

SECTION 14 | CONSTRUCTING WITH CARE

MINIMISING THE IMPACT ON COMMUNITIES

The Windermere catchment is environmentally sensitive, containing internationally important landscapes, protected sites and communities that rely heavily on the lake and visitor economy. Environmental impacts, stakeholder considerations and consenting requirements are therefore central to the development and delivery of the preferred ways forward.

The preferred ways forward make extensive use of tunnelling, which has the potential to significantly reduce the extent of surface works required across the catchment. By using tunnelling techniques that happen underground, disruption to communities, businesses, visitors, transport networks and environmentally sensitive areas can be reduced. The delivery approach would build upon lessons learned from major United Utilities infrastructure programmes, including the Haweswater Aqueduct Resilience Programme and West Cumbria Pipeline Project, where minimising community impacts and maintaining stakeholder confidence have been key considerations throughout project delivery.



The project seeks to deliver long-term environmental improvements while minimising disruption to local communities, businesses and visitors during construction.

Planning and consenting will be a key consideration throughout subsequent design stages, particularly where works may interact with protected habitats, highways, watercourses, public rights of way and local communities. Further environmental assessment, stakeholder engagement and design refinement will be undertaken to identify opportunities to avoid, minimise or mitigate impacts wherever practicable and to secure the appropriate consents and approvals.

Recognising the importance of Windermere to residents, visitors and local businesses, delivery of the preferred ways forward would be guided by Constructing with Care principles. This means designing and delivering the project in a way that respects the local environment and communities, with a clear focus on minimising disruption wherever reasonably practicable.

Construction activities would, where reasonably practicable, be phased and programmed to minimise disruption during peak visitor periods and other important local events. Opportunities to reduce traffic movements, maintain access to businesses and attractions, and minimise the duration of local disruption would be explored as part of future design development. These construction logistics would draw upon proven approaches developed on previous major infrastructure schemes across the United Kingdom.

While every effort would be made to avoid or minimise impacts, the project also recognises that some temporary disruption may be unavoidable given the scale of infrastructure required to deliver the ambition. Ongoing engagement with businesses, landowners and local communities would therefore be a key part of project development. Where impacts cannot reasonably be avoided, appropriate mitigation measures would be considered, including supporting business continuity and, where applicable, compensation arrangements.

The project will also support local employment in Cumbria through job creation, as well as provide long-lasting training and skills – leaving a lasting legacy for the area.

Through this approach, the project seeks to deliver long-term environmental improvements while minimising disruption to local communities, businesses and visitors during construction.

Construction programme

The programme outlined below provides an indicative delivery schedule for the proposed scheme following the completion of planning, consenting and detailed design activities. It focuses on the principal construction works and should be viewed as a high-level representation of the overall delivery programme. Subject to approvals and detailed design, the ambition of ORiW is to complete construction and enable delivery of benefits in the next ten years.

Opportunities may exist to undertake common infrastructure elements, enabling works and other programme activities in parallel or prior to major elements in order to optimise delivery. Following completion of construction, a period of testing, commissioning and asset handover would be required to ensure the infrastructure performs as intended before becoming fully operational.

Supply chain capability

The region is supported by a mature and capable supply chain, including major contractors, engineering consultants, tunnelling specialists and environmental advisors. This provides

a strong foundation for delivery, with access to the specialist skills, resources and expertise required to develop and implement infrastructure at this scale.

Many of the technologies and construction approaches considered within the shortlisted options are well established and have been successfully applied on comparable projects in the UK and internationally. This provides confidence that the expertise needed to support design, consenting, procurement and construction activities is readily available, reducing delivery risk and strengthening confidence in the overall deliverability of the programme.

Indicative construction timeline from contract award

