

M2 Junction 5 improvements scheme

Report on Public Consultation



TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | | |
|-----|--|----|
| 1 | EXECUTIVE SUMMARY..... | 1 |
| 1.1 | CONTEXT | 1 |
| 1.2 | SCHEME BACKGROUND..... | 1 |
| 1.3 | THIS REPORT | 2 |
| 1.4 | THE PROPOSAL | 3 |
| 1.5 | CONSULTATION ARRANGEMENTS..... | 3 |
| 1.6 | EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PUBLIC CONSULTATION | 4 |
| 1.7 | QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSE ANALYSIS | 4 |
| 1.8 | STAKEHOLDER RESPONSES..... | 4 |
| 1.9 | CONCLUSION | 5 |
| 2 | INTRODUCTION..... | 6 |
| 2.1 | BACKGROUND | 6 |
| 2.2 | PROJECT LOCATION..... | 6 |
| 3 | THE CONSULTATION APPROACH | 8 |
| 3.1 | INTRODUCTION..... | 8 |
| 3.2 | PUBLIC CONSULTATION OBJECTIVES | 8 |
| 3.3 | APPROACH | 8 |
| 3.4 | MATERIALS..... | 10 |
| 3.5 | COMMUNICATION CHANNELS | 11 |
| 3.6 | PUBLICITY AND ADVERTISING | 15 |
| 4 | CONSULTATION EFFECTIVENESS..... | 17 |
| 4.1 | INTRODUCTION..... | 17 |
| 4.2 | QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES | 17 |
| 4.3 | LETTERS AND EMAILS..... | 17 |
| 4.4 | PUBLIC EXHIBITION ATTENDANCE RECORD | 18 |
| 4.5 | HIGHWAYS ENGLAND WEBSITE VISITORS | 19 |
| 4.6 | RESPONSE AND ANALYSIS METHODOLOGY..... | 19 |
| 4.7 | EFFECTIVENESS OF COMMUNICATION METHODS | 20 |
| 5 | TRAVEL BEHAVIOUR AND EXISTING ISSUES | 22 |
| 5.1 | TRAVEL BEHAVIOUR | 22 |

| | | |
|-----|---|----|
| 5.2 | MODE CHOICE..... | 23 |
| 5.3 | EXISTING CONCERNS AND ISSUES | 24 |
| 5.4 | LOCAL ISSUES..... | 26 |
| 6 | VIEWS ON THE PROPOSED OPTION 12A | 28 |
| 6.1 | INTRODUCTION..... | 28 |
| 6.2 | NEED FOR IMPROVEMENTS TO M2 JUNCTION 5 | 28 |
| 6.3 | VIEWS ON PROPOSED SCHEME (OPTION 12A)..... | 29 |
| 6.4 | ALTERNATIVE IDEAS | 35 |
| 6.5 | PROVISION FOR PEDESTRIANS, CYCLISTS AND HORSE RIDERS | 36 |
| 6.6 | OTHER COMMENTS..... | 37 |
| 7 | STAKEHOLDER RESPONSES | 39 |
| 7.1 | INTRODUCTION..... | 39 |
| 7.2 | LOCAL AUTHORITY RESPONSES..... | 39 |
| 7.3 | Members OF PARLIAMENT & LOCAL AUTHORITY COUNCILLORS | 43 |
| 7.4 | PARISH COUNCILS | 50 |
| 7.5 | STATUTORY ENVIRONMENTAL BODIES | 56 |
| 7.6 | LOCAL BUSINESS GROUPS AND ORGANISATIONs | 61 |
| 7.7 | TRANSPORT / USER GROUPS | 67 |
| 7.8 | LOCAL COMMUNITY GROUPS | 68 |
| 8 | OTHER RESPONSES | 72 |
| 8.1 | INTRODUCTION..... | 72 |
| 8.2 | RESPONSE ANALYSIS | 72 |
| 9 | EVALUATION OF CONSULTATION..... | 74 |
| 9.1 | INTRODUCTION..... | 74 |
| 9.2 | CONSULTATION PROCESS | 74 |
| 9.3 | MATERIAL USEFULNESS..... | 75 |
| 9.4 | EXHIBITIONS USEFULNESS | 76 |
| 9.5 | TOPICS / ISSUES RAISED AT EXHIBITIONS | 78 |

| | | |
|-------------|---|-----------|
| 9.6 | LESSONS LEARNT..... | 78 |
| 10 | PRESS & SOCIAL MEDIA | 79 |
| 10.1 | INTRODUCTION..... | 79 |
| 10.2 | LOCAL PRESS COVERAGE | 79 |
| 10.3 | SOCIAL MEDIA | 83 |
| 11 | NEXT STEPS..... | 87 |
| 11.1 | Introduction..... | 87 |
| 11.2 | KEY EMERGING THEMES | 87 |
| 12 | SUMMARY | 89 |
| 12.1 | QUESTIONNAIRE ANALYSIS | 89 |
| 12.2 | STAKEHOLDER RESPONSE ANALYSIS..... | 89 |
| 12.3 | CONSULTATION EFFECTIVENESS | 89 |
| 12.4 | overall summary | 89 |

TABLES

| | |
|---|----|
| TABLE 3-1 COMMUNICATION MATERIALS AND CHANNELS | 9 |
| TABLE 3-2 SCHEDULE OF PUBLIC CONSULTATION EVENTS..... | 12 |
| TABLE 3-3 DEPOSIT POINTS..... | 13 |
| TABLE 4-1: CONSULTATION RESPONSES | 17 |
| TABLE 4-2 PUBLIC EXHIBITION ATTENDANCE..... | 18 |
| TABLE 4-3 WEBSITE VISITOR FIGURES | 19 |
| TABLE 5-1 WHAT SPECIFIC LOCAL ISSUES DO YOU FEEL WE SHOULD BE AWARE OF IN DEVELOPING OUR PROPOSALS FOR THE M2 JUNCTION 5? | 26 |
| TABLE 6-1 PLEASE PROVIDE DETAILS TO ILLUSTRATE YOUR RESPONSE TO QUESTION 8. | 31 |
| TABLE 6-2 DO YOU HAVE ANY OUTSTANDING CONCERNS ABOUT THE PROPOSED OPTION (12A) TO IMPROVE THE M2 JUNCTION 5? OTHER CONCERNS VERBATIM (PLEASE EXPLAIN):..... | 34 |
| TABLE 6-3 HAVING READ THE BROCHURE AND TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THE CONSTRAINTS, PLEASE SHARE YOUR VIEWS ON ANY OTHER IDEAS YOU WOULD LIKE US TO CONSIDER RELATED TO THIS SCHEME. | 35 |
| TABLE 6-4 HOW DO YOU THINK WE CAN IMPROVE ROUTES FOR OTHER HIGHWAY USERS INCLUDING PEDESTRIANS, CYCLISTS AND HORSE RIDERS AS PART OF OUR PROPOSALS?..... | 36 |
| TABLE 6-5 DO YOU HAVE ANY OTHER COMMENTS ON THE PROPOSALS FOR THE M2 JUNCTION 5 SCHEME (OPTION 12A)? | 38 |
| TABLE 7-1 SUMMARY OF RESPONSE FROM KENT COUNTY COUNCIL | 39 |
| TABLE 7-2 SUMMARY OF RESPONSE FROM SWALE BOROUGH COUNCIL | 40 |
| TABLE 7-3 SUMMARY OF RESPONSE FROM MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL | 41 |
| TABLE 7-4 SUMMARY OF RESPONSE FROM GORDON HENDERSON MP FOR SITTINGBOURNE AND SHEPPEY | 43 |
| TABLE 7-5 SUMMARY OF RESPONSE FROM COUNCILLOR MIKE WHITING - KENT COUNTY COUNCIL | 44 |
| TABLE 7-6 SUMMARY OF RESPONSE FROM COUNCILLORS JAMES HUNT & LLOYD BOWEN - SWALE BOROUGH COUNCIL | 45 |
| TABLE 7-7 SUMMARY OF RESPONSE FROM COUNCILLOR CAMERON BEART - SWALE BOROUGH COUNCIL | 45 |

| | |
|--|----|
| TABLE 7-8 SUMMARY OF RESPONSE FROM COUNCILLOR NICHOLAS HAPSHIRE - SWALE BOROUGH COUNCIL | 46 |
| TABLE 7-9 SUMMARY OF RESPONSE FROM COUNCILLOR TONY HARWOOD – MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL | 47 |
| TABLE 7-10 SUMMARY OF RESPONSE FROM COUNCILLOR PATRICK GARTEN– MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL | 49 |
| TABLE 7-11 SUMMARY OF RESPONSE FROM STOCKBURY PARISH COUNCIL..... | 50 |
| TABLE 7-12 SUMMARY OF RESPONSE FROM THURNHAM PARISH COUNCIL AND DETLING PARISH COUNCIL | 51 |
| TABLE 7-13 SUMMARY OF RESPONSE FROM MINSTER ON SEA PARISH COUNCIL..... | 52 |
| TABLE 7-14 SUMMARY OF RESPONSE FROM BOBBING PARISH COUNCIL | 53 |
| TABLE 7-15 SUMMARY OF RESPONSE FROM IWADE PARISH COUNCIL | 54 |
| TABLE 7-16 SUMMARY OF RESPONSE FROM HARTLIP PARISH COUNCIL | 54 |
| TABLE 7-17 SUMMARY OF RESPONSE FROM TUNSTALL PARISH COUNCIL | 55 |
| TABLE 7-18 SUMMARY OF RESPONSE FROM BREDGAR PARISH COUNCIL | 55 |
| TABLE 7-19 SUMMARY OF RESPONSE FROM KENT DOWNS AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY..... | 56 |
| TABLE 7-20 SUMMARY OF RESPONSE FROM NATURAL ENGLAND | 59 |
| TABLE 7-21 SUMMARY OF RESPONSE FROM ENGLISH HERITAGE | 60 |
| TABLE 7-22 SUMMARY OF RESPONSE FROM KEMSLEY FIELDS BUSINESS PARK | 61 |
| TABLE 7-23 SUMMARY OF RESPONSE FROM FEDERATION OF SMALL BUSINESSES – KENT AND MEDWAY STEERING GROUP..... | 62 |
| TABLE 7-24 SUMMARY OF RESPONSE FROM IAC DELIVERY SOLUTIONS | 62 |
| TABLE 7-25 SUMMARY OF RESPONSE FROM CHALKWELL GARAGE AND COACH HIRE LTD | 63 |
| TABLE 7-26 SUMMARY OF RESPONSE FROM C&A CONSULTING ON BEHALF OF QUINN ESTATES | 63 |
| TABLE 7-27 SUMMARY OF RESPONSE FROM MVV ENVIRONMENTAL RIDHAM..... | 64 |
| TABLE 7-28 SUMMARY OF RESPONSE FROM W A HINGE AND SONS..... | 65 |
| TABLE 7-29 SUMMARY OF RESPONSE FROM ENERGY SOLUTIONS..... | 66 |
| TABLE 7-30 SUMMARY OF RESPONSE FROM FREIGHT TRANSPORT ASSOCIATION..... | 67 |

| | |
|---|----|
| TABLE 7-31 SUMMARY OF RESPONSE FROM THAMES GATEWAY KENT PARTNERSHIP | 68 |
| TABLE 7-32 SUMMARY OF RESPONSE FROM SWALE ECONOMY AND REGENERATION PARTNERSHIP | 69 |
| TABLE 7-33 SUMMARY OF RESPONSE FROM THE SITTINGBOURNE SOCIETY | 70 |
| TABLE 7-34 SUMMARY OF RESPONSE FROM MAIDSTONE CYCLE CAMPAIGN FORUM..... | 70 |
| TABLE 8-1: OTHER RESPONSES - MOST FREQUENTLY MENTIONED COMMENTS | 72 |
| TABLE 9-1 DO YOU HAVE ANY COMMENTS ABOUT THE CONSULTATION PROCESS?..... | 74 |
| TABLE 9-2 HAVE YOU FOUND THE CONSULTATION MATERIALS USEFUL IN ANSWERING YOUR QUESTIONS? IF 'NO' HOW COULD THE MATERIALS AVAILABLE BE IMPROVED?..... | 75 |
| TABLE 9-3 ISSUES RAISED AT EXHIBITIONS..... | 78 |
| TABLE 10-1 SWALE BOROUGH COUNCIL SOCIAL MEDIA ACTIVITY | 84 |
| TABLE 11-1 : KEY EMERGING THEMES..... | 87 |

FIGURES

| | |
|---|----|
| FIGURE 2-1 M2 JUNCTION 5 LOCATION..... | 6 |
| FIGURE 2-2 M2 JUNCTION 5 STOCKBURY ROUNDAABOUT | 7 |
| FIGURE 3-1 LETTER DISTRIBUTION AREA | 10 |
| FIGURE 3-2 SCREENSHOT OF HIGHWAYS ENGLAND M2 JUNCTION 5 IMPROVEMENTS CONSULTATION PAGE..... | 14 |
| FIGURE 3-3: VMS EXAMPLE..... | 16 |
| FIGURE 4-1 HOW DID YOU FIND OUT ABOUT THE M2 JUNCTION 5 IMPROVEMENTS PUBLIC CONSULTATION?..... | 20 |
| FIGURE 4-2 PLEASE INDICATE IF YOU ARE COMMENTING AS | 21 |
| FIGURE 5-1 WHAT TYPE OF JOURNEYS DO YOU USE THE M2 JUNCTION 5 FOR MOST OFTEN?..... | 22 |
| FIGURE 5-2 HOW OFTEN DO RESPONDENTS USE THE M2 JUNCTION 5?..... | 23 |
| FIGURE 5-3 HOW DO YOU USUALLY TRAVEL THROUGH THIS AREA? (PLEASE SELECT ALL THAT APPLY). | 24 |
| FIGURE 5-4 HOW CONCERNED ARE YOU ABOUT THE FOLLOWING ISSUES RELATING TO THE M2 JUNCTION 5?..... | 25 |
| FIGURE 6-1 HOW MUCH DO YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE THAT IMPROVEMENTS TO M2 JUNCTION 5 ARE NEEDED? | 29 |

| | |
|--|----|
| FIGURE 6-2 HOW MUCH DO YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE THAT THE PROPOSED OPTION WILL MEET THE SCHEME OBJECTIVES?..... | 30 |
| FIGURE 6-3 OVERALL TO WHAT EXTENT DO YOU SUPPORT THE PROPOSED OPTION (OPTION 12A) FOR THE M2 JUNCTION 5 IMPROVEMENTS?..... | 31 |
| FIGURE 6-4 DO YOU HAVE ANY OUTSTANDING CONCERNS ABOUT THE PROPOSED OPTION (12A) TO IMPROVE THE M2 JUNCTION 5?..... | 33 |
| FIGURE 9-1 HAVE YOU FOUND THE CONSULTATION MATERIALS USEFUL IN ANSWERING YOUR QUESTIONS? | 75 |
| FIGURE 9-2 THIS QUESTIONNAIRE AND PROJECT INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE ONLINE AND AT THE EXHIBITIONS. HAVE YOU OR DO YOU INTEND TO VISIT ONE OF OUR PUBLIC EXHIBITIONS?..... | 77 |
| FIGURE 9-3 IF YOU HAVE VISITED AN EXHIBITION, HOW USEFUL DID YOU FIND IT IN TERMS OF ADDRESSING YOUR QUESTIONS? | 77 |
| FIGURE 10-1 HIGHWAYS ENGLAND PRESS RELEASE ON 6 SEPTEMBER | 80 |
| FIGURE 10-2 SWALE BOROUGH COUNCIL PRESS RELEASE ON 1 SEPTMEBER | 83 |

APPENDICES

| | |
|------------|---|
| A | CONSULTATION BROCHURE |
| B | CONSULTATION QUESTIONNAIRE |
| C | NEWSPAPER ADVERTISEMENT |
| D | MAPS |
| D-1 | Spatial Distribution Of Questionnaire Responses |
| D-2 | Spatial Distribution Of Exhibition Attendances |
| E | PRESS ARTICLES |
| F | CODE FRAMES AND FREQUENCIES |
| G | CLIENT SCHEME REQUIREMENTS |

1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 CONTEXT

- 1.1.1 Highways England's Project Control Framework sets out the methodology for delivery of a major highways scheme. The process is split into eight stages, of which this scheme is currently in Stage 2:
- PCF¹ Stage 0 (Strategy, Shaping and Prioritisation) – problem definition, scheme requirements and strategic business case
 - PCF Stage 1 (Option Identification) – option identification and sifting out of options that are likely to perform less well compared with others
 - PCF Stage 2 (Option Selection) – detailed option assessment and selection of the Preferred Option, including detailed public consultation of the options
 - PCF Stage 3 (Preliminary Design) – scheme development including design of the Preferred Option in sufficient detail to produce draft orders and preparation of the Environmental Assessment
 - PCF Stage 4 (Statutory Procedures and Powers) – gaining authority to construct the scheme through the normal statutory processes as laid down in legislation
 - PCF Stage 5 (Construction Preparation) – procurement of the construction contractor and detailed design of the scheme
 - PCF Stage 6 (Construction) – construction of the scheme
 - PCF Stage 7 (Handover and Close-Out) – project close out.

1.2 SCHEME BACKGROUND

- 1.2.1 In December 2014, the Department for Transport published the Road Investment Strategy 1 for 2015-2020, which lists the schemes to be delivered by Highways England over this period.
- 1.2.2 In response to the RIS² announcement Highways England has developed their Delivery Plan which details how they will deliver the key strategic outcomes sought for RIS and measure success.
- 1.2.3 The M2 Junction 5 is one of over 80 RIS schemes being progressed nationally as part of the delivery of the Highways England Delivery Plan - 2015-20. This plan responds to road network issues and the significant growth of Kent and the Thames Estuary, Highways England is investing £2.2 billion in roads in the South East over a five year period to 2020, through the Roads Investment Strategy.

¹ Highways England's Project Control Framework

² Road Investment Strategy

- 1.2.4 In addition The Kent Corridors to M25 Route strategy completed during 2014 was a high-level route assessment and identified long-standing congestion hot spots and safety concerns on the Strategic Road Network. It confirmed the need for improvement options at the M2 Junction 5 /A249 junction.
-

1.3 THIS REPORT

- 1.3.1 The purpose of this report is to provide a summary of the responses and feedback gathered during the non-statutory public consultation for the M2 Junction 5 improvements scheme, which ran from Wednesday 6 September to Tuesday 17 October 2017.
- 1.3.2 The report details how the public were informed, how the proposal was presented, the responses received from members of the public, statutory stakeholders and other bodies, and how the responses have been analysed and considered.
- 1.3.3 These responses will be used to help identify the Preferred Option and design requirements as the scheme approaches statutory consultation and Development Consent Order application (if applicable).
- 1.3.4 The report is structured as follows:
- **Chapter 2:** Introduction
 - **Chapter 3:** Consultation Approach
 - **Chapter 4:** Consultation Effectiveness
 - **Chapter 5:** Travel Behaviour and Existing Issues
 - **Chapter 6:** Views on the Option 12A proposed scheme
 - **Chapter 7:** Stakeholder Responses
 - **Chapter 7:** Other Responses
 - **Chapter 9:** Evaluation of Consultation
 - **Chapter 10:** Press & Social Media
 - **Chapter 11:** Next Steps
 - **Chapter 12:** Summary of Results

1.4 THE PROPOSAL

1.4.1 Option 12A proposes the following improvements:

- Stockbury Roundabout to provide a signalised roundabout with through lanes for the A249 traffic.
- The M2 southbound diverge will be widened to two lanes with a new free-flow link to the northbound A249.
- The existing footbridge over the slip road will be replaced with a longer spanning footbridge.
- Additional free-flowing links are provided from the A249 southbound to the M2 northbound and A249 northbound to M2 southbound.
- The existing connection from Maidstone Road to the roundabout and Oad Street access to the A249 west of Stockbury Roundabout will be closed. As well as closing Honeycrook Hill junction with the A249.
- A link will be provided between Maidstone Road and Oad Street with Oad Street re-routed to directly access Stockbury Roundabout.

1.5 CONSULTATION ARRANGEMENTS

- 1.5.1 The consultation took place over a six week period from 6 September 2017, closing on the 17 October 2017. This gave interested parties the opportunity to review and comment of the proposed scheme and for local knowledge and opinions to be obtained.
- 1.5.2 The consultation included five public events and two business events which allowed interested parties to ask questions of technical experts that were associated with the scheme. In addition a number of locations received information packs for the public to review.
- 1.5.3 Various media forms were used to advertise the scheme, the consultation events and how to express their views, this included a paper questionnaire or visiting the Highways England website to complete it online.
- 1.5.4 As part of the advertising campaign 126,395 residential properties received a letter detailing the consultation events, along with businesses, MP's, Councillors and other stakeholders such as schools and interest groups.
- 1.5.5 Advertising in the local newspapers was also undertaken, as well the consultation being shown on Kent County Council's variable message signs which undertaken to highlight the consultation to the passing drivers that are outside of the local advertising area.

1.6 EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PUBLIC CONSULTATION

- 1.6.1 The public exhibitions were well attended with 1307, and a further 21 businesses go to the dedicated business events. The website had a total of 9,389 unique visitors split over the scheme pages and the consultation pages, with an average 'time spent' of just over three minutes
- 1.6.2 A total of 518 questionnaires were returned split between paper and online responses. A further 47 written responses received from stakeholders and the general public expressing their views on the proposed scheme.
- 1.6.3 There were 37 enquires which have not been assessed in the report as it was deemed as requests for further information regarding the scheme or the consultation process and events.
- 1.6.4 The majority of respondents stated that they found out about the consultation via the letter drop or by seeing the adverts in the local newspaper.

1.7 QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSE ANALYSIS

- 1.7.1 All responses were subjected to a coding database to ensure that analysis could be efficiently undertaken. The majority of respondents considered themselves as a local residents, however, most journeys through the junction are for distances greater than 10 miles.
- 1.7.2 Over half of the respondents travel through the junction at least once a week for a journey, with just under 20% using it on a daily basis. Of these 93% stated that they travel via a car or van as the driver, although the question allow respondents to select multiple options.
- 1.7.3 A resounding 94% of respondents agreed that the M2 Junction 5 required improvements although 68% disagreed with Option 12A as the solution.
- 1.7.4 Within the 'free text' questions that allowed respondents to express their opinions on why they disagreed with Option 12A, the most common responses related to a 'fly-over' for the A249 and to remove traffic signals.

1.8 STAKEHOLDER RESPONSES

- 1.8.1 A number of stakeholders responded during the consultation process including MP's, Councils, Councillors, Environmental Bodies and business.
- 1.8.2 The majority of the responses did not support Option 12A as they thought that it did not provide a long term solution to the current issues.

1.9 CONCLUSION

- 1.9.1 Following the public consultation further work is proposed to investigate the possibility of implementing fly-over for the A249, whilst remaining within the budgetary limits. It is anticipated that elements of the scheme may need to be removed to reduce costs.
- 1.9.2 The local road diversions will also need to be accessed in the attempt to reduce their environmental impact, especially within the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
- 1.9.3 Further investigation is proposed to be undertaken within the next design stage to improve the access into Stockbury Village via Church Hill junction with the A249 as it is felt be local residents to be unsafe.

2 INTRODUCTION

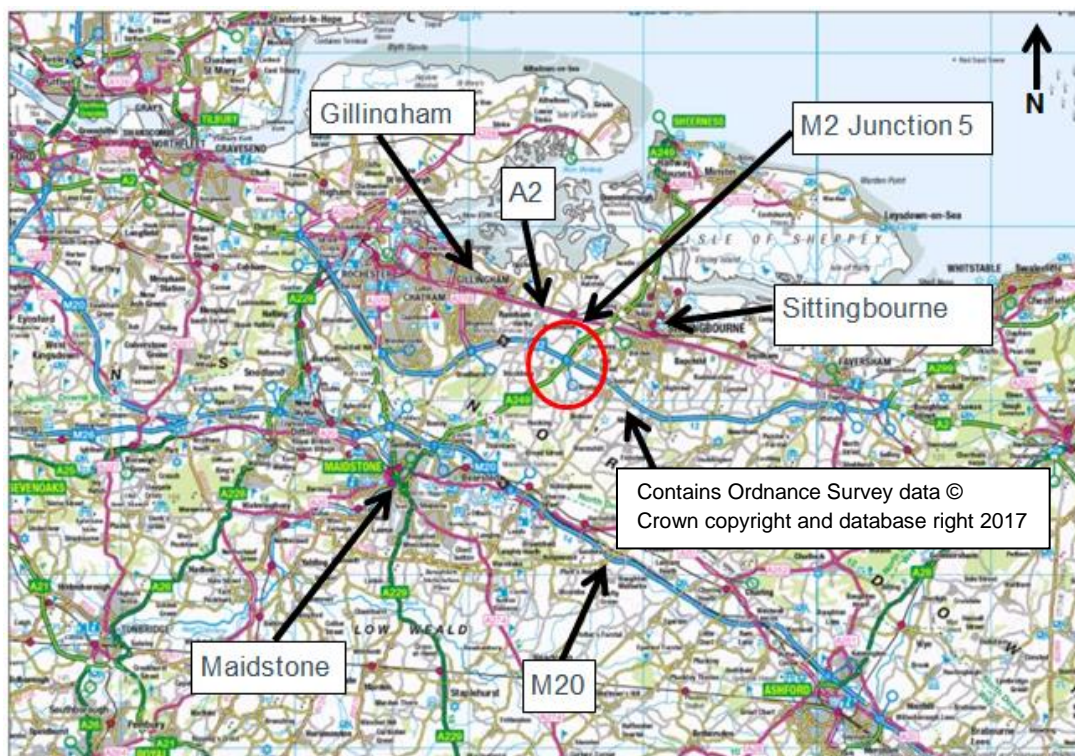
2.1 BACKGROUND

- 2.1.1 For a description of the scheme background please refer to Client Scheme Requirements in Appendix G.

2.2 PROJECT LOCATION

- 2.2.1 M2 Junction 5 is approximately 58km from the centre of London, with the built up area of Sittingbourne approximately 5km north west of M2 Junction 5. The area is largely open countryside, with areas of woodland close to the motorway slip roads. The open countryside areas are given over to grassland and arable farmland. There are a line of properties located to the north of the M2 (Danaway), adjacent to the A249 boundary. There are also several isolated properties to the south of the roundabout, around the Oad Street junction.

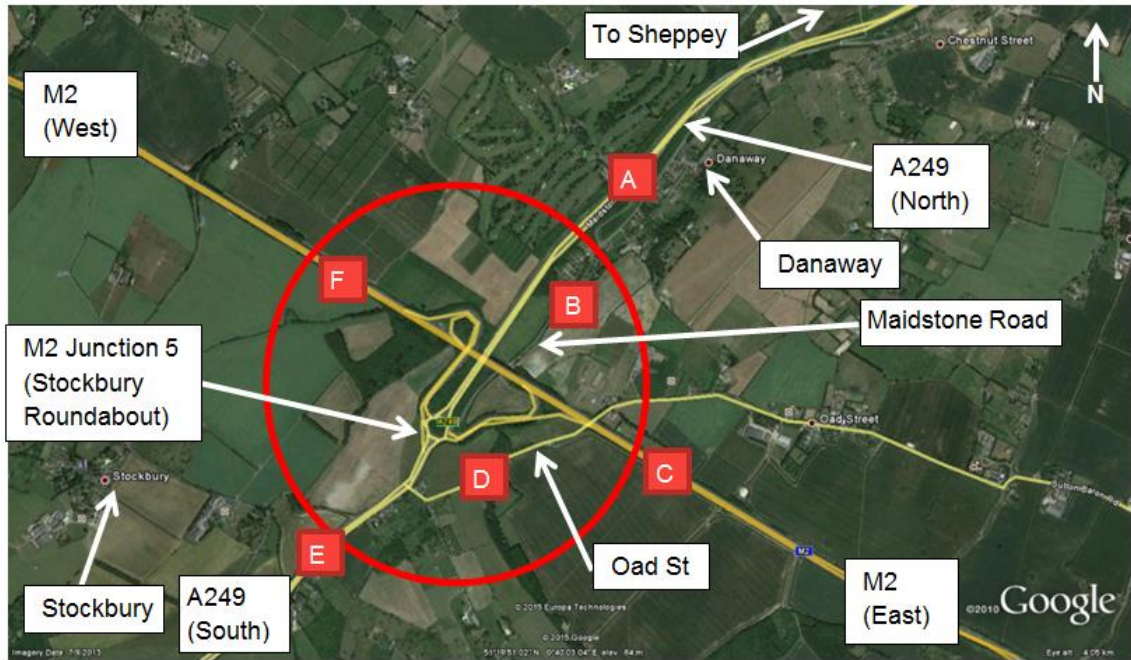
Figure 2-1 M2 Junction 5 Location



- 2.2.2 M2 Junction 5 forms the intersection between the strategically important M2 corridor linking Dover with London and the A249.
- 2.2.3 The A249 links Sittingbourne to Maidstone and Sheerness on the Isle of Sheppey. The A249 also functions as an important link between the M2 and M20 motorways, and is the principal route for goods vehicle traffic to the port at Sheerness.

2.2.4 The M2 Junction 5 and the associated links are shown in Figure 2-2. Further detail can be found in the PCF Stage 1 Environmental Study Report³.

Figure 2-2 M2 Junction 5 Stockbury Roundabout



³ M2 Junction 5 Improvements Scheme – PCF Stage 1 Environmental Study Report, October 2016

3 THE CONSULTATION APPROACH

3.1 INTRODUCTION

- 3.1.1 The public consultation took place over a six-week consultation period from Wednesday 6 September to until 11.59pm on Tuesday 17 October 2017. Providing an important opportunity for Highways England to gain a better understanding of the views and expectations of local people, stakeholders, landowners, businesses, public authorities, communities and road-users.
- 3.1.2 The responses to the consultation will help to identify the Preferred Option and the design requirements that would need to be considered as the scheme progresses.
-

3.2 PUBLIC CONSULTATION OBJECTIVES

- 3.2.1 The consultation aimed to meet the following objectives:
1. **Raise awareness and inform local residents, businesses and stakeholder organisations** about the M2 Junction 5 improvements scheme.
 2. **Raise awareness** of the wider *Road Improvement Strategy*
 3. **Encourage participation** from all local groups, ensuring attempts are made to engage vulnerable and hard-to-reach groups. Ensure that the public consultation events and materials are fully accessible so that people understand the improvements and are able to make informed comments.
 4. **Provide the public with the necessary information** to understand the proposed improvements, the process through which the scheme must follow and how the project team have arrived at the proposed scheme. Present the options clearly including the perceived benefits and / or impacts of the improvements.
 5. **Provide sufficient opportunities** for all people who may have an interest in or may be impacted by the scheme to provide feedback.
 6. **Facilitate feedback on the proposals** by providing people with the opportunity to have their say about the improvements. The feedback gathered will demonstrate the level of support for Option 12A, the issues and constraints, and other matters to consider when developing the scheme. It will be used to help determine a preferred route.
 7. Produce a Public Consultation Report to **provide timely feedback** about the issues raised during the consultation and the level of support for the proposed option.
-

3.3 APPROACH

- 3.3.1 In preparation for the non-statutory public consultation, Highways England implemented a targeted Public Consultation Strategy, which clearly set out the aims of the consultation, target audiences, key messages and identified stakeholders of interest. It was important that the approach enabled stakeholders to be meaningfully and continuously involved with the scheme from an early stage. Table 3-1 summarises the channels used.

Table 3-1 Communication materials and channels

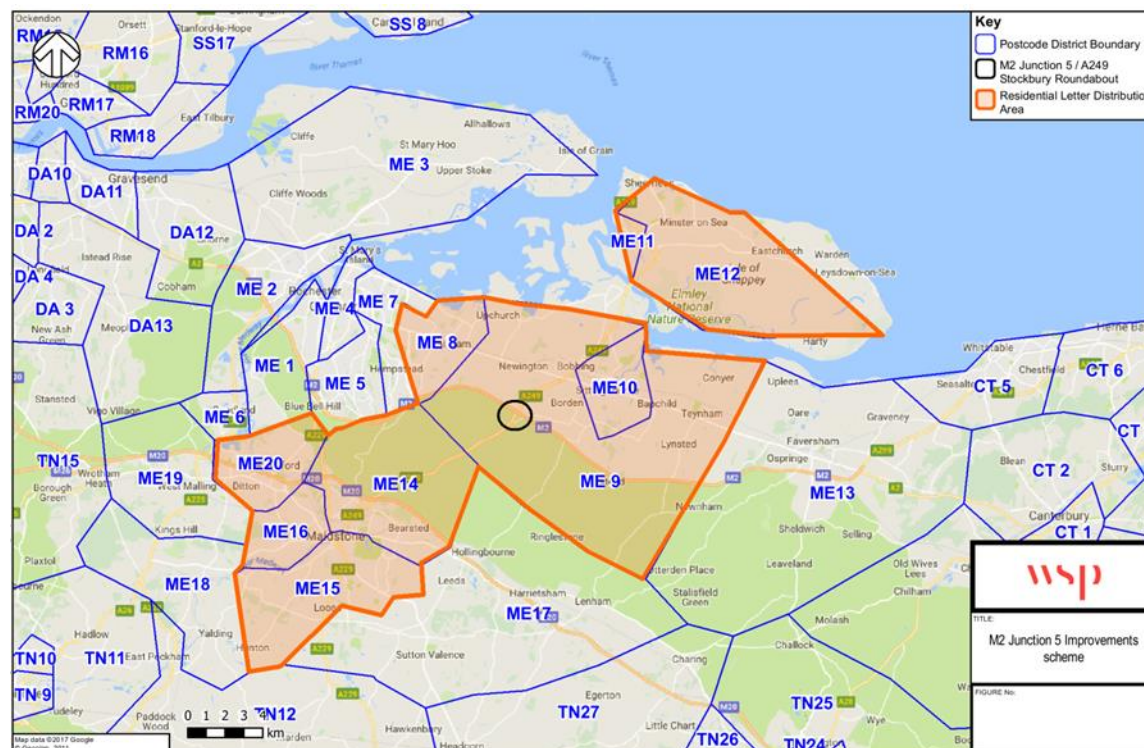
| COMMUNICATION TYPE | PURPOSE |
|---|--|
| Materials | |
| Letters and emails | Informed residents, landowners, businesses, MPs / Councillors, key stakeholders and wider stakeholders about the public consultation. |
| Brochure and questionnaire | Brochure provided concise information about the proposals. Questionnaire was the main method of gathering feedback. |
| Leaflets | Miniature version of the poster given out at the shopping centres exhibitions, for those members of the public who just wanted the information to complete the questionnaire online. |
| Deposit points | Made consultation materials (brochures, questionnaires, posters and background information) available in local, publicly accessible locations. |
| Highways England project website | Made consultation materials (brochures, questionnaires, background information, exhibition displays) available online. Anyone registered to receive updates about the scheme received an email on the consultation launch date inviting them to take part. |
| Press release | Issued on the consultation launch day to secure widespread press coverage and therefore raise awareness of the consultation. |
| Newspaper advertising | Raised awareness of the consultation amongst the general public, including those from a wider area throughout the consultation period. |
| Posters | Displayed on council and local community notice boards, etc. to raise awareness of the consultation more locally. |
| Highways England contact details | Provided in case of queries or for those requiring the information in a different format. |
| Existing communication channels | Established communications channels (Chamber of Commerce, Local Authority distribution lists and wider stakeholder organisations including equalities groups) used to extend the consultation reach. |
| Kent county Councils variable message signs | Displayed messages on signs throughout Kent to inform drivers that a consultation was being undertaken and to visit Highways England website |
| Events | |
| Public exhibition events | Provided opportunity for interested groups, local residents, landowners and businesses to view the proposals and discuss them with members of the project team. |
| Business Breakfasts | Provided opportunity for local businesses to view the proposals and discuss them with members of the project team |
| Preview events | Provided opportunity for the media, MPs / Councillors and Key Stakeholders to view the proposals prior to the general public and discuss them with members of the project team. |

3.4 MATERIALS

LETTERS

3.4.1 Letters of invitation were distributed in advance of the consultation to approximately 126,395 residential properties in the vicinity of the M2 Junction 5 containing full details of the public consultation. The area of coverage is shown in Figure 3-1.

Figure 3-1 Letter Distribution Area



3.4.2 Letters were also sent out to the following groups to make them aware of the consultation:

- Landowners – those whose land may be impacted by the proposed scheme (8)
- Businesses (88)
- MPs / Councillors (3 MPs and 133 Councillors)
- Key stakeholders (41 individuals/organisations)
- Wider Stakeholders (103 organisations)

BROCHURE AND QUESTIONNAIRE

3.4.3 An 18-page consultation brochure (shown in Appendix A) was produced with concise information about the scheme including the scheme background, summary of the discounted options, detailed description of the proposal, the impacts and the benefits and the next stages.

3.4.4 A separate consultation questionnaire was produced which sought respondents' views on the existing issues, and the proposal before moving on to explore travel behaviour and effectiveness of communication. A variety of both closed questions (where respondents select their answer from a pre-defined list) and open-ended questions (free-text format response) were used within the questionnaire. It was also available as an online survey at

<https://highwaysengland.citizenspace.com/he/m2-junction-5-improvements/> and available to download and print a hard copy of the questionnaire.

BACKGROUND REPORTS

3.4.5 In addition to the consultation brochure, a number of background reports were made available on the project website and at the exhibitions. The reports that were made available included:

- Environmental Assessment Report
- Technical Appraisal Report

3.4.6 Further to this, a number of summary notes were created to provide a bridge between the consultation brochure and the background reports. The summary notes provided greater information than the consultation brochure in a digestible format on a range of topics, including:

- Environmental Assessment
- Planning Policy
- Scheme Development
- Traffic Modelling

VISUALISATIONS

3.4.7 A visual representation of the proposed Option 12A was produced. This was run as a film on a continual loop and displayed on a television screen at each exhibition and available on Highways England website.

3.5 COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

CONSULTATION EVENTS

3.5.1 Prior to the consultation events, all consultant and Highways England representatives involved attended a full briefing which included:

- An outline of event operation, timings and venue overview (locations, facilities etc.)
- A briefing on personal health and safety operations
- Details of the scheme options and appropriate technical leads
- A walk-through of the brochure, questionnaire, display material and other avenues for feedback collection.

3.5.2 The exhibitions were hosted by Highways England project team, including experts on modelling, environment, land ownership, and highways to ensure queries during the events could be properly addressed.

3.5.3 The events held during this period are summarised as follows:

- One political preview exhibition (for MPs, County and Borough Councillors)
- One key stakeholder preview exhibition
- Five public exhibition events
- Two business breakfast events
- Face to face meetings with landowners (as required)
- Unstaffed display exhibitions in 13 locations throughout the six week consultation period.

EXHIBITION BOARDS/BANNERS

3.5.4 The public consultation exhibition boards presented key information about the scheme including objectives, background, options, results of assessments, the consultation process, and next stages.

POLITICAL BRIEFING

3.5.5 Prior to the launch event for the public on 6 September 2017, a political briefing was held between 9am and 10.30am at the Holiday Inn in Sittingbourne. This gave relevant parish and local councillors the opportunity to view and comment on the consultation material. Attendees were asked to complete the attendance sheet with their name and the region or parish they represented.

STAKEHOLDER PREVIEW

3.5.6 Following the political briefing a stakeholder briefing was held. This gave key stakeholders the opportunity to view and comment on the consultation material. Attendees were asked to complete the attendance sheet with their name and the region or parish they represented.

PUBLIC EXHIBITIONS

3.5.7 The public exhibitions were held at a range of venues across the area as it is necessary to consider local residents as well as those who live further afield but travel through the junction. The venues were risk assessed, met the Equality Act 2010 requirements, and were accessible to those who did not travel by car.

3.5.8 Table 3-2 for summarises the schedule of events:

Table 3-2 Schedule of public consultation events

| EVENT | DATE | LOCATION | TIME |
|-------------------|-----------------------|--|-------------|
| Launch event | Wednesday 6 September | Holiday Inn (otherwise known as Coniston Hotel), 70 London Road, Sittingbourne, Kent, ME10 1NT | 4pm to 8pm |
| Public exhibition | Monday 11 September | Stockbury Memorial Hall (Cricket Club), The Street, Stockbury, Kent, ME9 7UD | 2pm to 8pm |
| Public exhibition | Saturday 16 September | Forum Shopping Centre, High Street, Sittingbourne, Kent, ME10 3DL | 10am to 2pm |

| EVENT | DATE | LOCATION | TIME |
|-------------------|------------------------|---|------------|
| Public exhibition | Wednesday 20 September | Sheppey Gateway, 38 - 42 High Street, Sheerness, Kent, ME12 1NL | 2pm to 8pm |
| Public exhibition | Saturday 23 September | The Mall Maidstone, Pads Hill, Maidstone, Kent, ME15 6AT | 9am to 5pm |

BUSINESS BREAKFAST EVENTS

3.5.9 Two business breakfast events were held 8am to 10am, one at the Hilton Hotel, Maidstone on the 20 September and the other at the Holiday Inn Hotel, Sittingbourne on the 21 September. Similar to the public events this gave businesses the opportunity to view and comment on the consultation material. Attendees were asked to complete the attendance sheet with their name and the region or parish they represented.

INFORMATION DEPOSIT POINTS

3.5.10 Consultation brochures, questionnaires and posters were available during the consultation period from the following deposit points shown in Table 3-3.

Table 3-3 Deposit Points

| LOCATION | ADDRESS |
|------------------------------|--|
| Allington Library | Castle Road, Maidstone, Kent, ME16 0PR |
| Bearsted Library | The Green, Bearsted, Maidstone, Kent, ME14 4DN |
| Boughton-under-Blean Library | Village Hall, Bull Lane, Boughton-Under-Blean, Faversham, Kent, ME13 9AH |
| Faversham Library | Newton Road, Faversham, Kent, ME13 8DY |
| Madginford Library | Egremont Road, Bearsted, Maidstone, Kent, ME15 8LH |
| Maidstone Library | Kent History And Library Centre, James Whatman Way, Maidstone, Kent, ME14 1LQ |
| Minster-in-Sheppey Library | Minster-in-Sheppey Library, Worcester Close, Minster-On-Sea, Sheerness, Kent, ME12 3NP |
| WM Morrison Supermarkets plc | WM Morrison Supermarkets plc, Distribution Centre, Fleet End, Kemsley, Sittingbourne, ME10 2FD |
| Queenborough Library | Railway Terrace, Queenborough, Kent, ME11 5AY |
| Sheerness Library | Sheppey Gateway, 38 - 42, High Street, Sheerness, Kent, ME12 1NL |
| Shepway Library | 17, Northumberland Court, Northumberland Road, Maidstone, Kent, ME15 7LW |
| Sittingbourne Library | Central Avenue, Sittingbourne, Kent, ME10 4AH |
| Teynham Library | 131 London Road, Teynham, Sittingbourne, Kent, ME9 9QJ |

HIGHWAYS ENGLAND PROJECT WEBSITE

3.5.11 Information about the consultation was published on Highways England's project web page: with a link to the dedicated consultation page. This web address was included in all information released into the public domain. The website provided:

- Information on the scheme background
- Dates, times and venue information for the public consultation events
- PDF versions of the consultation materials including the information presented at the public exhibition events (exhibition display panels, brochure, questionnaire, summary notes, technical reports, etc.)
- A link to the online consultation questionnaire
- Contact details for queries about the consultation

Figure 3-2 Screenshot of Highways England M2 Junction 5 Improvements Consultation Page

highways
england

Search consultations

Consultation Hub Find Consultations We Asked, You Said, We Did

M2 junction 5 improvements

Overview

We are consulting on a proposal to provide additional capacity at the M2 Junction 5/A249 Stockbury Roundabout, including improvements to slip roads and junction approaches.

We are at an early stage in developing our proposal and your views will help us decide how to progress with it. We look forward to hearing from you.

This consultation runs for 6 weeks, from Wednesday 6 September to Tuesday 17 October 2017.

You can join us at one of our public events where you can speak to one of our team:

| Date | Time | Location | Address |
|------|------|----------|---------|
|------|------|----------|---------|

Closes 17 Oct 2017
Opened 6 Sep 2017

Contact
0300 123 5000
M2J5@highwaysengland.co.uk

3.6 PUBLICITY AND ADVERTISING

MEDIA ENGAGEMENT

- 3.6.1 A media briefing was held on 6 September 2017 (11am to 12.30pm) at the Holiday Inn, Sittingbourne which was organised by Highways England Press Office following the MP/Councillor session. This was an opportunity for the press to view the consultation material and ask questions of Highways England project managers.
- 3.6.2 Only Highways England staff had the authority to speak to the media about the project. A nominated spokesperson was agreed with Highways England and all questions were channelled through the press officer on duty.
- 3.6.3 There was a point of contact at each event from Highways England in case there are any requests from the media to attend and the nominated press officer was not there.
- 3.6.4 The member of staff manning the 'reception' desk at the public exhibition events had contact details for the Highways England Press Office in the event that a journalist turned up un-announced.

ONLINE ENGAGEMENT

- 3.6.5 Details of the M2 Junction 5 improvements scheme were provided on Highways England website at <http://roads.highways.gov.uk/projects/m2-junction-5-improvements/>. The web page address was included in all information released into the public domain.

PRESS ADVERTISING

- 3.6.6 A single press release was issued by Highways England encompassing a number of public consultations for road schemes across the south east. The press release is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/plans-to-improve-busy-junction-on-the-m2-in-kent-unveiled-today>
- 3.6.7 A full colour quarter page advertisement (shown in Appendix C) ran for one week in the following newspapers:
 - The Sittingbourne News Extra and Sheerness Times Guardian on Wednesday 6 September and Wednesday 20 September
 - The Sittingbourne Messenger on Thursday 7 September and Thursday 21 September.

POSTERS AND LEAFLETS

- 3.6.8 Posters were produced which advertised the time and location of the public consultation events, location of the deposit points and details of how to complete the questionnaire. These were distributed to deposit spots.
- 3.6.9 Leaflets were produced as smaller versions of the posters for distribution at the shopping centre event venues. Leaflets were handed to people passing by to capture their attention and encourage them to come speak to the team.

VARIABLE MESSAGE SIGNS

3.6.10 Kent County Council promoted the consultation through its Variable Message Signage throughout the area. A series of messages promoting the events was produced for KCC⁴ and these are being displayed on the VMS⁵ whenever possible. This method of communication is considered very effective at promoting the consultation to the wider audience of the 'travelling public'. An example of the information displayed on a sign is shown below.

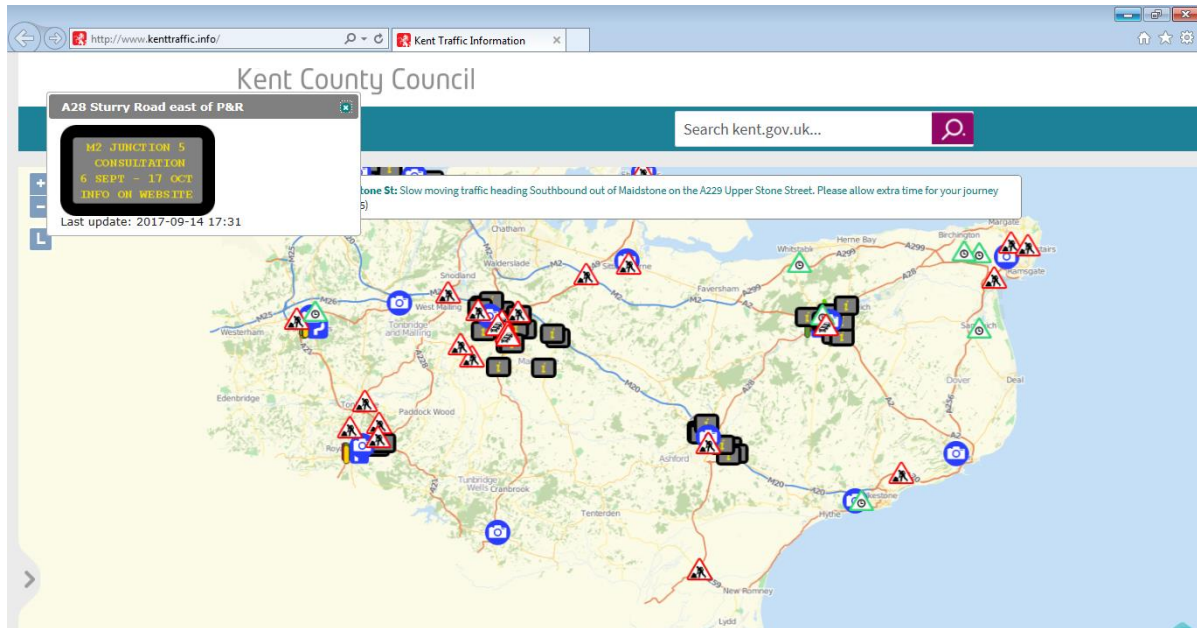


Figure 3-3: VMS example

SOCIAL MEDIA

3.6.11 Facebook advertising was not used to promote this consultation.

HIGHWAYS ENGLAND CONTACT DETAILS

3.6.12 These details were publicised for contacting the project team:

- Email: M2J5@highwaysengland.co.uk
- Telephone: Highways England Customer Contact Centre [0300 123 5000](tel:03001235000)

3.6.13 All responses received via the Customer Contact Centre during the consultation period were sent to the M2 Junction 5 mailbox (UK-M2J5Consultation@wsp.com), recorded and responded to by the Customer Contact and project teams. Highways England Customer Contact Centre received 37 queries.

⁴ KCC: Kent County Council

⁵ VMS: Variable Message Signs

4 CONSULTATION EFFECTIVENESS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

- 4.1.1 This chapter summarises the effectiveness of the public consultation in terms of the reach, number of responses and exhibition attendance. It then looks at the methodology of analysing the responses received.
- 4.1.2 Chapter 9 includes information on the public's impressions of the exhibitions and consultation materials provided.
-

4.2 QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES

- 4.2.1 In total, 518 questionnaire responses were received during the consultation period. Just under a third (29%; 150) were hard copy responses, with the majority (71%; 368 responses) completed online.
- 4.2.2 It is noted that a further 6 responses were received after the consultation closing date (by Thursday 19 October) which have not been included in the analyses presented in this report.
- 4.2.3 Appendix D-1 shows that the questionnaire responses were concentrated around the proposed junction, largely within the letter drop area. There are concentrations of attendees found in Stockbury, Sittingbourne and on the Isle of Sheppey. This is to be expected given the considerable local interest in the scheme. Other clusters of respondents away from the proposed works area can be found in Maidstone, Faversham, Canterbury and Chatham.
-

4.3 LETTERS AND EMAILS

- 4.3.1 In addition to the questionnaires, other responses were received by the Highways England Customer Contact Centre in a variety of formats, including letters, emails and telephone calls. Some of these contacts requested or queried information, while others sought to feedback their views on the proposals.
- 4.3.2 Questionnaires completed by stakeholders have been included in the overall data analysis in this report as well as being summarised with the stakeholder written responses in Chapter 7. The written responses received by the public have been included in Chapter 7. It is noted that those contacts defined as 'enquiries' only have not been included in this report.

Table 4-1: Consultation responses

| CONTENT | FORMAT | NO. RESPONSES |
|---|----------------------------|---------------|
| Completed questionnaire (<i>19 of these completed questionnaires are from stakeholders</i>) | Paper | 150 |
| | Online | 368 |
| Written response (stakeholder) | Email / Letter | 19 |
| Written response/ feedback (public) | Email / Telephone/ Letter | 28 |
| Enquiries (public and stakeholders) | Email / Letter / Telephone | 37 |

4.4 PUBLIC EXHIBITION ATTENDANCE RECORD

4.4.1 To record visitor numbers, attendees were asked to provide their name, address, postcode and organisation (if applicable). There were 1307 visitors to the public consultation exhibitions, as seen in Table 4-2.

Table 4-2 Public Exhibition Attendance

| DATE OF EVENT | LOCATION | ATTENDANCE |
|------------------------|--|-------------|
| Wednesday 6 September | Holiday Inn (otherwise known as Coniston Hotel), 70 London Road, Sittingbourne, Kent, ME10 1NT | 412 |
| Monday 11 September | Stockbury Memorial Hall (Cricket Club), The Street, Stockbury, Kent, ME9 7UD | 250 |
| Saturday 16 September | Forum Shopping Centre, High Street, Sittingbourne, Kent, ME10 3DL | 242 |
| Wednesday 20 September | Sheppey Gateway, 38 - 42 High Street, Sheerness, Kent, ME12 1NL | 137 |
| Saturday 23 September | The Mall Maidstone, Pads Hill, Maidstone, Kent, ME15 6AT | 266 |
| Total | | 1307 |

4.4.2 The business breakfasts did not attract the numbers of businesses as originally anticipated. Only 9 attended the Maidstone Business Breakfast and 12 attended the Swale Business Breakfast.

4.4.3 Appendix D-2 shows that the exhibition attendees' were concentrated around the proposed junction, largely within the letter drop area. There are concentrations of attendees found in Stockbury, Sittingbourne and Sheppey. This is to be expected given the considerable local interest in the scheme. Other clusters of respondents away from the proposed works area can be found in Maidstone and the surrounding local villages/towns of Junction 4 and 5.

4.4.4 The postcode location of event visitors correlate with the venue that they attended.

4.5 HIGHWAYS ENGLAND WEBSITE VISITORS

4.5.1 Table 4-3 below presents the number of visitors to both the project webpage and consultation webpage, with the average time spent on the webpages during the consultation period.

Table 4-3 Website Visitor Figures

| WEBPAGE | TOTAL VISITS | TOTAL UNIQUE VISITORS | AVERAGE TIME SPENT ON THE PAGE |
|-------------------|--------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------|
| Scheme Page | 8,224 | 6,986 | 3 minutes 12 seconds |
| Consultation Page | 2,975 | 2,403 | 3 minutes 41 seconds |

4.5.2 The consultation webpage received 2,403 unique visitors, 1307 visitors attended the consultation events in person. It is noted that people could attend more than one exhibition and also visit the website so overall reach of the consultation cannot be calculated by

4.6 RESPONSE AND ANALYSIS METHODOLOGY

4.6.1 Before any analysis could take place, all data contained in the paper questionnaires required input to an electronic dataset (spreadsheet) which could subsequently be interrogated and merged with the online questionnaire data. Data entry adheres to a thorough and robust process which ensures maximum accuracy. The following quality checking procedures were employed:

- The data entry programme incorporates full range checks for each question – making it impossible for any numeric values to be present outside the specified range
- 100% verification – whereby data is input twice by two different operators and the files are subsequently compared. Where inconsistencies are identified, the entries are checked against the original questionnaire and the correct data is recorded
- Spot checks of data carried out by data processing staff
- The coded data was subject to rigorous quality control procedures, for example checking 20% of the coded data to ensure accuracy of code application.

4.6.2 The paper questionnaire data has subsequently been combined with the online questionnaire data, to produce a single file containing all responses. A series of logic and range checks on the data prior to analysis was undertaken to ensure accuracy.

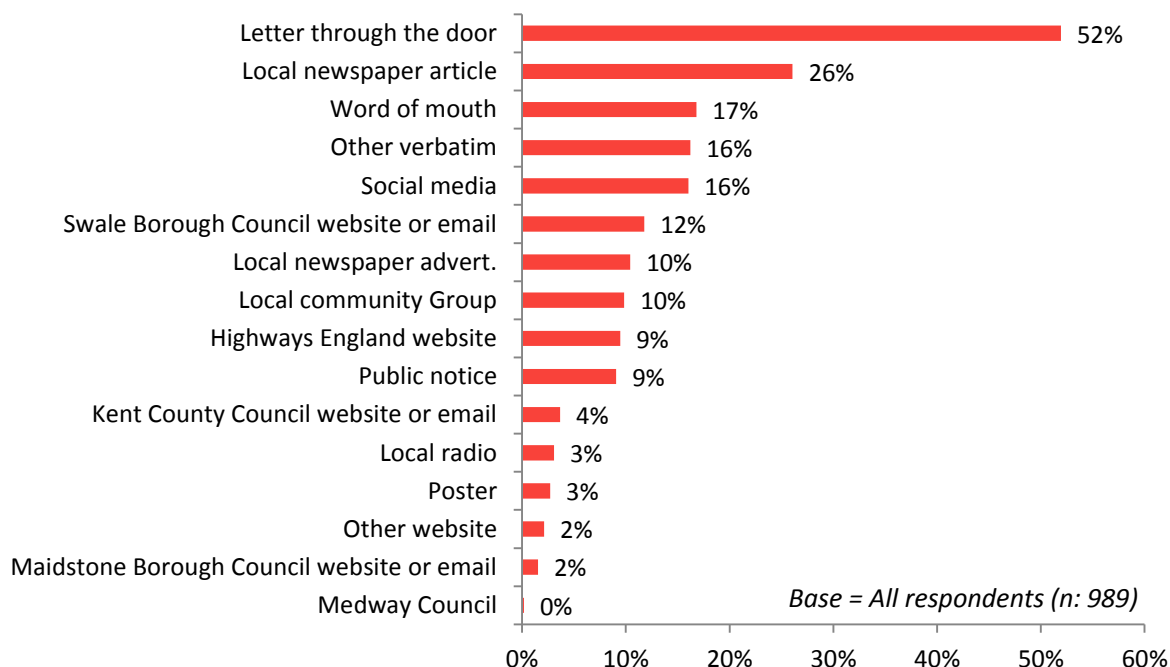
4.6.3 The combined dataset was analysed using SPSS, a statistical software package designed for the analysis of questionnaire data, along with Microsoft Excel and the ArcGIS mapping software. The results of this analysis are presented in the series of tables, charts and maps.

4.7 EFFECTIVENESS OF COMMUNICATION METHODS

CONSULTATION AWARENESS

4.7.1 Question 14 of the questionnaire asked respondents to state how they found out about the consultation. It is noted that respondents could select multiple answers meaning that the sum total of percentages exceeds 100%. There were 989 responses to this question in total. Figure 4-1 below summarises the responses.

Figure 4-1 How did you find out about the M2 Junction 5 improvements public consultation?

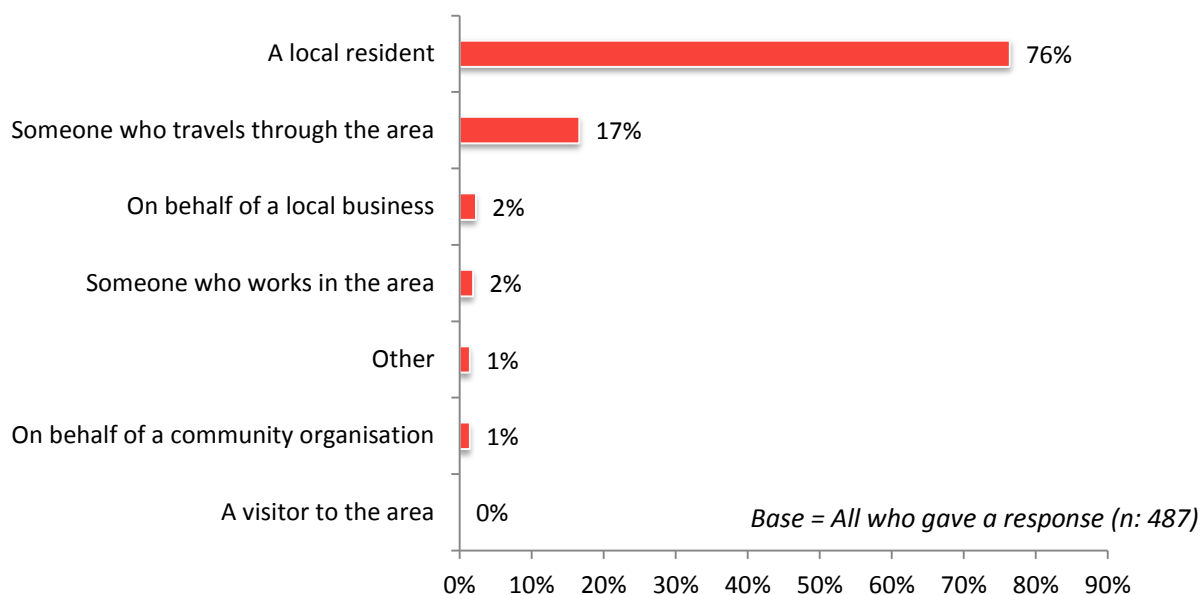


4.7.2 The majority of respondents (52%; 269 respondents) had found out about the consultation via the letter drop. Local news article (26%; 135 respondents) and the word of mouth (17%; 88 respondents) also proved popular means of communication.

TYPE OF RESPONDENT

4.7.3 Question 15 of the questionnaire asked respondents to state in the capacity in which they were responding to the consultation (for example, as a local resident, representing a local business, etc.). Respondents to the online survey were limited to one response but many of those who completed the paper version selected multiple answers, meaning that the sum total of percentages is just below 100%. Figure 4-2 below summarises the findings.

Figure 4-2 Please indicate if you are commenting as



4.7.4 Figure 4-2 shows that the vast majority of respondents are local residents, with 76% of respondents (370 respondents) describing themselves as such. A far smaller proportion 17% (83 respondents) described themselves as travelling through the area, while a further 2% (10 respondents) responded on behalf of a local business, 2% (10 respondents) work in the area and 1% (5 respondents) responded as other. In all, 36 respondents did not provide a response to this question and 2 preferred not to say.

4.7.5 While the vast majority of responses are from the general public, it should be noted that they include a number came from stakeholders, including:

- 1 response from a Member of Parliament
- 3 responses from local authorities
- 7 responses from Councillors (Borough and County)
- 3 statutory environmental bodies
- 9 responses from parish councils
- 9 business organisations
- 3 community organisations

4.7.6 Responses from these organisations have been included within the main analysis of questionnaire responses presented Chapters 4-6 but are also discussed in more detail in Chapter 7 – stakeholder responses.

5 TRAVEL BEHAVIOUR AND EXISTING ISSUES

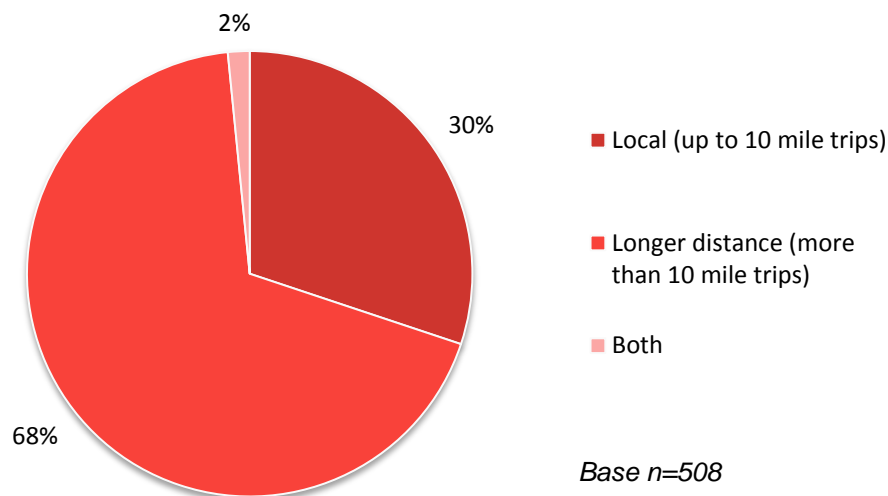
5.1 TRAVEL BEHAVIOUR

FREQUENCY OF USE

5.1.1 Respondents were asked about how they currently use the M2 Junction 5, to provide an understanding of how respondents use the junction, and whether frequency of use has an impact on attitudes towards the proposals.

5.1.2 Firstly, in question 4 respondents were asked whether they mainly use the M2 Junction 5 for local journeys of up to 10 miles in length, or predominantly for longer distance trips of over 10 miles distance these results are shown in Figure 5-1.

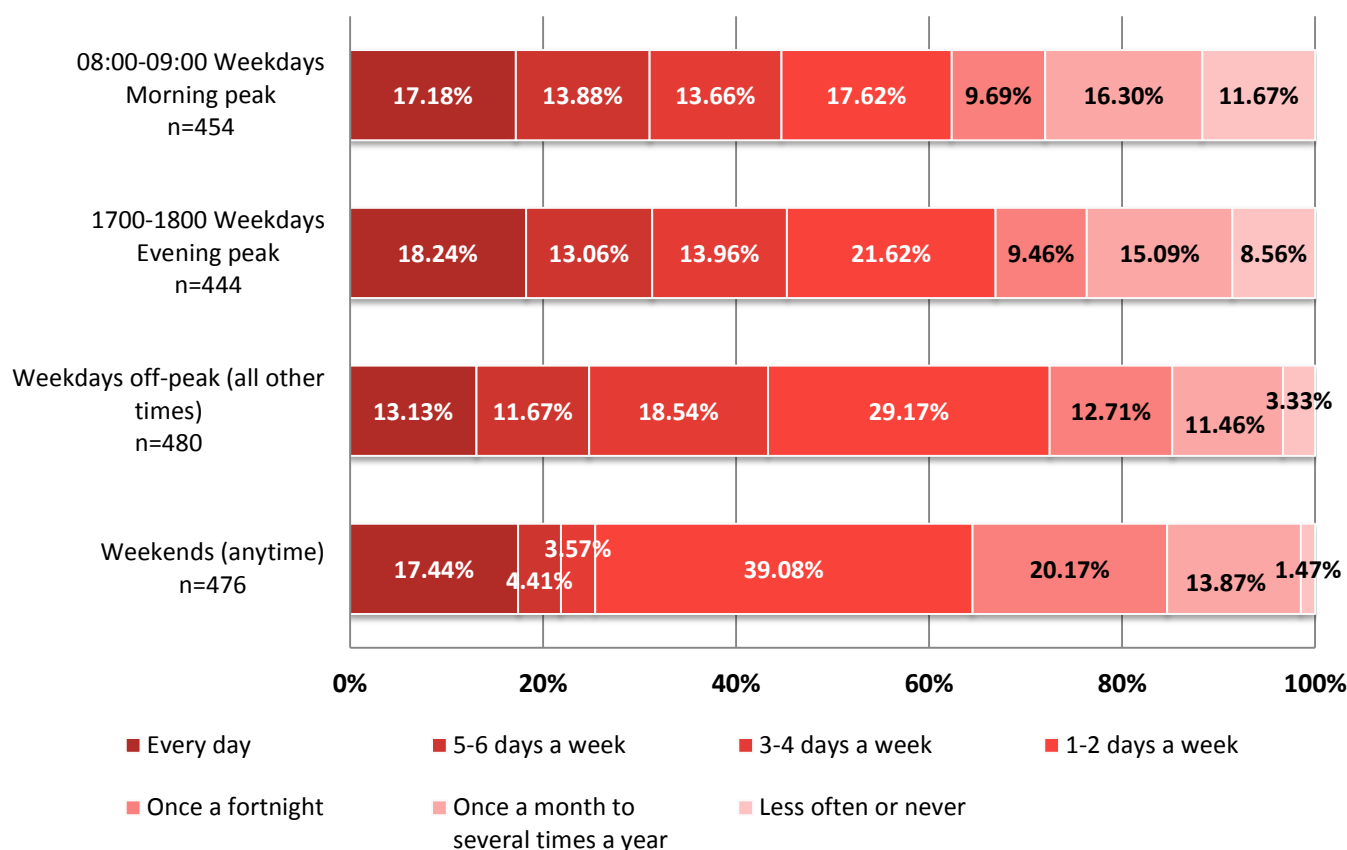
Figure 5-1 What type of journeys do you use the M2 Junction 5 for most often?



5.1.3 The results indicate that 30% (n.152) of respondents mainly use the junction for local trips, while the remaining 68% (n.354) of respondents use the road as part of a longer distance journey. The remaining 2% (n.10) used it for both. Ten respondents didn't answer the question. It is therefore important to note the strategic interest in the proposal and the importance of this junction for trips being made within the local area.

5.1.4 Respondents were then asked in question 5 how often they use the M2 Junction 5 at certain times of the day; these results are shown in Figure 5-2.

Figure 5-2 How often do respondents use the M2 Junction 5?



PEAK HOURS (MORNINGS 8AM TO 9AM & EVENINGS 5PM TO 6PM)

5.1.5 Around a fifth (17%; 77) of respondents who use the M2 Junction 5 in the morning peak do so every day, while 62% (281) of respondents make a journey during this time at least once a week. Once a fortnight 10% (45) use the junction for their journey, while just over a quarter (28%; 127) do so once a month to several times a year or less often/ never. The usage of the junction during the evening peak period is similar, with 18% (80) doing so on a daily basis and 67% (297) of respondents making a journey during this time period at least once a week. Once a fortnight 9% (40) of respondents use the junction for their journey, while just under a quarter (24%; 107) do so between once a month to several times a year or less often/ never.

OFF-PEAK HOURS (WEEKDAYS OFF PEAK OUTSIDE 8-9AM & 5-6PM AND WEEKENDS)

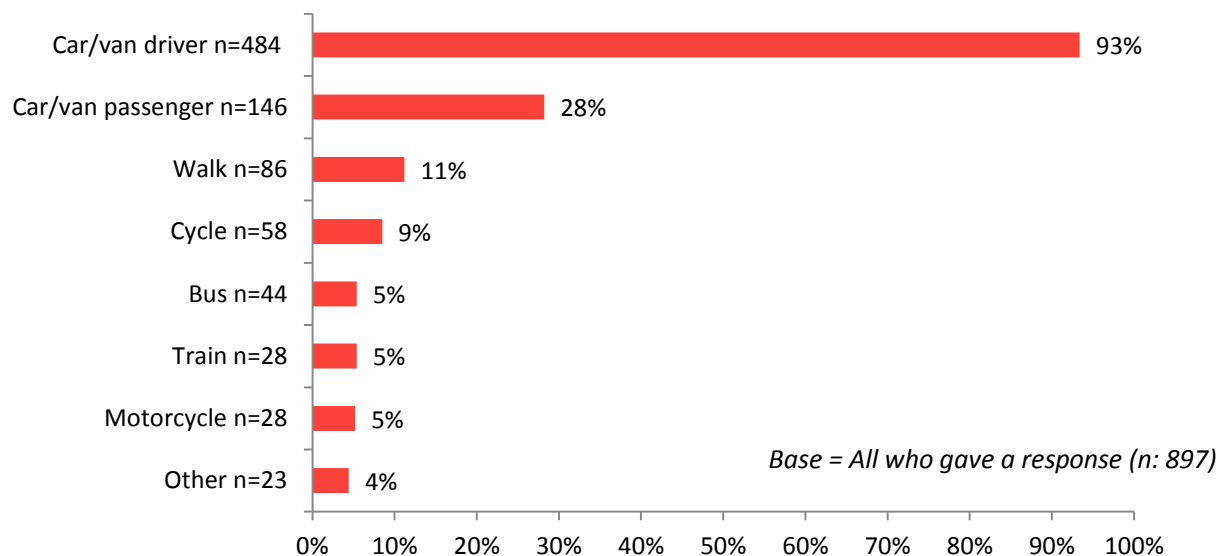
- 5.1.6 Only 13% (62) of respondents use this junction on a daily basis in the off peak which is less than in the peak hours. Although a slightly higher proportion 73% (350) use the road during the weekday off-peak period at least once a week.
- 5.1.7 Every weekend 64% (305) of respondents reportedly use this junction, whilst one fifth (20%; 95) use it once a fortnight.

5.2 MODE CHOICE

5.2.1 Question 19 asked respondents what mode of transport they use in order to travel through the area local M2 Junction 5. Respondents were able to select all modes that applied to them, so it was possible for more than one answer to be selected. The results are shown in Figure 5-3

are shown for each mode as a proportion of all 518 respondents so the sum total of percentages exceeds 100%.

Figure 5-3 How do you usually travel through this area? (Please select all that apply).



5.2.2 By far the greatest proportion of respondents travel through the area as car or van drivers (93%; 484 people). Around a third (28%; 146 respondents) travel as a passenger in a motor vehicle. However, respondents also walk (11%; 86 respondents) and cycle (9%; 58 respondents). Around a fifth of respondents (5%) travel through the area by bus, and 28 (5%) travel through the junction by train. Five percent of respondents are motorcyclists. The other responses consisted of heavy goods vehicles drivers, coach drivers, farm vehicles, disabled and equestrian users.

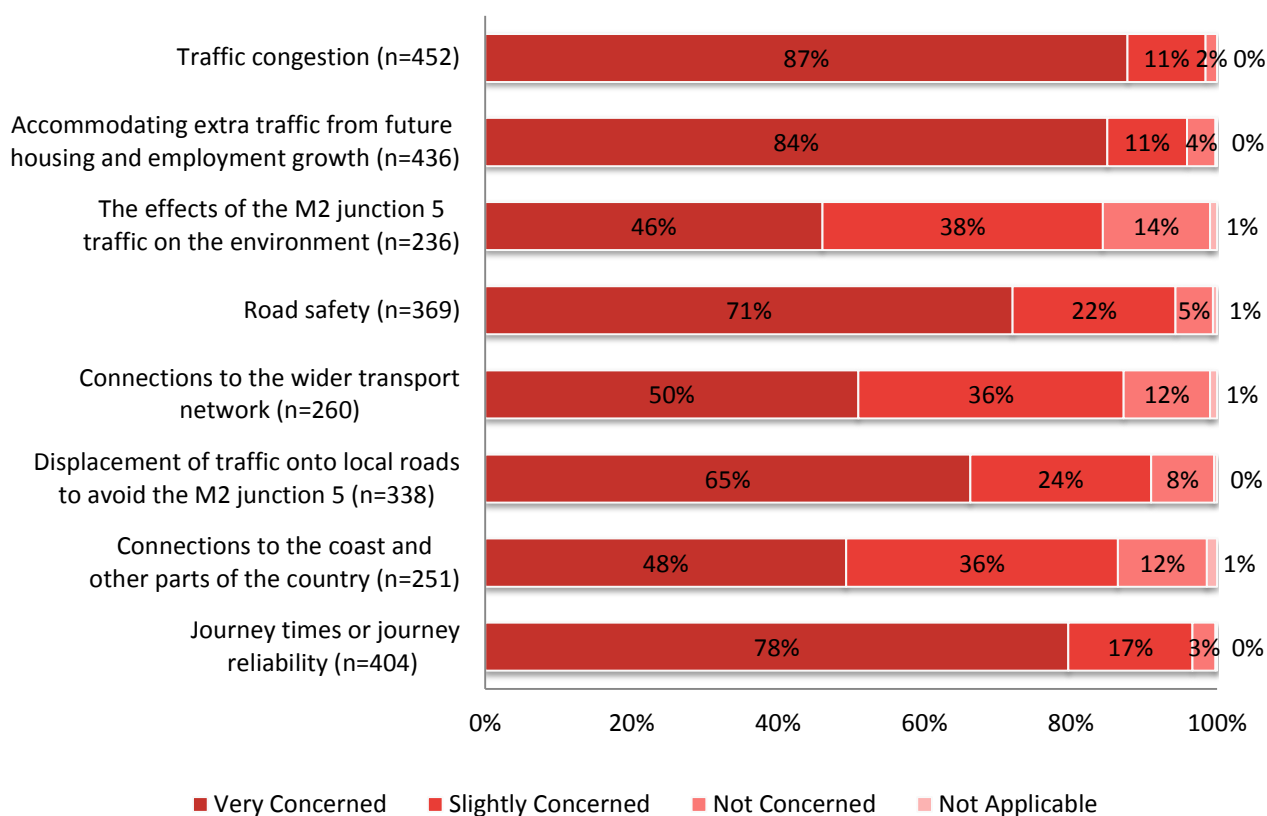
5.2.3 The results indicate that respondents comprise a large proportion of car/van drivers, but also a good representation of people who walk and cycle (non-motorised users).

5.3 EXISTING CONCERNS AND ISSUES

5.3.1 Respondents were asked to consider the existing M2 Junction 5 in its current condition and layout. A list of potential issues was provided in the questionnaire, and respondents were asked to express their level of concern with each of these using a fixed point scale from 'very concerned' through to 'not concerned'.

5.3.2 The results are shown in Figure 5-4 in order from the issue of greatest concern to the issue with the smallest proportion of 'very concerned' respondents.

Figure 5-4 How concerned are you about the following issues relating to the M2 Junction 5?



- 5.3.3 The results shown in Figure 5-4 indicate that respondents are concerned about most of the potential issues suggested. The proportion of concerned respondents vastly outnumbers the proportion of unconcerned respondents for each of the potential issues listed in the questionnaire.
- 5.3.4 Traffic congestion is the biggest concern for respondents, with 87% (393) of respondents being 'very concerned', and a further 11% (50) being 'slightly concerned' about this issue. Only 2% (9) are 'not concerned'.
- 5.3.5 Traffic growth is also a major concern among respondents, with 84% (366) being 'very concerned' about the impact of future housing and economic growth on this junction and 11% being 'slightly concerned'. Only 4% (17) are not concerned about this issue.
- 5.3.6 Respondents are also concerned about journey time reliability (78%; 315 very, 17%; 69 slightly) and the displacement of traffic on to local roads (65%; 220 very, 24%; 81 slightly). As before, few describe themselves as 'not concerned' with these issues (3%; 12 and 8%; 27 respectively).
- 5.3.7 Road safety at the existing junction is a significant concern with 71% (262) very concerned and 22% (81) slightly concerned.
- 5.3.8 Connectivity is also an issue, with 50% (130) being very, and 36% (94) slightly, concerned about connections to the wider transport network. Similarly 48% (120) are very concerned and 36% (90) slightly concerned about connections to the coast and to other parts of the country.
- 5.3.9 Respondents are least concerned about the environmental effects of traffic from the M2 Junction 5 (46%; 109 very, and 38%; 90 slightly).

5.4 LOCAL ISSUES

5.4.1 Question 3 sought to gather information on what respondents felt are the local issues that should be taken into consideration whilst developing the proposals for the M2 Junction 5 improvements scheme. A total of 434 comments were coded in response to this question, with the most frequently mentioned codes outlined in Table 5-1. Appendix F provides a full list of codes and their associated frequencies.

Table 5-1 What specific local issues do you feel we should be aware of in developing our proposals for the M2 Junction 5?

| DESCRIPTION | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE |
|--|-----------|------------|
| Impact of residential / commercial developments on traffic volumes/flows | 103 | 8% |
| Congestion/queues/delays (general or at the junction/roundabout) | 76 | 6% |
| Need to accommodate new housing developments being built in wider area | 75 | 6% |
| Traffic lights cause delay/queues | 73 | 6% |
| Flyover/Underpass is only solution that will work longer term | 54 | 4% |
| Congestion/queues/delays on A249 | 49 | 4% |
| Concerns about rat running | 41 | 3% |
| Congestion (peak time, rush hour) | 38 | 3% |
| Volume of traffic / too much traffic / traffic growth / high number of HGV's | 31 | 2% |
| Roundabouts cannot improve the traffic flow or congestion / traffic must flow freely unimpeded on A249 | 30 | 2% |
| Concerns about safety issues / dangerous / more accidents | 27 | 2% |
| New Thames crossing is likely to bring very large volumes of extra traffic | 26 | 2% |
| Concerns about impact of pushing more traffic onto local roads | 24 | 2% |
| New Housing / housing growth is unsustainable | 23 | 2% |
| Do not use traffic lights / remove traffic signals | 23 | 2% |
| Frequent accidents (which cause further delay due to no hard shoulder) | 22 | 2% |
| Concerns about rat running through Bordon and/or Oad Street | 21 | 2% |

5.4.2 As with the previous section, the most frequently mentioned comment relates to impact of residential / commercial developments on traffic volumes/flows (103; 8%), with 75 comments (6%) expressing that the scheme needs to accommodate new housing developments in the wider area. Also separately a large number of respondents were concerned about new housing / unsustainable housing growth (mentioned in comments 23 times, 2%) and the volume of traffic / traffic growth was also a significant concern having been mentioned 31 times (2%).

- 5.4.3 A proportion of comments expressed that there is general congestion / queues / delays at the junction (mentioned 76 times; 6%), while an additional 49 comments (4%) specifically mention the A249 and 38 comments (3%) mention peak time, rush hour.
- 5.4.4 A large proportion of the comments (71, 5%) feel that traffic lights cause delays and queues and it was mentioned 23 times (2%) that that traffic lights should be not be used/removed.
- 5.4.5 A flyover/underpass is the only option was mentioned in 54 times in comments (4%) and 30 times (2%) comments mentioned that roundabouts do not improve traffic flow / traffic on the A249 should flow freely and not be impeded.
- 5.4.6 Many respondents commented that they were concerned about rat running in general (41, 3%) and in particular through Bordon and/or Oad Street 21 comments (2%). Also linked to these issues, were concerns about impact of pushing more traffic onto local roads with 24 comments (2%).
- 5.4.7 Responses highlighted that concerns about safety issues in general was mentioned 27 times (2%), whilst frequent accidents which cause delay was mentioned 22 times (2%).
- 5.4.8 The volume of traffic was commented 31 times (2%) and many of the responses (26, 2%) were also concerned about the impact of the new Lower Thames Crossing on traffic flows.

6 VIEWS ON THE PROPOSED OPTION 12A

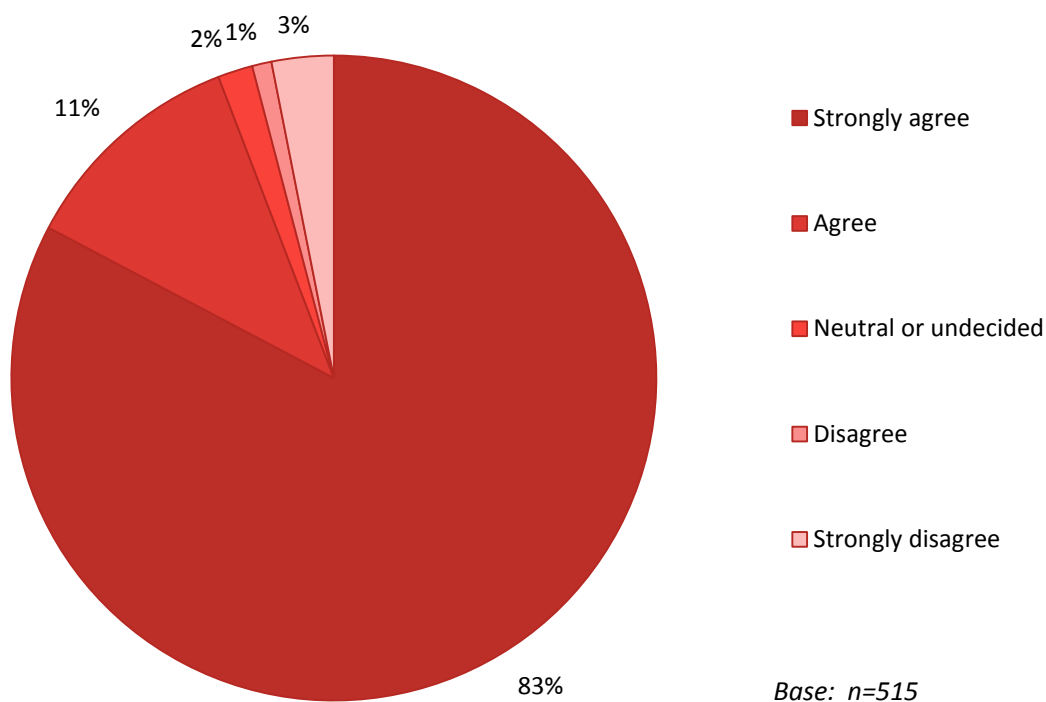
6.1 INTRODUCTION

- 6.1.1 This chapter presents respondents' opinions on the need for improvements to the M2 Junction 5, before analysing the comments made on the proposal. Section 9.2 interprets respondents' comments on the consultation process.
 - 6.1.2 The analysis presents the findings on both the closed-response ('tick box') and open response (free-text) questions. Open-ended verbatim data is complex to analyse, and to do so, the comments have been coded (grouped thematically). Many respondents made multiple coded comments within their answers. The codes have been analysed to identify the number of times (frequency) a particular issue or comment has been raised.
 - 6.1.3 Due to the large number of codes in some categories, it would be impractical to present and provide commentary on the results of every code (e.g. if only one person had mentioned an issue in response to a question). Therefore, the codes that have been presented in this chapter are those that were the most common and amass a proportionate percentage of the overall coded responses. A full frequency table including all codes and the coding framework used for this analysis is given in Appendix F.
-

6.2 NEED FOR IMPROVEMENTS TO M2 JUNCTION 5

- 6.2.1 Question 6 asked respondents whether they consider there to be a need for a scheme to improve the M2 Junction 5. Figure 6-1 shows that there is a substantial amount of support to improve the M2 Junction 5, with 94% (484) of respondents in agreement (83%; 427 strongly agree, and 11%; 57 agree). Conversely, only 4% (21) of respondents do not believe there is a need to improve the junction (1%; 5 disagree and 3%; 15 strongly disagree). The remaining 2% (10) of respondents expressed a neutral opinion.

Figure 6-1 How much do you agree or disagree that improvements to M2 Junction 5 are needed?

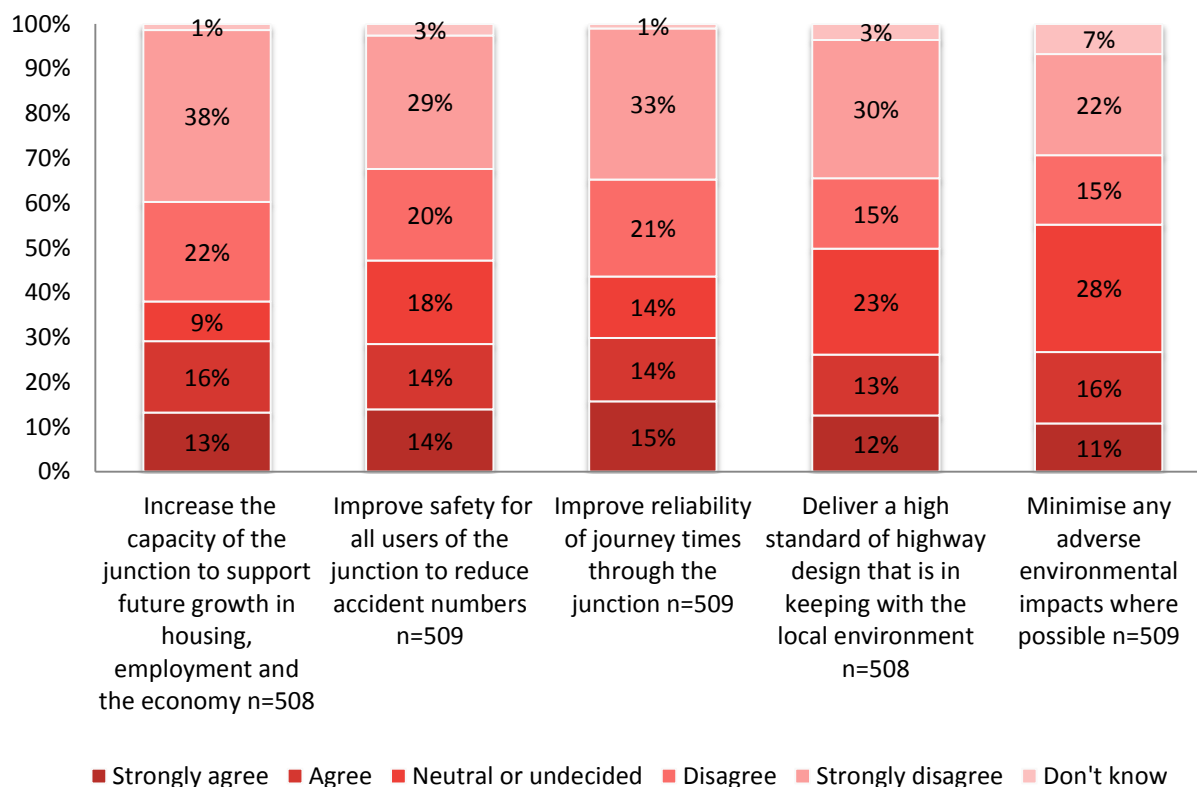


6.3 VIEWS ON PROPOSED SCHEME (OPTION 12A)

MEETING THE SCHEME OBJECTIVES

- 6.3.1 Respondents were subsequently asked to what extent they believe that the proposed Option 12A would meet the five scheme objectives. The results are shown in Figure 6-2.
- 6.3.2 As shown, the majority of respondents (approximately half of respondents in each case) feel that the proposed Option 12A will not meet the scheme objectives:
- 60% (305) of respondents do not believe that the proposed Option 12A will increase capacity enough to support the future growth in housing, employment and the economy, while 29% (147) feel that the proposed option will have this effect.
 - 49% (249) do not believe that the scheme will improve safety for all users of the junction to reduce accidents, while 28% (143) believe the scheme will improve safety.
 - 54% (275) do not believe that the scheme will provide more reliable journey times through the junction while a lesser 29% (148) agree it will.
 - 45% (229) disagree that the scheme will deliver a high standard of highway design that is in keeping with the local environment while 25% (127) believe it will.
 - 37% (188) disagree that the proposed option will minimise any adverse environmental impacts where possible while 27% (137) agree it will.
- 6.3.3 A significant proportion around 20% for each objective were neutral or undecided on whether the proposed option 12A met the objectives.

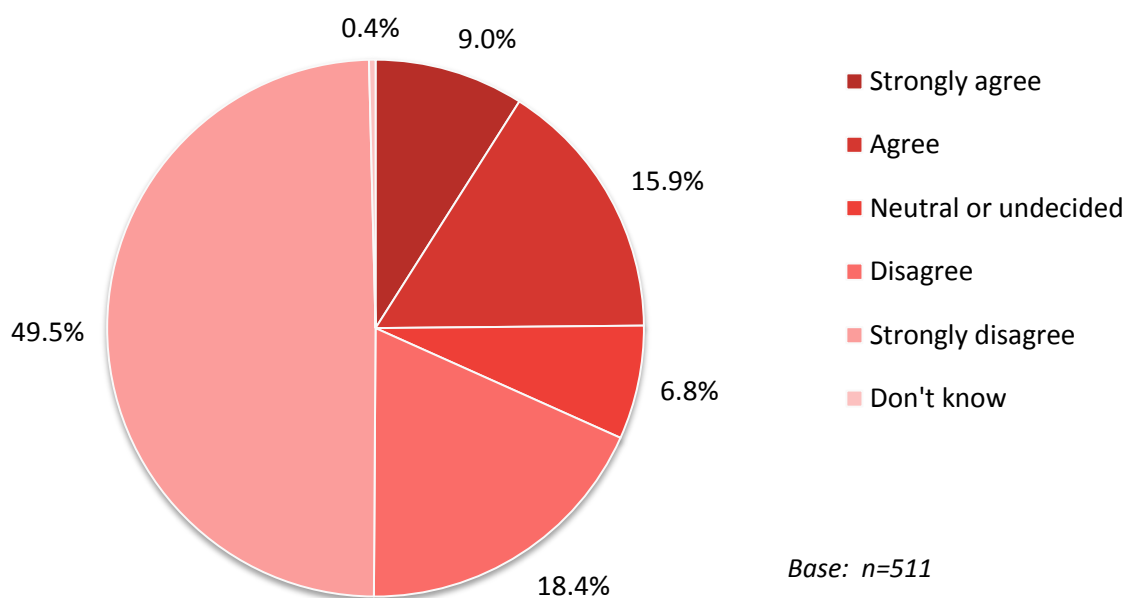
Figure 6-2 How much do you agree or disagree that the proposed option will meet the scheme objectives?



OVERALL VIEWS ON PROPOSAL

6.3.4 Question 8 then asked respondents to indicate their views on the proposed Option 12A for the M2 Junction 5 overall. The results in Figure 6-3 indicate that there is a low level of support for the proposed scheme. As shown, 68% (347) of respondents overall do not support the proposed option (50%; 256 strongly disagree, 18%; 92 disagree). Meanwhile, 25% (128) of respondents support the proposed Option 12A (9%; 46 strongly agree and 16%; 82 agree with the proposed scheme). A further 7% (36) of respondents expressed a neutral opinion and 0.4% (2) answered 'don't know'.

Figure 6-3 Overall to what extent do you support the proposed option (Option 12A) for the M2 Junction 5 improvements?



6.3.5 The results above clearly indicate that while there is very strong support for improving the M2 Junction 5 (94%), the proposed solution (Option 12A) is not supported (68% of respondents disagree with Option 12A).

6.3.6 Question 9 then went on to ask respondents to provide details to illustrate their response on the extent to which they support Option 12A. In total, 455 comments were received in response to Question 9, with Table 6-1 indicating the most common responses.

Table 6-1 Please provide details to illustrate your response to Question 8.

| DESCRIPTION | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE |
|---|-----------|------------|
| Flyover/Underpass is only solution that will work longer term | 110 | 8% |
| Do not use / remove / switch off traffic lights | 103 | 7% |
| Traffic lights cause delay/queues | 101 | 7% |
| Do not support this option / will not solve the problem / quick fix solution / not fit for purpose /over engineered | 74 | 5% |
| Does not offer a long-term solution / is not sufficient to meet future demand | 55 | 4% |
| Roundabouts cannot improve the traffic flow or congestion / traffic must flow freely unimpeded on A249 | 47 | 3% |
| Impact of residential / commercial developments on traffic volumes/flows | 33 | 2% |
| Support dedicated left turn lanes/ slip roads / filter lanes | 33 | 2% |
| Concerns about safety / fails to address serious crash record | 32 | 2% |
| Congestion/queues/delays on A249 | 26 | 2% |

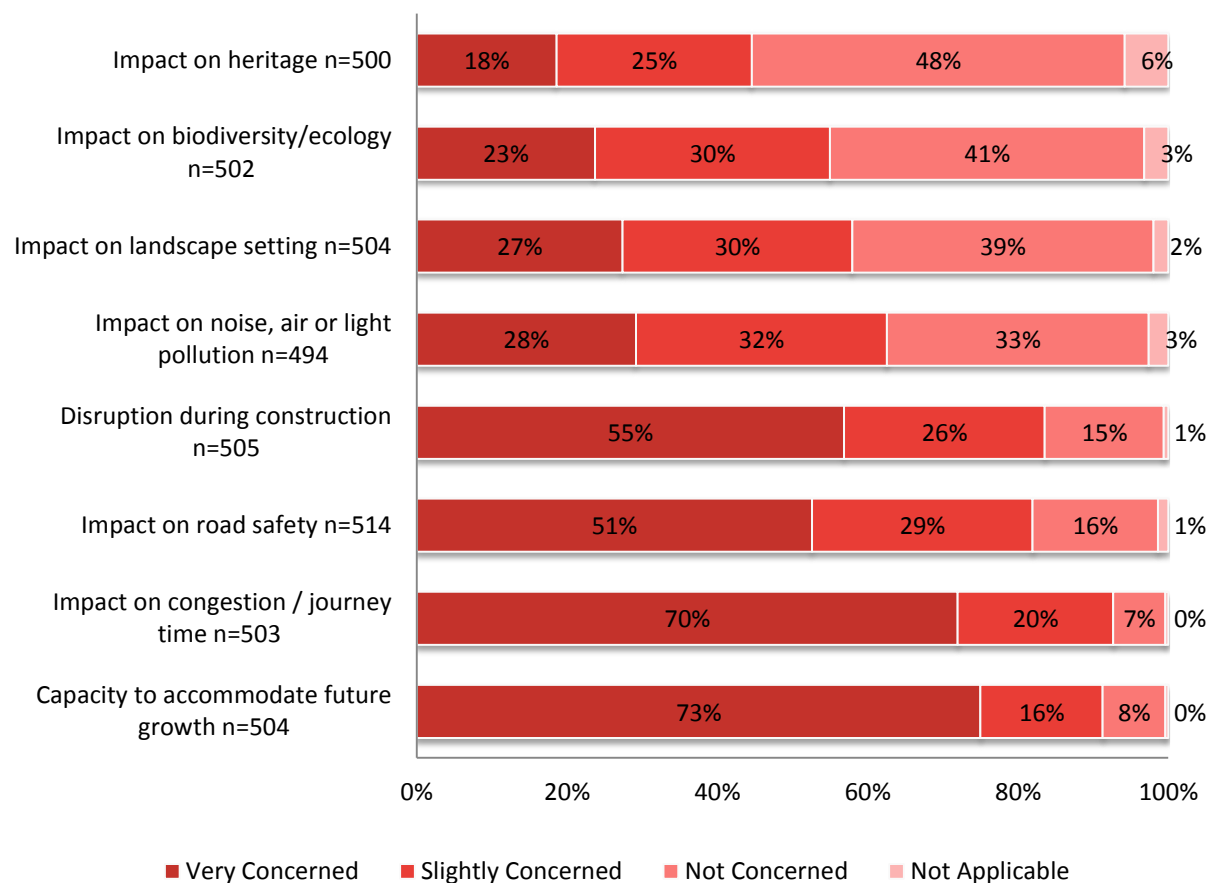
| | | |
|--|----|----|
| Option 4 is the preferred option | 25 | 2% |
| Option 10 is the preferred option | 23 | 2% |
| Would require further improvements (and therefore expenditure) in the future | 22 | 2% |

- 6.3.7 The most frequently mentioned comment relates to a flyover/underpass being the solution (110 comments; 8%).
- 6.3.8 In addition not using / removing / switching off traffic lights (103 comments; 7%) and traffic lights causing delays/queues (101 comments, 7%) were also a very frequent comments.
- 6.3.9 Many responses commented that they didn't support option 12A as it didn't solve the problem (74 comments, 5%) and it didn't offer a long term solution (55 comments, 4%).
- 6.3.10 An additional proportion of comments were concerned that the proposal did not cater for the impact of development (33 comments; 2%), improve safety issues (32 comments; 2%) and alleviate congestion on the A249 (26 comments; 2%).
- 6.3.11 Many responses to this question commented on the benefit of the proposed dedicated left turn lanes / slip roads (33 comments; 2%).
- 6.3.12 However a large majority still supported the discounted options 4 (25 comments; 2%) and option 10 (23 comments; 2%). In addition 22 comments mentioned that the proposed option would require further improvements in the future (22 comments; 2%).

OUTSTANDING CONCERNS WITH THE PROPOSED OPTION (12A)

- 6.3.13 Question 10 then asked respondents to indicate any outstanding concerns on the proposed Option 12A for the M2 Junction 5. A list of potential issues was provided in the questionnaire, and respondents were asked to express their level of concern with each of these using a fixed point scale from 'very concerned' through to 'not concerned'.
- 6.3.14 The results are shown in Figure 5-4 in order from the issue of greatest concern to the issue with the smallest proportion of 'very concerned' respondents.

Figure 6-4 Do you have any outstanding concerns about the proposed option (12A) to improve the M2 Junction 5?



6.3.15 The results shown in Figure 6-4 indicate that respondents are concerned about most of the potential issues suggested. The proportion of concerned respondents vastly outnumbers the proportion of unconcerned respondents for each of the potential issues listed in the questionnaire.

6.3.16 Capacity to accommodate future growth is the biggest concern for respondents, with 73% (368) of respondents being 'very concerned', and a further 16% (81) being 'slightly concerned' about this issue. Only 8% (40) are 'not concerned'.

6.3.17 Impact of congestion /journey time is also a major concern among respondents, with 70% (352) being 'very concerned' and 20% (101) being 'slightly concerned'. Only 7% (35) are not concerned about this issue.

6.3.18 Respondents are also concerned about the disruption of construction (55%; 278 very, 26%; 131 slightly) and the impact on road safety (51%; 262 very, 29%; 149 slightly). As before, few describe themselves as 'not concerned' with these issues (15%; 76 and 16%; 82 respectively).

6.3.19 The remaining environmental concerns the numbers not concerned start to outweigh those concerned. Impact on noise, air or light pollution and on landscape setting are less of a concern; with 28% (138) and 27% (136) very concerned and 33% (163) and 39% (197) not concerned respectively. Similarly the impact on biodiversity/ecology and heritage 41% (206) and 48% (240) are not concerned compared to 23% (115) and 18% (90) very concerned respectively.

6.3.20 Question 10 sought to understand any outstanding concerns on the proposed Option 12A that respondents explained under 'other concerns'. In total, 155 comments were coded in response for this question, with the most common codes presented in Table 6-2 below.

Table 6-2 Do you have any outstanding concerns about the proposed option (12A) to improve the M2 junction 5? Other concerns verbatim (please explain):

| DESCRIPTION | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE |
|---|-----------|------------|
| Do not support this option / will not solve the problem / quick fix solution / not fit for purpose /over engineered | 15 | 5% |
| Traffic lights cause delay/queues | 11 | 4% |
| Does not offer a long-term solution / is not sufficient to meet future demand | 11 | 4% |
| Do not use traffic lights / remove traffic signals | 11 | 4% |
| Waste of time / money | 8 | 3% |
| Concerns about increased journey times / longer routes | 8 | 3% |
| Impact of residential / commercial developments on traffic volumes/flows | 7 | 2% |
| Need to increase budget / seek further funding - solution to the issues not a solution to fit a budget | 7 | 2% |
| Would require further improvements (and therefore expenditure) in the future | 7 | 2% |
| Flyover/Underpass is only solution that will work longer term | 7 | 2% |
| Concerns about safety / fails to address serious crash record | 7 | 2% |
| Concerns about impact of construction (disruption) | 6 | 2% |
| Congestion/queues/delays (general or at the junction/roundabout) | 5 | 2% |
| Congestion/queues/delays on A249 | 5 | 2% |
| Concerns about rat running | 5 | 2% |
| Concerns about environmental Impact (Biodiversity - habitats - animals, woodland) | 5 | 2% |
| Concerns about rat running through Bordon and/or Oad Street | 5 | 2% |
| Poor value / efficiency for money | 5 | 2% |

6.3.21 The most frequently mentioned comment relates to not supporting the proposal/ not believing it will solve the problem (15 comments; 5%). Many believe the proposal does not offer a long term solution (11, 4%).

6.3.22 An additional proportion of comments believe the traffic lights will cause delays/queueing (11; 4%) and consequently many comments also mention removing the traffic signals or switching them off (11, 4%).

6.3.23 Many comments thought the proposal was a waste of time/money (8 comments; 3%). Many also have concerns about the longer journey times/longer routes (8 comments; 3%) and impact of development on traffic flows (7 comments; 2%).

- 6.3.24 A number of comments feel there is insufficient funding for the scheme and there is need to increase the budget (7 comments; 2%). 136 comments (3%) believe that further improvements will be required in the future (7 comments; 2%).
- 6.3.25 A considerable number of comments also mention wanting a flyover (7 comments; 2%), concerns over safety issues (7 comments; 2%) and the impact of construction (6 comments; 2%).
- 6.3.26 Many responses still had concerns about congestion in general (5 comments; 2%) and specifically on the A249 (5 comments; 2%).
- 6.3.27 There were still outstanding concerns with the proposal around rat running in general (5 comments; 3%) and through Bordon/Oad Street (5 comments; 2%).

6.4 ALTERNATIVE IDEAS

- 6.4.1 Question 11 sought to understand from respondents whether they had any other ideas that should be considered relating to this scheme having read the brochure and taken account of the constraints. In total, 390 comments were coded in response to this question, with the most common codes presented in Table 6-3 below.

Table 6-3 Having read the brochure and taking into account the constraints, please share your views on any other ideas you would like us to consider related to this scheme.

| DESCRIPTION | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE |
|--|-----------|------------|
| Flyover/Underpass is only solution that will work longer term | 140 | 16% |
| Do not use traffic lights / remove traffic signals | 39 | 5% |
| Option 4 is the preferred option | 34 | 4% |
| Option 10 is the preferred option | 29 | 3% |
| Would require further improvements (and therefore expenditure) in the future | 22 | 3% |
| Waste of time / money | 21 | 2% |
| Need to increase budget / seek further funding - solution to the issues not a solution to fit a budget | 21 | 2% |
| Option 4/10/12 preferred options | 21 | 2% |
| Does not offer a long-term solution / is not sufficient to meet future demand | 20 | 2% |
| Roundabouts cannot improve the traffic flow or congestion / traffic must flow freely unimpeded on A249 | 19 | 2% |
| Impact of residential / commercial developments on traffic volumes/flows | 19 | 2% |
| Save money until Options 4/10 or better solution can be afforded | 18 | 2% |
| Traffic lights cause delay/queues | 17 | 2% |
| Do not support this option / will not solve the problem / quick fix solution / not fit for purpose / over engineered | 16 | 2% |
| New slip road(s)/New Maidstone Rd-Oad Street link are excessive - spend money on other aspects | 15 | 2% |
| Need longer slip road A249 Southbound to M2 Westbound | 14 | 2% |

| DESCRIPTION | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE |
|---|-----------|------------|
| Need longer slip road A249 Northbound to M2 Eastbound | 14 | 2% |
| Propose new slip roads /dedicated left turn lanes | 13 | 2% |

- 6.4.2 The most frequently mentioned ideas were related to the need for a flyover /underpass (140 comments; 16%), with 36 comments (5%) suggesting not using traffic lights. A number of respondents believe that the discounted Option 4 (34 comments; 4%) and Option 10 (29 comments; 3%) would be better solutions for the junction. Some stated that either option 4/10/12 would be better than Option 12A (21 comments; 2%). Consequently saving the money until option 4/10 or a better solution could be afforded was also mentioned (18 comments; 2%).
- 6.4.3 Other respondents commented on the proposed option stating that further improvements in the future would be required (22 comments; 3%), current option was a waste of time/money (21 comments; 2%) and that the budget needed to be increased (21 comments; 2%). Some supported traffic flowing freely on the A249 (19 comments; 2%) and thought traffic lights caused delays/queueing (17 comments; 2%).
- 6.4.4 In addition some responses considered the proposed slip roads/Maidstone Road -Oad street link to be excessive and thought the budget could be spent on other elements of the scheme (15 comments 2%). Also respondents highlighted that the proposed Option 12A slip roads should be longer as they could be blocked easily by queuing traffic (28 comments in total; 4%). Whilst, a number of responses suggested new slip roads / dedicated lanes (13 comments; 2%).

6.5 PROVISION FOR PEDESTRIANS, CYCLISTS AND HORSE RIDERS

- 6.5.1 Question 12 of the questionnaire gave respondents the opportunity to provide any suggestions in ways that the routes for other highway users including pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders could be improved as a part of the proposals. A total of 325 comments were received in response. Table 6-4 demonstrates the key comments made in response, with the full code frame and frequencies being provided in Appendix F.

Table 6-4 How do you think we can improve routes for other highway users including pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders as part of our proposals?

| DESCRIPTION | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE |
|---|-----------|------------|
| Dedicated/separate cycle lanes/footpaths alongside the A249 | 54 | 12% |
| Need greater provision of bridges/underpasses/tunnels/crossings. | 54 | 12% |
| Should provide alternative routes away from main carriageway (e.g. Cycle way down Old Maidstone Road) | 47 | 11% |
| Low demand / never seen walkers, cycling and equestrians at this junction / don't believe walkers, cycling and equestrians would want to use M2J5 | 40 | 9% |
| Concern for safety issues / dangerous for pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians crossing A249 | 25 | 6% |
| Junction 5 is no place for pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians - local roads can accommodate | 14 | 3% |
| Concerns about impact of pushing more traffic onto local roads which should be used by pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians. | 13 | 3% |

| DESCRIPTION | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE |
|---|-----------|------------|
| Need for reduced speed limit | 12 | 3% |
| Flyover/Underpass is only solution that will work longer term | 11 | 3% |
| Safe access across A249 from Oad Street to Honeycrook Hill | 11 | 3% |
| Prohibit horse riders / pedestrians / cyclists on A249 / at this junction | 10 | 2% |
| A249 is a significant obstacle for cyclists, pedestrians and equestrians | 9 | 2% |
| Concerns about safety issues / dangerous / more accidents | 8 | 2% |
| pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians should not use junction / no provision should be made for pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians as unsafe | 8 | 2% |

- 6.5.2 From the responses it is apparent that the existing provision for people walking, cycling and horse riding is inadequate. The most frequency comments suggested cycle lanes/footpaths alongside the A249 (54 comments; 11%); provision of bridges underpasses/tunnels/crossings (54 comments; 11%); and alternative routes away from the junction (47 comments; 10%).
- 6.5.3 A number commented that there were safety concerns about crossing the A249 (25 comments; 5%) and safe access across the A249 from Oad Street to Honeycrook Hill (11 comments; 3%). There were also a number of concerns about general safety issues / accidents (8 comments; 2%). In line with these comments, many responses felt reduced speed limits would benefit pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians (12 comments; 3%).
- 6.5.4 There were a number of comments which were concerned about the amount of traffic being pushed onto local roads which are used by pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians (13 comments; 3%). Some respondents also thought junction 5 wasn't the place for pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians and that the local roads could accommodate pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians (14 comments; 3%).
- 6.5.5 A number of respondents stated they had never seen pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians at this junction (40 comments; 8%). Some did not think pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians should use the junction and that no provision should be made for them (8 comments; 2%). Further to this several comments thought these users should be prohibited from using the junction (10 comments; 2%).

6.6 OTHER COMMENTS

- 6.6.1 Question 13 provided respondents with the opportunity to provide any additional comments that they would like to make in relation to the proposed junction improvements scheme. In total 279 comments were coded in response to this question. The common themes that were mentioned are shown in Table 6-5. The full list of codes and associated frequencies are in Appendix F.

Table 6-5 Do you have any other comments on the proposals for the M2 Junction 5 scheme (Option 12A)?

| DESCRIPTION | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE |
|---|-----------|------------|
| Do not support this option / will not solve the problem / quick fix solution / not fit for purpose /over engineered | 48 | 10% |
| Flyover/Underpass is only solution that will work longer term | 35 | 7% |
| Does not offer a long-term solution / is not sufficient to meet future demand | 21 | 4% |
| Need to increase budget / seek further funding - solution to the issues not a solution to fit a budget | 20 | 4% |
| Waste of time / money | 19 | 4% |
| Do not use traffic lights / remove traffic signals | 16 | 3% |
| Traffic lights cause delay/queues | 14 | 3% |
| Option 4 is the preferred option | 14 | 3% |
| Least expensive/cheap option / expensive "modification" | 12 | 3% |
| Option 10 is the preferred option | 12 | 3% |
| Concerns about safety / fails to address serious crash record | 10 | 2% |
| Would require further improvements (and therefore expenditure) in the future | 9 | 2% |
| Option 4/10/12 preferred options | 9 | 2% |
| Short sighted / doesn't do enough | 9 | 2% |
| Save money until Options 4/10 or better solution can be afforded | 8 | 2% |

- 6.6.2 The most frequently mentioned comment relates to the lack of support for the proposal (48 comments; 10%) and a flyover/underpass as a preferred solution (35 comments; 7%).
- 6.6.3 Similar comments to other questions, the proposal does not offer long term solution (21 comments; 4%); need to increase the budget (20 comments; 4%); waste of time/money (19 comments; 4%) and that it is the least expensive/cheap option (12 comments 2%).
- 6.6.4 There is lack of support for traffic lights with many comments stating they cause delays /queues (14 comments; 3%) and many thinking they should be removed/ switched off (16 comments 3%).
- 6.6.5 The discounted options 4 and 10 as preferred options were both popular comments with (14 comments and 12 comments, 3% and 2% respectively). Also a number of comments relate to option 4/10 or 12 being preferential to Option 12A (9 comments 2%).
- 6.6.6 There were also comments about the long term viability of Option 12A; with 9 comments (2%) believing it will require further improvements in the future and 9 comments (2%) believing the option is short sighted.

7 STAKEHOLDER RESPONSES

7.1 INTRODUCTION

7.1.1 This section provides an overview of the written responses received in relation to the public consultation from stakeholders. Each stakeholder submission has been tabulated to indicate the organisations (or individual's) overall position in relation to the proposed scheme, Option 12A, the positive and negative comments on the proposed scheme, and any further suggestions.

7.2 LOCAL AUTHORITY RESPONSES

Table 7-1 Summary of response from Kent County Council

| KENT COUNTY COUNCIL | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| RESPONDENT | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Corporate Director – Growth Environment and Transport |
| POSITION | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Objection to Option 12A,• Is a missed opportunity to address and mitigate existing congestion and is wholly inadequate to accommodate future planned growth. |
| NEGATIVES/ CONCERNS | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Congestion is expected to worsen in the future due to planned development and population growth. In fact, the Kent and Medway Growth and Infrastructure Framework (GIF) forecasts that between 2011 and 2031 the combined Districts of Swale, Maidstone, Medway and Canterbury will collectively deliver an increase of 65,800 homes and 59,000 jobs over the 20 year period.• The volumes using the route will also increase with the opening of the new Lower Thames Crossing in 2026 creating a new strategic route along the M2/A2 corridor from the Channel ports to the Midlands and the North.• In addition, the ports are forecasting significant growth of around 5% per annum, and as such, the need for resilience between these corridors linking the Channel ports to the rest of the UK will be further increased.• The A249 is also part of the Strategic Road Network linking the Port of Sheerness, which is also forecasting significant growth, as well as a key inter-urban corridor between Maidstone and Sittingbourne, each with substantial housing and employment growth strategies.• The resulting pressures from growth and Kent's position as a strategic gateway to the rest of the country mean that improvements to M2 Junction 5 are vital. However, we cannot support the proposed Option 12A scheme as it does not provide a free-flow link for movements north and south along the A249. Furthermore, the introduction of a signalised 'Hamburger' roundabout will cause unnecessary conflicts and will fail to |

POSITIVES

SUGGESTIONS

increase capacity or improve safety.

- No positives were given about Option 12A
- Option 4 is the only feasible option that will increase capacity, improve journey times, journey time reliability and safety through the junction.
- We urge Highways England to reconsider its options appraisal and bring forward the previously discarded Option 4 as the scheme that will deliver sufficient capacity improvements to enable growth.

Table 7-2 Summary of response from Swale Borough Council

SWALE BOROUGH COUNCIL

RESPONDENT

- Andrew Bowles (Council Leader)

POSITION

- Objection to Option 12A
- The council is disappointed that the £100m allocated has only produced one option for consultation, about which it has significant reservations.

NEGATIVES/ CONCERNS

- *“This council agrees that the proposed Junction M2/A249 improvements Option 12A will not provide a long term solution to the issues faced here by many drivers and businesses as it still impedes traffic flow along the A249 with traffic lights and the impractical crossover at the roundabout is not sustainable scheme for the future of Swale and fails to address rat-running in surrounding rural areas and indeed may increase it, and threatens the future of bus provision along Chestnut Street and Danaway with key urban centres. It urges Highways England and the Government to fund Option 4 or Option 10 which provides a long term sustainable solution to cope with the growth anticipated in the future not only in Swale, but with the extra traffic from the Lower Thames Crossing and other districts”*
- The current design does not facilitate unimpeded north-south movements through the junction, which we believe is necessary to address the long queues that build up on the A249, in particular back towards Sittingbourne.
- The congestion impacts not only on the Strategic Road Network, but also the local road network. It is widely felt locally that the existing traffic lights at the junction contribute significantly to congestion and we do not see how any option that retains similar traffic controls will not lead to similar and worsening problems as traffic volumes continue to grow. In Option 12A, the retention of the existing off-slip arrangement from the M2 further re-enforces this view, on the assumption that the traffic lights would still need to be controlled but the length of queue on this slip road, which is likely to worsen over time.
- The issue of rat running is also of particular concern. Whilst the proposed scheme appears to provide a safer and more

POSITIVES

SUGGESTIONS

convenient access to the strategic road network from the Oad Street direction, there are fears that this will draw an unacceptable volume of traffic from the north and east, through what are rural lanes and a number of villages. Members have also expressed concern that any design should seek to facilitate continued bus service provision between these more peripheral communities and main urban centres.

- The impact of Government driven growth ambitions further highlights the inadequacy of Option 12A. Development targets set out in Swale's recently adopted Local Plan have been built into traffic modelling to date but the council is required to undertake an immediate review. This will inevitably lead to a higher housing growth target, particularly in light of the Governments currently consultation on proposals to boost housing supply in England. The proposed approach to objectively assessed housing need would see a dramatic rise in housing required from both Swale and Maidstone.
- We also understand that the current scheme has yet to be tested against the traffic modelling associated with the preferred option for the Lower Thames Crossing. With increased traffic on the M2 corridor, and the A249 forming one of only two dual carriageway links between the M2 and the M20, we believe that this will place new pressures upon Junction 5 of the M2 and Junction 7 of the M20, as key nodes on the internationally important routes between the UK and Europe.
- No positives were given about Option 12A
- Swale Borough Council believes the current scheme will only produce short-term mitigation to what is one of the major challenges facing the Borough. Options 10 and 4 both provide unimpeded movements in the critical north-south direction and Option 4 in particular provides a solution which allows for free flowing movements for all of the dominant turning movements through the junction.

Table 7-3 Summary of response from Maidstone Borough Council

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

RESPONDENT

POSITION

- Maidstone Borough Council
- Objection to Option 12A
- Whilst accepting that no technical evidence is available to compare the transport benefits of Option 12A against Options 4 and 10, it is clear that, in providing unobstructed movements north/south on the A249, these options would provide a more long term, strategic solution to improving the junction. In this context, the proposed scheme represents a low cost and in all likelihood an interim measure, given the known development pressures in the wider area and the impacts of the Lower Thames Crossing.

NEGATIVES/ CONCERNS

- The dedicated lane arrangements for London-bound traffic travelling from Maidstone/M20 appear to be adversely affected. Moreover, the retention and expansion of the existing convoluted arrangements would miss this significant opportunity to respond positively to the landscape and provide meaningful capacity and safety improvements.
- Limited evidence is presented in the consultation documentation to justify the proposed Option 12A. Indeed, the only detailed comparative analysis published is the PCF Stage 1 Report from November 2016 which assesses option 12, rather than 12a, against options 4 and 10. No transport modelling is made available to provide an understanding of the relative benefits of the options at the junction, let alone across the wider area. Any benefits arising from the scheme have therefore not been quantified.
- The PCF report describes 12 as a “low cost” option which doesn’t meet the scheme objectives where options 4 and 10 “fully meet” the objectives. Given that the report identifies expected costs for options 4 and 10 as £80m and £88m respectively, comfortably within the £100m budget, it is unclear where the estimated costs set out on page 13 of the latest brochure originate from. This is all the more important in the context that the PCF report appears to advocate these as the preferred options and, subsequently, they are only discounted on grounds of cost.
- The design of the proposal would lead to greater fragmentation and severance for both local residents and wildlife habitats. What is already a very convoluted and unconventional junction layout would further encroach on this nationally important landscape with the opportunity to regularise the junction and minimise the footprint entirely missed.
- No information is included regarding how the environmental impacts of the current proposal would be mitigated, nor any indication of how the landscape impacts would be compensated for. The sprawling nature of the design would presumably necessitate additional lighting however the impacts of this on the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty appear not to have been assessed.

POSITIVES

- The scheme may provide some limited improvement in capacity and safety through dedicated lanes for some journeys.

SUGGESTIONS

- A long term, strategic solution is critical in the context of planned development in the wider area and the impacts of the Lower Thames Crossing on this part of the strategic and local road network.
- The proposed provision of footpath extensions to connect to the bus stop on the northbound A249 is welcomed in principle. However, further consideration should be given to options for pedestrian connectivity to/from the southbound bus stop opposite.
- The Council would expect the delivery of the final scheme to be properly coordinated with the delivery of nearby major infrastructure schemes including M20 J7, Lower Thames Crossing and M20 Smart Motorway so as to maximise the cumulative benefits of these improvements and to minimise disruption and harm to the local economy during construction.

7.3 MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT & LOCAL AUTHORITY COUNCILLORS

Table 7-4 Summary of response from Gordon Henderson MP for Sittingbourne and Sheppey

GORDON HENDERSON MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT

RESPONDENT

- Member of Parliament for Sittingbourne and Sheppey

POSITION

- Objection to Option 12A

NEGATIVES/CONCERNS

- I do not believe option 12A, as proposed, is the right option for the following reasons:
- It does not provide a flyover to allow traffic travelling north and south on the A249 to bypass the junction.
- It adds to the number of traffic lights on the junction, which will cause more hold ups. The current junction runs far more freely when the traffic lights are not operating.
- Tailbacks along the southbound A249 approach to the roundabout caused by the traffic lights are a factor in many accidents and this option does not address that issue.
- It does not, in my view, provide capacity either for the planned economic and housing growth in the Swale Local Plan or the proposed development of the port at Sheerness as set out in the port's 20-year plan. Neither does it, in my view, provide for the growth in traffic that will come from the new Lower Thames Crossing.
- It risks increasing rat-running in rural lanes and through the villages of Oad Street and Borden.
- Deeply disappointed to have not received an advance copy of the proposals for the improvements by Highways England. Instead I received it two days after the local media had been sent a briefing, and not until after the embargo period. Because of this I was unable to field questions from the press or comment to constituents on something they had seen via the media before me. I had asked for the documentation on the 15 August.

POSITIVES

- No positives were given about Option 12A

SUGGESTIONS

- I would like Highways England to throw out option 12A.
- I ask that Highways England adopts option 4, which does in my view provide the necessary flyover and offer better mitigation to planned economic growth in Swale, adjoining districts and the Lower Thames Crossing.
- While option 4 is slightly more expensive than option 12A, I believe it will provide better value for money in the long term because it will better meet the future pressures described above.

Table 7-5 Summary of response from Councillor Mike Whiting - Kent County Council

COUNCILLOR MIKE WHITING - KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

RESPONDENT

- Councillor Mike Whiting elected member for Swale West and Swale Borough Council Councillor for Teynham and Lynsted Ward

POSITION

- Objection to Option 12A

NEGATIVES/CONCERNS

- Option 12A fails to take the A249 through traffic away from the junction, indeed it increases the number of traffic lights at the junction. Therefore, it does not reduce the impact through traffic has on traffic exiting the motorway and wanting to pass through the junction.
- Option 12A fails to address the serious crash record on the southbound A249 approaching the junction because through traffic heading toward Maidstone remains signalised and queues will still build up on that approach.
- Option 12A addresses the issue of diverted traffic using Chestnut Street, but creates a new pressure on Oad Street and will likely lead to more traffic in Borden and Oad Street and the country lanes serving those villages, when the A249 is closed for any reason.
- Option 12A provides a very expensive slip from the eastbound M2 to northbound A249, which replaces the only working part of the existing junction.
- Land take should be kept to a minimum.
- Housing and business development, including at the Port of Sheerness and Eurolink, one of the largest employment areas in the southeast, will put more pressure on the junction in future. The chosen design must be able to accommodate that growth.
- The Lower Thames Crossing will rely on the junction as a primary node in getting traffic to the M20. Designing that capacity in now will help alleviate future congestion on local village roads.
- Diversion traffic through Chestnut Street when the A249 is closed for repair or due to an accident is an issue locally. A way of quickly creating a contraflow on one carriageway of the A249 would benefit local people.

POSITIVES

- No positives were given about Option 12A

SUGGESTIONS

- Discard option 12A and adopt instead either option 10 or option 4 because they offer a through route at a different level for A249 traffic heading north and south.
- This creates the capacity required for future development of the area including massive housing development locally in Swale and Maidstone, and throughout Kent, and the huge investments going on in job creation in Swale including planned expansion of the dockyard at Sheerness, Eurolink Business Park and the Kent Science Park.
- Options 10 and 4 also better future proof the junction against the

impact of the Lower Thames Crossing and could, if chosen and completed now, provide a long-term saving in construction costs at the junction following the opening of the new Thames crossing.

Table 7-6 Summary of response from Councillors James Hunt & Lloyd Bowen - Swale Borough Council

| COUNCILLORS JAMES HUNT & LLOYD BOWEN - SWALE BOROUGH COUNCIL | |
|---|---|
| RESPONDENTS | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Councillor James Hunt elected member for Meads Ward and Councillor Lloyd Bowen elected member for Teynham and Lynsted (both Councillors sent the same letter) |
| POSITION | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Objection to Option 12A it is not considered to bring any benefit |
| NEGATIVES/CONCERNS | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Traffic lights cause delay Poor safety record and Option 12a will exacerbate problem Congestion on the A249 Option 12A is not future proofed |
| POSITIVES | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No positives were given about Option 12A |
| SUGGESTIONS | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The A249 needs to continue to flow through this junction Accommodate planned and future growth as set out in Swale Local Plan Further consideration for growth in the wider area such as Lower Thames Crossing Consider other options such as 4 and 10 Reconsider the budget and progress upgrades that fix the problems. |

Table 7-7 Summary of response from Councillor Cameron Beart - Swale Borough Council

| COUNCILLOR CAMERON BEART - SWALE BOROUGH COUNCIL | |
|---|--|
| RESPONDENT | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Councillor Cameron Beart elected member representing Queenborough and Halfway ward |
| POSITION | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Objection to Option 12A |
| NEGATIVES/CONCERNS | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The proposed Junction M2/A249 improvements Option 12A will not provide a long term solution to the issues faced here by many drivers and businesses as it still impedes traffic flow along the A249 with traffic lights and the impractical crossover at the roundabout is not a sustainable scheme for the future of Swale. |
| POSITIVES | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No positives were given about Option 12A |

SUGGESTIONS

- I urge Highways England and the Government to fund Option 4 or Option 10 which provides a long term sustainable solution to cope with the growth anticipated in the future not only in Swale, but with the extra traffic from the Lower Thames Crossing and other districts.
- Please don't make the mistake of implementing a design to meet a budget. If the budget needs to be increased to make a lasting impact, then increase the budget. Do not attempt to save money now that will only cost more in the future.
- I find it rather pointless consulting on a proposal when you have only given one option and have discounted the rest. For most people, all they have seen is 12A and haven't been given a real chance to comment on alternatives.

Table 7-8 Summary of response from Councillor Nicholas Hapshire - Swale Borough Council

COUNCILLOR NICHOLAS HAPSHIRE - SWALE BOROUGH COUNCIL

RESPONDENT

- Councillor representing Borden and Grove Park Ward

POSITION

- Objection to Option 12A

NEGATIVES/CONCERNS

- As you will be aware from other local representatives, including Gordon Henderson MP, congestion on the A249 at this junction is considerably reduced when the traffic lights are not in operation. You can imagine my disappointment, therefore, to learn that the proposal for improving this highly congested junction is to include the introduction of significantly more traffic lights.
- There is no doubt in my mind, and that of my residents from Borden and Grove Park whom I represent, that without an uninterrupted route from Sittingbourne to Maidstone, to be achieved either by a flyover or underpass for the A249 at the Stockbury interchange, any alterations to this junction will be ineffective and fail to provide the reliable and efficient infrastructure our area desperately requires to support planned residential and business growth.
- My residents are highly concerned that instances of rat-running will increase along the rural roads that serve Borden, notably Oad Street, Sutton Baron Road and Wrens Road, as this will become the preferred option should the A249 towards Sittingbourne become impassable. In addition, the closure of Pet Lane with the A249 will lead to additional traffic passing through Borden as road users from the neighbouring village of Bredgar would now have no choice but to use this route A249 will lead to additional traffic passing through Borden as road users from the neighbouring village of Bredgar would now have no choice but to use this route
- My residents are also concerned about the future of the bus service that serves Chestnut Street and Danaway. With the old A249 / Maidstone Road being blocked off before the Stockbury roundabout, they question, as do I, the suitability of the new road between Chestnut Street and Oad Street and whether the topography is suitable for such vehicles. It is their belief that bus operators will have no choice but to terminate this service and end

POSITIVES

SUGGESTIONS

a vital connection for this rural community with our nearby urban centres of Sittingbourne and Maidstone.

- Scheme 12A fails to deliver a long-term solution to the problems at this junction. Only Options 4 and 10 do so. This is because further consideration must be given to the impact the new Lower Thames Crossing will have on the M2 and Junction 5, traffic currently using the M20 after exiting the Dartford Crossing will now more likely use the M2 as its preferred route to the Port of Dover when exiting the new crossing. You can imagine my astonishment to learn from Highways England that the results of traffic-flow modelling from the new crossing are yet to be determined and consequently have not been considered when designing the Junction's upgrade. There is no doubt in my mind that this modelling will reveal an adverse impact on Junction 5.
- No positives were given about Option 12A
- In summary, although I welcome Highways England's efforts to attempt to improve this key piece of infrastructure in Swale, it falls far short of being deemed anywhere near 'fit-for-purpose'. The last thing anyone would want to see is a bodge job of a scheme that will only require reworking soon after adoption to get a scheme that works. Such an approach surely will be more expensive than spending the additional £50m or so needed today to get a scheme that works and not only works for today but also well in to the future. Swale, including my residents, deserve a better deal than present.

Table 7-9 Summary of response from Councillor Tony Harwood – Maidstone Borough Council

COUNCILLOR TONY HARWOOD - MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

RESPONDENT

- Councillor representing North Ward and Boxley Parish for Woodlands Ward.

POSITION

- Objection to Option 12A

NEGATIVES/CONCERNS

- Landscape and biodiversity of the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty is deteriorating rapidly as a result of impacts arising from expanding road infrastructure. Air, noise, light pollution and fragmentation of wildlife habitats and resultant high rates of road kill is intensifying to the extent that the functioning of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty is profoundly undermined.
- Any new road infrastructure must incorporate significant new areas of linked woodland, scrub, chalk grassland and wetland (balancing ponds and swales). Land bridges are vital to allow movement of wildlife across the affected countryside. All new planting should comprise native species historically appropriate to the locality prior to human intervention and incorporate plentiful dead wood habitats utilising cord-wood arising from tree felling associated with the works. Habitat creation opportunities for invertebrates, ground nesting birds, small mammals and reptiles should also be grasped. The cost of land purchase to allow

significant environmental mitigation must be factored into costings at start of scheme and be integral to its delivery.

- New bridges and other structures must incorporate nesting and roosting niches for swifts and bats.
- Landscaping associated with the scheme should ultimately link to the Hucking complex of woodlands to the south east.
- Lighting should be avoided wherever possible, with red light which is less damaging to nocturnal wildlife utilised where lighting is required for safety reasons.
- Toxic run off contaminated with salt, hydro-carbons and heavy metals is a significant problem in mid Kent, in terms of both surface and groundwater. Reed beds and other filtration systems will be required to cleanse run-off before it is released into the natural environment.
- Traffic speeds on the A249 and M2 contribute to the chronic air and noise pollution prevailing within their corridors. It is therefore crucial that a 'controlled motorway and trunk road approach' is pursued utilising (average) speed camera technology.
- Pedestrian movement across the A249 corridor is a further key consideration and should be incorporated into wildlife land bridge(s).
- The very significant land take, sensitive Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty location and 'over-design' which will inevitably increase traffic levels and thus noise, pollution and habitat fragmentation is to be deplored.
- The illustrative layout profoundly fragments the landscape and is profoundly deficient in landscape and biodiversity mitigation. It is a scheme conceived only to pander to cars, lorries, motorists and unsustainable growth.
- No positives were given about Option 12A
- A landscape led approach recreating woodland and downland habitats with the highway network re-designed to reduce harm through sunken carriageways, land bridges and pollution mitigation at its heart.
- Land bridges are vital, and 'controlled motorway and trunk road' speed limit enforcement.

POSITIVES

SUGGESTIONS

Table 7-10 Summary of response from Councillor Patrick Garten– Maidstone Borough Council

COUNCILLOR PATRICK GARTEN - MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

RESPONDENT

- Councillor representing North Downs Ward

POSITION

- Objection to Option 12A

NEGATIVES/CONCERNS

- 12A is not future proof in that London bound traffic from Maidstone and the M20 has to queue 3/4 around the roundabout, additionally impeded by the new north/south traffic flow across the roundabout.
- Improve safety for all users of the junction to reduce accident numbers: 12A retains the strange/ unnatural lay-out whereby westbound traffic turns right and eastbound turns left. This layout causes confusion even to people who use this junction regularly. Virtually all local people who I spoke to recently, confess to have taken the wrong turning at least once.
- Highways England makes the point that the majority of incidents are low speed low impact collisions. It therefore stands to reason, that confusion, which is caused by the unusual lay-out of the junction, is a major contributory factor
- Improve reliability of journey times through the junction:
- While the M2 eastbound to Sittingbourne slip will undoubtedly improve some reliability, the additional aforementioned Maidstone to London problems may outweigh any partial improvement.
- Overall, Option 12 A is a hare-brained betrayal of the taxpayer: One would not renovate an old house without fitting a roof nor windows?
- Option 12A tries just that with £ 108 million of taxpayer's money.
- The only viable solution would be the discounted Option10 price tag: £185 million.
- Staying with the house analogy: if you build it, build it properly, fit a roof and windows.

POSITIVES

- The new single lane slip road from the M2 eastbound to the A249 northbound which would avoid the M2 junction 5/A249 Stockbury Roundabout altogether
- The only positive proposal in the scheme which would be acceptable on its own, without the other modifications

SUGGESTIONS

- Increase the capacity of the junction to support future growth in housing, employment and the economy.
- Option 10 is the only improvement which I will support and I have the full backing for this option from my community.

7.4 PARISH COUNCILS

Table 7-11 Summary of response from Stockbury Parish Council

STOCKBURY PARISH COUNCIL

POSITION

- Objection to Option 12A
- The discounted Option 10 appears the only option that would successfully deal with the traffic and associated problems at the M2 Junction 5.

NEGATIVES/CONCERNS

- Traffic lights create queuing, traffic congestion and block dedicated left turn lanes at M2 Junction 5. Traffic flows more freely when they are turned off.
- Poor driver behaviour (lane discipline, jumping the traffic lights)
- Merging from 3 lanes on A249 southbound into 2 lanes on M2 westbound creates pinch point for traffic. In addition heavy goods vehicles will cause queuing as they negotiate the tight bends in the slip roads off the A249 at low speeds.
- Proposal encourages “rat running” through Chestnut Street and rural lanes/ villages. In addition this queuing will disrupt the bus service timetable.
- Safety concerns around access/egress from Church Hill junction with the closure of Honeycrock Hill.
- No provision for pedestrians crossing the A249 to access the bus stop which will be near the new dedicated left turn lane.

POSITIVES

- Support slip road from the M2 Eastbound to the A249 Northbound.

SUGGESTIONS

- The speed limit should be 50mph along the A249 and enforced with average speed cameras to improve safety and traffic flow.
- Lane signage would also improve driver awareness of the lane segregations at the A249 Stockbury Roundabout.

Table 7-12 Summary of response from Thurnham Parish Council and Detling Parish Council

THURNHAM PARISH COUNCIL AND DETLING PARISH COUNCIL

POSITION

- Objection to Option 12A
- The discounted Option 10 appears the only option that would successfully deal with the traffic and associated problems at the M2 Junction 5.

NEGATIVES/CONCERNS

- Traffic lights create queuing, traffic congestion and block dedicated left turn lanes at M2 Junction 5. Traffic flows more freely when they are turned off.
- Poor driver behaviour (lane discipline, jumping the traffic lights)
- Merging from 3 lanes on A249 southbound into 2 lanes on M2 westbound creates pinch point for traffic. In addition heavy goods vehicles will cause queuing as they negotiate the tight bends in the slip roads off the A249 at low speeds.
- Proposal encourages “rat running” through Chestnut Street and rural lanes/ villages. In addition this queuing will disrupt the bus service timetable.
- Safety concerns around access/egress from Church Hill junction with the closure of Honeycrock Hill.
- No provision for pedestrians crossing the A249 to access the bus stop which will be near the new dedicated left turn lane.

POSITIVES

- Support slip road from the M2 Eastbound to the A249 Northbound.

SUGGESTIONS

- The speed limit should be 50mph along the A249 and enforced with average speed cameras to improve safety and traffic flow.
- Lane signage would also improve driver awareness of the lane segregations at the A249 Stockbury Roundabout.

Table 7-13 Summary of response from Minster on Sea Parish Council

MINSTER ON SEA PARISH COUNCIL

POSITION

- Objection to Option 12A
- Option 12A does not offer a solution or meet the current design standards. Neither does it take into consideration the inevitable impact on Junction 5 of the proposed Lower Thames Crossing and future development.

NEGATIVES/CONCERNS

- Traffic lights in the design of this scheme and other similar schemes have always presented a hindrance. The junction works better when the lights are switched off, consequently the parish would like to see a scheme that does not need them.
- Option 12A does not include the inevitable impact on Junction 5 of the proposed Lower Thames Crossing and future development in the area.
- Fails to take into consideration the problems caused by the M20 congestion travelling south on the A249 or poor visibility at the M20/A249 junction. On this basis it seems short sighted.

POSITIVES

- No positives were given about Option 12A

SUGGESTIONS

- The parish would like to see more available options explored.
- Option 4 is the most viable and cost-effective solution. Other alternatives would be Option 10 and Option 12. It is urged that all these options are taken forward for further assessment.
- Strongly advises Highways England to revisit the scheme
- Review of the design of the consultation, to allow the public the opportunity to discuss the different options as it is currently weighted heavily on Option 12A.
- Inclusion of local councils in the future planning of this scheme.

Table 7-14 Summary of response from Bobbing Parish Council

BOBBING PARISH COUNCIL

POSITION

- Neither support or oppose Option 12A – concerned

NEGATIVES/CONCERNS

- The public have not been asked to consider options. The general view would have been a preference for an underpass.
- Concern about the proposed scheme in relation to the wider development and infrastructure in the area such as:
 - The Thames Gateway planned expansion and extension to 2050;
 - The expansion and development at Sheerness deep water port;
 - Industrial developments at Queenborough, Ridham Dock, Kemsley and Eurolink all of which will feed on to the A249 and generate considerable heavy goods vehicle traffic;
 - Extra housing planned for Sittingbourne and Sheppey
 - Lower Thames crossing which will feed increased traffic to the A2 and M2.
- Chestnut Street is used by the main local bus service, farm traffic and serves as a relief road when the A249 is blocked. The new proposed Chestnut Street diversion will need to cope with heavy goods vehicles, double decker busses and large slow farm traffic given steep gradients on the new route.
- Traffic lights do not improve the current situation. Safety concerns around the increasing amount of heavy goods vehicles with trailers using the junction and how the length of these vehicles will be accommodated.
- Safety concerns around access/egress from Church Hill junction with the closure of Honeycrook Hill.

POSITIVES

- No positives were given about Option 12A

SUGGESTIONS

- The A249 northbound slip road on to the M2 eastbound needs to be longer to avoid blockage by queuing traffic.
- Traffic from the M2 Medway towns travelling towards Sittingbourne on the A249 northbound needs long slip as fast traffic gathering speed downhill may cause accidents.

Table 7-15 Summary of response from Iwade Parish Council

| IWADE PARISH COUNCIL | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| POSITION | Objection to Option 12A |
| NEGATIVES/CONCERNS | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By accepting the proposed scheme the money will be spent on something that in a few years' time will need to be revisited because of the expansion of the Eurolink Industrial Estate, the new Thames Gateway, the expansion of the Kent Science Park and the huge numbers of housing proposed for the Swale area. Better to spend a little more on this now than have to come back in a few years' time to redesign it and spent even more. • The only proposal put forward will be a waste of money. • The traffic lights will not work and will only add to casualties and even more queues. |
| POSITIVES | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No positives were given about Option 12A |
| SUGGESTIONS | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A flyover, although more costly, will in the long run save money. • Most residents and the Parish Council prefer a flyover which will reduce the pressure on the Stockbury Roundabout. |

Table 7-16 Summary of response from Hartlip Parish Council

| HARTLIP PARISH COUNCIL | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| POSITION | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objection to Option 12A • The preferred option so far as Hartlip Parish Council is concerned is option 10 with option 4 as the second choice of Hartlip Parish Council |
| NEGATIVES/CONCERNS | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Option 12A will not provide sufficient improvement. There will still be traffic lights on the A249 which will cause congestion, air pollution etc. The lane structure is complicated and will cause more accidents. There are no estimates of improvements as no modelling of the options has been undertaken. All assertions of improvements are guesswork. • No modelling of the option has been undertaken. • Option 12A is not a sustainable solution because no flyover or underpass is proposed for direct North South A249. • Option 12A does not deliver better highway safety at a known black spot for accidents. • Option 12A does not take into account the growth not only in Swale but other districts and the extra traffic along the M2 from the lower Thames crossing. • Option 12A is the cheap and nasty option. |
| POSITIVES | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No positives were given about Option 12A |

SUGGESTIONS

- Option 10 gives a better longer lasting solution and best environmental impact giving back Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and not hitting so many rural roads.

Table 7-17 Summary of response from Tunstall Parish Council

TUNSTALL PARISH COUNCIL

POSITION

- Objection to Option 12A

NEGATIVES/CONCERNS

- The benefits of the road improvements will be short lived following the significant increase in housing locally.
- The changed access from Oad Street will encourage increased use as a "rat-run" from Sittingbourne and beyond, causing an unacceptable traffic flow through the narrow country lanes leading to A249 / M2.
- Choosing Option 12A is a "false economy" as it will only provide a temporary solution to the present traffic congestion. Spending more money on an option that removes traffic lights and creates an underpass / flyover, is the only worthwhile solution. We now have the opportunity to make a difference; do not miss this chance as the inevitable need for more improvements will only result in more expense and upheaval, in the long run.

POSITIVES

- The changed access from Oad Street is a safer option.

SUGGESTIONS

- No suggestions were given

Table 7-18 Summary of response from Bredgar Parish Council

BREDGAR PARISH COUNCIL

POSITION

- Objection to Option 12A
- Councillors consider that Option 12A will provide short term benefit for traffic movements overall, but with limited improvements for Bredgar residents.

NEGATIVES/CONCERNS

- Due to the additional traffic joining the Bredgar exit from Chestnut Street and the lack of traffic lights on that exit, local traffic may experience longer delays or difficulty when entering onto the roundabout.
- The new roads and infrastructure on the east side of the A249 require too much land take and have a negative impact on the countryside.
- Option 12A is unlikely to meet the long term needs for the area. The future housing numbers and industrial growth in the Swale Local Plan will quickly negate any advantage gained from implementing Option 12A.

POSITIVES

- No positives were given about Option 12A

SUGGESTIONS

- In our view Options 4 or 10 (with flyover/underpass) are needed to meet the longer term needs for Swale. If these options are reconsidered we would encourage planners to investigate ways to implement them with less land take, reduced impact on the countryside, greater separation of through traffic from local traffic and lower cost.

7.5 STATUTORY ENVIRONMENTAL BODIES

Table 7-19 Summary of response from Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

KENT DOWNS AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY

POSITION

- The Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Unit is of the view that the proposed alterations to Junction 5 of the M2 as proposed in Options 4, 10 and 12A, would significantly change the landscape resulting in a loss of existing rural character to the detriment of the local environment and significant harm to the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

NEGATIVES/ CONCERNS

- The proposal would also be detrimental as a result of increased traffic movements, noise, and severance of habitat and loss of biodiversity as well as increased severance of local communities. The works would result in substantial harm to both the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and its setting that could not be satisfactorily mitigated. We have significant concerns regarding inaccuracies within the Landscape Section of the Environmental Study Report and strongly disagree with the conclusions 10 reached as to the level of harm that would arise as a result of the proposed alterations. In light of this, we question the suitability of using this report as a basis for assessing impacts on the landscape. We also query whether the importance of the nationally protected landscape of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty has been adequately taken into account and Highways England has complied with its Duty of Regard under S85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act in considering the proposal. We consider the most harmful aspect of option 12A on the protected landscape of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty to be the proposed new Oad Street Link and we would urge Highways England to review this aspect of the proposal to help reduce the level of harm on the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
- Junction 5 lies predominantly within the Mid Kent Downs Local Character Area. Key characteristics for this area are identified as comprising a series of wide ridges and steep sided dry valleys, much surviving original ancient woodland, large arable fields on the plateaux, hedgerow trees, prominent in parts and tiny scattered villages linked by narrow lanes. The land in the vicinity of Junction 5 and affected by the proposed works is representative of these characteristics.
- Overall landscape character objectives identified for this Landscape Character Area within the Landscape Assessment of

the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty are to manage and restore hedgerows, trees and woodland, especially in the valleys, to seek to conserve the small scale of the roads and villages and the remote quality of the countryside and to control urban fringe pressures. The proposed works at Junction 5 would conflict with these objectives.

- While relatively contained in the wider landscape, the proposed works would be visible from numerous viewpoints in the local area, including from Church Hill, Stockbury, public rights of way to the west of junction 5 (KH85/2, ZR70), and public rights of way to the east of Whipstake Farm (ZR135) as well as from locations on the opposite side of the Borden Hill valley.
- The proposal comprises various elements that have the potential to impact on the special characteristics and qualities of the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, however the most harmful aspect of the scheme on the landscape is considered to be the creation of the Oad Street and Maidstone Road links.
- The proposed Oad Street link is proposed entirely within the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. It involves the creation of a new section of highway of some 1 km in length, across undeveloped rural land that is in agricultural, equestrian and pastoral use and is of high landscape value, typical of the Mid Kent Downs local character area within which it is situated. The proposed new road would represent a significant new urbanising feature with the undulating topography resulting in the need for extensive engineering works with much of the road to be provided within extensive cuttings. While this would reduce the visual impact of the new highway on the local landscape, it would result in significant impacts on landscape character thus exacerbating impact to the local environment and resulting in large tracts of land being required to accommodate the associated cuttings. The provision of a new bridge for the existing Oad Street to allow the new link road to pass under it would also be an urbanising feature out of character with the existing rural character of Oad Street, much of it without kerbs and bounded by hedgerows on either side.
- The provision of the new Oad Street link would also cut through several field boundaries. Despite the construction of the M2 and Stockbury Roundabout junction, evidence shows the historic field pattern in this locality has remained remarkably unchanged in this area since the 17th century. The new road link would fragment this historic field pattern and boundaries which would have a detrimental impact on the historic character of the Kent Downs historic landscape.
- This would also result in the loss of trees and hedgerows and sever ecological links/corridors including remnant trees from woodland to the south of Whipstake Farm that is identified on historic maps dating back to at least 1872.
- Option 12A also includes provision of a new slip road connecting the M2 east bound to the A249 and a re-routing of the Maidstone Road. Both proposals involve significant land take. While lying outside of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty boundary, in view of their proximity to the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the fact the land affected shares the same characteristics as the landscape of the Area of

Outstanding Natural Beauty, being part of the Stockbury Valley, these proposed works would also impact on the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, although to a lesser extent than the proposed new Oad Street link road within the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty boundary.

- The new slip road to the north of the existing junction would be approximately 1 km in length. While some of it would be provided on land already affected by the existing Junction 5, the majority of it would not. The existing topography of the land and difference in levels of the two roads means that significant engineering works are proposed in the form of a cutting to provide the new slip road, resulting in a significant amount of land take required to provide the new road. The land affected is in agricultural use and comprises a continuation of the Stockbury valley side.
- Similarly, the proposed new Maidstone Road link would pass through the opposite side of the valley. This also comprises rural undeveloped land, primarily in agricultural use, with some equestrian use and also require areas of cutting. Where the proposed new road connects with Oad Street, a significant number of mature trees would need to be removed to provide the junction and required visibility splays. While we have not confirmed through woodland survey, it is thought the trees affected are likely to be remnants of the Chestnut Wood Ancient Woodland that previously occupied much of the land to the north.
- The proposed enlargement of the Stockbury Roundabout, together with re-alignment of the A249 and its slip roads, the new through route across the roundabout and new left turn lanes associated with the roundabout would all result in an increase in both land take and built form into the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. These works would also result in the loss of significant tracts of tree planting which was undertaken as part of the highways works when the roads were constructed in the 1990s and have now matured and assist in screening the highways infrastructure in the landscape. While replacement planting could be undertaken, this would take some time to mature sufficiently to provide the same level of mitigation as currently exists and we would expect significant areas of tree planting to be undertaken, including into areas beyond the highway boundary where this is constrained. We would be happy to work closely with Highways England to develop an appropriate landscaping strategy incorporating this.
- The proposals include diversion and closures of existing junctions and routes, including the Honeycrook Hill junction with the A249 to Stockbury. Impacts of these local road closures on rural traffic within the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty needs to be assessed, along with consideration of the impacts of severance of routes between local communities. The closure of Maidstone Road will result in a much greater level of traffic using Oad Street and is likely to lead to a displacement of local traffic using rural lanes within the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty which also needs to be assessed.
- The alterations are also likely to result in a need for increased signage and lighting which could also negatively impact on the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The proposal should

support the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan policy on Dark Skies (SD7) i.e. seeking to ensure that lighting is minimised and where essential, careful design and best technologies are used to reduce impact on views from the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. This is particularly important in view of the fact that at present it is only the roundabout that is lit.

- For the above reasons we are in strong disagreement with the conclusions of the Environmental Study Report that both the landscape and visual impacts would only be minor adverse impact with a slight adverse significance at year 1 reducing to neutral at year 15. While we agree that subject to the retention of much of the existing vegetation and subject to compensatory additional planting, the proposed works to the existing Stockbury roundabout would be likely to result in a slight impact on the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, we consider that the proposed creation of a new Oad Street link road would have a major impact of change on the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and in view of the high sensitivity of the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty landscape, this would result in a large significance of impact.

POSITIVES

- No positives were given about Option 12A

SUGGESTIONS

- We consider a less harmful approach on the landscape would be for the route of the existing Oad Street to be utilised as far as possible, with minor widening as required and a link to the roundabout more closely aligned to that proposed in Options 4 and 12, but retaining an appropriate rural road design. We would urge Highways England to review this.

Table 7-20 Summary of response from Natural England

NATURAL ENGLAND

POSITION

- Concerned about the proposals impact on the environment

NEGATIVES/ CONCERNS

- Option 12A appears to include wide cuttings either within or in the setting of the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, for example to the south of the M2 to accommodate a realigned Oad Street. These have the potential to result in significant impacts to the landscape character of this area of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. In addition, the cuttings are likely to result in significant visual impacts for both near and more distant visual receptors.
- The option also appears to have direct impacts to an area of ancient woodland. Despite these, the landscape and nature conservation impact is assessed as being 'slight adverse' within the consultation.

POSITIVES

- No positives were given about Option 12A

SUGGESTIONS

- Natural England's advice is that the alternatives for the scheme should be revisited and the option with the least landscape and ecological impact that meet the safety and traffic flow requirements of the scheme is the one that is progressed.
- Whilst this consultation is seeking views on the option, irrespective of which scheme progresses Natural England would recommend that significant landscape and ecological restoration and enhancement measures should be implemented to ensure landscape and habitat connectivity is maintained or restored.

Table 7-21 Summary of response from English Heritage

ENGLISH HERITAGE

POSITION

- Objection to Option 12A
- Highways England's preferred option (Option 12A) may not be the least harmful to heritage assets, although it is not possible to be certain on the basis on the information currently available.

NEGATIVES/ CONCERNS

- The proposed scheme options are all likely to cause some harm to the heritage significance of Stockbury Castle, St Mary Magdalene's Church, Church Farmhouse and Church Farm Cottage. A slight adverse effect is anticipated by the Environmental Study Report. We accept that the schemes would alter the view but not in ways that will greatly alter the current contribution that setting makes to the assets' significance. It seems unlikely to us that there would be much difference between the scheme options in the harm that they would do.
- The scheme options will also harm remains of the Chatham Land Front directly by destroying some evidence, as well as obscuring or intruding into some defensive lines of fire from some positions, which are a key aspect of their significance. All schemes seem to have some potential to affect the battery, strong point and observation post that survive in the field in the north-west quadrant of the scheme, either through direct impacts or changes to their setting. The field in the north-east quadrant contains defensive trenches that would be harmed by Options 4 and 12 but might be preserved in Option 10. The new Oad Street link of Options 4 and 12 might affect an advance defence. Similarly, the Maidstone Road link to Oad Street would also cross defences. We note that a moderate to very large adverse effect on the remains is anticipated by the Environmental Study Report but that there is considerable uncertainty about the degree of impact because the extent of survival of the remains is not well understood.
- A moderate to large adverse effect on hitherto unknown buried archaeological remains is also possible, according to the Environmental Study Report.

POSITIVES

- No positives were given about Option 12A

SUGGESTIONS

- Some further work is necessary to adequately describe the significance of the Chatham Land Front remains in order to enable the Secretary of State to properly take it into account in decision making (National Network National Planning Statement, 5.127 & 5.130). However, we are pleased to note

that an extensive programme of archaeological evaluation is about to begin. A clear and convincing justification will be needed for any harm to the Chatham Land Front, which is likely to be of equivalent importance to a scheduled monument (National Network National Planning Statement, 5.124 & 5.131).

7.6 LOCAL BUSINESS GROUPS AND ORGANISATIONS

Table 7-22 Summary of response from Kemsley Fields Business Park

KEMSLEY FIELDS BUSINESS PARK ASSOCIATION

POSITION

- Objection to Option 12A

NEGATIVES/CONCERNS

- Although we support Highways England's commitment to tackling high levels of congestions, we do not feel we can support the preferred option 12A. We have concerns that the proposed option does not fully take into consideration the increased capacity which will be required to support the additional journeys generated by proposals such as the Lower Thames Crossing, and the planned housing and commercial development outlined in Swale Borough Council's Local Plan.

POSITIVES

- In line with our aims to support business at the park and encourage improvements to local infrastructure, we broadly support the objective to increase capacity at the junction to support future growth in employment and the economy. We also strongly support the need to improve the reliability of journey times through the junction, which we feel can only have a positive effect on supporting the economy and attracting new business to the borough. It is with this in mind that we are pleased to see that by proposing a new through route for north-south traffic on the A249, consideration has been given for the large number of journeys undertaken between the Isle of Sheppey, Sittingbourne and Maidstone.

SUGGESTIONS

- Our preferred option would be Option 4, which proposes an A249 flyover above the roundabout. We believe unimpeded north-south access will help to maintain the flow of traffic, increase capacity to a sufficient level and give businesses the longer-term certainty of an effective road network to service their future activity and encourage more investment.

Table 7-23 Summary of response from Federation of Small Businesses – Kent and Medway Steering Group

| FEDERATION OF SMALL BUSINESSES – KENT AND MEDWAY STEERING GROUP | |
|--|---|
| POSITION | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objection to Option 12A |
| NEGATIVES/ CONCERNS | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To be effective the scheme needs to separate the Sittingbourne - Maidstone traffic in both directions from traffic entering or leaving M2. • Traffic using the Key Street road (old A249) needs to be prevented from entering or leaving the roundabout. • The proposal doesn't address the fundamental issue of increasing capacity. |
| POSITIVES | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No positives were given about Option 12A |
| SUGGESTIONS | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The fundamental requirement is to separate traffic travelling north south on the A249 from traffic entering or leaving the M2. Either an underpass or flyover would achieve this and substantially increase capacity. |

Table 7-24 Summary of response from IAC Delivery Solutions

| IAC DELIVERY SOLUTIONS | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| POSITION | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support to Option 12A |
| NEGATIVES/ CONCERNS | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sittingbourne is currently undergoing a large amount of development, both residential and commercial. Good transport links are essential to ensure the success of these schemes (Sittingbourne Regeneration). Concern that it does not go far enough to deal with future growth. • When the new Lower Thames link opens there will be a large proportion of the traffic that currently goes straight from Dartford to the M20 looking for a route between the M2 and the M20. Whilst a large part of this will probably use the A228 or A229, I believe that the A249 will also see an additional increase to its current load. |
| POSITIVES | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposal 12A goes a very long way to alleviate the current delays, and reduce the risk of incidents. |
| SUGGESTIONS | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flyover for A249 through traffic would be a far better long term solution, despite the additional cost. |

Table 7-25 Summary of response from Chalkwell Garage and Coach Hire Ltd

| CHALKWELL GARAGE AND COACH HIRE LTD | |
|--|--|
| POSITION | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objection to Option 12A |
| NEGATIVES/ CONCERNS | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This proposal does not provide an answer to the problem of congestion. There will still be traffic lights at the roundabout which means that traffic will stop. • Slowing and stationary traffic means congestion and a high risk of rear-end shunts. • There is little provision to accommodate the inevitable rise in vehicle usage at Junction 5 with the additional housing and industrial developments proposed for Sittingbourne and Sheppey. With the proposed third crossing of the Thames more traffic will be generated using the M2 and A249 as a route of travel between the M2 and M20. • There is little provision for traffic growth within the scheme and thus no real forward thinking and planning. • The proposed linking of Maidstone Road with Oad Street creates a further traffic problem at the Oad Street junction. |
| POSITIVES | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The closure of Honeycrook Hill junction is necessary as is the closure of the existing Oad Street / A249 for safety reasons. • Providing a slip road from the M2 Eastbound to the A249 Northbound is long overdue. |
| SUGGESTIONS | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through traffic on A249 in both directions must be provided with a flyover or better still a subway as at Key Street. • The slip road from the M2 Eastbound to the A249 Northbound has to be long enough for vehicles to accelerate and filter into the fast moving through traffic on the A249 Northbound. |

Table 7-26 Summary of response from C&A Consulting on behalf of Quinn Estates

| C&A CONSULTING ON BEHALF OF QUINN ESTATES | |
|--|--|
| POSITION | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did not state their position on Option 12A |
| NEGATIVES/CONCERNS | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of detail on performance of the option and the assumption on future year growth that have been made to inform the design. |
| POSITIVES | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No positives were given about Option 12A |
| SUGGESTIONS | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gave no alternative suggestions regarding the junction |

Table 7-27 Summary of response from MVV Environmental Ridham

MVV ENVIRONMENT RIDHAM LTD

POSITION

- Neither Supports or Objects the proposal

NEGATIVES/CONCERNS

- The proposed improvements will have limited effect because the fundamental problem is the merging of traffic from the A249, both north and southbound onto the M2 westbound slip road and the way in which the slip road narrows to one lane on a steep upward and twisting alignment. Changing from alternating 2 lanes of traffic controlled by traffic lights to 4 lanes of uncontrolled traffic merging down to the single lane with the northbound traffic on the roundabout having priority over the southbound traffic on the A249 will still have the potential to cause serious delays on the A249 southbound in the morning peak.
- The fundamental problem is not the roundabout but the A249 - M2 westbound link road which narrows to one lane on a steep vertical incline with sharp turns with HGV's starting from stationary at the roundabout.

POSITIVES

- No positives were given about Option 12A

SUGGESTIONS

- The optimum solution would be to create two separate slip roads for traffic from the A249 to join the M2 westbound; one for A249 traffic southbound using the proposed arrangements with a dedicated slip road avoiding the roundabout; and a second slip road for A249 traffic northbound leaving the A249 just before the roundabout and making a direct 90 degree turn onto the M2 westbound. This would be a very similar arrangement to Junction 10 on the M40 which was upgraded about 5 years ago.
- Option 10 did include a dedicated A249 northbound – M2 westbound slip road but it was not evaluated on its merits but it was evaluated as part of the 3 tier intersection with a through road for the A249 traffic passing over the roundabout at an elevated level. This option was rejected as too expensive.
- Highways England at the exhibition said that they had not included the A249 northbound to M2 westbound direct connection because the alignment of that slip road would take it through an area of Ancient Woodland. Ancient Woodland which has a very high designation with Natural England and should only be removed if there is no alternative. Highways England said that there was an alternative which they had proposed and which can out with a better cost benefit in the Cost Benefit Analysis (CBA).
- In order to calculate the Cost Benefit Analysis, Highways England had taken the actual costs of delays in terms of additional driver time in queues; additional fuel used in queueing; and delays caused to supply chains against an arbitrary cost attributed to the loss of Ancient Woodland.
- The retention of Ancient Woodland is important but the real value of the Ancient Woodland is not the trees but the soil in which they grow and the seed stock and variety of species that are supported by the soil structure. It is possible with careful excavation of the different layers of the soil structure to recreate Ancient Woodland to a reasonable level and if it is left undisturbed it can re-establish

itself relatively quickly.

- It would be possible to cut a narrow swathe through the Ancient Woodland in the south west quadrant of land at the M2 Junction 5 /A249 Stockbury Roundabout and to move the soil to the west of the M2 adjacent to the new north – west link to recreate an area of Ancient Woodland quite quickly.
- Widening the roundabout sufficiently to include cycle lanes.
- The demand for facilities for pedestrians and horse riders at this location does not merit specific provision for their requirements.
- Separate free flow arrangements for traffic northbound and southbound on the A249 to climb to the M2 westbound would address the fundamental problem.

Table 7-28 Summary of response from W A Hinge and Sons

W A HINGE & SONS LTD

POSITION

- Objection to Option 12A

NEGATIVES/CONCERNS

- We believe proposals encourage a lot of additional local traffic from South Sittingbourne/Borden/Tunstall etc. to access A249/M2 via the Oad Street where the existing roads tend to be narrow, single track with existing speed controls and restricted places for vehicles to pass one another, particularly larger farm vehicles and lorries.

POSITIVES

- No positives were given about Option 12A

SUGGESTIONS

- Significant lengthening of all slip roads providing egress from the A249 to relieve traffic from the A249 sooner.
- The Bobbing A2/A249 junction at Key Street is already 2-tier and the M2J5 junction should also be 2-tier to allow free-flow unrestricted traffic north/south (Maidstone/ Sheppey).
- Preferred Option 10, over Option 4.
- Provision of dedicated routes for pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians if there is a proven need

Table 7-29 Summary of response from Energy Solutions

ENERGY SOLUTIONS

POSITION

- Objection to Option 12A
- It is clear that the only 'real' solution is a flyover. If money is not available to do this then some hard decisions need to be made to make 12A (or perhaps 12B?) work as needed for the community.

NEGATIVES/CONCERNS

- New 2 lane slip road from M2 Eastbound and subsequent replacement of footbridge – I have not seen the traffic data so my anecdotal feelings might be inaccurate. My feeling is that the existing slip road has sufficient capacity – especially when combined with the new slip road proposed to the A249 North. The disruption and cost of the M2 slip road change and new footbridge seems unnecessary. If there is doubt – could the new A249 slip road be built in such a way that it could feed off the existing M2 slip but be adapted to an improved M2 slip at a later date if found necessary? Save money, save disruption on M2
- New through route for A249 – The drawing suggests that this will be three lanes wide. As the A 249 before, and after, the junction is only two lanes I would suggest that this is reviewed. I use, on a daily basis the A289 past the Kent Police building at pier Road. This junction has been modified in the same way and the issues with drivers racing to get into the third lane and then after only a couple of hundred meters trying to push back in is a daily worry. I see no evidence, from daily use in both directions, that this is anything other than a problem. If you then add a 4th lane into the mix (which is the traffic entering from the Oad Street / M2 Eastbound to A249 South) then you have 4 lanes narrowing to 2. Save the money and make the new through route 2 lanes only and spend a bit more on having a longer merge for the Oad Street slip. Save money, save road rage on A249
- Oad Street exit onto roundabout – My suggestion here is not to make a provision for such a minor road to be able to join the A249 at this point. This junction can ill afford the added complexity. Don't build the new Oad Street link. Prevent the access to A249 as proposed and force the Oad Street traffic to use the new link to the Maidstone Road and join the A249 at the Key Street roundabout. This again would save money and reduce the compromise of the junction. Save money, improve A249 traffic at the expense of Oad Street traffic having a longer route to join A249.

POSITIVES

- No positives were given about Option 12A

SUGGESTIONS

- No suggestions were given regarding the junction

7.7 TRANSPORT / USER GROUPS

Table 7-30 Summary of response from Freight Transport Association

FREIGHT TRANSPORT ASSOCIATION (FTA)

POSITION

- Support Option 12A
- Junction 5 of the M2 is a vital link for freight traffic connecting between the M2 and the M20 and is a major feeder route for the Channel Tunnel and continental ports. It is strategically important for Freight Transport Association that Highways England ensures there is additional capacity now and for the future freight movements along this stretch of road.
- Freight Transport Association recognises that the junction experiences high levels of congestion on the A249 southbound (towards Maidstone), northbound (towards Sittingbourne) and the approaches to the junction and on the exit slip road from the M2 westbound (towards Stockbury Roundabout) and Freight Transport Association supports measures which will reduce congestion and delays and improve journey times for travel travelling in both directions along the A249.

NEGATIVES/CONCERNS

- No negatives were given about Option 12A

POSITIVES

- Freight Transport Association recognises that the junction experiences high levels of congestion on the A249 southbound (towards Maidstone), northbound (towards Sittingbourne) and the approaches to the junction and on the exit slip road from the M2 westbound (towards Stockbury Roundabout) and Freight Transport Association supports measures which will reduce congestion and delays and improve journey times for travel travelling in both directions along the A249.

SUGGESTIONS

- Freight Transport Association would be keen to see that any future improvements to this junction increase the capacity and improve the traffic flow to reduce queuing at the roundabout from all directions.

7.8 LOCAL COMMUNITY GROUPS

Table 7-31 Summary of response from Thames Gateway Kent Partnership

THAMES GATEWAY KENT PARTNERSHIP

POSITION

- Objection to Option 12A

NEGATIVES/CONCERNS

- In our judgment the proposed option 12A has a number of shortcomings:
- The proposals retain the existing geometry of the interchange, which is counter-intuitive and one of the sources of driver confusion that leads to accidents. Improved signage might mitigate this to a limited extent.
- Relying on traffic-controlled flows on the roundabout will cause stop-start queueing on the roundabout itself and potentially on slip roads. Just as the layout of both the existing roundabout and proposed option 12A are counter-intuitive, so it seems counter-intuitive to propose subjecting the main north-south flow of traffic on the A249 to signalised control. Has this design been used elsewhere, and what has been its performance in both efficiency and safety?
- Whilst the new slip off the M2 onto A249 northbound will take a significant flow of traffic away from the roundabout, and thus reduce the flows trying to join northbound A249 at the roundabout, the retention of the geometry for all traffic joining the M2 to travel east will perpetuate the problem of a difficult climb with tight curves and short slip road onto the M2.
- Similarly, whilst the new slip for southbound A249 onto M2 westbound will relieve congestion at the roundabout, both this traffic and the traffic joining from A249 northbound will still funnel down onto the existing narrow and steep curve and short slip onto the M2 westbound, which has similar shortcomings to those on the eastbound side.
- The illustrative layout for A249 is signalised rather than free-flowing and is therefore likely to continue to create queues at peak times, however smartly managed. Highways England's proposal for minimising this appears to be widening the road to 3 lanes at the cross-over, to allow more stationary vehicles at and within the roundabout. There are three potential problems with this:
- Unless the controls within the roundabout ensure that there is no risk of queueing vehicles tailing back and blocking the roundabout, the north south movements could impede flow from other directions on the roundabout;
- If queueing is allowed/created within the roundabout then vehicles 'shooting' the lights at the first traffic controls could block the roundabout.
- The three lanes of traffic created at the roundabout then have to funnel down to dual carriageway within a short distance of the roundabout. For northbound traffic there would additionally be traffic exiting the roundabout, e.g. from M2 westbound or from the new Oad Street link, or from M2 eastbound (if traffic failed or

POSITIVES

SUGGESTIONS

chose not to use the new slip road). So there could be potentially five lanes trying to funnel down to two. Even the loss of a single carriageway – funnelling from 3 to 2 – has potential to cause congestion either because the weight of traffic will make filtering difficult or resulting from poor/selfish driver behaviour. Both scientific and anecdotal evidence illustrate how lane reduction or lane changing can have far-reaching effects on congestion. We suggest that the negative consequences of funnelling could outweigh any benefits that might arise from creating additional road capacity at the traffic lights, in which case it would be better not to create three lanes in the first place.

- The revised Maidstone Road-Oad Street link seems likely to add further pressure onto the roundabout by creating additional entry and exit points in close proximity. The Oad Street link seems a disproportionately large component of the scheme for what is a minor local road.
- Thames Gateway Kent Partnership strongly agrees with the urgent need for improvement of M2 Junction 5 and the Stockbury Roundabout.
- No alternative suggestions where given

Table 7-32 Summary of response from Swale Economy and Regeneration Partnership

SWALE ECONOMY AND REGENERATION PARTNERSHIP

POSITION

NEGATIVES/ CONCERNS

POSITIVES

SUGGESTIONS

- Objection to Option 12A
- No negatives were given about Option 12A
- In line with our aim to further economic development and regeneration in the borough, we broadly support the objective to increase capacity at the junction to support further growth in employment and the economy. We also strongly support the need to improve the reliability of journey times through the junction, which we feel can only have a positive effect on supporting the economy and attracting new business to the borough. It is with this in mind that we are pleased to see that by proposing a new through route for north-south traffic on the A249, consideration has been given for the large number of journey undertaken between the Isle of Sheppey, Sittingbourne and Maidstone.
- Although we support Highways England's commitment to tackling high levels of congestions, we do not feel we can support the additional journeys generated by proposals such as the Lower Thames Crossing, and the planned housing and commercial development outlines in Swale Borough Council's Local Plan.
- No alternative suggestions were given

Table 7-33 Summary of response from The Sittingbourne Society

THE SITTINGBOURNE SOCIETY (REGISTERED CHARITY)

POSITION

- Objection to Option 12A

NEGATIVES/ CONCERNS

- Traffic lights cause delays
- Growing traffic volumes will increase delays.
- Lower cost option is not the solution now or in the future.
- Disappointed that a flyover solution has been discarded on grounds of high costs.

POSITIVES

- Proposed slip road from the Eastbound M2 to A249 Northbound will reduce traffic flows through the junction.

SUGGESTIONS

- Consider alternative junction arrangement such as A12 and A127 at Gallows Corner Romford Essex where Baileys Bridge a steel-framed structure carries cars and Light Goods Vehicles only over the roundabout.

Table 7-34 Summary of response from Maidstone Cycle Campaign Forum

MAIDSTONE CYCLE CAMPAIGN FORUM (REGISTERED CHARITY)

POSITION

- No position was given regarding Option 12A

NEGATIVES/ CONCERNS

- The current junction and surrounding roads are a massive barrier to non-motorised users (pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians) who wish to travel in the area. The improvements scheme must consider pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians in the final design.

POSITIVES

- One of the benefits of this scheme put forward by Highways England is that less traffic will be tempted to use rural roads in the area if congestion is reduced on the A249. The Maidstone Cycle Campaign Forum believes that this is an opportunity to improve Maidstone Road, which runs parallel with the A249 from the Stockbury Roundabout to Sittingbourne. Cycling provision on Maidstone Road should match Table 2.2.2 in IAN 195/16. This could be achieved through the construction of cycle tracks, or a reduction in speed limit and volume of traffic to enable cycling on the carriageway itself. Highways England standards dictate that the existing road is not suitable for a cycle route in its current form, and this road is an important link to any cycling provision at the Stockbury Roundabout.

SUGGESTIONS

- Maidstone Cycle Campaign Forum proposes that a grade separated route for pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians is created as part of the junction improvements scheme. This should link Maidstone road, Oad Street, and Honeycrock hill and enable pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians to safely access these three roads for onward travel. Any cycle route

from Maidstone to Sittingbourne that follows a logical route will pass through this area, and so this should be considered as part of the improvements scheme.

- Assuming that the roundabout would have a speed limit of ≥ 40 mph, and a vehicle flow of over 10,000 vehicles per day, IAN 195/16 states that Stockbury Roundabout should have a grade separated route for pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians. The best option for grade separation is an underpass, because it reduces the height difference that is required for a bridge. An underpass should be well lit, provide good sight lines, and have shallow gradients on the approaches. Section 2.5.1 of IAN 195/16 explains this well.
- If underpasses cannot be provided, then Maidstone Cycle Campaign Forum would support at-grade signalised crossings. These should consist of separate crossings for pedestrians and cyclists, because Toucans create conflict between pedestrians and cyclists, and are uncomfortable for cyclists to use. At-grade crossings would be less expensive, however they would be less advantageous than grade-separation, causing time delay for pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians and motor vehicles, and would be less safe.
- The proposals from Highways England will also close a section of Maidstone Road, as it would no longer connect with Stockbury Roundabout. This section of road should be maintained for pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians, and provide clear separated space for people cycling and walking. It should also be lit in order to enhance the feeling of safety when using the route at night.
- As access from Honeycrop Hill to the A249 is being removed, access should be maintained for pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians to access Stockbury Roundabout and Oad Street. The best way to achieve this would be by an overpass for pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians, due to the gradient on Honeycrop Hill.

8 OTHER RESPONSES

8.1 INTRODUCTION

- 8.1.1 In addition to the stakeholder submissions, correspondence was also received via the Highways England Customer Care Centre, through which respondents sought to feedback their views on the proposals. This chapter summarises the 28 responses to the consultation, 20 email through the Customer Care Centre and 8 by letters.
- 8.1.2 As with the open-ended questions within the questionnaire, the comments have been coded (grouped thematically). The respondents made multiple coded comments within their answers. The codes have been analysed to identify the number of times (frequency) a particular issue or comment has been raised.

8.2 RESPONSE ANALYSIS

- 8.2.1 Table 8-1 presents the codes that were the most common and amass a proportionate percentage of the overall coded responses. A total of 58 comments were coded within the 28 response. A full frequency table including all codes and the coding framework used for this analysis is given in Appendix G.

Table 8-1: Other responses - most frequently mentioned comments

| DESCRIPTION | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE |
|---|-----------|------------|
| Missing literature / information not available on website | 6 | 4% |
| Congestion/queues/delays (general or at the junction/roundabout) | 5 | 4% |
| Traffic lights cause delay/queues | 5 | 4% |
| Impact of residential / commercial developments on traffic volumes/flows | 5 | 4% |
| Congestion (peak time, rush hour) | 4 | 3% |
| Poor junction / design / road markings / signage | 4 | 3% |
| Propose new slip roads /dedicated left turn lanes (i.e. M2 Westbound to A249 Southbound) | 4 | 3% |
| Flyover/Underpass is only solution that will work longer term | 4 | 3% |
| Do not use traffic lights / remove traffic signals | 4 | 3% |
| Lack of information (e.g. on traffic movements, proposed developments, costs) | 4 | 3% |
| Need more exhibitions (general) | 4 | 3% |
| Concerns about safety issues / dangerous / more accidents | 3 | 2% |
| Do not support this option / will not solve the problem / quick fix solution / not fit for purpose /over engineered | 3 | 2% |
| No public consultation events or information available in Medway | 3 | 2% |

- 8.2.2 Frequently mentioned comments about the consultation were missing literature or information not being available on the website (6 comments; 4%); lack of information (4 comments; 3%) and more exhibitions in general (4 comments; 3%) and in Medway (3 comments; 2%).

- 8.2.3 Congestion/ queues/ delays in general (5 comments; 4%); and in peak times (4 comments 3%).
- 8.2.4 Many responses detailed that traffic lights causing delay (5 comments; 4%); and consequently there were also many that wanted them removed/did not want traffic lights (4 comments; 3%).
- 8.2.5 The impact of development on traffic volumes (5 comments; 4%) was a concern as was current poor junction design/ road markings/ signage (4 comments; 3%).
- 8.2.6 A number of responses proposed new slip roads (4 comments; 3 %) and a flyover/underpass as a solution (4 comments; 3%).
- 8.2.7 Lastly responses contained concerns about safety issues (3 comments; 2%) and generally did not support the proposal (3 comments; 2%).

9 EVALUATION OF CONSULTATION

9.1 INTRODUCTION

- 9.1.1 This chapter sets out a summary of the public exhibitions, before going on to analyse how useful the consultation material and events were in addressing any questions that people had.
- 9.1.2 Though attendees were encouraged to complete the questionnaire, it is useful to summarise the questions raised and topics discussed at exhibitions to give further insight into local opinions and recurring concerns / issues. These are detailed in Section 9.5.

9.2 CONSULTATION PROCESS

- 9.2.1 Question 21 aimed to gather respondents' views on the consultation process. In total 230 comments were made in response to this question. Table 9-1 indicates the most frequently mentioned comments.

Table 9-1 Do you have any comments about the consultation process?

| DESCRIPTION | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE |
|---|-----------|------------|
| Option 12A would go ahead irrespective of public opinion / won't make a difference | 44 | 15% |
| Public should have been given choice of options | 37 | 13% |
| Plead to listen to the public | 29 | 10% |
| Lack of knowledge / number of exhibition and supporting staff to answer questions | 22 | 8% |
| Informative, well-presented and many opportunities to ask questions | 18 | 6% |
| Exhibition and supporting staff were both very well done | 16 | 5% |
| Flyover/Underpass is only solution that will work longer term | 11 | 4% |
| Need more / Not sufficient advertising and promotion | 10 | 3% |
| Need to increase budget / seek further funding - solution to the issues not a solution to fit a budget | 7 | 2% |
| Engage with wider stakeholders/users/residents in future | 6 | 2% |
| Waste of time / money | 5 | 2% |
| Do not support this option / will not solve the problem / quick fix solution / not fit for purpose /over engineered | 5 | 2% |
| Poorly constructed questions / some questions lead the response towards supporting Option 12a | 5 | 2% |

- 9.2.2 The main comment made in relation to the consultation process, was that people felt Option 12A would go ahead irrespective of public opinion (44 comments; 15%). The public also felt they should have been given a choice of options (31 comments; 13%) and were generally pleading to be listened too (29 comments 10%).
- 9.2.3 A number of comments relate to a lack of knowledge of exhibition staff or staff failed to answer their questions (22 comments; 8%) and poorly constructed questionnaire (5

comments 2%). However, 18 comments (6%) thought that the consultation was informative, well-presented and welcomes the opportunity to ask questions and the staff were helpful (16 comments; 5%).

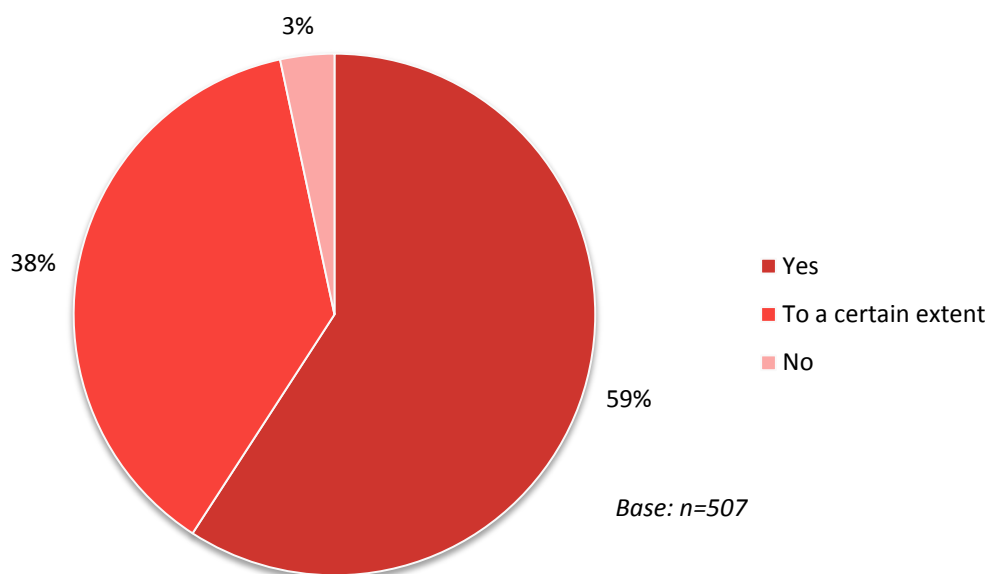
9.2.4 A large proportion of comments did not support the option (5 comments; 2%) believing a flyover/underpass to be the solution (11; 4%), with 7 comments (2%) expressing the need to increase the budget solution and that it was a waste of time/money (5 comments; 2%).

9.2.5 There were also some comments suggesting engagement with wider stakeholders, users, residents and/or local authorities (6 comments; 2%).

9.3 MATERIAL USEFULNESS

9.3.1 Question 16 sought to ascertain whether respondents had found the consultation materials useful. Of the 518 questionnaire responses, 507 provided an answer to this question. Figure 9-1 below summarises these responses:

Figure 9-1 Have you found the consultation materials useful in answering your questions?



9.3.2 As shown in Figure 9-1, 38% found the consultation materials useful, whereas 3% did not. Those that responded 'No' were then asked to explain how the consultation material available could have been improved.

9.3.3 A total of 55 comments were received and coded in response to the free-text part of Question 16. Table 9-2 details the comments that were mentioned.

Table 9-2 Have you found the consultation materials useful in answering your questions? If 'No' how could the materials available be improved?

| DESCRIPTION | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE |
|---|-----------|------------|
| Lack of information (egg. on traffic movements, proposed developments, costs) | 12 | 17% |
| Some of the detail was missing on the proposals | 7 | 10% |

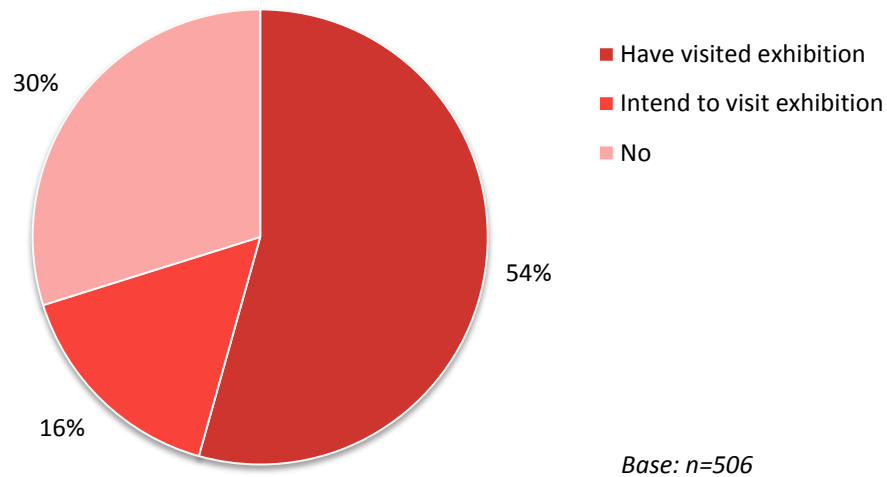
| | | |
|---|---|----|
| Option 12A would go ahead irrespective of public opinion / won't make a difference | 5 | 7% |
| Online survey had broken links | 5 | 7% |
| Materials to include more of surrounding area / bigger clearer images / impact on local residents | 5 | 7% |
| Online technical reports have not included any detail on Option 12A | 4 | 6% |
| Public should have been given choice of options | 4 | 6% |

- 9.3.4 The most frequently mentioned comments thought the consultation material lacked some form of information (12 comments; 17%) and detail on the proposals (7 comments; 10%).
- 9.3.5 Other responses commented that they thought Option 12A would go ahead irrespective of public opinion support (5 comments; 7%), and that the public should have been given more options (4 comments; 6%).
- 9.3.6 The online survey had a few broken links initially which the responses highlighted (5 comments; 7%) in addition some responses thought the materials should be clearer/ contain more of the area/ impact on residents (5 comments; 7%).

9.4 EXHIBITIONS USEFULNESS

- 9.4.1 As described in Chapter 8, five public consultation exhibitions were held for the M2 Junction 5 improvements scheme, with additional invite-only events held for potentially impacted landowners and local businesses. The exhibitions were held on both weekdays and weekends, at a range of locations throughout the area to maximise the opportunities for local people to attend.
- 9.4.2 The exhibitions were hosted by members of the project team comprising of Highways England and consultant, WSP, staff. Experts on highway design, traffic modelling, land & property and environment were on hand to ensure queries raised during the consultation events could be properly addressed.
- 9.4.3 Question 17 asked respondents whether they had already attended a public consultation event, or were intending to do so. Figure 9-2 below summarises the results.

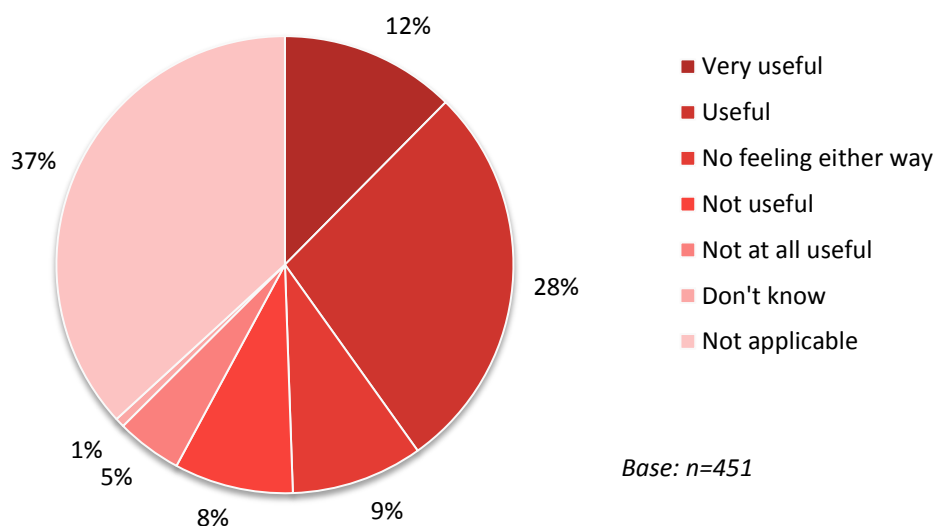
Figure 9-2 this questionnaire and project information is available online and at the exhibitions. Have you or do you intend to visit one of our public exhibitions?



9.4.4 In Figure 9-2, of the 506 respondents that answered Question 17, over half (54%) had already attended a consultation event, while a further 16% were planning to do so at the time of their response. Over a quarter of respondents to the consultation questionnaire (30%) said that they did not plan to attend any of the exhibitions at the time of answering.

9.4.5 Question 18, followed this question by asking respondents that had attended an exhibition how useful they considered the event to be in terms of addressing any questions they had. 451 respondents gave an answer to this question, of which 166 said the question was not applicable. The answers were as follows shown in Figure 9-3.

Figure 9-3 If you have visited an exhibition, how useful did you find it in terms of addressing your questions?



9.4.6 In Figure 9-3, it can be seen that, of the respondents who had already attended a consultation event, 40% found the consultation materials very useful and useful. Conversely only 17% of respondents said that they did not find the exhibitions useful in terms of answering their

questions. As such, it is clear that a greater proportion of respondents considered the materials useful than those that did not – thus signifying that the exhibitions were a good source of information to interested parties.

9.5 TOPICS / ISSUES RAISED AT EXHIBITIONS

9.5.1 Table 9-3 summarises the issues that were raised during public consultation exhibitions. The frequency of mentions by attendees is denoted by the 'star' rating, with ★★★ denoting that an issue was raised very frequently, while a single ★ denotes that the issue was raised several times, but not by many attendees. It is noted that an attendee may have made multiple comments about different (or the same) topic. Comments that were raised by only one attendee are not shown.

Table 9-3 Issues raised at exhibitions

| ISSUE RAISED | STAR RATING |
|---|-------------|
| Introduce a fly-over with no other improvements i.e. M2 eastbound to A249 Northbound free-flowing link | ★★★ |
| Members of the public were concerned that the Oad Street arm being un-signalised would cause safety and traffic issues | ★★ |
| Turn of traffic signals at existing junction as will perform better - reference made to period when control box was hit and needed to be replaced and so was not working for a number of weeks. | ★★★ |
| Proposed Maidstone Road and Oad Street Links will encourage / facilitate more rat-running from the Key Street development. | ★ |
| Will cause accidents as people will cut in at last moment at point 3 lane is dropped. | ★★ |
| Is there enough capacity on the existing Oad Street bridge over the M2? Will the proposed un-signalised entry at the Stockbury Roundabout be able to cope with the volumes of traffic? | ★★ |
| More traffic onto unsuitable local roads, as only the proposed Oad Street Link is being upgraded and not other sections of the Local Road network that feed into it. | ★★ |
| Safety concerns relating to entry into and exit from Church Lane. | ★★★ |

9.6 LESSONS LEARNT

This section summarises the lessons learnt from the consultation.

- Residents at Faversham and Medway were disappointed that an exhibition event was not organised for their towns. We will endeavour to engage with wider stakeholders, where possible, in future.
- There was some confusion with distinguishing between questionnaires and brochures at the deposit points. Consequently some was not displayed immediately at the start of the consultation.
- Some residents were frustrated that the libraries closed before the end of the standard working day. Therefore those libraries that close early will be replaced, where possible, with places that will remain open for longer hours.

10 PRESS & SOCIAL MEDIA

10.1 INTRODUCTION

10.1.1 This chapter sets out a summary of media coverage throughout the public exhibitions, including newspapers, websites and social media.

10.2 LOCAL PRESS COVERAGE

The M2 Junction 5 improvements featured in local press during the consultation period as follows:

- Headline: No Flyover in junction upgrade,(Medway Messenger, 11.9.2017,page 23)
- Headline: Up to £100m improvements planned for M2 (Canterbury Times (Faversham)13.9.2017, page 129)
- Headline: £102 traffic hotspot solution? (Kent on Sunday,10.9.2017, page 9)
- Headline: Plans for problem roundabout are revealed (Sittingbourne News, 6.9.2017, front page)
- Headline: Review starts on £100m upgrade for roundabout (Sheerness Time Guardian, 6.9.2017 Page 7)
- Headline: Review starts on £100m upgrade for roundabout (Kent Messenger (Maidstone), 7.9.2017, page 23)
- Headline: Roundabout upgrade plan is 'unsuitable' (Sheerness Time Guardian, 20.9.2017 Page 7)
- Headline: Roundabout upgrade plan is 'unsuitable' (Sittingbourne News Extra, 20.9.2017 Page 7)
- Headline: Consultation continues on Junction 5 changes (Inside Swale Page 18)

HIGHWAYS ENGLAND

10.2.1 Please see Highways England press release in Figure 10-1 below.



1. Home (<https://www.gov.uk/>)

Press release

Plans to improve busy junction on the M2 in Kent unveiled today

From: Highways England (<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/highways-england>)

Part of: Road network and traffic (<https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/road-network-and-traffic>)

Published: 6 September 2017

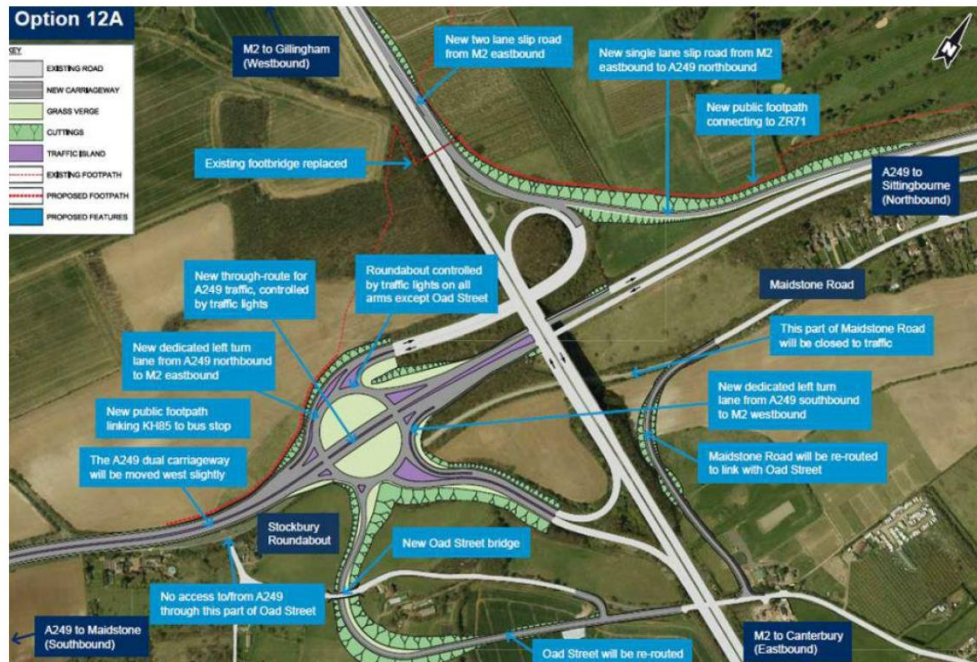
Proposals to improve journeys for drivers using junction 5 on the M2 starts today.



Proposed major improvements to make journeys safer and more reliable for drivers using junction 5 on the M2 have been unveiled by Highways England today (Wednesday 6 September).

The M2 is a key route which links London with Rochester and Faversham and the Port of Dover. The interchange between the M2 and the A249 at junction 5 is heavily congested with tens of thousands of vehicles using the junction each day. These improvements would mean crucial additional capacity for the junction and its approaches to support development in Kent and the Thames Estuary corridor.

A public consultation on the proposals starts today and runs until 17 October. Highways England is holding five information exhibitions at venues in Sittingbourne, Stockbury, Sheerness and Maidstone so that people can examine the proposals and put any questions directly to the project team.



An outline of Highways England's plans for improvements at junction 5 on the M2

The roundabout itself would be enlarged, with a new through route for A249 traffic; there would be new dedicated left turn filter lanes for traffic travelling between the M2 and the A249; a new single lane slip road from the M2 eastbound to the A249 northbound to avoid the Stockbury roundabout altogether, and measures to improve facilities for people using the junction on foot.

Highways England Senior Project Manager Neil Andrew said:

The Stockbury junction provides a vital interchange between the M2 and A249 and is heavily congested during peak periods each day. This junction is currently one of the top 50 national casualty locations on England's strategic road network, and we are consulting on the proposals to improve the junction, which will not only improve safety, but also help to boost the economy and support development of homes and jobs in the local area. I urge anyone interested to send us their feedback and to come along to one of our exhibitions.

Funding for the scheme comes from the Department for Transport's £15bn Roads Investment Strategy, announced in 2014, which is providing people with better journeys, cutting congestion and improving the economy.

All responses to the consultation will be carefully considered before an announcement is made on a preferred route this winter. Subject to a successful outcome, construction could start as early as 2020 and take around two years to complete.

Details on the proposals and feedback forms will be available online (<http://roads.highways.gov.uk/projects/m2-junction-5-improvements/>) from today until 11:45pm on 17 October 2017.

General enquiries

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

Media enquiries

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.

Published: 6 September 2017

From: Highways England (<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/highways-england>)

Part of: Road network and traffic (<https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/road-network-and-traffic>)

SWALE BOROUGH COUNCIL

Figure 10-2 Swale Borough Council press release on 1 Septmeber

Resident Business Council Stay Connected

Contact Us | Councillors / Meetings | Compliments and complaints | Voting / Elections | About us | Finance / Performance

[Home](#) [Council](#) [Council news](#) [Hot off the Press](#) [M2 Junction 5 consultation](#) [Contact Customer Services](#)

M2 Junction 5 consultation

Friday 1 September

Improvements to be made to M2 Junction 5

Overview

Highways England is holding a public consultation between 6 September and 17 October 2017 on their plans to improve the M2 Junction 5/A249 Stockbury Roundabout. They are at an early stage in the development of the scheme and want your views to help inform the future direction of the scheme. The consultation will run for 6 weeks, from Wednesday 6 September to Tuesday 17 October 2017.

They want your views

Highways England would like to hear your views about their proposals and so are hosting a number of public open days at nearby venues where their experts will be on hand to explain the proposal:

- Wednesday, 6 September, 4pm to 8pm - Holiday Inn, 70 London Road, Sittingbourne
- Monday, 11 September, 2pm to 4 pm - Stockbury Memorial Hall (Cricket Club), The Street, Stockbury
- Saturday, 16 September, 10am to 2pm - The Forum Shopping Centre, Sittingbourne
- Wednesday, 20 September, 2pm to 8pm - Sheppey Gateway, 38-42 High Street, Sheerness
- Saturday 23 September, 9am to 5pm - The Mall, Maidstone

All plans will be available to view online from Wednesday 6 September. If you are unable to attend any of the scheduled events but would like to find out more or comment on the scheme then visit the [Highways England website](#).

Copies of the consultation will also be available at a number of other locations throughout the consultation:

- Allington Library
- Bearsted Library
- Boughton-under-Blean Library
- Faversham Library
- Madginford Library
- Maidstone Library
- Morrisons, Sittingbourne
- Queenborough Library
- Sheerness Library
- Shepway Library
- Sittingbourne Library
- Teynham Library

About the scheme

The M2 is an important motorway linking Rochester to Faversham, and a key route to the Port of Dover.

The M2 Junction 5 / A249 Stockbury Roundabout is the main access point for people travelling northeast to Sittingbourne, the Isle of Sheppey and the Port of Sheerness and southwest to Maidstone and surrounding villages.

The M2 serves a population of at least 142,400 (Swale Borough) and 164,500 (Maidstone Borough) and a large number of businesses in Kent and Medway, including many in the freight and logistics sector.

The Road Investment Strategy has allocated a budget of between £50 million and £100 million to this scheme; to provide additional capacity for the junction, through improvements to slip roads and enhanced junction approaches.

Why are the improvements needed?

- The M2 Junction 5 / A249 Stockbury Roundabout cannot cope with existing traffic flows. Currently there are high levels of congestion and delay at certain times of day.
- Congestion is expected to worsen in the future due to planned development, population and traffic growth.
- Some traffic diverts away from the M2 Junction 5 / A249 Stockbury Roundabout to less suitable alternative rural routes.
- The junction is one of the top 50 national casualty locations on England's major 'A' roads and motorways.
- There are high levels of car use and there are no plans to improve public transport

10.3 SOCIAL MEDIA

SWALE BOROUGH COUNCIL

10.3.1 Table 10-1 summarises Swale Borough Council's social media coverage of the M2 Junction 5 consultation.

Table 10-1 Swale Borough Council Social Media Activity

| LOCATION | DATE | CONTENT |
|--------------------------------|--------|--|
| Twitter | | |
| SwaleBoroughCouncil Twitter | 16-Oct | Tomorrow, Tuesday 17 Oct, is the last day of @HighwaysSEAST's consultation on plans to improve M2 J5. Have your say: https://t.co/qd86hhePUI |
| SwaleBoroughCouncil Twitter | 10-Oct | The @HighwaysSEAST consultation on plans for improvements to M2 J5 closes next Tuesday, 17 Oct. Have your say here: https://t.co/qd86hhePUI |
| SwaleBoroughCouncil Twitter | 20-Sep | There's a public open day on @HighwaysSEAST proposals to improve M2 J5 Stockbury roundabout today at Sheppey Gateway in Sheerness |
| SwaleBoroughCouncil Twitter | 15-Sep | Speak to the @HighwaysSEAST team behind plans for improvements to M2 J5/Stockbury roundabout @TheForumSC tomorrow https://t.co/BhAPStpHa |
| SwaleBoroughCouncil Twitter | 01-Sep | The @HighwaysSEAST consultation on plans for improvements to M2 J5/A249 Stockbury Roundabout starts next week https://t.co/emo2CN54iO |
| Facebook | | |
| Swale Borough Council Facebook | 16-Oct | Tomorrow is the last day of the public consultation on plans for improvements to Junction 5 of the M2. Have you had your say? Click the link below to respond to Highways England's consultation and make sure your voice is heard. Visit our website to find out more: http://www.swale.gov.uk/M2-Junction-5-consultation/ |
| Swale Borough Council Facebook | 10-Oct | The public consultation on plans to improve Junction 5 of the M2 closes next Tuesday, 17 October. Have you had your say? Click the link below to respond to Highways England's survey and make sure your voice is heard. For more information about the consultation, visit our website: http://www.swale.gov.uk/M2-Junction-5-consultation/ |
| Swale Borough Council Facebook | 20-Sep | If you want to find out more about Highways England's plans to improve M2 Junction 5, Stockbury Roundabout, there's a public open day at Sheppey Gateway today from 2 - 8pm |
| Swale Borough Council Facebook | 15-Sep | Find out more about Highways England's plans to improve M2 J5 tomorrow. Highways England is running a public consultation on their plans to improve capacity at the junction to improve traffic flow, journey time, safety and boost economic growth in line with local growth aspirations. The next public open day where you can speak to their team about the proposals, is tomorrow (Saturday, 16 September) from 10am to 2pm in The Forum Shopping Centre, Sittingbourne. The public consultation is running between 6 September and 17 October 2017, and you can find out more, and respond to the consultation at http://roads.highways.gov.uk/pr.../m2-junction-5-improvements/ |

| LOCATION | DATE | CONTENT |
|--------------------------------|--------|--|
| Swale Borough Council Facebook | 06-Sep | <p>The consultation on plans to improve the M2 junction 5 opens today. Highways England is running a public consultation on their plans to improve capacity at the junction to improve traffic flow, journey time, safety and boost economic growth in line with local growth aspirations. They want to hear your views about their proposals, which are being published today at http://roads.highways.gov.uk/pr.../m2-junction-5-improvements/ There will also be a number of public open days when you can talk to their team: Wednesday, 6 September, 4pm to 8pm - Holiday Inn, 70 London Road, Sittingbourne Monday, 11 September, 2pm to 4 pm - Stockbury Memorial Hall (Cricket Club), The Street, Stockbury Saturday, 16 September, 10am to 2pm - The Forum Shopping Centre, Sittingbourne Wednesday, 20 September, 2pm to 8pm - Sheppey Gateway, 38-42 High Street, Sheerness Saturday 23 September, 9am to 5pm - The Mall, Maidstone The public consultation is running between 6 September and 17 October 2017.</p> |

| LOCATION | DATE | CONTENT |
|--------------------------------|--------|--|
| Swale Borough Council Facebook | 01-Sep | <p>Consultation on plans for Stockbury Roundabout improvement start next week.</p> <p>Highways England is holding a public consultation between 6 September and 17 October 2017 on their plans to improve capacity at M2 Junction 5/A249 Stockbury Roundabout.</p> <p>The scheme aims to improve traffic flow, journey time, safety and boost economic growth in line with local growth aspirations. Highways England want to hear your views about their proposals, which they will publish on 6 September, and so are hosting a number of public open days at nearby venues:</p> <p>Wednesday, 6 September, 4pm to 8pm - Holiday Inn, 70 London Road, Sittingbourne</p> <p>Monday, 11 September, 2pm to 4 pm - Stockbury Memorial Hall (Cricket Club), The Street, Stockbury</p> <p>Saturday, 16 September, 10am to 2pm - The Forum Shopping Centre, Sittingbourne</p> <p>Wednesday, 20 September, 2pm to 8pm - Sheppey Gateway, 38-42 High Street, Sheerness</p> <p>Saturday 23 September, 9am to 5pm - The Mall, Maidstone</p> <p>All plans will be available to view online from Wednesday 6 September.</p> <p>If you are unable to attend any of the scheduled events but would like to find out more or comment on the scheme then visit the Highways England website http://roads.highways.gov.uk/pro.../m2-junction-5-improvements during the consultation period.</p> <p>The consultation runs from the 6 September to 17 October 2017. All responses will be considered by the project team.</p> <p>Copies of the consultation will also be available at a number of other locations throughout the consultation:</p> <p>Allington Library Bearsted Library Boughton-under-Blean Library Faversham Library Madginford Library Maidstone Library Morrisons, Sittingbourne Queenborough Library Sheerness Library Shepway Library Sittingbourne Library Teynham Library</p> |
| Swale Means Business Facebook | 13-Oct | <p>Highways England's consultation on their plans to improve capacity at the M2 Junction 5 closes next Tuesday 17 October. You can find out more about the scheme, view the consultation reports and take part online by using this link.</p> <p>https://highwaysengland.citizenspace.com/he/m2-junction-5-improvements/</p> |

11 NEXT STEPS

11.1 INTRODUCTION

11.1.1 This chapter sets the key emerging themes from the public exhibitions and the steps that will be undertaken to respond to the themes.

11.2 KEY EMERGING THEMES

Table 11-1 : Key Emerging Themes

| AREA | COMMENT |
|---------------------|---|
| Traffic signals | <p>Traffic signals are perceived as being the main cause of congestion and preventing traffic flow. The respondents do not support a traffic signalised junction, they would generally prefer a flyover or underpass for A249 traffic</p> <p>The merge at the end of the M2 coast bound to Sheerness slip seen as being a new pinch point despite the signalisation at the roundabout.</p> |
| Future proof | <p>The scheme is not thought to be future proof. Many respondents feel that Option 12A is not enough and that in the near future Highways England will need to upgrade the junction again. They feel better value for money to do Option 4 or 10 now, rather than have the disruption in the future.</p> <p>There are considerable concerns that the design does not sufficiently take into account the planned growth in commercial and residential developments in the area.</p> |
| A249 | <p>50mph speed limit on the A249 from the junction with the M20 to the junction with the A2 with speed cameras and police patrol.</p> |
| Local Roads | <p>Concerns that the connection of Maidstone Rd to Oad Street will increase 'rat running' because it will 'legitimise' the route</p> <p>Some respondents believe that the connection between Maidstone Rd and Oad Street is not necessary or is excessive.</p> <p>Concerns about increased rat running due to planned developments particularly at Borden and Key Street.</p> <p>The new Oad Street link will need to have restricted access to HGVs attempting to access the fruit packaging business as there is a 90 degree bend which they cannot negotiate if they come in via the new link direction.</p> |
| Surrounding network | <p>The design of 12A does not assist with the issue of congestion at Key Street. May be even more traffic at Key Street quickly leading to increased congestion and further increase of 'rat running'.</p> <p>Right turn manoeuvres are seen as the major contributor to congestion in that traffic blocks the straight through and joining movements.</p> |

| | |
|-----------------------|---|
| Communities | <p>Stockbury residents are concerned about closure of Honeycrook Hill as this would leave just the one route into the village and residents heading north on A249 would find themselves queueing in Church Hill behind all those who need to go right to Maidstone.</p> <p>Currently Stockbury residents heading north on the A249 from Honeycrook Hill join the carriageway when the traffic is queuing. However residents are concerned that it would be much more dangerous joining from Church Hill, as the traffic on the A249 at this point is travelling much faster.</p> <p>Stockbury residents concerned about severance from the other half of the village on the east side of the A249 with the closure of Honeycrook Hill.</p> <p>There is a community bus scheme which is funded by the Parish Council which will be impacted by the proposed scheme to close Honeycrook Hill and gaps in the central reserve.</p> |
| Lower Thames Crossing | <p>The proposed Lower Thames crossing will push traffic onto the A249 as a cut across between the M20 and M2 and vice versa.</p> |

11.2.1 It can be seen from Table 11-1 that Option 12A is not entirely supported by the respondents as they have concerns about how future proof the junction will be and how it will affect the local communities.

NEXT STEPS

11.2.2 The key emerging themes are to be assessed as to whether further design solutions can be undertaken to resolve the comments raised or whether they are not feasible either in design solutions or available funding.

11.2.3 One theme is to assess whether the local road network can be redesigned to deter rat-running, typically along Maidstone Road and Oad Street.

12 SUMMARY

12.1 QUESTIONNAIRE ANALYSIS

- 12.1.1 The responses were small based on the letters sent to local residents and the number of attendees at the exhibition events. Although the majority of respondents considered themselves to be local residents and used the junction on a regular basis. They also commented that a solution to the junction was required for the current situation and future growth
- 12.1.2 In general the responses were negative towards the proposed Option 12A with 68% suggesting that it will not improve the traffic queuing situation. Furthermore there was consensus that traffic signals were not the solution as they only caused delays.
- 12.1.3 There was also a strong desire to see a fly-over of the junction for the A249 as it was perceived that this would solve the problem of queuing traffic

12.2 STAKEHOLDER RESPONSE ANALYSIS

- 12.2.1 There was a reasonable number of responses from stakeholders that included MP's, Councillors, environmental bodies and businesses. These did not overly support the proposed Option 12A as they felt it did not support local growth plans.
- 12.2.2 The environmental bodies and some Councillors considered that the diverted local roads caused environmental negative effects especially the Oad Street diversion that was within a deep cutting, they suggested that this should be redesigned to remove this element.
- 12.2.3 Most stakeholders felt that a fly-over of the junction for the A249 would provide a better longer term solution, however, the environmental bodies considered that the traditional layout, shown in Option 10, would be most preferable as it had a lesser impact on the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in the long term.

12.3 CONSULTATION EFFECTIVENESS

- 12.3.1 It was considered by most to be a useful consultation with good informative information available at the exhibitions and that the staff that attended were knowledgeable. The only negative was that it was felt that only having one option was not useful or a consultation.

12.4 OVERALL SUMMARY

- 12.4.1 In summary the public consultation was successful as it allowed information to be gathered from the public and businesses that use the junction on a regular basis. Although it was considered that Option 12A was not the best solution to deal with the current situation and proposed future growth.
- 12.4.2 The responses gave a strong opinion that a fly-over of the junction for the A249 would resolve the issues of queuing and for future growth. In addition the local road diversions were welcomed but it was considered that they should have a small environmental impact, typically the Oad Street cutting.

12.4.3 There was a strong opinion that the access into Stockbury Village needs to be considered further and made safe as the current access via Church Hill is perceived to be unsafe.

APPENDIX

A CONSULTATION BROCHURE



APPENDIX

B CONSULTATION QUESTIONNAIRE



APPENDIX

C NEWSPAPER ADVERTISEMENT



APPENDIX

D MAPS



D-1 Spatial Distribution Of Questionnaire Responses

D-2 Spatial Distribution Of Exhibition Attendances

APPENDIX

E PRESS ARTICLES



APPENDIX

F CODE FRAMES AND FREQUENCIES



APPENDIX

G

CLIENT SCHEME REQUIREMENTS

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

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

Highways England Creative GFD18_0103

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