



# HOO

## New Routes to Good Growth

**MEDWAY**

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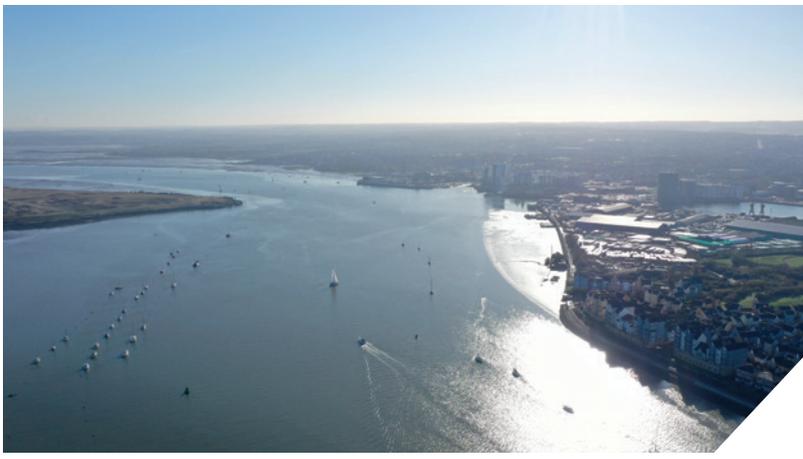
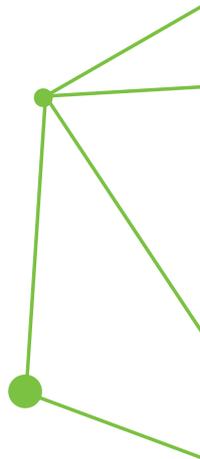
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## 1 INTRODUCTION

The information here describes our proposals for infrastructure improvements and environmental management measures on the Hoo Peninsula. We are consulting on these proposals to obtain feedback from the local community and other stakeholders. We will take this feedback into account before we finalise the infrastructure proposals and submit applications for planning permission and other consents for the infrastructure proposals.

We secured £170m funding from government for the proposals outlined. They comprise highway improvements on the Hoo Peninsula, a new railway station south of Sharnal Street and the reintroduction of a passenger rail service, and environmental management measures.

These proposals relate solely to infrastructure and environmental management. Any decisions on where to locate new housing and other development will be taken in the Local Plan process. We are currently preparing a new Local Plan which will set out a vision for future development in Medway up to 2037.

Decisions about any future growth on the Hoo Peninsula will be taken as part of the Local Plan process. The award of government funding and the preparation of planning and applications for other consents help to show that the infrastructure proposals described in this booklet can be delivered, but this does not pre-determine decisions about future growth.

A draft of the new Local Plan will be published in spring/summer 2021. We welcome your comments on the infrastructure proposals so that we can take this feedback into account before we prepare applications for planning permission and other consents for infrastructure and environmental management proposals.

## Overview of the New Routes to Good Growth project

During 2020, we had confirmation from government that our Housing Infrastructure Fund application had been successful and that £170m has been earmarked for the building of new roads (see Highways section 3), the provision of a new train station and passenger service (see Rail section 4) and the delivery of environmental mitigation and enhancements (see SEMS section 5).

This funding package supports the delivery of the essential infrastructure proposals which will enable emerging proposals for 10,600 homes to come forward. Decisions as to whether it is appropriate to allocate land for the development of new homes 10,600 or any other number of homes or other development will be made in the Local Plan process, and the decision to award HIF funding does not pre-determine the outcome of the planning process.

The HIF proposals are intended to address the challenge of getting on and off the peninsula by providing three ways on and three ways off of the peninsula (the new road linking the A289 to A228, the existing but improved Four Elms Hill junction and the new rail passenger service). This is in addition to the improvements being planned for Bell's Lane, Ropers Lane and Main Road junctions.

These investments to improve accessibility to and from the peninsula are planned to be in place by 2024. The proposed environmental improvements will create new open spaces that will support wildlife, landscape features and, where appropriate, new footpaths and cycleways. These will complement the existing footpath network and support walking and cycling around the peninsula for both existing and new residents.

**new open spaces that will support wildlife, landscape features and... new footpaths and cycleways**

We are preparing a new Local Plan and will be publishing a draft setting out proposed development sites and policies in spring 2021. The plan needs to take account of the needs of Medway's growing population for homes, jobs and services, and address the high housing targets set by government. We are using a number of studies to identify the best options for how Medway can grow in a sustainable way, balancing the needs of communities, the environment and the economy.

We have considered a wide range of options for growth around Medway. Much of the focus remains on expanding on our urban regeneration successes in waterfront and town centre sites. The Hoo Peninsula also has potential for large scale and sustainable growth, if the right measures are put in place to protect the environment and improve infrastructure capacity, particularly transport.

**Investments to improve accessibility to and from the peninsula will be in place by March 2024**

The HIF programme provides the means to get infrastructure, strategic environmental management and other measures in place. This provides a basis upon which to consider whether there is or planned to be adequate infrastructure to enable any new housing and employment on the Hoo Peninsula to be delivered over the coming decades as part of any planned growth in Medway.

Medway's Local Plan will be examined by an independent planning inspector, appointed by the government. The inspector will consider whether the plan is sound including whether proposals are deliverable over the plan period. The inspector is likely to consider whether infrastructure will be in place to support proposed development. The delivery of the HIF programme over the next few years is likely to be relevant when considering that issue.

The Local Plan will also specify the need and land for wider services and infrastructure, such as new schools, health services and community, leisure, and sports facilities required in connection with any proposals for housing growth on the Hoo Peninsula. These will be included in proposals for growth around Hoo. We will publish the draft plan with supporting technical documents, including transport and environmental assessments, for comments in spring 2021. You will have a chance to make representations on the Local Plan at that point, and any representations you make on the Local Plan will be sent to the planning inspector to review alongside the council's draft plan.

**Illustrative overview map:**



The information covers each of the proposed interventions and gives an overview of:

- The alignment and function of the new road on to the peninsula
- The proposed improvements to existing roads and junctions
- The location of the new rail station, rail passing places and changes to level crossings
- Our environmental management aspirations

The information is provided to enable you to provide feedback via the online questionnaire and to share your thoughts on this proposed new infrastructure. We strongly suggest that you read this information before completing the questionnaire. The simplest and quickest way to provide feedback to us is via the online questionnaire.

However, if you have problems accessing the online questionnaire then please contact the HIF team and we can send you a hard copy of the information and the questionnaire.

Email at: [futurehoo@medway.gov.uk](mailto:futurehoo@medway.gov.uk)





## 2 PROCESS AND TIMELINES

Throughout the development of the new Local Plan for Medway, it has been recognised that development on the Hoo Peninsula would require significant investment in infrastructure. This includes improvements to the existing highways and rail network, and strategic environmental management measures would be needed to help avoid impacts to the sensitive ecological sites on the peninsula.

These improvements would help ensure that any proposals that may be included in the Local Plan for development on the peninsula are sustainable and acceptable in planning terms.

Taking measures to enhance infrastructure provision will enable development options to be considered, including in the Local Plan process. Consideration of the different infrastructure and associated environmental measures is to be undertaken at this stage. The outcome of such consideration can, if relevant to matters in issue, be taken into account in the Local Plan process. It is in that context that the funding received by the council from Homes England to deliver these works requires that the infrastructure is in place by spring 2024.

We are therefore developing the proposals for infrastructure improvements alongside the ongoing preparation of the Local Plan.

Before these infrastructure proposals can be delivered, we will need to obtain planning permissions and other consents for the works. These include:

Infrastructure	Consents required
Highways	Planning permission; and, where the proposed works involve consequential changes to side roads, public rights of way and private means of access; a Side Roads Order (SRO) under the Highways Act 1980 made by the council.
Rail	A Transport and Works Act Order (TWAO) made by the Secretary of State under the Transport and Works Act 1992 - this is an all encompassing consent that will roll up all the requirements of these works into one consent; including land powers (see below).
SEMS	Planning permission

We will also need to access and acquire land that is necessary for the proposed infrastructure. The council will be negotiating with all land owners that are affected by the proposals to try and reach voluntary agreement. However, where this is not possible, the council will seek to use compulsory purchase powers. Such powers will only be used as a last resort where it has not been possible to reach agreement with the relevant landowners.

We propose to submit applications for planning permission in summer 2021.

We are therefore consulting at this early stage to enable your feedback to inform the applications.

The applications will also be informed by the environmental impact assessments, transport assessments and habitats regulations assessments that will be undertaken as discussed in section 6.

The timeline for delivery of these projects, alongside the Local Plan, is envisaged to be as follows:

<b>Spring 2021</b>	Consultation on publication version of new Local Plan
<b>Summer 2021</b>	Submission of consent applications
<b>Winter 2021/2022</b>	Submission of Local Plan
<b>Winter/spring 2022</b>	Inquiries for TWAO, SRO and CPO
<b>Summer 2022</b>	Consent decisions made, works to start as soon as possible thereafter
<b>End of 2022</b>	Local Plan adopted
<b>Spring 2024</b>	Infrastructure works complete



### 3 OUR PROPOSALS: HIGHWAYS

#### Overview of all phases

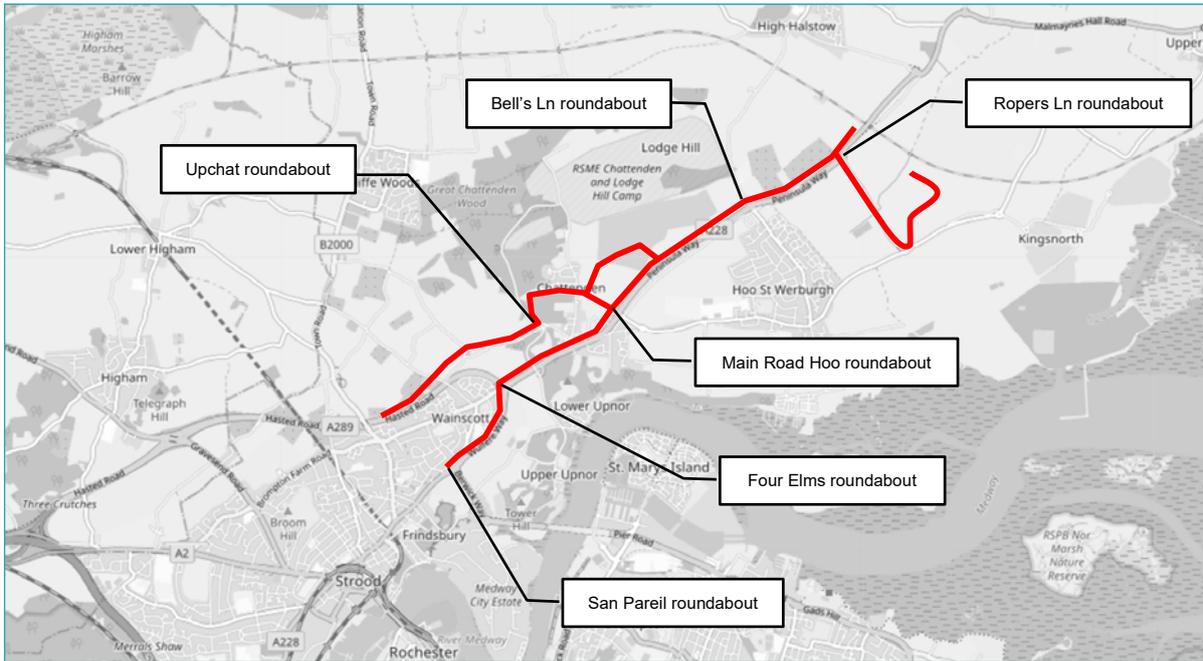
The highways proposals will accommodate future traffic growth associated with any future housing proposals for the Hoo Peninsula.

They involve improvements to existing infrastructure, as well as the provision of new infrastructure including new slip roads, junctions and interchanges on the A228 and A229, a relief road via Woodfield Way i.e. a second road access to the peninsula, and wider highway improvements.

These changes 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 and are described figure 1.

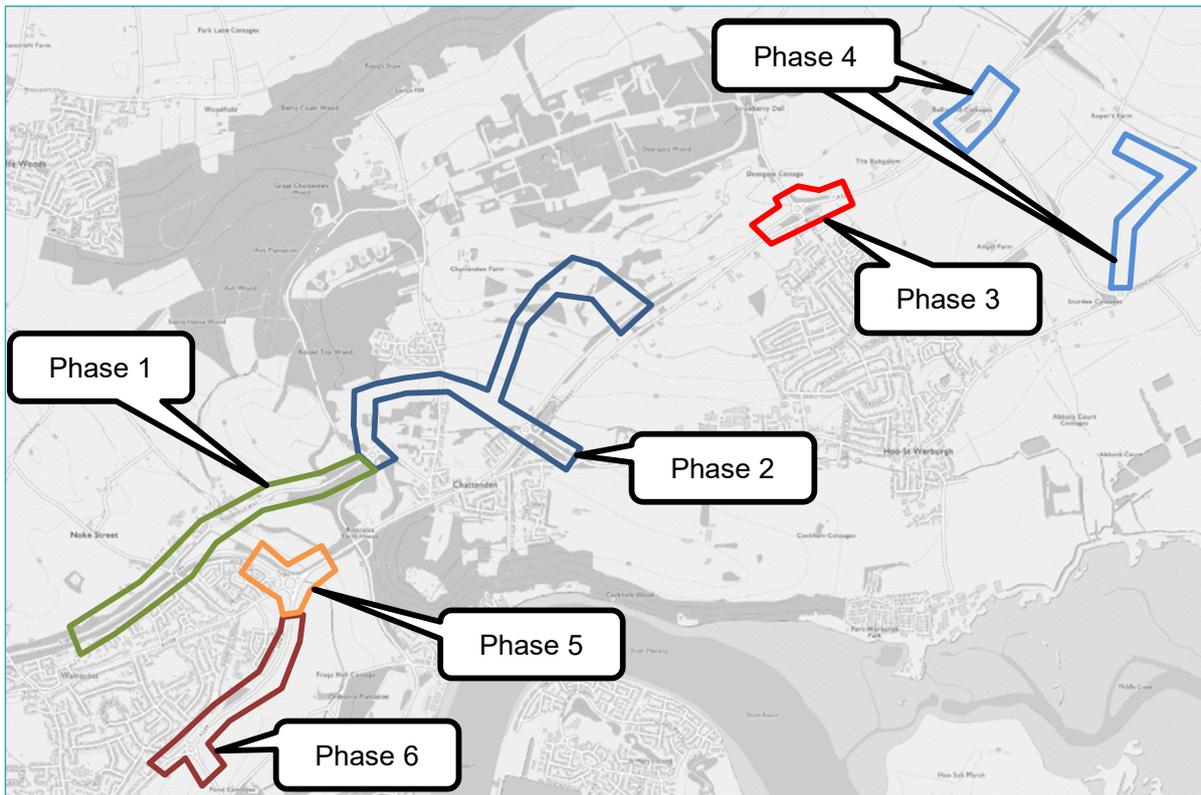




**Figure 1: provides an overview of the existing highway infrastructure provision**

The network comprises several key strategic A roads serving Strood and the Hoo Peninsula, namely the A289 and the A228.

The extent of the proposed improvements is indicated in red.



**Figure 2: location of the phases of the highways improvement**

Figure 2 indicates the improvements split into six individual phases.

**Phase 1** (in green) includes a new junction controlled by traffic signals to link the A289 with Islingham Farm Road, plus improvements to Higham Road and Woodfield Way.

**Phase 2** (in dark blue) includes a new relief road, connecting Upchat roundabout to the A228. A new spur link road and roundabout will also be introduced to ease congestion.

**Phase 3** (in red) entails improvements to the existing Bell's Lane roundabout to accommodate traffic growth.

**Phase 4** (in light blue) shows the measures to be implemented at Ropers Lane roundabout to accommodate the new rail station.

**Phase 5** (in orange) consists of improvements to Four Elms roundabout.

**Phase 6** (in brown) involves upgrading the existing A289 Wulfere Way and Sans Pareil roundabout to ease network congestion.

The description of the works in the following sections includes initial suggestions for how provision will be made for walkers, cyclists and horse riders. We are undertaking a walking, cycling and horse-riding assessment and review (WCHAR) for all phases of the highways works. This will inform any further design requirements relating to the provision of walking, cycling and horse-riding facilities.

Interested groups will be consulted on the WCHAR process, including Medway Local Access Forum and others.

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

## The proposed works

### A289 junction

A new junction on the A289 Hasted Road is proposed at the Higham Road intersection with new slip roads from the current Hasted Road bridge down to the A289.

### Higham Road

The junction of Higham Road, traffic from the A289 and Islingham Farm Road will require traffic signals and give priority for through traffic passing to and from the A289 to/from Islingham Farm Road.

### Islingham Farm Road

There will be an upgrade of the existing single lane Islingham Farm Road, which will be widened to two lanes. There will also be provision of a new footway and cycle path, and the creation of a new link to Woodfield Way. The works also involve embankment strengthening, utilities diversions and changes to fencing at the adjacent MOD Training Centre.

### Woodfield Way

Improvements to Woodfield Way will make the road suitable for increased public use.

The works comprise improvements to the surface of the existing carriageway and footways, providing new crossings, and improving fencing. No works are proposed that will directly impact upon the adjacent Chattenden Woods and Lodge Hill SSSI. The works will take place within the existing hard surfaces.

### Walking and cycling

Shared footways will be provided on Islingham Farm Road and Woodfield Way.

Users of 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.



**Figure 3: Phase 1 - Modifications to A289 including providing new slip roads to Higham Road junction, new overbridge, improvements to Islingham Farm Road and Woodfield Way**

Figure 3 shows the key improvements proposed as part of Phase 1.

Views A and B illustrate the new junction at Higham Road overbridge.



Figure 4: Phase 2 - View A shows the widening of Islingham Farm Road, realigned with Woodfield Way to provide improved traffic flow.

View B shows the improvements along the existing Woodfield Way including the provision of several crossing points, and an adjacent shared footway cycleway facility.

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.

### **The proposed works**

#### **Upchat Roundabout / relief road to Main Road Hoo Roundabout**

At the northern end of Woodfield Way, the road connects to the existing Upchat Roundabout. Local improvements to Upchat Roundabout are proposed including footway improvements and new street lighting, drainage and signing.

A new relief road is proposed to be constructed in the direction 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.

This alignment takes account of development sites that have been proposed in the development of the Local Plan to date, and creates opportunities for enhanced cycle and footway links with those development sites if they were to be allocated in the Local Plan and brought forward. Landscaping and screening are being considered to mitigate ecological and visual impacts to any new developments.

At the intersection with the existing Chattenden Lane, a junction controlled by traffic signals is proposed to allow safe controlled crossing points.

#### **Main Road Hoo Roundabout**

To support the new relief road, a number of changes are required at the existing A228/Main Road Hoo Roundabout:

- signals will be introduced;
- a dedicated slip road to the A228 northbound will be provided;
- the existing access to the Abbey Developments development site currently under construction will be relocated;
- the single carriageway road link between the Main Road Hoo Roundabout and the Main Road Chattenden Roundabout will be upgraded to two lanes in each direction with a new left turn slip lane to the A228 southbound; and
- Ratcliffe Highway will be stopped up at its junction with Main Road, with traffic no longer able to pass between these two roads.

#### **New A228 Roundabout and Spur Link Road**

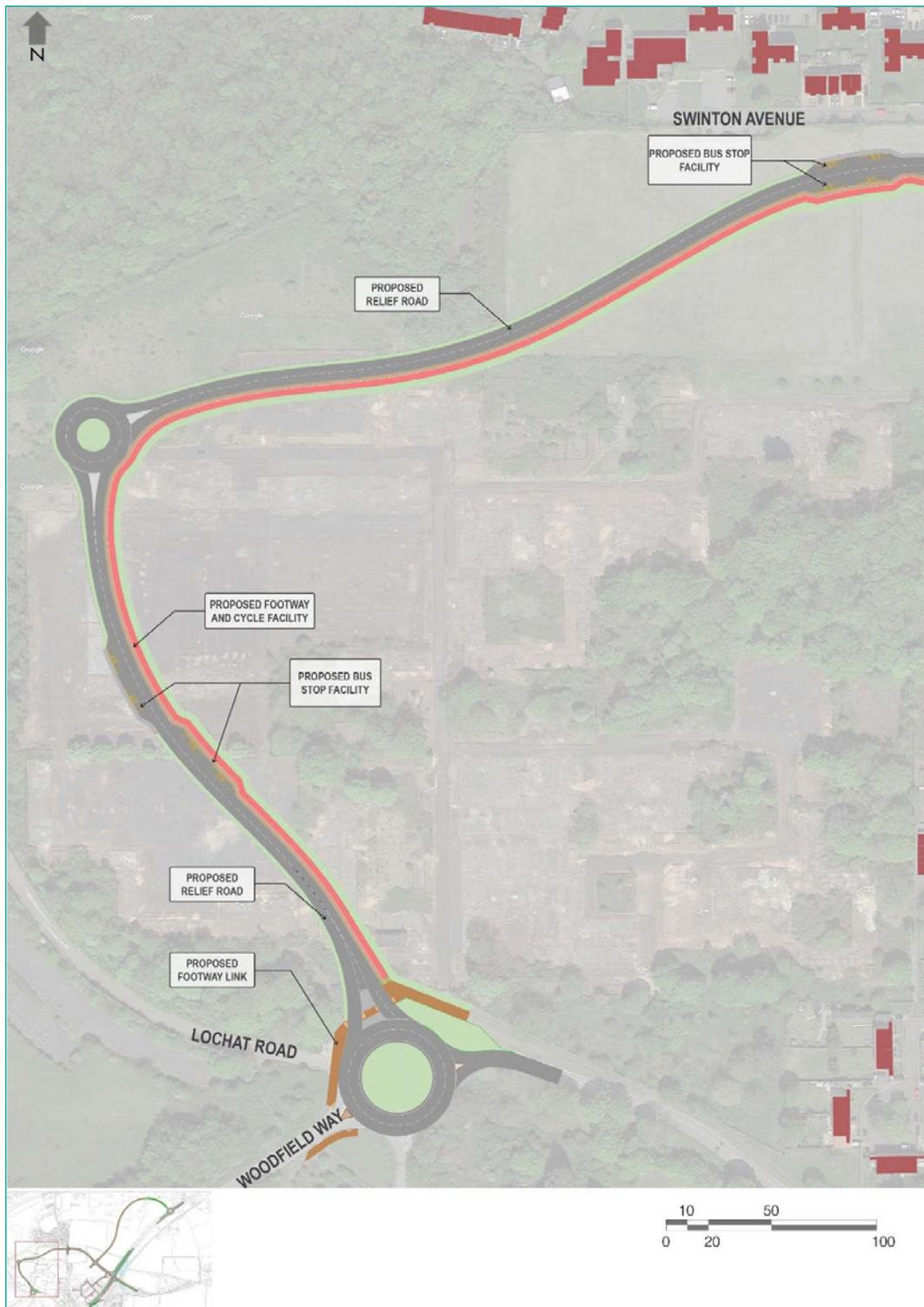
See figure 6 - An additional spur road is proposed from a roundabout junction with the New Relief Road to the east of Chattenden Lane, to an additional roundabout proposed between Main Road Hoo and Bell's Lane roundabout, passing through a small southern part of the former Deangate Ridge golf course.

#### **Walking and cycling**

The road improvements will include footways to provide priority for pedestrians and cyclists in terms of movement and crossing points. This will help to

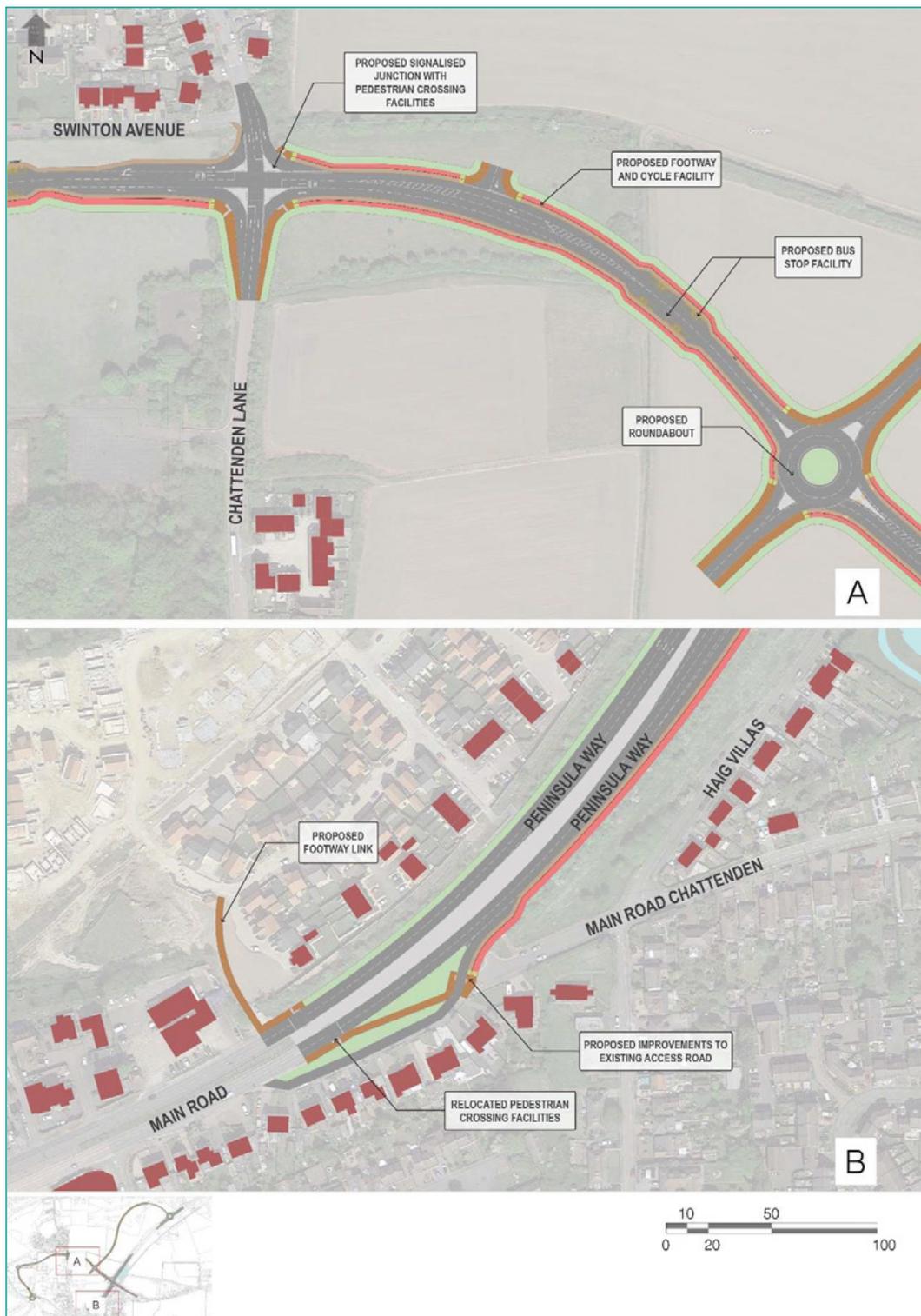
facilitate safe and easy pedestrian and cycling movement through the various developments in the area.

Segregated cycle tracks are also proposed for the relief road and the Main Road junction.



**Figure 5: Phase 2 - Proposed Relief Road from Upchat Roundabout to Chattenden Lane**

Figure 5 shows the improvements proposed at Upchat roundabout. This includes a new link for pedestrians and cyclists across the roundabout. To the north east of the roundabout a new relief road is to be provided. Provision of bus stops are proposed in both directions to facilitate future bus services.



**Figure 6: Phase 2 - Shows the continuation of the relief road to the east**

**View A** shows a new signal-controlled junction where the relief road intersects with Chattenden Lane. Moving east, a new 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.

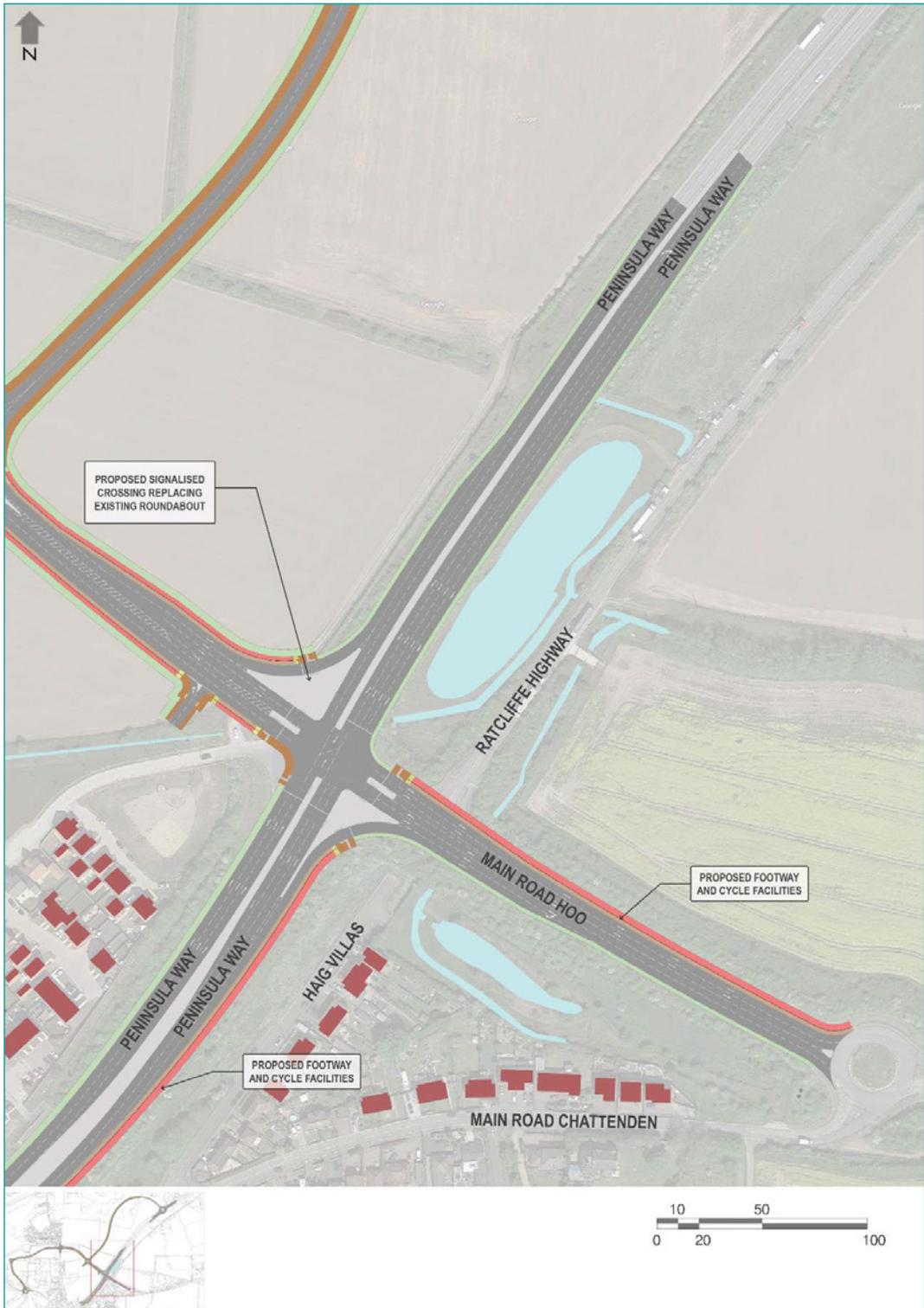
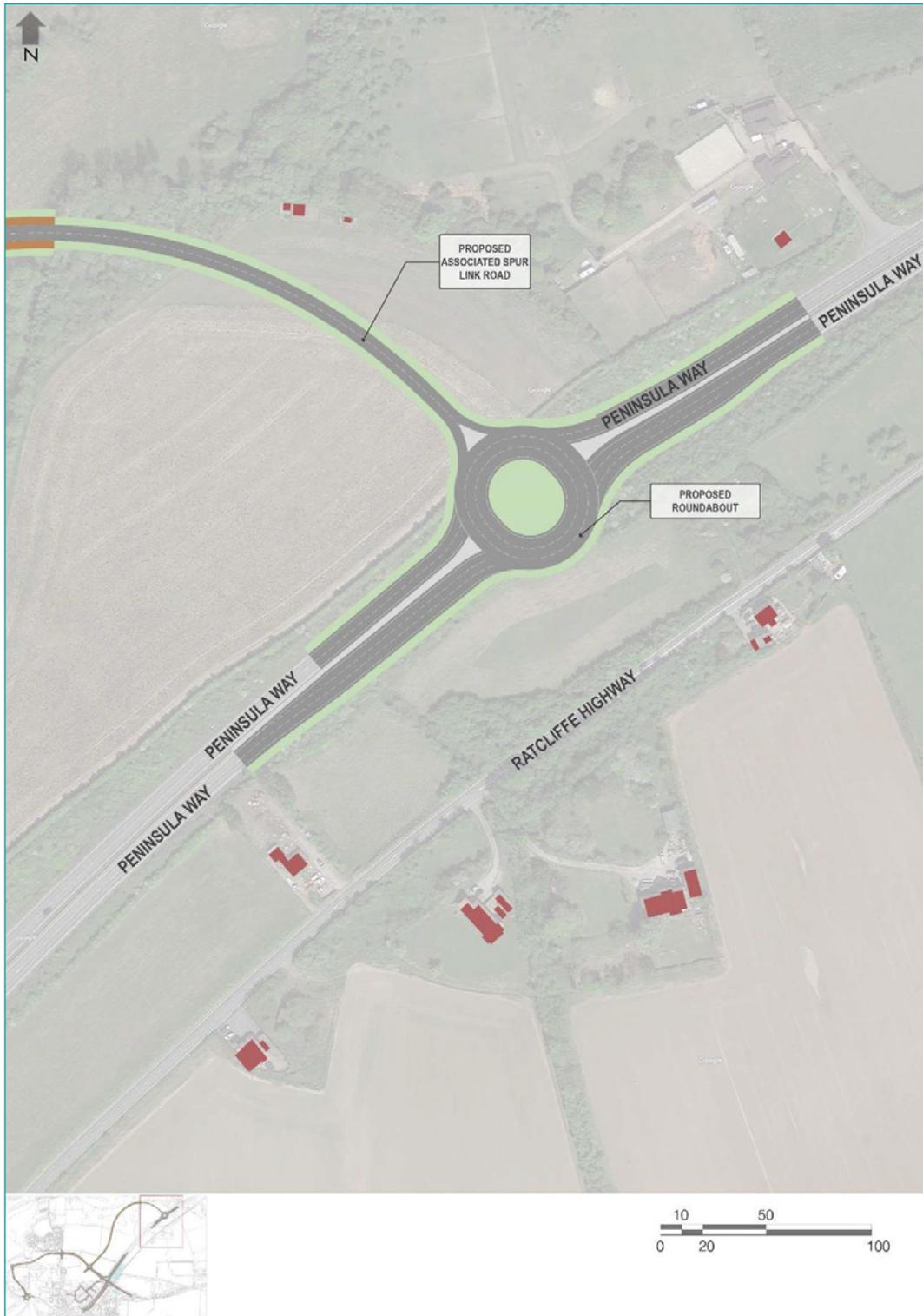


Figure 7: Phase 2 - Proposed A228/Main Road Roundabout junction modification



**Figure 8: Phase 2 - Proposed associated spur link road**

Figure 8 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. Provision is also being made to cater for pedestrian and cycling use.



**Figure 9: Phase 2 - Proposed A228 Roundabout and associated spur link road**

Figure 9 Shows the new spur link road and its intersection with the A228 Peninsula Way where a new roundabout will be introduced 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)

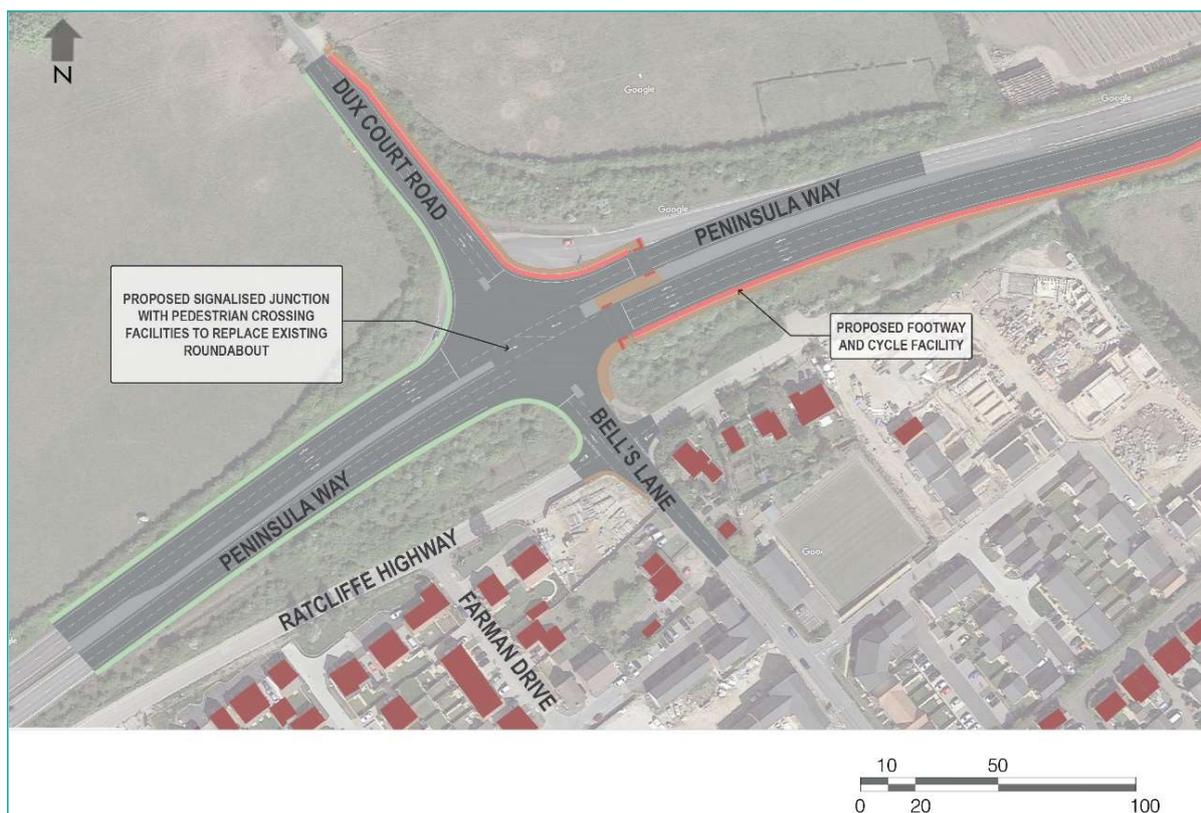
### The proposed works

The existing Bell's Lane Roundabout will be modified to improve access from the adjoining Bell's Lane and Dux Court Road.

### Walking and cycling

Footway and cycling provisions have been provided on the southern side of the A228 to tie-in to the existing facility at Bell's Lane and Ratcliffe Highway. A crossing with traffic signals will be situated east of the Bell's Lane roundabout providing a link towards a shared footway north of the A228. This provides a safer route for pedestrians as it moves them away from the roundabout.

Existing public rights of way across the road improvements are not impacted by the works.



**Figure 10: Phase 3 - Improvements to A228 Bell's Lane Roundabout and Dux Court Road (widening and link road)**

Figure 10 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 Bells Lane for all modes.

## Phase 4 - Improvements to Ropers Lane Roundabout and Modification to the Stoke Road roundabout to allow access to the new station

### The proposed works

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.



**Figure 11: Phase 4 – Improvements to Ropers Lane Roundabout**

Figure 11 indicates the improvements proposed at Ropers Lane roundabout to accommodate additional traffic associated with the rail station.

A new highway link is proposed from the existing Stoke Road roundabout which will provide access into the new station for vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists.

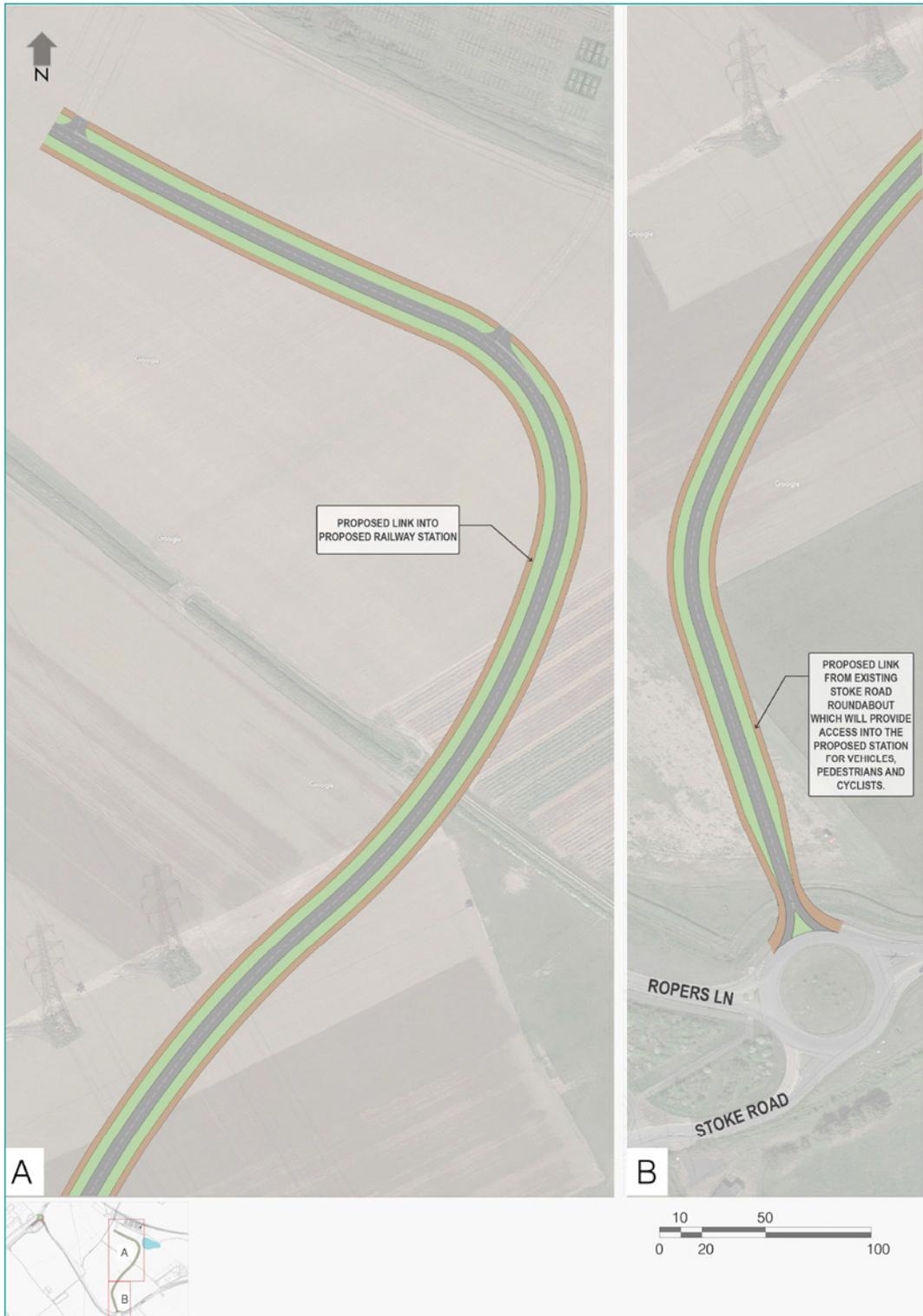


Figure 12: Phase 4 - Proposed link to proposed railway station

## Phase 5 - Four Elms Roundabout

### The proposed works

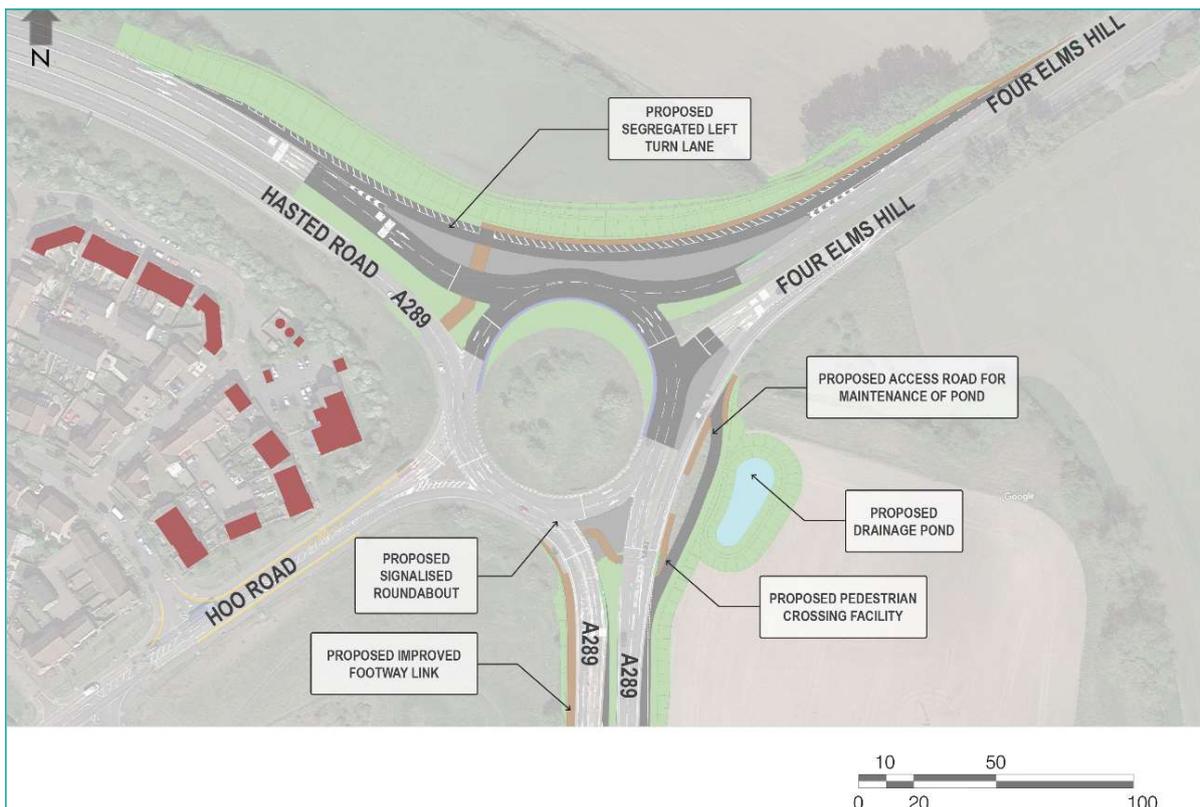
To increase road capacity on Four Elms Roundabout the following interventions are proposed.

- Additional lane on approach roads
- Increased circulation capacity at the roundabout
- A new highways drainage pond and associated access
- A dedicated slip road from the A289 Hasted Road to northbound A228

### Walking and cycling

As part of the new proposals, a new shared pedestrian/cycle footway and crossing facilities will be provided following on from intended collaboration with key stakeholders.

The public rights of way (RS119 - Granary Cottage to Hoo Road) at Four Elms Hill will be re-routed around the embankments to maintain the route.



**Figure 13: Phase 5 - Four Elms Roundabout**

Figure 13 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.

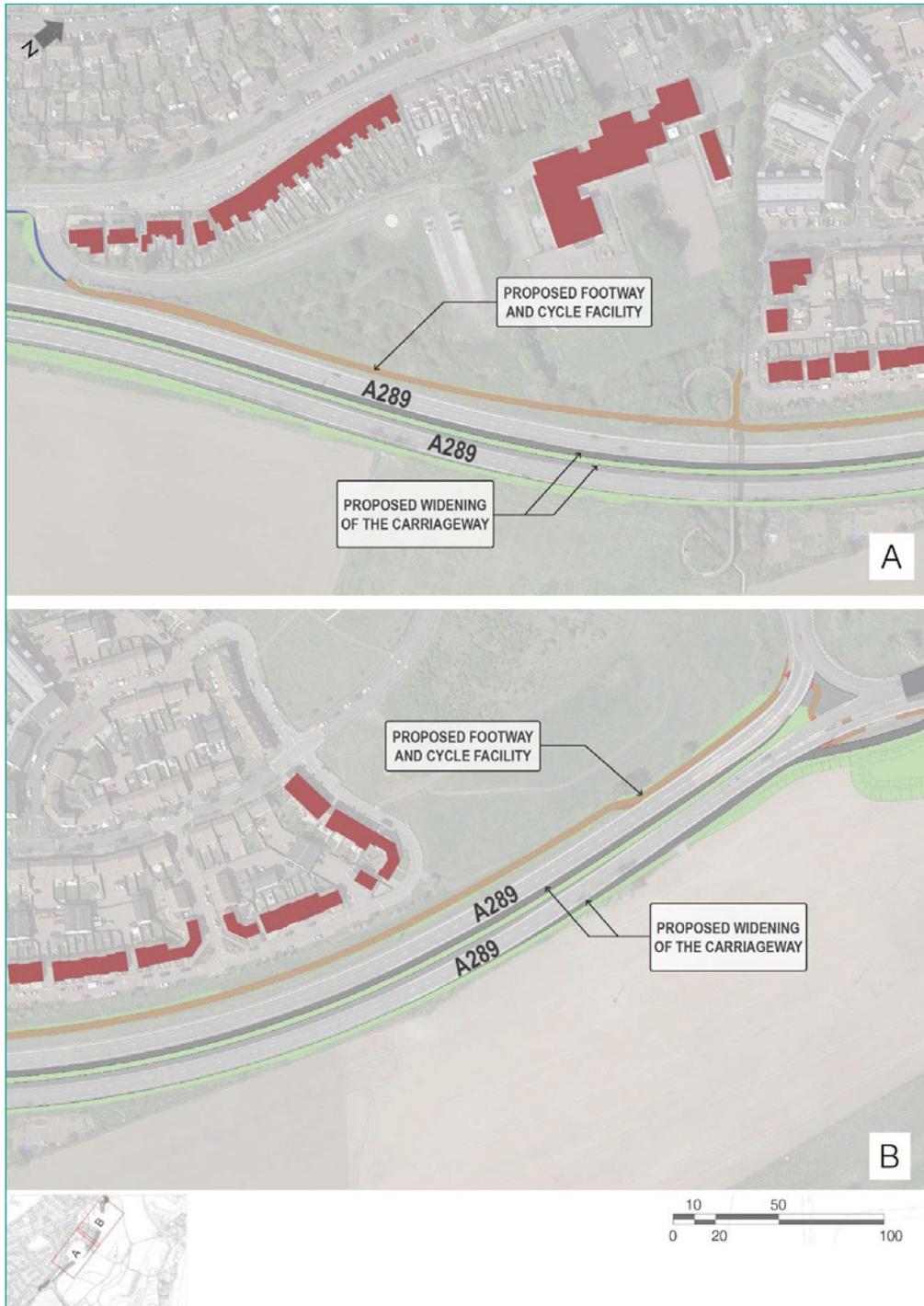
Maintenance areas will be provided as well as signal-controlled crossings to improve safety and accessibility at the junction for pedestrians and cyclists.

## Phase 6: Wulfere Way and Sans Pareil Roundabout

### The proposed works

#### Wulfere Way

Wulfere Way is currently a two-lane dual carriageway. As part of the improvements, an additional lane in each direction is proposed.



**Figure 14: Phase 6 - Wulfere Way**

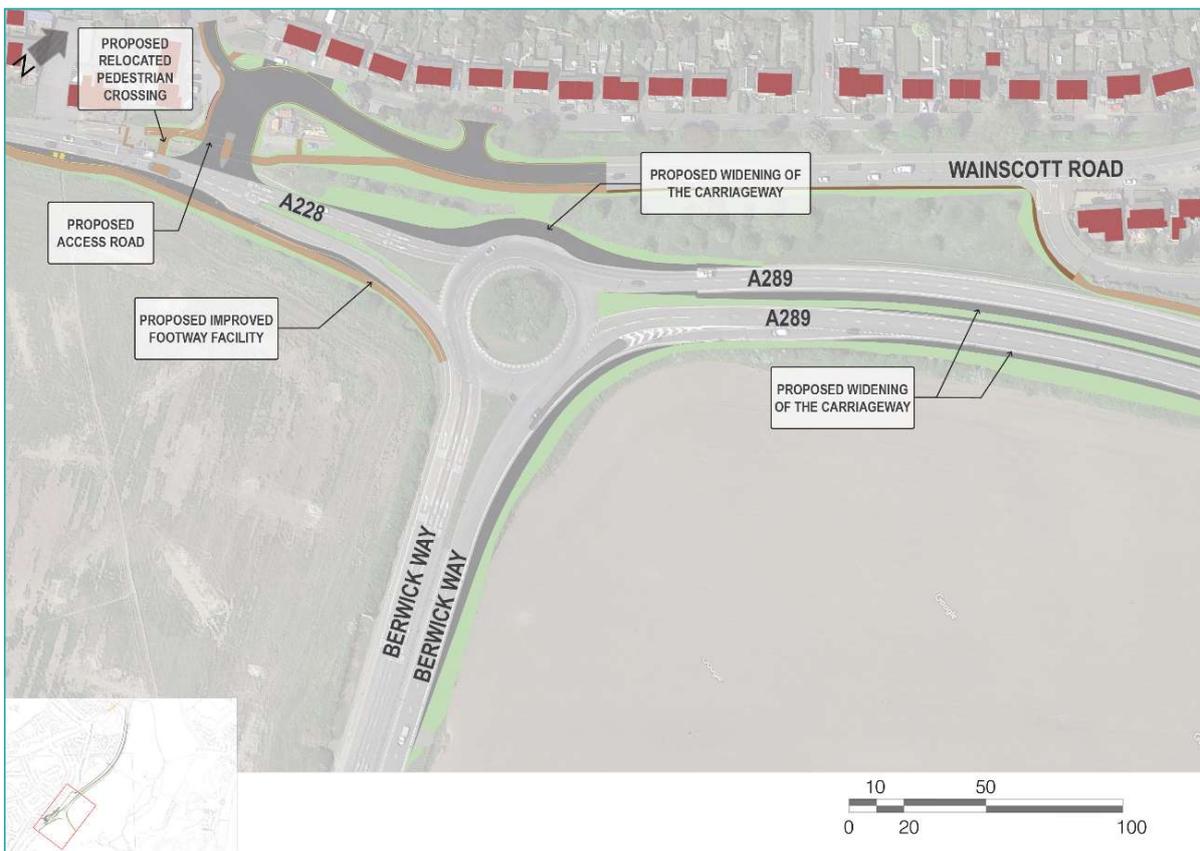
Figure 14 shows the proposed works along the A289 Wulfere Way. The works include the widening of the existing carriageway to provide three lanes in each direction. A footway cycleway will be provided along its length, connecting the facilities at Four Elms roundabout and Sans Pareil.

## Sans Pareil Roundabout

Various improvements are proposed at this roundabout including an additional lane on approaches, increased circulation capacity and a dedicated slip road to the northbound A228. The Wainscott Road access to the roundabout is also proposed to be relocated to reduce conflict at the roundabout and improve access to and from Benenden Road and Wainscott Road.

## Walking and cycling

New pedestrian/cycle footway and crossing facilities will be provided following on from intended collaboration with key stakeholders.



**Figure 15: Phase 6 - Sans Pareil Roundabout**

Figure 15 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

We will seek to minimise disruption to the existing highway network during the construction period. Construction of the six packages is to be split into stages to avoid impacting the existing highway network. Construction within Phase 2 will be mostly constructed away from the highway network. Site compounds will be located within the surrounding land.

During the construction period, traffic flows will be maintained where possible. Any road closures required will be restricted to night-time only and suitable diversion routes will be provided. Residential access will be maintained throughout construction. Consultation will take place with key stakeholders such as Police and emergency services before works are carried out to consider phasing, traffic management and suitable diversion routes. Variable messaging signs (VMS) will be used to inform road users of the works and alternative routes. Information leaflets will be sent to inform local residents and businesses of the proposed construction works in advance of them taking place in each locality. 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.

## Ecological and environmental constraints

The following ecological and heritage interests are in close proximity to the proposed works and will be taken into account in the development of our proposals:

**Phase 1** - Woodfield Way is located within Chattenden Woods and Lodge Hill Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). No works are proposed outside of the existing carriageway. The area contains broad-leaved semi-natural woodland.

**Phase 2** - The site of the works is not subject to any statutory or non-statutory designations but is adjacent to Chattenden Woods and Lodge Hill SSSI. The area contains arable land, broad-leaved ancient semi-natural woodland, scattered scrub and a small section of amenity grassland.

**Phase 3** - The site of the works is not subject to any statutory or non-statutory designations. The area contains low ecological value grassland, continuous and scattered scrub, hedge and trees.

**Phase 4** - The site of the works is not subject to any statutory or non-statutory designations. The area contains arable land, scattered trees, scattered and continuous scrub and hedge and trees.

**Phase 5 and 6** - The site of the works is not subject to any statutory or non-statutory designations. The site works are adjacent to the Conservation Area of Frindsbury and Manor Farm.

## Ecological and environmental mitigation

There will be no substantive works to Woodfield Way (Phase 1) within the vicinity of the SSSI area.

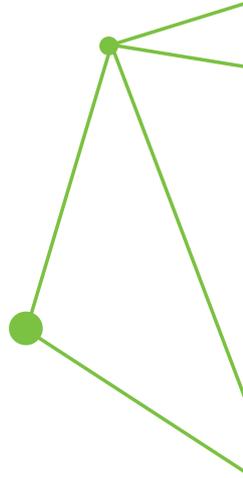
There are potential direct and indirect impacts to the habitat within the SSSI from the relief road (Phase 2). We will work closely with Natural England to understand any potential for disturbance and noise impacts to the nationally important nightingale population and other habitats and species, and to ensure that appropriate mitigation measures are put in place.

We have carried out several surveys to determine which protected animal species will be affected by the scheme. Badgers, bats, great crested newts, nesting and wintering birds, reptiles and water voles have been identified in the area.

Additional/updated surveys to establish the numbers of protected animal species will be carried out prior to the start of construction, so that suitable measures can be taken to find new habitats for them so that they are not affected by the work.

A precautionary approach to any vegetation clearance in respect to breeding birds, hazel dormice, bats, and badgers will be implemented to minimise any adverse impacts on these species.

Please see Section 6 for further details of our proposals for managing environmental impacts.



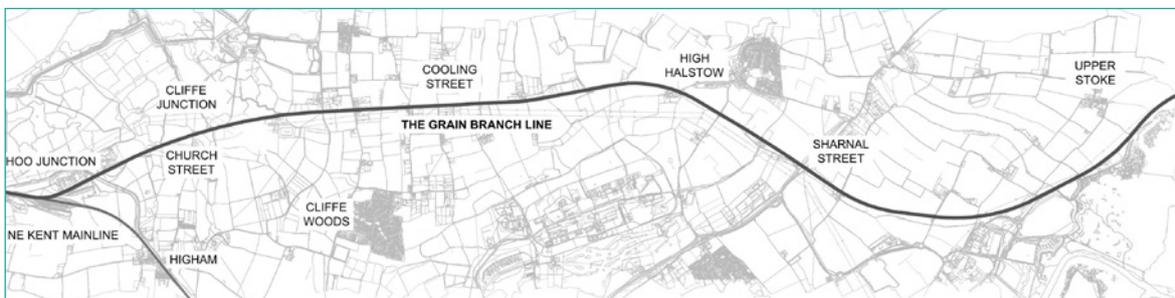


## 4 - RAIL PROPOSALS

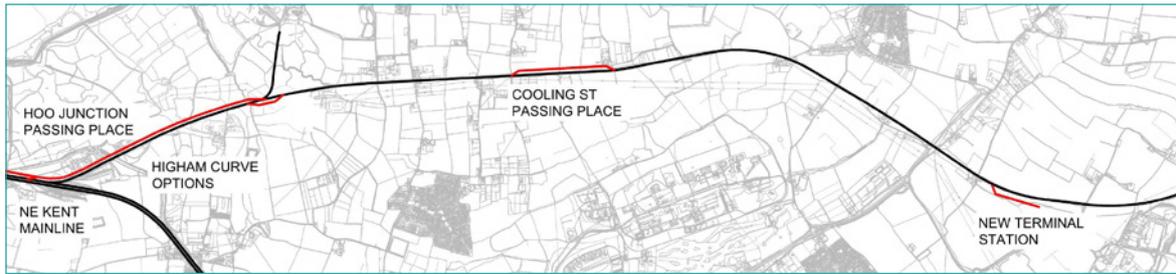
### OVERVIEW

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 a reliable link to London and an interchange option at Gravesend to link to locations across Medway.

#### Overview of proposed rail route



**Figure 16: Existing NE Kent Mainline and the route of the existing Grain rail line east which will form the basis of the new passenger service**



**Figure 17: Principal locations on proposed route**

Figure 17 showing the principal works on the line including electrification and dualling of the line at Hoo Junction and Cooling St and a new terminal station east of Hoo.

The existing single line will also be provided with passing places at Cooling Street and between Canal Road and Cliffe junction to improve the frequency of trains and provide flexibility in the service.

A half hourly service is proposed. There is scope for the frequency of the service to be increased in line with demand in future national timetable updates as the patronage at the station increases.

Should demand increase, there is the opportunity for the service to be extended beyond Sharnal Street with additional stations being included further down the line. This would be the subject of a separate scheme and does not form part of this project.

