

Press release: £282m investment for M42 junction 6 near Birmingham

Highways England is announcing its preferred route for a major £282m improvement scheme to improve the M42 junction 6 near Solihull which has the backing of local residents, businesses and road users.

Following a seven week consultation on three options which ended in January, Highways England is taking forward a modified version of Option 1 as the preferred route for M42 junction 6.

The modification moves the route slightly closer to the south west corner of Bickenhill to avoid a local business in the area and reduce the effect on the Bickenhill Meadows, a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

Option 1 was supported by 64% of people who responded to the consultation, including 60% of the local residents. The preferred route will see a new 2.4km dual carriageway link road – aligned to the west of Bickenhill – between the A45 Clock Interchange and a new junction on the M42 south of junction 6 located north of Solihull Road.

Highways England regional director, Catherine Brookes, said:

M42 junction 6 lies at the heart of an area of dynamic growth and is surrounded by a unique mix of existing and proposed major assets that serve both the local and wider economy.

Highways England senior project manager, Jonathan Pizzey, said:

The recent consultation was a great way to ensure that we heard the opinions of local residents and businesses in the area and also for them to have a say in the project as it moves forward.

This is a vital scheme which will support economic growth in the area and beyond. It will also improve access to HS2, the National Exhibition Centre (NEC), Birmingham Airport and future developments such as the UK Central development area.

The decision to take forward Option 1 has also received the backing of Birmingham International Airport and the UK Urban Growth Company.

Birmingham Airport chief operating officer, David Winstanley, said:

We welcome Highways England's decision to progress the Option 1 scheme for improvements to junction 6 of the M42. This junction is a critical part of the road network which provides access to many

of the region's biggest employers but is currently heavily congested.

It is therefore vital that better access is provided to ease current congestion and cater for the future growth of both Birmingham Airport and the surrounding UK Central area. We will continue to work with Highways England to ensure that our emerging master plan aligns with the scheme so that passengers using Birmingham Airport in years to come benefit from the improvements.

Managing director at UK Urban Growth Company (UGC), Huw Rhys Lewis, said:

We have worked closely with Highways England and wholeheartedly support this option which will increase the resilience and reliability of the road network in this area and in turn support economic growth.

As part of the scheme there are also plans to improve traffic flow at the roundabout – a well-known bottleneck – by providing dedicated left turn links between the M42 and A45 at the NEC and the north east side of the roundabout. This will benefit motorists by reducing congestion and improving journey times around the junction, as well as access to and from the motorway.

Additionally, Highways England will be undertaking improvements to the M42 junction 6 roundabout, Clock Interchange and the A45 between the two junctions, in order to ensure the two junctions can work together going forward and minimise the effect on the A45.

Highways England will continue to work closely with all the stakeholders through the detailed design and statutory process to ensure their views and ideas are incorporated into the design where appropriate.

Following this work, Highways England will hold a further public consultation so that people can have their say on the detail of the project. It is expected that this will take place in late 2017 or early 2018.

Construction is expected to start in 2020 and completion is due in 2023.

For a copy of the preferred route announcement leaflet and more information about the scheme, [visit the scheme website](#).

Members of the public can also contact the project team by emailing:

m42junction6@highwaysengland.co.uk or by calling Highways England Customer Contact Centre on 0300 123 5000.

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.

[News story: Vacancy: Finance Officer](#)

The AAIB is looking for a Finance Officer who is highly motivated, flexible and enthusiastic. You will join a small finance team and will be responsible for providing a high level of service, managing and processing financial and non-financial enquiries as well as tracking, processing and managing invoices to set timescales.

A full job description and role profile is on the [Civil Service jobs website](#). The deadline for applications is 25 August.

[News story: Help to Buy Equity Loan](#)

Following stories in the media on the future of Help to Buy Equity Loan, the Department for Communities and Local Government has made the following statement.

We remain committed to the Help to Buy Equity Loan Scheme to 2021, ensuring it continues to support homebuyers and stimulate housing supply.

The Government also recognise the need to create certainty for prospective home owners and developers beyond 2021, so will work with the sector to consider the future of the scheme.

Additional information

The Department regularly reviews the Help to Buy Equity Loan Scheme, with the last review taking place in 2015. To infer from this that the Help to Buy Equity Loan scheme will be cancelled is simply incorrect.

Office address and general enquiries

2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

Contact form <http://forms.communiti...>

General enquiries: please use this number if you are a member of the public
030 3444 0000

[Press release: Guto Bebb: Eisteddfod at the very heart of Welsh language and culture](#)

UK Government in Wales Minister Guto Bebb will join the thousands of people set to descend on Anglesey to celebrate Wales' culture, its language and its heritage at the National Eisteddfod (4-12 August).

The annual Welsh festival of music and arts will be held on the island for the first time since 1999 and will see over 6,000 people competing in various competitions throughout the week.

Mr Bebb – who is a fluent Welsh speaker – will visit the Eisteddfod on Monday (7) where he will meet with Chief Executive Elfed Roberts, watch performances in the pavilion and visit a range of exhibitors, including BBC Wales and the National Trust.

The Minister will also deliver a keynote speech at a reception at the S4C stand where he will take the opportunity to set out more detail on an independent review of the channel which will look at its remit, the way it is funded and its governance.

UK Government in Wales Minister Guto Bebb said:

The National Eisteddfod is a landmark event on the Welsh cultural calendar. It is one of the world's greatest festivals and provides a prime opportunity for us to promote our language, our arts and the talents of our people to the rest of the UK and beyond.

Its economic impact on the local area cannot be underestimated. Not only do the businesses, hoteliers and campsites in the host town benefit, it also puts the spotlight on neighbouring areas, and the

additional cultural attractions on offer to those planning on visiting Wales this summer.

I am looking forward to joining those heading to Anglesey to take part in the celebrations, and I hope the organisers and all those competing during the week have a very successful Eisteddfod.

The Eisteddfod attracts over 160,000 visitors to the area during the week, boosting the local economy by an estimated £6-8 million over the duration of the festival.

This year's event will include events and performances to mark the centenary of the bloody battle of Passchendaele where Welsh poet, Ellis Humphrey Evans, known as Hedd Wyn – was killed during the first day of fighting. Hedd Wyn had submitted a poem in the Eisteddfod's chair competition that year, but died before being told he had won. In the 1917 festival in Birkenhead – a month after his death – a black shroud was placed over the bardic Chair in his memory.

Taking its inspiration from the history of Hedd Wyn and the generation of men who never came home from the War, this year's National Eisteddfod will open with a special performance commemorating the War, exactly a century later, and through the eyes of the people. The title, A Oes Heddwch? (Is There Peace?), is not only relevant to the War but also to the Eisteddfod and the Gorsedd ceremonies.

News story: Britain's flagship Carrier could arrive home as early as next Thursday, Defence Secretary announces

The 65,000-tonne Carrier, the biggest warship ever to be built in Britain, has been undergoing sea trials since setting sail from Scotland's Rosyth dockyard in June. She is now set to make her historic arrival into Portsmouth, where she will be the latest in a long line of famous Royal Navy ships to call the port home.

Whilst weather conditions mean the exact date of the historic moment is yet to be confirmed, the window for entry will open next Thursday (17/08), with her arrival expected to be no later than the following Tuesday (22/08).

The Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon visited HMS Queen Elizabeth during sea trials last month.

Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon said:

In just two weeks' time, the most powerful warship ever built for Britain's famous Royal Navy is set to sail into her proud new home in Portsmouth.

HMS Queen Elizabeth will be the Royal Navy's flagship for the next 50 years, keeping us safe by deploying across the seven seas, using her strike power to deter our enemies.

With only three other countries in the world building aircraft carriers, HMS Queen Elizabeth will give Britain the capability to lead the way in tackling global issues in an increasingly uncertain world, from providing humanitarian relief to high-end warfighting.

The Defence Secretary addressed the Royal Navy crew and industry personnel on the deck of the new aircraft carrier last month.

And with the state-of-the-art F-35B Lightning fighter jets on track to make their first trial flights from the Carrier's deck next year, the UK is now building towards delivering Carrier Strike capability.

Both aircraft carriers are being delivered by the Aircraft Carrier Alliance.