A19 Downhill Lane Junction Improvement

Scheme Number: TR010024

6.4 Environmental Statement Non-Technical Summary

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A19 DOWNHILL LANE JUNCTION IMPROVEMENT

The A19 Downhill Lane Junction Improvement Development Consent Order 201[ ]

ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT
NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

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Introduction

Highways England is a government-owned company responsible for operating, maintaining and improving the strategic road network in England on behalf of the Secretary of State for Transport. Its road network totals around 4,300 miles and carries a third of all traffic by mileage and two thirds of all heavy goods traffic.

As set out in the government's Road Investment Strategy (RIS, 2014), Highways England is expected to deliver £15 billion of investment on our road network, £11 billion of which is committed between 2015 and 2020.

As part of the RIS the Department for Transport committed to improving the A19 Downhill Lane junction with the A1290, near Town End Farm, on the boundary of South Tyneside Council and Sunderland City Council (see Figure 1).

This document is a Non-Technical Summary (NTS) of the Environmental Statement (ES) which forms part of the application for a Development Consent Order (DCO) for the A19 Downhill Lane Junction Improvement Scheme ('the Scheme'). The application has been submitted to the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) by Highways England and will be determined by the Secretary of State for Transport (SoS).

The ES reports the findings of an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), which has been carried out in accordance with the Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2009 (as amended). The purpose of the EIA was to identify and assess the likely significant effects on the environment resulting from the construction and operation of the Scheme, then to recommend appropriate mitigation to reduce the identified effects. The results of the EIA are presented in the ES.

This NTS provides a summary description of the Scheme and the ES in non-technical language so that the outcomes of the EIA are readily communicated and understood by the general public, consultees and decision makers alike.

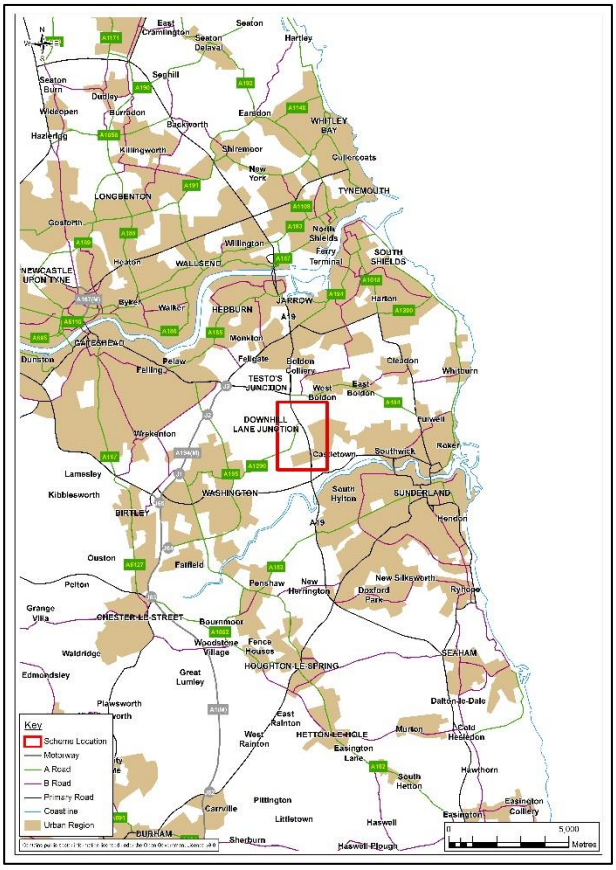

Figure 1 - Location Plan

Why the improvement is needed

The A19 runs from Doncaster to Tyneside. Together with the A168, its northern half forms a strategic route linking the A1 at Dishforth to the Tyne Tunnel and back to the A1 north of Newcastle.

The A19 dual carriageway runs approximately north-south under Downhill Lane, which crosses above the A19 via a single bridge. The A1290 joins this junction from the south-west.

Future developments, such as an International Advanced Manufacturing Park (IAMP) on land north of the Nissan Plant and south-west of Downhill Lane junction, are likely to significantly increase the amount of traffic using the A19 Downhill Lane junction. This would be too much traffic for the current junction to handle, and would cause further issues on other local roads.

The Scheme aims to allow more traffic to travel through the junction by constructing a second bridge south of the existing bridge to

create a roundabout junction raised above the A19, controlled with traffic lights.

Scheme objectives

The key objectives of the Scheme are to:

- support economic growth by improving road access;
- achieve a freer flowing strategic network for the region;
- improve network resilience and journey time reliability;
- reduce accidents;
- provide safer crossings for non-motorised users;
- improve connectivity for non-motorised users with the local road network; and
- minimise impacts on the environment.

Scheme history and development

It was announced by the Department for Transport in December 2014 that the A19 Downhill Lane junction would be adapted to support local plans for an IAMP to the north of the existing Nissan Plant (see Figure 2).

IAMP is being delivered in two phases; IAMP One received consent in May 2018, whilst IAMP Two is currently preparing to submit an application under the Planning Act 2008 for a DCO. Therefore, the Scheme ES and design has assumed that IAMP One would be built and operational by January 2020, before the Scheme starts construction. IAMP Two was considered separately alongside other potential future developments, in ES Chapter 15 (Cumulative Effects).

Initially, Highways England considered combining the Downhill Lane junction improvements with an ongoing scheme to improve the neighbouring A19/A184 Testo's junction. However, the A19/A184 Testo's Junction Improvement Scheme (the Testo's scheme) was at a more advanced stage, so was progressed as a separate project.

The Testo's scheme has since received development consent through a DCO; it is expected to start construction in 2019 and be open in 2021. Therefore, the Scheme ES and design included the Testo's scheme as part of the baseline and under construction and operation at the same time as the Scheme.

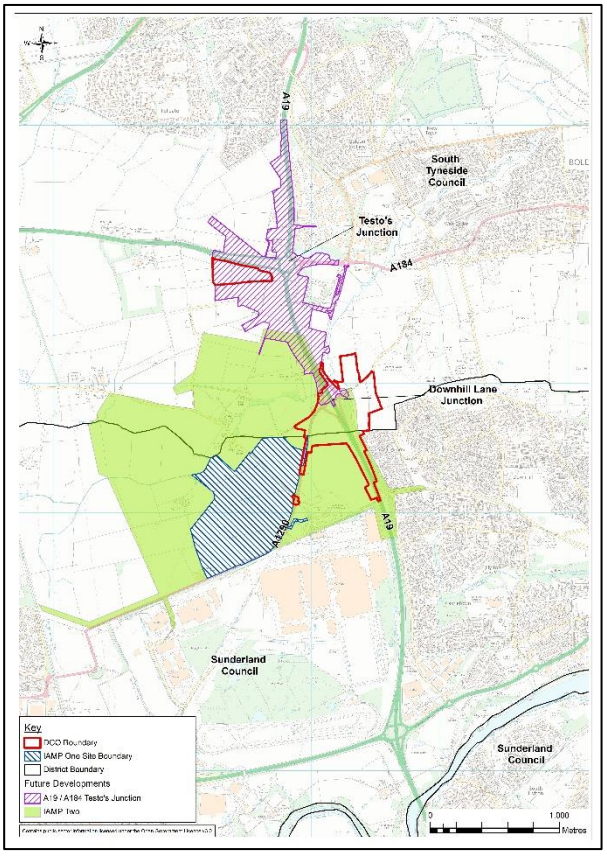

Figure 2 - Relationship between Downhill Lane junction, Testo's junction and IAMP

Alternatives considered

Since 2015 the proposals for Downhill Lane junction have been developed in more detail and a number of options for the layout of the junction have been considered. Six options were considered in 2016. During option selection key considerations included the avoidance of having to undertake work within the River Don, which is an important resource and home to a number of protected species. The effects of the Scheme options on the surrounding landscape, the visual effects and the extent of land take were also key option selection factors. Taking these into consideration alongside technical and economic considerations led to the selection of the preferred Scheme design, which was presented for public consultation.

As a result of public and other stakeholder feedback, it was necessary to alter the design slightly from the original preferred route. Figure 3 presents the final Scheme layout assessed in the ES.

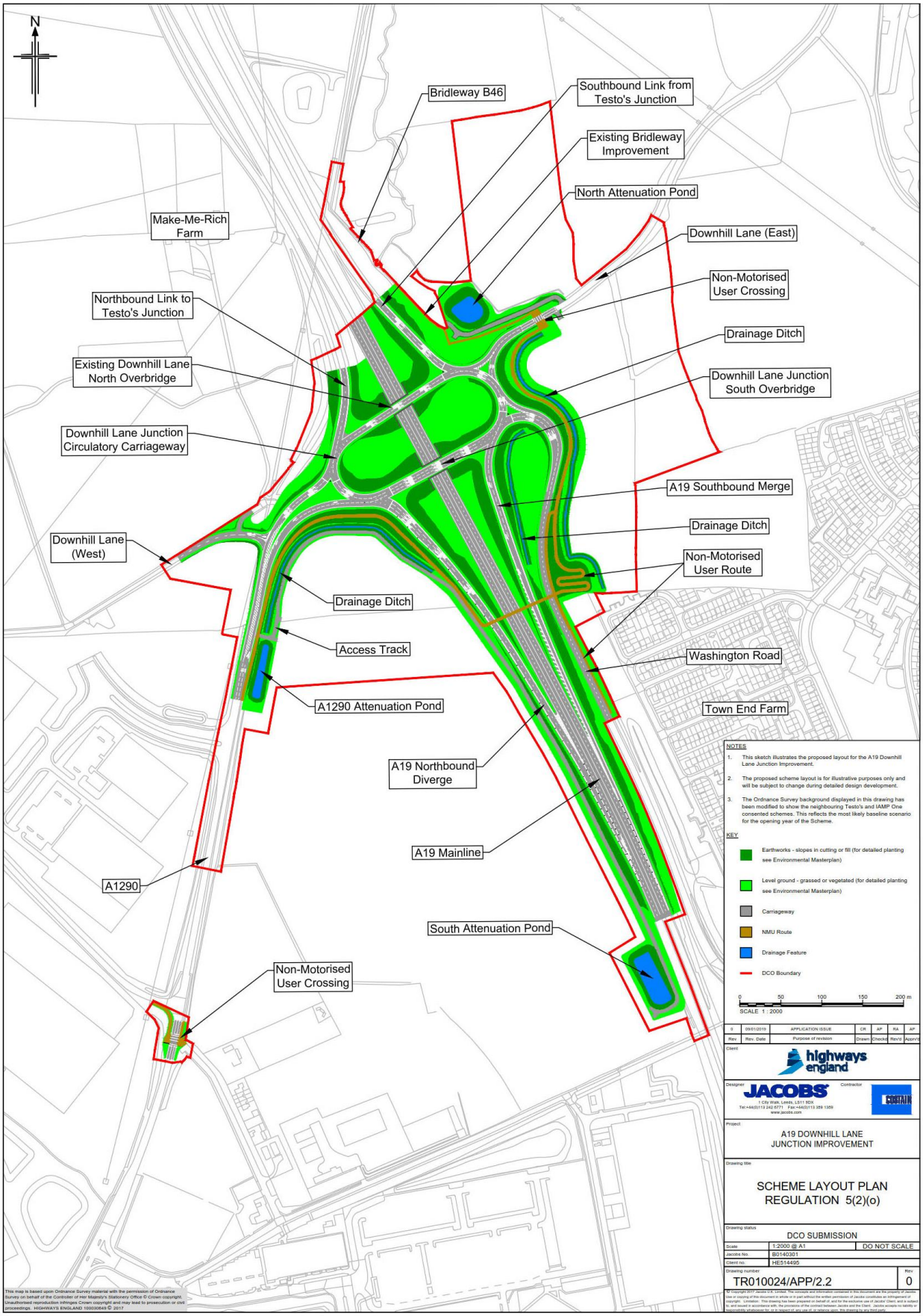

Figure 3 - Scheme layout

Scheme description

A new bridge over the A19 would be built immediately south of the A19 Downhill Lane junction and combined with the existing bridge to create a new full roundabout junction, above the A19, controlled with traffic lights.

The existing Washington Road, A1290 and Downhill Lane (East) would be realigned to connect to the new roundabout. The Scheme would also require the re-alignment of the existing slip roads to and from the A19.

The junction of Downhill Lane (West) with the A1290 would also be amended to create a left-in, left-out junction. This would require the permanent realignment of the access road for Make-Me-Rich farmhouse and relocation of the northbound bus stop for routes 50 and 56.

Due to the close proximity of the Downhill Lane and Testo's junctions, it would not be possible to construct traditional slip roads between the junctions. Instead traffic to and from the north of Downhill Lane junction will be linked to the A19 via new link roads; these link roads would run alongside the A19 and use the slip roads to the north of Testo's junction. The northbound (west side) link road will comprise two lanes and the southbound (east side) link road would have one lane, increasing to two lanes on the approach to Downhill Lane junction.

A new non-motorised user (NMU) route for walkers, cyclists and horse riders would be constructed, to link the existing Bridleway B46, north-east of Downhill Lane junction, with the A1290 using a dedicated route fully segregated from vehicular traffic. The new NMU route would include a NMU bridge across the A19, south of Downhill Lane junction.

Other elements of the Scheme would be:

- removal and replacement of road signage;
- installation of lighting and cabling;
- installation of boundary fencing and safety barriers;
- road surfacing;
- road drainage system, with three new drainage ponds.

The route of the A19 would not be changed, but a total of 5.97 hectares of agricultural land would be permanently acquired to enable the Scheme to be built; though part of this is within the footprint of IAMP Two.

Construction

A temporary main site compound, access / haul roads and materials storage areas would be required. These temporary features would be sited on fields either side of the A19 that would be returned to agricultural use at the end of construction. The main site compound would be located north-east of Downhill Lane junction. 12.82 hectares of the land within the Scheme DCO boundary would be for this type of temporary land take.

The DCO Scheme boundary incorporates 6.13 hectares relating to the temporary Testo's scheme main site compound. This is to allow for the opportunity to share use of this facility as the two schemes are expected to be constructed at the same time. This would be mainly for general storage, traffic management and office-based administrative purposes. As the environmental assessment focuses on the impacts of a standalone Scheme, the effects of the shared use of the Testo's main site compound are discussed separately at the end of each specialist topic chapter within the ES.

Within the Scheme DCO boundary 0.44 hectares relates to the amendment of the Testo's scheme to omit the proposed diversion of Bridleway B46; the effects are considered in a standalone appendix to ES, but the main assessment assumes the bridleway diversion is not implemented.

Table 1 presents an indicative construction programme.

Table 1 - Indicative construction schedule

Phase	Activities	Year
Enabling Work	• Construction of the site compound, access and haul roads. • Some environmental mitigation works. • Site clearance and fencing. • Traffic management. • Construction of drainage features.	Summer 2020
Construction Phase 1A	• Off-line work to the south-west of the existing junction. • Off-line work for the A1290 approaches. • Construct temporary Washington Road link. • Start the supporting structure for the NMU bridge.	Autumn 2020 to Spring 2021
Construction Phase 1B	• Move traffic onto the temporary Washington Road link. • Construct temporary southbound slip road to the A19. • Complete the supporting structure for the NMU bridge.	Autumn 2020 to Spring 2021 (overlaps with 1A)
Construction Phase 2	• Build the supports for the southern bridge. • Install the new decks of the southern bridge and NMU bridge.	Early 2021 to Early 2022
Construction Phase 3	• Upgrade the southern part of the existing bridge. • Connect Downhill Lane with the roundabout.	Autumn 2021 to early 2022
Construction Phase 4	• Upgrade the northern part of the existing bridge. • Remove temporary link roads, temporary slip road and the old Washington Road junction. • Landscape planting.	Early 2022

The appointed contractor would manage the site using a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP), which would make sure the commitments made in the ES are met and would:

- protect sensitive environmental assets;
- avoid or minimise any pollution risks;
- set protocols for the delivery, storage and handling of fuels and materials;
- provide method statements and protocols for specific tasks and activities;
- control emissions of dust; and
- reduce disturbance from noise.

Environmental design features

The Scheme incorporates a range of mitigation measures that have been developed to reduce likely significant adverse environmental impacts, including:

- planting to integrate the Scheme into the local landscape and to minimise impacts on views;
- creation of new & replacement habitats;
- locating the main site compound to reduce construction disturbance impacts to residents of Town End Farm;
- selecting fields for temporary storage to avoid those of high ecological value (e.g. beside Town End Farm);
- keeping open the existing road and NMU network during construction (apart from occasional overnight temporary closures / diversions);
- embracing lighting technology to improve the existing lighting network to achieve energy and carbon emission savings, maintenance savings, reduced environmental implications and a safer network; and
- appropriate drainage design (including creation of three new drainage ponds) to control the additional hard surface run-off and reduce the risk of flooding and pollution in local watercourses.

Non-motorised users (NMUs)

Downhill Lane junction is a popular NMU route for recreational users and commuters, especially to the nearby Nissan Plant. The Scheme would affect the existing

arrangements for NMUs. Figure 4 shows the location of the existing and proposed routes for NMUs.

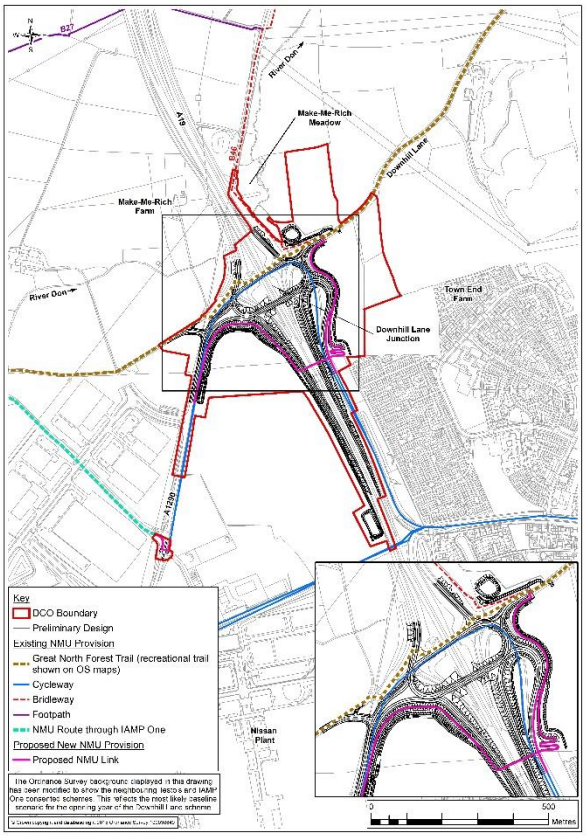

Figure 4 - Non-motorised User Routes

During construction, existing routes for NMUs would be kept open, although there would be some diversions.

Once operational the Scheme would provide a new dedicated NMU route, separate from cars, linking the existing Bridleway B46, north-east of Downhill Lane junction, with the A1290. A new NMU bridge, with ramped access, would be provided between Washington Road and the A1290, across the A19 south of the junction. NMUs would cross Downhill Lane (East) and the A1290 using traffic light controlled crossing points. The full length of the new NMU route, including the NMU bridge, would be lit by low height lighting.

Compared to the existing NMU provision, the Scheme would improve connectivity and safety for NMUs. The A1290 NMU crossing would also connect to the new NMU route along Follingsby Lane through IAMP One.

Environmental effects

Figure 5 overleaf shows the location of sensitive environmental receptors potentially affected by the Scheme.

The predicted environmental effects of the Scheme on these receptors are reported in detail within the ES. A summary of the main findings from each specialist chapter of the ES is provided in Table 2, together with a summary of additional mitigation measures to further reduce the Scheme's environmental effects. A full analysis can be found in the ES.

The environmental assessment considered impacts in the following years, to reflect changing conditions and the potential for programme acceleration for the Scheme to open end of 2021, in the same year as the Testo's scheme:

- 2019 - the 'construction year', when construction would start.
- 2021 - the 'operational (opening) year', when the Scheme would open to traffic.
- 2036 - the 'operational (future) year', when mitigation measures, such as landscape planting would be mature.

Different environmental topics consider either one, two or all three years, as appropriate. This is explained within the topic specific chapters of the ES.

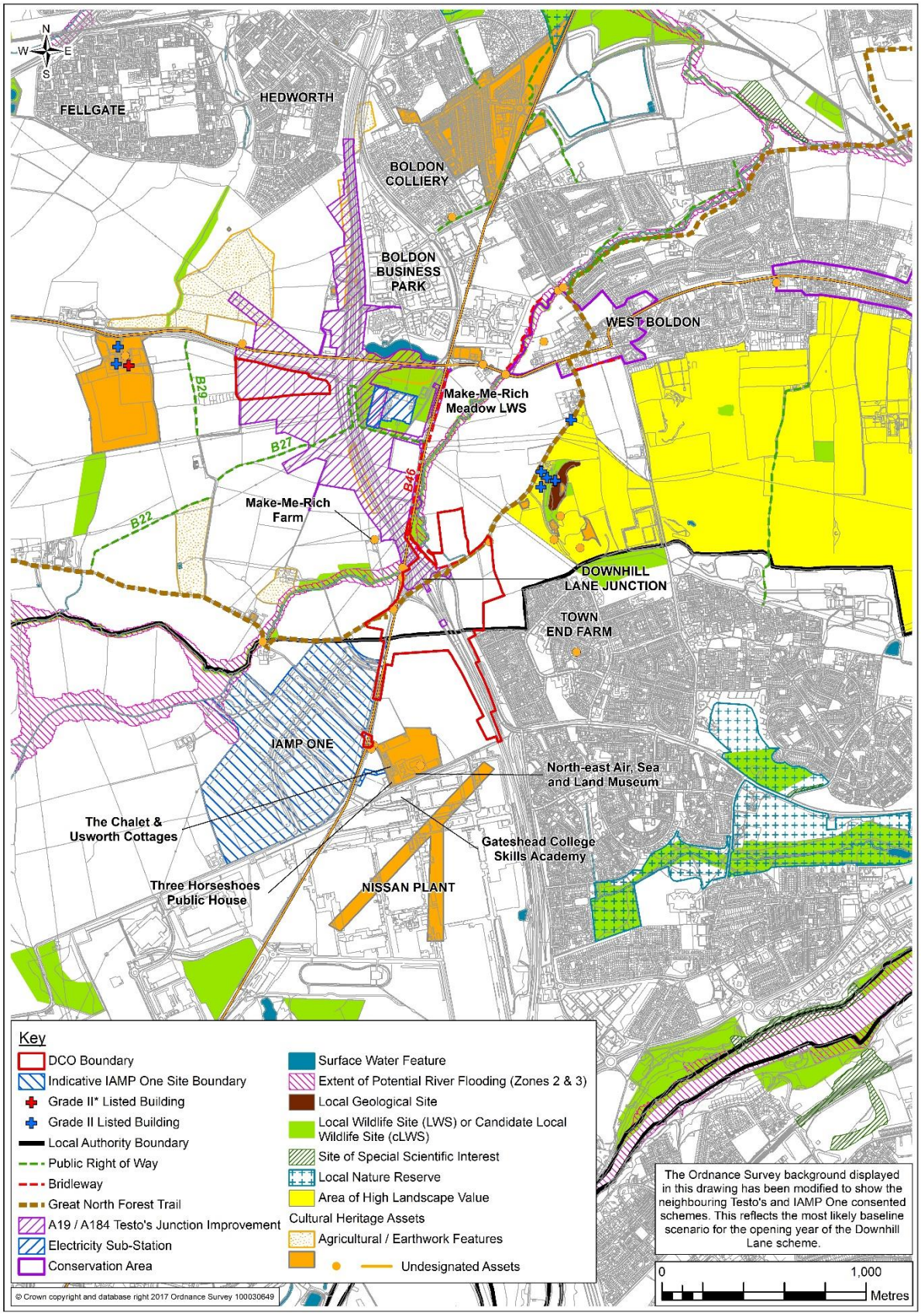

Figure 5 - Environmental Constraints Plan

Table 2- Summary of Environmental Effects

Topic	*Key issues*	*Mitigation measures*	*Effect after applying mitigation*
Air quality	There are a number of properties in the vicinity of the Scheme that could be affected by dust from construction works and construction vehicle movements. At a local level there would be no increases in pollutants from the operation of the Scheme. In the wider regional area there would be some slight increases in pollutants.	Dust control measures would be included within the Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP).	With the application of control measures contained within the CEMP it would be possible to control the generation of dust emissions to avoid unacceptable effects occurring at nearby properties. There would be no significant effects from the operation of the Scheme on local air quality and it was not anticipated that the Scheme would alter the UK's ability to comply with the EU Air Quality Directive. Although there would be slight increases in some pollutants at a regional level, these would be small increases.
Cultural heritage	There would be a direct impact on two areas of levelled ridge and furrow field systems. The Scheme would result in the removal of a small part of the remains of the route for the Stanhope and Tyne Railway and also cross the site of Downhill Lane level crossing. There would be no direct impacts from construction on any historic building and the Scheme would not affect the setting of any of Listed Buildings.	None required, as agreed with relevant authorities.	There would be no significant effects on the local cultural heritage of the area. Although there would be minor changes to the four remains identified, the scale of the change means that the effect of the Scheme would not alter the current condition of the remains significantly.
Landscape and visual	The Scheme would affect the landscape character of the area as a result of the loss of vegetation, which would open up views for some local residents and users of local footpaths and walking routes, particularly during construction. The introduction of new structures, for example the new NMU bridge would permanently alter views for	The existing tree line and vegetation to the north of Downhill Lane would be retained to help provide screening for the construction compound. There would also be retention of the existing tree line along Washington Road between Town End Farm and the site of the new NMU bridge. Material storage would be phased, particularly to the	Once new planting is established the visual effects of the Scheme would be reduced over time. Some effects would remain as a result of new structures added to the environment, which would remain visible even with new planting.

Topic	*Key issues*	*Mitigation measures*	*Effect after applying mitigation*
	some local properties.	eastern edge of the working areas east of the A19, as this would help screen construction activity from residents at Town End Farm. The temporary working areas would be reinstated post construction. New planting characteristic of the locality would form part of the Scheme along the road boundary, and would include woodland, tree and shrub as well as scrub planting. New grassland habitats would be created at the balancing pond areas.	
Ecology and nature conservation	There would be permanent and temporary habitat loss associated with the Scheme, including arable land, semi-improved grassland, plantation woodland and marshy grassland. There would be impacts on wildlife during the construction period as a result of disturbance and habitat loss. However, there would be no impacts on any designated sites or protected species as a result of the Scheme.	Replacement habitat would be provided, including grassland, woodland and shrub habitats. Around 8.76 hectares of habitat of significant biodiversity value would be created to replace the permanent loss of 4.85 hectares of habitat of significant biodiversity value. The CEMP would contain measures to control impacts during construction, including consideration of timings involved with vegetation loss to limit disturbance at sensitive times, limiting night-time working and controls on lighting types to reduce disturbance to nocturnal animals.	Though there would be a net loss of habitats, including low biodiversity value habitats (e.g. arable and amenity grassland). When focusing on habitats of significant biodiversity value there would be a net gain in biodiversity with the creation of 3.91 hectares of habitat of significant biodiversity value.
Geology and soils	There would be some temporary and permanent loss of moderate quality agricultural land and also some impacts on local soil quality.	Temporary areas required for construction would be returned to agricultural use. Topsoil would be carefully stored and reused.	There would be a small permanent loss of moderate quality agricultural land but the overall significance of this effect on a national scale would be low.
Materials	During construction, waste would be produced, which would require disposal.	Excavated material would be reused as much as possible within the Scheme	The Scheme would require more material than is being excavated, but this would be

Topic	*Key issues*	*Mitigation measures*	*Effect after applying mitigation*
	There would also be carbon emissions due to the transport of materials.	design. The CEMP would contain a site waste management plan and a materials management plan, which would help maximise the reuse and recycling of waste.	of a minor magnitude.
Noise and vibration	There would be temporary construction noise disturbance at properties close to the Scheme. Vibration may be noticeable at those properties closest to the Scheme. During operation there would be changes to traffic generated noise levels as a result of the Scheme.	The CEMP would contain measures to help control noise emissions during construction. Regular communication with local residents regarding any periods of vibratory work would be managed through the CEMP.	Temporary significant noise effects during construction activities would remain even with mitigation, but no there would be no significant ground-borne vibration. During operation, no properties would experience significantly adverse or beneficial effects in the short-term or long-term as a result of the Scheme.
People and communities	There would be temporary and permanent loss of agricultural land and a permanent change in access for Make-Me-Rich Farm. NMUs would experience disruption during construction due to roadworks and a temporary loss of amenity and visual effects. During operation the effects for NMUs would be beneficial due to the provision of new facilities with a greater degree of separation from vehicles and low level lighting provided on the new route. Dedicated crossing facilities would also increase safety. Additionally, there would be a permanent relocation of the northbound bus stop, for routes 50 and 56, on the A1290. There would be a temporary loss of amenity for local residents as a result of the construction works. Vehicle travellers would experience temporary disruption during	Reinstatement of temporarily used agricultural land during construction. NMU routes through the junction would be maintained throughout construction. Construction disruption would be managed through a Construction Traffic Management Plan. Road signs and traffic signals would be used to explain route changes and to direct drivers.	There would be some effects remaining on agricultural land as a result of a small permanent loss of land. During operation the effects of the Scheme for NMUs would be beneficial once the new NMU route is open. It is expected that the Scheme would lead to improvements in amenity and access to community facilities as a result of improvements to the road network. During construction and operation, the effects on vehicle travellers are anticipated to be adverse. During operation of the Scheme, vehicles on the A19 and those travelling from Testo's to the north are expected to experience improved journey times during peak periods. For vehicle travellers travelling east to west through Downhill Lane junction, journey times are anticipated to increase. As Downhill Lane (West) would become a left in-left out only

Topic	*Key issues*	*Mitigation measures*	*Effect after applying mitigation*
	construction, particularly for traffic running through the junction from Downhill Lane (East), Washington Road and the A1290. There would be some increases in journey times and driver stress associated with east-west movement through the junction. For the A19 users there would be journey time improvements, whilst driver stress would be unchanged.		road at its junction with the A1290 when IAMP One is constructed, those using Downhill Lane (West) via this junction would experience significant increases in journey times. Should IAMP Two be consented and constructed, then the Downhill Lane (West) connection with the A1290 would be removed and therefore traffic would permanently re-route via the A194 (M), A184 and A19 or via the full length of the A1290. The IAMP Two local road network improvements would provide reductions in driver stress on the approaches to Downhill Lane junction.
Road drainage and the water environment	There would be potential effects on part of the banks and channel bed of a tributary to the River Don as a result of creating a new outfall. During construction there would be the potential for pollutants to enter the watercourse and River Don. Changes to the surface water run-off could affect water quality and flood risk.	Three balancing ponds would be introduced as part of the Scheme to treat the additional run-off and control the discharge rate. The design of the outfall would be carefully considered to minimise effects on the tributary of the River Don.	With mitigation there would be no change in flood risk due to the Scheme. There would be slight benefits in water quality through improvements to the drainage system. Some localised permanent effects remain on the tributary of the River Don due to the new outfall.
Cumulative effects	There would be some cumulative effects on the local landscape and visual amenity for local residents and users of the local footpath network as a result of the Scheme in conjunction with other developments in the area. These effects would be mostly felt during construction, but there would be long-term effects during operation. The cumulative effects could also affect local ecology habitats and agricultural land.	The contractors would seek to work with the other developers to integrate their CEMPs, especially where the construction programmes would overlap. Continue liaising with the local authorities to integrate the project designs as much as possible, especially between the Downhill Lane junction, Testo's junction and the IAMP Two development.	There would be some effects on the local community as a result of the cumulative effect of the Scheme and other developments, particularly with the Testo's scheme and IAMP Two. The effects would be most felt during construction, but there would be long-term visual effect for some receptors. The effects on the local economy are anticipated to be beneficial.

The application documents

The ES and other DCO application documents are available for download, free of charge, from the Planning Inspectorate's (PINS) website:

https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/projects/north-east/a19-downhill-lane-junction-improvement/

You can also find information about the project on Highways England's website:

http://roads.highways.gov.uk/projects/downhill-lane-junction-improvement/

Hard copies of the ES are available for the public to view for the duration of the pre-examination and examination periods, free of charge at the following locations:

Highways England
Lateral, 8 City Walk, Leeds, LS11 9AT

Bunny Hill Customer Service Centre
Hylton Lane, Sunderland. SR5 4BW

The Word Library
45 Market Place, South Shields, Tyne and Wear, NE33 1JF

Copies of this Non-Technical Summary (NTS) are available to take away, free of charge, from these locations. Alternatively, copies of the NTS can be obtained by contacting the project team using the details below:

Email:

A19DownhillLane@highwaysengland.co.uk

Telephone: 0300 470 2313 or 0300 470 4418

Alternatively, you can write to the A19 Downhill Lane Project Team at:

Highways England
Lateral
8 City Walk
Leeds
LS11 9AT

Copies of the complete ES in electronic format, on CD, can be obtained from the same address, free of charge. Paper copies of the ES are available at a cost, as follows:

- Complete ES (Volumes 1 – 3) - £900;
- Volume 1 (main text) - £220;
- Volume 2 (figures) - £175; and
- Volume 3 (appendices) - £590.

Prices include VAT at 20% and UK postage. Please contact Highways England for further details regarding payment methods.

What happens next?

An application for a DCO has been submitted to PINS to examine the application on behalf of the Secretary of State (SoS), who will the determine whether to approve the application. If granted, the DCO will give Highways England the legal power to build the Scheme.

Following the application submission, PINS will make the application documents available to download from their website and will contact local authorities to confirm that the pre-application consultation has been adequately carried out and that all the necessary documents have been provided.

Once satisfactory responses have been received the pre-examination phase will begin. During this phase, interested parties can register their interest and submit relevant representations to PINS. The period for pre-examination ends with the 'preliminary meeting', to which registered parties are invited to attend. At the preliminary meeting the Examining Authority (Inspectors appointed by PINS) will decide the key issues that will be taken into account during the examination of the application.

The examination period is held over a maximum period of six months, during which time a series of hearings are held to address the key issues. Registered interested parties may attend the hearings, make statements and ask questions. Following the conclusion of the examination, PINS has three months to provide the SoS with its recommendation. The SoS then has a further three months to come to a decision. Once the decision is published, there is a six-week High Court challenge period. If there are no challenges, the decision becomes final.