

Highways England's A1 Birtley to Coal House improvement application accepted for examination

Yesterday, Tuesday 10 September, The Planning Inspectorate accepted for examination, an application by Highways England for proposed improvements on the A1 Newcastle Gateshead Western Bypass. The application proposes widening of the A1 south of Gateshead to four lanes, between junction 65 and 67 on the southbound carriageway and three lanes with lane gain between junctions on northbound carriageway to provide additional capacity.

The application was submitted on 14 August 2019 and the decision to accept the application was made in accordance with section 55 of the Planning Act 2008 (as amended). (The Planning Inspectorate has 28 days from the day after the date of receipt of an application to decide whether or not to accept it).

The decision and a copy of the application documents can be viewed at [the project page on the Inspectorate's National Infrastructure Planning website](#)

The Planning Act 2008 (as amended) sets high standards for applications and places a strong duty upon developers to involve the local community, local authorities and other stakeholders in the development of their proposal, ahead of submission.

Sarah Richards, Chief Executive of The Planning Inspectorate said: "After careful consideration, we have decided the application submitted by Highways England meets the required tests set out in the legislation to be accepted for examination."

It is now for the applicant to publicise the application has been accepted to proceed to examination and invite people who are interested in the proposal to register with the Planning Inspectorate as an Interested Party by making a Relevant Representation.

Interested Parties in an application can:

- Say what they agree or disagree with in the application and why
- Comment on what other people have said in their representations
- Attend a Preliminary Meeting and say how they think the application should be examined
- Request that an open floor hearing is held
- Attend an open floor or issue-specific hearing
- Request to speak at a hearing.

Sarah Richards said.

"A major priority for us over the next few weeks is to ensure that the people and communities who may be affected by this proposal have the opportunity to give us their views."

Ends

Journalists wanting further information should contact the Planning Inspectorate's Press Office, on: 0303 444 5004 or 0303 444 5005 or email: press.office@planninginspectorate.gov.uk

More information on this application, including details of the developer's website, is available in National Infrastructure's [Programme of Projects](#)

Notes to editors:

The Planning Inspectorate is an agency of the Ministry for Housing, communities and Local Government (MHCLG) and operates within the policy framework prescribed in the Planning Act 2008, secondary legislation and the National Policy Statements.

The process in a snapshot

There are six key stages within the process. The summary below provides examples of when and how people have an opportunity to provide evidence to the Planning Inspectorate. Pre-application

Key activities:

- Project development / developer's pre-application consultation and publicity.
- Environmental impact assessment preparation and scoping, where required.

Public involvement:

- Have their say on the proposal to the developer through their pre application consultation Acceptance by the Planning Inspectorate on behalf of the Secretary of State

Key activities:

- The Secretary of State has 28 days from the day after receipt to decide whether or not an application should be accepted for examination

Public involvement:

- Details will be posted at the Planning Inspectorate's website on how to register as an interested party – once an application has been accepted for examination and publicised by the developer.
- Opportunity to legally challenge a decision not to accept an application.

Pre-examination

Key activities:

- Single Inspector or a Panel of three or more Inspectors appointed.
- Preliminary Meeting called and held.
- Procedure and timetable set for examination.

Public involvement:

- Register to say what you agree or disagree with in the application
- Submit your representation
- View application documents submitted by the developer on the Planning Inspectorate website
- Attend the Preliminary Meeting
- Say how the examination should be conducted.

Examination

Key activities:

- A maximum of six months to carry out the examination

Public involvement:

- Submit more detailed comments in writing
- Comment on what other people have said
- Request and attend an open-floor hearing
- If being held, request to speak at open-floor and / or issue specific hearing(s)
- Comment on the local authority's Local Impact Report – detailing the impact of the scheme on the local area.

Decision

Key activities:

- A maximum of three months for Planning Inspectorate to issue a recommendation to the relevant Secretary of State, with a statement of reasons.
- The relevant Secretary of State then has a further three months from receiving the recommendation in which to issue the decision.

Post decision

Key activities:

- Six weeks for any legal challenge.

Public involvement:

- Opportunity to challenge.
-

News story: Defra responds to Wild Justice challenge: releasing gamebirds on protected sites

Defra will review the way in which the release of gamebirds on or near protected sites in England is managed following a proposed legal challenge.

Defra responds to Wild Justice challenge: releasing gamebirds on protected sites

Defra will review the way in which the release of gamebirds on or near protected sites in England is managed following a proposed legal challenge.

Defra responds to Wild Justice challenge: releasing gamebirds on protected sites

The way in which the release of gamebirds on or near protected sites (Special Protection Areas and Special Areas of Conservation) in England is managed will be reviewed following a proposed legal challenge, Defra has today (11 September 2019) confirmed.

This will not result in any immediate changes for owners or occupiers of land.

In response to a pre-action protocol (PAP) letter from Wild Justice, Defra accepted in principle the annual release of non-native gamebirds, specifically the Common Pheasant and Red-legged Partridge, can be considered a 'plan or project' requiring appropriate assessment within the meaning of the Habitats Directive.

While not accepting the argument that current laws do not provide for appropriate assessment in such cases, Defra proposes to undertake a review to consider the legislative arrangements around the relevant activities and

whether there are ways in which their effectiveness could be improved. The detail of this review will be developed over the coming weeks.

Upcoming review and next steps

Defra will undertake a review to consider the legislative arrangements in England around the relevant activities and whether there are ways in which their effectiveness could be improved. The detail of this review will be developed over the coming weeks. A review of this nature will take time to conduct and it will only be after a thorough examination that it will become clear if any subsequent change is necessary.

What to do if you release gamebirds on protected sites

This will not result in any immediate changes for owners or occupiers of land.

The legislative regime surrounding gamebird releases will remain unchanged in the immediate term and there will be no impact on the industry. The industry will be kept informed of progress with the review in due course.

[News story: 2019 Badger control licences announced](#)

Badger control licences published by Natural England