

A39 Roundswell Roundabout Improvement

Report of the Head of Planning, Transportation and Environment

Please note that the following recommendations are subject to consideration and determination by the Cabinet (and confirmation under the provisions of the Council's Constitution) before taking effect.

Recommendation: It is recommended that:

- (a) the scheme design shown in Appendix I and on drawings EATS(N)498-11-00 (on display at the meeting) and EATS(N)498-13-00 (attached to this report) be approved to proceed, subject to available funding, to construction at an estimated cost of £1.2m;**
- (b) Devon County Council enters into negotiations to obtain the land required for the scheme including progression to compulsory purchase if necessary;**
- (c) the Traffic Regulation Orders required for the scheme are advertised and if no objections received, be made and sealed;**
- (d) the Head of Planning, Transportation and Environment, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation, be given delegated authority to make minor amendments to the scheme design, following consultation.**

1. Summary

This report seeks Cabinet approval for the scheme to improve the A39 Roundswell Roundabout junction, Barnstaple.

2. Background

The scheme is based upon achieving the following objectives:

- Creating additional capacity to address current traffic queuing.
- Provide additional capacity to also allow for future development in the emerging North Devon and Torridge Local Plan and current Planning Applications.
- Encourage traffic to use the A361/A39 instead of the A3125 for cross town trips.
- Including passive provision for Toucan Crossings for pedestrians and cyclists, if required in future, to avoid community severance and enable sustainable travel.

Current Traffic Queuing

The local road network experiences traffic queuing which is most severe in the traditional commuting peak periods in the morning and evening.

Traffic modelling and queue length analysis of the local network shows that there is stress on the network around the A39 Roundswell Roundabout east and west approaches, the A3125 Roundswell Link and along the Bickington Road and Sticklepath Hill corridor. Much of this is due to drivers avoiding the worst congested approaches to the Roundswell Roundabout.

The introduction of the Western Bypass and downstream bridge has made cross town travel easier. Some parts of the network are now exposed as being deficient in terms of capacity and this is causing drivers to choose routes which are not the most appropriate for large volumes of traffic, for example Bideford to Pottington via the A3125 and 'Cedars' roundabout. This has consequent impacts on key high frequency bus routes such as the 21 between Barnstaple and Bideford/Westward Ho!/Appledore, causing delays and increased operating costs.

Future Development in the Emerging Local Plan

The North Devon District Council is preparing its Local Plan jointly with Torrington District Council, allocating the housing and employment necessary to meet future housing demand and support economic growth.

Devon County Council has used industry standard modelling software (SATURN) to model the road network around Barnstaple with this future development. The modelling has made it possible to understand the overall impact of future housing and employment development on the road network.

The modelling is based primarily upon the development scenario proposed in the Draft Core Strategy in 2009, and has since been modified to test the latest options in the emerging North Devon and Torrington Local Plan.

The conclusions have broadly remained the same with the most significant areas of congestion being around the Roundswell Roundabout with queuing on the A39 approaches and the entire A3125 corridor via 'Cedars' roundabout.

A draft transport strategy has been prepared for Barnstaple which proposes a range of transport improvements to help manage future demand. These proposals include new pedestrian and cycle bridges, improved paths and priority bus routes to help connect new housing and employment sites and the town centre. A presentation of these potential strategy measures was made to a special meeting of North Devon Highways and Traffic Orders Committee (HATOC) in December 2012 including a briefing on this scheme.

Providing additional capacity on the highway network is likely to induce the demand for more car travel, therefore the proposals are proportionate to the housing and employment growth and will seek to ensure that the network continues to work satisfactorily. However, the improvements will be accompanied by appropriate transport alternatives, notably to reduce shorter car journeys within the urban area, provided by the overall strategy. The improvement to the A39 Roundswell Roundabout forms one of the strategy's early phases.

Besides the Local Plan preparation there are three current planning applications lodged with North Devon District Council, each of which would have an impact upon this junction. Those applications are:

- St Johns Nursery relocation (Garden Centre and associated facilities)
- Tews Lane (350 homes and Primary School)
- Larkbear (850 homes and Primary School)

It is appropriate for Devon County Council to anticipate and plan for the cumulative impact of these developments upon the existing network. Negotiations with the developers on mitigation measures reflect a balance between policies in the new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the aspirations of the Local Plan as they become formal policy.

The draft Local Plan is expected to be ready for public consultation in Spring/Summer 2013.

Encouraging traffic onto the most appropriate roads

This roundabout improvements scheme would increase capacity through the junction along the A39. Improving the A39 corridor would encourage traffic to use the A39 and A361 Western bypass rather than the route via Cedars roundabout and Sticklepath Hill. Assessments of junctions at Lake Roundabout and the proposed signalised access into Larkbear show that they would handle future demand during the forthcoming Local Plan period up to 2031 and beyond. If a new access into PETROC could be established through the Larkbear development site, then further traffic relief benefits could be achieved in the Sticklepath area.

3. Proposal

Scheme Description

The proposal is designed to provide additional capacity to deal with future traffic growth, particularly in peak periods. The extra capacity is achieved by increasing the circulatory width on the roundabout and adding extra lanes on the eastern and western A39 approaches and exits. This has the benefit of allowing two lanes of 'straight-ahead' traffic to simultaneously enter, negotiate and exit the roundabout along the A39; at present only one lane of traffic can do this and that limits the capacity of the roundabout. The scheme includes extended sections of two lanes on the exits to encourage use of both lanes.

The scheme is being prepared whilst the status of a current planning application for the St Johns garden centre to the south-east of the roundabout is being determined. The Local Plan is also in formulation with development allocation options to the south of the A39 yet to be confirmed. The Draft Core Strategy included an allocation of land for employment development south of the A39 and this has been considered in the preparation of this scheme.

Because there is the possibility of the roundabout being surrounded by future development there is a need to consider how people can access the site on foot or by cycle. In order to ensure that the scheme can be adapted in future, passive provision, i.e. ducting for cables, for Toucan Crossings has been included in the design. This would enable the crossings to be provided at a future date with minimised additional cost and disruption. Toucan Crossings would require a speed restriction of 40mph to be introduced in the vicinity of the roundabout to ensure safety. A pedestrian and cycle bridge could be an alternative to the Toucan crossings if this was economically and environmentally viable.

Land Assembly

Small areas of land are required in the south western and south eastern corners of the roundabout to allow for its expansion. The South Western corner is already in DCC ownership.

Should land to the south west of the A39 be allocated for development through the Local Plan, or be granted planning permission in the near future, then the land contribution can be negotiated as part of future development, potentially as a S106 contribution.

If the land to the south of the A39 is not allocated for development in the Local Plan, or does not achieve planning permission, then it is likely that the land would need to be purchased by DCC for the scheme through either negotiation as the first option or the Compulsory Purchase process if necessary. The value of the land would be informed by the outcome of

the final Local Plan and/or pending Planning Application and in the case of a Compulsory Purchase, determined through a Land Tribunal process.

The scheme cost does include estimated land costs and includes an overall contingency of 10%.

Further Opportunities

Traffic modelling of Local Plan development options across Torridge and North Devon has indicated that there may be a strategic case to be made for a new junction on the A39 for access to the Roundswell area in the vicinity of Brynsworthy. If required, the additional junction would be part of the Local Plan Infrastructure requirements and would be in addition to this improvement scheme for the existing roundabout.

4. Consultations, Representations and Technical Data

The draft scheme has been presented to North Devon HATOC at a special meeting to advise members of the likely transport improvements to accompany the Draft Local Plan. Further consultation has also been undertaken with the DCC Local Member.

A process of Public Consultation has been initiated involving direct consultation with stakeholders and the publishing of a web site and feedback facility, the feedback from this consultation can be reported to the Local Member and Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation.

5. Financial Considerations

There are a number of potential funding sources for this scheme. Negotiations on Section 106 agreements for the two planning applications at Tews Lane, the Garden Centre and Larkbear are currently in progress and, assuming they are granted planning permission, are expected to contribute sums and/or land to this scheme.

The County Council is exploring the potential for scheme funding from other sources including the recently announced Department for Transport Local Pinch Point Fund (for which guidance will be issued in January). There is also scope for reprioritising existing Local Transport Plan Integrated Block funding over the next few years.

In the absence of alternative sources it is proposed that the scheme would be funded from the Local Transport Plan Integrated Block subject to approved changes to the agreed programme for 2012/13 to 2014/15.

This report seeks the scheme layout approval which will allow the conclusion of land negotiations and ensure that, by being ready to construct, the scheme has a strong chance of succeeding in bids for external funding. The scheme will not proceed without the necessary funding being in place.

6. Sustainability and Equality Considerations

An Impact Assessment has been undertaken for this scheme considering Equality and Economic Impacts.

In economic terms the scheme will facilitate travel and development which will have a beneficial impact upon the local economy by enabling employment and housing development in the area to proceed with mitigated impact.

The Impact Assessment also considered equality impacts. As a result of the assessment, and with regard to the needs of all highway users, the scheme includes a passive provision for a Toucan Crossing to be added in future if required, however an alternative method of crossing the A39 may be considered more appropriate depending on future development assumptions.

7. Carbon Impact Considerations

The scheme will facilitate additional journeys by road, however it is essential to provide some additional capacity in order to allow future housing and employment development in locations which are otherwise considered to be sustainable by virtue of their proximity to local services including schools, employment, retail and public transport.

Improving traffic flow also has the advantage of improving the fuel efficiency of engines and reducing certain emissions including carbon.

8. Legal Considerations

The lawful implications of the recommendations have been considered and taken into account in the formulation of the recommendations set out above.

9. Risk Management Considerations

The risks relating to finance and land are described within the relevant sections of this report. The scheme is also subject to the normal engineering risks and a contingency of 10% has been included within the scheme cost.

10. Public Health Impact

The scheme has been subject to a Road Safety Audit. The scheme is located in a semi-rural context on a former trunk road and as such there are minimal impacts upon the built up area. However, the scheme includes passive provision for a Toucan crossing which would enable travel by walking and cycling if the demand emerges in future should the context of the junction change.

11. Options and Alternatives

Alternative options could include adjusting the geometry of the roundabout to avoid the need to acquire land; however this would compromise on safety features such as the central reserve on the A39 arms, adversely affect junction performance and remove the passive provision for an at-grade crossing for pedestrians and cycles in future.

12. Reason for Recommendation

The scheme is recommended in order that it can be formally supported by Cabinet as a DCC scheme for which developer contributions and third party funding can be sought with minimal risk.

The scheme addresses existing issues with traffic congestion. The scheme also enables the traffic impacts of future development to be mitigated by allowing such development to take place without severe impact. The scheme is consistent with the aims of the Local Transport Plan 3 (LTP3) with regard to economic growth and maintaining strategic connections.

Dave Black

Head of Planning, Transportation and Environment

**Electoral Divisions: Chulmleigh and Swimbridge
(Fremington Rural and Barnstaple South as neighbouring
Divisions)**

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Local Government Act 1972: List of Background Papers

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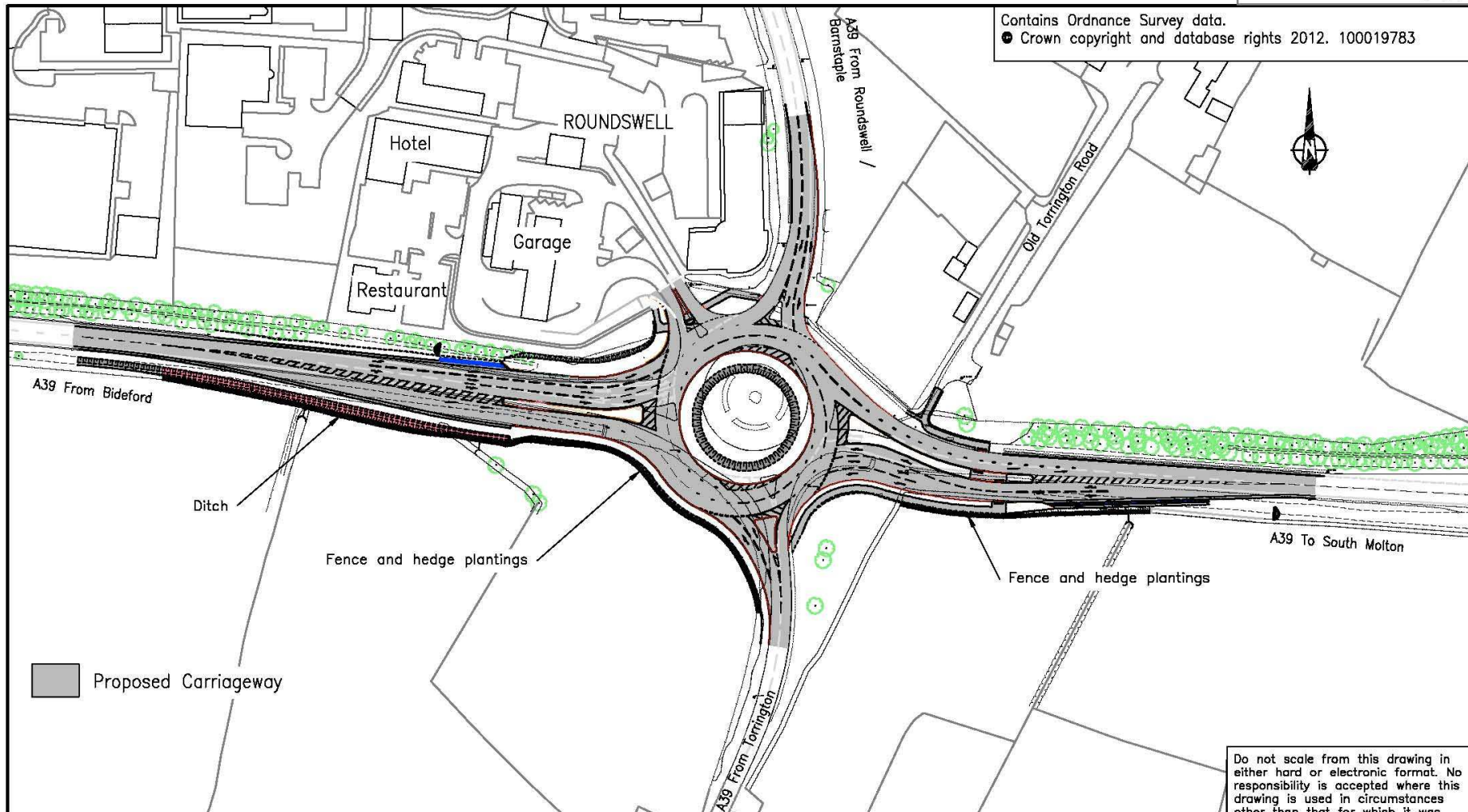
Background Paper	Date	File Reference
1. Impact Assessment	December 2012	

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Proposed Carriageway



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DRAWING TITLE

A39 Roundswell
Roundabout
Barnstaple
Committee Plan

No.	Date	Revisions

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designer	P.C.R.	checked	S.D.H.
drawn	P.C.R.	date	Dec/2012

scale: NTS

Dwg. No. EATS(N)498-13-00

ACAD Ref

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