

NATIONAL HIGHWAYS UPDATE TO CORONER (JUNE 2024)

THIS FURTHER RESPONSE IS BEING SENT TO:

The Assistant Coroner for the coroner area of Milton Keynes, Dr Sean Cummings, of Civic Offices, 1 Saxon Gate East, Milton Keynes MK9 3EJ to provide an update of the actions National Highways has taken and intends to take as committed to in our Regulation 29 response dated 14 February 2024 following the 'Regulation 28 Report to Prevent Future Deaths' issued before an inquest into the death of Amal Mohamed Ahmed.

1 DETAILS OF FURTHER ACTIONS TAKEN (since National Highways Regulation 29 response, dated 14 February 2024)

Additional temporary signing has been put in place at the exit point of the A5 off slip at the Little Brickhill junction in the form of two large 1200mm 'No Entry' signs on A-frames on each side of the carriageway (Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions (TSRGD), Diagram 616 *No entry for vehicular traffic*). These signs are intended to provide mitigation against further wrong way driving incidents while a full safety review of the junction has been undertaken.



Image 1 – Additional No-Entry signs installed on 07/12/2023. Existing fixed signs remained unchanged.

Interference with signs:

Following a site inspection on 24 April 2024, it was observed that the offside fixed (permanent) No-Entry sign had been rotated to face westwards (facing the Little Brickhill approach). This alteration had not been instructed or carried out by National Highways.

The result of this change meant neither of the fixed No-Entry signs were visible to drivers approaching the junction from the east (Woburn approach). To remedy this, the nearside sign was rotated to face westwards, see images below.



Image 1 - Offside sign rotated (by unknown party/person(s)) – 24/04/2024



Image 2 - nearside sign rotated to the correct position on 26/04/2024



Image 3 - Offside sign before rotated – 07/12/2023



Image 4 - Offside sign after being rotated – 24/04/2024

Defacing/graffiti of the temporary signs

Following the installation of the additional temporary signs on 07 December 2023, regular inspections carried out identified that the signs have been defaced with graffiti on a number of occasions. The following extract of the inspection record details the date and details:

Date	Time (approx.)	Signs Present	comments
22/04/2024	10:00	Sign damaged or graffitied	Ringway attempting to source new sign faces
23/04/2024	09:40	Sign damaged or graffitied	
24/04/2024	10:00	Both present and OK	Ringway have removed the graffiti from the existing signage

25/04/2024	10:00	Both present and OK	Ringway have installed a L2 closure and bought the no entry signs closer together (work carried out 24/04/2024)
29/04/2024	10:10	Both present and OK	
01/05/2024	10:00	Both present and OK	
03/05/2024	09:30	Sign damaged or graffitied	Small scrawny white writing on the right-hand sign across the white section
03/05/2024	11:00	Sign damaged or graffitied	1 x wonky cone moved back out on longitudinal just after last 610
07/05/2024	09:30	Both present and OK	2 x cones out of placed - corrected under fix now
08/05/2024	10:00	Both present and OK	
10/05/2024	11:00	Both present and OK	
13/05/2024	11:00	Both present and OK	
14/05/2024	10:00	Both present and OK	Large number of lamps facing either left or right and batteries need checking - Ringway attended
15/05/2024	10:00	Both present and OK	
17/05/2024	11:40	Both present and OK	Large cone strike at beginning of taper and a few other cones out of place - Spoke to Ringway, they will send someone ASAP
20/05/2024	12:30	Both present and OK	
22/05/2024	09:30	Both present and OK	
24/05/2024	11:30	Both present and OK	
29/05/2024	10:00	Both present and OK	
28/05/2024	10:30	Sign damaged or graffitied	Graffiti on one of the No Entry Signs. (Ringway) informed and arranging clean up today
31/05/2024	08:30	Both present and OK	
03/06/2024	12:24	Both present and OK	Photo supplied to Abi via WhatsApp
05/06/2024	10:00	Both present and OK	Cone strike and use sat nav sign hanging - Ringway attended
07/06/2024	11:45	Both present and OK	
10/06/2024	10:00	Sign damaged or graffitied	Graffiti on both signs, reported to Ringway
12/06/2024	10:00	Both present and OK	
14/06/2024	10:00	Both present and OK	
17/06/2024	10:00	Both present and OK	

19/06/2024	10:00	Both present and OK	Some cones misaligned - emailed Ringway to attend
21/06/2024	09:15	Sign damaged or graffitied	Graffiti on both signs, reported to Ringway
24/06/2024	11:20	Sign damaged or graffitied	Graffiti on both signs, reported to Ringway

Further non-permanent enhancements

Further enhancements were made to the temporary signing layout following some additional reports of drivers attempting to turn into the slip road. These reports came from:

18 April 2024 – email received from local Councillor Tracey Bailey notifying us that reports had been made by residents directly to Cllr Bailey.

23 April 2024 – A Ringway operative (maintenance contractor for National Highways) carrying out maintenance to the No-Entry signs following an act of graffiti on the temporary signs.

These further changes involved closing the offside lane of the slip road to remove the potential ‘appearance’ of a two-way road. This also enabled the two large diameter No-Entry signs to be positioned closer together, see images below:



Image 5 - Additional measures at the slip road to mitigate right-turn manoeuvres.



Image 6 - view of junction from the west (Woburn approach)



Image 7 - view of junction from the east (Little Brickhill approach)

These works were undertaken on the night of the 24 April 2024. A daily inspection regime was put in place to monitor the signs and cones, and this is ongoing.

Abnormal Loads

The existing slip road includes a nearside overrun area. This is to cater for routing of Abnormal Loads. Whilst these temporary measures are in place, Network Occupancy teams are monitoring applications for abnormal loads to ensure changes can be made to the temporary works and replaced as required.

'Do not follow Sat Nav' signs

During the deployment of the non-permanent enhancements as detailed above, two vehicles were observed turning right into the slip road. On speaking to the driver of the second vehicle, the driver stated they were following Sat Nav instructions. At this time, the A5 carriageway was closed for routine drainage works so opposing traffic was not present.

Again, on the 29 April 2024, the location was visited by National Highways and Thames Valley Police (Traffic Management Officer). During the site visit, a vehicle was observed to attempt to turn right into the slip road against the No-Entry signing. The driver was flagged down and aborted the turn. On speaking to the driver, they said that the Sat Nav app said to turn right. This raised concerns that Sat Nav instructions may have been leading to driver confusion.

As a result, temporary signs displaying 'Do not follow Sat Nav' were deployed on site together with a customer information sign. These signs were installed on 07 May 2024, see images below.



Image 8 - sign installed on westbound approach to the slip road



Image 9 - sign installed at the top of the slip road (left hand side)



Image 10 - sign installed at the top of the slip road (right hand side)

Sat Nav Routing

Investigations have been undertaken to understand the potential influence Sat Nav instructions are having on driver behaviour. Route drives were undertaken using various Sat Nav apps (Google Maps, Apple Maps and WAZE) to review route guidance given to drivers.

The key findings were:

1. There were no issues found where routing contravened no entry signs at the slip road.
2. Whilst all routing clearly indicates the correct route to be driven, an audible instruction is given to drivers coinciding with the top of the slip road.

As a result of these findings, contact was made with Google Maps (17 May

	<p>2024).</p> <p>This is currently being investigated by Google Maps and we are awaiting further updates.</p> <p>Further enquiries are being made with Apple Maps and WAZE.</p> <p>As part of continued monitoring of the junction, we are planning to undertake CCTV monitoring, initially for 24hours a day for a period of 7 days, to measure the effectiveness of the temporary layout.</p>
2	<p>DEVELOPMENT OF PERMANENT WORKS</p> <p>Following receipt of the Regulation 28 Report to Prevent future Deaths, we commissioned our external design consultant (WSP) to carry out feasibility work to determine and recommend appropriate permanent changes at the junction, including the following key activities:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Undertake Safety Risk Assessment of each engineering option as identified in the National Highways Safety Assessment Report. 2. Undertake appraisal effectiveness, cost and engineering difficulty of each engineering option as identified in the National Highways Safety Assessment Report. 3. Carry out TA 501 Road Lighting Appraisal (Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB)) of the study area to identify whether lighting is required. <p>Details of the external design consultants' initial assessment and options were submitted to National Highways on 14 June 2024, and we are currently reviewing the outcomes and planning the next steps, which include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Carry out workshop with the design consultants to review outcomes of Safety Risk Assessment and TA501 Road Lighting Appraisal to discuss and agree preferred option. 2. Produce outline preliminary design for preferred option, complete with Cost Estimate. 3. Prepare Stage 1 Road Safety Audit Brief. 4. Prepare Stage 1 Road Safety Audit Response Report. <p>Following completion of above actions, detailed design will be carried out and implementation programmed for the 2025/26 financial year.</p> <p>During this period, temporary measures will remain in place, together with regular checks and inspections.</p>

3	<p>TIMETABLE FOR NEXT STEPS</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th><u>DATE</u></th> <th><u>ACTION</u></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Q2 2025</td> <td>Programme implementation of enhanced mitigation measures</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>ACTION</u>	Q2 2025	Programme implementation of enhanced mitigation measures
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Q2 2025	Programme implementation of enhanced mitigation measures				
4	<p>25th June 2024 Signed:</p> <div style="background-color: black; width: 245px; height: 91px; margin: 10px auto;"></div> <p style="text-align: center;">██████████, Head of Planning & Development on behalf of ██████████</p>				