

**Thank you for your patience & support**

The government-funded Somerset Council Highways Chelston Link scheme began on the 15th of June to replace this poorly draining, uneven, unsightly, deteriorating, 51 year-old concrete road and motorway junction built in 1974. Heidelberg Materials, our principal contractor, has made incredible progress on the scheme and are proud to announce that all slip roads at Junction 26, the roundabout and the A38 link road from the motorway to the Chelston roundabout reopened overnight on **Saturday 6 September to Sunday 7 September**.

We can also confirm that the Silk Mills Road works have now been completed by Wales and West Utilities ahead of schedule.

The early reopening has been made possible by a combination of overnight and extended working and use of innovative techniques. The project team prioritised work which would enable the road to reopen as soon as possible. Works will continue during September but will be completed after the closure has been lifted.

Cllr Richard Wilkins, Somerset Council's Lead Member for Transport and Waste Services, said: "We pledged to do everything in our power to keep disruption to a minimum and it is fantastic news that the A38 and motorway junction will reopen well ahead of schedule".

Jonathan Hill, National Highways Route Manager, said: "It's good to see Somerset Council and their teams deliver this significant road improvement scheme ahead of schedule. As the Chelston Link Road scheme necessitated the closure of the Junction 26 slip roads, we've worked closely with the Council over the last few years during planning for these works to ensure the impact on our roads and our road users was minimised as far as possible. We're grateful to drivers for their patience during the programme of work."

### Construction Completion

The refurbishment of Junction 26 of the M5 along with the A38 Chelston link road, which were built in 1974, was entirely funded by Government grants.

- For the A38 link road, the council's contractor Heidelberg Materials used an innovative technique known as rubblization to break up the existing concrete road surface using heavy machinery. Instead of removing 7,300 tonnes of concrete from site, the materials were retained and recycled as sub-base for the new road.
- This modern recycling method, often used on airport runways, saved 200 tonnes in carbon and around 1,130 lorry movements, compared to traditional road construction methods. This was achieved by removing the need to export waste material and quarry and import new stone – better for the environment, but also enabling work to be completed faster.
- Rubblization could not be used on the J26 roundabout due to the height of the overhead bridges, so for this section an entire excavation of more than one metre in depth was required in order to build the new surface.

- Other programme optimisations included the use of asphalt kerbs in this scheme instead of traditional methods which take longer to install.
- The project included works to create a whole new drainage system which will reduce the risk of flooding and will also be easier to access for future maintenance.
- The window and timescale for the work was agreed with National Highways and dictated by forthcoming M5 works, alongside the need to allow them to access its gritting depot off the Chelston Link Road during winter.
- To minimise disruption to road users, partner organisations National Grid and National Highways took advantage of the closures to carry out essential improvement works which would have otherwise required traffic management.

### Community Engagement

Thanks also to the many invitations to interact and speak to so many community members and community groups including: LCN'S, Bishops Hull, West Buckland, Trull, and Nynehead Parish Councils, and Wellington Without and Wellington Town Council. This ensured, along with the regular newsletters, that members of the public were kept up to date. A full training exercise with the emergency services was also undertaken. With the advance notification we have now been able to ensure bus services and other services are made aware for them to adapt their services accordingly.

### Traffic Management

Core Highways have worked incredibly hard in setting up and maintaining the necessary traffic management to cater for this scheme, requiring a FULL CLOSURE of Junction 26 and part of the A38 link road (from J26 to Foxmoor Business Park) from the 15<sup>th</sup> of June to the 7<sup>th</sup> September. This has included ensuring the National Highways depot had safe access.

### More Information



All enquiries and **feedback** have been directed solely to our **Public Liaison Officer, Syed Shah**, please call Syed on **07717 844 042**, in the first instance as many enquiries can often be quickly answered by calling, alternatively email **syed.shah@somerset.gov.uk**. to subscribe to the newsletters/further information

A dedicated webpage has been set up to provide an overview, FAQs and updates: <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/roads-travel-and-parking/major-refurbishment-of-junction-26-and-chelston-link-road/>

**PLEASE NOTE: All information in this newsletter has been agreed with the scheme management team. The Public Liaison Officer has been appointed to be the sole person responsible for communicating this and to update the public along with X and Facebook @travelsomerset accordingly.**