

M3 Junction 9 Improvements Update – Summer 2022

Welcome

It's been a while since we got in touch to update you on what's been happening.

In this edition, we talk about progress on the scheme, why we're reviewing our designs and some of the environmental work we're doing.

First, a quick recap

The feedback we received in May/July last year showed a broad level of support for improving the junction. The results of our community consultation exercise revealed that a large percentage of respondents favoured the proposed improvements, however many of you had questions about the environment, traffic flow, cycling provision and the impact on climate change.

Since then, we've been looking at [your feedback](#) in more detail to address these concerns and talking with Winchester City Council, Hampshire County Council and the South Downs National Park Authority.

The pause on the [M3 J9-14 all lane running motorway scheme](#) has allowed us to further consider how the design will tie in with the existing road layout rather than a smart motorway layout.

So, what happens next?

We will continue to refine our design and aim to apply for consent to make our improvements by Spring 2023 at the latest.

We will update you when we've made our application and let you know the outcome from the Planning Inspectorate.

We will also be in touch before then to keep you updated about the project.

Summer surveys – out and about

We regularly carry out surveys to gather data about habitats, species and ground conditions which could impact our work.

The summer weather means our teams can get out and about to conduct environmental, engineering and ecological surveys.

Here's a bit more about what we do...

Arboricultural and land surveys

We want to understand as much as we can about the local flora and fauna as well as any areas of cultural heritage. The features of interest are mapped onto the scheme footprint to ensure these are retained or preserved.

These surveys are also combined with more specific ecology surveys and can highlight areas where there may be protected species, or particular 'pockets' of species, such as reptiles and amphibians.

Ecological surveys - Dormice



Hampshire has a thriving dormouse population and we've put measures in place to keep them and their habitat safe. The project team will apply for a licence from Natural England to move the dormice to safe alternative locations during the works.



We've installed over 200 dormouse nest tubes along hedgerows and in woodland across the site and will be returning to check back on these in the coming months.

Nesting birds

All nesting birds are protected during the breeding season, usually February to August. Any vegetation that needs to be removed must be done before this period.

Ecologists inspect suitable habitat areas to ensure there are no birds or chicks. However, other structures and equipment could potentially be home to a nesting bird, such as the underside of bridges or even construction equipment like dumpers or cranes.

Our teams check everything before work in a sensitive area starts. Under these circumstances, work is halted until the chicks have fledged and moved on.

Bats



Bats are protected in the UK and this protection extends to their roosts and feeding grounds. If works affect their habitat, then a licence is obtained from Natural England to minimise the impact and recreate suitable habitats.

We've conducted bat surveys to assess how the works will impact their habitat. These comprise of ground-level assessments of all trees and tree groups which need to be removed. Whenever a tree has been identified with 'moderate' or 'high' potential to support roosting bats, a follow up detailed at-height inspection to further inspect roost features will be completed in the future.

You might be interested in listening back at a [series of webinars](#) we recorded about our work and the environment – see our update from July 2021.

We'll be back in touch with updates on this scheme as we work towards getting our plans approved.

In the meantime, [sign up to our web page](#) where you can find information about all aspects of this project.