

24th April 2023

From:

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To: National Highways, A66 NTP project manager. A66NTP@highwaysengland.co.uk

Cc: Active Travel England. info@activetravelengland.gov.uk

Subject - formal complaint - A66 NTP walking, cycling & horse riding provision

Dear National Highways A66 project manager

We are writing to you to express our concern and raise a formal complaint over the current active travel proposals for the A66 Northern Trans-Pennine dualling scheme proposals, currently being developed by National Highways and awaiting a decision on the development consent order via the Planning Inspectorate.

Our concerns are as follows:

- i) within the development of the WCHAR proposals, National Highways have failed to fully embrace the concept of a continuous east to west safe cycling corridor along the course of the dualled A66. As a result the proposals do not currently provide for provision of a safe route between Brough and Bowes - an area of high moorland with limited alternative options and no alternative traffic-free provision. We note most particularly that at this point the existing dual carriageway is located close to a disused railway line that could be brought into service as a safe route for minimal cost, and that if formally dedicated as Restricted Byway would have the significant additional benefit of providing a safe route for non-mechanically propelled traffic to travel to the annual Appleby Horse Fair without travelling on busy roads (an issue which has led to fatalities in the past.
- ii) As a result of the failure to adopt a 'full route' approach, we have been repeatedly told that the scheme boundaries extend only to the limits of the current dualling proposals, and not to the existing sections that have already been dualled in the past, with poor inclusion of walking, cycling and horse riding facilities. As a result, the 'new' route will have partial provision built in as part of the new stretches, but not on the old stretches. This undermines the efficiency and value of any active travel provision by providing a disjointed and patchy route with significant gaps.
- iii) National Highways have failed to fully embrace safe provision for horse riders in the development of the proposals. Numerous stretches of the 'new' provision are for walking and cycling only. As these sections of the route are in predominantly rural

areas we see no reason why provision cannot be included for safe horse riding facilities, particularly where the only alternative is for riders to use currently unsafe sections of busy road.

- iv) In addition we raise the issue that a number of accommodation roads running alongside the new route, and several bridges and underpasses will have no right of public access, even where this could serve huge benefits to local communities. We believe that accommodation roads, bridges and underpasses should be made available for public access and linked to the existing rights of way network.
- v) We express concern over the proximity of the proposed NMU provision to the carriageway and seek assurances over appropriate segregation and/or traffic calming measures and speed limits. We believe this is particularly important along areas where, currently, the proposals seek to utilise 'detrunked' sections of the existing A66 route. We suggest that in areas it may be appropriate to narrow the existing carriageway to provide safe, segregated routes and reduce the risk of speeding along these detrunked sections of highway.

Whilst we recognise that, overall, the rural nature of these routes lends to the likelihood that the predominant active travel uses will be recreational rather than utility. We feel that there are still important reasons to connect towns and their outlying villages, along with important heritage destinations, and that as such the current proposals for the A66 project have somewhat failed to fully embrace the opportunities for active travel, and to build it in as a design feature for the future.

As a result, we are writing to you to ask you to review the current plans in order to develop greater facility for vulnerable road users along this route, particularly by securing a commitment to a continuous safe east-west route along the A66 corridor (via both dedicated provision and alternative low-traffic minor routes).

We would also seek your assurances that you have sought direct input from Active travel England into the design of cycle facilities along this corridor.

Yours Faithfully

Duncan Dollimore, Head of Campaigns, Cycling UK

Mark Weston, Access Director, British Horse Society