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e-mail:

09 April 2012

Kathryn Powell
Case Leader
IPC
Temple Quay House
Temple Quay
Bristol BS1 6PN.

Dear Ms. Powell,

**A556 'Environmental Improvement Scheme'
'Preferred Route' 'B'**

This letter states the views of the five adult resident members of this household, who wish to be registered as interested parties, affected by this Highways Agency (HA) proposed Scheme: we should be grateful for confirmation that it is weighted accordingly for the five adults for the IPC's considerations.

This 'Environmental Improvement Scheme' - the '*Scheme*' - should be rejected, and substituted with an up-to-date, reappraised and simplified in the context of modern construction engineering, M6 (northbound) / M56 (eastbound) Junction 20 option as the solution to solve problems of the existing A556. Accompanying de-trunking the existing A556, will satisfy all resident communities. The HA has repeatedly refused carry out this reappraisal, whilst purporting to 'listen' to the public during the belated Public Consultation, January - April 2012. A group of residents, outraged at this indifference of the HA and their biased, secretive, and flawed consultation process during 2007-2011, and the blight that the Scheme will have on our environment, have thus been forced to have the Jn 20 solution re-appraised professionally - at their expense - both in design and in costings. This simplified Junction 20 Scheme, now submitted to the IPC for consideration, costs a fraction of that rejected by the HA more than a decade ago, (on the grounds of 'Not Good Value'), moreover, it is a fraction of the cost of the *Scheme*. The HA proposed A556 'Environmental Improvement Scheme' should therefore be rejected for the following *bone fide* reasons:

1. **Safety: accidents on juxtaposed country lanes to link roads will rise.**

Department of Transport Accident Statistics by Road Class, RAS10014, for Cheshire East, 2010, available at:

<http://www.dft.gov.uk/statistics/releases/road-accidents-and-safety-annual-report-2010>

- confirm that 1327 accidents occurred in East Cheshire on minor roads, compared to 342 on Motorways, and 1349 on A roads.

- This means that the IPC, by adopting the new, re-appraised, M6/M56 Junction 20 option, conferring a 380% lower accident rate than currently, can help avoid dozens of accidents which will result directly from the Scheme locally, each and every year. Motorway heavy traffic should be kept where it is intended for - on Motorways.
- In traffic density terms (accidents per vehicle, per mile travelled), the danger of rural, minor road travel, and 'A' roads, is even more exaggerated, compared with the safety of Motorways.
- Furthermore, the HA's own figures forecast increases of from currently, c.400 vehicles / day, to c.1500 /day - other estimates are much higher, up to 3000/day on the rural roads linking to the *Scheme*. This is a 380% to 750% increase within 5 years, with no weight limits for rural lane traffic, into and from, the *Scheme* link roads.
- The *Scheme* will do nothing to solve the problem of traffic from the M6, eastbound to Manchester on the M56, 'backing up' at M56 Junction 7. The 'rat race' through country lanes which we see daily, at every rush hour, traffic attempting to take 'short cuts' to avoid the M56 Jn 7 back-up, will be magnified 4- to 7-fold.

This means local rural lane accidents will rise from a few dozen currently, by 400 to 700%. They will be more serious too, as heavier traffic uses the lanes.

- The *Scheme*, presented to the Public in January 2012, in The Summary Document (SD) shows 4 link road configuration options, named as option 0 to 3. All of these option links feed to, and from, rural lanes in the greenbelt. All these options will dangerously increase accidents. None are reasonable or acceptably safe.

At the public meeting demanded by High Legh Parish residents, held on 17 October 2011, at the local Primary School, more than 200 residents were shocked to hear Mr Bloom, also Mr Swapan, admit that they had never visited these lanes: furthermore, Swapan stated that High Legh and Knutsford (5 miles away) were one and the same place. The competence of the HA in assessing the *Scheme* safety is questionable.

Just north-west of the Scheme, Peacock Lane runs into Chapel Lane, 200 yards from the proposed Chapel Lane - Millington link road, and has a 90° blind corner, less than 3.5 metres wide, at which there are literally double figures of accidents per annum - some serious, others less so, the latter not appearing in D.o.T. statistics. There are many such single track rural lane areas in close proximity.

Furthermore, these, and the other nearby rural lanes are never gritted in icy conditions. During every winter, exposed rural roads ice over much more frequently than 'A' roads. In the harsh winters of 2009 and 2010, accidents on this, and nearby lanes were weekly events. Planning to Increase rural lane traffic 4-fold and more, including heavy vehicles, is the most dangerous folly imaginable.

Dr. F W Ballardie, as a NHS Consultant Physician appointed to Manchester Royal Infirmary and the lead writer of this letter, has had the dubious honour during the past two decades, of attending many accident victims on rural lanes locally, until Emergency Services arrive. For the *Scheme* which claims to be 'Environmental Improvement' to have such inbuilt and inevitable consequences, greatly increasing rural lane traffic flow, fully admitted by the HA, and therefore accidents, is neither sensible or reasonable.

'Safe Roads, reliable journeys, informed travellers'? - the HA motto. That's an anathema to any sensible person - or public agency, not motivated by self-interest in their rush to crystallise a scheme rejected by the previous Government's Secretaries of State.

On safety aspects alone, the IPC must reject this *Scheme*, and demand that the HA consider the Junction 20 re-appraised option, which has now been submitted to the IPC.

2. Uneven, unfair, and flawed Consultation process.

We ask that the IPC carefully consider Appendix 1 (attached).

- Mr Bloom, HA project leader has denied this concealment, in reply to our letters to The Rt. Hon. George Osborne, MP for Tatton. He has failed to explain how High Legh Parish Council, including residents, ourselves, knew nothing of the HA decision to award a 'Preferred Route' favouring a single Parish - Mere. Either they (the HA) are biased - or they are incompetent – or both. Mr Bloom purports that we (in postcode WA16 6..) were mailed about public meetings. That is absolutely untrue. The only two communications received in the past 15 years from the HA have been:

(a) A reply letter to us, 13 years ago stating that the original Junction20 option was 'not good value', dismissing it - and at the same time stating "...it was impossible to stop M6 northbound traffic taking a shortcut from Jn 19 M6 along the existing A556 to M56".

Yet, that is exactly what the *Scheme* now plans, by de-trunking the current A556: the HA are hypocritical, guilty of making facts fit their conclusions.

(b) A written request from Mr Swapan, 2011, to place a decibel reading instrument in the front of our property (!) - no doubt to support the HA claim of 'Environmental Improvement' of the *Scheme*.

Yet a further example of the HA's continued failure to communicate during the past 20 years – probably the result of their incomplete mailing data base - occurred on 29 February 2012: the enclosed letter (Appendix 2) was delivered to the address shown: it was not delivered to ourselves, nor to any neighbour in the vicinity.

- Residents of High Legh, nor the Parish Council, did not know of any consultation about the process of choosing the *Scheme* - 'The Preferred Route' - but Mere residents did, during the past 3 years, before its discovery by HLPC in August 2011. *Please read Appendix I carefully, in which the Clerk states: The High Legh Parish Council knew nothing of the change from proposed route 'A' (widening of the existing A556) to 'Preferred Route 'B' (the new Scheme).*
- Mr Bloom, whose geography is in doubt - he works from Leeds - states in a recent reply to a letter sent to our MP, that he believes reading 'The Knutsford Guardian' newspaper should have alerted High Legh residents. He fails to recognise that High Legh and Knutsford are two separate towns, 5 miles apart, and High Legh residents do *not* receive the copies of that newspaper which are distributed in Knutsford only. Mr Bloom thinks that a busy doctor, working in Central Manchester, should be checking, weekly, over a period of over 20 years, what may or may not be in another town's newspaper! This is patently unreasonable nonsense by the HA.
- The HA Questionnaire, January 2012 does not contain any option to vote against the Preferred Route. Mr Bloom explicitly refused to include this, despite 'listening' to hundreds of outraged residents on October 17th. Voting for link road options (0 - 3) only is possible. This is undemocratic, presenting High Legh parishioners with an *incommutable, fait accompli, of the Preferred Route - on which they have had no opportunity to input their views vs. the two alternatives.*
- The fact is, The HA, who manifestly can communicate with High Legh residents, but only when it is in their interests - have failed to do so about choosing the new A556 Preferred Route proposal. For a Scheme to have had 30 years of considerations, this recent, hasty, incomplete, unfair and failed consultation process, to result in choosing 'The Preferred Route' of the *Scheme*, means it must be rejected, and reassessed.
- High Legh Parish Council and its residents were therefore clearly excluded from deliberations between 2008 and 2011. The IPC now

have the evidence in writing, Appendage 1 to this letter, from the Parish Council Clerk - when proposed route 'A' (widening of the existing A556, minor traffic light bypasses) was changed to Preferred Route 'B' - the new A556('M') through the greenbelt, on the grounds that "...We only spoke to residents in parishes through which the road directly passed" (Mr Bloom's own words, recorded digitally, public meeting, 17 October 2011, High Legh School hall, when over 200 residents voiced concern and outrage about being excluded from the decision making process). The IPC may have copies of these confirmatory audio files on request.

- Furthermore, Mr Bloom admitted on October 17th, that he "...was not allowed to discuss the process – and outcome - of choosing The Scheme Preferred Route before or after the time of the General Election (2010) (an 18 month period) - except with residents of Mere Parish" - residents of whom will have their homes which abut the existing A556 transformed into a leafy oasis, at the expense of residents of the six other Parishes' residents whose lives and properties in many cases, will be devastated by the new road.

The Rt. Hon. George Osborne has been invited - twice - to comment on this anomaly. He has failed to do so.

Residents in the 6 other adversely affected Parishes, have applied, under The Freedom of Information Act, for information on correspondence on how this truly extraordinary bias towards Mere Parish residents could have occurred. The HA has refused to disclose this, as of April 2012. Residents are pursuing the case with The Information Commissioner.

We ask, therefore, that the IPC assess, the imbalanced and flawed Consultation on the Scheme proposals, and deferring it until a fair, transparent release of what has occurred in the years 2008 -11 is seen in public.

'Safe Roads, reliable journeys, informed travellers'? Not so, for travellers, who are also residents.

3. Highways Agency issued misleading and inaccurate information.

- The HA state that the *Scheme* is 'Environmental Improvement'.
That is manifestly untrue:

- (a) Diagrams in the HA Summary Document show all Mere Parish properties *but essentially none to the west side of the Scheme Preferred Route*. This includes all the Millington Parish cottages, farms, all properties in Chapel Lane and Peacock Lane. Why?

The only logical conclusion is that the HA are attempting to mislead less interested members of the public into a false sense of security, having stated that the Scheme is 'in open countryside', and not hugely damaging to the environment and peoples' livelihoods and homes.

Notwithstanding the devastation to the greenbelt, ancient woods and relics thousands of years old, enjoyed by many hundreds locally, from Knutsford, from Manchester suburbs, for farm tractors, recreation, sports, cycling (Cheshire Cycle routes), equestrian, walking, - the fact is, that 78 homes only, in 1 parish, Mere, will benefit by 'Environment Improvement' - but 74 homes and hundreds of acres of greenbelt in 6 parishes, immediate vicinity, will be blighted, have their livelihood destroyed, and/or home(s) demolished. At a *Scheme* cost exceeding £200 million – and the IPC should note that the HA have contingency plans to fund above that cost level, which I have no doubt will follow (information obtained via the FOI Act recently) - that equates to a cost of £50 million per net property (4 of), 'Environmentally Improved'.

In the current era of austerity, £200 million (+) expenditure by the taxpayer – is absurd, when the cheaper, better in every respect Junction 20, reappraised option is there to solve the A556 problem, and benefit *every home* in the area.

The central question to find the solution to the existing A556 problem must be: *'What is the least environmentally destructive, most cost effective option available', from the 3 practical solutions for the A556 problem ('A': widening the existing A556; 'B' the Preferred Route of the Scheme; the re-appraised Junction 20 solution)?*

We urge the IPC to reject the current Highways Agency Preferred Route Scheme, on the grounds of Safety, Flawed Consultative process, Misleading of the Public, and Bias.

The Highways Agency should be required to reconsider the re-appraised Junction 20 solution, which the IPC now has had submitted, and which will benefit everyone, *genuinely and not factitiously, improving the environment – and saving a great deal of cost to the us, as taxpayers.*

Yours sincerely,

(Dr) Francis W. Ballardie

(Mrs) Marilyn E Ballardie

(Mr) James W Ballardie

(Ms) Jennifer F Ballardie

(Mr) Gregory Ballardie

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From: Doreen Walker
Sent: Tuesday, September 13, 2011 5:54 PM
To: Francis Ballardie
Subject: Re: New A556 Proposal:

Thank you for your email. High Legh Parish Council didn't know about the change until a couple of weeks ago. Three of our parish councillors attended the meeting last night at the Swan and reported back to our Parish Council meeting which was held last night.

I have arranged for the Highways Agency to attend our next PC meeting in October. Obviously we are very concerned about how the new proposal will affect Peacock Lane/West Lane.

I will forward your email to our Chairman, Gary Pemberton. and Cllr Hay.

Regards

Doreen Walker
Clerk to High Legh Parish Council
Tel: 01925 754818
www.highleghparishcouncil.gov.uk

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Your ref:

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A556 Knutsford to Bowdon Project
Team
Highways Agency
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester M1 2WD

Direct Line: 0161 930 5998

29 February 2012

Dear Sir/ Madam

A556 KNUTSFORD TO BOWDON ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS

AMENDMENTS TO THE PUBLIC CONSULTATION SUMMARY DOCUMENT JANUARY TO APRIL 2012

Following comments received during our public consultation, we have reviewed the Consultation Summary Document and made amendments to one of the maps contained within it.

The enclosed map replaces the two maps shown on page 8/9 and 10 of the Summary Document and shows the corrected locations of cuttings and embankments along the line of the proposed scheme.

These amendments are not changes to the scheme – they are corrections to ensure that the enclosed map is consistent with the other consultation materials already published and made available.

The Public Consultation Summary Document has been revised to include the enclosed map. It can be viewed at www.highways.gov.uk/a556knutsfordbowdon, alongside a range of other consultation documents that are unchanged and show more detailed plans as well as technical and non-technical information about the scheme.

All maps shown in the Summary Document are illustrative only and are not intended to show individual properties.

As noted in the Summary Document more detailed plans showing the extent of the cuttings and embankment information together with details of affected properties can be found in the Preliminary Environmental Information. A detailed engineering map showing this information can also be found as Figure C in the Scheme Assessment Report.

This detailed information continues to be available online. It was shown at the recent Public Exhibitions for the scheme in Cottons Hotel & Spa, Knutsford and remains available to view at the following deposit locations:



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- Knutsford Library, Toft Road, Knutsford, Cheshire, WA16 0PG.
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Telephone: 01625 374873 / e-mail: knutsford.library@cheshireeast.gov.uk
- Cheshire East Council's Macclesfield Customer Service Centre, Town Hall, Market Place, Macclesfield, SK10 1EA.
Open: Monday – Friday 8:45am – 5pm. Telephone: 0300 123 55 00
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Open: Monday 9am – 7pm, Tuesday 9am – 5pm, Wednesday 9am – 7pm, Thursday 9am – 1pm, Friday 9am – 5pm, Saturday 9:30am – 1pm.
Telephone: 01270 375355 / e-mail: sandbach.library@cheshireeast.gov.uk
- Trafford Council's 'Welcome Point', Waterside House, Sale Waterside, Sale, M33 7ZF.
Open: Monday 9am – 7pm, Tuesday 9am – 5pm, Wednesday 9am – 7pm, Thursday 9am – 5pm, Friday 9am – 5pm, Saturday 10am – 4pm.
Telephone: 0161 912 2000 / e-mail: access.trafford@trafford.gov.uk
- Little Bollington C of E Primary School, Lymm Road, Little Bollington, Cheshire.
Likely viewing times: Monday – Friday 3.30pm – 4.30pm.
Telephone: 01565 830344
- Highways Agency office, 9th Floor, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester, M1 2WD.
Viewing times: Monday – Friday 9am – 5pm. Telephone: 0161 930 5998

The consultation period remains open until 16 April 2012 and we continue to welcome your comments.

If you have already contributed to the consultation and would like to discuss any aspect of your submission, or to submit a further response, please feel free to contact our project team.

Similarly, should you require any further information on the scheme itself please contact the A556 Knutsford to Bowdon Project Team.

Yours sincerely

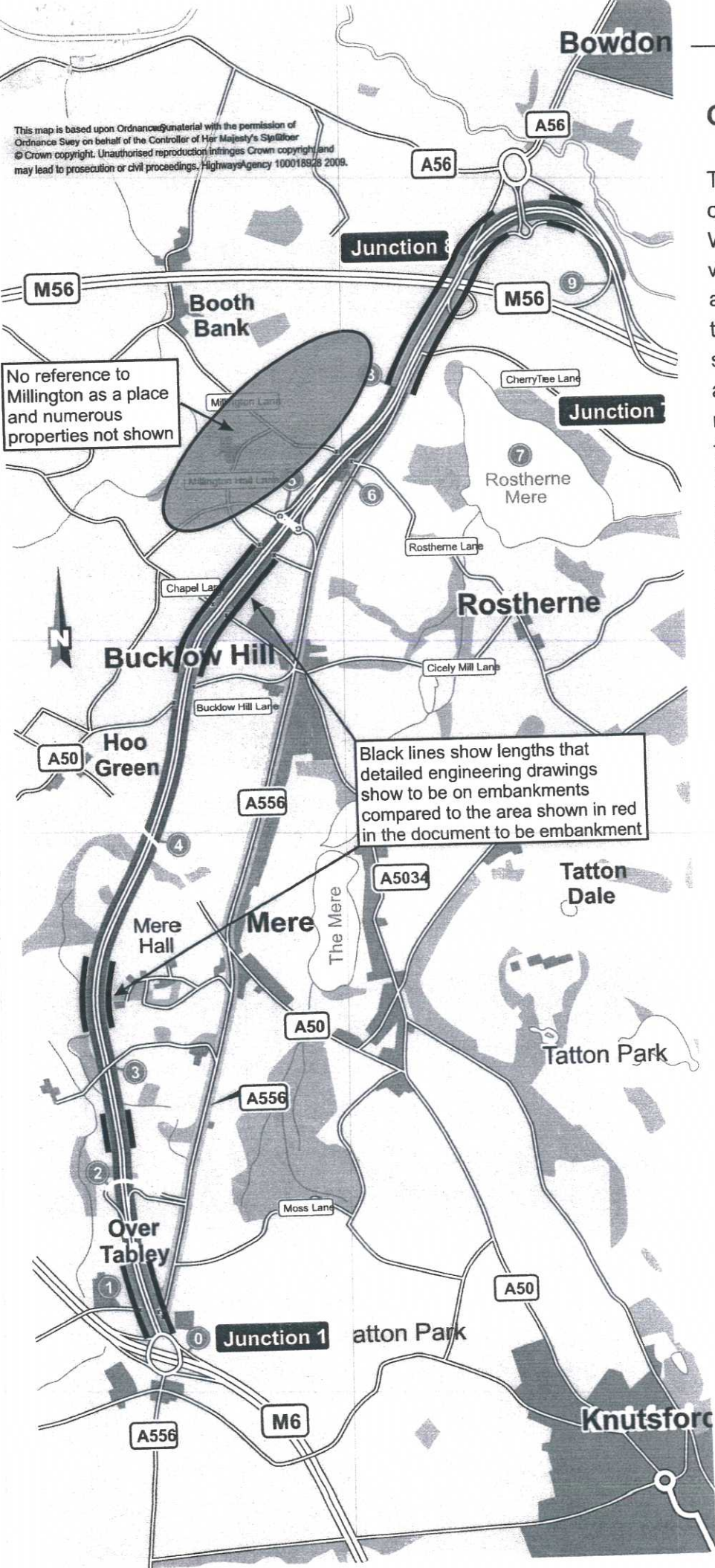

Arun Hans Sahni
Major Projects North
Email: A566knutsfordbowdon@highways.gsi.gov.uk



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No reference to Millington as a place and numerous properties not shown

Black lines show lengths that detailed engineering drawings show to be on embankments compared to the area shown in red in the document to be embankment

Cuttings and embankments

The new A556 would be mostly in cuttings below existing ground level. We have introduced these cuttings where possible to minimise the adverse appearance and noise from the new A556. In certain areas, where shallow cuttings or embankments are unavoidable, we plan to create raised earth mounds next to the road to reduce the adverse impacts. The locations of the cuttings (≡) and embankments (≡) are shown on the diagram. More detailed plans can be found in the Preliminary Environmental Information.

De-trunking (≡) of the bypassed section of the A556. The new A556 would bypass the current route of the A556 between M6 Junction 19 (①) and the connection between the offline and online sections (③). Where this happens, the current road would move from the control of the Highways Agency. It would become the responsibility of Cheshire East Council as the local highway authority. This process is called 'de-trunking'. As the A556 scheme would take the majority of traffic away from this de-trunked section, we intend to carry out works to reflect this reduced use. These works would also make the de-trunked road more suitable for use by people making local journeys and for non-motorised traffic. The only accesses to the new A556 from the de-trunked road in the baseline scheme design would be through the Tabley and Millington Junctions. The existing connection with M6 Junction 19 would be removed. You can find more information about the proposals for the de-trunking works on the following pages.