

## M27 Junctions 3-4 Widening Non-Technical Summary of the Environmental Statement

### Introduction

The South Coast Corridor Multi-Modal Study (SoCoMMS), which reported in August 2002, made recommendations for a long term strategy to address transport problems on the South Coast.

One of the key recommendations included in the study was to enhance the current road network's overall efficiency. Improvements are proposed to the operation of the M27 between junctions 3 and 4 by widening the carriageway.

The Highways Agency's proposals are assessed in an Environmental Statement. The Environmental Statement has been published in accordance with section 105A of the Highways Act, 1980, which applies the requirements of European Council Directive 85/337/EEC.

This leaflet describes the proposed scheme and summarises the Environmental Statement in non-technical language. Information on the reverse provides details about the public exhibition and what happens next.

### Why the Improvement is Needed

The area has seen considerable growth in recent years, which has led to increased traffic flows. This causes congestion during peak periods.

There is a high proportion of slower moving traffic. Heavy goods vehicles and traffic changing lanes associated with the two junctions and the motorway service area are factors contributing to disruption to the flow of traffic on the main carriageway. These factors lead to congestion and hence unreliable journey times.

### Proposed Scheme

The proposed scheme would provide an additional lane in each direction between junctions 3 and 4. The total length of the scheme is approximately 4km. The widening would be achieved wholly within the existing highway boundary, minimising environmental impacts and using only land currently owned by the Highways Agency.

The scheme is proposed to reduce congestion and improve safety for all users. This would lead to improved and more reliable journey times.

A variable speed limit is proposed between junction 3 and junction 4. Electronic signs would be provided over each lane to inform drivers of the speed limit. These signs would be mounted on eleven new overhead gantries. The existing gantries would be removed. This variable speed limit would improve the flow of traffic, reducing the impact of congestion and making journeys safer and more reliable.

Motorway lighting would be extended to provide lighting from junction 4 to junction 3. The lighting columns would be situated in the verge and incorporate directional lighting, with reduced light spill when compared to the existing.

The full width of carriageway over the length of the widening would be surfaced with quiet surfacing. The opportunity would also be taken to carry out improvements to the drainage and the safety barriers over the length of the scheme. This would include concrete barriers in the central reserve.

## Environmental Impacts

### Measures to Reduce Environmental Impacts

The scheme has been designed to avoid or minimise impact to the environment, whilst meeting safety and engineering standards and providing value for money. The scheme design has minimised adverse environmental impacts by:

- Taking as little land as possible from the soft estate (that is the land between the hard shoulder and motorway boundary fence);
- Using quiet road surfacing to reduce traffic noise;
- Minimising the loss of motorway planting and ecologically important habitat, as far as is practical; and
- Upgrading the motorway drainage system.

## Landscape

Landscape and visual impacts would generally be confined to the existing route corridor. The introduction of lighting, gantries, new cuttings and retaining features, as well as the loss of motorway planting, would lead to a slight adverse impact due to the scheme. Opportunities would be taken for new planting, particularly in the western part of the scheme, where the majority of residential properties are located.

## Ecology and Nature Conservation

The loss of the existing soft estate habitat, notably areas used by reptiles, cannot be completely replaced within the scheme boundary. However, habitat enhancement, reptile relocation and replacement of habitat on new slopes would help mitigate the adverse impact of the works. Overall the scheme has been assessed as having a slight adverse impact.

## Water Quality and Drainage

The existing rates of drainage discharge to watercourses would be maintained through containment facilities built into the new drainage system. Pollution control units would be improved and have valves to contain a major spillage on the motorway. Overall the scheme is assessed as having a neutral impact.

## Traffic Noise and Vibration

The noise and vibration effects of the scheme are considered to be minimal. On completion of the scheme, residents are predicted to experience a slight reduction in noise levels due mainly to the use of quiet surfacing.

## Air Quality

The scheme would have a slight adverse impact on air quality. However, over time, air quality would improve due to advances in vehicle emissions.

## Pedestrians, Cyclists and Equestrians

The proposed scheme would not alter, change or modify any Public Rights of Way, bridleways, cycleways or crossing facilities.

## Cultural Heritage

Most of the improvements would take place on land previously disturbed when the motorway was built. There are no direct impacts on any designated sites. The historic landscape itself would be unaffected by the scheme. In the early stages of construction, supervised excavation would be undertaken, to check for archaeological remains in previously undisturbed areas.

## Vehicle Travellers

The scheme would be of benefit in helping to reduce driver stress by:

- Assisting traffic flows and relieving congestion;
- Providing quiet surfacing; and
- Providing improved sign information and lighting.

## Construction Impacts

Construction is expected to take approximately fifteen months. A Construction Environmental Management Plan would be implemented. This will identify how the impacts of construction activities will be minimised, including noise, vibration, dust and water pollution, and to protect wildlife and safeguard planting.

There would be a need for a contra-flow and reduced speed limits during the works.

## Policies and Plans

There would be no significant impacts, positive or negative on policies and plans, although it would be slightly beneficial in terms of achieving Government and local authority objectives.

## Alternatives Considered

A number of alternatives have been considered during the development of the scheme, including narrower lane widths and full standard lane widths. Full standard lane widths would have required the demolition and rebuilding of the existing bridges. There are many problems associated with this including a need to acquire additional land, resulting in significant environmental impacts and disruption. The alternative which is now proposed includes the use of narrower traffic lanes and some lengths of reduced hardshoulder width. This offers all the major benefits in terms of improved traffic flows and relief of congestion required, but minimises the disruption to the local community, the travelling public and to the environment.

## The Public Exhibition

The exhibition is designed to inform you about the proposed scheme and allow you to ask related questions. Staff from the Highways Agency and their design consultants, WSP Civils Limited, will be present at the exhibition to explain the proposals, answer your questions and listen to your views.

A full copy of the Environmental Statement, on paper or on disk, may be purchased from Louise Brown of the Highways Agency at: Highways Agency, Temple Quay House, 2 The Square, Temple Quay, Bristol, BS1 6HA

**The Environmental Statement can be inspected free of charge during normal office hours at the following locations until 07 December 2006.**

Highways Agency, Federated House, London Road, Dorking, Surrey, RH4 1SZ

Southampton City Council, Civic Centre, Southampton, SO14 7LW

New Forest District Council, Appletree Court, Lyndhurst, Hampshire, SO43 7PA

Test Valley Borough Council, Council Offices, Duttons Road, Romsey, Hampshire, SO51 8XG

Lordshill Library, Lordshill District Centre, Southampton, SO16 8HY

Eastleigh Borough Council, Civic Offices, Leigh Road, Eastleigh, Hampshire, SO50 9YN

#### **Additional copies of this leaflet may be obtained from:**

- Rownhams Motorway services - eastbound and westbound
- Nursling Post Office
- Nursling and Rownhams Village Hall
- North Baddesley Post Office
- North Baddesley Village Hall
- Chilworth Parish Hall
- Chilworth Post Office
- Chilworth Manor Hotel
- Chilworth Science and Research Centre
- West Quay Shopping Centre
- Winchester Motorway Services - southbound
- Library, Lordshill District Centre
- Sainsbury's, Lordshill District Centre
- Test Valley District Council Office
- New Forest District Council Office
- Eastleigh Borough Council Office
- Southampton City Council Office
- Southampton Central Library
- Southampton Ports Authority

Further copies of this leaflet and reply forms are available from Louise Brown at the above address or telephone **0117 372 8945** or email: **M27Junctions3-4@highways.gsi.gov.uk**

## **Exhibition Dates and Times**

The exhibition will be held at:

Nursling & Rownhams Village Hall, Nursling Street, Nursling,  
Southampton, SO16 0XH

on: **Friday 12 January 2007, 10.00am to 8.00pm**

and **Saturday 13 January 2007, 10.00am to 4.00pm**

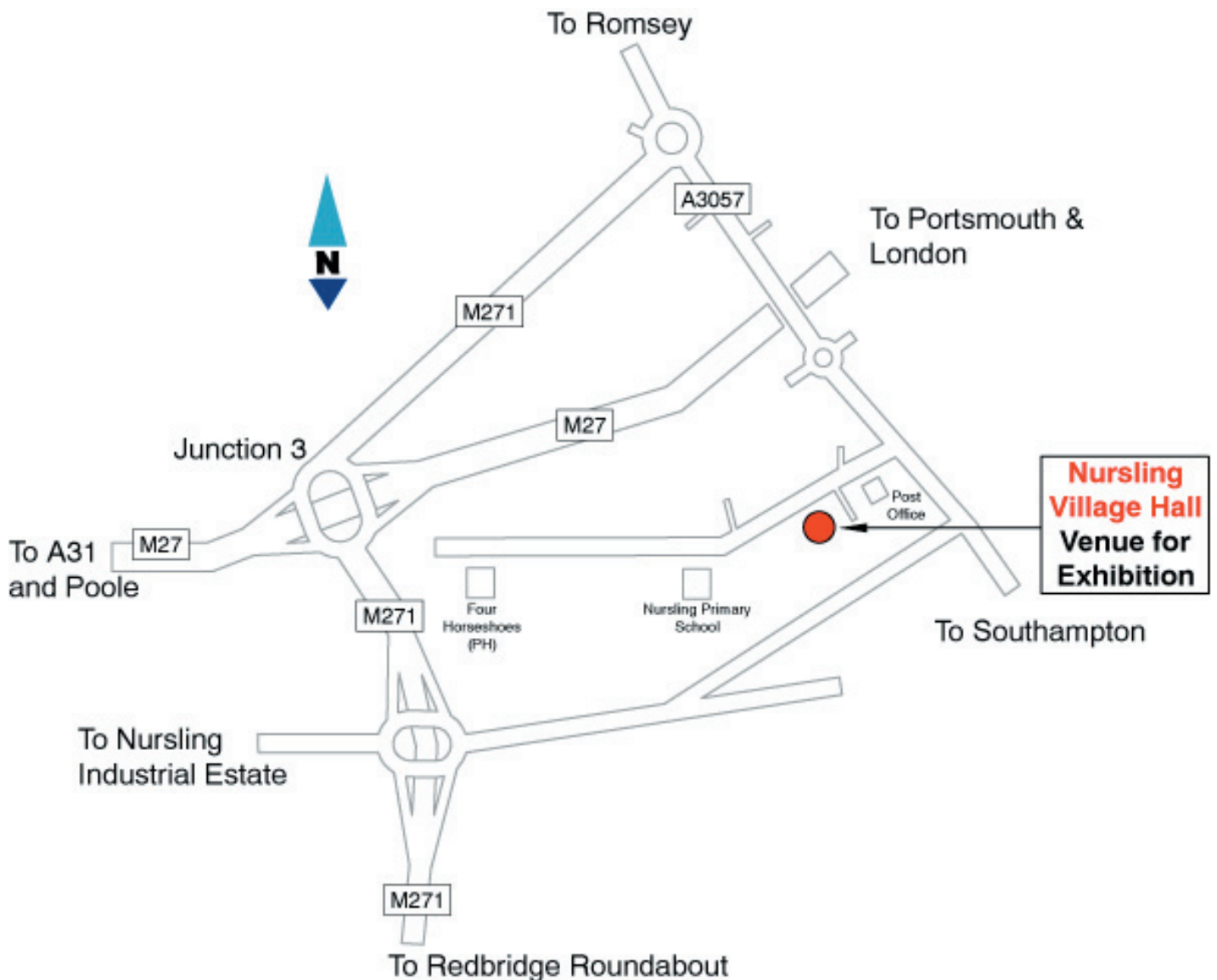
Leaflets explaining your rights will be available at the exhibition.

## Location of the Venue

Bus services serving Nursling, stopping near the Village Hall:

Stagecoach route 46A from Southampton City Centre to Winchester via Lordshill

Solent Blue Line route 4 from Southampton City Centre to Romsey via Lordshill



## What Happens Next?

Following publication of the Environmental Statement, and holding of the public exhibition, comments may be made in response to the proposals. The outcome of these comments will be forwarded to the Secretary of State, who will consider these before making a decision on whether to proceed with the proposed scheme.

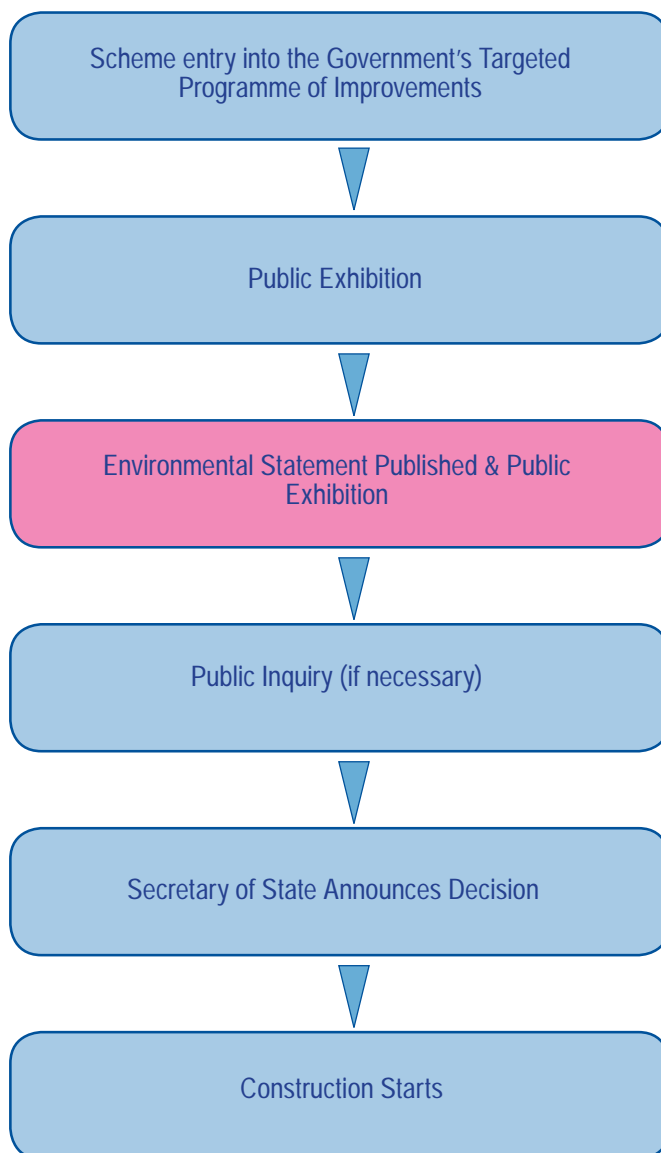
## How You Can Ask Questions

If you have any questions regarding the scheme or the Environmental Statement, you may raise these at the public exhibition, or by completing the enclosed reply form.

The reply form can be handed in at the exhibition or sent using the pre-paid envelope to:

Louise Brown, Scheme Administrator, Highways Agency, Zone 2/26-H, Temple Quay House, 2 The Square, Temple Quay, Bristol, BS1 6HA

**Completed forms to be returned by 22 February 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 3p per minute; mobile calls usually cost more)

## Safe driving at roadworks

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



During 2005, five workers were killed and 12 seriously injured in the course of their work on Highways Agency roads. This was the worst year since 1999.

For the safety of all road users and roadworkers, drivers approaching roadworks are advised to:

- 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