

## A421 Improvements - M1 Junction 13 to Bedford

### Non Technical Summary of the Environmental Statement

#### Why are we making improvements ?

The A421 connects the M1 at Junction 13 to the A1 at the Black Cat Roundabout and is an important link between Oxford, Milton Keynes, Bedford and Cambridge. An average of 25,000 vehicles travel this route every day, leading to considerable congestion, particularly during peak times, and especially at Junction 13.

The amount of traffic also causes safety problems because large number of side roads, private properties and businesses border the existing road.

We want to improve the A421 by building a new dual carriageway 13km (8 miles) long, between the M1 at Junction 13 and its junction with the A6 at Kempston. We would provide safer access using slip roads and reduce congestion.

A Public Consultation was held in the Spring of 2004 and the Secretary of State for Transport announced the Preferred Route in December 2004. Since then we have revised the Scheme and produced an Environmental Statement, which outlines the environmental effects likely to result from the Scheme.

This leaflet summarises our Environmental Statement and explains what we are doing.

#### What other options did we consider ?

Our first design was in a similar position to the one we have now. We would have closed off Wood End and local roads at Lower Shelton, Hoo Lane and Fields Road. At Marston Moretaine we would have used the existing dual carriageway as part of the Scheme and built a junction at Stewartby.

Following public consultation, we revised our plan. This design only closed Hoo Lane. A junction at Marston Moretaine replaced the Stewartby junction,

Fields Road crossed the dual carriageway on a bridge and a bridge also crossed at Wood End.

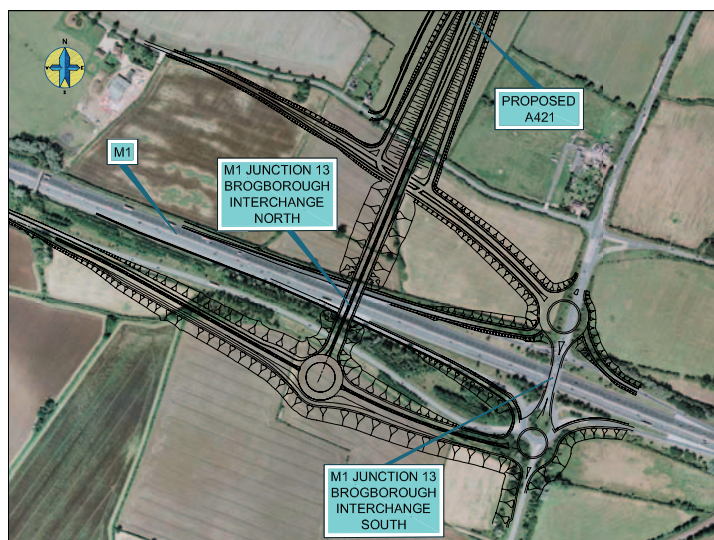
We have now developed our Preferred Route with slightly adjusted junctions and Public Rights of Way crossings.

We decided not to widen the existing A421 because:

- the current road does not meet dual carriageway standards
- there are many side road junctions
- people need access to private property
- there would be major disruption to traffic during construction

#### What are we doing ?

Junction 13. We would include traffic lights and additional roundabouts.



The new dual carriageway crosses above Salford Road, and bypasses Brogborough in a cutting through Brogborough Hill.

The new road continues close to the existing A421 between the Brogborough Landfill Site and Brogborough Lake. We would rebuild a part of the existing A421 to provide space for the new road. The new road carries on between Moreteyne Farm and Wood End towards Marston Moretaine.

We intend to build a new junction (Marston Junction) at Marston Moretaine where the new road would pass under Beancroft Road. A new road to Lower Shelton would join at this junction.

Just past the junction, the new dual carriageway meets the Marston Moretaine bypass. Part of this existing bypass would be used for the new road and part for local traffic. The road would continue, next to the existing road, to another junction at Marsh Leys where the new road would pass over the junction and continue towards Bedford. Between Marston Junction and Marsh Leys Junction, Fields Road would pass over the new dual carriageway on a bridge to re-join the old A421. At Marsh Leys Junction the new Bedford Western Bypass meets the existing A421 and the B5130 to Kempston. Between Marsh Leys and the A6, the road would be three lanes in each direction. We would remove the Interchange Retail Park roundabout for safety reasons because the junctions would be too close together. Our proposals end at the A6.

We would hope to start building the new road in 2008 and complete it in 2010.

There would be major earthworks at Brogborough Hill, M1 Junction 13, Marston Junction and Marsh Leys Junction. We would build several new bridges, whilst others would be extended or improved. We would light the junctions at the M1, Marston, Marsh Leys and Fields Road.

### **What are we doing for the environment ?**

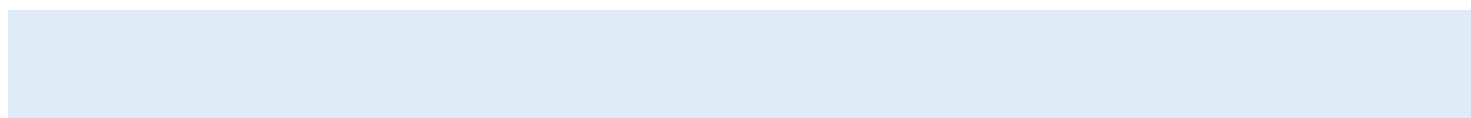
Though highways are often considered as generally causing environmental problems, we have designed the road to create a number of environmental benefits, as well as minimising potential adverse effects.

We would include:

- extensive planting to help the road blend in with the landscape and contribute to the aims of the Forest of Marston Vale
- ponds and habitat for the protected great crested newt and other wildlife

- re-use as much excavated material as possible from within the site
- pollution and drainage control measures
- low noise surfacing throughout, and noise barriers where needed
- construction of bridges and underpasses to allow pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders to cross the road in safety

On the following pages there is a summary of the environmental issues which we have examined as part of the environmental assessment.



Topic	Issues	Solutions	Outcome
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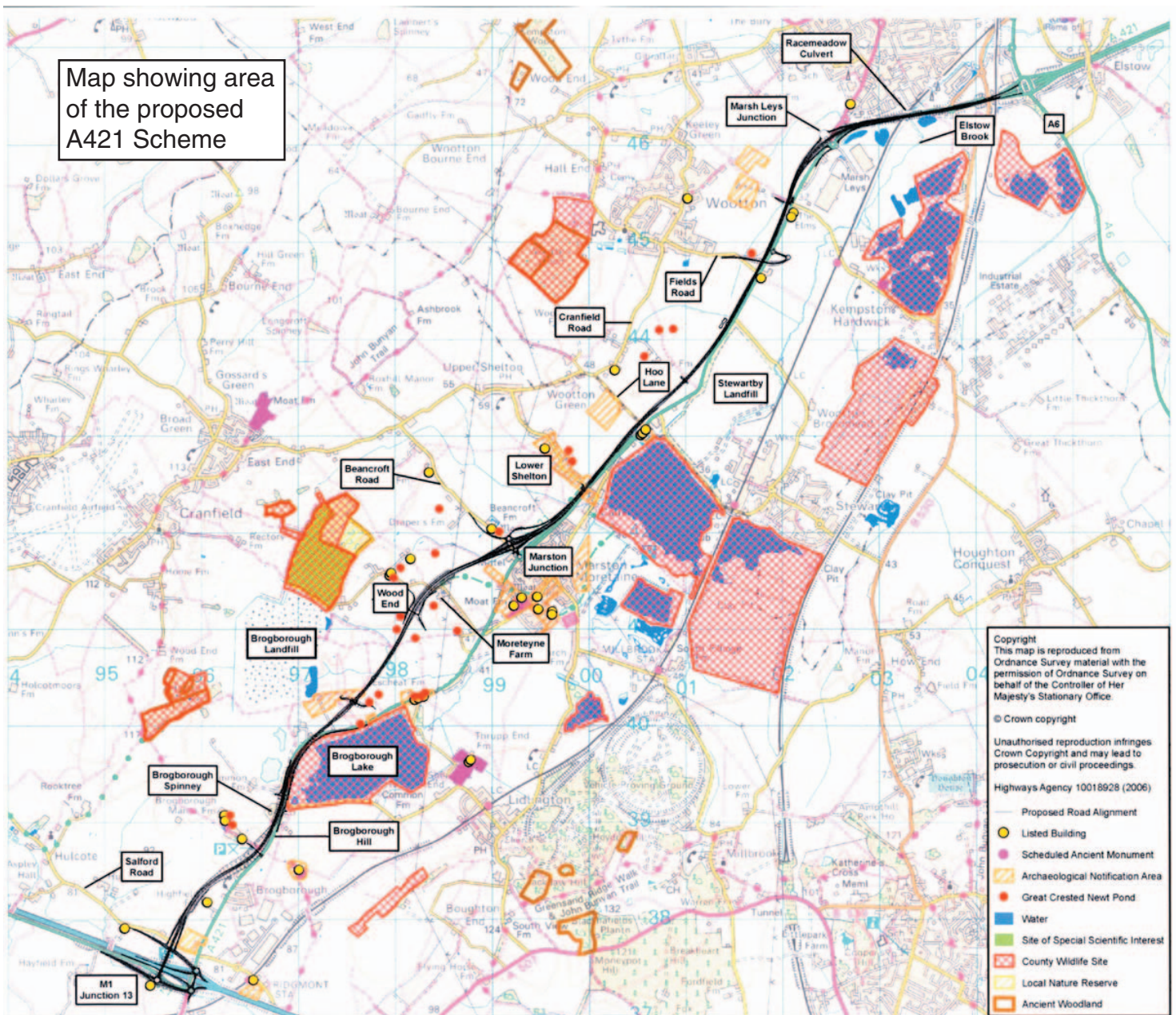
<b>Land Use</b>	Loss of 17ha of good quality agricultural land. Loss of 96ha of low quality agricultural land		Loss of 17ha of good quality agricultural land would give rise to a moderate adverse effect
	Division of 12 farm holdings	Alternative access to separated areas of farm holdings would be provided or, where this is not possible, land would be used for scheme planting	Nine farm holdings would experience a moderate adverse effect and four would experience a minor adverse effect
	Loss of community space, including Brogborough Picnic Site	Appropriate funding would be provided to compensate for loss of Brogborough Picnic Site	Loss of community land would result in a slight adverse effect

<b>Cultural Heritage</b>	Loss of building of local interest at Charity Farm		
	Impacts on "setting" of a number of local historic or listed buildings		Some reduction in attractive nature of settings of historic or listed buildings, giving rise to slight adverse effects
	Impacts on five archaeological sites of regional importance	Further archaeological survey work prior to construction. Any significant finds would be preserved on site or investigated and recorded in detail. Archaeological areas and sites would be protected during construction	Slight adverse effects upon regional and local archaeological sites
	Impacts on four archaeological sites of local importance		
	Impacts on historic landscape character areas of moderate and low sensitivity	Hedgerow, tree and shrub planting to reduce impact on "settings" of buildings	Slight adverse effects upon historic landscape character areas

<b>Landscape and Visual Effects</b>	Impact of Scheme on the four landscape character areas through which it passes	Retain existing vegetation where possible	Over time, planting would reduce landscape and visual effects. One landscape character area (Brogborough and Greensand Ridge) would experience moderate adverse effects in the long term
		Replace landscape features lost to the Scheme	

Topic	Issues	Solutions	Outcome
<b>Landscape and Visual Effects (continued)</b>	Visual Impact of Scheme, particularly raised sections of road, on those who live, work or travel through the area	Integrate and screen parts of Scheme, particularly raised sections and structures with woodland/ tree planting	Some 9% of visual receptors would suffer moderate adverse effects in the long term and 1% would experience substantial/moderate adverse effects
		Increase overall woodland coverage across the Forest of Marston Vale where possible	Scheme objectives meet aspirations of Forest of Marston Vale
<b>Ecology and Nature Conservation</b>	Impact on woodland	44ha new woodland planting to replace 22ha lost at Brogborough Road Spinney	General enhancement of habitat would give rise to a slight beneficial effect overall
	Impact on Broughton and Elstow Brooks, due to lengthened culverts		Slight adverse effect
	Impact on protected species	Increase and improve great crested newt habitat with high quality planting and 6 new ponds  Construction programme would take account of seasonal ecological constraints, e.g. nesting birds & amphibian trapping	Effects on protected species range from slight adverse (bats, spined loach and bullhead fish) to slight beneficial (great crested newts and grizzled skipper butterfly)
<b>Geology and Soils</b>	Potential loss, destruction of or damage to soils		Loss of 17 ha of best quality agricultural land is a moderate adverse effect (refer to land use above)
	Exposure of currently contaminated soils	No significant contaminants found: further investigations planned. Any contamination would be treated or disposed of as appropriate	The removal of contaminated material has the potential to give rise to a beneficial effect

Topic	Issues	Solution	Outcome
<b>Water Quality and Drainage</b>	Spillage and potential pollution of groundwater or watercourses	Balancing ponds and filter drains would reduce potential pollution effects of routine run-off	Improved and increased drainage facilities compared to the existing situation
<b>Noise and Vibration</b>	Potential disturbance from construction noise	Strict controls & good site practice to minimise construction noise & vibration	During construction: some limited adverse effects on properties near Scheme
	Potential disturbance from traffic noise	Landscape bunding & noise barriers would be introduced in the area of residential properties close to the Scheme	After construction: some increase in traffic noise effects on properties close to the Scheme which were previously remote and some reduction of traffic noise effects on properties close to existing road
<b>Air Quality</b>	Dust generated during construction	Best practice measures to be adopted during the Scheme construction process: for example, minimising soil handling, use of water bowsers, sensitive location of compounds, restriction on vehicle speeds	Construction dust is predicted to give rise to a moderate adverse effect
	Traffic emissions		Overall the scheme has a minor beneficial effect on community exposure to road traffic pollution
<b>Pedestrians, Cyclists, Horse Riders and Community Effects</b>	Disruption to or loss of Public Rights of Way	Where necessary diversions to Public Rights of Way would be provided	Slight adverse effect during the construction process.
		Bridges and subways provided to enable safer crossing of the new road	Minor beneficial effect once the Scheme is complete
		An extra 5040m of new Public Rights of Way to be provided	
<b>Vehicle Travellers</b>	Potential for “driver stress” (due to frustration, fear of accidents and uncertainty)	Improved design leading to reduction in traffic congestion	Less driver stress leading to a beneficial effect
	Changes to drivers’ “view from the road”	Landscape planting	More rural views and planting would lead to a generally beneficial effect on “views from the road”



Detailed plans and general details of the proposals, together with proposed measures to reduce the environmental impact, will be on display.

*Representatives of the Highways Agency and their consultants will be available at the exhibition to explain the proposals.*

Depending on the type and number of objections received, a Public Inquiry may be held. We will write to everyone who responded at least six weeks beforehand and adverts will appear in the local press.

All your comments will be made available to the Inspector who may decide to make them public. We will publicise any alternative proposal received. The Secretary of State for Transport will consider the Inspector's recommendations and decide on the way forward.

## Where can I get more information ?

The full Environmental Statement for the Scheme may be inspected free of charge during normal opening hours at the following locations from 22nd March 2007 to 28 June 2007.

Highways Agency, Woodlands, Manton Lane,  
Bedford MK41 7LW

Bedfordshire County Council, County Hall,  
Cauldwell Street, Bedford MK42 9AP

Milton Keynes Council, Civic Offices,  
1 Saxon Gate East, Central Milton Keynes MK9 3HQ

Bedford Borough Council, Town Hall, St Paul's  
Square, Bedford MK40 1SJ

Mid Bedfordshire District Council, Priory House,  
Monks Walk, Chicksands, Beds. SG17 5TQ

Forest Centre, Marston Vale, Millennium Country  
Park, Station Road, Marston Moretaine, Beds. MK43  
0PR

Wootton Library, Lorraine Road, Wootton, Beds.  
MK43 9LH

Kempston Public Library, Halsey Road, Kempston,  
Bedford MK42 8AT

Bedford Central Library, Harpur Street, Bedford  
MK40 1PG

You can buy copies of the Environmental Statement at a cost of £250. A CD of the full Environmental Statement is available free of charge from the Highways Agency at:

Roy Brunsden  
A421 Improvements Scheme  
Highways Agency  
Woodlands  
Manton Lane  
Bedford  
MK41 7LW

## How do I tell you what I think ?

If you want to:

- comment on the Environmental Statement or the draft Orders
- support the road
- object to the draft Orders
- put forward alternative proposals -

you should write to the Highways Agency at the address shown on this page. We need your comments by 28 June 2007.

## Public Exhibition

A public exhibition of the proposals will be held at:

Marston Sports Pavilion, Bedford Road, Marston  
Moretaine, Bedford. MK43 0ND

14.30 - 20.00 Thursday 29 March 2007

10.00 - 20.00 Friday 30 March 2007

10.00 - 16.00 Saturday 31 March 2007

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)