

Handcross to Warninglid **A23** Widening Scheme Newsletter • October 2011

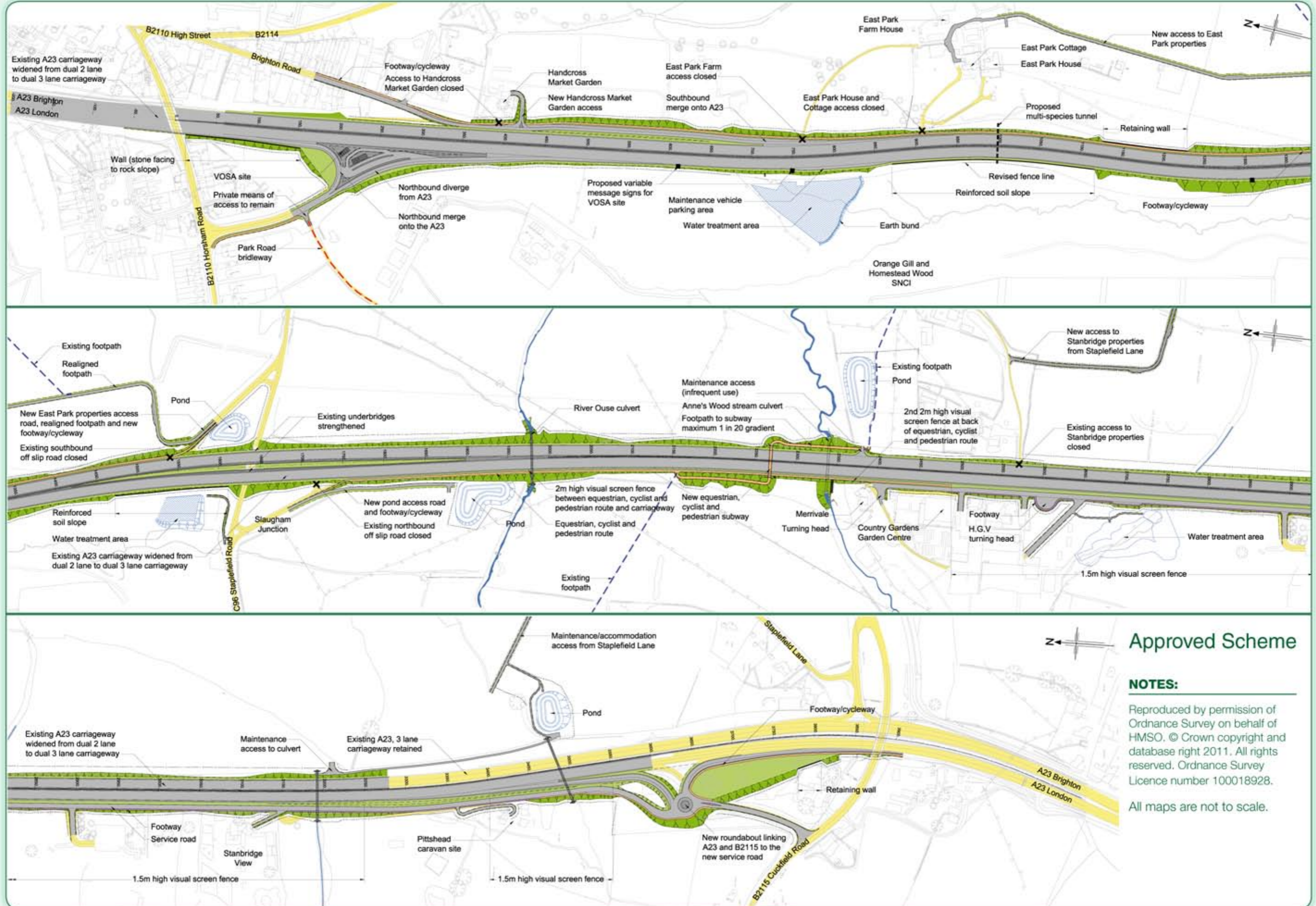


Works starting. See inside!



Welcome to our latest newsletter for the A23 Handcross to Warninglid Widening scheme.

It has the latest news to keep you-up-to-date with progress following completion of the formal planning stage of the scheme.



Approved Scheme

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All maps are not to scale.

The A23 Handcross to Warninglid Widening scheme

What's happened so far

The detailed planning process for the scheme started with draft Orders being published in Autumn 2008. A Public Inquiry into the objections received and alternatives proposed was held in the Summer 2008 and the Secretaries of State's decision announced in October 2009. Following further traffic work and consultation on changes recommended for further consideration by the Inspector, they decided in March 2010 to make the Orders with amendments to delete Slaugham junction and to provide a different access to Handcross Market Garden. The scheme as now confirmed also includes enhanced provision for pedestrians, equestrians and cyclists to that originally suggested and is shown on the plan in this newsletter.



Slaugham junction

In May 2010, the scheme was deferred and considered as part of the Government's Spending Review. Following the review, it was announced in October 2010 that the scheme would be one of 14 nationally to be taken through to construction in the period up to 2015. In April 2011 it was confirmed that work would start in Quarter 3 2011/12. Advance environmental works and detailed design of the scheme started immediately.



B2115 Warninglid junction

What's happening next

We plan to start the main construction works shortly and aim to complete them by Autumn 2014 or earlier if possible. The main works start with tree felling in October. This is a significant operation and will involve night time and working and closures to the A23.



A23 southbound near River Ouse

This will lead to the first significant civil engineering works starting in Spring 2012 when we will commence widening of the southbound carriageway to enable it to carry two lanes of traffic in each direction. These works will take about ten months and when complete will allow us to transfer traffic from the northbound carriageway which we will then start to rebuild. During this first period we will also concentrate on providing new private accesses to property at East Park and Stanbridge and also the service road serving businesses and properties on the west side of the A23 north of Warninglid.

As part of the decision to proceed with the scheme, a programme of traffic monitoring is being undertaken on the local road network to help determine whether any traffic calming is necessary as a direct consequence of the closure of Slaugham junction. Traffic will be monitored before, during and after construction of the A23 scheme and in discussion with West Sussex County Council, we have identified fourteen sites where permanent traffic counters have now been installed and arrangements made for the collection and evaluation of the data. Any necessary traffic calming measures on the locals network will be developed in consultation with the local community and funded by us.

Advance Works

The first stage of the advance environmental works to provide planting to enhance existing hedges has been completed. This is important as it provides connectivity across the landscape and enables protected animals such as dormice to relocate.



A23 looking north

Timing is critical as dormice are active during the summer months and hibernate in the base of trees in winter. We have gradually increased the management of the hedges through the summer when dormice are active and they can use these improved corridors to move into new habitat.

We have provided about 60 bat boxes, 80 bird boxes and 80 dormouse boxes and a bat roost has been constructed by modifying an existing World War II pill box adjacent to the scheme. Alien species such as a rhododendron and skunk cabbage are also being removed as part of the enhancement of ancient woodland areas.

Environmental Surveys

Environmental surveys are ongoing. This summer ecologists are completing bat, dormouse and great



Great Crested Newt

crested newt surveys to provide a baseline, so that the success of the advanced mitigation activities can be assessed.



Dormouse from Handcross Hill

Traffic Management

Some work we have already undertaken has been at night when traffic flows are low allowing us to close one lane. The tree felling works though will require us to close lanes in October and both carriageways of the A23 overnight through November.



A23 northbound near Country Gardens Centre

Once main civil engineering works start in Spring 2012, two lanes of traffic will be maintained in both directions for the duration of construction with the occasional restrictions overnight for specific operations. The two lanes of traffic in each direction will use narrow lanes and a 40mph speed restriction will apply regulated by average speed cameras. The laybys on the northbound carriageway and near Brighton Road slip road will be closed and not replaced.

A23 Closures

Our site clearance plans are governed by environmental wildlife restrictions particularly in relation to dormice who are a protected species. Their habitat is in the tree canopy whilst from November onwards, they hibernate in the base of the trees. We also have to avoid disturbing nesting birds in the trees.

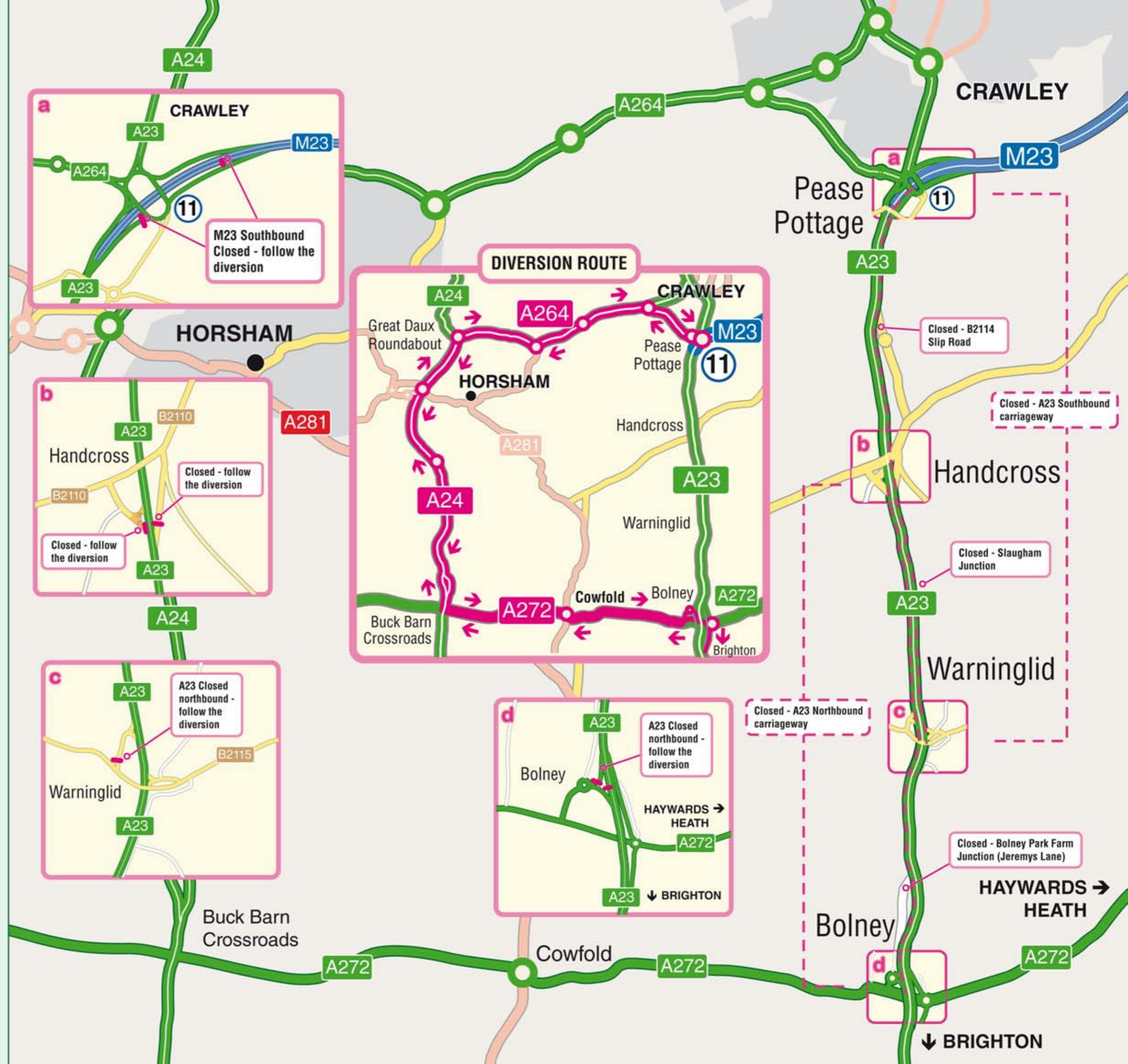
We have therefore planned to fell the trees over the period from 3rd October to 27th November which is outside the bird nesting season and complies with a licence to protect the dormice which we have obtained from Natural England.

We intend to remove the trees by the end of November but will leave the stumps in place. The dormice habitat is therefore removed whilst they are hibernating but once they emerge from hibernation in the new year they will clear from the area along enhanced vegetation corridors provided earlier under advance environmental works. Once they have cleared the area then we can remove the tree stumps.

The first phase of tree felling will take place from 3rd to 20th October and as part of these works, we will close one lane on the A23 in each direction overnight on weekday evenings between 9th and 12th October. The second phase of works which are covered by the dormouse licence will start on 1st November and be undertaken with closures of both carriageways of the A23.

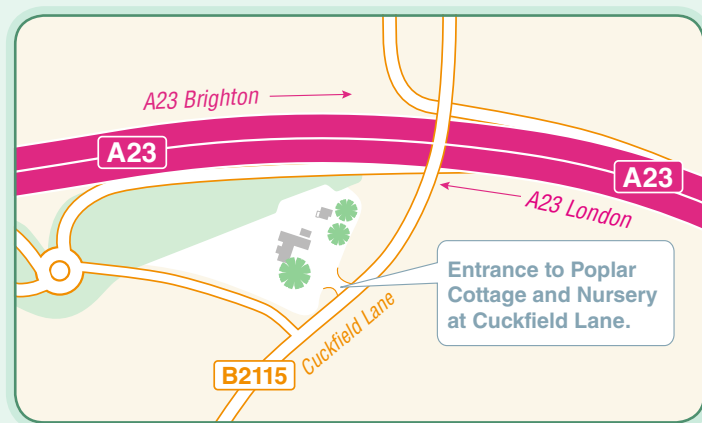
The A23 closures will be overnight from 7th November onwards and timed for when A23 traffic flows are low. When the A23 is closed, through traffic will be diverted in both directions between the M23 junction 11 and A23/A272 junction at Bolney via the A264, the A24 Horsham bypass and the A272. Access to local villages adjacent to the A23 will be maintained and signposted. The closures are planned to operate six nights a week – no works are planned on Friday night to Saturday morning – and we aim to complete them by November 27th. The closures will generally operate between 10pm and 6am but the exact timings will be reviewed each night and be changed to reflect live traffic flow data. Regular updates about traffic management changes will be added to the scheme page on our website.

We are contacting all residents and businesses with direct access to the sections of A23 to discuss access arrangements for their properties when the road is closed.



Keeping in Touch

We have purchased Poplar Cottage and Nursery at Cuckfield Lane at its junction with the A23 at Warninglid, which we bought because of the significant affect of the scheme on the overall site. During the advanced works we will be operating from a temporary site office at this location. Our Public Liaison officer, Alan Bedford will be based at Poplar Cottage during the advance works so please feel free to contact him if you have any queries about the scheme.



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www.highways.gov.uk/roads/projects/3998.aspx

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Safety at roadworks



The Highways Agency is working with the industry and road users to reduce the risks of working on the roads.

For the safety of roadworkers and all road users, when you are approaching roadworks:

- Keep within the speed limit – it is there for your safety.
- Get into the correct lane in good time – don't keep switching.
- Concentrate on the road ahead, not the roadworks.
- Be alert for works' traffic leaving or entering roadworks.
- Keep a safe distance – there could be queues in front.
- Observe all signs – they are there to help you.

If you need help using this or any other Highways Agency information, please call **0300 123 5000** and we will assist you.

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