

M2 Junction 5 improvements scheme

Have your say



Wednesday 6 September to Tuesday 17 October 2017

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Have your say

Introduction

About us

Highways England is the Government-owned company responsible for operating, maintaining and improving England's major 'A' roads and motorways.

About the M2 Junction 5/A249 Stockbury Roundabout

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.

Have your say

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 non-statutory consultation runs for 6 weeks, from Wednesday 6 September to Tuesday 17 October 2017.

You can also find out more about the scheme at our public consultation exhibitions. We have arranged these in your area so that you can talk to members of our team. See page 16 for dates and venues.

For full details of the proposal: www.roads.highways.gov.uk/m2-junction-5-improvements

How to give us your views

- Complete the questionnaire and send it to: FREEPOST M2 Junction 5
- Visit our website and complete the questionnaire online
- Come to a public consultation exhibition and complete a questionnaire

If you have any queries or would like the information in a different format please:

- Email M2J5@highwaysengland.co.uk
- Call 0300 123 5000 (24 hours).

About the M2 Junction 5/A249 Stockbury Roundabout improvements

In 2014, the Government released its Road Investment Strategy (RIS) announcing £15 billion to invest in England's major A roads and motorways. The funding – the largest investment in a generation – will be used to increase the capacity and condition of the network in key areas.

The south east will benefit from £2.2 billion of road investment with a number of major improvement projects to create better and safer journeys for drivers, including the M2 Junction 5/A249 Stockbury Roundabout.

The Road Investment Strategy identified a budget range of between £50 to £100 million for the M2 Junction 5 scheme. The scope, as described in the Road Investment Strategy, is:

“additional capacity for the junction, through improvements to slip roads and enhanced junction approaches.”

The area considered is the M2 Junction 5/A249 Stockbury Roundabout as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1: M2 Junction 5/A249 Stockbury Roundabout location



Enlarged section of roundabout area



Need for the scheme

The M2 Junction 5/A249 Stockbury Roundabout cannot cope with existing traffic flows:

- At certain times of day, there are high levels of congestion and delay on the A249 southbound (towards Maidstone), northbound (towards Sittingbourne) and on the approaches to the junction and on the exit slip road from the M2 westbound (towards Stockbury Roundabout).
- Congestion is expected to worsen in the future due to planned development and population growth.

Some traffic diverts away from the M2 Junction 5/A249 Stockbury Roundabout to alternative rural routes:

- People currently use rural roads to avoid the congestion, putting undue pressure on local roads not suited to large volumes of traffic and increases safety risks.

The junction is one of the top 50 national casualty locations on England's major 'A' roads and motorways:

- There were 111 personal injury accidents between January 2011 and December 2015 and nearly half occurred during morning and evening peak periods¹.

There are high levels of car use and there are no plans to improve public transport:

- There are currently no significant plans to improve bus or rail services.

Our proposal is designed to relieve congestion, improve journey times and contribute to improved road safety for all road users.

Our proposal is also designed to support development in Kent and the Thames Estuary corridor. Swale Borough Council is planning an additional 14,124 houses and 130,000 square metres (net) of employment floor space by 2031². This will increase the need for additional capacity at M2 Junction 5/A249 Stockbury Roundabout.

How people travel in the area

There is a strong reliance on car travel in the area:

- 70% of Maidstone and Swale Borough residents currently in employment travel to work by car/van
- 11% walk
- 7% travel by train
- 3% travel by bus, minibus or coach
- 2% cycle
- 1% travel by motorcycle
- 6% see footnote³.

The immediate local area currently has limited alternative transport methods. These include 5 bus services, operating between 7.00am and 5.30pm and national rail services from Sittingbourne on the Chatham Main Line and Sheerness Line, providing direct train services to London St Pancras, London Victoria, Faversham, Dover Priory, Canterbury East and Sheerness-on-Sea.

Even if greater reliance on public transport, walking and cycling could reduce some of the future demand for car travel, this is unlikely to solve the problems of queuing and congestion around the M2 Junction 5/A249 Stockbury Roundabout. Improvements are needed to accommodate both existing and future travel demand.

Scheme objectives

- Increase the capacity of the junction to support future growth in housing, employment and the economy.
- Improve safety for all users of the junction to reduce accident numbers.
- Improve reliability of journey times through the junction.
- Deliver a high standard of highway design that is in keeping with the local environment.
- Minimise any adverse environmental impacts where feasible.

How we developed the scheme

We have considered a number of options for improving the M2 Junction 5/A249 Stockbury Roundabout. These were the subject of various traffic and environmental surveys and assessments. We have worked with Swale Borough Council, Maidstone Borough Council, Medway Council and Kent County Council to understand local constraints and ensure that their aspirations for growth and development are accurately represented in our assumptions.

For an option to be taken forward to public consultation it must achieve the scheme objectives, be affordable and offer value for money.

We initially considered 12 options during the early stages of this scheme (see table on pages 12 to 13). After 9 were discounted, the 3 best-performing options (Options 4, 10 and 12) became the focus of our technical work and were assessed on their economic merits, ability to ease traffic congestion and environmental impact. This work concluded that 2 of these options (Options 4 and 10) would deliver benefits for the forecast years but would be too expensive for the Road Investment Strategy budget.

We then looked at whether we could enhance Option 12 to provide better benefits and have put forward an Option 12A for public consultation. Details of how we developed our proposals, including details of discounted options, are set out on pages 12 to 15.

The proposal

Option 12A is designed to support the demand anticipated in the Swale Borough Council Local Plan. It would significantly reduce congestion and delay at the junction, in addition to providing wider economic, development and accessibility benefits. The highest expected cost of this option is just over £100 million at £102 million. We are currently identifying efficiencies to bring the scheme within the budget threshold of £100 million.

The details of the proposal are as follows:

- Enlarged M2 Junction 5/A249 Stockbury Roundabout to provide a new through route for A249 traffic (with traffic light controls).
- New dedicated left turn lanes for traffic travelling from the A249 southbound to the M2 westbound and from the A249 northbound to the M2 eastbound.
- 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 existing connection from the Maidstone Road to the A249 Stockbury Roundabout would be closed, and Maidstone Road would be re-routed to link with Oad Street.
- The existing junction of Oad Street with the A249 would be closed. A new link would be provided south of the existing Oad Street to connect directly with A249 Stockbury Roundabout.
- The Honeycrook Hill junction with the A249 would be closed for safety reasons.
- All traffic movements through the junction would be controlled by traffic lights, with the exception of the Oad Street 'arm', which would have 'give way' markings at the roundabout entry.
- Our proposal includes some measures to improve facilities for people walking to the bus stops and connecting to local public footpaths.

Figure 2: Overview of proposal (Option 12A)

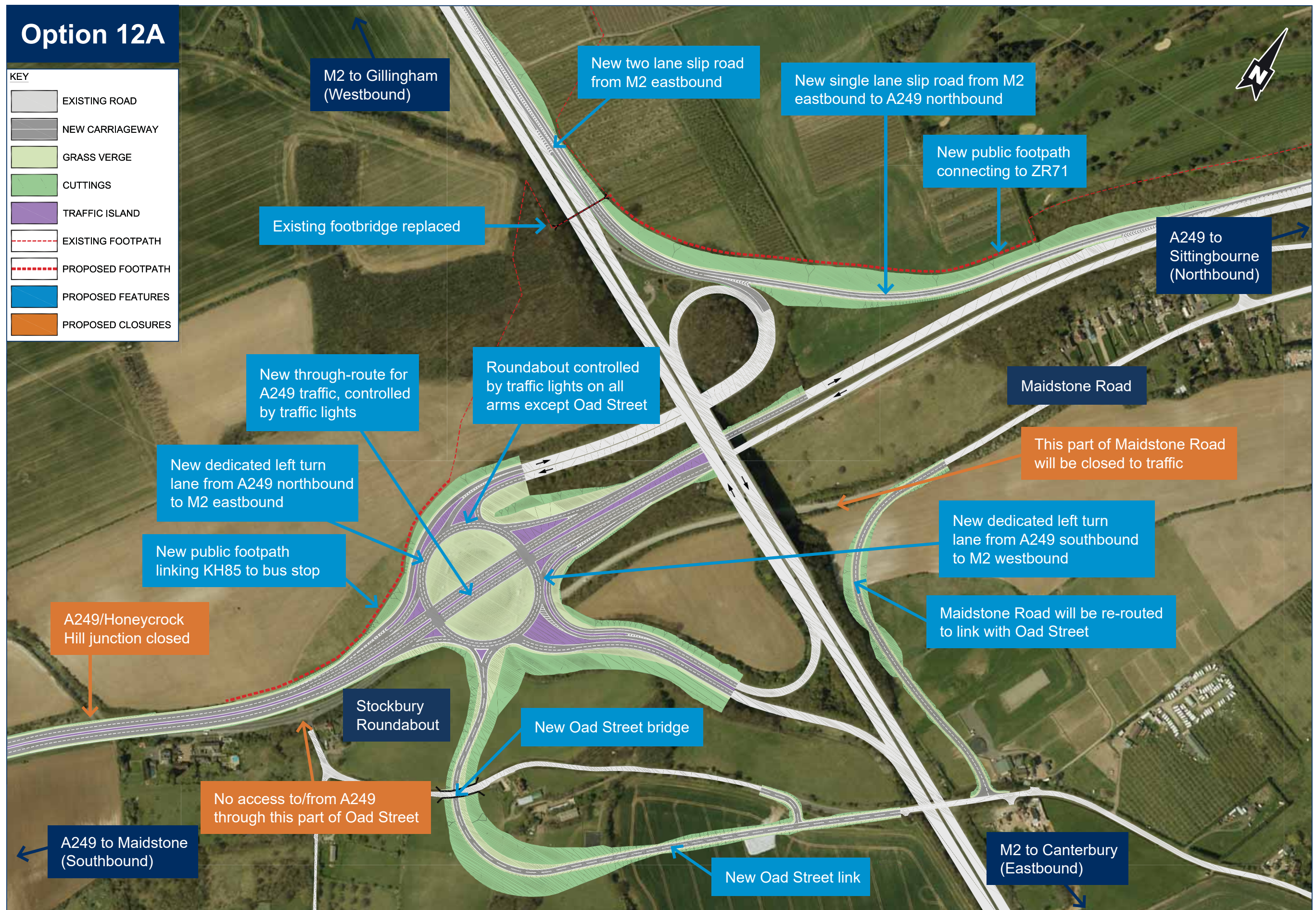
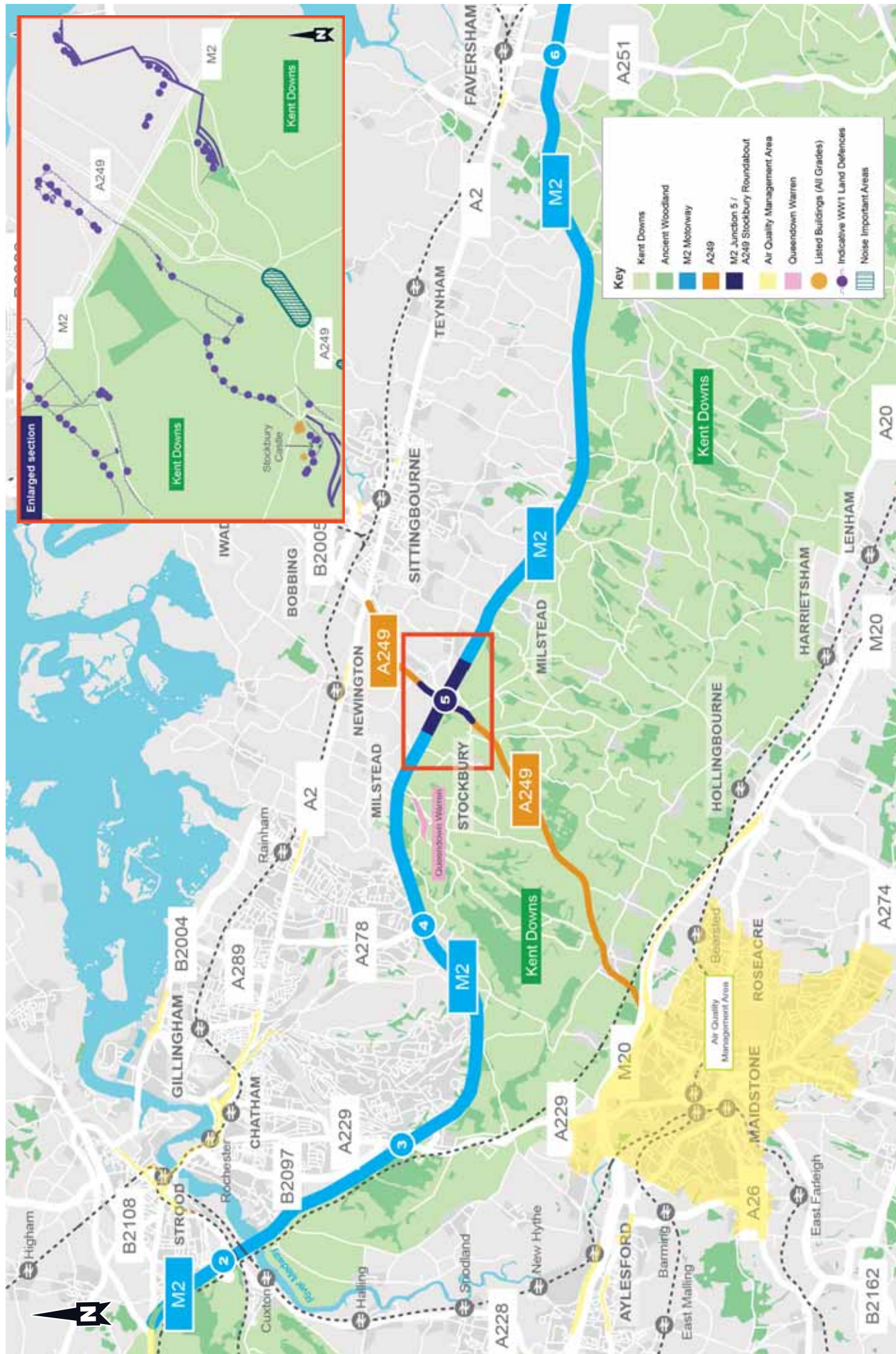


Figure 3: Environmental constraints



Environmental and design considerations – minimising the potential impacts

We are committed to minimising the environmental impact of our road network and to protecting and enhancing the quality of the surrounding environment.

We have considered a number of environmental and design constraints in developing the scheme and will continue to do so as the scheme progresses.

These are summarised below and shown in Figure 3:

Consideration	Description
Residents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The need to acquire private property. Potential noise and visual impacts may affect residential amenity. Suitable access arrangements and crossing facilities for all road users.
Landscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The scheme is within the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
Nature conservation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Church Wood and Chestnut Wood are areas of ancient woodland, located immediately adjacent to the existing junction.
Air quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are 3 designated Air Quality Management Areas within 4 miles of the scheme. There are also a number of residences that could be affected by changes in air quality.
Cultural heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Key heritage assets close to the scheme include Stockbury Castle, the Grade I Listed St Mary Magdalene's Church, Church Farmhouse and Church Farm Cottage. The scheme also lies within an area likely to contain fire trenches, gun batteries and support trenches associated with the Chatham Land Front First World War land defences.
Noise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The scheme lies in close proximity to a number of residences and 4 Noise Important Areas (where noise is considered to be an important issue).
Water environment and flooding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The A249 lies adjacent to a drainage feature which runs through the scheme area. There are also a number of mapped 'groundwater resources'.

Potential benefits and impacts

The table below presents the results of preliminary assessments of the potential benefits and impact of the scheme. The colour-coding and symbols shows the scale of the likely benefits and impacts. Best practice mitigation will be implemented, which means that measures will be taken to avoid, reduce or offset any potential significant negative environmental impacts. If you have different views or local information, please tell us in the questionnaire.

Significant Benefit	Slight Benefit	Neutral	Slight adverse	Significant adverse
↑↑	↑	↔	↓	↓↓
Topic	Potential Impact of Option 12A	Level of benefit		
Congestion	There will be a reduction in traffic congestion which will benefit local and through-traffic, enable local economic growth and cater for planned development. Will also result in less congestion on some local roads.	↑↑		
Effects on drivers' journey times	<p>The dedicated left turn lanes will improve journey times:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> From the M2 eastbound to the A249 northbound (towards Sittingbourne) From the A249 southbound to the M2 westbound (towards Gillingham) From the A249 northbound to the M2 eastbound (towards Canterbury). <p>The provision of a more direct through-route will improve journey times for traffic travelling in both directions along the A249.</p>	↑↑		
Safety	Increasing the size of the M2 Junction 5/A249 Stockbury Roundabout and adding dedicated left turn lanes will increase the junction capacity and improve traffic flow, which in turn will reduce queuing at the roundabout and reduce the likelihood of rear shunt collisions. Providing dedicated left turn lanes will reduce the potential for side impact collisions resulting from driver confusion.	↑		
Air quality	Preliminary assessments indicate a likely reduction in overall emissions due to reduced queuing. Further assessments are underway.	↑		
Cultural heritage	There is potential to impact heritage assets. Additional surveys and assessments will be carried out.	↓		
Landscape and nature conservation	There is potential for short term local impacts on landscape from the loss of mature vegetation and long term local impacts from new road cuttings and new roads. There is potential for minor direct impacts on nature conservation from removal of vegetation and indirect impacts on surrounding habitats.	↓		
Land take and soils	There will be a requirement to acquire agricultural land. In all other respects, the impact on geology and soil is considered to be minimal. Temporary land use for construction may also be required.	↓		

Noise and vibration	Preliminary assessments indicate minimal changes to noise and vibration.	↔
Impact on pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians	Bus stops south of the M2 Junction 5/A249 Stockbury Roundabout and some Public Rights of Way may be temporarily closed or relocated during construction. A new section of footway connecting to the local footpath network and replacing the existing footbridge over the M2 will improve pedestrian connectivity.	↑
People and communities	The overall impact on the health, well-being and connectivity of the surrounding communities will be improved. There may be localised impacts to directly affected private property.	↑
Water and drainage	Preliminary assessments estimate that there will be minimal overall changes to water and drainage.	↔

Relationships with other local projects

The Lower Thames Crossing (LTC) managed by Highways England will be a new road crossing connecting Essex and Kent, located east of Gravesend and Tilbury. This new crossing will offer improved journeys, new connections, better network reliability, and unlock economic benefits. We are currently undertaking traffic modelling and anticipate that the results will be available in late 2017. We will consider the outcomes of this modelling on the M2 Junction 5/A249 Stockbury Roundabout.

The potential impact of the proposed London Resort Company Holdings development which is to be located on the Swanscombe Peninsula in North Kent may also need to be taken in consideration at a later stage.

There is also a local authority aspiration for creating a new Junction 5A on the M2, although there is no commitment to progress this proposal at this stage.

Public information exhibitions are taking place for the Smart Motorway Programme M20 junctions 3 - 5 from 16 - 23 September.



History of the scheme

M2 Junction 5/A249 Stockbury Roundabout improvements were proposed in Kent County Council's framework for regeneration in 2010 (Growth without Gridlock) and in the South East Local Economic Partnership's Growth Deal and Economic Plan 2014.

Discounted options

In our earlier work, we explored 12 options for improving the M2 Junction 5/A249 Stockbury Roundabout. Of the initial 12 options, 9 were discounted for reasons shown below:

Option	Brief overview	Discounted or progressed	Reason
1	Widen A249 approach to 3 lanes from M2 viaduct	Discounted	Option unlikely to have a significant effect on congestion and queuing traffic. Benefit seen on A249 southbound only.
2	Widen A249 to 3 lanes from A2	Discounted	Option unlikely to have a significant effect on congestion and queuing traffic. Benefit seen on A249 southbound only.
3	Widen A249 to 3 lanes from A2, Maidstone Road joined to A249	Discounted	Option unlikely to have a significant effect on congestion and queuing traffic. Benefit seen on A249 southbound only.
4	A249 fly-over/fly-under	Progressed	Option developed further for traffic, economic and environmental assessment.
5	Widen A249 Approach to 3 Lanes from M2 viaduct, free-flow link to M2 westbound	Discounted	Option unlikely to have a significant effect on congestion and queuing traffic. Benefit seen on A249 southbound only.
6	Through-route roundabout (conversion of existing junction)	Discounted	Option unlikely to show significant benefit without improvements. This became a new variant and was later developed into Option 12A.
7	2-tier dumbbell junction (at existing junction location)	Discounted	Less preferable to Option 4 due to space required for dumbbell roundabout. This also had local connectivity issues.
8	2-tier dumbbell junction (orientated north-south)	Discounted	Option unlikely to show significant benefit, with scheme cost and complexity identified as other problems.
9	2-tier intersection (at M2 viaduct)	Discounted	Option unlikely to show significant benefit as A249 through movement still uses the roundabout.
10	3-tier intersection (at M2 viaduct)	Progressed	Option developed further for traffic, economic and environmental assessment.

11	4-tier intersection (at M2 viaduct)	Discounted	Whilst showing potential for benefits, option removed due to lack of local connectivity.
12	Enlarged roundabout with free-flow links (in existing location)	Progressed	Option developed further for traffic, economic and environmental assessment.

The 3 best-performing options (Options 4, 10 and 12) were taken forward for further assessment and rejected for reasons below: Plans are shown on pages 14-15.

Option	Description	Reason for rejection
4	<p>A249 flyover above the roundabout:</p> <p>A249 elevated carriageway above the Stockbury Roundabout. This option includes new dedicated left turn lanes from A249 southbound to M2 westbound and from A249 northbound to M2 eastbound in addition to a new single lane slip road from M2 eastbound to A249 northbound. The existing connection from Maidstone Road to A249 Stockbury Roundabout would be closed, and Maidstone Road would be re-routed to link with Oad Street. The existing junction of Oad Street with the A249 would be closed. A new link would be provided to connect Oad Street directly with A249 Stockbury Roundabout. The Honeycrook Hill junction with the A249 would be closed for safety reasons.</p>	Rejected due to cost (estimated to be up to £158 million).
10	<p>Replacement of roundabout with 3- tier interchange:</p> <p>Stockbury Roundabout removed and replaced with three tier interchange, with a through-route for the A249 at the lower-level, a roundabout at the mid-level and the M2 passing over at the top-level. There would be new slip roads for A249 and M2, and a new link connecting Maidstone Road and Oad Street directly with the new interchange. The Honeycrook Hill junction with the A249 would be closed for safety reasons</p>	Rejected due to cost (estimated to be up to £184 million).
12	<p>Roundabout/junction improvement (with no flyovers):</p> <p>This option is the same as the proposed Option 12A, but with no through-route for traffic travelling in both directions on the A249.</p>	Rejected as would not create sufficient capacity. Cost estimated to be up to £84 million.

We then looked at whether Option 12 could be enhanced and arrived at Option 12A.
This is the proposal which we are now progressing

Figure 4: Discounted option 4

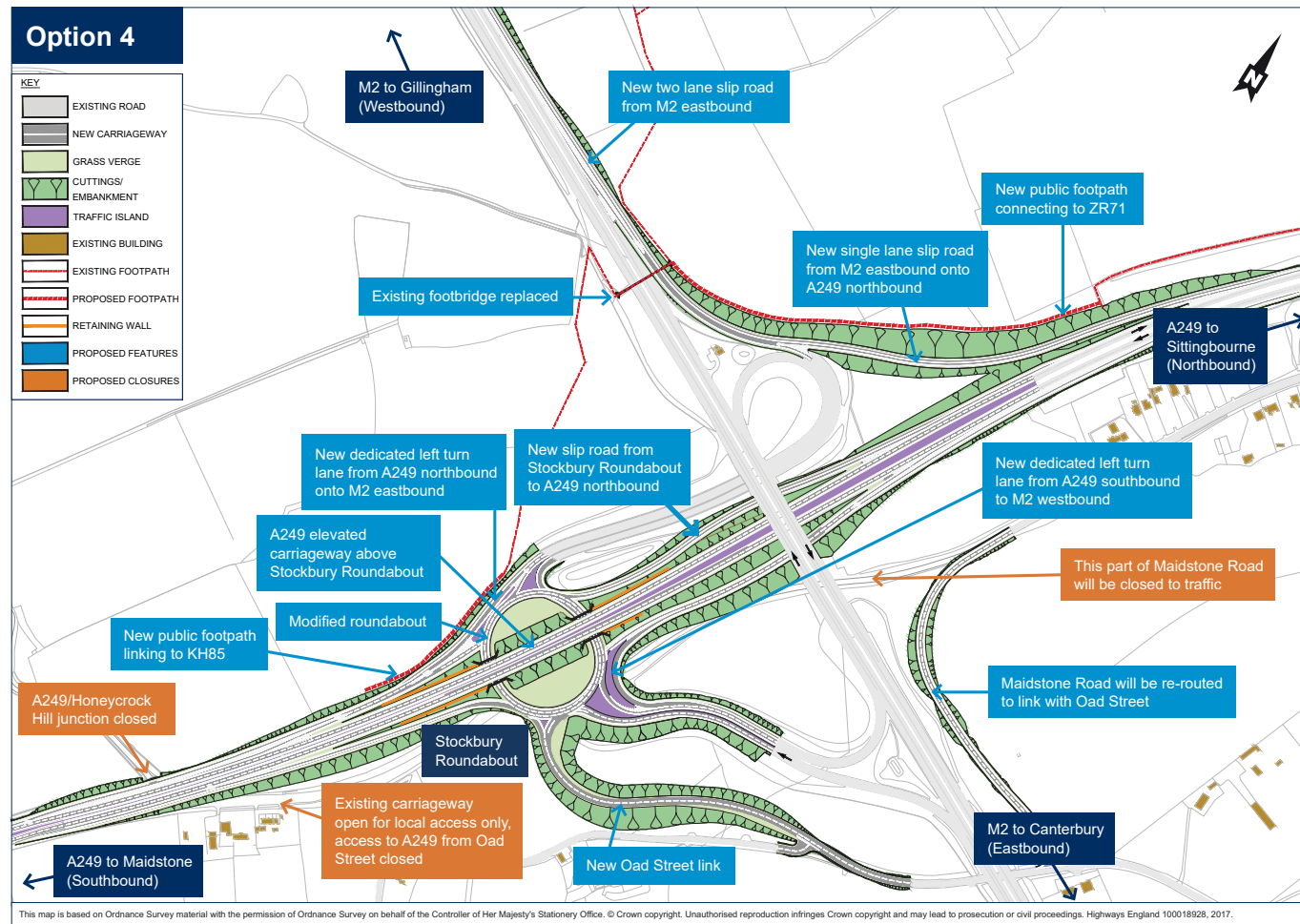


Figure 6: Discounted option 12

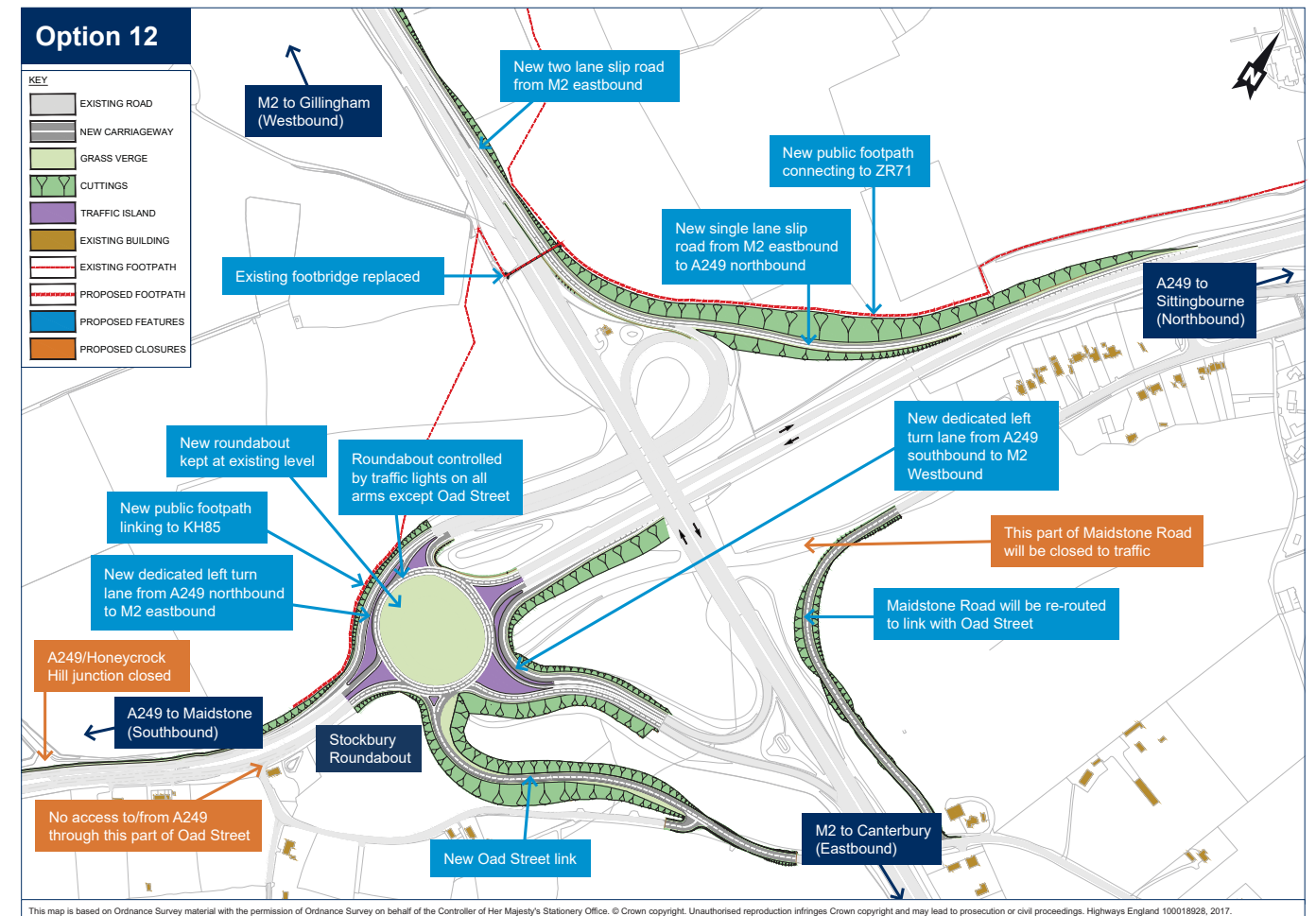
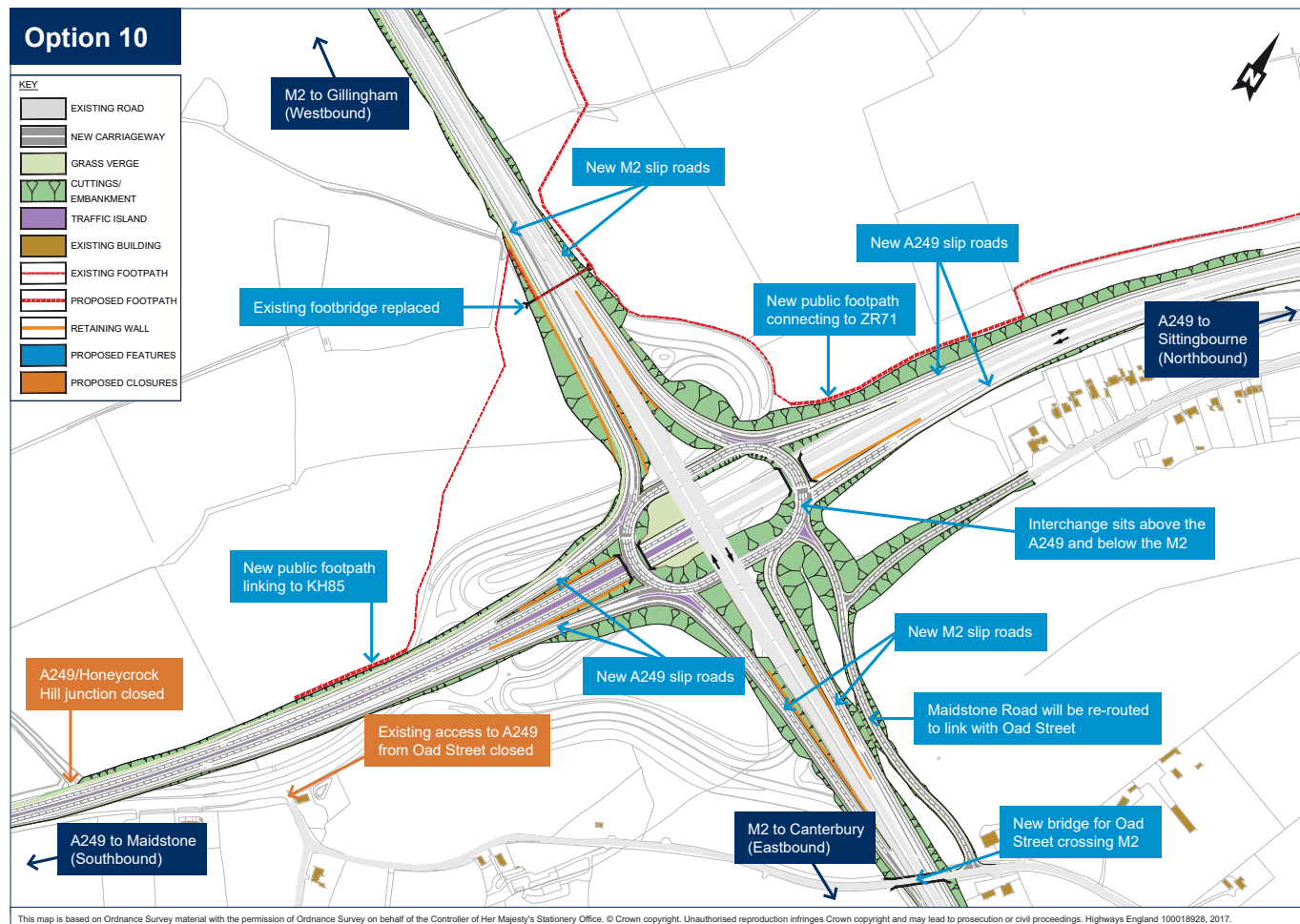


Figure 5: Discounted option 10



Public exhibitions

You can find out more about the options at the public consultation exhibitions where we will be on hand to answer your questions.

Date	Time	Location	Address
Wednesday 6 September	4pm to 8pm	Holiday Inn (otherwise known as Coniston Hotel)	70 London Road, Sittingbourne, Kent, ME10 1NT
Monday 11 September	2pm to 8pm	Stockbury Memorial Hall (Cricket Club)	The Street, Stockbury, Kent, ME9 7UD
Saturday 16 September	10am to 2pm	Forum Shopping Centre	High Street, Sittingbourne, Kent, ME10 3DL
Wednesday 20 September	2pm to 8pm	Sheppey Gateway	38 - 42 High Street, Sheerness, Kent, ME12 1NL
Saturday 23 September	9am to 5pm	The Mall Maidstone	Pads Hill, Maidstone, Kent, ME15 6AT

Locations to collect consultation material

You can also find copies of the brochure and the questionnaire at the following locations throughout the consultation period, during their normal hours of opening:

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

Summary notes

We understand that some of our technical information may be difficult to follow. We have produced a series of summary notes as a bridge between this brochure and our technical reports for anyone who wishes to understand more.

Copies will be available at our exhibitions and online at: www.roads.highways.gov.uk/m2-junction-5-improvements.

Your views are important

You know the area better than anyone, so we would like to hear your views on our proposal. This is a great opportunity for you to have your say. The consultation runs from Wednesday 6 September to Tuesday 17 October 2017.

How will we use the feedback?

Your responses and comments will help us to:

- Fully consider any potential impacts on the community and environment.
- Develop the final scheme design incorporating your responses, where applicable.
- Ensure the final Environmental Statement required for the planning application considers impacts or mitigation measures that you have told us about, where appropriate.

What happens after the public consultation?

All responses and comments received during the public consultation will be considered and summarised in our Public Consultation Report, which will be submitted to the Department for Transport (DfT).

Planning consent

The M2 Junction 5/A249 Stockbury Roundabout improvements scheme may be defined as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) by the Planning Act 2008. This depends on the eventual size and impacts of the scheme, which may change as we develop our designs. If the scheme is a NSIP, we must obtain a Development Consent Order (DCO) to build the scheme. A Development Consent Order is a comprehensive type of planning permission combined with powers necessary to develop complex infrastructure schemes, such as powers to buy land.

If the scheme is defined as a NSIP, we will undertake a statutory public consultation, and then we will prepare and lodge the application with the Planning Inspectorate, who will check and decide whether or not to accept the application. A pre-examination stage follows this, where the public will be able to register with the Planning Inspectorate and provide a written summary of their views on the proposal. The Planning Inspectorate then has 6 months to carry out the formal examination. During this stage, people who have registered will be invited to provide more detail of their views in writing.

If the scheme is not classed as a NSIP, we will seek planning consent through the Highways Act 1980. We will prepare the draft orders required for the scheme and the Environmental Statement, and these will be available for you to comment on during an 'objection period'. The Planning Inspectorate will hold a Public Inquiry if relevant objections are received. A nominated Planning Inspector will consider the objections received and make a recommendation to the Secretary of State for Transport about whether the draft orders for the scheme should be approved.

Whichever planning route is taken, the final decision on the proposal will be made by the Secretary of State for Transport.

If we do not obtain consent from the Secretary of State for Transport then the scheme cannot be delivered.

Another opportunity to have your say

Following a Preferred Route Announcement, we will develop a detailed proposal. This will include further surveys and investigations to allow us to design the scheme in more detail.

When the detailed designs are complete, there will be another opportunity to have your say on the design of the preferred route, as outlined below:

December 2017

We will produce a Public Consultation Report to document feedback received.

Early 2018

Preferred Route Announcement.

Spring 2018

We will publish a Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC) setting out the process for the statutory public consultation. This is subject to the scheme being classed as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP)

Summer 2018

Statutory public consultation on details of the preferred route. This is subject to the scheme being classed as a NSIP.

Winter 2018

We will submit a planning application which will follow one of two formats according to the type of scheme

If it is a NSIP, we will submit a Development Consent Order (DCO) application.

If it is not deemed a NSIP, we will seek consent through the Highways Act 1980.

2019

The Planning Inspectorate will evaluate the scheme and the application

2019/2020

The Planning Inspectorate will give a recommendation to the Government. The Government will decide whether to give the scheme consent.

2020/2021

If planning consent is granted by Government construction will commence (subject to funding being available).

2022

Junction improvements will be fully open for traffic.

Opportunities to have your say.

How to contact us:

You can use the following methods to respond to the public consultation:

- Complete the questionnaire and send it to us at: FREEPOST M2 Junction 5
- Complete the questionnaire online at www.roads.highways.gov.uk/m2-junction-5-improvements
- Complete the questionnaire at a public consultation event.

If you have any questions, or would like information in a different format, please contact us by:

- Email M2J5@highwaysengland.co.uk
- Telephone 0300 123 5000 (24 hours).

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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