

Hearing ISH2
(as held on 23/06/2020 – AM)

- 1 Noted that discussions with Highways England began in 2017 regarding the setting of the Angel and subsequent Southern Green report. The DCO has been timely in that it presents a clear opportunity to undertake some of the preferred option as part of the DCO works.
- 2 JC raised the issue of the cumulative impact of the gantries on views of the Angel on the north and south approach to the Angel. It was agreed that there were no significant adverse landscape impacts at the Angel but that sufficient evidence had not been provided to establish that the adverse visual impacts were not significant. The LVIA covers landscape and visual effects. The Angel is referred to as a landmark for that reason.
- 3 Angel is undeniably a landscape feature. It carries weight as a non-designated heritage asset under the NPPF as a result of the intent of Historic England to designate it as a statutory listed building under the 1990 Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act. Historic England guidance on listing is that structures should be a minimum of 30 years old though exceptions can be made. The proposal to list arose from the 2016/2016 post war public art exhibition held by Historic England at Somerset House (London) and Bessie Surtees House (Newcastle upon Tyne).
- 4 Welcomes a review of the proposed gantries in light of the withdrawal of relevant guidance and emerging new guidance which supports verge sigs rather than superspan gantries across six lanes. The issue is the impact on the Angel of the North and not the landscape.
- 5 The design of the footbridge at North Dene is important as is the proposed colour. Noted Highways England would amend the colour from the blue proposed (requirement 12).
- 6 The Southern Green landscape options report is not a planning document therefore it does not carry weight as a planning document. It is a technical document commissioned by the Council to address concerns and issues regarding the current landscape character and setting of the Angel of the North, including tree growth, loss of views, and use of the site for memorials, and was undertaken in discussion with stakeholders including Highways England, Durham Wildlife Trust and Historic England. The report and preferred option have been agreed by the Chief Executive and Leader of the Council. The report and preferred option seek to contribute to the delivery of policies CS8, CS14, and CS18 of the Newcastle Gateshead Core Strategy and Urban Core Plan (adopted March 2015). It contributes to the delivery of the adopted Rural Economic Strategy 2015-2020. As such there is requirement to subject the Southern Green report to the same consultation and adoption procedures as if it was a planning policy document.
- 7 Welcomes the ongoing discussions with Highways England regarding the proposed landscape mitigation scheme for the areas of land around the Angel which are included in the DCO boundary and affected by works proposed to take place to the highway. Noted that Highways England required this to result in a cost neutral outcome to the highways scheme and that appropriate offsetting measures for planting are required.
- 8 The submitted photo montage by Antony Gormley's office – slides 11 and 13 show planting already cleared, so the Angel is not currently this enclosed. The perception that vegetation is concealing the Angel in views from the A1 to the north is not the whole picture. The current landform contributes to these views and currently, partially hides the mound and feet. The vegetation reinforces this.

A1 Birtley to Coal House Improvement Scheme

Issue specific hearing 4: Transport and traffic

Written summary of oral representation made by Andrew Haysey, Gateshead Council

3. Construction issues

Previous concerns identified by the Council have now largely been addressed by the applicant. It is considered that any outstanding concerns can be accommodated through:

- Discussions around the final version of the Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP);
- The proposed Working Group referred to in the CTMP (Rep 8-008, Appendix B, section 3.3).

The Council has had specific concerns around the need to use Woodford given the sensitive nature of roads in that area. Information supplied by Highways England (Rep 5-010, 2.9.4) recognises the difficulties in this area and the need to minimise use of this, and this is now recognised appropriately in the CTMP (Rep 8-008, Appendix B, section 2.5).

4. Non-motorised users

Concerns about diversion of Public Rights of Way in the vicinity of Eighton Lodge roundabout remain. These relate to horse riders, previous problems for pedestrians and cyclists having been resolved by the staggering of construction work on the Bowes Railway Path and at North Dene footbridge to ensure they do not take place concurrently. The remaining problems relate to the length of the diversion, and the unsuitability of the on-road route for horse riders.

Further discussions are sought between the Council's Public Rights of Way experts and Highways England to identify the possibility of mitigating these impacts. It is possible many of these discussions could take place as part of the process of finalising the CTMP and through the associated Working Group (see item 3 above). However initial discussions within the DCO timeframe should take place to identify the scope for further action and finalise the Council's overall view of this matter.

5. Sustainable transport

There is good evidence that one of the side effects from the construction of new road capacity is the generation of additional traffic. Induced traffic of this kind has the potential to undermine the congestion relief benefits of the increased capacity and conflict with wider national, regional and local policy objectives in relation to matters such as climate change, air quality and health.

The reasoning behind the Council's approach to this matter has been explained further in previous responses to the examination (AS-007, Rep 2-065(1.9.11), Rep 2-075 (5.51)).

These impacts are caused by construction of the additional capacity and the Council believes they should be mitigated in the same way other impacts (ecology, landscape etc.) are. They are additional to existing impacts and unrelated to the manner in which the local road network is managed. There is a compelling case for action of this kind, made the more urgent by the declarations in the past year of Climate Emergencies and the recognition of urgent need for action in this area.

It is recognised that any measures would need to be time limited. As per previous submissions a programme of 3-4 years would appear to be most appropriate.

A second element of this topic concerns the need for improvements to pedestrian and cycle facilities at both the Eighton Lodge and Coal House junctions. The Council has accepted the need for these to be developed outside the DCO process. The Coal House junction in particular poses major challenges in developing an effective scheme, and as such it is unlikely to be possible to bring something forward with the timescale of the A1 improvements. However the importance of improvements at these locations remains and the Council looks forward to Highways England's commitment to joint working to investigate and exploit possible source of funding to achieve tangible improvements at both these locations.

6. Bowes cycleway and North Dene footbridge

Previous issues for the Council concerning alternative routes during the construction phase and the sub-standard slope relating to North Dene footbridge have been dealt with satisfactorily, with the exception of those highlighted in section 4 above.

The Council will provide a separate update on its position with regard to drainage problems affecting the Bowes cycleway.

7. Royal Mail

No comment.

8. Construction compounds

Highways England have made a commitment (Rep 8-024, response to question 3.9.2) that accesses to the construction compounds will be designed to accord with current standards. In addition the details of the access will be approved by the Secretary of State in consultation with the local highway authority. In the light of these safeguards the Council does not have any in principle concerns to raise in relation to the provision of access to these.

The undertaking of the design for the access to the compound at Junction 67 by Gateshead Council will help minimise the likelihood of any problems. This measure is used frequently in relation to new development, and will assist the Applicant by reducing the risk of possible lengthy discussion and negotiation, and the Council by ensuring its own standards are met.

ISH5 – Draft DCO

Commencement – Council is comfortable with the items excluded, subject to a Determination of Prior Approval type process being followed where appropriate.

Maintain – Council has no issue in respect of ‘landscape’, ‘improve’ or ‘alter’, notwithstanding consideration of materiality and possible enforcement action, if considered necessary.

Limits of deviation – Council suggested that 1m seemed excessive.

Requirement 3(iv-vi) – Council has no issues with NGN wording.

The Council welcomes the additional wording pertaining to agreeing the signage strategy for the gantries.

ISH6 – CAH1

The Valuation Office has proposed terms to acquire land from the Council at Coal House Roundabout. Negotiations to commence week commencing 29th June 2020.