Welcome to our latest update on the A417 Missing Link project

The A417 Missing Link is a three-mile stretch of single carriageway between the Brockworth bypass and Cowley roundabout. The A417 provides an essential link to the M5 at Gloucester and the M4 at Swindon and plays a vital role in the daily lives of the many people who use it every day.

Progress update
So far, we’ve identified possible route options for providing a solution to this important stretch of road and held a public consultation on these.

We’ll announce our preferred route in the spring this year.
Surveys
We’ve also been carrying out a range of surveys to help us gather more information on the local area to feed into our ongoing assessment work.

Ecological and hibernation surveys are underway to help us develop a scheme that will improve landscape and ecological connectivity across the local area. We’re using qualified ecologists to survey potential habitats, feeding or breeding areas. This includes looking across an extended area to identify any potential wider repercussions of our work, or any opportunities to enhance conservation value where we can. We’re currently conducting three main ecological surveys:

1. Birds
Our environmental team are working on wintering bird surveys. These surveys record different species of birds, focusing on those that have migrated to the UK for the winter, to assess the potential impact of the scheme on these species.

2. Bats
As bats are a European protected species, we have licenced ecologists carrying out surveys to see how they’d be affected by our proposal. We’re performing hibernation surveys which include daytime inspections of areas that might have suitable habitats for hibernating bats such as buildings, bridges, trees and caves.

Before we can carry out any bat monitoring, we need to find out where they roost and forage by inspecting trees and buildings close to areas where bats have the most potential to roost. This is usually done during the day using ladders, endoscopes and a powerful torch. Specially trained ecologists will climb very tall trees and will also assess whether bats forage on farmland during the night.

3. Badgers
Our badger surveys consist of daytime walkovers, examining fields, woodland boundaries, and hedgerows to identify setts, latrines, paths between setts and feeding areas, scratching posts, hair traces and footprints.

Following on from these initial surveys, we’ll carry out more detailed badger surveys to work out where badgers interact and how we can mitigate the impact of our work.
Topography
We’re carrying out topographical surveys to help us map the physical features of the landscape. This will include surveyors walking along the existing A417 to take measurements of the area. We'll also carry out a LiDAR (Light Detection and Ranging) survey, which involves a helicopter flying over the area, in the same type of movement as a tractor ploughing a field, to measure the form of the landscape.

Ground investigation
Our teams are currently carrying out initial groundwater investigation studies. This includes using some drilling rigs alongside the existing A417 to help us measure underground water conditions. We’re drilling at four key locations (Barrow Wake car park, Ermine Way, National Star College and in the Air Balloon car park) to understand more about ground water conditions. In future, we’ll be expanding our groundwater investigation studies to obtain more detailed information to feed into our appraisal work as we develop the more detailed proposals for the scheme.

Bringing skills to schools
Highways England is inspiring the next generation of engineers and highlighting engineering opportunities within the highways industry through a variety of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) activities across the country.

This week, the team behind the A417 Missing Link hosted a bridge-building exercise with pupils at Birdlip Primary School in Gloucester, helping Year 3-4 pupils to design and build their own bridges. Year 1-2 received a visit from traffic officers Dave and Lynn to learn more about their work on our roads.

In November, the project team also visited Cranham Primary School and Christ Church Primary School in Chalford, where we hosted further welding and bridge-building exercises.

“The children were really engaged with the activity and enjoyed working as teams to apply their knowledge of bridges to their own design.”

– Ms Harbin, Key Stage 1 Teacher at Christ Church Primary School, Chalford
What’s next?
We’re planning to announce our preferred route for the A417 Missing Link in spring 2019. As part of this, we’ll publish the results of the options consultation so that you can see how this has fed into our preferred route selection. After we’ve announced the preferred route we’ll hold a second consultation to get people’s views on our more refined proposals before we submit an application for a Development Consent Order.

Statutory consultation

Development Consent Order (DCO) submission

Development Consent Order (DCO) decision

Start of works

Open to traffic

Monthly web chat
Our next live monthly web chat will be on Wednesday 30 January 2019. You can join and ask us a question on our webpage: www.highwaysengland.co.uk/a417-missing-link

Contact us
For further information about the scheme please:

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