

Engagement summary

Feedback on planned changes to the A370 Smallway junction | Congresbury

Date of report: February 2025

Overview

This report gives an overview of planned changes to the A370 Smallway junction in Congresbury, including the background to the improvements and the results of public engagement. It outlines the current challenges faced by the junction, such as traffic congestion and safety concerns, and presents the changes aimed at improving traffic flow, safety, and accessibility for all users, including pedestrians, cyclists, and public transport users.

Additionally, the report covers the public engagement process, which has included a survey and a community event, summarising feedback received from local residents. This feedback, alongside technical data, will inform design decisions. The report also highlights the scope and limitations of the planned improvements, considering factors such as budget constraints and physical space at the junction.

Through these planned enhancements, the goal is to create a more efficient and safer junction that accommodates future growth and supports sustainable travel options.

Why are changes needed?

About the A370 Smallway junction

The Smallway crossroads is a key interchange for people travelling between Yatton and Bristol, where residents frequently experience tailbacks and hold-ups.

The planned new layout for the Smallway junction sets out to allow it to function more effectively in the years to come, as our population grows, by introducing changes and new features which balance:

- the increasing pressures of more people on our roads
- the need to make more effective and efficient use of existing and finite road space, to meet current and future needs

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- The need to provide modern infrastructure for widespread sustainable travel with enhanced bus services, which can carry a large number of passengers more effectively than individual private vehicles, within our existing road space.

For example, approximately 18,100 journeys are made daily on the northern section of the A370 near Long Ashton Bypass. Of these, around 3,600 (20%) are made on just 110 buses, while the remaining 14,500 (80%) trips are made by individual vehicles with lower capacity.

Increasing the capacity of bus services using the A370 will be a key strategy to reduce the impact of future congestion on our road network.

The planned improvements to Smallway will complement recent changes made at the nearby Wood Hill junction. Together, these enhancements will improve traffic flow at both junctions, leading to smoother movement across the local road network.

Traffic queue GPS data from TomTom shows that, for a typical weekday:

- In the morning peak, queues can stretch up to 60 metres on Smallway and 200 metres on Bristol Road.
- In the afternoon-to-evening peak, queues extend between 700 metres and 900 metres on Smallway, and between 400 metres and 1200 metres on Bristol Road.
- The heaviest traffic periods are typically between 8am and 9am and 4pm and 5pm for both northbound traffic towards Bristol and southbound traffic towards Weston.

What are the changes planned for the Smallway junction?

The planned improvements to the A370 Smallway junction aim to address current traffic congestion, enhance safety, and create a more accessible and sustainable transport network. The following changes will support these objectives and provide a more efficient solution for all road users, including motorists, pedestrians, cyclists, and public transport passengers. They include:

- extending and widening the left-hand lane to Yatton, on the A370 from the Weston-super-Mare direction, to help increase road capacity at the junction
- helping address safety concerns by bringing the stop line heading towards Weston-super-Mare further forward, to encourage better vehicle positioning and adding new traffic signal crossings at the junction
- adding traffic lights on all arms of the junction, including on the left hand and right hand turns to Yatton off the A370, to support more efficient and controlled traffic movements



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- closing the east side of the Smallway crossroads to all traffic from the A370 Bristol Road, creating a small pedestrian-friendly area which allows for a more accessible crossing point for pedestrians, cyclists and mobility users. This would also improve the safety and efficiency of the A370 at this location
- extending the existing, full-time bus lane with bus priority signals, on the approach to the Smallway junction from the Bristol direction, supporting current and future bus services. Current services standing to benefit from this change are the X1, X5, A3 services and WESTlink
- widening, lengthening and improving the western footway on the A370, making it more accessible, while removing the eastern footway between Smallway and Kent Road, which has less footfall, to make this possible
- resurfacing the roads directly affected by the improvements as part of the works, meaning that the Council can extend vital Highways maintenance budgets to address needs of as many areas as possible.

Engagement on the junction changes

The new A370 Smallway junction design has been developed to bring about the greatest possible benefit, within the physical limits of the A370 Smallway junction location. The scope of the design is restricted by the physical Highway boundary, utilities, and the drainage system, and the budget that is available for improvements.

Discussions with community representatives

Early conversations with community representatives on improving the Smallway crossroads began in 2023. The plans reflect changes requested through those discussions, including:

- adding new crossings to the junction to improve pedestrian and cyclist access
- bringing a stop line further forward to encourage better vehicle positioning
- improving pedestrian access where currently there is no footway by creating a new footpath on the east side of the Smallway road
- keeping the footpath on the western side of the A370 between Smallway and Kent Road, allowing it to be widened and lengthened, while removing the narrower eastern footpath.



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Feedback from local people

We invited residents to comment on specific elements of the planned design, through:

- A three-week online SNAP survey, which ran from Monday 11 November to Wednesday 3 December 2024. Paper copies of the survey were available on request. The survey was completed by 163 respondents.
- A public information event in Congresbury on Thursday 21 November 2024. The event was fully booked and 94 members of the public attended on the night. The format of the event was a design presentation, followed by an informative question-and-answer session with officers.

Survey overview

- The public survey opened on Monday 11 November and closed at midnight on Wednesday 3 December 2024. There were 163 survey respondents in total. All but one of the survey questions were quantitative (numeric), with one qualitative (free text) question.
- A thematic analysis was conducted on the open text responses, to understand the common themes across the responses.
- During the survey period, we also received 12 emails with feedback. We included these emails in our analysis of the free text responses.

An important note on the survey

The survey data should be considered alongside detailed technical analysis, monitoring, and data collected from the scheme location. This broader set of information will guide the next steps for the project, ensuring that decisions are informed by a comprehensive understanding of the benefits and the most appropriate approach for the area.

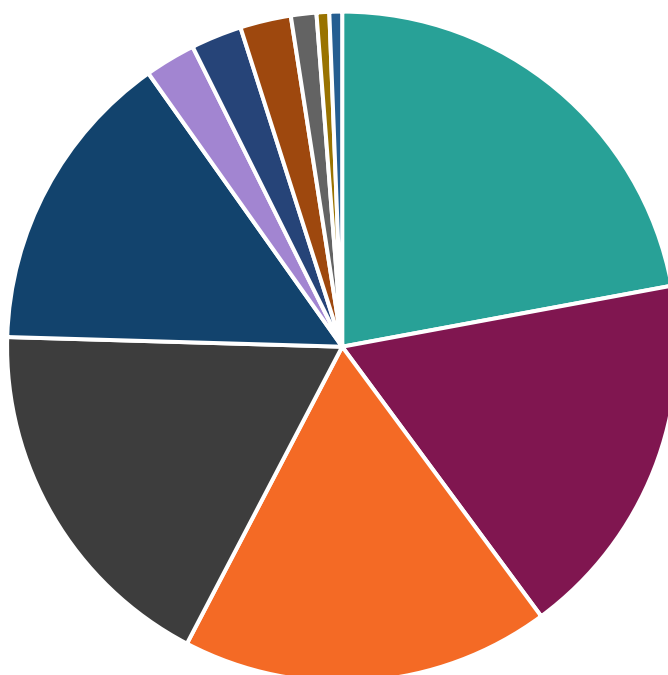
The survey was designed to gather practical, local feedback on the proposed redesign of the junction. It was based on a self-selecting sample of participants, rather than a demographically representative sample. As such, the results reflect the views of those who chose to participate and may not represent the entire population or all road users in the area. Not all participants answered every question, which may also influence the interpretation of the feedback.

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While the survey offers valuable insights, it is one of many sources used to inform the design and decision-making process, and it will be considered alongside other technical data and assessments to inform the scheme's next steps.

Question: Please select where you live from the list below (163 respondents)

- South Congresbury (36 people)
- North Congresbury (29 people)
- On or near Smallway East towards Kent Road (29 people)
- Yatton (29 people)
- Somewhere else in North Somerset (24 people)
- On or near Smallway West (4 people)
- Claverham (4 people)
- Prefer not to say (4 people)
- Live in Cleeve (2 people)
- I do not live in any of the places stated (1 person)
- Did not answer (1 person)



Question: What type of road user are you? (Multiple choice, 163 respondents)

- Motorist – selected by 159 respondents
- Pedestrian – selected by 98 respondents
- Public transport user – selected by 64 respondents
- Cyclist – selected by 50 respondents
- Motorcyclist – selected by 8 respondents

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- Other (hospital transport, dog owner/walker, runner) – selected by 3 respondents
- Mobility user – selected by 1 respondent
- Question left blank – selected by 1 respondent.

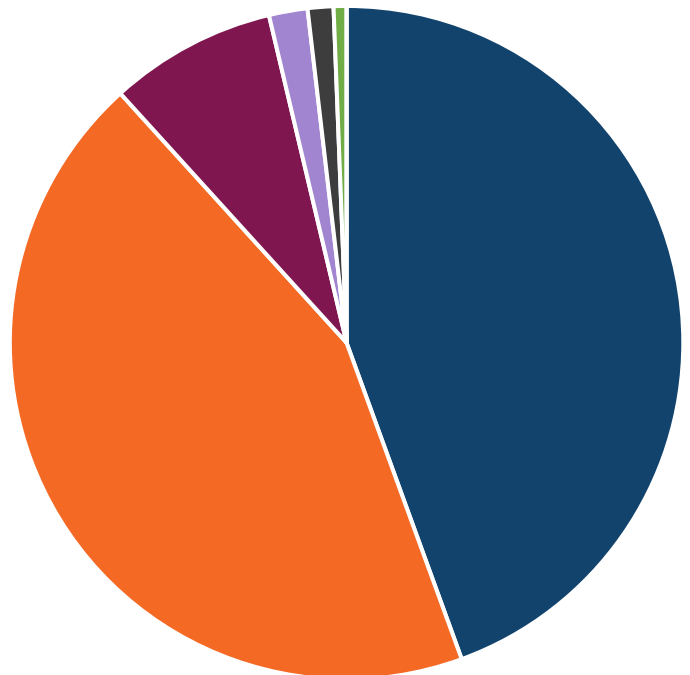
Question: Do you use the A370 Smallway junction? (162 respondents)

162 respondents answered this question – all said 'Yes'.

Question: How often do you use the A370 Smallway junction? (162 respondents)

Choose the option which most closely reflects when you use the junction:

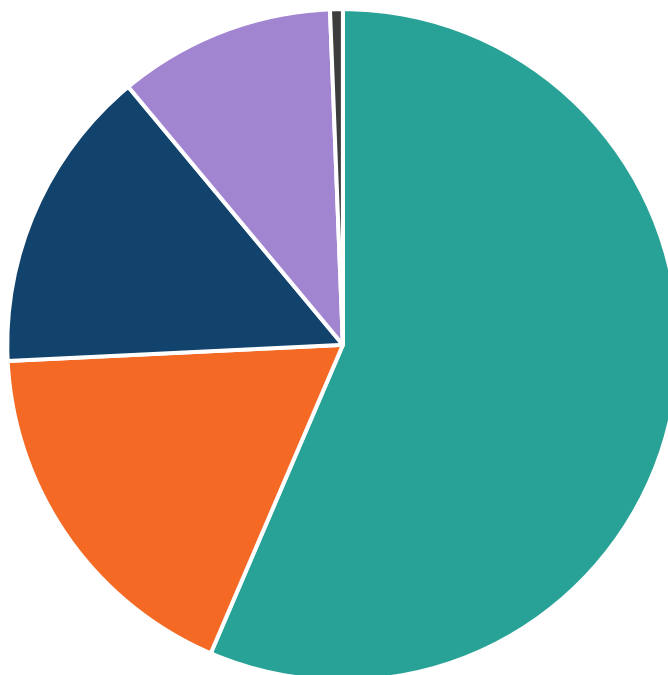
- Daily (72 people)
- Several times a week (71 people)
- A few times a month (13 people)
- Once a week (3 people)
- A few times a year (2 people)
- Once a month (1 person)
- Rarely (0 respondents)



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Question: When do you typically use the A370 Smallway junction? (163 respondents)

- Both peak and off-peak hours (92 people)
- Varies (no specific pattern) (29 people)
- During off-peak hours (outside of weekday peak hours) (24 people)
- During peak hours (17 people)
- Didn't answer (1 person)



Question: When you use the A370 Smallway junction, where are you usually travelling to? (163 respondents)

Those answering 'Other' went on to expand on their answer and explain that they had a mixture of destinations and travel patterns, including:

- nearby towns: Nailsea, Yatton, Wrington, Clevedon, and Langford
- major hubs: Bristol, Weston-super-Mare, and Bristol Airport
- longer journeys: to the M5, Midlands, Leeds, and Cornwall
- regular use for accessing major roads and regional connections
- travel in all directions, depending on the situation
- some specifically pointed out two-way travel, e.g. between Yatton and Bristol
- geographic spread: destinations ranged from local North Somerset areas to regions such as the Mendips, Southlands Way, and Wales.



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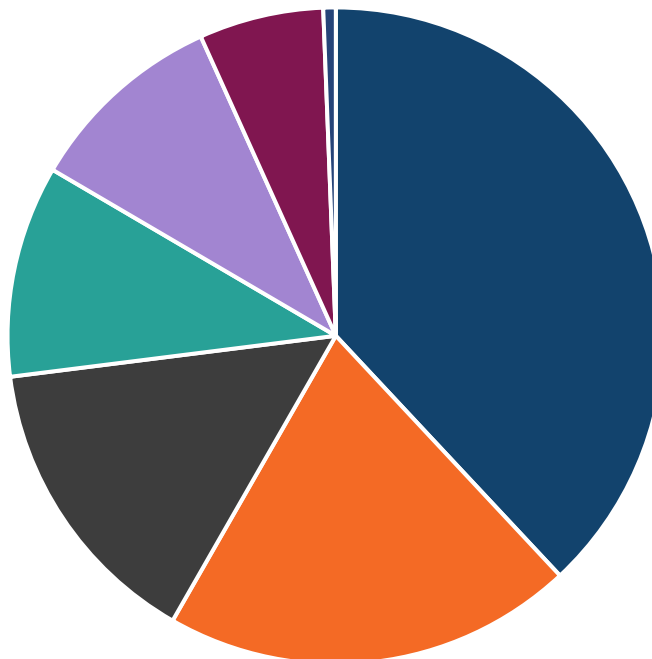
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- Yatton (62 people)
- Other (33 people)
- Weston-super-Mare (24 people)
- North Congresbury (17 people)
- Bristol (16 people)
- South Congresbury (10 people)
- Didn't answer (1 person)



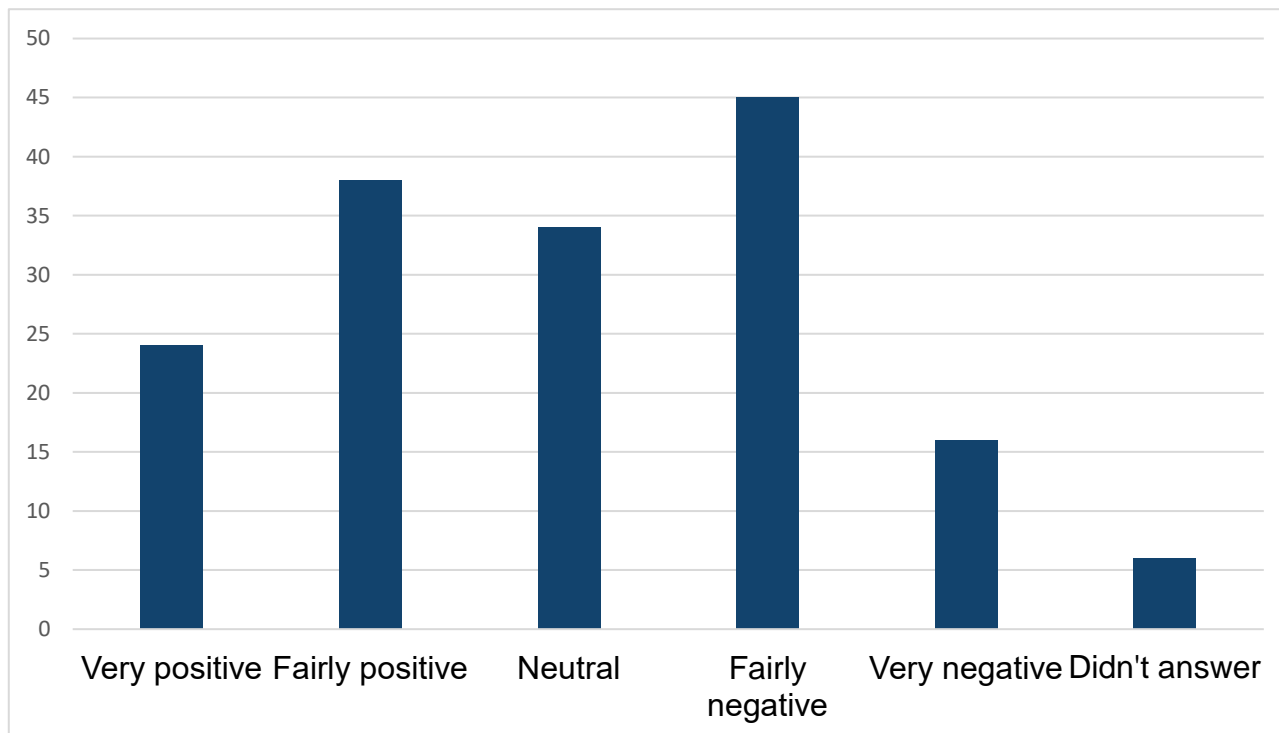
Question: How would you rate your overall experience using the Smallway junction in its current form? (163 respondents)

The experience ratings are evenly split:

- 38% of respondents rated their experience of the current junction as 'fairly positive' or 'very positive'
- 38% of respondents rated their experience as 'fairly negative' or 'very negative'
- 21% of respondents felt 'neutral' about their experience

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- The largest single proportion of respondents said their experience was 'fairly negative', with 45 respondents (28% of overall respondents).



Question: Do you have any specific comments or concerns regarding the NEW design of the Smallway junction?

158 respondents answered this question, of which 136 answered 'Yes'.

Question: Which specific features of the new design proposals would you like to comment on? Please select all that apply. (Multiple choice, 138 respondents)

- Extending the full-time bus lane with bus-priority signals on the approach to the Smallway junction from Bristol – selected by **41 respondents**
- Extending the left-hand lane on the A370 (from the Bristol direction) to increase road capacity – selected by **35 respondents**
- None of these – selected by **35 respondents**



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- Closing the east side of the Smallway crossroads to create a pedestrian-friendly area to allow for the creation of a more accessible crossing point for pedestrians, cyclists, and mobility users – selected by **26 respondents**
- Didn't answer – selected by **25 respondents**
- Adding a new footpath from Smallway East to the footpath on Kent Road – selected by **18 respondents**
- Making lane layouts the same on both A370 approaches, including moving the stop line towards Weston-super-Mare forward, to improve safety and add traffic signal crossings for pedestrians and cyclists – selected by **17 respondents**.

Analysis of free-text survey responses and emails

Question: Please use the box below to share any specific comments or concerns about the new junction design. (143 respondents)

We undertook a thematic analysis of the free-text responses to understand the prominent themes across the survey comments, alongside 12 emails received about the plans during the survey period.

The feedback regarding the new A370 Smallway junction design revealed a range of concerns and suggestions from local residents. The top seven themes were:

- 1. Concerns about extending the existing bus lane:** some participants suggested the longer lane would negatively impact general traffic congestion. Questions were also raised about bus lane enforcement, and whether the lane could be part time.
- 2. Closing the Smallway East arm and the effect on Kent Road:** people questioned the suitability of additional drivers and pedestrians using Kent Road, over having direct access to Smallway East from the A370. Others shared concerns over parking and accessibility for larger vehicles.
- 3. Safety concerns:** varied safety concerns were expressed in relation to the existing junction layout, and how the planned design would address these, referencing accidents at the current junction. Several commenters asked for a dedicated traffic light for the A370 right turn to Yatton, to prevent collisions with traffic heading towards Bristol.

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4. Design effectiveness: some participants queried how the design would benefit the area in light of congestion elsewhere on the road network.

5. Pedestrian or cyclist crossings or access: some questions were raised about changes and improvements within the new design, such as plans to remove the eastern footpath on the A370, allowing for a longer, widened, more accessible footpath on the western side.

6. Traffic light timings and synchronicity: Some people felt improving traffic light timings and synchronicity at the junction, and in the wider area, would help local congestion. Several respondents commented on the need for a right-hand turn signal for the A370 turn to Yatton.

7. Flooding and drainage: Some respondents asked how flooding and drainage would be managed under the new design, and how the new design would impact it.

Next steps and actions for the A370 Smallway scheme

We are grateful to everyone who gave feedback on the planned changes to the A370 Smallway junction through the survey, direct correspondence and the information event.

Many of the key themes raised through the comments are addressed by the new layout.

This includes changes that will make the junction more efficient, effective, and safer, by:

- **adding traffic signals on all arms of the junction** – including on the right-hand turn to Yatton, helping to minimise risky driver behaviour. This means traffic in all directions would be controlled by traffic lights. These lights would be linked with other nearby traffic lights, such as at Wood Hill, and the High Street, Bristol Road junction. The traffic light technology would also be upgraded with the capability to sense bus locations using GPS.
- **closing the A370 entrance to Smallway East** – which will help traffic to flow through more efficiently on the A370, and at the junction, by reducing the number of movements in all directions. Simplifying the number of directions people can take will also make the junction safer. It means we can improve the crossing points and a major A370 footpath for pedestrians, cyclists and mobility users. The Smallway concept design has also been successfully tested for large vehicle access and turning in the Sheppy's Mill area, tracking an 11.2m-long refuse vehicle. Accessibility would be tested further in a more detailed design phase, following approval of the scheme.

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- **extending and widening the left-hand lane to Yatton**, on the A370 from Weston-super-Mare, would help create more road space at the junction, helping traffic to flow more efficiently through it.
- **working together with Wood Hill as the sister junction** to ease congestion and improve flow by allowing traffic to disperse better across the road network.
- **helping address safety concerns**. As well as introducing traffic lights on all arms of the junction to control traffic, yellow box junctions would be repainted as needed to support movements between Kent Road and the A370. Bringing the stop line heading towards Weston-super-Mare further forward would encourage better vehicle positioning. Vegetation would be cleared to improve visibility and lines of sight. Speed limits will also be considered in the preliminary design process if the scheme is approved for construction.
- **improving pedestrian crossings and access** – by removing the footpath on the lesser-used eastern side of the A370, we can improve, lengthen and widen the western footpath, making it more accessible. Adding a new crossing with traffic lights will give a clear pedestrian crossing across the A370. New signage at the junction, such as fingerposts, will help signpost pedestrians, cyclists and mobility users to appropriate routes. Kent Road offers a quieter alternative for pedestrians walking from north to south than the A370.
- **updating the bus stop layby near the south Kent Road / A370 junction** – if the scheme is approved for construction, we will look at this bus stop to see how we can change the layout, so buses can pull in more effectively, and avoid holding up traffic.
- **improving drainage** – if the scheme is approved, the drainage system would be surveyed to understand any issues to resolve. We would also add new gullies on both sides of the road, to help with surface water run-off.

Other feedback themes raised, such as around the most appropriate and effective positioning of the bus lane, and parking in Smallway East and Kent Road, will be tested further if the design is approved to proceed to construction.

We continue to work through comments and local insights alongside technical testing and surveys to understand the issues raised and consider all the information available to us.



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Scheme approval process

Council approvals for BSIP schemes are completed in two stages.

The first approval stage is in consultation with the BSIP Formal Board and Executive Member, and the final approval is an Executive Member Decision. This happens before a scheme is approved to proceed to be built. The anticipated date of the Executive Member decision will be published in the Council's Forward Plan.

The decision to approve the A370 Smallway junction scheme will not be made before March 2025.

If an Executive Member decision is taken to approve a scheme to be built, a legal Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) will then be published to legally advertise changes to the highway. This takes place around 12 weeks before any works are due to begin. The TRO period is a further and final opportunity for residents to submit any formal comments.

What is the Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP)?

- The BSIP is a UK Government-funded, time limited programme aimed at creating more reliable, frequent and affordable bus services for residents in North Somerset.
- It covers a wide-ranging package of improvements, designed to work together, to improve traffic flow and the bus travel experience along key routes and locations.
- With better buses, more people can travel affordably, accessibly and sustainably to work, loved ones and services, and stay connected. It means less pressure on our roads, better use of public space, a cleaner environment – and that these vital services are protected for North Somerset.
- The BSIP includes:
 - Extra bus services and routes paid for by BSIP
 - New and improved crossings for pedestrians, cyclists and mobility users
 - New bus lanes and smart traffic signals along the A38, A370, A369, and in Weston-super-Mare
 - New transport hubs in communities offering features such as secure cycle parking, displays, EV charging and other facilities
 - Cheaper fares, such as the national fare cap and free travel for care leavers
 - A state-of-the-art, all-electric bus fleet, making sustainable travel available to all



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- An updated modern bus stop and shelter network, with new *WEST* branding
- Resurfacing roads and junctions in schemes, helping to save money.

Better buses benefit everyone because:

- Many of our BSIP projects include changes that benefit all road users, such as by increasing or making better use of road capacity, and that help encourage healthier ways to travel, like walking and cycling.
- Our population in North Somerset is growing – and is expected to keep growing at a rate above the national average.
- At the same time, a whopping 43% of our carbon emissions in North Somerset come from transport, at a time in our history when we need to reduce how much carbon is used to get from A to B.
- We also have a [higher-than-average amount of people](#) in North Somerset aged over 65, over 75, over 85, and over 90 years old, compared with regional and national averages, who may wish and need to depend on public transport.
- Encouraging more people onto public transport results in less pressure on our roads, less congestion and less impact on the environment and air quality.
- We want to keep our buses and reduce services being cut, like the loss of a quarter of North Somerset's bus network in 2022 by bus operators. Encouraging more people onto public transport keeps services running and continuing to offer vital lifelines for communities.
- Current BSIP funding offers investment opportunities to protect, enhance and modernise our public transport, road network and public travel in North Somerset.

Learn more at: www.n-somerset.gov.uk/bsip



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