

## **Public play key role in refined A66 plans**

The proposal for the biggest investment on the north's road network in a generation is moving into a new phase thanks to vital feedback from the public.

National Highways has listened to the opinions of people and taken action by refining designs for the £1bn A66 Northern Trans-Pennine project.

The project will lead to significant improvements to the A66 between M6 junction 40 and A1 at Scotch Corner by dualling the remaining single carriageway sections of the route and upgrading key junctions.

The road runs east to west across northern England, providing access to the North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the Yorkshire Dales and the Lake District National Park, as well as carrying high levels of freight. However, the route is not up to modern standards, meaning drivers face congestion, delays at key junctions and substandard access to jobs and leisure locations.

Today, National Highways publishes its Statutory Consultation Summary Report alongside a winter 2022 update setting out updated plans for the vital project.

Last autumn National Highways spent six weeks talking to communities, drivers and businesses who use the vital route about the proposal. More than 1,200 people and organisations gave their thoughts, while over 1,500 attended a series of public information events.

The responses are helping to shape the final design and inform National Highways' application for a Development Consent Order (DCO) in May 2022 which, if successful, will pave the way for the scheme to go ahead.

Lee Hillyard, National Highways' A66 Northern Trans-Pennine project director, said:

"We're delighted so many people have taken such a keen interest in our proposals and I'd like to thank everyone for their responses. Today we've published our statutory consultation summary report and Spring 2022 project update, which is the perfect opportunity to provide the latest information and show how we are acting on the feedback we've received."

While some changes are minor tweaks to the design shared in autumn 2021, others are more substantial. In those areas, National Highways has held targeted non-statutory consultations with

local communities, landowners and stakeholders, whose feedback is currently being collected and will be incorporated into our DCO submission.

The provision of walking, cycling and horse riding (WCH) routes has been a major talking point during the route's development and, after listening to feedback, additional WCH routes are now being proposed in some areas.

Lee Hillyard added:

“We have listened to the local communities and stakeholders on the issue of WCH, which was one of the most requested topics during consultation. We’ve maintained and relocated any severed WCH routes which cross the new road, and now we’re proposing extra routes. Our new routes will deliver wider connectivity.”

The project team have also completed surveys to gain an intricate understanding of the local area including the environment, ecology and heritage, while also exploring ways to mitigate potential impacts like noise, drainage and visual aesthetics. This has created opportunities in various locations to improve environmental and land impacts.

You can get hard copies of both the winter update and summary report at the below deposit points:

Penrith Library CA11 7YA

St Michael’s Church, Kirkby Thore CA10 1UR

Appleby Tourist Information CA16 6XE

Kirkby Stephen Library CA17 4QX

Brough Memorial Hall CA17 4AS

Cross Lanes Organic Farm DL12 9RT

Barnard Castle Library DL12 8JB

Mainsgill Farm Shop DL11 7PN

Richmond Library DL10 4AE

Clayport Library DH1 1WA

Meanwhile, on the section between Appleby and Brough, we are considering an alternative to the proposed replacement of the travelling community’s Brough Hill Fair site. In the autumn 2021 statutory consultation, a site to the east of Warcop was earmarked on land belonging to the Ministry

of Defence - known as the "bivvy" site. An alternative location, approximately 1.6 miles east from the current site, is now also being considered in response to feedback from the Statutory Consultation.

National Highways is keen to hear views on the sites with regards to their suitability for the annual event. As these are potential changes to the design presented in the autumn, a supplementary consultation is being carried out to provide the chance to gather feedback on this specific issue.

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