

A19 Testos Junction Improvement

Introduction

In 2002 the Tyneside Area Multi Modal Study (TAMMS) recommended that the Testos Junction on the A19 be improved. The scheme has been considered a priority since 2006 by the NE Regional Transport Board who support the scheme's continued development as part of an overall route strategy for the A19. The Highways Agency has been assessing the options, and a public consultation exhibition will be held to explain the proposals - details of venue and times are shown on the back of this leaflet.

The purpose of this consultation is to seek the views of local councils, organisations and people living, working and travelling in the area. A questionnaire is included in this leaflet, and we would welcome your views on the proposals.

Need for improvement

Testos is the junction of the A19 and the A184, south of Newcastle. The A19 is a strategic route that provides an alternative to the A1 between North Yorkshire and North Tyneside. It also provides links between Tyneside, Wearside and Teesside. The junction has both local and regional importance. The junction previously suffered a high accident rate. In 2001 traffic signals were installed, which reduced congestion and improved safety. But the junction in its present form still presents problems for drivers. Expected growth in traffic means that the roundabout will become a bottleneck, resulting in longer delays and more severe congestion, increasing driver frustration.

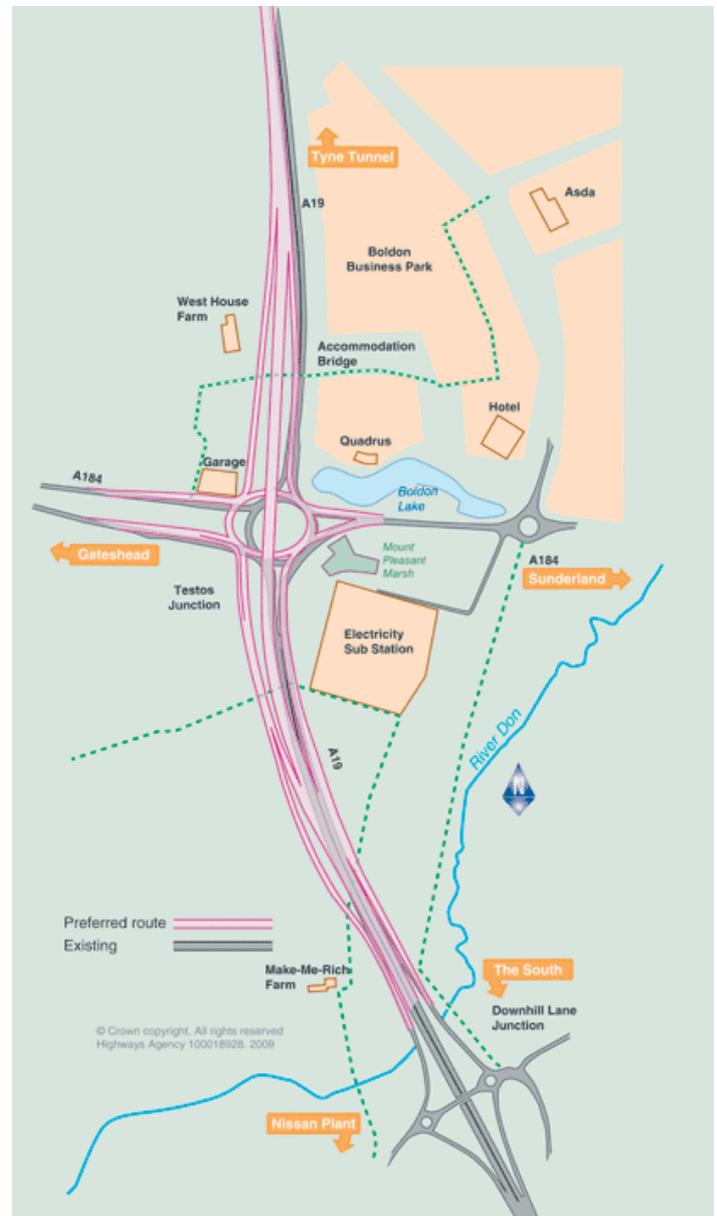
Scheme objectives

The objectives of the scheme are to

- Improve road safety at the junction
- Relieve congestion associated with the roundabout
- Minimise the environmental impact of the proposals and compensate for them where possible.

Scheme proposals

The Highway Agency's preferred option is an on-line (follows the existing A19) improvement scheme. This involves raising the A19 carriageway above ground on an embankment and carrying it over the existing roundabout, slightly to the west, via two bridges. Access to Downhill Lane junction would be via parallel link roads connecting to the new south-facing slip roads of Testos Junction.



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Reasons for the preferred option

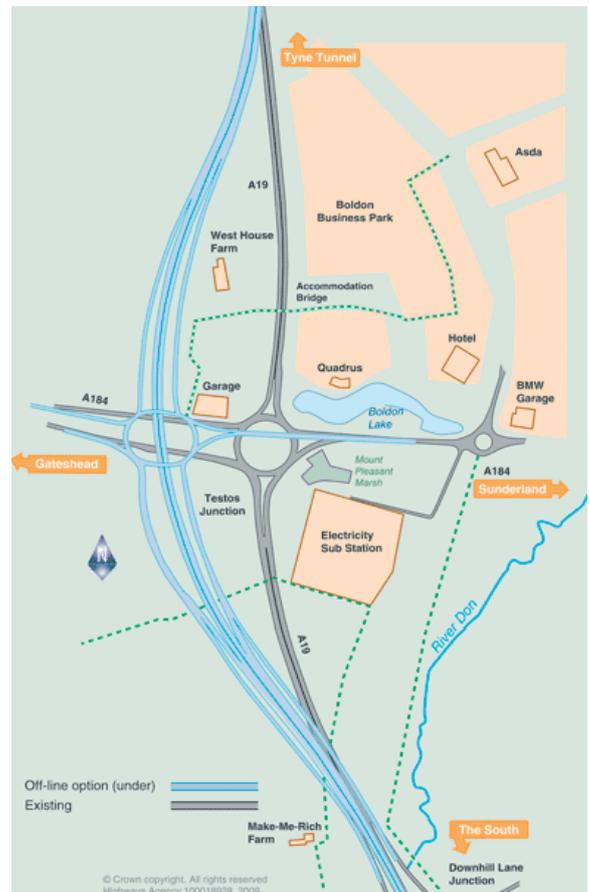
Compared to the off-line options the on-line option:

- is significantly cheaper and provides greater value for money - greater benefits at lower cost
- requires less land and has the least damaging impact on the environment.

A consultation has already been undertaken with selected stakeholders, several of whom represent the interests of the community. Many support the proposals and no objections have been raised.

The first off-line option, which veers away from the existing A19 before re-joining it, has a similar layout to the online option in terms of junction arrangement, with the roundabout at ground level and the A19 passing over the new roundabout on embankment and two bridges. The proposed roundabout would be located approximately 200m to the west of the existing roundabout.

A second off-line option, which veers away from the existing A19 before re-joining it, was also considered. This option proposed the A19 at ground level passing beneath a raised roundabout. The roundabout would also be located approximately 200m west of the existing roundabout.



Other options were considered, including further improvements to the existing junction involving a new road through the middle of the roundabout. This was rejected on the basis that it would not improve safety at the junction.

The Environment

The protection of the environment is very important to the Highways Agency. Our environmental specialists work very closely with the design team and are involved in all the key decisions. Environmental studies which compare the effects of each option have been completed. On balance, the on-line option was preferable. The effects of the preferred route will be assessed in detail in an environmental statement. As part of this work we are consulting a wide range of national and local bodies, including all the relevant planning authorities, Natural England, the Environment Agency and English Heritage. An environmental specialist will be at the public consultation exhibitions to answer your questions about the potential effects of the scheme options. Some of the key environmental issues we are looking at are:

- the effects of changes in noise levels, vibration and air quality
- the visual impacts on local residents, buildings and rights of way
- the proximity to sensitive water bodies, including the River Don and Boldon Lake and their protection from pollution
- the proximity to sensitive ecological features or protected species
- the opportunity to improve the local network of footpaths and bridleways
- the possibility of finding archaeological remains.

How you can be involved

You can let us have your comments by completing the questionnaire online.

Please return your completed questionnaire by **22 June 2009**. Please try and visit the exhibition where the scheme details will be on display. The Highways Agency, consultants and contractors will be available to discuss the proposal and answer your questions. This will inform a government announcement on the preferred route.

You will have further opportunity to comment for or against future detailed proposals when they are published under the Highways Act. Proposals will be on display as part of the publication of the Draft Orders in 2011.

What happens next

Following the exhibitions, we will analyse the feedback and returns from stakeholders and customers. Your views are important to us and we will carefully consider them, together with those of our stakeholders and other bodies, during the development of the proposals. Our preference for the online option is provisional and your comments will be fully considered before any firm decisions are taken.

Exhibition Dates and Times

**A public exhibition will be held at
Quality Hotel, Boldon
Witney Way, Jct. A19/A184
Boldon NE35 9PE**

on

**Friday 27th March 2pm - 8pm
Saturday 28th March 10am - 6pm
Sunday 29th March 10am - 6pm
Monday 30th March 10am - 1pm**

Please try to attend, we look forward to seeing you.



If you need help using this or any other Highways Agency information, please call **08457 50 40 30** and we will assist you.

For real time traffic information:

08700 660 115

www.highways.gov.uk/trafficinfo

24 hours a day, 365 days a year

For general Highways Agency information:

08457 50 40 30

email: ha_info@highways.gsi.gov.uk

24 hours a day, 365 days a year

*Calls from BT landlines to 0845 numbers will cost no more than 4p per minute and to 0870 numbers no more than 8p per minute, mobile calls usually cost more.

Safety at roadworks



The Highways Agency is working with the industry and road users to reduce the risks of working on the roads.

For the safety of roadworkers and all road users, 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.