

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

*(Briefly, this scheme involves widening the A1 from 3 to 4 lanes in both directions).*

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 next 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, Lamesley & 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 declaration.

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

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

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.

In addition to all of this, it is of great concern in regards to the high levels of damage and encroachment likely to occur on the existing environment, chiefly Long Acre wood, as well as all of the nature around the proposed building of the New bridge, Coal House roundabout and all natural areas along the proposed site right along to Birtley. This green

environment is essential to be kept intact not only for the wildlife it contains but for assisting to tackle the air pollution that is already being created by the traffic of the A1. We should be protecting our areas of green belt and open nature, not creating larger roads. Many of these trees, shrubs, areas of green have been here a long time.

Although the scheme details it will replant, this whole process will take a number of years to get back to the level it is already at and with the increased traffic in the area it will be to the detriment to all of the local residents, surrounding area and the wildlife it contains.

There will be a high level of disruption (including noise and air pollution) over a number of years not only to the natural environment and wildlife but also to the local residents for a sustained period of time causing great inconveniences and long lasting negative effects.

The bridleways, pathways, woods and local nature of this area are all used extensively and especially during this period of lockdown, it is vital that all of this lovely nature and wildlife right on our doorstep should be preserved, cared for and supported, for the health and well being of all the local people and the natural wildlife.

The Green Party ask that the Order be rescinded.

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JUNE 2020