

M2 Junction 5 improvements: Design and Development Summary

This note describes how we are developing the M2 Junction 5 / A249 Stockbury Roundabout improvements scheme.

What is the process for developing the scheme?

We follow an established process when developing a major road scheme. We are currently at *Stage 2: Option Selection* of a longer-term process in which the scheme opens to traffic at the end of Stage 6. The Stage 2 public consultation will inform a Preferred Route Announcement (PRA) at the end of Stage 2. After this, the preferred route will be designed in more detail and there will be a second public consultation followed by a planning application. Table 1 outlines the project timescales, based on the scheme being defined as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) by the Planning Act 2008.

Table 1: Project Timescales

Timescale	Project stage
December 2017	After considering your feedback alongside that from our stakeholders and partners, we will produce a Public Consultation Report.
Late 2017/early 2018	Preferred Route Announcement.
Spring 2018	Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC) will be published 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 Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP).
Winter 2018	We will submit planning application which will follow one of two formats according to the type of scheme. With an NSIP there will be a Development Consent Order (DCO) application. If it is not an NSIP it will follow both the Highways Act 1980 and Town and Country Planning Act 1990.
2019	The Planning Inspectorate will evaluate the scheme and application.
2019/2020	A recommendation will be given to the Government by the Planning Inspectorate. The Government will decide whether to give the scheme consent.
2020/2021	If planning consent is granted, construction programmed to start (subject to funding being available).
2022	M2 Junction 5 / A249 Stockbury Roundabout improvements will open for traffic.

What work have we done so far?

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 will be used to increase the capacity and condition of the network in key areas, including the M2 Junction 5 / A249 Stockbury Roundabout

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.

In our earlier work, we explored 12 options for improving the M2 Junction 5 / A249 Stockbury Roundabout. Of the initial 12 options, 9 of these options were discounted for various reasons and the 3 best performing options were taken forward for further traffic, environmental and economic assessments. The full record of discarded options is set out in the brochure.

The project has focused on identifying feasible improvement options and assessing their costs, benefits and impacts. During this stage we have worked with key stakeholders including local authorities (Swale Borough Council, Maidstone Borough Council, Medway Council and Kent County Council), the Kent Downs AONB, the Environment Agency, Natural England, and Historic England. This has helped us understand the wide range of possible issues, risks and constraints to be considered.

We have considered the options put forward in the past and considered new ones, and have now identified **one** option for further investigation. The consultation is taking place at an early stage of scheme development to gather feedback from you on this option.

After the consultation, we will consider and summarise your comments and responses in our *Public Consultation Report*, which we will submit to the Department for Transport (DfT). We will also report on all the technical work done to date. This will then inform the decision on the preferred route, which will set out the scheme that is to be taken forward, and may include some amendments to the initial proposals in light of the consultation feedback.

What happens next?

As the scheme progresses, we will develop a preliminary design for the preferred route and look at whether there are any opportunities to improve the proposal and consider how best to avoid and mitigate against any possible impacts.

Following the preliminary design we will take the proposed scheme through the necessary approvals process in order to secure the necessary permission to build it. This will include a further period of public consultation.

What standards do we have to follow when developing the designs?

A consistent approach is taken to the design standards for new motorways and trunk roads as set out in the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB). It is approved by the Department for Transport (DfT) as the set of requirements to which all designs should conform.

How are costs checked?

Every major road project requires a rigorous check on its cost and value for money. We prepare a business case which considers how the scheme meets its objectives and how the economic benefits compare to the scheme costs. We also employ an independent commercial cost consultant to prepare cost estimates for all major projects on a consistent basis.

The scheme costs are used in the business case to check whether the scheme represents good value for money. As part of the business case, an economic cost-benefit analysis is undertaken in which journey time savings, vehicle operating costs, accident reduction, and maintenance costs over 60 years are compared to the construction costs, and discounted to a base year for comparison. This information along with assessment of environmental impacts on noise, air quality, landscape, etc, and social impacts of the scheme will be presented in an Appraisal Summary Table.

An Appraisal Summary Table is a summary of key consequences relating to the environmental, economic and social impacts of a road scheme. It is used to help determine which option to choose.

How and when do we build in ways of reducing the impact of a road scheme?

Before we submit an application for planning consent we will consider ways of reducing the impacts of the scheme.

Measures to eliminate, reduce, offset, and compensate for significant environmental impacts (known collectively as “mitigation”) will be designed in detail once the preferred route has been announced. The Environmental Study Report (ESR) sets out how potential impacts of the scheme are identified, and how mitigation measures are subsequently developed.