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## **6. TRANS-PENNINE UPGRADE PROGRAMME NON STATUTORY PUBLIC CONSULTATION – PEAK DISTRICT NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY RESPONSE (TN/BJT)**

### **Consultation**

Highways England is holding a non-statutory public consultation into the Trans-Pennine Upgrade Programme. The consultation is in relation to a series of measures that have been included within the Roads Investment Strategy 1 (RIS1) and focusing on the Southern Trans-Pennine road link between the M1 and the M67, and including the A628 Trunk Road across the National Park.

At this stage the proposals are yet to be finalised, and are at a high level and thus do not carry the level of detail that would be forthcoming at the later design stages. There are a number of elements to the package of proposals, and these include the following: -

- i. Mottram Moor Link Road and the A57(T) to A57 Link Road (2 options)
- ii. A61 Dualling (2 options)
- iii. A628 Climbing Lanes (2 locations)
- iv. Safety improvements
- v. Technology improvements

All of the proposals are likely to result in either direct or indirect impacts on the National Park, and therefore the proposed response covers all these elements.

The consultation is based upon an eight page questionnaire; however, in order to ensure that the Authority is able to provide a detailed and holistic response to the proposals, we are choosing to respond via a letter.

The Public Consultation is open for four weeks, closing on 10<sup>th</sup> April 2017.

### **Site and Surroundings and Proposals**

The proposals have both direct and indirect effects on land within the National Park. The most significant impacts will be from the proposed A628 Climbing Lanes, both of which fall within the National Park boundary.

The locations of sites and their surroundings are provided below: -

#### **i) Mottram Moor Link Road and the A57(T) to A57 Link Road**

There are two possible options for the delivery of this element of the proposal, with the intention of relieving two traffic bottlenecks at Mottram and Woolley Moor, and improving conditions for residents at Mottram and Woolley Moor.

Both of the potential options for this element of the upgrade lie outside the National Park boundary.

#### **ii) A61 Dualling**

There are two possible options for the delivery of this element of the proposal, with the intention of improving traffic flow and journey times between the A616 and the M1

Both of the potential options for this element of the upgrade lie outside the National Park boundary.

### iii) A628 Climbing Lanes

The delivery of these climbing lanes will involve widening the current carriageway at two separate locations. The two locations are: -

- a) Location 1 – This climbing lane would start on the eastern end of Woodhead Reservoir, south of Pikenaze Moor and would extend for a length of approximately 800 metres towards Cadding Wood. In addition to the climbing lane there would be a need for a ~ 250 metre entry / exit way at either end of the climbing lane. It is anticipated that the widening necessary would take the road width from approximately 6 metres at present to approximately 17.5 metres along the length of the climbing lane.

The land that would be used to create the climbing lane at location 1 falls within the Dark Peak, *Reservoir valleys with woodland* and *Moorland slopes and cloughs* landscape character types.

- b) Location 2 – This climbing lane is located to the east of Location 1 and would start roughly adjacent to the Hawthorn Clough Culvert, extending for a length of approximately 1,100 metres towards Longside End. In addition to the climbing lane there would be a need for a ~ 250 metre entry / exit way at either end of the climbing lane. It is anticipated that the widening necessary would take the road width from approximately 6 metres at present to approximately 17.5 metres along the length of the climbing lane.

The land that would be used to create the climbing lane at Location 2 falls within the Dark Peak, *Moorland slopes and cloughs* and *Open Moors* landscape character types. The land at this location is also covered by the Dark Peak SSSI, the South Pennine Moors Special Area of Conservation and the Peak District Moors Special Protected Area.

In both locations, the climbing lanes would be delivered through the use of cuttings on the northern edge of the carriageway. In both locations, the stabilisation of slopes above the cuttings may require additional earthworks, dependent on the local geology and geomorphology.

### iv) Safety improvements

These are a range of measures across the whole of the route from the M67 to the A1. Of those that may be included within the National Park boundary, the following are worth noting: -

- a) Changing speed limits (usually reducing them) – this is proposed for the majority of the A628 corridor within the National Park.
- b) Average speed cameras – this has been suggested for the whole of the route, including within the National Park.
- c) Erecting vehicle actuated signs (VAS) – it is likely that this would be used to address specific hazards, and it should be assumed that this would include locations on the route within the National Park.

### v) Technology improvements

There are two measures proposed, both of which are on land either within or in close proximity to the National Park: -

- a) Automated snow gates – these would replace the existing snow gates, but would be

raised vertically when closed.

- b) Vehicle Messaging Signs (VMS) – these would new and or replacement signs to warn of road closures etc. These would be clustered around either end of the A628 (T) cross-Park Route.

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

- 1. That the Authority supports the response to the Trans-Pennine Upgrade Programme Non Statutory Public Consultation**
- 2. That the Authority recognises the timescales for the Trans-Pennine Upgrade proposals moving forward.**

### **History**

There has been a long history of a desire to provide a bypass of the villages of Mottram, Hollingworth and Tintwistle, which culminated in the Highways Agency proposed A57/A628/A616 Mottram, Hollingworth and Tintwistle Bypass and Route Restraint Measures scheme of 2007. This proposal included the local A57(T) to A57 Link Road (then known as the Glossop Spur).

The National Park Authority formally objected to the proposed scheme on the basis of the extremely high levels of predicted traffic growth resulting from the scheme, and the impact of road building with the National Park.

The Public Inquiry into the scheme commenced in June 2007, but was adjourned following the discovery of an error in the Highways Agency's traffic modelling figures. Delays in addressing the issue and increased costs as a result led to the Highways Agency withdrawing from the Public Inquiry in March 2009.

Tameside Metropolitan Borough Counsel then devised a strategy to deliver a bypass of Mottram and the Glossop Spur; this was known as the Longdendale Integrated Transport Strategy (LITS).

Measures to deliver the elements of LITS as part of a Trans-Pennine Upgrade Programme were announced in December 2014, and these proposals form part of the RIS1 Programme for delivery during the period from 2015-2020.

### **Main Policies**

Relevant Core Strategy policies:

#### **GSP1: Securing national park purposes and sustainable development**

Part A states that all policies must be read in combination.

Part B states that all development shall be consistent with the National Park's legal purposes and duty.

Part E states that in securing national park purposes major development should not take place within the Peak District National Park other than in exceptional circumstances. Major development will only be permitted following rigorous consideration of the criteria in national policy.

Part F states that where a proposal for major development can demonstrate a significant net benefit to the National Park, every effort to mitigate potential localised harm and compensate for any residual harm to the area's valued characteristics would be expected to be secured.

### **T1: Reducing the general need to travel and encouraging sustainable transport**

Part B of the Policy states that “*Cross-Park Traffic will be deterred*”, it is likely that the delivery of the upgrade programme will encourage Cross-Park Traffic.

Part C states that “*Impacts of traffic within environmentally sensitive locations will be minimised*”, the introduction of a climbing lane that directly impacts on the Dark Peak SSSI, the South Pennine Moors Special Area of Conservation and the Peak District Moors Special Protected Area would appear to be contrary to this Policy

Part A states that “*Conserving and enhancing the National Park’s valued characteristics will be the primary criterion in the planning and design of transport and its management*”, this provides a steer towards the high design standards required as part of any scheme within the National Park.

### **T2: Reducing and directing traffic**

Part C of the Policy states that “*No new road schemes will be permitted unless they provide access to new businesses or housing development or there are exceptional circumstances. Those road schemes (including improvements) that fall outside of the Planning Authority’s direct jurisdiction will be strongly resisted except in exceptional circumstances*”.

However Part B provides scope for potential exceptions stating “*In exceptional circumstances, transport developments (including expansion of capacity, widening or a new route) that increase the amount of cross-Park traffic may be accepted where: there is a demonstrable long term net environmental benefit within the National Park*”.

### **T3: Design of transport infrastructure**

This Policy sets out the standards that would be required from any new transport development including those such as proposed as part of the upgrade programme.

### **T6: Routes for walking, cycling and horse riding, and waterways**

Part A states that “*Where a development proposal affects a Right of Way, every effort will be made to accommodate the definitive route or provide an equally good or better alternative*”.

Relevant Saved Local Plan policies:

### **LT3: Cross-Park traffic: road and rail**

Part A states that “*Cross-Park transport infrastructure projects will be opposed unless there is a net environmental benefit to the National Park and wherever practicable they also provide economic benefits and meet local transport needs*”.

### **Policy LT18: Design criteria for transport infrastructure**

This Policy sets out the standards that would be required from any new transport development including those such as proposed as part of the upgrade programme.

### **Policy LT19: Mitigation of wildlife severance effects**

This policy states that “*Proposals for 'wild bridges' and cut and cover tunnels in Special Protection Areas, Special Areas of Conservation and where major footpaths and bridleways cross roads and railways will be encouraged and supported*”.

### **Policy LT20: Public rights of way**

This Policy protects the line of rights of way but also sets stringent criteria which must be met to remedy the loss of / replacement of an existing right of way.

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## National Planning Policy Framework

Paragraphs 115-116 make a presumption against major development in National Parks “*except in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated they are in the public interest*”. Paragraph 116 then provides a series of tests that should be applied before major development should be considered.

Paragraphs 118-119 make a presumption against development including sustainable development of sites that are designated as SSSI, European Designated Sites (SAC & SPA) and any potential European Sites.

### Wider Policy context (if relevant)

The English National Parks and the Broads UK Government Vision and Circular 2010 states the following at paragraph 85:

*“Improvements of main routes through the Parks are governed largely by considerations outside those relating to the Park area itself. However, there is a strong presumption against any significant road widening or the building of new roads through a Park, unless it can be shown there are compelling reasons for the new or enhanced capacity and with any benefits outweighing the costs very significantly. Any investment in trunk roads should be directed to developing routes for long distance traffic which avoid the Parks.”*

### Key Issues

This Non-Statutory Public Consultation into the Trans-Pennine Upgrade Programme lacks detail and is focussed on obtaining public opinion on the merits of the various elements of the programme.

For this reason the proposed response to the Consultation focuses on clarifying the role of the National Park Authority with regard to the statutory purposes and duty, and Highways England’s duty under Section 62 of the Environment Act.

The proposed response also looks at each element in turn and highlights things that Highways England should take into consideration and areas which will be of potential concern to the Authority. These include the following: -

- i. Direct impacts on the Dark Peak SSSI, the South Pennine Moors Special Area of Conservation and the Peak District Moors Special Protected Area.
- ii. Direct landscape impacts of various elements including the climbing lanes and the average speed cameras.
- iii. Direct and indirect affects related to the growth in traffic along the route.
- iv. Direct and indirect impacts on the quiet enjoyment and tranquillity within the Longdendale Valley.

The proposed response to the proposals largely seeks to raise concerns about the impacts and raises awareness of the requirement of an Environmental Impact Assessment for the upgrade and also the likelihood of the requirement for an Appropriate Assessment under the Habitat Regulations. **However in respect of the proposed climbing lanes officers have proposed to make an objection.** Adopted policies GSP1, T1 and T2 (see below) in combination are clear in that such schemes would comprise major development. Cross-park traffic, and new road building which facilitates such increase will be deterred. Moreover where exceptional circumstances do arise there should be a net environmental benefit to the National Park.

It should be noted that the consultation relates to the schemes detailed within this report. It does not include any potential remediation for Tintwistle or Hollingworth and it does not have any relation to the potential Trans-Pennine Tunnel Study.

It is also worth considering that according to Page 2 of the Consultation Document, there is currently a lack of funds available to complete the full upgrade programme within the RIS1 Time Period (2015-2020). However, Highways England and their agents are looking at ways to deliver the whole programme within budget using a “value engineering” approach. This will almost certainly require a compromise on quality of materials etc. In itself this raises concerns as to the nature of detailed proposals. In accordance with policy GSP1, where major development is considered acceptable the design response ought to be of the highest quality in order to mitigate and compensate for any harm that arises to the valued characteristics of the National Park.

### **Conclusion**

At this stage, it is difficult to be clear on any potential benefits and impacts of the proposed Trans-Pennine Upgrade Programme, as the designs are yet to be finalised and the detailed assessments and modelling have yet to be undertaken.

Therefore it is important and appropriate at this stage to formally raise any potential concerns about the proposals as well as offering guidance to Highways England as to the processes that they will need to go through to meet Environmental Impact Regulations; their responsibilities with regard to the Dark Peak SSSI, the South Pennine Moors Special Area of Conservation and the Peak District Moors Special Protected Area, and how the Section 62 Duty applies to them.

### **Human Rights**

Any human rights issues have been considered and addressed in the preparation of this report.

### **List of Background Papers** (not previously published)

Annex 1 – [Public Consultation Document \(weblink\)](#)

Annex 2 – [Draft Map of the A628 Climbing lanes Location \(weblink\)](#)

### **Appendices**

Appendix 1 – proposed National Park Authority response to consultation

#### **Report Author, Job Title and Publication Date**

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