

Junction 26 and A38 Chelston Link Road to reopen ahead of schedule

A £5.7 million Somerset Council scheme to replace a deteriorating 51-year-old concrete road is progressing well with Junction 26 and the A38 Chelston Link Road now planned to reopen ahead of schedule.

All slip roads at Junction 26, the roundabout and the A38 link road from the motorway to the Chelston roundabout are set to reopen overnight on Saturday 6 September to Sunday 7 September.

The early reopening has been made possible by a combination of overnight and extended working and use of innovative techniques. The project team prioritised work which would enable the road to reopen as soon as possible. Works will continue during September but will be completed after the closure has been lifted.

Cllr Richard Wilkins, Somerset Council's Lead Member for Transport and Waste Services, said: "We pledged to do everything in our power to keep disruption to a minimum and it is fantastic news that the A38 and motorway junction will reopen well ahead of schedule.

"We appreciate this has been a hugely challenging project to deliver and we are very grateful to local communities, businesses and the travelling public for their patience.

"Thanks also to our project team and contractors Heidelberg Materials for their hard work. I am proud of their efforts to deliver these long overdue improvements much earlier than planned.

"It means the government funding we worked so hard to secure has been put to good use and we can all benefit from a smoother, quieter road surface with improved drainage for years to come."

Jonathan Hill, National Highways Route Manager, said: "It's good to see Somerset Council and their teams deliver this significant road improvement scheme ahead of schedule.

"As the Chelston Link Road scheme necessitated the closure of the Junction 26 slip roads, we've worked closely with the council over the last few years during planning for these works to ensure the impact on our roads and our road users was minimised as far as possible. We're grateful to drivers for their patience during the programme of work."

The refurbishment of Junction 26 of the M5 along with the A38 Chelston link road, which were built in 1974, was entirely funded by Government grants.

- For the A38 link road, the council's contractor Heidelberg Materials used an innovative technique known as rubblization to break up the existing concrete road surface using heavy machinery. Instead of removing 7,300 tonnes of

concrete from site, the materials were retained and recycled as sub-base for the new road.

- This modern recycling method, often used on airport runways, saved 200 tonnes in carbon and around 1,130 lorry movements, compared to traditional road construction methods. This was achieved by removing the need to export waste material and quarry and import new stone – better for the environment, but also enabling work to be completed faster.
- Rubblization could not be used on the J26 roundabout due to the height of the overhead bridges, so for this section an entire excavation of more than one metre in depth was required in order to build the new surface.
- Other programme optimisations included the use of asphalt kerbs in this scheme instead of traditional methods which take longer to install.
- The project included works to create a whole new drainage system which will reduce the risk of flooding and will also be easier to access for future maintenance.
- The window and timescale for the work was agreed with National Highways and dictated by forthcoming M5 works, alongside the need to allow National Highways to access its gritting depot off the Chelston Link Road during winter.
- To minimise disruption to road users, partner organisations National Grid and National Highways took advantage of the closures to carry essential improvement works which would have otherwise required traffic management.

You can report a problem quickly and easily by visiting [Report a problem on the road.](#)

Follow @Travelsomerset on [Facebook](#) and [X](#) for travel updates and news.