

EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MINUTES

Committee: Overview and Scrutiny Committee **Date:** Monday, 6 September 2010

Place: Council Chamber, Civic Offices, High Street, Epping **Time:** 7.30 - 9.28 pm

Members Present: Councillors R Morgan (Chairman) K Angold-Stephens (Vice Chairman of Council), R Barrett, W Breare-Hall, Ms R Brookes, Mrs R Gadsby, Mrs A Grigg, D Jacobs, D C Johnson, G Mohindra, J Philip and J M Whitehouse

Other Councillors: Councillors R Bassett, Mrs P Brooks, Mrs T Cochrane, Mrs D Collins, B Rolfe, Mrs M Sartin, D Stallan, Ms S Stavrou, Mrs L Wagland, C Whitbread and D Wixley

Apologies:

Officers Present: D Macnab (Acting Chief Executive), A Mitchell (Assistant Director (Legal)), L MacNeill (Assistant Director (Operations, Administration & Finance)), J Gilbert (Director of Environment and Street Scene), S G Hill (Senior Democratic Services Officer), V Loftis (Market Research Consultation Officer), A Hendry (Democratic Services Officer) and M Jenkins (Democratic Services Assistant)

By Invitation: T Jones (Connect Plus M25)

28. WEBCASTING INTRODUCTION

The Chairman reminded everyone present that the meeting would be broadcast live to the Internet, and that the Council had adopted a protocol for the webcasting of its meetings.

29. SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

There were no substitute Members for the meeting.

30. MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the last meeting of the Committee held on 12 July 2010 be agreed subject to the alteration of '19 years' to '35 years' in minute item 18.

31. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made pursuant to the Council's Code of Member Conduct.

32. 'CONNECT PLUS M25' PRESENTATION

The Committee Chairman welcomed Tim Jones, the CEO of 'Connect Plus' the company that had the contract to maintain the M25 and had been appointed the preferred bidder to design, build, finance and operate the M25 project. He informed the Committee that the company had a thirty year contract with the Government via the Highways Agency and were spending the equivalent of a million pounds a day on remedial works and updating and enlarging some carriageways. They were at present refurbishing the Hatfield Tunnel. (A copy of his presentation slides are attached to these minutes)

The company worked closely with the Highways Agency and 'Metronet', with the Highways Agency also having a seat on their board. Their contract was due to end in September 2039.

The Committee noted that the government were considering turning the area around the Dartford Crossing into a managed motorway, putting in a free flowing tolling section for the crossing.

They were also particularly proud of their Health and Safety record, having had no reportable accidents in over 1.6 million hours worked. The vast majority of work was done at night so as not to disrupt traffic. They had main operations and maintenance depots at South Mimms and Dartford and have a smaller depot at Blunts Farm, Theydon Bois.

The company had to take a long term view (30 years) of the works they have to do and had developed a supply chain with an eye to achieving best value.

The Chairman then opened the meeting to questions from the Committee and other members.

Q. What are the options to improve the flow through the Dartford Crossing?

A. This had recently been made worse by the periodic closure of the Blackwall Tunnel. Also with the crossing it only needed one breakdown or fire and that would slow things down considerably. Free flow tolling would help considerably especially on the North to South crossing, but revenue collection would pose a challenge. It should also be noted that the crossing was not a Motorway, it's classed as an 'A' road, and the occasional cyclist does tend to use it. The ultimate solution would be a separate lower Thames crossing point.

Q. Density of traffic means that certain parts of the motorway wears out quicker than other parts. Has this been taken into account?

A. Yes it has. The M25 had been constructed to various standards over the different sections as they were being built. Various companies are looking at new ways to repave the surface for the future.

Q. The toll charge has gone up from £1 to £1.50, is this adding to the congestion. Is this money used for renewal and maintenance and would having no charge improve the flow.

A. Only 6,000 people and hour can go through the crossing anyway. Officially it is a charge and not a toll, and the money goes to the exchequer. Also a lot of people do not wait for their change and just drive through.

Annually £70million is collected but it takes between £16 to £19 million to run per annum.

Q. Congratulations on the work done so far. But my pet hate is average speed cameras, do you actually put film in them and are people fined?

A. Yes, there is film in them and people are charged. They are needed at construction and works sites, some people find them frustrating but for safety they are necessary.

Q. I live by Junction 27, the lighting is now better, but:

- It now seems directed outwards and not towards the road;
- also noticed that the road was very noisy especially at the junction with the M11;
- why are concrete blocks used as barriers now instead of the metal ones;
- when will you be finishing at Blunts Farm? and
- why was there no consultation on the erection of the gantry?

A. I will have the lighting checked out and also the noise; apologies about the gantry, it should have been part of a consultation; We have been at Blunts Farm a long time, it is substandard as it's too small and very old. Concrete barriers have proved to be much safer than the metal ones.

Q. Predicting road capacity over a thirty year period, how do you predict it and what figures are you looking at.

A. We work closely with the Highways Agency, we generally expect a 2% growth per year, this would eventually prove unsustainable. We also need to predict what would happen with electric cars, which may be lighter and thus cause less wear on the roads surfaces. They are also looking to move more goods via the railways. The biggest issues at present would be the future of the Dartford crossing.

Q. Is there much research carried out into road surfaces?

A. Yes there is, at present they are looking at concrete surfacing as concrete wears better than tarmac.

Mr Jones offered to arrange a visit to Junction 29 for the members, for them to go and see for themselves some of the work being carried out.

The Chairman thanked Mr Jones for his interesting presentation and hoped he would come again in the future to update members on progress made.

33. CALL-IN - CABINET DECISION ON SPORTS AND LEISURE MANAGEMENT CONTRACT EXTENSION NEGOTIATIONS

The Committee considered the call-in of a decision by the Cabinet of a Leisure and Wellbeing Portfolio Holder report (C-009-2010/11) regarding the suspension of the new sports hall at Waltham Abbey swimming Pool and to reconsider it as part of the annual review of the Council's capital programme. The call-in suggested that any net savings made should be re-invested in Waltham Abbey, a known area of deprivation. The efficient time to do this was now while the Council was re-negotiating with SLM.

The lead member of the call-in, Councillor Mrs Pat Brooks was asked to open the discussion. She said that the Cabinet had taken no account of assurances given to residents. It seems like Waltham Abbey resident's wellbeing had been sacrificed. King Harold School now runs the sports centre successfully, but cannot handle the long term needs of casual users. In addition the sports centre has limitations particularly for those with disabilities. Waltham Abbey contains some of the most deprived areas in the district. This new hall can be funded now by revenue savings from the closure of the sports centre. If not, she could see the decision being deferred indefinitely.

The responsible Portfolio Holder, Councillor B Rolfe, was then asked to make his opening statement. He said that Epping Forest has an established policy on using capital resources where there is a demonstrable revenue benefit. The sports centre does not meet this requirement as it would cost £50,000 extra per annum. There were no obvious financial benefits on taking this forward at this time, but it will be taken to the planning application stage. The Council had good relations with SLM and could arrange terms later when needed. He acknowledged that Waltham Abbey has some deprived areas in the district but it did have other fitness facilities and a swimming pool. Although there was a loss of a specialist gym and a summer play scheme, the Council were also looking to put in an 'astro' turf all weather pitch in Waltham Abbey at a cost of £507,000 and we have also recently opened a refurbished Ninefield Hall. There are also other deprived areas in the district such as Limes Farm and Debden.

This would be good if the scheme could proceed but the current financial position makes this impossible for now.

Councillor Jon Whitehouse asked what criteria was used for the yearly assessment of the Sports Hall and how many years could this go on for? Councillor Rolfe replied that the criteria was only a financial one at present and the situation would have to be reviewed annually over the next two or three years. Councillor Whitehouse was glad to find out that the criterion was only a matter of finance. He thought there was a need to look at the leisure contract in the round and see if the savings made could pay for the new hall. There was a danger of postponing the decision and have the savings absorbed into the budget as a whole and not have to invest in Waltham Abbey. The money could be spent on other things within a year or two. Also construction costs would increase over the years and there was a good case for doing it now, and there was a strong case for the Cabinet to look at it again.

Councillor Jacobs commented that a couple of years ago the Council was very keen for this to go ahead; Waltham Abbey people had been given an expectation that it would. Councillor Philips disagreed because of the current financial position the Council was looking at significant cuts in October, maybe of an order of 25%. He did not believe that the council had set up an expectation in Waltham Abbey and they will take it to the pre-planning stage. We would know by then what cuts we would have to make.

Councillor Johnson was disappointed that it was to be postponed but heartened that it would be reviewed. He did not think that any savings made would pay for the construction; he calculated it would leave the council £700k short.

The lead member responsible for the call-in and the Portfolio Holder were asked to sum up the debate.

Councillor Mrs Brooks had nothing to add to comments already made.

Councillor Rolfe reiterated his comments about the council's finances being uncertain in the coming year and the need for savings. He stressed that they were a number of alternative leisure related schemes happening at present in Waltham Abbey. The Cabinet were not against this scheme, but he noted that Limes Farm and Debden had similar problems and there was only a limited amount of money at present. The current financial climate had forced these changes.

RESOLVED:

That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee confirmed the original decision of the Cabinet on report C-009-2009/10, regarding the suspension of the new sports hall at Waltham Abbey swimming Pool and to consider it as part of the annual review of the Council's capital programme.

34. CONSULTATION ON 'POLICING IN THE 21ST CENTURY - RECONNECTING POLICE AND THE PEOPLE'

The Committee considered a Home Office consultation paper on 'Policing in the 21st Century – Reconnecting police and the people'. This had previously gone to the Safer Cleaner Greener Scrutiny Standing Panel on 26 August 2010 and the draft minutes from that meeting were tabled for the committee's information.

Members noted that page 49 of the agenda contained a table of suggested consultation responses and the tabled minutes had the Safer Cleaner Greener Panel's response to some of the responses.

On going through the responses, the Committee made the following comments:

- That any new panels that oversee the work of the police commissioner should have a direct relationship with the commissioner and be able to hold them to account.
- *Question 1:* The proposed Commissioner would not be working alone; they would have an office to do the admin work so there would be cost implications to this. It could cause some democratic difficulties with a candidate that could come from anywhere and the chance of getting a reasonable turnout at an election was remote, making the chances of getting a potentially unsuitable commissioner a risk.
- *Question 18:* This calls for senior police officers to take a more business-like approach, but is hampered by the quick turn-around in senior officers. It would call for forward planning and preserving a continuity of senior police officers.
- There was a need to continue collecting data so we could compare forces.
- It seems we have limited powers to scrutinise the commissioner and his office.
- Overall this was a good concept;
- we want more front line policing; and
- would we get a better service or make more savings because of this; it was not clear and the Committee would like this clarified.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the Home Office consultation paper on the future of policing be noted.
- (2) That the responses made by officers and the Safer Cleaner Greener Scrutiny Standing Panel be agreed with the additional comments made by this Committee and reported to the Cabinet.

35. CONSULTATION ON 'REBALANCING THE LICENSING ACT'

The Committee considered a consultation document on licensing entitled "Rebalancing the Licensing Act 2010". The Assistant Director, Legal Services, Alison Mitchell introduced the consultation document. The document was looking to give local licensing authorities additional powers to regulate licensing in their area and to allow them to respond more effectively to local concerns. The closing date for this review was 8 September 2010.

Officers had suggested answers to the consultation questions taking into account issues that have been raised in the past and committee members were also provided with the response from the Safer Cleaner Greener Standing Panel that looked at this on 26 August 2010.

The Committee made the following comments on the question posed:

- *Question 5:* On issuing of boundary notices, the position should be reversed with the Council being allowed to advertise on their web site, without prejudice, as part of the consultation process and to enable the applicant to advertise elsewhere other than the local newspapers.
- *Question 14:* the officer's suggested answer should be reworded to 'we' instead of 'I'.
- *Question 25:* Could a question be included on how we could go about setting our own consultation fees so that we could get back some of the fee money collected.
- As a general comment the committee wanted to know how wide an area would be defined for any proposed widening of the consultation areas.
- It was important for Town or Parish Councils to be considered as interested parties.

RESOLVED:

That the suggested replies to the questions raised in the Government's consultation document 'Rebalancing the Licensing Act 2010' be endorsed subject to the Safer Cleaner Greener member's comments as reported and the additional comments made by this meeting.

36. WORK PROGRAMME MONITORING

(a) Work programme

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Item 7: Epping Forest College - noted that the principal had been asked to attend the October meeting. Officers would like to know if there were any specific topics they would like covered. Members wanted to know:

- what their academic objectives were for the next few years;
- what their plans were for community engagement; and
- what plans they have for the use of their sports field.

(b) Standing Panels

Planning Services Scrutiny Standing Panel

The Chairman of the Panel, Councillor J Philip gave a brief outline of the Panel's work at their last meeting:

The Panel met on Thursday 2 September and discussed the following:

- New Improvement Plan for 2010/11
- Considered proposed re-structure of Countrycare, which involved the creation of an additional Countryside Assistant and the deletion of one Assistant Countryside Manager Post.
- The Panel will be looking at types of planning applications from the past few years regarding lessons that may be learnt about the planning process
- The Panel recommended that performance indicator targets LPI 45 Planning appeals and NI 157(b) Processing of Minor Applications be changed.
- The Panel will need to schedule an extra meeting in early October to discuss consultations on the Core Strategies for both Broxbourne Borough Council and East Herts District Council.

37. CABINET REVIEW

It was noted that there was no business to report to the Cabinet.

CHAIRMAN

This page is intentionally left blank



Epping Forest District Council
Epping

M25: An overview

Tim Jones
Connect Plus

6 Sept 2010

Agenda

Contract Structure

M25 - now and then

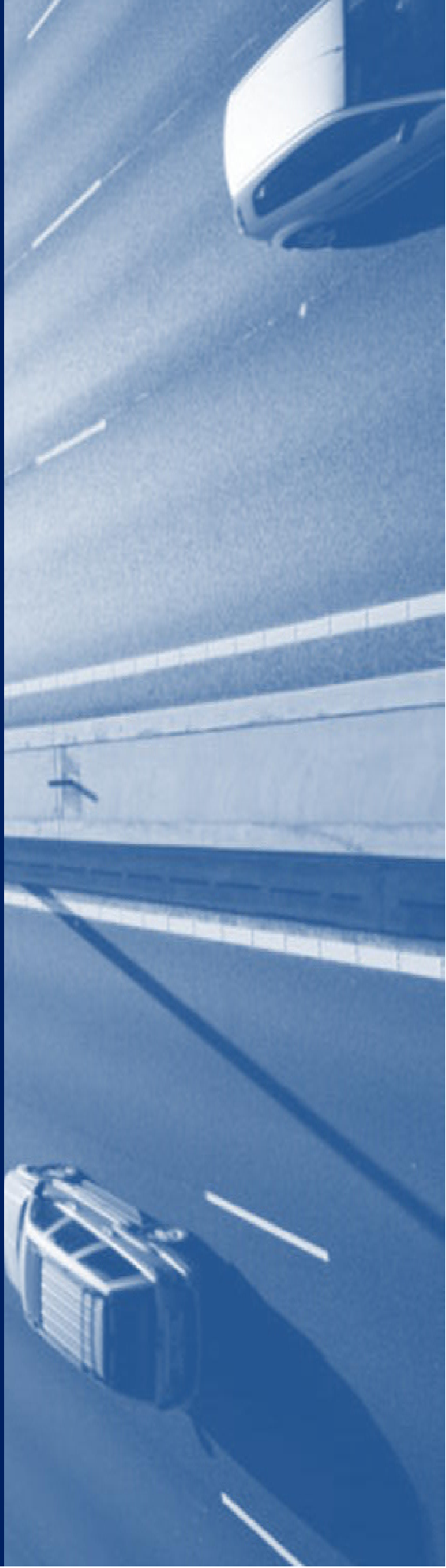
Essex Interface

Scope and Challenges

The 30 Year View



Contract Structure



Connect Plus

ZERO HARM

Introduction

- Contract Award in uncertain financial markets
- Contract performance with uncertain government funding
- Meeting demand and planning for growth
- Journey time reliability
- Stakeholder engagement

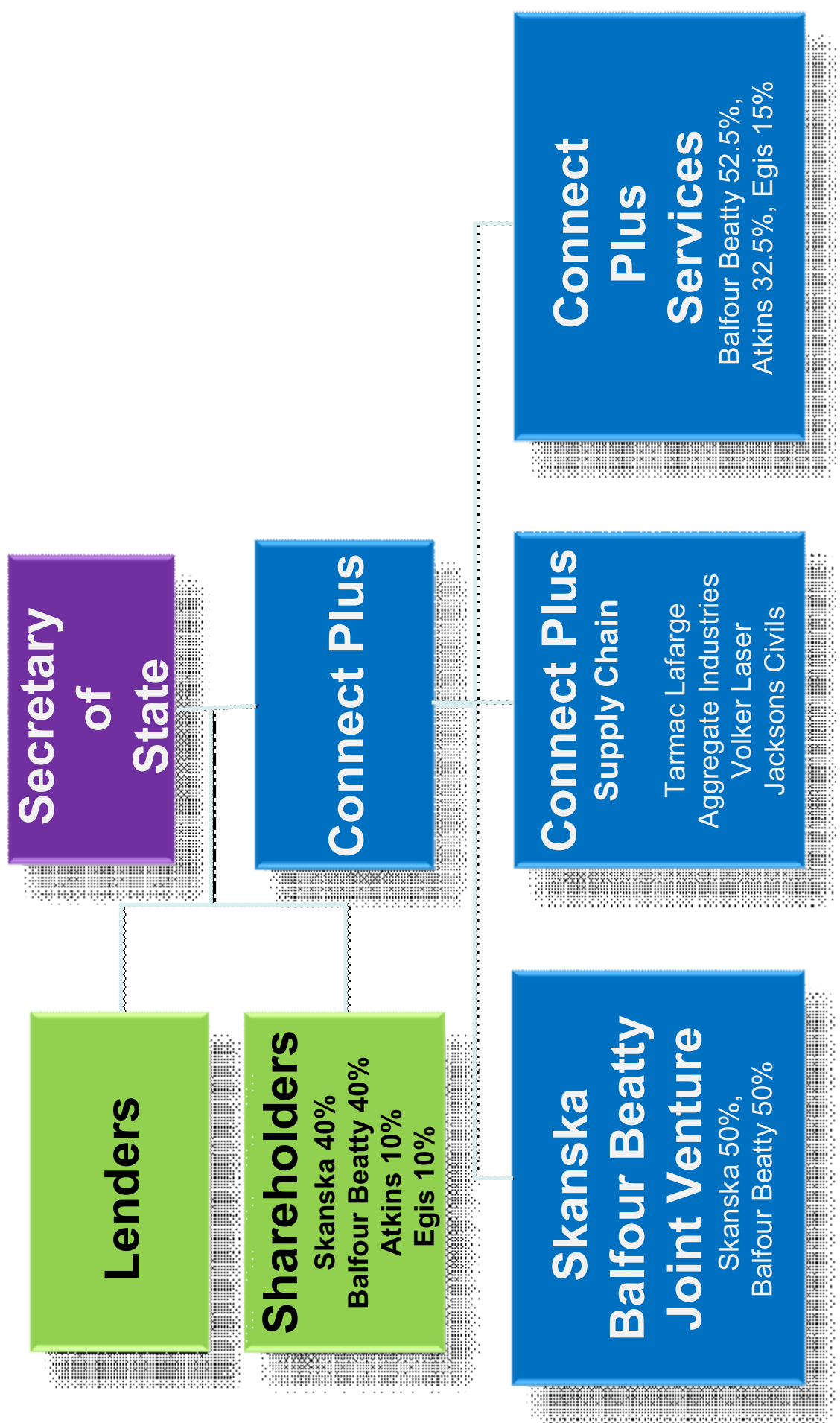


The Key Ingredients to Success

- Importance of variant proposals
- HA evaluated quality under five broad headings – delivery, resources, processes, behaviours / values and pricing methodology – harmony across all 5 critically important
- Price was key – best value essential
- Connect Plus – not just a group of secondees from different shareholders
- Strong supply chain
- Advanced Works Agreement enabled immediate start on Financial Close



Stakeholder Expectations Lenders & Shareholders



Partners - Connect Plus consists of:-

	Investment	Construction	Maintenance
Atkins	10%	-	32.5%
Egis	10%	-	15%
Balfour Beatty	40%	50%	52.5%
Skanska	40%	50%	-

Connect Plus

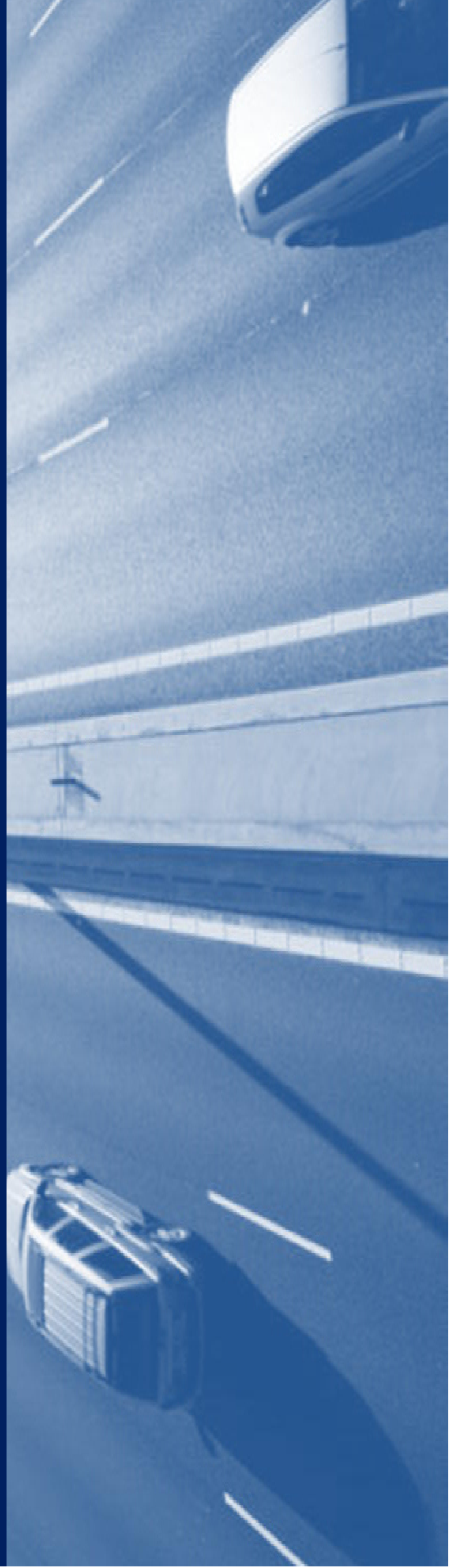
ZERO HARM

Key Dates

- 'Preferred bidder' status : July 2008
- Financial Close : May 2009
- Start widening Works : May 2009
- Service Commencement Date : September 2009
- IUS Completion : 8 July 2012
- LUS Start : Autumn 2012
- Refinancing : Spring 2016
- Contract Completion : September 2039



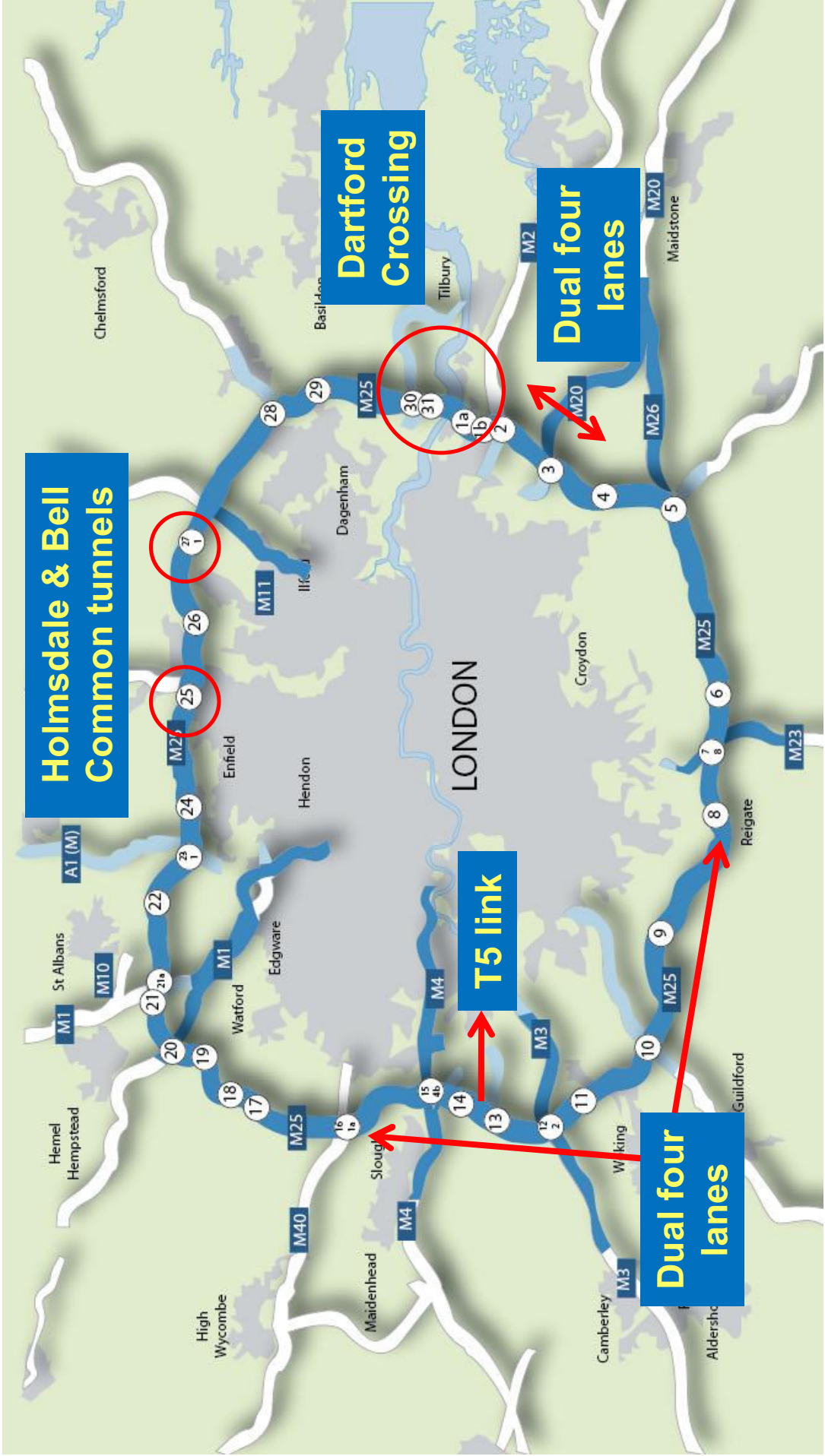
M25 – now and then



Connect Plus

ZERO HARM

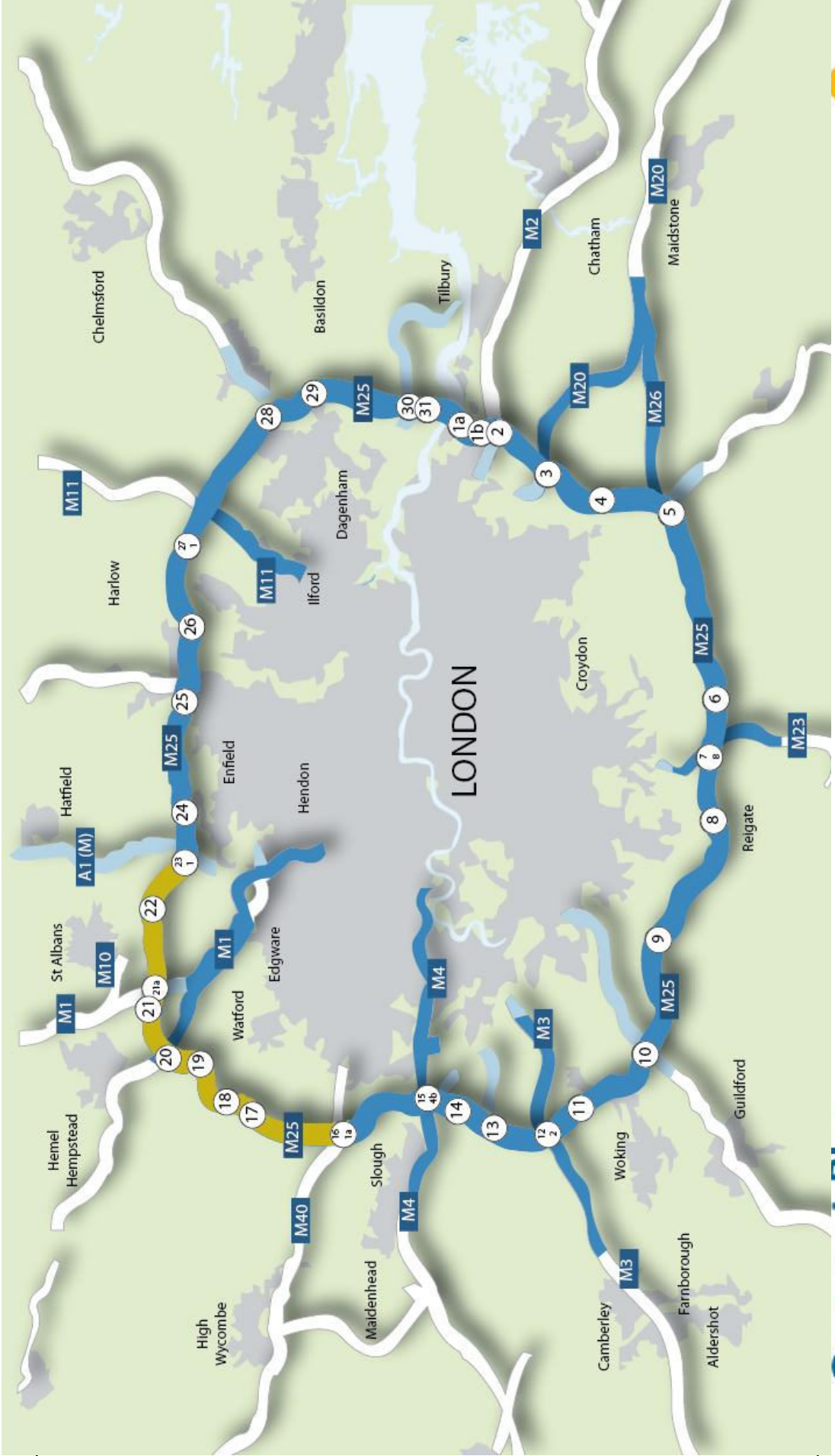
The M25: Current Configuration



Connect Plus

ZERO HARM

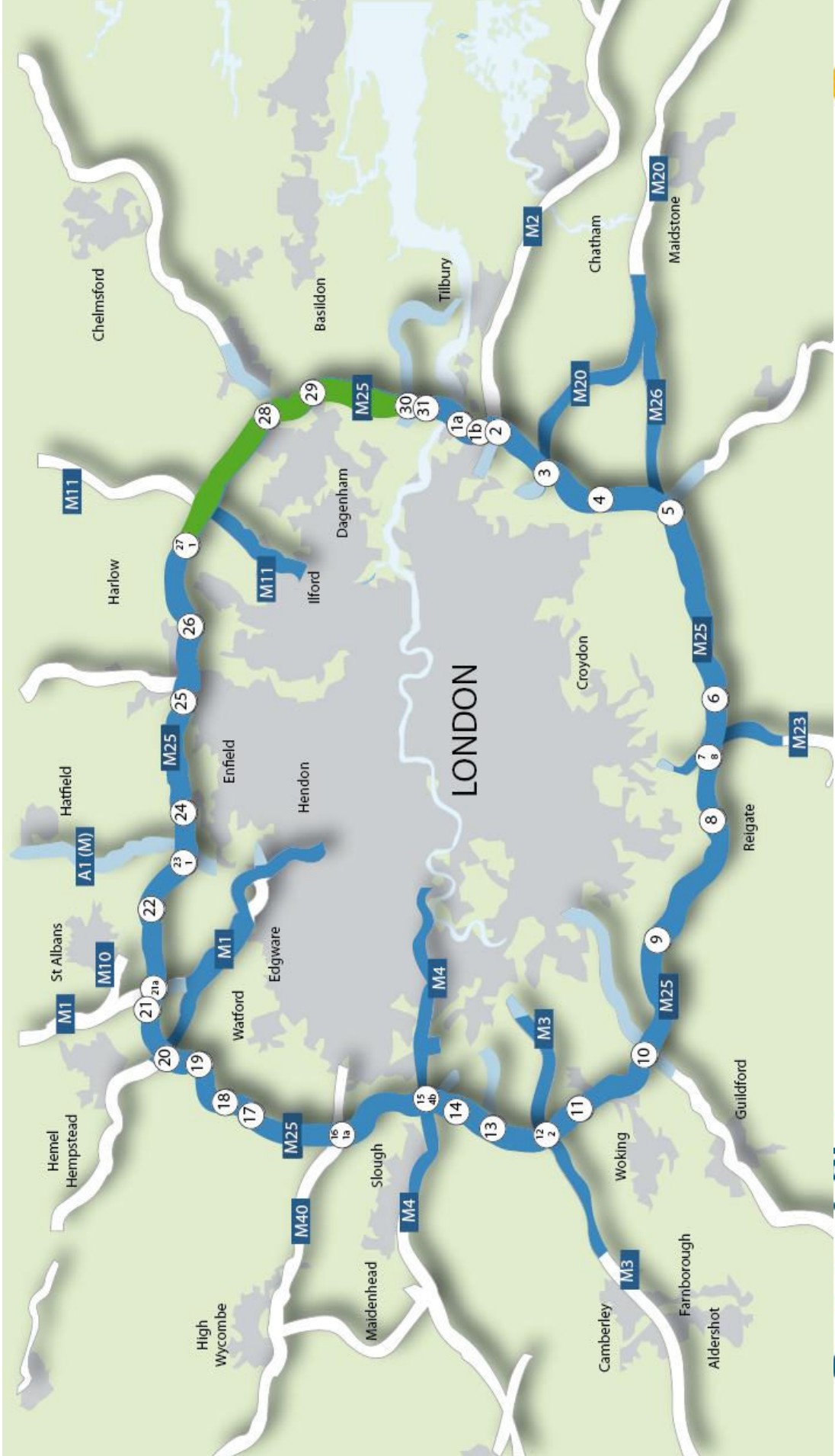
Construction Works: Section 1



Connect Plus

ZERO HARM

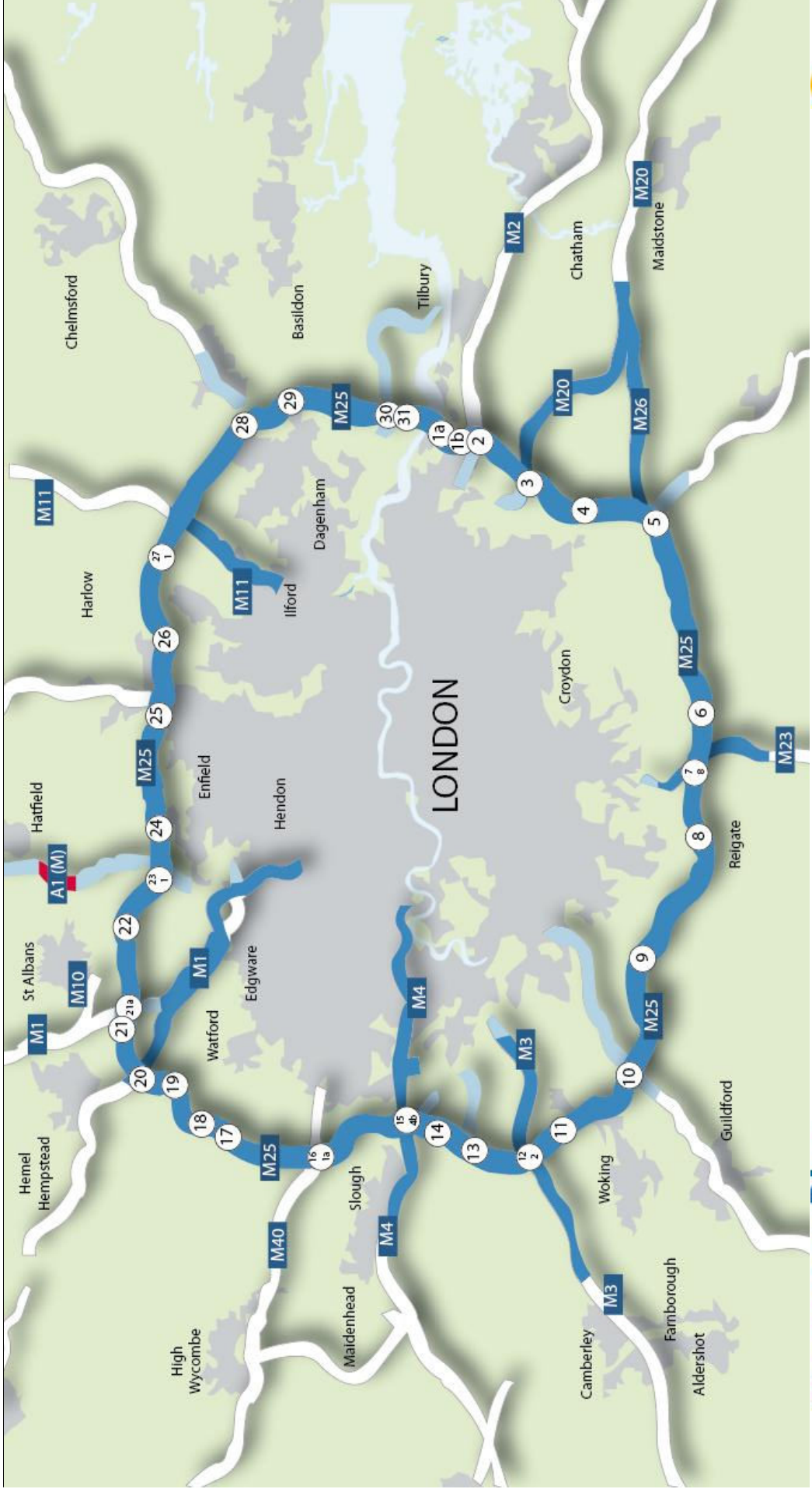
Construction Works: Section 4



Connect Plus

ZERO HARM

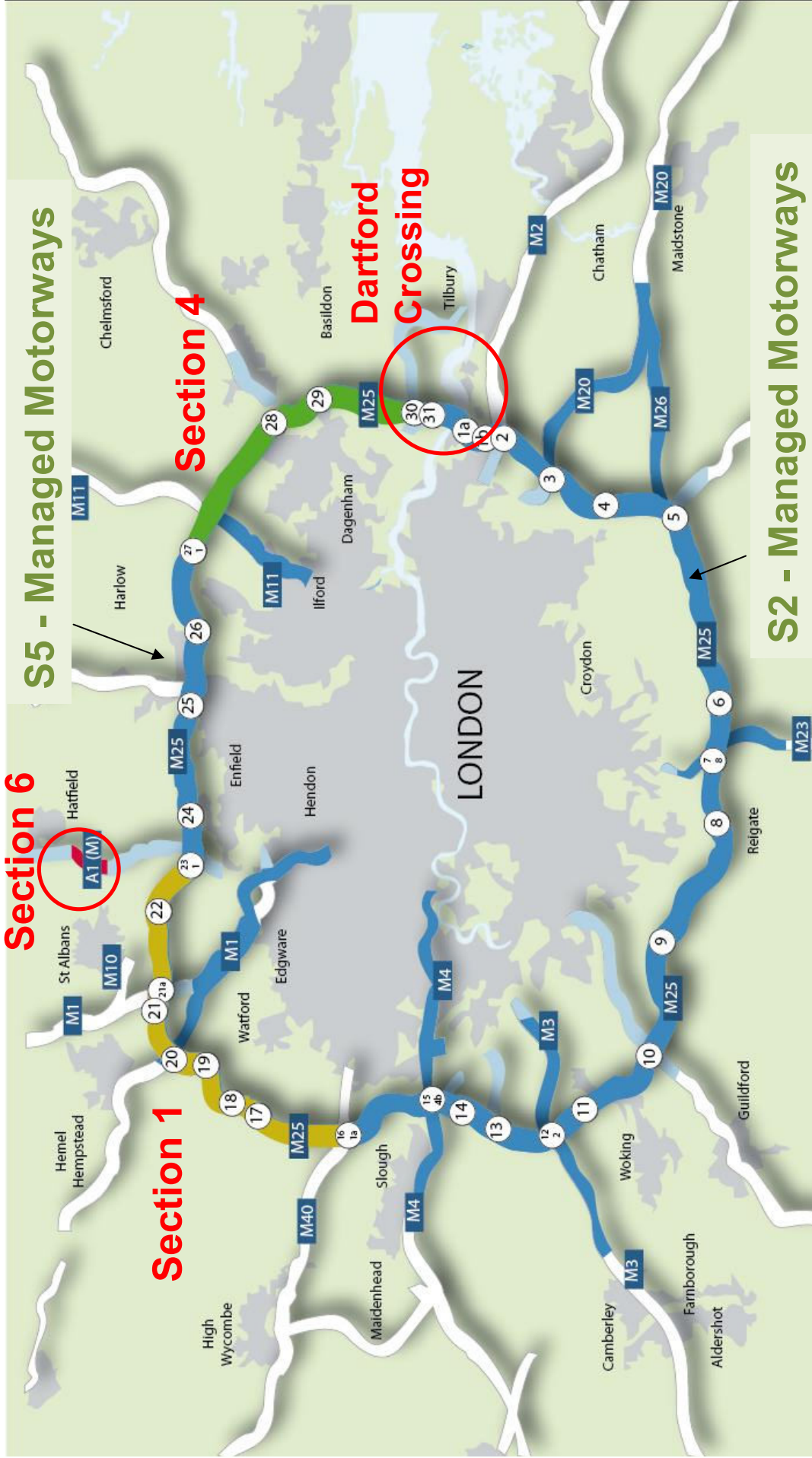
Construction Works: Section 6 – Hatfield Tunnel Refurbishment



Connect Plus

ZERO HARM

Construction: Overview with Future upgrades

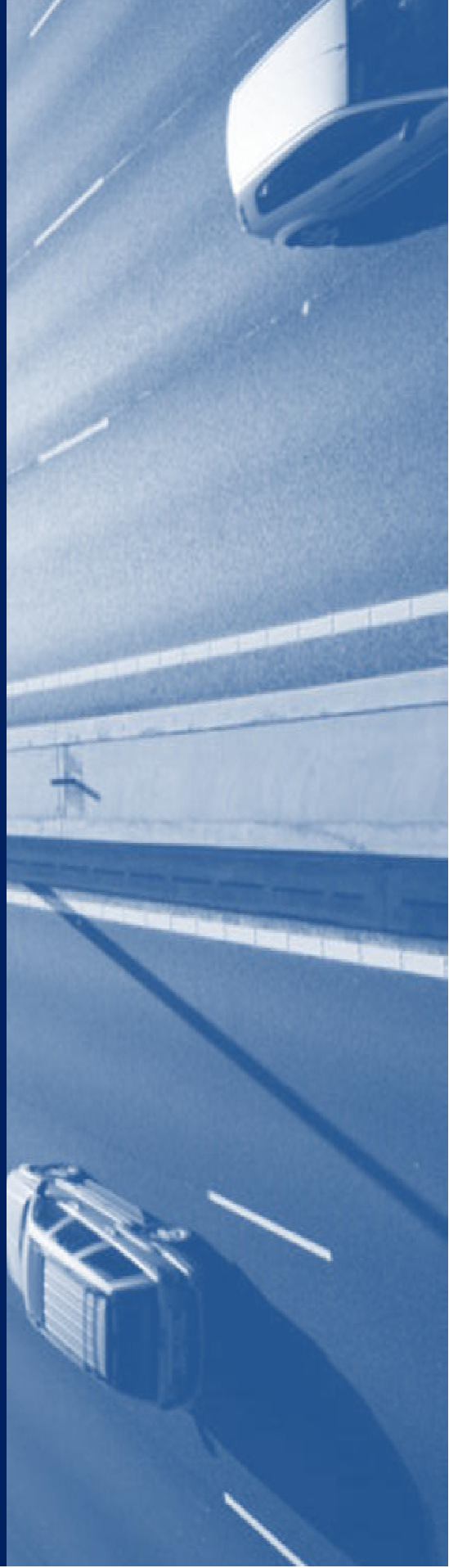


Connect Plus

ZERO HARM



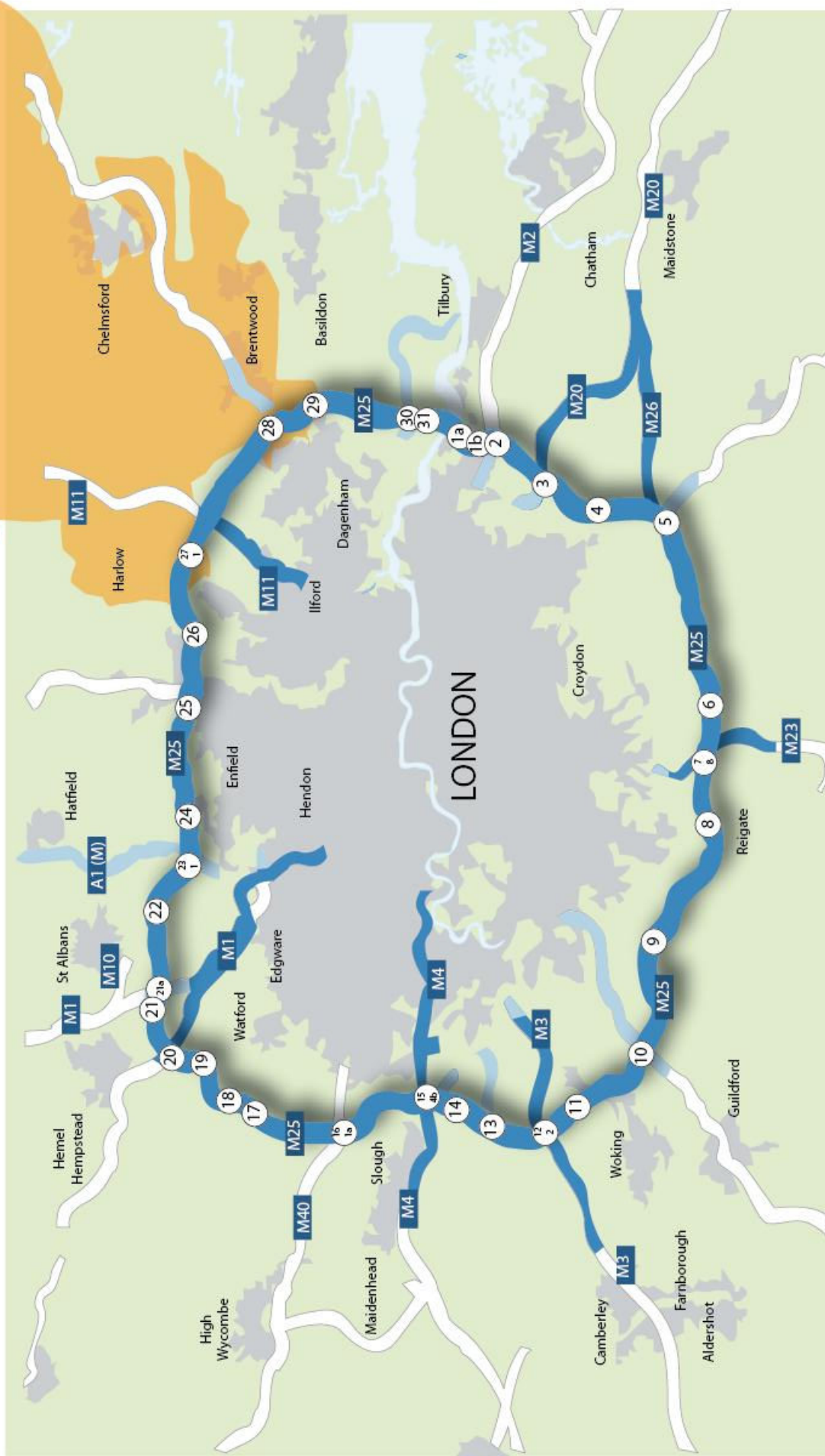
Essex Interface



Connect Plus

ZERO HARM

The M25 & Essex



Connect Plus

ZERO HARM

What we have done...

- Fourth lane on the anti clockwise and clockwise carriageway complete including emergency access routes; retaining wall; drainage; lighting columns and permanent fencing
- 11 gantries installed and comms being commissioned
- Into phase 4 traffic running on hard shoulder, lane 1 and 2 during central reserve works
- Planted 21,5067 shrubs and trees clockwise, approx 23,000 to be planted on anti clockwise
- 4a works were complete in July 2010



Programme

4b Programme

- advanced works for 5 weeks over winter made back time
- 24hr/7days a week working in central reserve
- vegetation clearance
- newt and reptile mitigation
- works at bridges, cctv, drainage
- construction of Upminster Bund ongoing
- sheet piling



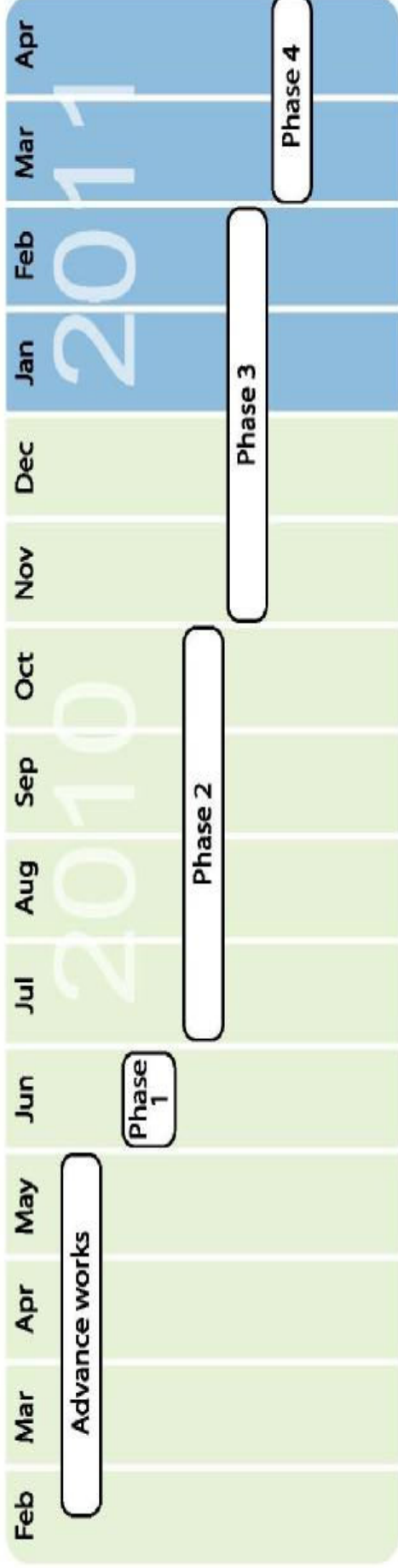
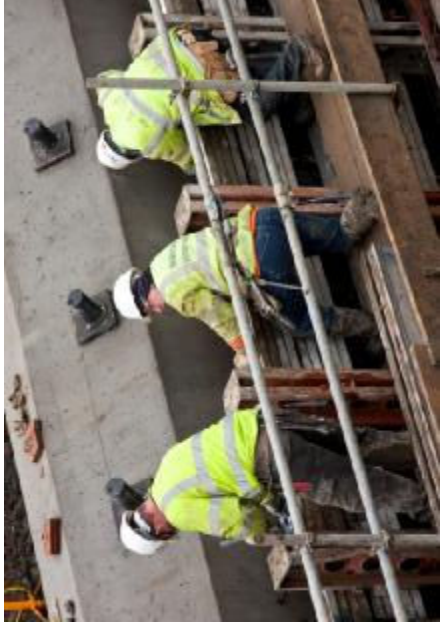
4c Programme

- site investigations

Update

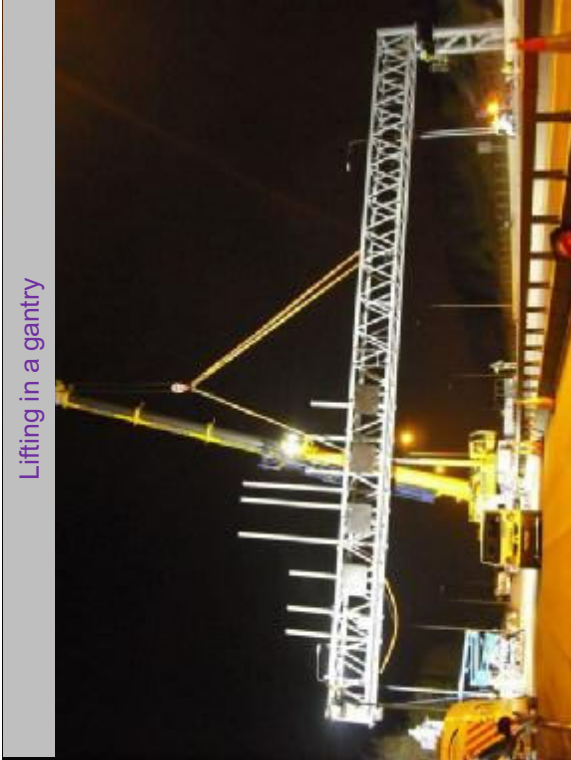
Health and Safety

- the project has now completed –
1,637,825 safe hours worked –
zero reportable accidents





Upminster Bund under construction. This bund will finally be 4m above the carriageway and is to protect the residents of Cranham from the M25.



Lifting in a gantry



Progress picture (May 2010)



Group of operatives who were given a free breakfast in recognition of the project reaching 1.5m safe hours worked, 350 took up the breakfast.

Students from Sawyers Hall College on a one day visit / site tour. Students requirements were matched to Senior managers and they received interactive presentations from health and safety, Structure Team Leader, Jim Mc Nicholas (Construction Manager) and Calvin Blacker (Design). Students studying new course Construction the Built Environment. The ICE are also keen on us working with students of course to encourage them into the industry.

Land

- work closely with local land owners and Councils
- looking at turning attenuation tanks to Ponds
- consideration given to move from hard walls into gentle slopes if feasible
- wherever possible ensure we construct in sympathy with the surrounding environment

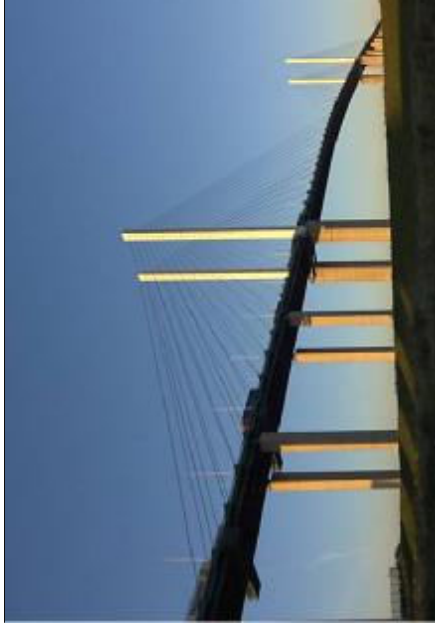


Traffic Management

- 4a and 4c three lanes in contraflow
- 4b narrow lanes non contraflow
- 50mph speed limit
- Barrier for all permanent works areas
- All site drivers receive driver training
- VMS at works exits
- Automated lane closure implemented
- TRL monitoring flows



Dartford Crossing



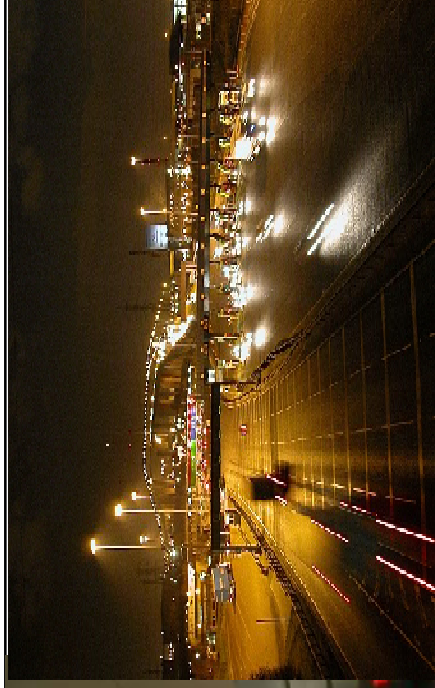
Bridge

- 137m long cable-stayed
- Over 150,000 vehicles per day use the crossing
- £70m per year revenue



Tunnels

- 1963 - West-bound constructed
- 1980 - Eastbound constructed



Key Issues

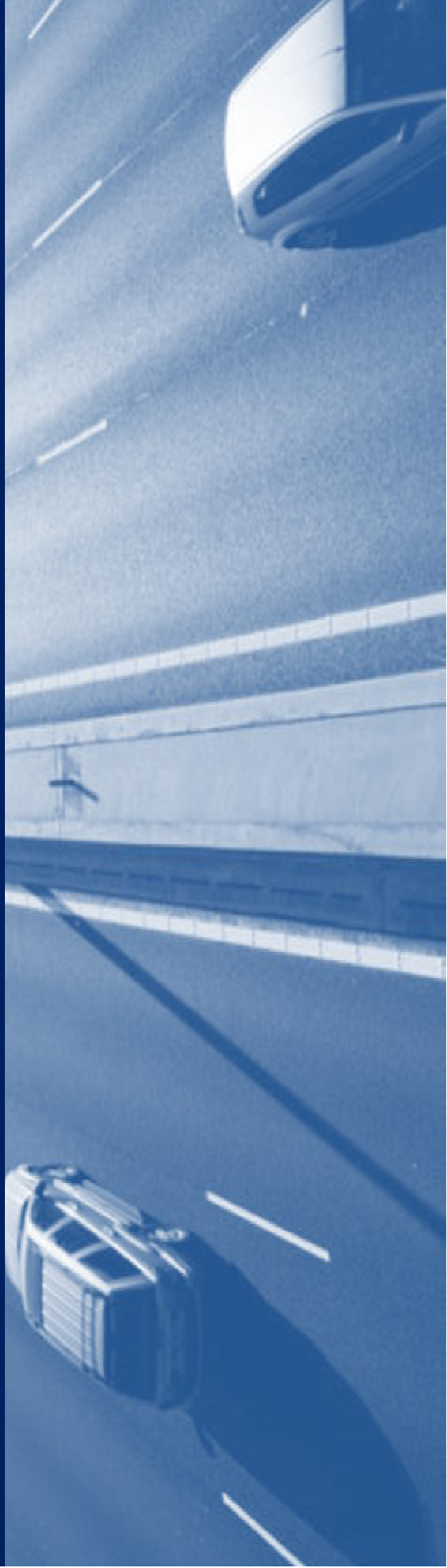
- Charging order 1 Apr 03
- Dangerous Goods 2004/S4/EC
- EU Regulations tunnel improvements include equipment,

Connect Plus

signage & emergency exits
ZERO HARM



Scope and Challenges



Connect Plus

ZERO HARM

The scope and challenges of the contract

- Connect Plus

Connect Plus – the SPV

- Robust SPV – HA facing – strong governance
- Lifecycle management - £1bn over 30 years
- Leverage innovation and efficiencies

- Maintain governance
- Managing 16 banks + EIB
- Leading on technical innovation
- Delivering a robust energy strategy
- Management of key sub-contracts and lifecycle contractors
- Managing the Payment Mechanism



The scope and challenges of the contract

- Construction



Key Facts

- £1m per day spend
- 2.5 x intensity of M1 Junctions 6a – 10
- 700 staff & designers
- 1,000 site staff
- 2m hours worked without a RIDDOR

Construction

- 67km of road widening in 38 months
- Refurbishment of 2 x 1km bores at Hatfield

Key Risks

- Maintain programme
- Secure key departures – physical constraints
- Build in programme contingency within TM rules
- Balancing works and traffic congestion

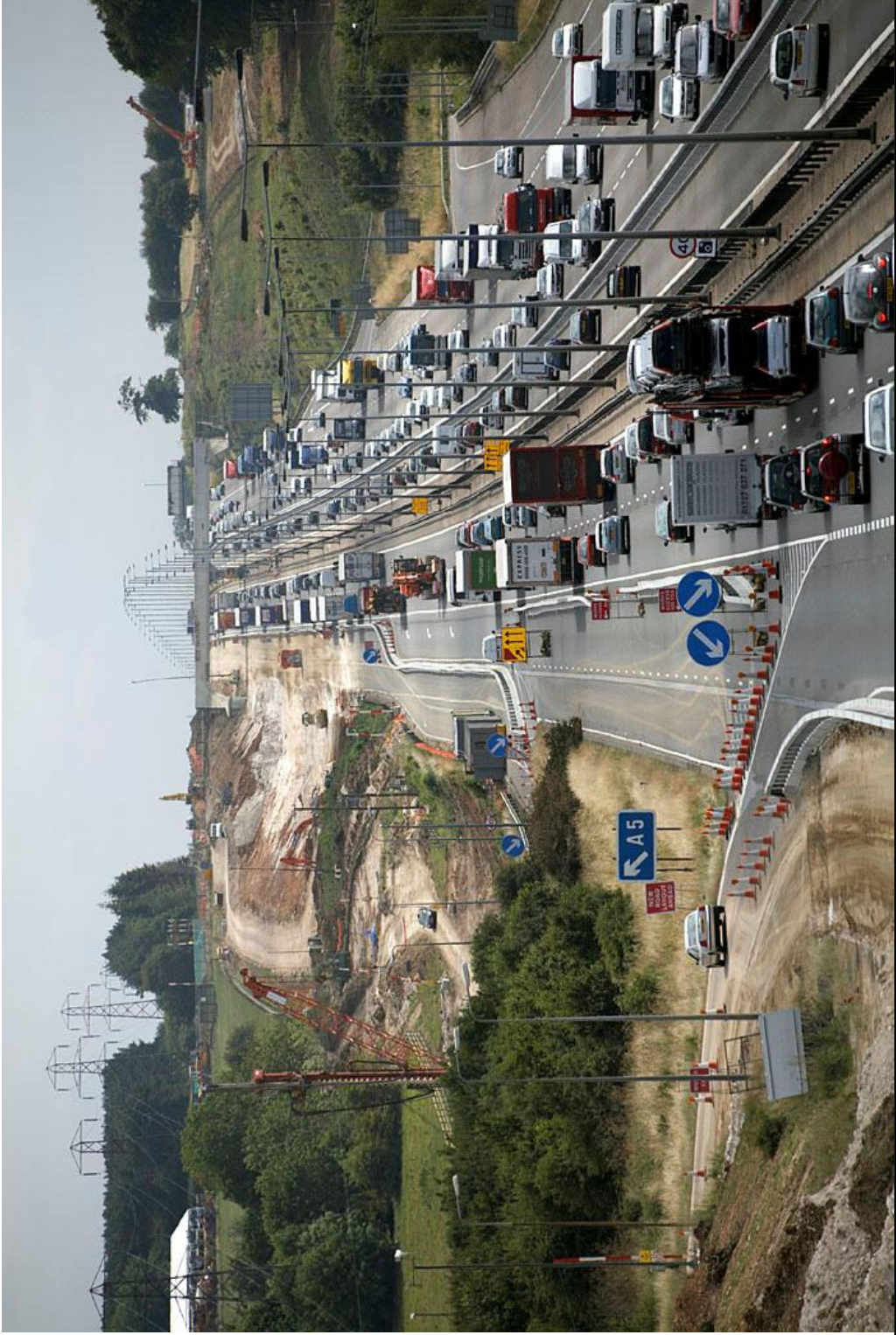
Connect Plus

ZERO HARM

M1 Junction 6a – 10 widening



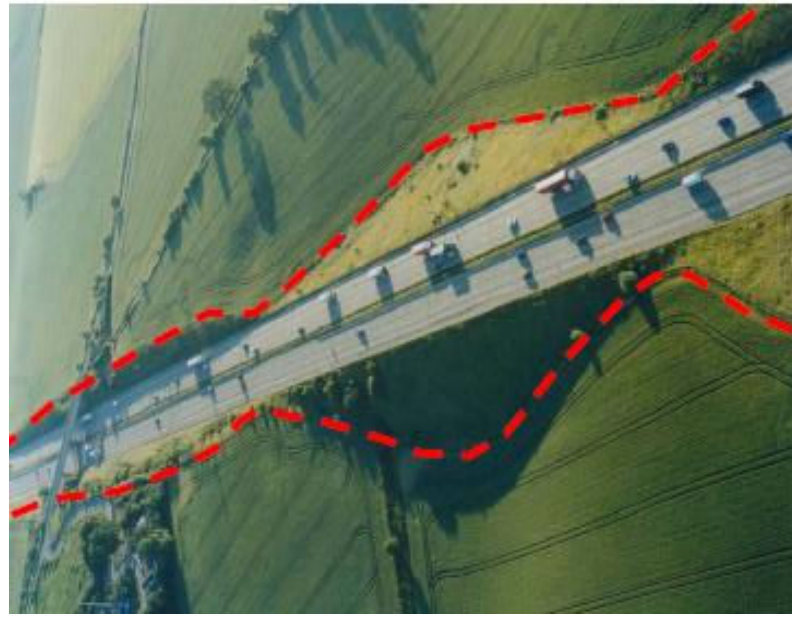
M1 Junction 6a – 10 widening



Connect Plus

ZERO HARM

Section 4 Jct 27 to 30 overview



(14.3m / 2
3km)



4a July 09 to Aug 10 (47wks)

4b Aug 10 to Apr 11 (34 wks)

4c Apr 11 to May 12 (49 wks)

M25 - S4 widening



M25 - S4 widening



Connect Plus

ZERO HARM

Retained Infrastructure Proposal

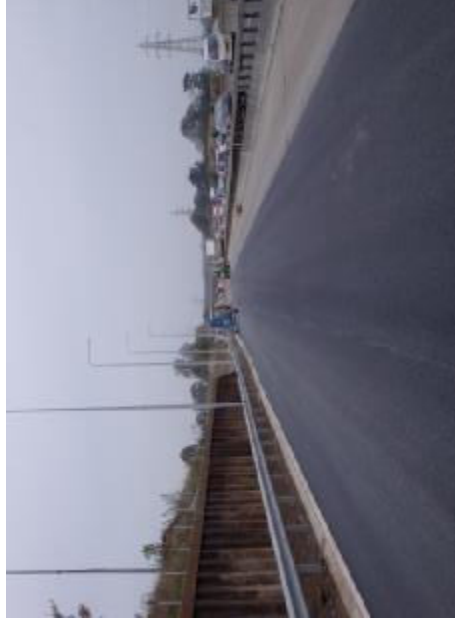
Retained:

- Existing Central Reserve paving
- Existing drainage
- New VCB
- Existing VCB and pier protection
- Existing Central Reserve paving
- Existing drainage



Construction Programme

- **Restrained by Traffic Management rules**
 - Max 12km sections / Divides each section into 3
 - Using contra-flow only one verge can be worked at a time
 - Average of 5 months per 12km section of verge
 - Average of 4 months per 12km section of Central Reserve
 - Some overlapping and non contra-flow to hit 39 months overall
- **Programme Robustness / End Date Certainty:**
 - Rationalize TM rules
 - Approve Departures to best use space & reduce disruption and time
 - Scope for offline working from adjacent land under review



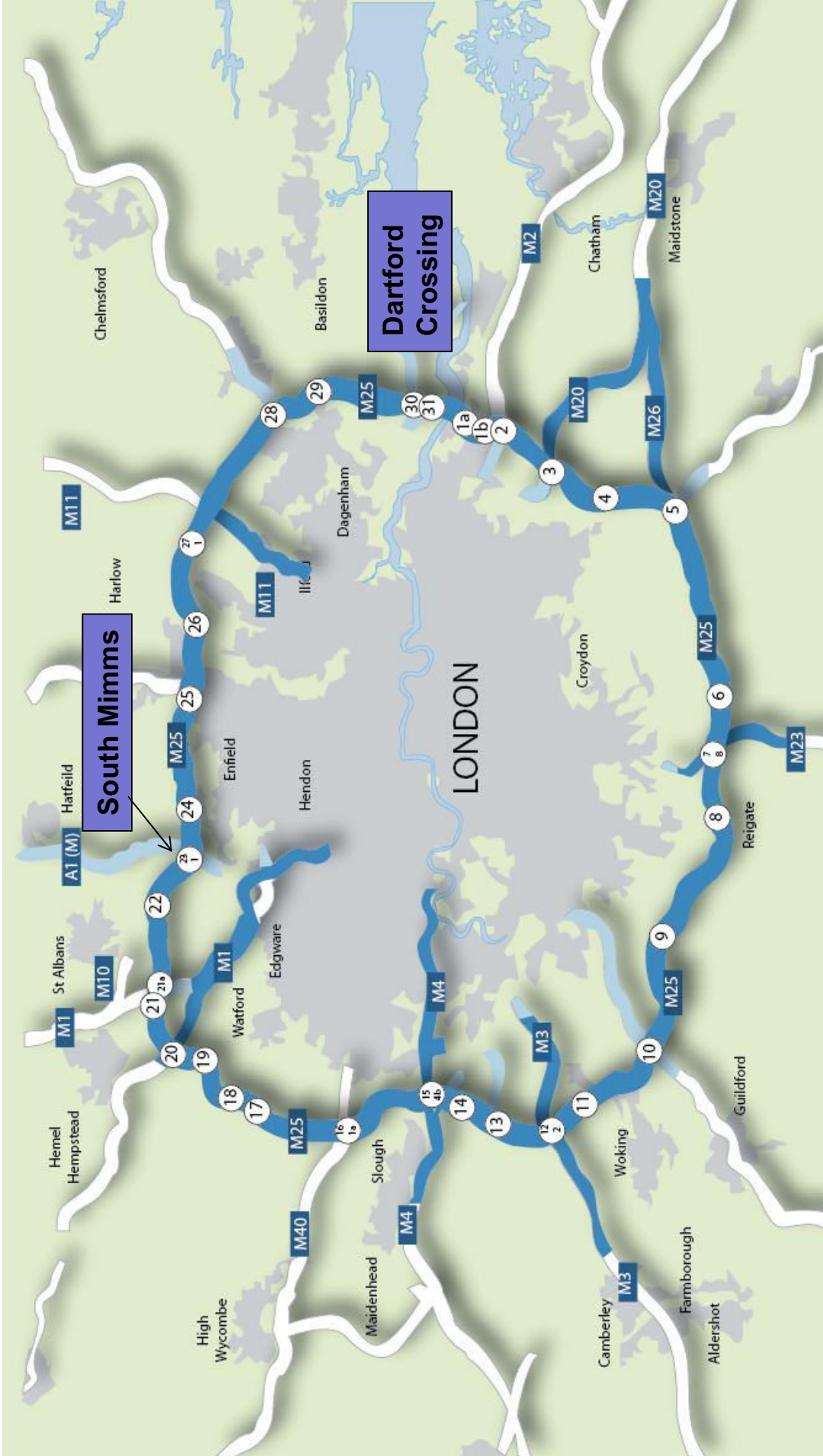


Connect Plus



ZERO HARM

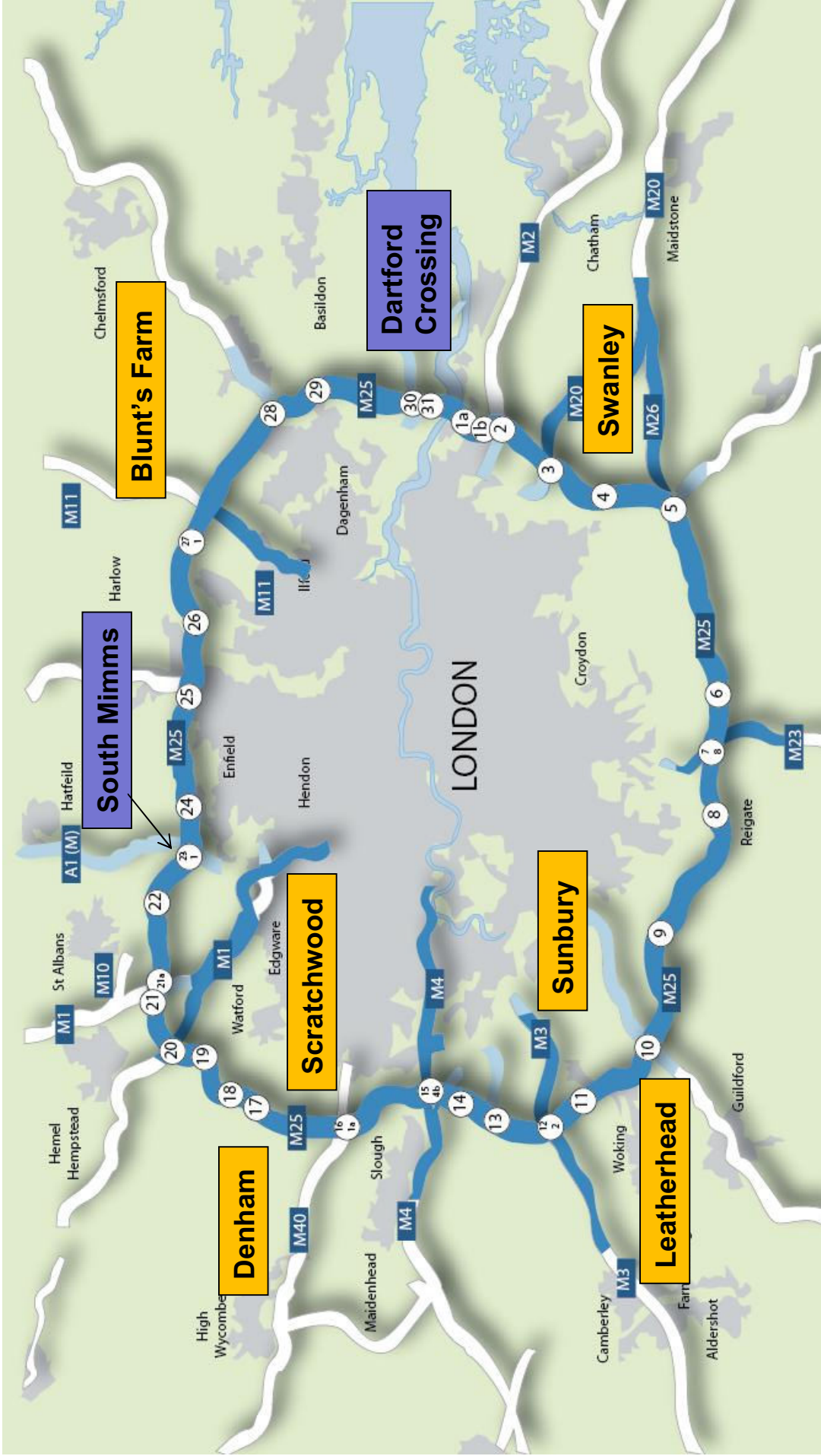
Operations and Maintenance: Overview



Connect Plus

ZERO HARM

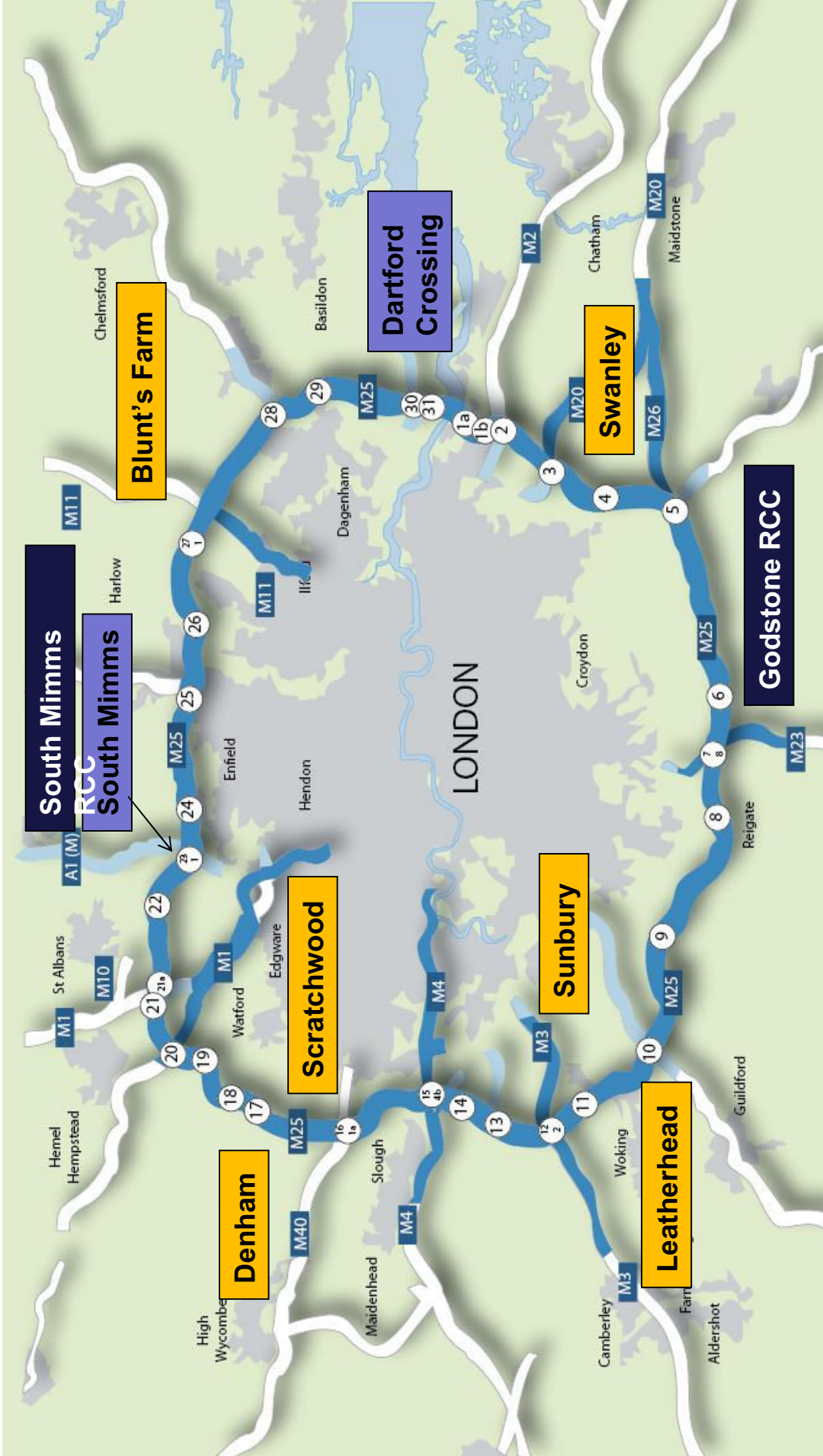
Operations and Maintenance: Overview



Connect Plus

ZERO HARM

Operations and Maintenance: Overview



Connect Plus

ZERO HARM

The scope and challenges of the contract

- Operations and Maintenance



Key Facts

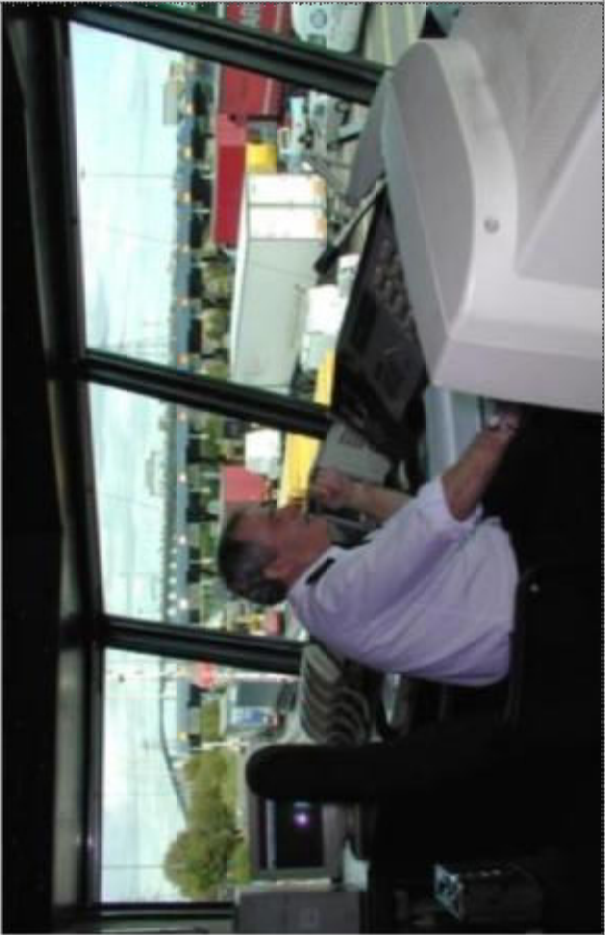
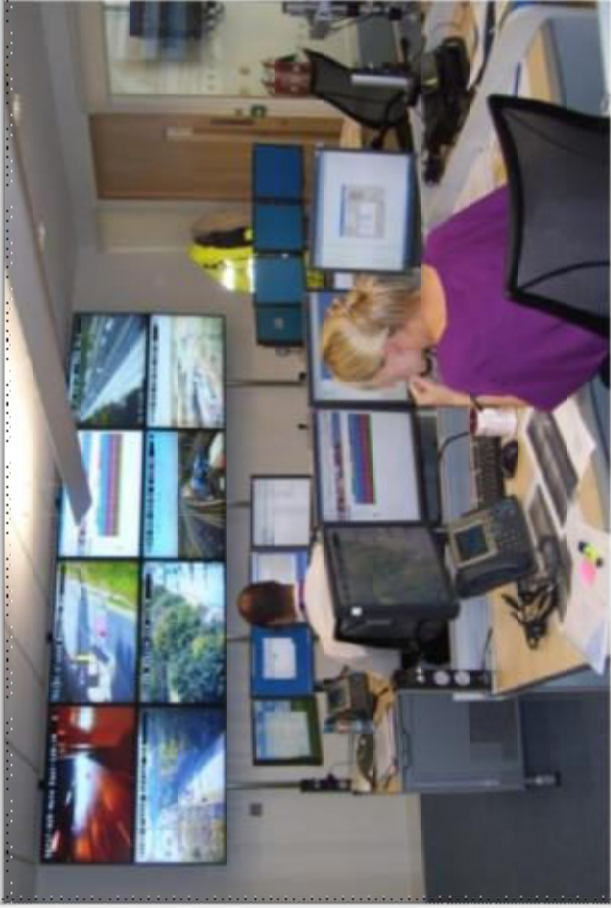
- £50m annual contract
- 650 staff / 7 depots including Dartford
- 2 control centres (CPS) interfacing with HA RCCs
- Operation and Maintenance
- 440km network
- 5 tunnels and QEII bridge

Key Challenges

- Support DBFO Co in asset management
- £250m lifecycle renewals
- Meeting over 160 KPIs
- Meeting Payment Mechanism
- Integrating 6 cultures

Connect Plus

ZERO HARM



Connect Plus

ZERO HARM



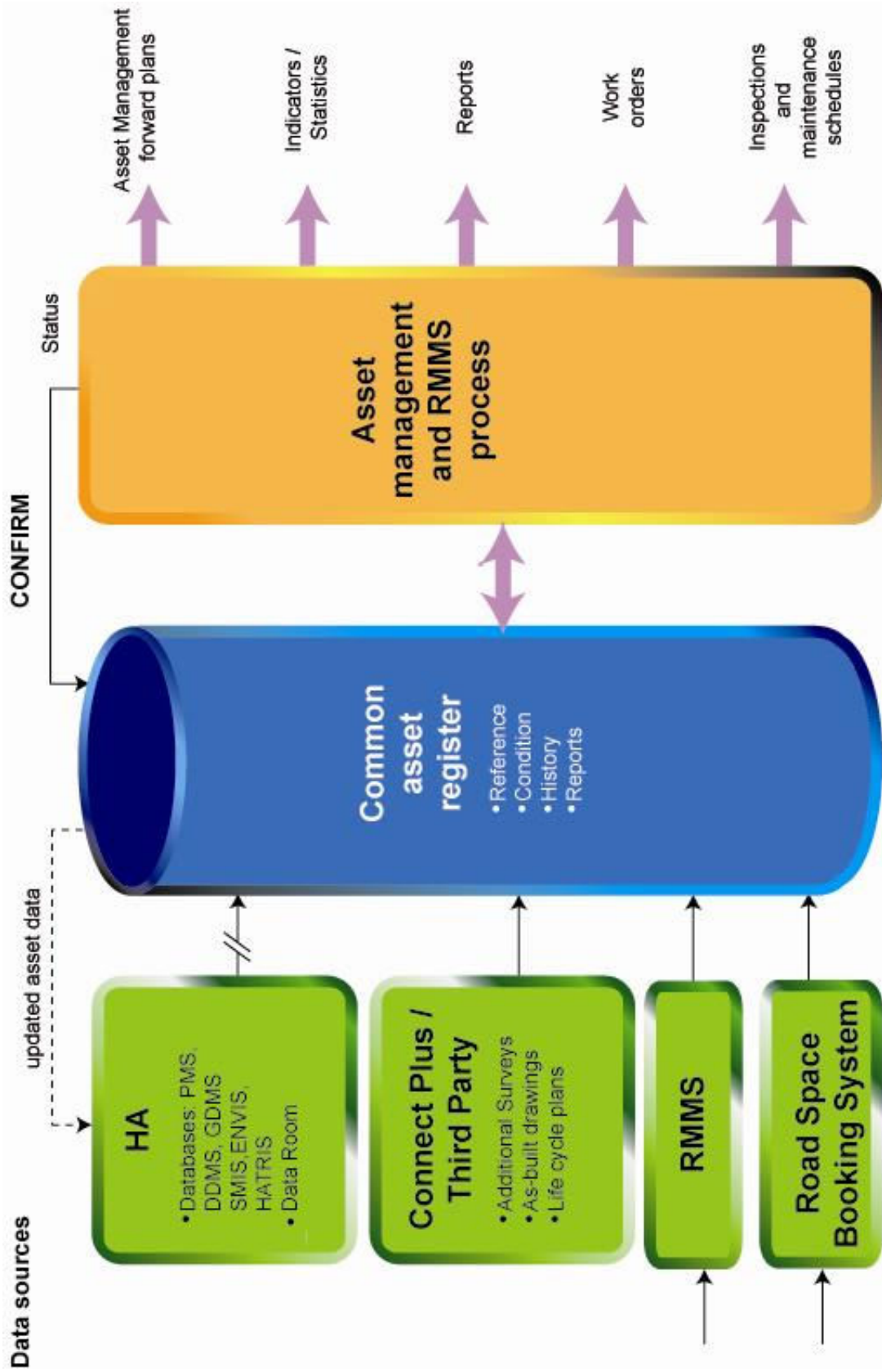
The 30 Year View



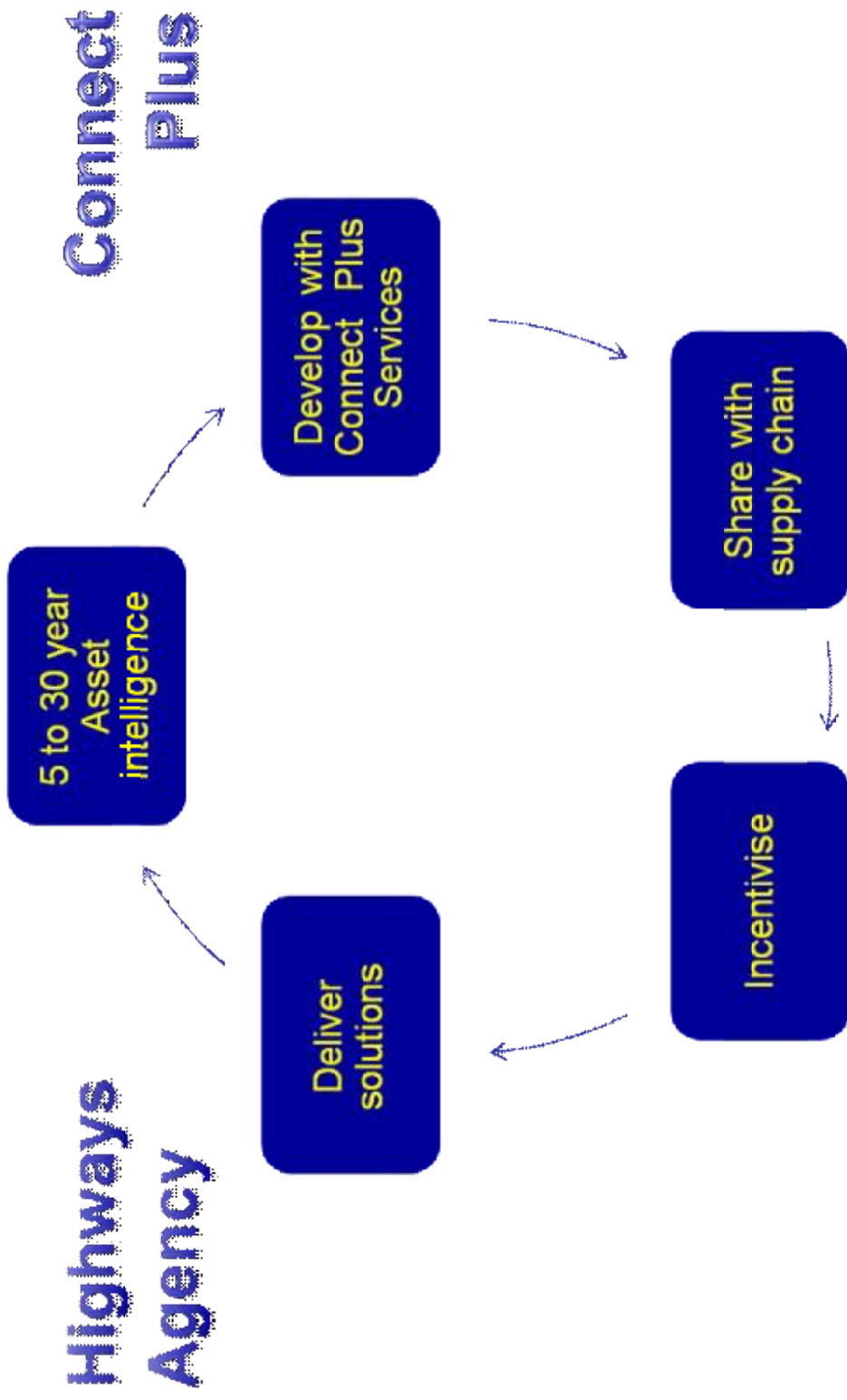
Connect Plus

ZERO HARM 

Asset intelligence: source and systems



Innovation and the Supply Chain



Signposts to the future...

- Integrated new build with O&M of existing assets into one integrated DBFO
- Consistency of approach and service over 30 years (not 6x 5 year term contracts)
- Whole life cost focus and effective risk transfer to give best value
- Innovation and systems led, e.g. predictive software supporting asset renewals
- Able to cope with future challenges:
 - Carbon
 - Energy
 - Decreasing reliance on unsustainable materials





Epping Forest District Council Epping

M25: An overview

Tim Jones
Connect Plus

6 Sept 2010

44

Notes following meeting

From: Liz Truckle
Sent: 08 September 2010 13:19
To: 'James.Richardson@sbbjv.co.uk'
Cc: 'Louise.Morgan@sbbjv.co.uk'; Tim Hinch; Filippa St Aubin D'Ancey
Subject: presentations to Essex - Epping Forest District Council (6 Sept) by Tim Jones
James

I had a successful meeting / presentation with the members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on Monday 6 September at Epping Forest. These are a few of the issues that were raised, as part of the presentation, which I believe Liz has sent through to you.

- Members applauded us for the progress we have been making
- Dartford was high on the agenda, as you can imagine, particularly congestion through Essex. Dartford is a moving target at the moment, with regard to initiatives emerging from the DfT regarding free flow tolling and relieving the daily charge in the event of severe congestion. Mike Putnam and Andrew McNaughton are meeting Graham Dalton tomorrow (Thurs) to explore ways to address Dartford going forward.
- Members were concerned about planning for the growth of traffic in the next 20 to 30 years and were concerned that the LUS (in whatever form) would go back at least 5 years.
- A number of comments were raised about J27 including noisy surfacing, imposing gantries and the over bright level of lighting in the area.
- They were concerned with the positioning of the Blunts Farm Depot and I reassured them that Connect Plus is concerned about its long term viability and that we were looking at alternative sites

I understand you are presenting on my behalf at the EEHBLG at Enfield tomorrow evening. Firstly thank you for doing this – and secondly, if you wanted to talk about any of the above issues, please call me on my mobile on the basis of the above comments, I suspect you won't have a hard time!
Kind regards
Liz Truckle

This page is intentionally left blank