



National Highways Route Strategies Consultation

Response by National Parks England

3 December 2021

National Parks England (NPE) exists to provide a collective voice for the nine English National Park Authorities and the Broads Authority. NPE is governed by the Chairs of the ten Authorities. Our response to the National Highways Vision for Route Strategies represents the collective view of officers who are working within the policies established by the National Park Authorities and the Broads Authority (NPAs) and follows internal consultation with the All Parks Transport Working Group.

Some authorities may also make individual responses on detailed issues concerning their local routes.

The following routes pass through National Parks:

South Coast Central (A27, A3, M27, M3, A23)	South Downs National Park
North Pennines (A66, A590)	Lake District National Park
London to Scotland West (M6)	Lake District National Park
South Pennines routes (A628)	Peak District National Park
South West Peninsula (M27/A31, A36)	New Forest National Park
South West Peninsula (A30)	Dartmoor National Park

There are also a number of routes that run along the boundary of National Parks, some for a considerable distance affecting the landscape setting and communities. This includes:

South West Peninsula (A38)	Dartmoor National Park
London to Scotland West (M6)	Yorkshire Dales National Park
South Pennines routes (A616)	Peak District National Park

The strategic network outside National Parks is also of great importance as a means of feeding visitor and resident traffic onto the local road network to reach National Parks. Examples include:

North and East Midlands	Peak District National Park
North Pennines routes	Northumberland National Park
London to Scotland East	North York Moors National Park
Birmingham to Exeter	Exmoor National Park

You will be aware that the [Memorandum of Understanding](#) between Highways England (now National Highways) and NPE was signed in October 2019. We welcome continued partnership working and the principles set out in this MOU will continue to guide our engagement over any future route strategy development. These include joint working on strategic planning, government policy and legislation, asset design and management, natural capital and climate change.

We support the collaborative integrated approach set out, and the reference to last mile connections and look forward to participating in this. We also welcome increased forward planning, which would enable us as sole Planning Authorities to work closer with National Highways on the development of our Local Plans.

We would like to see in all route strategies a recognition of and reference to the importance of:

- a) The move to Net Zero Carbon, which would entail increased facilities for EVs, public transport infrastructure, cycling and walking routes and connectivity, and a willingness to reduce speed limits in order to improve safety and reduce emissions;
- b) Connecting communities but also addressing community issues around severance, safety and air quality;
- c) Protecting vulnerable road users, including providing more attractive and safer facilities for pedestrians, cyclists and disabled people to cross or travel along the route of major roads;
- d) Designing any infrastructure to be fitting for a protected landscape by minimising visual, noise, and air pollution impacts and light pollution, particularly within or close to National Parks that are designated as Dark Sky Reserves;
- e) Enabling Nature Recovery through appropriate design and planting of surrounding green space and inclusion of wildlife crossings and corridors; and
- f) Ensuring that directional signs on and from major routes, including brown tourist signs to National Parks, are appropriately sited to enable visitors to access National Parks safely.

We thank you for the opportunity to comment on the high-level Vision for Route Strategies and look forward to working closely with you on the more detailed development of the route strategies.

For more information, please contact National Parks England at enquiries@nationalparksengland.org.uk