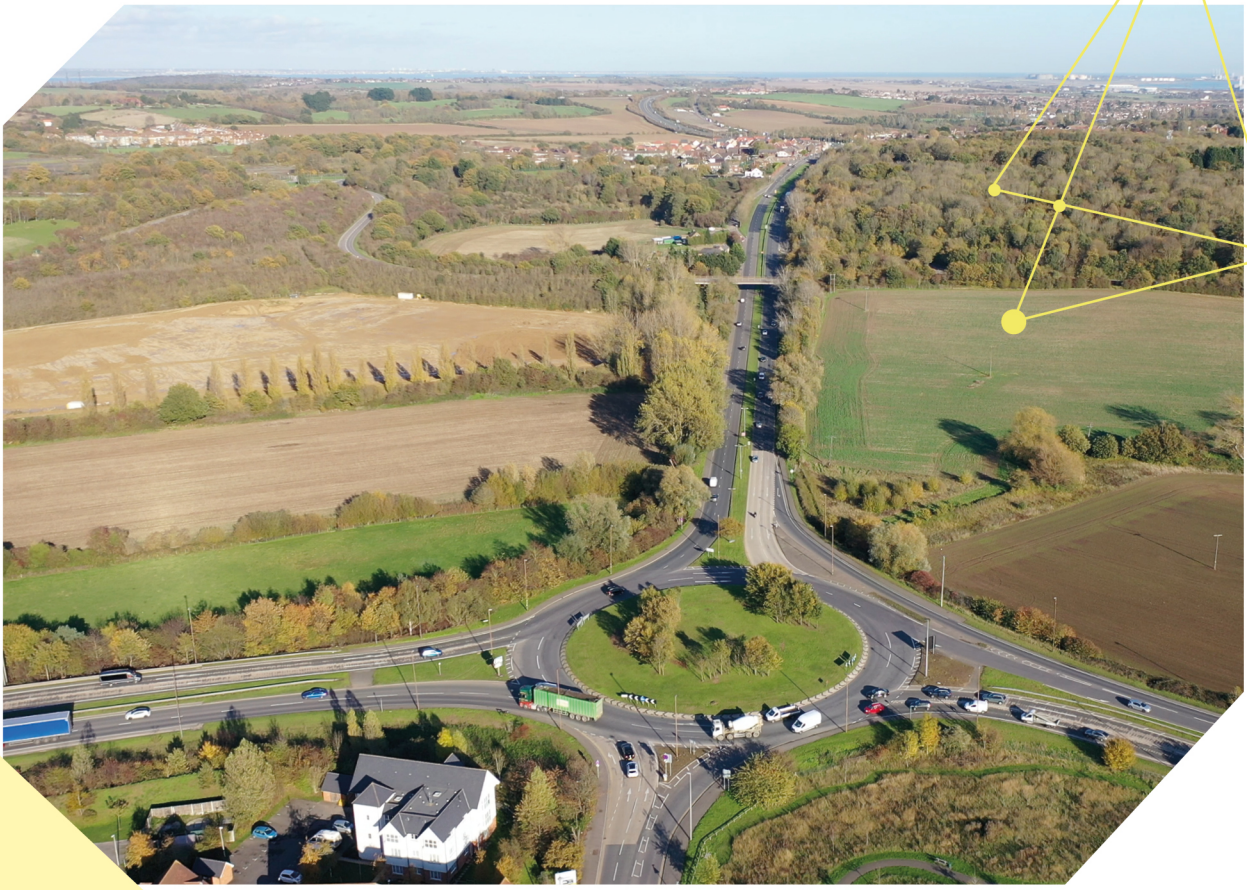


Future Hoo

Consultation 2021

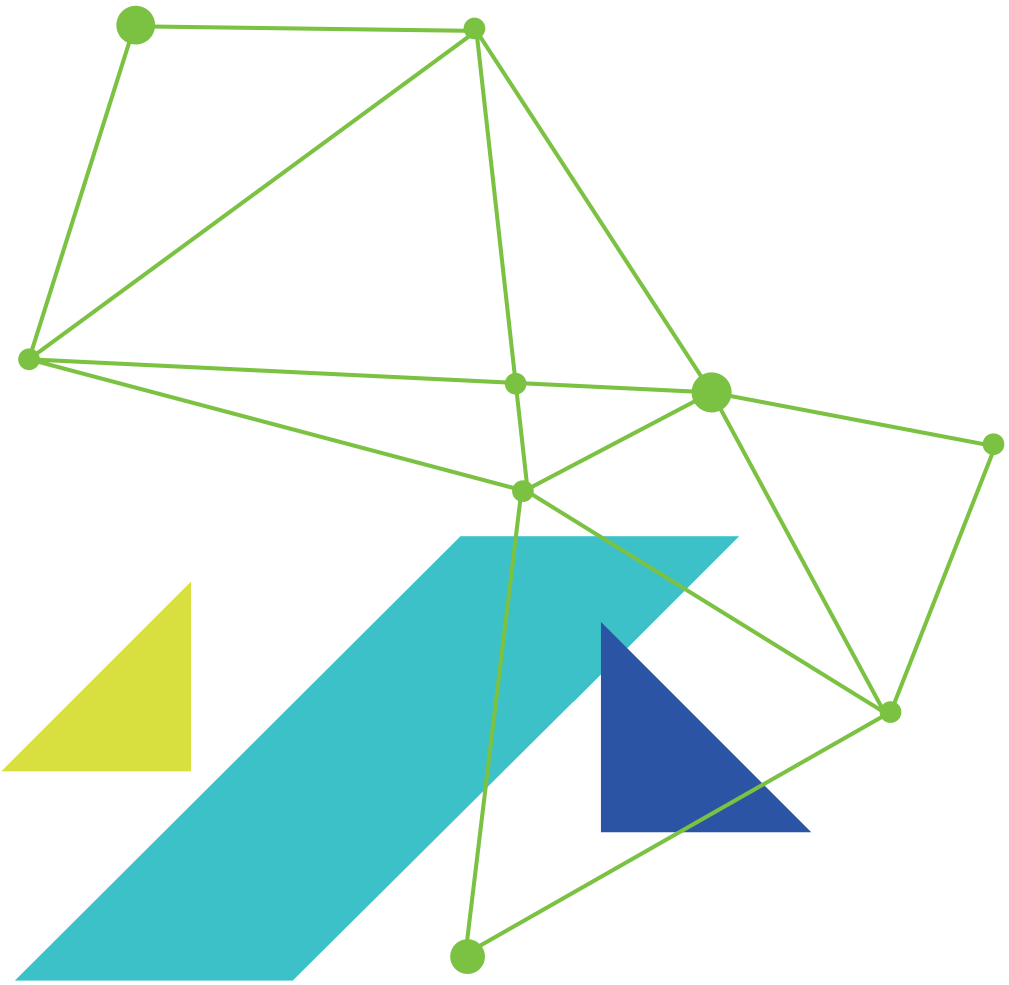
Second round

MEDWAY

medway.gov.uk/futurehoo

Medway Council

Serving You



Contents

Foreword

Welcome to this second-round Housing Infrastructure Fund consultation on our proposals for a multi-million-pound investment on the Hoo Peninsula.

Background

In 2020 the government awarded Medway Council £170m via the Housing Infrastructure Fund to pay for environmental and infrastructure improvements on the Hoo Peninsula.

Since then, we have been developing plans on how this money can best be used for the maximum benefit of current and future residents, within the parameters of the fund.

Initial proposals were published in January 2021 with the supporting first-round HIF consultation running until April. This generated just over 700 feedback responses from the public and stakeholders.

This invaluable feedback has helped shape the revised proposals set out in this document.

The HIF proposals in summary

The proposals are focused around three key areas:

- A £14m Strategic Environmental Management Scheme (SEMS) to deliver large-scale new publicly accessible (where appropriate) open spaces, covering 300 hectares (740 acres) of community parkland, woodland and nature reserves, managed for both wildlife and for public access.
- A £63m investment in a new train station and reinstated passenger service on the Grain branch line.
- An £86m upgrade of the existing road network with the provision of new infrastructure including slip roads, junctions and interchanges on the A228 and A289 and wider highway improvements, as well as a new relief road to access the peninsula via Woodfield Way.

The rail and road proposals will allow us to forward plan for potential population growth in a coherent, strategic way that creates a high-quality environment and provides a robust transport infrastructure. The HIF transport infrastructure will support opportunities to maximise walking and cycling with new access routes being delivered parallel to the road interventions. These additions to local sustainability accessibility are illustrated on the station plan in rail chapter and the road plans in chapter 3.

Please note, this second-round HIF consultation is focussed on environmental and transport issues on the Hoo Peninsula.

Consideration of other infrastructure (such as medical centres, schools and leisure facilities) on the Hoo Peninsula is being advanced as part of the development of the Hoo Development Framework; this is a document that is being brought forward as part of the progression of the new Local Plan for Medway, which will be consulted on in due course.

What has happened since first-round HIF consultation?

This second-round HIF consultation shows how the plans have moved on, and how we believe we can:

- Deliver the best possible environmental improvements
- Improve the area's rail connectivity and provision of public transport
- Upgrade the local road infrastructure
- Ensure a sustainable future for the local community

Various changes have been made, from the significant to the detailed. For example, a major concern highlighted during the first-round HIF consultation was a proposed flyover (over-bridge) at Higham Road connecting Islingham Farm Road to the Hasted Way. Working with the consultation feedback, we have managed to design an alternative solution, which is set out in this document.

An example of a much more detailed change that has resulted from residents' comments is the provision of secure cycle storage at the planned new train station. This will be both more convenient for cyclists and help to reduce traffic.

The feedback and subsequent work have also helped clarify some issues. For example, in the first-round HIF consultation, the team proposed two options for the station's design. Residents were clearly in favour of the one reflecting the area's agricultural heritage, and this is what is now being taken forward.

Other ideas – such as a new bridge crossing the rail line at Church Street or the possible option of electrifying the line – no longer form part of the proposals.

The feedback has also helped bring elements of the HIF together in an even more coherent and beneficial way.

For example, a number of consultees expressed a desire for more footpaths linking up the proposed Cockham Community Parkland to the wider network of public footpaths. This will now form part of the landscape design for the park, providing longer walking routes for the community to enjoy, where currently the land is restricted under private ownership.

These are just a few examples of how the respondents to the first consultation have helped improve the proposals, there are many more detailed changes shown in this second-round consultation document.

What happens next?

The second-round HIF consultation starts on Monday, 29 November 2021 and will run for six weeks until Monday, 10 January 2022. All responses will be assessed and will help finetune our proposals before they are finalised.

We hope to finalise our plans in spring/summer 2022 at which point we will look to commence planning processes for the various elements, including seeking compulsory acquisition powers where discussions with landowners for voluntary deals have not been able to complete.

We aim to have all elements contained in the HIF proposals in place by March 2025.

We look forward to receiving your comments.

Strategic Environmental Management Scheme

SEMS stands for Strategic Environmental Management Scheme (SEMS) – known locally as Hoo Community Parklands. The full description from the first-round HIF consultation brochure can be found HERE.

- **Strategic** = Network of connected and well managed spaces (including new and improved footpaths) – for people and wildlife, designed to maximise biodiversity.
- **Environmental** = Landscape plans developed for each SEMS parcel of land, informed by ecological impact and landscape character studies and contributing to Medway's emerging Green (trees, hedgerows, grass etc) and Blue (rivers, streams, estuary etc) Infrastructure linking between areas network/ other initiatives.
- **Management** = The active management/ monitoring of these spaces (including community engagement) with biodiversity, access and health and safety at the heart.
- **Scheme** = Planned and designed to address indirect impact of possible population growth on the peninsula's protected habitats.

What we presented in first-round HIF consultation

In our first-round HIF consultation, we consulted on various proposals as outlined below.

Developing a draft vision for SEMS

Starting the process of capturing aspirations for landscape, biodiversity, access and long-term management and engagement - to reflect the interests of current communities and path users.

Vision and principles

Access and boundaries; habitats; passive recreation; facilities.

Objectives for Cockham Community Parkland

Concept proposal for this space: an early part of the SEMS proposals which has already been subject to consultation with residents of Hoo and other key stakeholders.

SEMS and how it links to Local Plan

Contribution of SEMS proposals to the thinking on how future possible development on the peninsula could avoid/mitigate/compensate for impact on the area's species and habitats.

When SEMS will be available to enjoy

Timings for Cockham Community Parkland and other master-planning work

How any new recreational paths will be delivered

Stakeholder and community engagement.

New access routes for walking and cycling

Objectives, delivery and stakeholder engagement

The full SEMS chapter from the first-round HIF consultation brochure can be revisited HERE.

Your views on the SEMS proposals presented in early 2021

We undertook consultation on SEMS in early 2021 and received more than 700 responses with nearly 200 specific SEMS comments. These have been reviewed, including the 27 proposals for access improvements, and taken on board to be included within the SEMS site plans where appropriate.

To read the feedback on our initial SEMS proposals in full, you can access the first-round HIF 'Consultation Feedback Report' **HERE** or, for an abridged version, the Executive Summary of that document **HERE**.

What has changed since first-round HIF consultation

The team has been working hard to consider and respond to all the feedback received as part of the first-round HIF consultation. We have continued to develop a high-level ecological study, called the Cumulative Ecological Impact Assessment (CEIA), which, alongside the feedback, will help us understand and plan for the ecological impact of possible future development on the Hoo Peninsula. A wide range of ecological surveys have either been completed or are underway on all of the proposed Community Parkland sites, along with archaeology research to better understand the history of the sites.

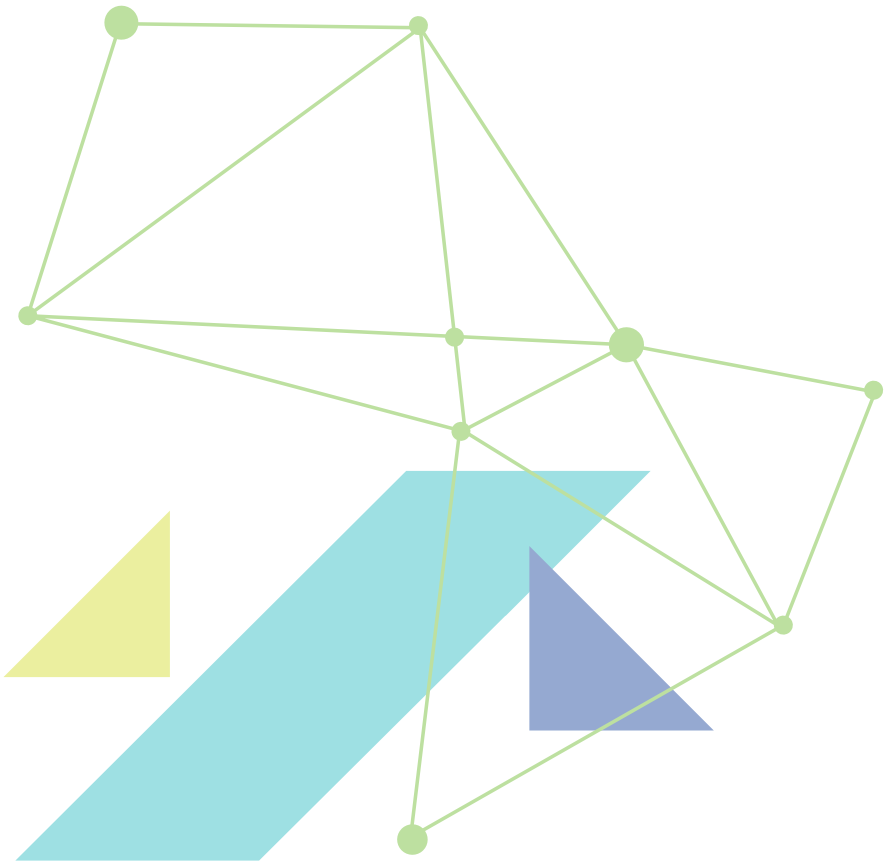
Our thinking and proposals have now developed considerably as a result. A summary of the key changes, developments, work undertaken since the first-round HIF consultation are as follows:

- Numerous studies undertaken or commissioned to inform these proposals
- A detailed Vision Document for SEMS will be produced
- Phase 1 Cockham Community Parkland – Planning permission received
- Development of Phase 2 areas to create new habitat and access opportunities:
    - Initial Landscape Plans created for Hoo Flats (2a) and Lodge Hill Community Parkland (2b)
    - Proposals developed for approximately 35 hectares of parkland at Deangate Ridge (2c)
- Feasibility underway to understand if a shared-use bridge across the A228 is possible
- New initiative to increase wildlife areas through landowner participation in a voluntary planting scheme by working with landowners, environmental charities and the local community.

Our updated proposals – seeking your feedback

Within this chapter, we have provided some background information on ecological studies undertaken or in progress, to help develop proposals for the various Community Parklands proposed. We have also provided an update on progress made with Cockham Community Parkland which has now been granted planning consent.

However, for the purposes of this second-round HIF consultation, we have outlined key features of the new Community Parklands proposals and are seeking feedback from the community on these.



Ecological studies / research to inform proposals

As outlined in the first-round HIF 'Consultation Brochure', "SEMS will be informed by the findings of the Cumulative Ecological Impact Assessment which will inform the Local Plan and the road and rail proposal, the Natural Character Area study (undertaken by Natural England) and stakeholder expertise and input. Landscape plans will be developed for each of the SEMS parcels of land which will suggest areas for the planting of trees, scrub and hedges, and the creation of new ponds and wildflower meadows. Together these will contribute to Medway's emerging Green and Blue Infrastructure network and initiatives such as the establishment of Local Nature Restoration Networks and Pollinator Plans."

Initial findings from the above, along with community feedback on your environmental priorities has led to the design development of a number of new Community Parklands – as outlined in the next section. The key features will form part of a SEMS Vision document, the development of which is on-going and will be further informed by feedback from this second-round HIF consultation.

Key features of the new community parklands - what they will look like

With Phase 1 (Cockham Community Parkland) already having received planning permission and ideas being developed for new habitat and biodiversity opportunities as part of Phase 2, the team has developed a site wide plan to show the holistic view being taken to SEMS.

The additional ecological and recreational land that Hoo Community Parklands together would create is equal to the size of two Regents Parks; the additional footpath network would also amount to another 10km around and within Hoo and Chattenden. New links between existing footpaths, bridleways and cycle paths will be created with the addition of a shared-use bridge across the A228, helping to meet the Medway Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) objectives of connecting dead-ends.

Figure 1 – A satellite image map showing Hoo St Werburgh, Chattenden and Lodge Hill with SEMS Areas 1 Cockham Community Parkland and 2a Hoo Flats Community Parkland highlighted in green to the north of the A228. To the South of the A228 it shows 2b Lodge Hill, 2c Deangate highlighted in green and the crossing point for the bridge across the A228. Arrows indicate pedestrian/ cycle/green connection between the SEMS areas.

Phase 1 – Cockham Community Parkland

Phase 1 Cockham Community Parkland has already been granted planning consent and the project is now being further developed. However, we thought it would be helpful to provide an update on the various changes made to the scheme, since the first-round HIF consultation.

The first phase of SEMS concentrated on the creation of the 60 hectares Cockham Community Parkland to the west of Vicarage Lane towards Hoo Common. This will provide new flower-rich meadows, woodlands and hedgerows, as well as new footpaths, cycleways and areas for informal recreation. These new habitats will provide a buffer to the Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) woodland and added protection to the birds and mammals that inhabit it. Importantly, the SSSI woodland will be managed for wildlife and a decision has been made to restrict public access to the woodland. Omitting access removes public safety concerns and will allow the mature trees to age as nature intended.

There were two stages of public consultation relating to Phase 1: a dedicated Cockham Community Parkland consultation in July to September 2020; and the presentation of revised SEMS proposals (to respond to summer 2020 feedback) as part of the wider first-round HIF consultation. To review the full feedback report from the July to September 2000 consultation, please click HERE.

For information, the team responded to Phase 1 feedback from the first-round HIF consultation with a revised scheme which now has planning consent:

- Respondents mentioned the need for parking to alleviate congestion on nearby roads therefore, car parks have been included as part of the Cockham Community Parkland scheme for this reason.
- Picnic areas, dog walking areas and toilets were also mentioned as a requirement in the feedback – these now form part of the Phase 1 design.
- A desire for more footpaths linking up the proposed Cockham Community Parkland to the wider network of public footpaths was raised by several consultees – these will form part of the landscape design for the park, providing longer walking routes for the community to enjoy, where currently the land is restricted under private ownership.

Figure 2 – A satellite image map showing Cockham Community Parkland highlighted in green with proposed layout of the parkland, between Vicarage Lane and Hoo Common.

Phase 2a – Hoo Flats Community Parkland

To the east of Vicarage Lane, we propose to create 60 hectares of wetland habitats with wet meadow, reed beds and ponds. We also propose to create new paths to help visitors to access the area, and new places to sit and watch the birds that visit over the winter will also be provided. In addition, we will continue to work with the Environment Agency to help realise its plans to create habitats on land adjacent to the Community Parkland. Together, these sites will offer valuable new habitat for the birds that visit the estuary to feed over winter.

Proposed key features of the Hoo Flats Community Parkland include:

- Management plan to manage and improve the SSSI condition and to support notable species identified through the SSSI and Ramsar designations.
- Creation of an ecosystem of new wetland habitats, including freshwater wetlands to the north and centre of the site and brackish / saline wetlands to the south.
- Water to be directed from the Hoo Stream and the Medway Council water course, into wetland features, where it is attenuated. This will be carefully designed to support the hydrological infrastructure of Hoo St Werburgh and enhance the existing site hydrology.
- Habitat connectivity from the SSSI across the site to be improved through enhancement and expansion of wetland features, scrub creation and tree planting transitioning into new wet meadow areas.
- Existing and new public access routes to connect with the wider surroundings, including other SEMS sites. A new route to be introduced to connect directly to the proposed Cockham Community Parkland.
- Heritage/ information boards to be provided detailing the site's history, including military structures and features of the site's Saxon heritage.
- Creation of a system of new wetland habitats, including freshwater wetlands to the north and centre of the site, to improve habitat connectivity to the SSSI.
- Salt-marsh habitat is anticipated to form in the future as the management of the sea wall will change over time and more saline water will influence the types of plants that grow here.
- Enhancements of the expansion of scrub and tree planting (as wet woodland) transitioning into new wet meadow areas.

Several respondents in the first-round HIF consultation requested that all areas "should be kept natural and not enhanced to look false". A further common request was that the team should "consider existing residents who have to use the area" and not "cut off one right of way from another and consider circular walk/ cycle paths/ bridleways". The work on the wetlands will return natural habitats and provide new accessible paths that link up to existing paths for local residents to use and enjoy.

Figure 3 – A satellite image map showing outline illustrative concept of Hoo Flats Community Parkland situated between Vicarage Lane and Abbots Court in Hoo St Werburgh.

Phase 2b – Lodge Hill Community Parkland

Parts of the ex-Ministry of Defence (MOD) land at Lodge Hill (to the north of Chattenden) will be transformed from grazed grassland and a military camp into 60 hectares of wood pasture and scrubland of particular interest for nightingales. This will complement the existing SSSI habitat that currently supports the largest breeding population of nightingales in the UK. These new habitats will also benefit bat and many other species. Working with Homes England, we will embark on a habitat creation and access strategy in 2022.

Key features of the proposed new Lodge Hill Community Parkland:

- Existing habitat features will be enhanced, including the introduction of a series of ponds along a damp area at the top of the ridge line, allowing the natural growth of habitat from boundary edges
- Large areas of open pasture will be enhanced through the establishing of species-rich grassland or hay meadow, moving to a variety of native plants and dense scrub thicket around the borders
- Access through the site will be managed carefully with the installation of kissing gates and hedging or fencing along footpaths, allowing access and enjoyment of both heritage and landscape assets whilst protecting valuable Nightingale habitat within the vicinity
- Habitat connectivity between the areas of SSSI will be improved through a combination of woodland restoration and habitat creation of grassland, scrub and woodland, allowing native plants to set seed and grow
- Restoration of ancient woodland and provision of connectivity between key SSSI habitats including Rough Shaw and the Training area, and Lodge Hill Wood and Wybornes Wood. New links along the edges of woodland and boundary edges will extend available habitats for animals
- Retention and protection of areas for nesting birds in particular, the local skylark population

As part of the first-round HIF consultation, the team received comments from several respondents relating to the need to provide “a dedicated nightingale conservation strategy” and protect/ provide “more habitat for nightingales”. The Lodge Hill project will provide further scrub habitat that, in time, will be prime ground for nightingale breeding and connect the existing SSSI sites. Other respondents expressed a desire to see the existing rights of way link up; the new proposed access across the Lodge Hill site from Chattenden Wood across to Dux Court Road will link existing footpaths and provide informal recreation.

Figure 4 – a satellite image map showing outline illustrative concept for Lodge Hill Community Parkland situated to the North of Lodge Hill training camp.

Phase 2c – Deangate Ridge Community Parkland

The team has been looking carefully at the proposals to deliver 35 hectares of community parklands created at Deangate Ridge. This would include nearly five hectares of new woodland and six kilometres of new access routes. These enhancements have been designed to complement the neighbouring SSSI and provide dedicated routes to encourage greater accessibility.

Several respondents from the first-round HIF consultation referred to Deangate as an existing space for recreation that should not be destroyed; there were also requests to make it a Country Park. The proposal to create a community parkland would bring a large swathe of Deangate (approximately 30 hectares) into management as a parkland with improved access paths for all community users. Further tree and woodland planting would also provide a benefit of linking to the adjacent Lodge Hill SSSI, ensure a secure perimeter to protect the SSSI, and also still benefit the communities of Hoo and Chattenden through the creation of an informal recreation area where visitors can enjoy nature.

Figure 5 – a satellite image map showing outline concept for Deangate Community Parkland, north of the A228.

Phase 2d - Shared-use bridge for people

The A228 dual carriageway severs links to the wider countryside from the south-east for pedestrians, cyclists, and horse-riders. From the north-west, it severs links to the village centre and schools for Chattenden community. Locating a bridge over the A228 provides an opportunity to connect the communities, providing an uninterrupted journey for pedestrians, cyclists, and horse-riders from Hoo to Chattenden. This work is currently in the feasibility stage to better understand whether it is possible to undertake this through SEMS. The image below shows the most likely crossing point for the bridge if it is found to be possible.

Figure 6 – plan shows a satellite image of Hoo St Werburgh with the A228 running through the centre – the location of the proposed green bridge is illustrated in the centre of the plan, Cockham Community Parkland is highlighted to the South of the bridge and Deangate Community Parkland highlighted to the North of the Bridge.

HIF Rail

Our proposed railway works will reinstate a passenger service on the Grain branch line and create a new station south of Sharnal Street. This will improve connectivity and help to support sustainable growth on the peninsula by providing an interchange option at Gravesend to link to locations across Medway as well as providing a reliable link towards London.

Rail proposals

The Grain line is currently a freight-only, single bi-directional line serving Cliffe Marine siding and the Grain terminal. It is critical to the freight operators and Network Rail that the proposed passenger service does not directly impact upon freight services, the capacity of the line, or its resilience. Therefore, proposals have been developed to allow freight and passenger services to co-exist in harmony, with the ability for them to pass each other, this also minimises the overall cost of the infrastructure works.

We have developed the train service proposals based upon demand forecasts and timetable modelling. We have consulted with the train operator on the service and addressed their requirements for the scheme. We have also tested these proposals with the Network Rail Built Environment Accessibility Panel (BEAP) to ensure inclusivity for users.

With respect to Public Rights Of Way (PROW) crossing the railway, we have consulted with Network Rail, Gravesham and Medway Council, Kent County Council, local access forums and Built Environment Accessibility Panel (BEAP).

What we presented in first-round HIF consultation

Overview

The proposed railway works will reinstate a passenger service on the Grain branch line, which include:

- A new station south of Sharnal Street
- Passing places at Cooling St and Hoo Junction to Cliffe
- Works to existing crossing points along the line

Sharnal Street Station

Two concepts for a new destination station plus other logistics:

- Barn style station in keeping with the local character
- Alternative style station to reflect the airship heritage of the area
- Proposed location and arrangement of the station, plaza area, car park, walking and cycling, access and station construction

Level crossings

Details of proposals for each specific level crossing:

- Kings Crossing
- Church Lane Crossing
- Wybournes Level Crossing and High Halstow restricted byway
- Solomon's Crossing
- Whitehall bridleway
- Stoke Road Crossing
- Creek Lane Crossing

Railway passing loops

Current situation and any proposed changes to passing loops from Hoo Junction to Cliffe, Cooling Street – including construction

The full Rail chapter from the first-round HIF consultation brochure can be revisited HERE.

Your views on the Rail proposals presented in the first round HIF consultation

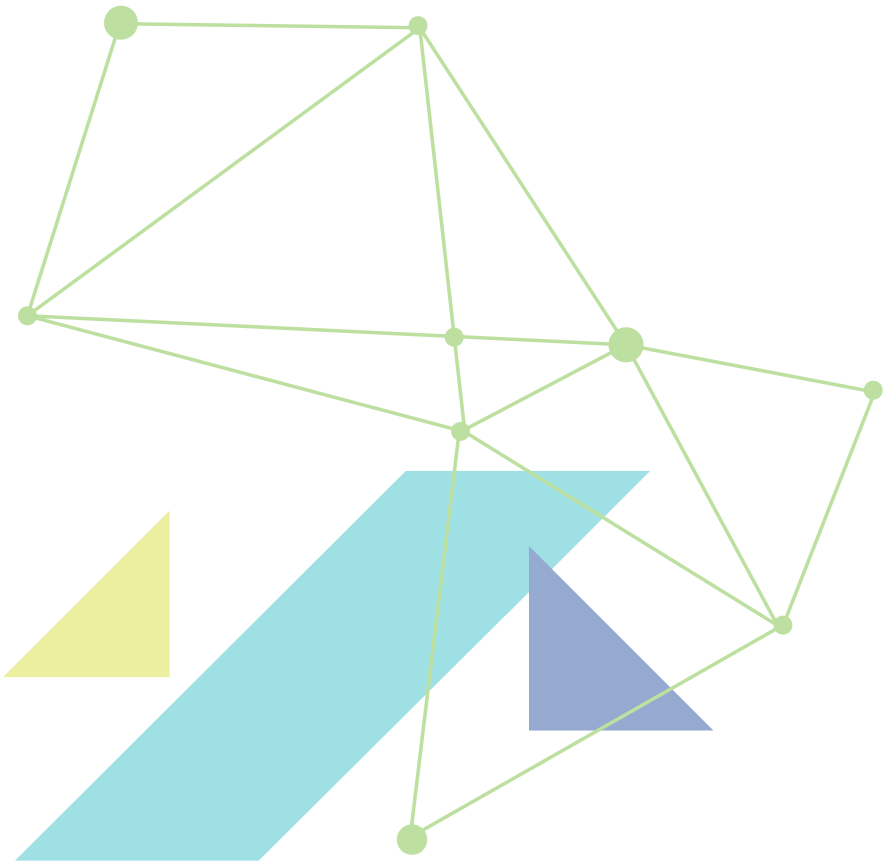
In the first-round HIF consultation, the team posed 15 questions specifically relating to future station design, travel habits, passing loops, crossings, construction and managing impacts. All feedback, comments and suggestions received have been reviewed and considered by the team in the on-going design of the rail scheme.

To read the feedback on our former Rail proposals in full, you can access the First-round HIF 'Consultation Feedback Report' HERE or, for an abridged version, the 'Executive Summary' of that document can be found HERE.

What has changed since the first-round HIF consultation

The team has been exploring all feedback received as part of the first-round HIF consultation.

With consideration to the feedback received we have adapted and developed our rail proposals and taken action to improve the scheme as a result. A summary of the key changes/ developments/ work undertaken since the first-round HIF consultation are as follows:



The station

The station is to be based upon 'barn style' local heritage and these ideas are being further developed.

Level crossing – Kings Crossing

Additional solutions are being developed; in particular, the upgrading of the existing cattle crossing to make it suitable for pedestrians, as recommended by consultees. This is now being explored with Network Rail and Gravesham Borough Council.

Level crossing – Church St Crossing

Existing vehicular and pedestrian crossings to be retained. The vehicle crossing will remain as existing, and the pedestrian crossing will be upgraded with new safety features.

Level crossing – Wybournes Farm Crossing

The existing pedestrian and vehicular crossings will be retained and upgraded with new safety features.

Level crossings - Whitehall / Stoke Rd / Creek

It is now considered that these crossings will not be impacted by the passenger service and the works have now been discounted from the scheme.

Hoo Junction passing place

The extent of the Hoo crossing passing place is limited to between Canal Road and Cliffe.

Cooling Street Loop

The Cooling Street loop has been moved approximately 650 metres west to avoid the foot of an existing incline on the railway.

DC Electrification

The DC electrification required for a 12-car service has been discounted and a new option is being explored.

Switch to a link service

Local connections to a faster service rather than a direct service to London which would require a third rail system.

Construction

The use of Hoo Junction depot and the concept of materials being moved from Cliffe using marine and rail wagons to minimise HGV movements is being further developed.

Our updated proposals – Seeking your feedback

The HIF rail team is now asking for feedback on the above key changes made to the proposals since the first-round HIF consultation. Further information, in terms of how these changes address specific feedback raised by consultees, is provided on each of the above elements, in the sections below, under the following headings:

- The station
- Level crossings
- Passing places
- Service provision
- Construction

The station

The first round HIF consultation feedback received resulted in the team taking forward the permanent 'barn style' station to reflect the local heritage, as preferred by respondents.

The station is to be located in the centre of the development area and will include easy access walking and cycling routes along Ropers Green Lane.

The team is continuing to work on the detail of the rail access road to ensure that Stoke Road roundabout and Ropers Lane can accommodate the level of predicted vehicle movements. On this basis works to the roundabout or to Ropers Lane cannot be ruled out and the route of the station access road presented in the early 2021 consultation may need to change. If works are required and the access road route does change, this will be presented as part of the planning processes for the HIF schemes.

The station frontage will be simplified with the previously proposed 'wavy paving' lines removed in response to comments from mobility impaired groups. Drop-off bays will also be included close to the two proposed bus stops, and secure cycle storage will be added to the scheme to respond to demands to enhance the facilities provided for non-car travel.

Additional stations at Cliffe and Church St have been considered as a result of feedback from the first-round HIF consultation. However, these have been discounted due to the proximity of Higham Station and consequentially insufficient demand for additional stations.

Low level street lighting, LED technology and dimming of lights at time of low usage will be considered as part of the design development to reduce energy usage and light pollution in the area.

Figure 7 - Rendition of the Proposed Station.

Level Crossings

Where crossings are to be closed, secure fencing will be installed to prevent ongoing use of the facility. This fencing will be as unobtrusive as possible.

Kings Crossing

The necessary dualling of the line here creates an increased risk to crossing pedestrians.

In order to mitigate this risk, we are proposing to upgrade the Cattle Arch through the embankment, as recommended by consultees in the first-round HIF consultation. This would provide a safer, segregated level access route for all users across the railway. Connections to the original footpaths would be made.

However, it is recognised that this alternative route will affect registered common land. The council will therefore carefully consider how this proposal will interact with the commons rights at this location in designing the final solution.

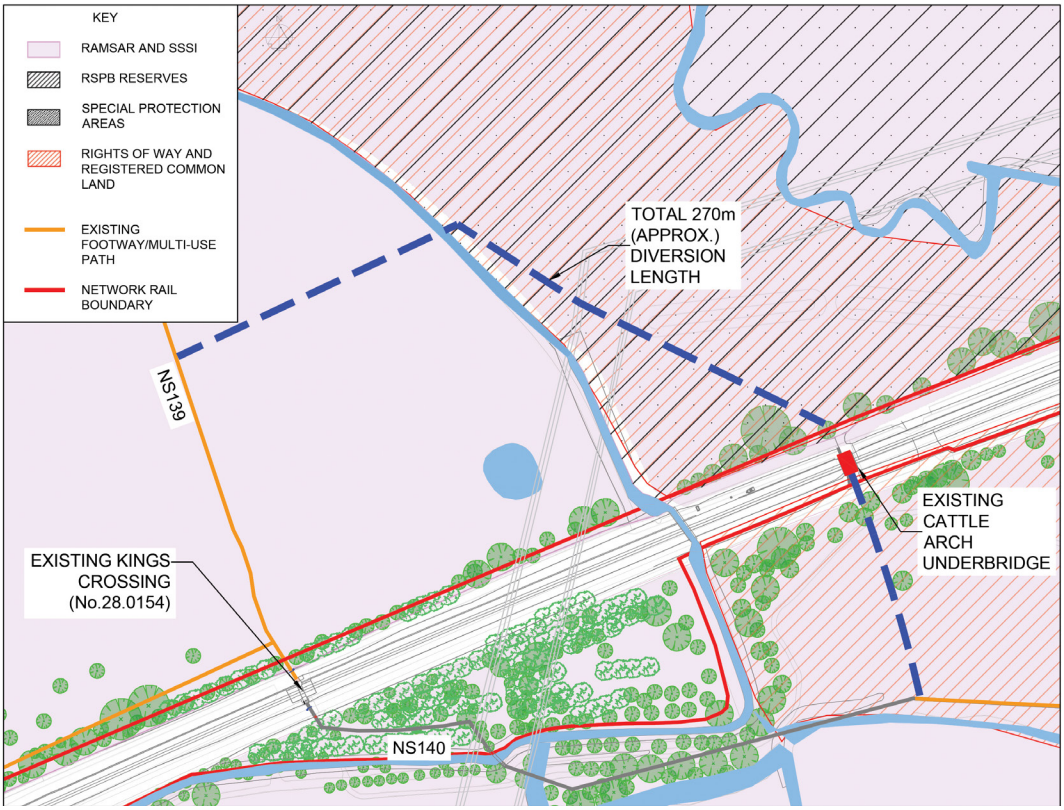


Figure 8 - King's Crossing - An image showing a map with the existing and proposed footpaths. The footpath crossing the track is being closed on the left of the image and a new route is shown on the right of the image.

Church St Existing Vehicular Crossing and pedestrian crossings

Respondents were not generally in favour of a bridge due to the environmental impact and visual intrusion this would cause. Closure is not viable due to the length of the diversions that would be required consequently, the existing crossings are to be retained.

The vehicle crossing (User Work Crossing - UWC) will remain as existing and the pedestrian crossing will be upgraded with new safety features, including miniature stop lights and a crossing telephone, to mitigate the additional use of the line by passenger services.

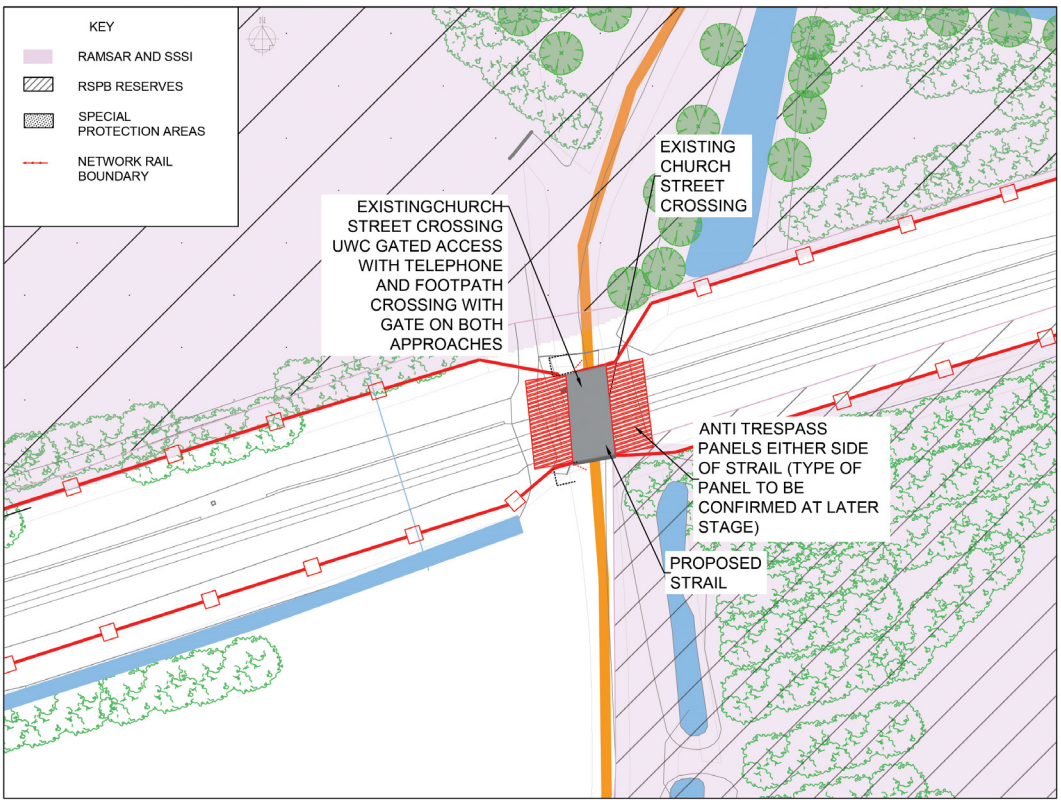


Figure 9 - Church Crossing - An image showing a map with the existing and proposed crossing. The new crossing is in the same place as the existing but is larger.

Wybournes Farm Crossing and High Halstow Restricted Byway

Respondents were not generally in favour of a bridge due to the environmental impact and visual intrusion this would cause. The option to divert vehicles and all other users to Dux Court Road would involve the construction of a long access route to the farm and reconstruction of an existing bridge due to current weight restrictions. These changes would be at significant additional cost therefore, the existing highway crossing is to be retained; it will be upgraded with a full barrier and new safety features to ensure the crossing is clear before a train can pass.

The High Halstow restricted byway, which sits 50 metres to the southeast, is to be closed and users are to be diverted to Wybournes Crossing; this will avoid multiple crossings and the requirement for additional safety systems when these exist already at the adjacent Wybournes crossing.

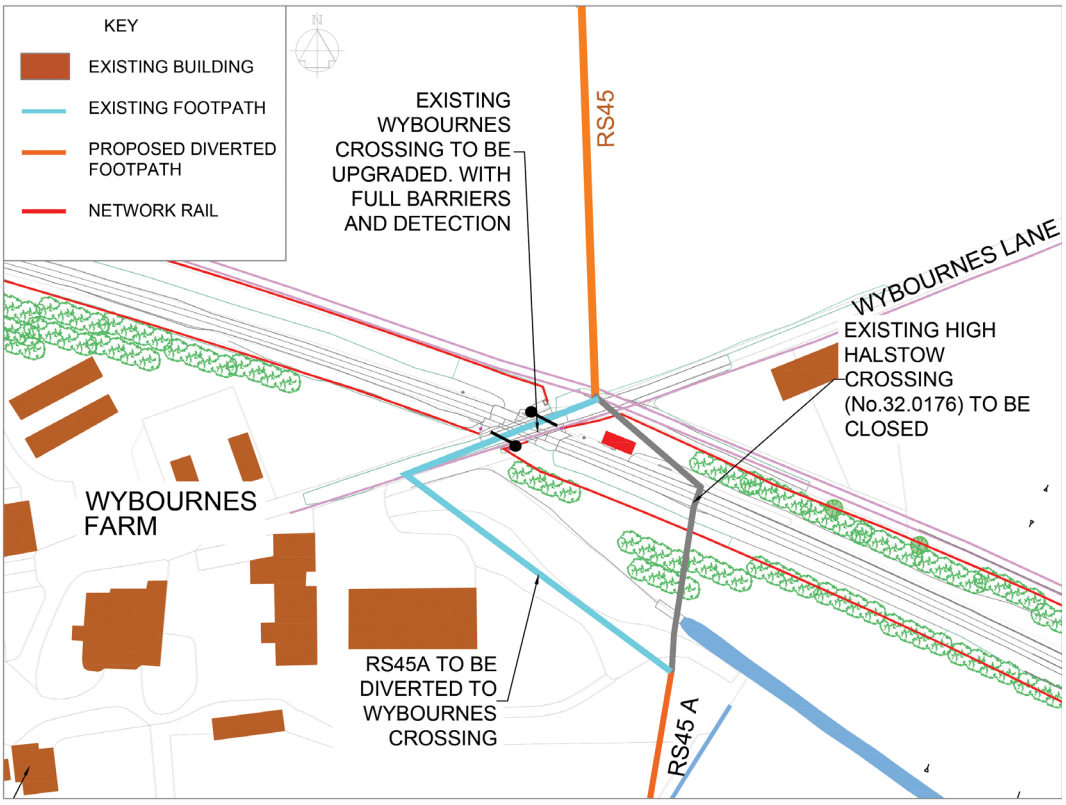


Figure 10 - Wybournes Level Crossing and High Halstow Crossing Closure - An image showing a map with the existing and proposed crossings. The footpath crossing to the right is to be closed and diverted across the road crossing to the left. The proposed road crossing is to have new barriers and is larger than the existing crossing.

Solomon's Crossing

The initial proposals were to provide a diversion route over Solomon's Farm bridge to the north of the railway. These proposals remain the same for this consultation. The proposed enhancements also include an additional path connecting the existing footpath, which sits south of the railway, to Dux Court Road, providing a complete footpath on both sides of the railway.

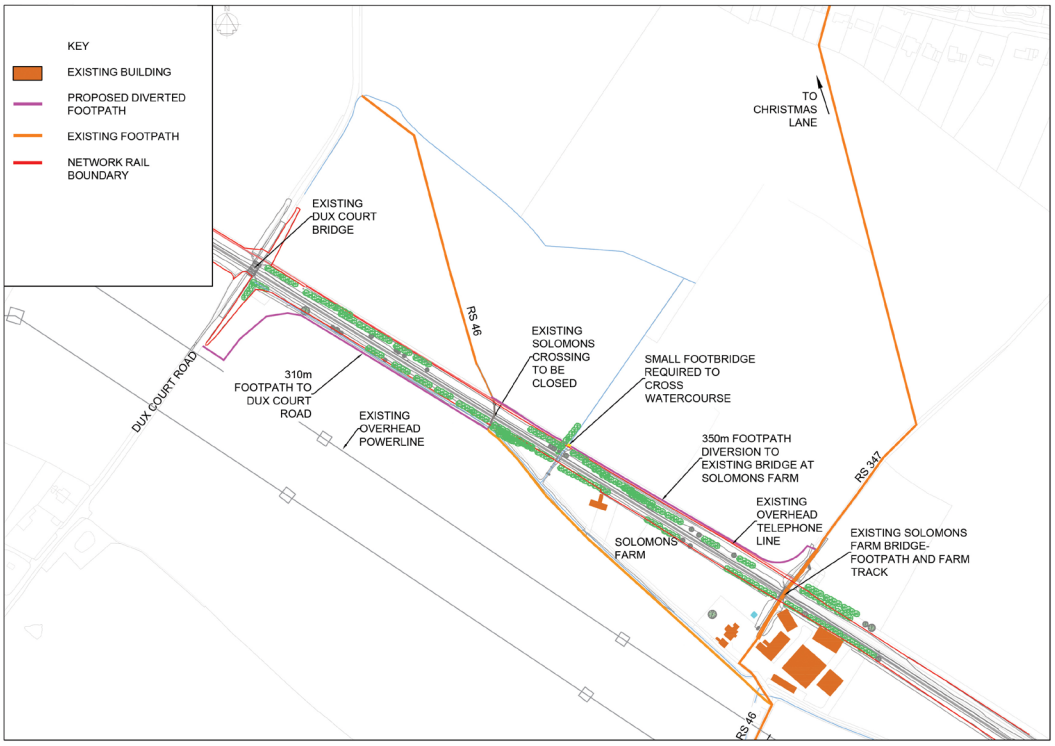


Figure 11 - Solomons Crossing - An image showing a map with the existing and proposed crossings. The footpath crossing the track is being closed and two new footpaths are being created either side of the track to the nearest bridges.

Whitehall Bridleway, Stoke Rd Crossing and Creek Crossing

The design has been developed so that these crossings are no longer impacted by the passenger service and therefore no works are required.

Therefore, works to these crossings have now been discounted from the scheme and the crossings will remain as existing.

Passing places

Passing places on the line are required to allow passenger and freight services to pass. There are two passing locations in addition to the station siding.

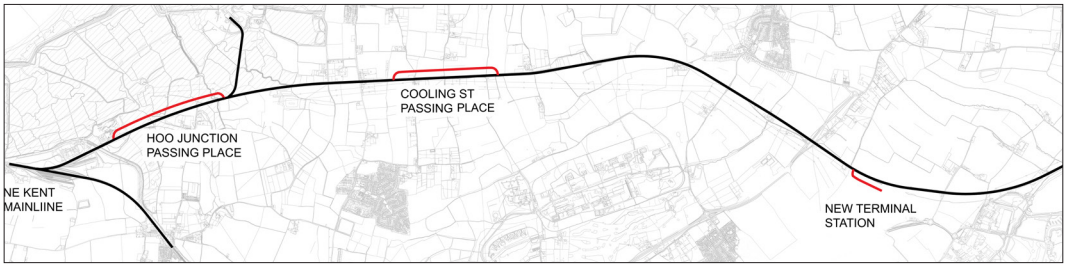


Figure 12 - Passing places along the grain line - An image showing a map with whole route shown. There are passing places shown on the map at Cliffe Junction and at Cooling Street, the proposed station is also shown to the right of the image.

Hoo Junction to Cliffe Loop

The design of the Cliffe loop has been refined to support the required passing movements. It will be located between Canal Road and Cliffe to eliminate the need for works to Canal Road Bridge and, consequently, will no longer extend to the North Kent Main Line. The previously proposed deviation to the south of the Cliffe junction has also been removed. This reduces the cost and the environmental impact of the scheme.

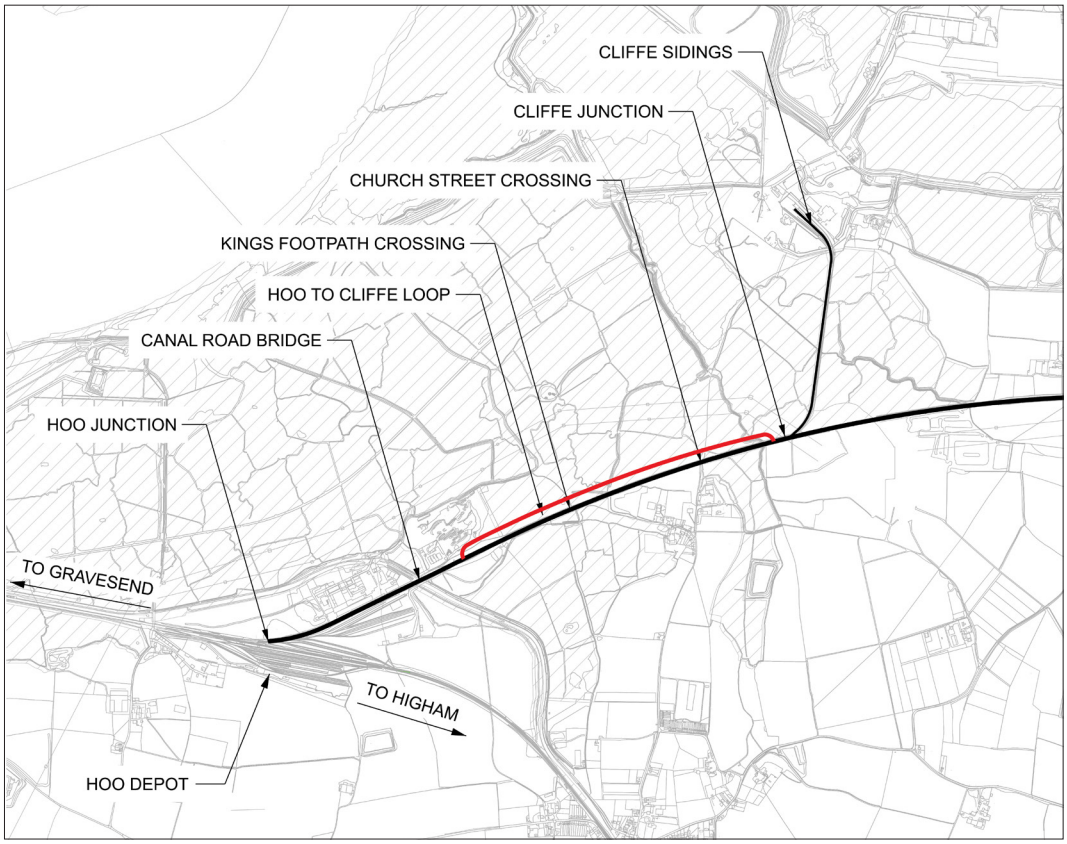


Figure 13 - Hoo Junction to Cliffe Junction Loop - An image showing a map with a section of the rail route. There is a red loop next to the track showing the location of the passing loop.

Cooling Street loop

Cooling Street loop has been moved approximately 650 metres west to avoid:

1) the foot of an existing incline on the railway, which would require trains to start uphill and

2) other utility services in that area. Bridges within the vicinity of the passing place will be reconstructed to suit dualling of the line; the bridges were constructed to take dual lines, but some parts will need to be replaced. Replacement parts will be as similar as possible to the existing and will be constructed to minimise visual intrusion.

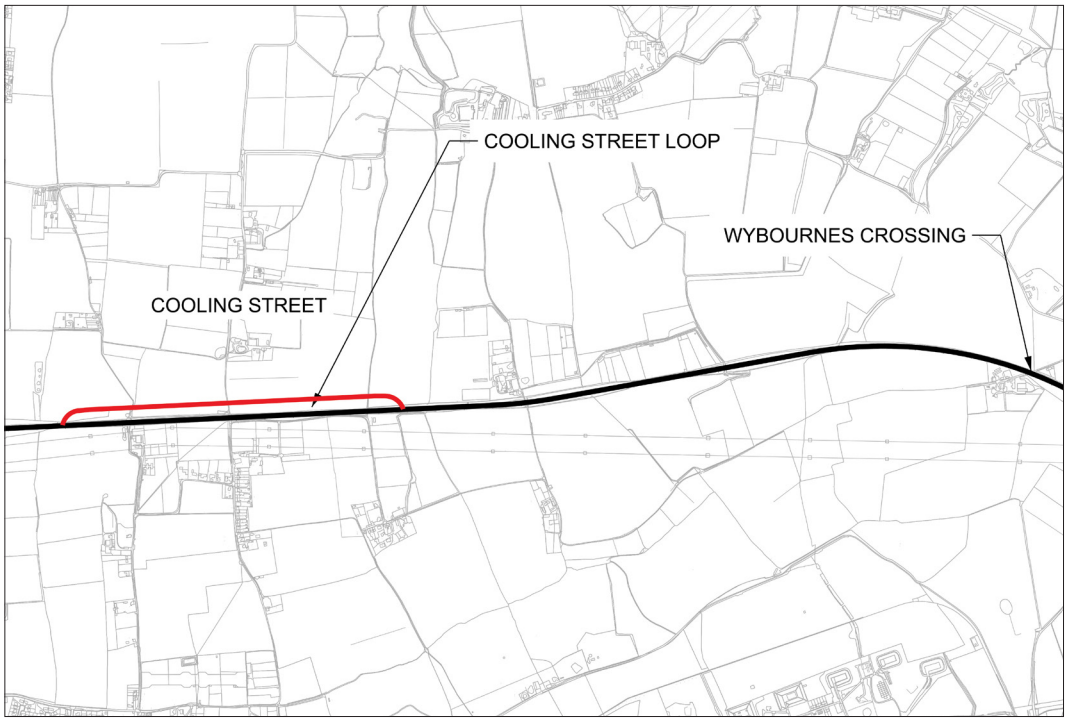


Figure 14 - Cooling Street Passing Loop - An image showing a map with a section of the rail route. There is a red loop next to the track showing the location of the passing loop.

The exact length of passing places may be further refined to suit train lengths and signalling solutions as the scheme develops.

Service provision

The DC electrification that would be required to deliver a 12-car service has been discounted. The original plan to deliver DC electrification would have provided a service into London but this would have been prohibitively expensive. To remove the need for electrification a service will be efficiently delivered by a Battery/ Electric or BiModal train.

Respondents' preference was for a connection to a faster route that can be provided by a link service stopping at Gravesend, as the most flexible interchange station, and connecting to Ebbsfleet for the higher speed services. Consequently, the service will now be switched to a link service connecting the local area to a faster service for London and also connecting to locations in Medway. The options are currently being developed to maximise the efficiency of the solution.

The options being considered are:

- A link service between Sharnal Street and Gravesend
- A link service between Sharnal Street, Gravesend and Northfleet
- A link service between Sharnal Street, Gravesend and Ebbsfleet
- Extending some of the London to Dartford or Gravesend trains through to Sharnal Street station.

A service from Sharnal Street Station terminating at Gravesend would use the existing through line platforms at Gravesend, and the train would then reverse to return to Sharnal Street Station. This represents the simplest and shortest service, providing onward connectivity to London and the Medway towns at Gravesend. The key infrastructure change that would be required at the Gravesend station to facilitate this service is the introduction of an additional track crossover to allow the service to use both platforms 1 and 2.

The Northfleet option requires the construction of a dedicated platform at the station and allows for greater flexibility in providing the service. There are currently three options being considered for the location of the dedicated platform. Options 1 and 2 places the dedicated platform on the eastern east of the station, option 1 on the northern side adjacent to Ebbsfleet Walk, and option 2 on the southern side overlooking Thames Way and Ebbsfleet station. Option 3 placed the dedicated platform to the west adjacent to Station Road and Railway Street.

A service terminating at Ebbsfleet is restricted by the availability of the platforms and may not be able to support the level of service desired but does not require any construction at the station.

Extending the Dartford service provides a direct link to London as well as interchange stations and requires no construction. However, it is reliant on the ability to convert the existing trains on the network to battery operation.

The advantage of converting the existing trains to battery operation is that additional train care facilities are not required. For the link service options, modifications to existing train care facilities will need to be developed at Slade Green or a similar location to maintain the trains.

Within the design of the rail system, the possibility of future extensions have been considered and the proposed works do not prevent future phases extending the passenger service beyond Sharnal, or including additional stops on the Hoo Peninsula, or a curve to allow a direct connection to Higham, Strood and towns in Medway.

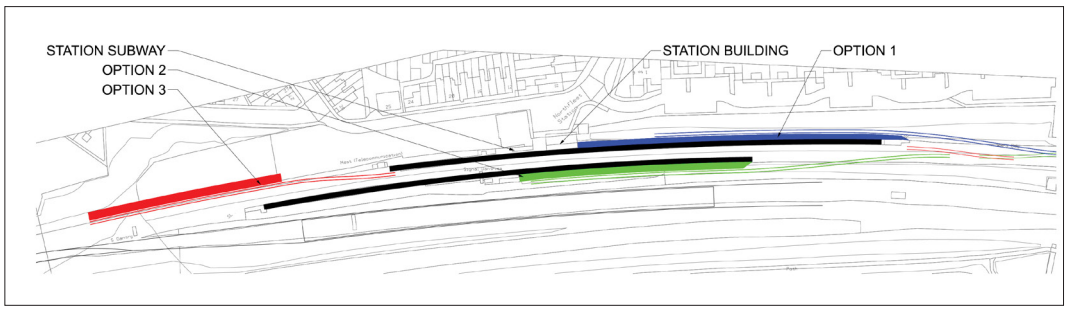


Figure 15 - Dedicated Platform Options at Northfleet Station - An image showing a map with the existing and proposed platform options. To the left in red is option 1, in the lower middle in green is option 2, in the upper middle in blue is option 1.

The final nature of the service will be considered and assessed as part of the EIA process for the rail works.

Construction

The need for HGV traffic on local roads to move construction materials was expressed as a concern by respondents.

The use of Hoo Junction rail depot, with materials sourced from Cliffe Marine aggregate rail sidings, and rail wagons used to move materials and minimize HGV movements, is being further developed as part of the overall solution. The physical constraints around the rail corridor will make it difficult to import the material required by road. Hoo junction depot specific purpose is to load rail wagons to undertake this work, and Cliffe is a marine aggregate siding that is a major source of material for other rail projects including HS2.

Both passing places can be constructed within the existing railway boundary, which was originally built to cater for dual track along the whole line, minimising the environmental impact of the works.

HIF Road

The proposals for the road aspect of HIF have been designed to manage future traffic growth associated with future housing projections for the Hoo Peninsula, and the current impact of there only being one road on and one road from Hoo. These proposals will help to maximise the use of existing infrastructure whilst also creating additional capacity to facilitate future Hoo growth. The improvements are split into six geographic phases.

They involve improvements to existing infrastructure, as well as the provision of new infrastructure including slip roads, junctions, interchanges, a relief road which will provide a second road access to the peninsula, and wider highway improvements.

What we presented in first-round HIF consultation

Phase 1

New Relief Road – Improvements to existing highways including providing new slip roads to Higham Road junction, new overbridge, improvements to Islingham Farm Road and Woodfield Way

Phase 2

New Relief Road - Proposed relief road from Upchat Roundabout to Main Road Hoo Roundabout. A228/ Main Road Roundabout junction modification. New A228 roundabout and associated spur link road

Phase 3

Improvements to A228 Bell's Lane Roundabout and Dux Court Road (widening and link road)

Phase 4

Improvements to Ropers Lane Roundabout and modification to the Stoke Road roundabout to allow access to the new station

Phase 5

Four Elms Roundabout

Phase 6

Wulfere Way and Sans Pareil Roundabout

Construction

Management of traffic flows, road closures and residential access; stakeholder consultation and community engagement; Construction Traffic Management Plan.

The full highways chapter from the early 2021 consultation brochure can be revisited HERE.

Your views on the Highways proposals presented in the first-round consultation

When the HIF highways proposals were presented as part of the first-round HIF consultation, the team sought feedback from the community on travel habits, the six phases of works proposed and initial thoughts on any measures that could be put in place to minimise any negative impacts.

In total, 16 questions were posed. Responses were detailed and there were a number of general comments and suggestions made by respondents for each question. All feedback has been logged, organised into themes and explored in detail by the team.

These comments have been considered as part of the council's optioneering and design development process, which has, and will continue to, take account of factors such as:

- transport studies/ modelling
- highways safety policies
- engineering constraints
- land requirements
- cost
- legislative and policy compliance
- environmental constraints (including SSSI limitations) and the assessment process; feedback from the public and the council's desire to minimise any impacts on the existing and future residents on the Hoo Peninsula, such as considering various options proposed by the community for alternative routes (phase 1 in particular) as well as different locations for, or approaches to, the delivery of other relief measures proposed.

Following consideration of the public's feedback to this consultation the council's continued assessment work and negotiations with landowners, the process and results of all stages of this optioneering work will be presented as part of the consent applications.

To read the feedback on our early 2021 highways proposals in full, you can access the first-round HIF 'Consultation Feedback Report' HERE or, for an abridged version, the 'Executive Summary' of that document can be found HERE.

What has changed since the first-round HIF consultation

Following a number of additional studies, ongoing technical stakeholder meetings, consideration of adjacent development proposals, and detailed analysis of the first-round HIF consultation feedback, the team has evolved the highways solutions since the scheme that was presented in the early 2021 consultation.

A summary of the key changes to proposals since the first-round HIF consultation in early 2021 is below.

Phase 1

Alternative route (from that presented in the early 2021 consultation) taken forward

Phase 2

Relief road and associated spur road

Phase 3

Changed junction to roundabout

Phase 4

Revisions to rail access being further explored

Phase 5

No changes

Phase 6

Design amendments

The proposals we are consulting on

The proposed changes are detailed phase by phase and information is only included where this is a change from previous information presented.

To view the original proposals presented for each phase, you can access the highways section of the first-round HIF 'Consultation Brochure' HERE.

As a direct result of feedback, the team has also undertaken further work to consider the construction impacts and plans to reduce any negative impacts.

Phase 1

There were a number of concerns raised about the Phase 1 proposals in the first-round HIF consultation around noise, light, air quality, traffic volumes and visual intrusion to the nearby residential areas. We were pleased to receive some alternative layouts from residents, each of which the team considered carefully taking into account the above factors with the overriding objective of ensuring that if the suggested layout was able to accommodate future traffic and considered the adjacent SSSI.

Whilst many of the layouts suggested were unsuitable for design and environmental reasons, the team did look at one proposal in more detail to determine if there was an alternative/ compromise that may work with further development. This potential alternative would mean the proposed overbridge and slip roads, near the existing Higham Road bridge, would not be needed.

The new proposal has been tested, and the team is of the view that this is the best option. The modifications include:

- signal-controlled junction on the A289 (between the existing Higham Road Bridge and Four Elms Roundabout).
- new link road from the A289 to Woodfield Way.
- improvements to Woodfield Way; and
- local improvements to Islingham Farm Road.

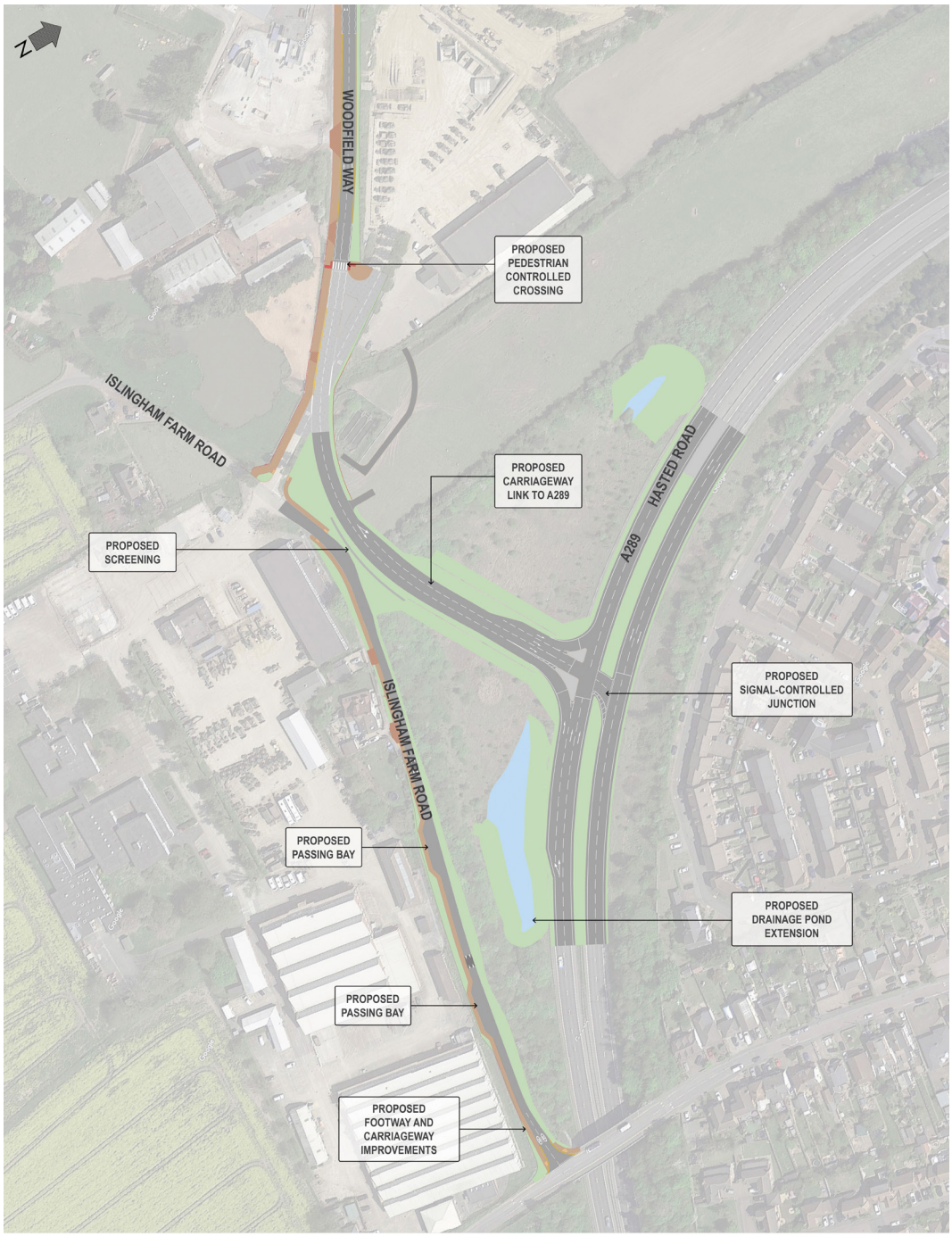


Figure 16 shows the key improvements proposed on Islingham Farm Road, Woodfield Way and A289 Hasted Road.

A proposed grade separated junction will be provided at A289 Hasted Road, providing direct access to Woodfield Way. Islingham Farm Road will be improved with passing bays and footway along one side of the road. Woodfield Way will be upgraded to provide improved pedestrian crossing points and vehicular movement.

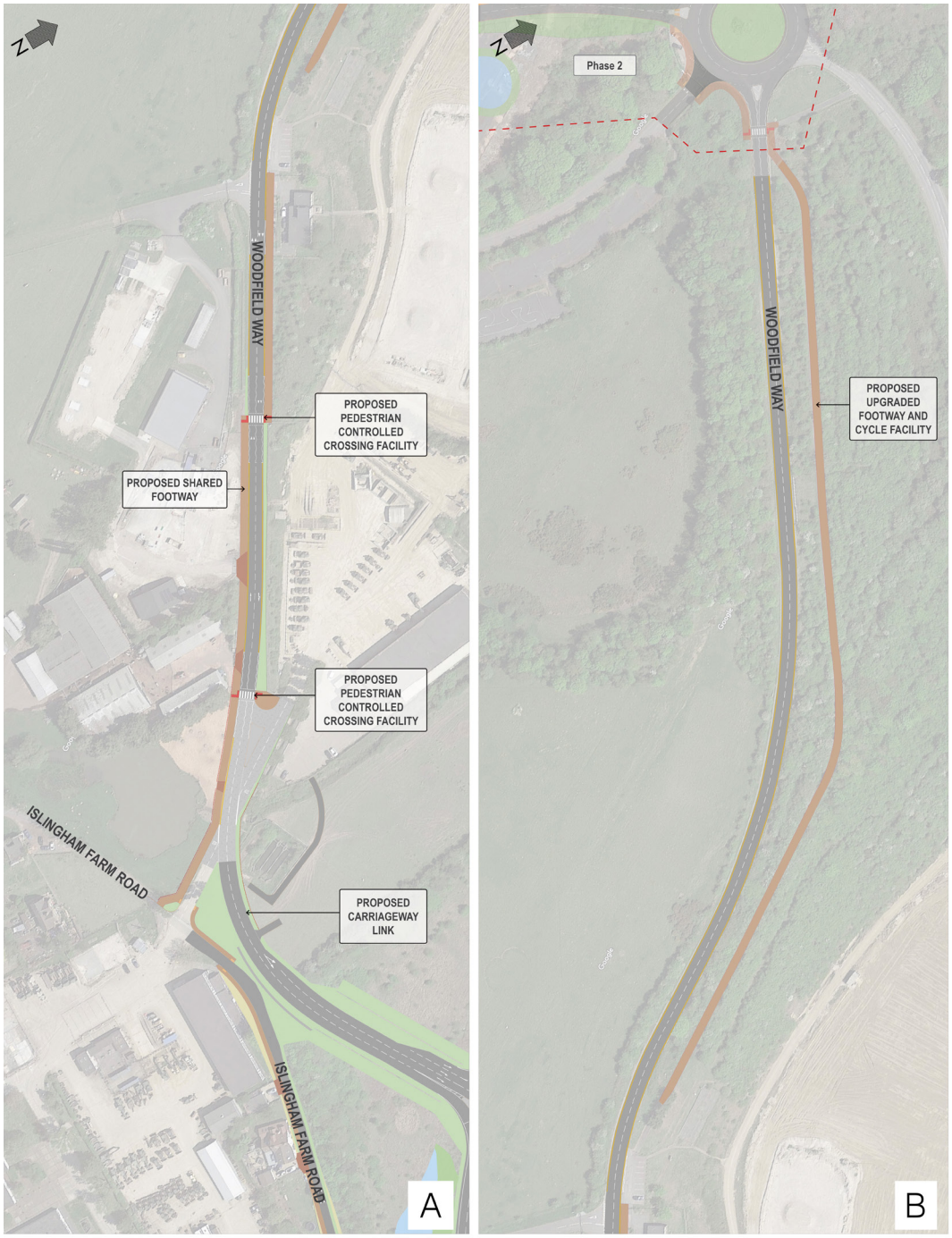


Figure 17 - view A and B shows local improvements on Islingham Farm Road and shows the improvements along the existing Woodfield Way including the provision of several crossing points. In addition, the introduction of an adjacent shared footway cycleway facility will provide links with Islingham Farm Road and facilities further north to improve cycling connections through the area.

A289 Junction / Link Road

A new, traffic-signalled, junction on the A289 Hasted Road is proposed between Higham Road and Four Elms Roundabout. This will provide access to and from a new link road to Woodfield Way but with HGVs and buses discouraged from using the route.

Approach speed limits on the A289 to the new junction will be reduced to accommodate traffic flows, allow inter-junction connectivity and generally to improve safety. A new structure is required to carry the link road over the existing A289 drainage pond; this will be delivered in a way which will be sensitive to the ecology in and around the pond whilst also ensuring that no water storage capacity is lost.

Higham Road

No works are proposed along Higham Road. At the junction of Higham Road and Islingham Farm Road, access improvements to the footway are proposed to provide safe connectivity for a new footway on Islingham Farm Road.

Islingham Farm Road

Local improvement works, and the provision of a new footway along one side of the existing single lane Islingham Farm Road, are proposed to provide safe pedestrian connectivity. The single lane road width will be retained but additional passing bays are proposed.

To enable the new footway and local road re-alignment to be provided, utilities will need to be diverted. Given pedestrians on the new footway will be walking adjacent to existing Ministry of Defence land, the fencing along this boundary will need to be upgraded to meet the security standards required by the MOD.

Woodfield Way

Improvements to Woodfield Way will make the road suitable for increased public use and the expected higher traffic flows. The works comprise improvements to the surface of the existing carriageway, enhanced drainage provision, new footway/ cycle facilities and controlled crossings.

As referenced above, the existing MOD boundary fencing will be upgraded to provide the required security standards with pedestrians adjacent to the boundary. A traffic control system is proposed to allow the safe movement of large MOD vehicles between the training centres which are currently uncontrolled.

No works are proposed that will impact upon the adjacent Chattenden Woods and Lodge Hill SSSI. The works will take place within the existing built upon areas and hard surfaces.

Walking and Cycling

A new footway will be provided on Islingham Farm Road which will improve connectivity and safety between Higham Road and Woodfield Way. Currently there is no footway and limited verges to allow pedestrians, dog walkers or other footway users to step out of the way of vehicles.

As outlined in the early 2021 consultation, the Public Rights of Way (RS119 – Granary Cottage to Hoo Road) at Woodfield Way will be accommodated as part of the road improvements to maintain the route. Other public rights of way across the road will not be affected by the works; this is unchanged from the first-round HIF consultation.

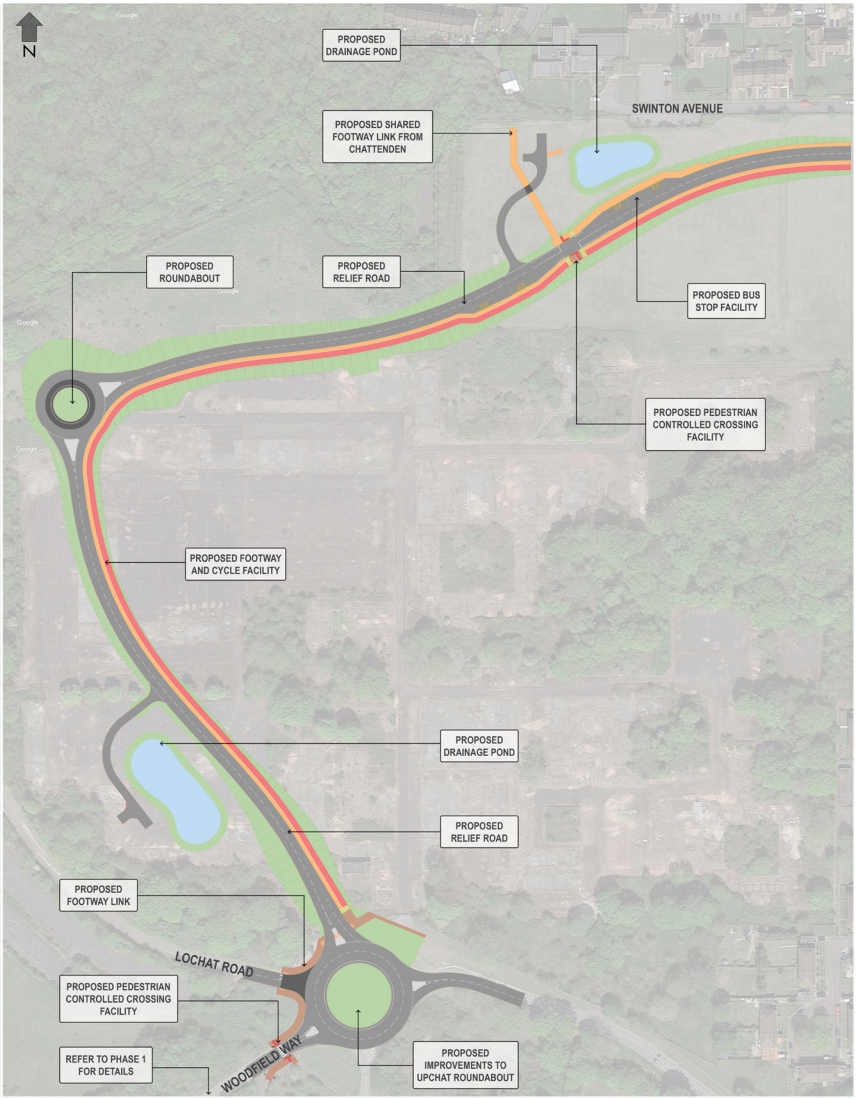


Figure 18 shows the improvements proposed at Upchat roundabout that forms part of Phase 2.

This includes the introduction of a link for pedestrians and cyclists across the roundabout to further improve connectivity. To the Northeast of the roundabout a proposed relief road is to be provided. The alignment has been developed with consideration to proposed development areas and future access into these sites.

Provision of bus stops are proposed in both directions to facilitate future bus services.

Phase 2 – New Relief Road and associated spur link road

The team initially presented proposals for 'a new relief road....to be constructed to the north and then to the east, before intersecting with Chattenden Lane. It then continues to join the A228 Main Road Hoo Roundabout adjacent to the site currently being developed by Abbey Developments.'

As a result of engagement with interested parties, the team has also been considering another potential new route for Phase 2. Whilst both the original and new potential Phase 2 routes would deliver a new relief road connecting the Upchat roundabout to the A228, one of the potential routes would include additional roundabouts with spurs for access and would be located closer to the existing highway (Peninsula Way) than the other.

At this stage, both routes are being considered. A preferred route will be selected and presented as part of the planning application for the HIF road scheme.

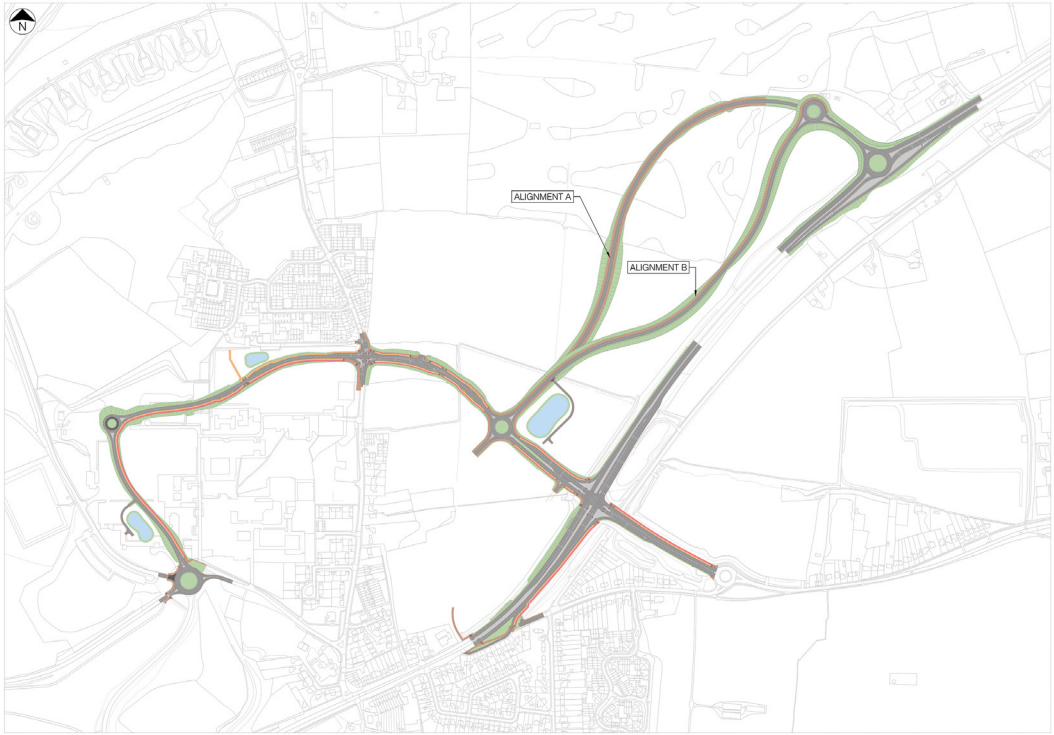


Figure 19 - Overall map of phase 2 displaying a new relief road from Upchat roundabout. The road travels north and then east, crossing Chattenden Lane and continues east to join the A228 at the Main Road junction. Between Chattenden Lane and Main road is a roundabout where a spur road travels north to join to the A228 at the new proposed roundabout on the A228 between Main Road junction and Bell's Lane roundabout.

This image shows two alignments for the spur road, alignment A is a high curved alignment, alignment B will require a second roundabout as this alignment cuts back towards the A228.

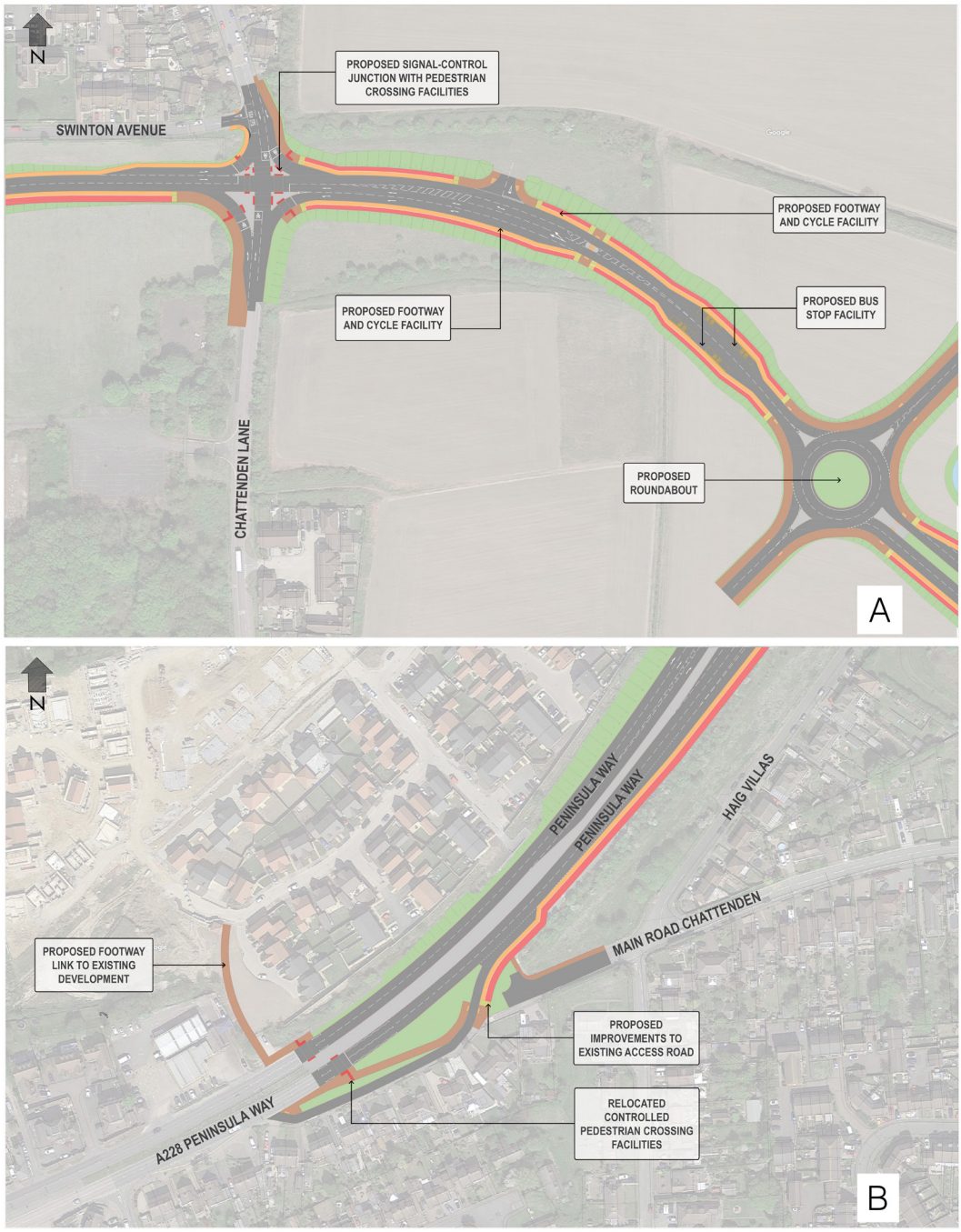


Figure 20 shows the continuation of the relief road to the east.

View A shows a proposed signal-controlled junction is to be provided at the point the relief road intersects with Chattenden Lane.

Moving east, a proposed roundabout is to be introduced that will serve proposed developments and provide a spur link. This link will provide a more direct route to the A289, easing traffic congestion on the A228 Main Road.

View B shows Main Road Chattenden south of the A228. Improvements include relocation of the existing crossing facility to provide improved connections into the Abbey Homes development.

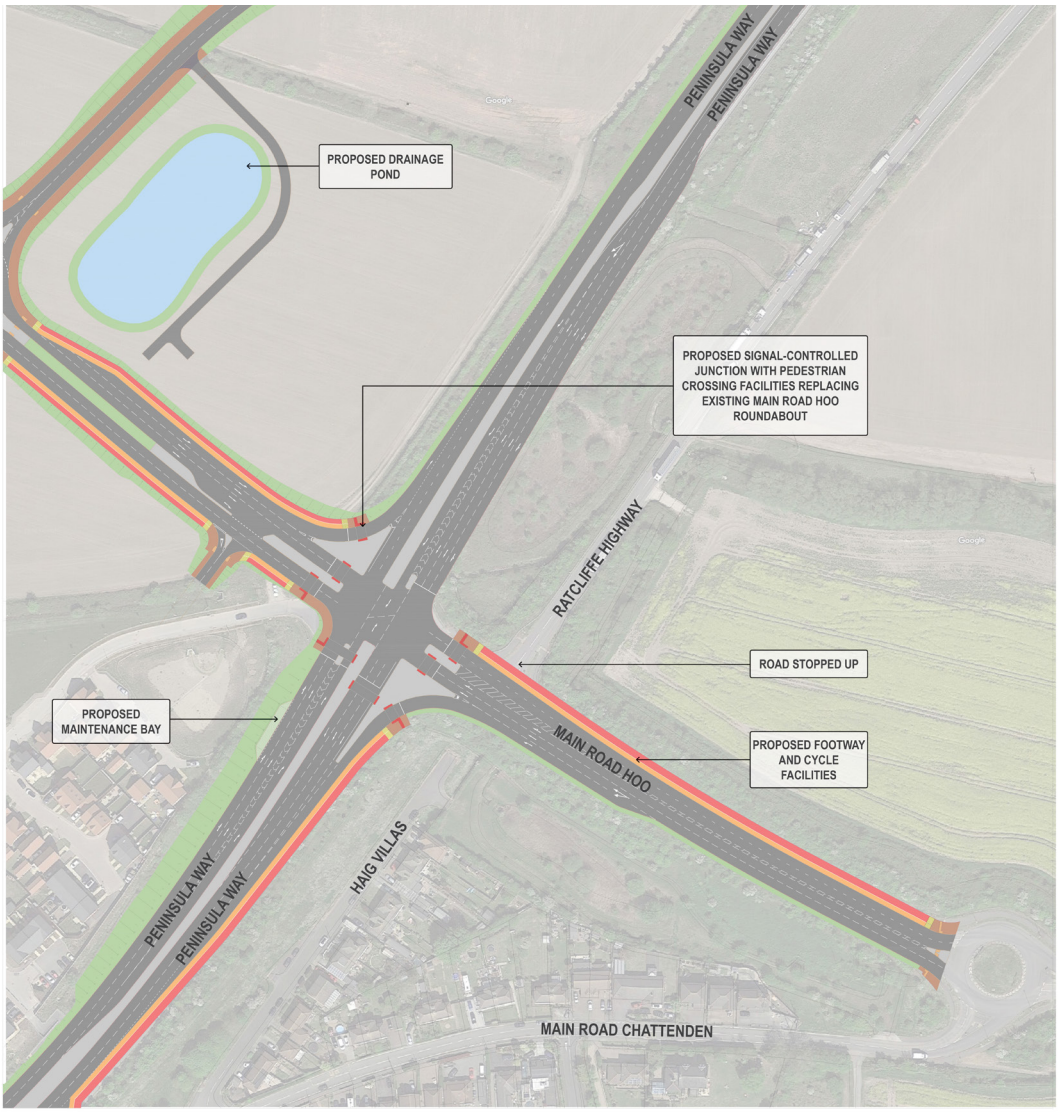


Figure 21 shows the proposed signal-controlled junction improvements at Main Road Hoo.

The reconfiguration from the existing roundabout arrangement will address both the existing congestion issues and provide further capacity to accommodate future growth.

Signal controlled crossings are also provided to improve pedestrian and cycling provision.

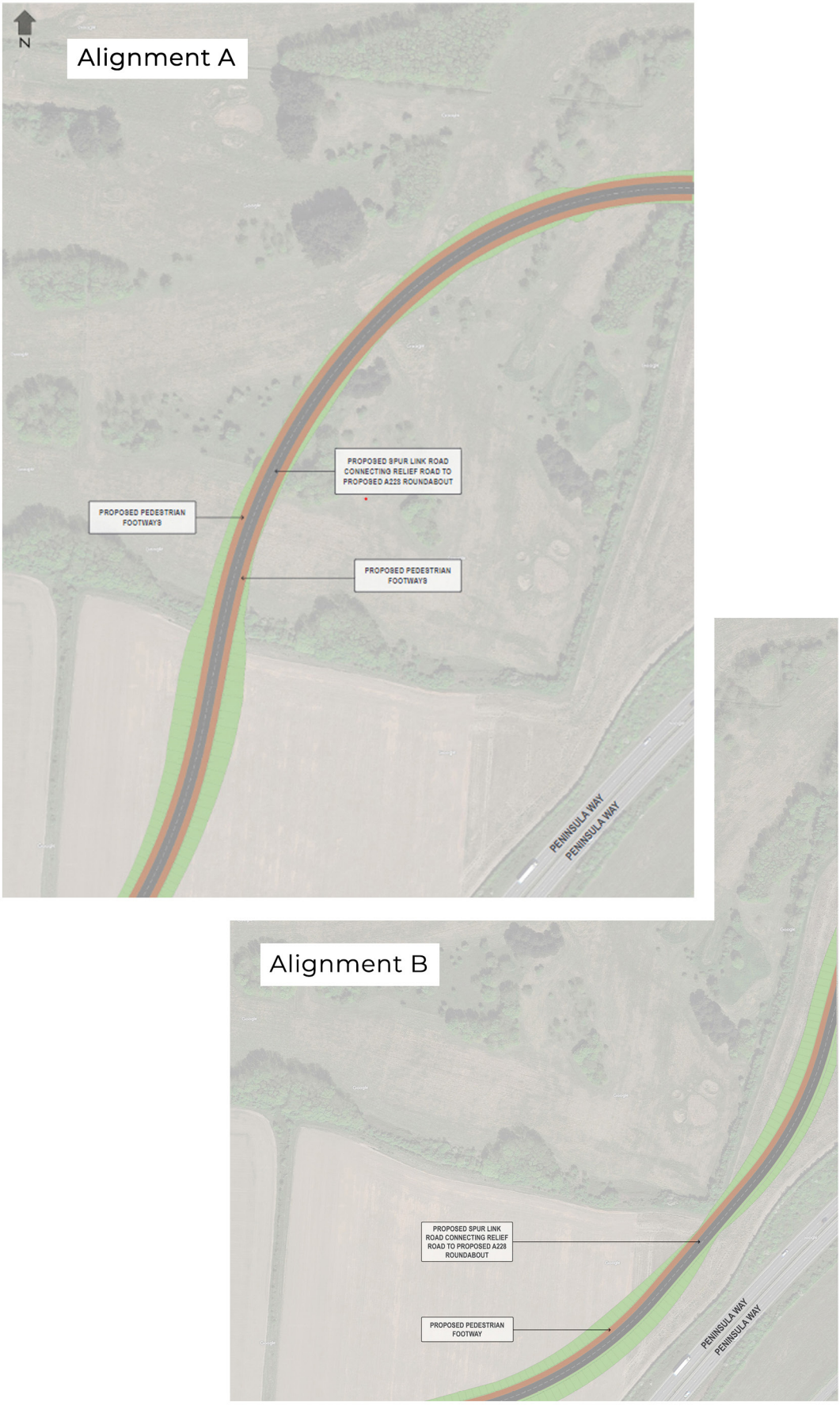


Figure 22 (Alignment A and B) shows the continuation of the new spur road which provides a more direct route to the A289, easing traffic congestion on the A228 Main Road. Provisions also being made to cater for pedestrian and cycling use.

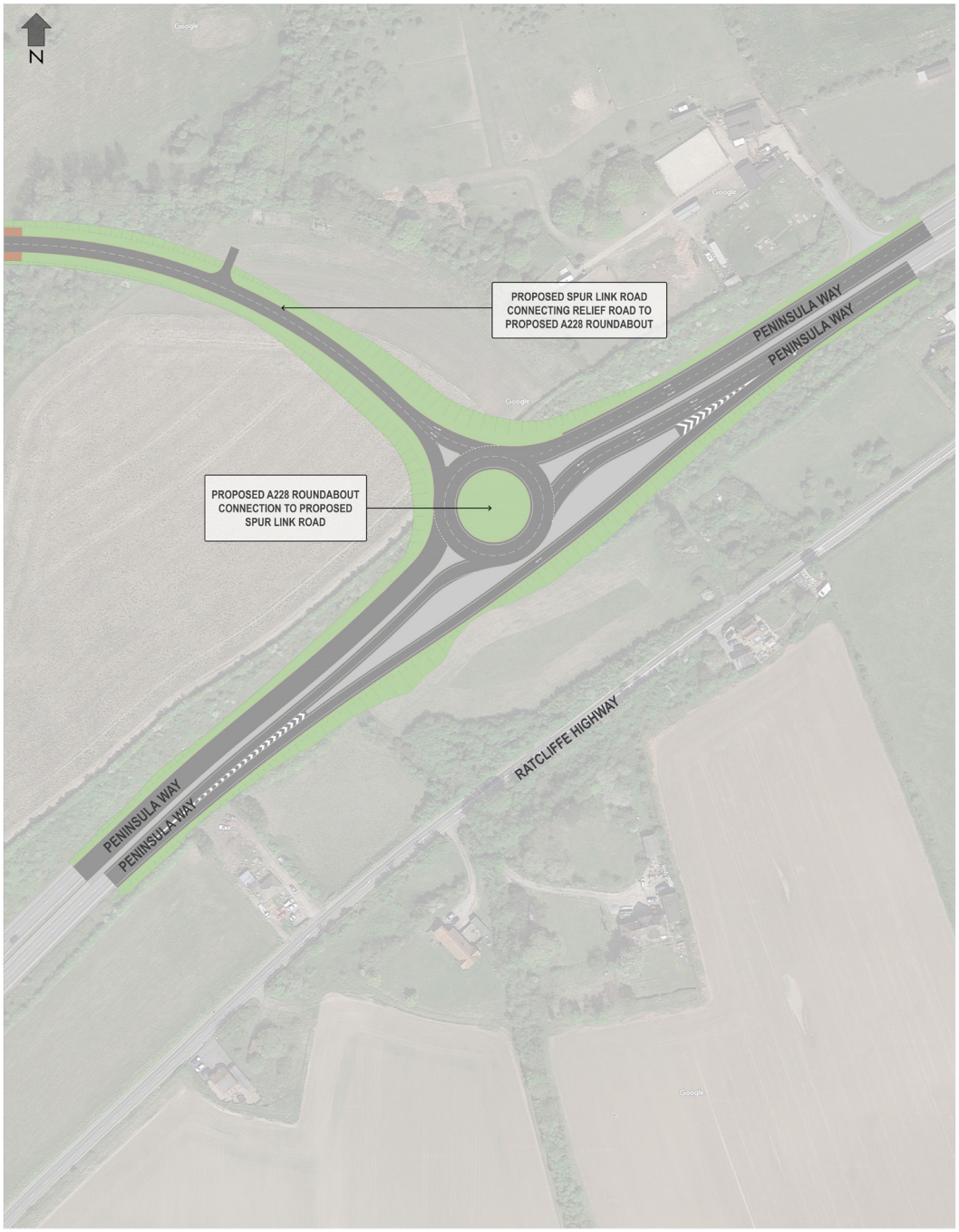


Figure 23 shows the proposed spur link road and its intersection with the A228 Peninsula Way where a proposed roundabout will be introduced between Main Road Hoo and Bell's Lane (Alignment A).

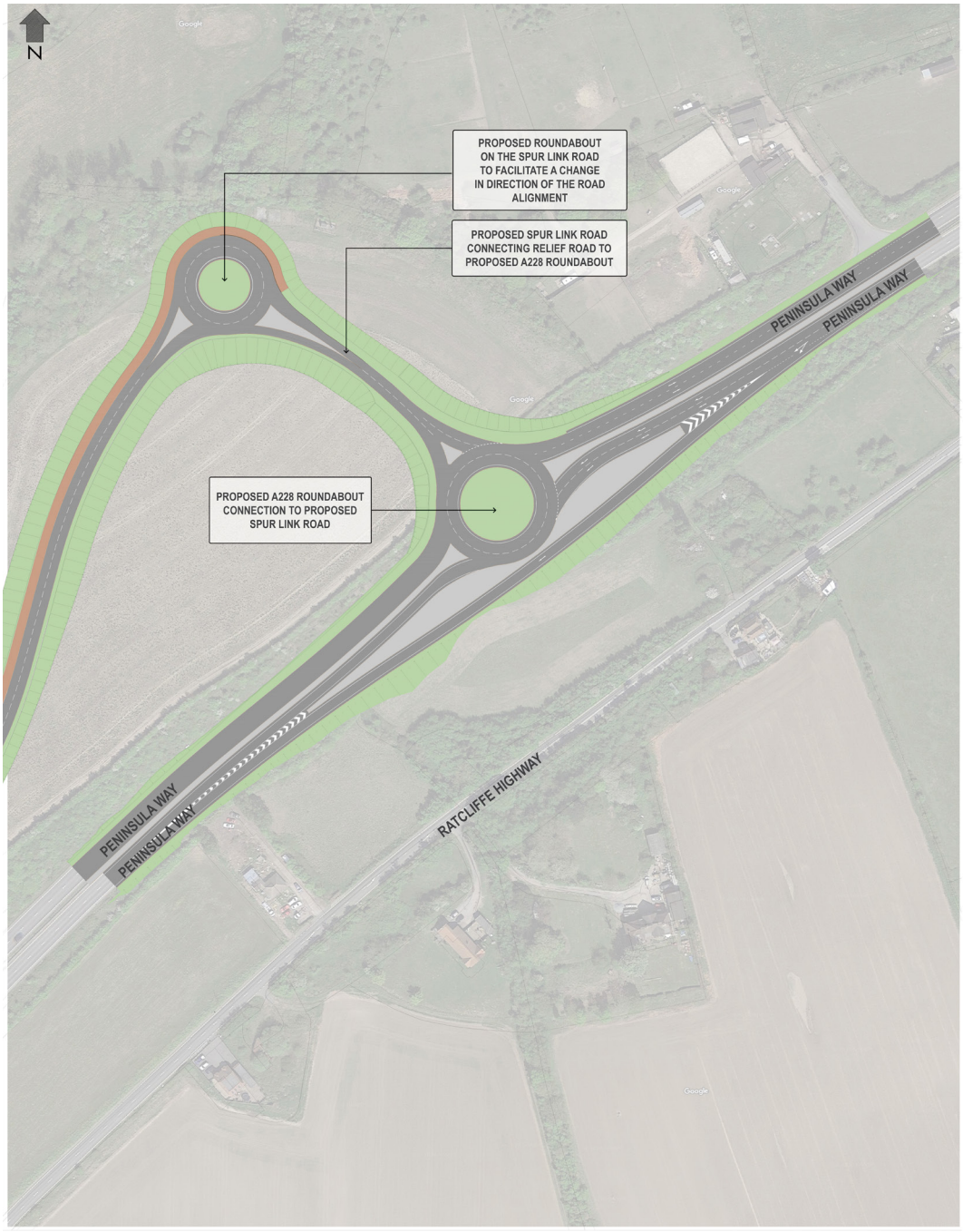


Figure 24 shows the proposed spur link road and its intersection with the A228 Peninsula Way where a proposed roundabout will be introduced to facilitate a change in direction of the road alignment (Alignment B). A proposed roundabout will be between Main Road Hoo and Bell's Lane.

Phase 3 - Improvements to A228 Bell's Lane Roundabout and Dux Court Road (widening and link road)

The existing roundabout configuration will be modified to provide capacity for additional traffic, whilst improving the links between Dux Court Road and Bell's Lane for vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists. This includes the installation of traffic signals and signal-controlled pedestrian crossings for a safer crossing of the A228.

In response to community feedback, approach speed limits to the roundabout will be reduced to 40mph. Lighting will also be enhanced and extended on all approaches to provider greater safety along this stretch but will be designed to take account of environmental sensitivities.

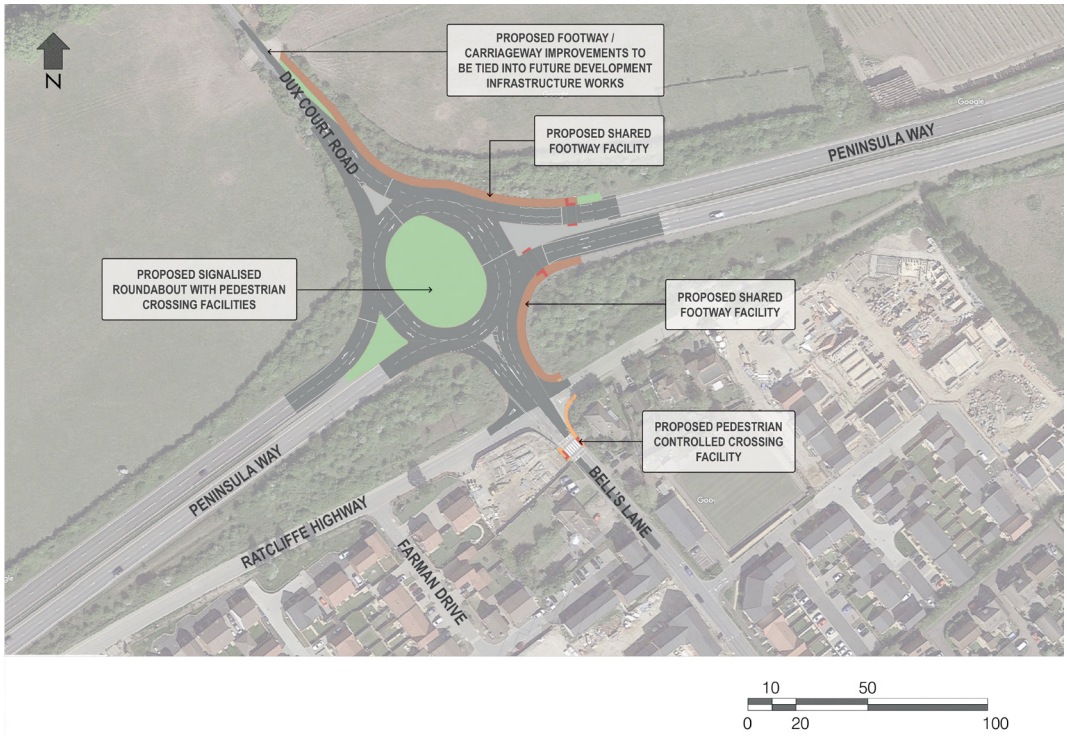


Figure 25 shows the proposed improvements at Bell's Lane.

The existing roundabout configuration will be modified to provide capacity for additional traffic, whilst improving the links between Dux Court Road and Bell's Lane for all modes.

Phase 4 - Improvements to Ropers Lane Roundabout and modifications to the existing highway network to facilitate access to the new station

Ropers Lane

As part of the early 2021 consultation, the team presented proposals for the improvements to Ropers Lane Roundabout and modification to the Stoke Road roundabout to allow access to the new station. The existing Ropers Lane Roundabout will be modified to accommodate the projected traffic growth from adjacent housing developments and the proposed rail station. The existing Stoke Road roundabout is being modified to allow access to the new rail station.

The team received very little feedback on these Ropers Lane Roundabout proposals at the consultation, and as a result, no changes have been made.

Figure 26 indicates the improvements proposed at Ropers Lane roundabout to ease traffic congestion.

Stoke Road roundabout and access to the proposed new station

The team is continuing to work on the detail of these proposals to ensure that Stoke Road roundabout and Ropers Lane can accommodate the level of predicted vehicle movements and also safely facilitate access to the new station. On this basis works to the roundabout or to Ropers Lane cannot be ruled out and the route of the station access road presented in the early 2021 consultation may need to change. If works are required and the access road route does change, this will be presented as part of the planning processes for the HIF schemes.

Walking and cycling

Footway and cycling provisions will be provided to improve connectivity to the adjacent routes and the new railway station.

Existing public rights of way across the road improvements will be retained.

Phase 5 - Four Elms Roundabout

A number of respondents to the first-round HIF consultation asked why the Four Elms improvements could not be delivered sooner as part of an earlier phase. As described previously in this section, the phase numbers are based on geographical location and not the order of construction. The timing of construction phases will be identified as the proposals develop further.

The essential design of this phase has not changed since the first consultation. However, the team considered the feedback to the Four Elms Roundabout and have developed more detail and mitigation measures.

To increase road capacity and ease congestion on the Four Elms Roundabout, the following changes are proposed:

- Additional lane on approach roads to provide increased capacity at the junction, allowing a greater number of cars to move via the junction
- Increased circulation capacity at the roundabout to encourage free movement
- Installation of traffic signals to improve traffic flows and accessibility for all road users at the roundabout
- A new highways drainage attenuation pond (and associated access) to provide additional storage capacity and pollution management measures for the controlled flows entering the watercourse
- A dedicated slip road from the A289 Hasted Road to northbound A228 to provide a free flow lane; the length of the slip road will be restricted to respect the SSSI site surrounding the area
- Dedicated, separate maintenance areas will be provided to prevent disruption of traffic flow and for the safety of operatives
- Speed limits on the approach to the roundabout will be reduced to improve safety, maintain efficient traffic capacity, and to accommodate the revised road layout.

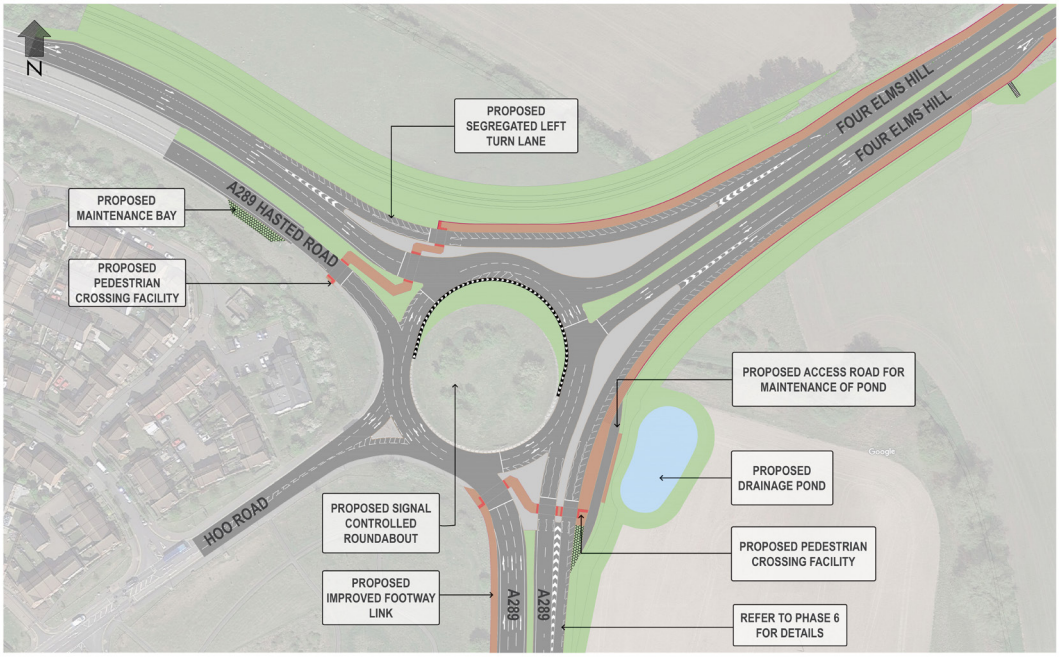


Figure 27 indicates the additional measures being provided at Four Elms Hill to ease congestion. This includes the introduction of slip lanes to cater for the additional traffic to the Peninsula.

Maintenance areas will be provided as well as signal-controlled crossings to improve safety and accessibility at the junction for pedestrians and cyclists.

Phase 6: Wulfere Way and Sans Pareil Roundabout

Wulfere Way

Wulfere Way is currently a two-lane dual carriageway. As we outlined in the first-round HIF consultation, an additional lane in each direction is proposed. We can now confirm that, in response to community feedback, the speed limit at this point will be reduced.

As part of the first-round HIF consultation, the team outlined that it intended to collaborate with key stakeholders to deliver new pedestrian and cycle access. This has now been undertaken and it is confirmed that a footway/ cycleway off the highway will be provided along its length connecting the facilities at Four Elms Roundabout and Sans Pareil Roundabout. This will provide a more direct, dedicated clear route between the key junctions, whilst providing access to existing routes.

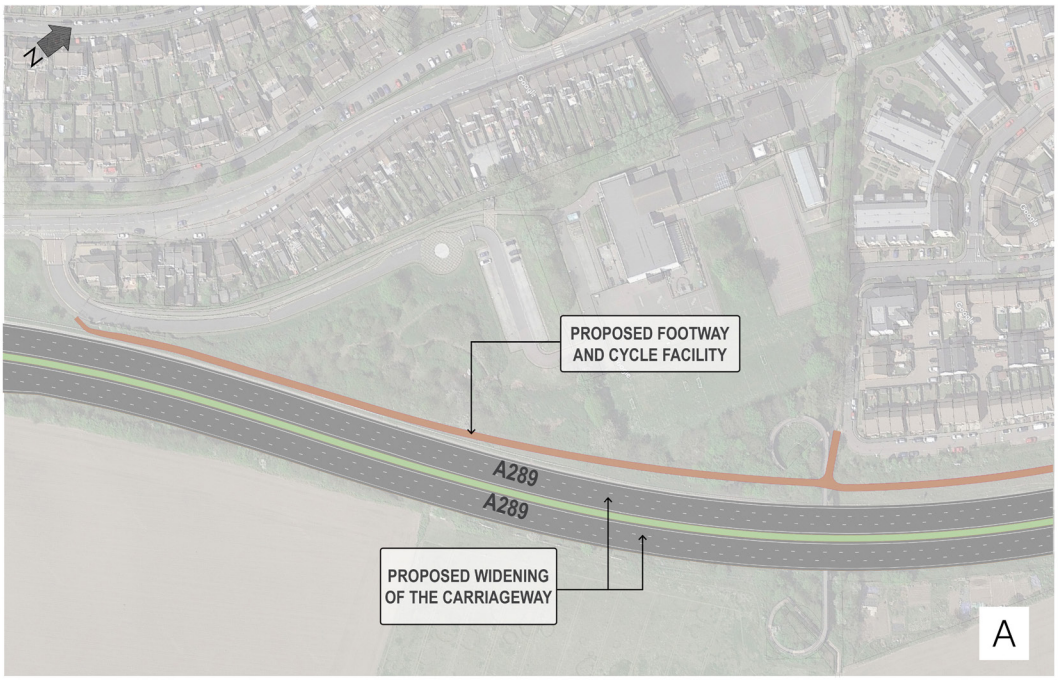


Figure 28, above and over the page, shows the proposed works along the A289 Wulfere Way. The works include the widening of the existing carriageway to provide three lanes in each direction.

A footway cycleway will be provided along its length, connecting the facilities at Four Elms roundabout and Sans Pareil.

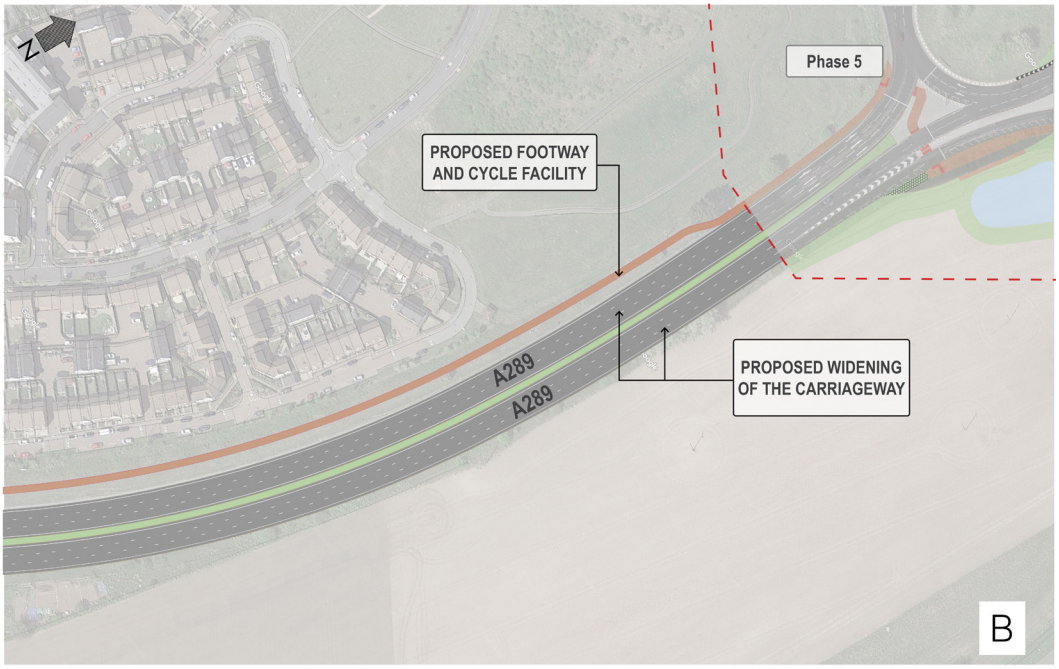


Figure 28 continued.

Sans Pareil Roundabout

In direct response to community feedback, there is a significant change to the Wainscott Road access to this roundabout, with a revised layout of the road at this point.

The remainder of the design remains largely the same as presented in the first-round HIF consultation, however, the detail of the proposals has been developed to respond to issues raised and following further technical studies.

To increase road capacity and ease congestion on the Sans Pareil Roundabout, the following changes are proposed:

- Additional lane on approach roads, including a dedicated free flow lane to the northbound Wulfere Way from Frindsbury Hill
- Increased circulation capacity at the roundabout
- Installation of traffic signals to improve traffic flows at the roundabout
- The Wainscott Road access to the roundabout is proposed to be relocated to reduce conflict and help to improve traffic flows at the roundabout, and improve access to and from Benenden Road and Wainscott Road
- Maintenance areas will be provided for safety of operatives and to mitigate impact on traffic flow

As part of the Maritime Academy development, a new traffic signal-controlled junction will be delivered on Frindsbury Hill by the Department for Education. This junction will be constructed in advance of the HIF scheme proposal, but will be designed to accommodate future HIF works, to mitigate changes and disruption at a later date. The HIF scheme will build up this junction with modifications to the Sans Pareil Roundabout, relocated junction for Wainscott Road to Frindsbury Hill and alterations to the Benenden Road layout.

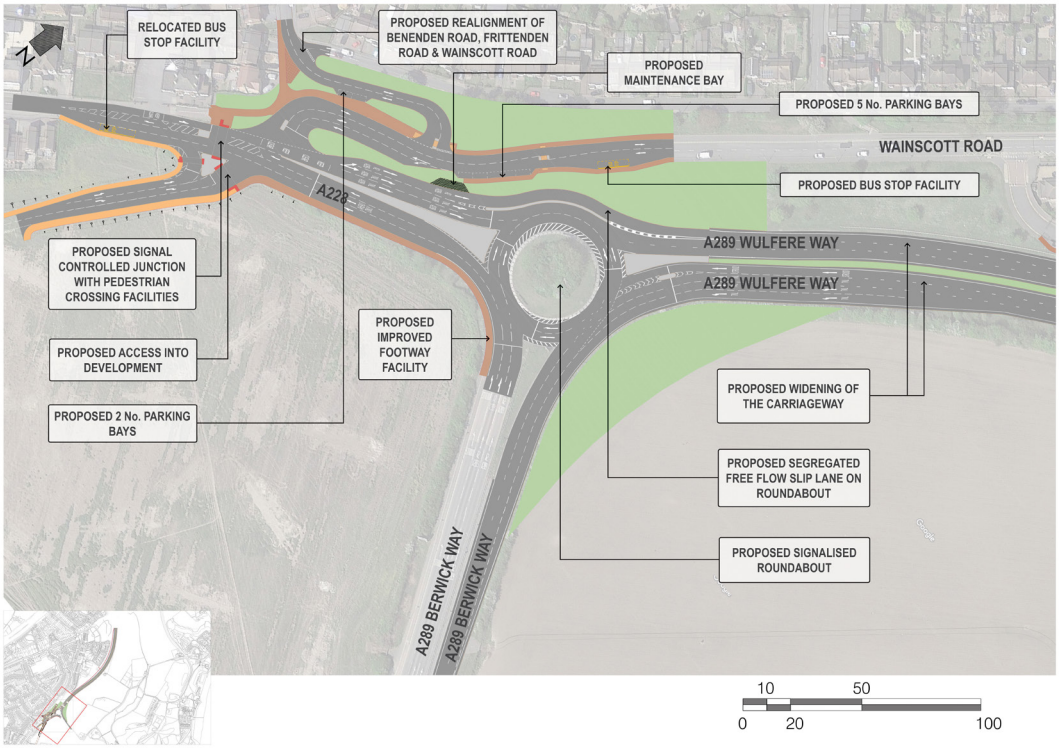


Figure 29 shows the roundabout extension required to accommodate additional lanes that will increase circulation capacity and reduce queuing.

The access to Wainscott Road and Benenden Road will be relocated away from the junction and additional pedestrian and crossing facilities provided to improve accessibility.

Construction

Whilst the construction phases are yet to be determined, we are committed to finding ways of operation that will minimise disruption when associated construction works commence.

We have identified ways and measures to help reduce the impacts on the existing road networks. These measures will form part of a Construction Traffic Management Plan, an outline of which will be submitted with the planning application for the proposals.

Some identified measures included, but are not limited to:

- Site compounds will be located close to the works areas with off-road parking.
- During the construction period, traffic flows will be maintained where possible and impacts mitigated.
- Where road closures are required for safety considerations, these will be restricted to night-time or weekends and suitable diversion routes will be provided.
- Residential access will be maintained throughout construction.
- Consultation with key stakeholders such as the emergency services and bus companies will be undertaken and appropriate plans agreed before works are carried out, to consider phasing, traffic management and suitable diversion routes.
- Signage and information will be used to inform road users of the works and alternative routes.

We will keep residents and local communities up to date on the construction work, with information leaflets being sent to inform local residents and businesses about the proposed construction works, in advance of them taking place.

Environmental Assessments

Environmental considerations continue to underpin and inform the design of each of the proposals (SEMS, rail and road), and all opportunities to avoid and minimise environmental impacts are being explored and, wherever possible, such options for embedding mitigation within our designs are being maximised.

Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA), resulting in Environmental Statements, will be undertaken for the rail works and the highways works to assess the potential for significant environmental impacts to arise as a result of the proposed improvements.

Each assessment will take account of the cumulative effects of the other project and other proposed developments. This EIA work will also be informed by transport assessments, which will consider the effects of the railway and highway works on the peninsula's transport network. A suite of ecological surveys (including reptiles, Great Crested Newt, Dormouse, wintering birds and breeding birds) are being undertaken to inform the assessments.

A Habitat Regulations Assessments (HRA) will also be undertaken to assess the potential impacts of the proposed highway and rail improvements to impact upon protected European sites, including Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Areas (SPA) and Ramsar sites. These European sites are protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 and the HRA will assess the potential for the scheme to impact upon the integrity and conservation status of these sites.

The planning applications for the SEMS proposals will also be accompanied by environmental information about the likely impacts of the scheme.

Where the potential for significant environmental impacts is identified through the EIA and HRA processes, the assessments will identify measures to avoid or mitigate those impacts.

We will continue to engage with statutory and non-statutory environmental groups in respect of these assessments and the development of mitigation measures.

How to get involved and have your say

The HIF is an important opportunity for Hoo and Medway.

The first-round HIF consultation was invaluable in helping to shape and improve how we plan to invest the £170m we have been given by the government.

Your feedback

Please let us have your feedback on the revised proposals by completing the questionnaire.

You can do this by visiting **medway.gov.uk/futurehoo** and completing the online questionnaire. To request a paper copy, phone **01634 331166** or email **futurehoo@medway.gov.uk**

Thank you for reading this document and we look forward to receiving your completed questionnaires.

HIF public consultation events

If you would like to talk to the project team in person and find out more about the revised proposals, we will be holding a number of drop-in events:

- Chattenden Community Centre, Swinton Avenue, Chattenden, Rochester ME3 8PH - Wednesday, 15 December, 2-8pm
- High Halstow Hall, The St, High Halstow, Rochester ME3 8SQ - Thursday, 16 December, 1-7pm
- Hundred of Hoo School Hall, St Werburgh, Main Road, Hoo St Werburgh Rochester; ME3 9HH - Wednesday, 5 January 2022, 5.30-9pm
- Frindsbury Extra Memorial Hall, Holly Road, Wainscott, Rochester ME2 4LG - Friday, 7 January 2022, 2-8pm

Glossary

Built Environment Accessibility Panel (BEAP)
The BEAP is Network Rail's Built Environment Accessibility Panel which has been set up to make sure that their major building works, station designs and other amenities across Britain are accessible and as inclusive as possible. Membership is voluntary and the panel meets every month.

Conservation of Habitats
Conservation of Habitats is the process and management of practices that seek to conserve, protect and restore habitats.

Construction Traffic Management Plan
A construction traffic management plan (CTMP) assesses the impacts on the local road highway created by developments. The Plan helps to identify ways to safeguard and protect people whilst works are carried out.

Cumulative Ecological Impact Assessment (CEIA)
Cumulative Ecological Impact Assessment (CEIA) is an approach to environmental impact assessment (EIA) that considers the effects of multiple actions or impacts on the environment.

DC Electrification
Direct current electrification.

Drainage attenuation pond
Drainage attenuation ponds are designed to to collect and store excess surface water run-off from heavy rainfall/storm weather.

Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA)
Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is the evaluation of the likely environmental impacts of a proposed project or development, taking into account socio-economic, cultural and human-health impacts, both beneficial and adverse.

Habitat Regulations Assessments (HRA)
The Habitat Regulations set out a procedure for dealing with development in relation to Natura 2000 sites. The process, known as 'Habitat Regulations Assessment' (HRA), involves an initial screening stage to filter out developments which do not require further assessment, followed by an appropriate assessment for developments that are likely to have a significant effect on one or more Natura 2000 sites.

HIF
HIF - Housing Improvement Fund, which is a government capital grant programme. In 2020, the Government awarded Medway Council £170m via the Housing Infrastructure Fund to pay for environmental and infrastructure improvements on the Hoo Peninsula.

Hoo Development Framework
A (masterplanning document covering Hoo St Werburgh and High Halstow) that is being brought forward as part of the progression of the new Local Plan for Medway, which will be consulted on in due course.

Public Rights Of Way (PROW)
Public Rights of Way are protected and maintained by the Highway Authority in order to ensure that the general public has access to them. Public rights of way are marked with signs or coloured arrows, for example yellow for footpaths, blue for bridleways.

Ramsar sites
Ramsar Sites are wetlands of international importance designated under the Ramsar Convention.

Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP)
Every local highway authority is required by law to produce a ROWIP. It is the council's strategic document setting out its goals and priorities for public rights of way and access. ROWIPs must be reviewed every ten years. The law and government guidance sets out that the ROWIP must go further than the basic legal duties each council has for public rights of way. It must fully consider the needs of the wider public and not just those who already use public rights of way. It must assess how public rights of way meet those needs; now and in the future. It must also assess how rights of way can support exercise and recreation and those who are blind or partially sighted or have mobility problems.

Signal-controlled pedestrian crossings
A crossing that pedestrians can request to cross by pressing a button and waiting for the green man to indicate they can cross.

Single bi-directional line
A single line which allows trains to run in both directions.

Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
A Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) is a formal conservation designation that decribes an area that has a particular interest to science. SSSIs often contain important habitats such as grasslands, parkland and woodland, and should be protected.

Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)
Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) are internationally important areas defined by the national planning policy framework (NPPF) as 'Areas given special protection under the European Union's Habitats Directive.

Special Protection Areas (SPA
A Special Protection Area (SPA) is a designation under the European Union Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds. Under the Directive, Member States of the European Union (EU) have a duty to safeguard the habitats of migratory birds and certain particularly threatened birds.

Strategic Environmental Management Scheme

SEMS stands for Strategic Environmental Management Scheme (SEMS) – known locally as Hoo Community Parklands.

- Strategic = Network of connected and well managed spaces (including new and improved footpaths) – for people and wildlife, designed to maximise biodiversity.

- Environmental = Landscape plans developed for each SEMS parcel of land, informed by ecological impact and landscape character studies and contributing to Medway's emerging Green (trees, hedgerows, grass etc) and Blue (rivers, streams, estuary etc) Infrastructure linking between areas network/ other initiatives.

- Management = The active management/ monitoring of these spaces (including community engagement) with biodiversity, access and health and safety at the heart.

- Scheme = Planned and designed to address indirect impact of possible population growth on the peninsula's protected habitats.