

A Design for Life

A comparison of access to the Port of Liverpool with a recently completed motorway link between Rotterdam and Amsterdam in The Netherlands

The purpose of this short report is to compare the recently announced preferred route for access to the Port of Liverpool and a recently built missing link on the A4 motorway in The Netherlands. This missing link lies between Schiedam and Delft and connects Rotterdam with The Hague and Amsterdam, as well as being an important route south towards Belgium.

1. A5036 Port of Liverpool Port Access

1.1 A brief history

In September 2017, Highways England announced its preferred route for expanded road capacity to connect Liverpool port with the motorway network, after a public consultation held earlier in the year. The desire for more road capacity has arisen due to the expansion of the port and the concerns about congestion and pollution on the existing A5036 which runs through residential areas.

1.2 The current situation

The existing A5036 is heavily built up either side of the ride in a corridor that is only around 30m wide in places, including access roads for the housing. In contrast the Rimrose Valley Country Park, the chosen preferred route, is some 350 – 600m wide, although at its southern end it narrows down to 200m before narrowing further to around 40m as it connects to the A5036.

The distance from Switch Island (the main junction to access the wider motorway network) to the Port of Liverpool is around 5km. The route via Rimrose Valley is longer and involves 3.5km of construction within the Country Park. The financial cost of the online option was projected to be £20-40 million, while for Rimrose Valley it was £200-300 million.

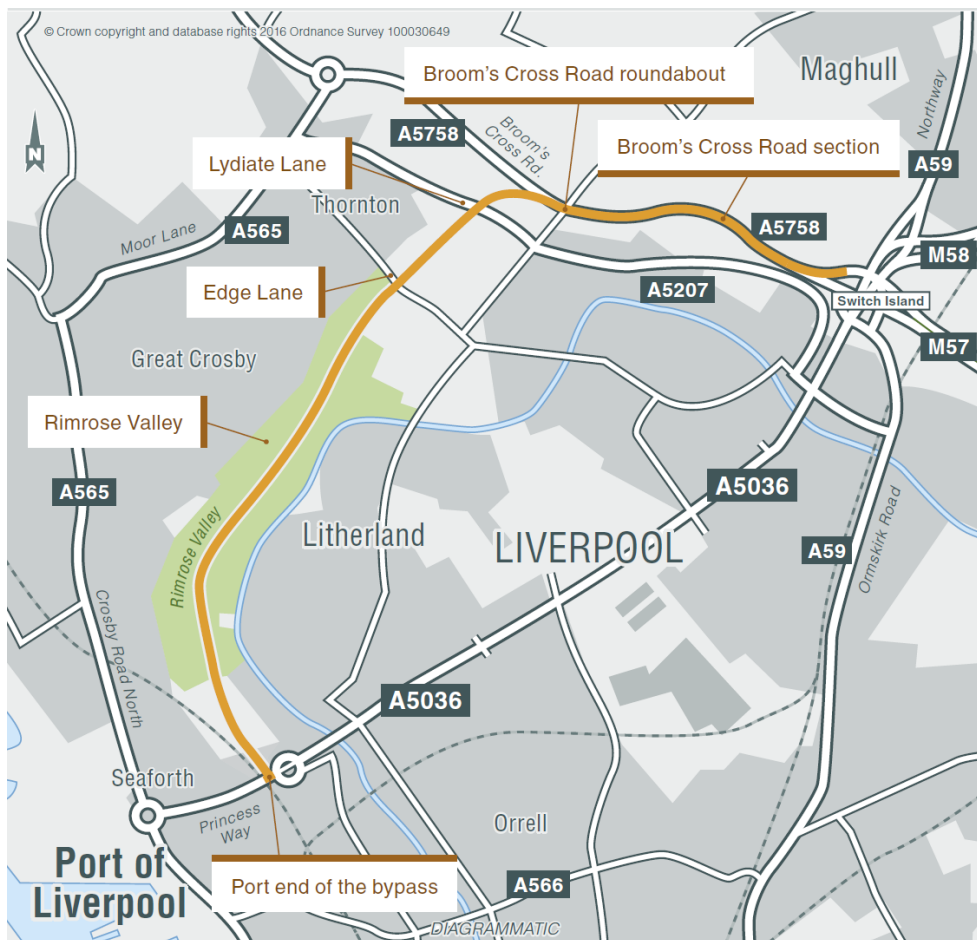


Figure 1: Highways England's preferred route

1.3 The decision

If purely looking at increasing road capacity and ease of construction then Rimrose Valley is the obvious choice. However, it comes at a fantastically high cost to the local community as indeed do both 'options' and why Highways England was forced to admit in its [consultation report](#):

“Most respondents indicated they did not like either of the options and would rather see another option chosen. The most commonly mentioned alternatives were:

- *Make better use of the rail network as opposed to building new roads*
- *Build a new road tunnel”*

Unfortunately, little weight has been given to the importance of Rimrose Valley Country Park as social and environmental asset, which hugely contributes to the health and well-being of the local community. Many of these benefits will be lost if a dual carriageway is built down the middle of it, leaving two narrow strips either side of the road, combined with the obvious landscape, air and noise pollution impacts as well as the severance it will cause. It shows a remarkably callous disregard for people's health and well-being.

2. A4 motorway connecting Rotterdam to Amsterdam (Schiedam to Delft missing link)

2.1 The current situation

In December 2015, this 7km missing link, which extends from the Kethelplein junction in Schiedam, a suburb of Rotterdam, up to Delft to the north, was opened to traffic. The aim behind its construction was to better connect the Port of Rotterdam with The Hague and Amsterdam and to relieve pressure on the A13, another motorway to the east.



Figure 2: The A4 missing link between Schiedam and Delft

Its length is not dissimilar to the Port of Liverpool access, but consideration of the impact on people and the environment appears to have been given a much higher profile in the design and construction of this project. Total project costs were around €650 million.

2.2 The Design

Starting from the Kethelplein junction, the A4 enters the Ketheltunnel a 2 km cut and cover tunnel that is situated in a 200m corridor between two residential areas.



Figure 3: The Ketheltunnel

North of the communities of Holy Zuid / Holy Noord and Kethel en Spaland / Groenord in Schiedam, the A4 crosses the nature reserve in Middel Delfland, an important recreational area for the many surrounding communities. Across this 4km stretch the road is sunk below ground level so that it cannot be seen and noise pollution is reduced. A low noise surface is also used.

In this area, an ecological aqueduct, see figure 4, has been constructed to continue the water feature over the road. At 100 metres wide, this is the largest aqueduct in the Netherlands and provides access for pedestrians and canoeists as well as being an important bridge for wildlife.

100 hectares of natural landscape, wildlife crossings, footpaths and cycle paths and much more have also been created.



Figure 4: The 100m wide ecological aquaduct over the A4 north of Schiedam

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Campaign for Better Transport's vision is a country where communities have affordable transport that improves quality of life and protects the environment. Achieving our vision requires substantial changes to UK transport policy which we aim to achieve by providing well-researched, practical solutions that gain support from both decision-makers and the public.

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