

Improving the A47

Guyhirn junction improvement

Public consultation



March 2017

Improving the A47 corridor:

We are improving the A47 around Peterborough, Norwich and Great Yarmouth to create better, safer journeys.

1. Introduction

About us

Highways England is the government owned company charged with operating, maintaining and improving England's motorways and major A roads. Formerly the Highways Agency, we became a government owned company in 2015.

About the A47 corridor improvement scheme

In 2014 the government published the Road Investment Strategy (RIS) setting out a £15.1 billion investment for 2015-2020 to improve journeys on England's motorways and major A roads.

The RIS includes a package of 6 schemes to improve journeys on the 115 mile section of the A47 between Peterborough and Great Yarmouth. Together, the proposals will relieve congestion and improve the reliability of journey times for drivers.

The A47 trunk road forms part of the strategic road network and provides for a variety of local, medium and long distance trips between the A1 and the east coast. The corridor connects the cities of Norwich and Peterborough, the towns of Wisbech, Kings Lynn, Dereham, Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft and a succession of villages in what is largely a rural area.

The schemes include converting almost 8 miles of single carriageway to dual carriageway and making improvements to junctions across the route.

The 6 schemes are:

- A47 Wansford to Sutton dualling
- A47 Guyhirn junction improvement
- A47 North Tuddenham to Easton dualling
- A47 Blofield to North Burlingham dualling
- A47/A11 Thickthorn junction improvement
- A47 Great Yarmouth junction improvements (Formerly A47/A12 junction enhancements)

We are consulting on all 6 schemes at the same time. **In this brochure, you can find out more about the A47 Guyhirn junction.** To find out more about the other schemes or request a copy of the consultation brochure, please visit:



Online:

www.highways.gov.uk/a47Improvement



Email:

A47GuyhirnJunctionRIS@highwaysengland.co.uk

In total, over £2 billion is being invested in the East of England to create better and safer journeys across the region.

We want your views

We are consulting on proposals to improve the A47 Guyhirn junction. This junction on the A47, located to the east of Peterborough, regularly experiences congestion and delays.

Our proposals will create a larger roundabout that will relieve congestion, provide extra traffic capacity, improve safety and help provide a serviceable network.

This consultation provides you with an opportunity to view, discuss and help shape our proposals and help us understand what is important to our customers and local communities before the selection of a preferred option.

We are working closely with local authorities to ensure that the proposals align with local and regional aspirations for growth and transportation within local areas.

There will be a further public consultation before any scheme is finalised.

The consultation will run for 6 weeks from Monday 13 March to Friday 21 April 2017.

2. Need for the scheme

The junction between the A47 (Fen Road to South Brink) and the A141 (March Road) at Guyhirn currently experiences high levels of congestion, acting as a bottleneck, leading to longer and unreliable journey times.

There are a number of reasons for these delays. Our investigations to date have highlighted these issues as:

- Roundabout traffic capacity
- Lack of lane space
- Poor visibility on the roads as drivers approach the roundabout
- The increasing traffic is outgrowing the capacity of the road, causing tailbacks and delays
- Development in the local area, which can lead to potentially more vehicles on the road

If nothing is done to improve capacity and connectivity, these delays are forecast to get worse in future years.

In developing this scheme we aim to address these issues by improving the junction.

The scheme will support economic growth by making journeys safer and more reliable.

3. Scheme objectives

The objectives of the proposed A47 Guyhirn junction improvement scheme are:

■ Supporting economic growth

Contributing to regeneration and sustainable economic growth by supporting employment and residential development opportunities. The scheme aims to reduce congestion-related delay, improve journey time reliability and increase the overall capacity of the A47.

■ A safe and serviceable network

Improving road safety for all road users by designing to modern highway standards appropriate for a major A road.

■ A more free-flowing network

Increasing the resilience of the road in coping with incidents such as collisions, breakdowns, maintenance and extreme weather. The route around A47/A141 Guyhirn junction will be more reliable, reducing journey times and providing capacity for future traffic growth.

■ Improved environment

We will protect the environment by minimising adverse impacts and where possible, improving the environmental effects of transport for those living along the existing A47. We will do this by reducing the impact of new infrastructure on the natural and built environment.

■ An accessible and integrated network

We will ensure our proposals take into account local communities and access to the road network, providing a safer route between communities for cyclists, pedestrians, and other non-motorised groups.

■ Value for money

Ensuring that the scheme is affordable and delivers good value for money.

4. Option for consultation

A number of potential alternative options were considered as part of the scheme development process during 2016. These options did not perform well against the objectives and were not progressed any further.

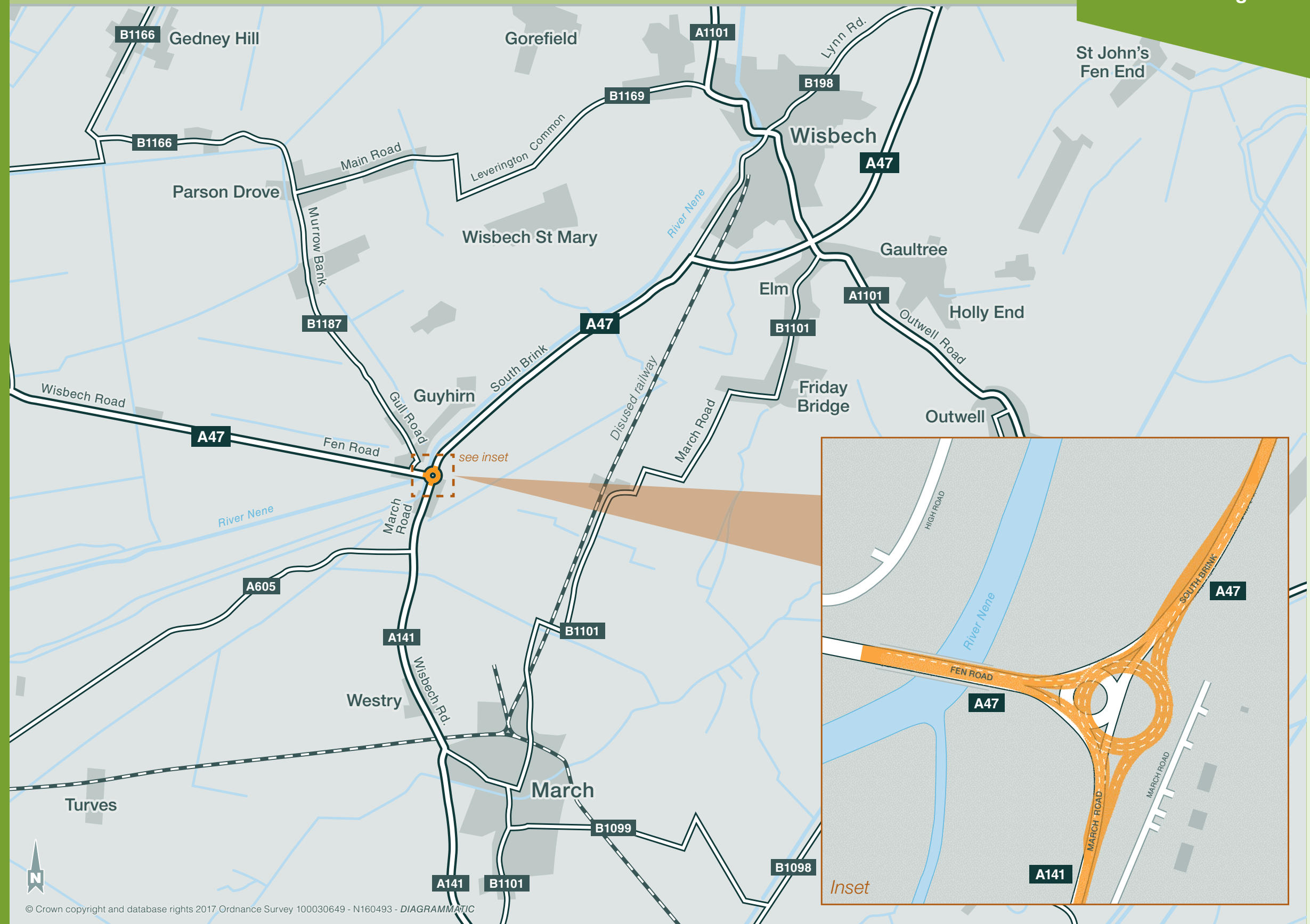
We are therefore putting forward one option for consultation.

Proposed option

Our proposal is to enlarge the junction.

We propose to increase the size of the roundabout and create 3 lanes on all approaches to the junction. We also propose to widen the existing carriageway on the River Nene bridge to accommodate the additional traffic lane.

Proposed option
Junction enlargement



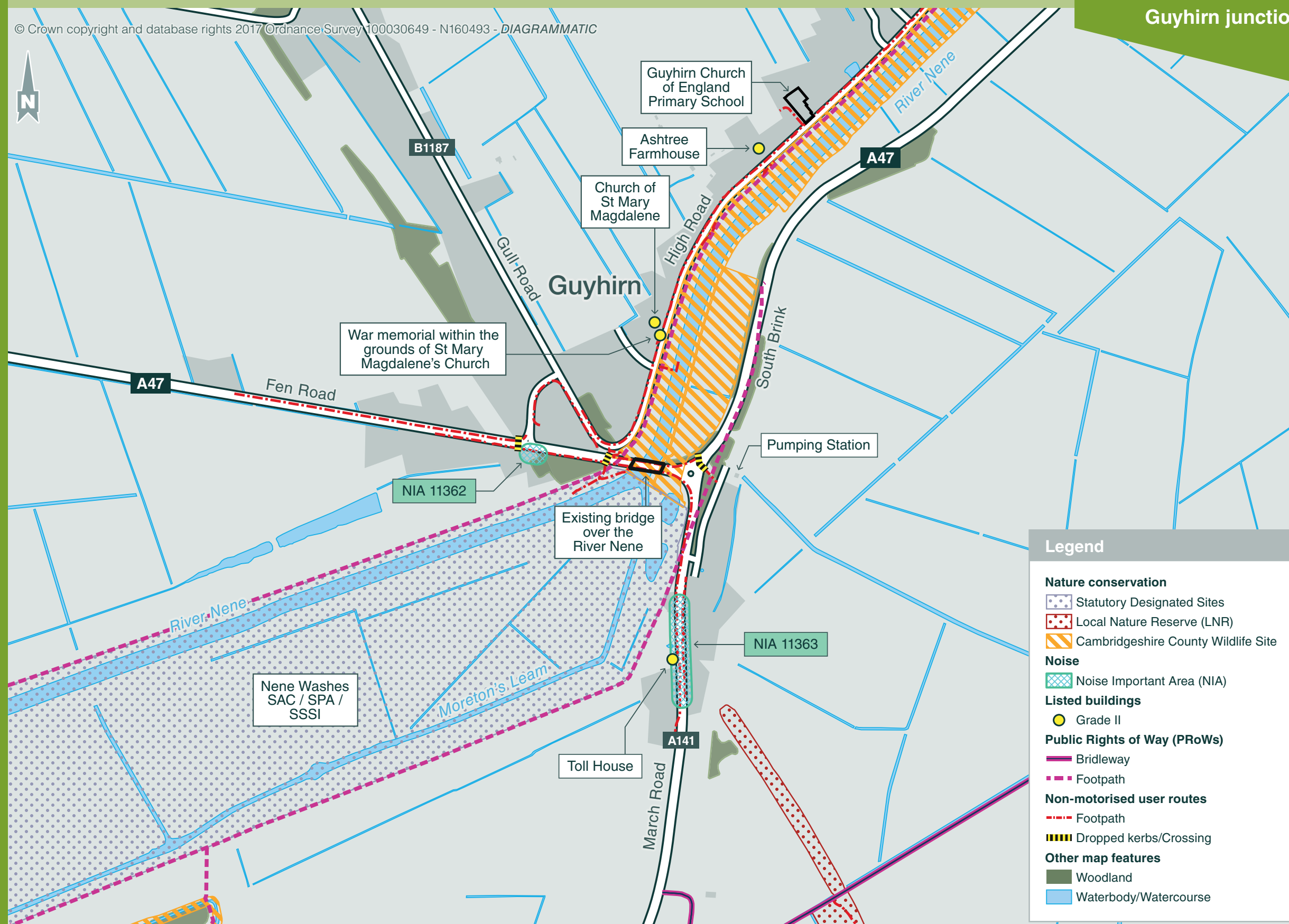
5. Respecting the environment

We will use best practice to safeguard and protect the local environment. We are surveying the local surroundings and the results will be used to decide ways to both reduce any negative effects and contribute towards improving the local environment. We will plan the construction works to minimise effects on the environment.

It is highly likely that we would need to acquire land adjacent to the existing junction to accommodate the improvement.

Please see the environmental constraints plan for details.

Environmental constraints plan Guyhirn junction



Local communities

The public rights of way network will be retained or alternatives provided. Pedestrian/cycle routes and crossings will also be maintained or improved around the existing carriageway or replaced where required.

We will use earth mounds and planting equipment where possible to help screen the junction from nearby properties. We will use modern road lighting to reduce any light pollution, where required.

Landscape

To reduce the visual impact of the scheme, we will plant areas of trees, shrubs and grassland. Where possible, we will use native species that are local to the area.

Wildlife and nature conservation

A key issue for the scheme is the close proximity of the Nene Washes Complex to the site, which has the following environmental designations; Special Area of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Area (SPA), Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Ramsar, RSPB Bird Reserve, Reedbed County Wildlife Site and Lowland Meadows BAP Priority Habitat.

The study area for the scheme includes a range of habitats that support different plant and wildlife species. We are currently carrying out ecological surveys in the area to identify any evidence of protected species, including bats, badgers, water voles, great crested newts, white-clawed crayfish, reptiles and birds.

If we find any evidence of protected species, we will include methods at the design stage to reduce any impacts of the scheme. This work will be carried out in consultation with Natural England and Cambridgeshire Wildlife Trust as well as local interest groups.

The design will allow for habitat replacement and create opportunities for new habitats.

Historic environment

The area contains a variety of features of cultural heritage importance, including listed buildings.

We will include various measures in the scheme design to reduce the impacts on these areas.

Air quality

Our initial assessment shows that there should be no significant changes in air quality for the residential properties in the area. Most residential areas are expected to experience improved air quality as a result of the scheme, due to improved traffic flows.

We will monitor the effects on air quality in the area with the aim of meeting national air quality objectives.

Noise

Our initial noise assessment shows that there should be no significant changes in noise in the built-up areas near the existing junction. We will use low noise road surfacing and the detailed design will include further assessments to determine whether any additional noise mitigation, such as barriers, is required.

We will pay particular attention to the properties nearest to the proposed route.

Water

We will provide appropriate drainage to deal with the surface water from the road. Existing watercourses and groundwater will be protected with balancing ponds, pollution control devices and water treatment features.

Any improvement to the junction would be designed to ensure flood mitigation measures are either maintained or improved.

6. Next steps

Preferred route

This consultation is your opportunity to express your views on the current scheme proposals ahead of further development and will help inform the selection of a preferred option. After the consultation ends, we will publish a report summarising the responses. From this, we will make recommendations for further development of the scheme.

Subject to the findings of the consultation, a preferred route announcement will be made in late 2017 and the pre-application stage of the development consent process will begin.

Development Consent Order application

This scheme is classed as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project under the Planning Act 2008. As such, we are required to make an application for a Development Consent Order in order to obtain permission to construct the scheme. The application will be made to the Planning Inspectorate who will examine the application in public hearings and then make a recommendation to the Secretary of State for Transport who will decide on whether or not the project will go ahead.

We currently intend to make our application by summer 2018. Prior to the application, you will have another opportunity to have your say with a public consultation on our preliminary design proposals.

More information about the Development Consent Order process can be found on the Planning Inspectorate's website:
<http://infrastructure.planningportal.gov.uk>

7. What happens next?

We are at the early stages of this project and there are many stages to come. This includes another opportunity to have your say before a final decision is made.

Your views are important to us. We will consider all responses to this consultation. Your feedback will help inform the decision on the preferred solution.

Below are the key milestones and the steps we plan to take before we start construction:

Summer 2017

We will analyse the consultation responses and undertake additional technical work

Autumn 2017

If there is a compelling case for the scheme and a suitable option is selected, a preferred route will be announced

Autumn 2017

We will engage with communities, land owners and stakeholders on the preferred route and design

Winter 2017/18

Statutory public consultation on the preferred route

Summer 2018

Submit an application for a Development Consent Order (Planning Application)

Winter 2019/20

Decision on the Development Consent Order (estimated)

Construction starts*
(estimated)

*Construction on the A47 corridor improvement is likely to start in spring 2020. We may need to sequence the improvements along the route to manage the disruption to customers and local communities.



8. Share your views

This is the first stage in our consultation process and we would like to know what you think about the proposed option. We will listen to your views and publish a Consultation Report to inform the selection of a preferred option.

Join us at one of our events. Members of our team will be on hand to answer your questions.

Public information events

Venue	Date	Time
Wisbech St Mary Sports and Community Centre	Thursday 16 March	3pm - 8pm
Guyhirn Village Hall	Friday 17 March	10am - 5pm
Wisbech St Mary Sports and Community Centre	Saturday 18 March	10am - 2pm

9. How to respond

Please only respond using one of the following channels, which have been set up for the specific purpose of this consultation:



Online: www.highways.gov.uk/a47Improvement



Email: A47GuyhirnJunctionRIS@highwaysengland.co.uk



Post: You can write to us or post paper copy responses to:
FREEPOST A47 Guyhirn Junction

We cannot accept responsibility for ensuring responses that are sent to addresses other than those described above are included in the consultation process. All responses must include at least your postcode. Please state whether you are responding as an individual or representing the views of an organisation. If responding on behalf of an organisation, please make it clear who the organisation represents and, where applicable, how the views of members were assembled.

The final date we will accept consultation responses will be no later than 11:59pm on Friday 21 April 2017.

For further information about the scheme or this consultation, please call the Highways England Customer Contact Centre on **0300 123 5000**.

Confidentiality and data protection

Information provided in response to this consultation, including personal information, may be subject to publication or disclosure in accordance with the access to information regimes (these are primarily the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA), the Data Protection Act 1998 (DPA) and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004).

If you want any information that you provide to be treated as confidential, please be aware that under the FOIA, there is a statutory Code of Practice with which public authorities must comply and which deals, amongst other things, with obligations of confidence.

For more information about what information can be requested under the FOIA, see:

<https://ico.org.uk/for-the-public/official-information>

Highways England will process your personal data in accordance with the DPA and in the majority of circumstances this will mean that your personal data will not be disclosed to third parties.



If you need help accessing this or any other Highways England information, please call **0300 123 5000** and we will help you.

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This document is also available on our website at www.gov.uk/highways

If you have any enquiries about this publication email info@highwaysengland.co.uk or call **0300 123 5000***. Please quote the Highways England publications code **PR248/17**.

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