

M54 to M6 Link Road

TR010054

Preliminary Environmental Information Report – Non-Technical Summary

APFP Regulation 5(2)(q)

Planning Act 2008

Infrastructure Planning (Applications: Prescribed
Forms and Procedure) Regulations 2009

May 2019

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INTRODUCTION

Background

Highways England is proposing to construct a new link road between the M54 Junction 1 and the M6 Junction 11 (referred to as the proposed Scheme) to relieve congestion on the road network, increasing safety and improving connectivity with neighbouring regions.

High volumes of traffic, often with a large number of heavy goods vehicles (HGVs), regularly use the local road network (including the A460) rather than the motorway network to travel between the M54 and M6 northbound. This leaves the local road network struggling with congestion, which affects road users and local businesses.

The proposed Scheme would help to support Hilton local economic growth for Telford, Shrewsbury, Wolverhampton, Cannock and Tamworth by improving traffic flow and enhanced east-west and north-south routes.

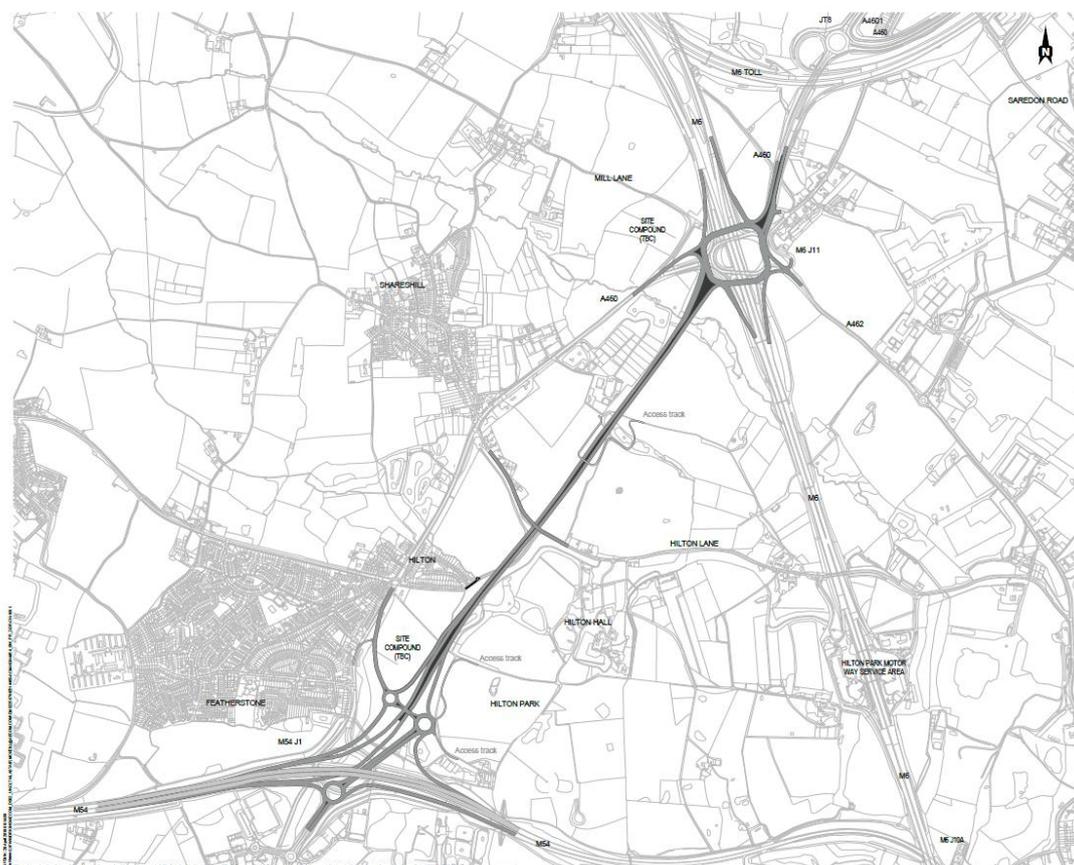


Figure 1: Scheme plan

The Planning Process and Environmental Impact Assessment

This proposal is a 'Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project' as described by the Planning Act 2008, which means that an application to the Secretary of State will be made for permission to build and operate the proposed Scheme. This planning permission is called a Development Consent Order (DCO).

Before an application for a DCO is submitted, the local community and other stakeholders must be formally consulted on the proposals for the proposed Scheme and made aware of the potential environmental effects that could arise, alongside any mitigation plans to reduce these

effects. We do this to ensure consultees are informed and provide valuable feedback to us during consultation.

We have prepared a Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEI Report) which is based on the environmental information we have available at this time. This document is a summary of the PEI Report in non-technical language.

The proposed Scheme requires an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) under the Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017, as it has the potential to generate significant environmental effects due to its nature, scale and location. Accordingly, we are undertaking an assessment of potentially significant environmental effects that could arise during operation and construction in order to meet planning policy and legal requirements.

Our environmental survey and assessment work will continue to be undertaken as part of the EIA process and will build on our preliminary findings. Our environmental assessment covers the effects on: air quality, cultural heritage, landscape, biodiversity, soils and geology, materials and waste, noise and vibration, population and health, road drainage and the water environment, and climate.

The Environmental Statement (ES) will present the full results of the EIA and show how the design has been adjusted and mitigated as a result of environmental assessment and consultation feedback. The ES will be submitted with the DCO application.

THE PROPOSED SCHEME

Scheme Description

The proposed Scheme would be located within the county of Staffordshire between the existing M54, M6 and A460, and to the east of the villages of Shareshill, Featherstone and Hilton. This is within the boundary of Staffordshire County Council and South Staffordshire District Council.

The proposed Scheme would be approximately 2.5 km (1.6 miles) long and would be a dual two-lane carriageway link road between the M54 Junction 1 and the M6 Junction 11. This would also require construction of the following features:

- improvements to M54 Junction 1 to provide a slip road to and from the M54 and the new link road;
- three new roundabouts at the M54 Junction 1 to maintain connectivity with the local road network. Short dual carriageway connections would be provided between roundabouts;
- the realignment of Hilton Lane and new bridge and access road to provide access across the proposed Scheme; and
- junction improvements for the M6 Junction 11, to connect the new link road into this junction, and realign existing connections with the A460 and M6.

The proposed Scheme design is under development and has been informed by the preliminary assessment and earlier consultation.

Design development is ongoing and is being informed by consultation and our growing knowledge of the environment that would be affected by the proposed Scheme. The proposed Scheme design will consider the responses from public consultation, the principles of good design, and the requirements of National Planning Policy. Elements of the design which will be developed further through 2019 are:

- junction layout at junction 11 of the M6;

- the alignment at Dark Lane;
- junction layout at junction 1 of the M54;
- site compounds and material storage areas;
- areas required for mitigation measures;
- non-motorised user (NMU) facilities;
- noise mitigation;
- drainage strategy;
- lighting;
- technology and signage; and
- landscape and earthworks design.

Details of how to contact Highways England during consultation on the proposals can be found in the consultation brochure or the next steps section towards the end of this document.

Alternatives

Recommendations for a new link road between the M54, M6 and M6 Toll were first proposed in 2001. Since then various routes have been studied and assessed. The process of options identification and route selection leading to the current design of the proposed Scheme is summarised in Chapter 3 of the full PEI Report.

Three route options (A, B and C) were presented at the non-statutory public consultation we held in December 2014 and January 2015. Following this consultation, we considered public feedback and carried out further technical work on the environmental impacts, traffic benefits and costs of the options.

We presented three modified options (Option B West, Option C West and Option C East) for non-statutory consultation in September and October 2017.

A Preferred Route was announced in September 2018. The Preferred Route is an amended version of the route Option B West consulted on in September 2017 without the direct link to the M6 Toll. The M6 Toll link was subject to other contributions, however the level of contributions available was not enough to meet the cost of this link. Alignment options that have been assessed and rejected include variations of an alignment to the east following the existing M6 and M54 corridors, and different alignments of the preferred route. The Preferred Route has formed the basis of the proposed Scheme which is considered in the PEI Report and this non-technical summary.

AIR QUALITY

Baseline Conditions

There are no air quality management areas (AQMAs) within 200m of the proposed Scheme. However wider changes in traffic flows has the potential to directly affect a number of AQMAs further away from the proposed Scheme. We have collated air quality monitoring data from 11 local authorities and have also undertaken our own air quality monitoring for other schemes in the area close to the M54, M6 and M6 Toll. We have also looked at Defra's Pollution Climate Mapping Model, which shows pollutants which are contributed by road traffic, and the designation of Air Quality Management Areas within our study area.

The assessment considers the potential effects on 'sensitive receptors' within the area, which includes residential property, hospitals, schools and designated ecological sites which contain features which are sensitive to air pollution.

Construction

There is potential for adverse effects during construction from dust and emissions from construction plant and vehicles. Mitigation measures as described below would be used as a minimum. Any impacts on human health would be temporary during the period of the construction works only and would be minimised using mitigation measures. Further assessment will be undertaken as further detail around the design and construction methods is developing and will be reported in the ES.

Best practice mitigation measures would be implemented through the Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP). Mitigation measures are likely to include (but are not limited to) dust management measures (e.g. visual inspections and damping down surfaces), wheel washing and use of construction plant powered by ultra-low sulphur diesel (ULSD) or equivalent, where possible. Traffic management and road diversions are likely to be used during the construction phase. However, it is not currently known to what extent temporary traffic management may be required.

Operation

The preliminary assessment shows there are a range of increases and decreases in traffic flows across the study area, and there is potential for adverse and beneficial effects on residential receptors during operation. Adverse effects could also occur at Belvide Reservoir Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), and beneficial effects could occur at Chasewater and the Southern Staffordshire Coalfield Heaths SSSI and Stowe Pool and Walk Mill Clay Pit SSSI.

Specific air quality mitigation measures for the operational phase are not proposed at this stage and no additional monitoring of air quality is planned. This is because, based on this preliminary assessment, no significant air quality effects are predicted.

CULTURAL HERITAGE

Baseline Conditions

A number of historic assets (archaeological remains, historic buildings and structures (built heritage) and historic landscapes) have been identified within 1km of the proposed Scheme. This includes non-designated archaeological assets dating from the prehistoric, Roman, early-medieval, medieval and post-medieval and modern periods.

A total of two Grade I, three Grade II* and 21 Grade II listed buildings are present within 1km of the proposed Scheme amongst 21 non-designated historic buildings and structures. The most notable built heritage is Hilton Hall (Grade I listed building) and its associated buildings including the Grade I Conservatory, Grade II Coach House and Stable Block. These are set within ornamental parkland (Hilton Park) and contribute to picturesque views. The Grade II Portobello Tower at Hilton Park was built to commemorate a historic event, the victory in Portobello. The Grade II* Moseley Old Hall also has historic significance; this derives from its association with King Charles II and architectural design.

Hilton Park, a non-designated historic park covers the southern extent of the proposed Scheme, south of Hilton Lane. The park is associated with Hilton Hall and was likely established in the mid to late 18th century and has historic significance due to its association with landscape gardener, Humphrey Repton.

Construction

The proposed Scheme has the potential to result in adverse effects to designated built heritage and archaeology.

The proposed Scheme could have a direct physical impact on the line of the Streetway and Wordsley Green Turnpike Road (A62) (a post-medieval highway now known as Cannock Road), and several cropmarks (landforms indicating previous land uses). Construction works within Hilton Park would change the setting of Grade I listed Hilton Hall and the Conservatory and the Grade II listed Coach House and Stable Block. This could further erode the parkland that forms the setting for these properties resulting in an adverse impact on the listed buildings. Construction would introduce a change to the setting of the Grade II Portobello Tower at Hilton Park. The relationship of the tower with the hall, including views of the tower and from the tower, would not be lost. Grade II* Moseley Old Hall may be affected by noise from construction and construction traffic. The landscape park around the Grade I listed Hilton Hall holds historical and archaeological significance and the park itself provides a setting for the listed buildings located within its boundary. The proposed Scheme would have a direct physical impact on part of Hilton Park historic parkland.

We are planning archaeological fieldwork to understand below ground archaeology as far as we can prior to construction. The CEMP would be in place during construction, which is likely to include measures such as archaeological supervision, physical protection around some features to avoid damage and compiling a record of heritage assets before they are changed or lost.

Operation

The operation of the proposed Scheme would likely increase noise experienced from Grade I listed Hilton Hall, the Grade I listed Conservatory and the Grade II Coach House and Stable Block resulting in adverse effects. The potential increase in noise and visual intrusion from traffic movements experienced from the Grade II Portobello Tower at Hilton Park is not likely to result in a significant effect due to proximity to the existing M54. The landscape park around the Grade I listed Hilton Hall would potentially experience light and noise intrusion, resulting in an adverse effect on the setting of the parkland.

The design is still under development but could include changes to the road alignment to avoid assets as far as possible and reduce noise and visual effects on heritage assets. Measures to reduce impacts on heritage assets could include, minimising land-take and the development of a landform and planting strategy. Our survey, assessment work and proposed mitigation is being developed in discussion with the Local Authority and Historic England.

LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL

Baseline Conditions

The local area contains extensive mixed farmland, as well as the settlements of Shareshill, Featherstone, Hilton, Essington and Cheslyn Hay. Transport infrastructure and urban development have already reduced the value of the landscape. Much of the study area is designated as green belt. The landscape is characterised by gently rolling hills and long distance views from high points. There are a number of wooded stream valleys throughout the landscape. Ancient hedgerow patterns and tree cover limit some views.

Construction

There would be adverse effects on landscape and visual amenity during construction. Historic parkland, farmland and trees would be lost through the construction process, and construction vehicles, construction compounds and soil stockpiles may be partially seen from surrounding areas.

The CEMP would be prepared and implemented during construction. This would include a range of best practice measures to reduce the impacts of construction activities, for example, limiting construction lighting to a minimum and using suitable hoarding around works to minimise views of the worksite.

Operation

There would be an increase in the amount of highway infrastructure present in the landscape. Some properties in the residential areas of Featherstone, Hilton, Shareshill, Essington, Little Saredon and Laney Green, and a number of footpaths and bridleways could have views of the proposed Scheme.

Good design could minimise the visibility of the proposed Scheme, using the existing landform and planting to minimise views. The design is still in development, but the mitigation of the impacts will continue to be a consideration alongside the assessment process. We hope to refine the design to reduce land take and vegetation removal. The design will include a landscape planting design and earth bunds. This would replace landscape features lost during construction and screen views from sensitive receptors as far as possible.

BIODIVERSITY

Baseline Conditions

To inform the assessment we have considered international, national and local designated nature conservation sites within 2km of the proposed Scheme (up to 30km away for international designated sites). This includes Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Areas (SPA), Ramsar sites, Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Local Nature Reserves (LNR), Local Wildlife Sites (LWS), Sites of Biological Interest (SBI), Biodiversity Action Sites (BAS) and Sites of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCI).

We have also considered species that are protected by law and habitats that are not protected by law, but are still of high value. Through our surveys we have identified areas of potential ancient and semi-natural ancient woodland. Further survey work is being carried out in 2019 to collect additional information on local species and habitats, and confirm whether the areas of potential ancient woodland identified can be classified as ancient woodland or not.

Construction

The proposed Scheme is anticipated to result in the loss of parts of two SBI, Lower Pool and Brookfield Farm. There is also the potential for the proposed Scheme to result in the loss of habitat from existing waterbodies (ponds and watercourses), species-rich grassland, marshy grassland and woodland which would require mitigation. A number of areas of potential ancient woodland have been identified that may be directly affected by the proposed Scheme, resulting in the loss of habitat.

There is a risk of disturbance to protected species (including but not limited to badgers, bats, great crested newts, reptiles, water vole, otter and birds) due to construction activities, lighting or loss of habitat. Construction would require the closure of a number of active and disused badger setts.

The design will be developed to reduce habitat loss, provide replacement habitat or manage existing habitat to improve the quality. The design will include replacement habitat, such as tree and shrub planting to provide replacement foraging, resting and breeding habitat. Should ancient woodland be lost as a result of the proposed Scheme, compensation measures will be designed, including the potential to move suitable habitat or soils to another location (translocation) and planting new hedgerows to replace those lost. Replacement wildlife ponds would be provided to mitigate for the loss of pond habitat.

Measures to control construction noise, pollution and dust would be implemented by the CEMP, alongside any specific actions required to ensure species or habitats are protected and retained. The CEMP would also include measures to maintain connectivity of the water environment during construction. Mitigation measures will be developed once ecology surveys are completed.

Operation

Without mitigation in place, traffic using the new road may result in changes to air quality and the pollution of local watercourses. This has the potential for indirect impacts on Lower Pool and Brookfield Farm SBIs, potential sites of ancient woodland, important habitats (ponds hedgerows, running water etc.) and protected species. There is also the potential for changes in air quality to result in both positive and negative impacts on three SSSI. Air quality modelling is currently being undertaken to assess changes in air quality and the impact this would have on ecological habitats and designated sites and will be reported in the ES.

Without mitigation in place there is potential for traffic using the new road to result in the severance of badger and bat habitat.

The design may include mammal ledges within watercourse crossings and mammal fencing to minimise access onto the road. A sensitive lighting design will be developed to minimise the severance effect for bats, as well as strategic planting to encourage flight paths 'at height' over the road. Our drainage design will include pollution control measures to reduce the risk of pollution of local watercourses. Our survey and assessment work and proposed mitigation is being developed in discussion with the Local Authority, The Wildlife Trust and Natural England.

GEOLOGY AND SOILS

Baseline Conditions

British Geological Society mapping indicates geological deposits underlying the proposed Scheme are mainly the Devensian Till. This consists of sand, silty clay with pebbles, or gravels. There are also small areas of alluvium which is also silty clay, but can contain layers of silt, sand, peat and gravel.

The solid geology (bedrock) is the Chester Formation (Sandstone and Conglomerate Interbedded) of the Sherwood Sandstone Group. This is designated a 'Principal' aquifer by the Environment Agency and, there are a number of recorded groundwater abstractions within 1 km of the proposed Scheme.

Potential sources of historic contamination have been identified. There are several areas of infilled ground within 250m of the proposed Scheme. One of these is expected to be colliery spoil associated with the former Hilton Colliery. There are known infilled ponds present to the east of the A460 and north of the M54. A historic landfill is present north of the A460 and west of the M6 Junction 11.

The Coal Authority mapping confirms that the proposed Scheme is within a Coal Mining Reporting Area and a Coalfield Consultation Area, however it is not within a Development High Risk Area.

Agricultural land classified within the boundary of the proposed Scheme is classed as good to moderate (Grade 3a and 3b). Not all areas of potential agricultural land have been classified. Further surveys are being undertaken to classify these missing areas.

Construction

Without mitigation in place construction works could create a pathway for contaminated materials and ground gases to move through, which could result in pollution of uncontaminated

soils and the water environment. Construction workers could also come into contact with soil and groundwater contamination.

Construction would temporarily prevent the use of some agricultural land which may disrupt farm activities. The proposed Scheme would also result in the permanent loss of agricultural land and soils. It is possible that some agricultural operations may be permanently disrupted due to the potential land take following construction of the proposed Scheme.

We will be undertaking ground investigation works prior to construction to identify the risk associated with contaminated land. Should evidence of contamination be found we would prepare a remediation strategy to control this risk.

The CEMP would include measures such as appropriate fuel and chemical storage facilities, emergency response procedures and measures to safely work around, store and transport contaminated material. The risk to construction workers will be assessed, and as a minimum they would be provided with appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE), such as gloves, overalls, barrier cream etc. to minimise direct contact with soils.

Where appropriate, we will work with landowners to minimise disruption to agricultural land and farm holdings, through the scheme design, for example through the inclusion of bridges which cross the new road.

Operation

Contamination would have been removed, contained or remediated during the construction phase such that there would be no significant effects from the operation of the proposed Scheme.

MATERIAL ASSETS AND WASTE

Baseline Conditions

The existing landfill capacity in the West Midlands is approximately 57.4 million cubic metres. A target for diversion from landfill of construction and demolition waste is set by the EU at 70% by weight. The West Midlands regional target for use of secondary and recycled aggregates over virgin resources is 27% by weight.

The proposed Scheme is located within a Mineral Safeguarding Area, which is in place to protect minerals resources and ensure development does not prevent future extraction.

Construction

The scheme design aims to balance the amount of material excavated and material required to fill or build up embankments. Suitable excavated material would be reused on site in construction where possible, for example to form embankments and earth mounds. This would minimise the amount of surplus material generated and material that is disposed of to landfill. There are unlikely to be significant effects on regional landfill capacity.

The proposed Scheme is unlikely to affect the ability to achieve the regional alternative aggregate target, assuming 27% of aggregates used in construction are from recycled or secondary sources.

The proposed Scheme will aim to prioritise waste prevention, followed by preparing materials for re-use, recycling and recovery and lastly disposal to landfill. As we develop the design, we will identify areas where waste would be generated and seek to minimise this, whilst maximising the reuse of material likely to be generated from excavation. The approach to waste management during construction will be demonstrated in a Site Waste Management Plan and implemented through the CEMP.

Operation

Material use and waste generation is expected to be very small during operation and maintenance of the proposed Scheme. As this is unlikely to result in significant environmental effects, operational waste has been scoped out of the assessment.

NOISE AND VIBRATION

Baseline Conditions

The main background noise source in the study area is the existing road network. We completed baseline noise monitoring in April 2019 and will be undertaking further noise modelling to inform the assessment for the ES.

New low noise surfacing is expected to be in place on the M54, M6, M6 Toll and A449 prior to the opening year, and would be used on the new link road.

There are three 'Noise Important Areas' within 1km of the proposed Scheme and the existing sections of road replaced by the proposed Scheme. These areas are noise 'hotspots' experiencing the highest noise levels from road, rail or airports in England.

Construction

The construction of the proposed Scheme has the potential to result in temporary adverse noise impacts at properties closest to the works, including the eastern edge of Featherstone, Dark Lane, Hilton Lane, Brookfield Farm and properties at the southern end of Wolverhampton Road.

The addition of construction traffic onto existing roads, or re-routing of traffic as a result of diversions could have a temporary impact on properties on those routes.

The CEMP would implement a range of best practice measures to mitigate noise and vibration impacts such as the selection of working methods and plant to minimise noise and vibration, a suitable construction programme and a communications plan. A Traffic Management Plan would also be in place to manage temporary diversions and haulage routes.

Operation

The proposed Scheme could have adverse effects and beneficial effects as a result of the new road alignments and changes to traffic patterns. Traffic flows in the area could increase as congestion is reduced and the route becomes more attractive to drivers. Significant increases in road traffic noise may arise at receptors very close to the proposed Scheme on Dark Lane, Hilton Lane and around Brookfield Farm.

A reduction in road traffic noise is anticipated on the M54 east of Junction 1 as the new link road would become the preferred route to access the M6 northbound. Likewise, a large reduction in road traffic noise is anticipated on the A460 west of the M6 as through traffic currently using this route would transfer onto the new link road.

The proposed Scheme design would incorporate a low vertical alignment (below ground level) where possible, and earth bunds or noise fencing to mitigate noise levels. Initial indications show that noise barriers would be required at the eastern end of Dark Lane. The ongoing design and assessment process will confirm the extent of mitigation, including fencing, required.

POPULATION AND HEALTH

Baseline Conditions

We have identified a number of Public Rights of Way in the study area, the majority of which are located to the north of Hilton Lane between the A460 and M6. We know that pedestrians and

cyclists using crossing facilities along the A460 are exposed to heavy traffic, a high proportion of which are HGVs.

The existing road network currently experiences high levels of traffic, particularly during peak hours. This results in extended and unreliable journey times which can increase driver frustration and fear of accidents. Views from the existing road network, the M6, M54 and A460 are partially screened by existing vegetation.

There are no existing planning applications or residential properties located within the study area. There are some private businesses, including Hilton Hall Business Centre, Brookfield Livery and Events, Brookfields Fishery and two car boot sale sites. Hilton Cross Business Park, a strategic development site is located adjacent to the proposed Scheme, to the south of the M54 Junction 1.

Community facilities are primarily located within Featherstone and Shareshill, including schools, a community centre, health facilities, churches, the post office and local shops. It is assumed that residents of Hilton travel to either Featherstone or Shareshill to use community facilities.

We have also reviewed health statistics in the wards of Featherstone and Shareshill, Cheslyn Hay North and Saredon and Essington. The statistics vary across wards, sometimes above national averages (less healthy) and sometimes below (healthier).

Construction

Temporary land take and diversions of footpaths during construction may increase the length of some journeys undertaken by pedestrians and cyclists, and in some cases could create temporary severance from community facilities. Views of construction activities may be possible from some footpaths, affecting the amenity of journeys.

As construction works would take place largely away from the existing road network, driver views are not likely to be significantly affected and there should be limited disruptions to road users as a result of traffic diversions. An increase in HGV movements could increase driver stress levels temporarily.

A pond would be permanently lost to the south-east of Brookfield Farm which may be used for fishing. There would be a permanent loss of up to 4.7% of the Hilton Cross Business Park strategic employment site. The majority of this site has already been developed and therefore we do not anticipate that the proposed Scheme would affect the viability of the site.

Further assessment and survey work is planned which will enable us to complete the assessment for the ES.

The CEMP would be prepared to implement a range of good practice measures such as a communication plan to advise of footpath diversions and road diversions. A Traffic Management Plan would take account of local public and business access requirements to reduce severance and disruption to local traffic movements.

Operation

Some footpaths would have permanent diversions which may change journey length and amenity. The proposed Scheme could create new community severance. However, a reduction in traffic flows and congestion on local roads is anticipated to reduce existing community severance between and within villages.

The view from existing roads would be largely unchanged as views of the new link road would be largely screened by existing or new vegetation. The transfer of traffic onto the new link road with less congestion and clear signage is expected to be beneficial in terms of driver stress.

Further assessment and survey work is planned which will enable us to complete the ES.

During design development we will aim to reduce temporary and permanent land take and design footpath diversions. We intend to construct accommodation bridges to reduce new severance issues.

ROAD DRAINAGE AND THE WATER ENVIRONMENT

Baseline Conditions

We have identified several waterbodies in the study area, including the Latherford Brook (which is monitored under the Water Framework Directive, WFD), eight other watercourses (which are not monitored under the WFD) and several ponds of varying sizes.

The Latherford Brook is a heavily modified watercourse which has some water quality issues affecting its ecology.

The majority of the proposed Scheme is located in an area considered to have a very low risk of flooding. Environment Agency mapping shows there are areas of medium risk of flooding at Old Ride (one pond), Hilton Park and Brookfield Farm, and an area at high risk of flooding within Hilton Park.

Construction

There would be a requirement to work close to and on the banks of watercourses. Construction works have the potential to spill soils, oils, fuels, or other construction chemicals into waterbodies which could affect water quality. There is a risk that this could affect waterbodies downstream of the worksite temporarily. Construction could disrupt the water flows within the Latherford Brook and the other unnamed watercourses, which could temporarily increase flood risk.

Some ponds may be lost or modified during construction, such as Lower Pool south-west of Hilton Hall, a pond south-east of Brookfield Farm and a pond west of Tower House Farm. This could also affect ecology and biodiversity.

A ground investigation is planned to enable us to understand existing groundwater levels and how construction would affect them.

The CEMP would be implemented during construction and would include procedures for undertaking construction to minimise the risk of pollution and flooding. This would include plans for the storage of fuels, materials or equipment, dewatering methods and procedures to be followed in the event of spills.

Operation

Whilst there would be an increase in surface water run-off from the new link road, the highway drainage system would be designed to control spillages and avoid pollution incidents. It is therefore anticipated that there would be no significant effects on the water environment during operation. Improvements to the existing highway drainage network at the M6 Junction 11 or M54 Junction 1 could benefit the local water environment.

The design will be subject to a Flood Risk Assessment. This will ensure the risk of flooding on the road and nearby areas remains sufficiently low.

The designs for the crossing of watercourses will be informed by modelling and assessment to ensure that water flows are not significantly affected. We intend to avoid creating new structures within the water channel.

Floodplain compensation would be required for any land lost from Flood Zone 3 due to the proposed Scheme, so as not to adversely increase flood risk elsewhere. Our survey, assessment work and proposed mitigation is being developed in discussion with the Local Authority and The Environment Agency.

CLIMATE

This assessment considers the greenhouse gases (GHG) associated with the proposed Scheme, and the vulnerability of the project to the effects of climate change (e.g. increased rainfall or extreme temperatures).

The overall GHG production in construction, operation and maintenance is expected to be minimal when considered in the national context. The proposed Scheme will be designed to minimise exposure to climate change effects and to be sufficiently resilient in line with future climate change predictions.

CUMULATIVE EFFECTS

This assessment considers the combined effects of the proposed Scheme on one receptor (e.g. a single property affected by noise, air quality and visual impacts from the proposed Scheme); and the cumulative effects that could arise from other developments close to the proposed Scheme. Both situations could result in effects that feel worse when combined than when considered alone. Significant cumulative environmental effects will be reported in the ES.

MAJOR ACCIDENTS OR DISASTERS

This assessment considers the vulnerability of the proposed Scheme to major accidents or disasters, and any significant environmental effects that may arise as a result. The preliminary assessment indicates that there are unlikely to be any significant effects associated with major accidents or disasters.

HOW TO FIND OUT MORE

The full PEI Report has been prepared to assist the public in understanding the potential environmental impacts of the proposed Scheme and mitigation measures proposed. In order to further assist with this process, public consultation is taking place over a six week period between 24 May to 5 July 2019.

To find out more about our proposed Scheme you can:

- **Join us at one of our public information events:** Members of our team will be on hand to answer your questions. These events are being held at:
 - 31 May 2019: Featherstone and Hilton Community Centre, Baneberry Drive, Featherstone, WV10 7TR (13:00 – 20:00).
 - 1 June 2019: Featherstone and Hilton Community Centre, Baneberry Drive, Featherstone, WV10 7TR (11:00 – 18:00).
 - 5 June 2019: Shareshill Village Hall, Elms Lane, Shareshill, WV10 7JS (13:00 – 20:00).
 - 8 June 2019: Shareshill Village Hall, Elms Lane, Shareshill, WV10 7JS (11:00 – 18:00).
 - 11 June 2019: Wedges Mills Village Hall, Wolverhampton Road, Wedges Mill, WS11 1ST (15:00 – 20:00).
 - 13 June 2019: Cheslyn Hay Village Hall, Pinfold Lane, Cheslyn Hay, WS6 7HP. (Times 15:00 – 20:00).
 - 15 June 2019: Essington Community Centre, Hobnock Road, Essington. (Times 13:00 – 20:00).

- **Visit our website at:** www.highwaysengland.co.uk/M54-M6linkroad here you will find background information on the proposed Scheme plus information on the current consultation, including:
 - Details on when and where our public information events are being held
 - Details of Information and Deposit Point locations at local libraries where information about the proposed Scheme can be viewed
 - Our Statement of Community Consultation
 - The Consultation Booklet and the Response Form
 - Plans of the proposed Scheme, including the draft site boundary plans showing the extent of temporary and permanent land required for the construction of the proposed Scheme that will form part of our DCO application
 - A Preliminary Environmental Information Report which is accompanied by this Non-Technical Summary. The PEI Report will provide further details about the development of the design, DCO process and existing environmental impact assessment
- **Phone us:** get in touch by calling 0300 123 5000
- **Email us:** at M54toM6linkroad@highwaysengland.co.uk

HOW TO HAVE YOUR SAY

This is your opportunity to give your views on our proposals. There are various ways that you can respond to the consultation.

- **Completing the feedback form online:** www.highwaysengland.co.uk/M54-M6linkroad
- **Posting your response:** completed feedback forms can be sent by Freepost (you do not need a stamp) to the following address:
Freepost M54 TO M6 LINK ROAD

If you need a paper copy of the feedback form, let us know and we can post one to you.

Please submit your responses by 23:59 on Friday 05 July 2019

Your feedback will inform our continuing development of the proposed Scheme. Once we have taken your feedback into consideration, we plan to submit our application for a DCO in Early 2020. We will also prepare a report on the consultation, recording the feedback and our response, which will be published with our application.

Your comments will be analysed by Highways England and any of its appointed agents. Copies may be made available in due course to the Secretary of State, the Planning Inspectorate and other relevant statutory authorities so that your comments can be considered as part of the DCO application process. We will request that your personal details are not placed on public record and will be held securely by Highways England in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations 2018 and will be used solely in connection with the consultation process and subsequent DCO application and, except as noted above, will not be passed to third parties.

NEXT STEPS

Following this consultation, Highways England will prepare a Consultation Report on the responses received and how they have been taken into account, including whether or not they led to changes to the design or the environmental impact assessment currently being undertaken. This report will be submitted as part of the DCO application.

If our application for a DCO is accepted by the Planning Inspectorate, there will be an examination of the application in which you will have further opportunity to comment as part of the DCO application examination process. This examination will take a maximum of six months. The Planning Inspectorate then has three months to make a recommendation to the Secretary of State, who then has a further three months to make a final decision. If our application is approved, construction work is planned to start by late 2021.

If you would like any further information on the DCO application process, please visit the Planning Inspectorate's website:

<http://infrastructure.planningportal.gov.uk>

The Planning Inspectorate's website will also provide updates on the DCO application process, including providing access to the submitted application documents.