

## A417 MISSING LINK STEERING GROUP

**Summary:** To review the progress of the A417 Missing Link Steering Group

**Recommendation:** That the Executive Committee notes the report and endorses (1) the Relevant Representation and (2) the approach to our future involvement in the examination process

**Report by:** Andy Parsons, Chief Executive

## BOARD MEMBERS REPRESENTED ON THE GROUP

- Graham Hopkins
- Sue Crawford

## MEETINGS SINCE THE LAST EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

1. The Steering Group met on 10 August to review the content and tone of our Representation. Good discussion and debate and an acknowledgement that further thought was required before finalising the document. In addition to the Board Members above, the Chair, Vice-Chair, Chief Executive, Planning and Landscape Lead and Land Management Lead all attended.
2. Other meetings in the period:
  - 30 June - Barrow Wake Parking and Access
  - 3 and 25 August – 1:1s with Mike Goddard, Senior Project Manager for Highways England on the A417 road scheme
  - 13 August - Designated Funds briefing
  - 7 September – Designated Funds Partnership Panel (first meeting to agree remit, scope, etc.)
  - 8 September – Strategic Stakeholder Panel

## OTHER ACTIVITY

3. In late August, **Highways England rebranded to National Highways**. Ministers say the rebrand reflects the new focus the company has on delivering the government's £27bn strategic roads investment programme, while also continuing to set highways standards for the whole UK.
4. In late May, Highways England submitted its application for a **Development Consent Order** to the Planning Inspectorate (PINS). The application was subsequently approved.
5. In May, Highways England submitted a **cut and cover tunnel feasibility study**, in response to our previous consultation responses.
6. In August, Highways England sent us an **Options Report** that provided a comprehensive response to other various suggestions that our organisation has put forward in the past, with regard to design alternatives. This has been very useful as

previous conversations and written replies have been sporadic, so this document has been really helpful in pulling everything together.

7. We **registered as an Interested Party** in the examination process and submitted our Relevant Representation. This was completed ahead of the deadline of 2 September.
8. The **Relevant Representation** is a short document that sets out our main points and will be expanded upon during the examination phase through further Written Representation/s.
9. **Future Written Representations** will focus on our desire and ambition for Option 30 to be the best possible road scheme from a landscape-led perspective. It is not our intention to go into detail on past suggestions and scheme alternatives, unless asked to do so by PINS.
10. The Chief Executive will represent the Cotswolds National Landscape on a **Partnership Panel** as the **Designated Funds** programme and proposals develop over the coming weeks and months. James Webb, Partnerships and Fundraising Lead, will act as our deputy on the Panel.
11. National Highways has appointed **Fortuna** as its consultant for Designated Funds.
12. Currently the Designated Funds 'categories' are split into two:
  - *Cotswolds Vision* – the main fund linked to the A417 Missing Link Road Scheme
  - *Biodiversity Net Gain* – a national designated fund that the A417 is included in.

### DECISIONS REQUIRED

13. There are no decisions required but the Steering Group is seeking the Executive Committee's endorsement of the Relevant Representation (*Appendix A*) and the approach to our future involvement in the Examination process (see section 9).

### NEXT STEPS

14. To continue being involved in the Examination of the road scheme.
15. To continue being involved in the Designated Funds programme and proposals.

### SUPPORTING PAPERS

- Appendix A – Relevant Representation

SEPTEMBER 2021