

Anne-Marie Trevelyan MP



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

The Rt Hon Chris Grayling MP
Secretary of State for Transport
Department for Transport
Great Minster House
33 Horseferry Road
London
SW1P 4DR

28 March 2017

Our Ref: ZA2465

Dear Chris,

The A1 in Northumberland

As you will be aware, since the Government, as part of its major works Road Investment Strategy, pledged £290 million to dual the A1 from Morpeth to Ellingham in my constituency, plans have been moving at quite a pace, under the guidance of Highways England's A1 in Northumberland team.

Public exhibitions were held throughout Northumberland last year, and local people gave their feedback to the team on their thoughts on the proposals. The Highways England team will be in a position to announce the route of the new dualled stretch in the coming months, with work due to commence in 2020. North of Ellingham, extensive works are also on course to improve the safety of the present stretch of road, which will also make a significant difference to journey times. These works are scheduled to commence next year.

Just last month, you publicly stated your support for my long-term campaign to dual the A1 to the Scottish border, once this major scheme of works is completed. Despite that, there has been some concern locally that the present plans to dual the A1 might be under threat. These concerns seem to stem from this month's National Audit Office report into the Road Investment Strategy, compiled as part of the Public Accounts Select Committee (on which I sit) inquiry.

I have read the NAO report thoroughly and note that it focuses on ways in which the Department for Transport and Highways England can introduce more efficiency into the delivery of such major schemes. Given that the NAO and the Public Accounts Committee have an interest in value for money in public works and delivery, I would expect nothing less.

There is no mention of the A1 scheme in the report, or any recommendation that it should be altered or cancelled, and I certainly cannot find anything within the report that could be deemed a threat to this project. However, it would be very helpful and would allay remaining fears locally, if you could confirm there is no threat to the project, and confirm the Highways England timetable remains on course.

Yours sincerely

Anne Marie

Member of Parliament for Berwick-upon-Tweed

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