

A1 North of Newcastle  
Feasibility Study  
Scope Document

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## **1. DOCUMENT PURPOSE AND STATUS**

- 1.1 This document sets out the scope of the A1 North of Newcastle Feasibility Study. It has been developed by the Department for Transport in conjunction with the Highways Agency and sets out the scope, timing, and management arrangements of the study.

## **2. INTRODUCTION**

- 2.1 Following the 2013 Spending Review, the Government announced its plans for the biggest ever upgrade of the strategic national roads network. The HM Treasury document, Investing in Britain's Future (July 2013) set out details of the programmes of infrastructure investment, which included the tripling of annual investment on Highways Agency major roads enhancements from today's levels to over £3bn by 2020/21.
- 2.2 As part of that investment programme, the Government announced that it will identify and fund solutions, initially through feasibility studies to look at problems and identify potential solutions to tackle some of the most notorious and long-standing road hot spots in the country. The locations identified were as follows:
  - The A303/A30/A358 corridor
  - The A1 North of Newcastle
  - The A1 Newcastle-Gateshead Western Bypass
  - The A27 Corridor (including Arundel and Worthing)
  - Trans-Pennine routes
- 2.3 In addition, the Secretary of State announced on 20th August 2013 that the Department would undertake a further feasibility study on the A47 corridor between Peterborough and Great Yarmouth.
- 2.4 These studies are to be progressed alongside the Highways Agency's Route Based Strategy programme which is considering the current and future performance of the entire network, to inform future investment decisions.

## **3. BACKGROUND AND STUDY NEED**

- 3.1 The A1 North of Newcastle, through Northumberland, forms an important strategic route between England and Scotland, especially for long distance traffic on the eastern side of the country. The Government has recognised the importance of the route particularly its role in facilitating the movements of freight and its role in providing transport connectivity between the UK's capital cities.
- 3.2 The route also caters for local commuters and agricultural traffic. There are about 37 miles in total over the three remaining undualled sections of the A1 North of Newcastle. Traffic volumes on this length of road are low in comparison

with other parts of the network given the small centres of population and the absence of significant centres of employment.

- 3.3 The case for dualling the remaining sections of single carriageway of the A1 north of Newcastle was considered in the 2002 A1 (North of Newcastle) Multi Modal Study (A1MMS). The Study concluded that there was not an adequate justification on economic grounds to dual the whole of the remaining A1 North of Newcastle but that this should be reviewed were surrounding sections of A1 upgraded or where there were changes in traffic flows and accident rates.
- 3.4 In responding to A1MMS study, the Secretary of State agreed to the development of proposals to dual the 8 mile section of road between Morpeth and Felton, and the 2.5 mile section between Adderstone and Belford. Proposals were developed at both locations, but in 2006 the then interim Regional Transport Board for the North East did not identify either of the schemes for the A1 as a funding priority for the period up to 2016.
- 3.5 Since that time there have been a number of calls to revisit the case for dualling the A1 north of Newcastle both in terms of addressing the accident record of the A1, and the impacts that incidents can cause but also in terms of improving connectivity between Newcastle and Scotland.
- 3.6 A specific 'Dual the A1 Campaign', has called upon Government to establish the transport business case for improvements to the A1, citing the views expressed in a recent survey of businesses that the lack of a fully dualled A1 was a key barrier to growth.
- 3.7 The Government understands the importance of considering this issue, with the Chancellor of the Exchequer in his 2012 Autumn Statement making clear that the Department for Transport would be looking at what work would be necessary to develop proposals for improving the A1 north of Newcastle. This commitment was reiterated in the 2013 Spending Round with the establishment of this specific feasibility study.

## **4. STUDY AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

### **Study Aims**

4.1 The aim of the study is:

- To establish the potential business case for dualling the remaining sections of the A1 north of Newcastle, and to consider the potential economic cases for other transport investment opportunities on the route.

### **Study Objectives**

4.2 The specific objectives of the study are to:

- a) Identify and assess the economic business case, deliverability and timing of proposals to complete the dualling of the A1 North of Newcastle.

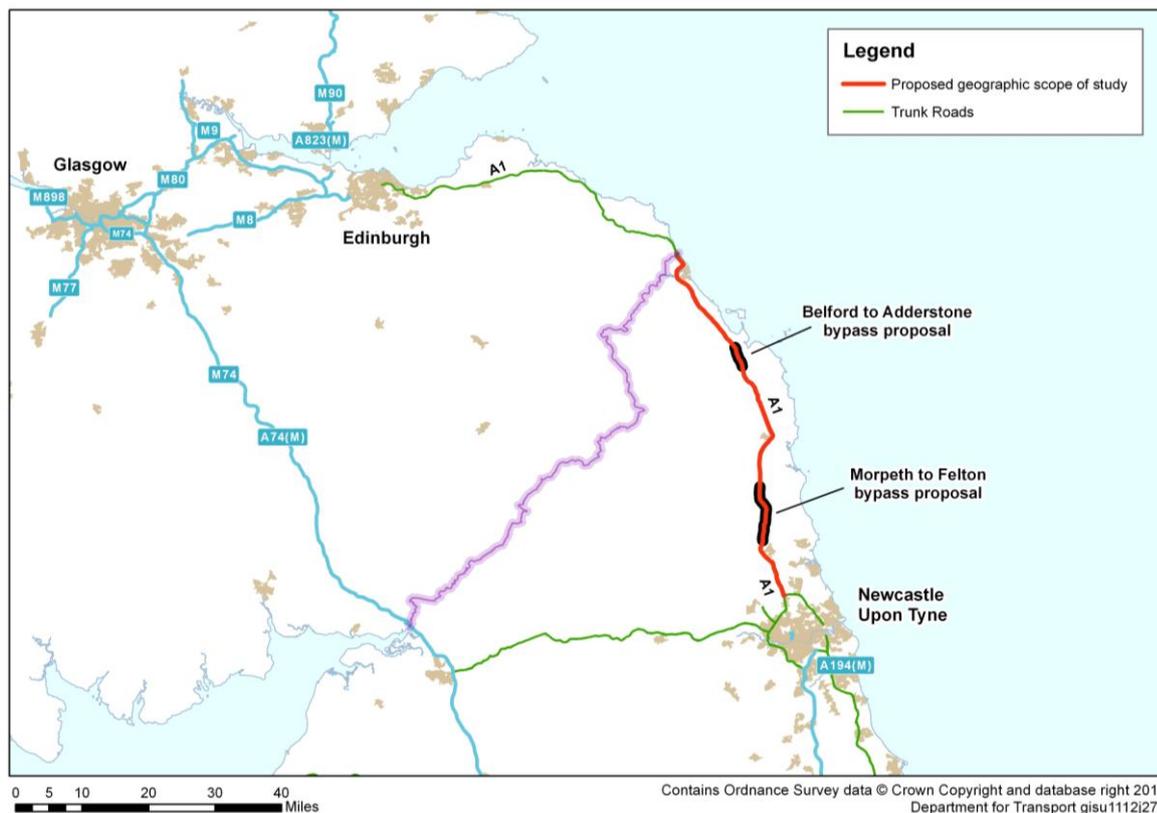
- b) Identify and assess the economic business case, deliverability and timing of potential specific road infrastructure investments along the A1 corridor north of Newcastle.
- c) Understand the comparative balance of benefits and impacts from individual investment proposals and any additional benefits or impacts from an investment on a corridor basis.
- d) Evidence where possible, the wider economic impacts from the potential road infrastructure investment in the A1 corridor.

## 5. GEOGRAPHIC AND MODAL SCOPE

### Geographic Scope

5.1 The geographic scope of the study will consider the length of the A1 from its junction with the A19 to the north of Newcastle to where the A1 meets the Scottish Border. A map of the proposed geographical scope of the study is included at Figure 1 below

Figure 1: Proposed geographic scope of A1 North of Newcastle study



### Modal Scope

5.2 The modal scope of the study will be predominantly road-based and would need to understand the details of performance and current investment proposals on the identified parts of the strategic road network. It will also need to understand any improvements planned to the surrounding strategic road network and surrounding transport systems, including local road and rail networks.

- 5.3 It is not proposed to consider specific issues or proposals in relation to other parts of the strategic road network in the vicinity, as the case for further future investment will be considered as part of the Highways Agency's London to Scotland East and North Pennine Route Based Strategy, or within other specific feasibility studies.

## 6. QUESTIONS TO BE ADDRESSED

- 6.1 There are a number of questions that need to be addressed as part of the study work, and these are set out below.
1. Given an assessment of current and future performance of the A1 North of Newcastle, is there an economic case for dualling the remaining sections of the route?
  2. With updated analysis on costs and benefits are there now economic cases for potential road investments on the A1 North of Newcastle that are deliverable and demonstrate value for money?
  3. What are the potential timescales for the delivery of identified potential solutions?
  4. Are there additional benefits or impacts from combinations of potential solutions over and above those for individual solutions?
  5. Have the potential solutions identified fully considered and optimised the environmental opportunities potential transport investment could bring?
  6. To what extent do the proposed road investments provide wider economic impacts in terms of facilitating growth or improved connectivity?
  7. To what degree do the potential options for investment address issues around the resilience of the A1 North of Newcastle and/or address issues around the safety performance of the route?
  8. Is further work/analysis required for Government to be able to make specific investment decisions, and if so what are the timescale of such work?
- 6.2 These questions should be addressed by completing the study objectives.

## 7. STUDY STAGES

- 7.1 The study will be completed in accordance with WebTag guidance and in several stages which are set out below.

### **Stage 1: Review of evidence and identification of problems along the corridor**

The study would review any relevant evidence gathered as part of phase 1 of the Highways Agency's London to Scotland East route based strategy, together with evidence from other relevant study work and analysis and form a view as to the

nature and scale of current and future performance of the A1 North of Newcastle.

The study would also look to set out details of previous historical work and decisions taken in terms of the approach to investment or management of the A1 North of Newcastle with the aim of reaching agreement on the historical position in relation to previous investment proposals.

The study would also need to establish both the availability of transport modelling and the need to undertake specific transport modelling necessary to provide analysis that would be needed to evidence answers to some of the questions to be addressed in the study.

### **Stage 2: Work to finalise the range of infrastructure proposals that could address the problems along the corridor**

Once the problems along the route have been identified, the study should review previous work, including the A1MMS and other related study work to identify infrastructure proposals that could address the problems.

This stage should culminate in the production of an Option Assessment Report (step 8, as set out in [Stage 1: Option Development of the Transport Appraisal Process](#)).

### **Stage 3: Work to assess the affordability, value for money and deliverability of prioritised infrastructure proposals**

Work should be completed using the Department's transport appraisal guidance to develop or refresh strategic outline business cases for each of the prioritised infrastructure proposals.

Work should also be completed to consider the benefits and business cases for each of the transport investment proposals as well as the cumulative or additional benefits and impacts from investment in the corridor as whole.

This stage should also document any additional work necessary for Government to be able to make an investment decision on one/all of the infrastructure proposals. The length of time needed to complete this additional work should also be documented.

## **8. POTENTIAL OPTIONS TO BE CONSIDERED**

- 8.1 The study will need to consider a range of individual potential investment proposals and potentially combinations of investment propositions. However, the study will look to initially build on work done to date on potential proposals, rather than complete a specific fresh process of identification of investment proposals.
- 8.2 The study will need to draw upon a range of completed or recent related work in term of studies or strategies for the A1 North of Newcastle. The study would therefore take as its starting point, the proposals recommended by the Secretary of State in their response to the 2002 A1MMS, and any other proposals recommended from other, more recent, related study work.

- 8.3 Below are references to a number of related pieces of work which the study may need to consider. The list is not exhaustive and may be added to in light of discussions/engagement with stakeholders.
- Access to Tyne & Wear Study (Department for Transport, 2010)
  - The North East's Missing Link – The need for a transport business case to dual the A1 from Morpeth to the Scottish Border (Dual the A1 Campaign, June 2012)
  - North East Independent Economic Review Report (April 2013)
- 8.4 The study will include consideration of the proposals to dual the A1 between Morpeth and Felton and proposals to dual the A1 between Adderstone and Belford.
- 8.5 The study would however not rule out consideration of other investment proposals and would need to capture details of potential investment proposals that would emerge from the first phase of the London to Scotland East Route Based Strategy that is within the study's geographic scope.
- 8.6 In considering potential investment options, the study needs to recognise the advice provided within national planning guidance in relation to development proposed within nationally designated areas. The guidance makes clear that great weight should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in nationally designated areas. National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty have the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty. Each of these designated areas has specific statutory purposes which help ensure their continued protection and which the Secretary of State has a statutory duty to have regard to in decisions.<sup>1</sup>
- 8.7 Agreement on the finalised or prioritised list of investment proposals would need to be agreed as part of the study process.

## 9. STUDY OUTPUTS

- 9.1 The study will need to consider a range of individual potential investment proposals and potentially combinations of investment propositions.

### **Stage 1: Review of evidence and identification of problems along the corridor**

A report which summarises the evidence gathered as part of the stage 1 London to Scotland East RBS and other relevant study work and analysis and sets out the problems/issues along the route.

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<sup>1</sup> National Planning Guidance is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework, and the draft National Networks National Policy Statement. The Department's consultation on the National Network National Policy Statement (NNNPS) closed on 26 February 2014 and the Department is currently considering consultation responses and will respond later this year. Should the planning policy adopted in the NNNPS affect the feasibility studies, this will be given due regard within the study work.

## **Stage 2: Work to identify the range of infrastructure proposals that could address the problems along the corridor**

Produce an Option Assessment report (step 8, as set out in [Stage 1: Option Development of the Transport Appraisal Process](#)), which will be presented to the project board, which sets out the range of proposals that could address the problems along the corridor.

## **Stage 3: Work to assess the affordability, value for money and deliverability of prioritised infrastructure proposals**

Where possible, to document the appraisal of a small number of better performing options to strategic business case level (or as detailed and robust an appraisal as can be achieved within the timescale).

To also produce a strategic outline business case for addressing the identified problems on the corridor, including the Adderstone to Belford and Morpeth to Felton dualling schemes and determine whether considering the corridor as a whole produces more benefits than considering each proposal in isolation.

To also document the further work necessary to develop proposals to the stage to which Government would be able to take an investment decisions if strategic outline business case level could not be reached in the time available.

## **10. GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS**

10.1 In order to manage and oversee the work within the study, the following governance and management arrangements have been established.

### **Study Project Board**

10.2 The day to day control of the study will be undertaken by a Project Board, made up of representatives from the Department for Transport and the Highways Agency.

10.3 The Project Board's role is to:

- Ensure agreement to the scope of the study, aims, timings and outputs of the study, and agree any amendments to the study's activities as the study progresses
- Provide day to day control of the study
- Take decisions as necessary throughout the life of the study and decide which decisions should be escalated or made by others
- Monitor progress against plan and review significant risks and issues

10.4 As the study progresses there may be a need to establish specific technical or working groups to take forward defined activities. Decisions on the establishment and membership of such groups would be for the Project Board to consider.

## Study Reference Group

- 10.5 Given the range of stakeholder interest in the study a Study Reference Group has been established. The Group will meet at the end of each stage of the study.
- 10.6 The main role of the Reference Group is to ensure stakeholders' views are captured and considered during the study process, particularly at key points in the study's work and at times of the development of key outputs.
- 10.7 The establishment of the Reference Group would allow stakeholder organisations to be aware and feed into the work of the study and allow representation from other organisations.
- 10.8 The current membership of the Reference Group can be found in Annex A. The membership of this group will be kept under review as the study progresses to ensure that it continues to capture stakeholder views throughout the study process.

## 11. KEY MILESTONES

- 11.1 The following key milestones have been established for the study. These milestones will be kept under review as the study progresses, and may be subject to amendment if required.

<b>Milestone</b>	<b>Completion date</b>
Establishment of Stakeholder Reference Group and completion of evidence gathering.	End of March 2014
Completion of stage 2 of study - identify the range of infrastructure proposals that could address the problems along the corridor	End of July 2014
Completion of stage 3 of study - work to assess the affordability, value for money and deliverability of prioritised infrastructure proposals	Autumn 2014

## **ANNEX A: MEMBERSHIP OF STUDY REFERENCE GROUP**

A1. The initial membership of the A1 North of Newcastle Reference Group is as follows:

Local Highway and Planning Authorities:

- Newcastle City Council
- Northumberland County Council
- Tyne and Wear Integrated Passenger Transport Authority

Local Economic Partnerships

- North East Local Enterprise Partnership

Statutory bodies

- Natural England

Other Organisations

- Dual the A1 Campaign
- The Wildlife Trusts

Members of Parliament

- Rt. Hon Sir Alan Beith MP