

## A1 Elkesley Junctions Improvement Public Exhibition

Welcome to the Highways Agency's February 2008 Elkesley Junctions Improvement public exhibition.

We're holding the exhibition to explain progress on our plans to improve the junctions on the A1 trunk road around Elkesley in Nottinghamshire since the public consultation closed in late 2005.

The exhibition will be held at the Elkesley Memorial Hall in Elkesley High Steet from on Monday 18 February from 2pm to 8pm and on Tuesday 19 February from noon to 7pm, representatives from the Highways Agency and the main designers Mouchel will be available to explain the proposals and answer your questions.

### Why the work is needed

The A1 now carries about 38,000 vehicles per day, many of them heavy good vehicles. At Elkesley, the junction layouts create hazards, and there are no specific facilities for pedestrians, cyclists or horse riders to cross the A1. Journeys to and from Elkesley rely on right-turning and U-turning movements through gaps in the central reservation, and the layout requires traffic accessing the local road network to use a short section of the A1.

These deficiencies were confirmed in the A1 Peterborough to Blyth Route Management Strategy, and in October 2002 the Elkesley junctions were identified as one of the Highways Agency's 92 Priority Action Sites for junction improvements. In 1997, pending improvements to the road layouts, a reduced speed limit of 50mph was introduced along a two-mile section of the A1.

The main requirements of any improvement are identified as:

- Improving A1 access at the Elkesley and Jockey Lane junctions
- Providing local access avoiding the A1

- Closing or improving direct agricultural and other accesses
- Reintroducing the 70mph speed limit in line with national policy
- Improving the layouts of the slip roads at the Twyford Bridge (B6387) junction east of Elkesley
- Improving the forward visibility along the A1 around the Twyford Bridge junction

### 2005 Option A

Option A proposed a new two-level junction northwest of Elkesley with links to the southbound carriageway of the A1, Jockey Lane and Coalpit Lane. The slip roads linking Coalpit Lane with the northbound A1 would be improved and the central reservation gaps closed. A second phase of works would involve closing the Twyford Lane access to the village and replacing the two-way northbound slip road at Twyford Bridge junction with a new slip road further east. This would give Elkesley a high-standard junction allowing full access to and from the A1, remove all through traffic from the village, and improve the operation of the Twyford Bridge junction.

### 2005 Option B

Instead of a new A1 junction, Option B proposed linking Elkesley via Twyford Lane to the B6387 and replacing the Twyford Bridge slip road as under Option A. A roundabout would be built on the B6387 where the new link road and slip road met. The Twyford Lane junction with the A1 would be closed, and the other junctions at Elkesley and Jockey Lane converted to a 'left-on/left-off' arrangement with all central reservation gaps closed. This option would route some traffic through Elkesley and restrict the use of Jockey Lane. An environmental weight limit could be introduced through the village to prevent access by HGVs, although this would involve them in U-turn movements at neighbouring junctions.

## The 2005 exhibited schemes

In 2005 we exhibited two main improvement options.

Both would provide access to the local road network avoiding the A1, and would allow the closure or improvement of all direct agricultural and other accesses and the reintroduction of the national speed limit on the A1.

## Response to Public Consultation – 2006 development of Option A

The 2005 consultation revealed broad support for improving the Elkesley junctions, with Option A strongly favoured. Option B was widely thought unsuitable because it required traffic to pass through the village, in particular the narrow Twyford Lane. We therefore have not developed it any further.

Although Option A was generally supported, many people felt that the bridge and approach road would be too close to the village, which would expose Coalpit Lane residents to traffic intrusion and spoil the view. Some people also noted that HGV traffic travelling between the northbound A1 and the Crookford Hill timber works would still need to use the residential part of Coalpit Lane.

We therefore improved Option A by moving it westwards and introducing a new slip road to remove northbound traffic from Coalpit Lane.

In 2005 we had stated that some options had been rejected because they exceeded the normal cost limit for 'smaller scale' local trunk road improvements. In developing the exhibited Option A, we found that it too then exceeded that limit. Larger schemes can be taken forward, but are likely to wait longer for funding because they are entered into a larger pool of transport schemes regionally.

## Alternative proposal and 2007 review

In October 2006 we decided not to advise the Secretary of State for Transport on the preferred route for the Elkesley Junctions Improvement until we had explored whether a smaller-scale scheme would be possible which would still address most of the identified requirements.

We developed a different and simpler scheme based on the idea that because the numbers of vehicles

using the new junction would be relatively low, it might be possible to reduce the amount of new infrastructure by making more use of the existing junctions. The development of this idea showed that although it would be possible to develop a simple bridge scheme to allow local road network and A1 access at lower cost – within the limit for 'smaller scale' local schemes – this would be less than fully satisfactory in engineering terms and would leave Coalpit Lane residents significantly exposed to traffic intrusion.

In the summer of 2007 we reviewed all the scheme options. It was clear that the identified requirements could only be sufficiently met through a scheme based on the 2006 development of the original Option A (Phase 1). In light of this finding and the priority attached to improving the Elkesley junctions, and after discussions with the Department for Transport and the local highway authority, Nottinghamshire County Council, we hope that such a scheme can be taken forward as a 'smaller scale' local scheme.

## The current proposals – February 2008

We have now developed two versions of a scheme based on the 2005 Option A (Phase 1). They are similar to one another but differ in how they provide for access to and from the northbound A1. Version 1 is very similar to 2005 Option A, moved westwards, whereas version 2 incorporates the new on/off slip road for northbound traffic which was a feature of the 2006 scheme.

We are carrying out technical and other appraisals of these two versions to see which offers the best engineering and environmental solution and the best value for money. Version 2 would remove all HGV traffic from the Coalpit Lane frontages, but it would require all traffic between the village and A1 northbound, in both directions, to use Coalpit Lane and the new bridge approach road.

Both versions would allow the closure or improvement of all direct agricultural and other accesses onto the A1 and provide access to the local road network avoiding the trunk road. However, neither provides at this stage for any work at Twyford Bridge junction. The national speed limit would be restored through the Elkesley section only.

## Lay-by facilities

For road safety reasons, we will need permanently to close the northbound and southbound lay-bys on

the A1 at Elkesley. Laybys contribute to road safety by providing places for drivers to pull over at regular intervals. Other lay-bys have recently been removed at Apleyhead, and so we are looking at how new layby capacity may be provided in the Elkesley area. We have identified possible sites northwest of the village between the Cocked Hat and Tea Table plantations.

### Twyford Bridge Junction and Twyford Lane

Improvements to the Twyford Bridge Junction present differing engineering and other challenges to those at Elkesley, and additionally may depend on developments planned locally. For those reasons, to avoid further delay to the Elkesley Junctions Improvement, we have decided to consider any works to Twyford Bridge junction separately. We are working on outline scheme designs and will bring forward proposals in due course.

Until Twyford Bridge junction is improved, we will retain the 50mph speed limit on that section of the A1. We may also leave Elkesley's Twyford Lane access open, but only as a one-way 'left-off' junction for access into the village. If we do that then we will discuss with Nottinghamshire County Council the imposition of an environmental weight limit to exclude HGVs. On safety grounds we will close the entry to the A1 from Twyford Lane when the works start at Elkesley.

## Scheme benefits and impacts

### Identified benefits of the scheme include:

- Direct access to the local road network for Elkesley residents and businesses, avoiding the A1
- Alternative access route for Elkesley during A1 incidents
- Improved access to and from the A1, avoiding the need to turn across carriageways and reducing driver stress
- Better and safer access for farm traffic
- More reliable journeys for A1 through traffic
- Increased reliability of local bus services
- Better and safer routes for pedestrians, cyclists and horse-riders, creating new journey opportunities

- Reduced severance resulting from the trunk road
- Reduced HGV intrusion at Coalpit Lane (varies by scheme variant)

### Full assessment of the environmental and other impacts is ongoing, but they include:

- Slight lengthening of local journeys to reach new access points
- Loss of some arable land
- Detachment of other arable land
- Loss of hedgerows and mature trees, to be compensated for by new planting
- Visual intrusion of bridge structure, slip roads and lighting, to be mitigated through landscaping and planting
- Intrusion locally of new layby facilities
- Slight increase in the impermeable area of land requiring drainage
- Increased flows of light vehicles on Coalpit Lane (extent varies by scheme variant)
- Disruption during construction, for through traffic, residents and local businesses

## The way forward

The February 2008 exhibition forms part of a process of development and appraisal of the two scheme variants now presented. We hope, subject to responses to the exhibition and the outcome of our appraisals, that we will be able to advise the Secretary of State on the preferred route for the Elkesley Junctions Improvement in the Spring of 2008. That will be followed by the preparation in draft of statutory orders which allow us to take the required land and alter the highway. We will aim to do that early in 2009, and there will then be the chance to comment formally on the detailed proposals.

Depending on the nature and weight of any objections to the orders, a Public Inquiry may be held before an independent inspector. If so, a decision to go ahead with the scheme could only be taken after the Secretary of State had considered the inspector's recommendations.

## Your views

Whether or not you are able to attend the exhibition in person, we welcome your views. You can email us on [a1elkesley@highways.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:a1elkesley@highways.gsi.gov.uk) or write to us at:

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## Further Information

Further copies of this brochure will be available via the Highways Agency Information Line on 08457 504030, at the exhibition and at the following locations:

Worksop Library  
Memorial Avenue  
Worksop  
Nottinghamshire  
S80 2BP

Elkesley Post Office  
Nevasa  
High Street  
Elkesley  
DN22 8AJ

For real time traffic information:

**08700 660 115**

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For general Highways Agency information:

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(Calls from BT landlines to 0845 numbers will cost no more than 4p per minute; mobile calls usually cost more)

## Safe driving at roadworks

*Remember that tiredness can kill. Take regular breaks from driving.*



**During 2006 two workers were killed and 19 seriously injured in the course of their work on Highways Agency roads.**

For the safety of all road users and roadworkers, when you are approaching roadworks:

- Keep within the speed limit – it is there for your safety.
- Get into the correct lane in good time – don't keep switching.
- Concentrate on the road ahead, not the roadworks.
- Be alert for works' traffic leaving or entering roadworks.
- Keep a safe distance – there could be queues in front.
- Observe all signs – they are there to help you.