

Subject: **North Somerset Council Core Strategy EiP - Position Statement**

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Introduction

During the Inquiry, North Somerset Council submitted a Highways Technical Note (Doc ref CTRAES062/TN1 Rev1) relating to a Junction 21 Bypass. Having now digested the contents of the note, we would like to respond on behalf of Mead Realisations. At the time of writing this note we had hoped the LPA would provide the following requested documents which underpin their conclusions (see list below), however, this information had not been provided.

- Background modelling reports for the VISSIM model.
- Details of the traffic demand / distribution assumptions used in the modelling.
- A copy of the June 2011 Technical Note referenced in the latest document.
- Background modelling reports for the SATURN model, explaining model set up and calibration.

This note therefore sets out our position with regard to work that has been completed by Mead Realisations. It explains the benefits and importance of planning for a bypass now to ensure it is able to capture private sector funding through new development. It is also confirmed that the bypass is situated on deliverable land and would not require any lengthy CPO process.

Need for the M5 Junction 21 Bypass

The provision of the Bypass is necessary because extensive traffic modelling of the local and strategic (M5 J21) networks using ARCADY and LinSig3 has been undertaken which supports the premise that the Major Scheme Bid (MSB) is likely to initially address current problems but cannot accommodate significant levels of development traffic over and above that which currently exists on the surrounding highway network. The substantial traffic generations associated with current planning proposals and recent consents on the edge of the town will therefore re-create the existing congestion and delay, precluding the Council from achieving its economic and physical growth aspirations.

Genuine Benefits of a Bypass

The work completed for Mead Realisations has established three clear benefits that follow:

- Enhance the viability of public transport provision across the M5.
- Significantly reduce congestion on the M5 Junction 21, the A370 and reduce vehicle mileage.
- The proposed location of a Park & Ride site at a strategic location adjacent to M5 J21 would deliver the opportunity for public transport vehicles to bypass traffic delays at the junction and into Weston-super-Mare.

Review of Halcrow Technical Note – M5 J21 Bypass: VISSIM Analysis

Our concerns about the Technical Note provided by North Somerset Council are:

- It is not the sole aim of the bypass to 'address current congestion problems on the A370 Somerset Avenue approach [to M5 J21] from Weston-super-Mare' (para 1.1) – rather, the aim is to provide overall relief to J21. The Halcrow Tech Note makes only a passing reference to scheme effects on the M5 slip-roads.
- It is unclear which traffic movements NSC / Halcrow have assigned via the bypass.
- It is not clear whether the latest version of the Highways Agency VISSIM model has been used, or whether it has been developed in line with the recommendations of Department for Transport guidance.
- 2010 and 2026 traffic volumes have been tested. As with the other modelling undertaken by NSC, in which only 2010 and 2026 scenarios are understood to have been modelled, the modelling cannot therefore quantify that the bypass is needed more urgently than in 2026. This is a significant limitation of NSC's work.
- In reviewing the limited data which is reported within the Technical Note, it is apparent that the bypass results in 2010 AM conditions which are significantly better than the Base scenario, not '*marginally better*'

(para 2.2).The same comment applies to para 2.4, which does not appear to correlate with Table 2.1. Furthermore, the bypass reduces journey times in comparison with the Weston Package (WP) option.

- On Somerset Avenue, by 2026 the WP + additional measures (2A) option (WP + 2A) performs worse in terms of queuing than the WP option in isolation. In general, the WP + Bypass option performs better than both of the above on this link.
- B3440 queuing performance is less clear and clarifications will be required in terms of the modelled impact of the Bypass on this link.
- It is apparent (para 3.2) that the bypass link has not been included in the VISSIM model; rather, assumptions have been made as to the likely change in traffic patterns.
- No assessment has been made of network performance in the PM peak hour.