

## M25 Junctions 16 to 23 Widening

### Explanation of the scheme and Non-Technical Summary of the Environmental Statement

#### Explanation of the M25 Widening Schemes

The Highways Agency is to widen approximately 102 kilometres of the M25 by adding a lane in each direction to make generally a 4-lane motorway. The widening is to be undertaken around the north side of London between Junctions 16 (M40) and 30 (A13 Interchange) and between Junctions 5 (M26) and 7 (M23) around south-east London. The works will take place over approximately 7 years starting in 2009. Currently the Highways Agency is widening the M25 between Junctions 1b (Dartford Crossing) and 3 (A20/M20) south of the Thames. These works began in Spring 2007 and will be completed in 2008.

The Highways Agency's proposals for the M25 are developed from the London Orbital Multi-Modal Study (ORBIT) published in 2002. This study looked at the most appropriate transport strategy for the M25 corridor. The Secretary of State for Transport accepted the ORBIT study recommendation to widen most of the remaining 3-lane sections of the motorway and to manage traffic demand to ensure that the benefits of the additional capacity are retained.

#### Why is improvement needed?

High levels of traffic flow lead to increased congestion and unpredictability of travel times. Congestion on the M25 is caused by a number of factors including:



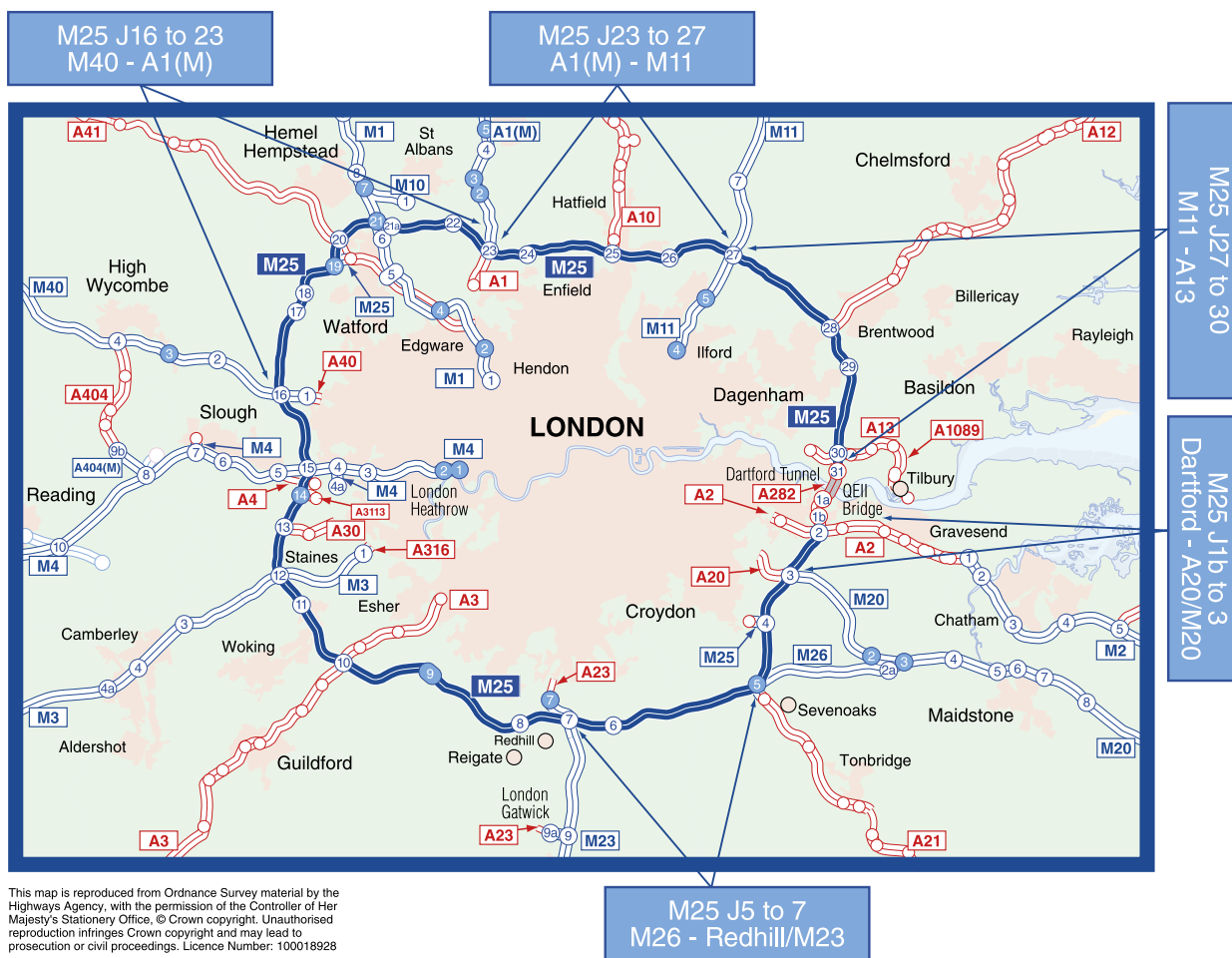
*Existing Congestion at M25 Junction 21a*



*Improved Motorway at M25 junctions 12 to 15*

- journeys to and from work which account for approximately 50% of traffic in the peak periods
- the M25 is used for a small part of many longer journeys
- average occupancies of vehicles are low
- traffic consists of a high proportion of heavy goods vehicles

Nearly 20% of UK road freight either starts or ends its journey in the South East (SE) of England. Thus, improvement of the M25 through widening of the road is essential to secure the long-term economic prosperity of SE England and the country as a whole



## What are the benefits?

The Scheme provides the following benefits:

- improved reliability of the time it takes to make a journey
- improved safety on the motorway
- reduced congestion
- improved driver information

## How is the Highways Agency going to build these improvements?

For construction purposes, the remaining widening works are divided into four sections. These are:

- Section 1: From Junctions 16 (M40) to 23 (A1(M))
- Section 2: From Junctions 5 (M26) to 7 (M23)
- Section 4: From Junctions 27 (M11) to 30 (Thurrock)
- Section 5: From Junctions 23 (A1(M)) to 27 (M11)

Section 1 is the first to be widened.

# Non-Technical Summary of the Environmental Statement

This Non-Technical Summary details the widening of Section 1 between Junctions 16 and 23, which has an overall length of 35.6km. The Non-Technical Summary acts as a summary of the Environmental Statement, which is published in accordance with European Directive 85/337/ECC amended by Directive 97/11/EEC and Directive 2003/35/EC as applied by Section 105A of the Highways Act 1980, as amended.

The Environmental Statement presents in detail the findings of the Environmental Impact Assessment. There is a legal requirement to provide a Non-Technical Summary to ensure that the non-technical reader can fully appreciate the likely environmental effects of the new development before a decision is made by the Secretary of State.

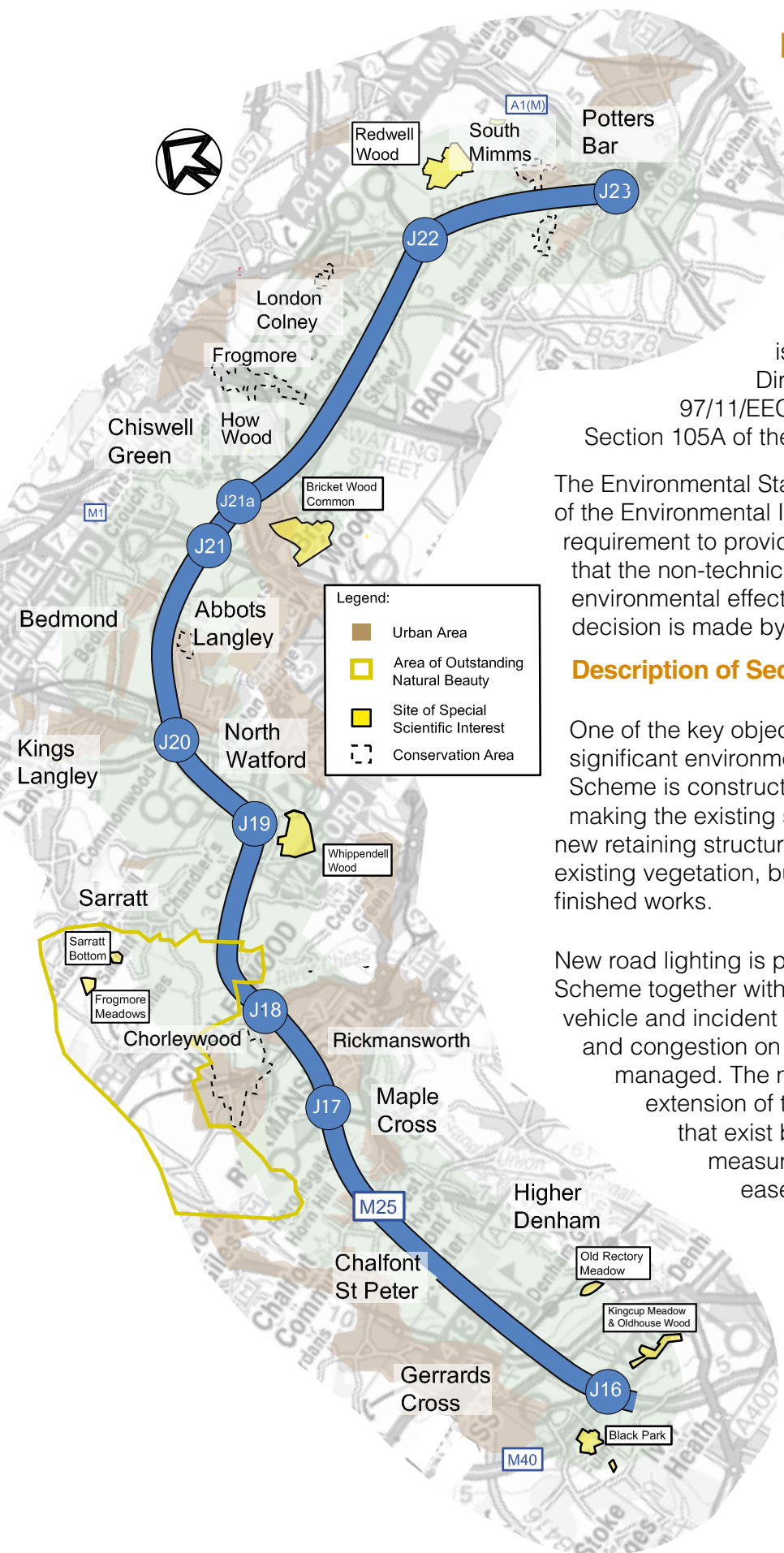
## Description of Section 1 (Junctions 16 to 23) Widening

One of the key objectives is to avoid, reduce and mitigate significant environmental impacts where necessary. The Scheme is constructed within the Secretary of State's land by making the existing side slopes steeper or by constructing new retaining structures. It is necessary to remove some of the existing vegetation, but this is replaced and improved in the finished works.

New road lighting is provided along the whole length of the Scheme together with new traffic sign gantries and better vehicle and incident detection, to ensure that breakdowns and congestion on the motorway can be more effectively managed. The new gantries and signals enable the extension of the current system of variable speed limits that exist between M25 Junctions 10 and 16. These measures help to manage the flow of traffic and ease any congestion that might occur.

## Landscape Effects

The existing motorway is visible in many views from the surrounding landscape. The landscape surrounding the Scheme includes the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), Colne Valley Park, Watling Chase Community Forest and numerous towns, villages and scattered houses.



The impact of the Scheme on the landscape and views results from loss of vegetation within the motorway fence line and because of new gantries, signs and lighting.

Impacts will be reduced in the long term by new planting and enhancement of the existing vegetation. This helps to screen the Scheme from sensitive viewpoints and assist with its wider visual integration in the landscape.

## **Ecology and Nature Conservation**

Disturbance from the motorway already impacts on the existing habitats and species. The use of low noise surfacing, enhanced environmental barriers and improved drainage ensures that these effects are not made worse by the Scheme. The Scheme includes new planting and habitat reinstatement in line with the Highways Agency Biodiversity Action Plan; however, in some locations new lighting has a negative effect on certain species, such as bats and fish.

No Statutory Designated Ecological Sites are affected by the Scheme.

A programme of mitigation and the Construction Environmental Management Plan controls construction impacts and ensures improvements are implemented. Advance mitigation work, prior to construction, minimises impacts on protected species during the construction phase.

## **Road Drainage and Water Environment**

The new drainage collects rainfall from the motorway, treats the quality of the water and manages its flow by the use of a number of drainage features, such as filter drains and ponds. These measures minimise the adverse effects from the Scheme because water quality and discharge are no worse than in the existing situation and provide an improvement where possible.

## **Traffic Noise and Vibration**

On completion of the widening, the full width of carriageway is surfaced with low noise surfacing. When the Scheme opens, new environmental barriers and improvements to existing barriers result in 170 residential properties receiving a reduction in noise levels of more than 1 dB(A), of which 70 receive decreases of 2 – 3 dB(A) and 21 receive decreases of 3 – 6 dB(A). 125 properties receive an increase of between 1 and 2 dB(A). Four residential properties qualify for noise insulation, including two Listed Buildings.

During the construction phase, noise control measures will be in place and the contractor will agree permissible noise levels with the local authority Environmental Health Officers.

## **Air Quality**

Changes in traffic flows and speeds do not result in any of the relevant air quality standards being exceeded.

During construction, temporary air quality effects caused by dust are controlled to ensure that there is no nuisance to neighbouring properties.

## **Geology and Soils**

Where the motorway crosses contaminated land, the contractor will employ best practice procedures to minimise the risk of any harmful effects.

New retaining walls minimise the exposure of contaminated landfill material, minimise the quantity of soil excavated and act as a barrier to the migration of any contaminants.

## **Cultural Heritage**

No negative archaeological effects are expected during the construction of the Scheme. The Scheme has limited adverse visual effects on some Listed Buildings.

Minor works are proposed to protect the piers of Chalfont Viaduct, which is an important local heritage feature; however, the visual impact is not significant.

## Vehicle Travellers

The view from the road is not significantly changed because the Scheme is constructed within the existing Secretary of State owned land. Rising traffic levels will increase driver stress, whether the Scheme is built or not. With the Scheme in place this stress will be lower due to improved driver information, smoother traffic flow and reduced congestion.

## Policies and Plans

The Scheme is in compliance with various national, regional and local Government transport and planning policies that promote improvements to the existing trunk road network/freight corridors. The Scheme has no effect on planning and other policies relating to waste and contaminated land, archaeology and built heritage, provisions for pedestrians and cyclists and public rights of way.

In the short term, the removal of habitat and vegetation for the Scheme does not promote planning policies on biodiversity and landscape protection. However, the Scheme's proposed long-term enhancement measures encourage biodiversity and landscape improvements. The Scheme does not promote various national, regional and local Government transport and planning policies that aim for reductions in car usage. The Scheme is constructed within land owned and controlled by the Secretary of State and non-vehicular modes of transport are not affected.

## Pedestrians, Cyclists, Equestrians and Community Effects

Two M25 crossing points are temporarily affected by the Scheme. During construction, Park Avenue Footbridge and the paths passing under Berry Lane Viaduct will be closed temporarily; however, diversions ensure that disruption is minimised.

Following completion of the Scheme, impacts to pedestrians and others are not significant enough to deter any journeys and there is no overall change in community severance.

## Disruption Due to Construction

A Construction Environmental Management Plan will be in place before the start of construction. The Plan comprises detailed methods and controls to safeguard the environment, ensure best practice and mitigate the adverse effects of the Scheme during construction.

The Plan details measures to reduce the effects of excavated materials, noise, dust, waste, temporary lighting and traffic management on the community including watercourses, habitats and protected species.

## Frequently Asked Questions

**Q.** When will construction start and how long will it last?

**A.** Construction is planned to start in 2009, subject to the Secretary of State deciding to proceed with the Scheme. The construction between Junctions 16 and 23 will be carried out in phases and is planned to be completed by 2012.

**Q.** Will traffic divert off the M25 onto the local roads?

**A.** The works are planned so as to maintain the existing number of traffic lanes during the day time and thus minimise any potential for traffic diversion.

**Q.** Will noise levels increase?

**A.** Low noise surfacing and new environmental barriers ensure that surrounding properties do not experience noticeable increases in noise levels.

**Q.** What are the benefits to road users?

**A.** The main benefit is that journey times for the road user are more reliable, safer and less stressful. Road users will be better informed of road conditions by means of new message signs.

**Q.** Why is it necessary to light the motorway?

**A.** The additional lighting of the M25 improves road safety. Research has shown that lighting leads to a reduction in night-time accidents.



Following the publication of the Environmental Statement there is a 12 week comment period where the Environmental Statement can be viewed at Deposit Locations and when Public Exhibitions will take place.

### Deposit Locations are:

Slough Central Library  
Uxbridge Central Library  
South Bucks District Council  
Three Rivers District Council  
Ricksmansworth Library  
Chiltern District Council  
Watford Central Library  
Abbots Langley Parish Council  
Hemel Hempstead Library  
St Albans Library  
Borehamwood Library  
Hertsmere Borough Council  
Chipping Barnet Library

### The Environmental Statement will also be on deposit at the following Highways Agency office locations:

Highways Agency, Federated House, London Road, Dorking, RH4 1SZ  
Highways Agency, Woodlands, Manton Lane, Manton Industrial Estate, Bedford MK41 7LW  
Highways Agency, Broadway, 5 Broadway, Broad Street, Birmingham, B15 1BL

### Public Exhibition Locations are:

London Colney Community Centre on  
Friday 14th September (2pm-9pm) &  
Saturday 15th September (10am-5pm)  
Henderson Hall, Abbots Langley on  
Friday 21st September (2pm-9pm) &  
Saturday 22nd September (10am-5pm)  
Henderson Hall, Abbots Langley on  
Friday 5th October (2pm-9pm) &  
Saturday 6th October (10am-5pm)  
Higher Denham Community Centre on  
Friday 12th October (2pm-9pm) &  
Saturday 13th October (10am-5pm)

For real time traffic information:

**08700 660 115**

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

24 hours a day, 365 days a year

(Calls from BT landlines to 0870 numbers will cost no more than 8p per minute; mobile calls usually cost more)

For general Highways Agency information:

**08457 50 40 30**

email: [ha\\_info@highways.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:ha_info@highways.gsi.gov.uk)

24 hours a day, 365 days a year

(Calls from BT landlines to 0845 numbers will cost no more than 4p per minute; mobile calls usually cost more)

## Safe driving at roadworks

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



**During 2006 two workers were killed and 19 seriously injured in the course of their work on Highways Agency roads.**

For the safety of all road users and roadworkers, when you are approaching roadworks:

- Keep within the speed limit – it is there for your safety.
- Get into the correct lane in good time – don't keep switching.
- Concentrate on the road ahead, not 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 are there to help you.