

A39 Causeway, Street, Somerset Advance notification of major road works

22 October 2016 to 30 October 2016 - provisional

Background

Somerset County Council, as the highway authority, has a statutory duty to maintain the roads in Somerset; with the exception of the motorway and trunk roads. There is around 4,000 miles of highway network in total, all requiring some form of maintenance at some time in its life.

The A39 Causeway at Street is showing signs of significant structural failure. There are numerous cracks in the road and settlement across the carriageway width. This location has seen 67 separate visits to fix potholes in two years – clearly, this is unsustainable and something needs to be done.



Proposed works

Fundamental to the long term performance of any road is what lies beneath – specifically, the foundations. Site investigation has revealed the foundations are saturated with water, poorly constructed and weak.

The proposed maintenance works will include excavation and removal of the soft road foundation and re-construction of part of the road. Other parts of the road will be recycled, strengthened and re-laid. The whole length of the road between Street roundabout and the Red Brick Buildings will also be resurfaced (see plan on the last page of this Information Sheet).

Following consideration of all options at the design stage, we have concluded the A39 will have to be fully closed during the works. Regrettably, it is not possible to physically do the job while maintaining a safe zone for the workforce and the travelling public.

The programme is still being finalised, but it is currently intended to close the A39 for seven days and work 24 hours a day. The first viable window for this is from Saturday 22 October 2016 to Sunday 30 October 2016 – autumn half term.

Public utilities

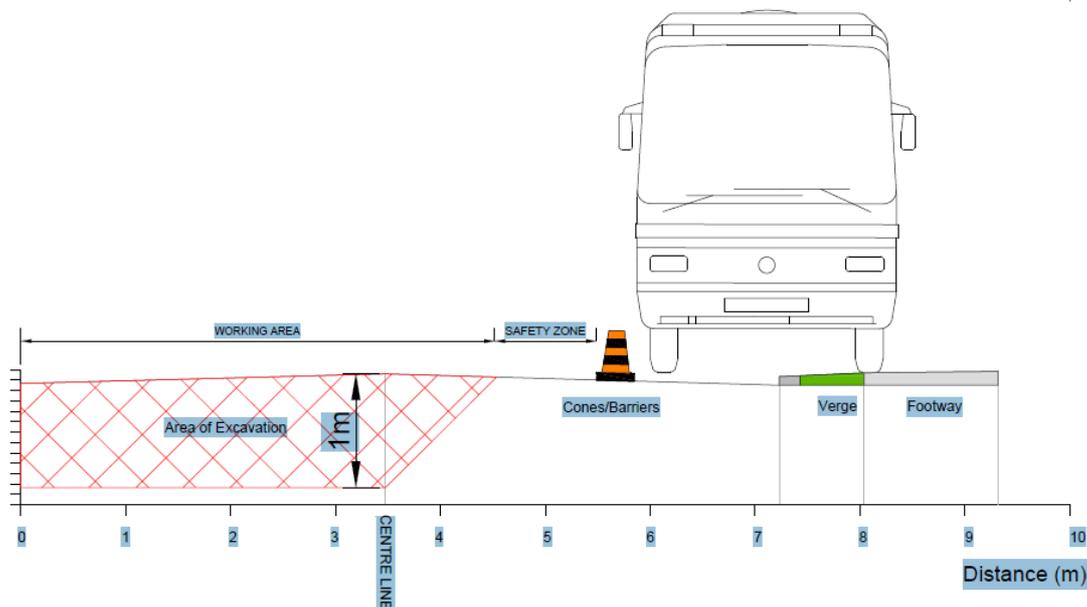
To complicate the scheme further, there are various public utility apparatus such as gas and water pipes, and electrical cables in the area of excavation. This apparatus is understood to be fragile and could be damaged during the works. To manage this risk, we are working with the public utility companies to explore if there are opportunities to strengthen or relocate the utility apparatus.

A significant amount of work needs to be done in advance to properly understand and cater for the utility equipment.

Questions and answers...

Why can't you keep one lane open?

Put simply, the road is just too narrow to allow us to keep a lane open. We have to comply with national Code of Practice for road works and to keep a lane open we need at least three metres of road. We would be breaking the law if we ignored this – and clearly it would not be safe for either the travelling public or the workforce. The diagram below illustrates vehicles would have to drive on the verge and footway to avoid the works.



Why don't you clear the road works away at night?

With some road works we are able to do this, but at this location it is not possible because there will be numerous deep excavations up to and beyond the centre of the road.

Why is the work taking so long?

We will be working 24/7 to complete the works as quickly as possible. By adopting this approach, the works will be undertaken in a shorter time period minimising disruption for residents, businesses and the travelling public.

Why have you chosen those dates?

There is no perfect time to carry out major work like this, but we have tried to avoid key times such as the summer tourism period or the lead up to Christmas.

We have timed this for half term when roads are generally quieter and to avoid disruption to school transport. We accept it will still have a considerable impact which is why we are publicising the work as early as possible.

More information

There is a great deal still to do and some aspects of the works are still uncertain. Further communications will be issued as the extent of the scheme becomes clearer. However, we wanted to alert you as early as possible. We recognise this will inevitably have a big impact on the community and we will do our very best to manage and mitigate.

Over the coming months, we will continue to inspect the A39 and carry out repairs as necessary. In the meantime, if you have any questions, queries or observations on the works, please use the contact details below:

Call 0300 123 2224 or

Email countyroads-mendip@somerset.gov.uk

Scheme location plan illustrating the extent of works.

