

A19 Downhill Lane junction improvement scheme



Introduction

Highways England is a government run company. We are responsible for the operation, maintenance and improvements to England's motorways and major A roads. This includes delivery of the government's Road Investment Strategy (RIS) commitments, published in 2014 by the Department for Transport.

The RIS outlines how the government plans to invest in the Strategic Road Network (motorways and major A roads) in England over the next 5 years. The RIS made a commitment to make improvements to both the A19/A184 Testos junction and the A19 Downhill Lane junction. A preferred route announcement was made in June 2014 for the Testos junction, and statutory consultation has been undertaken on this scheme. An update on the Testos scheme is provided in Section 2 of this brochure.

This consultation brochure is in relation to proposed improvements to the A19 Downhill Lane junction. The improvements are required to increase capacity at the junction, facilitate access to the planned International Advanced Manufacturing Park (IAMP) whilst improving safety and minimising environmental impacts. This brochure explains the proposals that we are considering and how you can have your say.



Consultation

Section 1: Consultation

Section 2: Need for improvement

Section 3: The proposed option

Section 4: Discounted options

Section 5: Next steps

We would like to hear the views of local communities, government and businesses on our proposals. The consultation will help us refine our proposals to enable us to take the scheme forward to the next stage of design.

This is your opportunity to tell us what you think of the scheme, what works, what concerns you may have, and any local or specialist knowledge that may help us to improve the design.

The consultation will run for 7 weeks, commencing 21 November 2016 and closing at 23:59 on 6 January 2017.

We will also be holding two public exhibitions. We would like you to come along to discuss the proposals in more detail with our project team. If you are not able to attend these events, please complete the questionnaire included with this brochure or online at www.highways.gov.uk/a19-testos-downhill-lane

How to respond

You can 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/a19-testos-downhill-lane

Email: your response to: a19testosjunctionimp@highwaysengland.co.uk

Post: your response and additional material using the free-post envelope provided.
A19 Testos and Downhill Lane team, Lateral, 8 City Walk, Leeds, LS11 9AT

A hard copy response form can be found in this document, or you can download a response form at: www.highways.gov.uk/a19-testos-downhill-lane

Further details about the IAMP development can be found at the following link: www.iampnortheast.com

All responses should be returned by 6 January 2017

Public exhibitions

The public information exhibitions are being held as follows:

Friday, 2 December

12pm – 6pm

Bunny Hill Library and Customer Service Centre
Hylton Lane, Sunderland, SR5 4BW

Saturday, 3 December

10am - 2pm

The Quadrus Centre
Boldon Business Park, Woodstock Way, Boldon Colliery, NE35 9PF

We are asking for your feedback on the proposed improvements to the A19 Downhill Lane junction and want to provide an opportunity for you to find out more.

Need for improvement

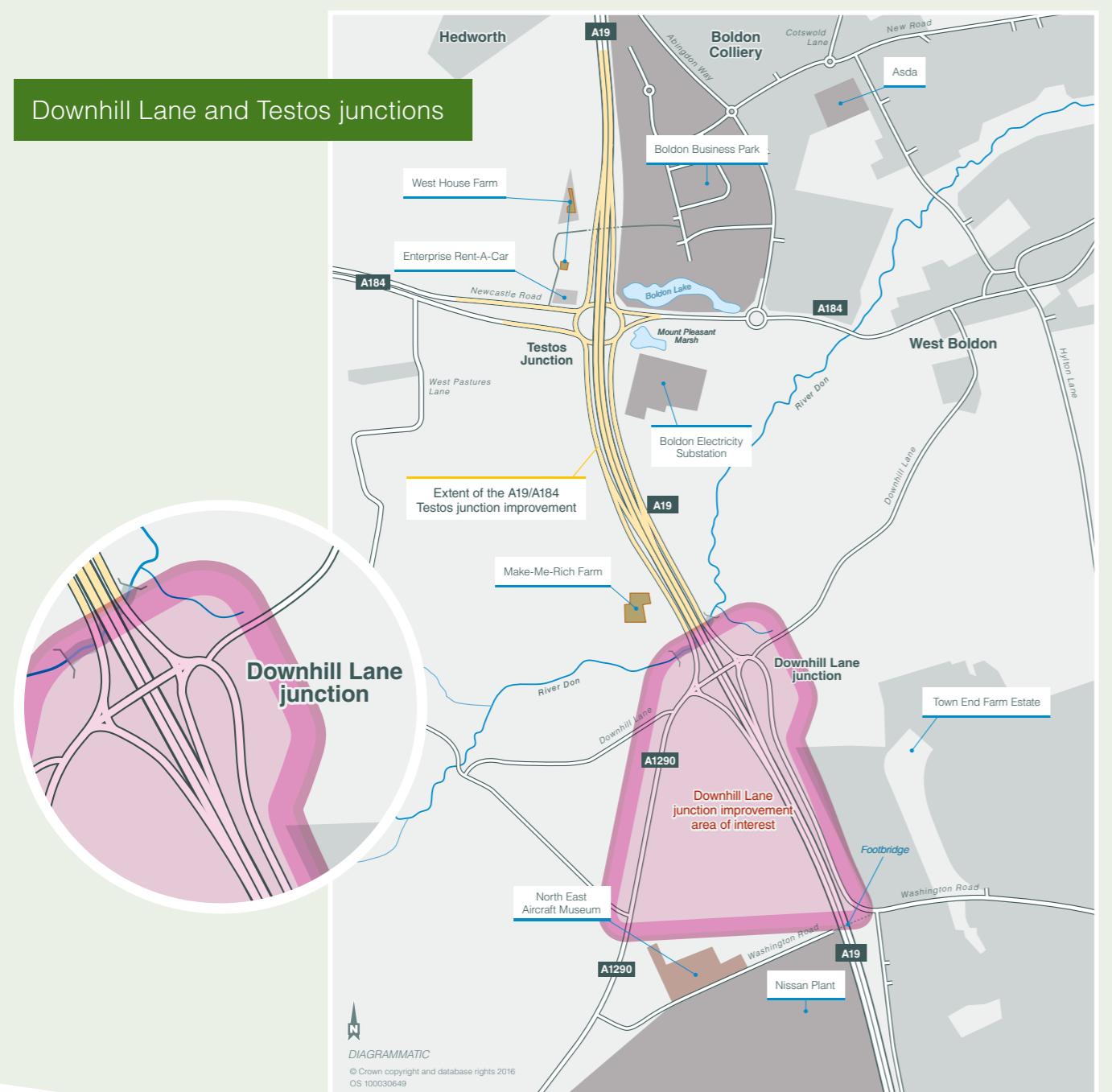
Section

2

The A19 is a major route running from Doncaster to the north of Newcastle. It is the main route linking Tyne and Wear with Teesside to the south, and to the north of England via the A1.

The Downhill Lane junction is located just over 5km south of the Tyne Tunnel and approximately 1.1km south of the Testos junction. It forms the junction between the A19 and the A1290, which is one of the main access routes for the Nissan car plant, and Washington Road, which runs into north Sunderland.

South Tyneside and Sunderland Councils are planning the development of the International Advanced Manufacturing Park (IAMP) within land to the west of the A19 and north of the Nissan plant. It is planned that access to the IAMP will also be from the Downhill Lane junction.



Why are we improving Downhill Lane junction?

Future developments on the land to the north of the Nissan plant are likely to significantly increase the amount of traffic using Downhill Lane junction. The current capacity of the junction would not be sufficient for the anticipated additional traffic and would therefore affect the A19 and local roads.

We need to make sure that the junction is able to cope with increased vehicle numbers. The proposed improvements at Downhill Lane junction would increase its capacity, reduce journey times and improve road user safety. The improvements will support new growth in the area by allowing better access to the proposed IAMP and the Nissan plant from the A19, as well as complementing the proposed improvements at Testos.

Regional and local benefits

The scheme is being designed with the following key objectives in mind:

Supporting economic growth

This will be achieved by improving the attractiveness of the area for the IAMP and other prospective developers and businesses by improving road access. The scheme will help connect key employment sites, schools, colleges and residential areas, thereby delivering major benefits.

A safe and serviceable network

The scheme aims to reduce accidents, provide safer crossings for non-motorists and improve journey time reliability, leading to a reduction in driver stress.

A more free-flowing network

The traffic model used to develop the scheme predicts that road users travelling through the junction will benefit significantly from reduced journey times as a result of the proposal.

Improved environment

The environmental effects resulting from the scheme have been considered during the options identification stage. Measures to mitigate potential effects on the local environment and opportunities to provide enhancements will be further developed as the design progresses.

An accessible and integrated network

The proposed scheme will provide improved connectivity with the local road network. We are investigating ways to maintain existing facilities for pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders and to provide enhancements where possible. We will continue to work with the local access forum and user groups to develop our proposals.

What have we done to date?

We made the decision in 2015 to develop the Testos and Downhill Lane junction improvements together to minimise disruption to road users and provide cost efficiencies. This meant that we needed to identify options for improving Downhill Lane junction and review the preferred route option for Testos junction to understand what effect the changes at Downhill Lane junction might present.

The first part of this process involved identifying possible options for improvements at Downhill Lane junction. We considered all options and 6 were taken through a more detailed environmental assessment and technical appraisal. The results are reported in our Environmental Assessment Report (EAR) and Technical Appraisal Report (TAR). It is worth noting that environmental impacts are assessed based on national guidance and copies of the full TAR and EAR can be found on our website: www.highways.gov.uk/a19-testos-downhill-lane. In assessing the benefits and effects of improvement options, we have looked at a variety of topics including: environmental features, traffic forecasts, traffic movements, how it could

be constructed, value for money, cost and budget, required land take and the effect on communities. We have also considered the effect on the Testos scheme, including whether the Downhill Lane junction proposals would require major changes

This consultation is taking place at an early stage in the overall project, and information is still being gathered as we undertake more surveys and assessments. This information and the feedback received from the consultation will be used during the design development.

We will continue to engage with South Tyneside and Sunderland Councils, Nissan and the IAMP development team to ensure a joined up approach.

Testos junction update

We are planning to deliver the Testos and Downhill Lane junction improvements together to minimise disruption to road users. To achieve our delivery plan commitments, this approach requires two phased applications for development consent. We will issue more information on Testos junction in early 2017 ahead of an application for development consent later that year.

to the Testos design, resulting in additional work, cost and delays to delivering the improvements.

Our appraisal identified that one of the 6 options, now referred to as Option A, should be progressed further and presented as our preferred option for public consultation.



A19 Downhill Lane improvement scheme

Public consultation questionnaire

Please tell us your views by completing this questionnaire.

If you're returning this to us by post, please follow the folding instructions on the back page of the questionnaire and pop it in the post.

Please submit your completed questionnaire by 6 January 2017.

Please provide us with your name and address. If you'd prefer for your comments to be anonymous, please just provide your postcode.

Name:

Address:

Postcode:

If you want to be kept informed by email about the project please give us your email address below:

If you are responding on behalf of an organisation, please tell us the name of the organisation and your role in it:

Name of organisation:

Your role in the organisation:

Please tell us how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements by ticking the relevant box:

1. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the need for improvements on the A19 Downhill Lane junction.

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree

2. I support the proposed improvement option for A19 Downhill Lane junction.

Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree

Please provide more details below on why you are in support, or not in support, of this option.

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

3. How you use the A19 Downhill Lane junction

How do you normally travel on the A19 Downhill Lane junction? tick all that apply

Car/van HGV Bus Motorcycle On foot Bicycle On a horse I don't use this junction

Other (please state)

4. What is your relationship to A19 Downhill Lane and the surrounding area (tick all that apply)?:

- I live in the local area and use the A19 Downhill Lane junction to get to/from home
 I work in the local area and use the A19 at Downhill Lane junction to get to/from work
 I use the A19 at Downhill Lane junction to get to local leisure facilities
 I use the A19 at Downhill Lane junction to travel through Tyne and Wear, for example between Newcastle and Sunderland

Other (please state)

5. How often do you use this junction?

Daily More than once a week Weekly
 More than once a month Monthly Less than once a month

6. The consultation events

- i. Did you attend a public exhibition? Yes No

- ii. How did you hear about this consultation?

a. Website

b. Consultation brochure through post

c. Consultation brochure at public viewing point

d. Newspaper article

e. other (please state)

This section is optional but we'd be grateful if you'd tell us a little about yourself so that we understand more about the community we serve. We will not share your personal information nor will we contact you or use it for any other purpose.

- i. Your gender?

Male Female Prefer not to say

- ii. Your age?

16-24 25-34 35-44
 45-54 55-64 65+

- iii. Do you consider yourself to have a disability?

Yes No Prefer not to say

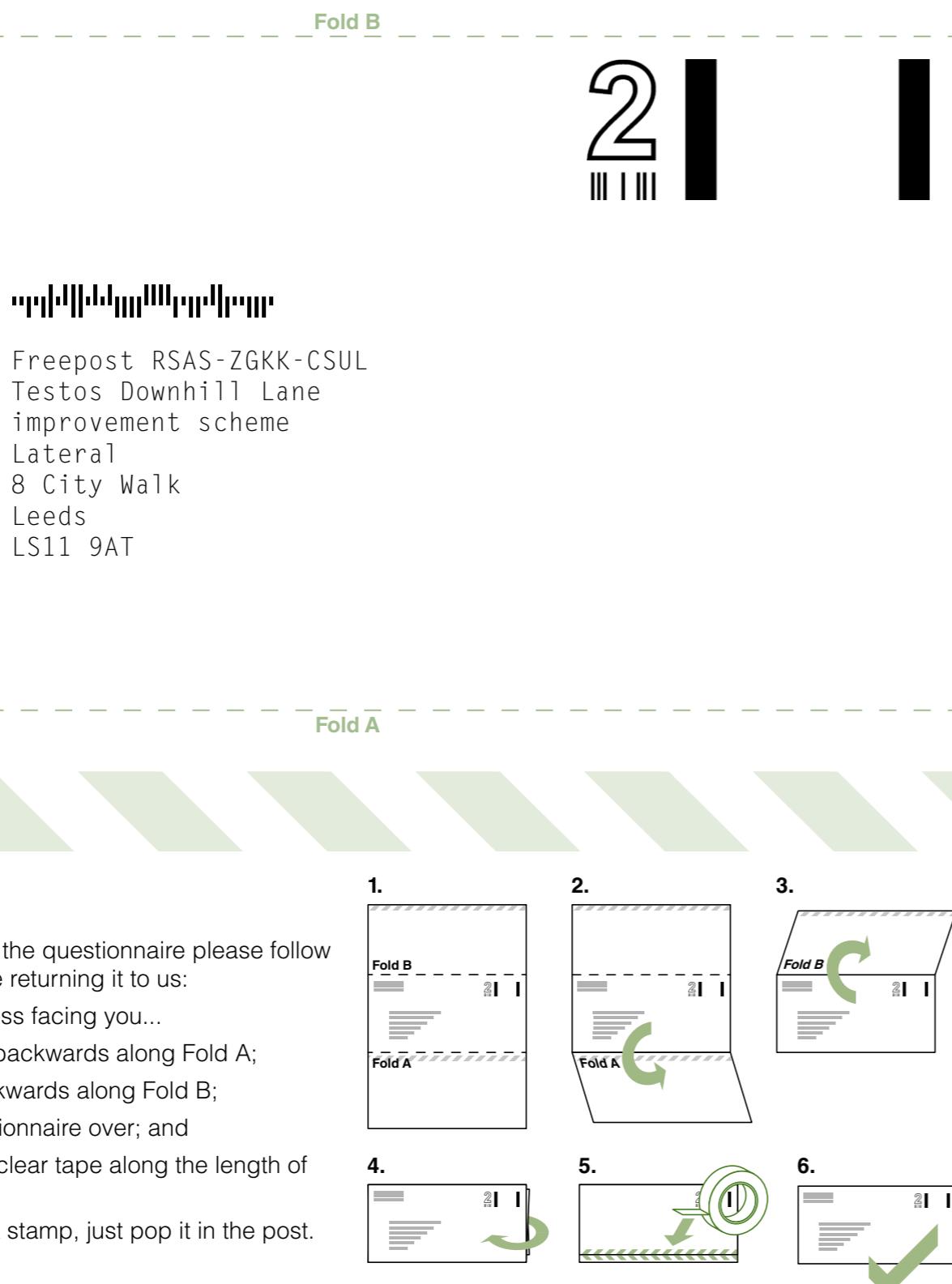
Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.

Information provided in response to this consultation, including personal information, may be published or disclosed 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 the 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. In view of this it would be helpful if you could explain to us why you regard the information you have provided as confidential. If we receive a request for disclosure of the information we will take full account of your explanation, but we cannot give an assurance that confidentiality can be maintained in all circumstances. An automatic confidentiality disclaimer generated by your IT system will not, of itself, be regarded as binding on Highways England.

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. Confidential responses will be included in any statistical summary of number of comments and views expressed.

The proposed option



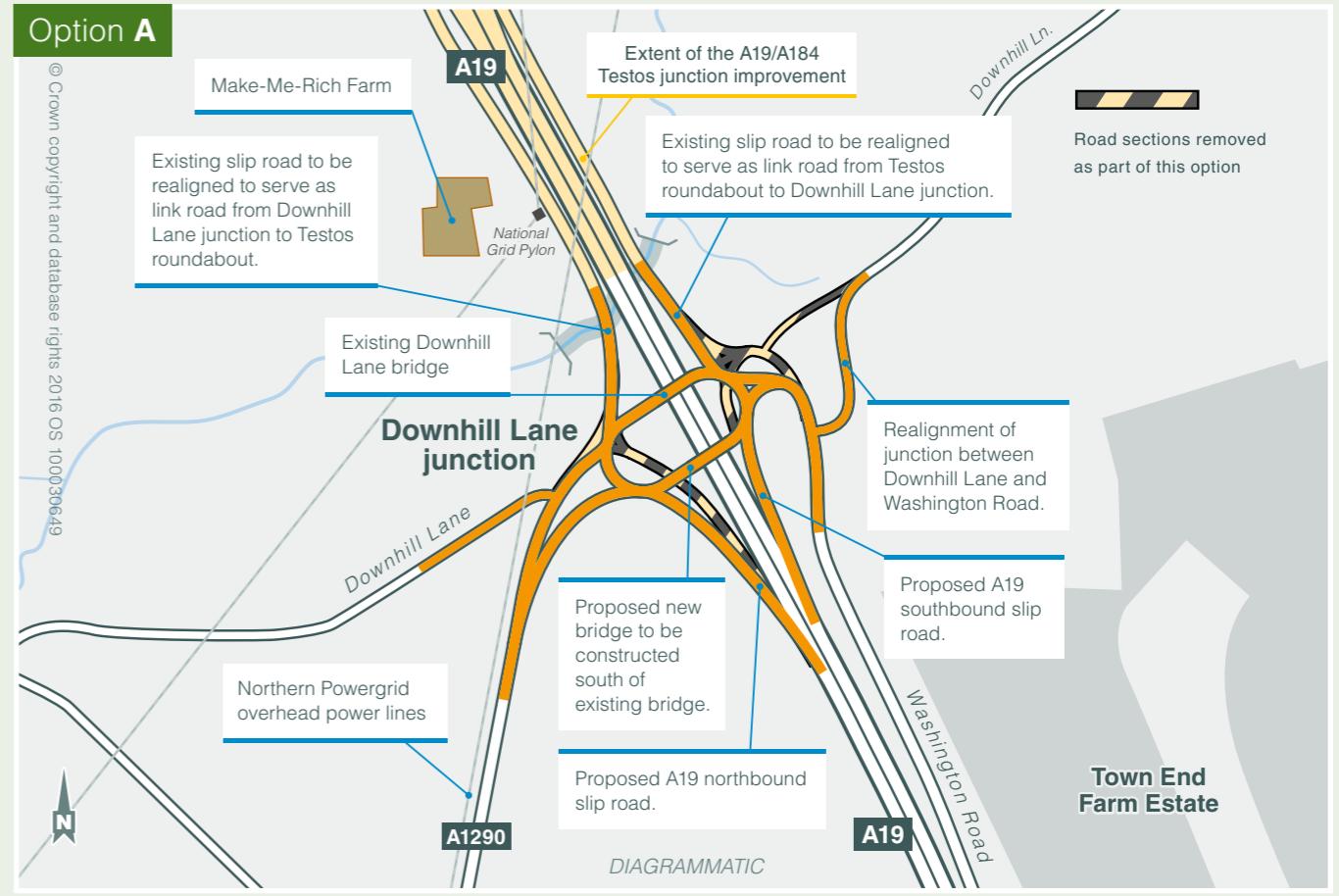
Folding instructions

Once you've completed the questionnaire please follow these instructions before returning it to us:

1. With the return address facing you...
2. fold the bottom part backwards along Fold A;
3. fold the top part backwards along Fold B;
4. turn the folded questionnaire over; and
5. secure it by sticking clear tape along the length of hatched area.
6. There's no need for a stamp, just pop it in the post.

Option A is preferred over the other shortlisted options because:

- It is the most cost effective option, providing similar or greater benefits to other options, but at a lower cost
- It provides the best fit with the Testos preferred route design so it would have no impact on the programme to deliver the improvements at Testos junction
- It requires the least land take of all the options, minimising the impact on the proposed development site and the surrounding environment
- It is one of the simplest options to construct as it would not require work within the River Don corridor or work to divert the Northern Powergrid overhead power lines



Features

The table below illustrates the key impacts for the proposed option:

Feature	Option A
Air quality	Air quality assessments determined that there would be no significant impacts with any option.

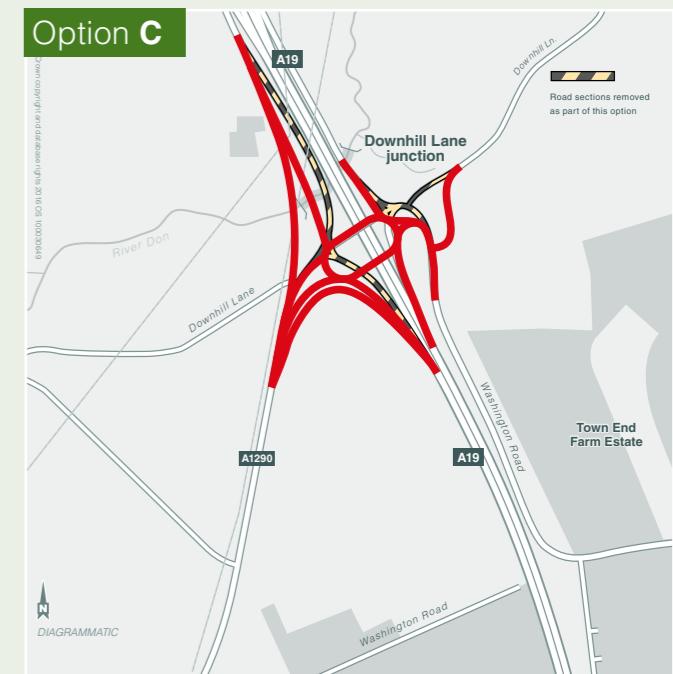
Noise and vibration	Significant noise disruption could occur at some locations for short periods during construction. We will minimise the effects through good construction practice. Once opened we anticipate a small number of properties may experience a very small level of increased noise. Further work will be carried out to assess this impact.
Landscape and visual impact	Effects on the landscape would be most significant in the construction period and would reduce as planted trees and shrubs mature.
Drainage and the water environment	The River Don would see an increase in the amount of water running off the A19. However, the overall effect would be a net improvement to both flood risk and water quality, as the scheme would include balancing ponds to slow down the flow of water into the river and treat the water before release.
Geology and soils	The disturbance of contaminated ground, particularly around the historic railway line and along the existing A19 will be managed to prevent environmental incidents. No other significant impacts or risks have been identified.
Materials	We aim to minimise the volume of waste materials going to landfill and the use of raw materials such as quarried aggregates/stone through good design, good construction practice, recycling of materials where possible and effective management of waste. Further assessment of materials and waste is planned.
Cultural heritage	No significant effects on archaeological remains or historic landscape have been identified at this stage. Further investigation is planned.
Nature conservation	There would be no impact on European or nationally designated sites. Local wildlife sites, habitats and some wildlife species may be adversely impacted. Further assessment will be carried out and mitigation measures developed where needed.
Land take	Option A uses parts of the existing junction layout and features, minimising land requirements. Further opportunities to use the existing junction layout and reduce land take will be investigated during the later stages of design development.
Construction	Option A is considered to be one of the least complicated to build. For example, it does not require work within the River Don corridor. Further work will be carried out in the next stage of design to look at how traffic can be kept flowing as freely as possible during the construction work.
Cost	We plan to construct both Testos and Downhill Lane junctions together; the cost estimates for all the options include the improvements to Testos junction. Option A is the second cheapest, with only Option F being cheaper, but delivering significantly less benefit.
Value for money	When delivered with the Testos improvement, the scheme delivers high value for money.
Average peak time journey change	Option A is forecast to provide a significant reduction in average vehicle delay at Downhill Lane junction at peak times.
Compatibility with the Testos scheme	These proposals provide a direct fit to the preferred route announced for the improvements at Testos junction.

The environmental assessments will continue to be refined as more information becomes available and the design progresses. After the formal announcement of a preferred option, we will carry out a statutory Environmental Impact Assessment, leading to publication of an Environmental Statement (ES). The ES would provide a detailed description of the baseline environment and how it would be changed by the construction and operation of the scheme. It would describe any design changes we have made to avoid or reduce impacts, set out any other proposed environmental mitigation and enhancement works, and outline the environmental management plans that would be put in place to prevent accidental pollution or other environmental damage during construction or operation.

Discounted options

The following plans show the shortlisted options that we considered. These have been discounted for the reasons described with each option.

All options apart from Option F are more expensive than our preferred option.



Reasons for rejecting Option B

- Strengthening works would be required to the River Don culvert which would increase costs
- Safety concerns over traffic interaction on the northbound link road
- Significant additional land would be required east of Make-Me-Rich Farm
- Northern Powergrid overhead lines supplying the Nissan plant would need diversion works
- Maintenance access issues for the National Grid pylon
- Not directly compatible with the preferred route announced for the Testos scheme

Reasons for rejecting Option C

- Strengthening and extension of the River Don culvert would be required, which would increase costs and impact on the natural habitat of the local wildlife site
- Significant additional land would be required east of Make-Me-Rich Farm
- Maintenance access issues for the National Grid pylon
- Northern Powergrid overhead lines supplying the Nissan plant would need diversion works
- Not directly compatible with the preferred route announced for the Testos scheme



Reasons for rejecting Option D

- Strengthening and extension of the River Don culvert would be required, which would increase costs and impact on the natural habitat of the local wildlife site
- Poor ground conditions for construction of the new bridge to the north of the existing junction
- Significant additional land would be required east of Make-Me-Rich Farm
- Northern Powergrid overhead lines supplying the Nissan plant would need diversion works
- Maintenance access issues for the National Grid pylon
- Not directly compatible with the preferred route announced for the Testos scheme



Reasons for rejecting Option E

- Requires considerably more land take than all other options
- Requires a significant area of land which is earmarked for development
- Not directly compatible with the preferred route announced for the Testos scheme



Reasons for rejecting Option F

- Does not meet proposed scheme objectives for improving Downhill Lane junction
- Requires a significant area of land which is earmarked for development
- Not directly compatible with the preferred route announced for the Testos scheme

Next steps

Once the consultation closes on 6 January 2017, all responses will be analysed and compiled into a consultation report which summarises the feedback. The consultation report will be available via the Highways England website. We will then refine the design to:

- Ensure the scheme design incorporates all relevant comments where practicable
- Make sure the potential impact on the community and environment have been fully considered
- Complete our environmental assessment work, making sure it takes into account issues that you have told us about

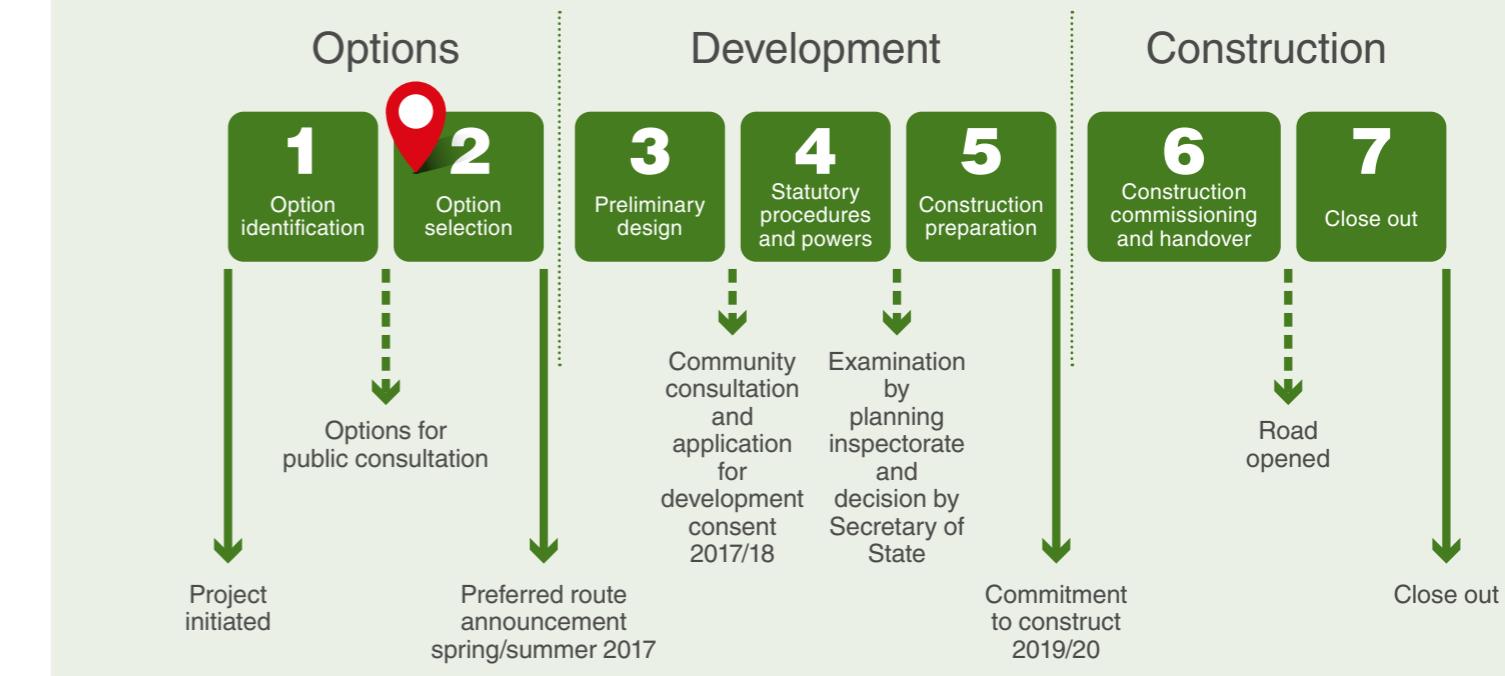
We will then announce the preferred route option for the improvement to Downhill Lane junction in spring/summer 2017.

The planning process

Further consultation will take place on the preferred route before submitting a Development Consent Order (DCO) to the Planning Inspectorate. This is the planning application for the Downhill Lane scheme, which is required under the Planning Act 2008.

There are set opportunities for you to be involved in a DCO scheme:

- You can comment now, when we are selecting the option to take forward (this consultation)
- Formal pre-application consultation required by the Planning Act 2008 will be undertaken throughout 2017. We will inform statutory stakeholders, landowners, local communities and anybody else who tells us they wish to be informed about future consultation stages.



There are a number of venues where you can find further copies of this consultation brochure and response form during the consultation period. These venues are as follows:

- **Boldon Village Hall**
Asda Complex/North Rd, Boldon Colliery, NE35 9AR
- **Bunny Hill Centre Library**
Hylton Lane, Sunderland, SR5 4BW
- **East Boldon Library**
Boker Lane, East Boldon, NE36 0RY.
- **Gateshead Civic Centre**
Regent Street, Gateshead, NE8 1HH.
- **Hebburn Library**
Station Road, Hebburn, NE31 1PN.
- **Hedworthfield Community Association**
Cornhill, Jarrow, NE32 4QD
- **Jarrow Library**
Cambrian Street, Jarrow, NE32 3QN.
- **North Tyneside Council**
Planning Reception, Quadrant the Silverlink North, Cobalt Business Park, North Tyneside, NE27 0BY.
- **Quadrus Centre**
Woodstock Way, Boldon Business Park, Tyne & Wear, NE35 9PF
- **South Shields Central Library**
Prince George Square, South Shields, NE33 2PE.
- **Sunderland City Centre Customer Service Centre**
31-32 Fawcett Street, Sunderland, SR1 1RE.
- **Washington Library**
Independence Square, Washington, NE38 7RZ

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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 **PR122/16**.

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