

M56

New Junction 11a

Preferred route announcement





Introduction

The M56 New Junction 11A scheme introduces a new motorway junction to the M56 motorway between junction 11 and junction 12. This project is part of our programme of investment in the motorway and trunk road network in this area – supporting the Northern Powerhouse growth agenda.

The scheme is vital for reducing congestion for the future. It will make people's journeys more reliable and will improve safety as well as helping to connect local areas. The new junction will also provide an additional access route to help traffic flow around the Mersey Gateway Bridge, which is scheduled to open later this year.

Why is the scheme needed?

During peak periods, traffic queues on the M56 motorway between Sutton Weaver and Preston Brook, especially around the eastbound approach to junction 12. With traffic flows predicted to increase over the coming years, congestion is expected to get worse.

With the introduction of this new junction, local communities will enjoy faster and more reliable journey times because of the quicker dispersal of M56 bound traffic. Local industry is also expected to benefit greatly from improved access to the Mersey Gateway Bridge, the M56 and the local network. This will stimulate investment in the area and increase economic growth.

We aim to:

- Improve journey times from the M56 to the Merseyside Gateway Bridge and support the 4,600 jobs promised by the Mersey Gateway Project
- Improve access to the M56 for the local areas including Brookvale, Preston Brook and Sutton Weaver
- Improve facilities for cyclists and pedestrians

- Improve access to Halton General Hospital
- Support future housing developments in Preston Brook
- Maintain reliable journey times and access to and from North Wales, Cheshire, Merseyside, Manchester and its airport
- Keep the road network running efficiently with improved traffic flow

Public consultation

We held a public consultation earlier in the year which ran from 16 January until 10 April 2017. We presented two design options for the proposed new junction:

Option A

To upgrade Murdishaw roundabout into a through-about. A through-about is a roundabout design in which the major road runs through the middle of the roundabout, with signal controls at the intersection of each roundabout arm.

Option B

To convert Murdishaw roundabout into a signalised crossroad

We presented both design options at the public consultation - both connecting to a new small southern roundabout. We took into account early consultation feedback about the potential for this small roundabout to cause queuing of traffic back onto the M56. To better understand this issue we carried out further operational assessments. These additional assessments showed that the southern roundabout would not be suitable for the indicated traffic flows. We therefore redesigned it as a crossroads. We've visited the residents most affected by this new design and will work with them as the scheme progresses.

Responses to public consultation

We received a total of 469 completed consultation questionnaires from members of the public and local residents.

Of those respondents who stated a preference for Option A, the most common reason given for their choice was the perception that this design would be better for keeping traffic flowing and reducing congestion. The most commonly stated reason for respondents selecting Option B was a sense that it offered a greater degree of road safety. A number of these respondents also felt this option would offer increased control over vehicle movements leading to freer flowing traffic. We also received comments indicating Option B appeared to provide an improved access to the local network.

We have used traffic models to simulate the flow of vehicles through each of the design options.

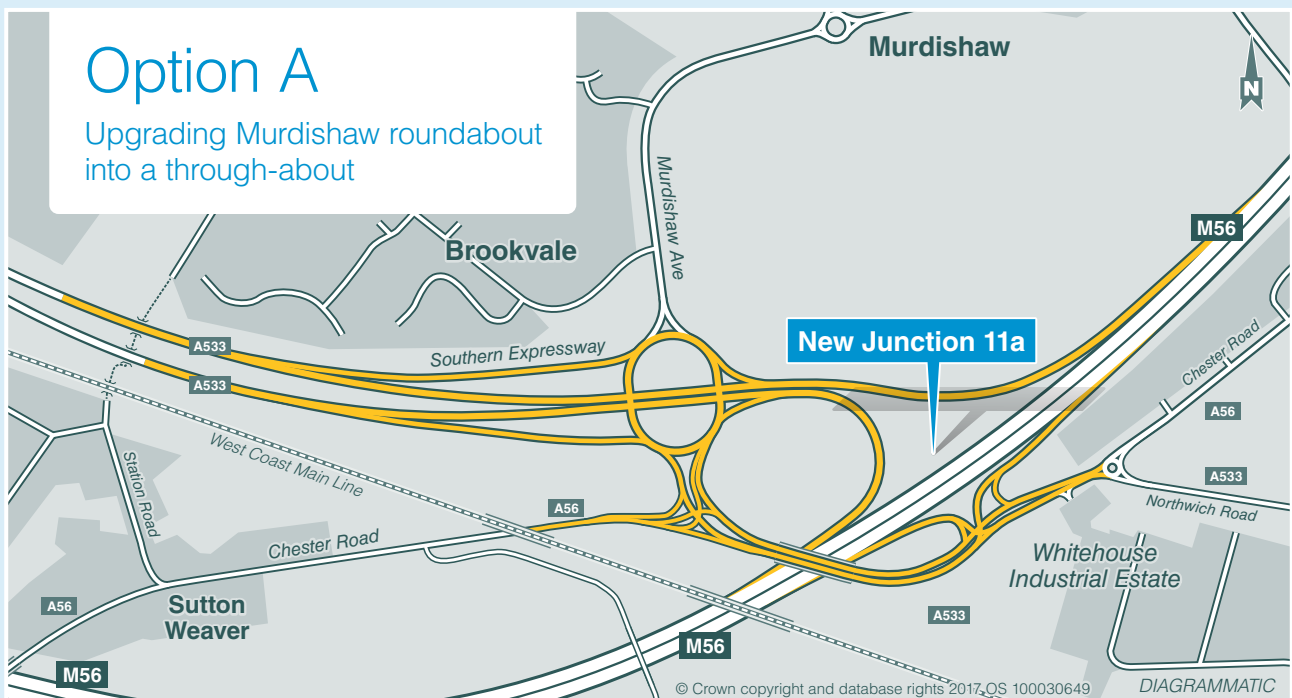
The results show that Option B performs better at reducing congestion and providing better control over traffic flow. Option B has also proven to be the safer variant of the scheme with fewer accidents expected over the coming years.

Comments from local council

Having been consulted throughout the development of the new junction, Halton Borough Council has indicated a preference for Option B. They agree that this design will offer greater local and regional benefits, being a positive and valuable step towards a successful transport network with significant connectivity benefits for the new Mersey Gateway Bridge. The New M56 Junction 11a has also been identified in Halton's Local Transport Plan as a means of enhancing the local road network in a way which would boost economic and social regeneration.

Rejected option

Although both of the options offer a big improvement to the local road network, Option A has proven to be less effective in terms of safety, congestion and traffic control. We will not be developing this design any further.

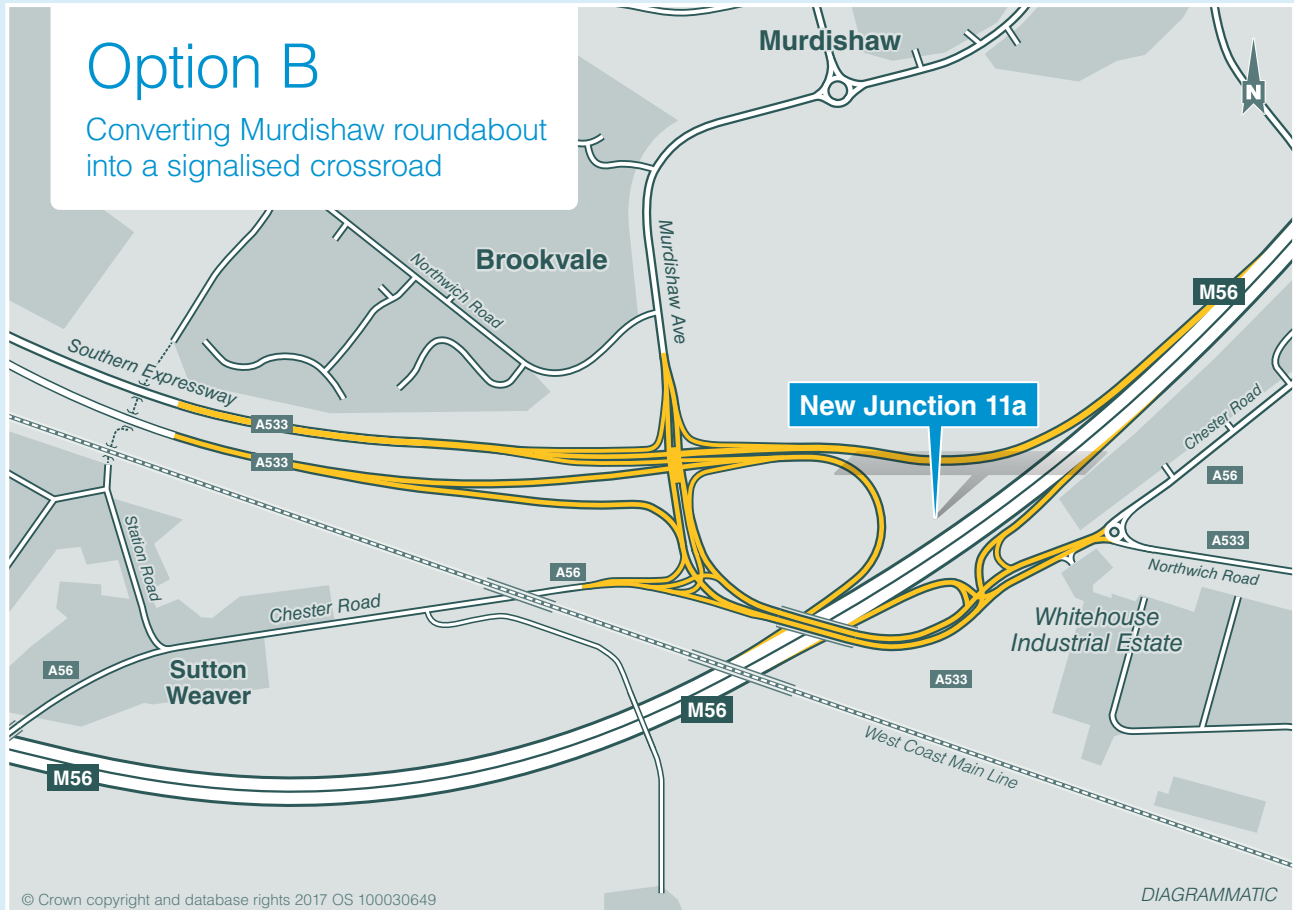


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We have chosen Option B for the design of the new junction.

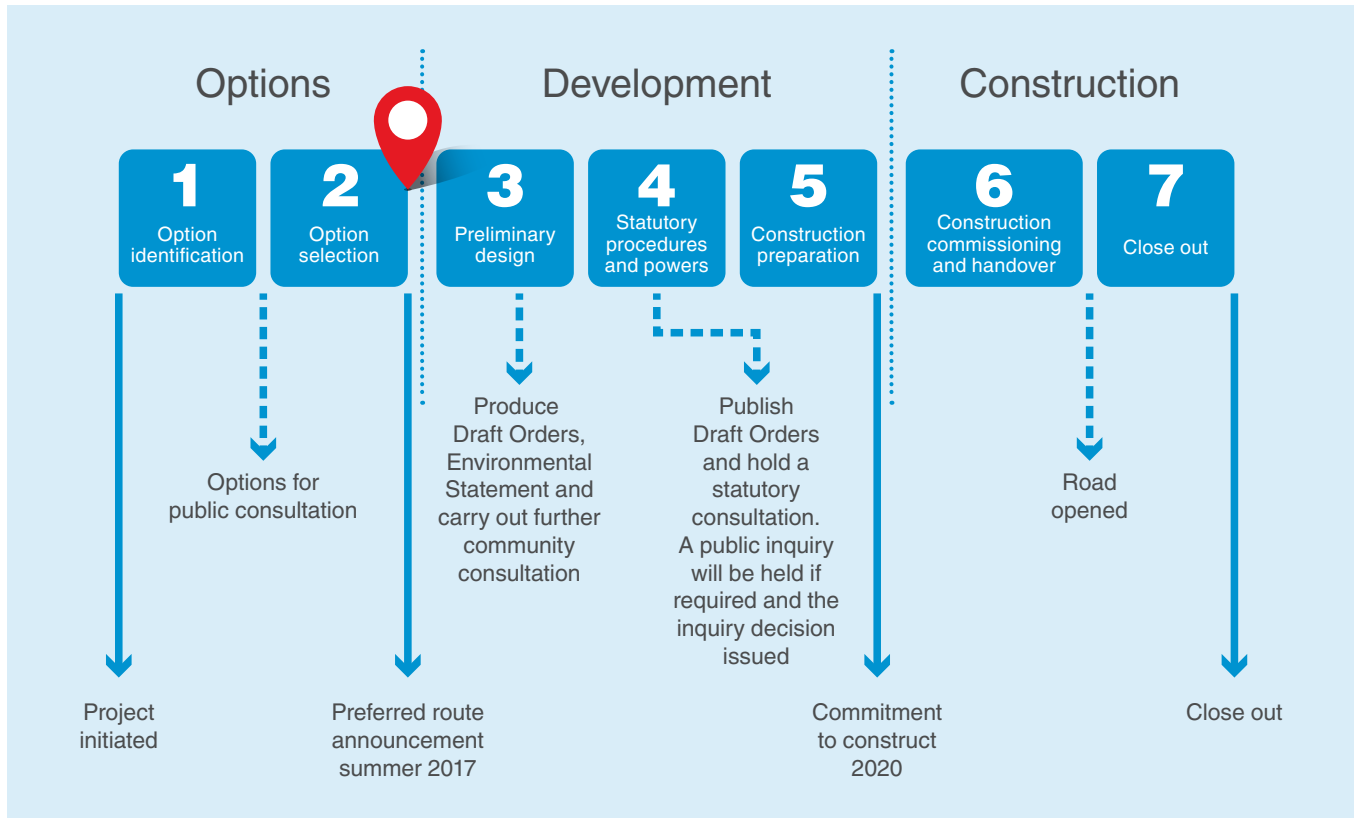
We carefully considered a number of factors when selecting this option such as safety, meeting the scheme's objectives and value for money.

Assessments show that Option B provides the greatest benefits to road safety and offers better control over traffic movement leading to less congestion.



Next steps

The timeline below shows what will happen at each stage of the scheme. We are currently at the end of Stage 2 – option selection (as indicated by the arrow), which concludes with this preferred route announcement. Now we've announced our preferred route, we will carry out surveys and investigations to allow us to design the scheme in more detail.



We currently expect work to start on site no later than March 2020.

Further information

For more information please visit our website where you can also sign up for email alerts whenever the web page is updated: roads.highways.gov.uk/projects/m56-new-junction-11a

If you have any queries about this scheme please contact the project team directly by calling **0300 470 2733** or emailing M56NewJunction11A@highwaysengland.co.uk.

For technical information about this scheme our Scheme Assessment Report is available upon request.

Please contact us using the details above if you'd like a copy.



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