

# M2 Junction 5 improvements scheme

Preferred route announcement





## Investing in your roads

At Highways England we believe in a connected country and our network makes these connections happen. We strive to improve our major roads and motorways – engineering the future to keep people moving today and moving better tomorrow. We want to make sure all our major roads are more dependable, durable and, most importantly – are safe.

That's why we're delivering £15 billion of investment on our network – the largest investment in a generation.

The M2 Junction 5/A249 Stockbury Roundabout improvements scheme is a critical part of this investment. The scheme will improve journeys for people travelling north east to Sittingbourne, the Isle of Sheppey and the Port of Sheerness.

In addition, journeys south west to Maidstone and surrounding villages will also be made easier. This is great news for the local and regional economy.

In this brochure we announce the preferred route for the M2 Junction 5 /A249 Stockbury Roundabout and set out the detail behind the announcement. We also explain what will happen next.

## Why is the scheme needed?

The M2 Junction 5/A249 Stockbury Roundabout cannot cope with existing traffic flows:

- At certain times of day, there are high levels of congestion and delay on the A249 southbound (towards Maidstone), northbound (towards Sittingbourne) and on the approaches to the junction and on the exit slip road from the M2 westbound (towards Stockbury Roundabout).
- Congestion is expected to worsen in the future due to planned development and population growth.

Traffic is already diverting away from the M2 Junction 5/A249 Stockbury Roundabout to alternative rural routes to avoid the congestion, putting undue pressure on local roads not suited to large volumes of traffic and increasing safety risks.

The junction is one of the top 50 national casualty locations on England's major 'A' roads and motorways:

- There were 111 personal injury accidents between January 2011 and December 2015 and nearly half occurred during morning and evening peak periods.



## Scheme objectives

Improving the M2 Junction 5/A249 Stockbury Roundabout will:

- **Improve journey times:** our improvement scheme will reduce delays meaning people will have quicker and more reliable journeys.
- **Make journeys safer:** improving the junction will improve safety for all road users.
- **Support economic growth:** increasing capacity at the junction will support the future housing and employment growth in the area.
- **Help cyclists and pedestrians:** working with the local authorities we will aim to improve facilities for pedestrians, cyclists and other non-motorised users.
- **Deliver high standards of highway design:** resulting in a scheme that is in keeping with the local environment, minimising environmental impacts and where feasible make conditions better.

## Consultation feedback

A public consultation ran from 6 September to 17 October 2017, supported by 5 consultation exhibitions in the area. 518 questionnaire responses were received, with 47 further written responses from stakeholders and the public. A total of 1,307 people visited the public consultation exhibitions.

There was overwhelming support for a scheme at the junction with 94% of respondents agreeing that something needs to be done.

Respondents were very concerned about traffic congestion, capacity for increased traffic from future housing and employment growth, and journey times and/or reliability. The majority of respondents were also very concerned about road safety and the displacement of traffic onto local roads.



A single option (Option 12A) which is affordable and delivers good benefits was presented at the events along with discounted options, such as Option 4, which incorporated a flyover. The principle differences between Option 12A and Option 4 were the inclusion of a flyover and alterations to the connection with Oad Street.

There was little support for Option 12A with 68% of the general public not supporting this option. The local MP, Local Authorities and South East Local Enterprise Partnership expressed a preference for a flyover.

Highways England therefore undertook a review of the rejected flyover option presented during the public consultation (Option 4) to determine if there were opportunities to reduce the cost of the scheme, whilst maintaining the benefits of this option.

A revised scheme has been developed, referred to as Option 4H1. This option delivers the Roads Investment Strategy<sup>1</sup> outcomes, increases safety benefits over Option 12A and ensures there are no traffic signals on the A249 mainline.

Although lower cost than Option 4, the revised Option 4H1 still remains above the original allocated budget. Highways England has had a series of discussions with external partners to identify additional financial contributions to the scheme and now includes a £2.5 million contribution from Kent County Council.

## Preferred route (Option 4H1)

An artist's impression of the new junction is shown on page 5.

The details of the proposed option include:

- Existing roundabout replaced with a new grade-separated interchange, which is a flyover, to provide free-flowing movement on the A249.
- 2 new dedicated free-flowing slip roads: A left turn for traffic travelling from the A249 southbound to the M2 westbound and a left turn from the A249 northbound to the M2 eastbound.
- The existing connection from the Maidstone Road to the A249 Stockbury Roundabout to be closed, and Maidstone Road to be re-routed to link with Oad Street.
- The existing junction of Oad Street with the A249 to be closed. A new link to be provided south of the existing Oad Street to connect directly with the A249 Stockbury Roundabout.
- The Honeycrop Hill junction with the A249 to be closed for safety reasons.

## Option 4H1



Artist's impression of the proposed new flyover with possible associated improvements

### This option will provide the following benefits:

- The extra road capacity will help support the planned housing and economic growth outlined in the Local Plans.
- The reduction of congestion and queues will lower the probability of rear-end shunt accidents as slowing vehicles interact with stationary traffic streams.
- Lane widening and reduction of congestion at the interchange will boost capacity on the M2 and reduce the likelihood of trips being diverted onto less suitable roads in the event of a traffic incident.
- Additional lane capacity and a reduction in congestion will ensure that breakdown/emergency vehicles can access incidents with greater ease ensuring that they are addressed more efficiently.
- The reduction of vehicular delay and travel times will reduce journey cost.
- Improved journey-time reliability, a decrease in overall journey times and a reduction of queuing and queue lengths.

<sup>1</sup> [www.gov.uk/government/collections/road-investment-strategy](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/road-investment-strategy)



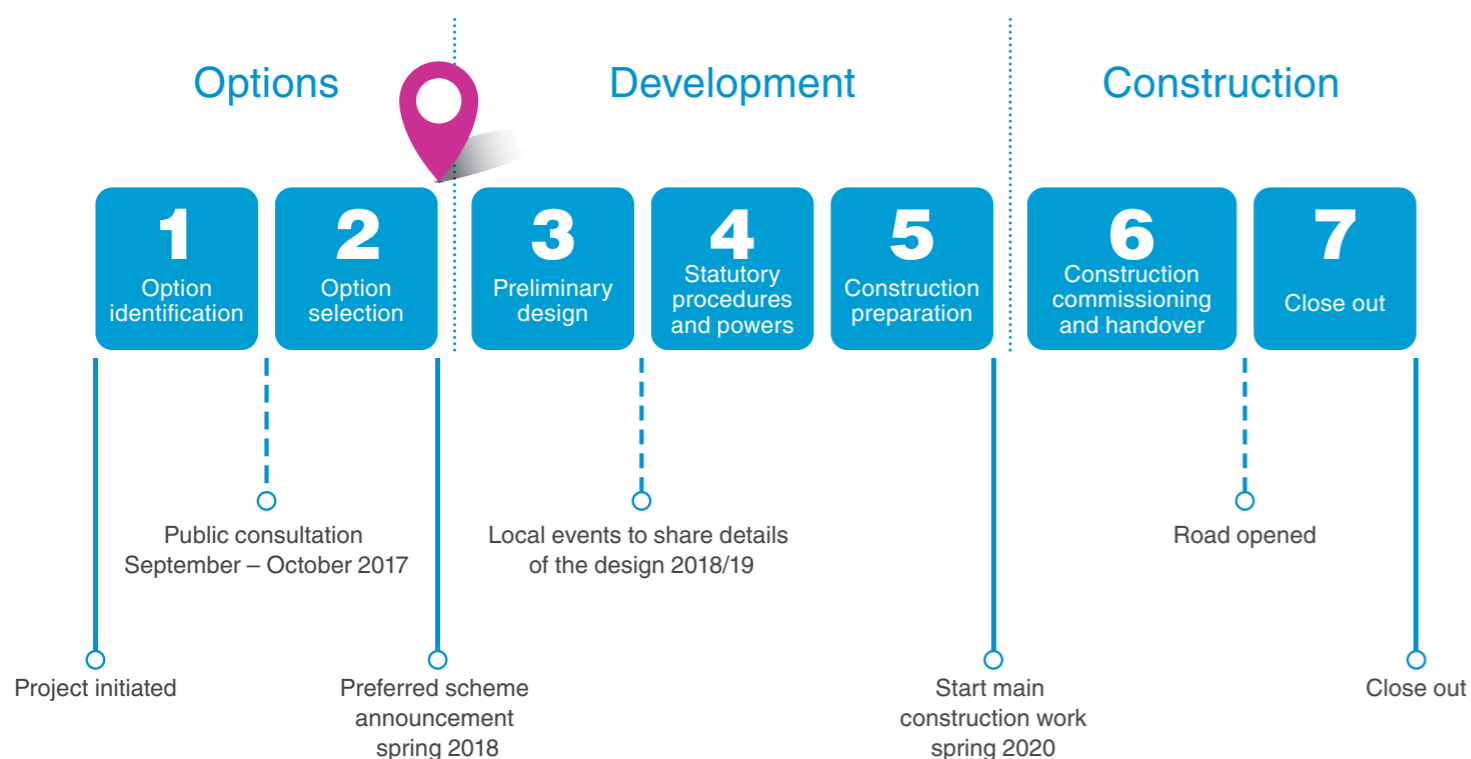
## Next steps

Now we have announced the preferred route, we will carry out more detailed surveys and investigations to allow us to continue to design Option 4H1.

The scheme will proceed under the Highways Act 1980 so there will be a series of public information events in late 2018/early 2019.

We currently expect work to start on site no later than March 2020.

## Timeline



## Further information

For more information, please visit our website where you can also sign up for email alerts whenever the page is updated:

<https://highwaysengland.co.uk/projects/m2-junction-5-improvements/>

If you have any queries about this scheme, please contact us:



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