

# The Rt Hon Anne-Marie Trevelyan MP



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

The Rt Hon Mark Harper MP  
Secretary of State for Transport

21<sup>st</sup> August 2023

By email to: [REDACTED]

Our Ref: ZA32939

Dear Mark,

As the Member of Parliament for Berwick-upon-Tweed, I write to convey my constituents' strong support for the proposals to upgrade the A1 between Morpeth and Ellingham – as well as their amplifying concerns at delays in approving this.

For context, as you may be aware, then Chancellor George Osborne explicitly confirmed £293 million of investment to dual the A1 in his 2014 Autumn Statement. The end result of my long campaign, channelling desperate calls from local residents, this money has been explicitly promised to my constituents – and over a decade of local debate has been priced in. From a Government rightly committed to economic regeneration and levelling up across the country, I cannot express how catastrophic it would be for the Government to steal this money back off them.

Nonetheless, I know we are in agreement that it is important to be honest with the public that these are difficult times, with endless demands competing for taxpayers' money. So while I highlight to my constituents that a host of important capital projects, like dualling, are on pause – giving both the Chancellor and your Department valuable flexibility to take immediate action, while putting long-term solutions in place – it is vital pausing should not mean cancellation.

After, first, further consideration of environmental matters delaying a decision from January to June 2022, last year's 'Union Connectivity Review' then recommended studying and identifying the most impactful opportunities along the east coast. This pushed back the final decision on A1 proposals to December 2022 and then again to this September.

Whether commuting, popping to the shops, or taking a life-threatening ambulance ride, my constituents in very rural North Northumberland rely heavily on local roads and improvements are vitally needed. Having been promised this in 2014, it is time to finally give my constituents some certainty on a build start date please.

As National Highways confirmed earlier this year: *“To date, £67m has been spent on the A1 Morpeth to Ellingham improvement... This includes options development, detail design of the project, the Development Consent Order (DCO) application process, land and property acquisition and some advanced construction.”* – and there was widespread media coverage of my visit to one of the over 850 archaeological trenches dug along the route of the A1 dualling scheme in preparation. We must not waste this, but it is far from a sunk cost fallacy.

Cont'd /

**Member of Parliament for Berwick-upon-Tweed**

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*I send a regular e-newsletter to keep residents informed of the work I do in Parliament and locally.  
To receive it email “subscribe” to [REDACTED]@parliament.uk.*

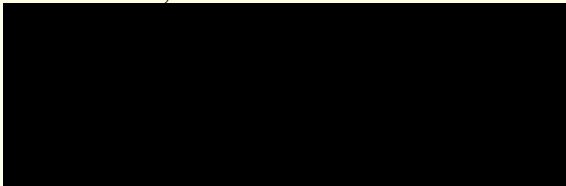
Not only is the A1 a vital strategic route between England and Edinburgh, but for my constituents it is the only viable route to access education, employment, health services, and keep our local economy afloat. By way of an example, cancer patients, aided by the Berwick and District Cancer Support Group, made 1,115 journeys up and down the A1 for treatment in 2022 – a return journey of over 120 miles.

Further, research from the House of Commons library found “*of all 6,000 settlements checked, Berwick-upon-Tweed has the second-highest distance to A&E in the country (50.6 miles). 15 other settlements have a distance to A&E of over 30 miles. Looking only at settlements with a population over 10,000: Berwick-upon-Tweed’s 50.6 miles is the longest distance to an A&E by some margin. The second-highest is Penzance, at 22.3 miles. Only six other towns in England have a distance over 20 miles.*” This is distance as the crow flies; without improvements to the A1, North Northumberland is so rural that journey times are even worse.

I thought it important to pass on, which I hope is useful, that both my constituents and I completely support the dualling. My constituents would be most grateful for your help with this important issue and, as ever, I am happy to discuss this – and wider policy development – further, at your convenience.

I am copying this letter to the Chancellor.

Yours ever,



The Rt Hon Anne-Marie Trevelyan MP