

# Improving the A1 in Northumberland

Newsletter issue 2 - Spring 2016

We are currently investigating options to dual the existing single carriageway sections of the A1 between Morpeth and Ellingham.

We are also developing options to enhance the performance and safety of the route north of Ellingham, including junction improvements, overtaking opportunities and improvements to crossings.

The proposals were announced in the Government's Road Investment Strategy: 2015-2020, published in 2014.

## Why are we doing this?

In 2014 a feasibility study was carried out which considered the problems experienced by people using the A1 in Northumberland. The following main issues were identified:

- A large number of junctions and private accesses, resulting in delays and potential for accidents when vehicles exit or enter the main carriageway
- Average traffic speeds on the single carriageway sections of the route were significantly lower than sections already upgraded to dual carriageway. Peak-hour traffic speeds were significantly slower than when traffic was free flowing
- A high proportion of heavy goods and agricultural vehicles north of Alnwick resulting in reduced speeds for following vehicles. Lack of overtaking opportunities which slows down traffic



## What are the benefits?

We're designing this improvement scheme to deliver greater benefits for road users and local communities by:

- Providing additional capacity on the route
- Improving journey time reliability
- Improving safety along the route
- Helping to support economic growth in the North East

## What are we doing?

We are currently assessing a number of improvement options to convert the existing single carriageway to dual carriageway between Morpeth to Felton, and Alnwick to Ellingham, to identify which improvement options are viable.

The following options have been identified for upgrading the routes between:

## Morpeth to Felton

### Orange route option

Upgrade the existing road to dual carriageway, either widening to the east, or the west; depending on the local features that we need to consider.

### Green route option

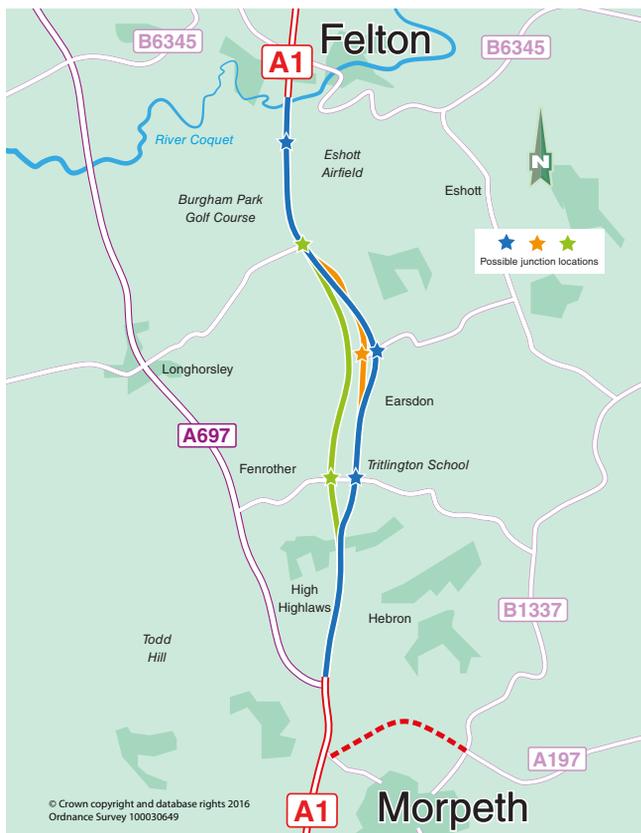
Build a new carriageway to the west of the existing road.

This is similar to the preferred route announced in 2005.

### Blue route option

Upgrade the majority of the existing road to dual carriageway, with approximately 1.2 miles (2 km) section of new carriageway built to the east of the existing route near Earsdon.

We anticipate that all of these options will include construction of new junctions, and limit access on and off the A1 to left turns only at some locations.



## Alnwick to Ellingham

### Orange route option

Upgrade the existing road to dual carriageway, either widening to the east or the west; depending on the local features that we need to consider.

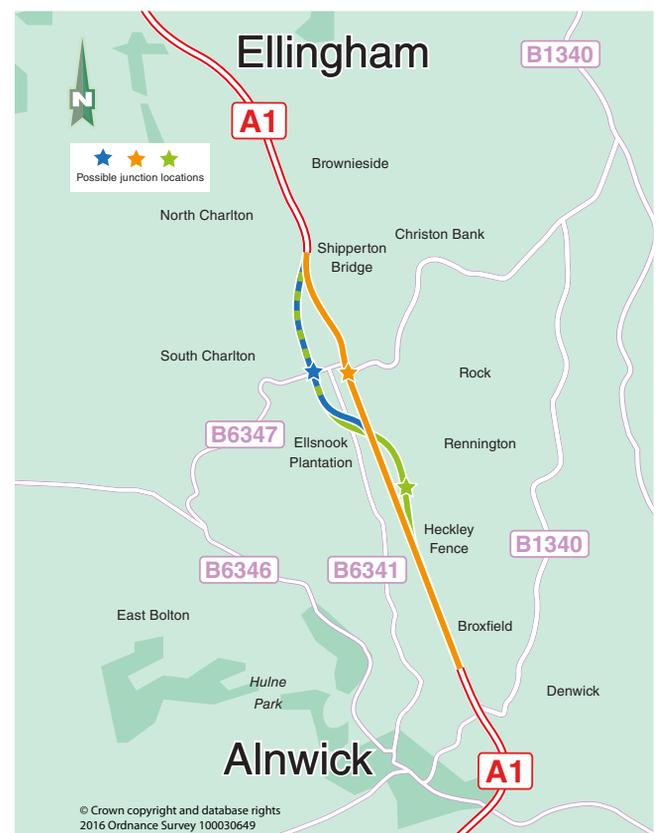
### Green route option -

Upgrade approximately 1.2 miles (2 km) of the existing road to dual carriageway, and build a new carriageway to the east of the existing road at Heckley Fence, before crossing over to the west of the existing road at Ellsnook Plantation and continuing until Shipperton Burn.

We anticipate all of these options will include construction of a new junction, and limit access on and off the A1 to left turns only at some locations.

### Blue route option

Upgrade the majority of the existing road to dual carriageway, with approximately 2.2 miles (3.5 km) section of new carriageway built to the west of the existing route between Ellsnook Plantation and Shipperton Burn



## Progress so far

**Surveys** - we are carrying out a number of surveys to gather information in the area, which will help us to develop and assess each improvement option. This is being done in consultation with local stakeholders.

## North of Ellingham improvements

We are also considering smaller scale opportunities, such as junction improvements and overtaking sections, to enhance safety and capacity **north of Ellingham**.

The following locations have been identified as a priority for potential improvement:

- ★ **West Mains (Holy Island) junction** – this improvement would address safety and the flow of traffic on the A1 by creating a new entry to Beal services. This will help to improve movement of traffic for road users accessing the services, and those leaving Holy Island during busy times.
- ★ **Wooler junction** - by improving the layout of the junction, this would improve safety and visibility for road users.
- ★ **Cheswick junction** - this scheme would improve the layout and safety of the junction by providing a dedicated lane for northbound traffic on the A1 turning right. This will also address issues with vehicles slowing down behind vehicles turning right.
- **Overtaking Lane located between Fenwick Stead junction and Fisher's Back Road junction** - this scheme would provide an additional lane northbound between Fenwick and Fisher's Back Road, and southbound between Fenwick and Fenwick Stead. The junction immediately to the north of Fisher's Back Road will be closed off, with an access road provided for properties located to the east.
- **Overtaking Lane located between B1342 junction and Middleton** - providing an additional lane northbound between Cragmill junction and Low Middleton, and southbound between Cragmill junction and the B1342. The minor road toward Middleton would be closed off.
- **Facilities for pedestrians and cyclists** – as part of these proposals, we will consider what improvements can be made to facilities for pedestrians and cyclists.



## What will happen next?

We have set out below what we plan to do next.

	Dualling Sections	North of Ellingham
Timing	Activity	Activity
Summer 2016	We will assess the potential impacts, benefits and costs of all options. This will enable us to identify which options are viable to take forward to public consultation.	
Autumn 2016	A Public Consultation including an exhibition is planned to take place in autumn/winter 2016. This is when we will present the final improvement options, and seek your views to help determine a preferred improvement scheme.	We will start to develop the detailed designs and statutory procedures for the improvements. We will engage with local people and other stakeholders in the area who are affected by the improvements. An update on the improvements will be provided at the Public Consultation exhibitions in autumn 2016.
Summer 2017	We will complete the options phase and make recommendations on the preferred route for improving the A1 between Morpeth and Ellingham.	Develop selected options for construction.

We plan to start construction of some of the north of Ellingham improvements in 2018.

Construction of the Morpeth to Felton and Alnwick to Ellingham dualling improvement schemes is planned to start in 2020.

## Keeping you up to date



**Online** – up to date information will be posted on our scheme web page as it becomes available, at: [www.highways.gov.uk/A1inNorthumberland](http://www.highways.gov.uk/A1inNorthumberland)



**Newsletter** - we will produce a regular newsletter to keep people updated about the development of our improvement scheme, including details of what's happening next. If you would like to receive an email copy of our newsletter, please send us your details. Or, you can hand them in today on our questionnaire feedback form.



**Email alerts** - you can sign up to receive email alerts as they are made via our web page at: [www.highways.gov.uk/A1inNorthumberland](http://www.highways.gov.uk/A1inNorthumberland)



**Contacting us** - If you have any queries about this improvement scheme please contact the Highways England information line by emailing: [info@highwaysengland.co.uk](mailto:info@highwaysengland.co.uk) Or call: **0300 123 5000**

Alternatively, you can contact the project team direct at: [A1inNorthumberland@highwaysengland.co.uk](mailto:A1inNorthumberland@highwaysengland.co.uk)

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Registered office Bridge House, 1 Walnut Tree Close, Guildford GU1 4LZ Highways England Company Limited registered in England and Wales number 09346363