

Executive Summary

Introduction

Our proposals are to construct a two-lane dual carriageway running east from the A5 north of Dunstable to join the M1 at a new Junction 11a south of Chalton. Land will be required to construct the road and allow for environmental features including water drainage, earth mounds or barriers to reduce noise and landscaping.

The A5 provides a route from Milton Keynes to the M1 at Junction 9, passing through the built-up area of Dunstable, which often experiences traffic congestion. Other local routes also carry significant amounts of traffic, including the A5120 passing through Houghton Regis and Toddington to Junction 12, and the A505 linking Dunstable and Luton town centres via Junction 11. The A5 - M1 Link (Dunstable Northern Bypass) 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.

We presented both a Southern Route option of approximately 4.3km (2.7miles) and a Northern Route option of approximately 5.8km (3.6 miles). Also presented were options for connections to the new road from the A5120 between Houghton Regis and Toddington, and from the B579 Luton Road and Sundon Road at the proposed M1 Junction 11a.

Public Consultation

The Public Consultation period was 9th September 2005 to 2nd December 2005. We sought views on the proposals from the general public and other interested parties. We prepared a leaflet containing information on the proposals, along with a questionnaire for respondents to complete and return to the Highways Agency.

This leaflet and questionnaire was distributed in advance of public exhibitions to approximately 5000 local residents, with a further 350 to deposit points including local authorities, town councils and libraries. Details were also published on the Highways Agency website.

Public exhibitions showing the proposals took place in

A5 - M1 LINK (DUNSTABLE NORTHERN BYPASS)

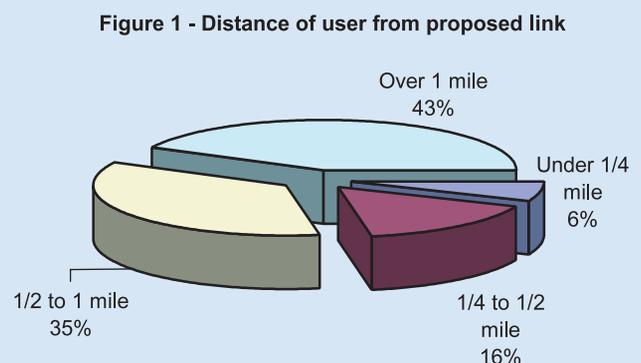
PUBLIC CONSULTATION REPORT

September 2005. Preliminary designs were displayed (subject to change as the scheme progresses) with staff from the Highways Agency and consulting engineers Parsons Brinckerhoff Ltd available to answer questions from the public and accept written comments.

In addition to the questionnaire and the exhibitions, we also received public responses via post, telephone, email and the Highways Agency website. As part of the consultation, reports on the proposals were circulated to stakeholders including county councils and local authorities, bodies such as the Environment Agency and English Nature, the emergency services, parish councils and action/user groups. The reports included illustrative design drawings, assessments of future traffic levels and details of environmental features. Comments and feedback were invited, and the opportunity for further consultation offered.

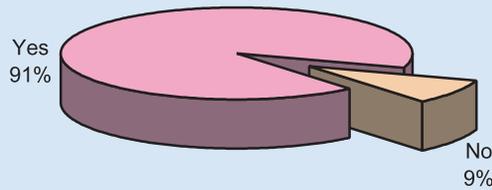
Summary of Responses to Consultation

A total of 1259 visitors attended the exhibitions, with 173 comments made. 958 completed questionnaires were received and the Highways Agency issued individual replies to requests for further information. The vast majority of respondents were local residents, as shown in Figure 1 below:



The majority view was that the existing through traffic travelling on the A5 through Dunstable needs an alternative route, as shown in Figure 2 overleaf.

Figure 2 - Does the existing through traffic need an alternative route?

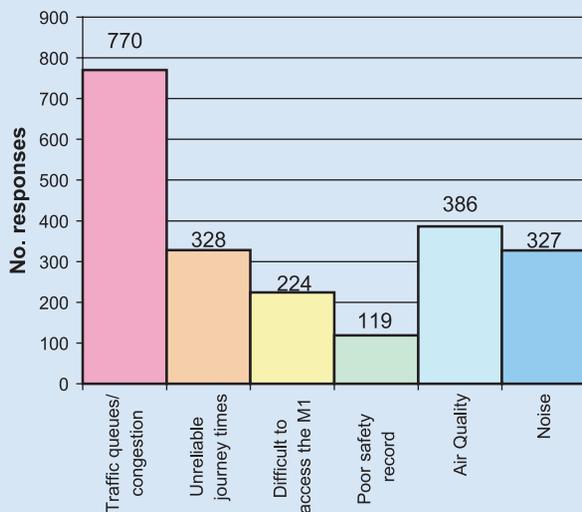


The general concerns raised during the public consultation included:

- Traffic queues and congestion
- Unreliable journey times
- Dealing with environmental issues including noise and air quality.

These are shown in Figure 3 below:

Figure 3 - Main problems on the A5 in Dunstable



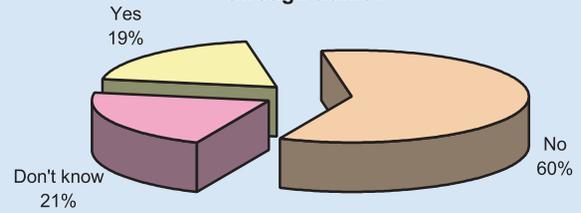
A number of specific concerns also arose including:

- Impact on Green Belt and local amenities including the rugby ground and shooting range
- Heavy goods vehicles in the area and through local villages
- Existing traffic problems through Dunstable and the trunk road status of the A5
- Potential housing development in the area to the north of Houghton Regis
- Other improvement schemes such as a north-south bypass of Dunstable, link to industrial areas in Dunstable, link from Junction 11a to the A6 north of Luton

The majority of respondents expressed the opinion that they would like Thorn Road to remain open to through traffic after

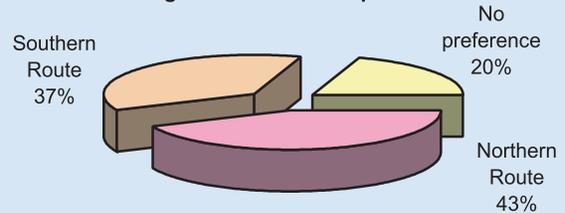
the Link road opens, as shown in Figure 4.

Figure 4 - Should Thorn Road be closed to through traffic?



There was a slight preference that the proposed route should be the Northern Route, as shown in Figure 5.

Figure 5 - Preferred option



The responses to the consultation expressed strong overall approval of construction of the road and for connections to local roads at the proposed Junction 11a. There was also overall support for a junction with the A5120 near Houghton Regis.

The responses we received from local authorities and other groups expressed general support for the proposed scheme, with preference for the Northern Route. The consultation raised a number of issues that require further consideration throughout detailed design of the scheme. Some respondents also requested that they be consulted further throughout the detailed design stage.

Recommendations of Public Consultation Report

Due consideration should be given to the comments and concerns raised during the Public Consultation period as design of the scheme progresses.

Further Information

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

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