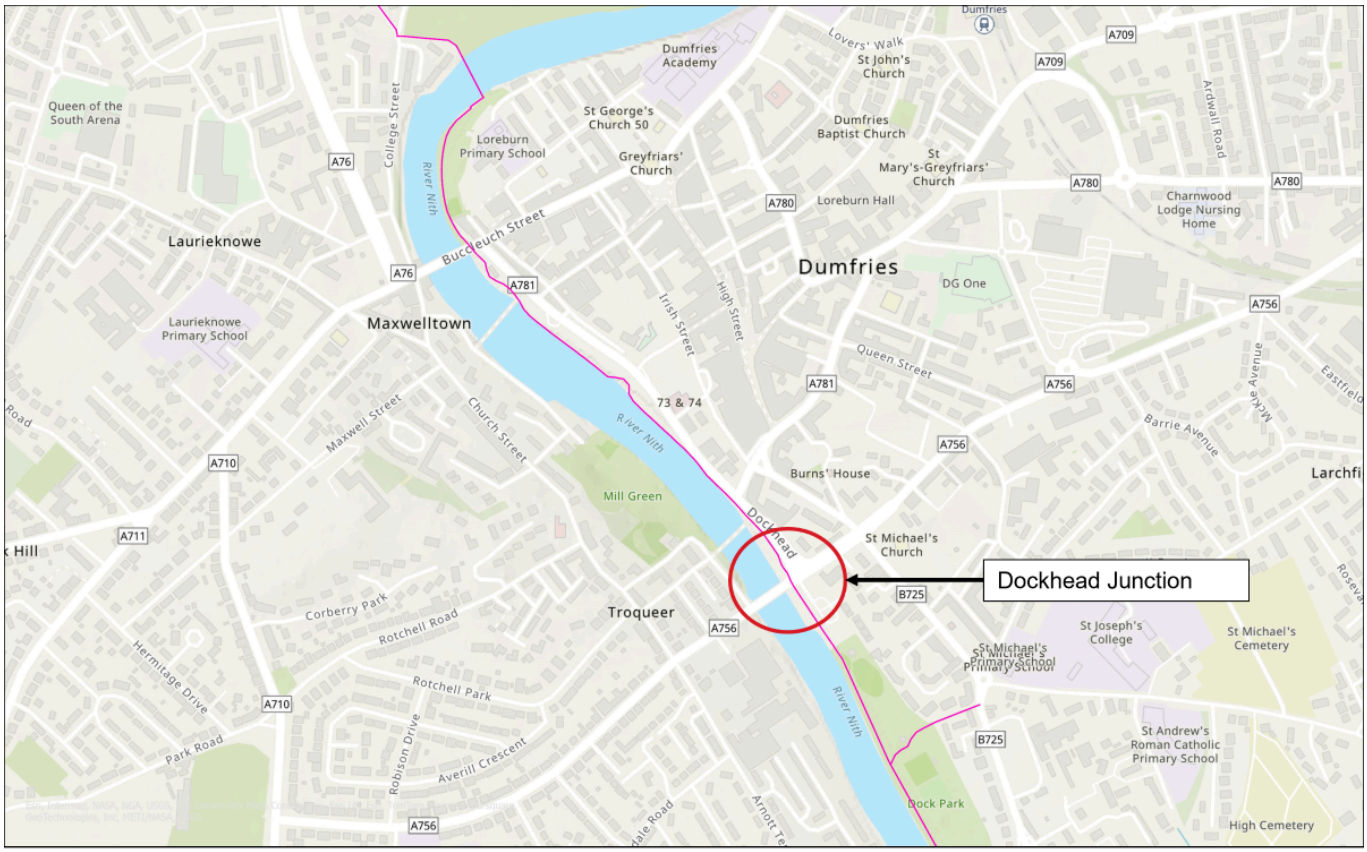
Dockhead St Michael's Bridge Road Junction

Dumfries & Galloway | May 2025



Introduction

Dumfries and Galloway Council (the council) is seeking to improve walking, wheeling (including wheelchairs, mobility scooters, walking frames, prams or buggies), and cycling infrastructure at the Dockhead Junction as part of the Crichton Trust - Development Framework and Masterplan, a supplementary guidance document to the Local Development Plan (LDP2).

The junction is located at the intersection of St Michael's Bridge Road (both north and south), Dockhead, and the vehicle access to Dock Park car park (as shown opposite).

The traffic signals at the junction are in poor condition and beyond the end of their operational life. The council wants to take this opportunity to consider improvements for people walking, wheeling and cycling. They have appointed Stantec to undertake an assessment, option appraisal, and redesign of the Dockhead Junction.

In order to coordinate designs, we are working closely with the team seeking to introduce flood protection measures at Whitesands. Engagement regarding the flood protection scheme will take place later in 2025, and this will allow the local community and stakeholders to provide feedback.

The latest information on the Flood Protection Scheme can be viewed here: https://www.dumgal.gov.uk/whitesands

Objectives

The vision for Dockhead Junction is to make it as easy as possible for people to move around the town without needing to drive, ultimately contributing to a reduction in car use and improvement in health and wellbeing. We recognise that some people will still

want to make trips by car and so the new design will cater for all movements, as well as larger vehicles and buses.

The following project objectives are:

- The improve the infrastructure to make walking, wheeling and cycling not only possible but also attractive
- To make the intersection safer and easier to navigate for those walking, wheeling and cycling
- To reduce overall times for pedestrians to cross the intersection and increase the space provided for those travelling by active means
- To reduce vehicle speeds and limit the increase in delay for buses and commercial traffic
- To cater for users of all abilities
- To re-layout the junction to modern design principles and in line with the National Transport Hierarchy
- To modernise and replace obsolete equipment and reduce running costs by using energy efficient technology and improve maintainability

Timeline

The project delivery timeline consists of four key stages:

1. Concept development
2. **Developed design**
3. Detailed Design (or technical design)
4. Construction

Stage one, Concept Development, has now been completed. Stantec conducted a thorough review of the local area, existing data, and the movement of pedestrians, cyclists, and vehicles in 2023. Following this baseline review, we performed an option appraisal and engaged with stakeholders to inform the development of an initial design. Both stakeholders and the local community were consulted on this initial concept, and as a result, a developed design has now been created.

We would like to provide an update on the project's progress before further engagement with stakeholders on technical details commencing May 2025.

Design considerations

There are a number of technical considerations as this is a key location on the road network in Dumfries.

Consideration	Approach
Ecology	The ecological impact of any works associated with the junction upgrade and the Flood Protection Scheme are being considered through an Environmental Statement.
Flooding	In coordination with the Flood Defence Scheme project, measures to mitigate the impact of flooding at the junction will be incorporated.
Active Travel	A key aim was to try and improve the crossing of the St Michael's Bridge Road arm of the junction. The crossing is part of the National Cycle Network and the aspiration is to make it safer and more attractive for pedestrians and cyclists because we know a lot of people cross here.

Consideration	Approach
	Elsewhere, it has been attempted to make crossing movements more direct and minimise waiting times, through detailed modelling.
Delay and congestion	Detailed modelling has been undertaken to ensure that the level of delay for cars, larger vehicles and buses is within acceptable levels. The traffic signals will use SCOOT software which is a traffic control system that automatically adjusts traffic signal timings based on real-time traffic conditions. There might still be some queuing and delay at the busiest times as result of the number of vehicles trying to pass through the junction.
Road surface and safety	Improving safety for all users is a key part of the design and it will be

Consideration	Approach
	subject to Road Safety Audits, undertaken by independent specialists. These are undertaken during the design stage and after construction. The road surface throughout the junction will be replaced as part of the works, removing all potholes. Tracking of buses and larger vehicles has been undertaken to ensure they can make all movements.
Cost and maintenance	A key part of the work is to minimise the financial burden on the council. Opportunities to identify external funding sources for construction will be explored, which is one reason that conditions for pedestrians and cyclists must be improved. The design will also seek

Consideration	Approach
	to minimise the future maintenance cost to the council so, for example, the use of pedestrian guardrail will be minimised.
Ground conditions and utilities	Detailed surveys have been undertaken to understand ground conditions and the location of any underground utilities.
Construction impact	A traffic management plan will be put in place during construction to try and minimse the impact at this time.

Consultation

Extensive engagement has been undertaken with the local community and stakeholders.

The need for improvement at the junction was identified during the 2019 Dumfries Active Street Review. This review was shaped by various consultation exercises, including a community active travel street audit. Following this, engagement was carried out in 2023 through an online survey, workshops and a drop-in event.

The feedback gathered from the engagement programme has been incorporated into the detailed design. We have developed a ‘You said, We did’, to reflect how the feedback has been incorporated.

You said, We did

Pedestrian Crossings

You said the existing crossings are inadequate in terms of crossing time and physical layout. Additionally, one commenter noted that the audio signals were confusing as it is hard to tell which crossing it is for.

We simplified some crossing movements, in particular the crossing on St Michael's Bridge Road which is the alignment of the NCN. The traffic signal timings will be revised to give sufficient time for pedestrians to make crossings. Sensors will be incorporated which can extend the crossing time if people are still crossing. Tactile cones will be provided at each push button to inform those with visual impairments when it is safe to cross.

Separating Pedestrians and Cyclists

You said it would be good to minimse conflict between pedestrians and cyclists through the provision of dedicated cycle infrastructure.

At the main crossing point used by cyclists, aligned to the National Cycle Network, pedestrians and cyclists will be seperated. Where cyclist movements are lower, there will be shared space areas, similar ot the current National Cycle Network. Signage will be included to encourage cyclists to give way to pedestrians. Cyclist behaviour will be monitored and additional measures can be put in place if required.

Junction Layout

You said the current junction is confusing, with lack of signage and wayfinding. This is in addition to the complicated physical layout and alignment.

The layout will be simplified by reducing the number of lanes for traffic and crossing movements. Unlike the current layout, all traffic and crossing movements will be controlled by traffic signals with “green men”. Additional signage for drivers, pedestrians and cyclists will be included throughout the junction.

Queing and Delay

You said it is important that people who need to, or choose to, drive or get the bus can get through the junction without being significantly delayed in queues of traffic.

The traffic signals will use SCOOT software which is a traffic control system that automatically adjusts traffic signal timings based on real-time traffic conditions. This will help to keep traffic flowing as best at possible.

Potholes and Road Surface

You said the junction needs resurfaced.

The junction will be resurfaced throughout as part of the works.

Design Layout

A detailed option appraisal was undertaken which ranked a number of options against the project objectives and the deliverability / affordability of each option.

The design layout opposite was identified as the the preferred option and was taken forward to Stage 3 Developed Design. This layout makes the junction safer and more appealing for pedestrians and cyclists without having significant negative impact on road traffic and public transport.

You can also download a version of the design by clicking the button below.

Developed Design

The design layout would reconfigure the islands on the Dockhead (north) arm, as well as providing a single-stage shared use cycle

and pedestrian crossing of the St Michael's Bridge Road west arm.

The left-hand turn lanes from the car park (south) and St Michael's Bridge Road west would be removed to provide sufficient space for the crossing. Additionally, all pedestrian guardrails would be removed and general maintenance such as replacing defective tactile paving, refurbishing drop kerbs, improving signage and other improvements.

This design layout significantly improves the infrastructure at the junction for walking, wheeling, and cycling by introducing a single-stage crossing for users crossing the NCN arm of the junction and rationalising the crossings on the other arms. It provides a pragmatic approach to upgrading the junction.

Public Drop-in

The council engaged on the project in the early design stages, and the feedback gathered has helped develop the detailed designs for the junction. We are now hosting a drop-in information event to provide information on the projects progress and let you speak to the project team.

This event will be held at the **Stove Network & Cafe, 100 High Street, Dumfries, DG1 2BJ on 20 May from 3pm to 7pm.**

What's next

The project is currently in the developed design stage, and the proposed design layout has been approved by the council after engaging with the community.

The next phase will involve technical design, where the materials and specifications will be finalised. Construction of the proposed layout is expected to begin financial year 2026/27.

FAQs

Why is money being spent on this scheme?

The signal infrastructure at the junction is beyond the end of its design life and needs to be replaced. Following the chosen design process may mean the scheme is eligible for external funding (whether partly or fully) so less is paid for from the council budget. Additionally, carriageway resurfacing will take place throughout the junction.

What will the impact be during construction?

Construction of the proposals will be considered in parallel with the flood defence scheme.

A traffic management system will be put in place and the temporary signals can be set to efficiently manage traffic flows.

The flood defence scheme will block the view of the river.

While this is not within the scope of the junction proposals, this will be taken into consideration.

There are issues with the New Abbey Road / Pleasance Avenue junction accomodating larger vehicles.

Detailed assessment has been undertaken to ensure that larger vehicles can make all turning movements.

There is potential to accomodate more active travel movements.

The design was updated to include additional provision for active travel on some approaches.

Why Stantec

Stantec is an international transportation consultancy, recently appointed by Dumfries and Galloway Council to redesign Dockhead St Michael's Bridge Road Junction.

With a dedicated Scotland Active Travel Team, Stantec have extensive experience of delivering Active Travel projects nationwide.

Stantec has previously gained local knowledge of Dumfries & Galloway through our work in Dumfries on the Troqueer Road/Pleasance Avenue junction and the Cuckoo Bridge North Toucan Crossing. Both projects are currently underway and aim to deliver active travel and crossing improvements at the signalised junctions. They have involved consultation, options appraisals, concept designs and technical designs.

We are a team of transport planners, geospatial analysts, active travel specialists, traffic modellers, data analysts, engineers and designers who combine local knowledge with professional skills and an international network of experts working on similar projects worldwide.

We care about the communities we serve - because they're our communities too. This allows us to assess what's needed and connect our expertise, to appreciate nuances and envision what's never been considered, to bring together diverse perspectives and public engagement so we can collaborate towards a shared success

Thank you!

Thank you for visiting the website and for taking the time to participate in our community information share about the future of Dockhead St Michael's Bridge Road Junction.

If you have any further queries, please email:

dockheadjunction@stantec.com