

The British Mountaineering Council (BMC) has seen the response by National Highways to our earlier submission, along with their response to others who have commented on the draft proposals. We have not been reassured by that response. We would again ask that the Inspector pay particular attention to the wider consequences of the proposals, if these go ahead, on the A628 and A57 roads that pass through the Peak District National Park, and indeed of the enjoyment of the National Park both by people who live there and by the many thousands who visit it. The BMC feel the response undervalues the inevitable and unacceptable consequences of the proposed scheme.

As the national representative body for hill walkers, climbers and mountaineers in England and Wales, the BMC's particular concern is for the quality of the landscape of the National Park, its bio-diversity, tranquillity and accessibility. The particular details of the proposed new road at Mottram fall outside our sphere of expertise, though we note that the tenor of responses from local people is unequivocally that the new scheme would make the traffic problems they live with worse.

A general comment on the responses is that they lack appropriate consideration of the human element. There are many technical comments, and comments on wildlife, carbon release, air quality and such like, but the quality of life of people whose lives will be disturbed by increased traffic flows, and of the many visitors to the National Park who seek quiet recreation there, are, on our reading of the responses, significantly under-represented. Health of the community, achieved by exercise and enjoyment of the outdoors at a personal level bring significant economic benefit in terms of both physical and mental health, as well as a general sense of well being. Increased traffic flows, along with attendant consequential effects, can only mitigate against these hugely desirable outcomes.

Since our last submission there has been a burgeoning of local community groups seeking solutions to the ever-increasing traffic flow within the National Park, all of which seek to propose ways of limiting traffic, and of informal roadside parking which facilitates access to the countryside. This will be a particular issue for people who have mobility problem. A common theme is for a better public transport infrastructure, something that is lacking from the National Highways proposals. The agenda to address suffocation of the National Park by ever increasing traffic flows is completely at odds with proposals which will have the intended effect of increasing traffic flow to and through the National Park. Consideration of how that increased volume of traffic might be accommodated within the National Park, and of how the public transport infrastructure should be enhanced and funded to accommodate it, cannot responsibly be held to be beyond the remit of the proposals. They are integral to it. There seems to be a total absence of any joined up thinking.

The tacit assumption in the proposals would seem to be of exponential growth of traffic volumes and, already in the National Highways response, intimation of 'improvements' on the already accident prone A57. There is no balancing consideration of how future travel to work patterns may be affected by increase in home working and increasing fuel costs. Road enhancements have yet to show they reduce volumes of traffic: there is another balance to be struck between ease of traffic flow, and the way people live (and will in the future live) and of the absolute necessity to preserve places where landscape, wildlife, biodiversity and quiet open spaces are retained for the general sanity and health of the community, as well as for their own intrinsic value " which on its own merits recognition. As we indicated in our earlier submission, health, wellbeing and landscape are as important nationally as ease of passage of road traffic.

In reading through the various National Highway responses, the approach has been to address

points raised individually, but the cumulative effect of the impact on a wider scale must also be considered. Apart from the human aspects of tranquillity, accessibility and quiet enjoyment, an inevitable consequence within the National Park will be effective loss of connectivity between habitats that for wildlife need to be linked, as well as, again inevitably, increase in road kill, along with reduction in air quality. The loss of economic benefits accrued from what would otherwise be a healthier and more dynamic National Park are not considered against any theoretical economic benefits from the proposed A 57 Link scheme.

It is for all the above reasons, which we note are widely represented in other responses to the consultation, that the BMC asks the Inspector to have particular regard for the inevitable consequences of the proposals in and on the Peak District National Park.