



The Planning Inspectorate Yr Arolygiaeth Gynllunio

Meeting note

File reference	Highways England (Northern schemes)
Status	Final
Author	Richard Price
Date	9 May 2017
Meeting with	Highways England
Venue	Highways England Offices, Manchester
Attendees	Planning Inspectorate Tom Carpen – Infrastructure Project Lead David Price - EIA and Land Rights Manager Richard Price – Case Manager Emma Cottam – EIA and Land Rights Advisor Richard Kent – EIA and Land Rights Advisor Pauleen Lane – Group Manager Highways England Amarjit Doow-Powell – DCO and Statutory Process Manager (See Annex A for other Highways England attendees)
Meeting objectives	Update on Highways England northern schemes
Circulation	All

Summary of key points discussed and advice given

The Planning Inspectorate (PINS) advised that a note of the meeting would be taken and published on its website in accordance with section 55 of the Planning Act 2008 (the PA2008). Any advice given under section 51 would not constitute legal advice upon which applicants (or others) could rely.

The meeting comprised six presentations dealing with six Highways England schemes in the north of England. Each presentation was delivered to PINS by the relevant Project Manager/ Assistant Project Manager.

The six Highways England schemes presented were:

- A5036 Port of Liverpool;
- A1 Scotswood to North Brunton;
- A1 Birtley to Coal House;
- A585 Windy Harbour to Skippool Junctions;
- M56 Junction 11a; and
- A57/ A628 Trans-Pennine and A61 Dualling.

PINS recorded the following information in respect of each scheme.

A5036 Port of Liverpool

The main objective of the scheme is to improve access to the Port of Liverpool (in particular Liverpool2 deep-water container port). Planned development/ regeneration in the area threatens to overwhelm an already congested part of the network, with traffic modelling predicting a 50% increase in HGV movements by 2023. High accident rates, as well as existing air quality and noise issues, were noted.

The Applicant highlighted environmental constraints including designated wildlife sites, Air Quality Management Areas at the port end of the road and heritage assets. The existing road is also a barrier for non-motorised users as there are limited crossing points.

The Applicant is currently considering two options, identified as Options A and B:

- Option A would be for online road improvements, comprising junction improvements at Hawthorne Road, Netherton Way and Copy Lane. At Hawthorne Road and Copy Lane junctions, additional capacity would be provided by widening the existing A5036 to allow three lanes through the junction in both directions. At Netherton Way junction, new signalised roundabout with through lanes for the A5036 would be constructed. The improvements would be carried out entirely on Highways England land. It is thought that these works would fall under the Highways Act 1980 (HA1980). It was noted that Option A would generally be considered to be a short term solution in terms of capacity.
- Option B would be a circa 4.75km bypass, requiring an amount of additional land take and development consent under the PA2008, but would present a longer term solution. The bypass would go through the Rimrose Valley 'Country Park'. The park is not allocated as a Country Park in the Local Plan, but it is in the Green Belt and is of importance to the local community.

A tunnel option has also been considered but has been dismissed largely on technical and financial grounds.

The Department for Transport's Preferred Route Announcement (PRA) was expected soon and the plan would be to request a scoping opinion from PINS in July/ August 2017.

A1 Scotswood to North Brunton

There are existing problems with congestion and accidents on this stretch of road network, which is preventing longer term plans to aid development and increase housing provision. There are large housing proposals in the area with up to 6,000 new homes being planned. Various options were considered but now down to a single option with variants therein, which comprises 8km of lane widening within the existing structures.

Hydrological issues are a concern for the scheme and the drainage design will need to be sympathetic to the sensitivity of the receiving environment. The proximity to Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site was noted. There are also particular issues being considered around potential severance of existing access to specific residential areas.

There is still some uncertainty over whether this will be a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) or not but this would be confirmed to PINS shortly. If it was determined to be an NSIP and a Development Consent Order (DCO) is therefore required, this is a candidate scheme for being fast-tracked through the DCO process.

A1 Birtley to Coal House

The scheme would involve widening the existing road to provide a three lane carriageway, over a distance of 4.5km. The Allerdene Railway Bridge (crossing the East Coast Mainline) would also be replaced.

Two options were presented at public consultation. There are a number of significant constraints associated with both options, including interaction with Statutory Undertakers. However, a team has been assembled and is working to address concerns in this regard. There are also constraints in terms of Scheduled Monuments and interactions with an ongoing River Team flood alleviation scheme, but there is no expectation of direct effects.

The PRA is anticipated to be in July 2017, with a scoping request likely to follow in July/ August 2017. The DCO application is anticipated to be submitted in Q3 2018.

A585 Harbour to Skippool Junctions

The A585 is the main road in and out of Fleetwood, which adjoins the M55 to the east of Blackpool. The scheme will address immediate concerns with congestion but will also support a proposal for 6,000 new homes in the emerging Wyre Local Plan.

There are two options being considered:

- Option 1 is a southern bypass, including four junctions (three signalised and one roundabout), which would definitely require a DCO.
- Option 2 is an online option, including two junctions, which is more likely to be a Highways Act 1980 scheme.

There are issues with flood risk, underlying geology and ground conditions which present challenges to the overall design of the scheme but they are being considered in detail. The proximity of the scheme to designated ecological sites, including Morecambe Bay Special Protection Area and Ramsar site, was noted.

Local opinions gauged from consultation feedback are that the online improvement won't be sufficient and that a bypass is generally the preferred option (although responses are still being analysed).

The scoping request was anticipated to be made in September 2017, following the PRA.

M56 Junction 11A

The current plan suggests that this will be a Highways Act 1980 scheme, closely aligned with the planned Mersey Gateway Project. The proposal would open up land for future development and enable the fulfilment of existing plans for redevelopment

at the Mersey Gateway. The scheme is currently being handled in accordance with the Highway England RoD/ NoD¹ approach.

A local stakeholder reference group has been established by Highways England, including representation from Sutton Weaver Parish Council.

The PRA is anticipated to be in August 2017.

A57/ A628 Trans-Pennine and A61 Dualling

The scheme would improve connectivity between Manchester and Sheffield and would run through the Peak District National Park. There are five main development aspects to the scheme, as follows:

- 1) Mottram Moor Link Road – this is currently considering two options for development;
- 2) A57 Link road;
- 3) A61 Dualling;
- 4) A628 Climbing lanes; and
- 5) Safety and technology improvements – variable messaging/ signage technology, CCTV, automated snow gates etc.

The scheme is environmentally sensitive and engineering challenges exist not least because of the inaccessible and rugged terrain. Meetings with the key statutory environmental bodies are underway and the National Park Authority is also involved as are the Campaign to Protection Rural England and Friends of the Peak District.

The role of the National Policy Statement for National Networks in terms of the National Park was noted and will be a key issue of consideration throughout the development of the scheme.

The PRA is anticipated to be Autumn 2017, with the scoping request anticipated to be November 2017.

Specific decisions/ follow up required?

- It was agreed that an update meeting would be held in November 2017.

¹ Record of Determination/ Notice of Determination in respect of EIA

List of Highways England attendees

Name	Scheme	Position
Carl Stockton	A5036 Port of Liverpool	Project Manager (PM)
Sarah Manston	A5036 Port of Liverpool	Assistant Project Manager (APM)
Sal Hopkinson	A1 Scotswood to North Brunton	APM
*Nicola Wilkes	A1 Birtley to Coal House	PM
*Jess Meikle	A1 Birtley to Coal House	Project Support
David Hopkin	A585 Windy Harbour to Skippol Junctions	PM
Tristram Bardrick	M56 Junction 11A	PM
Nicola Eastwell	M56 Junction 11A	APM
Irene Ofei	A57/ A628 Trans-Pennine and A61 Dualling	PM
Alison Poytress	A57/ A628 Trans-Pennine and A61 Dualling	APM
Darlene Procter	-	DCO and Statutory Process Manager

* **Not available to attend the meeting**