

# Charminster village Movement Strategy

February 2024









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#### **Executive summary**

This strategy reflects the local need for changes to address concerns about traffic, to better prioritise walking, cycling and horse riding, and protect what is distinctive to Charminster parish.

The sketches and outline ideas set out in this strategy report will be subject to further detailed design, planning, testing, and refinement.

The principles will give scope for continued engagement by the residents and communities of Charminster Parish and provides the basis for a broad consensus and strategy for change to be implemented in partnership with the highway authority.

# 01. Introduction

#### Introduction

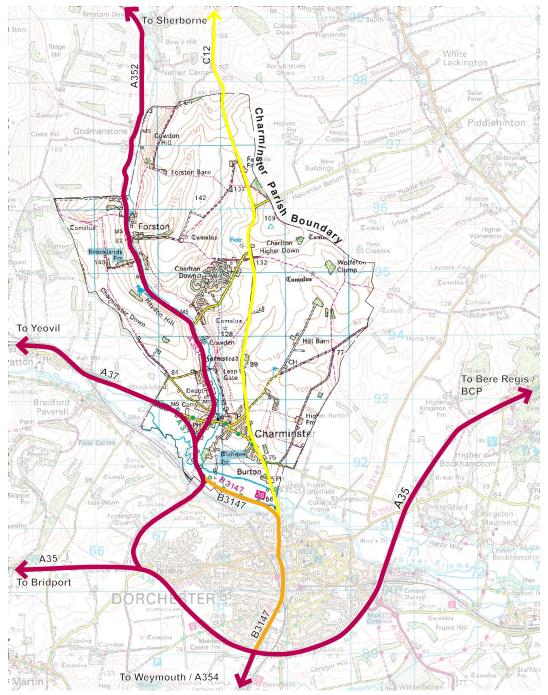
This strategy sets out a framework to help reconcile the impact of traffic movement on the quality of Charminster as a place, seeking to improve safety by integrating highway related improvement proposals with the key features which define the village.

The strategy focuses on the settlement of Charminster but takes account of the wider parish and influence of the surrounding rural context, whilst recognising the proximity to Dorchester, potential future growth areas, and the strategic road network.

The priority aim is to ensure Charminster protects its form, function, and place identity as a vibrant, attractive historic Dorset village - not as a 'pass through' place dominated by traffic.

If you want drivers to behave as in a village, make sure it feels like a village. 99

Quotation from Traffic in Villages Toolkit



Charminster Parish in context

#### **Process**

Charminster Parish Council commissioned consultants NEW masterplanning and Sustainable Street Design to work with the parish community to prepare the strategy.

A series of work stages have been undertaken, including consultation with the local community, key stakeholders, and the Parish Council driven by the Transport Working Group.

The findings of this process informed the consultant team's independent recommendations set out in this strategy report.

#### Structure

This report is purposely concise, providing specific recommendations and design proposals for key areas and components of the strategy. This is provided through illustrated design specifications and guidance on the physical interventions proposed, with supporting graphic and written explanations.

An **Appendix** is provided containing the baseline analysis and summary of engagement undertaken to inform the strategy recommendations. This should be considered in conjunction with this report.

#### Stage 1: Research

- Information gathering & mapping
- Reviewing data (speed surveys, traffic counts)
- Stakeholder discussions

#### Stage 2: Engage

- Understanding 'likes' & concerns
- Mapping priority areas for improvement
- Exploring opportunities for change ideas

#### Stage 3: Design

- Agreeing priority areas
- Developing a parish wide strategy plan
- Preparing draft design solutions

#### Stage 4: Report

- Review feedback
- Present final plans and recommendations
- Prepare and issue final strategy report

#### **Approach**

There is a need to re-balance the relationship between traffic and village life in Charminster. This is a common objective for settlements across the country and is also representative of policy, with a continuing move towards integrating streets and public spaces back into the village context.

This movement strategy reflects this context; providing place-making principles to make the village more distinctive and recognisable, and to create environments that increase driver awareness of where they are to influence their driving behaviour.

Key guidance and best practice informing this strategy include:

#### Manual for Streets & Manual for Streets 2

Publication of Manual for Streets and particularly Manual for Streets 2 led a process towards a different relationship between streets and all their users:

"Neighbourhoods where buildings, streets and spaces combine to create locally distinct places and which make a positive contribution to the life of local communities need to become more widespread..... A street is defined as a highway that has important public realm functions beyond the movement of traffic"

#### Adopted by Dorset Cou

**Dorset Rural Roads Protocol** 

Adopted by Dorset Council to set principles for the management and maintenance of rural highways, seeking to avoid imposition of standard highway measures that can erode the distinctiveness and quality of villages:

"All decisions affecting the highway environment in Dorset will ensure the conservation and enhancement of the outstanding quality of its landscape and settlements, whilst delivering a safe and convenient network for all modes of movement"

#### Traffic in villages

A toolkit for communities to use to understand more about traffic and the ways in which its impact can be better managed to enhance and conserve preserve place aualities:

"The toolkit is intended to help find new ways to balance these conflicting pressures, and to explore ways in which local residents can become more closely engaged with ideas and initiatives to improve the relationship between people, places and traffic"

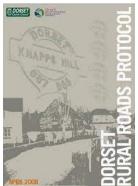
#### Manual for Streets 2

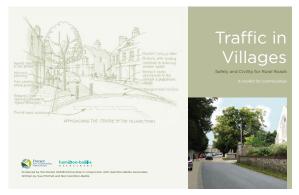


Find out more click here



Find out more click here





Find out more click here

# 02. Understanding place & Engagement

The first step in developing a strategy or plan response is to build a clear picture about the village – how it developed in the past, how people respond to it today, and what the future could offer.

Sketching out the evolution of a place can help explain and illustrate its character and form. An understanding of the history helps when it comes to finding ways to emphasise character and context and to communicate to drivers where they are. This is the starting principle set out in the Traffic in Villages Toolkit.

The following pages of this section provide an overview understanding of evolution and structure of Charminster, setting a baseline position for the strategy preparation.

The detail of the baseline review underpinning this strategy is set out in the **Appendix** of this report.



Picturesque rural qualities of Charminster

#### **Charminster village**



- Historic village settlement
- 2 miles north of the County town of Dorchester
- Approximately 3,000 residents
- Recent residential expansion to the west (Charminster Farm)

#### Landscape context



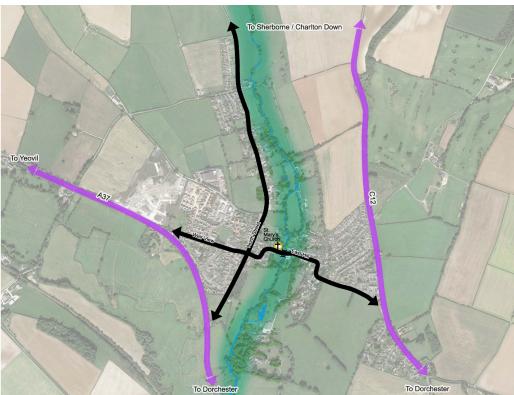
- Situated along the Cerne Valley
- Grown along the valley floor (ribbon form)
- Expanded up valley sides and over ridgeline
- Street gradients respond to topography

#### Historic structure



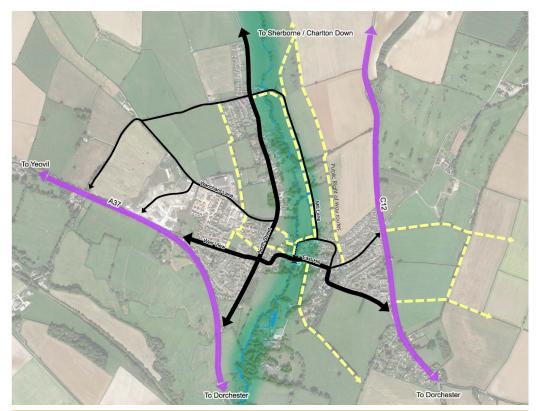
- Origins around church and river crossing
- North South route along the valley
- East West route across valley sides
- Historic cross street forms at the heart

#### **Movement context**



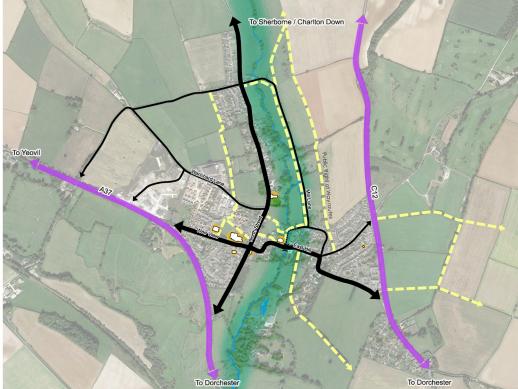
- Strategic routes border the village
- Major 'A' road passes through centre 'Rat running' connections across the valley
- 'Pass through' traffic pressure on historic routes

#### **Local connections**



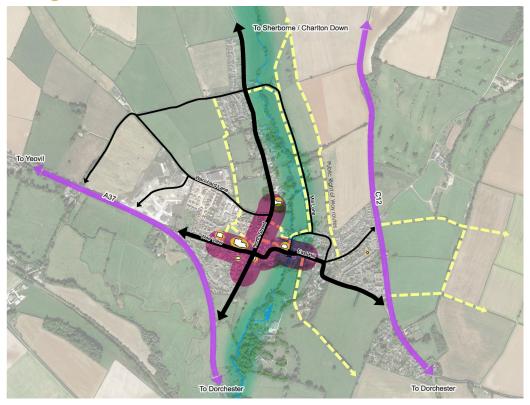
- East and west streets cross valley sides
- Network of established pedestrian / riding routes
- Connections to Charlton Down and Dorchester
- Connections to surrounding countryside

#### **Key facilities**



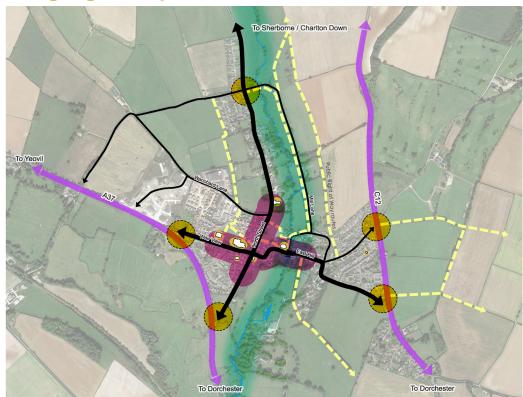
- Facilities include school, halls, church, play area and pubs
- Clustered around the historic cross streets

#### Village 'heart'



- Centre of the village defined at 'The Cross'
- Centre of the village defined at 'Ine Cross
  Priority area to preserve and enhance place identity

#### Village 'gateways'



- Arrival and village entrance points
- Priority locations to announce and define village

#### **Engagement**

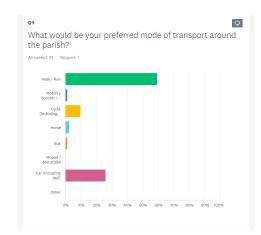
The strategy has been prepared through a process of engagement undertaken during 2023, with input directly informing the strategy recommendations.

#### This includes:

- Community wide survey questionnaire
- Walkabout meetings with Parish Council representatives
- Meetings with Parish Council Transport Working Group
- Meetings with the village school
- Meeting with Dorset Council Highways
- Community consultation event

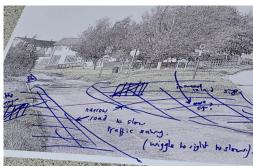
A key part of the engagement process was to explore and identify what makes Charminster a special village, what do people value about where they live and what they what to preserve and protect. This also included developing a clearer understanding of the main concerns and issues associated with current traffic and movement patterns that undermine the qualities and sense of place in Charminster.

An overview of the engagement process and feedback is set out in the Stage 2 report included in the **Appendix** to this report.



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPUNSES	
Walk / Run	59.26%	48
Mobility Scooter / Wheelchair	1.23%	1
Cycle (including electric bike)	9.88%	8
Horse	2.47%	2
Bus	1.23%	1
Moped / Motorbike	0.00%	0
Car (including taxi)	25.93%	21
Other	0.00%	0

Residents online questionnaire survey



Design testing at community event







Walkabout reviews, steering group sessions and stakeholder meetings



Dorset Council Highways meeting

#### Community engagement event: January 2023

"Strong sense of community"



"Preserve the Conservation Area and significant history"



"Stop the rat runs"



"Needs traffic calming"



"Bring back our community safely in the heart of our village"



"Friendly people"

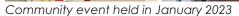


"Define prominent gateways to the village"



"River valley walks and access to the countryside"







#### **Key qualities**

The engagement process identified a strong sense of pride and place identity associated with the village and its distinctive characteristics and rural setting. Preserving and enhancing this is a key objective for the strategy (further details set out in the Appendix).



























Key qualities and village character elements identified through the engagement process

#### Key concerns

The process also identified the increasing dominance of traffic in the village, particularly through traffic, creating pressure and conflict points on the historic streets, and undermining the character and identity of Charminster (further details set out in the Appendix).













Key concerns identified through the engagement process

# 03. Objectives & Proposals

#### **Priority Outcomes**

The Parish Transport Working Group identified 5 priority outcome objectives for the strategy following a combined review of the community engagement feedback.

Alongside each outcome, enabling design response opportunities/interventions are highlighted that reflect relevant best practice and policy guidance to inform the strategy proposals.

The recommendations draw on a combination of principles that combine to create a low-speed environment that promotes safety, efficient movement, and civility through maximising driver awareness of their surroundings. They also reflect approaches already being implemented across the county by Dorset Council and the Rural Roads Protocol policy.

Although traffic may continue to impact on Charminster, the reduction in the dominance of highway characteristics of the main road (North Street), the strengthening of entry and transition points, and stronger placemaking in the centre will help alleviate the problems and establish a better balance for community life in the village.

Priority Objective	Strategy responses
1. Create a low-speed environment, and better management of through traffic  Reducing traffic speeds, discouraging through traffic, and influencing driver behaviour through placemaking to ensure that the village environment is consistent with desired speeds.	<ul> <li>Speed limit restrictions with extended 30mph and 20mph zones.</li> <li>Narrowing road carriageway widths.</li> <li>Surface material treatment and road marking removals to change awareness.</li> <li>Restrict vehicular movement (one way).</li> </ul>
2. Create safe pedestrian, cycle and horse riding connections  Creating an improved pedestrian / cycle / riding environment and improving crossings points at key locations, particularly routes to schools, community facilities, public rights of way and bus stops.	<ul> <li>Highlight and facilitate key crossing points and desire lines.</li> <li>Create space for other road users with virtual footways and comfort zones.</li> <li>Better cater for non-vehicular road users with 'Quiet lane' designations.</li> <li>Surface material treatments to change awareness.</li> <li>Improve connections to / from Charlton Down.</li> </ul>
3. Define entry points to the village  Creating clear, identifiable entry points and transitions between higher-speed highways at the boundaries of the village and the low-speed context of the village centre.	<ul> <li>Marked features and signage to announce arrival to the village.</li> <li>Narrow road carriageway widths.</li> <li>Surface material treatment and road marking removals to change awareness.</li> <li>Landscaping, tree planting and sense of greenery.</li> </ul>
4. Create a stronger sense of place  Marking points of interest in the village with physical interventions to highlight their importance to the community and to make it clearer to drivers to respond appropriately to the village context.	<ul> <li>Mark the heart of the village and destinations such as the school, church and community spaces.</li> <li>Celebrate existing village features and distinctive character elements, including key buildings, traditional phone box and signposts.</li> <li>Surface material treatment and road marking removals to change awareness.</li> <li>Landscaping, tree planting and sense of greenery.</li> </ul>
5. Rationalise and manage car parking  Organising and defining parking arrangements to improve access and ensuring vehicles do not dominate the village street scene.	<ul> <li>Formalising parking with defined on and off street spaces or bays.</li> <li>Surface material treatments to define spaces.</li> <li>Landscaping, tree planting to reduce visual dominance.</li> </ul>

#### Strategy framework

The strategy framework plan defines a spatial arrangement for the agreed priority outcomes and proposed strategy responses.

#### **Speed limit control**

The strategy proposes an extension of the village 20-mph zone to limit speeds on North Street and through the heart of Charminster (changed from 30 mph). This restriction is also proposed for the Wanchard Lane section between Sheridan Rise and North Street. Gateway features will be defined to mark the transition and entry to the 20-mph zone.

Currently the speed limit at the junction between the A37 and North Street changes from 50 to de-restricted (60-mph). This gives the wrong message. The strategy proposes a 30 mph speed limit to North Street as a lead into the village and the newly defined 20-mph zone (1). A combination of removed central road markings, changes in surface materials and speed / crossing hump features could also slow traffic speeds.

#### Traffic direction control

The new street connection from the A37 (Sheridan Rise) through phase 3 of Charminster Farm development is designed to support HGV's accessing the commercial sites and depot located on Wanchard Lane. This helps to reduce the amount of HGV's accessing through the existing village via North Street.

#### **Wanchard Lane**

This approach also reflects existing proposals to reinforce this opportunity by restricting traffic flow on Wanchard Lane to one-way westbound. This allows a redesign of the Wanchard Lane / North Street junction to reduce the dominance of highway infrastructure at the heart and in the Conservation Area.

#### **Weir View**

To discourage strategic traffic cutting through the village, the strategy proposes to restrict access for vehicles from the A37 into Weir View. This would limit vehicle movements from Weir View to westbound exits only. The recent alterations to the junction already create a supportive context for this proposal. Cycle and pedestrian access would remain open both directions.

#### **Pedestrian environment**

New crossing arrangements, extended footpaths, and virtual footpath markings will create a safer environment for walking around the village and a clear indication to drivers that pedestrian priority applies.

#### **Gateways**

The strategy proposes enhancements to key village entrance points to create clearer, identifiable transitions between higher-speed highways at the village surroundings. Design

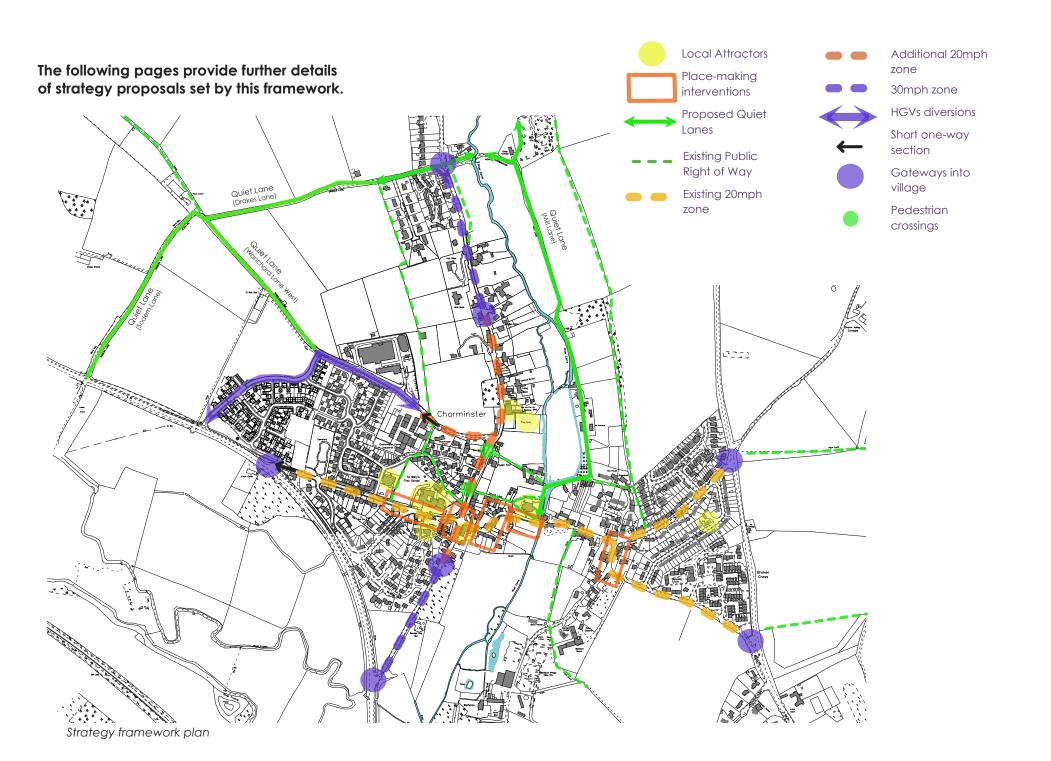
enhancements to junction alignments, road surface materials, signage, and landscape planting are proposed to better define where the village starts and ends and to slow entry traffic down.

#### **Quiet Lanes**

Quiet Lane designations are proposed to Sodern Lane, Drakes Lane, Mill Lane, and the western section of Wanchard Lane to create a connected network of routes with a clear message to motorists to respect the right of passage for walkers, runners, cyclists, and horse riders. These designated routes will connect directly with established rights of way routes into the wider countryside.

#### **Placemaking locations**

A series of 'placemaking' interventions are proposed within the village heart. These areas are a focus for designed enhancements to the public realm to deliver a clear message to motorists they are within a village and to adapt their driving behaviour accordingly. These interventions purposely target key locations where village character and function are critical to the identity of Charminster, such as the historic Cross Streets, school, and church frontages. The interventions combine design improvements to the treatment of surface materials, landscaping, seating and pedestrian crossing arrangements to better support village life and reduce the dominance of traffic and highway related infrastructure.



#### Strategy proposals

#### Village Heart: Charminster Cross

Historic 'Cross Streets' at the heart of the village to be properly defined and celebrated to provide a safer connection for east-west pedestrian movements.

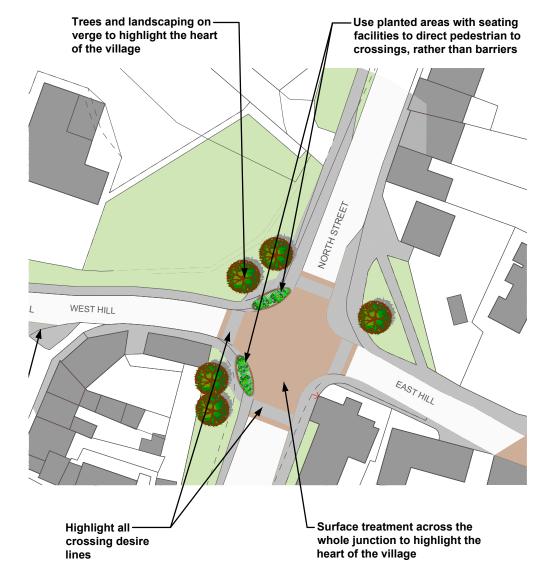
#### **Proposal summary**

- Speed limit restrictions (20mph zone)
- Surface material treatment and road marking removals
- Highlight and facilitate key crossing points and desire lines
- Marked features and signage to announce arrival to the village
- Landscaping, tree planting and sense of greenery
- Celebrate existing village features and distinctive character elements, including key buildings, signposts, phone boxes

#### Priority outcome objectives

- Create a low-speed environment, and better management of through traffic
- Create safer east-west pedestrian and cycle connections
- ✓ Create a stronger 'sense of place'

**Note:** Appropriate visibility splays will be retained. For landscaping proposals this will typically involve ensuring plants (when mature) do not generally exceed 600mm in height when sited within visibility splay areas. To be demonstrated at the detailed design stage.





Existing highway dominated view of Charminster Cross (looking south)



Illustrative photomontage view of proposed strategy principles at Charminster Cross (looking south)

#### Village Heart: School frontage

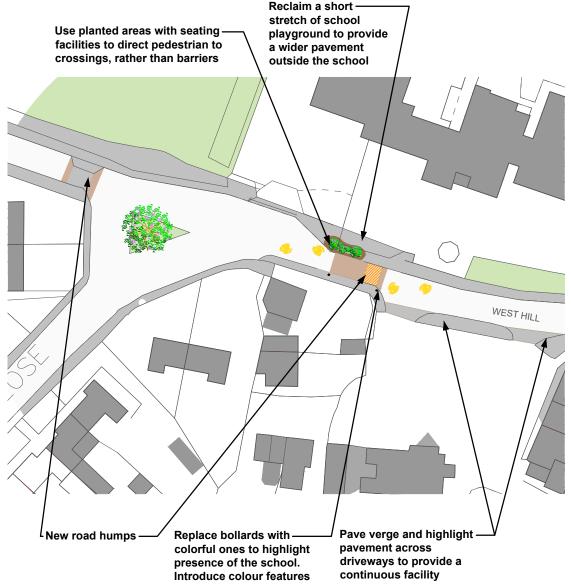
Public realm enhancement to mark the school frontage, making a clear statement of community function and presence of children at the heart of the village.

Opportunity to utilise small area from school play ground to create a wider pavement area for safer drop off and collection from school.

#### **Proposal summary**

- Use colourful and interesting surface and boundary treatments to send a clear message of use and activity taking place
- Create space for pedestrians with new and widened footpath connections
- Slow traffic with new speed humps in the carriageway
- Landscaping, tree planting and sense of greenery

- Create a low-speed environment, and better management of through traffic
- Create safe pedestrian, cycle and horse riding connections
- ✓ Create a stronger 'sense of place'





Existing view of West Hill school frontage (looking east)



Illustrative photomontage view of proposed strategy principles at West Hill school frontage (looking east)

#### Village Heart: West Hill & Church frontage

Announce a sense of place on West Hill and at the Church frontage to slow traffic down.





Existing view of West Hill Church frontage (looking east)



Illustrative photomontage view of proposed strategy principles at West Hill Church frontage (looking east)

#### Village Gateway: Westleaze

Realign junction to remove slip road approach and enhance gateway space.

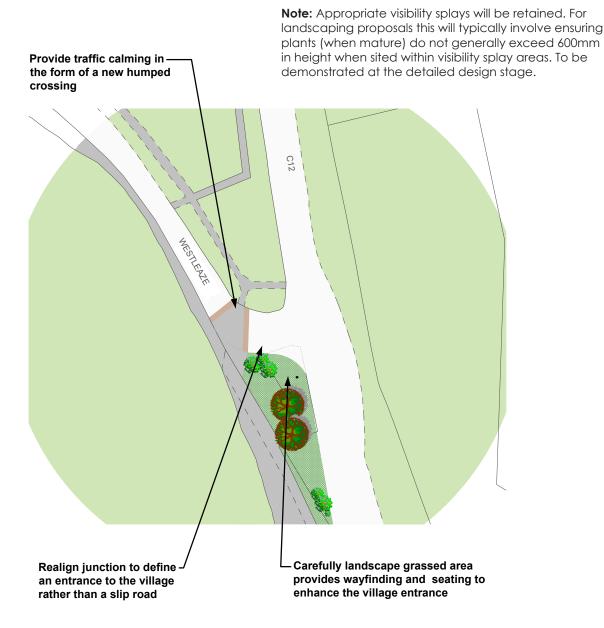
#### **Proposal summary**

- Surface material treatment and road marking removals to change awareness
- Slow traffic with new speed humps in the carriageway
- Highlight and facilitate key crossing points and desire lines
- Create space for pedestrians with footways
- Landscaping, tree planting and greenery

- Define entry points to the village
- Create a low-speed environment, and better management of through traffic
- Create safe pedestrian, cycle and horse riding connections



Existing view of Westleaze gateway (looking north)



#### Village Gateway: Vicarage Lane

Enhance gateway space and better define the village entrance.

#### **Proposal summary**

- Surface material treatment and road marking removals to change awareness
- Slow traffic with new speed humps in the carriageway
- Highlight and facilitate key crossing points and desire lines
- Create space for pedestrians with footways
- Landscaping, tree planting and sense of greenery

- Define entry points to the village
- Create a low-speed environment, and better management of through traffic
- Create safe pedestrian, cycle and horse riding connections



Existing view of Vicarage Lane gateway (looking north)



#### Village Gateway: North Street / Drakes Lane

Define the village entry and key connection node for wider countryside leisure routes, reinstating the principle of previously implemented surface material treatments in this key location.

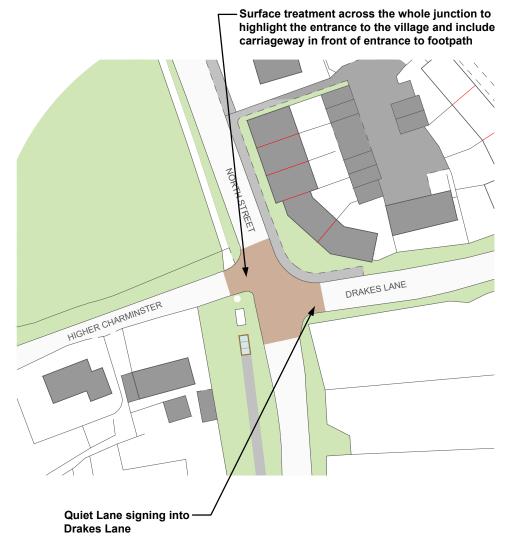
#### **Proposal summary**

- Surface material treatment and road marking removals to change awareness
- Highlight and facilitate key crossing points and desire lines
- Quiet Lane designation for Drakes Lane

- ✓ Define entry points to the village
- Create a low-speed environment, and better management of through traffic
- Create safe pedestrian, cycle and horse riding connections



Existing view of North Street / Drakes Lane gateway (looking south)



#### Village Approaches: North Street (northern approach)

Create a safer environment for pedestrians on North Street with new virtual footway on east side (where road widths allow) to link with existing field footpath entrance.

#### **Proposal summary**

- Surface material treatment and road marking removals to change awareness
- Create space for pedestrians with virtual footways and comfort zones

- Create safe pedestrian, cycle and horse riding connections
- Create a low-speed environment, and better management of through traffic



Existing view of North Street (looking south)



Illustrative photomontage view of proposed strategy principles at North Street

#### Village Approaches: North Street (northern approach)

Create a safer environment for pedestrians on North Street with new virtual footway on east side (where road widths allow) and use surface materials and signage to define the start of the 20-mph zone.

#### **Proposal summary**

- Speed limit restrictions with 20mph zone
- Surface material treatment and road marking removals to change awareness
- Create space for pedestrians with virtual footways and comfort zones

- Create safe pedestrian, cycle and horse riding connections
- Create a low-speed environment, and better management of through traffic



Existing view of North Street (looking south)



Illustrative photomontage view of proposed strategy principles at North Street

#### Village Approaches: North Street / Wanchard Lane

Create a safer environment for pedestrians with widened footway on east side. Narrow the junction and reallocate carriageway space for parking, planting and people. (Strategy concept reflects principles of current planning application ref: WD/D/20/003259)

#### **Proposal summary**

- Speed limit restrictions with 20mph zone
- Narrowing road carriageway widths
- Surface material treatment at crossing
- Highlight and facilitate key desire lines
- Create space for pedestrians
- Landscaping, tree planting and greenery
- Formalising parking with defined on and off street spaces or bays

#### Priority outcome objectives

- Create safe pedestrian, cycle and horse riding connections
- Create a low-speed environment, and better management of through traffic
- ✓ Rationalised car parking



Existing view of North Street / Wanchard Lane (looking north)

**Note:** Appropriate visibility splays will be retained. For landscaping proposals this will typically involve ensuring plants (when mature) do not generally exceed 600mm in height when sited within visibility splay areas. To be demonstrated at the detailed design stage.



#### Village Approaches: North Street (southern approach)

Create a safer environment for pedestrians on North Street with new virtual footway on west side (where road widths allow) and use surface materials and signage to define the start of the 20-mph zone. A 30-mph zone will be in place from the A37 junction. No parking within virtual footways.

#### **Proposal summary**

- Speed limit restrictions with 30-mph and 20-mph zone approaches
- Surface material treatment and road marking removals to change awareness
- Create space for pedestrians with virtual footways on the building side of street

- Create safe pedestrian, cycle and horse riding connections
- Create a low-speed environment, and better management of through traffic



Existing view of North Street (looking north)



Illustrative photomontage view of proposed strategy principles at North Street

#### **Quiet lanes**

Quiet Lane status proposed for Drakes Lane, Sodern Lane, Mill Lane and Wanchard Lane (west of junction to connect with existing countryside routes.

#### **Proposal summary**

 Better cater for non-vehicular road users with 'Quiet lane' designations

#### Priority outcome objectives

- Create safe pedestrian, cycle and horse riding connections
- Create a low-speed environment, and better management of through traffic

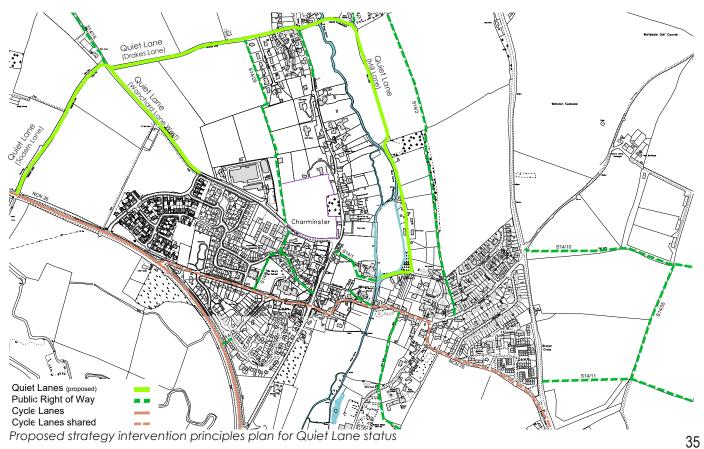
Find out more click here



Quiet Lane signage will send a clear message to drivers

#### What are Quiet Lanes?

Nationally recognised designation of single-track road with no line markings or footpaths. Low traffic flows (up to 1,000 a day) shared by motorised and non-motorised traffic. Routes where visitors and locals can enjoy the natural surroundings and use them for activities such as cycling, horse-riding, jogging and walking. Advisory signs at either end to show motorised users clearly that the road is a shared space.



#### **Strategic connection** (Charminster - Charlton Down)

There has been a long-standing aspiration to improve connectivity between Charminster and Charlton Down for pedestrians, cyclists, horse riders and other non-vehicular users. This movement strategy supports the principle of this objective, particularly to provide a safer connection for children accessing Charminster First School from Charlton Down via an active travel route.

Previous investigations have identified the opportunity to improve an existing route along the Cerne Valley, running parallel to the A352/North Street on the east side of the River Cerne. This proposal would incorporate upgrades to parts of footpath \$14/17 and \$14/2 to a bridleway and improvements to the surface to enable use by pushchairs, bicycles and horse riders, as well as pedestrians.

It is understood this proposal would be subject to seperate agreements with landowners to deliver.

The improved routes would then connect into the existing Mill Lane byway route into Charminster, and over Herrison Road to Back Lane into Charlton Down. Improvements to the crossing arrangement over Herrison Road may also be required to make the connection as safe as possible for all users.



Back Lane link into Charlton Down



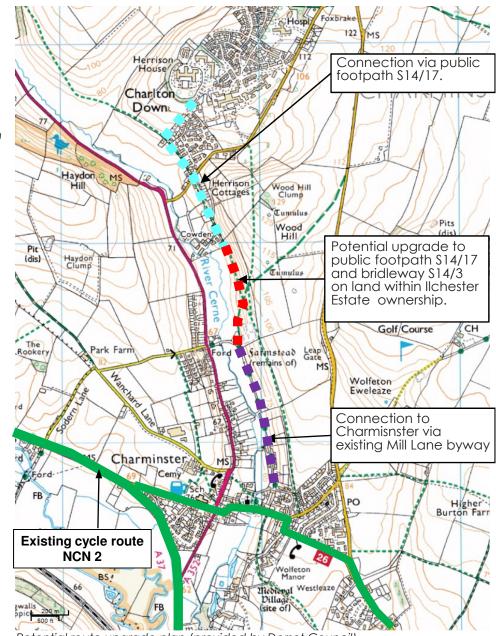
Crossing over Herrison Road



Route past Herrison Cottages



Mill Lane link to Charminster



#### Strategy summary

The new road will help redirecting

heavy goods vehicles away from

Consider one way (westbound)

Landscape and enhance the area

pavement and surface all verges.

around the school. Provide a

raised crossing, widen the

The 30mph zone should be

The 20mph zone will have a consistent limited road width defined by marked parking bays if

and virtual pavements.

the carriageway is wide.

at all.

characterised by no central line

Where the carriageway is extremely

narrow, there will be no pavements

North Street.

except cycles.



Existina Public Right

**Local Attractors** 

## 04. Next steps

#### Next steps / 'Quick wins'

The next steps should continue to develop, test, and confirm the key principles presented in this report, with continuing input from the community and wider stakeholders.

The sketches and outline ideas will be progressed through a process of detailed design and refinement. The suggested next steps include:

- Continue to engage with Dorset Council Highways, and other key stakeholders regarding principles of the scheme and concept design.
- Publicise strategy through Parish Council website.
- Engage with the school to consider expansion of pavement into playground area.
- Develop the design to a detailed level including specification of materials and identification of any utility diversions required.
- Continue to explore the potential upgrades and improvements to existing routes for all users between Charlton Down and Charminster.

- Consider temporary testing of one way traffic exit on Weir View and Wanchard Lane ('Quick win' opportunity)
- Organise events in the public realm to increase community sense of place, e.g. Charminster in Bloom and use of streets for fêtes ('Quick win' opportunity).
- Planting schemes to enhance the village feel at all key locations identified in the strategy ('Quick win' opportunity).
- Remove de-restricted speed limit at southern entrance to the village ('Quick win' opportunity).
- Review Dorset Council Highways maintenance schedule and ensure central line is not reinstated ('Quick win' opportunity).

## Appendix:

Stage 1: Baseline sketchbook

Stage 2: Engagement summary

Stage 3: Parish Transport Working Group presentation