

A5-M1 Link (Dunstable Northern Bypass)

Explanatory Statement



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HIGHWAYS AGENCY

A5-M1 LINK (DUNSTABLE NORTHERN BYPASS)

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

Introduction

The Highways Agency, on behalf of the Secretary of State for Transport, has published proposals to construct a new road to the north of Dunstable between the existing A5 Trunk Road (just north of its junction with the A505) and the M1 Motorway at a new Junction 11A (to the south of the existing Toddington Motorway Services Area)

Background

The A5-M1 Link has been considered for development over the last twenty years. Bedfordshire County Council produced a preliminary design in 1988 and variations have been presented in a number of documents since.

The scheme was identified in the London South Midlands Multi Modal Study (2003) as part of an east to west route linking the A5 with the M1; it is currently included in the South Bedfordshire Local Plan. Between 2002 and 2006 the two options, considered by the Highways Agency for the route were:

- a route running close to Houghton Regis, passing between Houghton Regis Sewage Works and Thorn Road and following the line of the protected route shown in the South Bedfordshire Local Plan. This was referred to as the 'Southern Route'; and
- a route running further north of Houghton Regis, close to the line of electricity pylons north of Thorn Road and close to Chalton Ridge. This was referred to as the 'Northern Route'.

The two routes shared a proposed location for Junction 11A.

The Northern Route was formally announced as the Preferred Route in February 2007 by the Secretary of State. Since that date, the scheme design has been developed, integrating the road design with structures, earthworks, drainage and environmental requirements.

In September 2005, an Early Contractor Involvement (ECI) Contract was awarded to Costain-Carillion Joint Venture for the planning, design, management and construction of the scheme.

Need for the Scheme

The scheme aims to relieve traffic congestion on the A5 through Dunstable. This road runs through the centre of the town and it currently suffers from serious congestion, delays and safety problems. Another objective is to improve unreliable journey times on the A5 caused by this congestion, particularly for long distance traffic going to or coming from the M1.

The Proposals

The Link would be a 4.5 km long dual two lane carriageway. There would be three road junctions:

- a roundabout at the western end with the A5;
- a roundabout near the middle at the intersection with the A5120 Bedford Road; and
- a new M1 motorway interchange at the eastern end which would be called Junction 11A.

There would also need to be some alterations to local roads. A new bridge would carry Sundon Road over the Link. The new Junction 11A would require the B579 Luton Road, on the eastern side of the M1 motorway, to be diverted around the junction. It would also be realigned on the western side of the M1 and would have two new junctions with Sundon Road – one on either side of the M1, linked by a new overbridge across the M1.

The scheme would include two bridges passing over the A5-M1 for use by pedestrians and farm vehicles; one bridge for pedestrians and cyclists and one pedestrian only overbridge.

The scheme would include lighting around the junctions, as well as signs, safety barriers and drainage to the appropriate standards

Minimising the impact on the Environment

The scheme will be designed to minimise as far as possible any adverse environmental effects. Surveys have been carried out to identify areas of importance for archaeology, ecology, ecology, cultural heritage and landscape.

The A5-M1 Link would require landtake within the Green Belt and the demolition of five properties.

The impact of the scheme on the historic landscape would be reduced by appropriate landscape design, screening and where possible the integration of existing historic landscape features in to the scheme's design.

Important environmental characteristics of the design include a "low noise" road surface and pollution control measures at appropriate locations.

Statutory Procedures

The proposals are published as draft Orders under the Highways Act 1980 and the Acquisition of Land Act 1981.

The formal proposals are contained in: -

The A5 Trunk Road (A5-M1 Link Dunstable Northern Bypass Connecting Roads) Scheme 20 – under Sections 16, 17 and 19 of the Highways Act 1980 – this order is required when a new section of motorway (Special Road) or motorway connecting road is being created.

The A5 Trunk Road (A5-M1 Link Dunstable Northern Bypass) Side Roads Order 20 No.1 and No.2 – under Sections 12, 14 and 125 of the Highways Act 1980 – this Order would authorise the improvement, stopping up and construction of local highways in the vicinity of the junction improvement, together with the stopping up of private means of access to premises and provision of new private means of access to premises.

The A5 Trunk Road (A5-M1 Link Dunstable Northern Bypass) Compulsory Purchase Order 20 No. 1 and No. 2 - published under Sections 239, 240, 246 and 250 of the Highways Act 1980 and Section 2 of the Acquisition of Land Act 1981 – this Order would authorise the compulsory acquisition of any land needed to construct the new junction, all connecting roads and all new and altered side roads as provided for by all of the above mentioned Schemes and Orders

The A5 Trunk Road (A5-M1 Link Dunstable Northern Bypass) (Detrunking) Order 20 – published under Section 10 of the Highways Act 1980 – this order will authorise that a length of the A5 will cease to be a trunk road from the date on which the Secretary of State notifies the Central Bedfordshire Council Bedfordshire County Council and Hertfordshire County Council that the new trunk road is open for traffic.

The A5 Trunk Road (A5-M1 Link Dunstable Northern Bypass) Order 20
– published under Section 10 and 41 of the Highways Act 1980 – this order authorises the construction of a new section of trunk road or trunk road slip roads.

Environmental Statement and Non Technical Summary

An Environmental Statement and Non-Technical Summary are published under Section 105A of the Highways Act. These documents describe the scheme and the main effects it is likely to have on the environment together with the measures proposed to reduce or eliminate adverse effects of the scheme on the environment.

More Information

Copies of each draft Scheme and Order and their associated plans, along with the Environmental Statement, can be inspected free of charge at all reasonable hours from 9th December 2009 until 2nd March 2010 at:

The Highways Agency, Woodlands, Manton Lane, Manton Lane Industrial Estate, Bedford MK41 7LW; The Highways Agency, 5 Broadway, Broad Street, Birmingham B15 1BL; Government Office for the East of England, Eastbrook, Shaftesbury Road, Cambridge CB2 8DF; Luton Borough Council, Town Hall, George Street, Luton LU1 2BQ; Central Bedfordshire Council, The Council Offices, High Street North, Dunstable LU6 1LF; Bedford Borough Council, Borough Hall, Cauldwell Street, Bedford, MK42 9AP; Dunstable Town Council, Grove House, 76 High Street, Dunstable LU6 1NF; Houghton Regis Town Council, Council Offices, Peel Street, Houghton Regis, Bedfordshire, LU5 5EY,

Public Exhibitions will be held as follows:

Thursday 17th December 2009 from 2pm to 8pm
Adult Learning Office
Kingsland Skills & Enterprise Centre
Parkside Drive
Houghton Regis
Bedfordshire
LU5 5PY

Thursday 7th January 2010 from 2pm to 8pm
Dunstable Leisure Centre
Court Drive
Dunstable
LU5 4JD

Saturday 9th January 2010 from 10am to 4pm.
Wilkinson Church Hall
Station Rd
Toddington
Bedfordshire
LU5 6BN

To Comment on the Proposals

For a period of 12 weeks until 2nd March 2010 anyone wishing to support, comment on or object to the proposals should write to the Highways Agency, at the address below, quoting reference HA/065/009/000387.

Depending on the nature and number of objections received, a Public Inquiry may be held before an Independent Inspector. Any comments received will be made available to the Inspector, who may decide to make them public. Should any alternative routes be proposed by objectors, they would be publicised in the local press so that anyone affected would have the opportunity to support, comment on or object to them.

What Happens Next

If an inquiry is to be held, all those who have responded will be notified of the date and the venue at least six weeks beforehand. Notices will also appear in the local press.

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