

M60/M62/M66 Simister Island Interchange

TR010064

5.2 CONSULTATION REPORT ANNEX

ANNEX A: Options Consultation Brochure

APFP Regulation 5(2)(q)

Planning Act 2008

Infrastructure Planning (Applications: Prescribed
Forms and Procedure) Regulations 2009

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Infrastructure Planning

Planning Act 2008

**The Infrastructure Planning
(Applications: Prescribed Forms and
Procedure) Regulations 2009**

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A.1 Options Consultation Brochure

M60

Junction 18 Simister Island Interchange Public consultation



Share your views
June to August 2020

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Investing in your roads

At Highways England we believe in a connected country and our network makes these connections happen. We strive to improve our major roads and motorways - engineering the future to keep people moving today and moving better tomorrow. We want to make sure all our major roads are more dependable, durable and, most importantly, safe.

In the north-west, we are investing in ways to increase capacity and improve connections to make sure your journeys are as reliable as possible. Jobs and businesses rely on our roads and we keep the local economy running, whether through ports in Merseyside and Lancashire or keeping shop shelves stocked in Stockport.

The M60 Junction 18 Simister Island Interchange scheme is a critical part of this investment. This scheme will improve journeys through junctions 17 and 18 and beyond, which is great news for the local and regional economy.

In this brochure we describe our proposed improvements for M60 Junction 18 Simister Island Interchange and the options under consideration. We also explain how you can give us your feedback during the public consultation.

We're consulting
from Monday 22
June to Monday 17
August

Our consultation

We're holding a public consultation on our proposals to improve M60 Junction 18 Simister Island Interchange. We'd like to hear what you think, so please share any concerns, ideas or local knowledge that you may have. The consultation will run for 8 weeks, from **Monday 22 June to Monday 17 August**.

Coronavirus is affecting us all, presenting significant challenges and demanding new and adaptive ways of working. The situation is constantly developing and changing, and it is essential that we observe and comply with the UK Government's restrictions.

For Highways England, this means that we are not holding face-to-face public consultation events as we would normally do. We are instead providing alternative ways for you to access scheme information, ask questions and ultimately make an informed response to the public consultation.

Details on where to find information and how to get in touch with us are found on page 2 of this brochure.

Why your opinion matters

The feedback and comments you provide will help us to understand the local area better as well as the scheme benefits and any potential impacts.

All responses received during the public consultation will be recorded and analysed. Where it is possible, we will use your feedback to help develop the scheme design or to help identify ways to address concerns about the impacts of the scheme.

How to respond

We'd like to hear your views. Please share any concerns, ideas or local knowledge that you may have. You can respond using one of the following methods.

- **Online:** complete the consultation response form online at:
www.highwaysengland.co.uk/m60-j18-simister-island
- **Post:** complete a paper copy of the consultation response form and return it using the freepost address:
FREEPOST M60 J18 SIMISTER ISLAND

Simply put the completed response form in an envelope with the freepost address written on the front and put it in your local post box. There is no need to use a stamp.

Please note: All responses must be received by Highways England by **11:59pm on Monday 17 August 2020**. Responses received after this date may not be considered. Because of the potential impact on Royal Mail's services due to the coronavirus, we recommend responding via our online form where possible.

Where to get more information

We want to make sure you have access to all the information you need about the scheme. Our information channels below are available for you to access during the consultation:

- Visit our scheme webpage at www.highwaysengland.co.uk/m60-j18-simister-island
- You can speak to a member of the project team during one of our telephone consultation events by calling **141 0117 2444 061** during the following dates and times:
 - Tuesday 30 June 11am – 7pm
 - Tuesday 7 July 11am – 7pm
 - Saturday 11 July 11am – 7pm
 - Tuesday 14 July 11am – 7pm
 - Saturday 18 July 11am – 7pm
 - Tuesday 21 July 11am – 7pm
- We'll be holding online chat events and we'll publicise the details of these events on our webpage.

If you would like more information on accessing the consultation materials, require printed copies of the materials or have a query about the consultation, please contact us on the following details:

Phone our Customer Contact Centre on **0300 123 5000**

Email the project team at M60J18SimisterIslandInterchange@highwaysengland.co.uk

Why is the scheme needed?

In March 2020, the Government's second Road Investment Strategy included a commitment for Highways England to improve Simister Island Interchange between the M62, M60 and M66. Simister Island Interchange is one of the busiest motorway junctions in the north-west used by around 90,000 vehicles each day. The junction struggles with such high volumes of traffic above what it was designed for, and as a result suffers from congestion and poor journey time reliability.

We have developed two proposed options for the scheme. Both options are to improve junction 18 of the M60 and facilitate smoother flows of traffic along the M60, M62 and M66 in the scheme area, contributing to more reliable and safer journeys into and around Greater Manchester.

To complement improvements at Simister Island Interchange, we will also convert the hard shoulder into a permanent traffic lane between M60 junctions 17 and 18, providing 5 lanes in both directions. This will provide additional benefits to those delivered through the Manchester smart motorways scheme and reduce delays through the improved junction as well as on the M60. We're also aware of the recent Department for Transport stocktake of smart motorways and will consider these recommendations when we develop the options further.

Scheme Objectives

The main objectives of the scheme are:

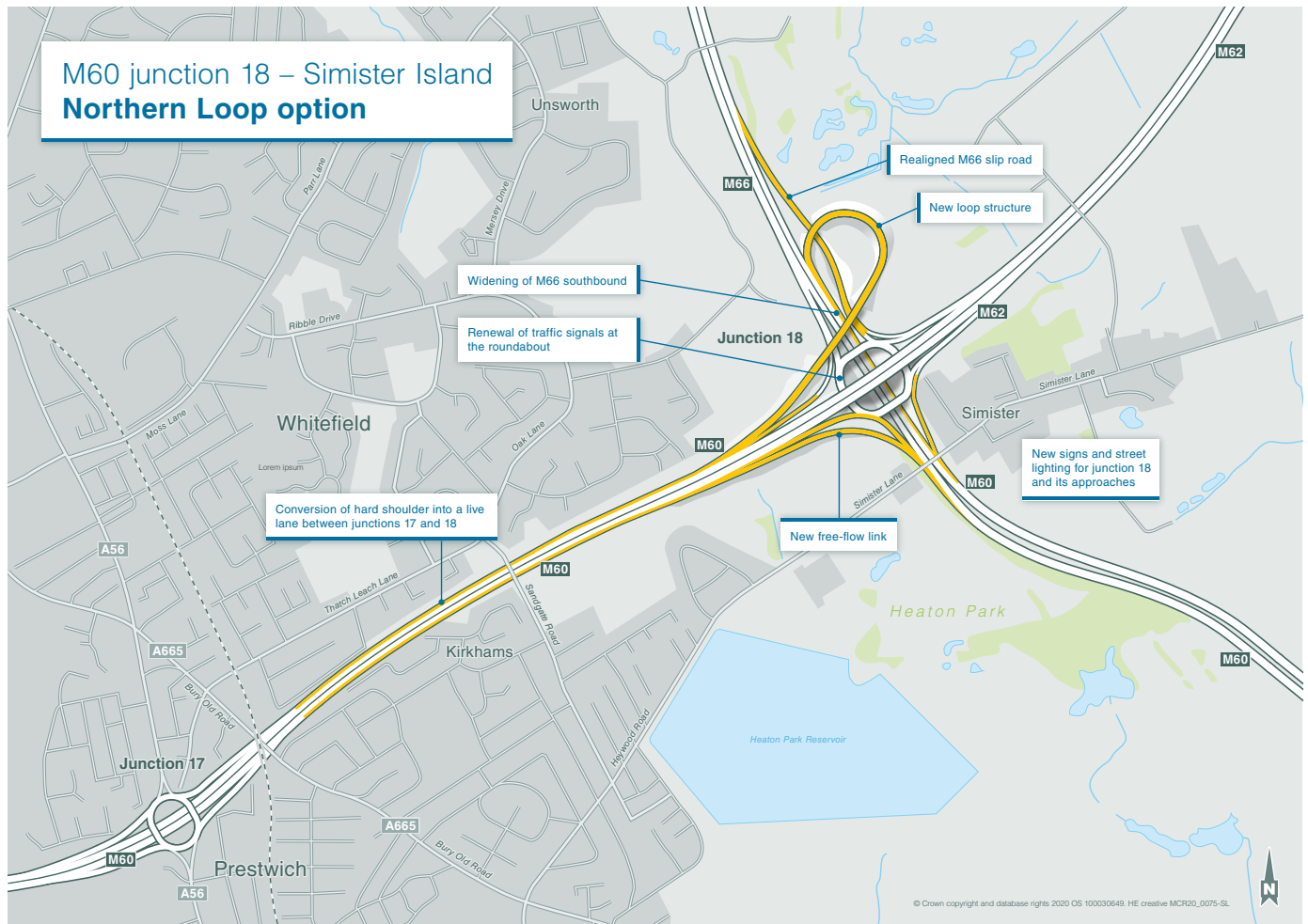
- to improve the journey experience for users of this section of network by:
 - reducing peak congestion
 - reducing journey times
 - delivering more reliable journey times
- to provide an option which is safe for all road users
- to minimise the impact of our option on the surrounding environment including within Noise Important Areas and Air Quality Management Areas
- to facilitate future economic growth across the Greater Manchester area and support the delivery of proposed development sites close to the M60 and M66

The proposed options

We have shortlisted two options for consideration that performed the best against the project objectives, these are the "Northern Loop" and "Inner Links" options.

The two shortlisted options are described in more detail on the following pages. The options we have discounted are described later in this document.

Northern Loop option



Features of the Northern Loop option:

New loop structure

A new structure providing a free-flow link from M60 eastbound to M60 southbound (clockwise), including a new bridge over the M66 and junction 18 slip roads.

Realigned M66 slip road

Realignment of the slip road from the M66 southbound to junction 18 to accommodate the loop. This includes a new underbridge where the loop crosses the slip road, and realignment of the left turn lane to the M62 eastbound.

New free-flow link

A new two-lane free-flow link from the M60 northbound to the M60 westbound (anti-clockwise), to replace the existing single-lane link.

Widening of M66 southbound

M66 southbound to be widened to 4 lanes as it passes through junction 18.

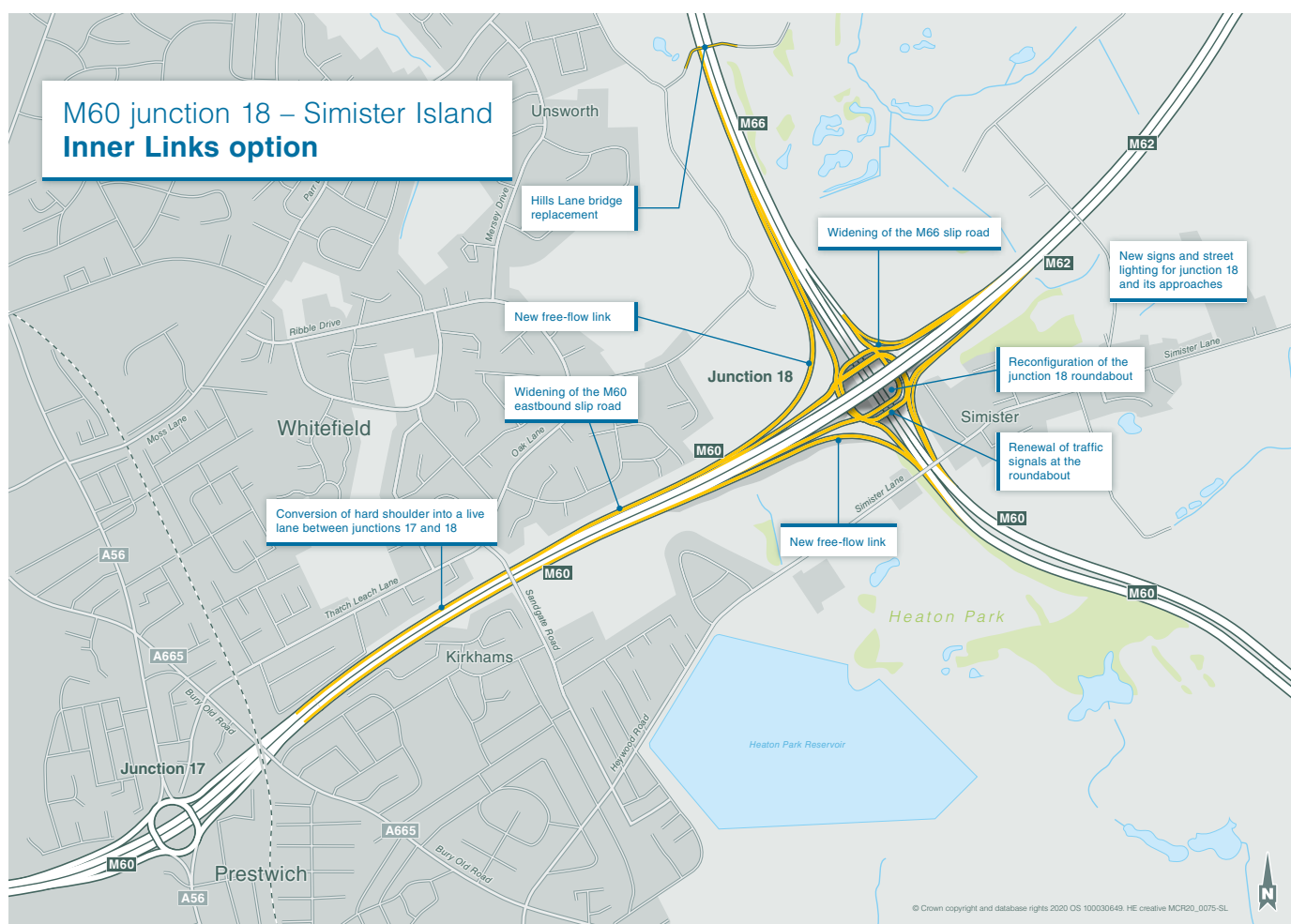
Conversion of hard shoulder between junctions 17 and 18

We will convert the hard shoulder into a permanent traffic lane between M60 junctions 17 and 18, providing 5 lanes in both directions (all lane running).

Renewal of signs and signals

- New signs and street lighting at junction 18 and its approaches.
- Renewed traffic signals at the junction 18 roundabout.
- New gantries on the M66 southbound, and between junctions 17 and 18.

Inner Links option



Features of the Inner Links option:

Reconfiguration of the junction 18 roundabout

Reconfiguration of the roundabout at junction 18 will separate traffic movements and allow an easier flow of traffic through the junction. Within the junction there are 2 new bridges over the M66.

New free-flow links

- A new two-lane free-flow link from the M60 northbound to the M60 westbound (anti-clockwise), to replace the existing single-lane link.
- New two lane free-flow lane link from the M60 eastbound to the M66 northbound.

Widening of the M60 eastbound slip road

M60 eastbound slip road to junction 18 to be widened to 3 lanes.

Widening of the M66 slip road

M66 southbound slip road to junction 18 to be widened and left turn lane to the M62 eastbound realigned.

Hills Lane bridge replacement

The Hills Lane bridge will be widened to allow the M60 eastbound to M66 northbound link road to join the M66 safely.

Conversion of hard shoulder between junctions 17 and 18

We will convert the hard shoulder into a permanent traffic lane between M60 junctions 17 and 18, providing 5 lanes in both directions (all lane running).

Renewal of signs and signals

- New signs and street lighting at junction 18 and its approaches.
- Renewed traffic signals at the junction 18 roundabout.
- New gantries between junctions 17 and 18.

Benefits and impacts of the proposed options

To assess the benefits and impacts of the proposed options, we considered a variety of key aspects shown below. We will undertake more detailed surveys and assessments based on statutory requirements and national guidance as the scheme progresses.

Aspect	Benefit/impact of Northern Loop option	Benefit/impact of Inner Links option
Journey times and traffic congestion	<p>Overall, the proposed improvements to junction 18 as part of this option will increase capacity and maximise the free flow of traffic through the junction.</p> <p>The Northern Loop structure will improve journey times for those travelling eastbound to southbound on the M60 with this traffic no longer stopping at junction 18.</p> <p>Introducing a two-lane link from the M60 northbound to the M60 westbound to two-lanes will increase capacity and reduce delays at this section of the junction.</p> <p>Increasing the number of traffic lanes from four to five between junctions 17 and 18 will increase the capacity on the M60 and facilitate traffic joining and leaving the M60 at these two junctions. This will help to reduce journey times by over 25% and improve journey time reliability.</p> <p>The improvements to journey times for this option are better than the improvements provided by the Inner Links option.</p> <p>The Northern Loop option provides more free flow links at junction 18, making it more efficient than the Inner Links option which still requires most traffic to continue using the main junction.</p>	<p>Overall, the proposed improvements to junction 18 as part of this option will increase capacity and reduce delays to traffic passing through the junction.</p> <p>Widening the link from the M60 northbound to the M60 westbound to two-lanes and introducing a new free-flow link from M60 eastbound to the M66 northbound will increase capacity and reduce delays at these sections of the junction.</p> <p>Introducing a two-lane link from the M60 northbound to the M60 westbound to two-lanes will increase capacity and reduce delays at this section of the junction.</p> <p>Increasing the number of traffic lanes from four to five between junctions 17 and 18 will increase the capacity of the M60, and facilitate traffic joining and leaving the M60 at these two junctions. This will help to reduce journey times by over 25% and improve journey time reliability.</p> <p>However, the introduction of additional traffic signals on the junction 18 roundabout may contribute to increased journey times for some journeys at certain times of day.</p>
Air quality	<p>Simister Island and sections of the connecting motorways (M60, M66 and M62) are located within an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA).</p> <p>To understand the effect our options will have on air quality, our experts have developed an air quality model to predict the impact of each option when it is open for traffic. The model forecasts potential changes in air quality at key sensitive locations such as houses and schools.</p> <p>Other data we have used to build up a picture of air quality within the study area includes the 2016 Air Quality Annual Status Report (July 2017) and data from Defra's Automatic Urban and Rural Network (AURN). We're also using air quality monitoring data gathered by Highways England at locations around the scheme over a six-month period between 2015 and 2016.</p> <p>The work done so far suggests that neither the Northern Loop or The Inner Links option will cause a significant change in air quality. Based on the assessments completed to date, the scheme should not affect the UK's ability to achieve compliance with the EU Air Quality Directive in the shortest time scales possible.</p> <p>We will carry out air quality surveys as the scheme develops to support and verify our assessment.</p>	
Noise	<p>The scheme study area covers some of the Noise Important Areas to the north of Manchester. We have completed a noise assessment of the existing route and developed a model to predict the impact of each option when it is open for traffic.</p> <p>Our model suggests that both options are likely to cause minor changes in noise inside and outside of Noise Important Areas. Some areas will see an increase in noise levels and others will see a decrease. Whilst overall these changes are unlikely to be noticeable, mitigation will be included in the design. This will ensure that any increases in noise are kept below the acceptable levels defined by policy.</p> <p>The mitigation measures we'll consider will include noise barriers, increasing the height of existing barriers or introducing low noise surfacing.</p> <p>If the Inner Links option is chosen, a small number of residential properties may experience a noticeable decrease in noise.</p> <p>We will continue to carry out noise monitoring surveys and modelling as the scheme develops.</p>	
Cultural heritage	<p>We have assessed the potential impacts on cultural heritage within the vicinity of the scheme, accounting for possible impacts on historic buildings, archaeological remains or landscape. Neither option is expected to have a significant effect on cultural heritage. We will continue to review this as the scheme progresses.</p>	

Aspect	Benefit/impact of Northern Loop option	Benefit/impact of Inner Links option
Landscape	Using field surveys, we have assessed the potential impact of the scheme on the local landscape, and any other visual impacts. We will ensure that, as a minimum, we replant the same amount of vegetation and trees which we need to remove. Where possible, we will also plant additional vegetation to mitigate visual impacts.	
	The Northern Loop option will have more adverse impacts on the landscape than the Inner Links option. This is due to the creation of the new loop road and associated removal of vegetation. The loop structure will be constructed to the same height as the existing junction. There will also be some visual impacts for local residents and users of public rights of way.	The Inner Links option will have some adverse impacts on the landscape due to removal of vegetation associated with construction. There will be some visual impacts for local residents and users of public rights of way.
Nature conservation	We have completed a review of existing habitats to inform the next steps in reducing the impact of the scheme, and we're aware that there are great crested newts in the ponds to the north-east of junction 18. The Northern Loop option has more impact on these ponds than the Inner Links. As a protected species, if great crested newts are found in the project area, we will work with Natural England to ensure that they are moved to an appropriate nearby location. There may also be water voles, bats, breeding birds and reptiles in the area. Detailed surveys will be completed in the next stage of the scheme's development to assess the impact of the chosen option on both species and habitats and to design the mitigation required.	
Road drainage and the water environment	Both options will have an adverse impact on water quality. However, there is potential for these impacts to be mitigated and options for this will be identified and included in the design for the scheme as it progresses. This is likely to include a settlement pond or the introduction of wetland into the design to remove pollutants.	
Contaminated land	Assessments so far suggest that there are unlikely to be significant sources of contamination, however we will continue to review this as the scheme progresses.	
Road safety	The proposals will create a better flow of traffic and reduce queuing at the junction and back onto the M60, reducing the likelihood of incidents.	
Economic growth	Making the M60 less congested will lead to improved journey times and allow more reliable access to work and leisure, locally and across the Central Pennines corridor. The scheme will also provide the necessary highway capacity for future employment and housing growth, contributing to the Government's aspiration of creating greater connectivity and economic growth across the north.	
Construction duration and impacts	We currently expect to start construction of the scheme in 2024 and take two years to build. Both options involve substantial engineering work at a very busy location. We are committed to delivering the scheme safely, minimising disruption to road users and residents. We will publish our construction strategy before we start work on the scheme.	
Land take	The Northern Loop option will require approx. 19.3 hectares of land. Some of this land lies within the existing highway boundary. The design has been developed to minimise the impact on recreational and green belt land as far as possible.	The Inner Links option will require approx. 12.4 hectares of land. Some of this land lies within the existing highway boundary. The design has been developed to minimise the impact on recreational and green belt land as far as possible and has less of an impact on these land categories than the Northern Loop.
Current cost estimate	£80m - £338m	£66m - £243m
	<i>Please note that this is a wide range based on early estimates and is subject to change during later design stages.</i>	

Discounted options

The two options outlined in this brochure have been shortlisted following a thorough option identification process.

We started by identifying individual design elements, that we combined to form five options (A to E).

We then looked at the five options against the scheme objectives and assessed other factors such as value for money.

After these assessments, the options were reduced to two - Options A and C. Options B and D were discounted because when compared to the others, they were:

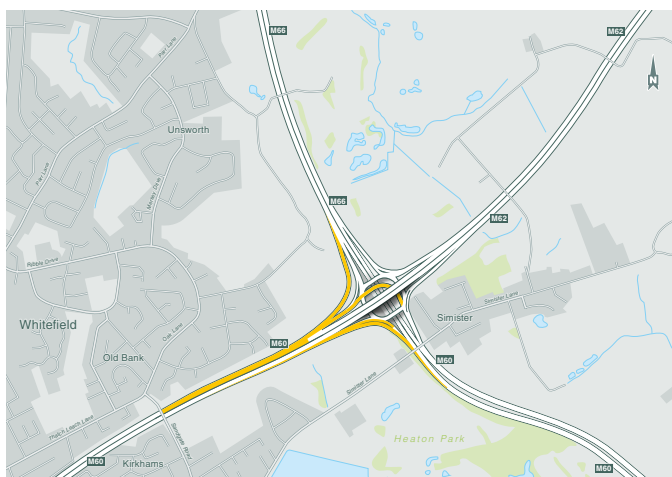
- not as effective at improving journey times or congestion at the junction
- likely to have a more significant environmental impact
- more difficult to construct without adversely impacting road users and safety
- more expensive, without offering as many benefits

Option E consisted of a new free-flow link from the M60 northbound to the M60 westbound and has now been incorporated into both options A and C.

We then refined both options further, producing the two options we are now consulting on - the Northern Loop and the Inner Links.

Options A to D are described in more detail on the following pages.





Option B

Upgrade of the existing junction with a new two-lane link built over the M66 for traffic travelling from the M60 eastbound to M60 southbound.

This option also included an improved link from the M60 northbound to the M60 westbound, and a new link from the M60 eastbound to M66 northbound.

This option was discounted due to the following factors:

Journey times

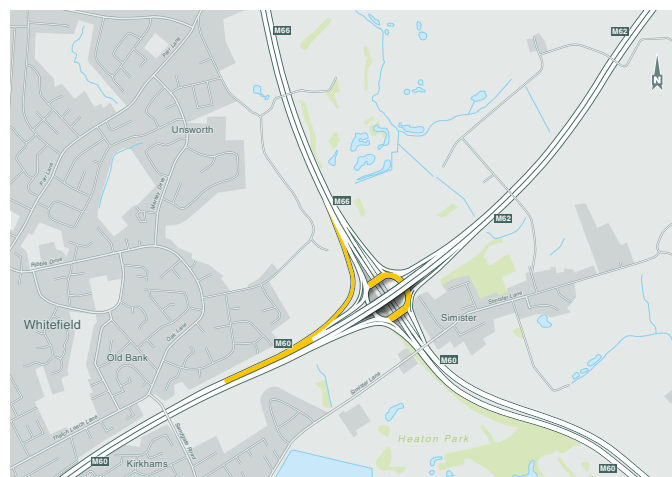
There were limited improvements to journey times and reliability due to the need for new stop lines and traffic signals on the junction.

Safety

The link road between the M60 northbound and M60 westbound would not have been safe enough due to the tighter curve of the road compared to the other options.

Environmental and land

There would be slightly worse impacts on noise and air quality for the community of Simister.



Option D

Upgrade of the existing junction, widening the two overbridges and reducing lane widths, to create 5 lanes through the junction.

This option also included an improved link between the M60 eastbound to M66 northbound.

This option was discounted due to the following factors:

Journey times

There was less improvement to journey times compared with other options.

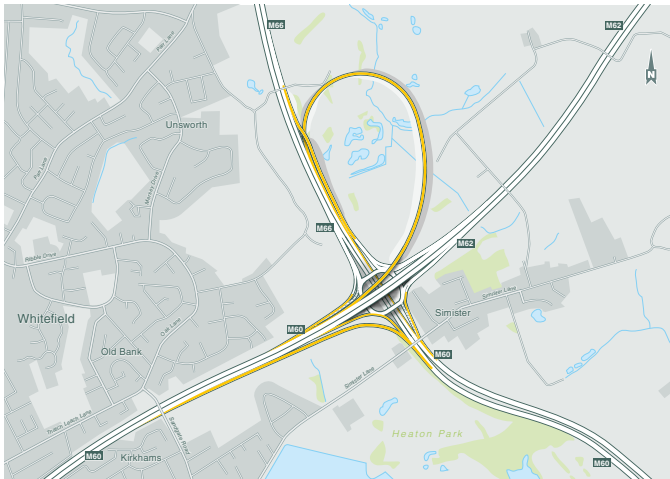
Safety

There were concerns associated with navigating safely around a 5-lane junction.

Disruption and safety during construction

The need to close roads to safely modify an existing structure would cause disruption to our customers.

The options we refined



Option A

Similar to the Northern Loop option but with a longer loop, leaving the M60 at junction 18 itself rather than before the junction.

This option also included the improved link between the M60 northbound and the M60 westbound.

This option was discounted due to the following factors:

Journey times

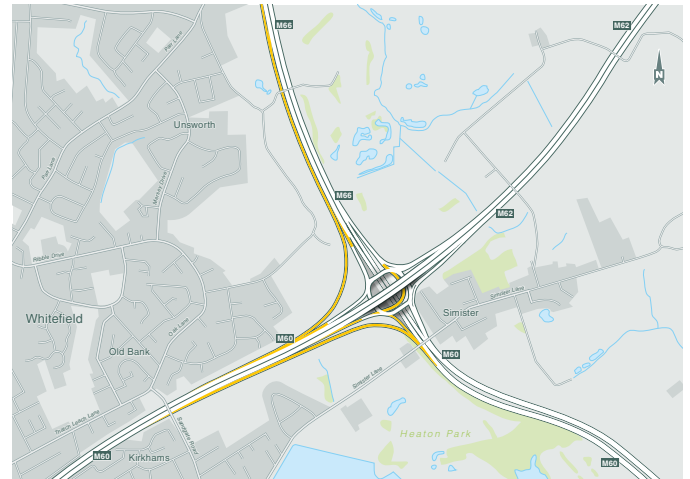
The longer loop led to a slight journey time increase between the M60 eastbound and M60 southbound.

Environmental and land

There would be significant impacts on the local landscape and Pike Fold Golf Course.

Disruption and safety during construction

Constructing a loop over junction 18 itself would be more difficult to construct safely and would require more road closures, causing more disruption to our customers.



Option C

Similar to the Inner Links option, including a new 3-lane link running parallel to the existing M66 southbound to M60 westbound link, but with fewer additional structures and less capacity.

This option also included the improved link between the M60 northbound and the M60 westbound, and an improved link between the M60 eastbound to M66 northbound.

This option was discounted due to the following factors:

Journey times

There were limited improvements to journey times.

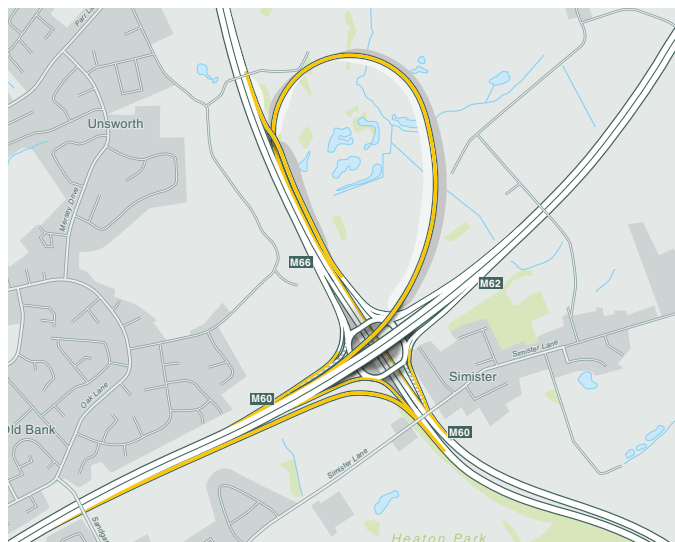
Disruption and safety during construction

The need to close roads to safely modify the existing road network on the north of the junction would cause disruption to customers during construction.

How we refined the options

We refined Option A and Option C to become the Northern Loop and Inner Links options respectively. This section highlights the changes we made to develop the two options we are now presenting for consultation.

Option A



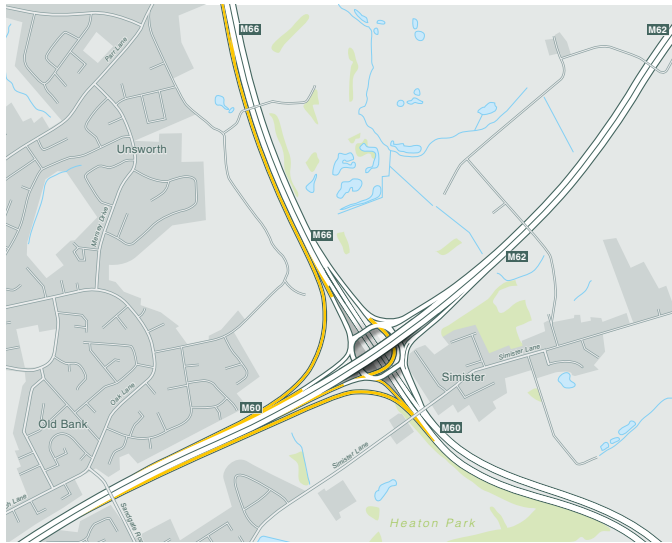
Northern Loop



The changes we made to refine Option A into the Northern Loop option are as follows:

1. The loop providing the M60 eastbound to M60 southbound link has been redesigned.
 - a. The redesigned loop is smaller than Option A, reducing journey times and visual and environmental impact.
 - b. A large part of the loop will be constructed offline, away from existing traffic which is safer and less complex.
2. The M66 southbound off-slip has been realigned to reduce the impact on Pike Fold golf course.
3. The refined option avoids the need for widening at Sandgate Road bridge and Haweswater underpass.

Option C



Inner Links



The changes we made to refine Option C into the Inner Links option are as follows:

1. Introduction of 2 new structures within the junction 18 roundabout to provide additional capacity.
 - a. The additional structures will separate M66 southbound to M60 westbound traffic away from the existing structures at junction 18, improving journey times through the junction.
 - b. The new structures are less complex to build than in Option C and will provide less disruption during construction because they are away from junction 18 itself.
2. Land take has been reduced by amending the M60 eastbound to M66 northbound slip road.
3. The refined option avoids the need for widening Sandgate Road bridge and Haweswater underpass.

Next steps

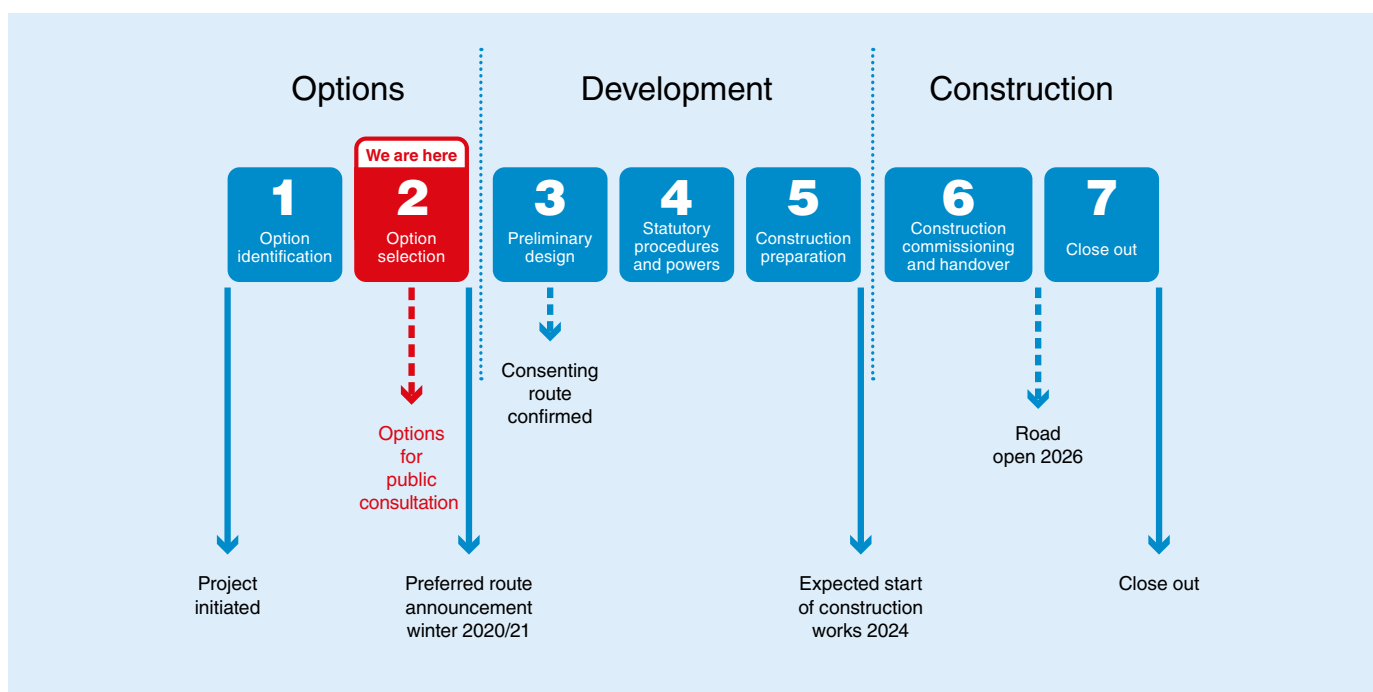
The consultation closes at **11:59 pm on Monday 17 August 2020**. All responses will be independently analysed, and a consultation report will be published. The timeline below shows the next steps following the consultation, up to the preferred route announcement.

Summer 2020	All responses will be analysed then summarised within the consultation report.
End of Summer 2020	The consultation report will be published and made available in a digital format on our website. Paper copies will also be available upon request via the contact details provided.
Autumn 2020	Where possible, and alongside continued surveys and assessments, we will use your feedback to develop the designs and help identify ways to address concerns about the impacts of the scheme.
Winter 2020/21	We will announce our preferred option to take forward to the next stage of design development.

Following this, our preferred route option will be taken through to the preliminary design stage. This is when the detail is developed on the overall design and when we complete the detailed environmental assessments.

Once the scheme preferred option is selected, we will be able to confirm the process that will be used to obtain consent to build the scheme. This will either be under the Planning Act 2008; or the Highways Act 1980, and the required steps to obtain consent will be set out in the Preferred Route Announcement. We will carry out surveys and investigations to allow us to continue to design the preferred option in more detail.

Throughout this process, we will continue to work with environmental and heritage statutory bodies, landowners and stakeholders. The seven-step process for this project is explained in the timeline below.



For more information please visit our website:
www.highwaysengland.co.uk/m60-j18-simister-island

You can also sign up for email alerts, which will update you whenever the website is updated.

If you would like more information on accessing the consultation materials, require printed copies of the materials or have a query about the consultation, please contact us on the following details:

Phone our Customer Contact Centre on **0300 123 5000**

Email the project team at **M60J18SimisterIslandInterchange@highwaysengland.co.uk**

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