

The Highways Agency (HA) is inviting feedback on its planned improvements to the junction of the A19 and A184, known as Testos Junction Improvement (the Project). The purpose of this document, known as the Statement of Community Consultation (SOCC), is to set out how the HA will consult the local community about its proposals for the Project. It provides details of where further information can be obtained or viewed and how comments on the proposals can be made.

The Application

The Project is classed as a nationally significant infrastructure project under the Planning Act 2008 (the Act). As such we are required to make an application for a Development Consent Order (DCO) to construct the Project. We intend to make our application by mid-2015. The application will be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate who will examine the application and make a recommendation to the Secretary of State for Transport, who will make a decision on whether the Project should go ahead.

A National Policy Statement (NPS) is a document published by the Government which sets out the objectives and policies for the development of a particular type of infrastructure. It provides a framework for the Secretary of State to make its decision on DCO applications. Each NPS is subject to public consultation and parliamentary scrutiny before they are designated. No designated NPS is currently in place for road schemes. However, the Government has consulted on a draft National Networks NPS, which is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/national-road-and-rail-networks-draft-national-policy-statement>

It is anticipated that the National Networks NPS will be designated before the application is submitted to the Planning Inspectorate.

Under the Act, the HA is required to consult on its proposals before submitting an application for a DCO. This pre-application consultation is an important opportunity to provide feedback on the scheme, and as part of the examination process the Planning Inspectorate will consider whether our consultation has been adequate. The HA has prepared this SOCC in accordance with Section 47 of the Act. We have consulted South Tyneside Council, Sunderland City Council and Gateshead Council about our plans to consult the local community and have taken their comments into account. Comments made during the consultation period will be recorded and carefully considered by the Highways Agency in developing the proposals for the Project.

More information about the Planning Inspectorate and the Planning Act 2008 can be found on the Planning Inspectorate's National Infrastructure Planning website: <http://infrastructure.planningportal.gov.uk> or by calling them on 0303 444 5000.

The Project

The Highways Agency is proposing to provide grade separation at the junction by raising the A19 on embankment and carrying it over the existing roundabout on two new bridges. Access to the next junction to the south at Downhill Lane will be provided using two parallel link roads connecting to the new south-facing slip roads of Testos Junction. The existing bridleway bridge will also be removed. The scheme length is approximately 2km.

In line with the HA's overall aim of 'Safe Roads, Reliable Journeys, Informed Travellers', the aims of the scheme are:

- To improve road safety at the junction
- To relieve congestion associated with the at grade roundabout layout whilst minimising the environmental impact of the proposals
- To support regeneration in Tyne and Wear

The scheme supports these aims by improving traffic flows and reducing queues. This will improve the living environment for the local community and transport users will benefit from improved journey times, ambience and road quality. This supports the overall competitiveness and productivity of the national economy through time savings and improved reliability for business users.

The scheme also forms part of a wider strategy to upgrade the A19 through the east of Tyneside.

Consultation

A consultation exercise was held in spring 2009 on three options. The consultation found an overall preference for the 'on line' option, i.e. with the A19 maintained on its existing route, but slightly to the west of the existing roundabout. The outcome from this initial consultation was validated with key stakeholders in spring 2014. The process culminated in a preferred route announcement in June 2014.

Since the preferred route announcement, the design has been developed further and we are now able to present the design in more detail and seek further views on the Project proposals. We are therefore holding a seven week public consultation, starting on **Monday 13th October 2014** and ending on **Friday 28th November 2014**. The consultation will focus on the development of the preferred route. Our consultation materials will provide information on the proposed layout, junction and access arrangements, including design changes since the preferred route announcement and the reasons for these.

The Project is an Environmental Impact Assessment development (EIA development), as defined by the Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2009. An Environmental Statement will be submitted as part of the DCO application and, in accordance with Regulation 10, our Preliminary Environmental Information (PEI) Report will form part of the consultation material. The PEI Report presents environmental information that we have collected from earlier stages of the

Project and explains how we plan to further assess the environmental effects of the Project. It indicates in general terms the mitigation measures that we expect to implement in order to minimise any negative effects. We will confirm these mitigation measures in the Environmental Statement and incorporate them into the design of the Project.

All comments received will be considered and will influence, where possible, further refinements to the Project and our approach to environmental mitigation.

We will be using a range of methods during the consultation period to ensure that the local community has an opportunity to view and comment on the proposals. This will involve:

- **A consultation event**, to be held at Quality Hotel, Bolden Business Park Witney Way, Bolden, NE35 9PE on **Friday 7th November 2014** from 12 noon until 8pm and **Saturday 8th November 2014** from 10am until 4pm. The Highways Agency will have staff available throughout this event to explain the proposals and answer any questions. A consultation event will also be arranged within the NISSAN plant the week commencing 10th November 2014 for two weeks to provide a suitable opportunity for local shift workers.
- The issue of our **consultation leaflet**, providing information about the Project and the issues being consulted on, to homes and businesses in the area, including Boldon Colliery, Redhill, Cleadon and East and West Boldon, Fellgate and Hedworth, Castletown, Washington North and Townend Farm.
- Meetings with local residents, businesses and interest groups about either the Project in general or particular issues can be arranged on request to the Highways Agency using the email address, postal address or telephone number below.
- The **publication of our consultation materials**; including the consultation leaflet, a scheme layout plan, the preliminary environmental information in the form of our PEI Report, copies of our consultation event boards, and this SOCC on our Project webpage: www.highways.gov.uk/a19testosjunctionimprovement.
- The **deposit of these consultation materials** to view between Monday 13th October and Friday 28th November 2014 at the following community facilities:
 - South Shields Central Library, Prince Georg Square, South Shields NE33 2PE. Opening times Monday and Wednesday 0900hrs to 1900hrs; Tuesday, Thursday and Friday 0900 hrs to 1700hrs; Saturday 1200hrs to 1600hrs. Tel: 0191 427 1818
 - East Boldon Library, Boker Lane, East Boldon, NE36 0RY. Opening times: Monday and Friday 0930 to 1230 and 1330 to 1700hrs; Tuesday and Thursday 0930 to 1230 and 1330 to 1900hrs. Tel: 0191 424 7853
 - Hebburn Library, Station Road, Hebburn, NE31 1PN. Opening times: Monday and Wednesday 0930 to 1900hrs; Thursday and Friday 0930 to 1700hrs; Saturday 0900 to 1300hrs. Tel: 0191 483 2088
 - Sunderland City Centre Customer Service Centre, 31-32 Fawcett Street, Sunderland, SR1 1RE. Opening times: Monday to Thursday 0830 to 1715hrs; Friday 0830 to 1645hrs. Tel: 0191 520 5555
 - Bunny Hill Customer Service Centre, Hylton Lane, Sunderland, SR5 4BW. Opening times: Monday to Friday 0930 to 1700hrs. Tel: 0191 520 5555
 - Washington Millennium Centre Library, The Oval, Concord, Washington, NE37 2QD. Opening times: Monday 1000 to 1800hrs; Tuesday 1000 to 1300hrs; Friday 1300 to 1700hrs. Tel: 0191 561 3878
 - Gateshead Civic Centre, Regent Street, Gateshead, NE8 1HH. Opening times: Monday to Friday 0900 to 1700hrs. Tel: 0191 433 3000
 - North Tyneside Council, Planning Reception, Quadrant the Silverlink North, Cobalt Business Park, North Tyneside, NE27 0BY. Opening times: Monday to Thursday 0830 to 1700hrs; Friday 0830 to 1630hrs. Tel: 0345 2000 101
 - Jarrow Library, Cambrian Street, Jarrow, NE32 3QN. Opening times: Monday 0930 to 1700hrs; Tuesday and Thursday 0930 to 1900hrs; Friday 0930 to 1700hrs; Saturday 1200 to 1600hrs. Tel: 0191 489 7000
- The consultation materials will also be available to view at the Highways Agency, Lateral, 8 City Walk, Leeds, LS11 9AT. Viewing times: Monday to Friday 9am – 5pm. Tel: 0113 283 6258

Please note that viewing locations may be closed on bank holidays.

All of the consultation materials will be available to view free of charge on our website or at the facilities listed above. Copies of the consultation materials may be requested from the Highways Agency using the email address, postal address or telephone number listed below. A CD copy can be provided free of charge. Paper copies of the consultation leaflet and SOCC will be supplied free of charge. Paper copies of the other consultation materials are priced at £15 for the EIA scoping report, £10 for an A3 copy of the consultation event boards and £7.50 for an A1 copy of the scheme layout plan. Prices include VAT at 20% and UK postage. Please contact the Highways Agency for further details regarding payment methods.

Following the consultation period we will produce a consultation report to summarise the views and comments received and outline how they have been taken into consideration in developing the Project. We will send this report to the Planning Inspectorate as part of our DCO application. The Planning Inspectorate will decide whether our application meets the required standards to proceed to examination, and as part of this will determine whether our pre-application consultation has been adequate.

Making your comments

Comments on our proposals can be made by:

- Completing our questionnaire. This is enclosed with the consultation leaflet and is also available to complete online on the Project webpage at <http://www.highways.gov.uk/roads/road-projects/A19-Testos-Junction-Improvements>. Alternatively a paper copy can be printed from the webpage. A paper copy can also be requested free of charge by contacting the project team.
- Emailing us at a19testosjunctionimprovements@highways.gsi.gov.uk.
- Writing to us at A19 Testos Junction Improvement Project Team, Highways Agency, Lateral, 8 City Walk, Leeds, LS11 9AT.

If you have any questions about this consultation, please contact the project team using any of these details or by calling 0113 283 6258.

The deadline for all responses is **Friday 28th November 2014**.