

**A38 Junctions around Cross  
Review 2009/10**

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7<sup>th</sup> September, 2009

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## **1 Introduction**

### **1.1**

The A38, Old Coach Road and Cross Lane junction has been a concern of residents and the Parish Council for many years. The previous Council saw the installation of a speed camera on the southbound traffic lane and more recently there has been a change in the camera type. This has led to a reduction in both the number and severity of traffic accidents when they occur. Somerset County Council Highways produced a proposal to treat Old Coach Road as a one-way road with “No entry” from the East. Neither residents nor the Parish Council found merit in this proposal and could not support it..

### **1.2**

Since then the Parish Council has produced a report 10.03.08 about the junction intended to assist SCC Highways in coming up with a proposal for improvement of the junction. A meeting was held on 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2009 at which SCC Highways were expected to put forward a new proposal that would take the various highlighted possibilities forward. In the event the plan advanced was identical to that which had been suggested previously and which both Council and residents had roundly rejected.

### **1.3**

The “Red route” improvements are shortly due to extend from Rooksbridge to the County Northern boundary. The A38 crossroads are to be treated as a separate entity.

### **1.4**

The Parish Council is concerned that there has been no progress in meeting the needs to improve this junction so to reduce accidents, improve pedestrian access to Axbridge and make use of the junction a safer procedure for all road users. The Parish Council has noted that SCC claim budget constraints restrict the straightforward solution of traffic lights, but believes this should not preclude some scheme other than the unacceptable "No Entry "proposal that has been put forward by SCC Highways. Hopefully that scheme has been sufficiently discredited to be disregarded.

### **1.5**

However progress needs to be made particularly in the light of the planned extensions to Bristol International Airport and the large increase in the volume of traffic anticipated as a result. Crossing the A38 from Old Coach Road to Cross Lane is bad enough now let alone with a further increase in traffic volumes.

### **1.6**

Traffic surveys have been conducted by SCC and there is good knowledge of the demand even though they were conducted during a period of economic downturn.

### **1.7**

The Parish Council is of the opinion that an improvement is possible given the motivation on the part of Somerset Highways to address the situation. Whilst there are a number of possibilities this report focuses on one possible solution and asks SCC Highways to give it due consideration, not reject it out off hand or to see their “No entry” proposal as the only possibility. They rightly have pointed out that the difficulty lies in the number of traffic conflicts that exist and finding a solution that causes the least detrimental effect.

## 2 Purpose

To identify a single scheme that given the goodwill of Somerset County Council Highways Department is capable of implementation on a trial basis to prove its practicality and which alleviates the worst hazards at the junction at reasonable cost and provides improvements for road users and residents alike.

## 3 Reference

This report should be read in conjunction with the report dated 10<sup>th</sup> March, 2008, the Scheme SR000501-TP-701, dated February, 2008, the notes of a Joint Working Group meeting of the 22<sup>nd</sup> April, 2009 and a letter dated 11<sup>th</sup> June, 2009 from Mrs B. Norman, Traffic Team Manager Somerset County Council. The Ordnance Survey map of the junction is shown in **Appendix No. 1**.

## 4 Identified Traffic conflicts

- |                   |   |
|-------------------|---|
| A38 Northbound    | a) Traffic emerging from Old Coach Road (OCR)   |
|                   | b) Traffic crossing over from Cross Lane into OCR   |
|                   | c) Traffic turning right into Cross Lane confronting Southbound traffic turning right into Old Coach Road |
|                   | d) Static traffic in the road centre obstructing visibility   |
|                   | e) Pedestrians attempting to cross  |
| A38 Southbound    | f) Traffic crossing over from Cross Lane to OCR   |
|                   | g) Traffic filtering left from Cross Lane   |
|                   | h) Traffic turning right into OCR   |
|                   | i) Emerging traffic from Manor Farm and New Cottages  |
|                   | j) Pedestrians/cyclists/horses attempting to cross  |
| Eastbound traffic | k) Crossing over, North and Southbound traffic  |
|                   | l) Northbound traffic turning into Cross Lane   |
|                   | m) Traffic turning right Southbound   |
| Westbound traffic | n) Crossing over, North and Southbound traffic  |
|                   | o) Turning left avoiding A38 Southbound traffic   |
|                   | p) Turning right avoiding Northbound traffic  |
|                   | q) Turning right restricted visibility to South   |

## **5 Objections to SR000501 Scheme**

### **5.1**

The cost of the scheme, whilst this has not been declared, by observation there is a need to provide elaborate signage and modifications to two junctions.

### **5.2**

Developing the alternative South entrance to OCR providing a safe turning area without obstructing through traffic.

### **5.3**

The unsuitability of the South leg of OCR to increased traffic volumes and Large Goods Vehicles, where the road shoulders are already showing signs of collapse.

### **5.4**

Bow Bridge is narrow and requires single lane working.

### **5.5**

The impact upon local businesses, the White Hart, New Inn, Jan's Eggs, James Timber, inter farm access and by no means least the Webbington Hotel.

### **5.6**

The safety of pedestrians in OCR South leg from increased traffic with no pathway.

### **5.7**

The very real resistance from residents, particularly from those living at the East end of OCR introduced by scheme SR000501.

### **5.8**

Easy access to properties is required for motorists and cyclists who are returning from the nearest shops in Axbridge or those from the A38 Nursery.

### **5.9**

Does not provide a solution to the major cause of the traffic accidents at this junction, which is the poor sight line and lack of visibility for drivers emerging from Cross Lane intending to turn North when the central lane is blocked with Northbound traffic turning East.

### **5.10**

Loss of A38 central road space to overtake a farm tractor or slow moving vehicle before Shute Shelve hill North of the junction.

### **5.11**

Reduces pressure to keep OCR clear of parked vehicles

### **5.12**

Pedestrians are on the wrong, North side of Cross Lane to connect safely and seamlessly with the verge and established footpath.

### **5.13**

The confusion created due to the bifurcation of the A371.

## **6 Perceived Benefits for scheme SR5000501**

### **6.1**

The provision of a pedestrian refuge enables pedestrians to cross the A38 in stages.

### **6.2**

A reduction in the level of “Rat run” traffic bound for Bleadon and Weston Super Mare.

## **7 Local proposed solution**

### **7.1**

The philosophy behind this proposal is that minimal change allows time for residents to adapt to revised circumstances at minimal cost to the taxpayer, yet addresses the root cause of many of the accidents that have occurred in the past and which have been identified. That it is capable of being introduced on a trial basis to establish whether or not it proves to be practical. The junction has to cater for increased traffic volumes due to the anticipated expansion of Bristol International airport, increasing commuter traffic from new developments in Cheddar and this proposal acts as an interim solution until such time as proper budgetary provision can be made for a solution that either involves traffic lights or the duplication of the A38 carriageway to cope with the anticipated increased traffic volumes or the A38’s ability to act as an effective relief road at times when the region’s main artery the M5 is out of commission or when the Cheddar relief road is introduced.

### **7.2 Stage 1**

That Cross lane be de-classified from the A371 designation to its more rural “B” road status leaving the Axbridge bypass with its “A road” status. We are given to understand that Axbridge Town Council would support such a move.

### **7.3 Stage II**

The junction at the top of Shute Shelve, A38 to Axbridge bypass is improved and that available budget be expended to so do.

### **7.4 Stage III**

On the A38 Northbound, make the entrance to Cross lane a “No right turn”. Make the exit from OCR a “No right turn” to prevent a South turn. Make Westbound traffic from Cross Lane “No right turn except buses”.

### **7.5 Stage IV**

Construct a central pedestrian/cyclist refuge on the A38 to the South of Cross Lane and OCR as well as improving the pavement on both the West and East sides to connect with the existing footpath to Axbridge. Change the road markings at the junction.

## **8 Conclusion**

Some improvement to the junction of the A38 with OCR and Cross Lane, to reduce traffic accidents and ease the West/East pedestrian/cyclist route where they are traversing the A38 are desirable and are long overdue. Red Route improvements provide an opportunity to achieve this despite the crossroads being a special case. Budget constraints are a factor, but this should not prevent a minimal cost solution being tried and applied.

As stated in the previous Joint Working Group report, **local consultation is an essential requirement to establish wider support prior to implementation.** This report is intended to move the matter forward and provide those responsible for any scheme's implementation with a suggestion that we believe will be acceptable to local residents and can achieve the objective set out in paragraph 2. Movements identified in paragraph 4 (a to q) will be improved for "c, d, k simplified, l, m, p and q". The cost should be within the budget that can be made available for the work.

There is a need for political motivation to progress the solution proposed and the goodwill of the professionals to make it happen.

Improvements to the A38 Shute Shelve, Axbridge bypass junction will not only cater for the anticipated increased traffic volumes, but also provide improved traffic flow exiting from the bypass and travelling towards the North. In our opinion it is here that the major development interest should be applied.

The purpose outlined we believe is met through the stages proposed and whilst it is accepted that to a degree it is a compromise, it offers an alleviation of the traffic accident potential and improves pedestrian/cycle access to the nearest Town settlement.

We ask that this approach be seriously considered.

## **9 Resource implications**

As were noted in the previously submitted report. "To be identified and established by the appropriate authorities." The past 5 years accident record has incurred costs based upon national accident standards in the region of £715, 030 over this A38 stretch.

## **10 Recommendation**

That the appropriate authorities use this report as a basis for plans to be generated and implemented for the improvement of the A38 OCR/Cross Lane and Axbridge bypass junctions. That a trial diversion arrangement is adopted to confirm the practicality of the approach proposed. That the facilities for pedestrians/cyclists at the crossroads be improved with the establishment of a refuge to the South of the junction.

## **11 Authors**

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Cllr R. Parker

Cllr M. Rolfe

**Ratification by:  
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**12 Distribution**

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