



Historic England

SUMMARY
OF WRITTEN REPRESENTATIONS

ON BEHALF OF THE

HISTORIC BUILDINGS AND MONUMENTS COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND

(HISTORIC ENGLAND)

Application by

**Highways England for an Order granting Development Consent for the
A1 Birtley to Coal House Improvement Scheme, Tyne & Wear**

PINS Reference No: TR010031

Historic England Reference No: PL00552195

Deadline 1 Submission

04 February 2020

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. This is the summary statement to accompany Historic England's Written Representations for the Examination of Highways England's application for a Development Consent Order (DCO) for the nationally significant infrastructure project to construct the A1 Birtley to Coal House Improvement Scheme (the 'Scheme').
- 1.2. The Written Representation sets out Historic England's position in relation to the significance of the designated heritage assets affected by the Scheme and the impact of the Scheme on the significance of those assets, including any contribution made by their settings to their significance. It also details the issues raised by Historic England with regards the DCO and notes on-going discussions with the Applicant to be addressed in the Statement of Common Ground.

2. ROLE OF THE HISTORIC BUILDINGS AND MONUMENTS COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND

- 2.1 The *Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England* is generally known as Historic England and was set up in 1984 under the National Heritage Act 1983.
- 2.2 We are a statutory consultee providing advice to local planning authorities on certain categories of applications for planning permission and listed building consent; we advise the Secretary of State for DCMS on applications for scheduled monument consent, and we are a statutory consultee on all Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIP).
- 2.3 A key issue for Historic England is ensuring that the significance and the impact on that significance of any heritage assets that may be affected is fully understood; that any proposals to avoid, or mitigate that impact have been considered and can be secured, and that the decision maker is fully informed

and can be satisfied that there is clear and convincing justification for any harm with great weight given to the asset's conservation.

3. SCOPE OF WRITTEN REPRESENTATIONS

3.1 The scope of Historic England's written representation will include:

- a summary of the proposals;
- a brief summary of Historic England's consultation and advice on the proposals prior to submission;
- a brief description of the designated heritage assets affected and an assessment of their significance (including that contribution made by their settings) and our assessment of the impact of the Scheme;
- Historic England's comments and observations on the draft DCO and
- An update on the current production of the SoCG.

4. THE PROPOSALS AND HISTORIC ENGLAND'S INVOLVEMENT WITH THE SCHEME PRIOR TO SUBMISSION

4.1 We have set out in Section 4 of our Written Representations the detail of the scheme and the consultation we have had with the Applicant and their agents.

5. ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE AND IMPACT ON DESIGNATED HERITAGE ASSETS AFFECTED BY THE SCHEME

5.1 A number of heritage assets are identified within the scheme's study area. However, within the Order limit there is only one highly designated heritage asset – the Bowes Railway Scheduled Monument.

5.2 The Bowes Railway was designed by renowned railway engineer George Stephenson and opened in 1826 from Jarrow to Mount Moor. By the middle of the 19th century it had linked with other sections of colliery railway which stretched toward Pontop and Dipton. The railway closed in 1974 after the closure of the last pit with which it was connected. At its peak, it had 7 rope-

worked inclines and 3 locomotive-worked sections. When it closed in 1974 it had 3 stationary electric haulers, 1 gravity inclined plane and diesel locomotives were used, making this the last such system in England. The scheduled part of the railway contains the world's only preserved and partly operational standard-gauge cable railway system - the 1.5 miles between Springwell and Blackham's Hill Hauler House. It also includes the route of the incline south from Blackham's Hill to Blackfell Hauler House; the trackbed east to Leam Lane, and then west to the East Coast Mainline in the Team Valley. It is this latter part of the monument which is bridged by the A1 at Longbank.

- 5.3 The railway was scheduled in 1976 and its significance lies in the nationally important archaeological evidence it retains about technological advancements in the development of early railways in England. A substantial part of the alignment of the Bowes Railway dating from 1826 is now preserved for the Nation as a scheduled monument which can generally be freely visited, experienced and appreciated by the public.
- 5.4 The monument has been on Historic England's *Heritage at Risk* register since it was established in 2001 as parts are under threat from vandalism.
- 5.5 The proposed works will cause substantial harm (in NPPF terms, para 195) to a limited part of the scheduled monument. The construction of an extended tunnel/bridge on the southbound side of the A1 will impact on extant revetment walls on either side of the trackbed, and may potentially damage buried remains such as evidence of rails, trackbed construction and associated features.
- 5.6 There will be a permanent removal of part of the scheduled monument (hence substantial harm) but we do concur with the Applicant that overall there will be a 'moderate adverse significance of effect' or in NPPF terms a 'less than substantial harm' to the overall significance of the monument. This will therefore require a balancing of harm against the perceived public benefits of the scheme by the Examining Authority.
- 5.7 Historic England has previously discussed mitigation with the Applicant and has agreed a general scheme with them. However, in order to provide clarity on the

ground during construction (to the main contractor and the appointed archaeological contractor) – should the DCO be granted – we advise that the Applicant provides a more detailed outline WSI to be agreed and submitted in support of the DCO.

- 5.8 We have provided an example of such an outline WSI in Appendix 4 of our Written Representations.

6. DEVELOPMENT CONSENT ORDER (DCO)

- 6.1 In our Written Representations we have provided advice about various provisions in the DCO which need to be taken into consideration in order to ensure the significance of the scheduled monument and the impact these proposals will have on that significance is addressed and that the protection and conservation of the historic environment is delivered.

- 6.2 We have provided these amendments in detail in Appendices 5 – 7 of our Written Representations.

7. STATEMENT OF COMMON GROUND (SoCG)

- 7.1 Discussions about the SoCG continue with the Applicant. We anticipate further detailed conversations with them and an update on the outcome of those discussions is provided within the draft Statement of Common Ground.