

Improving the environment | **A556** Knutsford to Bowdon

Amended Preferred Route Announcement (2010)



Preferred Route Announcement • March 2010



Introduction

The Highways Agency held a Supplementary Public Consultation in September 2009 to seek views of local residents, businesses and key stakeholders, on their proposals to amend the Preferred Route of the A556 scheme through Over Tabley.

This leaflet summarises the results of the Public Consultation and presents the amended Preferred Route the Secretary of State for Transport announced.

The design of the scheme presented at the March 2007 public consultation and forming the basis for the 2008 Preferred Route announcement did not include improvements to a short section of the A556 adjacent to Junction 19 of the M6, through Over Tabley. This section of the route was to be improved as part of a future M6 Junction 11 to 19 widening scheme.

The Highways Agency has reviewed plans for the M6 widening scheme and has concluded that an improvement focussed on M6 Junction 19 alone is likely to be the preferred way forward and will therefore not include improvement to the section of the A556 through Over Tabley. The Highways Agency has developed alternative route options for the M6 Junction 19 to Mere Hall section of the A556 to be included as part of the A556 Knutsford to Bowdon scheme. This will ensure that the entire route between the M56 and M6 is upgraded to the required standard.

Scheme Objectives

The scheme objectives are to:

- improve the local environment in Bucklow Hill and Mere
- improve road safety and journey time reliability
- reduce conflicts between long distance and local traffic
- minimise the environmental impacts of the scheme, during construction and once open to traffic.

Supplementary Public Consultation 2009

Whilst no change was required to the line of the route to the north of Mere Hall, two alternative route

options (an on-line 'Blue' Option and an off-line 'Red' Option) were identified and these, along with the previous proposal which is now referred to as the 'Brown' Option, were presented as a Supplementary Public Consultation in the form of a leaflet and a questionnaire. This consultation began in September 2009 and finished in December 2009. The exercise was undertaken to obtain views and opinions from the public and external stakeholders regarding the presented options.

Response to the Supplementary Public Consultation

A total of 97 responses to the questionnaire were received during the 12 week consultation period.

The response to the consultation questionnaire showed strong support for an improvement scheme. The primary sentiment expressed in questionnaire comments was a desire for an improvement scheme to reduce traffic accidents, improve road safety and the environment and for the scheme to be implemented as soon as possible.

Respondents were asked to rank the options for the M6 Junction 19 to Mere Hall section of the A556 Improvement Scheme. Of those who submitted a ranking, 72% of respondents ranked the Red Option as their most preferred. Approximately 12% of respondents had no preference of route option, whilst 9% of respondents preferred the Brown Option and 7% of respondents preferred the Blue Option.

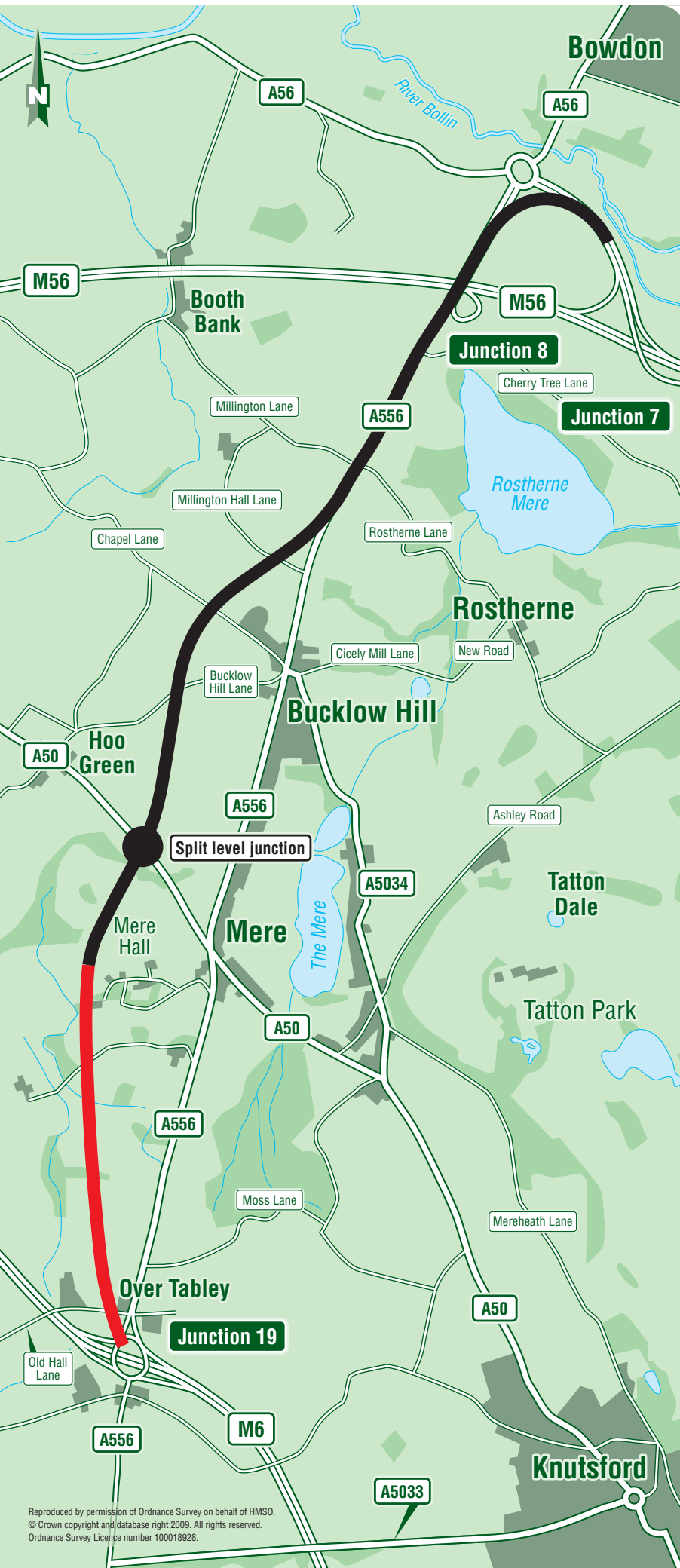
Decision of the Secretary of State for Transport

The Secretary of State for Transport has considered the views expressed by the public and the comparative benefits provided by each option. He has accepted that the route incorporating the Red Option for the southern section, and shown on the adjacent plan, should be the amended Preferred Route.

This still includes:

- improvement to the layout of M56 Junction 7
- online improvements to the existing A556 south of Bowdon roundabout
- bypassing the Bucklow Hill and Mere villages
- a split level junction with the A50 between Hoo Green and Mere

The amended route will now connect directly to M6 Junction 19.



What happens next?

Since the initial Preferred Route Announcement in December 2008, design of road alignments, junction layouts, drainage requirements has been progressed and site surveys started.

Comments and suggestions received as part of the Supplementary Public Consultation as well as ongoing consultation with stakeholders are being integrated in the assessment of the design development.

This announcement allows this work to be completed and the Environmental Statement to be prepared, including the development of suitable environmental mitigation measures such as landscaping and planting. This will allow the land that will need to be acquired to construct the scheme to be identified.

This scheme is a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project and will be considered by the recently established Infrastructure Planning Commission (IPC).

Before an application for Development Consent is submitted to the IPC, a Public Consultation will be held to seek views on the more detailed proposals. The IPC will review previous consultation outcomes and organise hearings on the submitted proposals before making a decision.

Key Milestones

- Public Consultation before the submission to the Infrastructure Planning Commission (IPC) –
- Submission of Application to IPC – **2011**
- Opening of Road - **2015**

Map of the area showing the line of the Amended Preferred Route (2010)

For further information about this scheme please contact:

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

Tel: 0161 930 5707

Email: A556knutsfordbowdon@highways.gsi.gov.uk

www.highways.gov.uk/a556improvements



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