



**Westmorland
& Furness
Council**

Richard Holden, MP
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Roads and Local Transport)
Department for Transport
Great Minster House
33 Horseferry Road
London
SW1P 4DR

19th October 2023

Dear Under Secretary,

NATIONAL HIGHWAYS' A66 NORTHERN TRANS PENNINE PROJECT

Westmorland and Furness Council is the host local authority for a large part of the A66 Northern Trans Pennine (NTP) project, which involves the dualling of the A66 between M6 (J40) at Penrith and the A1(M) (J53) at Scotch Corner.

The Council has worked positively with National Highways to help shape the project and support its development and approval, including being proactive during the Examination into the development consent application which closed on 29th May 2023.

The Council sees this project as a vital investment in infrastructure for the North of England, and which will bring considerable benefits to the area – facilitating growth and improving connectivity. The A66 NTP will improve connectivity through increased resilience, reliability and capacity on the national road network between Cumbria, Scotland and North-West England and the North-East, East Midlands and North Sea ports.

Westmorland and Furness has nationally important economic and natural assets, providing critical capacity that supports industries at the forefront of the transition to a post-carbon economy, with world-class energy, nuclear and defence expertise and a high concentration of advanced manufacturing activity, together with associated supply chains.

The economic and labour market challenges faced by Westmorland and Furness, such as a decline in working age population, mean that the ability to move people and goods over larger distances is increasingly important if the area is to prosper and make progress in levelling up. The A66 NTP will contribute to addressing these challenges by facilitating the movement of people and goods more reliably and quickly which in turn will provide:

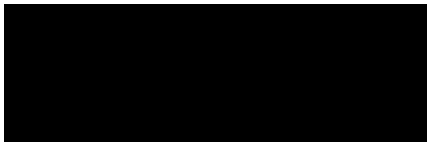
County Hall, Busher Walk, Kendal, Cumbria, LA9 4RQ
T. 01539 713066

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- better access to work opportunities and access to labour markets;
- better access for tourism visitors and the potential to attract visitors to places outside the established tourism hot-spots;
- cost reductions for businesses dependent on east-west connectivity, improved contact with customers and suppliers, and the ability to access markets domestically and overseas; and
- a more accessible environment for inward investment.

The Council is strongly supportive of the project and hopes to see it consented this year, with a start on construction early in 2024.

Your sincerely,



Angela Jones

Director of Thriving Places