

Project update

Read about our latest design

A47/A11 Thickthorn junction improvements

Investing in the A47

The A47 is an important connection linking the cities of Norwich and Peterborough, the towns of Wisbech, Kings Lynn, Dereham, Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft and a succession of villages in what is largely a rural area.

As part of a multi-billion investment to improve journeys on England's major A-roads and motorways, the Government is funding a package of six projects on the 115-mile stretch of the A47 between Peterborough and Great Yarmouth. Together, the proposals will relieve congestion and improve the reliability of journey times for drivers.

The projects include converting almost eight miles of single carriageway to dual carriageway and improving key junctions along the A47 road.

The other A47 road improvement projects are:

- A47 Wansford to Sutton dualling
- A47/A141 Guyhirn junction
- A47 North Tuddenham to Easton dualling
- A47 Blofield to North Burlingham dualling
- A47 Great Yarmouth junction



Why are the Thickthorn junction improvements needed?

The A47/A11 Thickthorn junction is already important for commuter, business and commercial traffic, whether on short or long-distance journeys.

Committed developments in Cringleford and Hethersett are expected to increase traffic at Thickthorn junction and the A11/Round House Way junction significantly by 2026.

Around 3,000 new homes are potentially planned near the junction, as well as new commercial businesses. These are also likely to increase congestion near the junction.

The current junction will be unable to cope with the likely increases in traffic. Our proposed changes will help by re-routing traffic away from the existing junction to relieve congestion, reduce journey times, support economic growth and make the road better for motorists, as well as walkers, cyclists and horse riders.

Project benefits

By delivering these improvements to the junction, we aim to:

- improve road safety for motorists and for those living near the junction
- reduce congestion, make journey times more reliable, and increase capacity for future traffic growth
- help the road cope better if there are vehicle collisions or breakdowns, and during road maintenance
- help support regional housing and economic growth in Norwich and the surrounding areas
- help protect the environment by minimising adverse impacts and, where possible, deliver benefits
- consider local communities and their access to the roads
- provide a safer route between communities for cyclists, walkers, horse riders and other non-motorist groups

How you've been involved

In early 2017, we held a public consultation on options to gain your feedback on our proposal and to help shape our plan to improve the Thickthorn junction at an early stage. Over 250 people attended the three days of public events and we received 185 responses to the consultation. Around 74% supported the need to improving the junction and agreed our proposal would be beneficial in reducing congestion and improve journey times.

After considering the feedback, the option taken to consultation was selected as the preferred route with some modifications.

We then developed our design to take into account the concerns raised by the public around the Cantley Lane link. We held a further statutory consultation between June and July 2019, where the public and other consultees were asked for their views on the proposed new junction layout. Over 500 people attended the statutory consultation events and we received 237 responses.



What's happened since the statutory consultation?

Following the summer 2019 consultation we analysed all the responses and engaged with key stakeholders and affected landowners to fully understand the feedback received.

Based on the feedback, we have refined our proposals to address the common themes and concerns raised, whilst ensuring that the project solves the traffic problem, improves journey times and improves safety as key considerations.

Meanwhile, the proposed Park and Ride extension, Round House Way improvements and local housing developments are progressing; and the proposed route for the Norwich Western Link has been announced.

Engagement is ongoing with utility providers to plan for any pipes or cables to be moved.

We've undertaken several surveys, with more to be completed before winter 2020.

Local Road Traffic Survey	Completed	Winter 2019
Air Quality Monitoring	Completed	Winter 2019 to spring 2020
Archaeological Trenching	Ongoing	Summer 2020
Supplementary Ground Investigations	Scheduled	Autumn 2020
Ecological Surveys	Ongoing	Spring 2020 to winter 2020

For more information on the project, visit our webpage at www.highwaysengland.co.uk/A47-thickthorn-junction

A number of responses to the statutory consultation suggested that the proposed Cantley Lane link road be replaced by a new layout at Station Lane instead. We have assessed various solutions for Cantley Lane South: you can read these in the Side Road Strategy Options Report found at www.highwaysengland.co.uk/A47-thickthorn-junction. The report shows that the current proposal is the best option. Please see Appendix E of the report for more information on our assessment of the side road options.

Our proposed design

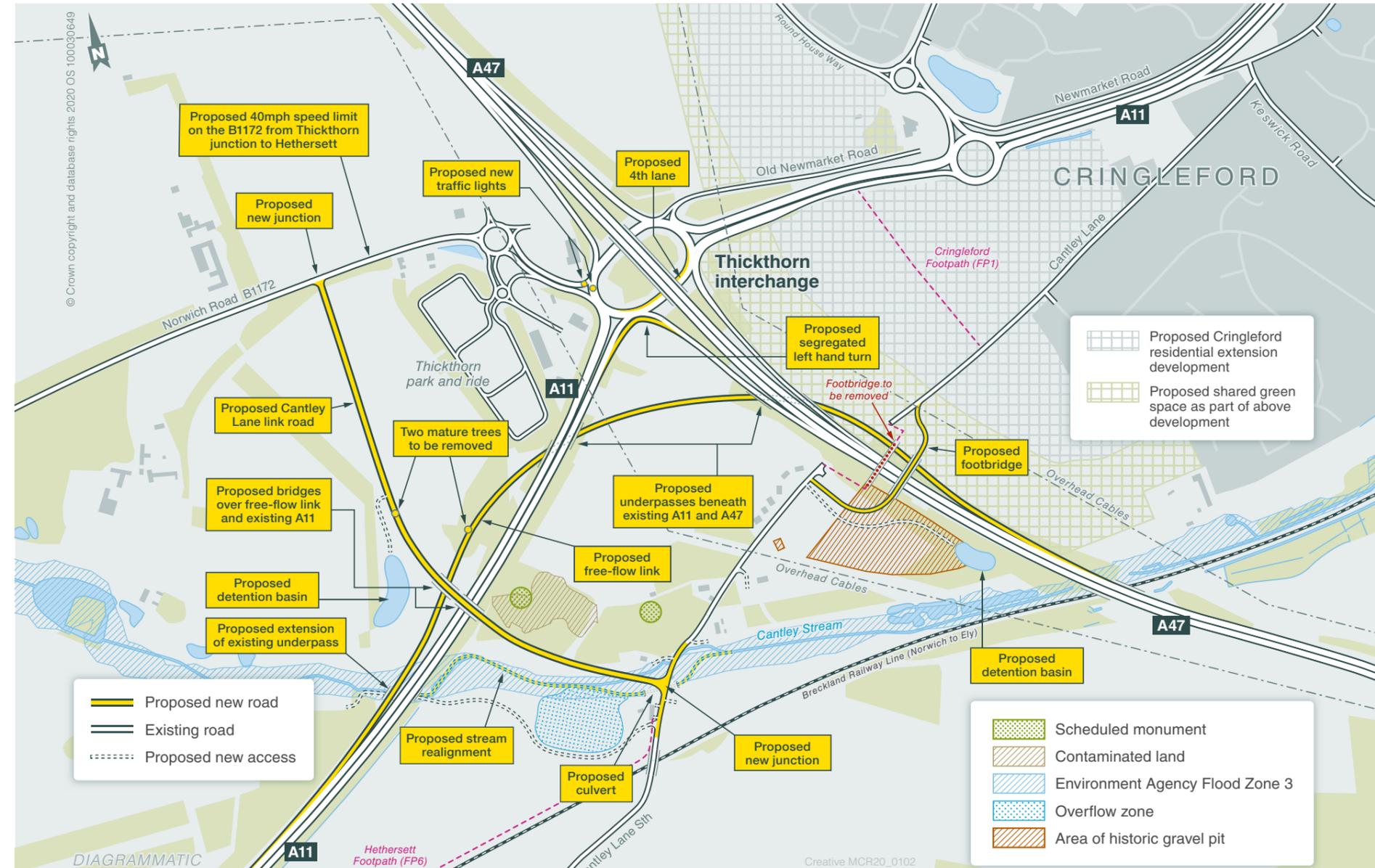
Our revised layout that we intend to submit for planning approval includes:

- a single-lane free-flowing link road connecting the A11 northbound to A47 eastbound via two underpasses (under the A11 and A47 respectively)
- improvements to the junction:
 - widening the existing slip road on the A47 westbound and building a dedicated left-hand free flow lane to the A11 southbound.
 - widening the southern section of the roundabout from three lanes to four
 - new traffic lights on the approach to / from the junction with the B1172 Norwich Road
 - a new road surface, new road signs and road markings throughout the junction.
- removal of the Cantley Lane South direct connections between the A11 and A47 exit slip roads
- a new link road connecting Cantley Lane South with the B1172 Norwich Road to the north and construction of two new bridges. The new link road it will have a 40mph speed limit
- from the Thickthorn junction to Hethersett, a 40mph speed limit on the B1172 Norwich Road and a new junction connecting to Cantley Lane Link road.
- a 30mph speed limit on Cantley Lane South
- a new junction connecting Cantley Lane South to Cantley Lane link road
- the existing Cantley Lane stream and access track will be realigned and one new stream culvert constructed
- a new footbridge over the A47 for walkers, cyclists and horse riders approximately 45m east of the existing footbridge (which will be demolished). The footbridge will have higher railings to help improve safety for horse riders
- paths for walking and cycling proposed along the new Cantley Lane link road giving access to local amenities and links to other recreational routes
- access to the Park and Ride from the Cantley Lane link road for walkers and cyclists

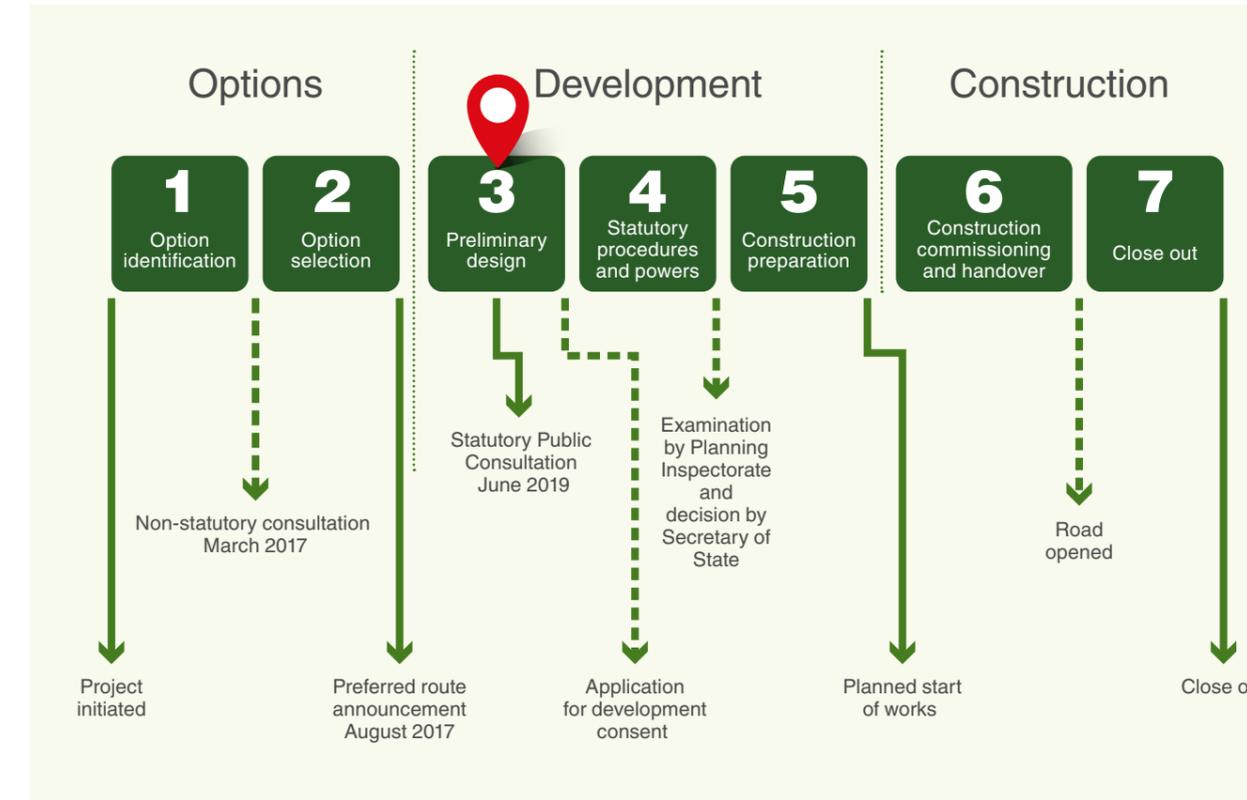
Further design refinements may be made, in advance of our submission to the planning inspectorate as a result of further engagement with:

- **Key stakeholders**
- **Lead Local Flood Authority & Environment Agency**
- **Utility providers**

Our proposed design



Next steps



About Development Consent Orders

This scheme is classed as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project under the Planning Act 2008. This means that we are required to make an application for a Development Consent Order to obtain permission to construct the road. The application will be made to the Planning Inspectorate who will examine the application including holding some hearings in public and then make a recommendation to the Secretary of State for Transport who will decide on whether the project will go ahead. We intend to submit our application in early 2021 and if approved, we expect the road to be open for traffic in autumn 2024.

More information about the Development Consent Order process can be found on the Planning Inspectorate's website at

<https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/>

If you need help accessing this or any other Highways England information, please call **0300 123 5000** or email: **A47A11ThickthornjunctionRIS@highwaysengland.co.uk** and we will help you.

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