

# Impact Assessment



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Assessment of: The Safer Roads Fund – A361 Barnstaple to Ilfracombe  
Service: Climate Change, Environment & Transport

Head of Service: Meg Booth

Version/ date of sign off by Head of Service: Version 1.0 Jamie Hulland  
Deputy Director Planning 16/12/2024

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## 1. Description of project / service / activity / policy under review

Devon County Council (DCC) has successfully bid for capital grant funding to deliver road safety infrastructure improvements on the A361 in North Devon from Barnstaple to Ilfracombe.

To invest in improving road safety in England, the Department for Transport (DfT) established the Safer Roads Fund (SRF) to treat the highest risk local A road sections with remedial road safety engineering interventions. These high-risk routes were identified through independent analysis by the UK Road Safety Foundation under the International Road Assessment Programme (IRAP). In the third funding round of the SRF, twenty-seven A-Road sections were identified for local highway authorities to submit bids for SRF investment and this included the A361 from Barnstaple to Ilfracombe.

## 2. Proposal, aims and objectives, and reason for change or review

The proposed bid encompasses the section of the A361 corridor from its junction with the A39 at Lake roundabout to the south of Barnstaple, northwards to its junction with the A399\B3230 within Ilfracombe.

The A361 in Devon provides a main road link from the M5 to Ilfracombe via Barnstaple and Braunton. The SRF does not support investment in the national strategic road network, which includes trunk roads like the M5 managed by National Highways and the County Major Road Network like the A361 (North Devon Link Road) from the M5 to Barnstaple.

The latest Road Safety Foundation analysis for the route uses an International Roads Assessment programme (IRAP) methodology to identify road safety star ratings for the A361 route, that are based on the injury risk to road users from the existing road

environment and road infrastructure standards. The IRAP methodology also incorporates the impacts of speeds and speed management on the route and it quantifies the safety risks from predicted increases in vulnerable road user activity from pedestrians and cyclists that can be linked to growth in active travel. The introduction of standardised infrastructure countermeasures are modelled to predict the potential serious and fatal injury collision savings that they could achieve over a 20-year analysis period. The cost of introducing these measures and the estimated injury savings from making these engineering interventions are used to calculate a Benefit Cost Ratio (BCR) for the project funding bid.

The maximum available grant for capital improvements under the SRF is limited and the bid has aimed to incorporate the best balance of countermeasures in terms of their predicted injury savings, their costs to deliver within the total available grant and their suitability for delivery along this particular route.

- The bid comprises extensive route based speed management counter measures for reducing and enforcing speeds and a proposal for a programme of Artificial Intelligence (AI) cameras for enforcement of seat belt and in-vehicle distraction offences. The AI proposals could not be quantified as a standardised road safety countermeasure but due to the estimated collision severity savings this could bring to the route, it is intended to incorporate AI enforcement subject to approval by the grant body.
- The bid incorporates counter measure improvements to junctions, visibility and road-side protection.
- The bid incorporates countermeasure improvements to pedestrian and cycling infrastructure primarily in the more urbanised areas of Braunton, Knowle and Ilfracombe and also in areas around Chivenor, Knowle and West Down. This will capitalise on other planned investment into the adjacent Tarka Multi-Use Trail and deliver improvements that will help to connect communities and businesses to the trail.

As well as supporting the objectives of the IRAP assessment and SRF programme, these proposed infrastructure improvements will also support the local DCC collision analysis processes that are used to inform our annual road safety casualty reduction programme and which are normally delivered under the Transport Capital Programme and Local Transport Plan.

When compared to the baseline scenario without any infrastructure improvements, the IRAP bid analysis has predicted a saving of 20 Fatal and Serious injuries over the 20 year assessment period, excluding the AI cameras, and a further saving of 105 slight injuries over the same period. The collision injury savings have a net present value of benefits to the economy of £11,391,290 and has a predicted project BCR of 1.68 for the maximum available grant funding of £5,040,000 and a predicted BCR of 2.96 with the inclusion of Acusensus AI enforcement options.

### 3. Risk assessment, limitations and options explored (summary)

Detailed risk assessments will be undertaken at Stage 1 & 2 design. Preliminary assessments have identified the following key risks: -

- Landowner negotiations: To avoid publicising the bid by entering into external consultations, it has not been possible to commence negotiations with land owners and agree support in principle. A desktop study has identified minimal requirements for private land; however this remains a delivery risk.
- Utilities: A significant section of the rural route has no nearby mains power supplies. New connections for roadside electronic equipment will require quotes and agreements from the Distribution Network Operator.
- Public engagement: It would be normal practice to commence public engagement and consultation at the earliest stages of bid preparation; however, with an embargo on publicity, this introduced a delivery risk to the proposed programme. There have been representations from local parish councils seeking safety improvements to the A361.
- Environmental: Roadside vegetation clearance and the potential environmental impacts and planning requirements for hedgerows and established habitats is a risk in this environmentally sensitive area. No environmental habitat surveys have been commissioned in advance of the project funding being awarded and the risks will need to be quantified and updated accordingly.

A project risk assessment will identify risks, severity and mitigation measures will be updated in the final Impact Assessment.

### 4. People affected, diversity profile and analysis of needs

The A361 is the main arterial road corridor for North Devon. It connects Barnstaple as the regional hub for key services, employment and onward public transport links with the major residential towns of Ilfracombe in the north and South Molton to the south. It is a very busy public transport corridor for the region and provides vital access for a predominantly rural population to key services like primary health care provision. Due to the dispersed and rural nature of the area, the dominant form of travel is vehicular. The project will positively impact on the health and safety of the local population and local road users and as a primary County A-Road, the project will benefit road users and visitors from out of County.

Table 4.1 illustrates that although comparable to the rest of Devon, the age profile for North Devon and the percentage of population aged over 65 is still significantly higher than the national norm.

<b>Geography</b>	<b>Total Population</b>	<b>% Age 0-19</b>	<b>% Age 20-64</b>	<b>% Age 65+</b>
North Devon	98,611	21%	54%	26%
Devon	811,638	20%	54%	26%
England	56,490,048	23%	58%	18%

Table 4.1 Age (Source national census 2021)

Table 4.2 illustrates that the ethnic diversity for the population of North Devon is marginally lower than for the rest of Devon but significantly lower than the England norm.

<b>Geography</b>	<b>Total Population</b>	<b>% Asian/ Asian British</b>	<b>% Black/ African/ Caribbean/ Black British</b>	<b>% Mixed/ Multiple ethnic groups</b>	<b>% White</b>	<b>% Other ethnic group</b>
North Devon	98,611	1.2%	0.3%	1.2%	97%	0.3%
Devon	811,638	1.5%	0.3%	1.4%	96.4%	0.5%
England	56,490,048	9.6%	4.2%	3.0%	81.0%	2.2%

Table 4.2 Ethnicity (Source national census 2021)

Figure 4.3 Summarises the Indices of Multiple Deprivation (MDI) by Lower Super Output Areas around the district and along the A361 project corridor, categorised from 1 most deprived to 10 least deprived. Although North Devon has an average of 47.9% of households that are not deprived in any dimension, within the District there are distinct areas of higher deprivation like central Ilfracombe wards that feature in the highest deciles of deprivation across Devon County Council. Along the A361 corridor there are isolated areas of deprivation around the urban areas of Ilfracombe, Barnstaple and Braunton, which are mirrored in the Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI), the Income Deprivation Affecting Older People Index (IDAOP) and in individual indices for health, income and employment deprivation.

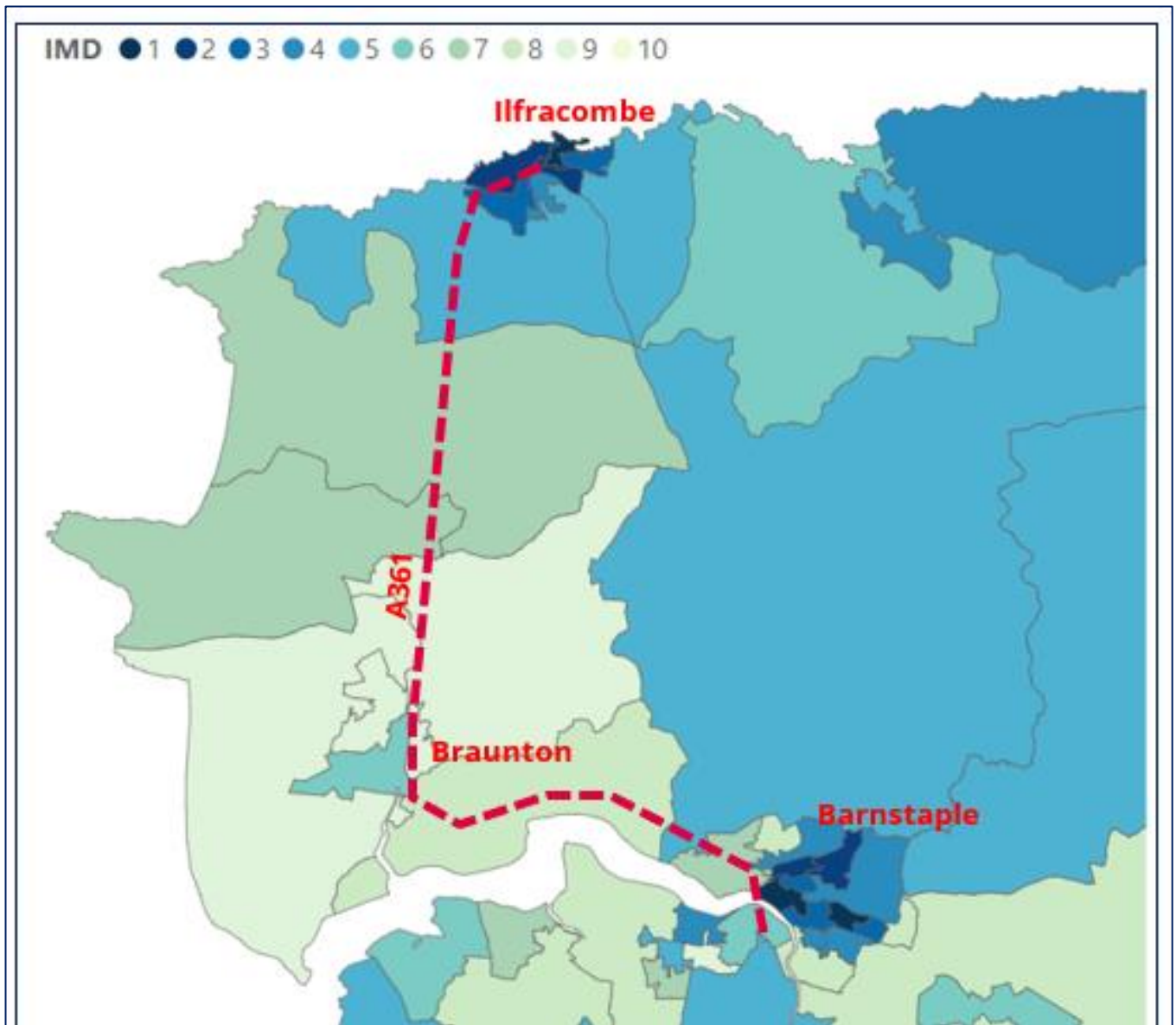


Figure 4.3 Indices of Multiple Deprivation (MDI) by LSOA (Source national census 2021)

In a district area like North Devon, with a dispersed rural population there is heavy reliance on the road network for personal vehicular travel and for travel by public transport services. Although the A361 is also a busy tourism route for the region, and it experiences a significant increase in peak holiday season traffic volumes, Figure 4.4 identifies that in 2022, 70% of those injured on roads in North Devon were local residents and lived less than 9 miles from where the collision occurred. The dominant mode of transport involved in these collisions were cars and that human contributory factors (or human errors like driving too fast or failing to look) were involved in a high proportion of these collisions (83%). The most at risk of further injuries identify younger age groups and 73% of the injuries occurred on rural routes.

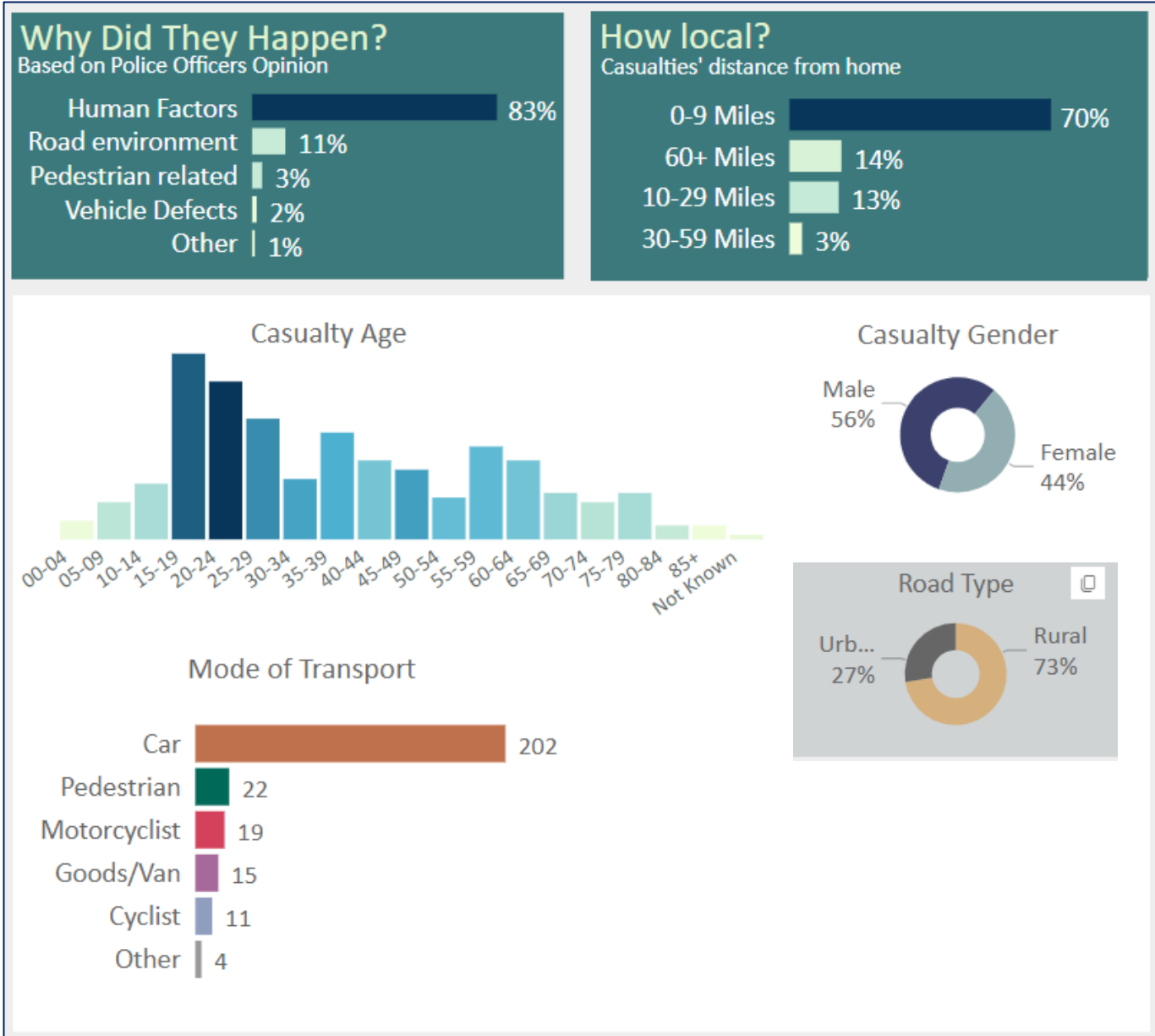


Figure 4.4 Road casualty summary statistics for North Devon in 2022 (source DCC)

The section of the A361 section that had been identified for funding under the SRF, is a primary rural A-Road but the nature of the road environment changes significantly along its length. DCC has a wealth of local collision intelligence to help understand the collision patterns, the parties involved and also the road environment impacts. This information has been used to help inform the proposed infrastructure counter measures that are included in the bid. Information shown in Figure 4.5 is for a fully urban section of the A361 in Ilfracombe and 4.6 is for a fully rural section between Knowle and Mullacott Roundabout. They both demonstrate the differences in road user collision risks between these two locations. Figure 4.5 evidences a greater risk of injury to pedestrians and with a wider range of age groups involved in injury collisions, and Figure 4.6 indicates a younger male local driver collision pattern that is more comparable to the district wide and county rural A-Road norms.

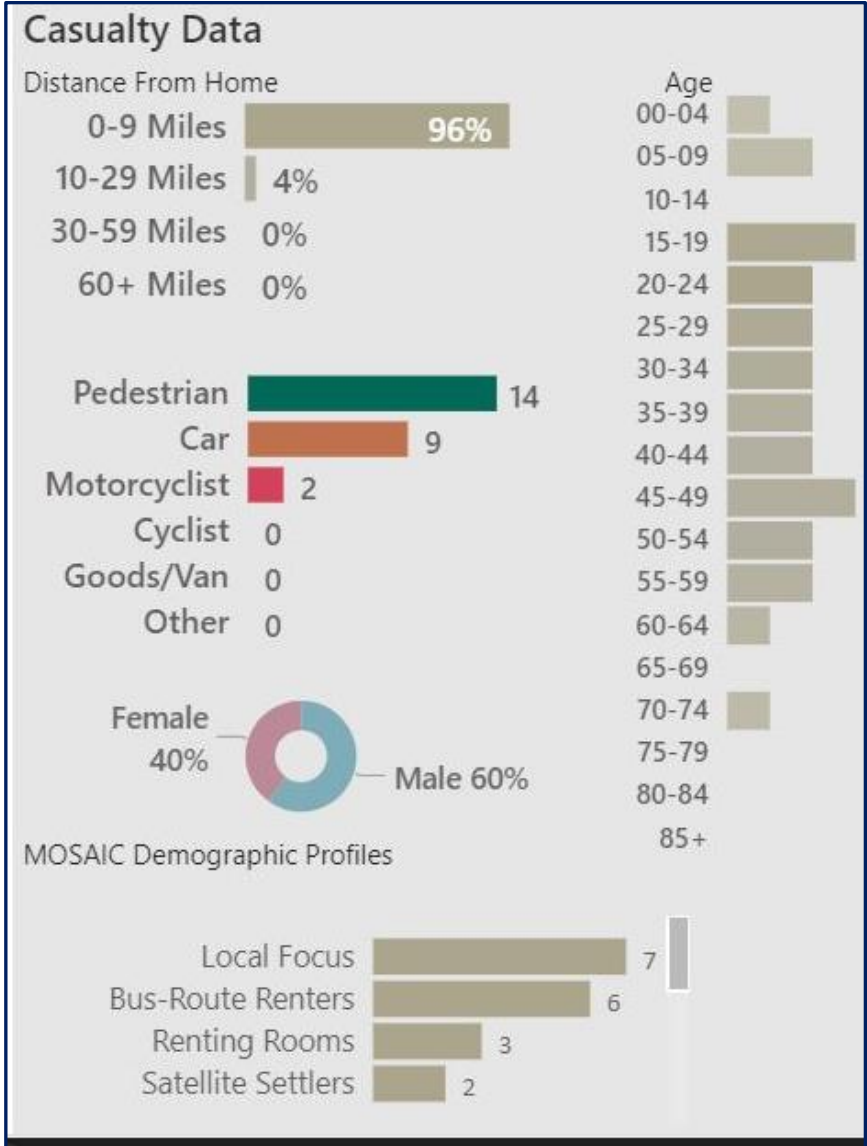


Figure 4.5 A361 route statistics 2018-2022 Ilfracombe Urban Area (Source DCC)

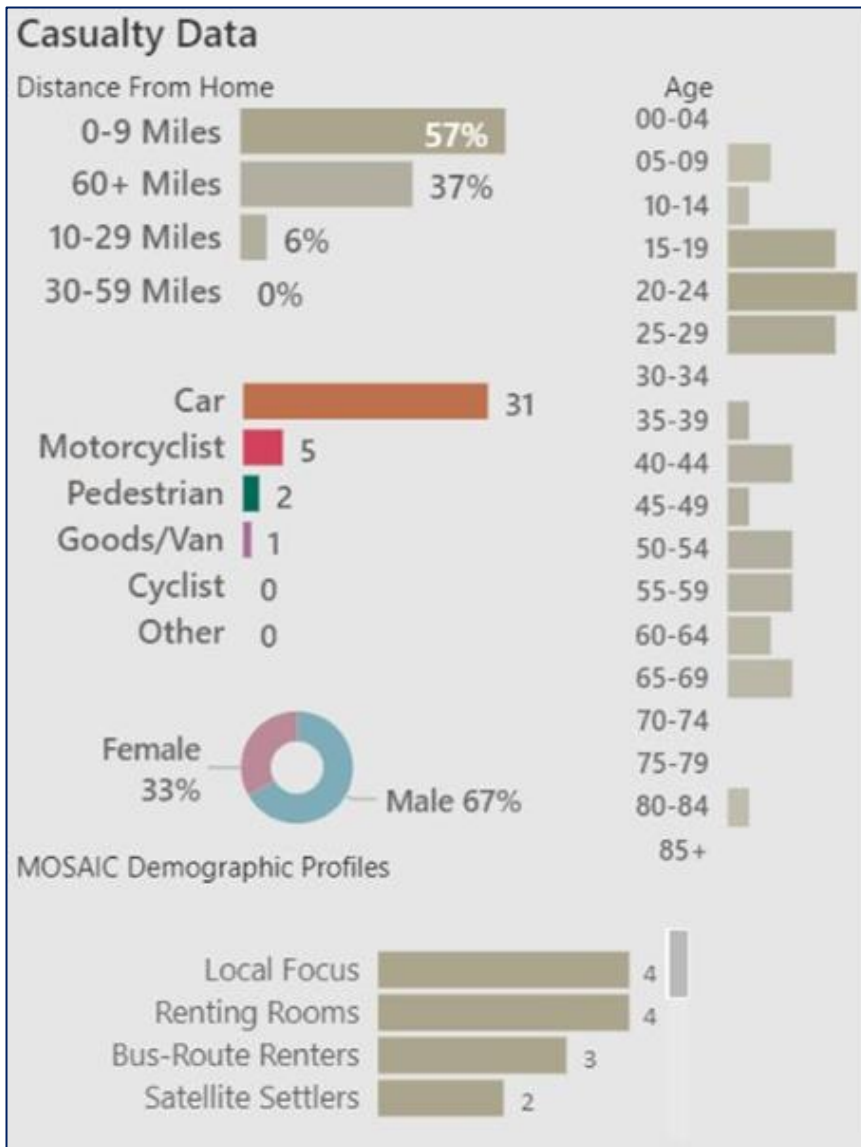


Figure 4.6 A361 route statistics 2018-2022 Mullacott to Knowle Rural Area (Source DCC)

The combined programme of assessed counter measures has a primary impact in reducing deaths and serious life changing injuries on the A361 but associated impacts to the local population and communities include: -

- Improved mobility and connectivity.
- Improved reliability and access to public transport services in the region.
- Improved reliability and safer access to employment and education.
- Improved quality of life.
- Economic benefits through collision cost savings to the local and national economy.



## 5. Stakeholders, their interest and potential impacts

Residents and property owners directly accessing the A361: With an interest in road safety following exposure to serious and traumatic road injury collisions, seeking positive remedial actions to be taken to prevent their recurrence.

Owners of land that may be required to help facilitate highway improvements or accommodate services to the roadside. This could potentially impact on their private property and quality of life both during construction activities and potentially permanently through any loss of land, screening or from visual or noise intrusion.

Businesses and wider communities who rely on the route for travel and business: There is a potential for adverse reactions to speed management controls. Although this will have a negligible to zero impact on journey times, it may not be fully supported by users of the route. There may be adverse reactions to disruptions during construction and traffic management for delivery.

Elected members representing the interest of their constituents.

## 6. Additional relevant research used to inform this assessment

- IRAP International Roads Assessment Programme guidance and procedures.
- Environmental Impact Assessment guidance.
- North Devon Biosphere Reserve Strategy 2014-2024

## 7. Description of consultation process and outcomes

It is a requirement of the bidding process that no publicity and external consultation\engagement takes place until the bid is approved and announced.

Sections of the route have been subject to prior local member, public and community action group liaison and consultation as part of the internal Casualty Reduction investigation and local delivery processes.

A public webpage for the project development and delivery stages following any award of funding is a requirement of the bid award. The detailed design and development stages towards bid delivery will also require extensive consultation with local residents, community groups, land owners and elected member\councils and will require statutory legal consultation for traffic regulation orders and any planning permissions required.

## Background information

### 8. Equality analysis

Under the Equality Act 2010, the local authority must consider how people will be affected by a service, policy or practice. In so doing we must give due regard to the need to: eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation; advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations across protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership (for work), sex, sexual orientation, race, and religion and belief. The Equality Act 2010 and other relevant legislation does not prevent the Council from taking difficult decisions which result in service reductions or closures for example, it does however require the Council to ensure that such decisions are: informed and properly considered with a rigorous, conscious approach and open mind, taking due regard of the effects on the protected characteristics and the general duty to eliminate discrimination, advance equality and foster good relations; proportionate (negative impacts are proportionate to the aims of the policy decision); fair, necessary, reasonable, and those affected have been adequately consulted.

- a) Is this group negatively or potentially negatively impacted, and in what way?
- b) What could be done or has been done to remove the potential for direct or indirect discrimination, harassment or disadvantage and inequalities?
- c) In what way do you consider any negative consequences to be reasonable and proportionate in order to achieve a legitimate aim?
- d) What can be done to advance equality further? This could include meeting specific needs, ensuring equality of opportunity and access, encouraging participation, empowering people, making adjustments for disabled people and action to reduce disparities and inequalities.
- e) Is there a need to foster good relations between groups (tackled prejudice and promote understanding) and help people to be safe and protected from harm? What can be done?

[Answer the questions above for each of the characteristics below. Use the data, consultation and research sections 4 and 5 as evidence. If carrying out an options appraisal, explore the pros and cons of each option for each characteristic. Delete this note]

#### **All residents by geographic area**

The project will provide positive benefits to health and safety for all road users. The primary beneficiary will be local residents who live and travel regularly in the North Devon area. The project does not discriminate against or impact any individual group.

## **Age**

The project does not discriminate against or negatively impact any individual age group. The project will provide positive benefits to health and safety for all road users of all ages. Certain age groups including younger drivers and riders are overrepresented in injury collision statistics and so better outcomes for those groups are anticipated but no interventions will specifically negatively impact any defined age group.

## **Disability (includes sensory, mobility, mental health, learning disability, neurodiversity, long term ill health) and carers of disabled people**

The project will provide positive impacts to health and safety for all road users of all groups. The proposals do not discriminate against or disadvantage any group.

Serious road traffic injuries can be life changing and have long term negative impacts for the victims resulting in disability, mental health and long term ill health for the victims, their family and communities. Accident prevention goes beyond financial considerations to the economy. It also seeks to address the human toll of injuries and fatalities. Human costs include the pain, distress, and intrinsic loss of enjoyment of life experienced by accident victims and their families. The project seeks to reduce predicted number of fatal and serious road injuries here by 23% over the next 20 years and this will have a significant positive impact in preventing disabilities and the impacts on carers.

## **Race and culture: nationality/national origin, ethnic origin, skin colour, religion and belief, asylum seeker and refugee status, language needs**

The proposals do not discriminate against or negatively impact any individual on the basis of either race or culture. The project will provide positive benefits to health and safety for all road users of all races and cultures.

## **Sex and gender identity and reassignment (including men, women, non-binary and transgender people), and pregnancy and maternity (including women's right to breastfeed)**

The proposals do not discriminate against or disadvantage any individual group by gender.

The project will provide positive benefits to health and safety for all road users of all genders or sex identity.

## **Sexual orientation, and marriage/civil partnership if work related.**

There are no identified negative impacts for sexual orientation. The project will provide positive benefits to health and safety for all road users of all groups.

## **Other relevant socio-economic factors and intersectionality**

This includes, where relevant: income, housing, education and skills, language and literacy skills, family background (size/single people/lone parents), sub-cultures, rural isolation,

access to services and transport, access to ICT/Broadband, children in care and care experienced people, social connectivity and refugee status/no recourse to public funds. Also consider intersectionality with other characteristics.

The A361 provides an important transport link for communities and individuals of different socio and economic groups. There are areas of high deprivation for income, rural isolation, age, education and transport that rely on this corridor for travel and connectivity. By aiming to provide a safer and more reliable corridor for travel by all road user groups, this will have a positive impact on providing access to employment, services and help promote social inclusion and connectivity.

## 9. Human rights considerations:

We need to ensure that human rights are protected. In particular, that people have:

- A reasonable level of choice in where and how they live their life and interact with others (this is an aspect of the human right to 'private and family life').
- An appropriate level of care which results in dignity and respect (the protection to a private and family life, protection from torture and the freedom of thought, belief and religion within the Human Rights Act and elimination of discrimination and the promotion of good relations under the Equality Act 2010).
- A right to life (ensuring that nothing we do results in unlawful or unnecessary/avoidable death).

The lack of any segregation between busy roads and an individual's dwelling can be detrimental to their home environment and private life. This will be minimised or avoided if possible through the design process and consultations.

Transport, connectivity and the ability to travel safely and reliably can help to remove barriers to travel and support an individual's choice. Reducing the risk of death or serious and life changing injuries from road traffic collisions is a statutory responsibility of DCC as a local highways authority and this project positively contributes towards meeting this duty.

## 10. Environmental analysis

An impact assessment should give due regard to the following activities in order to ensure we meet a range of environmental legal duties. The policy or practice does not require the identification of environmental impacts using this Impact Assessment process because it is subject to (please mark X in the relevant box below and proceed to the 11, otherwise complete the environmental analysis information below):

<b>Devon County Council's Environmental Review Process</b>	X
<b>Planning Permission</b>	X
<b>Environmental Impact Assessment</b>	
<b>Strategic Environmental Assessment</b>	

- a) Description of any actual or potential negative consequences and consider how to mitigate against these.
- b) Description of any actual or potential neutral or positive outcomes and consider how to improve as far as possible.

Environmental Impact Assessments will be undertaken as part of the design process. And this information will be included in the final Impact Assessment.

**Reduce, reuse, recycle and compost**

The use of recycled material in the construction of all proposed infrastructure will be considered through the design, procurement and delivery stages.

**Conserve and enhance wildlife**

The A361 corridor runs through the transition zone to the Core area of the North Devon Biosphere which is a special area of conservation. All appropriate measures will be taken to protect this area.

**Safeguard the distinctive characteristics, features and special qualities of Devon's landscape**

The A361 corridor runs through the transition zone to the Core area of the North Devon Biosphere which is a special area of conservation. All appropriate measures will be taken to protect this area.

**Conserve and enhance Devon's cultural and historic heritage**

The A361 corridor runs through the transition zone to the Core area of the North Devon Biosphere which is a special area of conservation. All appropriate measures will be taken to protect this area.

**Minimise greenhouse gas emissions**

Construction activities for new infrastructure delivery will generate short term greenhouse emissions. Carbon reduction through construction procurement and delivery will be prioritised for all project elements.

As well as promoting a safer road environment for all road user groups, for the safety of vulnerable road users like pedestrians and cyclists, the project incorporates improvements to active travel infrastructure and improved access to the Multi-Use trail network. The project will have a small but positive long term impact on encouraging and facilitating sustainable travel options as an alternative to motor vehicles.

### **Minimise pollution (including air, land, water, light and noise)**

There are no identified positive impacts or negative outcomes

### **Contribute to reducing water consumption**

There are no identified positive impacts or negative outcomes

### **Ensure resilience to the future effects of climate change (warmer, wetter winters; drier, hotter summers; more intense storms; and rising sea level)**

There are no identified positive impacts or negative outcomes

### **Other (please state below)**

## **11. Economic analysis**

- a) Description of any actual or potential negative consequences and consider how to mitigate against these.
- b) Description of any actual or potential neutral or positive outcomes and consider how to improve as far as possible.

The project has an estimated collision injury saving of £11,391,290 to the economy over a 20 analysis period, which excludes the AI cameras. The short and long term economic impacts resulting from predicted injury savings will primarily benefit local parties and the injury savings will have the greatest impact and benefits to the local economy. These savings come from both the costs of responding to these collisions and the resulting long term human costs from loss of life and life changing serious injuries.

### **Impact on knowledge and skills**

A safer and more reliable transport corridor will improve opportunities to access education facilities.

### **Impact on employment levels**

A safer and more reliable transport corridor will improve opportunities to access employment facilities.

### **Impact on local business**

A safer and more reliable transport corridor will improve opportunities to access employment and service local business facilities.