M6 Junction 10
Public Consultation

December 2015

Walsall Council

highways england

Introduction

Walsall Council and Highways England are developing plans to provide a long term improvement to M6 junction 10. We are holding this non-statutory public consultation to present the current scheme options and seek comments and feedback to inform the final decision and help shape the design.

M6 junction 10 currently experiences significant congestion and resultant delays particularly during morning and evening peak times.

The area suffers from long queues at peak times on the Black Country Route from M6 junction 10 to the junction with Bentley Road South.

There is also significant queuing on the roundabout and both the on and off motorway slip roads. Congestion also occurs on other roads leading to the junction, such as Wolverhampton Road, Wolverhampton Road West and Bloxwich Lane.

The junction is of strategic importance to Walsall and the wider area, providing access to the West Midlands. However, these queues affect the local community and business environment quite significantly, making it harder for businesses to get their goods and services to market, impacting local businesses and jobs.

Environment

As the volume of traffic and congestion continues to rise it will have a greater impact upon the local environment. We have considered this in our options, with several issues requiring consideration.

- Noise pollution and reduced air quality associated with high volumes of slow moving or stationary traffic impacts on local residents, especially those that live adjacent to roads leading to M6 junction 10
- Unwelcoming and potentially dangerous environment for pedestrians and cyclists that use the junction and nearby roads
- The local natural environment provides habitats for protected species around the junction and adjacent roads

In addition to the above general environmental issues there are various specific environmental issues in close proximity to M6 junction 10. The main specific issues,

listed below, are the presence of the following:

- An Air Quality Management Area in the local area
- A DEFRA Noise Improvement Area nearby
- An underground canal culvert
- Habitats along nearby watercourses, both the Walsall Canal and the River Tame
- Key community facilities, such as schools, local shops and hotels
- Area of housing, including; adjacent the southbound off-slip, adjacent the A454 (Black Country Route and Wolverhampton Road), and, adjacent Wolverhampton Road West (B4464).

The above will need to be taken into consideration by Walsall Council and Highways England both during the design and construction phases of the project.

Objectives

The main objectives of the scheme are to:

1. Provide a more free flowing network by;

- reducing congestion on the Black Country Route eastbound to improve journey time reliability, critical to the needs of local residents, businesses and the Black Country Enterprise Zone
- reducing congestion on other roads linking to the junction, such as Wolverhampton Road, Wolverhampton Road West and Bloxwich Lane
- reducing 'rat-running' traffic on nearby routes parallel to the Black Country Route, Wolverhampton Road and Wolverhampton Road West.

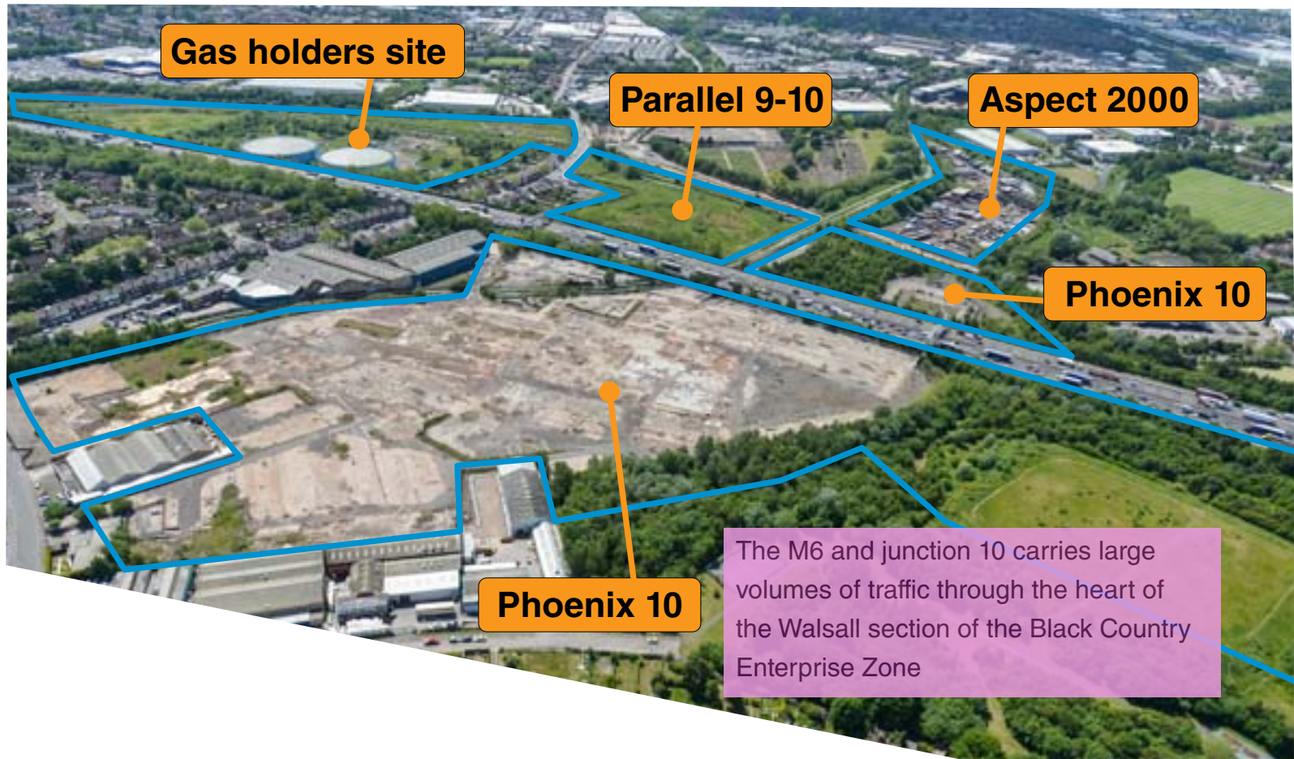
2. Support economic growth by;

- improving transport in the local area to tie-in with significant recent investments made by Walsall Council in local transport infrastructure, with the £26m Darlaston Strategic Development Area (DSDA) Access Project, and by Highways England with Smart Motorways at M6 junctions 5-8 and 10a-13
- enhancing operational conditions for existing businesses that rely on excellent links to the strategic road network
- attracting new business and development to the area by enhanced road infrastructure. Supporting the commitment Central Government made to Walsall for numerous designated development sites and Enterprise Zone status in 2011.

3. Provide a safe and serviceable network with improved access by;

- replacing the structures that carry M6 junction 10 over the M6 and avoiding major maintenance work on the structures in the near future
- improving conditions for cyclists, pedestrians and other non-motorised users at the junction.

In addition to addressing all of the above the option selected will also provide good value for money.



Preferred options

Option 1a, Two new straight four lane bridges

Option 1b, Two new curved four lane bridges

Preferred options

	Option 1a; Two new straight four lane bridges	Option 1b; Two new curved four lane bridges
Impact on journey:	All options are likely to show a similar, slight degree of improvement for long distance (motorway) traffic	
Long distance		
Local	Large improvement; this option is expected to show significant reductions to queues and delays on the A454/ Black Country Route and slip roads.	Largest improvement; this option is expected to show significant reductions to queues and delays on the A454/ Black Country Route and slip roads.
Efficiency benefits for Highways England maintenance programme	Highest degree of efficiency benefits; these options provide for the full modernisation of bridge structures by creating a minimum number of new structures.	
Affordability	Affordable	
Value for money	Very good value for money	
Facilitate economic growth	All options would facilitate economic growth along in the surrounding area, particularly in and around Walsall town centre and the nearby Walsall section of the Black Country Enterprise Zone.	
Safety	Reduced accidents rates along existing routes	
Landscape	These options would all require only minimal land adjacent the highway and it is anticipated that no buildings would be impacted. The current junction already consists of bridges carrying two lanes of traffic above a pre-existing motorway, replacing it with bridges carrying four lanes of traffic will have minimal visual impact.	
Ecology & nature conservation	All options will avoid impacts on sites of international or national importance although some local wildlife sites have the potential to be slightly effected. Any impacts on protected species and local habitiats will be mitigated as appropriate.	
Pedestrians, cyclists etc	These options would likely make limited changes to the experiences of pedestrians and cyclists at the junction, maintaining current levels of accessibility across the junction and on adjacent roads.	
Disruption for road users during construction	Least disruption; traffic will be managed during the construction works, mainly via lane closures. The new bridges will be built almost wholly parallel to the existing bridges before demolition.	Minimal disruption, traffic will be managed during the construction works, mainly via lane closures. The new bridges will be partly built alongside the existing bridges before demolition.

Options considered

	Option 2; four new straight two lane bridges	Option 3; two new straight two lane bridges and retained existing bridges
Impact on journey	All options are likely to show a similar, slight degree of improvement for long distance (motorway) traffic.	
Long distance:		
Local:	Large improvement; this option is expected to show significant reductions to queues and delays on the A454 Black Country Route and slip roads.	Moderate improvement; it is expected that the degree of improvement will reduce due to the need for significant and/or regular maintenance interventions, causing queues and delays.
Efficiency benefits for Highways England maintenance programme	Moderate efficiency benefits; this option provides for the full modernisation of bridge structures but creates additional structures which will require a bigger maintenance programme in future.	Low efficiency benefits; this option does not address the needs of the current structures and also creates additional structures.
Afford ability	Affordable	Low affordability
Value for money	Very good value for money	Low value for money
Facilitate economic growth	All options would facilitate economic growth along in the surrounding area, particularly in and around Walsall town centre and the nearby Walsall section of the Black Country Enterprise Zone.	
Safety	Reduced accident rates along existing routes.	
Landscape	These options would all require only minimal land adjacent the highway and it is anticipated that no buildings would be impacted. The current junction already consists of bridges carrying two lanes of traffic above a pre-existing motorway, replacing it with bridges carrying four lanes of traffic will have minimal visual impact.	
Ecology & nature conservation	All options will avoid impacts on sites of international or national importance although some local wildlife sites have the potential to be slightly effected. Any impacts on protected species and local habitiats will be mitigated as appropriate.	
Pedestrians, cyclists etc	These options would likely make limited changes to the experiences of pedestrians and cyclists at the junction, maintaining current levels of accessibility across the junction and on adjacent roads.	
Disruption for road users during construction	Moderate disruption, traffic will be managed during the construction works, mainly via lane closures. The two new bridges will be built almost wholly parallel to the existing bridges before demolition. However, the two inner bridges could only begin construction once the existing bridges are demolished. Construction of extra structures above the motorway would create more disruption for motorway traffic.	Moderate disruption, traffic will be managed during the construction works, mainly via lane closures. The two new bridges will be built almost wholly parallel to the existing bridges before demolition. However, the decision to maintain the two existing bridges would likely lead to significant maintenance works in future causing disruption for motorway traffic.
Reasons for discounting	Creates additional structures which will require a bigger maintenance programme in future, causing more disruption. Furthermore there would be insufficient width between the bridges to install a vehicle restraint system compliant to our standards.	Continued use of the existing bridges would require an extensive and ongoing maintenance programme, causing more disruption. Furthermore there would be insufficient width between the bridges to install a vehicle restraint system compliant to our standards.

	Option 4; two new straight two lane bridges plus flyover	Option 5; Two new straight two lane bridges plus “hamburger” bridge
Impact on journey	All options are likely to show a similar, slight degree of improvement for long distance (motorway) traffic.	
Long distance:		
Local:	Moderate improvement; it is expected that the degree of improvement will reduce due to likely conflicts between two key traffic movements: traffic exiting the flyover eastbound and turning left, and traffic heading east towards the junction of Wolverhampton Road/Bloxwich Lane going straight ahead.	Slight improvement; it is expected that the degree of improvement will reduce due to the extra red time that is added to traffic signals in order to accommodate the new ‘straight-across’ movement.
Efficiency benefits for Highways England maintenance programme	Low efficiency benefits; this option does not address the needs of the current structures and also creates additional structures.	Some traffic reductions on A449 and A460.
Afford ability	Least affordable	Low affordability
Value for money	Low value for money	Lowest value for money
Facilitate economic growth	All options would facilitate economic growth along in the surrounding area, particularly in and around Walsall town centre and the nearby Walsall section of the Black Country Enterprise Zone.	
Safety	Least reductions in accident rates due to conflicts between flyover traffic turning left onto Bloxwich Lane and eastbound straight ahead traffic along A454/ Wolverhampton Road.	Lower reductions in accidents rates.
Landscape	This option would have the greatest degree of visual impact, with construction of a new structure at a greater height than the existing bridges, in fairly close proximty to nearby residential properties.	This option would have a similar visual impact as options 1a-3, with a third central bridge at the same vertical level as the existing bridges.
Ecology & nature conservation	All options will avoid impacts on sites of international or national importance although some local wildlife sites have the potential to be slightly effected. Any impacts on protected species and local habitiats will be mitigated as appropriate.	
Pedestrians, cyclists etc	This option offers significant detriment to pedestrian and cyclists. It is likely to create conflicts between pedestrians and cyclists attempting to negotiate the junction of A454/Wolverhampton Road and Bloxwich Lane, particularly where eastbound traffic looks to turn left or right from the flyover to Bloxwich Lane or Tempus Drive.	This option would likely make limited changes to the experiences of pedestrians and cyclists at the junction, maintaining current levels of accessibility across the junction and on adjacent roads.
Disruption for road users during construction	These two options offer the greatest - and significant - disruption; the critical section of construction in this option - that of tyng-in a new flyover or link road ontoa dual carriageway (the A454/Black Country Route and the A454/Wolverhampton Road) - would require significant lane closures or even road closures to achieve the required safe working space for construction workers.	
Reasons for discounting	Option discounted as cannot be constructed within the footprint of the junction, particularly on the A454 Wolverhampton Road side. The existing structures would also need replacing.	The addition of the centre bridges introduces an additional signal stage on each side of the roundabout, which would cause traffic build up. The existing structures would also need replacing.

Next steps

This consultation is your opportunity to give your views on the options we are proposing ahead of further development of the scheme and choosing a preferred design.

We will need you to complete the questionnaire for your view to be taken into account, returning your completed questionnaire and any other feedback by Sunday 24 January 2016.

After the consultation ends, we will consider the responses and opinions of the public, local groups and organisations. Following this we will make recommendations for further development of the scheme. We will select and announce a preferred design during 2016. Once that design has been announced we will seek your views again. The subsequent consultation will be part of the process of taking the chosen scheme option towards gaining funding, planning approval and any required statutory powers that are needed in order for the scheme to be built.

At present we anticipate that the scheme will take approximately two years to build, starting construction during 2018 and then being open to traffic during 2020.

More information on the scheme can be found on Walsall Council website at:
www.walsall.gov.uk/m6j10

and Highways England scheme website at:
www.highways.gov.uk/roads/m6junction10improvement

Share your views

We want to know your views on the proposed junction design. Please complete the online questionnaire available via the above address on Walsall Council's website, who are working with Highways England on the scheme.

You can also request a printed copy of the questionnaire from either Walsall Council or Highways England, using the contact details below.

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If you have any questions please get in touch.

This document is also available on our website at **www.highways.gov.uk.**

If you have any enquiries about this publication
email **info@highwaysengland.co.uk** or call **0300 123 5000***.

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