

From: [REDACTED]
To: [M42 Junction 6](#)
Subject: Re: M42 Junction 6 Improvement TR010027
Date: 25 April 2019 22:11:40
Attachments: [181001_OSS_M42_J6_consultation_response.pdf](#)

Dear Sirs,

Thank you for your letter of 23 April 2019.

I wish to attend the Preliminary Meeting and would like to speak on Item 3 Initial Assessment of Principal Issues.

I would like to request that the stopping up and diversion of Public Rights of Way be examined as a separate Principal Issue.

The points I would like to make are that (a) a large network of public footpaths linked to the public transport hub at Birmingham International is affected by the scheme, (b) there were 5 main concerns in the response submitted by the Open Spaces Society which have not been addressed, (c) it hasn't proved possible to meet with Highways England and Solihull MBC for an objective evaluation of options to resolve these concerns, and (d) inclusion of Public Rights of Way in Principal Issue 5 would not be the most convenient way of dealing with provisions for non-motorised users.

I attach herewith the last consultation response to Highways England.

Yours faithfully,

Richard Lloyd
OSS Local Correspondent, Solihull

On Tuesday, 23 April 2019, 11:58:21 BST, M42 Junction 6 <M42Junction6@planninginspectorate.gov.uk> wrote:

Dear Sir/ Madam

Planning Act 2008 – Section 88 and The Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010 – Rule 6

Application by Highways England for an Order Granting Development Consent for the M42 Junction 6 Improvement

Notice of Preliminary Meeting, Open Floor Hearing, Issue Specific Hearing and matters to be discussed

Your reference: 20022308

Please find below a website link to the Rule 6 letter giving notice of, and the agenda for, the Preliminary Meeting and Open Floor Hearing to be held on 21 May 2019 and Issue Specific Hearing to be held on 22 May 2019 at the Ramada Hotel, The Square, Solihull, West Midlands, B91 3RF

<https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/projects/TR010027/TR010027-000328-Rule%206%20Final%20for%20M42%20j6%20.pdf>

If this link does not open automatically, please cut and paste it into your browser, or contact us for assistance.

Yours faithfully,

M42 Junction 6 Improvement Project Team

Email: M42junction6@planninginspectorate.gov.uk

Telephone: 0303 444 5000

Web: <https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk>

Response of the Open Spaces Society to the Further Consultation on the M42 Junction 6 Improvement Scheme

1. Introduction

The Society welcomes the opportunity to make a further contribution to the development of this important scheme during the consultation running from 4 September 2018 to 2 October 2018.

Consultation has resulted in a number of changes that lessen the impact of the scheme on the environment, and improve access for non-motorised users. However, there is still more to be done for the benefit of users on foot, who are particularly affected by inappropriate route diversions and exposure to vehicle traffic. Amenity and convenience should be key considerations.

For reasons of clarity, our main objections are given in section 2 below, while comments on the recent developments of the proposals are listed separately in section 3. A map showing the principle concerns is given at the end.

2. Objections to the scheme

2.1 Errors

Despite earlier representations, there are errors in the depicted alignments of several Public Footpaths.

These include M106, which is proposed to be stopped-up, where it crosses the field south of the Clock interchange; M107, southwest of M42 Junction 6; and M123, south of Shadowbrook Lane and east of the new link road.

2.2 Public Footpath M106 Green Man Trail (part)

There has been no resolution of the loss of this important link between Birmingham International Station and the footpath network to the south of the A45.

The proposal is still to divert the path on a circuitous route around the field edge, then onto the cycle path beside Airport Way, and continuing around three major roundabouts and crossing major roads at each of them. The route is nearly a kilometre longer, and would take an extra 10 minutes to walk. The environment, alongside a high-speed road, is unsuitable for pedestrians, and the crossing of major traffic flows introduces further hazards and inconvenience. The new field-edge sections would be additional maintenance burdens on the Highway Authority.

The eastern overbridge of the Clock Interchange is 14 m wide, and it would appear the unused space could be used to accommodate an extra lane for vehicle traffic, while keeping the path for non-motorised users. The absence of any detailed analysis in the scheme documents suggests there is scope for further study.

It is understood that a third lane is also to be added to the slip road onto the A45 east-bound. The current two-lane road is not too difficult for pedestrians to cross in normal conditions, but widening the road would create a need for one or two pedestrian refuges between the lanes.

The field crossed by M106 to the south of the A45 is designated for landscaping and ecological mitigation, so there should be little difficulty in adopting a more direct route, as shown in error on the scheme plans.

Retention and enhancement of Footpath M106 is essential to meet the declared aims of maintaining current levels of connectivity for non-motorised and vulnerable users. It would also benefit users of the footway/ cycleway along the south side of the A45 who wish to access the Station (see 3.11 below). There is concern that insufficient priority has been given to developing a solution.

2.3 Public Footpaths running west from the proposed new link road

The proposed link road will sever four public footpaths between the Bickenhill/ Hampton area and points to the west, such as Castle Hills and Elmdon Park. From north to south, these are Public Footpaths M109, M112, M113, and M113A.

The scheme proposes to link the severed eastern ends of these paths with a new bridleway on the west side of the new road. This would connect around to Bickenhill village at the north, and to the existing pedestrian/ cycle path running southwards along Catherine de Barnes Lane.

2.4 Public Footpath M109

This path is a principal route between Bickenhill and Elmdon. The line of M109 crosses the link road just at the start of the south slip to the Bickenhill roundabout. The proposal is to close 220 m of the path, and to divert walkers some 170 m along St Peters Lane over the new overbridge, and then back south 195 m on the bridleway above and to the west of the link road.

Although the proposed diversion is less than ideal, the prolongation of the route by about 150 m is probably not enough to justify provision of a footbridge.

However, closure of the 110 m segment between St Peters Lane and Catherine de Barnes Lane lacks justification, as the path provides a useful short-cut between the two. This section should be retained.

2.5 Public Footpath M112

Public Footpath M112 is the main path running west from Bickenhill to Castle Hills and Elmdon Park. It's also popular with aircraft enthusiasts, because of its closeness to the end of the Airport runway.

M112 is the natural extension of the longer distance route from Hampton-in-Arden, made up of Public Footpaths M121 and M111 and St Peters Lane.

M112 would cross both the link road itself, and the southbound slip to the Bickenhill roundabout, so the scheme proposes to close the path all the way from St Peters Lane to the intersection with the new bridleway west of the link road, some 280 m.

Bearing in mind the other proposed closures, severance of M112 would have a serious impact on both local and longer distance pedestrian traffic, with a marked reduction in convenience and amenity. It would be counter to the stated objectives of enhancing connections and creating integrated and safe routes for non-motorised users.

Retention of M112 on its current alignment is supported by its position in the centre of the scheme, as well as its contribution to the path network as a whole. At this location, the new roads are in a cutting, so an overbridge would be essentially flat and with few, if any, steps or ramps, but the total span would be 120 m across the cutting.

The 90 m long initial section of the path between St Peters Lane and Catherine de Barnes Lane should stay on its current line.

2.6 Public Footpath M113

The scheme proposes to stop-up Public Footpath M113 for 140 m from Catherine de Barnes Lane to the intersection with the new bridleway on the west side of the link road. The severance of this path would affect residents in St Peters Lane, who would have to use tortuous routes to the north or south to access countryside to the west. However, although provision of a footbridge would be practicable, provided the routes of M112 and M113A were retained and improved, as proposed in sections 2.5 above and 2.7 below, the demand in this location would probably be insufficient.

2.7 Public Footpath M113A

Public Footpath M113A is the continuation on the west side of Catherine de Barnes Lane of Public Footpath M122 to the east.

The proposed stopping-up of the western section of Public Footpath M122 means that users would now join Catherine de Barnes Lane at the Barbers Coppice roundabout, 100 m south of the present exit from the path, after following the south side of the Mainline North Merge Slip. The amenity will be poor, due to vehicle traffic and the roadside environment, and to continue north along the west side of Catherine de Barnes Lane would be equally unattractive.

To provide a short and more agreeable route, it is recommended that M113A be diverted southwards along the western boundary of the property Four Winds, and then to the access road off the Barbers Coppice roundabout. The land is already designated as part of the search area for replacement land for the Warwickshire Gaelic Athletic Association, and this proposed diversion would facilitate reconfiguration of the site.

3. Comments on scheme changes

3.1 Southern Junction (M42 Junction 5a) Slip Roads and Junction

Minor alterations to the junction and realignment of the slip roads at the new Southern Junction, which have been moved closer to the M42 carriageway.

The reduced impact on the Scheduled Ancient Woodland is welcome.

3.2 Solihull Road Overbridge

The span of the bridge has been decreased.

The reduced impact on the Scheduled Ancient Woodland is welcome.

3.3 Solihull Road Overbridge Footway provision

The layout has been redesigned for future provision of footway.

Future provision of a footway along Solihull Road by Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council would be welcome.

3.4 Surface water storage and treatment system, SE of new southern Junction

An upgrade to the existing surface water drainage tank.

The new access from Solihull Road for maintenance purposes should be landscaped to minimise intrusion.

3.5 Surface water storage and treatment system, northwest of M42 Junction 5a.

Storage and treatment strategy altered to underground storage and reed beds.

The reduced landscape impact is welcome.

3.6 New overbridge between Shadowbrook Lane and Solihull Road

Provision of a new accommodation bridge over the link road between Shadowbrook Lane and Solihull Road.

The proposed bridge would meet the need to retain the north-south connectivity of Public Footpath M123, although it introduces an undesirable loop in the route.

The retention of more sections than originally proposed, of Public Footpaths M122 and M123, will be beneficial for both local and long-distance users.

The proposed new route of the east-west Public Footpath M122 - over the bridge and then alongside the Merge Slip road - would be more acceptable if there were a matching realignment of M113A on the west side of Catherine de Barnes Lane, as detailed in section 2.3 above.

3.7 Roundabout near Barbers Coppice

The roundabout has been moved closer to Catherine de Barnes Lane and reduced in size.

The reduced land take is welcome.

3.8 Access route to the west of the new link road

The proposed bridleway to the west of the new link road to be redesignated as a Proposed Means of Access.

The impact on non-motorised users is not thought to be significant.

3.9 New Bickenhill Roundabout

The roundabout has been relocated approximately 100m further south to better connect with St Peters Lane and the new link road off-slip.

The relocation is not significant for non-motorised users.

3.10 Drainage system south of the Clock Interchange

The storage and treatment arrangement has been modified and relocated to the west of the Link Road away from Church Lane.

The reduced landscape impact is welcome.

3.11 Footway/ cycleway provision at Clock Interchange.

The footway/ cycleway provision to the south-west of Clock Interchange has been altered to provide safer access to the airport and along the southern side of the A45 towards the M42 Junction 6.

The footway/ cycleway along the A45 in this area has no connection to the Public Footpaths running parallel further south. The proposed changes are satisfactory for non-motorised users travelling eastwards along the A45 and then north toward the Airport on Airport Way.

For travellers going to Birmingham International Station, the route is longer and more exposed to traffic than that currently available. Provision should be made for non-motorised users, who cross the new link road on Airport Way, to descend to the current footway continuing from Public Footpath M106 (see section 2.2 above).

3.12 Clock Interchange

It is proposed to include a free flow link road from the new Link Road to the A45 westbound at Clock Interchange.

This link requires the changes to the footway/ cycleway discussed above.

3.13 New bridge - A45 north of Church Lane, Bickenhill

It is proposed to include a new pedestrian/ cycle bridge linking Church Lane, Bickenhill to facilities to the north of the A45.

Improved access across the A45 for non-motorised users is welcome, and is a long-overdue improvement. It is in a suitable location to cater for foot and cycle traffic between the Railway Station and the National Motorcycle Museum and other points to the east, as well as serving the local community in Church Lane. However, it does not address the severance of pedestrian routes further west.

3.14 Bus stop on A45 westbound

The bus stop on the Airport Way link road is to be relocated closer to Church Lane.

This change will improve access for local residents.

3.15 Link - A45 eastbound to M42 northbound

The A45 eastbound to M42 northbound free flow link arrangement has been altered.

Not significant for non-motorised users as long as the new bridge (change 3.13) is provided.

3.16 M42 southbound slip road to Junction 6 and Eastway

The Slip Road and associated links to Eastway and to the A45 Eastbound roundabout has been reconfigured.

There is no provision for pedestrians on Eastway, but retention of the overbridge across the M42 might benefit some non-motorised users.

3.17 M42 Junction 6 dedicated southwest slip road to Airport Way

The free flow link from M42 northbound at Junction 6 onto A45 westbound is proposed to be closed to general traffic and is being retained for emergency use only.

Public Footpath M107 crosses this link road, between Wyckhams Close and the M42 J6 roundabout, and a footway continues NW and W alongside the carriageway from the crossing point. There could be a safety issue for pedestrians if they are unaware there may be emergency vehicles on the link road, potentially travelling at high speed. Signage should be provided to alert both pedestrians and the drivers of emergency vehicles.

3.18 North-east of M42 Junction 6

Additional drainage storage and treatment device now proposed.

No significant landscape impact.

3.19 Middle Bickenhill Lane Loop

Two-way access to Middle Bickenhill Lane to be provided.

Not significant for non-motorised users.

3.20 South-west quadrant of M42 Junction 6

Additional land is required temporarily during construction.

This area is crossed by Public Footpath M107 between the M42 J6 roundabout and the footbridge over the Rugby and Birmingham railway. It is essential that access be maintained during construction, due to the absence of alternative routes.

3.21 NEC car parks and internal access roads

Additional land is required.

No particular impact on non-motorised users is anticipated.

3.22 Warwickshire Gaelic Athletic Association

Land previously identified for a potential relocation site is now no longer required.

No comment.

3.23 Land adjacent to the Arden Hotel and north of the A45

Additional land is required.

Not of concern.

3.24 Bickenhill Meadows Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)

Additional land required on a temporary basis.

No objection, subject to appropriate supervision of the ecological impacts.

3.25 Footway adjacent to NMM/NCC and A45 westbound to M42 J6 slip

Additional land is required to potentially enhance pedestrian facilities.

Improved cycle/pedestrian provision would be welcome. An upgrade would be of most benefit to cyclists travelling along the A45, as the environment is not ideal for foot traffic, and there is no convenient crossing of the A45 to areas of interest on the north side.

The project would be an opportunity to improve pedestrian access parallel to and across the A45 dual carriageway via the Eastway underpass and loop. About 130 m of new Public Right of Way would be needed to link the loop road on the south side of the A45 with Public Footpath M107 running east-west 140 m south of the dual carriageway. Also required would be a 200 m extension of the footway beside the loop road.

This would provide a shorter pedestrian connection between the Old Station Road area and Middle Bickenhill to the north of the A45, with less exposure to vehicle traffic. Possibly, the north-south section of M107, on the eastern boundary of the National Motorcycle Museum and terminating on the A45, would be found to be redundant.

Richard Lloyd, OSS Local Correspondent, Solihull

Principal concerns of the OSS

