
Report to Planning Committee of 15 March 2012

Subject: **Planning Application 11/00332/FULL – Alterations to Existing Railway Footbridge from Grange Road to Stirling Road, Alloa**

Applicant: **Network Rail, Buchanan House, 58 Port Dundas Road, Glasgow**

Agent: **N/A**

Prepared by: **Keith Johnstone, Principal Planner**

Ward **Clackmannanshire Central**

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1. This report summarises a planning application for the above noted proposed development. Having considered the relevant planning policies in the Development Plan, consultation responses and the representations received from neighbours, the report makes a recommendation on the application to Members.
- 1.2. The application has to be reported to the Planning Committee as the Council has an interest in the application, as owner of the site.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 it is recommended that the application is APPROVED subject to the following conditions;
1. Before any works commence at the site, details of a Construction and Environmental Management Plan shall have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Council as planning authority, in consultation with Environmental Health. The Plan shall include the following;
 - (a) The proposed location, design and means of access to any construction compound, storage and lay down areas.
 - (b) The arrangements to manage and mitigate the road safety and environmental impacts of all construction related traffic on adjacent roads and neighbours including residents and the St John's primary school.

(c) The measures designed to control and minimise the potential environmental impacts generated during the construction phase on neighbouring residents and users of St John's Primary School. This shall include details of the proposed hours for construction activities including deliveries to the site. Any construction work, operation of machinery or plant or receipt of deliveries shall be restricted to between 0800-1800 hours Monday to Friday, 0800-1300 Saturday and not on Sundays, as far as practicably possible, having regard to operational constraints.

(d) The arrangements for consultation and liaison between the applicant (and any contractors) with neighbours both in advance and during the construction phase. This shall include the arrangements to respond to complaints.

Thereafter, the development shall be completed in accordance with the approved Plan.

2. Before any works start on site, the following details shall have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Council, as planning authority;

(a) Details of all areas of hard surfacing around the approaches to the ramps and staircase from Grange Road and Stirling Road.

(b) Details of any railings or other means of enclosure. This shall include details of the location, design, colour and timing of completion of a timber screen fence or an alternative means of enclosure between the footpath area at the end of the ramp and staircase on the south side of the bridge and the garden area of the house at 75 Grange Road, Alloa

(c) Details of the location and design of any new or additional lighting of the bridge required to accommodate the design hereby approved.

(d) Details of the arrangements to undertake additional or replacement tree or shrub planting between the bridge and the carriageway at Dirleton Gardens. This shall include details of plant species, plant sizes, planting distances, means of establishment and timetable for implementation.

Thereafter, the development shall be completed in accordance with the above approved details.

3. No trees within or adjacent to the site shall be removed or lopped or topped as part of the construction process without the prior written approval of the Council, as planning authority. Prior to development commencing at the site, all trees within or adjacent to the site which are to be retained as part of the development shall be protected throughout the entire duration of construction work in accordance with BS5837 (2005).

4. The development shall proceed in accordance with the details and levels shown on the approved plans and documentation hereby approved, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Council, as planning authority.

Reasons for the Conditions

1. To consider these details yet to be submitted in the interests of residential amenity and road safety.
2. To consider these details yet to be submitted and in the interest of residential and visual amenity.
3. In the interests of visual amenity.
4. To retain effective control over the development.

Reasons for the Decision

1. The proposal would accord with the Development Plan.
2. The potential impact on the existing standard of amenity and privacy of neighbouring residential properties would not be sufficiently detrimental to justify withholding permission.
3. The proposals, subject to the conditions, have minimised the impacts on the area and there are no material considerations that would justify withholding permission.

Plans in Relation to the Decision

1. 5088817-RLS-SAA-CBR-00010 RevA01 - Plan Layout
2. 5088817-RLS-SAA-CBR-00011 RevA01 - Proposed Elevations

3.0 Background to the Proposals

- 3.1. The site comprises an existing footbridge over the Stirling to Alloa railway which links Grange Road with Stirling Road. The bridge was installed to maintain a pedestrian link when Grange Road was closed to accommodate the re-opening of the railway. The bridge contains a staircase and a ramp on the south side and a ramp on the north side. The deck of the bridge is approximately 4.3 m above the footway level at Grange Road.
- 3.2. Planning permission is sought to increase the height of the structure ie, the bridge, the ramps and staircase, by 600mm in order that there is sufficient clearance beneath the bridge to accommodate the electrification of the line. This would form part of the Edinburgh Glasgow Improvement Programme (EGIP) which will see an investment of between £500 million to £1.5 billion to increase capacity and reduce journey time on the network. In order to maintain the existing ramp gradient, the ramped sections have to be extended in length to accommodate the increase in height.
- 3.3. The original layout has been amended by the applicant following a review of the dimensions and levels on site and the main changes to the original design comprise:

- a. A reduction in the length of the ramp extension on the south side by approximately 5.3m.
- b. The deletion of proposed brick walls to enclose the extended ramp on the south side and the use of railings to match the existing.
- c. A re-design of the ramp on the northern side so that it would continue to terminate adjacent to the existing light controlled crossing on Stirling Road. The original design would have moved the ramp some 15 metres west of the crossing point.

- 3.4 The bridge is owned by Clackmannanshire Council and is adopted by Roads as part of the public footpath network. The existing ramp on the north side is bounded by an area of public open space. The ramp and staircase on the south side lie opposite residential properties.

4.0 Consultations

- 4.1 Roads and Transportation have advised that they have no objection to the proposed amended design since it would not increase the existing ramp gradients and the northern ramp would now integrate with the pedestrian crossing on Stirling Road. The changes to the ramps will also require a Minor Roadworks Consent from Roads.
- 4.2 Environmental Health have advised that the works required to implement the EGIP will be subject to an Environmental Management Plan produced by the applicant. This includes measures to mitigate potential noise impacts during night time periods as it is recognised that some of the work will have to be carried out for operational reasons. *Comment: The proposed development will be carried out in advance of the EGIP. However, the applicant has agreed to submit a construction and environmental management plan to minimise potential nuisance to neighbours during the alterations to the bridge. This could be regulated by condition.*
- 4.3 Central Scotland Police advise that the ramps and staircase should continue to be enclosed by railings rather than solid panels. Solid panels would eliminate natural surveillance of the bridge and its users which would not be in the interests of Community Safety, particularly as the bridge is likely to form part of a route to school. The railings also make it easier for neighbours to see or report anyone loitering on the bridge. *Comment: The advice from the Police was sought as part of the Service's assessment of the concerns raised by objectors about the impact on their property from overlooking from the bridge and their suggestion that further screening is provided by replacing the railings with solid panels. This issue is discussed in Section 5.3 below.*

5.0 Representations

- 5.1 A total of 8 neighbouring properties were notified of the application and a Neighbour Notification advert was placed in the Alloa Advertiser. The application was re-published following the submission of the revised drawings of the ramp details since the Service considered this was a material change to the original proposal. One objector made further comments in response to the re-notification.

5.2 In response to this publicity, representations have been received from the following parties;

- Mr & Mrs Oliver, 75 Grange Road, Alloa, FK10 1LU
- Mr & Mrs Hunter, 80 Grange Road, Alloa, FK10 1LU
- Mr & Mrs Smith, 46 Dirleton Gardens, Alloa
- Mr & Mrs Crowley, 48 Dirleton Gardens, Alloa
- Carole Pullan, 77 Grange Road, Alloa

5.3 The main issues raised can be summarised as follows;

(a) The neighbouring houses, to the south of the bridge are already overlooked from the bridge and ramp and the proposed increase in height of the structure would exacerbate the impact on their privacy and security due to the degree of overlooking into their houses and gardens. This overlooking did not exist prior to the installation of the bridge. The replacement of the outside railings on the ramp with solid panels would help mitigate these impacts.

Comment: The purpose of the proposal to increase the height of the existing bridge by 600mm (approximately 2 feet) is to provide sufficient clearance above the railway track for the future electrification of the line. It is recognised that the installation of the bridge to maintain the pedestrian link from Grange Road has had an impact on the neighbouring houses both in terms of its visual impact and the overlooking between them due to the elevated structure. Mitigation was undertaken by planting 4 trees between the ramp on the south side and the carriageway at Dirleton Gardens and the installation of a solid panel opposite the southern end of the bridge deck to prevent direct views towards the property at 80 Grange Road. However, the determining issue is whether the impacts on neighbouring houses associated with the proposed change in height is acceptable or not, rather than whether the existing impacts are acceptable. On balance, it is considered that the proposal to increase the height of the structure by a further 600mm and retain the railings would be acceptable for the following reasons:

- *when the existing level of overlooking and visual impact between the bridge and the objectors houses is considered, the effects of the proposed change on those properties are not considered to be sufficiently detrimental to justify withholding permission. This is due to the combination of distance (approximately 20m), the modest increase in height and the enclosures at and around gardens.*
- *the replacement of the railings with solid panels, as suggested by some of the objectors, would remove the existing good levels of natural surveillance of users of the bridge (including from their properties) which would result in an unacceptable adverse impact on the standards of community safety design of the bridge as recommended by the Police.*
- *there is scope to supplement the existing tree planting opposite the houses and this could be regulated using a planning condition.*

(b) the proposed enclosure of the southern ramp extension would create a screen which could attract people to congregate. Comment *the revised ramp design has removed the proposed brick walls and replaced them with railings.*

(c) the proposal is likely to result in a repeat of the significant levels of disruption, noise and disturbance experienced by neighbours when the bridge was installed and the railway re-opened. Comment *the proposed development would not involve the same scale and extent of works as before and a condition could be attached requiring a construction management plan to be agreed including appropriate community liaison. For operational reasons, some of the work would have to be carried out outwith normal working hours and the applicant has indicated that this could include a 48 hour period over one or two weekends. While this is likely to result in a degree of disturbance, it is considered that if properly planned, managed and controlled, it would not be reasonable to withhold permission for this reason subject to the proposed planning condition.*

(d) neighbours were not consulted on the original bridge project. Comment *the previous works were not subject to the same neighbour notification process as a planning application. However, the bridge provides an important pedestrian link and would provide a route to the proposed new replacement primary school at Redwell.*

(e) if the proposal is approved, better lighting, CCTV cameras and more trees should be provided. Comment *the Police has advised that the provision of good levels of natural surveillance is the key to providing a safe environment. The bridge is part of the footpath network adopted by the Roads Service and the design and lighting levels will have to meet their standards.*

(f) will the works result in more trains passing thereby increasing noise from the railway. Comment *the work is required to allow the future electrification of the railway line. The frequency of trains is not material in the determination of the application.*

(g) any changes to the existing barriers across the ends of the ramps should not restrict access for wheelchair scooters. Comment *the revised design will take account of this issue and their provision will be regulated by Roads.*

(h) the gate that provides access for Network Rail operatives onto the track at the south side of the bridge should be relocated since it also results in noise and disturbance to residents from vehicles and staff who park on the adjacent public road. Comment *although we made Network Rail aware of this issue, it is not related to the proposed development and cannot be treated as a material consideration in the determination of the application.*

6.0 Planning Considerations

6.1 The planning application requires to be determined in accordance with the terms of the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The most relevant policies of the Plan are Clackmannanshire Local Plan Policies;

- EN11 (Enhancing Environmental Quality)

- INF4 (Development Standards)

- 6.2 **Policy EN11:** The policy requires new developments to contribute positively to its immediate environment through high quality design, finishes and landscaping and by providing a high level of safety and security for pedestrians. *Comment it is recognised that the existing bridge is a functional structure which was installed to provide an accessible link from Grange Road to Stirling Road. The proposed increase in height of the structure would result in localised impacts on amenity but, where these occur, we consider that they would not be sufficiently detrimental to justify withholding permission. The proposed revised design would maintain a satisfactory level of safety for users of the bridge, a point reflected in the advice received from the Police. A condition would be attached to ensure the existing landscaping would be maintained and enhanced. The proposal is not considered to be contrary to this policy.*
- 6.3 **Policy INF4:** The policy requires development to comply with the Roads Guidelines and Specification. *Comment the existing bridge is adopted by the Council as Roads authority and Roads have advised that the revised design would be acceptable. The proposal accords with this policy.*
- 6.4 The aim and objective of the Development Plan is to work towards sustainable development and it is considered that the proposed development would be consistent with this.

Other Material Considerations

- 6.5 Scottish Planning Policy (SPP)2010;
- supports the shift to more sustainable modes of travel including walking, cycling and public transport to address climate change issues.
 - requires proposed or committed transport projects to be taken into account in development management decisions.
 - states that urban areas should be made attractive and safer for pedestrians and cyclists including those with mobility difficulties.
 - advises that the strategic transport network, which includes rail networks, is critical to facilitating sustainable economic growth.

The proposed works would be consistent with this guidance.

- 6.6 The concerns raised by neighbours have been discussed in Section 5.0 above. While it is recognised that the existing bridge has resulted in an impact on the amenity and privacy of the nearest properties, the effect of the proposed change in height would not be sufficiently detrimental to withhold permission. This conclusion has been reached having had regard to the option to install solid panels along the side of the ramp nearest to the houses, which has been discounted due to the adverse impact this would have on community safety and deterring crime due to the loss of natural surveillance of the bridge, contrary to Secure by Design principles. On balance, it is concluded that the proposal accords with the Development Plan and, in the

absence of any alternative practicable solutions, there are no other material considerations which would provide sufficient support to refuse permission.

7.0 Sustainability Implications

- 7.1 The proposal would contribute to opportunities for active travel and public transport

8.0 Resource Implications

8.1 Financial Details

- 8.2 The full financial implications of the recommendations are set out in the report. This includes a reference to full life cycle costs where appropriate.

Yes ☐

9.0 Exempt Reports - Reasons for Exemption

- 9.1 This is not an exempt report.

10.0 Declarations

The recommendations contained within this report support or implement our Corporate Priorities and Council Policies.

- (1) **Our Priorities 2008 - 2011** (Please double click on the check box ☒)

The area has a positive image and attracts people and businesses	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Our communities are more cohesive and inclusive	<input type="checkbox"/>
People are better skilled, trained and ready for learning and employment	<input type="checkbox"/>
Our communities are safer	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Vulnerable people and families are supported	<input type="checkbox"/>
Substance misuse and its effects are reduced	<input type="checkbox"/>
Health is improving and health inequalities are reducing	<input type="checkbox"/>
The environment is protected and enhanced for all	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
The Council is effective, efficient and recognised for excellence	<input type="checkbox"/>

- (2) **Council Policies** (Please detail)

Clackmannanshire local Plan

11.0 Equalities Impact

- 11.1 Have you undertaken the required equalities impact assessment to ensure that no groups are adversely affected by the recommendations?

Yes ☐

No ☒

12.0 Legality

- 12.1 It has been confirmed that in adopting the recommendations contained in this report, the Council is acting within its legal powers. Yes ☒

13.0 Appendices

- 10.1 Please list any appendices attached to this report. If there are no appendices, please state "none".

None

11.0 Background Papers

- 11.1 Have you used other documents to compile your report? (All documents must be kept available by the author for public inspection for four years from the date of meeting at which the report is considered)

Yes ☒ (please list the documents below) No ☐

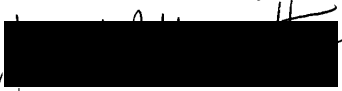
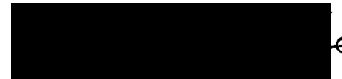
Clackmannanshire Local Plan

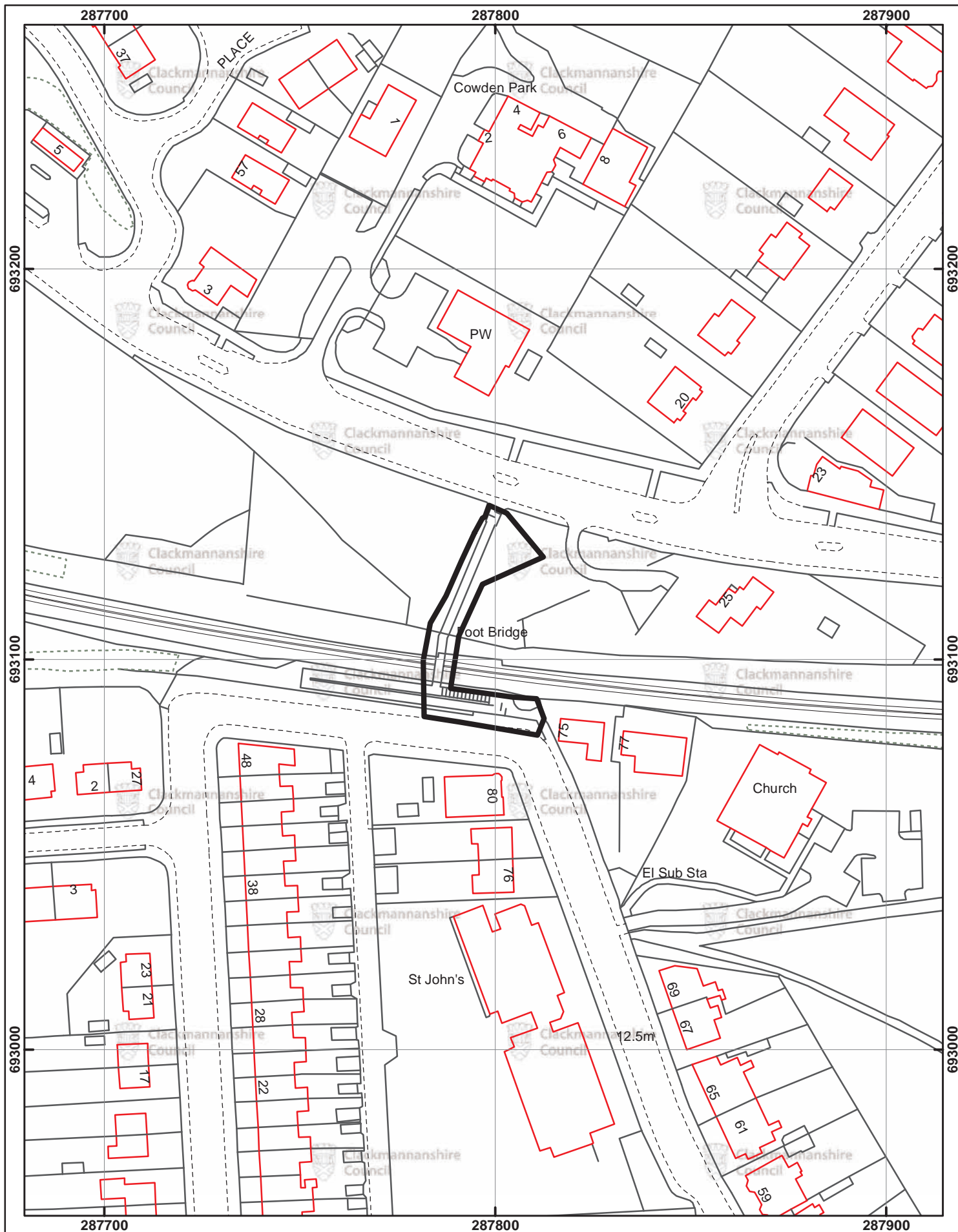
Scottish Planning Policy (2010)

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Approved by

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John Gillespie	Head of Community and Regulatory	



Date:
28-Feb-2012

11/00332/FULL - Railway Footbridge From Grange Road To Stirling Road, Alloa **Alterations To Existing Footbridge**

Ward: Clackmannanshire South

OS Grid Ref: NS 87 93 SE

0 10 20 30 40 50
Meters

Scale: 1:1,250

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