

# Press release: Huge A47 improvement programme revealed

Highways England has announced its preferred routes for dualling three parts of the 115 mile stretch of the A47 between Peterborough and Great Yarmouth, and improving several junctions and roundabouts, following a successful public consultation.

Philip Davie, Highways England Programme Leader for the A47, said:

Delivery of these projects will improve users journey times and safety, so this work is a priority for Highways England.

We have listened to the public's views and these have helped shape and inform our approach to our proposed schemes. Work now continues, adding detail to the design for each of the dualling and junction improvements, and on planning how we will deliver them in a way that keeps traffic moving.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for taking part. There will be further opportunities to have your say as the schemes develop.

Around Norwich, work includes dualling of the A47 between North Tuddenham and Easton, further east, between Blofield and North Burlingham, along with junction improvements at the Thickthorn Interchange with the A11 plus two busy junctions in Great Yarmouth, on what was formerly the A12.

Further west at Peterborough, the work involves dualling a busy stretch between Wansford (A1) and Sutton, and improving the Guyhirn junction with the A141.

The six consultations into the £300 million work were held between 13 March and 21 April this year. In total, 1,447 people had their say, with 1,333 attending the 19 public events. The six projects are all part of the Government's record £15 billion investment in England's motorways and major A roads, with £3 billion of that being invested in the East of England.

## **A47 North Tuddenham and Easton**

Option 2 was chosen for the dualling between North Tuddenham and Easton, which will see the A47 upgraded to dual carriageway along its existing route, with the alignment been amended to address some of the key concerns raised.

## **A47 Blofield to North Burlingham**

For the Blofield to North Burlingham dualling, option 4 was selected which will see a new stretch of dual carriageway built a little to the south of the existing A47.

## **A47 Thickthorn Interchange with A11**

The consultation was about a single option for the junction improvements, which will now see delivered a direct link from the A11 northbound to the A47 eastbound, and similarly from the A47 westbound to the A11 southbound, alleviating congestion at the roundabout.

## **A47 Great Yarmouth junctions (formerly A12)**

At Great Yarmouth, the Vauxhall roundabout will be enlarged and fully signalled, and get an extended bridge and a new slip road. There will also be minor improvements at the Station Approach junction, while the Gapton roundabout will be significantly improved as it is widened and fully signalled too.

## **A47 Wansford to Sutton**

Option 2 was chosen for dualling the A47 between the A1 junction at Wansford and the dual carriageway section west of Peterborough. This will include building a new dual carriageway to the north, at the western end, and to the south, at the eastern end. There will also be a dedicated slip road from the A1 southbound to the A47 eastbound to alleviate congestion at the junction. Since the consultation, the alignment has been amended to address some of the key concerns raised.

## **A47 Guyhirn**

The single option proposed for the Guyhirn junction will see the roundabout enlarged and the road over the River Nene Bridge widened to three lanes to ease congestion.

The six projects are all part of the Government's record £15 billion investment in England's motorways and major A roads, with £3 billion of that being invested in the East of England.

Subject to statutory processes, work on the six projects could begin as early as March 2020, with completion dates starting from March 2021.

For more information about our plans, [visit the scheme website](#).

### **General enquiries**

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

## Media enquiries

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.

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## [News story: Civil/crime news: LAA Portal upgrade schedule](#)

A large number of users have now been migrated to the upgraded Portal. The remaining users are scheduled to be migrated in September. You will need to access the new Portal from 11 September 2017.

From 11 September, CCMS, CWA, CCLF EMI and eForms will only be accessible via the upgraded portal.

We will contact users directly with more information on how to access the upgrade ahead of the roll-out.

As we told you in April, the upgrade will require an IT outage to the Portal and all the applications accessed through it. This will be done during an off-peak period in order to cause minimal disruption.

Once the work has been finalised you should see the following improvements:

- increased stability
- quicker log-in times
- more user-friendly password reset process
- status bar for all applications, providing up-to-date information on any issues affecting performance

### Updating your password

You will need to reset your password once the upgrade has been completed.

It is vital that that you know your password for the current Portal in order to do this.

If you cannot recall your current password you will need to use the 'Password resets' link below before 5 September.

If you know your password you will not need reset it this stage.

### Further information

[Password resets](#) – use this link and select the password reset video from the list of options

[Portal upgrade guidance](#) – advice on logging into the new Portal and frequently asked questions

[Upgraded Portal password resets](#) – a short video on what to do if you forget your password in the upgraded Portal (video will load automatically).

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## **Press release: Enjoy our excellent bathing waters this summer**

The school holidays are well underway – even if summer isn't – so grab your bucket and spade and visit one of our brilliant bathing waters this month.

There are 34 bathing waters in the North East. All are classed as either an 'excellent' or 'good', and every one of them has passed high standards for water quality.

The results are based on regular water sampling by specially trained officers from the Environment Agency.

Environment Agency officers visit each bathing water beach from May to September every year to see what levels of bacteria are present in the water. Officers use results to maintain and improve bathing water quality. They were out taking water samples from beaches along the coastline from Blyth to Roker on Monday 14 August.

Mick Donkin, Sampling and Collections Team Leader, said:

Sun or no sun, the beach is a great day out for the kids during the school holidays. Our bathing waters are the cleanest they've ever been – not just here but across the country.

Samples are taken regularly throughout the bathing water season and this enables us to check they are safe for people to enjoy. We know how much people like going to the beach and the great benefit this has on the local economy. We will continue our work to ensure these standards are upheld.

A sample of bathing water taken from Roker, Sunderland.

Huge strides have been made to improve water quality, helping to make our beaches even more attractive for the increasing numbers of tourists who visit from around the world. Northumbrian Water has invested £1bn over 20 years in enhancing the quality of water on the region's coastline.

Richard Murray, Head of Wastewater Treatment and Bioresources for

Northumbrian Water, said:

Two decades of investment have seen significant improvements to the North East bathing waters and this is something we are extremely proud of. Back in 2000, only four of the region's beaches met requirements and now all 34 meet the high standards.

We know there is more work to be done, by ourselves and our partners, as great bathing water relies on constant attention to detail. To ensure our beaches are a great place to visit we continually look for new ways of working to help protect and improve our environment.

The public can also do their bit to keep our beaches clean. On Monday 14 August, the Environment Agency and partners launched the #binit4beaches campaign to raise awareness of the importance of only flushing the 3P's down the toilet: pee, poo and (toilet) paper, and always putting wet wipes in the bin.

While many wet wipes claim to be 'flushable', they may not break down quickly once they've been flushed. This can add to the risk of blockages. Millions of wipes are wrongly flushed down the toilet each year which means some of them reach our much loved beaches and seas after sewers are overloaded by heavy rain or flooding.

The Marine Conservation Society's annual beach litter survey shows that the number of wet wipes found on UK beaches have echoed this trend, increasing by 700% over the last decade.

All of the latest information and advice about bathing waters can be found online: <https://environment.data.gov.uk/bwq/profiles/>

The Environment Agency works 24 hours a day to protect people and wildlife from pollution incidents and we encourage people to report such incidents to our Incident Hotline on 0800 807060.

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## **[News story: Environment Agency chair visits Grogley and Coverack](#)**

Emma Howard Boyd met residents of Coverack to see the progress of recovery work 3 weeks after flash flooding hit the Cornish village.

The chair of the Environment Agency spent 2 days in Cornwall, where she also visited a project to boost fish numbers.

On Wednesday 9 August Emma travelled by bike using the Camel trail to Grogley, where she was shown the Water for Growth project – a £2.2 million project to restore freshwater fish habitats to the Camel and Fowey rivers.

The project is a partnership with the Environment Agency, Westcountry Rivers Trust, Natural England and South West Water to remove obstructions to fish migration, making it easier for salmon and trout to spawn in Cornwall. The river restoration project will create an improved environment for people and wildlife while adding value for local businesses that depend on sustainable fisheries. The Camel trail itself is a very popular tourist destination all year round providing an important contribution to the local economy.

During the trip Emma met a staff member inspired to learn to cycle by her visit. Gitty Ankers is an Environment Agency catchment co-ordinator who has worked on the project since its inception in 2015 and was very pleased the chair would be visiting.

Emma Howard Boyd's visit inspired Gitty Ankers to learn to cycle

But when Gitty learned Emma was a keen cyclist and would be making the trip by bicycle, a cultural barrier from Gitty's childhood threatened to spoil the visit.

Gitty said:

My parents wanted me out of Iran during the revolution in 1979, so I came over to the UK to do my master's degree. But in my native country they don't teach girls two things: swimming and cycling. And those two things have been on my wish list ever since.

When area director Richard Stockdale said Emma Howard Boyd wanted to come and look at Grogley, I was so pleased as I had really worked hard on this project. But when he said it would be part of a cycling trip my heart sank. I thought it would be too difficult to keep up with everyone. So I gave myself a week to learn to cycle.

Borrowing a colleague's bicycle, bought for his daughter 5 years ago for £5, Gitty began to learn, which is not without its own unique difficulty in hilly Cornwall.

Gitty said:

Learning to cycle is the scariest thing I have ever done. The worst is the speed coming downhill. And finding somewhere flat in Cornwall is challenging. But I found a quiet residential street and every morning I would go up and down that road. Since then I have cycled from Bodmin to Grogley and from Grogley to Wadebridge and back. That's 7 miles each way.

If I don't learn to cycle now, then there will be no other

opportunities. You always need someone to inspire you to do something, no matter how old you are.

Gitty's next goal is to learn to swim. Emma and Gitty have committed to swimming together next year so watch this space.

On Thursday 10 August Emma Howard Boyd visited Coverack to see how the village has recovered since flash flooding.

Area director Richard Stockdale shows Emma Howard Boyd around Coverack

Cornwall Council declared a major incident at 5.40pm on 18 July when flash flooding affected about 50 properties in Coverack. More than 105mm of rainfall fell within 3 hours. The recovery effort saw Environment Agency staff:

- transport 100 tons of silt from a river bed and take it 50m upstream
- remove 50 tons of debris from the beach
- dispose of 40 tons of green waste blocking watercourses
- remove 30 tons of silt, fallen trees and other blockages
- clear blockages from culverts

One of these culverts threatened to flood the home next door. Environment Agency staff cleared the watercourse that flowed within yards of the kitchen window and dug family possessions out of the silt by hand.

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## [News story: New customs proposals laid out by Government in new paper on future relationship with the EU](#)

A new paper setting out proposals for a future customs relationship with the EU has been unveiled today by the Government in the first of a series of papers on the UK's future partnership with the EU.

The document highlights the UK's strong starting position and how we can build on the strong foundation through two broad approaches:

- A highly streamlined customs arrangement between the UK and the EU, with customs requirements that are as frictionless as possible. This would aim to continue some existing arrangements we have with the EU, reduce or remove barriers to trade through new arrangements, and adopt technology-based solutions to make it easier for businesses to comply with customs procedures.

- A new customs partnership with the EU by aligning our approach to the customs border in a way that removes the need for a UK-EU customs border. One potential approach would involve the UK mirroring the EU's requirements for imports from the rest of the world where the final destination is the EU.

The paper also sets out new details on an interim period with the EU. The proposed model, which would mean close association with the EU Customs union for a time-limited period, would ensure that UK businesses only have to adjust once to a new customs relationship. This would minimise disruption and offering business a smooth and orderly transition.

**Secretary of State for Exiting the EU David Davis said:**

The approaches we are setting out today will benefit both the EU and UK and avoid a cliff-edge for businesses and individuals on both sides.

The way we approach the movement of goods across our border will be a critical building block for our independent trade policy. An interim period would mean businesses only need to adjust once to the new regime and would allow for a smooth and orderly transition.

The UK is the EU's biggest trading partner so it is in the interest of both sides that we reach an agreement on our future relationship. The UK starts from a strong position and we are confident we can deliver a result that is good for business here in the UK and across the EU.

**Chancellor of the Exchequer, Philip Hammond said:**

Our proposals are ambitious, and rightly so. They set out arrangements that would allow UK businesses to continue to trade with their European partners in the future, while expanding their markets beyond the EU.

And in the near term they will reassure people and companies that, the day after we leave the EU, they will still be able to go about their business without disruption as we make a smooth transition to our bright future outside the EU and deliver a Brexit that works for Britain.



The leading document crucially sets out that the UK will be guided by what delivers the greatest economic advantage to the UK, and by three key objectives: to ensure trade with the EU is frictionless as possible, to avoid any form of hard-border between Ireland and Northern Ireland and to establish an independent international trade policy.

**International Trade Secretary, Dr Liam Fox said:**

Leaving the Customs Union will allow us to operate a fully independent trade policy in Britain's national interest which will benefit UK businesses and consumers.

We will seek a new customs arrangement that ensures that trade between the UK and the EU remains as frictionless as possible and allows us to forge new trade relationships with our partners in Europe and around the world.

As we leave the EU and establish an independent trade policy, the Government will prioritise ensuring that the UK and EU businesses and consumers can continue to trade freely with one another as part of a new free trade agreement. In 2016, UK imports and exports from the EU totalled £553 billion alone.

The paper can be found [here](#).