

# Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC)

Under section 37 of the Planning Act 2008 required promoters on Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIP) must detail how they intend to comply with the consultation requirements set out in sections 42, 47 and 48 of the Act. This template can be used by project teams preparing a SoCC to support an application for a Development Consent Order for a NSIP. The wording below is set text and has been agreed with the Planning Inspectorate.

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## **Introduction**

Highways England is publishing this Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC) in connection with a proposed improvement to the A1 between Junction 65 at Birtley and Junction 67 at Coal House (the “Scheme”) in Gateshead. The purpose of this document is to set out how we will consult the local community about our proposal. The document also provides background to the scheme and how the application to build it will progress.

## **The application**

Highways England is developing this scheme under the Planning Act 2008 and is publishing this statement under Section 47 of that Act. It has consulted Gateshead Council and Sunderland Council, the local authorities responsible for areas where the project will be built, about plans to consult the local community.

The Planning Act 2008 requires Highways England to make an application to the Secretary of State through the Planning Inspectorate for a Development Consent Order (DCO) to build the scheme. The Secretary of State’s role is to consider whether authorisation should be given for major infrastructure projects like this scheme.

Highways England anticipates that a DCO application for the scheme will be published in Winter 2018/19. The Planning Inspectorate will examine the DCO application and the Secretary of State will decide on whether the scheme should go ahead.

Government policy relating to the development of the national road network is set out in the National Networks National Policy Statement (NNNPS). This provides the framework for DCO applications to be considered against.

When Highways England submits its DCO application, the Secretary of State must consider whether our consultation has been adequate. This pre-application consultation will be important in relation to the examination process that follows after an application

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is accepted by the Planning Inspectorate. Therefore, the best time to provide feedback on this scheme is now by taking part in this pre-application consultation.

You can find more information about the Planning Inspectorate and the Planning Act 2008 on the Gov.uk website: <http://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk> or by calling the Planning Inspectorate on 0303 444 5000.

## **The scheme**

Highways England is proposing to relieve congestion and increase capacity to the A1 between junction 65 (Birtley) and junction 67 (Coal House). The route currently experiences severe congestion and weaving between junctions.

The objectives of the Scheme are to:

- Make the network safer
- Increase capacity
- Improve journey time reliability, particularly during peak periods;
- Improve non-motorised user facilities
- Reduce need for asset maintenance

## **Consulting the community**

In accordance with section 47 of the Act, we will consult people, businesses and organisations in the vicinity of the Scheme along with those who use the existing road.

We have already undertaken public consultation which took place between August and October 2016. Consultees were asked for their views on the two options, which were identical, with the exception of replacement of Allerdene Railway Bridge.

More details, including the outcomes of these consultations are included in the Public Consultation Report and/or the Public Consultation Summary Document, available to download from [www.highways.gov.uk/a1birtleytocoalhouse](http://www.highways.gov.uk/a1birtleytocoalhouse), on request from Highways England or to view for the duration of the consultation period at the display locations detailed in this SoCC.

We want to make sure that the local community, the residents, local interest groups, businesses, visitors and road users, have the opportunity to fully understand the scheme and comment on our proposals. To do this we are holding a six-week public consultation starting on 8 February 2018 and ending on 22 March 2018, during which we will provide consultation information on various issues including:

- Junction Layouts
- Works to the existing road and slip roads
- Environmental assessments and potential environmental impacts
- Environmental mitigation measures
- Arrangements during construction of the scheme

We have carried out an Environmental Impact Assessment for the Scheme. The Scheme is an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) development as defined by the Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 and therefore we are publishing Preliminary Environmental Information as part of the consultation material. This gives information about the potential environmental effects of

the scheme and the measures proposed to reduce those effects such as (air quality, noise, drainage provisions), so to assist responses to the consultation.

Our consultation will involve:

| Method                                      | Detail   |
|---|--|
| <p><b>Public information exhibition</b></p> | <p>A public information exhibition will be held in various locations in February and March 2018. Two well-attended venues from the previous consultation (Birtley East Primary School and Chowdene Children's Centre) will be used along with a few others further to feedback received from the consultation in September 2016. It will be a mixture of week days and evenings. Events will also be held over two consecutive Saturdays.</p> <p>Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> February 1pm- 8pm- Chowdene Children's Centre, Waverley Road, Harlow Green, NE9 7TU</p> <p>Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> February- 10am - 4pm<br/>Washington Leisure Centre, Town Centre, Washington, NE38 7SS</p> <p>Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> March- 10am - 4pm Kibblesworth Millennium Centre, Grange Terrace, Kibblesworth, Gateshead, NE11 0XN</p> <p>Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> March- 10am- 1.30pm Team Valley Trading Estate, Axis Building, Maingate, Kingsway North, Gateshead, NE11 0BE</p> <p>Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> March 4pm- 8pm Metrocentre, intu Metrocentre, Gateshead, NE11 9YG</p> <p>Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> March- 10am- 4pm Birtley East Primary School, Highfield, Birtley East, DH3 1QQ</p> <p>Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> March- 4pm- 8pm Birtley Community Hub, The Hub Resource Centre, Birtley Community Partnership, 16 Harraton Terrace, Durham Road, Birtley, DH3 2QG</p> <p>The exhibitions will give people an opportunity to view scheme proposals, talk to the project team and provide comments.</p> <p>The public will be informed of the exhibition through channels including: advertisements in</p> |

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|   | <p>appropriate local newspapers, notice in a national newspaper (where appropriate) and appropriate local newspaper(s), via the Project website, social media shared via stakeholders, the media, direct communications and direct mailings.</p> <p>A number of copies of the full suite of consultation documents will be available at this exhibition including: preliminary environmental information report, summary of the Project, copies of the supporting project documents and a questionnaire.</p> <p>Questionnaires will be available at the exhibition events for members of the public to record their comments and these can either be left with the project team and/or sent back separately via the address noted below.</p> |
| <b>Scheme webpage</b>                               | <p>A full summary of the scheme, copies of the supporting documents and a consultation response form will be provided on a dedicated website:<br/> <a href="http://www.highways.gov.uk/a1birtleytocoalhouse">www.highways.gov.uk/a1birtleytocoalhouse</a></p>  |
| <b>Public consultation brochure</b>                 | <p>A public consultation brochure and details of the planned exhibitions will be delivered to over 23,000 local residents, homes and businesses in close proximity to the scheme (within a 2km radius and key areas identified) as shown on the consultation zone plan at Appendix 1.</p>  |
| <b>Council and community / area forum briefings</b> | <p>Gateshead and Sunderland Council are within the area the Scheme is located and will be offered briefings to discuss the proposal during the formal consultation period. Lamesley Parish Council will also be offered this opportunity. We will also consult with Durham and Newcastle Council about our proposals.</p>  |
| <b>Stakeholder briefings</b>                        | <p>When invited, and where it is possible to do so, the project team will attend meetings of local community groups affected by the Scheme during the consultation period.</p>   |
| <b>Establishing stakeholder groups</b>              | <p>A stakeholder reference group has been established for the scheme and the first meeting will be held in March 2018 in Newcastle. This will be an opportunity to discuss terms of reference and progress to date. If a similar stakeholder group is already in existence or established by the relevant Local Authorities, we will participate when invited.</p>   |

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| <b>Consultation feedback</b> | <p>Written comments can be made in writing to the following address:</p> <p>A1 Birtley to Coal House Scheme<br/>Highways England<br/>Lateral<br/>8 City Walk<br/>Leeds<br/>LS11 9AT</p> <p>or via email at:<br/><a href="mailto:A1BirtleytoCoalhouse@highwaysengland.co.uk">A1BirtleytoCoalhouse@highwaysengland.co.uk</a></p>  |
| <b>Media</b>                 | <p>The consultation will be advertised for two successive weeks in two local newspapers (The Chronical and The Journal), once in a national newspaper and once in the London Gazette. Adverts will be placed in local venues, such as libraries and community centres, prior to the launch of the consultation.</p> <p>A press releases detailing the public consultation period and how the community and road users can participate will be issued.</p> <p>Council news could be used, in agreement with Gateshead Council, which is distributed to every household in the borough.</p> |

### Documents available for inspection

The full suite of consultation materials, including Scheme summary information, this updated SoCC, policy guidance documents and other relevant technical documents listed in Appendix 3 will be available online at [www.highways.gov.uk/a1birtleytocoalhouse](http://www.highways.gov.uk/a1birtleytocoalhouse) and will be available to view, free of charge during the consultation, at the deposit points listed below:

| <b>Location</b>  | <b>Viewing Times</b>   |
|--|--|
| Gateshead Civic Centre<br>Regent Street<br>Gateshead<br>NE8 1HH<br>Tel: 0191 433 3000            | Monday – Friday<br>09.00– 17.00  |
| Birtley Library<br>Durham Road,<br>Birtley<br>Chester-le-Street<br>DH3 1LE<br>Tel: 0191 433 6101 | Monday, Tuesday & Thursday<br>09.00 – 17.00<br>Wednesday & Friday<br>09:00 – 15:45<br>Saturday<br>CLOSED |

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| The Hub Resource Centre<br>Birtley Community Partnership<br>16 Harraton Terrace<br>Durham Road<br>Birtley<br>DH3 2QG<br>Tel: 0191 492 0434 | Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday<br>09.30 – 15.30<br>Wednesday<br>09.30 – 12.00<br>Saturday<br>CLOSED                |
| Kibblesworth Millennium Centre<br>Grange Terrace<br>Kibblesworth<br>Gateshead<br>NE11 0XN<br>Tel: 0191 411 1193                            | Monday and Friday<br>10.00- 3.00<br>Tuesday, Wednesday<br>10.00- 16.00<br>Thursday<br>09.00- 17:00<br>Saturday<br>CLOSED |
| Highways England<br>Lateral<br>8 City Walk<br>Leeds<br>LS11 9AT<br>Tel: 0300 470 4548  | By prior arrangement:<br>Monday to Friday<br>09.00 – 17.00   |

## Next steps

Comments made during the consultation will be recorded and carefully considered by Highways England and will be taken into account when further developing the Scheme proposal. An explanation of how comments received have shaped and influenced our proposals will be reported in a Consultation Report prepared by Highways England which will accompany the DCO application as required by Section 37(3) (c) of the Planning Act 2008. The Planning Inspectorate will decide whether the application meets the required standards to proceed to examination, and will determine whether Highways England's pre-application consultation has been adequate.

We need to collect and assess all responses to consultation before compiling the DCO application to the Planning Inspectorate. To allow time to do this, we are asking for feedback to be submitted by the close of the consultation period on **23:59 22 March 2018**.

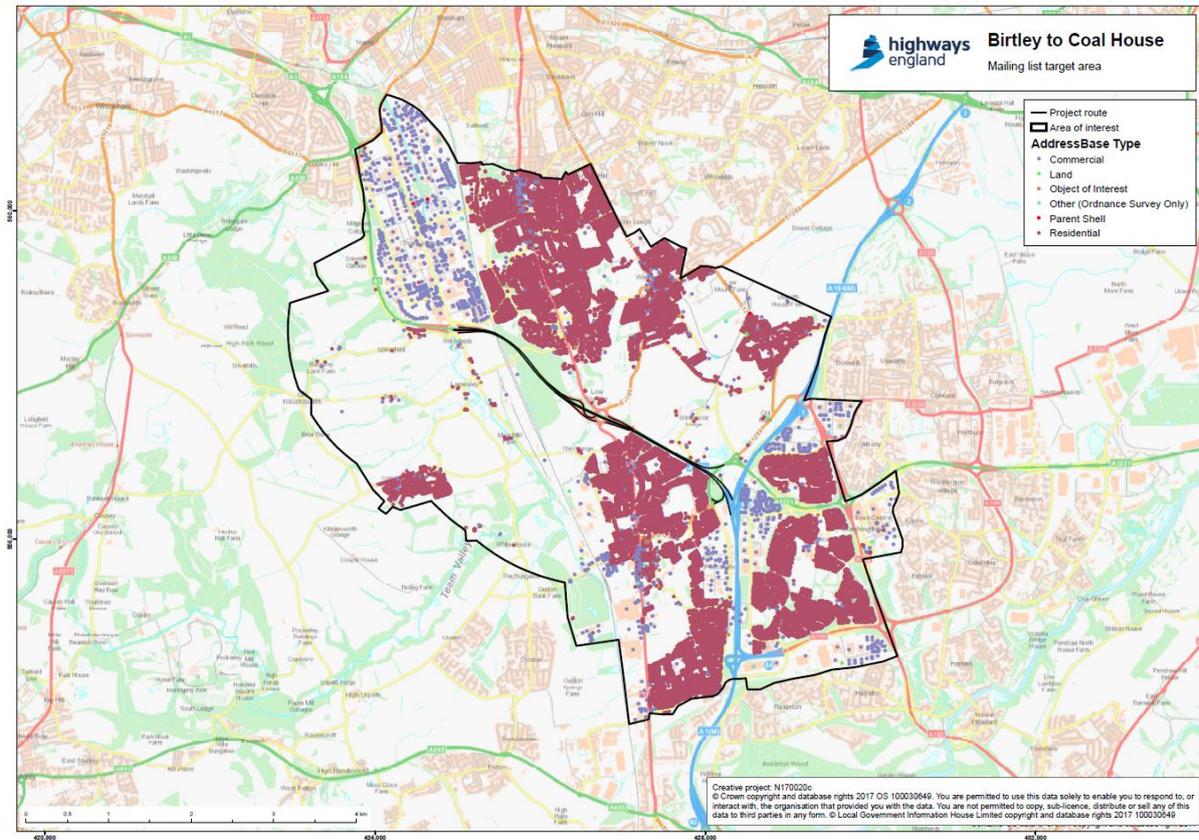
If you want to contact us or find out more about the Scheme, you can:

- Visit the scheme webpage: [www.highways.gov.uk/a1birtleytocoalhouse](http://www.highways.gov.uk/a1birtleytocoalhouse)
- E-mail us: [A1BirtleytoCoalhouse@highwaysengland.co.uk](mailto:A1BirtleytoCoalhouse@highwaysengland.co.uk)
- Call us: 0300 470 4548
- Write to us: A1 Birtley to Coal House Project Team, Highways England, Lateral, 8 City Walk, Leeds, LS11 9AT

Date: 10 January 2018

## Appendices

### Appendix 1 – Consultation zone



### Appendix 2 – Local Authorities

Local Authorities affected by the scheme:

- Gateshead Council
- Sunderland Council

Adjoining Local Authorities:

- Newcastle Council
- Lamesley Parish Council
- Durham Council

### Appendix 3 - Documents to be made available for inspection at deposit points:

- PEIR Non-Technical Summary
- Statutory Consultation Brochure
- Statement of Community Consultation