

J19, M5 discussion meeting with Highways England



11th July 2017, St. Andrew's House.

Attendees:

Organisation
Accolade Wines
Avon Fire and Rescue
Bristol Port Police
Expeditors
Highways England)
N. Somerset Council
Pill Parish Council
Seabank Power Station
Severn Beach & Pilning PC / Severnside Sirens
SevernNet
The Bristol Port Company
Wincanton Transport

There were a number of apologies

Agenda

- Presentation and overview of J19, M5 – Sean Walsh
- Discussion – All

Summary

See also attached presentation

Sean provided an overview of:

- Highways England re-organisation and his area of responsibility
- Mechanisms for justifying spend on HE's network
- J19's challenges
- Work done to date at J19 and its impact
- Three step proposal for further improvement
- Long Term Solutions

This was followed by a discussion and question and answer session and a number of action points

Highways England (HE) re-organisation and Sean's area of responsibility

- HE is now a government owned company (since 2015) and is re-organising into Route based management.
- A number of capabilities are also being brought in-house to improve HE's capacity and capability ... and flexibility going forward

Sean's particular area of responsibility encompasses:

- M5 14-21
- M4 J18 to M48
- M48 and M49
- M32

- Sean has not been advised if the A4 and the three roundabouts around Crowley Way fall within his area

M5 J19

Has a number of issues and barriers to progress (see slides)

Funding improvement is challenging as there has been no funding for economy schemes. The absence of an associated 'accident profile' means there is no basis to develop a safety scheme. The position has now changed via the new congestion relief programme

Current strategic expenditure is part of the RIS 1 for 2015 to 2020 which does not include anything for J19.

Government 'Pinch-Point' / Congestion Relief funding

£2.8m has been identified for J19. Work, in the medium term, to be in 3 phases.

Already completed

Revision to slip road signing and lining on a trial basis allowing two lanes on slip road and roundabout for Portishead traffic. This has been completed and has had a significantly positive impact. It has also reduced the numbers of people pulling in at the last moment.

- The impact may reduce as more people return to using the junction after the summer and when schools go back.

Phase 1:

Widening of A369 in Portishead.

Inbound dualing. This is a remote scheme on the North Somerset Council network but funded by Highways England. This will provide release capacity for M5 J19. Subject to modelling and value management

Phase 2:

Removal of splitter island combining Service station and Bristol traffic in one lane + **nearside widening of the gyratory** to allow 2 full lanes to Portishead – Winter 2018. Subject to modelling.

Phase 3:

Study to look at other options for improvement

The scope of this study is not yet clear. Ultimately any proposals that emerge would need to be consulted on

Longer term Solutions

It's clear that J19 is no longer fit to support current peak hour traffic and anticipated growth in traffic volumes and radical solutions may need to be considered. **Without prejudice, examples could include.**

- Trying to get traffic off the road with better public transport offers
- Dedicated bus lane
- Other options for service station traffic
- Take A369 out of the junction
- Dedicated port traffic route
- Supporting improved cycle and walking routes

It is hoped that something along these lines is taken forward by government as part of RIS2 (2020-25)

What can businesses and travellers do to help

1. Avoid using J19 and related infrastructure at peak times. Look at flexible working, home working, alternative shift times, public transport etc.
2. Communicate key messages across the area about how best to use the network to minimise congestion

- a. Encouraging HGVs not to block the traffic in Avonmouth (J18) when J19 traffic has tailed back
- b. Encouraging 'Merging in Turn'. However signs supporting this can't be used on motorway network also difficult to justify this on a safety basis as mentioned earlier.
- c. Encourage holiday sites in Devon and Cornwall NOT to have Friday evening as a changeover time as this puts holiday makers on the roads at the same time as the working day/ end of week business peak
- d. Encourage stop-over holiday traveller stopovers close to motorway network to enable travellers to do journeys in two stages

Co-operative Working

The latest improvements have been helped through effective working together between HE and NSC. It's important that stakeholders continue to work together closely and local knowledge is built into solutions.

Smart / Managed Motorways

This will eventually extend to J21 and is a feature of the emerging Joint transport Study by the West of England LEP.

Smart Motorways (variable speed lanes and hard-shoulder running) have been shown to significantly reduce accidents and improve safety.

'SevernNet' Cycling and Walking Network

HE now have a clear policy of ensuring that cycling and walking infrastructure and facilities are supported. HE may be able to help fund work to put in place the SevernNet Cycling and Walking Network which needs funding, however there must be demonstrable benefit for the Strategic Road Network

Lorry Parking Facilities

Kate raised the challenges arising from shortage of lorry parking across the area. HE cannot fund these, but can work with stakeholders to support access to/from facilities from the HE network.

Resilience of the network and Public Transport options

Work has been done within the West of England Joint transport Plan to consider options such as a J18a on M4 and J21a to provide alternative options in case of road closure etc. This has been identified as part of the £9.8bn package.

It was also agreed that getting and keeping people out of cars is essential and effective public transport routes between residential and employment areas were needed. These have been identified in the Joint Transport Plan

All recommended to have a look at this

(<https://www.jointplanningwofe.org.uk/consult/ti/JTSissues2015/consultationHome>)

Dedicated Truck Route – Avonmouth to Royal Portbury Dock

Has been considered on a number of occasions

J19 screening to protect Portbury

HE is considering what can be done to replace the environmental screening at Portbury village in an incremental fashion. This may be best practice, but is also uneconomic, so challenging.

J17 and impact of growth on villages

Peter Tyzack raised concern about the growth of traffic at J17 and surrounding roads which is and will result from continued expansion at Avonmouth/Sevenside. The Local Plan will be important in this.

St. Andrew's Roundabout

Needs re-lining

Concern that MOVR system that should make traffic lights smart may not be working properly.

Agreed Actions and Next Steps**Keeping in touch and following up:**

Sean Walsh will endeavour to attend the SevernNet Sustainable Transport Forum each quarter to provide a regular update. Substantive information is likely to be available in about six months.