M20 J10A ACCESS TO SOUTH ASHFORD

PUBLIC CONSULTATION REPORT

February 2009

Report Number GR053

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

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PREPARED BY
Name: Duncan Johnston / Peter Shimadry
Position: Graduate Engineer / Deputy Project Manager, Parsons Brinckerhoff
Date: February 2009

AGREED BY
Name: Peter Shimadry
Position: Deputy Project Manager, Parsons Brinckerhoff
Date: February 2009

AUTHORISED BY
Name: Andy Wyatt
Position: Project Manager, Parsons Brinckerhoff
Date: February 2009

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<td>Project Manager</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<td>Andy Wyatt</td>
<td>Project Manager</td>
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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 General

1.1.1 Ashford has been identified as a major growth area for the South East and the provision of 31,000 additional homes and 28,000 new jobs in the area is anticipated by 2031. The M20 Junction 10A scheme is identified as a key transport requirement and is essential to the future development of South Ashford.

1.1.2 The planned growth will include associated improvements in education, leisure, retail and commercial development as well as better travel options and sustainable transport links.

1.1.3 The recent developer-funded improvements to Junction 10 to increase the capacity and improve safety will allow some development to go ahead but will not be sufficient for all the proposed development. The Junction 10A scheme is required to address planned housing growth and is promoted to aid the Government objectives and targets for the south east.

1.1.4 The location plan for the project is shown as Figure 1.

1.1.5 Following design reviews in line with the Ashford development and transport strategy, the Highways Agency (HA) decided to proceed to Public Consultation on a scheme, referred to in this report as ‘the Proposed Option’. Two alternatives showing other options considered but not favoured by the Highways Agency were included in the consultation.

1.2 Purpose of Consultation

1.2.1 The purpose of the Public Consultation was to seek views on the outline proposals from the general public, Statutory Consultees, including local authorities, and other interested bodies. It was stated that comments received as a result of the consultation process would be considered.

1.2.2 The Public Consultation period was from 13 June 2008 to 5 September 2008.

1.2.3 This report describes the proposed scheme and the consultation arrangements, and provides factual information on the responses received.

1.2.4 The responses received are analysed within this report. This will form part of a submission to the Secretary of State for Transport, to enable a decision to be made on an option to be taken forward.

1.2.5 A summary of the proposals was included in a consultation leaflet (see Section 3.2).
1.3 Background

1.3.1 Ashford has been identified as a major growth area for the South East in the Government’s Sustainable communities plan. The provision of 31,000 new homes and 28,000 new jobs in the area is anticipated by 2031. M20 Junction 10A entered the Government’s improvements programme in November 2003 with the specific aims of:

- Increasing the capacity of the road network to support the proposed development areas in Ashford
- Providing Junction 10A to alleviate congestion around the existing Junction 10 and improve safety whilst creating the opportunity to enhance local transport facilities with specific provision for buses, cyclists and pedestrians
- Providing a new route for traffic into Ashford by way of the new junction and dual carriageway link road

1.3.2 The proposed development in Ashford is indicated in Appendix E.
2 PROPOSALS PRESENTED FOR PUBLIC CONSULTATION

2.1 The Proposed Option – Junction 10A Gyratory

2.1.1 The Proposed Scheme is shown in Appendix E.

2.1.2 The Junction 10A scheme presented for consultation would provide a new partially signalised gyratory located approximately 700m east of the existing Junction 10 Willesborough Interchange. The gyratory would include 2 bridges over the Motorway, each carrying 3 lanes of traffic. The A20 Hythe Road would be connected to the junction so that it forms the northern part of the gyratory.

2.1.3 The eastern most of the 2 bridges of the gyratory would be at the same location as the existing Highfield Lane Bridge. The existing bridge would be demolished and a new one built or alternatively it could be widened and strengthened. The junction would include new east and west facing slip roads providing for all movements. Both the new off slip roads would be controlled by traffic signals where the slip roads join the gyratory. The existing east facing slip roads at Junction 10 would be removed.

2.1.4 An existing sewage pumping station near the site of the proposed junction would be relocated. The residential property of Highfields Bungalow and the commercial properties Beauchamp Clark Nurseries, Wyevale Garden Centre and Sweatman Mowers would be lost as a result of the scheme.

2.1.5 As part of the Public Consultation views were sought about provision for pedestrians and cyclists at the proposed junction. The alternatives presented were:

- A new foot and cycle bridge located to the east of Junction 10A, linking Kingsford Street and Mersham to the south with the A20 to the north. Dedicated access routes for users would be provided on each side of the new bridge.

- Shared use pedestrian and cycle routes around the gyratory with at grade signal controlled crossings at the off slip roads.

2.1.6 A new dual carriageway link road with a 40 mph speed limit would be provided between the new Junction 10A and the A2070. The existing A2070 would be realigned where it joins the link road to direct long distance traffic towards the new Junction 10A. A traffic signal controlled junction would be provided at the junction of the link road and the section of the A2070 leading to the existing Junction 10. The alignment of the link road where it meets the A2070 would affect the Church Road Footbridge such that it would need removing or substantial structural alterations. As part of the Public Consultation views were sought about:

- Whether the footbridge should be demolished and replaced by at grade crossings at the signal controlled junction

- Or a footbridge should be retained either by providing a completely new structure or by altering the existing structure.
2.2 Alternative options

2.2.1 Two alternative options considered at the preliminary design stage were included in the consultation.

Alternative Option 1 – Further Improvements to Existing Junction 10

2.2.2 This option involves improvements to the existing Junction 10, with a new dual two lane bridge to cater for north–south movements. The slip roads and the A2070 would be widened and signalised, and access to the development area would be from the A2070. The widening of the A2070 would require construction of a retaining wall on the west side, on the approach to the junction. Noise fencing would be provided on the west side of the A2070 to reduce the impact on properties.

2.2.3 The non-motorised user network would be improved with new signalised crossings installed across the Junction 10, although some diversions to the footpath network would be required.

2.2.4 The Church Road Footbridge and Highfield Lane Bridge would not be affected in this option.

2.2.5 The sewage pumping station, the residential property Highfields Bungalow and the commercial properties Beauchamp Clark Nurseries, Wyevale Garden Centre and Sweatman Mowers would not be affected in this option.

2.2.6 Alternative Option 1 is shown in Appendix E.

Alternative Option 2 – Junction 10A Single Bridge Interchange

2.2.7 This option would provide a single bridge interchange at the same location as the Proposed Option, approximately 700m east of the existing Junction 10. The existing Highfield Lane bridge would be demolished and a new one built, or alternatively it could be widened and strengthened. New east and west facing slip roads catering for all movements would be provided and the existing east facing slip roads at Junction 10 would be removed.

2.2.8 In this option Highfields Bungalow, Beauchamp Clark Nurseries and the sewage pumping station would be retained but Wyevale Garden Centre and Sweatman Mowers would be demolished.

2.2.9 A new dual carriageway link road with a 40 mph speed limit would be provided between the new Junction 10A and the A2070. The link road would join the A2070 at a T junction. The existing A2070 would not be realigned and therefore Church Road Footbridge would not be affected.

2.2.10 The provision of new noise fencing on the west side of the A2070 to benefit the properties immediately north of Church Road Footbridge would be considered.

2.2.11 Alternative Option 2 is shown in Appendix E.
3 CONSULTATION ARRANGEMENTS

3.1 Information issued to Statutory Consultees

3.1.1 Stage 2 Environmental Assessment reports in accordance with the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges, as listed in Appendix A, were sent to the Statutory Consultees. (Kent County Council, Ashford Borough Council, the Environment Agency, English Heritage and Natural England).

3.1.2 The responses of the Statutory Consultees are detailed in Section 6.

3.2 Leaflet and Questionnaire

3.2.1 The Public Consultation leaflet is in Appendix B.

3.2.2 The leaflet includes:

- Information on the scheme proposals
- Details of the exhibition dates and venue
- Contact details to enable comments to be made to the Highways Agency. These consisted of postal address, email and website address, and telephone number.

3.2.3 The leaflet includes a questionnaire for respondents to complete and return to the Highways Agency. Questions were asked to gain information such as type and location of user, frequency and purpose of use, and to obtain feedback on the proposals shown. Information and analysis of the questionnaire responses received is in Section 5. Respondents were also invited to make additional comments if they wished to do so.

3.2.4 The consultation leaflet and questionnaire were distributed to the general public between the dates of 6 June 2008 and 12 June 2008. The area delivered to included residences in Ashford, Willesborough, Mersham, and Sevington. The distribution area is shown in Appendix C.

3.2.5 Leaflets and questionnaires were also distributed to non statutory consultees such as the emergency services and utility companies, and deposited in local libraries and council offices.

3.2.6 Details on circulation of the leaflet and questionnaire are in Appendix C.
3.2.7 The approximate numbers of leaflets delivered to various parties are in Table 3.1 below.

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Recipient</th>
<th>Approximate number of leaflets and questionnaires delivered</th>
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<td>General public</td>
<td>1700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other organisations</td>
<td>225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deposit points</td>
<td>700</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Table 3.1 – Leaflet distribution

3.3 Advertising

3.3.1 The Public Consultation Exhibition was advertised as follows:

- Invitation to the MP, local councillors and other key stakeholders to attend a preview of the Exhibition before it opened to the public, sent on 3 June 2008
- Advertisements in local newspapers (‘Kentish Express’ and ‘Adscene’) on 5 June and 12 June
- Interviews on local radio
- Notices posted at strategic locations around the Ashford and Mersham Area before the Exhibition
- Notices posted at the exhibition venue on the days of the exhibition

3.3.2 Further details on the advertising of the Public Consultation Exhibitions are in Appendix D.

3.4 Public Exhibition

3.4.1 The Exhibition was held on 13 and 14 June 2008. Details are shown in Table 3.2, including the number of visitors that attended. The exhibition was attended by staff from the Highways Agency, its consulting engineers Parsons Brinckerhoff and Ashford Borough Council, who were available to answer questions on the proposals from members of the public.

3.4.2 The venue was selected with the aims of providing the optimum opportunity for members of the public across the area to attend, as well as offering the most suitable facilities locally to hold such an exhibition. The location can be seen in the Public Consultation Leaflet in Appendix B.
3.4.3 The Public Consultation Exhibition presented the scheme proposals on display boards, with a combination of drawings and descriptive text. The display material is in Appendix E.

3.4.4 Copies of the leaflet and questionnaire were available at the exhibitions. There was also the facility for members of the public to make written comments, or request that a member of the exhibition staff recorded their views.

3.5 Illustrative Design Drawings and Display Material

3.5.1 Drawings of the Proposed Scheme as displayed at the Public Consultation are included in Appendix E of this report. The display material contained information about the scheme and the issues surrounding it, such as:

- the role of the Highways Agency
- the proposed development in Ashford
- predicted traffic flows
- alternative options considered
- proposed pedestrian and cyclist facilities
- the environmental impact of the scheme
- details about the consultation process

3.5.2 Also displayed at the exhibition was a computer generated 3D visualisation. This consisted of a virtual-reality-style drive through of the proposals. This was shown on a large television screen, running a programme of approximately ten minutes on a continuous loop.

3.6 Attendance at Exhibition

3.6.1 A total of 300 visitors attended the exhibition, as detailed in Table 3.2 below.

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Venue</th>
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<th>Opening times</th>
<th>Number of visitors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td>Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce</td>
<td>13 June 2008</td>
<td>1pm – 3pm MP, Councillor and stakeholder</td>
<td>Not recorded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashford Business Point</td>
<td></td>
<td>Preview</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waterbrook Avenue</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sevington</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashford</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kent</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kent TN24 0LH</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 June 2008</td>
<td>3pm – 8pm</td>
<td>146</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 June 2008</td>
<td>10am – 4pm</td>
<td>154</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total number of visitors</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>300</strong></td>
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</table>

*Table 3.2 – Public Consultation Exhibitions*
3.7 Additional material on display

3.7.1 A shorter version of the material shown at the public exhibition was displayed at the Ashford Gateway Centre in Ashford town centre from 23 June to 5 September. The Ashford Gateway is a joint Kent County Council and Ashford Borough Council service providing public access to services such as skills learning, housing advice, access to voluntary organisations and internet access. Details of the display were posted on the HA website.

3.7.2 The same shorter version of the public exhibition material was also provided to Mersham with Sevington Parish Council, on 23 June 2008.

3.7.3 The material provided to the Ashford Gateway Centre and to Mersham with Sevington Parish Council is shown in Appendix F.

3.8 Meetings with affected parties

3.8.1 As part of the consultation process, the HA actively sought to discuss the proposals with parties directly affected by the proposals, such as landowners and those with business interests in the scheme area. A number of meetings took place and consultation will continue as design progresses.

3.8.2 As part of the consultation process, the HA actively sought to discuss the proposals with Statutory Consultees, and persons directly affected by the proposals, such as landowners and others.

3.8.3 A list of meetings is in Appendix J.
4 RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION

4.1 Responses from General Public

4.1.1 There were 300 visitors to the Public Consultation Exhibitions (see Table 3.2). There were 26 written comments made by visitors to the exhibition.

4.1.2 Responses following the exhibitions were received as follows:

- 13 responses via email
- 3 responses via the Highways Agency Information Telephone Line
- 15 responses via letter

4.1.3 A summary of the responses received is shown in Appendix G.

4.2 Questionnaire

4.2.1 A total of 384 completed questionnaires were received during the consultation period. 75 of these were received prior to the exhibition via responses to the leaflets distributed and also by way of the HA website.

4.2.2 Section 5 of the report details the questions that were asked and analyses the responses made.

4.2.3 A summary of the additional responses received with the questionnaires is shown in Appendix G.

4.2.4 See Appendix B for a copy of the questionnaire.

4.3 Local Preference

4.3.1 The majority of responses were from residents in the local area. The comments received via the exhibitions, the questionnaires, and other methods as detailed in Section 4.1 may be summarised as follows:

- 48 respondents directly expressed approval of the proposals
- 8 respondents directly expressed disapproval of the proposals
- 62 respondents commented on Junction 10A
- 34 respondents commented on Junction 10
- 51 respondents commented on the A2070 / Barrey Road junction
- 24 respondents commented on the A20
- 6 respondents commented on the A2070
- 19 respondents commented on Kingsford Street
- 8 respondents commented on Highfield Lane
- 7 respondents commented on The Street
- 45 respondents commented on traffic and safety
- 34 respondents commented on heavy goods vehicles
50 respondents commented on the environment, the majority related to noise
23 respondents commented on development in the area
18 respondents commented on the William Harvey Hospital and emergency vehicles
7 respondents commented on public transport
6 respondents commented on the Church Road footbridge
6 respondents commented on the proposed Kingsford Street footbridge
21 respondents commented on pedestrian, cyclist and equestrian facilities
36 respondents made other comments

4.3.2 There were a number of issues that were raised several times. The main points of concern are detailed in Section 8.

4.4 Non-Local Views

4.4.1 A small number of responses (<20) were received from persons not resident in the local area. The comments received related to the following:

- Junction 10
- A20
- Traffic
- Development in the area
- Public transport
- Equestrian facilities

4.5 Further information issued by Highways Agency

4.5.1 There were a number of comments raised, and questions directly asked, that required responses. The Highways Agency replied to those comments as appropriate, by letter, telephone or email. A number of the consultation respondents requested plans, or other items displayed at the Public Exhibitions. These were issued by the Highways Agency as required.

4.5.2 In total, the Highways Agency issued 78 responses as a result of comments received. These can be summarised as follows:

- 12 responses to requests made at the Public Consultation Exhibitions
- 11 responses to requests made via email
- 3 responses to requests made via the Highways Agency Information Line and telephone
- 15 responses to requests made via letter
- 37 responses to requests made via the Public Consultation questionnaire.
5 \hspace{5em} QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES

A total of 384 completed questionnaires were received. The questionnaire is contained in Appendix B.

This section of the report details the questions that were asked and analyses the responses made. The location of respondents can be summarised as shown in Figure 5.0 below. It can be seen that the majority of respondents reside in the following postcode areas:

- 96% of respondents reside within the TN (Tonbridge) postcode area. This area includes Tunbridge Wells, Sevenoaks, Tenterden, Hastings, Rye and New Romney.
- The proposed junction and link road falls within the TN24 postcode area. 70% of all respondents reside within this postcode area which includes Ashford, Cheeseman's Green, Hinxhill, Kennington, Sevington, South Willesborough, Willesborough and Willesborough Lees.
- The small remaining number is made up of residents in areas such as Maidstone and Dover and also other areas not directly affected by the location of the junction and link road.

![Figure 5.0 – Questionnaire responses by postcode location of respondents](image)

The postcode areas in relation to the scheme can be seen in Figure 2 at the back of the report. Comments received from the public are contained in Appendix G. 

*Questionnaire responses by location are illustrated in Appendix H (Figure Q1).*
5.1 **Question 1: Type of user**

5.1.1 **Question 1: Are you?**

- A driver/motorcyclist
- A cyclist
- A pedestrian
- A recreational walker
- An equestrian
- A local resident
- A local business (including farm)
- A visitor to the area
- Other (please specify) …………………………………………………

5.1.2 Respondents were invited to indicate all user groups they consider relevant to themselves.

5.1.3 The categories of users are summarised in Figure 5.1 below.

![Bar graph](image-url)

**Figure 5.1 – Type of user**
5.1.4 It can be seen that the vast majority of respondents are local residents. It can also be seen that nearly all of the respondents are drivers or motorcyclists. A substantial amount of respondents are pedestrians, walkers or cyclists. A small number of respondents are equestrians or representative of local businesses.

5.1.5 It can be reasonably concluded that the majority of responses received represent the views of local residents that use the local area road network as both drivers and pedestrians.
5.2 Question 2: Frequency of use

5.2.1 Question 2: How often do you travel through Junction 10 at Ashford?

☐ Daily  ☐ Weekly  ☐ Monthly  ☐ Not at all

5.2.2 The responses relating to frequency of use are summarised in Figure 5.2 below.

![Pie chart showing frequency of use]

Daily 79%
Weekly 17%
Monthly 4%
Not at all 0%

Figure 5.2 – Frequency of use

5.2.3 It can be seen that the largest proportion of respondents (79%) travel through Junction 10 on a daily basis. Nearly all respondents (96%) travel through Junction 10 on at least a weekly basis.
5.3 Question 3: Purpose of journey

5.3.1 Question 3: For what purposes do you travel through Junction 10?

- Local journeys
- Long distance journeys
- Local business
- Commuting
- To access the M20 motorway

5.3.2 The statistics on purpose of journey are summarised in Figure 5.3 below.

![Figure 5.3 – Purpose of journey](image)

5.3.3 It can be seen that nearly all respondents travel through Junction 10 for local journeys. These results are consistent with the results for Question 1, i.e. the vast majority of respondents are local residents.

5.3.4 The majority also use the junction to access the M20 motorway. Approximately half of respondents use Junction 10 for long distance journeys. Smaller, though substantial, numbers use the junction for commuting and local business.
5.4 Question 4: Location of user

5.4.1 Question 4: How close do you live to the proposed Junction 10A or A2070 link road?

- ☐ Under ¼ mile
- ☐ ¼ to ½ mile
- ☐ ½ mile to 1 mile
- ☐ Over 1 mile

5.4.2 The responses relating to distance and location of users are summarised in Figure 5.4 below.

![Pie chart showing location of user](image)

**Figure 5.4 – location of user**

5.4.3 The results show that the majority of respondents (79%) live within 1 mile of the proposed Junction 10A or A2070 link road.

5.4.4 These results are consistent with the results for Question 1, i.e. the vast majority of respondents are local residents. The results are also consistent with the postcode information supplied.
5.5 Question 5: Option preference

5.5.1 Question 5: Of the three basic options for improvements to the existing M20 Junction 10, which do you prefer?

- A new Junction 10A with a roundabout and 2 bridges over the M20 and a link road to the A2070 (the Proposed Option)
- Improve the existing Junction 10 with a new bridge over the motorway (Alternative 1)
- A new Junction 10A with a single bridge over the Motorway and a link road to the A2070 (Alternative 2)
- No preference
- None of the above

5.5.2 The responses relating to option preference of users are summarised in Figure 5.5 below and illustrated in Appendix H (Figure Q5).

![Figure 5.5 – Option preference](image)

5.5.3 The majority of respondents (64%) expressed preference for the proposed option. Preference for the alternative options showed 13% favouring Alternative 1 and 7% favouring Alternative 2. 6% had no preference whilst 10% indicated that none of the options presented were satisfactory.
5.5.4 The respondents that favoured the proposed option are located mainly in the Willesborough area, near to the existing Junction 10. A small number of respondents (approximately 1% of the total) in the Mersham area favoured the proposed option.

5.5.5 13% of the respondents favoured Alternative 1; these are located mainly in the Mersham area. A small number of respondents (approximately 1% of the total) in the Willesborough area favoured Alternative 1.

5.5.6 7% of the respondents favoured Alternative 2; these are located mainly in the Willesborough area.

5.5.7 6% of the respondents had no preference and 10% of the respondents expressed that they were not in favour of any of the options; these are located across the response area, with no strong concentration in any particular area.
5.6 Question 6: Connection of Highfield Lane/Kingsford Street

5.6.1 Question 6: When the new motorway junction opens to traffic, would you like to see Highfield Lane/Kingsford Street connected to the A2070 link road through the new development area?

☐ Yes  ☐ No  ☐ Don’t know

5.6.2 The responses relating to option preference of users are summarised in Figure 5.6 below and illustrated in Appendix H (Figure Q6).

![Pie chart showing preferences for connection of Highfield Lane/Kingsford Street]

Don’t know 32%

Yes 43%

No 25%

5.6.3 It can be seen that 43% of people prefer a connection to Highfield Lane/Kingsford Street.

5.6.4 25% of people prefer no connection to Highfield Lane/Kingsford Street.

5.6.5 The remaining 32% (i.e. “don’t know”) did not express a preference for the connection issue.

5.6.6 The majority of respondents in the Willesborough area favour the connections, whereas those in the Mersham area generally prefer no connections.
5.7 Question 7: Provision for pedestrians at Junction 10A

5.7.1 Question 7: If the Proposed Option is built the existing Highfield Lane Bridge will become part of the new junction. New provision will be made for pedestrians, cyclists and other non motorised users. Would you prefer

- A footpath around the new roundabout with road crossings controlled by traffic signals
- A new footbridge / cycle bridge between Kingsford Street and the A20 Hythe Road
- Neither
- No preference
- None of the above

5.7.2 The responses relating to provision for pedestrians at Junction 10A are summarised in Figure 5.7 below and illustrated in Appendix H (Figure Q7).

![Figure 5.7 – Provision for pedestrians at Junction 10A](image)

5.7.3 The largest proportion (48%) expressed preference for a new footbridge / cycle bridge between Kingsford Street and the A20 Hythe Road.

5.7.4 17% preferred a footpath around the new roundabout with road crossings controlled by traffic signals.
5.7.5 26% had no preference. The remainder were not in favour of any of the options listed.

5.7.6 It can be seen that the majority are in favour of a facility for non motorised users, with the favoured option being a new footbridge / cycle bridge. There is no strong correlation between preference for any one option and respondents in a particular area.
5.8  Question 8: Use of pedestrian / cycle bridge near Junction 10A

5.8.1 Question 8: If a new pedestrian / cycle bridge were to be constructed over the M20 would this encourage you to walk / cycle to

- Work
- Recreation
- Neither
- Don’t know

5.8.2 The responses relating to use of pedestrian / cycle bridge near Junction 10A are summarised in Figure 5.8 below.

![Figure 5.8 – Use of pedestrian / cycle bridge near Junction 10A](image)

5.8.3 It can be seen that the largest proportion of respondents would not be encouraged to walk or cycle, if a new pedestrian / cycle bridge were to be constructed.

5.8.4 However, a significant number would be encouraged to walk or cycle for recreation; these are located across the response area, with no strong concentration in any particular area.

5.8.5 Those that expressed a likelihood of walking or cycling to work, or were undecided, are located mainly in the Willesborough area.
5.9 Question 9: Church Road Footbridge

5.9.1 Question 9: As a replacement for the Church Road Footbridge would you prefer a signalised crossing or a new pedestrian / cycle bridge?

- [ ] Signalised crossing
- [ ] New pedestrian / cycle bridge
- [ ] No preference

5.9.2 The responses relating to use of pedestrian / cycle bridge near Junction 10A are summarised in Figure 5.9 below and illustrated in Appendix H (Figure Q9).

![Figure 5.9 – Church Road Footbridge](image)

5.9.3 The majority of respondents (68%) favour a new pedestrian / cycle bridge. 13% favour the signalised crossing option. The remaining 19% have no preference.

5.9.4 The responses are located across the area, with no strong concentration in any particular area.
5.10 Question 10: Attendance at Public Consultation Exhibition

5.10.1 Question 10: Did you visit the exhibition?

☐ Yes ☐ No

5.10.2 The number of respondents that visited the exhibition is illustrated in Figure 5.10 below.

![Pie chart showing 31% Yes and 69% No](image)

Figure 5.10 – Attendance at exhibition

5.10.3 It can be seen that nearly a third of the respondents said that they visited the exhibition.
5.11 Question 11: Opinion on Public Consultation Exhibition

5.11.1 Question 11: Did you find the exhibition useful?

☐ Yes   ☐ No

5.11.2 The responses relating to opinion on the exhibition are summarised in Figure 5.11 below.

![Pie chart showing 85% Yes and 15% No.]

**Figure 5.11 – Was the exhibition useful?**

5.11.3 The majority (85%) of visitors said that they found the exhibition useful.

5.11.4 Respondents were also asked for their comments on the exhibition, in terms of what was good/bad, to aid the HA in planning future exhibitions. These comments are contained in Appendix G.

5.11.5 The main comments raised were in relation to:

- Praise for the exhibition display drawings and computer visualisation being helpful and informative
- Praise for staff at exhibition
- Criticism at short notice in advertising the exhibition and choice of venue not easily accessible by pedestrians or by public transport
- Criticism that exhibition should have been on for longer
5.12 Additional comments on Questionnaires

5.12.1 The questionnaire allowed respondents to make additional comments if they so wished. Of the 384 questionnaires received, 280 contained additional comments. This represents 73% of the total number of questionnaire responses.

5.12.2 Comments made via the questionnaires can be seen in Appendix G. The main points of concern are detailed in Section 4.
6 STATUTORY CONSULTEES

6.1 General

6.1.1 The following statutory consultees were issued with information, as detailed in Section 3.1, and invited to comment:

- Ashford Borough Council
- Kent County Council
- English Heritage
- Environment Agency
- Natural England

6.1.2 The responses are summarised below.

6.2 Ashford Borough Council

6.2.1 The Borough Council indicated strong support, in principle, for the proposed scheme. It requested that the issues of traffic flows on the A20 and the potential signalisation of the Barrey Road / A2070 junction be reviewed.

6.3 Kent County Council

Kent County Council Countryside Access Group

6.3.1 The Group responds in respect of public rights of way and countryside access. Comments were made on the effects of the scheme on the public rights of way and access for pedestrians and equestrians.

6.3.2 It was suggested that retention or upgrading of Church Road Footbridge should be considered. A further consideration put forward was in relation to the proposed footbridge at Kingsford Street, and potential design to enable equestrian use. The Group was of the opinion that the provision of pedestrian and equestrian facilities alongside the A20 would allow for safer journeys, without having to use the A20 carriageway.

6.4 English Heritage

6.4.1 English Heritage commented that archaeology in the area could be dealt with through appropriate mitigation strategies. The main concerns are the impacts on the Grade I listed church of St Mary, Sevington and the associated medieval settlement remains.

6.4.2 English Heritage welcomed discussions to reach possible solutions and referred to collaboration with Kent County Council’s Heritage team.
6.5 Environment Agency

6.5.1 The EA is keen to work with the Highways Agency to manage flood risk in the Upper Stour catchment. These measures may include improvement works and habitat enhancement, the Aylesford Stream being a designated ‘main’ river under the jurisdiction of the EA.

6.5.2 The EA drew attention to issues to be considered as design progresses, including sediment surveys, habitat compensation, fish surveys, disposal of excavated material and groundwater protection.

6.5.3 The Highways Agency attended a meeting with the EA during the consultation period.

6.6 Natural England

6.6.1 Natural England expressed concern at the information available to assess the potential impacts on statutory nature conservation sites, protected species and landscape character.

6.6.2 Natural England did not take up the Highways Agency’s offer of a meeting during the consultation period.

6.7 Correspondence with Statutory Consultees

6.7.1 See Appendix K for copies of correspondence.
7 RESPONSES FROM EMERGENCY SERVICES, OTHER BODIES & GROUPS

7.1 Responses from Emergency Services

7.1.1 Kent Police expressed support for the proposed option.

7.1.2 There were no comments from other emergency services during the consultation period.

7.2 Responses from other bodies and groups

7.2.1 Responses and comments were received from representatives of non-statutory bodies and are summarised below.

Ashford Access Group

7.2.2 The Group, which promotes disability awareness and access for all, preferred the proposed option stating that it seemed the most logical.

Ashford Society 74A

7.2.3 The local amenity society expressed disapproval of the proposed scheme, promoting an alternative arrangement consisting of a spur road exit from the London bound M20 to the southbound A2070.

British Horse Society

7.2.4 The BHS would prefer the proposed footbridge should accommodate equestrians, with the location near to Bockham Lane to avoid travel on the A20. Similarly, it was recommended that the proposed footway/cycleway along the new link road should be designed to enable equestrian use.

7.2.5 The potential for increased equestrian activity in the area following the proposed additional housing was highlighted, with the conclusion that the proposed option better enables provision of safe routes for equestrians compared with Alternatives 1 and 2.

Diocese of Canterbury, Church of England

7.2.6 The Diocese of Canterbury commented on the potential impact of the scheme on local churches, and general fears relating to the effect of increased development and urbanisation on the local communities. In the immediate area, the potential demolition of Church Road Footbridge was seen as adversely affecting access to St Mary’s, Sevington.

English Partnerships

7.2.7 English Partnerships expressed support for the proposed option.

Kent Bat Group

7.2.8 The Group made reference to good practice guidelines for the consideration of bats during design and expressed interest in the results of any survey works.
Kent Countryside Access Forum

7.2.9 The Forum has worked with Kent County Council through development of the Countryside Access Improvement Plan.

7.2.10 The Forum welcomed the provision of routes for pedestrians and cyclists, and requested that crossing facilities and links for equestrians be provided. It was also suggested that the proposed footbridge be designed to cater for equestrians.

Kent Wildlife Trust

7.2.11 The Trust accepted the findings of the work to date and welcomed the commitment to further surveys. Attention was drawn to obligations under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act. The Trust indicated that its position on the final scheme proposals will be dictated in large part by the Agency’s proposals for conserving biodiversity by way of habitat enhancement and mitigation.

Mersham with Sevington Parish Council

7.2.12 The Council expressed the view that the exhibition should have been on for longer, and in a location closer to Mersham residents. There were also concerns about the level of publicity and advertising prior to the exhibition. The Parish Council expressed a strong preference for Alternative 1 – improvements to the existing Junction 10 – because of a number of perceived adverse impacts of the proposed option and Alternative 2 on Mersham.

William Harvey Hospital

7.2.13 Support for the proposed option was expressed. The problems in accessing the hospital caused by incidents at Junction 10 were also highlighted, as was the future desire for a direct link from the hospital to Junction 10A.

Damian Green MP

7.2.14 The need for a new junction to enable future development was accepted. Mr Green highlighted the current situation at Barrey Road, with the view that improvements should be made. Concern for the impact on local businesses was raised, and also the effect of the footbridge in the Mersham area, making reference to the response by Mersham with Sevington Parish Council.

7.2.15 The interaction between the A20 and proposed Junction 10A was thought to need reconsidering. A potential access from the junction to the William Harvey Hospital was deemed to be a possibility to consider.

East Kent Badger Group

7.2.16 The Phase 2 Badger Assessment Report was provided to the group on request. The Group have not commented on the report.
7.2.17 GSE Waterbrook Ltd / Ashford Truckstop

Questionnaire received in favour of the proposed option, with comments regarding signing, driver information, Operation Stack and operational problems at the Orbital Park roundabout.

7.2.18 Local councillors

Responses received from the following Ashford Borough Councillors:

- Michael Burgess – requested additional information; aerial images of scheme. Questionnaire received.
- Peter Davison – questionnaire received; in favour of Alternative 1.
- Rita Hawes – questionnaire received; advocated additional display in Ashford Town Centre.
- Brendan Naughton – questionnaire received; comments regarding need to update pedestrian and cycle facilities, particularly A2070 near J10.

Parish of Boughton Aluph and Eastwell and High Halden and Sellindge

7.2.19 Comments received from the Parish Clerk; comments relate to knock on effect of new Junction 10A on existing Junctions 9 and 10.

Pilgrims Hospice

7.2.20 Questionnaire received objecting to the proposed option and in favour of Alternative 1. Main concern is increased noise.

St Mary’s Church, Sevington

7.2.21 Request for information regarding noise and vibration, pedestrian routes and environmental impact. received from the vicar. Questionnaire also received.

Wyevale Garden Centres

7.2.22 Questionnaire response recognising the importance of the improvements identified to improve the future traffic capacity within South Ashford. Wyevale Garden Centres are currently in discussions with Ashford Borough Council to relocate the existing garden centre to a site at the Eureka Leisure Park.

7.3 Responses from developers / consultants

Barton Willmore

7.3.1 Comments received regarding Orchard Way.

Denis Wilson

7.3.2 Electronic drawings provided on request.
Montserrat Properties Limited

7.3.3 Alternative proposal for a “Junction 10B” approximately 6km south east of Junction 10 instead of Junction 10A.

MLM

7.3.4 Support for the new junction proposal for both commercial and residential development at the Cheesemans Green area and commercial development at Waterbrook. Requested further consultation and traffic modelling information.

WSP

7.3.5 Requested copies of the environmental and TAR reports. DMRB Stage 2 Environmental Assessment Reports, plus Phase 2 Water Vole Assessment provided.

7.4 Responses from landowners

7.4.1 A number of responses from local landowners were received during the consultation period. Information was issued and meetings were held. See Appendix K for details.

7.5 Copies of correspondence with other bodies and groups

7.5.1 See Appendix K.
8 ISSUES RAISED

8.1 Introduction

8.1.1 This section describes the main issues that were raised during the consultation period.

8.2 Junction 10

8.2.1 The comments received related to the operation of the junction. Following the recent works, some respondents felt that the signalised gyratory junction worked well, but a larger number felt there were problems.

8.2.2 The concerns raised were the delay caused by the traffic signals during off-peak periods and also the confusion relating to lane markings. It was suggested that box junctions may help the traffic flow and discourage traffic from blocking the arms of the gyratory. There was also the suggestion that the eastbound onslip could remain as access for emergency vehicles.

8.2.3 The Highways Agency is monitoring Junction 10, following the completion of interim works.

8.3 A20

8.3.1 The main concern was related to the perceived increase in journey time caused by having to negotiate the new Junction 10A. The westbound journey was noted as being more problematic due to the requirement to navigate the gyratory and also the traffic signals at the motorway slips into the junction.

8.3.2 The other concern raised was the anticipated increase in traffic on the A20 due to the closure of the east facing slip roads at Junction 10. Respondents were concerned about the potential increased traffic, particularly from vehicles heading towards the coast, and also additional congestion at the roundabout for access to Tesco superstore.

8.3.3 A number of residents of The Street, near Junction 10, were concerned that traffic from the B2164 would use the road as a ‘rat-run’ to avoid Junction 10.

8.3.4 In response to the comments made regarding the A20, the Highways Agency undertook additional assessment work. This consisted of traffic modelling and design of alternative options that do not require westbound A20 traffic to navigate the Junction 10A roundabout.

8.3.5 It was found that the additional options considered did not offer significant benefits in terms of capacity, traffic flow, and costs, when compared with the proposed option.

8.3.6 Details of the additional assessment can be found in Appendix L.

8.4 Barrey Road / Sevington Business Park

8.4.1 Residents in the Willesborough area as well as users of Sevington Business Park expressed concern that improvements to the A2070 / Barrey Road junction were not part of the proposed scheme.
8.4.2 The junction layout currently allows both left and right turning movements into Barrey Road, but only left turn out of Barrey Road. This arrangement results in all traffic from Barrey Road having to travel north on the A2070 to Junction 10, whereby drivers wishing to head south on the A2070 have to use Junction 10 to make a U-turn.

8.4.3 It was also put forward that there are frequent minor accidents at the junction, due to the speed of vehicles travelling on the 70mph A2070. Some respondents suggested that the junction operated successfully during the recent Junction 10 works when a reduced speed limit was in place and left turn in and out filter lanes for Barrey Road were provided.

8.4.4 It was suggested that the right turning movement out of Barrey Road onto the A2070 should be allowed, with the most popular method being the provision of a roundabout at the junction.

8.4.5 Consideration will be given to inclusion of the A2070 / Barrey Road junction in the Junction 10A scheme or whether any necessary improvements should be promoted by the HA’s Network Operations Division as a separate scheme.

8.5 Alternative Proposal “Junction 10B”

8.5.1 An alternative proposal was received from Montserrat Properties Limited (a property developer and landowner) for a “Junction 10B” instead of the proposed Junction 10A. Montserrat wrote to the Secretary of State, the Highways Agency and Ashford Borough Council about this proposal on a number of occasions before the Junction 10A consultation. The HA and the Government Office for the South East replied in 2007 and 2008.

8.5.2 The proposal is for a new Motorway junction approximately 6km south east of the existing Junction 10 to provide access for a proposed lorry park and to open up land for development.

8.5.3 The proposal would not address existing capacity and congestion at Junction 10. Compared to Junction 10A it would not provide a more economical or advantageous access to the identified development areas immediately south of the A2070.

8.6 Connections to Highfield Lane / Kingsford Street

8.6.1 A concern raised by some Mersham residents was the potential for rat running. Therefore, connections to Highfield Lane / Kingsford Street were generally not preferred by residents of Mersham.

8.7 Heavy goods vehicles

8.7.1 Comments were made that there are frequent problems caused by heavy lorries in the local area. These include problems due to HGV’s parked in residential areas and also congestion caused by the number of vehicles. This is an issue for Kent County Council, who are considering solutions to the issue of on-street lorry parking.
8.8 **Pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians**

8.8.1 Comments received generally expressed approval for facilities included within the proposed scheme.

8.8.2 Some respondents were concerned over the proposed replacement of Church Road Footbridge by signalised crossings and would prefer a bridge crossing to be retained. This was mainly for reasons of safety and journey length.

8.8.3 Comments were raised regarding the overall network for non-motorised users in the immediate area, recommending facilities that are suitable for both cyclist and equestrian groups.

8.9 **Development**

8.9.1 Comments were made that a new Junction 10A is required to provide improvements for the proposed development in the area, and should proceed as soon as possible. However, other comments were opposed to further development in the area.

8.10 **Environment**

8.10.1 A number of respondents commented on the potential environmental impact of the scheme. These were mainly concerned about noise issues. Residents closest to the proposed works were concerned that noise levels may increase, whereas some Willesborough residents expressed approval of the proposed realignment of the A2070.

8.10.2 Other comments related to the loss of countryside land and impact on landscape and views, particularly in the area near St Mary’s Church, Sevington.
9 SUMMARY OF RESULTS

9.1 Public Exhibition

9.1.1 Exhibitions were held in June 2008. A total of 300 visitors attended the exhibitions. A total of 26 comments were made by visitors at the exhibition.

9.1.2 Of these 26 responses, 12 included requests for further information, to which the Highways Agency issued individual replies.

9.2 Public Consultation Leaflet and Questionnaire

9.2.1 The leaflet and questionnaire were delivered to relevant councils, local authorities, MPs and other statutory bodies for consultation.

9.2.2 Approximately 1700 leaflets and questionnaires were delivered to public residences within the area of the proposed scheme. An additional 700 leaflets were distributed to deposit points such as local authorities, town councils and libraries.

9.2.3 A total of 384 completed questionnaires were received during the consultation period. The majority of respondents are local residents, who are both drivers and pedestrians, living within 1 mile of the motorway. Most of the respondents use the motorway on at least a weekly basis, for local journeys.

9.2.4 Approximately a third of all questionnaire respondents attended the Public Consultation and the vast majority indicated that they found it to be useful.

9.2.5 278 of the questionnaire respondents made additional comments. Of the 278 additional comments made, 34 included requests for further information, to which the Highways Agency issued individual replies.

9.3 Further consultation responses

9.3.1 During the consultation period, 57 responses were made to the Highways Agency by way of email, website, telephone and in writing.

9.3.2 The Highways Agency issued individual replies as appropriate to these respondents.

9.4 Responses from Statutory Consultees and other groups

9.4.1 Reports on the scheme proposals were issued, including illustrative design drawings and assessments, inviting comments and feedback, and offering the opportunity for further consultation. Statutory Consultees Kent County Council, Ashford Borough Council, the Environment Agency, Natural England and English Heritage were also consulted. Other consultees included the emergency services, parish councils and local action and user groups.

9.4.2 The responses received expressed general support for the proposed scheme. However, the groups consulted raised various issues to be considered as the design is developed. Some of the respondents also requested that they be consulted further throughout the detailed design stage.
9.5 **Main issues raised during public consultation**

9.5.1 The main comments made concerned the following:

- Junction 10 – delays and driver confusion (Highways Agency is monitoring Junction 10)
- A20 – increased journey times and increased traffic (additional options subsequently considered did not offer significant benefits in terms of capacity, traffic flow, and costs, when compared with the proposed option)
- Barrey Road / Sevington Business Park – right turn out required, potentially via a roundabout (consideration will be given to inclusion of the A2070 / Barrey Road junction in the Junction 10A scheme)
- Connections to Highfield Lane / Kingsford Street – not favoured by Mersham residents
- Heavy goods vehicles – parking problems and additional congestion (Kent County Council are considering solutions)
- Pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians – footbridge at Church Road preferred to signalised crossings
- Development – some opposition to development in the local area
- Environment – increased noise and impact on countryside
10 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1 Conclusions

10.1.1 During the Public Consultation period, the majority of respondents favoured the proposed scheme over the alternatives presented. Respondents include the general public, Statutory Consultees and other groups.

10.1.2 A number of issues were raised during the Public Consultation period, with particular interest relating to the A20, M20 Junction 10 and the A2070 / Barrey Road junction.

10.2 Recommendations

10.2.1 It is recommended that the proposed option presented at Public Consultation be confirmed by the Secretary of State for Transport as the Preferred Route.

10.2.2 A footbridge across the M20 between Kingsford Street and the A20 Hythe Road was preferred to pedestrian crossings on the Junction 10A roundabout by the majority of those who expressed a preference. Therefore it is recommended that the footbridge is included in the scheme proposals.

10.2.3 The majority of respondents who expressed a preference want the Church Road footbridge across the A2070 to be retained. It is recommended that options for refurbishment or replacement of the footbridge are examined during scheme development and design.

10.2.4 The proposed inclusion of the A20 Hythe Road in the Junction 10A roundabout should be retained. Options that do not require A20 traffic to travel around the roundabout do not provide significant benefits in terms of capacity, traffic flow and costs compared to the proposed option.

10.2.5 Consideration should be given to inclusion of the A2070 / Barrey Road junction in scheme development and design because of the concerns expressed by a number of respondents. Alternatively, changes to the junction layout and permitted turning movements should be investigated and implemented by the HA’s Network Operations.
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PROPOSED SCHEME