

Department for Transport's Safer Roads Fund – scheme for approval A3121 (South Hams)

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.

Recommendations. That:

- (a) Cabinet approves the Safer Roads Schemes on the A3121 in South Hams at a cost of no more than £1.9 million;**
- (b) any land required for the schemes be acquired by negotiation and, if necessary, by Compulsory Purchase Orders and any associated statutory orders;**
- (c) any Traffic Regulations Orders necessary be advertised and, if no significant objections received, be made and sealed;**
- (d) the schemes be tendered, and subject to all legal agreements being in place, be constructed;**
- (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 their delivery.**

1. Summary

The report seeks approval to implement the DfT Safer Roads Fund agreed road safety improvements on the A3121 following the award of £1,900,000 as part of the Department for Transport's "Safer Roads Fund" project.

2. Background

In the Government's 2016 Autumn statement the Transport Secretary announced a £175 million fund to improve 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 A3121 connects the A379 west of Modbury to Ermington and the A38 east of Ivybridge, and is 9km in length.

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 A3121 had 31 collisions along the route (including the A379 nodal junctions), of which six were fatal or serious injuries (KSIs). Two known collision clusters are on the route - Kitterford Cross and the junction with the A379 west of Modbury. These clusters had seven and nine collisions respectively in the 2012-2016 period.

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 from the Safer Road Fund for improvements designed to reduce the rates of the most serious injuries.

This report provides details and recommendations for the A3121 scheme.

3. Proposal

The proposal is to implement up to twelve road safety improvement schemes along the 9km length of the A3121, the twelve combined comprising a 'whole route' intervention. This is in line with the original grant requirements imposed by DfT and Devon's Road Safety Vision that every route and every mode should be available to everyone, free from risk or fear of harm. The collision analysis identified future risk as being, at least in part, related to the presence of junctions and associated inter-vehicle conflict.

An overview of the schemes is shown in Appendix I. Land acquisition will be necessary at six of the twelve sites and at Site 12 (Modbury Cross) Traffic Regulation Orders will be required. The original scheme Location Plan as submitted to the Department for Transport (DfT) is shown in Appendix II.

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.

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

4. Consultations/Representations/Technical Data

The scheme has the support of the local Member. Consultation will be undertaken with the Parish and in line with the requirement for Traffic Regulation Orders. Scheme plans and scheme information will be included on the Council's website. Planning consents are not currently required for this scheme.

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. Cost estimates include an allowance for risk and contingency bias have 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, the award letter and grant of £1.9 million, was received in March 2019, the programmed spend is in years 2019/20 and 2020/21. 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 would result in scaling down the scheme or be 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://new.devon.gov.uk/roadsandtransport/safe-travel/road-safety/safer-roads/capital-schemes/>

The scheme will reduce journey times as well as localised congestion on the A3121. This will reduce stop/start traffic thereby reducing carbon emissions.

The scheme will, however, require earthworks and construction at Site 4 (Kitterford Cross) and Site 12 (Modbury Cross). Where practicable all construction waste material will be recycled and only local sources used. There will be a small reduction in the overall length of maintainable carriageway as part of the scheme.

Translocation (moving back) of hedge banks will be required at Site 1 where the A3121 is being widened. Sites 4 and 12 may also require this process to take place to a lesser extent. The translocated hedge banks are expected to recover fully, as has been shown on other projects where this technique has been 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 Sites 1 and 12 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://new.devon.gov.uk/roadsandtransport/safe-travel/road-safety/safer-roads/capital-schemes/>

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.

No adverse impacts were identified. 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 & visually impaired.

8. Legal Considerations

DCC 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 Modbury Cross, 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.

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. Road Space has been pre-booked to allow construction to start on the first sites (sites 1 –3) in Autumn 2019.

Schemes that may impact on nesting birds are also being programmed with a “first phase” of work, so that any work requiring the removal of hedges and trees is undertaken outside the nesting season. With this work completed the rest of the works can follow through at any time.

At some locations work is required to take place near existing High Voltage overhead power lines and high-pressure gas mains; again, early dialogue has commenced with the utility companies.

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

Finally, to avoid any overspend it is planned to deliver the higher priority schemes first so the programme of works can be truncated with the lower priority schemes if required.

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 A3121’s safety particularly at Kitterford Cross where a number of people have been and continue to be injured. The improvements will also improve journey times and allow visitors better access into the South Hams.

Dave Black
Head of Planning, Transportation and Environment

Electoral Divisions: South Brent & Yealmpton

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

Contact for enquiries: Nigel Flower/Jeremy Phillips

Room No. Lucombe House, County Hall, Exeter, EX2 4QD

Tel No: (01392) 383000

Background Paper	Date	File Reference
Impact Assessment	September 2017	https://www.devon.gov.uk/roadsandtransport/safe-travel/road-safety/safer-roads/capital-schemes/(A3121 Appendix Supporting Information)

A3121 Safer Roads (South Devon) Overview

Scheme No. / Location	Description		Land Required	TRO Required
	Existing problem	Proposed Action		
1,2,3 Wrangaton to Venn Cross	1. Approximately 150 metres of carriageway which currently cannot support the passing of large vehicles.	Widen Carriageway to the same width as adjacent carriageway, mark centre line and install catseyes.	✓	X
	2. Sign of The Owl (west) - Currently a side road junction with a wide central grassed island, entry and exits not square to the main road.	Remove central grassed island, square up the junction creating kerbed verges, re-profile hedge banks and verges and provide new signage as necessary.	✓	X
	3. Sign of The Owl (east) - Currently a tight and narrow bend where large vehicles come to a near halt. There is adverse camber which causes water to pond on the high side and the existing drainage is of insufficient capacity and outfall drainage is silted up.	Widen and re-profile the carriageway on the bend so that the crossfall aligns with the run-off from the adjacent fields and the super elevation is corrected. Reconstruct the carriageway drainage and off-road soakaway as required.	✓	X
4. Kitterford Cross	Currently a mis-aligned cross roads that makes vehicle manoeuvres difficult and hazards, 7 RTC's occurred here over the 5 year study period 2013 - 2016 with a further 4 RTCs in 2017 - 2018.	Create a through route for the A3121 with two side road junctions to Loddiswell (B3196) and Avonwick (C794).	✓	X

Scheme No. / Location	Description		Land Required	TRO Required
	Existing problem	Proposed Action		
5. Well Cross	Currently a side road junction with a central grassed island, entry and exits not square to the main road making entry and exit difficult.	Remove central grassed island, square up the junction using kerbed edges, re-profile hedge banks and verges and provide new signage as necessary.	X	X
6. Ware Cross	Currently a side road junction with a central grassed island, entry and exits not square to the main road making entry and exit difficult.	Remove central grassed island, square up the junction using kerbed edges, re-profile hedge banks and verges and provide new signage as necessary.	X	X
7. Whitmore Lane South (Scheme subject to review depending on funding)	Visibility to the left compromised by hedge bank 27m, to the right very good (2.5 m back).	Take back hedge bank to the left and cut hedges tightly back.	X	X
8. Erme Bridge	Pedestrians currently walk on the main road from Ermington Village recreation ground where they connect into the walking route on the lane to Penquit. Additionally there is no visibility out of this junction due to the bridge parapet wall.	Construct a footway on the north side of the River Erme bridge deck and in doing so bring the give way line across the adjacent junction forward to improve visibility.	X	X

Scheme No. / Location	Description		Land Required	TRO Required
	Existing problem	Proposed Action		
9. Ermington Village junction	Visibility from this junction is compromised to the right by residential hedging. To the left by a stone wall and hedging.	With the co-operation of residents the hedging and wall could be set back.	✓	X
10. Town Hill Junction	Currently there is a raised Bitmac / Thermoplastic hump in the middle of this junction that forces right turning vehicles onto the wrong side of the road and into the path of oncoming traffic.	Remove the raised junction splitter hump and renew the road markings.	X	X
11. Ermington 40mph speed limit	Currently some 40mph signing is obscured and some of the central (hazard) warning lines are of the incorrect length.	Where possible re-position signs and correct the road markings	X	X
12. Modbury Cross	The connection of the A3121 to the A379 is very poor. The Modbury Cross junction is very acute and affords little visibility onto the fast main road. The alignment of the A379 is poor and the adjacent road (C79) is narrow and is often blocked by HGV's.	Build a roundabout at Hollowcombe Cross (A3121) Widen the existing connection (C79) between the two main roads that provides road width and visibility to the latest standards. Close Modbury Cross access to A379 and divert through the new roundabout.	✓	✓

