

# Great Chesterford

Cycle Route Feasibility Study

April 2014





## Document Control Sheet

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# 1 Background

Essex Highways have been commissioned by the Uttlesford Local Highway panel to undertake a feasibility study to examine what cycle infrastructure can be implemented for the village of Great Chesterford. The primary purpose of this is to connect Great Chesterford with the nearby village of Littlebury and on to Saffron Walden to the south and additionally to connect with any proposed cycle network development in Cambridgeshire to the north.

The need for such cycle network development has been promoted by Great Chesterford parish Council and has gained support from both local District and County Councillors.

## 1.1 Aims

The primary aims of any cycle network improvements are as follows:

- Improved Cycle and Pedestrian Safety by providing safe routes between Great Chesterford, Saffron Walden and Cambridgeshire
- Link schools – lack of footways and cycle ways prevents non-motorised travel particularly between Littlebury and Great Chesterford.
- Encourage leisure access to the countryside by bike
- Improve cycle links to Employment to reduce dependency on car travel

Other considerations:

- 95 new homes are planned for Great Chesterford in the Uttlesford Local Plan
- Provision for future extension of Chesterford Science Park
- South Cambridgeshire cycle network improvements

## 1.2 Setting the scene

### 1.2.1 Great Chesterford

Great Chesterford is situated on the north eastern border of Essex with Cambridgeshire, the village has a population of around 1,400 and where the 1% of the population normally cycle to work (2011 Census). Saffron Walden to the south is the nearest town and is 6 miles away, a journey distance that could quite easily be made by bike given the right infrastructure.

The proximity of the village to Cambridgeshire with many of its residents working in the county makes it likely those living there would be more susceptible to the idea of cycling than other areas of Uttlesford should appropriate infrastructure be put in place.

Analysis of Mosaic market segmentation data based upon a methodology adopted by Transport for London also shows Great Chesterford contains many people in of social economic demographic where they would be open to cycling.

Great Chesterford village is separated from its railway station to the south west by the B1383 London Road, which has a 30mph limit however the generous carriageway widths and relatively straight nature of the road encourage speed. This is demonstrated by the presence of a VAS sign to the village's south along with hatching along the majority of the median within the village to reduce lane widths. Where the B1383 meets Ickleton Road on a near 90 degree bend the road widths are extremely generous giving plenty of options to improve the area for both cyclists and pedestrians in what is a very vehicle dominated space.

Access to the railway station is hampered by the absence of any footway along the station approach road, which is dominated by parked cars due to lack of any official station car park. The access road itself is poorly maintained, further investigation indicates this road is not adopted highway. The station has 8 covered Sheffield stands on the London-bound platform, which for current usage appears adequate.

To the east of Great Chesterford lies Chesterford Science Park, one of a number similar rural employment sites located the area, the site is accessed by a relatively quiet road with footway along its entire length

There have been four recorded personal injury collisions involving cyclists in the Saffron Walden to Great Chesterford corridor over the past five years, all of which were classified as serious. Of those collisions, three were on the B1383 London Road, one of these inside Great Chesterford itself. Whilst the occurrence of these incidents in themselves are not in significant a number to warrant direct remedial action, they do highlight both the presence of cyclists, as well as the rather high speed and car dominated environment.

### **1.2.2 Littlebury**

Located around 3 km away and half way between Great Chesterford and Saffron Walden on the B1383, Littlebury is a relatively compact and small village. Many of the primary age children of the village attend school in Great Chesterford with a shuttle bus being provided as there is no footway along the B1383 in places which discourages both walking and cycling.

The London Road within Littlebury is relatively narrow which discourages speed within the village though a VAS sign has been placed to the south. There is also very limited scope to widen any footway here in any case leave on carriageway cycling likely the only feasible option in Littlebury.

### **1.2.3 Saffron Walden**

Saffron Walden is the nearest large settlement to Great Chesterford with a population of 14,000 and is around 6km away which is still an acceptable cycling distance. The town contains very little cycling infrastructure but benefits from having narrow streets with low speeds along with a number of side streets that are ideal for cyclists.

In between Littlebury and Saffron Walden lies Audley End House, a large 17<sup>th</sup> century house under the stewardship of English Heritage. The house and gardens are a popular tourist attraction and a number of events are held in the grounds throughout the year.

The house and grounds would benefit from improved pedestrian and cyclist access from Saffron Walden and the formalisation of a through route along the northern boundary of the site would both provide this and aid in the creation of a route between Littlebury and Saffron Walden.

Any route improvements would however be subject to the agreement of various parties involved in the ownership, residence and upkeep of Audley End House.

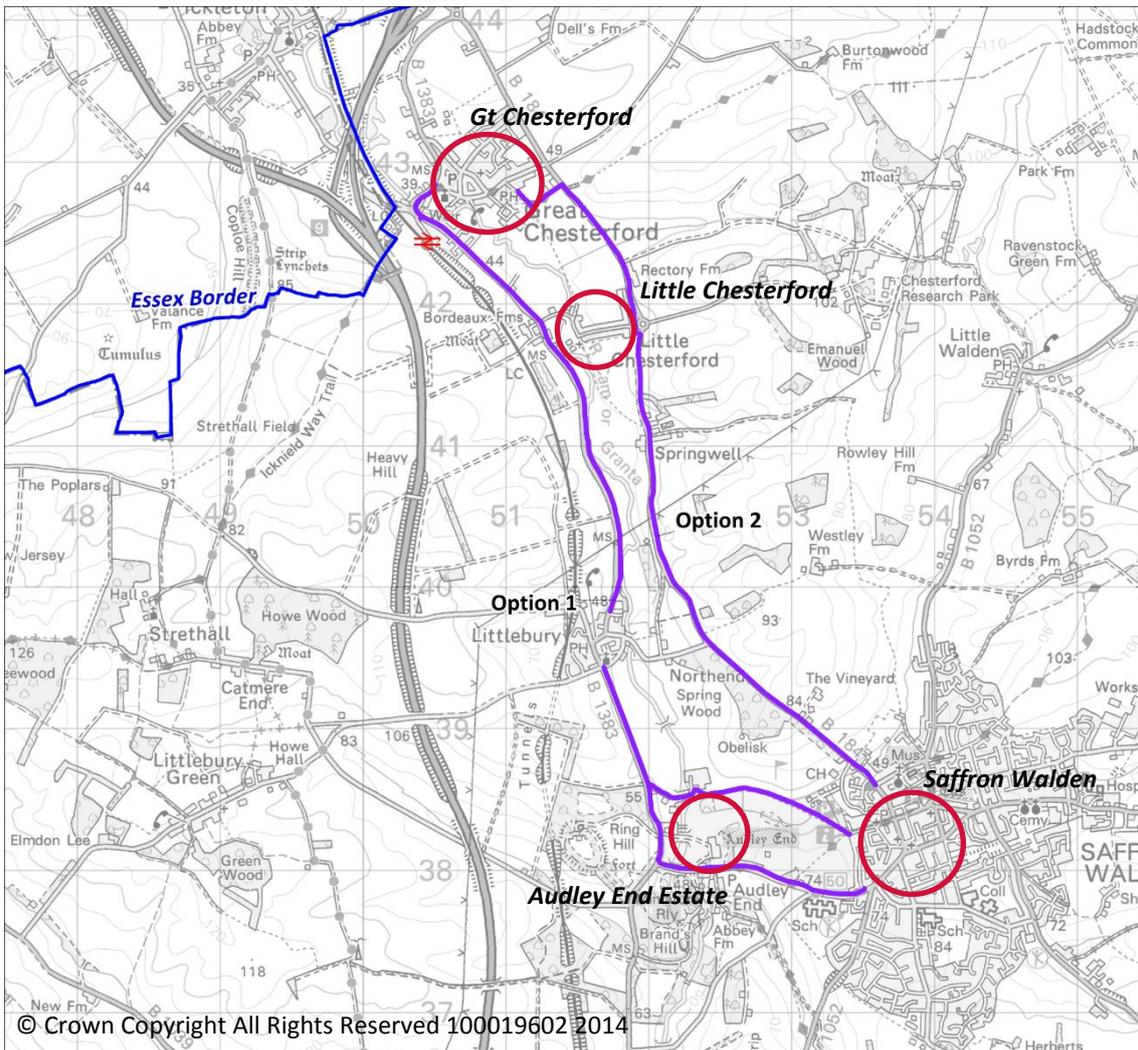
### **1.2.4 South Cambridgeshire**

Across the border into Cambridgeshire contains important employment for the area in the form of various Science Parks, many of which are in quite rural locations. Cambridgeshire County Council recognise the importance of providing for sustainable travel to these sites and are implementing a number of schemes to achieve this. One such scheme is to link Whittlesford Parkway station with Granta Science Park by building a cycleway alongside the A505. As Whittlesford is only one rail stop north of Great Chesterford, it makes sense to link to this. Consideration to signing a route along country lanes to Whittlesford should be made if any significant cycle infrastructure is to be built in Great Chesterford.

## 2 Route Options

Primarily, two separate options for routing cycle network between Gt Chesterford and Saffron Walden have been examined, as suggested by Great Chesterford Parish Council. Option 1 follows the B1383 London Road and Option 2 the B184 Walden Road.

A third option utilising public rights of way along the river Cam for part of the way was also considered but discounted due to land ownership and likely flooding making any solution likely complicated and expensive to deliver.



### 2.1 Option 1 – London Road via Littlebury

A shared use footway/cycleway route from Church Street, Great Chesterford in the north to Saffron Walden in the south. This route involves the widening or creation of footway to the east of the carriageway along the B1383 London Road then either via Audley End House estate or along Spring Hill/Audley End Road.

The benefits of this route are that it serves both Littlebury and Audley End House as well as connecting Great Chesterford village centre with the railway station. The route also has the potential for connecting with the Wenden Road scheme in the south and creating a more complete network.

The risks are that some existing sections have no existing footway at all making it expensive to deliver in places. Routing through Littlebury will have to be on road and therefore less attractive to some potential cyclists. The route has two possible options in the south, either going through or around Audley End House with the former preferred but dependent upon agreement with land owners.

The total costs of option 1 are £1,090,000

## **2.2 Option 2 – B184 Walden Road**

A shared use footway cycleway from Rose Lane in Great Chesterford via Public Rights of Way and along a widened footway adjacent to the B184 Walden Road.

This route serves both Little Chesterford and Chesterford Science Park. However it does not serve Great Chesterford railway station, Littlebury or Audley End House and is costly to deliver in places due to narrow verges and proximity to the boundary wall of Audley End estate.

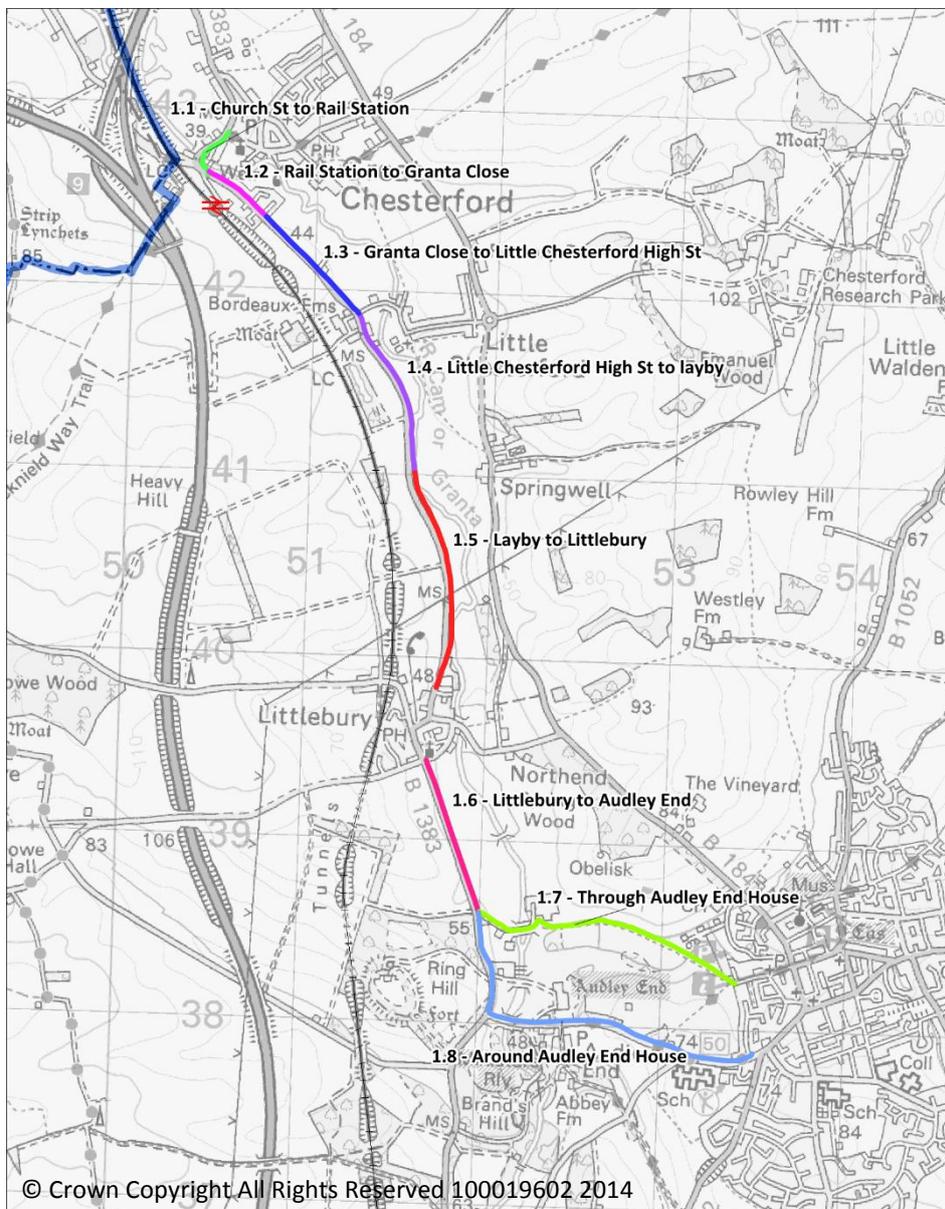
The total costs of option 2 are £2,750,000

### 3 Route Development

Based upon the delivery costs and additional benefits of Option 1 when compared with Option 2, Option 1 has been selected as a preferred route and further developed.

#### 3.1 Option Prioritisation

Due to the scheme cost it is unlikely that the entire scheme from Great Chesterford to Saffron Walden could be funded in one go, the route for the preferred option has been broken into eight more deliverable sections. These sections are shown in the figure below:



The costs for each section are broken down and shown in the table below:

Section	Description	Cost
1.1	Church St to Rail Station	£100,000
1.2	Rail Station to Granta Close	£60,000
1.3	Granta Close to Little Chesterford	£170,000
1.4	Little Chesterford to layby	£260,000
1.5	Layby to Littlebury	£200,000
1.6	Littlebury to Audley End	£200,000
1.7	Through Audley End House	£100,000
1.8*	Around Audley End House	£100,000

\*This is an alternative route should it not be possible to reach an agreement with Audley End Estates

It is important to note that phasing of these sections is essential as to avoid building an 'island' of cycleway that is not connected to any other infrastructure and neither provides for end to end journeys. Outline designs for sections of option 1 can be found in **Appendix A**.

Therefore it is recommended that section 1.1 is prioritised as it provides for an end to end journey between Great Chesterford village and railway station. Section 1.7 should also be investigated further as part of improved pedestrian and cycling access to Audley End House, design works should be funded if this proves to be feasible with land owners. Scheme 1.7 also provides an opportunity for a connection with the Wenden Road cycle scheme which would start to create a wider cycle network for Saffron Walden.

Further sections can then be funded as and when funding becomes available either from the LHP, developers or other sources such as the DfT.

## 4 Delivery and Recommendations

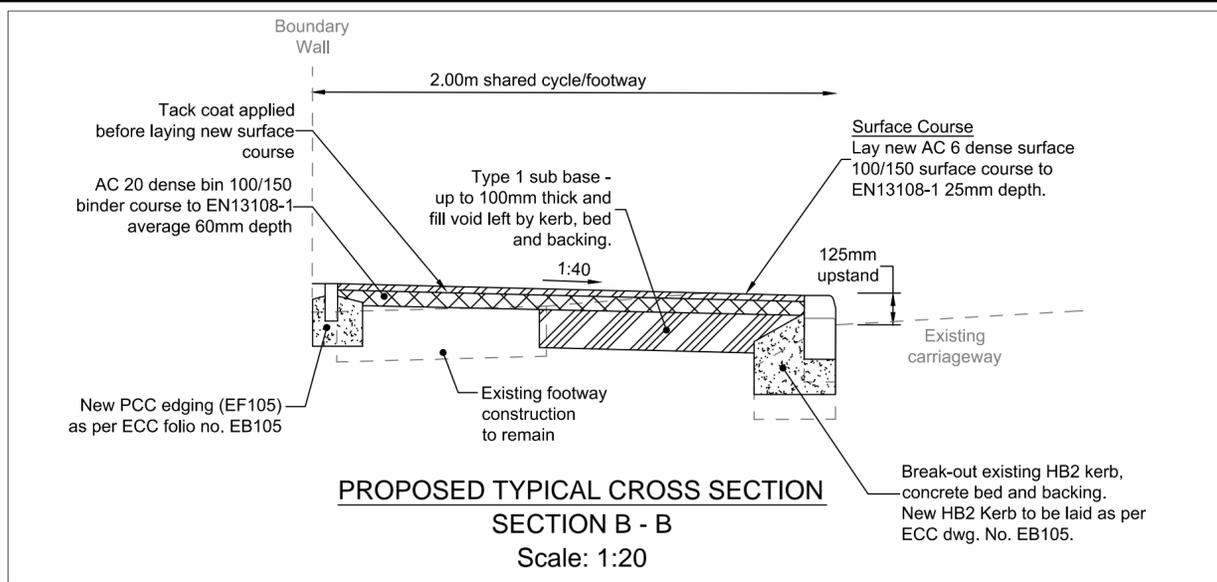
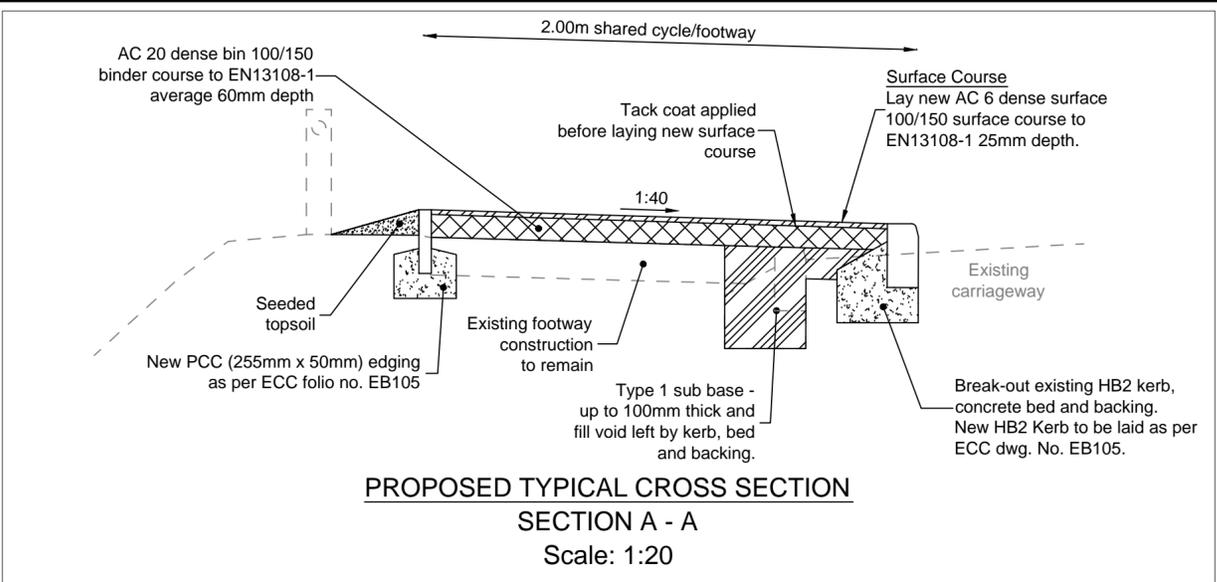
Due to scheme cost and the likely use, the Option 1 route has been further developed as a preferred route. This route has been further broken down into eight more manageable and deliverable sections that could be built over a number of years.

To aid in the funding of this scheme, it is essential that opportunities to gain additional funding via planning gains from developments in the vicinity of the route are taken.

This route whilst useful should not be looked at in isolation. For cycle infrastructure in Uttlesford to be properly prioritised and planned for, a whole District cycle strategy should be commissioned. This will ensure the best value for money and those schemes with the highest impact are delivered. The strategy can also be used to justify further funding as opportunities arise.

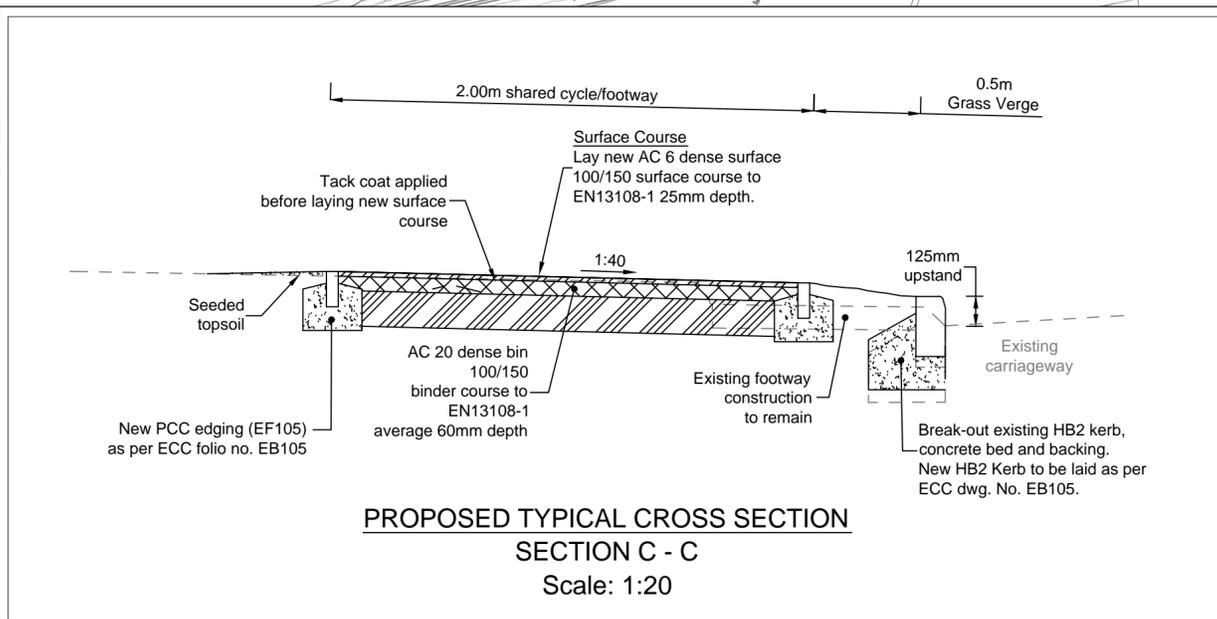
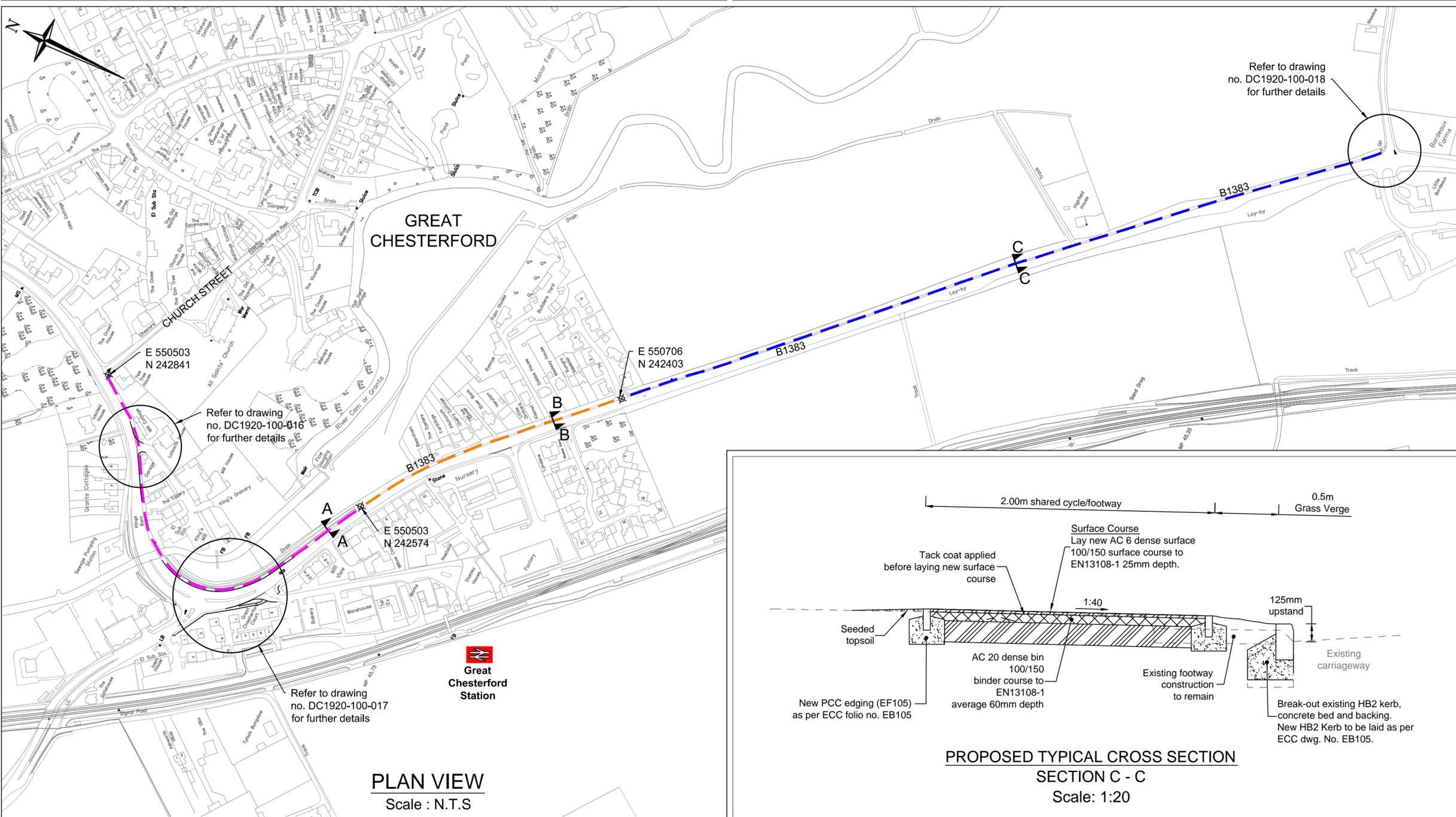
Should the option 1 route be delivered, onward connections to Whittlesford in South Cambridgeshire should be further examined.

# Appendix A



- Notes**
- Do not scale. This drawing is to be read in conjunction with all other contract drawings and documents.
  - All works to be in accordance with the Department of Transport's Specification for Highway Works and Essex County Council Specifications and Standard Construction Drawings.

- KEY**
- New shared 2m wide cycle/footway Refer to Detail A-A for typical construction details
  - New shared 2m wide cycle/footway Refer to Detail B-B for typical construction details
  - New shared 2m wide cycle/footway Refer to Detail C-C for typical construction details



REV.	DATE	AMENDMENT DESCRIPTION	DRAWN	CHECKED

**INFORMATION**



Ringway Jacobs working in partnership with Essex County Council  
 Mark Rowe, Service Director, Essex Highways  
 County Hall, Chelmsford, CM1 1QH  
 Tel: 0845 6037631 © Essex County Council

**Great Chesterford to Safron Walden Cycling Study**

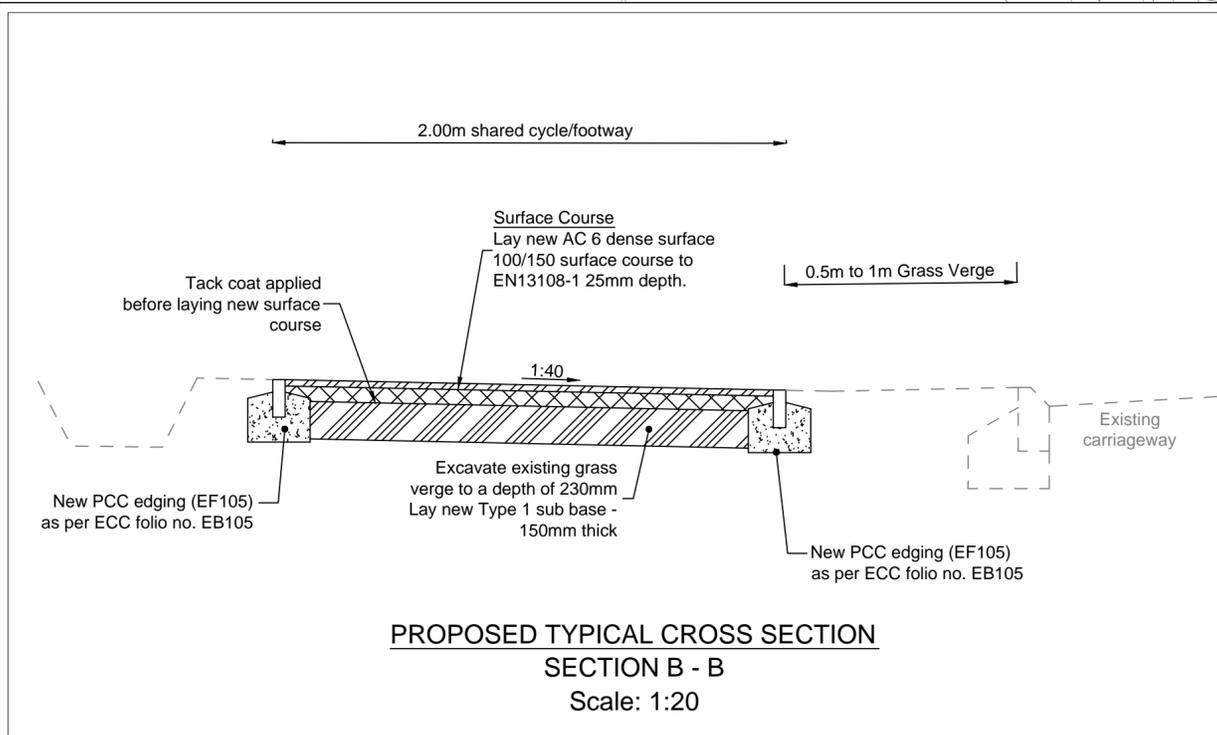
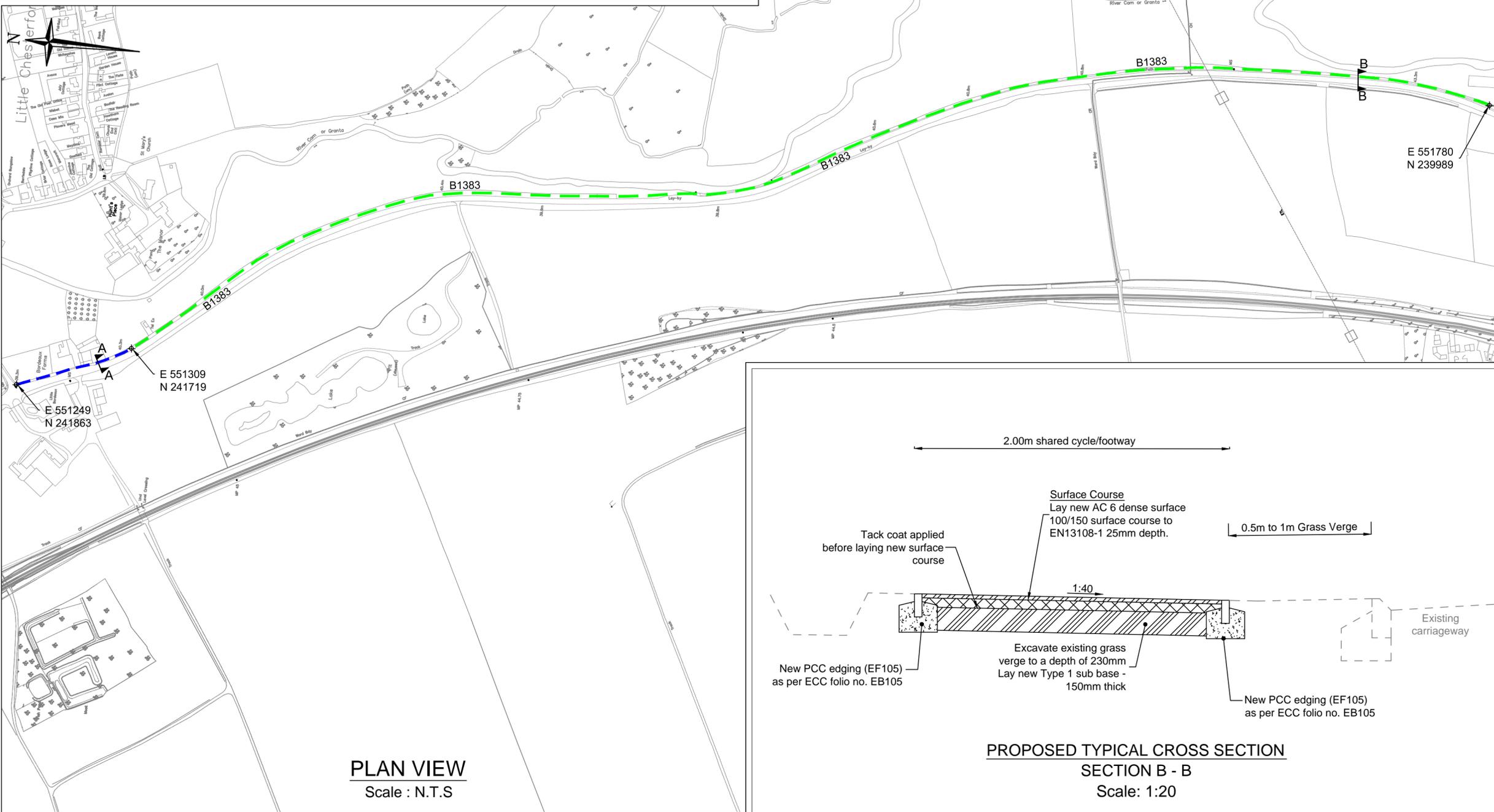
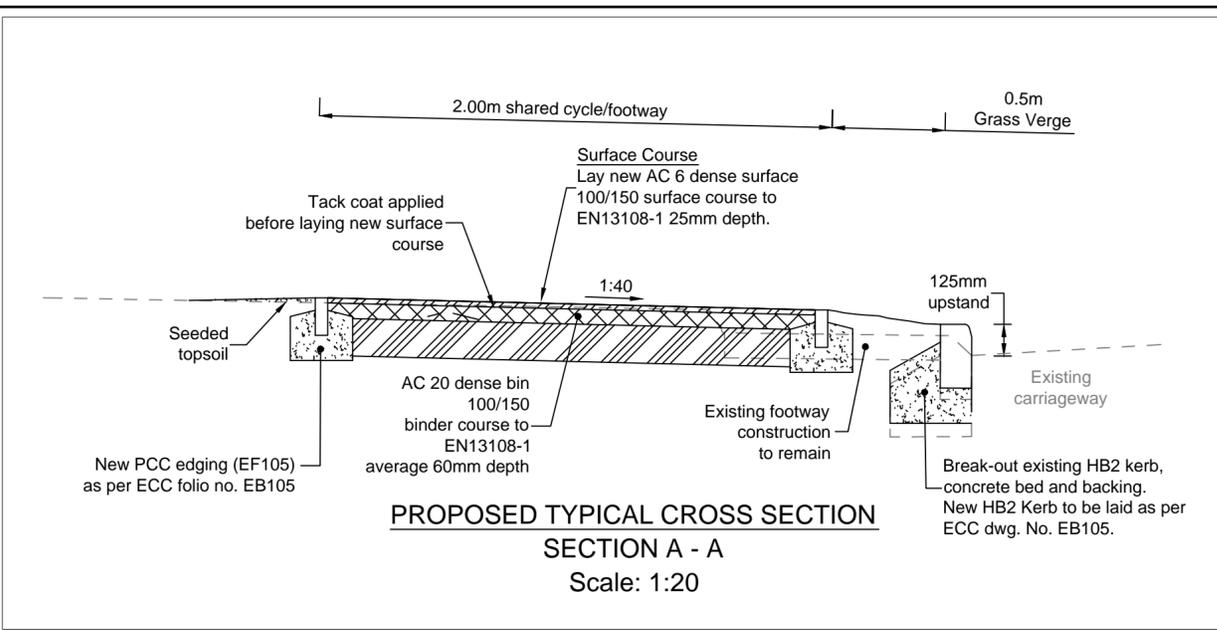
**B1383 Gt Chesterford - Lt Chesterford Cycle Route (Phase 1)**

DESIGNED	DRAWN	CHECKED	REVIEWED	APPROVED
MJ	MJ			
DATE	DATE	DATE	DATE	DATE
Jan 14	Jan 14			

DRAWING UNITS U.N.O. DIMENSIONS IN MILLIMETRES LEVELS IN METRES SCALE AT A2 (594x420mm) N.T.S

DRAWING No. **DC1920-001-013** REV. -

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 Cycling Study**

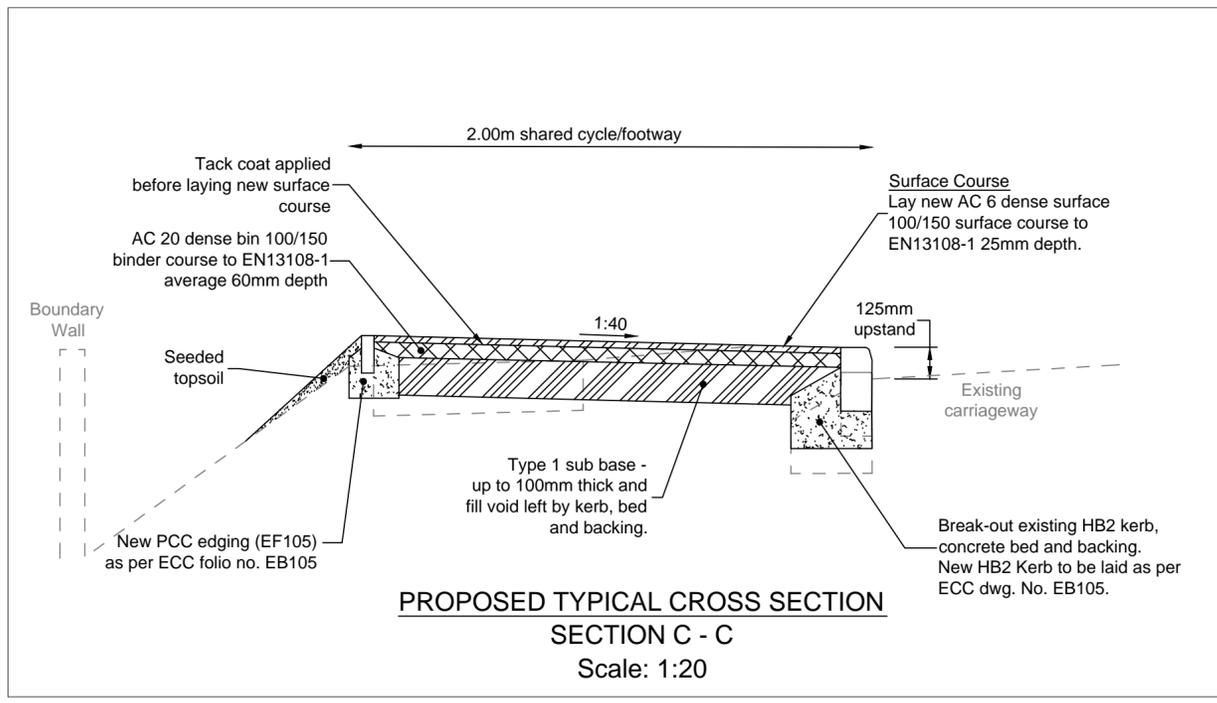
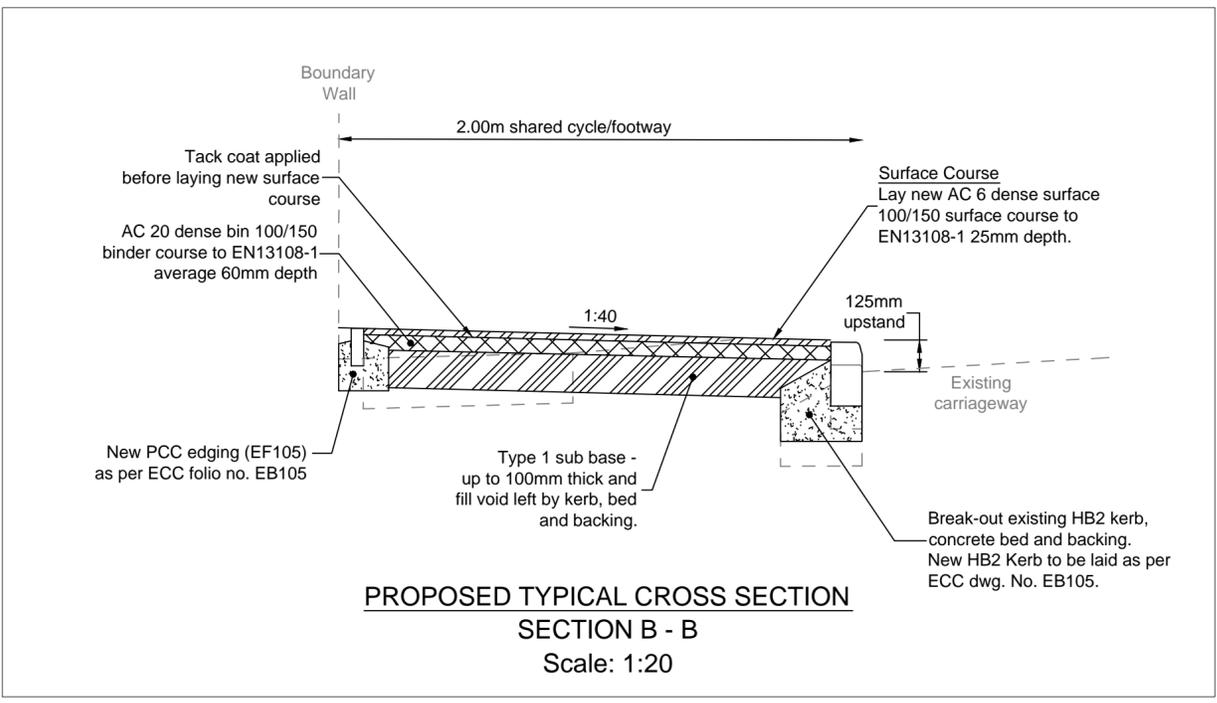
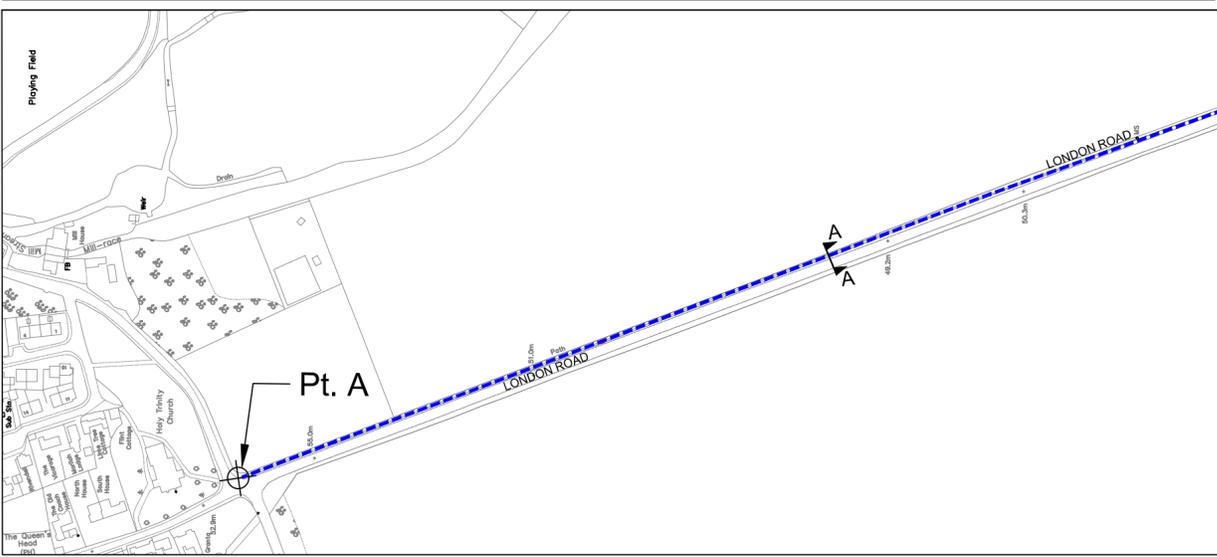
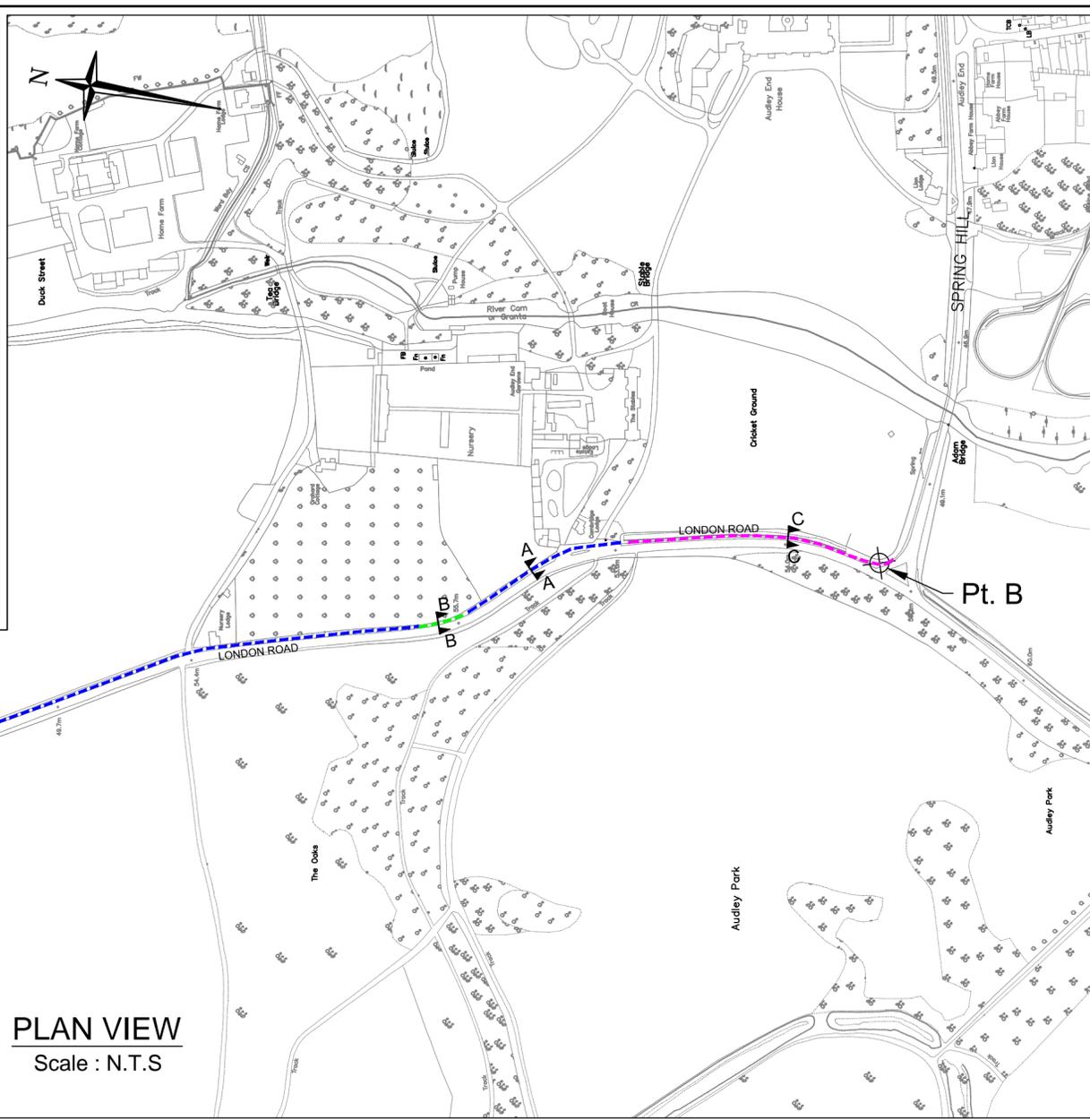
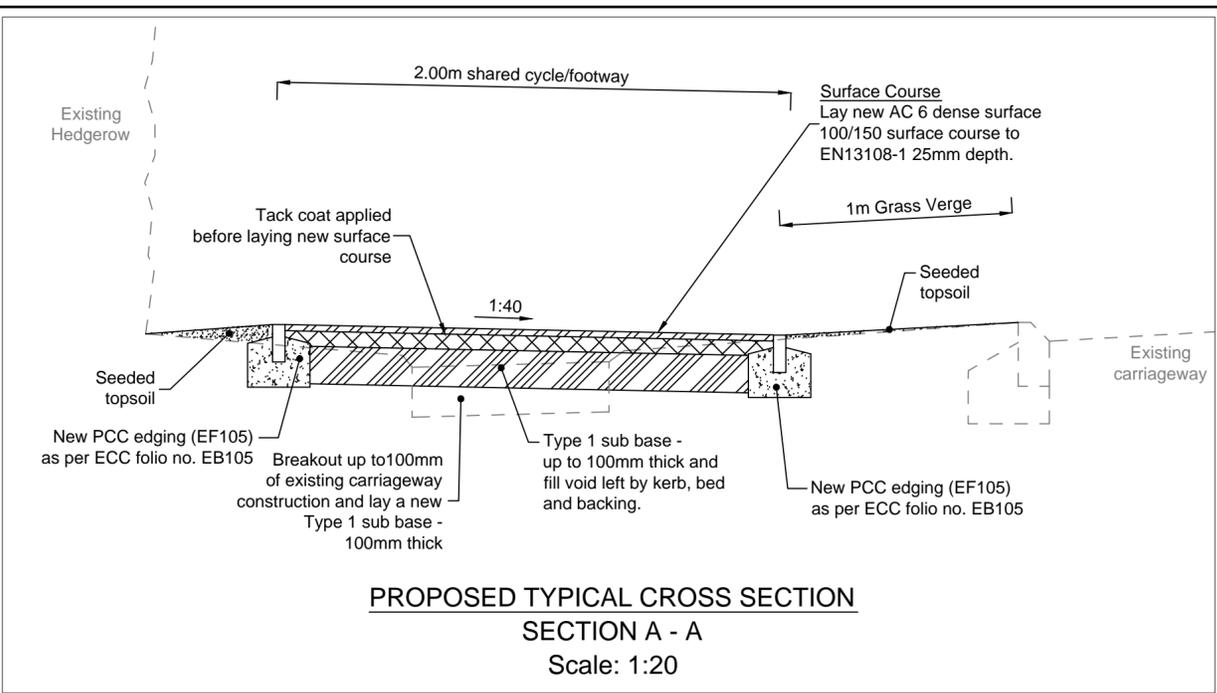
**B1838 Lt Chesterford - Littlebury  
 Cycle Route  
 (Phase 2)**

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MJ	MJ			
DATE	DATE	DATE	DATE	DATE
JAN 14	JAN 14			

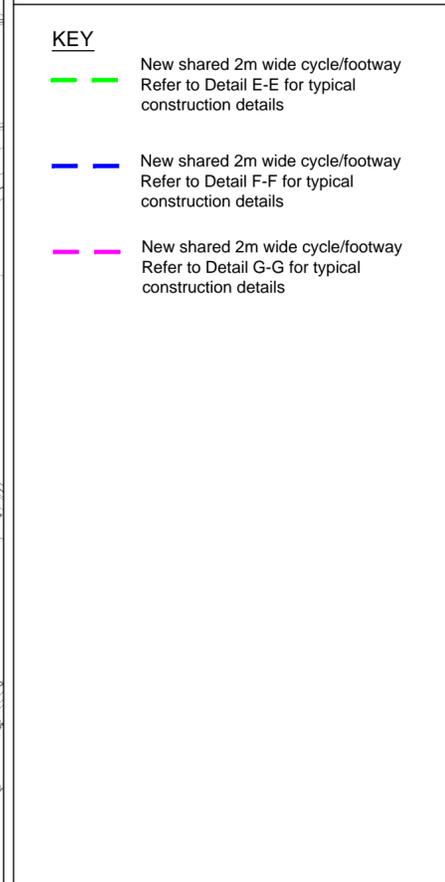
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**Great Chesterford to Safron Walden Cycling Study (Phase 3)**

**B1838 Littlebury - Audley End Farm Cycle Route**

DESIGNED	DRAWN	CHECKED	REVIEWED	APPROVED
MJ	MJ			
DATE	DATE	DATE	DATE	DATE
JAN 14	JAN 14			

DRAWING UNITS U.N.O. DIMENSIONS IN MILLIMETRES LEVELS IN METRES  
 SCALE AT A2 (594x420mm) As Shown

DRAWING No.	REV.
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