

## **Response to Secretary of State's letter of 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2024 inviting responses from Interested Parties.**

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the submissions made on 31<sup>st</sup> January. I am writing on behalf of my parents, aged [REDACTED] who live at [REDACTED]. The proposals would bring the dual carriageway and a new access road about 50 metres from their house, cause an overwhelming reduction in their quality of life, and impact their health significantly, as well as causing great loss of value to their property (and subsequently impacting on their ability to pay for social care).

### **Letter from Ruth Bradshaw, Campaign for National Parks 31/01/2024**

The CNP expressed concern at the response of National Highways to their request for information about how NH will meet the new duty of LURA , and considered that NH were Having taken legal advice, from Alex Shattock of Landmark Chambers, they conclude:

This means that National Highways must now provide the evidence to demonstrate why it has ruled out alternatives to dualling which would do more to further the purposes, such as introducing demand management measures to reduce traffic on the A66, investing in public transport or addressing road safety concerns by reducing speed limits. In the absence of such evidence, it is impossible for the Secretary of State to demonstrate that their decision on this scheme complies with the new duty to seek to further the statutory purpose (CNP, letter of 31 Jan 2024).

Many local residents have had concerns about the dualling project from the beginning, and its impact on local residents, vulnerable or otherwise. We very much welcome this submission, and call on the SoS to take the new duty seriously. Organisations such as the Friends of the Lake District were calling for such measures in 2019, yet were ignored and not even invited to community meetings.

It should be noted that the failure to take measures to control traffic on the A66, suggested above, and pursuing of the dualling project at the expense of other measures, has now perpetuated the safety problems of the current road over a period of 5 years.

## Letter from the Woodland Trust 31 January 2024

We would like to take this opportunity to express our serious concerns regarding potential impact to woods and trees from the A66 Northern Trans-Pennine Project. Of particular concern to us is the applicant's decision to not undertake an Arboricultural Impact Assessment as part of their Development Consent Order application.

While National Highways have said they will provide a full assessment at the post consent design stage, this means that limited information will be available to the Secretary of State about the impact of the dual carriageway on trees, including on the border of the DCO boundary, at the decision making stage. We very much welcome this submission.

We therefore consider that it would be unreasonable for National Highways to not provide an AIA to support the A66 Northern Trans-Pennine project. In the interests of transparency and appropriate scrutiny of the A66 Northern Trans-Pennine project, we request that an Arboricultural Impact Assessment is provided by the applicant in full, prior to any decision being taken by the Secretary of State on this.

Both letters highlight concerns about the impact of the dual carriageway on the environment of one of the most beautiful parts of Great Britain, which makes it a tourist attraction.

## Letter from National Highways 31 January 2024

National Highways claim that the dual carriageway will have no adverse impact on any National Park. Moreover:

"The existing A66 forms the southern border of the North Pennines AONB but this road corridor does not represent any of the special qualities of the North Pennines AONB. The experience of the North Pennines AONB at this point is diluted by the significant presence of traffic, the roadside buildings and signage primarily associated with the operation of Ministry of Defence land to the north. The landscape is typical managed roadside verge with scrubby trees and untidy grass strips introduced for the purpose of screening (see, for example, ES Chapter 10 [APP-053] paragraph 10.10.139).

While the use of the land for firing for several decades has undoubtedly had an effect, the area to the north of the A66 from Broomrigg (Scheme 6) still provides a place to walk in solitude on non-firing days with views of the fells, which will be less accessible to my parents and others, while at the same time, new roads to the south of the current A66 at Broomrigg will have significant

adverse effects on the landscape as well as the residents. It is noteworthy that National Highways admit that the significant presence of traffic has a negative impact on the enjoyment of the landscape, yet do not admit the negative effects of traffic on human health.

### Comments on Appendix 1 responding to the concerns of Cumbria Police.

In 2.5, National Highways stated

The scope of the Project does not include for the provision of ANPR.

Cumbria Police have noted that

2.6 The A66 east of Penrith is a high harm area in respect of KSI collisions in the county – what preventative measures are being implemented to prevent this and will activity be linked to the Cumbria Road Safety Partnership? Is there any consideration to implementing average / fixed speed cameras, similar to that of the A590 to improve road safety? The speeds on this stretch of road will be higher given dual carriageway status. Will the speed limit be 70 MPH throughout? Will there be locations for safe vehicle stops and safety camera van enforcement zones.

We are very concerned that safety cameras will apparently not be installed along the A66 between Appleby and Brough, given the added risks of traffic travelling at higher speeds. There are already a significant number of accidents on the Broomrigg-Appleby stretch (Scheme 6), some proven to be the result of bad driving, yet no attempt seems to be anticipated to oversee driver behaviour.

### **Other recent developments .**

1.The Office of Roads and Rail has announced an investigation into National Highways which includes looking specifically at capital projects under RIS2, and whether NH is complying with its statutory duties on the environment under its Licence. They recommend a period of 8 to 12 weeks. No decision should be made until this investigation is complete and the ORR have reported.

<https://www.orr.gov.uk/search-news/orr-undertake-investigation-national-highways-performance>

Letter from ORR to NH :<https://www.orr.gov.uk/media/25190>

Dr Mary Clare Martin

On behalf of the Thompsons

[REDACTED]

14<sup>th</sup> February 2024