

A1

Scotswood to North Brunton
Public Information Exhibition
Executive Summary

Introduction

The A1 Scotswood to North Brunton scheme is proposed on the A1 Newcastle Gateshead Western Bypass (NGWB) between junction 74 (Scotswood) and junction 79 (North Brunton).

The scheme will provide widening, to three narrower lanes between junction 74 (Scotswood) and 78 (Kingston Park) and three full width lanes between junction 78 (Kingston Park) and 79. (North Brunton). The widening will be within the existing highways boundary and all the existing structures are to be retained. The proposed speed limit is 50mph between junction 74 and junction 78 and to remain as 70mph between junction 78 and junction 79.

During our recent Public Information Exhibitions (PIEs), that ran from 28 June to 31 August 2017, we asked for views on Option 2 (the proposed scheme) as well as presenting a previously discounted option (Option 1 - standard lane widening).

Our PIEs ended in August and we want to thank everyone for their feedback which is now being taken into consideration in the scheme design.

We're designing this improvement scheme to deliver greater benefits for road users, local communities, and to support the region's economy.

Once completed the scheme will;

- **Support economic growth** – The scheme, through providing additional capacity, supports a number of housing developments that are in close proximity to the A1 and would use this section of road to access the surrounding areas.
- **Support the movement of goods and access to transport hubs** – Maintain and enhance the role of a key national route to facilitate the movement of goods and access to transport hubs supporting the government's initiative for growth in the North-East.
- **Provide a more accessible free flowing and integrated network** – Through an increase in capacity the scheme will reduce delays and accidents, improve journey times and reliability. The provision of additional lanes improves resilience of the network when incidents do occur and we will work with stakeholders to facilitate other modes of transport and enable safe movement across and alongside our network.
- **Provide a safe and serviceable network** – The scheme is designed to increase capacity and thereby reduce delays, the impact of weaving and safety issues. Furthermore, operating at a reduced speed of 50mph may reduce the severity and frequency of accidents.
- **Provide an improved environment** – We will work to ensure our activities enable a long term and sustainable benefit to the environment.

Public Information Exhibitions

Our engagement period for the scheme commenced on 28 June 2017 and concluded on 31 August 2017.

During this time we held 10 PIEs and residents, businesses and other stakeholders with an interest in the scheme were consulted. We provided an overview of the proposed scheme and its benefits; outlined the proposed option and discounted option and provided information on the next steps. It also provided us with an opportunity to hear feedback from our customers on the proposals.

In order to inform local residents, businesses and key stakeholders of the events the following activities were undertaken:

- A flyer was issued to almost 72,000 residents, to the East and West of the A1, to advise them of when, where and why the exhibitions are taking place.
- Local MPs and Councillors were also sent the flyer via email.
- Posters were displayed in local libraries and community centres.
- A press notice advertising the exhibitions was released to the local media in Newcastle and the wider region and press interviews were undertaken with BBC Radio Newcastle and the Newcastle Chronicle.
- The Highways England Twitter account was used to notify followers of the exhibitions and the scheme webpage was regularly updated; residents were advised to subscribe to email alerts and keep informed of the latest developments.

Birchfield Gardens

These exhibitions were used to provide an update on the development of the design for Birchfield Gardens access road at junction 75. This access road is an exit point from the Dumpling Hall estate which joins on to junction 75 slip road coming off of the A1 northbound.

In 2016 there had been early indications that introducing an extra lane on the A1 at this location may result in a safety risk. Following feedback received from the public at exhibitions held in the Lemington Ward, between May and October 2016, on the proposed closure, detailed work has been undertaken to assess options to keep the access open. During the events in July and August 2017 we presented a number of options for the Birchfield Gardens access, including closure.

Following further assessment of the options which has included their operation, safety and impact on the local network, we have concluded that we are able to keep Birchfield Gardens access road open and this will form part of the design moving forwards.

This news was communicated to local MPs and Councillors as well as Lemington residents on 02 December 2017 at a drop-in-event held at Lemington Resource Centre.

Responses

The July and August 2017 PIEs were attended by 750 members of the public over 10 days and 272 questionnaire responses were received by Highways England.

73% agreed or strongly agreed with the need for improvement on the A1 between Scotswood and North Brunton, while only 15% disagreed or strongly disagreed. The majority (58%) of the respondents expressed that they support the proposed improvement option for the A1 between Scotswood and North Brunton.

19% of responses were in relation to the potential impacts on the Birchfield Gardens access road. However following this feedback, and as detailed above, this access will remain open as part of the scheme design going forward.

Feedback varied however reoccurring themes included:

- Narrower lanes
- Higher noise and air quality levels due to the increased capacity of the A1
- Retention of trees and vegetation
- Disruption during construction

As we progress the development of the scheme we will undertake further noise and air quality modelling, and develop mitigation measures to address potential effects due to construction or operation of the scheme. We will also focus on minimising the need for tree and vegetation clearance, where possible.

The scheme involves widening within the existing highways boundary and no additional land take is proposed. We will develop fully detailed plans on how we intend to construct the scheme whilst minimising disruption to the local community and road users. We will look closely at lessons learned from the recently constructed A1 Coal House to Metro Centre scheme, which also utilised narrower lanes. We will reduce the speed limit from 70 mph to 50mph between junctions 74 and 78 which should benefit traffic flow, road safety, noise and air quality.

Conclusions and Next Steps

Public engagement has been undertaken with the community, local Councillors and MPs, businesses and Newcastle City Council. The level of engagement undertaken has resulted in a range of feedback and comments all of which have been collated and where practicable, have been considered within the proposals in order to produce a scheme that will provide the most beneficial outcome for the region and our customers.

Since we held our exhibitions in July and August 2017 we have undertaken further ecology surveys to better understand the local habitats, including bat, badger and red squirrels. We are also currently undertaking traffic, noise, water, and air quality assessments which will help us to understand the environmental impacts of the scheme, including how the local air quality levels will be affected.

Over the coming months, our team of specialists will carry out further surveys, geo-physical investigations and drainage inspections so that we can design the scheme in more detail. If we need access to your land for any of these surveys we will contact you in advance and we aim keep disruption to a minimum.

We will hold further PIEs in 2018 to share the latest information on the scheme with you and listen to your feedback. We will also be continuing to meet with key stakeholders to develop our proposals.

Keep in touch

If you want further information on this scheme please contact a member of the Highways England Project Team using any of the following methods:

In writing: A1 Scotswood to North Brunton Project Team, Highways England, Third floor South, Lateral, 8 City Walk, Leeds, LS11 9AT

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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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