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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Purpose of this Report

- 1.1.1 This Preliminary Environmental Information (PEI) Report has been prepared to enable the local community, stakeholders and any other interested person to understand the likely significant environmental effects of the A66 Northern Trans-Pennine project (hereafter referred to as ‘the project’) based on preliminary environmental information available and enable them to make an informed response to consultation.
- 1.1.2 The project is a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) being progressed by Highways England supported by AmeyArup and is now in the Preliminary Design stage, which includes:
- Undertaking surveys (such as topographical, geotechnical and environmental).
  - Consulting with the community and stakeholders including exhibitions, completing consultation reports and resolving outstanding issues where possible.
  - Refining, completing and freezing the preliminary design.
  - Preparing the draft Development Consent Order (DCO) application.
  - Completing the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and preparing the Environmental Statement (ES) and the Shadow Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA).
- 1.1.3 Highways England intends to submit a DCO application to the Planning Inspectorate on behalf of the Secretary of State in early 2022. The application will be supported by a range of plans and documents, including an ES presenting the results of the EIA.
- 1.1.4 This PEI Report describes the project and alternatives considered, presents information on the likely significant environmental effects of the project based on the preliminary information available to date and details the measures proposed to avoid or reduce such effects. This is to support consultees in developing an informed view of the project and its likely significant environmental effects, as well as the measures proposed to avoid or reduce such effects, enabling them to provide consultation responses on the design of the project, the assessment of impacts and the appropriateness of potential mitigation.
- 1.1.5 The information contained within this PEI Report should be regarded as a preliminary account of the likely significant environmental effects identified up to the point of its publication in September 2021. Some aspects of the design of the project are still being developed, environmental information collected, impacts assessed and proposed mitigation detailed – this will all feed into the EIA process that is currently being undertaken. The PEI Report identifies any uncertainties and assumptions and the information included may be subject to change as the design evolution and environmental assessment work continues. This PEI Report also sets out what information is still to be collected and how it will be used, as well as how the mitigation identified might evolve in response to further design development, including changes resulting from the consultation.
- 1.1.6 The results of the completed EIA will be reported in the ES, which will be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate, on behalf of the Secretary of State, as part of the DCO application and will be made available to members of the public and stakeholders should the application be accepted.

## 1.2 Overview of the Project

- 1.2.1 The project comprises the improvement of the A66 between the M6 at Penrith and the A1(M) at Scotch Corner, as shown in Figure 1.1 – A66 Location and Overview Plan:, comprising the following eight individual schemes:1 – A66 Location and Overview Plan:, comprising the following eight individual schemes:
- M6 Junction 40 to Kemplay Bank
  - Penrith to Temple Sowerby
  - Temple Sowerby to Appleby
  - Appleby to Brough
  - Bowes Bypass
  - Cross Lanes to Rokeby
  - Stephen Bank to Carkin Moor
  - A1(M) Junction 53 Scotch Corner.
- 1.2.2 Between the M6 and the A1(M) the existing route is approximately 80km in length. Along this length it is intermittently dualled, however, there is approximately 30km of single carriageway in six separate sections, making the route accident-prone and unreliable.
- 1.2.3 The route carries high levels of freight traffic and is an important route for tourism and connectivity for nearby communities. The variable road standards, together with the lack of available diversionary routes when incidents occur, affects road safety, reliability, resilience and attractiveness of the route.
- 1.2.4 The project comprises upgrades to the existing six single carriageway sections to dual carriageway and is formed of a number of schemes. Some of these schemes involve online widening of the carriageway and some are offline (i.e. new sections of road that follow a different route but reconnect into the main A66 alignment). Along with dualling the six sections of single carriageway, other improvements will be made along the route, such as junction improvements at the M6 Junction 40 at Penrith.
- 1.2.5 Once complete, the project will lead to the entire 80km route having two lanes in both directions. This will improve journey time, safety and connectivity.
- 1.2.6 The project will be undertaken in line with Highways England: Licence (Department for Transport, 2015a)<sup>1</sup> which outlines that Highways England has a duty to “*minimise the environmental impacts of operating, maintaining and improving its network and seek to protect and enhance the quality of the surrounding environment*” and “*conform to the principles of sustainable development*”.
- 1.2.7 In 2014, the Department for Transport (DfT) announced its five-year investment programme for making improvements to the Strategic Road Network (SRN) across England. The project is one of more than 100 schemes identified as part of the first Road Investment Strategy (RIS1) 2015-2020 (DfT, 2015b)<sup>2</sup>. Funding for delivery of

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<sup>1</sup> Department for Transport (2015a) *Highways England: Licence*, available at: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/431389/strategic-highways-licence.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/431389/strategic-highways-licence.pdf) [Accessed 10 August 2021]<sup>1</sup> Department for Transport (2015a) *Highways England: Licence*, available at: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/431389/strategic-highways-licence.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/431389/strategic-highways-licence.pdf) [accessed 10 August 2021]

<sup>2</sup> Department for Transport (2015b), *Road investment strategy: 2015 to 2020*, available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/road-investment-strategy-for-the-2015-to-2020-road>

the project has been confirmed within the second Road Investment Strategy (RIS2) (DfT, 2020a)<sup>3</sup>, which covers the period between 2020 and 2025 which was published in March 2020. The project is aligned with the principles set out in RIS1 and RIS2 which promotes improving the road network to support the economy, create a greener network, making a safer and more reliable network, a more integrated network and a smarter network. The project is also in accordance with the *National Policy Statement for National Networks (NPSNN)* (DfT, 2014a)<sup>4</sup>.

1.2.8 Further details about the project as proposed are provided in Chapter 2: The Project.

## 1.3 Project Speed

1.3.1 The project now forms part of UK Government's 'Project Speed' announced as part of *A New Deal for Britain* (Prime Minister's Office, 2020)<sup>5</sup>, which aims to bring forward proposals to deliver public investment projects more strategically and efficiently. 'Project Speed' aims to ensure that the right things are built better. The A66 project is one of a number of high-profile "pathfinder projects" to identify reforms which could speed up and improve delivery across the UK Government's infrastructure portfolio. This report describes this improved approach in line with 'Project Speed' as 'the optimisation of the project'. The optimisation of the project has a number of implications for the EIA process. The key measures that are being implemented to aid optimisation of the delivery programme (and ultimately an earlier project completion date) include:

- Retention of flexibility in design at DCO stage to allow buildability matters to influence the detailed design and the Environmental Management Plans (EMP) to be developed during the examination process and post-consent. This will also allow the detailed design to respond to all the EIA findings and issues emerging from examination without the need for lengthy reapproval processes or downstream consents. This work is to be undertaken in recognition that, if anything were to change materially from that included in the DCO and assessed in the ES, a formal change to the DCO will still be required.
- Certain aspects of enabling works that are not directly part of the highways NSIP project may be subject to planning processes outside of the DCO (though the DCO, for completeness, may also include all aspects of the project required to deliver it, including enabling works) in order that they can be delivered early, enabling an earlier start on site for the construction phase. However, the ES will

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[period](#) [Accessed 10 August 2021]<sup>2</sup> Department for Transport (2015b), *Road investment strategy: 2015 to 2020*, available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/road-investment-strategy-for-the-2015-to-2020-road-period> [accessed 10 August 2021]

<sup>3</sup> Department for Transport (2020a), *Road investment strategy: 2020 to 2025*, available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/road-investment-strategy-2-ris2-2020-to2025> [Accessed 10 August 2021]<sup>3</sup> Department for Transport (2020a), *Road investment strategy: 2020 to 2025*, available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/road-investment-strategy-2-ris2-2020-to2025> [accessed 10 August 2021]

<sup>4</sup> Department for Transport (2014a) *National Policy Statement for National Networks*, available at: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/387222/npsnn-print.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/387222/npsnn-print.pdf) [accessed 10 August 2021]

<sup>5</sup> Prime Minister's Office, 10 Downing Street (2020), *Press Release: A New Deal for Britain*, available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/pm-a-new-deal-for-britain> [Accessed 10 August 2021]<sup>5</sup> Prime Minister's Office, 10 Downing Street (2020), *Press Release: A New Deal for Britain*, available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/pm-a-new-deal-for-britain> [accessed 10 August 2021]

consider the project in its entirety and may be used to support more than one consenting process.

- A new approach to pre-construction approvals is being developed, which may be trialled on the A66 NTP. This would cover aspects of detailed design and development of detailed management plans which would normally be captured through requirements for pre-commencement approval of these aspects within the DCO by the Secretary of State or regulatory bodies. The proposed approach will present designs for approval and build detail into the Environmental Management Plan (EMP) for the project, including specific requirements for information to be developed before construction can commence, requirements for how that information will be consulted upon and with whom, and an auditable self-certification process within Highways England, whereby once all conditions described in the EMP are met, construction can commence. The approval process within Highways England will also be set out in the application documentation for the project. The intention would be that the level of detail required for this process to be completed would be built up during the DCO examination and post-examination phases, facilitating an earlier start on site once the DCO is granted than would otherwise have been possible. Further information regarding this approach is provided in Appendix 4.1: Outline of Environmental Management Plan. Further information regarding this approach is provided in Appendix 4.1: Outline of Environmental Management Plan.

1.3.2 The optimisation of the project has a number of implications for how the EIA is approached:

- Surveys to inform the EIA are ongoing and some, such as winter bird surveys and archaeological trenching, will continue throughout 2021 and into early 2022. For certain locations and receptors, due to the timing and nature of surveys, the number of **alternatives** remaining for some schemes and the optimised programme, full survey data may not be available at the time of writing the ES. This will be very limited in area and extent and the EIA will be based on all the survey data available, desk-based data and a highly precautionary worst-case approach to ensure all significant effects are identified and reported in the ES. Survey data that become available as the DCO is submitted and early in the acceptance period will be submitted to verify the findings of the ES.
- Retention of flexibility (through limits of deviation) will mean impacts and mitigation could change between the indicative design to be submitted with the DCO application and assessed in the ES and the final detailed design completed by the contractor after the DCO process is complete. This will require a realistic worst-case scenario to be presented in the ES, limits of deviation and parameters specified in the DCO for the indicative design submitted to inform the DCO examination, and specific DCO requirements to ensure that the detailed design does not lead to different or greater environmental impacts than those assessed for the reasonable worst-case.
- Increased reliance on and importance of the EMP to be adaptive to the development of the detailed design and to be developed to the level of detail required to inform pre-commencement consultation.

1.3.3 Initial, informal, consultation has been held with a number of stakeholders regarding the approach to optimisation of the project and how the EIA should be delivered. The feedback received from this engagement has informed the approach adopted. As the approach to optimisation as a result of 'Project Speed' is still evolving, ongoing close engagement with key statutory consultees and stakeholders is a core principle in the delivery approach for the project. Further information on consultation

for the project is presented in Section 1.7 and discussion on the Evidence Plan process is included in Chapter 4: Environmental Assessment Methodology, Section 4.3.

- 1.3.4 Initial, informal, consultation has been held with a number of stakeholders regarding the approach to optimisation of the project and how the EIA should be delivered. The feedback received from this engagement has informed the approach adopted. As the approach to optimisation as a result of 'Project Speed' is still evolving, ongoing close engagement with key statutory consultees and stakeholders is a core principle in the delivery approach for the project. Further information on consultation for the project is presented in Section 1.7 and discussion on the Evidence Plan process is included in Chapter 4: Environmental Assessment Methodology, Section 4.3.

## 1.4 Legislative and Planning Policy Framework

### Overview

- 1.4.1 To support the preparation of the PEI Report, it is necessary to review the national and local planning policy and legislation that informs the overall approach. An overview of policies relevant and important to the project are presented in this section. Topic-specific policies have been considered within each of the topic chapters where they are directly relevant to the assessment being undertaken (set out within Chapter 5: Air Quality to Chapter 14: Road Drainage and the Water Environment of this PEI Report).
- 1.4.2 These sections will be updated in the ES as necessary to reflect any future legislative changes as a result of the UK exit from the EU.

### Planning Act 2008

- 1.4.3 As a result of its nature and scale, elements of the project comprise a NSIP under section 22 of the Planning Act 2008. Highways England is therefore required to make an application to the Secretary of State for a DCO to authorise the project. The Planning Act 2008 sets out the procedure that must be followed in respect of DCO applications and is supplemented by sets of regulations.
- 1.4.4 The decision-making authority for all transport related NSIP projects is the Secretary of State (SoS) for Transport. An Examining Authority examines an application before making recommendations to the SoS. The Planning Inspectorate (PINS) is the government agency responsible for managing the DCO process on behalf of the SoS. PINS and the SoS issue guidance and advice providing recommendations and approaches which applicants and others involved in the DCO Process should take into account and follow as appropriate.

### The environmental impact assessment regulations

- 1.4.5 Under regulation 12 of the Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (the EIA Regulations), an applicant for a DCO must, as part of the pre-application consultation requirements, state how it intends to publicise and consult on PEI. PEI is defined as information referred to in regulation 14(2) of the EIA Regulations that has been compiled by the applicant and is *"reasonably required for the consultation bodies to develop an informed view of the likely significant environmental effects of the development..."*.

- 1.4.6 The EIA Regulations set out the legislative requirements for undertaking an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA).
- 1.4.7 EIA is defined by Regulation 5 of the EIA Regulations as a process consisting of:
- (a) the preparation of an environmental statement or updated environmental statement, as appropriate, by the applicant;
  - (b) the carrying out of any consultation, publication and notification as required under these Regulations or, as necessary, any other enactment in respect of EIA development; and
  - (c) the steps that are required to be undertaken by the Secretary of State under regulation 21 or by the relevant authority under regulation 25, as appropriate, in determining an application.
- 1.4.8 The project falls within Schedule 1 of the EIA Regulations. The project is therefore considered to be 'Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) development' under the EIA Regulations and is subject to an EIA, the preliminary findings of which are reported in this PEI Report. An ES is being prepared to accompany the application for a DCO.
- 1.4.9 Guidance on PEI is provided in Planning Inspectorate's *Advice Note Seven: Environmental Impact Assessment: Preliminary Environmental Information, Screening and Scoping* (Planning Inspectorate, 2020)<sup>6</sup>.

### National policy statements

- 1.4.10 The policy context for applications for development consent for NSIP is set out in *National Policy Statements (NPS)* (Planning Inspectorate, 2012)<sup>7</sup>. *NPS* set out government's objectives for the development of nationally significant infrastructure in a particular sector, including:
- How this will contribute to sustainable development.
  - How these objectives have been integrated with other government policies.
  - How actual and projected capacity and demand have been taken into account.
  - Consideration of relevant issues in relation to safety or technology.
  - Circumstances where it will be particularly important to address the adverse impacts of development.
  - Specific locations, where appropriate, in order to provide a clear framework for investment and planning decisions.
- 1.4.11 *NPS* also include any other policies or circumstances that government ministers consider should be taken into account in decisions on infrastructure development. Under the Planning Act 2008, decisions on DCO applications must be made in accordance with a relevant *NPS*, subject to certain exceptions. They therefore provide the framework within which an Examining Authority appointed to examine the application makes its recommendation to the SoS and the SoS ultimate decision

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<sup>6</sup> Planning Inspectorate (2020) *Advice Note Seven: Environmental Impact Assessment: Preliminary Environmental Information, Screening and Scoping* (version 7)

<sup>7</sup> Planning Inspectorate (2012) *National Policy Statements*, available at:

<https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/legislation-and-advice/national-policy-statements/> [Accessed 10 August 2021] <sup>7</sup> Planning Inspectorate (2012) *National Policy Statements*, available at: <https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/legislation-and-advice/national-policy-statements/> [accessed 10 August 2021]

on whether to make a DCO. The *NPS* for roads is the *NPSNN* referenced earlier in this chapter.

#### National policy statement for national networks

1.4.12 *NPSNN* was designated by the SoS in 2015 and sets out the need for development of road, rail and strategic rail freight interchange projects on the national networks and the policy against which decisions on major road and rail projects will be made. It provides planning policy for promoters of NSIP on the road and rail networks and is the basis for the examination by the Examining Authority and decisions by the SoS.

1.4.13 On 22 July 2021, the SoS for Transport announced that the Department was to commence a review of the *NPSNN*, which is aimed to complete no later than spring 2023. Whilst that review is being undertaken, the *NPSNN* will remain in force. As such, this PEI Report and the ES will make reference to and be based on the current *NPSNN*.

#### National Planning Policy Framework<sup>8</sup> (NPPF)

1.4.14 The *NPPF* (Ministry of Housing Communities & Local Government, 2021)<sup>9</sup> originally published in March 2012 and most recently updated in July 2021, sets out the government's planning policies for England and provides a framework within which locally prepared plans can be produced. The *NPPF* is "an important and relevant matter to be considered in decision making for NSIP".

### Regional plans

1.4.15 The following regional planning policies are relevant to the project:

- **Tees Valley Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) (Tees Valley Combined Authority, 2019)**<sup>10</sup>: The Industrial Strategy for Tees Valley 2016-2026. The *SEP* highlights six growth generating themes, one of which is 'Transport & Infrastructure' with the aim to facilitate local, regional, national and international digital and conventional infrastructure. There are ambitions to improve connectivity within the Tees Valley, across the Northern Powerhouse and the wider UK, including the improvement of east-west connectivity and the dualling of the A66 between the A1(M) and the M6.
- **Tees Valley Strategic Transport Plan 2020-2030 (Tees Valley Combined Authority (2020))**<sup>11</sup>: Focuses on building east-west connectivity and both freight

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<sup>8</sup> Ministry of Housing Communities & Local Government (2021) National Planning Policy Framework, available at:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1005759/NPPF\\_July\\_2021.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1005759/NPPF_July_2021.pdf) [accessed 10 August 2021]

<sup>9</sup> Ministry of Housing Communities & Local Government (2021) National Planning Policy Framework, available at:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1005759/NPPF\\_July\\_2021.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1005759/NPPF_July_2021.pdf) [accessed 10 August 2021]

<sup>10</sup> Tees Valley Combined Authority (2019) *Tees Valley Strategic Economic Plan 2016-2026*, available at: <https://teesvalley-ca.gov.uk/sep/> [Accessed 10 August 2021] <sup>10</sup> Tees Valley Combined Authority (2019) *Tees Valley Strategic Economic Plan 2016-2026*, available at: <https://teesvalley-ca.gov.uk/sep/> [accessed 10 August 2021]

<sup>11</sup> Tees Valley Combined Authority (2020) *Tees Valley Strategic Transport Plan 2020-2030*, available at: <https://teesvalley-ca.gov.uk/transport/strategic-transport-plans/> [Accessed 10 August 2021] <sup>11</sup> Tees Valley Combined Authority (2020) *Tees Valley Strategic Transport Plan 2020-2030*, available at: <https://teesvalley-ca.gov.uk/transport/strategic-transport-plans/> [accessed 10 August 2021]



and passenger travel to other key areas in the Northern Powerhouse and the wider UK. The A66 is included in the Major Road Network and improvements to the A66 are included in the Key Route Network (KRN) live interventions that are set out in the Tees Valley Road Implementation Plan.

- **Cumbria Transport Plan Strategy 2011-2026 (Cumbria County Council, 2011)**<sup>12</sup>: Outlines what is needed in terms of investment in their highways and infrastructure at county level in this plan. Highway and transport improvements to enable these have been identified in the form of improvements to the A66.
- **Transport for North (TfN) Strategic Transport Plan 2019 (Transport for the North, 2019)**<sup>13</sup>: The Strategic Transport Plan provides an opportunity to drive major improvements in strategic connectivity throughout the North. In the TfN plan the A66 is included in both the Major and Strategic Road Networks. The plan references the Northern Trans-Pennine Routes Study which assessed the strategic and economic case for improving the A66 between the A1(M) at Scotch Corner and the M6 at Penrith.

## Local plans

1.4.16 Local planning policy of relevance to the project relate to the following local authority and National Park areas:

### Council areas adjacent to the A66

- Cumbria County Council
- Durham County Council
- Eden Council
- North Yorkshire County Council
- Richmondshire District Council.

### Council areas neighbouring the A66

- Allerdale Borough Council
- Carlisle City Council
- Craven District Council
- Darlington Borough Council
- Gateshead Council
- Hambleton District Council
- Harrogate District Council
- Hartlepool Borough Council
- Lancaster City Council
- South Lakeland District Council
- Stockton on Tees Council
- Sunderland City Council.

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<sup>12</sup> Cumbria County Council (2011) *Cumbria Transport Plan Strategy 2011-2026*, available at:

<https://www.cumbria.gov.uk/roads-transport/public-transport-road-safety/transport/transportplan/3rdcumbriatransportplan.asp> [Accessed 10 August 2021] <sup>12</sup> Cumbria County Council (2011) *Cumbria Transport Plan Strategy 2011-2026*, available at: <https://www.cumbria.gov.uk/roads-transport/public-transport-road-safety/transport/transportplan/3rdcumbriatransportplan.asp> [accessed 10 August 2021]

<sup>13</sup> Transport for the North (TfN) (2019) *Strategic Transport Plan*, available at:

<https://transportforthenorth.com/onenorth/> [Accessed 10 August 2021] <sup>13</sup> Transport for the North (TfN) (2019) *Strategic Transport Plan*, available at: <https://transportforthenorth.com/onenorth/> [accessed 10 August 2021]

- 1.4.17 Any forthcoming changes to local authority boundaries are not anticipated to alter the status of the local plans identified above in relation to their role in setting the local policy context of the project.

Other significant planning designations:

- Lake District National Park
- North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)  
Yorkshire Dales National Park

- 1.4.18 A detailed review of all relevant planning policies will be included in the ES.

## 1.5 The Applicant

- 1.5.1 Highways England is the Applicant and the strategic highways company appointed by the SoS under the Infrastructure Act 2015 being charged with operating, maintaining and improving England's motorways and major A roads, known as the strategic road network, on behalf of the Department for Transport.
- 1.5.2 Highways England is responsible for motorways and major (trunk) roads in England. Its road network totals over 4,300 miles (6,920 km). Whilst this represents only 2% of all roads in England by length, these roads carry a third of all traffic by mileage and two-thirds of all heavy goods traffic.
- 1.5.3 On 20 August it was announced that Highways England would be changing its name to National Highways. The name change reflects the role of the strategic road network – to connect the nation's regions – and the part it plays in setting Highways standards across the UK.
- 1.5.4 This consultation has been continued under the Highways England branding to avoid confusion but this project will be rebranded as of 8 November. The remit of the organisation has not changed and National Highways will continue to operate and maintain England's motorways and A roads.

## 1.6 Competent Experts

- 1.6.1 Regulation 14 (4)(a) of the EIA Regulations requires that an ES is prepared by competent experts.
- 1.6.2 The EIA is being undertaken by AmeyArup on behalf of Highways England. The overall EIA Lead and EIA competent expert is Kerry Whalley, Associate Director, Arup. The EIA is being undertaken by competent experts with the relevant and appropriate experience in their respective technical disciplines. The EIA technical leads responsible for the individual chapters of this PEI Report, along with their professional qualifications and experience, is presented in Appendix 1.1: Competent Expert Evidence.
- 1.6.3 Arup is a registrant of the EIA Quality Mark scheme administered by the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA) (Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment, 2021)<sup>14</sup>, demonstrating externally-assessed competence in ES preparation.

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<sup>14</sup> Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (2021) EIA Quality Mark, available at: <https://www.iema.net/corporate-programmes/eia-quality-mark> [Accessed 10 August 2021] <sup>14</sup> Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (2021) EIA Quality Mark, available at: <https://www.iema.net/corporate-programmes/eia-quality-mark> [accessed 10 August 2021]

## 1.7 Stakeholder Engagement

1.7.1 Highways England has been extensively engaging and consulting with a wide range of stakeholder groups in order to share evolving designs, understand feedback and amend the emerging design throughout the development of the project. The statutory pre-application consultation planned for September 2021, as required by the Planning Act 2008, is a formal opportunity to respond and is part of a wider engagement and consultation process that has taken place over a number of years. Highways England has had regard to the feedback received through consultation and engagement during the project design process, and will continue to do so throughout the preliminary design and preparation of the DCO application.

### Consultation to date

1.7.2 Consultation to date has included with Statutory Environmental Bodies (SEB)<sup>15</sup> and other environmental bodies throughout each stage of project development and a non-statutory public consultation at the options stage which took place from 16 May to 25 June 2019.

#### Consultation undertaken at Project Concept/Option Development stage

1.7.3 During the earliest stage of project development (which aims to understand the problems that exist and the possible solutions, or options, for addressing those problems) consultation was undertaken with the SEB and other environmental bodies, focusing on progressing the selection of options to take forward. An initial workshop with the SEB was held on the 19 January 2018, attended by Environment Agency, Natural England and Historic England and focused on providing a briefing of the project, reviewing the environmental appraisal process, presenting the longlist of options and reviewing future engagement programme.

1.7.4 A second workshop was held with the SEB on 1 May 2018 to provide a project update, demonstrate how SEB feedback from the first workshop had been incorporated, present the shortlist of options and outline the approach to shortlist assessment by topic. Further informal engagement was also ongoing outside this workshops.

1.7.5 In addition, a number of consultation workshops and focus groups were held with non-statutory environmental bodies on in February and September 2018 to outline progress and to gain an understanding of their initial views.

#### Consultation undertaken to inform the Preferred Route Announcement

1.7.6 A series of meetings were held with the SEB in January 2019 to present the findings of the option development and short-listing process and to discuss the scope of the assessment to be undertaken to inform the selection of the Preferred Route.

1.7.7 Non-statutory environmental bodies were invited to a focus group on the 14 March 2019 to discuss the findings from the option development and short-listing process.

1.7.8 In addition, to inform the selection of the Preferred Route, public consultation on possible options was undertaken. This was to provide local residents, landowners and stakeholders an overview of the project and the options that were under

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<sup>15</sup> The term Statutory Environmental Bodies (SEB) is used here to refer to the following three organisations: Environment Agency, Historic England and Natural England.

consideration and present them with an opportunity to provide their feedback and opinions. This included holding 21 events in local areas along the route, as well as engaging with key stakeholders such as local planning authorities, parish councils, political representatives, landowners, local residents and road users.

1.7.9 Information provided at these consultation events focused on the project options. The responses from that consultation were a material consideration in the selection of the Preferred Route for each of the schemes that form the project.

1.7.10 Intensive landowner engagement began at this stage.

#### Consultation undertaken following Preferred Route Announcement

1.7.11 The Preferred Route was formally announced in May 2020. Following that announcement, further stakeholder engagement has been undertaken to help inform the EIA and the evolving design. This has included consultation with SEB, local planning authorities and other organisations regarding emerging designs, assessment methodology and baseline data in the form of design reviews and Technical Working Groups (TWG).

1.7.12 A virtual public update was conducted in November/December 2020 to provide further detail of the Preferred Route, including showing updates to junction locations and emerging junction layouts.

1.7.13 As well as the formal statutory public consultation currently being undertaken (as required under the Planning Act 2008), there will be continued engagement with landowners and local communities. Further engagement will be undertaken with SEB, the local planning authorities and other organisations throughout the design development up to the DCO submission.

## 1.8 Structure of this PEI Report

1.8.1 The main text of this PEI Report is divided into four parts:

- Chapters 1 to 4 introduce and describe the project, the alternatives considered and the approach that has been taken to this PEI Report and will be carried through to the EIA.
- Chapters 5 to 14 present the preliminary assessment of the likely significant effects of the project in relation to the following ten specialist topics covering particular aspects of the environment and the mitigation that is likely to be required (based on survey data and design available at this stage):
  - Chapter 5: Air Quality
  - Chapter 6: Biodiversity
  - Chapter 7: Climate
  - Chapter 8: Cultural Heritage
  - Chapter 9: Geology and Soils
  - Chapter 10: Landscape and Visual Effects
  - Chapter 11: Material Assets and Waste
  - Chapter 12: Noise and Vibration
  - Chapter 13: Population and Human Health
  - Chapter 14: Road Drainage and the Water Environment.
- Chapter 15 considers the potential inter-relationships between the topics and between the project and other developments in the surrounding area.
- Chapter 16 presents a preliminary summary of the likely significant environmental effects.
- Chapter 17 presents a Glossary of Terms and List of Abbreviations used in this PEI Report.

- Chapter 18 lists all external References used in compiling this PEI Report.

1.8.2 A separate document has also been prepared to provide a Non-Technical Summary (NTS) of this PEI Report and an online digital version is available for members of the public and stakeholders to explore.

## 1.9 Next Steps

1.9.1 This PEI Report has been prepared to support consultees in developing an informed view of the likely significant environmental effects of the project based on preliminary information available at this time.

1.9.2 Highways England invites comments on the project and the environmental issues addressed in this PEI Report.

1.9.3 Further details on the consultation and downloadable copies of this PEI Report and NTS, the map book, the consultation booklet and response form and further information on the project can be downloaded at:

<http://www.highwaysengland.co.uk/A66-NTP>

1.9.4 All consultation responses must be made in writing by:

- Completing the feedback form on the project webpage or virtual consultation room at [www.highwaysengland.co.uk/A66-NTP](http://www.highwaysengland.co.uk/A66-NTP).
- Attending a consultation event where you can meet the project team and complete a paper copy.
- Picking up a hard copy feedback form and freepost envelope at one of our deposit locations, subject to COVID-19 restrictions, which can be posted via freepost.
- Requesting a hard copy of the feedback form via telephone on 0333 090 1192 and sending it to us using the Freepost address below.
- Alternatively, you can: email [A66NTP@highwaysengland.co.uk](mailto:A66NTP@highwaysengland.co.uk), or write to us at **Freepost A66 NORTHERN TRANS-PENNINE PROJECT**.

1.9.5 All responses must be received by 23.59pm on 06 November 2021. Responses received after that date may not be considered.

1.9.6 After the consultation period, all responses will be taken into account in finalising the project design and progressing the EIA. Comments will be taken into account when considering the need for further assessment or modification to the project design or mitigation measures.

1.9.7 Following submission of the DCO application, PINS will consider, on behalf of the Secretary of State, whether the application should be accepted for examination. If the application is accepted, parties including the general public will then be able to register as interested parties and make relevant representations about the project and its potential impacts, and take part in the examination process. The documents accompanying the DCO application will be publicly available on PINS website and consultees will be able to submit comments to PINS. These comments will then be considered as part of the examination into the DCO application. Following examination, the Inspector(s) appointed by the SoS to examine the project will make a recommendation to the SoS, who will then decide whether to grant a DCO.

1.9.8 If the DCO is granted, construction is planned to start in the first quarter of 2024 and the project is due to open to traffic in 2029. This five-year construction period differs from assumptions made at earlier stages in the project in response to Project Speed'. Speed.