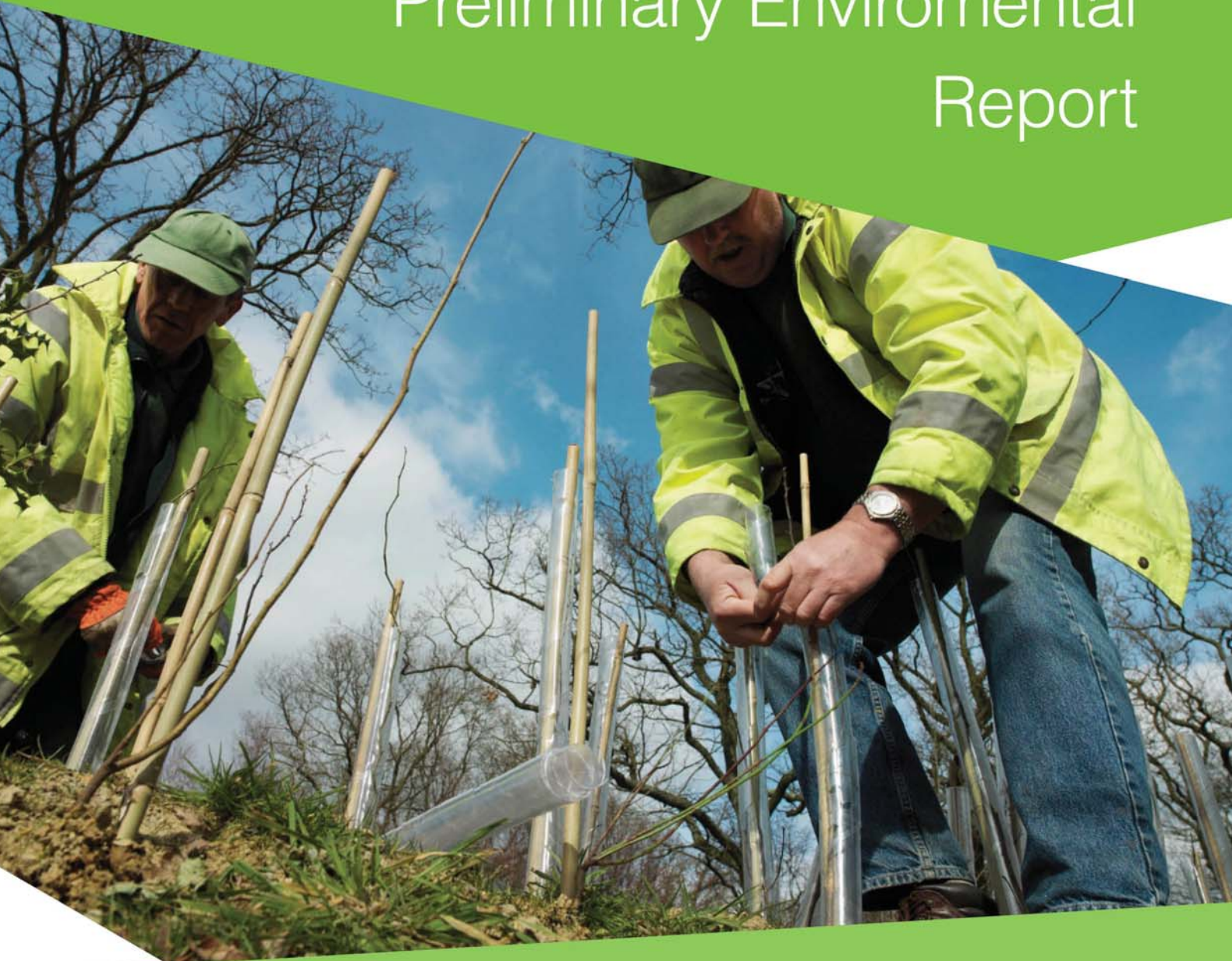


# M20 junction 10a Improvement Scheme Preliminary Environmental Report



## **Introduction**

Highways England has commissioned a Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR) to be prepared as part of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) of the proposed M20 Junction 10a scheme (the Scheme). The aim of the PEIR (October 2015) is to provide statutory environmental bodies with an update on the EIA process and preparation of the Environmental Statement, so an informed response can be given as part of the consultation.

This document provides a summary of the PEIR.

It should be noted that the Scheme design is currently being developed and the process of gathering information and identifying how the environment might be affected by the Scheme is still underway. The information contained within this document is therefore preliminary only, and may be subject to change prior to the production of the full Environmental Statement, as assessment work progresses.

## **Scope and Content of the Preliminary Environmental Information Report**

The Scheme meets the criteria to be considered as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) under the Planning Act 2008 (the Act) and The Highway and Railway (Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project) Order 2013.

The M20 Junction 10a is a 'highways' NSIP under section 22(5) of the Act (as amended) as it is an improvement of a highway that is wholly within England, where the Secretary of State (SoS) is the Highway Authority, and because the Scheme is likely to have a significant effect on the environment, and therefore an Environmental Statement is required.

As the Scheme is a NSIP, Highways England is required to make an application for a Development Consent Order (DCO) to the Planning Inspectorate. If granted, the DCO will provide the necessary authorisation to allow the Scheme to be constructed.

The EIA for a DCO is reported in two stages:

- The PEIR, prepared to inform the consultation with the public and other stakeholders about the proposed Scheme; and,
- The Environmental Statement, prepared to accompany the DCO application.

The PEIR is arranged into different topic chapters, which reflect those which will be used for the Environmental Statement, as follows:

- Air Quality;
- Cultural Heritage;
- Landscape;
- Nature Conservation;
- Geology and Soils;
- Materials;
- Noise and Vibration;
- Effects on All Travellers;
- Community and Private Assets; and,

- Road Drainage and Water Environment.

In addition, an assessment of the potential combined and cumulative effects of the Scheme is included.

Each environmental topic chapter within the PEIR describes the local environment, and identifies any sensitive receptors such as designated sites, for example Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Air Quality Management Areas or Noise Important Areas. Baseline environmental surveys that have been carried out for each topic are then described, along with detail of consultation with Local Authorities and other stakeholders. Any likely impacts of the M20 Junction 10a scheme on the local environment are then described.

### **Description of the Scheme**

The M20 Junction 10a Scheme is required to accommodate traffic generated by the proposed future growth of Ashford and includes a new junction to the south of the existing M20 Junction 10 and a new link road to the A2070.

The proposed Scheme involves the following key elements:

- A new Junction 10a comprising a gyratory roundabout over the M20 approximately 700m east of the existing Junction 10, two bridges over the motorway each carrying three traffic lanes and four new slip roads to cater for all movements to and from the motorway;
- A new link road between the new Junction 10a and the A2070 Southern Orbital Road to the south of Ashford;
- Provision of a roundabout at the junction of the existing A2070 SOR and the new link road;
- Removal of the existing east facing slip roads at Junction 10;
- A new pedestrian/cyclist bridge over the M20 from Kingsford Street to the A20;
- Demolition of three properties (Clarks Nursery (disused), Wyevale Garden Centre and Highfield Cottage);
- Demolition and relocation of the sewage pumping station on Highfield Lane;
- Demolition of the existing Highfield Lane bridge, with non-motorised users rerouted to the new footbridge adjacent to Kingsford Street; and
- Replacement of the Church Road footbridge with one that is compliant with the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 and is suitable for cyclists.

### **Objectives of the Scheme**

Ashford has been identified as a major growth area for the South East in the Government's Sustainable Communities Plan. The existing M20 Junction 10 suffers from congestion and delays, especially in peak periods, caused mainly by conflict between strategic and local traffic. These issues are expected to be exacerbated in the future if additional capacity is not provided. The M20 Junction 10a Scheme is required to accommodate traffic generated by the proposed future growth of Ashford.

The overall (indicative) objectives for the Scheme are:

- Increase the capacity of the road network to support the proposed development areas in Ashford;
- Alleviation of congestion around the existing Junction 10 and improved safety, whilst creating the opportunity to enhance local transport facilities with specific cyclists and pedestrians.
- Providing a new route for traffic into Ashford by way of the new junction and dual carriageway link road;
- Minimising the environmental impact of the Scheme and where possible allow enhancements to be made to the environment; and
- There are also a series of additional indicative Transport and Safety, Environmental, Economic and Integration Objectives outlined in Section 3.1 of the PEIR.

### **Alternatives**

Several potential options for the M20 Junction 10a have been considered and consulted on previously prior to the announcement of the Preferred Route in 2008. The design of the proposed Scheme has evolved through consideration of a number of highway arrangement options against economic, social and environmental data.

### **Consultation**

An EIA Scoping Report was submitted to the Planning Inspectorate on the 20<sup>th</sup> January 2015, with a Scoping Opinion received on the 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2015. Consultation has been carried out subsequent to receipt of the Scoping Opinion with Ashford Borough Council, Kent County Council, the Environment Agency, Natural England, Historic England, the County Archaeologist, and appropriate actions have been taken as a result of the consultation.

### **Potential Environmental Effects**

#### **Air Quality**

Following its first phase of review and assessment between 1998 and 2001, Ashford Borough Council deemed it unnecessary to declare any Air Quality Management Areas as all pollutants were achieving their respective objectives. Subsequent reviews carried out by Ashford Borough Council in 2003, 2009 and 2015 concluded that all air quality objectives are being met for all pollutants across the Borough and there was no need to declare any Air Quality Management Areas. However, Scheme specific monitoring data undertaken by Highways England illustrates that the air quality objectives are exceeded at two locations within the study area of the scheme: on the A20 near Summer Hill Road and the A2070 north of Junction 10.

An indicative construction assessment has been undertaken following best practice guidance using a risk based approach taking into account the dust raising potential of construction activities and the

location of potentially sensitive receptors. The initial assessment identified a number of receptors which are potentially sensitive to dust emissions and located within 200m of construction activities and it is therefore recommended that mitigation measures be applied to avoid the risk of nuisance effects and/or loss of amenity.

At this stage of the proposed Scheme detailed traffic data is not available and therefore no assessment of the operational phase has currently been undertaken. However, operational effects are likely to include changes in emissions associated with changes in traffic flows (including composition and speed) on the local road network and changes in road layout which may bring road traffic emission sources closer to, or farther away from, sensitive receptors.

### **Cultural Heritage**

There are several heritage assets which potentially could be adversely affected by the proposed Scheme, either directly through loss or damage during construction or indirectly through adverse effects on the setting and/or amenity value of assets.

The options for mitigation include designing the proposed Scheme to avoid or reduce impacts upon heritage assets. Archaeological investigation and historic building and landscape recording could be undertaken to record any heritage assets before loss, and careful design choices and landscaping would mitigate the effects upon the historic environment.

### **Landscape**

Despite existing development there is potential for the Scheme to lead to a reduction in the quality of local landscape character, particularly during the construction phase when additional machinery and materials would exacerbate the presence of a new feature in the landscape. Large scale construction works, construction traffic, plant and site compounds would all be visible, forming new additions within the landscape and views afforded by local visual receptors.

Given the sensitivity of a number of nearby receptors there are likely to be significant adverse effects upon landscape character and visual amenity during construction, whilst other receptors would be affected to a lesser degree. The Environmental Statement will address these receptors, identifying likely changes in the view for each receptor, the magnitude of change experienced, and the resulting significance of effect during construction.

### **Nature Conservation**

There are valuable habitats and species present of nature conservation importance which could be affected by the proposed Scheme. The ongoing ecological surveys and EIA work will help identify mitigation measures to reduce the magnitude of impacts through sensitive design and construction methodologies, with a view to safeguard the conservation status of populations through both the construction and operational phases.

A number of measures have been recommended to guide the design process and identify mitigation requirements. However, these measures are not an exhaustive list and are likely to require a review and additional measures following completion of the survey and design work.

### **Geology and Soils**

There is the potential for effects on geology and soils related receptors from the proposed Scheme. However, appropriate mitigation measures to limit or potentially completely remove these effects have been outlined, and these will be refined in the next stage of assessment. The significance of the effects will be determined using the guidance set out in the Highways Agency Design Manual for Roads and Bridges Volume 11 Section 2 Part 5 HA (205/08) (Assessment and Management of Environmental Effects)<sup>1</sup>. This will ensure that the final mitigation measures set out in the Environmental Statement are sufficient that all identified effects to receptors are reduced as much as is reasonably practicable within the constraints of the proposed Scheme and in accordance with all applicable legislation.

### **Materials**

There is potential for significant effects due to material usage and waste arisings during construction of the Scheme. Through reusing and recycling all soil materials onsite there would be a reduction in materials required and wastes produced. In addition all concretes and metals to be used onsite would, where design constraints allow, contain high proportions of recycled content. Existing infrastructure such as ducts and cabinets would be reused where possible, reducing the need for new construction. All concrete, metal and plastics to be removed from site would be recycled and waste sent to landfill would be minimised.

### **Noise and Vibration**

The proposed Scheme involves construction of a new motorway junction and its associated link roads, therefore a change in the magnitude of noise impact of 1dB due to traffic noise, affecting sensitive receptors on Scheme opening is considered likely.

Noise impacts due to the construction of the Scheme are expected to be perceptible at nearby sensitive receptors; particularly frontline properties along the M20, A20 and A2070 that are directly adjacent to the Scheme boundaries. Given the proximity of some residential receptors to the Scheme there is potential for construction impacts to have a significant effect without careful management.

---

<sup>1</sup> Highways Agency, 2008: Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB), Volume 11, Section 2, Part 5 HA (205/08)

## **Effects on All Travellers**

At present congestion commonly occurs on the M20 and around Junction 10, leading to delays and increased traffic flows, resulting in driver stress for vehicle travellers. A number of Public Rights of Way have been identified within the study area, but there are no public bridleways or byways open to all traffic within the study area.

Construction stage effects for Non-Motorised Users and vehicle travellers would be managed through the implementation of a Construction Environment Management Plan and Community Relations Strategy. Once the Scheme is operational, it is anticipated that there would be some benefits for Non-Motorised Users through the provision of new Non-Motorised Users facilities and safer access, although there may be some increase to journey times. Early consultation with Kent County Council Rights of Way Officers has been held, which has aided the further development of mitigation and enhancement opportunities for Non-Motorised Users. This consultation is ongoing, and will further inform the design as it progresses.

## **Community and Private Assets**

At this stage it is expected that there would be significant effects during both construction and operation on private property and associated land, community land, development land, agricultural land and community severance. Construction stage effects would be managed through the implementation of a Construction Environmental Management Plan, a Community Relations Strategy and a Traffic Management Plan.

## **Road Drainage and Water Environment**

The water environment includes surface water features such as the Aylesford Stream and its associated flood plain, ponds and ditches, and the underlying groundwater. The options for mitigation of the potential effects on these waterbodies include the proposed drainage design, which incorporates attenuation storage for surface water run-off and pollution control measures such as oil interceptors and penstocks.

In addition, construction of the Scheme would be carried out in accordance with best practice to reduce the potential for pollution. Further assessments will be completed to inform the Environmental Statement, including a Flood Risk Assessment and Preliminary Water Framework Directive assessment.

## **Combined and Cumulative Effects**

Combined and cumulative effects result from multiple actions on receptors over time and are generally additive or interactive (synergistic) in nature. They can also be considered as effects resulting from incremental changes caused by other past, present or reasonably foreseeable actions together with the project, identified as:

- Combined effects from a single project (the interrelationship between different environmental factors); and
- Cumulative effects from different projects (with the project being assessed).

This chapter of the Environmental Statement will bring together the principal findings of each of the topic chapters in order to identify and assess the combined effects of the Scheme and the cumulative effects of the Scheme in association with other existing or future major developments in the study area.

The main development that could cause cumulative effects is the proposed development to the north and west of Highfield Lane at Sevington (Stour Park development). This is a mixed use development, for which a planning application is currently under consideration by Ashford Borough Council.

## Consultation

Highways England wishes to obtain the views of the public on the proposed Scheme during the consultation period, 14 January to 17 March 2016. These views will be taken into account in finalising the design, refining the EIA and preparing the Environmental Statement.

Responses can relate to the environmental information set out in the PEIR or to any other aspect of the proposed scheme.

The following methods can be used to contact Highways England and/or respond to the consultation:

- Attend a public consultation exhibition to meet the project team and complete a consultation questionnaire.
- Attend a single day event at a community location and complete a questionnaire.
- Complete the consultation questionnaire online at: [www.highways.gov.uk/M20J10a](http://www.highways.gov.uk/M20J10a)
- Collect a consultation questionnaire at one of the public viewing places (see list below) and return by letter or by e-mail:
  - Address: M20Jct 10a, Highways England, Bridge House, 1 Walnut Tree Close, Guildford, GU1 4LZ.
  - Email: M20-J10a@highwaysengland.co.uk
- Write to Highways England at M20 Jct 10a, Highways England, Bridge House, 1 Walnut Tree Close, Guildford, GU1 4LZ.
- Call Highways England on 0300 123 5000 (9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday).
- If you would like a representative at a local event please get in touch.

Consultation materials will also be available to view from Thursday 14 January 2016 until Thursday 17 March 2016 at the following community locations:

- **William Harvey Hospital** Kennington Road, Ashford TN24 0LZ
- **Willesborough Post Office** 65 Church Road, Ashford, TN24 0JZ



- **Mersham Stores and Post Office** 8 The Street, Ashford, TN25 6NA
- **Ashford Gateway Plus** Church Road, Ashford, TN23 1AS
- **Ashford Cattle Market** Orbital Park, Ashford, TN24 0HB
- **Ashford Borough Council Offices Civic Centre** Tannery Lane, Ashford, TN23 1PL
- **Willesborough Garden Centre** Hythe Road, Willesborough, Ashford, TN24 0NE
- **Brabourne Lees Village Shop and Post Office** Lees Road, Brabourne Lees, Ashford, TN25 6QE
- **Kent County Council** County Hall, Maidstone, ME14 1XQ

### **After the Consultation**

Following the consultation period a Consultation Report will be produced to summarise the views and comments received, and outline how they have been taken into consideration in refining the Scheme. Highways England will send this report to the Planning Inspectorate as part of the DCO application which is planned for submission in the summer. The Planning Inspectorate will decide whether the application meets the required standards to proceed to examination, and will determine whether the pre-application consultation has been adequate.



Scan with your smartphone  
QR code reader app to be  
taken to scheme web pages

© Crown copyright 2015.

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/](http://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](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This document is also available on our website at [www.gov.uk/highways](http://www.gov.uk/highways)

If you have any enquiries about this publication email [info@highwaysengland.co.uk](mailto:info@highwaysengland.co.uk) or call **0300 123 5000**\*. Please quote the Highways England publications code **PRXX/XX**.

Highways England, Creative S150656

\*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.

Registered office Bridge House, 1 Walnut Tree Close, Guildford GU1 4LZ  
Highways England Company Limited registered in England and Wales number 09346363