



Pedestrians, Cyclists, Equestrians & Community

*A228 Leybourne & West Malling Bypass
Environmental Statement
Volume 2 (part)*

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1. INTRODUCTION

This report on Pedestrians, Cyclists, Equestrians and Community forms part of Volume 2 of the Environmental Statement for the A228 Leybourne and West Malling Bypass. It covers a review of existing and proposed rights of way in the vicinity of the published route and the route's effect on these, equestrians and community facilities. Impacts on local vehicle traffic flows are also assessed where relevant.

The report has been prepared in accordance with Department of Transport guidelines contained in the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) Volume 11. Impacts of the preferred route have been investigated for the years 1998 and 2013, being the anticipated year of opening and 15 years after opening respectively, as recommended by DMRB.

2. METHODOLOGY

The report has been based upon a desk study carried out using local ordnance survey maps provided by Kent County Council and supplemented with information obtained by consultation with the following organisations.

Kent County Council

Definitive footpath plans of the area.

The Access and Recreation Officer was consulted regarding long distance and circular routes in the area as was the Safety Engineering Manager and the Cycling Officer relating to cycleway proposals.

Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council

Local planning proposals and policies were assessed and the Recreational Works Officer was consulted.

Meopham and District Riding Association

The association was consulted on their view about the proposed bridleway route.

Leybourne Grange Riding Centre for the Disabled

The riding centre was consulted about their views on the proposed bridleway route.

Key community facilities within the catchment area are identified on figure 2.1. These have been identified as the basis of:

- (i) level of use;
- (ii) use by vulnerable groups, mainly children;
- (iii) availability of alternative facilities; and
- (iv) their own importance such as a railway station.

It is assumed that people will use the nearest available facility unless there is evidence to the contrary.

3 EXISTING CONDITIONS

3.1 PEDESTRIANS, CYCLISTS AND EQUESTRIANS

Figure 3.1 shows the statutory footpaths and bridleways in the study area. Pedestrian crossings at existing roads are all at-grade, including those on West Malling Bypass which is a de-restricted, high speed 'A' class single carriageway. With the exception of footpaths along existing roads, there are no designated crossings of the existing M20 and junction 4. Paved footways run along the length of Castle Way, A20 and along part of West Malling Bypass.

Kent County Council and the Countryside Commission have created numerous walks throughout the county. One of these 'Country Park Walks' known as Woods Meadow Walk runs through the study area, as shown on Figure 3.2.

Most of the footpaths are only lightly used with the possible exception of MR 133 and MR 101. MR 133 forms part of the Woods Meadow Walk and is regularly used. MR 101 forms an east-west route through the residential area of Leybourne.

There are several other footpaths in Leybourne Wood that are not statutory rights of way, but are administered by Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council.

A survey carried out at More Park RC school indicated that there are a small number of parents who use the path along the eastern edge of West Malling Bypass to access the school from Leybourne.

Bridleways MR 578, 579 and 111 are used infrequently as they do not form part of an integrated network.

There are no designated cycleways in the study area.

3.2 SCHOOLS AND GENERAL COMMUNITY FACILITIES

The community of Leybourne has been recently developed in and around a farming area containing some historic and an ancient building. On the east side of Castle Way, within 500m of the proposed scheme is a primary school, Leybourne Church of England School. A recently formed college, Grange Park College, is located at the site of the former Leybourne Grange Hospital.

A small shopping and community centre is located in the centre of the new Leybourne development. At the M20 end of Castle Way is St Peters and St Pauls Church. Nearby is Leybourne Castle, a privately owned listed property whose grounds are scheduled as an Ancient Monument. To the north of the M20 junction 4 are Leybourne Lakes, used regularly for fishing and water sports.

Within the Hermitage group of buildings south of the A20, is St Thomas More Roman Catholic Church and More Park School. A few hundred yards from these buildings is the West Malling railway station, which serves local commuters and has links to London and Ashford. To the west of West Malling Bypass lies the historic town of West Malling which consists of numerous and varied facilities, including Manor Park Country Park.

4 PROPOSALS AND POLICIES

4.1 EXISTING PROPOSALS

Kent County Council do not have any specific leisure proposals in this area apart from the measures to be implemented as a result of the scheme.

Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council also do not have any specific leisure proposals in the area of interest.

The Department of Transport, as part of their proposed M20 widening works, are to replace the existing Birling Road bridge with a temporary structure until a replacement bridge is built. Both the temporary and new structure will allow pedestrian and bridleway use as currently enjoyed.

An outline planning application for the redevelopment of the site of the former Leybourne Grange Hospital into 750 houses has recently been received by Kent County Council.

4.2 POLICIES

The Adopted Medway Gap and Vicinity Local Plan (March 1994) states the following policies:

'The Borough Council will seek to maintain and improve the existing network of public rights of way and, as opportunities arise, will, in association with the County Council, seek to provide new recreational footpaths and bridleways, where they improve access to the countryside without detriment to agricultural, forestry or nature conservation interests, and where they would not conflict with other policies of the Plan.'

It is the intention of the Borough Council to put forward proposals for alleviating existing deficiencies in public open space, where practicable and preventing any new deficiencies occurring.

Policy 6.1 seeks to improve the accessibility of existing and proposed open playing spaces wherever reasonable and practicable opportunities can be identified.

Policy 6.2 states that the *'Borough Council will, through its allocation of resources and such other means are at its disposal, seek to provide, promote or require, the provision of additional public open space...'*

Other policies affecting open space, safeguarding and development are also identified in the Plan, as are policies regarding development and open recreation in rural areas.

Kent County Council actively promote opportunities for walking, riding and informal recreation via their 'Kent Countryside Strategy' document, published yearly. This document is produced following public consultation and promotes agreed action to compliment other initiatives stated in the Kent Structure Plan.

5. EFFECT OF THE PROPOSAL ON PEDESTRIANS, CYCLISTS AND EQUESTRIANS

5.1 EFFECTS DURING CONSTRUCTION

Existing footpaths MR132, 130, 131, 119, 116 and 143 would probably be temporarily severed during the construction works, albeit at different times but matching the progress of the contract. Diversions for those that are most frequently used would be specified in the Contract Documentation. Other footpaths would be signed as 'temporarily closed'. Users of the diverted rights of way may experience a moderate increase in their journey length.

Bridleway MR578 would be temporarily severed due to the reconstruction of Lavenders Road Bridge and the widening of West Malling Bypass.

The pedestrian route from Leybourne, along West Malling Bypass and into More Park School, although not designated as a Public Right of Way is used quite frequently by school children accompanied by parents. This route would be severed for a considerable period of time during the construction of the proposed junction. Alternative routes, via Lucks Hill or the A20 are available and would have to be used during this phase of the works.

Access along the A20, where it crosses the proposed scheme would be severed during the construction of the proposed A20 overbridge. A temporary diversion of the A20 has been proposed in order to construct the overbridge. A temporary footpath route would be provided adjacent to this diversion.

During the works, earthworks deposition and disposal would be carried out along designated haul routes. These routes may be along public highways and may lead to an increase in noise and possibly dust. Where these routes are proposed along roads in use by other local users they would be clearly defined and signed to warn all users.

Other temporary haul routes may be located in the open countryside and may affect pedestrian use of footpaths. Again these would be clearly marked and signed.

Haul routes and existing roads would be kept free from dust and debris as far as possible by sweeping, spraying and vehicle washing facilities.

The access into Woods Meadow Walk from the A20 would be severed for a short period during the construction of the A20 overbridge. The existing access from the southern end of Pump Close to the A20 would also be temporarily severed.

5.2 EFFECTS AT THE YEAR OF OPENING

Footpath MR132 would be re-aligned to continue along Park Road and over a new Park Road overbridge. Footpaths MR130 and 131 would be realigned to follow the eastern edge of the new carriageway and across it via a new footbridge/accommodation bridge. A new footpath on the western edge of the proposed scheme would connect this bridge to existing routes. Footpath MR133 would be re-aligned from the point it is affected by the proposed scheme and along its western edge to meet the new footbridge/accommodation bridge carrying MR131 and thereby forming a clear network of footpaths. Users would therefore only experience a slight change in their journey time. There would be a reduction in travelling time for those wishing to cross Castle Way due to the anticipated reduction in traffic volumes.

MR116 would be accommodated across the proposed scheme by means of a subway. MR143 would be re-aligned to cross over the proposed scheme using the new Lavenders Road bridge.

MR119 would be diverted to the new eastern edge of the Bypass. Access to Lucks Hill would be provided by a new set of steps and a ramp.

Ramblers would notice a change in the landscape, but would be presented with much safer methods of crossing West Malling Bypass than they have at present due to the proposed provision of a subway for MR116 and the diversion of MR143 to Lavenders Road bridge.

MR578 would be repositioned along the new western edge of the Bypass and over the new Lavenders Road bridge. It is proposed to extend MR578 from Lavenders Road along the new eastern edge of the Bypass to meet MR116. MR116 would then be redesignated a footpath/bridleway from this point and eastwards. The bridleway network would continue via Broadwater Road (which is already used by horses at frequent intervals and is lightly trafficked) to MR117. MR117 would also be redesignated to become a footpath/bridleway, providing access to West Malling and the north. A new semi-rural network of bridleways would therefore be created.

In keeping with policies drawn up to promote alternative transport modes, a new footpath/cycleway would be constructed from the A20 roundabout, running along the entire length of the eastern edge of the Bypass. This route would be connected to similar facilities within the Kings Hill development and northwards along Castle Way – which would have the added benefit of a reduction in traffic volumes as a result of the construction of the Bypass. A link to West Malling would be achieved by the provision of a proposed ramp at Lavenders Road bridge. Strategic cycleway policies at Kings Hill, if implemented, would extend the cycleway network eastward to Watlington and beyond. The cycle routes would be clearly signed and crossing points would be provided before junctions by means of dropped kerbs to avoid difficulties at locations such as roundabouts.

New footways would be constructed adjacent to the Hermitage junction and the link road to the A20 to allow pedestrian access across the proposed scheme to More Park School from Leybourne.

Due to a difference in levels access into Woods Meadow would be provided from a new point on the A20, 40m further west of the original access. A new footpath would be provided from Pump Close to the A20 adjacent to the mitigation mound.

6. EFFECT OF THE PROPOSAL ON COMMUNITY FACILITIES

6.1 EFFECTS DURING CONSTRUCTION

Vehicular access to Leybourne C of E school from both the M20 and A20 junctions with Castle Way would be affected during construction of each new roundabout. These junctions provide the major access points to the community of Leybourne; residents would therefore also suffer some access difficulties during construction.

Pedestrians that would normally access More Park School by foot may experience some difficulties due to diversions in place during construction of the new A20 interchange.

The A20 would need to be diverted during construction of a new bridge over the proposed scheme. It is the primary east-west route between West Malling and Maidstone and its diversion would have a major effect on traffic during the period of construction of the overbridge.

Residents of Pump Close would be close to the proposed route and would suffer an increase in noise, dust and visual intrusion from works adjacent to Pump Close, such as: earthwork requirements and the demolition of properties to form a permanent noise and visual intrusion, mitigation mound.

Works adjacent to Leybourne Lakes would be carefully undertaken to avoid any adverse impact on users of the Lakes.

6.2 EFFECTS AT YEAR OF OPENING

With the anticipated reduction in traffic volumes along Castle Way, levels of dust, noise and visual intrusions should be reduced. Along with measures to be implemented to enhance Castle Way, this would greatly benefit the community of Leybourne.

Access for right turning vehicles onto and from Castle Way would be much easier with the reduction in traffic volumes especially from Oxley Shaw Lane.

Access to and from West Malling and its facilities, would become easier due to the anticipated reduction in volumes of traffic using the A20.

Access to the M20, London bound, for local users may be affected due to the increased journey length involved in negotiating the new layout, although journey times should be decreased.

Journey times for strategic through traffic would be greatly reduced.

Access to More Park school from Leybourne would be via the new Hermitage junction using dedicated at grade crossings. However, users may suffer an increase in their journey times although crossings positioned adjacent to single way slip roads should facilitate their safe usage.

7. SUMMARY

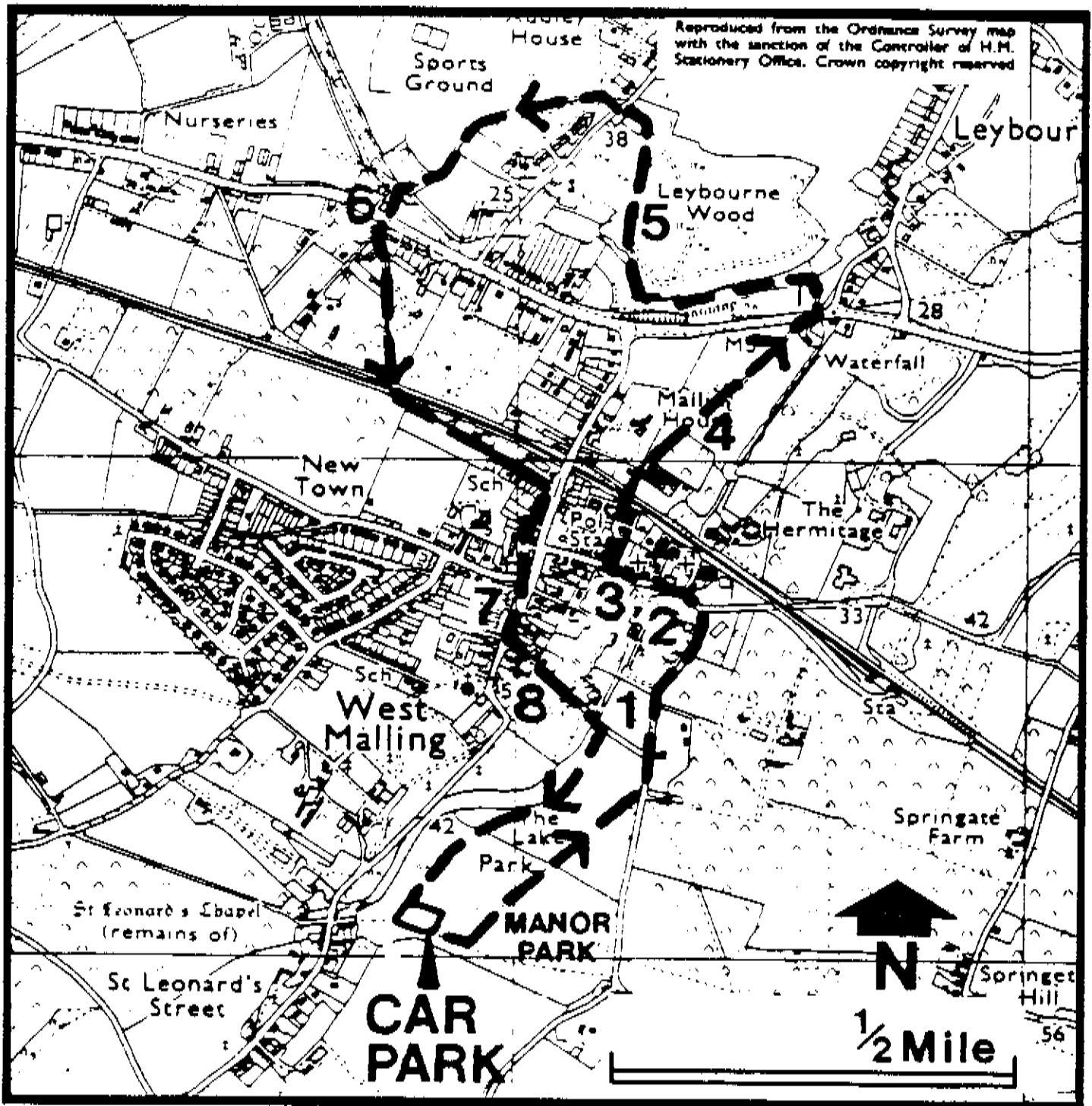
Public footpaths or bridleways that would be severed by the route have been realigned or accommodated by means of bridges or subways. Effects on pedestrians and equestrians at the year of opening would therefore be slight. Pedestrians and cyclists using Castle Way should benefit from the anticipated reduction in traffic volumes as would the community as a whole.

There will be some loss of amenity where the route cuts through the edge of Leybourne Wood. This would be mitigated to some extent by extensive planting on the new cut slope between the wood and the carriageway and by the creation of a sensitively planted lagoon.

The creation of a north/south cycleway and footway between Leybourne and Kings Hill will benefit existing users and should encourage the use of alternative transport modes.

The provision of an added bridleway and links to existing bridleway network should encourage increased and safe equestrian usage.

Road users from local areas may suffer an increase in journey length when accessing the M20 London bound.



WOODS MEADOW WALK

Figure 3.2



UNCLASSIFIED

TOLLGATE HOUSE

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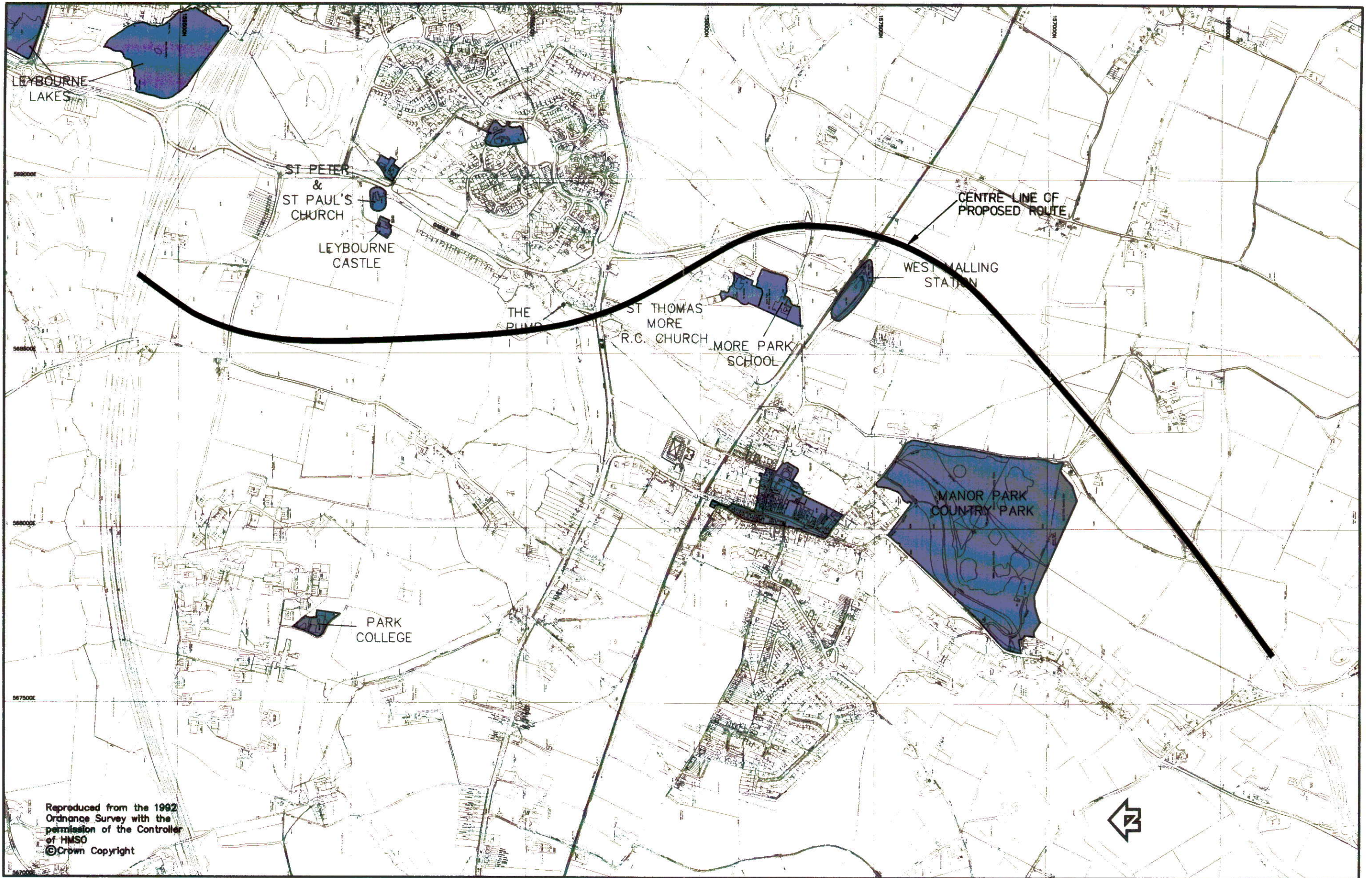
ENVIRONMENT & LANDSCAPE
Environmental Statement

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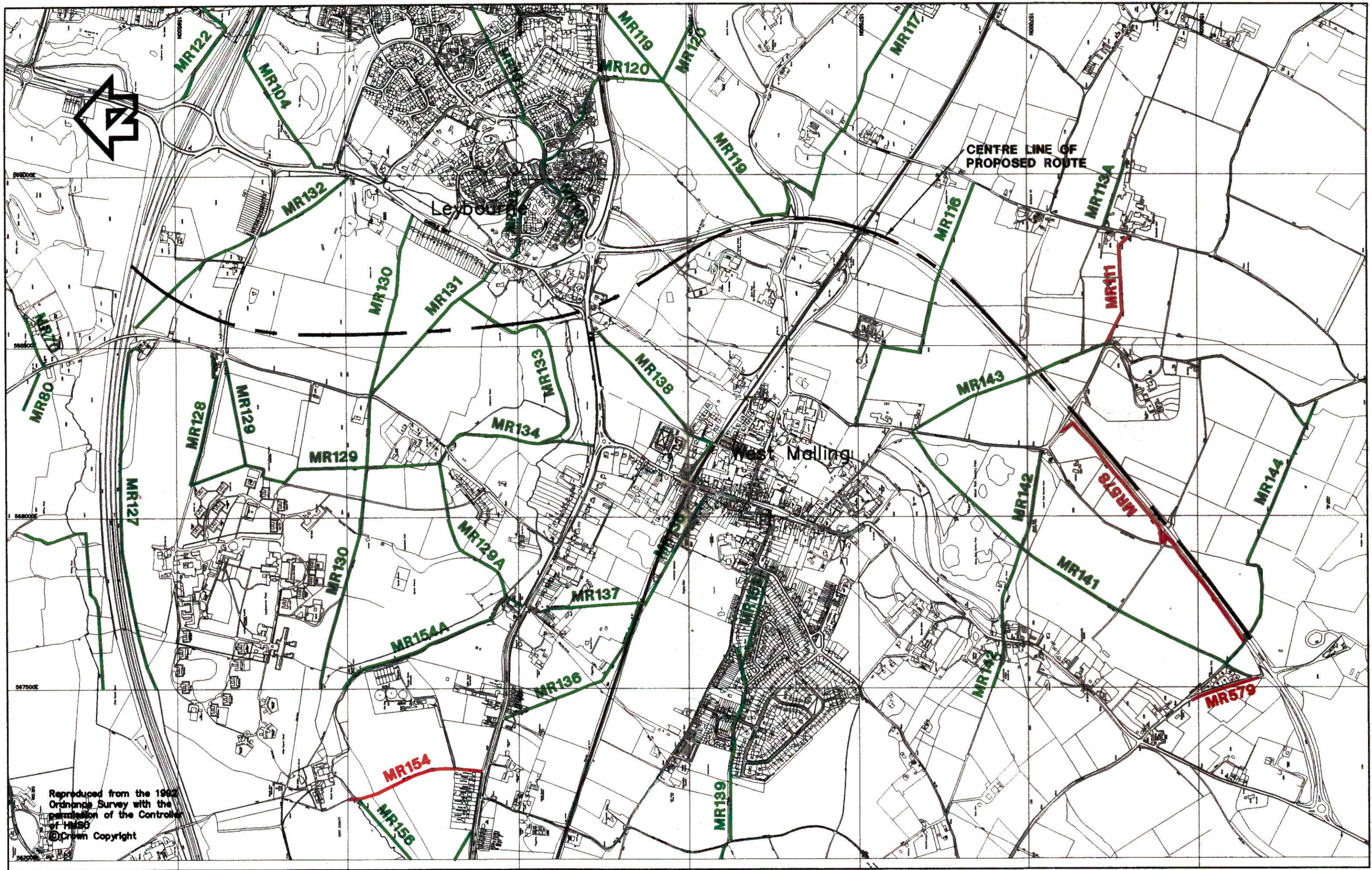
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KEY COMMUNITY FACILITIES

FIG 2.1



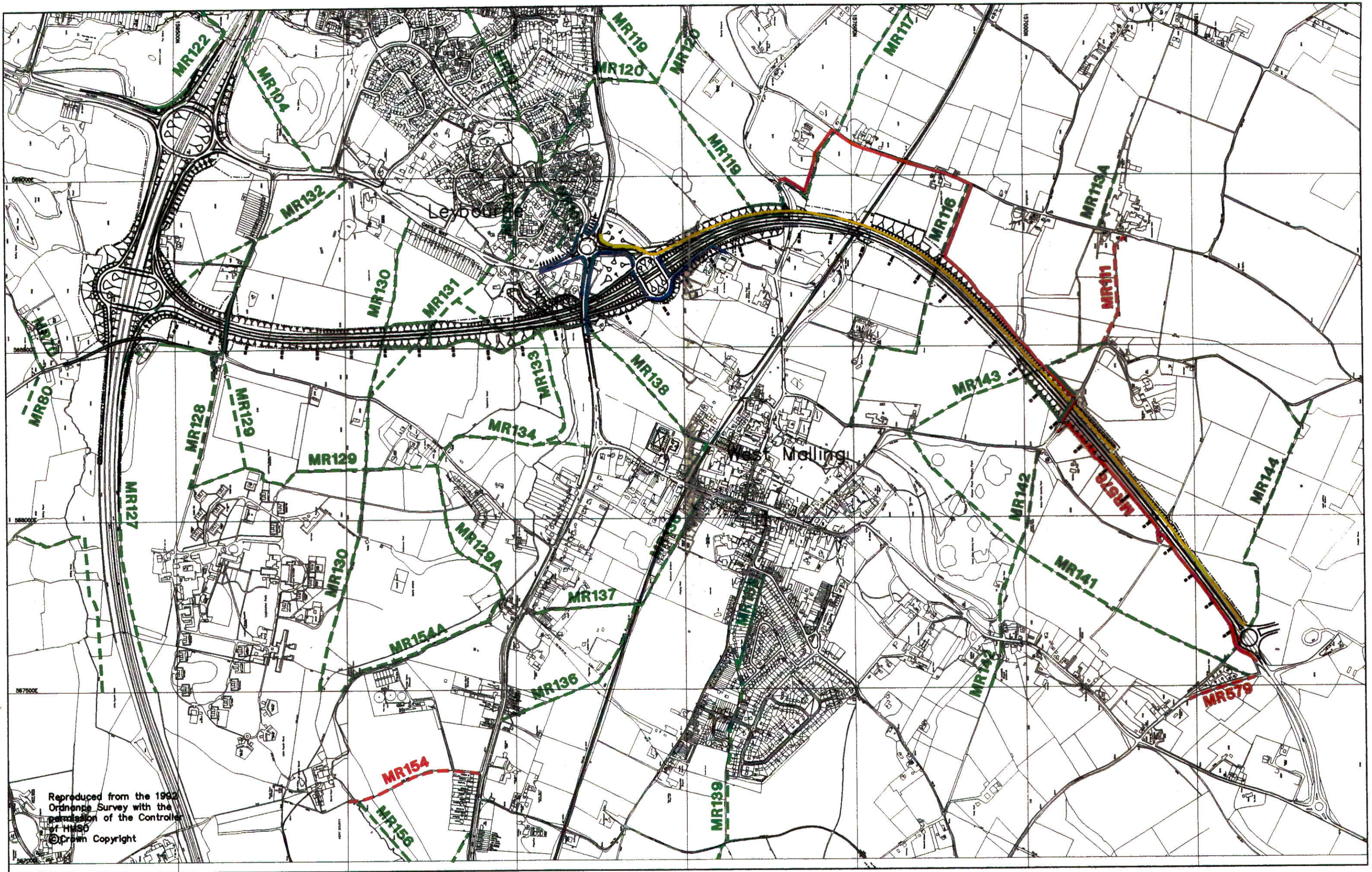
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KEY



Footpaths
Bridleways

EXISTING FOOTPATHS & BRIDLEWAYS Figure 3.1



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KEY	
	Footpaths
	Bridleways
	Footpath Diversion
	Bridleway Diversion
	New Footpath/Cycleway
	New Footpath

DIVERSIONS OF PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY & BRIDLEWAYS Figure 4.1