

# Press release: Bypass is best A5036 option says Highways England

The company confirmed today it would formally defend its decision to opt for a bypass after Sefton Council applied for a judicial review on the basis that a tunnel option was not included as part of the public consultation.

Following the consultation earlier this year, Highways England announced in August it had decided to take forward the design of a new bypass through Rimrose Valley rather than try to improve the existing route between the port and Switch Island junction where the road meets the M57 and M58 motorways.

Highways England announced in the summer it had chosen the bypass option (above)

Highways England chief executive Jim O Sullivan said:

The considerable cost and disruption of constructing a tunnel and ongoing maintenance and operational costs meant it was never going to be a viable solution.

A bypass will provide similar long-term benefits to a tunnel – an almost junction-free link between the port and motorway network – at a significantly lower cost with less construction disruption and a much shorter delivery time when pressure on the existing road is increasing all the time.

We want to continue talking to the council and local people to ensure we deliver an A5036 Port of Liverpool route which can support the local and regional economy.

The existing route is often heavily congested with vehicle numbers increasing

Explaining why a tunnel was never put forward as an option at the consultation, Tim Gamon, Highways England's regional delivery director for the North West, said a bypass would deliver the same economic benefits as a tunnel but while a tunnel would cost more than £1.5 billion the cost of a bypass was around £250 million.

Mr Gamon said:

The tunnel simply does not provide value for money. Furthermore, the impact of delivering a tunnel through the park would mean the whole of the Rimrose Valley would potentially be 'out of bounds' for recreational use – including the sports pitches – for up to 6 years due to the scale of the construction and safety zones required.

Highways England is working on ideas to help mitigate the impact of a new bypass on the country park, park users and people living nearby, with a package of mitigation and environmental improvement measures including landscaping, planted screening, noise barriers and improved leisure facilities and pedestrian and cyclist links through the valley.

An artist's impression of how the current A5036 could be transformed if replaced by a bypass

Delivering a bypass would mean handing back the existing A5036 to local people to provide a clear separation of local traffic from commercial and commuter traffic between the port and motorway network. Highways England will transform the existing A5036 – delivering improved cycling facilities, better crossing and footpaths, improved connectivity on the inter-city routes crossing the road to benefit local communities.

### **General enquiries**

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

### **Media enquiries**

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.