

CET/25/01  
Cabinet  
08 January 2025

## A361 Barnstaple to Ilfracombe Safer Roads Fund Phase 1 Scheme

### Report of the Director of Climate Change, Environment and Transport

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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.

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#### **1) Recommendation**

That the Cabinet be asked that:

- (a) the artificial intelligence and speed enforcement cameras scheme on the A361 corridor between Ilfracombe and Barnstaple, as shown in Appendices 1 and 2, be approved for delivery at an estimated cost of £1 million;
- (b) approval is given to commence the acquisition of land through negotiation and/or a Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) for any land required for the scheme
- (c) the Director of Climate Change, Environment and Transport be given delegated authority, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Highway Management and the local Member, to make minor amendments to the scheme details as necessary

#### **2) Introduction**

This report seeks approval to introduce latest advancements in camera technology to encourage safer driver behaviour and support a reduction in the number of people being killed or seriously injured on the A361 between Ilfracombe and Barnstaple. The Department for Transport has identified this section as a 'high risk' route due to its poor safety record and has committed £5.04 million funding towards road safety improvements.

The main causes of serious traffic collisions, known as 'the fatal five' are:

- Speeding
- Not wearing your seatbelt
- Distractions, i.e. using a mobile or a hand-held device
- Drink and drugs
- Careless and inconsiderate driving

This report recommends approval for the first phase of measures, which aim to tackle several of the above factors, and will include artificial intelligence (AI) cameras to detect seatbelts and distractions, and speed enforcement cameras which will support safer speeds. There is an opportunity to bring the installation of this first phase of measures forward during 2025/26. A phase 2 report seeking approval for junction upgrades and

improved crossings on the A361 to support safer connectivity for pedestrians and cyclists, including access to bus stops will be presented at a future Cabinet meeting.

### **3) Proposal**

Since the Government's award of £5.04 million Safer Roads funding towards safety improvements on the A361 in North Devon between Barnstaple and Ilfracombe, the County Council has been developing plans to introduce measures to tackle unsafe driver behaviour and reduce the number of people being killed or seriously injured on the road corridor.

The Safer Roads Fund bid considered road injuries recorded between 2018 and 2022. Over this period there were 162 recorded casualties on this section of the A361, including three fatalities and 30 serious injuries. On the most rural sections of this route there is a higher injury collision risk to drivers and riders of motorcycles. There is a high significance of human behaviour being a contributory factor in these collisions including inappropriate speed, loss of control, overtaking and failure to look or judge another vehicle's path or speed. An independent appraisal process found that speed management measures would deliver the greatest casualty reduction benefits on this route. The speed reduction measures were forecast to deliver a 20-year injury saving of approximately 15 fatal and serious injuries.

Appendix 1 identifies the location of three new spot speed cameras. These will be bidirectional cameras that can detect speeding traffic in both directions of travel. Two are being introduced to help reduce speeds within the local communities at Knowle and Ilfracombe. The other camera is being proposed to help manage speeds on the 50mph A361 dual carriageway and its approaches into lower speed limits at Ashford and Barnstaple.

Appendix 1 also illustrates the location of the two new average speed camera systems. These cameras will help to manage speeds over longer route sections and work by measuring a vehicle's travel time over distance. The average speed camera systems are being proposed between Ashford and Chivenor and between Knowle and Mullacott Cross.

Devon and Cornwall Police stated that in 2021 a third of all fatal collisions across Devon and Cornwall involved someone not wearing a seatbelt. This statistic underscores the critical importance of wearing seatbelts to enhance safety on our roads. Devon County Council is part of the Vision Zero South West (VZSW) road safety partnership, involving local highway authorities across Devon and Cornwall, National Highways, the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner and all the emergency 'blue light' services including Devon and Cornwall Air Ambulance. Through this partnership, it was possible to pilot AI cameras on the A361 over a four-week period in August 2024. For vehicles travelling from Braunton to Barnstaple, the cameras recorded 1,799 potential offences including 1,363 instances where a seatbelt was not being worn and 436 mobile phone distraction offences.

This pilot has helped make the case for committing approximately £0.6m of the £5.04m DfT funds to focus on this driver behaviour targeted technology. The scheme proposes an extended three-year programme of AI camera technology to detect and reduce dangerous driving behaviours, including not wearing seatbelts and using mobile phones while driving. These AI cameras will be deployed at different sites along the route on a rotational basis. The proposed locations are shown in Appendix 2. AI enforcement is a relatively new technology, but it has been predicted that employing AI camera enforcement will save an additional 0.6 fatal and seriously injured casualties per year, so approximately 2 people avoiding being killed or seriously injured over the three-year operation on the corridor.

There will be a Phase two improvement scheme of complementary civil engineering measures supporting upgrades to junctions on the A361 and walking and cycling access improvements, which will be presented at a future Cabinet.

#### 4) Options / Alternatives

A 'do nothing' scenario could result in further road users losing their lives or experiencing serious injury. This would not achieve the desired safety outcomes for the communities connected by the A361 nor reduce the cost to the Devon economy associated with traffic deaths and injuries. It would also prevent ongoing learning about the effectiveness of new technology which has the potential for applications elsewhere in the county.

Camera locations have been considered in terms of their benefits to casualty reduction where speed compliance is a problem and with the aim of complementing other engineering measures that are being considered for Phase 2. Additional camera sites or alternative camera sites may be considered or required subject to detailed site assessment by the chosen suppliers.

#### 5) Technical Data and Representations

##### Collision Analysis and Financial Impact

The section of A361 between Ilfracombe and Barnstaple has been identified as a Safer Road Foundation 'high risk' route. Devon County Council has carried out detailed analysis of the safety performance of the route as a whole, as well as sections where works are being proposed. There are notably concerns of a speeding problem along the route and the proportion of younger drivers involved in collisions is disproportionately high. Following the trial by VZSW, there is also concern over the level of seatbelt compliance and driver distraction in vehicles through mobile phone use.

<b>Casualties (no. of people)</b>			
Fatal	Serious	Slight	Total (all injuries)
3	30	129	162

Table 1: Total casualties along the A361 route between Ilfracombe and Barnstaple, 2018 – 2022

Table 1 shows that there have been 162 people injured (all categories), with three people killed and 30 people seriously injured between 2018 and 2022. Further analysis of the collisions highlights sections of the A361 where younger drivers are disproportionately at risk of injury.

The section of A361 between Mullacott Cross and Knowle is a 'Poor'<sup>1</sup> performing rural route, showing 39% of total casualties being younger car drivers (16-24). This is statistically significantly higher than the VZSW average of 22%.

25% of collisions on the A361 had a contributory factor where the driver was classified as travelling 'carelessly/recklessly/in a hurry'. When looking at other contributory factors reported by the police over this period that relate to speed<sup>2</sup>, this increases to 44%, highlighting poor driver behaviour along the corridor.

The A361 into Ilfracombe has an 80% pedestrian involvement in 15 collisions, which is one of the highest rates of pedestrian collisions in routes across Devon.

As Table 2 highlights, preventing collisions and injury has significant positive financial impacts on the public purse and so the investment in these safety measures is expected to represent good value for money.

<b>Severity</b>	<b>Cost per casualty (£)</b>	<b>Cost per collision (£)</b>
Fatal	2,411,659	2,718,861
Serious	271,003	311,098
Slight	20,892	31,132
Average for all severities	99,048	133,307
Damage only		2,880

Table 2: Average value of prevention per reported casualty and per reported road collision based on 2023 price (source RAS4001)<sup>3</sup>

### Representations

Braunton Parish Council and Knowle Community Group have raised concerns of speeding, overtaking and dangerous driving on the A361, notably between Corilhead and Heddon Mill. The measures to specifically control speeds along this corridor and support driver behaviour improvement will therefore support these local road safety improvement aspirations.

There will be further engagement on the complementary civil engineering measures which will be a second phase of the Safer Roads Fund programme. This will include

<sup>1</sup> [Dataset information and FAQs - Roads and transport](#) Devon County Council High Harm Route Methodology

<sup>2</sup> Factors included are – Careless/reckless/in a hurry, Loss of control, Travelling too fast for conditions, Aggressive driving, Exceeding speed limit.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/reported-road-accidents-vehicles-and-casualties-tables-for-great-britain#accident-and-casualty-costs-ras60>

junction upgrades and crossing facilities to support safer active travel routes and improved access to bus facilities and will be subject to approval at a future Cabinet.

## 6) Strategic Plan

In July 2024, the Corporate Plan 2024/2025 Cabinet report highlighted Directorate priorities including the aim to reduce the number of people being killed or seriously injured on our roads. There were specific actions to develop pilot schemes to increase activity around Safer Roads and Safer Road Use and gain approval for the A361 Safer Roads Fund corridor improvement, which this report supports.

The table below summarises how the proposals would impact achievement of relevant Strategic Plan actions according to a seven-point scale, whereby -3 represents a large negative impact and +3 represents a large positive impact.

Strategic Plan Priority	Strategic Plan Action	Alignment
Respond to the climate emergency	Support a green recovery from COVID-19	+1 (slight positive)
	Prioritise sustainable travel and transport	+1 (slight positive)
	Encourage sustainable lifestyles	+1 (slight positive)
Investing in Devon's economic recovery	Secure investment in transport infrastructure	+3 (large positive)
	Maintain and, where necessary, improve our highway network and improve sustainable transport options	+2 (moderate positive)
Improve health and wellbeing	Give people greater opportunities for walking and cycling to increase their physical activity	+1 (slight positive)
Helping communities to be safe, connected and resilient	Enable a range of transport options, including public transport	+2 (moderate positive)
	Keep people safe by improving community safety	+3 (large positive)

## 7) Financial Considerations

The estimated cost of the speed enforcement camera corridor improvement scheme is £400,000. The estimated cost of the AI camera deployment programme over a three-year period is £600,000. This will be wholly funded by the DfT's Safer Roads Fund grant, which has a total budget envelope of £5.04 million. The remaining grant funding will be used to design and deliver the phase 2 complementary civil engineering improvements.

The AI cameras will be installed for a period of three years, after which time the evidence from these cameras will be reviewed to understand the impacts on driver behaviour over an extended period. This will help inform future options for periodic or permanent

deployment. As a new and developing technology, it is anticipated that the cost of AI cameras will reduce significantly over time and that the market options for potential procurement will expand.

The following budgets are currently included in the approved capital programme :-

Financial Year	£'000
2024/25	600
2025/26	1,800
2026/27	2,300
2027/28	340
Total	5,040

## **8) Legal Considerations**

The Council's statutory duty under section 39 of the Road Traffic Act 1988 is to take steps to promote road safety. Under this duty, local highway authorities must carry out studies into accidents arising from the use of vehicles on roads. Analysis has identified the A361 as a 'high risk' route.

Furthermore, in light of those studies, local authorities must take such measures, as appropriate, to prevent such accidents from occurring including the dissemination of information and advice relating to the use of roads, practical training to road users, and construction, improvement, maintenance and repair of roads. In this regard, the lawful implications of the recommendations have been considered and taken into account in the preparation of this report.

Enforcement by camera operations is undertaken in partnership with Devon & Cornwall Police through the VZSW partnership arrangements. The partnership retains a risk register and a risk contingency budget to mitigate costs from legal challenges to enforcement.

The Council has powers under the Highways Act 1980 to acquire land necessary for the improvement of highways. Land may be acquired through negotiation or compulsory purchase. The Council will attempt to secure the land required through negotiation with the affected landowners, however in the event that this negotiation is unsuccessful then the compulsory purchase order process may be utilised.

If any objections are received from any landowner to a compulsory purchase order, and that objection is not withdrawn, then there will be the need for a Public Inquiry. This would have additional costs for the Council, including the need to instruct external Counsel.

## **9) Environmental Impact Considerations (Including Climate Change, Sustainability and Socio-economic)**

The A361 corridor runs through the transition zone to the core area of the North Devon Biosphere which is a special area of conservation. The installation of camera infrastructure on the public highway will have minimal impact on the local environment.

The introduction of speed management cameras will promote a safer road environment for all road user groups and have beneficial impacts for vulnerable road users like pedestrians and cyclists, including accessing public transport. The project will have a small but positive long-term impact on the environment and climate change by encouraging and facilitating sustainable travel options as an alternative to motor vehicles.

Better speed management will have a small but positive impact on vehicle carbon and nitrogen dioxide emissions.

## **10) Equality Considerations**

Where relevant, in coming to a decision the Equality Act 2010 Public Sector Equality Duty requires decision makers to give due regard to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other prohibited conduct;
- advance equality by encouraging participation, removing disadvantage, taking account of disabilities and meeting people's needs; and
- foster good relations between people by tackling prejudice and promoting understanding

in relation to the protected characteristics (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership (for employment), pregnancy and maternity, race/ethnicity, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation). This Council also treats care experience as if it were a protected characteristic.

A decision maker may also consider other relevant factors such as caring responsibilities, rural isolation or socio-economic disadvantage.

In progressing this A361 Safer Roads Fund scheme, an Impact Assessment has been prepared which has been circulated separately to Cabinet Members and also is available on the Council's website at <https://www.devon.gov.uk/impact/published>

Members will need to consider the Impact Assessment for the purposes of this item / meeting.

## **11) Risk Management Considerations**

The proposals in this report have been assessed and all necessary safeguards or action have been taken to safeguard the Council's position.

Financial governance requirements will be met through quarterly reporting to the Department for Transport to monitor spend, identify any project risks and take appropriate mitigating actions.

The Government grant funding provides the capital investment required for the speed camera infrastructure. The ongoing revenue costs to operate and maintain the cameras

will be funded through the VZSW partnership. The capital investment into AI camera enforcement is a costed proposal for three years. There is no commitment in this report for the Council to fund AI cameras beyond this trial period.

The project maintains a risk register that will be updated at all key project stages. The most significant risk for this proposal at this stage relates to power supply costs from third parties. An allowance for this risk has been included in the project contingency. A small area of third party land may be required at Mullacott Cross to accommodate camera equipment to support installation of one of the cameras; however, this is not anticipated to present a significant risk to delivery and will be planned for as part of the detailed design process, which will follow approval.

## **12) Summary**

The A361 has been identified as a high harm route for collisions with evidence indicating that speeds and driver distractions are significant contributory factors. Using Department for Transport Safer Roads grant funding, this report seeks approval to introduce a combination of speed enforcement measures, including average speed cameras and artificial intelligence cameras, to address driver errors by managing speeds more effectively, encouraging seatbelt use and discouraging mobile phone-type distractions in the vehicle. This is expected to contribute to a reduction in the number of people being killed or seriously injured on this road.

### **Meg Booth**

Director of Climate Change, Environment and Transport

**Electoral Divisions:** Ilfracombe; Combe Martin Rural; Braunton Rural, Barnstaple South, Barnstaple North, Chulmleigh & Landkey

Cabinet Member for Highway Management: Councillor Stuart Hughes

## **13) Local Government Act 1972: List of background papers**

Background Paper

Date

File Reference

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# Appendix 1

## Proposed Speed Camera Systems

- Spot Speed Camera System Sites
- ▬ Average Speed Camera System Sectors

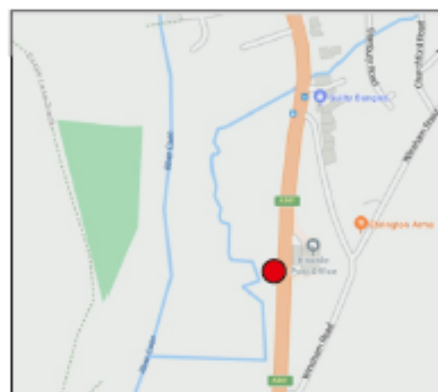


## Spot Speed Camera System Sites

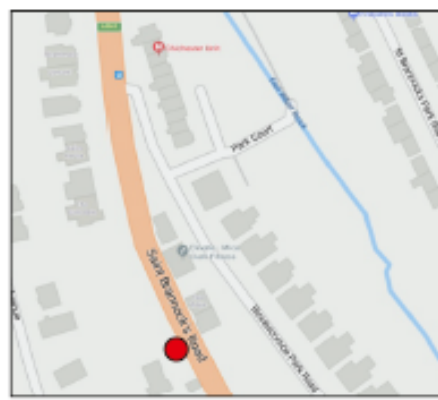
Spot speed cameras will use a combination of radar and video detection to provide instantaneous speed enforcement at a single point on the road. The cameras will enforce in both directions and cover all traffic lanes. They can operate continuously with a secure communication to back office systems. They will use infrared illumination to capture images at night and do not require traditional speed camera flash units or road markings. The site details shown below are for illustration purposes only and details may change following site investigation and procurement.



Site A. 50mph A361 dual-carriageway between Bamstaple and Ashford.



Site B. 30mph A361 community at Knowle.

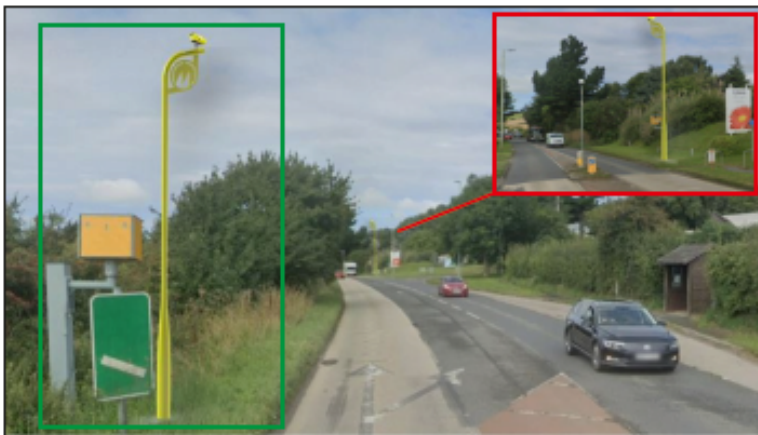
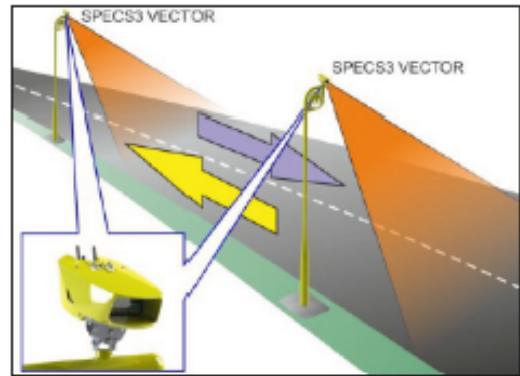


Site C. 30mph A361 community at Ilfracombe, Saint Brannocks Road



# Average Speed Camera (ASC) System Sites

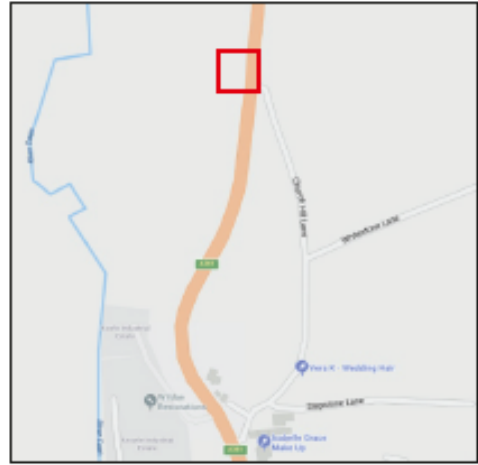
Average speed cameras use a pair or a series of Automatic Number Plate Recognition video cameras to measure vehicle speeds by time over distance travelled. They can operate continuously with secure communication to back office systems. They use infrared illumination to capture images at night and they can operate in both directions of travel. The site details shown below are for illustration purposes only and details may change following site investigation and procurement.



Site D. 40mph A361 Ashford to Braunton ASC Sector by St Johns Garden Centre at Ashford. New ASC sector entrance and exit cameras located separately. These will replace two existing spot speed GATSO speed cameras.



Site E. 40mph A361 Ashford to Chivenor ASC Sector at the Chivenor Royal Marine Base roundabout junction. New ASC sector entrance and exit cameras located separately.



Site F. 50mph A361 Knowle to Mullacott Cross sector. New combined ASC sector entrance and exit cameras.



Site G. 50mph A361 Knowle to Mullacott Cross sector. New mid-sector combined ASC entrance and exit cameras.



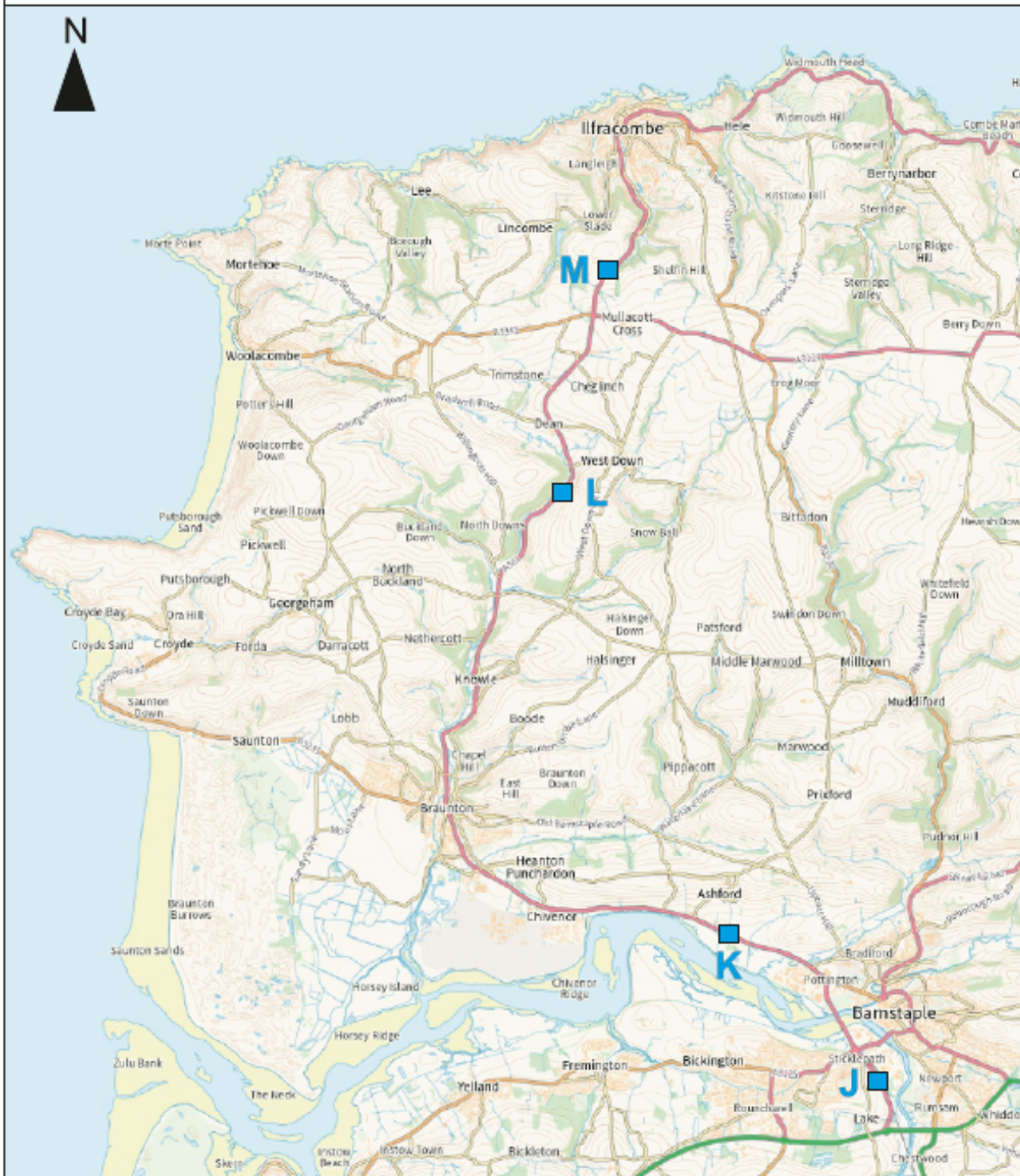
Site H. 50mph A361 Knowle to Mullacott Cross sector. New combined ASC entrance and exit cameras.



## Appendix 2

### Proposed Artificial Intelligence Cameras

■ Artificial Intelligence Camera Deployment Sites



## Artificial Intelligence Cameras

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Cameras use AI powered CCTV with ANPR to detect and identify potential in-vehicle driver offences. Through the Vision Zero Partnership and the equipment supplier AECOM, a dedicated deployment programme is being proposed for the Safer Roads Fund A361 route between Ilfracombe and Barnstaple. The programme will use a mobile trailer based camera system, that will move between sites along the route. Repeat deployment sites will be established at four locations along the Safer Roads Fund route between major nodes.

- (J). A39 to Barnstaple A3125
- (K). Barnstaple to Braunton B3231
- (L). Braunton to Mullacott Cross A3123\B3343.
- (M). Mullacott Cross to Ilfracombe A399

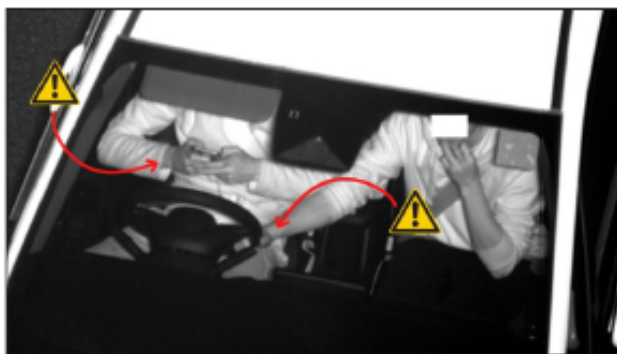


Figure 1. Mobile Phone Example Image



Figure 2. Seatbelt Example Image



Figure 3. Mobile AI Camera Trailer