

### Welcome

to our first newsletter for the A5-M1 Link (Dunstable Northern Bypass). It has the latest news to keep you up-to-date with the scheme's progress.

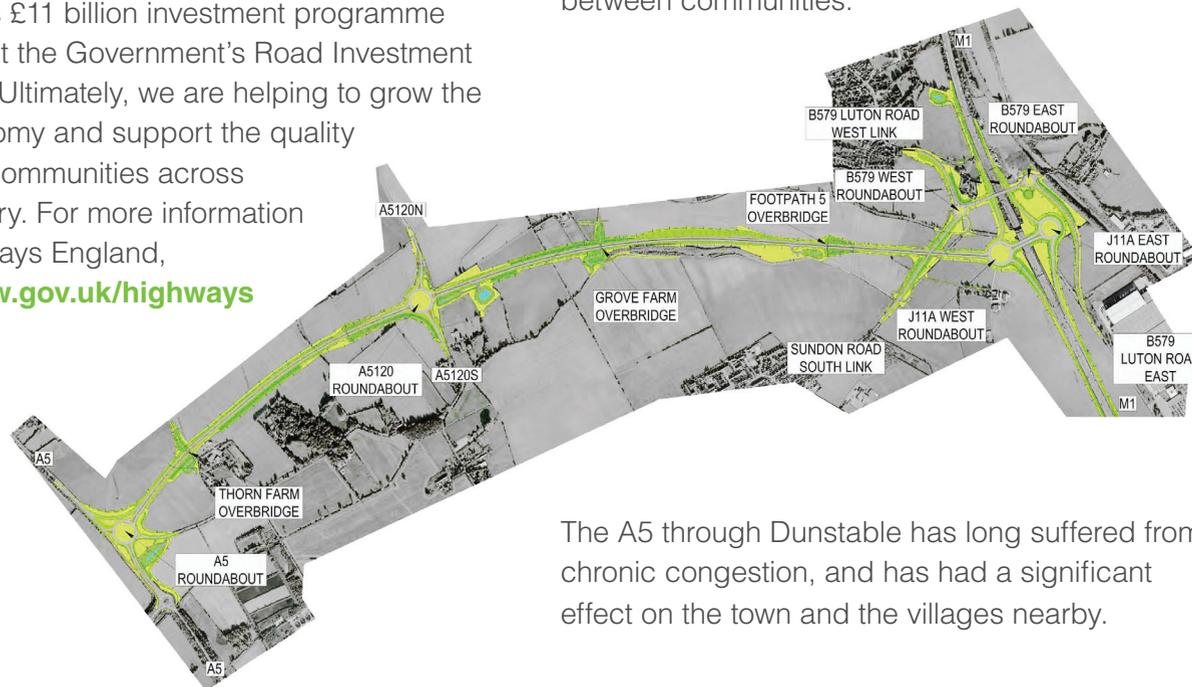
### Who we are

On 1 April 2015, Highways Agency became Highways England. Highways England operates, modernises and maintains England's motorways and major A roads.

As part of this challenge, we are delivering an ambitious £11 billion investment programme to support the Government's Road Investment Strategy. Ultimately, we are helping to grow the UK economy and support the quality of life of communities across the country. For more information on Highways England, visit: [www.gov.uk/highways](http://www.gov.uk/highways)

### Scheme overview

The government has committed up to £162.1 million pound investment into building the bypass. The A5-M1 Link is a vital scheme that will relieve congestion, unlock economic growth and improve the connection between communities.



The A5 through Dunstable has long suffered from chronic congestion, and has had a significant effect on the town and the villages nearby.

This new road, which will link the A5 and the M1, will reduce congestion on the A5, especially through the town and the villages of Chalton, Houghton Regis, Toddington and Sundon.

Our scheme will also improve road safety and bring economic benefits, unlocking the development of 7,000 houses and 40 hectares of employment land, potentially providing 4,000 jobs at Houghton Regis.

### What we are doing

The project is a joint venture between Carillion and Costain (CCJV). We plan to carry out the following construction works to build:

- A new 2.8 miles, two lane dual carriageway and three new junctions.
- Build a roundabout at the intersection with the A5120 Bedford Road.
- Create a new interchange with the M1 motorway - Junction 11a - at the eastern end of the link road.
- Demolish two existing bridges over the M1.
- Construct seven new bridges including two new bridges over the M1.

## Construction update

Preparatory construction work started in January 2015. A public exhibition was held in March followed by a cutting of the turf ceremony that was supported by a visit from the Secretary of State for Transport, Patrick McLoughlin, to mark the start of the main works.

So far we have completed 90% of the site's clearance and archaeology investigations. Five houses have been demolished so we can continue our work on the new junction. Works to the centre pier of the new M1 Junction 11a is almost complete and the existing "splitter island" (a raised or painted traffic island that separates traffic) on the A5 has been successfully removed.



We have installed over 7km of boundary fencing, dug 8km of ditches and carried out significant earthworks allowing the new roundabouts within the scheme to take shape. Around 70% of drainage work has been completed. We have also completed 90% of the scheme's topsoil strip.

## Next phase of construction work

For the next phase of construction work, we will:

- Construct the bridges over the M1, including the slip roads for the new junction 11a.
- Continue works on the A5120 roundabout.
- Continue to work on the main line drainage.
- Continue to construct the two bridges that span the M1 motorway.

## Traffic management

To carry out the work safely, we need to put out traffic management on the M1, A5 and on some local roads.

### On the M1

- Temporary traffic management is in place with three lanes running on both carriageways.
- We have introduced a 50mph speed limit enforced by average speed cameras.
- There's a free 24 hour vehicle recovery service.

### On the A5, travelling from the A505

- Roundabout traffic now runs on the east side of the carriageway on one lane in each direction, to allow for works on retaining wall.
- In addition, there are three-way traffic lights at the A5/A505 roundabout, north of Dunstable, week nights only, between 8pm and 6am. This will allow us to create a cycle-way and footway.

### Local roads

- We will put in place local traffic signals and carry out overnight closures to help with road crossing during construction work.
- During this time, we'll be working hard with our local authority partners to keep disruption to a minimum.



## Hidden treasures, medieval graves and other finds...

Extensive archaeology works have unearthed some interesting discoveries. The following were discovered during the digging:

- An early Roman (1st Century AD) cremation group surrounding a pit of pottery and an intact brooch made of bronze.
- A small 1st Century AD family cemetery of skeletal burials, including adults and adolescents of both genders.
- One well preserved male was buried with his iron spear and sheath knife, another, possibly female, had a copper necklace.
- The low lying valley to the west of our main compound was a marsh area in the late Iron Age.

- Indications show that the site of Hillcrest was once possibly an Anglo-Saxon smallholding in the 7th - 8th Centuries. Finds in this area include a highly decorated bone comb, pottery and 2 loom-weights.

Our discoveries suggest that an Anglo-Saxon occupation developed into a medieval village. The finds show that a small cottage lay within a smaller enclosure on the hillside facing north; this cottage was probably occupied in the 12th-13th Centuries but seems to have been abandoned around the time of the Black Death. Three bodies were found buried next to the cottage.



Archaeologists digging on site

## Watching out for wildlife

Although the area of the new road is rural, the habitat for wildlife is of relatively low quality. Most of the land is arable with some pasture. There are very few areas of mature planting with trees and shrubs that are affected by the scheme.

Our two newly constructed badger setts are in full use, with one of the setts being used by a mother and her five new cubs.

Mammal tunnels are being installed at various locations to allow safe passage under the dual

carriageway. Mammal fencing helps direct badgers and other animals towards the tunnels. One-way mammal escape gates at strategic points along the carriageway also give an escape route for any mammals that may venture onto the carriageway.

We've also put in place temporary newt fencing to avoid any harm or disturbance to great crested newts or their habitat during the construction period.



## Community engagement

The team are involved in a number of activities helping to promote the highways sector and encourage young people into the construction industry.

In November 2015, CCJV site team supported Road Safety Week. Talking to over 500 children between the ages of 4 and 11 years old, from Chalton Primary, Thornhill Primary and Thomas Whitehead Church of England Primary School. We also recently held a number of events with local schools, focusing on career development and health and

safety around construction sites. CCJV (Costain–Carillion Joint Venture) site team have also taken part in various community engagement events. This includes supporting Houghton Regis Town Council's skate park competition and helping local charity, Keech Hospice Care with its Give and Gain day.

Last summer the scheme provided work placements for a number of civil engineering and commercial undergraduates. We have also hosted various site visits. These have been attended by members of Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC) and the local parish councils.

## Communications

We are communicating regularly with the community through stakeholder and parish council forums, letter drops, direct liaison with landowners and local council newsletters. You can also visit our website at: [www.highways.gov.uk/a5m1link](http://www.highways.gov.uk/a5m1link)

The scheme is part of the Considerate Constructors Scheme. This is a commitment to our workforce, the public and the environment to safe and considerate building.

We are also working closely with CBC Woodside link to ensure the roadworks in the area have as little impact as possible to the public. For more information about this scheme, visit:

[www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/](http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/)

We hold forums with the parish council where we provide a presentation on progress of the scheme and the next stage of works.

As work progresses, we will be holding more drop-in sessions for the public at the site's visitor centre, so you can see the progress of the scheme and ask questions.



Volunteers helping Keech Hospice with its Give and Gain day

## Want to know more?

Visit our website  
[www.highways.gov.uk/a5m1link](http://www.highways.gov.uk/a5m1link)

Send us an email  
[M1-A5Link\\_DunstableNorthernBypass@highwaysengland.co.uk](mailto:M1-A5Link_DunstableNorthernBypass@highwaysengland.co.uk)

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**0300 123 5000**

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