

Information

Sheet Number:
2013-17/182

for County Councillors

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| From: | Sunita Mills Service Manager Transport Policy |
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| Date: | 12 October 2015 |
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| To: | All County Councillors |
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A303 / A358 Traffic Surveys

Highways England (HE) has notified SCC of their intention to carry out traffic surveys in Somerset in the form of roadside interviews between 13 October and 20 October. The press release for the survey work can be found here - <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/traffic-surveys-taking-place-on-south-west-main-roads>. The dates and locations of the surveys are –

| Survey Location | Date | Direction of traffic |
|--|----------------------|----------------------|
| A303 between A37 and Higher Farm Lane (Podimore) | Tuesday 13 October | Eastbound |
| A37 between A372 and Tout Lane | Tuesday 13 October | Northbound |
| A359 between Sparkford Hill and A303 | Wednesday 14 October | Northbound |
| A303 west of Parish Hill | Wednesday 14 October | Westbound |
| A303 west of Horton Cross | Thursday 15 October | Eastbound |
| A303 west of Horton Cross | Thursday 15 October | Westbound |
| A358 East of West Hatch Lane | Tuesday 20 October | Eastbound |
| A358 west West Hatch Lane | Tuesday 20 October | Westbound |

The purpose of the surveys is to collect accurate information about travel patterns along the routes; this will be used to develop a mathematical model of the traffic. HE will then be able to test and compare the various options they are developing for improving the routes. This information will be used to progress the Development Consent Order and allow the design and consultation of the road improvement schemes to take place in the next two to three years.

SCC worked with other authorities in the South West to lobby government to deliver the road improvements on the A303 and A358 for the benefit of the region; these surveys are an essential part of delivering the infrastructure. It is not in SCC's interest to encourage people to avoid the surveys as this can skew the data that is collected which in turn may have an impact on the design of the scheme.

An update report on the A303 / A358 improvements was presented to Scrutiny Committee on 29 September and can be found here - <http://www1.somerset.gov.uk/council/board43%20scrutiny%20place/2015%20Sept%2022%20-%20Item%205%20A303%20Update.pdf>

Roadside interviews are a form of survey where vehicles are required (by police) to stop in a survey bay. The survey team then carries out a short interview with the driver before the police allow the vehicle to return to the road. It is not mandatory for the driver to answer the questions but they must follow the police instructions.

The nature of this survey method means that it can be disruptive to the traffic and frequently causes complaints from residents who have been delayed on their journeys. It is understandable that the impact of these surveys will frustrate some road users however they are the most accurate way of obtaining the data needed to progress the road improvement schemes that will be of great benefit to Somerset in the future.

All queries or complaints from the public should be directed at Highways England's customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

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