

# A19

## Downhill Lane Junction Improvement Scheme

Preferred route announcement – June 2017



### Introduction

Every road user wants less congested roads to enable swift, safe, comfortable and informed travel. On behalf of the government and its Road Investment Strategy, Highways England is responsible for delivering the largest investment in a generation throughout England's motorways and major A roads that aims to support the journeys of today, while investing in those of tomorrow.

The Road Investment Strategy for the 2015-2020 Road Period, published by the Department for Transport (DfT) in December 2014, announced the A19 Downhill Lane junction improvement scheme as part of Highways

England's programme of investment in the strategic road network in the North East that supports the government's growth agenda for the region.

The A19 is a major route, running between Doncaster and the north of Newcastle, providing an alternative route to the A1. It is the main route linking Tyne and Wear with Teesside to the south, and to the north of England joining the A1 at Seaton Burn north of Newcastle. It provides a link for key distributors to the Port of Tyne and local access to the Tyne Tunnel.

### The need for improvement: why do we need this scheme

At present, the A19 suffers from significant congestion at the Downhill Lane junction particularly due to the large volumes of local traffic conflicting with the north and south flows of long-distance traffic. This is noticeable during the Nissan shift change as this stretch of road provides the primary access from the A19 for vehicles entering and leaving the plant.

Future developments on the land to the north of the Nissan plant, in the form of an International Advanced Manufacturing Plant (IAMP), are likely to increase the amount of traffic using Downhill Lane junction, in addition to proposed plans to expand the Nissan plant.

The current capacity of the junction would not be sufficient for the anticipated additional traffic, and would therefore affect the A19 and local roads causing

congestion resulting in significant delays and lengthy journey times.

#### Scheme objectives

- To improve journey times on this route which is of strategic national importance
- Improve network resilience and journey time reliability
- Improve safety
- Facilitate future economic growth
- Improve provision for walkers, cyclists and other non-motorised users
- Maintain access for local traffic whilst improving the conditions for strategic traffic

## The option taken to consultation

Prior to consultation, several options were assessed on their benefits and effects which resulted in option (A) providing an adequate solution to address the projected congestion around the Downhill Lane junction. This single option (A) was presented to the public for consideration in November 2016 at the Downhill Lane junction consultation where previously discarded options could also be viewed and commented on. This information can be found in the full consultation report.

Our assessments show that our proposed design (Option A) is the best performing overall. It provides the greatest improvements for road users, significantly eases congestion and provides the best value for money.

Once a preferred route announcement has been announced, Highways England will continue working on the design of the scheme.

## Public consultation

We held a public consultation between 21 November 2016 and 6 January 2017. As part of that, we held two exhibitions.

The public exhibition events were publicised through a combination of leaflet drops to 35,000 local residences, formal letters and media coverage, as well as through the Highways England website, local community groups and large local employers.

We provided information in the form of consultation leaflets, which included a questionnaire, and left them at local deposit points including libraries and council offices and on the Highways England website.

## Responses to public consultation

We received 143 responses to the consultation and the feedback we received showed that overall:

- 73% of responses agreed with the need to improve Downhill Lane junction
- 18% disagreed
- 9% neither agreed nor disagreed.

Of responses to the preferred option:

- 69% were supportive
- 20% disagreed with the option
- 9% indicated no preference.

A copy of the consultation report is available on the Highways England Website at: [www.highways.gov.uk/a19-testos-downhill-lane](http://www.highways.gov.uk/a19-testos-downhill-lane)

## Recommended option: the preferred route

The A19 Downhill Lane junction improvement scheme has been in development for two years and over this period various options have been considered.

Since it was initially presented in 2014 and following feedback from the public consultation in 2016/2017, the proposed route has been developed and refined by our engineers. We investigated a range of alternative options as part of this process.\*

All possible options have now been assessed to determine how well each one performed against Highways England's key objectives for the scheme.

### Key objectives of the preferred route include:

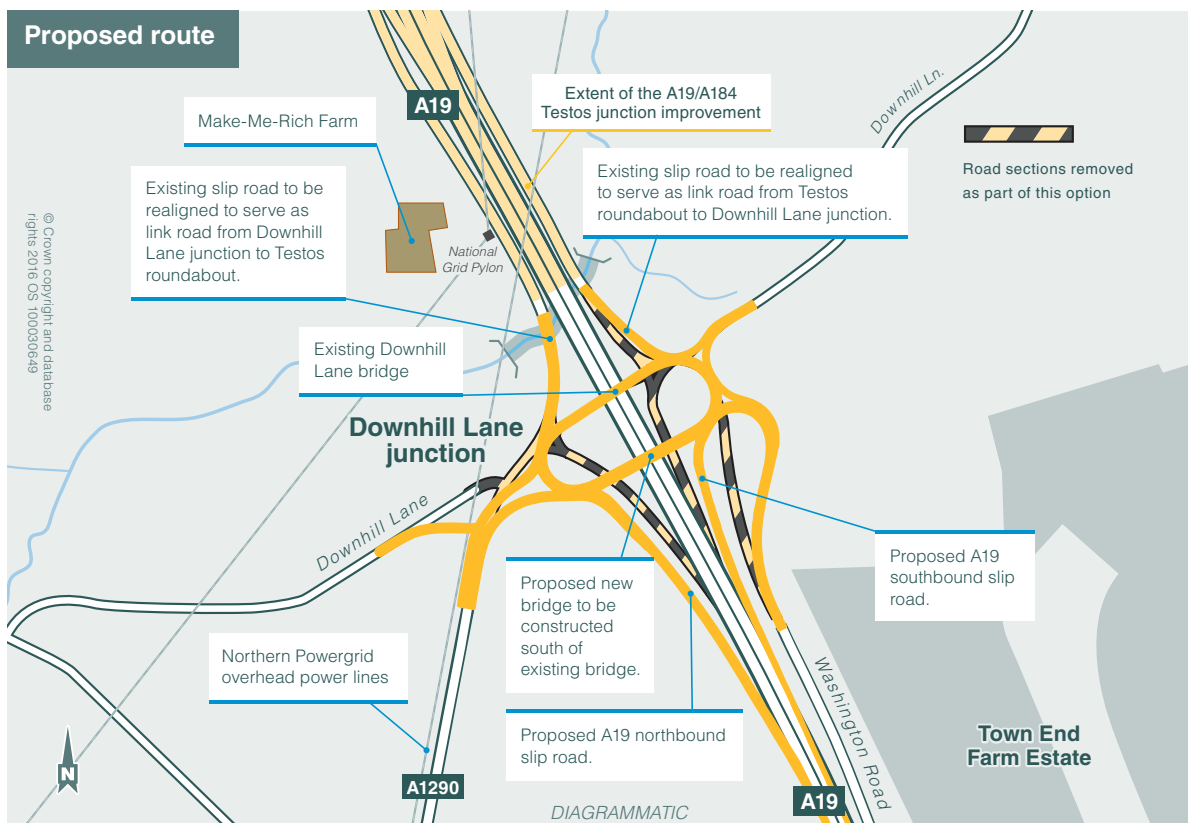
- Reduce congestion and increase reliability of journey times
- Support economic growth by improving the junction capacity for the IAMP
- Minimise impacts on the environment and provide opportunities to enhance natural and structural landscape/environmental features
- Where possible, seek to mitigate impacts on air quality and noise
- Improve the safety for all road users
- Where possible, look to maintain or provide improved facilities for crossing and travelling along the route for cyclists, pedestrians and horse riders
- Be affordable and represent high value for money

Any proposals which passed the initial assessment above were then assessed to determine their performance with regards to:

- Public utilities impact, such as gas and water
- Provision for pedestrians, cyclists and horse-riders
- Drainage and flooding
- The contents and stability of the ground
- Structures, including bridges
- Compliance with technical standards

These assessments combined with the estimated costs or the options enabled us to determine which one performs best overall.

*\*It is important to note that whilst we are announcing the preferred route for the A19 Downhill Lane junction, you need to be aware that this announcement is subject to successful completion of the statutory planning process.*



## Next steps

During the next stage of the project, our team will develop the design of the preferred route in more detail. This will include details on the proposed junctions and landscaping.

We will hold a further consultation in autumn 2017 to get your feedback and suggestions.

We will be engaging with Sunderland and South Tyneside Councils to help shape the consultation so that local people get to have their say.

A draft Development Consent Order and Environmental Statement will be prepared, leading to our submission of the formal application for development consent in 2018.

The application will be made to the Planning Inspectorate who will examine the application and make a recommendation to the Secretary of State for Transport, who will make the decision on whether or not the project should go ahead.

For further information on PINS, please visit: <http://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk>.

Following the announcement this report can be inspected on the scheme web page and during office hours for a period of 12 weeks at the following locations:

- **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
- **Library at Hebburn Central**  
Glen Street, 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
- **The Word Library,**  
The Word, 45 Market Place,  
South Shields, NE33 1DX
- **Sunderland City Centre Customer Service Centre,**  
31-32 Fawcett Street, Sunderland, SR1 1RE
- **Washington Library,**  
Independence Square, Washington, NE38 7RZ

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

## Further information

For further information about this scheme please contact a member of the project team using the following methods:



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**By phone:** 0300 470 2683



**Website:** [www.highways.gov.uk/a19-testos-downhill-lane](http://www.highways.gov.uk/a19-testos-downhill-lane)

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