

Post Opening Project Evaluation

A421 Scheme M1 J13 to Bedford - Five Years After



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What is the scheme?

The scheme opened in December 2010 and provided a new A421 dual two-lane carriageway between the M1 at junction 13 and Bedford. The scheme included:

- A new 8 mile (13km) dual two-lane A421 carriageway (three-lane between Marsh Leys and the A6), and detrunking of the former A421 route.
- Improvements to M1 junction 13.
- A grade-separated junction at Beancroft Road, Marston Moretaine and Marsh Leys.
- Removal of the A421/ B530 interchange retail park roundabout, with junction improvements at Cowbridge.






What are the main findings from the study?

- Traffic flows using the A421 have **increased by around 65%** following the scheme opening. This is primarily a result of traffic reassigning along the new A421 as the scheme has become recognised as a key strategic route.
- In the area used for the modelling of the scheme's appraisal, **the severity index** (the proportion of serious and fatal collisions to slight collisions) **has reduced**. However, there has been an increase of 30.1 collisions per annum following the scheme opening.
- **Journey times savings are between 6 and 11 minutes** which is similar to the level of savings forecast.
- Journey time **reliability has substantially improved** across the day.
- The impact of the scheme on the environment is **generally as expected for the environmental indicators** assessed.
- The scheme has provided some **relief from existing severance** within and between the villages on the south-eastern side of the new A421 including Brogborough, Lidlington, Marston Moretaine, Stewartby and Kempston Hardwick, with the reduced volume of traffic on the former A421.

Does the scheme meet its scheme specific objectives?

Objective	Objective Achieved?
To deliver one of the trunk road improvements identified in the London to South Midlands Multi Modal Study (LSMMMS)	✓
To improve journey time reliability	✓
To improve safety	Partial
To achieve the above without causing significant adverse environmental impacts	✓

How does the scheme support Highways England's current strategic objectives?

-  **01 Supporting Economic Growth**
-  **02 A Safe and Serviceable Network**
-  **03 A More Free-Flowing Network**
-  **04 Improved Environment**
-  **05 An Accessible and Integrated Network**

Additional capacity has been provided at a key part of the network. Delays have reduced, and the route has become more reliable.

There has been a negligible reduction in collision numbers in the scheme area.

Journey times and journey time reliability have improved since the scheme opened.

The impact of the scheme is generally as expected, and most mitigation measures have been successful.

Some relief from severance has been provided for the villages on the south-eastern side of the new A421. Diversions to previous public rights of way contribute to an improved network.

If you want more detail about the outcomes of this scheme then please refer to the Five Years After Opening Evaluation Report on the Highways England website.