



The countryside charity
Peak District and
South Yorkshire

37 Stafford Road
Sheffield S2 2SF

The Rt Hon. Anne-Marie Trevelyan MP
Secretary of State for Transport
By email: A57LinkRoads@planninginspectorate.gov.uk

26th September 2022

Dear Secretary of State,

Determination of the A57 Link Roads TR010034

CPRE PDSY was Interested Party (IP) 20029243 at the Examination into the A57 Link Roads draft Development Consent Order (DCO). We fully engaged with the proceedings. At the end of the Examination, 16th May 2022, we submitted our closing position [REP12-033] which detailed why the scheme should be refused, based on evidence available to us at that time. Our consultant Keith Buchan of the Metropolitan Transport Research Unit (MTRU) also summarised our position [REP8-033] and submitted an open letter to the Examining Authority [REP12-038]. However, at the final deadline National Highways submitted new evidence to which IPs were not able to respond. Also, since the Examination closed, other evidence has emerged that is relevant to assessment of the impacts of the A57 Link Roads. Taking all this into account we believe that full scrutiny of the scheme has been compromised and it is not possible to determine the planning balance of the scheme as required by the Planning Act 2008 s.104 (7) and the 2017 EIA Regulations s.21 (1)(b). The outstanding issues are summarised below.

1. Low Carbon Travel for Longdendale and Glossopdale - a sustainable alternative

There are compelling reasons for a full review of the options' appraisal (as required by the Treasury Green Book) (a) for the scheme to comply with the 2017 EIA Regs s.14 (2) (d) and (b) to determine the best solution and value for money for the traffic and transport issues in the area. Our proposal *Low Carbon Travel for Longdendale and Glossopdale* (attached) provides a robust sustainable alternative. It meets the strategic objectives of the A57 Link Roads; is feasible and deliverable; and provides a 'very high' value for money with a BCR of 4.99 using our central assumptions. It also avoids the adverse effects of the proposed A57 Link Roads and distributes benefits over a wide area, in particular bringing relief to other villages.

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It was not possible to complete our *Low Carbon Travel for Longdendale and Glossopdale* during the Examination as National Highways (the Applicant) did not supply the necessary information. The majority of the proposal was available to the Examining Authority (ExA), but additional work had to be completed after the Examination closed. Having been prematurely rejected through the options' appraisal in 2014, our proposal requires full and proper testing before proceeding with the scheme.

2. Transport Assessment

At the close of the Examination the transport assessment was incomplete and its results were inconsistent. A WebTAG compliant appraisal was not presented as part of the DCO application, as required by NPSNN 4.5. The Transport Assessment Report did not allow full understanding of the traffic effects of the scheme or provide sufficient evidence to assess the impacts of the scheme against legal, policy and guidance requirements.

Serious unexplained disparities remained between observed and 'do minimum' 2025 modelled traffic flows [REP9-043; REP10-012; REP12-030, 3.1]. The Environmental Statement relies on the integrity of the data and modelled results in order to give an accurate assessment of the scheme's impact on the environment. The reliability, or otherwise, of the traffic model must be demonstrated before the scheme can be determined.

Major omissions in the investigation of the effects of the scheme remained;

- exclusion of most of Greater Manchester from the detailed modelling;
- exclusion of walking, cycling and public transport (except for rail trips by households with access to a car) from the modelling and the assessment [EV-041 at 1.05.26; REP7-034; REP8-033; REP9-040, p5, Q3.4];
- failure to apply GMCA's Transport Strategy 2040 Right Mix policy¹ and the DfT's Decarbonising Transport aim for 50% of trips in urban areas to be made by active travel by 2030 to the modelling [REP9-040, p3, Q3.3; REP7-034; REP7-036, pp2-4, Q3.3];

¹ [09.01.03](#) is referred to SD52 Allocations Tameside Issues Summary on page 10 JPA30.36; page32 JPA31.27; page 71 JPA32.49; page 72 JPA32.51 & JPA32.52; page 85 JPA32.96

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- failure to fully assess the cumulative effect of a proposed major development - Godley Green Garden Village - with the scheme (see para 7 below);
- exclusion of the major interventions planned for the M60 J24 Denton Island Interchange (see para 7 below).

All these omissions and disparities must be addressed before the scheme can be determined.

3. Assessment of Carbon Emissions

There were several omissions with respect to assessment of carbon emissions, all of which need addressing. We are concerned here with the assessment of the significance of the scheme's emissions against the annual carbon reduction targets and trajectories for transport in the UK's Net Zero Strategy (NZS). The Applicant agreed [REP9-027 9.79.15, bullet 3] *'that ... the Scheme should be considered against this, in accordance with NPSNN paragraphs 5.16-5.18 (and footnote 69)'*. Yet this assessment was not undertaken. Instead, the Applicant assumed that the UK NZS, and by extrapolation DfT's Decarbonising Transport, the UK's National Determined Contribution, and the UK's 6th carbon budget, would meet its required target [REP9-027, 8.10.5 *'The carbon budgets are supported by the policy commitments in the Net Zero Strategy which add further detail as to how the carbon budget and NDC will be achieved'*].

This confidence that the UK NZS policies will automatically lead to the UK being on course to meet its carbon budgets is now undermined by the recent successful court challenge² in July 2022. The UK NZS was found to be unlawful as it did not meet its obligations under Sections 13 and 14 of the Climate Change Act 2008 to enable Parliament to clearly evaluate how the Government intends to achieve its carbon budgets. The SoS for Business Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) is now required to present to Parliament a report, which complies with section 14 of the Climate Change Act, by no later than 31 March 2023. This requires quantification of the effectiveness of the UK NZS policies. Therefore, the UK NZS is not a credible strategy and cannot be used to consider the significance of the scheme's carbon emissions until the Climate Change Committee and Parliament are satisfied that the revised UK NZS would be

² R (Friends of the Earth Ltd and ors) v Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy
Neutral Citation Number: [2022] EWHC 1841 (Admin) 27 July 2022

President: Dame Fiona Reynolds



effective. Only then can compliance with the UK NZS and the significance of the scheme's carbon emissions be determined.

4. Effects of the scheme on Glossopdale

The Applicant's delayed and late response to the spurious traffic modelling results exposed the need for further investigation of the impacts of the scheme on Glossopdale. Three of the disparities were explained as due to local zone limitations [REP11-010 3.1a]. Such limitations are a good reason for using a more refined model of Glossopdale [REP12-030, 3.1]. Glossopdale should be remodelled with smaller zones and a finer network until all relevant traffic is represented, as required by NPSNN 4.6, which states '*Applications for road and rail projects should usually be supported by a local transport model to provide sufficiently accurate detail of the impacts of a project.*'

5. Impacts of the scheme on Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM's) transport policies

TfGM engaged with the A57 Link Roads only through a Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) between itself and the Applicant. It had no other engagement with the Examination. The final version of the SoCG was published on the PINS website at the close of the Examination [REP12-009]; the previous version had been published four months earlier on Jan 14th.

In the final SoCG TfGM raised new issues which were inadequately addressed by the Applicant. The SoCG is explicit that TfGM did not engage in the development of the traffic modelling but is silent on whether TfGM is aware of the full impacts of the scheme on its citizens and its transport policies. The exclusion of public transport, walking and cycling, TfGM's Right Mix policy and most of Greater Manchester from the assessment was only exposed late on in the Examination and because of CPRE's work. A full assessment of the effects of the scheme on Greater Manchester must be prepared and submitted for scrutiny.

6. Impact of scheme on GHG emissions in Greater Manchester

In the SoCG TfGM expressed concerns about GHG emissions within Greater Manchester [REP12-009, pp 28-29]. In response (pp30-31) the Applicant '*prepared a table to split the predicted GHG emissions for Greater Manchester and for both EFT10.1 and 11*

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and has issued this to TfGM'. The table was not submitted to the Examination. After the Examination closed the Applicant shared a copy of this table with us. Both the totals and percentage increases are significantly greater within the Greater Manchester area. This is consistent with our point about the majority of impacts being in Greater Manchester. It is most unclear, given that a large part of Greater Manchester is modelled in less detail, how this affects the carbon emissions' results. Further scrutiny of the table is important for two reasons; (a) to understand the impacts of the scheme on GMCA's carbon budget and net zero target of 2038; and (b) because, as a first step, it shows that the Applicant could do an assessment of the scheme's effects on regional and local carbon budgets, as required by NPSNN 4.1. This it refused to do. The Applicant should now do a full and proper assessment for Greater Manchester, Tameside and High Peak, all of which have carbon budgets, on the scheme's effects on each carbon budget.

7. Impacts of Godley Green Garden Village with the scheme

The cumulative impact of the A57 Link Roads with the proposed major development of Godley Green Garden Village (GGGV) was assessed superficially by the Applicant in the DCO application as insignificant³. This conclusion is contrary to the evidence supporting GMCA's Joint Development Plan 'Places for Everyone' (PfE), underestimates the cumulative impact of the two developments and fails to mention the substantial impacts on the M67 Jn4 and M60 Jn24. Although the former is part of the A57 Link Roads project, the latter is not and no mitigation was suggested for it by National Highways through the DCO application. We presented evidence on these matters as the Examination closed [REP12-031, 10.20, 10.23 and 10.24], but new evidence has emerged/is emerging which must be taken into consideration before a decision about the scheme can be made.

- (a) Research undertaken by TfGM whilst the A57 Link Roads scheme was undergoing its 2020 statutory consultation, showed the severe impacts the scheme would impose on the Strategic Road Network (SRN) when combined with the GGGV [REP12-028]. That research has been updated through PfE and confirms that traffic generated by GGGV - allocation JPA31 - is *'likely to result in material implications on the operation of the SRN⁴'* at both the M67 J4

³ A57 Link Roads TR010034 ES Ch.15 Cumulative Effects Table 15-7 row 42 REP1-020

⁴ 09.01.26 Tameside Locality Assessments Addendum page 37/51, para 6.5.1

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roundabout and M60 J24 Denton Island. JPA31 with the ‘bypass’ (Mottram Moor Link Road) would cause both the M67 J4 and the M60 J24 to operate beyond capacity⁵. Mitigation without the bypass using partial signalisation and widening of the M67 J4 roundabout⁶ would restore operating capacity to the junction as the substantial increase in traffic accompanying the bypass would not be generated. All proposed options to mitigate congestion at M60 J24 fail to bring the junction within operating capacity, leading to continuing air pollution. These results challenge the evidence the Applicant presented to the DCO Examination.

(b) National Highways submitted on 28th July 2022 a formal recommendation to TMBC’s planning application 21/01171/OUT for GGGV that planning permission is not granted until October 28th 2022⁷; it does not have confidence that there would not be a severe impact to the SRN, should this development proceed. This extends a previous recommendation not to grant permission and challenges the conclusion presented to the DCO Examination.

(c) Further investigation is being undertaken by National Highways and TfGM to produce ‘*Highways England Future Work Programme*’ to inform PfE. This examines the potential implications of the plan on the SRN, including every SRN link, junction, merge and diverge arrangement across Greater Manchester⁸. National Highways describes this work as ‘*of critical importance to the transport evidence base. Only when this work is completed and has been reviewed, will National Highways be able to understand the impacts of Plan on the strategic road network*’⁹. Thus, this work appears crucial to informing and evaluating the authenticity of the assessment of the A57 Link Roads.

⁵ 09.01.26 Tameside Locality Assessments Addendum page 38/51, Table 13

⁶ As proposed in *Low Carbon Travel for Longendale and Glossopdale*

⁷ https://publicaccess.tameside.gov.uk/online-applications/files/7982E563901C85BCDC19119B2D9C0117/pdf/21_01171_OUT-CONSULTEE_COMMENT_-_NATIONAL_HIGHWAYS-1555101.pdf

⁸ GMCA3.1, 27 May 2022, [REDACTED] PfE response to Inspectors notes IN3, IN3.1 and IN3.2: preliminary questions to GMCA: legal, procedural and other general matters, page 125

⁹ GMCA’s Joint Development Plan, Examination of Places for Everyone, IN8 page 18 Issue 3.3

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The inconsistency between National Highways' and TfGM's evidence as to the cumulative impacts of the A57 Link Roads with GGGV must be resolved. The completed *Highways England Future Work Programme*, and a full and proper assessment of the cumulative impacts of GGGV with the A57 Link Roads should be available for scrutiny by IPs and yourself as the decision-maker before a decision is made about the A57 Link Roads. This is reinforced by what we demonstrated about the traffic modelling as outlined in paragraph 2 above.

8. Air quality assessment at Brookfield

Three working days before the Examination closed, the Applicant submitted the results of a sensitivity test applied at HPBC's request to an area adjacent to the scheme. This showed that human health receptors would be exposed to illegal levels of nitrous dioxide with the scheme [REP11-011]. In the SoCG between HPBC and the Applicant submitted at the close of the Examination [REP12-008, 9.24] the matter was left as 'not agreed'. *'Discussions are ongoing regarding a mechanism for the Applicant to support HPBC to better understand the baseline air quality at the property.'* IPs have not been privy to any of these discussions or the outcome of them. This is of great concern as two AQMAs in Glossopdale and the Natura 2000 sites adjacent to the A628T were excluded from assessment. Their exclusion depended on traffic flows not meeting the required thresholds for assessment, but the traffic model was refined to explicitly reduce the air pollution at both AQMAs. In this context and the newly emerging further evidence of air pollution, the air quality effects of the scheme need further scrutiny.

9. The Applicant is in breach of its licence conditions

Our report detailing how the Applicant is in breach of its licence conditions was submitted to the Office of Rail and Road, as the Highways Monitor, and copied to your predecessor, Grant Shapps, as SoS for Transport. It is attached to this letter and provides evidence relevant to the determination of the scheme. In brief, the Applicant misled the public through both statutory consultations to the extent that it was not possible for those consulted to come to an informed opinion about the scheme. Throughout the examination, as IPs, we were faced with obfuscation and non-engagement by the Applicant with the questions and substantive evidence which we provided. The Applicant has also failed to provide effective stewardship of the long term operation and integrity of the A628T corridor. Through progressing the A57 Link Roads it also failed to ensure efficiency and value for money, to protect and

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improve the safety of the network, to co-operate with local authorities, to minimise the impacts on the environment and to have due regard for 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 any decision which might be made to proceed with the scheme untenable and open to challenge.

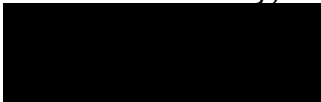
Conclusion

The Planning Act 2008, s.104 (7), as reflected in NPSNN 4.1, and the 2017 EIA Regulations s.21 (1)(b) require the decision-maker to weigh the adverse impacts of a proposed development against its benefits. We have shown that all the above issues are unresolved with respect to the impacts of the A57 Link Roads. As the impacts of the scheme cannot properly be determined due to lack of evidence, or poor evidence, or new evidence any decision to proceed with the scheme would be untenable.

We therefore strongly urge you to refuse the A57 Link Roads DCO and ask National Highways to urgently commence:

- 1 Repeating the local options appraisal afresh, with our *Low Carbon Travel for Longdendale and Glossopdale* measures fully developed and evaluated in light of the established local and national policies for achieving healthy and sustainable travel.
- 2 Developing a similar strategic approach for the whole corridor, reflecting
 - a. National Government's pathway to carbon reduction, in particular the DfT's Decarbonising Transport and, when established as effective, the UK's NZS;
 - b. The special nature of the National Park and National Park Authority's policies for traffic management;
 - c. The transport policies of cities which the road is designed to serve, including Sheffield as well as Manchester.

Yours sincerely,



Anne Robinson
Campaigner

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