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## **June 2021: M42 junction 6 stakeholder event (virtual)** **- question and answer summary**

1. Why does Solihull Road need to be closed between the B4102 roundabout at Barbers Coppice and Eastcote Lane?

Highways England and our appointed contractor, Skanska have been working to improve the design of the M42 junction 6 improvement scheme to further reduce our impact on the environment. The new replacement Solihull Road bridge has been moved 10 metres north from the original design, which reduces our impact on the nearby ancient woodland by over 1,300 square metres. To safely build this part of the scheme and open the new link road by October 2023 we need to close Solihull Road.

2. Why does the road need to be closed for 18 months?

The M42 junction 6 improvement scheme includes:

- the demolition of the existing Solihull Road bridge
- building a new bridge
- building a new junction (junction 5a) off the M42, which includes 2 roundabouts that are linked by 2 new bridges as well as slip roads that run from the roundabouts to the M42

This work will take until December 2022 to complete which is why the road needs to remain closed until then.

3. Why can't you keep some of the road open and use traffic management measures instead?

Closing the road is the safest way we can deliver the work. Over 12,000 construction vehicle journeys are needed to bring materials to site and take waste material away. If the work were to be carried out with the road remaining open, these vehicles would need to use the local roads. With the added pressure the road network would face from traffic management on Solihull Road, we believe the overall impact would be more severe than closing a section and installing a 1.8-mile diversion.

4. How long is the diversion route and how much longer will my journey take?

The diversion route is 1.8 miles in length and takes approximately three and a half minutes at non-peak times. At peak times we have measured the journey to take between six and nine minutes.

5. How much advanced notice did you provide to the community of the closure?

Engagement took place with Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council, Transport for West Midlands and Hampton in Arden Parish council before the road closure. Advanced notice signage was installed and an electronic notification published before the road was closed. We're committed to engaging with the public and as part of the Development Consent Order (DCO) process, the M42 junction 6 improvement scheme was widely publicised and subject to statutory and non-statutory public consultations where the views of the public were sought. Solihull Road is included in Schedule 5 of the M42 junction 6 improvement scheme DCO, that was granted by the Secretary of State in May 2020. This Schedule gives consent for Solihull Road to be closed to allow the scheme to be built. The scheme also carried out a further Section 56 consultation to make people aware of the DCO application and invite individuals and organisations to register as interested parties and make representations to the Planning Inspectorate.

6. Can pedestrians and cyclists still travel along Solihull Road?

The road is closed to everyone. We've looked at keeping Solihull Road open to non-motorised users but due to the volume of work we need to carry out within the area of the road closure it's not possible to do this safely. Safety is Highways England's top imperative and keeping the public and our workforce safe must be the priority.

7. Did you discuss the closure with the emergency services?

The road closure is fully consented by the Development Consent Order (DCO) that was approved in May 2020. The emergency services are a statutory consultee for our DCO and were given the opportunity to comment on all aspects of the scheme. To make sure the local authority and the emergency services were fully aware of when we intended to close the road, we also submitted a Temporary Road Traffic Order application in April 2021 and they were invited to comment on the closure again. Additionally, we hold a monthly traffic forum that each of the emergency services is invited to attend.

8. Will the closure of Solihull Road mean there are no M42 junction 6 scheme heavy goods vehicles on the local road network?

The closure of Solihull Road will ensure that the 12,000 construction vehicle movements needed for the works to build the new junction (5A) off the M42 and to allow Solihull Road bridge to be demolished and rebuilt will not use the local road network. Our construction vehicles will be able to enter our site from the M42 via a series of temporary haul roads that we will build within the site.

9. Will access be maintained for emergency vehicles and residents who live within the closure?

There will be no through route from one end of Solihull Road to the other however access will always be maintained for residents who live within the closure. Emergency vehicles will be able to use that same access.

10. What is Highways England doing to support local business' during the closure?

All businesses can be accessed by the diversion route and extra signage promoting businesses within Hampton in Arden has been installed. Access will always be maintained and we'll look to support local businesses with any specific requests they have.

11. Is the diversion route safe for all road users?

The diversion route has been developed with Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council and Transport for West Midlands, and uses roads that are classified as suitable for all vehicles. Safety professionals have reviewed the suitability of the diversion route and are happy that the diversion route is safe to use by all who travel along the road. We're committed to reviewing this on an ongoing basis and will carry out any repairs required to make sure the route remains safe.