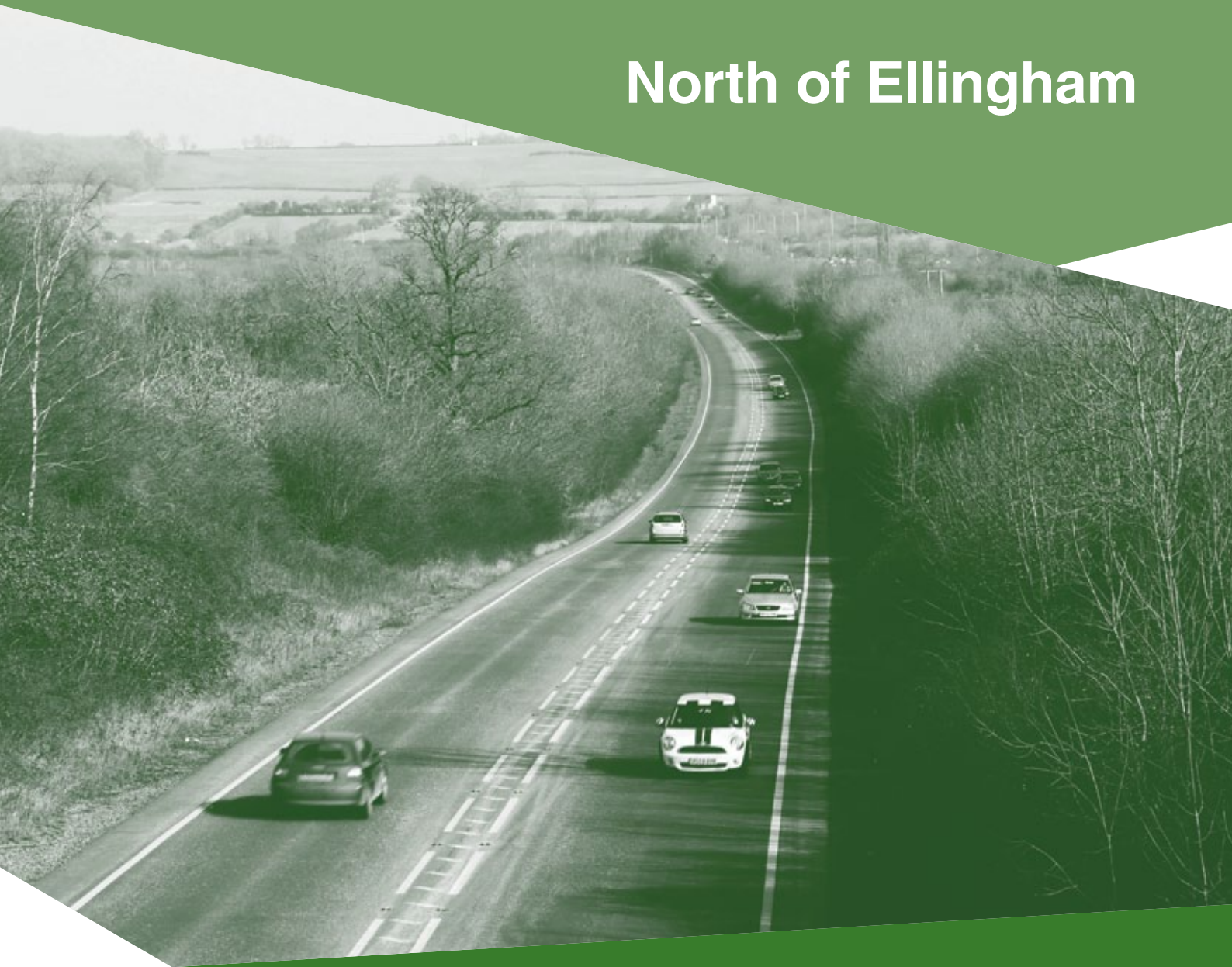


A1

Improving the A1 in Northumberland Public consultation

November – December 2016

North of Ellingham



Improving the A1 in Northumberland

In autumn 2014, the government announced the first Road Investment Strategy, which included a £290 million package to improve the A1 in Northumberland.

The A1 in Northumberland programme of improvements includes:

A1 north of Ellingham improvements

- A set of measures to enhance the performance and safety of the A1 north of Ellingham

These improvements are covered in this booklet.

A1 Morpeth to Ellingham

- 13 miles of upgrade to dual the carriageway linking the Morpeth and Alnwick bypasses with the dual carriageway near Ellingham, to create a continuous, high quality dual carriageway from Newcastle to Ellingham

These improvements are covered in a separate *Morpeth to Ellingham* booklet.

We have been developing the plans for improving the A1 in Northumberland. This includes considering the environmental challenges and identifying the most viable options to improve this nationally important road corridor for all our customers.

We have developed a number of options for improving the A1 north of Ellingham and we would like to know your views.

Your input means a lot to us

We're launching the first public consultation on the shortlisted options. We need to hear your views on the proposed options, as well as views from local communities, local government and businesses.

This is your opportunity to tell us what you think of the proposals, what works, what concerns you may have and give us any local or specialist knowledge that may help us to improve the options. Your feedback will help us to refine the options as we move into the next stage of detailed design.

The consultation will run for six weeks, commencing **14 November 2016** and closing **23 December 2016**.

Please note that the **A1 in Northumberland** was formerly known as the **A1 North of Newcastle** in the Road Investment Strategy.

How to respond

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

- Online: by following the links on:
www.highways.gov.uk/A1inNorthumberland
- Email: you can email your response to:
A1inNorthumberland@highwaysengland.co.uk
- Post: you can post your response and additional material using the freepost envelope provided
- A hard copy questionnaire can be found with this document, or you can download it at:
www.highways.gov.uk/A1inNorthumberland

If a response is sent to any address other than the ones set out above, we cannot accept responsibility for ensuring that it will be considered as part of the consultation process.

All responses should be returned by **23 December 2016**.

Public exhibitions

We're holding public exhibitions to provide information and allow you to ask questions of the project team:

Friday 18 November

12pm – 7pm

Northumberland Hall

Market Place, Alnwick, NE66 1HS

Saturday 19 November

10am – 5pm

Northumberland Hall

Market Place, Alnwick, NE66 1HS

Wednesday 23 November

11am – 7pm

The Maltings

Eastern Lane, Berwick-upon-Tweed,
TD15 1AJ

Thursday 24 November

11am – 6pm

Masonic Centre

Dacre Street, Morpeth, NE61 1HW

Friday 25 November

11am – 7pm

Felton Village Hall

Main Street, Felton, NE65 9NH

Saturday 26 November

10am – 5pm

Bell View

33 West Street, Belford, NE70 7QB

**We look forward to seeing you
at one of the exhibitions**

Part 1: This consultation

We are asking you:

- For your views on the proposed improvements north of Ellingham

The options presented in this booklet have been developed following the public awareness exhibitions in May 2016. Over 500 people attended the events we held and we received written comments from 227 individuals and stakeholders. The most frequent comments are shown below:

You said	What have we done?
Safety concerns at Mousen Bends and elsewhere on the network	An improvement at Mousen Bends is not within the scope of the improvements announced by government in the Road Investment Strategy. However we are considering how your feedback of safety concerns on this and other locations may inform future roads investment.
Start construction of the improvements sooner	It takes time to go through option development and the planning application process and this informs how quickly we can start construction. However, we are continually reviewing the programme and will keep you informed through our website.
What cyclist/pedestrian facilities will be provided?	We have recently conducted surveys to gather pedestrian, cyclist and horse usage data. We will review this data to identify locations for improvements.
Safety at Belford junction	We have listened to the concerns raised by local people about crossing the A1 near Belford and reduced the length of the overtaking lane to reduce the risk of crossing at this location.
Volume of traffic on the A697	Our analysis suggests that the improvements to the A1 will make it a more attractive north-south route for road users and should attract traffic from the A697 and other local roads.
Dual the whole A1	The proposed dual carriageway upgrade will provide a consistent dual carriageway as far as Ellingham. This section of the route is the most heavily trafficked. Full dualling was considered in 2014 but the assessment showed it offered low value for money.

Part 2: A1 in Northumberland – today and in the future

Scheme history

The A1 is one of the longest roads in the country, connecting London to Newcastle and Edinburgh. The route currently consists of motorway standard and dual carriageway standard, with some single carriageway sections running between Morpeth and Ellingham and north of Ellingham to Berwick.

In Northumberland the A1 runs through an extensive rural landscape, close to the Northumberland coastline. This section of the A1 is used by a wide variety of roads users for many different reasons. From business users travelling long distance between Newcastle and Edinburgh, local traffic accessing rural areas, where there is no public transport and tourists who come to visit the many historic attractions and coastline.

Over the last decade there have been significant upgrades to the A1 south of Newcastle, with many sections upgraded to motorway standard, and there are further plans to improve the section of the A1 around Newcastle itself.

There have been long standing calls to government from key stakeholders and businesses to progress plans to improve the A1 in Northumberland.

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 route.

The following problems were identified:

- Drivers face a lack of alternative routes for their journeys
- Varying carriageway standards on the route, this can lead to confusion for long distance drivers
- Poor junction standards and layout – there are many different types of junctions along the route which can be confusing for those who are not familiar with the route
- A large number of junctions and private accesses, resulting in delays and potential accidents when vehicles exit or enter the main carriageway
- Average traffic speeds on the single carriageway sections of the route are significantly lower than sections that have been upgraded to dual carriageway
- A high proportion of heavy goods and agricultural vehicles north of Alnwick resulting in reduced speeds for following vehicles
- Lack of overtaking opportunities on single carriageway sections of the route which slows down traffic; and peak-hour traffic speeds are significantly slower than when traffic is free flowing

The A1 in Northumberland scheme is designed to address these issues and so improve the safety and speed of journeys along the route.

Regional benefits

We're designing this improvement scheme to deliver benefits for road users and local communities, and to support the region's economy. This package of improvements is expected to:

- Improve safety by improving the standard of the road; and reduce delays associated with planned and unplanned incidents
- Improve journey times
- Improve journey time reliability and resilience of the network
- Increase capacity on the A1 which will allow traffic to travel at a more desirable speed
- Allow traffic to overtake slow moving vehicles

The combined programme of improvements will provide additional capacity on the A1 and improve overall journey times on this route of strategic national importance. This will enable greater access to Northumberland, and surrounding economic centres, and tourist destinations therefore supporting economic growth and the development aspirations of the region.

Progress so far

Design

We have developed initial designs for dualling options, and for planned improvements north of Ellingham. These designs were reviewed following the public awareness exhibitions in May to incorporate appropriate changes from the comments received.

Traffic

We gathered traffic data in 2015 to identify the number and types of vehicles using the route at different times of the day. This data has been incorporated into our traffic assessment model, and helps us understand what impact the options would have on the volume and movement of traffic in the future. The assessment also helps us to predict journey time savings and safety benefits.

Ground conditions

Ground conditions can have a big influence on construction costs. Therefore, we've carried out a study to identify any known ground issues in the local area. Surveys will be required in the future to check the ground conditions, and the results will be used to inform further development of the planned improvements.

Communicating with local government

We have been working with Northumberland County Council to develop the plans for improving the A1, in order to try and align our proposals with the development aspirations of the region.

Environment

Our environmental team have carried out a preliminary environmental study to determine the potential for each of the north of Ellingham proposals to cause significant environmental impacts, taking account of a range of environmental topics. In most respects, because the proposals are very small scale in nature, there is little chance of such effects taking place. Where any uncertainty remains, additional environmental assessment work is being undertaken during the current phase of work.

We have also carried out extensive surveys of pedestrian, cyclist and horse rider traffic using the rights of way and side roads intersecting the A1 in the vicinity of the proposed works. These will help us gauge the effects of the options on vulnerable users and design facilities for them.

Part 3: North of Ellingham enhancement options

The A1 north of Ellingham runs 19.6 miles from the Ellingham dual carriageway to A1/A1167 roundabout to the south-west of Berwick-upon-Tweed.

The main communities along this section of the A1 are Warenford, Belford and Fenwick, and it also provides access to the tourist attractions of Holy Island and Bamburgh Castle.

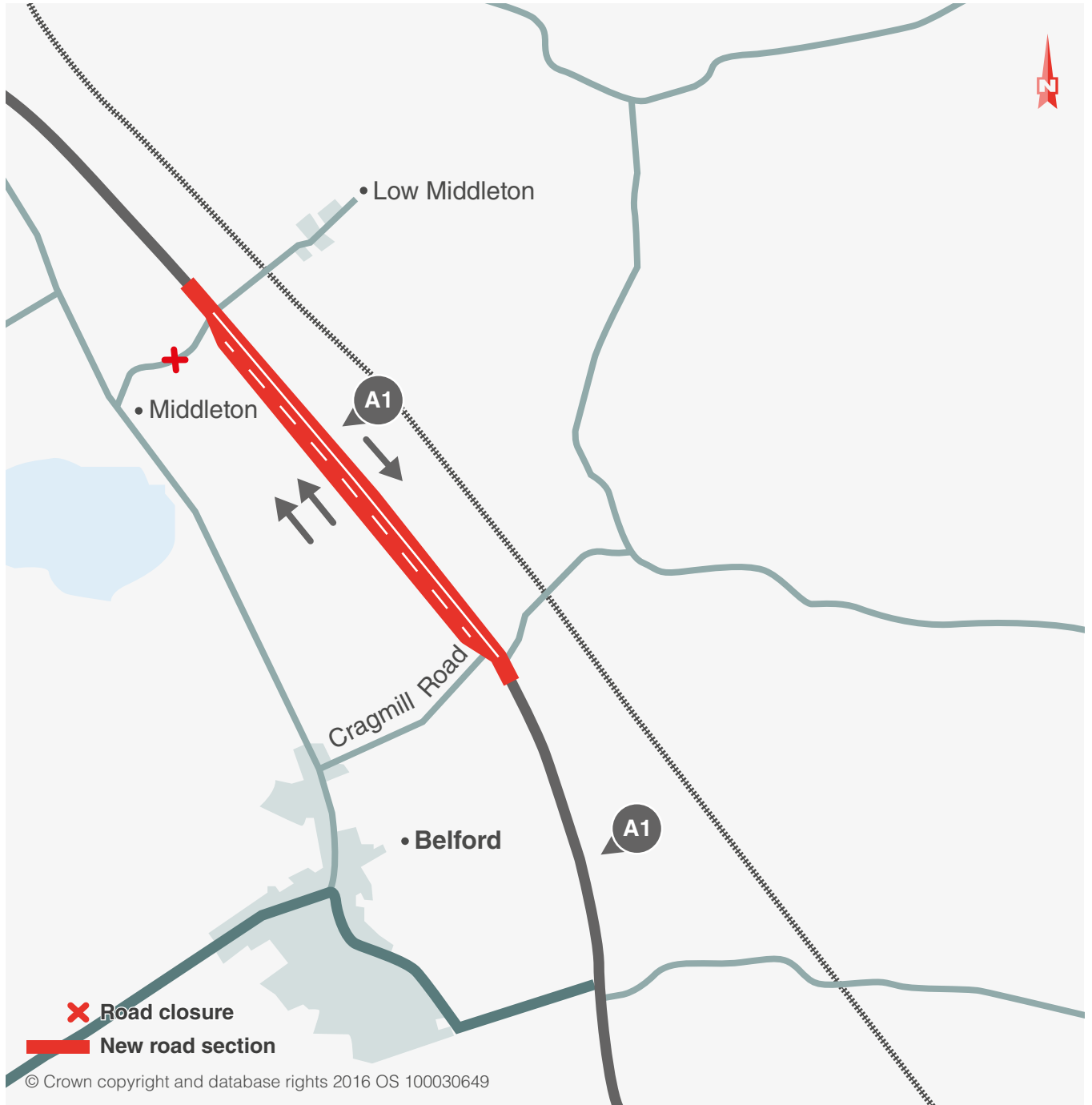
The road itself is varied with some newer, straighter sections and also older sections with narrow verges and low visibility of traffic on the road or waiting to join the A1. There are many junctions with minor roads and also private and farm accesses, many of these have poor visibility which increases the risk of accidents. The main junctions along this section of the A1 are at Purdy Lodge (B1341), at Pillars/Bellshill (B6348), at Belford (B6349 and B1342), at Fenwick (B6353) and at Wooler road (B6525).

A number of options were developed for this section, a full summary of these can be found in the *Assessment Summary Report*, which has been published as part of this consultation as a supporting document and can be found online at www.highways.gov.uk/A1inNorthumberland

Our proposed improvements are described in the following pages. Some land take will be required to make these improvements, but most of the work will take place within the existing highway boundary.

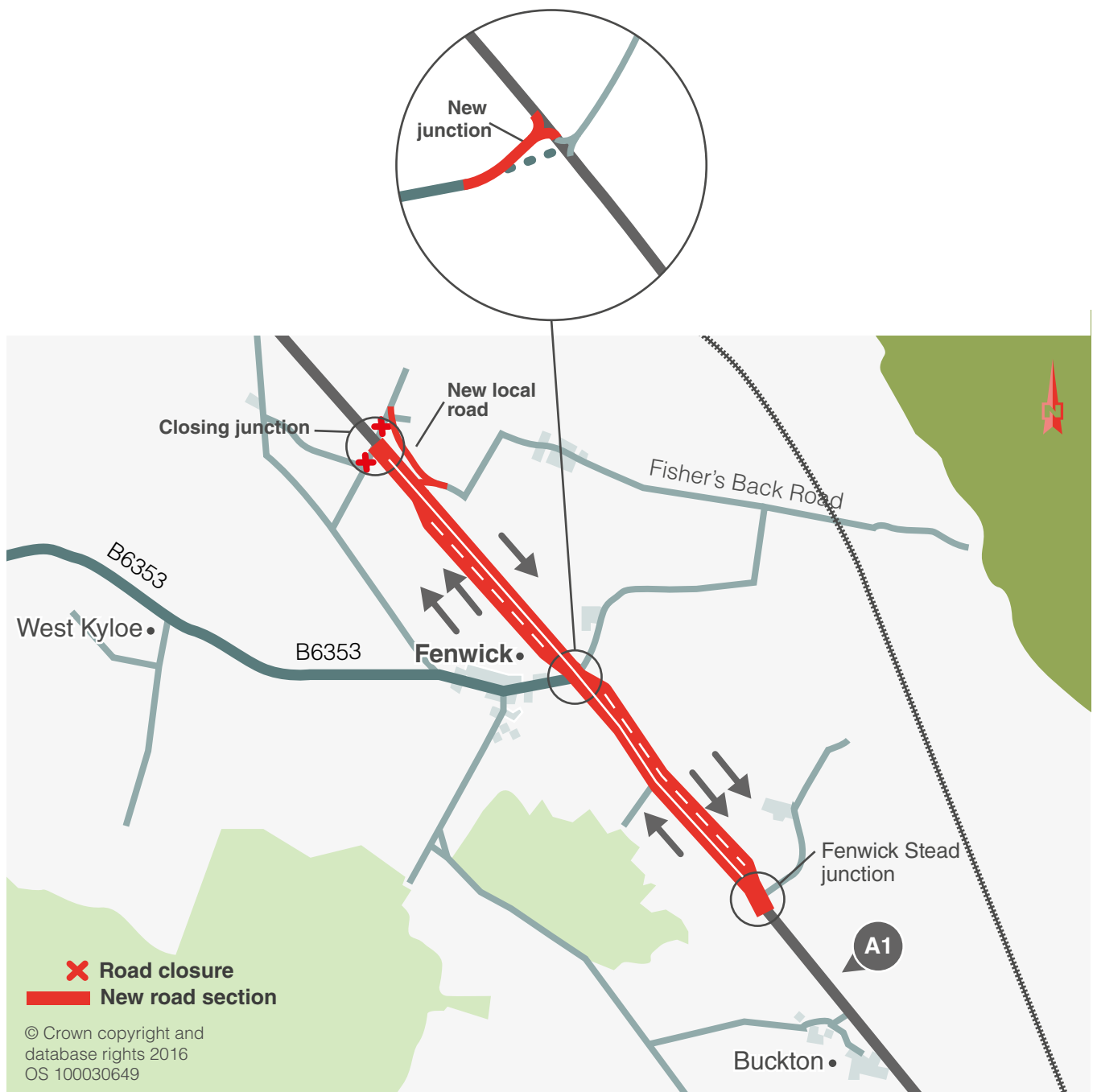
Middleton overtaking lane from Cragmill junction to Middleton

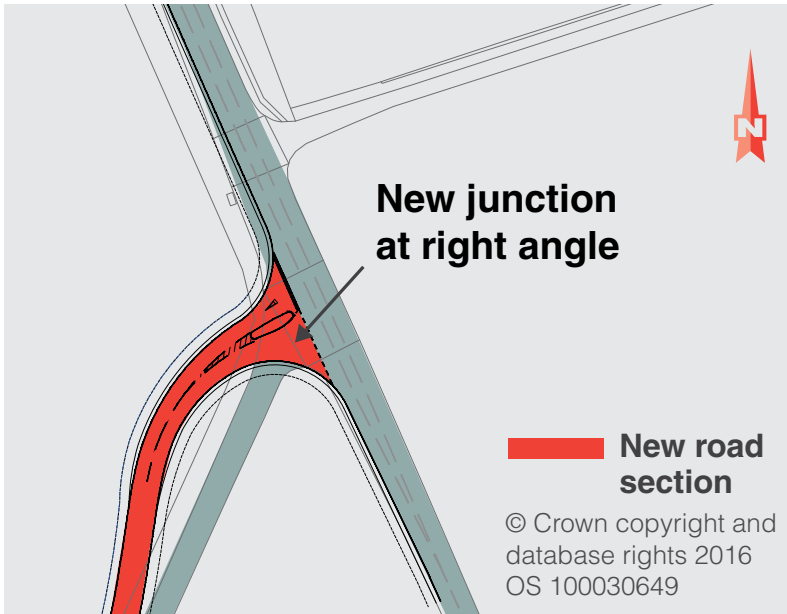
This will provide an additional lane northbound between Cragmill junction and Low Middleton to allow overtaking. The minor road towards Middleton would be closed off.



Fenwick overtaking lane between Fenwick Stead and Fisher's Back Road

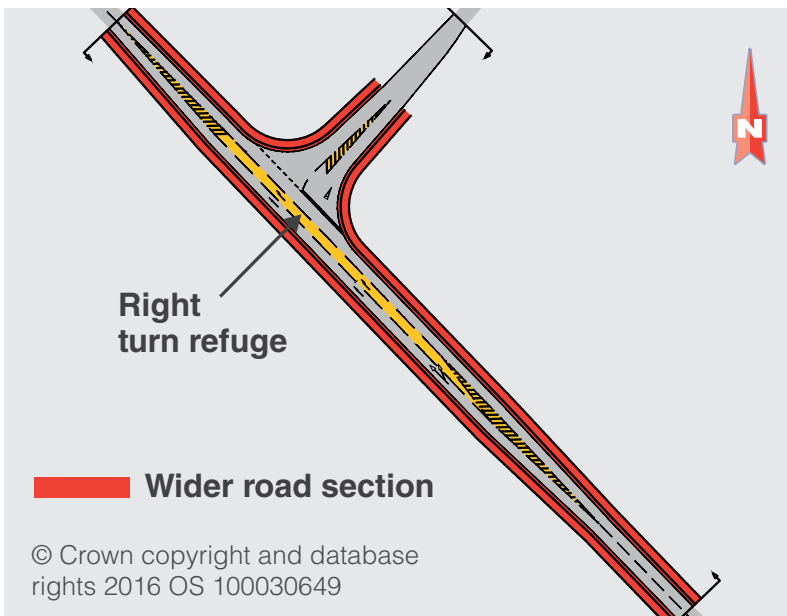
This option will provide an additional lane northbound between Fenwick and Fisher's Back Road, and southbound between Fenwick and Fenwick Stead. There would be clear markings separating the two overtaking sections. The junction immediately to the north of Fisher's Back Road will be closed with an access road provided for properties located to the east of the existing A1. The junction at Fenwick would be upgraded to provide a staggered junction.





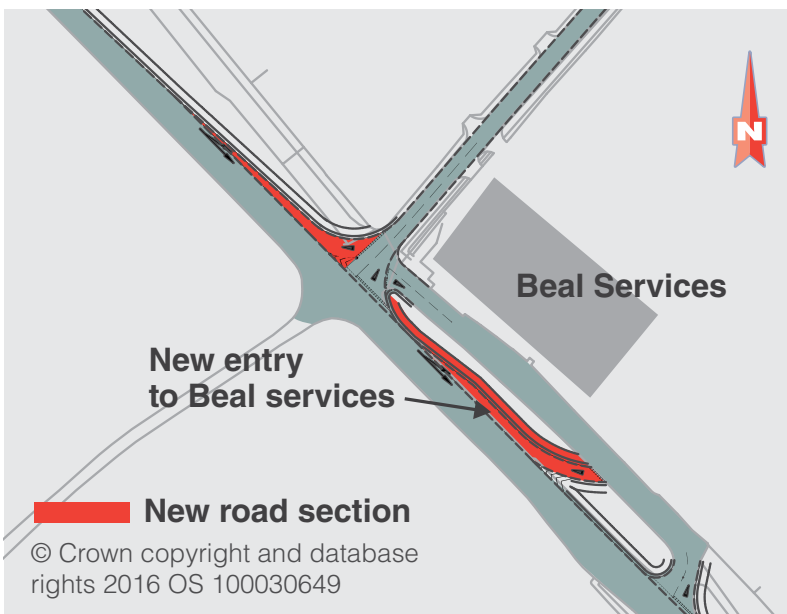
Improvement to Wooler road junction

We will realign the junction so that Wooler road meets the A1 at a right angle, this will increase visibility for those waiting to join the A1 and so reduce accidents. The bus stop would be moved slightly north and we would provide a new pedestrian crossing island to help cross the A1.



Improvement to Cheswick junction

We will provide a marked right turn refuge and realign the carriageway to allow northbound traffic to pass those waiting to turn into Cheswick. We will widen the entrance to the Cheswick road to provide separate left and right turn lanes for those waiting to join the A1. This will also allow us to provide an easier left turn into the Cheswick road from the southbound A1, which means traffic on the southbound A1 will not need to slow so much behind traffic turning left.



Improvement to West Mains junction

This improvement would address safety and the flow of traffic on the A1 by creating a new entry to Beal Services, which will help to improve movement of traffic for road users accessing the services and those leaving Holy Island during busy times.

Benefits and effects of the proposed options

In assessing the benefits and effects of the proposed options, we look at a variety of topics including: environmental features, traffic flows and movements, how the improvements could be constructed, cost, budget, time and safety benefits, land take and the effect on communities.

This consultation is taking place at an early stage in the overall project, and so this information is still being developed as we undertake further surveys and assessments. It is worth noting that environmental impacts are assessed based on national guidance.

The table below describes the key findings for the proposed improvement options:

Feature	North of Ellingham improvements
Air quality	The improvements north of Ellingham are designed to offer improved safety including safer overtaking provisions. As a result, we currently don't predict an impact on air quality .
Cultural heritage	The junction improvement at West Mains takes place within the existing highway boundaries and therefore no impact on cultural heritage is anticipated. At Wooler and Cheswick there is a small amount of land required to improve the junctions and the overtaking lanes will involve widening along the existing carriageway. Potentially there may be some impact on cultural heritage in these areas.
Landscape	The junction improvement at West Mains takes place within the existing highway boundaries and therefore no impact on landscape is anticipated. The junction improvements at Wooler and Cheswick will require a small amount of land take and so may have a slight impact on landscape. The overtaking lanes will involve widening along the existing carriageway and there may be some impact on landscape.
Nature conservation	The junction improvement at West Mains takes place within the existing highway boundaries and therefore no impact on nature conservation is anticipated. The junction improvements at Wooler and Cheswick will require small scale land take and the overtaking lanes will involve widening along the existing carriageway, due to this there may be some impact on habitats and nature conservation. If this is the case, mitigation of the impacts will be included in the design.
Geology and soils	Because the improvements largely take place within the existing highway boundaries there is little loss of Grade 3 agricultural land.
Noise and vibration	The improvements north of Ellingham are designed to offer improved safety including safer overtaking provisions. As a result, there may be a slight increase in noise, due to increased speed. However there will be few areas where this noise will be experienced.

Feature	North of Ellingham improvements
Safety and effects on all travellers	At present, there are limited overtaking opportunities between Ellingham and Berwick-upon-Tweed. This can cause frustration for drivers wanting to pass slower moving vehicles. Providing overtaking sections will help address this. The inclusion of the right-turning refuges will also reduce queuing at junctions on the A1. The improvements north of Ellingham are designed to improve safety and reduce journey times.
Community and private assets, including land take	The junction improvement at West Mains takes place within the existing highway boundaries and therefore does not require any land take, there is a very small amount of additional land needed at Cheswick and Wooler junctions. The overtaking lanes will involve widening along the existing carriageway and therefore will require some land, we are in touch with landowners who may be potentially affected to discuss this.
Road drainage and the water environment	All the improvements north of Ellingham will take place either within the existing road drainage design or as small additions to the drainage systems. There should be little additional water to drain and therefore no anticipated impact on the water environment.
Construction duration	We expect to start construction in 2018. Construction is phased with each junction and overtaking lane section taking place separately.
Construction costs	The scheme costs vary between £0.8m and £1.5m for the junction improvements and around £8.8m for Cragmill to Middleton overtaking lanes and £10.4m for the Fenwick Stead to Fisher's Back Road overtaking lane.

Further information

If you would like further information about the options we have considered and the assessments we have completed, the *Assessment Summary Report* will be available on the scheme website at the following link, www.highways.gov.uk/A1inNorthumberland.

Alternatively, please come and speak to a member of the project team at the exhibitions and we will be happy to help you.

What happens next?

Once the consultation has closed on 23 December 2016, all responses will be analysed and compiled into a consultation report for consideration by our technical teams. Our technical teams will consider the feedback and undertake design refinements where practicable.

Your feedback will help to inform development of the options as we move into the detailed design stage and completion of statutory procedures where relevant.

How you can be involved in the planning process?

This consultation is your opportunity to tell us what you think about the proposed improvements north of Ellingham.

Following this we will be going through the statutory processes from 2017 onwards with the aim to start construction in 2018. We are currently planning to phase these works to minimise disruption to road users.

Most of the improvement works north of Ellingham require small pieces of land to allow the changes and we are talking with the relevant landowners about the land we need. There are statutory processes which we will need to follow and these take time to complete.

We will engage with local people and stakeholders in the area as we develop these improvements. For those registered, we will keep you updated via our newsletter and email updates.

Keeping in touch

Our website is updated as the scheme progresses and will always have the latest news about the project. You can find it at: www.highways.gov.uk/A1inNorthumberland

We will produce a regular newsletter to keep you informed about progress on the project, including details of what's happening next. These newsletters will be available on our website, in local places and will also be emailed to all those who register with us to receive them. If you would like

to receive an email copy of our newsletter, please send us your details. Or, you can hand them in at the exhibitions via our questionnaire feedback form.

You can sign up to receive email alerts as they are made via our web page:

www.highways.gov.uk/A1inNorthumberland

If you have any queries about this improvement scheme please contact the project team directly at **0300 470 4585**. Alternatively, you can email: A1inNorthumberland@highwaysengland.co.uk

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

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