

7. **DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL SAFER ROADS SCHEMES (A5004 LONG HILL AND A5012 VIA GELLIA) TN**

1. **Purpose of the report**

To inform Members about the proposed Derbyshire County Council Safer Roads Scheme on the A5004 Long Hill and A5012 Via Gellia; and to seek a decision from Members on whether to formalise or withdraw the current holding objections to each scheme.

**Key Issues**

- The two roads have been identified by the Department for Transport (DfT) as being amongst the most dangerous in the country, requiring remedial measures to improve safety. Ring-fenced funding for the schemes is being provided to Derbyshire County Council (DCC) by the Department.
- Significant sections of the two schemes fall inside or adjacent to the National Park boundary. Parts of the routes pass through or adjacent to SSSI / SAC / SPA designations and the Natural Zone.
- The proposed measures, including average speed cameras, signalised junctions, street lighting, signage, vehicle restraint systems and improvements to stopping sight distance collectively will have a significant impact on the landscape and setting of the National Park over several kilometres.
- The A57 Snake Pass is likely to be included for a similar treatment in the future.
- There is one current operational average speed camera scheme in the National Park on the A54 / A537 Cat & Fiddle route.
- The Peak District National Park Authority has submitted holding objections to both schemes, whilst assessing the potential impact of the schemes and the justification for the measures proposed.

2. **Recommendations**

1.

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

3. **Environment Act (1995)**

Section 62 directs relevant authorities to have regard to National Park purposes and the Sandford principle. Relevant authorities include the DfT and highway authorities.

**Peak District National Park Core Strategy (2011)**

The Peak District National Park Core Strategy (2011) sets out the strategic planning policies for the whole area of the National Park.

Policy GSP 1: Securing national park purposes and sustainable development states: -

*“Policy GSP1 seeks that any development proposal will comply with core policies so that any development in the National Park must satisfy the statutory purposes of national park designation.”*

Policy L1: Landscape character and valued characteristics (Part A) states: -

*“Development must conserve and enhance valued landscape character, as identified in the Landscape Strategy and Action Plan, and other valued characteristics.”*

Policy T3: Design of Transport Infrastructure, which advocates a minimalist approach, whilst taking *“full account of the valued characteristics of the National Park”*.

### **Peak District National Park Development Management Policies (2019)**

The Peak District National Park Development Management Policies (2019) document provides detailed policies that underpin the Core Strategy.

Policy DMT3: Access and design criteria, Part A requires that new transport related infrastructure should be of the

*“highest standards of environmental design and materials and in keeping with the valued characteristics of the National Park”*.

### **Peak District National Park Transport Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (2019)**

Acts as a design guide for private developers and as an advisory document for highway authorities. The document includes a section on Average Speed Cameras, recognising both their effectiveness and their impact on landscape; stating: -

*“The delivery of further average speed camera schemes should only be considered in extremis, and may be opposed by the Authority without sufficient evidence to support their introduction.”*

It should be noted that the impact of average speed cameras lies not only with the camera infrastructure, but with the associated infrastructure for operation and the signage required to allow enforcement.

### **Background Information**

4. The DfT introduced the Safer Roads Fund to support road safety in England. Based on assessments undertaken by the Road Safety Foundation, the fifty most dangerous stretches of road were identified for remedial works. Four of the routes identified in the first assessment were in the Peak District National Park: -
  1. A619 Thirteen Bends (Derbyshire)
  2. A54/A537 Cat & Fiddle (Derbyshire / Cheshire East)
  3. A5004 Long Hill (Derbyshire)
  4. A5012 Via Gellia (Derbyshire)

Remedial works have been completed on the first two schemes, following consultation from the respective highway authorities. In the case of the Cat & Fiddle, the works largely consisted of the replacement of existing cameras. The impact of both schemes was considered by officers of the Authority to be minimal compared to the existing route

at the time.

In all cases, the National Park Authority has been consulted by the highway authority, but only once the scheme has been designed. At no point were the Authority consulted in advance either by the DfT or the highway authority.

The County Council formally consulted the Authority in December 2022 and February 2023 regarding the A5004 and A5012 schemes respectively. The main driver for both schemes appears to relate to the safety of leisure motorcyclists. The original consultation did not include any detailed information or any evidence in support of the proposed schemes. Officers therefore submitted holding objections to both schemes in January and March 2023 respectively, seeking further information. Summary plans and an assessment of the safety records of the two roads have been provided and are contained at Appendices 1 and 2.

Since March 2023, Officers of the Authority have worked with Officers of the County Council to assess the individual Camera Sites, their setting and any impact on the National Park landscape, cultural heritage or wildlife. In most cases (9 of 11 sites within or adjacent to the National Park boundary), we have been able to reach agreement, including opportunities for mitigation where necessary (please see Appendix 3 for detail). However, there are still outstanding concerns about impact at two locations within the Via Gellia scheme.

1. Grangemill – current proposals include: -
  - A change in speed limits from 50mph to 40mph, requiring 4 Average Speed Cameras for enforcement, plus gateway treatments;
  - A 4-way signalised junction including Pegasus crossing, requiring 14 street lighting columns (ongoing discussions suggest that there is a possibility that street-lighting could be removed from the scheme).

At this location there is concern about the overall landscape impact; the impact on the setting of three listed buildings; the extremely negative effects on dark skies; and the overall urbanisation of a rural hamlet.

2. A5012 / Unclassified junction at Keepers Cottage – Average Speed Camera location (ongoing discussions suggest there is the opportunity for planting to mitigate the landscape impact at this location).

Feedback from the County Council suggests that the success of the A54/A537 Cat & Fiddle Scheme has caused speeding motorcyclists to use different routes. These include the A5004 Long Hill, the A5012 Via Gellia and presumably the A57 Snake Pass; driving the need for these schemes.

As a result of the Authority's concerns about the schemes early constructive meetings with the DfT has suggested that a different approach will be taken for any future schemes in National Parks. This is something that will also be pursued through National Parks England.

It should be noted that in addition to the requirement for average speed cameras, the two projects will also require additional signage, vehicle restraint measures and the removal of trees and vegetation to improve lines of site for road users.

## **Proposals**

5. That Members support the recommendations including a formal objection to the A5012

Via Gellia scheme, and in particular the current proposals for the junction at Grange Mill. Support is also sought from Members for ongoing negotiations between Officers of the Authority and Derbyshire County Council and the Department for Transport to achieve a mutually acceptable layout at the junction.

Members are further asked to support the delegation of the removal of the objection to the Head of Planning, Chair and Vice-Chair in the event that a mutually acceptable solution can be found.

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

**Financial:**

6. None

**Risk Management:**

7. Formally objecting to either or both of the schemes could be seen as the Authority valuing the Landscape, Wildlife and Cultural Heritage of the National Park above road safety.

**Sustainability:**

8. None

**Equality, Diversity and Inclusion:**

9. None

10. **Climate Change**

**Are there any other Climate Change related issues that are relevant to this decision that should be brought to the attention of Members?**

The delivery of the schemes could lead to slower speeds on the two routes, with a subsequent reduction in emissions; provided that the currently speeding motorists don't divert onto alternative routes.

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

None

12. **Appendices**

Appendix 1 - Summary plans for the schemes

Appendix 2 - Safety reports for the A5004 Long Hill and A5012 Via Gellia (Provided by Derbyshire County Council)

Appendix 3 - Assessment of the individual average speed camera sites for both routes.

**Tim Nicholson, Transport Policy Planner, 21<sup>st</sup> September 2023**

