

Our Ref: HE551519-ATK-GEN-LN-XM-000016

Mr Richard Allen Lead Member Examining Authority Planning Inspectorate National Infrastructure Planning By email only Thomas Selby Project Manager Highways England

7 May 2021

Dear Sir

M25 junction 28 improvement scheme Planning Inspectorate reference: TR010029 Notification of approval of Designated Funding for the non-motorised user improvements (NMU) scheme

I am writing to inform you that Highways England's application for designated funding to implement an integrated NMU improvement scheme (the "integrated NMU scheme") has been approved. I have also taken the opportunity to set out our views on how the delivery of that part of the integrated NMU scheme as it passes through junction 28 could be secured alongside the M25 junction 28 improvement scheme currently under examination (the "DCO Scheme").

We thought it would be helpful for this information to be available to all in advance of the issue specific hearing next Wednesday.

Designated funding is available from Highways England to invest in initiatives beyond its core responsibilities in respect of the strategic road network (SRN), but in some way related to the SRN, to address important social and environmental issues, adding value to society.

In this case Highways England sought designated funding for an integrated NMU scheme to address existing severance issues between communities either side of the M25 motorway. The connectivity between Brentwood to the east and Harold Hill/Havering to the west is currently perceived as unsatisfactory for pedestrians, cyclists and other non-motorised users. In particular the existing uncontrolled crossing at M25 junction 28 roundabout on the M25 southbound off slip discourages the use of non-motorised modes.



In developing the integrated NMU scheme Highways England has proposed improvements for crossing the M25 junction 28 roundabout within a wider improvement scheme that also looks to improve the amenity for NMUs along the A1023 Brook Street and A12 corridor between Brentwood and Harold Hill. As such the wider integrated NMU scheme sets out to also improve connections between National Cycle Network 136 (NCN 136), London Borough of Havering (LBH), and Honeypot Lane in Brentwood. The wider NMU scheme involves the upgrade of 3.4km of the existing walking route into a high-quality shared use cycling and walking route and is expected to cost in the region of £3.5 million.

The extent of the wider integrated NMU scheme is shown in Figure 1. The design of the wider NMU scheme is shown in more detail in **Attachment A**.

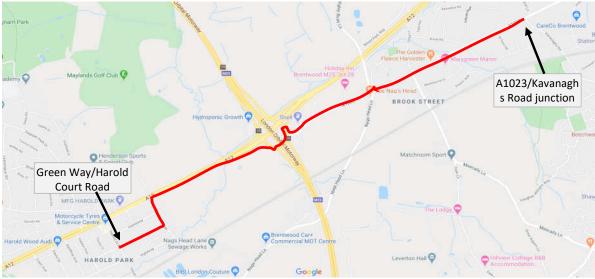


Figure 1 – Extent of wider integrated NMU scheme

On 16 April 2021 you wrote under Rule 17 of The Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010 to request further information from Highways England, London Borough of Havering, Essex County Council, Brentwood Borough Council, Transport for London and other relevant Interested Parties (IPs) relating to matters arising from earlier submissions concerning connectivity to non-motorised users and local community severance.

Highways England's position has been and remains that the appropriate approach to deal with improved cycle and pedestrian provision should be as part of a wider corridor of upgrades to pedestrian and cycle facilities between Harold Hill and Brentwood, secured under a designated funds scheme, and that it would not be appropriate to deliver a portion of this wider NMU scheme as part of the DCO scheme.

The ExA noted that at the time Highways England had not provided any progress on the application for designated funds, and had not confirmed or agreed whether, or how the NMU improvements would be provided and secured. As stated above, Highways England is pleased to confirm that designated funding has now been



approved for the wider integrated NMU scheme. Accordingly, Highways England has been considering how best to deliver the section of the NMU improvement scheme that lies within the extent of the junction 28 roundabout.

The extent of the junction 28 NMU improvements is shown in **Attachment B** of this letter. The junction 28 NMU improvements allows NMUs to negotiate the roundabout between the A1023 Brook Street and the A12 west of the junction but avoiding the uncontrolled crossing on the M25 southbound on-slip exit from the roundabout. It achieves this by the following:

- NMUs on Brook Street would use the shared use path on the northern kerb of Brook Street from a point close to the Shell petrol filling station. This shared use path provides a link to two new toucan crossings (a crossing used by pedestrians and cyclists) on the A12 eastbound approach and the circulatory carriage way of the roundabout. These new toucan crossings allow NMUs to safely access the shared use path in the inside of the roundabout island.
- Using the shared use path on the inside of the roundabout island, NMUs are able to safely move from one side of the roundabout to the other and avoid the uncontrolled crossing of the M25 southbound slip road exit from the roundabout.
- On the western side of the roundabout another toucan crossing will be installed to cross the roundabout circulatory carriageway between the centre of the roundabout and existing controlled crossing on the M25 northbound off slip road approach to the roundabout. From here NMUs can continue along the existing path on the southern side of the A12.

The wider integrated NMU scheme also comprises a range of measures to improve the facilities along Brook Street and the A12 well beyond the extent of the junction 28 roundabout improvements set out above. These online improvement measures include (but are not limited to) the provision or upgrade of shared use paths, changes to kerb alignment, additional toucan crossings, co-ordination of traffic signals, dropped kerbs and tactile paving for visually impaired users.

With the designated funds having been awarded, Highways England does not need to be compelled to ensure its delivery, although its delivery does depend upon the co -operation of the highway authorities involved and Highways England is confident that this will be forthcoming.

However, in order to address the ExA's concerns about timely delivery, Highways England is proposing to enter into a planning obligation with (or given to) the London Borough of Havering to the effect that the central section of the integrated NMU scheme (i.e. as it passes through the junction) will be delivered alongside the DCO scheme. The obligation will be given under section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and be enforceable by the London Borough of Havering as the main local planning authority involved.

As explained above (and as shown on the plans at Attachment B), in order that NMUs can access the route as it passes through the junction it will be necessary for some works to be carried out on Brook Street, which is under the control of Essex



County Council (ECC) as highway authority. ECC's co-operation is therefore needed and Highways England believes that it will be readily given. However, delivery of the new NMU route through the junction under the section 106 obligation will necessarily have to be dependent upon ECC co-operating in the delivery of the central section.

Regarding compliance with the National Policy Statement for National Networks (NPS NN), paragraph 3.17 of the NPS NN states the following:

There is a direct role for the national road network to play in helping pedestrians and cyclists. The Government expects applicants to use reasonable endeavours to address the needs of cyclists and pedestrians in the design of new Schemes. The Government also expects applicants to identify opportunities to invest in infrastructure in locations where the national road network severs communities and acts as a barrier to cycling and walking, by correcting historic problems, retrofitting the latest solutions and ensuring that it is easy and safe for cyclists to use junctions.

The delivery of the central section of the integrated NMU scheme would contribute towards removing an existing barrier to cycling and walking currently posed at the junction and would improve the ability of pedestrians and cyclists to navigate through it. The above-mentioned planning obligation to secure the delivery of the central section would further strengthen the case that the DCO Scheme is compliant with this paragraph of the NPS NN.

I should be grateful if you would acknowledge receipt of this letter and arrange for a copy of it and its enclosures to be placed before the ExA.

I look forward to your response.

Yours faithfully,



Thomas Selby Project Manager

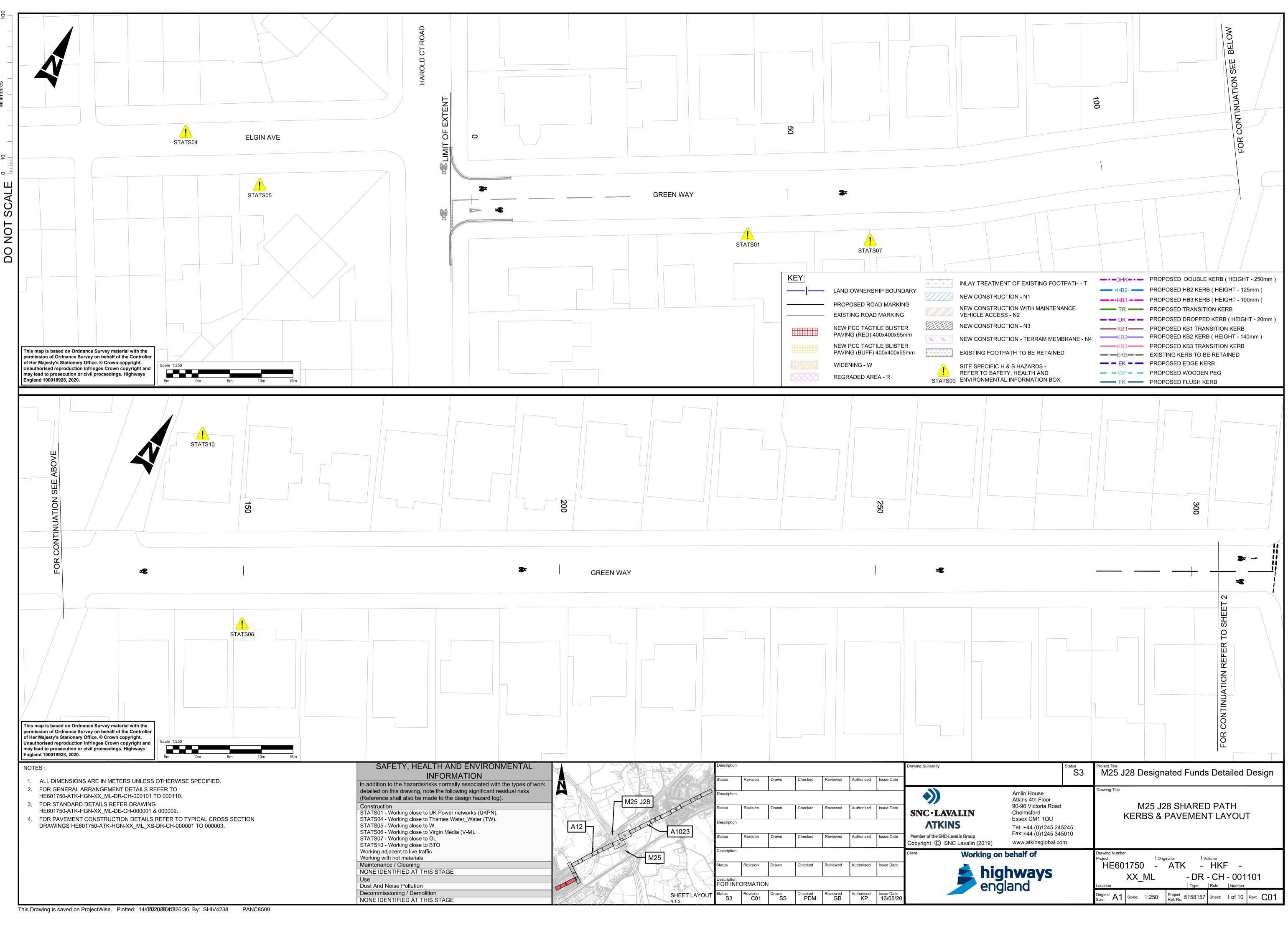


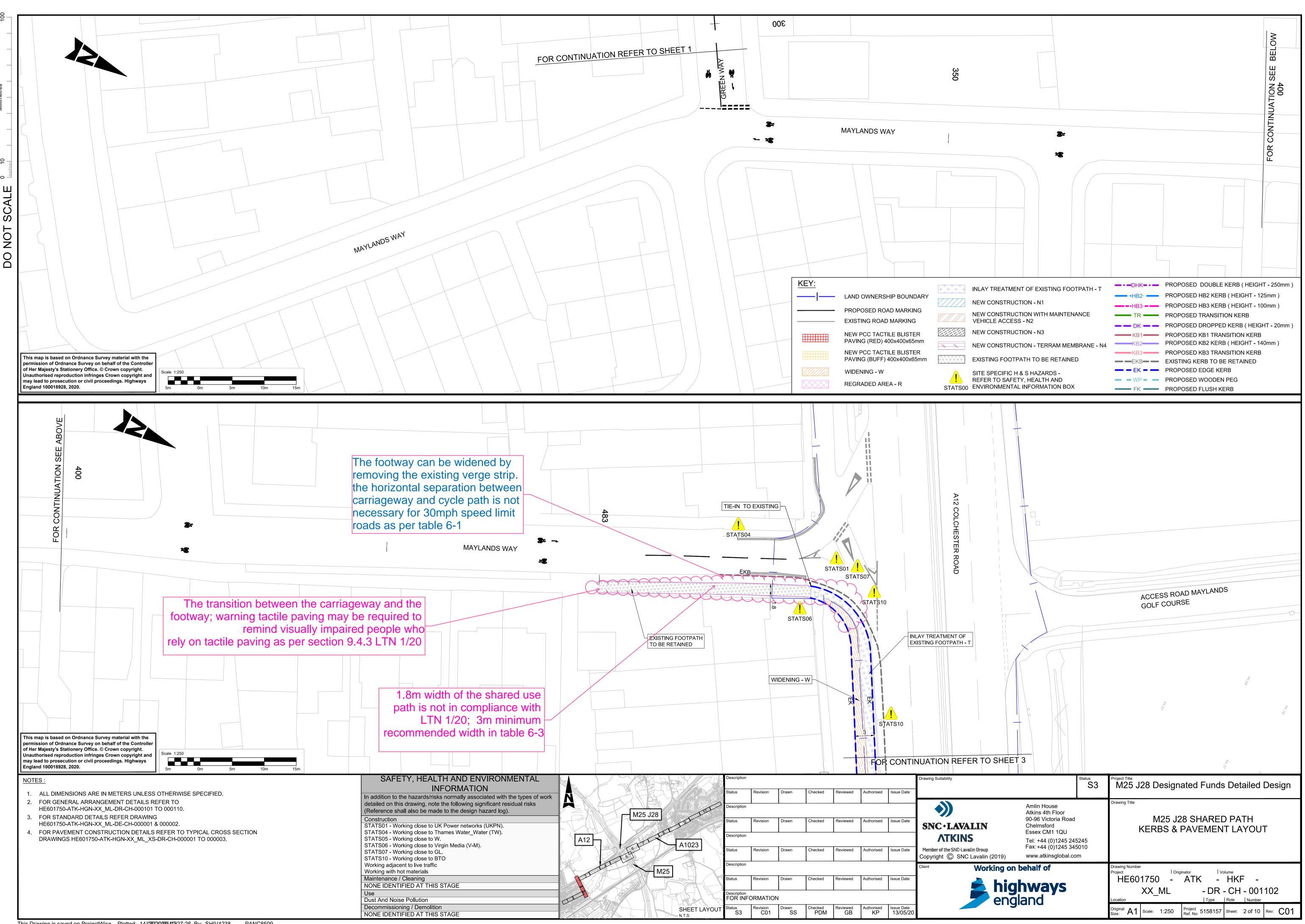
Attachment A – Wider NMU Scheme

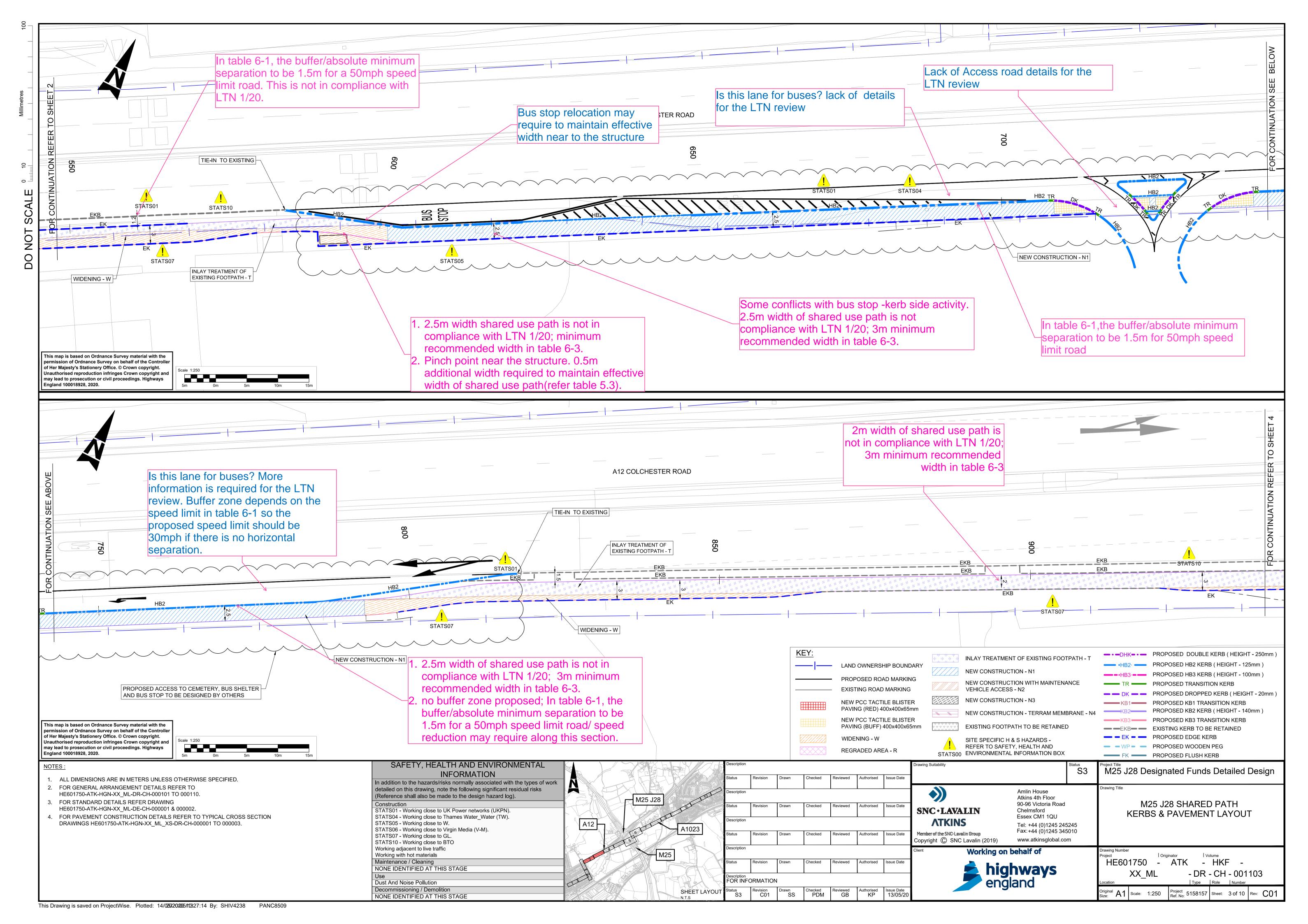
Registered office Bridge House, 1 Walnut Tree Close, Guildford GU1 4LZ Highways England Company Limited registered in England and Wales number 09346363

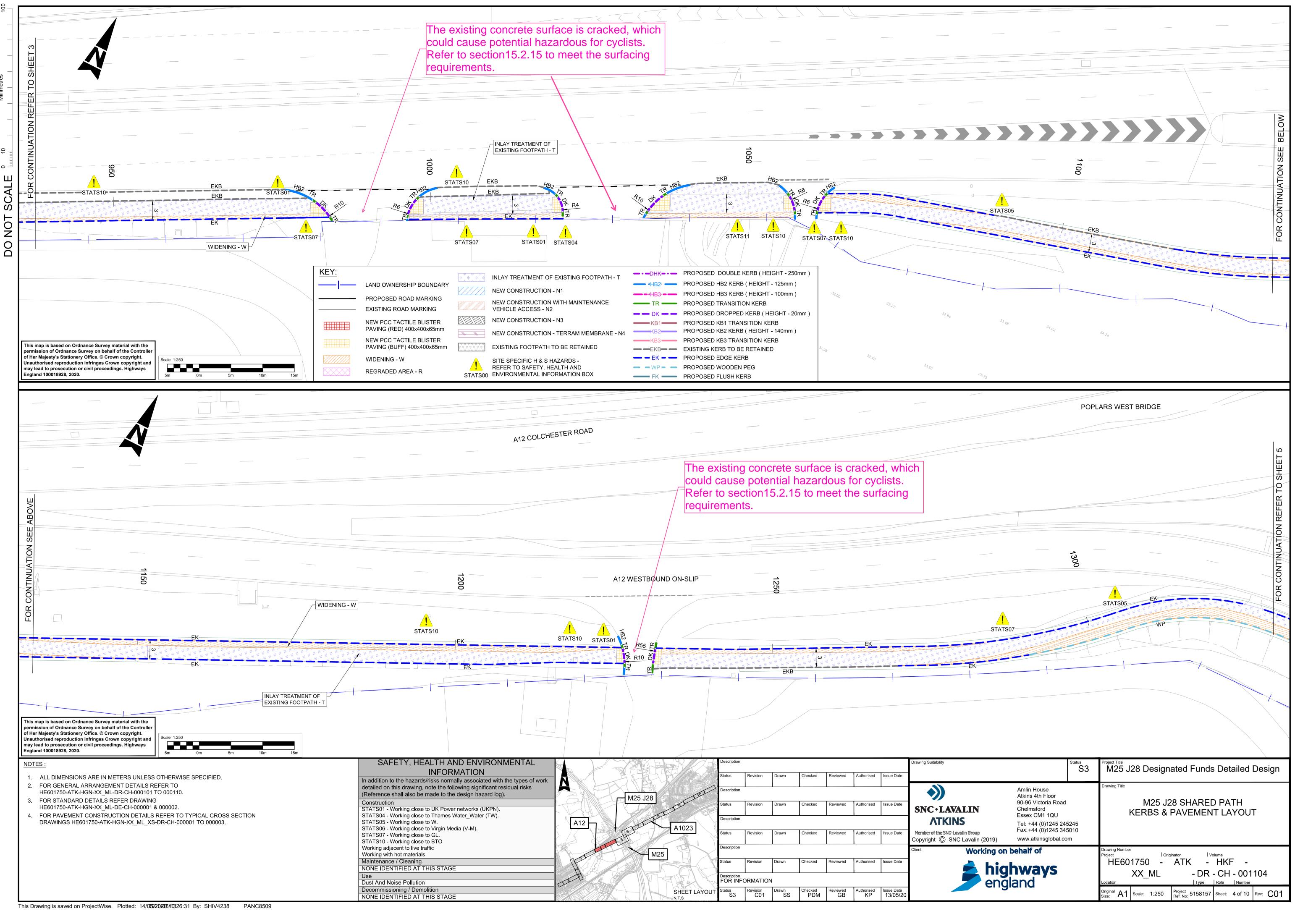


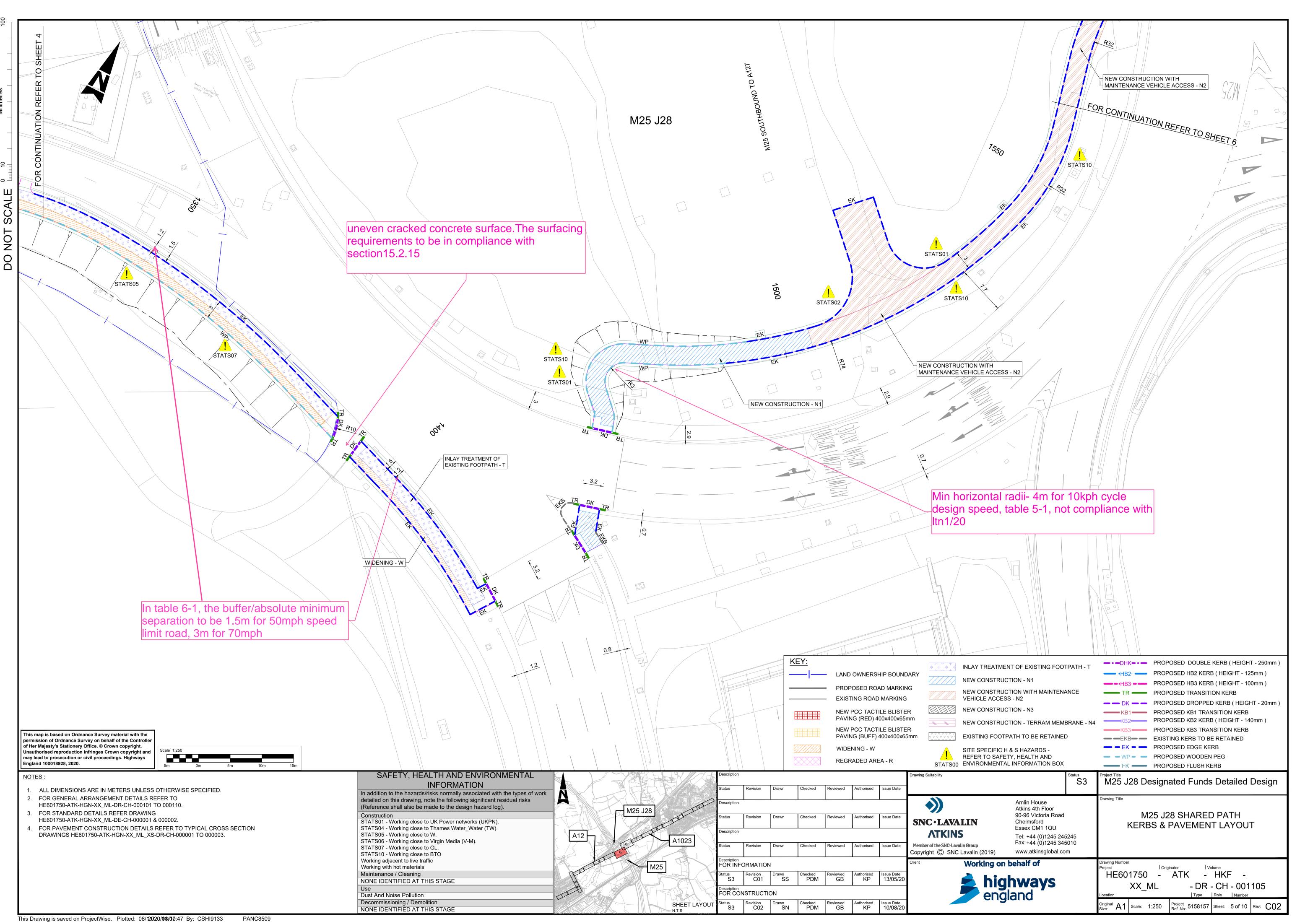


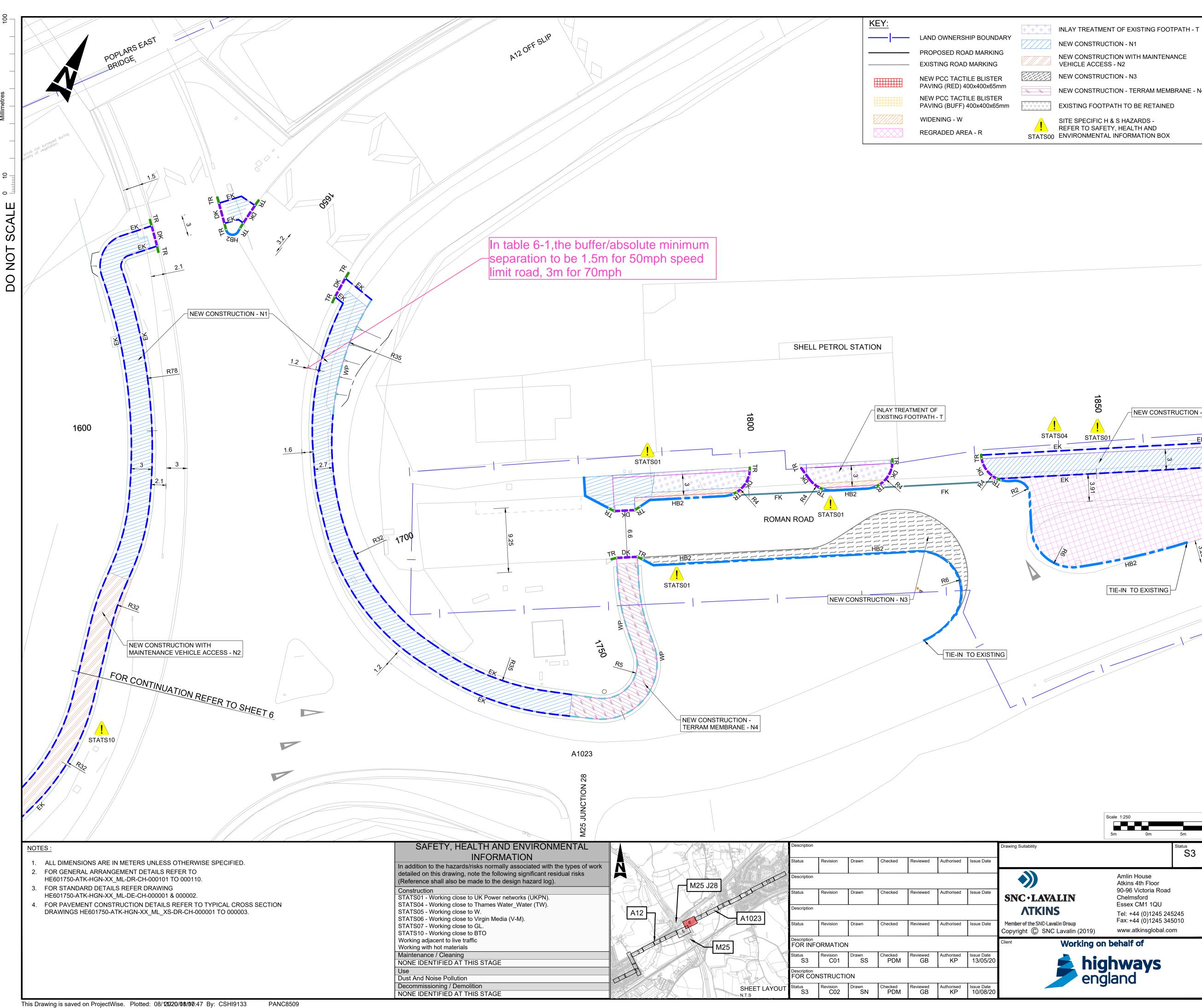






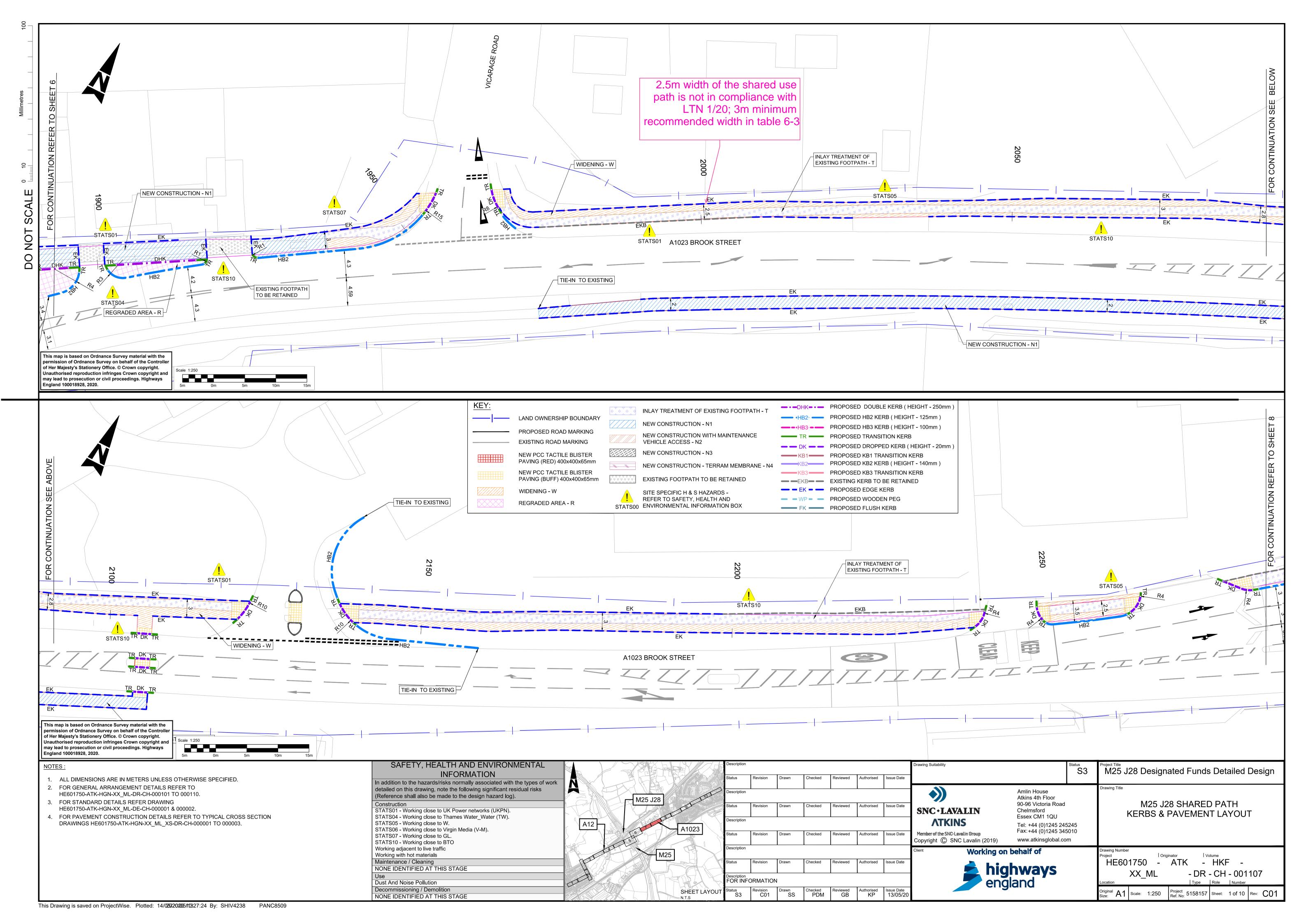


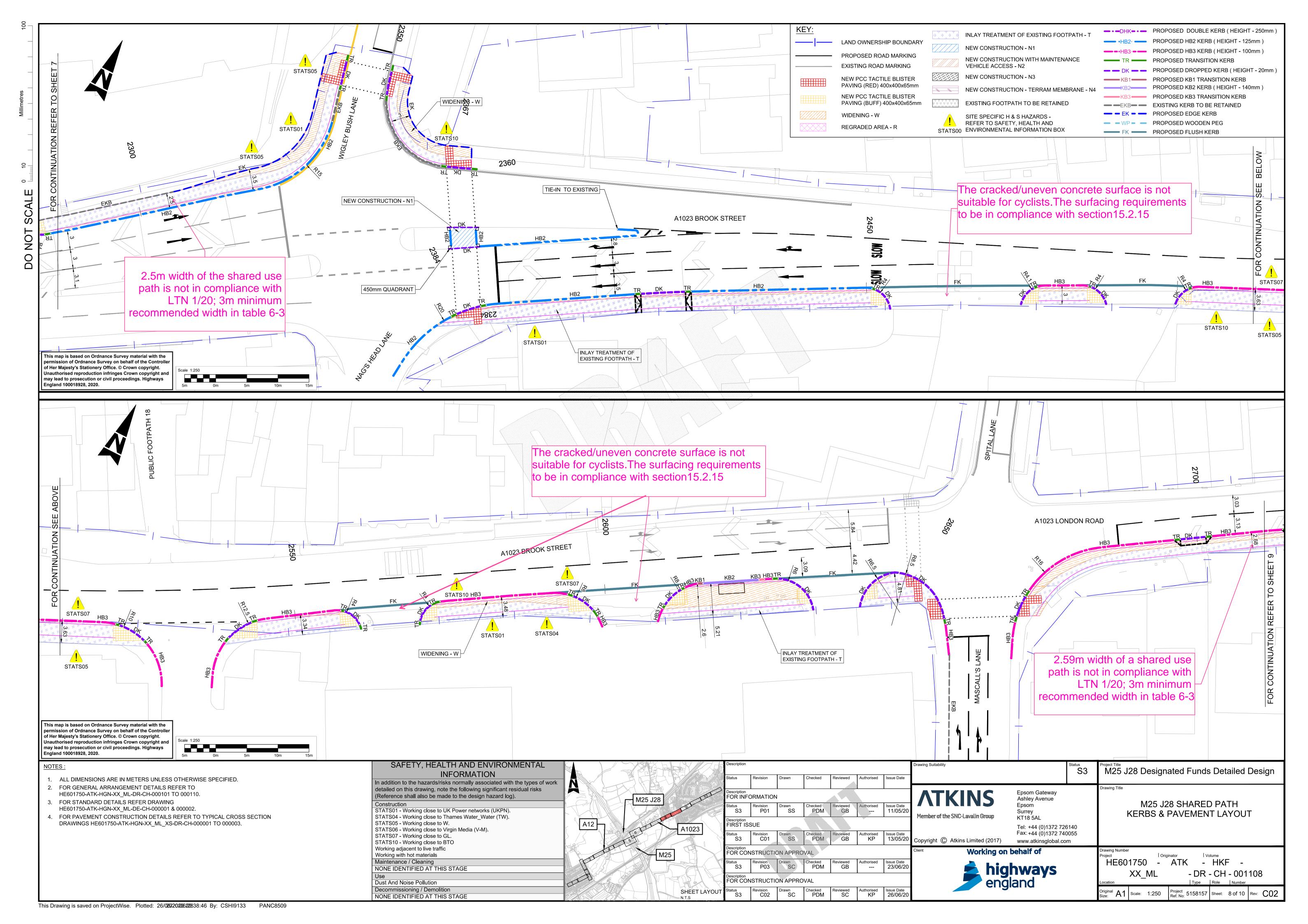


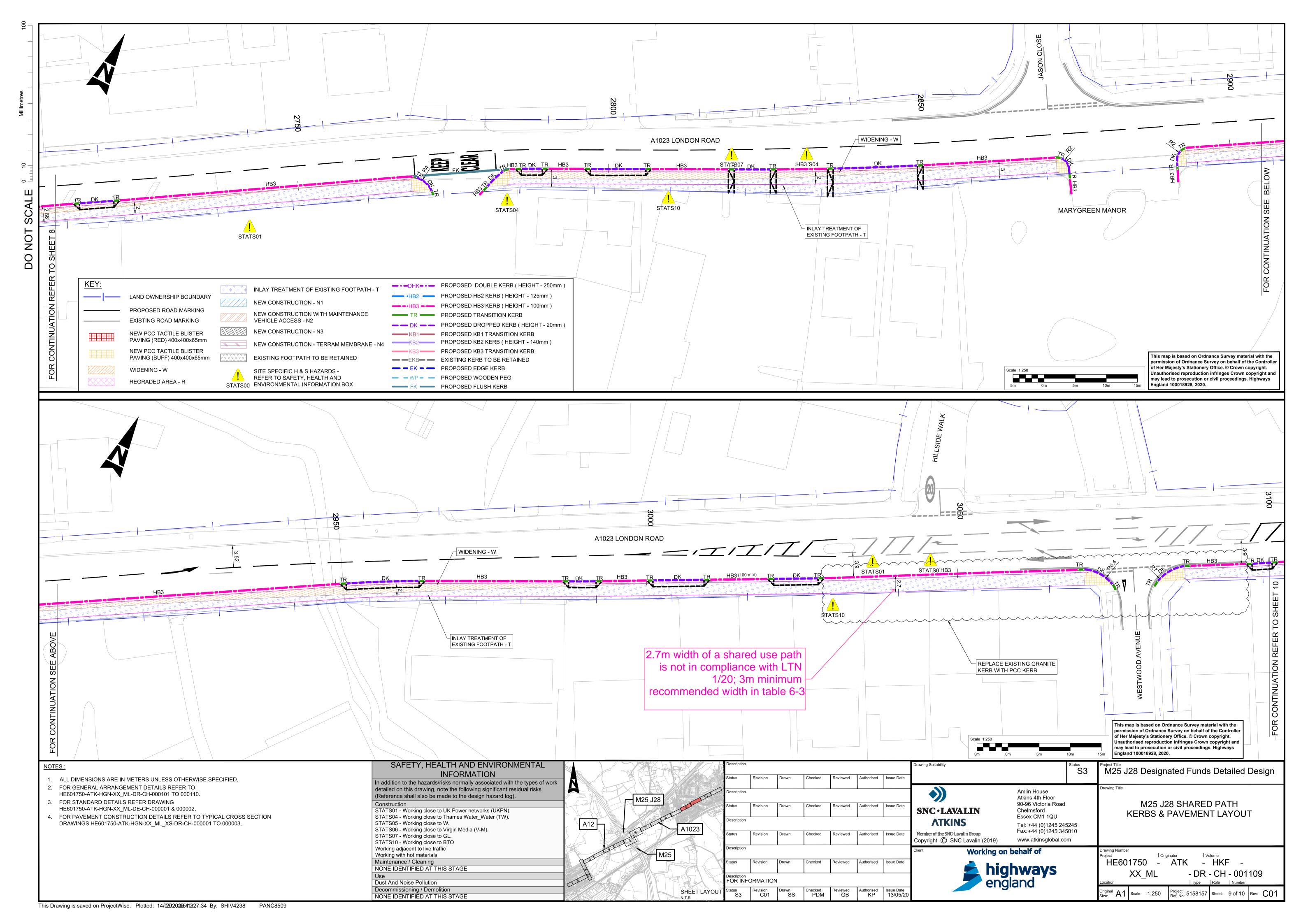


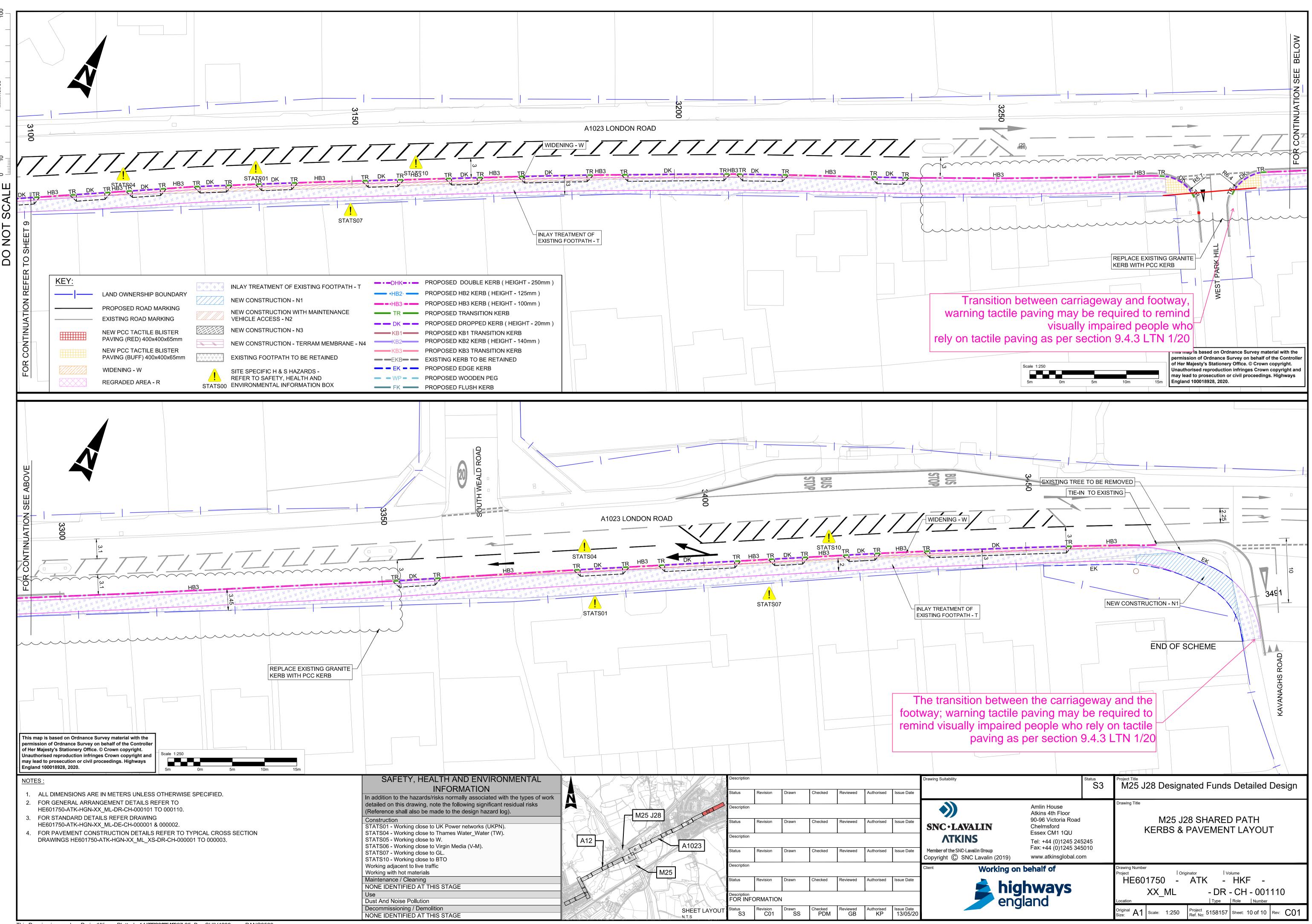
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---DHK--- PROPOSED DOUBLE KERB (HEIGHT - 250mm)









Attachment B – Junction 28 Section of NMU Scheme

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