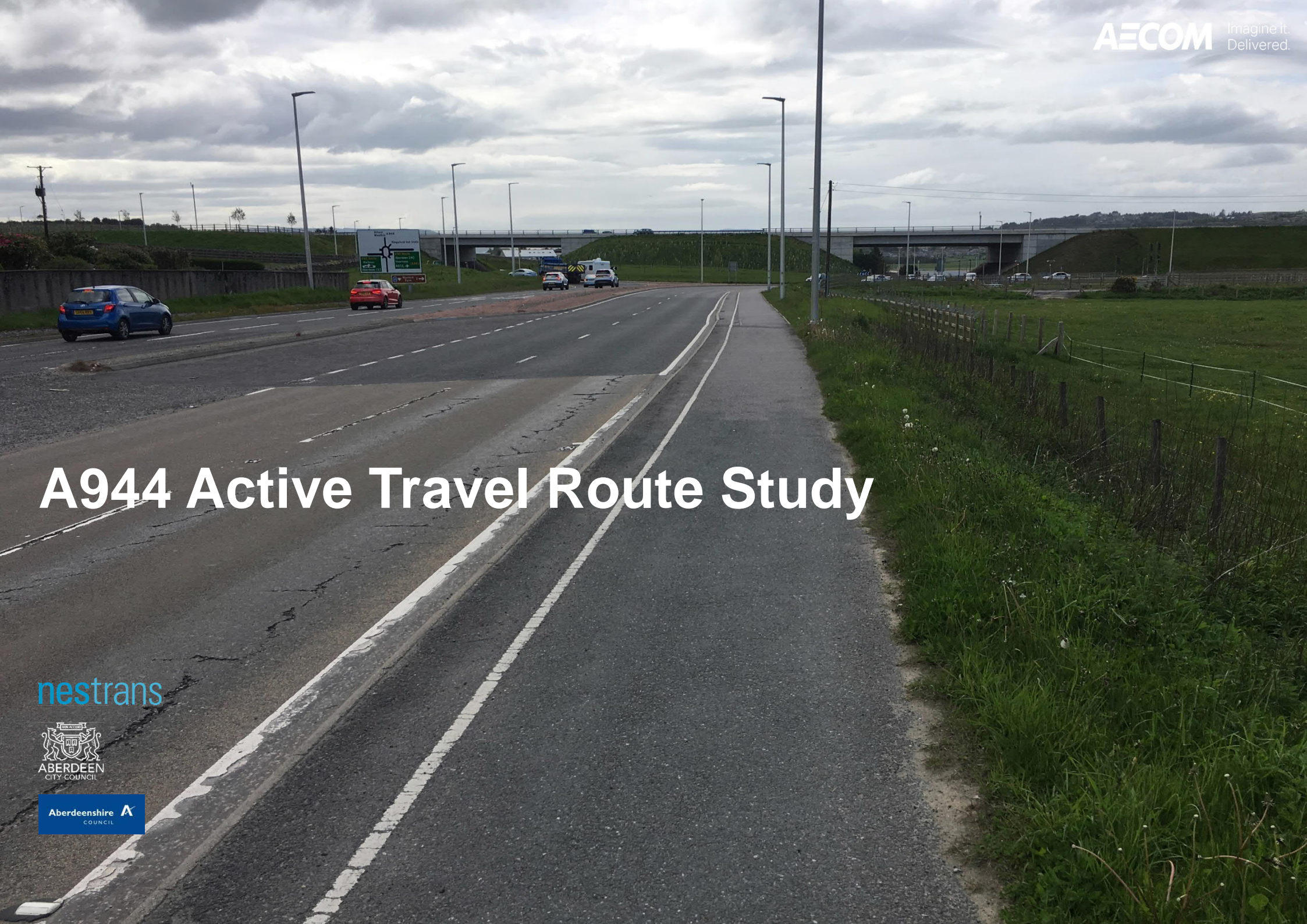


# A944 Active Travel Route Study

nestrans



Aberdeenshire COUNCIL





## Introduction

Nestrans, the North East Scotland Regional Transport Partnership, has commissioned AECOM to explore options for a new active travel route on the A944 between Westhill in Aberdeenshire and Kingswells in Aberdeen City. The study is being progressed in line with national, regional, and local policy objectives to increase levels of active travel and reduce private car journeys.

The ultimate objective of the study is to provide recommendations to inform the implementation of a continuous active travel route for walking and cycling between Westhill and Kingswells. The study will seek to promote a route that is constructed in accordance with standards set out in national guidelines and has taken a multidisciplinary approach, recognising the requirement to consider the interaction of the project with the AWPR Kingswells South junction.

It should be noted that this study has progressed separately, but in parallel to the A944/A9119 Transport Corridor Study that ACC consulted on during 2020, with the outcomes from both anticipated to contribute to the development of continuous and coherent walking and cycling routes between Westhill and the city centre.

This briefing paper has been prepared as part of the second round of consultation on the study which will focus on presenting the options which have been developed for the route. The initial round of consultation was held in 2019 and focussed on the problems and opportunities on the route which have informed the option generation and development process.



## Study Objectives

The study is being progressed with the following objectives:

- To develop a flagship segregated cycle corridor between Westhill and Kingswells.
- To ensure this provides a safe, direct, convenient, coherent, and continuous active travel link between Westhill and Kingswells and serves a range of intermediate destinations, thus facilitating and encouraging strategic and local active travel journeys.
- To improve the transport options available to those living and/or working on or alongside the corridor by making active travel a safe and viable alternative to motorised travel, thus encouraging a shift from car-based to active modes of transport.
- To engage with current and potential users and community representatives to develop and design options that meet the needs of all users.
- To ensure that infrastructure improvements are accompanied by an intensive behaviour change campaign within affected communities and with key trip generators along the route in order to raise awareness and encourage use of the route.
- To raise the profile of active travel throughout the region and to encourage more healthy lifestyles for those living and working in Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire.





## Study Approach

A number of key tasks are being undertaken to progress the study including:

- Desktop review of active travel policies and guidance at the national, regional, and local level.
- Stakeholder engagement to identify problems, issues, opportunities, and constraints on the A944 route.
- Option development taking into account the views of various organisations, local community representatives in the study area and members of the public.
- Option appraisal, in accordance with Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance (STAG).
- Preparation of a detailed report setting out the study process, option appraisal and final recommendations.



## Stakeholder Engagement Phase 1

A programme of stakeholder engagement is central to the successful delivery of the project.

The initial round of consultation was undertaken in 2019 and provided Elected Members, council officers, and key stakeholders with a means of providing feedback on the key issues and opportunities associated with active travel along the A944 between Westhill and Kingswells.

High level feedback on the problems and opportunities on the route included:

1. The shared use path being split between the north and south of the carriageway.
2. Conflict between cyclists and vehicles emerging from junctions onto A944 means opportunity to close off vehicular access from some junctions onto the route.
3. Poor visibility at certain points of the route.
4. Narrow sections along the route, making it difficult for passage with other cyclists or pedestrians.
5. Opportunity to reduce the size of the central reservation to allow more space to accommodate active travel infrastructure.
6. Opportunity to increase leisure cycling along the route, providing connections to the wider active travel network.





## Stakeholder Engagement Phase 2



The second phase of engagement focusses on the option development stage and is seeking to receive feedback on the options which have been developed as part of the study.

Three options have been identified from a series of considerations:

- An on-line route
- A northern route
- A southern route

As part of this phase of engagement, Elected Members, council officers and key stakeholders will be invited to provide feedback on the three options.

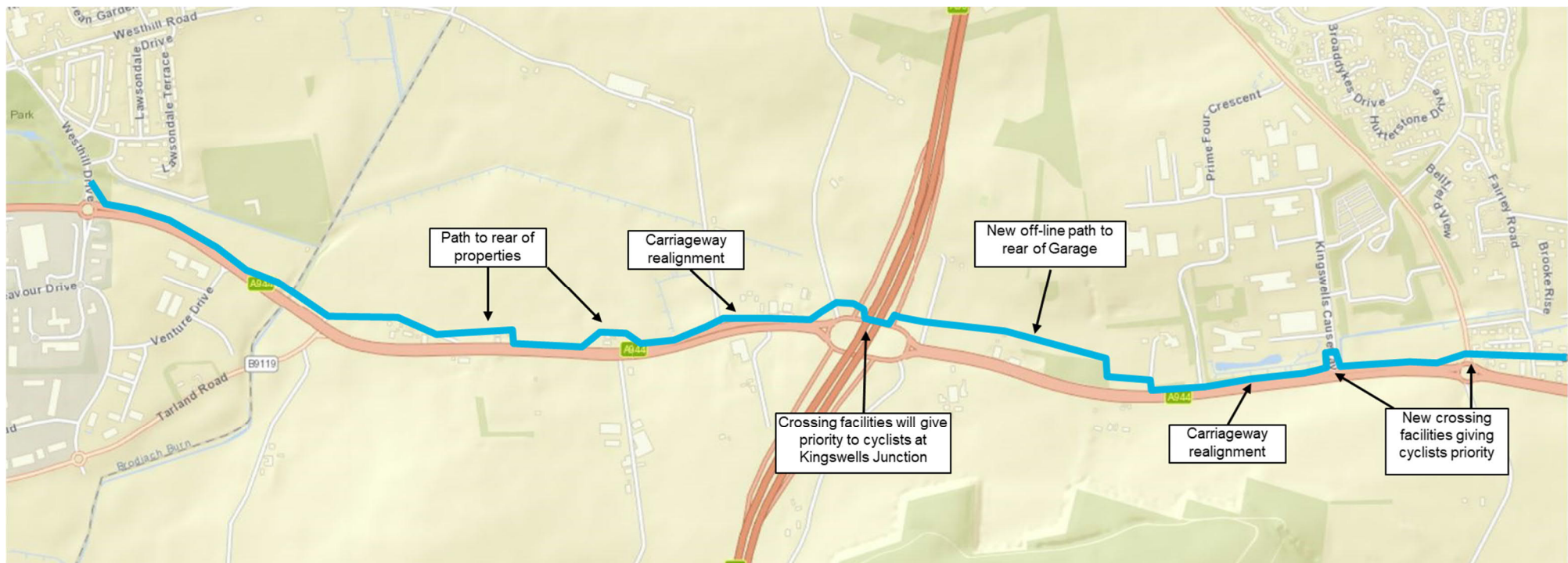
An online public consultation will also be available to complete from the Nestrans website between 17<sup>th</sup> May and 11<sup>th</sup> June 2021.

## Option 1 – On-line Route

Follows the route of the A944, providing a fully segregated path for pedestrians and cyclists with new priority sections put in place at junctions as well as some closing of junctions to the benefit of cyclists and pedestrians.

The full segregated path will have:

- 1m verge segregating path from carriageway
- 3m wide two-way cycleway
- 1m segregation strip between cyclists and pedestrians
- 2m wide footway





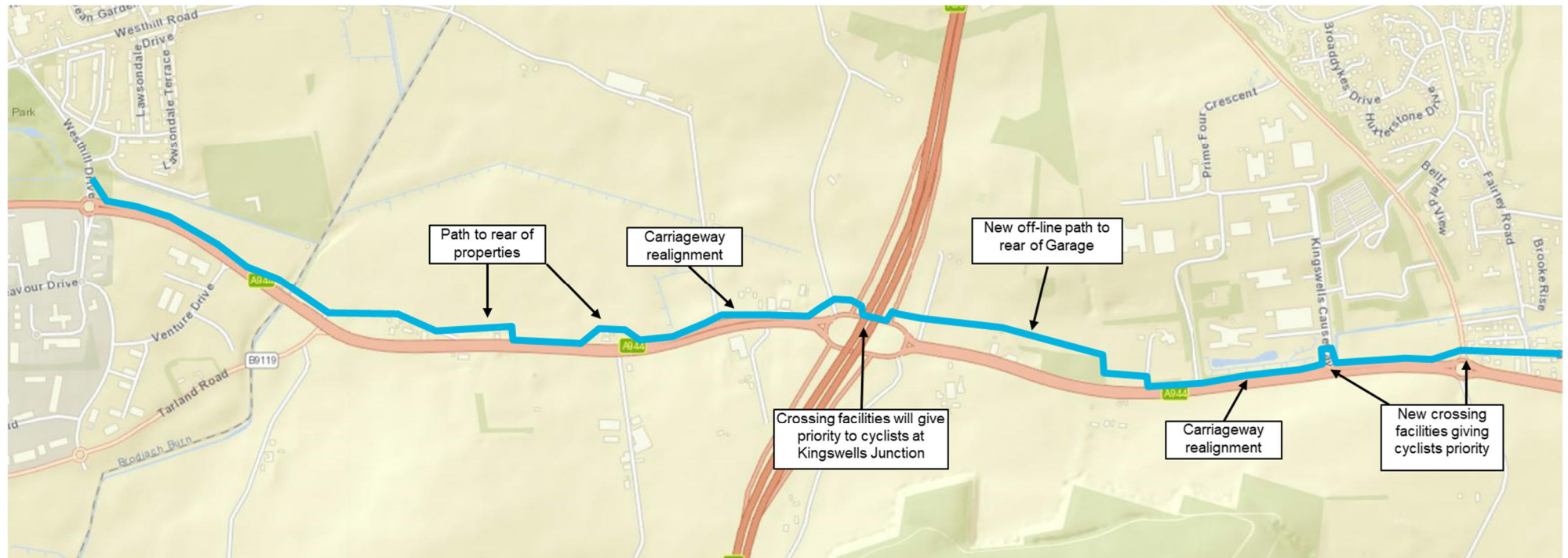
## Option 1 – On-line Route

### PROS

- Medium cost
- Closure of A944/Westhill Road junction to vehicles to create continuous active travel route and low vehicle traffic on Westhill Road
- Good level of access to facilities including Prime Four and Kingswells P&R
- Excellent potential for future expansion to the east and west

### CONS

- Four toucan crossings are required to cross the Kingswells South junction
- Carriageway realignment required in two locations on the A944
- Route passes to the rear of the Five Mile Garage with some perception of remoteness possible
- Route remains adjacent to vehicular traffic on the A944



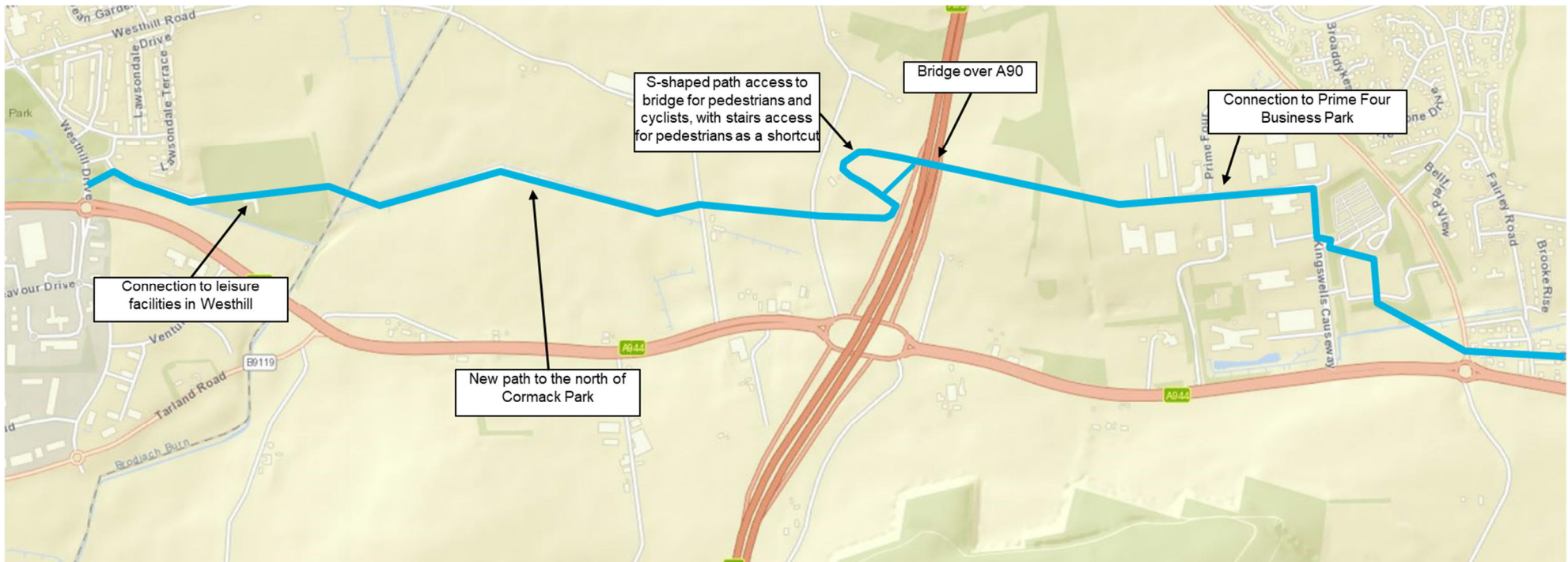


## Option 2 – Northern Option

Follows a route to the north of the A944, using a series of new and upgraded paths and connecting to various facilities on its route.

The route will contain:

- A fully segregated path to the same specification as Option 1
- A bridge over the A90 (AWPR) to the north of the Kingswells Junction
- An S-shaped access point to the bridge for cyclists and pedestrians and separate stairs for pedestrians as a shortcut
- Connections to Prime Four Business Park, the Park and Ride at Kingswells and leisure facilities in Westhill



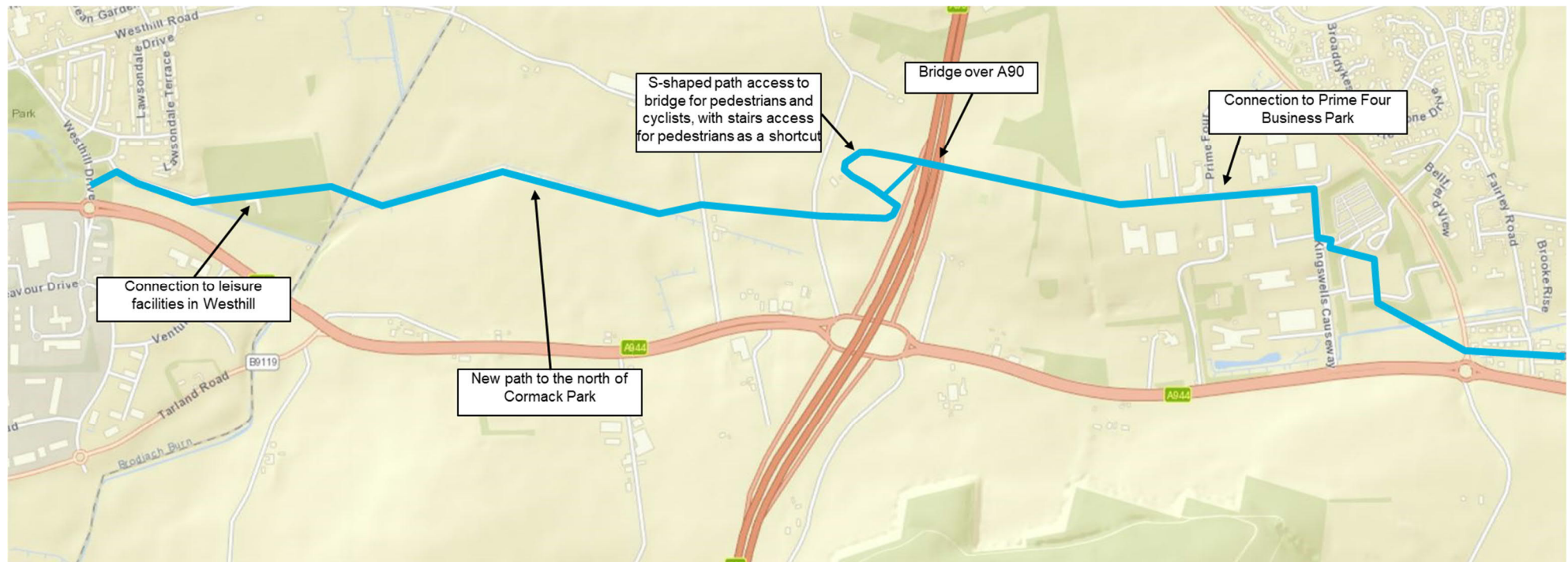
## Option 2 – Northern Option

### PROS

- Route is distanced from the A944 for its entire length
- Bridge crossing of the A90
- Easy access to numerous facilities along the route including Lawsondale pitches, Prime Four and Kingswells P&R
- Vehicle speeds reduced where the route crosses side roads with priority given to active travel

### CONS

- Continuous gradient to A90 from both directions, but never steeper than maximum standards
- Longest route by 400m of the three under consideration
- High cost





## Option 3 – Southern Option

Follows a route to the south of the A944, using mostly new paths, and involving a large bridge over the A90 to the south of the Kingswells Junction.

The route will contain:

- A fully segregated path to the same specification as Options 1 and 2
- A bridge over the A90 (AWPR) to the south of the Kingswells Junction
- An upgraded toucan crossing near Prime Four Business Park



## Option 3 – Southern Option

### PROS

- Majority of the route is separate from the A944
- Access nearby to Prime Four and Kingswells P&R
- Bridge crossing of the A90
- Potential for access to Kingshill Woods
- Closure of A944/Venture Drive junction to create continuous active travel route

### CONS

- Highest cost of the three options
- Limited access to facilities along the route
- Requirement to cross the B9119 Tarland Road and the A944 via toucan crossings
- Route is relatively remote compared to the other options potentially leading to a perception of isolation





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