

HIGH PEAK BOROUGH COUNCIL

The Executive

3 December 2020

TITLE:	Trans Pennine Upgrade A57 Link Road
EXECUTIVE COUNCILLOR:	Councillor Anthony McKeown, Council Leader
CONTACT OFFICER:	Mark James - Principal Planning Officer
WARDS INVOLVED:	All wards in Glossopdale

Appendices Attached –

Appendix 1 - Joint consultation response from High Peak Borough Council and Derbyshire County Council to the Trans Pennine Upgrade consultation (March 2018).

Appendix 2 – Copy of presentation given by Highways England to Councillors on 3rd November 2020.

1. Reason for the Report

- 1.1 The notify the Executive of the current consultation from Highways England on the A57 Link Roads, to highlight key elements of the scheme, to set out the proposed approach to consider and agree a response to the consultation and to clarify the process moving forward.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 That the Executive note the details of the consultation and proposed approach to agree the Council's response as set out at paragraph 5.16 of this report.
- 2.2 That the Executive make any comments around the proposals in response to the consultation.

3. Executive Summary

- 3.1 A public consultation on the A57 Link Roads scheme will run until 17th December. The consultation proposes a series of design changes from the scheme published in 2018 alongside an updated assessment of environmental impacts.

- 3.2 High Peak Borough Council and Derbyshire County Council submitted a joint holding objection to the 2018 consultation due to a lack of supporting information in terms of impacts such as the implications for air quality. On the basis of an initial review of the current consultation by officers, it is not clear if the Council's previous concerns have been adequately addressed. If not, the current holding objection may need to be sustained until such time that any outstanding issues are resolved. Officers are in the process of liaising with Highways England and Derbyshire County Council to investigate these matters further. Given the circumstances and timescales, it is suggested that the Council's response is delegated to the Executive Director for Place in consultation with the Leader of Council with regard given to feedback from Councillors.
- 3.3 Following the consultation, Highways England expect to submit the Development Consent Order application to the Planning Inspectorate in Spring 2021. If the application is accepted for consideration, the examination itself will take around 18 months through to a decision by the Secretary of State. Subject to approval, construction is expected to start in 2023.

4. **How this report links to Corporate Priorities**

- 4.1 The A57 Link Roads scheme has direct implications for the following aims of the Corporate Plan; Aim 1 Supporting our communities to create a healthier, safer, cleaner High Peak, Aim 2 Protect and create jobs by supporting economic growth, development and regeneration and Aim 3 Protect and improve the environment including responding to the climate emergency.

Neil Rodgers
Executive Director (Place)

Web Links and Background Papers

Consultation website:

<https://highwaysengland.co.uk/our-work/north-west/a57-link-roads/>

Planning Inspectorate Advice Note: The role of local authorities in the DCO process

https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Advice_note_2.pdf

Contact details

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5. **Detail**

Background

- 5.1 A public consultation on the "A57 Link Roads" scheme was published by Highways England on 5th November and will run until 17th December. The consultation follows on from previous engagement on the "Trans-Pennine Upgrade" project in 2018 which also included the proposals for the A57 Link

Roads as well as upgrades to Westwood roundabout near Sheffield and associated improvements to the east of the Pennines which have since been split off into a separate project.

- 5.2 The Mottram Moor Link Road & A57 Link Road scheme is identified as commitment in the Government's second Roads Investment Strategy (RIS2) for the period 2020 to 2025. It also featured in RIS1 for the period 2015 to 2020. The scheme is classified as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP). As such, an application for a Development Consent Order (DCO) will be considered at an examination conducted by the Planning Inspectorate under the provisions of the Planning Act 2008 (as amended). The Secretary of State will determine the application having regard to the recommendations of the planning inspector.
- 5.3 Policy S6 (Glossopdale Sub-Area Strategy) of the adopted High Peak Local Plan includes the following in relation to infrastructure improvements in Glossopdale:
- “Working with partner organisations and developers to address congestion along the A57 and A628, to improve transport links to surrounding areas and to enable transport improvements and mitigation measures identified the High Peak Transport Study and in the Trans-Pennine Feasibility Study ¹(subject to further consideration).”*
- 5.4 In line with the above, officers have attended stakeholder meetings with Highways England and other relevant public bodies to discuss the process and details of the scheme and supporting evidence when available.
- 5.5 The Economy and Growth Select Committee considered the previous Trans-Pennine Upgrade consultation on 8 February 2018. Feedback from councillors at this meeting informed the subsequent response to Highways England which was prepared jointly with Derbyshire County Council. A holding objection was submitted by the Councils on the basis of the lack of supporting evidence and information in the accompanying Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PIER) on the impacts of the scheme. Specific concerns related to air quality, landscape and visual impact, cultural heritage and ecology. A copy of the holding objection is provided at Appendix 1 to this report.
- 5.6 Since the 2018 consultation, the Council has designated two Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA) in High Peak; a section of the A628 in Tintwistle and part of the A57 at Dinting due to concerns regarding Nitrogen Dioxide emissions. A separate AQMA designation covers Greater Manchester.
- 5.7 On 3rd November, Highways England presented key details of the consultation to Councillors ahead of the start of the consultation (Appendix 2). Issues raised by Councillors at this briefing included:

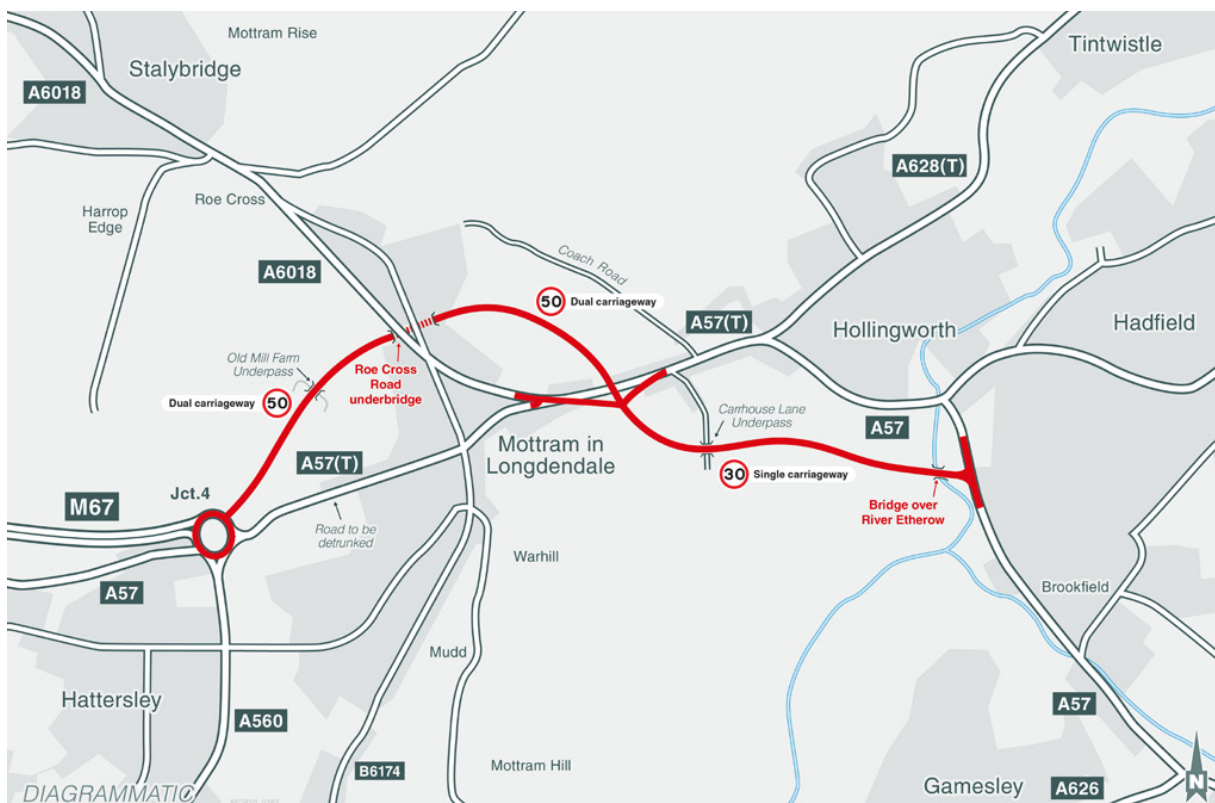
¹ The Trans Pennine Feasibility Study included the concept of the A57 Links Roads now subject to consultation.

- The scheme does not provide a solution to the traffic related problems in Tintwistle. Highways England confirmed that this scheme is focussed on addressing issues in Mottram but that separate consideration was being given to wider solutions. However at current there is not a clear timescale for these wider considerations.
- Whether supporting traffic data and information regarding associated impacts would be available. Highways England stated that an updated Preliminary Environmental Information Report would be available as part of the consultation with a full Environmental Statement to follow.
- Concern regarding number of traffic lights on the A57 and as part of the scheme which may cause congestion. Highways England confirmed that the previous proposals for a roundabout at Mottram Moor was also signal controlled and suggested that phasing of lights would need to be considered
- Whether funding opportunities to benefit the wider community would be available. Highways England conformed that their “Designated Fund” is available for local authorities and others to bid for projects in the vicinity of the scheme.

A57 Link Road proposals and supporting information

5.8 The scheme now subject to consultation consists of the following:

- Mottram Moor Link Road – a new dual carriageway from the M67 junction 4 roundabout to a new junction on the A57(T) at Mottram Moor
- A57 Link Road – a new single carriageway link from the A57(T) at Mottram Moor to a new junction on the A57 in Woolley Bridge.



- 5.9 The majority of the scheme is located within Tameside. Only the far eastern end of the A57 Link Road is located within High Peak. The scheme overall is broadly the same as that previous subject to consultation in 2018. However, there are several design changes to the scheme and new supporting information which are the focus of this consultation:
- Increased capacity at junction 4 of the M67 – additional lane to the roundabout and new traffic signalling
 - Removal of the proposed junction with Roe Cross Road
 - Updated design for the under pass at Mottram
 - The proposed roundabout on Mottram Moor is to be replaced with a signal controlled junction
 - A shorter re-designed bridge over the River Etherow and re-designed junction at Woolley Bridge. This is intended to better manage impacts on the flood plain, neighbouring farmhouse and enable access to the proposed housing development at Woolley bridge directly opposite the new A57 Link Road. This is the only section of the new road within High Peak.
 - Improved provision for pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders. This includes a combined footpath and cycleway alongside the A57 Link Road to connect Mottram Moor with the Trans-Pennine Trail at Woolley Bridge.
- 5.10 Neither a bypass of Hollingworth and Tintwistle nor the proposed Trans-Pennine Tunnel are included in the current scheme as they are not committed projects at the moment and there is no clear timescale for them becoming so.. However, the feasibility of both schemes is subject to further consideration. It is understood that the alignment of any future bypass or tunnel scheme may seek to tie into with the A57 Link Roads project in the future.
- 5.11 An updated PIER has also been published. The updated version seeks to respond to concerns raised in 2018 by drawing on new surveys and data, including for air quality and noise. The PIER provides a preliminary assessment of the existing environment, likely impacts of the scheme, how the impacts can be mitigated and identifies any limitations of the current information and assumptions made. Specific consideration is given to air quality, cultural heritage, biodiversity, geology and soils, materials assets and waste, noise and vibration, population and human health, road drainage and water, climate and the cumulative effects of the scheme. Further environmental impact assessment work will be carried out following this consultation with the preparation of the Environmental Statement which must be submitted along with the DCO application to the Planning Inspectorate.
- 5.12 The consultation documents reference the Greater Manchester Clean Air Plan which is subject to separate consultation until 3rd December. This consultation seeks to improve air quality across Greater Manchester by encouraging uptake of cleaner vehicles through the introduction of a daily charge for certain classifications of non-private vehicles and financial incentives. However, the Clean Air Plan does not currently propose to charge vehicles for use of the Strategic Road Network. This includes the A628/A57 as operated by Highways England.

- 5.13 The modelling for the A57 Link Roads scheme does not currently take the proposals for the Clean Air Plan into account. It is understood that sensitivity testing will be undertaken prior to the DCO submission to consider the implications.
- 5.14 Whilst it is recognised that the forthcoming Environmental Statement will provide further information regarding the impacts of the scheme, the PIER as published in 2018 was considered to provide insufficient information by High Peak Borough Council and Derbyshire County Council.
- 5.15 Officers are in the process of analysing the updated PIER to determine if our previous concerns have been addressed. Our initial review has identified a number of queries which are currently being taken up with Highways England. These include the absence of traffic data and queries regarding the inputs into the modelling of air quality impacts.

Response

- 5.16 Given the above, it is proposed that Council's response to the consultation is delegated to the Executive Director (Place) in consultation with the Leader of the Council and Derbyshire County Council. The response will also have regard to feedback from issues raised by the Economy and Growth Select Committee. If it is ultimately concluded that the concerns raised previously by the Councils have not been addressed in this consultation, the holding objection may need to be maintained until such time that they have been resolved. The forthcoming Environmental Statement to be submitted by Highways England in Spring 2021 may help with this.

Next steps

- 5.17 The current consultation closes on 17th December. Highways England will then review feedback and finalise the documents ready for submission with the DCO application due in Spring 2021. The Planning Inspectorate will then have 28 days to decide whether to accept the application. During this period, the Council has 14 days to submit a representation regarding the "Adequacy of Consultation" conducted by Highways England to date.
- 5.18 Once the application has been accepted, members of the local community can register as interested parties to participate in the examination process. Statutory bodies such as the Council will also participate.
- 5.19 In the meantime, the Council can begin to prepare its own Local Impact Report (LIR) which will draw on data from Highways England where available but also set out its own conclusions in terms of the implications for the scheme. To this end, the Council has appointed Aecom consultants to assist in the preparation of the LIR in conjunction with Derbyshire County Council. Aecom are also preparing masterplan to help identify an appropriate planning strategy to complement the A57 Link Roads scheme.

- 5.20 A Statement of Common Ground will also begin to be developed between the local authorities and Highways England which sets out the matters upon which the respective signatories agree or disagree. Both the LIR and Statement of Common Ground will inform the examination process. Further information regarding the role of the Council in the examination is set out in the Planning Inspectorate's Advice Note (see link at the end of Section 4 to this report).
- 5.21 In total, the process for the examination and decision making is expected to take around 18 months. Subject to approval, construction is scheduled to commence in 2023.