

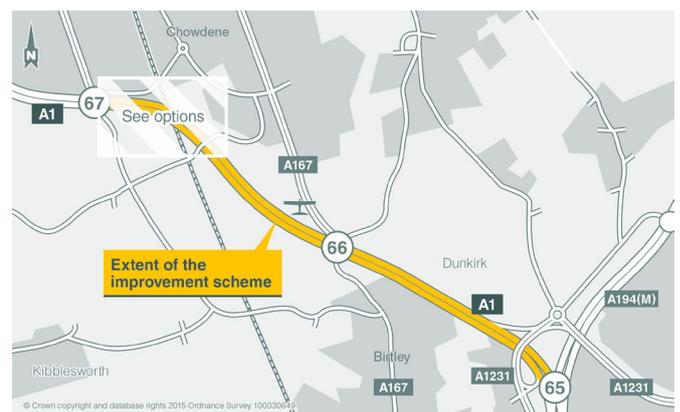
**In this brochure we explain the preferred route for the Birtley to Coal House improvement scheme, how we have assessed the options and carried out public consultation. We also give details of what will happen next with the scheme.**

## Why do we need this scheme?

Every road user wants less congested roads to enable swift, safe, comfortable and informed travel. On behalf of the government, Highways England is responsible for delivering the largest investment in a generation throughout England's motorways and major A roads. The A1 is a critical part of the road network and the A1 Newcastle Gateshead Western Bypass is one of the most congested sections of highway in the North East. It's only set to get busier with traffic expected to grow as a result of new housing and employment developments planned for the area.

We've identified that improving the road between Birtley and Coal House will provide a number of benefits. The objectives of the scheme are to:

- Reduce congestion
- Improve the reliability of people's journeys
- Make journeys safer
- Help support economic growth
- Support the government's initiative for growth in the North East by improving access to the Tees Valley Employment Zone



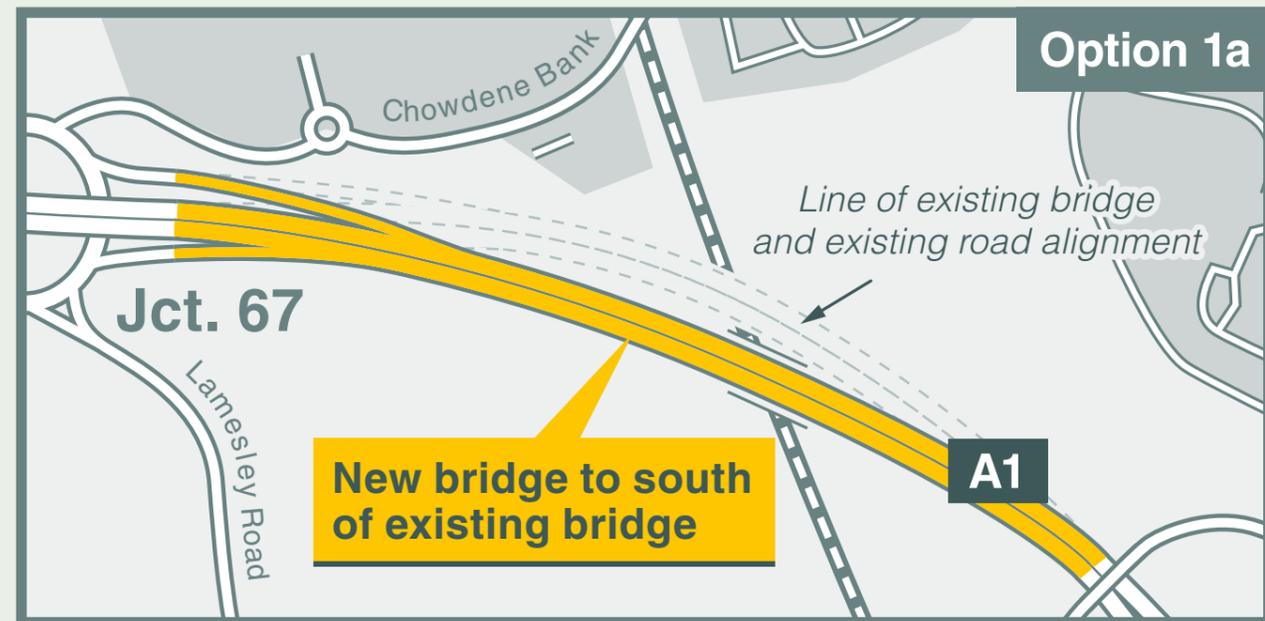
As part of the proposed scheme, we plan to replace Allerdene Railway Bridge, which carries the A1 over the East Coast Main Line railway. The current bridge was built nearly 40 years ago and requires regular maintenance that can cause disruption to traffic.

## The preferred route

We have selected Option 1a as our preferred route. Our assessments show that this option performs the best overall since it:

- Provides the greatest improvements for road users

- Significantly reduces congestion
- Provides the best value for money
- Will have less impact on our customers during construction



## The options taken to consultation

We have carefully considered various options for improving the A1 between Birtley and Coal House. We engaged with key stakeholders and the public while we were looking at developing these options – to take into account their views.

In autumn 2016, we presented our initial scheme proposals to the public to get more feedback. We presented two options at this public consultation. Both of the proposed options involved:

- Widening the existing road to provide a three lane carriageway
- Providing extra lanes between junctions to help manage traffic joining and leaving the A1
- Modifications to existing structures at junction 65 (Birtley) and junction 67 (Coal House) to accommodate the additional lanes

Both of the options involved replacing Allerdene Railway Bridge, but in different ways:

### Option 1a

Allerdene Railway Bridge to be reconstructed south of its current location. This will improve the existing road alignment and improve safety, but Smithy Lane bridge would have to be replaced.

### Option 1b

Allerdene Railway Bridge to be replaced in its current location. This would require a temporary bridge to be constructed to carry traffic over the A1 while the new bridge is constructed. This option would take longer and the construction would be more complicated. There would need to be more traffic management during its construction.

## Selection of preferred route

We selected the preferred route after carefully assessing how well each option meets the objectives for the scheme. We have taken into account feedback from the public and stakeholders throughout our assessment of options, including the important feedback we received during the formal consultation period.

Our assessment of the options has also involved consideration of:

- Potential costs
- Impact on public utilities such as gas and water pipes
- Footbridges, crossings and cyclepaths
- Drainage and flooding
- Geotechnics such as ground conditions

## Consultation feedback

We gathered feedback from the public and stakeholders during our public consultation period in 2016. We held a number of exhibitions where residents and road users could find out about our proposals and provide their views on the options. At the exhibitions we explained the benefits of the scheme and its effect on the local area as well as the differences between the two options.

We publicised the exhibition events widely, through leaflets, letters, posters and our website. We also provided the consultation materials to the Gateshead Council offices, in local libraries, shops, and community centres for anyone who couldn't attend the events.

A total of 102 people attended the exhibitions and we received 115 responses in the form of returned questionnaires, either by post or online. At the exhibitions 25 comments were left by members of the public.

We gathered the following feedback during the consultation period:

### Option 1a

Overall, 73% of responses favoured Option 1a. This option was also favoured by the majority of key stakeholders. People chose this as their preferred option because it has a shorter construction time. They also preferred the safer traffic management layouts since we can build a new bridge at the same time as maintaining traffic flow on the existing structure.

- How each option can be built – construction phasing
- Environmental impact
- Structures, such as bridges –

Allerdene Bridge is complex to replace. Option 1b would require the construction of a temporary structure and demolition of the existing bridge. This would require significant traffic management. It would also take longer since demolition of the existing bridge would have to take place prior to the new bridge being constructed. Replacement of the bridge to the south of its current location (Option 1a) would be less complex and traffic would continue to flow on the existing structure while the new bridge is installed.

### Option 1b

Overall, 10% of responses favoured Option 1b. People who chose this as their preferred option were concerned that Option 1a would bring the A1 closer to Lamesley. Some people preferred the fact that this option requires less land and Smithy Lane bridge would not need to be altered.

### Alternative options

A third option was previously considered in which Allerdene Bridge would be replaced approximately 150 metres south of its existing location and a completely new layout at Coal House junction would be developed. This scheme provided similar benefits to the other two, however the costs were significantly higher. This third option would also have a greater impact on the surrounding area than the other two options. We therefore decided to only move forward with assessments on options 1a and 1b.

## What happens next?

During the next stage of our project, our team will develop a detailed design of our preferred route.

We will hold a further consultation exercise in winter 2017 where we will gather your feedback and suggestions.

We will continue to engage with the local authorities to help shape the consultation so that local people get to have their say.

The draft Development Consent Order and Environmental Statement will be prepared with the submission of the formal Planning Application taking place in summer 2018.

More information about the Development Consent Order can be found on the Planning Inspectorate's website: <http://infrastructure.planningportal.gov.uk>.

A Public Examination will be held by the Planning Inspectorate (PINS). For further information please visit: <http://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk>.

An executive summary of the public consultation is available to view on the project website: [www.highways.gov.uk/a1birtleytocoalhouse](http://www.highways.gov.uk/a1birtleytocoalhouse).

**You can request an electronic or hardcopy of the executive summary, the full Report on Public Consultation, or an additional copy of this leaflet by contacting our project team using the details below:**

### Further information

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

 **In writing:** A1 Birtley to Coal House Project Team, Highways England, Lateral, 8 City Walk, Leeds, LS11 9AT

 **By email:** [A1birtleytocoalhouse@highwaysengland.co.uk](mailto:A1birtleytocoalhouse@highwaysengland.co.uk)

 **By phone:** **0300 470 4548**

 **Website:** [www.highways.gov.uk/a1birtleytocoalhouse](http://www.highways.gov.uk/a1birtleytocoalhouse).

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