



Northumberland County Council

Mr Richard Holden MP
Minister for Roads and Local Transport

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A1 IN NORTHUMBERLAND – MORPETH TO ELLINGHAM DUALLING

You will remember when we met a month or so ago that I pointed out just how important the A1 is and why at least some positive news around a dualling scheme would be hugely welcomed. So, you will appreciate the significant disappointment that the announcement to delay a decision until June next year has created. Of course, I am very grateful that the scheme is still a possibility.

As I have highlighted in previous correspondence to the Department, the Morpeth to Ellingham dualling scheme is well-developed and ready for construction but, has been awaiting a Development Consent Order (DCO) decision since January 2022. The positive case for dualling is clear and in my view unarguable:

- Improving network resilience and journey-time reliability;
- Maintaining access for local traffic whilst improving strategic travel;
- Stimulating economic growth;
- Creating opportunities to provide sustainable benefits to the environment; and,
- Strengthening Union connectivity.

There is also a compelling human story to this. We continue to experience serious accidents on this part of the road. It is clear to me we have a part of our strategic road network designed for the 1950s and unfit for a modern, vibrant economy. I also need to highlight the plight of property owners adjacent to the proposed dualling, many of whom are trapped in a state of limbo until they have clarity on future plans for the route.



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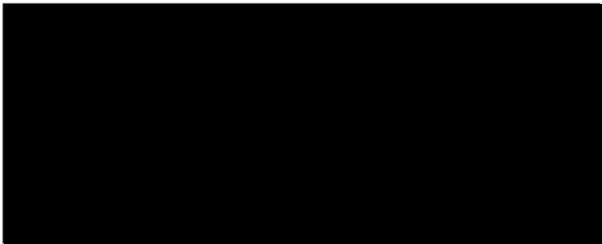


The pattern of announcement, followed by delay has now become familiar, including in 2014 when the then PM, David Cameron visited the region and stated "...the long-awaited green lights are flashing...". In our region, this issue has become a 'litmus-test' for trust in national Government. Undoubtedly, 'Levelling Up' has brought substantial benefits to Northumberland and we are grateful for Government investment. However, I fear the positive impacts from this are at risk of unravelling due to failure on A1 dualling.

Yet, it is not too late for Government to act. I urge you to bring forward a long-awaited, positive decision on A1 dualling which will surely boost other initiatives in the region. It would show our residents and businesses that this Government honours its commitments to 'Levelling Up' our economy.

My Council stands ready to work with you and your Department on this important matter. I would be happy to come to London to continue the conversation with you. Alternatively, I'd be delighted to welcome you to Northumberland to see for yourself the current challenges on our road network as well the enormous opportunities dualling would bring.

I look forward to your reply.



Councillor Glen Sanderson
Leader of the Council