



The countryside charity
Peak District and
South Yorkshire

37 Stafford Road
Sheffield S2 2SF

Mr John Larkinson
CEO, The Office of Rail and Road (ORR)
Office of Rail and Road
25 Cabot Square
London
E14 4QZ

By email: contact.pct@orr.gov.uk

25th August 2022

Dear Mr Larkinson

National Highways non-compliance with its licence

CPRE PDSY is a branch of CPRE, the countryside charity. We believe in a thriving, beautiful countryside, rich in nature and playing a crucial role in the response to the climate emergency. Our goal is a countryside that's valued, enjoyed and understood by, and accessible to, everyone, wherever they live.

We write to bring to the ORR's attention that National Highways is non-compliant with several of its licence conditions with respect to the development of the A57 Link Roads. In the report accompanying this letter we present substantial evidence of poor behaviour which has prejudiced engagement with stakeholders and the public, and calls into question not only the integrity of the company but also veracity of the evidence for the Development Consent Order for the scheme. There is also evidence of failure to properly steward the future of this part of the Strategic Route Network, to ensure value for money, to protect and improve safety on the strategic and local road network, to co-operate with stakeholders, to conform to the principles of sustainable development and to comply with Government policy.

The non-compliance described represents not only a serious malfeasance but also demonstrates that the process through which the A57 Link Roads has passed has been both unlawful and encumbered by participatory unfairness making untenable any decision which might be made to proceed with the scheme.

President: Dame Fiona Reynolds

CPRE Peak District and South Yorkshire
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This conclusion is also shared by our consultant, Keith Buchan of MTRU, a Chartered Transport Planning professional whose expertise, experience and persistence in understanding the evidence revealed much of what has been exposed. Without his engagement in the process, much would have been missed. Mr Buchan's view, which reinforces the findings of our report, was submitted as an open letter to the Examining Authority as the examination closed in May 2022. It can be read here <https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/projects/TR010034/TR010034-001534-Keith%20Buchan%20-%20comments%20on%20submissions%20for%20Deadline%2011.pdf>

With respect to the A57 Link Roads, we urge the ORR to assess NH's performance in the light of our evidence to you and report its findings to the SoS before he makes a decision on the scheme in mid-November 2022. More generally we urge the ORR to enforce behaviour that is expected of a public body. In particular, we suggest that the ORR a) insists on, or provides, much more robust assessment and monitoring of scheme development from options appraisal through project business case, and b) reviews or instigates a review of the NSIP proposal and DCO process.

Although our report relates to an individual scheme - the A57 Link Roads - we are aware that other individuals and organisations have had similar experiences to ours with other schemes, including the Lower Thames Crossing, the A27 Arundel Bypass and the A66 Northern Trans-Pennine Project. National Highways general approach and behaviour also appears to extend beyond specific road schemes, given what was exposed through the recent national scandal of its management of the Historical Railways Estate.

We look forward to hearing from you as to how the ORR intends to address our concerns. We are copying this letter and the report to the Transport Select Committee and the Secretary of State for Transport.

Yours sincerely,

[REDACTED]
Anne Robinson
Campaigner

President: Dame Fiona Reynolds

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