

M58 link road (A5197) scheme update

Background

You may be aware that Wigan Council has plans to create a new link road to improve journey times, reduce congestion and increase connectivity across the borough.

The link road will be a 2.3km single carriageway link between Junction 6 of the M58 and Junction 26 of the M6 and the southern part of Wigan town centre.

It will provide a new high profile access point into Wigan town centre from the M58/M6 and connects a number of key employment sites to local roads, which will bring the opportunity to create new jobs linking with the council's wider commitment to supporting the borough's economy.

The link road aims to alleviate traffic on Ormskirk Road (A577), which is one of Wigan Borough's busiest routes, addressing a severe weakness in Wigan's transport network. Building on the success of the A49 link road, which opened in 2020, the new road will form a major piece in the jigsaw to improve east-west connections across the borough.

The road will have a 30mph speed limit and will be complete with pedestrian and cycle facilities.

In May 2018, planning permission was secured to connect the M58/M6 motorway junction to Billinge Road by extending Leopold Street on to Pemberton Business Park, connecting with the roundabout at Smithy Brook Road.

Scheme update

The original scheme proposals were to refurbish the existing Network Rail owned Pemberton rail bridge to accommodate the new road with a traffic signalised junction.

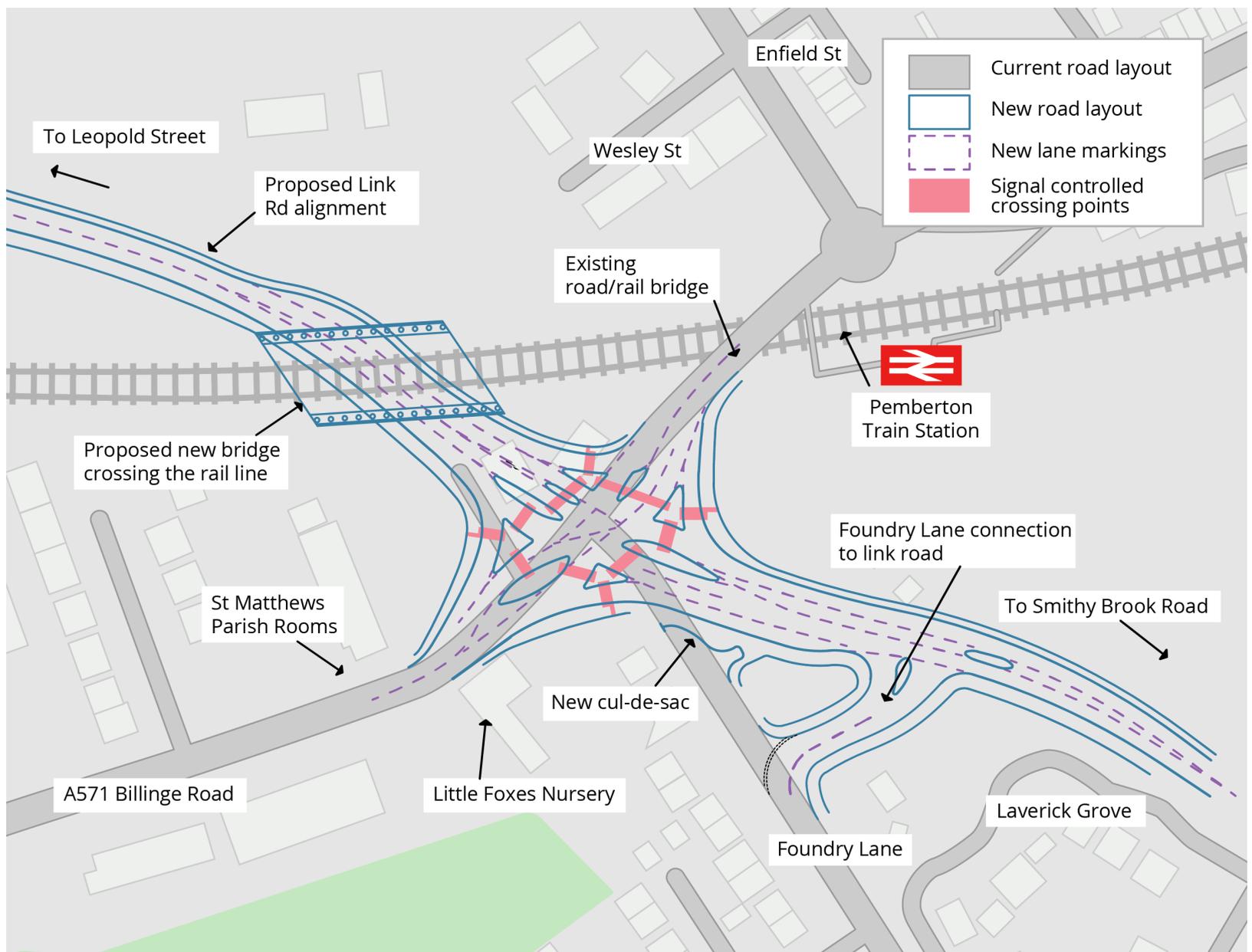
Challenges since identified with the existing bridge means that it is not possible to deliver this junction without significant local disruption to the highway network, utility network and Pemberton train station.

Our design consultants have undertaken a comprehensive study to consider alternative options, including rebuilding the existing structure in the same location or building a structure in a new location.

The study concluded that the overall least disruptive option would be to build a new bridge in a new location, avoiding the existing bridge completely. This approach would provide least disruption to the highway and rail network during construction, whilst providing an improved long-term solution. More information can be found in the FAQ's sheet overleaf.



Benefits of the new junction



- A more conventional and efficient highway junction layout. The previous proposals prohibited the right turn from the Smithy Brook Road side of the link road onto Billinge Road and a short section of Enfield Street was to be made one way. The proposals will allow motorists to travel in all directions and Enfield Street will remain two-way traffic flow.
- Billinge Road can generally stay open during construction (except for short closures), removing the possible need to close Billinge Road for long periods.
- The majority of construction works will take place away from the highway network and it will also have a reduced impact upon the rail line.
- Simplified construction process, leading to reduced temporary diversion works.
- Removes the requirement to provide new access to the train station, reducing disruption to train users.

M58 link road - FAQs

Billinge Road

What is being built at Billinge Road?

The Billinge Road section of the link road will benefit from a new traffic signal controlled junction with pedestrian and cycle crossings as part of the M58 link road.

In addition to the junction, a new bridge will be built (see map) so the link road can cross the rail line safely.

To carry out this significant road improvement, the below work will be needed:

- Site clearance
- New highway construction
- Installation of new traffic signals
- The construction of a new bridge
- Utility diversions
- New drainage installation
- Landscaping works

Why change the design from the previously approved one?

The original road design sought to cross the rail line at the existing Pemberton rail tunnel. Challenges have since been identified with the existing bridge meaning that it is not possible to deliver this junction without significant disruption to local roads, the utility network and Pemberton train station.

The previous proposals also prohibited the right turn from the link road (the foundry lane side) onto Billinge Road and a short section of Enfield Street was to be made one way (away from the link road junction).

The proposed changes provide a more conventional permanent highway junction layout allowing motorists to travel in all directions (e.g. no banned turning) and the ability to retain two-way traffic on Enfield Street.

The new bridge will also enable the majority of the works to be constructed away from the highway network and with a reduced impact upon the rail line.

Has the new junction got planning permission?

The existing proposals for the M58 link road has planning permission. The proposed new junction and bridge at Billinge Road does not. A planning application will be submitted in summer 2021 to seek permission for this section of the route. Residents and businesses will have the opportunity to submit comments in line with usual planning practice.

What impact will this junction have on local traffic?

Traffic modelling has been completed to support the new proposed junction at Billinge Road and the M58 link road. Findings from the modelling show that the junction will operate in line with the previously approved plans.

How will access be maintained to Foundry Lane

Motorists will access Foundry Lane via a new link onto the new road, adjacent to Laverick Grove, as per the previous layout. This link will not be controlled by traffic signals but will accommodate pedestrian and cycle facilities.

Access to Foundry Lane will be maintained throughout the construction period. There are no proposals for further accesses to be opened to the Foundry Lane estate area.

Is this new junction safe?

Pedestrian, cyclist and motorist safety is at the heart of this design. It will provide dedicated controlled crossings to make the road experience safer for everyone. In line with usual practice, the design will be subject to a Road Safety Audit to ensure operational safety.

M58 link road - FAQs continued

What will the impact of the junction be on the noise and air quality of the area?

A detailed noise and air quality assessment is currently being undertaken and will be submitted as part of the planning application.

As part of the noise and air quality assessment, we will be investigating if any mitigation measures such as acoustic barriers are required.

Will you be removing any trees?

As part of the link road project, new landscaping designs are being developed including planting new vegetation and trees around the Billinge Road junction and along the length of the new road.

Some clearance will be required and tree removal will take place. This will be limited wherever possible.

Wigan Council remains committed to the green agenda and has pledged to plant 1 million trees by 2030.

Will the new street lighting shine into my garden?

New street lighting will be provided to Billinge Road and the link road. The positioning of the street lighting will be developed to focus lighting on the new highway, and minimise intrusion on private residences.

When will construction take place at Billinge Road?

Construction on the link road will take place from 2023 to 2024. The date for the construction of Billinge Road is to be determined following the planning decision.

Opportunities to carry out preparatory works in advance of the main construction contract, such as utility diversions or vegetation clearance, will be considered. Residents will be kept informed as the scheme progresses.



Next steps

The proposed changes of this section of the link road will require a new planning application, which we hope to submit in summer 2021.

Local insight is key to delivering successful major projects and residents and businesses will be invited to submit their views in line with usual planning practice once the application has been submitted.

Virtual engagement

We propose to host a virtual engagement session to give residents the opportunity to ask questions about the new proposals. To express an interest please request an invite by providing an email address to **Majorprojects@wigan.gov.uk** by the 28th June

Responses will then be collated and feedback to our design consultants to shape the design where possible.

In the meantime, please visit **www.wigan.gov.uk/majorprojects** for more information about the link road.