



**Driving economic growth on the
A50/A500 Corridor
March 2025**

Foreword



As the Parliamentary Advocate for the A50/A500 and MP for Burton and Uttoxeter, I witness daily the urgent need for investment in this essential corridor. The A50/A500 is the Midlands' economic backbone — connecting Stoke-on-Trent to Nottingham and powering the livelihoods of over a million residents and half a million jobs. It's a route relied upon by giants like JCB, Toyota, and Rolls-Royce, but just as crucially, it supports countless small businesses that form the beating heart of our local economy.

Yet, persistent congestion and unreliable journeys are throttling growth and stifling opportunity. From manufacturing titans to small firms striving to expand, businesses are paying the price — 37 minutes lost per weekday, peak speeds plummeting to 14mph, and spiralling costs for logistics, supply chains, and everyday trade.

The potential here is vast: 39,000 new jobs, 67,000 homes, and a thriving hub for green transport technology. But without decisive action, these opportunities will remain out of reach. The A50/A500 must become a true catalyst for growth, innovation, and sustainability.

The time to act is now.



- **Jacob Collier, MP for Burton and Uttoxeter**



Foreword

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Having visited businesses and communities along the A50/A500 corridor, it's clear to me that the current situation is simply not sustainable. Government investment to improve the route is vital. Easing congestion and shortening journey times will benefit the local economy and residents along the corridor through reduced air pollution, better access to jobs, housing and education, and give more confidence to businesses.

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- **John Whitby, MP for Derbyshire Dales**



1.0 Introduction

Midlands Connect has identified the A50/A500 corridor as a vital east-west route, linking Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire and Leicestershire to Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire and the North-West. At several pinch points, the A50/A500 corridor is slow and unreliable, with average rush hour speeds below 20 mph.

The corridor has become notorious for significant congestion due to the high volume of vehicles on the road at any given time. With a growing logistics and manufacturing market along the corridor, enhancing reliability and reducing travel times will support local businesses to lower costs and access new markets, while establishing the corridor as a more attractive location for investment.

Cavendish was commissioned by Midlands Connect to undertake qualitative research by speaking to local firms along the A50/A500 to understand the challenges they currently face, as well as how they might benefit from investment in the corridor.

These discussions demonstrate that businesses along the A50/A500 in the area believe that the current route causes significant delays. The existing route serves as a hindrance to business operations, and improvement works to the A50/A500 corridor would be unanimously welcomed, helping to improve efficiency and drive business growth.

2.0 Executive Summary

2.1 Overview

This report provides a summary of insights, including quotes, gathered from local businesses and stakeholders via one-to-one interviews conducted on Microsoft Teams and correspondences via email, in the period of January to March 2025.

These discussions have allowed Midlands Connect to better understand the current road related issues affecting businesses. The responses we received reveal an urgent need to upgrade the route, with a unanimous view that an improved A50/A500 corridor would facilitate increased business confidence and support economic growth in the area.

The research and interviews undertaken during January to March 2025 included:

Name	Role	Sector
Steve Marriott	Senior Manager at Toyota Motor Manufacturing UK	Automotive
Simon Lings	Site Manager at Yusen Logistics (UK)	Logistics
Karen Woolley	Development Manager at the Federation of Small Businesses	Business Organisation
Steve Ling	Managing Director at Overclockers UK	Online Retailer
Damien Holdstock	Planning Director at Indurent	Industrial and Logistics Warehousing Provider
Richard Hickman	Senior Director of Planning at Indurent	Industrial and Logistics Warehousing Provider
Richard Smith	Group Property Director at bet365	Online Gambling
Cher Wynne	Head of Facilities Services at bet365	Online Gambling

2.3 Key Findings

As a result of these interviews, four key themes emerged:

1. The existing road network consistently disrupts business operations, leading to prolonged periods of delays caused by congestion.
2. Businesses reported issues with lengthy commuting times as a result of the A50/A500, impacting sustainability and recruitment efforts.
3. Businesses are implementing specific strategies to mitigate the impact of traffic congestion along the A50/A500.
4. An improved A50/A500 would greatly improve business efficiency and encourage greater investment around the area.
5. The area offers excellent access to markets across the UK; improving the network would allow the region to fully capitalise on the growing logistics market.

3.0 Interview Analysis

3.1 Issues with the current road network

Local firms consistently expressed their dissatisfaction with the A50/A500 route at present, particularly in regard to frequent congestion.

“Heading down towards Derby, that junction can't take the sheer volume of traffic, so it backs down onto the dual carriageway and then causes massive traffic jams. And you know, coming from the Derby direction on the A50 to the A500 has the same problem, you just get huge tailbacks.” **Steve Ling, Managing Director at Overclockers**

As a result of this congestion, HGV drivers are facing significant delays in their operations.

“We can lose anything up to 20 to 30 minutes, from leaving site at Burnaston to Junction 16. And often we're using this route four times a day, so in the worst-case scenario that can total 120 minutes (2 hours) per driver per day. When the A500 gets snarled up, it actually doesn't move. It's a real problem.” **Simon Lings, Site Manager at Yusen Logistics.**

It was also suggested that even outside rush hours, the A500 is at capacity.

“You kind of get it at peak time traffic time, where everything's trying to get into the city, which happens in every area of the country. But when it's the middle of the day, and there's no accident and it's just like that all the time. It's pretty ridiculous, to be honest.” **Steve Ling, Managing Director at Overclockers**

Drivers also expressed concern that new housing developments in and around the corridor were exacerbating the amount of traffic at peak times.

“It's not as bad down near Blyth Bridge, although it's been worse since the new housing estates have been built on the side of the island. Because there's a lot more movement of traffic. I think there's a lot of development

going on along the corridor at the moment. And more efficient transport flows can only aid that.” **Simon Lings, Site Manager at Yusen Logistics**

A clear consensus emerged among local firms that the local road network is inadequate and excessively busy even outside peak times, causing a range of problems for their business operation. Businesses reliant on the A50/A500 to get employees to and from their site noted considerable issues with commuting times.

3.2 Businesses reported issues with lengthy commuting times

Bet365 was founded and is headquartered in Stoke, employing just under 5,000 people at an office just off the A500. The company is the largest private-sector employer in the city by a considerable margin, although some employees also travel from the Manchester and London area. Richard Smith, Property Group Director, noted that some employees work shift patterns which are impacted by transport problems.

“Getting people to and from work is our biggest challenge. We face issues all the time with transportation. Significant amounts of vehicles are travelling along the A500, but our employee base is not just from Stoke on Trent. They travel into the city. A lot of staff coming in from the North, South, East and West, all along the A50/A500.” **Richard Smith, Group Property Director at bet365**

“I commute to work via the A50 and A500. When there is no traffic at all, it takes me roughly 10 minutes from work to home. This morning it took me nearly an hour.” **Cher Wynne, Head of Facilities Services at bet365**

“When there's problems on the M6 and the A500, it is a big problem for us. A lot of our employees work shift patterns in our contact centre. So, if we get a lot of staff who were late for work as a result of transport problems, then it creates big issues with serving customers.” **Richard Smith, Group Property Director at bet365**

For Bet365, the levels of congestion can affect recruitment and sustainability drives. Both issues could be better addressed by investments into the A50/A500 corridor.

“An improved A500 would be better for us from a recruitment and retention perspective. If employees have got a nightmare of a journey to get into work every day, it'll make them think twice about where they go to work.”

“We're trying to encourage more energy efficiencies and sustainability in the business. Transportation is a key part of that. However, it relies on investment from outside of our business to help us to achieve those goals.”

Richard Smith, Group Property Director at bet365

Large local employers are struggling to manage the flow of employees to and from the office along the A50/A500, particularly those working shifts. In turn, this is impacting on their ability to recruit and retain staff, who may be frustrated in facing regular delays.

3.3 Businesses are forced to take measures to mitigate the impact of congestion

Multiple firms operating along the route have been forced to implement specific strategies to mitigate the impact of traffic congestion along the A50/A500.

For Steve Marriott at Toyota, careful planning is required to adhere to tight supply schedules that can be impacted negatively by congestion. Missing specific windows can lead to massive knock-on effects along the supply chain.

“Our supply schedules are quite tight. If we are planning to be at a supplier during a specific window and are late for that window, then they may have another automotive customer going in and they will prioritise that. There's a massive knock-on effect. We must be aware of this and bring drivers in early, ensuring they leave 20 or 30 minutes earlier.” **Steve Marriott, Senior Manager at Toyota Motor Manufacturing UK.**

For logistics firms, where just-in-time routes are planned to make freight supply more efficient, it is vital for freight to meet window times for collection. As it stands, congestion must be factored into these just-in-time calculations.

“All our routes are planned to the nth degree and they're all just in time. So, you know, we've got time slots where we arrange window times for

collections. If we're outside of those window times, it not only causes problems for us, but for the suppliers as well.” **Simon Lings, Site Manager at Yusen Logistics**

The impact of congestion on the cost of running a logistics dependent business can clearly be considerable and must be factored in when making business decisions. By addressing these issues and reducing journey times, local firms would be able to enhance their profitability by reducing time lost in traffic.

3.4 A50/A500 corridor improvements would increase business efficiency

Local firms outlined their opinion that an improved A50/A500 corridor between Stoke and Derby could greatly improve the efficiency of their operations. With investment in the corridor, there would be increased road capacity and capability for businesses to keep moving.

The Federation of Small Businesses in Staffordshire and the West Midlands felt the improvements would be vital in supporting small firms that have long suffered from poor road connections, whilst also reducing pollution.

“Building capacity and capability in these areas is crucial, especially if it can be done in an environmentally friendly way by keeping traffic flowing and reducing pollution.” **Karen Woolley, Development Manager at the Federation of Small Businesses.**

Steve Marriott noted that the improvements could help Toyota Motor Manufacturing UK be more efficient, reducing the number of drivers needed, while improving long-term employment stability.

“From an efficiency point of view, we could more effectively utilise our drivers and that's a real cost benefit we can realise for our business, which long term, can help us to continue to be a sustainable long-term employer here. The improvements can only help us to be more efficient in our day-to-day running and operating costs as a business. We know it promotes growth, industry and long-term employment stability.” **Steve Marriott, Senior Manager at Toyota Motor Manufacturing UK.**

Indurent, one of the UK's leading providers of industrial and logistics warehousing, agreed that improvement of this vital east-west corridor would make their sites more attractive. Indurent is a significant investor in local strategic employment initiatives and enhanced accessibility to the sites would bolster their confidence in these investments.

“The efficiency of the A50/A500 corridor is critical to the success of our developments. A well-connected road network makes our sites more appealing to businesses, helping to attract tenants and drive investment. Without improvements, congestion will continue to be a barrier to growth in the corridor.”

“We are committed to delivering large-scale employment schemes, many of which have already secured planning consent or strong local authority support. Improved transport links would give us greater confidence in these investments, ensuring that businesses can efficiently access our sites while enabling seamless movement of goods and workers.” **Richard Hickman, Senior Director of Planning at Indurent.**

3.5 Corridor improvements would allow the region to capitalise on the growing logistics market

Another key theme that emerged is that local firms have invested in the area, as they feel it provides great access to employment and to markets across the UK. Many suggested that these improvements would allow the area to capitalise on the growing logistics market and provide more jobs for local people. For Steve Ling, their site means Overclockers can reach customers across the North and Midlands easily and they hope to employ more from the local talent pool.

“You're bang between the second and third biggest cities in the UK, it's quite easy to get to places like Liverpool, Lancashire, even Yorkshire and West Yorkshire Region. As well as importantly, the East Midlands: Derby, Nottingham, you know, just down the road”.

“We've got two universities here as well; we've got the potential to keep the talent pool here. Business sectors in Stoke are getting stronger but they are very strong in logistics, and I think that is because of that position in the country, we can capitalise. The way people shop has changed a lot, we've seen sadly the decline of city centres, but ultimately, it's what people want. So, you've got to move with the times.” **Steve Ling, Managing Director at Overclockers**

For Indurent, the accessibility of the area has meant they've had a long-term interest in continued investment.

“We've invested in this area for years because of its strategic location and strong market demand. However, congestion on the A50/A500 remains a significant challenge. Upgrading the corridor would unlock new opportunities, making the region more attractive to both local and national businesses looking for well-connected logistics hubs.” **Damien Holdstock, Planning Director at Indurent**

Businesses also identified that this is a time of considerable investment in the region, with the East Midlands Freeport and hydrogen cluster coming forward. There is a belief that an improved A50/A500 corridor would allow more companies to benefit from these developments, improving the future economic outlook of the region.

“There's a lot of talk of the Freeport development at the East Midlands Airport and hydrogen corridor. If we can say the A50/A500 corridor is congestion free, it's efficient and you can go left to right, right to left, no problem at all, it will help the future image of the area.” **Steve Marriott, Senior Manager at Toyota Motor Manufacturing UK.**

4.0 Conclusions

Businesses along the A50/A500 recognise that there's great potential to capitalise on the growing logistics market, and other major investments in the East Midlands. However, the corridor is currently being held back by chronic congestion and a lack of road capacity.

The firms interviewed agreed that the government should prioritise improvement works to the A50/A500 corridor when considering future transport funding allocation, with many suggesting that this work has been long overdue.

“Across Staffordshire, we've sustained many years of poor road and rail connections. Our small businesses are the lifeblood of our local communities, they rely on these networks to keep their businesses moving.” **Karen Woolley, Development Manager at the Federation of Small Businesses.**

Numerous businesses interviewed felt that the area is well-positioned to attract more employees from across Staffordshire, Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire, as well as access many UK markets. However, the A50/A500 corridor has been unable to achieve its full potential, with local congestion on unsuitable roads costing them time and money, creating a significant barrier to meaningful growth.

From these interviews it can be concluded that local businesses believe an improvement of the A50/A500 corridor would bring benefits far beyond short-term relief for drivers from traffic and congestion. Local firms would increase their operational efficiency, greater confidence will be given to investors in local sites and more jobs can be created for local people. Through these improvements, the region can capitalise on the growing logistics markets, challenging other major logistics hubs in Doncaster, Milton Keynes and the Golden Triangle.

By funding these improvements, businesses along the route feel the government can support regional economic growth across Staffordshire, Derbyshire, and further afield.