

M60/M62/M66 Simister Island Interchange

Frequently Asked Questions

Contents

1. [The scheme](#)
2. [Public consultation](#)
3. [Cost and delivery](#)
4. [Benefits of the scheme](#)
5. [Environment](#)
6. [Noise and Air Quality](#)
7. [Climate](#)
8. [Habitats](#)
9. [Visual](#)
10. [Flood risk](#)
11. [People and communities](#)
12. [Traffic](#)
13. [Safety](#)
14. [Effect on road users and residents during construction](#)
15. [Related projects](#)
16. [Land and property](#)
17. [Next steps](#)

1. The scheme

What is National Highways proposing to do at junction 18 of the M60?

Since announcing the Northern Loop as the preferred route in January 2021, we have been working to develop the design which will widen both the M60 and M66 to allow traffic to flow more freely.

A fifth lane will be added between M60 junctions 17 and 18 in both directions. A new hard shoulder will also be installed increasing current coverage in this section. This will be achieved by widening the carriageway whilst minimising the impact to residents and properties.

A new loop link road will also be built to allow traffic from M60 eastbound to join the M60 southbound (clockwise).

An improved two-lane link from the M60 northbound to the M60 westbound (anti-clockwise) will also replace the existing single lane link.

The M66 southbound would also be widened to 4 lanes as it passes through junction 18 to improve traffic flow.

You can find out more about the scheme, including the junction layout and slip road design, as well as any environmental mitigation measures, and arrangements for the construction stage of the scheme in our consultation brochure.

Why did National Highways choose the Northern Loop option instead of the Inner Links?

During the selection process for the preferred route, we considered several criteria. These included the scheme objectives: safety, benefits, costs, environmental effects, construction and feedback from the options consultation we held during summer 2020.

While both options would have met the scheme objectives, the Northern Loop will provide greater capacity improvements and journey time savings for road users when compared to the Inner Links. These benefits will therefore be felt for longer into the future, as predicted traffic levels continue to grow.

The Northern Loop was also widely supported during the options consultation, with over 67% of respondents preferring this option.

For more information about the previous options [consultation](#) and the [preferred route](#), please visit our dedicated scheme webpage: www.nationalhighways.co.uk/M60-Simister-Island

Why are you planning to improve Simister Island Interchange?

Simister Island is one of the busiest motorway junctions in the north-west used by around 90,000 vehicles each day, with traffic levels predicted to rise in the coming years it is important that the junction is future-proofed as soon as possible so that it continues to support Manchester city region's economy and local needs.

The junction struggles with high volumes of traffic above what it was designed for, and as a result suffers from congestion and poor journey time reliability. This impacts people's journeys into and around Greater Manchester and restricts economic growth due to the unsuitable motorway connections and delays to goods travelling around the county.

What work have you done to date?

In January 2021 the [preferred route](#) for the scheme was announced as the Northern Loop as it provides greater capacity improvements and journey time savings for road users. It was also widely supported during the options consultation in 2020, with over 67% of respondents preferring this option.

Since then, we have been developing the preliminary design for the scheme and have started a more detailed environmental impact assessment which gives information about the likely significant environmental effects of the scheme and the mitigation measures required to reduce these. This will be submitted in the form of an Environmental Statement as part of the Development Consent Order application in late 2023.

Why was the statutory consultation paused?

Since announcing the Northern Loop as the preferred route in January 2021, we have been working to develop the design. In January 2022 we paused the start of the statutory consultation as we identified further reviews were required. We are now in a position to present our updated designs at this statutory consultation.

Why have you changed the design since the Preferred Route Announcement?

The scheme is currently at the preliminary design stage. At this stage we work to develop the detail of the design, which can be influenced by changes in statutory guidance, stakeholder feedback or environmental surveys. Any changes we have made to the design since the Preferred Route Announcement will be discussed during the statutory consultation, where you will have an opportunity to provide further comments and feedback.

Have you implemented any of the design changes stakeholders suggested in Stage 2?

We have reviewed and considered all of the comments received during the previous options consultation, including those which related to design changes of the Northern Loop after it was announced as the preferred route in January 2021.

A number of the design suggestions were not feasible requiring additional land take or did not meet the current design standards. However, a suggestion to utilise the space on the existing free flow link from the M60 northbound to the M60 westbound (anti-clockwise) to create a second lane instead of building a new separate free flow link was investigated and implemented. This update has reduced the amount of land take required, will increase driver visibility and has allowed us to retain the existing gantries on the free flow link.

Respondents also highlighted the need to make sure drivers were in the correct lanes, requesting good signage and lane design. We have reviewed our design and identified opportunities to encourage better lane discipline, including separating the diverge and merge lanes using hatching and ensuring that the schemes signs are in line with the latest highways guidance. We will continue to refine our signage strategy as the scheme design progresses.

The design also now includes a hard shoulder which will improve the current coverage between junction 17 and 18 of the M60.

What stage is the scheme at now?

The scheme is currently at the preliminary design stage. This is the stage after the options selection and announcement of the preferred option. An Environmental Statement will be produced, which gives information about the likely significant environmental effects of the scheme and the mitigation measures required to reduce these.

As part of the preliminary design stage, in line with the Planning Act 2008, the statutory consultation is being held from 15 February to 28 March 2023. Responses will be used to shape the development of the preliminary scheme design, environmental mitigation and arrangements for the construction stage where appropriate.

An application for a Development Consent Order (DCO) will be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate in late 2023, with the outcome expected in summer 2025.

How did you identify and select the options?

In January 2021 we identified the Northern Loop as the preferred option for the scheme. This followed an extensive options identification and assessment process

which initially identified five options for the scheme. These options were compared against the scheme objectives and assessed other factors such as value for money, which resulted in two options, the Northern Loop and Inner Links being taken forward for options consultation in 2020.

These two options were assessed using several criteria, including the scheme objectives, safety, benefits, costs, environmental effects, construction and feedback from the options consultation. The Northern Loop was chosen as the preferred option as it provided greater capacity improvements and journey time savings for road users and was also widely supported during the options consultation in 2020, with over 67% of respondents preferring this option.

Since then, we have been working on the preliminary design of the scheme.

What have you done since stage 2 in terms of environmental investigations?

We have begun a more detailed environmental impact assessment of the scheme. These will initially be combined in a document known as a Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR) and a non-technical summary (NTS) and will form part of the material published during the statutory consultation. A summary of information on the findings of this assessment is presented in the consultation brochure. A full environmental impact assessment will be submitted as part of the DCO application in late 2023 in the form of an Environmental Statement.

Mitigation measures to reduce the negative impacts as a result of the scheme, such as landscaping, tree planting and noise barriers will be identified and set out within the Environmental Statement.

What have you done since stage 2 in terms of stakeholder engagement?

An options consultation was carried out in summer 2020, which asked stakeholders their views on the two proposed route options for the scheme with a view of selecting a preferred option. The Northern Loop was identified as the preferred route option in January 2021.

In the lead up to this statutory consultation, we have engaged with stakeholders such as local authorities and Transport for Greater Manchester.

We will continue to engage with stakeholders and community groups throughout this statutory consultation, which asks stakeholders for their views on the scheme design, environmental mitigation measures and arrangements for the construction stage.

What have you done since stage 2 in terms of traffic modelling?

We continue to develop our detailed traffic model to forecast future changes in traffic flows and conditions at the junction. Data from the models will be used to inform the

preliminary design of the Northern Loop and to assess the impact of the scheme on traffic flows, journey times and the economy. The model is being developed in accordance with national guidance using observed traffic count data, journey time data and mobile phone trip pattern data. A transport assessment will form part of the Development Consent Order application.

What other options were considered and why were these discounted?

We started by identifying individual design elements, that we combined to form five options (A to E). We then looked at the five options against the scheme objectives and assessed other factors such as value for money. After these assessments, options B and D were discounted outright because when compared to the others, they were:

- not as effective at improving journey times or congestion at the junction
- likely to have a more significant environmental impact
- more difficult to construct without adversely impacting road users and safety
- more expensive, without offering as many benefits

One option (Option E) which consisted of a new free-flow link from the M60 northbound to the M60 westbound was incorporated into both remaining options (A and C), which were then refined to become the Northern Loop and Inner Links.

The two options were assessed and in January 2021 the preferred route for the scheme was announced as the Northern Loop. The scheme provides greater capacity improvements and journey time savings for road users and was also widely supported during the options consultation in 2020, with over 67% of respondents preferring this option.

Why have you added the ponds to the scheme/what are they for?

Since announcing the Northern Loop as the preferred option in January 2021, we have been working to refine the preliminary design. As part of this work we have identified the need to incorporate additional drainage mitigation to ensure the scheme does not adversely affect the watercourses or water quality within the area.

They will also allow us to mitigate the flood risk within the area, which would otherwise increase, due to the additional rainfall forecast in the medium- to long-term due to climate change, as well as the increase in impermeable ground surfaces as a result of the scheme. These mitigation measures include creating attenuation ponds for the surface water to flow into before being directed into existing watercourses.

The following attenuation ponds will be created:

- Pond 1 - Land north east of Simister Island Interchange adjacent to Northern Loop
- Pond 2– Land north of Simister Island Interchange, to the east of the M66

- Pond 4 - Land south west of Simister Island Interchange, west of the M60
- Pond 5 - Land south of Simister Island Interchange to the west of the M60
- Pond 6 – Land south of Whitefield golf course to the north of the M60
- Pond 7 - Land north west of Simister Island Interchange, to the north of the M60

Why are there so many ponds?

The scheme covers a large area and several water catchments (also known as networks). The pond reference number relates to the numbered drainage network which flows into the pond(s). Our water quality and drainage assessments have shown that we will require 6 ponds to ensure the scheme does not adversely affect the local watercourses or water quality within the area. The ponds will also reduce the risk of surface water flooding on the motorway and surrounding land by providing temporary storage and the subsequent controlled release of additional rainfall which is forecast in the medium - to long-term due to climate change.

Why are the pond numbers all different/not in order?

There are a large number of drainage networks that cover the scheme. The pond numbers relate to the particular drainage network which flows into the pond(s).

Why is Pond 6 so far away?

Our drainage assessments have shown that due to the topography of the land a number of the watercourses and water catchment areas flow towards the land between Whitefield golf course and the M60. The attenuation ponds in this area are required to ensure that the scheme does not adversely affect the local watercourses or water quality within this area, or increase the risk of flooding.

Why does the scheme now include land between Whitefield Golf Course and the M60?

Our drainage assessments have shown that due to the topography of the land a number of the watercourses and water catchment areas flow towards the land between Whitefield golf course and the M60. The attenuation ponds are required to ensure that the scheme does not adversely affect the local watercourses or water quality within this area, or increase the risk of flooding.

Who are Jacobs and Costain?

Jacobs and Costain were appointed by National Highways and are working in partnership as CJP (Costain Jacobs Partnership) to deliver the design and construction of the scheme.

2. Public consultation

What is the purpose of this statutory public consultation?

This statutory consultation forms part of our preparation for the Development Consent Order (DCO) application, which is essentially our planning permission. It is being held to seek your views on the changes made to the design since the preferred route was announced as well as seeking views on the proposed environmental mitigation measures and arrangements for the construction stage of the scheme. Your feedback and comments will help us to shape our proposal for the DCO application.

How long is the consultation period?

The statutory consultation period will last for 41 days, starting on 15 February and closing at 11:59pm on 28 March 2023.

How are events being advertised?

A press notice advertising the start of the consultation was issued to local media. Statutory notices, required under the Planning Act 2008, were also issued to local and national newspapers; and National Highways Twitter and Facebook accounts will publicise the consultation. Properties located within the distribution boundary will receive either a brochure/ response form and FAQ or a postcard informing them of the consultation.

Information regarding the scheme is also available at the deposit point locations identified within the Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC) and scheme brochure. The SoCC has been developed in consultation with local authorities and is available on the scheme website during the statutory consultation period.

Are you holding public events and if I can't/don't want to attend how can I speak to the project team?

We will hold consultation events at local venues including:

- Parrenthorn High School, Tuesday 21 February 2023, 11am to 7pm, Heywood Road, Prestwich, Greater Manchester, M25 2BW

- Our Lady of Grace Hall, Saturday 11 March 2023, 10am to 4pm, 11 Fairfax Road, Prestwich, Manchester, M25 1AS
- Unsworth Cricket Club, Monday 20 March 2023, 12pm to 8pm, The Pavilion, Pole Lane, Bury, BL9 8QL

You can speak to a member of the project team during one of our telephone consultation events by calling 0808 196 4502 during the following dates and times:

- Saturday 4 March 2023, 11am – 4pm
- Tuesday 7 March 2023, 11am – 7pm
- Thursday 23 March 2023, 11am – 7pm

Calls cost standard rates.

We'll also be holding online webinars, during the following dates and times:

- Thursday 23 February 2023, 1pm to 3pm
- Wednesday 15 March 2023, 5pm to 7pm

How can I respond?

You can respond online by completing the consultation response form at:

www.nationalhighways.co.uk/M60-Simister-Island

You can also respond by completing a paper copy of the consultation response form and returning it using the freepost address: **Freepost M60 J18 SIMISTER ISLAND.**

Simply put the completed response form in an envelope with the freepost address written on the front and put it in your local post box. There is no need to use a stamp.

All responses must be received by 11:59pm on 28 March 2023. Responses received after this date may not be considered.

What information is available about the scheme during the consultation process?

The consultation brochure provides a detailed overview of the scheme and the consultation process. The brochure also includes a summary of the benefits and potential impacts of the scheme. The Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR) and a non-technical summary (NTS) will also be available. The PEIR and NTS will set out the likely environmental effects of the scheme to allow an informed response.

The brochure, PEIR and NTS will be available on the scheme webpage and from deposit locations. You can find out more information about the scheme on our webpage, including our Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC) document.

I haven't received a brochure; how do I get one?

We have delivered our consultation brochure to homes and businesses within the consultation area.

If you have not received a brochure you can request one by contacting the project team by phone or email:

Phone: **0300 123 5000**

Email: M60J18SimisterIslandInterchange@nationalhighways.co.uk

Alternatively, you can visit one of our deposit locations where you can find out more information and pick up a copy of the brochure and FAQ document. You can also visit the scheme webpage and download a copy: www.nationalhighways.co.uk/M60-Simister-Island.

Are consultation documents available in alternative languages and formats?

Yes. If you require a copy in a different language or format, such as larger font, please contact the team on the details below and we will help you.

Email: M60J18SimisterIslandinterchange@nationalhighways.co.uk

Phone: 0300 123 5000

How will my feedback influence the design?

The feedback and comments you provide will help us to understand the local area better as well as any potential impacts and community concerns.

All responses received during the consultation will be recorded and analysed. Detailed analysis will allow us to understand the issues and concerns raised by all our stakeholders and how these can be addressed.

Where it is possible to do so, we will use your feedback to develop the preliminary scheme design or to identify ways to address concerns about the impacts of the scheme, including environmental effects. Under the Planning Act 2008 we are required to demonstrate how we have considered your response, and this will be set out in the Consultation Report which will be submitted with the Development Consent Order application.

How will responses be analysed?

Responses received during the consultation will be recorded and analysed. The content of each response will be categorised and broken down by sentiment and into themes, helping us understand your comments and why you have made them. Where it is possible to do so, we will use your feedback to help influence the

development of the preliminary scheme design or to help identify ways to address concerns about the impacts of the scheme, including environmental effects.

We will summarise our findings in our consultation report and will explain the analysis and how it has influenced our proposals.

Will the results of the statutory consultation be published?

All responses will be analysed then summarised within a Consultation Report. The Consultation Report will be published as part of the Development Consent Order application and will be made available in a digital format on our webpage. Paper copies will also be available upon request via the contact details provided.

How can I be kept informed?

To be kept informed on how the scheme is progressing sign up to our email distribution list via the scheme website: www.nationalhighways.co.uk/M60-Simister-Island

We will also be publicising the scheme on our social media sites: Twitter @HighwaysNWest and on our National Highways Facebook page National Highways: North-West.

Where can I see the responses to the consultation?

We will analyse submissions received during the consultation period and publish a Consultation Report. The Consultation Report will form part of the documents submitted to the Secretary of State for Transport via the Planning Inspectorate as part of the Development Consent Order application and will be made available in a digital format on our webpage.

3. Cost and delivery

You have given such a wide range for how much the scheme will cost. What will the final figure be?

The scheme is still at an early stage of the preliminary design phase and we are therefore still developing the design. However, we are currently carrying out ground investigations and more detailed environmental surveys which will help us to refine the cost estimate further and reduce this cost range.

Why has the scheme's cost range changed?

As a project progresses through different stages of development, the cost range estimate is subject to change due to many variables including inflation and changes to elements of a proposed scheme.

Since announcing our preferred route announcement (PRA) in January 2021 we've been refining the design of the scheme, working closely with our supply chain. The development of the project has resulted in a number of changes to the initial PRA, which include:

- Improving the drainage system to mitigate flooding risks
- Extending the scheme area to accommodate new water catchment ponds and gantries
- Installing a new hard shoulder between junction 17 and 18 of the M60
- Creating two lanes from the existing single free-flow lane by utilising additional space at the side of the carriageway
- Realigning the M60 junction 18 slip road from the M66 southbound to accommodate the loop
- Building a new bridge to allow the realigned M66 slip road to pass over the new Northern Loop

The cost range for the scheme is £207 million to £340 million, this includes all costs such as design and development, land, diversion of utilities and the costs for the construction of the scheme.

We have made prudent provision for a range of uncertainties during the design process. As a result of this, inflation is not currently a cause for delaying or rescheduling our scheme.

However, we continue to monitor the risks of sustained inflation to deliverability and maintaining value for money for the taxpayer, while delivering improvements to this extremely busy stretch of our road network.

Has the scheme been funded?

In March 2020, the Government published the second Road Investment Strategy (RIS 2) which committed to investing £27.4 billion in the strategic road network. Plans to improve Simister Island Interchange between the M62, M60 and M66 were included as part of this strategy and funding. The scheme will be constructed as part of the governments third RIS (RIS 3) which runs from 2025 to 2030.

Although committed, the scheme is still subject to a successful outcome of the Development Consent Order (DCO) process.

How long will it take to deliver?

The preferred route was announced in January 2021. The scheme is now in its preliminary design stage and the Development Consent Order application will be submitted to the Secretary of State for Transport via the Planning Inspectorate in late 2023. This process usually takes around 18 months, followed by preparations for construction. Main works are currently expected to start construction in late 2025, and to take around three years to complete.

More information on the statutory process for schemes like this can be found in the consultation brochure, together with the anticipated timescales and next steps for this scheme. The [National Infrastructure Planning](https://nationalinfrastructureplanning.org.uk) website has a lot of detailed information and advice notes: <https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/>

Why is it taking so long to build?

We would expect to start on site late 2025 and take around three years to build the scheme. The estimated time taken for construction is informed by the scheme's complexity, proximity to residential areas and the need to keep the motorways running.

4. Benefits of the scheme

How will this improve traffic flow?

The scheme aims to create extra capacity at Simister Island Interchange, easing the flow through it, reducing the likelihood of tailbacks and queues and shortening journey times by up to 50% for traffic moving through the junction.

The Northern Loop option will achieve improved traffic flows and journey times by transferring one of the movements through the junction (M60 clockwise, eastbound to southbound) onto a new free-flow link. This leaves more capacity for the traffic using the roundabout.

The widened carriageway between junctions 17 and 18 of the M60 will allow traffic to merge onto and leave the motorway more efficiently. This is because traffic joining junction 17 and leaving at junction 18, and vice versa, will no longer have to change lanes.

How will this benefit local communities, including residents and businesses?

Creating extra capacity at the junction and between the M60 junctions 17 and 18 will allow a smoother traffic flow between the M60, M62 and M66, which will reduce congestion and deliver shorter, more reliable journey times. The scheme will support and enable economic growth in the area by improving connectivity and access for the local community and businesses to local facilities, employment opportunities and customers.

What will be the impact of not improving the Simister Island Interchange?

Volumes of traffic are expected to increase, especially as planned development, such as that associated with the 'Places for Everyone' plan which aims to develop a long-term proposal for jobs, new homes and sustainable growth in the area is delivered. If no improvement is made at Simister Island Interchange congestion is likely to get worse. Queues at the junction are likely to lengthen, journey times will get longer and less reliable, and accident rates are expected to increase. All this will impact the local and regional economy.

5. Environment

When will the Environmental Statement be produced and how do I comment on it?

The Environmental Impact Assessment and Environmental Statement will be published as part of the Development Consent Order application for the consent required to build, maintain and operate the scheme and will be made available in a digital format on our webpage and at deposit point locations

How have you assessed any environmental impacts and what will you do to mitigate these?

Potential environmental impacts will be identified and assessed through the Environmental Impact Assessment process and will be set out in the Environmental Statement. The Environmental Statement gives information about the likely significant environmental effects of the scheme and the mitigation measures that would be implemented to reduce these.

6. Noise and air quality

What air quality monitoring has been done to date?

To understand the effect our scheme will have on air quality, our environmental specialists have developed an air quality model, based on best practice guidance, to predict the impact when the scheme opens for traffic. Due to technological improvements in vehicles in the future, that air pollutant concentrations should reduce over time, meaning that the opening year is likely to be the worst case year.

We have used local authority, Transport for Greater Manchester, National Highways and national monitoring data to understand the air quality within the area of the scheme. We have also undertaken an air quality scheme specific monitoring survey at locations around the scheme which took place over a six-month period in 2021.

We have completed assessments as part of the Preliminary Environmental Information Report, which currently show that the risk of exceeding air quality limits (or objectives) in the area near to the scheme is low, however where required measures to mitigate these effects will be introduced. Any temporary effects from construction would be controlled by measures such as suppression of construction dust using water sprays and wheel washing. The proposed mitigation measures will be explained further in the Environmental Management Plan (EMP), which will be submitted as part of our Development Consent Order application.

What noise monitoring has been done to date?

Noise measurement surveys have been carried out in October and November 2021 at five locations to establish the noise baseline. The noise measurement results are reported in the Preliminary Environmental Information Report.

The scheme area covers four noise important areas to the north of Manchester, with the potential to affect two which are next to the scheme on the local road network north of M60 junction 17.

To understand the effect our scheme will have on noise, we will use traffic data and noise modelling software to predict any changes to road traffic noise levels created by the scheme in the future. Our assessment will follow established best practice guidance and British standards. For most properties close to the existing route our current modelling suggests there will be no significant increase in road traffic noise; however, for some residential properties there may be a significant increase.

Further information will be included in the Environmental Statement which will form part of the Development Consent Order application.

Where required we will introduce mitigation in our scheme design. For example, using a very low noise road surface on the affected parts of the M60 or noise barriers, which could include earth mounds, new or extended noise fencing or a combination of these. This mitigation is likely to reduce the effect of traffic noise. During construction measures like perimeter fencing will be included in our Environmental Management Plan.

Will there be more noise because of the scheme?

For most properties close to the existing route our current modelling suggests there will be no significant increase in road traffic noise; however, for some residential properties there may be a significant increase. Further information will be included in the Environmental Statement which will form part of the Development Consent Order application. We will be contacting any affected properties before publication of the Environmental Statement.

The construction phase is likely to result in higher noise and vibration levels during some phases of the works, but these would be temporary.

Where required we will introduce mitigation in our scheme design. This mitigation is likely to reduce the effect to non-significant.

Where required we will introduce mitigation in our scheme design. For example, using a very low noise road surface on the affected parts of the M60 or noise barriers, which could include earth mounds, new or extended noise fencing or a combination of these. This mitigation is likely to reduce the effect to non-significant. During construction measures like perimeter fencing will be included in our Environmental Management Plan.

Will there be a noise barrier near my house and if so, how high will it be?

There are currently six noise barriers in the scheme location. Some of these will be impacted as part of the amended design. We are currently modelling these to determine the height and length required to mitigate against any noise impacts.

7. Climate

Have you considered the climate?

The construction and operation of the scheme is not anticipated to result in a significant increase in greenhouse gas emissions, relative to UK carbon budgets. Whilst we have included carbon mitigation measures within the current scheme design, we will continue to assess the effect of the scheme on greenhouse gas emissions, and seek to reduce them, as the design is developed further.

Current standards state that “projects shall seek to minimise greenhouse gas emissions in all cases to contribute to the UK’s target for net reduction in carbon emissions”.

We will also make sure that the scheme is designed to be resilient to the impacts of climate change, for example increased rainfall, using the latest UK climate projections.

How will the scheme contribute towards net zero carbon emissions?

The scheme is implementing industry-recognised best practice to measure, manage and reduce carbon. We are still in the early design phases of the scheme, and therefore carbon reduction opportunities are still being identified. We are currently targeting a 30% reduction in embedded carbon (the total amount of greenhouse gases emitted in building the scheme) compared to a typical highway project using standard construction practices.

8. Habitats and protected species

Are there any protected animal species in the area? How will they be affected?

We have completed a review of existing habitats and are aware that there are protected species in the area including great crested newts, water voles, bats, breeding birds and reptiles.

Detailed surveys are currently being completed to assess the impact of the proposed scheme on both the species and habitats, with any mitigation measures required being identified.

We will work with Natural England to obtain any European protected species licenses required before the scheme commences construction.

What environmental surveys are being undertaken?

Ecological surveys started in winter 2020 and are ongoing. Surveys include habitat, breeding and wintering birds, great crested newts, badgers, otters, water voles and bats. We are also carrying out landscape surveys, noise surveys, air quality surveys, cultural heritage surveys and land use surveys.

These detailed surveys will allow us to assess the impact of the scheme on the environment with any mitigation measures required being identified.

9. Visual

Will the scheme increase visual impacts for residents living close to the motorway?

Those living close to Simister Island are likely to be able to see the loop structure or the new gantries, however once mitigation planting has established, visual impacts are likely to reduce.

Those using the local golf courses, public footpaths and bridleways will also be able to see the new features of the scheme, this is also likely to reduce once mitigation planting is established.

Which trees and hedges will be lost? Will they be replanted?

There will be some loss of trees and hedges as a result of the scheme, but we will aim to minimise vegetation loss and any loss will be replanted, either in the same location or as near as we can.

Have you undertaken a visual impact assessment?

We will investigate any visual impacts the new infrastructure has on the landscape and seek to reduce these by looking at the design, its location, height and the option to plant trees or shrubs. We will plant similar trees and shrubs to those already in the landscape. Details will be set out in the Environmental Statement to be submitted with the Development Consent Order application.

I have read about biodiversity net gain. Is this being proposed for the scheme? Would this mitigate against the visual impacts if being considered?

Biodiversity Net Gain is a way to improve a site's biodiversity value. The scheme will seek to maximise and enhance biodiversity where possible. Any visual impacts will be assessed as part of the Environmental Statement and mitigation put in place.

10. Flood Risk

Will the scheme affect flood risk where I live?

Increasing the footprint of the road will result in a greater amount of water flowing off the road when it rains. However, we will implement mitigation measures to ensure that this does not affect or increase the flood risk in the area.

11. People and communities

Will any public footpaths, cycleways or bridleways be impacted?

Two public rights of way, which currently run along the east side of the M66 southbound, would be diverted due to the construction of the Northern Loop and Pond 2. We would also realign a small number of footpaths on the land between Whitefield golf course and the M60 which would be affected by Pond 6. A small section of public right of way would also be diverted near to Pond 5, which is located west of the M60 and south of Simister Island Interchange.

Are there any provisions for walkers, cyclists and horse riders in the scheme design?

The junction connects three motorways and is not directly connected to local roads. As these are motorways there is no existing provision for walkers, cyclists and horse riders (WCH). As such, the Development Consent Order application does not include additional provision for WCH users.

The project team has, however, identified potential opportunities to use designated funds to improve the Haweswater underpass close to junction 18 of the M60, bringing it up to the standard of a cycleway and footpath, and connecting it to the local cycle network, and Old Hall Lane footbridge, south of the junction. Applications for designated funding to conduct feasibility studies have been submitted but there is no guarantee that funding to deliver the improvements would be secured.

12. Traffic

Will the road improvements generate more traffic?

Traffic is forecast to grow on the M60 and other parts of the motorway network in the surrounding area without the scheme.

The main effect of the improvements will be an improved capacity and the quicker flow of traffic through Simister Island and on the M60 between junction 17 and 18. Our assessment indicates that the improvements will result in slightly more traffic using the motorway network through the junction as a result of the scheme. The majority of this will be due to traffic using the motorway network over local roads, to take advantage of the quicker flowing network provided by the scheme.

What traffic modelling work has been done to date?

We continue to develop our detailed traffic model to forecast future changes in traffic flows and conditions at the junction. Data from the models will be used to inform the preliminary design of the Northern Loop and to assess the impact of the scheme on traffic flows, journey times and the economy. The model is being developed in accordance with national guidance using observed traffic count data, journey time data and mobile phone trip pattern data. A transport assessment will form part of the Development Consent Order application.

13. Safety

What impact will the scheme have on safety?

Ensuring safety for customers is the most important consideration for us as we continue to develop the design. The proposal will create a better flow of traffic and reduce queuing at the junction and back onto the M60, reducing the likelihood of incidents.

Will the M60 junction 18 scheme reduce accidents at the junction and between junctions 17 and 18 of the motorway?

Traffic modelling indicates that the risk of accidents at the junction will reduce as a result of the scheme. Ensuring safety for customers is the most important consideration for National Highways as we continue to develop the design.

We know that where traffic merges or changes lanes there is an increased risk of collisions. By introducing the additional fifth lane, traffic joining the M60 at one junction and leaving at the next (between junctions 17 to 18) will not have to change lanes as much. This will reduce the risk of collisions caused by changing lanes.

14. Effect on road users and residents during construction

How long will the scheme take to build?

The scheme is currently expected to start construction in 2025 and will take around three years to build.

Which companies will do the work?

A partnership between two companies, Costain and Jacobs will develop the design and construct the scheme.

What hours will you be working?

Alongside the design, we are developing a strategy for how the scheme will be built, this will include details about working hours. However we expect that some of the work will be carried out during the night and will at times require off-peak closures.

We will let you know in advance when work is planned to take place and will aim to minimise disruption during construction as much as possible. Where there are impacts, these will be mitigated appropriately.

Further details about construction and how any disruption will be minimised will be included within the consultation materials.

Will you be doing road works at night and at weekends?

Alongside the design, we are developing a strategy for how the scheme will be built, this will include details about working hours, however we expect that some of the work will be carried out during night-time closures and weekend work.

We aim to minimise disruption during construction as much as possible. Where there are impacts, these will be mitigated so far as reasonably practicable.

How loud will construction activities be?

We aim to minimise disruption during construction as much as possible. Where there are impacts, these will be mitigated appropriately.

Alongside the design, we are developing a strategy for how the scheme will be built. This will include details about potential impacts such as noise and vibration, dust and visual impact and how these will be mitigated.

Details about construction and an opportunity to comment will be part of the consultation process.

Will the scheme be constructed in phases?

Should the scheme be approved, it will be constructed in a single phase over an estimated three-year period between 2025 and 2028.

How will motorway traffic be affected during construction?

There will be some traffic disruption during the scheme's construction. Traffic management plans will be implemented, however where possible we will try to keep disruption to the current road network to a minimum. Where road closures are required, we will try to undertake these overnight or at weekends when traffic levels are lower. Diversions will be put in place and road users informed in advance.

We will develop a communications plan to ensure that stakeholders are kept informed. Details of any diversions or disruptions to traffic flow will be communicated to stakeholders through a variety of methods, these could include letter drops, newsletters, through the scheme's webpage and National Highways Twitter and Facebook accounts.

What are the typical construction activities involved in a scheme like this?

Typical construction activities include:

- Site clearance of vegetation, trees, hedges and existing infrastructure no longer needed such as paved areas, kerbs, drains, signs and structures
- Groundworks including the removal of topsoil and subsoil, excavation of cuttings and forming embankments. Materials will be moved on site via dump trucks or if required on the highway in road vehicles.
- Construction of structures from reinforced concrete, pre-cast concrete and steel
- Piling such as sheet, bored and driven piles

- Drainage works including buried plastic and concrete pipework for carriageway drainage.
- Road construction using stone and asphalt materials for the road foundations and pavement layers

How will you keep me/the local community informed about construction activities?

We will develop a communications plan to ensure that the local community are kept informed of the scheme's construction activities and appoint a public liaison officer. Details of any upcoming work, diversions or disruptions to traffic flow and the key stages of the scheme will be communicated through a variety of methods. These will include the schemes webpage as well as letter drops, newsletters and National Highways north-west Twitter and Facebook accounts. You can also be kept informed through our mailing distribution list which you can sign up to via:

www.nationalhighways.co.uk/M60-Simister-Island

Have you considered the impact upon residents from construction noise, dust and vibration? What measures will be put in place to mitigate any impact?

We aim to minimise disruption during construction as much as possible. Where there are impacts, these will be mitigated appropriately.

Alongside the design, we are developing a strategy for how the scheme will be built, this will include details about potential impacts such as noise and vibration, dust and visual impact and how these will be mitigated.

Details about construction and an opportunity to comment will be part of the consultation process.

Will there be traffic diversions during construction?

It is likely that traffic diversions will be required during the scheme's construction. Local residents, the affected councils and the emergency services will be consulted in advance to agree on suitable diversion routes, timings of restriction and duration. Details of any proposed temporary traffic restrictions will also be published through the scheme webpage, on National Highways north-west Twitter and Facebook accounts and roadside information signs.

How much delay will be caused by the roadworks/traffic management?

During the construction of the scheme, wherever possible we would maintain access along existing slip roads until the new links are complete in order to maintain traffic flows and minimise the disruption.

We would then tie the new structures into the junction in phases under lane closures to ensure the traffic flows can be maintained without excessive delays.

We would need traffic management in place to allow safe access to the work areas off the main carriageways and junctions.

How long will the diversion routes add to my journey?

We are committed to keeping disruption from the construction of the scheme to a minimum.

The nature of this scheme means that we will need to undertake works on the existing motorway network. We will look to do the majority of this work during the day and will install traffic management including cones and temporary safety barriers to allow us to do so safely. We will look to keep the existing number of lanes open in the daytime and may install speed restrictions for the safety of roadworkers and road users. Should we need to close lanes, we will undertake this work at night when there is less traffic.

There will be times when we may need to close the motorway or slip roads. When we need to close the road a signed diversion route will be in place. We will try to keep diverted traffic on the motorway whenever possible. When this is not possible, we will need to divert traffic onto the local road network. Diversion routes will be agreed in advance with the relevant local authorities and police.

Where will the works compound be located and where will the access routes be?

Locations of the site compound and access routes are currently being identified as part of the preliminary design for the scheme and will be identified within the consultation documents. Temporary land take would be required during construction for access, working areas, site compounds and storage areas.

15. Related projects

How does the Greater Manchester 'Places for Everyone' (formerly Greater Manchester Spatial Framework) aspiration affect the M60/M62/M66 Simister Island scheme?

The Northern Gateway aspect of 'Places for Everyone' is a significant consideration for the scheme. This is because significant industrial and residential development is proposed close to junction 18 of the M60 (although not accessed directly from it), with the potential to increase congestion at the junction and on the surrounding motorway network.

We have designed a solution which will provide the additional capacity required now and in the years to come as more traffic starts using the junction.

How is this scheme related to the Manchester North West Quadrant (MNWQ) study?

The scheme lies within the MNWQ study area but is being developed independently as a stand-alone scheme and as such is not linked to the development of the MNWQ scheme. As we continue to develop the scheme we will however continue to work closely with the MNWQ team to keep them informed of how the scheme is developing.

How is the scheme related to the Manchester Smart Motorways project?

This scheme will provide additional benefits to those already delivered through the Manchester smart motorways project. These include making it safer and easier for drivers joining and leaving the M60 between junctions 17 and 18 and reducing the delays currently caused by merging traffic.

As part of this work, we will upgrade the 0.8km stretch between junctions 17 and 18 of the M60 to provide five lanes in both directions with a new hard shoulder.

Residents and road users were subject to years of roadworks and disruption because of Manchester smart motorways - why are you now planning to subject them to several years more?

We understand the frustration that is caused by roadworks and we recognise that in this regard there is never a good time to carry out major projects. However, both the Manchester smart motorways and this scheme are vital to providing the much-needed upgrades the M60 requires.

The Manchester smart motorways project was developed by National Highways (then known as Highways Agency) during previous funding cycles. In December 2014 the Government published the first Roads Investment Strategy which included an instruction for us to start developing a scheme to improve Simister Island Interchange during the second roads period (2020-2025). At this time, the smart motorway project was already in construction.

We will work hard to minimise the disruption caused by the scheme and follow industry best practice for any disruptive work activities.

We'll also work closely with local authorities, key stakeholders and other National Highways projects to ensure we minimise the disruption of our traffic management and motorway closures on road users.

16. Land and property

What land outside the highway boundary will you need to take permanently and temporarily?

Our current proposals require both permanent and temporary land take, for example for the site compound and for temporary storage and access routes.

We will be working closely with all impacted landowners throughout the preliminary design process, however should you feel your land is potentially affected by the scheme please contact us on:

M60J18SimisterIslandinterchange@nationalhighways.co.uk or 0300 123 5000

What compensation will be available for any landowners affected?

We have appointed a district valuer and are in contact with affected landowners who will be compensated for any land which we require for this scheme. Please refer to the [National Highways property and road proposals guidance document](#).

Am I entitled to compensation due to this scheme, but you are not taking any land from me? (residential)

Part I of the Land Compensation Act 1973 gives property owners a right to claim compensation if the value of their property has been depreciated by certain physical factors caused by the use of a new or altered road. These factors are noise, vibration, smell, fumes, smoke and artificial lighting. To claim compensation, property owners or their agents need to show that depreciation has resulted from the use of the new or altered road and not from any other reasons. This claim cannot be made until the scheme has been open for one year and a day.

National Highways is not obliged or required to pay compensation for disruption, inconvenience, costs or losses caused by roadworks. This is because the work we do, maintaining and improving the highways for all to use, is a statutory duty.

Am I entitled to compensation due to loss of trade? (businesses)

Maintenance and improvement work on our roads ultimately stands to benefit the whole community.

As business owners do not hold any legal right to passing trade, we have no legal obligation to compensate for loss of trade when the works are properly executed under our statutory powers.

Business owners may be entitled to compensation if something is done improperly (for example, the blocking of access without authority), but not otherwise. Trade may

fluctuate for a variety of reasons, and accurately assessing loss that is directly caused by roadworks can be difficult.

17. Next steps

When will a decision be made and by who?

The scheme application for a Development Consent Order (DCO) will be submitted to the Secretary of State for Transport via the Planning Inspectorate in late 2023. The Planning Inspectorate will appoint an independent examining authority who will examine the application through a process including public hearings and make a recommendation to the Secretary of State for Transport who will decide whether or not consent should be granted. We would expect to hear an outcome of the DCO application in summer 2025.

What is the process for gaining consent to build the scheme?

The scheme is now in its preliminary design stage and the Development Consent Order application will be submitted to the Secretary of State for Transport via the Planning Inspectorate in late 2023. This process usually takes around 18 months, followed by preparations for construction. Main works are currently expected to start construction in late 2025, and to take around three years to complete.

More information on the statutory process for schemes like this can be found in the consultation brochure, together with the anticipated timescales and next steps for this scheme. The National Infrastructure Planning website has a lot of detailed information and advice notes: <https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/>

If you need help accessing this or any other National Highways information, please call **0300 123 5000** and we will help you.

© Crown copyright 2023.

You may re-use this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence:

visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/

write to the **Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU**, or email psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

Mapping (where present): © Crown copyright and database rights 2023 OS 100030649. You are permitted to use this data solely to enable you to respond to, or interact with, the organisation that provided you with the data. You are not permitted to copy, sub-licence, distribute or sell any of this data to third parties in any form.

This document is also available on our website at www.nationalhighways.co.uk

For an accessible version of this publication please call **0300 123 5000** and we will help you.

If you have any enquiries about this publication email info@nationalhighways.co.uk or call **0300 123 5000***. Please quote the National Highways publications code **PR247/22**.

National Highways creative job number CRE22_0236

*Calls to 03 numbers cost no more than a national rate call to an 01 or 02 number and must count towards any inclusive minutes in the same way as 01 and 02 calls.

These rules apply to calls from any type of line including mobile, BT, other fixed line or payphone. Calls may be recorded or monitored.

Printed on paper from well-managed forests and other controlled sources when issued directly by National Highways.

Registered office Bridge House, 1 Walnut Tree Close, Guildford GU1 4LZ

National Highways Limited registered in England and Wales number 09346363