



CEO ref: 23030459

Cllr Ciaran Cronnelly
North Somerset Council
Town Hall
Weston-Super-Mare
BS23 1UJ

Elliot Shaw
Chief Customer and Strategy Officer
Bridge House
1 Walnut Tree Close
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16 May 2024

Dear Cllr Cronnelly,

RE: Improvements needed to Junction 21, M5 Weston-Super-Mare

Thank you for your letter of 5 May 2024 to Nick Harris regarding your concerns about the capacity of M5 Junction 21 in light of current and planned growth at Weston-Super-Mare. I am replying to you as this issue falls within my area of responsibility.

We are currently preparing for significant refurbishment works at Junction 21 St Georges Bridge and are investigating the opportunity to incorporate widening of the northbound slip to address the issues you have highlighted. No decision has yet been made as we are currently finalising the design and will then seek funding. We hope to be able to confirm our plans in late 2024.

Beyond this immediate work we produce Route Strategy reports to help inform which parts of the strategic road network could warrant investigation for potential road and non-road interventions in future road periods. In May 2023 we published twenty [Route Strategy Initial Overview Reports](#) to help inform potential studies and schemes in RIS3 and beyond. The report for the [Birmingham to Exeter Route](#) recognises seasonal peak delay northbound at Junction 21 and longer-term forecast morning peak congestion between Junctions 21 to 17. Informed by the Route Strategies, a further national programme of studies will be undertaken during the next Road Period on locations for potential enhancement in RIS4 or future RIS periods, and this may provide opportunities for any residual issues and potential further options to be explored, such as a new junction M5 J21a.

The forthcoming North Somerset Local Plan will need to demonstrate what level of infrastructure will be required to safely accommodate proposed growth. We would encourage the level of employment in the Plan to be considered in line with the current congestion and we would expect the planning authority to undertake a vision-led approach in terms of their assessment. North Somerset are engaging with the National Highways Spatial Planning Team as a statutory consultee through the regulation plan stages.

In addition, we are aware that rail industry strategic plans for the Bristol to Exeter corridor ([Bristol to Exeter rail corridor strategic study](#) and [Greater Bristol Rail Network Strategic](#)

[Study](#)) seek to enhance train services to the Weston-super-Mare area, through increasing calls in CrossCountry services at Worle (serving Bristol Airport) and extending GWR services from Bristol to Weston-super-Mare. Network Rail is working with local authorities and other stakeholders to develop the case for these service enhancements and the interventions needed to enable them. It believes these changes would help reduce pressure on the M5 through promoting modal shift, helping to support sustainable growth in the area.

If your office would like any further information please contact our Network Planning

Yours sincerely



Elliot Shaw
Executive Director of Customer, Strategy and Communications