


From: 
To: [A66Dueling](#)
Subject: Friends of the Lake District response to Secretary of State's letter dated 5th January IP number - 20032016
Date: 18 January 2024 18:55:55
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
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[image003.png](#)

TR010062: A66 Northern Trans-Pennine Project: IP number - 20032016

Dear Sir/Madam

Friends of the Lake District response to Secretary of State's letter dated 5th January

Benefit Cost Ratio and Inflation

In light of the high inflation rate over the past two years the costings for the A66 Trans-Pennine Upgrade development should be recalculated. Costs are now 23% higher than they were in 2019 when the project costings were carried out. The 12 month CPI inflation rates in December 2021 (5.4%), 2022 (10.5%) and 2023 (4.2%) are well above the 3.5 % pa inflation rate used in the Combined Modelling and Appraisal Report which means that the actual costs will be significantly higher than projected. We request that the Secretary of State asks National Highways how these increased costs will affect the Benefit Cost Ratio which was already low at 0.90. Anything under 1.0 is rated as poor value in National Highways own Value for Money Indicator document <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/percentage-of-dft-s-appraised-project-spending-that-is-assessed-as-good-or-very-good-value-for-money/value-for-money-indicator-2019>

Of the projects assessed in the 2019 document, only two projects, making up 1% of spending (£6m in total) rated as "Poor" value for money. The size of the A66 project will mean that considerably more taxpayers money will be spent on a £1.4+bn project that won't pay for itself, even when all the enumerated benefits of the project are taken into account.

Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 (LURA) Duty to seek to further the purposes of National Parks and National Landscapes (AONBs)

Friends of the Lake District fully supports and endorses the submission from Anne Robinson (registration reference 20031841) regarding the Levelling up and Regeneration Act 2023.

Natural England is the statutory Government adviser responsible for National Parks and National Landscapes (AONBs). Natural England should therefore be asked to provide their opinion to the Secretary of State on the new Duty in the LUR Act to "seek to further" the purposes of the North Pennines National Landscape in relation to the A66 Upgrade.

We note that Natural England made representations about the new LURA Duty during the Lower Thames Crossing Examination (see letter dated 15th December 2023 <https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/projects/TR010032/TR010032-006179-Natural%20England%20-%20Deadline%209a%20Submission.pdf>) and therefore consider that it would be remiss for the Government's adviser on protected landscapes not to provide an opinion on the new Duty in the case of the A66 Trans-Pennine Upgrade.

In Natural England's letter it is made clear that the "seek to further the purposes of national parks and national landscapes" duty "is an **active** duty not a passive one. Any relevant authority [i.e. National Highways] must take all reasonable steps to explore how the statutory purposes of the protected landscape...can be furthered."

Natural England then say that:

The new duty underlines the importance of avoiding harm to the statutory purposes of protected landscapes but also to seeks to further the conservation and enhancement of a protected landscape. That goes beyond mitigation and like for like measures and replacement. A relevant authority must be able to demonstrate with reasoned evidence what measures can be taken to further the statutory purpose. If it is not practicable or feasible to take those measures the relevant authority should provide evidence to show why it is not practicable or feasible. The proposed measures to further the statutory purposes of a protected landscape, should explore what is possible in addition to avoiding and mitigating the effects of the development, and should be appropriate, proportionate to the type and scale of the development and its implications for the area and effectively secured. Natural England's view is that the proposed measures should align with and help to deliver the aims and objectives of the designated landscape's statutory management plan. The relevant protected landscape team/body should be consulted.

Considering the Government's landscape adviser's interpretation of the "seek to further the purposes of protected landscape" duty, the Secretary of State should ask Natural England whether they consider National Highways' interpretation of the LURA duty (as set out in their letter dated 20th December) actually meets the duty to seek to further the purposes of the North Pennines AONB

National Highways' interpretation of the Duty as set out in their response to the Secretary of State on 20th December may not even comply with the National Networks Policy Statement section 5.152 on protected landscapes. This states:

*'There is a strong presumption against any significant road widening or the building of new roads and strategic rail freight interchanges in a National Park, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, unless it can be shown there are compelling reasons for the new or enhanced capacity and **with any benefits outweighing the costs very***

significantly. Planning of the Strategic Road Network should encourage routes that avoid National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

As noted in the first section of this response, the Benefit Cost Ratio for the scheme is below 1.0, not even accounting for inflation over the past three years. **The benefits of the A66 Upgrade are very significantly not outweighing the costs of the scheme** both financially and environmentally.

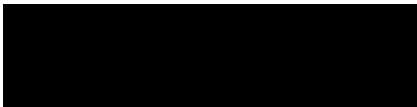
LURA and the Lake District National Park

Friends of the Lake District has continued to raise the concern that the A66 will bring a significant number of additional visitors by car to the Lake District National Park. This concern is backed up by statements made by National Highways in their consultation documents and publicity for the scheme and Department for Transport statements such as that by the [A66 accounting officer assessment](#) which states that there is a **Strong strategic case for dualling the A66 because it provides access to major national tourism areas**. There are no other “major national tourism areas” directly accessible by the A66 other than the Lake District.

Increasing car traffic into the Lake District is contrary to the Lake District’s Management Plan which is specifically working to reduce people accessing the National Park by car. The A66 Upgrade actively works against the new LURA duty to seek to further the purposes of the Lake District National Park and instead is undermining the management plan for the National Park and the English Lakes World Heritage Site as published by the Lake District National Park Authority. The responses by the Lake District National Park Authority which I linked to in my [November 8th response to the Secretary of State](#) set it out plainly that increasing traffic into the Lake District will damage the area and is the very opposite of “seeking to further” the purposes of the Lake District National Park.

Yours sincerely

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