

**Devon on the Move  
Devon Local Transport Plan (DLTP)  
Proposed Highway Maintenance and Improvement Scheme at A3123 Seven Ash,  
Combe Martin**

Report of the Local Service Officer (Barnstaple)

***Please note that the following recommendations are subject to consideration and determination by the Committee before taking effect.***

**Recommendations: It is recommended that:**

- (a) the Committee note the scheme shown on plan no. EATS(N)333-07-00 and EATS(N)333-08-00 (to be displayed at Committee) at an estimated cost of £625,000;**
- (b) approval is sought for the purchase of land needed for the scheme and the use of compulsory purchase powers should land acquisition by agreement not be forthcoming.**

**1. Summary**

The report concerns a highway maintenance and improvement scheme at Seven Ash, Combe Martin, as shown on plan no. EATS(N)333-06-00, and seeks approval to the acquisition of land needed for road widening.

**2. Background**

The Executive approved in February 2006 expenditure on a series of Highway Structural Maintenance Projects on Devon's Principal Road Network. This included a project on the A3123 at Seven Ash near Combe Martin. This is part of the ongoing strategy of investment in the Principal Road Network and also covers work identified as part of the route management strategy for the A399 and the A3123 from Aller Cross, via Blackmoor Gate to the North Devon coastal resorts. This contributes to the strategy to accommodate some future traffic growth along this route and to reduce future town centre congestion and air pollution levels in Barnstaple and Braunton.

**3. Proposals**

The A3123 at Seven Ash is in need of major reconstruction work and resurfacing. However it is very narrow with some locations being only 4.5 metres wide making it difficult for two larger vehicles to pass. The road at Seven Ash has also been identified as an accident cluster site with a significant history of accidents and vehicle collisions in the narrow section. With a number of bends set between high hedgebanks forward visibility is limited for drivers. Best value therefore, in this location, is to undertake a comprehensive road improvement and highway maintenance scheme to address these problems. This scheme will address a collision problem identified at a recent Accident Cluster Review. The value of prevention of these collisions will be in the region of £80,000 per annum. This would give an Economic Rate of Return (ERR) for the improvement of 27%.

This section of A3123 has been identified previously for a similar project. A scheme was approved by the County Council in 1994 when work was undertaken on the design and acquisition of land. However funding priorities at the time meant that the scheme did not go ahead.

The scheme now proposed is very similar to that approved in 1994. This will provide for a 6.5 metre carriageway widened on bends, improved visibility, reconstruction of existing carriageway and replaced hedgebanks and improved surface water drainage system.

#### **4. Financial Consideration**

The estimated cost of this scheme is £625,000. There is a budget of £35,000 within the 2006 Highway Structural Maintenance Capital Programme for land and design. £590,000 will need to be provided for in the 2007/8 DLTP Capital Programme.

#### **5. Sustainability Considerations**

The project is part of a programme of ensuring long term maintenance of the highway network. The strategy for the A399/A3123 is intended to deliver reduced congestion and air pollution in Barnstaple and Braunton and to reduce accidents at locations such as Seven Ash. The scheme will provide an improved tourist route to holiday areas on the North Devon coast. The improvement to carriageway width and alignment will assist public transport and heavy goods deliveries in the local area.

It is intended that the existing hedgebanks will be replaced under the scheme. The County Council will need to apply to the District Council for approval for this under the Hedge Bank Removal Process. Where possible all road materials will be recycled or incorporated in the works.

#### **6. Alternatives Considered**

The carriageway structure is in need of reconstruction if it is to continue to carry the volume of traffic expected. The options are to repair the road as it is or use the opportunity to widen and improve this section of road as part of the comprehensive project. The second option provides better value and longer term advantages.

#### **7. Reasons for Reaching the Recommendation**

In order to deliver the recommended scheme the HATOC approval is needed for the acquisition of the land by compulsory purchase order if necessary.

Joe Deasy

**County Electoral Division: Combe Martin Rural**  
**North Devon District Council: Marwood Ward**

Local Government Act 1972

List of Background Papers

Contact for enquiries: Joe Deasy

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Background Paper	Date	File Ref
None		

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sn/dltp seven ash  
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