

# Non-Technical Summary of the Environmental Statement

## A5117 Deeside Park • Junctions Improvement

### Introduction

The Highways Agency is proposing to improve a section of the A5117/A550 within the Counties of Cheshire and Flintshire, between the M56 Junction 16 at Dunkirk and the Deeside Park Junction (A550/A548), a distance of approximately 5 kilometres.

This leaflet explains the proposals and summarises the Environmental Statement that has been produced in accordance with the European Community (EC) Directive 85/337/EEC, as amended by EC Directives 97/11/EC, and as applied in England and Wales by Section 105A of the Highways Act 1980, as amended by the Highways (Assessment of Environmental Effects) Regulations 1999.

A Welsh language version of the written text of this Non Technical Summary is also available.

### Why the Scheme is Needed

This section of the A5117/A550 is part of the Trans European Network, which connects Ireland with Scandinavia and provides a strategic link between North Wales and the North West of England. It is a dual carriage-way with two lanes in each direction.

Compared with the highways at either end, the M56 and A550, this part of the A5117/A550 is constructed to a lesser standard, with ground level junctions including roundabouts and traffic lights. The junctions cause significant congestion and delays for travellers, especially at peak times and holiday weekends. Queues approaching the A540 Parkgate Road Roundabout can be over 500 metres long.

This section of A5117/A550 also has a poor safety record. In the five years between 1997 and 2002 there were 124 personal injury accidents, including 3 fatal accidents. This rate is over twice the national average for this type of road.

Facilities for pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians are either poor or non-existent. There is no continuous route for them along the scheme and getting over the road at established crossing points is difficult and dangerous.

### Scheme Objectives

The main objectives of the scheme are:

- To benefit the economy by reducing accidents and congestion and by making journey times more reliable.
- To reduce accidents along the route and improve safety for all users.
- To minimise adverse impacts upon people and their property, the landscape and sensitive ecological areas.

- To provide good access to local communities and businesses, including all properties which front the existing road, and to make it easier to cross the road, thereby reducing community severance. To improve access to public transport.
- To support regional and local transport strategies, and take account of the views of Regional Planning Conferences.
- To provide a safe route for cyclists, pedestrians and horse riders along the length of the scheme.

### Summary of the Proposals

The proposals have been developed following the addition of the scheme to the Government's Targeted Programme of Improvements in February 2002. This followed the public consultation on the Deeside Park Junctions Study carried out in Spring 2001. The proposals are illustrated on the enclosed plan.

The improved A5117/A550 will consist of a dual carriageway throughout, with two lanes in each direction as it is now. However at the 3 junctions, the main line will be separated from the junction either by a bypass, level change, or both. Access to the main line will be restricted from frontage properties and suitable alternative access arrangements will be made. This will allow through traffic to travel without interruption, reducing congestion.

An all purpose route will be provided for pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians along the whole length of the scheme including safe crossing points to provide links with existing paths as described below.

#### Deeside Park Junction to Woodbank

The main traffic flow will be taken onto a new dual carriageway to be built on land to the south east of the existing road. It will bypass the traffic lights at Woodbank, still required under the new scheme, before rejoining the existing road line near Pleasant View Farm.

New slip roads will be provided for north-bound traffic, providing connections between the Deeside Park Junction and the A550 towards Ledsham, and for traffic seeking to leave or join the A5117. New slip roads will also be required for traffic heading south.

#### Woodbank to Parkgate Road Junction

No changes are planned for the road between Pleasant View Farm and a point just east of West View Farm, although a new bridge will be built connecting the severed ends of Lodge Lane. The road level of the bridge will be 7.5 metres above ground level. East of West View Farm, the main line moves north of the existing road,

entering an 8 metre deep underpass below the A540 Parkgate Road. Access to the Little Chef and petrol filling station will be maintained from the roundabout.

Provision will also be made for pedestrians and cyclists to cross the A5117 by pathways provided on either side of the bridge. A public footpath east of Parkgate Road will be diverted to the bridge to provide a safe crossing point.

### Parkgate Road Junction to Dunkirk

East of the junction, the new dual carriageway will emerge from cutting to cross the existing line of the A5117 at Ashcroft Farm and then bypass south of the Dunkirk roundabout making a direct connection with the M56 adjacent to Chester Gates Business Park. Most of the new section will be on shallow embankment of 1.5 metres.

The Dunkirk roundabout will be retained with direct slip roads to and from the eastbound carriageway of the A5117. There will also be a two way connecting road between Parkgate Road and Dunkirk, generally following the line of the existing road.

## Measures Taken to Reduce Environmental Effects

The scheme has been designed to reduce, as far as possible, any damage to the environment whilst still considering other factors such as road safety, engineering design and cost.

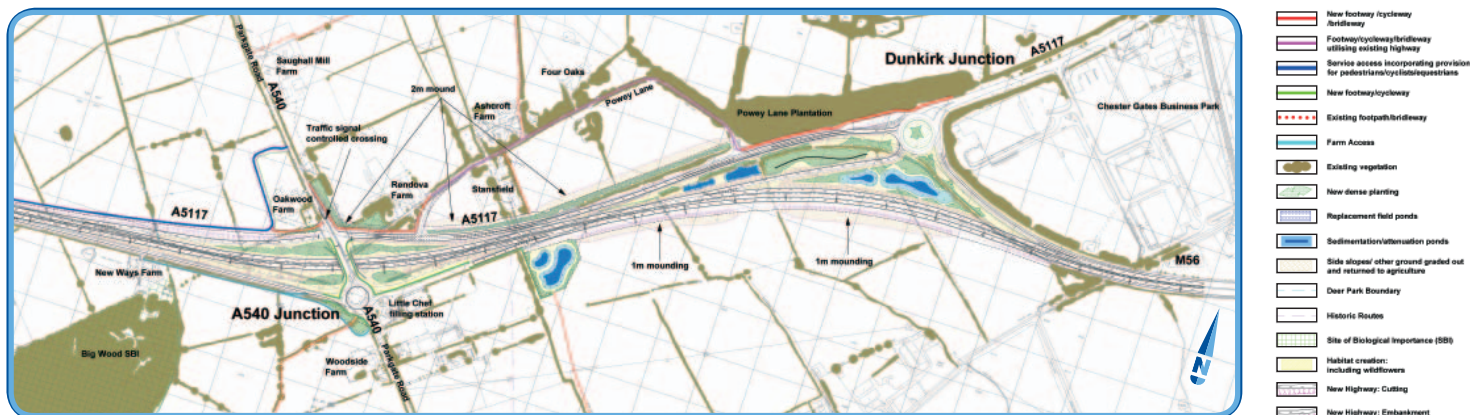
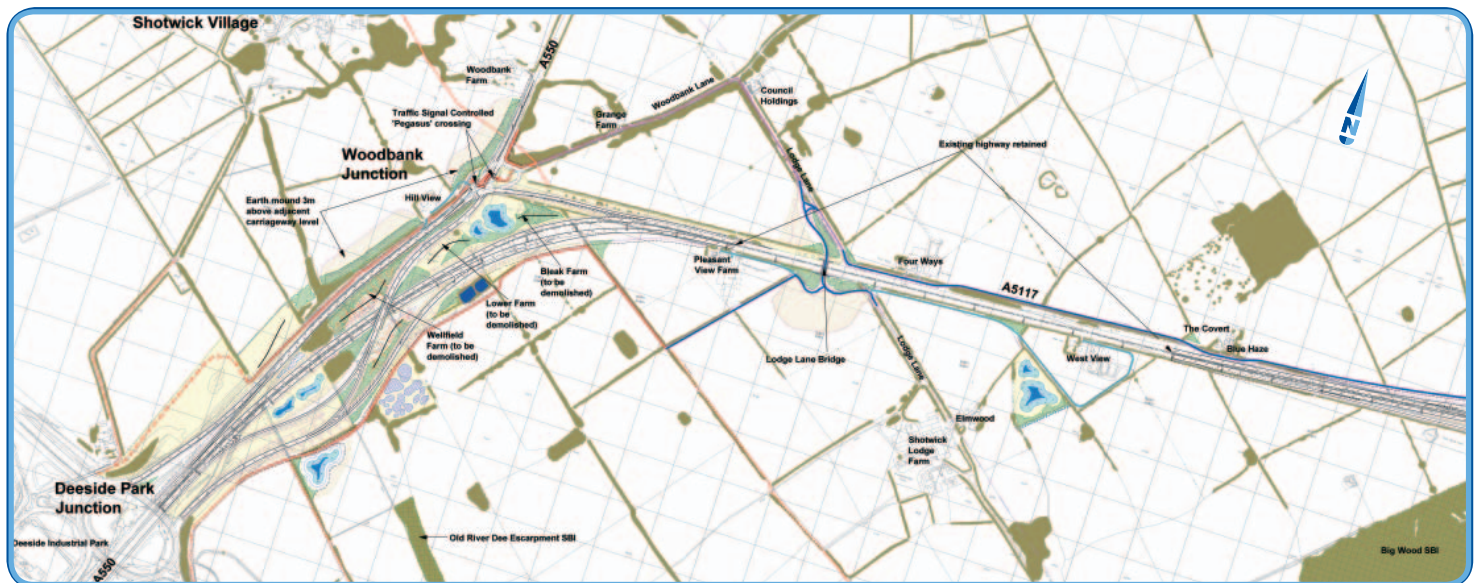
A low noise surface is proposed on new sections of road.

Various measures are proposed to provide screening, to help blend the road into its surroundings and to benefit wildlife. New woodland, shrubs and hedgerows will be planted within the highway using native species, wherever possible from local seed sources which have the best value for wildlife. Wildflowers will be added to grass areas, and ponds planted to benefit wildlife. Earth mounding will be carried out to protect the setting of Shotwick and to screen views from houses east of the A540. Parts of the field sides of mounds and some embankments will be given shallow gradients so that they can be returned to agriculture.

New planting areas and ponds will be designed to benefit nature conservation and to replace and extend habitat lost to wildlife by the scheme. New ponds representing twice the area of those lost will be provided. Where required, protective fencing will prevent access to the road by wildlife.

A series of drainage ponds are proposed to collect and treat run off from the road and to prevent the flooding and contamination of local watercourses. As the main part of the existing road has no such controls at present this will represent an improvement and will afford greater protection to wildlife sites, of international importance downstream, than presently exists.

A continuous combined footway/ cycleway/ bridleway and safe crossings will be provided between Deeside Junction and Dunkirk.



- New footway/cycleway/bridleway
- Footway/cycleway/bridleway utilising existing highway
- Service access incorporating provision for pedestrians/cyclists/equestrians
- New footway/cycleway
- - - Existing footpath/bridleway
- Farm Access
- Existing vegetation
- New dense planting
- Replacement field ponds
- Sedimentation/attenuation ponds
- Side slopes/ other ground graded out and returned to agriculture
- Deer Park Boundary
- Historic Routes
- Site of Biological Importance (SBI)
- Habitat creation: including wildflowers
- New Highway: Cutting
- New Highway: Embankment

## Environmental Effects

Improving an existing road is an opportunity to provide some environmental improvements. It is likely that there will be some adverse effects but these will be reduced to a minimum. The key environmental issues are described below.

### Noise and Air Quality

A comparison for the year 2022, (15 years after opening), with and without the road improvement, shows a balance between adverse effects and benefits. Most of the changes are marginal with some properties benefiting from measures such as screen mounding. A slightly higher number are likely to be affected by higher noise levels from increased traffic.

In overall terms the level of air pollutants at properties will reduce with the scheme. Although there will be adverse effects for some properties, these will be outweighed by improvements for others. Levels at all properties are expected to meet the Government's air quality objectives. There will however be an estimated increase of 5% in emissions of the greenhouse gas carbon dioxide for the local road network.

### Landscape and Visual Effects

The landscape character of the area is generally flat, and open, except for the slopes of the Dee valley at Woodbank where there are long views towards the Deeside Park Industrial Estate and the Welsh hills beyond.

Fields are enclosed by hedges, and there are some blocks of woodland. The existing road and power lines already adversely affect the quality of the landscape but there will be some additional adverse impacts on landscape character resulting from the increased scale of the three junctions and the loss of existing trees and hedges. A high bridge at Lodge Lane will also be intrusive in the open landscape. Over 40 houses, including some listed buildings, will be adversely affected by views of the new road.

Proposed screen mounds will help to screen views of the road, for example from Shotwick. Visual impacts will further reduce in time as planting matures.

### Heritage

Locally important features include the village of Shotwick, which is a conservation area containing several listed buildings. Archaeological remains potentially affected include the boundaries to a former medieval deer park near Shotwick and two historic routes of possible Roman origin. The historic character of the landscape is also important, the pattern of fields and woodlands are evidence of changes in the use of land through history. No sites of national importance are affected. Steps would be taken to investigate and record any archaeological features encountered during construction. Proposed planting and mounding will be designed to help to protect the setting of features such as Shotwick and reflect the historic character of the area.

### Nature Conservation and Water Quality

Local sites designated for their Biological Importance will not be affected by the proposals. The assessment also confirms that the River Dee and its estuary, (the River Dee and Mersey Natura 2000 sites), which are of international importance for wildlife, will not be affected.

Land used by protected species, including great crested newts, will be affected and there will be some loss of habitat such as hedges, meadows and an area of wet woodland at Woodbank. Habitat creation measures including wildflower meadows, new ponds and tree and shrub planting will offset the losses and result in benefits for wildlife as it establishes.

The series of drainage ponds proposed as part of the scheme represent an improvement over the existing road drainage by reducing flooding risk and providing better pollution control. Pollution safeguards will give greater protection to wildlife sites of international importance downstream.

### Agriculture, Geology and Soils

Agriculture is the dominant land use – the majority of the land is good quality grazing land. Although improving an existing road line minimises the land needed, 36 hectares of farmland will be required, including the buildings to 3 farmsteads. Altogether 15 farms will be affected in some way. New access roads will be provided where necessary and most of the farms will not be unduly affected in the long term. Areas required for temporary works during the construction of the scheme will be restored to agricultural use.

There are no protected geological sites in the area. The risk of ground contamination along the route is considered to be negligible.

### Pedestrian, Cyclists and Equestrians

Improved crossing points, including a bridge at Lodge Lane and a 'Pegasus' crossing for the A550 at Woodbank, will improve safety and reduce severance for people seeking to cross the road. Conditions will also be improved at Parkgate Road with provision for pedestrians and cyclists across the bridge. A new continuous route for pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians will be provided between Dunkirk and Deeside Park Junctions.

### Vehicle Travellers

Road users will benefit from reduced congestion. Planting will be designed to create an attractive view from the road.

### Construction Effects

A Construction Environment Master Plan (CEMP) will provide the methods for controlling, for example, noise, vibration and dust to minimise effects during construction. The CEMP will also identify works needed to protect wildlife habitats and prevent pollution to watercourses. Works will be phased to minimise traffic disruption and two lanes of traffic will be maintained in each direction during peak times. Access will be maintained to the Little Chef and petrol station at the A540 roundabout. Alternative access to agricultural businesses and houses fronting the road will be provided early and public footpaths maintained wherever possible.

Any important archaeological finds made during the course of the works will be assessed and recorded by an archaeologist.

## Exhibition Details

You are invited to an exhibition of the proposals will be held at:

Village Hall, Stanney Lane, Little Stanney, Chester, CH2 4HT.

at the following times:-

Tuesday 22nd March 1.00pm – 8.00pm

Wednesday 23rd March 10.00am – 6.00pm

Representatives of the Highways Agency and their contractor Mowlem plc will be present to explain the proposals and answer questions.

## What Happens Next?

Only after considering all comments and representations will the Secretary of State for Transport decide whether to proceed with the Scheme as proposed. Depending on the nature of the comments and representations, a Public Inquiry before an Independent Inspector may be held. If the Secretary of State decides to proceed with the project, a copy of the letter announcing the decision will be sent to all those who comment on the proposals. Subject to this procedure, the earliest anticipated starting date for construction will be Spring 2006, with a construction period of approximately 18 months.

## Further Information

Copies of the full Environmental Statement and other documents may be inspected free of charge during office hours at the locations listed below

Copies of the Environmental Statement may be purchased from the Highways Agency at the Manchester address given below.

The Environmental Statement is priced at £40.00 for Volume 1, £75.20 for Volume 2 and £83.50 for Volume 3. A version on CD is available for £23.50. There is no charge for the Non-technical summary, which can be obtained from the same address. A Welsh language version of the Non-Technical Summary is also available from the same address.

Highways Agency, City Tower, Piccadilly Plaza, Manchester, M1 4BE.

Cheshire County Council, Backford Hall, Cheshire, CH1 6EA.

Chester City Council, Town Hall, Chester, CH1 2HS.

Woodvale Stores, Church Road, Saughall, Chester, CH1 6EN.

You can also visit the scheme at:

[www.highways.gov.uk](http://www.highways.gov.uk)

or telephone the Highways Agency Information Line on: 08457 50 40 30

## Your Views

Anyone wishing to comment on the scheme and its environmental aspects should write to:

Highways Agency, Room 710, City Tower, Piccadilly Plaza, Manchester, M1 4BE.

Comments should reach the Highways Agency by 30th April 2005.

### Driving through roadworks



If you do have to drive through roadworks, please take extra care.

- Keep to the speed limit – it's there for your safety
- Get into the correct lane in good time – don't keep switching
- Concentrate on the road ahead, not on the roadworks
- Be alert for works traffic leaving or entering roadworks
- Keep a safe distance – there could be queues in front
- Observe all signs – they're there to help you

Remember that tiredness can kill. Take regular breaks from driving.

**For further information on the Highways Agency call our information line: 08457 50 40 30**