

A1 Birtley to Coal House DCO

Transport comments

The scheme as a whole is supported, being consistent with Policy CS13 (2) (iv) of the joint Gateshead/Newcastle Core Strategy. It is particularly important in replacing the existing A1 bridge over the East Coast Main Line at Allerdene, whose deterioration poses a threat to the integrity of this important strategy route. This point is reinforced by recent problems in continuing to accommodate abnormal loads, which mean these may need to be diverted through Gateshead in future along roads which, in general, are far less suited to such traffic.

The selection of Option 1a as the preferred option for the scheme is similarly supported. This option should provide the desired improvement at a lower cost, shorter construction time and least disturbance to existing traffic on the route when compared with other options.

Notwithstanding the overall support for the scheme there are two areas of concern from a transport perspective:

- *Smarter choices.* The Council has commented previously that the absence of a complementary programme of measures to promote sustainable transport will be important if the benefits of the additional capacity are not to be undermined by additional traffic generation. This is made the more important by the recent declaration of a climate emergency, and the need to reduce carbon emissions wherever possible. Currently no such programme is proposed;
- *Facilities for pedestrians and cyclists.* Previous comments have highlighted the poor nature of facilities for pedestrians and cyclists at Coal House roundabout at the south end of Team Valley. While Highways England have undertaken a review of provision for pedestrian, cyclists and horse riders as part of the scheme no substantive improvement to provision at this location is proposed.

It is suggested the scheme should be amended to reflect the above concerns.