

# M3

## **junction 9 improvement scheme**

Public consultation summary report

October 2021





## The scheme

At National Highways we believe in a connected country and our network makes these connections happen. We strive to improve our major roads and motorways - engineering the future to keep people moving today and moving better tomorrow.

We're improving junction 9 of the M3, a key motorway junction which connects south Hampshire and the wider region with London via the M3 and the A34. The scheme is intended to reduce congestion and improve journeys between the M3 to and from Southampton and the A34 to and from Newbury. Specifically, we plan to widen the M3 locally to the junction, which will include:

- creating four lanes in each direction
- providing a same direction free-flow link between M3/A34
- rearranging the main junction 9 roundabout
- building three new bridges and a number of other structures, including new underpasses
- modifying walking and cycling routes
- improving the motorway slip-roads

The scheme will:

- reduce congestion and increase how reliable peoples' journey times are
- improve safety by reducing delays and making traffic queues shorter
- improve the environment, where possible, by reducing the number of households affected by noise, improving air quality and achieving the best we can for the diversity of local plants and animals
- improve access for walkers and cyclists connecting the National Cycle Route 23 east to west across the junction and providing additional footpaths linking Kings Worthy to the west of the junction
- support economic growth by making capacity for more jobs, business and housing

In this leaflet, we explain the consultation methodology, summarise the feedback received and outline the key themes from the public consultation. We also give details of what will happen next.

## Scheme updates as shared during the 2021 public consultation

The scheme is classed as a 'Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project' and therefore we need to obtain planning consent to build the scheme through a Development Consent Order (DCO). This process includes assessment of the potential impacts of our proposals, consultation and preparation of viable design solutions that address a range of concerns, before we submit our application.

The preparation of the DCO application has taken longer than we anticipated as we have re-visited our design following concerns raised in the 2019 summer consultation. The designs we presented at our summer 2021 consultation responded to feedback received at our summer 2019 consultation and the design changes we've made. Through consideration of the feedback received and ongoing engineering review and development of the proposals, we have made several design changes to try to resolve some of the issues raised.

Figure 1 shows the scheme we presented to you at our 2019 consultation and Figure 2 is the scheme we presented at our 2021 consultation. The key changes are:

- the change from a dumb bell roundabout to a more conventional roundabout over the motorway to ease traffic movements
- local traffic on the A33 being separated from the A34 traffic following concerns raised at the last consultation
- additional footpath on the eastern side
- improved landscaping proposals

Figure 1

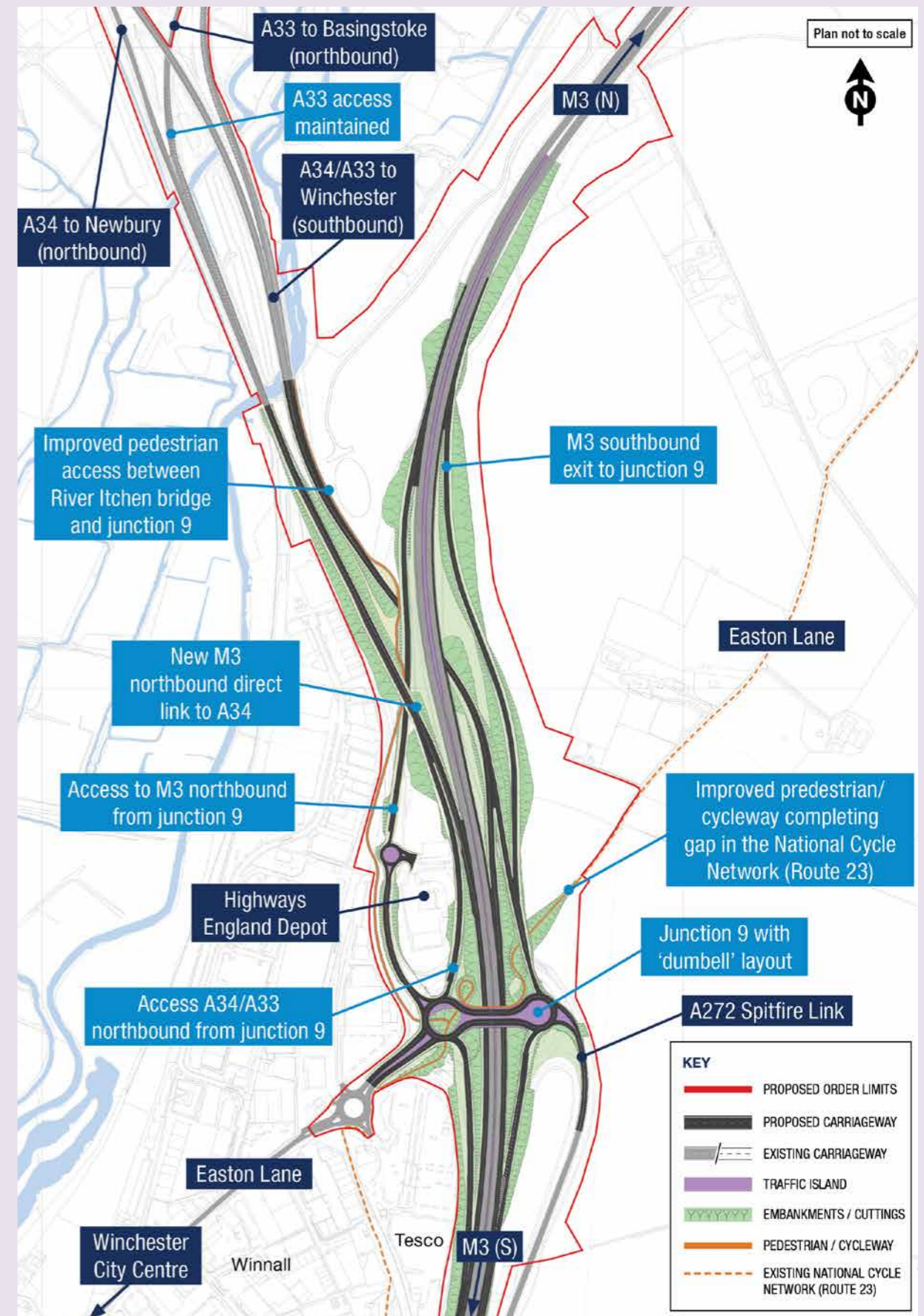
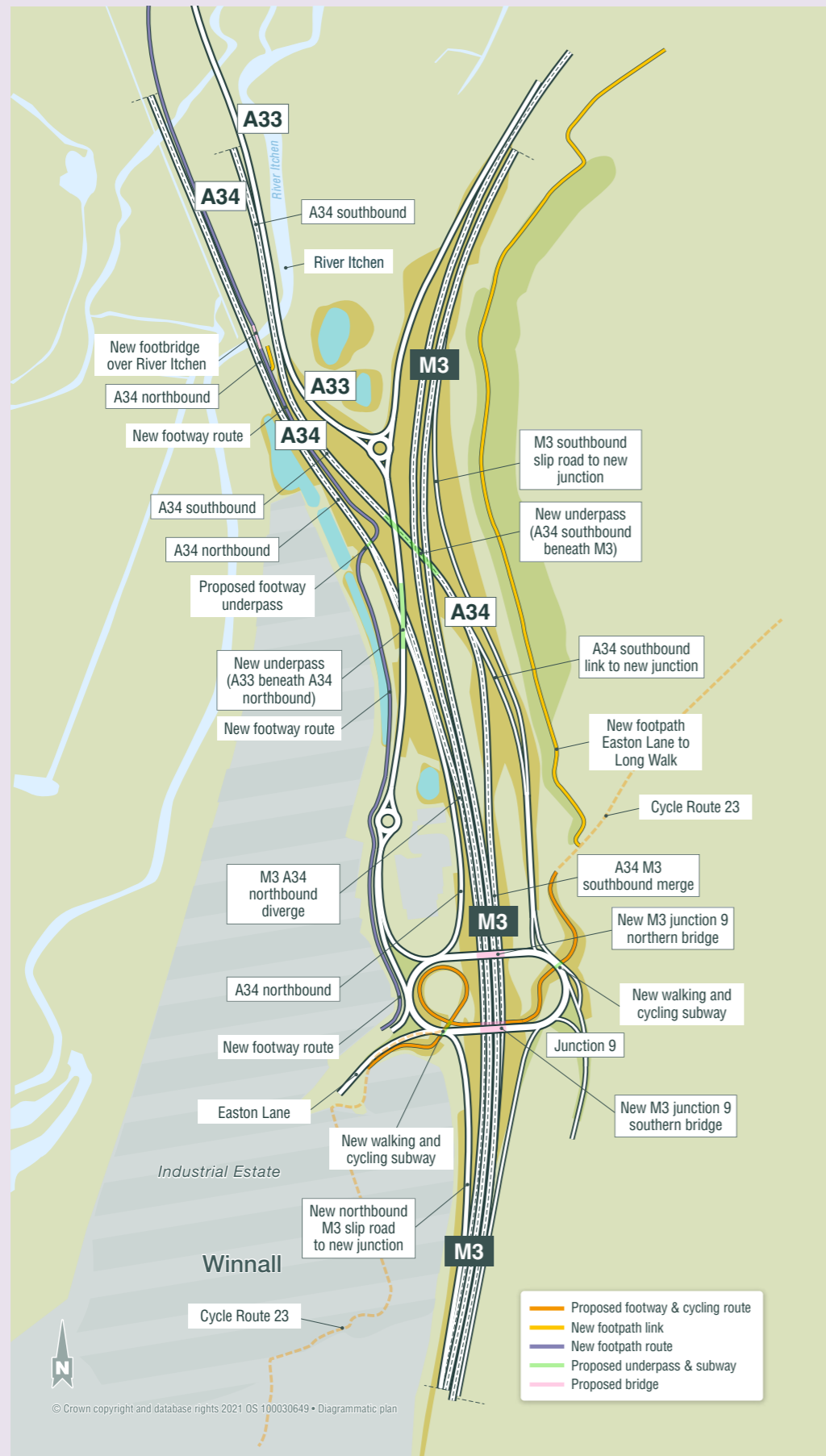




Figure 2



## 2021 Public consultation

As part of the planning process for the scheme, we're required to consult on our project design. The consultation ran for six weeks from 27 May to 8 July 2021.

Our consultation approach was set out in our 2021 Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC) which replaced the SoCC prepared for the summer 2019 consultation. To make sure we approached our consultation in the very best way for the local community we consulted on the SoCC with Winchester City Council, Hampshire County Council and South Downs National Park Authority.

Feedback from the summer 2019 consultation showed a high level of support for the scheme. However, people were concerned about:

- the length available for vehicles to change lanes when joining the A34 from junction 9 and then heading to the A33 Kings Worthy
- the traffic capacity of the scheme
- the length of the construction period

We made several design changes to the scheme, seeking to address those concerns where possible and welcomed comments on these changes:

- a new design to introduce better traffic flow between the M3 and A34
- extra space to build the scheme in a safe, efficient and sensitive manner while keeping vehicles running through the junction
- new areas for environmental works
- new areas for temporary construction compounds and areas to place spare excavated material
- a new footbridge over the River Itchen
- revised walking and cycling routes

With the situation around COVID-19 constantly developing and changing, we were not able to hold the face-to-face events we normally would. Instead, we provided a range of alternative ways for you to speak to the project team, ask questions and ultimately make an informed response to the public consultation. This included replacing face-to-face events with online webinars, a virtual exhibition and telephone appointments with a member of the project team. Consultation documents, including the consultation brochure, were available to view online throughout the consultation period and paper copies could be sent to you upon request.

The following consultation documents were available to view online, free of charge, during the consultation period:

- **Public consultation brochure:** this document summarised our consultation and explained how you could have your say. It included:
  - background information
  - summary of the scheme
  - information about design changes since the 2019 consultation
  - information about potential benefits, effects and impacts of the scheme
  - information about how we propose to mitigate any potential impacts
  - references to more detailed information reports
  - details of how to respond to the consultation
- **Proposed scheme map** (referred to as a General Arrangement Plan): this allowed viewers to see our proposal in its entirety.
- **Environmental mitigation design plan:** this allowed viewers to see the location and detail of our proposed environmental mitigation measures.
- **Indicative application boundary:** this showed viewers the boundary of the scheme

- **Indicative land use:** this map identified four possible locations for the construction compound for the scheme.
- **Walking and cycling proposals plan:** this showed existing walking and cycling plans and what our proposals were.
- **Preliminary environmental impact report (PEIR):** this set out how we'd considered the potential environmental effects of our updated design and the measures we are planning to reduce the impact.
- **PEIR non-technical summary** of the above document.
- **Public consultation feedback questionnaire,** aiming to capture views on the proposal and consultation.
- **Section 47 Notice**
- **Section 48 Notice**
- **The Statement of Community Consultation.**

Previous public consultation reports and public consultation summary documents were also available to view online on the scheme webpage [www.highwaysengland.co.uk/m3junction9](http://www.highwaysengland.co.uk/m3junction9)

The consultation was advertised in the local and national press, with posters in the local area and through social media.

In place of face-to-face engagement, we delivered;

- 12 public telephone surgeries; these involved members of the project team available to talk about the scheme and answer questions during set times, by calling our dedicated phonenumber.
- seven public online webinars, these featured a presentation of our proposals from the project team and a live question and answer session. A total of 102 people attended the webinars.
- four online briefings via Microsoft Teams to different stakeholder groups.

- a virtual exhibition, which included an interactive map of the scheme, access to the consultation documents and a 3D flythrough video showing key routes of the scheme. The virtual exhibition room was open throughout the consultation period and attracted over 3,400 visitors.

We received in excess of 350 responses to our 2021 consultation, this was made-up of responses via the online questionnaire, via email and via our freepost option.

Consultation responses were accepted through the following channels:

- completing the online response form at [www.highwaysengland.co.uk/m3junction9](http://www.highwaysengland.co.uk/m3junction9)
- completing a paper copy of the consultation response form and returning it using the freepost address - Freepost M3 JUNCTION 9
- emailing [M3Junction9Improvements@highwaysengland.co.uk](mailto:M3Junction9Improvements@highwaysengland.co.uk)
- writing to us on the freepost address above

In addition to the community consultation, we also consulted with:

- the local authorities that would host and surround our Proposed scheme
- a list of 'statutory consultees' that all major infrastructure projects are required to consult with, including Historic England, the Environment Agency and Natural England; and
- landowners, tenants and occupiers who would be directly impacted by our Proposed scheme

Further details around our engagement with stakeholders and landowners, including feedback and the ongoing work that has been undertaken since 2017, will be included in a longer Consultation Report that will make up part of our planning application. This will be made available following submission of our planning application to the Planning Inspectorate in 2022.

## Consultation findings

This report is based on the responses received to the community consultation, so isn't a technical assessment of the proposed improvements. Also, as the report only contains feedback from people who chose to respond, it cannot be assumed to represent the views of the whole community, or all stakeholders. The value of the community consultation is in capturing the views of those who have responded and understanding any concerns about the project they might have.

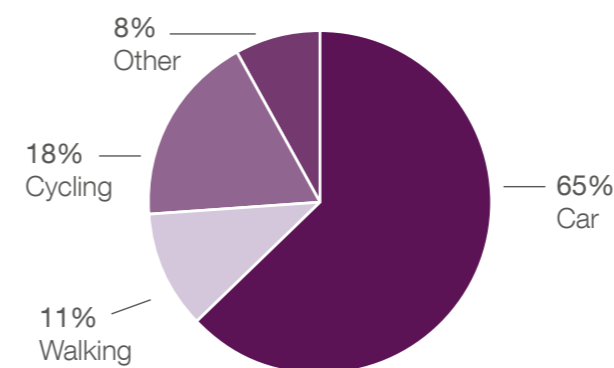
## Road users

Of our 243 on-line respondents, most use the junction for long distance journeys exceeding 10 miles for shopping trips and for attending leisure and recreational activities within the area. The vast majority of respondents currently use the road to travel by car, though many respondents also use it for walking and cycling. Most people reported that they use the junction at the weekends, anytime and during the week at off peak times.

Furthermore, a majority of respondents stated they use the junction between 1-2 days a week, to three or more days a week to 1-3 days a month.

## Key themes

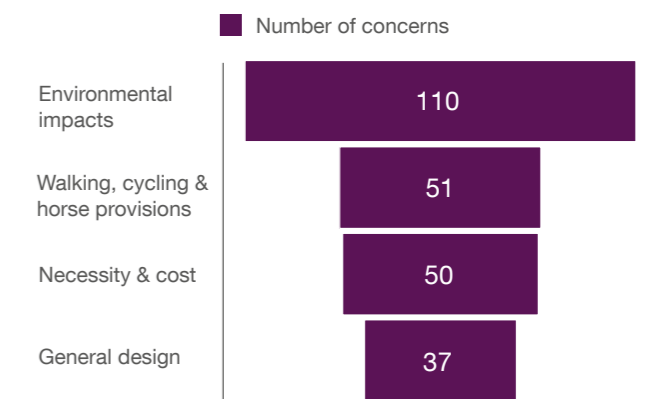
Method of transport used by respondents



For those of who had raised concerns with our proposals, the common themes that emerged were concerns over:

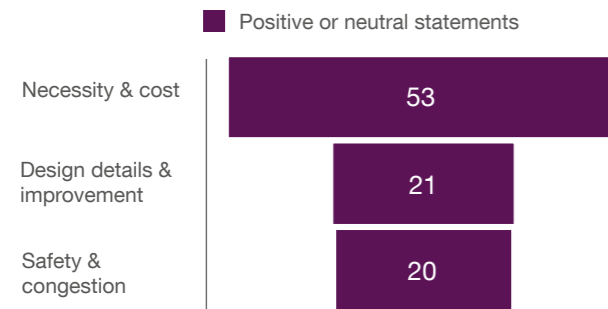
- environmental impacts (including climate change);
- the walking and cycling provisions proposed in our 2021 consultation design (namely that it did not provide enough provision for cyclists);
- the design (such as the need to include the Cart and Horse junction into the design);
- signage and the introduction of two new roundabouts;
- access onto the A34, and
- questioning the need for the scheme.

Respondents main concerns about the scheme



Conversely, for those who did agree or held neutral beliefs about the scheme, the most common theme was the belief that the proposal was necessary, many respondents also felt that the proposal would improve safety for road users, compared to the current situation, followed by a feeling that the current proposals were an improvement from past proposals and from the current situation.

### Respondents key positive or neutral beliefs about the scheme



The feedback revealed that whilst many respondents support the scheme, they also have reservations around the environmental impacts, cycle provision, traffic increase and construction impacts.

## Taking your comments onboard

We are taking on board all the comments received as part of the ongoing development of the scheme. For example, we are liaising with local walking, cycling and horse-riding groups to understand their needs and how they could potentially be met in the design. We are also continuing to work with the statutory environmental bodies and the local authorities to develop our environmental assessments and address topics such as climate change. These developments to our assessments will be incorporated into the Environmental Statement that will be submitted with our DCO application in 2022.

## Conclusion

The results of the community consultation exercise have revealed that whilst a large percentage of respondents favored the proposed junction improvements, expressing that it is a necessity and will ultimately make the junction safer, many people still have concerns over environmental impacts and traffic flow increases and how this will impact climate change issues.

It should be noted that these are the opinions stated by those who responded to the community consultation and, therefore, the information in this report is not representative of all the community and all stakeholders.

## Next steps

We have considered the results of the consultation and we are developing our proposals further for the DCO submission. Our DCO application will include a longer Consultation Report summarising the feedback and showing how it has informed the development of the scheme.

Although the Secretary of State for Transport will decide whether to give permission for the scheme, local planning authorities such as Winchester City Council, Hampshire County Council and the South Downs National Park Authority have an important role to play in the process. We've already been talking to them about our proposals and will continue to engage before, during and after we submit the DCO to the government, via the Planning Inspectorate, which is likely to happen in early 2022.

The Planning Inspectorate will then examine the DCO application, with input from interested parties and statutory consultees. The examination period is a maximum of six months. Following the examination, the Planning Inspectorate will present its recommendation to the Secretary of State for Transport, who will then make the final decision on whether the DCO should be granted.

We'll carry on working on our detailed design throughout this process and, assuming the DCO application is successful, we expect to start construction work by mid to late 2023.

## Keep in touch

You can find more information about the scheme and sign-up to alerts at

[www.highwaysengland.co.uk/m3junction9](http://www.highwaysengland.co.uk/m3junction9)

If you have any queries about the scheme, please contact National Highways

Email: [M3junction9Improvements@highwaysengland.co.uk](mailto:M3junction9Improvements@highwaysengland.co.uk)

Phone: 0300 123 5000

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