

A47/A12 Corridor  
Feasibility Study  
Scope Document

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

- 1.1 This document sets out the scope of the A47/A12 corridor 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 A47 forms part of the strategic road network (SRN) between Peterborough and Great Yarmouth via King's Lynn, Dereham and Norwich. The road is predominantly single carriageway, with a dualled bypass to Norwich and a handful of other short dualled sections. On single carriageway sections of the route, traffic is between 14,000 and 22,000 vehicles a day, or moderately busy. Around Norwich and King's Lynn the road is of higher quality, and takes more traffic.

- 3.2 The 2002 Norwich to Peterborough Multi Modal Study proposed dualling a number of sections of the A47 in the short and long term. It also proposed a number of junction improvements.
- 3.3 In his response to the Norwich to Peterborough Multi Modal Study, the Secretary of State did not ask the Highways Agency to prioritise any improvements to the A47. He pointed out that improvements were planned to the A11 (Fiveways to Thetford) and A14 (Ellington to Fen Ditton) which would significantly improve access to East Anglia. He went on to say that the case for significant improvements to the A47 should be considered further in the light of the performance of these two schemes in improving transport links to East Anglia.
- 3.4 In 2006, as part of the Regional Funding Advice process the East of England Regional Assembly prioritised Blofield to Burlingham dualling (east of Norwich) as a priority scheme. Proposals to dual this section were not however prioritised during the RFA process in 2009. This scheme was one of seven to be cancelled in 2010, as it had little prospect of being built in the foreseeable future. No other schemes on the A47 were prioritised in the 2006 or 2009 RFA processes
- 3.5 In 2012, the A47 Alliance set out a business case to transform the 105 miles of the A47 into a strategic link between Central/Northern Europe, the Midlands and the North. The proposition contains a number of investment proposals on the strategic road network.
- 3.6 Norfolk County Council's 2012 Wider Economic Benefit Study concluded that were the road improvements to take place there would be, within 20 years, around 9,600 jobs and an increase of around £400m per annum GVA, equating to a Net Present Value of £3bn. There could also be an additional £820m of private investment and an average of 500 additional investment jobs over the 20 year period.
- 3.7 Comprehensive improvement of the A47 west of Norwich is a strategic aspiration of the County Council in order to capitalise on the potential economic regeneration benefits of improved accessibility to the Midlands and the North. In addition, it has been felt that the poor safety record of the route would be dramatically improved by dualling.
- 3.8 In December 2013 Government announced a Greater Norwich City Deal. The Deal's ambition for Greater Norwich is to enable knowledge based industries to develop and grow and the ambition includes the need to help in delivering critical infrastructure, including improvements to the A47 in the location.

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

### **Study Aims**

- 4.1 The aim of the study is:
  - To identify the opportunities and understand the case for future investment solutions on the A47/A12 corridor that are deliverable, affordable and offer value for money.
- 4.2 The specific objectives of the study are to:

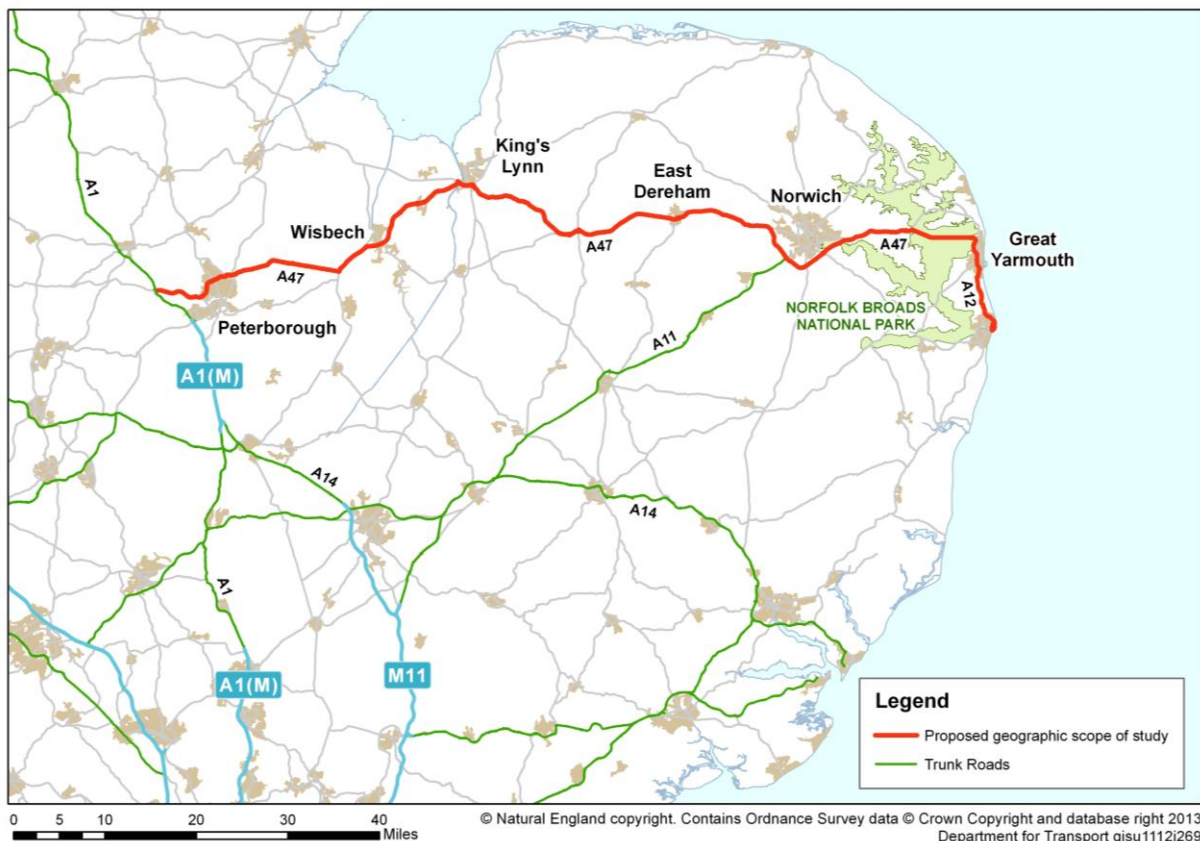
- a) Identify and assess the case, deliverability and timing of specific road investments that address existing and future problems on the A47/A12 corridor.
- b) Understand the balance of benefits and impacts from potential individual investment proposals and any additional benefits or impacts from an investment on a corridor basis.
- c) Evidence where possible, the wider economic benefits from investment in the corridor.

## 5. GEOGRAPHIC AND MODAL SCOPE

### Geographic Scope

5.1 The geographic scope of the study should consider the A47, from its junction with the A1 to the West of Peterborough, through to Great Yarmouth, and would include the section of the A12 from its junction with the A47 to the south-side of the Bascule Bridge in Lowestoft. A map of the proposed geographical scope of the study is included at Figure 1 below.

**Figure 1: Proposed geographic scope of A47/A12 study**



## Modal Scope

- 5.2 The modal scope of the study will be predominantly road-based but would need to consider potential local transport improvements, and the interaction between the A47/A12 corridor and the local road network.
- 5.3 It is not proposed to consider specific issues or proposals in relation to other parts of the motorway or trunk road network in the vicinity, as the case for further investment is being considered as part of the Highways Agency's East of England Route Based Strategy.

## 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 the assessment of current and future performance of the A47/A12 corridor are there specific priority location/problems that should be addressed?
  2. Are there viable potential solutions to these problems which are deliverable, affordable and offer 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. Is there evidence of the impact of investment in potential solutions on the resilience of the road network?
  6. Have the potential solutions identified fully considered and optimised the environmental opportunities and mitigation that potential transport investment could bring?
  7. 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 East of England route based strategy, together with

evidence from other relevant study work and analysis, including the A47 Alliance prospectus, and form a view as to the nature and scale of current and future performance along the A47/A12 route.

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 A47/A12 corridor 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 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 both the Norwich to Peterborough Multi Modal study and the A47 Alliance prospectus to identify infrastructure proposals that would 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](#)) or the potential equivalents for the rail and local road network.

### **Stage 3: Work to assess the affordability, value for money and deliverability of prioritised infrastructure proposals 2014**

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 of taking a corridor approach to the proposals as compared to assessing the benefits of individual proposals.

Due to the time constraints of the study it may not be possible to develop full strategic outline business cases for each of the prioritised infrastructure proposals. This stage should also document any additional work necessary for Government to be able to make an investment decision in 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 A47/A12 corridor. The study would therefore

take as its starting point the identified proposals from the work undertaken by the A47 Alliance and details of potential investment proposals that emerge from the first phase of the East of England Route Based Strategy, or other investment planning proposals such as the City Deal and the draft Strategic Economic Plan developed by the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership.

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.

- The Norwich to Peterborough Multi-Modal Study (2002)
- Potential for Economic Impacts Associated with Improvements to the A47 (Norfolk County Council, April 2012)
- A47 Strategic Route - Gateway to Growth – (A47 Alliance, November 2012)
- Greater Norwich City Deal (December 2013)
- Draft Strategic Economic Plan (New Anglia LEP, December 2013)

8.4 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>

8.5 Agreement on the finalised or prioritised list of investment proposals would need to be agreed as part of the study process.

## 9. STUDY OUTPUTS AND TIMINGS

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 East of England 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 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

10.3 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 This section provides the key milestones put forward 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> |
|---|------------------------|
| Completion of stage 1 of study – evidence gathering and problem prioritisation  | 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 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 THE STUDY REFERENCE GROUP**

A.1 The initial membership of the A47/A12 Reference Group is as follows:

Local Highway and Planning Authorities:

- Norfolk County Council
- Cambridgeshire County Council
- Suffolk County Council
- Peterborough City Council
- Waveney District Council

Local Economic Partnerships:

- New Anglia LEP
- Greater Cambridgeshire and Greater Peterborough LEP

Statutory Bodies:

- Natural England
- The Broads Authority
- English Heritage

Other organisations:

- A47 Alliance
- RSPB
- The Broads Society
- The Wildlife Trusts
- Campaign for Better Transport
- RAC Foundation

Members of Parliament:

- George Freeman MP
- Elizabeth Truss MP

