

Application by Highways England for an Order Granting Development Consent for the A1 Birtley to Coal House Improvement Scheme. Your Ref: TR010031.

This Scheme contravenes Central Government's Declaration of a Climate Emergency made in April 2019. It also conflicts with their ban on selling new petrol & diesel cars by 2040 (announced July 2017). That date will almost certainly be brought forward and include hybrid vehicles, at UN COPT26 Summit in Glasgow later this Year.

In addition in May 2019 Gateshead Council declared it wanted to be carbon neutral by 2030. The Council agreed to work with organisations for them to also meet that target. Central Government and Highways England are key such organisations.

The average motor car with 1 occupant emits 171grams of CO2 per kilometre travelled (source: BEIS/Defra Greenhouse gas Conversion factors 2019). About 70% of cars have only one occupant.

The same Defra source states that domestic rail only emits 41g per Km. This is further reduced where rail is electrified.

The Scheme will increase greenhouse gas emissions in Birtley, Kibblesworth, Eighton Banks & surrounding residential areas. Carbon and fine particulate emissions are already a concern here. Air pollution and consequent resident ill health will increase.

In 2018 the number of UK licensed vehicles again increased to 38.2 million (ONS). These additional vehicles & existing ones will be attracted to a widened A1 road. More traffic.

The Green Party cannot understand how Gateshead Council can State any fundamental Common Grounds with Highways England. It will conflict with their Climate Emergency.

The Scheme will cost tens of millions of £. We propose that valuable these public funds should instead be invested in railway infrastructure. The Tyne Rail Yard has ample spare land for freight. Birtley Rail Station only has 2 hourly trains. Washington remains the largest UK town with no rail station.

Alternative investment in buses, cycling & walking will also improve public health.

It is imperative for all life on Earth to continue, that global average temperatures do not rise more than 1.5 degrees Centigrade above their pre-industrial (1800) level. This application increases the likely hood that this will happen.

The Green Party ask that the Order be rescinded.

Andy Blanchflower,

Coordinator, Gateshead Green Party.