

## St Mary's junction improvement scheme

### FAQs

#### **What is this scheme all about?**

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government has made available £9.6 million of transport infrastructure funding to the council supplementing development contributions. This will allow the early delivery of strategic junction improvements in and around Newport which will enable the delivery of new homes and boost economic productivity on the Island. This phase of the package of strategic improvements involves significant works to St Mary's junction in Newport to improve the junction for motorists, local bus traffic, cyclists and pedestrians.

#### **What are the strategic junction improvements?**

The St Mary's improvement is one of a package of strategic junction schemes developed to help accommodate additional traffic predicted to be generated until the end of the local plan period in 2034 see [here](#) That package includes improvements at:

- Shide, St Georges Way and at the exit to Morrisons / M&S which have already been delivered (shown in green on the map);
- St Mary's and between Coppins Bride and St Georges Way / St Georges Approach which have been approved for implementation (shown in orange); and
- St James Street / Hunnycross Way, Riverway slip to Medina Way and approach to Coppins Bridge which are to be designed (shown in red).

#### **Why is this work necessary?**

With regeneration plans for Newport and the Medina Valley, vehicle numbers are predicted to increase, and traffic modelling has demonstrated that improvements are required on the main routes through Newport to avoid congestion and delays for road users.

#### **How long will the work take?**

A start date of 30 September 2019 has been agreed, with an estimated completion of mid-December 2020.

#### **Why is the work scheduled to take so long?**

This is a significant road improvement scheme on one of the busiest junctions on the Isle of Wight. If the road was closed to all traffic then the work could be completed more quickly, but it is vital to maintain access in and out of Newport from the Cowes and West Wight directions, as well as access to the hospital, industrial estate and nearby prison. In order to keep the junction and its approaches open to road users the works need to be carefully phased and this extends the duration of the scheme.

#### **How have you decided that this is the best scheme to do?**

The council appointed traffic engineering consultants Mott MacDonald to assess the strategic road network and determine what improvements would be necessary to accommodate predicted increases in traffic up to the end of the local plan period in 2034. Mott MacDonald recommended a package of junction improvements among which, one such improvement, was the scheme proposed at St Mary's. Island Roads refined the feasibility design which was reviewed by independent consultants WYG and was subject to public consultation in January and February 2018. The public

consultation generated 97 representations which informed a number of modifications and a revised scheme was approved for implementation by the council's cabinet in September 2018. Subsequently the scheme has been peer reviewed by Hampshire County Council to make absolutely sure that this is the most appropriate improvement for this junction given the predicted increase in traffic movements. That confirmed the previous findings and instruction has now been given to Island Roads to implement the project.

**What parts of the scheme have changed as a result of public consultation?**

The plans have evolved over time with a significant number of changes being incorporated following feedback from the public consultation. The signal-controlled junction is one such major change together with improvements to the B&Q roundabout and enhanced cycle and pedestrian links. Since then the proposed scheme has also undergone a further independent, external review just to be absolutely certain that this scheme presents the best possible approach to the improvement of that key junction.

**Why didn't it start last year when the council made the decision to implement the scheme?**

The council wanted to ensure that the scheme was the optimal solution and therefore commissioned an external review of the scheme by independent highways experts. This review was completed with minor changes to the scheme.

At the same time Southern Electric indicated that they wanted to undertake major cabling replacement works in Forest Road. In order to minimise future disruption, the scheme has also been adjusted to incorporate these works to take advantage of road/lane closures.

The junction improvement scheme is due to start on 30 September 2019.

**What will happen to bus services during the works?**

Bus routes will be maintained where possible throughout the scheme. We will be working closely with Southern Vectis so that they have time to plan any potential temporary route changes and share these with their customers. For information visit [www.islandbuses.info](http://www.islandbuses.info).

When completed, the new road layout will improve access for buses, including a dedicated bus lane turning into Hunnyhill.

**Will I still be able to get to the hospital?**

Yes. Access to the hospital will be maintained at all times, although as a scheme of this scale cannot be completed without disruption, we would advise those needing to visit the hospital to allow more time for their journeys during the works.

We have and will continue to liaise closely with the hospital to limit the impact of the scheme where possible. Access for blue light services will be maintained throughout the scheme.

**Will access into the industrial estate be maintained during the junction works?**

Yes. Access will be maintained to the industrial estate from St Mary's junction and the southern end of the industrial estate via Riverway. During the works double yellow lines will also be put in place on the main route through the Riverway Estate and Manners View to assist the flow of traffic through the area.

**What will happen to the shrubs/trees inside the junction improvement scheme area?**

It is necessary to remove some of the existing trees and vegetation to accommodate the new junction improvement scheme, but in developing the new scheme we have tried to keep this to a minimum.

Much of the vegetation within the scheme site has self-seeded over time and grown in a sporadic manner making it unsuitable for replanting, however wherever possible any vegetation removed will be mulched and recycled to create compost that can then be re-used. Any wood that can be reused from trees removed from the site will also be recycled.

Our planting scheme is being developed but we will be looking to replace indigenous trees and vegetation on a like for like basis as far as it is reasonably practical to do so, while continuing to ensure road users' safety within the new scheme area. Any planting would take place in the autumn of 2020, outside of the bird-nesting season.

**Will emergency vehicles be able to get through?**

Yes. Access will be maintained for blue light services at all times. Island Roads will continue to work closely with the emergency services to keep them informed as the junction improvement scheme progresses and have made specific provision for those services within our traffic management plans.

**What will happen to waste collections during the works?**

Domestic waste collections should be largely unaffected by the work, however we will continue to work closely with Amey throughout the scheme so that they can inform residents of any changes to collections in good time, should they be needed.

**Will I still be able to use the underpass to get between Hunnyhill and the IW College site?**

Yes. The underpass will be unaffected by the works and will remain open throughout.

**Will you be adding improved facilities for cyclists?**

Yes. The new junction will provide improved access for cyclists with shared use cycle lanes to provide better connectivity between existing cycle routes in the area.

**Will the scheme bring any improvements for pedestrians?**

Yes. The new scheme will include more pedestrian crossings and wider footways.

**Can I access local businesses located near the junction improvement scheme?**

Yes. Access to businesses will be maintained throughout, although sometimes it may be necessary to put local diversions in place. These will be well signposted, and we will continue to work closely with local businesses throughout the scheme so they can update their customers as necessary as the works progress.

**How do I find out more information?**

A dedicated web page for the scheme can be found on the council's website at [www.iwight.com](http://www.iwight.com) and also on Island Roads website [www.islandroads.com](http://www.islandroads.com)

### **Won't traffic lights slow down the flow of traffic?**

At the current roundabout all traffic must pause at the existing give way lines to check that there is no circulating traffic. At traffic lights a large platoon of vehicles will be able to move safely and freely through the junction when the lights are green. This will also provide fairer access through the junction from all approaches. While this may introduce minor delays when traffic flows are light, it will improve traffic flow at this busy junction at peak times.

### **Why isn't work being done at night?**

Some of the work will be done overnight, however due to the nature of the work being carried out it will not be safe to operate some of the machinery overnight.

### **What happens if traffic lights break at this junction in the future?**

In the unlikely event that traffic lights fail at this junction, the council will have a maintenance contract in place providing a rapid response to manage traffic until the traffic lights can be restored.

### **How is the scheme funded?**

The scheme is being funded as part of a £9.6 million grant from the government's transport infrastructure fund, supplementing development contributions, to enable the council to deliver strategic junction improvements in and around Newport. The council has developed the scheme and contracted Island Roads to carry out the work on its behalf.

### **Why is the money not being spent on improvements to Coppins Bridge?**

Options for direct improvements to the Coppins Bridge interchange are very limited. The particular constraints make any significant scheme, such as a flyover, impractical and only very minor interventions to improve lane discipline and destination signing are proposed at the gyratory. As a consequence, the wider package of improvements is focused to reduce delay and disruption elsewhere on the routes through Newport. Whilst a number of those have already been implemented at Shide and along St Georges Way, the details of the remaining elements remain to be finalised but are likely to include: widening the link between St Georges Way / St Georges Approach and Coppins Bridge; signalling the southbound slip from Riverway To Medina Way and providing a dedicated right turn lane between St James Street and Hunnycross Way.

### **What is the point of making it easier for traffic to get through the St Mary's junction if it still gets held up at Coppins Bridge?**

The St Mary's junction improvement scheme is about improving traffic flow in all directions, not just about traffic flow towards Coppins Bridge. The scheme has an important role to play in traffic movement in and out of Forest Road, Hunnyhill and Dodnor Way. The wider programme of improvements seeks to resolve delays across the network focusing on main routes in and around Newport.

### **The current roundabout works ok so why do we need to change it?**

The current roundabout already presents difficulties for vehicles joining the main route at peak times. This scheme is designed to address this and to improve public transport and cycling links across the busy junction as well as enabling it to cope with the projected increases in vehicle movements over the coming years due to regeneration schemes in Newport and the Medina Valley.

**Will the scheme create any new jobs or work for Island businesses?**

Yes. The scheme will create additional work for local supply chain partners and contractors over the duration of the scheme.

**How will people find out what's happening and when?**

A dedicated web page about the scheme will be updated regularly. Local residents and businesses will also receive updates on progress at each stage of the scheme. Information will also be shared via social media via the council's Facebook and Twitter pages.

**In light of the Covid-19 pandemic are you able to continue with this scheme?**

We are continuing to work with our contractors on the St Mary's Junction Improvement scheme in line with current government advice to keep construction sites progressing where possible. We are also mindful of the impact the project has, under usual circumstances, on many people's journeys every day and so we are keen to continue to deliver this in line with the agreed timetable. We have undertaken risk assessments and put in place the necessary measures to ensure we can continue to deliver this scheme safely and in line with Government guidance. Please visit our website for further details <https://islandroads.com/covid-19/>