MOSS NAYLOR YOUNG

B3153 Lydford-on-Fosse through Alford to Clanville, Somerset– Traffic & Highway Report

Static and Dynamic Concerns - Final Report

Change Table:

Report	Version	Date Issue	Notes
MNY17-15 Part 1	0	01/01/19	Original report
MNY17-15 Main Report	1.0	1/11/19	Document restructured to enable use by a wider use of stakeholders – text amended in line with restructuring
	1.1	4/11/19	Minor corrections

Contents

Executive Summary

This report has been commissioned from Moss Naylor Young by the residents of Alford, supported by Care4Cary, to look at the traffic problems associated with the B3153 and endeavour to identify potential solutions that would create a safer environment within the village.

The report examines the issues surrounding the B3153 in general and identifies the drivers that have resulted in where we are today. It shows that people and businesses of the villages along the B3153 are reliant on the B3153 for their active daily requirements. They share this route with both local and longer distance traffic passing through from early in the morning until late at night. A significant proportion of that through traffic is large and heavy haulage vehicles; there are better quality alternative routes that this component of traffic using the B3153 could, and arguably should, use.

In addition to the quantity and quality of this excess traffic, it travels at speeds that are not sympathetic to the needs of the communities deriving direct access from and straddling the route. The unnecessarily high proportion of HGVs wears heavily on the community's perceptions. It has a negative impact on people's daily lives due to the domineering nature of very large machines in brisk motion. It creates severance as people on one side of the road fear crossing to their neighbours or their church on the other side. It exacerbates junction danger, the HGVs require increased stopping distances, due to much greater mass. HGVs do more damage to verges and other boundary treatments (walls, fences), parked cars – wing mirrors, car bodywork damage etc.

The people and traffic share the space available along the corridor of the B3153. By today's standards it is deficient and in places unsafe for this sharing, being narrow and winding with poor quality side road junction geometries, and inadequate forward visibilities. Deficient for today's fast and agile light motorbikes and cars because it emerged as it is now through historic, organic development from use by foot traffic, pack-horses and horse drawn carts. Hence it is not certainly not adequate to accommodate modern farm traffic and HGVs in brisk motion with their bulks of up to domineering 6-axle vehicles, 16.5m long (and longer for drawbar lorries), 2.55m wide and 44 tonnes in weight.

The report presents a list of issues that arise as a result of the above and explores a range of options that may provide solutions to these issues. It looks into strategies to discourage further growth in the numbers of damaging and intimidating lorries using the route if they do not absolutely need to, and indeed measures to reduce the impact of such vehicles that already use the route. It looks at the shapers and influencers that can elicit change, if they can be persuaded and should they so choose. It suggests angles to use to approach or appeal to people, organisations, stakeholders and other bodies that have the power and resources to

make changes to the highway corridor and to affect beneficial changes to the people and traffic that use it.

A Technical Note based on this report, developed by MNY, was submitted to the Planning Inspectorate as part of an objection to an application to develop part of the Dimmer site for storing lease hire vehicles. This objection was upheld by the planners largely on the basis of increased traffic on the B3153 and the fact that it had been clearly demonstrated that this was unacceptable.

Annexe A of this report examines in more detail the specific problems within the village of Alford such as:

- Traffic Flow including high proportion of HGVs;
- Speeding traffic;
- Pinch points;
- Noise and vibration pollution;
- Blind exits;
- Pedestrian safety;
- Kerb / verge destruction.

It then considers a number of tactics that might be employed to reduce the speed of traffic through the village of Alford and provide a safer pedestrian environment. In particular, the report looked at the following three approaches to reducing speed of traffic through Alford and considered a number of activities that may improve general safety:

- Traffic Lights;
- Vertical traffic calming measures;
- Horizontal traffic calming measures (Chicanes).

It should be noted that all three of these approaches would require street lighting to be installed within the village, for which approval is becoming increasingly difficult. In addition to being costly to install, various consents are required including environmental, with impact on wildlife and light spillage being major issues.

Of the three approaches, only Chicanes was considered a viable option. If suitable positions could be found for chicanes at both ends of the village it would inevitably reduce the speed of the majority of traffic in the village. In particular, the existence of the pinch point in the B3153 adjacent to the Old Rectory, where the road narrows so two HGV's cannot pass, means there is the makings of a natural chicane. The construction of a chicane in this position with priority for traffic leaving the village could include a protected pavement and with reduced hedging, provide much improved visibility at the Church Lane junction. Such an option would need the agreement of The Old Rectory as part of a comprehensive improvement scheme.

However, the positioning of chicanes is a complex activity requiring expert knowledge to take account of lines of sight, the positions of all side roads and private accesses to enable villagers to go unimpeded about their daily lives. If there is a desire for this type of solution, despite the difficulties, the next step should be to seek further assistance from a highways expert to examine the feasibility. However, realistically, due to the lack of street lighting and the cost of this type of installation, it is unlikely to be approved by Highways unless they can be persuaded to make it a priority or funding can be provided from elsewhere.

Vehicle activated Signs (VAS) have been developed to address the problem of inappropriate speed where conventional signing has failed. Research has shown that these signs have had a reasonable amount of success in reducing traffic speeds and at relatively low cost, these are certainly worth pursuing.

Whilst all options may be pursued, funding limits likely provision. The community may look at raising funds and the most effective, cheapest and most likely of the proposals to be implemented relate to traffic management (eg. re-routing) and driver education. These may be re-enforced by physical means such as signage, white lining, maintenance of hedgerows and the introduction of footways. Where private land is needed to effect a solution to a safety problem (eg. the junction with Church lane) the community are best placed to negotiate this. Potential funding mechanisms have been identified to enable the potential solutions developed, particularly if the Highway Authority itself no longer has the wherewithal to take a financial lead for the betterment of the B3153 highway through Alford village.

Introduction

This Report has been commissioned from Moss Naylor Young by Alford Traffic Working Group and Care4Cary, a local organisation which supports proposed developments that benefit the Castle Cary area but campaigns against developments that will disproportionately damage the special character of the locality.

This Report's main purpose is to assess the B3153 and looks closely at the traffic it carries through the village of Alford. It considers what can be done to ameliorate the various negative aspects of the road and their impacts on the local community.

Ansford Parish Council, Cary Moor Parish Council and Castle Cary Town Council form the third tier of local government in Somerset. The South Somerset District Council (SSDC) is the Local Planning Authority (LPA), and Somerset County Council (SCC) is the Local Highway Authority (LHA). Developments in the adjacent Mendip District Council (MDC) necessarily have an impact on movement of people and goods in the study area for which Somerset County Council is also the LHA. To the south of Alford and Castle Cary the A303 runs in a similar direction to the B3153 and is a Trunk Road, managed and maintained by Highways England (HE).

The Report focuses on the B3153 from its junction with the A37 at Lydford-on-Fosse west of Alford, through the villages of Lovington, Alford itself, and Clanville to its termination at the A371 north of Castle Cary. The roads that form alternative highway routes, being the A37, A303 (a Highways England responsibility), the A359 and the A371 provide the network context; the A303 is a high standard alternative route to the B3153 east-west. These routes pass across and around a geographic area some 12km east-west by 9km north-south which includes the market town of Castle Cary with its special character, and nearby Ansford. The area of the study and its environs are also served by Castle Cary railway station which serves inter-city travel and local services to Yeovil (to the south) or to Bruton and Frome etc (to the north-east). The village of Alford looks for its goods and services to Castle Cary/Ansford approximately 3km to its east as the crow flies, but over 4km by road.

This Report will look in careful detail at the B3153 where it passes through Alford from the start of the footway at east end of the village to the bus stops at the west end of the village. It will consider the impacts of several significant heavy goods vehicle (HGV) operators within the immediate study area but also within the surrounding area such as at Shepton Mallet and Evercreech; for which the B3153 sometimes appears not only to be a preferred choice for drivers, but a route along which traffic is directed by the Local Highway Authority when popular events are staged at the Royal Bath and West Showground south of Shepton Mallet. The impact of HGVs on the B-road is of great concern to residents and local users, LHA data shows that there is an unusually high percentage of HGVs amongst all the traffic using the route.

Proposals with scope to ameliorate unwanted impacts include influencing hauliers' decision making processes thereby generating better operator traffic management plans, small scale highway works, landscaping works by frontage landowners and probably in the longer term, identifying opportunities to influence council policies for the improvement of conditions in the area.

Existing Situation

The B3153:

A modern B-road built by the LHA would be constructed to standards to meet its purposes:

- where the traffic is high speed perhaps 7.4m wide with margins and outside those verges, gentle curves and appropriate forward and junction visibility splays of hundreds of metres in accordance with the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges; and
- where it passes through settlements it would be likely to meet at least the more generous proportions of the Manuals for Streets with sufficient width for two-way traffic to pass, 1.8m wide footways, safe forward and junction visibility splays etc.

Whereas the B3153 is in contrast a sinuous, mature highway of varying width and substandard visibility splays; Somerset County Council appears to recognise it to be a significant HGV haulier choice, although it is not acknowledged as a local, county nor strategic freight route in its Freight Strategy.

Geometry/Alignment – The B3153 is a single carriageway B class road with, in the main, the width for two opposing traffic lanes. It runs through three settlements and between through rural environments where it is open in nature. It has relatively straight sections and some bends, several on the approaches to the settlements. The bends immediately west of Alford are of sufficiently tight radius to affect the speed of traffic approaching from that direction. These reverse bends also make it impossible for drivers approaching to see the village environment they are about to enter where the built and domestic environment effectively closes in on the road corridor for the next kilometre.

It is a relatively level road in terms of longitudinal alignment, there being no challenging gradients along its length.

Margins - In the main the B3153 between Lydford on Fosse and Clanville is without highway margins, for some of its length there are grass verges and in places footways but there are also significant lengths that are bounded by hedges. It has one particularly narrow section at Lovington which is managed by traffic signal shuttle system so that traffic may take turns alternately in the opposing directions of flow, the signals also manage movements out of the side roads and pub access there.

Hedges form living boundaries, they are kept clipped either by their landowners, in designated safety splays maybe by the LHA, but also frequently as and where vehicles brush by. Within Alford there are a set of problems created by the hedge on the inside of the bend on the corner of Church Lane, a side road on the north side of the B3153. There are four easily identified highway problems caused by this hedge:

- It obstructs junction visibility for those emerging from Church Lane;
- It obstructs forward Visibility for traffic passing along the B3153;
- It forms the abrupt highway boundary such that traffic can be seen to swerve out in middle of the road so as not to graze it and to see further ahead; and
- There is no haven from the road for pedestrians who must necessarily walk in the highway approaching this blind bend.

Hedge boundaries are also subject to 'boundary creep', it is likely that unless the owners have been cutting the hedge back regularly (which would involve the hazard of standing on the highway), it has been slowly invading the highway, narrowing the carriageway on this bend and exacerbating the issues outlined above.

The lack of margins and verges means that in places entering bends drivers cannot see far ahead from their own lane. There are points where drivers veer to their off-side to try to gain a better forward view. This is a reason why in some locations the LHA have put up warning signs that on-coming vehicles may be in the middle of the road. It is of much concern to the residents of Alford who see this happen within Alford on a regular basis. It is also a relatively common behaviour as traffic volumes are such that traffic may frequently experience no opposing flow, ride out centrally to 'smooth' the bends, only re-aligning to the near-side when an opposing vehicle comes into view. The occupiers and visitors of properties opposite the Church Lane junction, on the outside of the bend here, report feeling very squeezed at times in their accesses and parking laybys as westbound vehicles veer to the very outside of the bend to avoid oncoming eastbound vehicles, which have either positioned themselves wide away from the hedge, to see better, or because they are travelling too fast to follow the bend in their own lane.

Width and Road Markings - The road has centre-line markings for most of its length – hazard centre-line markings – indicating that the carriageway is in the main over 5.5m wide, although not much more. This also indicates to drivers that junction and forward visibilities are poor for much of its length and to drive accordingly. A note commissioned by the Local Highway Authority in 2015 acknowledged that through Alford the B3153 varies in width between 5.2m (no centre line markings) and 6.5m; significantly narrower than the modern standard 7.4m carriageway width for high speed roads carrying significant volumes of HGV traffic.

The road is so narrow in parts that opposing HGVs cannot pass without manoeuvring (reversing) to a wider part of the road and tractor-trailer combinations can meet with

particular difficulty if they meet another wide vehicle head to head as their drivers are rarely able to reverse into wider parts of the road.

Speed Limits - The national speed limit applies for most of its length with speed limits of 30mph through the villages straddling the road. Recently entry gate-ways to the lower speed limited lengths have been enhanced to alert traffic approaching these parts to the potential vulnerable users and hazards ahead (the village and settlement environments) thereby to encourage compliance with the lower speed limits.

Street Lighting - There is no street lighting through Alford. The 30mph limit is therefore indicated by entry and exit terminal signs as well as small repeater signs displayed along the roadsides at regular intervals.

Footway and Bus Stops - There is a short length of footway on the north side of the B3153 but this does not extend as far as the bus stops at the western end of the village. It runs between the junctions of Old Approach and Church Lane, although it terminates short of Alford Lodge and therefore shy of Church Lane, no properties let onto this length. The footway is substandard being only 0.7 to 1.3m wide, whereas modern footways may be constructed to 1.8m width. At its narrowest therefore, it is narrower than the LHA width consideration for pedestrians (0.75m), and too narrow for adults with pushchairs or wheelchairs (0.9m) and providing no opportunity for passing thereon. Pedestrians therefore must walk or use mobility devices in the live carriageway if they wish to pass along the B3153 in Alford either to visit neighbours, attend church, or catch a bus, etc. Source: *Estate Roads in Somerset (the red book) by SCC, via*
http://www.somerset.gov.uk/EasySiteWeb/GatewayLink.aspx?alId=125512

As well as being very narrow the footway appears to be being encroached and further narrowed by the retaining hedge and the raised land to its north.

The school bus picks up and drops off students at a location in the village, not at the stop for commercial services at the end of the village.

Drainage – There have been problems with highway drainage and flooding of B3153 and side roads following heavy rain in Alford.

Junctions – A number of lanes and minor accesses meet the B3153 within Alford. The two Highway junctions are near one another towards the western end of the village. Church Lane joining from the north, is signed and marked as a give-way junction, though it has extremely limited visibility to and for emerging traffic, being most inadequate to an emerging driver's right, the near side. Church Lane serves several properties as well as the Church. Alford Well Farm Lane joins the B3153 from the south, immediately adjacent to a marked bus stop. A very small number of properties of the village are to the west of these junctions.

It is remarkable that although the position of the two highway junctions were photographed and noted in a feasibility note prepared for the LHA in 2015, the particularly poor visibility for traffic emerging from Church Lane was not remarked upon. This suggests that the specific function of each of the side roads was not considered in the scope of that note, although turning movements on and off a highway are a common factor in injury collisions. According to *RAS10009: Reported accidents by junction type, built-up and non built-up roads and severity, Great Britain*, over two thirds of personal injury collisions on built-up roads are at junctions.

https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/ras10-reported-road-accidents

Collisions - Although the LHA in Alford has no record, two damage only collisions have been reported for this study, both involved a car emerging from Church Lane being in collision with another vehicle on the B-road. At least one of these collisions resulted in the vehicle emerging being written off. A very similar near miss was also reported observed by a neighbour who was operating as a banksman to help the driver turn out, and who was taken by surprise at how slowly the emerging vehicle necessarily went in its tight turn; and how quickly a lorry entering the village appeared around the bend and covered the visible ground to the potential collision point.

The LHA does have record of Personal Injury Collisions at Clanville. In the five years 2009 to 2014 two collisions occurred, one involving two HGVs, another a car where the driver lost control. Although this sample is very small, it underlines the community concerns about HGVs, that there are too many using the B3153 and the likelihood that they may be involved in traffic collisions.

Traffic Flows and Speeds Through the Village

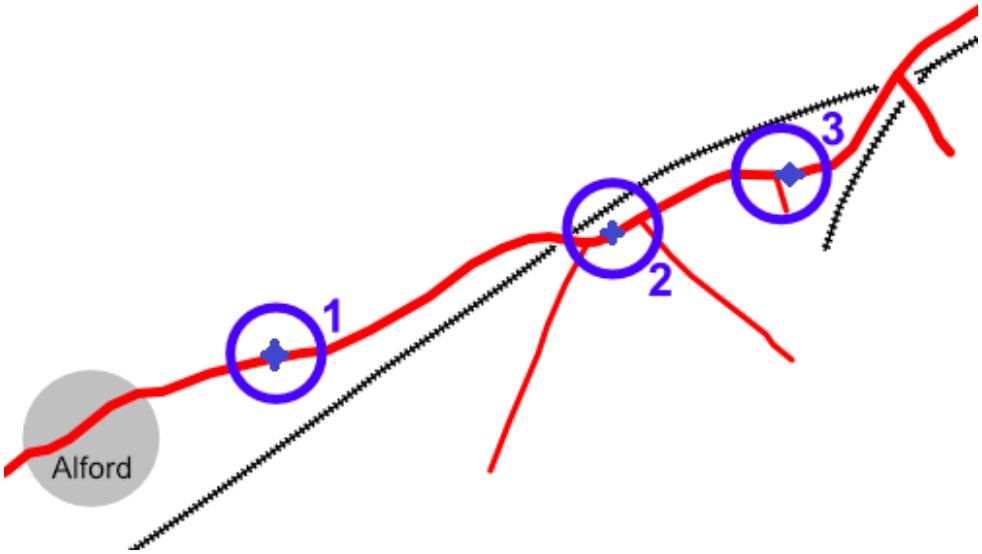
Moss Naylor Young commissioned three comprehensive traffic surveys in June 2018 to assess traffic volumes, speeds and the classes of vehicles that use the B3153 in 2018, to drill down into how and why the traffic using the B3153 causes the issues identified in this Report. This data provides a robust and current evidence base for trafficking of the B3153.

The surveys also provide a useful ‘after’ study to measure traffic after Somerset County Council installed a Small Improvement Scheme (SIS) which made enhancements to signing and lining along the route in 2017. Despite the intention of the SIS to improve conditions along the B3153 it appears that in the three years 2015 to 2018 traffic has grown and speeds have risen. The experience therefore for the communities along the route has worsened.

Traffic Surveys

Surveys were commissioned and carried out by Axiom in June 2018. The surveys took place at three sites selected by the Parish Council:

Site 1 – B3153 Alford (Hedgerow) ST 60746 32374
Site 2 - B3153 Sutton (30mph Sign) ST 62229 32877
Site 3 - B3153 Sutton (30mph Sign) ST 62742 33061



Plan 2: ATC Locations

Traffic Volumes

The recorded traffic flows show some variation in the numbers of vehicles using the B3153 at different locations. This is to be expected as vehicles join or leave the route on side roads and accesses along the route. In general, between three and four thousand vehicles use the route every day – up to and over 2000 vehicles each way, each day.

As can be seen in Table 1 below, there has been some growth in the three years between the surveys. In Alford the surveys show a growth in the order of 100 vehicles per week day, a little over 2%. However, between Dimmer Lane and Blackworthy Lane the increase is in the order

of 750 vehicles per day, over 20%. This is probably as a result of the increase in traffic to the Dimmer Landfill site which is now taking waste from outside of the County.
The 2015 survey figures were sourced from a report commissioned by the Local Highways Authority which concluded that these flows could be considered moderate, based on the Highways Agency Advice Note TA 79/99 – Traffic Capacity of Urban Roads, which suggests a capacity of 900 vehicles per hour in each direction for a 6.1m wide road with certain characteristics.

However, in the introduction to Advice Note TA 79/99 it states that:

*"Traffic flows on **urban trunk roads in Greater and Outer London** has been analysed to assess the capacities that can be achieved for different road types and widths." (our emphasis in bold)*

Whether, the application of traffic capacities derived from this Advice Note is appropriate to this narrow rural road passing through a small village should be considered a matter for debate.

Whilst volumes like this are not large compared to Greater and Outer London, they do create their own problems whereby the timing of any individual vehicle passing or approaching a junction becomes unpredictable. In addition, drivers can achieve the false feeling of security that they are travelling along empty roads and then be surprised by other traffic. There is rarely congestion that would limit traffic speeds either, although some vehicles by their nature will hold up following vehicles, and if travelling far enough may cause the formation of platoons from time to time.

Site	Description	Direction	Date from	to	5 day ave	Two-way Total
2015 - Lovington		Eastbound	Fri 20-Mar-15	Thu 26-Mar-15	1640	
		Westbound			1477	
						3117
Site No: 23013001	Site 1, B3153 Alford (Hedgerow) ST 60746 32374	Channel: Eastbound	Tue 05-Jun-18	Mon 11-Jun-18	1832	
		Channel: Westbound			1854	
						3686
2015 - Alford		Eastbound	Fri 20-Mar-15	Thu 26-Mar-15	1868	
		Westbound			1702	
						3570
Site No: 23013002	Site 2, B3153 Sutton (30mph Sign) ST 62229 32877	Channel: Eastbound	Tue 05-Jun-18	Mon 11-Jun-18	2168	
		Channel: Westbound			2013	
						4181
2015 - west of Blackworthy Road		Eastbound	Fri 20-Mar-15	Thu 26-Mar-15	1710	
		Westbound			1704	
						3414
Site No: 23013003	Site 3, B3153 Sutton (30mph Sign) ST 62742 33061	Channel: Eastbound	Tue 05-Jun-18	Mon 11-Jun-18	1713	
		Channel: Westbound			1794	
						3507
2015 - Clanville SID		West	Mon 09-Feb-15	Sat 14-Feb-15	1100*	N/A

* SID information from ATWG - only traffic speeding recorded, not all traffic

Table 1: Average Weekday Traffic at Sites along the B3153 in 2015 & 2018

Traffic Speeds

The findings of the surveys by Axiom are that traffic speeds in June 2018 were generally higher than those recorded in March 2015, as reported by Parsons Brinkerhoff to the Local Highways Authority.

In March 2015, according to the Parsons Brinkerhoff Report of July 2015, the 85% speeds at three locations along the B3153 were between 34.2mph and 36.9mph. Whereas in June 2018 the 85% speeds were measured as being between 38.1mph and 42.8mph. This is quite a significant finding given that this shows that a high proportion of traffic is exceeding the 30mph speed limits to an alarming degree.

Mean speeds have increased too. Whereas in March 2015 they were below or hovering at about 30mph, in June 2018 the average mean speeds were in excess of 30mph at all the sites and for traffic travelling in both directions.

These findings will be of considerable disappointment to the people who live and have workplaces along the route. At face value the County Council's scheme to re-furbish and improve signing and lining and to cut back vegetation encroaching into the highway has not resulted in lower, safer traffic speeds, quite the opposite in fact.

Figure 1: Pedestrian Collision Survival Ratios:

Hit by a Vehicle at Speed:	**Pedestrians Who Survive**
20mph	9 out of 10
30 mph	5 out of 10
40mph	1 out of 10

More pedestrians hit by vehicles travelling nearer 40mph than 30 would be killed than would survive. This is especially the case as 10 percent of the traffic travelling through Alford are HGVs and large modern agricultural tractors (and trailer combinations) which collide with greater impact and which have longer stopping distances than lighter vehicles.

Pedestrians and Buses – few people walk along the B3153, there is no shop or school in the village, but those that rely on buses walk to and from the bus stops. Bus services link to Castle Cary Station, Strode College in Street, or farther afield to Bruton, Wincanton, and Gillingham. The stops are: for westbound at the west end of the village immediately west of the Alford Well Farm Lane junction (formerly site of a phone box) on the south side of the B-road; and for eastbound a short distance east of that outside the Old Rectory on the north side of the road. This is a dangerous stop with no layby and no safe area for pedestrians to alight. Once off the bus it is also a dangerous place to cross the road.

There are several services along the B-road each day for people wishing to access shops, services, education, health care etc in other settlements.

Bus Services: 646, 647, 648 and 667 are run by South West Coaches.

Table 2 Summarises the Traffic Volumes and Vehicle Speeds of Surveys of March 2015 and June 2018 (next page)

Table 2 - Traffic Volumes and Speeds												
Site	Location	Direction	Start Date	End Date						Average 85%ile Speed/ mph	Average Mean Speed/ mph
Site No: 23013001	Site 1, B3153 Alford (Hedgerow) ST 60746 32374	Channel: Eastbound	Tue 05-Jun-18	Mon 11-Jun-18	30	11464	1832	1638	38.1	32.9
		Channel: Westbound				11506	1854	1644	39.0	33.4
2015 - Alford		Eastbound	Fri 20-Mar-15	Thu 26-Mar-15	30		1868		35.1	28.2
		Westbound					1702		36.1	29.2
Site No: 23013002	Site 2, B3153 Sutton (30mph Sign) ST 62229 32877	Channel: Eastbound	Tue 05-Jun-18	Mon 11-Jun-18	30	13667	2168	1952	38.1	32.1
		Channel: Westbound				12703	2013	1815	38.5	32.6
2015 - west of Blackworthy Road		Eastbound	Fri 20-Mar-15	Thu 26-Mar-15	30		1710		36.9	30.2
		Westbound					1704		36.6	30.1
Site No: 23013003	Site 3, B3153 Sutton (30mph Sign) ST 62742 33061	Channel: Eastbound	Tue 05-Jun-18	Mon 11-Jun-18	30	10866	1713	1552	42.0	35.6
		Channel: Westbound				11260	1794	1609	42.8	35.8
2015 - Clanville SID		Westbound	Mon 09-Feb-15	Sat 14-Feb-15			1100*		43.0	37.0

* SID data from ATWG - traffic exceeding sign setting/speed limit, not all traffic

Table 2

Traffic Composition

The Axiom surveys included vehicle classification counts – Five categories of vehicle types were recorded:

Motorcycles
Cars
LGVs
HGV and
Bus

Table 3 summarises the vehicle classes recorded in the June 2018 survey

2018 – Site 1 Alford	**Vehicle Types**	**% Eastbound**	**% Westbound**
	Motorcycles	1.4	1.4
	Cars	77.9	79.7
	LGVs	11.7	11.7
	HGV	8.6	7.0
	Bus	0.4	0.3
	No of vehicles per weekday	1832	1854
2018 – Site 2 Blackworthy Road	**Vehicle Types**	**% Eastbound**	**% Westbound**
	Motorcycles	0.9	1.3
	Cars	82.0	78.4
	LGVs	10.7	12.5
	HGV	6.2	7.5
	Bus	0.3	1.7
	No of vehicles per weekday	2168	2013
2018 – Site 3 Clanville	**Vehicle Types**	**% Eastbound**	**% Westbound**
	Motorcycles	1.3	1.4
	Cars	71.8	76.9
	LGVs	14.3	12.8
	HGV	12.0	8.5
	Bus	0.7	0.5
	No of vehicles per weekday	1713	1794

From this data it can be seen that in the Villages, whilst 80% of traffic is motorcycles and cars/ light vans some with trailers, some 20% of traffic is larger and more dominating on the road.

Half of these larger/heavier vehicles (10% of the total volume) are rigid and heavy vehicles, one in ten on the road. This is a high proportion of HGVs, four times the national average proportion of HGVs (Source: *Road Traffic Estimates: Great Britain 2016,* https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/road-traffic-estimates-in-great-britain-2016), and one of the highest proportions of HGVs on roads in Somerset (Source: *Somerset Traffic Data 2016,* http://www.somerset.gov.uk/roads-parking-and-transport/working-on-the-road/transport-survey-information/.)

Farther to the east along the B3153 at Clanville the proportion of heavy traffic is higher due to traffic generated by Dimmer Waste Management Facilities. Dimmer Waste Management Facilities and other generators of HGV traffic at Torbay Road and Blackworthy Road are restricted to their west by the low railway bridge between Alford and Clanville, so must travel in and out of Blackworthy Road and Dimmer Lane via the B3153 and the A371. This will also be the case for traffic generated by Dimmer Waste Transfer Station, a major development and significant HGV generator given planning permission in 2015.

The significant settlements and significant destinations that have been observed to exert a great influence on traffic, and particularly HGV traffic, along the B3153 are:

- Castle Cary and Ansford (and Torbay Industrial Estates and Dimmer); and
- Shepton Mallet and Evercreech (and the Royal Bath and West Showground).

At Torbay Industrial Estate and Dimmer there are some significant uses with large haulage needs. Though the Local Planning Authority (SSDC) and the Planning Inspectorate have refused some planning applications on the grounds of road safety and amenity, nevertheless several have been permitted. The County Council recently granted planning permission for Viridor to operate one of Somerset's two Waste Transfer Stations for a further 25 years at Dimmer, a former amunitions dump and currently a landfill waste disposal site. This is expected to generate some 200 lorry movements per week day, a proportion of which will use the B3153 through Alford to travel to and from collection areas in South Somerset, west of Alford including Yeovil and parts of Mendip District.

Events at the Royal Bath and West Showground attract visitors from across the South West Region and even farther afield. Use of the RB&W Showground is set to increase as the Local Development Consent Order issued by Mendip District Council is gradually built out. The Alford Traffic Working Group and Care4Cary are concerned that traffic from here, which has its main access onto the A371 may choose the B3153 as a cut through to the west which may exacerbate the HGV traffic problems experienced along the B3153. Another event with a national attraction is the Glastonbury Festival held at Pilton most summers.

There are also many other haulage operations registered by the Traffic Commissioners in places in or near the study area. A basic search has identified the following in February 2018:

Table 4: Licensed Goods Vehicle Operators:

Locale	Valid HGV Operator Licences*	Valid HGV Operator Licenses with over 10 Vehicles & Trailers	No. of Vehicles & Trailers Reg. by Operators of Over 10 Vehicles & Trailers
Castle Cary	22 (15 unique)	6	165
Evercreech	47		
Shepton Mallet	201		
Bruton	29		
Wincanton	110		
Sparkford	13		
Lydford-on-Fosse	50		
TOTAL	472		

*NB there is overlap between the locales as some organisations have operating centres in more than one location therefore there will be fewer than the 472 Operators identified using the initial beta search algorithm on the Traffic Commissioners website at www.Gov.UK.

As can be seen from the 3rd and 4th column of the table above further analysis demonstrates the considerable numbers of vehicles and trailers that a wide range of licensed operators is able to use from their operating centres in the study area.

Also not to be forgotten are the large number of farms, cheesemakers and associated agricultural businesses spread throughout the area which also generate HGVs, Milk Tankers, large agricultural vehicles and tractor-trailer combinations.

Issues Arising

People who live in Alford have repeated to us the following related to the B3153:

- A general severe impact on village life
- That so many large and overly fast vehicles impact on access and pedestrian safety
- They welcome that this is recognised by SCC – SID programme
- Elderly people and families with children dare not walk along the main road
- Footways are overgrown
- Cyclists fear for their safety
- Some junctions and accesses are blind
- At Church Lane Junction visibility is extremely poor, emerging traffic is at risk of colliding with traffic on the main road negotiating the bend, drivers managing their speeds and path. Potential for cumulative likelihood of hazardous multiple activity and sudden surprise to drivers on the main road meaning reaction times in the event of vehicle conflict may be reduced
- Bus stops – access from the carriageway, no footway, no layby on north side, no pedestrian waiting areas
- Some frontage property owners/tenants feel intimidated by passing traffic, particularly HGVs and large agricultural tractor-trailer combinations
- In places the road is not wide enough for two HGVs to pass one another
- There is unfair competition for road space between pedestrians and all sizes of vehicles, such that pedestrians fear to walk along the B3153, the main road through the village.
- Those living in houses closest to the road are impacted by the vibrations and noise of the heavy lorries as they pass
- Soft verges and garden boundaries are constantly being damaged by HGVs and farm traffic.

Having discussed together the need to act to seek safety improvements people in Alford recognise that different solutions could result in tensions between those who might be affected in different ways.

Potential Solutions

Range and Scale of Solutions

There are many things that would make the B3153 a better space for those who live and work along it, or a better highway for those who use it as a way. Some are static changes – engineering to change geometry for instance. Some are dynamic, more about behavioural

choices: how and when goods and materials are transported, which alternative routes may be used. Some are complementary, but some would improve one and cause detriment to the other. From engineered highway improvements to behavioural changes, the corridor can be improved, traffic using it may be influenced, the village spaces may be reclaimed for more use by people out of vehicles.

The Alford Traffic Working Group asked that the problems identified above be separated into strategic and tactical issues. These approaches throw up differing sets of objectives and a slightly different approach to their resolution. The strategic view looks at a series of measures that can be put in place to attempt to reduce the volume and size of traffic along the B3153 as a whole, whereas for the tactical view , which has been covered in Annexe A, MNY were asked to look at what, if anything, can be done in Alford to reduce the speed of the traffic and deliver a safer environment.

Strategic Solutions

The following looks at measures that could be taken to reduce the volume and size of traffic along the B3153.

Many different bodies have an interest in a local highway network. Some are influential over large areas and include government bodies, transport providers, some utilities infrastructure providers. Others have more local influence such as private organisations including adjacent land owners, nearby employers and freight operators. Improving the experience of a road such as the B3153 will take some time, and require co-operation, co-ordination and patience, to bring forward necessary change.

The overall aim would be to reduce the volumes of HGVS and Tractor-trailer combinations passing through the village on medium and long-distance routes. This might also require, to increase their attractiveness, improvements to the highway links and junctions of the highway network alternative routes, the A37, A303, A359 and A371. This could be achieved by the following:

- Influencing Transport and Planning Policy; progressing physical improvements as opportunities arise (local land ownerships, developments etc); and

- Developing better transport operator plans (Traffic Management plans) – approaches could be made to existing local industries, and as new operators start up. Existing

operators might be prepared to review their vehicular activity along the route and make immediate changes. Future behaviour of new operators or those making significant changes to their businesses could be influenced and operations changes enforced even, through planning procedures and planning conditions.

A greater understanding of which companies are using the route could be achieved by observers recording information on lorries, how many from a particular company are seen frequently for instance.

Speeds of traffic can be influenced in a positive way by introduction of Speedwatch. Local community groups are trained in the use of a speed gun, monitor speeds at a location, and drivers can be sent educational letters if they exceed a safe speed. More information can be found at: https://www.communityspeedwatch.org/

Local people understand and appreciate that even if longer distance through traffic can be diverted there will still be a residual local need. Some HGV/LGV flow is expected, but other HGVs, those not requiring access to destinations along or very close to the route, should be prevented or deterred from using this substandard and rural route, such that it can return it to its local function: a space for local people, a safe and respected highway for local traffic.

It is not known if Somerset County Council (SCC) has or is developing a specific countryside traffic management strategy. These can introduce specific countryside traffic management measures, such as distinctive signing and innovative traffic calming measures to help meet the needs of residents, tourists and visitors to such areas; including people powered road users including those with impaired mobility. Some Local Highway Authorities do such strategies. SCC provides advice to drivers in rural areas at:
http://www.somersetroadsafety.org/page/rural-roads/229/

Measures for Highways England to Consider

As with the County Council, the Traffic Working Group or the Parish Council itself might wish to lobby Highways England. The traffic below above provides a comprehensive baseline record for future comparison. Trunk road works tend to be on a large scale, the works can be relatively long term, but also their effects are long term.

The A303 is an alternative east-west trunk road or primary route, however in the study area is one of the last sections of unimproved single carriageway; this being between Podimore and Sparkford about 6km south of the B3153. As this congestion bottleneck may be a factor in some drivers choosing to route along the B3153, the proposed improvement scheme to

this trunk road may be beneficial, it may attract through traffic from the B3153 when it is built in a few years' time.

Construction of the A303 Sparkford to Ilchester Improvement aims to improve the single lane to a dual carriageway as part of a programme of improvements to the A303/A30/A358. The work is planned and estimated to cost from £100m to £250m. As at September 2018, the Planning Inspectorate has accepted the Highways England application for examination on behalf of the Secretary of State. It was accepting relevant representations on the scheme, from Thursday 13 September 2018 until Thursday 18 October 2018. Work may start on site in 2020.

Appropriate diversion routes will be required and signed and publicised in advance of and during the works. The B3153 is not considered an appropriate alternative route. Unfortunately, many drivers choose their own alternatives from maps or their SatNav devices, so it will be of concern to the communities along the B3153 that non-local traffic might choose to divert along the B3153 if the Highways England trunk road improvement works cause uncharacteristic congestion and delay.

Assistance from Local Businesses

Some businesses may be landowners with responsibilities to maintain the highway boundaries – trim hedges, manage trees, prevent water run-off etc.

In addition, freight operators and local businesses (or local operations hubs of large national and international businesses) may choose routing strategies that minimise use of the B3153 and impose this discipline on their drivers and also on their suppliers' or clients' drivers. Vehicle operators can make careful choices to the benefit of communities through which they drive, such as which fleet vehicles to buy or lease – their size, fuel, efficiency and flexibility, thereby using vehicles which are less polluting and less intimidating.

A survey of which companies' large vehicles most regularly traverse the route would be helpful to identify most frequent users and target them with enquiries. There is also information on the Traffic Commissioners website (at https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/traffic-commissioners) which provides a good basis for where large vehicles may be stored and generated in the local vicinity – for instance the business sites near Castle Cary, Evercreech towards Shepton Mallet etc.

Opportunities Related to Development

As development proposals come forwards there is opportunity to consider their implications and put in place measures to manage whatever traffic is generated. Any planning applications in the area that entail the generation of significant additional or different traffic are received with Transport Statements or Plans, Travel Plans, Construction Traffic Management Plans, and Operational Traffic Management Plans. These must take into account the poor quality of the B3153 and explain how inappropriate use of it is to be avoided or what measures are proposed to mitigate against any transport harm that might otherwise ensue from more harmful traffic.

Other bodies with Interests along the corridor include:

Avon and Somerset Police – could be lobbied to consider undertaking more vehicle speed enforcement (as surveys show excessive speed) and may be prepared to assist with starting up a Community Speedwatch (CSW) project (see above). The Police respond to incidents such as road traffic crashes or spilled loads on roads to manage live situations and events. The Police record all the data of a road traffic collision and pass the data on to Somerset County Council which cleans and analyses the data to help direct expenditure in acute circumstances and to those places most in need.

The Parish Council might wish to open discussions with the Environment Agency (EA) about any drainage or flooding on the road coming from watercourses managed by the EA. Measures are required to prevent damage to the structure of the road and to keep it passable at all times.

Railtrack – the bridge and its abutments west of Dimmer Lane are a significant feature on the B3153. The bridge creates a double bend with limited through visibility and is subject to a 4.5m (14’ 9”) height restriction. The bridge does not appear to cause any particular problems, although it is one of the factors that makes the route unsuitable for very large vehicles and must be considered in any strategic assessment of the local highway network.

Transport Policies for Freight

Freight transport continues to increase as our economy grows. Road haulage is the dominant mode for movement of freight in the country. Whilst HGV movements are concentrated in the daytime, a certain level persists throughout the night and above average levels are

evident from around 5:00 am. This is a source of conflict between the behaviours of hauliers and communities.

New development is considered in accordance with various tiers of planning and transport policies.

Considering the National Planning Policy Framework at https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2

Paragraphs 31 and 32 are relevant to this situation.

'31. Local authorities should work with neighbouring authorities and transport providers to develop strategies for the provision of viable infrastructure necessary to support sustainable development, including large scale facilities such as rail freight interchanges, roadside facilities for motorists or transport investment necessary to support strategies for the growth of ports, airports or other major generators of travel demand in their areas. The primary function of roadside facilities for motorists should be to support the safety and welfare of the road user.'

'32. All developments that generate significant amounts of movement should be supported by a Transport Statement or Transport Assessment. Plans and decisions should take account of whether:

- *the opportunities for sustainable transport modes have been taken up depending on the nature and location of the site, to reduce the need for major transport infrastructure;*
- *safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all people; and*
- *improvements can be undertaken within the transport network that cost effectively limit the significant impacts of the development. Development should only be prevented or refused on transport grounds where the residual cumulative impacts of development are severe.'*

There are some relevant policies of the LHA, Somerset County Council, to be considered too.

The LHA's Freight Strategy and that of neighbouring transport authorities with whom the LHA co-operates in the interests of sustainable cross boundary planning: *'Wherever possible HGVs should use the strategic road network'.* Source: *Strategic Routes and Cross Boundary Planning, Chapter 7 – LPT 2006-2011 at* http://www.somerset.gov.uk/policies-and-plans/plans/local-transport-plan/

SCC Travel Planning Guidance 2011 at http://www.somerset.gov.uk/policies-and-plans/strategies/transport-strategy/

states: '*We will help hauliers choose the most appropriate routes and work to improve communication between communities and the hauliers that serve them*.'

Policy ECN -5 (Freight), page 52 (per TP directory)

Somerset Freight Strategy November 2011 at
http://www.somerset.gov.uk/policies-and-plans/strategies/transport-strategy/
'*The Somerset Freight Map (see appendix one) is included in LTP2 and sets out three types of routes for HGVs*:

National Routes	Longer distance freight routes from other parts of the country. Given that many freight facilities are located adjacent to junctions on these routes, they are also likely to act as Regional Routes.
Regional Routes	Routes used for inter-regional travel where national routes are not appropriate and to provide access to major distribution centres from the national routes.
County Routes	Routes used to provide access to freight facilities not served by either national or regional routes. County routes will also form connections between the national and regional routes into these facilities.

The national and regional routes form the 'strategic network' to be promoted for use by HGVs in preference to county or other routes.'

Through policies such as these the integration of freight issues in mainstream travel planning processes are to be promoted in Somerset and further afield. The impact on the character or amenity of the area in terms of type, volume or speed of traffic generated by a development must be carefully weighed.

The South Somerset Local Plan 2006 – 2028 adopted version March 2015 included Policy TA5: Transport Impact of New Development, at
https://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/media/707200/south_somerset_local_plan_2006-2028_adoption_version_march_2015.pdf

POLICY TA5: TRANSPORT IMPACT OF NEW DEVELOPMENT

All new development shall be required to address its own transport implications and shall be designed to maximise the potential for sustainable transport through:

i. Safeguarding existing and new transport infrastructure, which is important to an efficient and sustainable transport network from development that would prejudice their transport use;

ii. Securing inclusive, safe and convenient access on foot, cycle, and by public and private transport that addresses the needs of all;

iii. Ensuring that the expected nature and volume of traffic and parked vehicles generated by the development would not have a detrimental impact on the character or amenity of the area and would not compromise the safety and/or function of the local or strategic road networks in terms of both volume and type of traffic generated;

iv. Ensuring that proposals, which specifically require a location with direct access to the strategic road network due to the volumes and quality of traffic generated, are well located on these networks. There is a presumption against direct access from the strategic road network. Exemptions will only be made where the type of development is such that it requires a high order (of route hierarchy) route location, such as roadside service stations or freight transfer facilities;

v. Assessing the transport impact of development and ensuring delivery of the necessary transport infrastructure for the proposal and requiring larger schemes to prepare Transport Assessments.

vi. Requiring car parking and vehicle servicing at levels appropriate to the development and its location, in accordance with the approved/adopted standards identified in Policy TA6.

Summary and Conclusion

People and businesses of the villages along the B3153 are reliant on the B3153 for their active daily requirements. They share this route with both local and longer distance traffic passing through from early in the morning, throughout the day and through the night. A significant proportion of that through traffic is large and heavy haulage vehicles; there are better quality alternative routes that this component of traffic using the B3153 could, and arguably should, use.

In addition to the quantity and character of these excess traffic movements, vehicles travel at speeds that are not sympathetic to the needs of the communities deriving direct access from and straddling the route. The unnecessarily high proportion of HGVs wears heavily on the community's perceptions and has a negative impact on people's daily lives due to the domineering nature of very large machines in brisk motion. It creates severance as people on one side of the road fear crossing to their neighbours or their church on the other side, it exacerbates junction danger as the HGVs require increased stopping distances, due to much greater mass. HGVs do more damage to verges and other boundary treatments (walls, fences), parked cars – wing mirrors, car bodywork damage etc.

The people and traffic share the space available along the corridor of the B3153. By today's standards it is deficient and in places unsafe for this sharing, being narrow and winding with poor quality side road junction geometries, and inadequate forward visibilities. Deficient for today's fast and agile light motorbikes and cars because it emerged as it is now through historic, organic development from use by foot traffic, pack-horses and horse drawn carts. Hence it is not certainly not adequate to accommodate modern farm traffic and HGVs in brisk motion with their bulks of up to domineering 6-axle vehicles, 16.5m long (and longer for drawbar lorries), 2.55m wide and 44 tonnes in weight.

It is understood that if unnecessary through traffic can be diverted to alternative, better quality routes, that there will still remain some residual through traffic sharing the corridor. It would though be far safer if this traffic travelled at speeds commensurate with the conditions, activities and ensuing risks along the route, speeds much lower than those observed and measured to date through the settlements.

This report offers a comprehensive range of measures with the overall aim of reducing the volumes of HGVS and Tractor-trailer combinations passing through the village on medium and long-distance routes.

It identifies that many different bodies have an interest in a local highway network. Some are influential over large areas and include government bodies, transport providers, some utilities infrastructure providers. Others have more local influence such as private organisations

including adjacent land owners, nearby employers and freight operators. Improving the experience of a road such as the B3153 will take some time, and require co-operation, co-ordination and patience, to bring forward necessary change.

However, some heart should be taken from an early success whereby the objection to the Hopkins planning application at Dimmer, was upheld partly due to the village initiative in commissioning this paper; thereby preventing additional HGVs passing through the village. This builds on the two previous Inspector-lead refusals of Applications also part-based on the pure nature of the B3153 and its inability to handle more HGV traffic.

In addition, a great step forward in bringing focus to the above activities is the creation of a joint working group by the Parish Councils represented along this section of the B3153 (directly as a result of the Alford residents initiative). The joint working group, formally recognised by and made up of representatives of Castle Cary Town Council together with Ansford, Cary Moor and Lydford Parish Councils, has been set up to look at issues associated with the B3153. The working group meets 3-monthly and is focussed on the B3153 between the A37 at Lydford Cross Keys and the A371 at Ansford railway bridge, with the primary objectives of finding ways to:

- Reduce HGV traffic;
- Reduce the speed of traffic;
- Create a safer environment for motorists, pedestrians and all other road users.

Having identified the issues surrounding the B3153 and looked at the implementation strategies that may be applied to divert traffic off the B3153 and along more suitable routes, Annexe A of this report looks more closely at the ‘on the ground’ issues, specific to Alford itself and various options that could be implemented to create a safer environment for pedestrians and motorists alike.