

17 June 2021

Solihull Road Temporary Road Closure - Update

I am the Head of Stakeholder, Customer and Communications for Skanska who are working on behalf of Highways England delivering the M42 junction 6 improvement scheme.

We recently issued a series of communications about the Scheme's plans to close a section of Solihull Road between Barbers Coppice roundabout and Eastcote Lane. Following this I have been made aware of a number of social media posts calling into question Hampton in Arden Parish Council and the perceived lack of representation from them on this matter.

I want to firstly touch on the legislation that allows the scheme to close this section of road before explaining how we want to learn from this process and improve communication with the local community.

The scheme was widely publicised between 2017 and 2020 and has been subject to statutory and non-statutory public consultations when the views of the public were sought. It was also subject to a Section 56 consultation to make people aware of the Development Consent Order (DCO) application and to invite individuals and organisations to register as interested parties and make representations to the Planning Inspectorate. Solihull Road was then included in schedule 5 of the DCO that was granted by the Secretary of State in May 2020. This permits the scheme to close the road between the B4102 Barbers Coppice roundabout and Eastcote Lane to allow it to be built.

Our original intention was to leave Solihull Road open with 2-way traffic lights in place whilst we carried out our work in this area. The work includes the construction of a new motorway junction, demolition of the existing bridge, and building a new replacement bridge. This work also involves significant excavation. Since early 2020 we have been developing the design of the scheme and one of the outcomes is that we have moved the new Solihull Road bridge 10 meters north. This will reduce our impact on the ancient woodland by over 1300 square meters, but the knock-on effect is that it makes the works around Solihull Road much more complex. Closing Solihull Road is now the only way we can safely deliver the work whilst reducing the impact on the local community. If we built the scheme with Solihull Road remaining open it would take much longer, the local road network would be filled with construction vehicles and the safety risk to the public and our construction team would be increased.

I would like to offer assurance to the parishioners of Hampton in Arden Parish Council that the Parish Council challenged us over this closure and sought justification. We were only able to formally confirm the closure on the 8 June, before meeting with representatives from the Parish Council on the 9 June to communicate why it is required. I acknowledge that this is far from ideal and want to take ownership of that. In this instance the scheme has had to rely on the consent and prior consultation delivered during the DCO development period, however we have agreed with the Parish Council that they will be much more involved with the scheme from now on. A representative from Hampton-in-Arden is set to come to our site and review the scheme with our planning team to make sure the community has no surprises in the future.

If anyone has any specific concerns about the scheme, I would be happy to discuss them with you. You can contact me directly at jonathan.Compton@skanska.co.uk. You can also find more information about the M42 junction 6 improvement scheme on our [project webpage](#) where you can also sign up for updates.

Kind Regards

Jon Compton
Head of Stakeholder, Customer & Communications, M42 junction 6