, etc
- ✓ Provisional Advance Authorisation (PAA) for Road Space
- ✓ Preliminary Ecology Appraisal (PEA)
- ✓ Stage 1/2 (Feasibility/Detail Design) Safety Audit
- ✓ Tender Documents Preparation Including Drawings, Pre-Construction Information, Bill of Quantities, etc.
- ✓ Tendering, Tender Evaluation and Tender Award

The Journey So Far

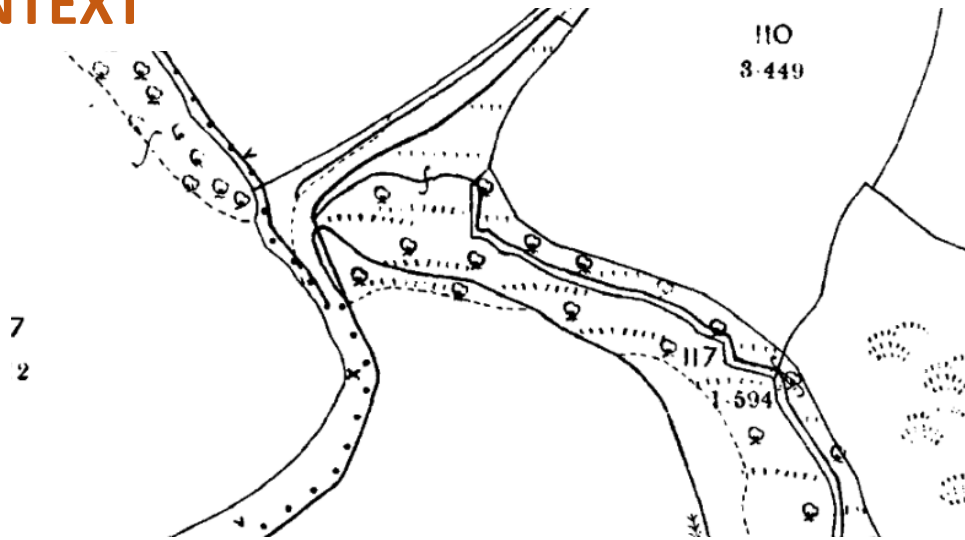
- Public Meeting here tonight to present THE scheme.

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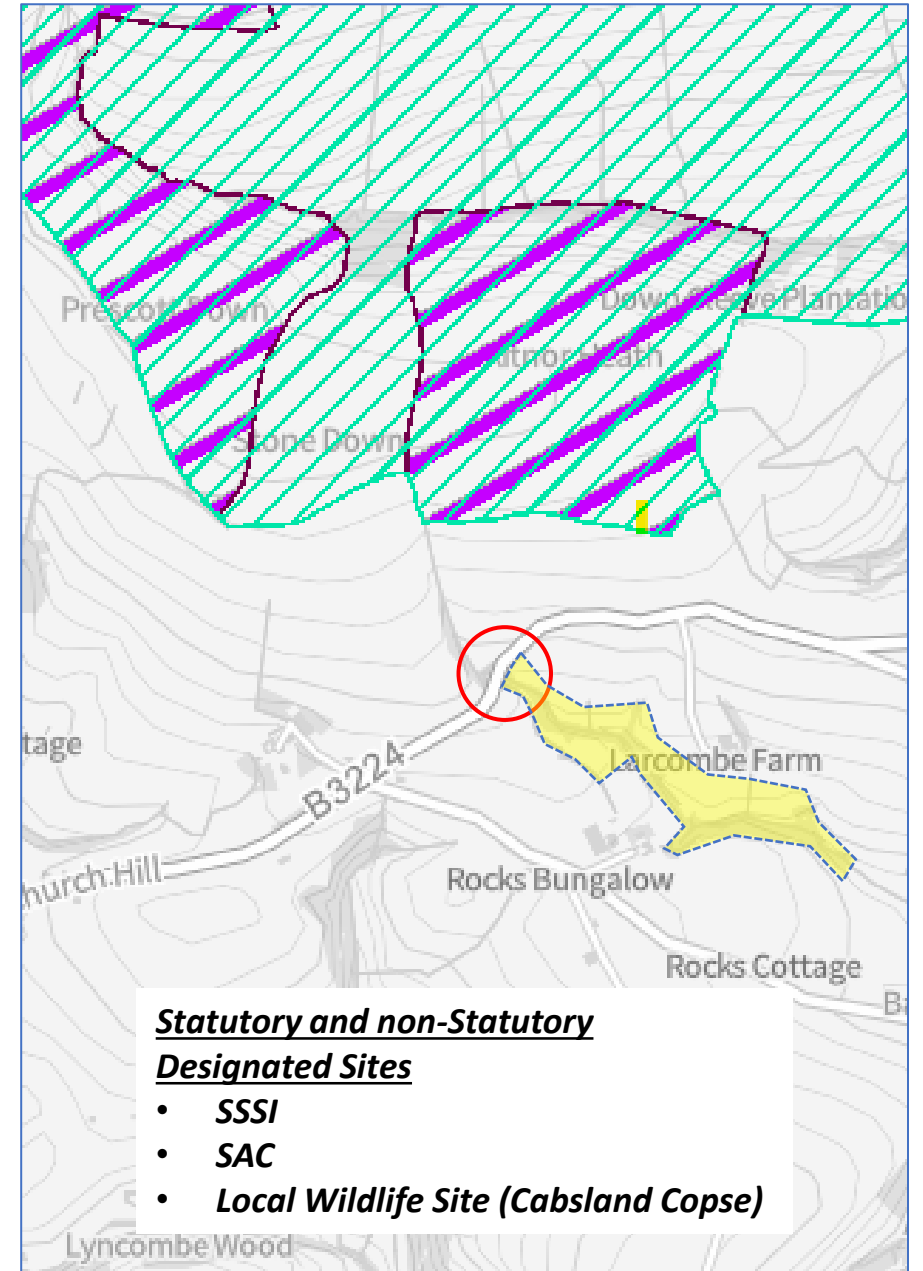
The Designer WSP

CONTEXT



7
2

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TOPOGRAPHICAL SURVEY

→ = water flow routes and direction

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Flowing culverts
(Larcombe Brook)

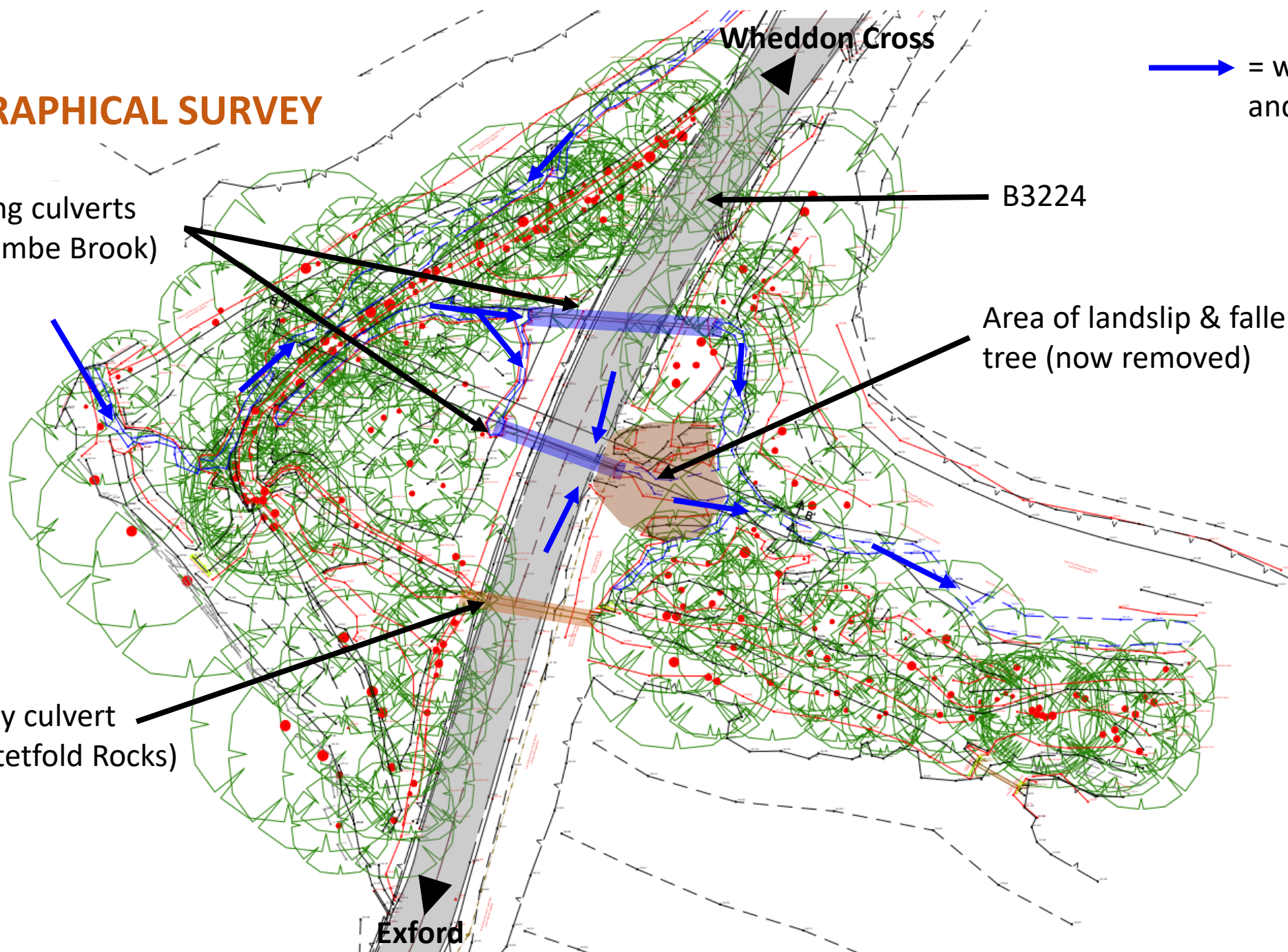
B3224

Area of landslip & fallen tree
(now removed)

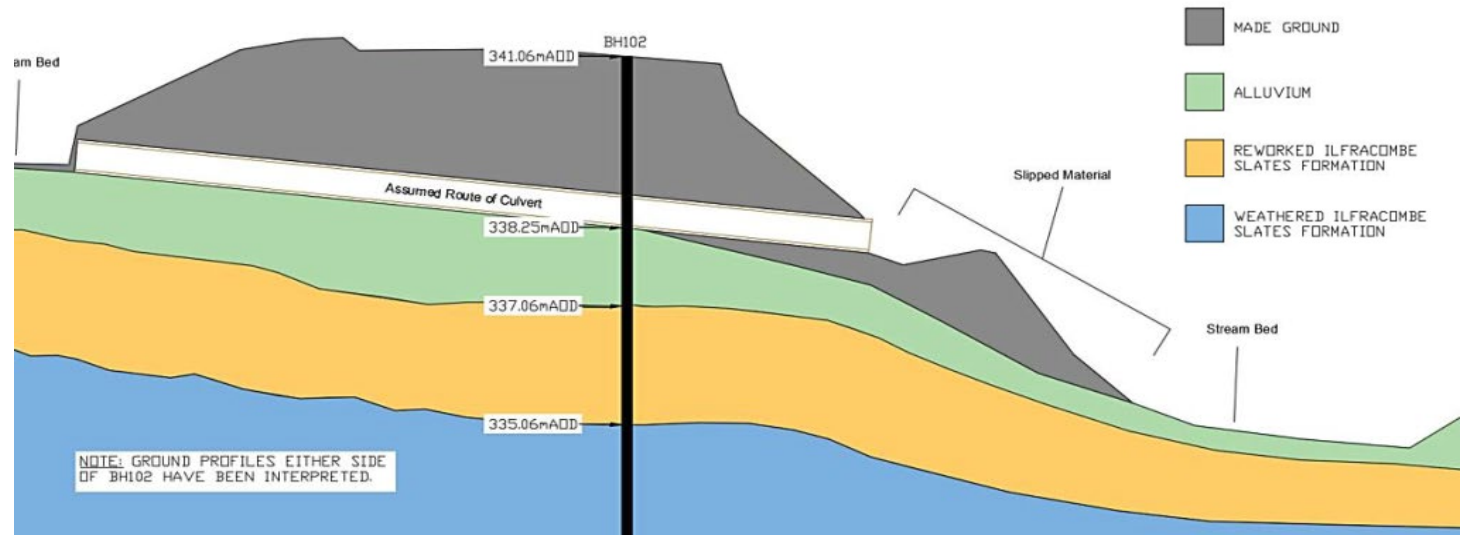
Dry culvert
(Stetfold Rocks)

Wheddon Cross

Exford



GROUND INVESTIGATION

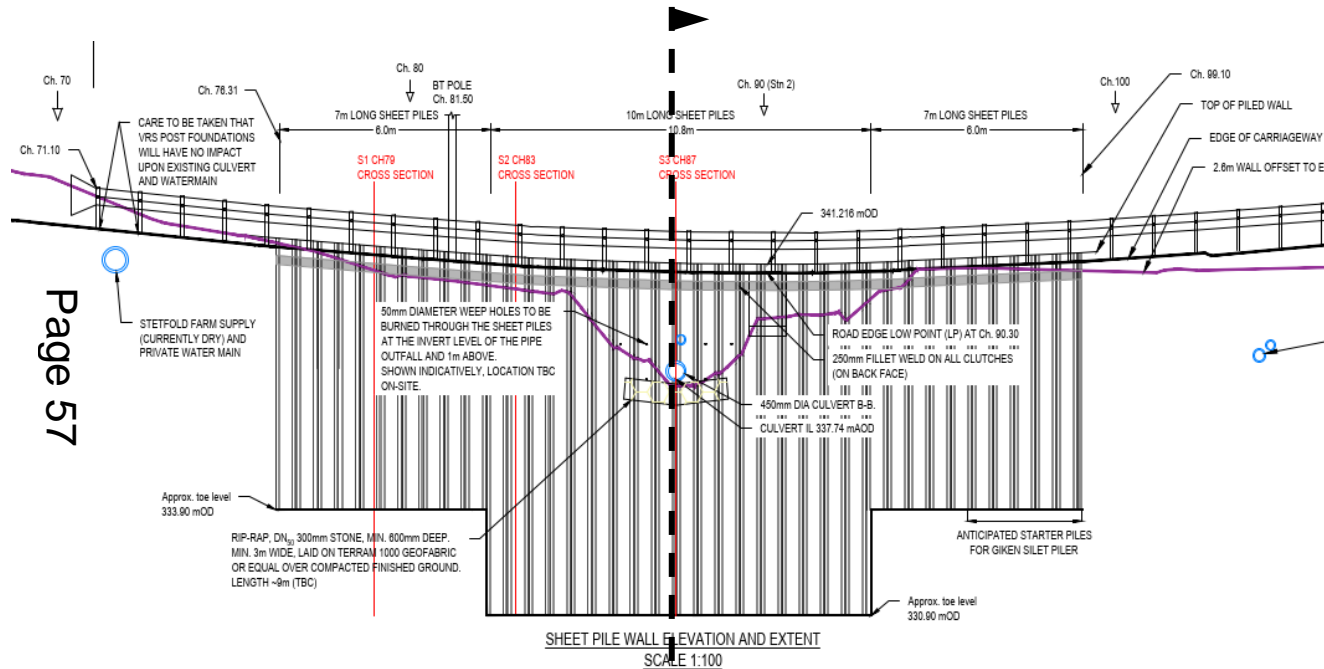


ECOLOGY SURVEYS & SUPERVISION



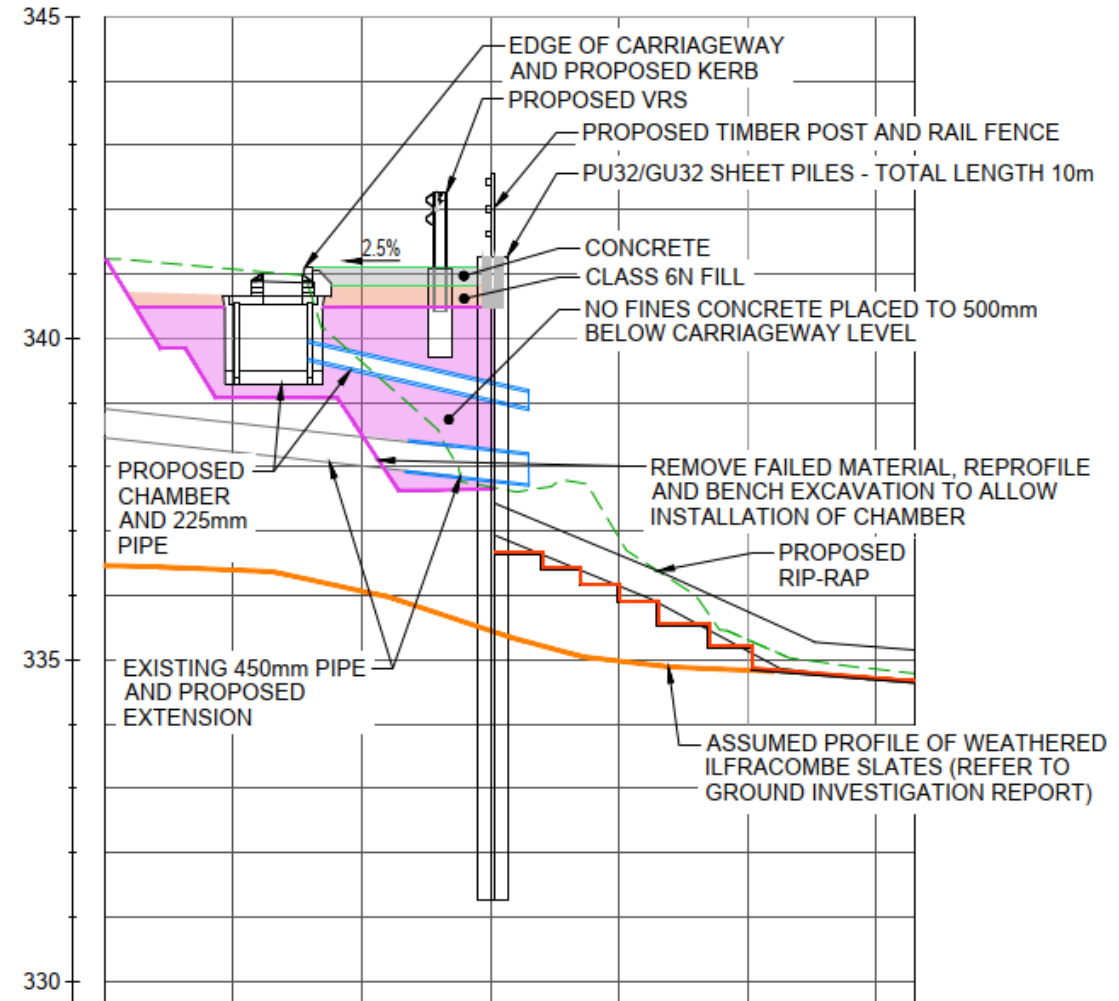
SOLUTION – SHEET PILED RETAINING WALL

ELEVATION

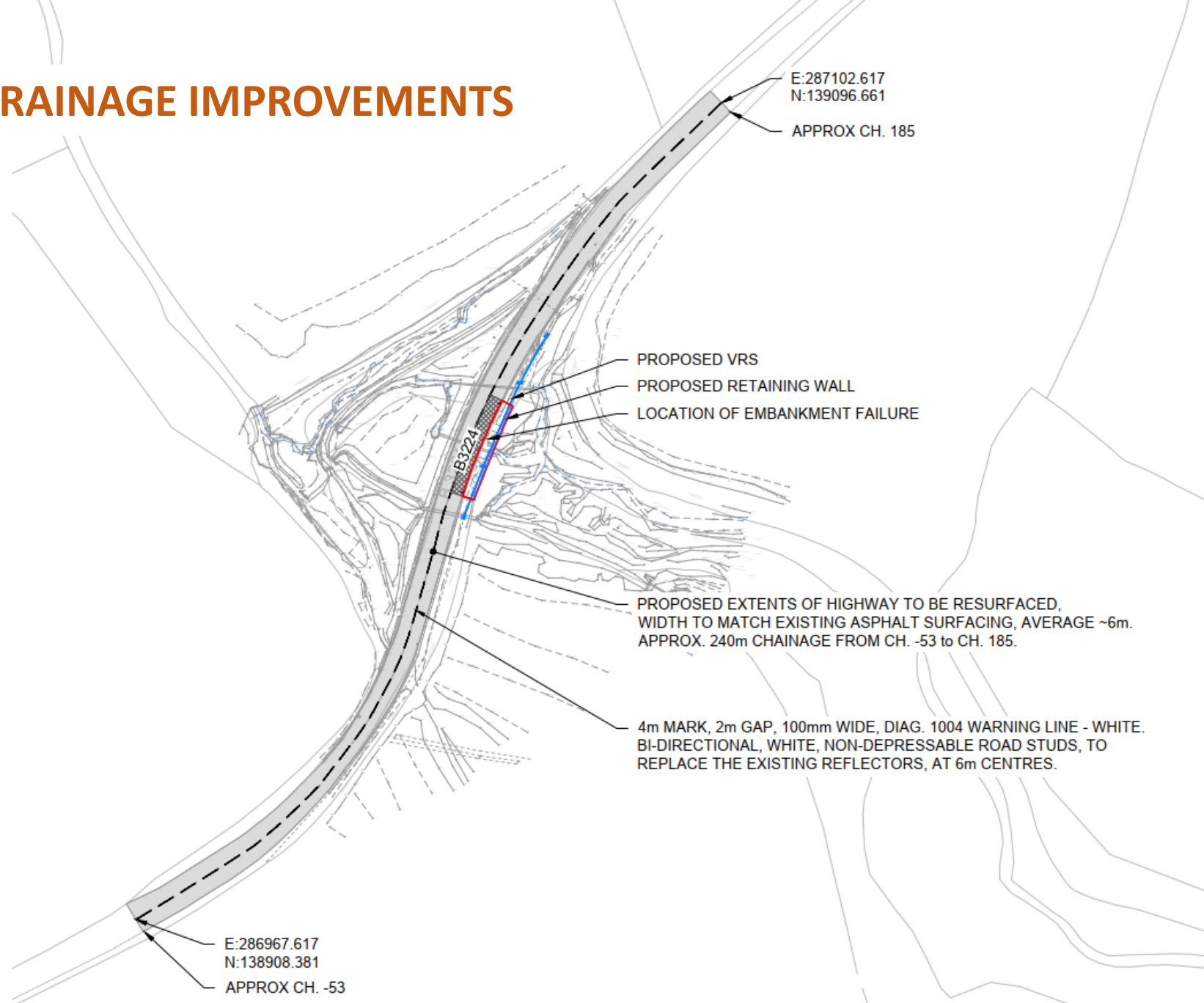


Section Line

CROSS SECTION



HIGHWAYS & DRAINAGE IMPROVEMENTS



The Contractor Walters Group

Who are we

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Jim Webb
Regional Director



Richard Scammell
Contracts Manager



Dan Harrison
Project Manager



Joe Sullivan
Site Agent

AGENDA

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1. Introduction to Walters
2. Previous Similar Experience
3. Roundwaters Project
4. Scope of Works
5. Specialist works/equipment
6. Rd closure/diversion route
7. Environmental Factors
8. Supply chain



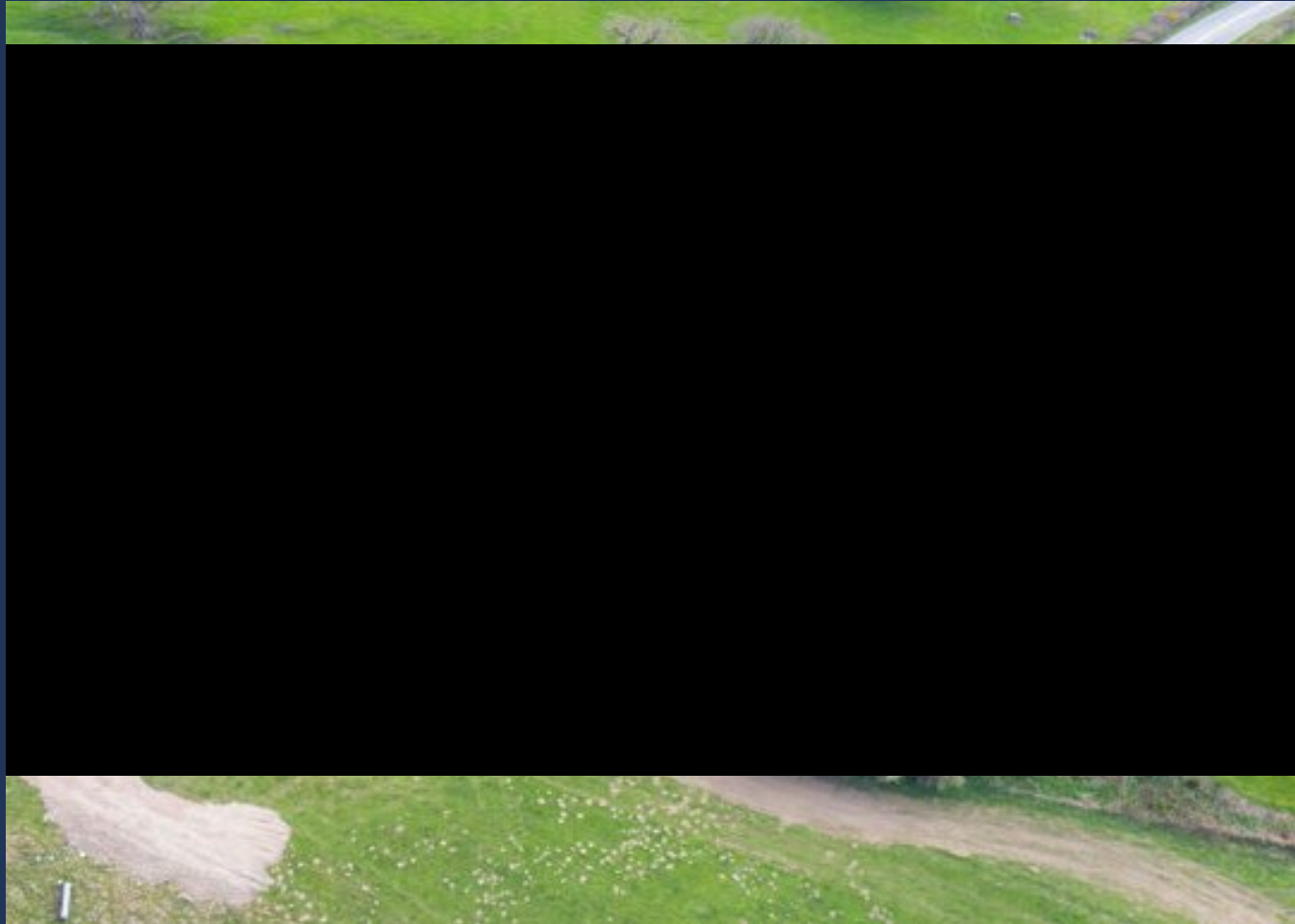


INTRODUCTION

- Founded in 1982 – 40 years in business
- Group turnover £150M
- South-west Head Quarters in Avonmouth
- Strong working relationship with Somerset Council
- Almost 3 years on Somerset structures framework
- Directly employed, local workforce

RECENT SIMILAR WORKS

A46 Coopers Hill Southern Corner



- Gloucestershire CC
- Full closure of A46
- Bored pile retaining wall solution
- Carriageway reconstruction
- Completed and road re-opened on time

Northbound



Southbound



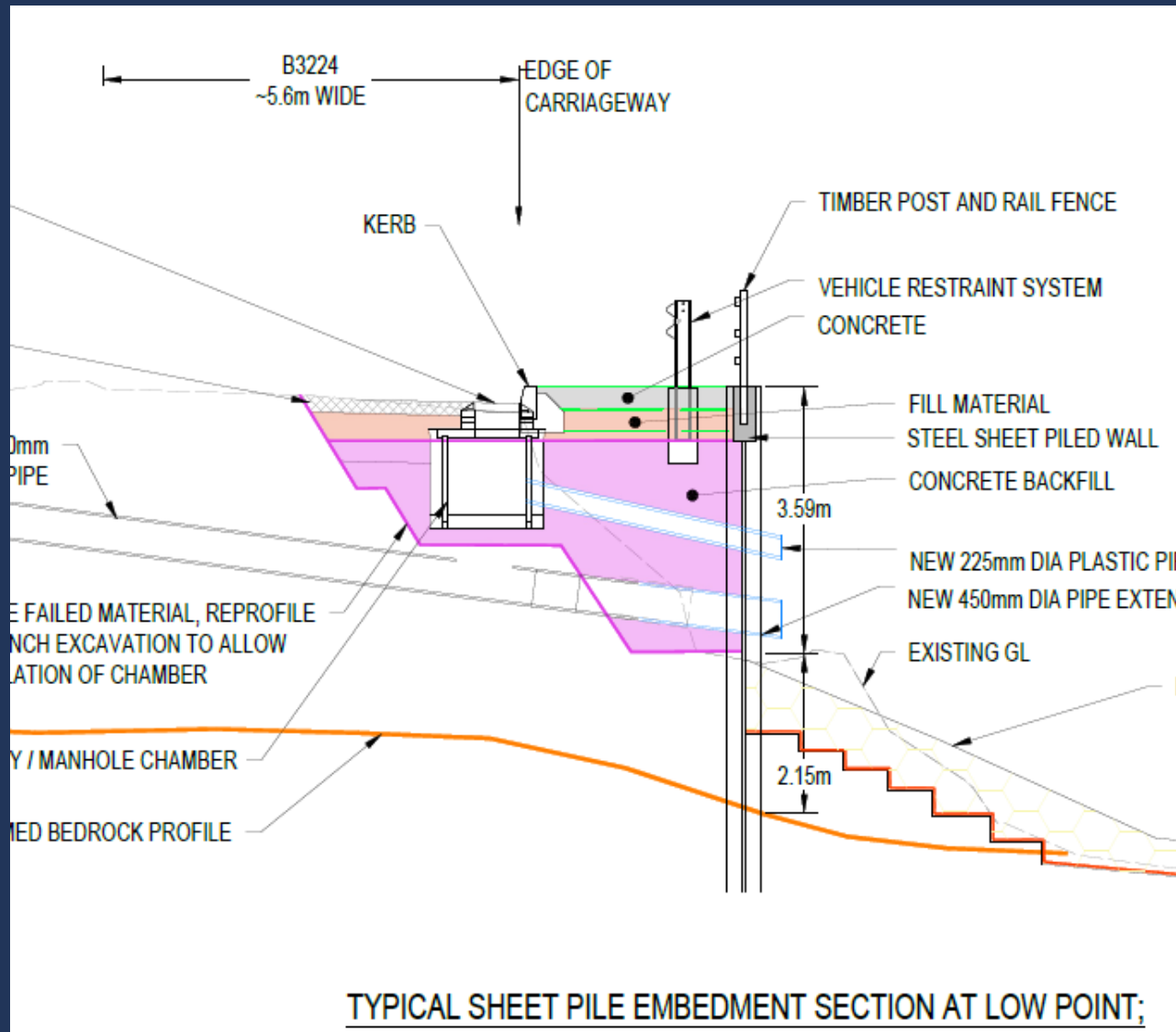
ROUNDWATERS

Project Information

- **Landslip remediation**
- **Enabling works completed in Autumn 2023**
- **Sheet piled solution**
- **Carriageway reconstruction**
- **Start on site: 2nd January 2024**
- **Completion: 10th May 2024**
- **Duration: 19 weeks**

ROUNDWATERS

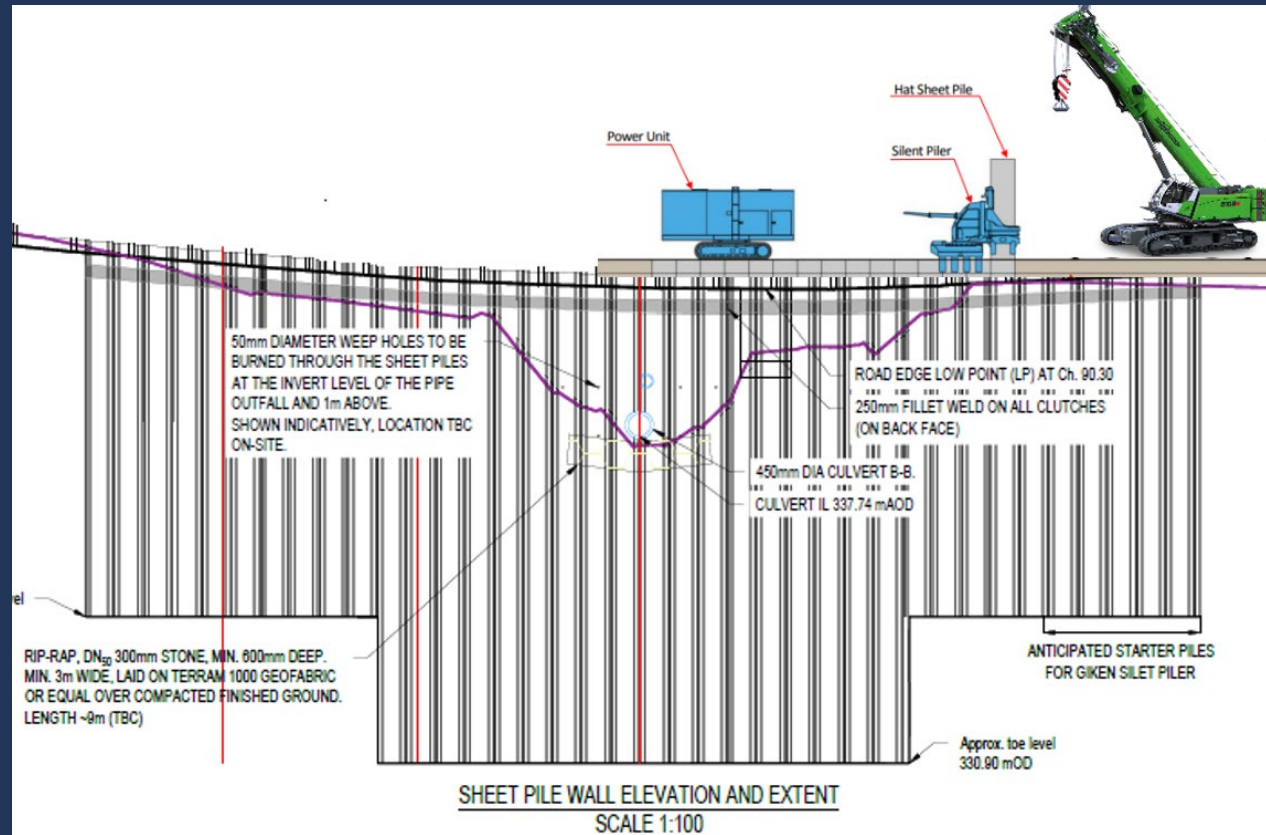
Activity	Jan-24	Feb-24	Mar-24	Apr-24	May-24
ESTABLISH ROAD CLOSURE AND DIVERSION ROUTE	02/01/2024				
BT OPENREACH UNDERTAKE OVERHEAD CABLE DIVERSION					
WALTERS' SITE MOBILISATION, INCLUDING WATERCOURSE MANAGEMENT					
EARTHWORKS PRE-PILING (RECOVER SLIPPED MATERIAL, INSTALL EROSION CONTROL, CIVILISE EMBANKMENT)					
STEEL SHEET PILING INSTALLATION (INCLUDING INSTALL TEMPORARY WORKING PLATFORMS)					
CIVILS WORKS (CULVERT EXTENSION, NEW DRAINAGE GULLY, BACKFILL, CONCRETE FOOTWAY, KERBS, TIMBER FENCE)					
VEHICLE RESTRAINT SYSTEM INSTALLATION					
RE-SURFACING AND ROAD MARKINGS					
SITE DE-MOBILISATION					
REMOVE ROAD CLOSURE AND DIVERSION ROUTE					10/05/2024



ROUNDWATERS

Scope of Works:

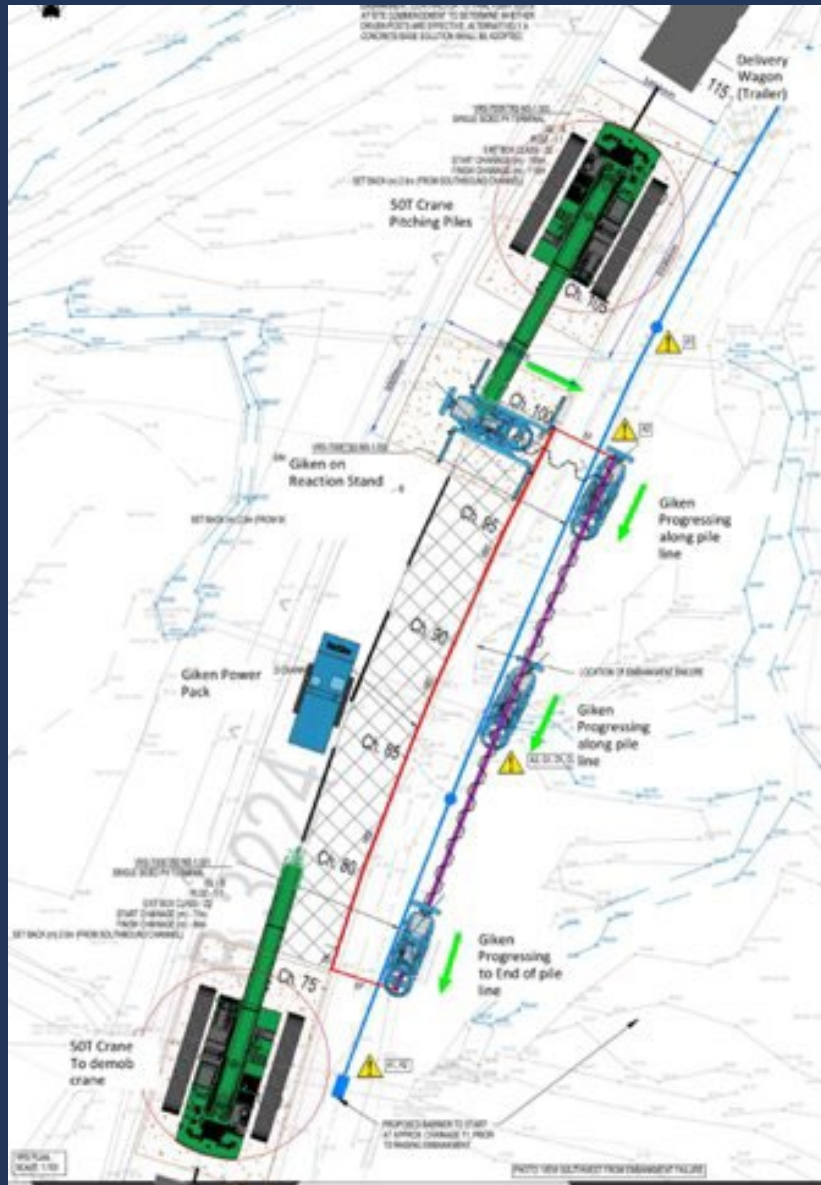
- Mobilise to site
- Establish diversion route
- Watercourse management & environmental controls
- Recover slip material and remove
- Install sheet piled solution
- Reconstruct carriageway
- Install VRS system



ROUNDWATERS

Specialist sheet piling works:

- Giken Supercrush
- Very efficient installation method
- Low noise
- Low vibration
- Environmentally friendly
- Cost effective solution



ROUNDWATERS

Specialist sheet piling works:

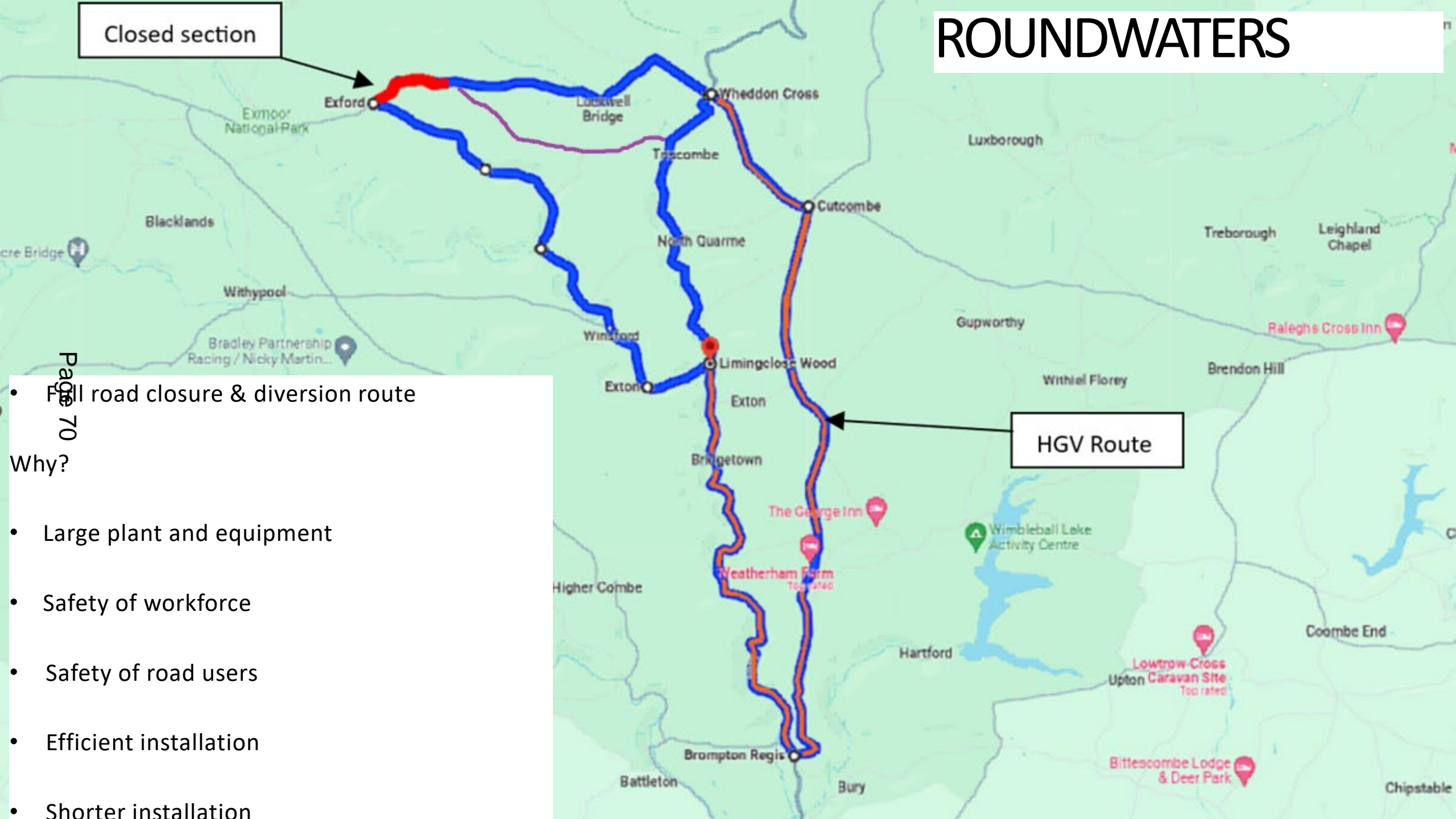
- Giken Supercrush
- Very efficient installation method
- Low noise
- Low vibration
- Environmentally friendly
- Cost effective solution

GIKEN SUPERCRUSH SILENT PILING

How to design and install a GIKEN SUPERCRUSH SILENT PILING

ROUNDWATERS

Closed section



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Why?

- Full road closure & diversion route
- Large plant and equipment
- Safety of workforce
- Safety of road users
- Efficient installation
- Shorter installation

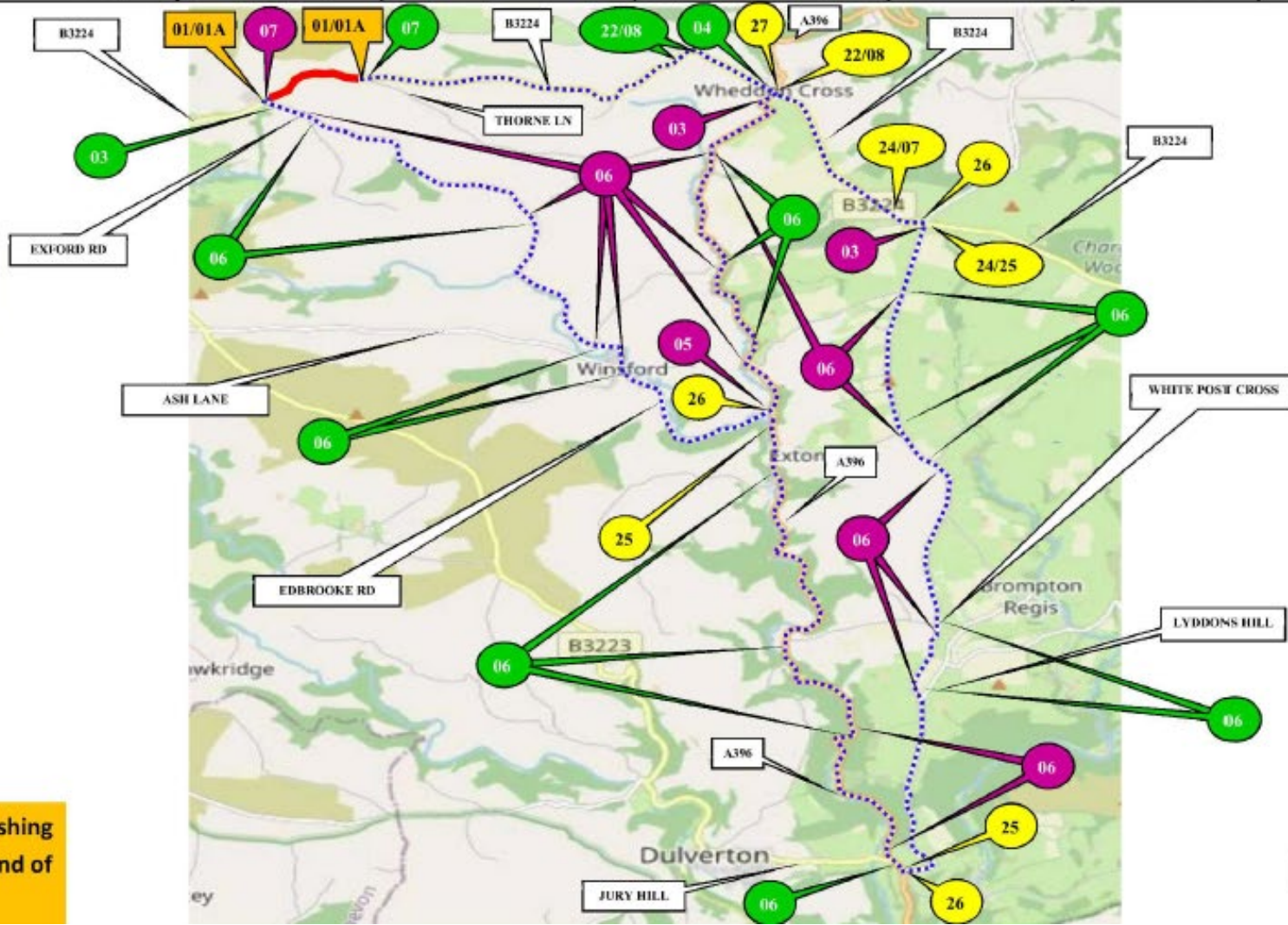
Key 01A ADVANCED WARNING ACCESS TO ROAD AHEAD CLOSED ON ___ TO ___ FOR ___ DAY(S) FROM ___ TO ___	 01	 02	 04	 06	 08	 10	 12	 14	 15
		 03	 05	 07	 09	 11	 13		

22 ROAD AHEAD CLOSED ACCESS AS FAR AS THORNE LANE NO THROUGH ROUTE

24 HGV'S B3224 CLOSED AHEAD FOR EXFORD FOLLOW DIVERSION

26 HGV B3224 DIVERTED TRAFFIC

27 HGV B3224 DIVERTED TRAFFIC



16 ROAD AHEAD CLOSED

17 ROAD AHEAD CLOSED

Both ends of closure

Barriers, cones and flashing lamps required each end of road closure



ROUNDWATERS

Environmental factors:

- Planned and executed to avoid negative impact
- Watercourse management
- Endangered species
- Low noise solution
- Low vibration solution
- Keep surrounding road network clean
- Recycling of soils and granular arisings



ROUNDWATERS

Supply chain:

- Directly employed, local labour
- Locally sourced supply chain
- Use of recycled arisings from project
- Utilising local accommodation and business
- Supported by 4 specialist sub- contractors:
 - Traffic management
 - Sheet piling
 - Vehicle Restraint System
 - Road Surfacing



THANK YOU

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Rockingham House,
Rockingham South, Smoke
Lane, Avonmouth BS11 0YA



0117 9827400



www.walters-group.co.uk

We look forward to working for you

Time for Questions

If there are any questions that have not been answered this evening for:-

Technical queries email

BRIDGES@SOMERSET.GOV.UK

Press and media queries email

PRESSOFFICE@SOMERSET.GOV.UK

Bridges@somerset.gov.uk

**Thank you for your time.
Good night and safe journey home.**



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Bridges@somerset.gov.uk

Minutes of the Exmoor Public Meeting on the B3224 Roundwater Scheme, Cutcombe

Held on Thursday 29 November 2023,

At the Moorland Hall, Cutcombe

The doors opened at 7pm so that attendees could view plans and details of the scheme. Somerset Council officers, the WSP design team and Walters, the contractor, were available to answer questions and talk through any issues. Handouts, briefing sheets and a slide pack of the presentation were available to take away.

The meeting started at 7.33pm.

Present from Somerset Council

Cllr Steven Pugsley – Chair of the Exmoor LCN

Cllr Frances Nicholson – Exmoor Division representative

Paul Tucker – Bridges and Structures' Service Manager

Paul Nation – Bridges and Structures' Team Leader (Lead Scheme Officer – Design and Office) and SC presenter.

Ross Matthews - Bridges and Structures' Team Leader (Lead Site Officer – Site Works and Construction)

Luke Green – Principal Street Works Officer

Sam Murrell – Specialist Town & Parish Liaison / Interim LCN Link Officer

Present from WSP – Design Team (Consultant)

Rob Benson – Geotechnical / Structures Design Lead and WSP presenter

Chris Uzzell – Highways / Drainage Design Lead

Present from Walters Group Construction Team (Contractor)

Jim Webb – Regional Director and joint Walters presenter

Richard Scammell – Contracts Manager and joint Walters presenter

Dan Harrison – Project Manager and joint Walters presenter

Joe Sullivan – Site Agent and joint Walters presenter

Also Present were 44 other attendees including:

Ian Liddell Grainger (MP), Jon & Angie Levenson, Andy Forward and Roger Foxwell (Cutcombe PC), Alison Blackmore (Cutcombe School), Nicola Stenner (Exford First School), Oliver Edwards, Mike Ellicott & Jeremy Hickman (Exford PC), Colin Wilkins & Ian Brooks (Winsford PC), Roger Webber, Martyn Atkins, Susan Atkins, Chris Richards, Eric Norman, David Butt, Ernie Toop, John Anson, Lloyd Parry, Miranda Taylor, Wendy Schofield, Ian Whybow, Katherine Daniel, Diane Stevens, Adrian Branfield, Alex Stevens, Steve Green, Peter Gibson, Maddy Harrison-Hall, Robert Martin, Adrian Branfield, Sarah Buchanan, Carrie Golledge, Peter Huntley (Exmoor Farmers Livestock Auctions), SC Griffin, Jeremy Andrews, John & Kathryn Tucker, Mr and Mrs Colwill, Bryan Stevens and Serena Colwill.

1. Presentation on the Scheme

The team delivered a presentation on the specifics of the scheme and how it was going to be delivered. [The presentation slides are available to view here.](#)

During the presentation, Luke Green advised that the map on the diversion route had become slightly skewed on the handout and place names had shifted. The route remained unchanged however and this was available to view on the website.

Once the presentation had concluded, questions were directed to the project team via the Chair.

2. Questions from the Floor

Q. Concern was expressed from the Chair, Cllr Pugsley about the length of time the road would be closed. (19 weeks in total). Was there any room to reduce this, to lessen the impact on local businesses and members of the public? Was there a possibility of evening and weekend working for example?

A. It was important that this work was conducted sequentially, as most of the operational duties could not be overlapped. The heavy machinery was booked via Ivor King who are a specialist in silent piling technology (Giken Supercrush), and there are only a few rigs of this type in the country. All parties were keen to make an early start but there were a variety of environmental and health and safety considerations to take into account. There may be a possibility of weekend working, but it would be dependent on suppliers and sub-contractors' availability as well as the prevailing weather conditions; if possible it would be most likely that weekend working would revolve around tasks that Walters were able to undertake with their own in-house teams directly and it was noted that weekend working is not as productive as weekday working. Working at night was not considered viable due to the severity of the terrain, operating the specialist equipment as well as the ecological reasons highlighted in the presentation.

Cllr Pugsley stressed that weekend working would be viewed favourably by local communities, to reduce the length of time of the closure. If there was any possibility of starting on site earlier too, (once Openreach had completed their work on re-siting their telephone masts), that would be a tremendous benefit. Walters stated that this would be something they would undertake but would require sufficient advance warning to enable the works to be reprogrammed. (Post meeting note – Open Reach are unable to provide any guidance as to when they might complete their activities and hence Walters will be unable to programme in an earlier start).

Q. Peter Huntley (Exmoor Farmers Livestock Auctions) – Was concerned about the lack of consultation with local businesses, especially the Cutcombe Market traders. There will be 16 sale days during the road closure which would result in lengthy delays in getting stock to market. The busiest sheep market of the year

was on May 5, whilst the road was still scheduled to be closed. Oliver Edwards (Exford PC), said this part of the B3224 was one of the busiest on the moor, and the closure would affect all parts of the community. It would impact the two primary schools who shared a school meals service, the school buses, waste and winter maintenance services and emergency vehicles. Many farm vehicles used this road at various times of the day, and it was an essential link to the county border.

A. The road needed to be fixed as it was an essential route across Exmoor. The design had been drawn up and the capital funding granted. It was important that this work was progressed as quickly as possible before the integrity of the road deteriorated further, which might result in an unplanned and unmanaged emergency closure. Future events could cause the road to collapse further. Although the road closure was going to adversely affect the communities for a few months, if it didn't happen then the long-term result could be catastrophic.

School bus service – all pupils would still be collected although they might have a longer diversion. Luke Green would contact the Senior Schools Transport Officer at County Hall to advise on a way forward.

Waste Services – Recycling and waste should still be collected on the usual collection day, but there may be a delay in collection times as the vehicles navigated the diversion. There are, however, no properties within the physical road closure length.

School Meals Service – There are two official diversion routes with one specifically designed to accommodate large HGVs and one for smaller vehicles. Traffic usage of the lanes would be closely monitored to ensure there was no rat-running. If the Streetworks team, acquired evidence of anti-social driving they would consider implementing traffic regulation orders (TRO) and partial road closures in these areas.

Winter Maintenance – It was important that the roads being used for diverted traffic were adequately gritted and safe to travel. This included the alternative access onto the moor from Porlock to Exford.

Local Businesses – The diversion signage would advise that local businesses were open as usual in general but not refer to specific businesses, whilst complying with the regulations and legislation. It was important that the signs did not clutter the pavement and were clear and concise in their wording. Luke Green said he would work with local businesses to ensure this was effectively managed.

General Publicity – The LCN had been consulted and scheme updates circulated. The purpose of the evening meeting was to inform the community of the works and their effects.

Q. Jon Levenson (Cutcombe PC) was concerned about slippage times. The road closure was operating for long enough, but what happened if there were delays in the operating schedule such as machinery breakdown?

A. Walters stated that they had undertaken similar schemes in the past and had faced various issues and challenges that such a scheme presents. This ranged from adverse weather (ice and snow), machinery breakdown, supply chain difficulties and reduced workforce on site. They had confidence in Ivor King who supplied the specialist piling equipment, that spare parts and machinery could be made available in the event of a breakdown since Ivor King, could not afford their plant to be standing and not working on this or other sites. This should enable them to remain on schedule. If the weather was favourable and supplies could be sourced there was the possibility to extend into the weekend, to regain any lost time. Contingencies had been built into the operational programme.

Once the piling is completed on site, Walters will have a better idea of the remaining time needed. The Bridges team will be kept constantly updated and the timeline could be reviewed if gains were made or losses occurred.

Q. Ian Brooks (Winsford PC) had submitted a question prior to the meeting about monitoring traffic coming through Winsford village as this was on the diversion route.

A. Luke Green advised that speed monitoring cameras were going to be placed at strategic locations in the village to monitor the traffic flow, There would also be a TRO on Upcott Lane, Winsford to reduce the speed of vehicles coming through the village.

Q. Roger Webber/Oliver Edwards (Cutcombe residents) asked if the Highways team were going to conduct any work on Longrun Corner whilst the road closure was in operation. This was just up from the ravine area and caused a pinch-point on the highway. Large vehicles had difficulty passing here and it seemed an optimum time to do the work.

A. There was nobody from the Highways team present to address this question, but Luke Green advised that he would take it back to the area office. It was also stressed that due to Somerset Council's financial pressures there was unlikely to be money in the revenue budget to fund any additional highways work unless it was deemed to be a road safety issue.

Q. Adrian Brandworth (Hawkridge resident) advised that he knew of a secure compound where spoil and supplies could be stored by Walters if they wished to use it?

A. Dan Harrison agreed to follow up with him directly after the meeting.

Q. Jeremy Hickman (Exford PC) – Devon CC are also undertaking roadworks over the border at this time which will have an impact on the Somerset Highway. Their diversions normally take them along the B3224 and incorporate where our

road closure is operating. There is likely to be confusion and conflicting signage. How do we mitigate for this?

A. Devon CC will be changing their diversion routes to avoid the B3224. All signage must comply with UK standards so cannot be colour coded or changed to differentiate between the routes. Where there is a clash, it has been agreed that some symbols will be added to the standard signs so that road users can understand what route to follow as was normal practice.

Q. The presentation seemed to imply that there was a pedestrian barrier and pavement being installed at the site. Why did the specification make provision for this when there wasn't one there previously?

A. There is no footpath being installed. There is a pedestrian barrier being built along the edge of the piled wall behind the vehicle restraint system. This is required for future safe inspection and routine maintenance of the new retaining structures i.e. by SC inspection staff and/or their delegated representatives. Design standards require this barrier to prevent potential falls from height.

Q. Mike Ellicott (Exford PC) asked if the Bridges Team had been consulting with the landowners (Tuckers), as they were not aware of current developments?

A. The Tuckers have been kept up to date with the schemes progress and development. A site meeting had taken place that afternoon (29th Nov), between all parties, to discuss a specific matter recently raised unique to their farms. The Tuckers were also present at the meeting. Following that meeting a proposal was being developed.

Q. Please improve communications! Residents were not being kept informed about what was happening. How can we receive regular updates and know what is happening and when?

A. Provide Sam Murrell with your email address. Notes such as the minutes of this meeting, will be sent to you and made available online. There will continue to be regular updates via the Exmoor Local Community Network (LCN) meeting and the Highways subgroup. Somerset Councillors and the parishes will be kept informed as work progresses. Once the project is underway, a further public meeting may be considered.

The final comment of the evening was made about ongoing Highway Maintenance. It was stressed that if there had been adequate grip clearance further up the road, then the water would not have eroded the soil around the base of the tree causing it to topple and placing the Highway at risk.

The notes of the meeting would be circulated as soon as possible. Any further questions or comments should be directed to bridges@somerset.gov.uk.

Press and media queries should be emailed to pressoffice@somerset.gov.uk.

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