

A5-M1 Link (Dunstable Northern Bypass)

Public Consultation 9th September – 2nd December 2005

Who are we?

The Highways Agency is an Executive Agency of the Department for Transport (DfT) responsible for operating, maintaining and improving the motorways and trunk roads in England on behalf of the Secretary of State for Transport.

Background

Following the Government transport study 'The London South Midlands Multi Modal Study', the Secretary of State for Transport announced in July 2003 that the A5 - M1 Link was to be added to the government's Road Improvement Programme. The options currently being considered form the basis of this consultation and the public exhibition.

There are two route options, the Northern route and the Southern route.

The line of the Southern route option is based on the route corridor previously protected by Bedfordshire County Council, which is included in the South Bedfordshire District Council Local Plan. The Northern route is a new alternative option.

What are we doing?

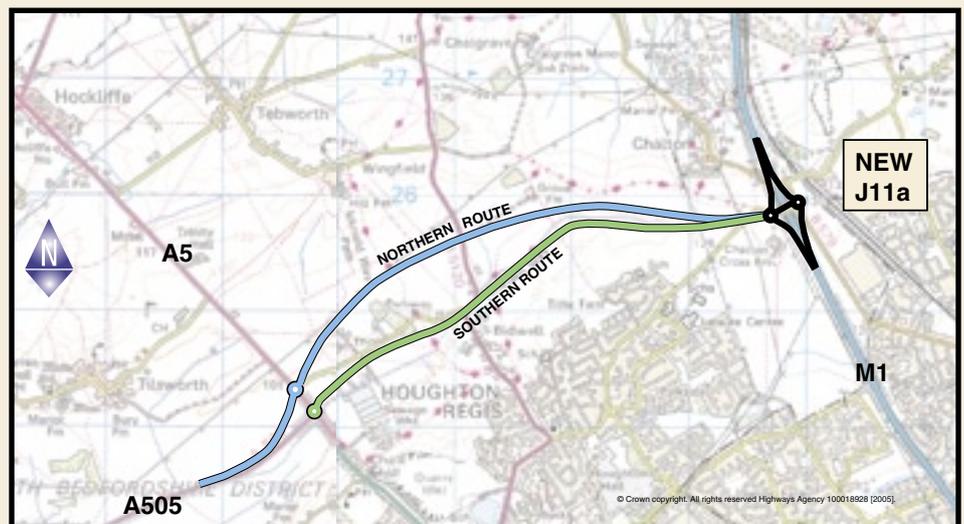
We propose to construct a two-lane dual carriageway running east from the A5 at its junction with the A505 Leighton Buzzard Bypass to join the M1 at a new Junction 11a. This consultation presents both a Southern route option of approximately 4.3km (2.7 miles) and a Northern route option of approximately 5.8km (3.6 miles).

Why is the Link Road Required?

The A5 - M1 Link road aims to reduce journey times and improve journey time reliability for long distance traffic currently travelling through Dunstable. This traffic will be able to use the M1 motorway as an alternative route. The proposals will also remove traffic travelling to Junctions 11 and 12 from the local road network in Dunstable, Houghton Regis and surrounding villages.

How will this affect you?

We understand and appreciate that there may be some in-convenience at the junctions of the new Link road during the works, and we will ensure that this is kept to a minimum. Most of the land required for the proposals will be agricultural. A small number of residential properties near the the J11a may need to be acquired.



Public Exhibition.

You can find out more about the proposals at the exhibition. You are invited to attend and comment at the venues shown below:

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We want you to be safe

The proposals will remove long-distance traffic including heavy goods vehicles from Dunstable. The new route will be built to the latest safety standards, providing the safest possible environment for drivers and non-motorised users.

Protecting the environment

We are carefully assessing the effects of the proposals on the environment and will manage them throughout the project. Preliminary surveys have been carried out recently in the local area. The surveys are the first step in planning how we can minimise the effect on the local environment. For example:

- Retaining existing vegetation where appropriate
- Using noise barriers / earth mounds and low-noise road surfacing to reduce noise
- New planting and measures to enhance wildlife habitat
- Maintaining or enhancing the character of the local area

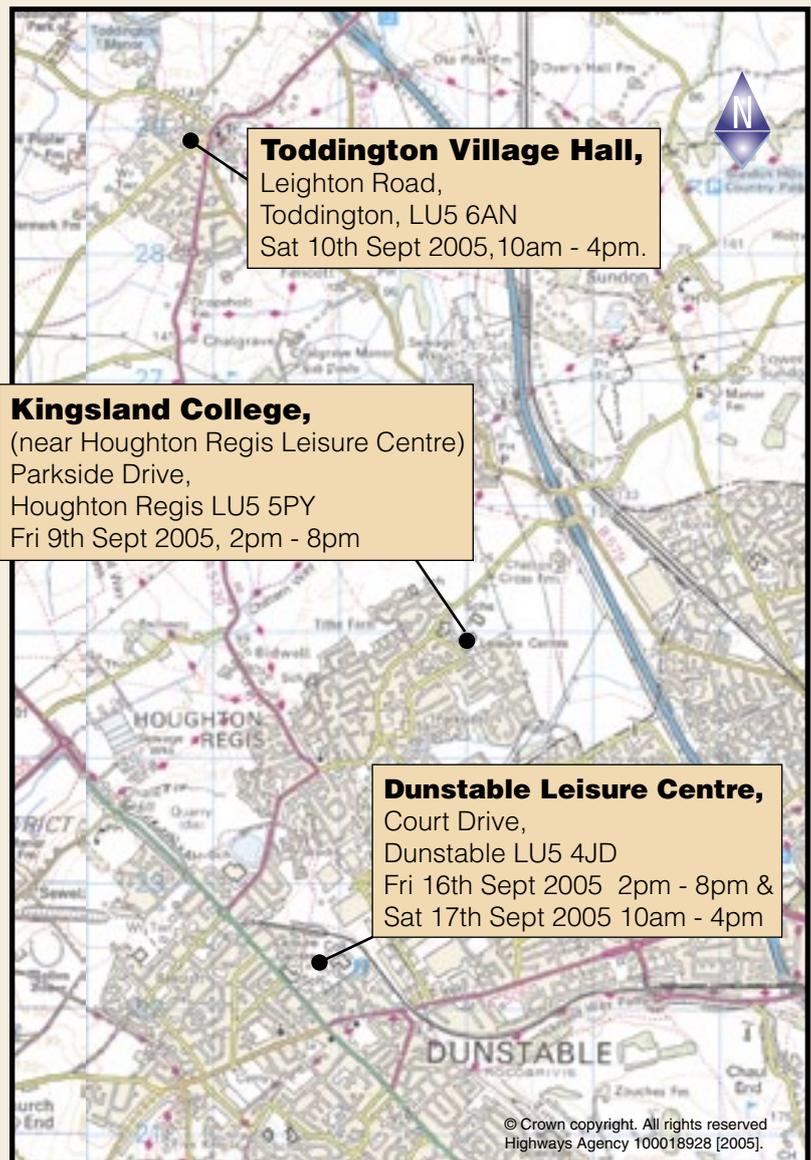
Potential environmental measures are described in more detail at the public exhibitions.

Regional Planning

The Milton Keynes and South Midlands Sub-Regional Strategy was published in March 2005. This identified the area of Luton, Dunstable, Houghton Regis and Leighton Linlade as one of the key locations for development.

Cost

The overall project cost is currently estimated to be £63 million for the Southern route option and £70 million for the Northern route option.



What happens next

Responses to the public consultation will be carefully analysed. The Secretary of State will decide on a Preferred Route to take forward. The results will then be published on the Highways Agency website along with the Preferred Route Announcement. A contractor will be appointed to progress the project through detailed design to construction and completion. This will include Statutory Orders and an Environmental Statement. If objections are received a Public Inquiry may be held. For contract purposes, the A5 M1 Link Road may be packaged with the M1 Junctions 10-13 Widening project.

Indicative Programme

Entry into Roads Programme:	July 2003
Public Consultation:	September 2005
Summary of Responses:	February / March 2006

Subject to the completion of statutory processes and the availability of funding

Preferred Route Announcement:	Spring / Summer 2006
Draft Order Publication:	2007
Public Inquiry (if required):	2008
Start of Works:	2009
Open to Traffic:	2010

We welcome your views

We now need local people and other users of this route to comment.

Your views are important to us and we value your opinion. Please send us your comments by completing and returning the enclosed questionnaire (no stamp required) by 2nd December 2005.

If you prefer, you can contact us by telephone, in writing or by e-mail (details below).

Further information

Should you require additional information, please use the following contacts:

Telephone

**Highways Agency Information Line: 0845 7
50 40 30**

8am-8pm weekdays, 9am-5pm weekends
(Calls from BT landlines to 0845 numbers will cost no more than 4p per minute; mobile calls usually cost more)

Post

HIGHWAYS AGENCY
Lynne Stinson
5 Broadway
Broad Street
Birmingham B15 1BL

Website: www.highways.gov.uk

E-mail: A5-M1Link_DunstableNorthernBypass@highways.gsi.gov.uk

Additional copies of this leaflet can be obtained via the Highways Agency Information Line quoting the Highways Agency Publication number HA149/05. If you need the leaflet in another format such as large print, or another language please telephone the Information Line number above.

For real time traffic information:

08700 660 115

www.highways.gov.uk/trafficinfo

24 hours a day, 365 days a year

(Calls from BT landlines to 0870 numbers will cost no more than 8p per minute; mobile calls usually cost more)

For general Highways Agency information:

08457 50 40 30

email: ha_info@highways.gsi.gov.uk

8am – 8pm weekdays, 9am – 5pm weekends

(Calls from BT landlines to 0845 numbers will cost no more than 4p per minute; mobile calls usually cost more)

Driving through roadworks

If you do have to drive through roadworks, please take extra care.



- Keep to the speed limit - it is there for your safety
- Concentrate on the road ahead, not on the roadworks
- Keep a safe distance - there could be queues in front

- Get into the correct lane in good time - don't keep switching
- Be alert for works traffic leaving or entering roadworks
- Observe all signs - they are there to help you

Remember that tiredness can kill. Take regular breaks from driving.