

National Highways A35 engagement meeting. (Notes).

Objective: to provide a high level overview of NH operational plans for the A35.

1. Peter Ball (Kilminster PC) introduced the Meeting and welcomed Ben Hampson (BH) and Jack (J) from National Highways who went on to outline NH plans for the A35. Questions were taken throughout the meeting.

Safety and severance

2. NH can tap into two separate funding streams:
 - a. **Safety and Congestion** - Safety is reliant upon accident data; and attention is to areas of greatest concern, using “Killed and Seriously Injured (KSI)” statistics to identify areas of greatest concern. This budget is largely “reactive” and requires an evidenced accident profile. Its important to note that safety and perception of danger are not synonymous when it comes to taking safety interventions
 - b. **User and Communities** - This budget could be considered as “pro-active” and can use anecdotal evidence and reports from customers and stakeholders to initiate assessments. It looks to address community issues such as severance, crossings, walking and cycling.
3. Prioritising studies is taken across the whole SW area. Severance studies are scored using a prioritisation matrix tool that takes in factors such as use, safety, quality, local plan content and directness etc.
4. It would generally take 3-6 years for a proposed scheme to be completed, through the process of identification / financial justification / design and finally construction. Each element of a scheme requires funding and must be checked that it meets its objectives both on the road and financially.
5. The A35 is currently subject to a Design; Build; Finance and Operate (DBFO) form of Contract from 1996 to 2026 at which point the A35 will be handed back and managed directly by NH.
6. The Safety scheme, currently coming to the end of the feasibility stage, will look at a range of measures. Improved lining signing, visibility as well as speed reductions and average speed cameras through the villages however, no one specific safety solution suited all sites, and that the consideration would always be for the route overall not specific bits.
6. Nh are not responsible for the operation and maintenance of the camera equipment, the police have sole responsibility and autonomy of how they choose to use the equipment and enforce the road.
7. Previously the SRN has always at a conflict between the objective of fast flowing traffic and the village community needs, but we are now making changes and enhancing the way we look at these interactions to ensure a netter network for everyone.

Major Projects

NH ops provided an outline regarding their remit and the overall remit of NH when it comes to its major projects.

NH ops will ask both the SW Peninsula route study team to provide a progress update as well as the A358 project team

3rd party works

Miles Cross/Vearse Farm - This scheme is "Developer led" via the Planning Authority and NH input is strictly limited to checking for compliance to their road standards NOT design. All engagement for this should be with the developer.

Air Quality

The issue of air quality was raised by Chideock PC, Chideock has for years been under the control of an AQMA by Dorset council. NH had done some trial work and explored some options prior to and during Covid-19, however not many options demonstrated a benefit. A reduced 30mph on the westbound Chideock hill did demonstrate a small positive benefit and on that basis, NH is taking forward a permanent speed reduction in the location.

NH also believe that Dorset is the best place for Chideock to engage on matters relating to air quality, Dorset are the environmental authority responsible for air quality management area as well as the air quality action plan.

Dorset's latest AQAP has been released and we encourage Chideock to speak with Dorset to discuss the report.

Q&A

1. With new government changes, will NH budgets be affected? NH remain confident that their budgets are "ring-fenced" for the current RIS spending (2020 - 2025) and that budgets will continue to be allocated in future RIS periods of 5 years and not annually.
2. Is there going to any adverse impacts as a result of the scheme i.e pollution? it is most likely all other impacts will be negligible except the positive impact on safety.
3. Why do minor accidents not feature as part of the evidence, as villagers are often aware of many dangerous situations for potential serious accidents? Safety is evidence lead and requires an evidenced accident profile, we use numerous data sources and utilise all available data, if incidents are not reported then we have no way of knowing they occurred, we would encourage anyone to report any incidents they see.
4. Proposed "Village Walk-throughs" with NH as a good basis for informing problems. NH have agreed that they are welcoming of village walk throughs going forward.

5. NH were asked to consider warning signage at strategic locations (e.g., Monkey Jump roundabout / Hunters Lodge) advising “A35 Liable to Delays” in an attempt to de-congest the A35? Signage must be nationally consistent, as part of the safety scheme we are reviewing the signage along the A35 however signing large portions of the road as delayed would not be nationally consistent and would most likely be ignored.
6. NH were asked about changing speed limits e.g., introducing 30mph limits for all villages? Reduced speed limits are being considered as part of the safety scheme; However, this would have to be considered for impacts upon journey times and upon accident statistics. Speed limit changes are subject to statutory consultations and stakeholders/customers would be able to provide feedback as part of that process.

Communication

- NH aims to set out a range of different meetings with both PC's and county councillor's, NH is working through an engagement plan to take forward from January which will look at strategic and specific meetings including walk throughs, updates and problem identifications.
- meetings shouldn't be the only place to raise issues along the route and the best place is always to email "info@nationalhighways.co.uk"