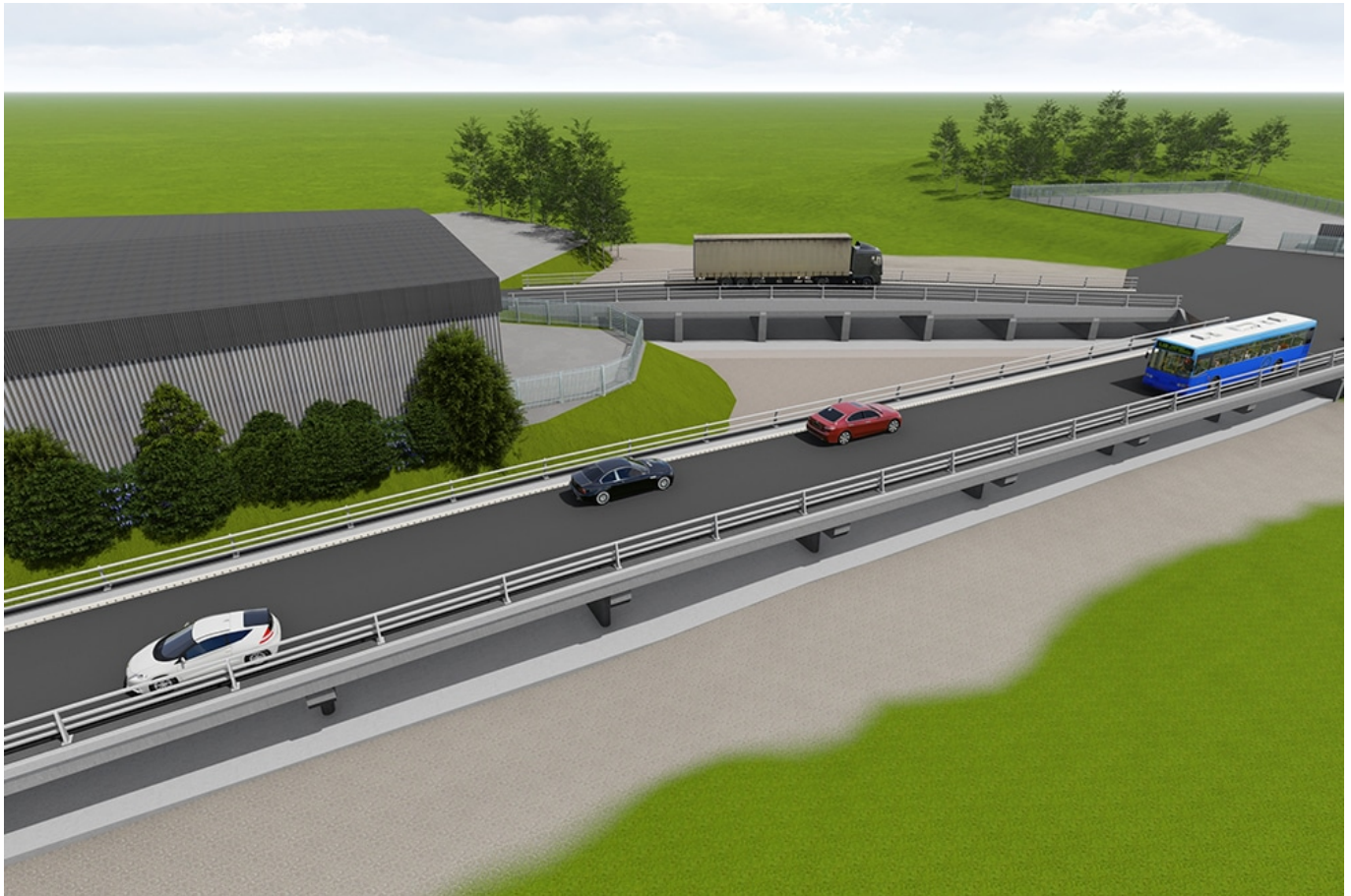


# Green light for Hele flood resilience scheme

February 3, 2023



Mid-Devon District Council has approved Network Rail's plans to reduce the frequency and duration of flooding on the railway at Hele.

The £7.2 million scheme to replace two road bridges and re-profile the floodplain will mean fewer closures and less disruption for passengers and freight, as well as road users.

The work is part of a wider package of work to reduce flooding on the main railway line through Somerset, Devon and Cornwall.

The scheme involves:

- Demolishing the current bridge at Station Road, Hele, and replacing it with a viaduct, increasing the flow of water through the structure.
- Building a new access bridge to Devon Valley Mill, subject to agreement with the mill owners.
- Reprofilng of the floodplain to further reduce flooding risk to the highway and railway.
- Local flood mitigation at Hele Square, subject to agreement with affected residents.

Network Rail is hoping to start construction in late Spring 2023. Station Road will need to be closed for

approximately eight months while work takes place, with a diversion via Bradninch towards Cullompton and along the B3181, subject to county council consent.

Pedestrian and cycle access would be maintained throughout the work via a temporary walkway.

John Newland, Network Rail's senior sponsor for the project, said: "We are pleased that Mid-Devon District Council has approved our plans, which will help to provide a more resilient railway on this key part of the national rail network.

"Since submitting our planning application, we have been carrying out further land and drainage surveys, refining the designs for the structures and putting a plan in place to make sure the project leaves a net gain for biodiversity.

"As well as providing more reliable services for passengers and freight, the scheme will improve Station Road for users and generally cut the frequency and duration of flooding for businesses close to the level crossing in Hele.

"We appreciate that the work over several months will cause disruption for the people of Hele and Bradninch and we'll do all we can to keep this to a minimum, including providing a suitable shuttle bus service during the road closure.

"We'll be keeping the community updated as our plans progress and our programme is finalised."

*Photo credit: Network Rail*