



Welcome to the latest newsletter for the project. Great progress is being made across the site and the project is going well.



What is currently underway: Junction 65 Birtley

We have started to clear the ground ready to install new lanes. This includes removing trees, shrubs and grasslands. We are removing as little as we can and are working with an ecologist to protect wildlife and biodiversity.

Between junction 65 and junction 66 we have started to widen the carriageway and we are continuing to build up earthworks alongside the carriageway.

We have also started to remove the North Dene footbridge starting with demolishing the protective barrier in front of the bridge. The full removal will happen later in September.

Work is also progressing well at the Longbank Underpass, where we have started extending the bridge which will then allow us to extend the carriageway. This work is due to finish this summer and will be complete before we close the North Dene Footbridge.

Junction 66 Eighton Lodge

We are continuing the work on the bridges over the junction. This will allow us to build the new lanes, both northbound and southbound. This will include removing excess soil, install piling which will allow us to support the new lanes and build new reinforced concrete sections. The treatment of the old mine workings will also continue in the central reserve and will be completed in the summer.



Junction 67 Coal House

At Kingsway we will finish widening the existing structure on the northbound carriageway over junction 67.

This will include reinforced concrete works and hydro-demolition of the existing northbound deck allowing us to join into the existing deck. We will be installing the new bridge beam and start working on the new northbound slip road later this year.

At Allerdene, we will continue installing over 6,500 supports below ground, for the new Allerdene Bridge embankment. We have completed the piling works for the eight supports which will hold the new bridge and will be constructing these supports throughout the summer. In autumn, we will have the UK's largest mobile crane on site to lift the new bridge beams over the east coast main line and into place.

The equipment we use means we will cause some disruption, particularly noise. We make every effort to reduce the impact of noise and brief all site staff about working responsibly in the local community. We monitor noise levels regularly during the work. Most of this work is carried out overnight when we can close the road for the safety of our workers and road users.

Environmental update

We've planned small areas of vegetation clearance work at Kingsway, junction 67 in the southbound carriageway verge, with also some possibility of small areas being cleared at Eighton Lodge and at North Dene. Recently we received feedback on our night operations - we've responded to this by stopping all chipping by 12 midnight in residential areas. We're also making sure we notify people before noisy work is carried out and have widened the letter drop area following feedback.

Allerdene burn which courses through our site is excellent for wildlife, even on an active site. The wide channel with riffles and pools is perfect for invertebrates, which in turn are attracting wagtails and swallows. Mallard ducks have also found the pools and there are now signs asking our workers to watch out for them. We've also identified **bee orchids** which will be protected to maintain the presence of this species for the future.

We have dedicated ecology teams working on the project and we only ever clear vegetation where it is necessary for the project. Where possible we will be replacing trees and shrubs and introducing wild grasslands. Some of the trees we will re-plant may not be in the original locations due to the increase in the number of lanes; but we will ensure there is no overall loss of trees because of the scheme.



Work in the community

National Highways has a series of funds, called designated funds, which can potentially be used to fund projects that benefit local residents and businesses. When proposing a new designated funds project, there is a criteria for the fund which must be reviewed before it can be taken forward for approval. There are categories of funding and not all bids are successful. However, we do currently have some schemes already approved at feasibility stage, as well as a number still progressing to the next stage of approval.

A1 Long bank scheme will begin in August 2022 with full funding approved.

Longbank bridleway runs south from the Ravensworth area of Gateshead before passing through an underpass below the A1 motorway and entering the Birtley area. The path is well used by walkers, cyclists and horse riders. Currently the path is overgrown, has a poor surface and the ramp connecting to the underpass is a slip hazard for horses due to the current surfacing material. We have secured enough funding to improve the bridleway by clearing vegetation and trees and resurfacing both the path and ramp.

Cycling and pedestrian schemes at junctions 66 and 67

We submitted two bids and gained funding for the feasibility stage to introduce signalised crossings and improved pedestrian and cycle infrastructure (widening and resurfacing) at both these junctions.

At junction 66, the Eighton Lodge roundabout which connects the A167 and A1, our plan is to create a new shared use cycleway on the south of the roundabout and then connecting it to the existing shared use cycleway on the north side of the roundabout.

At junction 67 the focus is on creating a link for cyclists and pedestrians from both the north and south sides of the roundabout.

Invasive species

Invasive species are plants that are not native to the UK and which can cause significant problems if not removed or treated.

An ecological survey taken ahead of work starting identified all instances of invasive plant species. A lot of areas across the site have been and will continue to be revisited to manage invasive species. For example, **Japanese knotweed** and **Himalayan balsam** (pictured here) which, if untreated, can self seed large areas despite each plant only living for one season.



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

Community and engagement

The community relations team at Costain continue to promote social value and aim to leave a long-lasting legacy in the region whilst working on the project. They work with local charities, training providers, schools and colleges across the north east.

Recently, several visits with Cedar's Trust School were hosted at the Blaydon Hub site offices, giving pupils the chance to learn about careers in construction. Over three visits, the students learnt about different roles within the industry and also had the chance to experience a 'drive through' of the scheme on a simulator.

There is a programme of school visits and work experience planned involving many different schools located close to the scheme. The team have also worked with Harlow Green Primary School, donating some logs for them to use in their outdoor learning area in the school grounds. Where possible, any trees we need to cut down are turned into logs which are donated and recycled to help out the local community.

Costain continue to work in partnership with the skills academy Building Heroes, specifically supporting people who have served in the military. They provide training and employment support via an onsite training academy at the Blaydon Hub. The programme is designed to provide a wide variety of skills and qualifications including Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS) cards for all participants, with funding provided by Costain Jacobs. The programme has been successful with 34 people completing the training in 2022, with 58% going into employment, further construction related training or work experience. This is a crucial part of how we help the local community around us.

Costain were able to support a local scout, who has been selected for a trip to South Korea for the scouts Jamboree and has been raising money to get himself there. Staff at Costain supported him by holding an Easter raffle, and a member of the Community Relations Team (Paige Sheils) did a sponsored silence to raise a total of £410 to donate to his funds. What's more, a charity bake fare for the Queens Jubilee was held and raised a total of £307 for The Samaritans.



More information



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