

Date: 16 September 2021  
Our ref: 362861  
Your ref: TR010034



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## BY EMAIL ONLY

Dear Sir/Madam

**NSIP Reference Name / Code: Highways England S56 notice for the A57 Link Roads Scheme**  
**User Code: TR010034**

Thank you for your consultation on the above dated 05 August 2021.

Natural England is a non-departmental public body. Our statutory purpose is to ensure that the natural environment is conserved, enhanced, and managed for the benefit of present and future generations, thereby contributing to sustainable development.

### Relevant Representation

PART I: Summary of Natural England's advice. Natural England are satisfied the A57 Link Road Scheme will not lead to significant impacts on any Site of Special Scientific Interest or lead to Likely Significant Effects on any European designated sites.

PART II: Natural England's detailed advice

- 1.1. Natural England's advice in these relevant representations is based on information submitted by Highways England in support of its application for a Development Consent Order ('DCO') in relation to the project.
- 1.2. Natural England has been working closely with Highways England to provide advice and guidance since 2017. Natural England has also been working with the Peak District National Park Authority to provide coordinated advice. Natural England has undertaken a number of meetings with Highways England and their ecological consultants at various points between 2017 and 2021 as well as assessing submitted draft ecological reports and associated evidence and data which have

been submitted as part of the scheme. This has enabled Natural England to develop a Statement of Common Ground with Highways England which agreed that there would be no significant impacts on any SSSI's or SAC's/SPA's. Advice has also been provided on European Protected Species.

- 1.3. These relevant representations contain a summary of what Natural England considers the main nature conservation issues<sup>1</sup> to be in relation to the DCO application, and indicate the principal submissions that it wishes to make at this point. Natural England will develop these points further as appropriate during the examination process. It may have further or additional points to make, particularly if further information about the project becomes available.
- 1.4. Natural England has worked successfully with Highways England and there are no substantive outstanding matters.
- 1.5. The Examining Authority may wish to ensure that the matters set out in these relevant representations are addressed as part of the Examining Authority's first set of questions to ensure the provision of information early in the examination process.

## **2. The natural features potentially affected by this application**

- 2.1. The designated sites relevant to this application are .
  - 2.1.1. The South Pennine Moors Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Peak District Moors Special Protection Areas (SPA)
  - 2.1.2. The Dark Peak Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Huddersfield Narrow Canal SSSI.
- 2.2. The following European protected species may be affected by the proposed project:
  - Bats
- 2.3. The main issues raised by this application are whether the scheme will directly or indirectly lead to increases in traffic on roads within the Peak District National Park and which could lead to associated air quality impacts on habitats for which an increase in traffic that could lead to air quality impacts on habitats for which The South Pennine Moors SAC and Peak District Moors SPA, Dark Peak SSSI and Huddersfield Narrow Canal SSSI could be affected. Chapter 5 Air Quality of the Environmental Statement should provide Traffic Modelling data that must be considered before any determination is made.

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<sup>1</sup> PINS NSIP Advice Note 11 Annex C sets out Natural England's role in infrastructure planning.

[https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/PINS-Advice-Note-11\\_AnnexC\\_20150928.pdf](https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/PINS-Advice-Note-11_AnnexC_20150928.pdf)

Part II:

## **NATURAL ENGLAND'S RELEVANT REPRESENTATIONS IN RESPECT OF A57 LINK ROADS SCHEME**

### **3. Planning Inspectorate Reference: TR010034**

3.1. Natural England has no objection to the project for the following reasons:

3.1.1. The applicant has submitted a thorough Environmental Statement which we are satisfied demonstrates beyond reasonable scientific doubt that there would be no significant effect on the integrity of the European site.

3.1.2. Natural England is satisfied that the project is unlikely to have a significant impact on the nearby Dark Peak and Huddersfield Narrow Canal SSSI's.

3.1.3. The project site currently supports habitats of negligible ecological interest and all protected species issues (including any licensing requirements under the Habitats Regulations or the 1981 Act) can be addressed by the proposed draft DCO requirements.

3.1.4. Natural England welcomes the use of the Defra Biodiversity Metric 2.0 Calculation Tool105 to design and achieve a net gain for area-based habitats and which are set out within Appendix 8.1 of the Environmental Statement. This will have a positive effect on the natural environment. This is in accordance with the principles set out in paragraph 170 of the National Planning Policy Framework. Natural England notes that this commitment is reflected in proposed Requirement TR010034/APP/7.2 and (TR010034/APP/7.3 of the draft DCO. Natural England therefore advises that this requirement should be secured by a suitably worded requirement in the DCO, if the project is approved.

3.2. Natural England's headline points are that on the basis of the information submitted:

3.2.1. Natural England is satisfied that there will be no Likely Significant Effects on Internationally Designated sites both alone and in combination and that there will be no significant impact on any Nationally Designated sites should it proceed as detailed in the submitted documents.

3.3.2 Natural England advises that, if approved, the project must be subject to all necessary and appropriate requirements which ensure that unacceptable environmental impacts either do not occur or are sufficiently mitigated.