

M54 to M6/M6 (Toll) Link Road

Report on public consultation

September 2018

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Executive summary

Purpose of this document

The purpose of this report is to provide a factual summary of the M54 to M6/M6 Toll Link road Public Consultation held from 15 September and 13 October 2017. It also summarises the results received from the various stakeholders.

The report presents:

- how we informed stakeholders of the consultation events
- how we presented the options we identified
- the consultation responses received
- the initial analysis of the consultation responses

Background

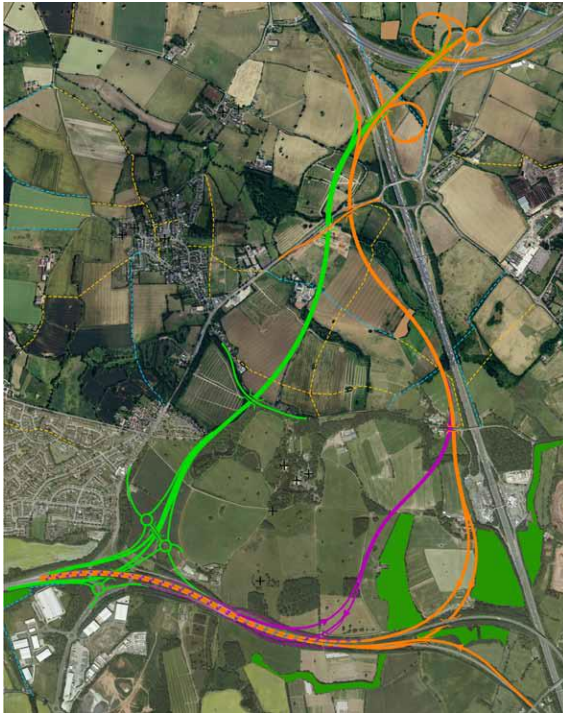
In December 2014, the Department for Transport (DfT) published the Roads Investment Strategy (RIS) for 2015 to 2020. As part of the RIS, Highways England was asked to develop a Scheme to add a north-facing access between the M54 the M6 and M6 Toll around junctions 10A and 11.

As part of the scheme development, a non-statutory consultation was held in 2014/15 to introduce the scheme and to consult on 3 options we developed. Information for this consultation exercise can be found in Annex B.

We listened carefully to your comments, and these identified the need for us to carry out further assessment work on the options to find the best solution. Through this assessment, we developed 3 modified options and these 3 modified options were then consulted on in 2017.

Presented Options

In September 2017, we presented the 3 options shown below; Option B West, Option C West and Option C East.



Consultation

We held 5 public exhibitions and 1 webchat during the consultation. This was to give members of the public and stakeholders the opportunity to find out more about the scheme and comment on our proposals. Information was available at the consultation events and online on our website: [www.http://roads.highways.gov.uk/projects/m54-to-m6m6-toll-link-road/](http://roads.highways.gov.uk/projects/m54-to-m6m6-toll-link-road/). We promoted the events through social media, local media interviews and adverts, letters to residents and posters at key locations. We also produced a consultation brochure, which we made available at the consultation events and online. We included a questionnaire in this to enable people to respond to the proposals. This was also available to complete online.

Results

In total, 337 people visited the exhibitions and a total of 462 responses were received during the consultation period. These were split between online (42%) responses, completed questionnaires and emails or letters (58%) sent directly to the project team.

Of the 462 responses received 71% preferred Option B West.

Next steps

We have used the feedback from the consultation to inform initial design development and to assist in identifying the preferred route, which we expect to announce in September 2018.

1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose of report

- 1.1.1 This report set outs the process that we followed for the non-statutory public consultation arrangements, and provides factual information on the responses received.
- 1.1.2 This forms part of a package of information, informing the Preferred Route Announcement that will allow us to start preliminary design of a single route.
- 1.1.3 This report provides:
- overview of the scheme, including options consulted on
 - consultation responses
 - response analysis
 - next steps

1.2 Scheme background

- 1.2.1 The government's Road Investment Strategy (RIS) for 2015-2020 sets out the long-term programme for our motorways and major roads with the stable funding needed to plan ahead effectively. The RIS stated that the M54 to M6/M6 Toll link road scheme would 'add a north-facing access between the M54 and the M6 and M6 Toll around junctions 10A and 11.'



Figure 1 - M54 to M6/M6 Toll Link Road scheme area

- 1.2.2 The M54 is approximately 20 miles long and forms part of the strategic road network (SRN). It is an important strategic route, and is used for a variety of local, medium and long-distance journeys within the Midlands and wider area. It provides a key route into Wales and alongside the M6, A5, A460, A449 connects much of the North and South of England. Several large local towns and cities, such as Telford, Wolverhampton, Walsall, Stafford, Cannock and Birmingham are reliant on the route. There is a mixture of rural land also around the area including a number of farms and farm based businesses.
- 1.2.3 The M54 is a dual carriageway standard motorway, predominately with two-lanes and a hard shoulder.
- 1.2.4 Birmingham and the surrounding towns attract additional traffic, particularly during the morning and evening peak periods causing congestion on the local roads.
- 1.2.5 There is considerable growth predicted in the area, which the proposed improvements will help to support to reduce any potential further impacts on congestion on the local roads.
- 1.2.6 The scheme has been recommended based on the following known issues:
- The signed route for northbound traffic from the M54 to the M6 and eastbound traffic to the M6 toll used the A460 and A449 / A5
 - Motorway traffic on A449, A5 and A460 contributed to local traffic congestion
 - The A460 suffered significant congestion and high accident rates due to large traffic volumes; journey times were almost doubled during peak hours and there were also air quality issues in the villages and along the route

- High volumes of traffic and HGVs contributed to some poor facilities for pedestrians, equestrians and cyclists.

1.2.7 A previous public consultation was carried out from December 2014 to January 2015, further information on this public consultation can be found in Annex B.

1.3 Scheme objectives

1.3.1 Improving the link between the M54 and the M6/ M6 Toll will:

- relieve traffic congestion on the A460, A449 and A5, providing more reliable journey times
- support local economic growth for Telford, Shrewsbury, Wolverhampton, Cannock and Tamworth by improving traffic flow and enhanced east-west and north-south routes
- keep the right traffic on the right roads by separating local traffic from long-distance and business traffic
- enhance facilities for pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians.

2 Scheme proposals

2.1 Scheme Proposals

2.1.1 We considered your views and feedback from the previous consultation and used these to develop 3 modified options for consultation:

- Option B West
- Option C East
- Option C West

2.2 Option B West

2.2.1 Option B West would bypass the villages of Featherstone and Shareshill to the east of the existing A460. The road would pass to the west of Hilton Hall, crossing the M6 north of junction 11. Junction 11 would remain unchanged with local access to the M6 and M6 Toll remaining the same.



Figure 2 - 2017 Option B West

2.3 Option C East

- 2.3.1 During the previous, 2014/15 consultation, Option C was the preferred option; however, it did not perform well in economic terms, due to traffic joining the already congested M6 mainline. Option C East was developed to align as closely as possible to the existing M54/M6 corridor, whilst providing good value for money.
- 2.3.2 This option would widen the existing M54 from junction 1 towards the M6. The road will continue northwards towards the M6, affecting areas of the ancient woodland at Burn's Wood, Spring Coppice and Keeper's Wood.
- 2.3.3 The route will then pass under Hilton Lane and run north towards the M6 at junction 11. The route will pass under the re-aligned A460, crossing the M6 north of junction 11. Junction 11 would remain unchanged with local access to the M6 and M6 Toll remaining the same.



Figure 3 - 2017 Option C East

2.4 Option C West

- 2.4.1 This option was selected to provide an alternative to Option C East, that does not impact directly on ancient woodland
- 2.4.2 This option would widen the existing M54 from junction 1 towards the M6. The road will continue northwards towards the existing M6. The route will then pass under Hilton Lane and run north towards the M6 at junction 11, then pass under the realigned A460, crossing the M6 north of junction 11.
- 2.4.3 Junction 11 would remain unchanged with local access to the M6 and M6 Toll remaining the same.



Figure 4 - 2017 Option C West

3 Consultation methodology

3.1 Purpose of non-statutory public consultation

3.1.1 On Friday 15 September 2017, we launched the M54 to M6/M6 Toll Link Road consultation at the Village Hall in Shareshill. As part of the consultation, 5 public information events were held in towns and villages affected by the scheme.

3.1.2 The aims of the consultation were to:

- successfully engage with stakeholders affected by or interested in the scheme
- engage with potentially affected land owners
- encourage involvement from stakeholders and build strong open relationships
- raise awareness of the scheme and understanding for the need to improve the M54 – M6/M6 Toll link road scheme
- inform about the option assessment process
- understand stakeholder concerns, issues and suggestions
- get feedback on the three options to allow us to develop the scheme further, before to the Development Consent Order application
- prepare for the statutory consultation phases

3.1.3 We achieved this by:

- identifying stakeholders that may be affected by or interested in the scheme
- communicating the consultation through a variety of channels to reach as many stakeholders as possible
- providing clear and accessible communications about the scheme
- presenting fact-led information about the scheme, background and the need for the improvement
- providing a balanced overview of the options and how they compare in relation to the scheme's objectives and social, environmental and economic impacts
- being open about the next steps of scheme
- considering honestly and fairly the suggestions received from stakeholders

3.1.4 This forms the second non-statutory public consultation on the route, the first was held from December 2014 and January 2015.

3.1.5 The public consultation period was from 15 September 2017 to 13 October 2017.

3.2 Brochure and questionnaire

3.2.1 A copy of the Public Consultation brochure is included in **Appendix A**. The brochure includes:

- information on the scheme proposals
- a map showing constraints around the local area
- contact details, including postal address, email and website address, and telephone number, to send feedback on the options.

3.2.2 We included a questionnaire in the brochure for respondents to complete and return to us. We asked questions to find out more information and to obtain feedback on the proposal shown. Information and analysis of the questionnaire responses received is provided in Sections 5 to 9. We also invited respondents to make additional comments if they wished to do so.

3.2.3 We produced A4 posters and brochures and placed these at a number of locations.

Location
Shareshill Post Office
Shareshill Community Centre
Shareshill Parish Council
Cheslyn Hay Leisure Centre
Cheslyn Hay Post Office
Cheslyn Hay Community & Sports Club
Cheslyn Hay Parish Council
South Staffordshire District Council Offices
Staffordshire County Council Offices
Cannock Chase District Council Offices
Wolverhampton City Council Offices
Great Wyrley Community Centre

Table 1 - brochure deposit locations

3.3 Advertising

3.3.1 We advertised the Public Consultation exhibitions as follows:

- M54 to M6/M6 Toll Link Road [website](#)
- Press release (published on 15 September 2017)
- Media interviews were conducted at the first consultation event with BBC Radio Shropshire, Free Radio and Express & Star/Shropshire Star.
- We sent letters to:
 - a 100m corridor around the A460
 - a corridor around Dark Lane
 - A 100m area around M54 Junction 1
- Displayed posters at the exhibition venues in advance of the exhibition

3.4 Public information exhibition

- 3.4.1 The locations of the events were established by searching for accessible locations within the vicinity of the proposed routes. At each location, a building risk assessment was carried out by Highways England. The information points were established in the same way, but with some locations added as suggested by local Councillors.
- 3.4.2 The public information exhibitions (PIEs) took place on 15, 16 and 18 September 2017. Details are shown in Table 4.1 below, including the number of visitors that attended. The exhibition was attended by our project team and other specialists, who were available to answer questions on the proposals from members of the public.
- 3.4.3 We selected the locations of the venues to give enough opportunity for members of the public across the local area to attend. We also ensured that these offered the most suitable facilities to hold such an exhibition.
- 3.4.4 At the PIEs, we presented the scheme proposals on display boards, with a combination of drawings and descriptive text. The content of the boards was a summary of the brochures.
- 3.4.5 Copies of the brochure were also available at the exhibitions. We advised members of the public that they could complete a copy of the questionnaire and post it back the HE or complete the questionnaire online at the website detailed in the brochure.

3.5 Display material

- 3.5.1 The display material contained information about the scheme and the issues surrounding it, including the following:
- Welcome board (including an introduction to the scheme)
 - M54 to M6/M6 Toll Link Road Scheme (including details of why the scheme is needed)
 - Objectives of the scheme
 - Environmental constraints plan
 - Proposed option B (with a diagrammatic layout drawing of the proposed option)
 - Proposed option C West (with a diagrammatic layout drawing of the proposed option)
 - Proposed option C East (with a diagrammatic layout drawing of the proposed option)
 - What happens next? (with board details of the overall scheme programme)
 - How to respond? (with details of the various methods for completing the questionnaire).
- 3.5.2 In addition, plans were available to view on tables, including option drawings and aerial photograph mapping showing the 3 options.

3.6 Attendance

- 3.6.1 A breakdown of how many people attended each exhibition is detailed below.

Venue	Date	Opening Times	Number of Visitors
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Venue	Date	Opening Times	Number of Visitors
Shareshill Village Hall	15 September 2017	midday to 8pm	137
Featherstone & Hilton Community Centre	16 September 2017	9am to 5pm	80
Essington Community Centre	18 September 2017	1pm – 8pm	83
Cheslyn Hay Village Hall	2 October 2017	5pm – 8pm	25
Wedges Mill Village Hall	3 October 2017	5pm – 8pm	12

Table 2 - Public Information Exhibitions attendees

3.6.2 A total of 337 people attended the public consultation over 5 days, to meet our team and to view our proposals.

3.7 Webchat

3.7.1 We held a webchat on Wednesday, 27 September 2017 from 11am to 2pm. The project team were on hand to answer any questions or comments from members of the public. We did not receive any questions or comments at the webchat.

3.8 Meetings with affected parties

3.8.1 As part of the consultation process, we actively sought to discuss the proposals with those parties directly affected by the proposals. This included local councils, landowners and those with business interests or development proposals in the scheme area.

3.8.2 A number of meetings took place during the consultation events and in the immediate time afterwards. We will continue to consult with potentially affected parties as the design progresses.

4 Methodology

4.1 Data receipt and digitisation of all submissions

4.1.1 We handled consultation responses according to the format we received them. Physical questionnaires and letters were collated and scanned onto the computer system, whilst online questionnaire analysis was automatically collated by the online citizen space system. We added all consultation responses to a consultation response tracker.

Type of responses	Count
Online response form	194
Paper response form	239
Emails/letters/other	29
Total	462

Table 3 - Number of Responses by Type

4.1.2 We categorised emails, letters and any other responses that did not follow the question structure of the feedback form as unstructured (or non-fitting) feedback. These responses were integrated with the open text responses to the final consultation question. As is common in public consultations, the number of responses for each question varied, as not all respondents chose to respond to all questions. The table below shows the number of responses by question.

	Question	Responses
1.	Do you support the need for an improved link road from the M54 to the M6/M6 Toll?	335
2.	Which Option do you prefer?	459
3.	Reason for your preferred Option?	305
4.	Please tell us how concerned you are about the following issues?	264 – 289
5.	Do you have any further comments regarding the Options?	
6.	Based on your usual journeys, what would you use the improved link road for?	294
7.	How did you find out about the M54 to M6/M6 Toll Link Road Consultation?	278

Table 4 - Number of responses by question

Online responses

4.1.3 We downloaded the online responses from the consultation website at the end of the consultation period. We then added these files were to the consultation response tracker.

Paper response forms and letters received through the freepost address

4.1.4 Upon receipt, letters and paper-based response forms were logged and scanned copies were then imported into the consultation response tracker and the content was data entered in the same format as the online responses.

Email responses

- 4.1.5 Responses contained within the body of an email were scanned and added into the consultation response tracker. Responses that were sent through as email attachments were imported into the consultation database and data-entered where necessary.

Responses containing non-text elements

- 4.1.6 We made sure that any submissions containing images, maps and other non-text content were made available to analysts as a PDF version of the original submission. This information could be viewed alongside any written responses.

4.2 Analysis process

- 4.2.1 We created a coding framework to ensure a thorough and fair analysis of the views expressed by respondents. The coding framework enabled analysts to categorise responses by themes and issues so that main ideas as well as specific points of detail could be captured and reported. This is shown in Section 6 of the Report.
- 4.2.2 Each code within a theme represents a specific issue or argument raised in the responses. The application of a code to part of a response was done by highlighting the relevant theme to that response. A single submission could receive multiple codes. Where similar issues were raised, we carefully ensured that these were coded consistently.
- 4.2.3 The coding process enabled all responses to be indexed according to the issues raised by respondents, and enabled a summary of the content by means of this report.

4.3 Reporting

- 4.3.1 Chapters 5 to 9 of this report summarise the main themes raised by respondents to the consultation, including members of the public and stakeholder organisations.
- 4.3.2 The following points should be considered when interpreting the charts in this document:
- As a consultation process is down to individuals to choose to participate, we can only show the views of those who participated.
 - The values shown in the chart only show those who completed the online or paper questionnaire.
 - A large number of respondents chose not to answer all of the questions.
- 4.3.3 Please note, therefore, that the proportions shown in the charts cannot be considered as fully representative of all respondents who participated in the consultation. The number of valid responses to a question is indicated on the graph as (n= number of responses to that question).

5 The need for improvements

5.1 Response to Question 1 – Is the improvement needed?

5.1.1 Question 1 asked respondents to state if they felt improvements to the route were needed. Of the 462 responses to the public consultation, only 335 (approximately 72%) answered this question. Figure 6 highlights the responses to Question 1:

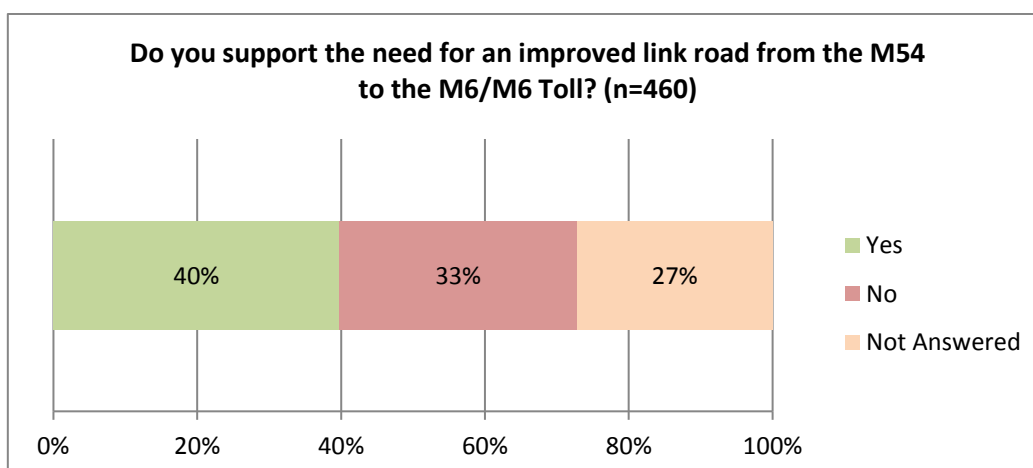


Figure 5 - Support for Scheme Improvements

5.1.2 Approximately 40% of the total respondents to the public consultation considered that improvements were required at this location. Approximately 33% stated that improvements were not required. Approximately 27% of respondents did not answer this question.

5.1.3 If those that did not answer the question are removed, 183 respondents from the 335 that answered the question (55%) supported the need for an improved link road.

5.2 Comments supporting the need for improvements

5.2.1 Approximately 149 respondents gave additional comments regarding the need for improvement.

5.2.2 The top 3 reasons for supporting the need for improvements are shown in table 6.

	Number	Percentage of respondent giving comments
Reduces congestion on the A460	23	15
Logical link required for existing network	19	13
Improves access / reduces congestion on existing motorway network	15	10
Total	57	50

Table 5 - reasons for supporting scheme improvements

5.2.3 The top 3 reasons for against the need for improvements are shown below:

	Number	Percentage of respondent giving comments
There is no issue – therefore no need	10	7
Potential impacts on local horse / farming communities	10	7
Will impact on countryside and wildlife	8	5
Total	28	19

Table 6 - reasons for opposing scheme improvements

5.3 Response to Question 2 – which option do you prefer?

5.3.1 Question 2 asks respondents to select their preferred Option of which 459 respondents answered this question (approximately 99%).

5.3.2 Figure 7 below shows the responses to Question 2:

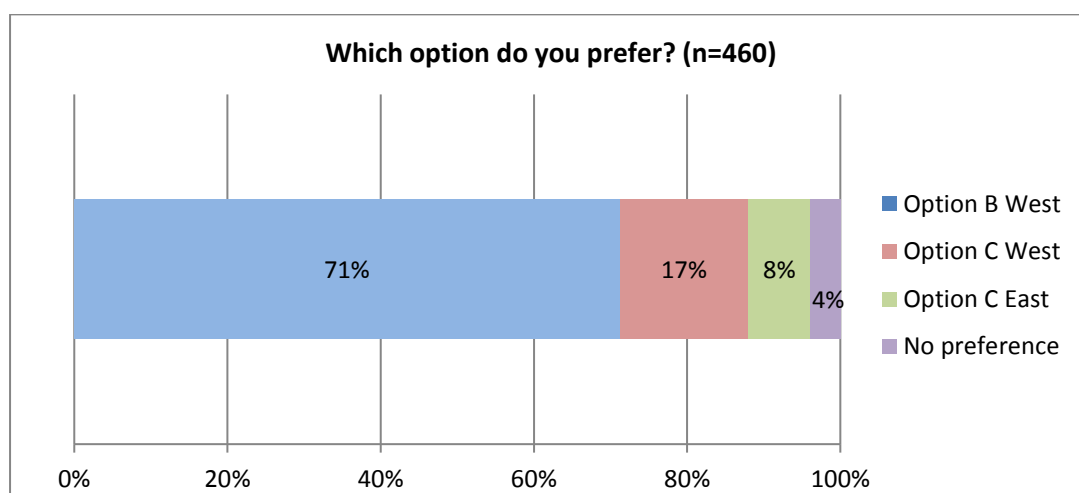


Figure 6 - improvement option preference

5.3.3 Of the 459 respondents, 327 (approximately 71%) supported Option B West as their preferred route. Option C West followed, with 77 respondents (approximately 17%), with Option C East least preferred by 37 respondents (approximately 8%). In addition to those stating their preferred route, 18 respondents (approximately 4%) stated they had no preference.

Key Stakeholder Views

5.3.4 We invited key stakeholders to offer their views on the public consultation, and to select their preferred route also, the results are shown in table 9.

Preferred Option	Key Stakeholders
Option B West	Staffordshire County Council; Transport for West Midlands; Natural England; 2 Private companies;
Option C West	Staffordshire County Council; South Staffordshire District Council, Shareshill Parish Council;

	Hatherton Parish Council; Hilton Parish Council; Cheslyn Hay Parish Council; Essington Parish Council; Natural England; 1 Private company;
Option C East	Historic England; 1 Private company;
Support with no preferred Option	National Trust, Marches LEP, 1 Private company

Table 7 – Key Stakeholder Option Preference

5.3.5 Staffordshire County Council supported both Option B West and Option C West. All the Parish Councils supported Option C West, referencing supporting South Staffordshire District Council’s preference of Option C West also. Historic England opposed both Option B West and Option C West and Natural England opposed Option C West and Option C East.

5.4 Response to Question 3 – reasons for your preferred Option?

5.4.1 Responses were coded into for and against each option, then further split into themes.

Responses supporting all Options

5.4.2 The majority of respondents (18) stated that they have no preference because they believe that any option will be better than the existing situation and improve congestion on the A460.

Responses supporting Option B West

5.4.3 101 respondents gave additional reasons for supporting Option B West. These have been coded into themes and are shown in table 10.

	Number	Percentage
Convenience and directness	19	18.8
Least disruptive	15	14.9
Reduces congestion on A460	14	13.9
Environmental benefits - reduction in noise and air pollution	13	12.9
Road needed to improve traffic flow/reduce journey time	10	9.9
Cost effective Option	10	9.9
Improves quality of life in area	8	7.9
Reduces local traffic and prevent rat running	6	5.9
Reduce negative impacts on Essington	3	3.0
Improve future connectivity for the network	3	3.0
TOTAL	101	100

Table 8 - Reasons for supporting Option B West

5.4.4 Of the 101 respondents, the most popular reason for supporting Option B West, with 19 respondents (approximately 19%) was due to “Convenience and directness”.

Responses supporting Option C West

- 5.4.5 129 respondents gave additional reasons for supporting Option C West. These have been coded into themes and are shown in the table below:

	Number	Percentage
Option protects woodland	21	16.3
Least impact to locals	17	13.2
Reduces pollution to surrounding areas	17	13.2
Reduce traffic/congestion	14	10.9
Minimal noise impact	13	10.1
Least disruptive	11	8.5
Least impact on Featherstone	10	7.8
Most cost effective	7	5.4
Least impact on Shareshill	6	4.7
Agree with design layout	6	4.7
Least impact to wildlife	4	3.1
Most direct route	3	2.3
TOTAL	129	100

Table 9 - Reasons for Supporting Option C West

- 5.4.6 Of the 129 respondents, the most popular reason for supporting Option C West, with 21 respondents (approximately 16%) was due to “Option protects woodland”.

Responses supporting Option C East

- 5.4.7 75 respondents gave additional reasons for supporting Option C East. These have been coded into themes and are shown in the table below:

	Number	Percentage
Routes near existing motorway corridor/follows corridor well	20	26.7
Less impact on landscape and local residents	14	18.7
Least disruptive	11	14.7
Least amount of farmland to be obtained	9	12.0
Reduces noise/pollution in local area	8	10.7
Least impact on Featherstone	7	9.3
Least impact on Shareshill	3	4.0
Cost effective Option	2	2.7
Decrease noise level from A460	1	1.3
TOTAL	75	100

Table 10 - Reasons for supporting Option C East

- 5.4.8 Of the 75 respondents, the most popular reason for supporting Option C East, with 20 respondents (approximately 27%) was due to “route near existing motorway corridor / follows corridor well”.

Responses opposing all Options

- 5.4.9 7 respondents opposed all options, for a variety of reasons, including; impact on environment / wildlife, construction disruption, cost and proposing alternative options.

Responses opposing Option B West

5.4.10 28 respondents gave additional reasons for opposing Option B West. These have been coded into themes and are shown in table 13.

	Number	Percentage
Disagree with design	10	35.7
Most disruptive option	4	14.3
Noise pollution	4	14.3
Negative impact on Featherstone	3	10.7
Traffic will not be diverted from local villages	2	7.1
Ruin natural scenery of area	2	7.1
Negative impact on Essington	1	3.6
Option B could be used for multi modal purposes - safety issues	1	3.6
impact on J1	1	3.6
TOTAL	28	100

Table 11 - Reasons Opposing Option B West

5.4.11 Of the 28 respondents, the most popular reason for opposing Option B West, with 10 respondents (approximately 36%) was due to “Disagree with design”.

Responses opposing both Option C West and Option C East

5.4.12 198 respondents gave additional reasons for opposing Option C West and Option C East. These have been coded into themes and are shown in the table below:

	Number	Percentage
Impact on farm/horses	92	46.5
Link road impacting negatively on landscape/wildlife	49	24.7
Oppose Option C West and Option C East more - general	32	16.2
Loss of home/land through construction	17	8.6
Options will not alleviate traffic on the A460	4	2.0
Congestion caused from other options by people changing lanes	2	1.0
No need for link road - just encourages speeding/rat running	2	1.0
TOTAL	198	100

Table 12 - Reasons Opposing Option C West and Option C East

5.4.13 Of the 198 respondents, the most popular reason for opposing Option C West and Option C East, with 92 respondents (approximately 47%) was due to “Impacts on farm / horses”, with an additional 49 respondents (approximately 25%) due to “link road impacting negatively on landscape / wildlife”, and 32 respondents (approximately 16%) due to “Oppose Option C West and Option C West more [than Option B West]”.

Responses opposing Option C East

5.4.14 6 respondents gave additional reasons for opposing Option C East. There were various reasons for the opposition, including “longest route”, “design impacts on safety” and “Environmentally problematic”.

5.5 Location of responses compared to their Preferred Route

- 5.5.1 Of the 460 responses to the public consultation, we received postal data from 265 (approximately 58%). We considered this to be quite a low response rate for this type of question, meaning that we have been unable to plot almost half of the respondents' postcode information.
- 5.5.2 We plotted the postcode information by postcode boundary (figure 8), including the preferred route in that area. If the area has significant differences between choices, the numbers have been included for reference:

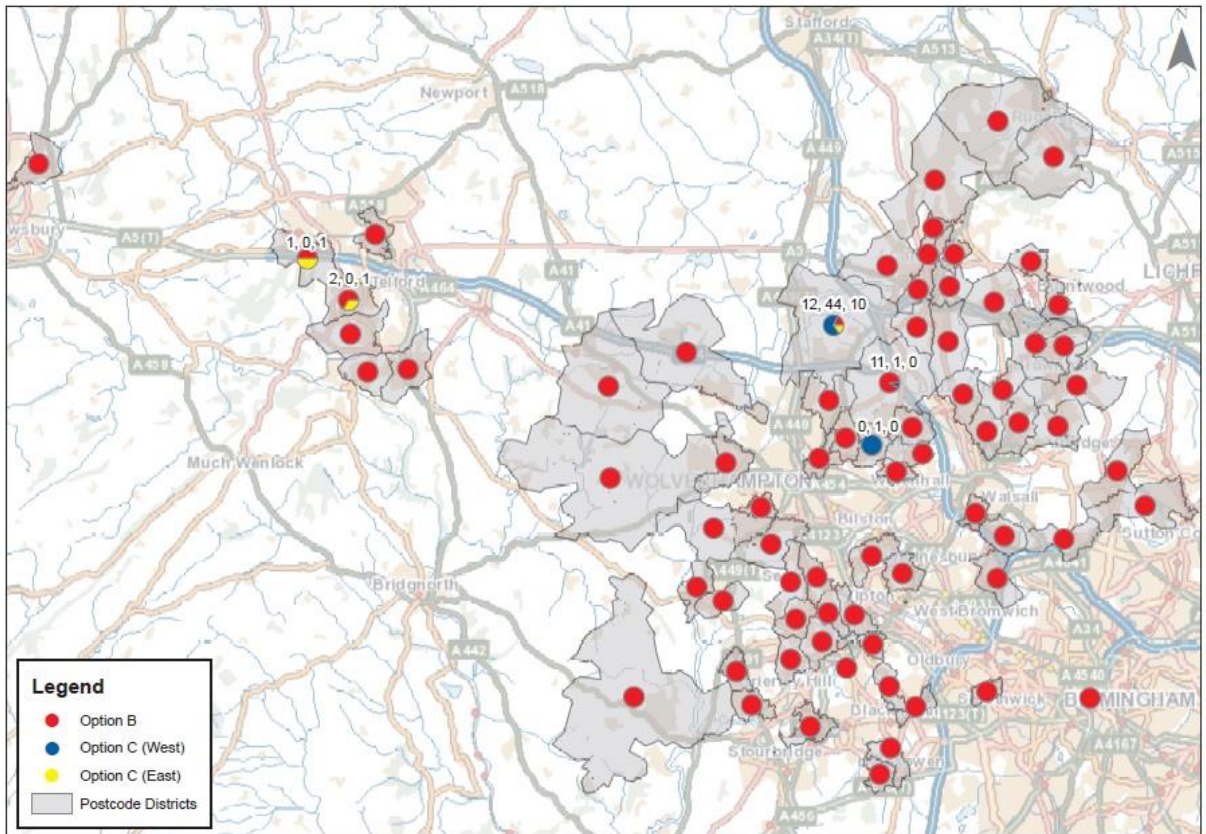


Figure 7 - Responses mapped by postcode

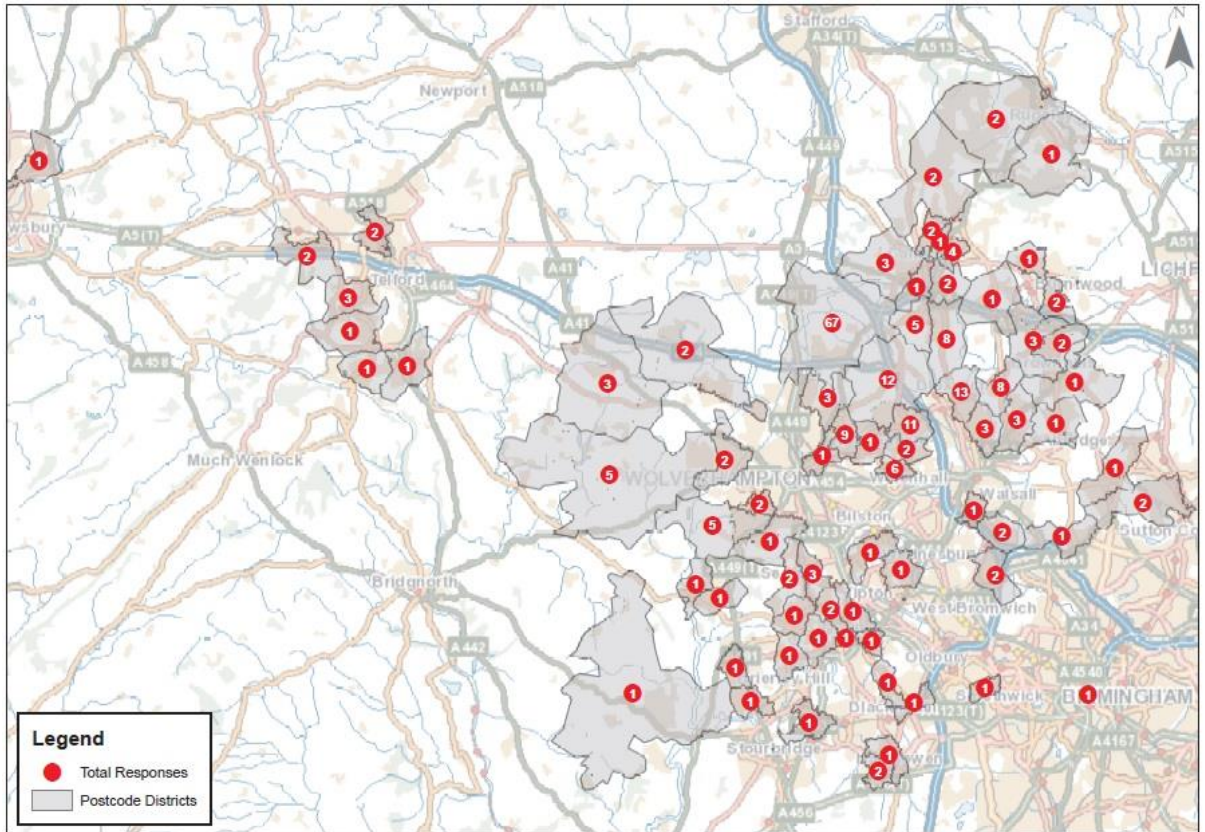


Figure 8 - Response total per postcode

5.5.3 Most the postcode areas support Option B West, however, the postcode closest to what would be closest to the alignment of Option B West and Option C West has a mixture of support, with 44 for Option C West, 12 for Option C East and 10 for Option B West. This postcode also has the highest number of respondents per postcode, with a total of 67 respondents.

6 Concerns and further comments

6.1 Response to Question 4 – concerns relating to the Scheme

6.1.1 Respondents were asked to tell us which of the following topics below, regarding the current road network, concerned them, with a scale from no concern to very concerned:

- Road Safety
- Congestion
- Limited Opportunities for Economic Growth
- Construction Impact
- Landscape and Scenery
- Impact of Scheme on residential properties
- Regional Connectivity

6.1.2 Approximately 40% of respondents to the consultation did not answer these questions. Table 15 shows the results of this questions.

	very concerned	concerned	little concern	no concern	Total*	no opinion
Road Safety	188	58	19	7	272	176
Congestion	182	52	23	13	270	184
Limited opportunities for economic growth	72	65	64	47	248	191
Construction impact	163	61	45	10	279	176
Landscape and scenery	205	60	19	7	291	164
Impact of scheme on residential properties	193	57	26	7	283	171
Regional connectivity	104	80	41	24	249	196

Table 13 - Respondents concerns

*Total – shows the number of people who offered a response, therefore does not count “no opinion”.

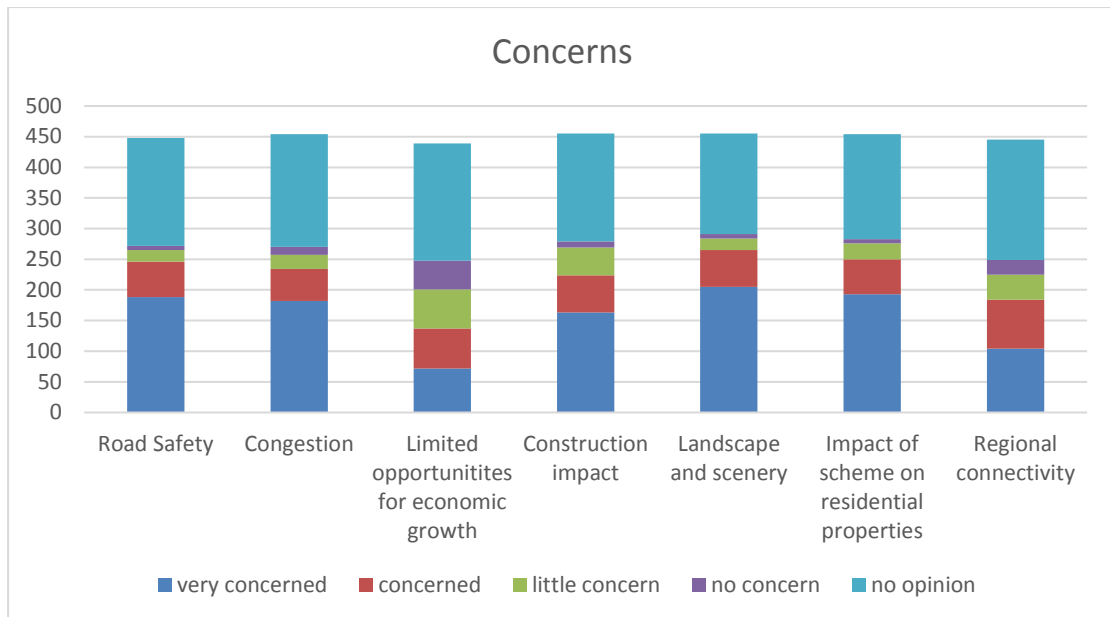


Figure 9 - Respondents concerns

Road safety

- 6.1.3 Of the 272 respondents who responded to the question, 188 people (approximately 69%) said that they were “very concerned” with current road safety at this time. A further 58 people (approximately 21%) said that they were “concerned” with road safety at this time.

Congestion

- 6.1.4 Of the 270 respondents who responded to the question, 182 people (approximately 67%) said that they were “very concerned” with congestion at this time. A further 52 people (approximately 19%) said that they were “concerned with congestion at this time.

Limited opportunities for Economic Growth

- 6.1.5 Of the 248 respondents who responded to the question, 72 people (approximately 29%) said that they were “very concerned”, 65 people (approximately 26%) said that they were “concerned” and 64 people (approximately 26%) said that they had “little concern” with limited opportunities for economic growth at this time. The answers for this question were much wider spread, with no clear leading answer.

Construction Impact

- 6.1.6 Of the 279 respondents who responded to the question, 163 people (approximately 58%) said that they were “very concerned” with construction impact at this time. A further 61 people (approximately 22%) said that they were “concerned” with construction impact at this time.

Landscape and Scenery

- 6.1.7 Of the 291 respondents who responded to the question, 205 people (approximately 70%) said that they were “very concerned” with landscape and scenery issues at this time. A further 60 people (approximately 21%) said that they were “concerned” with landscape and scenery issues at this time.

Impact of Scheme on residential properties

- 6.1.8 Of the 283 respondents who responded to the question, 193 people (approximately 68%) said that they were “very concerned” with impact of scheme on residential properties at this time. A further 57 people (approximately 20%) said that they were “concerned” with impact of scheme on residential properties at this time.

Regional Connectivity

- 6.1.9 Of the 249 respondents who responded to the question, 104 people (approximately 42%) said that they were “very concerned” with regional connectivity at this time. A further 80 people (approximately 32%) said that they were “concerned” with regional connectivity at this time.

6.2 Response to Question 5 – Further comments

- 6.2.1 We offered respondents the opportunity to give further comments, regarding current concerns about the existing situation / potential for the scheme, of which 83 people provided a comment as shown in table 16.

Issue / Comment	Number
Disagree with new road being built	12
Planning and impact on local community needs to be considered	8
Preference to Option C West	8
Opinion of making a different option	7
Noise/air pollution needs to be improved/considered	5
Preference to Option B West	5
Disagree with road - due to funding	5
Reduce existing congestion issues	4
Urgency on being built immediately	4
Road should not be all-purpose	4
Negative impact on horses	4
Noise/air pollution will be worsened	3
Road is necessary	3
Negatives to environment	3
Preference to Option C East	2
Risk of area being overdeveloped	2
Safety issue existing for cyclists	1
N/A	3
TOTAL	83

Table 14 - Respondents further comments on options

- 6.2.2 7 people also commented that they had a view as to a different or amended option, to what was shown at the public exhibition. These different opinions on options are shown below, including our response, if required:

Comment on potential amended / different option	Response
---	----------

Comment on potential amended / different option	Response
<p>The north end of the new road puts a lot down in a very small space. The 270 degree curve from the M6 to the new M54 link is particularly tortuous.</p> <p>To make space for the new junction and its connections , my proposal is to remove Jn11, and divert the A460 away along an improved Hilton Lane to the roundabout on the A462, then along the B4156, then a short new link to where Saredon Road meets the M6 Toll. A west-bound entry point would be put in here so as to give access to both M6 north and south using one of the new links. Past the M6 Toll bridge at Saredon Road, a short section of new road could be built round the back of Middle Hill Farm but is not strictly necessary. M6 users coming south wanting the A460 to go south would use Jn12 (A5) to get to the A460 roundabout.</p> <p>Obviously Hilton Lane and the B4156 would need some straightening and widening work to make it suitable for its new role as an 'A' road. Some new road to make the junction better to the A462 will also be needed to cut the acute angle that is there now.</p>	<p>A 270 degree loop is a standard method (DMRB Vol 6; TD 22/06; Figure 4/5) of connecting two motorways.</p> <p>Highways England has considered numerous options in terms of cost, economic benefit, traffic flow, environmental impact and impact on residents and landowners. The suggested improvements would re-route traffic along alternative existing routes which are already constrained and would therefore require a significant amount of improvement works. This would significantly increase scheme costs and environmental impact and likely reduce the proportion of economic benefit. A significant remodelling of the local highway network is outside the scope of this project</p>
<p>I am worried about the choice to use loop ramps, especially for the A460 > M6T movement.</p> <p>If the aim is to encourage people to use the M6T over the M6, A5 or other roads in the area, loop ramps (particularly those that turn off to stay on the main route) would discourage that.</p> <p>If the funding can be found for the extra bridge(s), a more direct link for through traffic going A460 > M6T without having to turn onto a slip road must be seriously considered.</p>	<p>The A460 to M6 Toll eastbound movement, at JT8, is already served by a 'loop' connector link.</p> <p>The 'loop' connector road is often used in similar situations. There is an example at Stoke-on-Trent, where the A500 Queensway westbound connects with M6 northbound at J15.</p> <p>The current proposal for the link road is to connect into a re-modelled Junction 11 and as such the current access to the M6Toll will not be affected.</p>
<p>Better to have it as close to the existing M6 as possible</p>	<p>Option C (E) as presented at the exhibition follows the existing M6 corridor as much as possible but the alignment impacts directly on Scheduled Ancient Woodland. Option C West still indirectly affects the Ancient Woodland, but the impact has been reduced.</p>

Comment on potential amended / different option	Response
<p>With option B, the junction with the M54 looks very difficult; the existing tunnels under the M54 are at right angles to it and there's no obvious way to convert them to skew tunnels. Using the existing tunnels would probably be excessively dangerous, as they're only just wide enough for two lanes without a hard shoulder (and would make the junction much larger as the curves would have to start later). It may be that the whole option has to be abandoned due to the difficulty of building it.</p> <p>The Option C options will need measures to discourage drivers from using the existing roads (and even Option B would benefit from them, although they're less necessary). One of the most obvious steps here is to make the new link road a motorway; it's fulfilling a motorway's purpose, after all, and drivers would be likely to consider the most direct-looking route when comparing non-motorway roads. The existing A460 between the ends of the new link road should probably also be downgraded to a B road, for similar reasons (additionally, the standard through Featherstone is not high enough to be a rural A road, but drivers are unlikely to consider it as urban); the route of the A460 would then effectively go up the new motorway, reappearing at the other end. A speed limit of 30 through at least Featherstone would also make a lot of sense (although thought would need to be given as to how to enforce it). Note that the existing route needs to stay unbroken as a "local access road" for non-motorway traffic.</p>	<p>The proposal is to construct a new structure underneath M54 to accommodate the proposed carriageway alignment. We have confirmed the feasibility of constructing such a structure with our contractor advisors</p> <p>The A460 is maintained by the local authority, South Staffordshire District Council, and we would look to work them to investigate appropriate measures that might be applied to the bypassed length of the A460 to discourage through traffic and to encourage more appropriate traffic speeds. We will also consider opportunities to enhance facilities for pedestrians and cyclists along the A460</p> <p>We note that not all vehicle types would be able to use the new link road if this to be constructed as a motorway.</p>
<p>The best solution for this scheme would be to make the link road of Motorway standard as it would be pointless to construct it to all purpose road specifications seeing as it is supposed to provide a direct free flow connection between THREE motorways. Additionally, as we have seen countless times before, scrimping on costs and making the road of a lower standard and grade than what it should be will only cause more problems further along the line when the need will arise to carry out further realignments and improvements at greater cost (e.g. many examples of the HA not allowing for future traffic growth forecasts - such as grade separation - on so many of the main trunk routes elsewhere in the West Midlands: A45/M42 Junction 6 near airport; Stonebridge and Tollbar End junctions - both A45; West Bromwich Expressway A41/A4031 junction ; at-grade intersections on the Black Country Spine Road A41 and Birmingham Middleway A4540, etc.)</p>	<p>The cross section of the new link is proposed to comply with Highways England's Design Manual for Roads and Bridges in order to provide consistency across the strategic road network. The proposed link is to be constructed to dual carriageway standard with grade separated junctions and will provide sufficient capacity to accommodate future traffic flows.</p>

Comment on potential amended / different option	Response
<p>Maybe better to flatten the services on the m6 and make a much simpler junction. Build new services north of junction 12.</p>	<p>This had been considered previously at a high level, but the very high cost would make the scheme not viable.</p> <p>Because of the close proximity of the Junction 12 slip roads, it would be difficult to fit a simpler junction onto this length of the M6.</p>
<p>1. Drop the price of using the toll road, a lot more people would then use it, reducing congestion!</p> <p>2. Put the links in that are missing, instead of these planned routes</p> <p>3. Someone should drive the local roads, day in day out for a given period of say 3 months, to see things from a resident point of view</p>	<p>1. The toll price is set by the M6 Toll operator, Midlands Expressway Ltd.</p> <p>2. Connections between M54 and M6 North would not accommodate the east-west movements. If east-west movements were to be diverted onto the north-south M6; then that length of the M6; the M6 J11 roundabout and the A460 (east of the M6) would become overloaded.</p> <p>3. We are listening to the views of residents at the public consultation events and will continue to involve the public going forward. We have also undertaken traffic surveys and have a detailed understanding of existing traffic problems along the A460</p>
<p>Access to Moseley Olde Hall to be given back, rather than having to travel into Wolverhampton, West Midlands access it, now</p> <p>Access to Whitgreave Wood to be returned with the re-opening of Campion Lane from Brookhouse Lane</p> <p>Access to the M6 to be blocked off at Shareshill / Saredon</p> <p>As lorries etc should not be using the A460 the motorways as shortcut, why aren't cameras used and fine applied to offenders?</p> <p>Instead of another road skirting the ancient villages of Featherstone, Brinsford, Hilton, Shareshill and Essington, I propose a road between Coven and Brewood, linking up the A5 and the M6 Junction 12 – the land lends itself to development.</p>	<p>Moseley Old Hall Lane was severed when the M54 motorway was constructed – Brookhouse lane was diverted to egress onto Cat and Kittens lane. Access to Moseley Old Hall can be obtained from C & K lane and the A460 via Mosley Road.</p> <p>There is a footpath Featherstone 3 which provides access to Whitgreave's Wood from the A460 /M54 J11. Also, Footpath Featherstone 8 provides access to the wood from Moseley lane and joins Featherstone 3</p> <p>There is No restriction to the M6 from Shareshill and Saredon</p> <p>There are currently no restrictions to HGVs on the A460. There are speed cameras along the route that are not managed by Highways England – the proposed new route will aim to discourage HGV using the current A460 but they will still require access to the businesses along the route.</p> <p>The original route of the Birmingham Western Orbital was further west of Junction 2 and did connect with the M6 in the vicinity of J12 – the route concept for this projects was outside our remit.</p>

Table 15 - Respondents suggestions / amendments to options

6.2.3 We may continue to use comments received as part of the public consultation throughout the preliminary design stage of the scheme.

6.3 Comments / Questions raised at the Public Information Events

6.3.1 We did not record discussions at the public information events for assessment as part of the public consultation process. However, a small number of questions were asked / information supplied requiring consideration by the project team.

6.3.2 We have reviewed this information and will be use this as we move into preliminary design.

7 Journey use

7.1 Response to Question 6 – Use of the Improved link road

7.1.1 We asked respondents to tell us, choosing from the following list, how they would use the new improved link road. More than one answer was allowed for this question:

- Travelling to/from the M6 northbound
- Travelling to/from the M6 southbound
- Travelling to/from the M6 Toll
- Travelling to/from Cannock and Lichfield
- Travelling to/from Telford
- I would not use the link road

7.1.2 The table and graph below show the responses to Question 6:

	Count	Percentage
I would not use the link road	154	52.4
Travelling to/from the M6 northbound	93	31.6
Travelling to/from Cannock and Lichfield	73	24.8
Travelling to/from the M6 southbound	64	21.8
Travelling to/from the M6 Toll	58	19.7
Travelling to/from Telford	57	19.4
Total	294	100.0

Table 16 - respondents use of future improvements

7.1.3 We further analysed the results of this question, comparing it against the respondent's route preference. This is shown in the table below:

	Option B West	Option C West	Option C East	No preference	Total
Travelling to/from the M6 northbound	35	36	15	7	93
Travelling to/from the M6 southbound	20	28	11	5	64
Travelling to/from the M6 Toll	19	20	13	6	58
Travelling to/from Cannock and Lichfield	25	34	8	6	73
Travelling to/from Telford	20	23	9	5	57
I would not use the link road	118	13	14	9	154
Total	177	64	36	17	294

Table 17 - Respondents Use of Future Improvements by Option Preference

7.1.4 Most of the 'use of future' options are relatively balanced in terms of the preferred option. However, of the 154 people that said they would not use the future improved link road, 118 (approximately 77%) preferred Option B West.

8 How did you find out about the consultation?

8.1 Response to Question 7 – how did you find out about the consultation

8.1.1 We asked respondents how they had found out about the consultation from the following options:

- Letter / email from Highways England
- Highways England Website
- Local Newspaper
- Other (Please specify)

8.1.2 The table and graph below show the responses to Question 7:

	Number	%
7d. Other (please specify)	113	39
7c. Local newspaper	65	23
7a. Letter/email from Highways England	60	21
7b. Highways England website	49	17
TOTAL	287	100

Table 18 - Respondents "How did you hear about" responses

8.1.3 Of the 287 respondents, 113 (approximately 39%) said that they had heard about the consultation through "Other" channels of communication.

8.1.4 Of the 287 respondents, 109 (approximately 38%) collectively heard about the consultation through a Highways England channel of communication, a letter / email or the website.

8.1.5 Of the 287 respondents, 65 people (approximately 23%) heard about the consultation via a local newspaper.

8.1.6 In response to the relatively high number of people hearing about the consultation through "other" communication channels, we have broken the "other" option down as follows:

	Count	Percentage
Family/friends/neighbours	37	32.7
Facebook/Social Media	15	13.3
Land owner/manager of areas affected	15	13.3
No option given	13	11.5
Word of mouth	13	11.5
Parish Council	6	5.3
SABRE Forum	4	3.5
CBRD.com	2	1.8
Highways England Twitter	2	1.8
Local knowledge	2	1.8
BBC Local news	1	0.9

	Count	Percentage
Brochure at Essington Farm	1	0.9
National Trust	1	0.9
Notices around Cheslyn Hay	1	0.9
Online road discussion forum	1	0.9
Total	113	100

Table 19 - Respondents "How did you hear about" Other responses

- 8.1.7 Of the 113 respondents who chose "Other" around 50 people (approximately 45%) in total, heard through a combination of friends / family / neighbours and hearing through word of mouth.

9 Comments on the Consultation Process

General

- 9.1.1 We asked attendees at the public information events to fill out a satisfaction questionnaire, so that we could understand what we did well and where perhaps we needed to improve our design and delivery of the public consultation.
- 9.1.2 Overall, 97 attendees filled out a questionnaire and 100% of respondents said that they found the consultation material helpful in answering their questions about the proposed improvement options.

Was there enough advertising for the Exhibitions?

- 9.1.3 The majority (84%) of attendees were satisfied with the level advertising for this consultation. However, of the 17 attendees that responded “No” to this question, some felt that there was a lack of local advertisement for the event.
- 9.1.4 Some consultees stated that the only form of advertisement for this consultation was an email sent by Highways England. One attendee commented that leaflets should have distributed across Featherstone and Shareshill, as many of the local residents have limited access to emails and social media, and so were not necessarily directly made aware that this consultation was happening.

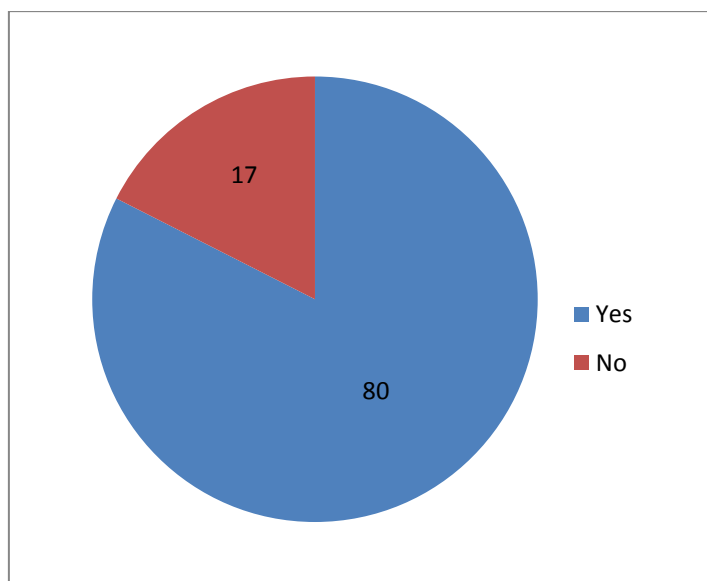


Figure 10 - Advertising the Exhibitions

Were the opening times of the exhibition convenient?

- 9.1.5 Almost all (91%) of the attendees were happy with the opening times. Only 9 attendees felt that the opening times were not suited to their needs. The overall response however was positive, and of the 9 attendees who were not satisfied with the opening times, none left a comment as to why, and how the opening times could be better tailored to their day to day activities.

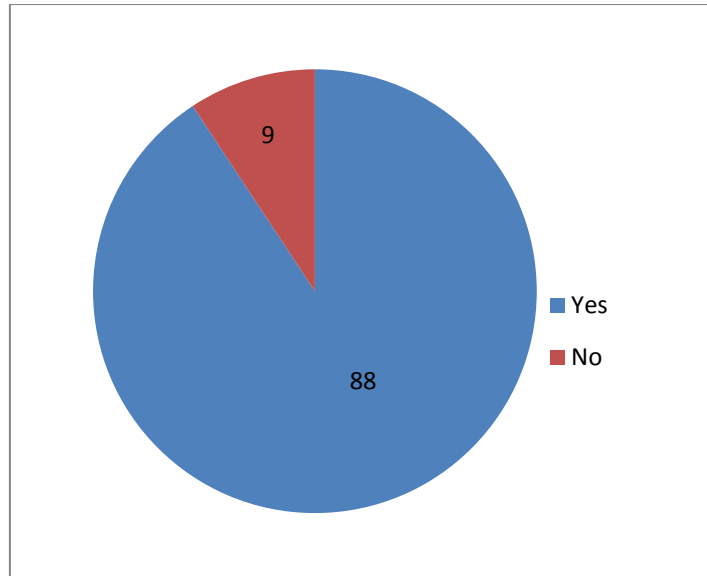


Figure 11 - Convenience of Exhibitions

Were there sufficient staff members available to answer your queries? & Were the project team representatives courteous and helpful?

9.1.6 Overall, the attendees were satisfied with level of information that staff provided, and the general behaviour of the project team. However, only 88 attendees provided a response to these questions. One attendee commented that the “Staff were extremely helpful”, with another attendee commenting on the friendliness of the staff. No attendee commented negatively about either the staff or the project team’s performance, with the overall feedback being positive.

Was the information displayed at the exhibition clear and easily understood?

9.1.7 Almost all of the attendees felt that the exhibitions were clear and easily understood. The vast majority of feedback was positive, with many of the attendees feeling that the consultation was very useful and informative.

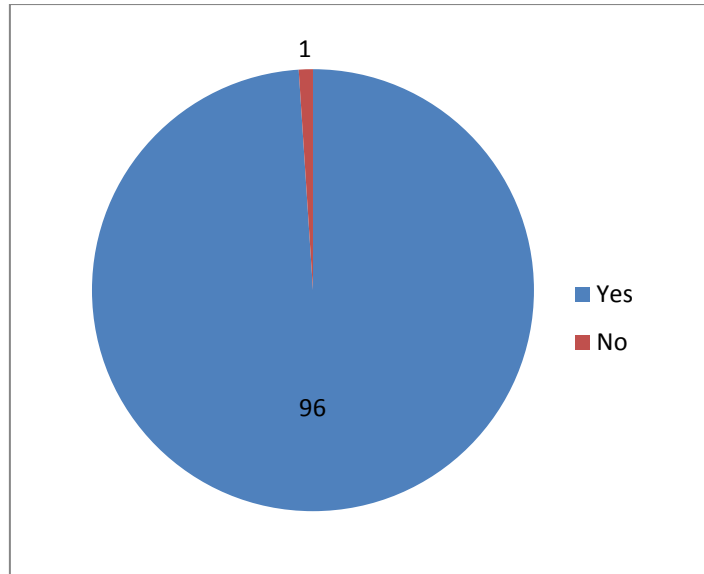


Figure 12 - Clarity of Displayed Information

Were you satisfied with the way your enquiries were handled? & Was the location of the exhibition easily accessible?

9.1.8 All attendees that answered these questions responded "Yes". The attendees were satisfied with the way in which their enquiries were dealt with, and felt the location of the consultation was convenient. None of the attendees left any further comments.

Summary

9.1.9 Overall, the response to the consultation preparation and delivery was positive. The majority of the attendees said that they had a positive experience. Some improvements were suggested and we will take those into account when arranging the next statutory Public Consultation.

10 Conclusions

10.1 Conclusions

10.1.1 We held a 4-week non-statutory consultation to seek views on the proposed link road improvement between the M54 / M6 / M6 Toll from 15 September to 13 October 2017. We will use the feedback received from the consultation to inform the further development of the assessment and design process, which will lead to a decision of which route option to take forward.

10.1.2 The consultation clearly demonstrates Option B West as the public preferred Option, with 71% of respondents selecting it as the option of choice.

10.2 Differences between 2014/15 and 2017 Public Consultation Results

10.2.1 The public preferred route, following the 2014/15 consultation was Option C. The preferred route, following the 2017 consultation is Option B West. This highlights a movement from one Option to another, which represents a substantial physical movement in terms of where the roads may be built.

10.2.2 We have made the following observations between the previous and current, public consultation results:

- The 2014/15 Option B East badly affected a local business who wrote in with significant opposition to the Option. Due to modifications made before 2017 consultation, the latest alignment of Option B West no longer affects the Angling Club ponds. Therefore, the local Angling Club did not respond to the latest consultation due to no longer being affected.
- The 2014/15 Option C was an 'online' option, whereby the new improvements were within the existing highway, therefore not taking any new land, that did not badly affect the local land owners and businesses along the western side of the M6 northbound. The alignment of the 2017 Option C East and West is 'offline', impacting green fields and land to avoid potential future traffic congestion on the M6. Therefore, it now affects several businesses, land owners, residents and people who undertake social interests / activities in the area, who wrote in and strongly opposed Option C East and West. These parties were not affected by the previous Option C.

10.3 Next Steps

10.3.1 This consultation forms part of our commitment to engage with stakeholders. The project team had involved key stakeholders in the process of developing appropriate options to take forward to the public consultation. We will continue to maintain and improve relationships with all the stakeholders as the scheme develops through the preliminary design and statutory process phases. We want to ensure that their views and issues are incorporated into the design wherever possible.

10.3.2 We will use the comments and concerns raised during the consultation as we progress the decision of what is the preferred option for the Scheme. The consultation responses, along with environmental, transportation and cost factor will be analysed in order to decide which is the best overall option that provides value for money and delivers the benefits required. This information will assist in the selection of the preferred option as the scheme approaches statutory consultation and Development Consent Order (DCO) application.

10.3.3 This is only the beginning of the process; we will hold a further statutory consultation before we submit the scheme Development Consent Order (DCO) application, on the preferred route. This is to give the public the chance to comment on the more detailed proposals. We will review the programme for future consultation(s) after the preferred route announcement.

11 Appendix A – Public Consultation Brochure and Questionnaire

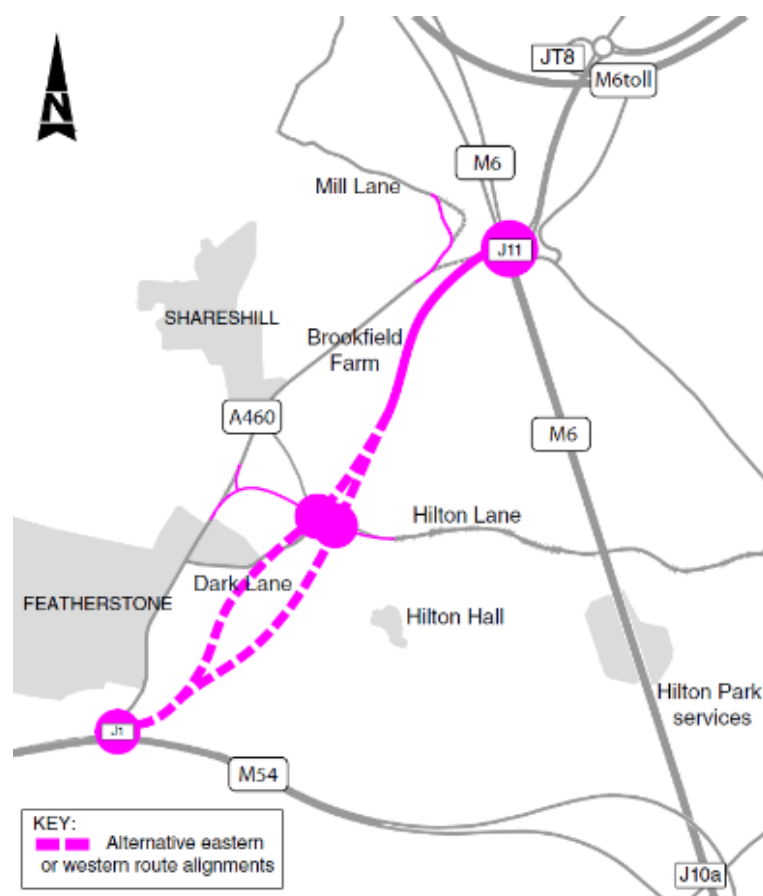
12 Appendix B – Public Consultation 2014/15 Summary

12.1 Summary

12.1.1 A public consultation was held for 8 weeks, between November 2015 and January 2015, to present options for a new road linking the M54 and M6/M6 Toll.

12.1.2 Three options were presented:

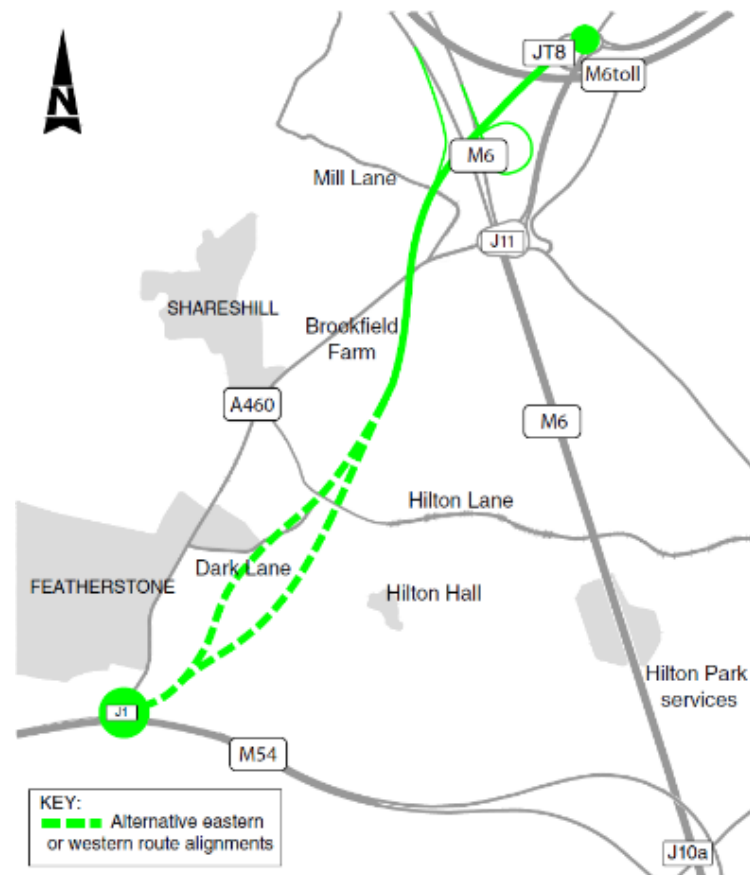
12.1.3 **Option A** would provide a new road between M54 junction 1 and M6 junction 11, covering approximately 1.5 miles (2.5 km).



- The proposed route would bypass the villages of Featherstone and Shareshill, and be sited to the west of Hilton Hall.
- There would be a single junction on the new road to allow local traffic to access the link road from Hilton Lane.
- There would be no access from the existing A460 to M6 junction 11 on the west side of M6 as this would be removed to move through-traffic to the new road.
- There would be a new local access road built to Mill Lane for local residents.
- We predict that Option A would reduce traffic on the A449, with all long distance and freight traffic on the existing A460 through Featherstone moved onto the new link road.

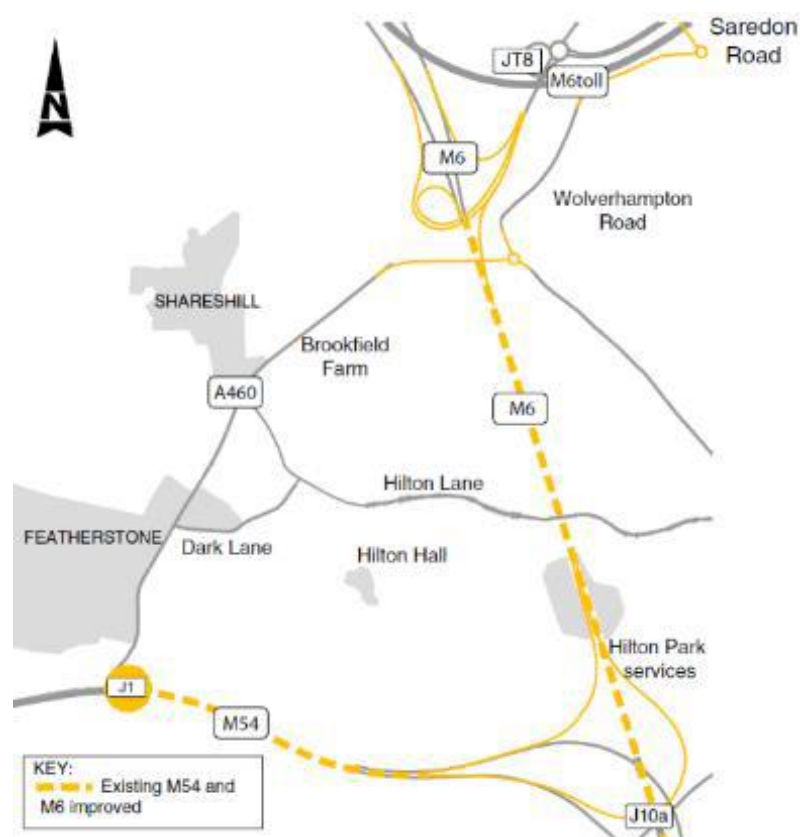
- There are two routes proposed for this option: eastern or western

12.1.4 **Option B.** This option would provide a new road between M54 Junction 1 and the M6 and M6 Toll.



- The link would follow the same route as Option A, bypassing the villages of Featherstone and Shareshill, and be sited to the west of Hilton Hall.
- The new road would then link directly with the M6, north of Junction 11 and with the M6 Toll at Junction T8. This additional link to Junction T8 would be approximately 0.6 miles (1km), giving a total length of approximately 2.2 miles (3.5km).
- M6 junction 11 would be unchanged by this option with local access to the M6 and M6 Toll remaining the same.
- We predict that Option B would reduce traffic on the A449 with traffic on the existing A460 through Featherstone significantly reduced.
- There are two routes proposed for this option: eastern or western.

12.1.5 Option C. This option would widen the M54 from Junction 1 to the M6, providing extra capacity through an additional traffic lane in each direction.



- New slip roads would be constructed at M6 junction 10a to provide links to and from the M6 north.
- The existing hard shoulder would be converted to a fourth traffic lane between M6 junction 10a and 11.
- Access roads to Hilton Park Services would be modified as part of the scheme and access to the services will be maintained throughout construction.
- M6 junction 11 would be demolished and replaced by a new junction 11 further north, linking to the M6 Toll junction T8.
- The distance travelled between M54 junction 1 and M6 Toll junction T8 would be greater than Options A and B at 3.4 miles (5.5km).
- The A460 would cross the M6 on a new bridge, linking in to the A462 and Wolverhampton Road, with a new local road provided to Saredon Road for local destinations north or east.
- We predict that overall traffic reduction on the A460 through Featherstone would be lower than the other options. This is because the A460 will remain attractive to some road users primarily due to the longer distance covered by following Option C along the M54 to the M6.

12.1.6 We held five exhibitions and 13 stakeholder meetings; 785 people attended the exhibitions and we received 502 responses through completed questionnaires letters or emails.

12.1.7 The key outcomes of the public consultation were as follows:

- Approximately 437 (87%) of the respondents supported the scheme.
- The top priorities for the scheme from the public were to relieve congestion on the A460 and A449 and to separate long distance and local traffic.
- Option C had the most support (63%), with Option B second (22%), Option A third (13%) and 2% had no preference. It was noted that just under half of the support for Option C was from members of a local angling club.
- Stakeholder support was split between Options B and C, with less support for Option A.
- The western route of Option B had more support than the eastern route, although it was noted that three quarters of the total support for the western route was from members of the local angling club, whose fishing lake would be affected by the proposals for the eastern route.

12.2 Outcomes

12.2.1 The angling club particularly disliked Option A East and Option B East due to the impact upon their fishing lakes.

12.2.2 Option C was preferred by the public and stakeholders, but did not perform well in economic terms and had a negative impact on ancient woodland. Option B provided significantly better economic and environmental benefits due to not having an impact on ancient woodland, but was not well received by the public.

12.2.3 Your feedback identified the need for us to carry out further assessment work on the options to find the best solution.