

morpeth northern bypass

news

www.morpethnorthernbypass.org

Public Consultation March 2010



welcome

to the latest news about this major
highway project.



NORTHUMBERLAND
Northumberland County Council

background

Construction of the A1 to South East Northumberland Link Road has been a long held ambition of Northumberland County Council as an important solution to the varied transport issues faced by Morpeth and the former mining communities to the east.

Following the successful completion of the Pegswood Bypass in 2007, council engineers have been developing proposals for the £35m Morpeth Northern Bypass, the final section of the A1 to South East Northumberland Link Road which will link the A197 at Whorral Bank to the A1 Trunk Road south of Fairmoor.

Funding for the scheme is to be only partially provided by the County Council, the vast majority being borne by central government through the regional funding framework.

planning application

Following comment received through primary consultation in 2007 the proposals have been tailored to best meet the objectives of the scheme balanced with the wishes of the residents of Morpeth.

As with all new developments, the Morpeth Northern Bypass has to pass through a formal planning application process where it will be subject to public scrutiny and its merits evaluated against national and regional policies, the policies of Northumberland County Council and the needs of the local community. At one stage it was intended that the South East Northumberland Link Road should be built in three phases, Pegswood Bypass, St George's Link and St Leonard's Junction. To this end, planning permission was approved for St Leonard's in 2006.

Changes in funding policy during the development of the proposals have made it more advantageous to construct the remainder of the link road as one.

As such it has been decided to submit a planning application for the remaining part of the route not yet constructed which will include a refresh of those aspects relating to the St Leonard's Junction.



Already recognised as part of the regional programme a bid was submitted in late 2008 to achieve national priority. The bid has passed through a lengthy period of assessment and revision and is currently under consideration.

Approval in principle allows the council to pursue the scheme with financial certainty subject to successfully completing targets such as planning approval and purchase of land.



the route

Morpeth Northern Bypass will start from Whorral Bank Roundabout on the A197 north east of Morpeth, and head westward, bordering the northern edge of Morpeth, connecting to the A192 at Lane End, Fairmoor. This section is referred to as the St George's Link and will be similar in character to the Pegswood Bypass. It will include two parking laybys and a new roundabout west of How Burn which will provide access to the new St George's (growth point) housing development.

The route continues south westward until it intersects with the A1 trunk road where an all movements grade separated junction will be constructed west of Lancaster Park. This section is referred to as St Leonard's Junction and will be similar in character to the one constructed at Stannington in 2004.

The overall geometry of the route will be to 'A' road status with a 60mph speed limit and two distinct overtaking sections and restricted junction access, making for safe motoring, particularly when joining the A1.

easing congestion

One of the main objectives of the Morpeth Northern Bypass is to reduce the current traffic levels in Morpeth by providing an alternative for through journeys.

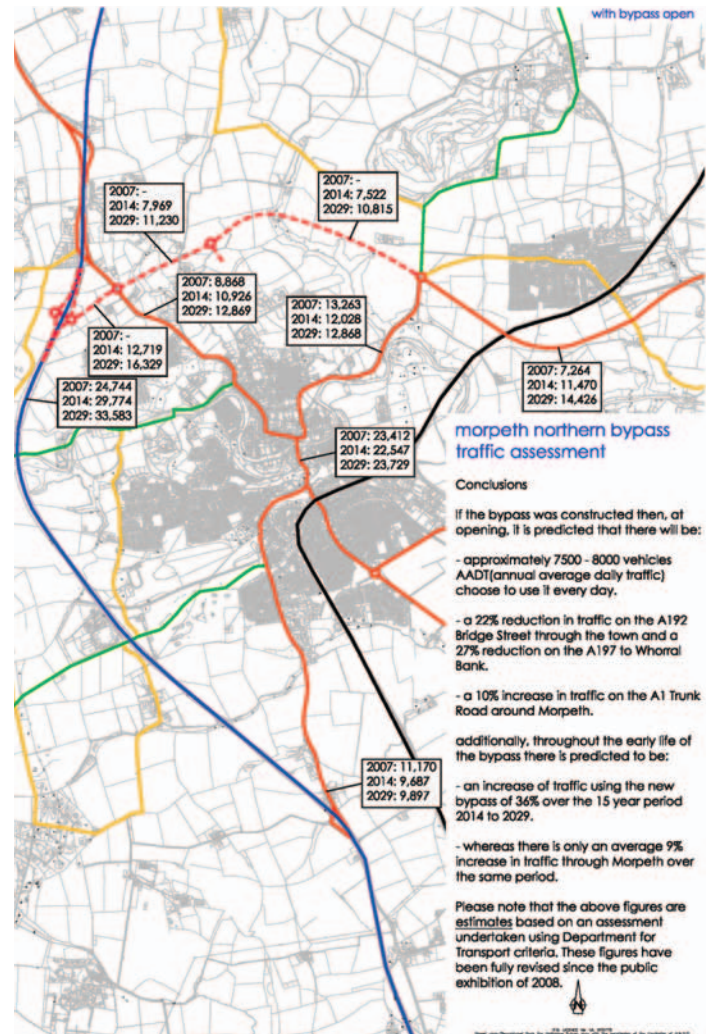
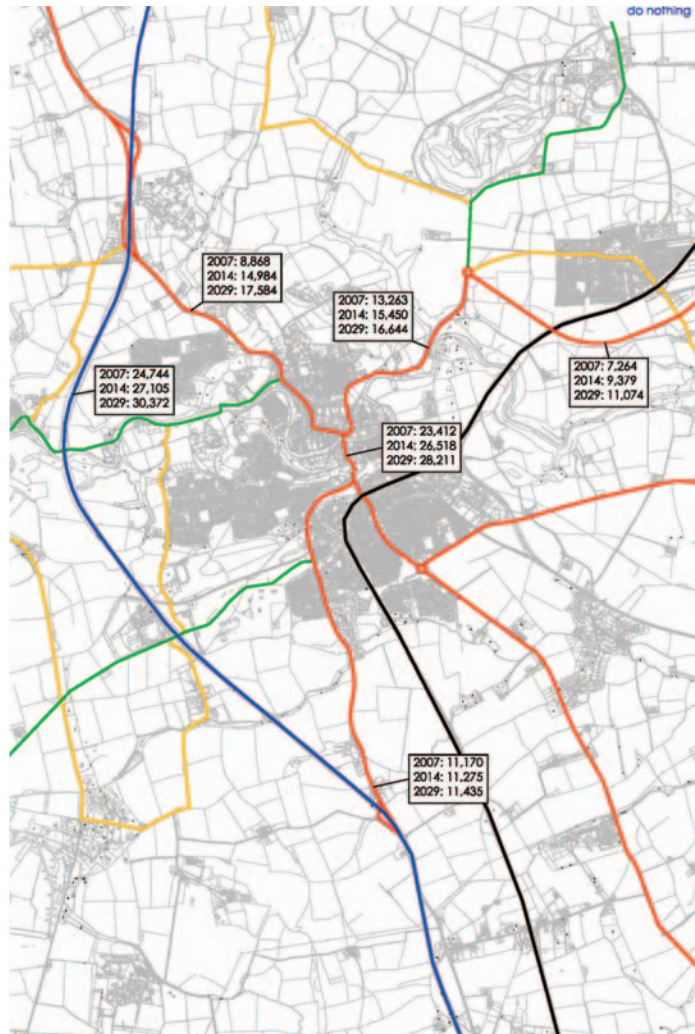
Traffic in Morpeth is estimated to rise by 20% over the next 20 years bringing with it increased noise, pollution and delay.



Traffic modelling has projected that, if constructed, the bypass would bring about an immediate 22% reduction in traffic volumes on the A192 Bridge Street.

Furthermore, future traffic growth in the town centre will be slowed significantly.

Reducing congestion levels in Morpeth brings many benefits to residents and businesses with reduced noise, reduced pollution, and improved public transport reliability.



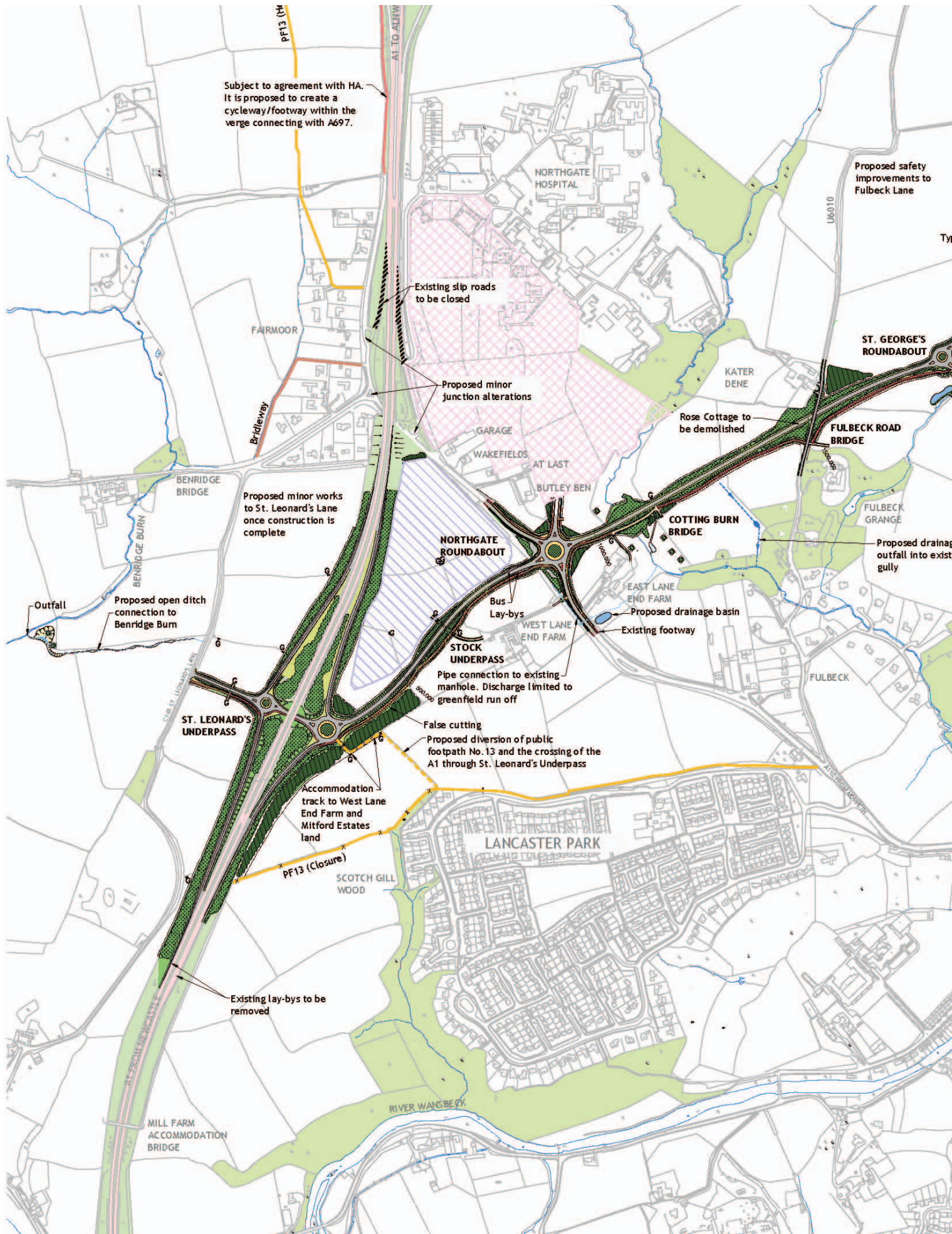
bridging the gaps

The route of the bypass requires the crossing of three minor tributaries of the Wansbeck and the Fulbeck Road.

The tributary at Pegswood Moor will only require a large drain to accommodate the small intermittent flow, whereas watercourses of the How Burn and the Cotting Burn will pass through embankments via arch structures with openings large enough to accommodate water and wildlife.

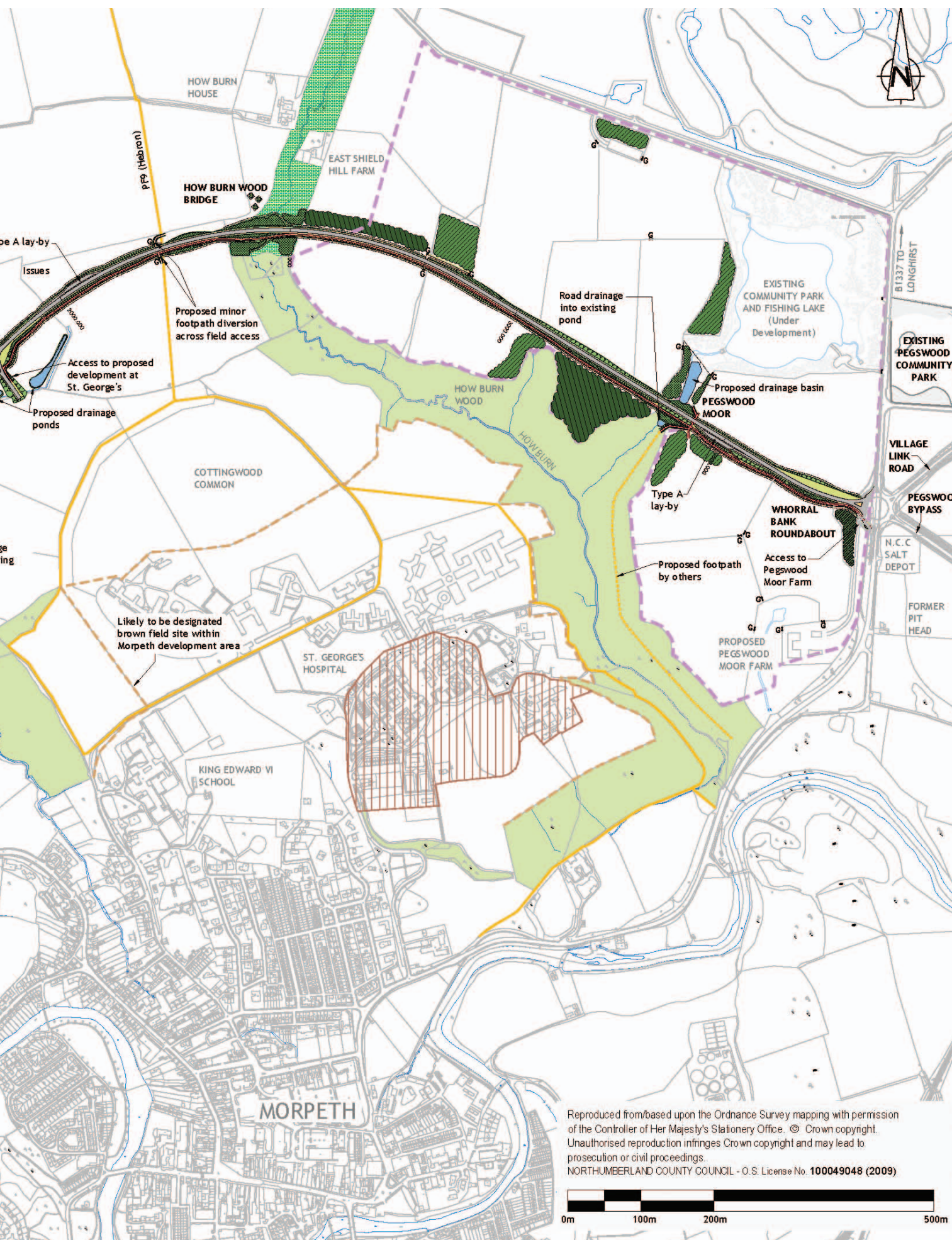
Fulbeck Road Bridge will be more traditional in style and will carry the U6010 over the bypass which will be in a cutting at this point.





KEY

EXISTING PUBLIC RIGHT OF WAY	PROPOSED EARTHWORKS	PROPOSED BROWNFIELD SITE	TREE AND SHRUB PLANTING	GATE
PROPOSED PUBLIC RIGHT OF WAY	PROPOSED SHARED CYCLEWAY/FOOTWAY	PROPOSED OFFICE DEVELOPMENT	WOODLAND PLANTING	PROPOSED CARRIAGEWAY



FORMER PEGSWOOD MOOR
OPENCAST SITE, NOW RESTORED

EXISTING WOODLAND

PROPOSED
EMPLOYMENT LAND

AREAS OF GRASSLAND
AND COPSE

WOODLAND PLANTING
BY OTHERS

GROUPS OF TREES

EXISTING BRIDLEWAY

protecting the natural environment

An engineering project of the scale of the Morpeth Northern Bypass inevitably has an affect upon the natural environment.

To ensure that adverse impacts are limited, the effects upon both the landscape and biodiversity of the area have been considered at every stage of the design process.

landscape

The design of the bypass has been sensitive to the relationship between the proposed road and the existing landscape.

For example, to help reduce the visual impact of the road and moving traffic, much of the bypass will be set below ground in cutting.

The St Leonard's Junction will be positioned to take advantage of the natural screening provided by Scotch Gill Wood and the undulations in the local landscape. The visual impact will be further reduced by the proposal to set the two roundabouts that make up the junction about two metres below the surrounding ground level and supplemented with a planted landscape earth bund up to two metres in height, partially screening the A1 embankment and the majority of traffic using the junction.

Wherever possible the character of the existing landscape will be enhanced and the conditions for wildlife improved. Hedgerows with trees, for example, are proposed along the new highway boundaries. Over time, these will provide visual screening, establish field patterns, improve habitat links and help integrate the new road into the existing landscape.

flora

New planting proposed for the scheme is extensive and will include -

- 43,000 square metres of new native woodland planting
- 65,000 square metres of native tree and shrub planting
- 8 km of hedgerow planting
- 5,000 standard trees
- 2,000 wildflower plants
- 2,000 marginal and aquatic plants
- 114,000 square metres of grassed areas and 40,000 square metres of grassed areas that include wildflowers.

Species will be chosen to reflect those already established in the area and to increase the visual and ecological diversity of the existing landscape.

Species rich grass lands will be established throughout the scheme to compensate for any loss of old pasture.

fauna

Wildlife corridors tend to follow woodland, hedgerows and watercourses. Where the proposed bypass passes over



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watercourses, new arch bridges will be constructed of sufficient size to allow animals such as deer, otter and badger to pass freely under the road.

Those sections of riverbank disturbed during the works will be sensitively restored to create habitats for small mammals such as water vole, whose population has declined over the last decade due to the prevalence of mink.

Works to support the expansion of the rare white clawed crayfish community in the Wansbeck are also being investigated.

New ponds, swales and ditches will be created as part of the proposed sustainable drainage system. Wherever possible, the swales will be sown with a species rich grassland mix and the edges of the ponds and ditches will be planted with native marginal and aquatic plants. These wetland areas will provide suitable habitats for newts, toads and frogs, helping to increase the biodiversity of the area.

birds & bats

Bird populations can be adversely affected by traffic and the associated noise.

Buffers between existing habitats at How Burn and Scotch Gill Wood will help reduce the impact.

Barn Owl populations have been in marked decline over the last century.

Forming the road in cutting, creating high hedges and minimising areas of open grassland will discourage birds from hunting near the road.

Measures to support the local bat population are also to be introduced. Artificial bat roosts will be incorporated into the undersides of the new bridges to encourage bats to fly through and under the road. Other suitable sites in the locality are also being investigated.

flood prevention

Flooding is an issue which affects us more and more as the Morpeth floods of 2008 sadly illustrated.

The proposed Morpeth Northern Bypass will lie within the catchment of the River Wansbeck and its associated tributaries.

As with any development, the increased area of hard standing can, given the right conditions, heighten the risk of flooding.

In order to prevent any potential increased risk, the bypass design will incorporate current sustainable drainage techniques as laid out in recent national guidelines.

The main tools that will be employed are retention and controlled release.

Water will be collected from the road surface and carried to new storage ponds via grassed channels or 'swales' rather than using a conventional piped system .

Use of swales provides two main benefits in that they don't require the use of unsustainable material such as plastic pipes whilst also providing some filtering and cleaning of the runoff from the road.

The proposed wetland areas will be designed to encourage the development of natural habitats, but also to have enough capacity to store additional water during heavy storms.

The accumulated storm water will be released into the local river network over an extended period, eliminating the impact.

The overriding design principle is one of achieving a neutral 'greenfield runoff', i.e. the overall drainage impacts of constructing the road should be the same as if the road had not been constructed at all.



the bigger picture

Establishing improved connections to the regional and national road network are a significant objective.

Morpeth and the towns to the east are relatively poorly served by the current access arrangements on to the A1 which at Clifton offers only entry and egress to and from the south, whilst the junctions to the north at Fairmoor and Warrener's House, although offering movements in all directions are confused and poor when judged by today's design standards.



no car? no problem

The new bypass will not just cater for drivers.

The proposals include for a new 3 metre wide shared use cycle/footway similar to that which was successfully introduced as part of the Pegswood Bypass.

The scheme will further extend the growing cycleway network across the county and link in with existing footpaths in the area, such as a new link from Lancaster Park to provide a safe alternative crossing of the A1 trunk road.

After lengthy consideration as to how best to provide access to the trunk road, the best option is to provide a new all movements, high standard, grade separated junction south of Fairmoor

The intersection will be very similar in appearance and operation to the Stannington junction which was completed in October 2004 and has enjoyed an commendable safety record.

The design will also provide capacity to cope with future traffic growth.

The existing substandard slip roads at Fairmoor will be closed.



In addition it is intended to further enhance the local cycling network where possible.

Cycling proposals include the provision of 'on carriageway' cycle lanes on the A192 from the new Northgate Roundabout south towards Morpeth. 'On carriageway' cycle lanes will also be provided to the north leading to Fairmoor with a further link to the A697.

Provision for horse riders will also be provided for by means of extra wide verges alongside the new cycle/footways.

A diversion of footpath No 13 (Mitford) through St Leonard's underpass is also being considered.



what do you think?

For us to deliver the best scheme possible your feedback is welcomed. Please contact us by post, telephone or e-mail. If you want more in depth background about the scheme, you can also visit our website.

By post: Northumberland County Council, Highways Design, Place Group, County Hall, Morpeth, Northumberland, NE61 2EF

By Telephone: 0845 600 6400

By e-mail: morpethnorthernbypass@northumberland.gov.uk

On the web: www.morpethnorthernbypass.org

where do we go from here?

Should planning permission be granted the County Council is required to complete several tasks before final financial approval is granted from Central Government, including:

- The acquisition of all of the land necessary to build the bypass
- Completion of the detailed preparation and design
- Invitation to tender to construction groups.