

A1

in Northumberland

Preferred Route Announcement
September 2017



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 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. The A1 in Northumberland is a key part of this investment.

The A1 is one of the longest roads in the country, connecting London and Edinburgh. The route currently consists of motorway and dual carriageway standard with some areas of single carriageway sections running between Morpeth and Ellingham and Ellingham and Berwick.

In Northumberland, the A1 runs through an extensive rural landscape, close to the Northumberland coastline. This section of the A1 is used by a wide variety of road users for many different reasons. From business users travelling long distance between Newcastle and Edinburgh, local traffic accessing rural areas, and tourists who come to visit the many historic attractions and coastline.

In 2014 a feasibility study was carried out which considered the problems experienced by people using the route.

Following this, in Autumn 2014, the government announced the first Roads Investment Strategy, which included a £290 million package to improve the A1 in Northumberland as part of a national investment of £15 billion into England's motorways and major A roads.

This includes:

A1 Morpeth to Ellingham

13 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

A set of measures to enhance the performance and safety of the A1 north of Ellingham.

Note: *The A1 in Northumberland was previously known as the A1 north of Newcastle in the governments 2014 Road Investment Strategy, this was updated to better reflect the geography of the improvements.*

The expected regional benefits of the scheme are to:

- Improve journey times on the route of strategic national importance
- Improve network resilience and journey time reliability
- Improve safety
- Maintain access for local traffic whilst improving conditions for strategic traffic
- Facilitate future economic growth
- Avoid, mitigate and compensate for potential impacts on the natural and built environment and identify opportunities to provide a long term and sustainable benefit to the environment

Options considered

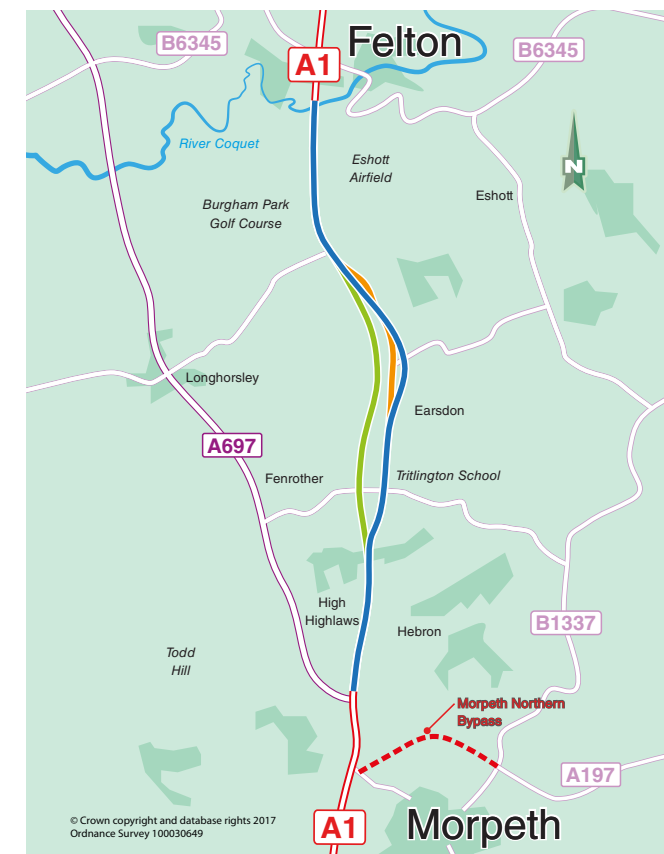
A number of options were developed and considered as part of developing this scheme. This booklet provides details of the options to dual the A1 between Morpeth and Felton and Alnwick and Ellingham, which were presented to the public at a series of exhibitions in 2016.

Further information about the proposals for improving the A1 north of Ellingham which were also presented at the public exhibitions can be found on the scheme webpage at: www.highways.gov.uk/A1inNorthumberland.

Morpeth to Felton

Three options were considered for the proposed improvements between Morpeth and Felton;

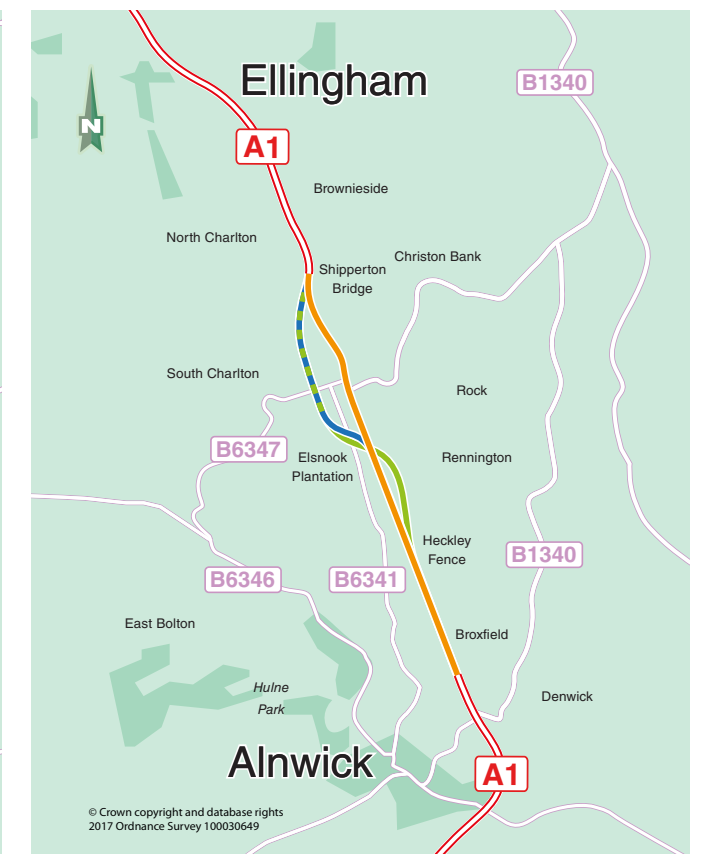
- **Orange Option:** upgrade the existing road to dual carriageway, either widening to the east or the west depending on the local features that we need to consider
- **Green Option:** build a new carriageway to the west of the existing road between Priest's Bridge and Burgham Park
- **Blue Option:** upgrade the majority of the existing road to dual carriageway, with approximately 1.2 miles (2 km) section of new carriageway to the east of the A1 near Causey Park Bridge



Alnwick to Ellingham

Three options were considered between Alnwick and Ellingham. Only the Orange option was affordable within the scheme budget and therefore, the Green and Blue options were presented as discounted options at the public consultation:

- **Orange Option:** upgrade the existing road to dual carriageway, widening either to the east or the west depending on the local features that we need to consider
- **Green Option:** upgrade approximately 1.2 miles (2 km) of existing road to dual carriageway, and build a new carriageway to the east of the existing road at Heckley Fence, before crossing over to the west of the existing road at Elsnook Plantation and continuing until Shipperton Burn
- **Blue Option:** upgrade the majority of the existing road to dual carriageway, with approximately 2.2 miles (3.5 km) section of new carriageway built to the west of the existing route between Elsnook Plantation and Shipperton Burn



Public consultation on the options

Between 14 November and 23 December 2016, Highways England held a series of events in the local area during a consultation period on the A1 in Northumberland scheme.

A total of 587 responses were received to the consultation, the majority via paper questionnaires provided at the events, with several others responding via email, letters or online via the Highways England webpage. We also received

three petitions. On the Morpeth to Felton section, 41% said that the Green option was their preferred option, 29% preferred the Blue option, and 12% preferred the Orange option.

For the Alnwick to Ellingham section, nearly half of respondents (49%) agreed with the proposed Orange option, between Alnwick and Ellingham, five percent disagreed and the rest said they neither agreed nor disagreed or did not answer.

The preferred routes

The decision for the preferred route has been made following consideration of the factors listed below:

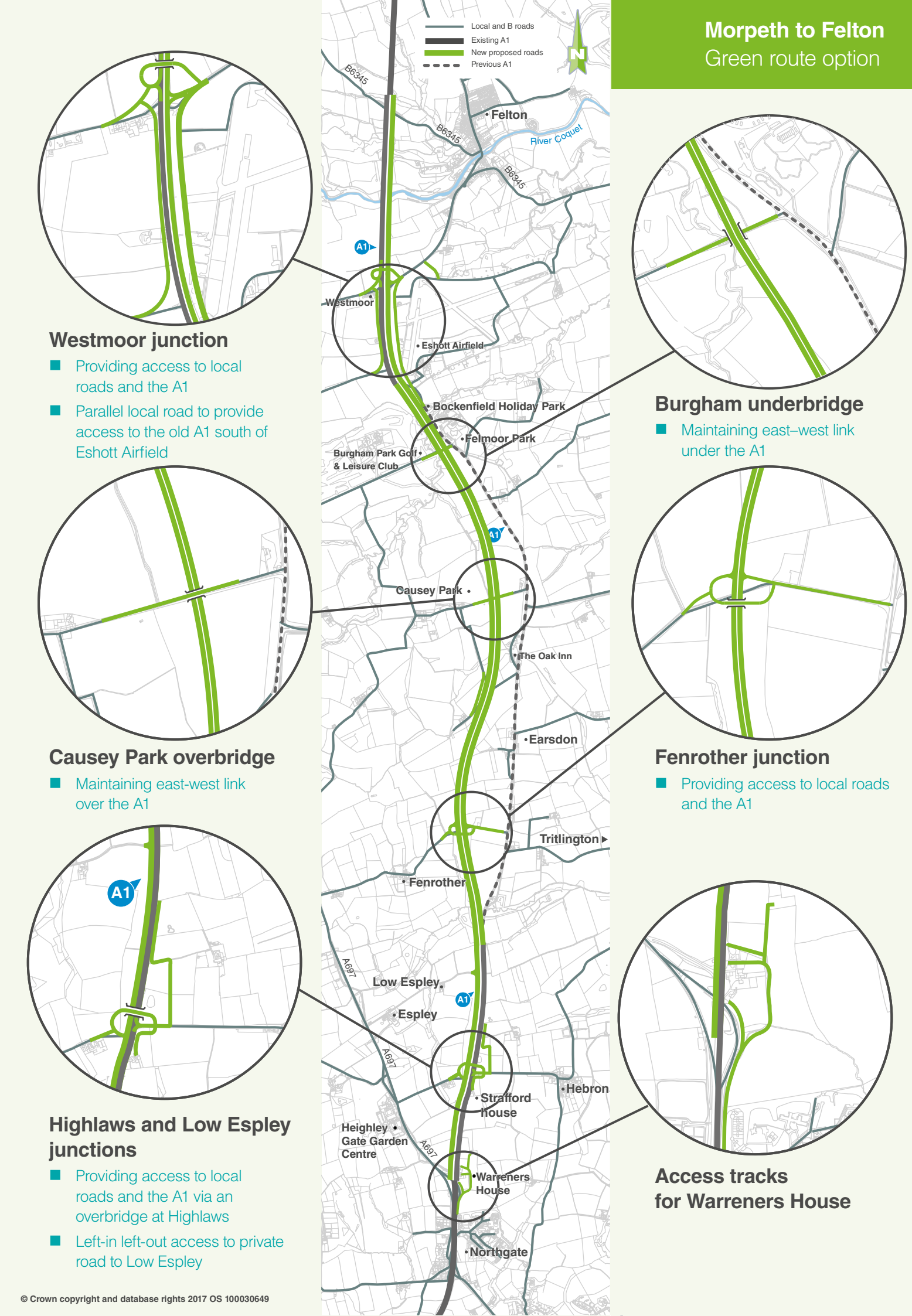
- Consultation feedback
- Cost
- Cost benefit ratio based on economic assessment
- Ease of construction
- Road safety, including alignment and geometric standards
- Impacts on road user satisfaction
- Impacts on pedestrians, cyclists and horse-riders
- Impacts on local communities and landowners
- Environmental impacts

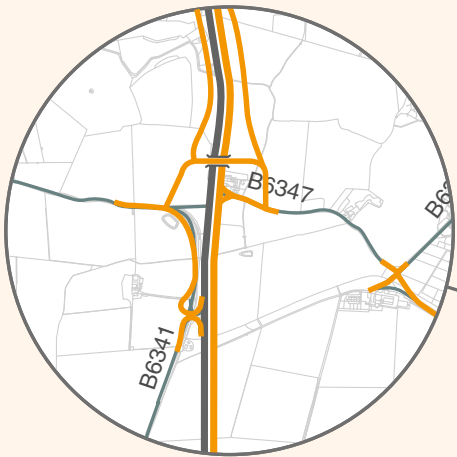
The **Green route option** has been selected as the preferred option between Morpeth and Felton. Along with being the most popular option presented to the public, this also presents the greatest benefits during construction, in terms of building efficiency and worker safety as the majority of the improvement is constructed away from the existing road. It also has the best road alignment for improving safety on the route. Additionally, it also retains the existing A1 to act as a local road after scheme completion, which can be utilised to reduce delays during future routine maintenance. It was also noted that the green route option requires land to be used in its construction.

The **Orange route option** has been selected as the preferred route between Alnwick and Ellingham. Along with the majority of the consultation responses agreeing that this option should be taken forward, it also provides additional network resilience and overtaking opportunities by providing a dual carriageway road standard. Additionally, this improvement provides added safety benefits by providing an overbridge junction connecting B6341, B6347 and the A1 at South Charlton. It was also noted that this improvement will require land to be developed.

Following the consultation responses and our discussions with landowners, we have changed the proposed junction design at South Charlton to improve access for properties in the local area. The new design is shown on the diagram.

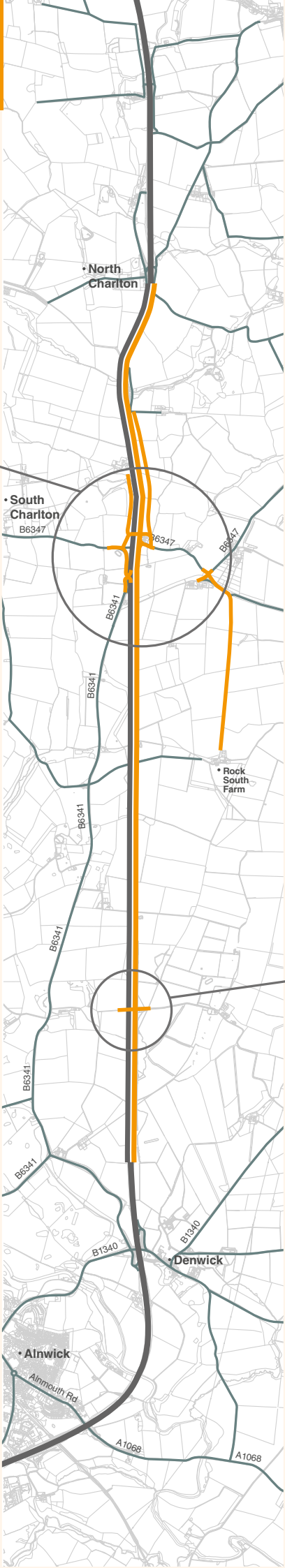
This preferred route safeguards the alignment of the new road from other developments and further details of the scheme design will be developed as the scheme progresses.



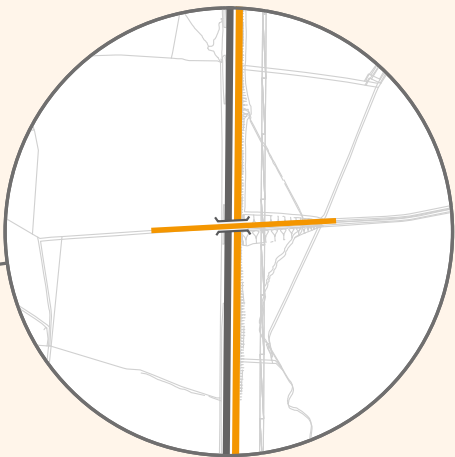


South Charlton junction

- Providing access to local roads and the A1
- Access tracks for West Link Hall and East Link Hall



- Local and B roads
- Existing A1
- New proposed roads



Broxfield occupation bridge

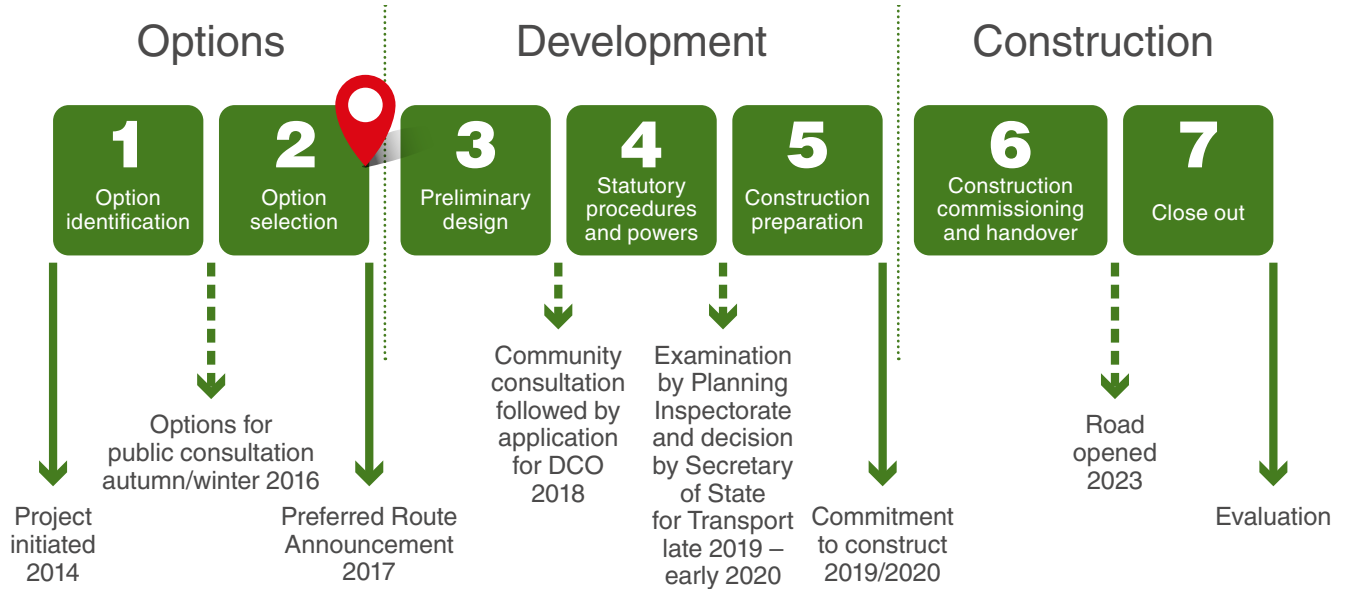
- Maintaining east-west link

What happens next?

Following this Preferred Route Announcement, we will be consulting on the preferred options to gather input into the finer points of the design. In parallel with this, we will also be continuing with work to complete the preliminary design of the improvements. This will include work such as finishing surveys of the local area, including ground investigation and work to understand the nature of the local drainage systems and progress all access arrangements along the route. Our environmental impact assessment will also be completed and this will inform any aspects of the design to reduce or mitigate the environmental impacts.

We will then submit an application for a Development Consent Order to the Planning Inspectorate in 2018 ahead of receiving a decision in late 2019. During this process, you will have the opportunity to register as an interested party with the Planning Inspectorate in order to support or object to the proposals. We will publish details on how to do this on our scheme webpage nearer the time.

Following the decision of the Planning Inspectorate we aim to start the construction work in 2019/20.



Keeping in touch

Our website will be updated as the scheme progresses and will always have the latest news about the project. You can sign up to receive email alerts for any changes that are made to the webpage. You can find it at: www.highways.gov.uk/A1inNorthumberland.

If you have any queries about this improvement scheme please contact the project team directly at **0300 470 4585**. Alternatively, you can email: A1inNorthumberland@highwaysengland.co.uk. A member of the project team will be glad to help.

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

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