



**A66 Northern Trans-Pennine  
Supplementary Design  
Consultation: walking, cycling  
and horse-riding provision,  
landform and compounds  
(March 2022)**

Transport Action Network (TAN) would like to make the following comments on the supplementary design consultation for the A66 Northern Trans-Pennine Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) on compounds, landforming, and cycling and walking infrastructure.

## Summary

- The design changes outlined in this consultation have been very significant and should have been included in the statutory consultation
- The consultation has been wholly inadequate and extremely poorly advertised
- A new Statement of Community Consultation should have been issued, detailing how National Highways would have consulted openly and fully about these changes
- An updated Preliminary Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) should have been produced, to reflect the impact of the new changes and to show the ecological impact

## Inadequacy of consultation

We are extremely concerned about the adequacy of the consultations for this huge and complex scheme. We have already raised our concerns about the adequacy of the consultation in our response to the 6-week statutory consultation in Autumn 2021<sup>1</sup>. Since we raised these concerns the subsequent consultations have only become worse, with consultations being fragmented, conducted in semi-secrecy, with poor publicity, little or no attempt to inform the public or relevant organisations such as TAN, and no attempt to quantify the combined and cumulative impacts of the proposed changes.

As we said in our response to the statutory consultation, this is a uniquely complex scheme. It is in effect eight or nine separate NSIPs in their own right, along a 50-mile stretch, rolled into one £1 billion mega-scheme. If this rolled-up approach is to be taken, then it is even more important that all the changes are assessed together, to enable consultees to form an informed view of the combined and cumulative impacts. This is not possible if the 8-9 schemes are treated as a single scheme for legal and planning purposes, yet are consulted on in a fragmented and disjointed way.

Also, 4 weeks is not enough time for such an important and massive consultation.

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<sup>1</sup> [TAN response to the A66 preliminary design consultation](#), November 2021

## Lack of publicity

There has been no publicity about this consultation on the National Highways' specific [A66 Twitter account](#), nor on National Highways' [A66 Facebook page](#). National Highways have been posting about unrelated issues (such as women's rights), but there has been no attempt to notify the public about the consultation through their social media channels. There were no emails sent to all those who have signed up to receive updates on this scheme. There have also not been any updates or notices put on the scheme [website](#) (such as the home page, the 'latest news' page, nor the 'what's next' page). The Latest News part of the website has not been updated since October 2021.

The only place where this significant, route-long consultation has been publicised in a NH page that is not specific to the A66: their [national consultation hub](#). This is where TAN found out about this scheme.

To ensure NH reach the maximum number of people, the consultation should have been advertised regularly on NH's A66 social media, with frequent reminders and updates posted on the scheme website.

## Lack of public events

The consultation brochure and website do not include any details of organised in-person public events, despite it being a major consultation into significant changes along the entire 50 mile route, which will have a huge impact on the environment, on local, regional and cross-country traffic, and on the tourist and leisure industry. Many people, particularly the elderly, do not have access to the internet, or do not have the bandwidth to look at huge and complex documents online.

As in-person events were not organised, as is best practice, people were denied the opportunity to look at maps and ask questions of NH's professional staff.

There were no COVID restrictions in place at the time of this consultation, so there was no reason not to hold in-person events.

We understand that key local people and local groups (such as parish councils) were not informed of this vital consultation. If this is true, then it is a serious failing.

## Lack of adequate and clear information

There is not enough clear information and detail in the consultation documents. The documents comprise only a four-page consultation brochure, a feedback form, and eight maps (with another set only added two days before the end of the consultation), with no information about the additional environmental impact. The consultation brochure simply repeats the information on the consultation website, with very little new or detailed information.

The maps are extremely detailed and difficult to read, requiring them to be magnified to 200% to be able to read the key, and then reduced to 75% to be able to fit the map onto a laptop screen. In total there are 29 maps

The maps use terms such as “laydown” in the key for new areas added to the proposed design for this consultation, but there are no definitions for any of the technical terms such as this in the consultation documents. Without vital information, such as definitions it is hard to form an informed view of the project.

## Status of the consultation

The position of the compounds and landforming should have been included in the statutory consultation in Autumn 2021. This has been standard practice elsewhere with other National Highways NSIP statutory consultations, such as the recent one at A27 Arundel.

The failure to include these crucial elements illustrates the rushed and flawed way that National Highways approached the statutory consultation. We are concerned that this eight-scheme NSIP's inclusion in the Treasury's Project Speed initiative has created an experimental approach to consultation which has meant that the usual consultation processes have been either cut or speeded up. With speed being prioritised, democracy, transparency and inclusion have been sacrificed.

In correspondence with National Highways, they have said that these consultations are only targeted at people immediately local to the eight schemes. Local people tell us that only a handful of local people have had leaflets through their doors, otherwise they would never have heard about it. People who live slightly further away, but still use the A66, were not informed, nor were national and regional groups.

Under paragraphs 75-76 of the pre-application guidance for the Planning Act 2008<sup>2</sup>, small, local, targeted consultations are only allowed if the scheme changes only "to a small degree, or if the change only affects part of the development", and the scheme has not materially changed. We would argue that the changes outlined in the supplementary consultations have been so substantial that they do materially impact on the scheme, especially its combined environmental impacts.

Moreover, we would also argue that any changes within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) are significant and of national importance. The same principle applies to internationally important habitats and species protected under the Habitats Directive, such as Special Conservation Areas (SCAs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs). Local, regional and national environmental organisations should be given the opportunity to respond, if the consultation is to be considered adequate. Without their input it is difficult to see how the most appropriate proposals will be advanced, that will have the least impact on this nationally important landscape and internationally important habitats.

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<sup>2</sup> Paragraphs 75-76 of the [Planning Act 2008: Guidance on the pre-application process](#), March 2015

Also this scheme is not a small, local scheme but a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP), requiring at least £1 billion of taxpayers money, from across the country.

A new Statement of Community Consultation should have been issued, and this consultation should have been given more publicity and consultees given more time.

## Environmental Impact Assessment

The proposed changes are so significant that the Preliminary Environmental Impact Report (PEIR, that was produced for the statutory consultation) should have been updated and reconsulted on.

The pre-application guidance for the Planning Act 2008 says that “applicants are advised to include sufficient preliminary environmental information to enable consultees to develop an informed view of the project” and that the “key issue is that the information presented must provide clarity to all consultees”<sup>3</sup>.

The PEIR has not been updated with the new impacts, and so consultees are unable to develop an informed view of the project and its impacts, nor the cumulative impact of these changes across eight sections of route.

## Our comments on the proposed changes

There are 29 maps included in this consultation (but no analysis of the environmental impact assessments).

The maps for the Temple Sowby to Appleby section show 17 new compounds or landforms that were **NOT** consulted on during the Autumn 2021 statutory consultation. As far as we can see only one compound was consulted on in Autumn 2021. These are overwhelmingly new.

The new compounds and landforms cross the River Eden Special Conservation Area (SAC) and directly impact on the Chapel Wood County Wildlife Site which we understand is ancient woodland.

The new walking and cycling infrastructure should have been consulted on more widely amongst walking and cycling groups, and the tourism and leisure industry.

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<sup>3</sup> Paragraph 93 of the [Planning Act 2008: Guidance on the pre-application process](#), March 2015

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Transport Action Network provides free support to people and groups pressing for more sustainable transport in their area and opposing cuts to bus services, damaging road schemes and large unsustainable developments

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