

**Department for Transport's Safer Roads Fund – scheme for approval A3123 (North Devon)**

***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.***

**Recommendations: That**

- (a) Cabinet approves the Safer Roads Schemes shown illustratively on the scheme plans attached at Appendix III on the A3123 in North Devon at a cost of no more than £2.2 million;**
- (b) Cabinet approves that the A3123 improvements between Mullacott Roundabout and Easter Close Cross are progressed through to detailed design and land acquisition by negotiation and, if necessary, by Compulsory Purchase Orders and any associated statutory orders;**
- (c) Traffic Regulations Orders related to Oxenpark Lane be advertised and, if no significant objections received, be made and sealed;**
- (d) the scheme be tendered and subject to all legal agreements being in place, and with the available cost envelope, progressed to construction;**
- (e) the Head of Planning, Transportation and Environment be given delegated powers, in consultation with the relevant Cabinet Member and relevant local Member(s), to make minor amendments to scheme details to facilitate its delivery.**

**1. Summary**

The report seeks approval to implement road safety improvements on the A3123 following the award of £2,200,000 as part of the Department for Transport's (DfT) "Safer Roads Fund" project.

**2. Background**

In the Government's 2016 Autumn statement the Transport Secretary announced a £175 million fund to improve sections of the 50 most dangerous A roads in the country. The roads were identified in the Road Safety Foundation's report "Making Road Travel as Safe as Rail and Air".

The report identified two roads in Devon in the national list of 50 - the A3121 in the South Hams and the A3123 in North Devon. The A3123 is 11km in length, in the west it connects with the A361 at Mullacott Roundabout, to the east it connects with the A399 at Easter Close Cross south of Coombe Martin. See Appendix I.

Between 2012 and 2016 (which was the period used in preparing the funding application for DfT and which provided the original Road Safety Foundation dataset) the A3123 had 27 collisions along the route of which three were fatal or serious injuries (KSIs). There are three known collision clusters on the route – Hore Down Gate, Lynton Cross and Berry Down

Cross. These clusters had four collisions each in the 2012-2016 period. See Appendix I. In addition, there are ongoing concerns regarding the safety of the Oxenpark Lane junction with the B3230.

A “Safer Roads Fund” bid was submitted to DfT for both the A3121 and the A3123. Devon County Council was subsequently awarded £1,900,000 for the A3121 and £2,200,000 for the A3123 for improvements designed to reduce the rates of the most serious injuries.

This report provides details and recommendations for the A3123 scheme.

### 3. Proposal

The following proposals are in line with the original grant requirements imposed by DfT and reflect Devon’s Road Safety Vision that every route and every mode should be available to everyone, free from risk or fear of harm.

The three accident clusters at Hore Down Gate, Lynton Cross and Berry Down Cross experienced collisions related to the presence poorly aligned junctions and associated inter-vehicle conflict. Due to poor alignment and poor inter-visibility.

The proposed improvement includes:

- The design of an unlit four arm rural roundabout at **Lynton Cross**. This minimises the ecological impact on the adjacent english meadow, takes account of the dark skies in the rural area and has minimum ongoing carbon requirements. Research and evidence, produced the road safety team, regarding rural unlit rural roundabouts is provided in Appendix II
- Minor works will be carried out at **Hore Down Gate** to improve the alignment of the junction.
- The intended closure of **Oxenpark** Lane up to its connection with the B3230, as shown in Appendix I. This will overcome safety concerns at the Oxenpark Lane junction with B3230. This will be subject to a future consultation.
- At **Berry Down Cross** the junction will be altered to give the A3123 more visibility, also white lining along the A3123 will be improved to give drivers consistent guidance. Following a recent crash, the proposed works at Berry Down Cross have now expanded to include several innovative solutions. These will include vehicle actuated signs and chevrons, new high friction surfacing, illuminated cat’s eyes and a new 40mph speed limit.

Scheme plans for the three junction improvements are shown in Appendix III.

Grant funding will become available in the Financial year 2020-21 but work on Berry Down Cross will commence sooner as a Devon Casualty and Severity Reduction scheme. It is planned that this expenditure can be reclaimed from the grant fund in the next financial year.

It is not envisaged at this time that any land will need to be subject to Compulsory Purchase powers as it is anticipated that negotiations with the relevant landowners to acquire the land will continue to progress well. If they do not, then Devon County Council would consider using its Compulsory Purchase powers to acquire the necessary land and / or rights.

All interventions and whole route performance will be subject to monitoring and review after the scheme is complete.

#### **4. Consultations/Representations/Technical Data**

The scheme has the support of the local Member and the relevant local Parish councils. Further consultation will be undertaken with the Parish and will be in line with the requirement for Traffic Regulation Orders. Scheme plans and scheme information will be included on the Council's website.

A further local consultation will be undertaken on the Oxenpark Lane closure prior to works taking place.

#### **5. Financial Considerations**

DfT have used the Safer Roads Fund initiative to trial, on a national scale, an approach to collision risk reduction that demands treatment over the whole route, irrespective of whether collisions are primarily 'clustering' at specific locations. This has created challenges in generating a viable benefit/cost ratio, but current analysis shows that an effective and cost-efficient scheme can be delivered within the grant allocation, albeit with an emphasis on making critical improvements at three target locations along the route. Cost estimates include an allowance for risk, and optimism bias has been applied. The Council has a strong track record of effectively managing its grant programmes, demonstrating sound project and financial management.

The DfT announced that our bid was successful in June 2018 and an award letter is expected soon with a grant payment of £2.2 million. The works are expected to commence in 2020/21, subject to the award letter. Once works are complete the DfT logo will be displayed at the site as per the grant terms and conditions. The scheme and budget will be closely monitored; however, the award is the maximum amount and therefore any predicted overspend on the grant itself would result the scheme being funded by the Local Transport Plan grant. Should there be an underspend, it would be returned to the DfT.

#### **6. Environmental Impact Considerations (Including Climate Change)**

As part of the grant application bid an impact assessment was carried out and can be found here. <https://www.devon.gov.uk/roadsandtransport/safe-travel/road-safety/safer-roads/capital-schemes/> (A3123 Supporting Information)

The scheme will require some earthworks and construction at Lynton Cross. Where practicable all construction waste material will be recycled, only local sources used.

Early discussions regarding Ecology and Landscape have taken place with the relevant officers in order that the schemes are designed and built in compliance with the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 and the schemes fit as closely as possible into the natural landscape.

Some trees will need to be felled at Lynton Cross and enhanced planting will be undertaken to compensate for these losses.

During the detailed design phase, the use of recycled materials and reducing the volume of earthworks will be considered with the aim of reducing carbon emissions.

## **7. Equality Considerations**

As part of the grant application bid an impact assessment was carried out which can be found here.

<https://www.devon.gov.uk/roadsandtransport/safe-travel/road-safety/safer-roads/capital-schemes/> (A3123 Appendix Supporting Information)

Road safety schemes of this kind are expected to be of general benefit across the road using demographic. However, the collision analysis suggests that younger (17-24yrs) and older (65+yrs) drivers are currently over-represented and consequently are likely to be key beneficiaries. Cumulatively, the proposed measures will offer a positive social impact by decreasing risk of injury, and injury severity, arising from road travel.

Road Safety Audits will be carried out, paying particular attention to vulnerable road users such as the very old or young, powered two-wheeler riders and the mobility or visually impaired.

## **8. Legal Considerations**

Devon County Council will need to enter into land purchase agreements with several landowners. Initial agreement from all landowners was gained prior to the original funding bid to DfT. Traffic Regulation Orders will be required for Oxenpark Lane which will be processed through the Council's Traffic Management Team.

It is not envisaged at this time that any land will need to be subject to Compulsory Purchase Powers as it is anticipated that negotiations with the relevant landowners to acquire the land will progress well. If they do not, then Devon County Council would consider using its Compulsory Purchase powers to acquire the necessary land together with any associated orders, such as the use of Side Roads Orders, if necessary.

## **9. Risk Management Considerations**

The short timescale of the funding presents a risk, particularly for those schemes that require land purchase and major earthworks that require favourable weather. To mitigate these risks, exploratory land negotiations started last year, and these are now currently being followed through.

The scheme does not require planning permission and will be built under permitted development.

The proposed roundabout at Lynton Cross will be unlit. The Road Safety Audit identified the issue of an unlit roundabout which does not comply with Highways England standards for the trunk road network. This is considered an acceptable risk due to the good road safety characteristics of roundabouts, relatively low traffic flows and speeds. For further details see Appendix II.

Risk Management plans have been created for the scheme to identify actions for those risks identified. This process has enabled the risks to be costed and included in the estimate.

## **10. Reason for Recommendation/Conclusion**

This project is in line with Devon's Road Safety Vision that every route and every mode should be available to everyone, free from risk or fear of harm. The DfT time limited funding will allow Devon to improve the A3123's safety at Hore Down Gate, Lynton Cross and Berry

Down Cross where a number of people have been, and continue to be, injured. Plus, an improvement of the junction between Oxenpark Lane and the B3230.

Dave Black  
Head of Planning, Transportation and Environment

**Electoral Divisions: Combe Martin Rural, and Ilfracombe**

Cabinet Member for Highway Management: Councillor Stuart Hughes

*Chief Officer for Communities, Public Health, Environment and Prosperity, Dr Virginia Pearson*

Local Government Act 1972: List of Background Papers

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Background Paper  
Impact Assessment

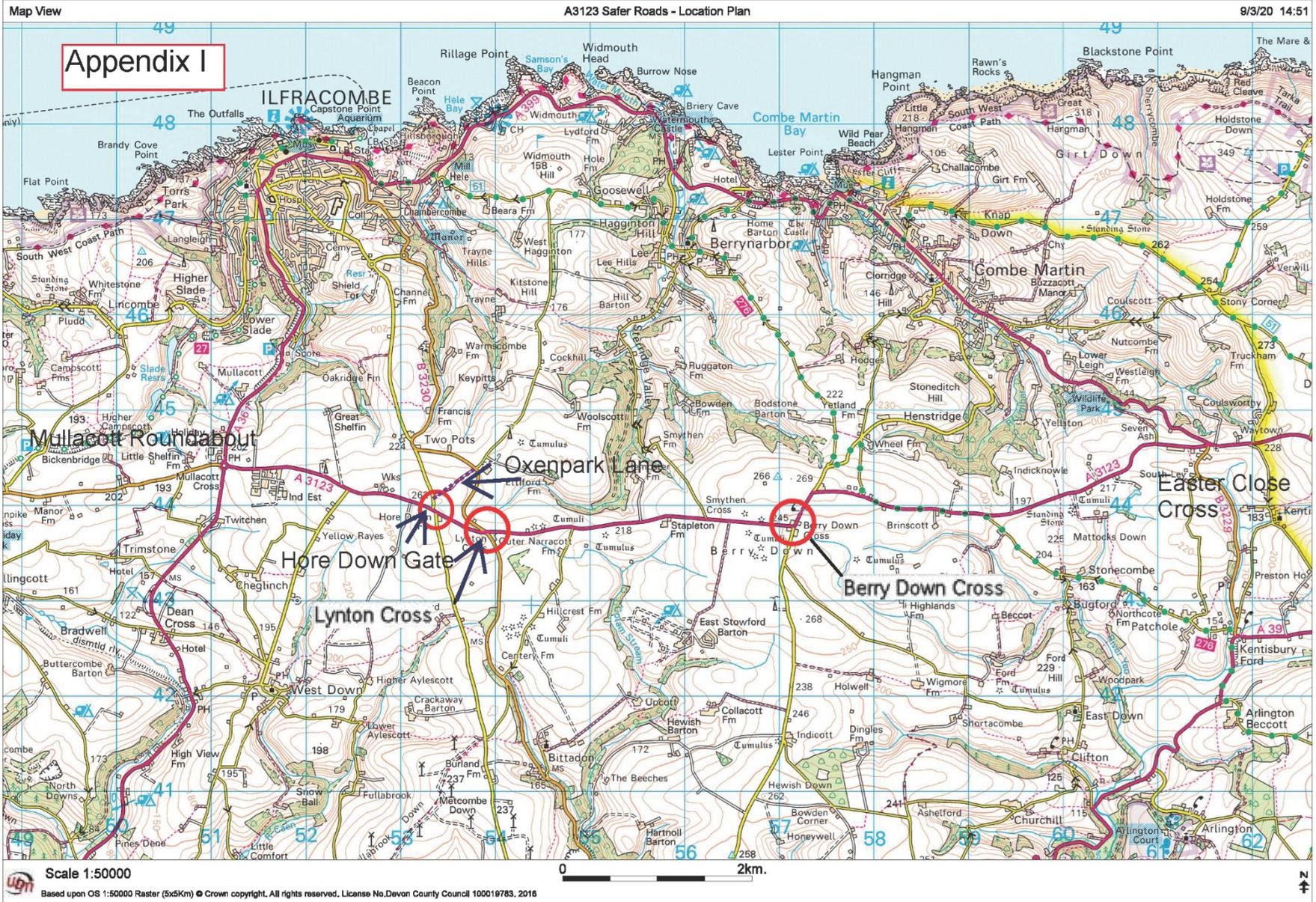
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File Reference

<https://www.devon.gov.uk/roadsandtransport/safe-travel/road-safety/safer-roads/capital-schemes/> (A3123 Appendix Supporting Information)

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Appendix I  
To PTE/20/9



## **Consideration of the Need for Street Lighting on Roundabouts on Rural Roads**

### 1. Background

Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB), reference CD 116 – Geometric Design of Roundabouts, is a Highways England originated document. It identifies that Road Lighting shall be provided on all roundabouts. This has followed through from the previous standard TD16/07. The primary application of DMRB is on the high volume high speed strategic road network. It is often used as a baseline for lower volume rural roads in Devon.

For a number of reasons there has been considerable research into reduced street lighting in urban areas. There continues to be a desire for a range of evolving initiatives focused on reduced periods of lighting and levels of brightness, rather than none at all, including:

- switching selected road lights off;
- lighting roads for part of the night only;
- dimming the level of lighting during the early hours of the morning;
- reducing the “burning” time of lamps in the evening and early morning; and
- using new and evolving technologies such as a central management system (CMS) or light emitting diode (LED) lights.

The issues in rural roads where new designs are to be implemented are more complex as there can be range of environmental constraints which suggest junctions should not be lit at all. Therefore, the measures suggested in DMRB on high volume urban areas may not be flexible enough for local rural roads.

Currently there is very little, if any, recent research into the difference between lit and unlit roundabouts in rural areas. The aim of this paper is to provide enough information to enable the construction of unlit roundabouts in rural areas where local conditions warrant it.

### 2. Policy Considerations

A scheme to convert a major-minor junction to a roundabout in rural areas general comes about due to safety and/or possibly congestion issues. Road safety in particular is a key driving force for an intervention to convert a major-minor junction to a roundabout.

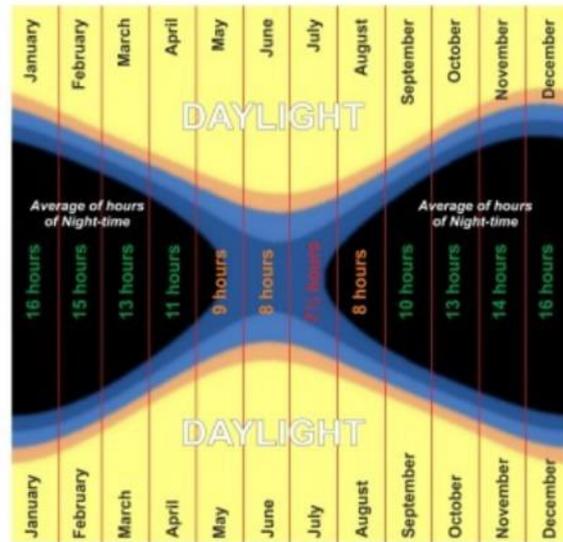
Devon County Council has declared a climate emergency and is taking as many steps as possible to reduce its carbon footprint. A large number of street lights have been turned off, in urban and residential areas, during periods when vehicle and pedestrian flows are low.

Within Devon’s rural area there are 5 Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, 2 National Parks and many areas with a sensitive landscape. Exmoor in particular has a Dark Skies Reserve. Looking at the wider rural areas of Devon, there is a body of opinion that where possible the whole of the rural area should have as dark a sky as possible.

Ecology and biodiversity and in particular bats have an aversion to night time lighting. Bats are a protected nocturnal animal that have adapted to a life in darkness, partly to avoid predation during daylight hours from birds of prey. Therefore, the artificial lighting of bat roosts, access points and foraging pathways can be extremely disturbing to bats and should be avoided.

### 3. Review of Roundabouts on Rural Roads

Historically, roundabouts in rural areas have been lit. A review has been carried out on 2 lit roundabouts on the A386 north of Okehampton. Traffic data suggests that the typical flows are in the order of 5,000 vehicles a day. Over the year, the 85%ile flow during the hours of darkness is approximately 5% of the daily average. Although during the winter months, the evening peak period occurs during the hours of darkness and inevitably flows are higher. So in summary, for a typical rural roundabout carrying approximately 5,000 vehicles a day flows during the hours of darkness are of the order of 250 per hour, which is very low.



Average of hours of night-time in the UK during the seasons.

The collision statistics on these two roundabouts have also been analysed. This shows that both roundabouts had one collision over the last 5 years, one of which occurred during daylight hours the other during darkness. This is an extremely low statistic.

The location of such roundabouts means there are unlikely to be any pedestrians or cyclists using these roundabouts (particularly at night) and consequently there are no non-motorised user facilities provided.

### 4. Comparison Accidents at Lit and Unlit Roundabouts

Unlit roundabouts were identified nationally of which eleven were assessed in detail. Unlit roundabouts were found to have a slightly elevated darkness collision percentage (33%) compared to a selection of lit roundabouts in Devon (25%) and national collisions at all roundabouts (26%). The number of Killed and Serious darkness collisions at unlit roundabouts was lower (8%) than at lit (13%) and nationally at rural roundabouts (14%).

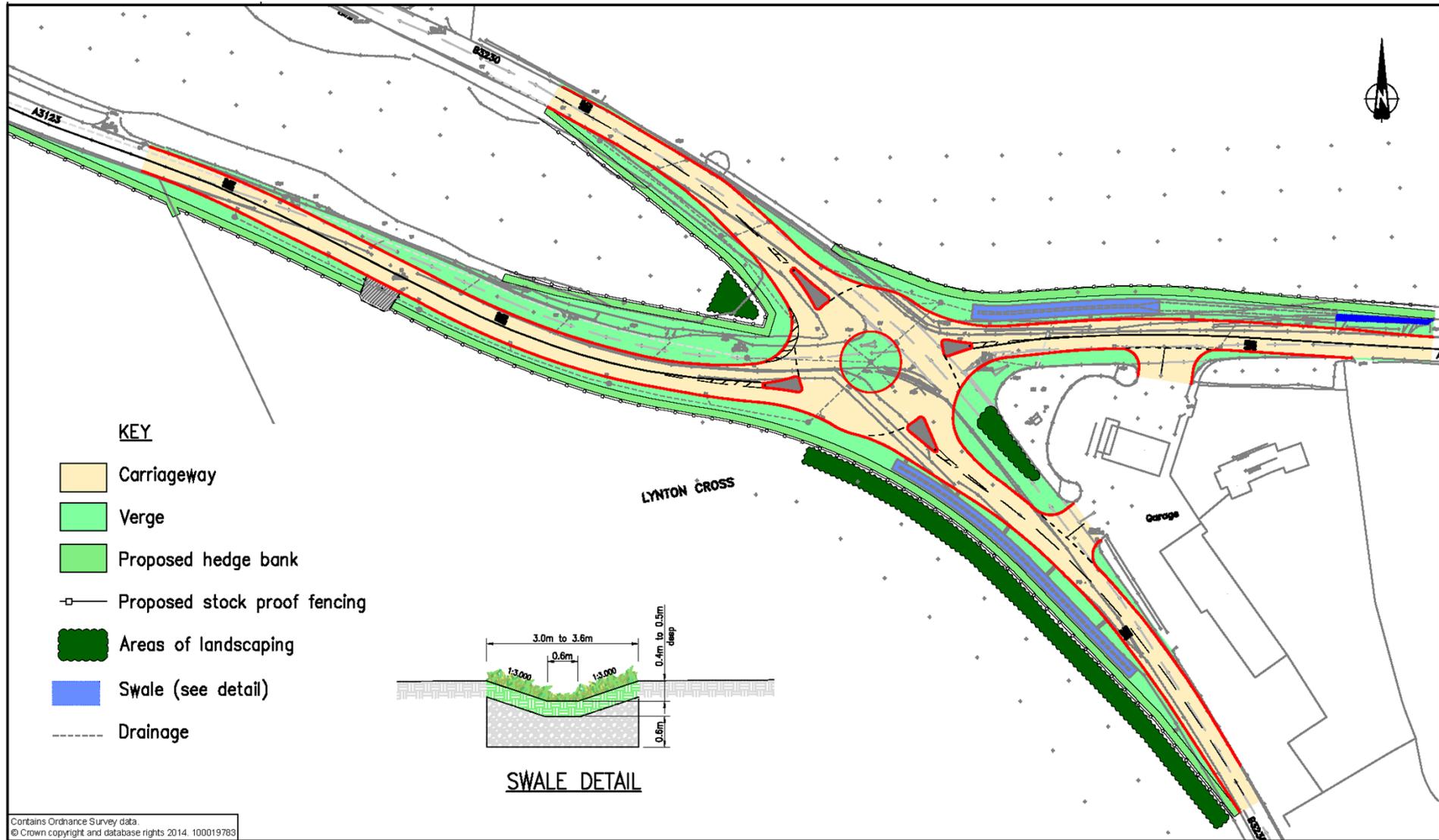
It is anticipated that if an unlit roundabout is installed a slightly increase in collisions may be seen but of a lower severity. However, severity of injury will likely be heavily linked to the individual characteristics and design of each roundabout.

### 5. Conclusion

Traffic flows on lightly trafficked rural roads are typically 5,000 vehicles a day. During the hours of darkness flows can vary during winter and summer months. At such junctions the 85%ile darkness flow is 250 vehicles per hour with higher flows in the late afternoon during the winter months. Typically there are very few cyclists or pedestrians and traffic flows during the hours of darkness are considered to be low.

Roundabouts are generally considered to have a good safety record. The likelihood of an accident occurring at such a rural roundabout is low and the difference between lit and unlit is small and the severity may be slightly lower.

There are number of current and new policies that suggest consideration should be given to a restriction of street lighting in rural areas in particular. Having no street lighting at all on a new rural roundabout where the circumstances suggest that it is an appropriate design would accord with the need to balance road safety and key environmental policies.



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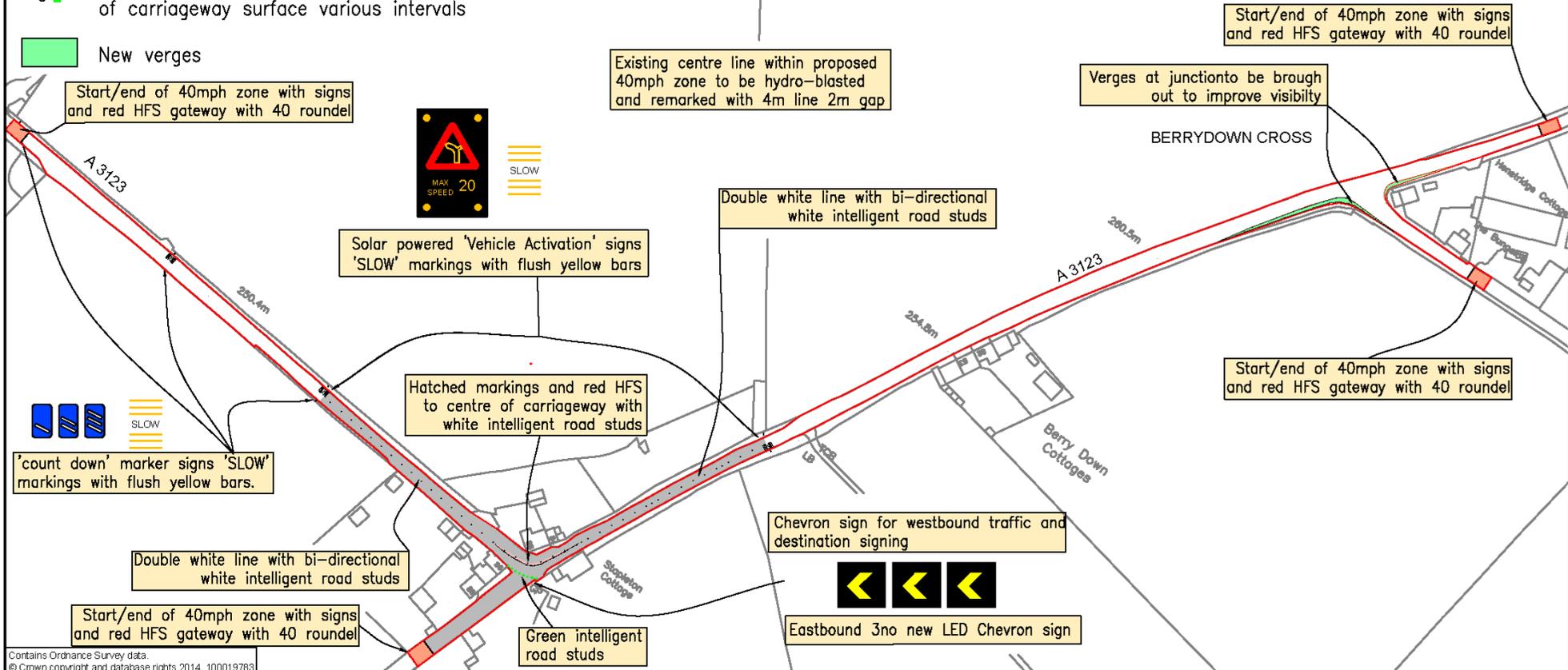
JOB/TITLE  
**A3123 SAFER ROADS  
SCHEME  
LYNTON CROSS  
COMMITTEE PLAN**

Rev	Date	Drawn	Revisions	Chk
0	25.03.20	IS	Original Issue	

**KEY**

-  40mph zone
-  Plane carriageway to a depth of 40mm and lay 40mm of SMA 10 with a PSV of 72
-  Red HFS surfacing
-  New verges

• ◻ Solarlite Flush Intelligent road studs fixed to centre line of carriageway surface various intervals



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JOB/TITLE  
**A3123 SAFER ROADS SCHEME  
BERRY DOWN CROSS  
COMMITTEE PLAN**

Rev	Date	Drawn	Revisions
0	25.03.20	IS	Original Issue

Chk	Revisions
	Original Issue

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	<b>Engineering Design Group</b> Taw View, Barnstaple, EX31 1EE Tel. 0845 155 1004 Fax 01392 382342 customer@devon.gov.uk www.devon.gov.uk	JOB/TITLE <b>A3123 SAFER ROADS          SCHEME          HORE DOWN GATE          COMMITTEE PLAN</b>	Rev	Date	Drawn	Revisions	Chk	Do not scale from this drawing in either hard or electronic format. No responsibility is accepted where this drawing is used in circumstances other than that for which it was originally prepared and issued. drawing number <b>DCCP17357 - EDG - HGN</b> <b>27503491 - DR - C - 038</b> <small>author/checked by</small> <small>scale(s)</small> 1:1250 <small>size</small> A4 <small>revision</small> 0
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