

Improving the A1 in Northumberland

Newsletter issue 1 - August 2015

Highways England is the new public company responsible for the strategic road network in England. We are responsible for modernising, maintaining and operating the country's 1,300 miles of motorways and major A-roads.

We are currently developing a package of improvements for the A1 in Northumberland route. You may have heard about this programme of work before, when it was called the "A1 North of Newcastle". Following feedback from stakeholders, the name has been changed to "A1 in Northumberland".

In this newsletter we will explain our proposed improvements, give a summary of the current progress and outline what will happen next.

Why improvements are needed

A number of issues affect the performance of the route. We identified these by analysing available data and liaising with key stakeholders.

- A lack of alternative routes
- Inconsistent carriageway standards
- Poor junction standards and layout
- A large number of junctions and private accesses. These result in delays to following vehicles and potential for accidents when vehicles slow down to 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 relatively high proportion of heavy goods and agricultural vehicles results in reduced speeds for following vehicles
- Lack of overtaking opportunities
- Peak-hour traffic speeds are significantly slower than when traffic is free flowing



In 2014 a feasibility study was carried out which looked at the issues. As a result of this the government announced an investment package of £290 million on the A1.



The proposed improvements

The £290 million investment package includes:

- A1 Morpeth to Ellingham**
 Thirteen 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.
- A1 north of Ellingham enhancements**
 A set of measures to enhance the performance and safety of the A1 north of Ellingham, including overtaking lanes, junctions enhancements and better crossing facilities for pedestrians and cyclists.

How we develop and deliver major projects

All major schemes delivered by Highways England are carefully managed and developed through a series of important stages before we can start construction. We need to take time to ensure that we identify and select the right option.

Here is a summary of the stages each of our projects goes through before construction starts:

Options

This is where we identify and assess options, undertake key surveys and consult with the public.

Development

Preliminary design – we undertake detailed surveys and environmental assessments. We complete the initial design of the scheme.



Statutory procedures and powers

We complete all necessary statutory planning procedures and seek approval to proceed.

Construction preparation

We carry out the detailed design and obtain approval for any advance works.

Assessments need to be updated throughout in order to take into account new information and determine if a scheme still demonstrates value for money. Up to date information and analysis is also required at each stage in order for the proposals to pass through the statutory planning procedures required.

Delivery of a scheme requires the successful completion of the necessary statutory planning process, continued development of the business case including demonstration of value for money and funding availability.

Current progress

The A1 in Northumberland programme is currently at the options identification stage. We are exploring a number of options to upgrade the route to dual carriageway between Morpeth and Ellingham and develop improvements north of Ellingham. As part of this work we have undertaken traffic surveys.

On 11 August Andrew Jones, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Transport, met with Anne-Marie Trevelyan MP to discuss progress of the improvements.

Next steps

As with all our new investment commitments, the proposals in the A1 in Northumberland programme will require further development work, engagement and consultation in order to reach an agreement on the specific details of the proposals.

As the work progresses, we will hold public consultations to obtain local input before a decision on preferred options is announced. Public consultations will be widely publicised and details will be provided on our website.

We have set out the nature of the work we plan to do next and indicative timescales for key milestones in our [*Delivery Plan 2015-2020](#). The key milestones are shown below.

Activities	Year
Commence further development and appraisal work on a range of options to inform consultation with key stakeholders.	2015
Initiate traffic and environmental surveys.	
Hold public exhibitions and consult on the proposals.	2016
Make recommendations on the preferred route for the A1 Morpeth to Ellingham dualling programme.	2017
Start construction on the A1 North of Ellingham enhancements in advance of the dualling programme.	2018



*Our Delivery Plan 2015-2020 can be accessed at www.highways.gov.uk

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

Find out more and contact us

More information is available on our website at www.highways.gov.uk/roads

If you have any queries about this project please contact us

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