

M11 Junctions 6 to 8 Improvements Consultation Spring 2007

Introduction

The Highways Agency has been investigating options for improving the M11 between the M25 and Stansted Airport. This consultation leaflet summarises the need for improvements and seeks your views on the proposal to widen the M11 to four lanes in each direction.

We are consulting you about the M11 improvements at the same time that BAA is consulting you about its surface access proposals to accompany an expanded Stansted Airport.

There will be a series of exhibitions at which the Highways Agency and their consultants will be available to answer your questions and provide further information. Details of the venues and times of these exhibitions are given in this leaflet.

The need for change

The M11 is a key transport link within an area which has been identified for significant growth. Plans for development in the M11 corridor include housing, employment and airport expansion. This combination of regional and airport growth would mean more traffic will want to use the M11, which would become congested.

The Highways Agency has been working closely with BAA to identify the improvements that will be required to increase the capacity of the M11.

BAA has identified a number of measures to reduce the growth in car use by air passengers and airport workers travelling to the expanded airport, including improvements to public transport. Even with those measures in place, the combination of regional and airport growth indicates that there is a need to increase the capacity of the M11.

References for information:

The Draft East of England Plan (March 2005) sets out plans for housing, employment and economic growth in the region, with specific concentration on the M11 corridor.

The Government policy for the development of Stansted Airport is set out in *The Future of Air Transport* White Paper (December 2003) and it requires BAA to work with the Highways Agency to consider the need to increase the capacity of the M11 to serve the combination of regional and airport growth.

BAA's consultation on surface access proposals to support a second runway is available in the *Stansted Generation 2 – Surface Access – February 2007 Consultation*.

What would the benefits be?

The improvements to the M11 between Junctions 6 and 8 would deliver:

- safer and more reliable travel;
- reduced traffic congestion in the area;
- a solution that represents good value for money.

The Proposal

Background

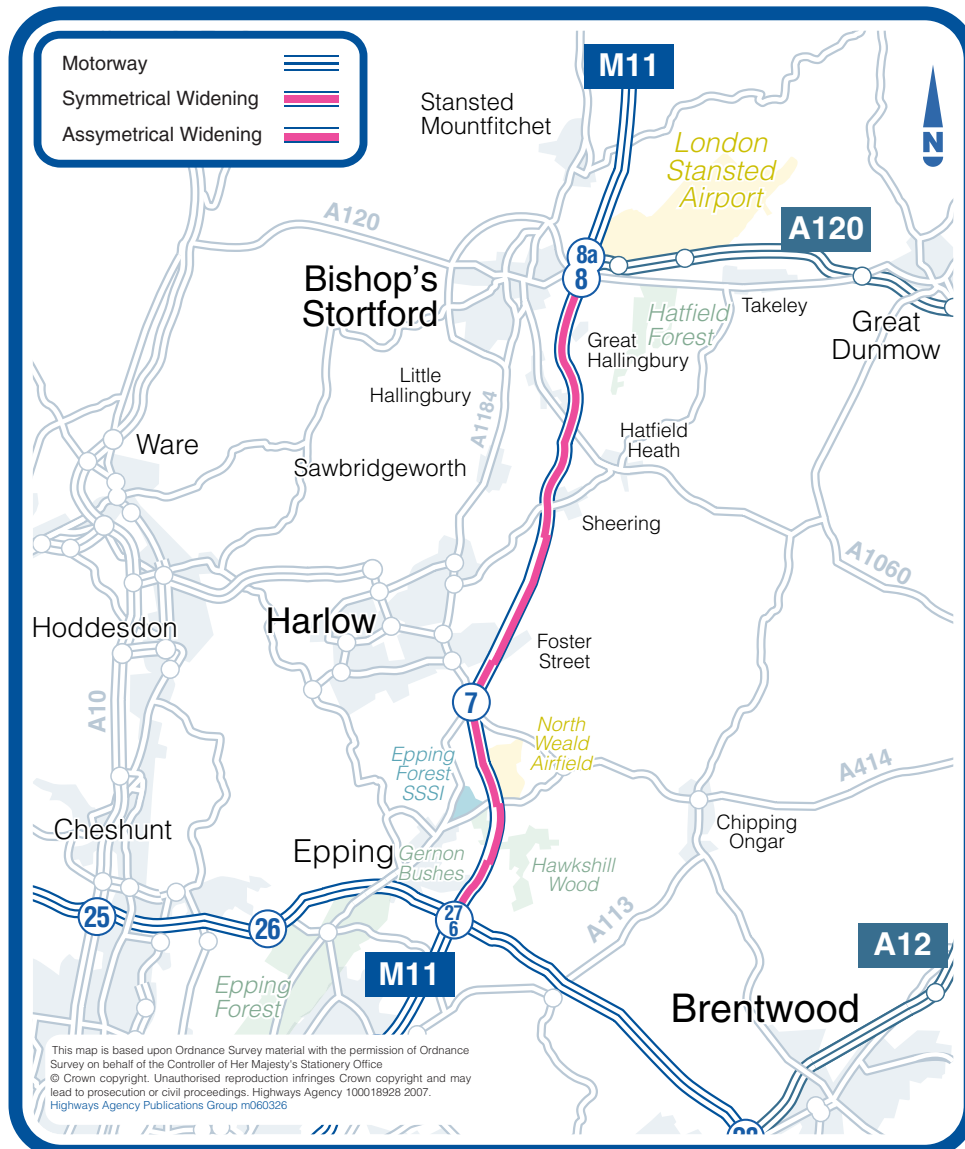
The M11 motorway is a strategic route that begins at the North Circular (Junction 4) in London and ends near to Cambridge at Junction 14. Between the M25 (Junction 6) and Stansted Airport (Junction 8) the M11 currently has three traffic lanes and a hardshoulder in each direction.

Proposed Scheme

We propose to add an extra lane of motorway in both directions between Junctions 6 and 8 of the M11. The widened motorway would have four traffic lanes and a hardshoulder in each direction, and would cost about £698m*.

**These costs are outturn costs, based on 2015 opening to traffic and include construction, preparation, VAT, inflation, and risk, calculated in accordance with government accounting rules.*

For most of the route, the widening would be equal on both sides requiring a strip of land on each side of the existing motorway. At Epping Forest and for the stretch between Harlow and Sheering, all of the widening would be to the east. At both locations this would reduce the environmental impact, particularly at Gernon Bushes a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).



Junctions

The proposed scheme does not include any major changes to Junctions 6 and 7 except the realignment of slip roads to suit the widening. This approach is necessary until plans for regional growth become sufficiently clear for use in design.

At Junction 6 the slip roads would be lengthened and would be integrated with the changes resulting from the M25 widening in this area.

At Junctions 7 & 8 the slip roads would be altered to fit with the proposed M11 widening to four lanes. The possibility of further alterations, should they be needed for regional growth, would be safeguarded.

Improvements associated with Junction 8 are shown in the Airport Access from M11 and A120 leaflet.

Discounted Options

This describes other schemes that we considered but which we have not taken forward. If you wish, you may express views about these Discounted Options.

The following options have been discounted, primarily because of their environmental impact:

a **separate parallel motorway**, either adjacent to or remote from the existing M11;

at **Epping Forest** widening on both sides – *increased environmental impact on the SSSI.*

The following options have been discounted for a combination of cost, environmental impact, operational and safety considerations when compared with the proposed scheme:

High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes without widening – *not value for money and would lead to worse congestion on the existing three lane motorway;*

four narrow lanes with intermittent hardshoulders – *potentially difficult in emergencies for the M11;*

at **North Weald Airfield**, widening on the west side only, to keep the M11 away from a Scheduled Ancient Monument – *no significant difference in impact;*

between **Harlow and Sheering**, widening on both sides – *increased environmental impacts on listed buildings, a water course and nearby homes west of the motorway.*

The following options have been discounted at this stage because they are currently subject to trials or consultation elsewhere in the country and are not yet proven:

compact widening – narrow lanes with no hardshoulder but an emergency access route and emergency refuges – *the subject of recent consultation for the M1 and M62 in Yorkshire;*

hardshoulder running – use of the hardshoulder to relieve congestion, under a system of overhead control (as being trialled on M42 near Birmingham) – *results of operational trials awaited.*

Respecting the environment

We take our environmental responsibilities seriously and are committed to environmental enhancement where possible and to minimising unavoidable adverse effects.

The environmental effect of the scheme has played an important role in helping choose between the Proposed Scheme and other options. Environmental issues considered and the implications of the Proposed Scheme include:

- **Ecology** – minor land-take from three locally designated ecological sites and a small area of SSSI at Gernon Bushes may be affected. Some effects on protected species are also likely. Where effects are unavoidable new wildlife habitat would be created.
- **Heritage** – no buildings of heritage interest would be lost although the setting of some may be affected in which case screening measures would be introduced. There is also a risk of effects on buried archaeology which would be investigated and recorded.
- **Noise** – quieter noise surfaces would be used to keep noise to a minimum. Initial studies indicate a slight increase in noise, although at most properties this would be imperceptible.
- **Air quality** – initial work indicates that changes would be very minor and at no location would air quality standards be exceeded.
- **Landscape** – highway vegetation would be lost and there would be increased intrusion from new road lighting and sign gantries. Barriers would be provided to screen some parts of the motorway and new tree and shrub planting would, on maturity, reinstate or enhance existing views.
- **Water** – existing drainage from the motorway flows into local watercourses with minimal treatment. Measures would be included to improve the quality of motorway drainage water and reduce the risk of accidental spillages entering these streams.
- **Pedestrian, cycle and equestrian** – routes across the M11 would be retained broadly along existing alignments with minor effects.
- **Land and property** – landtake is likely to be up to 35ha of mostly agricultural land. No properties are likely to require demolition.

Traffic management in the form of lane and road closures, contraflow and lower speed limits may be needed during the building of the scheme.

Public exhibition and consultation

The exhibitions will provide further indicative layouts of the proposed scheme.

Documents illustrating the proposals in more detail can be seen at public libraries in Bishop's Stortford, Stansted Mountfitchet, Dunmow and Harlow, and on the Highways Agency website.

Exhibition Venue	Date and Time
Harlow	
Civic Centre The Water Gardens College Square Harlow, Essex CM20 9SA	Friday 9th March 2007 11 am to 9 pm and Saturday 10th March 2007 11 am to 4 pm
Bishop's Stortford	
Charis Centre Water Lane Bishop's Stortford, Herts CM23 2JZ	Wednesday 14th March 2007 11 am to 9 pm and Thursday 15th March 2007 11 am to 9 pm
Elsenham	
Memorial Hall Leigh Drive Elsenham Essex CM22 6BY	Thursday 22nd March 2007 11 am to 9 pm
Epping	
Quality Hotel High Road Bell Common Epping, Essex CM16 4DG	Thursday 29th March 2007 11 am to 9 pm and Friday 30th March 2007 11 am to 9 pm
Little Hadham	
Little Hadham Village Hall The Ford Little Hadham Ware, Herts SG11 2BX	Wednesday 4th April 2007 11 am to 9 pm
Thaxted	
Bolford Street Hall Bolford Street Thaxted Essex CM6 2PY	Thursday 5th April 2007 11 am to 9 pm
Takeley	
Silver Jubilee Hall Takeley Herts CM22 6QJ	Wednesday 11th April 2007 11 am to 9 pm
Stansted Mountfitchet	
United Free Church Chapel Hill Stansted Mountfitchet Essex CM24 8AP	Wednesday 9th May 2007 11am to 9 pm
Great Dunmow	
Foakes Hall 47 Stortford Road Great Dunmow Essex CM6 1DG	Fri 11th May 2007 11 am to 9 pm
Sawbridgeworth	
Memorial Hall The Forebury Sawbridgeworth Herts CM21 9BD	Friday 25th May 2007 11 am to 9 pm

What happens next?

After considering carefully all comments and representations, the Secretary of State for Transport will decide on a preferred scheme to be announced.

The scheme design will be developed to enable the publication of draft Orders under the Highways Act, together with an Environmental Statement. At this design stage, the scheme engineering will be taken forward and will be subject to full environmental assessment. This will include identifying appropriate measures to mitigate environmental impacts and, when completed, this work will be published.

Depending on the nature and weight of any objections to the draft Orders, a Public Inquiry may be held.

We welcome your views

Please use the attached questionnaire to make your views known on the specific points raised and/or make your own statements using the space provided. We value your opinion and would be pleased to receive your written response by 5th June 2007. Since studies are at a preliminary stage, the information that has been given can only be regarded as approximate.

Further information

If you require further information please write to Mr Chris Shuker at:
The M11 Junctions 6 – 8 Team
Highways Agency
Woodlands
Manton Lane
Bedford
MK41 7LW

or email: m11junctions6to8@highways.gsi.gov.uk

The Highways Agency Information Line:
08457 50 40 30

Website: www.highways.gov.uk/m11junctions6to8

Related documents

We are consulting you about the M11 improvements at the same time that BAA is consulting you about its plans to increase the size of Stansted Airport. If you are interested in finding out more about these plans there are other documents like this one that you may like to read. They are called:

Stansted Generation 2 – Surface Access – February 2007 Consultation;

Airport Access – Highways Agency Public Consultation Leaflet.

This leaflet has been prepared in accordance with the principles of the Cabinet Office Code of Practice on Consultation. A copy of the criteria is available on request, or on the Cabinet Office's website at:

www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/regulation/Consultation/Code/index.asp

The six consultation criteria are:

1. Consult widely throughout the process, allowing a minimum of 12 weeks for written consultation at least once during the development of the policy.
2. Be clear about what your proposals are, who may be affected, what questions are being asked and the timescale for responses.
3. Ensure that your consultation is clear, concise and widely accessible.
4. Give feedback regarding the responses received and how the consultation process influenced the policy.
5. Monitor your Department's effectiveness at consultation, including through the use of a designated consultation co-ordinator.
6. Ensure your consultation follows best practice, including carrying out a Regulatory Impact Assessment if appropriate.

Any complaints or comments about this consultation should be sent to:

Miss Monica Brown
HA Consultation Co-ordinator
Room 2/19e, Temple Quay House
2 The Square
Temple Quay
Bristol BS1 6HA

Information provided in response to this consultation, including personal information, may be published or disclosed in accordance with the access to information regimes (these are primarily the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA), the Data Protection Act 1998 (DPA) and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004).

If you want the information that you provide to be treated as confidential, please be aware that, under the FOIA, there is a statutory Code of Practice with which public authorities must comply and which deals, amongst other things, with obligations of confidence. In view of this it would be helpful if you could explain to us why you regard the information you have provided as confidential. If we receive a request for disclosure of the information we will take full account of your explanation, but we cannot give an assurance that confidentiality can be maintained in all circumstances. An automatic confidentiality disclaimer generated by your IT system will not, of itself, be regarded as binding on the Agency.

The Agency will process your personal data in accordance with the DPA and in the majority of circumstances this will mean that your personal data will not be disclosed to third parties.

Live traffic information:

08700 660 115

www.highways.gov.uk/trafficinfo

24 hours a day, 365 days a year

(Calls from BT landlines to 0870 numbers will cost no more than 8p per minute; mobile calls usually cost more)

Got a question or comment?:

08457 50 40 30

email: ha_info@highways.gsi.gov.uk

24 hours a day, 365 days a year

(Calls from BT landlines to 0845 numbers will cost no more than 4p per minute; mobile calls usually cost more)

Stay safe on the roads this winter



In winter, our weather can change quickly. If there is severe weather don't travel unless your journey is essential. If you must drive, make sure you are prepared for bad weather.

- Before you set out, check local and national weather forecasts. Listen to travel information on the radio. Make sure you're equipped with **warm clothes, food, water, boots, a torch and a spade.**
- It can take ten times longer to stop in icy conditions. Allow extra room to slow down and stop.

Remember that tiredness kills. Take regular breaks from driving.

For wider motoring advice visit DirectGov
www.direct.gov.uk/topics/motoringandtransport

Directgov
Straight through to public services