

Knutsford to Bowdon Improvement **A556**

Start of works exhibition

November 2014

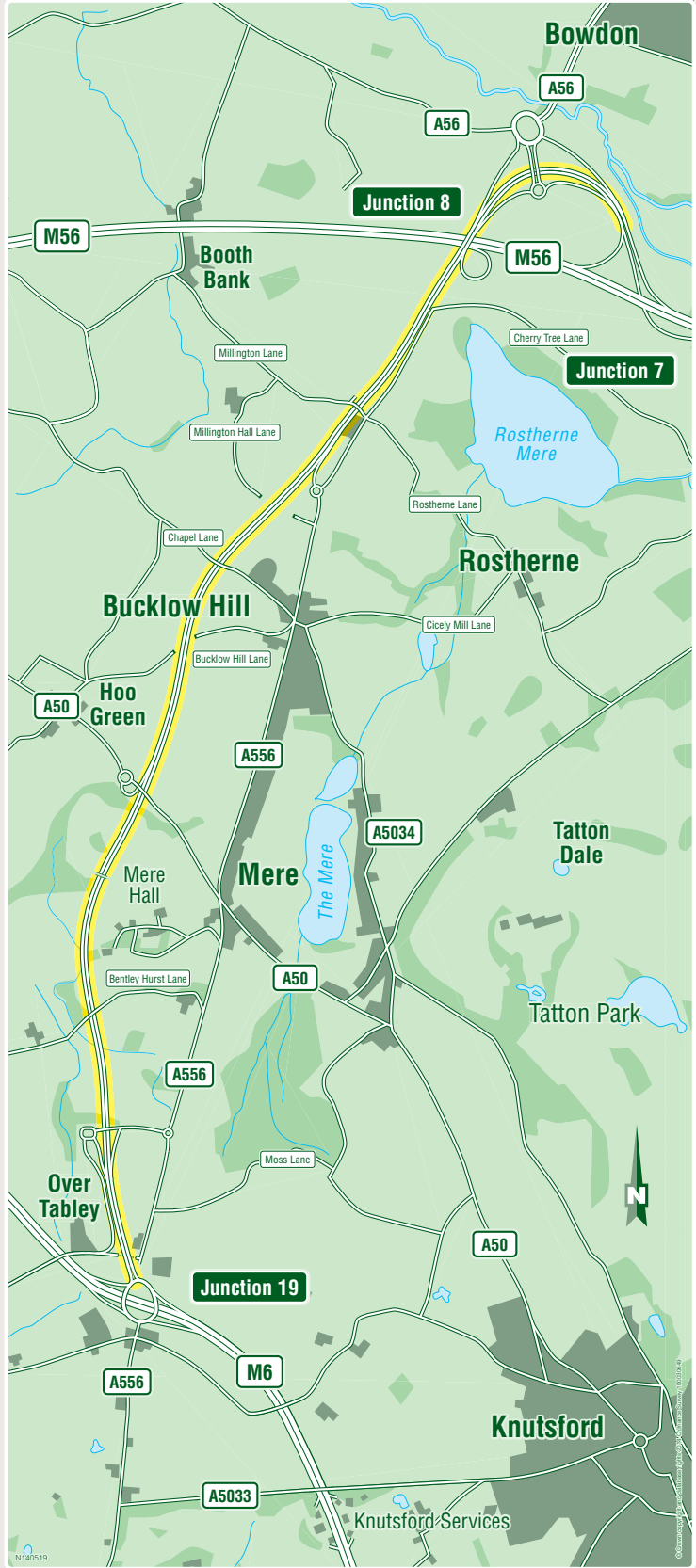
Welcome



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Scheme plan



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The scheme

The A556 links north Cheshire and Greater Manchester with the West Midlands. The scheme will improve a 4.7 mile (7.6 Km) section connecting M6 Junction 19 near Knutsford with the M56 Junction 7 near Bowdon, which passes through Over Tabley, Mere and Bucklow Hill. This section forms part of the strategic road network, but is the only non-motorway link between Manchester and Birmingham. Its improvement will bring significant benefits to strategic traffic between the M6, south Manchester and Manchester International Airport.

The A556 currently suffers from congestion, unreliable journey times and a poor safety record. The road has been identified as one of the most congested roads in England. The existing road is mainly single carriageway with two lanes in each direction, however there are small stretches of dual carriageway. It has numerous junctions, private accesses and field entrances onto the trunk road.

Key scheme objectives

- Improve the local environment in Bucklow Hill and Mere
- Improve road safety and journey time reliability
- Reduce conflicts between long distance and local traffic
- Minimise the environmental impacts of the scheme, during construction and once open to traffic



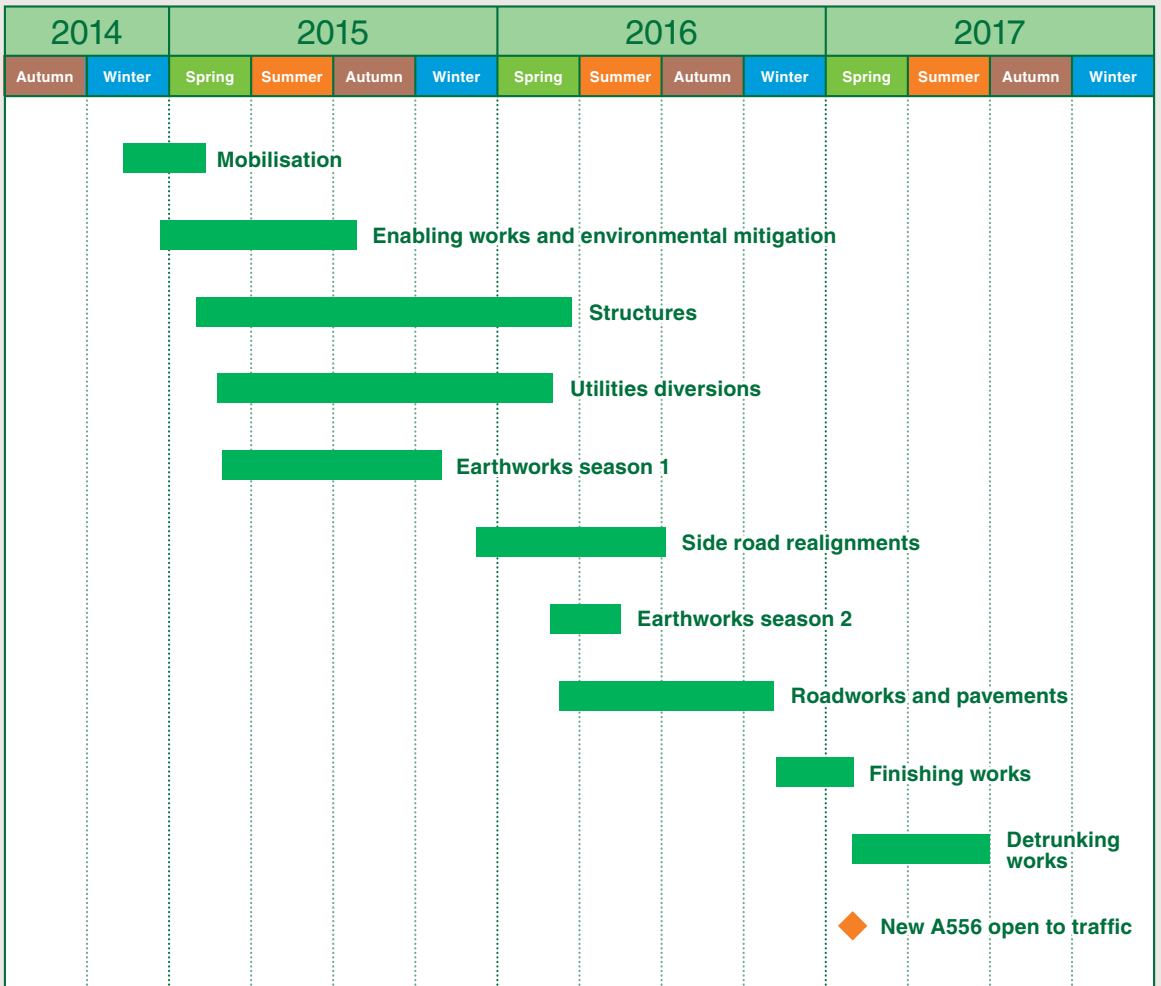
The proposals

The scheme will improve the route to a consistent standard of modern dual carriageway to achieve these objectives. The main aspects of the design include:

- Construction of a new section of the A556 from M6 Junction 19 to north of Bucklow Hill, to bypass Over Tabley, Mere and Bucklow Hill (the 'offline' works)
- Improvement of the existing A556 north of the new bypass, to the M56 (the 'online' works)
- Improvement of the layout of M56 Junction 7 at Bowdon
- Creation of junctions allowing local traffic access to the new A556
- Narrowing of the bypassed section of the A556 (the 'de-trunking' works) and changes to side road connections
- Measures to mitigate environmental impacts of the scheme and improve the local environment

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Timeline



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Mainline works

The new dual carriageway will consist of 2 lanes in each direction separated by a concrete safety barrier in the central reservation.



New junction at M56 junction 7

General scheme features:

- Junctions – the existing A556 has numerous direct accesses and junctions which contribute to accidents. The new road will have junctions which are different levels and roundabouts which will be safer.
- Technology – variable driver information signs will be provided to warn of incidents on the new road and surrounding network.
- As an interim measure there will be a speed limit of 60mph on the new road to mitigate air quality impacts. As soon as air quality improves the speed limit will be increased to 70mph.
- New vehicle checkpoint facility will be provided for the DVSA (formerly VOSA) on Bowdon roundabout to replace existing facility near Cheshire Lounge.
- Provision of a re-modelled M56 junction 7 providing free flow link between the M56 and the A556
- Some facts and figures:
 - 18 miles of new drainage
 - 1 million square cubic meters of earth to move
 - laying 130,000 tonnes of tarmac
 - erecting 19 miles of fencing
 - up to 300 people employed on the construction site.

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Construction methods

Construction methods will follow latest best practice and will be designed to have as little impact on the local residents, the environment and local infrastructure as possible. This will include:

- using silenced and low emission plant / machinery
- minimising transportation / HGV journeys
- screening temporary working lights to minimise light pollution to the surrounding areas
- road-cleaning
- prohibiting fires and providing noise screening where appropriate and feasible.



Working hours

- general site hours will be 7.30am to 6.00pm Monday to Friday and 8.00am to 1.00pm on Saturday
- out of hours working will be 1.00pm and 6.00pm on Saturday and 7.30am to 6.00pm on Sunday
- night time working will be between 9.00pm and 5.00am

We anticipate some out of hours and night time working during the project, but we will endeavour to keep these to a minimum and will communicate with the local community through:

- the Highways Agency's website
- social media
- key liaison group meetings
- direct information to local councils / councillors
- letters to affected residents and businesses
- regular public newsletter

Throughout the works, our primary objective will be the health and safety of the public and our workforce. Our aim is to deliver the scheme efficiently, with the minimum of disruption whilst achieving excellent health and safety standards.

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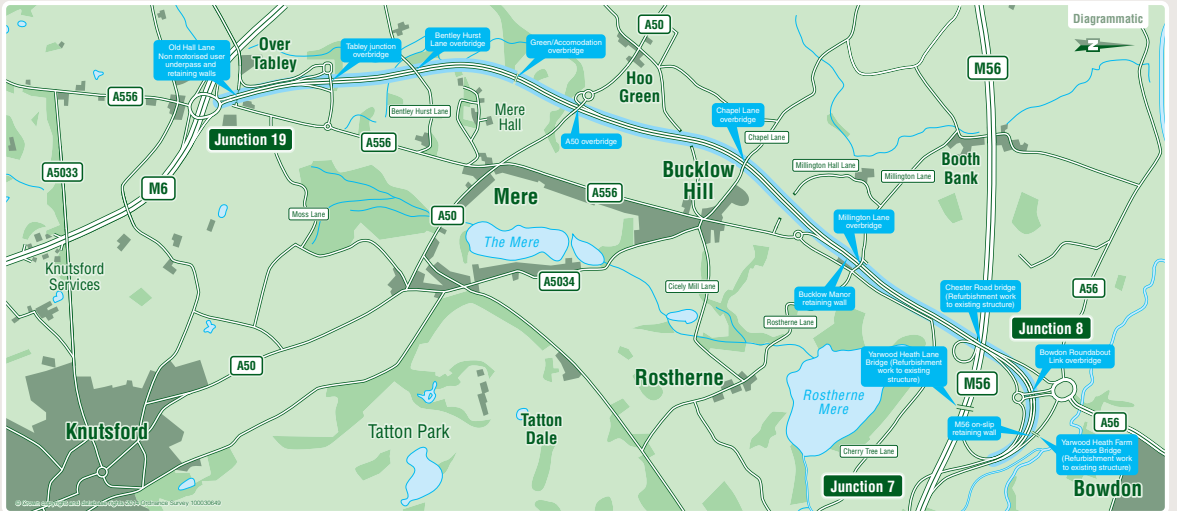
Structures

The scheme incorporates 7 new over bridges, 1 pedestrian underpass and refurbishment works to 2 existing bridges.

One of the bridges which is approximately 500m south of the A50 adjacent to Belt Wood is a “green bridge”, which will provide a safe crossing point for wildlife and reconnect valuable ecological habitats severed by the new road, and will also carry an agricultural accommodation track.



The ‘green bridge’ is the Agency’s first of this type of structure.



Plan of new structures to be built.

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Traffic management during construction

Closures or restrictions will be well advertised in advance on our website, social media and through local media outlets where possible. Diversion routes will also be published and local access will be maintained.

Traffic management will be varied in scale, timing and detail and includes:

- provision of suitable access arrangements in and out of the site;
- overnight lane closures of the motorway and local roads to undertake bridge works; and
- overnight closure of the A556 to complete the tie ins between the online and off line works.

Air quality and dust management

Air quality around the construction site will be monitored whilst work is ongoing to ensure the project will not have a negative effect on the local environment.

Noise impact

Noise levels will be monitored to ensure that the effect on local people is minimised. Silenced plant and equipment will be used to mitigate noise levels and appropriate maintenance regimes will be in place. Screening will be used where possible.



Traffic management arrangements and provisions will be planned to take into account local Tatton Park and Cheshire Show events.

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Environmental mitigation

The project will be carried out in a manner which will minimise the impact of construction on the surrounding environment.

An environmental assessment covering a range of topics, including noise, air quality, ecology, cultural heritage, materials use and impacts on the landscape has been undertaken. The assessment identifies the key environmental issues. Following this assessment a number of mitigation measures have been incorporated into the design and construction methods, to avoid adverse impacts on the environment.

A number of native species will need to be relocated to accommodate the scheme.

These include the provision of:

- 6 bat hop overs to prevent low flying bats from being struck by vehicles
- 20 new ponds for great crested newts



Impression of the new 'green bridge'

- approximately 50 hectares of new habitat woodland
- 3 mammal tunnels to ensure safe passage for animals under the road
- construction of the first green bridge on a project of this scale to provide connectivity between habitats.



Reusing the excavated material in the construction of the new road will reduce HGV movements on local roads.

An extensive archaeology survey will be undertaken prior to the works to record for preservation, any features uncovered.

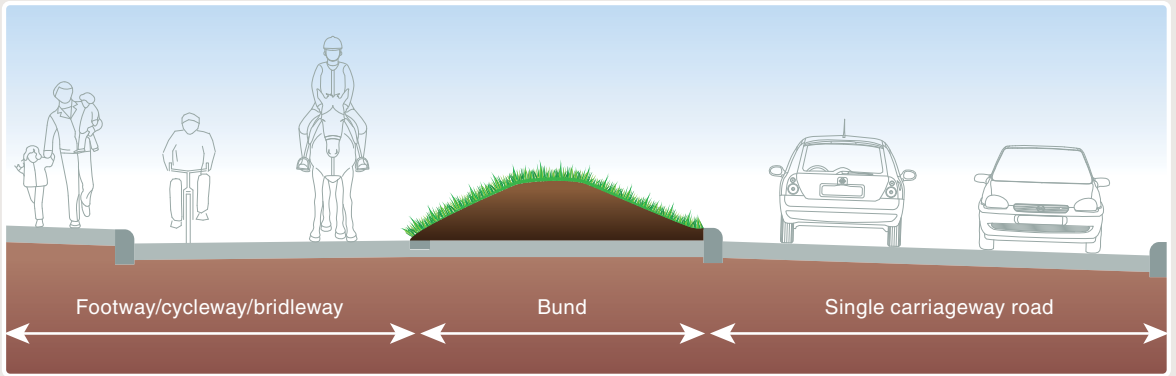
The new alignment of the A556 will take traffic away from the communities of Bucklow Hill, Mere and Over Tabley. This reduction in traffic will provide an improvement in air quality for the surrounding villages.

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Detrunking

Works will be undertaken to de-trunk the existing A556. The de-trunked Chester Road will be reduced to a single carriageway after the opening of the new route. The existing southbound carriageway will become two lanes, one in each direction and the existing northbound lanes will be used to provide a shared pathway for pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians.



The redundant outside lane will be replaced with a mounded grass bund. The existing A556 will be renamed and re-classified to discourage its use by non-local traffic.

There are two existing traffic light junctions within the section of Chester Road to be de-trunked. Works to these junctions are as follows:

- Mere Crossroads – will be re-aligned and the A50 will become the main through route.
- Bucklow Hill Junction – will be modified to accommodate the new flow of vehicular traffic utilising the left turn at Bucklow Hill onto the A5034.

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The team

Client/Employer	
Contractor	
Contractor's Designer	
Employer's Agents	 
Local Highways Authority	
Employer's Valuation and Property Adviser	

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Contact us

If you want to contact us or find out more about this project, you can:



Visit the scheme web page at

www.highways.gov.uk/roads/road-project/a556-knutsford-to-bowdon-improvement



Email us: A556KnutsfordBowdon@highways.gsi.gov.uk



Find us on Twitter: www.twitter.com/HA@HAnews_nwest



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Write to us at:

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