

**8. TRANS PENNINE UPGRADE PROGRAMME STATUTORY PUBLIC CONSULTATION AND TRANSPORT FOR THE NORTH STRATEGIC TRANSPORT PLAN PUBLIC CONSULTATION (TN/BJT )**

**1. Purpose of the report**

This report provides an update to Members on the progress of major transport proposals with the potential to negatively affect the Peak District National Park. The report focuses on two current public consultations and the draft responses to these consultations.

The first of these consultations is in regard to Highway's England's short term proposal for two link roads to ease congestion in the Mottram Moor and Woolley Bridge areas, west of the National Park boundary. The draft response is contained within Appendix 1 to this report.

The second consultation is in relation to Transport for the North's longer term proposals to improve both road and rail connectivity across the whole of the North. However, the focus of our response is in relation to those proposals within the South Pennines area and across the National Park. The draft response is contained within Appendix 2 to this report.

**Key Issues**

- The Highways England scheme comprises two link roads just outside of, but in close proximity to, the National Park boundary.
- Both link roads proposed by Highways England are expected to increase traffic flows in the order of more than 1,000 vehicles per day across both the A628 and A57 Snake Pass roads within the National Park.
- The Transport for the North proposals includes major road building within the National Park along the A628 corridor with a partial tunnel.
- The Transport for the North proposals include significant upgrades to the Hope Valley Line or the building of a new railway line should the upgrades prove unfeasible.

**2. Recommendations(s)**

- 1. That the Authority notes the report and the likely continuation of pressure for major improvements to Trans Pennine road and rail routes across the National Park.**
- 2. That the Authority agrees the response to the Trans Pennine Upgrade Statutory Public Consultation.**
- 3. That the Authority agrees the response to the Transport for the North's Strategic Transport Plan Public Consultation.**

**How does this contribute to our policies and legal obligations?**

3. The responses brought before Authority at Appendix 1 and 2 set out the role of the Authority and others with regard to National Park purposes as set out in Sections 61 and 62 on the Environment Act (1995).
4. Core Strategy 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'.*

5. Core Strategy L1: Landscape character and valued characteristics; Part B states *'Other than in exceptional circumstances, proposals for development in the Natural Zone will not be permitted'*.
6. Core Strategy Policy T1: Reducing the need to travel and encouraging sustainable travel; Part B states that *'Cross-Park traffic will be deterred'*, whilst Part E states that *'Impacts of traffic within environmentally sensitive locations will be minimised'*.
7. Core Strategy Policy T2: Reducing and directing traffic; Part B states *'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'*. Part C states *'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'*.
8. Core Strategy Policy T3: Design of transport infrastructure; Part C states that *'Mitigation measures will be provided where transport infrastructure severs wildlife routes'*.
9. Core Strategy Policy T5: Managing the demand for rail, and reuse of former railway routes; Part A states that *'Land, tunnels and bridges will be safeguarded for future rail use (including heavy rail, light rail and guided bus) for the following schemes.....i) Enhancement of the Hope Valley line'*.
10. Core Strategy Policy T6: Routes for walking, cycling and horse riding, and waterways; Part B states *'The Manifold, Tissington and High Peak Trails, and other long distance routes, will be protected from development that conflicts with their purpose. The continuity of the Trans Pennine Trail and the Monsal Trail will be retained, irrespective of any future rail use, by realignment if required'*.
11. Local Plan Policy 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'*. Part B states that *'Land required for the following schemes will be safeguarded.....iii) an additional loop to enhance track capacity on the Hope Valley line'*.
12. Local Plan Policy LT19: Mitigation of wildlife severance effects; states *'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'*.
13. Local Plan Policy LT20: Public rights of way; states *'Where a development proposal affects a public right of way, either the definitive line of the public right of way should be retained, or, in exceptional circumstances, where retention of the definitive line is not possible, the developer will be required to provide an alternative route'*. The policy goes on to set criteria that an alternative route would be required to meet.

## **Background Information**

### **Highways England Trans Pennine Upgrade Programme**

14. There has been a long history of plans 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).
15. 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.
16. 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.
17. Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council then devised a strategy to deliver a bypass of Mottram and the Glossop Spur; this was known as the Longdendale Integrated Transport Strategy (LITS).
18. 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.
19. The main elements of the scheme were a relief road for Mottram Moor ( Mottram Moor Link Road) and one for the Woolley Bridge junction on the A57 (A57(T) to A57 Link Road). The proposal also included two climbing lanes on the A628, safety and technology measures; plus junction improvements on the A61 east of the Park boundary
20. Highways England conducted a non-statutory public consultation into the Trans Pennine Upgrade Programme in March of 2017. At the time, the proposals included the delivery of two climbing lanes on the A628 within the National Park. The Authority endorsed an objection to this element of the proposals at its meeting on 7<sup>th</sup> April 2017.
21. The climbing lanes element of the scheme has been put on hold and is not subject to the Statutory Public Consultation. Similarly, the proposals for the A61 and Technology and Safety measures, whilst part of the public consultation process now fall outside of the Development Consent Order Process.
22. The information provided within the public consultation includes a Preliminary Environmental Impact Report. This details the potential environmental impacts relating to the scheme. However, at the present time, there is no traffic modelling information provided. Whilst ongoing dialogue with Highways England and their agents have provided some idea of traffic flows (as referred to within the response); it is understood that the modelling has progressed considerably.
23. Without having detailed traffic flow projections, it is difficult to ascribe the potential impacts that may arise as a result of the scheme. However, the Preliminary Environmental Impact Report does suggest an impact on the South Pennine Moors Special Area of Conservation (SAC); Peak District Moors Special Protection Area (SPA); and Dark Peak Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). The potential impacts relate to air quality, noise, and severance.

24. In addition there are potential impacts on Tintwistle and Langsett Conservation areas due to the increase in traffic along the A628(T) and A616(T) through or adjacent to the National Park. These would again be in relation to air quality, noise, and severance. It is likely that users of National Trails within the Longdendale Valley and on Snake Summit would be similarly impacted on but with addition of visual effects from increased traffic flows.
25. The draft response recognises the benefits of the scheme to the residents of Mottram and Woolley Bridge, but raises concerns about the potential impacts on residents of Tintwistle and Langsett, and on the South Pennine Moors Special Area of Conservation (SAC); Peak District Moors Special Protection Area (SPA); and Dark Peak Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).
26. The response also raises concerns about the lack of available information to be able to properly judge the impacts of the proposed scheme at this stage; the final statutory opportunity to influence it.
27. It should be noted that the response does not object to the proposed Trans Pennine Upgrade scheme.

### **Transport for the North's Strategic Transport Plan**

28. Transport for the North (TfN) was created as a Pan-Northern Partnership board of civic and business leaders from across the North. Transport for the North will become England's first Sub-National Transport Body on the first of April 2018. Transport for the North has worked with a number of bodies including Highways England, Network Rail, High Speed 2 (HS2) Ltd and the Department for Transport to produce a draft Strategic Transport Plan for the North.
29. The area bounded by the Plan is from Scotland in the North to the East Midlands, crossing the National Park boundary accordingly. However, the membership of some East Midlands districts within Sheffield City Region has led to the area of Bassetlaw, Bolsover, Chesterfield, Derbyshire Dales and North East Derbyshire to be shown as an annex to the TfN boundary.
30. The Plan is based around seven Strategic Development Corridors; of these, the Southern Pennines and North West to Sheffield City Region are likely to directly impact on the Peak District National Park. Of the others, three overlap the National Park and its constituent or neighbouring authorities.
31. The Southern Pennine corridor is linked to the TfN plans for the major road network and strategic road studies. Members will be aware of one of these studies; the Trans Pennine Tunnel Study which was announced as part of the Roads Investment Strategy 1 Investment Plan in 2014. The premise behind the study was for the delivery of a dual carriageway strategic road link between South Yorkshire and Greater Manchester. The main environmental constraint was that the route be delivered within a tunnel inside the Peak District National Park boundary. The Peak District National Park Authority offered cautious support to this proposal, believing that on balance the benefits outweighed any impacts to the National Park.
32. The report into the study found that whilst technically possible, the delivery of a tunnel beneath the National Park would not be viable financially, whilst the time taken to deliver the scheme would compromise the early realisation of benefits to offset the costs. A further study was undertaken to assess the wider connectivity benefits of an enhanced strategic route linking the Liverpool and Humber ports.
33. The TfN Strategic Transport Plan puts forward an alternative approach to the full tunnel, which is a partial tunnel under the highest part of the route, roughly following the line of

the current A628(T) corridor. The inference is that the remaining two thirds of the route (within the National Park) would comprise a motorway standard dual carriageway under the management of Highways England. Such an approach would, once the tunnel was built, significantly enhance the South Pennine Moors Special Area of Conservation (SAC); Peak District Moors Special Protection Area (SPA); and Dark Peak Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), due to the removal of traffic from the highest section of the existing route. However, the significant upgrade to the remaining corridor would constitute major road building within the National Park. It should be noted that since 1976, there has been a general National presumption against major road development within National Parks.

34. It has been indicated that any such route would be delivered as an 'exemplar scheme involving environmental enhancements to benefit the Peak District National Park'. However, at the current time, the evidence to demonstrate such benefits as part of the overall justification of exceptional circumstances has not been clearly demonstrated within the Strategic Transport Plan. As such it cannot yet be shown to be in the wider public interest. Similarly, the strategic nature of the Plan means that there is no detail available to properly assess any impacts or benefits to the National Park and its two statutory purposes that may arise from the scheme. Given our existing Core Strategy Policies and the longstanding National presumption against road building in National Parks, it would be extremely difficult to be supportive of such a proposal.
35. The North West to Sheffield City Region corridor relates principally to rail connectivity between Cumbria and South Yorkshire via the Hope Valley Line or a suitable alternative. There is some potential overlap with the Southern Pennines corridor dependent on any options that may be delivered. This corridor is also linked to TfN's plans for Northern Powerhouse Rail.
36. The Peak District National Park Local Plan (2001) and Core Strategy (2011) safeguard land in the Hope Valley associated with the delivery of a passing loop for the Hope Valley Line. Network Rail brought forward a revised scheme for this loop, which went to a Public Inquiry in May 2016. By the time of the Inquiry, Network Rail had addressed some concerns raised by the Authority, and we had withdrawn a previous objection to the scheme. The result of the Inquiry was announced in February 2018, with the scheme to be delivered in the near future.
37. The TfN Strategic Transport Plan puts forward a proposal for significant upgrades along the corridor of the existing Hope Valley Line. The nature of such upgrades is not specified, but is thought to be of a level that would again constitute major development within the Peak District National Park. The reason for this presumption is a later section, which suggests that if transformational outputs (journey times) cannot be achieved within the existing Hope Valley Line corridor, then TfN will consider further assessment for a new line between Manchester and Sheffield.
38. The statement raises concerns in relation to the scale and impact of any significant upgrades to the Hope Valley Line to deliver transformational journey times. As with any potential road scheme, there is a long standing presumption against major transport development in National Parks. The suggestion of a new route is also of concern, as the presumption must be that a new line, delivering high speed connectivity between Sheffield and Manchester, would in all likelihood pass through the National Park.
39. As with the alternative to the Trans Pennine Tunnel scheme, the strategic nature of the Plan means that there is no detail available to properly assess any impacts or benefits to the National Park that may arise from the scheme(s) described above. Again given our existing Core Strategy Policies and the longstanding National presumption against major transport development within National Parks, it would be extremely difficult to be supportive of such a proposal.

40. There is a reason why for forty years, there has been the very strong presumption against major transport development in National Parks. The onus is on Transport for the North to demonstrate conclusively and robustly the reasons why this approach should not continue within the Peak District for the next forty years. This is particularly important because Transport for the North's plans extend beyond its boundary and into the Midlands. Therefore any benefits to justify a scheme within this National Park have to be at the National level and unachievable by any other means.
41. Given the lack of detail and evidence supporting the proposals, the draft response to the TfN Strategic Transport Plan objects to the proposed part-tunnel road link along the A628 corridor, the significant upgrade to the Hope Valley Line and the delivery of an alternative rail link between Sheffield and Manchester through the National Park. It should be noted that should any further details be brought forward to justify such proposals, there would be opportunity then to judge each on its merits.
42. The National Park Authority would wish to have sight of any appraisal and analysis at an early stage where any scheme is being promoted within the Peak District National Park.

**Are there any corporate implications members should be concerned about?**

**Financial:**

43. Any formal opposition to a proposed scheme will bring resource issues for the Authority if the scheme goes to a Public Inquiry. These would include staff time and the financial implications of appointing a barrister if necessary.

**Risk Management:**

44. There is a reputational risk associated with opposing the improvement of traffic conditions along the A628, and particularly within Mottram, Hollingworth and Tintwistle.

**Sustainability:**

45. The support of major roads schemes is contrary to the sustainability agenda of the Authority.

**Equality:**

46. N/a

**47. Background papers (not previously published)**

N/a

**48. Appendices**

Appendix 1 - Trans Pennine Upgrade Public Consultation – Authority Response

Appendix 2 - Transport for the North Strategic Transport Plan Public Consultation – Authority Response

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

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