

Improving the A47

A47/A11 Thickthorn 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/A11 Thickthorn junction improvement.** 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:

A47A11ThickthornJunctionRIS@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 our proposal to improve the A47/A11 Thickthorn junction. Our proposal will create a better junction that will relieve congestion, provide extra traffic capacity and improve safety.

The assessment to date has considered a significant number of options for the improvement of the existing junction. This work has led us to seek views on a proposed option.

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

There will be a further public consultation before a formal application for a Development Consent Order is made.

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

2. Need for the scheme

The A47/A11 Thickthorn junction is located on the south-western edge of Norwich, and provides access to the A47 via the A11 and B1172 Norwich Road for Eaton, Cringleford, Hethersett and Wymondham.

The A47 connects Norwich with Great Yarmouth to the east and Peterborough to the west, via King's Lynn and Wisbech. The A11 is the main route connecting Norwich with Thetford, Cambridge and London to the M11 and A14. The A47/A11 Thickthorn junction is therefore important for commuter, business and commercial traffic, and for both short and long distance trips.

Studies have identified the unsuitability of the current junction layout to accommodate the dominant movements through the junction on the A11 and between the A11 northbound to A47 eastbound and the A47 westbound and A11 southbound carriageways during peak hours. This is predicted to worsen in future years due to growth in long distance traffic, and growth from the large local residential developments in Hethersett and Cringleford.

In developing this scheme, we aim to address these issues by upgrading the existing junction to a high quality interchange.

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

3. Scheme objectives

The objectives of the proposed A47/A11 Thickthorn junction improvement scheme are:

■ Supporting economic growth

Contributing to 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 junction in coping with incidents such as collisions, breakdowns, maintenance and extreme weather. The improved A47/A11 Thickthorn 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 on those living along the existing A47 and A11. We will do this by reducing the impact of new infrastructure on the natural and built environment.

■ An accessible and integrated network

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

■ Value for money

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

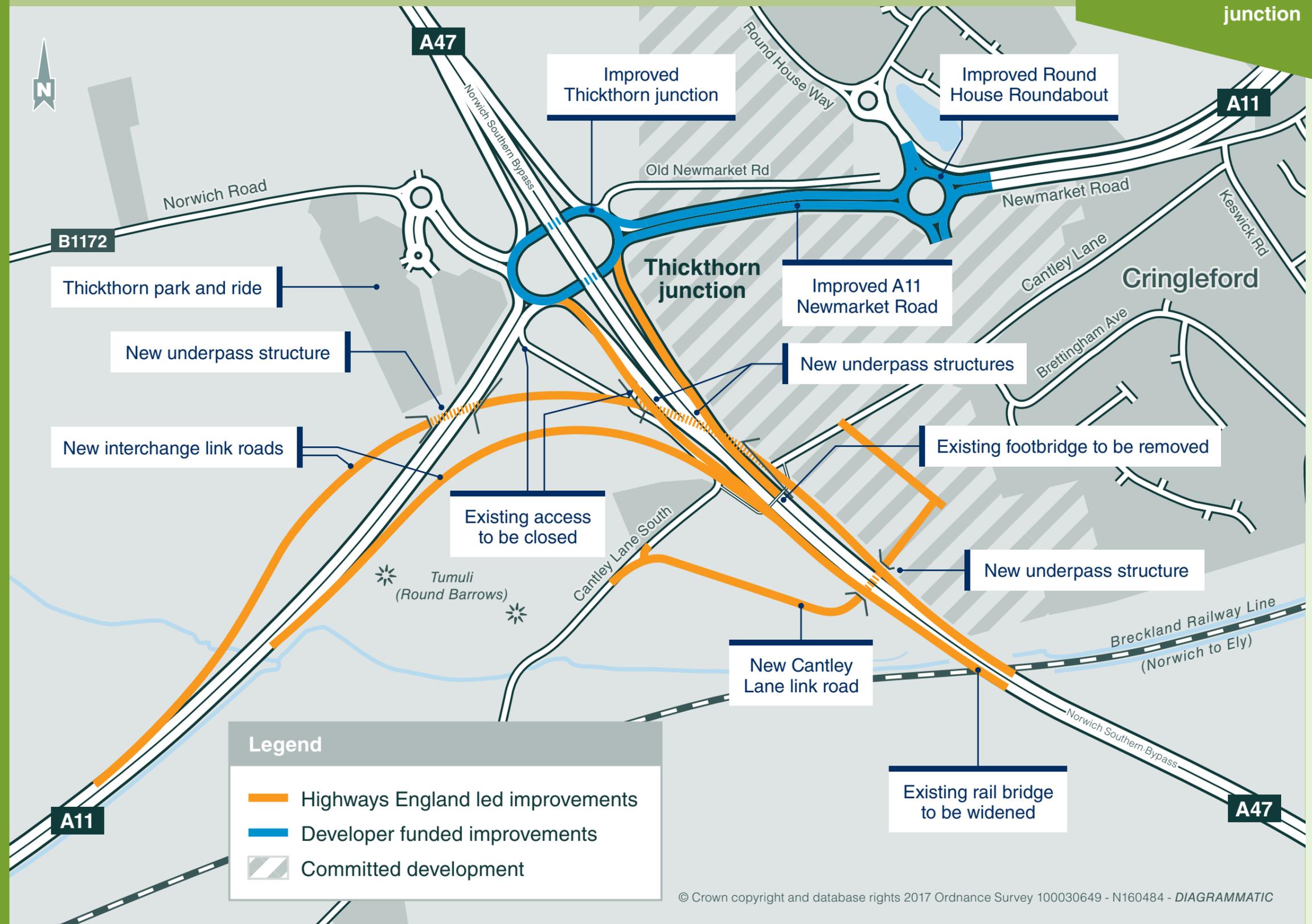
4. Our proposed option

Our proposed option would:

- Create new free-flow links, in both directions, between the A11 and the A47 eastern link.
- Improve the existing A11 signalised junction.
- Improve the existing A11 Round House Roundabout.
- Reconnect Cantley Lane with Cantley Lane South.

This option would re-route traffic away from the existing A47/A11 Thickthorn junction which would release capacity for local traffic movements.

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 therefore were not progressed any further.



5. Respecting the environment

We will 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 any construction to minimise the effects on the environment.

It is highly likely that we will need to acquire land adjacent to the existing junction to accommodate the improvement. The proposed option passes predominantly through open farm land and some woodland.

Please see the environmental constraints plan for details.



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

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 ensure that these are considered as part of the design stage and that there are appropriate mitigation measures in place to reduce any impacts of the scheme. This work will be carried out in consultation with Natural England and Norfolk 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 a scheduled ancient monument, archaeological sites and listed buildings. We will include various measures in the scheme design to reduce the impacts on these areas.

Air quality

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

There may be some worsening in air quality for the properties nearest to the junctions in particular for the existing properties along Cantley Lane South. 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 will be no significant changes in noise in the built-up areas near the 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 junction.

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.

6. Next steps

Preferred route

This consultation is your opportunity to express your views on the proposal at an early stage of development and ahead of the selection of a preferred route. After the consultation ends, we will publish a report summarising our findings. 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 route.

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
Willow Centre, Cringleford	Saturday 25 March	10am - 2pm
Jubilee Youth Club, Hethersett	Monday 27 March	3pm - 8pm
Willow Centre, Cringleford	Tuesday 28 March	3pm - 8pm

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: A47A11ThickthornJunctionRIS@highwaysengland.co.uk



Post: You can write to us or post paper copy responses to:
FREEPOST A47 Thickthorn 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 **PR244/16**.

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