

# M42 junction 6 Improvement scheme

Project newsletter – autumn 2020

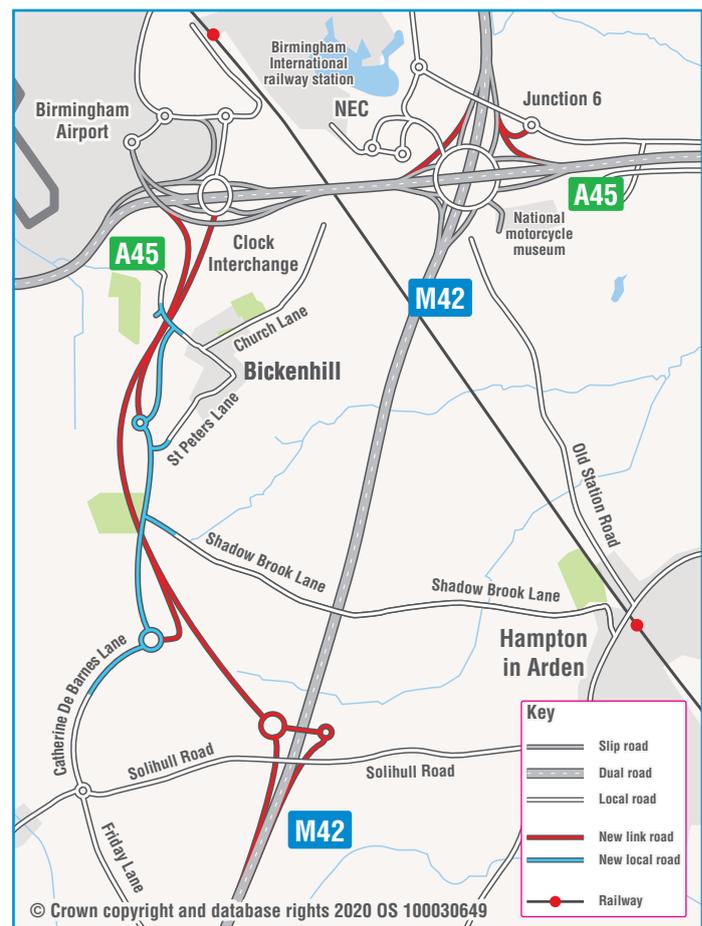
**W**elcome to the first edition of the M42 junction 6 improvement scheme newsletter. In it, we'll be providing you with the latest information and updates from the project delivery team.

Whether you're heading north to south or east to west across the country, you're likely to travel through our network in the Midlands.

We're the beating heart of the country and our iconic roads like Spaghetti Junction are its lifeblood. From chocolate to car production, jewellery to JCBs, our roads support economic growth and help connect global brands to their customers.

Many national distribution companies have chosen the Midlands as their home because of the excellent road infrastructure here. Our major roads like the M1 and the M6, connect the Midlands to local roads and with the rest of the UK and the world, via rail, ports and airports.

We work hard to provide better journeys for the millions who live in the Midlands and use our roads daily, whether by car, on foot, cycling or using public transport.



**COVID-19:** Please be assured that we have strict safeguarding measures in place to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and are closely monitoring the ongoing situation. We continue to follow all the latest government advice and will adapt our plans to take account of any changes, keeping the general public, road users, and our workforce safe.



## Who's working on the scheme?

Highways England has appointed Skanska Mott MacDonald (SMM) as delivery partner for this £282 million, nationally significant infrastructure project.

SMM bring combined expertise in major infrastructure project design and engineering and are part of Highways England's regional delivery partnership (RDP).

RDP is Highways England's evolved construction framework that provide incentives for companies to produce better outcomes, including:

- working to minimise the impact on our customers, the road users and local stakeholders
- shorter duration and more accurate management of roadworks to help drivers better plan their journeys and experience predictable journey times
- buying more efficiently and buying locally - using the capability of a region to benefit the region
- encouraging innovation, for example lighting and signs designed to need less maintenance, reducing disruption and improving road worker safety
- reduced road noise and increased environmental benefits

## Why do we need the scheme?

The M42 junctions 6 improvement scheme will help to ease congestion and improve traffic flows and journey times for those travelling to the M42 junction 6 and along the A45. It will improve the connections to Birmingham Airport, the NEC and Resorts World, and the planned HS2 Interchange Station. Once completed the scheme will:

- reduce queuing and delays on and around junction 6
- ease congestion by increasing capacity at junction 6
- ensure improved reliability of journey times
- improve pedestrian and cycling routes
- make the road safer for all users
- improve capacity to support planned economic growth



M42 junction 6 roundabout traffic

Get updates!

## Sign up for future updates

To help us be more environmentally friendly, whilst managing COVID-19 risks all future project newsletters and notifications are to be issued electronically via email. If you would still like to receive a paper copy please email us to let us know and it will be mailed out to you. Please be sure to sign up for updates on our web page at:

[www.highwaysengland.co.uk/M42J6](http://www.highwaysengland.co.uk/M42J6)

## Email us and follow us

You can contact a member of our team via:

[M42Junction6@highwaysengland.co.uk](mailto:M42Junction6@highwaysengland.co.uk)

and follow us on Twitter

[@HighwaysWMIDS](https://twitter.com/HighwaysWMIDS)

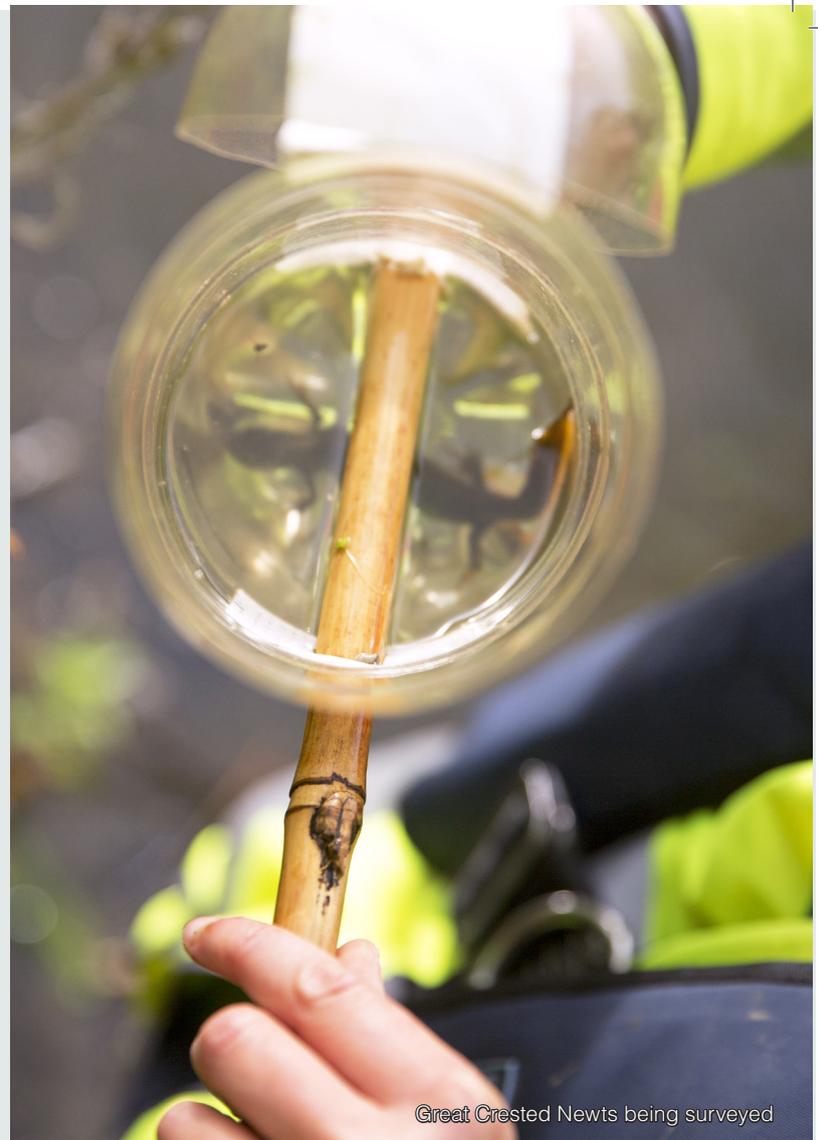
to get the most up to date news on the scheme.



## Ground investigation and ecology works

We have been carrying out ground investigation work and environmental surveys over the last few months and these will continue into autumn. The results of the investigation works will help to inform our detailed design, allowing us to obtain the required consents and licences for construction. The surveys include:

- ground penetrating radar surveys to confirm the locations of underground utilities.
- CCTV drainage surveys to check the condition of drainage pipes.
- bore hole surveys to monitor groundwater and water table levels.
- ecology surveys to check flora and fauna around the footprint of the scheme, including trees and hedgerows and the presence of invasive species.
- protective species surveys to check bat, badger and Great Crested Newt populations.
- air and noise surveys to check baseline levels prior to construction in key areas.



Great Crested Newts being surveyed

## Previous virtual public information event

Safety is our top imperative and we are following government guidance closely due to COVID-19 which has understandably restricted some of our planned activities etc.

While we couldn't meet people in person, we utilised an online platform of Microsoft Teams where we were able to speak to local people and businesses to update them on our progress.

The event provided an overview of the scheme and highlighted the design changes made since the DCO application.

It was the first time the team had held a 'virtual information event' and the feedback we received after the event has been positive so we will be looking to use this method to communicate with large numbers of our stakeholders and customers going forwards.



An example of a video call being made

## Start of construction

The main construction phase will begin in November and the project team are currently carrying out enabling works that includes environmental surveys and ground investigations in land that is within the scheme footprint. The survey data gathered will help to finalise our detailed design and environmental masterplan and allow us to obtain the necessary consents required for construction.

An example of construction plant we may use

## New main site compound location

During the development consent order (DCO) process we identified a location for a main site compound.

We're committed to working with local residents to make sure we can keep disruption to a minimum and we have chosen land adjacent to Clock Lane in Bickenhill.

This location provides a number of benefits including, reduced temporary land take, reduced noise and visual impacts to Bickenhill Village, along with less disruption

to the road network as we don't need to construct any new temporary junctions.

We have now taken possession of the new compound site with the intention of having it operational from December 2020.

## Community focus

Earlier this year, during the vegetation clearance at Heath End House, a number of trees were felled within the grounds of the property.

Instead of disposing of the wood, it was chopped up into manageable logs and offered to the local community.

The site team contacted Bickenhill and Marston Green Parish Council, along with Hampton in Arden Parish Council, who advertised the availability of the logs locally and we were able to distribute all of the wood within the community.



SMM Section Engineer Adam Steele provided community volunteers with log donations

## Construction timeline

The M42 junction 6 improvement scheme will be constructed in 5 phases to enable the creation of:

- a new dumbbell junction approximately 1.8km south of the existing Junction 6 on the M42.
- upgrades to the existing Junction 6 with the construction of two new free-flow links.
- modifications to the existing Clock Interchange junction.
- a new 2.4km dual carriageway link road between the new junction and Clock Interchange (an existing junction on the A45).
- realignments and improvements to local roads to the west of the existing M42 in close proximity to the proposed bypass.

**Phase 1** is scheduled to take place between November 2020 and January 2021. This will have a limited impact on the road network with the work set to take place on private land or land that has been acquired for the scheme. This work includes:

- Warwickshire Gaelic Athletic Association (WGAA) pitch realignment work (subject to a successful planning application to Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council). As the M42 junction 6 scheme will impact on the WGAA pitches we are working with the WGAA and other key stakeholders in the nearby area to find a suitable outcome that will further alleviate the schemes impact on them. Work on the pitch realignment is set to begin. Creation of private means of access for those impacted by the new link road.
- establishment of the main site compound.
- vegetation clearance, and survey works.

**Phase 2** is scheduled to take place between January and August 2021 and includes:

- diversion of key underground utilities.
- major excavation in private land off the network for the new link road.
- vegetation clearance and moving of soil on site.

**Phase 3** is scheduled to take place between August 2021 and January 2022 and includes:

- utility diversions.
- we're building the A45 footbridge and the Solihull Road bridge away from our network to minimise the impact on the road network and the community.
- construction of a new underpass and the widening of Clock Interchange.

**Phase 4** is scheduled to take place between February 2022 and August 2023 and includes:

- demolition of Solihull Road bridge and the installation of the new bridges.
- construction of new Junction 5a slip roads.
- gantry installations.

**Phase 5** is scheduled to take place between August 2023 to August 2024 and includes:

- completion of the southbound off slip roads at junction 5a.
- construction of the free flow links at junction 6.

Please note that all timings are approximate and are subject to change.



## Returned memories

One of the early works activities that we have delivered is the demolition of Heath End House. This house is a property on Catherine-de-Barnes Lane that was purchased by Highways England due to it being blighted by the scheme. Whilst preparing the building for mechanical demolition one of the Skanska engineers discovered an old photo album that contained lots of family photos.

The site team were able to contact the previous owner and return the photos. This prompted a lovely email from the family stating that they 'very much appreciate the effort taken to return these photos. They are treasured memories and we were not aware that they were missing'. It is an example of how Highways England and our contractors always try to put the customer, and the communities we work within, at the forefront of what we do.

Bricks from a demolished house

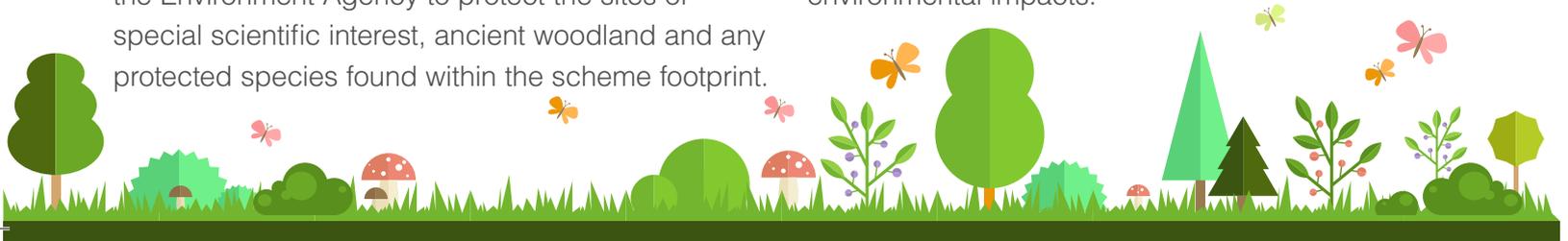
## Stakeholder and community engagement

The M42 junction 6 improvement scheme places the customer and the community at the heart of everything it does. We are here for the next few years to work with you to minimise the impact of our work as much as possible. Our project stakeholder team are working hard to get to know both community residents and scheme stakeholders so that we can understand your concerns and plan our works accordingly. We are working closely with key stakeholders; Birmingham Airport, Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council, NEC and Resorts World, and HS2 Ltd to ensure we are fully aligned, and our work activities are programmed to have a minimal impact on the strategic road network and the wider community.

We are working in accordance with several environment bodies; Natural England, the Woodland Trust, Warwickshire Wildlife Trust and the Environment Agency to protect the sites of special scientific interest, ancient woodland and any protected species found within the scheme footprint.

One of our environmental objectives is to maximise biodiversity net gain in the scheme footprint through the enhancement of natural habitats and the creation of new features to attract wildlife. We are working hard to deliver a scheme that minimises environmental impact and enhances the existing natural habitats such as Bickenhill Meadow site of special scientific interest.

The scheme has been working hard to refine our design in such a way that we are able to minimise our impact on the ancient woodland. Following a lot of hard work we have been able to alter the design of Solihull Road bridge, moving it approximately 10 metres further north. This change means a significant reduction in how we impact the ancient woodland and demonstrates our commitment to continuing to look at how we can mitigate our environmental impacts.



## Virtual public information exhibitions

In January, the M42 junction 6 improvement Scheme will hold three virtual public information events (PIE) to inform customers and stakeholders what they can expect as we start our main construction activities. The three information sessions will be hosted online via Microsoft live events.

The events on the 20th and 23rd January will be delivered with community stakeholders in mind with the event on the 21st aimed at businesses and organisations. Timings for these will be:

- Wednesday 20 January 6-8pm
- Thursday 21 January 12-2pm
- Saturday 23 January 10-12 midday

Each session will feature an online presentation on screen, similar to a traditional public information event, providing details on the construction timeline, traffic management, environmental mitigation, site compound location and community engagement.

We will deliver a project overview and update followed by a question and answer forum to ensure you have all the information that matters most to you. To join one of the events on the above dates, please go to:

[www.highwaysengland.co.uk/M42J6](http://www.highwaysengland.co.uk/M42J6)

For those without internet access, a telephone dial in option will be available. Please call our customer line: **0300 123 5000** and **ask to register for the M42 junction 6 improvement scheme January public information exhibition.**

Tell us which session you would like to join and leave your contact details. If you require assistance with accessing the event then please contact us and our friendly team will be more than happy to help.

## Contact us

For general enquiries about this scheme, or to receive electronic or printed versions of this and future leaflets, please email:

[M42Junction6@highwaysengland.co.uk](mailto:M42Junction6@highwaysengland.co.uk)

or call:

**0300 123 5000**

You can also visit our website for more information about the scheme:

[www.highwaysengland.co.uk/M42J6](http://www.highwaysengland.co.uk/M42J6)

Or you can write to us at:

**M42 Junction 6 Improvement  
Highways England  
2 Colmore Square  
Birmingham, B4 6BN**

If you need help accessing this or any other Highways England information, please call **0300 123 5000** and we will help you.



M42 junction 6 roundabout traffic

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