

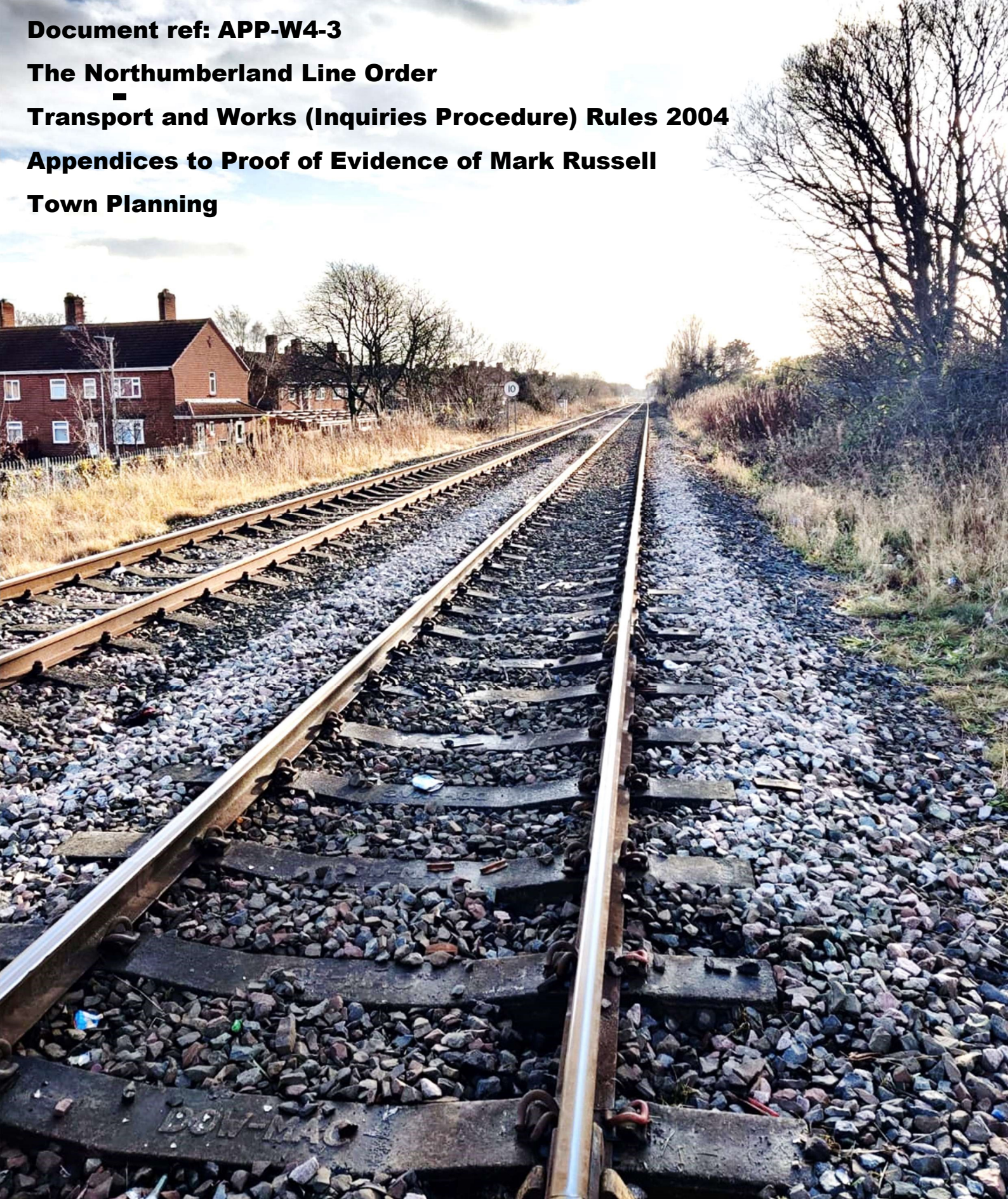
**Document ref: APP-W4-3**

**The Northumberland Line Order**

**Transport and Works (Inquiries Procedure) Rules 2004**

**Appendices to Proof of Evidence of Mark Russell**

**Town Planning**



**Northumberland**  
County Council



APP W4-3 – Index of Appendices for Mark Russell Proof of Evidence

1. Appendix A - Northumberland Park station committee report
2. Appendix B - Northumberland Park station decision notice
3. Appendix C - Seaton Delaval station planning statement
4. Appendix D - Newsham station planning statement
5. Appendix E - Bebside station planning statement
6. Appendix F - Bedlington station planning statement
7. Appendix G - Bedlington station car park planning statement
8. Appendix H - Ashington station committee report
9. Appendix I - Ashington station decision notice
10. Appendix J - Chase Meadows committee report
11. Appendix K - Chase Meadows decision notice
12. Appendix L - Hospital crossing planning statement
13. Appendix M - Prior approval for Underbridge 35
14. Appendix N - Prior approval for Underbridge 36
15. Appendix O - Nexus Metro and local rail strategy
16. Appendix P - North East Combined Authority (NECA) Transport Manifesto
17. Appendix Q - Palmersville Dairy planning statement



## Appendix A

### Northumberland Park station committee report



## RECOMMENDATION REPORT

Application No: 21/00299/FUL

Printed: 14 September 2021

Date Authorised to proceed: 14 September 2021

Author: Aidan Dobinson Booth

Date valid: 2 March 2021

Target decision date: 27 April 2021

Date of Site Visit:

☎: 0191 643 6333

Decision Type: Delegated Decision

Ward: Valley

Application type: full planning application

Location: Northumberland Park Metro Station Station Road Backworth NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE

Proposal: Construction of a new single platform railway station including: retaining wall, pedestrian lift, staircase and access from Algernon Drive modifications to existing bridge parapet. Construction of facilities ancillary to the station including, lighting, soft and hard landscaping, surface and subsurface drainage, utilities and other services, boundary treatment and other associated works (Additional information for emergency egress May 2021)

Applicant: Northumberland County Council, County Hall Morpeth NE61 2EF

Agent: Alannah Healey, 72 B-Box Studios Newcastle NE2 1AN

RECOMMENDATION: Application Permitted

### INFORMATION

#### Description of the Site

The existing Northumberland railway line (formerly called Ashington Blyth and Tyne line) passes through North Tyneside, running east of Backworth Village, curving south west to bisect Northumberland Park, running parallel with the metro line for a distance to Benton and then continuing south-west through the Borough and into Newcastle. The new station is to be constructed at Northumberland Park along a stretch of the route in a cutting, where the Northumberland Line runs parallel with the two metro lines.

The application relates to land adjoining the existing Metro station at Northumberland Park. The metro station is a single platform positioned centrally between the two metro line tracks. The new station scheme encompasses some 0.51ha of land in an extended "L" shaped configuration which includes the existing, pedestrian only Algernon Drive bridge, a strip of land between the



residential street of Fenwick Close and the A186 dual carriageway and the existing railway line and the steep, planted embankment to the south of Fenwick Close and Backworth Court.

In its wider context the application site lies in a mixed residential and commercial location and there is, as described, housing to the north-west of the railway embankment and roads, under which the railway and metro lines pass, to the north-east (Algernon Drive) and south-west (A186). To the south, beyond the metro lines is the bus interchange and multi storey car park which serves the metro station, accessed via Algernon Drive. The existing metro station is accessed from the Algernon Drive bridge via a lift and covered stairs down to the platform. Further to the east / south-east is the Sainsbury's supermarket which forms part of the Northumberland Park district retail centre. Delivery access to the supermarket and other shops is also via Algernon Drive.

Land further west of the A186 forms part of the Backworth Park housing development and there is outline permission in place to construct housing in the area bounded by the A186 and the railway line.

#### Description of application

The application seeks permission for a new railway station adjacent to the existing metro station. The proposed single station platform, which will serve passengers travelling in both directions, will be located immediately north of the metro station. It is approximately 100m in length and will accommodate waiting shelters, seating, help points, CCTV, lighting, customer information screens and ticket machines. Final design details of the facilities on the platform are not yet confirmed. It has been designed to accommodate approximately 840,000 passengers per year.

The platform will be constructed at the base of the existing embankment which will need to be excavated to allow the platform to be constructed. The platform will be of concrete with a bitumen surface and tactile paving. The embankment will be re-graded and a retaining wall constructed at this location. This will necessitate the removal of the existing, established planting. Limited planting is proposed on completion at the top of the embankment.

Access to the platform will, as with the metro station, be via the Algernon Drive bridge where a lift and stairs will be provided. The bridge parapet will be altered to accommodate the new access points. The bridge is identified as the location for a site compound during construction. The lift will be of steel construction with cladding. Cladding will also be used to finish the retaining wall.

The strip of land to the south-west of Fenwick Close is to be used to accommodate an emergency egress from the station so that in the event of an emergency passengers could walk up to the A186.

No dedicated parking for cars or cycles is proposed as part of the scheme. Passengers joining the service at Northumberland Park would be directed to the existing multi storey car park.

The proposal forms part of a wider scheme to re-introduce direct passenger train services between Ashington and Newcastle city centre (Manors station) which will see the introduction of six new stations along the length of the line. Only Northumberland Park is in North Tyneside and the remaining new stations are within Northumberland. The aim of the wider scheme is to improve accessibility and connectivity in South East Northumberland – which is the most densely populated part of Northumberland but is not served by any passenger rail services – and encourage a modal shift away from the private car, in particular among commuters, towards



rail services. The service, which will operate half hourly, will offer a passenger journey time of around 35 minutes from Ashington to Newcastle compared with 60 mins in a car.

The scheme is promoted by Northumberland County Council who is the applicant for this proposal.

#### Relevant Planning History

20/01022/SCREIA – EIA screening opinion for the development of six new train stations and the associated upgrading of existing rail infrastructure and engineering works and the reintroduction of passenger train services – various locations including land adjacent to Northumberland Park Metro Station – No EIA required 19/11/20

#### Adjoining Land

00/00930/REM – new metro interchange and park and ride car park – approved 23/02/01

01/02472/REM – 102 dwellings and apartments – approved 18/12/02

03/03240/OUT – new district centre – approved 26/07/04

04/00462/OUT & 04/03747/REM – multi storey car park to serve park and ride and new district centre and new access to a highway – approved 01/03/05

06/00673/FUL – construction of superstore and car parking (District centre phase 1) – approved 16/05/06

16/01952/OUT – land south of the Pavilion Pub - outline permission for approximately 53 dwellings – approved 19/05/17

#### Development Plan

North Tyneside Local Plan (2017)

#### Government Policies

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (July 2021)

National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

Planning applications must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The NPPF is a material consideration in the determination of all applications. It requires Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) to apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development in determining development proposals. Due weight should still be attached to Development Plan policies according to the degree to which any policy is consistent with the NPPF.

#### Consultations/representations

#### Internal Consultees

#### Highways Network Manager

The infrastructure required for the proposed station is already in place, having been constructed when the metro station was built. This includes vehicle & pedestrian access, overbridges, multi-storey car park and bus interchange. The site also forms part of the local centre of shopping facilities and has a wide catchment area for pedestrian footfall.

A Transport Assessment (TA) was included as part of the application and the impact on the local highway network will not be severe. The proposal, along with the wider Northumberland



Line development will enhance transport links in the North Tyneside & South East Northumberland areas and as such, the proposal is welcomed for the positive impact on single car journeys. Conditional approval is recommended.

#### Recommendation - Conditional Approval

#### Conditions:

SIT07 - Construction Method Statement (Major)

SIT08 - Wheel wash

No part of the development shall be occupied until a refuse management plan for the site has been submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local planning Authority. Thereafter this refuse management plan shall be carried out in accordance with the agreed details.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety.

No part of the development shall be occupied until a servicing management plan for the site has been submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local planning Authority. Thereafter this refuse management plan shall be carried out in accordance with the agreed details.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety.

No part of the development shall be occupied until a scheme for the provision of secure undercover cycle storage has been submitted to and approved by in writing the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter, this scheme shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details before the development is occupied.

Reason: In the interests of promoting sustainable transport

#### Informatives:

I05 - Contact ERH: Construct Highway Access

I08 - Contact ERH: Works to footway.

I10 - No Doors/Gates to Project over Highways

I12 - Contact ERH Erect Scaffolding on Rd

I13 - Don't obstruct Highway, Build Materials

I46 - Highway Inspection before dvlpt

The applicant is advised that free & full access to the Public Right of Way network will always need to be maintained. Should it be necessary for the protection of route users to temporarily close or divert an existing route during development, this should be agreed with the council's Public Rights of Way Officer.

The applicant is advised that prior to the commencement of works and upon the completion of the development the developer will need to the council's Public Rights of Way Officer to carry out a full joint inspection of the routes affected to be carried out. The developer will be responsible for the reinstatement of any damage to the network arising from the development.

Sustainable Transport Team Leader

Request the imposition of a full travel plan condition.

Biodiversity and Landscaping Officers

The site is located in a Wildlife Corridor as defined by the Local Plan therefore the following policies apply:

- Policy S5.1 Strategic Green Infrastructure
- Policy S5.4 Biodiversity and Geodiversity
- Policy DM5.5 Managing Effects on Biodiversity and Geodiversity
- Policy DM5.7 Wildlife Corridors states:
- Policy DM 5.9 Trees, woodland and hedgerow

#### Ecological Impact Assessment (EcIA)

A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA), a series of species-specific surveys and a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) assessment of land at Northumberland Park has been provided. This includes surveys were undertaken between April 2019 and September 2020.

The potential presence of great crested newts, otter, water vole, red squirrel, white-clawed crayfish and migratory fish were considered through the assessment however, the lack of suitable habitat on site (or accessible breeding habitat within 500m of the site in the case of great crested newts) is considered to preclude any potential impacts upon these species.

Surveys noted habitats are dominated by broadleaved plantation, tall ruderal vegetation, amenity grassland and scrub. The railway embankments to the north of the existing line support semi-mature trees, primarily broadleaved species, including species such as ash, birch, poplar, Scots pine and beech. Areas of dense and scattered scrub are present along sections of the railway and road embankments, which comprise species such as hawthorn, gorse and bramble.

Small strips of sparse semi-improved neutral grassland lie on the ballast between the east- and west-bound Metro tracks adjacent to the existing station platform, which appears unmanaged. Two bridges are present which support the roads crossing the existing railway line, while the existing Metro station structures lie immediately to the south of the proposed new station area, between the two railway tracks. No Schedule 9 species were recorded on site during the survey, although species including Japanese knotweed *Fallopia japonica* and cotoneaster are known to be present in the surrounding area.

The EcIA notes this woodland and scrub would provide good quality habitat for bats and the railway line forms a strong linear feature of value to commuting bats. However, the report indicates that high light and disturbance levels in this location reduce the suitability of such habitats for the local bat population. Bridges were also assessed but were considered to be of negligible suitability for roosting bats or, where considered of low suitability, an emergence survey did not observe any bats emerging from the bridge. Trees on site were also risk assessed but concluded to be of negligible suitability. Bat transect surveys recorded low levels of commuting or foraging activity by individual common pipistrelles.

There was no evidence indicating the presence of reptiles was recorded during the surveys and conditions across the site were generally considered to be unsuitable for such species. The survey concluded that habitats on site were unsuitable for badger. No setts were identified but there was a low risk of individuals moving through the site on an intermittent basis.

In terms of breeding birds, 28 species were recorded, of which 13 were considered to be breeding/ probably breeding in this area. No Annex 1 or Schedule 1 species were recorded breeding within the site or wider survey area during the surveys, although three Red List



species (Linnet, Song Thrush and Starling) and 1 Amber List species (Dunnock) were considered to be holding territory.

Habitats on site were considered sub-optimal for Dingy Skipper butterfly with limited key larval food plants within the development area, therefore, this species was not considered further in the assessment.

#### Impact Assessment

Based on the proposals the report concludes that the development will have the following impacts upon the ecological interests of the site in the absence of mitigation:

- The loss or disturbance of small areas of habitat of no more than local botanical value
- The loss or disturbance of small areas of foraging habitat used by very low numbers of locally common bat species on an intermittent basis at times throughout the active season
- The loss of small areas of habitat used by a small range of common breeding birds
- The harm or disturbance of any protected species present within the site at the time of works, including foraging / commuting bats, badger or breeding birds, and a low residual risk of such impacts affecting species such as reptiles and/or BAP species such as hedgehog

As a result, the following mitigation measures are proposed:

- Vegetation clearance works will be undertaken outside of the nesting bird period (March – September inclusive) in order to minimise the risk of nesting birds being adversely affected. If this is not possible, works will not commence unless a checking survey by a Suitably Qualified Ecologist (SQE) has confirmed that no active nests are present
- Works will proceed to a precautionary method statement produced by a SQE, to minimise the low residual risk of protected or notable species being adversely affected
- No lighting will be installed during the works period without the approval of a SQE, in order to minimise the risk of adversely affecting nocturnal species such as bats

#### Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Assessment

A BNG assessment has been undertaken for the scheme based on the results of the PEA/Phase 1 surveys and the Landscape Design Drawing (60601435-ACM-XX-ZZ-DRG-EEN-00505. Rv P01). The biodiversity 'value' of the site both before and after the proposed development has been calculated using the Defra Biodiversity Metric 2.0 (beta test 2019 update). Comparing the pre- and proposed post-development biodiversity units (BDU), the development results in the loss of 0.74 BDU which equates to a net loss of 86% based on the on-site mitigation that has been provided. As such, the EcIA report recommends that further mitigation or enhancement works will be required on and/or off site, in order to ensure the proposals do not result in a net loss for biodiversity.

#### Arboricultural Impact assessment (AIA)

A revised Arboricultural Impact assessment (AIA May 2021) in accordance with BS5837 has been submitted by AECOM that identifies ten groups, two hedgerows and a single individual tree (Tree Survey Schedule included as Appendix A).

No trees have been categorised as high quality (Category A), five groups have been categorised as moderate quality (Category B) and the remaining tree features including five tree groups, two hedgerows and one individual tree has been categorised as low quality (Category C). The trees on site are predominantly young to early mature. Generally, the tree cover was in good to fair condition and considered of moderate or low quality depending on their landscape and screening value. Species present include: aspen, Norway maple, hybrid black poplar, goat willow, crack willow, Scots pine, field maple, hawthorn, cherry, hazel, gorse, Leyland cypress,

lime, laurel, dogwood, blackthorn, elder and cotoneaster. The site contains a moderate population of trees, consisting of various sizes, species and conditions providing as a collective, reasonable tree cover and understorey that provides a level of visual amenity and biodiversity benefits.

This AIA sets out the likely principal direct and indirect impacts of the proposed development on the trees on or immediately adjacent to the site and focuses on the quality and benefits of the trees. It does not assess the safety of trees on site, however where obvious issues have been identified, recommendations have been included in the Tree Survey Schedule. It was noted that only very few significant defects were evident at the time of assessment. Tree groups G6 and G8 had however been subject to some recent management having been partially removed and pruned to provide clearance from the railway line. It is likely that this management will need to be repeated as the trees mature, to ensure a suitable safe clearance from the railway line. T12, a recently planted cherry, also displayed some apical die back and leaf scorch, likely the result of drought stress and a lack of aftercare following planting.

There are no Tree Preservation Orders or Conservation Area designations which could affect trees within or immediately adjacent to the Site. However, the trees on the site contribute to the amenity of the local landscape and therefore considered significant under local plan policy DM5.9. The existing trees are an important feature in urban landscapes and make a positive contribution to the character and quality of our landscape as well as enhancing biodiversity.

Two tree groups (G6 and G8) classed as moderate quality (Category B) and part of G1 (category B) are to be removed to facilitate the proposed development. These groups contain a number of tree species (as described above) but no actual numbers have been provided. It is estimated however, that this equates to approximately an area in excess of 0.1ha of broadleaved plantation woodland which is a large majority of trees and scrub within the red line boundary of the application. The reason for their removal is to achieve the construction and landscaping proposals for the site, to facilitate the regrading of the railway bank and the installation of a new station platform.

Trees within G1 may require some incursion into their construction exclusion zone to allow the proposed development with pruning works to be undertaken. Tree Protection Plan and details have been included as Appendix D in the report.

The loss of the trees will be a visual change to amenity and is an unfortunate loss. The landscape scheme submitted to support the application is for a much smaller area of street trees planted on the re-profiled embankment and would be insufficient to meet the required level of mitigation. Discussions have been held to address this and agreed that off site mitigation will need to be considered.

It is noted that the detailed design of the scheme is ongoing so therefore the scheme is potentially subject to change before being finalised, therefore a revised Arboricultural Impact Assessment, Method Statement and Tree Protection Plan will need to be submitted on condition that addresses any design changes and any additional impacts resulting from it. All construction site facilities including site huts, staff and contractor parking and areas for storage will be located outside of the RPA or crown spread of retained trees, including those not specifically covered in this report but this can be dealt with via a condition when necessary.

## Assessment of Scheme

There are two tree groups and part of one group being removed to accommodate this scheme, which consists of an area in excess of 0.1ha of broadleaved plantation woodland. The landscape scheme submitted to support the application is for a much smaller area of street trees planted on the re-profiled embankment. The result of this is a net loss in habitat of 86% which is contrary to Planning Policy and the NPPF. The EclA report recommends that biodiversity units could be increased (and net loss reduced) if planting consisted of a woodland planting scheme with understorey planting (rather than street trees). However, the provision of better-quality planting on-site would still be unlikely to achieve net gain and therefore, off-site habitat compensation would need to be considered. These concerns were set out in an interim response with the recommendation from Officers that in order to achieve net gain for this scheme, a better-quality planting scheme would be required on site and land made available by the applicant for off-site compensation.

Officers have recommended (in line with the EclA) that landscaping on site should be improved with better quality planting (rather than just street trees) to provide good quality biodiversity habitat and increase biodiversity units on site. However, the applicant provided a response on 29.3.21 which stated that “operational restrictions placed on the line and the station by Network Rail preclude any further changes to the landscape scheme to the benefit of biodiversity. As such the submitted scheme should be taken as providing the ‘best’ biodiversity net gain which can be provided” In addition it was also stated that “no additional railway land is available for mitigation” The response also stated that it was accepted that there would be a net loss which the applicant was anticipating having to fund through off-site mitigation, which would be subject to a condition.

Subsequent meetings with the applicant and provision of additional information to support the application (emergency egress) has highlighted that the detailed technical and engineering design of Northumberland Park is ongoing and the applicant is seeking to agree planning permission with the LPA that is conditional on the submission and approval of further design details and the emergency egress.

Policy DM5.5 of the North Tyneside Local Plan states the following:

“for all adverse impacts of the development, appropriate on-site mitigation measures, reinstatement of features, or, as a last resort, off site compensation to enhance or create habitats must form part of the proposals”

The Biodiversity Net Gain Good Practice Principles (CIEEM) sets out a number of good practice principles that should be followed to achieve net gain and the first of these is to apply the mitigation hierarchy. This consists of first avoiding and then minimising impacts on biodiversity and states that “only as a last resort, and in agreement with external decision-makers where possible, compensate for losses that cannot be avoided. If compensating for losses within the development footprint is not possible or does not generate the most benefits for nature conservation, then offset biodiversity losses by gains elsewhere”. Another principle within the document advocates achieving net gain locally to the development.

The proposed landscape scheme offers very limited opportunities for habitat and landscaping improvement and it is unlikely that the scheme can incorporate measures to meet the required mitigation so it is likely that off-site biodiversity mitigation would be required. As highlighted above, and only in relation to this application, the detailed technical and engineering design of the scheme is ongoing, therefore, planning permission would be conditional on the submission and approval of further design details and updated ecological information and Biodiversity Net



Gain Assessments. As part of these assessments and updated plans, it is recommended that an improved design is provided for on-site mitigation, in accordance with the EcIA and to ensure that the amount of off-site compensation required is minimised and undertaken as a last resort in accordance with Policy DM5.5 and NPPF.

If the Local Planning Authority are minded to approve the planning application, the following conditions should be attached:-

#### Conditions

Prior to any ground being broken on site and in connection with the development hereby approved (including demolition works, tree works, soil moving, hardstandings, temporary access construction and / or widening or any operations involving the use of motorised vehicles or construction machinery, site security fencing, services), a revised Arboricultural Impact Assessment, Method Statement and Tree Protection Plan in accordance with BS5837:2012 'Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction – Recommendations' is to be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. No development or other operations shall take place except in complete accordance with the approved tree protection scheme and Arboricultural Method Statement.

All works within the RPA of the retained trees that include (but not limited to) kerb installation, fence post installation, lighting and drainage, are to be carried out in complete accordance with the revised Arboricultural Method Statement, revised Tree Protection Plan, BS 5837:2012 and the National Joint Utilities Group (NJUG) 'Guidelines for the Planning, Installation and Maintenance of Utility Apparatus in Proximity To Trees'

All tree pruning works shall be carried out in full accordance with the approved specification and the requirements of British Standard 3998: 2010 - Recommendations for Tree Works, detail of which are to be submitted for approval.

Within one month from the start on site of any operations such as site excavation works, site clearance (including site strip) for the development, a fully detailed landscape plan shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The fully detailed landscape scheme shall include planting proposals for both on site and off site compensation land that ensures biodiversity net gain is achieved in accordance with other planning conditions. Any new standard tree planting is to be a minimum of 12-14cm girth. The landscaping scheme shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details within the first available planting season following the approval of details.

Prior to any works commencing on site a revised Ecological Impact Assessment (EcIA) will be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority to ensure protected and priority species and habitats are appropriately assessed in accordance with updated design plans associated with the scheme.

No development shall commence unless and until a scheme ("the offsetting scheme") for the offsetting of biodiversity impacts at the site has been submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The offsetting scheme shall include:

- Details for on-site mitigation and a methodology for the identification of receptor site(s);
- The identification of receptor site (s);
- Details of the offset requirements of the development (in accordance with the recognised offsetting metrics standard outlined in the most up to date Defra Biodiversity Metric Guidance) to

be submitted within a Biodiversity Net Gain Report with associated plans that achieve a minimum 10% Biodiversity Net Gain;

- The provision of arrangements to secure the delivery of the offsetting measures (including a timetable for their delivery) that will be implemented by the developer;
- A fully detailed Landscape & Ecology Management Plan to include for the provision and maintenance of the offsetting measures for a 30-year period. The plan shall include details of the design, management and monitoring objectives, management responsibilities, timescales and maintenance schedules for all newly created and/or enhanced habitats within the site. Thereafter, these areas shall be managed and maintained in full accordance with these agreed details unless first agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The plan will include the following:-

- Details on the creation, enhancement and management of all target habitats identified within the approved Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment Report and associated landscape plans for on-site and off-site mitigation/compensation.
- Survey and monitoring details for all target habitats identified within the Net Gain Assessment Report and associated Landscape Plans /Strategies. Monitoring Reports will be submitted to the LPA for review in years 3, 5 and 10 and 5 yearly thereafter, and will include a Net Gain Assessment update as part of the report to ensure habitats are reaching the specified target condition. Any changes to habitat management as part of this review will require approval in writing from the LPA. The Plan will be reviewed every 5 years in partnership with the LPA.
- Details of any corrective action that will be undertaken if habitat delivery fails to achieve the requirements set out in the approved Biodiversity Net Gain Report.

The written approval of the LPA shall not be issued before the arrangements necessary to secure the delivery of the off-setting measures have been executed. The offsetting scheme shall be implemented in full accordance with the requirements of the approved scheme.

No vegetation removal or works to features (buildings) that could support nesting birds will take place during the bird nesting season (March-August inclusive) unless a survey by a suitably qualified ecologist has confirmed the absence of nesting birds immediately prior to works commencing.

Works will proceed to a Precautionary Method Statement produced by a Suitably Qualified Ecologist (SQE), to minimise the low residual risk of protected or notable species being adversely affected. Details of the Method Statement will be submitted to the LPA for approval prior to works commencing on site.

A Construction Method Statement/Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) will be submitted to the Local Planning Authority for approval prior to development commencing. The contractors construction method statement relating to traffic management/site compounds/contractor access, temporary parking, on site welfare facilities, loading, unloading and storage of equipment, materials, fuels and waste as well concrete mixing and use of fires must be submitted in writing and approved by the Local Planning Authority and include tree protection measures for the trees to be retained. Cabins, storage of plant and materials, parking are not to be located within the RPA of the retained trees as defined by the Tree Protection Plan and maintained for the duration of the works.

No lighting will be installed during the construction works period without the approval of a Suitably Qualified Ecologist, in order to minimise the risk of adversely affecting nocturnal species such as bats

Prior to the installation of any floodlighting or other form of external lighting, a lighting scheme shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Lighting must be designed to minimise light spill to adjacent boundary features such as woodland, scrub, grassland and hedgerow habitats and should be less than 2 lux in these areas. The lighting scheme shall include the following information:

- a statement of frequency of use, and the hours of illumination;
- a site plan showing the area to be lit relative to the surrounding area, indicating parking or access arrangements where appropriate, and highlighting any significant existing or proposed landscape or boundary features;
- details of the number, location and height of the proposed lighting columns or other fixtures;
- the type, number, mounting height and alignment of the luminaires;
- the beam angles and upward waste light ratio for each light;
- an isolux diagram showing the predicted illuminance levels at critical locations on the boundary of the site and where the site abuts residential properties or the public highway to ensure compliance with the institute of lighting engineers Guidance Notes for the reduction of light pollution to prevent light glare and intrusive light for agreed environmental zone ; and
- where necessary, the percentage increase in luminance and the predicted illuminance in the vertical plane (in lux) at key points.

The lighting shall be installed and maintained in accordance with the approved scheme

Any excavations left open overnight will have a means of escape for mammals that may become trapped in the form of a ramp at least 300mm in width and angled no greater than 45°.

5no. bat boxes will be provided on buildings and trees within the development site. Details of bat box specification and locations must be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority within 4 weeks of development commencing on site and will be installed in accordance with the approved plans.

5no. bird boxes will be provided on buildings and trees within the development site. Details of bird box specification and locations must be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority within 4 weeks of development commencing on site and will be installed in accordance with the approved plans.

#### Environmental Health Manager

Further to my pre planning comments ref 19/01086/PREAPP where I raised concerns with regard to adverse impact during construction phase of Northumberland Line

Upgrades identified in Northumberland Park Station NIA Report -

I have viewed the report and acknowledge the findings of the report regard to impact on noise sensitive properties and have the following comments.

This development will have adverse impact on existing housing during the proposed construction times even if best practical means applied to construction operation without additional mitigation measures. The report outlines the need for mitigation measures to mitigate noise arising from tannoy and train noise .

Construction Noise



With mitigation measures proposed: the report indicates there will still be potential adverse impact from construction work due to the activities proximity to noise sensitive receptors, duration of the construction phase and proposed construction times which are proposed to occur over a 5 month period June to November 2022 on a weekly 79 hours period starting on a Thursday 22:00 hours and 05:00 hours on a Monday.

The submission of an Construction Environmental Noise Plan will not be sufficient to address the noise impact on housing.

Restrictions of specific noisy activities of construction need to be set e.g. no piling limited to daytime 10:00 to 14:00 hours or upper noise limits set at boundary that must not be exceeded and noise monitoring required of developer during construction phase.

I consider that construction noise will cause the exceedance of the threshold noise level to properties at Fenwick Close and Backworth Court even with use of temporary barriers particularly with regard to night time work.

It is recommended that exceedance of the threshold levels determined from noise assessment in accordance with BS5288 is avoided to prevent adverse impact by controlling the activities based on noise impact at night.

If considered essential to occur at night, it will be necessary to notify those properties that exceed the threshold and to advise on the number of events that threshold may be exceeded.

In accordance with BS5228 compensation shall be offered to any properties were over more than 40 day/night/evening exceedances of threshold events during period of construction may arise. The threshold levels measured as free field equivalent noise levels at façade of noise sensitive property are set out from noise report as: night time period 22:00 hours to 07:00 hours free field Leq(A) 45dB, evening period 19:00 hours to 22:00 hours Leq(A) 55 dB, and day time period 07:00 to 19:00 hours Leq(A) 65 dB.

Compensation for those properties considered eligible based on criteria shall be set out and agreed in writing with the planning authority.

BS5228 states If the implementation of all reasonable mitigation measures and Best Practical Means still results in construction noise levels exceeding the Threshold Values, BS 5228-1 does recommend further options such as the provision of noise insulation to affected habitable rooms. BS 5228-1 also provides example noise limits for determining eligibility for noise insulation and temporary rehousing which are above the Threshold Values. To qualify for insulation or temporary rehousing these noise limits would have to be exceeded "for a period of 10 or more days of working in any 15 consecutive days or for a total number of days exceeding 40 in any 6 consecutive months." (BS 5228-1 section E.4)"

I would recommend the following conditions.

The installation of acoustic fencing must be installed prior to night time construction activities as outlined in Appendix B Plan Drawing ref:60601435-ACM-01-ZZ-DRG-ECV-0001 rev.P02.4. The fence must be double boarded to improve its durability and long term performance as an acoustic barrier.

Night time working between the hours of 23:00 hours and 07:00 hours shall be restricted to ensure no exceedance of threshold noise level of 45dB(A).

No piling is permitted between the 17:00 hours and 10:00 hours

Prior to commencement of activities, a Construction Environmental Noise Plan in accordance with BS2558 must be submitted in advance and approved in writing by the planning authority to include the phased assessment of noise levels at residential premises for each phase of activity, excavation, earth works, stabilisation works. foundations and engineering works

The plan must include details of mitigation measures, communication scheme with noise sensitive receptor and noise monitoring scheme to validate noise activity assessments, to enable corrective actions to mitigate noise levels and to ensure compliance with threshold noise levels. A reporting mechanism for noise monitoring to the planning department should be agreed for complaint recording, exceedances of threshold levels and corrective action as well as noise monitoring. All information should be available on request within 5 working days. The threshold levels are set out below: night time period 22:00 hours to 07:00 hours free field Leq(A) 45dB, evening period 19:00 hours to 22:00 hours Leq(A) 55 dB, and day time period 07:00 to 19:00 hours Leq(A) 65 dB.

Prior to commencement of construction a compensation scheme shall be agreed and thereafter implemented for any property that meets criteria of 40 or more exceedances of the threshold level.

Prior agreement for those activities where exceedance of threshold levels considered to arise from planning authority must be obtained detailing properties affected, number of exceedances of threshold, and if meets compensation criteria if more than 40 events as set out in BS5228.

No deliveries or collections shall be carried out except between the hours of 07:00 and 19:00 hours determined as the day time period under BS5228.

#### Operational Noise

The noise impact due to the operation of the development has been assessed by predicting the likely daytime ambient sound levels at nearby sensitive receptors. At most receptors, the change in the ambient sound levels is assessed as an impact of low magnitude, however at R1 (31 to 36 Fenwick Close) and R6 (6 Backworth Court), impacts of medium magnitude are predicted. The predicted external ambient sound levels are anticipated to exceed the criterion from the WHO guidelines by up to 4 dB at the upper floors of nearby properties.

The mitigation measure will ensure gardens meet the WHO community noise levels for external spaces for moderate annoyance

It is recommended that :

Prior to operational use of the station, submit and implement the acoustic scheme set out in noise report providing details of the acoustic fencing and other mitigation measures.

It is recommended prior to commencement of station, a noise scheme is set up for those properties identified to experience exceedance of internal noise levels set out in BS 8233 namely first and second floor rooms at R1, and second floor rooms of R3 and R4 of noise report. These noise levels will only be exceeded if windows are opened.

#### PA Tannoy Noise

I consider that tannoy noise impact will require mitigation at source as well as acoustic fencing. I would recommend the following conditions.

Prior to operational use of tannoy at Northumberland station an agreed output level for tannoys at station must be agreed and thereafter.

#### Contaminated Land Officer

Previous land use may have given rise to contamination. Therefore I would recommend 115 be attached as any spoil from foundations will have to be disposed of at a suitably licensed facility.

#### External Consultees

##### Newcastle Airport

No comments

### Coal Authority

Notes that the application site falls within the defined Development High Risk Area where records indicate there has been historic recorded underground coal mining at shallow depth and possibly unrecorded underground coal mining at shallow depth associated with a thick coal seam outcrop. Records also indicate the presence of a mine entry (shaft) close to the planning boundary and that the site has been subject to past surface mining operations. The Coal Authority notes that the applicant has obtained appropriate and up-to-date information for the proposed development site; including a Coal Mining Report, geological mapping, borehole records, mine abandonment plans, historical mapping and information from previous site investigation reports and desktop appraisals associated with the construction of the existing Metro Station. This information has been used to inform the Coal Mining Risk Assessment (desk based) (10 February 2021, prepared by AECOM), which correctly identifies that the application site has been subject to past coal mining activity.

Based on a review of the information, the Report is able to discount any undue risks posed by both the mine entry and features associated with past surface mining operations, specifically owing to their remoteness from the proposed new platform and its ancillary components. However, the Report does identify risks to ground stability posed by the recorded mine workings, which are very likely to underlie the site, but also potential unrecorded workings. The Report therefore makes appropriate recommendations for structured intrusive site investigation works prior to development in order to establish the exact situation regarding ground conditions and to enable appropriate remedial measures to be identified, if necessary.

### Mine Gas

It should be noted that wherever coal resources or coal mine features exist at shallow depth or at the surface, there is the potential for mine gases to exist. These risks should always be considered by the LPA. The Planning & Development team at the Coal Authority, in its role of statutory consultee in the planning process, only comments on gas issues if our data indicates that gas emissions have been recorded on the site. However, the absence of such a comment should not be interpreted to imply that there are no gas risks present. Whether or not specific emissions have been noted by the Coal Authority, local planning authorities should seek their own technical advice.

The Coal Authority concurs with the recommendations of the Coal Mining Risk Assessment that coalmining legacy potentially poses a risk to the proposed development and that intrusive site investigation works should be undertaken prior to development in order to establish the exact situation regarding coal mining legacy issues on the site.

Accordingly, the Coal Authority has no objection to the proposed development subject to the imposition of the conditions to secure the above:

1. No development shall commence until;
  - a) a scheme of intrusive investigations has been carried out on site to establish the risks posed to the development by past coal mining activity, and;
  - b) any remediation works and/or mitigation measures to address land instability arising from coal mining legacy, as may be necessary, have been implemented on site in full in order to ensure that the site is safe and stable for the development proposed.

The intrusive site investigations and remedial works shall be carried out in accordance with authoritative UK guidance.

2. Prior to the occupation of the development, or it being taken into beneficial use, a signed statement or declaration prepared by a suitably competent person confirming that the site is, or has been made, safe and stable for the approved development shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority for approval in writing. This document shall confirm the methods and findings of the intrusive site investigations and the completion of any remedial works and/or mitigation necessary to address the risks posed by past coal mining activity.

#### Northumbria Police

Note that Northumberland Park already has established infrastructure including the metro station, bus station and car park.

Note from the new proposal that it is unclear which areas will fall under the jurisdiction of either Northumbria Police or the British Transport Police but suggest as the majority of the application details the platform and pedestrian access it is probable this will come under the BTP but the development will potentially impact on Northumbria Police from a policing and demand perspective.

Northumbria Police have received reports of anti social behaviour within Northumberland Park and there is graffiti on the infrastructure around the Blyth and Tyne Line, with that in mind there it is essential there is a good lighting scheme and CCTV system in place and both of these can work in conjunction with each other to provide a safe place for people and reduce the opportunity for criminality.

#### Lighting

The lighting plan will be lit to BS EN 12464-2 2014. This standard refers to the lighting of work places. Increased levels of lighting in darkness can reduce the public's fear of crime and reduce the opportunity for an offender to commit crime. I would recommend the lighting to conform to BS 5489-1 2013 rather than the proposed lighting scheme.

The Design and Access statement mentions the use of CCTV – we would advise that an Operational Requirement be completed to assist with the process of identifying need and how each camera will operate and integrate. I would recommend a comprehensive system, which would cover the staircase, lift, station platform including help points and ticket machines.

#### British Transport Police

BTP will submit their own comments. I fully support and agree with their observations. It would be useful for clarification on who will be responsible for each part of this development, this will enable a more directed response into each Force's responsibilities.

#### British Transport Police

The new build heavy rail platform (for services on the future Newcastle to Ashington route - to be known as the Northumberland Line) will be located on the north side of the existing Northumberland Park Metro Station (Nexus - light rail) thus the development will form an Interchange hub between the two rail transport systems.

The BTP are the national police force for Britain's railways thus the force will have a policing responsibility for the line of route and that of the heavy rail new build platform once the new rail route becomes operational.

A key aspect of any new station design and build will be to show that designing out crime measures have been taken into consideration and applied at the planning stage of the project to demonstrate the sustainability of the scheme in terms of providing a facility rail passenger will



want to use, reduce the fear of crime and disorder for passengers using the railway and that of rail staff working on a public transport system.

I recommend the project planning team responsible for the development are aware of the content and work towards achieving the standards of good design identified in the below documents which I can forward upon request:

Security in Design of Stations (SIDOS) DfT  
Cycle-Rail Tool Kit. ATOC  
Secure Station Award. BTP/DfT  
CCTV output requirements for stations. BTP

Having reviewed the documents attached to the planning application I make the below comments.

Road vehicle access on Algernon Drive.

Will the section of road passing over the railway at the station remain closed to all motorised vehicles for the foreseeable future?

Station CCTV

BTP have produced a CCTV document -Stakeholder Brief, Output requirements from CCTV systems - for use by all station and train operators outlining recommendations of coverage and quality of any captured images. I can forward a copy of the document to the appointed CCTV contractor at the planning stages of the design and would recommend the standards outlined the document are achieved for the station environment.

As the development will form an Interchange facility between the heavy and light rail systems I would support the use of a single CCTV system used by the two rail operators for the whole of the Interchange.

Station Lighting

The operation of station lighting controlled by movement sensors rather than a time clock whereby the lighting is switched off at a certain time will support the out of hours use of persons on the station and that of the CCTV.

This would be beneficial if the platform offers 24hour unrestricted access e.g. at times when no rail services are operating.

Railway lineside boundary definition

I support the installation of an open style of lineside boundary fence line in the area of the station (e.g. weld mesh) aimed to offer a surveillance opportunity around the area both inwards and outward. The boundary definition should be high enough to deter climbing and trespass whilst providing a surveillance opportunity along the whole route for the user.

As the station is located close to a road over rail bridge and in a densely populated residential area, the railway boundary protection (lineside fence) should be reviewed in the area of the station aimed to prevent access to the platform by means other than by the authorised station entrance / exit points – remove the ability to access the line for use as a short cut walking route (trespass) by persons to reach the station.

Planting and vegetation

The use of shrubbery and the planting of trees on the site should take into consideration their size and height at maturity. Vegetation and the height of a mature tree should not obstruct the capability of a CCTV camera to scan and capture images of an area, restrict the surveillance opportunity for a station user nor impede emitted light.

Soft landscaping.

The use of loose surface dressings such as stone chippings or decorative aggregates around the station should be avoided. Typical areas of use can include around the base of trees, in planters or flower beds and to cover undulating surfaces. Such material can be used as a missile to throw at trains, vehicles or station users.

Passenger lift

Lifts at unstaffed stations can attract crime and anti-social behaviour e.g. drug taking, used as a toilet. The open access but enclosed space can offer an area of concealment. I would recommend the lift is fitted with CCTV and Help Point linked to a 24hour monitoring service. Doors fitted with a large area of clear glazing will increase a surveillance opportunity for both lift users and that of persons on the station. There will be times of the day / night when no stopping trains will serve the station. Will the use of the lift be closed off– secured, aimed to prevent misuse during these times when no passengers should be on the station platforms?

The CCTV coverage of the station platform area should capture images of persons both entering and leaving the lift in addition to a camera installed inside the lift.

The walking route between the entrance / exit point of the lift and the public roadside pavement of Algernon Drive should be designed to offer a surveillance opportunity for the user to have sight along their intended route. High side walls, solid structures that removes a surveillance opportunity and right-angle bends should be avoided.

An uneven surface such as a ramp or slope between the base of the lift door and the platform should be avoided. This unwanted feature could offer a potential roll away to the edge of the platform / lineside for a person in a wheelchair or child in a buggy.

Platform void area under the staircase.

The staircase leading down to the platform from Algernon Drive will form a void area under the steps. Such places can offer an area of concealment to a motivated offender or attract anti-social behaviour e.g. used as a toilet. Such a void area should be removed using screening or caging.

Seating areas in public space

Whilst offering a resting place for station users, seating installed around the public areas of a station and outside the entrance points can attract anti-social activity. Such seating should be kept to a minimum or not installed at all. Consideration should be given to the design of any street furniture selected e.g. a long bench style seat can encourage persons to lay across it. Each seat should be defined and separated by a feature like an arm rest to avoid this. Clusters of seating located at station entrance points can encourage groups of non- rail users to gather and loiter and may lead to anti-social behaviour activity.

Rear platform boundary treatment.

I would support the use of a boundary treatment installed at the back of the station platform that would afford a surveillance opportunity e.g. weld mesh as opposed to a close board solid timber fence line, aimed to enable persons on the platform and those in other areas of the station to observe their surroundings.

### Platform waiting shelters

I recommend the choice of shelter installed on the platform offers a surveillance opportunity for intending users on their approach to the facility to see if there is any other person already in the shelter and for those inside the shelter to see out along the platform and across the station. This can be achieved using open sides or clear glazed panels rather than the use of a building material removing a surveillance opportunity e.g. metal sides with no sight line.

Covered shelters on platforms are often installed leaving a void area (access space) between the structure and the boundary fence line at the rear of the platform. This area can attract anti-social- behaviour e.g. used as a toilet or for littering. I would recommend the void is removed to prevent such activity. Controlled access (for cleaning) can be applied by the installation of a gated access.

### Nexus

In order to protect Tyne and Wear Metro assets owned by Nexus, all relevant safety and asset protection measures as set in in the attached document Nexus Rail Planning Condition Requirements (Issue 4) must be adhered to, as well as those within an Asset Protection Agreement between Nexus and the contractors as agreed prior to the commencement of any works.

It is our understanding that the works will be carried out without any disruption to Metro operations.

Works undertaken in respect of this development must allow for unrestricted highway access for Nexus plant and equipment at Northumberland Park Metro at all times.

No alterations to existing pedestrian routes between the Metro station and the bus stops or multi-storey car park to take place without the prior consent of Nexus.

Nexus notes the comments made in supporting documentation in relation to the capacity of the multi-storey car park to accommodate additional vehicles linked to journeys made from the new station. Whilst the facility currently has adequate spare capacity, future availability may depend upon any agreements made by the asset owner in relation to the sub-letting of areas. of the car park to third parties. Nexus is therefore not in a position to guarantee the availability of additional vehicle parking for Northumberland Line rail users at the time the station is opened to passengers.

In relation to cycle parking, although there is adequate capacity at present for Metro users, this is again subject to availability. The scheme promoters should ensure that sufficient capacity will be available for the use of Northumberland Line passengers at the time that the service commences operation.

There are adequate connecting bus services to and from Northumberland Park for onward travel across the surrounding area. Service 19 operates every 30 minutes throughout each day between Northumberland Park – North Shields Ferry extending hourly Monday – Saturday daytime/early evening to/from Ashington. Monday – Saturday daytime is fully commercial by GNE and evening/Sunday trips are supported by Nexus (and operated by Central Taxis of Gateshead) and Northumberland County Council (with their supported evening trips north of Cobalt operated by Go North East). Service 359 operates every 20 minutes during the peaks (Monday – Saturday) between Backworth – Northumberland Park, with an hourly inter-peak service operating between Backworth – Marden Estate. This service is

fully secured by Nexus and currently operated by Central Taxis of Gateshead. The access roads within the Interchange are suitable for large coaches in the event that Rail Replacement service provision would be required for Northumberland Line services.

Nexus has legal rights in relation to the Algernon Road bridge, granted by the Duke of Northumberland when Nexus built the bridge. Those rights will be interfered during the construction phase, to the detriment of Metro passengers. Nexus should be compensated for such interference. Nexus assumes that the landowner will grant a Construction Area Laydown licence to the highway authority for the bridge area which will require Nexus' consent to, and the deed granting Nexus rights may need to be varied.

### Representations

Nine representations have been received in response to the statutory publicity undertaken.

Seven raise concerns and objections relating to:

- Traffic and parking - cars are already being intrusively parked on Algernon Drive from 7am until 4 or 5pm so if this station is approved there will be further parking on local streets because drivers do not use the car park to save money. The parking causes obstructions and leads to near misses. Measures, including yellow lines should be introduced to control parking;
- Anti-social behaviour (ASB) – there are already issues with the use of the metro station and this will be worsened with the addition of a further platform which will bring nuisance closer to existing residential properties;
- Residents of Backworth Court experience anti-social behaviour associated with the use of a footpath linking to Station Road, which is used by youths accessing and leaving the metro station. Residents are already working with the police, Council and MP to resolve this. The path has been temporarily closed but if re-opened and this proposal goes ahead, more people will use it and ASB will increase. If the path is closed some residents would not object to this development;
- A particular issue about people being dropped off at Backworth Court early in the morning has been highlighted and this gives rise to noise disturbance;
- A representation on behalf of the occupiers of the flats on Fenwick Close raises concerns about the loss of the trees and scrub, which provide habitat to many species and screens views of the nearby multi storey car park, which will have to be cut down to create the new embankment. This does not accord with Mayoral policies on green issues and the protection of the environment and wildlife;
- Has there been consultation with Northumberland County Council and the Government on the impact of the proposals on the environment of North Tyneside? The development will have a huge impact in Fenwick Close if permanent or temporary use of the car parks and communal gardens is granted;
- Emergency egress – residents of Fenwick Close object to the path which they are concerned will bring anti-social behaviour, and the risk of trespass and break ins, very close to their homes, with problems elsewhere in the area coming to which is a secluded location. There are also concerns over the potential loss of established planting adjacent to property boundaries which provides visual screening and is a barrier to noise. The path is considered unnecessary and has no benefit when there is a footpath and cycle path only 10m away. The path is pointless and will impact on property values. At this location a 100m path is not required as a shorter, 20m route where the levels change could link to the existing footpath. If a path is needed this could be located on the other side of the line. The fencing and gate will be a big eyesore and the associated lighting will impact on residents using their gardens. As proposed this will become a route for people to leave the station.

- Adverse effect on wildlife
- Affect character of conservation area
- Impact on landscape
- Inappropriate design
- Loss of privacy
- Loss of residential amenity
- Loss of visual amenity
- Loss of/damage to trees
- Nuisance - disturbance
- Nuisance - noise
- Out of keeping with surroundings
- Will result in visual intrusion

Just like to say that as a resident of Fenwick Close and one who objects in the strongest possible terms to the Emergency Path,

One resident initially expressed concerns over the potential impact of the emergency egress but having been provided with more detail of this part of the proposal indicated they were happy with the proposal.

There is one letter of support.

The applicant had undertaken consultation on the proposals for the full Northumberland Line project prior to the submission of this planning application.

## PLANNING OFFICERS REPORT

### Main Issues

The main issues for consideration relate to:

the principle of a new rail station in this location;

Its economic impact;

Its impact on the local environment and biodiversity including on existing planting, habitat and wildlife;

Its impact on residential amenities in terms of noise and visual impact during construction and operational phases; and

Its impact on traffic and parking both in the local area but also in the wider context of the scheme's aims to promote a new public transport option to reduce reliance on the private car.

### Principle of Development

The Local Plan (LP) was adopted in July 2017 to guide development in the period up to 2032.

The council acknowledges that the policies contained within the LP predate the publication of the revised NPPF however, it is clear from paragraph 219 of the NPPF that "... existing policies should not be considered out-of-date simply because they were adopted or made prior to the publication of this Framework. Due weight should be given to them, according to their degree of consistency with this Framework (the closer the policies in the plan to the policies in the Framework, the greater the

weight that may be given)." The Council considers that the LP policies set out in this report are consistent with the NPPF and can be afforded significant weight.



Paragraph 7 of NPPF states that the purposed of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development.

Paragraph 8 of NPPF states that a social objective is one of the three overarching objectives of the planning system and that amongst other matters it should seek to support a sufficient number and range of homes to meet present and future needs which support communities' health, social and cultural well-being.

Paragraph 11 of NPPF introduces a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which amongst other matters states that decision takers should approve development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or where there are no relevant development plan policies or the policies which are most important are out-of-date grant planning permission, unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole.

NPPF sets out objectives relating to the promotion of sustainable transport which includes, among others, realising opportunities from existing and proposed infrastructure and promoting walking, cycling and the use of public transport. It states that "the planning system should actively manage patterns of growth in support of these objectives" and that "significant development should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes. This can help to reduce congestion and emissions, and improve air quality and public health." It notes that opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions vary between urban and rural areas and that this should be taken into account in both plan-making and decision-making. To do this, policies should be aligned with those of other transport infrastructure providers and routes which could be critical in delivering infrastructure to widen transport choice should be identified and protected. In decision making, opportunities to promote sustainable transport modes should be taken up.

The re-instatement of passenger rail services on the existing line from Ashington to Newcastle is a long standing ambition of Northumberland County Council, Newcastle City Council and North Tyneside Council and as such is referenced in the North Tyneside Local Plan. A range of regional bodies support the scheme and support for the scheme is set out in the Strategic Economic Plan published by the NE Local Economic Partnership and it is identified as a strategic transport priority by Transport for the North and NECA.

The Local Plan notes that the re-instatement of passenger services on the Northumberland Line is seen as a key driver for delivering growth in South East Northumberland, the most densely populated part of Northumberland, providing access to employment and attracting investment. Although the line is existing and has continued to accommodate freight rail traffic since passenger services ceased in the mid 1960s and the Local Plan seeks to safeguard the route for the future.

Policy S7.3 Transport seeks to ensure an integrated approach to sustainable travel taking into account travel patterns based on existing demand and planned economic and housing growth. In line with national policy, it sets out a clear objective to deliver a modal shift to more sustainable modes of transport. In relation to public transport the policy states that the Council will "support its partners who seek to provide a comprehensive, integrated, safe, accessible and efficient public transport network capable of supporting development proposals and future levels of growth". In order to retain and protect essential infrastructure which will facilitate sustainable

passenger and freight movements it seeks to prevent development which would obstruct or constrain the use of existing or former railway lines and the Ashington – Blyth – Tyne Railway is identified as one of the infrastructure schemes to be protected from development and its route is safeguarded on the proposals map.

In terms of the location of a new station, this is clearly constrained by the alignment of the existing railway line. No specific site is identified in the Local Plan, but in addition to seeking to safeguard the route of the line, Local Plan policy S7.3 makes specific reference to support for potential new stations on the existing network or routes re-opened for passenger traffic. The station is an integral part of the wider scheme and the location allows access to the service for North Tyneside residents. The applicant has indicated that 70% of trips to the proposed station would be in-bound because the location provides access to key employment sites and provides in-bound passengers with access to a public transport interchange for access to bus services and the metro system to enable travel, by public transport, to locations across the Borough and beyond. The location is also close to Cobalt Business Park which is a significant location for economic investment in the A19 corridor.

In the context of national planning policy and Local Plan policy, the principle of the use of the Northumberland Line is clearly supported and policy offers support for new stations on routes to be re-opened for passenger travel. The location of the station is considered acceptable in principle.

#### Economic Impacts

NPPF identifies addressing barriers to economic investment, such as inadequate infrastructure, as one of four priorities for planning policy which should seek to create the conditions in which businesses can invest. As set out above, the Northumberland Line is considered to be a key economic development investment which will help drive growth in south east Northumberland. As also noted, a range of regional bodies support the scheme. The Strategic Economic Plan published by the NE Local Economic Partnership offers support for the scheme and it is identified as a strategic transport priority by Transport for the North and NECA.

Local Plan policy AS2.6 - A19 (T) economic corridor supports the further development of the A19 economic corridor for employment activities through measures including the continued enhancement of the road and public transport infrastructure serving the corridor. In addition to stimulating investment in south east Northumberland the location of a station close to residential areas and the Northumberland Park district centre will help sustain these locations, further increasing the attractiveness of Cobalt Business Park and potentially stimulating further investment in North Tyneside.

The proposal is considered to comply with national and local economic planning policies.

#### Impact on local environment

Issues to consider relate to the impact of the development on ecology and landscaping and on local amenities in terms of both the construction and operational aspects of the development in terms of visual impact, noise and vibration and air quality.

#### Ecology and Landscaping

An environmental role is one of the three dimensions of sustainable development according to NPPF, which seeks to protect and enhance our natural environment.

Paragraph 174 of the NPPF states that the planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment. Amongst other matters, this includes minimising the impacts of biodiversity and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures.

Paragraph 179 of the NPPF states that when determining planning applications LPA's should aim to protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity by following the principles set out in paragraph 180 which includes, amongst other matters, if significant harm cannot be avoided, adequately mitigated, or as a last resort, compensated from the planning permission should be refused.

LP policy S5.1 'Strategic Green Infrastructure' seeks the protection, enhancement, extension and creation of green infrastructure in appropriate locations to support the delivery of the green infrastructure strategy. Policy S5.4 Biodiversity and Geodiversity seeks to protect, create, enhance and manage sites within the borough relative to their significance.

LP policy DM5.5 'Managing effects on Biodiversity and Geodiversity', amongst other matters, seeks to protect the biodiversity and geodiversity value of land, protected and priority species and buildings and minimise fragmentation of habitats and wildlife links. Proposals should maximise opportunities to create, restore, enhance, manage and connect natural habitat. Net gains to biodiversity should be considered, unless otherwise shown to be inappropriate. Proposals that are likely to significantly affect nationally or locally designated sites, protected species, or priority species and habitats (as identified in the BAP), identified within the most up to date Green Infrastructure Strategy, would only be permitted where: the benefits of the proposal clearly demonstrably outweigh any adverse impacts, applications are accompanied by the appropriate ecological surveys that are carried out to industry guidelines, and for all adverse impacts of the development appropriate on site mitigation measures, reinstatement of features, or, as a last resort, off site compensation to enhance or create habitats must form part of the proposals. This must be accompanied by a management plan and monitoring schedule, as agreed by the Council.

The site is within a wildlife corridor. LP Policy DM5.7 'Wildlife Corridors' states: "Development proposals within a wildlife corridor must protect and enhance the quality and connectivity of the wildlife corridor. All new developments are required to take account of and incorporate existing wildlife links into their plans at the design stage. Developments should seek to create new links and habitats to reconnect isolated sites and facilitate species movement." Policy DM5.9 'Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows' is also relevant and seeks to protect these features where this does not degrade other important habitats.

Land on which the emergency egress is proposed is open space which LP Policy DM5.3 'Green Space Provision and Standards' states: "... accessible green space will be protected and enhanced to be of the highest quality and value".

The Council's Biodiversity officer has reviewed the application and supporting documents. A number of objectors raise concerns about the loss of existing planting to accommodate the works. Habitat on the application site is mainly broadleaved planting, ruderal vegetation, amenity grassland and scrub. Assessments of species likely to be present on the site have revealed the limited presence of any key species other than birds. The development will result in the loss of the existing semi-mature planting on the railway embankment which is to be regraded to accommodate the new platform. There is limited scope to replace planting on site

on the smaller area remaining on completion of the works and constraints imposed by Network Rail on operational land. In this context, although there will be some replacement planting on the embankment, the net gain assessment provided shows the development will result in a loss in biodiversity value. Off site mitigation will be required to achieve a positive net gain as is required by LP policy. The applicant has agreed to such provision and the matter is addressed by the imposition of a condition. It has not been possible to agree details at this stage as the acquisition of land required for the scheme, including mitigation works, remains subject of on-going negotiation and, if necessary, may be subject to compulsory purchase as part of the Transport and Works Act process.

A number of other conditions are also recommended to provide control over the timing of works, the provision of bird and bat boxes and to control the installation of lighting.

Residents have also expressed concern about the potential loss of existing planting to accommodate the emergency egress proposed. In response, the applicant has advised that the design and surfacing of this path has been adapted to safeguard the root systems of trees adjacent to the route and, in recognition of the visual screening provided by the trees, the removal of vegetation will be kept to a minimum. Some self seeded trees along the route would need to be removed. A condition is recommended to agree the final details of the path to ensure that vegetation removal is controlled.

This part of the site is designated as open space. Sited between the rear gardens of properties on Fenwick Close and the footpath and cycleway to the east side of the A186, it is not accessible open space, and its main purpose is to accommodate structural landscaping for Northumberland Park. It is important that as much planting is retained as possible to maintain visual screening along the boundary with the residential properties. The introduction of a route along this open space will not diminish the openness of the space nor prevent any access to it and as such is considered an acceptable location for the route.

#### Impact on amenities

The site is located close to established residential properties – five apartment blocks - which lie to the to the immediate north-west at the top of the planted railway embankment. The closest properties are within 1m of the application site boundary. As set out in the description of works, the embankment will be re-graded to allow the platform to be created and this will bring construction works in close proximity to housing. Due to constraints in place when working adjacent to an operational railway, works will have to take place at night-time and over weekends.

Paragraph 174 of the NPPF states that planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural environment by, among other measures preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability. Paragraph 185 of the NPPF states that planning decisions should ensure that new development is appropriate for its location taking into account the likely effects (including cumulative effects) of pollution on health, living conditions and the natural environment, as well as the potential sensitivity of the site or the wider area to impacts that could arise from the development. In doing so, they should, amongst other matters, mitigate and reduce to a minimum potential adverse impact resulting from new development – and avoid noise giving rise to significant adverse impacts on health and quality of life.

The noise policy statement for England (NPSE) (2010) sets out the government's overall policy on noise. It aims to promote good health and a good quality of life by effective management of noise in the context of government policy on sustainable development. National advice seeks to define noise concerns over levels where there is expected to be no noticeable impact up to a significant observed adverse effect.

LP Policy S1.4 states that development proposals should be acceptable in terms of their impact upon local amenity for new or existing residents and businesses, adjoining premises and land uses. Policy DM5.19 'Pollution' states, amongst other matters, development that may cause pollution will be required to incorporate measures to prevent or reduce pollution so as not to cause unacceptable impacts to the environment, to people and to biodiversity. Potentially polluting development will not be sited near to sensitive areas unless satisfactory mitigation measures can be demonstrated.

Policy DM6.1 seeks to achieve high and consistent design standards and states that proposals are expected to demonstrate, among other matters, a positive relationship to neighbouring buildings and spaces; a safe environment that reduces opportunities for crime and antisocial behaviour; and a good standard of amenity for existing and future residents and users of buildings and spaces.

The Design Quality SPD, which applies to all building works, promotes the highest standards of design, which responds to its location and creates a safe and accessible environment.

#### Noise and Vibration

Construction works inevitably create some noise disturbance and vibration. This is a particularly difficult location given the site topography and a construction environment which is adjacent to two operational railway lines. This will mean that some works will have to take place during more sensitive hours (evenings and night-times and weekends). A construction noise assessment has been provided and reviewed by the Council's Environmental Health officer. The assessment also considers the impact of vibration.

Construction works will comprise site clearance and earthworks associated with the regrading of the embankment and platform construction; the installation of the lift and stairs; construction of paths; landscaping and finishing. The earthworks phase is likely to generate the highest noise and vibration levels.

It is expected that working will be over a 79hr period each week from 10pm Thurs to 5am Mon, over 5 months in 2022 (anticipated June – Nov). The applicant has indicated that significant restrictions on night-time working would impact on the construction programme, prolonging the duration of works and delaying the wider project.

Measurements have been taken at various locations to establish background noise and vibration levels. It is clear that noise levels associated with the construction works, even with best practicable measures implemented, will be high and will require additional mitigation. The impacts of vibration can cause annoyance and potentially property damage although the level of vibration causing damage is higher than that which causes annoyance. Mitigation would comprise the use of temporary acoustic barriers, programming noisy work and quieter work to give respite, phasing work closest to properties to give respite and seeking to undertake the noisiest activities at the least sensitive times. There needs to be a balance between keeping the duration of works to the minimum possible, so balancing temporary higher noise levels for a shorter time against lower levels over a longer period.

BS 5228 'Code of Practice for Noise and Vibration Control from Construction and Open Sites' sets out criteria relating to noise and the point at which there is likely to be a significant impact. It identifies an exceedance of the specified noise thresholds for a period of 10 or more days of working in any 15 consecutive days or for a total number of days exceeding 40 in any 6 consecutive months as being significant. Where the impact is significant residents are potentially entitled to additional noise insulation to habitable rooms or temporary rehousing.

Conditions, which have been reviewed by the applicant and Council's Environmental Health Manager, are recommended to deal with construction noise through the submission of a detailed Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) and a detailed noise and vibration impact assessment which accords with BS 5228. Required measures will include a range of mitigation measures, monitoring requirements, and a communication plan to ensure residents are made aware in advance of construction working times and activities expected to be noisy and a process for any complaints to be recorded and dealt with. With these measures in place, it is considered that significant disturbance of residents can be controlled but there will be noise and vibration impacts which are unavoidable during the construction period.

The Environmental Health Manager recommends conditional approval. Conditions have been drafted in discussion with the applicant. The conditions will require mitigation and with these measures in place, it is considered that the proposal is compliant with national and local planning policy. It is also understood that the applicant will also submit a notice to the Local Authority under Section 61 of the Control of Pollution Act (1974) to apply to carry out noisy construction works. This provides the Authority with alternative powers to control noise and vibration from construction works.

Once operational, sources of noise and vibration will be from the operation of the trains themselves and from the use of the platform – the movement of passengers and the use of public announcement (PA) systems. Modelling has been undertaken to establish current noise and vibration levels associated with the existing metro station and the use of the railway line for freight trains.

A PA system, which is used to provide important passenger information does, by necessity, need to be audible over existing background and operational noise. The passenger train service will run from approximately 06:30 to 23:00 on the route between Ashington and Newcastle. This falls into the period defined as night-time (23:00-07:00) and four trains will stop during this time. There are also existing freight trains on the line (moving between Ashington and Heaton) which operate earlier and later. The freight trains do not stop here but pass by. They are longer than passenger trains so take longer to pass by and have different suspension resulting in lower frequency vibration which can be felt more further from the track. The movement of trains during the night-time has been assessed as having an acceptable impact, generating noise levels below the British Standard. In terms of vibration, there would be an increase over existing vibration experienced nearby but the impact is considered to be lower, within the category of there being a low probability of adverse complaint.

The PA system is expected to be used for 30 seconds in each 5 minute period. The assessment submitted indicates that the PA system could result in noise above acceptable levels. The upper floors of the adjacent apartment blocks are worst affected as there is no attenuation from existing or proposed boundary enclosures. Existing garden fencing does provide some attenuation and a 2.4m fence proposed on the railway boundary is recommended and can be agreed by condition.



With this barrier in place, noise levels can be mitigated to within acceptable levels when windows are shut. If windows are open for ventilation, internal noise levels will be higher but it is expected this would be for short periods which would not give rise to any significant effect. The applicant notes however that if this is not the case an offer can be made to provide a ventilation system to noise sensitive rooms on the upper floors of some elevations of the apartment blocks. A condition is recommended to agree details of the PA system and would be expected to include the restriction of its using during defined night time hours as recommended.

Subject to the recommended conditions, it is considered that the proposal is compliant with national and local planning policy.

#### Air Quality

An air quality assessment has been submitted. Policies relating to pollution as outlined in the preceding section are relevant.

The Northumberland Line will rely on the use of diesel trains. The freight trains already using the line are also diesel trains. Advice on the air quality impacts of diesel trains identifies locations where a train would be regularly stationary for 15 mins or more. It is not expected that trains will be stationary for more than 1 minute at the station platform. In terms of moving trains, the assessment has considered impacts up to 30m from the line. It concludes that the introduction of 32 more train movements, in both directions, onto the line will have a minimal contribution to air quality.

There is not considered to be a significant growth in road traffic to this location as a result of the proposal which would have an impact on local air quality.

During construction, dust emissions may impact on air quality but conditions are recommended to mitigate such impact.

In a wider context, the proposal seeks to promote a modal shift from private car use to public transport use and this would be expected to have a positive impact on regional air quality.

#### Design and Visual Impact

Paragraph 126 of the NPPF recognises that the creation of high-quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities.

Paragraph 130 of the NPPF states “Decisions should ensure that developments: will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development; are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping; are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities); establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit; optimise the potential of the to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.”

Paragraph 92 of the NPPF, amongst other matters, seeks to promote health and safe communities. Decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which: promote social interaction....street layouts that allow for easy pedestrian and cycle connections within and between neighbourhoods, and active street frontages; are safe and accessible....enable and support healthy lifestyles, especially where this would address identified local health and well-being needs – for example through the provision of safe and accessible green infrastructure, sports facilities, local shops, access to healthier food, allotments and layouts that encourage walking and cycling.

Paragraph 131 of the NPPF states “Trees make an important contribution to the character and quality of urban environments and can also help to mitigate climate change” and that opportunities should be taken to incorporate trees elsewhere into developments, secure measures to ensure the long-term maintenance of newly planted trees and that existing trees are retained wherever possible.

Paragraph 134 of the NPPF makes it clear that development that is not well designed, especially where it fails to reflect local design policies and government guidance on design should be refused. Significant weight should be given to development which reflects local design policies etc. and development which promote high levels of sustainability or help raise the standard of design more generally in an area, so long as they fit in with the overall form and layout of the surroundings.

By necessity, a station is functional in its design and there are a range of design requirements which have to be complied with in addition to planning policy. In visual terms, the railway line is existing and as the station is sited at the base of a steep embankment, the main visual impact from the proposal will be from the new access from Algernon Drive. There will also be a visual impact arising from changes to the existing environment associated with the loss of existing trees and landscaping.

The new station access (lift shaft and stairs) from Algernon Drive will sit adjacent to the existing Metro station entrance. The lift shaft will be set back from Algernon Drive and accessed via a link bridge. It will reach a similar height to the existing metro station. The lift shaft will complement the design and finish of the metro station and a condition is required to agree materials. Branding will be to the selected operator’s requirements.

When viewed in the context of the existing environment, it is not considered that the visual impact of the development will be significant. The loss of the existing planting will have a negative impact but is unavoidable. Replacement planting is proposed on area of embankment retained after the regrading works. This will be just a narrow strip of planting adjacent to the easternmost apartment block on Fenwick Close where most of the embankment has to be removed to construct the retaining wall and create the area for the lift and stairs. Conditions are recommended to agree the landscaping and its maintenance.

The impact of the proposed emergency egress has been set out earlier in this report. There is a level change between the path and platform (hence steps are required at the platform end (a flat area is provided for passengers requiring support to access the path to wait safely) and the gate is not easily accessible from this route. Weldmesh panels are however proposed to prevent access from the non-platform side of the gate. Other locations were considered for the access but were not able to offer a safe means of emergency escape given the operational constraints of the existing metro lines and site topography.

It is noted that a number of objectors raise concerns about anti-social behaviour and refer to existing problems in this area where the Council and police are already working together. Design policy seeks to ensure the provision of an environment which is safe and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience. The station has been designed to incorporate help points, CCTV and lighting to

ensure that passengers have a safe environment in which to travel. The emergency egress route is required to be provided to meet Network Rail standards but is not intended to be used other than in an emergency. The route will be gated at the station end and conditions are recommended to agree the final design of the gate and the measures to restrict its use, and the use of associated lighting.

The British Transport Police, who are responsible for policing the station have provided comments on the design and recommended measures to design out crime. These can be considered as part of the final design. Northumbria Police have also commented on the application and confirm they are aware of existing incidents of anti-social behaviour. They recommend good lighting and CCTV.

Whilst residents' concerns are noted, the design of the station and emergency egress is considered to comply with relevant policy and will provide a safe and attractive environment for passengers. It is of course hoped that the station will attract more passengers to this location but the area in which the station is located is also well designed and well lit and, with the mix of commercial and residential uses nearby benefits from much natural surveillance. Problems associated with the use of the footpath linking the nearby Backworth Court with Station Road, via the dismantled railway, are noted and it is noted that discussions are underway about the future of this route. This falls outside the remit of this application. Passengers walking to the station may use this route if it remains open, but this is likely to be at similar times of the day as Metro passengers. It is not considered that the fear of crime warrants refusal of this application. The Police nor BTP have raised objections.

#### Other issues

##### Flood Risk

Paragraph 167 of the NPPF states "When determining any planning applications, local planning authorities should ensure that flood risk is not increased elsewhere. Where appropriate, applications should be supported by a site-specific flood-risk assessment...."

LP Policy DM5.14 states that applicants will be required to show, with evidence, they comply with the Defra technical standards for sustainable drainage systems (unless otherwise updated and/or superseded). A reduction in surface water run off rates will be sought for all new development. On brownfield sites, surface water run off rates post development should be limited to a maximum of 50% of the flows discharged immediately prior to development where appropriate and achievable. For greenfield sites, surface water run off post development must meet or exceed the infiltration capacity of the greenfield prior to development incorporating an allowance for climate change.

LP Policy DM5.15 states that applicants will be required to show, with evidence, they comply with the Defra technical standards for sustainable drainage systems (unless otherwise updated and/or superseded).

A Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) has been submitted to accompany this planning application. Having regard to NPPF, the proposal is considered to be essential infrastructure which is permitted in flood zones 1 and 2 (without the need for an exceptions test). The risk to the development from rivers and other water courses and ground water is considered low as is the risk from sewers and water mains. The impact of the development on flood risk elsewhere is also considered low. A limited risk of runoff and rainfall will be mitigated by a surface water drainage system designed to a 1 in 100 year event. This will discharge at a greenfield run off rate into the existing Network Rail track drainage network.

#### Ground conditions

Paragraph 183 of the NPPF states planning policies and decisions should ensure that a site is suitable for its proposed use taking account of ground conditions and any risks arising from land instability and contamination i.e. mining or land remediation.

Paragraph 184 of the NPPF goes onto say that where a site is affected by contamination or land instability issues, responsibility for securing a safe development, rests with the developer and/or landowner.

The Contaminated Land Officer has recommended an informative to any spoil removed from the site which might be contaminated will need to be disposed of at a suitably licenced site.

A Coal Mining Risk assessment has been submitted and notes the site is at risk from unrecorded and recorded shallow mine workings and unrecorded mine entries. The Coal Authority has been consulted and concurs with the findings of the risk assessment. They raise no objections subject to the imposition of conditions to require an intrusive site investigation before development commences and the validation the remediation and mitigation measures have been undertaken.

#### Aviation Safety

Newcastle International Airport Limited (NIAL) has been consulted and have no comment to make on the application.

In considering the impact of the development on the other matters set out above, there are, subject to the imposition of conditions, not considered to be any reasons which would justify refusal of permission and the proposal is considered to comply with national and local planning policy.

#### Highways Impact

NPPF paragraph 111 makes it clear that development should only be prevented or refused on highway grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.

NPPF paragraph 112 states, amongst other matters, that applications for development should give priority first to pedestrian and cycle movements both within the scheme and with neighbouring areas and second to facilitate access to high quality public transport.

NPPF paragraph 113 sets out guidance on sustainability and connectivity.

LP Policy S7.3 states that the Council, will support its partners, who seek to provide a comprehensive, integrated, safe, accessible and efficient public transport network, capable of supporting development proposals and future levels of growth.

LP Policy DM7.4 'New Development and Transport' makes it clear that the Council will ensure that the transport requirements of new development, commensurate to the scale and type of development, are taken into account and seek to promote sustainable travel to minimise environmental impacts and support resident's health and well-being.

The Council's parking standards are set out in the Transport and Highways SPD (LDD12). NPPF states that 'maximum parking standards for residential and non-residential development should only be set where there is a clear and compelling justification that they are necessary for

managing the local road network, or for optimising the density of development in city and town centres and other locations that are well served by public transport (in accordance with chapter 11 of this Framework).'

A travel assessment (TA) has been submitted with the application. The station is sustainably located to provide access to the metro system and local bus services. No parking is proposed as part of the development which will rely on the existing, 269 space, multi storey car park adjacent. Cycle parking is also located here. The TA includes a review of the use of this car park and concludes that it is not fully occupied. Traffic modelling indicates the development will have no net increase in traffic on the local road network. The TA includes a road safety review and does not identify any issues.

The Council's Highway Network Manager recommends approval of the application subject to the imposition of conditions. He notes that this proposal, as part of the wider Northumberland Line project, will enhance transport links in the North Tyneside and South East Northumberland areas and welcomes its positive impact on single car journeys.

An outline Travel Plan has also been submitted with the application. It seeks to provide a framework for the delivery of co-ordinated transport strategies. It notes that station travel plans to have a different focus than other travel plans because the station is not the end destination for the traveller and travel to a station is to be encouraged because rail travel should be encouraged. It recommends the appointment of a travel plan co-ordinator who will have an ongoing commitment to encouraging travel by the most sustainable means. A condition is recommended to agree a full travel plan pursuant to the outline plan submitted and this will enable appropriate targets for a shift in transport use for journeys to the station to be agreed and monitored.

Objectors have raised concerns that this proposal will lead to further instances of passengers parking on residential streets to avoid paying to park in the adjacent car park. The Senior Traffic Engineer from the Traffic and Road Safety team confirms that there are some longstanding complaints about parking (associated with the metro) from residents of Algernon Drive, Fenwick Close and Backworth Court particularly in relation to the southern end of Algernon Drive near the closure point. Some measures - the introduction of double yellow lines at that end and also at all the junctions off Algernon Drive – have already been put in to restrict this. The area has been assessed for permit parking restrictions but did not meet the appropriate criteria but if the situation is likely to worsen scope for permit restrictions could be revisited. The Council, as Highway Authority, can keep this matter under review.

Concerns about car parking are noted. The application site provides no additional parking as the location and site topography do not allow for this. Given that there is currently capacity in the existing multi storey car park it would be difficult, given advice in NPPF regarding maximum standards, to require additional parking in association with a public transport scheme. The outline travel plan notes that it is desirable to discourage travellers driving to the station right from its opening. In this context, the provision of additional parking would not help to make driving a less attractive option. It is noted that Nexus indicate the current spare capacity in the existing car park cannot be guaranteed but this in itself is not considered to be a basis to require additional parking. As noted above, parking in residential streets will be monitored and measures can be taken to mitigate any issues. Measures to discourage travel to the station by car will be a travel plan requirement. The Highway Network Manager has not raised any objections on these grounds.

No additional cycle parking is proposed as there is capacity in the existing car park. Whilst the application site does not lend itself to on site cycle parking, a condition is recommended to ensure that there is a further review of existing provision before the station becomes operational.

Fundamentally this proposal seeks to introduce an enhance public transport option so as to divert current car journeys onto a train service. This will bring regional benefits. No local traffic and transport impacts have been identified and the proposal is considered to comply with relevant national and local highway policies and guidance.

#### Conclusion

The application is considered to comply with the relevant national and local planning policy and guidance set out in this report. There are a range of socio economic benefits associate with the wider scheme, the delivery of which has been an ambition of Northumberland County Council, North Tyneside Council and Newcastle City Council for some years. The wider scheme will improve opportunities for more sustainable travel in the region and this complies with a key aim of planning policy. The location of the station itself is sustainable as it offers good access to the metro system and bus services for sustainable onward travel.

The design is functional but in keeping with this urban area and is considered to offer a safe and attractive environment and will not give rise to harmful impacts which cannot be mitigated.

Conditions are recommended to mitigate the biodiversity impacts arising from the loss of existing landscaping and habitat and the adverse effects of construction as far as possible.

RECOMMENDATION:            Application Permitted

#### Conditions/Reasons:

1. The development to which the permission relates shall be carried out in complete accordance with the approved plans and documents as listed below:

- |           |   |
|-----------|---|
| Plans     |   |
| 1.        | 60601435-ACM-XX-ZZ-DRG-LEP-000010 (Rev P01.1) Site Location Plan                                      |
| 2.        | 60601435-ACM-01-PL-DRG-ECV-000001 (Rev: P01) Existing general arrangement                             |
| 3.        | 60601435-ACM-01-PL-DRG-ECV-000002 ( Rev: P01) Proposed General Arrangement                            |
| 4.        | 60601435-ACM-01-PL-DRG-ECV-000003 (Rev: P01) East Access General Arrangement                          |
| 5.        | 60601435-ACM-01-ZZ-DRG-ECV-000001 (Rev: P01) Planning Drawing General Arrangement                     |
| 6.        | 60601435-ACM-01-ZZ-DRG-ECV-000002 (Rev: P01) Sections 1 Planning Drawing                              |
| 7.        | 60601435-ACM-01-PL-DRG-ECV-000006 (Rev: P01) Platform Services General Arrangement                    |
| 8.        | 60601435-ACM-01-PL-DRG-ECV-000008 (Rev: P01) Sections 1 Platform and Slope Re-Grade                   |
| 9.        | 60601435-ACM-01-PL-DRG-ECV-000009 (Rev: P01) Sections 2 Steelwork & Wall Sections                     |
| 10.       | 60601435-ACM-XX-ZZ-DRG-EPT-400001 (Rev: P02) E&P Proposed Lighting Layout Northumberland Park Station |
| 11.       | 60601435-ACM-XX-ZZ-DRG-EEN-000505 (Rev: P01) Landscape Design   |
| 12.       | 60601435-ACM-01-ZZ-DRG-ECV-000004 (Rev: P02) Northumberland Park Planning drawing walkway             |
| Documents |   |
| 1.        | 60601435-SLC-P-270-NP-PS (V.07) Northumberland Park Planning Statement                                |

2. 60601435-SLC-P-270-NP-DAS (V.05) Northumberland Park Design and Access Statement
3. 60601435-SLC-P-270-NP-LTVO (v.05) Northumberland Park - Landscape, Townscape and Visual Overview
4. 60601435-SLC-P-270-NP-LTVO-FIGURES Northumberland Park - LTVO Figures
5. 60601435-SLC-P-270-SD-CEMP (V.04) Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan
6. Northumberland Park - Level 2 Flood Risk Assessment (D02)
7. Air Quality Assessment (V01)
8. 60601435-ACM-XX-ZZ-REP-EEN-000028 (R1) Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA)
9. 60601435-SLC-P-270-NP-ECIA (V02) Ecological Impact Assessment (including net gain statement)
10. 60601435-SLC-P-270-NP-SCE (V03) Statement of Community Engagement
11. TA\_Northumberland Line- Npark (V.4) Transport Assessment
12. Noise and Vibration Assessment
13. 60601435-ACM-07-ZZ-REP-EGE-000001 (P01) Preliminary Sources Study Report
14. 60601435-SLC-P-270-NP-HW (V.04) Health and Wellbeing Statement
15. Services and utilities Statement
16. Outline Travel Plan (V.04)
17. 60601435-ACM-01-ZZ-REP-EGE-000002 (P01) Coal Mining Risk Assessment
18. Supplementary Submission\_ Emergency Egress\_ 200521 (V.01)

Reason: To ensure that the development as carried out does not vary from the approved plans and documents.

2 Standard Time Limit 3 Years FUL MAN02

3. Notwithstanding Condition 1 and pursuant to the submitted Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) (SLC Property January 2021) no development shall commence until a detailed Construction Method Statement and CEMP which set out control measures and standards to be implemented for the duration of the construction period, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved statement and CEMP shall:

- identify the traffic management arrangements including access to the site for all site operatives (including those delivering materials) and visitors and the parking to be provided for the vehicles of site operatives and visitors;
- indicate the route for heavy construction vehicles to and from the site;
- identify a turning area within the site for delivery vehicles;
- provide details of a dust suppression scheme (which shall include measures to include mechanical street cleaning, and/or provision of water bowsters, and/or wheel washing and/or road cleaning facilities, and any other wheel cleaning solutions and dust suppressions measures considered appropriate to the size of the development).

The statements shall also provide details of the site compound(s) including:



- identifying the locations of welfare facilities and for the storage of plant (silos etc) and materials used in constructing the development and provide details of the arrangements for their unloading;

- identify the location of any fuels and waste to be stored;
- provide details of any concrete mixing facilities.

The scheme shall be designed and laid out to ensure that no cabins shall be placed, nor materials or plant placed or stored, and no parking areas are located within the root protection area (RPA) of the retained trees as defined by the Tree Protection Plan.

The scheme must include a site plan illustrating the location of facilities for each phase of the development. The approved statement shall be implemented and complied with during and for the life of the works associated with the development.

Reason: This information is required pre development to ensure that the site set up does not impact on highway safety, pedestrian safety, retained trees (where necessary) and residential amenity having regard to policies DM5.19 and DM7.4 of the North Tyneside Local Plan (2017) and National Planning Policy Framework.

4. Construction shall not commence on any part of the development other than the construction of a temporary site access and site set up until the scheme for the provision of wheel washing facilities and mechanical sweepers to prevent mud and debris onto the public highway as required by condition 3 has been implemented and the approved measures are available for use. The agreed measures must remain fully operational for the duration of the construction of the development hereby approved and if the agreed measures are not operational then no vehicles shall exit the development site onto the public highway.

Reason: This information is required pre development to ensure that the adoptable highway(s) is kept free from mud and debris in the interests of highway safety having regard to policies DM5.19 and DM7.4 of the North Tyneside Local Plan (2017) and National Planning Policy Framework.

5. Prior to the commencement of any phase of the development, in accordance with the Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment (AECOM November 2020) and the outline Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) (SLC Property January 2021) a detailed construction noise and vibration assessment, which is in accordance with BS5228 for that phase must be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. As set out in section 7 of the Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment the plan shall detail the construction works and methodologies, measures for the control and reduction of noise emissions associated with the construction works, including the use of permanent acoustic fencing or the temporary use of acoustic screens during construction, a communication scheme setting out the steps which will be taken to give notice to residents of night time working and a process for responding to complaints, details of predicted noise levels at the nearest sensitive receptors for the phase. The works on each phase shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plan for that phase. On approval the applicant will be required to carry out noise monitoring to validate noise levels. All complaints and noise monitoring results must be made available to the Local Planning Authority on request within 7 working days.

Reason: To ensure that the development is designed to mitigate the identified construction and operational noise and vibration impacts to protect residential amenity having regard to policy DM5.19 of the North Tyneside Local Plan (2017) and National Planning Policy Framework.

6. No development shall commence until;

- a) a scheme of intrusive investigations has been carried out on site to establish the risks posed to the development by past coal mining activity, and;

b) any remediation works and/or mitigation measures to address land instability arising from coal mining legacy, as may be necessary, have been implemented on site in full in order to ensure that the site is safe and stable for the development proposed.

The intrusive site investigations and remedial works shall be carried out in accordance with authoritative UK guidance.

Reason: The undertaking of intrusive site investigations, prior to the commencement of development, is considered to be necessary to ensure that adequate information pertaining to ground conditions and coal mining legacy is available to enable appropriate remedial and mitigatory measures to be identified and carried out before building works commence on site to ensure the safety and stability of the development, in accordance with paragraphs 178 and 179 of the National Planning Policy Framework and having regard to policy DM5.18 of the North Tyneside Local Plan (2017).

7. Prior to the occupation of the development, or it being taken into beneficial use, a signed statement or declaration prepared by a suitably competent person confirming that the site is, or has been made, safe and stable for the approved development shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority for approval in writing. This document shall confirm the methods and findings of the intrusive site investigations and the completion of any remedial works and/or mitigation necessary to address the risks posed by past coal mining activity.

Reason: To ensure the implementation of remedial and mitigatory measures required by the intrusive site investigation to ensure the safety and stability of the development, in accordance with paragraphs 178 and 179 of the National Planning Policy Framework and having regard to policy DM5.18 of the North Tyneside Local Plan (2017).

8. There shall no deliveries by Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs) to the construction site outside the hours of 0800-1800 Monday-Friday and 0800-1600 on Saturday unless otherwise approved in advance in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To protect residential amenity and manage noise levels at the nearest sensitive receptors in accordance with policy DM5.19 of the North Tyneside Local Plan (2017).

9. Construction works shall not commence until a scheme for surface water management has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The following details will be required:

- Information about the design storm period and intensity
- Provision for climate change
- Method of attenuation
- Measures to control the discharge rate into the surrounding network
- Measures taken to prevent pollution into the surrounding network both during the construction period and on completion of the development
- Provision of a management and maintenance plan for the lifetime of the development

This scheme shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details prior to the station becoming operational.

Reason: To ensure there is a satisfactory means of drainage and prevent the increased risk of flooding from any sources in accordance with the NPPF and Policy DM5.12 of the North Tyneside Local Plan 2017.

10. No development shall take place until plans of the site showing the existing and proposed ground levels has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Such levels shall be shown in relation to a fixed and known datum point. Thereafter, the development shall not be carried out other than in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: This needs to be pre-commencement condition to ensure that the work is carried out at suitable levels in relation to adjoining properties and highways, having regard to amenity, access, highway and drainage requirements having regard to policy DM6.1 of the North Tyneside Local Plan (2017).

11. All operations including the use of cranes or other mechanical plant working adjacent to Nexus Rail's property must at all times be carried out in a fail safe manner such that in the event of mishandling, collapse or failure, no materials or plant are capable of falling within 3.0m of the nearest rail of the adjacent railway line or within 3.0m of overhead electrical equipment or supports. No cranes or plant will be permitted to oversail Nexus Rail property, overhead lines or track.

Reason: To minimise the risk of any health and safety impacts on adjoining operational railway land.

12. The station shall not be operational until a refuse and waste recycling management plan and servicing plan for the site has been submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local planning Authority. These shall include details of the provision of litter and recycling bins and the arrangements for the collection of refuse and recycling from the station both during construction and once operational and the operational arrangements for access to the station and parking for maintenance vehicles for on-going servicing and maintenance. Thereafter refuse and waste recycling management and site servicing shall take place in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and visual amenity and to ensure the safety and security of users of the station and surrounding occupiers having regard to policy DM6.1 of the North Tyneside Local Plan (2017).

13. All works shall be undertaken in accordance with the submitted Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AECOM December 2020) and the Tree Protection Plan (set out in Appendix D of the AIA). If there are any changes to the design of the development hereby approved, a revised AIA and Tree Protection Plan, which shall also be informed by the requirements in BS 5837:2012 Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction, shall be submitted for the approval of the Local Planning Authority. No development or other operations, including any works within the root protection area (RPA) of the retained trees, including but not limited to kerb installation, fence post installation, lighting and drainage installation shall take place except in accordance with the approved AIA or any approved revised AIA.

Reason: To ensure that important features are protected and retained in the interests of amenity and to ensure trees and hedges to be retained are adequately protected from damage during the execution of the works hereby permitted, in the interests of visual amenity having regard to policy DM5.9 of the North Tyneside Local Plan (2017).

14. All tree pruning works shall be carried out in full accordance with the approved specification and the requirements of British Standard 3998: 2010 - Recommendations for Tree Works, detail of which are to be submitted for approval.

Reason: To ensure the satisfactory retention of existing trees in the interests of visual amenity having regard to policy DM5.9 of the North Tyneside Local Plan (2017).

15. Within one month from the start on site of any operations such as site excavation works, site clearance (including site strip) for the development, a fully detailed landscape plan shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority for approval. The fully detailed landscape scheme shall include planting proposals for both on site and off site compensation land that ensures biodiversity net gain is achieved in accordance with other planning conditions. Any new

standard tree planting is to be a minimum of 12-14cm girth. The landscaping scheme shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details within the first available planting season following the approval of details. New trees or shrubs planted adjacent to the Nexus operational railway boundary must be positioned at a minimum distance greater than their predicted height from that boundary. Evidence must be provided with the landscaping scheme to confirm that it has been approved by Nexus and is compliant with their requirements for planting in proximity to their operational land.

Reason: To ensure that important features are protected and retained in the interests of amenity and to ensure a satisfactory standard of landscaping having regard to policy DM5.9 of the North Tyneside Local Plan (2017) and to protect the safety of an operational railway line.

16. No trees, shrubs or hedges within the site which are shown as being retained on the approved landscaping plans required by condition 12 shall be felled, uprooted, wilfully damaged or destroyed, cut back in any way or removed during the development phase other than in accordance with the approved plans or without the prior written consent of the Local Planning Authority. Any trees, shrubs or hedges removed without such consent, or which die or become severely damaged or seriously diseased within three years from the completion of the development hereby permitted shall within the next planting season, i.e. October to March, be replaced by with trees, shrubs or hedge plants of similar size and species until the Local Planning Authority gives written consent to any variation.

Reason: To ensure the satisfactory retention of existing trees, shrubs and hedges and in the interests of visual amenity having regard to policy DM5.9 of the North Tyneside Local Plan (2017).

17. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the requirements of the submitted Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) (SLC Property January 2021). If there are any changes to the design of the development hereby approved, a revised EclA shall be submitted for the approval of the Local Planning Authority to ensure protected and priority species and habitats are appropriately assessed in accordance with any updated design plans associated with the scheme.

Reason: To ensure that local wildlife populations are protected in the interests of ecology having regard to the NPPF and Policy DM5.5 of the North Tyneside Local Plan (2017).

18. No vegetation removal or works to features (buildings) that could support nesting birds will take place during the bird nesting season (March-August inclusive) unless a survey by a suitably qualified ecologist has confirmed the absence of nesting birds immediately prior to works commencing.

Reason: To ensure that local wildlife populations are protected in the interests of ecology having regard to the NPPF and Policy DM5.5 of the North Tyneside Local Plan (2017).

19. Any excavations left open overnight shall have a means of escape for mammals that may become trapped in the form of a ramp at least 300mm in width and angled no greater than 45°.

Reason: To ensure that local wildlife populations are protected in the interests of ecology having regard to the NPPF and Policy DM5.5 of the North Tyneside Local Plan (2017).

20. No lighting will be installed during the construction works period without the approval of a Suitably Qualified Ecologist, in order to minimise the risk of adversely affecting nocturnal species such as bats.

Reason: To ensure that local wildlife populations are protected in the interests of ecology having regard to the NPPF and Policy DM5.5 of the North Tyneside Local Plan (2017).

21. Prior to the installation of any floodlighting or other form of external lighting at the station, a lighting scheme shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Lighting must be designed to minimise light spill to adjacent boundary features such as woodland, scrub, grassland and hedgerow habitats and should be less than 2 lux in these areas. The lighting scheme shall include the following information:

- a statement of frequency of use, and the hours of illumination;
- a site plan showing the area to be lit relative to the surrounding area, indicating parking or access arrangements where appropriate, and highlighting any significant existing or proposed landscape or boundary features;
- details of the number, location and height of the proposed lighting columns or other fixtures;
- the type, number, mounting height and alignment of the luminaires;
- the beam angles and upward waste light ratio for each light;
- an isolux diagram showing the predicted illuminance levels at critical locations on the boundary of the site and where the site abuts residential properties or the public highway to ensure compliance with the institute of lighting engineers Guidance Notes for the reduction of light pollution to prevent light glare and intrusive light for agreed environmental zone ; and
- where necessary, the percentage increase in luminance and the predicted illuminance in the vertical plane (in lux) at key points.

The lighting shall be installed in accordance with the approved scheme.

Reason: In the interest of visual amenity and/or highway safety having regard to policy DM5.19 of the North Tyneside Local Plan (2017).

22. Five bat boxes and five bird boxes will be provided within the development site. Details of bat and bird box specification and locations must be submitted the Local Planning Authority for approval prior to the development becoming operational. The bat and bird boxes shall be installed prior to the development becoming operational in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure that local wildlife populations are protected in the interests of ecology having regard to the NPPF and Policy DM5.5 of the North Tyneside Local Plan (2017).

23. No development shall commence unless and until a scheme ("the offsetting scheme") for the offsetting of biodiversity impacts at the site has been submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The offsetting scheme shall include:

- Details for on-site mitigation and a methodology for the identification of receptor site(s);
- The identification of receptor site (s);
- Details of the offset requirements of the development (in accordance with the recognised offsetting metrics standard outlined in the most up to date Defra Biodiversity Metric Guidance) to be submitted within a Biodiversity Net Gain Report with associated plans that achieve a minimum 10% Biodiversity Net Gain;
- The provision of arrangements to secure the delivery of the offsetting measures (including a timetable for their delivery) that will be implemented by the developer;
- A fully detailed Landscape & Ecology Management Plan to include for the provision and maintenance of the offsetting measures for a 30-year period. The plan shall include details of the design, management and monitoring objectives, management responsibilities, timescales and maintenance schedules for all newly created and/or enhanced habitats within the site. Thereafter, these areas shall be managed and maintained in full accordance with these agreed details unless first agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The plan will include the following:-

- Details on the creation, enhancement and management of all target habitats identified within the approved Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment Report and associated landscape plans for on-site and off-site mitigation/compensation.

- Survey and monitoring details for all target habitats identified within the Net Gain Assessment Report and associated Landscape Plans /Strategies. Monitoring Reports will be submitted to the LPA for review in years 3, 5 and 10 and 5 yearly thereafter, and will include a Net Gain Assessment update as part of the report to ensure habitats are reaching the specified target condition. Any changes to habitat management as part of this review will require approval in writing from the LPA. The Plan will be reviewed every 5 years in partnership with the LPA.

- Details of any corrective action that will be undertaken if habitat delivery fails to achieve the requirements set out in the approved Biodiversity Net Gain Report.

The written approval of the LPA shall not be issued before the arrangements necessary to secure the delivery of the off-setting measures have been executed. The offsetting scheme shall be implemented in full accordance with the requirements of the approved scheme.

Reason: This information is required from the outset in the interests of biodiversity having regard to policy DM5.5 of the North Tyneside Local Plan 2017.

24. Within 8 weeks of the commencement of the development hereby approved, details of all boundary walls, fences and any other means of enclosure shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority for approval. Thereafter the means of enclosure shall be constructed in accordance with the approved details before the development is operational. Any fencing which is required to be erected to provide noise mitigation for the operational station and agreed pursuant to condition 4, shall not be removed or altered without the prior written approval of the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure that the proposed development does not adversely affect the privacy and visual amenities at present enjoyed by the occupiers of neighbouring properties having regard to policies DM6.1 and DM5.19 of the North Tyneside Local Plan (2017).

25. Notwithstanding the details submitted, prior to the commencement of construction works, samples of all materials, colours and finishes to be used on all external surfaces shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter the development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity and to secure a satisfactory external appearance having regard to policy DM6.1 of the North Tyneside Local Plan 2017.

26. A scheme for the provision of a network of closed circuit television cameras (CCTV), including the proposed location of cameras, mounting columns or other fixing arrangements, details of the use and management of the system and of its installation shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority before the station hereby approved is brought into operational use. The CCTV system shall thereafter be installed in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In the interests of the safety and security of users of the station and surrounding occupiers having regard to policy DM6.1 of the North Tyneside Local Plan (2017).

27. Details of the passenger waiting shelters and any other passenger furniture, including help points, to be erected shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority before the station hereby approved is brought into operational use. Such details shall include the position and external appearance of the shelters. The shelters and any other station furniture shall thereafter be installed in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity and the safety and security of users of the station and surrounding occupiers having regard to policy DM6.1 of the North Tyneside Local Plan (2017).

28. Prior to the construction of the emergency egress path, detailed plans of the vertical and horizontal alignment of the path, the method of construction, including the identification of any trees or vegetation to be removed to facilitate its construction and details of the protection measures to be used to prevent damage to trees and vegetation to be retained, as well as details of its final surfacing, the size and position of lights and associated mounting posts as well as the measures to be installed to control the operation of the gate and lighting to restrict their use other than in the event of an emergency, and the management of the gate and lighting including the frequency and timing of any testing regime. Thereafter the emergency egress, lighting and gate shall be constructed and maintained in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In the interests of the safety and security of users of the station and surrounding occupiers having regard to policy DM6.1 of the North Tyneside Local Plan (2017).

29. Prior to any help points of other amplified public announcement system becoming operational, full details of the system shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Such details shall include the measures to be used to limit noise levels from any system when it is in use. Thereafter the system shall be installed in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To protect residential amenity and manage noise levels at the nearest sensitive receptors in accordance with policy DM5.19 of the North Tyneside Local Plan (2017).

30. No part of the development shall be occupied until a scheme for the provision of secure undercover cycle storage or an assessment to demonstrate that additional cycle parking is not required has been submitted to and approved by in writing the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter, this scheme shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details before the development is occupied.

Reason: In the interests of promoting sustainable transport having regard to policies S1.4 and DM7.3 of the North Tyneside Local Plan (2017).

31. Notwithstanding the details submitted in the Outline Travel Plan (Aecom April 2021), prior to the station becoming operational, a Full Travel Plan which accords with the Council's Travel Plan Scope, has been submitted to and approved by in writing the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter, the development shall be carried out in full accordance with the agreed Travel Plan. The Travel Plan will require the Travel Plan Coordinator to be in place three months prior to first occupation until at least five years from first occupation and will also include an undertaking to conduct travel surveys (baseline then in years 1, 3 and 5) to monitor whether the Travel Plan targets are being met with a Monitoring Report submitted to the council within two months of surveys being undertaken.

Reason: To accord with Central Government and Council Policy concerning sustainable transport.

Statement under Article 35 of the Town & Country (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015):

The proposal complies with the development plan and would improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. It therefore comprises sustainable development and the



Local Planning Authority worked proactively and positively to issue the decision without delay. The Local Planning Authority has therefore implemented the requirements in Paragraph 38 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

#### Informatives

Contact ERH Construct Highway Access ()

Contamination may be on Site ()

Contact ERH Works to Footway ()

No Doors Gates to Project Over Highways ()

Contact ERH Erect Scaffolding on Rd ()

Do Not Obstruct Highway Build Materials ()

Highway Inspection before dvlpt ()

The applicant is advised that free & full access to the Public Right of Way network will always need to be maintained. Should it be necessary for the protection of route users to temporarily close or divert an existing route during development, this should be agreed with the council's Public Rights of Way Officer.

The applicant is advised that prior to the commencement of works and upon the completion of the development the developer will need to the council's Public Rights of Way Officer to carry out a full joint inspection of the routes affected to be carried out. The developer will be responsible for the reinstatement of any damage to the network arising from the development.

## Appendix B

Northumberland Park station decision notice



**North Tyneside Council**

North Tyneside Council  
Planning, Quadrant  
The Silverlink North  
Cobalt Business Park  
North Tyneside  
NE27 0BY

Northumberland County Council  
C/O Alannah Healey  
72 B-Box Studios  
Newcastle  
NE2 1AN

Application No:  
**21/00299/FUL**

Date of decision issue:  
14 September 2021

**TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990**  
**Town and Country (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015**  
**(DMPO)**  
**Town and Country (Applications Regulations) 1988**

**GRANT OF PLANNING PERMISSION**

TAKE NOTICE that in pursuance of its powers under the above mentioned Act and Regulations North Tyneside Council as Local Planning Authority hereby **GRANTS** planning permission

**For: Construction of a new single platform railway station including: retaining wall, pedestrian lift, staircase and access from Algernon Drive modifications to existing bridge parapet. Construction of facilities ancillary to the station including, lighting, soft and hard landscaping, surface and subsurface drainage, utilities and other services, boundary treatment and other associated works (Additional information for emergency egress May 2021)**

**at: Northumberland Park Metro Station Station Road Backworth  
NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE**

in accordance with the application numbered 21/00299/FUL, deemed valid by the Council on 2 March 2021, and the plans stamped as approved on 14 September 2021.

**SUBJECT TO CONDITIONS as follows:**

1) The development to which the permission relates shall be carried out in complete accordance with the approved plans and documents as listed below:  
Plans

1. 60601435-ACM-XX-ZZ-DRG-LEP-000010 (Rev P01.1) Site Location Plan
2. 60601435-ACM-01-PL-DRG-ECV-000001 (Rev: P01) Existing general

arrangement

3. 60601435-ACM-01-PL-DRG-ECV-000002 ( Rev: P01) Proposed General Arrangement
  4. 60601435-ACM-01-PL-DRG-ECV-000003 (Rev: P01) East Access General Arrangement
  5. 60601435-ACM-01-ZZ-DRG-ECV-000001 (Rev: P01) Planning Drawing General Arrangement
  6. 60601435-ACM-01-ZZ-DRG-ECV-000002 (Rev: P01) Sections 1 Planning Drawing
  7. 60601435-ACM-01-PL-DRG-ECV-000006 (Rev: P01) Platform Services General Arrangement
  8. 60601435-ACM-01-PL-DRG-ECV-000008 (Rev: P01) Sections 1 Platform and Slope Re-Grade
  9. 60601435-ACM-01-PL-DRG-ECV-000009 (Rev: P01) Sections 2 Steelwork & Wall Sections
  10. 60601435-ACM-XX-ZZ-DRG-EPT-400001 (Rev: P02) E&P Proposed Lighting Layout Northumberland Park Station
  11. 60601435-ACM-XX-ZZ-DRG-EEN-000505 (Rev: P01) Landscape Design
  12. 60601435-ACM-01-ZZ-DRG-ECV-000004 (Rev: P02) Northumberland Park Planning drawing walkway
- Documents
1. 60601435-SLC-P-270-NP-PS (V.07) Northumberland Park Planning Statement
  2. 60601435-SLC-P-270-NP-DAS (V.05) Northumberland Park Design and Access Statement
  3. 60601435-SLC-P-270-NP-LTVO (v.05) Northumberland Park - Landscape, Townscape and Visual Overview
  4. 60601435-SLC-P-270-NP-LTVO-FIGURES Northumberland Park - LTVO Figures
  5. 60601435-SLC-P-270-SD-CEMP (V.04) Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan
  6. Northumberland Park - Level 2 Flood Risk Assessment (D02)
  7. Air Quality Assessment (V01)
  8. 60601435-ACM-XX-ZZ-REP-EEN-000028 (R1) Arboricultural Impact Assesment (AIA)
  9. 60601435-SLC-P-270-NP-ECIA (V02) Ecological Impact Assessment (including net gain statement)
  10. 60601435-SLC-P-270-NP-SCE (V03) Statement of Community Engagement
  11. TA\_Northumberland Line- Npark (V.4) Transport Assessment
  12. Noise and Vibration Assessment
  13. 60601435-ACM-07-ZZ-REP-EGE-000001 (P01) Preliminary Sources Study Report
  14. 60601435-SLC-P-270-NP-HW (V.04) Health and Wellbeing Statement
  15. Services and utilities Statement
  16. Outline Travel Plan (V.04)
  17. 60601435-ACM-01-ZZ-REP-EGE-000002 (P01) Coal Mining Risk Assessment
  18. Supplementary Submission\_ Emergency Egress\_ 200521 (V.01)

Reason: To ensure that the development as carried out does not vary from the approved plans and documents.

2) The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with the requirements of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

3) Notwithstanding Condition 1 and pursuant to the submitted Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) (SLC Property January 2021) no development shall commence until a detailed Construction Method Statement and CEMP which set out control measures and standards to be implemented for the duration of the construction period, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved statement and CEMP shall:

- identify the traffic management arrangements including access to the site for all site operatives (including those delivering materials) and visitors and the parking to be provided for the vehicles of site operatives and visitors;
- indicate the route for heavy construction vehicles to and from the site;
- identify a turning area within the site for delivery vehicles;
- provide details of a dust suppression scheme (which shall include measures to include mechanical street cleaning, and/or provision of water bowsers, and/or wheel washing and/or road cleaning facilities, and any other wheel cleaning solutions and dust suppressions measures considered appropriate to the size of the development).

The statements shall also provide details of the site compound(s) including:

- identifying the locations of welfare facilities and for the storage of plant (silos etc) and materials used in constructing the development and provide details of the arrangements for their unloading;
- identify the location of any fuels and waste to be stored;
- provide details of any concrete mixing facilities.

The scheme shall be designed and laid out to ensure that no cabins shall be placed, nor materials or plant placed or stored, and no parking areas are located within the root protection area (RPA) of the retained trees as defined by the Tree Protection Plan.

The scheme must include a site plan illustrating the location of facilities for each phase of the development. The approved statement shall be implemented and complied with during and for the life of the works associated with the development.

Reason: This information is required pre development to ensure that the site set up does not impact on highway safety, pedestrian safety, retained trees (where necessary) and residential amenity having regard to policies DM5.19 and DM7.4 of the North Tyneside Local Plan (2017) and National Planning Policy Framework.

4) Construction shall not commence on any part of the development other than the construction of a temporary site access and site set up until the scheme for the provision of wheel washing facilities and mechanical sweepers to prevent mud and debris onto the public highway as required by condition 3 has been implemented and the approved measures are available for use. The agreed measures must remain fully operational for the duration of the construction of the development hereby approved and if the agreed measures are not operational then no vehicles shall exit the development site onto the public highway.

Reason: This information is required pre development to ensure that the adoptable highway(s) is kept free from mud and debris in the interests of highway safety having regard to policies DM5.19 and DM7.4 of the North Tyneside Local Plan (2017) and National Planning Policy Framework.

5) Prior to the commencement of any phase of the development, in accordance with the Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment (AECOM November 2020) and the outline Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) (SLC Property January 2021) a detailed construction noise and vibration assessment, which is in accordance with BS5228 for that phase must be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. As set out in section 7 of the Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment the plan shall detail the construction works and methodologies, measures for the control and reduction of noise emissions associated with the construction works, including the use of permanent acoustic fencing or the temporary use of acoustic screens during construction, a communication scheme setting out the steps which will be taken to give notice to residents of night time working and a process for responding to complaints, details of predicted noise levels at the nearest sensitive receptors for the phase. The works on each phase shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plan for that phase. On approval the applicant will be required to carry out noise monitoring to validate noise levels. All complaints and noise monitoring results must be made available to the Local Planning Authority on request within 7 working days.  
Reason: To ensure that the development is designed to mitigate the identified construction and operational noise and vibration impacts to protect residential amenity having regard to policy DM5.19 of the North Tyneside Local Plan (2017) and National Planning Policy Framework.

6) No development shall commence until;  
a) a scheme of intrusive investigations has been carried out on site to establish the risks posed to the development by past coal mining activity, and;  
b) any remediation works and/or mitigation measures to address land instability arising from coal mining legacy, as may be necessary, have been implemented on site in full in order to ensure that the site is safe and stable for the development proposed.

The intrusive site investigations and remedial works shall be carried out in accordance with authoritative UK guidance.

Reason: The undertaking of intrusive site investigations, prior to the commencement of development, is considered to be necessary to ensure that adequate information pertaining to ground conditions and coal mining legacy is available to enable appropriate remedial and mitigatory measures to be identified and carried out before building works commence on site to ensure the safety and stability of the development, in accordance with paragraphs 178 and 179 of the National Planning Policy Framework and having regard to policy DM5.18 of the North Tyneside Local Plan (2017).

7) Prior to the occupation of the development, or it being taken into beneficial use, a signed statement or declaration prepared by a suitably competent person confirming that the site is, or has been made, safe and stable for the approved development shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority for approval in writing. This document shall confirm the methods and findings of the intrusive site investigations and the completion of any remedial works and/or mitigation necessary to address the risks posed by past coal mining activity.

Reason: To ensure the implementation of remedial and mitigatory measures required by the intrusive site investigation to ensure the safety and stability of the development, in accordance with paragraphs 178 and 179 of the National Planning Policy Framework and having regard to policy DM5.18 of the North Tyneside Local Plan (2017).

8) There shall no deliveries by Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs) to the construction site outside the hours of 0800-1800 Monday-Friday and 0800-1600 on Saturday unless otherwise approved in advance in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To protect residential amenity and manage noise levels at the nearest sensitive receptors in accordance with policy DM5.19 of the North Tyneside Local Plan (2017).

9) Construction works shall not commence until a scheme for surface water management has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The following details will be required:

- Information about the design storm period and intensity
- Provision for climate change
- Method of attenuation
- Measures to control the discharge rate into the surrounding network
- Measures taken to prevent pollution into the surrounding network both during the construction period and on completion of the development
- Provision of a management and maintenance plan for the lifetime of the development

This scheme shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details prior to the station becoming operational.

Reason: To ensure there is a satisfactory means of drainage and prevent the increased risk of flooding from any sources in accordance with the NPPF and Policy DM5.12 of the North Tyneside Local Plan 2017.

10) No development shall take place until plans of the site showing the existing and proposed ground levels has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Such levels shall be shown in relation to a fixed and known datum point. Thereafter, the development shall not be carried out other than in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: This needs to be pre-commencement condition to ensure that the work is carried out at suitable levels in relation to adjoining properties and highways, having regard to amenity, access, highway and drainage requirements having regard to policy DM6.1 of the North Tyneside Local Plan (2017).

11) All operations including the use of cranes or other mechanical plant working adjacent to Nexus Rail's property must at all times be carried out in a fail safe manner such that in the event of mishandling, collapse or failure, no materials or plant are capable of falling within 3.0m of the nearest rail of the adjacent railway line or within 3.0m of overhead electrical equipment or supports. No cranes or plant will be permitted to oversail Nexus Rail property, overhead lines or track.

Reason: To minimise the risk of any health and safety impacts on adjoining operational railway land.

12) The station shall not be operational until a refuse and waste recycling management plan and servicing plan for the site has been submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local planning Authority. These shall include details of the provision of litter and recycling bins and the arrangements for the collection of refuse and recycling from the station both during construction and once operational and the operational arrangements for access to the station and parking for maintenance vehicles for on-going servicing and maintenance. Thereafter refuse and waste recycling management and site servicing shall

take place in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and visual amenity and to ensure the safety and security of users of the station and surrounding occupiers having regard to policy DM6.1 of the North Tyneside Local Plan (2017).

13) All works shall be undertaken in accordance with the submitted Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AECOM December 2020) and the Tree Protection Plan (set out in Appendix D of the AIA). If there are any changes to the design of the development hereby approved, a revised AIA and Tree Protection Plan, which shall also be informed by the requirements in BS 5837:2012 Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction, shall be submitted for the approval of the Local Planning Authority. No development or other operations, including any works within the root protection area (RPA) of the retained trees, including but not limited to kerb installation, fence post installation, lighting and drainage installation shall take place except in accordance with the approved AIA or any approved revised AIA.

Reason: To ensure that important features are protected and retained in the interests of amenity and to ensure trees and hedges to be retained are adequately protected from damage during the execution of the works hereby permitted, in the interests of visual amenity having regard to policy DM5.9 of the North Tyneside Local Plan (2017).

14) All tree pruning works shall be carried out in full accordance with the approved specification and the requirements of British Standard 3998: 2010 - Recommendations for Tree Works, detail of which are to be submitted for approval.

Reason: To ensure the satisfactory retention of existing trees in the interests of visual amenity having regard to policy DM5.9 of the North Tyneside Local Plan (2017).

15) Within one month from the start on site of any operations such as site excavation works, site clearance (including site strip) for the development, a fully detailed landscape plan shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority for approval. The fully detailed landscape scheme shall include planting proposals for both on site and off site compensation land that ensures biodiversity net gain is achieved in accordance with other planning conditions. Any new standard tree planting is to be a minimum of 12-14cm girth. The landscaping scheme shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details within the first available planting season following the approval of details. New trees or shrubs planted adjacent to the Nexus operational railway boundary must be positioned at a minimum distance greater than their predicted height from that boundary. Evidence must be provided with the landscaping scheme to confirm that it has been approved by Nexus and is compliant with their requirements for planting in proximity to their operational land.

Reason: To ensure that important features are protected and retained in the interests of amenity and to ensure a satisfactory standard of landscaping having regard to policy DM5.9 of the North Tyneside Local Plan (2017) and to protect the safety of an operational railway line.

16) No trees, shrubs or hedges within the site which are shown as being retained on the approved landscaping plans required by condition 12 shall be felled, uprooted, wilfully damaged or destroyed, cut back in any way or removed during the development phase other than in accordance with the approved plans or without the prior written consent of the Local Planning



Authority. Any trees, shrubs or hedges removed without such consent, or which die or become severely damaged or seriously diseased within three years from the completion of the development hereby permitted shall within the next planting season, i.e. October to March, be replaced by with trees, shrubs or hedge plants of similar size and species until the Local Planning Authority gives written consent to any variation.

Reason: To ensure the satisfactory retention of existing trees, shrubs and hedges and in the interests of visual amenity having regard to policy DM5.9 of the North Tyneside Local Plan (2017).

17) Development shall be carried out in accordance with the requirements of the submitted Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) (SLC Property January 2021). If there are any changes to the design of the development hereby approved, a revised EclA shall be submitted for the approval of the Local Planning Authority to ensure protected and priority species and habitats are appropriately assessed in accordance with any updated design plans associated with the scheme.

Reason: To ensure that local wildlife populations are protected in the interests of ecology having regard to the NPPF and Policy DM5.5 of the North Tyneside Local Plan (2017).

18) No vegetation removal or works to features (buildings) that could support nesting birds will take place during the bird nesting season (March-August inclusive) unless a survey by a suitably qualified ecologist has confirmed the absence of nesting birds immediately prior to works commencing.

Reason: To ensure that local wildlife populations are protected in the interests of ecology having regard to the NPPF and Policy DM5.5 of the North Tyneside Local Plan (2017).

19) Any excavations left open overnight shall have a means of escape for mammals that may become trapped in the form of a ramp at least 300mm in width and angled no greater than 45°.

Reason: To ensure that local wildlife populations are protected in the interests of ecology having regard to the NPPF and Policy DM5.5 of the North Tyneside Local Plan (2017).

20) No lighting will be installed during the construction works period without the approval of a Suitably Qualified Ecologist, in order to minimise the risk of adversely affecting nocturnal species such as bats.

Reason: To ensure that local wildlife populations are protected in the interests of ecology having regard to the NPPF and Policy DM5.5 of the North Tyneside Local Plan (2017).

21) Prior to the installation of any floodlighting or other form of external lighting at the station, a lighting scheme shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Lighting must be designed to minimise light spill to adjacent boundary features such as woodland, scrub, grassland and hedgerow habitats and should be less than 2 lux in these areas. The lighting scheme shall include the following information:

- a statement of frequency of use, and the hours of illumination;
- a site plan showing the area to be lit relative to the surrounding area, indicating parking or access arrangements where appropriate, and highlighting any significant existing or proposed landscape or boundary features;

- details of the number, location and height of the proposed lighting columns or other fixtures;
- the type, number, mounting height and alignment of the luminaires;
- the beam angles and upward waste light ratio for each light;
- an isolux diagram showing the predicted illuminance levels at critical locations on the boundary of the site and where the site abuts residential properties or the public highway to ensure compliance with the institute of lighting engineers Guidance Notes for the reduction of light pollution to prevent light glare and intrusive light for agreed environmental zone ; and
- where necessary, the percentage increase in luminance and the predicted illuminance in the vertical plane (in lux) at key points.

The lighting shall be installed in accordance with the approved scheme.

Reason: In the interest of visual amenity and/or highway safety having regard to policy DM5.19 of the North Tyneside Local Plan (2017).

22) Five bat boxes and five bird boxes will be provided within the development site. Details of bat and bird box specification and locations must be submitted the Local Planning Authority for approval prior to the development becoming operational. The bat and bird boxes shall be installed prior to the development becoming operational in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure that local wildlife populations are protected in the interests of ecology having regard to the NPPF and Policy DM5.5 of the North Tyneside Local Plan (2017).

23) No development shall commence unless and until a scheme ("the offsetting scheme") for the offsetting of biodiversity impacts at the site has been submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The offsetting scheme shall include:

- Details for on-site mitigation and a methodology for the identification of receptor site(s);
- The identification of receptor site (s);
- Details of the offset requirements of the development (in accordance with the recognised offsetting metrics standard outlined in the most up to date Defra Biodiversity Metric Guidance) to be submitted within a Biodiversity Net Gain Report with associated plans that achieve a minimum 10% Biodiversity Net Gain;
- The provision of arrangements to secure the delivery of the offsetting measures (including a timetable for their delivery) that will be implemented by the developer;
- A fully detailed Landscape & Ecology Management Plan to include for the provision and maintenance of the offsetting measures for a 30-year period. The plan shall include details of the design, management and monitoring objectives, management responsibilities, timescales and maintenance schedules for all newly created and/or enhanced habitats within the site. Thereafter, these areas shall be managed and maintained in full accordance with these agreed details unless first agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The plan will include the following:-
- Details on the creation, enhancement and management of all target habitats identified within the approved Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment Report and associated landscape plans for on-site and off-site mitigation/compensation.
- Survey and monitoring details for all target habitats identified within the Net Gain Assessment Report and associated Landscape Plans /Strategies. Monitoring Reports will be submitted to the LPA for review in years 3, 5 and 10 and 5 yearly thereafter, and will include a Net Gain Assessment update as

part of the report to ensure habitats are reaching the specified target condition. Any changes to habitat management as part of this review will require approval in writing from the LPA. The Plan will be reviewed every 5 years in partnership with the LPA.

- Details of any corrective action that will be undertaken if habitat delivery fails to achieve the requirements set out in the approved Biodiversity Net Gain Report.

The written approval of the LPA shall not be issued before the arrangements necessary to secure the delivery of the off-setting measures have been executed. The offsetting scheme shall be implemented in full accordance with the requirements of the approved scheme.

Reason: This information is required from the outset in the interests of biodiversity having regard to policy DM5.5 of the North Tyneside Local Plan 2017.

24) Within 8 weeks of the commencement of the development hereby approved, details of all boundary walls, fences and any other means of enclosure shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority for approval. Thereafter the means of enclosure shall be constructed in accordance with the approved details before the development is operational. Any fencing which is required to be erected to provide noise mitigation for the operational station and agreed pursuant to condition 4, shall not be removed or altered without the prior written approval of the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure that the proposed development does not adversely affect the privacy and visual amenities at present enjoyed by the occupiers of neighbouring properties having regard to policies DM6.1 and DM5.19 of the North Tyneside Local Plan (2017).

25) Notwithstanding the details submitted, prior to the commencement of construction works, samples of all materials, colours and finishes to be used on all external surfaces shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter the development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity and to secure a satisfactory external appearance having regard to policy DM6.1 of the North Tyneside Local Plan 2017.

26) A scheme for the provision of a network of closed circuit television cameras (CCTV), including the proposed location of cameras, mounting columns or other fixing arrangements, details of the use and management of the system and of its installation shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority before the station hereby approved is brought into operational use. The CCTV system shall thereafter be installed in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In the interests of the safety and security of users of the station and surrounding occupiers having regard to policy DM6.1 of the North Tyneside Local Plan (2017).

27) Details of the passenger waiting shelters and any other passenger furniture, including help points, to be erected shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority before the station hereby approved is brought into operational use. Such details shall include the position and external appearance of the shelters. The shelters and any other station furniture shall thereafter be installed in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity and the safety and security of users of the station and surrounding occupiers having regard to policy DM6.1 of the North Tyneside Local Plan (2017).

28) Prior to the construction of the emergency egress path, detailed plans of the vertical and horizontal alignment of the path, the method of construction, including the identification of any trees or vegetation to be removed to facilitate its construction and details of the protection measures to be used to prevent damage to trees and vegetation to be retained, as well as details of its final surfacing, the size and position of lights and associated mounting posts as well as the measures to be installed to control the operation of the gate and lighting to restrict their use other than in the event of an emergency, and the management of the gate and lighting including the frequency and timing of any testing regime. Thereafter the emergency egress, lighting and gate shall be constructed and maintained in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In the interests of the safety and security of users of the station and surrounding occupiers having regard to policy DM6.1 of the North Tyneside Local Plan (2017).

29) Prior to any help points of other amplified public announcement system becoming operational, full details of the system shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Such details shall include the measures to be used to limit noise levels from any system when it is in use. Thereafter the system shall be installed in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To protect residential amenity and manage noise levels at the nearest sensitive receptors in accordance with policy DM5.19 of the North Tyneside Local Plan (2017).

30) No part of the development shall be occupied until a scheme for the provision of secure undercover cycle storage or an assessment to demonstrate that additional cycle parking is not required has been submitted to and approved by in writing the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter, this scheme shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details before the development is occupied.

Reason: In the interests of promoting sustainable transport having regard to policies S1.4 and DM7.3 of the North Tyneside Local Plan (2017).

31) Notwithstanding the details submitted in the Outline Travel Plan (Aecom April 2021), prior to the station becoming operational, a Full Travel Plan which accords with the Council's Travel Plan Scope, has been submitted to and approved by in writing the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter, the development shall be carried out in full accordance with the agreed Travel Plan. The Travel Plan will require the Travel Plan Coordinator to be in place three months prior to first occupation until at least five years from first occupation and will also include an undertaking to conduct travel surveys (baseline then in years 1, 3 and 5) to monitor whether the Travel Plan targets are being met with a Monitoring Report submitted to the council within two months of surveys being undertaken.

Reason: To accord with Central Government and Council Policy concerning sustainable transport.

## **Statement under Article 35 of the Town & Country (Development**

## **Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015):**

The proposal complies with the development plan and would improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. It therefore comprises sustainable development and the Local Planning Authority worked proactively and positively to issue the decision without delay. The Local Planning Authority has therefore implemented the requirements in Paragraph 38 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

### **How did we do ?**

We would like to take this opportunity to thank you for working with us. We strive to provide our customers with a great customer experience and greatly rely on customer feedback to continuously improve the service we provide. We would be grateful if you could spare a moment to share your thoughts with us by completing this short customer survey: <http://www.northtyneside.gov.uk/snap/planning-services-2018/index.htm>;



Phil Scott  
Head of Environment, Housing and Leisure

**If you have any queries about this decision, please contact the case officer Aidan Dobinson Booth on 0191 643 6333 or email [aidan.dobinsonbooth@northtyneside.gov.uk](mailto:aidan.dobinsonbooth@northtyneside.gov.uk)**

## INFORMATION FOR APPLICANTS

- 1) The applicant is advised that the vehicular access to the highway must be constructed by or to the satisfaction of the Local Authority, please contact Highway Maintenance on tel no. 0191 643 6130 before any works are commenced.
- 2) Your attention is drawn to the fact that the responsibility for the safe development and secure occupancy of the site rests with the developer. The Local Planning Authority has determined this application on the basis of the information available to it, but this does not mean that the land is free from contamination.
- 3) The applicant is advised that a licence must be obtained from the Highways Authority before any works are carried out on the footway, carriageway verge or other land forming part of the highway. Please contact Highway Maintenance on tel no. 0191 643 6130.
- 4) The applicant is advised that no part of the gates or garage door may project over the highway at any time.
- 5) The permission hereby granted shall not be construed as authority to obstruct the public highway by the erection of scaffolding, hoarding or any other device or apparatus for which a licence must be sought from the Highways Authority. Please contact the Highway Maintenance on tel no. 0191 643 6130 for further information.
- 6) It is an offence to obstruct the public highway (footway and/or carriageway) by depositing materials without obtaining beforehand, and in writing, the permission of the Council as Highway Authority.

Such obstructions may lead to an accident, certainly cause inconvenience to pedestrians and drivers, and are a source of danger to children, elderly people and those pushing prams or buggies. They are a particular hazard to those who are disabled, either by lack of mobility or impaired vision.

Please assist the Council by instructing your building contractor and materials suppliers that obstruction of the highway will not be tolerated by the Council, which is prepared to take legal action against those responsible for such obstructions.

Should you find it impossible to avoid placing materials on the public highway, contact the Highways Maintenance Section (tel 0191 643 6130) in advance to discuss the circumstances. In such cases the Council may authorise the placing of materials subject to specified conditions being met.

- 7) Prior to any works commencing on site, the applicant should contact Highway Maintenance to arrange for an inspection of the highways adjacent to the site. The applicant should be aware that failure to do so may result in the Council pursuing them for costs of repairing any damage in the surrounding area on completion of construction. You can contact the Highway Maintenance team on tel. 0191 643 6130.

- 8) The applicant is advised that free & full access to the Public Right of Way network will always need to be maintained. Should it be necessary for

the protection of route users to temporarily close or divert an existing route during development, this should be agreed with the council's Public Rights of Way Officer.

9) The applicant is advised that prior to the commencement of works and upon the completion of the development the developer will need to the council's Public Rights of Way Officer to carry out a full joint inspection of the routes affected to be carried out. The developer will be responsible for the reinstatement of any damage to the network arising from the development.

**Note 1** A condition of this permission requires that the development shall be carried out in complete accordance with the approved plans. Failure to do so could render the development unauthorised. Any material change to the approved plans will require a formal planning application to vary this condition or apply for a non-material amendment to the plans and the approval of the Local Planning Authority prior to any change being made. If you require any further information or advice regarding this permission please contact Development Management on 0191 6432310.

**Note 2** This approval must not be construed as giving approval under Building Regulations or for improvement grant purposes. Building Regulations consent may be required for development involving the extension or construction of a building for which an application may be required. For further information telephone Building Control on 0191 6432200.

### Appeals to the Secretary of State

- If you are aggrieved by the decision of your local planning authority to refuse permission for the proposed development or to grant it subject to conditions, then you can appeal to the Secretary of State under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.
- If you want to appeal you must do so within six months of the date of this notice. Appeals can be made online at: <https://www.gov.uk/planning-inspectorate>. If you are unable to access the online appeal form, please contact the Planning Inspectorate to obtain a paper copy of the appeal form on tel: 0303 444 5000.
- If this decision on a planning application relates to the same or substantially the same land and development as is already the subject of an enforcement notice, if you want to appeal against your local planning authority's decision on your application, then you must do so within 28 days of the date of issue of this notice.
- If an enforcement notice is served relating to the same of substantially the same land and development as in your application and if you want to appeal against your local planning authority's decision on your application, then you must do so within: 28 days of the date of service of the enforcement notice, or within 6 months of the date of this notice whichever period expires earlier.
- The Secretary of State can allow a longer period for giving notice of an appeal, but he will not normally be prepared to use this power unless there are special circumstances which excuse the delay in giving notice of appeal.

- The Secretary of State need not consider an appeal if it seems to the Secretary of State that the local planning authority could not have granted planning permission for the proposed development or could not have granted it without the conditions they imposed, having regard to the statutory requirements, to the provisions of any development order and to any directions given under a development order.
- If you intend to submit an appeal that you would like examined by inquiry then you must notify the Local Planning Authority and Planning Inspectorate ([inquiryappeals@planninginspectorate.gov.uk](mailto:inquiryappeals@planninginspectorate.gov.uk)) at least 10 days before submitting the appeal. Further details are available at [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk).

## **Purchase Notices**

- If either the local planning authority or the Secretary of State refuses permission to develop land or grants it subject to conditions, the owner may claim that he can neither put the land to a reasonable beneficial use in its existing state nor can he render the land capable of a reasonable beneficial use by the carrying out of any development which has been or would be permitted.
- In these circumstances, the owner may serve a purchase notice on the Council (District Council, London Borough Council or Common Council of the City of London) in whose area the land is situated. This notice will require the Council to purchase his interest in the land in accordance with the provisions of Part VI of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

## **Compensation**

- In Certain circumstances compensation may be claimed from the local planning authority if permission is refused or granted subject to conditions by the Secretary of State on appeal or on reference of the application to him.  
These circumstances are set out in sections 114 and related provisions of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.



## Appendix C

### Seaton Delaval station planning statement



**SLC Property**

# **Planning Statement**

**Prepared in support of a planning  
application for a new railway  
station at Seaton Delaval**

**60601435-SLC-P-270-SD-PS**

# Content

<b>1</b>	<b>Introduction to the scheme .....</b>	<b>2</b>
1.1	Overview of the scheme.....	2
1.2	Seaton Delaval Station .....	2
1.3	Applicant and Agent .....	2
1.4	The Scheme.....	2
1.5	Supporting Information.....	4
1.6	Structure of this statement.....	5
<b>2</b>	<b>Background to the Proposed Development .....</b>	<b>6</b>
2.1	Introduction .....	6
2.2	Ambitions for a new passenger service .....	6
2.3	Ambitions for the railway station at Seaton Delaval.....	9
2.4	Committed Development.....	10
<b>3</b>	<b>Pre-application Engagement .....</b>	<b>12</b>
3.1	Introduction .....	12
3.2	Pre-application enquiries.....	12
3.3	Changes to the proposed development since receipt of pre-application response ...	13
3.4	Request for a Screening Opinion (RfSO) .....	13
3.5	Pre-submission stakeholder consultation (2019) .....	14
3.6	Pre-submission stakeholder consultation (2020).....	15
3.7	Summary .....	15
<b>4</b>	<b>Site Context .....</b>	<b>17</b>
4.1	Introduction .....	17
4.2	Historical Context.....	17
4.3	Planning History of the Site.....	18
4.4	Site Selection .....	19
4.5	Site Description.....	20
4.6	Site-specific environmental and land use constraints .....	21

<b>5</b>	<b>Proposed Development .....</b>	<b>23</b>
5.1	Introduction .....	23
5.2	Planning Application .....	23
5.3	Reasons for the proposed development.....	23
5.4	Elements of proposed development.....	24
5.5	Summary .....	26
<b>6</b>	<b>Planning Policy Context .....</b>	<b>27</b>
6.1	Introduction .....	27
6.2	Northumberland Development Plan .....	28
6.3	Blyth Valley Borough Local Development Framework Core Strategy (July 2007).....	30
6.4	Blyth Valley Borough Local Development Framework Development Control Policies Development Plan Document (September 2007) .....	31
6.5	Blyth Valley District Local Plan (May 1999).....	33
6.6	Northumberland Local Plan Regulation 19 Publication Draft (May 2019).....	34
6.7	National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).....	41
<b>7</b>	<b>Planning Assessment.....</b>	<b>46</b>
7.1	Introduction .....	46
7.2	Accordance with Northumberland Development Plan .....	46
7.3	Blyth Valley Borough Local Development Framework Core Strategy (July 2007).....	47
7.4	Blyth Valley Borough Local Development Framework Development Control Policies Development Plan Document (September 2007) .....	49
7.5	Blyth Valley District Local Plan (May 1999).....	54
7.6	Accordance with Northumberland Local Plan Regulation 19 Publication Draft (May 2019)	57
7.7	Accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework.....	71
7.8	The Planning Balance .....	79
<b>8</b>	<b>Material Considerations .....</b>	<b>83</b>
8.1	Introduction .....	83
8.2	National Design Guide (2019).....	83
8.3	Blyth Valley Urban Design Guide and Public Realm Strategy Supplementary Planning Document (2008) .....	84
8.4	Northumberland Local Transport Plan (LTP3) (2011) .....	84
8.5	North East Combined Authority Transport Manifesto (2016) .....	85

8.6	Transport for the North Strategic Transport Plan (2019).....	86
8.7	The Road to Zero Strategy (2018).....	86
8.8	Northumberland Economic Strategy (2018).....	87
8.9	Nexus Metro and Local Rail Strategy (2016).....	88
8.10	Summary .....	88
<b>9</b>	<b>Case for Planning Permission to be granted .....</b>	<b>89</b>
9.1	Introduction .....	89
9.2	Accordance with local and national policies.....	89
9.3	Benefits of the Scheme .....	89
9.4	Conditions .....	91
9.5	Additional information.....	94
<b>10</b>	<b>Appendix A- Economic Assessment.....</b>	<b>95</b>
<b>11</b>	<b>Appendix B- Adopted and Local Plan Policies Map.....</b>	<b>99</b>
11.1	Emerging Northumberland Local Plan policies map .....	99
11.2	Adopted Blyth Valley Local Plan policies map.....	100

## Table of Figures

Figure 1.1 Northumberland Line.....	3
Figure 2.1 Schedule of committed developments.....	10
Figure 4.1 Blyth and Tyne Railway Historic Network .....	17
Figure 4.2 Location of Seaton Delaval station (Ordnance Map, 1897; Google Earth, 2020).....	18
Figure 4.3 Planning History .....	19
Figure 4.4 Red Line Boundary Plan .....	21
Figure 4.5 Extract from Emerging Northumberland Local Plan Reg 19 Draft and Adopted Blyth Valley Local Plan .....	22
Figure 5.1 Proposed Site Layout .....	24
Figure 5.2 Schedule development proposals.....	25
Figure 7.1 Summary of policy compliance.....	82
Figure 9.1 Schedule of proposed conditions.....	93

# Document Control

## Version Control

Version No.	Date	Created/Modified by	Notes
V.07	27/05/2021	Alannah Healey/ Peter Gillan	Submission

## Approvals

Version No.	Name of approver	Title & organisation	Date
V.07	Allen Creedy	SLC Property	27/05/2021

# 1 Introduction to the scheme

## 1.1 Overview of the scheme

- 1.1.1 The scheme seeks to re-introduce passenger services onto the existing freight line between the city of Newcastle upon Tyne and the town of Ashington in Northumberland.
- 1.1.2 The railway line is known as the 'Northumberland Line' and was formerly known as the Ashington Blyth and Tyne Line (ABT). ['the scheme'].
- 1.1.3 The scheme includes the construction of six new railway stations and associated infrastructure. This planning statement has been prepared in support of the planning application for the proposed railway station and associated works at Seaton Delaval ['the application'].

## 1.2 Seaton Delaval Station

- 1.2.1 This planning statement supports and accompanies an application for planning permission for the development associated with the construction and operation of a new railway station at Seaton Delaval. Further details of the proposed development are provided in Section 5.

## 1.3 Applicant and Agent

- 1.3.1 SLC Property Ltd has been instructed on behalf of Northumberland County Council to prepare this planning application.

## 1.4 The Scheme

- 1.4.1 The Northumberland Line proposes to offer a direct passenger service between Newcastle Central to Ashington. It is anticipated that the proposed service will call at the existing Manors railway station and at six proposed new station sites at Northumberland Park, Seaton Delaval, Newsham, Bebside, Bedlington and Ashington. Figure 1.1 illustrates the locations of the six new railway stations.



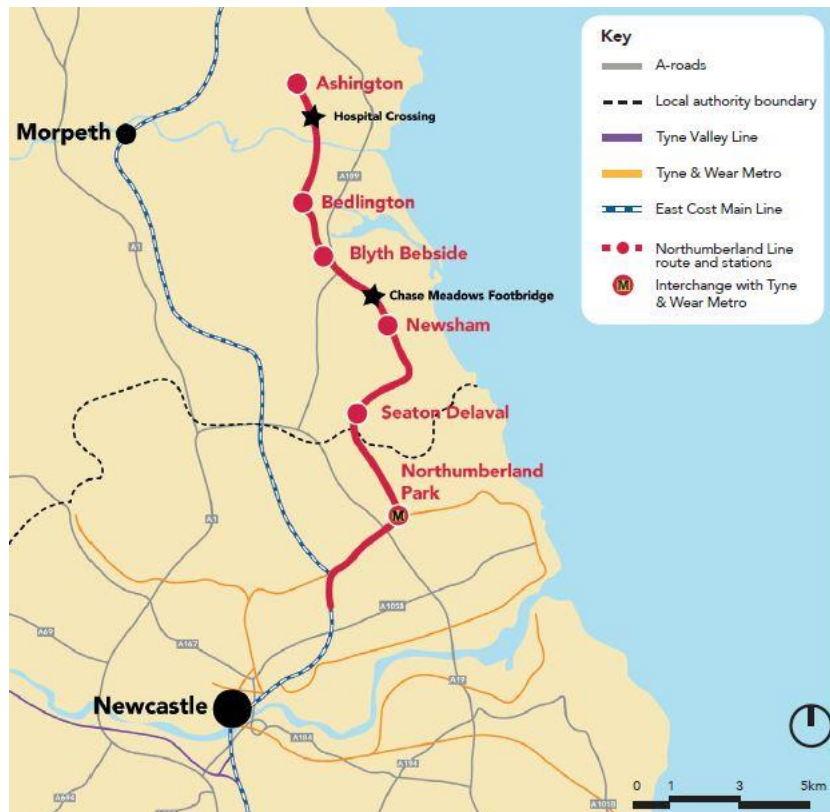


Figure 1.1 Northumberland Line

- 1.4.2 The scheme seeks to encourage a modal shift towards rail travel, assisting in reducing congestion and therefore improving journey times both on the local highway network, and for users of public transport. The scheme anticipates a journey time of approximately 35 minutes between Ashington and Newcastle.
- 1.4.3 The 'Northumberland Line' is located within the administrative areas of three local planning authorities.
- **Northumberland County Council (NCC):** Five of the six proposed railway stations are located within the NCC administrative boundary– Seaton Delaval, Newsham, Bebside, Bedlington and Ashington.
  - **North Tyneside Council (NTC):** The proposed railway station at Northumberland Park is located within NTC's administrative boundary.
  - **Newcastle City Council:** There are no new stations proposed within the Newcastle City Council administrative boundary, however passenger services along the Northumberland Line will operate to and from Newcastle Central station.



## 1.5 Supporting Information

- 1.5.1 The application for planning permission is accompanied by the supporting information identified as required by the local planning authority in discussions prior to submission. The nature, extent and scope of the supporting information is in accordance with the advice and recommendations given by officers of the local planning authority. The schedule of submitted information is summarised in Figure 1.2.

Document/Plan reference number	Name of document/Plan
60601435-ACM-XX-ZZ-DRG-LEP-000011	Site Location Plan
60601435-ACM-03-PL-DRG-ECV-000100	Existing General Arrangement Plan
60601435-ACM-03-ZZ-DRG-EHW-030010	Car Park Existing Public Utilities Layout
60601435-ACM-03-ZZ-DRG-EHW-030001	Car Park Highways General Arrangement
60601435-ACM-03-PL-DRG-ECV-000001	Platform General Arrangement
60601435-ACM-03-ZZ-DRG-EHW-030005	Car Park Drainage Layout Sheet 1 of 2
60601435-ACM-03-ZZ-DRG-EHW-030004	Car Park Drainage Layout Sheet 2 of 2
60601435-ACM-03-ZZ-DRG-EHW-030003	Carpark Highways - Typical cross sections Sheet 1 of 2
60601435-ACM-03-ZZ-DRG-EHW-030007	Carpark Highways - Typical cross sections Sheet 2 of 2
60601435-ACM-03-ZZ-DRG-EHW-030006	Car Park Traffic sign and road marking layout
60601435-ACM-03-ZZ-DRG-EHW-030009	Vehicle Tracking
60601435-ACM-03-PL-DRG-ECV-000005	Platform and Section and Details
60601435-ACM-03-PL-DRG-ECV-000006	Platform Services and General Arrangement
60601435-ACM-03-ZZ-DRG-EPT-000060	E&P Proposed Lighting Layout Seaton Delaval carpark
60601435-ACM-03-ZZ-DRG-HLG-001301	Highways Lighting Proposed Lighting Layout Sheet 1 of 1
60601435-ACM-03-ZZ-DRG-HLG-001302	Highways Lighting Contours Layout Sheet 1 of 1
60601435-ACM-03-ZZ-DRG-HLG-001303	Highways Lighting Calculation Results Sheet 1 of 1
60601435-ACM-03-ZZ-REP-HLG-001301	Lighting Calculation Report
60601435-ACM-03-ZZ-SKT-HLG-001300	Highways Lighting Proposed Lighting Class Sheet 1 of 1
60601435-ACM-XX-ZZ-DRG-EEN-000501	Station Landscape Design - Seaton Delaval
270_SD_P_400	Cross sections
60601435-SLC-P-270-SD-LTVA	Landscape Statement
60601435-SLC-P-270-SD-DAS	Design and Access Statement
60601435-SLC-P-270-SD-ECIA and BNG	Ecological Impact Assessment (including net gain statement)
60601435-ACM-XX-ZZ-REP-EEN-000027	Arboriculture Assessment
60601435-SLC-P-270-SD-SCE	Statement of Community Engagement
FINAL ISSUE_TA_Northumberland Line - Seaton Delaval	Transport Assessment
Seaton Delaval_FRA_final	Flood Risk and Drainage Assessment
Seaton Delaval_Heritage Statement_final	Heritage assessment (including archaeology assessment)
60601435-ACM-03-ZZ-REP-EGE-000002	Coal Mining Risk Assessment
Seaton Delaval Railway Station NIA Report	Noise and Vibration Assessment
60601435-ACM-03-ZZ-REP-EGE-000001	Preliminary Sources Study Report
Seaton Delaval Air Quality Assessment Report_final	Air Quality Impact Assessment
60601435-SLC-P-270-SD-HW	Health and Wellbeing Statement
60601435-SLC-P-270-SD-PS	Economic Statement (within the planning statement)
60601435-SLC-P-270-SD-CEMP	Outline CEMP
Seaton Delaval_Services and Utilities Statement_final	Services and utilities Statement

Figure 1.2 Schedule of supporting information

## **1.6 Structure of this statement**

- Section 2 sets out the background to the development and highlights the relevant planning history for the site and adjacent land
- Section 3 summarises the engagement with the Northumberland County Council, stakeholders and the public which has informed the submitted scheme.
- Section 4 introduces the application site and describes the surrounding areas
- Section 5 describes the proposed development
- Section 6 sets out the policies and other determining factors at both a national and local level which are relevant to the determination of the planning application
- Section 7 assesses the proposed development against the policies identified in section 6.
- Section 8 describes the material considerations
- Section 9 provides a summary of the case for planning permission.

## 2 Background to the Proposed Development

### 2.1 Introduction

- 2.1.1 The purpose of this section is to provide a background to the ambitions held by key stakeholders for the reintroduction of passenger services on the Northumberland Line.

### 2.2 Ambitions for a new passenger service

- 2.2.1 The reintroduction of passenger services on the Northumberland Line is a long-held ambition of Northumberland County Council, North Tyneside Council, Newcastle City Council, North East Combined Authority, Network Rail and other partners and key stakeholders. This section provides a summary of recent support for new railway stations and introduction of passenger services on the Northumberland Line, with particular reference to the proposed railway station at Seaton Delaval.
- 2.2.2 The scheme seeks to improve connectivity and accessibility in the South East Northumberland Corridor (SEN Corridor). The scheme is a priority of both Northumberland County Council, North Tyneside Council, Newcastle City Council, North East Combined Authority and is supported by a number of key project partners, including the Department for Transport (DfT), Network Rail, Transport for the North (TfN) Nexus and Northern Rail.
- 2.2.3 South East Northumberland is the most densely populated area of Northumberland, where the county's three largest towns are located: Cramlington, Blyth and Ashington. Crucially, the most densely populated settlements of Ashington and Blyth are not served by a passenger rail service.
- 2.2.4 At present, bus journey times are uncompetitive in comparison with car journey times from Newcastle to Ashington. The average journey time by bus between Newcastle and Ashington is more than 60 minutes.
- 2.2.5 The lack of viable and efficient modal choice has resulted in significant dependence on the private car by residents and visitors within South East Northumberland, increasing highway congestion, delaying journey times and adversely impacting local air quality. The aforementioned issues are exacerbated by the high percentage of residents who commute to nearby Newcastle and North Tyneside for work, leisure and retail opportunities. The 2011 Census identified a new outflow of commuters from Northumberland of over 23,000 people (37% of the population). This is expected to have increased in the last decade. Of those commuters, 65% of trips originating in Northumberland are made by car, which is higher than the national and regional average.
- 2.2.6 The scheme supports the strategic objectives of Northumberland County Council, North Tyneside Council and other key stakeholders, as summarised below, to improve sustainable

transport connections, which will facilitate economic growth, assist in reducing local highway congestion and contribute to improvements in regional air quality.

- 2.2.7 Improving the links from towns such as Ashington and Blyth is critical to encouraging more sustainable access to the key regional economic centres in South East Northumberland. Double Row is a designated as an employment site in the emerging Northumberland Local Plan. The site is located approximately 100 metres to the north of the proposed station at Seaton Delaval. As such, the proposed development will assist in improving access for staff and visitors. Furthermore, the proposed stations are located to promote onward journeys by alternative public transport options, including access to the Tyne and Wear metro and local bus network. As a result, the scheme promotes access to a number of regionally important business parks, including, but not limited to parks at Ashwood, Cobalt, Quorum, Gosforth and Balliol and the renewable energy sector businesses located in the Blyth Estuary.
- 2.2.8 It is anticipated that enhancements to transport links within South East Northumberland will be instrumental in stimulating economic investment within the region. The reintroduction of passenger services on the Northumberland Line will improve the accessibility and connectivity of South East Northumberland to the wider North East area, which may help to bring forward the much-needed delivery of housing allocations and other infrastructure.

#### **Northumberland County Council**

- 2.2.9 The Northumberland Economic Strategy 2019–2024 considers the Ashington, Blyth and Tyne line, as a ‘dormant asset’<sup>1</sup>. The re-introduction of the railway line is a top priority for South East Northumberland. The scheme is a key deliverable for the next stage of the Economic Strategy and has been identified as a catalyst for unlocking commercial investment throughout the area.
- 2.2.10 The Northumberland Local Transport Plan 2011–2026 sets out the Council’s visions, aims and objectives for transport over this period. The strategy identifies that levels of deprivation in South East Northumberland are exacerbated by accessibility issues<sup>2</sup>. As such, the current public transport options are considered not to meet the needs of all residents in Northumberland. The Ashington, Blyth and Tyne Line is identified as a key area of development within the South East Northumberland Public Transport Corridor<sup>3</sup>. The strategy identifies the potential socio-economic and environmental benefits the scheme could bring to the area.

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<sup>1</sup> The Northumberland Economic Strategy 2019–24 p19

<sup>2</sup> Northumberland Local Transport Plan 2011–2026 p45

<sup>3</sup> Northumberland Local Transport Plan 2011–2026 p118

## North Tyneside Council

- 2.2.11 The adopted North Tyneside Local Plan (2017) considers 'Future transport provision should reflect existing demand and also take account of planned economic and housing growth to ensure an integrated approach to sustainable development and travel patterns<sup>4</sup>.'
- 2.2.12 North Tyneside Council supports the common objectives of the North East Combined Authority and Northumberland County Council in seeking to deliver a modal shift to more sustainable modes of transport. Notably, the local plan safeguards the Ashington, Blyth and Tyne Railway to ensure the transport infrastructure can be delivered with limited constraints.
- 2.2.13 Paragraph 10.25 of the North Tyneside Local Plan states:

*"The reinstatement of passenger services over the Ashington, Blyth and Tyne Railway is seen as a key driver for delivering growth in South East Northumberland. It is crucial that the potential should be retained for reopening of this route to passenger traffic in the future, an importance reflected through the safeguarding of the alignment in the Local Plan. The proposal would link South East Northumberland to Newcastle with options to serve Ashington, Bedlington and Morpeth including the possibility for an interchange station, between heavy rail, Metro and bus services, at Northumberland Park. Reinstatement of this passenger service is a key aspiration of Northumberland County Council and North Tyneside Council. Significant progress has already been made, including progressing plans through a Network Rail GRIP study and in assembling funding bid packages. Various options are currently being appraised for station sites, service frequency and infrastructure requirements for both development and operation. Although closed to passenger traffic since the mid 1960s, the majority of the route is still in use as an existing freight line, but the North Tyneside Local Plan also includes the protection of land which would enable the option of direct access from Seghill southwards towards Percy Main (as shown on the Policies Map)."*

## North East Combined Authority

- 2.2.14 The '20-year Transport Manifesto'<sup>5</sup> produced by the North East Combined Authority has a vision to provide 'provide affordable, attractive, reliable, safe, healthy transport choices for businesses, residents and visitors whilst enhancing the environment' The strategy identifies local rail and metro as a way to drive economic growth. Although the Northumberland Line scheme is not specifically identified, the strategic identifies the upgrading of freight-only sections to passenger use as an objective.

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<sup>4</sup> North Tyneside Local Plan (2017) p153

<sup>5</sup> North East Combined Authority (2016) A 20-year Transport Manifesto for the North East Combined Authority

## **Transport for the North**

- 2.2.15 Transport for the North published a 'Strategic Transport Plan in 2019 which outlines the ambitions for the growth of the Northern Powerhouse until 2050.
- 2.2.16 The plan identifies the importance of encouraging a modal shift towards rail in meeting transport objectives for the region<sup>6</sup>. This includes contributing to meeting commitments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and driving towards the inclusive growth agenda.
- 2.2.17 The strategy considers that 'To realise the benefits of agglomeration and economic mass, the North requires faster, more efficient, reliable and sustainable journeys on the road and rail networks<sup>7</sup>.
- 2.2.18 The aims and objectives of Transport for the North align with the principles of the Northumberland Lines scheme. The Northumberland Line seeks to improve connectivity in South East Northumberland, which contributes to the aim that: *'improvements should ensure that all areas of opportunity are connected, and that communities are not disconnected and further isolated<sup>8</sup>'*.

## **2.3 Ambitions for the railway station at Seaton Delaval**

- 2.3.1 Seaton Delaval is a designated service centre within Northumberland. It is considered a new railway station at Seaton Delaval would strengthen the role of the village in providing important services for both residents and communities within neighbouring areas<sup>9</sup>.
- 2.3.2 The proposed development will provide sustainable transport infrastructure, reducing reliance on the private car for current and future residents. This will assist in reducing congestion on the local highway network and improving access to employment and leisure opportunities across the North East.
- 2.3.3 The visitor economy has been identified as an area of growth for Northumberland in the emerging Northumberland Local Plan. Furthermore, the plan identifies Seaton Delaval Hall as a major attraction for future growth. The proposed railway station at Seaton Delaval will assist in improving access for visitors and thus support ambitions for future growth.
- 2.3.4 A number of businesses are located on Double Row, less than 100 metres from the site of the proposed Seaton Delaval Station. The area is designated as employment land in the Emerging Northumberland Local Plan. Furthermore, the emerging local plan identifies

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<sup>6</sup> Transport for the North (2019) Strategic Transport Plan, p87

<sup>7</sup> Transport for the North (2019) Strategic Transport Plan, p8

<sup>8</sup> Transport for the North (2019) Strategic Transport Plan, p8

<sup>9</sup> Emerging Northumberland Local Plan – Publication Draft January 2019 p24

opportunities for redevelopment of the existing employment area. The proposed station at Seaton Delaval will improve access to Double Row, as such it is considered the proposed development will encourage inward investment into the Double Row employment site.

## 2.4 Committed Development

2.4.1 A review of planning applications on land adjacent to the site (both determined and in the process of being determined) has been undertaken to identify any consented developments which may be material considerations in the determining of a planning application for the proposed railway station.

2.4.2 Figure 2.1 describes those developments which have been granted planning permission [committed development] as listed on Northumberland County Council's planning public access system on the 13<sup>th</sup> May 2021 within 500 metres of the red line boundary. Figure 2.1 also identifies planning applications which are awaiting determination which have the potential to be 'material considerations' in the determination of the planning application.

Reference	Address	Description of proposal	Date of approval
21/01423/FUL	Jh Laidler Storage Yard Double Row Seaton Delaval NE25 0PP	Siting of upcycled shipping containers to provide ancillary facilities including booth seating and toilets in association with the use of an existing building for food and drink retail (Use Class E) and a tented permanent roof covering	Awaiting decision validated- 08/04/21
20/03398/FUL	Land North Of Hastings Cottage Seaton Delaval Northumberland	Proposed new stables and associated works	22/01/21
16/00657/FUL	Former Seaton Delaval County First School Double Row Seaton Delaval Northumberland NE25 0PS	Proposed residential development comprising 10no. residential units at former Seaton Delaval first school	9/09/16

*Figure 2.1 Schedule of committed developments*

2.4.3 It is considered the scheme which is the subject of this planning application would not preclude or impact on the delivery of the committed developments set out in Figure 2.1. The scheme which is the subject of this application for planning permission does not impact any of the land that pertains to those committed developments. It is anticipated that appropriate measures will be implemented during the construction phase to avoid or mitigate any impacts on the delivery of those adjacent developments.

2.4.4 Figure 2.1 identifies that a planning application for a retail and leisure development on Double Row has been submitted to Northumberland County Council. It is considered that the proposed station would complement the development by improving access to those businesses for residents, staff, customers and visitors.

2.4.5 Figure 2.1 identifies that the construction of stables is proposed on a site approximately 500 metres to the west of the site of the proposed station. The scheme has been designed to ensure uninterrupted access to the Public Right of Way network to the south of the station during operation. As such, it is considered the proposed development will complement any future development relating to equestrian activities within Seaton Delaval.



## 3 Pre-application Engagement

### 3.1 Introduction

- 3.1.1 The proposed development has been the subject of extensive and ongoing engagement with officers and Members of Northumberland County Council, and other key stakeholders.
- 3.1.2 This section provides a summary of the formal pre-application discussions and engagement that has been undertaken pertaining to this planning application.

### 3.2 Pre-application enquiries

- 3.2.1 Informal dialogue with local authority officers and members was undertaken prior to the submission of a formal pre-application to Northumberland County Council as the local planning authority on the 9<sup>th</sup> August 2019. A formal response to the pre-application enquiry was received from the local planning authority on 1st October 2019.
- 3.2.2 The response indicated that the principle of development would likely be supported, however an application for planning would need to be supported by assessments to ascertain the extent of any potential impacts:
- ‘the principle of development may vary from site to site but a case could be made that would likely to receive support. The proposals are considered by Northumberland County Council to be in accordance with the development plan<sup>10</sup>’.*
- 3.2.3 Overall, the local planning authority considered that *‘the benefits that could be delivered to the South East of Northumberland, should be able to address any harm that may be created by each application through the wider benefits that would be proposed and deliverable’*.
- 3.2.4 The formal pre-application response did not raise any specific concerns relating to the proposed new railway station at Seaton Delaval.
- 3.2.5 Since receipt of the pre-application response, extensive discussions have been held with Northumberland County Council local officers including those from departments for highways, environmental health, ecology, flooding and drainage. During these discussions various surveys, assessments and draft designs and proposals have been shared. Those discussions have also confirmed the scope, extent and nature of the information which is required to be submitted in support of the planning application. The submitted scheme

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<sup>10</sup> NCC Pre-Application response, Ref: 19/00680/PREAPP (1<sup>st</sup> October 2019) p14

takes account of the comments and advice received from the local planning authority and other Council services.

- 3.2.6 Further details can be found within the full suite of information which has been submitted in support of this planning application. This Planning Statement should be read in conjunction with the various submitted plans, surveys and assessment reports.

### **3.3 Changes to the proposed development since receipt of pre-application response**

- 3.3.1 Subsequent to the submission of the pre-application enquiry and receipt of the formal pre-application response from Northumberland County Council (application ref: 19/00680/PREAPP) on the 1st October 2019, several changes have been made to the proposed development at Seaton Delaval station. Those changes are set out below:

- 1) The preferred location for the site was confirmed to be the option located to the south of the A192.
- 2) The size of the proposed car park has increased to provide for the potential growth up to the year 2039. As a result of the increase of site area, the proposed development submitted as part of this planning application includes a small protrusion into land designated as greenbelt to the south of the site.
- 3) The proposed access to the site is now located adjacent to the Hastings Arms. This will reduce the impact to the woodland located to the north of the proposed car park.
- 4) Access into the site takes account of the potential needs of Public Right of Way users. The scheme proposes resurfacing improvement works to the existing footpath (Ref: 300/129) located on the western flank of the site. Furthermore, the development provides for a segregated cycleway running parallel to the access road.

- 3.3.2 As a consequence of these changes, it has been agreed that the surveys and assessments to be submitted with the planning application would be varied and extended in the following ways:

- 1) The scope of the Transport Assessment has been updated to include impacts on the highway network associating with the additional car parking.
- 2) The scope of all of the supporting assessments have been updated to account for the extension of the red line boundary.

### **3.4 Request for a Screening Opinion (RfSO)**

- 3.4.1 A Request for a Screening Opinion (RfSO) was submitted to North Tyneside Council and Northumberland County Council on 28<sup>th</sup> June 2019 in accordance with the screening

procedures laid out in the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (hereafter referred to as the EIA Regulations).

- 3.4.2 The Opinion of the Northumberland County Council was received on 9<sup>th</sup> August 2019, confirming that the scheme does not constitute 'EIA development'.
- 3.4.3 As the detailed design of the scheme has evolved, it has become apparent that some components of the scheme have altered from those identified in the previous RfSO, as well as the extent of the land which is required.
- 3.4.4 As a consequence of the changes to the scheme, a further RfSO was submitted in the 16<sup>th</sup> July 2020.
- 3.4.5 On the 19<sup>th</sup> November 2020, Northumberland County Council confirmed that the amended scheme *'is not likely to have significant effects on the environment and as such is not considered to be EIA development'*<sup>11</sup>.
- 3.4.6 On this basis, an Environmental Impact Assessment is not required to be undertaken and the planning application is not required to be accompanied by an Environmental Statement.

### **3.5 Pre-submission stakeholder consultation (2019)**

- 3.5.1 The preparation of this planning application, and the scope of the submitted information, has been informed by the responses received to the public consultation undertaken during 2019 and 2020.
- 3.5.2 An initial public consultation was undertaken between the 2nd and 18th September 2019. The objective was to raise awareness of the scheme and ascertain local perceptions of the scheme. The consultation was undertaken through the provision of 'drop in' events, attended by officers of the council and project team representatives. The 'drop in' events were held in five different locations with a geographical spread along the proposed route. Members of the public were also invited to provide feedback online. The initial public consultation for the overall Northumberland Line scheme received a total 971 responses. Those responses were considered and used to inform the proposals which were the subject of the public consultation in 2020.

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<sup>11</sup> NCC Screening Opinion, Ref: 20/02242/SCREEN (19<sup>th</sup> November 2020) p19

### **3.6 Pre-submission stakeholder consultation (2020)**

- 3.6.1 A second public consultation took place between the 14<sup>th</sup> of November and 16<sup>th</sup> December 2020. Discussions were held with officers of the council to confirm the extent, scope, nature, timing and information of this public consultation.
- 3.6.2 The objective was to ascertain local views on the specific proposals for each of the station sites, together with the scheme as a whole.
- 3.6.3 510 comments were made in connection with the proposals for Seaton Delaval station. 65% of the comments were either positive or neutral, 35% were negative. Comments were coded across seventeen themes. Positive responses commonly focussed on the following benefits of the development: economy, interchange and connectivity, re-use of derelict land and the design of the station. Neutral and negative feedback focussed on the design with concerns raised about the single platform and its inhibiting future service expansion, parking, highway and road impacts, pedestrian and cycle access and the environmental impact.
- 3.6.4 The Statement of Community Engagement submitted in support of this application demonstrates that the project has engaged stakeholders and the local community at the plan-making stage of the proposals when information on the designs was of sufficient level for informed and meaningful engagement. It further demonstrates that the project team has listened and considered the feedback which will feed into the development of the station at Seaton Delaval.

### **3.7 Changes to the scheme following stakeholder consultation**

- 3.7.1 Subsequent to the public consultation exercise, changes have been made to the proposed development at Seaton Delaval station to address concerns raised by residents.
- 3.7.2 Those changes are set out below:
- 1) The minimum distance between the internal car park access road and the corner of 15 Whytrigg Close has been increased to provide additional landscaping and screening.
  - 2) The minimum distance between the internal car park access road and the corner of 65 Wheatridge has been increased to provide additional landscaping and screening.
  - 3) The access road has been realigned with radii introduced to reduce the length of 'straight' carriageway sections.
  - 4) The footpaths from Whytrigg Close and the Wheatridge Estate have been aligned directly to the single crossing point on the station access road. This better meets the desire line and routes footpath users away from property boundary fences at Whytrigg Close.
  - 5) The number of proposed car parking spaces has been reduced.

## **3.8 Summary**

- 3.8.1 Ongoing consultation with local planning authority officers and other key stakeholders has informed the nature, extent and scope of the information submitted in support of this application. The design submitted in support of this application has been informed by the feedback received during the public consultation and engagement with key stakeholders. Further details can be found in the submitted Statement of Community Engagement.

## 4 Site Context

### 4.1 Introduction

- 4.1.1 This section describes the existing site, adjacent land uses and provides a contextual overview of those considerations which have informed the design of the submitted scheme. Further details of those considerations and how the submitted scheme has been informed based on an understanding of those considerations and appraisal of alternative development options, are set out in the submitted Design and Access Statement.

### 4.2 Historical Context

- 4.2.1 Seaton Delaval station was originally opened to serve Seaton Delaval Colliery in 1841 as part of the 'Blyth, Seghill and Percy Main Railway'. The railway company was consolidated into the Blyth and Tyne Railway network in 1853, which comprised of several railway companies. The network served the vast number of collieries in the South East Northumberland area into the early twentieth century,
- 4.2.2 The location of the original Seaton Delaval Station is identified in Figure 4.1.



Figure 4.1 Blyth and Tyne Railway Historic Network

4.2.3 The Ashington, Blyth and Tyne Line ran its final passenger service in 1964. Several stations were closed as part of the Beeching cuts in the early 60s, including Seaton Delaval in 1964. Since the closure of passenger services, freight trains have continued to operate, primarily serving Lynemouth Power Station.

4.2.4 The proposed location for the railway station at Seaton Delaval is adjacent to the site of the original station (see Figure 4.2).



Figure 4.2 Location of Seaton Delaval station (Ordnance Map, 1897; Google Earth, 2020)

## 4.3 Planning History of the Site

4.3.1 A desk-based review of the planning applications which have been submitted to and either: consented, refused or withdrawn on the land which comprises the application site has been undertaken.

4.3.2 Figure 4.3 describes those applications which have been identified within the red line boundary, based on a review of Northumberland County Council's planning public access system undertaken on the 13<sup>th</sup> May 2021.

Reference	Address	Description of proposal	Decision	Date
20/02243/SCREEN	Various addresses	Screening request for provision of six new train stations, associated upgrading and refurbishment of existing rail infrastructure and engineering works and the reintroduction of passenger train services.	No EIA required	19 <sup>th</sup> November 2020

Reference	Address	Description of proposal	Decision	Date
19/02151/SCREEN	Various addresses	Request for a Screening Opinion- Provision of six new train stations, associated upgrading and refurbishment of existing rail infrastructure and engineering works and the reintroduction of passenger train services.	No EIA required	9 <sup>th</sup> August 2019

*Figure 4.3 Planning History*

- 4.3.3 Based on the desk-based review there are not known to be any other planning or other related applications pertaining to the site, other than the Request for a Screening Opinions submitted to assess the potential requirement for an EIA to support the planning applications for the Northumberland Line scheme.

## 4.4 Site Selection

- 4.4.1 To construct a railway station, it must obviously be located adjacent to a railway line. This significantly limits the number of sites available for the proposed development.
- 4.4.2 The proposed siting of the station has been determined based on an appraisal of alternative options. To the north of the site, alternative sites are constrained by the existing built development adjacent to the railway line. Any sites to the south would not have been well related to the existing settlement.
- 4.4.3 The site is ideally located, with direct access from the local highway network (A192) and the local Public Right of Way network. The site is adjacent to the existing built development and as such the station is easily accessible for nearby residents and businesses. Furthermore, the site provides sufficient land to accommodate the car parking required to meet anticipated demand.
- 4.4.4 The site of the proposed station is adjacent to the site of the historic railway station. The success of the coal mining industry necessitated a rapid expansion of the Blyth and Tyne Railway. As such, the historic railway network embodies the history of the local area. The proposed development supports local heritage by re-introducing a station in close proximity to the site of the historic Seaton Delaval station.
- 4.4.5 Overall, the site of the proposed station is considered to be the most appropriate and the most beneficial when compared against alternatives.



## 4.5 Site Description

- 4.5.1 Seaton Delaval is a designated service centre within Northumberland. As such, the village is considered to provide *'important services for both residents and communities within neighbouring areas'*<sup>12</sup>.
- 4.5.2 A number of businesses are located approximately 100 metres to the north of the site on Double Row, including Hartley Leisure Storage. The area surrounding the site comprises of residential housing to the east and west. The site is bound to the north by the A192. The Hastings Arm pub is located adjacent to the proposed vehicular access to the site from the A192. There is a supermarket and petrol station located immediately to the north of the A192. The site is bound to the south and south east by open countryside. The site is located approximately 1km from the Seaton Delaval Conservation Area and approximately 2km from Seaton Delaval Hall, a Grade I Listed National Trust property.
- 4.5.3 The site of the proposed development has an area of 6.1 hectares.
- 4.5.4 The majority of the site is located within the settlement boundary for Seaton Delaval. A small southern section of the site is located outwith the settlement boundary.
- 4.5.5 The existing site is comprised of four separate areas:
- 1) Woodland to the north
  - 2) Greenfield to the south
  - 3) Railway corridor to the west
  - 4) Footpath to the west (Reference: 300/128)
- 4.5.6 The proposed site layout is comprised of the following elements:
- 1) The platform is proposed to be constructed within, and adjacent to the railway corridor.
  - 2) Car Park is proposed to be constructed on the greenfield site.
  - 3) Drainage attenuation pond is proposed on the southern extent of the greenfield site.
  - 4) Vehicular access is proposed from A192.
  - 5) Pedestrian access is proposed from existing footpath (300/128)

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<sup>12</sup> Emerging Northumberland Local Plan – Publication Draft January 2019 p24



*Figure 4.4 Red Line Boundary Plan*

## **4.6 Site-specific environmental and land use constraints**

- 4.6.1 The site-specific policy constraints and land-use designations that pertain to the site are shown on Figure 4.5, extracted from the Emerging Northumberland Local Plan. This section presents an overview of the constraints, which are assessed in the subsequent chapters of this planning statement. A full extract of the local plan maps and associated legends are available in Appendix B.



*Figure 4.5 Extract from Emerging Northumberland Local Plan Reg 19 Draft and Adopted Blyth Valley Local Plan*

- 4.6.2 The majority of site of the proposed station is located within the designated settlement boundary for Seaton Delaval. A small southern section of the site is located within land designated as green belt in both the emerging and adopted local plans. The emerging local plan supports development which is appropriate in the Green Belt, as defined in national planning policy, which includes local transport infrastructure.
- 4.6.3 The railway line is safeguarded for the reintroduction of passenger trains in Policy M4 of the Adopted Blyth Valley Local Plan, and TRA5 in the Emerging Northumberland Local Plan. The adopted policy safeguards a site approximately 150 metres to the north of the site of the proposed station. The approximate location of the proposed station site is safeguarded in the Emerging Local Plan policy. The emerging local plan is at an advanced stage of preparation and likely to be adopted in Spring 2021. The approximate location of the proposed development is supported by the development plan, and therefore the policy can be given increasing weight as the plan moves towards adoption.
- 4.6.4 The identified policy constraints and land use designations referenced above are more fully set out in Section 6 and assessed in section 7 of this statement.

## 5 Proposed Development

### 5.1 Introduction

- 5.1.1 This section presents the detail of the development proposals which are the subject of this application for planning permission.

### 5.2 Planning Application

- 5.2.1 This planning statement has been submitted in support of an application for planning permission for:

*Construction of a new single platform railway station including new highway access and signalised junction; modifications to existing highways including pedestrian footways; provision of parking for cars, electric vehicles, motorcycles, cycles, and taxis; works to public rights of way. Construction of: facilities ancillary to the station including, lighting, soft and hard landscaping, surface and subsurface drainage, utilities and other services, boundary treatment and other associated works*

### 5.3 Reasons for the proposed development

- 5.3.1 The Economic Assessment<sup>13</sup> produced to support this application for planning permission identifies that the Northumberland Line is forecast to generate approximately £1.45million annual return journeys by 2039<sup>14</sup>.
- 5.3.2 At present, the village is served by a bus network which provides frequent connections to Tyne and Wear, however the public transport connectivity to settlements within South East Northumberland is considered to be poor. Furthermore, journey times are uncompetitive in comparison with private vehicular journeys. As such, the proposed development provides a viable alternative to the existing bus network and the private vehicle.
- 5.3.3 The Economic Assessment identifies that Seaton Delaval is likely to be an 'origin station', as 90% of anticipated demand is for outbound trips. As such, the proposed development improves accessibility for residents to seek employment, education and leisure opportunities outside of the local areas. The proposed development is likely to strengthen the role of

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<sup>13</sup> Seaton Delaval Economic Assessment (AECOM, 2020) see Appendix A

<sup>14</sup> These forecasts are aligned to a service proposition that has 2 trains per hour operating between Ashington and Newcastle, taking 32 minutes. Rail fares would be set at a similar level to those used on the Tyne & Wear Metro.

Seaton Delaval as a service centre to accommodate future employment, housing and services<sup>15</sup>.

## 5.4 Elements of proposed development

5.4.1 It is anticipated the Northumberland Line scheme will provide a half hourly service with an anticipated journey time between Newcastle and Ashington of 35 minutes.

5.4.2 Figure 5.1 indicates the site layout for the proposed development.



Figure 5.1 Proposed Site Layout

5.4.3 Figure 5.2 summarises the elements of the proposed development which are the subject of this application for planning permission for the construction and operation of a new railway station. This summary should be read in conjunction with submitted plans and Design and Access Statement, which provide further details of the scheme.

<sup>15</sup> Emerging Northumberland Local Plan – Publication Draft January 2019 p53



Figure 5.2 Schedule development proposals

Development Proposals	
Platform	Construction of single platform (approximately 100 metres in length) Platform to include the following facilities: help points, platform lighting, CCTV and waiting shelters. Ticket Vending Machines and Customer Information Screens with real time information to be provided at station entrance.
Car Parking	Construction of car park providing up to 284 spaces including 6% accessible spaces and 6% electric vehicle charging bays, with capacity to provide additional future provision. Car park to include taxi drop off. Sheltered cycle storage facility to be provided for up to 27 cycles.
Pedestrian and Cycle access	PROW 300/128 to be maintained and provide access to the station. Segregated cycleway to be provided on western access road Toucan crossing to be constructed at vehicular entrance to site. New footpath connections from Wheatridge and Whytrigg Close.
Vehicular Access	Vehicular access to be provided via a new signalised junction with the A192. Pedestrian crossing facilities to be provided.
Biodiversity	It is anticipated that off-site compensatory habitat creation will be undertaken, as the existing biodiversity within the site cannot be replaced within the site details are to be agreed with the planning authority.
Landscaping	Hard and soft landscaping to be provided. Specimen tree planting provided on site boundaries. Swales, water tolerant grass, shrub and tree planting to be provided between car park bays. Additional area to the south of the site designated for planting. Habitat creation measures associated with the soft landscaping and drainage works
Drainage	Surface water drainage system to be provided including attenuation and other measures.
Bus stops and connectivity	Bus stops to be relocated to enable construction of signalized junction on A192.
Lighting	Raise / lower lighting columns (typically 6m in height) will be provided to achieve the necessary illumination to the platforms. Waiting shelter to include in-built lighting. Appropriate lighting to be provided in car park. Footway to include lighting columns
Construction	It is anticipated the construction of the station will be undertaken in a period of approximately 4.5 months, however this is subject to safety, access and other considerations.
Services and Utilities	Details of existing local services provision provided as part of planning application. Details of works thereto to be provided to discharge a condition.
Signage	Adequate signage will be provided for pedestrians and cyclist movements as well as vehicular traffic. Details of signage will be provided to discharge a condition.

## **5.5 Summary**

- 5.5.1 The emerging proposals have attracted support based on pre-application discussions with local planning authority officers and key stakeholders. Section 7 assesses compliance of the proposed development against those local and national planning policies.

## 6 Planning Policy Context

### 6.1 Introduction

- 6.1.1 This section outlines the principal planning policies that pertain to the proposed development. It is important to note that the thematic survey reports and assessments submitted in support of this application contain further additional information and further details of other relevant policies (e.g. ecology).
- 6.1.2 In England, there is a hierarchical structure of policy covering national and local planning. At a national level the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's planning policies and how these are expected to be applied. At a local level, development plans set out planning policy for the area.
- 6.1.3 Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 6.1.4 Therefore, the starting point from a planning perspective in the determination of this planning application is the development plan. The development plan in respect of the application site comprises the Blyth Valley Borough Local Development Framework Core Strategy Development Plan Document (July 2007), the Blyth Valley Borough Local Development Framework Development Control Policies Development Plan Document (September 2007) and the saved policies of the Blyth Valley District Local Plan (May 1999).
- 6.1.5 The NPPF advises at paragraph 213 that, in respect of development plans adopted prior to publication of the NPPF, local planning authorities should afford due weight to relevant policies according to their degree of consistency with the NPPF; the closer the policies in the Plan to the policies in the NPPF, the greater the weight that may be given.
- 6.1.6 In accordance with paragraph 48 of the NPPF, weight may also be given to the policies in emerging plans, depending on the stage of preparation of the plan, the extent to which emerging policy aligns with the NPPF and the extent of unresolved objections to the emerging plan. The latest version of the Northumberland Local Plan was submitted to the Secretary of State for examination in May 2019 and is currently at examination. Relevant policies in this Plan are a material consideration in determining this application and it is considered that such policies can be afforded some weight at this time.
- 6.1.7 Paragraph 11 of the NPPF provides definitive guidance on how applications should be determined by stating:

*"Plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development. For decision-taking this means:*



*Approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:*

- i. The application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or*
- ii. Any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework as a whole.”*

## **6.2 Northumberland Development Plan**

- 6.2.1 Northumberland County Council was established as a unitary authority on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2009 following Local Government Reorganisation. It replaced the former County Council and six District/ Borough Councils of Alnwick, Berwick, Blyth Valley, Castle Morpeth, Tynedale and Wansbeck.
- 6.2.2 The former Northumberland local planning authorities had produced their own Development Plans to guide development within their administrative boundaries, of relevance to this application are:
- The Core Strategies of the former Local Authorities of Alnwick (2007), Blyth Valley (2007) and the Blyth Valley Development Control Policies DPD (2007); and
  - The saved Local Plan policies (under the Secretary of State’s Direction) of the Blyth Valley District Local Plan (1999)
- 6.2.3 Policies contained within those documents that have been ‘saved’ under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 will remain in force and will continue to provide the basis for planning decisions until replaced by subsequent Development Plan Documents.
- 6.2.4 These documents, together with any made Neighbourhood Plans, have been brought together to form the ‘Northumberland Consolidated Planning Policy Framework’.
- 6.2.5 Planning law states that planning applications should be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The NPPF is a material planning consideration in the determination of planning applications. The closer the policies in the Development Plan to the policies in the NPPF, the greater the weight that can be given to the development plan policies.
- 6.2.6 Northumberland County Council is focusing on the preparation of a Local Plan for Northumberland. The Northumberland Local Plan will:
- *set the strategic planning policies of the Council;*

- *provide the planning principles, including detailed development management policies to guide future development and planning decisions in Northumberland to 2036;*
- *set the general scale and distribution of new development which is required to meet Northumberland's needs to 2036;*
- *include strategic allocations as well as detailed land allocations and designations; and*
- *include site specific proposals for the development, protection and conservation of land.*

6.2.7 Once adopted, the Northumberland Local Plan will supersede those existing development plan documents which collectively comprise the 'Northumberland Consolidated Planning Policy Framework'.

6.2.8 The Northumberland Local Plan was submitted to the Secretary of State on 29<sup>th</sup> May 2019 and is currently undergoing independent examination. Given that the examination of the Plan is currently ongoing, this Planning Statement considers both the extant and emerging local planning policies that are of relevance to the determination of this application for planning permission.

6.2.9 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states that:

*"If regard is to be had to the development plan for the purpose of any determination to be made under the planning Acts the determination must be made in accordance with plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise."*

6.2.10 Therefore, the starting point from a planning perspective in considering the acceptability or otherwise of the proposals is the development plan. The development plan in respect of the application site comprises the Blyth Valley Borough Local Development Framework Core Strategy Development Plan Document (July 2007), the Blyth Valley Borough Local Development Framework Development Control Policies Development Plan Document (September 2007) and the saved policies of the Blyth Valley District Local Plan (May 1999).

6.2.11 The NPPF advises at paragraph 213 that, in respect of Development Plans adopted prior to publication of the NPPF, local planning authorities should afford due weight according to their degree of consistency with the NPPF (the closer the policies in the Plan to the policies in the NPPF, the greater the weight that may be given).

6.2.12 In accordance with paragraph 48 of the NPPF, weight may also be given to the policies in emerging plans depending on the stage of preparation of the plan, the extent to which emerging policy aligns with the NPPF and the extent of unresolved objections to the emerging plan. The Northumberland Local Plan was submitted to Secretary of State for examination in May 2019 and is currently undergoing examination. It is therefore considered

that relevant policies can be given some weight presently and can be given increasing weight as the Plan moves towards adoption.

### **6.3 Blyth Valley Borough Local Development Framework Core Strategy (July 2007)**

6.3.1 The relevant policies of the extant Core Strategy that pertain to the scheme which is the subject of this planning application are identified as follows:

#### **Policy SS1: Regeneration and Renaissance of Blyth Valley 2021**

6.3.2 Policy SS1 outlines an integrated regeneration and spatial strategy to support an economic and social renaissance of Blyth Valley. This includes improving accessibility for new developments. The policy specifically supports the reintroduction of passenger services on the Ashington, Blyth and Tyne Railway Line. The policy defines the Ashington, Blyth and Tyne Line proposals as 'essential infrastructure'.

#### **Policy SS3: Sustainability Criteria**

6.3.3 Policy SS3 identifies the criteria against which the sustainability credentials of new development will be assessed:

- *The development must be accessible to homes, jobs, shops, services, the transport network and modes of transport other than the private car; and*
- *There would be no physical and environmental constraints on the development of the land as a result of contamination, flood risk, and/or land stability which could not be resolved without a detrimental impact on the environment; and*
- *That there would be no unacceptable adverse impact on the natural environment, resources, biodiversity and geological conservation interests, landscape character, historic and cultural heritage and community assets of the borough and the maintenance, restoration and enhancement of these interests will be secured in new developments; and*
- *That new development would help to build communities by sustaining community services and facilities, or through the provision of affordable housing to meet identified local need; and*
- *That new development will reflect the principles of energy efficiency, water efficiency and conservation, sustainable design and construction, sustainable urban drainage schemes (SUDS), the hierarchy of waste management [waste minimisation, reuse of waste and recovery, which includes recycling] and secure by design.*

#### **Policy A2: Pedestrian/ Cycle Routes**

- 6.3.4 Policy A2 supports development that is well connected to existing areas and infrastructure, including pedestrian and cycle routes.

#### **Policy A3: Ashington, Blyth and Tyne Line**

- 6.3.5 Policy A3 supports the re-introduction of passenger services on the Ashington, Blyth and Tyne railway line by safeguarding the route and land for future stations. The council supports in principle alternative approaches to improving connectivity along the strategic transport corridor.

### **6.4 Blyth Valley Borough Local Development Framework Development Control Policies Development Plan Document (September 2007)**

- 6.4.1 The relevant policies of the extant Development Control Policies Development Plan Document that pertain to the scheme which is the subject of this planning application are identified as follows:

#### **Policy DC1: General Development**

- 6.4.2 Policy DC1 sets out the general principles that will be used to consider the appropriateness of development proposals. Development proposals will be expected to, amongst other things, be:

- *of a high standard of design and landscaping which takes account of existing natural and built features, the surrounding area and adjacent land uses; and*
- *be in locations which are, or can be through the provision of appropriate measures, accessible on foot, by cycle and by public and private transport and where satisfactory access can be achieved.*

#### **Policy DC3: Development in the Green Belt and in the Countryside**

- 6.4.3 Policy DC3 outlines the presumption against inappropriate development in the Green Belt. The policy considers that new development in the countryside will not be permitted unless it is for:

- a. *Agriculture or forestry*
- b. *Countryside based enterprises and activities which contribute to the rural economy and/or promote recreation in and the sustainable management of the countryside.*
- c. *The improvement of public access and facilitating the provision of appropriate sport and recreation facilities.*
- d. *The re-use of existing buildings*

- 6.4.4 Where new developments are to be permitted, they will be expected to demonstrate a sequential search has been undertaken and that there are no more suitable sites available.

**Policy DC11: Planning for Sustainable Travel**

- 6.4.5 Policy DC11 sets out a number of criteria for new developments to satisfy. This includes encouraging the use of public transport, improving the integration of different modes of travel and providing an appropriate level of car and cycling provision.

**Policy DC16: Biodiversity**

- 6.4.6 Policy DC16 considers development proposals should seek to contribute to the delivery of the objectives and targets set by the Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP). The policy states that all development should aim to maintain and enhance habitat networks by avoiding or repairing the fragmentation and isolation of natural habitats.

**Policy DC17: Landscape: General Protection and Restoration**

- 6.4.7 Policy DC17 states that development should contribute to restoration, enhancement, repair and maintenance of the landscape in and around which it is sited. Development with landscape and visual impacts will be assessed against the extent to which it will:

- a) *Cause unacceptable visual harm; and*
- b) *Introduce or remove incongruous landscape elements; and*
- c) *Enhance, maintain or degrade:*
  - *Landscape features that contribute to local distinctiveness;*
  - *Historic elements that contribute to landscape character and quality; and*
  - *Semi-natural vegetation that is characteristic of the landscape type; and*
  - *The visual condition of landscape elements that combine to create the distinctive character; and*
  - *The tranquillity of the area*

**Policy DC19: Drainage and Flood Risk**

- 6.4.8 Policy DC19 states that development proposals should make the most efficient use of water and enhance the sustainable use of the water environment. Development that incorporates sustainable drainage systems will be encouraged.

**Policy DC21: Pollution Control**

- 6.4.9 Policy DC21 states that the local planning authority will seek to minimise the impact of pollution on the environment, including existing land uses, and on proposed development

and will support and encourage measures to reduce existing pollution to the lowest practicable levels and where possible, improve air, soil and water quality.

**Policy DC22: Noise Pollution**

- 6.4.10 Policy DC22 states that the local planning authority will seek to ensure that, wherever practicable, noise sensitive development and noisy or potentially noisy developments are located away from one another and will impose relevant conditions or seek appropriate planning obligations in relation to new development where separation is not practicable.

**Policy DC27: Design of New Developments**

- 6.4.11 Policy DC27 states that new development will be expected to achieve a high standard of design, incorporate sustainable construction measures and reflect local distinctiveness through the incorporation of local building traditions and materials. Proposals should take full account of the need for or opportunities to enhance the local environment. High quality contemporary design solutions will be considered where they can be accommodated without detriment to the surrounding environment.

## **6.5 Blyth Valley District Local Plan (May 1999)**

- 6.5.1 The relevant policies of the extant District Local Plan that pertain to the scheme which is the subject of this planning application are identified as follows:

**Policy E3: Landscape: General Approach**

- 6.5.2 Policy E3 states that the quality of the landscape will be taken into account in planning decisions by assessing proposals according to their effects on the intrinsic qualities of the landscape type or types which they affect. Account will also be taken of any positive landscape related measures proposed as part of any development.

**Policy G9: Development in Countryside Beyond Green Belt**

- 6.5.3 Policy G9 states that in areas outside settlement limits which are not part of the Green Belt, the construction of new buildings will not be permitted except for the following purposes:
- 6.5.4 Where a structure is related to essential infrastructure services in which case the proposal would also be assessed against other environmental policies in this Plan.

**Policy G10: Development Criteria in the Countryside**

- 6.5.5 Policy G10 outlines the criteria for which all development outside of the development settlement limits must comply. New development must have regard to the existing settlement pattern. This includes consideration of neighbouring uses, the environment and any future needs that the development may necessitate. A new building will not be permitted if it is isolated from existing buildings, unless it is necessary in terms of the uses proposed.

### **Policy M8: Car Parking**

- 6.5.6 Policy M8 states that new development should seek to minimise the area devoted to car parking, whilst complying with parking standards and safeguarding existing provision. The policy states that the possibility of providing park and ride facilities should be explored. Where possible, measures should be taken to ensure that car park areas are well landscaped and safe for pedestrians.

## **6.6 Northumberland Local Plan Regulation 19 Publication Draft (May 2019)**

- 6.6.1 The NPPF advises at paragraph 48 that weight may also be given to the policies in emerging plans depending on the stage of preparation of the plan, the extent to which emerging policy aligns with the NPPF and the extent of unresolved objections to the emerging plan. The Northumberland Local Plan was submitted to Secretary of State for examination in May 2019 and is currently undergoing examination. It is therefore considered that relevant policies can be given some weight presently and can be given increasing weight as the Plan moves towards adoption.
- 6.6.2 The relevant policies of the emerging Northumberland Local Plan that pertain to the scheme which is the subject of this planning application are identified as follows:

### **Policy STP1: Spatial Strategy**

- 6.6.3 Policy STP1 states that sustainable development will be supported within the constraints of the Green Belt and settlement boundaries defined on the Local Plan policies map. Sustainable development within, or immediately adjacent to, the built up form of Main Towns, Service Centres and Service Villages without defined settlement boundaries, will be supported, if it is commensurate with size of the settlement, and it can be demonstrated that it does not adversely impact upon the character of the settlement.
- 6.6.4 Development in the open countryside will only be supported if it can be demonstrated that it:
- Provides for essential transport, utilities and energy infrastructure in accordance with other policies in the Local Plan.
- 6.6.5 The policy goes on to state that development in the open countryside should be sensitive to its surroundings, not have an unacceptable impact upon the local road network, and use previously developed land where opportunities exist.

### **Policy STP2: Presumption in favour of Sustainable Development**

- 6.6.6 Policy STP2 states that when considering development proposals, the Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). It will always work pro-actively

with applicants to seek to find solutions that mean proposals that improve the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area can be approved wherever possible.

### **Policy STP3: Principles of Sustainable Development**

6.6.7 Policy STP3 states that In applying the presumption in favour of sustainable development in Northumberland and to deliver against economic, social and environmental objectives, development proposals will be expected to deliver across the range of the economic, social and environmental factors, and adhere to the following principles where appropriate:

- *Contribute to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy across Northumberland, support more and better jobs, protect and enhance the vitality and viability of Northumberland's town centres and other important economic sectors;*
- *Minimise their impact upon local amenity for new or existing residents and businesses, adjoining premises and land uses;*
- *Support and provide opportunities to improve health, social and cultural wellbeing for all, and provide the infrastructure which is required to enhance the quality of life of individuals and communities;*
- *Demonstrate high quality sustainable design which is accessible to all, and which respects and enhances the local distinctiveness of the natural, historic and built environment, helps promote a sense of place, reduces the need for energy, and facilitates flexible and adaptable buildings and environments;*
- *Be accessible by, or be able to be made accessible by public transport, walking or cycling where feasible, thereby reducing the need to travel for both people and goods, and the dependence on travel by private car;*
- *Make best use of existing facilities and infrastructure, whilst making appropriate provision for new or additional infrastructure as required;*

### **Policy STP4: Climate change mitigation and adaptation**

6.6.8 Policy STP4 states that Development proposals should mitigate climate change and contribute to meeting nationally binding targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. When determining planning applications, support will be given to how development proposals that help mitigate climate change and consideration will be given to how proposals:

- Through their location, layout and pattern of development, reduce the need to travel for both people and goods, and encourage sustainable modes of transport, including walking, cycling and the use of public transport;



### **Policy STP5: Health and wellbeing**

6.6.9 Policy STP5 states that development which promotes, supports and enhances the health and wellbeing of communities, residents, workers and visitors will be supported. Development proposals will be required to demonstrate that they:

- are safe, comfortable, inclusive and attractive and prioritise pedestrian and cycle movement;
- provide access to a range of facilities including public transport, health, education, social care, green spaces, sport, play and leisure facilities

6.6.10 The policy requires that a Health Impact Assessment Screening be submitted for all major development proposals to determine whether the potential impact on health resulting from the development warrants any further assessment. Where further assessment is warranted, a proportionate Health Impact Assessment will also be required to be submitted as part of the application. A Health Impact Assessment will be required to include proposals to mitigate any adverse health impacts, maximise potential positive impacts, and help reduce health inequalities.

### **Policy STP8: Development in the Green Belt**

6.6.11 Policy STP8 states that in assessing development proposals within the Green Belt:

- Development that is inappropriate in the Green Belt, in accordance with national planning policy, will not be supported unless very special circumstances clearly outweigh the potential harm to the Green Belt, and any other harm resulting from the proposal;
- Development which is appropriate in the Green Belt, as defined in national planning policy, will be supported.

### **Policy QOP1: Design Principles**

6.6.12 Policy QOP1 states that in determining planning applications, design will be assessed against the following design principles, in accordance with the Northumberland Design Guide.

### **Policy QOP2: Good Design and Amenity**

6.6.13 Policy QOP2 states that development will be required to provide a high standard of amenity for existing and future users of the development itself and preserve the amenity of those living in, working in or visiting the local area.

6.6.14 Development which would result in unacceptable adverse impacts on the amenity of neighbouring uses, in terms of both individual and cumulative impacts, will not be supported.

#### **Policy QOP4: Landscaping and Trees**

6.6.15 Policy QOP4 states that where relevant, new development will be expected to incorporate well-designed landscaping and respond appropriately to any existing landscape features. Development proposals should ensure that:

- *Landscaping design is of a high quality, in accordance with the principles set out in Policy QOP 1;*
- *Existing features which contribute towards the character of the area, or amenity, are retained wherever possible and sympathetically incorporated into the overall design of the scheme;*
- *Any hard or soft landscaping is appropriate, functional and well-integrated into the design of the development;*
- *Trees, and other spaces and features that provide green and blue infrastructure, are preserved, enhanced and introduced into the landscaping scheme wherever possible;*

#### **Policy QOP6: Delivering well-designed places**

6.6.16 Policy QOP6 states that proposals are expected to meet the local design expectations set out in design policies within the Plan, the Northumberland Design Guide, and any other design guidance. Proposals are expected to respond to any character assessments that form part of or support the Plan. Where a Design and Access Statement is required as part of a planning application, there must be a clear and proportionate demonstration of:

- *How relevant design policies, the Northumberland Design Guide, character assessments and any other design guidance supporting the Plan, have been integral to the design development process;*
- *A robust analysis of the context and character of the site and the local area, in addition to the functional requirements of the intended use;*
- *The design concept and the evolution of the design development through drawings or models, including explanatory text as appropriate; and*
- *Where relevant, how consultation with communities and other relevant stakeholders has informed the design.*

#### **Policy TRA1: Promoting sustainable connections**

6.6.17 Policy TRA1 states that the council will support development that:

- *Promotes a spatial distribution which creates accessible development, reduces the need to travel by car, and maximises the use of sustainable modes of transport;*

- *Promotes good design principles in respect of the permeability, connectivity and legibility of buildings and public spaces; and inclusive access;*
- *Promotes sustainable transport choices, including supporting, providing and connecting to networks for walking, cycling and public transport; and infrastructure that supports the use of low and ultra low emission vehicles;*
  - a. *Ensures delivery of cycle parking and supporting infrastructure;*
  - b. *Protects, enhances and supports public rights of way;*
  - c. *Supports the delivery of reliable, safe and efficient transport networks, in partnership with other organisations, service providers and developers;*
  - d. *Requires development to be designed to enable charging of plug-in and other ultra low emission vehicles in safe, accessible, convenient locations; and*
  - e. *Requires development proposals which generate significant amounts of movements to be supported by a Transport Assessment/ Transport Statement, and Travel Plans, and where appropriate, delivery/servicing plans.*

#### **Policy TRA2: The effects of development on the transport network**

- 6.6.18 Policy TRA2 states that all developments affecting the transport network will be required to:
- a. *Provide effective and safe access and egress to the existing transport network;*
  - b. *Include appropriate measures to mitigate and manage any adverse impacts on the transport network including any contribution to cumulative impacts;*
  - c. *Minimise conflict between different modes of transport, including measures for network, traffic and parking management;*
  - d. *Facilitate the safe use of the network, including suitable crossing points, footways and dedicated provision for cyclists where necessary;*
  - e. *Suitably accommodate the delivery of goods and supplies, access for maintenance and refuse collection; and*
  - f. *Minimise any adverse impact on communities and the environment, including noise and air quality*

#### **Policy TRA4: Parking provision in new development**

- 6.6.19 Policy TRA4 states that an appropriate amount of off-street vehicle parking sufficient to serve new development shall be made available in safe, accessible and convenient

locations prior to the development, as a whole or in part, being brought into use. Vehicle parking shall be provided in accordance with the parking standards set out in Appendix D of the Local Plan, or other such local standards set out in made neighbourhood plans which will be given priority in determining the appropriate amount of parking required.

**Policy TRA5: Rail transport and safeguarding facilities**

- 6.6.20 Policy TRA5 states that development which would prevent the reintroduction of passenger rail services on the Northumberland Line along with associated stations, facilities and access to them from adjacent highways, and continued rail freight use of the Northumberland Line, its associated branch lines (including the branch line from Bedlington to Morpeth via Choppington, the Butterwell line north of Ashington and the line from Woodhorn to Newbiggin-by-the-Sea) and supporting infrastructure will not be supported.
- 6.6.21 Sites for stations have been identified and land will be safeguarded at the following locations:
- Woodhorn
  - Ashington
  - Bedlington Station
  - Blyth Bebside
  - South Newsham
  - Seaton Delaval
  - Seghill
- 6.6.22 The policy goes on to state that measures to improve public safety at level crossings will be supported. Improvement, alteration or closure of level crossings, or appropriate contributions towards the implementation of such works, may be secured through the grant of planning permission for development where it can be demonstrated, to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority, that those works are directly related to the impact that development may have on the level crossing and they are necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms.

**Policy ENVI: Approaches to assessing the impact of development on the natural, historic and built environment**

- 6.6.23 Policy ENVI states that the character and significance of Northumberland's distinctive and valued natural, historic and built environments, will be conserved, protected and enhanced by:

- *Giving appropriate weight to the statutory purposes and special qualities of the hierarchy of international, national and local designated and non-designated nature and historic conservation assets or sites and their settings;*
- *Protecting Northumberland's most important landscapes and applying a character-based approach to, as appropriate, manage, protect or plan landscape across the whole County.*

#### **Policy ENV2: Biodiversity and geodiversity**

6.6.24 Policy ENV2 states that development proposals affecting biodiversity and geodiversity will minimise their impact and net gains for biodiversity will be secured by:

- *Avoiding significant harm through location and/or design. Where significant harm cannot be avoided, applicants will be required to demonstrate that adverse impacts will be adequately mitigated or, as a last resort compensated for;*
- *Securing net biodiversity gains and/or wider ecological enhancements through new development*

#### **Policy ENV7: Historic environment and heritage assets**

6.6.25 Policy ENV7 supports the NPPF position on historic assets in that decisions affecting a heritage asset will be based on a sound understanding of the significance of that asset and any impact of any proposal upon that significance.

#### **Policy WAT3: Flooding**

6.6.26 Policy WAT3 states that development proposals will be required to demonstrate how they will minimise flood risk to people, property and infrastructure from all potential sources by:

- *Avoiding inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding and directing the development away from areas at highest risk, applying the Sequential Test and if necessary the Exceptions Test, in accordance with national policy and the Northumberland Strategic Flood Risk Assessment. Site Specific Flood Risk Assessments will be required in accordance with national policy and guidance;*
- *Ensuring that the development will be safe over its lifetime, taking account of climate change, will not increase flood risk elsewhere and where possible, reduce flood risk overall;*
- *Ensuring that development proposals in areas at risk from flooding are made resistant and resilient, in terms of their layout, mix and/or building design, in accordance with national policy and the findings and recommendations of the Northumberland Strategic Flood Risk Assessment;*

#### **Policy WAT4: Sustainable Drainage Systems**

6.6.27 Policy WAT4 states that SuDS will be a requirement for any development where it is necessary to manage surface water drainage unless it can be clearly demonstrated:

- *That SuDS are not technically, operationally or financially deliverable or viable and that any surface water drainage issues resulting from the development can be alternatively mitigated; or*
- *That the SuDS scheme will itself adversely affect the environment or safety, including where ponds could increase the risk of bird strike close to the airport or where existing minewater problems could be exacerbated.*

#### **Policy POL1: Unstable and contaminated land**

6.6.28 Policy POL1 states that development proposals will be supported where it can be demonstrated that unacceptable risks from land instability and contamination will be prevented and that measures can be taken to effectively mitigate the impacts.

#### **Policy POL2: Pollution and air, soil and water quality**

6.6.29 Policy POL2 states that development proposals that may cause pollution of water, air or soil, either individually or cumulatively, are required to incorporate measures to prevent or reduce their pollution so as not to cause nuisance or unacceptable impacts on the environment, people or biodiversity. Development proposed where pollution levels are unacceptable, and unable to be mitigated to acceptable levels, will not be supported.

### **6.7 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)**

6.7.1 The National Planning Policy Framework<sup>16</sup> (NPPF) sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied. It provides a framework within which locally-prepared plans for housing and other development can be produced.

6.7.2 Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The National Planning Policy Framework must be taken into account in preparing the development plan, and is a material consideration in planning decisions. Planning policies and decisions must also reflect relevant international obligations and statutory requirements.

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<sup>16</sup> Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (2019) National Planning Policy Framework (p4)

- 6.7.3 The NPPF states at paragraph 7 that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. At a very high level, the objective of sustainable development can be summarised as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.
- 6.7.4 Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways (so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across each of the different objectives):
- an economic objective – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;
  - a social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being; and
  - an environmental objective – to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.
- 6.7.5 At the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, so that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way.
- 6.7.6 With reference to paragraph 11 of the NPPF, it is important to note that for decision-taking this means;
- approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or
  - where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important are out-of-date, granting permission unless:
    - i) the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or
    - ii) any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.

- 6.7.7 Further advice on decision-taking which is of relevance to the current scheme is provided at paragraph 38 of the Framework;
- 6.7.8 Local planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way. They should use the full range of planning tools available and work proactively with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. Decision-makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible.
- 6.7.9 The early engagement evoked by the NPPF has been undertaken in a bid to assist in the efficiency and effectiveness of the determination of this planning application; paragraphs 39 to 46 of the NPPF highlight the importance of pre-application engagement.

#### **Promoting Sustainable Transport**

- 6.7.10 An integral component in delivering sustainable development and achieving wider sustainability and health objectives is the promotion of sustainable transport, as set out in Section 9 of the Framework. This includes identifying and pursuing opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport use.
- 6.7.11 This section states that the planning system should actively manage patterns of growth in support of these objectives. Significant development should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes. This can help to reduce congestion and emissions and improve air quality and public health.
- 6.7.12 Paragraph 109 states that development should only be prevented or refused on highway grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.
- 6.7.13 This connotes that a refusal of planning permission on transport grounds will only be justifiable if there are severe impacts arising from the development which cannot be mitigated.

#### **Building a strong, competitive economy**

- 6.7.14 The NPPF places great importance on ensuring the planning system does everything it can to help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development.

#### **Achieving well-designed places**

- 6.7.15 The creation of high quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities.



- 6.7.16 Paragraph 128 states that design quality should be considered throughout the evolution and assessment of individual proposals. Early discussion between applicants, the local planning authority and local community about the design and style of emerging schemes is important for clarifying expectations and reconciling local and commercial interests. Applicants should work closely with those affected by proposals to evolve designs that take account of the views of the community. Applications that can demonstrate early, proactive and effective engagement with the community should be looked on more favourably than those that cannot.

### **Protecting Green Belt land**

- 6.7.17 The Government attaches great importance to Green Belts. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence.
- 6.7.18 Paragraph 143 states that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances.
- 6.7.19 The NPPF goes on to state that when considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt. 'Very special circumstances' will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.
- 6.7.20 Paragraph 145 advises that a local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt. Exceptions to this are:
- a. buildings for agriculture and forestry;
  - b. the provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of land or a change of use) for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation, cemeteries and burial grounds and allotments; as long as the facilities preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it;
  - c. the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building;
  - d. the replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces;
  - e. limited infilling in villages;
  - f. limited affordable housing for local community needs under policies set out in the development plan (including policies for rural exception sites); and
  - g. limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land, whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which

would: not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development; or not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt, where the development would re-use previously developed land and contribute to meeting an identified affordable housing need within the area of the local planning authority

6.7.21 Paragraph 146 notes that certain other forms of development are also not inappropriate in the Green Belt provided they preserve its openness and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it. These are:

- mineral extraction;
- engineering operations;
- local transport infrastructure which can demonstrate a requirement for a Green Belt location;
- the re-use of buildings provided that the buildings are of permanent and substantial construction;
- material changes in the use of land (such as changes of use for outdoor sport or recreation, or for cemeteries and burial grounds); and
- development brought forward under a Community Right to Build Order or Neighbourhood Development Order.

## 7 Planning Assessment

### 7.1 Introduction

- 7.1.1 The application for planning permission is accompanied by the supporting information identified as required by the local planning authority in discussions prior to submission. The scope, extent and nature of the supporting information is in accordance with the advice and recommendations given by officers of the local planning authority.
- 7.1.2 The design of the scheme and scope of the submitted proposals has been conceived with the ambition of satisfying all of the relevant local and national planning, transport and environmental policies.
- 7.1.3 Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the statutory development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 7.1.4 The following sections:
- summarise the evidence that demonstrates how the development proposals accord with national planning policies (section 7.2–7.6)
  - summarises the evidence that demonstrates how the development proposals accord with the Local Plan (section 7.7)
  - confirms that there are no material considerations in the determination of the planning application that should lead to the application being refused (section 8)
  - confirms that the implementation of the scheme would deliver significant public benefits

### 7.2 Accordance with Northumberland Development Plan

- 7.2.1 The development plan in respect of the application site comprises the Blyth Valley Borough Local Development Framework Core Strategy Development Plan Document (July 2007), the Blyth Valley Borough Local Development Framework Development Control Policies Development Plan Document (September 2007) and the saved policies of the Blyth Valley District Local Plan (May 1999).
- 7.2.2 The NPPF advises at paragraph 213 that, in respect of Development Plans adopted prior to publication of the NPPF, local planning authorities should afford due weight according to their degree of consistency with the NPPF (the closer the policies in the Plan to the policies in the NPPF, the greater the weight that may be given).

- 7.2.3 In accordance with paragraph 48 of the NPPF, weight may also be given to the policies in emerging plans depending on the stage of preparation of the plan, the extent to which emerging policy aligns with the NPPF and the extent of unresolved objections to the emerging plan. The Northumberland Local Plan was submitted to Secretary of State for examination in May 2019 and is currently undergoing examination. It is therefore considered that relevant policies can be given some weight presently and can be given increasing weight as the Plan moves towards adoption.

### **7.3 Blyth Valley Borough Local Development Framework Core Strategy (July 2007)**

- 7.3.1 The Blyth Valley Borough LDF Core Strategy sets out the overall vision and spatial strategy for the borough until 2021. It currently forms the basis of Northumberland's Local Development Framework and is used to guide planning decisions throughout the Blyth Valley.
- 7.3.2 The Core Strategy was adopted on 5th July 2007 following an examination in February 2007. It now forms part of the statutory development plan for Northumberland. As well as providing the basis for decisions on planning applications, the Core Strategy is used to help shape regeneration, investment and growth within the borough.
- 7.3.3 It is anticipated the Core Strategy will be superseded by the emerging Northumberland Local Plan. Notwithstanding this, the extant Core Strategy currently forms part of the adopted development plan. Those policies of the existing, adopted Core Strategy that are material to the determination of this planning application are set out below.

#### **Policy SS1: Regeneration and Renaissance of Blyth Valley 2021**

- 7.3.4 Policy SS1 sets out an integrated regeneration strategy to guide new development to ensure that it can support the regeneration and economic and social renaissance of Blyth Valley. The policy states that it will support:

*“the implementation of essential infrastructure proposals in order to support and facilitate economic regeneration proposals, particularly:*

- *Ashington, Blyth and Tyne Line (ATB) or alternative public transport corridor.”*

- 7.3.5 The proposed railway station at Seaton Delaval is an integral component, and proposed to be delivered as part of, the Northumberland Line scheme. The scheme is therefore specifically supported by Policy SS1. The delivery of the new station will support and facilitate the council's ambitions for an economic and social renaissance in the Blyth Valley.
- 7.3.6 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy SS1 of the Blyth Valley Borough Core Strategy.

### **Policy SS3: Sustainability Criteria**

- 7.3.7 Policy SS3 identifies the criteria against which the sustainability credentials of new development will be tested.
- 7.3.8 The proposed railway station at Seaton Delaval, given its nature, represents a sustainable development. The scheme will encourage a modal shift toward more sustainable travel, reducing reliance on the private car. The location of the proposed station is adjacent existing housing and other amenities and can therefore be considered to be readily accessible by pedestrians, cyclists and motorists. Pedestrian crossing improvements are proposed to be delivered as part of the scheme, to encourage passengers to walk or cycle to and from the railway station. To this end, appropriate cycle parking facilities are to be provided at the site.
- 7.3.9 The many and various surveys, assessments and reports submitted in support of this planning application demonstrate that the proposed development has been designed based on a sound understanding of the physical and environmental constraints of the site. The scheme incorporates appropriate mitigation to avoid significant adverse or unacceptable environmental impacts.
- 7.3.10 The proposed development of a new railway station at Seaton Delaval would assist in sustaining communities and facilities through improving access for residents and visitors, including staff and customers of local businesses.
- 7.3.11 The proposed new railway station will encourage the conservation of existing resources, encouraging a shift from the private car to more sustainable modes. It is anticipated that such a modal shift would have a positive effect on regional air quality, reducing congestion of the local highway network and encouraging cycling and walking to improve the health and wellbeing of local people.
- 7.3.12 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy SS3 of the Blyth Valley Borough Core Strategy.

### **Policy A2: Pedestrian/ Cycle Routes**

- 7.3.13 Policy A2 supports development that is well connected to existing areas and infrastructure, including pedestrian and cycle routes.
- 7.3.14 The proposed railway station at Seaton Delaval is located adjacent to existing housing and other amenities. The proposed station has been designed to utilise existing infrastructure, including pedestrian and cycle routes and will deliver improvements to encourage pedestrian and cyclist access.
- 7.3.15 The existing Public Right of Way (300/128) is proposed to be retained during operation of the scheme and will provide access to the railway station and for throughfare to the PROW network. New footpath connections are proposed to provide access to the car park from Wheatridge and Whytrigg Close and a segregated cycleway is proposed to be provided parallel to the access road from the A192.

- 7.3.16 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy A2 of the Blyth Valley Borough Core Strategy.

**Policy A3: Ashington, Blyth and Tyne Line**

- 7.3.17 Policy A3 supports the re-introduction of passenger services on the Ashington, Blyth and Tyne railway line by safeguarding the route and land for future stations. The policy states that the council supports in principle alternative approaches to improving connectivity along the strategic transport corridor.
- 7.3.18 The proposed railway station at Seaton Delaval is an integral component, and proposed to be delivered as part of, the Northumberland Line scheme. The scheme is therefore specifically supported by Policy A3. The delivery of the new station will support and facilitate the council's ambitions for the re-introduction of passenger services on the Ashington, Blyth and Tyne Line.
- 7.3.19 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy A3 of the Blyth Valley Borough Core Strategy.

## **7.4 Blyth Valley Borough Local Development Framework Development Control Policies Development Plan Document (September 2007)**

- 7.4.1 The Blyth Valley Borough LDF Development Control Policies Development Plan Document sets out a series of generic development control policies against which planning applications for new development in the Blyth Valley will be assessed. It currently forms part of Northumberland's Local Development Framework and is used to guide planning decisions throughout the Blyth Valley.
- 7.4.2 The Development Control Policies Development Plan Document was adopted in May 2007 following an examination in February 2007. It now forms part of the statutory development plan for Northumberland. As well as providing the basis for decisions on planning applications, the Core Strategy is used to help shape regeneration, investment and growth within the borough.
- 7.4.3 It is anticipated the Development Control Policies Development Plan Document will be superseded by the emerging Northumberland Local Plan. Notwithstanding this, the extant Development Control Policies Development Plan Document currently forms part of the adopted development plan. Those policies of the existing, adopted Development Control Policies Development Plan Document that are material to the determination of this planning application are set out below.

**Policy DC1: General Development**

- 7.4.4 Policy DC1 sets out the general principles that will be used to consider the appropriateness of development proposals. The policy states that development proposals, amongst other things, will be expected to be:

- *“of a high standard of design and landscaping which takes account of existing natural and built features, the surrounding area and adjacent land uses; and*
- *be in locations which are, or can be through the provision of appropriate measures, accessible on foot, by cycle and by public and private transport and where satisfactory access can be achieved.”*

- 7.4.5 The proposed railway station at Seaton Delaval has been designed based on a detailed understanding of the existing and historic site conditions, an appraisal of those features of the local area that contribute to local character and distinctiveness, and through identifying the needs of all anticipated future users of the railway station and considering the advice of all stakeholders including Network Rail, the local planning authority, the local highway authority, residents, businesses and local politicians.
- 7.4.6 The submitted Design and Access Statement provides further details to demonstrate that the submitted scheme is based on a clear understanding of the character and local distinctiveness of the area and confirms that the proposed railway station would make a positive contribution to place-making and environmental improvement. The submitted landscaping proposals and visual impact assessment demonstrate that the scheme has been designed based on a sound understanding of the likely impacts on sensitive receptors and to ensure the visual impacts of the scheme do not have a significant adverse impact on the landscape.
- 7.4.7 The proposed railway station is located in an area which is accessible on foot, by cycle and by public and private transport and where satisfactory access can be achieved. The scheme includes measures to encourage walking and cycling to and from the railway station, though provision is made for vehicular access to ensure the station can be accessed by all users, including elderly and mobility impaired users that may be unable to walk to the station.
- 7.4.8 In summary, the proposed railway station demonstrates a bespoke approach to design. The proposed layout, scale, height and other design elements of the railway station are based on a detailed appraisal of the site, the existing railway and highway infrastructure and the proximity to adjacent land uses.
- 7.4.9 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy DC1 of the Development Control Policies Development Plan Document.

#### **Policy DC11: Planning for Sustainable Travel**

- 7.4.10 Policy DC11 sets out a number of criteria for new developments to satisfy. This includes encouraging the use of public transport, improving the integration of different modes of travel and providing an appropriate level of car and cycling provision.
- 7.4.11 The proposed railway station at Seaton Delaval is an integral part of the proposed re-introduction of passenger services on the Northumberland Line. The scheme includes the provision of measures to encourage walking and cycling to and from the station. The

proposed development would promote greater use of sustainable transport modes, encouraging rail travel for car users for either all or part of their journey to destinations including Northumberland, North Tyneside and Newcastle City Centre; helping to reduce the growth and reliance on car borne journeys. The scheme also provides measures to facilitate vehicular access to the station for elderly and mobility impaired users, to ensure the station is accessible for all.

- 7.4.12 The submitted Transport Assessment provides a detailed review of the predicted impacts of the proposed development on the local highway network, confirming that the proposed development would not result in a detrimental impact on the operation of the highway network and could alleviate pressure on the local highway network through encouraging an increased number of trips by rail.
- 7.4.13 In summary, the proposed railway station at Seaton Delaval is anticipated to encourage a modal shift toward more sustainable modes, benefiting both journey times for users of the road and rail network and providing environmental improvements to regional air quality, and improved cycle and walking routes.
- 7.4.14 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy DC11 of the Development Control Policies Development Plan Document.

#### **Policy DC17: Landscape: General Protection and Restoration**

- 7.4.15 Policy DC17 states that development should contribute to restoration, enhancement, repair and maintenance of the landscape in and around which it is sited. Development with landscape and visual impacts will be assessed against the extent to which it will:

*“Cause unacceptable visual harm; and*

- *Introduce or remove incongruous landscape elements; and*
- *Enhance, maintain or degrade:*
- *Landscape features that contribute to local distinctiveness;*
- *Historic elements that contribute to landscape character and quality; and*
- *Semi-natural vegetation that is characteristic of the landscape type; and*
- *The visual condition of landscape elements that combine to create the distinctive character; and*
- *The tranquillity of the area”*

- 7.4.16 The proposed railway station at Seaton Delaval has been designed based on a sound understanding of the physical constraints of the site, to ensure that it can be considered to appropriately sit within its landscape setting.



- 7.4.17 The proposed railway station at Seaton Delaval has been designed based on a detailed understanding and appraisal of those features of the local area that contribute to landscape character and distinctiveness, and through identifying and appraising the visual impact on different receptors from various viewpoints.
- 7.4.18 It should also be noted that the vast proportion of the site is located within the defined settlement boundary, therefore the impact on the open countryside is considered to be limited.
- 7.4.19 It is considered that the proposed station would not have a significant adverse impact on the local landscape.
- 7.4.20 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy DC17 of the Development Control Policies Development Plan Document.

**Policy DC19: Drainage and Flood Risk**

- 7.4.21 Policy DC19 states that development proposals should make the most efficient use of water and enhance the sustainable use of the water environment. Development that incorporates sustainable drainage systems will be encouraged.
- 7.4.22 The application site is identified as being located within Flood Zone 1 and is therefore at low risk of flooding. The proposed railway station at Seaton Delaval has been designed based on a sound understanding of the flood risk pertaining to the site from all sources. There is a risk of flooding from surface water. The scheme includes appropriate drainage to manage and mitigate the risk of flooding.
- 7.4.23 The submitted Flood Risk Assessment and Sustainable Drainage Assessment provides further details to demonstrate that the scheme has been designed to mitigate the risk of flooding to the site, in accordance with the drainage hierarchy.
- 7.4.24 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy DC19 of the Development Control Policies Development Plan Document.

**Policy DC21: Pollution Control**

- 7.4.25 Policy DC21 states that the local planning authority will seek to minimise the impact of pollution on the environment, including existing land uses, and on proposed development and will support and encourage measures to reduce existing pollution to the lowest practicable levels and where possible, improve air, soil and water quality.
- 7.4.26 The proposed railway station has been designed based on a good understanding of the physical and environmental constraints of the site, including pollution and land contamination. The submitted Preliminary Sources Study Report demonstrates that the proposed development incorporates appropriate mitigation to safeguard the site and adjacent land from significant adverse contamination issues.

- 7.4.27 The submitted Air Quality Assessment demonstrates that the scheme, given its nature, will assist in reducing the reliance on the private car and as such will likely result in improvements to regional air quality. However, there is potential for local air quality impacts within the vicinity of the stations and railway line. With the recommended air quality mitigation measures in place for the construction and operational phases, it is considered that the proposed railway station at Seaton Delaval would not cause any significant effects on air quality.
- 7.4.28 In summary, the proposed development is considered to appropriately consider pollution control issues and appropriate mitigation measures are to be incorporated to manage any pollution or contamination issues arising as a result of the scheme.
- 7.4.29 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy DC21 of the Development Control Policies Development Plan Document.

#### **Policy DC22: Noise Pollution**

- 7.4.30 Policy DC22 states that the local planning authority will seek to ensure that, wherever practicable, noise sensitive development and noisy or potentially noisy developments are located away from one another and will impose relevant conditions or seek appropriate planning obligations in relation to new development where separation is not practicable.
- 7.4.31 The proposed development has been designed based on a sound understanding of the site and adjacent land uses. The proposed station is located south of the A192. There are residential properties located to the east of the site. The site is located to the east of the railway corridor. The railway is currently used by freight trains and therefore a level of operational rail noise is already experienced at this location.
- 7.4.32 It is considered that there will be noise impacts during the construction and operational phases of the development; appropriate mitigation is proposed to be implemented to ensure noise impacts are minimised wherever possible.
- 7.4.33 The submitted Noise and Vibration Assessment demonstrates that the scheme has been designed based on a sound understanding of the proximity of sensitive receptors. It is proposed that appropriate mitigation during the operational phase will be secured through the provision of details to discharge relevant conditions on a planning permission. It is anticipated the details to mitigate construction noise impacts will included within the Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) which is expected to be included as a condition on a planning permission.
- 7.4.34 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy DC22 of the Development Control Policies Development Plan Document.

#### **Policy DC27: Design of New Developments**

- 7.4.35 Policy DC27 states that new development will be expected to achieve a high standard of design, incorporate sustainable construction measures and reflect local distinctiveness

through the incorporation of local building traditions and materials. Proposals should take full account of the need for or opportunities to enhance the local environment. High quality contemporary design solutions will be considered where they can be accommodated without detriment to the surrounding environment.

- 7.4.36 The proposed railway station at Seaton Delaval has been designed based on a detailed understanding of the existing and historic site conditions, an appraisal of those features of the local area that contribute to local character and distinctiveness, and through identifying the needs of all anticipated future users of the railway station and considering the advice of all stakeholders including Network Rail, the local planning authority, the local highway authority, residents, businesses and local politicians.
- 7.4.37 The submitted Design and Access Statement provides further details demonstrating that the submitted scheme is based on a clear understanding of the character and local distinctiveness of the area and confirms that the proposed railway station would make a positive contribution to place-making and environmental improvement.
- 7.4.38 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy DC27 of the Development Control Policies Development Plan Document.

## **7.5 Blyth Valley District Local Plan (May 1999)**

- 7.5.1 The Blyth Valley District Local Plan sets out a strategy to guide new development in the Blyth Valley. It currently forms the basis of Northumberland's Local Development Framework and is used to guide planning decisions throughout the Blyth Valley.
- 7.5.2 The Blyth Valley District Local Plan was adopted in May 1999. It forms part of the statutory development plan for Northumberland. As well as providing the basis for decisions on planning applications, the District Local Plan is used to help shape regeneration, investment and growth within the borough.
- 7.5.3 It is anticipated the Blyth District Local Plan will be superseded by the emerging Northumberland Local Plan. Notwithstanding this, the Blyth District Local Plan currently forms part of the adopted development plan. Those saved policies of the existing, adopted District Local Plan that are material to the determination of this planning application are set out below.

### **Policy E3: Landscape: General Approach**

- 7.5.4 Policy E3 states that the quality of the landscape will be taken into account in planning decisions by assessing proposals according to their effects on the intrinsic qualities of the landscape type or types which they affect. Account will also be taken of any positive landscape related measures proposed as part of any development.
- 7.5.5 The proposed railway station at Seaton Delaval has been designed based on a sound understanding of the physical constraints of the site, to ensure that it can be considered to

appropriately sit within its landscape setting. The application is supported by various landscape and visual impact assessments which confirm that the scheme would not have a significant adverse impact on the wider landscape.

- 7.5.6 The proposed railway station at Seaton Delaval has been designed based on a detailed understanding and appraisal of those features of the local area that contribute to landscape character and distinctiveness, and through identifying and appraising the visual impact on different receptors from various viewpoints.
- 7.5.7 It is considered that the proposed station would not have a significant adverse impact on the local landscape.
- 7.5.8 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy E3 of the Blyth District Local Plan.

#### **Policy G9: Development in Countryside Beyond Green Belt**

- 7.5.9 Policy G9 states that in areas outside settlement limits which are not part of the Green Belt, the construction of new buildings will not be permitted except for the following purposes:
- 7.5.10 *“Where a structure is related to essential infrastructure services in which case the proposal would also be assessed against other environmental policies in this Plan.”*
- 7.5.11 The proposed railway station at Seaton Delaval forms an integral component of the scheme which proposes the re-introduction of passenger services on the Northumberland Line. The Northumberland Line scheme is a strategic priority of both national and local government and should be considered to constitute ‘essential infrastructure’.
- 7.5.12 With the proposed development deemed to be ‘essential infrastructure’ the extent to which it is compliant with the policy will therefore rest on the compliance with ‘other environmental policies in the plan’. These are tested below.
- 7.5.13 The application site is located in an accessible location, with existing housing and other development adjacent to the site, it can therefore be considered to be located in a sustainable location.
- 7.5.14 In summary, the proposed railway station is considered to be appropriate development outwith the defined settlement boundary.
- 7.5.15 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy G9 of the Blyth District Local Plan.

#### **Policy G10: Development Criteria in the Countryside**

- 7.5.16 Policy G10 outlines the criteria for which all development outside of the development settlement limits must comply. New development must have regard to the existing settlement pattern. This includes consideration of neighbouring uses, the environment and any future needs that the development may necessitate. A new building will not be

permitted if it is isolated from existing buildings, unless it is necessary in terms of the uses proposed.

- 7.5.17 The proposed railway station at Seaton Delaval forms an integral component of the scheme which proposes the re-introduction of passenger services on the Northumberland Line. The Northumberland Line scheme is a strategic priority of both national and local government and should therefore be considered to constitute 'essential infrastructure'.
- 7.5.18 The application site is located in an accessible location, adjacent existing housing and other development and is therefore located in a sustainable location. The proposed development would involve the use of previously developed land for a use which could not reasonably be located elsewhere: to construct a railway station it must obviously be located adjacent to the railway line. The submitted landscaping proposals and visual impact assessment demonstrate that the proposals have been designed in a manner to minimise the impact on the openness of the Green Belt.
- 7.5.19 In summary, the proposed railway station is considered to be appropriate development outwith the defined settlement boundary.
- 7.5.20 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy G10 of the Blyth District Local Plan.

#### **Policy M8: Car Parking**

- 7.5.21 Policy M8 states that new development should seek to minimise the area devoted to car parking, whilst complying with parking standards and safeguarding existing provision. The policy states that the possibility of providing park and ride facilities should be explored. Where possible, measures should be taken to ensure that car park areas are well landscaped and safe for pedestrians.
- 7.5.22 The proposed railway station at Seaton Delaval seeks to provide appropriate access for all users, with priority given to encouraging walking and cycling to the station. It is acknowledged that not all users are able to walk and/or cycle to and from the station. For elderly and disabled users, it may be necessary to arrive at or depart from the station by car. The proposed station therefore provides appropriate vehicular access and car parking, the extent to which has been the subject of pre-application discussions with both planning and highway authority officers.
- 7.5.23 The proposed station is well served by links to existing bus stops and services. The site is a short walk away from the existing bus stops on the A192. The X7, 19, 57 and 58 buses stop at this location. Those buses from run from Newcastle to Blyth, East Cramlington to East Hartford, Ashington to Whitley Bay, and Percy Main to Backworth. The scheme is therefore designed to integrate with the existing public transport infrastructure adjacent to the site.
- 7.5.24 The proposed station has been designed to ensure safe and convenient access is available for all modes. The submitted Transport Assessment demonstrates that the scheme,

including the proposed amount of car parking, is considered to be acceptable from a highway capacity and safety perspective.

- 7.5.25 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy M8 of the Blyth District Local Plan.

## **7.6 Accordance with Northumberland Local Plan Regulation 19 Publication Draft (May 2019)**

- 7.6.1 The NPPF advises at paragraph 48 that weight may also be given to the policies in emerging plans depending on the stage of preparation of the plan, the extent to which emerging policy aligns with the NPPF and the extent of unresolved objections to the emerging plan. The Northumberland Local Plan was submitted to Secretary of State for examination in May 2019 and is currently undergoing examination. It is therefore considered that relevant policies can be given some weight presently and can be given increasing weight as the Plan moves towards adoption.

- 7.6.2 The relevant policies of the emerging Northumberland Local Plan that pertain to the scheme which is the subject of this planning application are identified as follows:

### **Policy STP1: Spatial Strategy**

- 7.6.3 Policy STP1 states that sustainable development will be supported within the constraints of the Green Belt and settlement boundaries defined on the Local Plan policies map. Sustainable development within, or immediately adjacent to, the built-up form of Main Towns, Service Centres and Service Villages without defined settlement boundaries, will be supported, if it is commensurate with size of the settlement, and it can be demonstrated that it does not adversely impact upon the character of the settlement.
- 7.6.4 Development in the open countryside will only be supported if it can be demonstrated that it:
- 7.6.5 *“Provides for essential transport, utilities and energy infrastructure in accordance with other policies in the Local Plan.”*
- 7.6.6 The policy goes on to state that development in the open countryside should be sensitive to its surroundings and should not have an unacceptable impact upon the local road network.
- 7.6.7 The proposed railway station at Seaton Delaval forms an integral component of the scheme which proposes the re-introduction of passenger services on the Northumberland Line. The Northumberland Line scheme is a strategic priority of both national and local government and could therefore reasonably be considered to constitute ‘essential infrastructure’.
- 7.6.8 The application site is located in an accessible location, adjacent existing housing and other development and is therefore located in a sustainable location. The scheme is designed to integrate with existing and adjacent public transport infrastructure, including the bus stops located along the A192. The proposed development would involve the use of land for a use

which could not reasonably be located elsewhere: to construct a railway station it must obviously be located adjacent to the railway line. The submitted landscaping proposals and visual impact assessment demonstrate that the proposals have been designed in a manner to minimise the impact on the openness of the Green Belt.

7.6.9 In summary, the proposed railway station is considered to be appropriate development outwith the defined settlement boundary.

7.6.10 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy STPI of the emerging Northumberland Local Plan.

### **Policy STP2: Presumption in favour of Sustainable Development**

7.6.11 Policy STP2 states that when considering development proposals, the Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). It will always work pro-actively with applicants to seek to find solutions that mean proposals that improve the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area can be approved wherever possible.

7.6.12 The proposed railway station at Seaton Delaval, given its nature, is considered to represent a sustainable development. The scheme will promote the use of rail services as an alternative to the private car and will assist in alleviating congestion on the local highway network and improving regional air quality. The application site is located within an accessible location and as such will encourage walking and cycling to and from the station, though vehicular access is to be provided to ensure the station is accessible for all users.

7.6.13 The proposed railway station at Seaton Delaval would deliver economic, social and environmental benefits and thereby support the planning system in fulfilling its purpose: to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development.

7.6.14 The economic benefits of the scheme include:

- The development will facilitate increased access for residents and local people to employment and training opportunities throughout Northumberland, North Tyneside and Newcastle City Centre. The provision of passenger rail services at this location, including specialist provision for mobility impaired and disabled users, will also encourage employers to locate in this part of Northumberland;
- The development will provide a convenient multimodal transport interchange which integrates the train services and railway station with buses, cycling, walking, private cars and taxis.
- The proposed railway station will help to alleviate congestion on the local highway network, presenting a potential cost saving in journey times for staff and visitors to local businesses and those travelling further afield, supporting economic growth in Seaton Delaval, Northumberland and the North East more widely.

7.6.15 The social benefits of the scheme include:

- The development will improve journey times for residents, local people and those wishing to travel from Ashington to destinations further afield including North Tyneside and Newcastle City Centre;
- The development will increase the ability of residents and local people to gain access to employment and training opportunities;
- The development will contribute to building strong, vibrant and healthy communities by encouraging social inclusion, improving the accessibility of local services and the use of sustainable travel modes

7.6.16 The environmental benefits of the scheme include:

- The development will improve the physical accessibility and connectivity of transport infrastructure for all users
- The development will make it physically more simple and convenient to use and access public transport infrastructure in Seaton Delaval. The consequential modal shift will assist in improving overall regional air quality
- The development will decrease dependence on the private car for residents and local people, in so doing it will reduce carbon emissions

7.6.17 In summary, the proposed railway station is considered to represent a sustainable development. Accordingly, it is considered the local planning authority ought to take a positive approach to the consideration and determination of this planning application.

7.6.18 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy STP2 of the emerging Northumberland Local Plan.

### **Policy STP3: Principles of Sustainable Development**

7.6.19 Policy STP3 states that in applying the presumption in favour of sustainable development in Northumberland and to deliver against economic, social and environmental objectives, development proposals will be expected to deliver across the range of the economic, social and environmental factors, and adhere to the following principles where appropriate:

- Contribute to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy across Northumberland, support more and better jobs, protect and enhance the vitality and viability of Northumberland's town centres and other important economic sectors;
- Minimise their impact upon local amenity for new or existing residents and businesses, adjoining premises and land uses;



- Support and provide opportunities to improve health, social and cultural wellbeing for all, and provide the infrastructure which is required to enhance the quality of life of individuals and communities;
- Demonstrate high quality sustainable design which is accessible to all, and which respects and enhances the local distinctiveness of the natural, historic and built environment, helps promote a sense of place, reduces the need for energy, and facilitates flexible and adaptable buildings and environments;
- Be accessible by, or be able to be made accessible by public transport, walking or cycling where feasible, thereby reducing the need to travel for both people and goods, and the dependence on travel by private car;
- Make best use of existing facilities and infrastructure, whilst making appropriate provision for new or additional infrastructure as required;

- 7.6.20 The proposed railway station at Seaton Delaval would improve access to and from the local area for residents, staff and customers of local businesses. The proposed station would therefore improve the accessibility and connectivity of Seaton Delaval to Northumberland and the North East more widely.
- 7.6.21 The scheme would assist in reducing reliance on the private car, encouraging use of more sustainable modes of travel including walking and cycling. The submitted Transport Assessment demonstrates that the scheme can be suitably accessed by various modes, and that safe and convenient access is provided for all users.
- 7.6.22 The scheme has been designed based on a sound understanding of the site, adjacent land uses and the requirements of key stakeholders including Network Rail, the local planning authority and the local highway authority. The submitted Design and Access Statements provides a detailed summary of the design evolution and confirms that the scheme constitutes a sustainable design which is accessible to all.
- 7.6.23 The scheme incorporates appropriate and proportionate improvements to the local highway, including improved pedestrian crossing arrangements, to ensure that the opportunities to encourage pedestrian and cyclist access to and from the station have been taken.
- 7.6.24 In summary, the proposed railway station is considered to represent a sustainable development. Accordingly, it is considered the local planning authority ought to take a positive approach to the consideration and determination of this planning application.
- 7.6.25 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy STP3 of the emerging Northumberland Local Plan.

#### **Policy STP4: Climate change mitigation and adaptation**

- 7.6.26 Policy STP4 states that development proposals should mitigate climate change and contribute to meeting nationally binding targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. When determining planning applications, support will be given to how development proposals that help mitigate climate change and consideration will be given to how proposals:
- 7.6.27 Through their location, layout and pattern of development, reduce the need to travel for both people and goods, and encourage sustainable modes of transport, including walking, cycling and the use of public transport;
- 7.6.28 The proposed railway station at Seaton Delaval, given its nature, will assist in encouraging the use of more sustainable modes of travel, reducing reliance on the private car. Such a modal shift is likely to assist in reducing carbon and greenhouse gas emissions; improving regional air quality together with assisting the council in meeting its climate change objectives.
- 7.6.29 The scheme is located within an accessible and sustainable location, adjacent existing housing and other development. The scheme incorporates measures to encourage walking and cycling, as well as rail services.
- 7.6.30 In summary, the proposed railway station is considered to represent a sustainable development. The scheme will assist the council in meeting its wider climate change objectives.
- 7.6.31 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy STP4 of the emerging Northumberland Local Plan.

#### **Policy STP5: Health and wellbeing**

- 7.6.32 Policy STP5 states that development which promotes, supports and enhances the health and wellbeing of communities, residents, workers and visitors will be supported. Development proposals will be required to demonstrate that they:
- are safe, comfortable, inclusive and attractive and prioritise pedestrian and cycle movement;
  - provide access to a range of facilities including public transport, health, education, social care, green spaces, sport, play and leisure facilities
- 7.6.33 The policy requires that a Health Impact Assessment Screening be submitted for all major development proposals to determine whether the potential impact on health resulting from the development warrants any further assessment. Where further assessment is warranted, a proportionate Health Impact Assessment will also be required to be submitted as part of the application. A Health Impact Assessment will be required to include proposals to mitigate any adverse health impacts, maximise potential positive impacts, and help reduce health inequalities.

- 7.6.34 The proposed railway station at Seaton Delaval has been designed to prioritise pedestrian and cycle movements. The scheme includes improved pedestrian crossing arrangements and cycle parking is provided to encourage travel to and from the station by sustainable modes. It is recognised, however, that not all users are able to walk and/ or cycle to and from the station. The scheme therefore ensures vehicular access is provided to ensure the station can be accessed by elderly and disabled users.
- 7.6.35 The scheme, given its nature, supports the delivery of sustainable transport infrastructure which will improve access to health, education and leisure facilities across the North East for local people.
- 7.6.36 The response by the local planning authority to the pre-application indicated that a Health Impact Assessment was not required to be undertaken. Notwithstanding this response the application includes an appraisal of the potential health and wellbeing benefits of the station to the local population. This demonstrates that the potential impacts resulting from the development are generally beneficial. The scheme has been designed to manage and mitigate the risk of potential adverse health impacts, wherever possible.
- 7.6.37 In summary, the proposed railway station is considered to represent a sustainable development, which will deliver many and various health and wellbeing improvements.
- 7.6.38 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy STP5 of the emerging Northumberland Local Plan.

**Policy STP8: Development in the Green Belt**

- 7.6.39 Policy STP8 states that in assessing development proposals within the Green Belt:

*Development that is inappropriate in the Green Belt, in accordance with national planning policy, will not be supported unless very special circumstances clearly outweigh the potential harm to the Green Belt, and any other harm resulting from the proposal.*

*Development which is appropriate in the Green Belt, as defined in national planning policy, will be supported.*

- 7.6.40 The proposed railway station at Seaton Delaval forms an integral component of the scheme which proposes the re-introduction of passenger services on the Northumberland Line. The Northumberland Line scheme is a strategic priority of both national and local government and could therefore reasonably be considered to constitute 'essential infrastructure'.
- 7.6.41 The application site includes only a small parcel of land which is allocated as Green Belt. The majority of the site is located outwith the Green Belt. The proposed development would involve the re-use of previously developed land for a use which could not reasonably be located elsewhere: to construct a railway station it must obviously be located adjacent to the railway line. The submitted landscaping proposals and visual impact assessment demonstrate that the proposals have been designed in a manner to minimise the impact on the openness of the Green Belt.

- 7.6.42 Further, it is considered that the above narrative satisfactorily demonstrates that the proposed station is required to be located (partially) within the Green Belt.
- 7.6.43 Notwithstanding the fact that the development is considered to be 'appropriate' within the Green Belt, should the local planning authority consider otherwise, it is considered that the development of the proposed railway station at Seaton Delaval satisfies the test of 'very special circumstances'. The re-introduction of passenger services on the Northumberland Line is defined by the council as 'essential transport infrastructure' and is a strategic transport priority both locally and nationally. It is therefore considered that the development partially on Green Belt land should be supported.
- 7.6.44 In summary, the proposed railway station is considered to be appropriate development in the Green Belt and would, in any event, exemplify 'very special circumstances' sufficient to outweigh any perceived harm to the Green Belt.
- 7.6.45 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy STP8 of the emerging Northumberland Local Plan.

#### **Policy QOPI: Design Principles**

- 7.6.46 Policy QOPI states that in determining planning applications, design will be assessed against the following design principles, in accordance with the Northumberland Design Guide. Proposals will be supported where design:
- Makes a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness and contributes to a positive relationship between built and natural features, including landform and topography;
  - Facilitates an inclusive, comfortable, user-friendly and legible environment;
  - Supports health and wellbeing and enhances quality of life
- 7.6.47 The proposed railway station at Seaton Delaval has been designed based on a detailed understanding of the existing and historic site conditions, an appraisal of those features of the local area that contribute to local character and distinctiveness, and through identifying the needs of all anticipated future users of the railway station and considering the advice of all stakeholders including Network Rail, the local planning authority, the local highway authority, residents, businesses and local politicians.
- 7.6.48 The submitted Design and Access Statement provides further details demonstrating that the submitted scheme is based on a clear understanding of the character and local distinctiveness of the area and confirms that the proposed railway station would make a positive contribution to place-making and environmental improvement.
- 7.6.49 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy QOPI of the emerging Northumberland Local Plan.

## **Policy QOP2: Good Design and Amenity**

- 7.6.50 Policy QOP2 states that development will be required to provide a high standard of amenity for existing and future users of the development itself and preserve the amenity of those living in, working in or visiting the local area.
- 7.6.51 Development which would result in unacceptable adverse impacts on the amenity of neighbouring uses, in terms of both individual and cumulative impacts, will not be supported.
- 7.6.52 The design of the proposed railway station at Bedlington Station has been informed by a detailed assessment of the potential impacts on the amenity of nearby and adjacent properties, and residents. The design is based on a sound understanding of the site and adjacent land uses, and in ensuring that the scheme takes account of the amenity of neighbouring land uses etc. Careful consideration has been given to the impacts of the scheme on sensitive receptors, and proposals for mitigating adverse impacts form part of the submission.
- 7.6.53 The thematic surveys and assessments submitted in support of the planning application including the noise and vibration assessment demonstrates that the scheme would not have a significant adverse impact on neighbouring land uses – subject to appropriate mitigation. The scheme will seek to incorporate appropriate mitigation, the precise details of which will be agreed through the discharge of relevant conditions on a planning permission.
- 7.6.54 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy QOP2 of the emerging Northumberland Local Plan.

## **Policy QOP4: Landscaping and Trees**

- 7.6.55 Policy QOP4 states that where relevant, new development will be expected to incorporate well-designed landscaping and respond appropriately to any existing landscape features. Development proposals should ensure that:

Landscaping design is of a high quality, in accordance with the principles set out in Policy QOP 1;

- Existing features which contribute towards the character of the area, or amenity, are retained wherever possible and sympathetically incorporated into the overall design of the scheme;
- Any hard or soft landscaping is appropriate, functional and well-integrated into the design of the development;
- Trees, and other spaces and features that provide green and blue infrastructure, are preserved, enhanced and introduced into the landscaping scheme wherever possible;

- 7.6.56 The design of the scheme has been informed by a survey of the trees: within, adjacent to, and nearby to the site, and by the preparation of an Arboricultural Impact Assessment. These documents are submitted with the application.
- 7.6.57 The design of the scheme has been informed by the Landscape Appraisal of the site and surroundings. This document is submitted with the application.
- 7.6.58 These surveys, assessments and appraisals have been used to guide the proposals and in particular to guide the; removal of trees and shrubs from within the site, and the provision of a soft landscaping scheme. The application is supported by an indicative landscaping scheme which seeks to retain and/or replace existing trees, wherever possible. An indication of the landscape proposals and the justification for tree removals are set out in the submitted landscaping scheme and arboricultural reports.
- 7.6.59 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy QOP4 of the emerging Northumberland Local Plan.

**Policy QOP6: Delivering well-designed places**

- 7.6.60 Policy QOP6 states that proposals are expected to meet the local design expectations set out in design policies within the Plan, the Northumberland Design Guide, and any other design guidance. Proposals are expected to respond to any character assessments that form part of or support the Plan.
- 7.6.61 The proposed railway station at Seaton Delaval has been designed based on a sound understanding of the defining characteristics of the site and the adjacent land uses. The scheme has evolved based on discussions with local authority officers and other key stakeholders to ensure the design of the scheme suitably reflects the wider ambitions of those stakeholders.
- 7.6.62 The proposed railway station at Seaton Delaval is supported by a Design and Access Statement which provides a summary of the design evolution process. The Design and Access Statement should be read in conjunction with this Planning Statement and the submitted Statement of Community Engagement to provide a comprehensive overview of how the submitted scheme has evolved to take account of the observations, guidance and comments received from the local planning authority and other key stakeholders.
- 7.6.63 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy QOP6 of the emerging Northumberland Local Plan.

**Policy TRAI: Promoting sustainable connections**

- 7.6.64 Policy TRAI states that the council will support development that:
- Promotes a spatial distribution which creates accessible development, reduces the need to travel by car, and maximises the use of sustainable modes of transport;

- Promotes good design principles in respect of the permeability, connectivity and legibility of buildings and public spaces; and inclusive access;
- Promotes sustainable transport choices, including supporting, providing and connecting to networks for walking, cycling and public transport; and infrastructure that supports the use of low and ultra low emission vehicles;
- Ensures delivery of cycle parking and supporting infrastructure;
- Protects, enhances and supports public rights of way;
- Supports the delivery of reliable, safe and efficient transport networks, in partnership with other organisations, service providers and developers;
- Requires development to be designed to enable charging of plug-in and other ultra low emission vehicles in safe, accessible, convenient locations; and
- Requires development proposals which generate significant amounts of movements to be supported by a Transport Assessment/ Transport Statement, and Travel Plans, and where appropriate, delivery/servicing plans.

- 7.6.65 The proposed railway station at Seaton Delaval is an integral part of the proposed re-introduction of passenger services on the Northumberland Line. The scheme includes the provision of measures to encourage walking and cycling to and from the station. The proposed development would promote greater use of sustainable transport modes, encouraging rail travel for car users for either all or part of their journey to destinations including Northumberland, North Tyneside and Newcastle City Centre; helping to reduce the growth and reliance on car borne journeys. The scheme also provides measures to facilitate vehicular access to the station for elderly and mobility impaired users, to ensure the station is accessible for all.
- 7.6.66 The submitted Transport Assessment provides a detailed review of the predicted impacts of the proposed development on the local highway network, confirming that the proposed development would not result in a detrimental impact on the operation of the highway network and could alleviate pressure on the local highway network through encouraging an increased number of trips by rail.
- 7.6.67 In summary, the proposed railway station at Seaton Delaval is anticipated to encourage a modal shift toward more sustainable modes, benefiting both journey times for users of the road and rail network and improved cycle and walking routes.
- 7.6.68 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy TRAI of the emerging Northumberland Local Plan.

## **Policy TRA2: The effects of development on the transport network**

7.6.69 Policy TRA2 states that, amongst other things, all developments affecting the transport network will be required to:

- Provide effective and safe access and egress to the existing transport network
- Facilitate the safe use of the network, including suitable crossing points, footways and dedicated provision for cyclists where necessary.

7.6.70 The proposed railway station at Seaton Delaval is an integral part of the proposed re-introduction of passenger services on the Northumberland Line. The scheme includes the provision of measures to encourage walking and cycling to and from the station. The proposed development would promote greater use of sustainable transport modes, encouraging rail travel for car users for either all or part of their journey to destinations including Northumberland, North Tyneside and Newcastle City Centre; helping to reduce the growth and reliance on car borne journeys. The scheme also provides measures to facilitate vehicular access to the station for elderly and mobility impaired users, to ensure the station is accessible for all.

7.6.71 The submitted Transport Assessment provides a detailed review of the predicted impacts of the proposed development on the local highway network, confirming that the proposed development would not result in a detrimental impact on the operation of the highway network and could alleviate pressure on the local highway network through encouraging an increased number of trips by rail.

7.6.72 In summary, the proposed railway station at Seaton Delaval is anticipated to encourage a modal shift toward more sustainable modes, benefiting both journey times for users of the road and rail network and improved cycle and walking routes.

7.6.73 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy TRA2 of the emerging Northumberland Local Plan.

## **Policy TRA4: Parking provision in new development**

7.6.74 Policy TRA4 states that an appropriate amount of off-street vehicle parking sufficient to serve new development shall be made available in safe, accessible and convenient locations prior to the development, as a whole or in part, being brought into use. Vehicle parking shall be provided in accordance with the parking standards set out in Appendix D of the Local Plan, or other such local standards set out in made neighbourhood plans which will be given priority in determining the appropriate amount of parking required.

7.6.75 The proposed railway station at Seaton Delaval seeks to provide appropriate access for all users, with priority given to encouraging walking and cycling to the station. It is acknowledged that not all users are able to walk and/or cycle to and from the station. For elderly and disabled users, it may be necessary to arrive at or depart from the station by car. The proposed station therefore provides appropriate vehicular access and car parking, the



extent of which has been the subject of pre-application discussions with both planning and highway authority officers.

- 7.6.76 The proposed station has been designed to ensure safe and convenient access is available for all modes. The submitted Transport Assessment demonstrates that the scheme, including the proposed amount of car parking, is considered to be acceptable from a highway capacity and safety perspective.
- 7.6.77 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy TRA4 of the emerging Northumberland Local Plan.

**Policy TRA5: Rail transport and safeguarding facilities**

- 7.6.78 Policy TRA5 states that development which would prevent the reintroduction of passenger rail services on the Northumberland Line along with associated stations, facilities and access to them from adjacent highways, and continued rail freight use of the Northumberland Line, its associated branch lines (including the branch line from Bedlington to Morpeth via Choppington, the Butterwell line north of Ashington and the line from Woodhorn to Newbiggin-by-the-Sea) and supporting infrastructure will not be supported.
- 7.6.79 Sites for stations have been identified and land will be safeguarded at the following locations:
- a. Woodhorn
  - b. Ashington
  - c. Bedlington Station
  - d. Blyth Bebside
  - e. South Newsham
  - f. Seaton Delaval
  - g. Seghill
- 7.6.80 The proposed railway station at Seaton Delaval is an integral component, and proposed to be delivered as part of, the Northumberland Line scheme. The scheme is therefore specifically supported by Policy TRA5. The delivery of the new station will support and facilitate the council's ambitions for the re-introduction of passenger services on the Ashington, Blyth and Tyne Line.
- 7.6.81 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy TRA5 of the emerging Northumberland Local Plan.

**Policy ENVI: Approaches to assessing the impact of development on the natural, historic and built environment**

- 7.6.82 Policy ENVI states that the character and significance of Northumberland's distinctive and valued natural, historic and built environments, will be conserved, protected and enhanced by:

*Giving appropriate weight to the statutory purposes and special qualities of the hierarchy of international, national and local designated and non-designated nature and historic conservation assets or sites and their settings;*

- 7.6.83 Protecting Northumberland's most important landscapes and applying a character-based approach to, as appropriate, manage, protect or plan landscape across the whole County.
- 7.6.84 The proposed railway station at Seaton Delaval has been designed based on a sound understanding of the site and its context, including consideration of the impacts on adjacent land uses. The planning application is supported by detailed surveys and assessments which consider the likely effect of the scheme on natural, historic and built environment receptors, confirming that the scheme would not have a significant adverse impact on those receptors. The scheme will improve access to Northumberland's distinctive and values natural, historic and built environments, helping to ensure they can continue to be continued by this and future generations, which will assist in the conservation, protection and enhancement of such assets.
- 7.6.85 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy ENVI of the emerging Northumberland Local Plan.

**Policy ENV2: Biodiversity and geodiversity**

- 7.6.86 Policy ENV2 states that development proposals should minimize the impacts on biodiversity and geodiversity and net gains should be secured.
- 7.6.87 The proposed railway station at Seaton Delaval has been designed based on a sound understanding of the ecological and wider environmental sensitivity of the site and adjacent land. The planning application is supported by appropriate ecological and other assessments which demonstrate that the scheme will not adversely impact on biodiversity and wildlife networks; opportunities for habitat and landscaping improvement, including appropriate mitigation, are to be provided. It is anticipated that the scheme will incorporate measures to improve the biodiversity value of the site, including sensitive landscaping proposals and the installation of bat and bird boxes. The project would be content to accept suitably worded conditions for further details regarding such measures.
- 7.6.88 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy ENV2 of the emerging Northumberland Local Plan.

### **Policy ENV7: Historic environment and heritage assets**

- 7.6.89 Policy ENV7 supports the NPPF position on historic assets in that decisions affecting a heritage asset will be based on a sound understanding of the significance of that asset and any impact of any proposal upon that significance.
- 7.6.90 The proposed railway station at Seaton Delaval has been designed based on a detailed understanding of the existing and historic site conditions, an appraisal of those features of the local area that contribute to local character and distinctiveness, and through identifying the needs of all anticipated future users of the railway station and considering the advice of all stakeholders including Network Rail, the local planning authority, the local highway authority, residents, businesses and local politicians.
- 7.6.91 The submitted Design and Access Statement provides further details demonstrating that the submitted scheme is based on a clear understanding of the character and local distinctiveness of the area and confirms that the proposed railway station would make a positive contribution to place-making and environmental improvement. The scheme would not have a detrimental impact on the significance on any heritage assets.
- 7.6.92 The planning application is supported by a Heritage Statement which demonstrates that the scheme would not detract from the significance of any designated or non-designated heritage assets.
- 7.6.93 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy ENV7 of the emerging Northumberland Local Plan.

### **Policy WAT3: Flooding**

- 7.6.94 Policy WAT3 states that development proposals will be required to demonstrate how they will minimise flood risk to people, property and infrastructure from all potential sources.
- 7.6.95 The proposed railway station at Seaton Delaval has been designed based on a sound understanding of the identified risk of flooding to the site from all sources. Appropriate drainage is incorporated within the submitted designs. The submitted Flood Risk Assessment and Surface Water Drainage Strategy demonstrates that flood risk to people, property and infrastructure from all sources will be suitably mitigated and managed as part of the proposed development.
- 7.6.96 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy WAT3 of the emerging Northumberland Local Plan.

### **Policy WAT4: Sustainable Drainage Systems**

- 7.6.97 Policy WAT4 SuDS should be incorporated within all development where it is necessary to manage surface water drainage, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

- 7.6.98 The proposed railway station at Seaton Delaval has been designed to incorporate appropriate drainage arrangements. The submitted Flood Risk Assessment and Surface Water Drainage Strategy provides further details on the proposed drainage arrangements.
- 7.6.99 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy WAT4 of the emerging Northumberland Local Plan.

**Policy POL1: Unstable and contaminated land**

- 7.6.100 Policy POL1 states that development proposals will be supported where it can be demonstrated that unacceptable risks from land instability and contamination will be prevented and that measures can be taken to effectively mitigate the impacts.
- 7.6.101 The proposed railway station at Seaton Delaval is supported by various ground investigations and contaminated land assessments, which are submitted in support of the planning application, to demonstrate that land instability and contamination issues will be appropriately mitigated and managed as part of the proposed development.
- 7.6.102 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy POL1 of the emerging Northumberland Local Plan.

**Policy POL2: Pollution and air, soil and water quality**

- 7.6.103 Policy POL2 states that development proposals that may cause pollution of water, air or soil, either individually or cumulatively, are required to incorporate measures to prevent or reduce their pollution so as not to cause nuisance or unacceptable impacts on the environment, people or biodiversity. Development proposed where pollution levels are unacceptable, and unable to be mitigated to acceptable levels, will not be supported.
- 7.6.104 The proposed railway station at Seaton Delaval is supported by various air quality and contaminated land assessments, which are submitted in support of the planning application, to demonstrate that the development is not at risk from, nor would it result in unacceptable impacts on the environment, people or biodiversity.
- 7.6.105 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy POL2 of the emerging Northumberland Local Plan.

## **7.7 Accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework**

- 7.7.1 The NPPF states at paragraph 7 that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. There are three interdependent, overarching objectives that the planning system must perform in order to contribute to sustainable development:
- an economic objective;
  - a social objective; and

- an environmental objective

7.7.2 The proposed railway station at Seaton Delaval would deliver economic social and environmental benefits and thereby supports the planning system in fulfilling its fundamental purpose: to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development.

7.7.3 The economic benefits of the scheme include:

- The development will facilitate increased access for residents and local people to employment and training opportunities throughout the North East. The provision of passenger rail services at this location, including specialist provision for mobility impaired and disabled users, may also encourage employers to locate in this part of Northumberland, given its improved accessibility and connectivity to the wider North East conurbation.
- The development will provide a convenient multimodal transport interchange which integrates the train services and railway station with buses, cycling, walking, private cars and taxis.
- The development will facilitate movement between Seaton Delaval and the wider North East conurbation, improving access to employment opportunities for local people.
- The proposed railway station will help to alleviate congestion on the local highway network, presenting a potential cost saving in journey times for staff and visitors to local businesses and those travelling further afield, supporting economic growth in Seaton Delaval, Northumberland and the North East more widely.
- The proposed railway station at Seaton Delaval will increase footfall in the local area, which will support local businesses such as the Harvest petrol station; Lakes and Dales supermarket and the Hastings Arms Pub.
- The significant investment into new and upgraded transport infrastructure will attract private sector investment, enhance economic vitality and encourage further economic growth in Northumberland.

7.7.4 The social benefits of the scheme include:

- The development will improve journey times for residents, local people and those wishing to travel from Seaton Delaval to destinations further afield including Newcastle City Centre.
- The development will increase the ability of residents and local people to gain access to employment and training opportunities

- The development will provide a safe and secure railway station, with appropriate lighting and CCTV camera provision to encourage all parts of the community to use the transport services and the railway station
- The development will incorporate lift and stepped access to both platforms and signage to the railway station suitable for users with disabilities
- The development would provide infrastructure that would encourage sustainable travel and would accommodate projected future growth in Seaton Delaval in terms of population, employment and housing
- The development will conserve and enhance the cultural heritage of Seaton Delaval. The station has been designed based on a sound understanding of local character and distinctiveness.
- The development will contribute to building strong, vibrant and healthy communities by encouraging social inclusion, improving the accessibility of local services and the use of sustainable travel modes
- The development will make it physically more simple and easy to use and access public transport infrastructure in Seaton Delaval. The consequential modal shift will assist in improving regional air quality
- The scheme will deliver environmental and physical improvements to the site, in doing so it will assist in changing perceptions of the area and of Seaton Delaval

#### 7.7.5 The environmental benefits of the scheme include:

- The development will improve the physical accessibility and connectivity of transport infrastructure for all users
- The development will provide a modern environment which is attractive and safe for pedestrians, cyclists and motorists
- The development will provide a safe and secure railway station, with appropriate lighting and CCTV camera provision to encourage all parts of the community to use the transport services and the railway station
- The pedestrian spaces within the site have been designed to be accessible for all users, especially those with visual and physical limitations
- The development will conserve and enhance the cultural heritage of Seaton Delaval. The station has been designed based on a sound understanding of local character and distinctiveness.
- The development will make it physically more simple and convenient to use and access public transport infrastructure in Seaton Delaval. The consequential modal shift will assist in improving overall regional air quality

- The development will be undertaken in accordance with a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) and a Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP), which will minimise the environmental impacts traditionally associated with urban redevelopment schemes.
- The development will decrease dependence on the private car for residents and local people, in so doing it will reduce carbon emissions
- The development will implement a strategy for providing a structured approach to landscaping at the site; removing invasive non-native species and introducing native shrub and tree planting

7.7.6 The proposed railway station at Seaton Delaval is a sustainable transport project which will deliver a range of economic, social and environmental benefits; supporting the fundamental objectives of the planning system as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework. The scheme can therefore be considered to represent a sustainable development. The NPPF holds a presumption in favour of sustainable development, for decision-taking this means approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay.

#### **Promoting Sustainable Transport**

7.7.7 An integral component in delivering sustainable development and achieving wider sustainability and health objectives is the promotion of sustainable development, as set out in Section 9 of the Framework. This section states that applications for development should:

- give priority first to pedestrian and cycle movements, both within the scheme and with neighbouring areas; and second – so far as possible – to facilitating access to high quality public transport, with layouts that maximise the catchment area for bus or other public transport services, and appropriate facilities that encourage public transport use;
- address the needs of people with disabilities and reduced mobility in relation to all modes of transport;
- create places that are safe, secure and attractive – which minimise the scope for conflicts between pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles, avoid unnecessary street clutter, and respond to local character and design standards;
- allow for the efficient delivery of goods, and access by service and emergency vehicles; and
- be designed to enable charging of plug-in and other ultra-low emission vehicles in safe, accessible and convenient locations

7.7.8 The proposed development has given due regard to the above criteria; the scheme has been designed to encourage pedestrian and cycle movements both within the site and

adjacent to the site. The scheme will provide safe and secure cycle parking on-site; a pedestrian link is to be provided to the station car park from the existing road bridge and the layout of the car park has been designed to ensure safe and convenient pedestrian routes are provided for those entering and exiting the railway station.

- 7.7.9 A pedestrian access link is to be created within the Wheatridge housing estate to the southeast of the application site. Pedestrian crossings (both signalised and zebra) and new footpaths are proposed to be provided to ensure that safe and appropriate access is available to encourage walking and cycling to and from the railway station.
- 7.7.10 The existing Public Right of Way (300/128) is proposed to be retained during operation of the scheme and will provide access to the railway station and for throughfare to the PROW network. New footpath connections are proposed to provide access to the car park from Wheatridge and Whytrigg Close and a segregated cycleway is proposed to be provided parallel to the access road from the A192.
- 7.7.11 Given the nature of the proposed development, a railway station, it is considered the scheme would facilitate access to high quality public transport. The location of the proposed station already benefits from good access to the local highway network and would therefore be possible to integrate with other public transport modes.
- 7.7.12 The proposed development has been designed following workshops with disabled user forums, which have assisted in identifying and understanding barriers to access for users with visual, auditory, physical and other impairments. The feedback received has been used by the designers to ensure the proposed railway station is accessible to all users. The proposed platforms will be accessed by lifts, steps and a pedestrian footbridge and a generous amount of disabled car parking is proposed in close proximity to the platforms to ensure the station is designed to promote access for all users.
- 7.7.13 The proposed station designs have evolved to take account of discussions with both Northumbria Police and the British Transport Police. The proposed layout, lighting, CCTV camera provision and landscaping proposals have been designed to seek to 'design out' crime wherever possible. The proposed cycle parking provision and landscaping are based on the detailed responses received from residents, businesses, local authority officers, local politicians and other stakeholders in the period prior to submission of this planning application.
- 7.7.14 Furthermore, Electric Vehicle Charging will be provided in the station car park, thus encouraging sustainable forms of onward travel.
- 7.7.15 The development is therefore considered to accord with the aims of objectives of section 9 of the NPPF, given that the proposed development by its very nature is promoting access to and use of sustainable modes of transport.
- 7.7.16 It should also be noted that paragraph 109 of the Framework states:



*“Development should only be prevented or refused on highway grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.”*

7.7.17 The Transport Assessment submitted in support of this planning application has been based on a scope agreed with the local highway authority. The Transport Assessment demonstrates that the proposed development would not have an unacceptable impact on highway safety, nor would the residual cumulative impacts on the road network be severe. Consequently, it is considered there are no highway grounds that should be used to seek to prevent or refuse the planning application.

7.7.18 In summary, the proposed railway station at Seaton Delaval would provide residents and local people with improved access to Northumberland, North Tyneside and Newcastle City Centre. It would provide those without access to the private car with an alternative to the bus, and those with access to the private car with an opportunity to avoid and help reduce congestion on the local road network. The proposed development has been designed to encourage access to the station by all users, including pedestrians, cyclists, motorists and disabled users. The proposed development has been the subject of a detailed assessment of the predicted traffic and transport-related impacts resulting from the development. The assessment has confirmed that the proposed development would not impinge upon the safe operation or capacity of the highway network. The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Section 9 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

#### **Building a strong, competitive economy**

7.7.19 The NPPF states at paragraph 80 that:

*“Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development.”*

7.7.20 Given the nature of the proposed development, a railway station, there are no other locations that are either available or suitable to provide a railway station in Seaton Delaval. The locational constraints on certain types of development is recognised by the NPPF at paragraph 82 which states:

*“Planning policies and decisions should recognise and address the specific locational requirements of different sectors. This includes making provision for clusters or networks of knowledge and data-driven, creative or high technology industries; and for storage and distribution at a variety of scales and in suitably accessible locations.”*

7.7.21 There is a significant amount of land within Seaton Delaval, and within close proximity to the proposed railway station site, that is allocated for or has consent to deliver new housing and industrial development. Those housing and industrial sites would derive significant benefits from being located within close proximity to the proposed railway station.

- 7.7.22 The improved access to and connectivity of the housing and industrial sites could encourage businesses to locate and grow in Seaton Delaval. The proposed railway station could also incentivise businesses to locate in Seaton Delaval. The increased ease of access and connectivity to Northumberland, North Tyneside and Newcastle City Centre makes Seaton Delaval a more attractive location as it is more easily accessible for staff and customers. The fact there is not currently a passenger rail service that serves the area could impede investment in the local area. The proposed railway station at Seaton Delaval could act as a catalyst for further inward investment and the continued regeneration of Northumberland more widely.
- 7.7.23 In summary, it is considered that the proposed railway station could assist in stimulating sustainable economic growth in Seaton Delaval. The substantial investment to deliver the railway station is anticipated to assist in unlocking the development potential of the sites which are proposed to be allocated for new housing and industrial development, increasing employment opportunities in the local area. The proposed railway stations will create direct employment opportunities during the construction phase and onwards associated with the operation and maintenance of the station and indirect employment opportunities, through improving access to employment opportunities further afield and increasing the attractiveness of Seaton Delaval as a destination for businesses looking to relocate.
- 7.7.24 The development is therefore considered to be in accordance with the aims and objectives of Section 6 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

#### **Achieving well-designed places**

- 7.7.25 The NPPF states at paragraph 124 that:
- “The creation of high quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities. Being clear about design expectations, and how these will be tested, is essential for achieving this. So too is effective engagement between applicants, communities, local planning authorities and other interests throughout the process.”*
- 7.7.26 The proposed railway station at Seaton Delaval has been designed based on a sound understanding of both the historic and existing conditions of the site, the surrounding area and the aspirations of Network Rail, the local planning authority, the local highway authority and other key stakeholders. The scheme has been finessed to take account of comments and observations from residents and local politicians to the preliminary designs which were the subject of an extensive public engagement campaign.
- 7.7.27 The proposed layout, scale, height and extent of the proposed development has been informed based on an understanding of the requirements of a 21st Century railway station, together with an understanding of the context of the site to ensure that the station design reinforces the local character and distinctiveness of the site through integration with existing pedestrian, cycle and vehicular routes and being respectful to adjacent land uses.

- 7.7.28 The Design and Access Statement which is submitted in support of this planning application demonstrates that a detailed appraisal of different design options was undertaken to understand the implications of various layouts and access arrangements, culminating in the submitted scheme which is considered to present the optimum viable layout within the budget and other constraints for the scheme.
- 7.7.29 In summary, the proposed railway station is considered to promote high levels of sustainability through encouraging the use of a more sustainable transport mode and will help raise the standard of design more generally in this area, whilst ensuring coherence with the overall form and layout of the surrounding area, in accordance with paragraph 131. Accordingly, great weight should be given to the designs which promote high levels of sustainability. The proposed development is therefore considered to accord with the aims and objectives of Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

### **Protecting Green Belt land**

- 7.7.30 The NPPF states at paragraph 146 that:

*“Certain other forms of development are also not inappropriate in the Green Belt provided they preserve its openness and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it. These are:*

*local transport infrastructure which can demonstrate a requirement for a Green Belt location”*

- 7.7.31 The proposed railway station at Seaton Delaval includes only a small slither of land which is allocated as Green Belt. The majority of the site is located outwith the Green Belt. The proposed development would involve the re-use of previously developed land for a use which could not reasonably be located elsewhere: to construct a railway station it must obviously be located adjacent to the railway line. The submitted landscaping proposals and visual impact assessment demonstrate that the proposals have been designed in a manner to minimise the impact on the openness of the Green Belt.
- 7.7.32 Further, it is considered that the above narrative satisfactorily demonstrates that the proposed station is required to be located (partially) within the Green Belt.
- 7.7.33 Paragraph 143 states that:
- “Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances.”*
- 7.7.34 Notwithstanding the fact that the development is not considered to be ‘inappropriate’ by virtue of it falling within of paragraph 146c of the NPPF, it is considered that the development of the proposed railway station at Seaton Delaval satisfies the test of ‘very special circumstances’. The re-introduction of passenger services on the Northumberland Line is defined by the council as ‘essential transport infrastructure’ and is a strategic transport

priority both locally and nationally. It is therefore considered that the development partially on Green Belt land should be supported.

- 7.7.35 In summary, the proposed railway station is considered to be appropriate development in the Green Belt and would, in any event, exemplify 'very special circumstances' sufficient to outweigh any perceived harm to the Green Belt.
- 7.7.36 The proposed development is therefore considered to accord with the aims and objectives of Section 13 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

## 7.8 The Planning Balance

- 7.8.1 With reference to the above planning assessment, it is considered that the proposed development accords with the relevant policies of the Northumberland Local Plan as summarised in Figure 7.1 below and the Development Plan as a whole. The ecology, noise, air quality, contaminated land, flood risk and other surveys and assessments submitted in support of the planning application identify the various environmental effects associated with the proposed development but conclude that with the adoption of appropriate mitigation measures during both the construction and operational phases, there would be no significant adverse effects as a result of the proposed development.
- 7.8.2 The approval of the planning application would facilitate improved access and connectivity both to and from Seaton Delaval for residents, businesses and other groups. The scheme would improve access to employment, educational and leisure opportunities across Northumberland, as well as North Tyneside and Newcastle City Centre.
- 7.8.3 The scheme would encourage a modal shift away from, and thereby reduce reliance on, the private car which would alleviate congestion on the local highway network and would assist in improving regional air quality.
- 7.8.4 In addition to the proposed development's accordance with the adopted policies of the Development Plan, and the emerging policies of the Northumberland Local Plan, it is further considered that the proposed development accords with the relevant policies of the NPPF which is a material planning consideration.
- 7.8.5 For these reasons it is considered that the positive benefits of the proposed development outweigh any minimal harm and the application accords with the Development Plan, as summarised in the table below.

Northumberland Development Policy	
Principle of Development	The proposed development, whilst partially located within the Northumberland Green Belt and Open Countryside, would provide a viable alternative to the private car, encouraging use of a more sustainable mode of travel and assisting in delivering
<b>Policy SS1, SS3, A3 (Blyth LDF Core Strategy)</b>	
<b>Policy DC3 (Blyth LDF Development Control Policies Development Plan Document)</b>	

<b>Northumberland Development Policy</b>	
<b>Policy E3, G8, G9, G10 (Blyth Valley District Local Plan)</b>  <b>Policy STP1, STP8 TRA5 (Northumberland Local Plan Regulation 19 Draft)</b>	regional air quality and other improvements. The re-opening of the Northumberland Line to passenger rail services, of which the new station is an integral component, is specifically supported by the policies within the Northumberland Development Plan.
Design  <b>Policy A2, SS3 (Blyth LDF Core Strategy)</b>  <b>Policy DC1, DC16, DC17, DC19, DC27 (Blyth LDF Development Control Policies Development Plan Document)</b>  <b>Policy QOP1, QOP2, QOP6, TRA1, TRA2 (Northumberland Local Plan Regulation 19 Draft)</b>	The submitted scheme aims to provide a high-quality, sustainable station that is well integrated within its surroundings and which takes opportunities to encourage walking and cycling both to and from the station. The submitted Design and Access Statement provides further details to demonstrate the evolution of the scheme to ensure the design suitably reflects the ambitions of the local planning authority and other key stakeholders.
Green Belt  <b>Policy DC3 (Blyth LDF Development Control Policies Development Plan Document)</b>  <b>Policy G8, G9 (Blyth Valley District Local Plan)</b>  <b>Policy STP8 (Northumberland Local Plan Regulation 19 Draft)</b>	The scheme is partially located within the Northumberland Green Belt, however it is considered that the provision of local transport infrastructure and the significant public benefits that will arise from the development, ensure that any limited harm is significantly and justifiably outweighed.
Open Countryside  <b>Policy DC3, DC17 (Blyth LDF Development Control Policies Development Plan Document)</b>  <b>Policy G9, G10 (Blyth Valley District Local Plan)</b>	The scheme is partially located within the open countryside, however it is considered that the provision of local transport infrastructure and the significant public benefits that will arise from the development, ensure that any limited harm is significantly and justifiably outweighed.
Health and wellbeing  <b>Policy STP5 (Northumberland Local Plan Regulation 19 Draft)</b>	The scheme is designed to ensure that appropriate access is provided for all users, including elderly and disabled users. The scheme will improve access to employment and leisure opportunities for residents and will assist in improving regional air quality and reducing congestion on the local highway network.
Landscape	The proposed development has been designed based on a sound understanding of

<b>Northumberland Development Policy</b>	
<b>Policy DC17 (Blyth LDF Development Control Policies Development Plan Document)</b>  <b>Policy E3 (Blyth Valley District Local Plan)</b>  <b>Policy QOP4 (Northumberland Local Plan Regulation 19 Draft)</b>	the site and its context. The scheme will incorporate sensitive landscaping to ensure the scheme makes an appropriate contribution to the local area. The application is supported by a detailed Landscape Assessment.
Transport and Access  <b>Policy A2, A3 (Blyth LDF Core Strategy)</b>  <b>Policy DC11, DC27 (Blyth LDF Development Control Policies Development Plan Document)</b>  <b>Policy M8 (Blyth Valley District Local Plan)</b>  <b>Policy TRA1, TRA2, TRA4, TRA5 (Northumberland Local Plan Regulation 19 Draft)</b>	The proposed development has been designed to ensure safe and convenient access to the station is provided for all users – pedestrians, cyclists and motorists. The application is supported by a Transport Assessment which provides further details to demonstrate that the scheme is capable of being supported from both a highway safety and capacity perspective.
Ground Conditions  <b>Policy SS3 (Blyth LDF Core Strategy)</b>  <b>Policy DC1, DC21 (Blyth LDF Development Control Policies Development Plan Document)</b>  <b>Policy STP2, STP3, STP4, POL1 (Northumberland Local Plan Regulation 19 Draft)</b>	The scheme has been designed based on an understanding of the existing ground conditions. A Phase I Geo-environmental Assessment has been submitted which provides further details on the ground conditions, which have been used to inform the submitted proposals.
Water Quality, Flood Risk and Drainage  <b>Policy SS3 (Blyth LDF Core Strategy)</b>  <b>Policy DC1, DC19 (Blyth LDF Development Control Policies Development Plan Document)</b>  <b>Policy STP2, STP3, STP4, WAT3, WAT4 (Northumberland Local Plan Regulation 19 Draft)</b>	The scheme has been designed based on an understanding of the flood risk and drainage requirements of the site. Discussions with the LLFA have informed the submitted proposals. The application is supported by a detailed Flood Risk and Drainage Assessment which demonstrates that the site is not at risk of flooding and that appropriate drainage is provided.
Heritage  <b>Policy E3 (Blyth District Local Plan)</b>	The Heritage Statement submitted in support of this application demonstrates that the scheme has been designed based on a sound understanding of significance of the historic assets which may be impacted. The

Northumberland Development Policy	
<b>Policy ENV7 (Northumberland Local Plan Regulation 19 Draft)</b>	<p>assessment that there would not be a significant impact on designated and non-designated heritage assets. The assessment identifies that the railway line played a significant role in the growth of Seaton Delaval and therefore the reinstatement of passenger travel is an opportunity to promote local heritage.</p>

*Figure 7.1 Summary of policy compliance*

## 8 Material Considerations

### 8.1 Introduction

- 8.1.1 Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 8.1.2 A material consideration is a matter which should be taken into account in deciding a planning application, or on an appeal against a planning decision. There is no legal definition to prescribe those matters which have the potential to constitute 'material planning considerations'. Case law has held that any consideration that relates to the use and development of land is capable of being a material planning consideration. It is for the decision-maker to determine the weight to be apportioned to each of the considerations.
- 8.1.3 The purpose of this section is therefore to identify and summarise those other policy and guidance documents that do not form part of the statutory development plan that are of particular relevance to the determination of this planning application.

### 8.2 National Design Guide (2019)

- 8.2.1 Published in October 2019, the National Design Guide seeks to provide guidance to assist in the delivery of beautiful, enduring and successful places.
- 8.2.2 The National Design Guide recognises the importance of good design. To this end, the document sets out ten characteristics which ought to be used to assess the design credentials of development. The ten characteristics identified are said to contribute towards the cross-cutting themes for good design set out in the NPPF. The ten characteristics are:
- Context – enhances the surroundings.
  - Identity – attractive and distinctive.
  - Built form – a coherent pattern of development.
  - Movement – accessible and easy to move around.
  - Nature – enhanced and optimised.
  - Public spaces – safe, social and inclusive.
  - Uses – mixed and integrated.
  - Homes and buildings – functional, healthy and sustainable.
  - Resources – efficient and resilient.



- Lifespan – made to last.

8.2.3 The submitted Design and Access Statement demonstrates that the scheme has evolved to take account of the observations, guidance and comments received from the local planning authority officers, together with other key stakeholders including Network Rail. It is considered that the principles set out in the National Design Guide reinforce those principles set out in those design-specific policies contained within the development plan, which the submitted scheme is considered to accord with.

8.2.4 It is therefore considered that the National Design Guide can be given moderate weight in the determination of this planning application. The scheme is considered to represent a sustainable design that suitably takes account of the site context. It is considered that further details that pertain to design considerations, including external material finishes, can be the subject of suitably worded conditions on a planning permission for the scheme.

### **8.3 Blyth Valley Urban Design Guide and Public Realm Strategy Supplementary Planning Document (2008)**

8.3.1 The Blyth Valley Urban Design Guide and Public Realm Strategy was adopted in June 2008 and sets out the principles and considerations that should be used to deliver high-quality design and placemaking for new schemes within Blyth Valley.

8.3.2 The submitted Design and Access Statement demonstrates that the scheme has evolved to take account of the observations, guidance and comments received from the local planning authority officers, together with other key stakeholders including Network Rail. It is considered that the principles set out in the Blyth Valley Urban Design Guide reinforce those principles set out in those design-specific policies contained within the development plan, which the submitted scheme is considered to accord with.

8.3.3 It is therefore considered that the Blyth Valley Urban Design Guide can be given moderate weight in the determination of this planning application. The scheme is considered to represent a sustainable design that suitably takes account of the site context. It is considered that further details that pertain to design considerations, including external material finishes, can be the subject of suitably worded conditions on a planning permission for the scheme.

### **8.4 Northumberland Local Transport Plan (LTP3) (2011)**

8.4.1 The Northumberland Local Transport Plan 2011 – 2026 was adopted on 4th April 2011 as an interim strategy which will be refreshed following the council's adoption of the Northumberland Sustainable Community Strategy and the Northumberland Local Plan.

8.4.2 The LTP3 identifies at paragraph 3.68 that:

*“Of particular issue to South East Northumberland is the time it takes to travel into the neighbouring authorities of Tyne & Wear, a key source of employment for residents of Northumberland, and the cost associated with these journeys. For example, public transport journey times from Blyth and Ashington to Newcastle City Centre can take in excess of 40 minutes with a weekly bus pass costing between £15 and £20.”*

8.4.3 To address such issues, the Northumberland LTP3 recognises that rail travel will have an increasingly important role in tackling congestion and supporting Northumberland’s sustainable economic growth and prosperity.

8.4.4 Paragraph 6.29 of the LTP3 states that:

*“The County Council is committed to addressing rail issues in Northumberland through improved partnership working with a wide range of stakeholders. These include rail passengers and representative organisations, the Department for Transport, local authorities and regional partners, Network Rail, rail operators and regulatory bodies.”*

8.4.5 Paragraph 6.33 also notes that the lack of available car parking at stations severely restricts passenger growth and demand for rail travel.

8.4.6 Paragraph 6.36 states that re-opening of the Ashington, Blyth and Tyne line to passenger services is one of the principal elements of the new rail strategy to be implemented in partnership with Network Rail and local rail operators over the period of the third LTP.

8.4.7 The scheme which is the subject of this application for planning permission would directly support the aims of the LTP3, to improve and encourage use of rails services in order to assist in reducing the economic, social and environmental impacts resulting from the highway congestion and journey time delays across South East Northumberland.

8.4.8 It is therefore considered that the Northumberland Local Transport Plan (LTP3) can be given substantial weight in the determination of this planning application. The scheme is considered to directly support the delivery of a scheme which is identified as a strategic transport priority for the council.

## **8.5 North East Combined Authority Transport Manifesto (2016)**

8.5.1 The North East Combined Authority was established in April 2014 and brought together the seven councils which serve County Durham, Gateshead, Newcastle, North Tyneside, Northumberland, South Tyneside and Sunderland. The ambition of NECA is to create the best possible conditions for growth in jobs, investment and living standards, making the North East an excellent place to live and work.

8.5.2 NECA recognises that effective transport networks are key to economic growth and opportunity for all. This includes links with the North East and connectivity with the rest of the UK, Europe and the rest of the world. The North East Combined Authority’s ambition, as set out

in its Transport Manifesto, is to provide affordable, attractive, reliable, safe, healthy transport choices for businesses, residents and visitors while enhancing the environment.

- 8.5.3 The NECA's Transport Manifesto supports the opening of new stations on existing rail lines, including the upgrading of freight-only sections for passenger use.
- 8.5.4 The scheme which is the subject of this application for planning permission would directly support the aims of the NECA's Transport Manifesto, to re-introduce passenger services on an existing freight line and to improve the accessibility and connectivity of South East Northumberland to the wider North East.
- 8.5.5 It is therefore considered that the NECA Transport Manifesto can be given moderate weight in the determination of this planning application. The scheme is considered to directly support the delivery of a scheme which is identified as a strategic transport priority for the North East Combined Authority.

## **8.6 Transport for the North Strategic Transport Plan (2019)**

- 8.6.1 Transport for the North (TfN) is the first statutory sub-national transport body in the United Kingdom. It was formed in 2018 to make the case for strategic transport improvements across the North of England. As a partnership, TfN brings the North's local transport authorities together with Network Rail, Highways England and HS2 Ltd and Central Government, to facilitate discussions on the transport infrastructure needed to drive transformational growth and rebalance the UK economy.
- 8.6.2 TfN's Strategic Transport Plan specifically supports the re-instatement of passenger services on the Northumberland Line, between Ashington and Blyth; this rail intervention is prioritised by TfN in the shorter term, in the context of the Department for Transport's Rail Network Enhancements Pipeline process.
- 8.6.3 The scheme which is the subject of this application for planning permission would directly support the aims of the TfN Strategic Transport Plan, to re-introduce passenger services on the Northumberland Line.
- 8.6.4 It is therefore considered that the TfN Strategic Transport Plan can be given moderate weight in the determination of this planning application. The scheme is considered to directly support the delivery of a scheme which is identified as a strategic transport priority for the Transport for the North.

## **8.7 The Road to Zero Strategy (2018)**

- 8.7.1 Whilst there are local policies pertaining to climate change within the Northumberland Local Plan, the climate crisis and the measures set out by Government in the 'Road to Zero: Next steps towards cleaner road transport and delivering our Industrial Strategy' is a material consideration in the determination of this planning application.

- 8.7.2 The Strategy states that in 2016, road transport accounted for 91% of UK greenhouse gas emissions in transport<sup>17</sup>.
- 8.7.3 The amount CO2 emissions per passenger per train is 14 grams. In contrast, a private car can produce 158 grams per passenger<sup>18</sup>. As such, a modal shift to public transport has the potential to dramatically decrease our national energy consumption.
- 8.7.4 The scheme which is the subject of this application for planning permission would support the aims of the 'Road to Zero' strategy, by seeking to establish a viable alternative to the private car that may encourage a modal shift from car to rail travel. Such a modal shift would likely result in regional air quality improvements.
- 8.7.5 It is therefore considered that the 'Road to Zero' strategy can be given moderate weight in the determination of this planning application. The scheme is considered to support the Government's ambitions to move toward zero emissions.

## **8.8 Northumberland Economic Strategy (2018)**

- 8.8.1 The Northumberland Economy Strategy 2019 – 2024 was formally approved by the council's cabinet in December 2018. The council's ambition as set out in the strategy is to deliver inclusive, industrial growth to support a more productive, prosperous economy.
- 8.8.2 Priority 5 of the Economic Strategy states that one of the key deliverables to better connect the county is:

*"Invest in high quality passenger transport including the reopening of the Northumberland to Newcastle rail line to passengers."*

- 8.8.3 The scheme which is the subject of this application for planning permission would directly support the aims of the Northumberland Economic Strategy, to reopen the Northumberland Line to passenger services.
- 8.8.4 It is therefore considered that the Northumberland Economic Strategy can be given substantial weight in the determination of this planning application. The scheme is considered to directly support the delivery of a scheme which is identified as a strategic economic priority for the council.

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<sup>17</sup> Page 28 The Road to Zero: Next steps towards cleaner road transport and delivering our Industrial Strategy (2018)

<sup>18</sup> P79 Transport for the North Strategic Transport Plan 2019

## **8.9 Nexus Metro and Local Rail Strategy (2016)**

- 8.9.1 The Nexus Metro and Local Rail Strategy, produced in conjunction with the North East Combined Authority, sets out the proposals for the improved integration between local rail and Metro services, and the potential to exploit under-used and disused railway assets and alignments across the North East region.
- 8.9.2 The Metro and Local Rail Strategy identifies that the restoration of passenger rail services to the Blyth, Bedlington and Ashington areas is a strategic priority for the NECA because of the significant regenerative benefits of the scheme.
- 8.9.3 The strategy identifies that Northumberland Park would provide an interchange station to enable easy access between rail, Metro and local bus services – given that park and ride facilities are already available at the station.
- 8.9.4 It is therefore considered that the Metro and Local Rail Strategy can be given moderate weight in the determination of this planning application. The scheme is considered to directly support the delivery of a scheme which is identified as a strategic priority for both NECA and Nexus.

## **8.10 Summary**

- 8.10.1 It is considered that there are various considerations that are material to the determination of this planning application. This section has sought to identify and apportion due weight to each of those considerations, to assist the local planning authority in the determination of this application.
- 8.10.2 It is considered that there are no material considerations that would be sufficient either individually or in conjunction with other considerations that would preclude the granting of planning permission for the submitted scheme.

## 9 Case for Planning Permission to be granted

### 9.1 Introduction

- 9.1.1 This section brings together the information presented within this planning statement and provides a reasoned conclusion for the support of the application.

### 9.2 Accordance with local and national policies

- 9.2.1 This planning statement has demonstrated that the proposed railway station and overall scheme accords with the relevant national and local planning policies.
- 9.2.2 This statement has identified the many and various economic, social and environmental benefits that will be delivered as a result of the proposed development, including the potential for the development to act as a catalyst for further investment and wider regeneration within Seaton Delaval and South East Northumberland more widely.
- 9.2.3 The scheme will improve the opportunities for use of alternative modes of transport to the private car, helping to better meet the needs of those without access to the private car and encouraging those with access to the private car to consider using a more sustainable mode of travel, which will help reduce carbon emissions and deliver many environmental and health benefits including improving regional air quality.
- 9.2.4 The scheme represents a sustainable development; the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development and therefore this scheme should be supported.
- 9.2.5 The material considerations that pertain to the application have been identified. This has included demonstrating that there are no material considerations which would prevent the approval of the scheme.
- 9.2.6 It is requested that the scheme which is the subject of this planning application therefore be approved as submitted.

### 9.3 Benefits of the Scheme

- 9.3.1 This planning statement has demonstrated that the proposed railway station would accord with both local and national planning policies in terms of encouraging use of public transport through the provision of improved access to the railway network.
- 9.3.2 The proposed railway station at Seaton Delaval will deliver a range of economic, social and environmental benefits.
- 9.3.3 The economic benefits of the scheme include:

- The scheme will deliver the transport infrastructure which is required to attract inward investment, create additional employment opportunities, enhance economic vitality and encourage further growth in South East Northumberland.
- The development will facilitate increased access for residents to employment and training opportunities throughout South East Northumberland. The provision of passenger rail services at this location, could encourage employers to locate to this part of Seaton Delaval especially given its proximity to the village centre and existing bus services.

9.3.4 The social benefits of the scheme include:

- The scheme will improve journey times for residents, local people, and those wishing to travel from Ashington to Newcastle, including onward journeys from Newcastle's central station.
- The development will provide a safe and secure railway station, with appropriate lighting and CCTV camera provision to encourage all parts of the community to use the transport services and the railway station.
- The nature of the scheme will encourage a sub-modal shift to more sustainable transport methods within the local area.
- The development will incorporate ramp and stepped access to the platform and signage to the railway suitable for users with disabilities.
- The development includes facilitating infrastructure improvements to the cycle and footways adjacent to the site, providing a safe and pleasant route for pedestrians and cyclists.
- The development would provide transport infrastructure that would encourage sustainable travel and would accommodate projected future growth in Seaton Delaval in terms of population, employment and housing.
- The development will contribute to building strong, vibrant and healthy communities by encouraging social inclusion, improving the accessibility of local services and the use of sustainable travel modes.
- The development will make it physically simpler and more convenient to use and access public transport infrastructure in Seaton Delaval. The consequential modal shift will assist in improving regional air quality.
- The scheme will deliver environmental and physical improvements to the site, in doing so it will assist in the regeneration of the area and of Seaton Delaval more widely.

9.3.5 The environmental benefits of the scheme include:

- Encouraging the use of healthy and sustainable modes of transport including walking, cycling and use of improved public transport.
- Facilitating a sub-modal shift to sustainable transport methods, reducing greenhouse gas emissions from a reduction of cars on the road network.
- The development will make it physically more convenient to use and access public transport infrastructure in Seaton Delaval. The consequential modal shift will assist in improving regional air quality
- The scheme includes the installation of a sustainable urban drainage system which will alleviate flooding and allow the immediate area to accommodate extreme rainfall events with less risk of adverse impacts on adjacent land uses
- The development will be undertaken in accordance with a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) and a Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP), which will minimise the environmental impacts traditionally associated with urban redevelopment schemes.
- The development will decrease dependence on the private car for residents and local people, in so doing it will reduce carbon emissions
- The development will implement a strategy for providing a structured approach to landscaping at the site; introducing native shrub and tree planting

9.3.6 The economic, social and environmental benefits associated with the development would be delivered jointly and simultaneously. As such, the proposed development can be considered to represent a sustainable development.

9.3.7 It is therefore requested that planning permission be granted for the scheme as submitted.

## 9.4 Conditions

9.4.1 Planning conditions, when used properly, can enhance the quality of development and enable development to proceed where it would otherwise have been necessary to refuse planning permission, by mitigating the adverse effects.

9.4.2 The objectives of planning are best served when the power to impose conditions on a planning permission is exercised in a way that is clearly seen to be fair, reasonable and practicable.

9.4.3 Section 70(1)(a) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 enables a local planning authority in granting planning permission to impose “*such conditions as they think fit*.” This power needs to be interpreted in the context of material considerations such as the National Planning Policy Framework, the supporting guidance on the use of planning conditions, and relevant case law.



- 9.4.4 A pre-commencement condition must not be imposed on the grant of permission without the written agreement of the applicant except in the circumstances set out in the Town and Country Planning (Pre-Commencement Conditions) Regulations 2018.
- 9.4.5 Paragraph 55 of the NPPF stipulates that planning conditions should be kept to a minimum, and use only where they satisfy the following tests:
1. necessary;
  2. relevant to planning;
  3. relevant to the development to be permitted;
  4. enforceable;
  5. precise; and
  6. reasonable in all other respects.
- 9.4.6 The plans, surveys, assessments and other information submitted in support of this planning application are considered to be sufficient to demonstrate to the satisfaction of the local planning authority that the scheme would accord with the relevant policies and that there are no material considerations that ought to preclude the granting of a planning permission for the scheme.
- 9.4.7 Although a considerable amount of information is submitted in support of the planning application, it is anticipated that additional details may be required to enable the local planning authority to be assured that the proposed mitigation will be sufficient to deliver the environmental and other benefits that pertain to the scheme. In these situations, to avoid potential prolongation of the determination period, the applicant would wish the local planning authority to attach a condition to a planning permission requiring the submission of a scheme with the additional details/ design information.
- 9.4.8 In line with the tests set out in paragraph 55, this section of the Planning Statement seeks to present an overview of those matters which could be the subject of conditions on a planning permission, in order to seek to avoid possible delays to determination of the planning application as a result of requests from the local planning authority for further information.
- 9.4.9 The applicants would respectfully request the opportunity to review the wording of any draft conditions which are to be imposed, prior to the granting of a permission.
- 9.4.10 Figure 9.1 presents an overview of those matters which could be the subject of conditions on a planning permission.

Condition Subject	Relevant submitted information	Suggested scope of condition
Design	Proposed Plans, Design and Access Statement	Submission of external materials samples, boundary treatment details, CCTV scheme, shelters etc
Trees	Proposed Plans, Arboricultural Impact Assessment	Submission of arboricultural method statement, Tree protection plan
Landscaping	Proposed Plans, Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment	Submission of finished site level details, hard and soft landscaping details, landscape management plan, platform furniture details, signage details
Ecology	Biodiversity Statement, Biodiversity Net Gain Statement	Submission of a scheme for biodiversity net gain
Construction	Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan	Submission of a detailed Construction Environmental Management Plan
Contaminated Land	Coal Mining Risk Assessment, Geo-technical Desk Based Assessment	Submission of a remediation scheme, verification report, unexpected contamination details if found
Drainage	Proposed Plans, Flood Risk and Drainage Assessment	Submission of a drainage scheme incorporating sustainable drainage details
Lighting	Proposed Plans, Lighting Statement	Submission of a lighting detail
Highways	Proposed Plans, Transport Assessment, Stage 1 Road Safety Audit to be submitted during determination of application.	Submission of cycle storage details, s278 works details, car park management plan, EV charging details, public rights of way details. RSA stage 1 is anticipated to be submitted during determination. Notwithstanding this submission there may be a requirement for further safety audits and these may be the subject of condition(s) attached to the grant of a planning permission
Archaeology	Heritage Statement, further evaluation to be submitted during determination	Submission of a mitigation scheme; trial trenching to be undertaken.
Noise	Noise Assessment	Details of PA system
Air Quality	Air Quality Assessment	No conditions anticipated

*Figure 9.1 Schedule of proposed conditions*

- 9.4.11 Figure 9.1 has been drafted to include only those matters which could potentially be pre-commencement or pre-operational conditions and does not include those matters which are likely to be the subject of 'compliance' conditions.
- 9.4.12 It is respectfully requested that the precise wording of all conditions, including suitable trigger points for discharge where relevant, be agreed with the applicant prior to formal determination of this application for planning permission.

## **9.5 Additional information**

- 9.5.1 In the event that additional information, clarification or further details concerning the proposed development are required during the determination period this will be provided upon request.
- 9.5.2 The applicants wish to continue to work closely with the local planning authority to ensure the application can be determined as expeditiously as possible. To this end, we are content to attend meetings as required by officers.

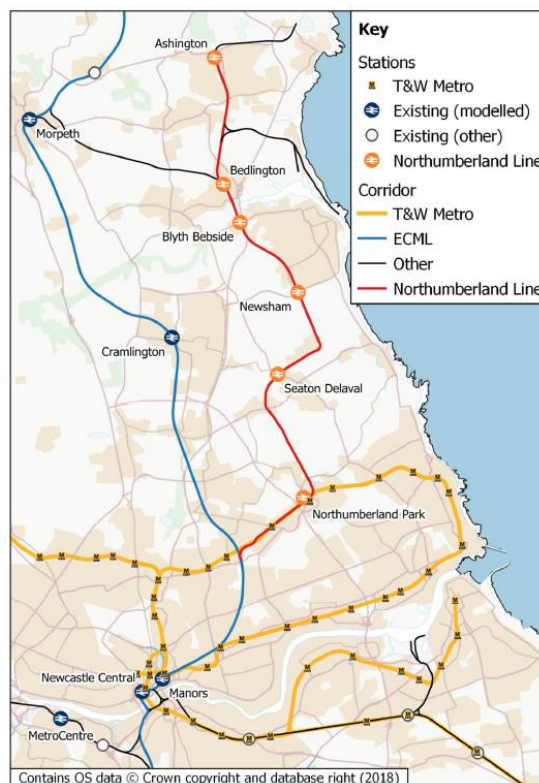
# 10 Appendix A- Economic Assessment

## Overview

Passenger train services operating on the railway line between Ashington and Newcastle were withdrawn in 1964 as part of the Beeching Cuts; the rail network in this area continues to be used for freight and as a diversion route for East Coast Main Line passenger services. The re-opening of the Northumberland Line between Ashington and Newcastle is a key priority of Northumberland County Council to improve connectivity within this area of South East Northumberland and to the wider North East region.

The proposed scheme will deliver five new stations and upgrade/expand a sixth station to provide interchange with the Tyne & Wear Metro network at Northumberland Park. The route of the Northumberland Line is shown in the figure below.

### *The Northumberland Line Scheme Extents*



The Outline and Updated Business Cases for the Northumberland Line scheme demonstrate that the scheme delivers high value for money, improves travel times by public transport within, and beyond, South East Northumberland, and provides regeneration benefits to the area. The following sections of this report summarise the economic benefits associated with a station being located at Seaton Delaval.

## Seaton Delaval

Seaton Delaval is a village in South East Northumberland close to the boundary with North Tyneside. The village grew around the coal mining industry, with collieries located at both Seaton Delaval and nearby Seghill. However, both collieries closed in the 1960s and the area has struggled to re-establish industry in the area since.

One of the biggest employers in Seaton Delaval was the Proctor and Gamble factory. However, this was taken over by french firm Coty in 2017 and closed down one year later with the loss of over 400 jobs. In 2019, celebrity Heather Mills purchased the site for her plant based food business, with the promise of much needed jobs and investment to the area. In Autumn 2020, this was given a further boost, with the announcement that the plant based food site had been selected as part of a government initiative whereby investment opportunities are selected to promote to foreign investors in order to drive investment to UK's regions.

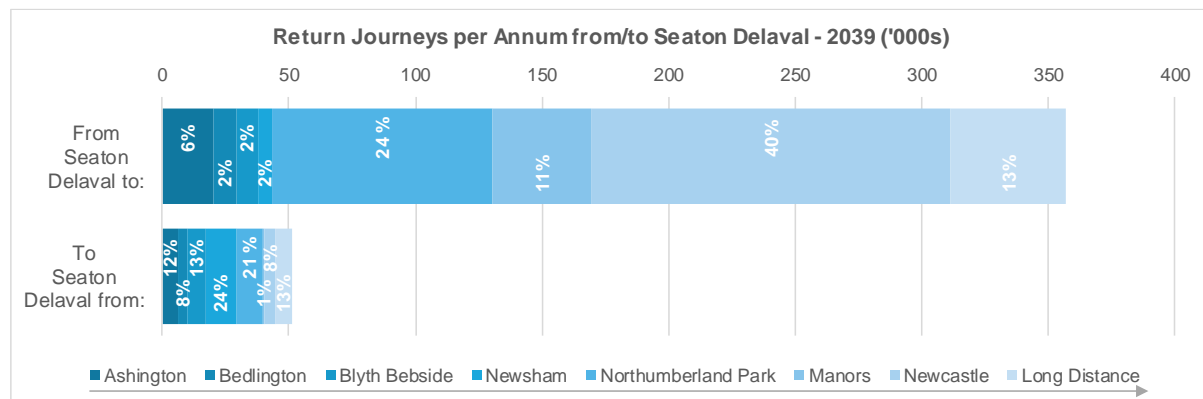
The village of Seaton Delaval is expected to grow in the coming years, with sites identified for housing in the Northumberland Local Plan. It is essential that the correct infrastructure is put in place to ensure this housing, and the plant based food site expansion, to ensure that the proposed developments are economically viable and sustainable.

With regards to existing transport connections, the village is served by a bus network that provides frequent connections to Tyne and Wear; public transport connections to other communities within South East Northumberland are considered poor. These bus services are essential to residents of Seaton Delaval without access to a car, to ensure they can access key services and facilities located outside of the village. However, despite the reliance of residents on public transport connections, bus journey times are much slower than that of the private car. Long public transport journey times means that it is often not viable to seek employment or educational opportunities outside of the local area.

### **Economic Assessment**

The Northumberland Line scheme is forecast to generate circa 1.45m annual return journeys by 2039<sup>19</sup>. Seaton Delaval station is mainly an origin station (nearly 90% of all demand are outbound trips) and it is forecast to generate 25% of all rail demand and attract 4% of all rail demand. The figure below shows the distribution of annual rail demand at this station, which is forecast to have circa 820,000 entries/exits by 2039.

### *Distribution of Annual Rail Demand (2039)*



The majority of the demand originating from Seaton Delaval uses the Northumberland Line to travel south, with 55% travelling to Newcastle Central or beyond, and 24% of demand forecast to alight at Northumberland Park. Over half of all inbound passengers to Seaton Delaval originate from stations located north.

### *Source of Rail Patronage*

<sup>19</sup> These forecasts are aligned to a service proposition that has 2 trains per hour operating between Ashington and Newcastle, taking 32 minutes. Rail fares would be set at a similar level to those used on the Tyne & Wear Metro.

It is estimated that by 2039, in the average morning peak hour, 196 passengers will board the train at Seaton Delaval, with 25 passengers alighting at this destination.

**Error! Reference source not found.** figure to the right summarises the source of patronage at Seaton Delaval in the future forecast year of 2039.

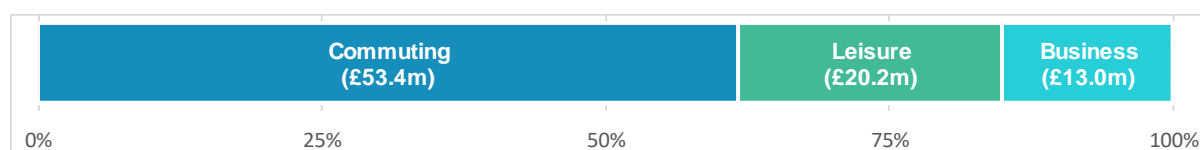
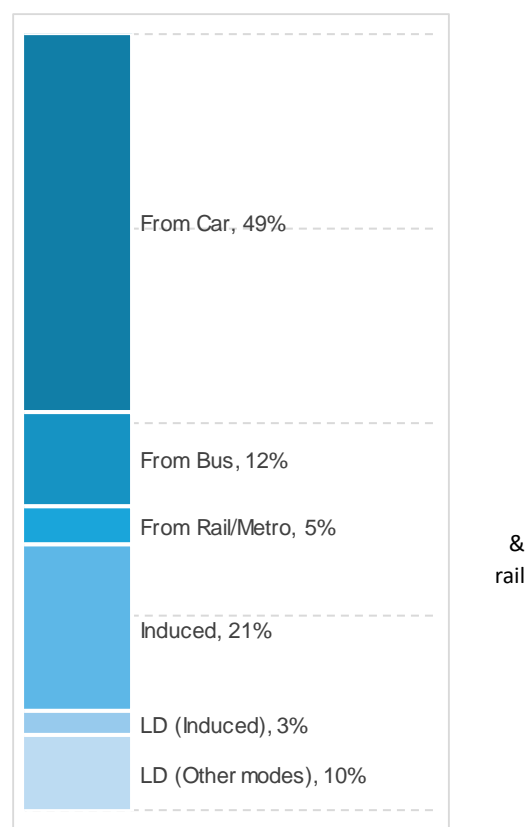
Modal transfer from car is the primary source of demand for the scheme at this station, accounting for over 50% of rail demand (once long-distance movements are considered), whilst just about 1-in-8 of new rail passengers has transferred from bus. Demand transferring from existing rail services (via Cramlington) or existing Metro services (via Northumberland Park) represent circa 5% of the total rail patronage.

24% of passenger journeys using this station are estimated to be new journeys that would not have been made previously in the absence of the scheme.

The introduction of the rail service will provide a quicker public transport option 'door-to-door' from Seaton Delaval into central Newcastle, other Tyne Wear destinations, and neighbouring towns, than can currently be offered by or bus. It will also be a more competitive option for existing car users to consider, especially once the full times and costs of the journey are taken into consideration.

The User Time Saving (UTS) benefits generated by Seaton Delaval passengers (£86.6m) represent 25% of the scheme's total UTS benefits; UTS benefits by journey purpose is presented in the figure below.

### User Time Saving Benefits Generated by Seaton Delaval Station Demand (£ million, 2010 prices)



The Northumberland Line scheme has two impacts on road usage; it removes car journeys across the rail corridor through mode transfer to rail, whilst some new short distance local journeys by car will be generated around stations. The overall net impact is a reduction in car-km and a decongestion benefit. By 2039, the annual net impact in car-km associated with rail demand generated at Seaton Delaval station is forecast to be a reduction of 4.44m car-km (a 6.67m reduction in car-km due to modal transfer balanced by a 2.23m increase in car-km associated with local station access).

Demand at Seaton Delaval station is forecast to contribute 22% of the scheme's total decongestion benefits (circa £31.9 million); decongestion benefits by purpose are presented in the below figure.

### Decongestion Benefits Generated by Seaton Delaval Station Demand (£ million, 2010 prices)



The wider economic benefits of the scheme comprise the sum of the agglomeration and the labour supply benefits and have been estimated at a Local Authority District level. Since the forecast model only provided full travel costs for movements within Northumberland at LAD level, it is not possible to further disaggregate the outputs at a station-by-station level. Outputs represent a conservative estimate of the overall benefits of the scheme as only Northumberland impacts have been estimated.

The welfare impact of agglomeration (effectivity density) impacts resulting from closer perceived proximity between individuals and businesses account for 93% of the welfare benefits estimated. Labour supply impacts, related to employment effects derived from improved accessibility on a region poorly connected to employment centres, accounts for the remaining 7% of wider economic benefits. The below table presents the present value of wider economic benefits from the scheme, over 60 years.

### *Northumberland Line Wider Economic Benefits (£ million, 2010 prices):*

Welfare Impacts	Agglomeration	Labour Supply	Total
Estimated Benefits (£m)	£47.2	£3.3	<b>£50.5</b>

The quantification of the wider economic benefits from the scheme has been endorsed through consultation with businesses, organisations and the general public, who agree that the scheme will improve connectivity to employment opportunities, increase the labour catchment area for businesses and help to deliver growth aspirations. The resultant outcome will be a much more prosperous future for the residents of Seaton Delaval.

#### **Summary**

Seaton Delaval is small village in South East Northumberland, which currently has limited employment opportunities. Residents are required to commute to other South East Northumberland areas, or the wider Tyne and Wear region, to find employment. Whilst the village is served by the bus network, journey times are often long, leaving residents reliant on travelling by car.

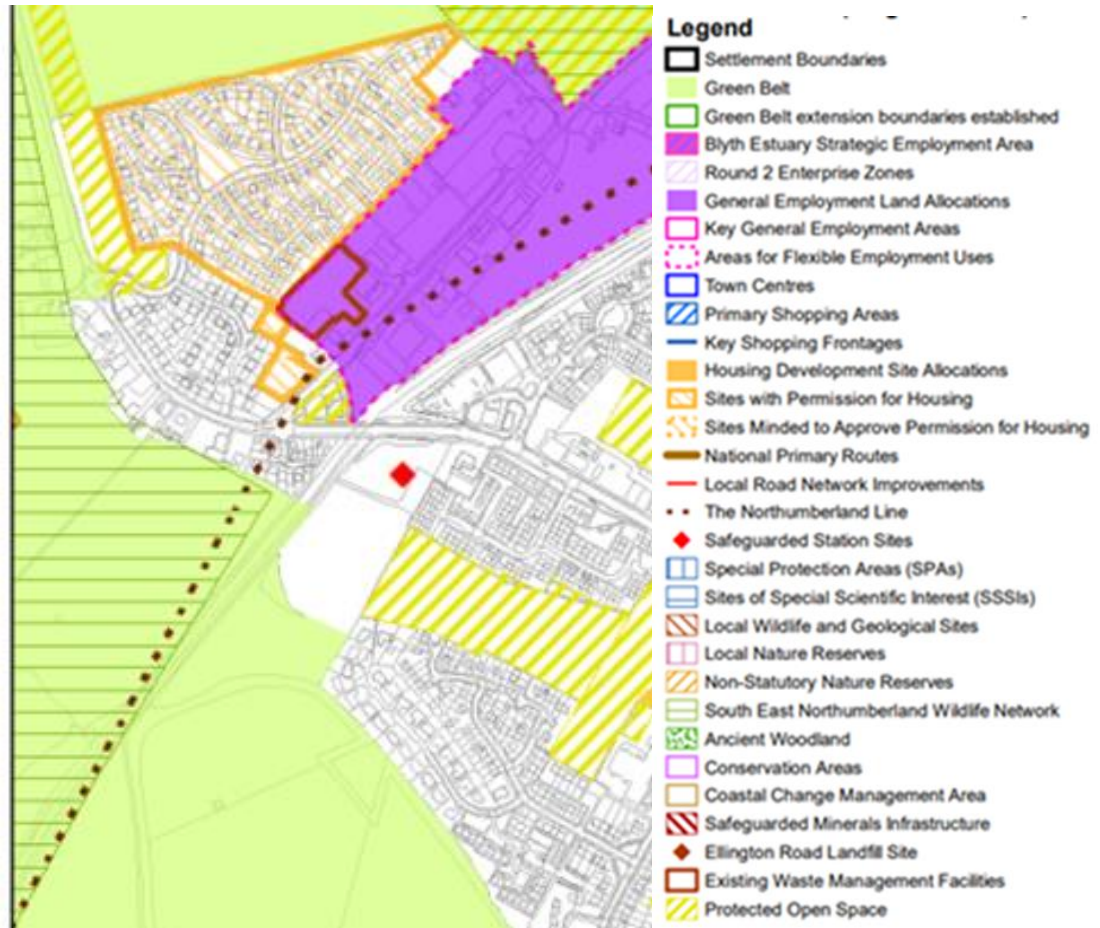
Connecting Seaton Delaval to the heavy rail network will bring significant benefits for both residents and people visiting the area. Rail will provide quicker journey times to key destinations, which are faster than the bus and are comparable to the car, thereby encouraging modal shift, and a reduction of vehicle kilometres travelled on the highway network.

With regards to passenger numbers, by 2039, Seaton Delaval station is anticipated to have around 820,000 entries and exits. The modelling predicts that users will use the rail line to travel to/from Seaton Delaval and other communities along the Northumberland Line, with other users traveling to Newcastle or beyond. Notably, 24% of rail trips will be made by people who would not have made the trip had the passenger service not been introduced.

The Northumberland Line presents Seaton Delaval with an unprecedented opportunity to deliver growth aspirations and ensure residents have easier access to other opportunities located outside of the village. The scheme will improve the quality of life of local residents and improve the economy of the local area.

# 11 Appendix B– Adopted and Local Plan Policies Map

## 11.1 Emerging Northumberland Local Plan policies map





































## 11.2 Adopted Blyth Valley Local Plan policies map













Policy / Proposal	Chapter 2 General Development
	<b>SETTLEMENT LIMITS AND GREEN BELT</b> (Sections 2.3 and 2.4)
G6	<b>Settlement Limits</b> Beyond these Policies G8 to G10 and Policies H24 to H26 will be applied as appropriate
G7	<b>Green Belt</b> Within which Policies G8, G10, H24 and H26 will be applied











Policy / Proposal	Chapter 3 Housing
	<b>HOUSING LAND ALLOCATIONS etc.</b> (Sections 3.3 to 3.5)
H7,10,13 H10	<b>Land Allocated for General Housing Purposes</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Where Land within the Allocated Area yet to be Identified for Community Uses, including Open Space</li> </ul>
H7,10	<b>SD</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Special Design Sites On these sites, Policy H21 (vi) will apply</li> </ul>
H14 (i)	<b>(A)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Where an element of Affordable Housing Proposed</li> </ul>
H18	<b>P</b> <b>Land where Low Density Housing Favoured</b>
H20 (iii)	<b>(Sh)</b> <b>Land Allocated for Housing with a View to Achieving Improvements to Local Shopping Centres</b>
	<b>ENVIRONMENT OF HOUSING AREAS</b> (Section 3.6)
H21 (iv)	<b>Eng</b> <b>Pilot Area for Energy Efficient Housing where Proposal SW1 will be applied</b>










PLAN AREA BOUNDARY	
Policy / Proposal	Chapter 1 Environmental Protection and Enhancement
	<b>NATURE CONSERVATION</b> (Section 1.2)
E1	 <b>Nature Conservation - Designated Sites</b> Numbered according to Table E-P1, (page 2)
E2 (i)(c)	<b>Wildlife Corridors</b>  Existing  Potential
E2 (ii)	 Proposals for Existing or Proposed Open Space Areas: <b>(1) Nature Conservation Enhancement Measures</b>
	<b>LANDSCAPE</b> (Section 1.3)
E4	 <b>Areas of High Landscape Value</b>
E5 (i)	 <b>Mature / Semi-Natural Woodland to be Retained</b>
E5 (ii)	 <b>Plantation Woodland to be Retained</b>
E6 + other proposals	 Proposals for Existing or Proposed Open Space Areas: <b>(2) Landscaping Proposals</b>
E6 + other proposals	 <b>Other Landscaping Proposals, (linear etc.)</b>
	<b>GROUND AND WATER</b> (Section 1.5)
E9	 <b>+5 Metre O.D. Contour, below which Policy E9 (ii) will be applied</b>
E11	 <b>Proposed Reclamation of Derelict Land</b>
	<b>THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT</b> (Section 1.6)
E15	 <b>Conservation Areas</b>
E16 (ii)	 <b>Positive Measures within Conservation Areas</b>
E16 (iii)	 <b>Possible Extension of Conservation Area Coverage</b>
E18 (ii)	 <b>Open Space Edges, Protection of</b> <b>SEE ALSO UNDER "COMMUNITY FACILITIES - OPEN SPACE" BELOW</b>
E19	  <b>Local Environmental Enhancements (other than purely landscaping)</b>
	<b>POLLUTION CONTROL</b> (Section 1.8)
E25	 <b>Aircraft Noise Exposure Category B</b>












Policy / Proposal	Chapter 4 Community Facilities
	<b>OUTDOOR PLAYING SPACE</b> (Section 4.3)
C2 (i)	 Proposals for Existing or Proposed Open Space Areas: <b>(3) Proposed Outdoor Sports Pitches</b>
C2 (v)	 <b>Floodlit All Weather Sports Surfaces</b>
C4 (i)	 <b>Proposed Neighbourhood Equipped Area for Play (for Children)</b>
C4 (i),(ii)	 <b>Proposed Local Equipped Area for Play (for Children)</b>
C4 (ii)	 <b>Zones of Shortfall of Children's Equipped Playspace</b>
	<b>OPEN SPACE</b> (Section 4.4)
C7 (i)	 Proposals for Existing or Proposed Open Space Areas: <b>(4) Proposed for Public Open Space / Parkland, not necessarily involving Nature Conservation, Landscaping nor Playing Pitches</b>
C7 (ii), (E2, E18)	 <b>Open Space to be Protected from Development for Strategic and/or Nature Conservation Reasons and/or Visual Reasons (SEE LIST AT APPENDIX XXII)</b> Numbered according to Appendix XXII
C7 (ii), (E2, E18)	 <b>As above - Corridors of Open Space</b>
	<b>ALLOTMENTS</b> (Section 4.5)
C8	 <b>Element of Allotment Use to be Retained</b>
	<b>INDOOR SPORTS PROVISION</b> (Section 4.6)
C9	 <b>Indoor Sports Facilities: Development / Retention of</b>
	<b>EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES</b> (Section 4.7)
C10 (ii)	 <b>Land Allocated for Community Facilities:</b> <b>(1) Education Purposes</b>
	<b>SHOPS AND RELATED SERVICES</b> (Section 4.8)
C14, (B1, CC1)	 <b>Boundary of Central Shopping Areas, Blyth Town Centre and Cramlington Town Centre</b>
C14 (i), C17 (ii), B1, CC1 (d), SD2	 <b>Retail Frontage Policies:</b> Blyth Town Centre (Policy B1 - Blocks separately lettered according to Policy); Cramlington Town Centre (Proposal CC1 (d)); <b>Local Service Area: Seaton Delaval - (Proposal SD2).</b>
C16 (ii)	 <b>Corridor of Resistance of Further Large Scale Retail Proposals</b>

Policy / Proposal	Chapter 5 Leisure and Visitor Activities
	<b>ACCOMMODATION AND ATTRACTION OF VISITORS</b> (Sections 5.3 and 5.4)
L1 (i)	 <b>Hotel Proposal</b>
L2 (i)	 <b>Focus for Increased Leisure and Visitor Activity</b>
L2 (ii)	 <b>Tourism Potential to be Investigated</b>
	<b>COUNTRYSIDE LEISURE</b> (Sections 5.5 and 5.6)
L3 (i)	 <b>Enhancement of Linear Visitor Destinations</b>
L4 (ii)	 <b>Large Scale, Formal Countryside Recreation Proposal</b>

Policy / Proposal	Chapter 4 Community Facilities	
C17 (iii)		Local Shopping Centre to be Retained
C17 (iii)(b)		Local Shopping Centre to be Retained, where Additional Facilities may be Located
C17 (iii)(c)		Local Shopping Centre to be Retained with an Improvement Sought
C17 (iii)(d)		Local Shopping Centre, High Pit: Special Policy
C17 (iv)		Village Shopping Policy - Settlements where Policy C17 (iv) will be applied
C17 (v) C17 (iii)(b)		Land Allocated for Community Facilities: (2) Shopping development
<b>COMMUNITY HEALTH FACILITIES</b>		(Section 4.9)
C18 (iii) & (iv)		Land Allocated for Community Facilities: (3) Health Facilities
<b>CULTURAL FACILITIES</b>		(Section 4.10)
C19 (i)		Land Allocated for Community Facilities: (4) Miscellaneous Community Facilities
C19 (ii)		Community Building Proposal
C19 (iv & v)		Arts Proposal

Policy / Proposal	Chapter 6 Work Activity	
<b>WORK ACTIVITY RELATED PROPOSALS</b>		(Sections 6.2 to 6.5)
W1, W2		Land for Work Activity: (1) Existing
W1, W2		Land for Work Activity: (2) Proposed
W1		Identified for Local / General Employment and Business Park Use
W1 (ii & iii)		Identified for Local / General Employment and Business Park Use, involving some restriction on the range of uses permitted.
WP2		Identified for Local / General Employment and Business Park Use, where additional uses will be considered
W2		Land for Work Activities Requiring Individual Sites in Non-Estate Locations
W4		Port Development Area; ("f" notation used where there is a restriction on the range of uses permitted).
W4 (last part), BQ1		Port Related Uses Favoured
W7		Office Use Proposed - Class B1
B3, (W6, W7, W8, C22)		Boundary of Secondary Commercial Area, Blyth Town Centre

Policy / Proposal	Chapter 7 Movement	
<b>PEDESTRIANS / CYCLISTS ETC., ("NON-POWERED MOVEMENT")</b>		(Section 7.2)
M2 (i)		Pedestrian Priority Areas
M2 (ii)		Footpath / Cycleway or Cycletrack Proposals
M2 (iii)		Pedestrian / Cycle Link between Severed Areas Sought
M2 (v), W3 (ii), WP1 (ii)		Retention / Enhancement of Public Access on Foot or Otherwise
<b>RAILWAYS / BUSES</b>		(Sections 7.3 & 7.4)
M4		Reintroduction of Passenger Trains plus Continued / Increased Freight Use
M4 (i & ii), (M5 (vi))		Land safeguarded for Railway Station Facility / Passenger Halt (to include Bus Interchange Facility)
M4 (iv)		Continued / Increased Freight Use
M5 (v)		Bus Only Link
M5 (vi)		Bus Station / Stopping Proposal

Policy / Proposal	Chapter 7 Movement	
<b>OTHER VEHICLES</b>		(Section 7.5)
M6 (iii)		Primary Vehicle Access Route to Blyth Town Centre
M6 (iii)		Secondary Vehicle Access Route to Blyth Town Centre
M6 (iii)		Improvement of Road for Traffic Management Purposes
M6 (iii)		Discouragement of Traffic from Existing Road
M7		Policy to Control Heavy Goods Traffic
M7 (i), BP4		Back Lane Policy, Blyth Town Centre
M8		Proposals for Protection / Enhancement of Parking Facilities
M9 (i)		Roads Providing Access into / within New Development
M9 (ii)		New Road Proposal within Settlement Limits
M10 (i)		New / Improved Road Proposal beyond Settlement Limits: Implementation sought within Plan Period
M10 (ii)		New / Improved Road Proposal beyond Settlement Limits: Implementation dependent on Development proceeding

## Appendix D

### Newsham station planning statement





**SLC Property**

# **Planning Statement**

**Prepared in support of a planning  
application for a new railway  
station at Newsham**

**60601435-SLC-P-270-N-PS**

# Content

<b>1</b>	<b>Introduction to the scheme .....</b>	<b>2</b>
1.1	Overview of the scheme.....	2
1.2	Newsham Station.....	2
1.3	Applicant and Agent .....	2
1.4	The Scheme.....	2
1.5	Supporting Information.....	4
1.6	Structure of this statement.....	5
<b>2</b>	<b>Background to the Proposed Development .....</b>	<b>6</b>
2.1	Introduction .....	6
2.2	Ambitions for a new passenger service .....	6
2.3	Ambitions for the railway station at Newsham.....	9
2.4	Committed Development.....	10
<b>3</b>	<b>Pre-application Engagement .....</b>	<b>12</b>
3.1	Introduction .....	12
3.2	Pre-application enquiries.....	12
3.3	Changes to the proposed development since receipt of pre-application response ...	13
3.4	Request for a Screening Opinion (RfSO) .....	14
3.5	Pre-submission stakeholder consultation (2019) .....	15
3.6	Pre-submission stakeholder consultation (2020).....	15
3.7	Summary .....	16
<b>4</b>	<b>Site Context .....</b>	<b>17</b>
4.1	Introduction .....	17
4.2	Historical Context.....	17
4.3	Planning History of the Site.....	18
4.4	Site Selection .....	18
4.5	Site Description.....	19
4.6	Site-specific environmental and land use constraints .....	21

<b>5</b>	<b>Proposed Development .....</b>	<b>23</b>
5.1	Introduction .....	23
5.2	Planning Application .....	23
5.3	Reasons for the proposed development.....	23
5.4	Elements of proposed development.....	24
5.5	Summary .....	26
<b>6</b>	<b>Planning Policy Context .....</b>	<b>27</b>
6.1	Introduction .....	27
6.2	Northumberland Development Plan .....	28
6.3	Blyth Valley Borough Local Development Framework Core Strategy (July 2007).....	30
6.4	Blyth Valley Borough Local Development Framework Development Control Policies Development Plan Document (September 2007) .....	31
6.5	Blyth Valley District Local Plan (May 1999).....	33
6.6	Northumberland Local Plan Regulation 19 Publication Draft (May 2019).....	34
6.7	National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).....	42
<b>7</b>	<b>Planning Assessment.....</b>	<b>47</b>
7.1	Introduction .....	47
7.2	Accordance with Northumberland Development Plan .....	47
7.3	Blyth Valley Borough Local Development Framework Core Strategy (July 2007).....	48
7.4	Blyth Valley Borough Local Development Framework Development Control Policies Development Plan Document (September 2007) .....	50
7.5	Blyth Valley District Local Plan (May 1999).....	56
7.6	Accordance with Northumberland Local Plan Regulation 19 Publication Draft (May 2019)	60
7.7	Accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework.....	79
7.8	The Planning Balance .....	88
<b>8</b>	<b>Material Considerations .....</b>	<b>92</b>
8.1	Introduction .....	92
8.2	National Design Guide (2019).....	92
8.3	Blyth Valley Urban Design Guide and Public Realm Strategy Supplementary Planning Document (2008) .....	93
8.4	Northumberland Local Transport Plan (LTP3) (2011) .....	93
8.5	North East Combined Authority Transport Manifesto (2016) .....	94

8.6	Transport for the North Strategic Transport Plan (2019) .....	95
8.7	The Road to Zero Strategy (2018).....	95
8.8	Northumberland Economic Strategy (2018).....	96
8.9	Nexus Metro and Local Rail Strategy (2016).....	97
8.10	Summary .....	97
<b>9</b>	<b>Case for Planning Permission to be granted .....</b>	<b>98</b>
9.1	Introduction .....	98
9.2	Accordance with local and national policies.....	98
9.3	Benefits of the Scheme .....	98
9.4	Conditions .....	100
9.5	Additional information .....	103
	<b>Appendix A- Economic Assessment .....</b>	<b>104</b>
<b>10</b>	<b>Appendix B- Adopted and Emerging Local Plan Policies Map .....</b>	<b>110</b>
10.1	Emerging Northumberland Local Plan policies map .....	110
10.2	Adopted Blyth Valley Local Plan policies map.....	111

## Table of Figures

Figure 1.1 Northumberland Line.....	3
Figure 1.2 Schedule of supporting information.....	5
Figure 2.1 Schedule of committed developments.....	11
Figure 4.1 Blyth and Tyne Railway Historic Network .....	17
Figure 4.2 Location of Newsham station (OS Map 1898; Google Maps 2020).....	18
Figure 4.3 Planning History .....	18
Figure 4.4 Red Line Boundary Plan .....	20
Figure 4.5 Extract from Emerging Northumberland Local Plan Reg 19 Draft and Adopted Blyth Valley Local Plan .....	21
Figure 5.1 Proposed car park layout .....	24
Figure 5.2 Proposed A1061 layout .....	25
Figure 5.2 Schedule development proposals.....	26
Figure 7.1 Summary of policy compliance.....	91
Figure 9.1 Schedule of proposed conditions.....	102



# Document Control

## Version Control

Version No.	Date	Created/Modified by	Notes
V.07	17.09.2021	Alannah Healey	Final

## Approvals

Version No.	Name of approver	Title & organisation	Date
V.07	Peter Gillan	SLC Property	17.09.2021

# 1 Introduction to the scheme

## 1.1 Overview of the scheme

- 1.1.1 The scheme seeks to re-introduce passenger services onto the existing freight line between the city of Newcastle upon Tyne and the town of Ashington in Northumberland.
- 1.1.2 The railway line is known as the 'Northumberland Line' and was formerly known as the Ashington Blyth and Tyne Line (ABT). ['the scheme'].
- 1.1.3 The scheme includes the construction of six new railway stations and associated infrastructure. This planning statement has been prepared in support of the planning application for the proposed railway station and associated works at Newsham ['the application'].

## 1.2 Newsham Station

- 1.2.1 This planning statement supports and accompanies an application for planning permission for the development associated with the construction and operation of a new rail station at Newsham. Further details of the proposed development are provided in Section 5.

## 1.3 Applicant and Agent

- 1.3.1 SLC Property Ltd has been instructed on behalf of Northumberland County Council to prepare this planning application.

## 1.4 The Scheme

- 1.4.1 The Northumberland Line proposes to offer a direct passenger service between Newcastle Central to Ashington. It is anticipated that the proposed service will call at the existing Manors railway station and at six proposed new station sites at Northumberland Park, Seaton Delaval, Newsham, Bebside, Bedlington and Ashington. Figure 1.1 illustrates the locations of the six new railway stations.

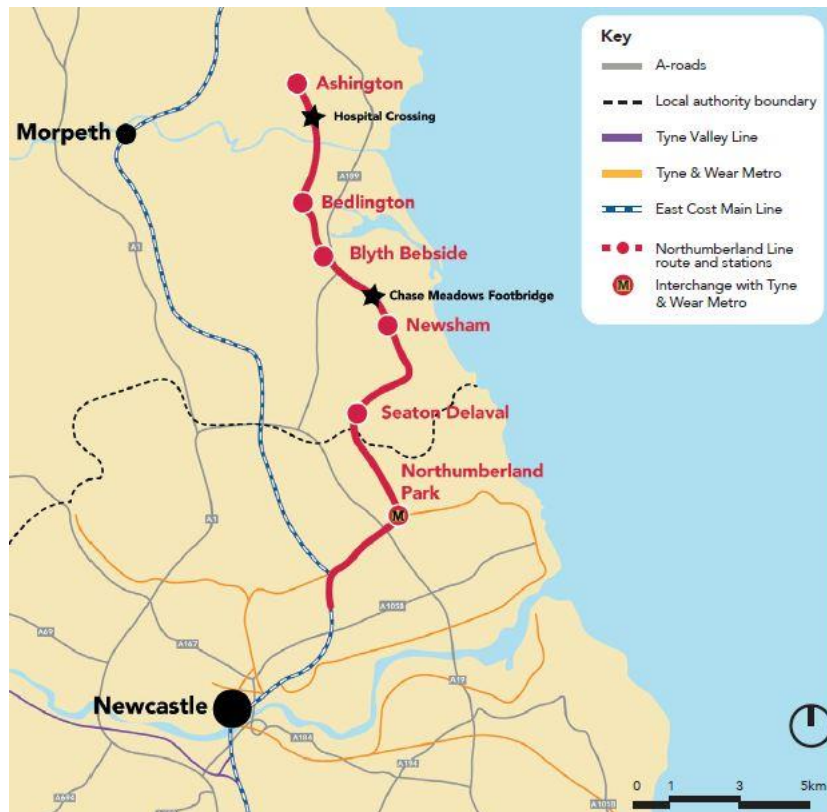


Figure 1.1 Northumberland Line

- 1.4.2 The scheme seeks to encourage a modal shift towards rail travel, assisting in reducing congestion and therefore improving journey times both on the local highway network, and for users of public transport. The scheme anticipates a journey time of approximately 35 minutes between Ashington and Newcastle.
- 1.4.3 The 'Northumberland Line' is located within the administrative areas of three local planning authorities.
- 1.4.4 **Northumberland County Council: (NCC):** Five of the six proposed railway stations are located within the NCC administrative boundary– Seaton Delaval, Newsham, Bebside, Bedlington and Ashington.
- 1.4.5 **North Tyneside Council (NTC):** The proposed railway station at Northumberland Park is located within NTC's administrative boundary.
- 1.4.6 **Newcastle City Council:** There are no new stations proposed within the Newcastle City Council administrative boundary, however passenger services along the Northumberland Line will operate to and from Newcastle Central station.

## 1.5 Supporting Information

- 1.5.1 The application for planning permission is accompanied by the supporting information identified as required by the local planning authority in discussions prior to submission. The nature, extent and scope of the supporting information is in accordance with the advice and recommendations given by officers of the local planning authority. The schedule of submitted information is summarised in Figure 1.2.

Document/ Plan reference number	Name of Document/ Plan
60601435-ACM-XX-ZZ-DRG-LEP-000012 P01	Site Location Plan
60601435-SLC-P-270-N-PS	Planning Statement
60601435-SLC-P-270-N-DAS	Design and Access Statement
60601435-ACM-04-PL-DRG-ECV-001001	Existing General Arrangement Planning submission Sheet 1
60601435-ACM-04-PL-DRG-ECV-001002	Existing General Arrangement Planning submission Sheet 2
60601435-ACM-04-PL-DRG-ECV-000002 A01	Existing Platform General Arrangement
60601435-ACM-04-ZZ-DRG-EHW-040060 P03	Existing Public Utilities Layout
60601435-ACM-04-PL-DRG-ECV-000003 A01	Proposed Platform General Arrangement
60601435-ACM-04-PL-DRG-ECV-000007 A01	Platform Existing and Proposed Sections and Details
60601435-ACM-04-PL-DRG-ECV-000008 A01	Platform Existing and Proposed Sections and Details
60601435-ACM-04-PL-DRG-ECV-000010 A01	Platform Drainage General Arrangement
60601435-ACM-04-PL-DRG-ECV-000011 A01	Platform Elevations
60601435-ACM-04-PL-DRG-ECV-000100 A01	Level Crossing Closure General Arrangement
60601435-ACM-04-ZZ-DRG-EPT-000045 A01	E and P Proposed Lighting Layout
60601435-ACM-04-ZZ-DRG-EHW-040051 P03	A1061 Realignment Plan and Profile
60601435-ACM-04-ZZ-DRG-EHW-040052 P03	Car Park General Arrangement
60601435-ACM-04-ZZ-DRG-EHW-040053 P04	Highways Typical Cross Sections Existing and Proposed Sheet 1
60601435-ACM-04-ZZ-DRG-EHW-040054 P03	Highways Typical Cross Sections Existing and Proposed Sheet 2
60601435-ACM-04-ZZ-DRG-EHW-040058 P03	Highways Typical Cross Sections Existing and Proposed Sheet 3
60601435-ACM-04-ZZ-DRG-EHW-040055 P04	Highways Drainage Layout Sheet 1 of 2
60601435-ACM-04-ZZ-DRG-EHW-040056 P04	Highways Drainage Layout Sheet 2 of 2
60601435-ACM-04-ZZ-DRG-EHW-040057 P02	Car Park Traffic Sign & Road Marking Layout
60601435-ACM-04-ZZ-DRG-EHW-040059 P02	Vehicle Tracking
60601435-ACM-04-ZZ-DRG-EPT-000063 P01	E and P Proposed Lighting Layout Newsham Car park
60601435-ACM-05-ZZ-DRG-EHW-040062 P01	Flood Compensation Basin
60601435-ACM-04-ZZ-DRG-EHW-040063 P01	Vehicle Tracking Sheet 2 of 2
60601435-ACM-04-ZZ-DRG-EST-000301	Footbridge Planning Proposed G.A Sheet 1 of 3
60601435-ACM-04-ZZ-DRG-EST-000302	Footbridge Planning Proposed G.A Sheet 2 of 3
60601435-ACM-04-ZZ-DRG-EST-000303	Footbridge Planning Proposed G.A Sheet 3 of 3
60601435-ACM-04-ZZ-DRG-EST-000304 A01	Newsham station footbridge existing arrangement
60601435-ACM-04-ZZ-DRG-EPT-000044 A01	E and P Proposed Schematic Newsham Station
60601435-ACM-04-ZZ-DRG-EST-001201	A1061 Overbridge Proposed GA Sheet 1 of 3
60601435-ACM-04-ZZ-DRG-EST-001202	A1061 Overbridge Proposed GA Sheet 1 of 4
60601435-ACM-04-ZZ-DRG-EST-001203	A1061 Overbridge Proposed GA Sheet 1 of 5
60601435-ACM-04-ZZ-DRG-HLG-001301	Highways Lighting, Proposed Lighting Layout - Sheet 1 of 2
60601435-ACM-04-ZZ-SKT-HLG-001301_1	Highways Lighting, Proposed Lighting Class Sheet 1 of 1
60601435-ACM-04-ZZ-DRG-HLG-001302	Highways Lighting, Proposed Lighting Layout - Sheet 2 of 2
60601435-ACM-04-ZZ-DRG-HLG-001303	Highways Lighting, Contours Layout - Sheet 1 of 2
60601435-ACM-04-ZZ-DRG-HLG-001304	Highways Lighting, Contours Layout - Sheet 2 of 2
60601435-ACM-04-ZZ-DRG-HLG-001305	Highways Lighting Calculation Results Sheet 1 of 2
60601435-ACM-04-ZZ-DRG-HLG-001306	Highways Lighting Calculation Results Sheet 2 of 2
60601435-ACM-04-ZZ-DRG-HLG-001307	Highways Lighting, Overall Lighting Layout, Sheet 1 of 1
60601435-ACM-04-ZZ-REP-HLG-001301	Lighting Calculation Report
60601435-SLC-P-270-N-LTVIA V4	Newsham - Landscape, Townscape and Visual Impact Assessment
60601435-SLC-P-270-N-LTVIA-FIGURES V4	Newsham - LTVIA Figures

60601435-ACM-XX-ZZ-DRG-EEN-000506_P01	Newsham - Landscape Design
60601435-SLC-P-270-N-CEMP V04	Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan
60601435-SLC-P-270-N-SCE V05	Statement of Community Engagement
60601435-SLC-P-270-N-ECIA	Ecological Impact Assessment (including net gain statement)
60601435-SLC-P-270-N-HW V04	Health and Wellbeing Statement
60601435-ACM-XX-ZZ-REP-EEN-000029	Newsham- Arboricultural Impact Assessment
20210915_Newsham FRA_D04	Newsham- Flood Risk Assessment
60601435-ACM-04-ZZ-REP-EEN-000006	Newsham- Heritage Statement
60601435-ACM-04-ZZ-REP-EEN-000003_P01	Newsham- Services and Utilities Statement
60601435-ACM-04-ZZ-REP-EEN-000005_4	Newsham-Transport Assessment
60601435-ACM-04-ZZ-REP-EEN-000004_V1.1	Newsham- Air Quality Assessment
60601435-ACM-04-ZZ-REP-EEN-000002_V4	Newsham- Noise and Vibration Assessment V4
60601435-ACM-04-ZZ-REP-EGE-000001 P01	Newsham- Preliminary Sources Study Report P01

*Figure 1.2 Schedule of supporting information*

## 1.6 Structure of this statement

- Section 2 sets out the background to the development and highlights the relevant planning history for the site and adjacent land.
- Section 3 summarises the engagement with the NCC, stakeholders and the public which has informed the submitted scheme.
- Section 4 introduces the application site and describes the surrounding areas
- Section 5 describes the proposed development
- Section 6 sets out the policies and other determining factors at both a national and local level which are relevant to the determination of the planning application
- Section 7 assesses the proposed development against the policies identified in Section 6.
- Section 8 describes the material considerations
- Section 9 provides a summary of the case for planning permission to be granted.

## 2 Background to the Proposed Development

### 2.1 Introduction

- 2.1.1 The purpose of this section is to provide a background to the ambitions held by key stakeholders for the reintroduction of passenger services on the Northumberland Line.

### 2.2 Ambitions for a new passenger service

- 2.2.1 The reintroduction of passenger services on the Northumberland Line is a long-held ambition of Northumberland County Council, North Tyneside Council, Newcastle City Council, North East Combined Authority, Network Rail and other partners and key stakeholders. This section provides a summary of recent support for new railway stations and introduction of passenger services on the Northumberland Line, with particular reference to the proposed railway station at Newsham.
- 2.2.2 The scheme seeks to improve connectivity and accessibility in the South East Northumberland Corridor (SEN Corridor). The scheme is a priority of Northumberland County Council, North Tyneside Council, Newcastle City Council, North East Combined Authority and is supported by a number of key project partners, including the Department for Transport (DfT), Network Rail, Transport for the North (TfN) Nexus and Northern Rail.
- 2.2.3 South East Northumberland is the most densely populated area of Northumberland, where the county's three largest towns are located: Cramlington, Blyth and Ashington. Crucially, the most densely populated settlements of Ashington and Blyth are not served by a passenger rail service.
- 2.2.4 At present, bus journey times are uncompetitive in comparison with car journey times from Newcastle to Ashington. The average journey time by bus between Newcastle and Ashington is more than 60 minutes.
- 2.2.5 The lack of viable and efficient modal choice has resulted in significant dependence on the private car by residents and visitors within South East Northumberland, increasing highway congestion, delaying journey times and adversely impacting local air quality. The aforementioned issues are exacerbated by the high percentage of residents who commute to nearby Newcastle and North Tyneside for work, leisure and retail opportunities. The 2011 Census identified a new outflow of commuters from Northumberland of over 23,000 people (37% of the population). This is expected to have increased in the last decade. Of those commuters, 65% of trips originating in Northumberland are made by car, which is higher than the national and regional average.
- 2.2.6 The scheme supports the strategic objectives of Northumberland County Council, North Tyneside Council and other key stakeholders, as summarised below, to improve sustainable

transport connections, which will facilitate economic growth, assist in reducing local highway congestion and contribute to improvements in local air quality.

- 2.2.7 Improving the links from towns such as Ashington and Blyth is critical to encouraging more sustainable access to the key regional economic centres in Tyne and Wear, and South East Northumberland. This includes improving access for staff and visitors to regionally business parks in close proximity to the station sites,
- 2.2.8 Furthermore, the proposed stations are located to promote onward journeys by alternative public transport options, including access to the Tyne and Wear metro and local bus network. As a result, the scheme promotes access to a number of regionally important business parks, including, but not limited to parks at Ashwood, Cobalt, Quorum, Gosforth and Balliol and the renewables energy sector businesses located in the Blyth Estuary.
- 2.2.9 It is anticipated that enhancements to transport links within South East Northumberland will stimulate economic investment within the region. The reintroduction of passenger services on the Northumberland Line will improve the accessibility and connectivity of South East Northumberland to the wider North East area, which may help to bring forward the much-needed delivery of housing allocations and other infrastructure.

#### **Northumberland County Council**

- 2.2.10 The Northumberland Economic Strategy 2019–2024 considers the Ashington, Blyth and Tyne line, as a ‘dormant asset’<sup>1</sup>. The re-introduction of the railway line is a top priority for South East Northumberland. The scheme is a key deliverable for the next stage of the Economic Strategy and has been identified as a catalyst for unlocking commercial investment throughout the area.
- 2.2.11 The Northumberland Local Transport Plan 2011–2026 sets out the Council’s visions, aims and objectives for transport over this period. The strategy identifies that the levels of deprivation in South East Northumberland are exacerbated by accessibility issues<sup>2</sup>. As such, the current public transport options are considered not to meet the needs of all residents in Northumberland. The Ashington, Blyth and Tyne Line is identified as a key area of development within the South East Northumberland Public Transport Corridor<sup>3</sup>. The strategy identifies the potential socio-economic and environmental benefits the scheme could bring to the area.

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<sup>1</sup> The Northumberland Economic Strategy 2019–24 p19

<sup>2</sup> Northumberland Local Transport Plan 2011–2026 p45

<sup>3</sup> Northumberland Local Transport Plan 2011–2026 p118

## North Tyneside Council

- 2.2.12 The adopted North Tyneside Local Plan (2017) considers 'Future transport provision should reflect existing demand and also take account of planned economic and housing growth to ensure an integrated approach to sustainable development and travel patterns<sup>4</sup>.'
- 2.2.13 North Tyneside Council supports the common objectives of the North East Combined Authority and Northumberland County Council in seeking to deliver a modal shift to more sustainable modes of transport. Notably, the local plan safeguards the Ashington, Blyth and Tyne Railway to ensure the transport infrastructure can be delivered with limited constraints.
- 2.2.14 Paragraph 10.25 of the North Tyneside Local Plan states:

*"The reinstatement of passenger services over the Ashington, Blyth and Tyne Railway is seen as a key driver for delivering growth in South East Northumberland. It is crucial that the potential should be retained for reopening of this route to passenger traffic in the future, an importance reflected through the safeguarding of the alignment in the Local Plan. The proposal would link South East Northumberland to Newcastle with options to serve Ashington, Bedlington and Morpeth including the possibility for an interchange station, between heavy rail, Metro and bus services, at Northumberland Park. Reinstatement of this passenger service is a key aspiration of Northumberland County Council and North Tyneside Council. Significant progress has already been made, including progressing plans through a Network Rail GRIP study and in assembling funding bid packages. Various options are currently being appraised for station sites, service frequency and infrastructure requirements for both development and operation. Although closed to passenger traffic since the mid 1960s, the majority of the route is still in use as an existing freight line, but the North Tyneside Local Plan also includes the protection of land which would enable the option of direct access from Seghill southwards towards Percy Main (as shown on the Policies Map)."*

## North East Combined Authority

- 2.2.15 The '20-year Transport Manifesto'<sup>5</sup> produced by the North East Combined Authority has a vision to provide 'provide affordable, attractive, reliable, safe, healthy transport choices for businesses, residents and visitors whilst enhancing the environment' The strategy identifies local rail and metro as a way to drive economic growth. Although the Northumberland Line scheme is not specifically identified, the strategy identifies the upgrading of freight-only sections to passenger use as an objective.

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<sup>4</sup> North Tyneside Local Plan (2017) p153

<sup>5</sup> North East Combined Authority (2016) A 20-year Transport Manifesto for the North East Combined Authority



## Transport for the North

- 2.2.16 Transport for the North published a 'Strategic Transport Plan in 2019 which outlines the ambitions for the growth of the Northern Powerhouse until 2050.
- 2.2.17 The plan identifies the importance of encouraging a modal shift towards rail in meeting transport objectives for the region<sup>6</sup>. This includes contributing to meeting commitments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and driving towards the inclusive growth agenda.
- 2.2.18 The strategy considers that 'To realise the benefits of agglomeration and economic mass, the North requires faster, more efficient, reliable and sustainable journeys on the road and rail networks<sup>7</sup>.
- 2.2.19 The aims and objectives of Transport for the North align with the principles of the Northumberland Lines scheme. The Northumberland Line seeks to improve connectivity in South East Northumberland, which contributes to the aim that: *'improvements should ensure that all areas of opportunity are connected, and that communities are not disconnected and further isolated<sup>8</sup>'*.

## 2.3 Ambitions for the railway station at Newsham

- 2.3.1 Newsham is located within the designated settlement boundary of Blyth. Blyth is the largest town in Northumberland.
- 2.3.2 Blyth is identified in the emerging Northumberland Local Plan as having a '*strategically important employment function<sup>9</sup>*'. This includes assets such as the national Offshore Renewable Catapult, and the Port of Blyth (a commercial port). Furthermore, the plan identifies that the town has significant growth potential, notably surrounding Blyth Estuary and within the offshore oil and gas, renewables, and the advanced manufacturing sector.
- 2.3.3 Newsham is one of two proposed railway stations within the town of Blyth. The other proposed station is located at Bebside. It is considered the two stations will support Blyth's future ambitions for growth.
- 2.3.4 The 2011 Census identifies that 50% of work trips in Blyth, originate from outside the area and utilise the local highway network. The proposed railway station will ease congestion on the local highway network, and as such will improve connectivity in South East Northumberland. This is likely to improve the attractiveness of Blyth as a place to live, work and invest.

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<sup>6</sup> Transport for the North (2019) Strategic Transport Plan, p87

<sup>7</sup> Transport for the North (2019) Strategic Transport Plan, p8

<sup>8</sup> Transport for the North (2019) Strategic Transport Plan, p8

<sup>9</sup> Emerging Northumberland Local Plan – Publication Draft January 2019 p23

- 2.3.5 Notably, the proposed station at Newsham is located to the south of Blyth and located adjacent to the A1061, one of two strategic roads into Blyth. It is considered the proposed station will improve accessibility to and from Blyth and assist in reducing congestion on the local highway network. As such, the proposed station will improve access to employment and leisure opportunities across the North East.
- 2.3.6 As such, the proposed development will provide sustainable transport infrastructure, reducing reliance on the private car for residents which will assist in reducing congestion on the local highway network and improving access to employment and leisure opportunities across the North East.

## 2.4 Committed Development

- 2.4.1 A review of planning applications on land adjacent to the site (both determined and in the process of being determined) has been undertaken to identify any consented developments which may be material considerations in the determining of a planning application for the proposed railway station.
- 2.4.2 Figure 2.1 describes those developments which have been granted planning permission [committed development] as listed on Northumberland County Council's planning public access system on the 23<sup>rd</sup> November 200 within 500 metres of the red line boundary. There are currently no planning applications which are awaiting determination within 500 metres of the red line boundary.

Reference	Address	Description of proposal	Date of approval
19/04156/FUL	Land South West Of 17 Carlton Avenue Newcastle Road Blyth Northumberland	Proposed development comprising of 27no. residential units with associated road and parking. Units consist of 2bed single storey bungalows, 2bed 2storey houses and 3bed 2storey houses.	27 <sup>th</sup> April 2020
17/00499/OUT	Land South West Of Park Farm South Newsham Road Blyth Northumberland	Outline application for approximately 300 residential dwellings (C3 use) with associated highways (including two new site accesses), infrastructure and landscaping, all matters reserved with the exception of access	28 <sup>th</sup> May 2020
18/02296/FUL	Land North Of Windsor Drive Windsor Drive Blyth Northumberland	Construction of 18no. dwellings with associated infrastructure (retrospective)	20 <sup>th</sup> November 2019
15/04185/FUL	Newsham North Farm South Newsham Road Blyth Northumberland NE24 3PW	Proposed demolition of existing farmhouse and outbuildings for creation of 42no new dwellings.	21 <sup>st</sup> November 2016

Reference	Address	Description of proposal	Date of approval
14/01449/FUL	Land West Of Benridge Park Laverock Hall Road Blyth Northumberland	New build 349 new dwellings to include 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 bedroom properties for private sale and an affordable housing allocation with associated landscape and infrastructure works, including a new roundabout access at the junction of Laverock Hall Road and the A1061 and the east bound junction improvements to the existing roundabout at the junction of the A1061 and A192	18 <sup>th</sup> December 2014

*Figure 2.1 Schedule of committed developments*

- 2.4.3 It is considered the scheme which is the subject of this planning application would not preclude or impact on the delivery of the committed developments set out in the table above. The scheme does not impact any of the land that pertains to those committed developments. It is anticipated that appropriate measures will be implemented during the construction phase to avoid or mitigate any impacts on the delivery of the committed developments.
- 2.4.4 Figure 2.1 indicates that a significant number of residential developments have been built, or have permission to be built, in close proximity to the proposed stations. In addition to the extant planning permissions, it has been identified in the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment that a further 412 dwellings could be constructed in the next 11-15 years at a site located approximately 700 metres to the north west of the site<sup>10</sup>.
- 2.4.5 It is considered the proposed station and car park will reduce the reliance of future residents of those committed developments on the private vehicle. As such, the proposed station is likely to assist in reducing congestion on the local highway network.

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<sup>10</sup> NCC SHLAA Reference Number: 4622 (September 2019)

## 3 Pre-application Engagement

### 3.1 Introduction

- 3.1.1 The proposed development has been the subject of extensive and ongoing engagement with officers and Members of Northumberland County Council and other key stakeholders.
- 3.1.2 This section provides a summary of the formal pre-application discussions and engagement that has been undertaken pertaining to this planning application.

### 3.2 Pre-application enquiries

- 3.2.1 Informal dialogue with local authority officers and members was undertaken prior to the submission of a formal pre-application to Northumberland County Council as the local planning authority on the 9<sup>th</sup> August 2019. A formal response to the pre-application enquiry was received from the local planning authority on 1st October 2019.
- 3.2.2 The response indicated that the principle of development would likely be supported, however an application for planning permission would need to be supported by assessments to ascertain the extent of any potential impacts:
- ‘the principle of development may vary from site to site but a case could be made that would likely to receive support. The proposals are considered by Northumberland County Council to be in accordance with the development plan’<sup>11</sup>.*
- 3.2.3 Overall, the local planning authority considered that *‘the benefits that could be delivered to the South East of Northumberland, should be able to address any harm that may be created by each application through the wider benefits that would be proposed and deliverable’.*
- 3.2.4 The formal pre-application response from the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) advised that *‘The discharge location for surface water from this area needs to be considered carefully. It needs to follow the existing natural drainage catchment. Please note that both the Newsham Burn to the north and Meggies Burn to the south have experienced flooding issues in the part. As such, we ask that flows are restricted to greenfield or below’<sup>12</sup>.*
- 3.2.5 Furthermore, the formal pre-application response advised that *‘Certain forms of development are not inappropriate in the Green Belt provided they preserve its openness and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it. This includes local transport infrastructure which can demonstrate a requirement for a Green Belt location’.* As such, NCC

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<sup>11</sup> NCC Pre-Application response, Ref: 19/00680/PREAPP (1<sup>st</sup> October 2019) p14

<sup>12</sup> NCC Pre-Application response, Ref: 19/00680/PREAPP (1<sup>st</sup> October 2019) p13

confirmed that the principle of development does not conflict with the local development plan, providing that it can be demonstrated there are no alternative options to provide the stations and supporting infrastructure outwith the green belt.

- 3.2.6 Since receipt of the pre-application response, extensive discussions have been held with Northumberland County Council officers including those from departments for highways, environmental health, ecology, flooding and drainage. During these discussions various surveys, assessments and draft designs and proposals have been shared. Those discussions have also confirmed the scope, extent and nature of the information which is required to be submitted in support of the planning application. The submitted scheme takes account of the comments and advice received from the local planning authority and other Council services.
- 3.2.7 Further details can be found within the full suite of information which has been submitted in support of this planning application. This Planning Statement should be read in conjunction with the various submitted plans, surveys and assessment reports.

### **3.3 Changes to the proposed development since receipt of pre-application response**

- 3.3.1 Subsequent to the submission of the pre-application enquiry and receipt of the formal pre-application response from Northumberland County Council (application ref: 19/00680/PREAPP) on the 1st October 2019, several changes have been made to the proposed development at Newsham station. Those changes are set out below:
1. As a result of safety risks at the level crossing, a road overbridge is proposed as a diversion to the A1061. This includes the closure of Newsham level crossing.
  2. The size of the proposed car park has increased to 237 spaces to provide for the potential growth up to the year 2039
  3. As a result of the increase in car parking and the need to provide an overbridge, it was confirmed that land both to the east and west of the railway line would be required to implement the scheme.
  4. The revised red line boundary now includes two designated Public Rights of Way- one on the eastern flank of the site (300/162) and one on the western flank of the site (300/031).
  5. The red line boundary now includes a
    - a. site of Protected Open Space to east of the site.
    - b. Archaeology resources which require additional evaluation
    - c. area of land required for the installation of drainage measures

3.3.2 As a consequence of these changes, it has been agreed that the surveys and assessments to be submitted with the planning application would be varied and extended in the following ways:

1. The scope of the Transport Assessment has been updated to include impacts on the highway network associated with the additional car parking.
2. The scope of this Planning Statement has been updated to include an assessment of the loss of open space (see Section 7).
3. The scope of all of the supporting assessments have been updated to account for the extension of the red line boundary, and to assess the inclusion of the proposed overbridge.

### **3.4 Request for a Screening Opinion (RfSO)**

3.4.1 A Request for a Screening Opinion (RfSO) was submitted to North Tyneside Council and Northumberland County Council on 28<sup>th</sup> June 2019 in accordance with the screening procedures laid out in the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (hereafter referred to as the EIA Regulations).

3.4.2 The Opinion of the Northumberland County Council was received on 9<sup>th</sup> August 2019, confirming that the scheme does not constitute 'EIA development'.

3.4.3 As the detailed design of the scheme has evolved, it has become apparent that some components of the scheme have altered from those identified in the previous RfSO, as well as the extent of the land which is required.

3.4.4 As a consequence of the changes to the scheme, a further RfSO was submitted in the 16<sup>th</sup> July 2020.

3.4.5 On the 19<sup>th</sup> November 2020, Northumberland County Council confirmed that the amended scheme 'is not likely to have significant effects on the environment and as such is not considered to be EIA development'<sup>13</sup>.

3.4.6 On this basis, an Environmental Impact Assessment is not required to be undertaken and the planning application is not required to be accompanied by an Environmental Statement.

3.4.7 On this basis, an Environmental Impact Assessment has not been undertaken and the planning application is not supported by an Environmental Statement.

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<sup>13</sup> NCC Screening Opinion, Ref: 20/02242/SCREEN (19<sup>th</sup> November 2020) p19

- 3.4.8 Notwithstanding the EIA decision, the scheme has implemented a number of measures to mitigate concerns which have been raised within consultation responses. Regular consultation has been undertaken with Northumberland County Council to agree the appropriate measures.

### **3.5 Pre-submission stakeholder consultation (2019)**

- 3.5.1 The preparation of this planning application, and the scope of the submitted information, has been informed by the responses received to the public consultation undertaken during 2019 and 2020.
- 3.5.2 An initial public consultation was undertaken between the 2nd and 18th September 2019. The objective was to raise awareness of the scheme and ascertain local perceptions of the scheme. The consultation was undertaken through the provision of 'drop in' events, attended by officers of the council and project team representatives. The 'drop in' events were held in five different locations with a geographical spread along the proposed route. Members of the public were also invited to provide feedback online. The initial public consultation for the overall Northumberland Line scheme received a total 971 responses. Those responses were considered and used to inform the proposals which were the subject of the public consultation in 2020.

### **3.6 Pre-submission stakeholder consultation (2020)**

- 3.6.1 A second public consultation took place between the 14<sup>th</sup> of November and 16<sup>th</sup> December 2020. Discussions were held with officers of the council to confirm the extent, scope, nature, timing and information of this public consultation.
- 3.6.2 The objective was to ascertain local views on the specific proposals for each of the station sites, together with the scheme as a whole.
- 3.6.3 501 comments were made in connection with the proposals for Newsham station. 75% of the comments were either positive or neutral, 25% were negative. Comments were coded across seventeen themes. Positive responses commonly focussed on the new road section and the design of the station. Neutral feedback focussed on the new road section, design of the station in particular the new overbridge and footbridge, and access to the new station for pedestrians and cyclists. Negative feedback focussed on the impact of the proposals on the local road network and congestion, location of the station and the parking provision and its provision over two-car parks.
- 3.6.4 Residents of Railway Cottages have made representations that the scheme will remove an area which is used by the residents for parking. As a result of these representations, the planning application now includes the provision of on street parking (12 No. bays) to provide for existing demand. Subject to the scheme being granted planning permission a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) could be made to manage the use of these bays, and for the TRO to provide for parking permits to be issued/purchased by residents of properties which may be

prescribed in the TRO. TROs are made by the Highway Authority and are a separate regulatory procedure to (seeking) planning permission. As such the planning application cannot prescribe how the parking bays will be used but can only to provide for their construction and for the bays to become 'adopted highway'. Any residents or group thereof wishing to have 'priority or exclusive use' of the bays will need to agree with the highway authority the arrangements for doing so.

- 3.6.5 The Statement of Community Engagement submitted in support of this application demonstrates that the project has engaged stakeholders and the local community at the plan-making stage of the proposals when information on the designs was of sufficient level for informed and meaningful engagement. It further demonstrates that the project team has listened and considered the feedback which will feed into the development of the station at Newsham.

## **3.7 Summary**

- 3.7.1 Ongoing consultation with local planning authority officers and other key stakeholders has informed the nature, extent and scope of the information submitted in support of this application. The design submitted in support of this application has been informed by the feedback received during the public consultation and engagement with key stakeholders. Further details can be found in the submitted Statement of Community Engagement.



## 4 Site Context

### 4.1 Introduction

- 4.1.1 This section describes the existing site, adjacent land uses and provides a contextual overview of those considerations which have informed the design of the submitted scheme. Further details of those considerations and how the submitted scheme has been informed based on an understanding of those considerations and appraisal of alternative development options, are set out in the submitted Design and Access Statement.

### 4.2 Historical Context

- 4.2.1 Newsham station was initially opened in 1851 as part of the 'Ashington Blyth and Tyne Railway'. The railway network served a vast number of collieries in the South East Northumberland area into the early twentieth century. The original railway station was located adjacent to Newsham junction. One line continued north towards Ashington and one line continued into the centre of Blyth. The line to Blyth is now disused.
- 4.2.2 The location of the original Newsham Station is identified in Figure 4.1.



*Figure 4.1 Blyth and Tyne Railway Historic Network*

- 4.2.3 The Ashington, Blyth and Tyne Line ran its final passenger service in 1964. Several stations were closed as part of the Beeching cuts in the early 60s, including Newsham in 1964. Since the closure of passenger services, freight trains have continued to operate, primarily serving Lynemouth Power Station.
- 4.2.4 The proposed location for the railway station at Newsham is located approximately 700 metres south of the site of the original station.



Figure 4.2 Location of Newsham station (OS Map 1898; Google Maps 2020)

## 4.3 Planning History of the Site

- 4.3.1 A desk-based review of the planning applications which have been submitted to and either: consented, refused or withdrawn on the land which comprises the application site has been undertaken.
- 4.3.2 Figure 4.3 describes the planning applications which have been submitted within the red line boundary of the site, based on a review of Northumberland County Council's planning public access system undertaken on the 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2020.

Reference	Address	Description of proposal	Decision	Date
20/02243/SCREEN	Various addresses	Screening request for provision of six new train stations, associated upgrading and refurbishment of existing rail infrastructure and engineering works and the reintroduction of passenger train services.	No EIA required	19 <sup>th</sup> November 2020
19/02151/SCREEN	Various addresses	Request for a Screening Opinion- Provision of six new train stations, associated upgrading and refurbishment of existing rail infrastructure and engineering works and the reintroduction of passenger train services.	No EIA required	9 <sup>th</sup> August 2019

Figure 4.3 Planning History

- 4.3.3 Based on the desk-based review there are not known to be any recent planning or other related applications pertaining to the site, other than the Request for a Screening Opinions submitted to assess the potential requirement for an EIA to support the planning applications for the Northumberland Line scheme.

## 4.4 Site Selection

- 4.4.1 To construct a railway station, it must obviously be located adjacent to a railway line. This significantly limits the number of sites available for the proposed development.

- 4.4.2 The proposed siting of the station has been determined based on an appraisal of alternative options. An appraisal of alternative sites for the proposed railway station was undertaken, including adjacent to the site of the original Newsham station. However, sites to the north of the railway station were constrained by existing building development adjacent to the railway line. Any potential alternative sites were not large enough to provide for the anticipated car parking demand at the station. This includes the site of the original Newsham station which is safeguarded in the Adopted Blyth Valley Local Plan (see Section 4.6). Furthermore, the proposed station at Newsham could not be sited further north due to it being in direct conflict with the proposed railway station at Bebside. Any sites to the south would not have been well related to the existing settlement.
- 4.4.3 The site is strategically located, with direct access to the local highway network (A1061) and the local Public Right of Way network. The A1061 is one of two main highways connecting into Blyth to the east. As such, the site has the potential to be used for Park and Ride serving Blyth. However, provision will be made for pedestrians and cyclists to commute and from the station. The site is adjacent to the existing built development and as such the station is easily accessible for nearby residents and businesses. Furthermore, the site provides sufficient land to accommodate the car parking required to meet anticipated demand.
- 4.4.4 Whilst the site of the proposed station is not adjacent to the site of the historic railway station, the site is adjacent to the site of the former Newsham Colliery. The success of the coal mining industry necessitated a rapid expansion of the Blyth and Tyne Railway. As such, the historic railway network embodies the history of the local area. The proposed development supports local heritage by re-introducing a station in close proximity to the site of the original Newsham station and traditional industries of the local area.
- 4.4.5 Overall, the site of the proposed station is considered to be the most appropriate and the most beneficial when compared against alternatives. Further information on site selection is contained within section 7.6.

## 4.5 Site Description

- 4.5.1 Newsham is a suburb of the main town of Blyth. The site of the proposed station is outwith, but adjacent to the settlement boundary for Blyth, on the southern extent of Newsham.
- 4.5.2 Residential properties at Blagdon Drive and Park Villages are located directly to the north of the site. The site is bound to the east, south and west by open countryside.
- 4.5.3 The site of the proposed development has an area of 11.9 hectares.
- 4.5.4 The existing site is comprised of eight separate areas.
1. Residential property (Arden House) to the east of the railway line
  2. Poultry farm to the east of the railway line

3. Field to the west of the railway line
4. Woodland on the eastern flank of the site
5. Field to the east
6. Railway corridor
7. A1061 to the north
8. Public Right of Way (300/031) on western flank; Public Right of Way (300/162) on eastern flank

4.5.5 The proposed site layout is comprised of the following elements:

1. The platforms, lifts, stairs are proposed to be constructed within, and adjacent to the railway corridor and on the site of the closed level crossing.
2. The public car parks are proposed to be constructed on both the east and west side of the rail line on land currently an open field, the poultry farm and the existing residential property.
3. The overbridge is proposed to be constructed on the site of the open field (west of rail line) and poultry farm (east of the line).
4. The A1061 will be realigned to include the new overbridge. The construction of the new overbridge will be facilitated by modifications to the existing roundabout, and the construction of a new roundabout to the east.
5. The Public Rights of Way will be the subject of localised short diversions to facilitate the construction and operation of the station infrastructure.
6. Drainage attenuation basin to be provided to the southwest of the site.



Figure 4.4 Red Line Boundary Plan

## 4.6 Site-specific environmental and land use constraints

4.6.1 The site-specific policy constraints and land-use designations that pertain to the site are shown on Figure 4.5, extracted from the adopted Blyth Valley Local Plan, and the Emerging Northumberland Local Plan. This section presents an overview of the constraints, which are assessed in the subsequent chapters of this planning statement. A full extract of the local plan maps and associated legends are available in Appendix B.



*Figure 4.5 Extract from Emerging Northumberland Local Plan Reg 19 Draft and Adopted Blyth Valley Local Plan*

- 4.6.2 The site of the proposed public car parks are located outwith the settlement boundary for Blyth, with the exception of railway infrastructure proposed to be constructed to the north of Newsham level crossing. The site is located on land designated as greenbelt in both the emerging and adopted local plans. However, local transport infrastructure is identified as a form of development which is not inappropriate in the Green Belt. which can demonstrate a requirement for a Green Belt location.
- 4.6.3 The railway line is safeguarded for the reintroduction of passenger trains in Policy M4 of the Adopted Blyth Valley Local Plan, and TRA5 in the Emerging Northumberland Local Plan. The adopted policy safeguards a site approximately 700 metres to the north of the site of the proposed station. This site was considered and discounted for the reasons set out in Section 4.4. The approximate location of the proposed station site is safeguarded in the Emerging Local Plan policy. The emerging local plan is at an advanced stage of preparation and likely to be adopted in early 2021. The approximate location of the proposed development is supported by the development plan, and therefore likely to be given some weight in the determination of this application.
- 4.6.4 The woodland located in the north east corner of the site is designated as Protected Open Space under INF5 in the emerging local plan. The woodland is designated as plantation woodland within the adopted local plan (Policy E5).
- 4.6.5 The identified policy constraints and land use designations referenced above are more fully set out in Section 6 and assessed in Section 7 of this statement.



## 5 Proposed Development

### 5.1 Introduction

- 5.1.1 This section presents the detail of the development proposals which are the subject of this application for planning permission.

### 5.2 Planning Application

- 5.2.1 This planning statement has been submitted in support of an application for planning permission for:

*Construction of a two-platform railway station including: pedestrian lifts, stepped pedestrian access, new highway accesses; construction of overbridge to carry diverted A1061 with shared footway and cycleway. Modifications to existing highways including new roundabouts and realignment of local roads and construction of new access roads from the highway; provision of parking for buses, cars, electric vehicles, motorcycles, cycles, and taxis; works to of public rights of way. Construction of facilities ancillary to the station including, lighting, soft and hard landscaping, surface and subsurface drainage, utilities and other services, boundary treatment and other associated works*

### 5.3 Reasons for the proposed development

- 5.3.1 The Economic Assessment<sup>14</sup> produced to support this application for planning permission identifies that the Northumberland Line is forecast to generate approximately £1.45million annual return journeys by 2039<sup>15</sup>.
- 5.3.2 Blyth is the largest town in Northumberland and is identified as a key centre for employment. At present, the town is served by a bus network which provides connections to Tyne and Wear and South East Northumberland. However, journey times are uncompetitive in comparison with private vehicular journeys. The average journey time by bus between Newcastle and Ashington is more than 60 minutes, compared with a proposed journey time of around 35 minutes by train. As such, the proposed development provides a viable alternative to the existing bus network and private vehicle for residents.
- 5.3.3 The Economic Assessment indicates that the 2011 census identifies 50% of journey to work trips with a destination into Blyth come from outside the area. The proposed development

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<sup>14</sup> Newsham Economic Assessment (AECOM, 2020) see Appendix A

<sup>15</sup> These forecasts are aligned to a service proposition that has 2 trains per hour operating between Ashington and Newcastle, taking 32 minutes. Rail fares would be set at a similar level to those used on the Tyne & Wear Metro.

provides an alternative to the private vehicle and is therefore likely to reduce existing congestion on the local highway network such as the A1061.

- 5.3.4 The proposed development improves accessibility for residents to seek employment, education and leisure opportunities outside of local areas. The proposed development is likely to strengthen the role of Blyth as a main town and strategic employment area to accommodate future employment, housing retail and services<sup>16</sup>.

## 5.4 Elements of proposed development

- 5.4.1 It is anticipated the Northumberland Line scheme will provide a half hourly service with an anticipated journey time between Newcastle and Ashington of 35 minutes.

- 5.4.2 Figure 5.1 and 5.2 indicate the proposed site layout for the principle elements of the proposed development.



Figure 5.1 Proposed car park layout<sup>17</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Emerging Northumberland Local Plan – Publication Draft January 2019 p53

<sup>17</sup> Extract from plan ref: 60601435-ACM-04-ZZ-DRG-EHW-040052\_P03





access	Construction of a new roundabout to the east to provide access to car park and overbridge.
Bus stops and connectivity	Bus stop to be provided in eastern car park. Bus stops on B1523 to be relocated.
Landscape	Hard and soft landscaping to be provided. Specimen tree planting provided on site boundaries.
Biodiversity	It is anticipated that off-site compensatory habitat creation will be undertaken as the existing biodiversity within the site cannot be replaced within the site details are to be agreed with the planning authority.
Drainage	Surface water drainage system to be provided including drainage attenuation basin and other measures.
Lighting	Raise / lower lighting columns (typically 6m in height) will be provided to achieve the necessary illumination to the platforms. Waiting shelter to include in-built lighting. Appropriate lighting to be provided in car park. Footway to include lighting columns
Construction	It is anticipated the construction of the station will be undertaken in a period of approximately 11-15 months, however this is subject to safety, access and other considerations.
Services and Utilities	Details of existing local services provision provided as part of planning application. Details of works thereto to be provided to discharge a condition.
Signage	Adequate signage will be provided for pedestrians and cyclist movements as well as vehicular traffic. Signage will be provided to amenities within the station such as lifts and stairs. Details of signage will be provided to discharge a condition

*Figure 5.3 Schedule development proposals*

## 5.5 Summary

- 5.5.1 The scope of the proposals has been informed through discussions with local authority officers and other stakeholders. The proposals have been the subject of extensive pre-application stakeholder engagement, culminating in the submitted scheme.
- 5.5.2 Further details of the public and stakeholder engagement are undertaken are included within the submitted Statement of Community Engagement. Where relevant, details of assessment specific discussions are included within the various surveys, assessments and reports submission in support of this planning application.

## 6 Planning Policy Context

### 6.1 Introduction

- 6.1.1 This section outlines the principal planning policies that pertain to the proposed scheme. It is important to note that the thematic survey reports and assessments submitted in support of this application contain further additional information and further details of other relevant policies (e.g. ecology).
- 6.1.2 In England, there is a hierarchical structure of policy covering national and local planning. At a national level, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's planning policies and how these are expected to be applied. At a local level, development plans set out planning policy for the area.
- 6.1.3 Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 6.1.4 Therefore, the starting point from a planning perspective in the determination of this planning application is the development plan. The development plan in respect of the application site comprises the Blyth Valley Borough Local Development Framework Core Strategy Development Plan Document (July 2007), the Blyth Valley Borough Local Development Framework Development Control Policies Development Plan Document (September 2007) and the Blyth Valley District Local Plan (May 1999).
- 6.1.5 The NPPF advises at paragraph 213 that, in respect of development plans adopted prior to publication of the NPPF, local planning authorities should afford due weight to relevant policies according to their degree of consistency with the NPPF; the closer the policies in the Plan to the policies in the NPPF, the greater the weight that may be given.
- 6.1.6 In accordance with paragraph 48 of the NPPF, weight may also be given to the policies in emerging plans, depending on the stage of preparation of the plan, the extent to which emerging policy aligns with the NPPF and the extent of unresolved objections to the emerging plan. The Phase 2 hearings on the Emerging Northumberland Local Plan were completed in November 2020 and the Inspector indicated that she did not envisage the need to hold additional hearings. As such, it is anticipated that the local plan will be adopted in Spring 2021. It is therefore considered that relevant policies can be given some weight presently and can be given increasing weight as the Plan moves towards adoption. As such, this Planning Statement considers both the extant and emerging local planning policies that are of relevance to the determination of this application for planning permission.
- 6.1.7 Paragraph 11 of the NPPF provides definitive guidance on how applications should be determined by stating:

*“Plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development. For decision-taking this means:*

*Approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:*

- i. The application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or*
- ii. Any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework as a whole.”*

## **6.2 Northumberland Development Plan**

- 6.2.1 Northumberland County Council was established as a unitary authority on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2009 following Local Government Reorganisation. It replaced the former County Council and six District/ Borough Councils of Alnwick, Berwick, Blyth Valley, Castle Morpeth, Tynedale and Wansbeck.
- 6.2.2 The former Northumberland local planning authorities had produced their own Development Plans to guide development within their administrative boundaries, which include:
- The Core Strategies of the former Local Authorities of Blyth Valley (2007) and the Blyth Valley Development Control Policies DPD (2007); and
  - The saved Local Plan policies (under the Secretary of State’s Direction) of the Blyth Valley District Local Plan (1999)
- 6.2.3 Policies contained within those documents that have been ‘saved’ under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 will remain in force and will continue to provide the basis for planning decisions until replaced by subsequent Development Plan Documents.
- 6.2.4 These documents, together with any made Neighbourhood Plans, have been brought together to form the ‘Northumberland Consolidated Planning Policy Framework’.
- 6.2.5 Planning law states that planning applications should be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The NPPF is a material planning consideration in the determination of planning applications. The closer the policies in the Development Plan to the policies in the NPPF, the greater the weight that can be given to the development plan policies.
- 6.2.6 Northumberland County Council is focusing on the preparation of a Local Plan for Northumberland. The Northumberland Local Plan will:

- *set the strategic planning policies of the Council;*
- *provide the planning principles, including detailed development management policies to guide future development and planning decisions in Northumberland to 2036;*
- *set the general scale and distribution of new development which is required to meet Northumberland's needs to 2036;*
- *include strategic allocations as well as detailed land allocations and designations; and*
- *include site specific proposals for the development, protection and conservation of land.*

6.2.7 Once adopted, the Northumberland Local Plan will supersede those existing development plan documents which collectively comprise the 'Northumberland Consolidated Planning Policy Framework'.

6.2.8 The Phase 2 hearings on the Emerging Northumberland Local Plan were completed in November 2020 and the Inspector indicated that she did not envisage the need to hold additional hearings. As such, it is anticipated that the local plan will be adopted in Spring 2021. It is therefore considered that relevant policies can be given some weight presently and can be given increasing weight as the Plan moves towards adoption. As such, this Planning Statement considers both the extant and emerging local planning policies that are of relevance to the determination of this application for planning permission.

6.2.9 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states that:

*"If regard is to be had to the development plan for the purpose of any determination to be made under the planning Acts the determination must be made in accordance with plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise."*

6.2.10 Therefore, the starting point from a planning perspective in considering the acceptability or otherwise of the proposals is the development plan. The development plan in respect of the application site comprises the Blyth Valley Borough Local Development Framework Core Strategy Development Plan Document (July 2007), the Blyth Valley Borough Local Development Framework Development Control Policies Development Plan Document (September 2007) and the Blyth Valley District Local Plan (May 1999).

6.2.11 The NPPF advises at paragraph 213 that, in respect of Development Plans adopted prior to publication of the NPPF, local planning authorities should afford due weight according to their degree of consistency with the NPPF (the closer the policies in the Plan to the policies in the NPPF, the greater the weight that may be given).

6.2.12 In accordance with paragraph 48 of the NPPF, weight may also be given to the policies in emerging plans depending on the stage of preparation of the plan, the extent to which

emerging policy aligns with the NPPF and the extent of unresolved objections to the emerging plan. The Phase 2 hearings on the Emerging Northumberland Local Plan were completed in November 2020 and the Inspector indicated that she did not envisage the need to hold additional hearings. As such, it is anticipated that the local plan will be adopted in Spring 2021. It is therefore considered that relevant policies can be given some weight presently and can be given increasing weight as the Plan moves towards adoption.

## **6.3 Blyth Valley Borough Local Development Framework Core Strategy (July 2007)**

6.3.1 The relevant policies of the extant Core Strategy that pertain to the scheme which is the subject of this planning application are identified as follows:

### **Policy SS1: Regeneration and Renaissance of Blyth Valley 2021**

6.3.2 Policy SS1 outlines an integrated regeneration and spatial strategy to support an economic and social renaissance of Blyth Valley. This includes improving accessibility for new developments. The policy specifically supports the reintroduction of passenger services on the Ashington, Blyth and Tyne Railway Line. The policy defines the Ashington, Blyth and Tyne Line proposals as 'essential infrastructure'.

### **Policy SS3: Sustainability Criteria**

6.3.3 Policy SS3 identifies the criteria against which the sustainability credentials of new development will be assessed:

- *The development must be accessible to homes, jobs, shops, services, the transport network and modes of transport other than the private car; and*
- *There would be no physical and environmental constraints on the development of the land as a result of contamination, flood risk, and/or land stability which could not be resolved without a detrimental impact on the environment; and*
- *That there would be no unacceptable adverse impact on the natural environment, resources, biodiversity and geological conservation interests, landscape character, historic and cultural heritage and community assets of the borough and the maintenance, restoration and enhancement of these interests will be secured in new developments; and*
- *That new development would help to build communities by sustaining community services and facilities, or through the provision of affordable housing to meet identified local need; and*
- *That new development will reflect the principles of energy efficiency, water efficiency and conservation, sustainable design and construction, sustainable urban*

*drainage schemes (SUDS), the hierarchy of waste management [waste minimisation, reuse of waste and recovery, which includes recycling] and secure by design.*

**Policy A2: Pedestrian/ Cycle Routes**

- 6.3.4 Policy A2 supports development that is well connected to existing areas and infrastructure, including pedestrian and cycle routes.

**Policy A3: Ashington, Blyth and Tyne Line**

- 6.3.5 Policy A3 supports the re-introduction of passenger services on the Ashington, Blyth and Tyne railway line by safeguarding the route and land for future stations. The council supports in principle alternative approaches to improving connectivity along the strategic transport corridor.

**6.4 Blyth Valley Borough Local Development Framework Development Control Policies Development Plan Document (September 2007)**

- 6.4.1 The relevant policies of the extant Development Control Policies Development Plan Document that pertain to the scheme which is the subject of this planning application are identified as follows:

**Policy DC1: General Development**

- 6.4.2 Policy DC1 sets out the general principles that will be used to consider the appropriateness of development proposals. Development proposals will be expected to, amongst other things, be:

- *of a high standard of design and landscaping which takes account of existing natural and built features, the surrounding area and adjacent land uses; and*
- *be in locations which are, or can be through the provision of appropriate measures, accessible on foot, by cycle and by public and private transport and where satisfactory access can be achieved.*

**Policy DC3: Development in the Green Belt and in the Countryside**

- 6.4.3 Policy DC3 outlines the presumption against inappropriate development in the Green Belt. The policy considers that new development in the countryside will not be permitted unless it is for:

- a. *Agriculture or forestry*
- b. *Countryside based enterprises and activities which contribute to the rural economy and/or promote recreation in and the sustainable management of the countryside.*

- c. *The improvement of public access and facilitating the provision of appropriate sport and recreation facilities.*
- d. *The re-use of existing buildings*

6.4.4 Where new developments are to be permitted, they will be expected to demonstrate a sequential search has been undertaken and that there are no more suitable sites available.

#### **Policy DC11: Planning for Sustainable Travel**

6.4.5 Policy DC11 sets out a number of criteria for new developments to satisfy. This includes encouraging the use of public transport, improving the integration of different modes of travel and providing an appropriate level of car and cycling provision.

#### **Policy DC16: Biodiversity**

6.4.6 Policy DC16 considers development proposals should seek to contribute to the delivery of the objectives and targets set by the Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP). The policy states that all development should aim to maintain and enhance habitat networks by avoiding or repairing the fragmentation and isolation of natural habitats.

#### **Policy DC17: Landscape: General Protection and Restoration**

6.4.7 Policy DC17 states that development should contribute to restoration, enhancement, repair and maintenance of the landscape in and around which it is sited. Development with landscape and visual impacts will be assessed against the extent to which it will:

- a) *Cause unacceptable visual harm; and*
- b) *Introduce or remove incongruous landscape elements; and*
- c) *Enhance, maintain or degrade:*
  - *Landscape features that contribute to local distinctiveness;*
  - Historic elements that contribute to landscape character and quality; and
  - Semi-natural vegetation that is characteristic of the landscape type; and
  - The visual condition of landscape elements that combine to create the distinctive character; and
  - The tranquillity of the area

#### **Policy DC19: Drainage and Flood Risk**

6.4.8 Policy DC19 states that development proposals should make the most efficient use of water and enhance the sustainable use of the water environment. Development that incorporates sustainable drainage systems will be encouraged.



#### **Policy DC21: Pollution Control**

- 6.4.9 Policy DC21 states that the local planning authority will seek to minimise the impact of pollution on the environment, including existing land uses, and on proposed development and will support and encourage measures to reduce existing pollution to the lowest practicable levels and where possible, improve air, soil and water quality.

#### **Policy DC22: Noise Pollution**

- 6.4.10 Policy DC22 states that the local planning authority will seek to ensure that, wherever practicable, noise sensitive development and noisy or potentially noisy developments are located away from one another and will impose relevant conditions or seek appropriate planning obligations in relation to new development where separation is not practicable.

#### **Policy DC27: Design of New Developments**

- 6.4.11 Policy DC27 states that new development will be expected to achieve a high standard of design, incorporate sustainable construction measures and reflect local distinctiveness through the incorporation of local building traditions and materials. Proposals should take full account of the need for or opportunities to enhance the local environment. High quality contemporary design solutions will be considered where they can be accommodated without detriment to the surrounding environment.

### **6.5 Blyth Valley District Local Plan (May 1999)**

- 6.5.1 The relevant policies of the extant District Local Plan that pertain to the scheme which is the subject of this planning application are identified as follows:

#### **Policy E3: Landscape: General Approach**

- 6.5.2 Policy E3 states that the quality of the landscape will be taken into account in planning decisions by assessing proposals according to their effects on the intrinsic qualities of the landscape type or types which they affect. Account will also be taken of any positive landscape related measures proposed as part of any development.

#### **Policy E5: The Protection of the Tree and Shrub Cover**

- 6.5.3 Policy E5 states that significant trees and areas of trees and shrubs will be protected by not normally granting planning permission for any development which would displace trees from areas of mature trees, retaining areas of plantation woodland and where Tree Preservation Orders apply, only approving tree work in very exceptional circumstances, where it will assist the achievement of other policies or proposals in the Plan.

#### **Policy G8: Development within the Green Belt**

- 6.5.4 Policy G8 states that within the Green Belt, the construction of new buildings or structures will only be permitted for a limited number of reasons, including:

- 6.5.5 Where a structure is related to essential infrastructure services but does not reduce the openness of the Green Belt nor diminish its ability to justify the purposes for which it has been designated and no alternative is available, in which case the proposal would also be assessed against other environmental policies in this Plan.

**Policy G10: Development Criteria in the Countryside**

- 6.5.6 Policy G10 outlines the criteria for which all development outside of the development settlement limits must comply. New development must have regard to the existing settlement pattern. This includes consideration of neighbouring uses, the environment and any future needs that the development may necessitate. A new building will not be permitted if it is isolated from existing buildings, unless it is necessary in terms of the uses proposed.

**Policy M8: Car Parking**

- 6.5.7 Policy M8 states that new development should seek to minimise the area devoted to car parking, whilst complying with parking standards and safeguarding existing provision. The policy states that the possibility of providing park and ride facilities should be explored. Where possible, measures should be taken to ensure that car park areas are well landscaped and safe for pedestrians.

## **6.6 Northumberland Local Plan Regulation 19 Publication Draft (May 2019)**

- 6.6.1 The NPPF advises at paragraph 48 that weight may also be given to the policies in emerging plans depending on the stage of preparation of the plan, the extent to which emerging policy aligns with the NPPF and the extent of unresolved objections to the emerging plan. The Phase 2 hearings on the Emerging Northumberland Local Plan were completed in November 2020 and the Inspector indicated that she did not envisage the need to hold additional hearings. A public consultation was undertaken on the proposed main modifications to the Local Plan from Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> June to 4<sup>th</sup> August 2021. As such, it is anticipated that the local plan will be adopted in late 2021. It is therefore considered that relevant policies can be given some weight presently and can be given increasing weight as the Plan moves towards adoption.
- 6.6.2 The relevant policies of the emerging Northumberland Local Plan that pertain to the scheme which is the subject of this planning application are identified as follows:

**Policy STP1: Spatial Strategy**

- 6.6.3 Policy STP1 states that sustainable development will be supported within the constraints of the Green Belt and settlement boundaries defined on the Local Plan policies map. Sustainable development within, or immediately adjacent to, the built-up form of Main Towns, Service Centres and Service Villages without defined settlement boundaries, will be

supported, if it is commensurate with size of the settlement, and it can be demonstrated that it does not adversely impact upon the character of the settlement.

6.6.4 Development in the open countryside will only be supported if it can be demonstrated that it:

- Provides for essential transport, utilities and energy infrastructure in accordance with other policies in the Local Plan.

6.6.5 The policy goes on to state that development in the open countryside should be sensitive to its surroundings, not have an unacceptable impact upon the local road network and use previously developed land where opportunities exist.

### **Policy STP2: Presumption in favour of Sustainable Development**

6.6.6 Policy STP2 states that when considering development proposals, the Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). It will always work pro-actively with applicants to seek to find solutions that mean proposals that improve the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area can be approved wherever possible.

### **Policy STP3: Principles of Sustainable Development**

6.6.7 Policy STP3 states that In applying the presumption in favour of sustainable development in Northumberland and to deliver against economic, social and environmental objectives, development proposals will be expected to deliver across the range of the economic, social and environmental factors, and adhere to the following principles where appropriate:

- *Contribute to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy across Northumberland, support more and better jobs, protect and enhance the vitality and viability of Northumberland's town centres and other important economic sectors;*
- *Minimise their impact upon local amenity for new or existing residents and businesses, adjoining premises and land uses;*
- *Support and provide opportunities to improve health, social and cultural wellbeing for all, and provide the infrastructure which is required to enhance the quality of life of individuals and communities;*
- *Demonstrate high quality sustainable design which is accessible to all, and which respects and enhances the local distinctiveness of the natural, historic and built environment, helps promote a sense of place, reduces the need for energy, and facilitates flexible and adaptable buildings and environments;*
- *Be accessible by, or be able to be made accessible by public transport, walking or cycling where feasible, thereby reducing the need to travel for both people and goods, and the dependence on travel by private car;*

- *Make best use of existing facilities and infrastructure, whilst making appropriate provision for new or additional infrastructure as required;*

#### **Policy STP4: Climate change mitigation and adaptation**

6.6.8 Policy STP4 states that Development proposals should mitigate climate change and contribute to meeting nationally binding targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. When determining planning applications, support will be given to how development proposals that help mitigate climate change and consideration will be given to how proposals:

- Through their location, layout and pattern of development, reduce the need to travel for both people and goods, and encourage sustainable modes of transport, including walking, cycling and the use of public transport;

#### **Policy STP5: Health and wellbeing**

6.6.9 Policy STP5 states that development which promotes, supports and enhances the health and wellbeing of communities, residents, workers and visitors will be supported. Development proposals will be required to demonstrate that they:

- are safe, comfortable, inclusive and attractive and prioritise pedestrian and cycle movement;
- provide access to a range of facilities including public transport, health, education, social care, green spaces, sport, play and leisure facilities

6.6.10 The policy requires that a Health Impact Assessment Screening be submitted for all major development proposals to determine whether the potential impact on health resulting from the development warrants any further assessment. Where further assessment is warranted, a proportionate Health Impact Assessment will also be required to be submitted as part of the application. A Health Impact Assessment will be required to include proposals to mitigate any adverse health impacts, maximise potential positive impacts, and help reduce health inequalities.

#### **Policy STP8: Development in the Green Belt**

6.6.11 Policy STP8 states that in assessing development proposals within the Green Belt:

- Development that is inappropriate in the Green Belt, in accordance with national planning policy, will not be supported unless very special circumstances clearly outweigh the potential harm to the Green Belt, and any other harm resulting from the proposal;

- Development which is appropriate in the Green Belt, as defined in national planning policy, will be supported.

6.6.12 Policy INF5: Open space and facilities for sport and recreation

6.6.13 Policy INF5 states that development proposals that would result in the loss of land or buildings used for recreational use or the loss of Protected Open Space will not be supported unless:

- They would be replaced by an area of equivalent or better quantity and quality, in a suitable location; or
- An excess of provision in quantitative and quantitative terms is clearly demonstrated; or
- The development proposed is for alternative sports and recreation provision, the need for which clearly outweighs the loss of the existing open space.

6.6.14 Development which would result in the loss of open space not shown on the Policies Map that contributes to the character and visual amenity of an area will not be supported unless it can be demonstrated that the benefits of development clearly outweigh the loss.

#### **Policy QOP1: Design Principles**

6.6.15 Policy QOP1 states that in determining planning applications, design will be assessed against the following design principles, in accordance with the Northumberland Design Guide.

#### **Policy QOP2: Good Design and Amenity**

6.6.16 Policy QOP2 states that development will be required to provide a high standard of amenity for existing and future users of the development itself and preserve the amenity of those living in, working in or visiting the local area.

6.6.17 Development which would result in unacceptable adverse impacts on the amenity of neighbouring uses, in terms of both individual and cumulative impacts, will not be supported

#### **Policy QOP4: Landscaping and Trees**

6.6.18 Policy QOP4 states that where relevant, new development will be expected to incorporate well-designed landscaping and respond appropriately to any existing landscape features. Development proposals should ensure that:

- *Landscaping design is of a high quality, in accordance with the principles set out in Policy QOP 1;*
- *Existing features which contribute towards the character of the area, or amenity, are retained wherever possible and sympathetically incorporated into the overall design of the scheme;*

- *Any hard or soft landscaping is appropriate, functional and well-integrated into the design of the development;*
- *Trees, and other spaces and features that provide green and blue infrastructure, are preserved, enhanced and introduced into the landscaping scheme wherever possible;*

#### **Policy QOP6: Delivering well-designed places**

6.6.19 Policy QOP6 states that proposals are expected to meet the local design expectations set out in design policies within the Plan, the Northumberland Design Guide, and any other design guidance. Proposals are expected to respond to any character assessments that form part of or support the Plan. Where a Design and Access Statement is required as part of a planning application, there must be a clear and proportionate demonstration of:

- *How relevant design policies, the Northumberland Design Guide, character assessments and any other design guidance supporting the Plan, have been integral to the design development process;*
- *A robust analysis of the context and character of the site and the local area, in addition to the functional requirements of the intended use;*
- *The design concept and the evolution of the design development through drawings or models, including explanatory text as appropriate; and*
- *Where relevant, how consultation with communities and other relevant stakeholders has informed the design.*

#### **Policy TRA1: Promoting sustainable connections**

6.6.20 Policy TRA1 states that the council will support development that:

- *Promotes a spatial distribution which creates accessible development, reduces the need to travel by car, and maximises the use of sustainable modes of transport;*
- *Promotes good design principles in respect of the permeability, connectivity and legibility of buildings and public spaces; and inclusive access;*
- *Promotes sustainable transport choices, including supporting, providing and connecting to networks for walking, cycling and public transport; and infrastructure that supports the use of low and ultra low emission vehicles;*
  - a. *Ensures delivery of cycle parking and supporting infrastructure;*
  - b. *Protects, enhances and supports public rights of way;*

- c. *Supports the delivery of reliable, safe and efficient transport networks, in partnership with other organisations, service providers and developers;*
- d. *Requires development to be designed to enable charging of plug-in and other ultra low emission vehicles in safe, accessible, convenient locations; and*
- e. *Requires development proposals which generate significant amounts of movements to be supported by a Transport Assessment/ Transport Statement, and Travel Plans, and where appropriate, delivery/servicing plans.*

#### **Policy TRA2: The effects of development on the transport network**

6.6.21 Policy TRA2 states that all developments affecting the transport network will be required to:

- a. *Provide effective and safe access and egress to the existing transport network;*
- b. *Include appropriate measures to mitigate and manage any adverse impacts on the transport network including any contribution to cumulative impacts;*
- c. *Minimise conflict between different modes of transport, including measures for network, traffic and parking management;*
- d. *Facilitate the safe use of the network, including suitable crossing points, footways and dedicated provision for cyclists where necessary;*
- e. *Suitably accommodate the delivery of goods and supplies, access for maintenance and refuse collection; and*
- f. *Minimise any adverse impact on communities and the environment, including noise and air quality*

#### **Policy TRA4: Parking provision in new development**

6.6.22 Policy TRA4 states that an appropriate amount of off-street vehicle parking sufficient to serve new development shall be made available in safe, accessible and convenient locations prior to the development, as a whole or in part, being brought into use. Vehicle parking shall be provided in accordance with the parking standards set out in Appendix D of the Local Plan, or other such local standards set out in made neighbourhood plans which will be given priority in determining the appropriate amount of parking required.

#### **Policy TRA5: Rail transport and safeguarding facilities**

6.6.23 Policy TRA5 states that development which would prevent the reintroduction of passenger rail services on the Northumberland Line along with associated stations, facilities and access to them from adjacent highways, and continued rail freight use of the Northumberland Line, its associated branch lines (including the branch line from Bedlington to Morpeth via

Choppington, the Butterwell line north of Ashington and the line from Woodhorn to Newbiggin-by-the-Sea) and supporting infrastructure will not be supported.

6.6.24 Sites for stations have been identified and land will be safeguarded at the following locations:

- Woodhorn
- Ashington
- Bedlington Station
- Blyth Bebside
- South Newsham
- Seaton Delaval
- Seghill

6.6.25 The policy goes on to state that measures to improve public safety at level crossings will be supported. Improvement, alteration or closure of level crossings, or appropriate contributions towards the implementation of such works, may be secured through the grant of planning permission for development where it can be demonstrated, to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority, that those works are directly related to the impact that development may have on the level crossing and they are necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms.

**Policy ENV1: Approaches to assessing the impact of development on the natural, historic and built environment**

6.6.26 Policy ENV1 states that the character and significance of Northumberland's distinctive and valued natural, historic and built environments, will be conserved, protected and enhanced by:

- *Giving appropriate weight to the statutory purposes and special qualities of the hierarchy of international, national and local designated and non-designated nature and historic conservation assets or sites and their settings;*
- *Protecting Northumberland's most important landscapes and applying a character-based approach to, as appropriate, manage, protect or plan landscape across the whole County.*

**Policy ENV2: Biodiversity and geodiversity**

6.6.27 Policy ENV2 states that development proposals affecting biodiversity and geodiversity will minimise their impact and net gains for biodiversity will be secured by:



- *Avoiding significant harm through location and/ or design. Where significant harm cannot be avoided, applicants will be required to demonstrate that adverse impacts will be adequately mitigated or, as a last resort compensated for;*
- *Securing net biodiversity gains and/or wider ecological enhancements through new development*

#### **Policy ENV7: Historic environment and heritage assets**

- 6.6.28 Policy ENV7 supports the NPPF position on historic assets in that decisions affecting a heritage asset will be based on a sound understanding of the significance of that asset and any impact of any proposal upon that significance.

#### **Policy WAT3: Flooding**

- 6.6.29 Policy WAT3 states that development proposals will be required to demonstrate how they will minimise flood risk to people, property and infrastructure from all potential sources by:
- *Avoiding inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding and directing the development away from areas at highest risk, applying the Sequential Test and if necessary the Exceptions Test, in accordance with national policy and the Northumberland Strategic Flood Risk Assessment. Site Specific Flood Risk Assessments will be required in accordance with national policy and guidance;*
  - *Ensuring that the development will be safe over its lifetime, taking account of climate change, will not increase flood risk elsewhere and where possible, reduce flood risk overall;*
  - *Ensuring that development proposals in areas at risk from flooding are made resistant and resilient, in terms of their layout, mix and/or building design, in accordance with national policy and the findings and recommendations of the Northumberland Strategic Flood Risk Assessment;*

#### **Policy WAT4: Sustainable Drainage Systems**

- 6.6.30 Policy WAT4 states that SuDS will be a requirement for any development where it is necessary to manage surface water drainage unless it can be clearly demonstrated:
- *That SuDS are not technically, operationally or financially deliverable or viable and that any surface water drainage issues resulting from the development can be alternatively mitigated; or*
  - *That the SuDS scheme will itself adversely affect the environment or safety, including where ponds could increase the risk of bird strike close to the airport or where existing minewater problems could be exacerbated.*

#### **Policy POL1: Unstable and contaminated land**

- 6.6.31 Policy POL1 states that development proposals will be supported where it can be demonstrated that unacceptable risks from land instability and contamination will be prevented and that measures can be taken to effectively mitigate the impacts.

**Policy POL2: Pollution and air, soil and water quality**

- 6.6.32 Policy POL2 states that development proposals that may cause pollution of water, air or soil, either individually or cumulatively, are required to incorporate measures to prevent or reduce their pollution so as not to cause nuisance or unacceptable impacts on the environment, people or biodiversity. Development proposed where pollution levels are unacceptable, and unable to be mitigated to acceptable levels, will not be supported.

## **6.7 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)**

- 6.7.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied. It provides a framework within which locally-prepared plans for housing and other development can be produced.
- 6.7.2 Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The National Planning Policy Framework must be taken into account in preparing the development plan and is a material consideration in planning decisions. Planning policies and decisions must also reflect relevant international obligations and statutory requirements.
- 6.7.3 The NPPF states at paragraph 7 that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. At a very high level, the objective of sustainable development can be summarised as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.
- 6.7.4 Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways (so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across each of the different objectives):
- an economic objective – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;
  - a social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering well-designed, beautiful and safe places, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being; and

- an environmental objective – to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.
- 6.7.5 At the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, so that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way.
- 6.7.6 With reference to paragraph 11 of the NPPF, it is important to note that for decision-taking this means;
- approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or
  - where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important are out-of-date, granting permission unless:
    - i) the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or
    - ii) any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.
- 6.7.7 Further advice on decision-taking which is of relevance to the current scheme is provided at paragraph 38 of the Framework;
- 6.7.8 Local planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way. They should use the full range of planning tools available, including brownfield registers and permission in principle, and work proactively with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. Decision-makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible.
- 6.7.9 The early engagement evoked by the NPPF has been undertaken in a bid to assist in the efficiency and effectiveness of the determination of this planning application; paragraphs 39 to 46 of the NPPF highlight the importance of pre-application engagement.

#### **Promoting Sustainable Transport**

- 6.7.10 An integral component in delivering sustainable development and achieving wider sustainability and health objectives is the promotion of sustainable transport, as set out in Section 9 of the Framework. This includes identifying and pursuing opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport use.

- 6.7.11 This section states that the planning system should actively manage patterns of growth in support of these objectives. Significant development should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes. This can help to reduce congestion and emissions and improve air quality and public health.
- 6.7.12 Paragraph 109 states that development should only be prevented or refused on highway grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.
- 6.7.13 This connotes that a refusal of planning permission on transport grounds will only be justifiable if there are severe impacts arising from the development which cannot be mitigated.

#### **Building a strong, competitive economy**

- 6.7.14 The NPPF places great importance on ensuring the planning system does everything it can to help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development.

#### **Achieving well-designed places**

- 6.7.15 The creation of high quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities.
- 6.7.16 Paragraph 128 states that design quality should be considered throughout the evolution and assessment of individual proposals. Early discussion between applicants, the local planning authority and local community about the design and style of emerging schemes is important for clarifying expectations and reconciling local and commercial interests. Applicants should work closely with those affected by proposals to evolve designs that take account of the views of the community. Applications that can demonstrate early, proactive and effective engagement with the community should be looked on more favourably than those that cannot.

#### **Protecting Green Belt land**

- 6.7.17 The Government attaches great importance to Green Belts. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence.
- 6.7.18 Paragraph 147 states that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances.

- 6.7.19 The NPPF goes on to state that when considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt. 'Very special circumstances' will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.
- 6.7.20 Paragraph 149 advises that a local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt. Exceptions to this are:
- a. buildings for agriculture and forestry;
  - b. the provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of land or a change of use) for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation, cemeteries and burial grounds and allotments; as long as the facilities preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it;
  - c. the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building;
  - d. the replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces;
  - e. limited infilling in villages;
  - f. limited affordable housing for local community needs under policies set out in the development plan (including policies for rural exception sites); and
  - g. limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land, whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would:
    - not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development; or
    - not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt, where the development would re-use previously developed land and contribute to meeting an identified affordable housing need within the area of the local planning authority
- 6.7.21 Paragraph 150 notes that certain other forms of development are also not inappropriate in the Green Belt provided they preserve its openness and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it. These are:
- mineral extraction;
  - engineering operations;
  - local transport infrastructure which can demonstrate a requirement for a Green Belt location;

- the re-use of buildings provided that the buildings are of permanent and substantial construction;
- material changes in the use of land (such as changes of use for outdoor sport or recreation, or for cemeteries and burial grounds); and
- development, including buildings, brought forward under a Community Right to Build Order or Neighbourhood Development Order.

## 7 Planning Assessment

### 7.1 Introduction

- 7.1.1 The application for planning permission is accompanied by the supporting information identified as required by the local planning authority in discussions prior to submission. The scope, extent and nature of the supporting information is in accordance with the advice and recommendations given by officers of the local planning authority.
- 7.1.2 The design of the scheme and scope of the submitted proposals has been conceived with the ambition of satisfying all of the relevant local and national planning, transport and environmental policies.
- 7.1.3 Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the statutory development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 7.1.4 This section:
- summarises the evidence that demonstrates how the development proposals accord with national planning policies
  - summarises the evidence that demonstrates how the development proposals accord with the Local Plan.
  - confirms that there are no material considerations in the determination of the planning application that should lead to the application being refused
  - confirms that the implementation of the scheme would deliver significant public benefits

### 7.2 Accordance with Northumberland Development Plan

- 7.2.1 The development plan in respect of the application site comprises the Blyth Valley Borough Local Development Framework Core Strategy Development Plan Document (July 2007), the Blyth Valley Borough Local Development Framework Development Control Policies Development Plan Document (September 2007) and the Blyth Valley District Local Plan (May 1999).
- 7.2.2 The NPPF advises at paragraph 213 that, in respect of Development Plans adopted prior to publication of the NPPF, local planning authorities should afford due weight according to their degree of consistency with the NPPF (the closer the policies in the Plan to the policies in the NPPF, the greater the weight that may be given).

- 7.2.3 In accordance with paragraph 48 of the NPPF, weight may also be given to the policies in emerging plans depending on the stage of preparation of the plan, the extent to which emerging policy aligns with the NPPF and the extent of unresolved objections to the emerging plan. The Phase 2 hearings on the Emerging Northumberland Local Plan were completed in November 2020 and the Inspector indicated that she did not envisage the need to hold additional hearings. As such, it is anticipated that the local plan will be adopted in Spring 2021. It is therefore considered that relevant policies can be given some weight presently and can be given increasing weight as the Plan moves towards adoption

### **7.3 Blyth Valley Borough Local Development Framework Core Strategy (July 2007)**

- 7.3.1 The Blyth Valley Borough LDF Core Strategy sets out the overall vision and spatial strategy for the borough until 2021. It currently forms the basis of Northumberland's Local Development Framework and is used to guide planning decisions throughout the Blyth Valley.
- 7.3.2 The Core Strategy was adopted on 5th July 2007 following an examination in February 2007. It now forms part of the statutory development plan for Northumberland. As well as providing the basis for decisions on planning applications, the Core Strategy is used to help shape regeneration, investment and growth within the borough.
- 7.3.3 It is anticipated the Core Strategy will be superseded by the emerging Northumberland Local Plan. Notwithstanding this, the extant Core Strategy currently forms part of the adopted development plan. Those policies of the existing, adopted Core Strategy that are material to the determination of this planning application are set out below.

#### **Policy SS1: Regeneration and Renaissance of Blyth Valley 2021**

- 7.3.4 Policy SS1 sets out an integrated regeneration strategy to guide new development to ensure that it can support the regeneration and economic and social renaissance of Blyth Valley. The policy states that it will support:

“the implementation of essential infrastructure proposals in order to support and facilitate economic regeneration proposals, particularly:

- Ashington, Blyth and Tyne Line (ATB) or alternative public transport corridor.”

- 7.3.5 The proposed railway station at Newsham is an integral component, and proposed to be delivered as part of, the Northumberland Line scheme. The scheme is therefore specifically supported by Policy SS1. The delivery of the new station will support and facilitate the council's ambitions for an economic and social renaissance in the Blyth Valley.
- 7.3.6 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy SS1 of the Blyth Valley Borough Core Strategy.

#### **Policy SS3: Sustainability Criteria**



- 7.3.7 Policy SS3 identifies the criteria against which the sustainability credentials of new development will be tested.
- 7.3.8 The proposed railway station at Newsham, given its nature, represents a sustainable development. The scheme will encourage a modal shift toward more sustainable travel, reducing reliance on the private car. The location of the proposed station is adjacent existing housing and other amenities and can therefore be considered to be readily accessible by pedestrians, cyclists and motorists. Pedestrian crossing improvements are proposed to be delivered as part of the scheme, to encourage passengers to walk or cycle to and from the railway station. To this end, appropriate cycle parking facilities are to be provided at the site.
- 7.3.9 The many and various surveys, assessments and reports submitted in support of this planning application demonstrate that the proposed development has been designed based on a sound understanding of the physical and environmental constraints of the site. The scheme incorporates appropriate mitigation to avoid significant adverse or unacceptable environmental impacts.
- 7.3.10 The proposed development of a new railway station at Newsham would assist in sustaining communities and facilities through improving access for residents and visitors, including staff and customers of local businesses.
- 7.3.11 The proposed new railway station will encourage the conservation of existing resources, encouraging a shift from the private car to more sustainable modes. It is anticipated that such a modal shift would have a positive effect on local air quality, reducing congestion of the local highway network and encouraging cycling and walking to improve the health and wellbeing of local people.
- 7.3.12 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy SS3 of the Blyth Valley Borough Core Strategy.

**Policy A2: Pedestrian/ Cycle Routes**

- 7.3.13 Policy A2 supports development that is well connected to existing areas and infrastructure, including pedestrian and cycle routes.
- 7.3.14 The proposed railway station at Newsham is located adjacent to existing housing and other amenities. The proposed station has been designed to utilise existing infrastructure, including pedestrian and cycle routes and will deliver improvements to encourage pedestrian and cyclist access.
- 7.3.15 The existing Public Right of Ways (300/162) on the eastern flank and (300/031) on the western flank are proposed to be locally diverted to provide access to the PROW network adjacent to the site.
- 7.3.16 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy A2 of the Blyth Valley Borough Core Strategy.

### **Policy A3: Ashington, Blyth and Tyne Line**

- 7.3.17 Policy A3 supports the re-introduction of passenger services on the Ashington, Blyth and Tyne railway line by safeguarding the route and land for future stations. The policy states that the council supports in principle alternative approaches to improving connectivity along the strategic transport corridor.
- 7.3.18 The proposed railway station at Newsham is an integral component, and proposed to be delivered as part of, the Northumberland Line scheme. The scheme is therefore specifically supported by Policy A3. The delivery of the new station will support and facilitate the council's ambitions for the re-introduction of passenger services on the Ashington, Blyth and Tyne Line.
- 7.3.19 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy A3 of the Blyth Valley Borough Core Strategy.

## **7.4 Blyth Valley Borough Local Development Framework Development Control Policies Development Plan Document (September 2007)**

- 7.4.1 The Blyth Valley Borough LDF Development Control Policies Development Plan Document sets out a series of generic development control policies against which planning applications for new development in the Blyth Valley will be assessed. It currently forms part of Northumberland's Local Development Framework and is used to guide planning decisions throughout the Blyth Valley.
- 7.4.2 The Development Control Policies Development Plan Document was adopted in May 2007 following an examination in February 2007. It now forms part of the statutory development plan for Northumberland. As well as providing the basis for decisions on planning applications, the Core Strategy is used to help shape regeneration, investment and growth within the borough.
- 7.4.3 It is anticipated the Development Control Policies Development Plan Document will be superseded by the emerging Northumberland Local Plan. Notwithstanding this, the extant Development Control Policies Development Plan Document currently forms part of the adopted development plan. Those policies of the existing, adopted Development Control Policies Development Plan Document that are material to the determination of this planning application are set out below.

### **Policy DC1: General Development**

- 7.4.4 Policy DC1 sets out the general principles that will be used to consider the appropriateness of development proposals. The policy states that development proposals, amongst other things, will be expected to be:
- "of a high standard of design and landscaping which takes account of existing natural and built features, the surrounding area and adjacent land uses; and

- be in locations which are, or can be through the provision of appropriate measures, accessible on foot, by cycle and by public and private transport and where satisfactory access can be achieved.”

- 7.4.5 The proposed railway station at Newsham has been designed based on a detailed understanding of the existing and historic site conditions, an appraisal of those features of the local area that contribute to local character and distinctiveness, and through identifying the needs of all anticipated future users of the railway station and considering the advice of all stakeholders including Network Rail, the local planning authority, the local highway authority, residents, businesses and local politicians.
- 7.4.6 The submitted Design and Access Statement provides further details to demonstrate that the submitted scheme is based on a clear understanding of the character and local distinctiveness of the area and confirms that the proposed railway station would make a positive contribution to place-making and environmental improvement. The submitted landscaping proposals and visual impact assessment demonstrate that the scheme has been designed based on a sound understanding of the likely impacts on sensitive receptors and to ensure the visual impacts of the scheme do not have a significant adverse impact on the landscape.
- 7.4.7 The proposed railway station is located in an area which is accessible on foot, by cycle and by public and private transport and where satisfactory access can be achieved. The scheme includes measures to encourage walking and cycling to and from the railway station, though provision is made for vehicular access to ensure the station can be accessed by all users, including elderly and mobility impaired users that may be unable to walk to the station.
- 7.4.8 In summary, the proposed railway station demonstrates a bespoke approach to design. The proposed layout, scale, height and other design elements of the railway station are based on a detailed appraisal of the site, the existing railway and highway infrastructure and the proximity to adjacent land uses.
- 7.4.9 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy DC1 of the Development Control Policies Development Plan Document.

#### **Policy DC11: Planning for Sustainable Travel**

- 7.4.10 Policy DC11 sets out a number of criteria for new developments to satisfy. This includes encouraging the use of public transport, improving the integration of different modes of travel and providing an appropriate level of car and cycling provision.
- 7.4.11 The proposed railway station at Newsham is an integral part of the proposed re-introduction of passenger services on the Northumberland Line. Given its nature, a railway station, the proposed development will encourage the use of public transport. The scheme includes the provision of measures to encourage walking and cycling to and from the station. The

scheme also provides measures to facilitate vehicular access to the station for elderly and mobility impaired users, to ensure the station is accessible for all.

- 7.4.12 The proposed railway station would be available to serve both existing and new developments and would promote walking and cycling, through improvements to pedestrian crossing facilities and provision of cycle parking infrastructure at the site. Further, given the nature of the scheme, the proposed development would promote greater use of sustainable transport modes, encouraging rail travel for car users for either all or part of their journey to destinations including Northumberland, North Tyneside and Newcastle City Centre; helping to reduce the growth and reliance on car borne journeys.
- 7.4.13 The submitted Transport Assessment provides a detailed review of the predicted impacts of the proposed development on the local highway network, confirming that the proposed development would not result in a detrimental impact on the operation of the highway network and could alleviate pressure on the local highway network through encouraging an increased number of trips by rail.
- 7.4.14 In summary, the proposed railway station at Newsham is anticipated to encourage a modal shift toward more sustainable modes, benefiting both journey times for users of the road and rail network and providing environmental improvements to local air quality, and improved cycle and walking routes.
- 7.4.15 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy DC11 of the Development Control Policies Development Plan Document.

**Policy DC17: Landscape: General Protection and Restoration**

- 7.4.16 Policy DC17 states that development should contribute to restoration, enhancement, repair and maintenance of the landscape in and around which it is sited. Development with landscape and visual impacts will be assessed against the extent to which it will:

*“Cause unacceptable visual harm; and*

- Introduce or remove incongruous landscape elements; and*
- Enhance, maintain or degrade:*
- Landscape features that contribute to local distinctiveness;*
- Historic elements that contribute to landscape character and quality; and*
- Semi-natural vegetation that is characteristic of the landscape type; and*
- The visual condition of landscape elements that combine to create the distinctive character; and*
- The tranquillity of the area”*

- 7.4.17 The proposed railway station at Newsham has been designed based on a sound understanding of the physical constraints of the site, to ensure that it can be considered to appropriately sit within its landscape setting.
- 7.4.18 The proposed railway station at Newsham has been designed based on a detailed understanding and appraisal of those features of the local area that contribute to landscape character and distinctiveness, and through identifying and appraising the visual impact on different receptors from various viewpoints.
- 7.4.19 Notwithstanding that the proposed overbridge will affect the openness of the landscape, it is considered that the significant and demonstrable public benefits that will result from the proposed station are capable of outweighing the landscape harm resulting from the impact on openness. The railway station is an integral component of the plans to re-introduce passenger services on the Northumberland Line, and is considered by officers to constitute 'essential infrastructure'. The overbridge has been designed so as to have the least possible visual and landscape impact, whilst complying with the relevant industry and safety standards that govern the design of bridges. The submitted scheme includes significant soft landscaping, including of the embankment, to minimise the landscape and visual impacts of the proposed development. The submitted Landscape, Townscape and Visual Impact Assessment demonstrates that the proposed development would not result in an overly prominent or incongruous feature within the landscape, and in so doing confirms that the proposed development is policy congruent. The impact of the proposed development on the openness of the landscape is therefore not considered to be significant.
- 7.4.20 It is considered that the proposed station would not have an unacceptable impact on the local landscape.
- 7.4.21 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy DC17 of the Development Control Policies Development Plan Document.

**Policy DC19: Drainage and Flood Risk**

- 7.4.22 Policy DC19 states that development proposals should make the most efficient use of water and enhance the sustainable use of the water environment. Development that incorporates sustainable drainage systems will be encouraged.
- 7.4.23 The application site is identified as being located within Flood Zone 1 and is therefore at low risk of flooding. However, the Flood Risk Assessment submitted in support of this planning application has identified the site may be at risk of flooding due to two existing watercourses in close proximity to the site. As a result, hydraulic modelling work is being undertaken to understand the extent of mitigation which is likely to be required. The hydraulic modelling study will be submitted during the determination of this planning application.
- 7.4.24 The proposed railway station at Newsham has been designed based on a sound understanding of the flood risk pertaining to the site from all sources. The scheme includes

appropriate drainage to manage and mitigate the risk of flooding. The drainage proposals have been designed to ensure that flows are restricted to greenfield rates.

7.4.25 The submitted Flood Risk Assessment and Sustainable Drainage Assessment highlights the complexity between the interconnectivity of fluvial and surface water flood risk to and from the site. To ensure the Flood Risk Assessment can manage and mitigate the potential flood risks in accordance with the NPPF and accompanying Technical Guidance, further ongoing work is required. This includes:

- Linked fluvial and surface water hydraulic modelling; and
- detailed culvert survey at the rail embankment

7.4.26 Once the aforementioned modelling and survey works has been concluded, recommendations will be made including for mitigation measures to be implemented should a requirement for mitigation be identified, for the 1 in 100 year plus climate change event. It is anticipated that the details of any such mitigation will be agreed through the discharge of relevant conditions on a planning permission for the scheme.

7.4.27 Subject to the implementation of appropriate mitigation, the proposed development is considered to be in accordance with Policy DC19 of the Development Control Policies Development Plan Document.

#### **Policy DC21: Pollution Control**

7.4.28 Policy DC21 states that the local planning authority will seek to minimise the impact of pollution on the environment, including existing land uses, and on proposed development and will support and encourage measures to reduce existing pollution to the lowest practicable levels and where possible, improve air, soil and water quality.

7.4.29 The proposed railway station has been designed based on a good understanding of the physical and environmental constraints of the site, including pollution and land contamination. The submitted Contaminated Land Assessment demonstrates that the proposed development incorporates appropriate mitigation to safeguard the site and adjacent land from significant adverse contamination issues.

7.4.30 The submitted Air Quality Assessment demonstrates that the scheme, given its nature, will assist in reducing the reliance on the private car and as such will likely result in improvements to local air quality.

7.4.31 In summary, the proposed development is considered to appropriately consider pollution control issues and appropriate mitigation measures are to be incorporated to manage any pollution or contamination issues arising as a result of the scheme.

7.4.32 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy DC21 of the Development Control Policies Development Plan Document.

## **Policy DC22: Noise Pollution**

- 7.4.33 Policy DC22 states that the local planning authority will seek to ensure that, wherever practicable, noise sensitive development and noisy or potentially noisy developments are located away from one another and will impose relevant conditions or seek appropriate planning obligations in relation to new development where separation is not practicable.
- 7.4.34 The proposed development has been designed based on a sound understanding of the site and adjacent land uses. The proposed station is located south of the A1061. There are residential properties located to the east of the site. The site is located to the east of the railway corridor. The railway is currently used by freight trains and therefore a level of operational rail noise is already experienced at this location.
- 7.4.35 It is considered that there will be noise impacts during the construction and operational phases of the development; appropriate mitigation is proposed to be implemented to ensure noise impacts are minimised wherever possible.
- 7.4.36 The submitted Noise and Vibration Assessment demonstrates that the scheme has been designed based on a sound understanding of the proximity of sensitive receptors. Noise attenuation fencing is proposed to the east of the railway corridor to mitigate the impact on sensitive receptors on Blagdon Drive. It is proposed that appropriate mitigation during the operational phase will be secured through the provision of details to discharge relevant conditions on a planning permission. It is anticipated the details to mitigate construction noise impacts will be included within the Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) which is expected to be included as a condition on a planning permission.
- 7.4.37 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy DC22 of the Development Control Policies Development Plan Document.

## **Policy DC27: Design of New Developments**

- 7.4.38 Policy DC27 states that new development will be expected to achieve a high standard of design, incorporate sustainable construction measures and reflect local distinctiveness through the incorporation of local building traditions and materials. Proposals should take full account of the need for or opportunities to enhance the local environment. High quality contemporary design solutions will be considered where they can be accommodated without detriment to the surrounding environment.
- 7.4.39 The proposed railway station at Newsham has been designed based on a detailed understanding of the existing and historic site conditions, an appraisal of those features of the local area that contribute to local character and distinctiveness, and through identifying the needs of all anticipated future users of the railway station and considering the advice of all stakeholders including Network Rail, the local planning authority, the local highway authority, residents, businesses and local politicians.
- 7.4.40 The submitted Design and Access Statement provides further details to demonstrate that the submitted scheme is based on a clear understanding of the character and local

distinctiveness of the area and confirms that the proposed railway station would make a positive contribution to place-making and environmental improvement. The submitted Landscape, Townscape and Visual Impact Assessment confirms that the proposed development would not harm the landscape character and amenity of the local area.

- 7.4.41 In summary, the proposed railway station demonstrates a bespoke approach to design. The proposed layout, scale, height and other design elements of the railway station are based on a detailed appraisal of the site, the existing railway and highway infrastructure and the proximity to adjacent land uses.
- 7.4.42 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy DC27 of the Development Control Policies Development Plan Document.

## **7.5 Blyth Valley District Local Plan (May 1999)**

- 7.5.1 The Blyth Valley District Local Plan sets out a strategy to guide new development in the Blyth Valley. It currently forms the basis of Northumberland's Local Development Framework and is used to guide planning decisions throughout the Blyth Valley.
- 7.5.2 The Blyth Valley District Local Plan was adopted in May 1999. It forms part of the statutory development plan for Northumberland. As well as providing the basis for decisions on planning applications, the District Local Plan is used to help shape regeneration, investment and growth within the borough.
- 7.5.3 It is anticipated the Blyth District Local Plan will be superseded by the emerging Northumberland Local Plan. Notwithstanding this, the Blyth District Local Plan currently forms part of the adopted development plan. Those policies of the existing, adopted District Local Plan that are material to the determination of this planning application are set out below.

### **Policy E3: Landscape: General Approach**

- 7.5.4 Policy E3 states that the quality of the landscape will be taken into account in planning decisions by assessing proposals according to their effects on the intrinsic qualities of the landscape type or types which they affect. Account will also be taken of any positive landscape related measures proposed as part of any development.
- 7.5.5 The proposed railway station at Newsham has been designed based on a sound understanding of the physical constraints of the site, to ensure that it can be considered to appropriately sit within its landscape setting. The application is supported by a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment which confirms that the scheme would not have a significant adverse impact on the wider landscape.
- 7.5.6 The proposed railway station at Newsham has been designed based on a detailed understanding and appraisal of those features of the local area that contribute to landscape character and distinctiveness, and through identifying and appraising the visual impact on different receptors from various viewpoints.



- 7.5.7 Notwithstanding that the proposed overbridge will affect the openness of the landscape, it is considered that the significant and demonstrable public benefits that will result from the proposed station are capable of outweighing the landscape harm resulting from the impact on openness. The railway station is an integral component of the plans to re-introduce passenger services on the Northumberland Line, and is considered by officers to constitute 'essential infrastructure'. The overbridge has been designed so as to have the least possible visual and landscape impact, whilst complying with the relevant industry and safety standards that govern the design of bridges. The submitted Landscape, Townscape and Visual Impact Assessment considers that the scheme would be successfully integrated into the existing environment and the built form of South Newsham with limited effects. The extensive soft landscaping which is proposed as part of the scheme is considered to ensure the proposed development sits well within the landscape.
- 7.5.8 It is considered that the proposed station would not have an unacceptable impact on the local landscape.
- 7.5.9 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy E3 of the Blyth District Local Plan.

**Policy E5: The Protection of the Tree and Shrub Cover**

- 7.5.10 Policy E5 states that significant trees and areas of trees and shrubs will be protected by not normally granting planning permission for any development which would displace trees from areas of mature trees, retaining areas of plantation woodland and where Tree Preservation Orders apply, only approving tree work in very exceptional circumstances, where it will assist the achievement of other policies or proposals in the Plan.
- 7.5.11 The proposed railway station at Newsham has been designed based on a sound understanding of the site and with an ambition to retain as many trees as possible. For any trees that cannot be retained as part of the development, the submitted arboricultural impact assessment presents a robust justification to explain the reasons why the removal is required. The Landscape Plan submitted in support of this application identifies areas proposed for re-planting. For those trees removed, appropriate mitigation measures including re-planting will be discussed and agreed with officers during the course of determination of the planning application.
- 7.5.12 It is considered that the proposed development would not have an unacceptable impact on the tree and shrub cover at the site.
- 7.5.13 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy E5 of the Blyth District Local Plan.
- 7.5.14 **Policy G8: Development within the Green Belt**

Policy G8 states that within the Green Belt, the construction of new buildings or structures will only be permitted for a limited number of reasons including:

- 7.5.15 *“where a structure is related to essential infrastructure services but does not reduce the openness of the Green Belt nor diminish its ability to justify the purposes for which it has been designated and no alternative is available, in which case the proposal would also be assessed against other environmental policies in this Plan.”*
- 7.5.16 The proposed railway station at Newsham forms an integral component of the scheme which proposes the re-introduction of passenger services on the Northumberland Line. The Northumberland Line scheme is a strategic priority of both national and local government and could therefore reasonably be considered to constitute ‘essential infrastructure’.
- 7.5.17 As explained elsewhere within this Planning Statement, to construct a railway station it must obviously be located adjacent the railway. There are no alternative sites which would be of sufficient size to accommodate the proposed development within close proximity to the railway and outwith the Green Belt – indeed, if the proposed development were to be located further north than the current site, then it would likely come into direct conflict with the proposed railway station at Bebside. If the proposed development were to be located further south than the current site, then it would be located deeper within the Green Belt and would be in a more isolated location. The proposed site is located directly adjacent the edge of the settlement and would utilise the existing highway to provide access to the station car park. Other site layouts have been considered but were discounted; the submitted scheme is considered to result in the least incursion into, and therefore impact on, the Green Belt. It would therefore seem reasonable to assert that the site which is the subject of this planning application, which is located on the edge of the existing settlement is considered to be the optimum site for the proposed development and least harmful to the Green Belt.
- 7.5.18 The proposed development would involve the use of land for a use which could not reasonably be located elsewhere: to construct a railway station it must obviously be located adjacent to the railway line. Further justification on the site selection is available in Section 4.4 of this statement. The submitted landscaping proposals and visual impact assessment demonstrate that the proposals have been designed in a manner to minimise the impact on the openness of the Green Belt.
- 7.5.19 It is considered that the above narrative satisfactorily demonstrates that the proposed station is required to be located within the Green Belt.
- 7.5.20 Notwithstanding the fact that the development is considered to be ‘appropriate’ within the Green Belt, should the local planning authority consider otherwise, it is considered that the development of the proposed railway station at Newsham satisfies the test of ‘very special circumstances’. The re-introduction of passenger services on the Northumberland Line is defined by the council as ‘essential transport infrastructure’ and is a strategic transport priority both locally and nationally. It is therefore considered that the development partially on Green Belt land should be supported.
- 7.5.21 Notwithstanding that the proposed overbridge will affect the openness of the landscape, it is considered that the significant and demonstrable public benefits that will result from the proposed station are capable of outweighing the landscape harm. The overbridge has been

designed so as to have the least possible visual and landscape impact, whilst complying with the relevant industry and safety standards that govern the design of bridges.

- 7.5.22 In summary, the proposed railway station is considered to be 'appropriate' development in the Green Belt and would, in any event, exemplify 'very special circumstances' sufficient to outweigh any harm to the Green Belt.
- 7.5.23 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy G8 of the Blyth District Local Plan.

#### **Policy G10: Development Criteria in the Countryside**

- 7.5.24 Policy G10 outlines the criteria for which all development outside of the development settlement limits must comply. New development must have regard to the existing settlement pattern. This includes consideration of neighbouring uses, the environment and any future needs that the development may necessitate. A new building will not be permitted if it is isolated from existing buildings, unless it is necessary in terms of the uses proposed.
- 7.5.25 The proposed railway station at Newsham forms an integral component of the scheme which proposes the re-introduction of passenger services on the Northumberland Line. The Northumberland Line scheme is a strategic priority of both national and local government and could therefore reasonably be considered to constitute 'essential infrastructure'.
- 7.5.26 Notwithstanding that the proposed overbridge will affect the openness of the landscape, it is considered that the significant and demonstrable public benefits that will result from the proposed station are capable of outweighing the landscape harm. The railway station is an integral component of the plans to re-introduce passenger services on the Northumberland Line, and is considered by officers to constitute 'essential infrastructure'. The overbridge has been designed so as to have the least possible visual and landscape impact, whilst complying with the relevant industry and safety standards that govern the design of bridges.
- 7.5.27 The application site is located in an accessible location, adjacent existing housing and other development and is therefore located in a sustainable location. The proposed development would involve the use of previously developed land for a use which could not reasonably be located elsewhere: to construct a railway station it must obviously be located adjacent to the railway line. The submitted landscaping proposals and visual impact assessment demonstrate that the proposals have been designed in a manner to minimise the impact on the openness of the Green Belt.
- 7.5.28 In summary, the proposed railway station is considered to be appropriate development outwith the defined settlement boundary.
- 7.5.29 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy G10 of the Blyth District Local Plan.

## **Policy M8: Car Parking**

- 7.5.30 Policy M8 states that new development should seek to minimise the area devoted to car parking, whilst complying with parking standards and safeguarding existing provision. The policy states that the possibility of providing park and ride facilities should be explored. Where possible, measures should be taken to ensure that car park areas are well landscaped and safe for pedestrians.
- 7.5.31 The proposed railway station at Newsham seeks to provide appropriate access for all users, with priority given to encouraging walking and cycling to the station. It is acknowledged that not all users are able to walk and/or cycle to and from the station. For elderly and disabled users, it may be necessary to arrive at or depart from the station by car. The proposed station therefore provides appropriate vehicular access and car parking, the extent to which has been the subject of pre-application discussions with both planning and highway authority officers.
- 7.5.32 The proposed station is well served by links to existing bus stops and services. The site is a short walk away from the existing bus stops on the A1061. The X9 buses stops at this location and runs from Newcastle to Blyth. These buses currently run every half hour. The scheme is therefore designed to integrate with the existing public transport infrastructure adjacent to the site.
- 7.5.33 The proposed station has been designed to ensure safe and convenient access is available for all modes. The submitted Transport Assessment demonstrates that the scheme, including the proposed amount of car parking, is considered to be acceptable from a highway capacity and safety perspective.
- 7.5.34 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy M8 of the Blyth District Local Plan.

## **7.6 Accordance with Northumberland Local Plan Regulation 19 Publication Draft (May 2019)**

- 7.6.1 The NPPF advises at paragraph 48 that weight may also be given to the policies in emerging plans depending on the stage of preparation of the plan, the extent to which emerging policy aligns with the NPPF and the extent of unresolved objections to the emerging plan. The Phase 2 hearings on the Emerging Northumberland Local Plan were completed in November 2020 and the Inspector indicated that she did not envisage the need to hold additional hearings. The NPPF advises at paragraph 48 that weight may also be given to the policies in emerging plans depending on the stage of preparation of the plan, the extent to which emerging policy aligns with the NPPF and the extent of unresolved objections to the emerging plan. The Phase 2 hearings on the Emerging Northumberland Local Plan were completed in November 2020 and the Inspector indicated that she did not envisage the need to hold additional hearings. A public consultation was undertaken on the proposed main modifications to the Local Plan from Wednesday 9th June to 4th August 2021. As such, it

is anticipated that the local plan will be adopted in late 2021. It is therefore considered that relevant policies can be given some weight presently and can be given increasing weight as the Plan moves towards adoption.

7.6.2 As such, it is anticipated that the local plan will be adopted in Spring 2021. It is therefore considered that relevant policies can be given some weight presently and can be given increasing weight as the Plan moves towards adoption.

7.6.3 The relevant policies of the emerging Northumberland Local Plan that pertain to the scheme which is the subject of this planning application are identified as follows:

#### **Policy STPI: Spatial Strategy**

7.6.4 Policy STPI states that sustainable development will be supported within the constraints of the Green Belt and settlement boundaries defined on the Local Plan policies map. Sustainable development within, or immediately adjacent to, the built-up form of Main Towns, Service Centres and Service Villages without defined settlement boundaries, will be supported, if it is commensurate with size of the settlement, and it can be demonstrated that it does not adversely impact upon the character of the settlement.

7.6.5 Development in the open countryside will only be supported if it can be demonstrated that it:

7.6.6 *“Provides for essential transport, utilities and energy infrastructure in accordance with other policies in the Local Plan.”*

7.6.7 The policy goes on to state that development in the open countryside should be sensitive to its surroundings and should not have an unacceptable impact upon the local road network.

7.6.8 The proposed railway station at Newsham forms an integral component of the scheme which proposes the re-introduction of passenger services on the Northumberland Line. The Northumberland Line scheme is a strategic priority of both national and local government and could therefore reasonably be considered to constitute ‘essential infrastructure’.

7.6.9 The application site is located in an accessible location, adjacent existing housing and other development and is therefore located in a sustainable location. The scheme is designed to integrate with existing and adjacent public transport infrastructure, including the bus stops located along the A1061. The proposed development would involve the use of land for a use which could not reasonably be located elsewhere: to construct a railway station it must obviously be located adjacent to the railway line. The submitted landscaping proposals and visual impact assessment demonstrate that the proposals have been designed in a manner to minimise the impact on the openness of the Green Belt.

7.6.10 In summary, the proposed railway station is considered to be appropriate development outwith the defined settlement boundary.

- 7.6.11 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy STP1 of the emerging Northumberland Local Plan.

**Policy STP2: Presumption in favour of Sustainable Development**

- 7.6.12 Policy STP2 states that when considering development proposals, the Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). It will always work pro-actively with applicants to seek to find solutions that mean proposals that improve the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area can be approved wherever possible.
- 7.6.13 The proposed railway station at Newsham, given its nature, is considered to represent a sustainable development. The scheme will promote the use of rail services as an alternative to the private car and will assist in alleviating congestion on the local highway network and improving local air quality. The application site is located within an accessible location and as such will encourage walking and cycling to and from the station, though vehicular access is to be provided to ensure the station is accessible for all users.
- 7.6.14 The proposed railway station at Newsham would deliver economic benefits, social benefits and environmental benefits and thereby support the planning system in fulfilling its purpose: to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development.
- 7.6.15 The economic benefits of the scheme include:
- The development will facilitate increased access for residents and local people to employment and training opportunities throughout Northumberland, North Tyneside and Newcastle City Centre. The provision of passenger rail services at this location, including specialist provision for mobility impaired and disabled users, will also encourage employers to locate in this part of Northumberland;
  - The development will provide a bespoke economically efficient multimodal transport interchange which integrates the train services and railway station with buses, cycling, walking, private cars and taxis.
  - The proposed railway station will help to alleviate congestion on the local highway network, presenting a potential cost saving in journey times for staff and visitors to local businesses and those travelling further afield, supporting economic growth in Newsham, Northumberland and the North East more widely.
- 7.6.16 The social benefits of the scheme include:
- The development will improve journey times for residents, local people and those wishing to travel from Ashington to destinations further afield including North Tyneside and Newcastle City Centre;
  - The development will increase the ability of residents and local people to gain access to employment and training opportunities;

- The development will contribute to building strong, vibrant and healthy communities by encouraging social inclusion, improving the accessibility of local services and the use of sustainable travel modes

7.6.17 The environmental benefits of the scheme include:

- The development will improve the physical connectivity of transport infrastructure for all users
- The development will make it physically more simple and convenient to use and access public transport infrastructure in Newsham. The consequential modal shift will assist in improving local air quality
- The development will decrease dependence on the private car for residents and local people, in so doing it will reduce carbon emissions

7.6.18 In summary, the proposed railway station is considered to represent a sustainable development. Accordingly, it is considered the local planning authority ought to take a positive approach to the consideration and determination of this planning application.

7.6.19 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy STP2 of the emerging Northumberland Local Plan.

### **Policy STP3: Principles of Sustainable Development**

7.6.20 Policy STP3 states that in applying the presumption in favour of sustainable development in Northumberland and to deliver against economic, social and environmental objectives, development proposals will be expected to deliver across the range of the economic, social and environmental factors, and adhere to the following principles where appropriate:

- Contribute to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy across Northumberland, support more and better jobs, protect and enhance the vitality and viability of Northumberland's town centres and other important economic sectors;
- Minimise their impact upon local amenity for new or existing residents and businesses, adjoining premises and land uses;
- Support and provide opportunities to improve health, social and cultural wellbeing for all, and provide the infrastructure which is required to enhance the quality of life of individuals and communities;
- Demonstrate high quality sustainable design which is accessible to all, and which respects and enhances the local distinctiveness of the natural, historic and built environment, helps promote a sense of place, reduces the need for energy, and facilitates flexible and adaptable buildings and environments;

- Be accessible by, or be able to be made accessible by public transport, walking or cycling where feasible, thereby reducing the need to travel for both people and goods, and the dependence on travel by private car;
- Make best use of existing facilities and infrastructure, whilst making appropriate provision for new or additional infrastructure as required;

- 7.6.21 The proposed railway station at Newsham would improve access to and from the local area for residents, staff and customers of local businesses. The proposed station would therefore improve the accessibility and connectivity of Newsham to Northumberland and the North East more widely.
- 7.6.22 The scheme would assist in reducing reliance on the private car, encouraging use of more sustainable modes of travel including walking and cycling. The submitted Transport Assessment and Travel Plan demonstrates that the scheme can be suitably accessed by various modes, and that safe and convenient access is provided for all users.
- 7.6.23 The scheme has been designed based on a sound understanding of the site, adjacent land uses and the requirements of key stakeholders including Network Rail, the local planning authority and the local highway authority. The submitted Design and Access Statements provides a detailed summary of the design evolution and confirms that the scheme constitutes a high-quality sustainable design which is accessible to all.
- 7.6.24 The scheme incorporates appropriate and proportionate improvements to the local highway, including improved pedestrian crossing arrangements, to ensure that the opportunities to encourage pedestrian and cyclist access to and from the station have been taken.
- 7.6.25 In summary, the proposed railway station is considered to represent a sustainable development. Accordingly, it is considered the local planning authority ought to take a positive approach to the consideration and determination of this planning application.
- 7.6.26 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy STP3 of the emerging Northumberland Local Plan.

#### **Policy STP4: Climate change mitigation and adaptation**

- 7.6.27 Policy STP4 states that development proposals should mitigate climate change and contribute to meeting nationally binding targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. When determining planning applications, support will be given to how development proposals that help mitigate climate change and consideration will be given to how proposals:
- 7.6.28 Through their location, layout and pattern of development, reduce the need to travel for both people and goods, and encourage sustainable modes of transport, including walking, cycling and the use of public transport;



- 7.6.29 The proposed railway station at Newsham, given its nature, will assist in encouraging the use of more sustainable modes of travel, reducing reliance on the private car. Such a modal shift is likely to assist in reducing carbon and greenhouse gas emissions; improving local air quality together with assisting the council in meeting its climate change objectives.
- 7.6.30 The scheme is located within an accessible and sustainable location, adjacent existing housing and other development. The scheme incorporates measures to encourage walking and cycling, as well as rail services. The submitted Flood Risk Assessment and hydraulic modelling take account of the risk from climate change and the implementation of the recommendations contained therein will assist in ensuring the proposed development is resilient to the impacts of climate change.
- 7.6.31 In summary, the proposed railway station is considered to represent a sustainable development. The scheme will assist the council in meeting its wider climate change objectives.
- 7.6.32 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy STP4 of the emerging Northumberland Local Plan.

**Policy STP5: Health and wellbeing**

- 7.6.33 Policy STP5 states that development which promotes, supports and enhances the health and wellbeing of communities, residents, workers and visitors will be supported. Development proposals will be required to demonstrate that they:
- are safe, comfortable, inclusive and attractive and prioritise pedestrian and cycle movement;
  - provide access to a range of facilities including public transport, health, education, social care, green spaces, sport, play and leisure facilities
- 7.6.34 The policy requires that a Health Impact Assessment Screening be submitted for all major development proposals to determine whether the potential impact on health resulting from the development warrants any further assessment. Where further assessment is warranted, a proportionate Health Impact Assessment will also be required to be submitted as part of the application. A Health Impact Assessment will be required to include proposals to mitigate any adverse health impacts, maximise potential positive impacts, and help reduce health inequalities.
- 7.6.35 The proposed railway station at Newsham has been designed to prioritise pedestrian and cycle movements. The scheme includes improved pedestrian crossing arrangements and cycle parking is provided to encourage travel to and from the station by sustainable modes. It is recognised, however, that not all users are able to walk and/ or cycle to and from the station. The scheme therefore ensures vehicular access is provided to ensure the station can be accessed by elderly and disabled users.

- 7.6.36 The scheme, given its nature, supports the delivery of sustainable transport infrastructure which will improve access to health, education and leisure facilities across the North East for local people.
- 7.6.37 The response by the local planning authority to the pre-application indicated that a Health Impact Assessment was not required to be undertaken. Notwithstanding this response the application includes an appraisal of the potential health and wellbeing benefits of the station to the local population. This demonstrates that the potential impacts resulting from the development are generally beneficial. The scheme has been designed to manage and mitigate the risk of potential adverse health impacts, wherever possible.
- 7.6.38 In summary, the proposed railway station is considered to represent a sustainable development, which will deliver many and various health and wellbeing improvements.
- 7.6.39 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy STP5 of the emerging Northumberland Local Plan.

**Policy STP8: Development in the Green Belt**

- 7.6.40 Policy STP8 states that in assessing development proposals within the Green Belt:
- 7.6.41 *Development that is inappropriate in the Green Belt, in accordance with national planning policy, will not be supported unless very special circumstances clearly outweigh the potential harm to the Green Belt, and any other harm resulting from the proposal;*
- 7.6.42 *Development which is appropriate in the Green Belt, as defined in national planning policy, will be supported.*
- 7.6.43 The proposed railway station at Newsham forms an integral component of the scheme which proposes the re-introduction of passenger services on the Northumberland Line. The Northumberland Line scheme is a strategic priority of both national and local government and could therefore reasonably be considered to constitute 'essential infrastructure'. The significant public benefits of the proposed development are considered to constitute 'very special circumstances', sufficient to outweigh the harm to the Green Belt.
- 7.6.44 The selection of sites for the proposed stations along the Northumberland Line, including the station at Newsham has been influenced by a number of criteria. These criteria include those related to the necessary 'engineering', 'safety' and technical standards which are required to be satisfied. The criteria also include those related to the economic viability of the station and the need for sufficient passengers to contribute to the funding of the operation of the service. There are also a suite of criteria related to the environmental characteristics of a station, including ensuring that vehicular traffic can gain access to the station without adversely impacting on the safety or resilience of the highway network. There is an iterative option selection process which is undertaken to confirm the location of new stations which takes into account all of these criteria and is also influenced by the relative distance between stations and the characteristics of the line between stations, including line speed, gradient, and the proximity and safety of level crossings. The location of the stations along

the Northumberland line is also dictated by the limitations of parts of the line being only single track and the need for passenger services to be capable of passing stationary freight trains.

- 7.6.45 The initial preferred location for the station at Newsham was predicated on the retention of the level crossing on the A1061, with the station located approximately 400m south of the A1061. However following an assessment of the risks associated with the continued use of the level crossing a revised preferred location has been selected which enables the closure of the level crossing and the station to be adjacent to the south side of Blyth. The retention of the level crossing would have presented a number of health and safety risks and long terms constraints to the flow of HGV's to and from the Port of Blyth, and vehicles using the A1061. The location of the station 'further' south would have been more distant from Newsham and Blyth and would have been deeper within the green belt. Although only 400m south the alternative location would have presented technical and engineering constraints, which are not experienced by the application site.
- 7.6.46 The closure of the level crossing requires the diversion of the A1061. The submitted alignment for the replacement highway is designed to satisfy relevant safety, amenity and engineering standards whilst minimising the land needed from within the green belt. The local geology together with the risk of flooding means that it is not possible for the realigned highway to be tunnelled beneath the railway line. The height of the bridge is the minimal required to satisfy relevant safety and engineering standards.
- 7.6.47 The proposed site is located directly adjacent the edge of the built-up area. Its location would reuse the two existing sections of the A1061 to provide access to the station car park.
- 7.6.48 The submitted scheme requires only the minimal land necessary for the station to function efficiently and economically whilst satisfying relevant engineering and safety standards. The realigned A1061 is designed to take the minimal land necessary for the safe operation of the highway and bridge by pedestrian, cyclists, equestrian users, and vehicles.
- 7.6.49 The submitted scheme includes the minimal engineering and other structures necessary for the safe operation of this 'essential transport infrastructure'. The scheme does not include any buildings. The land within the green belt which is proposed to be developed for the station and related infrastructure is the minimum necessary which is commensurate with the efficient functioning of the station and the passenger service. The scheme is an essential component of the plans to re-introduce passenger services on the Northumberland Line, and is 'essential infrastructure'.
- 7.6.50 The scheme includes the re-use of previously developed land within the green belt including the removal of a miscellany of buildings and a residential property.
- 7.6.51 The scheme includes the provision of a belt of landscaping on the southern side of the embanked and realigned A1061. The landscaping scheme and visual impact assessment demonstrate that the scheme has been designed so as to not compromise the openness of the Green Belt.

- 7.6.52 The Design and Access Statement demonstrates further how the scheme only develops the minimum land necessary within the Green Belt, commensurate with providing the necessary car parking, landscaping, flood attenuation, and replacement biodiversity resources.
- 7.6.53 The assessment of the compliance of the scheme with the policy is that it does not compromise the openness of the green belt. However if the local planning authority is of the view that the openness is compromised, then it is considered that there are significant public benefits which will arise from the proposed station and passenger services and these would outweigh any harm which may be considered to occur to the openness of the green belt.
- 7.6.54 Notwithstanding the fact that the assessment of the scheme is that the scheme is 'appropriate' development within the Green Belt, should the local planning authority consider otherwise, then the significant benefits are sufficient to satisfy the test of 'very special circumstances'.
- 7.6.55 The re-introduction of passenger services on the Northumberland Line is considered by the council as 'essential transport infrastructure' and is a strategic transport priority both locally and nationally.
- 7.6.56 In summary, the proposed railway station at Newsham is assessed as appropriate development in the Green Belt, notwithstanding which the benefits together with its local and national importance constitute 'very special circumstances' sufficient to outweigh any harm to the Green Belt.
- 7.6.57 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy STP8 of the emerging Northumberland Local Plan.
- 7.6.58 Policy INF5: Open space and facilities for sport and recreation
- 7.6.59 A section of the site of the proposed development is designated as Protected Open Space (Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace) under Policy INF5. The site is currently a woodland.
- 7.6.60 The development proposes a marginal removal of Protected Open Space of approximately 0.84 ha from a 2.03ha site which is known as 'South Newsham reclamation'.
- 7.6.61 Policy INF5 states that development proposals that would result in the loss of land or buildings used for recreational use or the loss of Protected Open Space will not be supported unless:
- They would be replaced by an area of equivalent or better quantity and quality, in a suitable location; or
  - An excess of provision in quantitative and quantitative terms is clearly demonstrated; or

- The development proposed is for alternative sports and recreation provision, the need for which clearly outweighs the loss of the existing open space.

7.6.62 Open Space, Sport and Recreational facilities PPG17 Assessment 2011 (as amended in 2018)<sup>19</sup> assessment identifies the following minimum standards should be achieved to provide appropriate provision for natural and semi-natural greenspace in the county:

**Quantity-** To ensure provision does not fall below the current level of 7.55 ha per 1,000 population,

7.6.63 **Quality-** To achieve a minimum standard of 48%,

7.6.64 **Accessibility-** To provide natural and semi-natural greenspace with 1200m or 15 minutes travel time of where people live.

7.6.65 The aforementioned assessment identifies that South East Northumberland currently has a slight deficiency of natural and semi-natural greenspace of 7.4ha. However, the assessment identifies that 98% of residents in South East Northumberland are located within 600 metres of open space. This is significantly higher than the north (75%) and the west (58%) of Northumberland.

7.6.66 The nearest site of open space to the proposed development is located directly adjacent to 'South Newsham Reclamation' which is South Newsham Playing fields which is a 5.29 Ha site designated as an 'Outdoor Sports Facility'.

7.6.67 Furthermore, there are two sites of natural and semi-natural greenspace located within 1km. This includes South Newsham reservoir, a 0.57 Ha site located 200 metres to the north west; and Meggies Burn, a 19.18Ha site located approximately 600 metres to the south. As such, it is not considered the development of the site will have a significant impact on accessibility to sites of natural and semi-natural greenspace in Newsham.

7.6.68 The assessment does not identify the quality of the open space. As such, it is not possible to assess the impact of the loss of the site on the average quality of open space in South East Northumberland.

7.6.69 The development only proposes to remove 0.84 ha of the 2.03ha site. As such, it is considered that a marginal removal of the existing site would not have a significant impact on access to quality or quantity of open space. Furthermore, the Landscape Plan submitted in support of this application identifies areas for re-planting and landscaping which are considered to offset the loss of the woodland on the site of Protected Open Space.

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<sup>19</sup> Northumberland County Council (2011) PPG17 open space, sport and recreation assessment (as amended in 2018) p106

- 7.6.70 Notwithstanding the above, the applicant is content to agree in principle to the making of a compensatory provision to offset the loss of the open space required to facilitate the development which is the subject of this application. The applicant is committed to working with the local authority during determination of the application to seek to identify suitable compensatory provision.
- 7.6.71 As such, the proposed development is considered to be in accordance with Policy INF5 of the emerging Northumberland Local Plan.

**Policy QOP1: Design Principles**

- 7.6.72 Policy QOP1 states that in determining planning applications, design will be assessed against the following design principles, in accordance with the Northumberland Design Guide. Proposals will be supported where design:
- Makes a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness and contributes to a positive relationship between built and natural features, including landform and topography;
  - Facilitates an inclusive, comfortable, user-friendly and legible environment;
  - Supports health and wellbeing and enhances quality of life
- 7.6.73 The proposed railway station at Newsham has been designed based on a detailed understanding of the existing and historic site conditions, an appraisal of those features of the local area that contribute to local character and distinctiveness, and through identifying the needs of all anticipated future users of the railway station and considering the advice of all stakeholders including Network Rail, the local planning authority, the local highway authority, residents, businesses and local politicians.
- 7.6.74 The submitted Design and Access Statement provides further details to demonstrate that the submitted scheme is based on a clear understanding of the character and local distinctiveness of the area and confirms that the proposed railway station would make a positive contribution to place-making and environmental improvement.
- 7.6.75 In summary, the proposed railway station demonstrates a bespoke approach to design. The proposed layout, scale, height and other design elements of the railway station are based on a detailed appraisal of the site, the existing railway and highway infrastructure and the proximity to adjacent land uses.
- 7.6.76 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy QOP1 of the emerging Northumberland Local Plan.

**Policy QOP2: Good Design and Amenities**

- 7.6.77 Policy QOP2 states that development will be required to provide a high standard of amenity for existing and future users of the development itself and preserve the amenity of those living in, working in or visiting the local area.
- 7.6.78 Development which would result in unacceptable adverse impacts on the amenity of neighbouring uses, in terms of both individual and cumulative impacts, will not be supported.
- 7.6.79 The proposed railway station at Newsham has been designed based on a sound understanding of the site and adjacent land uses, ensuring that the scheme respects the amenity of neighbouring land uses. The thematic surveys and assessments submitted in support of the planning application including the submitted noise and vibration assessments demonstrate that the scheme would not have a significant adverse impact on neighbouring land uses. The scheme will seek to incorporate appropriate mitigation, the precise details of which will be agreed through the discharge of relevant conditions on a planning permission, to seek to minimize the impacts on amenity wherever possible.
- 7.6.80 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy QOP2 of the emerging Northumberland Local Plan.

#### **Policy QOP4: Landscaping and Trees**

- 7.6.81 Policy QOP4 states that where relevant, new development will be expected to incorporate well-designed landscaping and respond appropriately to any existing landscape features. Development proposals should ensure that:

Landscaping design is of a high quality, in accordance with the principles set out in Policy QOP 1;

- Existing features which contribute towards the character of the area, or amenity, are retained wherever possible and sympathetically incorporated into the overall design of the scheme;
- Any hard or soft landscaping is appropriate, functional and well-integrated into the design of the development;
- Trees, and other spaces and features that provide green and blue infrastructure, are preserved, enhanced and introduced into the landscaping scheme wherever possible;

- 7.6.82 The proposed railway station at Newsham is supported by a sensitive landscaping scheme, which seeks to retain and/or replace existing trees, wherever possible. Precise details of the landscape proposals and the justification for tree removals are set out in the submitted landscaping scheme and arboricultural assessment reports. The submitted scheme has evolved to retain the woodland to the north of the site, to ensure the scheme is well integrated within the landscape setting.

- 7.6.83 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy QOP4 of the emerging Northumberland Local Plan.

**Policy QOP6: Delivering well-designed places**

- 7.6.84 Policy QOP6 states that proposals are expected to meet the local design expectations set out in design policies within the Plan, the Northumberland Design Guide, and any other design guidance. Proposals are expected to respond to any character assessments that form part of or support the Plan.
- 7.6.85 The proposed railway station at Newsham has been designed based on a sound understanding of the defining characteristics of the site and the adjacent land uses. The scheme has evolved based on discussions with local authority officers and other key stakeholders to ensure the design of the scheme suitably reflects the wider ambitions of those stakeholders.
- 7.6.86 The proposed railway station at Newsham is supported by a Design and Access Statement which provides a summary of the design evolution process. The Design and Access Statement should be read in conjunction with this Planning Statement and the submitted Statement of Community Engagement to provide a comprehensive overview of how the submitted scheme has evolved to take account of the observations, guidance and comments received from the local planning authority and other key stakeholders.
- 7.6.87 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy QOP6 of the emerging Northumberland Local Plan.

**Policy TRA1: Promoting sustainable connections**

- 7.6.88 Policy TRA1 states that the council will support development that:
- Promotes a spatial distribution which creates accessible development, reduces the need to travel by car, and maximises the use of sustainable modes of transport;
  - Promotes good design principles in respect of the permeability, connectivity and legibility of buildings and public spaces; and inclusive access;
  - Promotes sustainable transport choices, including supporting, providing and connecting to networks for walking, cycling and public transport; and infrastructure that supports the use of low and ultra low emission vehicles;
  - Ensures delivery of cycle parking and supporting infrastructure;
  - Protects, enhances and supports public rights of way;
  - Supports the delivery of reliable, safe and efficient transport networks, in partnership with other organisations, service providers and developers;



- Requires development to be designed to enable charging of plug-in and other ultra low emission vehicles in safe, accessible, convenient locations; and
- Requires development proposals which generate significant amounts of movements to be supported by a Transport Assessment/ Transport Statement, and Travel Plans, and where appropriate, delivery/servicing plans.

7.6.89 The proposed railway station at Newsham is an integral part of the proposed re-introduction of passenger services on the Northumberland Line. Given its nature, a railway station, the proposed development will encourage the use of public transport. The scheme includes the provision of measures to encourage walking and cycling to and from the station. The scheme also provides measures to facilitate vehicular access to the station for elderly and mobility impaired users, to ensure the station is accessible for all.

7.6.90 The proposed railway station would be available to serve both existing and new developments and would promote walking and cycling, through improvements to pedestrian crossing facilities and provision of cycle parking infrastructure at the site. Further, given the nature of the scheme, the proposed development would promote greater use of sustainable transport modes, encouraging rail travel for car users for either all or part of their journey to destinations including Northumberland, North Tyneside and Newcastle City Centre; helping to reduce the growth and reliance on car borne journeys.

7.6.91 The submitted Transport Assessment provides a detailed review of the predicted impacts of the proposed development on the local highway network, confirming that the proposed development would not result in a detrimental impact on the operation of the highway network and could alleviate pressure on the local highway network through encouraging an increased number of trips by rail.

7.6.92 In summary, the proposed railway station at Newsham is anticipated to encourage a modal shift toward more sustainable modes, benefiting both journey times for users of the road and rail network and providing environmental improvements to local air quality, and improved cycle and walking routes.

7.6.93 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy TRA1 of the emerging Northumberland Local Plan.

**Policy TRA2: The effects of development on the transport network**

7.6.94 Policy TRA2 states that, amongst other things, all developments affecting the transport network will be required to:

- Provide effective and safe access and egress to the existing transport network
- Facilitate the safe use of the network, including suitable crossing points, footways and dedicated provision for cyclists where necessary.

- 7.6.95 The proposed railway station at Newsham is an integral part of the proposed re-introduction of passenger services on the Northumberland Line. Given its nature, a railway station, the proposed development will encourage the use of public transport. The scheme includes the provision of measures to encourage walking and cycling to and from the station. The scheme also provides measures to facilitate vehicular access to the station for elderly and mobility impaired users, to ensure the station is accessible for all.
- 7.6.96 The proposed railway station would be available to serve both existing and new developments and would promote walking and cycling, through improvements to pedestrian crossing facilities and provision of cycle parking infrastructure at the site. Further, given the nature of the scheme, the proposed development would promote greater use of sustainable transport modes, encouraging rail travel for car users for either all or part of their journey to destinations including Northumberland, North Tyneside and Newcastle City Centre; helping to reduce the growth and reliance on car borne journeys.
- 7.6.97 The submitted Transport Assessment provides a detailed review of the predicted impacts of the proposed development on the local highway network, confirming that the proposed development would not result in a detrimental impact on the operation of the highway network and could alleviate pressure on the local highway network through encouraging an increased number of trips by rail.
- 7.6.98 In summary, the proposed railway station at Newsham is anticipated to encourage a modal shift toward more sustainable modes, benefiting both journey times for users of the road and rail network and providing environmental improvements to local air quality, and improved cycle and walking routes.
- 7.6.99 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy TRA2 of the emerging Northumberland Local Plan.

**Policy TRA4: Parking provision in new development**

- 7.6.100 Policy TRA4 states that an appropriate amount of off-street vehicle parking sufficient to serve new development shall be made available in safe, accessible and convenient locations prior to the development, as a whole or in part, being brought into use. Vehicle parking shall be provided in accordance with the parking standards set out in Appendix D of the Local Plan, or other such local standards set out in made neighbourhood plans which will be given priority in determining the appropriate amount of parking required.
- 7.6.101 The proposed railway station at Newsham seeks to provide appropriate access for all users, with priority given to encouraging walking and cycling to the station. It is acknowledged that not all users are able to walk and/or cycle to and from the station. For elderly and disabled users, it may be necessary to arrive at or depart from the station by car. The proposed station therefore provides appropriate vehicular access and car parking, the extent of which has been the subject of pre-application discussions with both planning and highway authority officers.

- 7.6.102 The proposed station has been designed to ensure safe and convenient access is available for all modes. The submitted Transport Assessment demonstrates that the scheme, including the proposed amount of car parking, is considered to be acceptable from a highway capacity and safety perspective.
- 7.6.103 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy TRA4 of the emerging Northumberland Local Plan.

**Policy TRA5: Rail transport and safeguarding facilities**

- 7.6.104 Policy TRA5 states that development which would prevent the reintroduction of passenger rail services on the Northumberland Line along with associated stations, facilities and access to them from adjacent highways, and continued rail freight use of the Northumberland Line, its associated branch lines (including the branch line from Bedlington to Morpeth via Choppington, the Butterwell line north of Ashington and the line from Woodhorn to Newbiggin-by-the-Sea) and supporting infrastructure will not be supported.
- 7.6.105 Sites for stations have been identified and land will be safeguarded at the following locations:
- a. Woodhorn
  - b. Ashington
  - c. Bedlington Station
  - d. Blyth Bebside
  - e. South Newsham
  - f. Seaton Delaval
  - g. Seghill
- 7.6.106 The proposed railway station at Newsham is an integral component, and proposed to be delivered as part of, the Northumberland Line scheme. The scheme is therefore specifically supported by Policy TRA5. The delivery of the new station will support and facilitate the council's ambitions for the re-introduction of passenger services on the Ashington, Blyth and Tyne Line.
- 7.6.107 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy TRA5 of the emerging Northumberland Local Plan.

**Policy ENVI: Approaches to assessing the impact of development on the natural, historic and built environment**

- 7.6.108 Policy ENVI states that the character and significance of Northumberland's distinctive and valued natural, historic and built environments, will be conserved, protected and enhanced by:
- 7.6.109 Giving appropriate weight to the statutory purposes and special qualities of the hierarchy of international, national and local designated and non-designated nature and historic conservation assets or sites and their settings;
- 7.6.110 Protecting Northumberland's most important landscapes and applying a character-based approach to, as appropriate, manage, protect or plan landscape across the whole County.
- 7.6.111 The proposed railway station at Newsham has been designed based on a sound understanding of the site and its context, including consideration of the impacts on adjacent land uses. The planning application is supported by detailed surveys and assessments which consider the likely effect of the scheme on natural, historic and built environment receptors, confirming that the scheme would not have a significant adverse impact on those receptors. The scheme will improve access to Northumberland's distinctive and values natural, historic and built environments, helping to ensure they can continue to be continued by this and future generations, which will assist in the conservation, protection and enhancement of such assets.
- 7.6.112 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy ENVI of the emerging Northumberland Local Plan.

#### **Policy ENV2: Biodiversity and geodiversity**

- 7.6.113 Policy ENV2 states that development proposals should minimize the impacts on biodiversity and geodiversity and net gains should be secured.
- 7.6.114 The proposed railway station at Newsham has been designed based on a sound understanding of the ecological and wider environmental sensitivity of the site and adjacent land. The planning application is supported by appropriate ecological and other assessments which demonstrate that the scheme will not adversely impact on biodiversity and geodiversity and opportunities for habitat and landscaping improvement, including appropriate mitigation, are to be provided. It is anticipated that the scheme will incorporate measures to improve the biodiversity value of the site, including sensitive landscaping proposals and the installation of bat and bird boxes. The project would be content to accept suitably worded conditions for further details regarding such measures.
- 7.6.115 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy ENV2 of the emerging Northumberland Local Plan.

#### **Policy ENV7: Historic environment and heritage assets**

- 7.6.116 Policy ENV7 supports the NPPF position on historic assets in that decisions affecting a heritage asset will be based on a sound understanding of the significance of that asset and any impact of any proposal upon that significance.
- 7.6.117 The proposed railway station at Newsham has been designed based on a detailed understanding of the existing and historic site conditions, an appraisal of those features of the local area that contribute to local character and distinctiveness, and through identifying the needs of all anticipated future users of the railway station and considering the advice of all stakeholders including Network Rail, the local planning authority, the local highway authority, residents, businesses and local politicians.
- 7.6.118 The submitted Heritage Statement confirms that the proposed development would not have a significant adverse impact on designated heritage assets. A programme of archaeological trial trench evaluation is being undertaken, the results of which will be submitted during determination of this planning application.
- 7.6.119 The submitted Design and Access Statement provides further details to demonstrate that the submitted scheme is based on a clear understanding of the character and local distinctiveness of the area and confirms that the proposed railway station would make a positive contribution to place-making and environmental improvement. The scheme would not have a detrimental impact on the significance on any heritage assets.
- 7.6.120 In summary, the proposed railway station demonstrates a bespoke approach to design. The proposed layout, scale, height and other design elements of the railway station are based on a detailed appraisal of the site, the existing railway and highway infrastructure and the proximity to adjacent land uses.
- 7.6.121 Subject to implementation of appropriate mitigation which is to be agreed through the discharge of relevant conditions on a planning permission, the proposed development is considered to be in accordance with Policy ENV7 of the emerging Northumberland Local Plan.

### **Policy WAT3: Flooding**

- 7.6.122 Policy WAT3 states that development proposals will be required to demonstrate how they will minimise flood risk to people, property and infrastructure from all potential sources.
- 7.6.123 The submitted Flood Risk Assessment and Sustainable Drainage Assessment highlights the complexity between the interconnectivity of fluvial and surface water flood risk to and from the site. To ensure the Flood Risk Assessment can manage and mitigate the potential flood risks in accordance with the NPPF and accompanying Technical Guidance, further ongoing work is required. This includes:
- Linked fluvial and surface water hydraulic modelling; and
  - detailed culvert survey at the rail embankment

- 7.6.124 Once the aforementioned modelling and survey works has been concluded, recommendations will be made including for mitigation measures to be implemented should a requirement for mitigation be identified, for the 1 in 100 year plus climate change event. It is anticipated that the details of any such mitigation will be agreed through the discharge of relevant conditions on a planning permission for the scheme.
- 7.6.125 Subject to the implementation of appropriate mitigation, the proposed development is considered to be in accordance with Policy WAT3 of the emerging Northumberland Local Plan.
- 7.6.126 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy WAT3 of the emerging Northumberland Local Plan.

#### **Policy WAT4: Sustainable Drainage Systems**

- 7.6.127 Policy WAT4 SuDS should be incorporated within all development where it is necessary to manage surface water drainage, unless there are exceptional circumstances.
- 7.6.128 The submitted Flood Risk Assessment and Sustainable Drainage Assessment highlights the complexity between the interconnectivity of fluvial and surface water flood risk to and from the site. To ensure the Flood Risk Assessment can manage and mitigate the potential flood risks in accordance with the NPPF and accompanying Technical Guidance, further ongoing work is required. This includes:
- Linked fluvial and surface water hydraulic modelling; and
  - detailed culvert survey at the rail embankment
- 7.6.129 Once the aforementioned modelling and survey works has been concluded, recommendations will be made including for mitigation measures to be implemented should a requirement for mitigation be identified, for the 1 in 100 year plus climate change event. It is anticipated that the details of any such mitigation will be agreed through the discharge of relevant conditions on a planning permission for the scheme.
- 7.6.130 Subject to the implementation of appropriate mitigation, the proposed development is considered to be in accordance with Policy WAT4 of the emerging Northumberland Local Plan.

#### **Policy POL1: Unstable and contaminated land**

- 7.6.131 Policy POL1 states that development proposals will be supported where it can be demonstrated that unacceptable risks from land instability and contamination will be prevented and that measures can be taken to effectively mitigate the impacts.
- 7.6.132 The proposed railway station at Newsham is supported by various desk based assessments, which are submitted in support of the planning application, to demonstrate that land

instability and contamination issues will be appropriately mitigated and managed as part of the proposed development.

- 7.6.133 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy POL1 of the emerging Northumberland Local Plan.

**Policy POL2: Pollution and air, soil and water quality**

- 7.6.134 Policy POL2 states that development proposals that may cause pollution of water, air or soil, either individually or cumulatively, are required to incorporate measures to prevent or reduce their pollution so as not to cause nuisance or unacceptable impacts on the environment, people or biodiversity. Development proposed where pollution levels are unacceptable, and unable to be mitigated to acceptable levels, will not be supported.
- 7.6.135 The proposed railway station at Newsham is supported by various air quality and contaminated land assessments, which are submitted in support of the planning application, to demonstrate that the development is not at risk from nor would it result in unacceptable impacts on the environment, people or biodiversity.
- 7.6.136 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy POL2 of the emerging Northumberland Local Plan.

## **7.7 Accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework**

- 7.7.1 The NPPF states at paragraph 7 that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. There are three interdependent, overarching objectives that the planning system must perform in order to contribute to sustainable development:
- an economic objective;
  - a social objective; and
  - an environmental objective
- 7.7.2 The proposed railway station at Newsham would deliver economic benefits, social benefits and environmental benefits and thereby supports the planning system in fulfilling its fundamental purpose: to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development.
- 7.7.3 The economic benefits of the scheme include:
- The development will facilitate increased access for residents and local people to employment and training opportunities throughout the North East. The provision of passenger rail services at this location, including specialist provision for mobility impaired and disabled users, may also encourage employers to locate in this part of Northumberland, given its improved accessibility and connectivity to the wider North East conurbation.

- The development will provide a bespoke economically efficient multimodal transport interchange which integrates the train services and railway station with buses, cycling, walking, private cars and taxis.
- The development will open access and facilitate movement between Newsham and the wider North East conurbation, improving access to employment opportunities for local people.
- The proposed railway station will help to alleviate congestion on the local highway network, presenting a potential cost saving in journey times for staff and visitors to local businesses and those travelling further afield, supporting economic growth in Newsham, Northumberland and the North East more widely.
- The proposed railway station at Newsham will increase footfall in the local area, which may encourage businesses to locate in the area.
- The significant investment into new and upgraded transport infrastructure will attract private sector investment, enhance economic vitality and encourage further economic growth in Northumberland.

#### 7.7.4 The social benefits of the scheme include:

- The development will improve journey times for residents, local people and those wishing to travel from Newsham to destinations further afield including Newcastle City Centre.
- The development will increase the ability of residents and local people to gain access to employment and training opportunities
- The development will provide a safe and secure railway station, with appropriate lighting and CCTV camera provision to encourage all parts of the community to use the transport services and the railway station
- The development will incorporate lift and stepped access to both platforms and signage to the railway station suitable for users with disabilities
- The development would provide infrastructure that would encourage sustainable travel and would accommodate projected future growth in Newsham in terms of population, employment and housing
- The development will conserve and enhance the cultural heritage of Newsham. The station has been designed based on a sound understanding of local character and distinctiveness.
- The development will contribute to building strong, vibrant and healthy communities by encouraging social inclusion, improving the accessibility of local services and the use of sustainable travel modes



- The development will make it physically more simple and easy to use and access public transport infrastructure in Newsham. The consequential modal shift will assist in improving local air quality
- The scheme will deliver environmental and physical improvements to the site, in doing so it will assist in changing perceptions of the area and of Newsham

#### 7.7.5 The environmental benefits of the scheme include:

- The development will improve the physical connectivity of transport infrastructure for all users
- The development will provide a modern environment which is attractive and safe for pedestrians, cyclists and motorists
- The development will provide a safe and secure railway station, with appropriate lighting and CCTV camera provision to encourage all parts of the community to use the transport services and the railway station
- The pedestrian spaces within the site have been designed to be accessible for all users, especially those with visual and physical limitations
- The development will conserve and enhance the cultural heritage of Newsham. The station has been designed based on a sound understanding of local character and distinctiveness.
- The development will make it physically more simple and convenient to use and access public transport infrastructure in Newsham. The consequential modal shift will assist in improving local air quality
- The development will be undertaken in accordance with a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) and a Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP), which will minimise the environmental impacts traditionally associated with urban redevelopment schemes.
- The development will decrease dependence on the private car for residents and local people, in so doing it will reduce carbon emissions
- The development will implement a strategy for providing a structured approach to landscaping at the site; removing invasive non-native species and introducing native shrub and tree planting

#### 7.7.6 The proposed railway station at Newsham is a sustainable transport project which will deliver a range of economic, social and environmental benefits; supporting the fundamental objectives of the planning system as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework. The scheme can therefore be considered to represent a sustainable development. The NPPF

holds a presumption in favour of sustainable development, for decision-taking this means approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay.

### **Promoting Sustainable Transport**

- 7.7.7 An integral component in delivering sustainable development and achieving wider sustainability and health objectives is the promotion of sustainable development, as set out in Section 9 of the Framework. This section states that applications for development should:
- give priority first to pedestrian and cycle movements, both within the scheme and with neighbouring areas; and second – so far as possible – to facilitating access to high quality public transport, with layouts that maximise the catchment area for bus or other public transport services, and appropriate facilities that encourage public transport use;
  - address the needs of people with disabilities and reduced mobility in relation to all modes of transport;
  - create places that are safe, secure and attractive – which minimise the scope for conflicts between pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles, avoid unnecessary street clutter, and respond to local character and design standards;
  - allow for the efficient delivery of goods, and access by service and emergency vehicles; and
  - be designed to enable charging of plug-in and other ultra-low emission vehicles in safe, accessible and convenient locations
- 7.7.8 The scheme has given due regard to the above criteria; the scheme has been designed to encourage pedestrian and cycle movements both within the site and adjacent to the site. The scheme will provide safe and secure cycle parking on-site; a pedestrian link is to be provided to the station car park from the existing road bridge and the layout of the car park has been designed to ensure safe and convenient pedestrian routes are provided for those entering and exiting the railway station.
- 7.7.9 Given the nature of the proposed development, a railway station, it is considered the scheme would facilitate access to high quality public transport. The location of the proposed station already benefits from good access to the local highway network and would therefore be possible to integrate with other public transport modes.
- 7.7.10 The scheme has been designed following several workshops with disabled user forums, which have assisted in identifying and understanding barriers to access for users with visual, auditory, physical and other impairments. The feedback received has been given due regard by the designers to ensure the proposed railway station is accessible to all users. The proposed platforms will be accessed by lifts, steps and a pedestrian footbridge and a

generous amount of disabled car parking is proposed in close proximity to the platforms to ensure the station is designed to promote access for all users.

- 7.7.11 The proposed station designs have evolved to take account of discussions with both Northumbria Police and the British Transport Police. The proposed layout, lighting, CCTV camera provision and landscaping proposals have been designed to seek to ‘design out’ crime wherever possible. The proposed cycle parking provision and landscaping are based on the detailed responses received from residents, businesses, local authority officers, local politicians and other stakeholders in the period prior to submission of this planning application.
- 7.7.12 Furthermore, Electric Vehicle Charging will be provided in the station car park, thus encouraging sustainable forms of onward travel.
- 7.7.13 The development is therefore considered to accord with the aims of objectives of section 9 of the NPPF, given that the proposed development by its very nature is promoting access to and use of sustainable modes of transport.
- 7.7.14 It should also be noted that paragraph 109 of the Framework states:
- “Development should only be prevented or refused on highway grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.”*
- 7.7.15 The Transport Assessment submitted in support of this planning application has been based on a scope agreed with the local highway authority. The Transport Assessment demonstrates that the proposed development would not have an unacceptable impact on highway safety, nor would the residual cumulative impacts on the road network be severe. Consequently, it is considered there are no highway grounds that should be used to seek to prevent or refuse the planning application.
- 7.7.16 In summary, the proposed railway station at Newsham would provide residents and local people with improved access to Northumberland, North Tyneside and Newcastle City Centre. It would provide those without access to the private car with an alternative to the bus, and those with access to the private car with an opportunity to avoid and help reduce congestion on the local road network. The proposed development has been designed to encourage access to the station by all users, including pedestrians, cyclists, motorists and disabled users. The proposed development has been the subject of a detailed assessment of the predicted traffic and transport-related impacts resulting from the development. The assessment has confirmed that the proposed development would not impinge upon the safe operation or capacity of the highway network. The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Section 9 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

### **Building a strong, competitive economy**

- 7.7.17 The NPPF states at paragraph 80 that:

*“Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development.”*

- 7.7.18 Given the nature of the proposed development, a railway station, there are no other locations that are either available or suitable to provide a railway station in Newsham. The locational constraints on certain types of development is recognised by the NPPF at paragraph 82 which states:

*“Planning policies and decisions should recognise and address the specific locational requirements of different sectors. This includes making provision for clusters or networks of knowledge and data-driven, creative or high technology industries; and for storage and distribution at a variety of scales and in suitably accessible locations.”*

- 7.7.19 There is a significant amount of land within Newsham, and within close proximity to the proposed scheme, that is allocated for or has consent to deliver new housing and industrial development. Those housing and industrial sites would derive significant benefits from being located within close proximity to the scheme.

- 7.7.20 The improved access to and connectivity of the housing and industrial sites could encourage businesses to locate and grow in Newsham. The scheme could also incentivise businesses to locate in Newsham. The increased ease of access and connectivity to Northumberland, North Tyneside and Newcastle City Centre makes Newsham a more attractive location as it is more easily accessible for staff and customers. The fact there is not currently a passenger rail service that serves the area could impede investment in the local area. The scheme could act as a catalyst for further inward investment and the continued regeneration of Northumberland more widely.

- 7.7.21 In summary, it is considered that the scheme could assist in stimulating sustainable economic growth in Newsham. The substantial investment to deliver the railway station is anticipated to assist in unlocking the development potential of the sites which are proposed to be allocated for new housing and industrial development, increasing employment opportunities in the local area. The proposed railway stations will create direct employment opportunities during the construction phase and onwards associated with the operation and maintenance of the station and indirect employment opportunities, through improving access to employment opportunities further afield and increasing the attractiveness of Newsham as a destination for businesses looking to relocate.

- 7.7.22 The scheme is therefore considered to be in accordance with the aims and objectives of Section 6 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

### **Achieving well-designed places**

- 7.7.23 The NPPF states at paragraph 124 that:

*“The creation of high quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable*

*development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities. Being clear about design expectations, and how these will be tested, is essential for achieving this. So too is effective engagement between applicants, communities, local planning authorities and other interests throughout the process.”*

- 7.7.24 The scheme has been designed based on a sound understanding of both the historic and existing conditions of the site, the surrounding area and the aspirations of Network Rail, the local planning authority, the local highway authority and other key stakeholders. The scheme has been finessed to take account of comments and observations from residents and local politicians to the preliminary designs which were the subject of an extensive public engagement campaign.
- 7.7.25 The layout, scale, height and extent of the scheme has been informed based on an understanding of the requirements of a 21st Century railway station, together with an understanding of the context of the site to ensure that the station design reinforces the local character and distinctiveness of the site through integration with existing pedestrian, cycle and vehicular routes and being respectful to adjacent land uses.
- 7.7.26 The Design and Access Statement which is submitted in support of the scheme demonstrates that a detailed appraisal of different design options was undertaken to understand the implications of various layouts and access arrangements, culminating in the submitted scheme which is considered to present the optimum viable layout within the budget and other constraints for the scheme.
- 7.7.27 In summary, the scheme is considered to promote high levels of sustainability through encouraging the use of a more sustainable transport mode and will help raise the standard of design more generally in this area, whilst ensuring coherence with the overall form and layout of the surrounding area, in accordance with paragraph 131. Accordingly, great weight should be given to the designs which promote high levels of sustainability. The scheme is therefore considered to accord with the aims and objectives of Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

#### **Protecting Green Belt land**

- 7.7.28 The NPPF states at paragraph 146 that:

*“Certain other forms of development are also not inappropriate in the Green Belt provided they preserve its openness and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it. These are:*

*local transport infrastructure which can demonstrate a requirement for a Green Belt location”*

- 7.7.29 The proposed railway station at Newsham satisfies the exception under criterion 146c): *“local transport infrastructure which can demonstrate a requirement for a Green Belt location.”* Details of the criteria which have been used to select the site are set out elsewhere within this Planning Statement.

7.7.30 The Supreme Court recently considered the exceptions to ‘inappropriate’ development, provided that it preserves Green Belt openness and does not conflict with its purposes in *Samuel Smith Old Brewery (Tadcaster) and others v North Yorkshire County Council* [2020] UKSC 3, which has wider application for all other planning applications proposing development within the Green Belt. The judgement confirmed that:

*“[Openness] is a matter not of legal principle but of planning judgement for the planning authority or the inspector” [25]... “... There was no error of law on the face of the report. Paragraph 90 [now NPPFI46] does not expressly refer to visual impact as a necessary part of the analysis, nor in my view is it made so by implication. As explained in my discussion of the authorities, the matters relevant to openness in any particular case are a matter of planning judgement, not law.” [39]*

7.7.31 To this end, this Planning Statement presents an objective appraisal which demonstrates that the proposed new railway station and associated infrastructure at Newsham is not inappropriate in the Green Belt. It also demonstrates that the scheme would preserve its openness and does not conflict with the purposes of the Green Belt.

7.7.32 The following table considers each of the ‘main’ components of the scheme and the impacts of each on the Green Belt. A collective consideration of the impacts of the development in its entirety is then provided – it is important to highlight there are no buildings proposed to be constructed, the built development therefore relates to structures and associated services and works.

Scheme Component	Impact on the Green Belt
Station platforms	Without platforms, the proposed railway station cannot function. The proposed platforms are open sided and are of a limited height. The platforms could not reasonably be located elsewhere; it is essential for the platforms to be located adjacent the railway. The platforms are designed to accord with all relevant legislation, standards, policies, and guidance – including Network Rail standards. Therefore, it is not possible to reduce the length or height of the platforms as this would likely contravene railway industry standards. The proposed platforms will not be visible outwith the site due to the woodland ‘buffer’ proposed to the southeastern and southwestern flanks of the site. The proposed woodland buffer connects to and expands the existing ‘green boundary’ along the A1061, which is formed by the existing hedgerow and woodland. Further, given the limited height of the platforms and their open sided nature, it is considered that the impacts of the proposed platforms on the openness of the Green Belt are negligible. The proposed platforms would not conflict with the purposes of including land within the Green Belt.
Pedestrian lifts and footbridge	The pedestrian lifts and footbridge are essential to enable access to the railway station for all users. The footbridge is a semi-permeable structure, with views maintained both above and below the structure, therefore the impact on the openness of the Green Belt is considered to be limited. The lifts and footbridge are of limited height and could not be reasonably located elsewhere. The lifts and footbridge are designed to accord with all relevant legislation, standards, policies and guidance – including Network Rail standards. Therefore, it is not possible to reduce the height of the lifts or footbridge as this would likely contravene railway industry standards.

Overbridge	The safety concerns surrounding the existing level crossing instigated the proposals to close the level crossing. As such, a diversion is required to be provided as the existing capacity of the local road network could not accommodate the existing traffic, let alone the traffic created by the provision of a railway station at this location. The overbridge has been designed to comply with all relevant legislation, standards, guidance and policies – and the submitted design is considered to be the least harmful to the openness of the Green Belt. The overbridge proposals are not considered to conflict with the purposes of including land within the Green Belt.
Car Parking	Based on the outputs from the demand forecast modelling which has been undertaken (summarised within the submitted Transport Assessment), it has been established that the maximum number of car parking spaces required at the station is 232. The station has therefore been designed to accommodate the predicted demand. It is necessary for the car parking to be provided within the Green Belt as there are no suitable, available sites outwith the Green Belt and within close proximity to the station and existing railway line to accommodate the required number of spaces. The construction of the car park, in isolation, would be inappropriate development and would reduce the openness of the Green Belt. The NPPF establishes that substantial weight should be given to any harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness. The car park would have a slight adverse impact on openness. This carries substantial weight, even though the harm to openness would be limited. The extent of the impact on openness would be limited due to the proposed woodland 'buffer', the location of the site adjacent the settlement boundary and the significant and demonstrable public benefits that will result from the proposed railway station – which the proposed car parking forms an integral component thereof. For these reasons, taken together, other considerations carry significant weight and clearly outweigh any harm which may be considered to be caused. This is the test they have to meet, in order to amount to very special circumstances. Therefore, any harm which may be caused by reason of inappropriateness or effect on openness is outweighed by other considerations, so as to amount to the very special circumstances necessary to justify the development within the Green Belt.

*Figure 7.1 Assessment of impacts of the scheme on green belt*

- 7.7.33 The above appraisal demonstrates that the scheme has been designed with due cognisance to the Green Belt and ensures that the development taking place within the green belt is minimised and the openness is not adversely affected.
- 7.7.34 The proposed development constitutes local transport infrastructure, for which a requirement for a Green Belt location is demonstrated. The scheme is an exception under criterion 146c): *“local transport infrastructure which can demonstrate a requirement for a Green Belt location.”*
- 7.7.35 The scheme preserves the openness of the Green Belt and does not conflict with the purposes of including land within it.
- 7.7.36 Consequently, the proposed development is considered to satisfy the exceptional provision set out under paragraph 146c) of the NPPF.
- 7.7.37 Notwithstanding that the assessment concludes that openness of the Green Belt is not adversely affected there are significant and demonstrable public benefits that will result from the scheme which outweigh any the harm which may be considered to be caused to

the openness of the Green Belt. The scheme is an integral component of the plans to re-introduce passenger services on the Northumberland Line, and is 'essential infrastructure'.

7.7.38 Paragraph 143 states that:

*"Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances."*

7.7.39 Notwithstanding the fact that the scheme is not considered to be 'inappropriate' by virtue of it falling within of paragraph 146c of the NPPF, it is considered that the development of the scheme at Newsham satisfies the test of 'very special circumstances'. The re-introduction of passenger services on the Northumberland Line is defined by the council as 'essential transport infrastructure' and is a strategic transport priority both locally and nationally. It is therefore considered that the development partially on Green Belt land should be supported.

7.7.40 In summary, the proposed railway station is considered to be appropriate development in the Green Belt, does not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt and would, in any event, exemplify 'very special circumstances' sufficient to outweigh any perceived harm to the Green Belt.

7.7.41 The proposed development is therefore considered to accord with the aims and objectives of Section 13 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

## **7.8 The Planning Balance**

7.8.1 With reference to the above planning assessment, it is considered that the scheme accords with the relevant policies of the Northumberland Local Plan as summarised in Figure 7.2 below and the Development Plan as a whole. The ecology, noise, air quality, contaminated land, flood risk and other surveys and assessments submitted in support of the planning application identify the various environmental effects associated with the scheme but conclude that with the adoption of appropriate mitigation measures during both the construction and operational phases, there would be no significant adverse effects as a result of the proposed development.

7.8.2 The approval of the scheme would facilitate improved access and connectivity both to and from Newsham for residents, businesses and other groups. The scheme would improve access to employment, educational and leisure opportunities across Northumberland, as well as North Tyneside and Newcastle City Centre.

7.8.3 The scheme would encourage a modal shift away from, and thereby reduce reliance on, the private car which would alleviate congestion on the local highway network and would assist in improving local air quality.



7.8.4 In addition to the proposed development's accordance with the adopted policies of the Development Plan, and the emerging policies of the Northumberland Local Plan, it is further considered that the scheme accords with the relevant policies of the NPPF which is a material planning consideration.

7.8.5 For these reasons it is considered that the positive benefits of the scheme outweigh any harm and accords with the Development Plan, as summarised in Figure 7.2.

Northumberland Development Policy	
Principle of Development <b>Policy SS1, SS3, A3 (Blyth LDF Core Strategy)</b> <b>Policy DC3 (Blyth LDF Development Control Policies Development Plan Document)</b> <b>Policy E3, G8, G10 (Blyth Valley District Local Plan)</b> <b>Policy STP1, STP8 TRA5 (Northumberland Local Plan Regulation 19 Draft)</b>	The proposed development, whilst partially located within the Northumberland Green Belt and Open Countryside, would provide a viable alternative to the private car, encouraging use of a more sustainable mode of travel and assisting in delivering air quality and other improvements. The re-opening of the Northumberland Line to passenger rail services, of which the new station is an integral component, is specifically supported by the policies within the Northumberland Development Plan.
Design <b>Policy A2, SS3 (Blyth LDF Core Strategy)</b> <b>Policy DC1, DC16, DC17, DC19, DC27 (Blyth LDF Development Control Policies Development Plan Document)</b> <b>Policy QOP1, QOP2, QOP6, TRA1, TRA2 (Northumberland Local Plan Regulation 19 Draft)</b>	The submitted scheme aims to provide a high-quality, sustainable station that is well integrated within its surroundings and which takes opportunities to encourage walking and cycling both to and from the station. The submitted Design and Access Statement provides further details to demonstrate the evolution of the scheme to ensure the design suitably reflects the ambitions of the local planning authority and other key stakeholders.
Green Belt <b>Policy DC3 (Blyth LDF Development Control Policies Development Plan Document)</b> <b>Policy G8 (Blyth Valley District Local Plan)</b> <b>Policy STP8 (Northumberland Local Plan Regulation 19 Draft)</b>	The scheme is partially located within the Northumberland Green Belt, however it is considered that the provision of local transport infrastructure and the significant public benefits that will arise from the development, ensure that any limited harm is significantly and justifiably outweighed.
Open Countryside <b>Policy DC3, DC17 (Blyth LDF Development Control Policies Development Plan Document)</b> <b>Policy G10 (Blyth Valley District Local Plan)</b>	The scheme is partially located within the open countryside, however it is considered that the provision of local transport infrastructure and the significant public benefits that will arise from the development, ensure that any limited harm is significantly and justifiably outweighed.
Health and wellbeing <b>Policy STP5 (Northumberland Local Plan Regulation 19 Draft)</b>	The scheme is designed to ensure that appropriate access is provided for all users, including elderly and disabled users. The scheme will improve access to employment and leisure opportunities for residents and will assist in improving local air quality and reducing congestion on the local highway network.

<b>Northumberland Development Policy</b>	
Landscape <b>Policy DC17 (Blyth LDF Development Control Policies Development Plan Document)</b> <b>Policy E3 (Blyth Valley District Local Plan)</b> <b>Policy QOP4 (Northumberland Local Plan Regulation 19 Draft)</b>	The proposed development has been designed based on a sound understanding of the site and its context. The scheme will incorporate sensitive landscaping to ensure the scheme makes a positive contribution to the local area. The application is supported by a detailed Landscape Assessment. The loss of trees which is proposed to be undertaken to facilitate the development is considered to be justified in the light of the substantial public benefits that will result from the scheme. Further details of the proposed tree removals are included within the submitted Arboricultural Report.
Transport and Access <b>Policy A2, A3 (Blyth LDF Core Strategy)</b> <b>Policy DC11, DC27 (Blyth LDF Development Control Policies Development Plan Document)</b> <b>Policy M8 (Blyth Valley District Local Plan)</b> <b>Policy TRA1, TRA2, TRA4, TRA5 (Northumberland Local Plan Regulation 19 Draft)</b>	The proposed development has been designed to ensure safe and convenient access to the station is provided for all users – pedestrians, cyclists and motorists. The application is supported by a Transport Assessment which provides further details to demonstrate that the scheme is capable of being supported from both a highway safety and capacity perspective.
Ground Conditions <b>Policy SS3 (Blyth LDF Core Strategy)</b> <b>Policy DC1, DC21 (Blyth LDF Development Control Policies Development Plan Document)</b> <b>Policy STP2, STP3, STP4, POL1 (Northumberland Local Plan Regulation 19 Draft)</b>	The scheme has been designed based on an understanding of the existing ground conditions. A Phase I Geo-environmental Assessment has been submitted which provides further details on the ground conditions, which have been used to inform the submitted proposals.
Water Quality, Flood Risk and Drainage <b>Policy SS3 (Blyth LDF Core Strategy)</b> <b>Policy DC1, DC19 (Blyth LDF Development Control Policies Development Plan Document)</b> <b>Policy STP2, STP3, STP4, WAT3, WAT4 (Northumberland Local Plan Regulation 19 Draft)</b>	The scheme has been designed based on an understanding of the flood risk and drainage requirements of the site. Discussions with the LLFA have informed the submitted proposals. The application is supported by a detailed Flood Risk and Drainage Assessment which demonstrates that appropriate measures are proposed to ensure that the site is not at risk of flooding and that appropriate drainage is provided, in accordance with the NPPF and accompanying Technical Guidance, further ongoing work is required. This includes: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Linked fluvial and surface water hydraulic modelling; and</li> <li>2) detailed culvert survey at the rail embankment</li> </ol> Once the aforementioned modelling and survey works have been concluded, recommendations will be made including for mitigation measures to be implemented should a requirement for mitigation be identified, for the 1 in 100 year plus climate change event. It is anticipated that the details of any such mitigation will be agreed through the discharge of relevant conditions on a planning permission for the scheme.
Open Space <b>Policy INF5 (Northumberland Local Plan Regulation 19 Draft)</b>	This Planning Statement has demonstrated the proposed development would not result in a significant reduction to the locally available open space provision in terms of either quality or quantity. The Landscape and Visual Assessment submitted in support of this planning application

Northumberland Development Policy	
	demonstrates that there would not be a significant loss to the community relating to visual amenity. Notwithstanding the above, the applicant is content to agree in principle to the making of a compensatory provision to offset the loss of the open space required to facilitate the development which is the subject of this application. The applicant is committed to working with the local authority during determination of the application to seek to identify suitable compensatory provision.
Heritage <b>Policy E3 (Blyth District Local Plan)</b> <b>Policy ENV7 (Northumberland Local Plan Regulation 19 Draft)</b>	The Heritage Statement submitted in support of this application demonstrates that the scheme has been designed based on a sound understanding of significance of the historic assets which may be impacted. The assessment that there would not be a significant impact on designated and non-designated heritage assets. The assessment identifies that the railway line played a significant role in the growth of Newsham and therefore the reinstatement of passenger travel is an opportunity to promote local heritage.

*Figure 7.2 Summary of policy compliance*

## 8 Material Considerations

### 8.1 Introduction

- 8.1.1 Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 8.1.2 A material consideration is a matter which should be taken into account in deciding a planning application, or on an appeal against a planning decision. There is no legal definition to prescribe those matters which have the potential to constitute 'material planning considerations'. Case law has held that any consideration that relates to the use and development of land is capable of being a material planning consideration. It is for the decision-maker to determine the weight to be apportioned to each of the considerations.
- 8.1.3 The purpose of this section is therefore to identify and summarise those other policy and guidance documents that do not form part of the statutory development plan that are of particular relevance to the determination of this planning application.

### 8.2 National Design Guide (2019)

- 8.2.1 Published in October 2019, the National Design Guide seeks to provide guidance to assist in the delivery of beautiful, enduring and successful places.
- 8.2.2 The National Design Guide recognises the importance of good design. To this end, the document sets out ten characteristics which ought to be used to assess the design credentials of development. The ten characteristics identified are said to contribute towards the cross-cutting themes for good design set out in the NPPF. The ten characteristics are:
- Context – enhances the surroundings.
  - Identity – attractive and distinctive.
  - Built form – a coherent pattern of development.
  - Movement – accessible and easy to move around.
  - Nature – enhanced and optimised.
  - Public spaces – safe, social and inclusive.
  - Uses – mixed and integrated.
  - Homes and buildings – functional, healthy and sustainable.
  - Resources – efficient and resilient.

- Lifespan – made to last.

8.2.3 The submitted Design and Access Statement demonstrates that the scheme has evolved to take account of the observations, guidance and comments received from the local planning authority officers, together with other key stakeholders including Network Rail. It is considered that the principles set out in the National Design Guide reinforce those principles set out in those design-specific policies contained within the development plan, which the submitted scheme is considered to accord with.

8.2.4 It is therefore considered that the National Design Guide can be given moderate weight in the determination of this planning application. The scheme is considered to represent a high-quality, sustainable design that suitably takes account of the site context. It is considered that further details that pertain to design considerations, including external material finishes, can be the subject of suitably worded conditions on a planning permission for the scheme.

### **8.3 Blyth Valley Urban Design Guide and Public Realm Strategy Supplementary Planning Document (2008)**

8.3.1 The Blyth Valley Urban Design Guide and Public Realm Strategy was adopted in June 2008 and sets out the principles and considerations that should be used to deliver high-quality design and placemaking for new schemes within Blyth Valley.

8.3.2 The submitted Design and Access Statement demonstrates that the scheme has evolved to take account of the observations, guidance and comments received from the local planning authority officers, together with other key stakeholders including Network Rail. It is considered that the principles set out in the Blyth Valley Urban Design Guide reinforce those principles set out in those design-specific policies contained within the development plan, which the submitted scheme is considered to accord with.

8.3.3 It is therefore considered that the Blyth Valley Urban Design Guide can be given moderate weight in the determination of this planning application. The scheme is considered to represent a high-quality, sustainable design that suitably takes account of the site context. It is considered that further details that pertain to design considerations, including external material finishes, can be the subject of suitably worded conditions on a planning permission for the scheme.

### **8.4 Northumberland Local Transport Plan (LTP3) (2011)**

8.4.1 The Northumberland Local Transport Plan 2011 – 2026 was adopted on 4th April 2011 as an interim strategy which will be refreshed following the council's adoption of the Northumberland Sustainable Community Strategy and the Northumberland Local Plan.

8.4.2 The LTP3 identifies at paragraph 3.68 that:

- 8.4.3 “Of particular issue to South East Northumberland is the time it takes to travel into the neighbouring authorities of Tyne & Wear, a key source of employment for residents of Northumberland, and the cost associated with these journeys. For example, public transport journey times from Blyth and Ashington to Newcastle City Centre can take in excess of 40 minutes with a weekly bus pass costing between £15 and £20.”
- 8.4.4 To address such issues, the Northumberland LTP3 recognises that rail travel will have an increasingly important role in tackling congestion and supporting Northumberland’s sustainable economic growth and prosperity.
- 8.4.5 Paragraph 6.29 of the LTP3 states that:
- 8.4.6 “The County Council is committed to addressing rail issues in Northumberland through improved partnership working with a wide range of stakeholders. These include rail passengers and representative organisations, the Department for Transport, local authorities and regional partners, Network Rail, rail operators and regulatory bodies.”
- 8.4.7 Paragraph 6.33 also notes that the lack of available car parking at stations severely restricts passenger growth and demand for rail travel.
- 8.4.8 Paragraph 6.36 states that re-opening of the Ashington, Blyth and Tyne line to passenger services is one of the principal elements of the new rail strategy to be implemented in partnership with Network Rail and local rail operators over the period of the third LTP.
- 8.4.9 The scheme which is the subject of this application for planning permission would directly support the aims of the LTP3, to improve and encourage use of rails services in order to assist in reducing the economic, social and environmental impacts resulting from the highway congestion and journey time delays across South East Northumberland.
- 8.4.10 It is therefore considered that the Northumberland Local Transport Plan (LTP3) can be given substantial weight in the determination of this planning application. The scheme is considered to directly support the delivery of a scheme which is identified as a strategic transport priority for the council.

## **8.5 North East Combined Authority Transport Manifesto (2016)**

- 8.5.1 The North East Combined Authority was established in April 2014 and brought together the seven councils which serve County Durham, Gateshead, Newcastle, North Tyneside, Northumberland, South Tyneside and Sunderland. The ambition of NECA is to create the best possible conditions for growth in jobs, investment and living standards, making the North East an excellent place to live and work.
- 8.5.2 NECA recognises that effective transport networks are key to economic growth and opportunity for all. This includes links with the North East and connectivity with the rest of the UK, Europe and the rest of the world. The North East Combined Authority’s ambition, as set out

in its Transport Manifesto, is to provide affordable, attractive, reliable, safe, healthy transport choices for businesses, residents and visitors while enhancing the environment.

- 8.5.3 The NECA's Transport Manifesto supports the opening of new stations on existing rail lines, including the upgrading of freight-only sections for passenger use.
- 8.5.4 The scheme which is the subject of this application for planning permission would directly support the aims of the NECA's Transport Manifesto, to re-introduce passenger services on an existing freight line and to improve the accessibility and connectivity of South East Northumberland to the wider North East.
- 8.5.5 It is therefore considered that the NECA Transport Manifesto can be given moderate weight in the determination of this planning application. The scheme is considered to directly support the delivery of a scheme which is identified as a strategic transport priority for the North East Combined Authority.

## **8.6 Transport for the North Strategic Transport Plan (2019)**

- 8.6.1 Transport for the North (TfN) is the first statutory sub-national transport body in the United Kingdom. It was formed in 2018 to make the case for strategic transport improvements across the North of England. As a partnership, TfN brings the North's local transport authorities together with Network Rail, Highways England and HS2 Ltd and Central Government, to facilitate discussions on the transport infrastructure needed to drive transformational growth and rebalance the UK economy.
- 8.6.2 TfN's Strategic Transport Plan specifically supports the re-instatement of passenger services on the Northumberland Line, between Ashington and Blyth; this rail intervention is prioritised by TfN in the shorter term, in the context of the Department for Transport's Rail Network Enhancements Pipeline process.
- 8.6.3 The scheme which is the subject of this application for planning permission would directly support the aims of the TfN Strategic Transport Plan, to re-introduce passenger services on the Northumberland Line.
- 8.6.4 It is therefore considered that the TfN Strategic Transport Plan can be given moderate weight in the determination of this planning application. The scheme is considered to directly support the delivery of a scheme which is identified as a strategic transport priority for the Transport for the North.

## **8.7 The Road to Zero Strategy (2018)**

- 8.7.1 Whilst there are local policies pertaining to climate change within the Northumberland Local Plan, the climate crisis and the measures set out by Government in the 'Road to Zero: Next steps towards cleaner road transport and delivering our Industrial Strategy' is a material consideration in the determination of this planning application.

- 8.7.2 The Strategy states that in 2016, road transport accounted for 91% of UK greenhouse gas emissions in transport<sup>20</sup>.
- 8.7.3 The amount CO2 emissions per passenger per train is 14 grams. In contrast, a private car can produce 158 grams per passenger<sup>21</sup>. As such, a modal shift to public transport has the potential to dramatically decrease our national energy consumption.
- 8.7.4 The scheme which is the subject of this application for planning permission would support the aims of the 'Road to Zero' strategy, by seeking to establish a viable alternative to the private car that may encourage a modal shift from car to rail travel. Such a modal shift would likely result in air quality.
- 8.7.5 It is therefore considered that the 'Road to Zero' strategy can be given moderate weight in the determination of this planning application. The scheme is considered to support Government's ambitions to move toward zero emissions.

## **8.8 Northumberland Economic Strategy (2018)**

- 8.8.1 The Northumberland Economy Strategy 2019 – 2024 was formally approved by the council's cabinet in December 2018. The council's ambition as set out in the strategy is to deliver inclusive, industrial growth to support a more productive, prosperous economy.
- 8.8.2 Priority 5 of the Economic Strategy states that one of the key deliverables to better connect the county is:

*"Invest in high quality passenger transport including the reopening of the Northumberland to Newcastle rail line to passengers."*

- 8.8.3 The scheme which is the subject of this application for planning permission would directly support the aims of the Northumberland Economic Strategy, to reopen the Northumberland Line to passenger services.
- 8.8.4 It is therefore considered that the Northumberland Economic Strategy can be given substantial weight in the determination of this planning application. The scheme is considered to directly support the delivery of a scheme which is identified as a strategic economic priority for the council.

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<sup>20</sup> Page 28 The Road to Zero: Next steps towards cleaner road transport and delivering our Industrial Strategy (2018)

<sup>21</sup> P79 Transport for the North Strategic Transport Plan 2019



## **8.9 Nexus Metro and Local Rail Strategy (2016)**

- 8.9.1 The Nexus Metro and Local Rail Strategy, produced in conjunction with the North East Combined Authority, sets out the proposals for the improved integration between local rail and Metro services, and the potential to exploit under-used and disused railway assets and alignments across the North East region.
- 8.9.2 The Metro and Local Rail Strategy identifies that the restoration of passenger rail services to the Blyth, Bedlington and Ashington areas is a strategic priority for the NECA because of the significant regenerative benefits of the scheme.
- 8.9.3 The strategy identifies that Northumberland Park would provide an interchange station to enable easy access between rail, Metro and local bus services – given that park and ride facilities are already available at the station.
- 8.9.4 It is therefore considered that the Metro and Local Rail Strategy can be given moderate weight in the determination of this planning application. The scheme is considered to directly support the delivery of a scheme which is identified as a strategic priority for both NECA and Nexus.

## **8.10 Summary**

- 8.10.1 There are various considerations that are material to the determination of this planning application. This section has sought to identify and apportion due weight to each of those considerations, to assist the local planning authority in the determination of this application.
- 8.10.2 There are no material considerations that would be sufficient either individually or in conjunction with other considerations that would preclude the granting of planning permission for the submitted scheme.

## 9 Case for Planning Permission to be granted

### 9.1 Introduction

- 9.1.1 This section brings together the information presented within this planning application and provides a reasoned conclusion for the support of this application.

### 9.2 Accordance with local and national policies

- 9.2.1 This planning statement has demonstrated that the proposed scheme accords with the relevant national and local planning policies.
- 9.2.2 This statement has identified the many and various economic, social and environmental benefits that will be delivered as a result of the proposed development, including the potential for the development to act as a catalyst for further investment and wider regeneration within Newsham and South East Northumberland more widely.
- 9.2.3 The scheme will improve the opportunities for use of alternative modes of transport to the private car, helping to better meet the needs of those without access to the private car and encouraging those with access to the private car to consider using a more sustainable mode of travel, which will help reduce carbon emissions and deliver many environmental and health benefits including improving local air quality.
- 9.2.4 The scheme represents a sustainable development; the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development and therefore this scheme should be supported.
- 9.2.5 The material considerations that pertain to the scheme have been identified. This has included demonstrating that there are no material considerations which would prevent the approval of the scheme.
- 9.2.6 It is requested that the scheme which is the subject of this planning application therefore be approved as submitted.

### 9.3 Benefits of the Scheme

- 9.3.1 This planning statement has demonstrated that the scheme accords with both local and national planning policies in terms of encouraging use of public transport through the provision of improved access to the railway network.
- 9.3.2 The scheme will deliver a range of economic, social and environmental benefits.
- 9.3.3 The economic benefits of the scheme include:

- The scheme will deliver the transport infrastructure which is required to attract inward investment, create additional employment opportunities, enhance economic vitality and encourage further growth in South East Northumberland.
- The development will facilitate increased access for residents to local people to employment and training opportunities throughout South East Northumberland. The provision of passenger rail services at this location, could encourage employers to locate to this part of Newsham especially given its proximity to the village centre and existing bus services.

#### 9.3.4 The social benefits of the scheme include:

- The scheme will improve journey times for residents, local people, and those wishing to travel from Ashington to Newcastle, including onward journeys from Newcastle's central station.
- The development will provide a safe and secure railway station, with appropriate lighting and CCTV camera provision to encourage all parts of the community to use the transport services and the railway station.
- The nature of the scheme will encourage a sub-modal shift to more sustainable transport methods within the local area.
- The development will incorporate ramp and stepped access to the platform and signage to the railway suitable for users with disabilities.
- The development includes facilitating infrastructure improvements to the cycle and footways adjacent to the site, providing a safe and pleasant route for pedestrians and cyclists.
- The development would provide transport infrastructure that would encourage sustainable travel and would accommodate projected future growth in Newsham in terms of population, employment and housing.
- The development will contribute to building strong, vibrant and healthy communities by encouraging social inclusion, improving the accessibility of local services and the use of sustainable travel modes.
- The development will make it physically simpler and more convenient to use and access public transport infrastructure in Newsham. The consequential modal shift will assist in improving local air quality.
- The scheme will deliver environmental and physical improvements to the site, in doing so it will assist in the regeneration of the area and of Newsham more widely.

#### 9.3.5 The environmental benefits of the scheme include:

- Encouraging the use of healthy and sustainable modes of transport including walking, cycling and use of improved public transport.
- Facilitating a sub-modal shift to sustainable transport methods, reducing greenhouse gas emissions from a reduction of cars on the road network.
- The development will make it physically more convenient to use and access public transport infrastructure in Newsham. The consequential modal shift will assist in improving local air quality
- The scheme includes the installation of a sustainable urban drainage system which will alleviate flooding and allow the immediate area to accommodate extreme rainfall events with less risk of adverse impacts on adjacent land uses
- The development will be undertaken in accordance with a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) and a Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP), which will minimise the environmental impacts traditionally associated with urban redevelopment schemes.
- The development will decrease dependence on the private car for residents and local people, in so doing it will reduce carbon emissions
- The development will implement a strategy for providing a structured approach to landscaping at the site; introducing native shrub and tree planting

9.3.6 The economic, social and environmental benefits associated with the development would be delivered jointly and simultaneously. As such, the proposed development can be considered to represent a sustainable development.

9.3.7 It is therefore requested that planning permission be granted for the scheme as submitted.

## 9.4 Conditions

9.4.1 Planning conditions, when used properly, can enhance the quality of development and enable development to proceed where it would otherwise have been necessary to refuse planning permission, by mitigating the adverse effects.

9.4.2 The objectives of planning are best served when the power to impose conditions on a planning permission is exercised in a way that is clearly seen to be fair, reasonable and practicable.

9.4.3 This section identifies and summarises those matters for which conditions on a planning permission may be required, to enable the planning permission to be granted expeditiously.

9.4.4 Section 70(1)(a) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 enables a local planning authority in granting planning permission to impose “*such conditions as they think fit.*” This power needs to be interpreted in light of material considerations such as the National Planning

Policy Framework, the supporting guidance on the use of planning conditions, and relevant case law.

- 9.4.5 A pre-commencement condition must not be imposed on the grant of permission without the written agreement of the applicant except in the circumstances set out in the Town and Country Planning (Pre-Commencement Conditions) Regulations 2018.
- 9.4.6 Paragraph 55 of the NPPF stipulates that planning conditions should be kept to a minimum, and use only where they satisfy the following tests:
1. necessary;
  2. relevant to planning;
  3. relevant to the development to be permitted;
  4. enforceable;
  5. precise; and
  6. reasonable in all other respects.
- 9.4.7 The plans, surveys, assessments and other information submitted in support of this planning application is considered to be sufficient to demonstrate to the satisfaction of the local planning authority that the scheme would accord with the relevant policies and that there are no material considerations that ought to preclude the granting of a planning permission for the scheme.
- 9.4.8 Although a considerable amount of information is submitted in support of the planning application, it is anticipated that additional details may be required to enable the local planning authority to be assured that the proposed mitigation will be sufficient to deliver the environmental and other benefits that pertain to the scheme. In these situations, to avoid potential prolongation of the determination period, the applicant would wish the local planning authority to attach a condition to a planning permission requiring the submission of a scheme with the additional details/ design information.
- 9.4.9 In line with the tests set out in paragraph 55, this section of the Planning Statement seeks to present an overview of those matters which could be the subject of conditions on a planning permission, in order to seek to avoid possible delays to determination of the planning application as a result of requests from the local planning authority for further information.
- 9.4.10 The applicants would respectfully request the opportunity to review the wording of any draft conditions which are to be imposed, prior to the granting of a permission.
- 9.4.11 Figure 9.1 presents an overview of those matters which could be the subject of conditions on a planning permission. The applicant would respectfully request an opportunity to discuss and agree the scope, extent, and nature of any conditions, including seeking to agree an appropriate trigger point for the discharge (e.g. pre-commencement, pre-operation etc).

Condition Subject	Relevant submitted information	Suggested scope of condition
Design	Proposed Plans, Design and Access Statement	Submission of external materials samples, boundary treatment details, CCTV scheme, bin store details
Trees	Proposed Plans, Arboricultural Impact Assessment	Submission of arboricultural method statement, Tree protection plan
Landscaping	Proposed Plans, Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment	Submission of finished site level details, hard and soft landscaping details, landscape management plan, platform furniture details, signage details
Ecology	Biodiversity Statement, Biodiversity Net Gain Statement	Submission of a scheme for biodiversity enhancement
Construction	Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan	Submission of a construction management plan/ method statement
Contaminated Land	Coal Mining Risk Assessment, Geo-technical Desk Based Assessment	Submission of a remediation scheme, verification report, unexpected contamination details if found
Drainage	Proposed Plans, Flood Risk and Drainage Assessment. Hydraulic modelling to be undertaken and submitted during determination	Submission of a drainage scheme incorporating sustainable drainage details
Lighting	Proposed Plans, Lighting Statement	Submission of a lighting detail
Highways	Proposed Plans, Transport Assessment, Stage 1 Road Safety Audit to be submitted during determination of application.	Submission of cycle storage details, s278 works details, car park management plan, EV charging details, bridleway/ public rights of way details. RSA stage 1 is anticipated to be submitted during determination. Notwithstanding this submission there may be a requirement for further safety audits and these may be the subject of condition(s) attached to the grant of a planning permission
Archaeology	Heritage Statement, further evaluation to be submitted during determination	Submission of a mitigation scheme
Noise	Noise Assessment	Submission of a mitigation scheme; details of noise attenuation fencing
Air Quality	Air Quality Assessment	Submission of a mitigation scheme

*Figure 9.1 Schedule of proposed conditions*

- 9.4.12 Figure 9.1 has been drafted to include only those matters which could potentially be pre-commencement or pre-operational conditions and does not include those matters which are likely to be the subject of 'compliance' conditions.
- 9.4.13 It is respectfully requested that the precise wording of all conditions, including suitable trigger points for discharge where relevant, be agreed with the applicant prior to determination of this application for planning permission.

## **9.5 Additional information**

- 9.5.1 In the event that additional information, clarification or further details concerning the proposed development are required during the determination period this will be provided upon request.
- 9.5.2 The applicants wish to continue to work closely with the local planning authority to ensure the application can be determined as expeditiously as possible. To this end, we are content to attend meetings as required by officers.

# Appendix A– Economic Assessment

## Overview

Passenger train services operating on the railway line between Ashington and Newcastle were withdrawn in 1964 as part of the Beeching Cuts; the rail network in this area continues to be used for freight and as a diversion route for East Coast Main Line passenger services. The re-opening of the Northumberland Line between Ashington and Newcastle is a key priority of Northumberland County Council to improve connectivity within this area of South East Northumberland and to the wider North East region.

The proposed scheme will deliver five new stations and upgrade/expand a sixth station to provide interchange with the Tyne & Wear Metro network at Northumberland Park. The route of the Northumberland Line is shown in the figure below.

### *The Northumberland Line Scheme Extents*



The Outline and Updated Business Cases for the Northumberland Line scheme demonstrate that the scheme delivers high value for money, improves travel times by public transport within, and beyond, South East Northumberland, and provides regeneration benefits to the area. The following sections of this report summarise the economic benefits associated with a station being located at Newsham, to the south of the town of Blyth.

## Newsham

Newsham is one of two proposed rail stations for the town of Blyth, the second station is proposed at Bebside. The site at Newsham is situated to the south of Blyth town centre and accessed from the A1061, one of two key routes into Blyth from the A189 Spine Road. Blyth is the largest settlement in Northumberland and constitutes a significant employment base for the local population and in-commuters, and provides homes for people who work, shop and spend outside the town. Indeed, the town is regarded in the Northumberland emerging Local Plan as a 'main commercial centre' due to its good level of retail provision and its role as a community hub for a large population. The main employment zones are located on the northern and eastern edges of the town, with recent housing developments also being located in similar peripheral locations.

The town of Blyth developed around the coal mining and shipbuilding industries, with the salt trade, fishing and the railways also playing an important part. At the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century however, these industries had all but vanished from Blyth, with the town being seriously impacted by this decline in its principal industries. Although new industries have developed, the town still suffers from many of the socio-economic problems associated with the decline in the shipbuilding and mining industries, which has resulted in areas



with high levels of deprivation when assessed through the index of multiple deprivation. Particular problems include higher than average levels of unemployment, poor educational attainment and a higher than average percentage of the population in poor health.

Although the town of Blyth has suffered since the decline in the shipbuilding and mining industries, there has been much investment in the town in recent years with large scale regeneration projects. This includes investment in the town centre and revamping of the Quayside, which has seen the area transformed into a peaceful open space. Moving forward, Blyth Estuary has been identified as a strategic employment area and accommodates around 220 hectares of land. It is being actively promoted to the renewable and low carbon energy, advanced manufacturing and offshore sectors, and is regarded as having the potential to become an 'innovation hub' in the North East Strategic Economic Plan in this field of activity.

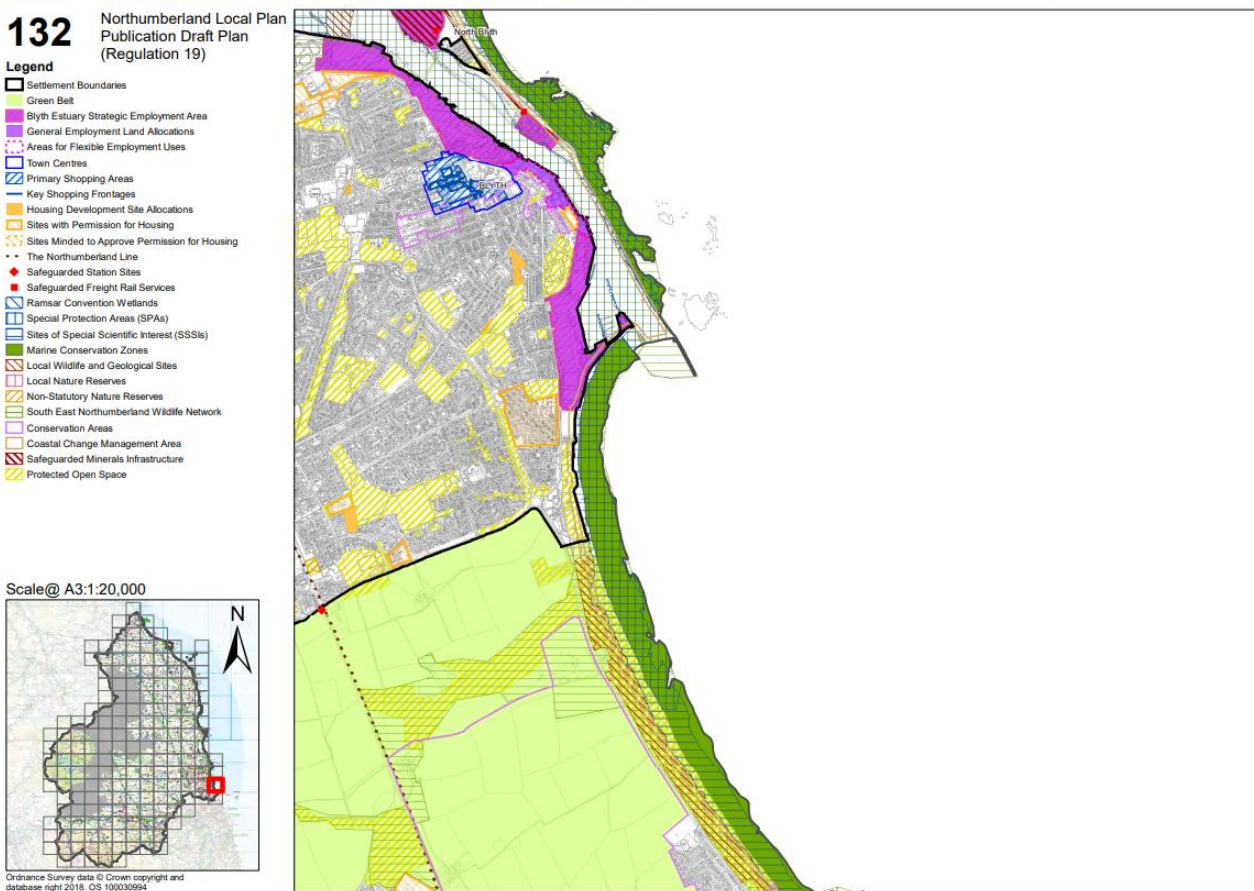
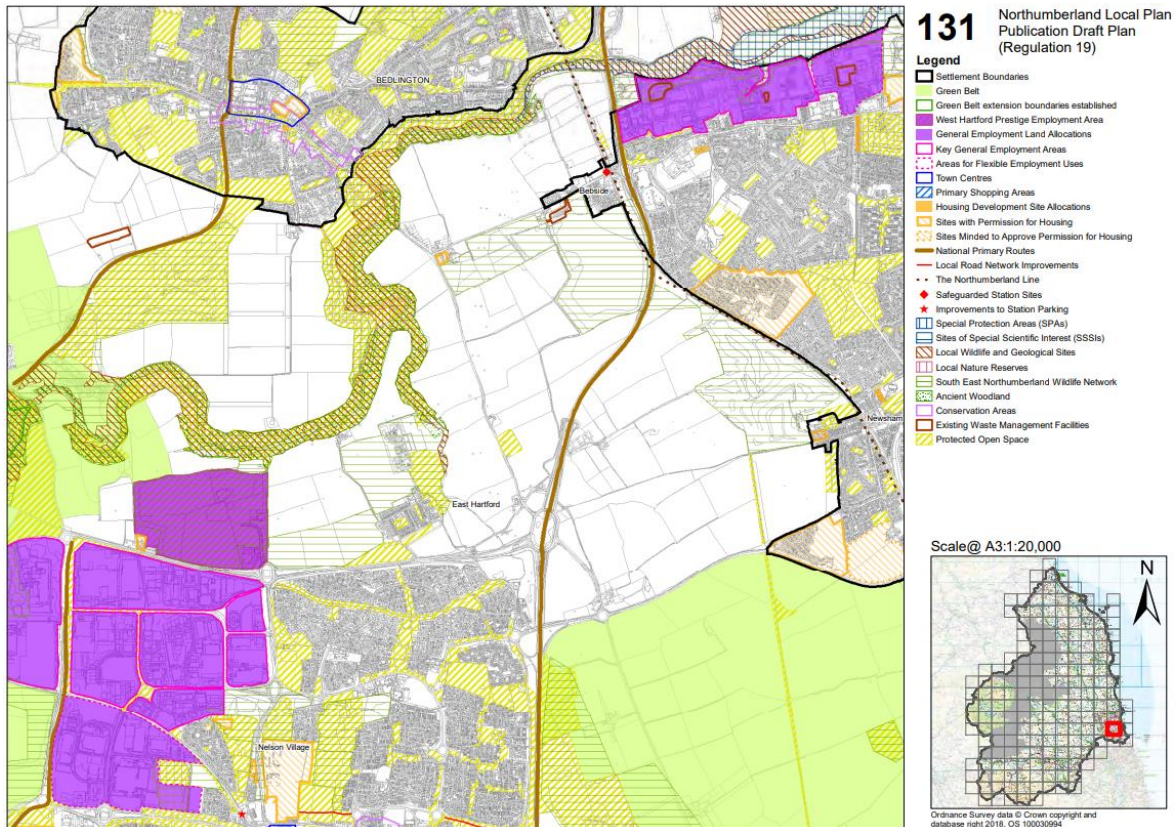
The development of the Blyth Estuary presents a real opportunity to grow the economy of Blyth and create private sector economic growth in the North East region, which is so essential for an area currently heavily dependent on the public sector for work. Not only will this benefit the resident population of Blyth, it will also provide employment opportunities for residents from outside of Blyth to strengthen linkages already present; census 2011 showed that 50% of journey to work trips with a destination into Blyth come from outside the area, with key origin points being the wider Northumberland area and Tyne and Wear. However, to ensure this economic growth becomes a reality, it is essential that the links are in place to ensure the easy movement of people and goods to and from the proposed development. This means removing bottlenecks, which currently exist on the highway network, such as congestion on the A1061 Laverock Hall Road, and improving the public transport connections to the area.

Alongside the potential for development in industry in Blyth, the Local Plan for Northumberland also sets out provision for 1,800 new homes between 2016 and 2036. As demonstrated in the figures overleaf, some of this proposed development is ideally located to take advantage of a railway station to the south of Blyth.

The proposed station at Newsham will be accessed via the A1061 Laverock Hall Road. This is one of two key routes into Blyth, which currently suffers from congestion on the approach to the A189 Spine Road. A train station in this location will provide alternative opportunities for commuting into and out of Blyth, and will reduce traffic levels on the A1061 at the western end of the corridor.

Blyth is also served by an extensive bus network, which connects residents of Blyth with education, employment and leisure opportunities in South East Northumberland and the Tyne and Wear area. The bus network provides a vital lifeline to many residents of Blyth, with car ownership being much lower than national levels and residents reliant on buses to access key services; according to the 2011 census, 31% of households in Blyth had no access to a car. However, despite the reliance of Blyth residents on public transport connections, bus journey times are much slower than that of the private car; which limits the potential for residents to access opportunities outside of the local area. The provision of a new public transport link will help to overcome some of these issues.

## Northumberland Local Plan: Blyth

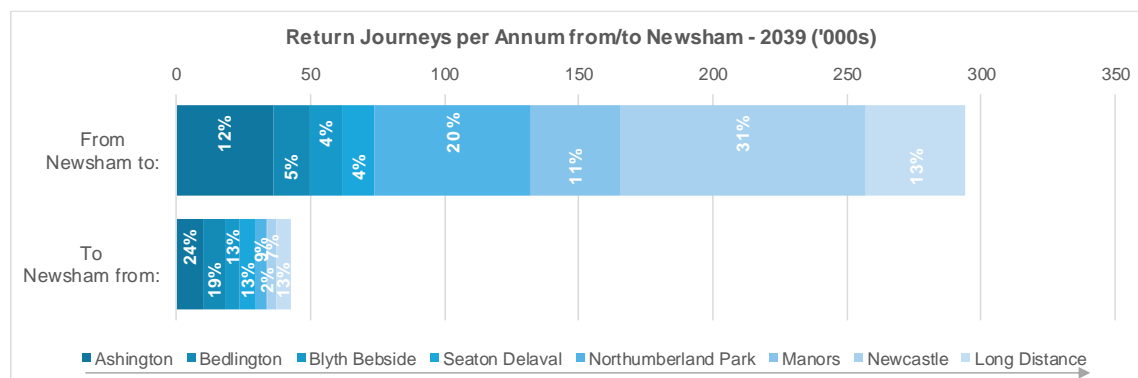


Source: Northumberland County Council<sup>22</sup>

## Economic Assessment

The Northumberland Line scheme is forecast to generate 1.45m annual return journeys by 2039<sup>23</sup> across the entire scheme. Newsham station is mainly an origin station (nearly 90% of all demand are outbound trips) and it is forecast to generate 20% of all rail demand and attract 3% of all rail demand. The figure below shows the distribution of annual rail demand at this station, which is forecast to have circa 670,000 entries/exits by 2039.

### Distribution of Annual Rail Demand (2039)



### Source of Rail Patronage

Nearly 45% of the demand originating from Newsham station uses the Northumberland Line to travel to Newcastle Central station or beyond. In fact, ¾ of all outbound journeys travel south either to or beyond Northumberland Park. Over half of all inbound passengers to Newsham originate from stations located north, the majority from Ashington (circa 25% of all inbound trips) and Bedlington (almost 20%).

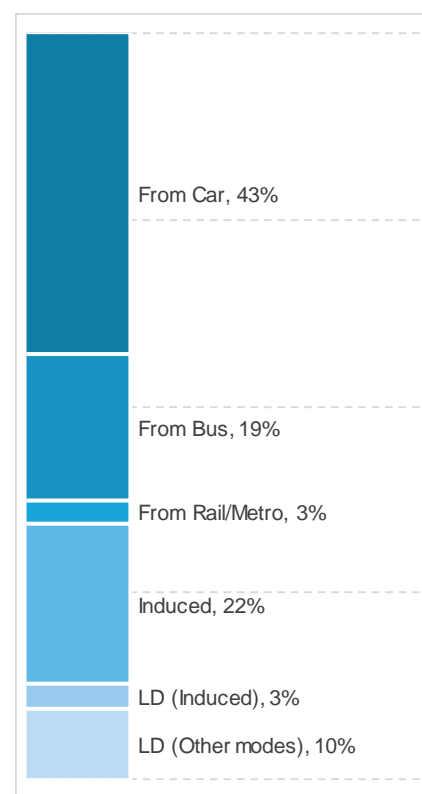
It is estimated that by 2039, in the average morning peak hour, 162 passengers will board a train at Newsham, with 23 passengers alighting at this destination.

The figure to the right summarises the source of patronage at Newsham in the future forecast year of 2039.

Modal transfer from car is the primary source of demand for the scheme at this station, accounting for over 45% of rail demand (once long-distance movements are considered), whilst just over a fifth of new rail demand has transferred from bus. Demand transferring from existing rail services (via Cramlington) or existing Metro services (via Northumberland Park) represents less than 5% of the total rail patronage.

25% of passenger journeys using this station are estimated to be new journeys that would not have been made previously in the absence of the scheme.

The introduction of the rail service will provide a quicker public transport option 'door-to-door' from Newsham into central Newcastle, other Tyne & Wear destinations, and neighbouring towns, than can currently be offered by rail or bus. It will also be a more

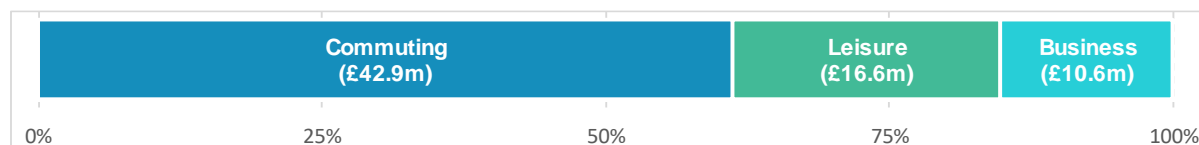


<sup>22</sup> <https://northumberland-consult.objective.co.uk/portal/planning/localplan/reg19?>

<sup>23</sup> These forecasts are aligned to a service proposition that has 2 trains per hour operating between Ashington and Newcastle, taking 32 minutes. Rail fares would be set at a similar level to those used on the Tyne & Wear Metro.

competitive option for existing car users to consider, especially once the full times and costs of the journey are taken into consideration. The User Time Saving (UTS) benefits generated by Newsham passengers (£70.1m) represent 20% of the scheme's total UTS benefits. The majority of these benefits are experienced by commuting journeys (61%), 24% on leisure journeys and the remaining 15% on business journeys, as presented in the following figure.

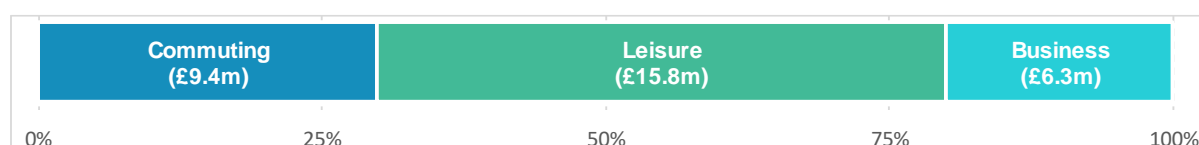
#### *User Time Saving Benefits Generated by Newsham Station Demand (£ million, 2010 prices)*



The Northumberland Line has two impacts on road usage; it removes car journeys across the rail corridor through mode transfer to rail, whilst some new short distance local journeys by car will be generated around stations. The overall net impact is a reduction in car-km and a decongestion benefit. By 2039, the annual net impact in car-km associated with rail demand generated at Newsham station is forecast to be a reduction of 2.59m car-km (a 3.70m reduction in car-km due to modal transfer balanced by a 1.11m increase in car-km associated with local station access).

Demand at Newsham station is forecast to contribute 22% of the scheme's total decongestion benefits (circa £31.5 million); decongestion benefits by purpose are presented in the below figure.

#### *Decongestion Benefits Generated by Newsham Station Demand (£ million, 2010 prices)*



The wider economic benefits of the scheme comprise the sum of the agglomeration and the labour supply benefits and have been estimated at a Local Authority District level. Since the forecast model only provided full travel costs for movements within Northumberland at LAD level, it is not possible to further disaggregate the outputs at a station-by-station level. Outputs represent a conservative estimate of the overall benefits of the scheme as only Northumberland impacts have been estimated.

The welfare impact of agglomeration (effectivity density) impacts resulting from closer perceived proximity between individuals and businesses account for 93% of the welfare benefits estimated. Labour supply impacts, related to employment effects derived from improved accessibility on a region poorly connected to employment centres, accounts for the remaining 7% of wider economic benefits. The below table presents the present value of wider economic benefits from the scheme, over 60 years.

#### *Northumberland Line Wider Economic Benefits (£ million, 2010 prices):*

Welfare Impacts	Agglomeration	Labour Supply	Total
Estimated Benefits (£m)	£47.2	£3.3	£50.5

The quantification of the wider economic benefits from the scheme has been endorsed through consultation with businesses, organisations and the general public, who agree that the scheme will improve connectivity to employment opportunities, increase the labour catchment area for businesses and improve the attractiveness of Blyth as an area in which to invest. This should help to reverse the socio-economic problems that currently exist in Blyth, and result in a much more prosperous future for residents of the town.

## **Summary**

Blyth is the largest town in South East Northumberland and constitutes a significant employment base for the local population and in-commuters, and provides homes for people who work, shop and spend outside the town. It suffered decline following the closure of the mining and shipbuilding industries at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, but recent years have seen investment in the town, with further opportunities for the future. Despite investment, the area still has high levels of deprivation, with key issues including high levels of unemployment, low educational attainment and a high percentage of the population considered to be in poor health.

Connecting Blyth to the heavy rail network at Newsham will bring significant benefits for both residents and people visiting the town. Rail will provide quicker journey times to key destinations, which are faster than the bus and are comparable to the car. This will not only improve accessibility to employment, education and leisure opportunities, it will also encourage modal shift from existing car users, and have environmental benefits through a reduction in traffic congestion and car emissions.

With regards to passenger numbers, by 2039, Newsham station is anticipated to have around 670,000 entries and exists at the station. The modelling predicts that users will use the rail line to travel to/from Newsham and other communities along the Northumberland Line, with other users traveling to Newcastle or beyond. Notably, 25% of rail trips will be made by people who would not have made the trip had the passenger service not been introduced.

The Northumberland Line presents Blyth with an unprecedented opportunity to help address deprivation, support investment in the town, and connect residents to the wider North East region. This will help to reverse the socio-economic problems that currently exist in Blyth, and result in a much more prosperous future for residents of the town.



# 10 Appendix B- Adopted and Emerging Local Plan Policies Map

## 10.1 Emerging Northumberland Local Plan policies map



### Legend



















- Settlement Boundaries
- Green Belt
- Green Belt extension boundaries established
- Blyth Estuary Strategic Employment Area
- Round 2 Enterprise Zones
- General Employment Land Allocations
- Key General Employment Areas
- Areas for Flexible Employment Uses
- Town Centres
- Primary Shopping Areas
- Key Shopping Frontages
- Housing Development Site Allocations
- Sites with Permission for Housing
- Sites Minded to Approve Permission for Housing
- National Primary Routes
- Local Road Network Improvements
- The Northumberland Line
- Safeguarded Station Sites
- Special Protection Areas (SPAs)
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs)
- Local Wildlife and Geological Sites
- Local Nature Reserves
- Non-Statutory Nature Reserves
- South East Northumberland Wildlife Network
- Ancient Woodland
- Conservation Areas
- Coastal Change Management Area
- Safeguarded Minerals Infrastructure
- Ellington Road Landfill Site
- Existing Waste Management Facilities
- Protected Open Space















## 10.2 Adopted Blyth Valley Local Plan policies map








Policy / Proposal	Chapter 2 General Development
	<b>SETTLEMENT LIMITS AND GREEN BELT</b> (Sections 2.3 and 2.4)
G6	<b>Settlement Limits</b> Beyond these Policies G8 to G10 and Policies H24 to H26 will be applied as appropriate
G7	<b>Green Belt</b> Within which Policies G8, G10, H24 and H26 will be applied











Policy / Proposal	Chapter 3 Housing
	<b>HOUSING LAND ALLOCATIONS etc.</b> (Sections 3.3 to 3.5)
H7,10,13 H10	<b>Land Allocated for General Housing Purposes</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Where Land within the Allocated Area yet to be Identified for Community Uses, including Open Space</li> </ul>
H7,10	<b>SD</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Special Design Sites On these sites, Policy H21 (vi) will apply</li> </ul>
H14 (i)	<b>(A)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Where an element of Affordable Housing Proposed</li> </ul>
H18	<b>D</b> <b>Land where Low Density Housing Favoured</b>
H20 (iii)	<b>I(Sh)</b> <b>Land Allocated for Housing with a View to Achieving Improvements to Local Shopping Centres</b>
	<b>ENVIRONMENT OF HOUSING AREAS</b> (Section 3.6)
H21 (iv)	<b>Envg</b> <b>Pilot Area for Energy Efficient Housing where Proposal SW1 will be applied</b>











PLAN AREA BOUNDARY	
Policy / Proposal	Chapter 1 Environmental Protection and Enhancement
	<b>NATURE CONSERVATION</b> (Section 1.2)
E1	 <b>Nature Conservation - Designated Sites</b> Numbered according to Table E-P1, (page 2)
E2 (i)(c)	<b>Wildlife Corridors</b>  Existing  Potential
E2 (ii)	 Proposals for Existing or Proposed Open Space Areas: <b>(1) Nature Conservation Enhancement Measures</b>
	<b>LANDSCAPE</b> (Section 1.3)
E4	 <b>Areas of High Landscape Value</b>
E5 (i)	 <b>Mature / Semi-Natural Woodland to be Retained</b>
E5 (ii)	 <b>Plantation Woodland to be Retained</b>
E6 + other proposals	 Proposals for Existing or Proposed Open Space Areas: <b>(2) Landscaping Proposals</b>
E6 + other proposals	 <b>Other Landscaping Proposals, (linear etc.)</b>
	<b>GROUND AND WATER</b> (Section 1.5)
E9	 <b>+5 Metre O.D. Contour, below which Policy E9 (ii) will be applied</b>
E11	 <b>Proposed Reclamation of Derelict Land</b>
	<b>THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT</b> (Section 1.6)
E15	 <b>Conservation Areas</b>
E16 (ii)	 <b>Positive Measures within Conservation Areas</b>
E16 (iii)	 <b>Possible Extension of Conservation Area Coverage</b>
E18 (ii)	 <b>Open Space Edges, Protection of</b> <b>SEE ALSO UNDER "COMMUNITY FACILITIES - OPEN SPACE" BELOW</b>
E19	  <b>Local Environmental Enhancements (other than purely landscaping)</b>
	<b>POLLUTION CONTROL</b> (Section 1.8)
E25	 <b>Aircraft Noise Exposure Category B</b>










Policy / Proposal	Chapter 4 Community Facilities
	<b>OUTDOOR PLAYING SPACE</b> (Section 4.3)
C2 (i)	 Proposals for Existing or Proposed Open Space Areas: <b>(3) Proposed Outdoor Sports Pitches</b>
C2 (v)	 <b>Floodlit All Weather Sports Surfaces</b>
C4 (i)	 <b>Proposed Neighbourhood Equipped Area for Play (for Children)</b>
C4 (i),(ii)	 <b>Proposed Local Equipped Area for Play (for Children)</b>
C4 (ii)	 <b>Zones of Shortfall of Children's Equipped Playspace</b>
	<b>OPEN SPACE</b> (Section 4.4)
C7 (i)	 Proposals for Existing or Proposed Open Space Areas: <b>(4) Proposed for Public Open Space / Parkland, not necessarily Involving Nature Conservation, Landscaping nor Playing Pitches</b>
C7 (ii), (E2, E18)	 <b>Open Space to be Protected from Development for Strategic and/or Nature Conservation Reasons and/or Visual Reasons (SEE LIST AT APPENDIX XXII) Numbered according to Appendix XXII</b>
C7 (ii), (E2, E18)	 <b>As above - Corridors of Open Space</b>
	<b>ALLOTMENTS</b> (Section 4.5)
C8	 <b>Element of Allotment Use to be Retained</b>
	<b>INDOOR SPORTS PROVISION</b> (Section 4.6)
C9	 <b>Indoor Sports Facilities: Development / Retention of</b>
	<b>EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES</b> (Section 4.7)
C10 (ii)	 <b>Land Allocated for Community Facilities: <b>(1) Education Purposes</b></b>
	<b>SHOPS AND RELATED SERVICES</b> (Section 4.8)
C14, (B1, CC1)	 <b>Boundary of Central Shopping Areas, Blyth Town Centre and Cramlington Town Centre</b>
C14 (i), C17 (ii), B1, CC1 (d), SD2	 <b>Retail Frontage Policies:</b> Blyth Town Centre (Policy B1 - Blocks separately lettered according to Policy); Cramlington Town Centre (Proposal CC1 (d)); <b>Local Service Area:</b> Seaton Delaval - (Proposal SD2).
C16 (ii)	 <b>Corridor of Resistance of Further Large Scale Retail Proposals</b>












Policy / Proposal	Chapter 5 Leisure and Visitor Activities
	<b>ACCOMMODATION AND ATTRACTION OF VISITORS</b> (Sections 5.3 and 5.4)
L1 (i)	 <b>Hotel Proposal</b>
L2 (i)	 <b>Focus for Increased Leisure and Visitor Activity</b>
L2 (ii)	 <b>Tourism Potential to be Investigated</b>
	<b>COUNTRYSIDE LEISURE</b> (Sections 5.5 and 5.6)
L3 (i)	 <b>Enhancement of Linear Visitor Destinations</b>
L4 (ii)	 <b>Large Scale, Formal Countryside Recreation Proposal</b>



Policy / Proposal	Chapter 4 Community Facilities	
C17 (iii)		Local Shopping Centre to be Retained
C17 (iii)(b)		Local Shopping Centre to be Retained, where Additional Facilities may be Located
C17 (iii)(c)		Local Shopping Centre to be Retained with an Improvement Sought
C17 (iii)(d)		Local Shopping Centre, High Pit: Special Policy
C17 (iv)		Village Shopping Policy - Settlements where Policy C17 (iv) will be applied
C17 (v) C17 (iii)(b)		Land Allocated for Community Facilities: (2) Shopping development
<b>COMMUNITY HEALTH FACILITIES</b> (Section 4.9)		
C18 (iii) & (iv)		Land Allocated for Community Facilities: (3) Health Facilities
<b>CULTURAL FACILITIES</b> (Section 4.10)		
C19 (i)		Land Allocated for Community Facilities: (4) Miscellaneous Community Facilities
C19 (ii)		Community Building Proposal
C19 (iv & v)		Arts Proposal

Policy / Proposal	Chapter 6 Work Activity	
<b>WORK ACTIVITY RELATED PROPOSALS</b> (Sections 6.2 to 6.5)		
W1, W2		Land for Work Activity: (1) Existing
W1, W2		Land for Work Activity: (2) Proposed
W1		Identified for Local / General Employment and Business Park Use
W1 (ii & iii)		Identified for Local / General Employment and Business Park Use, involving some restriction on the range of uses permitted.
WP2		Identified for Local / General Employment and Business Park Use, where additional uses will be considered
W2		Land for Work Activities Requiring Individual Sites in Non-Estate Locations
W4		Port Development Area; ("r" notation used where there is a restriction on the range of uses permitted).
W4 (last part), BQ1		Port Related Uses Favoured
W7		Office Use Proposed - Class B1
B3, (W6, W7, W8, C22)		Boundary of Secondary Commercial Area, Blyth Town Centre

Policy / Proposal	Chapter 7 Movement	
<b>PEDESTRIANS / CYCLISTS ETC.,</b> (Section 7.2) ("NON-POWERED MOVEMENT")		
M2 (i)		Pedestrian Priority Areas
M2 (ii)		Footpath / Cycleway or Cycletrack Proposals
M2 (iii)		Pedestrian / Cycle Link between Severed Areas Sought
M2 (v), W3 (ii), WP1 (ii)		Retention / Enhancement of Public Access on Foot or Otherwise
<b>RAILWAYS / BUSES</b> (Sections 7.3 & 7.4)		
M4		Reintroduction of Passenger Trains plus Continued / Increased Freight Use
M4 (i & ii), (M5 (vi))		Land safeguarded for Railway Station Facility / Passenger Halt (to include Bus Interchange Facility)
M4 (iv)		Continued / Increased Freight Use
M5 (v)		Bus Only Link
M5 (vi)		Bus Station / Stopping Proposal

Policy / Proposal	Chapter 7 Movement	
<b>OTHER VEHICLES</b> (Section 7.5)		
M6 (iii)		Primary Vehicle Access Route to Blyth Town Centre
M6 (iii)		Secondary Vehicle Access Route to Blyth Town Centre
M6 (iii)		Improvement of Road for Traffic Management Purposes
M6 (iii)		Discouragement of Traffic from Existing Road
M7		Policy to Control Heavy Goods Traffic
M7 (i), BP4		Back Lane Policy, Blyth Town Centre
M8		Proposals for Protection / Enhancement of Parking Facilities
M9 (i)		Roads Providing Access into / within New Development
M9 (ii)		New Road Proposal within Settlement Limits
M10 (i)		New / Improved Road Proposal beyond Settlement Limits: Implementation sought within Plan Period
M10 (ii)		New / Improved Road Proposal beyond Settlement Limits: Implementation dependent on Development proceeding

## Appendix E

### Bebside station planning statement





# Planning Statement

Prepared in support of a planning  
application for a new railway  
station at Blyth Bebside

60601435-SLC-P-270-BB-PS

# Content

<b>1</b>	<b>Introduction to the scheme .....</b>	<b>2</b>
1.1	Overview of the scheme.....	2
1.2	Blyth Bebside Station.....	2
1.3	Applicant and Agent .....	2
1.4	The Scheme.....	2
1.5	Supporting Information.....	4
1.6	Structure of this statement.....	5
<b>2</b>	<b>Background to the Proposed Development .....</b>	<b>6</b>
2.1	Introduction .....	6
2.2	Ambitions for a new passenger service .....	6
2.3	Ambitions for the railway station at Blyth Bebside.....	9
2.4	Committed Development.....	10
<b>3</b>	<b>Pre-application Engagement .....</b>	<b>12</b>
3.1	Introduction .....	12
3.2	Pre-application enquiries.....	12
3.3	Changes to the proposed development since receipt of pre-application response ...	13
3.4	Request for a Screening Opinion (RfSO) .....	14
3.5	Pre-submission stakeholder consultation (2019) .....	14
3.6	Pre-submission stakeholder consultation (2020).....	15
3.7	Summary .....	15
<b>4</b>	<b>Site Context .....</b>	<b>16</b>
4.1	Introduction .....	16
4.2	Historical Context.....	16
4.3	Planning History of the Site.....	17
4.4	Site Selection .....	19
4.5	Site Description.....	19
4.6	Site-specific environmental and land use constraints .....	21

<b>5</b>	<b>Proposed Development .....</b>	<b>23</b>
5.1	Introduction .....	23
5.2	Planning Application .....	23
5.3	Reasons for the proposed development.....	23
5.4	Elements of proposed development.....	24
5.5	Summary .....	26
<b>6</b>	<b>Planning Policy Context .....</b>	<b>27</b>
6.1	Introduction .....	27
6.2	Northumberland Development Plan .....	28
6.3	Blyth Valley Borough Local Development Framework Core Strategy (July 2007).....	30
6.4	Blyth Valley Borough Local Development Framework Development Control Policies Development Plan Document (September 2007) .....	31
6.5	Blyth Valley District Local Plan (May 1999).....	33
6.6	Northumberland Local Plan Regulation 19 Publication Draft (May 2019).....	34
6.7	National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).....	41
<b>7</b>	<b>Planning Assessment.....</b>	<b>44</b>
7.1	Introduction .....	44
7.2	Accordance with Northumberland Development Plan .....	44
7.3	Blyth Valley Borough Local Development Framework Core Strategy (July 2007).....	45
7.4	Blyth Valley Borough Local Development Framework Development Control Policies Development Plan Document (September 2007) .....	47
7.5	Blyth Valley District Local Plan (May 1999).....	52
7.6	Accordance with Northumberland Local Plan Regulation 19 Publication Draft (May 2019)	55
7.7	Accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework.....	69
7.8	The Planning Balance .....	75
<b>8</b>	<b>Material Considerations .....</b>	<b>79</b>
8.1	Introduction .....	79
8.2	National Design Guide (2019).....	79
8.3	Blyth Valley Urban Design Guide and Public Realm Strategy Supplementary Planning Document (2008) .....	80
8.4	Northumberland Local Transport Plan (LTP3) (2011) .....	80
8.5	North East Combined Authority Transport Manifesto (2016) .....	81

8.6	Transport for the North Strategic Transport Plan (2019) .....	82
8.7	The Road to Zero Strategy (2018).....	82
8.8	Northumberland Economic Strategy (2018).....	83
8.9	Nexus Metro and Local Rail Strategy (2016).....	84
8.10	Summary .....	84
<b>9</b>	<b>Case for Planning Permission to be granted .....</b>	<b>85</b>
9.1	Introduction .....	85
9.2	Accordance with local and national policies.....	85
9.3	Benefits of the Scheme .....	85
9.4	Conditions .....	87
9.5	Additional information .....	89
<b>10</b>	<b>Appendix A- Bebside Economic Assessment.....</b>	<b>91</b>
<b>11</b>	<b>Appendix B- Adopted and Emerging Local Plan Policies Map.....</b>	<b>97</b>
11.1	Emerging Northumberland Local Plan policies map .....	97
11.2	Adopted Blyth Valley Local Plan policies map.....	97

## Table of Figures

Figure 1.1 Northumberland Line.....	3
Figure 1.2 Schedule of supporting information.....	5
Figure 2.1 Schedule of committed developments.....	10
Figure 4.1 Blyth and Tyne Railway Historic Network .....	16
Figure 4.2 Location of Bebside station (OS Map, 1898; Google Maps, 2020).....	17
Figure 4.3 Planning History .....	18
Figure 4.4 Red Line Boundary Plan .....	21
Figure 4.5 Extract from Emerging Northumberland Local Plan Reg 19 Draft and Adopted Blyth Valley Local Plan .....	21
Figure 5.1 Proposed Site Layout .....	24
Figure 5.2 Proposed pedestrian and cycle bridge location.....	25
Figure 5.3 Schedule development proposals.....	26
Figure 7.1 Summary of policy compliance.....	78
Figure 9.1 Schedule of proposed conditions.....	89

# Document Control

## Version Control

Version No.	Date	Created/Modified by	Notes
V.06	03/03/2021	Alannah Healey/Peter Gillan	Final

## Approvals

Version No.	Name of approver	Title & organisation	Date
V.06	Allen Creedy	SLC Property	03/03/2021

# 1 Introduction to the scheme

## 1.1 Overview of the scheme

- 1.1.1 The scheme seeks to re-introduce passenger services onto the existing freight line between the city of Newcastle upon Tyne and the town of Ashington in Northumberland.
- 1.1.2 The railway line is known as the 'Northumberland Line' and was formerly known as the Ashington Blyth and Tyne Line (ABT). ['the scheme'].
- 1.1.3 The scheme includes the construction of six new railway stations and associated infrastructure. This planning statement has been prepared in support of the planning application for the proposed railway station and associated works at Blyth Bebside ['the application'].

## 1.2 Blyth Bebside Station

- 1.2.1 This planning statement supports and accompanies an application for planning permission for the development associated with the construction and operation of a new rail station at Blyth Bebside. Further details of the proposed development are provided in Section 5.

## 1.3 Applicant and Agent

- 1.3.1 SLC Property Ltd has been instructed on behalf of Northumberland County Council to prepare this planning application.

## 1.4 The Scheme

- 1.4.1 The Northumberland Line proposes to offer a direct passenger service between Newcastle Central to Ashington. It is anticipated that the proposed service will call at the existing Manors railway station and at six proposed new station sites at Northumberland Park, Seaton Delaval, Newsham, Blyth Bebside, Bedlington and Ashington. Figure 1.1 illustrates the locations of the six new railway stations.



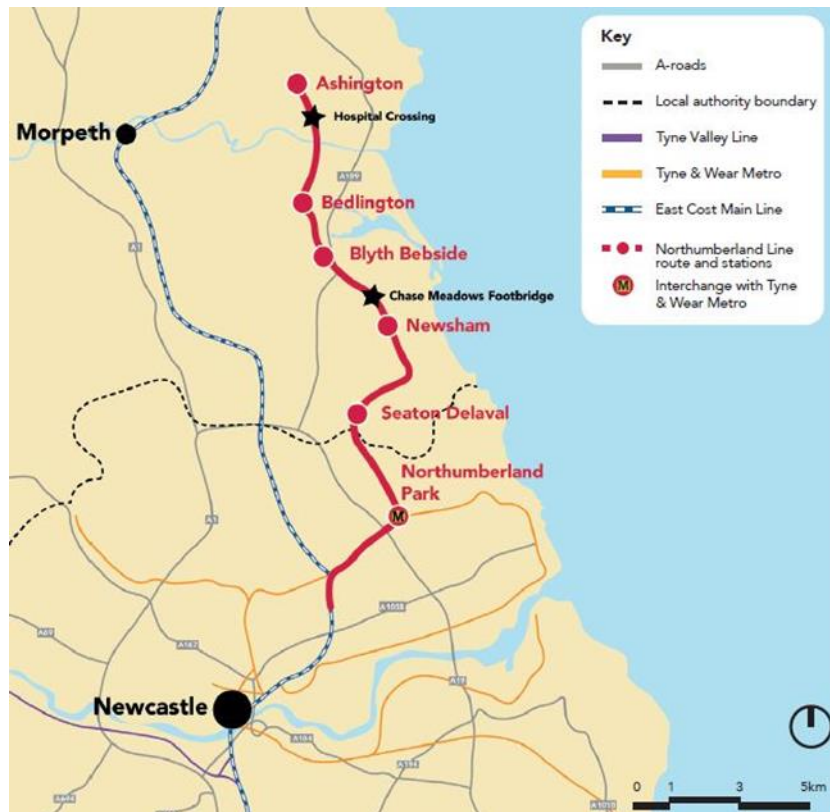


Figure 1.1 Northumberland Line

- 1.4.2 The scheme seeks to encourage a modal shift towards rail travel, assisting in reducing congestion and therefore improving journey times both on the local highway network, and for users of public transport. The scheme anticipates a journey time of approximately 35 minutes between Ashington and Newcastle.
- 1.4.3 The 'Northumberland Line' is located within the administrative areas of three local planning authorities.
- **Northumberland County Council (NCC):** Five of the six proposed railway stations are located within the NCC administrative boundary– Seaton Delaval, Newsham, Blyth Bebside, Bedlington and Ashington.
  - **North Tyneside Council (NTC):** The proposed railway station at Northumberland Park is located within NTC's administrative boundary.
  - **Newcastle City Council:** There are no new stations proposed within the Newcastle City Council administrative boundary, however passenger services along the Northumberland Line will operate to and from Newcastle Central station.

## 1.5 Supporting Information

- 1.5.1 The application for planning permission is accompanied by the supporting information identified as required by the local planning authority in discussions prior to submission. The nature, extent and scope of the supporting information is in accordance with the advice and recommendations given by officers of the local planning authority. The schedule of submitted information is summarised in Figure 1.2.

Document/Plan reference number	Name of document/Plan
60601435-ACM-XX-ZZ-DRG-LEP-000013	Site Location Plan
60601435-ACM-05-PL-DRG-ECV-001001	Existing General Arrangement Planning Submission Sheet 1 of 2
60601435-ACM-05-PL-DRG-ECV-001002	Existing General Arrangement Planning Submission Sheet 2 of 2
60601435-ACM-05-PL-DRG-ECV-000001	Existing general arrangement
60601435-ACM-05-ZZ-DRG-EHW-050008	Car Park Existing Public Utilities Layout
60601435-ACM-05-ZZ-DRG-EHW-050001	Car Park General Arrangement
60601435-ACM-05-ZZ-DRG-EHW-050003	Typical cross sections -Existing and Proposed Sheet 1 of 2
60601435-ACM-05-ZZ-DRG-EHW-050004	Typical cross sections - Existing and Proposed Sheet 2 of 2
60601435-ACM-05-ZZ-DRG-EHW-050005	Car Park drainage layout and Indicative Cross Sections of Swale
60601435-ACM-05-ZZ-DRG-EHW-050006	Traffic Sign and road marking layout
60601435-ACM-05-ZZ-DRG-EHW-050007	Vehicle Tracking
60601435-ACM-05-PL-DRG-ECV-000002	Platform General Arrangement
60601435-ACM-05-PL-DRG-ECV-000004	Emergency Exit General Arrangement
60601435-ACM-05-PL-DRG-ECV-000006	Platform Existing and Proposed Platform Sections
60601435-ACM-05-PL-DRG-ECV-000008	Platform Services General Arrangement
60601435-ACM-05-ZZ-DRG-EST-000501	Footbridge Planning Proposed GA Sheet 1 of 4
60601435-ACM-05-ZZ-DRG-EST-000502	Footbridge Planning Proposed GA Sheet 2 of 4
60601435-ACM-05-ZZ-DRG-EST-000503	Footbridge Planning Proposed GA Sheet 3 of 4
60601435-ACM-05-ZZ-DRG-EST-000504	Footbridge Planning Proposed GA Sheet 4 of 4
60601435-ACM-05-ZZ-DRG-HLG-001311	Highways Lighting, Proposed Lighting Layout - Sheet 1 of 1
60601435-ACM-05-ZZ-DRG-HLG-001312	Highways Lighting, Contours Layout - Sheet 1 of 1
60601435-ACM-05-ZZ-DRG-HLG-001313	Highways Lighting Calculation Results Sheet 1 of 2
60601435-ACM-05-ZZ-DRG-HLG-001314	Highways Lighting Calculation Results Sheet 2 of 2
60601435-ACM-05-ZZ-REP-HLG-001310	Lighting Calculation Report
60601435-ACM-05-ZZ-SKT-HLG-001301	Highways Lighting, Proposed Lighting Class Sheet 1 of 1
60601435-ACM-05-ZZ-DRG-EPT-000065	E&P Proposed Lighting Layout Blyth Bebside Car park
60601435-ACM-XX-ZZ-DRG-EEN-000503	Landscape Design
60601435-ACM-05-ZZ-SKT-HLG-001310	Highways Lighting, Proposed Lighting Class Sheet 1 of 1
60601435-SLC-P-270-BB-LVA	Landscape, Townscape and Visual Appraisal
60601435-SLC-P-270-BB-DAS	Design and Access Statement
60601435-SLC-P-270-BB-ECIA & BNG	Ecological Impact Assessment (ECiA) including net gain statement
60601435-ACM-XX-ZZ-REP-EEN-000030	Arboriculture Assessment
60601435-SLC-P-270-BB-SCE	Statement of Community Engagement
TA_Northumberland Line - Blyth Bebside	Transport Assessment
Bebside_FRA_final	Flood Risk and Drainage Assessment

Document/Plan reference number	Name of document/Plan
Bebside_Heritage Statement_final	Heritage assessment (including archaeology assessment)
60601435-ACM-05-ZZ-REP-EGE-000002	Coal Mining Risk Assessment
Blyth Bebside Railway Station NIA Report	Noise and Vibration Assessment
60601435-ACM-05-ZZ-REP-EGE-000001	Preliminary Sources Study Report (Geo-technical Desk Based Assessment)
Bebside Station Air Quality Assessment Report_final	Air Quality Impact Assessment
60601435-SLC-P-270-BB-PS	Economic Assessment (within the Planning Statement)
60601435-SLC-P-270-BB-HW	Health and Wellbeing Statement
60601435-SLC-P-270-BB-CEMP	Outline CEMP
NLP Services and Utilities Statement_Bebside	Services and utilities Statement

*Figure 1.2 Schedule of supporting information*

## 1.6 Structure of this statement

- Section 2 sets out the background to the development and highlights the relevant planning history for the site and adjacent land.
- Section 3 summarises the engagement with the NCC, stakeholders and the public which has informed the submitted scheme.
- Section 4 introduces the application site and describes the surrounding areas.
- Section 5 describes the proposed development.
- Section 6 sets out the policies and other determining factors at both a national and local level which are relevant to the determination of the planning application.
- Section 7 assesses the proposed development against the policies identified in Section 6.
- Section 8 describes the material considerations.
- Section 9 provides a summary of the case for planning permission.

## 2 Background to the Proposed Development

### 2.1 Introduction

- 2.1.1 The purpose of this section is to provide a background to the ambitions held by key stakeholders for the reintroduction of passenger services on the Northumberland Line.

### 2.2 Ambitions for a new passenger service

- 2.2.1 The reintroduction of passenger services on the Northumberland Line is a long-held ambition of Northumberland County Council, North Tyneside Council, Newcastle City Council, North East Combined Authority, Network Rail and other partners and key stakeholders. This section provides a summary of recent support for new railway stations and introduction of passenger services on the Northumberland Line, with particular reference to the proposed railway station at Blyth Bebside.
- 2.2.2 The scheme seeks to improve connectivity and accessibility in the South East Northumberland Corridor (SEN Corridor). The scheme is a priority of Northumberland County Council, North Tyneside Council, Newcastle City Council, North East Combined Authority and is supported by a number of key project partners, including the Department for Transport (DfT), Network Rail, Transport for the North (TfN), Nexus and Northern Rail.
- 2.2.3 South East Northumberland is the most densely populated area of Northumberland, where the county's three largest towns are located: Cramlington, Blyth and Ashington. Crucially, the most densely populated settlements of Ashington and Blyth are not served by a passenger rail service.
- 2.2.4 At present, bus journey times are uncompetitive in comparison with car journey times from Newcastle to Ashington. The average journey time by bus between Newcastle and Ashington is more than 60 minutes.
- 2.2.5 The lack of viable and efficient modal choice has resulted in significant dependence on the private car by residents and visitors within South East Northumberland, increasing highway congestion, delaying journey times and adversely impacting local air quality. The aforementioned issues are exacerbated by the high percentage of residents who commute to nearby Newcastle and North Tyneside for work, leisure and retail opportunities. The 2011 Census identified a new outflow of commuters from Northumberland of over 23,000 people (37% of the population). This is expected to have increased in the last decade. Of those commuters, 65% of trips originating in Northumberland are made by car, which is higher than the national and regional average.
- 2.2.6 The scheme supports the strategic objectives of Northumberland County Council, North Tyneside Council and other key stakeholders, as summarised below, to improve sustainable

transport connections, which will facilitate economic growth, assist in reducing local highway congestion and contribute to improvements in local air quality.

- 2.2.7 Improving the links from towns such as Ashington and Blyth is critical to encouraging more sustainable access to the key regional economic centres in South East Northumberland and Tyne and Wear. This includes regionally important business parks including Cobalt, Quorum, Gosforth, Bailliol, Ashwood and Wansbeck. Notably, the scheme will improve accessibility for staff and visitors to renewable energy sector businesses located in the Blyth Estuary which is located approximately 3km to the east of the site of the proposed railway station at Bebside.
- 2.2.8 It is anticipated that enhancements to transport links within South East Northumberland will stimulate economic investment within the region. The reintroduction of passenger services on the Northumberland Line will improve the accessibility and connectivity of South East Northumberland to the wider North East area, which may help to bring forward the much-needed delivery of housing allocations and other infrastructure.

#### **Northumberland County Council**

- 2.2.9 The Northumberland Economic Strategy 2019–2024 considers the Ashington, Blyth and Tyne line, as a ‘dormant asset’. The re-introduction of passenger services on the railway line is a top priority for South East Northumberland. The scheme is a key deliverable for the next stage of the Economic Strategy and has been identified as a catalyst for unlocking commercial investment throughout the area.
- 2.2.10 The Northumberland Local Transport Plan 2011–2026 sets out the Council’s visions, aims and objectives for transport over this period. The strategy identifies that levels of deprivation in South East Northumberland are exacerbated by accessibility issues<sup>2</sup>. As such, the current public transport options are considered not to meet the needs of all residents in Northumberland. The Ashington, Blyth and Tyne Line is identified as a key area of development within the South East Northumberland Public Transport Corridor<sup>3</sup>. The strategy identifies the potential socio-economic and environmental benefits the scheme could bring to the area.

#### **North Tyneside Council**

- 2.2.11 The adopted North Tyneside Local Plan (2017) considers ‘Future transport provision should reflect existing demand and also take account of planned economic and housing growth to ensure an integrated approach to sustainable development and travel patterns<sup>4</sup>’.

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<sup>1</sup> The Northumberland Economic Strategy 2019–24 p19

<sup>2</sup> Northumberland Local Transport Plan 2011–2026 p45

<sup>3</sup> Northumberland Local Transport Plan 2011–2026 p118

<sup>4</sup> North Tyneside Local Plan (2017) p153

2.2.12 North Tyneside Council supports the common objectives of the North East Combined Authority and Northumberland County Council in seeking to deliver a modal shift to more sustainable modes of transport. Notably, the local plan safeguards the Ashington, Blyth and Tyne Railway to ensure the transport infrastructure can be delivered with limited constraints.

2.2.13 Paragraph 10.25 of the North Tyneside Local Plan states:

*“The reinstatement of passenger services over the Ashington, Blyth and Tyne Railway is seen as a key driver for delivering growth in South East Northumberland. It is crucial that the potential should be retained for reopening of this route to passenger traffic in the future, an importance reflected through the safeguarding of the alignment in the Local Plan. The proposal would link South East Northumberland to Newcastle with options to serve Ashington, Bedlington and Morpeth including the possibility for an interchange station, between heavy rail, Metro and bus services, at Northumberland Park. Reinstatement of this passenger service is a key aspiration of Northumberland County Council and North Tyneside Council. Significant progress has already been made, including progressing plans through a Network Rail GRIP study and in assembling funding bid packages. Various options are currently being appraised for station sites, service frequency and infrastructure requirements for both development and operation. Although closed to passenger traffic since the mid 1960s, the majority of the route is still in use as an existing freight line, but the North Tyneside Local Plan also includes the protection of land which would enable the option of direct access from Seghill southwards towards Percy Main (as shown on the Policies Map).”*

#### **North East Combined Authority**

2.2.14 The '20-year Transport Manifesto'<sup>5</sup> produced by the North East Combined Authority' has a vision to provide 'provide affordable, attractive, reliable, safe, healthy transport choices for businesses, residents and visitors whilst enhancing the environment' The strategy identifies local rail and metro as a way to drive economic growth. Although the Northumberland Line scheme is not specifically identified, the strategy identifies the upgrading of freight-only sections to passenger use as an objective.

#### **Transport for the North**

2.2.15 Transport for the North published a 'Strategic Transport Plan in 2019 which outlines the ambitions for the growth of the Northern Powerhouse until 2050.

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<sup>5</sup> North East Combined Authority (2016) A 20-year Transport Manifesto for the North East Combined Authority

- 2.2.16 The plan identifies the importance of encouraging a modal shift towards rail in meeting transport objectives for the region<sup>6</sup>. This includes contributing to meeting commitments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and driving towards the inclusive growth agenda.
- 2.2.17 The strategy considers that *'To realise the benefits of agglomeration and economic mass, the North requires faster, more efficient, reliable and sustainable journeys on the road and rail networks'*<sup>7</sup>.
- 2.2.18 The aims and objectives of Transport for the North align with the principles of the Northumberland Lines scheme. The Northumberland Line seeks to improve connectivity in South East Northumberland, which contributes to the aim that: *'improvements should ensure that all areas of opportunity are connected, and that communities are not disconnected and further isolated'*<sup>8</sup>.

## **2.3 Ambitions for the railway station at Blyth Bebside**

- 2.3.1 Bebside is located within the designated settlement boundary of Blyth. Blyth is the largest town in Northumberland.
- 2.3.2 Blyth is identified in the emerging Northumberland Local Plan as having a *'strategically important employment function'*<sup>9</sup>. This includes assets such as the national Offshore Renewable Catapult, and the Port of Blyth (a commercial port). Furthermore, the plan identifies that the town has significant growth potential, notably surrounding Blyth Estuary and within the offshore oil and gas, renewables and the advanced manufacturing sector.
- 2.3.3 Blyth Bebside is one of two proposed railway stations within the town of Blyth. The other proposed station is located in Newsham. It is considered the two stations will support Blyth's future ambitions for growth.
- 2.3.4 The 2011 Census identifies that 50% of work trips in Blyth, originate from outside the area and utilise the local highway network. The proposed railway station will ease congestion on the local highway network, and as such will improve connectivity in South East Northumberland. This is likely to improve the attractiveness of Blyth as a place to live, work and invest.
- 2.3.5 Notably, the proposed station at Bebside is located to the west of Blyth and the A189 Spine Road. It is considered the proposed station will improve accessibility to and from Blyth and assist in reducing congestion on the local highway network. As such, the proposed station will improve access to employment and leisure opportunities across the North East.

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<sup>6</sup> Transport for the North (2019) Strategic Transport Plan, p87

<sup>7</sup> Transport for the North (2019) Strategic Transport Plan, p8

<sup>8</sup> Transport for the North (2019) Strategic Transport Plan, p8

<sup>9</sup> Emerging Northumberland Local Plan – Publication Draft January 2019 p23

- 2.3.6 As such, the proposed development will provide sustainable transport infrastructure, reducing reliance on the private car for residents which will assist in reducing congestion on the local highway network and improving access to employment and leisure opportunities across the North East.

## 2.4 Committed Development

- 2.4.1 A review of planning applications on land adjacent to the site (both determined and in the process of being determined) has been undertaken to identify any consented developments which may be material considerations in the determining of a planning application for the proposed railway station.

- 2.4.1 Figure 2.1 describes those developments which have been granted planning permission [committed development] as listed on Northumberland County Council's planning public access system on the 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2020 within 500 metres of the red line boundary. Figure 2.1 also identifies planning applications which are awaiting determination which have the potential to be 'material considerations' in the determination of the planning application.

Reference	Address	Description of proposal	Date of approval
20/02484/FUL	Asda Superstore Cowpen Road Blyth NE24 4LZ	Reconfiguration of the home shopping facility including new storage building and van canopy. Replacement click and collect canopy as supplemented by letter from agent received 01/10/20.	2 <sup>nd</sup> November 2020
20/01056/FUL	Land West Of Asda Filling Station Chase Farm Drive Blyth Northumberland	Coffee shop (A1) with drive thru.	11 <sup>th</sup> September 2020
19/00428/OUT	Land North Of High House Farm Furnace Road Bebside Blyth Northumberland NE24 4JW	Outline application for 'Lifetime Neighbourhood' comprising the erection of approximately 327 dwelling houses (C3 use) plus approximately 2000 square metres of commercial floor space (A1 use) with parking and landscaping.	Validated: 4 <sup>th</sup> March 2019

*Figure 2.1 Schedule of committed developments*

- 2.4.2 Figure 2.1 identifies that planning permission for a coffee shop has been granted adjacent to the site of the proposed pedestrian and cycle bridge. The access road for the development is included in the red line boundary for the proposed station. This is included in the red line boundary because the road is proposed to provide temporary access to facilitate construction of the pedestrian and cycle bridge. Discussions are ongoing with the landowner to ensure that the proposed station does not preclude or impact the delivery of the committed development.
- 2.4.3 Notwithstanding, it is considered that during operation proposed station and car park would complement the development, as the coffee shop would benefit from an increase in footfall from passengers travelling to the station.



2.4.4 It is considered the scheme which is the subject of this planning application would not preclude or impact on the delivery of either of the remaining two committed developments, acknowledging that 19/00428/OUT is currently in the process of being determined by the local planning authority, set out in Figure 2.1. It is considered the proposed station and car park would complement those developments, improving access to those businesses for residents, staff, customers and visitors. It is anticipated that appropriate measures will be implemented during the construction phase to avoid or mitigate any impacts on the delivery of the committed developments.

## 3 Pre-application Engagement

### 3.1 Introduction

- 3.1.1 The proposed development has been the subject of extensive and ongoing engagement with officer and Members of Northumberland County Council and other key stakeholders.
- 3.1.2 This section provides a summary of the formal pre-application discussions and engagement that has been undertaken pertaining to this planning application.

### 3.2 Pre-application enquiries

- 3.2.1 Informal dialogue with local authority officers and members was undertaken prior to the submission of a formal pre-application to Northumberland County Council as the local planning authority on the 9<sup>th</sup> August 2019. A formal response to the pre-application enquiry was received from the local planning authority on 1st October 2019.
- 3.2.2 The response indicated that the principle of development would likely be supported, however an application for planning would need to be supported by assessments to ascertain the extent of any potential impacts:
- ‘the principle of development may vary from site to site but a case could be made that would likely to receive support. The proposals are considered by Northumberland County Council to be in accordance with the development plan<sup>10</sup>’.*
- 3.2.3 Overall, the local planning authority considered that *‘the benefits that could be delivered to the South East of Northumberland, should be able to address any harm that may be created by each application through the wider benefits that would be proposed and deliverable’*.
- 3.2.4 The formal pre-application response identified that the site of the proposed car park at Blyth Bebside is recorded as a *“disused refuse tip”*. Northumberland County Council advised that the site was formerly used as railway sidings associated with Bebside Colliery, and *“it should therefore be assumed that wastes may be located on the site”*.
- 3.2.5 The Lead Local Flood Authority advised of an outstanding objection to development on the site relating to flood risk and drainage issues pertaining to a proposed housing development. (17/04599/OUT). As such, officers of the Lead Local Flood Authority advised that *“local drainage will need to be investigated, and, where necessary, mitigation undertaken.”*

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<sup>10</sup> NCC Pre-Application response, Ref: 19/00680/PREAPP (1<sup>st</sup> October 2019) p14

- 3.2.6 Since receipt of the pre-application response, extensive discussions have been held with Northumberland County Council officers including those from departments for highways, environmental health, ecology, flooding and drainage. During these discussions various surveys, assessments and draft designs and proposals have been shared. Those discussions have also confirmed the scope, extent and nature of the information which is required to be submitted in support of the planning application. The submitted scheme takes account of the comments and advice received from the local planning authority and other Council services.
- 3.2.7 Further details can be found within the full suite of information which has been submitted in support of this planning application. This Planning Statement should be read in conjunction with the various submitted plans, surveys and assessment reports.

### **3.3 Changes to the proposed development since receipt of pre-application response**

- 3.3.1 Subsequent to the submission of the pre-application enquiry and receipt of the formal pre-application response from Northumberland County Council (application ref: 19/00680/PREAPP) on the 1st October 2019, several changes have been made to the proposed development at Blyth Bebside station. Those changes are set out below:
1. The preferred location for the site was confirmed to be the option located to the south of the A193.
  2. The size of the proposed car park has increased to 293 spaces to provide for the potential growth up to the year 2039.
  3. As a result of highway safety concerns, a pedestrian and cycle bridge has been proposed to connect pedestrians and cyclist from the Public Right of Way network adjacent to Asda, to the site of the proposed station.
- 3.3.1 As a consequence of these changes, it has been agreed that the surveys and assessments to be submitted with the planning application would be varied and extended in the following ways:
1. The scope of the Transport Assessment has been updated to include impacts on the highway network associated with the additional car parking and assess the need for a pedestrian and cycle bridge.
  2. The scope of the Design and Access Statement has been updated to include the construction of a pedestrian and cycle bridge.
  3. The scope of all of the supporting assessments have been updated to account for the extension of the red line boundary.

### 3.4 Request for a Screening Opinion (RfSO)

- 3.4.1 A Request for a Screening Opinion (RfSO) was submitted to North Tyneside Council and Northumberland County Council on 28<sup>th</sup> June 2019 in accordance with the screening procedures laid out in the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (hereafter referred to as the EIA Regulations).
- 3.4.2 The Opinion of the Northumberland County Council was received on 9<sup>th</sup> August 2019, confirming that the scheme does not constitute ‘EIA development’.
- 3.4.3 As the detailed design of the scheme has evolved, it has become apparent that some components of the scheme have altered from those identified in the previous RfSO, as well as the extent of the land which is required.
- 3.4.4 As a consequence of the changes to the scheme, a further RfSO was submitted in the 16<sup>th</sup> July 2020.
- 3.4.5 On the 19<sup>th</sup> November 2020, Northumberland County Council confirmed that the amended scheme *‘is not likely to have significant effects on the environment and as such is not considered to be EIA development’<sup>11</sup>*.
- 3.4.6 On this basis, an Environmental Impact Assessment is not required to be undertaken and the planning application is not required to be accompanied by an Environmental Statement.

### 3.5 Pre-submission stakeholder consultation (2019)

- 3.5.1 The preparation of this planning application, and the scope of the submitted information, has been informed by the responses received to the public consultation undertaken during 2019 and 2020.
- 3.5.2 An initial public consultation was undertaken between the 2nd and 18th September 2019. The objective was to raise awareness of the scheme and ascertain local perceptions of the scheme. The consultation was undertaken through the provision of ‘drop in’ events, attended by officers of the council and project team representatives. The ‘drop in’ events were held in five different locations with a geographical spread along the proposed route. Members of the public were also invited to provide feedback online. The initial public consultation for the overall Northumberland Line scheme received a total 971 responses. Those responses were considered and used to inform the proposals which were the subject of the public consultation in 2020.

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<sup>11</sup> NCC Screening Opinion, Ref: 20/02242/SCREEN (19<sup>th</sup> November 2020) p19

### **3.6 Pre-submission stakeholder consultation (2020)**

- 3.6.1 A second public consultation took place between the 14<sup>th</sup> of November and 16<sup>th</sup> December 2020. Discussions were held with officers of the council to confirm the extent, scope, nature, timing and information of this public consultation.
- 3.6.2 The objective was to ascertain local views on the specific proposals for each of the station sites, together with the scheme as a whole.
- 3.6.3 436 comments were made in connection with the proposals for Blyth Bebside station. 77% of the comments were either positive or neutral, 23% were negative. Comments were coded across twelve themes. Positive responses commonly focussed on the following benefits of the development: economic, interchange and connectivity including pedestrian and cycle access and facilities. Neutral feedback was provided on pedestrian and cycle access with suggestions for wider connectivity, parking provision and the need for measures to mitigate antisocial behaviour. Negative feedback raises concerns about the impact on the local road network with increased congestion, parking availability for local shops and residents and the location of the proposals.
- 3.6.4 The Statement of Community Engagement submitted in support of this application demonstrates that the project has engaged stakeholders and the local community at the plan-making stage of the proposals when information on the designs was of sufficient level for informed and meaningful engagement. It further demonstrates that the project team has listened and considered the feedback which will feed into the development of the station at Blyth Bebside.

### **3.7 Summary**

- 3.7.1 Ongoing consultation with local planning authority officers and other key stakeholders has informed the nature, extent and scope of the information submitted in support of this application. The design submitted in support of this application has been informed by the feedback received during the public consultation and engagement with key stakeholders. Further details can be found in the submitted Statement of Community Engagement.

## 4 Site Context

### 4.1 Introduction

- 4.1.1 This section describes the existing site, adjacent land uses and provides a contextual overview of those considerations which have informed the design of the submitted scheme. Further details of those considerations and how the submitted scheme has evolved are set out in the submitted Design and Access Statement.

### 4.2 Historical Context

- 4.2.1 Blyth Bebside station was initially opened in 1850 as part of the 'Ashington, Blyth and Tyne Railway' to serve the former coal mining village. The railway network served a vast number of collieries in the South East Northumberland area into the early twentieth century.
- 4.2.2 The location of the original Bebside Station is identified in Figure 4.1.

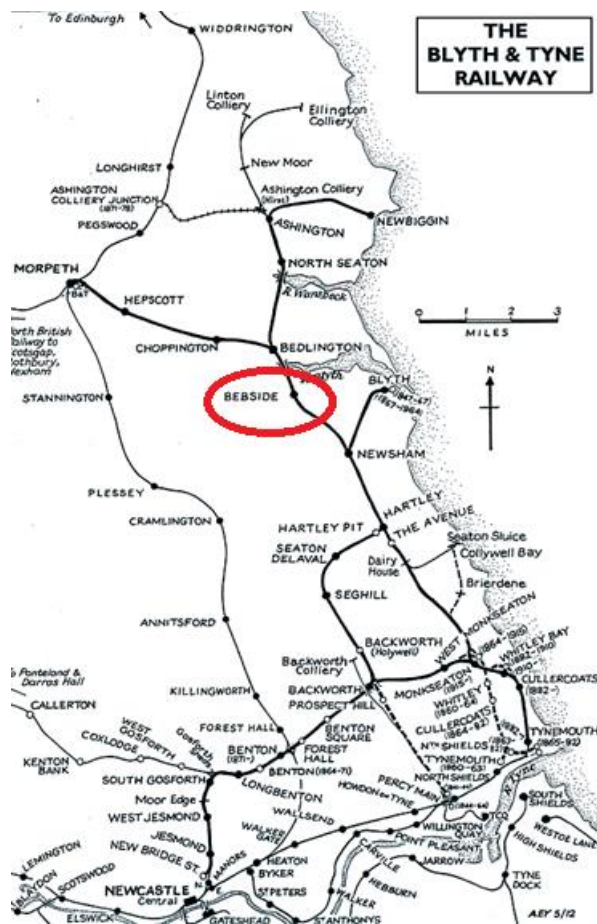


Figure 4.1 Blyth and Tyne Railway Historic Network

- 4.2.3 The Ashington, Blyth and Tyne Line ran its final passenger service in 1964. Several stations were closed as part of the Beeching cuts in the early 60s, including Bebside in 1964. Since the

closure of passenger services, freight trains have continued to operate, primarily serving Lynemouth Power Station.

- 4.2.4 The proposed location for the railway station at Newsham is located approximately 200 metres south of the site of the original station. The proposed station is located on the site of the former Bebside Colliery.

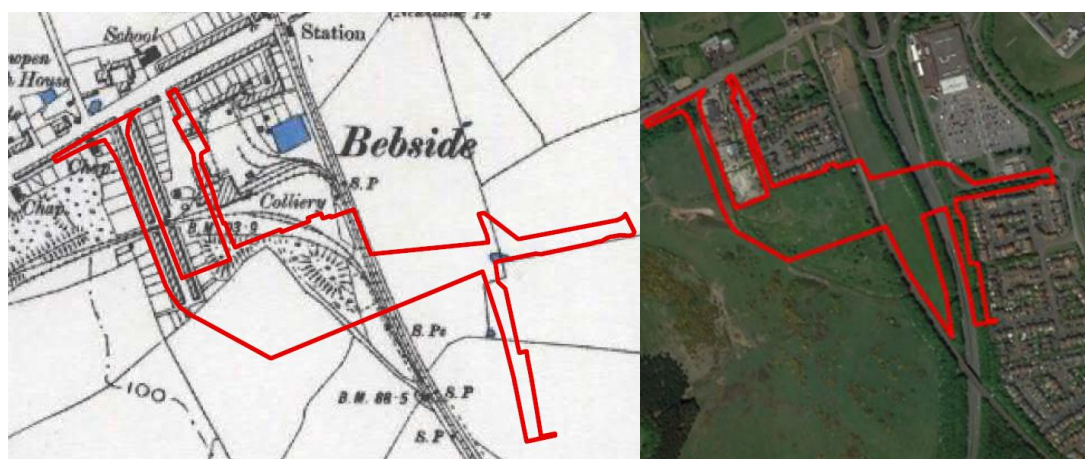


Figure 4.2 Location of Bebside station (OS Map, 1898; Google Maps, 2020)

## 4.3 Planning History of the Site

- 4.3.1 A desk-based review of the planning applications which have been submitted to and either: consented, refused or withdrawn on the land which comprises the application site has been undertaken.
- 4.3.2 Figure 4.3 describes the planning applications which have been submitted within the red line boundary of the site, based on a review of Northumberland County Council's planning public access system undertaken on the 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2020.

Reference	Address	Description of proposal	Decision	Date
20/02243/SCREEN	Various addresses	Screening request for provision of six new train stations, associated upgrading and refurbishment of existing rail infrastructure and engineering works and the reintroduction of passenger train services.	No EIA required	19 <sup>th</sup> November 2020
19/02151/SCREEN	Various addresses	Request for a Screening Opinion- Provision of six new train stations, associated upgrading and refurbishment of existing rail	No EIA required	9 <sup>th</sup> August 2019

Reference	Address	Description of proposal	Decision	Date
		infrastructure and engineering works and the reintroduction of passenger train services.		
17/04599/OUT	Central Garage Rear of Bebside Blyth, Northumberland NE24 4HW	Outline application for the construction of up to 124 dwellings with associated access off Front Street (all matters reserved except access) (amended description)	Unknown (registered)	Validated: 22 <sup>nd</sup> December 2017.
C/96/CC/31	Land East of Hathery Lane, Bebside	Extraction of coal and associated minerals by open cast methods, provision of temporary water treatment areas, sewage disposal facilities and stocking areas with restoration to agriculture on 159 ha of land	Refused. Appeal dismissed.	5 <sup>th</sup> February 1996
C/93/CC/046	Hathery Lane OCCS, Hathery Lane, Bebside	Extraction of coal and associated minerals by open case methods, provision of temporary water treatment areas, sewage disposal facilities and stocking areas with restoration to agriculture on 159ha of land.	Referred to Secretary of State. Appeal dismissed.	5 <sup>th</sup> February 1996.

*Figure 4.3 Planning History*

- 4.3.3 The two most recent planning applications related to the site are the Request for a Screening Opinions submitted to assess the potential requirement for an EIA to support the planning applications for the Northumberland Line scheme.
- 4.3.4 Figure 4.3 indicates that planning application has been submitted for a residential development on the site of the proposed station, and the adjacent land. Representatives of the railway station project are in discussions with the applicant for the housing development on the site to seek to agree a suitable approach to enable the housing development to be delivered in parallel to the railway station development. It is considered the railway station development will complement the proposed housing development by reducing the reliance of future occupiers on the private car.



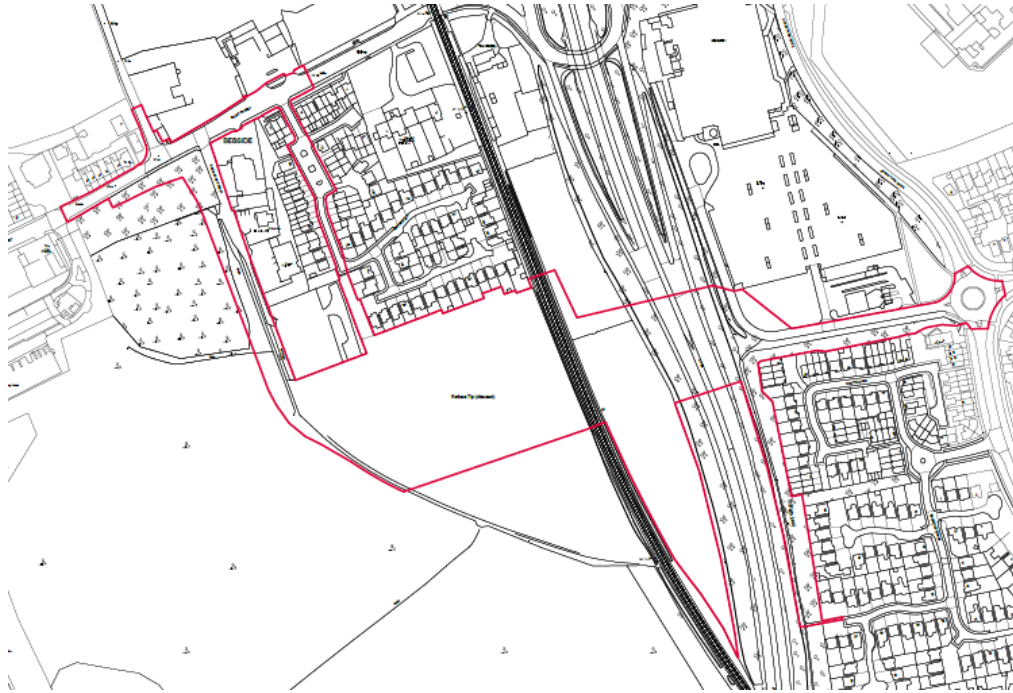
## **4.4 Site Selection**

- 4.4.1 To construct a railway station, it must obviously be located adjacent to a railway line. This significantly limits the number of sites available for the proposed development.
- 4.4.2 The proposed siting of the station has been determined based on an appraisal of alternative options. An appraisal of alternative sites for the proposed railway station was undertaken, which included several sites in close proximity to the level crossing at Bebside. However, through discussions with local highway authority officers and other key stakeholders, it has been established that those sites would not be suitable for the proposed new railway station due to highway safety concerns. Alternative sites to the north of the application site were considered, however due to significant highway safety and land acquisition challenges, those sites were considered to be unsuitable to provide for the new railway station. The proposed station at Blyth Bebside could not be sited further south due to it being in direct conflict with the proposed railway station at Newsham.
- 4.4.1 The site is strategically located, with direct access from the local highway network (A193). The A193 is one of two main highways connecting into Blyth to the east. As such, the site lends itself to use as a Park and Ride station site serving Blyth. The site is adjacent to the existing built development and as such the station is easily accessible for nearby residents and businesses. Furthermore, the site provides sufficient land to accommodate the car parking required to meet anticipated demand.
- 4.4.1 The site of the proposed station is adjacent to the site of the historic railway station. The success of the coal mining industry necessitated a rapid expansion of the Blyth and Tyne Railway. As such, the historic railway network embodies the history of the local area. The proposed development supports local heritage by re-introducing a station in close proximity to the site of the historic Bebside station.
- 4.4.2 Overall, the site of the proposed station is considered to be the most appropriate and the most beneficial when compared against alternatives.

## **4.5 Site Description**

- 4.5.1 The former coal mining village of Bebside is located within the settlement boundary for the main town of Blyth. The site of the proposed station is located outwith, but adjacent to, the settlement boundary. Some elements of the proposed development are located within the settlement boundary- including the proposed foot and cycle bridge.
- 4.5.2 Heather Lea housing estate is located immediately to the north of the proposed car park. Access to the site is proposed from Errington Street, which is located to the west of Heather Lea. A number of commercial and industrial properties are located on Errington Street. The site of the proposed car park is bound to the south, east and west by open fields. The site of the proposed station platforms is located approximately 100 metres to the west of the A189 (running from north to south).

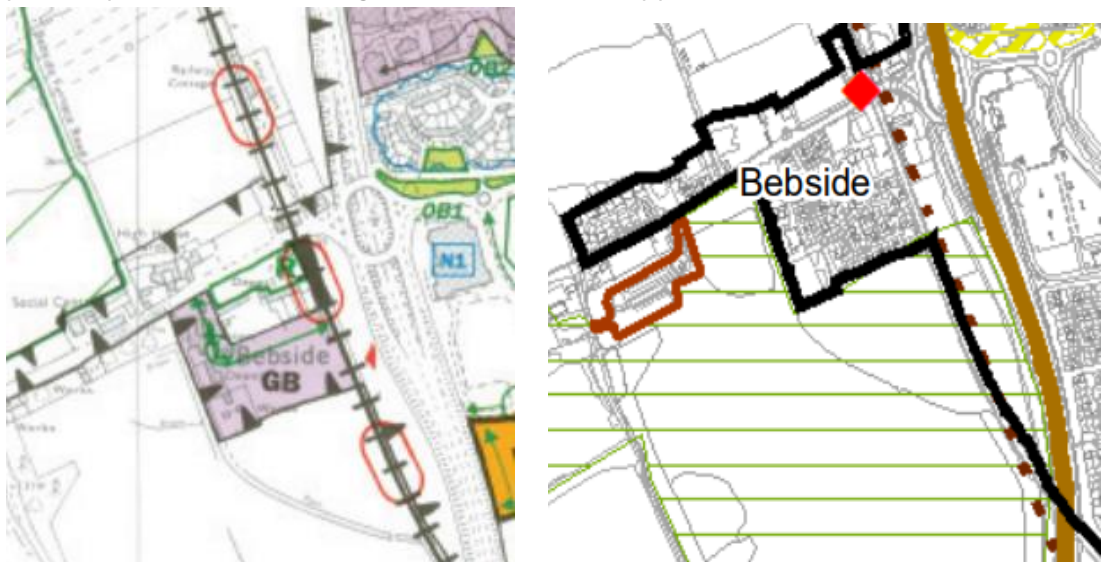
- 4.5.3 The site of the proposed development extends to the east of the car park to include the construction of a new pedestrian and cycle bridge. The eastern extent of the proposed pedestrian and cycle bridge is located adjacent to a supermarket car park, and residential properties on Beaumont Manor.
- 4.5.4 The site of the proposed development has an area of 7.01 hectares.
- 4.5.5 The existing site is comprised of seven separate areas:
1. Open field to the west (disused refuse tip and former railway sidings for Bebside Colliery)
  2. Errington Street (unadopted highway)
  3. Agricultural field to the east (currently used for grazing)
  4. Wooded Embankments to A189
  5. Existing access to ASDA car park to the east
  6. Footpath to the west (Reference: 300/178)
  7. Existing railway corridor
- 4.5.6 The proposed site layout is comprised of the following elements:
1. The platforms, lift and stairs are proposed to be constructed within, and adjacent to the railway corridor.
  2. The car park is proposed to be constructed on the site of the disused refuse trip.
  3. The pedestrian and cycle bridge is proposed to be constructed across the agricultural site and wooded embankments to connect with the footpath to the west.
  4. Vehicular access is proposed from A193 via Errington Street.



*Figure 4.4 Red Line Boundary Plan*

## 4.6 Site-specific environmental and land use constraints

- 4.6.1 The site-specific policy constraints and land-use designations that pertain to the site are shown on Figure 4.5, extracted from the adopted Blyth Valley Local Plan, and the Emerging Northumberland Local Plan. This section presents an overview of the constraints, which are assessed in the subsequent chapters of this planning statement. A full extract of the local plan maps and associated legends are available in Appendix B.



*Figure 4.5 Extract from Emerging Northumberland Local Plan Reg 19 Draft and Adopted Blyth Valley Local Plan*

- 4.6.2 The site of the proposed car park is located outwith the settlement boundary for Blyth. However, the proposed pedestrian and cycle bridge, and railway infrastructure to the east of the railway line are located within the settlement boundary.
- 4.6.1 The railway line is safeguarded for the reintroduction of passenger trains in Policy M4 of the Adopted Blyth Valley Local Plan, and TRA5 in the emerging Northumberland Local Plan. The adopted and emerging policy safeguards a site approximately 250 metres to the north of the site of the proposed station.
- 4.6.2 The emerging Policy ENV2 identifies the site is located with the designated 'South East Northumberland Wildlife Network'. The emerging Local Plan is at an advanced stage of preparation and likely to be adopted in early 2021 and can therefore be given some weight in the determination of this application.
- 4.6.3 The identified policy constraints and land use designations referenced above are more fully set out in Section 6 and assessed in Section 7 of this statement.

## 5 Proposed Development

### 5.1 Introduction

- 5.1.1 This section presents the detail of the development proposals which are the subject of this application for planning permission.

### 5.2 Planning Application

- 5.2.1 This planning statement has been submitted in support of an application for planning permission for:

*Construction of a two platform railway station including: pedestrian lifts, stepped and ramped pedestrian access, upgrade of existing highway junction to provide signalised access to station; modifications to highways including pedestrian footways; provision of parking for buses, cars, electric vehicles, motorcycles, cycles, and taxis; works to public rights of way; construction of a pedestrian and cycle bridge, facilities ancillary to the station including, lighting, soft and hard landscaping, surface and subsurface drainage, utilities and other services, boundary treatment and other associated works*

### 5.3 Reasons for the proposed development

- 5.3.1 The Economic Assessment<sup>12</sup> produced to support this application for planning permission identifies that the Northumberland Line is forecast to generate approximately £1.45million annual return journeys by 2039<sup>13</sup>.
- 5.3.1 Blyth is the largest town in Northumberland and is identified as a key centre for employment. At present, the town is served by a bus network which provides connections to Tyne and Wear and South East Northumberland. However, journey times are uncompetitive in comparison with private vehicular journeys. The average journey time by bus between Newcastle and Ashington is more than 60 minutes, compared with a proposed journey time of around 35 minutes via train. As such, the proposed development provides a viable alternative to the existing bus network and private vehicle for residents.
- 5.3.2 The Economic Assessment indicates that the 2011 census identifies 50% of journey to work trips with a destination into Blyth come from outside the area. The proposed development

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<sup>12</sup> Bebside Economic Assessment (AECOM, 2020) see Appendix A

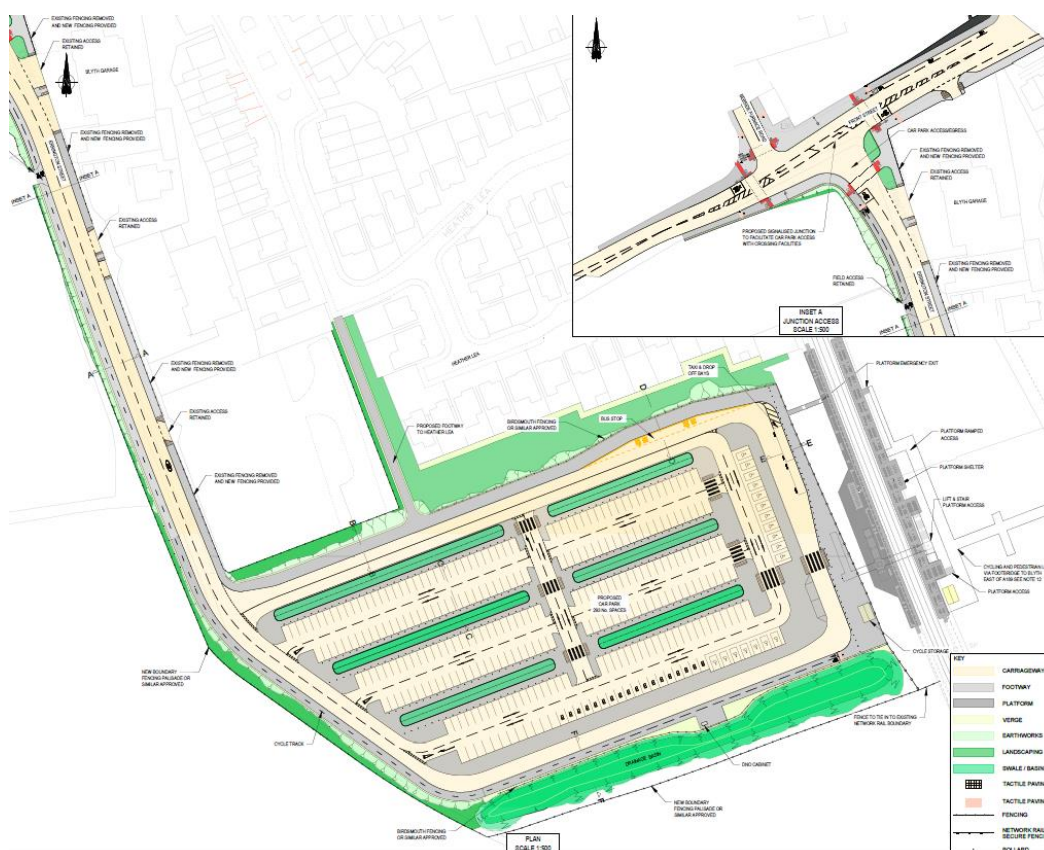
<sup>13</sup> These forecasts are aligned to a service proposition that has 2 trains per hour operating between Ashington and Newcastle, taking 32 minutes. Rail fares would be set at a similar level to those used on the Tyne & Wear Metro.

provides an alternative to the private vehicle and is therefore likely to reduce existing congestion on the local highway network such as the A193 Cowpen Road.

- |       |   |
|-------|---|
| 5.3.3 | The proposed development improves accessibility for residents to seek employment, education and leisure opportunities outside of local areas. The proposed development is likely to strengthen the role of Blyth as a main town and strategic employment area to accommodate future employment, housing retail and services <sup>14</sup> . |
| 5.3.4 | The proposed footbridge provides improved accessibility for pedestrians and cyclists which seeks to avoid potential conflict between pedestrians and motorists over the A189 and A193.  |

## 5.4 Elements of proposed development

- 5.4.1 Figure 5.1 indicates the proposed site layout for the proposed development.

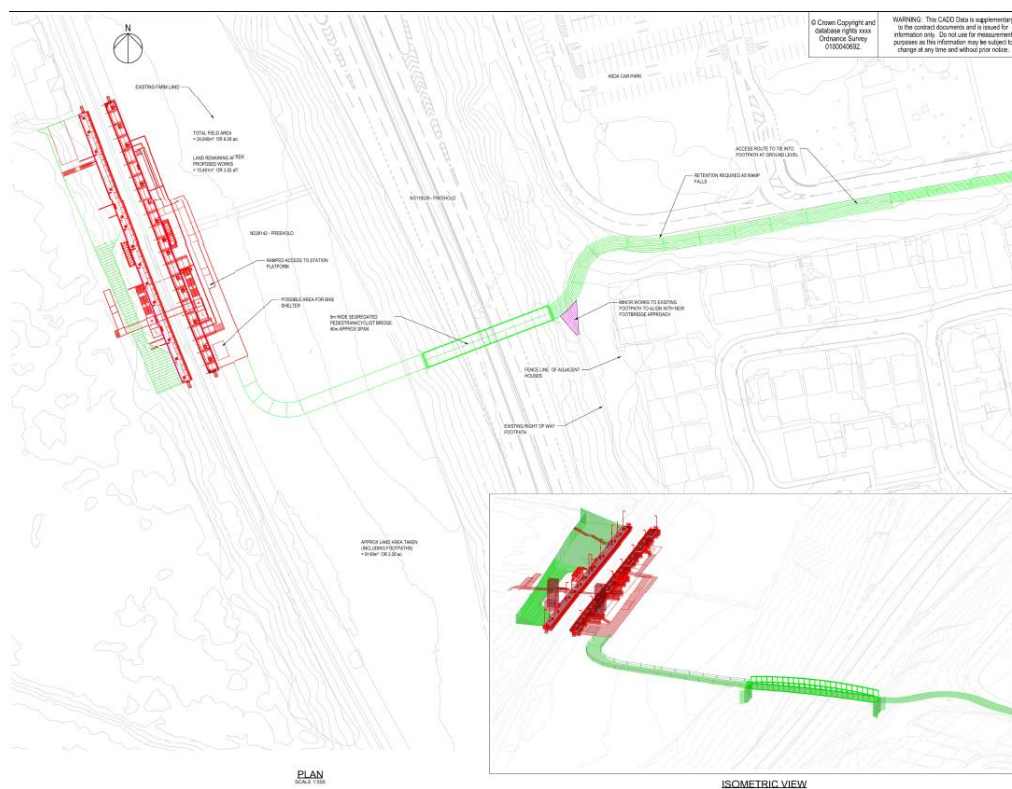


*Figure 5.1 Proposed Site Layout*

- 5.4.1 Figure 5.2 indicates the proposed location of the pedestrian and cycle bridge.

<sup>14</sup> Emerging Northumberland Local Plan – Publication Draft January 2019 p53





*Figure 5.2 Proposed pedestrian and cycle bridge location*

- 5.4.2 It is anticipated the Northumberland Line scheme will provide a half hourly service with an anticipated journey time between Newcastle and Ashington of 35 minutes
- 5.4.3 Figure 5.3 summarises the elements of the proposed development which are the subject of this application for planning permission for the construction and operation of a new railway station. This summary should be ready in conjunction with submitted plans and Design and Access Statement, which provide further details of the scheme.

Development Proposals	
Platform	Construction of two platforms (approximately 100 metres in length) Platform to include the following facilities: help points, platform lighting, CCTV and waiting shelters. Ticket Vending Machines and Customer Information Screens with real time information to be provided at station entrance
Car Parking	Construction of car park providing up to 293 spaces. 6% of spaces to provide for electric vehicle charging. 6% of spaces to be disabled parking spaces. Car park to include taxi drop off. Cycle storage facility to be provided
Pedestrian and Cycle access	Construction of a pedestrian and cycle bridge to provide access from the existing PROW network to the east (Ref: 300/178) to the station. Access provided through Heather Lea and Errington Street.
Vehicular Access	Vehicular access to be provided via a signalised staggered junction with Errington Street, Bebside Furnace Way Road and the A193.

	Errington Street to be upgraded and widened to provide access to the car park to the south.
Landscaping	Hard and soft landscaping to be provided. Specimen tree planting provided on site boundaries. Swales, water tolerant grass, shrub and tree planting provided between car park bays.
Biodiversity	It is anticipated that off-site compensatory habitat creation will be undertaken as the existing biodiversity within the site cannot be replaced within the site details are to be agreed with the planning authority
Drainage	Swales to be provided in car park. Attenuation basin to be provided to the south of the car park.
Bus stops and connectivity	Bus stop to be provided in car park.
Lighting	Raise / lower lighting columns (typically 6m in height) will be provided to achieve the necessary illumination to the platforms. Shelter to include in-built lighting. Appropriate lighting to be provided in car park.
Construction	It is anticipated the construction of the station will be undertaken in a period of approximately 4 months, however this is subject to safety, access and other considerations.
Services and Utilities	Details of existing local services provision provided as part of planning application. Details of works thereto to be provided to discharge a condition.
Signage	Adequate signage will be provided for pedestrians and cyclist movements as well as vehicular traffic. Signage will be provided to amenities within the station such as lifts and stairs. Details of signage will be provided to discharge a condition.

*Figure 5.3 Schedule development proposals*

## 5.5 Summary

- 5.5.1 The emerging proposals have attracted support based on pre-application discussions with local planning authority officers and key stakeholders. Section 7 assesses compliance of the proposed development against those local and national planning policies.



## 6 Planning Policy Context

### 6.1 Introduction

- 6.1.1 This section outlines the principal planning policies that pertain to the proposed development. It is important to note that the thematic survey reports and assessments submitted in support of this application contain further additional information and further details of other relevant policies (e.g. ecology).
- 6.1.2 In England, there is a hierarchical structure of policy covering national and local planning. At a national level the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's planning policies and how these are expected to be applied. At a local level, development plans set out planning policy for the area.
- 6.1.3 Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 6.1.4 Therefore, the starting point from a planning perspective in the determination of this planning application is the development plan. The development plan in respect of the application site comprises the Blyth Valley Borough Local Development Framework Core Strategy Development Plan Document (July 2007), the Blyth Valley Borough Local Development Framework Development Control Policies Development Plan Document (September 2007) and the saved policies of the Blyth Valley District Local Plan (May 1999).
- 6.1.5 The NPPF advises at paragraph 213 that, in respect of development plans adopted prior to publication of the NPPF, local planning authorities should afford due weight to relevant policies according to their degree of consistency with the NPPF; the closer the policies in the Plan to the policies in the NPPF, the greater the weight that may be given.
- 6.1.6 In accordance with paragraph 48 of the NPPF, weight may also be given to the policies in emerging plans, depending on the stage of preparation of the plan, the extent to which emerging policy aligns with the NPPF and the extent of unresolved objections to the emerging plan. The latest version of the Northumberland Local Plan was submitted to the Secretary of State for examination in May 2019 and is currently at examination. Relevant policies in this Plan are a material consideration in determining this application and it is considered that such policies can be afforded some weight at this time.
- 6.1.7 Paragraph 11 of the NPPF provides definitive guidance on how applications should be determined by stating:

*"Plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development. For decision-taking this means:*

*Approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:*

- i. The application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or*
- ii. Any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework as a whole.”*

## **6.2 Northumberland Development Plan**

6.2.1 Northumberland County Council was established as a unitary authority on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2009 following Local Government Reorganisation. It replaced the former County Council and six District/ Borough Councils of Alnwick, Berwick, Blyth Valley, Castle Morpeth, Tynedale and Wansbeck.

6.2.2 The former Northumberland local planning authorities had produced their own Development Plans to guide development within their administrative boundaries, which include:

- The Core Strategies of the former Local Authorities of Blyth Valley (2007), and the Blyth Valley Development Control Policies DPD (2007); and
- The saved Local Plan policies (under the Secretary of State’s Direction) of the Blyth Valley District Local Plan (1999)

6.2.3 Policies contained within those documents that have been ‘saved’ under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 will remain in force and will continue to provide the basis for planning decisions until replaced by subsequent Development Plan Documents.

6.2.4 These documents, together with any made Neighbourhood Plans, have been brought together to form the ‘Northumberland Consolidated Planning Policy Framework’.

6.2.5 Planning law states that planning applications should be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The NPPF is a material planning consideration in the determination of planning applications. The closer the policies in the Development Plan to the policies in the NPPF, the greater the weight that can be given to the development plan policies.

6.2.6 Northumberland County Council is focusing on the preparation of a Local Plan for Northumberland. The Northumberland Local Plan will:

- *set the strategic planning policies of the Council;*

- *provide the planning principles, including detailed development management policies to guide future development and planning decisions in Northumberland to 2036;*
- *set the general scale and distribution of new development which is required to meet Northumberland's needs to 2036;*
- *include strategic allocations as well as detailed land allocations and designations; and*
- *include site specific proposals for the development, protection and conservation of land.*

6.2.7 Once adopted, the Northumberland Local Plan will supersede those existing development plan documents which collectively comprise the 'Northumberland Consolidated Planning Policy Framework'.

6.2.8 The Phase 2 hearings on the Emerging Northumberland Local Plan were completed in November 2020 and the Inspector indicated that she did not envisage the need to hold additional hearings. As such, it is anticipated that the local plan will be adopted in Spring 2021. It is therefore considered that relevant policies can be given some weight presently and can be given increasing weight as the Plan moves towards adoption. As such, this Planning Statement considers both the extant and emerging local planning policies that are of relevance to the determination of this application for planning permission.

6.2.9 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states that:

*"If regard is to be had to the development plan for the purpose of any determination to be made under the planning Acts the determination must be made in accordance with plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise."*

6.2.10 Therefore, the starting point from a planning perspective in considering the acceptability or otherwise of the proposals is the development plan. The development plan in respect of the application site comprises the Blyth Valley Borough Local Development Framework Core Strategy Development Plan Document (July 2007), the Blyth Valley Borough Local Development Framework Development Control Policies Development Plan Document (September 2007) and the saved policies of the Blyth Valley District Local Plan (May 1999).

6.2.11 The NPPF advises at paragraph 213 that, in respect of Development Plans adopted prior to publication of the NPPF, local planning authorities should afford due weight according to their degree of consistency with the NPPF (the closer the policies in the Plan to the policies in the NPPF, the greater the weight that may be given).

6.2.12 In accordance with paragraph 48 of the NPPF, weight may also be given to the policies in emerging plans depending on the stage of preparation of the plan, the extent to which emerging policy aligns with the NPPF and the extent of unresolved objections to the emerging plan. The Northumberland Local Plan was submitted to Secretary of State for

examination in May 2019 and is currently undergoing examination. It is therefore considered that relevant policies can be given some weight presently and can be given increasing weight as the Plan moves towards adoption.

### **6.3 Blyth Valley Borough Local Development Framework Core Strategy (July 2007)**

6.3.1 The relevant policies of the extant Core Strategy that pertain to the scheme which is the subject of this planning application are identified as follows:

#### **Policy SS1: Regeneration and Renaissance of Blyth Valley 2021**

6.3.2 Policy SS1 outlines an integrated regeneration and spatial strategy to support an economic and social renaissance of Blyth Valley. This includes improving accessibility for new developments. The policy specifically supports the reintroduction of passenger services on the Ashington, Blyth and Tyne Railway Line. The policy defines the Ashington, Blyth and Tyne Line proposals as 'essential infrastructure'.

#### **Policy SS3: Sustainability Criteria**

6.3.3 Policy SS3 identifies the criteria against which the sustainability credentials of new development will be assessed:

- *The development must be accessible to homes, jobs, shops, services, the transport network and modes of transport other than the private car; and*
- *There would be no physical and environmental constraints on the development of the land as a result of contamination, flood risk, and/or land stability which could not be resolved without a detrimental impact on the environment; and*
- *That there would be no unacceptable adverse impact on the natural environment, resources, biodiversity and geological conservation interests, landscape character, historic and cultural heritage and community assets of the borough and the maintenance, restoration and enhancement of these interests will be secured in new developments; and*
- *That new development would help to build communities by sustaining community services and facilities, or through the provision of affordable housing to meet identified local need; and*
- *That new development will reflect the principles of energy efficiency, water efficiency and conservation, sustainable design and construction, sustainable urban drainage schemes (SUDS), the hierarchy of waste management [waste minimisation, reuse of waste and recovery, which includes recycling] and secure by design.*

#### **Policy A2: Pedestrian/ Cycle Routes**

- 6.3.4 Policy A2 supports development that is well connected to existing areas and infrastructure, including pedestrian and cycle routes.

#### **Policy A3: Ashington, Blyth and Tyne Line**

- 6.3.5 Policy A3 supports the re-introduction of passenger services on the Ashington, Blyth and Tyne railway line by safeguarding the route and land for future stations. The council supports in principle alternative approaches to improving connectivity along the strategic transport corridor.

### **6.4 Blyth Valley Borough Local Development Framework Development Control Policies Development Plan Document (September 2007)**

- 6.4.1 The relevant policies of the extant Development Control Policies Development Plan Document that pertain to the scheme which is the subject of this planning application are identified as follows:

#### **Policy DC1: General Development**

- 6.4.2 Policy DC1 sets out the general principles that will be used to consider the appropriateness of development proposals. Development proposals will be expected to, amongst other things, be:

- *of a high standard of design and landscaping which takes account of existing natural and built features, the surrounding area and adjacent land uses; and*
- *be in locations which are, or can be through the provision of appropriate measures, accessible on foot, by cycle and by public and private transport and where satisfactory access can be achieved.*

#### **Policy DC11: Planning for Sustainable Travel**

- 6.4.3 Policy DC11 sets out a number of criteria for new developments to satisfy. This includes encouraging the use of public transport, improving the integration of different modes of travel and providing an appropriate level of car and cycling provision.

#### **Policy DC16: Biodiversity**

- 6.4.4 Policy DC16 considers development proposals should seek to contribute to the delivery of the objectives and targets set by the Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP). The policy states that all development should aim to maintain and enhance habitat networks by avoiding or repairing the fragmentation and isolation of natural habitats.

#### **Policy DC17: Landscape: General Protection and Restoration**

6.4.5 Policy DC17 states that development should contribute to restoration, enhancement, repair and maintenance of the landscape in and around which it is sited. Development with landscape and visual impacts will be assessed against the extent to which it will:

- a) Cause unacceptable visual harm; and*
- b) Introduce or remove incongruous landscape elements; and*
- c) Enhance, maintain or degrade:*
  - Landscape features that contribute to local distinctiveness;*
  - Historic elements that contribute to landscape character and quality; and*
  - Semi-natural vegetation that is characteristic of the landscape type; and*
  - The visual condition of landscape elements that combine to create the distinctive character; and*
  - The tranquillity of the area*

#### **Policy DC19: Drainage and Flood Risk**

6.4.6 Policy DC19 states that development proposals should make the most efficient use of water and enhance the sustainable use of the water environment. Development that incorporates sustainable drainage systems will be encouraged.

#### **Policy DC21: Pollution Control**

6.4.7 Policy DC21 states that the local planning authority will seek to minimise the impact of pollution on the environment, including existing land uses, and on proposed development and will support and encourage measures to reduce existing pollution to the lowest practicable levels and where possible, improve air, soil and water quality.

#### **Policy DC22: Noise Pollution**

6.4.8 Policy DC22 states that the local planning authority will seek to ensure that, wherever practicable, noise sensitive development and noisy or potentially noisy developments are located away from one another and will impose relevant conditions or seek appropriate planning obligations in relation to new development where separation is not practicable.

#### **Policy DC27: Design of New Developments**

6.4.9 Policy DC27 states that new development will be expected to achieve a high standard of design, incorporate sustainable construction measures and reflect local distinctiveness through the incorporation of local building traditions and materials. Proposals should take

full account of the need for or opportunities to enhance the local environment. High quality contemporary design solutions will be considered where they can be accommodated without detriment to the surrounding environment.

## **6.5 Blyth Valley District Local Plan (May 1999)**

6.5.1 The relevant policies of the extant District Local Plan that pertain to the scheme which is the subject of this planning application are identified as follows:

### **Policy E3: Landscape: General Approach**

6.5.2 Policy E3 states that the quality of the landscape will be taken into account in planning decisions by assessing proposals according to their effects on the intrinsic qualities of the landscape type or types which they affect. Account will also be taken of any positive landscape related measures proposed as part of any development.

### **Policy E12: Archaeology**

6.5.3 Policy E12 states that archaeological heritage within the Plan area will be preserved, protected and enhanced by where, in principle, permission can be granted, it will normally be subject to:

- Appropriate mitigation measures, details of which should form part of the planning application;
- Development not taking place until a programme of archaeological work has been devised and implemented in accordance with an agreed archaeological brief.

### **Policy G9: Development in Countryside Beyond Green Belt**

6.5.4 Policy G9 states that in areas outside settlement limits which are not part of the Green Belt, the construction of new buildings will not be permitted except for the following purposes:

6.5.5 Where a structure is related to essential infrastructure services in which case the proposal would also be assessed against other environmental policies in this Plan.

### **Policy G10: Development Criteria in the Countryside**

6.5.6 Policy G10 outlines the criteria for which all development outside of the development settlement limits must comply. New development must have regard to the existing settlement pattern. This includes consideration of neighbouring uses, the environment and any future needs that the development may necessitate. A new building will not be permitted if it is isolated from existing buildings, unless it is necessary in terms of the uses proposed.

### **Policy M8: Car Parking**

- 6.5.7 Policy M8 states that new development should seek to minimise the area devoted to car parking, whilst complying with parking standards and safeguarding existing provision. The policy states that the possibility of providing park and ride facilities should be explored. Where possible, measures should be taken to ensure that car park areas are well landscaped and safe for pedestrians.

## **6.6 Northumberland Local Plan Regulation 19 Publication Draft (May 2019)**

- 6.6.1 The NPPF advises at paragraph 48 that weight may also be given to the policies in emerging plans depending on the stage of preparation of the plan, the extent to which emerging policy aligns with the NPPF and the extent of unresolved objections to the emerging plan. The Phase 2 hearings on the Emerging Northumberland Local Plan were completed in November 2020 and the Inspector indicated that she did not envisage the need to hold additional hearings. As such, it is anticipated that the local plan will be adopted in Spring 2021. It is therefore considered that relevant policies can be given some weight presently and can be given increasing weight as the Plan moves towards adoption.

- 6.6.2 The relevant policies of the emerging Northumberland Local Plan that pertain to the scheme which is the subject of this planning application are identified as follows:

### **Policy STP1: Spatial Strategy**

- 6.6.3 Policy STP1 states that sustainable development will be supported within the constraints of the Green Belt and settlement boundaries defined on the Local Plan policies map. Sustainable development within, or immediately adjacent to, the built up form of Main Towns, Service Centres and Service Villages without defined settlement boundaries, will be supported, if it is commensurate with size of the settlement, and it can be demonstrated that it does not adversely impact upon the character of the settlement.
- 6.6.4 Development in the open countryside will only be supported if it can be demonstrated that it:
- Provides for essential transport, utilities and energy infrastructure in accordance with other policies in the Local Plan.
- 6.6.5 The policy goes on to state that development in the open countryside should be sensitive to its surroundings, not have an unacceptable impact upon the local road network and use previously developed land where opportunities exist.

### **Policy STP2: Presumption in favour of Sustainable Development**

- 6.6.6 Policy STP2 states that when considering development proposals, the Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). It will always work pro-actively



with applicants to seek to find solutions that mean proposals that improve the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area can be approved wherever possible.

### **Policy STP3: Principles of Sustainable Development**

6.6.7 Policy STP3 states that: In applying the presumption in favour of sustainable development in Northumberland and to deliver against economic, social and environmental objectives, development proposals will be expected to deliver across the range of the economic, social and environmental factors, and adhere to the following principles where appropriate:

- *Contribute to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy across Northumberland, support more and better jobs, protect and enhance the vitality and viability of Northumberland's town centres and other important economic sectors;*
- *Minimise their impact upon local amenity for new or existing residents and businesses, adjoining premises and land uses;*
- *Support and provide opportunities to improve health, social and cultural wellbeing for all, and provide the infrastructure which is required to enhance the quality of life of individuals and communities;*
- *Demonstrate high quality sustainable design which is accessible to all, and which respects and enhances the local distinctiveness of the natural, historic and built environment, helps promote a sense of place, reduces the need for energy, and facilitates flexible and adaptable buildings and environments;*
- *Be accessible by, or be able to be made accessible by public transport, walking or cycling where feasible, thereby reducing the need to travel for both people and goods, and the dependence on travel by private car;*
- *Make best use of existing facilities and infrastructure, whilst making appropriate provision for new or additional infrastructure as required;*

### **Policy STP4: Climate change mitigation and adaptation**

6.6.8 Policy STP4 states that Development proposals should mitigate climate change and contribute to meeting nationally binding targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. When determining planning applications, support will be given to how development proposals that help mitigate climate change and consideration will be given to how proposals:

- Through their location, layout and pattern of development, reduce the need to travel for both people and goods, and encourage sustainable modes of transport, including walking, cycling and the use of public transport;

### **Policy STP5: Health and wellbeing**

6.6.9 Policy STP5 states that development which promotes, supports and enhances the health and wellbeing of communities, residents, workers and visitors will be supported. Development proposals will be required to demonstrate that they:

- are safe, comfortable, inclusive and attractive and prioritise pedestrian and cycle movement;
- provide access to a range of facilities including public transport, health, education, social care, green spaces, sport, play and leisure facilities.

6.6.10 The policy requires that a Health Impact Assessment Screening be submitted for all major development proposals to determine whether the potential impact on health resulting from the development warrants any further assessment. Where further assessment is warranted, a proportionate Health Impact Assessment will also be required to be submitted as part of the application. A Health Impact Assessment will be required to include proposals to mitigate any adverse health impacts, maximise potential positive impacts, and help reduce health inequalities.

### **Policy QOP1: Design Principles**

6.6.11 Policy QOP1 states that in determining planning applications, design will be assessed against the following design principles, in accordance with the Northumberland Design Guide.

### **Policy QOP2: Good Design and Amenity**

6.6.12 Policy QOP2 states that development will be required to provide a high standard of amenity for existing and future users of the development itself and preserve the amenity of those living in, working in or visiting the local area.

6.6.13 Development which would result in unacceptable adverse impacts on the amenity of neighbouring uses, in terms of both individual and cumulative impacts, will not be supported.

### **Policy QOP4: Landscaping and Trees**

6.6.14 Policy QOP4 states that where relevant, new development will be expected to incorporate well-designed landscaping and respond appropriately to any existing landscape features. Development proposals should ensure that:

- *Landscaping design is of a high quality, in accordance with the principles set out in Policy QOP 1;*
- *Existing features which contribute towards the character of the area, or amenity, are retained wherever possible and sympathetically incorporated into the overall design of the scheme;*

- *Any hard or soft landscaping is appropriate, functional and well-integrated into the design of the development;*
- *Trees, and other spaces and features that provide green and blue infrastructure, are preserved, enhanced and introduced into the landscaping scheme wherever possible;*

#### **Policy QOP6: Delivering well-designed places**

6.6.15 Policy QOP6 states that proposals are expected to meet the local design expectations set out in design policies within the Plan, the Northumberland Design Guide, and any other design guidance. Proposals are expected to respond to any character assessments that form part of or support the Plan. Where a Design and Access Statement is required as part of a planning application, there must be a clear and proportionate demonstration of:

- *How relevant design policies, the Northumberland Design Guide, character assessments and any other design guidance supporting the Plan, have been integral to the design development process;*
- *A robust analysis of the context and character of the site and the local area, in addition to the functional requirements of the intended use;*
- *The design concept and the evolution of the design development through drawings or models, including explanatory text as appropriate; and*
- *Where relevant, how consultation with communities and other relevant stakeholders has informed the design.*

#### **Policy TRA1: Promoting sustainable connections**

6.6.16 Policy TRA1 states that the council will support development that:

- *Promotes a spatial distribution which creates accessible development, reduces the need to travel by car, and maximises the use of sustainable modes of transport;*
- *Promotes good design principles in respect of the permeability, connectivity and legibility of buildings and public spaces; and inclusive access;*
- *Promotes sustainable transport choices, including supporting, providing and connecting to networks for walking, cycling and public transport; and infrastructure that supports the use of low and ultra low emission vehicles;*
  - a. *Ensures delivery of cycle parking and supporting infrastructure;*
  - b. *Protects, enhances and supports public rights of way;*
  - c. *Supports the delivery of reliable, safe and efficient transport networks, in partnership with other organisations, service providers and developers;*

- d. *Requires development to be designed to enable charging of plug-in and other ultra low emission vehicles in safe, accessible, convenient locations; and*
- e. *Requires development proposals which generate significant amounts of movements to be supported by a Transport Assessment/ Transport Statement, and Travel Plans, and where appropriate, delivery/servicing plans.*

**Policy TRA2: The effects of development on the transport network**

6.6.17 Policy TRA2 states that all developments affecting the transport network will be required to:

- a. *Provide effective and safe access and egress to the existing transport network;*
- b. *Include appropriate measures to mitigate and manage any adverse impacts on the transport network including any contribution to cumulative impacts;*
- c. *Minimise conflict between different modes of transport, including measures for network, traffic and parking management;*
- d. *Facilitate the safe use of the network, including suitable crossing points, footways and dedicated provision for cyclists where necessary;*
- e. *Suitably accommodate the delivery of goods and supplies, access for maintenance and refuse collection; and*
- f. *Minimise any adverse impact on communities and the environment, including noise and air quality*

**Policy TRA4: Parking provision in new development**

6.6.18 Policy TRA4 states that an appropriate amount of off-street vehicle parking sufficient to serve new development shall be made available in safe, accessible and convenient locations prior to the development, as a whole or in part, being brought into use. Vehicle parking shall be provided in accordance with the parking standards set out in Appendix D of the Local Plan, or other such local standards set out in made neighbourhood plans which will be given priority in determining the appropriate amount of parking required.

**Policy TRA5: Rail transport and safeguarding facilities**

6.6.19 Policy TRA5 states that development which would prevent the reintroduction of passenger rail services on the Northumberland Line along with associated stations, facilities and access to them from adjacent highways, and continued rail freight use of the Northumberland Line, its associated branch lines (including the branch line from Bedlington to Morpeth via Choppington, the Butterwell line north of Ashington and the line from Woodhorn to Newbiggin-by-the-Sea) and supporting infrastructure will not be supported.

6.6.20 Sites for stations have been identified and land will be safeguarded at the following locations:

- Woodhorn
- Ashington
- Bedlington Station
- Blyth Bebside
- South Newsham
- Seaton Delaval
- Seghill

6.6.21 The policy goes on to state that measures to improve public safety at level crossings will be supported. Improvement, alteration or closure of level crossings, or appropriate contributions towards the implementation of such works, may be secured through the grant of planning permission for development where it can be demonstrated, to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority, that those works are directly related to the impact that development may have on the level crossing and they are necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms.

**Policy ENV1: Approaches to assessing the impact of development on the natural, historic and built environment**

6.6.22 Policy ENV1 states that the character and significance of Northumberland's distinctive and valued natural, historic and built environments, will be conserved, protected and enhanced by:

- *Giving appropriate weight to the statutory purposes and special qualities of the hierarchy of international, national and local designated and non-designated nature and historic conservation assets or sites and their settings;*
- *Protecting Northumberland's most important landscapes and applying a character-based approach to, as appropriate, manage, protect or plan landscape across the whole County.*

**Policy ENV2: Biodiversity and geodiversity**

6.6.23 Policy ENV2 states that development proposals affecting biodiversity and geodiversity will minimise their impact and net gains for biodiversity will be secured by:

- *Avoiding significant harm through location and/ or design. Where significant harm cannot be avoided, applicants will be required to demonstrate that adverse impacts will be adequately mitigated or, as a last resort compensated for;*

- *Securing net biodiversity gains and/or wider ecological enhancements through new development*

#### **Policy ENV7: Historic environment and heritage assets**

- 6.6.24 Policy ENV7 supports the NPPF position on historic assets in that decisions affecting a heritage asset will be based on a sound understanding of the significance of that asset and any impact of any proposal upon that significance.

#### **Policy WAT3: Flooding**

- 6.6.25 Policy WAT3 states that development proposals will be required to demonstrate how they will minimise flood risk to people, property and infrastructure from all potential sources by:
- *Avoiding inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding and directing the development away from areas at highest risk, applying the Sequential Test and if necessary the Exceptions Test, in accordance with national policy and the Northumberland Strategic Flood Risk Assessment. Site Specific Flood Risk Assessments will be required in accordance with national policy and guidance;*
  - *Ensuring that the development will be safe over its lifetime, taking account of climate change, will not increase flood risk elsewhere and where possible, reduce flood risk overall;*
  - *Ensuring that development proposals in areas at risk from flooding are made resistant and resilient, in terms of their layout, mix and/or building design, in accordance with national policy and the findings and recommendations of the Northumberland Strategic Flood Risk Assessment;*

#### **Policy WAT4: Sustainable Drainage Systems**

- 6.6.26 Policy WAT4 states that SuDS will be a requirement for any development where it is necessary to manage surface water drainage unless it can be clearly demonstrated:
- *That SuDS are not technically, operationally or financially deliverable or viable and that any surface water drainage issues resulting from the development can be alternatively mitigated; or*
  - *That the SuDS scheme will itself adversely affect the environment or safety, including where ponds could increase the risk of bird strike close to the airport or where existing minewater problems could be exacerbated.*

#### **Policy POL1: Unstable and contaminated land**

- 6.6.27 Policy POL1 states that development proposals will be supported where it can be demonstrated that unacceptable risks from land instability and contamination will be prevented and that measures can be taken to effectively mitigate the impacts.

## **Policy POL2: Pollution and air, soil and water quality**

- 6.6.1 Policy POL2 states that development proposals that may cause pollution of water, air or soil, either individually or cumulatively, are required to incorporate measures to prevent or reduce their pollution so as not to cause nuisance or unacceptable impacts on the environment, people or biodiversity. Development proposed where pollution levels are unacceptable, and unable to be mitigated to acceptable levels, will not be supported.

## **6.7 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)**

- 6.7.1 The National Planning Policy Framework<sup>15</sup> (NPPF) sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied. It provides a framework within which locally prepared plans for housing and other development can be produced.
- 6.7.2 Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The National Planning Policy Framework must be taken into account in preparing the development plan, and is a material consideration in planning decisions. Planning policies and decisions must also reflect relevant international obligations and statutory requirements.
- 6.7.3 The NPPF states at paragraph 7 that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. At a very high level, the objective of sustainable development can be summarised as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.
- 6.7.4 Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways (so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across each of the different objectives):
- an economic objective – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;
  - a social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces that

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<sup>15</sup> Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (2019) National Planning Policy Framework (p4)

reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being; and

- an environmental objective – to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.

6.7.5 At the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, so that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way.

6.7.6 With reference to paragraph 11 of the NPPF, it is important to note that for decision-taking this means;

- approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or
- where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important are out-of-date, granting permission unless:
  - i) the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or
  - ii) any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.

6.7.7 Further advice on decision-taking which is of relevance to the current scheme is provided at paragraph 38 of the Framework;

6.7.8 Local planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way. They should use the full range of planning tools available and work proactively with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. Decision-makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible.

6.7.9 The early engagement evoked by the NPPF has been undertaken in a bid to assist in the efficiency and effectiveness of the determination of this planning application; paragraphs 39 to 46 of the NPPF highlight the importance of pre-application engagement.

### **Promoting Sustainable Transport**

6.7.10 An integral component in delivering sustainable development and achieving wider sustainability and health objectives is the promotion of sustainable transport, as set out in



Section 9 of the Framework. This includes identifying and pursuing opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport use.

- 6.7.11 This section states that the planning system should actively manage patterns of growth in support of these objectives. Significant development should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes. This can help to reduce congestion and emissions and improve air quality and public health.
- 6.7.12 Paragraph 109 states that development should only be prevented or refused on highway grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.
- 6.7.13 This connotes that a refusal of planning permission on transport grounds will only be justifiable if there are severe impacts arising from the development which cannot be mitigated.

#### **Building a strong, competitive economy**

- 6.7.14 The NPPF places great importance on ensuring the planning system does everything it can to help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development.

#### **Achieving well-designed places**

- 6.7.15 The creation of high-quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities.
- 6.7.16 Paragraph 128 states that design quality should be considered throughout the evolution and assessment of individual proposals. Early discussion between applicants, the local planning authority and local community about the design and style of emerging schemes is important for clarifying expectations and reconciling local and commercial interests. Applicants should work closely with those affected by proposals to evolve designs that take account of the views of the community. Applications that can demonstrate early, proactive and effective engagement with the community should be looked on more favourably than those that cannot.

## 7 Planning Assessment

### 7.1 Introduction

- 7.1.1 The application for planning permission is accompanied by the supporting information identified as required by the local planning authority in discussions prior to submission. The scope, extent and nature of the supporting information is in accordance with the advice and recommendations given by officers of the local planning authority.
- 7.1.2 The design of the scheme and scope of the submitted proposals has been conceived with the ambition of satisfying all of the relevant local and national planning, transport and environmental policies.
- 7.1.3 Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the statutory development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 7.1.4 The following sections:
- summarise the evidence that demonstrates how the development proposals accord with national planning policies (section 7.2–7.6)
  - summarises the evidence that demonstrates how the development proposals accord with the Local Plan (section 7.7)
  - confirms that there are no material considerations in the determination of the planning application that should lead to the application being refused (section 8)
  - confirms that the implementation of the scheme would deliver significant public benefits.

### 7.2 Accordance with Northumberland Development Plan

- 7.2.1 The development plan in respect of the application site comprises the Blyth Valley Borough Local Development Framework Core Strategy Development Plan Document (July 2007), the Blyth Valley Borough Local Development Framework Development Control Policies Development Plan Document (September 2007) and the saved policies of the Blyth Valley District Local Plan (May 1999).
- 7.2.2 The NPPF advises at paragraph 213 that, in respect of Development Plans adopted prior to publication of the NPPF, local planning authorities should afford due weight according to their degree of consistency with the NPPF (the closer the policies in the Plan to the policies in the NPPF, the greater the weight that may be given).

- 7.2.3 In accordance with paragraph 48 of the NPPF, weight may also be given to the policies in emerging plans depending on the stage of preparation of the plan, the extent to which emerging policy aligns with the NPPF and the extent of unresolved objections to the emerging plan. The Northumberland Local Plan was submitted to Secretary of State for examination in May 2019 and is currently undergoing examination. It is therefore considered that relevant policies can be given some weight presently and can be given increasing weight as the Plan moves towards adoption.

### **7.3 Blyth Valley Borough Local Development Framework Core Strategy (July 2007)**

- 7.3.1 The Blyth Valley Borough LDF Core Strategy sets out the overall vision and spatial strategy for the borough until 2021. It currently forms the basis of Northumberland's Local Development Framework and is used to guide planning decisions throughout the Blyth Valley.
- 7.3.2 The Core Strategy was adopted on 5th July 2007 following an examination in February 2007. It now forms part of the statutory development plan for Northumberland. As well as providing the basis for decisions on planning applications, the Core Strategy is used to help shape regeneration, investment and growth within the borough.
- 7.3.3 It is anticipated the Core Strategy will be superseded by the emerging Northumberland Local Plan. Notwithstanding this, the extant Core Strategy currently forms part of the adopted development plan. Those policies of the existing, adopted Core Strategy that are material to the determination of this planning application are set out below.

#### **Policy SS1: Regeneration and Renaissance of Blyth Valley**

- 7.3.4 Policy SS1 sets out an integrated regeneration strategy to guide new development to ensure that it can support the regeneration and economic and social renaissance of Blyth Valley. The policy states that it will support:

*“the implementation of essential infrastructure proposals in order to support and facilitate economic regeneration proposals, particularly:*

- *Ashington, Blyth and Tyne Line (ATB) or alternative public transport corridor.”*

- 7.3.5 The proposed railway station at Blyth Bebside is an integral component, and proposed to be delivered as part of, the Northumberland Line scheme. The scheme is therefore specifically supported by Policy SS1. The delivery of the new station will support and facilitate the council's ambitions for an economic and social renaissance in the Blyth Valley.
- 7.3.6 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy SS1 of the Blyth Valley Borough Core Strategy.

### **Policy SS3: Sustainability Criteria**

- 7.3.7 Policy SS3 identifies the criteria against which the sustainability credentials of new development will be tested.
- 7.3.8 The proposed railway station at Blyth Bebside, given its nature, represents a sustainable development. The scheme will encourage a modal shift toward more sustainable travel, reducing reliance on the private car. The location of the proposed station is adjacent existing housing and other amenities and can therefore be considered to be readily accessible by pedestrians, cyclists and motorists. Pedestrian crossing improvements are proposed to be delivered as part of the scheme, to encourage passengers to walk or cycle to and from the railway station. To this end, appropriate cycle parking facilities are to be provided at the site.
- 7.3.9 The many and various surveys, assessments and reports submitted in support of this planning application demonstrate that the proposed development has been designed based on a sound understanding of the physical and environmental constraints of the site. The scheme incorporates appropriate mitigation to avoid significant adverse or unacceptable environmental impacts.
- 7.3.10 The proposed development of a new railway station at Blyth Bebside would assist in sustaining communities and facilities through improving access for residents and visitors, including staff and customers of local businesses.
- 7.3.11 The proposed new railway station will encourage the conservation of existing resources, encouraging a shift from the private car to more sustainable modes. It is anticipated that such a modal shift would have a positive effect on local air quality, reducing congestion of the local highway network and encouraging cycling and walking to improve the health and wellbeing of local people.
- 7.3.12 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy SS3 of the Blyth Valley Borough Core Strategy.

### **Policy A2: Pedestrian/ Cycle Routes**

- 7.3.13 Policy A2 supports development that is well connected to existing areas and infrastructure, including pedestrian and cycle routes.
- 7.3.14 The proposed railway station at Blyth Bebside is located adjacent to existing housing and other amenities. The proposed station has been designed to utilise existing infrastructure, including pedestrian and cycle routes and will deliver improvements to encourage pedestrian and cyclist access.
- 7.3.15 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy A2 of the Blyth Valley Borough Core Strategy.

### **Policy A3: Ashington, Blyth and Tyne Line**

- 7.3.16 Policy A3 supports the re-introduction of passenger services on the Ashington, Blyth and Tyne railway line by safeguarding the route and land for future stations. The policy states that the council supports in principle alternative approaches to improving connectivity along the strategic transport corridor.
- 7.3.17 The proposed railway station at Blyth Bebside is an integral component, and proposed to be delivered as part of, the Northumberland Line scheme. The scheme is therefore specifically supported by Policy A3. The delivery of the new station will support and facilitate the council's ambitions for the re-introduction of passenger services on the Ashington, Blyth and Tyne Line.
- 7.3.18 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy A3 of the Blyth Valley Borough Core Strategy.

## **7.4 Blyth Valley Borough Local Development Framework Development Control Policies Development Plan Document (September 2007)**

- 7.4.1 The Blyth Valley Borough LDF Development Control Policies Development Plan Document sets out a series of generic development control policies against which planning applications for new development in the Blyth Valley will be assessed. It currently forms part of Northumberland's Local Development Framework and is used to guide planning decisions throughout the Blyth Valley.
- 7.4.2 The Development Control Policies Development Plan Document was adopted in May 2007 following an examination in February 2007. It now forms part of the statutory development plan for Northumberland. As well as providing the basis for decisions on planning applications, the Core Strategy is used to help shape regeneration, investment and growth within the borough.
- 7.4.3 It is anticipated the Development Control Policies Development Plan Document will be superseded by the emerging Northumberland Local Plan. Notwithstanding this, the extant Development Control Policies Development Plan Document currently forms part of the adopted development plan. Those policies of the existing, adopted Development Control Policies Development Plan Document that are material to the determination of this planning application are set out below.

### **Policy DC1: General Development**

- 7.4.4 Policy DC1 sets out the general principles that will be used to consider the appropriateness of development proposals. The policy states that development proposals, amongst other things, will be expected to be:
- *"of a high standard of design and landscaping which takes account of existing natural and built features, the surrounding area and adjacent land uses; and*

- *be in locations which are, or can be through the provision of appropriate measures, accessible on foot, by cycle and by public and private transport and where satisfactory access can be achieved.”*

- 7.4.5 The proposed railway station at Blyth Bebside has been designed based on a detailed understanding of the existing and historic site conditions, an appraisal of those features of the local area that contribute to local character and distinctiveness, and through identifying the needs of all anticipated future users of the railway station and considering the advice of all stakeholders including Network Rail, the local planning authority, the local highway authority, residents, businesses and local politicians.
- 7.4.6 The submitted Design and Access Statement provides further details to demonstrate that the submitted scheme is based on a clear understanding of the character and local distinctiveness of the area and confirms that the proposed railway station would make a positive contribution to place-making and environmental improvement. The submitted landscaping proposals and visual impact assessment demonstrate that the scheme has been designed based on a sound understanding of the likely impacts on sensitive receptors and to ensure the visual impacts of the scheme do not have a significant adverse impact on the landscape.
- 7.4.7 The proposed railway station is located in an area which is accessible on foot, by cycle and by public and private transport and where satisfactory access can be achieved. The scheme includes measures to encourage walking and cycling to and from the railway station, though provision is made for vehicular access to ensure the station can be accessed by all users, including elderly and mobility impaired users that may be unable to walk to the station.
- 7.4.8 In summary, the proposed railway station demonstrates a bespoke approach to design. The proposed layout, scale, height and other design elements of the railway station are based on a detailed appraisal of the site, the existing railway and highway infrastructure and the proximity to adjacent land uses.
- 7.4.9 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy DC1 of the Development Control Policies Development Plan Document.

#### **Policy DC11: Planning for Sustainable Travel**

- 7.4.10 Policy DC11 sets out a number of criteria for new developments to satisfy. This includes encouraging the use of public transport, improving the integration of different modes of travel and providing an appropriate level of car and cycling provision.
- 7.4.11 The proposed railway station at Blyth Bebside is an integral part of the proposed re-introduction of passenger services on the Northumberland Line. The scheme includes the provision of measures to encourage walking and cycling to and from the station. The proposed development would promote greater use of sustainable transport modes, encouraging rail travel for car users for either all or part of their journey to destinations

including Northumberland, North Tyneside and Newcastle City Centre; helping to reduce the growth and reliance on car borne journeys. The scheme also provides measures to facilitate vehicular access to the station for elderly and mobility impaired users, to ensure the station is accessible for all.

7.4.12 The submitted Transport Assessment provides a detailed review of the predicted impacts of the proposed development on the local highway network, confirming that the proposed development would not result in a detrimental impact on the operation of the highway network and could alleviate pressure on the local highway network through encouraging an increased number of trips by rail.

7.4.13 In summary, the proposed railway station at Blyth Bebside is anticipated to encourage a modal shift toward more sustainable modes, benefiting both journey times for users of the road and rail network and providing environmental improvements to local air quality, and improved cycle and walking routes.

7.4.14 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy DC11 of the Development Control Policies Development Plan Document.

**Policy DC17: Landscape: General Protection and Restoration**

7.4.15 Policy DC17 states that development should contribute to restoration, enhancement, repair and maintenance of the landscape in and around which it is sited. Development with landscape and visual impacts will be assessed against the extent to which it will:

*“Cause unacceptable visual harm; and*

- Introduce or remove incongruous landscape elements; and*
- Enhance, maintain or degrade:*
- Landscape features that contribute to local distinctiveness;*
- Historic elements that contribute to landscape character and quality; and*
- Semi-natural vegetation that is characteristic of the landscape type; and*
- The visual condition of landscape elements that combine to create the distinctive character; and*
- The tranquillity of the area”*

7.4.16 The proposed railway station at Blyth Bebside has been designed based on a sound understanding of the physical constraints of the site, to ensure that it can be considered to appropriately sit within its landscape setting.

7.4.17 The proposed railway station at Blyth Bebside has been designed based on a detailed understanding and appraisal of those features of the local area that contribute to

landscape character and distinctiveness, and through identifying and appraising the visual impact on different receptors from various viewpoints.

- 7.4.18 It should also be noted that the vast proportion of the site is located within the defined settlement boundary, therefore the impact on the open countryside (as defined by the Development Plan Document) is considered to be limited. Further details to demonstrate that the scheme is considered to sit well within the landscape can be found within the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment which is submitted in support of this planning application.
- 7.4.19 It is considered that the proposed station would not have a significant adverse impact on the local landscape. The site is currently an unkempt brownfield site. The proposed development will assist in making effective re-use of this site, restoring it for use as a railway station; a sustainable development that will incorporate appropriate landscaping provision.
- 7.4.20 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy DC17 of the Development Control Policies Development Plan Document.

#### **Policy DC19: Drainage and Flood Risk**

- 7.4.21 Policy DC19 states that development proposals should make the most efficient use of water and enhance the sustainable use of the water environment. Development that incorporates sustainable drainage systems will be encouraged.
- 7.4.22 The application site is identified as being located within Flood Zone 1 and is therefore at low risk of flooding. The proposed railway station at Blyth Bebside has been designed based on a sound understanding of the flood risk pertaining to the site from all sources. The scheme includes appropriate drainage to manage and mitigate the risk of flooding.
- 7.4.23 The submitted Flood Risk Assessment and Sustainable Drainage Assessment provides further details to demonstrate that the scheme has been designed to mitigate the risk of flooding to the site, in accordance with the drainage hierarchy.
- 7.4.24 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy DC19 of the Development Control Policies Development Plan Document.

#### **Policy DC21: Pollution Control**

- 7.4.25 Policy DC21 states that the local planning authority will seek to minimise the impact of pollution on the environment, including existing land uses, and on proposed development and will support and encourage measures to reduce existing pollution to the lowest practicable levels and where possible, improve air, soil and water quality.
- 7.4.26 The proposed railway station has been designed based on a good understanding of the physical and environmental constraints of the site, including pollution and land contamination. The submitted Contaminated Land Assessment (included in the Preliminary Sources Study Report) identifies that the contamination risks pertaining to the site and the



proposed development. In so doing, the Contaminated Land Assessment recommends appropriate mitigation to safeguard the site and adjacent land from significant adverse contamination issues.

7.4.27 The submitted Air Quality Assessment demonstrates that the scheme, given its nature, will assist in reducing the reliance on the private car and as such will likely result in improvements to local air quality.

7.4.28 In summary, the proposed development is considered to appropriately consider pollution control issues and appropriate mitigation measures are to be incorporated to manage any pollution or contamination issues arising as a result of the scheme.

7.4.29 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy DC21 of the Development Control Policies Development Plan Document.

#### **Policy DC22: Noise Pollution**

7.4.30 Policy DC22 states that the local planning authority will seek to ensure that, wherever practicable, noise sensitive development and noisy or potentially noisy developments are located away from one another and will impose relevant conditions or seek appropriate planning obligations in relation to new development where separation is not practicable.

7.4.31 The proposed development has been designed based on a sound understanding of the site and adjacent land uses. The proposed station is located south of the A192. There are residential properties located to the east of the site. The site is located to the east of the railway corridor. The railway is currently used by freight trains and therefore a level of operational rail noise is already experienced at this location.

7.4.32 It is considered that there will be noise impacts during the construction and operational phases of the development; appropriate mitigation is proposed to be implemented to ensure noise impacts are minimised wherever possible.

7.4.33 The submitted Noise and Vibration Assessment demonstrates that the scheme has been designed based on a sound understanding of the proximity of sensitive receptors. It is proposed that appropriate mitigation during the operational phase will be secured through the provision of details to discharge relevant conditions on a planning permission. It is anticipated the details to mitigate construction noise impacts will be included within the Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) which is expected to be included as a condition on a planning permission.

7.4.34 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy DC22 of the Development Control Policies Development Plan Document.

#### **Policy DC27: Design of New Developments**

7.4.35 Policy DC27 states that new development will be expected to achieve a high standard of design, incorporate sustainable construction measures and reflect local distinctiveness

through the incorporation of local building traditions and materials. Proposals should take full account of the need for or opportunities to enhance the local environment. High quality contemporary design solutions will be considered where they can be accommodated without detriment to the surrounding environment.

- 7.4.36 The proposed railway station at Blyth Bebside has been designed based on a detailed understanding of the existing and historic site conditions, an appraisal of those features of the local area that contribute to local character and distinctiveness, and through identifying the needs of all anticipated future users of the railway station and considering the advice of all stakeholders including Network Rail, the local planning authority, the local highway authority, residents, businesses and local politicians.
- 7.4.37 The submitted Design and Access Statement provides further details demonstrating that the submitted scheme is based on a clear understanding of the character and local distinctiveness of the area and confirms that the proposed railway station would make a positive contribution to place-making and environmental improvement.
- 7.4.38 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy DC27 of the Development Control Policies Development Plan Document.

## **7.5 Blyth Valley District Local Plan (May 1999)**

- 7.5.1 The Blyth Valley District Local Plan sets out a strategy to guide new development in the Blyth Valley. It currently forms the basis of Northumberland's Local Development Framework and is used to guide planning decisions throughout the Blyth Valley.
- 7.5.2 The Blyth Valley District Local Plan was adopted in May 1999. The saved policies therein form part of the statutory development plan for Northumberland. As well as providing the basis for decisions on planning applications, the District Local Plan is used to help shape regeneration, investment and growth within the borough.
- 7.5.3 It is anticipated the saved policies of the Blyth District Local Plan will be superseded by the emerging Northumberland Local Plan. Notwithstanding this, the saved policies of the Blyth District Local Plan currently forms part of the adopted development plan. Those policies of the existing, adopted District Local Plan that are material to the determination of this planning application are set out below.

### **Policy E3: Landscape: General Approach**

- 7.5.4 Policy E3 states that the quality of the landscape will be taken into account in planning decisions by assessing proposals according to their effects on the intrinsic qualities of the landscape type or types which they affect. Account will also be taken of any positive landscape related measures proposed as part of any development.
- 7.5.5 The proposed railway station at Blyth Bebside has been designed based on a sound understanding of the physical constraints of the site, to ensure that it can be considered to

appropriately sit within its landscape setting. The application is supported by various landscape and visual impact assessments which confirm that the scheme would not have a significant adverse impact on the wider landscape.

- 7.5.6 The proposed railway station at Blyth Bebside has been designed based on a detailed understanding and appraisal of those features of the local area that contribute to landscape character and distinctiveness, and through identifying and appraising the visual impact on different receptors from various viewpoints.
- 7.5.7 It is considered that the proposed station would not have a significant adverse impact on the local landscape. Further details in this regard can be found within the submitted Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment.
- 7.5.8 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy E3 of the Blyth District Local Plan.

#### **Policy E12: Archaeology**

- 7.5.9 Policy E12 states that archaeological heritage within the Plan area will be preserved, protected and enhanced by where, in principle, permission can be granted, it will normally be subject to:
- Appropriate mitigation measures, details of which should form part of the planning application;
  - Development not taking place until a programme of archaeological work has been devised and implemented in accordance with an agreed archaeological brief.
- 7.5.10 The planning application for the proposed railway station at Blyth Bebside is supported by a Heritage Statement which confirms that the proposed development would not have a significant adverse impact on heritage assets, including archaeology.
- 7.5.11 The submitted Heritage Statement advises that given the extensive opencast coal works to the west of the railway line, which has likely removed archaeological remains, and the lack of potential for remains to the east of the line, further evaluation is not recommended prior to determination. Notwithstanding, the applicant would be content to accept a condition on a planning permission requiring a scheme of archaeological excavations at the site to be undertaken, to assure the local planning authority of the impacts of the development on archaeological deposits.
- 7.5.12 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy E3 of the Blyth District Local Plan.

#### **Policy G9: Development in Countryside Beyond Green Belt**

- 7.5.13 Policy G9 states that in areas outside settlement limits which are not part of the Green Belt, the construction of new buildings will not be permitted except for the following purposes:

- 7.5.14 *"Where a structure is related to essential infrastructure services in which case the proposal would also be assessed against other environmental policies in this Plan."*
- 7.5.15 The proposed railway station at Blyth Bebside forms an integral component of the scheme which proposes the re-introduction of passenger services on the Northumberland Line. The Northumberland Line scheme is a strategic priority of both national and local government and could therefore reasonably be considered to constitute 'essential infrastructure'.
- 7.5.16 The application site is located in an accessible location, adjacent existing housing and other development and is therefore located in a sustainable location. The proposed development would involve the re-use of previously developed land for a use which could not reasonably be located elsewhere: to construct a railway station it must obviously be located adjacent to the railway line. The submitted landscaping proposals and visual impact assessment demonstrate that the proposals have been designed in a manner which is sensitive to the local character and distinctiveness of the site.
- 7.5.17 In summary, the proposed railway station is considered to be appropriate development outwith the defined settlement boundary.
- 7.5.18 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy G9 of the Blyth District Local Plan.

**Policy G10: Development Criteria in the Countryside**

- 7.5.19 Policy G10 outlines the criteria for which all development outside of the development settlement limits must comply. New development must have regard to the existing settlement pattern. This includes consideration of neighbouring uses, the environment and any future needs that the development may necessitate. A new building will not be permitted if it is isolated from existing buildings, unless it is necessary in terms of the uses proposed.
- 7.5.20 The proposed railway station at Blyth Bebside forms an integral component of the scheme which proposes the re-introduction of passenger services on the Northumberland Line. The Northumberland Line scheme is a strategic priority of both national and local government and could therefore reasonably be considered to constitute 'essential infrastructure'.
- 7.5.21 The application site is located in an accessible location, adjacent existing housing and other development and is therefore located in a sustainable location. The proposed development would involve the use of previously developed land for a use which could not reasonably be located elsewhere: to construct a railway station it must obviously be located adjacent to the railway line. The submitted landscaping proposals and visual impact assessment demonstrate that the proposals have been designed in a manner which is sensitive to the local character and distinctiveness of the area.
- 7.5.22 In summary, the proposed railway station is considered to be appropriate development outwith (but adjacent to) the defined settlement boundary.

- 7.5.23 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy G10 of the Blyth District Local Plan.

#### **Policy M8: Car Parking**

- 7.5.24 Policy M8 states that new development should seek to minimise the area devoted to car parking, whilst complying with parking standards and safeguarding existing provision. The policy states that the possibility of providing park and ride facilities should be explored. Where possible, measures should be taken to ensure that car park areas are well landscaped and safe for pedestrians.
- 7.5.25 The proposed railway station at Blyth Bebside seeks to provide appropriate access for all users, with priority given to encouraging walking and cycling to the station. It is acknowledged that not all users are able to walk and/or cycle to and from the station. For elderly and disabled users, it may be necessary to arrive at or depart from the station by car. The proposed station therefore provides appropriate vehicular access and car parking, the extent to which has been the subject of pre-application discussions with both planning and highway authority officers.
- 7.5.26 The proposed station is well served by links to existing bus stops and services. The site is a short walk away from the existing bus stops on the A192. The X7, 19, 57 and 58 buses stop at this location. Those buses from run from Newcastle to Blyth, East Cramlington to East Hartford, Ashington to Whitley Bay, and Percy Main to Backworth. The scheme is therefore designed to integrate with the existing public transport infrastructure adjacent to the site.
- 7.5.27 The proposed station has been designed to ensure safe and convenient access is available for all modes. The submitted Transport Assessment demonstrates that the scheme, including the proposed amount of car parking, is considered to be acceptable from a highway capacity and safety perspective.
- 7.5.28 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy M8 of the Blyth District Local Plan.

## **7.6 Accordance with Northumberland Local Plan Regulation 19 Publication Draft (May 2019)**

- 7.6.1 The NPPF advises at paragraph 48 that weight may also be given to the policies in emerging plans depending on the stage of preparation of the plan, the extent to which emerging policy aligns with the NPPF and the extent of unresolved objections to the emerging plan. The Phase 2 hearings on the Emerging Northumberland Local Plan were completed in November 2020 and the Inspector indicated that she did not envisage the need to hold additional hearings. As such, it is anticipated that the local plan will be adopted in Spring 2021. It is therefore considered that relevant policies can be given some weight presently and can be given increasing weight as the Plan moves towards adoption.

- 7.6.2 The relevant policies of the emerging Northumberland Local Plan that pertain to the scheme which is the subject of this planning application are identified as follows:

**Policy STP1: Spatial Strategy**

- 7.6.3 Policy STP1 states that sustainable development will be supported within the constraints of the Green Belt and settlement boundaries defined on the Local Plan policies map. Sustainable development within, or immediately adjacent to, the built up form of Main Towns, Service Centres and Service Villages without defined settlement boundaries, will be supported, if it is commensurate with size of the settlement, and it can be demonstrated that it does not adversely impact upon the character of the settlement.
- 7.6.4 Development in the open countryside will only be supported if it can be demonstrated that it:
- 7.6.5 *“Provides for essential transport, utilities and energy infrastructure in accordance with other policies in the Local Plan.”*
- 7.6.6 The policy goes on to state that development in the open countryside should be sensitive to its surroundings and should not have an unacceptable impact upon the local road network.
- 7.6.7 The proposed railway station at Blyth Bebside forms an integral component of the scheme which proposes the re-introduction of passenger services on the Northumberland Line. The Northumberland Line scheme is a strategic priority of both national and local government and could therefore reasonably be considered to constitute ‘essential infrastructure’.
- 7.6.8 The application site is located in an accessible location, adjacent existing housing and other development and is therefore located in a sustainable location. The scheme is designed to integrate with existing and adjacent public transport infrastructure, including the bus stops located along the A192. The proposed development would involve the use of land for a use which could not reasonably be located elsewhere: to construct a railway station it must obviously be located adjacent to the railway line. The submitted landscaping proposals and visual impact assessment demonstrate that the proposals have been designed in a manner which is sensitive to the local character and distinctiveness of the area. The site is adjacent to the settlement boundary and the proposed development includes a cycle/ footbridge which is located within the settlement boundary, providing a more convenient and safer route for local communities to the east of the site.
- 7.6.9 In summary, the proposed railway station is considered to be appropriate development partially outwith the defined settlement boundary.
- 7.6.10 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy STP1 of the emerging Northumberland Local Plan.

**Policy STP2: Presumption in favour of Sustainable Development**

- 7.6.11 Policy STP2 states that when considering development proposals, the Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development

contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). It will always work pro-actively with applicants to seek to find solutions that mean proposals that improve the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area can be approved wherever possible.

- 7.6.12 The proposed railway station at Blyth Bebside, given its nature, is considered to represent a sustainable development. The scheme will promote the use of rail services as an alternative to the private car and will assist in alleviating congestion on the local highway network and improving local air quality. The application site is located within an accessible location and as such will encourage walking and cycling to and from the station, though vehicular access is to be provided to ensure the station is accessible for all users.
- 7.6.13 The proposed railway station at Blyth Bebside would deliver economic, social and environmental benefits and thereby support the planning system in fulfilling its purpose: to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development.
- 7.6.14 The economic benefits of the scheme include:
- The development will facilitate increased access for residents and local people to employment and training opportunities throughout Northumberland, North Tyneside and Newcastle City Centre. The provision of passenger rail services at this location, including specialist provision for mobility impaired and disabled users, will also encourage employers to locate in this part of Northumberland;
  - The development will provide a convenient multimodal transport interchange which integrates the train services and railway station with buses, cycling, walking, private cars and taxis.
  - The proposed railway station will help to alleviate congestion on the local highway network, presenting a potential cost saving in journey times for staff and visitors to local businesses and those travelling further afield, supporting economic growth in Blyth, Northumberland and the North East more widely.
- 7.6.15 The social benefits of the scheme include:
- The development will improve journey times for residents, local people and those wishing to travel from Ashington to destinations further afield including North Tyneside and Newcastle City Centre;
  - The development will increase the ability of residents and local people to gain access to employment and training opportunities;
  - The development will contribute to building strong, vibrant and healthy communities by encouraging social inclusion, improving the accessibility of local services and the use of sustainable travel modes
- 7.6.16 The environmental benefits of the scheme include:

- The development will improve the physical accessibility and connectivity of transport infrastructure for all users
- The development will make it physically more simple and convenient to use and access public transport infrastructure in Blyth. The consequential modal shift will assist in improving overall local air quality
- The development will decrease dependence on the private car for residents and local people, in so doing it will reduce carbon emissions.

7.6.17 In summary, the proposed railway station is considered to represent a sustainable development. Accordingly, it is considered the local planning authority ought to take a positive approach to the consideration and determination of this planning application.

7.6.18 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy STP2 of the emerging Northumberland Local Plan.

### **Policy STP3: Principles of Sustainable Development**

7.6.19 Policy STP3 states that in applying the presumption in favour of sustainable development in Northumberland and to deliver against economic, social and environmental objectives, development proposals will be expected to deliver across the range of the economic, social and environmental factors, and adhere to the following principles where appropriate:

- Contribute to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy across Northumberland, support more and better jobs, protect and enhance the vitality and viability of Northumberland's town centres and other important economic sectors;
- Minimise their impact upon local amenity for new or existing residents and businesses, adjoining premises and land uses;
- Support and provide opportunities to improve health, social and cultural wellbeing for all, and provide the infrastructure which is required to enhance the quality of life of individuals and communities;
- Demonstrate high quality sustainable design which is accessible to all, and which respects and enhances the local distinctiveness of the natural, historic and built environment, helps promote a sense of place, reduces the need for energy, and facilitates flexible and adaptable buildings and environments;
- Be accessible by, or be able to be made accessible by public transport, walking or cycling where feasible, thereby reducing the need to travel for both people and goods, and the dependence on travel by private car;
- Make best use of existing facilities and infrastructure, whilst making appropriate provision for new or additional infrastructure as required;



- 7.6.20 The proposed railway station at Blyth Bebside would improve access to and from the local area for residents, staff and customers of local businesses. The proposed station would therefore improve the accessibility and connectivity of Blyth Bebside to Northumberland and the North East more widely.
- 7.6.21 The scheme would assist in reducing reliance on the private car, encouraging use of more sustainable modes of travel including walking and cycling. The submitted Transport Assessment and Travel Plan demonstrates that the scheme can be suitably accessed by various modes, and that safe and convenient access is provided for all users.
- 7.6.22 The scheme has been designed based on a sound understanding of the site, adjacent land uses and the requirements of key stakeholders including Network Rail, the local planning authority and the local highway authority. The submitted Design and Access Statements provides a detailed summary of the design evolution and confirms that the scheme constitutes a sustainable design which is accessible to all.
- 7.6.23 The scheme incorporates appropriate and proportionate improvements to the local highway, including improved pedestrian crossing arrangements, to ensure that the opportunities to encourage pedestrian and cyclist access to and from the station have been taken.
- 7.6.24 In summary, the proposed railway station is considered to represent a sustainable development. Accordingly, it is considered the local planning authority ought to take a positive approach to the consideration and determination of this planning application.
- 7.6.25 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy STP3 of the emerging Northumberland Local Plan.

**Policy STP4: Climate change mitigation and adaptation**

- 7.6.26 Policy STP4 states that development proposals should mitigate climate change and contribute to meeting nationally binding targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. When determining planning applications, support will be given to how development proposals that help mitigate climate change and consideration will be given to how proposals:
- 7.6.27 Through their location, layout and pattern of development, reduce the need to travel for both people and goods, and encourage sustainable modes of transport, including walking, cycling and the use of public transport.
- 7.6.28 The proposed railway station at Blyth Bebside, given its nature, will assist in encouraging the use of more sustainable modes of travel, reducing reliance on the private car. Such a modal shift is likely to assist in reducing carbon and greenhouse gas emissions; improving local air quality together with assisting the council in meeting its climate change objectives.
- 7.6.29 The scheme is located within an accessible and sustainable location, adjacent existing housing and other development. The scheme incorporates measures to encourage walking and cycling, as well as rail services.

- 7.6.30 In summary, the proposed railway station is considered to represent a sustainable development. The scheme will assist the council in meeting its wider climate change objectives.
- 7.6.31 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy STP4 of the emerging Northumberland Local Plan.

**Policy STP5: Health and wellbeing**

- 7.6.32 Policy STP5 states that development which promotes, supports and enhances the health and wellbeing of communities, residents, workers and visitors will be supported. Development proposals will be required to demonstrate that they:
- *are safe, comfortable, inclusive and attractive and prioritise pedestrian and cycle movement;*
  - *provide access to a range of facilities including public transport, health, education, social care, green spaces, sport, play and leisure facilities.*
- 7.6.33 The policy requires that a Health Impact Assessment Screening be submitted for all major development proposals to determine whether the potential impact on health resulting from the development warrants any further assessment. Where further assessment is warranted, a proportionate Health Impact Assessment will also be required to be submitted as part of the application. A Health Impact Assessment will be required to include proposals to mitigate any adverse health impacts, maximise potential positive impacts, and help reduce health inequalities.
- 7.6.34 The proposed railway station at Blyth Bebside has been designed to prioritise pedestrian and cycle movements. The scheme includes improved pedestrian crossing arrangements and cycle parking is provided to encourage travel to and from the station by sustainable modes. It is recognised, however, that not all users are able to walk and/ or cycle to and from the station. The scheme therefore ensures vehicular access is provided to ensure the station can be accessed by elderly and disabled users.
- 7.6.35 The scheme, given its nature, supports the delivery of sustainable transport infrastructure which will improve access to health, education and leisure facilities across the North East for local people.
- 7.6.36 The response by the local planning authority to the pre-application indicated that a Health Impact Assessment was not required to be undertaken. Notwithstanding this response the application includes an appraisal of the potential health and wellbeing benefits of the station to the local population. This demonstrates that the potential impacts resulting from the development are generally beneficial. The scheme has been designed to manage and mitigate the risk of potential adverse health impacts, wherever possible.
- 7.6.37 In summary, the proposed railway station is considered to represent a sustainable development, which will deliver many and various health and wellbeing improvements.

- 7.6.38 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy STP5 of the emerging Northumberland Local Plan.

#### **Policy QOP1: Design Principles**

- 7.6.39 Policy QOP1 states that in determining planning applications, design will be assessed against the following design principles, in accordance with the Northumberland Design Guide. Proposals will be supported where design:

- Makes a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness and contributes to a positive relationship between built and natural features, including landform and topography;
- Facilitates an inclusive, comfortable, user-friendly and legible environment;
- Supports health and wellbeing and enhances quality of life.

- 7.6.40 The proposed railway station at Blyth Bebside has been designed based on a detailed understanding of the existing and historic site conditions, an appraisal of those features of the local area that contribute to local character and distinctiveness, and through identifying the needs of all anticipated future users of the railway station and considering the advice of all stakeholders including Network Rail, the local planning authority, the local highway authority, residents, businesses and local politicians.

- 7.6.41 The submitted Design and Access Statement provides further details demonstrating that the submitted scheme is based on a clear understanding of the character and local distinctiveness of the area and confirms that the proposed railway station would make a positive contribution to place-making and environmental improvement.

- 7.6.42 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy QOP1 of the emerging Northumberland Local Plan.

#### **Policy QOP2: Good Design and Amenity**

- 7.6.43 Policy QOP2 states that development will be required to provide a high standard of amenity for existing and future users of the development itself and preserve the amenity of those living in, working in or visiting the local area.

- 7.6.44 Development which would result in unacceptable adverse impacts on the amenity of neighbouring uses, in terms of both individual and cumulative impacts, will not be supported.

- 7.6.45 The design of the proposed railway station at Blyth Bebside has been informed by a detailed assessment of the potential impacts on the amenity of nearby and adjacent properties, and residents. The design has been based on a sound understanding of the site and adjacent land uses, and in ensuring that the scheme takes account of the amenity of neighbouring land uses etc. Careful consideration has been given to the impacts of the scheme on

sensitive receptors, and proposals for mitigating adverse impacts form part of the submission.

7.6.46 The thematic surveys and assessments submitted in support of the planning application including the submitted Noise and Vibration Assessment demonstrates that the scheme would not have a significant adverse impact on neighbouring land uses – subject to appropriate mitigation. The scheme will seek to incorporate appropriate mitigation, the precise details of which will be agreed through the discharge of relevant conditions on a planning permission.

7.6.47 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy QOP2 of the emerging Northumberland Local Plan.

#### **Policy QOP4: Landscaping and Trees**

7.6.48 Policy QOP4 states that where relevant, new development will be expected to incorporate well-designed landscaping and respond appropriately to any existing landscape features. Development proposals should ensure that:

Landscaping design is of a high quality, in accordance with the principles set out in Policy QOP 1;

- *Existing features which contribute towards the character of the area, or amenity, are retained wherever possible and sympathetically incorporated into the overall design of the scheme;*
- *Any hard or soft landscaping is appropriate, functional and well-integrated into the design of the development;*
- *Trees, and other spaces and features that provide green and blue infrastructure, are preserved, enhanced and introduced into the landscaping scheme wherever possible;*

7.6.49 The design of the scheme has been informed by a survey of the trees: within, adjacent to, and nearby to the site, and by the preparation of an Arboricultural Impact Assessment. These documents are submitted with the application.

7.6.50 The design of the scheme has been informed by the Landscape Appraisal of the site and surroundings. This document is submitted with the application.

7.6.51 These surveys, assessments and appraisals have been used to guide the proposals and in particular to guide the removal of trees and shrubs from within the site, and the provision of a soft landscaping scheme. The application is supported by an indicative landscaping scheme which seeks to retain and/or replace existing trees, wherever possible. An indication of the landscape proposals and the justification for tree removals are set out in the submitted landscaping scheme and arboricultural reports.

- 7.6.52 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy QOP4 of the emerging Northumberland Local Plan.

**Policy QOP6: Delivering well-designed places**

- 7.6.53 Policy QOP6 states that proposals are expected to meet the local design expectations set out in design policies within the Plan, the Northumberland Design Guide, and any other design guidance. Proposals are expected to respond to any character assessments that form part of or support the Plan.
- 7.6.54 The proposed railway station at Blyth Bebside has been designed based on a sound understanding of the defining characteristics of the site and the adjacent land uses. The scheme has evolved based on discussions with local authority officers and other key stakeholders to ensure the design of the scheme suitably reflects the wider ambitions of those stakeholders.
- 7.6.55 The proposed railway station at Blyth Bebside is supported by a Design and Access Statement which provides a summary of the design evolution process. The Design and Access Statement should be read in conjunction with this Planning Statement and the submitted Statement of Community Engagement to provide a comprehensive overview of how the submitted scheme has evolved to take account of the observations, guidance and comments received from the local planning authority and other key stakeholders.
- 7.6.56 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy QOP6 of the emerging Northumberland Local Plan.

**Policy TRA1: Promoting sustainable connections**

- 7.6.57 Policy TRA1 states that the council will support development that:
- Promotes a spatial distribution which creates accessible development, reduces the need to travel by car, and maximises the use of sustainable modes of transport;
  - Promotes good design principles in respect of the permeability, connectivity and legibility of buildings and public spaces; and inclusive access;
  - Promotes sustainable transport choices, including supporting, providing and connecting to networks for walking, cycling and public transport; and infrastructure that supports the use of low and ultra low emission vehicles;
  - Ensures delivery of cycle parking and supporting infrastructure;
  - Protects, enhances and supports public rights of way;
  - Supports the delivery of reliable, safe and efficient transport networks, in partnership with other organisations, service providers and developers;

- Requires development to be designed to enable charging of plug-in and other ultra-low emission vehicles in safe, accessible, convenient locations; and
- Requires development proposals which generate significant amounts of movements to be supported by a Transport Assessment/ Transport Statement, and Travel Plans, and where appropriate, delivery/servicing plans.

- 7.6.58 The proposed railway station at Blyth Bebside is an integral part of the proposed re-introduction of passenger services on the Northumberland Line. The scheme includes the provision of measures to encourage walking and cycling to and from the station. The proposed development would promote greater use of sustainable transport modes, encouraging rail travel for car users for either all or part of their journey to destinations including Northumberland, North Tyneside and Newcastle City Centre; helping to reduce the growth and reliance on car borne journeys. The scheme also provides measures to facilitate vehicular access to the station for elderly and mobility impaired users, to ensure the station is accessible for all.
- 7.6.59 The submitted Transport Assessment provides a detailed review of the predicted impacts of the proposed development on the local highway network, confirming that the proposed development would not result in a detrimental impact on the operation of the highway network and could alleviate pressure on the local highway network through encouraging an increased number of trips by rail.
- 7.6.60 In summary, the proposed railway station at Blyth Bebside is anticipated to encourage a modal shift toward more sustainable modes, benefiting both journey times for users of the road and rail network and improved cycle and walking routes.
- 7.6.61 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy TRA1 of the emerging Northumberland Local Plan.

**Policy TRA2: The effects of development on the transport network**

- 7.6.62 Policy TRA2 states that, amongst other things, all developments affecting the transport network will be required to:
- Provide effective and safe access and egress to the existing transport network
  - Facilitate the safe use of the network, including suitable crossing points, footways and dedicated provision for cyclists where necessary.
- 7.6.63 The proposed railway station at Blyth Bebside is an integral part of the proposed re-introduction of passenger services on the Northumberland Line. The scheme includes the provision of measures to encourage walking and cycling to and from the station. The proposed development would promote greater use of sustainable transport modes, encouraging rail travel for car users for either all or part of their journey to destinations including Northumberland, North Tyneside and Newcastle City Centre; helping to reduce the growth and reliance on car borne journeys. The scheme also provides measures to facilitate

vehicular access to the station for elderly and mobility impaired users, to ensure the station is accessible for all.

- 7.6.64 The submitted Transport Assessment provides a detailed review of the predicted impacts of the proposed development on the local highway network, confirming that the proposed development would not result in a detrimental impact on the operation of the highway network and could alleviate pressure on the local highway network through encouraging an increased number of trips by rail.
- 7.6.65 In summary, the proposed railway station at Blyth Bebside is anticipated to encourage a modal shift toward more sustainable modes, benefiting both journey times for users of the road and rail network and improved cycle and walking routes.
- 7.6.66 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy TRA2 of the emerging Northumberland Local Plan.

#### **Policy TRA4: Parking provision in new development**

- 7.6.67 Policy TRA4 states that an appropriate amount of off-street vehicle parking sufficient to serve new development shall be made available in safe, accessible and convenient locations prior to the development, as a whole or in part, being brought into use. Vehicle parking shall be provided in accordance with the parking standards set out in Appendix D of the Local Plan, or other such local standards set out in made neighbourhood plans which will be given priority in determining the appropriate amount of parking required.
- 7.6.68 The proposed railway station at Blyth Bebside seeks to provide appropriate access for all users, with priority given to encouraging walking and cycling to the station. It is acknowledged that not all users are able to walk and/or cycle to and from the station. For elderly and disabled users, it may be necessary to arrive at or depart from the station by car. The proposed station therefore provides appropriate vehicular access and car parking, the extent of which has been the subject of pre-application discussions with both planning and highway authority officers.
- 7.6.69 The proposed station has been designed to ensure safe and convenient access is available for all modes. The submitted Transport Assessment demonstrates that the scheme, including the proposed amount of car parking, is considered to be acceptable from a highway capacity and safety perspective.
- 7.6.70 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy TRA4 of the emerging Northumberland Local Plan.

#### **Policy TRA5: Rail transport and safeguarding facilities**

- 7.6.71 Policy TRA5 states that development which would prevent the reintroduction of passenger rail services on the Northumberland Line along with associated stations, facilities and access to them from adjacent highways, and continued rail freight use of the Northumberland Line, its associated branch lines (including the branch line from Bedlington to Morpeth via

Choppington, the Butterwell line north of Ashington and the line from Woodhorn to Newbiggin-by-the-Sea) and supporting infrastructure will not be supported.

7.6.72 Sites for stations have been identified and land will be safeguarded at the following locations:

- a. Woodhorn
- b. Ashington
- c. Bedlington Station
- d. Blyth Bebside
- e. South Newsham
- f. Seaton Delaval
- g. Seghill

7.6.73 The proposed railway station at Blyth Bebside is an integral component, and proposed to be delivered as part of, the Northumberland Line scheme. The scheme is therefore specifically supported by Policy TRA5. The delivery of the new station will support and facilitate the council's ambitions for the re-introduction of passenger services on the Ashington, Blyth and Tyne Line.

7.6.74 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy TRA5 of the emerging Northumberland Local Plan.

**Policy ENVI: Approaches to assessing the impact of development on the natural, historic and built environment**

7.6.75 Policy ENVI states that the character and significance of Northumberland's distinctive and valued natural, historic and built environments, will be conserved, protected and enhanced by:

7.6.76 Giving appropriate weight to the statutory purposes and special qualities of the hierarchy of international, national and local designated and non-designated nature and historic conservation assets or sites and their settings;

7.6.77 Protecting Northumberland's most important landscapes and applying a character-based approach to, as appropriate, manage, protect or plan landscape across the whole County.

7.6.78 The proposed railway station at Blyth Bebside has been designed based on a sound understanding of the site and its context, including consideration of the impacts on adjacent land uses. The planning application is supported by detailed surveys and assessments which consider the likely effect of the scheme on natural, historic and built environment receptors, confirming that the scheme would not have a significant adverse impact on those



receptors. The scheme will improve access to Northumberland's distinctive and values natural, historic and built environments, helping to ensure they can continue to be continued by this and future generations, which will assist in the conservation, protection and enhancement of such assets.

- 7.6.79 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy ENV1 of the emerging Northumberland Local Plan.

**Policy ENV2: Biodiversity and geodiversity**

- 7.6.80 Policy ENV2 states that development proposals should minimize the impacts on biodiversity and geodiversity and net gains should be secured.

- 7.6.81 The proposed railway station at Blyth Bebside has been designed based on a sound understanding of the ecological and wider environmental sensitivity of the site and adjacent land. The scheme has been designed based on an acknowledgement of the location of the site on the edge of the South East Northumberland Wildlife Network. The planning application is supported by appropriate ecological and other assessments which demonstrate that the scheme will not adversely impact on biodiversity and geodiversity and opportunities for habitat and landscaping improvement, including appropriate mitigation, are to be provided. It is anticipated that the scheme will incorporate measures to improve the biodiversity value of the site, including sensitive landscaping proposals and the installation of bat and bird boxes. The project would be content to accept suitably worded conditions for further details regarding such measures.

- 7.6.82 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy ENV2 of the emerging Northumberland Local Plan.

**Policy ENV7: Historic environment and heritage assets**

- 7.6.83 Policy ENV7 supports the NPPF position on historic assets in that decisions affecting a heritage asset will be based on a sound understanding of the significance of that asset and any impact of any proposal upon that significance.

- 7.6.84 The proposed railway station at Blyth Bebside has been designed based on a detailed understanding of the existing and historic site conditions, an appraisal of those features of the local area that contribute to local character and distinctiveness, and through identifying the needs of all anticipated future users of the railway station and considering the advice of all stakeholders including Network Rail, the local planning authority, the local highway authority, residents, businesses and local politicians.

- 7.6.85 The submitted Design and Access Statement provides further details demonstrating that the submitted scheme is based on a clear understanding of the character and local distinctiveness of the area and confirms that the proposed railway station would make a positive contribution to place-making and environmental improvement. The scheme would not have a detrimental impact on the significance on any heritage assets.

- 7.6.86 The planning application is supported by a Heritage Statement which demonstrates that the scheme would not detract from the significance of any designated or non-designated heritage assets.
- 7.6.87 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy ENV7 of the emerging Northumberland Local Plan.

**Policy WAT3: Flooding**

- 7.6.88 Policy WAT3 states that development proposals will be required to demonstrate how they will minimise flood risk to people, property and infrastructure from all potential sources.
- 7.6.89 The proposed railway station at Blyth Bebside has been designed based on a sound understanding of the identified risk of flooding to the site from all sources. Appropriate drainage is incorporated within the submitted designs. The submitted Flood Risk Assessment and Surface Water Drainage Strategy demonstrates that flood risk to people, property and infrastructure from all sources will be suitably mitigated and managed as part of the proposed development.
- 7.6.90 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy WAT3 of the emerging Northumberland Local Plan.

**Policy WAT4: Sustainable Drainage Systems**

- 7.6.91 Policy WAT4 SuDS should be incorporated within all development where it is necessary to manage surface water drainage, unless there are exceptional circumstances.
- 7.6.92 The proposed railway station at Blyth Bebside has been designed to incorporate appropriate drainage arrangements. The submitted Flood Risk Assessment and Surface Water Drainage Strategy provides further details on the proposed drainage arrangements.
- 7.6.93 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy WAT4 of the emerging Northumberland Local Plan.

**Policy POL1: Unstable and contaminated land**

- 7.6.94 Policy POL1 states that development proposals will be supported where it can be demonstrated that unacceptable risks from land instability and contamination will be prevented and that measures can be taken to effectively mitigate the impacts.
- 7.6.95 The proposed railway station at Blyth Bebside is supported by various desk-based assessments and contaminated land assessments, which are submitted in support of the planning application, to demonstrate that land instability and contamination issues will be appropriately mitigated and managed as part of the proposed development. The previous uses of the site have been given due consideration and the submitted assessments demonstrate that appropriate mitigation will be incorporated as part of the development. The applicant would be content to accept suitably worded conditions on a planning

permission requiring the submission of a contamination remediation strategy or similar. The precise wording of all such conditions would need to be agreed during determination of the planning application.

- 7.6.96 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy POL1 of the emerging Northumberland Local Plan.

**Policy POL2: Pollution and air, soil and water quality**

- 7.6.97 Policy POL2 states that development proposals that may cause pollution of water, air or soil, either individually or cumulatively, are required to incorporate measures to prevent or reduce their pollution so as not to cause nuisance or unacceptable impacts on the environment, people or biodiversity. Development proposed where pollution levels are unacceptable, and unable to be mitigated to acceptable levels, will not be supported.
- 7.6.98 The proposed railway station at Bebside is supported by various air quality and contaminated land assessments, which are submitted in support of the planning application, to demonstrate that the development is not at risk from nor would it result in unacceptable impacts on the environment, people or biodiversity.
- 7.6.99 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy POL2 of the emerging Northumberland Local Plan.

## **7.7 Accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework**

- 7.7.1 The NPPF states at paragraph 7 that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. There are three interdependent, overarching objectives that the planning system must perform in order to contribute to sustainable development:
- an economic objective;
  - a social objective; and
  - an environmental objective
- 7.7.2 The proposed railway station at Blyth Bebside would deliver economic social and environmental benefits and thereby supports the planning system in fulfilling its fundamental purpose: to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development.
- 7.7.3 The economic benefits of the scheme include:
- The development will facilitate increased access for residents and local people to employment and training opportunities throughout the North East. The provision of passenger rail services at this location, including specialist provision for mobility impaired and disabled users, may also encourage employers to

locate in this part of Northumberland, given its improved accessibility and connectivity to the wider North East conurbation.

- The development will provide a convenient multimodal transport interchange which integrates the train services and railway station with buses, cycling, walking, private cars and taxis.
- The development will facilitate movement between Bebside and the wider North East conurbation, improving access to employment opportunities for local people.
- The proposed railway station will help to alleviate congestion on the local highway network, presenting a potential cost saving in journey times for staff and visitors to local businesses and those travelling further afield, supporting economic growth in Bebside, Blyth, Northumberland and the North East more widely.
- The proposed railway station at Blyth Bebside will increase footfall in the local area, which will support local businesses such as the Asda supermarket and businesses along the A192, including the butchers and smokehouse.
- The significant investment into new and upgraded transport infrastructure will attract private sector investment, enhance economic vitality and encourage further economic growth in Northumberland.

#### 7.7.4 The social benefits of the scheme include:

- The development will improve journey times for residents, local people and those wishing to travel from Bebside or Blyth to destinations further afield including Newcastle City Centre.
- The development will increase the ability of residents and local people to gain access to employment and training opportunities
- The development will provide a safe and secure railway station, with appropriate lighting and CCTV camera provision to encourage all parts of the community to use the transport services and the railway station
- The development will incorporate lift and stepped access to both platforms and signage to the railway station suitable for users with disabilities
- The development would provide infrastructure that would encourage sustainable travel and would accommodate projected future growth in Bebside and Blyth in terms of population, employment and housing

- The development will conserve and enhance the cultural heritage of Bebside. The station has been designed based on a sound understanding of local character and distinctiveness.
- The development will contribute to building strong, vibrant and healthy communities by encouraging social inclusion, improving the accessibility of local services and the use of sustainable travel modes
- The development will make it physically more simple and easy to use and access public transport infrastructure in Bebside. The consequential modal shift will assist in improving local air quality
- The scheme will deliver environmental and physical improvements to the site, in doing so it will assist in changing perceptions of the area and of Bebside.

7.7.5 The environmental benefits of the scheme include:

- The development will improve the physical accessibility and connectivity of transport infrastructure for all users
- The development will provide a modern environment which is attractive and safe for pedestrians, cyclists and motorists
- The development will provide a safe and secure railway station, with appropriate lighting and CCTV camera provision to encourage all parts of the community to use the transport services and the railway station
- The pedestrian spaces within the site have been designed to be accessible for all users, especially those with visual and physical limitations
- The development will conserve and enhance the cultural heritage of Bebside. The station has been designed based on a sound understanding of local character and distinctiveness.
- The development will make it physically more simple and convenient to use and access public transport infrastructure in Bebside. The consequential modal shift will assist in improving overall local air quality.
- The development will be undertaken in accordance with a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) and a Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP), which will minimise the environmental impacts traditionally associated with urban redevelopment schemes.
- The development will decrease dependence on the private car for residents and local people, in so doing it will reduce carbon emissions.

- The development will implement a strategy for providing a structured approach to landscaping at the site; removing invasive non-native species and introducing native shrub and tree planting

7.7.6 The proposed railway station at Blyth Bebside is a sustainable transport project which will deliver a range of economic, social and environmental benefits; supporting the fundamental objectives of the planning system as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework. The scheme can therefore be considered to represent a sustainable development. The NPPF holds a presumption in favour of sustainable development, for decision-taking this means approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay.

### **Promoting Sustainable Transport**

7.7.7 An integral component in delivering sustainable development and achieving wider sustainability and health objectives is the promotion of sustainable development, as set out in Section 9 of the Framework. This section states that applications for development should:

- give priority first to pedestrian and cycle movements, both within the scheme and with neighbouring areas; and second – so far as possible – to facilitating access to high quality public transport, with layouts that maximise the catchment area for bus or other public transport services, and appropriate facilities that encourage public transport use;
- address the needs of people with disabilities and reduced mobility in relation to all modes of transport;
- create places that are safe, secure and attractive – which minimise the scope for conflicts between pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles, avoid unnecessary street clutter, and respond to local character and design standards;
- allow for the efficient delivery of goods, and access by service and emergency vehicles; and
- be designed to enable charging of plug-in and other ultra-low emission vehicles in safe, accessible and convenient locations

7.7.8 The proposed development has given due regard to the above criteria; the scheme has been designed to encourage pedestrian and cycle movements both within the site and adjacent to the site. The scheme will provide safe and secure cycle parking on-site; a pedestrian link is to be provided to the station car park from the existing road bridge and the layout of the car park has been designed to ensure safe and convenient pedestrian routes are provided for those entering and exiting the railway station.

7.7.9 Given the nature of the proposed development, a railway station, it is considered the scheme would facilitate access to high quality public transport. The location of the proposed

station already benefits from good access to the local highway network and would therefore be possible to integrate with other public transport modes.

- 7.7.10 The proposed development has been designed following workshops with disabled user forums, which have assisted in identifying and understanding barriers to access for users with visual, auditory, physical and other impairments. The feedback received has been used by the designers to ensure the proposed railway station is accessible to all users. The proposed platforms will be accessed by lifts, steps and a pedestrian footbridge and a generous amount of disabled car parking is proposed in close proximity to the platforms to ensure the station is designed to promote access for all users.
- 7.7.11 The proposed station designs have evolved to take account of discussions with both Northumbria Police and the British Transport Police. The proposed layout, lighting, CCTV camera provision and landscaping proposals have been designed to seek to 'design out' crime wherever possible. The proposed cycle parking provision and landscaping are based on the detailed responses received from residents, businesses, local authority officers, local politicians and other stakeholders in the period prior to submission of this planning application.
- 7.7.12 Furthermore, Electric Vehicle Charging will be provided in the station car park, thus encouraging sustainable forms of onward travel.
- 7.7.13 The development is therefore considered to accord with the aims of objectives of section 9 of the NPPF, given that the proposed development by its very nature is promoting access to and use of sustainable modes of transport.
- 7.7.14 It should also be noted that paragraph 109 of the Framework states:
- 7.7.15 *"Development should only be prevented or refused on highway grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe."*
- 7.7.16 The Transport Assessment submitted in support of this planning application has been based on a scope agreed with the local highway authority. The Transport Assessment demonstrates that the proposed development would not have an unacceptable impact on highway safety, nor would the residual cumulative impacts on the road network be severe. Consequently, it is considered there are no highway grounds that should be used to seek to prevent or refuse the planning application.
- 7.7.17 In summary, the proposed railway station at Blyth Bebside would provide residents and local people with improved access to Northumberland, North Tyneside and Newcastle City Centre. It would provide those without access to the private car with an alternative to the bus, and those with access to the private car with an opportunity to avoid and help reduce congestion on the local road network. The proposed development has been designed to encourage access to the station by all users, including pedestrians, cyclists, motorists and disabled users. The proposed development has been the subject of a detailed assessment

of the predicted traffic and transport-related impacts resulting from the development. The assessment has confirmed that the proposed development would not impinge upon the safe operation or capacity of the highway network. The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Section 9 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

### **Building a strong, competitive economy**

- 7.7.18 The NPPF states at paragraph 80 that:
- 7.7.19 *“Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development.”*
- 7.7.20 Given the nature of the proposed development, a railway station, there are no other locations that are either available or suitable to provide a railway station in Blyth Bebside. The locational constraints on certain types of development is recognised by the NPPF at paragraph 82 which states:
- 7.7.21 *“Planning policies and decisions should recognise and address the specific locational requirements of different sectors. This includes making provision for clusters or networks of knowledge and data-driven, creative or high technology industries; and for storage and distribution at a variety of scales and in suitably accessible locations.”*
- 7.7.22 There is a significant amount of land within Bebside, and within close proximity to the proposed railway station site, that is allocated for or has consent to deliver new housing and industrial development. Those housing and industrial sites would derive significant benefits from being located within close proximity to the proposed railway station.
- 7.7.23 The improved access to and connectivity of the housing and industrial sites could encourage businesses to locate and grow in Bebside. The proposed railway station could also incentivise businesses to locate in Bebside. The increased ease of access and connectivity to Northumberland, North Tyneside and Newcastle City Centre makes Bebside a more attractive location as it is more easily accessible for staff and customers. The fact there is not currently a passenger rail service that serves the area could impede investment in the local area. The proposed railway station at Blyth Bebside could act as a catalyst for further inward investment and the continued regeneration of Northumberland more widely.
- 7.7.24 In summary, it is considered that the proposed railway station could assist in stimulating sustainable economic growth in Bebside. The substantial investment to deliver the railway station is anticipated to assist in unlocking the development potential of the sites which are proposed to be allocated for new housing and industrial development, increasing employment opportunities in the local area. The proposed railway stations will create direct employment opportunities during the construction phase and onwards associated with the operation and maintenance of the station and indirect employment opportunities, through improving access to employment opportunities further afield and increasing the attractiveness of Bebside as a destination for businesses looking to relocate.



7.7.25 The development is therefore considered to be in accordance with the aims and objectives of Section 6 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

#### 7.7.26 **Achieving well-designed places**

7.7.27 The NPPF states at paragraph 124 that:

7.7.28 *“The creation of high quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities. Being clear about design expectations, and how these will be tested, is essential for achieving this. So too is effective engagement between applicants, communities, local planning authorities and other interests throughout the process.”*

7.7.29 The proposed railway station at Blyth Bebside has been designed based on a sound understanding of both the historic and existing conditions of the site, the surrounding area and the aspirations of Network Rail, the local planning authority, the local highway authority and other key stakeholders. The scheme has been finessed to take account of comments and observations from residents and local politicians to the preliminary designs which were the subject of an extensive public engagement campaign.

7.7.30 The proposed layout, scale, height and extent of the proposed development has been informed based on an understanding of the requirements of a 21st Century railway station, together with an understanding of the context of the site to ensure that the station design reinforces the local character and distinctiveness of the site through integration with existing pedestrian, cycle and vehicular routes and being respectful to adjacent land uses.

7.7.31 The Design and Access Statement which is submitted in support of this planning application demonstrates that a detailed appraisal of different design options was undertaken to understand the implications of various layouts and access arrangements, culminating in the submitted scheme which is considered to present the optimum viable layout within the budget and other constraints for the scheme.

7.7.32 In summary, the proposed railway station is considered to promote high levels of sustainability through encouraging the use of a more sustainable transport mode and will help raise the standard of design more generally in this area, whilst ensuring coherence with the overall form and layout of the surrounding area, in accordance with paragraph 131. Accordingly, great weight should be given to the designs which promote high levels of sustainability. The proposed development is therefore considered to accord with the aims and objectives of Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

## 7.8 **The Planning Balance**

7.8.1 With reference to the above planning assessment, it is considered that the proposed development accords with the relevant policies of the Northumberland Local Plan as summarised in Figure 7.1 below and the Development Plan as a whole. The ecology, noise, air

quality, contaminated land, flood risk and other surveys and assessments submitted in support of the planning application identify the various environmental effects associated with the proposed development but conclude that with the adoption of appropriate mitigation measures during both the construction and operational phases, there would be no significant adverse effects as a result of the proposed development.

- 7.8.2 The approval of the planning application would facilitate improved access and connectivity both to and from Bebside and Blyth for residents, businesses and other groups. The scheme would improve access to employment, educational and leisure opportunities across Northumberland, as well as North Tyneside and Newcastle City Centre.
- 7.8.3 The scheme would encourage a modal shift away from, and thereby reduce reliance on, the private car which would alleviate congestion on the local highway network and would assist in improving local air quality.
- 7.8.4 In addition to the proposed development's accordance with the adopted policies of the Development Plan, and the emerging policies of the Northumberland Local Plan, it is further considered that the proposed development accords with the relevant policies of the NPPF which is a material planning consideration.
- 7.8.5 For these reasons it is considered that the positive benefits of the proposed development outweigh any minimal harm and the application accords with the Development Plan, as summarised in the table (Figure 7.1) below.

<b>Northumberland Development Policy</b>	
Principle of Development <b>Policy SS1, SS3, A3 (Blyth LDF Core Strategy)</b> <b>Policy DC3 (Blyth LDF Development Control Policies Development Plan Document)</b> <b>Policy E3, G8, G9, G10 (Blyth Valley District Local Plan)</b> <b>Policy STP1, STP8 TRA5 (Northumberland Local Plan Regulation 19 Draft)</b>	The proposed development, whilst partially located outwith the defined settlement boundary for Blyth, would provide a viable alternative to the private car, encouraging use of a more sustainable mode of travel and assisting in delivering air quality and other improvements. The re-opening of the Northumberland Line to passenger rail services, of which the new station is an integral component, is specifically supported by the policies within the Northumberland Development Plan.
Design <b>Policy A2, SS3 (Blyth LDF Core Strategy)</b> <b>Policy DC1, DC16, DC17, DC19, DC27 (Blyth LDF Development Control Policies Development Plan Document)</b> <b>Policy QOP1, QOP2, QOP6, TRA1, TRA2 (Northumberland Local Plan Regulation 19 Draft)</b>	The submitted scheme aims to provide a sustainable station that is well integrated within its surroundings and which takes opportunities to encourage walking and cycling both to and from the station. The submitted Design and Access Statement provides further details to demonstrate the evolution of the scheme to ensure the design suitably reflects the ambitions of the local planning authority and other key stakeholders.
Open Countryside <b>Policy DC3, DC17 (Blyth LDF Development Control Policies Development Plan Document)</b> <b>Policy G9, G10 (Blyth Valley District Local Plan)</b>	The scheme is partially located within the open countryside, however it is considered that the provision of local transport infrastructure and the significant public benefits that will arise from

<b>Northumberland Development Policy</b>	
	the development, ensure that any limited harm is significantly and justifiably outweighed.
Health and wellbeing <b>Policy STP5 (Northumberland Local Plan Regulation 19 Draft)</b>	The scheme is designed to ensure that appropriate access is provided for all users, including elderly and disabled users. The scheme will improve access to employment and leisure opportunities for residents and will assist in improving local air quality and reducing congestion on the local highway network. This application is supported by a Health and Wellbeing Statement.
Landscape <b>Policy DC17 (Blyth LDF Development Control Policies Development Plan Document)</b> <b>Policy E3 (Blyth Valley District Local Plan)</b> <b>Policy QOP4 (Northumberland Local Plan Regulation 19 Draft)</b>	The proposed development has been designed based on a sound understanding of the site and its context. The scheme will incorporate sensitive landscaping to ensure the scheme makes an appropriate contribution to the local area. The application is supported by a detailed Landscape Assessment which confirms that the scheme is considered to sit well within the local landscape.
Transport and Access <b>Policy A2, A3 (Blyth LDF Core Strategy)</b> <b>Policy DC11, DC27 (Blyth LDF Development Control Policies Development Plan Document)</b> <b>Policy M8 (Blyth Valley District Local Plan)</b> <b>Policy TRA1, TRA2, TRA4, TRA5 (Northumberland Local Plan Regulation 19 Draft)</b>	The proposed development has been designed to ensure safe and convenient access to the station is provided for all users – pedestrians, cyclists and motorists. The application is supported by a Transport Assessment which provides further details to demonstrate that the scheme is capable of being supported from both a highway safety and capacity perspective.
Ground Conditions <b>Policy SS3 (Blyth LDF Core Strategy)</b> <b>Policy DC1, DC21 (Blyth LDF Development Control Policies Development Plan Document)</b> <b>Policy STP2, STP3, STP4, POL1 (Northumberland Local Plan Regulation 19 Draft)</b>	The scheme has been designed based on an understanding of the existing ground conditions and the previous uses of the site. A Phase I Geo-environmental Assessment (Preliminary Sources Study Report) has been submitted which provides further details on the ground conditions, which have been used to inform the submitted proposals.
Water Quality, Flood Risk and Drainage <b>Policy SS3 (Blyth LDF Core Strategy)</b> <b>Policy DC1, DC19 (Blyth LDF Development Control Policies Development Plan Document)</b> <b>Policy STP2, STP3, STP4, WAT3, WAT4 (Northumberland Local Plan Regulation 19 Draft)</b>	The scheme has been designed based on an understanding of the flood risk and drainage requirements of the site. Discussions with the LLFA have informed the submitted proposals. The application is supported by a detailed Flood Risk and Drainage Assessment which demonstrates that the site is not at risk of flooding and that appropriate drainage is provided.
Heritage <b>Policy E3 (Blyth District Local Plan)</b> <b>Policy ENV7 (Northumberland Local Plan Regulation 19 Draft)</b>	The Heritage Statement submitted in support of this application demonstrates that the scheme has been designed based on a sound understanding of significance of the historic assets which may be impacted. The assessment confirms that there would not be a significant impact on designated and non-designated heritage assets. The assessment identifies that the railway line played a significant role in the growth of Bebside and therefore the

Northumberland Development Policy	
	reinstatement of passenger travel is an opportunity to promote local heritage.

*Figure 7.1 Summary of policy compliance*

## 8 Material Considerations

### 8.1 Introduction

- 8.1.1 Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 8.1.2 A material consideration is a matter which should be taken into account in deciding a planning application, or on an appeal against a planning decision. There is no legal definition to prescribe those matters which have the potential to constitute 'material planning considerations'. Case law has held that any consideration that relates to the use and development of land is capable of being a material planning consideration. It is for the decision-maker to determine the weight to be apportioned to each of the considerations.
- 8.1.3 The purpose of this section is therefore to identify and summarise those other policy and guidance documents that do not form part of the statutory development plan that are of particular relevance to the determination of this planning application.

### 8.2 National Design Guide (2019)

- 8.2.1 Published in October 2019, the National Design Guide seeks to provide guidance to assist in the delivery of beautiful, enduring and successful places.
- 8.2.2 The National Design Guide recognises the importance of good design. To this end, the document sets out ten characteristics which ought to be used to assess the design credentials of development. The ten characteristics identified are said to contribute towards the cross-cutting themes for good design set out in the NPPF. The ten characteristics are:
- Context – enhances the surroundings.
  - Identity – attractive and distinctive.
  - Built form – a coherent pattern of development.
  - Movement – accessible and easy to move around.
  - Nature – enhanced and optimised.
  - Public spaces – safe, social and inclusive.
  - Uses – mixed and integrated.
  - Homes and buildings – functional, healthy and sustainable.
  - Resources – efficient and resilient.

- Lifespan – made to last.

8.2.3 The submitted Design and Access Statement demonstrates that the scheme has evolved to take account of the observations, guidance and comments received from the local planning authority officers, together with other key stakeholders including Network Rail. It is considered that the principles set out in the National Design Guide reinforce those principles set out in those design-specific policies contained within the development plan, which the submitted scheme is considered to accord with.

8.2.4 It is therefore considered that the National Design Guide can be given moderate weight in the determination of this planning application. The scheme is considered to represent a sustainable design that suitably takes account of the site context. It is considered that further details that pertain to design considerations, including external material finishes, can be the subject of suitably worded conditions on a planning permission for the scheme.

### **8.3 Blyth Valley Urban Design Guide and Public Realm Strategy Supplementary Planning Document (2008)**

8.3.1 The Blyth Valley Urban Design Guide and Public Realm Strategy was adopted in June 2008 and sets out the principles and considerations that should be used to deliver high-quality design and placemaking for new schemes within Blyth Valley.

8.3.2 The submitted Design and Access Statement demonstrates that the scheme has evolved to take account of the observations, guidance and comments received from the local planning authority officers, together with other key stakeholders including Network Rail. It is considered that the principles set out in the Blyth Valley Urban Design Guide reinforce those principles set out in those design-specific policies contained within the development plan, which the submitted scheme is considered to accord with.

8.3.3 It is therefore considered that the Blyth Valley Urban Design Guide can be given moderate weight in the determination of this planning application. The scheme is considered to represent a sustainable design that suitably takes account of the site context. It is considered that further details that pertain to design considerations, including external material finishes, can be the subject of suitably worded conditions on a planning permission for the scheme.

### **8.4 Northumberland Local Transport Plan (LTP3) (2011)**

8.4.1 The Northumberland Local Transport Plan 2011 – 2026 was adopted on 4th April 2011 as an interim strategy which will be refreshed following the council's adoption of the Northumberland Sustainable Community Strategy and the Northumberland Local Plan.

8.4.2 The LTP3 identifies at paragraph 3.68 that:

*“Of particular issue to South East Northumberland is the time it takes to travel into the neighbouring authorities of Tyne & Wear, a key source of employment for residents of Northumberland, and the cost associated with these journeys. For example, public transport journey times from Blyth and Ashington to Newcastle City Centre can take in excess of 40 minutes with a weekly bus pass costing between £15 and £20.”*

8.4.3 To address such issues, the Northumberland LTP3 recognises that rail travel will have an increasingly important role in tackling congestion and supporting Northumberland’s sustainable economic growth and prosperity.

8.4.4 Paragraph 6.29 of the LTP3 states that:

*“The County Council is committed to addressing rail issues in Northumberland through improved partnership working with a wide range of stakeholders. These include rail passengers and representative organisations, the Department for Transport, local authorities and regional partners, Network Rail, rail operators and regulatory bodies.”*

8.4.5 Paragraph 6.33 also notes that the lack of available car parking at stations severely restricts passenger growth and demand for rail travel.

8.4.6 Paragraph 6.36 states that re-opening of the Ashington, Blyth and Tyne line to passenger services is one of the principal elements of the new rail strategy to be implemented in partnership with Network Rail and local rail operators over the period of the third LTP.

8.4.7 The scheme which is the subject of this application for planning permission would directly support the aims of the LTP3, to improve and encourage use of rails services in order to assist in reducing the economic, social and environmental impacts resulting from the highway congestion and journey time delays across South East Northumberland.

8.4.8 It is therefore considered that the Northumberland Local Transport Plan (LTP3) can be given substantial weight in the determination of this planning application. The scheme is considered to directly support the delivery of a scheme which is identified as a strategic transport priority for the council.

## **8.5 North East Combined Authority Transport Manifesto (2016)**

8.5.1 The North East Combined Authority was established in April 2014 and brought together the seven councils which serve County Durham, Gateshead, Newcastle, North Tyneside, Northumberland, South Tyneside and Sunderland. The ambition of NECA is to create the best possible conditions for growth in jobs, investment and living standards, making the North East an excellent place to live and work.

8.5.2 NECA recognises that effective transport networks are key to economic growth and opportunity for all. This includes links with the North East and connectivity with the rest of the UK, Europe and the rest of the world. The North East Combined Authority’s ambition, as set out

in its Transport Manifesto, is to provide affordable, attractive, reliable, safe, healthy transport choices for businesses, residents and visitors while enhancing the environment.

- 8.5.3 The NECA's Transport Manifesto supports the opening of new stations on existing rail lines, including the upgrading of freight-only sections for passenger use.
- 8.5.4 The scheme which is the subject of this application for planning permission would directly support the aims of the NECA's Transport Manifesto, to re-introduce passenger services on an existing freight line and to improve the accessibility and connectivity of South East Northumberland to the wider North East.
- 8.5.5 It is therefore considered that the NECA Transport Manifesto can be given moderate weight in the determination of this planning application. The scheme is considered to directly support the delivery of a scheme which is identified as a strategic transport priority for the North East Combined Authority.

## **8.6 Transport for the North Strategic Transport Plan (2019)**

- 8.6.1 Transport for the North (TfN) is the first statutory sub-national transport body in the United Kingdom. It was formed in 2018 to make the case for strategic transport improvements across the North of England. As a partnership, TfN brings the North's local transport authorities together with Network Rail, Highways England and HS2 Ltd and Central Government, to facilitate discussions on the transport infrastructure needed to drive transformational growth and rebalance the UK economy.
- 8.6.2 TfN's Strategic Transport Plan specifically supports the re-instatement of passenger services on the Northumberland Line, between Ashington and Blyth; this rail intervention is prioritised by TfN in the shorter term, in the context of the Department for Transport's Rail Network Enhancements Pipeline process.
- 8.6.3 The scheme which is the subject of this application for planning permission would directly support the aims of the TfN Strategic Transport Plan, to re-introduce passenger services on the Northumberland Line.
- 8.6.4 It is therefore considered that the TfN Strategic Transport Plan can be given moderate weight in the determination of this planning application. The scheme is considered to directly support the delivery of a scheme which is identified as a strategic transport priority for the Transport for the North.

## **8.7 The Road to Zero Strategy (2018)**

- 8.7.1 Whilst there are local policies pertaining to climate change within the Northumberland Local Plan, the climate crisis and the measures set out by Government in the 'Road to Zero: Next steps towards cleaner road transport and delivering our Industrial Strategy' is a material consideration in the determination of this planning application.



- 8.7.2 The Strategy states that in 2016, road transport accounted for 91% of UK greenhouse gas emissions in transport<sup>16</sup>.
- 8.7.3 The amount CO2 emissions per passenger per train is 14 grams. In contrast, a private car can produce 158 grams per passenger<sup>17</sup>. As such, a modal shift to public transport has the potential to dramatically decrease our national energy consumption.
- 8.7.4 The scheme which is the subject of this application for planning permission would support the aims of the 'Road to Zero' strategy, by seeking to establish a viable alternative to the private car that may encourage a modal shift from car to rail travel. Such a modal shift would likely result in air quality.
- 8.7.5 It is therefore considered that the 'Road to Zero' strategy can be given moderate weight in the determination of this planning application. The scheme is considered to support the Government's ambitions to move toward zero emissions.

## **8.8 Northumberland Economic Strategy (2018)**

- 8.8.1 The Northumberland Economy Strategy 2019 – 2024 was formally approved by the council's cabinet in December 2018. The council's ambition as set out in the strategy is to deliver inclusive, industrial growth to support a more productive, prosperous economy.
- 8.8.2 Priority 5 of the Economic Strategy states that one of the key deliverables to better connect the county is:

*"Invest in high quality passenger transport including the reopening of the Northumberland to Newcastle rail line to passengers."*

- 8.8.3 The scheme which is the subject of this application for planning permission would directly support the aims of the Northumberland Economic Strategy, to reopen the Northumberland Line to passenger services.
- 8.8.4 It is therefore considered that the Northumberland Economic Strategy can be given substantial weight in the determination of this planning application. The scheme is considered to directly support the delivery of a scheme which is identified as a strategic economic priority for the council.

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<sup>16</sup> Page 28 The Road to Zero: Next steps towards cleaner road transport and delivering our Industrial Strategy (2018)

<sup>17</sup> P79 Transport for the North Strategic Transport Plan 2019

## **8.9 Nexus Metro and Local Rail Strategy (2016)**

- 8.9.1 The Nexus Metro and Local Rail Strategy, produced in conjunction with the North East Combined Authority, sets out the proposals for the improved integration between local rail and Metro services, and the potential to exploit under-used and disused railway assets and alignments across the North East region.
- 8.9.2 The Metro and Local Rail Strategy identifies that the restoration of passenger rail services to the Blyth, Bedlington and Ashington areas is a strategic priority for the NECA because of the significant regenerative benefits of the scheme.
- 8.9.3 The strategy identifies that Northumberland Park would provide an interchange station to enable easy access between rail, Metro and local bus services – given that park and ride facilities are already available at the station.
- 8.9.4 It is therefore considered that the Metro and Local Rail Strategy can be given moderate weight in the determination of this planning application. The scheme is considered to directly support the delivery of a scheme which is identified as a strategic priority for both NECA and Nexus.

## **8.10 Summary**

- 8.10.1 It is considered that there are various considerations that are material to the determination of this planning application. This section has sought to identify and apportion due weight to each of those considerations, to assist the local planning authority in the determination of this application.
- 8.10.2 It is considered that there are no material considerations that would be sufficient either individually or in conjunction with other considerations that would preclude the granting of planning permission for the submitted scheme.

## 9 Case for Planning Permission to be granted

### 9.1 Introduction

- 9.1.1 This section brings together the information presented within this planning statement and provides a reasoned conclusion for the support of the application.

### 9.2 Accordance with local and national policies

- 9.2.1 This planning statement has demonstrated that the proposed railway station and overall scheme accords with the relevant national and local planning policies.
- 9.2.2 This statement has identified the many and various economic, social and environmental benefits that will be delivered as a result of the proposed development, including the potential for the development to act as a catalyst for further investment and wider regeneration within Bebside and South East Northumberland more widely.
- 9.2.3 The scheme will improve the opportunities for use of alternative modes of transport to the private car, helping to better meet the needs of those without access to the private car and encouraging those with access to the private car to consider using a more sustainable mode of travel, which will help reduce carbon emissions and deliver many environmental and health benefits including improving local air quality.
- 9.2.4 The scheme represents a sustainable development; the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development and therefore this scheme should be supported.
- 9.2.5 The material considerations that pertain to the application have been identified. This has included demonstrating that there are no material considerations which would prevent the approval of the scheme.
- 9.2.6 It is requested that the scheme which is the subject of this planning application therefore be approved as submitted.

### 9.3 Benefits of the Scheme

- 9.3.1 This planning statement has demonstrated that the proposed railway station would accord with both local and national planning policies in terms of encouraging use of public transport through the provision of improved access to the railway network.
- 9.3.2 The proposed railway station at Blyth Bebside will deliver a range of economic, social and environmental benefits.
- 9.3.3 The economic benefits of the scheme include:

- The scheme will deliver the transport infrastructure which is required to attract inward investment, create additional employment opportunities, enhance economic vitality and encourage further growth in South East Northumberland.
- The development will facilitate increased access for residents to employment and training opportunities throughout South East Northumberland. The provision of passenger rail services at this location, could encourage employers to locate to this part of Bebside especially given its proximity to the village centre and existing bus services.

9.3.4 The social benefits of the scheme include:

- The scheme will improve journey times for residents, local people, and those wishing to travel from Ashington to Newcastle, including onward journeys from Newcastle's central station.
- The development will provide a safe and secure railway station, with appropriate lighting and CCTV camera provision to encourage all parts of the community to use the transport services and the railway station.
- The nature of the scheme will encourage a sub-modal shift to more sustainable transport methods within the local area.
- The development will incorporate ramp and stepped access to the platform and signage to the railway suitable for users with disabilities.
- The development includes facilitating infrastructure improvements to the cycle and footways adjacent to the site, providing a safe and pleasant route for pedestrians and cyclists.
- The development would provide transport infrastructure that would encourage sustainable travel and would accommodate projected future growth in Bebside and Blyth in terms of population, employment and housing.
- The development will contribute to building strong, vibrant and healthy communities by encouraging social inclusion, improving the accessibility of local services and the use of sustainable travel modes.
- The development will make it physically simpler and more convenient to use and access public transport infrastructure in Bebside. The consequential modal shift will assist in improving local air quality.
- The scheme will deliver environmental and physical improvements to the site, in doing so it will assist in the regeneration of the area and of Bebside and Blyth more widely.

9.3.5 The environmental benefits of the scheme include:

- Encouraging the use of healthy and sustainable modes of transport including walking, cycling and use of improved public transport.
- Facilitating a sub-modal shift to sustainable transport methods, reducing greenhouse gas emissions from a reduction of cars on the road network.
- The development will make it physically more convenient to use and access public transport infrastructure in Bebside. The consequential modal shift will assist in improving local air quality
- The scheme includes the installation of a sustainable urban drainage system which will alleviate flooding and allow the immediate area to accommodate extreme rainfall events with less risk of adverse impacts on adjacent land use.
- The development will be undertaken in accordance with a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) and a Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP), which will minimise the environmental impacts traditionally associated with urban redevelopment schemes.
- The development will decrease dependence on the private car for residents and local people, in so doing it will reduce carbon emissions
- The development will implement a strategy for providing a structured approach to landscaping at the site; introducing native shrub and tree planting

9.3.6 The economic, social and environmental benefits associated with the development would be delivered jointly and simultaneously. As such, the proposed development can be considered to represent a sustainable development.

9.3.7 It is therefore requested that planning permission be granted for the scheme as submitted.

## 9.4 Conditions

9.4.1 Planning conditions, when used properly, can enhance the quality of development and enable development to proceed where it would otherwise have been necessary to refuse planning permission, by mitigating the adverse effects.

9.4.2 The objectives of planning are best served when the power to impose conditions on a planning permission is exercised in a way that is clearly seen to be fair, reasonable and practicable.

9.4.3 Section 70(1)(a) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 enables a local planning authority in granting planning permission to impose “*such conditions as they think fit*.” This power needs to be interpreted in the context of material considerations such as the National Planning Policy Framework, the supporting guidance on the use of planning conditions, and relevant case law.

- 9.4.4 A pre-commencement condition must not be imposed on the grant of permission without the written agreement of the applicant except in the circumstances set out in the Town and Country Planning (Pre-Commencement Conditions) Regulations 2018.
- 9.4.5 Paragraph 55 of the NPPF stipulates that planning conditions should be kept to a minimum, and use only where they satisfy the following tests:
1. necessary;
  2. relevant to planning;
  3. relevant to the development to be permitted;
  4. enforceable;
  5. precise; and
  6. reasonable in all other respects.
- 9.4.6 The plans, surveys, assessments and other information submitted in support of this planning application are considered to be sufficient to demonstrate to the satisfaction of the local planning authority that the scheme would accord with the relevant policies and that there are no material considerations that ought to preclude the granting of a planning permission for the scheme.
- 9.4.7 Although a considerable amount of information is submitted in support of the planning application, it is anticipated that additional details may be required to enable the local planning authority to be assured that the proposed mitigation will be sufficient to deliver the environmental and other benefits that pertain to the scheme. In these situations, to avoid potential prolongation of the determination period, the applicant would wish the local planning authority to attach a condition to a planning permission requiring the submission of a scheme with the additional details/ design information.
- 9.4.8 In line with the tests set out in paragraph 55, this section of the Planning Statement seeks to present an overview of those matters which could be the subject of conditions on a planning permission, in order to seek to avoid possible delays to determination of the planning application as a result of requests from the local planning authority for further information.
- 9.4.9 The applicants would respectfully request the opportunity to review the wording of any draft conditions which are to be imposed, prior to the granting of a permission.
- 9.4.10 Figure 9.1 presents an overview of those matters which could be the subject of conditions on a planning permission.

Condition Subject	Relevant submitted information	Suggested scope of condition
Design	Proposed Plans, Design and Access Statement	Submission of external materials samples, boundary treatment details, CCTV scheme, shelters, footbridge design etc

Condition Subject	Relevant submitted information	Suggested scope of condition
Trees	Proposed Plans, Arboricultural Impact Assessment	Submission of arboricultural method statement, Tree protection plan
Landscaping	Proposed Plans, Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment	Submission of finished site level details, hard and soft landscaping details, landscape management plan, platform furniture details, signage details
Ecology	Biodiversity Statement (including Biodiversity Net Gain Statement)	Submission of a scheme for biodiversity enhancement
Construction	Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan	Submission of a construction management plan/ method statement
Contaminated Land	Coal Mining Risk Assessment, Geo-technical Desk Based Assessment	Submission of a remediation scheme, verification report, unexpected contamination details if found
Drainage	Proposed Plans, Flood Risk and Drainage Assessment	Submission of a drainage scheme incorporating sustainable drainage details
Lighting	Proposed Plans, Lighting Statement	Submission of a lighting detail
Highways	Proposed Plans, Transport Assessment, Stage 1 Road Safety Audit to be submitted during determination of application.	Submission of cycle storage details, s278 works details, car park management plan, EV charging details, bridleway/ public rights of way details. RSA stage 1 is anticipated to be submitted during determination. Notwithstanding this submission there may be a requirement for further safety audits and these may be the subject of condition(s) attached to the grant of a planning permission
Archaeology	Heritage Statement	Submission of a mitigation scheme
Noise	Noise Assessment	Submission of a mitigation scheme
Air Quality	Air Quality Assessment	Submission of a mitigation scheme

*Figure 9.1 Schedule of proposed conditions*

- 9.4.11 Figure 9.1 has been drafted to include only those matters which could potentially be pre-commencement or pre-operational conditions and does not include those matters which are likely to be the subject of 'compliance' conditions.
- 9.4.12 It is respectfully requested that the precise wording of all conditions, including suitable trigger points for discharge where relevant, be agreed with the applicant prior to formal determination of this application for planning permission.

## 9.5 Additional information

- 9.5.1 In the event that additional information, clarification or further details concerning the proposed development are required during the determination period this will be provided upon request.

- 9.5.2 The applicants wish to continue to work closely with the local planning authority to ensure the application can be determined as expeditiously as possible. To this end, we are content to attend meetings as required by officers.



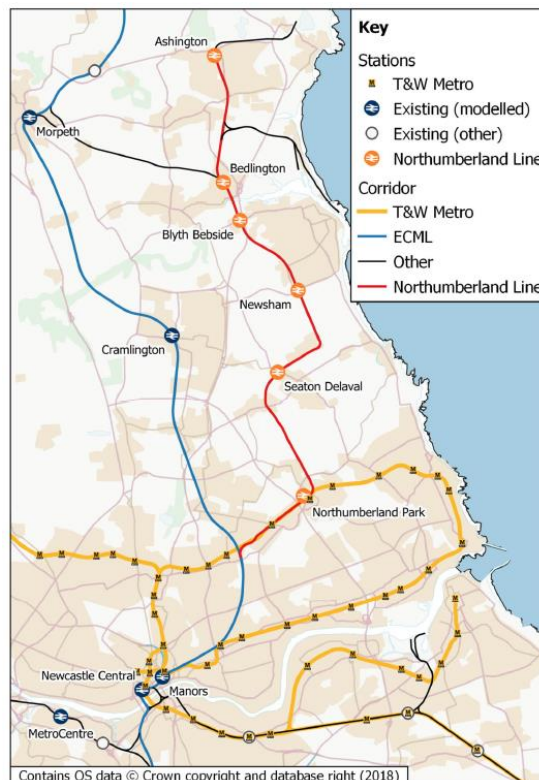
## 10 Appendix A- Bebside Economic Assessment

### Overview

Passenger train services operating on the railway line between Ashington and Newcastle were withdrawn in 1964 as part of the Beeching Cuts; the rail network in this area continues to be used for freight and as a diversion route for East Coast Main Line passenger services. The re-opening of the Northumberland Line between Ashington and Newcastle is a key priority of Northumberland County Council to improve connectivity within this area of South East Northumberland and to the wider North East region.

The proposed scheme will deliver five new stations and upgrade/expand a sixth station to provide interchange with the Tyne & Wear Metro network at Northumberland Park. The route of the Northumberland Line is shown in the figure below.

*The Northumberland Line Scheme Extents*



The Outline and Updated Business Cases for the Northumberland Line scheme demonstrate that the scheme delivers high value for money, improves travel times by public transport within, and beyond, South East Northumberland, and provides regeneration benefits to the area. The following sections of this report summarise the economic benefits associated with a park and ride station being located in Bebside, to the north of the town of Blyth.

### Bebside

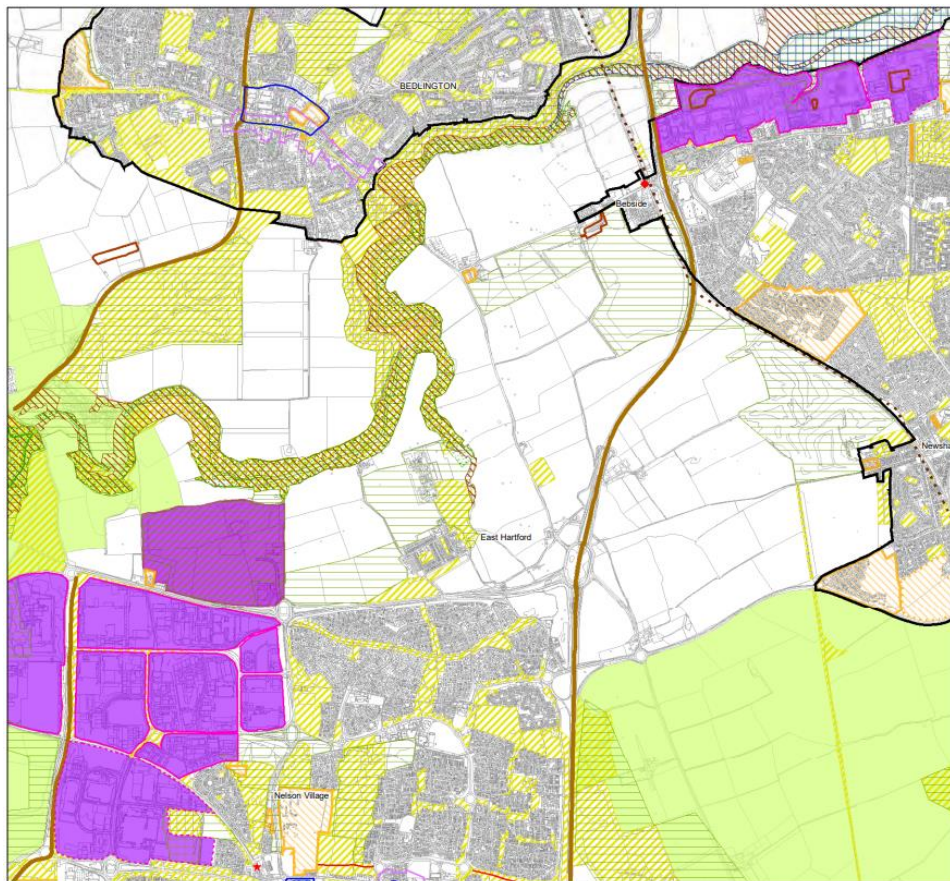
Bebside is one of two proposed railway stations for the town of Blyth. The second proposed railway station is located to the south west of Blyth, in South Newsham. Bebside is a former coal mining village located to the west of Blyth. Blyth is the largest settlement in Northumberland and constitutes a significant employment base for the local population and in-commuters, and provides homes for people who work, shop and spend outside the town. Indeed, the town is regarded in the Northumberland emerging Local Plan as a 'main commercial centre' due to its good level of retail provision and its role as a community hub for a large population. The main employment zones are located on the northern and eastern edges of the town, with recent housing developments also being located in similar peripheral locations. The proposed railway station at Bebside will serve these residential and employment locations to the north of Blyth, as well as communities further afield.

The town of Blyth developed around the coal mining and shipbuilding industries, with the salt trade, fishing and the railways also playing an important part. At the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century however, these industries had all but vanished from Blyth, with the town being seriously impacted by this decline in its principal industries. Although new industries have developed, the town still suffers from many of the socio-economic problems associated with the decline in the shipbuilding and mining industries, which has resulted in areas with high levels of deprivation when assessed through the index of multiple deprivation. Particular problems include higher than average levels of unemployment, poor educational attainment and a higher than average percentage of the population in poor health.

Although the town of Blyth has suffered since the decline in the shipbuilding and mining industries, there has been much investment in the town in recent years with large scale regeneration projects. This includes investment in the town centre and revamping of the Quayside, which has seen the area transformed into a peaceful open space. Moving forward, Blyth Estuary has been identified as a strategic employment area and accommodates around 220 hectares of land. It is being actively promoted to the renewable and low carbon energy, advanced manufacturing and offshore sectors, and is regarded as having the potential to become an 'innovation hub' in the North East Strategic Economic Plan in this field of activity.

The development of the Blyth Estuary presents a real opportunity to grow the economy of Blyth and create private sector economic growth in the North East region, which is so essential for an area currently heavily dependent on the public sector for work. Not only will this benefit the resident population of Blyth, it will also provide employment opportunities for residents from outside of Blyth to strengthen linkages already present; census 2011 showed that 50% of journey to work trips with a destination into Blyth come from outside the area, with key origin points being the wider Northumberland area and Tyne and Wear. However, to ensure this economic growth becomes a reality, it is essential that the links are in place to ensure the easy movement of people and goods to and from the proposed development. This means removing bottlenecks, which currently exist on the highway network, such as congestion on the A193 Cowpen Road, and improving the public transport connections to the area.

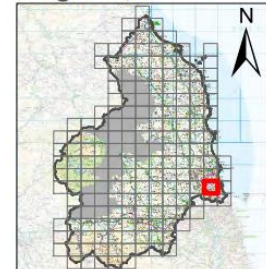
Alongside the potential for development in industry in Blyth, the Local Plan for Northumberland also sets out provision for 1,800 new homes between 2016 and 2036. As demonstrated in the following figures, some of this proposed housing is ideally located to take advantage of a railway station to the north of Blyth.



### 131 Northumberland Local Plan Publication Draft Plan (Regulation 19)

- Legend**
- Settlement Boundaries
  - Green Belt
  - Green Belt extension boundaries established
  - West Hartford Prestige Employment Area
  - General Employment Land Allocations
  - Key General Employment Areas
  - Areas for Flexible Employment Uses
  - Town Centres
  - Primary Shopping Areas
  - Housing Development Site Allocations
  - Sites with Permission for Housing
  - Sites Minded to Approve Permission for Housing
  - National Primary Routes
  - Local Road Network Improvements
  - The Northumberland Line
  - Safeguarded Station Sites
  - Improvements to Station Parking
  - Special Protection Areas (SPAs)
  - Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs)
  - Local Wildlife and Geological Sites
  - Local Nature Reserves
  - South East Northumberland Wildlife Network
  - Ancient Woodland
  - Conservation Areas
  - Existing Waste Management Facilities
  - Protected Open Space

Scale@ A3:1:20,000



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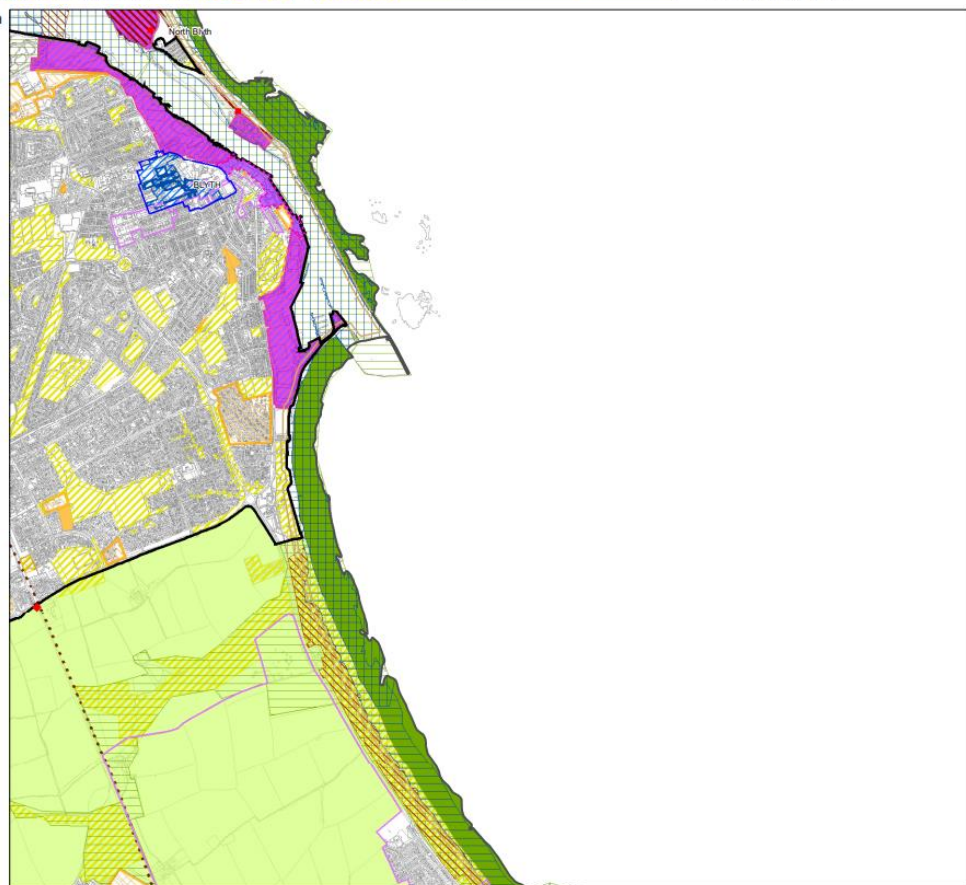
### 132 Northumberland Local Plan Publication Draft Plan (Regulation 19)

- Legend**
- Settlement Boundaries
  - Green Belt
  - Blyth Estuary Strategic Employment Area
  - General Employment Land Allocations
  - Areas for Flexible Employment Uses
  - Town Centres
  - Primary Shopping Areas
  - Key Shopping Frontages
  - Housing Development Site Allocations
  - Sites with Permission for Housing
  - Sites Minded to Approve Permission for Housing
  - The Northumberland Line
  - Safeguarded Station Sites
  - Safeguarded Freight Rail Services
  - Ramsar Convention Wetlands
  - Special Protection Areas (SPAs)
  - Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs)
  - Marine Conservation Zones
  - Local Wildlife and Geological Sites
  - Local Nature Reserves
  - Non-Statutory Nature Reserves
  - South East Northumberland Wildlife Network
  - Conservation Areas
  - Coastal Change Management Area
  - Safeguarded Minerals Infrastructure
  - Protected Open Space

Scale@ A3:1:20,000



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Source: Northumberland County Council<sup>18</sup>

Northumberland Local Plan: Blyth



The proposed station at Bebside is located to the west of Blyth and the A189 Spine Road. The A189 is a key highway route within South East Northumberland, connecting the communities in this area with each other and the wider North East region. However, in the peak periods, the road is congested due to known bottlenecks on the approach roads into Tyne and Wear; of keynote is congestion at the A189/A19 Moor Farm junction, which is in need of major investment to overcome current congestion issues.

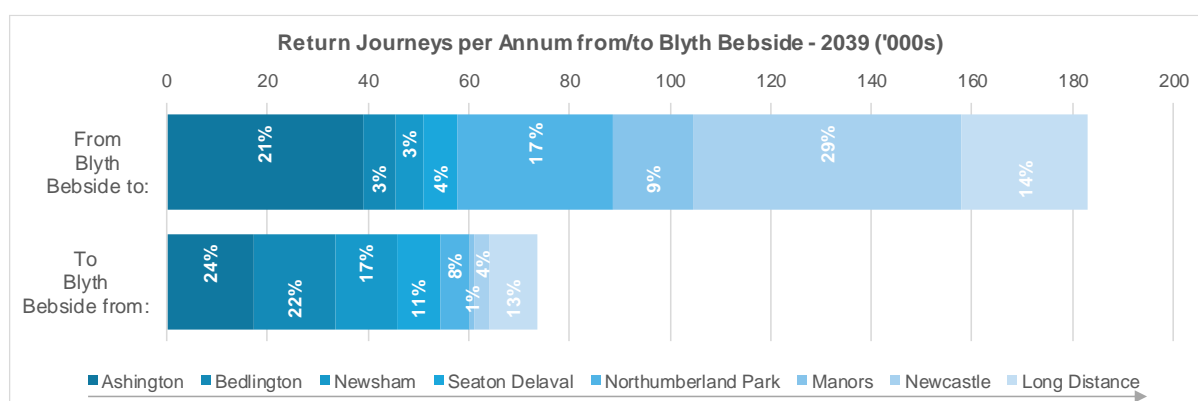
Blyth is served by an extensive bus network, which connects residents of Blyth with education, employment and leisure opportunities in South East Northumberland and the Tyne and Wear area. The bus network provides a vital lifeline to many residents of Blyth, with car ownership being much lower than national levels and residents reliant on buses to access key services; according to the 2011 census, 31% of households in Blyth had no access to a car. However, despite the reliance of Blyth residents on public transport connections, bus journey times are much slower than that of the private car; which limits the potential for residents to access opportunities outside of the local area. The provision of a new public transport link will help to overcome some of these issues.

### **Economic Assessment**

The Northumberland Line scheme is forecast to generate circa 1.45m annual return journeys by 2039<sup>19</sup> across the entire scheme.

Bebside station is forecast to generate 13% of all rail demand and attract 5% of all rail demand. The figure below shows the distribution of annual rail demand at this station, which is forecast to have circa 510,000 entries/exits by 2039.

### *Distribution of Annual Rail Demand (2039)*



### *Source of Rail Patronage*

Nearly 45% of the demand originating from Bebside station is forecast to use the Northumberland Line to travel to Newcastle Central station or beyond. Almost half of inbound passengers to Blyth Bebside originate from the northern stations (Ashington and Bedlington), and 17% from Newsham, the next station south.

It is estimated that in the average morning peak hour, 108 passengers will board a train service at Bebside, with 37 passengers alighting at this station by 2039.

<sup>19</sup> These forecasts are aligned to a service proposition that has 2 trains per hour operating between Ashington and Newcastle, taking 32 minutes. Rail fares would be set at a similar level to those used on the Tyne & Wear Metro.

The figure to the right summarises the source of patronage at Blyth Bebside in the future forecast year of 2039.

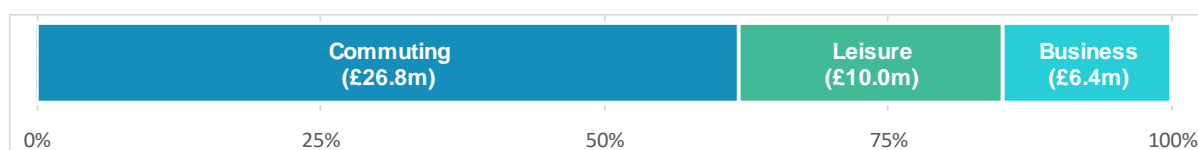
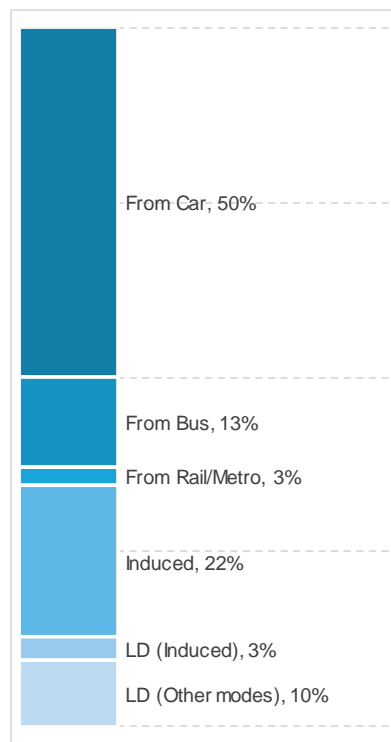
Modal transfer from car is the primary source of demand for the scheme at this station, accounting for over 50% of rail demand (once long-distance movements are considered), whilst just over a sixth of new rail demand has transferred from bus. Demand transferring from existing rail services (via Cramlington) or existing Metro services (via Northumberland Park) represent less than 5% of the total rail patronage.

25% of passenger journeys using this station are estimated to be new journeys that would not have been made previously in the absence of the scheme.

The introduction of the rail service will provide a quicker public transport option ‘door-to-door’ from Bebside into central Newcastle, other Tyne & Wear destinations, and neighbouring towns, than can currently be offered by rail or bus. It will also be a more competitive option for existing car users to consider, especially once the full times and costs of the journey are taken into consideration.

The User Time Saving (UTS) benefits generated by Blyth Bebside passengers (£43.2m) represent 12% of the scheme’s total UTS benefits; UTS benefits by journey purpose are presented in the figure below.

### User Time Saving Benefits Generated by Bebside Station Demand (£ million, 2010 prices)



The Northumberland Line scheme also impacts on road usage; it removes car journeys across the rail corridor through mode transfer to rail, whilst some new short distance local journeys by car will be generated around stations. The overall net impact is a reduction in car-km and a decongestion benefit. By 2039, the annual net impact in car-km associated with rail demand generated at Bebside station is forecast to be a reduction of 2.59m car-km (a 3.70m reduction in car-km due to modal transfer balanced by a 1.11m increase in car-km associated with local station access).

Demand at Bebside station is forecast to contribute 13% of the scheme’s total decongestion benefits (circa £18.6 million); decongestion benefits by purpose are presented in the below figure.

### Decongestion Benefits Generated by Bebside Station Demand (£ million, 2010 prices)



The wider economic benefits of the scheme comprise the sum of the agglomeration and the labour supply benefits and have been estimated at a Local Authority District level. Since the forecast model only provided full travel costs for movements within Northumberland at LAD level, it is not possible to further disaggregate the outputs at a station-by-station level. Outputs represent a conservative estimate of the overall benefits of the scheme as only Northumberland impacts have been estimated.

The welfare impact of agglomeration (effectivity density) impacts resulting from closer perceived proximity between individuals and businesses account for 93% of the welfare benefits estimated. Labour supply impacts, related to employment effects derived from improved accessibility on a region poorly connected to employment centres, accounts for the remaining 7% of wider economic benefits. The below table presents the present value of wider economic benefits from the scheme, over 60 years.

### *Northumberland Line Wider Economic Benefits (£ million, 2010 prices):*

Welfare Impacts	Agglomeration	Labour Supply	Total
Estimated Benefits (£m)	£47.2	£3.3	£50.5

The quantification of the wider economic benefits from the scheme has been endorsed through consultation with businesses, organisations and the general public, who agree that the scheme will improve connectivity to employment opportunities, increase the labour catchment area for businesses and improve the attractiveness of Blyth as an area in which to invest. This should help to reverse the socio-economic problems that currently exist in Blyth, and result in a much more prosperous future for residents of the town.

### **Summary**

Blyth is the largest town in South East Northumberland and constitutes a significant employment base for the local population and in-commuters, and provides homes for people who work, shop and spend outside the town. It suffered decline following the closure of the mining and shipbuilding industries at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, but recent years have seen investment in the town, with further opportunities for the future. Despite investment, the area still has high levels of deprivation, with key issues including high levels of unemployment, low educational attainment and a high percentage of the population considered to be in poor health.

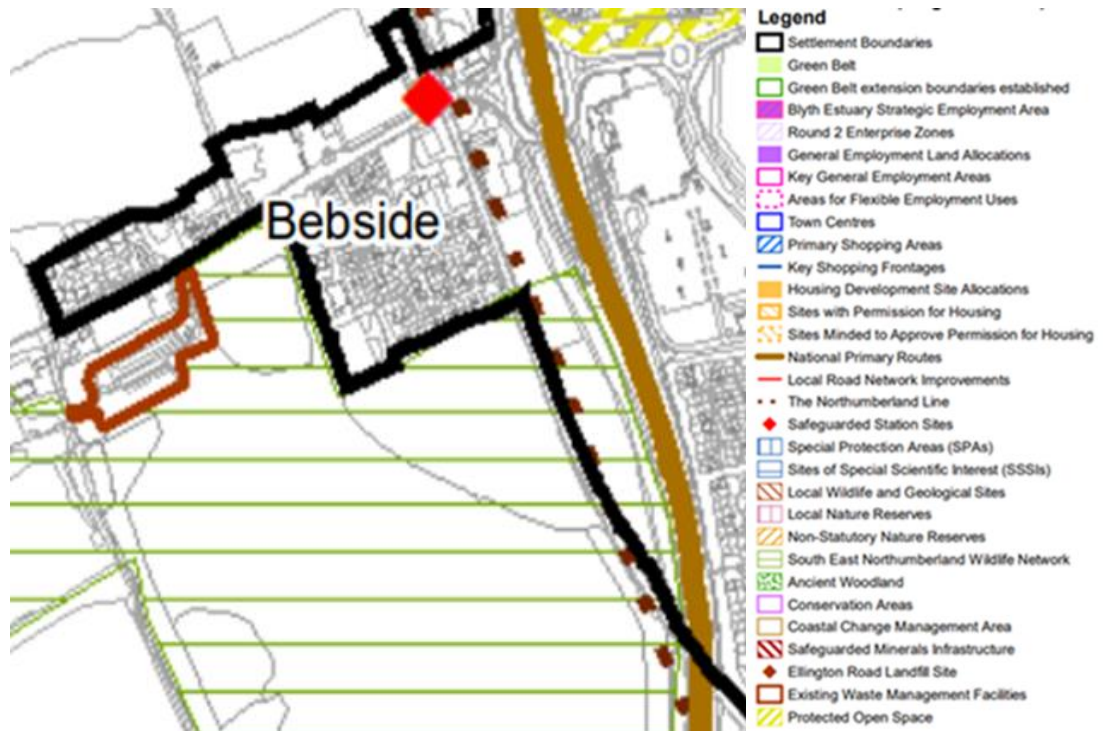
Connecting Blyth to the heavy rail network at Bebside will bring significant benefits for both residents and people visiting the town. Rail will provide quicker journey times to key destinations, which are faster than the bus and are comparable to the car. This will not only improve accessibility to employment, education and leisure opportunities, it will also encourage modal shift from existing car users, and have environmental benefits through a reduction in traffic congestion and car emissions.

With regards to passenger numbers, by 2039, Bebside station is anticipated to have around 510,000 entries and exists at the station. The modelling predicts that users will use the rail line to travel to/from Bebside and other communities along the Northumberland Line, with other users traveling to Newcastle or beyond. Notably, 25% of rail trips will be made by people who would not have made the trip had the passenger service not been introduced.

The Northumberland Line presents Blyth with an unprecedented opportunity to help address deprivation, support investment in the town, and connect residents to the wider North East region. This will help to reverse the socio-economic problems that currently exist in Blyth, and result in a much more prosperous future for residents of the town.

# 11 Appendix B- Adopted and Emerging Local Plan Policies Map



















## 11.1 Emerging Northumberland Local Plan policies map



















## 11.2 Adopted Blyth Valley Local Plan policies map








Chapter 3 Housing	
Policy / Proposal	
<b>HOUSING LAND ALLOCATIONS etc.</b> (Sections 3.3 to 3.5)	
H7,10,13 H10	Land Allocated for General Housing Purposes
H7,10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Where Land within the Allocated Area yet to be Identified for Community Uses, including Open Space</li> </ul>
H14 (i)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Special Design Sites</li> <li>On these sites, Policy H21 (vi) will apply</li> <li>Where an element of Affordable Housing Proposed</li> </ul>
H18	Land where Low Density Housing Favoured
H20 (iii)	Land Allocated for Housing with a View to Achieving Improvements to Local Shopping Centres
<b>ENVIRONMENT OF HOUSING AREAS</b> (Section 3.6)	
H21 (iv)	Pilot Area for Energy Efficient Housing where Proposal SW1 will be applied











PLAN AREA BOUNDARY	
Policy / Proposal	Chapter 1 Environmental Protection and Enhancement
	<b>NATURE CONSERVATION</b> (Section 1.2)
E1	 <b>Nature Conservation - Designated Sites</b> Numbered according to Table E-P1, (page 2)
E2 (i)(c)	<b>Wildlife Corridors</b>  Existing  Potential
E2 (ii)	 Proposals for Existing or Proposed Open Space Areas: <b>(1) Nature Conservation Enhancement Measures</b>
	<b>LANDSCAPE</b> (Section 1.3)
E4	 <b>Areas of High Landscape Value</b>
E5 (i)	 <b>Mature / Semi-Natural Woodland to be Retained</b>
E5 (ii)	 <b>Plantation Woodland to be Retained</b>
E6 + other proposals	 Proposals for Existing or Proposed Open Space Areas: <b>(2) Landscaping Proposals</b>
E6 + other proposals	 <b>Other Landscaping Proposals, (linear etc.)</b>
	<b>GROUND AND WATER</b> (Section 1.5)
E9	 <b>+5 Metre O.D. Contour, below which Policy E9 (ii) will be applied</b>
E11	 <b>Proposed Reclamation of Derelict Land</b>
	<b>THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT</b> (Section 1.6)
E15	 <b>Conservation Areas</b>
E16 (ii)	 <b>Positive Measures within Conservation Areas</b>
E16 (iii)	 <b>Possible Extension of Conservation Area Coverage</b>
E18 (ii)	 <b>Open Space Edges, Protection of SEE ALSO UNDER "COMMUNITY FACILITIES - OPEN SPACE" BELOW</b>
E19	  <b>Local Environmental Enhancements (other than purely landscaping)</b>
	<b>POLLUTION CONTROL</b> (Section 1.8)
E25	 <b>Aircraft Noise Exposure Category B</b>











Policy / Proposal	Chapter 2 General Development
	<b>SETTLEMENT LIMITS AND GREEN BELT</b> (Sections 2.3 and 2.4)
G6	 <b>Settlement Limits</b> Beyond these Policies G8 to G10 and Policies H24 to H26 will be applied as appropriate
G7	 <b>Green Belt</b> Within which Policies G8, G10, H24 and H26 will be applied










Policy / Proposal	Chapter 4 Community Facilities
	<b>OUTDOOR PLAYING SPACE</b> (Section 4.3)
C2 (i)	 Proposals for Existing or Proposed Open Space Areas: <b>(3) Proposed Outdoor Sports Pitches</b>
C2 (v)	 <b>Floodlit All Weather Sports Surfaces</b>
C4 (i)	 <b>Proposed Neighbourhood Equipped Area for Play (for Children)</b>
C4 (i),(iii)	 <b>Proposed Local Equipped Area for Play (for Children)</b>
C4 (ii)	 <b>Zones of Shortfall of Children's Equipped Playspace</b>
	<b>OPEN SPACE</b> (Section 4.4)
C7 (i)	 Proposals for Existing or Proposed Open Space Areas: <b>(4) Proposed for Public Open Space / Parkland, not necessarily involving Nature Conservation, Landscaping nor Playing Pitches</b>
C7 (ii), (E2, E18)	 <b>Open Space to be Protected from Development for Strategic and/or Nature Conservation Reasons and/or Visual Reasons (SEE LIST AT APPENDIX XXII) Numbered according to Appendix XXII</b>
C7 (ii), (E2, E18)	 <b>As above - Corridors of Open Space</b>
	<b>ALLOTMENTS</b> (Section 4.5)
C8	 <b>Element of Allotment Use to be Retained</b>
	<b>INDOOR SPORTS PROVISION</b> (Section 4.6)
C9	 <b>Indoor Sports Facilities: Development / Retention of</b>
	<b>EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES</b> (Section 4.7)
C10 (ii)	 <b>Land Allocated for Community Facilities: (1) Education Purposes</b>
	<b>SHOPS AND RELATED SERVICES</b> (Section 4.8)
C14, (B1, CC1)	 <b>Boundary of Central Shopping Areas, Blyth Town Centre and Cramlington Town Centre</b>
C14 (i), C17 (ii), B1, CC1 (d), SD2	 <b>Retail Frontage Policies:</b> Blyth Town Centre (Policy B1 - Blocks separately lettered according to Policy); Cramlington Town Centre (Proposal CC1 (d)); <b>Local Service Area:</b> Seaton Delaval - (Proposal SD2).
C16 (ii)	 <b>Corridor of Resistance of Further Large Scale Retail Proposals</b>












Policy / Proposal	Chapter 5 Leisure and Visitor Activities
	<b>ACCOMMODATION AND ATTRACTION OF VISITORS</b> (Sections 5.3 and 5.4)
L1 (i)	 <b>Hotel Proposal</b>
L2 (i)	 <b>Focus for Increased Leisure and Visitor Activity</b>
L2 (ii)	 <b>Tourism Potential to be Investigated</b>
	<b>COUNTRYSIDE LEISURE</b> (Sections 5.5 and 5.6)
L3 (i)	 <b>Enhancement of Linear Visitor Destinations</b>
L4 (ii)	 <b>Large Scale, Formal Countryside Recreation Proposal</b>



Policy / Proposal	Chapter 4 Community Facilities	
C17 (iii)		Local Shopping Centre to be Retained
C17 (iii)(b)		Local Shopping Centre to be Retained, where Additional Facilities may be Located
C17 (iii)(c)		Local Shopping Centre to be Retained with an Improvement Sought
C17 (iii)(d)		Local Shopping Centre, High Pit: Special Policy
C17 (iv)		Village Shopping Policy - Settlements where Policy C17 (iv) will be applied
C17 (v) C17 (iii)(b)		Land Allocated for Community Facilities: (2) Shopping development
<b>COMMUNITY HEALTH FACILITIES</b> (Section 4.9)		
C18 (iii) & (iv)		Land Allocated for Community Facilities: (3) Health Facilities
<b>CULTURAL FACILITIES</b> (Section 4.10)		
C19 (i)		Land Allocated for Community Facilities: (4) Miscellaneous Community Facilities
C19 (ii)		Community Building Proposal
C19 (iv & v)		Arts Proposal

Policy / Proposal	Chapter 6 Work Activity	
<b>WORK ACTIVITY RELATED PROPOSALS</b> (Sections 6.2 to 6.5)		
W1, W2		Land for Work Activity: (1) Existing
W1, W2		Land for Work Activity: (2) Proposed
W1		Identified for Local / General Employment and Business Park Use
W1 (ii & iii)		Identified for Local / General Employment and Business Park Use, involving some restriction on the range of uses permitted.
WP2		Identified for Local / General Employment and Business Park Use, where additional uses will be considered
W2		Land for Work Activities Requiring Individual Sites in Non-Estate Locations
W4		Port Development Area; ("r" notation used where there is a restriction on the range of uses permitted).
W4 (last part), BQ1		Port Related Uses Favoured
W7		Office Use Proposed - Class B1
B3, (W6, W7, W8, C22)		Boundary of Secondary Commercial Area, Blyth Town Centre

Policy / Proposal	Chapter 7 Movement	
<b>PEDESTRIANS / CYCLISTS ETC.,</b> (Section 7.2) ("NON-POWERED MOVEMENT")		
M2 (i)		Pedestrian Priority Areas
M2 (ii)		Footpath / Cycleway or Cycletrack Proposals
M2 (iii)		Pedestrian / Cycle Link between Severed Areas Sought
M2 (v), W3 (ii), WP1 (ii)		Retention / Enhancement of Public Access on Foot or Otherwise
<b>RAILWAYS / BUSES</b> (Sections 7.3 & 7.4)		
M4		Reintroduction of Passenger Trains plus Continued / Increased Freight Use
M4 (i & ii), (M5 (vi))		Land safeguarded for Railway Station Facility / Passenger Halt (to include Bus Interchange Facility)
M4 (iv)		Continued / Increased Freight Use
M5 (v)		Bus Only Link
M5 (vi)		Bus Station / Stopping Proposal

Policy / Proposal	Chapter 7 Movement	
<b>OTHER VEHICLES</b> (Section 7.5)		
M6 (iii)		Primary Vehicle Access Route to Blyth Town Centre
M6 (iii)		Secondary Vehicle Access Route to Blyth Town Centre
M6 (iii)		Improvement of Road for Traffic Management Purposes
M6 (iii)		Discouragement of Traffic from Existing Road
M7		Policy to Control Heavy Goods Traffic
M7 (i), BP4		Back Lane Policy, Blyth Town Centre
M8		Proposals for Protection / Enhancement of Parking Facilities
M9 (i)		Roads Providing Access into / within New Development
M9 (ii)		New Road Proposal within Settlement Limits
M10 (i)		New / Improved Road Proposal beyond Settlement Limits: Implementation sought within Plan Period
M10 (ii)		New / Improved Road Proposal beyond Settlement Limits: Implementation dependent on Development proceeding

## Appendix F

### Bedlington station planning statement





**SLC Property**

# **Planning Statement**

**Prepared in support of a planning  
application for a new railway  
station at Bedlington Station**

**60601435-SLC-P-270-B-PS**

# Content

<b>1</b>	<b>Introduction to the scheme .....</b>	<b>2</b>
1.1	Overview of the scheme.....	2
1.2	Bedlington Station.....	2
1.3	Applicant and Agent .....	2
1.4	The Scheme.....	2
1.5	Supporting Information.....	4
1.6	Structure of this statement.....	5
<b>2</b>	<b>Background to the Proposed Development .....</b>	<b>6</b>
2.1	Introduction .....	6
2.2	Ambitions for a new passenger service .....	6
2.3	Ambitions for a railway station at Bedlington Station.....	9
2.4	Committed Development.....	10
<b>3</b>	<b>Pre-application Engagement .....</b>	<b>12</b>
3.1	Introduction .....	12
3.2	Pre-application enquiries.....	12
3.3	Changes to the proposed development since the receipt of pre-application response	13
3.4	Request for a Screening Opinion (RfSO) .....	14
3.5	Pre-submission stakeholder consultation (2019) .....	14
3.6	Pre-submission stakeholder consultation (2020).....	15
3.7	Summary .....	15
<b>4</b>	<b>Site Context .....</b>	<b>16</b>
4.1	Introduction .....	16
4.2	Historical Context.....	16
4.3	Planning History of the Site.....	17
4.4	Site Selection .....	18
4.5	Site Description.....	19
4.6	Site-specific environmental and land use constraints .....	21

<b>5</b>	<b>Proposed Development .....</b>	<b>23</b>
5.1	Introduction .....	23
5.2	Planning Application .....	23
5.3	Reasons for the proposed development.....	23
5.4	Elements of proposed development.....	24
5.5	Summary .....	25
<b>6</b>	<b>Planning Policy Context .....</b>	<b>26</b>
6.1	Introduction .....	26
6.2	Northumberland Development Plan .....	27
6.3	Wansbeck District Local Plan (July 2007).....	29
6.4	Northumberland Local Plan Regulation 19 Publication Draft (May 2019).....	34
6.5	National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2019).....	41
<b>7</b>	<b>Planning Assessment.....</b>	<b>45</b>
7.1	Introduction .....	45
7.2	Accordance with Northumberland Development Plan.....	45
7.3	Wansbeck District Local Plan (July 2007).....	46
7.4	Accordance with Northumberland Local Plan Regulation 19 Publication Draft (May 2019).....	59
7.5	Accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework.....	76
7.6	The Planning Balance .....	82
<b>8</b>	<b>Material Considerations .....</b>	<b>85</b>
8.1	Introduction .....	85
8.2	National Design Guide (2019).....	85
8.3	Northumberland Local Transport Plan (LTP3) (2011).....	86
8.4	North East Combined Authority Transport Manifesto (2016).....	87
8.5	Transport for the North Strategic Transport Plan (2019).....	87
8.6	The Road to Zero Strategy (2018).....	88
8.7	Northumberland Economic Strategy (2018).....	89
8.8	Nexus Metro and Local Rail Strategy (2016).....	89
8.9	Summary .....	89
<b>9</b>	<b>Case for Planning Permission to be granted .....</b>	<b>91</b>
9.1	Introduction .....	91

9.2	Accordance with local and national policies.....	91
9.3	Benefits of the Scheme .....	91
9.4	Conditions .....	93
9.5	Additional information .....	96
<b>10</b>	<b>Appendix A- Economic Assessment.....</b>	<b>97</b>
<b>11</b>	<b>Appendix B- Adopted and Emerging Local Plan Policies Plan .....</b>	<b>101</b>
11.1	Emerging Northumberland Local Plan policies map .....	101
11.2	Adopted Wansbeck District Local Plan policies map .....	102
	102	

## Table of Figures

Figure 1.1 Northumberland Line.....	3
Figure 2.1 Schedule of committed developments .....	10
Figure 4.1 Blyth and Tyne Railway Historic Network .....	16
Figure 4.2 Location of Bedlington station (Ordnance Map, 1924; Google Earth, 2020).....	17
Figure 4.3 Planning History .....	18
Figure 4.4 Red Line Boundary Plan .....	21
Figure 4.5 Extract from Emerging Northumberland Local Plan Reg 19 Draft and adopted Wansbeck District Local Plan .....	22
Figure 5.1 Proposed Site Layout .....	24
Figure 5.2 Schedule development proposals.....	25
Figure 7.1 Extract from Emerging Northumberland Local Plan (Policy INF5).....	74
Figure 7.2 Summary of policy compliance .....	84
Figure 9.1 Schedule of proposed conditions.....	95

# Document Control

## Version Control

Version No.	Date	Created/Modified by	Notes
V.06	04/03/21	Alannah Healey/Peter Gillan	Final

## Approvals

Version No.	Name of approver	Title & organisation	Date
V.06	Allen Creedy	SLC Property	04/03/21

# 1 Introduction to the scheme

## 1.1 Overview of the scheme

- 1.1.1 The scheme seeks to re-introduce passenger services onto the existing freight line between the city of Newcastle upon Tyne and the town of Ashington in Northumberland.
- 1.1.2 The railway line is known as the 'Northumberland Line' and was formerly known as the Ashington Blyth and Tyne Line (ABT). ['the scheme'].
- 1.1.3 The scheme includes the construction of six new railway stations and associated infrastructure. This planning statement has been prepared in support of the planning application for the proposed railway station and associated works at Bedlington Station. ['the application'].

## 1.2 Bedlington Station

- 1.2.1 This Planning Statement supports and accompanies an application for planning permission for the development associated with the construction and operation of a new railway station in Bedlington Station. Further details of the proposed development are provided in Section 5 of this Planning Statement.

## 1.3 Applicant and Agent

- 1.3.1 SLC Property Ltd has been instructed on behalf of Northumberland County Council to prepare this planning application.

## 1.4 The Scheme

- 1.4.1 The Northumberland Line proposes to offer a direct passenger service between Newcastle Central to Ashington. It is anticipated that the proposed service will call at the existing Manors railway station and at six proposed new station sites at Northumberland Park, Seaton Delaval, Newsham, Bebside, Bedlington and Ashington. Figure 1.1 illustrates the locations of the six new railway stations.



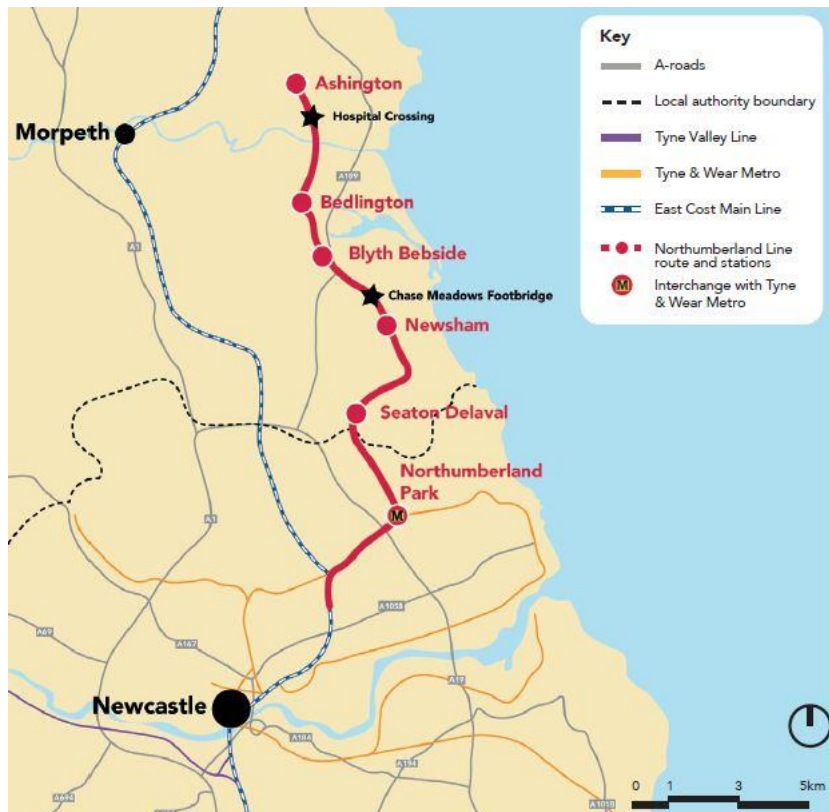


Figure 1.1 Northumberland Line

- 1.4.2 The scheme seeks to encourage a modal shift towards rail travel, assisting in reducing congestion and therefore improving journey times both on the local highway network, and for users of public transport. The scheme anticipates a journey time of approximately 35 minutes between Ashington and Newcastle.
- 1.4.3 The 'Northumberland Line' is located within the administrative areas of three local planning authorities.
- **Northumberland County Council (NCC):** Five of the six proposed railway stations are located within the NCC administrative boundary: Seaton Delaval, Newsham, Bebside, Bedlington and Ashington.
  - **North Tyneside Council (NTC):** The proposed railway station at Northumberland Park is located within the NTC administrative boundary.
  - **Newcastle City Council:** There are no new stations proposed within the Newcastle City Council administrative boundary, however passenger services along the Northumberland Line will operate to and from Newcastle Central station.

## 1.5 Supporting Information

- 1.5.1 The application for planning permission is accompanied by the supporting information identified as required by the local planning authority in discussions prior to submission. The nature, extent and scope of the supporting information is in accordance with the advice and recommendations given by officers of the local planning authority. The schedule of submitted information is summarised in Figure 1.2.

Document/Plan reference number	Name of document/Plan
60601435-ACM-XX-ZZ-DRG-LEP-000014	Site Location Plan
60601435-ACM-01-ZZ-DRG-ECV-000001	Planning Drawing General Arrangement
60601435-ACM-06-PL-DRG-ECV-000001	Existing General Arrangement
60601435-ACM-06-ZZ-DRG-EHW-060008	Existing Public Utilities Layout
60601435-ACM-06-PL-DRG-ECV-000100	Existing Buried Services General Arrangement
60601435-ACM-06-PL-DRG-ECV-000002	Platform General Arrangement
60601435-ACM-06-PL-DRG-ECV-000003	Up and Down Platforms General Arrangement
60601435-ACM-06-PL-DRG-ECV-000006	Platform Services General Arrangement
60601435-ACM-06-PL-DRG-ECV-000004	Platform Sections Sheet 1 of 2
60601435-ACM-06-PL-DRG-ECV-000005	Platform Sections General Arrangement
60601435-ACM-06-ZZ-DRG-EHW-060001	Bedlington Car Park Highways General Arrangement
60601435-ACM-06-ZZ-DRG-EHW-060006	Traffic sign and road marking layout
60601435-ACM-06-ZZ-DRG-EHW-060002	Bedlington Car Park Highways Typical Cross Sections 1 of 3
60601435-ACM-06-ZZ-DRG-EHW-060003	Bedlington Car Park Highways Typical Cross Sections 2 of 3
60601435-ACM-06-ZZ-DRG-EHW-060004	Bedlington Car Park Highways Typical Cross Sections 3 of 3
60601435-ACM-06-ZZ-DRG-EHW-060007	Vehicle Tracking
60601435-ACM-06-ZZ-DRG-HLG-001301	Highways Lighting, Proposed Lighting Layout - Sheet 1 of 1
60601435-ACM-06-ZZ-DRG-HLG-001302	Highways Lighting, Contours Layout - Sheet 1 of 1
60601435-ACM-06-ZZ-DRG-HLG-001301	Highways Lighting Calculation Results Sheet 1 of 1
60601435-ACM-06-ZZ-REP-HLG-001301	Lighting Calculation Report
60601435-ACM-06-ZZ-SKT-HLG-001301	Proposed Lighting Class Sheet 1 of 1
60601435-ACM-06-ZZ-DRG-EPT-000069	Lighting Layout Bedlington Carpark
60601435-ACM-XX-ZZ-DRG-EEN-000504	Landscape Design
60601435-SLC-P-270-B-LTVO	Landscape, Townscape and Visual Overview
60601435-SLC-P-270-B-DAS	Design and Access Statement
60601435-SLC-P-270-B-ECIA & BNG	Ecological Impact Assessment (including net gain statement)
60601435-ACM-XX-ZZ-REP-EEN-000031	Arboriculture Assessment
60601435-SLC-P-270-B-SCE	Statement of Community Engagement
TA_Northumberland Line-Bedlington	Transport Assessment
20210205_Bedlington FRA_D03	Flood Risk and Drainage Assessment
Bedlington_Heritage Statement_final	Heritage assessment (including archaeology assessment)
60601435-ACM-06-ZZ-REP-EGE-000002	Coal Mining Risk Assessment
Bedlington Railway Station NIA Report_rev2	Noise and Vibration Assessment
60601435-ACM-06-ZZ-REP-EGE-000001	Preliminary Sources Study (Geo-technical Assessment)
Sleekburn House Daylight Study- Final	Daylight Assessment
Bedlington Station Air Quality Assessment Report_final	Air Quality Impact Assessment

Document/Plan reference number	Name of document/Plan
60601435-SLC-P-270-B-HW	Health and Wellbeing Statement
60601435-SLC-P-270-B-PS	Economic Assessment (within the Planning Statement)
60601435-SLC-P-270-B-CEMP	Outline CEMP
NLP Services and Utilities Statement – Bedlington Final	Services and utilities Statement

*Figure 1.2 Schedule of supporting information*

## 1.6 Structure of this statement

- Section 2 sets out the background to the development and highlights the relevant planning history for the site and adjacent land.
- Section 3 summarises the engagement with the local planning authority, stakeholders and the public which has informed the submitted scheme.
- Section 4 introduces the application site and describes the surrounding areas
- Section 5 describes the proposed development
- Section 6 sets out the policies and other determining factors at both a national and local level which are relevant to the determination of the planning application
- Section 7 addresses the proposed development against the policies identified in Section 6.
- Section 8 describes the material considerations
- Section 9 provides a summary of the case for planning permission to be granted.

## 2 Background to the Proposed Development

### 2.1 Introduction

- 2.1.1 The purpose of this section is to provide a background to the ambitions held by key stakeholders for the reintroduction of passenger services on the 'Northumberland Line'.

### 2.2 Ambitions for a new passenger service

- 2.2.1 The reintroduction of passenger services on the Northumberland Line is a long-held ambition of Northumberland County Council, North Tyneside Council, Newcastle City Council, North East Combined Authority, Network Rail and other partners and key stakeholders. This section provides a summary of recent support for new railway stations and introduction of passenger services on the Northumberland Line, with particular reference to the proposed railway station at Bedlington Station.
- 2.2.2 The scheme seeks to improve connectivity and accessibility in the South East Northumberland Corridor (SEN Corridor). The scheme is a priority of Northumberland County Council, North Tyneside Council, Newcastle City Council, North East Combined Authority, Network Rail and is supported by a number of key project partners, including the Department for Transport (DfT), Network Rail, Transport for the North (TfN) Nexus and Northern Rail.
- 2.2.3 South East Northumberland is the most densely populated area of Northumberland, where the county's three largest towns are located: Cramlington, Blyth and Ashington. Crucially, the most densely populated settlements of Ashington and Blyth are not served by a passenger rail service.
- 2.2.4 At present, bus journey times are uncompetitive in comparison with car journey times from Newcastle to Ashington. The average journey time by bus between Newcastle and Ashington is more than 60 minutes.
- 2.2.5 The lack of viable and efficient modal choice has resulted in significant dependence on the private car by residents and visitors within South East Northumberland, increasing highway congestion, delaying journey times and adversely impacting local air quality. The aforementioned issues are exacerbated by the high percentage of residents who commute to nearby Newcastle and North Tyneside for work, leisure and retail opportunities. The 2011 Census identified a new outflow of commuters from Northumberland of over 23,000 people (37% of the population). This is expected to have increased in the last decade. Of those commuters, 65% of trips originating in Northumberland are made by car, which is higher than the national and regional average.
- 2.2.6 The scheme supports the strategic objectives of Northumberland County Council, North Tyneside Council and other key stakeholders, as summarised below, to improve sustainable

transport connections, which will facilitate economic growth, assist in reducing local highway congestion and contribute to improvements in regional air quality.

- 2.2.7 Improving the links from towns such as Ashington and Blyth is critical to encouraging more sustainable access to the key regional economic centres in Tyne and Wear and South East Northumberland. This includes improving access for staff and visitors to regionally important business parks in close proximity to the station sites, including Wansbeck Business Park which is located approximately 500 metres to the north east of the site of the proposed railway station at Ashington. Furthermore, the proposed stations are located to promote onward journeys by alternative public transport options, including access to the Tyne and Wear metro and local bus network. As a result, the scheme promotes access to a number of regionally significant business parks, including, but not limited to parks at Ashwood, Cobalt, Quorum, Gosforth and Balliol and the renewable energy sector businesses located in the Blyth Estuary.
- 2.2.8 It is anticipated that enhancements to transport links within South East Northumberland will be instrumental in stimulating economic investment within the region. The reintroduction of passenger services on the Northumberland Line will improve the accessibility and connectivity of South East Northumberland to the wider North East area, which may help to bring forward the much-needed delivery of housing allocations and other infrastructure.

#### **Northumberland County Council**

- 2.2.9 The Northumberland Economic Strategy 2019–2024 considers the Ashington, Blyth and Tyne line, as a ‘dormant asset’<sup>1</sup>. The re-introduction of passenger services on the railway line is a top priority for South East Northumberland. The scheme is a key deliverable for the next stage of the Economic Strategy and has been identified as a catalyst for unlocking commercial investment throughout the area.
- 2.2.10 The Northumberland Local Transport Plan 2011–2026 sets out the Council’s visions, aims and objectives for transport over this period. The strategy identifies that levels of deprivation in South East Northumberland are exacerbated by accessibility issues<sup>2</sup>. As such, the current public transport options are considered not to meet the needs of all residents in Northumberland. The Ashington, Blyth and Tyne Line is identified as a key area of development within the South East Northumberland Public Transport Corridor<sup>3</sup>. The strategy identifies the potential socio-economic and environmental benefits the scheme could bring to the area.

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<sup>1</sup> The Northumberland Economic Strategy 2019–24 p19

<sup>2</sup> Northumberland Local Transport Plan 2011–2026 p45

<sup>3</sup> Northumberland Local Transport Plan 2011–2026 p118

## **North Tyneside Council**

- 2.2.11 The adopted North Tyneside Local Plan (2017) considers 'Future transport provision should reflect existing demand and also take account of planned economic and housing growth to ensure an integrated approach to sustainable development and travel patterns<sup>4</sup>'.
- 2.2.12 North Tyneside Council supports the common objectives of the North East Combined Authority and Northumberland County Council in seeking to deliver a modal shift to more sustainable modes of transport. Notably, the local plan safeguards the Ashington, Blyth and Tyne Railway to ensure the transport infrastructure can be delivered with limited constraints.
- 2.2.13 Paragraph 10.25 of the North Tyneside Local Plan states:

"The reinstatement of passenger services over the Ashington, Blyth and Tyne Railway is seen as a key driver for delivering growth in South East Northumberland. It is crucial that the potential should be retained for reopening of this route to passenger traffic in the future, an importance reflected through the safeguarding of the alignment in the Local Plan. The proposal would link South East Northumberland to Newcastle with options to serve Ashington, Bedlington and Morpeth including the possibility for an interchange station, between heavy rail, Metro and bus services, at Northumberland Park. Reinstatement of this passenger service is a key aspiration of Northumberland County Council and North Tyneside Council. Significant progress has already been made, including progressing plans through a Network Rail GRIP study and in assembling funding bid packages. Various options are currently being appraised for station sites, service frequency and infrastructure requirements for both development and operation. Although closed to passenger traffic since the mid 1960s, the majority of the route is still in use as an existing freight line, but the North Tyneside Local Plan also includes the protection of land which would enable the option of direct access from Seghill southwards towards Percy Main (as shown on the Policies Map)."

## **North East Combined Authority**

- 2.2.14 The '20-year Transport Manifesto'<sup>5</sup> produced by the North East Combined Authority has a vision to provide 'provide affordable, attractive, reliable, safe, healthy transport choices for businesses, residents and visitors whilst enhancing the environment' The strategy identifies local rail and metro as a way to drive economic growth. Although the Northumberland Line scheme is not specifically identified, the strategic identifies the upgrading of freight-only sections to passenger use as an objective.

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<sup>4</sup> North Tyneside Local Plan (2017) p153

<sup>5</sup> North East Combined Authority (2016) A 20-year Transport Manifesto for the North East Combined Authority

## Transport for the North

- 2.2.15 Transport for the North published a 'Strategic Transport Plan in 2019 which outlines the ambitions for the growth of the Northern Powerhouse until 2050.
- 2.2.16 The plan identifies the importance of encouraging a modal shift towards rail in meeting transport objectives for the region<sup>6</sup>. This includes contributing to meeting commitments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and driving towards the inclusive growth agenda.
- 2.2.17 The strategy considers that 'To realise the benefits of agglomeration and economic mass, the North requires faster, more efficient, reliable and sustainable journeys on the road and rail networks<sup>7</sup>.
- 2.2.18 The aims and objectives of Transport for the North align with the principles of the Northumberland Lines scheme. The Northumberland Line seeks to improve connectivity in South East Northumberland, which contributes to the aim that: *'improvements should ensure that all areas of opportunity are connected, and that communities are not disconnected and further isolated<sup>8</sup>'*.

## 2.3 Ambitions for a railway station at Bedlington Station

- 2.3.1 The site of the new railway station is located within settlement boundary of Bedlington Station. It is considered the new railway station will support and enhance ambitions for the future role of Bedlington, and the linked settlement of Bedlington Station.
- 2.3.2 Bedlington (including Bedlington Station) is identified within the Emerging Northumberland Local Plan as *'providing housing for those working in the neighbouring towns and commuting to Tyneside<sup>9</sup>'*. The services are identified as serving a local market, given the proximity of larger towns including Ashington and Blyth. However, it is considered the proposed railway station will strengthen the role of the town centre and support committed developments and future aspirations within the town. As such, the proposed railway station will assist in improving access for residents, staff and visitors.
- 2.3.3 The proposed development will provide sustainable transport infrastructure, reducing reliance on the private car for residents which will assist in reducing congestion on the local highway network, and improving access to employment and leisure opportunities across the North East. As such, it is considered the proposed development will support aspirations for growth by improving the accessibility of the potential future development an

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<sup>6</sup> Transport for the North (2019) Strategic Transport Plan, p87

<sup>7</sup> Transport for the North (2019) Strategic Transport Plan, p8

<sup>8</sup> Transport for the North (2019) Strategic Transport Plan, p8

<sup>9</sup> Emerging Northumberland Local Plan (2019) p23

## 2.4 Committed Development

- 2.4.1 The site is located in close proximity to land used for employment, retail and residential purposes.
- 2.4.2 A review of planning applications on land adjacent to the site (both determined and in the process of being determined) has been undertaken to identify any consented developments which may be material considerations in the determining of a planning application for the proposed railway station.
- 2.4.1 Figure 2.1 describes those developments which have been granted planning permission [committed development] as listed on Northumberland County Council's planning public access system on the 18<sup>th</sup> December 2020 within 500 metres of the red line boundary. Figure 2.1 also identifies planning applications which are awaiting determination which have the potential to be 'material considerations' in the determination of the planning application.

Reference	Address	Description of proposal	Date of approval
17/00444/OUT	Car Park Vulcan Place Bedlington Northumberland NE22 5DN	Demolition of existing structures and erection of buildings in Class A1 (retail) and/or Class A2 (financial and professional services) and/or Class A3 (restaurants and cafes) and/or Class A4 (drinking establishments) and/or A5 (hot food takeaways) and/or Class C3 (dwellinghouses) and/or Class B1 (business) and/or Class D1 (non-residential institutions) and/or Class D2 (assembly and leisure) and/or betting office (Sui Generis) uses, with associated parking, landscaping and access (with all matters reserved).	11 <sup>th</sup> July 2017
18/04464/FUL	Welwyn Electronics Park Bedlington Northumberland NE22 7AA	Application for demolition of 3No existing industrial units, refurbishment of 3No existing industrial and office units, erection of a new 1500msq stores building, extension of existing production areas with erection of new 4294msq industrial units with associated parking.	1 <sup>st</sup> August 2019
20/01768/FUL	Watsons Yard, Barrington Road Bedlington Northumberland NE22 7AH	Change of use : vehicle depot to material recycling facility (B2 Use Classes)	Awaiting decision-registered 5 <sup>th</sup> May 2020

*Figure 2.1 Schedule of committed developments*

- 2.4.1 The desk-based assessment identified an application for a large mixed-use development located approximately 1.6km from the site, within Bedlington town centre. This application is considered to be relevant because the application is a significant investment for Bedlington town centre. It is considered the proposed station will complement the committed



development, improving access to those businesses for residents, staff, customers and visitors.

- 2.4.2 It is considered the scheme which is the subject of this planning application would not preclude or impact on the delivery of the committed developments set out in the table above. The scheme which is the subject of this application for planning permission does not impact any of the land that pertains to those committed developments. It is anticipated that appropriate measures will be implemented during the construction phase to avoid or mitigate any impacts on the delivery of those adjacent developments.
- 2.4.3 Furthermore, it is considered the station will stimulate future investment and economic growth in the surrounding area, reinforcing the role of Bedlington as a town centre for Northumberland.

## 3 Pre-application Engagement

### 3.1 Introduction

- 3.1.1 The proposed development has been the subject of extensive and ongoing engagement with officers and Members of Northumberland County Council, and other key stakeholders.
- 3.1.2 This section provides a summary of the formal pre-application discussions and engagement that has been undertaken pertaining to this planning application.

### 3.2 Pre-application enquiries

- 3.2.1 Informal dialogue with local authority officers and members was undertaken prior to the submission of a formal pre-application to Northumberland County Council as the local planning authority on the 9<sup>th</sup> August 2019. A formal response to the pre-application enquiry was received from the local planning authority on 1st October 2019.
- 3.2.2 The response indicated that the principle of development would likely be supported, however an application for planning would need to be supported by assessments to ascertain the extent of any potential impacts:
- ‘the principle of development may vary from site to site but a case could be made that would likely to receive support. The proposals are considered by Northumberland County Council to be in accordance with the development plan<sup>10</sup>’.*
- 3.2.3 Overall, the local planning authority considered that *‘the benefits that could be delivered to the South East of Northumberland, should be able to address any harm that may be created by each application through the wider benefits that would be proposed and deliverable’*.
- 3.2.4 The Lead Local Flood Authority advised that there is a risk of surface water flooding on the site of the proposed station at Bedlington Station. The response recommended that investigation and mitigation will need to be undertake in advance of the submission of a planning application.
- 3.2.5 Since receipt of the pre-application response, extensive discussions have been held with Northumberland County Council local officers including those from departments for highways, environmental health, ecology, flooding and drainage. During these discussions various surveys, assessments and draft designs and proposals have been shared. Those discussions have also confirmed the scope, extent and nature of the information which is

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<sup>10</sup> NCC Pre-Application response, Ref: 19/00680/PREAPP (1<sup>st</sup> October 2019) p14

required to be submitted in support of the planning application. The submitted scheme takes account of the comments and advice received from the local planning authority and other council services.

- 3.2.6 Further details can be found within the full suite of information which has been submitted in support of this planning application. This Planning Statement should be read in conjunction with the various submitted plans, surveys and assessment reports.

### **3.3 Changes to the proposed development since the receipt of pre-application response**

- 3.3.1 Subsequent to the submission of the pre-application enquiry and receipt of the formal pre-application response from Northumberland County Council (application ref: 19/00680/PREAPP) on the 1st October 2019, several changes have been made to the proposed development at Bedlington Station. Those changes are set out below:

- 1) The number of car parking spaces to be provided has increased to 67 spaces to meet anticipated demand.
- 2) An additional site for a car park is omitted from the scheme, this second site is currently an area of amenity grassland on Ravensworth Street.
- 3) The building on station road (formerly Boots the Chemist) is to be acquired and demolished to enable ramped and stepped access to the platform to be included within the scheme.
- 4) A narrow strip of land currently used as gardens to Sleekburn House Care Home and properties to Blenheim Drive is to be acquired and used to construct part of the 'Down' platform and provide suitable compliant access/egress.

- 3.3.2 As a consequence of those changes, it has been agreed that the surveys and assessments to be submitted with the planning application would be varied and extended in the following ways:

- 1) The scope of the Transport Assessment has been updated to include impacts on the highway network associated with the additional car park.
- 2) A Daylight Assessment has been produced in support of this application to assess the impact of the proposed development on Sleekburn House.
- 3) The scope of the Noise Assessment has been updated to include an assessment of the impact of the proposed development on Sleekburn House and nearby properties.

### 3.4 Request for a Screening Opinion (RfSO)

- 3.4.1 A Request for a Screening Opinion (RfSO) was submitted to North Tyneside Council and Northumberland County Council on 28<sup>th</sup> June 2019 in accordance with the screening procedures laid out in the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (hereafter referred to as the EIA Regulations).
- 3.4.2 The Opinion of Northumberland County Council was received on 9<sup>th</sup> August 2019, confirming that the scheme does not constitute 'EIA development'.
- 3.4.3 As the detailed design of the scheme has evolved, it has become apparent that some components of the scheme have altered from those identified in the previous RfSO, as well as the extent of the land which is required.
- 3.4.4 As a consequence of the changes to the scheme, a further RfSO was submitted on 16<sup>th</sup> July 2020.
- 3.4.5 On the 19<sup>th</sup> November 2020, Northumberland County Council confirmed that the amended scheme *'is not likely to have significant effects on the environment and as such is not considered to be EIA development'*<sup>11</sup>.
- 3.4.6 On this basis, an Environmental Impact Assessment is not required to be undertaken and the planning application is not required to be accompanied by an Environmental Statement.

### 3.5 Pre-submission stakeholder consultation (2019)

- 3.5.1 The preparation of this planning application, and the scope of the submitted information, has been informed by the responses received to the public consultation undertaken during 2019 and 2020.
- 3.5.2 The preparation of this planning application, and the scope of the submitted information, has been informed based on the responses received to the public consultation undertaken during 2019 and 2020.
- 3.5.3 An initial public consultation was undertaken between the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> September 2019. The objective was to raise awareness of the scheme and ascertain local perceptions of the scheme. The consultation was undertaken through the provision of 'drop in' events, attended by officers of the council and project team representatives. The 'drop in' events were held in five different locations with a geographical spread along the proposed route. Members of the public were also invited to provide feedback online. The initial public consultation for the overall Northumberland Line scheme received a total 971 responses. Those responses were

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<sup>11</sup> NCC Screening Opinion, Ref: 20/02242/SCREEN (19<sup>th</sup> November 2020) p19

considered and used to inform the proposals which were the subject of the public consultation in 2020.

### **3.6 Pre-submission stakeholder consultation (2020)**

- 3.6.1 A second public consultation was undertaken between the 14th of November and 16th December 2020. Discussions were held with officers of the council to confirm the extent, scope, nature, timing and information of this public consultation. The objective was to ascertain local views on the specific proposals for each of the station sites.
- 3.6.2 386 comments were made in connection with the proposals for Bedlington station. 68% of the comments were either positive or neutral, 32% were negative. Comments were coded across fifteen of the consultation themes. Feedback responses were dominated by parking. Following a review of the feedback from the general public, Network Rail and other stakeholders one of these three potential sites (Barrington Road) for car parking has been discounted and does not form part of the scheme being submitted for planning permission. The detailed design of the car park including the interface with the public highway is anticipated to be subject to a planning condition.
- 3.6.3 The Statement of Community Engagement submitted in support of this application demonstrates that the project has engaged stakeholders and the local community at the plan-making stage of the proposals when information on the designs was of sufficient level for informed and meaningful engagement. It further demonstrates that the project team has listened and considered the feedback which will feed into the development of the station at Bedlington.

### **3.7 Summary**

- 3.7.1 Ongoing consultation with local planning authority officers and other key stakeholders has informed the nature, extent and scope of the information submitted in support of this application. The design submitted in support of this application has been informed by the feedback received during the public consultation and engagement with key stakeholders. Further details can be found in the submitted Statement of Community Engagement.

## 4 Site Context

### 4.1 Introduction

- 4.1.1 This section describes the existing site, adjacent land uses and provides a contextual overview of those considerations which have informed the designs of the submitted scheme. Further details of those considerations and how the submitted scheme has been informed based on an understanding of those considerations and appraisal of alternative development options, are set out in the submitted Design and Access Statement.

### 4.2 Historical Context

- 4.2.1 Bedlington is a former mining town in South East Northumberland. Bedlington Station was initially built to convey coal traffic to the River Tyne. The original Ashington Station was open to passenger services as part of the 'Ashington, Blyth and Tyne' line in 1850.
- 4.2.2 The Blyth and Tyne rail network served the vast number of collieries in the South East Northumberland area into the early twentieth century,
- 4.2.3 The location of the historic Bedlington station is identified in Figure 4.1.

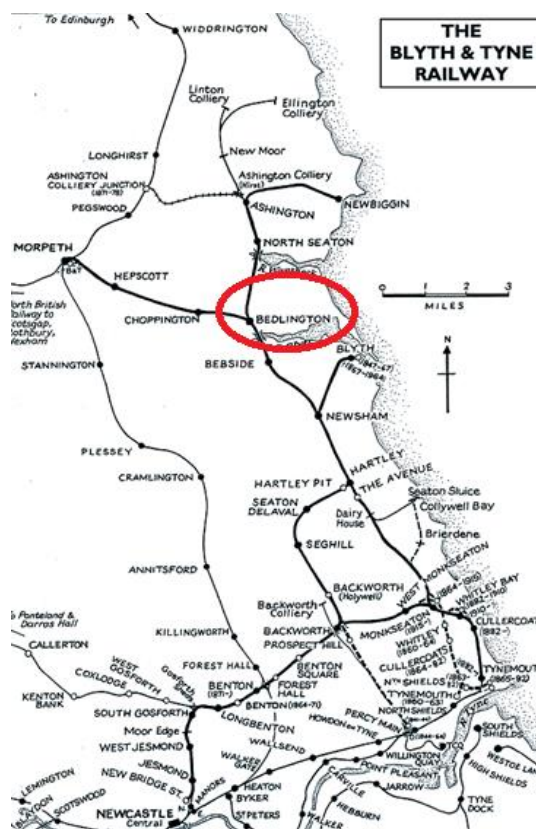
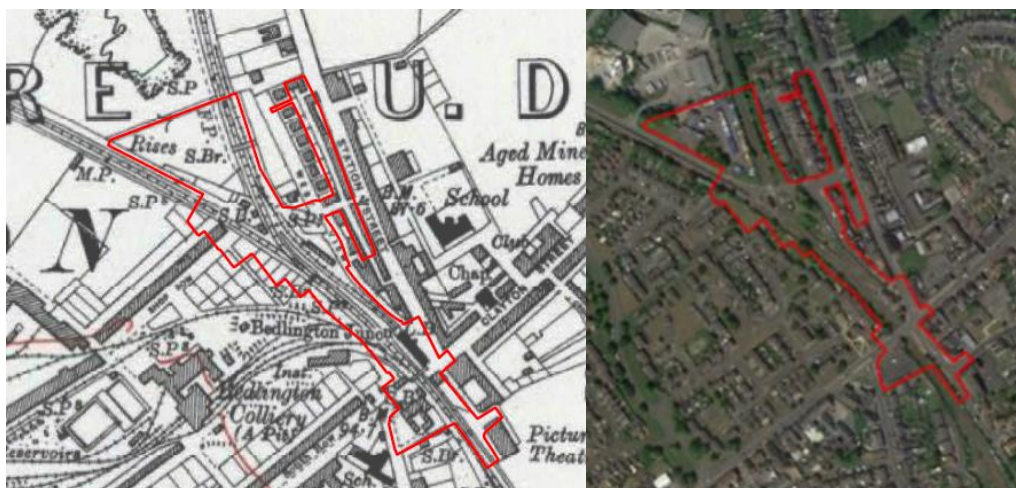


Figure 4.1 Blyth and Tyne Railway Historic Network

- 4.2.4 Several stations were closed as part of the Beeching cuts in the early 60s, including Bedlington in 1964. The Ashington, Blyth and Tyne Line ran its final passenger service in 1964. Since the closure of passenger services, freight trains have continued to operate, primarily serving Lynemouth Power Station. The former station buildings remain in situ.
- 4.2.5 The proposed location for the railway station at Bedlington Station is adjacent to the site of the original station (see Figure 4.2).



*Figure 4.2 Location of Bedlington station (Ordnance Map, 1924; Google Earth, 2020)*

## 4.3 Planning History of the Site

- 4.3.1 A desk-based review of the planning applications which have been submitted to and either: consented, refused or withdrawn on the land which comprises the application site has been undertaken.
- 4.3.2 Figure 4.3 describes those relevant applications which have been identified within the red line boundary, based on a review of Northumberland County Council's planning public access system undertaken on the 21<sup>st</sup> December 2020.

Reference	Address	Description of proposal	Decision	Date
20/02243/SCREEN	Various addresses	Screening request for provision of six new train stations, associated upgrading and refurbishment of existing rail infrastructure and engineering works and the reintroduction of passenger train services.	No EIA required	19 <sup>th</sup> November 2020
19/02151/SCREEN	Various addresses	Request for a Screening Opinion- Provision of six new train stations, associated upgrading	No EIA required	9 <sup>th</sup> August 2019

Reference	Address	Description of proposal	Decision	Date
		and refurbishment of existing rail infrastructure and engineering works and the reintroduction of passenger train services.		
17/01965/FUL	Sleekburn House, Station Road, Bedlington, Northumberland, NE22 5NX	Proposed replacement of existing doors & windows.	Application Permitted	Tues 25 Jul 2017
17/03393/MISC	Land South of 1A Stakeford Road Bedlington Northumberland	Proposed Northern Powergrid distribution substation	Application is permitted development	Fri 29 Sep 2017
16/02468/DEMGDO	Railway Tavern 1 - 3 Station Road Bedlington Northumberland NE22 7JD	Prior Notification of demolition of detached public house due to poor condition. Site to be left flat hardcore 150mm with secure hoarding to perimeter.	Prior Approval not required	21 <sup>st</sup> December 2016

*Figure 4.3 Planning History*

- 4.3.3 The site of the former Railway Tavern is currently a car park. this car park has been included within the red line boundary of the scheme as there is the potential for the car park to be used as a temporary compound/access route to the line during the construction. the scheme does not provide for any permanent change to the use of the car park or works to change its appearance.
- 4.3.4 In addition to the planning history of the site, two Requests for Screening Opinions have been submitted to assess the potential requirement for an EIA to support the planning applications for the Northumberland Line scheme. The responses have confirmed that the council are of the view that an EIA is not required for the proposed development. Accordingly, this planning application is not supported by an Environmental Statement.

## 4.4 Site Selection

- 4.4.1 To construct a railway station, it must obviously be located adjacent to a railway line. This significantly limits the number of sites available for the proposed development.
- 4.4.2 The intention for the station at Bedlington Station is to provide easy access to the settlement of Bedlington Station. As such, the site needs to be located in close proximity to the town centre to provide maximum benefit.



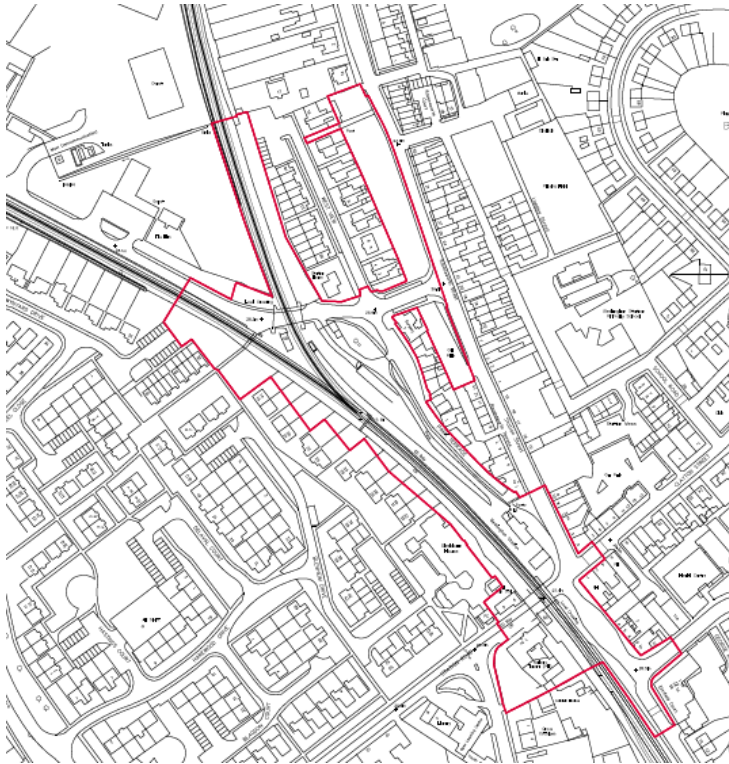
- 4.4.3 The options for the siting of the platforms are limited by the safety, signalling, and engineering constraints for the operation of the station. There are also limitations on track alignment which are required to achieve compliance for passenger service operation. A number of alternative options for the location of the platforms and the car park have been assessed. Options for a site to accommodate the platforms, and other station facilities within Bedlington Station are constrained by existing built development located adjacent to the railway line. Careful consideration has been given to minimising the impact on existing properties. Furthermore, sites capable of accommodating the estimated demand for car parking associated with railway station within a reasonable distance of the station were limited. The Design and Access Statement (accompanying the planning application) sets out the relevant design and access criteria which are required to be satisfied by the scheme and identifies the optioneering process undertaken to identify appropriate sites to accommodate car parking associated with the railway station.
- 4.4.4 There are two buildings which were used as part of the former Bedlington Station. Both buildings are currently owned by Network Rail. Neither building is needed or available for the safe and economic operation of the railway or passenger services. Both buildings are within the red line boundary of the scheme, but no works are currently proposed to either building. The existing signal box located at Bedlington South level Crossing is within the red line boundary of the planning application. The detailed design of the signalling for the line has yet to be concluded. It is anticipated that as a consequence of this signalling design the signal box will no longer be required as part of the signalling operation of the line. However until this detailed design work is undertaken it is not possible to confirm the use of the signal box.
- 4.4.5 Bedlington South Level crossing is within the red line boundary. Various works to the adopted highways and footways are anticipated in the vicinity of the level crossing. The crossing will be used by passengers to cross between platforms.
- 4.4.6 The site of the proposed station is to the south of the junction, with the line to Morpeth.
- 4.4.7 The site of the proposed station is within the boundaries of the historic railway station. The success of the coal mining industry necessitated a rapid expansion of the Blyth and Tyne Railway. As such, the historic railway network embodies the history of the local area. The proposed development supports local heritage by re-introducing a station in close proximity to the site of the historic Bedlington Station.

## **4.5 Site Description**

- 4.5.1 Bedlington is a main town within Northumberland. Bedlington Station is identified as a 'linked settlement' to Bedlington in the Emerging Northumberland Local Plan and is located within the settlement boundary for Bedlington.
- 4.5.2 The site of the proposed station is bound to the north by residential properties on Barrington road. The site is bound to the east by residential and business properties on Park Terrace. The

site is bound to the south by Station Road. The side is bound to the west by residential properties on Blenheim Drive and Sleekburn House care home. There is an industrial site located on Barrington road to the north of the proposed station. There are a number of retail and businesses located on Ravensworth Terrace, Clayton Street and Station Road. The proposed car park on Ravensworth Street is bound by residential properties to the east and west.

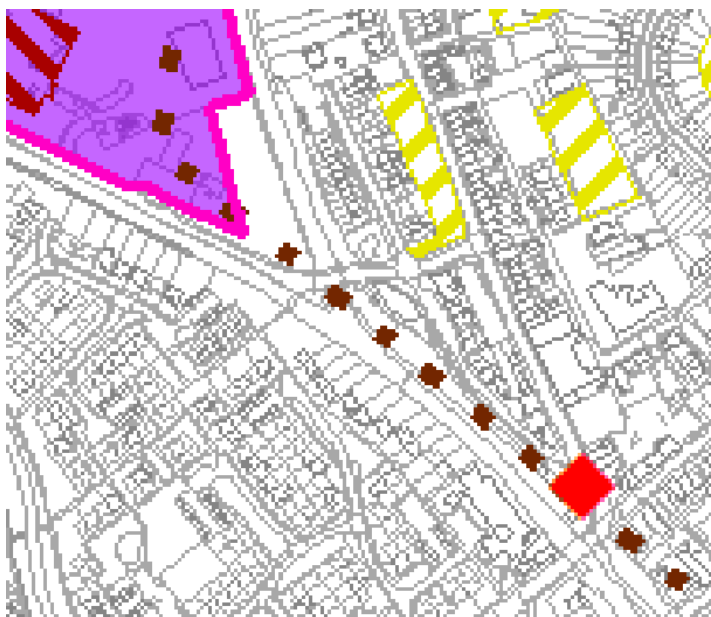
- 4.5.3 The site of the proposed development has an area of 2.7 hectares.
- 4.5.4 The existing site is comprised of six separate areas:
1. Railway corridor and disused platforms
  2. Network Rail buildings and signal boxes
  3. Network Rail storage compound
  4. Amenity greenspace on Ravensworth Street
  5. Gardens of Sleekburn House and gardens of properties on Blenheim Drive
  6. Existing local highways (Clayton Street, Station Road, Park Terrace, Barrington Road and Palace Road)
- 4.5.5 The platforms and associated railway infrastructure are proposed to be constructed within the existing railway corridor.
- 4.5.6 The width of the land within the existing railway corridor is insufficient to construct the 'up' platform nor to provide for safe public access thereto. Land adjacent to this corridor is required to allow this construction to take place and access to be provided. This is a very narrow strip of land currently part of the gardens to Sleekburn House and gardens to properties on Blenheim Drive.
- 4.5.7 One of the two car parks required to meet the predicted demand is proposed to be constructed on the site of the existing Network Rail open storage compound. The second car park is proposed to be constructed on land on Ravensworth street.
- 4.5.8 Modifications are proposed to existing highways and footways to provide access to the proposed car parks and to improve vehicular, pedestrian, cyclist and equine safety relating to the increase in barrier downtime at the two level crossings.
- 4.5.9 The former station buildings are proposed to be retained.

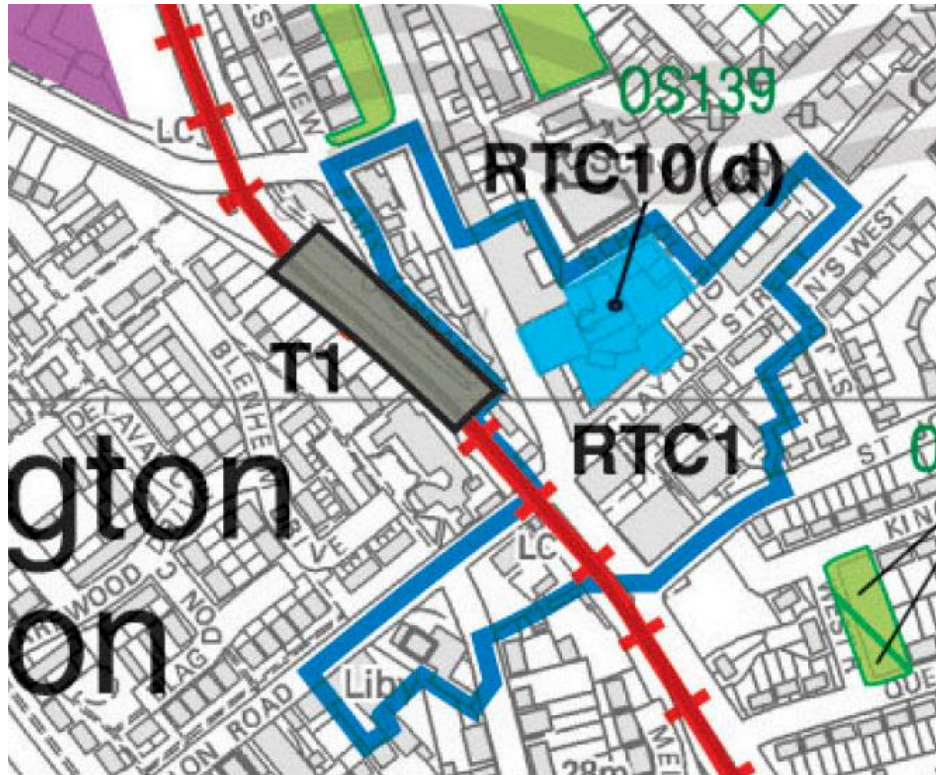


*Figure 4.4 Red Line Boundary Plan*

## 4.6 Site-specific environmental and land use constraints

4.6.1 The site-specific policy constraints and land-use designations that pertain to the site are shown on Figure 4.5, extracted from the Emerging Northumberland Local Plan and the adopted Wansbeck District Local Plan. This section presents an overview of the constraints, which are assessed in the subsequent chapters of this planning statement. A full extract of the local plan maps and associated legends are available in Appendix B.





*Figure 4.5 Extract from Emerging Northumberland Local Plan Reg 19 Draft and adopted Wansbeck District Local Plan*

- 4.6.2 The proposed station site is located within the settlement boundary for Bedlington. The proposed station site is located within a designated retail centre in RTC1 of the adopted local plan.
- 4.6.3 The railway line is safeguarded for the reintroduction of passenger trains by Policy T1 of the Adopted Wansbeck District Local Plan, and Policy TRA5 of the Emerging Local Plan. The proposed station site is located adjacent to the site designated in the emerging and adopted local plans.
- 4.6.4 Policy INF5 of the emerging local plan designates the amenity greenspace on Ravensworth Street as a site of Protected Open Space. Policy REC1 of the adopted local plan designates the amenity greenspace on Ravensworth street as a 'Safeguarded Park and Open Space'.
- 4.6.5 The identified policy constraints and land use designations referenced above are more fully set out in Section 6 and assessed in Section 7 of this Statement.

## 5 Proposed Development

### 5.1 Introduction

- 5.1.1 This section presents the detail of the development proposals which are the subject of this application for planning permission.

### 5.2 Planning Application

- 5.2.1 This planning statement has been submitted in support of an application for planning permission for:

*Construction of a two-platform railway station including: ramped pedestrian access, new highway access; modifications to existing highways including pedestrian footways; provision of parking for cars, electric vehicles, motorcycles, cycles, and taxis and other associated works. Construction of facilities ancillary to the station including, lighting, soft and hard landscaping, surface and subsurface drainage, utilities and other services, boundary treatment and other associated works*

### 5.3 Reasons for the proposed development

- 5.3.1 The Economic Assessment<sup>12</sup> produced to support this application for planning permission identifies that the Northumberland Line is forecast to generate approximately £1.45million annual return journeys by 2039<sup>13</sup>.
- 5.3.2 The Economic Assessment submitted in support of this statement identified that 24% of household in Ashington do not have access to a car or a van. At present, Bedlington is serviced by a bus network which provides connections to other towns in South East Northumberland, and into Newcastle. However, the average journey time by bus from Newcastle to Bedlington is currently 43 minutes at AM Peak. This is not comparable with a car journey time of 20 minutes. As such, journey times on public transport are uncompetitive. The proposed development provides a viable alternative to the existing bus network and private vehicle for residents.
- 5.3.3 The proposed development will improve accessibility for residents of South East Northumberland and beyond to access employment, education and leisure opportunities

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<sup>12</sup> Bedlington Economic Assessment (AECOM, 2020) see Appendix A

<sup>13</sup> These forecasts are aligned to a service proposition that has 2 trains per hour operating between Ashington and Newcastle, taking 32 minutes. Rail fares would be set at a similar level to those used on the Tyne & Wear Metro.



outside of local areas. As such, the proposed station is likely to strengthen the role of Bedlington as a town centre to accommodate future employment, housing and services.

5.4 Elements of proposed development

5.4.1 It is anticipated the Northumberland Line scheme will provide a half hourly service with an anticipated journey time between Newcastle and Ashington of 35 minutes.

5.4.2 Figure 5.1 indicates the proposed site layout for the proposed development.

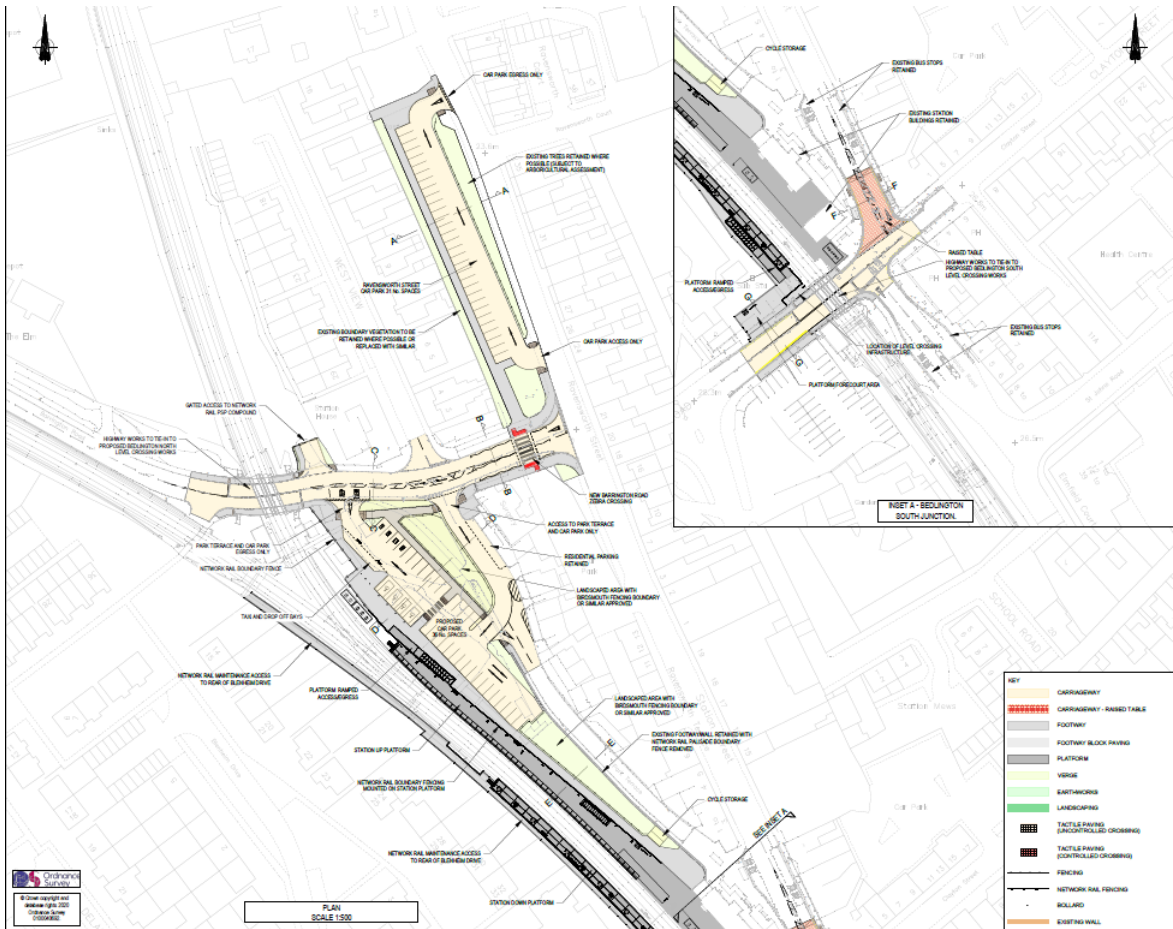


Figure 5.1 Proposed Site Layout

5.4.3 Figure 5.2 summarises the elements of the proposed development which are the subject of this application for planning permission for the construction and operation of a new railway station.

Development Proposals	
Platform	Construction of two platforms (approximately 100 metres in length) Platform to include the following facilities: help points, platform lighting, CCTV and waiting shelters. Ticket Vending Machines and Customer Information Screens with real time information to be provided at station entrance.

Car Parking	Construction of two car parks providing up to 67 spaces. The car park to the north of Ravensworth Road will provide 36 car parking spaces, including four accessible spaces and four EV charging spaces. The car park to the south of Ravensworth Street will provide up to 31 car parking spaces. Car park to include taxi drop off Cycle storage facility to be provided
Pedestrian and Cycle access	Pedestrian and cycle access to be provided from the north at Barrington Road and from the proposed car park to the east on Park Terrace. Access to the western platform to be provided from Station Road.
Vehicular Access	Access to the car park to the north is to be provided from Ravensworth Street. Access to the car park to the south is to be provided from Park Terrace. Highways modifications proposed to enable access.
Landscaping	Areas of shrub and specimen tree planting. Hard and soft landscaping.
Biodiversity	It is anticipated that off-site compensatory habitat creation will be undertaken as the existing biodiversity within the site cannot be replaced within the site details are to be agreed with the planning authority
Drainage	Surface water drainage system to be provided including attenuation tanks, and other measures.
Lighting	Raise/lower lighting columns (typically 6 m in height) to provide platform illumination. Shelter to include in-built lighting. Appropriate lighting to be provided in car park.
Construction	It is anticipated the construction of the station will be undertaken in a period of approximately 4 months, however this is subject to safety, access and other considerations.  There is potential for the car park to the south of Bedlington South level crossing to be used as a temporary compound/ access route to the line during construction.
Services and Utilities	Existing electrical substation to be relocated. Details of existing local services provision provided as part of planning application. Details of works thereto to be provided to discharge a condition.
Signage	Adequate signage will be provided for pedestrians and cyclist movements as well as vehicular traffic. Signage will be provided to amenities within the station such as lifts and stairs. Details of signage will be provided to discharge a condition

*Figure 5.2 Schedule development proposals*

## 5.5 Summary

- 5.5.1 The emerging proposals have attracted support based on pre-application discussions with local planning authority officers and key stakeholders. Section 7 assesses compliance of the proposed development against those local and national planning policies.

## 6 Planning Policy Context

### 6.1 Introduction

- 6.1.1 This section outlines the principal planning policies that pertain to the proposed development. It is important to note that the thematic survey reports and assessments submitted in support of this application contain further additional information and further details of other relevant policies (e.g. ecology).
- 6.1.2 In England, there is a hierarchical structure of policy covering national and local planning. At a national level the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's planning policies and how these are expected to be applied. At a local level, development plans set out planning policy for the area.
- 6.1.3 Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 6.1.4 Therefore, the starting point from a planning perspective in the determination of this planning application is the development plan. The development plan in respect of the application site comprises the Wansbeck District Local Plan (July 2007).
- 6.1.5 The NPPF advises at paragraph 213 that, in respect of development plans adopted prior to publication of the NPPF, local planning authorities should afford due weight to relevant policies according to their degree of consistency with the NPPF; the closer the policies in the Plan to the policies in the NPPF, the greater the weight that may be given.
- 6.1.6 In accordance with paragraph 48 of the NPPF, weight may also be given to the policies in emerging plans, depending on the stage of preparation of the plan, the extent to which emerging policy aligns with the NPPF and the extent of unresolved objections to the emerging plan. The Phase 2 hearings on the Emerging Northumberland Local Plan were completed in November 2020 and the Inspector indicated that she did not envisage the need to hold additional hearings. As such, it is anticipated that the local plan will be adopted in Spring 2021. It is therefore considered that relevant policies can be given some weight presently and can be given increasing weight as the Plan moves towards adoption. As such, this Planning Statement considers both the extant and emerging local planning policies that are of relevance to the determination of this application for planning permission.
- 6.1.7 Paragraph 11 of the NPPF provides definitive guidance on how applications should be determined by stating:

*"Plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development. For decision-taking this means:*



*Approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:*

- i. The application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or*
- ii. Any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework as a whole.”*

## **6.2 Northumberland Development Plan**

6.2.1 Northumberland County Council was established as a unitary authority on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2009 following Local Government Reorganisation. It replaced the former County Council and six District/ Borough Councils of Alnwick, Berwick, Blyth Valley, Castle Morpeth, Tynedale and Wansbeck.

6.2.2 The former Northumberland local planning authorities had produced their own Development Plans to guide development within their administrative boundaries, which include:

- The saved Policy S5 of the Northumberland County and National Park Joint Structure Plan Alteration (February 2005);
- The Core Strategies of the former Local Authorities of Alnwick (2007), Blyth Valley (2007), and Tynedale (2007) and the Blyth Valley Development Control Policies DPD (2007); and
- The saved Local Plan policies (under the Secretary of State’s Direction) of the (Wansbeck District Local Plan (2007).

6.2.3 Policies contained within those documents that have been ‘saved’ under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 will remain in force and will continue to provide the basis for planning decisions until replaced by subsequent Development Plan Documents.

6.2.4 These documents, together with any made Neighbourhood Plans, have been brought together to form the ‘Northumberland Consolidated Planning Policy Framework’.

6.2.5 Planning law states that planning applications should be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The NPPF is a material planning consideration in the determination of planning applications. The closer the policies in the Development Plan to the policies in the NPPF, the greater the weight that can be given to the development plan policies.

- 6.2.6 Northumberland County Council is focusing on the preparation of a Local Plan for Northumberland. The Northumberland Local Plan will:
- set the strategic planning policies of the Council;
  - provide the planning principles, including detailed development management policies to guide future development and planning decisions in Northumberland to 2036;
  - set the general scale and distribution of new development which is required to meet Northumberland's needs to 2036;
  - include strategic allocations as well as detailed land allocations and designations; and
  - include site specific proposals for the development, protection and conservation of land.
- 6.2.7 Once adopted, the Northumberland Local Plan will supersede those existing development plan documents which collectively comprise the 'Northumberland Consolidated Planning Policy Framework'.
- 6.2.8 The Phase 2 hearings on the Emerging Northumberland Local Plan were completed in November 2020 and the Inspector indicated that she did not envisage the need to hold additional hearings. As such, it is anticipated that the local plan will be adopted in Spring 2021. It is therefore considered that relevant policies can be given some weight presently and can be given increasing weight as the Plan moves towards adoption. As such, this Planning Statement considers both the extant and emerging local planning policies that are of relevance to the determination of this application for planning permission.
- 6.2.9 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states that:
- "If regard is to be had to the development plan for the purpose of any determination to be made under the planning Acts the determination must be made in accordance with plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise."*
- 6.2.10 Therefore, the starting point from a planning perspective in considering the acceptability or otherwise of the proposals is the development plan. The development plan in respect of the application site comprises the Wansbeck District Local Plan (July 2007).
- 6.2.11 The NPPF advises at paragraph 213 that, in respect of Development Plans adopted prior to publication of the NPPF, local planning authorities should afford due weight according to their degree of consistency with the NPPF (the closer the policies in the Plan to the policies in the NPPF, the greater the weight that may be given).
- 6.2.12 In accordance with paragraph 48 of the NPPF, weight may also be given to the policies in emerging plans depending on the stage of preparation of the plan, the extent to which

emerging policy aligns with the NPPF and the extent of unresolved objections to the emerging plan. The Phase 2 hearings on the Emerging Northumberland Local Plan were completed in November 2020 and the Inspector indicated that she did not envisage the need to hold additional hearings. As such, it is anticipated that the local plan will be adopted in Spring 2021. It is therefore considered that relevant policies can be given some weight presently and can be given increasing weight as the Plan moves towards adoption.

## **6.3 Wansbeck District Local Plan (July 2007)**

6.3.1 The relevant policies of the extant Core Strategy that pertain to the scheme which is the subject of this planning application are identified as follows:

### **Policy GP1: Spatial Strategy**

6.3.2 Policy GP1 states that provided that proposals are in accordance with other policies of the Plan, development on previously developed sites and buildings within settlement limits will be permitted. Development on greenfield sites within settlement limits will only be permitted if:

- The site is allocated for development; or
- It can be demonstrated that the development will meet an identified and justified need and no suitable alternative previously developed site is available.

### **Policy GP4: Accessibility**

6.3.3 Policy GP4 stipulates that new development should be located to reduce the need to travel and to minimise journey length. It should be accessible to all users by a choice of means of transport including buses, walking and cycling.

### **Policy GP5: Landscape Character**

6.3.4 Policy GP5 states that development must respect the character of the District's landscape. Proposals will be assessed in terms of:

- The siting, scale and design of buildings and materials; and
- The effect on distant views

### **Policy GP6: Trees and hedgerows**

6.3.5 Policy GP6 states that the authority will seek to protect trees, woodlands and hedgerows in the District and will encourage new planting, particularly of native species. Development which would result in the loss of healthy trees which make an important contribution to the quality of the environment will not be permitted unless there are overriding social or economic benefits to the community and compensatory off-site provision of landscape infrastructure is made. Healthy trees lost as a consequence of development shall be replaced with trees of an equivalent standard.

### **Policy G13: Biodiversity and wildlife networks**

- 6.3.6 Policy G13 states that the value to biodiversity of all sites proposed for development will be considered when planning applications are determined whether or not they are designated sites. Particular importance will be attached to the protection of priority habitats and species in Wansbeck. Where proposals affect a habitat which contributes, or could potentially contribute, to a network of natural habitats the developer will be required to protect and enhance the network.

### **Policy GP21: Archaeology**

- 6.3.7 Policy GP21 states that where evidence suggests that a proposed development could disturb archaeological remains, the developers will be required, before their planning application is determined, to provide information on the character and extent of the remains and any measures they propose to mitigate the impact of development. A field evaluation will be required if judged necessary.

### **Policy GP22: Flood risk and erosion**

- 6.3.8 Policy GP22 states that developers are required to consider the risk to their development from flooding and erosion and to consider any possible effect of their development on flood risk or erosion elsewhere. Development in areas of flood risk will not be permitted unless a flood risk assessment has been carried out and it can be demonstrated that:
- There is no reasonable alternative development option available which would involve no risk or a lower risk of flooding; and
  - The development does not increase the risk of flooding elsewhere; and
  - Satisfactory protection measures can be carried out at the expense of the developer and maintained for the lifetime of the development

### **Policy GP23: Pollution and nuisance**

- 6.3.9 Policy GP23 states that when determining planning applications, the authority will consider whether a proposed development has the potential to cause pollution or nuisance. Planning permission will not be granted for development liable to cause significant harm to either:
- Human health and safety
  - The amenity of local residents and other land users
  - The quality and enjoyment of all aspects of the environment

### **Policy GP25: Noise**

6.3.10 Policy GP25 states that when determining planning applications, the authority will consider the levels and characteristics of any noise which may be generated as a result of permitting the development. The likely impact will be assessed in terms of the following:

- Any disturbance to people living in the area; and
- Any disturbance to other noise-sensitive uses such as hospitals, schools, colleges, offices and community buildings; and
- Any effect on people's enjoyment of the outdoor environment including gardens, parks, the coast and the countryside; and
- Any disturbance to wildlife or livestock

### **Policy GP29: Land contamination**

6.3.11 Policy GP29 states that where there is reason to suspect that land is affected by contamination, applicants for planning permission will be required to submit a report of a desk study of previous uses of the site and their potential for contamination. Unless the study clearly demonstrates that the risk to the proposed uses is acceptable, further more detailed investigations will be required before the application is determined to assess the risks and identify and appraise the options for remediation.

6.3.12 Development will only be permitted if sustainable and feasible remediation solutions are adopted to secure the removal of unacceptable risk and make the site suitable for its new use.

### **Policy GP30: Visual Impact**

6.3.13 Policy GP30 states that all proposed development will be assessed in terms of its visual impact. Developments which in visual terms would cause significant harm to the character or quality of the surrounding environment will be refused.

### **Policy GP31: Urban Design**

6.3.14 Policy GP31 states that when considering any proposed development the authority will require high standards of urban design to:

- Promote character in townscape and landscape and establish local identity; and
- Clearly define public and private spaces; and
- Encourage accessibility; and
- Make places with a clear image that is easy to understand, by providing recognisable routes, intersections and landmarks; and

- Promote diversity and choice through a mix of compatible developments and uses that work together to create viable places that respond to local needs.

#### **Policy GP32: Landscaping and the Public Realm**

6.3.15 Policy GP32 states that developers are required to incorporate a high standard of landscape treatment in their developments. When submitting planning applications, developers will be required to demonstrate that:

- Any existing landscape features of value including trees, shrubs, hedgerows and ponds, will be retained, protected and used to advantage as part of the development; and
- New landscape features will be introduced which enhance the visual quality of the development, reduce its impact and provide habitat for the district's wildlife; and
- New landscape features to be introduced will be appropriate to the use and character of the development and its location; and
- Opportunities to create new public spaces and improve existing ones have been considered

#### **Policy GP35: Crime Prevention**

6.3.16 Policy GP35 states that development proposals will be expected to have regard to the objectives of 'planning out crime' through the incorporation of measures such as:

- Promotion of schemes that increase the range of activities that maximise the opportunities for surveillance
- Maximising the amount of defensible space which is controlled, or perceived to be controlled, by occupiers
- A high standard of street lighting

#### **Policy T1: Ashington, Blyth and Tyne Rail Line**

6.3.17 Policy T1 states that the re-introduction of passenger services on the rail line between Newcastle and Ashington will be supported and promoted. Land which may be required for associated facilities such as stations, bus stops and car parks will be safeguarded.

#### **Policy T3: Provision for cyclists**

6.3.18 Policy T3 states that improved facilities for cycling in the District will be sought. Cyclists will be provided for as part of highway and traffic management schemes and by developers as part of new developments. Provision will include the development of safe and convenient routes and cycle parking facilities. Developers will be required as a condition of planning permission to provide cycle parking as part of their developments.

#### **Policy T4: Provision for walking**

- 6.3.19 Policy T4 states that measures to assist and encourage walking will be sought including the development of a comprehensive network of footpaths and footways. Developers will be required to provide safe, convenient and pleasant routes for pedestrians.

#### **Policy T5: Access for people with reduced mobility**

- 6.3.20 Policy T5 states that an environment which is accessible to all will be sought. Developers will be required to make appropriate provision for those with reduced mobility as part of their developments.

#### **Policy T6: Traffic implications of new development**

- 6.3.21 Policy T6 states that when planning applications are determined, the volume and character of traffic likely to be generated by and attracted to the proposed development will be considered. Proposals will only be permitted if:
- The existing highway network is adequate to cope with any additional traffic resulting from the development or necessary improvement works will be carried out before the development goes ahead; and
  - The proposed arrangements for access and egress will allow the safe and efficient movement of vehicles; and
  - Internal circulation arrangements will be able to absorb vehicular traffic entering the site without queues forming on existing roads and will include measures to achieve safe traffic speeds; and
  - Adequate provision is made, in terms of safety and operating efficiency, for servicing and deliveries and for other heavy vehicles such as buses and emergency vehicles.

#### **Policy T7: Parking provision in new development**

- 6.3.22 Policy T7 states that developers should make appropriate provision in their developments for the parking of motor vehicles and motorcycles.

#### **Policy REC2: Recreation and Open Space**

- 6.3.23 Policy REC2 states that planning permission for development on open spaces not designated as being of strategic importance will only be granted if there is shown to be a surplus of open space by way of an assessment of open space needs and opportunities in the area that there will be no significant loss to the community in terms of either:
- a) visual amenity; or
  - b) provision for play and recreation; or

- c) nature conservation; or
- d) use for community events

**Policy RECII: Access to the countryside and coast**

- 6.3.24 Policy RECII states that improvements to the network of recreational footpaths, cycle routes and bridleways in the District will be sought. When new routes are planned, the impact on existing uses and interests will be taken into account and potential harm minimised. Existing routes will be protected.

## 6.4 Northumberland Local Plan Regulation 19 Publication Draft (May 2019)

- 6.4.1 The NPPF advises at paragraph 48 that weight may also be given to the policies in emerging plans depending on the stage of preparation of the plan, the extent to which emerging policy aligns with the NPPF and the extent of unresolved objections to the emerging plan. The Northumberland Local Plan was submitted to Secretary of State for examination in May 2019 and is currently undergoing examination. It is therefore considered that relevant policies can be given some weight presently and can be given increasing weight as the Plan moves towards adoption.

- 6.4.2 The relevant policies of the emerging Northumberland Local Plan that pertain to the scheme which is the subject of this planning application are identified as follows:

**Policy STPI: Spatial Strategy**

- 6.4.3 Policy STPI states that sustainable development within, or immediately adjacent to, the built up form of Main Towns, Service Centres and Service Villages without defined settlement boundaries, will be supported, if it is commensurate with size of the settlement, and it can be demonstrated that it does not adversely impact upon the character of the settlement.
- 6.4.4 Development in the open countryside will only be supported if it can be demonstrated that it:
- Provides for essential transport, utilities and energy infrastructure in accordance with other policies in the Local Plan.
- 6.4.5 The policy goes on to state that development in the open countryside should be sensitive to its surroundings, not have an unacceptable impact upon the local road network, and use previously developed land where opportunities exist.

**Policy STP2: Presumption in favour of Sustainable Development**

- 6.4.6 Policy STP2 states that when considering development proposals, the Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). It will always work pro-actively



with applicants to seek to find solutions that mean proposals that improve the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area can be approved wherever possible.

### **Policy STP3: Principles of Sustainable Development**

6.4.7 Policy STP3 states that: In applying the presumption in favour of sustainable development in Northumberland and to deliver against economic, social and environmental objectives, development proposals will be expected to deliver across the range of the economic, social and environmental factors, and adhere to the following principles where appropriate:

- Contribute to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy across Northumberland, support more and better jobs, protect and enhance the vitality and viability of Northumberland's town centres and other important economic sectors;
- Minimise their impact upon local amenity for new or existing residents and businesses, adjoining premises and land uses;
- Support and provide opportunities to improve health, social and cultural wellbeing for all, and provide the infrastructure which is required to enhance the quality of life of individuals and communities;
- Demonstrate high quality sustainable design which is accessible to all, and which respects and enhances the local distinctiveness of the natural, historic and built environment, helps promote a sense of place, reduces the need for energy, and facilitates flexible and adaptable buildings and environments;
- Be accessible by, or be able to be made accessible by public transport, walking or cycling where feasible, thereby reducing the need to travel for both people and goods, and the dependence on travel by private car;
- Make best use of existing facilities and infrastructure, whilst making appropriate provision for new or additional infrastructure as required;

### **Policy STP4: Climate change mitigation and adaptation**

6.4.8 Policy STP4 states that Development proposals should mitigate climate change and contribute to meeting nationally binding targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. When determining planning applications, support will be given to how development proposals that help mitigate climate change and consideration will be given to how proposals:

- Through their location, layout and pattern of development, reduce the need to travel for both people and goods, and encourage sustainable modes of transport, including walking, cycling and the use of public transport.

### **Policy STP5: Health and wellbeing**

6.4.9 Policy STP5 states that development which promotes, supports and enhances the health and wellbeing of communities, residents, workers and visitors will be supported. Development proposals will be required to demonstrate that they:

- are safe, comfortable, inclusive and attractive and prioritise pedestrian and cycle movement;
- provide access to a range of facilities including public transport, health, education, social care, green spaces, sport, play and leisure facilities

6.4.10 The policy requires that a Health Impact Assessment Screening be submitted for all major development proposals to determine whether the potential impact on health resulting from the development warrants any further assessment. Where further assessment is warranted, a proportionate Health Impact Assessment will also be required to be submitted as part of the application. A Health Impact Assessment will be required to include proposals to mitigate any adverse health impacts, maximise potential positive impacts, and help reduce health inequalities.

### **Policy QOP1: Design Principles**

6.4.11 Policy QOP1 states that in determining planning applications, design will be assessed against the following design principles, in accordance with the Northumberland Design Guide.

### **Policy QOP2: Good Design and Amenity**

6.4.12 Policy QOP2 states that development will be required to provide a high standard of amenity for existing and future users of the development itself and preserve the amenity of those living in, working in or visiting the local area.

6.4.13 Development which would result in unacceptable adverse impacts on the amenity of neighbouring uses, in terms of both individual and cumulative impacts, will not be supported.

### **Policy QOP4: Landscaping and Trees**

6.4.14 Policy QOP4 states that where relevant, new development will be expected to incorporate well-designed landscaping and respond appropriately to any existing landscape features. Development proposals should ensure that:

- Landscaping design is of a high quality, in accordance with the principles set out in Policy QOP 1;
- Existing features which contribute towards the character of the area, or amenity, are retained wherever possible and sympathetically incorporated into the overall design of the scheme;

- Any hard or soft landscaping is appropriate, functional and well-integrated into the design of the development;
- Trees, and other spaces and features that provide green and blue infrastructure, are preserved, enhanced and introduced into the landscaping scheme wherever possible;

#### **Policy QOP6: Delivering well-designed places**

6.4.15 Policy QOP6 states that proposals are expected to meet the local design expectations set out in design policies within the Plan, the Northumberland Design Guide, and any other design guidance. Proposals are expected to respond to any character assessments that form part of or support the Plan. Where a Design and Access Statement is required as part of a planning application, there must be a clear and proportionate demonstration of:

- How relevant design policies, the Northumberland Design Guide, character assessments and any other design guidance supporting the Plan, have been integral to the design development process;
- A robust analysis of the context and character of the site and the local area, in addition to the functional requirements of the intended use;
- The design concept and the evolution of the design development through drawings or models, including explanatory text as appropriate; and
- Where relevant, how consultation with communities and other relevant stakeholders has informed the design.

#### **Policy TRAI: Promoting sustainable connections**

6.4.16 Policy TRAI states that the council will support development that:

- Promotes a spatial distribution which creates accessible development, reduces the need to travel by car, and maximises the use of sustainable modes of transport;
- Promotes good design principles in respect of the permeability, connectivity and legibility of buildings and public spaces; and inclusive access;
- Promotes sustainable transport choices, including supporting, providing and connecting to networks for walking, cycling and public transport; and infrastructure that supports the use of low and ultra low emission vehicles;
  - a. Ensures delivery of cycle parking and supporting infrastructure;
  - b. Protects, enhances and supports public rights of way;
  - c. Supports the delivery of reliable, safe and efficient transport networks, in partnership with other organisations, service providers and developers;

- d. Requires development to be designed to enable charging of plug-in and other ultra low emission vehicles in safe, accessible, convenient locations; and
- e. Requires development proposals which generate significant amounts of movements to be supported by a Transport Assessment/ Transport Statement, and Travel Plans, and where appropriate, delivery/servicing plans.

**Policy TRA2: The effects of development on the transport network**

6.4.17 Policy TRA2 states that all developments affecting the transport network will be required to:

- a. Provide effective and safe access and egress to the existing transport network;
- b. Include appropriate measures to mitigate and manage any adverse impacts on the transport network including any contribution to cumulative impacts;
- c. Minimise conflict between different modes of transport, including measures for network, traffic and parking management;
- d. Facilitate the safe use of the network, including suitable crossing points, footways and dedicated provision for cyclists where necessary;
- e. Suitably accommodate the delivery of goods and supplies, access for maintenance and refuse collection; and
- f. Minimise any adverse impact on communities and the environment, including noise and air quality

**Policy TRA4: Parking provision in new development**

6.4.18 Policy TRA4 states that an appropriate amount of off-street vehicle parking sufficient to serve new development shall be made available in safe, accessible and convenient locations prior to the development, as a whole or in part, being brought into use. Vehicle parking shall be provided in accordance with the parking standards set out in Appendix D of the Local Plan, or other such local standards set out in made neighbourhood plans which will be given priority in determining the appropriate amount of parking required.

**Policy TRA5: Rail transport and safeguarding facilities**

6.4.19 Policy TRA5 states that development which would prevent the reintroduction of passenger rail services on the Northumberland Line along with associated stations, facilities and access to them from adjacent highways, and continued rail freight use of the Northumberland Line, its associated branch lines (including the branch line from Bedlington to Morpeth via Choppington, the Butterwell line north of Ashington and the line from Woodhorn to Newbiggin-by-the-Sea) and supporting infrastructure will not be supported.

6.4.20 Sites for stations have been identified and land will be safeguarded at the following locations:

- Woodhorn
- Ashington
- Bedlington Station
- Blyth Bebside
- South Newsham
- Seaton Delaval
- Seghill

6.4.21 The policy goes on to state that measures to improve public safety at level crossings will be supported. Improvement, alteration or closure of level crossings, or appropriate contributions towards the implementation of such works, may be secured through the grant of planning permission for development where it can be demonstrated, to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority, that those works are directly related to the impact that development may have on the level crossing and they are necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms.

**Policy ENV1: Approaches to assessing the impact of development on the natural, historic and built environment**

6.4.22 Policy ENV1 states that the character and significance of Northumberland's distinctive and valued natural, historic and built environments, will be conserved, protected and enhanced by:

- Giving appropriate weight to the statutory purposes and special qualities of the hierarchy of international, national and local designated and non-designated nature and historic conservation assets or sites and their settings;
- Protecting Northumberland's most important landscapes and applying a character-based approach to, as appropriate, manage, protect or plan landscape across the whole County.

**Policy ENV2: Biodiversity and geodiversity**

6.4.23 Policy ENV2 states that development proposals affecting biodiversity and geodiversity will minimise their impact and net gains for biodiversity will be secured by:

- Avoiding significant harm through location and/ or design. Where significant harm cannot be avoided, applicants will be required to demonstrate that adverse impacts will be adequately mitigated or, as a last resort compensated for;

- Securing net biodiversity gains and/or wider ecological enhancements through new development

#### **Policy ENV7: Historic environment and heritage assets**

- 6.4.24 Policy ENV7 supports the NPPF position on historic assets in that decisions affecting a heritage asset will be based on a sound understanding of the significance of that asset and any impact of any proposal upon that significance.

#### **Policy WAT3: Flooding**

- 6.4.25 Policy WAT3 states that development proposals will be required to demonstrate how they will minimise flood risk to people, property and infrastructure from all potential sources by:
- Avoiding inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding and directing the development away from areas at highest risk, applying the Sequential Test and if necessary the Exceptions Test, in accordance with national policy and the Northumberland Strategic Flood Risk Assessment. Site Specific Flood Risk Assessments will be required in accordance with national policy and guidance;
  - Ensuring that the development will be safe over its lifetime, taking account of climate change, will not increase flood risk elsewhere and where possible, reduce flood risk overall;
  - Ensuring that development proposals in areas at risk from flooding are made resistant and resilient, in terms of their layout, mix and/or building design, in accordance with national policy and the findings and recommendations of the Northumberland Strategic Flood Risk Assessment;

#### **Policy WAT4: Sustainable Drainage Systems**

- 6.4.26 Policy WAT4 states that SuDS will be a requirement for any development where it is necessary to manage surface water drainage unless it can be clearly demonstrated:
- That SuDS are not technically, operationally or financially deliverable or viable and that any surface water drainage issues resulting from the development can be alternatively mitigated; or
  - That the SuDS scheme will itself adversely affect the environment or safety, including where ponds could increase the risk of bird strike close to the airport or where existing minewater problems could be exacerbated.

#### **Policy POL1: Unstable and contaminated land**

- 6.4.27 Policy POL1 states that development proposals will be supported where it can be demonstrated that unacceptable risks from land instability and contamination will be prevented and that measures can be taken to effectively mitigate the impacts.

## **Policy POL2: Pollution and air, soil and water quality**

- 6.4.28 Policy POL2 states that development proposals that may cause pollution of water, air or soil, either individually or cumulatively, are required to incorporate measures to prevent or reduce their pollution so as not to cause nuisance or unacceptable impacts on the environment, people or biodiversity. Development proposed where pollution levels are unacceptable, and unable to be mitigated to acceptable levels, will not be supported.

## **Policy INF5: Open space and facilities for sport and recreation**

- 6.4.29 Policy INF5 states *'Development proposals that would result in the loss of land or buildings used for recreational use or the loss of Protected Open Space (as shown on the Policies Map) will not be supported unless:*

*"a. They would be replaced by an area of equivalent or better quantity and quality, in a suitable location; or*

*b. An excess of provision in quantitative and qualitative terms is clearly demonstrated; or*

*c. The development proposed is for alternative sports and recreation provision, the need for which clearly outweighs the loss of the existing open space".*

## **6.5 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2019)**

- 6.5.1 The National Planning Policy Framework<sup>14</sup> (NPPF) sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied. It provides a framework within which locally-prepared plans for housing and other development can be produced.
- 6.5.2 Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The National Planning Policy Framework must be taken into account in preparing the development plan and is a material consideration in planning decisions. Planning policies and decisions must also reflect relevant international obligations and statutory requirements.
- 6.5.3 The NPPF states at paragraph 7 that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. At a very high level, the objective of sustainable development can be summarised as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

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<sup>14</sup> Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (2019) National Planning Policy Framework (p4)

- 6.5.4 Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways (so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across each of the different objectives):
- an economic objective – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;
  - a social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being; and
  - an environmental objective – to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.
- 6.5.5 At the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, so that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way.
- 6.5.6 With reference to paragraph 11 of the NPPF, it is important to note that for decision-taking this means;
- approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or
  - where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important are out-of-date, granting permission unless:
    - i) the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or
    - ii) any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.
- 6.5.7 Further advice on decision-taking which is of relevance to the current scheme is provided at paragraph 38 of the Framework;



- 6.5.8 Local planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way. They should use the full range of planning tools available and work proactively with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. Decision-makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible.
- 6.5.9 The early engagement evoked by the NPPF has been undertaken in a bid to assist in the efficiency and effectiveness of the determination of this planning application; paragraphs 39 to 46 of the NPPF highlight the importance of pre-application engagement.

#### **Promoting Sustainable Transport**

- 6.5.10 An integral component in delivering sustainable development and achieving wider sustainability and health objectives is the promotion of sustainable transport, as set out in Section 9 of the Framework. This includes identifying and pursuing opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport use.
- 6.5.11 This section states that the planning system should actively manage patterns of growth in support of these objectives. Significant development should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes. This can help to reduce congestion and emissions and improve air quality and public health.
- 6.5.12 Paragraph 109 states that development should only be prevented or refused on highway grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.
- 6.5.13 This connotes that a refusal of planning permission on transport grounds will only be justifiable if there are severe impacts arising from the development which cannot be mitigated.

#### **Building a strong, competitive economy**

- 6.5.14 The NPPF places great importance on ensuring the planning system does everything it can to help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development.

#### **Achieving well-designed places**

- 6.5.15 The creation of high quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities.
- 6.5.16 Paragraph 128 states that design quality should be considered throughout the evolution and assessment of individual proposals. Early discussion between applicants, the local planning

authority and local community about the design and style of emerging schemes is important for clarifying expectations and reconciling local and commercial interests. Applicants should work closely with those affected by proposals to evolve designs that take account of the views of the community. Applications that can demonstrate early, proactive and effective engagement with the community should be looked on more favourably than those that cannot.

## 7 Planning Assessment

### 7.1 Introduction

- 7.1.1 The application for planning permission is accompanied by the supporting information identified as required by the local planning authority in discussions prior to submission. The scope, extent and nature of the supporting information is in accordance with the advice and recommendations given by officers of the local planning authority.
- 7.1.2 The design of the scheme and scope of the submitted proposals has been conceived with the ambition of satisfying all of the relevant local and national planning, transport and environmental policies.
- 7.1.3 Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the statutory development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 7.1.4 The following sections:
- summarises the evidence that demonstrates how the development proposals accord with the Local Plan (section 7.2–7.4)
  - summarises the evidence that demonstrates how the development proposals accord with national planning policies (section 7.4)
  - confirms that there are no material considerations in the determination of the planning application that should lead to the application being refused (section 8)
  - confirms that the implementation of the scheme would deliver significant public benefits

### 7.2 Accordance with Northumberland Development Plan

- 7.2.1 The development plan in respect of the application site comprises the saved Local Plan policies (under the Secretary of State's Direction) of the Wansbeck District Local Plan (2007).
- 7.2.2 The NPPF advises at paragraph 213 that, in respect of Development Plans adopted prior to publication of the NPPF, local planning authorities should afford due weight according to their degree of consistency with the NPPF (the closer the policies in the Plan to the policies in the NPPF, the greater the weight that may be given).
- 7.2.3 In accordance with paragraph 48 of the NPPF, weight may also be given to the policies in emerging plans depending on the stage of preparation of the plan, the extent to which emerging policy aligns with the NPPF and the extent of unresolved objections to the

emerging plan. The Northumberland Local Plan was submitted to Secretary of State for examination in May 2019 and is currently undergoing examination. It is therefore considered that relevant policies can be given some weight presently and can be given increasing weight as the Plan moves towards adoption.

### **7.3 Wansbeck District Local Plan (July 2007)**

- 7.3.1 The Wansbeck District Local Plan sets out the overall vision and spatial strategy for development in Wansbeck. It currently forms the basis of Northumberland's Local Development Framework and is used to guide planning decisions throughout Wansbeck.
- 7.3.2 The District Local Plan was adopted in July 2007. It now forms part of the statutory development plan for Northumberland. As well as providing the basis for decisions on planning applications, the District Local Plan is used to help shape regeneration, investment and growth within the borough.
- 7.3.3 It is anticipated the Wansbeck District Local Plan will be superseded by the emerging Northumberland Local Plan. Notwithstanding this, the extant District Local Plan currently forms part of the adopted development plan. Those policies of the existing, adopted District Local Plan that are material to the determination of this planning application are set out below.

#### **Policy GPI: Spatial Strategy**

- 7.3.4 Policy GPI states that provided that proposals are in accordance with other policies of the Plan, development on previously developed sites and buildings with settlement limits will be permitted. Development on greenfield sites within settlement limits will only be permitted if:
- The site is allocated for development; or
  - It can be demonstrated that the development will meet an identified and justified need and no suitable alternative previously developed site is available.
- 7.3.5 The proposed development includes the re-use of previously developed land. The site is located within an accessible location in proximity to Bedlington town centre and would therefore align with the general spatial strategy. The proposed railway station at Bedlington Station is an integral component, and proposed to be delivered as part of, the Northumberland Line scheme. The re-introduction of passenger services on the Northumberland Line is a strategic priority for the council as set out in the Plan. The development of the site to facilitate the delivery of a new railway station to serve Bedlington is therefore considered to support the council's wider ambitions for the re-introduction of passenger services on the Northumberland Line.
- 7.3.6 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy GPI of the Wansbeck District Local Plan.

#### **Policy GP4: Accessibility**

- 7.3.7 Policy GP4 stipulates that new development should be located to reduce the need to travel and to minimise journey length. It should be accessible to all users by a choice of means of transport including buses, walking and cycling.
- 7.3.8 The proposed railway station at Bedlington Station will encourage a modal shift toward more sustainable travel, reducing reliance on the private car. The location of the proposed station is adjacent existing housing and other amenities and can therefore be considered to be readily accessible by pedestrians, cyclists and motorists. Pedestrian crossing improvements are proposed to be delivered as part of the scheme, to encourage passengers to walk or cycle to and from the railway station. To this end, appropriate cycle parking facilities are to be provided at the site.
- 7.3.9 The submitted Design and Access Statement provides further details demonstrating that the scheme has been designed to ensure appropriate access is made for all users. *Inter alia* the demolition of the former Boots building on station road is necessary to provide adequate and safe pedestrian access to the up platform. The submitted Transport Assessment demonstrates that safe and convenient access is made for all users, and that the scheme is anticipated to assist in reducing congestion on the local highway network by encouraging increased use of rail travel.
- 7.3.10 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy GP4 of the Wansbeck District Local Plan.

#### **Policy GP5: Landscape Character**

- 7.3.11 Policy GP5 states that development must respect the character of the District's landscape. Proposals will be assessed in terms of:
- The siting, scale and design of buildings and materials; and
  - The effect on distant views
- 7.3.12 The proposed railway station at Bedlington Station has been designed based on a sound understanding of the physical constraints of the site, to ensure that it can be considered to appropriately sit within its landscape setting. Further details in this regard can be found within the submitted Landscape Appraisal.
- 7.3.13 The proposed railway station at Bedlington Station has been designed based on a detailed understanding and appraisal of those features of the local area that contribute to landscape character and distinctiveness, and through identifying and appraising the visual impact on different receptors from various viewpoints. It is anticipated that precise details of materials to be used in the construction of the development will be agreed through the subsequent discharge of planning conditions attached to a planning permission.

- 7.3.14 It should also be noted that the entire site is located within the defined settlement boundary, therefore the impact on the open countryside is negligible.
- 7.3.15 It is considered that the proposed station would not have a significant adverse impact on the local landscape.
- 7.3.16 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy GP5 of the Wansbeck District Local Plan.

**Policy GP6: Trees and hedgerows**

- 7.3.17 Policy GP6 states that the authority will seek to protect trees, woodlands and hedgerows in the District and will encourage new planting, particularly of native species. Development which would result in the loss of healthy trees which make an important contribution to the quality of the environment will not be permitted unless there are overriding social or economic benefits to the community and compensatory off-site provision of landscape infrastructure is made. Healthy trees lost as a consequence of development shall be replaced with trees of an equivalent standard.
- 7.3.18 The design of the scheme has been informed by a survey of the trees: within, adjacent to, and nearby to the site, and by the preparation of an Arboricultural Impact Assessment. These documents are submitted with the application.
- 7.3.19 The design of the scheme has been informed by the Landscape Appraisal of the site and surroundings. This document is submitted with the application.
- 7.3.20 These surveys, assessments and appraisals have been used to guide the proposals and in particular to guide the; removal of trees and shrubs from within the site, and the provision of a soft landscaping scheme. The application is supported by an indicative landscaping scheme which seeks to retain and/or replace existing trees, wherever possible. An indication of the landscape proposals and the justification for tree removals are set out in the submitted landscaping scheme and arboricultural reports. It is anticipated that appropriate compensation for the loss of trees will be discussed and agreed with officers during determination of the application.
- 7.3.21 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy GP6 of the Wansbeck District Local Plan.

**Policy G13: Biodiversity and wildlife networks**

- 7.3.22 Policy G13 states that the value to biodiversity of all sites proposed for development will be considered when planning applications are determined whether or not they are designated sites. Particular importance will be attached to the protection of priority habitats and species in Wansbeck. Where proposals affect a habitat which contributes, or could potentially contribute, to a network of natural habitats the developer will be required to protect and enhance the network.

- 7.3.23 The proposed railway station at Bedlington Station has been designed based on a sound understanding of the ecological and wider environmental sensitivity of the site and adjacent land. The planning application is supported by appropriate ecological and other assessments which demonstrate that the scheme will not adversely impact on biodiversity and wildlife networks; opportunities for habitat and landscaping improvement, including appropriate mitigation, are to be provided. It is anticipated that the scheme will incorporate measures to improve the biodiversity value of the site, including sensitive landscaping proposals and the installation of bat and bird boxes. The project would be content to accept suitably worded conditions for further details regarding such measures.
- 7.3.24 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy G13 of the Wansbeck District Local Plan.

#### **Policy GP21: Archaeology**

- 7.3.25 The proposed railway station at Bedlington Station has been designed based on a detailed understanding of the existing and historic site conditions. This includes a desk-based assessment of possible archaeological assets and non-listed heritage assets. It is also informed by and advice of all stakeholders including Network Rail, the local planning authority, the local highway authority, residents, businesses and local politicians.
- 7.3.26 The submitted Design and Access Statement provides further details demonstrating that the submitted scheme is based on a clear understanding of the character and local distinctiveness of the area and confirms that the proposed railway station would make a positive contribution to place-making and environmental improvement. The scheme would not have a detrimental impact on the significance on any heritage and archaeological assets.
- 7.3.27 The planning application is supported by a Heritage Statement which demonstrates that the scheme would not detract from the significance of recorded historical assets on site.
- 7.3.28 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy GP21 of the adopted Wansbeck Local Plan.

#### **Policy GP22: Flood risk and erosion**

- 7.3.29 Policy GP22 states that developers are required to consider the risk to their development from flooding and erosion and to consider any possible effect of their development on flood risk or erosion elsewhere. Development in areas of flood risk will not be permitted unless a flood risk assessment has been carried out and it can be demonstrated that:
- There is no reasonable alternative development option available which would involve no risk or a lower risk of flooding; and
  - The development does not increase the risk of flooding elsewhere; and

- Satisfactory protection measures can be carried out at the expense of the developer and maintained for the lifetime of the development

7.3.30 The application site is identified as being located within Flood Zone 1 and is therefore at low risk of flooding. The proposed railway station at Bedlington Station has been designed based on a sound understanding of the flood risk pertaining to the site from all sources. The scheme includes appropriate drainage to manage and mitigate the risk of flooding.

7.3.31 The submitted Flood Risk Assessment and Sustainable Drainage Assessment provides further details to demonstrate that the scheme has been designed to mitigate the risk of flooding to the site, in accordance with the drainage hierarchy.

7.3.32 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy GP22 of the Wansbeck District Local Plan.

### **Policy GP23: Pollution and nuisance**

7.3.33 Policy GP23 states that when determining planning applications, the authority will consider whether a proposed development has the potential to cause pollution or nuisance. Planning permission will not be granted for development liable to cause significant harm to either:

- Human health and safety
- The amenity of local residents and other land users
- The quality and enjoyment of all aspects of the environment

7.3.34 The proposed railway station at Bedlington Station has been designed to accord with all relevant legislation, policies, standards and guidance. This has included detailed pre-application discussions with statutory consultees and key stakeholders to assure the safety credentials of the submitted scheme.

7.3.35 Due regard has been given to the potential impacts of the development on the amenity of local residents and adjacent land uses, as detailed in the submitted Design and Access Statement.

7.3.36 The submitted noise, air quality, lighting and other environmental assessments demonstrate that the scheme would not result in unacceptable pollution or nuisance impacts. Appropriate mitigation measures are included in those accompanying assessment reports and the applicants are content for the implementation of those recommendations to be included as suitably worded conditions on a planning permission for the scheme. Regional air quality is anticipated to improve due to modal shift from the private car to public transport as a result of the scheme, however there is potential for local air quality impacts within the vicinity of the stations and railway line. With the recommended air quality mitigation measures in place for the construction and operational phases, it is considered that the proposed railway station at Bedlington Station would not cause any significant effects on air quality.



- 7.3.37 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy GP23 of the Wansbeck District Local Plan.

**Policy GP25: Noise**

- 7.3.38 Policy GP25 states that when determining planning applications, the authority will consider the levels and characteristics of any noise which may be generated as a result of permitting the development. The likely impact will be assessed in terms of the following:

- Any disturbance to people living in the area; and
- Any disturbance to other noise-sensitive uses such as hospitals, schools, colleges, offices and community buildings; and
- Any effect on people's enjoyment of the outdoor environment including gardens, parks, the coast and the countryside; and
- Any disturbance to wildlife or livestock

- 7.3.39 The proposed development has been designed based on a sound understanding of the site and adjacent land uses. The railway is currently used by freight trains and therefore a level of operational rail noise is already experienced at this location.

- 7.3.40 It is considered that there will be noise impacts during the construction and operational phases of the development; appropriate mitigation is proposed to be implemented to ensure noise impacts are minimised wherever possible.

- 7.3.41 The submitted Noise and Vibration Assessment demonstrates that the scheme has been designed based on a sound understanding of the proximity of sensitive receptors, including Sleekburn House. The submitted Noise Assessment demonstrates that the proposed development would not result in unacceptable impacts during either the construction or operational phases. It is proposed that appropriate mitigation during the construction and operational phases will be secured through the provision of details to discharge relevant conditions on a planning permission. It is anticipated the details to mitigate construction noise impacts will be included within the Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) which is expected to be included as a condition on a planning permission.

- 7.3.42 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy GP25 of the Wansbeck District Local Plan.

**Policy GP29: Land contamination**

- 7.3.43 Policy GP29 states that where there is reason to suspect that land is affected by contamination, applicants for planning permission will be required to submit a report of a desk study of previous uses of the site and their potential for contamination. Unless the study clearly demonstrates that the risk to the proposed uses is acceptable, furthermore detailed

investigations will be required before the application is determined to assess the risks and identify and appraise the options for remediation.

- 7.3.44 Development will only be permitted if sustainable and feasible remediation solutions are adopted to secure the removal of unacceptable risk and make the site suitable for its new use.
- 7.3.45 The proposed railway station has been designed based on a sound understanding of the physical and environmental constraints of the site, including pollution and land contamination. The submitted Phase I Geo-environmental Assessment demonstrates that the proposed development incorporates appropriate mitigation to safeguard the site and adjacent land from significant adverse contamination issues.
- 7.3.46 In summary, the proposed development is considered to appropriately consider land contamination issues and appropriate mitigation measures are to be incorporated to manage any pollution or contamination issues arising as a result of the scheme.
- 7.3.47 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy GP29 of the Wansbeck District Local Plan.

#### **Policy GP30: Visual Impact**

- 7.3.48 Policy GP30 states that all proposed development will be assessed in terms of its visual impact. Developments which in visual terms would cause significant harm to the character or quality of the surrounding environment will be refused.
- 7.3.49 The proposed railway station at Bedlington Station has been designed based on a sound understanding of the physical constraints of the site, to ensure that it can be considered to appropriately sit within its landscape setting and to ensure that the scheme does not adversely impact on the visual amenity of the area.
- 7.3.50 The proposed railway station at Bedlington Station has been designed based on a detailed understanding and appraisal of those features of the local area that contribute to landscape character and distinctiveness, and through identifying and appraising the visual impact on different receptors from various viewpoints. The scheme proposes the introduction of a platform fence adjacent Sleekburn House. The proposed fence has been designed so as to minimise disturbance to the occupiers of this building. Indeed, a Daylight Assessment has been undertaken which confirms that the fence will safeguard the daylight currently enjoyed by residents. While there may be a visual impact, it is considered that appropriate materials and finishes will ensure that any visual impacts are limited in terms of their impact on the amenity of residents.
- 7.3.51 It should also be noted that the entire site is located within the defined settlement boundary, therefore the impact on the open countryside is considered to be negligible.
- 7.3.52 It is considered that the proposed station would not have a significant adverse impact on the local landscape.

- 7.3.53 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy GP30 of the Wansbeck District Local Plan.

#### **Policy GP31: Urban Design**

- 7.3.54 Policy GP31 states that when considering any proposed development the authority will require high standards of urban design to:

- Promote character in townscape and landscape and establish local identity; and
- Clearly define public and private spaces; and
- Encourage accessibility; and
- Make places with a clear image that is easy to understand, by providing recognisable routes, intersections and landmarks; and
- Promote diversity and choice through a mix of compatible developments and uses that work together to create viable places that respond to local needs.

- 7.3.55 The proposed railway station at Bedlington Station has been designed based on a detailed understanding of the existing and historic site conditions. This includes an appraisal of local features that contribute to local character and distinctiveness, and by identifying the needs of all anticipated future users of the railway station. It is also informed by and advice of all stakeholders including Network Rail, the local planning authority, the local highway authority, residents, businesses and local politicians.

- 7.3.56 The submitted Design and Access Statement provides further details demonstrating that the submitted scheme is based on a clear understanding of the character and local distinctiveness of the area and confirms that the proposed railway station would make a positive contribution to place-making and environmental improvement.

- 7.3.57 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy GP31 of the Wansbeck District Local Plan.

#### **Policy GP32: Landscaping and the Public Realm**

- 7.3.58 Policy GP32 states that developers are required to incorporate a high standard of landscape treatment in their developments. When submitting planning applications, developers will be required to demonstrate that:

- Any existing landscape features of value including trees, shrubs, hedgerows and ponds, will be retained, protected and used to advantage as part of the development; and
- New landscape features will be introduced which enhance the visual quality of the development, reduce its impact and provide habitat for the district's wildlife; and

- New landscape features to be introduced will be appropriate to the use and character of the development and its location; and
- Opportunities to create new public spaces and improve existing ones have been considered

7.3.59 The proposed railway station at Bedlington Station has been designed based on a sound understanding of the physical constraints of the site, to ensure that it can be considered to appropriately sit within its landscape setting. The application is supported by a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment which confirms that the scheme would not have a significant adverse impact on the wider landscape.

7.3.60 The proposed railway station at Bedlington Station has been designed based on a detailed understanding and appraisal of those features of the local area that contribute to landscape character and distinctiveness, and through identifying and appraising the visual impact on different receptors from various viewpoints. The proposed development would bring back into use a currently derelict site, which will result in obvious local landscape and public realm benefits. It is considered the development may catalyse the redevelopment of adjacent land and buildings, resulting in wider public realm improvements.

7.3.61 It is considered that the proposed station would not have a significant adverse impact on the local landscape.

7.3.62 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy GP32 of the Wansbeck District Local Plan.

#### **Policy GP35: Crime Prevention**

7.3.63 Policy GP35 states that development proposals will be expected to have regard to the objectives of 'planning out crime' through the incorporation of measures such as:

- Promotion of schemes that increase the range of activities that maximise the opportunities for surveillance
- Maximising the amount of defensible space which is controlled, or perceived to be controlled, by occupiers
- A high standard of street lighting

7.3.64 The proposed railway station at Bedlington Station has been designed to seek to 'design out' crime, taking into account the observations, guidance and comments received from Northumbria Police and the British Transport Police.

7.3.65 The proposed layout, landscaping, lighting and CCTV camera provision have evolved to take account of discussions with key stakeholders, to ensure that opportunities are taken to maximise the safety of the station for all users.

- 7.3.66 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy GP35 of the Wansbeck District Local Plan.

**Policy T1: Ashington, Blyth and Tyne Rail Line**

- 7.3.67 Policy T1 states that the re-introduction of passenger services on the rail line between Newcastle and Ashington will be supported and promoted. Land which may be required for associated facilities such as stations, bus stops and car parks will be safeguarded.
- 7.3.68 The proposed railway station at Bedlington Station is an integral component, and proposed to be delivered as part of, the Northumberland Line scheme. The scheme is therefore specifically supported by Policy T1. The delivery of the new station will support and facilitate the council's ambitions for the re-introduction of passenger services on the Ashington, Blyth and Tyne Line.
- 7.3.69 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy T1 of the Wansbeck District Local Plan.

**Policy T6: Traffic implications of new development**

- 7.3.70 Policy T6 states that when planning applications are determined, the volume and character of traffic likely to be generated by and attracted to the proposed development will be considered. Proposals will only be permitted if:
- The existing highway network is adequate to cope with any additional traffic resulting from the development or necessary improvement works will be carried out before the development goes ahead; and
  - The proposed arrangements for access and egress will allow the safe and efficient movement of vehicles; and
  - Internal circulation arrangements will be able to absorb vehicular traffic entering the site without queues forming on existing roads and will include measures to achieve safe traffic speeds; and
  - Adequate provision is made, in terms of safety and operating efficiency, for servicing and deliveries and for other heavy vehicles such as buses and emergency vehicles.
- 7.3.71 The proposed railway station at Bedlington Station has been designed to ensure safe and convenient access is provided to the site for all modes, including the private car. The scheme, by nature, will assist in reducing reliance on the private car by encouraging a modal shift towards rail travel – which will assist in reducing congestion on the local highway network.
- 7.3.72 The submitted Transport Assessment demonstrates that the scheme will not have an unacceptable impact on the safety or capacity of the local highway network.

- 7.3.73 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy T6 of the Wansbeck District Local Plan.

**Policy REC2: Recreation and open space**

- 7.3.74 The total site area within the red line boundary is 2.7 hectares. 0.21 hectares of this site is designated as amenity greenspace under Policy REC1 of the adopted Wansbeck Local Plan. Policy REC2 identifies that development on open spaces 'not designated as being of strategic importance' will only be granted if there is shown to be a surplus of open space by way of an assessment of open space needs and opportunities in the area.
- 7.3.75 The development proposes the loss of a 0.21-hectare site of amenity greenspace on 'Ravensworth Terrace'.
- 7.3.76 The Open Space, Sport and Recreational facilities PPG17 Assessment 2011 (as amended in 2018)<sup>15</sup> assessment identifies the following minimum standards should be achieved to provide appropriate provision for amenity grassland in the county:
- 1) **Quantity**– To ensure provision does not fall below the current level of 1.09 ha per 1,000 population,
  - 2) **Quality**– To achieve a minimum standard of 48%,
  - 3) **Accessibility**–To provide amenity greenspace with 600m or 8 minutes travel time of where people live.
- 7.3.77 The aforementioned assessment identifies that South East Northumberland currently provides for 1.4 Ha of amenity greenspace per 1000 population. This is higher than the identified minimum standard of 1.09ha. As such, the assessment identifies that South East Northumberland has a surplus of amenity greenspace. On this basis, is considered the removal of a 0.21 Ha site would not significantly impact on the availability of amenity greenspace in the local area.
- 7.3.78 The assessment identifies that 98% of residents in South East Northumberland are located within 600 metres of open space. This is significantly higher than the north (75%) and the west (58%) of Northumberland.
- 7.3.79 Northumberland County Council's Open Space Assessment identifies that there are two additional sites of amenity greenspace located within 500 metres of the site. A site, referred to as 'Bedlington the 1<sup>st</sup> station' is located approximately 70 metres to the east of the site of

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<sup>15</sup> Northumberland County Council (2011) PPG17 open space, sport and recreation assessment (as amended in 2018) p106

the proposed car park. A site referred to as 'Burnside, Bedlington Station' is located approximately 170 metres to the east of the site.

- 7.3.80 In addition to this, there is a site of amenity greenspace referred to as 'A1147 Corridor Bedlington' which is located approximately 500m to the east of the site of the proposed car park. This is a 1.72ha site which is identified as having a quality rating of 54.24%, as such is considered to be of high quality. Whilst the site of the proposed car park has a quality rating of 64.76% it is considered the removal of the site as open space would not contribute to a significant reduction in the standards for accessibility within the local area.
- 7.3.81 On the basis of the available information, it is considered there is a surplus of open space in close proximity to the site of the proposed station. As such, it is considered that development of the proposed station will not result in a significant loss to the community in provision for play and recreation; nature conservation or use for community events. Furthermore, Landscape, Townscape and Visual Overview submitted in support of this planning application demonstrates that there would not be a significant loss to the community relating to visual amenity.
- 7.3.82 An optioneering exercise has been undertaken which identifies the Protected Open Space as the only site which was both available and capable of accommodating the car parking demand forecast identified in the Transport Assessment submitted in support of this application.
- 7.3.83 To inform the options for car parking, parking capacity surveys were undertaken in July 2019 to review the use of existing parking in close proximity of the proposed station site. This review included parking on Clayton Street, Ravensworth Street, and Melrose & Jubilee Terrace. The survey identified that the existing car park on Ravensworth Street is at over capacity, which has resulted in informal parking adjacent to the car park. The study sought to determine if additional spaces could be provided in the existing car park. However, a reconfiguration of the site would require car parking to accord with up-to-date parking standards. As such, the review concluded that formalising the car park would result in a reduction of capacity, not an increase.
- 7.3.84 Whilst the existing car park on Melrose Villas was identified to have some capacity, this is not sufficient to accommodate the demand for station parking. The study concluded that parking would need to be provided as part of the proposed development. Further details of the study undertaken are available in the Design and Access Statement submitted in support of this application.
- 7.3.85 Alternative locations to accommodate parking in close proximity to the station are limited by existing built development and other constraints. The areas immediately surrounding the station is constrained by Barrington Road to the north, Park Terrace to the east, Station Road to the south, and properties on Blenheim Road which are directly adjacent to the existing railway corridor.

- 7.3.86 Sites outside of the immediate area of the station were considered, including land located adjacent to Barrington Road, west of the level crossing. However, this site required passengers to cross two level crossings to gain access to the northbound platform. As such, this option was not considered viable as the solution would increase risk to pedestrians, raise concerns over accessibility and inclusivity. There was also concern that this option would increase the risk of trespass on the railway line as a shortcut to access the platforms. Furthermore, the site is an existing operational business. As a result of the factors considered above, this site was discounted.
- 7.3.87 The assessments undertaken have concluded that there is not sufficient capacity to accommodate the demand forecast in existing car parks within Bedlington. On this basis, it is considered that additional car parking is required to facilitate the operation of the station. Furthermore, there are no alternative sites identified within a reasonable walking distance of the site capable of accommodating the anticipated demand for station parking. The site on Ravensworth Street provides sufficient land to accommodate the demand and is within a reasonable walking distance of the station.
- 7.3.88 The assessments undertaken have concluded that there is not sufficient capacity to accommodate the demand forecast in existing car parks within Bedlington. On this basis, it is considered that additional car parking is required to facilitate the operation of the station. Furthermore, there are no alternative sites identified within a reasonable walking distance of the site capable of accommodating the anticipated demand for station parking. The site on Ravensworth Street provides sufficient land to accommodate the demand and is within a reasonable walking distance of the station. The submitted Statement of Community Engagement sets out the representations made on the proposal for the protected open space on Ravensworth Terrace to be developed as a car park.
- 7.3.89 The submitted scheme has sought to balance the competing interests of safeguarding public open space, together with the strategic public benefits that will result from the new railway station development, for which there is a requirement to provide adequate parking and safe footways and highway access arrangements. On balance, it is considered that the significant public benefits of the proposed railway station outweigh the harm resulting from the loss of a modest quantity of public open space. There is a clear and convincing case presented within the submitted application to demonstrate that the loss of the public open space is essential to enable provision of the new railway station development.
- 7.3.90 Notwithstanding the above, the applicant is content to agree in principle to the making of a compensatory provision to offset the loss of the open space required to facilitate the development which is the subject of this application. The applicant is committed to working with the local authority during determination of the application to seek to identify suitable compensatory provision.



## **7.4 Accordance with Northumberland Local Plan Regulation 19 Publication Draft (May 2019)**

7.4.1 The NPPF advises at paragraph 48 that weight may also be given to the policies in emerging plans depending on the stage of preparation of the plan, the extent to which emerging policy aligns with the NPPF and the extent of unresolved objections to the emerging plan. The Phase 2 hearings on the Emerging Northumberland Local Plan were completed in November 2020 and the Inspector indicated that she did not envisage the need to hold additional hearings. As such, it is anticipated that the local plan will be adopted in Spring 2021. It is therefore considered that relevant policies can be given some weight presently and can be given increasing weight as the Plan moves towards adoption.

7.4.2 The relevant policies of the emerging Northumberland Local Plan that pertain to the scheme which is the subject of this planning application are identified as follows:

### **Policy STP1: Spatial Strategy**

7.4.3 Policy STP1 states that sustainable development will be supported within, or immediately adjacent to, the built-up form of Main Towns, Service Centres and Service Villages without defined settlement boundaries, will be supported, if it is commensurate with size of the settlement, and it can be demonstrated that it does not adversely impact upon the character of the settlement.

7.4.4 Development in the open countryside will only be supported if it can be demonstrated that it:

7.4.5 “Provides for essential transport, utilities and energy infrastructure in accordance with other policies in the Local Plan.”

7.4.6 The policy goes on to state that development in the open countryside should be sensitive to its surroundings and should not have an unacceptable impact upon the local road network.

7.4.7 The proposed railway station at Bedlington Station forms an integral component of the scheme which proposes the re-introduction of passenger services on the Northumberland Line. The Northumberland Line scheme is a strategic priority of both national and local government and could therefore reasonably be considered to constitute ‘essential infrastructure’.

7.4.8 The application site is located wholly within the settlement boundary, in an accessible location, adjacent existing housing and other development and is therefore located in a sustainable location. The scheme is designed to integrate with existing and adjacent public transport infrastructure, including the bus stops located nearby. The proposed development would involve the use of land for a use which could not reasonably be located elsewhere: to construct a railway station it must obviously be located adjacent to the railway line.

7.4.9 In summary, the proposed railway station is considered to be appropriate development within the defined settlement boundary.

- 7.4.10 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy STPI of the emerging Northumberland Local Plan.

**Policy STP2: Presumption in favour of Sustainable Development**

- 7.4.11 Policy STP2 states that when considering development proposals, the Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). It will always work pro-actively with applicants to seek to find solutions that mean proposals that improve the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area can be approved wherever possible.
- 7.4.12 The proposed railway station at Bedlington Station will promote the use of rail services as an alternative to the private car and will assist in alleviating congestion on the local highway network and improving regional air quality. The application site is located within an accessible location and as such will encourage walking and cycling to and from the station, though vehicular access and car parking is to be provided to ensure the station is accessible for all users.
- 7.4.13 The proposed railway station at Bedlington Station would deliver economic, social and environmental benefits and thereby support the planning system in fulfilling its purpose: to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development.
- 7.4.14 The economic benefits of the scheme include:
- The development will facilitate increased access for residents and local people to employment and training opportunities throughout Northumberland, North Tyneside and Newcastle City Centre. The provision of passenger rail services at this location, including specialist provision for mobility impaired and disabled users, will also encourage employers to locate in this part of Northumberland;
  - The development will provide a convenient multimodal transport interchange which integrates the train services and railway station with buses, cycling, walking, private cars and taxis.
  - The proposed railway station will help to alleviate congestion on the local highway network, presenting a potential cost saving in journey times for staff and visitors to local businesses and those travelling further afield, supporting economic growth in Bedlington, Northumberland and the North East more widely.
- 7.4.15 The social benefits of the scheme include:
- The development will improve journey times for residents, local people and those wishing to travel from Bedlington to destinations further afield including North Tyneside and Newcastle City Centre;
  - The development will increase the ability of residents and local people to gain access to employment and training opportunities;

- The development will contribute to building strong, vibrant and healthy communities by encouraging social inclusion, improving the accessibility of local services and the use of sustainable travel modes.

7.4.16 The environmental benefits of the scheme include:

- The development will improve the physical accessibility and connectivity of transport infrastructure for all users
- The development will make it physically more simple and convenient to use and access public transport infrastructure in Bedlington. The consequential modal shift will assist in improving regional air quality
- The development will decrease dependence on the private car for residents and local people, in so doing it will reduce carbon emissions

7.4.17 In summary, the proposed railway station is considered to represent a sustainable development. Accordingly, it is considered the local planning authority ought to take a positive approach to the consideration and determination of this planning application.

7.4.18 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy STP2 of the emerging Northumberland Local Plan.

### **Policy STP3: Principles of Sustainable Development**

7.4.19 Policy STP3 states that In applying the presumption in favour of sustainable development in Northumberland and to deliver against economic, social and environmental objectives, development proposals will be expected to deliver across the range of the economic, social and environmental factors, and adhere to the following principles where appropriate:

- Contribute to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy across Northumberland, support more and better jobs, protect and enhance the vitality and viability of Northumberland's town centres and other important economic sectors;
- Minimise their impact upon local amenity for new or existing residents and businesses, adjoining premises and land uses;
- Support and provide opportunities to improve health, social and cultural wellbeing for all, and provide the infrastructure which is required to enhance the quality of life of individuals and communities;
- Demonstrate high quality sustainable design which is accessible to all, and which respects and enhances the local distinctiveness of the natural, historic and built environment, helps promote a sense of place, reduces the need for energy, and facilitates flexible and adaptable buildings and environments;

- Be accessible by, or be able to be made accessible by public transport, walking or cycling where feasible, thereby reducing the need to travel for both people and goods, and the dependence on travel by private car;
- Make best use of existing facilities and infrastructure, whilst making appropriate provision for new or additional infrastructure as required;

- 7.4.20 The proposed railway station at Bedlington Station would improve access to and from the local area for residents, staff and customers of local businesses. The proposed station would therefore improve the accessibility and connectivity of Bedlington to Northumberland and the North East more widely.
- 7.4.21 The scheme would assist in reducing reliance on the private car, encouraging use of more sustainable modes of travel including walking and cycling. The submitted Transport Assessment and Travel Plan demonstrates that the scheme can be suitably accessed by various modes, and that safe and convenient access is provided for all users.
- 7.4.22 The scheme has been designed based on a sound understanding of the site, adjacent land uses and the requirements of key stakeholders including Network Rail, the local planning authority and the local highway authority. The submitted Design and Access Statements provides a detailed summary of the design evolution and confirms that the scheme constitutes a sustainable design which is accessible to all.
- 7.4.23 The scheme incorporates appropriate and proportionate improvements to the local highway, including improved pedestrian crossing arrangements, to ensure that the opportunities to encourage pedestrian and cyclist access to and from the station have been taken. The submitted scheme has sought to balance the competing interests of safeguarding public open space, together with the strategic public benefits that will result from the new railway station development, for which there is a requirement to provide adequate parking and safe footways and highway access arrangements. On balance, it is considered that the significant public benefits of the proposed railway station outweigh the harm resulting from the loss of a modest quantity of public open space. There is a clear and convincing case presented within the submitted application to demonstrate that the loss of the public open space is essential to enable provision of the new railway station development.
- 7.4.24 In summary, the proposed railway station is considered to represent a sustainable development. Accordingly, it is considered the local planning authority ought to take a positive approach to the consideration and determination of this planning application.
- 7.4.25 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy STP3 of the emerging Northumberland Local Plan.

#### **Policy STP4: Climate change mitigation and adaptation**

- 7.4.26 Policy STP4 states that development proposals should mitigate climate change and contribute to meeting nationally binding targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. When

determining planning applications, support will be given to how development proposals that help mitigate climate change and consideration will be given to how proposals:

- 7.4.27 Through their location, layout and pattern of development, reduce the need to travel for both people and goods, and encourage sustainable modes of transport, including walking, cycling and the use of public transport;
- 7.4.28 The proposed railway station at Bedlington Station, given its nature, will assist in encouraging the use of more sustainable modes of travel, reducing reliance on the private car. Such a modal shift is likely to assist in reducing carbon and greenhouse gas emissions; improving regional air quality together with assisting the council in meeting its climate change objectives.
- 7.4.29 The scheme is located within an accessible and sustainable location, adjacent existing housing and other development. The scheme incorporates measures to encourage walking and cycling, as well as rail services. The planning application is supported by appropriate flood risk, drainage and other assessments which demonstrate that the scheme will not increase the risk of flooding either on or off-site.
- 7.4.30 In summary, the proposed railway station is considered to represent a sustainable development. The scheme will assist the council in meeting its wider climate change objectives.
- 7.4.31 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy STP4 of the emerging Northumberland Local Plan.

#### **Policy STP5: Health and wellbeing**

- 7.4.32 Policy STP5 states that development which promotes, supports and enhances the health and wellbeing of communities, residents, workers and visitors will be supported. Development proposals will be required to demonstrate that they:
- are safe, comfortable, inclusive and attractive and prioritise pedestrian and cycle movement;
  - provide access to a range of facilities including public transport, health, education, social care, green spaces, sport, play and leisure facilities
- 7.4.33 The policy requires that a Health Impact Assessment Screening be submitted for all major development proposals to determine whether the potential impact on health resulting from the development warrants any further assessment. Where further assessment is warranted, a proportionate Health Impact Assessment will also be required to be submitted as part of the application. A Health Impact Assessment will be required to include proposals to mitigate any adverse health impacts, maximise potential positive impacts, and help reduce health inequalities.

- 7.4.34 The proposed railway station at Bedlington Station has been designed to prioritise pedestrian and cycle movements. The scheme includes improved pedestrian crossing arrangements and cycle parking is provided to encourage travel to and from the station by sustainable modes. It is recognised, however, that not all users are able to walk and/ or cycle to and from the station. The scheme therefore ensures vehicular access is provided to ensure the station can be accessed by elderly and disabled users.
- 7.4.35 The scheme, given its nature, supports the delivery of sustainable transport infrastructure which will improve access to health, education and leisure facilities across the North East for local people.
- 7.4.36 The response by the local planning authority to the pre-application indicated that a Health Impact Assessment was not required to be undertaken. Notwithstanding this response the application includes an appraisal of the potential health and wellbeing benefits of the station to the local population. This demonstrates that the potential impacts resulting from the development are generally beneficial. The scheme has been designed to manage and mitigate the risk of potential adverse health impacts, wherever possible.
- 7.4.37 In summary, the proposed railway station is considered to represent a sustainable development, which will deliver many and various health and wellbeing improvements.
- 7.4.38 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy STP5 of the emerging Northumberland Local Plan.

#### **Policy QOP1: Design Principles**

- 7.4.39 Policy QOP1 states that in determining planning applications, design will be assessed against the following design principles, in accordance with the Northumberland Design Guide. Proposals will be supported where design:
- Makes a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness and contributes to a positive relationship between built and natural features, including landform and topography;
  - Facilitates an inclusive, comfortable, user-friendly and legible environment;
  - Supports health and wellbeing and enhances quality of life
- 7.4.40 The proposed railway station at Bedlington Station has been designed based on a detailed understanding of the existing and historic site conditions. This includes an appraisal of local features that contribute to local character and distinctiveness, and by identifying the needs of all anticipated future users of the railway station. It is also informed by and advice of all stakeholders including Network Rail, the local planning authority, the local highway authority, residents, businesses and local politicians. The scheme proposes the introduction of a platform fence adjacent Sleekburn House. The proposed fence has been designed so as to minimise disturbance to the occupiers of this building. Indeed, a Daylight Assessment has been undertaken which confirms that the fence will safeguard the daylight currently enjoyed

by residents. While there may be a visual impact, it is considered that appropriate materials and finishes will ensure that any visual impacts are limited in terms of their impact on the amenity of residents.

- 7.4.41 The submitted Design and Access Statement provides further details demonstrating that the submitted scheme is based on a clear understanding of the character and local distinctiveness of the area and confirms that the proposed railway station would make a positive contribution to place-making and environmental improvement.
- 7.4.42 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy QOP1 of the emerging Northumberland Local Plan.

#### **Policy QOP2: Good Design and Amenity**

- 7.4.43 Policy QOP2 states that development will be required to provide a high standard of amenity for existing and future users of the development itself and preserve the amenity of those living in, working in or visiting the local area
- 7.4.44 Development which would result in unacceptable adverse impacts on the amenity of neighbouring uses, in terms of both individual and cumulative impacts, will not be supported.
- 7.4.45 The design of the proposed railway station at Bedlington Station has been informed by a detailed assessment of the potential impacts on the amenity of nearby and adjacent properties, and residents. The design has been based on a sound understanding of the site and adjacent land uses, and in ensuring that the scheme takes account of the amenity of neighbouring land uses etc. Careful consideration has been given to the impacts of the scheme on sensitive receptors, including Sleekburn House and proposals for mitigating adverse impacts form part of the submission.
- 7.4.46 The thematic surveys and assessments submitted in support of the planning application including the submitted daylight assessment and the noise and vibration assessment demonstrates that the scheme would not have a significant adverse impact on neighbouring land uses – subject to appropriate mitigation. The scheme will seek to incorporate appropriate mitigation, the precise details of which will be agreed through the discharge of relevant conditions on a planning permission.
- 7.4.47 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy QOP2 of the emerging Northumberland Local Plan.

#### **Policy QOP4: Landscaping and Trees**

- 7.4.48 Policy QOP4 states that where relevant, new development will be expected to incorporate well-designed landscaping and respond appropriately to any existing landscape features. Development proposals should ensure that:

Landscaping design is of a high quality, in accordance with the principles set out in Policy QOP1;

- Existing features which contribute towards the character of the area, or amenity, are retained wherever possible and sympathetically incorporated into the overall design of the scheme;
- Any hard or soft landscaping is appropriate, functional and well-integrated into the design of the development;
- Trees, and other spaces and features that provide green and blue infrastructure, are preserved, enhanced and introduced into the landscaping scheme wherever possible;

7.4.49 The design of the scheme has been informed by a survey of the trees: within, adjacent to, and nearby to the site, and by the preparation of an Arboricultural Impact Assessment. These documents are submitted with the application.

7.4.50 The design of the scheme has been informed by the Landscape Appraisal of the site and surroundings. This document is submitted with the application.

7.4.51 These surveys, assessments and appraisals have been used to guide the proposals and in particular to guide the; removal of trees and shrubs from within the site, and the provision of a soft landscaping scheme. The application is supported by an indicative landscaping scheme which seeks to retain and/or replace existing trees, wherever possible. An indication of the landscape proposals and the justification for tree removals are set out in the submitted landscaping scheme and arboricultural reports.

7.4.52 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy QOP4 of the emerging Northumberland Local Plan.

#### **Policy QOP6: Delivering well-designed places**

7.4.53 Policy QOP6 states that proposals are expected to meet the local design expectations set out in design policies within the Plan, the Northumberland Design Guide, and any other design guidance. Proposals are expected to respond to any character assessments that form part of or support the Plan.

7.4.54 The proposed railway station at Bedlington Station has been designed based on a sound understanding of the defining characteristics of the site and the adjacent land uses. The scheme has evolved based on discussions with local authority officers and other key stakeholders to ensure the design of the scheme suitably reflects the wider ambitions of those stakeholders.

7.4.55 The proposed railway station at Bedlington Station is supported by a Design and Access Statement which provides a summary of the design evolution process. The Design and Access Statement should be read in conjunction with this Planning Statement and the submitted Statement of Community Engagement to provide a comprehensive overview of how the submitted scheme has evolved to take account of the observations, guidance and comments received from the local planning authority and other key stakeholders.



- 7.4.56 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy QOP6 of the emerging Northumberland Local Plan.

**Policy TRAI: Promoting sustainable connections**

- 7.4.57 Policy TRAI states that the council will support development that:
- Promotes a spatial distribution which creates accessible development, reduces the need to travel by car, and maximises the use of sustainable modes of transport;
  - Promotes good design principles in respect of the permeability, connectivity and legibility of buildings and public spaces; and inclusive access;
  - Promotes sustainable transport choices, including supporting, providing and connecting to networks for walking, cycling and public transport; and infrastructure that supports the use of low and ultra low emission vehicles;
  - Ensures delivery of cycle parking and supporting infrastructure;
  - Protects, enhances and supports public rights of way;
  - Supports the delivery of reliable, safe and efficient transport networks, in partnership with other organisations, service providers and developers;
  - Requires development to be designed to enable charging of plug-in and other ultra low emission vehicles in safe, accessible, convenient locations; and
  - Requires development proposals which generate significant amounts of movements to be supported by a Transport Assessment/ Transport Statement, and Travel Plans, and where appropriate, delivery/servicing plans.
- 7.4.58 The proposed railway station at Bedlington Station is an integral part of the proposed re-introduction of passenger services on the Northumberland Line. The scheme includes the provision of measures to encourage walking and cycling to and from the station. The proposed development would promote greater use of sustainable transport modes, encouraging rail travel for car users for either all or part of their journey to destinations including Northumberland, North Tyneside and Newcastle City Centre; helping to reduce the growth and reliance on car borne journeys. The scheme also provides measures to facilitate vehicular access to the station for elderly and mobility impaired users, to ensure the station is accessible for all.
- 7.4.59 The submitted Transport Assessment provides a detailed review of the predicted impacts of the proposed development on the local highway network, confirming that the proposed development would not result in a detrimental impact on the operation of the highway network and could alleviate pressure on the local highway network through encouraging an increased number of trips by rail.

7.4.60 In summary, the proposed railway station at Bedlington Station is anticipated to encourage a modal shift toward more sustainable modes, benefiting both journey times for users of the road and rail network and improved cycle and walking routes.

7.4.61 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy TRA1 of the emerging Northumberland Local Plan.

**Policy TRA2: The effects of development on the transport network**

7.4.62 Policy TRA2 states that, amongst other things, all developments affecting the transport network will be required to:

- Provide effective and safe access and egress to the existing transport network
- Facilitate the safe use of the network, including suitable crossing points, footways and dedicated provision for cyclists where necessary.

7.4.63 The proposed railway station at Bedlington Station is an integral part of the proposed re-introduction of passenger services on the Northumberland Line. Given its nature, a railway station, the proposed development will encourage the use of public transport. The scheme includes the provision of measures to encourage walking and cycling to and from the station. The scheme also provides measures to facilitate vehicular access to the station for elderly and mobility impaired users, to ensure the station is accessible for all.

7.4.64 The proposed railway station would be available to serve both existing and new developments and would promote walking and cycling, through improvements to pedestrian crossing facilities and provision of cycle parking infrastructure at the site. Further, given the nature of the scheme, the proposed development would promote greater use of sustainable transport modes, encouraging rail travel for car users for either all or part of their journey to destinations including Northumberland, North Tyneside and Newcastle City Centre; helping to reduce the growth and reliance on car borne journeys.

7.4.65 The submitted Transport Assessment provides a detailed review of the predicted impacts of the proposed development on the local highway network, confirming that the proposed development would not result in a detrimental impact on the operation of the highway network and could alleviate pressure on the local highway network through encouraging an increased number of trips by rail.

7.4.66 In summary, the proposed railway station at Bedlington Station is anticipated to encourage a modal shift toward more sustainable modes, benefiting both journey times for users of the road and rail network and providing environmental improvements to regional air quality, and improved cycle and walking routes.

7.4.67 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy TRA2 of the emerging Northumberland Local Plan.

#### **Policy TRA4: Parking provision in new development**

- 7.4.68 Policy TRA4 states that an appropriate amount of off-street vehicle parking sufficient to serve new development shall be made available in safe, accessible and convenient locations prior to the development, as a whole or in part, being brought into use. Vehicle parking shall be provided in accordance with the parking standards set out in Appendix D of the Local Plan, or other such local standards set out in made neighbourhood plans which will be given priority in determining the appropriate amount of parking required.
- 7.4.69 The proposed railway station at Bedlington Station seeks to provide appropriate access for all users, with priority given to encouraging walking and cycling to the station. It is acknowledged that not all users are able to walk and/or cycle to and from the station. For elderly and disabled users, it may be necessary to arrive at or depart from the station by car. The proposed station therefore provides appropriate vehicular access and car parking, the extent of which has been the subject of pre-application discussions with both planning and highway authority officers.
- 7.4.70 The proposed station has been designed to ensure safe and convenient access is available for all modes. The submitted Transport Assessment demonstrates that the scheme, including the proposed amount of car parking, is considered to be acceptable from a highway capacity and safety perspective.
- 7.4.71 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy TRA4 of the emerging Northumberland Local Plan.

#### **Policy TRA5: Rail transport and safeguarding facilities**

- 7.4.72 Policy TRA5 states that development which would prevent the reintroduction of passenger rail services on the Northumberland Line along with associated stations, facilities and access to them from adjacent highways, and continued rail freight use of the Northumberland Line, its associated branch lines (including the branch line from Bedlington to Morpeth via Choppington, the Butterwell line north of Ashington and the line from Woodhorn to Newbiggin-by-the-Sea) and supporting infrastructure will not be supported.
- 7.4.73 Sites for stations have been identified and land will be safeguarded at the following locations:
- a. Woodhorn
  - b. Ashington
  - c. Bedlington Station
  - d. Blyth Bebside
  - e. South Newsham
  - f. Seaton Delaval

g. Seghill

7.4.74 The proposed railway station at Bedlington Station is an integral component, and proposed to be delivered as part of, the Northumberland Line scheme. The scheme is therefore specifically supported by Policy TRA5. The delivery of the new station will support and facilitate the council's ambitions for the re-introduction of passenger services on the Ashington, Blyth and Tyne Line.

7.4.75 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy TRA5 of the emerging Northumberland Local Plan.

**Policy ENVI: Approaches to assessing the impact of development on the natural, historic and built environment**

7.4.76 Policy ENVI states that the character and significance of Northumberland's distinctive and valued natural, historic and built environments, will be conserved, protected and enhanced by:

7.4.77 Giving appropriate weight to the statutory purposes and special qualities of the hierarchy of international, national and local designated and non-designated nature and historic conservation assets or sites and their settings;

7.4.78 Protecting Northumberland's most important landscapes and applying a character-based approach to, as appropriate, manage, protect or plan landscape across the whole County.

7.4.79 The proposed railway station at Bedlington Station has been designed based on a sound understanding of the site and its context, including consideration of the impacts on adjacent land uses. The planning application is supported by detailed surveys and assessments which consider the likely effect of the scheme on natural, historic and built environment receptors, confirming that the scheme would not have a significant adverse impact on those receptors. The supporting surveys and assessments that form part of this application confirm there are no Conservation Areas or designations of landscape or townscape value either within or adjacent the application site. The scheme will improve access to Northumberland's distinctive and values natural, historic and built environments, helping to ensure they can continue to be continued by this and future generations, which will assist in the conservation, protection and enhancement of such assets.

7.4.80 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy ENVI of the emerging Northumberland Local Plan.

**Policy ENV2: Biodiversity and geodiversity**

7.4.81 Policy ENV2 states that development proposals should minimize the impacts on biodiversity and geodiversity and net gains should be secured.

7.4.82 The proposed railway station at Bedlington Station has been designed based on a sound understanding of the ecological and wider environmental sensitivity of the site and adjacent

land. The planning application is supported by appropriate ecological and other assessments which demonstrate that the scheme will not adversely impact on biodiversity and wildlife networks; opportunities for habitat and landscaping improvement, including appropriate mitigation, are to be provided. It is anticipated that the scheme will incorporate measures to improve the biodiversity value of the site, including sensitive landscaping proposals and the installation of bat and bird boxes. The project would be content to accept suitably worded conditions for further details regarding such measures.

- 7.4.83 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy ENV2 of the emerging Northumberland Local Plan.

#### **Policy ENV7: Historic environment and heritage assets**

- 7.4.84 Policy ENV7 supports the NPPF position on historic assets in that decisions affecting a heritage asset will be based on a sound understanding of the significance of that asset and any impact of any proposal upon that significance.
- 7.4.85 The proposed railway station at Bedlington Station has been designed based on a detailed understanding of the existing and historic site conditions. This includes an appraisal of local features that contribute to local character and distinctiveness, and by identifying the needs of all anticipated future users of the railway station. It is also informed by and advice of all stakeholders including Network Rail, the local planning authority, the local highway authority, residents, businesses and local politicians.
- 7.4.86 The submitted Design and Access Statement provides further details demonstrating that the submitted scheme is based on a clear understanding of the character and local distinctiveness of the area and confirms that the proposed railway station would make a positive contribution to place-making and environmental improvement. The scheme would not have a detrimental impact on the significance on any heritage assets.
- 7.4.87 The planning application is supported by a Heritage Statement which demonstrates that the scheme would not detract from the significance of any designated or non-designated heritage assets.
- 7.4.88 The application site includes existing station buildings. Those buildings are to be retained, but are not proposed to be used as part of the proposed development – discussions are ongoing with Network Rail, Northumberland County Council and other stakeholders to explore future opportunities to utilise those buildings.
- 7.4.89 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy ENV7 of the emerging Northumberland Local Plan.

#### **Policy WAT3: Flooding**

- 7.4.90 Policy WAT3 states that development proposals will be required to demonstrate how they will minimise flood risk to people, property and infrastructure from all potential sources.

- 7.4.91 The proposed railway station at Bedlington Station has been designed based on a sound understanding of the identified risk of flooding to the site from all sources. Appropriate drainage is incorporated within the submitted designs. The submitted Flood Risk Assessment and Surface Water Drainage Strategy demonstrates that flood risk to people, property and infrastructure from all sources will be suitably mitigated and managed as part of the proposed development.
- 7.4.92 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy WAT3 of the emerging Northumberland Local Plan.

**Policy WAT4: Sustainable Drainage Systems**

- 7.4.93 Policy WAT4 SuDS should be incorporated within all development where it is necessary to manage surface water drainage, unless there are exceptional circumstances.
- 7.4.94 The proposed railway station at Bedlington Station has been designed to incorporate appropriate drainage arrangements. The submitted Flood Risk Assessment and Surface Water Drainage Strategy provides further details on the proposed drainage arrangements.
- 7.4.95 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy WAT4 of the emerging Northumberland Local Plan.

**Policy POL1: Unstable and contaminated land**

- 7.4.96 Policy POL1 states that development proposals will be supported where it can be demonstrated that unacceptable risks from land instability and contamination will be prevented and that measures can be taken to effectively mitigate the impacts.
- 7.4.97 The proposed railway station at Bedlington Station is supported by various ground investigations and contaminated land assessments, which are submitted in support of the planning application, to demonstrate that land instability and contamination issues will be appropriately mitigated and managed as part of the proposed development.
- 7.4.98 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy POL1 of the emerging Northumberland Local Plan.

**Policy POL2: Pollution and air, soil and water quality**

- 7.4.99 Policy POL2 states that development proposals that may cause pollution of water, air or soil, either individually or cumulatively, are required to incorporate measures to prevent or reduce their pollution so as not to cause nuisance or unacceptable impacts on the environment, people or biodiversity. Development proposed where pollution levels are unacceptable, and unable to be mitigated to acceptable levels, will not be supported.
- 7.4.100 The proposed railway station at Bedlington Station is supported by various air quality and contaminated land assessments, which are submitted in support of the planning

application, to demonstrate that the development is not at risk from nor would it result in unacceptable impacts on the environment, people or biodiversity.

- 7.4.101 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy POL2 of the emerging Northumberland Local Plan.

**Policy INF5: Open space and facilities for sport and recreation**

- 7.4.102 The total site area within the red line boundary is 2.7 hectares. 0.21 hectares of this site is designated as amenity greenspace under Policy INF5 of the Emerging Northumberland Local Plan.
- 7.4.103 Policy INF5 states that development policies would not be supported unless one of identified exceptions apply including '*an excess of provision in quantitative and qualitative terms is clearly demonstrated*'
- 7.4.104 The development proposes the loss of a 0.21ha site of amenity greenspace on 'Ravensworth Terrace'.
- 7.4.105 The Open Space, Sport and Recreational facilities PPG17 Assessment 2011 (as amended in 2018)<sup>16</sup> assessment identifies the following minimum standards should be achieved to provide appropriate provision for amenity greenspace in the county:

**Quantity**– To ensure provision does not fall below the current level of 1.09 ha per 1,000 population,

**Quality**– To achieve a minimum standard of 48%,

**Accessibility**–To provide amenity greenspace with 600m or 8 minutes travel time of where people live.

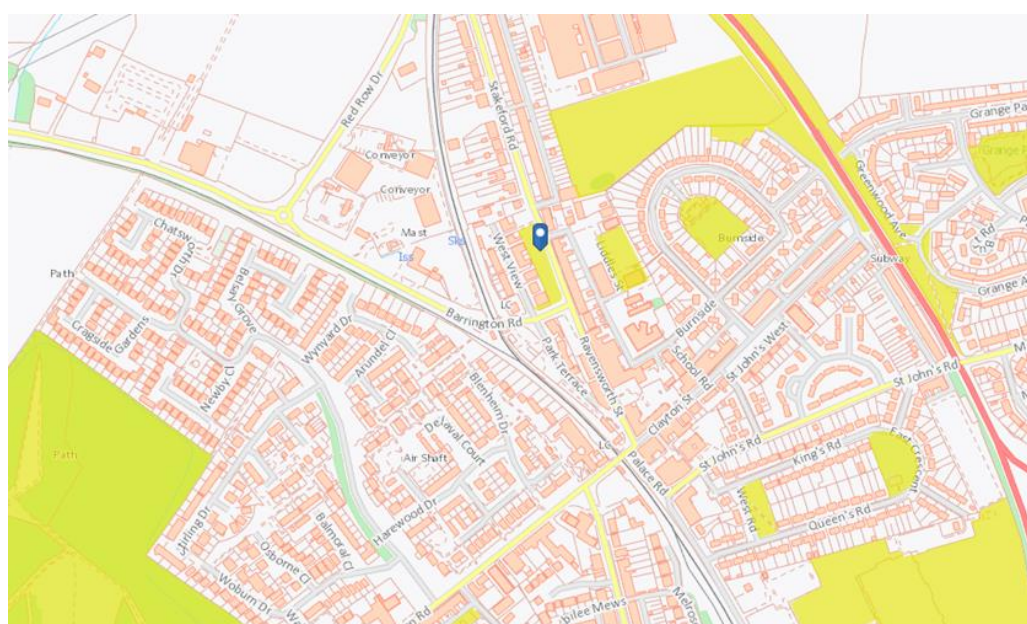
- 7.4.106 The aforementioned assessment identifies that South East Northumberland currently provides for 1.4 Ha of amenity greenspace per 1000 population. This is higher than the identified minimum standard of 1.09ha. As such, the assessment identifies that South East Northumberland has a surplus of amenity greenspace. On this basis, is considered the removal of a 0.21 Ha site would not significantly impact on the availability of amenity greenspace in the local area.
- 7.4.107 The assessment identifies that 98% of residents in South East Northumberland are located within 600 metres of open space. This is significantly higher than the north (75%) and the west (58%) of Northumberland.

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<sup>16</sup> Northumberland County Council (2011) PPG17 open space, sport and recreation assessment (as amended in 2018) p106



- 7.4.108 Northumberland County Council's Open Space Assessment identifies that there are two additional sites of amenity greenspace located within 500 metres of the site. A site, referred to as 'Bedlington the 1<sup>st</sup> station' is located approximately 70 metres to the east of the site of the proposed car park. A site referred to as 'Burnside, Bedlington Station' is located approximately 170 metres to the east of the site.
- 7.4.109 There is an additional site of amenity greenspace referred to as 'A1147 Corridor Bedlington' which is located approximately 500m to the east of the site of the proposed car park. This is a 1.72ha site which is identified has having a quality rating of 54.24%, as such is considered to be of high quality. Whilst the site of the proposed car park has a quality rating of 64.76% it is considered the removal of the site as open space would not contribute to a significant reduction in the standards for accessibility within the local area (see Figure 7.1).



*Figure 7.1 Extract from Emerging Northumberland Local Plan (Policy INF5)*

- 7.4.110 An optioneering exercise has been undertaken which identifies the Protected Open Space as the only site which was both available and capable of accommodating the car parking demand forecast identified in the Transport Assessment submitted in support of this application.
- 7.4.111 To inform the options for car parking, parking capacity surveys were undertaken in July 2019 to review the use of existing parking in close proximity of the proposed station site. This review included parking on Clayton Street, Ravensworth Street, and Melrose & Jubilee Terrace. The survey identified that the existing car park on Ravensworth Street is at over capacity, which has resulted in informal parking adjacent to the car park. The study sought to determine if additional spaces could be provided in the existing car park. However, a reconfiguration of the site would require car parking to accord with up-to-date parking standards. As such, the review concluded that formalising the car park would result in a reduction of capacity, not an increase.



- 7.4.112 Whilst the existing car park on Melrose Villas was identified to have some capacity, this is not sufficient to accommodate the demand for station parking. The study concluded that parking would need to be provided as part of the proposed development. Further details of the study undertaken are available in the Design and Access Statement submitted in support of this application.
- 7.4.113 Alternative locations to accommodate parking in close proximity to the station are limited by existing built development and other constraints. The areas immediately surrounding the station is constrained by Barrington Road to the north, Park Terrace to the east, Station Road to the south, and properties on Blenheim Road which are directly adjacent to the existing railway corridor.
- 7.4.114 Sites outside of the immediate area of the station were considered, including land located adjacent to Barrington Road, west of the level crossing. However, this site required passengers to cross two level crossings to gain access to the northbound platform. As such, this option was not considered viable as the solution would increase risk to pedestrians, raise concerns over accessibility and inclusivity. There was also concern that this option would increase the risk of trespass on the railway line as a shortcut to access the platforms. Furthermore, the site is an existing operational business. As a result of the factors considered above, this site was discounted.
- 7.4.115 The assessments undertaken have concluded that there is not sufficient capacity to accommodate the demand forecast in existing car parks within Bedlington. On this basis, it is considered that additional car parking is required to facilitate the operation of the station. Furthermore, there are no alternative sites identified within a reasonable walking distance of the site capable of accommodating the anticipated demand for station parking. The site on Ravensworth Street provides sufficient land to accommodate the demand and is within a reasonable walking distance of the station.
- 7.4.116 As such, the submitted scheme has sought to balance the competing interests of safeguarding public open space, together with the strategic public benefits that will result from the new railway station development, for which there is a requirement to provide adequate parking and safe footways and highway access arrangements. On balance, it is considered that the significant public benefits of the proposed railway station outweigh the harm resulting from the loss of a modest quantity of public open space. There is a clear and convincing case presented within the submitted application to demonstrate that the loss of the public open space is essential to enable provision of the new railway station development.
- 7.4.117 In conclusion, it is considered an excess of provision in quantitative and qualitative terms is clearly demonstrated. Therefore, the proposed development is considered to be compliant with Policy INF5.
- 7.4.118 Notwithstanding the above, the applicant is content to agree in principle to the making of a compensatory provision to offset the loss of the open space required to facilitate the development which is the subject of this application. The applicant is committed to working

with the local authority during determination of the application to seek to identify suitable compensatory provision.

## **7.5 Accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework**

7.5.1 The NPPF states at paragraph 7 that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. There are three interdependent, overarching objectives that the planning system must perform in order to contribute to sustainable development:

- an economic objective;
- a social objective; and
- an environmental objective

7.5.2 The proposed railway station at Bedlington Station would deliver economic, social and environmental benefits and thereby supports the planning system in fulfilling its fundamental purpose: to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development.

7.5.3 The economic benefits of the scheme include:

- The development will facilitate increased access for residents and local people to employment and training opportunities throughout the North East. The provision of passenger rail services at this location, including specialist provision for mobility impaired and disabled users, may also encourage employers to locate in this part of Northumberland, given its improved accessibility and connectivity to the wider North East conurbation.
- The development will provide a convenient multimodal transport interchange which integrates the train services and railway station with buses, cycling, walking, private cars and taxis.
- The development will facilitate movement between Bedlington and the wider North East conurbation, improving access to employment opportunities for local people.
- The proposed railway station will help to alleviate congestion on the local highway network, presenting a potential cost saving in journey times for staff and visitors to local businesses and those travelling further afield, supporting economic growth in Bedlington, Northumberland and the North East more widely.
- The proposed railway station at Bedlington Station will increase footfall in the local area, which will support local businesses.

- The significant investment into new and upgraded transport infrastructure will attract private sector investment, enhance economic vitality and encourage further economic growth in Northumberland.

#### 7.5.4 The social benefits of the scheme include:

- The development will improve journey times for residents, local people and those wishing to travel from Bedlington to destinations further afield including Newcastle City Centre.
- The development will increase the ability of residents and local people to gain access to employment and training opportunities
- The development will provide a safe and secure railway station, with appropriate lighting and CCTV camera provision to encourage all parts of the community to use the transport services and the railway station
- The development will incorporate lift and stepped access to both platforms and signage to the railway station suitable for users with disabilities
- The development would provide infrastructure that would encourage sustainable travel and would accommodate projected future growth in Bedlington in terms of population, employment and housing
- The development will conserve and enhance the cultural heritage of Bedlington. The station has been designed based on a sound understanding of local character and distinctiveness.
- The development will contribute to building strong, vibrant and healthy communities by encouraging social inclusion, improving the accessibility of local services and the use of sustainable travel modes
- The development will make it physically more simple and easy to use and access public transport infrastructure in Bedlington. The consequential modal shift will assist in improving regional air quality
- The scheme will deliver environmental and physical improvements to the site, and, in doing so, it will assist in changing perceptions of the area and of Bedlington.

#### 7.5.5 The environmental benefits of the scheme include:

- The development will improve the physical accessibility and connectivity of transport infrastructure for all users
- The development will provide a modern environment which is attractive and safe for pedestrians, cyclists and motorists

- The development will provide a safe and secure railway station, with appropriate lighting and CCTV camera provision to encourage all parts of the community to use the transport services and the railway station
- The pedestrian spaces within the site have been designed to be accessible for all users, especially those with visual and physical limitations
- The development will conserve and enhance the cultural heritage of Bedlington. The station has been designed based on a sound understanding of local character and distinctiveness.
- The development will make it physically more simple and convenient to use and access public transport infrastructure in Bedlington. The consequential modal shift will assist in improving regional air quality
- The development will be undertaken in accordance with a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) and a Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP), which will minimise the environmental impacts traditionally associated with urban redevelopment schemes.
- The development will decrease dependence on the private car for residents and local people, in so doing it will reduce carbon emissions
- The development will implement a strategy for providing a structured approach to landscaping at the site; removing invasive non-native species and introducing native shrub and tree planting

7.5.6 The proposed railway station at Bedlington Station is a sustainable transport project which will deliver a range of economic, social and environmental benefits; supporting the fundamental objectives of the planning system as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework. The scheme can therefore be considered to represent a sustainable development. The NPPF holds a presumption in favour of sustainable development, for decision-taking this means approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay.

### **Promoting Sustainable Transport**

7.5.7 An integral component in delivering sustainable development and achieving wider sustainability and health objectives is the promotion of sustainable development, as set out in Section 9 of the Framework. This section states that applications for development should:

- give priority first to pedestrian and cycle movements, both within the scheme and with neighbouring areas; and second – so far as possible – to facilitating access to high quality public transport, with layouts that maximise the catchment area for bus or other public transport services, and appropriate facilities that encourage public transport use;

- address the needs of people with disabilities and reduced mobility in relation to all modes of transport;
- create places that are safe, secure and attractive – which minimise the scope for conflicts between pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles, avoid unnecessary street clutter, and respond to local character and design standards;
- allow for the efficient delivery of goods, and access by service and emergency vehicles; and
- be designed to enable charging of plug-in and other ultra-low emission vehicles in safe, accessible and convenient locations

- 7.5.8 The proposed development has given due regard to the above criteria; the scheme has been designed to encourage pedestrian and cycle movements both within the site and adjacent to the site. The scheme will provide safe and secure cycle parking on-site; a pedestrian link is to be provided to the station car park from the existing road bridge and the layout of the car park has been designed to ensure safe and convenient pedestrian routes are provided for those entering and exiting the railway station.
- 7.5.9 Given the nature of the proposed development, a railway station, it is considered the scheme would facilitate access to public transport. The location of the proposed station already benefits from good access to the local highway network and would therefore be possible to integrate with other public transport modes.
- 7.5.10 The proposed development has been designed following workshops with disabled user forums, which have assisted in identifying and understanding barriers to access for users with visual, auditory, physical and other impairments. The feedback received has been used by the designers to ensure the proposed railway station is accessible to all users. The proposed platforms will be accessed by lifts, steps and a pedestrian footbridge and a generous amount of disabled car parking is proposed in close proximity to the platforms to ensure the station is designed to promote access for all users.
- 7.5.11 The proposed station designs have evolved to take account of discussions with both Northumbria Police and the British Transport Police. The proposed layout, lighting, CCTV camera provision and landscaping proposals have been designed to seek to ‘design out’ crime wherever possible. The proposed cycle parking provision and landscaping are based on the detailed responses received from residents, businesses, local authority officers, local politicians and other stakeholders in the period prior to submission of this planning application.
- 7.5.12 Furthermore, Electric Vehicle Charging will be provided in the station car park, thus encouraging sustainable forms of onward travel.
- 7.5.13 The development is therefore considered to accord with the aims of objectives of section 9 of the NPPF, given that the proposed development by its very nature is promoting access to and use of sustainable modes of transport.

- 7.5.14 It should also be noted that paragraph 109 of the Framework states:
- 7.5.15 “Development should only be prevented or refused on highway grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.”
- 7.5.16 The Transport Assessment submitted in support of this planning application has been based on a scope agreed with the local highway authority. The Transport Assessment demonstrates that the proposed development would not have an unacceptable impact on highway safety, nor would the residual cumulative impacts on the road network be severe. Consequently, it is considered there are no highway grounds that should be used to seek to prevent or refuse the planning application.
- 7.5.17 In summary, the proposed railway station at Bedlington Station would provide residents and local people with improved access to Northumberland, North Tyneside and Newcastle City Centre. It would provide those without access to the private car with an alternative to the bus, and those with access to the private car with an opportunity to avoid and help reduce congestion on the local road network. The proposed development has been designed to encourage access to the station by all users, including pedestrians, cyclists, motorists and disabled users. The proposed development has been the subject of a detailed assessment of the predicted traffic and transport-related impacts resulting from the development. The assessment has confirmed that the proposed development would not impinge upon the safe operation or capacity of the highway network. The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Section 9 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

### **Building a strong, competitive economy**

- 7.5.18 The NPPF states at paragraph 80 that:
- 7.5.19 “Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development.”
- 7.5.20 Given the nature of the proposed development, a railway station, there are no other locations that are either available or suitable to provide a railway station in Bedlington. The locational constraints on certain types of development is recognised by the NPPF at paragraph 82 which states:
- 7.5.21 “Planning policies and decisions should recognise and address the specific locational requirements of different sectors. This includes making provision for clusters or networks of knowledge and data-driven, creative or high technology industries; and for storage and distribution at a variety of scales and in suitably accessible locations.”
- 7.5.22 There is a significant amount of land within Bedlington, and within close proximity to the proposed railway station site, that is allocated for or has consent to deliver new housing and industrial development. Those housing and industrial sites would derive significant benefits from being located within close proximity to the proposed railway station.

- 7.5.23 The improved access to and connectivity of the housing and industrial sites could encourage businesses to locate and grow in Bedlington. The proposed railway station could also incentivise businesses to locate in Bedlington. The increased ease of access and connectivity to Northumberland, North Tyneside and Newcastle City Centre makes Bedlington a more attractive location as it is more easily accessible for staff and customers. The fact there is not currently a passenger rail service that serves the area could impede investment in the local area. The proposed railway station at Bedlington Station could act as a catalyst for further inward investment and the continued regeneration of Northumberland more widely.
- 7.5.24 In summary, it is considered that the proposed railway station could assist in stimulating sustainable economic growth in Bedlington. The substantial investment to deliver the railway station is anticipated to assist in unlocking the development potential of the sites which are proposed to be allocated for new housing and industrial development, increasing employment opportunities in the local area. The proposed railway stations will create direct employment opportunities during the construction phase and onwards associated with the operation and maintenance of the station and indirect employment opportunities, through improving access to employment opportunities further afield and increasing the attractiveness of Bedlington as a destination for businesses looking to relocate.
- 7.5.25 The development is therefore considered to be in accordance with the aims and objectives of Section 6 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

#### **Achieving well-designed places**

- 7.5.26 The NPPF states at paragraph 124 that:
- 7.5.27 “The creation of high quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities. Being clear about design expectations, and how these will be tested, is essential for achieving this. So too is effective engagement between applicants, communities, local planning authorities and other interests throughout the process.”
- 7.5.28 The proposed railway station at Bedlington Station has been designed based on a sound understanding of both the historic and existing conditions of the site, the surrounding area and the aspirations of Network Rail, the local planning authority, the local highway authority and other key stakeholders. The scheme has been finessed to take account of comments and observations from residents and local politicians to the preliminary designs which were the subject of an extensive public engagement campaign.
- 7.5.29 The proposed layout, scale, height and extent of the proposed development has been informed based on an understanding of the requirements of a 21st Century railway station, together with an understanding of the context of the site to ensure that the station design reinforces the local character and distinctiveness of the site through integration with existing pedestrian, cycle and vehicular routes and being respectful to adjacent land uses.

- 7.5.30 The Design and Access Statement which is submitted in support of this planning application demonstrates that a detailed appraisal of different design options was undertaken to understand the implications of various layouts and access arrangements, culminating in the submitted scheme which is considered to present the optimum viable layout within the budget and other constraints for the scheme.
- 7.5.31 In summary, the proposed railway station is considered to promote high levels of sustainability through encouraging the use of a more sustainable transport mode and will help raise the standard of design more generally in this area, whilst ensuring coherence with the overall form and layout of the surrounding area, in accordance with paragraph 131. Accordingly, great weight should be given to the designs which promote high levels of sustainability. The proposed development is therefore considered to accord with the aims and objectives of Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

## 7.6 The Planning Balance

- 7.6.1 With reference to the above planning assessment, it is considered that the proposed development accords with the relevant policies of the Northumberland Local Plan as summarised in Figure 7.1 below and the Development Plan as a whole. The ecology, noise, air quality, contaminated land, flood risk and other surveys and assessments submitted in support of the planning application identify the various environmental effects associated with the proposed development but conclude that with the adoption of appropriate mitigation measures during both the construction and operational phases, there would be no significant adverse effects as a result of the proposed development.
- 7.6.2 The approval of the planning application would facilitate improved access and connectivity both to and from Bedlington for residents, businesses, and other groups. The scheme would improve access to employment, educational and leisure opportunities across Northumberland, as well as North Tyneside and Newcastle City Centre.
- 7.6.3 The scheme would encourage a modal shift away from, and thereby reduce reliance on, the private car which would alleviate congestion on the local highway network and would assist in improving regional air quality.
- 7.6.4 In addition to the proposed development's accordance with the adopted policies of the Development Plan, and the emerging policies of the Northumberland Local Plan, it is further considered that the proposed development accords with the relevant policies of the NPPF which is a material planning consideration.
- 7.6.5 For these reasons it is considered that the positive benefits of the proposed development outweigh any minimal harm and the application accords with the Development Plan, as summarised in Figure 7.2.

Northumberland Development Policy	
Principle of Development	The proposed development would provide a viable alternative to the private car, encouraging use of a



<b>Northumberland Development Policy</b>	
<b>Policy GP1, T1 (Wansbeck District Local Plan)</b>  <b>Policy STP1, STP8 TRA5 (Northumberland Local Plan Regulation 19 Draft)</b>	more sustainable mode of travel and assisting in delivering regional air quality and other improvements. The re-opening of the Northumberland Line to passenger rail services, of which the new station is an integral component, is specifically supported by the policies within the Northumberland Development Plan.
Design  <b>Policy GP4, GP31, GP32, GP35 (Wansbeck District Local Plan)</b>  <b>Policy QOP1, QOP2, QOP6, TRA1, TRA2 (Northumberland Local Plan Regulation 19 Draft)</b>	The submitted scheme aims to provide a high-quality, sustainable station that is well integrated within its surroundings and which takes opportunities to encourage walking and cycling both to and from the station. The submitted Design and Access Statement provides further details to demonstrate the evolution of the scheme to ensure the design suitably reflects the ambitions of the local planning authority and other key stakeholders. The scheme has given due consideration to the impacts (noise, daylight, visual amenity) on Sleekburn House and it is considered that appropriate mitigation is provided to safeguard the amenity of those residents.
Health and wellbeing  <b>Policy STP5 (Northumberland Local Plan Regulation 19 Draft)</b>	The scheme is designed to ensure that appropriate access is provided for all users, including elderly and disabled users. The scheme will improve access to employment and leisure opportunities for residents and will assist in improving regional air quality and reducing congestion on the local highway network.
Landscape  <b>Policy GP5, GP30, GP31, GP32 (Wansbeck District Local Plan)</b>  <b>Policy QOP4 (Northumberland Local Plan Regulation 19 Draft)</b>	The proposed development has been designed based on a sound understanding of the site and its context. The scheme will incorporate sensitive landscaping to ensure the scheme makes an appropriate contribution to the local area. The application is supported by a detailed Landscape Assessment. Further information regarding the loss of trees is available in the submitted Arboricultural Impact Assessment.
Transport and Access  <b>Policy GP4, T3, T4, T5, T6, T7 (Wansbeck District Local Plan)</b>  <b>Policy TRA1, TRA2, TRA4, TRA5 (Northumberland Local Plan Regulation 19 Draft)</b>	The proposed development has been designed to ensure safe and convenient access to the station is provided for all users – pedestrians, cyclists and motorists. The application is supported by a Transport Assessment which provides further details to demonstrate that the scheme is capable of being supported from both a highway safety and capacity perspective.
Ground Conditions  <b>Policy GP23, GP29 (Blyth LDF Core Strategy)</b>	The scheme has been designed based on an understanding of the existing ground conditions. A Phase I Geo-environmental Assessment has been submitted which provides further details on the

<b>Northumberland Development Policy</b>	
<b>Policy STP2, STP3, STP4, POL1 (Northumberland Local Plan Regulation 19 Draft)</b>	ground conditions, which have been used to inform the submitted proposals.
<p>Water Quality, Flood Risk and Drainage</p> <p><b>Policy GP22 (Wansbeck District Local Plan)</b></p> <p><b>Policy STP2, STP3, STP4, WAT3, WAT4 (Northumberland Local Plan Regulation 19 Draft)</b></p>	The scheme has been designed based on an understanding of the flood risk and drainage requirements of the site. Discussions with the LLFA have informed the submitted proposals. The application is supported by a detailed Flood Risk and Drainage Assessment which demonstrates that the site is not at risk of flooding and that appropriate drainage is provided.
<p>Open Space</p> <p><b>Policy REC2 (Wansbeck District Local Plan)</b></p> <p><b>Policy INF5 (Northumberland Local Plan Regulation 19 Draft)</b></p>	<p>This Planning Statement has demonstrated there is a surplus of amenity greenspace, in terms of both quality and quantity in the local area. The Landscape, Townscape and Visual Overview submitted in support of this planning application demonstrates that there would not be a significant loss to the community relating to visual amenity. The significant public benefits of the proposed railway station are considered to outweigh the limited harm resulting from the loss of a modest quantity of amenity greenspace, for which there is a demonstrable surplus in the local area.</p> <p>Notwithstanding the above, the applicant is content to agree in principle to the making of a compensatory provision to offset the loss of the open space required to facilitate the development which is the subject of this application. The applicant is committed to working with the local authority during determination of the application to seek to identify suitable compensatory provision.</p>
<p>Heritage</p> <p><b>Policy GP21 (Wansbeck District Local Plan)</b></p> <p><b>Policy ENV7 (Northumberland Local Plan Regulation 19 Draft)</b></p>	The Heritage Statement submitted in support of this application demonstrates that the scheme has been designed based on a sound understanding of significance of the historic assets which may be impacted. The assessment that there would not be a significant impact on designated and non-designated heritage assets. The assessment identifies that the railway line played a significant role in the growth of Bedlington and therefore the reinstatement of passenger travel is an opportunity to promote local heritage.

*Figure 7.2 Summary of policy compliance*

## 8 Material Considerations

### 8.1 Introduction

- 8.1.1 Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 8.1.2 A material consideration is a matter which should be taken into account in deciding a planning application, or on an appeal against a planning decision. There is no legal definition to prescribe those matters which have the potential to constitute 'material planning considerations'. Case law has held that any consideration that relates to the use and development of land is capable of being a material planning consideration. It is for the decision-maker to determine the weight to be apportioned to each of the considerations.
- 8.1.3 The purpose of this section is therefore to identify and summarise those other policy and guidance documents that do not form part of the statutory development plan that are of particular relevance to the determination of this planning application.

### 8.2 National Design Guide (2019)

- 8.2.1 Published in October 2019, the National Design Guide seeks to provide guidance to assist in the delivery of beautiful, enduring and successful places.
- 8.2.2 The National Design Guide recognises the importance of good design. To this end, the document sets out ten characteristics which ought to be used to assess the design credentials of development. The ten characteristics identified are said to contribute towards the cross-cutting themes for good design set out in the NPPF. The ten characteristics are:
- Context – enhances the surroundings.
  - Identity – attractive and distinctive.
  - Built form – a coherent pattern of development.
  - Movement – accessible and easy to move around.
  - Nature – enhanced and optimised.
  - Public spaces – safe, social and inclusive.
  - Uses – mixed and integrated.
  - Homes and buildings – functional, healthy and sustainable.
  - Resources – efficient and resilient.

- Lifespan – made to last.

- 8.2.3 The submitted Design and Access Statement demonstrates that the scheme has evolved to take account of the observations, guidance and comments received from the local planning authority officers, together with other key stakeholders including Network Rail. It is considered that the principles set out in the National Design Guide reinforce those principles set out in those design-specific policies contained within the development plan, which the submitted scheme is considered to accord with.
- 8.2.4 It is therefore considered that the National Design Guide can be given moderate weight in the determination of this planning application. The scheme is considered to represent a sustainable design that suitably takes account of the site context. It is considered that further details that pertain to design considerations, including external material finishes, can be the subject of suitably worded conditions on a planning permission for the scheme.

### **8.3 Northumberland Local Transport Plan (LTP3) (2011)**

- 8.3.1 The Northumberland Local Transport Plan 2011 – 2026 was adopted on 4th April 2011 as an interim strategy which will be refreshed following the council's adoption of the Northumberland Sustainable Community Strategy and the Northumberland Local Plan.
- 8.3.2 The LTP3 identifies at paragraph 3.68 that:
- “Of particular issue to South East Northumberland is the time it takes to travel into the neighbouring authorities of Tyne & Wear, a key source of employment for residents of Northumberland, and the cost associated with these journeys. For example, public transport journey times from Blyth and Ashington to Newcastle City Centre can take in excess of 40 minutes with a weekly bus pass costing between £15 and £20.”
- 8.3.3 To address such issues, the Northumberland LTP3 recognises that rail travel will have an increasingly important role in tackling congestion and supporting Northumberland's sustainable economic growth and prosperity.
- 8.3.4 Paragraph 6.29 of the LTP3 states that:
- “The County Council is committed to addressing rail issues in Northumberland through improved partnership working with a wide range of stakeholders. These include rail passengers and representative organisations, the Department for Transport, local authorities and regional partners, Network Rail, rail operators and regulatory bodies.”
- 8.3.5 Paragraph 6.33 also notes that the lack of available car parking at stations severely restricts passenger growth and demand for rail travel.
- 8.3.6 Paragraph 6.36 states that re-opening of the Ashington, Blyth and Tyne line to passenger services is one of the principal elements of the new rail strategy to be implemented in partnership with Network Rail and local rail operators over the period of the third LTP.

- 8.3.7 The scheme which is the subject of this application for planning permission would directly support the aims of the LTP3, to improve and encourage use of rails services in order to assist in reducing the economic, social and environmental impacts resulting from the highway congestion and journey time delays across South East Northumberland.
- 8.3.8 It is therefore considered that the Northumberland Local Transport Plan (LTP3) can be given substantial weight in the determination of this planning application. The scheme is considered to directly support the delivery of a scheme which is identified as a strategic transport priority for the council.

## **8.4 North East Combined Authority Transport Manifesto (2016)**

- 8.4.1 The North East Combined Authority was established in April 2014 and brought together the seven councils which serve County Durham, Gateshead, Newcastle, North Tyneside, Northumberland, South Tyneside and Sunderland. The ambition of NECA is to create the best possible conditions for growth in jobs, investment and living standards, making the North East an excellent place to live and work.
- 8.4.2 NECA recognises that effective transport networks are key to economic growth and opportunity for all. This includes links with the North East and connectivity with the rest of the UK, Europe and the rest of the world. The North East Combined Authority's ambition, as set out in its Transport Manifesto, is to provide affordable, attractive, reliable, safe, healthy transport choices for businesses, residents and visitors while enhancing the environment.
- 8.4.3 The NECA's Transport Manifesto supports the opening of new stations on existing rail lines, including the upgrading of freight-only sections for passenger use.
- 8.4.4 The scheme which is the subject of this application for planning permission would directly support the aims of the NECA's Transport Manifesto, to re-introduce passenger services on an existing freight line and to improve the accessibility and connectivity of South East Northumberland to the wider North East.
- 8.4.5 It is therefore considered that the NECA Transport Manifesto can be given moderate weight in the determination of this planning application. The scheme is considered to directly support the delivery of a scheme which is identified as a strategic transport priority for the North East Combined Authority.

## **8.5 Transport for the North Strategic Transport Plan (2019)**

- 8.5.1 Transport for the North (TfN) is the first statutory sub-national transport body in the United Kingdom. It was formed in 2018 to make the case for strategic transport improvements across the North of England. As a partnership, TfN brings the North's local transport authorities together with Network Rail, Highways England and HS2 Ltd and Central Government, to facilitate discussions on the transport infrastructure needed to drive transformational growth and rebalance the UK economy.

- 8.5.2 TfN's Strategic Transport Plan specifically supports the re-instatement of passenger services on the Northumberland Line, between Ashington and Blyth; this rail intervention is prioritised by TfN in the shorter term, in the context of the Department for Transport's Rail Network Enhancements Pipeline process.
- 8.5.3 The scheme which is the subject of this application for planning permission would directly support the aims of the TfN Strategic Transport Plan, to re-introduce passenger services on the Northumberland Line.
- 8.5.4 It is therefore considered that the TfN Strategic Transport Plan can be given moderate weight in the determination of this planning application. The scheme is considered to directly support the delivery of a scheme which is identified as a strategic transport priority for the Transport for the North.

## **8.6 The Road to Zero Strategy (2018)**

- 8.6.1 Whilst there are local policies pertaining to climate change within the Northumberland Local Plan, the climate crisis and the measures set out by Government in the 'Road to Zero: Next steps towards cleaner road transport and delivering our Industrial Strategy' is a material consideration in the determination of this planning application.
- 8.6.1 The Strategy states that in 2016, road transport accounted for 91% of UK greenhouse gas emissions in transport<sup>17</sup>.
- 8.6.2 The amount CO2 emissions per passenger per train is 14 grams. In contrast, a private car can produce 158 grams per passenger<sup>18</sup>. As such, a modal shift to public transport has the potential to dramatically decrease our national energy consumption.
- 8.6.3 The scheme which is the subject of this application for planning permission would support the aims of the 'Road to Zero' strategy, by seeking to establish a viable alternative to the private car that may encourage a modal shift from car to rail travel. Such a modal shift would likely result in regional air quality improvements.
- 8.6.4 It is therefore considered that the 'Road to Zero' strategy can be given moderate weight in the determination of this planning application. The scheme is considered to support the Government's ambitions to move toward zero emissions.

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<sup>17</sup> Page 28 The Road to Zero: Next steps towards cleaner road transport and delivering our Industrial Strategy (2018)

<sup>18</sup> P79 Transport for the North Strategic Transport Plan 2019

## **8.7 Northumberland Economic Strategy (2018)**

8.7.1 The Northumberland Economy Strategy 2019 – 2024 was formally approved by the council's cabinet in December 2018. The council's ambition as set out in the strategy is to deliver inclusive, industrial growth to support a more productive, prosperous economy.

8.7.2 Priority 5 of the Economic Strategy states that one of the key deliverables to better connect the county is:

“Invest in high quality passenger transport including the reopening of the Northumberland to Newcastle rail line to passengers.”

8.7.3 The scheme which is the subject of this application for planning permission would directly support the aims of the Northumberland Economic Strategy, to reopen the Northumberland Line to passenger services.

8.7.4 It is therefore considered that the Northumberland Economic Strategy can be given substantial weight in the determination of this planning application. The scheme is considered to directly support the delivery of a scheme which is identified as a strategic economic priority for the council.

## **8.8 Nexus Metro and Local Rail Strategy (2016)**

8.8.1 The Nexus Metro and Local Rail Strategy, produced in conjunction with the North East Combined Authority, sets out the proposals for the improved integration between local rail and Metro services, and the potential to exploit under-used and disused railway assets and alignments across the North East region.

8.8.2 The Metro and Local Rail Strategy identifies that the restoration of passenger rail services to the Blyth, Bedlington and Ashington areas is a strategic priority for the NECA because of the significant regenerative benefits of the scheme.

8.8.3 The strategy identifies that Northumberland Park would provide an interchange station to enable easy access between rail, Metro and local bus services – given that park and ride facilities are already available at the station.

It is therefore considered that the Metro and Local Rail Strategy can be given moderate weight in the determination of this planning application. The scheme is considered to directly support the delivery of a scheme which is identified as a strategic priority for both NECA and Nexus.

## **8.9 Summary**

8.9.1 It is considered that there are various considerations that are material to the determination of this planning application. This section has sought to identify and apportion due weight to

each of those considerations, to assist the local planning authority in the determination of this application.

- 8.9.2 It is considered that there are no material considerations that would be sufficient either individually or in conjunction with other considerations that would preclude the granting of planning permission for the submitted scheme.



## 9 Case for Planning Permission to be granted

### 9.1 Introduction

- 9.1.1 This section brings together the information presented within this planning statement and provides a reasoned conclusion for the support of the application.

### 9.2 Accordance with local and national policies

- 9.2.1 This planning statement has demonstrated that the proposed railway station and overall scheme accords with the relevant national and local planning policies.
- 9.2.2 This statement has identified the many and various economic, social and environmental benefits that will be delivered as a result of the proposed development, including the potential for the development to act as a catalyst for further investment and wider regeneration within Bedlington and South East Northumberland more widely.
- 9.2.3 The scheme will improve the opportunities for use of alternative modes of transport to the private car, helping to better meet the needs of those without access to the private car and encouraging those with access to the private car to consider using a more sustainable mode of travel, which will help reduce carbon emissions and deliver many environmental and health benefits including improving regional air quality.
- 9.2.4 The scheme represents a sustainable development; the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development and therefore this scheme should be supported.
- 9.2.5 The material considerations that pertain to the application have been identified. This has included demonstrating that there are no material considerations which would prevent the approval of the scheme.
- 9.2.6 It is requested that the scheme which is the subject of this planning application therefore be approved as submitted.

### 9.3 Benefits of the Scheme

- 9.3.1 This planning statement has demonstrated that the proposed railway station would accord with both local and national planning policies in terms of encouraging use of public transport through the provision of improved access to the railway network.
- 9.3.2 The proposed railway station at Bedlington Station will deliver a range of economic, social and environmental benefits.
- 9.3.3 The economic benefits of the scheme include:

- The scheme will deliver the transport infrastructure which is required to attract inward investment, create additional employment opportunities, enhance economic vitality and encourage further growth in South East Northumberland.
- The development will facilitate increased access to employment and training opportunities throughout South East Northumberland. The provision of passenger rail services at this location, could encourage employers to locate to this part of Bedlington especially given its proximity to the town centre and existing bus services.

#### 9.3.4 The social benefits of the scheme include:

- The scheme will improve journey times for residents, local people, and those wishing to travel from Bedlington to Newcastle, including onward journeys from Newcastle's central station.
- The development will provide a safe and secure railway station, with appropriate lighting and CCTV camera provision to encourage all parts of the community to use the transport services and the railway station.
- The nature of the scheme will encourage a sub-modal shift to more sustainable transport methods within the local area.
- The development will incorporate ramp and stepped access to the platform and signage to the railway suitable for users with disabilities.
- The development includes facilitating infrastructure improvements to the cycle and footways adjacent to the site, providing a safe and pleasant route for pedestrians and cyclists.
- The development would provide transport infrastructure that would encourage sustainable travel and would accommodate projected future growth in Bedlington in terms of population, employment and housing.
- The development will contribute to building strong, vibrant and healthy communities by encouraging social inclusion, improving the accessibility of local services and the use of sustainable travel modes.
- The development will make it physically simpler and more convenient to use and access public transport infrastructure in Bedlington. The consequential modal shift will assist in improving regional air quality.
- The scheme will deliver environmental and physical improvements to the site, in doing so it will assist in the regeneration of the area and of Bedlington more widely.

#### 9.3.5 The environmental benefits of the scheme include:

- Encouraging the use of healthy and sustainable modes of transport including walking, cycling and use of improved public transport.
- Facilitating a sub-modal shift to sustainable transport methods, reducing greenhouse gas emissions from a reduction of cars on the road network.
- The development will make it physically more convenient to use and access public transport infrastructure in Bedlington. The consequential modal shift will assist in improving regional air quality
- The scheme includes the installation of a sustainable urban drainage system which will alleviate flooding and allow the immediate area to accommodate extreme rainfall events with less risk of adverse impacts on adjacent land uses
- The development will be undertaken in accordance with a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) and a Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP), which will minimise the environmental impacts traditionally associated with urban redevelopment schemes.
- The development will decrease dependence on the private car for residents and local people, in so doing it will reduce carbon emissions
- The development will implement a strategy for providing a structured approach to landscaping at the site; introducing native shrub and tree planting

9.3.6 The economic, social and environmental benefits associated with the development would be delivered jointly and simultaneously. As such, the proposed development can be considered to represent a sustainable development.

9.3.7 It is therefore requested that planning permission be granted for the scheme as submitted.

## 9.4 Conditions

9.4.1 Planning conditions, when used properly, can enhance the quality of development and enable development to proceed where it would otherwise have been necessary to refuse planning permission, by mitigating the adverse effects.

9.4.2 The objectives of planning are best served when the power to impose conditions on a planning permission is exercised in a way that is clearly seen to be fair, reasonable and practicable.

9.4.3 Section 70(1)(a) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 enables a local planning authority in granting planning permission to impose “*such conditions as they think fit*.” This power needs to be interpreted in the context of material considerations such as the National Planning Policy Framework, the supporting guidance on the use of planning conditions, and relevant case law.

- 9.4.4 A pre-commencement condition must not be imposed on the grant of permission without the written agreement of the applicant except in the circumstances set out in the Town and Country Planning (Pre-Commencement Conditions) Regulations 2018.
- 9.4.5 Paragraph 55 of the NPPF stipulates that planning conditions should be kept to a minimum, and use only where they satisfy the following tests:
1. necessary;
  2. relevant to planning;
  3. relevant to the development to be permitted;
  4. enforceable;
  5. precise; and
  6. reasonable in all other respects.
- 9.4.6 The plans, surveys, assessments and other information submitted in support of this planning application are considered to be sufficient to demonstrate to the satisfaction of the local planning authority that the scheme would accord with the relevant policies and that there are no material considerations that ought to preclude the granting of a planning permission for the scheme.
- 9.4.7 Although a considerable amount of information is submitted in support of the planning application, it is anticipated that additional details may be required to enable the local planning authority to be assured that the proposed mitigation will be sufficient to deliver the environmental and other benefits that pertain to the scheme. In these situations, to avoid potential prolongation of the determination period, the applicant would wish the local planning authority to attach a condition to a planning permission requiring the submission of a scheme with the additional details/ design information.
- 9.4.8 In line with the tests set out in paragraph 55, this section of the Planning Statement seeks to present an overview of those matters which could be the subject of conditions on a planning permission, in order to seek to avoid possible delays to determination of the planning application as a result of requests from the local planning authority for further information.
- 9.4.9 The applicants would respectfully request the opportunity to review the wording of any draft conditions which are to be imposed, prior to the granting of a permission.
- 9.4.10 Figure 9.1 presents an overview of those matters which could be the subject of conditions on a planning permission.

Condition Subject	Relevant submitted information	Suggested scope of condition
Design	Proposed Plans, Design and Access Statement	Submission of external materials samples, boundary treatment details, CCTV scheme, shelters etc
Trees	Proposed Plans, Arboricultural Impact Assessment	Submission of arboricultural method statement, Tree protection plan
Landscaping	Proposed Plans, Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment	Submission of finished site level details, hard and soft landscaping details, landscape management plan, platform furniture details, signage details
Ecology	Ecological Impact Assessment and Net Gain Calculation	Submission of a scheme for biodiversity net gain
Construction	Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan	Submission of a construction management plan/ method statement
Contaminated Land	Coal Mining Risk Assessment, Geo-technical Desk Based Assessment	Submission of a remediation scheme, verification report, unexpected contamination details if found
Drainage	Proposed Plans, Flood Risk and Drainage Assessment	Submission of a drainage scheme incorporating sustainable drainage details
Lighting	Proposed Plans, Lighting Statement	Submission of a lighting detail
Highways	Proposed Plans, Transport Assessment, Stage 1 Road Safety Audit to be submitted during determination of application.	Submission of cycle storage details, s278 works details, car park management plan, EV charging details, bridleway/ public rights of way details. RSA stage 1 is anticipated to be submitted during determination. Notwithstanding this submission there may be a requirement for further safety audits and these may be the subject of condition(s) attached to the grant of a planning permission
Archaeology	Heritage Statement, further evaluation to be submitted during determination	Submission of a mitigation scheme
Noise	Noise Assessment	Submission of a mitigation scheme
Air Quality	Air Quality Assessment	Submission of a mitigation scheme

*Figure 9.1 Schedule of proposed conditions*

- 9.4.11 Figure 9.1 has been drafted to include only those matters which could potentially be pre-commencement or pre-operational conditions and does not include those matters which are likely to be the subject of 'compliance' conditions.
- 9.4.12 It is respectfully requested that the precise wording of all conditions, including suitable trigger points for discharge where relevant, be agreed with the applicant prior to formal determination of this application for planning permission.

## **9.5 Additional information**

- 9.5.1 In the event that additional information, clarification or further details concerning the proposed development are required during the determination period this will be provided upon request.
- 9.5.2 The applicants wish to continue to work closely with the local planning authority to ensure the application can be determined as expeditiously as possible. To this end, we are content to attend meetings as required by officers.

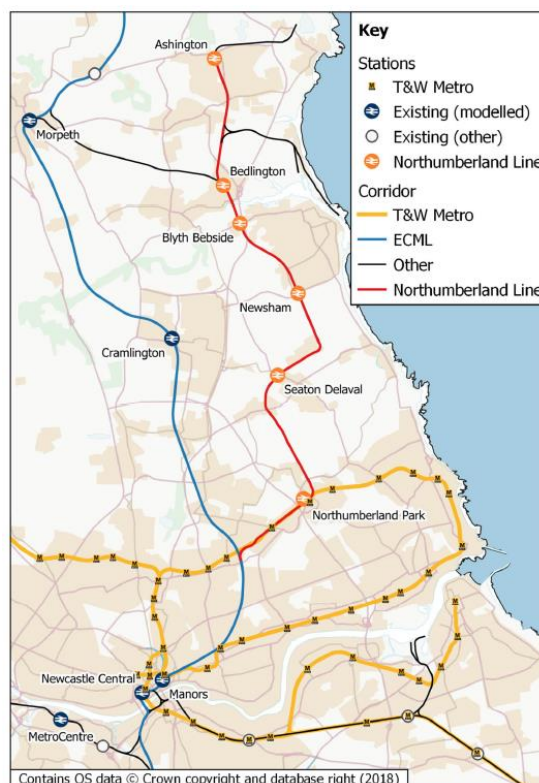
# 10 Appendix A- Economic Assessment

## Overview

Passenger train services operating on the railway line between Ashington and Newcastle, passing through Bedlington, were withdrawn in 1964 as part of the Beeching Cuts; the rail network in this area continues to be used for freight and as a diversion route for East Coast Main Line passenger services. The re-opening of the Northumberland Line between Ashington and Newcastle is a key priority of Northumberland County Council to improve connectivity within this area of South East Northumberland and to the wider North East region.

The proposed scheme will deliver five new stations, and upgrade/expand a sixth station to provide interchange with the Tyne & Wear Metro network at Northumberland Park. The route of the Northumberland Line is shown in the figure below.

*The Northumberland Line scheme extents*



The Outline and Updated Business Cases for the Northumberland Line scheme demonstrate that the scheme delivers high value for money, improves travel times by public transport within, and beyond, South East Northumberland, and provides regeneration benefits to the area. The following sections of this report summarise the economic benefits associated with a station being located in Bedlington.

## Bedlington

Bedlington Station is the location of one of the proposed railway stations for the Northumberland Line and lies to the east of Bedlington town. Bedlington, with a 2011 population of 18,000 (Census), is a town that grew as a result of iron production in the area, and then as a coalfield village. The town has been affected by the decline in the mining sector in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century and now suffers from many of the socio-economic problems that are characteristic of post-industrial towns. According to the index of multiple deprivation, the location of Bedlington Station is within the 20% most deprived lower super output areas nationally.

Given the close proximity of Bedlington, and the linked settlement of Bedlington Station to the larger towns of Ashington and Blyth, existing services provided within Bedlington and Bedlington Station provide services which serve the local market. However, current proposals to redevelop the town, including provision of a new supermarket and a number of high street retail brands, will strengthen

the role of the town within South East Northumberland. As part of Northumberland's Local Plan, 840 new homes have also been allocated to be delivered in Bedlington between 2016 and 2036.

Within the Northumberland Local Plan, it is acknowledged that the provision of new transport infrastructure is essential to achieving the growth aspirations for Bedlington, and the linked settlement of Bedlington Station. This is particularly true in terms of linking proposed housing areas with economic opportunities further afield.

With regards to existing transport connections, the town is served by a bus network that provides connections to other towns in South East Northumberland and Newcastle. These bus services are essential to residents of Bedlington given that 26% of households do not have access to a car or van. However, despite the reliance of Bedlington residents on public transport connections, bus journey times are much slower than that of the private car; this is illustrated in the following table.

#### *Journey Times to Key Employment Sites (AM Peak)*

Origin	Destination	Bus Time (mins)	Car Time (mins)	Distance (miles)
Bedlington	Newcastle city centre	43	20	16.2
Bedlington	Cobalt Business Park	78	15	10.3
Bedlington	Seaton Delaval	45	12	9.0

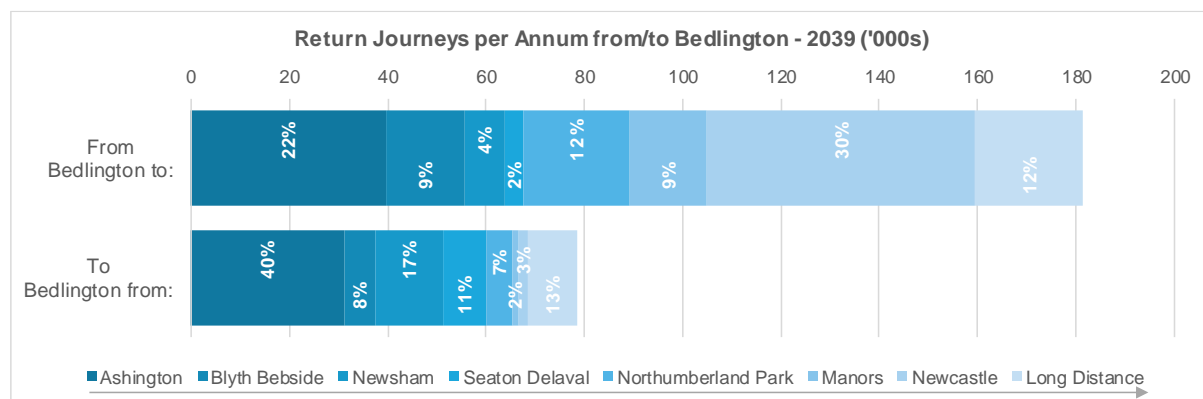
Source Google maps/Traveline (highway journey times represent quickest routes, but journey times are variable)

Long public transport journey times compared to the private car are limiting the potential for Bedlington Station residents to access employment, education and leisure opportunities across the wider North East region.

### **Economic Assessment**

The Northumberland Line scheme is forecast to generate circa 1.45m annual return journeys by 2039<sup>19</sup>. Bedlington station is forecast to generate 12% of all rail demand and attract 5% of all rail demand. The below figure shows the distribution of annual rail demand at this station, which is forecast to have circa 520,000 entries/exits by 2039.

#### *Distribution of Annual Rail Demand (2039)*



<sup>19</sup> These forecasts are aligned to a service proposition that has 2 trains per hour operating between Ashington and Newcastle, taking 32 minutes. Rail fares would be set at a similar level to those used on the Tyne & Wear Metro.



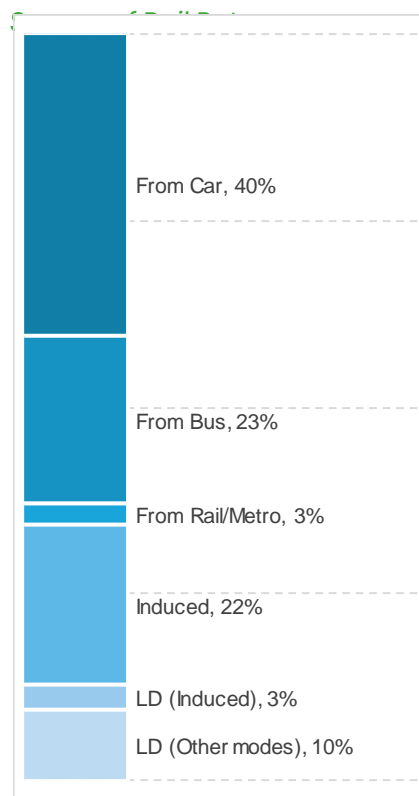
Over 40% of the demand originating from Bedlington station uses the Northumberland Line to travel to Newcastle Central station or beyond. The nearby Ashington station is both a key destination and key origin of demand, representing over a-fifth of all outbound demand and 40% of inbound demand.

It is estimated that during an average morning peak hour in 2039, 94 passengers will board a train service at Bedlington, with a further 39 passengers alighting at this destination.

The figure to the right summarises the source of patronage at Bedlington in the future forecast year of 2039.

Modal transfer from car is the primary source of demand for the scheme at this station, accounting for over 40% of rail demand (once long-distance movements are considered), whilst just over a quarter of new rail demand has transferred from bus. Demand transferring from existing rail services (Morpeth and Cramlington), or existing Metro services (via Northumberland Park), represent less than 5% of the total rail patronage.

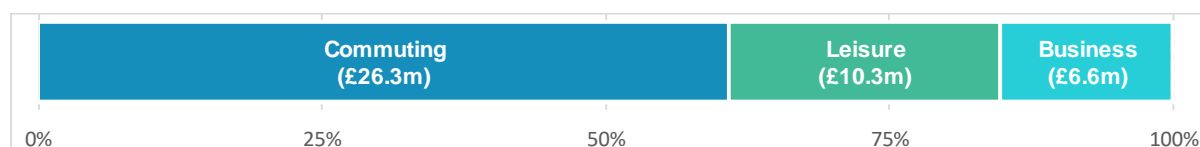
25% of passenger journeys using this station are estimated to be new journeys that would not have been made previously, in the absence of the scheme.



The introduction of the rail service will provide a quicker public transport 'door-to-door' from Bedlington into central Newcastle, other Tyne & Wear destinations, and neighbouring towns, than can currently be offered by rail or bus. It will also be a more competitive option for existing car users to consider, especially once the full times and costs of the journey are taken into consideration. option

The User Time Saving (UTS) benefits generated by Bedlington passengers (£43.2m) represent 12% of the scheme's total UTS benefits; UTS benefits by journey purpose are presented in the figure below.

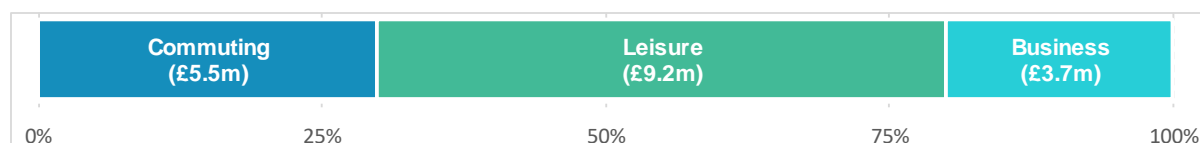
#### User Time Saving Benefits Generated by Bedlington Station Demand (£ million, 2010 prices)



The Northumberland Line scheme also impacts on road usage; it removes car journeys across the rail corridor through mode transfer to rail, whilst some new short distance local journeys by car will be generated around stations. The overall net impact is a reduction in car-km and a decongestion benefit. By 2039, the annual net impact in car-km associated with rail demand generated at Bedlington station is forecast to be a reduction of 2.56m car-km (a 3.07m reduction in car-km due to modal transfer, balanced by a 0.51m increase in car-km associated with local station access).

Demand at Bedlington station is forecast to contribute 13% of the scheme's total decongestion benefits (circa £18.4 million); decongestion benefits by purpose are presented in the below figure.

#### Decongestion Benefits Generated by Bedlington Station Demand (£ million, 2010 prices)



The wider economic benefits of the scheme comprise the sum of the agglomeration and the labour supply benefits and have been estimated at a Local Authority District (LAD) level. Since the forecast model only provided full travel costs for movements within

Northumberland at LAD level, it is not possible to further disaggregate the outputs at a station-by-station level. Outputs represent a conservative estimate of the overall benefits of the scheme as only Northumberland impacts have been estimated.

The welfare impact of agglomeration (effectivity density) impacts resulting from closer perceived proximity between individuals and businesses account for 93% of the welfare benefits estimated. Labour supply impacts, related to employment effects derived from improved accessibility on a region poorly connected to employment centres, accounts for the remaining 7% of wider economic benefits. The below table presents the present value of wider economic benefits from the scheme, over 60 years.

*Northumberland Line Wider Economic Benefits (£ million, 2010 prices):*

Welfare Impacts	Agglomeration	Labour Supply	Total
Estimated Benefits (£m)	£47.2	£3.3	£50.5

The quantification of the wider economic benefits from the scheme has been endorsed through consultation with businesses, organisations and the general public, who agree that the scheme will improve connectivity to employment opportunities and increase the labour catchment area for businesses. This should contribute to a reverse in the socio-economic problems that currently exist in Bedlington and result in a much more prosperous future for residents of the town.

**Summary**

Bedlington (including the linked settlement of Bedlington Station) is a small town in South East Northumberland that is struggling to re-establish itself following the decline in industry in the late 1980s and 1990s. The town currently suffers from issues of deprivation, which are exacerbated by poor transport connectivity and the ability of local residents to access employment and education opportunities.

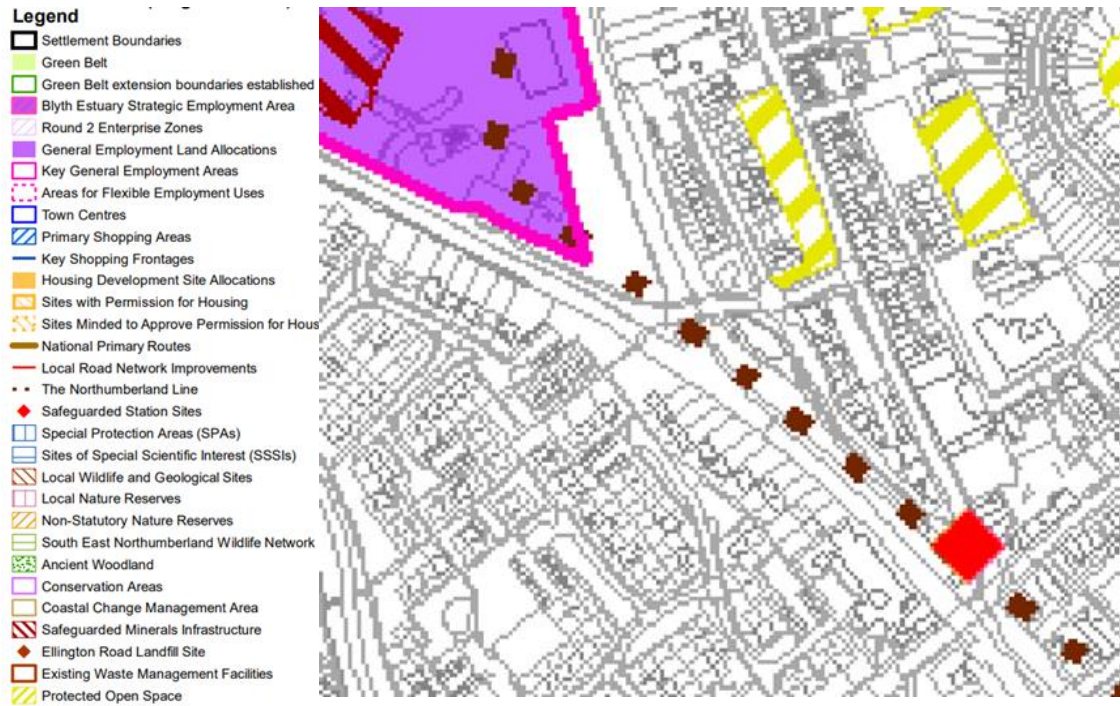
Connecting Bedlington Station to the heavy rail network will bring substantial benefits for both residents and people visiting the town. Rail will provide quicker journey times to key destinations, which are faster than the bus and are comparable to the car. This will not only improve accessibility to employment, education and leisure opportunities, it will also encourage modal shift from existing car users, and have environmental benefits through a reduction in traffic congestion and car emissions.

With regards to passenger numbers, by 2039, Bedlington station is anticipated to have around 520,000 entries and exits at the station. Forecasting work undertaken, predicts that users will use the rail line to travel to/from Bedlington and other communities along the Northumberland Line, with other users traveling to Newcastle or beyond. Notably, 25% of rail trips will be made by people who would not have made the trip had the passenger service not been introduced.

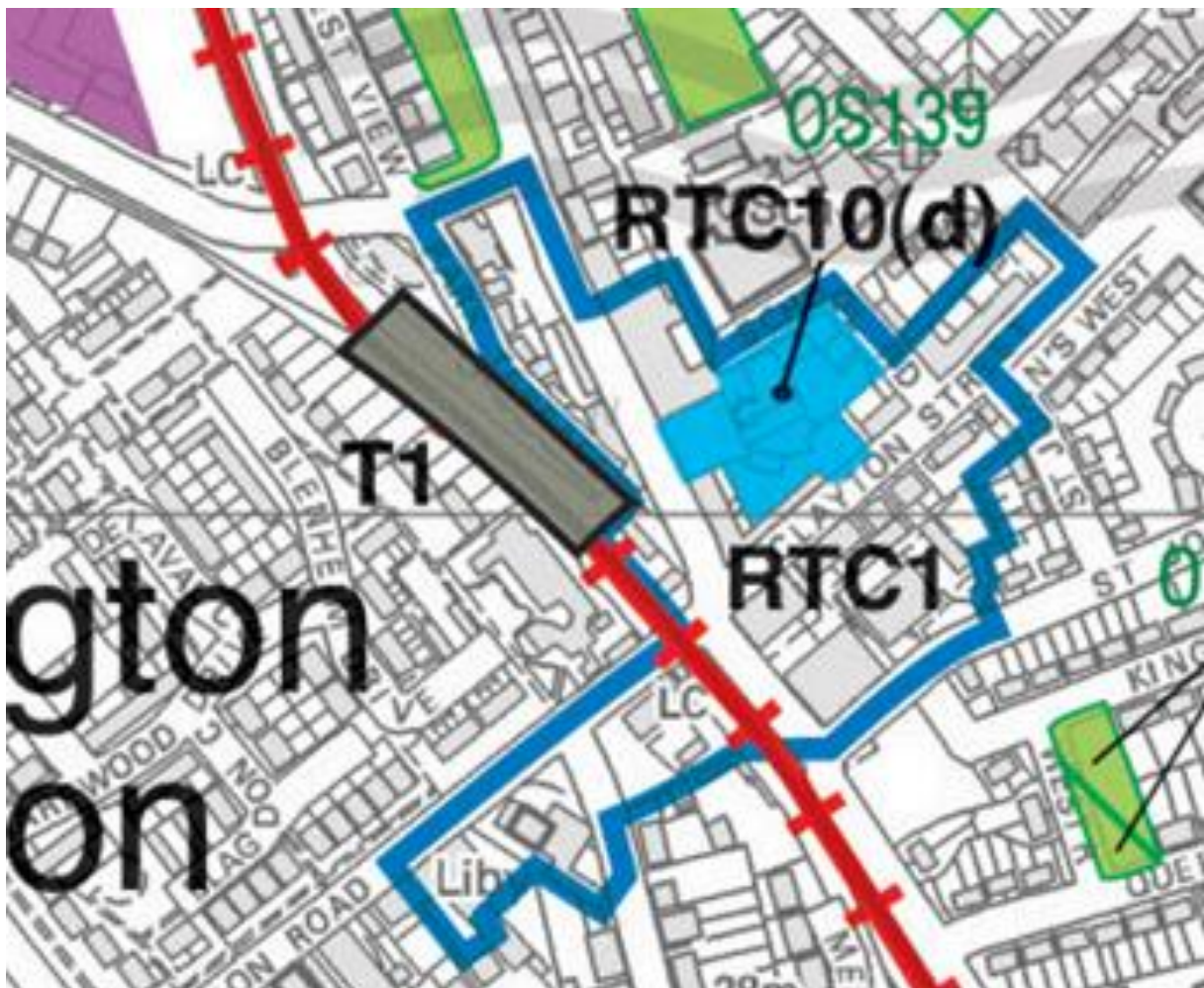
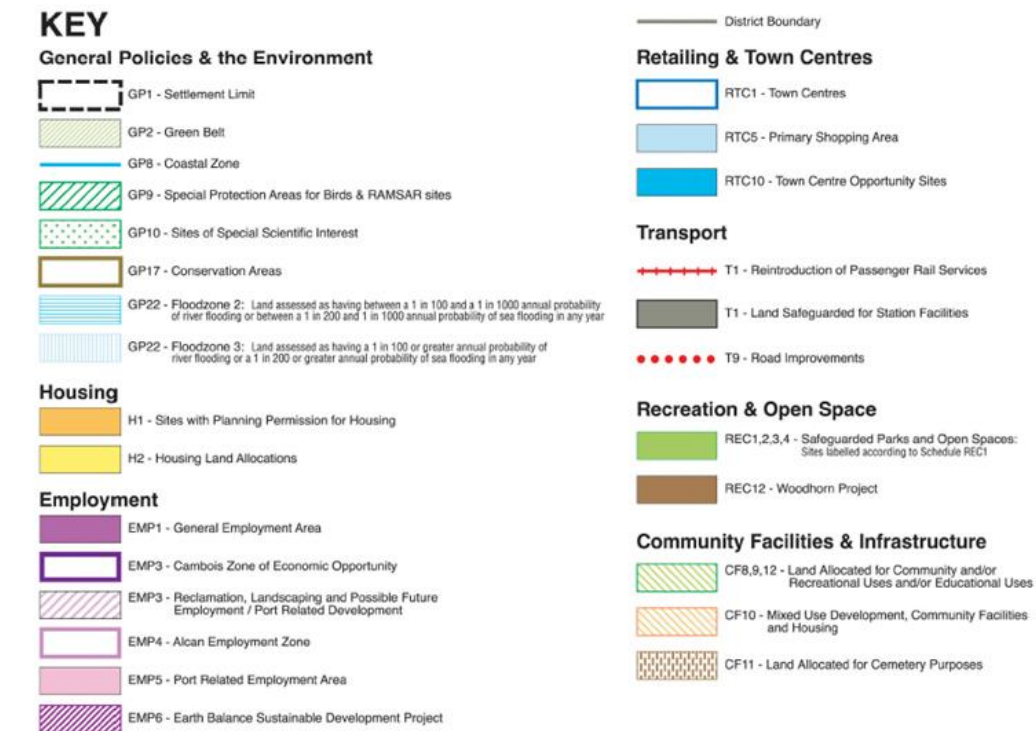
The Northumberland Line presents Bedlington Station with a great opportunity to help address deprivation, support investment in the town, and connect residents to the wider North East region. This will help to reverse the socio-economic problems that currently exist in Bedlington and result in a much more prosperous future for residents of the town.

# 11 Appendix B- Adopted and Emerging Local Plan Policies Plan

## 11.1 Emerging Northumberland Local Plan policies map



## 11.2 Adopted Wansbeck District Local Plan policies map



## Appendix G

### Bedlington station car park planning statement



Gordon Halliday

Northumberland County Council- Planning

By email: [gordon.halliday@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:gordon.halliday@northumberland.gov.uk)

30<sup>th</sup> July 2021

Dear Mr Halliday

**Re: Planning application for 'Construction of parking for cars, electric vehicles, and other associated works. Modifications to existing highways including pedestrian footways and new highways access'** on site adjacent to Liddle's Street, Bedlington Station to serve Bedlington railway station (Application Number: 21/01106/CCD).

## Introduction

This covering letter supports and accompanies an application for planning permission for the development associated with the construction and operation of a new car park on a site adjacent to Liddle's Street, with access proposed from the north adjacent to Ravensworth Court. The development is associated with the proposed new railway station in Bedlington Station (Application Ref: 21/01106/CCD).

## Background to the application

The proposed new railway station at Bedlington Station is one component of the proposed 'Northumberland Line' scheme. The scheme seeks to re-introduce passenger services onto the existing freight line between the city of Newcastle upon Tyne and the town of Ashington in Northumberland, which includes the construction of six new railway stations and associated infrastructure.

An application was submitted in March 2021 for the '*Construction of a two-platform railway station including: ramped pedestrian access, new highway access; modifications to existing highways including pedestrian footways; provision of parking for cars, electric vehicles, motorcycles, cycles, and taxis and other associated works. Construction of facilities ancillary to the station including, lighting, soft and hard landscaping, surface and subsurface drainage, utilities and other services, boundary treatment and other associated works*' in Bedlington Station (Application Ref: 21/01106/CCD).

The aforementioned March 2021 application proposed to include two car parks: one on Park Terrace, and one on a site of Protected Open Space (as identified by the adopted Wansbeck Local Plan and Emerging Northumberland Local Plan) on Ravensworth Street. Further to engagement with key stakeholders and objections received to the planning application, the applicant has formally withdrawn the proposals for a new car park on Ravensworth Street.

In parallel to the formal withdrawal of the Ravensworth Street car parking proposals, a planning application, which is the subject of this covering letter, has been submitted to provide for parking associated with the proposed railway station at Bedlington.

This application for a new car park at Liddle's Street should be considered in conjunction with the aforementioned application, for which the proposals for a new car park on Ravensworth Street are now formally withdrawn.

### **Stakeholder communications**

The 'Supplementary Planning Submission Prepared in support of a planning application for a new railway station at Bedlington Station 60601435-SLC-P-270-B-SPS' (dated 12/05/21) submitted in support of the aforementioned application included a review of alternative sites for a car park and other options to accommodate increased parking demand associated with the proposed station. The vacant site on Liddle's Street was identified for the purpose of providing compensatory green space for the loss of protected public open space resulting from the Ravensworth Street proposals.

Further to engagement with key stakeholders (including East Bedlington Parish Council) and objections received to the planning application, the applicant (NCC) has removed the proposals for a new car park on Ravensworth Street. Consequently, the application does not provide for the anticipated parking demand from station users as identified in the submitted Transport Assessment. NCC has identified a site on Liddle's Street, accessed from Ravensworth Court, that would assist in meeting the deficit in parking demand associated with the proposed railway station at Bedlington resulting from the withdrawal of the Ravensworth Street proposals.

The proposals for a car park on land off Liddle's Street have sought to balance the competing interests of safeguarding public open space, and potential impacts on residential amenity together with the strategic public benefits that will result from the new railway station. The concerns of residents on the loss of public open space at Ravensworth Street outweigh the previously identified limitations associated with the use of the land off Liddle's Street as a car park. (e.g. distance from the station, access is less convenient). Furthermore, the car park on Liddle's Street is also one of two car parks proposed – Park Terrace is adjacent to the proposed station. The parking for the proposed station will add to the overall provision of car parking spaces in Bedlington Station.

The project has undertaken a targeted communication with stakeholders (including local residents) with an interest in the withdrawal of the Bedlington Station Ravensworth Street car park proposals and submission of a new planning application for an alternative car park at Liddle's Street, with highway access from Ravensworth Court.

### **Site Context**

The site of the proposed development is 0.12ha site of scrub land, which has been vacant for c. 20 years. The site is located approximately 150 metres to the North East of the proposed railway station at Bedlington Station and approximately 40 metres to the east of the site of open space on Ravensworth Street

### **Proposed Development**

This planning statement has been submitted in support of an application for planning permission for 'Construction of parking for cars, electric vehicles and other associated works. Modifications to existing highways including pedestrian footways and new highways access' to the east of Ravensworth Court and to the north of Liddle's Street, Bedlington Station.

Access to the car park is proposed to be accessed via Ravensworth Court, which adjoins Ravensworth Street via a priority T-junction.

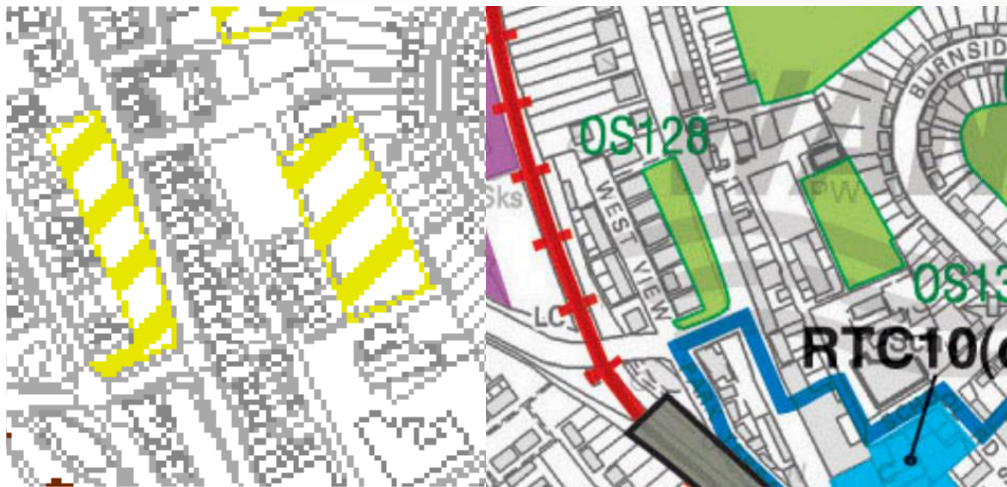
The development proposes to provide 31 car parking spaces with appropriate drainage, lighting and landscape measures to supplement the car park on Park Terrace proposed as part of application ref: 21/01106/CCD.

As agreed with local authority officers, a supporting Transport Statement will be submitted during determination of this application which will assess any transport implications of the proposed car park, including the interface with the proposed Bedlington railway station.

### Planning Policy Assessment

There are no site-specific policy constraints and land use designations that pertain to the site of the proposed development in the adopted Wansbeck District Local Plan and Emerging Northumberland Local Plan (see Figure 1 below).

The Planning Statement submitted in support of application ref: 21/01106/CCD provides a detailed planning policy assessment which should be read in conjunction with this planning application. This report should be read in conjunction with the aforementioned Planning Statement. As a result of the removal of the car park on Ravensworth Street, the policies relating to open space contained within the Adopted Wansbeck Local Plan (Policy REC1) and Emerging Northumberland Local Plan (INF5) are no longer engaged.



**Figure 1: Extract from Emerging Northumberland Local Plan and Adopted Wansbeck Local Plan**

### Supporting Information

This application for planning permission is accompanied by the supporting information identified as required by the local planning authority in discussions prior to submission and are listed below:

- 1) Site Location Plan (60601435-ACM-XX-ZZ-DRG-LEP-000025)
- 2) Highways General Arrangement Plan (60601435-ACM-06-ZZ-DRG-EHW-060064)



It is anticipated that details relating to lighting, drainage and landscape will be the subject of planning conditions, the precise details of which will be agreed with the relevant local authority officers.

### Summary

If you wish to further discuss the proposals, we would be grateful if you could provide your availability for a meeting. Any further queries, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Yours sincerely,



Alannah Healey MRTPI

Chartered Planner for and on behalf of SLC Property

## Appendix H

### Ashington station committee report



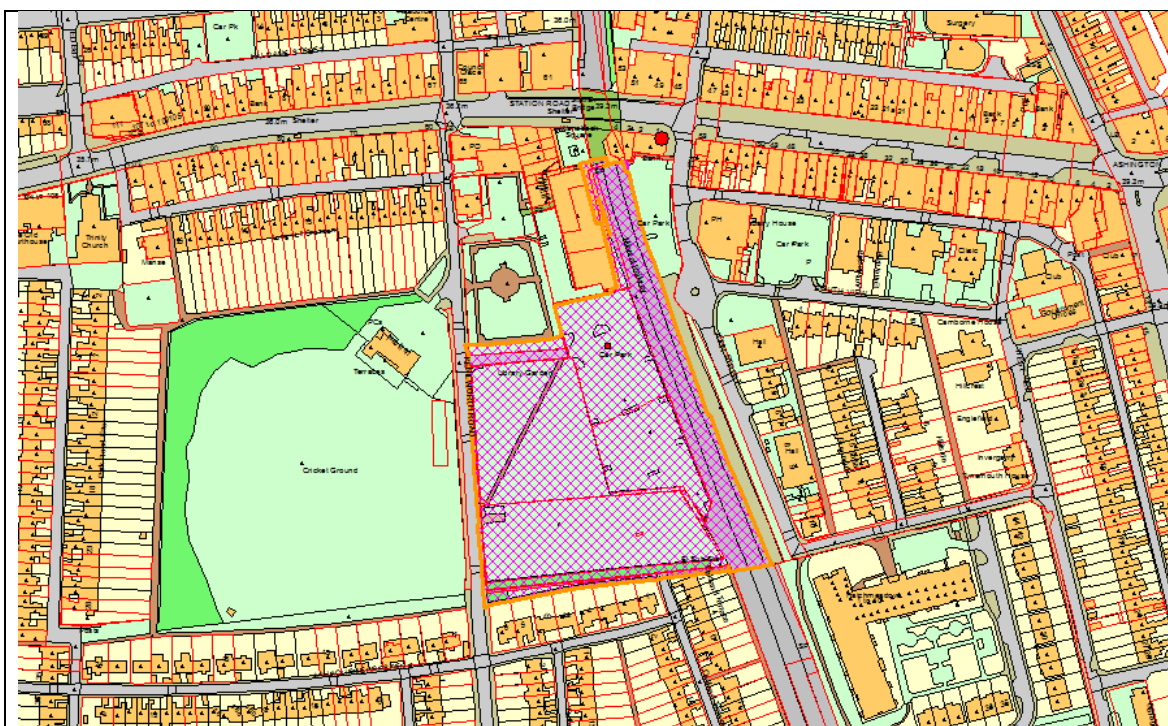
# Northumberland

## County Council

### Strategic Planning Committee, 7 September 2021

<b>Application No:</b>	21/00387/CCD		
<b>Proposal:</b>	Construction of a new single platform railway station including pedestrian lift, new highway access; modifications to existing highways including pedestrian footways; provision of parking for cars, electric vehicles, motorcycles, cycles, and taxis and other associated works including new crossings for pedestrians and cyclists. Construction of facilities ancillary to the station including, lighting, soft and hard landscaping, surface and subsurface drainage, utilities and other services, boundary treatment and other associated works.		
<b>Site Address</b>	Station Yard Car Park North, Wansbeck Square, Station Road, Ashington, Northumberland, NE63 9XH		
<b>Applicant:</b>	Northumberland County Council County Hall, Morpeth, NE61 2EF	<b>Agent:</b>	Mr Allen Creedy 72 B-Box Studios, Newcastle , NE2 1AN
<b>Ward</b>	Ashington Central	<b>Parish</b>	Ashington
<b>Valid Date:</b>	23 February 2021	<b>Expiry Date:</b>	30 September 2021
<b>Case Officer Details:</b>	Name: Mr Gordon Halliday Job Title: Consultant Planner Tel No: 07785 727053 Email: gordon.halliday@northumberland.gov.uk		

**Recommendation:** That this application be GRANTED permission



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## 1. Introduction

1.1 Under the provisions of the Council's current Scheme of Delegation, in cases where the local authority is the applicant in respect of a planning application, it is required to be determined by the Planning Committee.

## 2. Description of the Proposal

2.1 The Northumberland Line scheme seeks to re-introduce passenger services onto the existing freight line that runs between Newcastle Central Station and Ashington. The scheme includes the construction of six new railway stations and associated infrastructure. It is envisaged that there will be a half hourly service with an anticipated journey time between Newcastle and Ashington of 35 minutes.

2.2 The railway line was formerly known as the Ashington, Blyth and Tyne Line. Passenger services on the line ceased in 1964 since when freight trains have continued to operate.

2.3 This application is for the construction and operation of a new railway station in Ashington town centre. The proposed location for the new station is adjacent to the original railway station in Ashington that closed in 1964. To the north of the site is Wansbeck Square shopping complex and Ashington Memorial Garden. The railway line is bounded to the east by residential and commercial uses on St. John's Street. The site is bound to the south by residential properties on Ashbourne Crescent and to the west by Kenilworth Road, beyond which is Ashington Cricket Club.

2.4 The site of the proposed development has an area of 1.89 hectares. It comprises 4 separate areas – the existing railway corridor, the existing car park with glass recycling containers at the southern end, a vacant site to the south that used to be a care home and amenity grassland between the car park and Kenilworth Road. There is a current outline planning application for a new care home on the vacant land as described in Section 3 below.

2.5 The development proposals include the following main elements:

- A single platform, approximately 100 metres long, with a range of facilities including vending machines, customer information screens, waiting shelters, CCTV, help points and lighting.
- A car park providing up to 270 spaces including 17 accessible spaces and 18 electric vehicle charging bays.
- Access and egress for vehicles would be from Kenilworth Road.

## 3. Planning History

**Reference Number:** 07/00537/FUL

**Description:** Maintenance and upgrading of existing car park. To include kerbing and block work around the boundary and a limited number of islands between bays and landscaping. Scheme includes provision of recycling and bicycle bays and full resurface.

**Status:** PER

**Reference Number:** 20/04423/OUT

**Description:** Outline application seeking approval for access for construction of two storey 58 bed care home and associated but physically separate single

storey 12 bedroom specialist unit with associated parking and hard and soft landscaping

**Status:** PCO

**Reference Number:** 19/02151/SCREEN

**Description:** Request for a Screening Opinion- Provision of six new train stations, associated upgrading and refurbishment of existing rail infrastructure and engineering works and the reintroduction of passenger train services.

**Status:** SCREEN

**Reference Number:** 20/02243/SCREEN

**Description:** Request for a Screening Opinion- Provision of six new train stations, associated upgrading and refurbishment of existing rail infrastructure and engineering works and the reintroduction of passenger train services.

**Status:** SCREEN

#### 4. Consultee Responses

Ashington Town Council	No response received.
Natural England	No objection
The Coal Authority	No comments.
Network Rail	No objection subject to the imposition of conditions to ensure Network Rail's normal operating and maintenance functions are not affected during construction.
Northumbria Police	Suggestions made for designing out crime in the proposed development.
British Transport Police	Suggestions made for designing out crime in the proposed development.
Fire & Rescue Service	No objection
Northumbria Ambulance Service	No response received
Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA)	No objection subject to the imposition of conditions in relation to SuDS features and surface water management.
County Highways	No objection subject to the imposition of conditions and informatives in relation to highway safety and car / cycle parking considerations.
County Ecologist	No objection subject to the imposition of appropriate conditions in relation to mitigation measures, lighting and biodiversity net gain.
County Archaeologist	No objection on archaeological grounds subject to the imposition of a planning condition for an appropriate programme of archaeological mitigation.
Public Protection	No objection subject to the imposition of conditions in relation to station tannoy system, acoustic barrier, construction noise and vibration, enabling works, contaminated land and construction delivery and collection hours.
Strategic Estates	No response received
Waste Management - South East	There is a glass-recycling site located at the south end of the existing car park. It would be a sad loss for the residents of Ashington if this site

	were removed. (Note – provision made in amended proposals).
Tourism, Leisure & Culture	No response received
South SE Tree And Woodland Officer	No response received
Building Conservation	Supports the application subject to the imposition of a condition relating to the design and colour palette for station infrastructure to ensure continuity and quality in the appearance and design of the scheme.

## 5. Public Responses

### 5.1 Neighbour Notification

Number of Neighbours Notified	78
Number of Objections	2
Number of Support	1
Number of General Comments	0

5.2 Notices - general site notice were posted on 3 March 2021 and a press notice was published in the News Post Leader on 4 March 2021.

#### Summary of Responses:

5.3 The letter of support included no reasons for the respondent's views.

5.4 A letter of objection was submitted on behalf of Malhotra who own the southern part of the proposed car park and who have submitted an outline planning application for the development of a care home on the site. This objection is discussed at paragraphs 7.17 – 7.19 of this report.

5.5 The second letter of objection queries the number of car parking spaces proposed. This is discussed at paragraphs 7.11 – 7.16 of this report.

5.6 The above is a summary of the comments. The full written text is available on our website at: <http://publicaccess.northumberland.gov.uk/online-applications//applicationDetails.do?activeTab=summary&keyVal=QNWSO1QSLQD00>

## 6. Planning Policy

### Development Plan Policy

6.1 In accordance with Section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, planning applications should be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In this case the development comprises the saved policies from the Wansbeck District Local Plan (WDLP) (2007).

6.2 The following saved policies in the WDLP are relevant to the consideration of the application.

GP1 Spatial Strategy
GP4 Accessibility
GP5 Landscape Character
GP6 Trees and Hedgerows
GP13 Biodiversity and Wildlife Networks
GP21 Archaeology
GP22 Flood Risk and Erosion
GP23 Pollution and Nuisance
GP25 Noise
GP29 Land Contamination
GP30 Visual Impact
GP31 Urban design
GP32 Landscaping and the Public realm
GP35 Crime Prevention
T1 Ashington, Blyth and Tyne Rail Line
T3 Provision for Cyclists
T4 Provision for Walking
T5 Access for People with Reduced Mobility
T6 Traffic Implications of New Development
T7 Parking Provision in New Development
REC2 Recreation and Open Space
REC11 Access to the Countryside and Coast

6.3 Paragraph 48 of the NPPF states that weight can be given to policies contained in emerging plans dependent upon three criteria: the stage of preparation of the plan; the extent to which there are unresolved objections to policies within the plan; and the degree of consistency with the NPPF. The Northumberland Local Plan - Publication Draft Plan (Regulation 19) (NLP) was submitted to the Secretary of State for Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government on 29 May 2019, and is currently going through the examination process.

6.4 On 9 June 2021, the Council published for consultation, a Schedule of proposed Main Modifications to the draft Local Plan that the independent Inspectors examining the plan consider are necessary to make the plan 'sound'. As such the plan is at an advanced stage of preparation, and the policies in the NLP - Publication Draft Plan (Regulation 19) (Jan 2019) as amended by proposed Main Modifications (June 2021), are considered to be consistent with the NPPF. The NLP is a material consideration in determining this application, with the amount of weight that can be given to specific policies (and parts thereof) being dependent upon whether Main

Modifications are proposed, and the extent and significance of unresolved objections.

6.5 The NLP will eventually replace the WDLP plan as the development plan for the application site. The following policies in the emerging NLP are relevant to the consideration of the application.

STP 1: Spatial Strategy
STP2: Presumption in favour of Sustainable Development
STP3: Principles of Sustainable Development
STP4: Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation
STP5: Health and Wellbeing
QOP1: Design Principles
QOP2: Good Design and Amenity
QOP4: Landscaping and Trees
QOP6: Delivering Well-designed Places
TRA1: Promoting Sustainable Connections
TRA2: The Effects of Development on the Transport Network
TRA4: Parking Provision in New Development
TRA5: Rail Transport and Safeguarding Facilities
ENV1: Approaches to assessing the impact of development on the natural, historic and built environment
ENV2: Biodiversity and Geodiversity
ENV7: Historic Environment and Heritage Assets
WAT3: Flooding
WAT4: Sustainable Drainage Systems
POL1: Unstable and Contaminated Land
POL2: Pollution and Air, Soil and Water Quality
INF5 Open Space and Facilities for Sport and Recreation

#### National Planning Policy

6.6 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (July 2021) and Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) are material considerations in determining this application.

#### Other Documents

6.7 Ashington Town Centre Supplementary Planning Document (2010)  
North East Local Economic Partnership. Strategic Economic Plan (2017)  
Northumberland Economic Strategy 2019-2024. (2018)  
Northumberland Line Economic Corridor Strategy, (February 2021)



## 7. Appraisal

7.1 The main issues for consideration in the determination of this application are:

- Principle of the development
- Economic considerations
- Provision for car parking
- Impact on public amenity open space
- Highway considerations
- Impact on residential amenity
- Landscape and trees
- Impact on biodiversity
- Impact on heritage assets

### Principle of the Development

7.2 Saved policy T1 in the WDLP and policy TRA5 in the emerging NLP support the re-introduction of passenger rail services on the Northumberland Line. Saved Policy T1 of Wansbeck Local Plan states as follows. *'The re-introduction of passenger services on the rail line between Newcastle and Ashington will be supported and promoted. Land which may be required for associated facilities such as stations, bus stops and car parks will be safeguarded. Such sites will include Woodhorn Colliery; Ashington Town Centre; North Seaton Road, Ashington; and Bedlington Station'.*

7.3 The choice of site location for the proposed Ashington Station aligns well with saved policy T1, albeit that that Plan's proposals map only depicts the proposed station as an allocation within the track bed and adjacent railway corridor.

7.4 Policy TRA5 in the emerging NLP identifies Ashington as one of the locations for stations on the railway line. The emerging plan does not safeguard a specific site for the station, simply showing the station as a point in approximately the same location as the previous station.

7.5 The proposed railway station at Ashington is an integral component of the Northumberland Line scheme. It is concluded therefore the principle of the development is in accordance with saved policy T1 and emerging policy TRA5.

### Economic considerations

7.6 The County Council and various regional bodies consider that the re-opening of the Northumberland Line for passenger rail services will be a key to future economic development in South East Northumberland.

7.7 In the North East Local Economic Partnership's Strategic Economic Plan, the introduction of passenger services to the line is cited as necessary to the achievement of the plan's connectivity goals. The Northumberland Economic Strategy recognises that increased connectivity will bring huge benefits, especially to the deprived communities of South East Northumberland. The Strategy identifies the reopening of the Northumberland Line to passengers as a key priority.

7.8 The Strategy for the Northumberland Line Economic Corridor seeks to capitalise upon the reintroduction of passenger rail services between Ashington and Newcastle as a catalyst for transformational change. It states: *'The Northumberland Line is expected to have a major impact on the local economy by facilitating economic activity and improving public transport accessibility, providing the*

*foundations for a new and ambitious clean growth economic corridor to be established’.*

7.9 The Ashington Town Centre SPD, adopted in 2010 was prepared to supplement and support policies in the Wansbeck Local Plan including Policy T1. It focuses on the regeneration of an area in the north east of the town centre and although the station is peripheral to the SPD area, the document acknowledges that the reintroduction of passenger services including a new station would make a substantial contribution to the town centre regeneration aims.

7.10 It is concluded that the economic considerations support the principle of the development and should be given substantial weight.

#### Provision for car parking

7.11 Policy T7 in the WDLP states that developers should make appropriate provision in their developments for the parking of motor vehicles and motorcycles. Policy TRA4 in the emerging NLP states that an appropriate amount of off-street vehicle parking sufficient to serve new development should be made available in safe, accessible and convenient locations prior to the development being brought into use. However, the emerging NLP does not identify any minimum or maximum parking standards for developments such as the Northumberland Line. The NPPF states that maximum parking standards should only be set where there is clear and compelling justification that they are necessary for managing the local road network or for optimising the density of development in town centres where the aim should be to improve the quality of parking alongside measures to promote accessibility by pedestrians and cyclists (paragraph 108).

7.12 The Transport Assessment submitted with the planning application includes information on forecasting the number of passengers that would use the proposed station and how they would travel to the station. Based on a worst case scenario the demand forecasting found that a maximum of 186 car parking spaces would be required for Ashington station. The existing car park has 113 spaces and is well used resulting in an overall requirement for 299 spaces. The application originally proposed that the new car park would include provision for 275 car parking spaces but this has been reduced to 270 following reconfiguration of the car park. It is stated that the shortfall of 29 spaces would be met by working with public transport providers to improve bus links to the station and the encouragement of the use of other sustainable forms of travel to the site (e.g. walking and cycling) as well as balancing the assumptions within the modelling.

7.13 The applicants have explained that government and industry guidance for Transport Assessments and Appraisals has informed the car parking provision for each of the proposed stations. A first principles approach to developing car parking provision has been used by the applicants utilising models used to develop the Outline Business Case for the Northumberland Line scheme. The modelling led to the identification of a range of provision with the number of spaces proposed being informed by professional judgement and various planning and transport criteria including accessibility and existing usage.

7.14 The level of car parking proposed must balance the anticipated demand suggested by the modelling with the impacts associated with both providing too much car parking as well as too little car parking. Excessive levels of car parking can

encourage the use of cars over multi-modal sustainable transport trips to the station, such as walk-train or cycle-train, or leave areas of the car park underused with impacts upon amenity. An under provision of car parking can lead to parking problems in surrounding residential areas that will have impacts upon residential amenity and highway safety. It is the opinion of County Highways that the level of car parking proposed, provides an appropriate balance to these matters with a slight reduction on the worst case scenario shown in the modelling being appropriate in the situation where both station and town centre car parking will occur within the car park. In addition, providing appropriate levels of car parking will encourage the use of the train services over longer distance car trips only. The modal shift from single mode car journeys for travel to destinations on the Northumberland Line, to multi-modal trips is a more sustainable form of transport as the private car is only part of any journey or for some trips (e.g. cycle or walk – train) is not used at all.

7.15 The applicants acknowledge that the original modelling was based on pre-pandemic 2019 data, but recent traffic flow data demonstrates that traffic flows have largely recovered to pre-pandemic levels. Furthermore it is too early to assess if travel behaviours will return to pre-Covid patterns or have changed permanently as a consequence of the pandemic. However, it is only reasonable to anticipate some rubber-band return to pre-Covid patterns as car ownership levels continue to be high across Northumberland, based on registrations in December 2020. The applicants point out that there are many variables influencing parking demand with traffic levels being only one of such variables. They consider that it is not unreasonable to use pre-pandemic information on travel behaviour to inform parking provision and designs for the Northumberland Line scheme. County Highways agree with this, as there is nothing to support significant changes to population numbers and car ownership levels

7.16 An objection has been received suggesting that the number of car parking places could be reduced at all the proposed stations, although Ashington is not mentioned specifically. The objector lives adjacent to the proposed car park at the proposed Seaton Delaval station and a number of local residents have submitted objections to that application, including expressing concern with the assumptions that the applicants' consultants have used in their modelling of predicted car parking requirements. However, as previously stated, County Highways are broadly content with the modelling exercise. Some representations on the various station proposals have referred to the changing pattern of office / home based working and the increase in on-line shopping brought about by the pandemic that might reduce the number of passengers who might use the new services, in particular for travel to Newcastle upon Tyne. Such trends cannot be fully evidenced for existing train usage as travel patterns are still to settle following the pandemic and therefore any change to assumptions for a service that is not operational would be no less certain than those made in the Outline Business Case modelling that has informed the assessment. Nevertheless, it is important to look beyond the short-term in planning major infrastructure projects such as the Northumberland Line. Whilst recognising these various concerns it is considered that the proposed level of car parking provision at Ashington Station is justifiable, particularly as the new car park will also cater for car-borne visitors to the town centre.

7.17 The Malhotra Group, that owns the southernmost portion of the application site, has objected to the proposed development. Some 69 car parking spaces are proposed to be located on the land owned by the Group. This land was occupied by the former Essendene Care Home, until it was demolished in around 2008. The site

has subsequently lain vacant, but the Group has submitted an outline planning application for the development of a new care home on the site. The LPA has not yet determined this application.

7.18 The Malhotra objection, whilst welcoming the new Ashington station, expresses serious concerns at the loss of their development site. The objection acknowledges that land ownership is not a planning matter but, in pointing out that the proposed car parking provision is dependent upon utilisation of its land, it states that planning permission for the Ashington station application should not be granted until such time as the Council has agreed to acquire the Malhotra land.

7.19 A 'Grampian' condition is included in the recommended conditions requiring the Malhotra land to be acquired before development of the car park is commenced. Such a condition is considered appropriate because the applicant has high expectations that the land can be acquired in a timely manner either by a process of negotiation or by compulsory acquisition through the Transport and Works Act Order. Furthermore it is considered that the proposed development of the new Ashington Station and associated infrastructure including the car parking is desirable in the public interest.

7.20 It is concluded that the proposed car parking is in accordance with Policy T7 in the WDLP, the NPPF and policy TRA4 in the emerging NLP.

#### Impact on Public Amenity Open Space

7.21 Part of the land proposed for car parking is currently public amenity open space. This area forms part of the protected open space, shown as 'OS112' on the Policies Map of Wansbeck Local Plan and designated under Wansbeck Local Plan Policy REC 1. The protection of this open area is taken forward in the Northumberland Local Plan under emerging Policy INF 5. The proposal involves a reconfiguration of the existing public car park and its expansion across the public amenity open space– the southern part of OS112 - as well as the non-designated vacant land to the south.

7.22 Policy GP1 (Part B) in the Wansbeck Local Plan states:

*Development on greenfield sites within settlement limits will only be permitted if:*

- a) the site is allocated for development; or*
- b) it can be demonstrated that the development will meet an identified and justified need and no suitable alternative previously-developed site is available.*

7.23 This policy no longer fully aligns with the NPPF, which, while giving preference to previously developed land, does not impose a sequential approach. However, the principle of promoting development on brownfield land in order to preserve green 'breathing spaces' within a heavily built-up urban area continues to be valid. Notwithstanding this overall aim it is not possible to accommodate the station and the associated car parking fully within the existing areas of previously developed land within the vicinity of the station site.

7.24 Policy REC1 makes clear that the open space forms part of "a network of strategically important parks and open spaces". The Policy goes on to say that permission for built development on such areas should only be given if the "predominantly open character" is maintained. In context, the area of open space

that would be lost comprises around 14 per cent of the wider protected open area – i.e. counting the northern part of OS112 and OS14 to the west. This, plus the fact that buildings would not be part of the proposal on this land, means that the predominantly open character would be largely preserved.

7.25 Clearly the role and function of the open space also needs to be considered in terms of whether its loss can be accepted. Wansbeck Local Plan Policy REC1 also makes clear that these strategic open spaces are so designated due to their importance as recreational or amenity open spaces and the loss of these functions should not be accepted. The Planning Statement accompanying the application seeks to argue that there is a surplus of open space in the area. However, the carrying forward of the open spaces into the emerging plan reflects updated technical appraisal of the Northumberland PPG17 open space, sport and recreation assessment carried out in 2011 as part of the evidence base work for the emerging NLP. This Assessment identified the public open space as an area of open space to be retained albeit with scope for improvement.

7.26 The corresponding emerging NLP Policy INF 5 suggests an approach that would require the carrying out of an independent assessment to show the open space to be surplus to requirements. If this cannot be demonstrated, the approach would look for replacement by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location.

7.27 The Planning Statement submitted with the current application has sought to address whether the loss of green open space can be compensated, for example through enhancements to the public realm on the remainder of OS112 or adjacent areas and identifying how the public benefit accruing from the proposed development would outweigh this loss. In the Planning Statement the applicant offers to provide some form of compensation for the loss.

7.28 Following the submission of the planning application discussions have taken place with the applicant and within the Council to ascertain whether there is any local parkland or other public amenity land that would benefit from a scheme of enhancement. This has resulted in the identification of Peoples Park and Ashington Woods, which are both located close to Ashington town centre, as suitable receptor sites. It is proposed that 100 trees are planted at the northern end of Peoples Park to augment the existing mature trees along the northern boundary of the park. This is a scheme that has previously been the subject of an application under the Government's Urban Tree Challenge scheme that was unsuccessful. The proposal at Ashington Woods is to carry out some overdue and much needed thinning on parts of the 130 hectares of woodland. It is considered that both these schemes would provide appropriate compensation for the loss of the public amenity open space at Kenilworth Road. This is the subject of a planning condition should the Committee resolve to grant planning permission for the proposed development.

#### Highway Considerations

7.29 Policy T6 in the WDLP requires the volume and character of traffic likely to be generated and attracted by the development to be considered in the determination of planning applications and sets out a number of criteria that need to be complied with. A Transport Assessment is required for proposals that have significant transport implications. Policy TRA1 in the emerging NLP requires the transport implications of development to be addressed as part of any planning application and sets out various planning criteria that the development will be required to address. The NPPF

requires applications for developments requiring significant amounts of movement to be supported by a transport assessment so that the likely impacts of the proposal can be assessed (paragraph 113).

7.30 A Transport Assessment (TA) has been submitted to support the proposed development. The TA notes that the Covid-19 pandemic has prevented the collection of up-to-date traffic data on the local highway network that is considered representative of 'normal' operating conditions. 'Baseline' traffic information is therefore based on surveys carried out in 2019. The TA also concluded that the application site is well connected to the local pedestrian and cycling network and local bus services.

7.31 The existing access from Kenilworth Road to the car park will be realigned to provide access and egress for vehicles, cycles and pedestrians. A new egress to Kenilworth Road will be created at the southern end of the proposed car park. A lift is proposed from the platform to provide pedestrian access to Wansbeck Square.

7.32 County Highways raised a number of concerns that could impact upon highway safety and the operation of the proposed development and the highway network, on the plans that were originally submitted with the application. This resulted in additional information and revised plans being submitted to address these concerns. An initial Road Safety Audit (RSA) has been carried and further RSAs are the subject of an informative should the Committee decide to grant planning permission. The revised information has been assessed by County Highways and the proposals are now considered to be appropriate and acceptable. Therefore County Highways are raising no highway objections to the development proposals subject to the imposition of conditions and informatives, particularly in respect of the proposed car parking.

7.33 It is concluded therefore that the proposals are in accordance with Policy T6 in the WDLF, the NPPF and policy TRA1 in the emerging NLP.

#### Impact on residential amenity

7.34 Policy GP23 in the WDLF states that '*planning permission will not be granted for development likely to cause significant harm to either: a) human health and safety; b) the amenity of local residents and other land users; c) the quality and enjoyment of all aspects of the environment*'.

7.35 Policy STP5 in the emerging NLP (as proposed for modification) states that '*Development proposals will be required to demonstrate where relevant and in a proportionate way, that they ...(f) prevent negative impacts on amenity; (g) protect, and alleviate risk to people and the environment, and do not have a negative impact on...vibration, air and noise pollution*'.

7.36 The main impacts on residential amenity are noise, vibration, air quality, artificial lighting and visual impact.

#### Noise

7.37 The main residential receptors for noise from the proposed development are along John Street to the east of the station, parts of Ashbourne Crescent, parts of

Crawford Terrace, parts of Darnley Road, parts of Hatchmeadows and parts of Featherwood Drive. These dwellings are already receptors to noise from the current freight rail traffic and from vehicles using the existing car park.

7.38 Currently most freight services on the railway line do not travel through Ashington, as they comprise freight traffic to and from Lynemouth Power Station and Battleship Wharf. It is understood that current freight traffic on the line are up to 30 train movements per week with some of these being early morning. Whilst noise from trains is transitory, the proposed half hour frequency for passenger services represents a significant increase on current levels. However, the noise from railcars at the station is predicted to be 49 to 55 dBLA<sub>eq</sub> (with mitigation) which at the John Street receptors is the same as the daytime ambient noise level. The proposal is to use diesel railcars, therefore most train engines will be located under the chassis of the railcar and a certain amount of noise attenuation will be provided at the station from the platform acting as a barrier.

7.39 A new source of noise from the proposed development would be the tannoy system. However, noise from the tannoy system at the receptors on John Street is predicted to be significantly below the existing ambient levels during the day. Public Protection have identified a potential sleep disturbance issue between 06.00 and 07.00 when night-time noise levels apply and have recommended a planning condition requiring details of how noise from the tannoy will operate and be managed and controlled during the night period.

7.40 The noise levels at the car park are predicted to be below the measured daytime background levels at the nearest noise receptors on John Street. However, the cumulative daytime noise impact is predicted to be higher than the existing ambient noise levels. To reduce noise levels mitigation is proposed in the form of a 2.8 metre high acoustic barrier between the railway and the dwellings on John Street and the use of a noise absorbent lining on the face of the platform to prevent noise reflection. Details of the acoustic barrier are the subject of a proposed planning condition should the Committee decide to grant planning permission.

7.41 The recommended conditions require the submission of a construction noise and vibration management plan for the approval of the Local Planning Authority. That plan would be required to provide details of the construction work and methodologies, measures for the control and reduction of noise emissions associated with construction works, liaison with local residents and arrangements for noise monitoring. A main contractor for the Northumberland Line scheme has only recently been appointed, such information is not yet available. However, the applicants have stated that working at night-time and weekends would be necessary, as the line would remain open during construction for the operation of freight services. The expectation would be that the activities that might generate most noise, such as demolition, platform construction, groundworks and tarmacking the car park, would be carried out during normal working hours as far as practicable and this could be controlled through the approval of the planning condition or by a COPA Section 61 'prior approval' or a combination of both. Public Protection also point out that there are noise limits under British Standards 5228 (Code of practice for noise and vibration control on construction and open sites) that they would expect the applicants to adhere to. The applicants estimate that the construction period would be between eleven and thirteen months depending on land and track access availability.

7.42 Subject to the imposition of appropriate conditions, Public Protection have raised no objections based on noise, either during the operational phase or during construction.

#### *Vibration*

7.43 Vibration levels from the proposed railcars are likely to be minimal, especially when compared to the longer and heavier freight trains already using the line and would be significantly below levels that would be noticeable at nearby dwellings. Vibration from plant and machinery during the construction phase will depend on the schedule of works and plant to be used. A contractor has only recently been appointed and as the detailed works and plant are not yet known, this is the subject of a planning condition.

#### *Air Quality*

7.44 The railcars will be diesel and there is currently no plan to electrify the line, although the design of the scheme (e.g. the height of bridges) does allow for electrification at some future date. The railcar engines would be similar to those used to drive a large heavy goods vehicle. It is anticipated that the air quality impact from the proposed development would be minimal. Similarly it is considered that the air quality impact from cars travelling to and from the station would be within acceptable levels. A dust management plan for the construction phase has been submitted and Public Protection considers that it is acceptable.

#### *Artificial Lighting*

7.45 The external lighting on the platform and car park would be some 40 metres from the nearest property receptors and should not result in any nuisance or annoyance. A condition is recommended requiring the submission and approval of a lighting scheme that shows how and where external lighting will be installed to demonstrate clearly that areas to be lit will not unduly affect residential amenity.

#### *Visual Impact*

7.46 The application site currently comprises the railway line, car park, vacant brownfield land to the south and public amenity open space to the west. It is considered that the scale and massing of the various station features would not result in unacceptable visual impacts on nearby properties. The reconfiguration and extension of the existing car park provides an opportunity to improve its appearance, notwithstanding the fact that the new car park would be significantly larger than the existing car park. In general it is not considered that the proposed development would have a significant adverse impact on the character and general appearance of the local area or on the amenity of nearby residential properties.

7.47 In conclusion therefore it is considered that the proposed development complies with Policy GP23 in the WDLP and Policy STP5 in the emerging NLP.

#### *Landscape and Trees*



7.48 Policy GP6 in the WDLP seeks to protect trees and to encourage new planting. It states that *‘development which would result in the loss of healthy trees which make an important contribution to the quality of the environment will not be permitted unless there are overriding social or economic benefits to the community and compensatory off-site provision of landscape infrastructure is made’*.

7.49 Policy GP32 in the WDLP requires developers to incorporate a high standard of landscape treatment in their developments.

7.50 Policy QOP4 in the NLP (as proposed for modification) states that: *‘Where relevant, new development will be expected to incorporate well-designed landscaping and respond appropriately to any existing landscape features’*. It also sets out a number of criteria that development proposals should ensure that they comply with, including the retention wherever possible of existing features which contribute to the character of the area or amenity; and that there is no loss of existing trees which are valuable in terms of amenity, biodiversity or amenity, except where they are unavoidable and considerations in favour of the development would outweigh any harm resulting from the loss of trees and the loss can be satisfactorily mitigated through measures such as replacement planning where possible.

7.51 The NPPF as amended in 2021 includes new provisions related to trees, noting their important contribution to the character and quality of urban environments and their role in helping to mitigate and adapt to climate change. Applicants and LPAS are encouraged to ensure that the right trees are planted in the right places (paragraph 131).

7.52 A Landscape, Townscape and Visual Overview and an Arboricultural Impact Assessment were submitted with the application. The latter states that 33 tree features would be removed to facilitate the proposed development, although only one of these is considered to be of high quality and a further two individual trees and one group of moderate quality. The tree of high quality to be removed was the most significant tree surveyed on the site because of its prominence in the local landscape and, although not protected, its removal is regrettable. However, its central location within the proposed car park means that retention is not considered practicable. It is proposed that new planting mitigates tree loss and in addition there is the off-site planting proposed as referred to in paragraph 7.27 above.

7.53 In conclusion therefore it is considered that the proposed development complies with Policy GP6 and Policy GP32 in the WDLP, Policy QOP4 in the emerging NLP and the NPPF.

#### Impact on biodiversity

7.54 An Ecological Impact Assessment was submitted with the planning application. It notes that development at the site will lead to a net loss of biodiversity. The provision of net gains for biodiversity in accordance with the NPPF and Policy ENV1 in the emerging NLP is the subject of a recommended planning condition. The County Ecologist has raised no objections to the proposed development subject to the imposition of appropriate planning conditions, including the submission of a scheme of biodiversity net gain. The net gain may be in relation to the application site or the Northumberland Line as a whole. Other recommended conditions relate to mitigation measures and a lighting scheme to maintain the biodiversity value of the site and avoid harm to protected species.

## Impact on Heritage Assets

7.55 A Heritage Statement was submitted with the planning application. It notes that the existing disused platform structure for the former Ashington railway station would be demolished to accommodate the new platform and station. Other historic structures and buildings in the vicinity of the site include the former post office and library on Kenilworth Road and Memorial Gardens which contains war memorials commemorating the First and Second world Wars. The Building Conservation has considered the impact of the proposed development on the setting of these buildings and gardens and is satisfied that any impacts are not sufficient to warrant refusing the application. To ensure continuity and quality in the appearance and design of the proposed development, a condition is recommended requiring details relating to the design and colour palette for station infrastructure to be submitted.

7.56 The existing car park was formerly the railway sidings and goods shed. The Heritage Statement identifies a potential for the remains of historic rail infrastructure to survive below the existing car park. Also the proposed extension to the car park could potentially disturb any below-ground remains of previously demolished rail infrastructure, such as the former goods yard. There is also potential for potential for disturbance to un-recorded pre-modern archaeological remains that might exist beneath the existing public open space.

7.57 The County Archaeologist recommends that every effort be made to retain any surviving historic fabric associated with former uses of the site. A condition requiring a programme of archaeological work is included in the recommended planning conditions.

7.58 Subject therefore to the imposition of appropriate conditions, the impact of the proposed development on the heritage assets of the area is considered to be acceptable.

## Other Matters

7.59 A Flood Risk Assessment was submitted with the planning application. This has been reviewed by the Local Lead Flood Authority who have raised no objection to the proposed development subject to the imposition of planning conditions in relation to SuDS features and surface water management. One of the planning conditions relates to an assessment looking at the landscaped areas in between some of the parking bays and whether these could be turned into bioretention SuDS features to assist with surface water drainage on the car park.

7.60 A Phase 1 desk top study for the site has been submitted recommending that various intrusive investigations are carried to determine such aspects as the depth of made ground, the composition and strength of strata underground strata, the potential for unrecorded mine workings and other residual contamination associated with historical uses of the site. These are the subjects of recommended planning conditions should the Committee decide to grant planning permission.

## Equality Duty

7.61 The County Council has a duty to have regard to the impact of any proposal on those people with characteristics protected by the Equality Act. Officers have had due regard to Sec 149(1) (a) and (b) of the Equality Act 2010 and considered the information provided by the applicant, together with the responses from consultees and other parties, and determined that the proposal would have no material impact on individuals or identifiable groups with protected characteristics. A Diversity Impact Statement informed the various design options and these were shared with diversity groups. Level access is proposed with access points designed to cater for non-able users. The proposed lift would provide step free access from Wansback Square to the platform. Accessible parking is proposed close to the station entrance. Accordingly, no changes to the proposal were required to make the proposed development acceptable in this regard.

#### Crime and Disorder Act Implications

7.62 Policy GP35 of the WDLP states that development proposals will be expected to have regard to planning out crime objectives. The Planning Statement submitted with the application states that the design of the proposals has been informed by guidance received from Northumbria Police and British Transport Police. The 'Designing Out Crime' units of both organisations have been consulted on the planning application and have provided recommendations for various measures to assist in reducing the fear of crime and disorder for passengers using the railway and rail staff, including measures related to CCTV, lighting and access. These matters are the subjects of planning conditions. It is concluded that the policy requirements have been met.

#### Human Rights Act Implications

7.63 The Human Rights Act requires the County Council to take into account the rights of the public under the European Convention on Human Rights and prevents the Council from acting in a manner that is incompatible with those rights. Article 8 of the Convention provides that there shall be respect for an individual's private life and home save for that interference which is in accordance with the law and necessary in a democratic society in the interests of (inter alia) public safety and the economic wellbeing of the country. Article 1 of protocol 1 provides that an individual's peaceful enjoyment of their property shall not be interfered with save as is necessary in the public interest.

7.64 For an interference with these rights to be justifiable the interference (and the means employed) needs to be proportionate to the aims sought to be realised. The main body of this report identifies the extent to which there is any identifiable interference with these rights. The Planning Considerations identified are also relevant in deciding whether any interference is proportionate. Case law has been decided which indicates that certain development does interfere with an individual's rights under Human Rights legislation. This application has been considered in the light of statute and case law and the interference is not considered to be disproportionate.

7.65 Officers are also aware of Article 6, the focus of which (for the purpose of this decision) is the determination of an individual's civil rights and obligations. Article 6 provides that in the determination of these rights, an individual is entitled to a fair and public hearing within a reasonable time by an independent and impartial tribunal. Article 6 has been subject to a great deal of case law. It has been decided that for

planning matters the decision making process as a whole, which includes the right of review by the High Court, complied with Article 6.

## **8. Conclusion**

8.1 The reintroduction of passenger rail services on the Northumberland Line would bring considerable benefits to communities in southeast Northumberland, including in the Ashington area. The proposed station at Ashington forms an important part of the overall scheme and is in accordance with Development Plan policy.

8.2 The proposed new station would be located adjacent to the location of the former station. This is a sustainable location in Ashington town centre. The proposals for the station are considered to be acceptable subject to the imposition of conditions including mitigation measures to protect the amenity of local residents.

8.3 The extensions to the existing car park involve the loss of the public amenity open space that currently occupies part of the site. Compensatory improvements are proposed at Peoples Park and Ashington Woods and these are considered to be acceptable. Furthermore existing brownfield land owned by the Malhotra Group will also be required to provide the required car parking provision. A 'Grampian' condition is included in the recommended conditions requiring the Malhotra land to be acquired before development of the car park is commenced should the Committee decide to grant planning permission.

8.4 It is concluded that the proposal is in accordance with the Development Plan and the NPPF and that the overall planning balance weighs strongly in favour of granting planning permission subject to the imposition of appropriate planning conditions.

## **9. Recommendation**

That this application be GRANTED permission subject to the following conditions.

### **General**

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun not later than three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).

2. The development hereby permitted shall not be carried out otherwise than in accordance with the following plans and documents.

60604435-ACM-XX-ZZ-DRG-LEP-000015 (Rev PO1.1) Site Location Plan  
60601435-ACM-07-PL-DRG-ECV-000002 (Rev PO1) Existing General Arrangement  
60601435-ACM-07-PL-DRG-ECV-000003 (Rev PO1) Proposed General Arrangement  
60601435-ACM-07-ZZ-DRG-EST-001301 (Rev PO1.1) Proposed Wansbeck Square Lift Access General Arrangement  
60601435-ACM-07-ZZ-DRG-EST-001302 (Rev PO1.1) Proposed Wansbeck Square Lift Access Side Elevation

60601435-ACM-07-ZZ-DRG-EST-001303 (Rev PO1.1) Proposed Wansbeck Square Lift Access Front Elevation  
60601435-ACM-07-ZZ-DRG-EHW-070001 (Rev PO5) Highways General Arrangement  
60601435-ACM-07-ZZ-DRG-EHW-070002 (Rev PO4) Highways Typical Cross Sections  
60601435-ACM-07-ZZ-DRG-EHW-070004 (PO3) Traffic Sign and Road Marking Layout  
60601435-ACM-07-ZZ-DRG-EHW-070006 (Rev PO2) Highways Drainage Layout  
60601435-ACM-07-ZZ-DRG-EHW-070007 (Rev PO3) Vehicle Tracking  
60601435-ACM-07-ZZ-DRG-EHW-070003 (Rev PO2) Existing Public Utilities Layout  
60601435-ACM-07-PL-DRG-ECV-000006 (Rev PO1) Platform Drainage General Arrangement  
60601435-ACM-07-PL-DRG-ECV-000007 (Rev PO2) Typical Section and Platform Details  
60601435-ACM-XX-ZZ-DRG-EPT-000067 (Rev PO2.1) E&P Proposed Lighting Layout  
60601435-ACM-XX-ZZ-DRG-EEN-000502 (Rev PO2.2) Station Landscape Design Ashington  
60601435-ACM-07-ZZ-DRG\_EHW-070054 (Rev PO1) NCC Adopted Highways Location

Reason: To ensure that the approved development is carried out in accordance with the approved plans.

#### Environmental Matters

3. The development hereby permitted shall not be commenced until a Construction Environmental Management Plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved Management Plan shall be adhered to throughout the demolition and construction period. The Management Plan shall provide for:

- a. An assessment of construction noise and vibration including detailing measures for the control and reduction of noise and vibration emissions associated with demolition, earthworks and construction.
- b. Details of the disposal of surface water from the development through the construction phase.
- c. Equipment cleaning and washing facilities.
- d. Excavation plant machinery to be fitted with fuel spill kits.
- e. The provision of welfare facilities that shall be maintained by a licenced Waste Carrier.
- f. Details of behavioural policies for all site staff to minimise noise, vibration and air quality impacts from vehicles, plant and equipment.
- g. The engines / generators of all construction vehicles, plant and equipment shall be turned off when not in use. Hybrid generators shall be used wherever practicable to reduce noise and fuel consumption.

h. Details of the measures to be taken to protect existing trees that will not be removed as part of the development

Reason: To prevent nuisance in the interests of residential amenity in accordance with the NPPF, to ensure that the risk of flooding does not increase during the construction phase, to limit the siltation of any site surface water features, to ensure the welfare of site operatives and to ensure trees are protected from construction works.

4. Details of the proposed boundary treatment to the site shall be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority. The details shall include plans showing the location of existing, retained and proposed new boundary treatments and scaled drawings indicating the positions, height, design, materials, type and colour of the proposed new boundary treatments. The approved scheme shall be implemented before the station is brought into operational use and shall be retained thereafter for the lifetime of the development.

Reason: In the interests of the appearance of the area.

5. Notwithstanding the details submitted, prior to the commencement of development samples of all materials, colours and finishes to be used on all external surfaces shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter the development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity of the area and to ensure that the proposed development does not have an adverse effect upon the appearance of the area in accordance with Policy GP31 of the Wansbeck District Local Plan.

6. The development hereby permitted shall not be commenced until schemes for environmental improvements at Peoples Park, Ashington, and Ashington Woods, have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved environmental improvements shall be commenced no later than the first planting season after the proposed development is brought into use.

Reason: To provide compensation for the loss of public open space in accordance with Policy REC1 of the Wansbeck Local Plan.

#### Contaminated Land

7. No development shall take place, including any works of demolition, until a full programme of works has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The programme shall allow the identification of 'enabling works', separate from the main demolition and construction works, including major groundworks (i.e. soil stripping).

Reason: To provide an identifiable separation of works that will allow the imposition of conditions aimed only at the main demolition and construction works.

8. No development shall take place beyond the 'enabling works' identified under condition 7, until an appropriate scheme of assessments, investigations and remediation has been carried out as detailed below, unless those assessments and

investigations demonstrate that remediation is not required, and the Local Planning authority dispenses with any such requirement in writing.

a) Further site investigations are recommended in the Phase 1: Desk Study (The Northumberland Line – Preliminary Sources Study Report – Ashington Station. AECOM Ltd. December 2020 (version 1.0) and shall be carried out to fully and effectively characterise the nature and extent of any land contamination and / or pollution of controlled wastes. These shall specifically include a risk assessment that adopts the Source-Pathway-Receptor principle, in order that any potential risks are adequately assessed, taking into account the site's existing status and proposed new use. The site investigation and findings shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority without delay upon completion.

b) Thereafter, a written Method Statement (or Remediation Strategy) detailing the remediation requirements for the land contamination and / or pollution of controlled waters affecting the site shall be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority. All requirements shall be implemented and completed to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority. No deviation shall be made to the approved scheme without express written agreement of the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure that risks from land contamination to the future users of the land are minimised and to ensure that the development can be carried out safely without unacceptable risks to future users in accordance with Policy GP29 of the Wansbeck District Local Plan.

9. The development hereby permitted shall not be brought into use or continue in use until a full closure (Verification Report) report has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The report shall provide verification that the required works regarding contamination have been carried out in accordance with the approved Method Statement(s). Post remediation sampling and monitoring results shall be included in the closure report to demonstrate that the required remediation has been fully met.

Reason: To ensure that risks from land contamination to the future users of the land are minimised and to ensure that the development can be carried out safely without unacceptable risks to future users in accordance with Policy GP29 of the Wansbeck District Local Plan.

10. If during the development, contamination not previously considered is identified, then an additional Method Statement regarding this material shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall not be brought into use until a Method Statement has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and the measures proposed to deal with the contamination have been carried out. Should no contamination be found during development then the developer shall submit a signed statement indicating this to discharge this condition.

Reason: To ensure that risks from land contamination to the future users of the land are minimised and to ensure that the development can be carried out safely without unacceptable risks to future users in accordance with Policy GP29 of the Wansbeck District Local Plan.

Biodiversity

11. The development hereby permitted shall not be commenced unless and until a scheme ("the offsetting scheme") for the offsetting of biodiversity impacts at the site has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The offsetting scheme shall include:

- a. A methodology for the identification of receptor site(s).
- b. The identification of receptor site(s).
- c. Details of the offset requirements of the development (in accordance with the recognised offsetting metrics standard outlined in the Defra Metrics Guidance dated March 2012).
- d. The provision of arrangements to secure the delivery of the offsetting measures (including a timetable for their delivery).
- e. A management and monitoring plan (to include for the provision and maintenance of the offsetting measures in perpetuity).

The written approval of the LPA shall not be issued before the arrangements Necessary to secure the delivery of the offsetting measures have been executed. The offsetting scheme shall be implemented in full accordance with the requirements of the approved scheme.

Reason: To provide net gains for biodiversity in accordance with the NPPF.

12. No development shall take place unless in accordance with the mitigation measures detailed in the report *Ecological Impact Assessment Ashington station. Econorth. January 2021*, including:

- Priority within the planting scheme to be given to native species, ideally of local provenance.
- Retention where appropriate of the mature trees on the site.
- Retained and created habitats to be subject to a suitable management plan.
- Cotoneaster and Japanese rose checking survey to map current extent 1 month prior to the start of works. Removal and control to be undertaken by an appropriately licensed contractor.
- Any arboricultural works to follow a method statement.
- Installation of at least 5 bat boxes and 5 new nest boxes within the retained trees.
- Site clearance works shall not be undertaken during the nesting period (1 March – 30 September) unless a checking survey by a suitably qualified ecologist has confirmed no active nests have been present within the 5 days before the survey was undertaken.

Reason: To maintain the biodiversity value of the site and avoid harm to protected species that may be present in accordance with Policy GP13 of the Wansbeck District Local Plan.

#### Highways and Car Parking

13. The development hereby permitted shall not be commenced until a Transport and Construction Method Statement, together with a supporting plan, has been



submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved Method Statement shall be adhered to throughout the construction period. The Method Statement and plan shall provide for:

- a. Details of temporary traffic management measures, temporary access, routes and vehicles.
- b. Vehicle cleaning facilities.
- c. The parking of vehicles of site operatives and visitors.
- d. The loading and unloading of plant and materials
- e. Storage of plant and materials used in constructing the development.
- f. Mitigation measures in respect to the loss of public car parking during the construction phase and access to retained car parking and serving areas to the north of the application site.
- g. Measures to maintain access to the recycling facilities should a temporary location be provided during the construction period.

Reason: To prevent nuisance in the interests of residential amenity and highway safety, in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework.

14. Deliveries to and collections from the demolition and / or construction phases of the development shall only be permitted between the hours 08.00 – 18.00 Monday to Friday and 08.00 – 13.00 on Saturdays, with no deliveries or collections on Sundays or Bank Holidays, unless agreed in writing by the Local planning Authority.

Reason: To protect residential amenity and provide a commensurate level of protection against noise.

15. Development of the car park shall not be commenced until the land owned by the Malhotra Group in the southern part of the application site, between the existing car park and Ashbourne Crescent, is acquired for the proposed development. The station shall not become functional for passenger rail services until the development of the car park has been fully completed.

Reason: The land is required to enable the proposed number of car parking spaces to be provided.

16. The approved car parking shall not be made available for public use until the car parking area indicated on the approved plans, including any disabled and EV car parking spaces contained therein, has been hard surfaced, sealed and marked out in parking bays in accordance with the approved plans. Thereafter the car parking area shall be retained in accordance with the approved plans.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety, in accordance with Policy T7 of the Wansbeck Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

17. Prior to the car parking area being made available for public use, a car parking management strategy detailing the number of car parking spaces, including

disabled, EV and other spaces for non-public use, and details on how these spaces will be made available shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved strategy shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details before the car parking area is made available for public use.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and sustainable development, in accordance with Policy T7 of the Wansbeck Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

18. Prior to the car parking area being marked out in parking bays, details of a system of internal pedestrian routing within the car park aisles shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved details shall be implemented in accordance with the approved plans before the car parking area is made available for public use.

Reason: In the interests of pedestrian safety, in accordance with Policy T6 of the Wansbeck Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

19. Prior to the car parking area being made available for public use, details of the proposed highways works shown indicatively on the approved plans shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The highway works shall include the provision of:

- a. Widened and improved access to Kenilworth Drive (northern access), including cycling provision.
- b. New access junction to Kenilworth Drive (southern access).
- c. Reinstatement of former access point from Kenilworth Drive.
- d. Improved pedestrian connectivity between the southern access and the pedestrian routes to the north of Ashbourne Crescent.
- e. Pedestrian connectivity to Oakland Terrace.
- f. All other associated works.

The car parking area shall not be made available for public use until the highways works have been completed in accordance with the approved plans.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety, in accordance with Policy T6 of the Wansbeck Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

20. Prior to the commencement of passenger rail services at the station, details of the proposed advanced directional signage for vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians, including Town Centre Fingerpost signage, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. No passenger rail services at the station shall commence until the details have been implemented in accordance with the approved plans.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and sustainable development, in accordance with Policy T6 of the Wansbeck Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

21. Prior to the car parking area being made available for public use, an Operation, Management and Maintenance Strategy for the development shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The Operation, Management and Maintenance Strategy shall detail how the areas of the development including the car parking area, access roads, drainage, landscaping, CCTV and lighting will be operated, managed and maintained upon completion of the development and the boundaries between any multiple parties in this respect. Following the car parking area being made available for public use, the development shall be managed and maintained in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and local amenity, in accordance with Policy T7 of the Wansbeck Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

22. Prior to any change in charging strategy for the car parking area, details of the changes and any associated mitigation associated with that change, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved details and associated mitigation shall be implemented prior to the change in charging strategy being implemented.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety, in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework.

23. Prior to the car parking area being made available for public use, a Delivery and Servicing strategy for any business within Wansbeck Square that requires the development car park for vehicle movements shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The strategy shall include timings of delivery / servicing vehicles, 'engine off' / quiet delivery strategy, details of the vehicles used in the deliveries and servicing and the routes taken. The approved strategy shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details before the car parking area is made available for public use.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and local amenity, in accordance with Policy T6 of the Wansbeck Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

24. Prior to the commencement of passenger rail services at the station, the cycle parking shown on the approved plans shall be implemented in accordance with the approved plans. Thereafter the cycle parking shall be retained in accordance with the approved details and shall be kept available for the parking of cycles at all times.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and sustainable development, in accordance with Policy T3 of the Wansbeck District Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

## CCTV

25. A scheme for the provision of a network of closed circuit television cameras (CCTV), including the proposed location cameras, mounting columns, proposals for the use and management of the system and proposals for its installation shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The CCTV

system shall be installed in accordance with the approved details before the station is brought into operational use and shall be retained thereafter for the lifetime of the development.

Reason: In the interests of the safety and security of users of the station and car park in accordance with Policy GP35 of the Wansbeck District Local Plan.

#### Noise and Vibration

26. Prior to any amplified voice or tannoy system becoming operational, full details of the system shall be provided to the Local Planning Authority to show how the system will be operated and managed to minimise noise impacts to local noise sensitive receptors. The proposed system shall be installed, operated and maintained to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority in accordance with the details submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To protect residential amenity and provide a commensurate level of protection against noise in accordance with Policy GP25 of the Wansbeck District Local Plan.

27. Prior to the development hereby permitted being brought into use or continuing in use, full details of the acoustic barriers as outlined in the noise assessment (Ashington Railway Station Noise Impact Assessment. AECOM Ltd. January 2021), including location, specification, design and performance, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved scheme shall be implemented in full and retained for the lifetime of the development.

Reason: To protect residential amenity and provide a commensurate level of protection against noise and vibration, in accordance with Policy GP25 of the Wansbeck District Local Plan.

28. No development shall take place, including any works of demolition, until a construction noise and vibration management plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The plan shall detail the construction work and methodologies, measures for the control and reduction of noise emissions associated with construction works, liaison with local residents and arrangements for noise monitoring.

Reason: To protect residential amenity and provide a commensurate level of protection against noise in accordance with Policy GP25 of the Wansbeck District Local Plan.

#### Drainage

29. Prior to first use of the car park, a scheme detailing the type, adoption and maintenance of all SuDS features shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Maintenance of the SuDS features shall be implemented in accordance with the approved scheme.

Reason: To ensure that the satisfactory disposal of surface water from the site.

30. Prior to the installation of any drainage within the car park, an assessment looking at the landscaped area between some of the parking bays and whether

these could be turned into bioretention SuDS features that would assist with surface water drainage on site, shall be undertaken and submitted for the approval of the Local Planning Authority. The approved drainage shall be constructed in accordance with the approved plans and drawings.

Reason: To provide extra treatment of surface water quality within the development.

### Lighting

31. Prior to first use a lighting scheme for all areas of the site including, but not restricted to, the car park and footpaths, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall show how and where external lighting shall be installed (through the provision of appropriate lighting contour plans and technical specifications) so that it can be clearly demonstrated that areas to be lit will not unduly affect residential amenity or prevent bats using their territory (e.g. for foraging or commuting) or having access to their breeding sites and resting places. All external lighting shall be installed in accordance with the approved scheme and no external lighting shall otherwise be installed without prior approval in writing from the Local Planning Authority and shall be retained thereafter for the lifetime of the development.

Reason: To protect residential amenity in accordance with Policy GD23 of the Wansbeck District Local Plan and maintain connectivity along commuting and feeding corridors for protected animal species in accordance with Policy GP13 of the Wansbeck District Local Plan.

### Archaeology

32. A programme of archaeological work is required in accordance with Northumberland County Council Conservation Team (NCCCT) Standards for archaeological Mitigation and Site-specific Requirements document (17 March 2021). The archaeological scheme shall comprise three stages of work as set out below. Each stage shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

a) No development or archaeological mitigation shall commence on site until a written scheme of investigation based on NCCCT Standards and Site-specific Requirements document has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

b) The archaeological recording scheme required by NCCCT Standards and Site-specific Requirements document must be completed in accordance with the approved written scheme of investigation.

c) The programme of analysis, reporting, publication and archiving if required by NCCCT Standards and Site-specific Requirements document must be completed in accordance with the approved written scheme of investigation.

Reason: The site is of archaeological interest and to comply with Policy GP21 of the Wansbeck District Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

### Informatives

1. The prevention of nuisance is the responsibility of the developer and their professional advisors. Developers should, therefore, fully appreciate the importance of professional advice. Failure to address issues of noise, dust and light at the development stage does not preclude action by the Council under Section 79 of the Environment Protection Act 1990 in respect to statutory nuisance.
2. British Standards 5228 (Code of practice for noise and vibration control on construction and open sites) sets out noise limits that the developers will be expected to adhere to, particularly in relation to working outside 'normal working hours'.
3. There shall be no burning of any material associated with the construction phase of the development.
4. It is recommended that the lighting scheme approved under condition 31 is designed in consultation with the project ecologist and follow guidance set out in Institution of Lighting Professionals Advice Note 08/18 (2018).
5. Offsite highway works required in connection with the proposed development are controlled by the Council's Technical services Division. These works should be carried out before the car parking area is made available for public use. The Council will undertake such works at the applicant's expense. Highways Development Management ([highwaysplanning@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:highwaysplanning@northumberland.gov.uk)) should be contacted to progress this matter.
6. A highway condition survey should be carried out before the commencement of demolition and construction vehicle movements from the site. Highways Development Management ([highwaysplanning@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:highwaysplanning@northumberland.gov.uk)) should be contacted to arrange a survey.
7. The Council's Traffic Management Section at [highwaysprogramme@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:highwaysprogramme@northumberland.gov.uk) should be contacted before and during the construction period in respect of any impacts to current and proposed Traffic Regulation Orders.
8. Building material or equipment shall not be stored on the highway unless otherwise agreed. The Streetworks Team on 0345 600 6400 should be contacted for Skips and Containers licences.
9. The Council's Lighting Section at [highwaysstreetlighting@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:highwaysstreetlighting@northumberland.gov.uk) should be contacted before and during the construction period with respect of street lighting to ensure sufficient illumination levels of the public highway.
10. In accordance with the Highways Act 1980, no mud, debris or rubbish shall be deposited on the highway.
11. Road safety audits are required to be undertaken. The Council offers this service and can be contacted at [highwaysplanning@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:highwaysplanning@northumberland.gov.uk) or 01670 622979.
12. The demand for EV car parking spaces is likely to increase in the future to reflect the inevitable increased take up of electric vehicles.

13. Works that do not constitute 'development' or are permitted by virtue of the provisions of the General Permitted Development Order will not require formal discharge to be obtained prior to such works being undertaken.

**Date of Report:** 20 August 2021

**Background Papers:** Planning application file 21/00387/CCD

## Appendix I

Ashington station decision notice





# Northumberland

## County Council

Mr Allen Creedy  
72 B-Box Studios  
Newcastle  
NE2 1AN

Our Ref: 21/00387/CCD  
Your Ref:  
Contact: Mr Gordon Halliday  
Direct Line: 07785727053  
E-Mail: [Gordon.Halliday@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:Gordon.Halliday@northumberland.gov.uk)  
Date: 10th September 2021

Dear Sir/Madam,

### **Application to Northumberland County Council – Development Management**

I refer to your application to the above unit and enclose your approval certificate. This is an important legal document, it should therefore be safely stored.

Most approvals are subject to conditions and these are listed on the second page of the certificate. These form part of your permission and must be adhered to. Some conditions may require additional information to be submitted to this unit prior to the starting of any works, whilst others are ongoing, either just during the construction period and others for the life of the development. If you are uncertain about any of the conditions attached to your permission, please contact the Planning Case Officer whose details appear at the top of this page. Under the Fees for Applications Regulations 2012 (as amended), there is a standard fee of £116 per request to have conditions discharged. This is reduced to £34 for Householder applications.

If you consider that you are unable to comply with any of the conditions, you do have a right to apply to the Council to have a condition removed or varied. This has to be in the form of a variation application. Alternatively you do have a right of appeal to the Planning Inspectorate (see information on reverse of certificate). In either of these circumstances, you are advised to contact the Planning Case Officer first.

Most building work will require Building Regulations approval. If you have not already applied for this, you should contact your area Building Control office at either Alnwick, Hexham or Morpeth (telephone 01670 623838, 01670 623820 or 01670 623728/724 or e mail [buildingcontrol@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:buildingcontrol@northumberland.gov.uk)).

Finally, it would be helpful for record keeping purposes, if you could inform the planning unit prior to starting the building or other works, contact information is detailed at the top of this letter.

Yours faithfully,

**Rob Murfin**  
**Director of Planning**



TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990(As Amended)  
TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT  
PROCEDURE) (ENGLAND) ORDER 2015

**Application No.** 21/00387/CCD

Mr Allen Creedy  
72 B-Box Studios  
Newcastle  
NE2 1AN

**DEVELOPMENT BY NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL**

**Proposal** Construction of a new single platform railway station including pedestrian lift, new highway access; modifications to existing highways including pedestrian footways; provision of parking for cars, electric vehicles, motorcycles, cycles, and taxis and other associated works including new crossings for pedestrians and cyclists. Construction of facilities ancillary to the station including, lighting, soft and hard landscaping, surface and subsurface drainage, utilities and other services, boundary treatment and other associated works.

**Location** Station Yard Car Park North Wansbeck Square Station Road Ashington  
Northumberland  
NE63 9XH

**Applicant** Northumberland County Council  
County Hall Morpeth NE61 2EF

*In pursuance of powers under the above Act the Local Planning Authority hereby PERMITS the development described above which should be carried out in accordance with plans and details submitted with the application subject to all conditions defined in the attached schedule.*

**Rob Murfin**  
**Director of Planning**

10th September 2021

**NOTE**

Failure to adhere to any details shown on the plans forming part of the application for which permission is hereby granted, and/or failure to comply with any conditions attached to this permission, may constitute a contravention of the provisions of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 in respect of which enforcement action might be taken.

**(YOUR ATTENTION IS DRAWN TO THE NOTES OVERLEAF)**

**Conditions**

- 1 The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)

- 2 The development hereby permitted shall not be carried out otherwise than in accordance with the following plans and documents.

60604435-ACM-XX-ZZ-DRG-LEP-000015 (Rev PO1.1) Site Location Plan  
60601435-ACM-07-PL-DRG-ECV-000002 (Rev PO1) Existing General Arrangement  
60601435-ACM-07-PL-DRG-ECV-000003 (Rev PO1) Proposed General Arrangement  
60601435-ACM-07-ZZ-DRG-EST-001301 (Rev PO1.1) Proposed Wansbeck Square Lift Access General Arrangement  
60601435-ACM-07-ZZ-DRG-EST-001302 (Rev PO1.1) Proposed Wansbeck Square Lift Access Side Elevation  
60601435-ACM-07-ZZ-DRG-EST-001303 (Rev PO1.1) Proposed Wansbeck Square Lift Access Front Elevation  
60601435-ACM-07-ZZ-DRG-EHW-070001 (Rev PO5) Highways General Arrangement  
60601435-ACM-07-ZZ-DRG-EHW-070002 (Rev PO4) Highways Typical Cross Sections  
60601435-ACM-07-ZZ-DRG-EHW-070004 (PO3) Traffic Sign and Road Marking Layout  
60601435-ACM-07-ZZ-DRG-EHW-070006 (Rev PO2) Highways Drainage Layout  
60601435-ACM-07-ZZ-DRG-EHW-070007 (Rev PO3) Vehicle Tracking  
60601435-ACM-07-ZZ-DRG-EHW-070003 (Rev PO2) Existing Public Utilities Layout  
60601435-ACM-07-PL-DRG-ECV-000006 (Rev PO1) Platform Drainage General Arrangement  
60601435-ACM-07-PL-DRG-ECV-000007 (Rev PO2) Typical Section and Platform Details  
60601435-ACM-XX-ZZ-DRG-EPT-000067 (Rev PO2.1) E&P Proposed Lighting Layout  
60601435-ACM-XX-ZZ-DRG-EEN-000502 (Rev PO2.2) Station Landscape Design  
Ashington  
60601435-ACM-07-ZZ-DRG\_EHW-070054 (Rev PO1) NCC Adopted Highways Location

Reason: To ensure that the approved development is carried out in accordance with the approved plans.

- 3 The development hereby permitted shall not be commenced until a Construction Environmental Management Plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved Management Plan shall be adhered to throughout the demolition and construction period. The Management Plan shall provide for:
  - a. An assessment of construction noise and vibration including detailing measures for the control and reduction of noise and vibration emissions associated with demolition, earthworks and construction.
  - b. Details of the disposal of surface water from the development through the construction phase.
  - c. Equipment cleaning and washing facilities.

- d. Excavation plant machinery to be fitted with fuel spill kits.
- e. The provision of welfare facilities that shall be maintained by a licenced Waste Carrier.
- f. Details of behavioural policies for all site staff to minimise noise, vibration and air quality impacts from vehicles, plant and equipment.
- g. The engines / generators of all construction vehicles, plant and equipment shall be turned off when not in use. Hybrid generators shall be used wherever practicable to reduce noise and fuel consumption.
- h. Details of the measures to be taken to protect existing trees that will not be removed as part of the development.

Reason: To prevent nuisance in the interests of residential amenity in accordance with the NPPF, to ensure that the risk of flooding does not increase during the construction phase, to limit the siltation of any site surface water features, to ensure the welfare of site operatives and to ensure trees are protected from construction works.

- 4 Details of the proposed boundary treatment to the site shall be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority. The details shall include plans showing the location of existing, retained and proposed new boundary treatments and scaled drawings indicating the positions, height, design, materials, type and colour of the proposed new boundary treatments. The approved scheme shall be implemented before the station is brought into operational use and shall be retained thereafter for the lifetime of the development.

Reason: In the interests of the appearance of the area.

- 5 Notwithstanding the details submitted, prior to the commencement of development samples of all materials, colours and finishes to be used on all external surfaces shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter the development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity of the area and to ensure that the proposed development does not have an adverse effect upon the appearance of the area in accordance with Policy GP31 of the Wansbeck District Local Plan.

- 6 The development hereby permitted shall not be commenced until schemes for environmental improvements at Peoples Park, Ashington, and Ashington Woods, have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved environmental improvements shall be commenced no later than the first planting season and completed not later than the third planting season after the proposed development is brought into use.

Reason: To provide compensation for the loss of public open space in accordance with Policy REC1 of the Wansbeck Local Plan.

- 7 No development shall take place, including any works of demolition, until a full programme of works has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The programme shall allow the identification of 'enabling works', separate from the main demolition and construction works, including major groundworks (i.e. soil stripping).

Reason: To provide an identifiable separation of works that will allow the imposition of conditions aimed only at the main demolition and construction works.

- 8 No development shall take place beyond the 'enabling works' identified under condition 7, until an appropriate scheme of assessments, investigations and remediation has been carried out as detailed below, unless those assessments and investigations demonstrate that remediation is not required, and the Local Planning authority dispenses with any such requirement in writing.

a) Further site investigations are recommended in the Phase 1: Desk Study (The Northumberland Line - Preliminary Sources Study Report - Ashington Station. AECOM Ltd. December 2020 (version 1.0) and shall be carried out to fully and effectively characterise the nature and extent of any land contamination and / or pollution of controlled wastes. These shall specifically include a risk assessment that adopts the Source-Pathway-Receptor principle, in order that any potential risks are adequately assessed, taking into account the site's existing status and proposed new use. The site investigation and findings shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority without delay upon completion.

b) Thereafter, a written Method Statement (or Remediation Strategy) detailing the remediation requirements for the land contamination and / or pollution of controlled waters affecting the site shall be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority. All requirements shall be implemented and completed to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority. No deviation shall be made to the approved scheme without express written agreement of the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure that risks from land contamination to the future users of the land are minimised and to ensure that the development can be carried out safely without unacceptable risks to future users in accordance with Policy GP29 of the Wansbeck District Local Plan.

- 9 The development hereby permitted shall not be brought into use or continue in use until a full closure (Verification Report) report has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The report shall provide verification that the required works regarding contamination have been carried out in accordance with the approved Method Statement(s). Post remediation sampling and monitoring results shall be included in the closure report to demonstrate that the required remediation has been fully met.

Reason: To ensure that risks from land contamination to the future users of the land are minimised and to ensure that the development can be carried out safely without unacceptable risks to future users in accordance with Policy GP29 of the Wansbeck District Local Plan.

- 10 If during the development, contamination not previously considered is identified, then an additional Method Statement regarding this material shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall not be brought into use until a Method Statement has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and the measures proposed to deal with the contamination have been carried out. Should no contamination be found during development then the developer shall submit a signed statement indicating this to discharge this condition.

Reason: To ensure that risks from land contamination to the future users of the land are minimised and to ensure that the development can be carried out safely without unacceptable risks to future users in accordance with Policy GP29 of the Wansbeck District Local Plan.

- 11 The development hereby permitted shall not be commenced unless and until a scheme ("the offsetting scheme") for the offsetting of biodiversity impacts at the site has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The offsetting scheme shall include:

- a. A methodology for the identification of receptor site(s).
- b. The identification of receptor site(s).
- c. Details of the offset requirements of the development (in accordance with the recognised offsetting metrics standard outlined in the Defra Metrics Guidance dated March 2012).
- d. The provision of arrangements to secure the delivery of the offsetting measures (including a timetable for their delivery).
- e. A management and monitoring plan (to include for the provision and maintenance of the offsetting measures in perpetuity).

The written approval of the LPA shall not be issued before the arrangements necessary to secure the delivery of the offsetting measures have been executed. The offsetting scheme shall be implemented in full accordance with the requirements of the approved scheme.

Reason: To provide net gains for biodiversity in accordance with the NPPF.

- 12 No development shall take place unless in accordance with the mitigation measures detailed in the report Ecological Impact Assessment Ashington station. Econorth. January 2021, including:

Priority within the planting scheme to be given to native species, ideally of local provenance.

Retention where appropriate of the mature trees on the site.

Retained and created habitats to be subject to a suitable management plan.

Cotoneaster and Japanese rose checking survey to map current extent 1 month prior to the start of works. Removal and control to be undertaken by an appropriately licensed contractor.

Any arboricultural works to follow a method statement.

Installation of at least 5 bat boxes and 5 new nest boxes within the retained trees.

Site clearance works shall not be undertaken during the nesting period (1 March - 30 September) unless a checking survey by a suitably qualified ecologist has confirmed no active nests have been present within the 5 days before the survey was undertaken.

Reason: To maintain the biodiversity value of the site and avoid harm to protected species that may be present in accordance with Policy GP13 of the Wansbeck District Local Plan.

- 13 The development hereby permitted shall not be commenced until a Transport and Construction Method Statement, together with a supporting plan, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved Method Statement shall be adhered to throughout the construction period. The Method Statement and plan shall provide for:

- a. Details of temporary traffic management measures, temporary access, routes and vehicles.

- b. Vehicle cleaning facilities.
- c. The parking of vehicles of site operatives and visitors.
- d. The loading and unloading of plant and materials
- e. Storage of plant and materials used in constructing the development.
- f. Mitigation measures in respect to the loss of public car parking during the construction phase and access to retained car parking and serving areas to the north of the application site.
- g. Measures to maintain access to the recycling facilities should a temporary location be provided during the construction period.

Reason: To prevent nuisance in the interests of residential amenity and highway safety, in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework.

- 14 Deliveries to and collections from the demolition and / or construction phases of the development shall only be permitted between the hours 08.00 - 18.00 Monday to Friday and 08.00 - 13.00 on Saturdays, with no deliveries or collections on Sundays or Bank Holidays, unless agreed in writing by the Local planning Authority.

Reason: To protect residential amenity and provide a commensurate level of protection against noise.

- 15 Development of the car park shall not be commenced until the land owned by the Malhotra Group in the southern part of the application site, between the existing car park and Ashbourne Crescent, is acquired for the proposed development. The station shall not become functional for passenger rail services until the development of the car park has been fully completed.

Reason: The land is required to enable the proposed number of car parking spaces to be provided.

- 16 The approved car parking shall not be made available for public use until the car parking area indicated on the approved plans, including any disabled and EV car parking spaces contained therein, has been hard surfaced, sealed and marked out in parking bays in accordance with the approved plans. Thereafter the car parking area shall be retained in accordance with the approved plans.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety, in accordance with Policy T7 of the Wansbeck Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

- 17 Prior to the car parking area being made available for public use, a car parking management strategy detailing the number of car parking spaces, including disabled, EV and other spaces for non-public use, and details on how these spaces will be made available shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved strategy shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details before the car parking area is made available for public use.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and sustainable development, in accordance with Policy T7 of the Wansbeck Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

- 18 Prior to the car parking area being marked out in parking bays, details of a system of internal pedestrian routing within the car park aisles shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved details shall be implemented in accordance with the approved plans before the car parking area is made available for public use.

Reason: In the interests of pedestrian safety, in accordance with Policy T6 of the Wansbeck Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

- 19 Prior to the car parking area being made available for public use, details of the proposed highways works shown indicatively on the approved plans shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The highway works shall include the provision of:
- a. Widened and improved access to Kenilworth Drive (northern access), including cycling provision.
  - b. New access junction to Kenilworth Drive (southern access).
  - c. Reinstatement of former access point from Kenilworth Drive.
  - d. Improved pedestrian connectivity between the southern access and the pedestrian routes to the north of Ashbourne Crescent.
  - e. Pedestrian connectivity to Oakland Terrace.
  - f. All other associated works.

The car parking area shall not be made available for public use until the highways works have been completed in accordance with the approved plans.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety, in accordance with Policy T6 of the Wansbeck Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

- 20 Prior to the commencement of passenger rail services at the station, details of the proposed advanced directional signage for vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians, including Town Centre Fingerpost signage, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. No passenger rail services at the station shall commence until the details have been implemented in accordance with the approved plans.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and sustainable development, in accordance with Policy T6 of the Wansbeck Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

- 21 Prior to the car parking area being made available for public use, an Operation, Management and Maintenance Strategy for the development shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The Operation, Management and Maintenance Strategy shall detail how the areas of the development including the car parking area, access roads, drainage, landscaping, CCTV and lighting will be operated, managed and maintained upon completion of the development and the boundaries between any multiple parties in this respect. Following the car parking area being made available for public use, the development shall be managed and maintained in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and local amenity, in accordance with Policy T7 of the Wansbeck Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

- 22 Prior to any change in charging strategy for the car parking area, details of the changes and any associated mitigation associated with that change, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved details and associated mitigation shall be implemented prior to the change in charging strategy being implemented.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety, in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework.



- 23 Prior to the car parking area being made available for public use, a Delivery and Servicing strategy for any business within Wansbeck Square that requires the development car park for vehicle movements shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The strategy shall include timings of delivery / servicing vehicles, 'engine off' / quiet delivery strategy, details of the vehicles used in the deliveries and servicing and the routes taken. The approved strategy shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details before the car parking area is made available for public use.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and local amenity, in accordance with Policy T6 of the Wansbeck Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

- 24 Prior to the commencement of passenger rail services at the station, the cycle parking shown on the approved plans shall be implemented in accordance with the approved plans. Thereafter the cycle parking shall be retained in accordance with the approved details and shall be kept available for the parking of cycles at all times.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and sustainable development, in accordance with Policy T3 of the Wansbeck District Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

- 25 A scheme for the provision of a network of closed circuit television cameras (CCTV), including the proposed location cameras, mounting columns, proposals for the use and management of the system and proposals for its installation shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The CCTV system shall be installed in accordance with the approved details before the station is brought into operational use and shall be retained thereafter for the lifetime of the development.

Reason: In the interests of the safety and security of users of the station and car park in accordance with Policy GP35 of the Wansbeck District Local Plan.

- 26 Prior to any amplified voice or tannoy system becoming operational, full details of the system shall be provided to the Local Planning Authority to show how the system will be operated and managed to minimise noise impacts to local noise sensitive receptors. The proposed system shall be installed, operated and maintained to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority in accordance with the details submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To protect residential amenity and provide a commensurate level of protection against noise in accordance with Policy GP25 of the Wansbeck District Local Plan.

- 27 Prior to the development hereby permitted being brought into use or continuing in use, full details of the acoustic barriers as outlined in the noise assessment (Ashington Railway Station Noise Impact Assessment. AECOM Ltd. January 2021), including location, specification, design and performance, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved scheme shall be implemented in full and retained for the lifetime of the development.

Reason: To protect residential amenity and provide a commensurate level of protection against noise and vibration, in accordance with Policy GP25 of the Wansbeck District Local Plan.

- 28 No development shall take place, including any works of demolition, until a construction noise and vibration management plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The plan shall detail the construction work and methodologies, measures for the control and reduction of noise emissions associated

with construction works, liaison with local residents and arrangements for noise monitoring.

Reason: To protect residential amenity and provide a commensurate level of protection against noise in accordance with Policy GP25 of the Wansbeck District Local Plan.

- 29 Prior to first use of the car park, a scheme detailing the type, adoption and maintenance of all SuDS features shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Maintenance of the SuDS features shall be implemented in accordance with the approved scheme.

Reason: To ensure that the satisfactory disposal of surface water from the site.

- 30 Prior to the installation of any drainage within the car park, an assessment looking at the landscaped area between some of the parking bays and whether these could be turned into bioretention SuDS features that would assist with surface water drainage on site, shall be undertaken and submitted for the approval of the Local Planning Authority. The approved drainage shall be constructed in accordance with the approved plans and drawings.

Reason: To provide extra treatment of surface water quality within the development.

- 31 Prior to first use a lighting scheme for all areas of the site including, but not restricted to, the car park and footpaths, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall show how and where external lighting shall be installed (through the provision of appropriate lighting contour plans and technical specifications) so that it can be clearly demonstrated that areas to be lit will not unduly affect residential amenity or prevent bats using their territory (e.g. for foraging or commuting) or having access to their breeding sites and resting places. All external lighting shall be installed in accordance with the approved scheme and no external lighting shall otherwise be installed without prior approval in writing from the Local Planning Authority and shall be retained thereafter for the lifetime of the development.

Reason: To protect residential amenity in accordance with Policy GD23 of the Wansbeck District Local Plan and maintain connectivity along commuting and feeding corridors for protected animal species in accordance with Policy GP13 of the Wansbeck District Local Plan.

- 32 A programme of archaeological work is required in accordance with Northumberland County Council Conservation Team (NCCCT) Standards for archaeological Mitigation and Site-specific Requirements document (17 March 2021). The archaeological scheme shall comprise three stages of work as set out below. Each stage shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

a) No development or archaeological mitigation shall commence on site until a written scheme of investigation based on NCCCT Standards and Site-specific Requirements document has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

b) The archaeological recording scheme required by NCCCT Standards and Site-specific Requirements document must be completed in accordance with the approved written scheme of investigation.

c) The programme of analysis, reporting, publication and archiving if required by NCCCT Standards and Site-specific Requirements document must be completed in accordance with the approved written scheme of investigation.

Reason: The site is of archaeological interest and to comply with Policy GP21 of the Wansbeck District Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

In dealing with the application we have worked with the applicant in a positive and pro active manner and have implemented the requirement in paragraph 38 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

## Notes to Applicant

1. The prevention of nuisance is the responsibility of the developer and their professional advisors. Developers should, therefore, fully appreciate the importance of professional advice. Failure to address issues of noise, dust and light at the development stage does not preclude action by the Council under Section 79 of the Environment Protection Act 1990 in respect to statutory nuisance.
2. British Standards 5228 (Code of practice for noise and vibration control on construction and open sites) sets out noise limits that the developers will be expected to adhere to, particularly in relation to working outside 'normal working hours'.
3. There shall be no burning of any material associated with the construction phase of the development.
4. It is recommended that the lighting scheme approved under condition 31 is designed in consultation with the project ecologist and follow guidance set out in Institution of Lighting Professionals Advice Note 08/18 (2018).
5. Offsite highway works required in connection with the proposed development are controlled by the Council's Technical services Division. These works should be carried out before the car parking area is made available for public use. The Council will undertake such works at the applicant's expense. Highways Development Management ([highwaysplanning@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:highwaysplanning@northumberland.gov.uk)) should be contacted to progress this matter.
6. A highway condition survey should be carried out before the commencement of demolition and construction vehicle movements from the site. Highways Development Management ([highwaysplanning@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:highwaysplanning@northumberland.gov.uk)) should be contacted to arrange a survey.
7. The Council's Traffic Management Section at [highwaysprogramme@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:highwaysprogramme@northumberland.gov.uk) should be contacted before and during the construction period in respect of any impacts to current and proposed Traffic Regulation Orders.
8. Building material or equipment shall not be stored on the highway unless otherwise agreed. The Streetworks Team on 0345 600 6400 should be contacted for Skips and Containers licences.
9. The Council's Lighting Section at [highwaysstreetlighting@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:highwaysstreetlighting@northumberland.gov.uk) should be contacted before and during the construction period with respect of street lighting to ensure sufficient illumination levels of the public highway.
10. In accordance with the Highways Act 1980, no mud, debris or rubbish shall be deposited on the highway.
11. Road safety audits are required to be undertaken. The Council offers this service and can be contacted at [highwaysplanning@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:highwaysplanning@northumberland.gov.uk) or 01670 622979.
12. The demand for EV car parking spaces is likely to increase in the future to reflect the inevitable increased take up of electric vehicles.
13. Works that do not constitute 'development' or are permitted by virtue of the provisions of the General Permitted Development Order will not require formal discharge to be obtained prior to such works being undertaken.

## NOTES

- If you are aggrieved by the decision of your Local Planning Authority to refuse permission for the proposed development or to grant it subject to conditions, then you can appeal to the First Secretary of State under section 78 of The Town and Country Planning Act 1990.
- If this is a decision on a planning application relating to the same or substantially the same land and development that is already the subject of an enforcement notice, if you want to appeal against your local planning authorities decision on your application, then you must do so within 28 days of the date of this notice.
- If an enforcement notice is served relating to the same or substantially the same land and development as in your application and if you want to appeal against your local planning authority's decision on your application, then you must do so within: 28 days of the date of service of the enforcement notice, or within six months (12 weeks in the case of a householder appeal) of the date of this notice, whichever period expires earlier.
- If you want to appeal, then you must do so within six months of the date of this notice (if this is a decision to refuse planning permission for a householder application or a decision to refuse planning permission for a minor commercial application, if you want to appeal against your local planning authority's decision then you must do so within 12 weeks of the date of this notice) using a form which you can get from the Planning Inspectorate at Temple Quay House, 2 The Square, Temple Quay, Bristol BS1 6PN or online at [www.gov.uk/appeal-planning-inspectorate](http://www.gov.uk/appeal-planning-inspectorate).
- The Secretary of State can allow a longer period for giving notice of an appeal, but he will not normally be prepared to use this power unless there are special circumstances which excuse the delay in giving notice of appeal.
- The Secretary of State need not consider an appeal if it seems to him that the local planning authority could not have granted planning permission for the proposed development or could not have granted it without the conditions they imposed, having regard to the statutory requirements, to the provisions of any development order and to any directions given under a development order.
- In practice, the Secretary of State does not refuse to consider appeals solely because the local planning authority based their decision on a direction given by him.

### Purchase Notices

- If either the local planning authority or the First Secretary of State refuses permission to develop land or grants it subject to conditions, the owner may claim that he can neither put the land to a reasonably beneficial use in its existing state nor render the land capable of a reasonably beneficial use by the carrying out of any development which has been or would be permitted.
- In these circumstances, the owner may serve a purchase notice on the Council in whose area the land is situated. This notice will require the Council to purchase his interest in the land in accordance with the provisions of Part VI of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

## Appendix J

### Chase Meadows committee report



# Northumberland

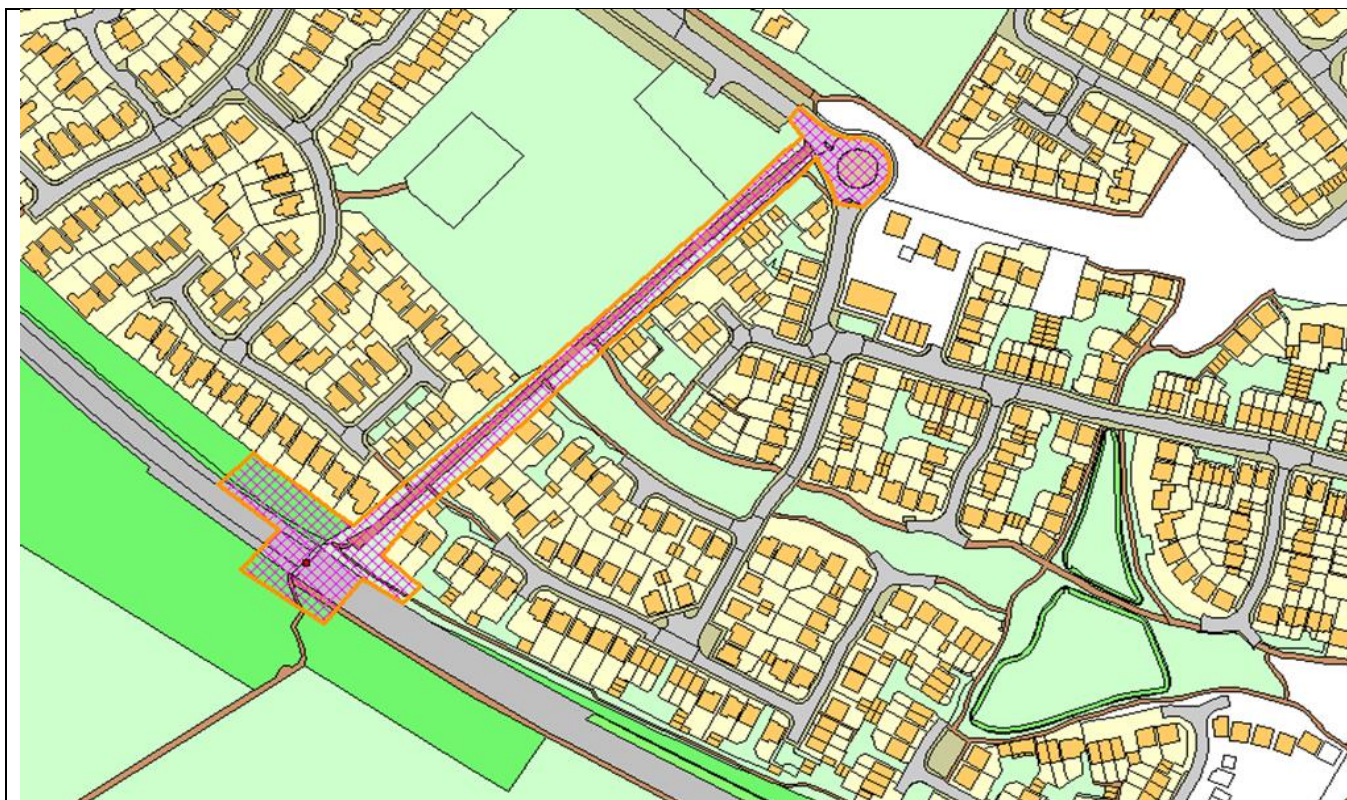
## County Council

### Strategic Planning Committee

1<sup>st</sup> June 2021

<b>Application No:</b>	21/00388/CCD		
<b>Proposal:</b>	Construction of footbridge, works to public rights of way, construction of soft and hard landscaping, surface and subsurface drainage, utilities and other services, boundary treatment and other associated works.		
<b>Site Address</b>	Land South East Of Chase Meadows, Chase Farm Drive, Blyth, Northumberland		
<b>Applicant:</b>	NCC County Hall, Morpeth, NE61 2EF,	<b>Agent:</b>	Mr Allen Creedy 72 B-Box Studios, Newcastle , NE2 1AN,
<b>Ward</b>		<b>Parish</b>	Blyth
<b>Valid Date:</b>	3 February 2021	<b>Expiry Date:</b>	30 June 2021
<b>Case Officer Details:</b>	Name: Mr Gordon Halliday Job Title: Consultant Planner Tel No: 07785 727053 Email: gordon.halliday@northumberland.gov.uk		

**Recommendation:** That this application be GRANTED permission



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## **1. Introduction**

1.1 Under the provisions of the Council's current Scheme of Delegation, in cases where the local authority is the applicant in respect of a planning application, it is required to be determined by the Planning Committee.

## **2. Description of the Proposals**

2.1 The Northumberland Line scheme seeks to re-introduce passenger services onto the existing freight line that runs between Newcastle Central Station and Ashington town centre. The scheme includes the construction of six new railway stations and associated infrastructure. The railway line was formerly known as the Ashington, Blyth and Tyne Line. Passenger services on the line ceased in 1964 since when freight trains have continued to operate.

2.2 This application is for the construction and operation of a new pedestrian footbridge at Chase Meadows to replace the existing level crossing. The existing level crossing provides access from the housing estates to the east, to the open countryside west of the railway line. The new overbridge would be located close to the existing level crossing, be 8.6 metres high with a vertical clearance of 5.1 metres. It would have stepped access, be coloured green and have a 1.8 metre privacy screen along the main span, main span landing and on one side of the staircase to limit views from the structure to adjacent residential properties. The nearest residential property would be approximately 15 metres away with the nearest residential boundary being 9.8 metres away.

2.3 A Public Right of Way (PROW) currently crosses the railway line at the existing level crossing. An application for an Order under the Transport and Works Act 1992 (TWA) will be submitted to the Secretary of State for transport in due course. The TWA if made, will authorise the closure of the level crossing and associated PROW and provide for the creation of a new PROW over the proposed footbridge. The TWA will also authorise minor permanent diversions to the existing bridleways to the east of the railway line to accommodate access to the proposed footbridge and various temporary closures that are required during construction.

2.4 This planning application includes the physical works necessary for the temporary and permanent diversion of the PROWs and the permanent and temporary closures set out above.

## **3. Planning History**

3.1 There have been no previous planning applications on land associated with the proposal. Planning permission has been granted for a number of residential developments in recent years on land to the east of the railway line.

3.2 There have been two Screening Opinions provided on the Northumberland Line scheme as set out below.

Reference Number: 19/02151/SCREEN

Description: Request for a Screening Opinion- Provision of six new train stations, associated upgrading and refurbishment of existing rail infrastructure and engineering works and the reintroduction of passenger train services.



Status: SCREEN

Reference Number: 20/02243/SCREEN

Description: Request for a Screening Opinion- Provision of six new train stations, associated upgrading and refurbishment of existing rail infrastructure and engineering works and the reintroduction of passenger train services.

Status: SCREEN

#### 4. Consultee Responses

Blyth Town Council	No response received.
County Ecologist	No objection subject to the imposition of conditions relating to biodiversity mitigation measures.
Countryside/ Rights Of Way	No objection subject to the conclusion of appropriate agreements relating to applications for the temporary closure or diversion of public rights of way, the construction of the site access, the construction of bridleways and footpaths and details of landscaping, hard surfacing and woodland planting.
South SE Tree And Woodland Officer	No response received.
Public Protection	No objection subject to the imposition of conditions relating to possible previous contamination and hours of working and delivery / collection.
The Coal Authority	No objection subject to the imposition of conditions requiring intrusive site investigations and any remedial works to be carried out, as the site is likely to have been subject to unrecorded underground mining at shallow depth.
Highways	No objection subject to the imposition of a condition requiring a construction method statement to be submitted and approved in the interests of residential amenity and highway safety.

#### 5. Public Responses

##### Neighbour Notification

Number of Neighbours Notified	25
Number of Objections	5
Number of Support	0
Number of General Comments	0

##### Notices

Site notice - Public Right of Way,

News Post Leader 18th February 2021

##### Summary of Responses:

The letters of objection refer to the following matters;

- Concern that the bridge is not justified by the volume of pedestrian traffic and represents a very expensive project. Instead improved safety measures, such as an automated gate system, should be introduced at the existing level crossing.

- Concern that the bridge would be a focus for anti-social behaviour, including vandalism, loitering and littering.
- Concern regarding overlooking of adjacent properties notwithstanding the design measures proposed to mitigate this.

The above is a summary of the comments. The full written text is available on our website at: <http://publicaccess.northumberland.gov.uk/online-applications//applicationDetails.do?activeTab=summary&keyVal=QNWSOLQSLQF00>

## 6. Planning Policy

### Development Plan Policy

6.1 The Development Plan in respect of the application site comprises the Blyth Valley Borough Local Development Framework Core Strategy (BVBCS) (2007), the Blyth Valley Borough Local Development Framework Development Control Policies (BVBDP) (2007) and saved policies from the Blyth Valley Borough Local Plan (BVBLP) (1999).

6.2 The following policies in the BVBCS are relevant to the consideration of the application.

SS1 Regeneration and Renaissance of Blyth Valley 2021
SS3 Sustainability Criteria
A2 Pedestrian / Cycle Routes
A3 Ashington, Blyth and Tyne Line

6.3 The following policies in the BVBDP are relevant to the consideration of the application.

DC1 General Development
DC11 Planning for Sustainable Travel
DC16: Biodiversity
DC17 Landscape, General Protection and Restoration
DC19: Drainage and Flood Risk
DC21: Pollution Control
DC22 Noise Pollution
DC27: Design of New Developments

6.4 The following saved policies in the BVBLP are relevant to the consideration of the application.

E2 Nature Conservation: General Protection of Wildlife
E3 Landscape: General Approach

E5 The Protection of tree and Shrub Cover
G9: Development in Countryside Beyond Green Belt
G10: Development Criteria in the Countryside
WB3: Chase Farm Access

6.5 Emerging Development Plan policy is the Northumberland Local Plan Submission Draft Plan (NLP) (February 2019 and Schedule of Proposed Minor Modifications (May 2019) .The NLP was submitted to the Secretary of State in May 2019 and has been the subject of Examination in Public. A number of examination hearings have been held since 2019, a Phase 1 between October 2019 and February 2020 and a Phase 2 in October and November 2020.

6.6 On 24 February 2021 the Inspector wrote to the Council stating "...whilst I consider the submitted Local Plan not to be sound, it is likely that it can be made sound by modifications'. The next stages are for the Inspector to work with the Council to finalise the wording of the main modifications and to agree a timetable for their consultation. While the Inspector's letter provides some confidence regarding the direction of travel as set out in the emerging plan, the Council considers that the level of weight to be given to the policies in the emerging Northumberland Local Plan at this stage, has not changed as a result of the Inspector's letter.

6.7 The NLP will eventually replace the various development plan documents referred to above as the development plan for the application site.

6.8 The following policies in the emerging NLP are relevant to the consideration of the application.

STP 1: Spatial Strategy
STP2: Presumption in favour of Sustainable Development
STP3: Principles of Sustainable Development
STP4: Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation
STP5: Health and Wellbeing
QOP1: Design Principles
QOP2: Good Design and Amenity
QOP4: Landscaping and Trees
QOP6: Delivering Well-designed Places
TRA1: Promoting Sustainable Connections
TRA2: The Effects of Development on the Transport Network
TRA5: Rail Transport and Safeguarding Facilities
ENV1: Approaches to assessing the impact of development on the natural, historic and built environment
ENV2: Biodiversity and Geodiversity
ENV7: Historic Environment and Heritage Assets
WAT3: Flooding

WAT4: Sustainable Drainage Systems
POL1: Unstable and Contaminated Land
POL2: Pollution and Air, Soil and Water Quality

## National Planning Policy

- 6.9 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2019)  
National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) (2019 as amended)

## 7. Appraisal

- 7.1 The main issues for consideration in the determination of this application are:
- Principle of the development
  - Impact on residential amenity
  - Impact on biodiversity
  - Public Right of Way considerations

### Principle of the Development

7.2 Policies SS1 and A3 in the BVBCS and policy TRA5 in the emerging NLP support the re-introduction of passenger rail services on the Northumberland Line. Policy TRA5 also states that measures to improve public safety at level crossings along the line will be supported. The proposed footbridge at Chase Meadows is an integral component of the Northumberland Line scheme.

7.3 The re-introduction of passenger rail services will significantly increase the number of trains using the railway line. At present the line is used only for freight services which number between 3 and 5 in each direction each day. The line is closed on Sundays. It is proposed that passenger rail services would run at half hourly intervals between the hours of 06.00 and 23.00. This would increase the potential risk of injury and fatality at each of the crossings along the line. A risk assessment carried out by Network Rail concluded that the closure of the Chase Meadows level crossing would be the safest intervention.

7.3 The current crossing connects the residential properties to the open countryside and PROW network to the west of the railway line. The PROW team have confirmed that they would require the crossing to continue to provide access to the land to the west.

7.4 A number of alternative design options for the proposal were considered including a footbridge with ramped access and upgrading to a manual controlled barrier crossing. Surveys established that the demand for ramp access is low and it was also considered this would also require additional land, the clearance of more woodland and would have a greater visual impact. The risk assessment carried out by Network Rail identified greater risk to safety with the manual controlled barrier crossing than with the pedestrian bridge. It was also considered that the construction of some 1000 new houses to the east of the railway line following recent the granting of recent planning permissions would potentially increase usage of the crossing, therefore increasing the safety with a level crossing.

7.5 It is concluded therefore the principle of the development is in accordance with Development Plan policy and has been established.

## Impact on Residential Amenity

7.6 Policy QOP2 in the emerging NLP states that developments will be required to preserve the amenity of those living in the local area and that development that would result in unacceptable adverse impacts on the amenity of neighbouring uses will not be supported.

7.7 During construction a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) and Transport Method Statement would set out the control measures required to mitigate the potential impacts of the development, including noise, lighting and traffic movements. An outline CEMP has been submitted with the application and a planning condition is recommended dealing with this aspect. Planning conditions are also recommended relating to hours of working and deliveries to and collections from the site.

7.8 The re-introduction of passenger rail services will increase the numbers of trains using the Northumberland Line. However, as stated above the principle of the scheme and the construction of the bridge have been established.

7.9 The main impacts on local residential amenity are considered to be the appearance of the bridge, its visual impact and the potential for overlooking of adjacent properties. It is clear that compared to the existing situation, the bridge will change the appearance of the area. However, the size of the bridge cannot be reduced and painting it a green colour will assist in reducing the visual impact. The proposed privacy screen represents an acceptable solution to limit views from the structure to adjacent residential properties.

7.10 Local residents have commented that the existing crossing is a focus for anti-social behaviour and that there is the potential for this to increase with the construction of the bridge. However, this would be a potential issue with whichever option was decided upon for the replacement crossing.

7.11 Overall therefore it is concluded that that there would be some adverse impacts on local residential amenity but that these would be mitigated by such aspects as the provisions in the CEMP and the design elements of the bridge. These adverse impacts need to be balanced against the benefits that would result both from the re-introduction of passenger rail services and the continued provision of safe access from the housing estates to the open countryside.

## Impact on Biodiversity

7.12 Policy DC16 in the BVLP states that all development should maintain and enhance habitat networks by avoiding or repairing the fragmentation and isolation of natural habitats. Policy ENV2 in the emerging NLP states that development proposals should minimise the impact on biodiversity and net gains should be secured.

7.13 The proposed development would involve the loss of approximately 355 square metres of existing vegetation to enable the land to be used for construction purposes and to comply with relevant design standards. It is proposed to mitigate the loss of this vegetation by planting an area of woodland edge adjacent to the existing

residential boundary to the north of the footbridge. This would also in time assist the screening of the bridge from residential properties.

7.14 The County Ecologist considers that the loss of trees will not affect the functionality of the woodland because they are located at the edge of the woodland block. The County Ecologist also supports the mitigation proposed and has raised no objection to the proposal subject to the imposition of appropriate planning conditions, including a condition relating to the offsetting of the biodiversity impacts (Biodiversity Net Gain).

#### Public Right of Way Considerations

7.15 The implications of the proposal for PROWs are set out in paragraphs 2.3 and 2.4 above. Some local residents have queried whether the numbers of people using the existing crossing and PROW justifies the proposed development. However, the PROW team considers that the existing crossing is well used and forms an integral element in the local PROW network.

7.16 The proposals for PROWs have been formulated in consultation with the County PROW team who have been consulted on the planning application. The PROW team raises no objection to the proposal subject to the conclusion of appropriate agreements relating to applications for the temporary closure or diversion of public rights of way, the construction of the site access, the construction of bridleways and footpaths and details of landscaping, hard surfacing and woodland planting. Some of these will be the subjects of separate statutory processes under the Highways Act and others are covered in the recommended conditions.

#### Other Issues

7.17 Conditions are recommended to address issues raised by the Coal Authority and County Highways. The proposal does not give rise to any heritage or water management issues.

#### Equality Duty

7.18 The County Council has a duty to have regard to the impact of any proposal on those people with characteristics protected by the Equality Act. Officers have had due regard to Sec 149(1) (a) and (b) of the Equality Act 2010 and considered the information provided by the applicant, together with the responses from consultees and other parties, and determined that the proposal would have no material impact on individuals or identifiable groups with protected characteristics. The possibility of providing a ramped bridge was considered but discounted for the reasons set out in paragraph 7.4 above. Accordingly, no changes to the proposal were required to make it acceptable in this regard.

#### Crime and Disorder Act Implications

7.19 Notwithstanding the comments received from some local residents regarding anti-social behaviour, it is concluded that these proposals have no implications in relation to crime and disorder.

## Human Rights Act Implications

7.20 The Human Rights Act requires the County Council to take into account the rights of the public under the European Convention on Human Rights and prevents the Council from acting in a manner which is incompatible with those rights. Article 8 of the Convention provides that there shall be respect for an individual's private life and home save for that interference which is in accordance with the law and necessary in a democratic society in the interests of (inter alia) public safety and the economic wellbeing of the country. Article 1 of protocol 1 provides that an individual's peaceful enjoyment of their property shall not be interfered with save as is necessary in the public interest.

7.21 For an interference with these rights to be justifiable the interference (and the means employed) needs to be proportionate to the aims sought to be realised. The main body of this report identifies the extent to which there is any identifiable interference with these rights. The Planning Considerations identified are also relevant in deciding whether any interference is proportionate. Case law has been decided which indicates that certain development does interfere with an individual's rights under Human Rights legislation. This application has been considered in the light of statute and case law and the interference is not considered to be disproportionate.

7.22 Officers are also aware of Article 6, the focus of which (for the purpose of this decision) is the determination of an individual's civil rights and obligations. Article 6 provides that in the determination of these rights, an individual is entitled to a fair and public hearing within a reasonable time by an independent and impartial tribunal. Article 6 has been subject to a great deal of case law. It has been decided that for planning matters the decision making process as a whole, which includes the right of review by the High Court, complied with Article 6.

## 8. Conclusion

8.1 The reintroduction of passenger rail services on the Northumberland Line would bring considerable benefits to communities in south-east Northumberland. The proposed footbridge at Chase Meadows is an integral component of the Northumberland Line scheme. A risk assessment carried out by Network Rail concluded that the closure of the Chase Meadows level crossing and its replacement by an overbridge would be the safest intervention.

8.2 It is recognised that the bridge will change the appearance of the local area and that there will be a loss of amenity for some local residents. However, various mitigation measures have been incorporated into the proposals to reduce such impacts including the privacy screen and tree planting. These adverse impacts need to be balanced against the benefits that would result both from the re-introduction of passenger rail services and the continued provision of safe access from the housing estates to the open countryside. Other impacts, for example in relation to biodiversity, highways and public rights of way, can be satisfactorily addressed by the imposition of planning conditions.

8.3 It is concluded that the proposal is in accordance with the Development Plan and that the planning balance weighs in favour of granting planning permission subject to appropriate planning conditions.

## 9. Recommendation

That this application be GRANTED permission subject to the following conditions.

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun not later than three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).

2. The development hereby permitted shall not be carried out otherwise than in accordance with the following plans and documents.

60601435-ACM-XX-ZZ-DRG-LEP-000016 (Rev. PO1) Site Location Plan  
60601435-ACM-05-ZZ-DRG-EST-000401 (Rev. PO1.4) General Arrangement  
60601435-ACM-05-ZZ-DRG-EST-000402 (Rev. PO1.3) Site Elevation and Isometric Views (Chase Meadows FB Elevations)  
60601435-ACM-05-ZZ-DRG-EST-000403 (Rev. PO1.3 Proposed Elevations (Chase Meadows FB Elevations)  
60601435-ACM-XX-ZZ-DRG-EEN-000507 (Rev. PO1) Landscape Design  
60601435-SLC-P-270-CM-ECIA Ecological Impact Assessment (including net gain statement)  
60601435-ACM-XX-ZZ-REP-EEN-000033 Arboriculture Assessment  
60601435-ACM-XX-ZZ-REP-EGE-004\_P01CMRA Coal Mining Risk Assessment  
60601435-ACM-05-ZZ-REP-EGE-004 Preliminary Sources Study Report

Reason: To ensure that the approved development is carried out in accordance with the approved plans.

3. Notwithstanding the details submitted, prior to the commencement of development samples of all materials, colours and finishes to be used on all external surfaces shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter the development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity of the area and to ensure that the proposed development does not have an adverse effect upon the appearance of the area in accordance with Policy DC17 of the Blyth Valley Borough Local Development Framework Core Strategy and Policy E3 of the Blyth Valley Borough Local Plan.

4. Development shall not commence until:

a. a scheme of intrusive investigations has been carried out on site to establish the risks posed to the development by past coal mining activity;

b. any remediation works and / or mitigation measures to address land instability arising from coal mining legacy, as may be necessary, have been implemented on site in full in order to ensure that the site is safe and stable for the development proposed;

The intrusive site investigations and remedial works shall be carried out in accordance with authoritative UK guidance



Reason: To ensure that adequate information pertaining to ground conditions and coal mining legacy is available to enable appropriate remedial and mitigation measures to be identified and carried out before building works commence on site, in the interests of safety and stability of the development in accordance with paragraphs 178 and 179 of the NPPF.

5. Prior to the commencement of construction of the structure, a signed statement or declaration prepared by a suitable competent person confirming that the site is, or has been made, safe and stable for the approved development shall be submitted and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. This document shall confirm the methods and findings of the intrusive site investigations and the completion of any remedial works and / or mitigation measures necessary to address the risks posted by past coal mining activity.

Reason: To ensure that the site is safe and stable for the development proposed in accordance with paragraphs 178 and 179 of the NPPF.

6. Development shall not commence until a Construction Environmental Management Plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved Management Plan shall be adhered to throughout the construction period. The Management Plan shall provide for:

- a. Equipment cleaning and washing facilities.
- b. Excavation plant machinery to be fitted with fuel spill kits.
- c. The positioning and direction of lighting so that it will not unnecessarily intrude on adjacent buildings and land uses, including foraging and bat habitats. The lighting scheme shall be designed in consultation with the project ecologist and follow guidance set out in Institution of Lighting Professional Advice Note 08/18. All external lighting shall be installed in accordance with the agreed specifications
- d. The provision of welfare facilities that shall be maintained by a licenced Waste Carrier.
- e. Details of behavioural policies for all site staff to minimise noise, vibration and air quality impacts from vehicles, plant and equipment.
- f. The engines / generators of all construction vehicles, plant and equipment shall be turned off when not in use. Hybrid generators shall be used wherever practicable to reduce noise and fuel consumption.

Reason: To prevent nuisance in the interests of residential amenity in accordance with the NPPF and to ensure the welfare of site operatives.

7. Development shall not commence until a Transport and Construction Method Statement has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved Method Statement shall be adhered to throughout the construction period. The Method Statement shall provide for:

- a. Details of temporary traffic management measures, temporary access routes and vehicles including swept plan drawings.

- b. Vehicle cleaning facilities.
- c. The parking of vehicles of site operatives and visitors.
- d. The loading and unloading of plant and materials
- e. Storage of plant and materials used in constructing the development.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety.

8. No development will take place unless in accordance with the mitigation measures set out in the report *Ecological Impact Assessment Chase Meadows Footbridge* (January 2021) by Econorth. The mitigation measures shall comprise the following:

- a. At least 5 new bat boxes and 5 new bird boxes shall be installed within the trees that are to be retained within the site.
- b. The habitats retained and created for wildlife shall be subject to an appropriate management regime for the life of the development.
- c. Priority within the planting scheme shall be given to native species or those of known value to wildlife of local provenance.
- d. A checking survey shall be undertaken within one month prior to the start of works to ensure no badger setts have been established within the site or an alternative buffer zone in the time since the previous survey.
- e. Vegetation clearance works shall be undertaken outside of the nesting bird period (1 March – 30 September) in order to minimise the risk of nesting birds being adversely affected. If this is not possible works shall not commence until a checking survey by a Suitably Qualified Ecologist (SQE) has confirmed that no active nests are present within the 5 days prior. In the event any active nests are recorded at this time the SQU shall implement a buffer zone around the feature into which no works will progress until the SQE confirms that the nest is no longer active.
- f. Works shall proceed to an appropriately precautionary method statement produced by a SQE to minimise the risks of protected or notable species being adversely affected.
- g. Any trenches opened as part of the works shall be closed on the same day. Where this is not possible, either one side of the trench shall be cut to an angle of no more than 45 degrees, or a plank large enough for a person to walk up shall be installed each night, to provide wildlife with an escape route. The trenches shall be checked each morning, prior to the recommencement of works, to ensure no protected or notable species have become trapped.
- h. Appropriate Rot Protection Areas, as advised by a suitably qualified arborist, shall be implemented around the trees which are to be retained within the site, into which no construction works, including stockpiling materials, shall extend. Heras fencing shall be used throughout the works to ensure the protection of these features, if required.

i. Site clearance works shall use methods recommended by a suitably qualified arborist, to minimise potential impacts upon adjacent trees that are to be retained.

j. Any sightings of protected species within the works area shall be recorded in the site diary and the project ecologist shall be notified immediately. In the event any great crested newts are identified on site when the project ecologist is not present, all works shall cease immediately and a SQE shall be contacted for advice on how to proceed.

Reason: To maintain the biodiversity value of the site and avoid harm to protected species that may be present.

9. No development shall commence unless and until a scheme ("the offsetting scheme") for the offsetting of biodiversity impacts at the site has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The offsetting scheme shall include:

a. A methodology for the identification of receptor site(s).

b. The identification of receptor site(s).

c. Details of the offset requirements of the development (in accordance with the recognised offsetting metrics standard outlined in the Defra Metrics Guidance dated March 2012).

d. The provision of arrangements to secure the delivery of the offsetting measures (including a timetable for their delivery).

e. A management and monitoring plan (to include for the provision and maintenance of the offsetting measures in perpetuity).

The written approval of the LPA shall not be issued before the arrangements necessary to secure the delivery of the off-setting measures have been executed. The offsetting scheme shall be implemented in full accordance with the requirements of the approved scheme.

Reason: To provide net gains for biodiversity in accordance with the NPPF and emerging Northumberland Local Plan Policy ENV1.

10. If contamination not previously considered is identified during site operations than an additional Method Statement regarding the material shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall not be brought into use until the measures in the approved Method Statement have been carried out to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority. If no contamination is found during site operations a signed statement to that effect shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Plan Authority before the development is brought into use.

Reason: To ensure that risks from contamination to future users of the land are minimised in accordance with emerging Northumberland Local plan Policy POL1.

11. During the construction period there shall be no noisy activity from mobile plant, pneumatic equipment or power tools audible at the site boundary on Sundays,

Bank Holidays or outside the hours of 08.00 – 18.00 Monday to Friday and 08.00 – 13.00 on Saturdays, unless agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To protect residential amenity and provide a commensurate level of protection against noise.

12. Deliveries to and collections from the site during the construction phase of the development shall not be allowed on Sundays, Bank Holidays or outside the hours of 08.00 – 18.00 Monday to Friday and 08.00 – 13.00 on Saturdays, unless agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To protect residential amenity and provide a commensurate level of protection against noise.

13. Development shall not commence until details for the construction site access along public right of way 300/178 have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Any reinstatement of the existing route and the adjacent land which may be required shall (if required) be undertaken with the agreement in writing of the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interest of users of the PROW.

14. Prior to the development coming into use, details for the construction of the bridleway and footpath sections linking directly to the footbridge on both sides of the new footbridge shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter the development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

15. Prior to the development coming into use, a detailed landscaping and hard surfacing plan covering areas to be agreed with the Local Planning Authority shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Narrow and sharp path junctions shall be avoided with splays and hard surfaced junctions. Thereafter the development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details and all soft landscaping shall be implemented in the first available planting season following completion of the development.

Reason: To avoid the development of unsurfaced desire line routes.

16. The area of woodland planting proposed to the rear of 89 Chase Meadows shall be a minimum of 1.5 metres from the realigned bridleway surface of 300/178 to avoid any future encroachment of overhanging vegetation. Details of the proposed planting shall be agreed with the Local Planning Authority and shall be implemented in the first available planting season following completion of the development.

Reason: In the interest of users of the bridleway.

### Informatives

1. The developer is required to submit an application for the diversion of public rights of way 300/013, 300/016, 300/022 and 300/178 under section 257 TCPA 1990 to reflect the realignment of the public rights of way for the new footbridge, unless this is covered by a TWAO.

2. The application for the temporary closure of sections of paths 300/13, 300/16, 300/022 and 300/178 will be required prior to any works starting on site. It is recognised that a closure will be necessary for the bridge construction and that the provision of alternative routes is unlikely.
3. A highway condition survey shall be carried out before the commencement of demolition and construction vehicle movements from the site.
4. Building materials or equipment shall not be stored on the highway unless otherwise agreed.
5. In accordance with the Highways Act 1980, mud debris or rubbish shall not be deposited on the highway.
6. The developer shall ensure that lighting does not cause annoyance to any nearby receptors.
7. Under the Coal Industry Act 1994 any intrusive activities, including site investigation boreholes, and / or any subsequent treatment of coal mine workings / coal mine entries for ground stability purposes require the prior approval in writing of the Coal Authority, since such activities can have serious public health and safety implications. Failure to obtain permission will result in trespass with the potential for court action.

**Date of Report:** 12 May 2021

**Background Papers:** Planning application file 21/00388/CCD

## Appendix K

### Chase Meadows decision notice



# Northumberland

## County Council

Mr Allen Creedy  
72 B-Box Studios  
Newcastle  
NE2 1AN

Our Ref: 21/00388/CCD  
Your Ref:  
Contact: Mr Gordon Halliday  
Direct Line: 07785727053  
E-Mail: [Gordon.Halliday@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:Gordon.Halliday@northumberland.gov.uk)  
Date: 9th June 2021

Dear Sir/Madam,

### **Application to Northumberland County Council – Development Management**

I refer to your application to the above unit and enclose your approval certificate. This is an important legal document, it should therefore be safely stored.

Most approvals are subject to conditions and these are listed on the second page of the certificate. These form part of your permission and must be adhered to. Some conditions may require additional information to be submitted to this unit prior to the starting of any works, whilst others are ongoing, either just during the construction period and others for the life of the development. If you are uncertain about any of the conditions attached to your permission, please contact the Planning Case Officer whose details appear at the top of this page. Under the Fees for Applications Regulations 2012 (as amended), there is a standard fee of £116 per request to have conditions discharged. This is reduced to £34 for Householder applications.

If you consider that you are unable to comply with any of the conditions, you do have a right to apply to the Council to have a condition removed or varied. This has to be in the form of a variation application. Alternatively you do have a right of appeal to the Planning Inspectorate (see information on reverse of certificate). In either of these circumstances, you are advised to contact the Planning Case Officer first.

Most building work will require Building Regulations approval. If you have not already applied for this, you should contact your area Building Control office at either Alnwick, Hexham or Morpeth (telephone 01670 623838, 01670 623820 or 01670 623728/724 or e mail [buildingcontrol@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:buildingcontrol@northumberland.gov.uk)).

Finally, it would be helpful for record keeping purposes, if you could inform the planning unit prior to starting the building or other works, contact information is detailed at the top of this letter.

Yours faithfully,

**Rob Murfin**  
**Director of Planning**



TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990(As Amended)  
TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT  
PROCEDURE) (ENGLAND) ORDER 2015

**Application No.** 21/00388/CCD

Mr Allen Creedy  
72 B-Box Studios  
Newcastle  
NE2 1AN

**DEVELOPMENT BY NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL**

**Proposal** Construction of footbridge, works to public rights of way, Construction of soft and hard landscaping, surface and subsurface drainage, utilities and other services, boundary treatment and other associated works.

**Location** Land South East Of Chase Meadows Chase Farm Drive Blyth  
Northumberland

**Applicant** NCC  
County Hall Morpeth NE61 2EF

*In pursuance of powers under the above Act the Local Planning Authority hereby PERMITS the development described above which should be carried out in accordance with plans and details submitted with the application subject to all conditions defined in the attached schedule.*

**Rob Murfin**  
**Director of Planning**

9th June 2021

**NOTE**

Failure to adhere to any details shown on the plans forming part of the application for which permission is hereby granted, and/or failure to comply with any conditions attached to this permission, may constitute a contravention of the provisions of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 in respect of which enforcement action might be taken.

**(YOUR ATTENTION IS DRAWN TO THE NOTES OVERLEAF)**



**Conditions**

- 1 The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)

- 2 The development hereby permitted shall not be carried out otherwise than in accordance with the following plans and documents.

60601435-ACM-XX-ZZ-DRG-LEP-000016 (Rev. PO1) Site Location Plan  
60601435-ACM-05-ZZ-DRG-EST-000401 (Rev. PO1.4) General Arrangement  
60601435-ACM-05-ZZ-DRG-EST-000402 (Rev. PO1.3) Site Elevation and Isometric Views (Chase Meadows FB Elevations)  
60601435-ACM-05-ZZ-DRG-EST-000403 (Rev. PO1.3 Proposed Elevations (Chase Meadows FB Elevations)  
60601435-ACM-XX-ZZ-DRG-EEN-000507 (Rev. PO1) Landscape Design  
60601435-SLC-P-270-CM-ECIA Ecological Impact Assessment (including net gain statement)  
60601435-ACM-XX-ZZ-REP-EEN-000033 Arboriculture Assessment  
60601435-ACM-XX-ZZ-REP-EGE-004\_P01CMRA Coal Mining Risk Assessment  
60601435-ACM-05-ZZ-REP-EGE-004 Preliminary Sources Study Report

Reason: To ensure that the approved development is carried out in accordance with the approved plans.

- 3 Notwithstanding the details submitted, prior to the commencement of development samples of all materials, including acoustically appropriate materials, colours and finishes to be used on all external surfaces shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter the development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity of the area and to ensure that the proposed development does not have an adverse effect upon the appearance of the area in accordance with Policy DC17 of the Blyth Valley Borough Local Development Framework Core Strategy and Policy E3 of the Blyth Valley Borough Local Plan.

- 4 Development shall not commence until:

a. a scheme of intrusive investigations has been carried out on site to establish the risks posed to the development by past coal mining activity;

b. any remediation works and / or mitigation measures to address land instability arising from coal mining legacy, as may be necessary, have been implemented on site in full in order to ensure that the site is safe and stable for the development proposed;

The intrusive site investigations and remedial works shall be carried out in accordance with authoritative UK guidance

Reason: To ensure that adequate information pertaining to ground conditions and coal mining legacy is available to enable appropriate remedial and mitigation measures to be identified and carried out before building works commence on site, in the interests of

safety and stability of the development in accordance with paragraphs 178 and 179 of the NPPF.

- 5 Prior to the commencement of construction of the structure, a signed statement or declaration prepared by a suitable competent person confirming that the site is, or has been made, safe and stable for the approved development shall be submitted and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. This document shall confirm the methods and findings of the intrusive site investigations and the completion of any remedial works and / or mitigation measures necessary to address the risks posted by past coal mining activity.

Reason: To ensure that the site is safe and stable for the development proposed in accordance with paragraphs 178 and 179 of the NPPF.

- 6 Development shall not commence until a Construction Environmental Management Plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved Management Plan shall be adhered to throughout the construction period. The Management Plan shall provide for:

- a. Equipment cleaning and washing facilities.
- b. Excavation plant machinery to be fitted with fuel spill kits.
- c. The positioning and direction of lighting so that it will not unnecessarily intrude on adjacent buildings and land uses, including foraging and bat habitats. The lighting scheme shall be designed in consultation with the project ecologist and follow guidance set out in Institution of Lighting Professional Advice Note 08/18. All external lighting shall be installed in accordance with the agreed specifications.
- d. The provision of welfare facilities that shall be maintained by a licenced Waste Carrier.
- e. Details of behavioural policies for all site staff to minimise noise, vibration and air quality impacts from vehicles, plant and equipment.
- f. The engines / generators of all construction vehicles, plant and equipment shall be turned off when not in use. Hybrid generators shall be used wherever practicable to reduce noise and fuel consumption.

Reason: To prevent nuisance in the interests of residential amenity in accordance with the NPPF and to ensure the welfare of site operatives.

- 7 Development shall not commence until a Transport and Construction Method Statement has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved Method Statement shall be adhered to throughout the construction period. The Method Statement shall provide for:

- a. Details of temporary traffic management measures, temporary access routes and vehicles including swept plan drawings.
- b. Vehicle cleaning facilities.
- c. The parking of vehicles of site operatives and visitors.
- d. The loading and unloading of plant and materials .
- e. Storage of plant and materials used in constructing the development.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety.

- 8 No development will take place unless in accordance with the mitigation measures set out in the report Ecological Impact Assessment Chase Meadows Footbridge (January 2021) by Econorth. The mitigation measures shall comprise the following:

- a. At least 5 new bat boxes and 5 new bird boxes shall be installed within the trees that are to be retained within the site.

- b. The habitats retained and created for wildlife shall be subject to an appropriate management regime for the life of the development.
- c. Priority within the planting scheme shall be given to native species or those of known value to wildlife of local provenance.
- d. A checking survey shall be undertaken within one month prior to the start of works to ensure no badger setts have been established within the site or an alternative buffer zone in the time since the previous survey.
- e. Vegetation clearance works shall be undertaken outside of the nesting bird period (1 March - 30 September) in order to minimise the risk of nesting birds being adversely affected. If this is not possible works shall not commence until a checking survey by a Suitably Qualified Ecologist (SQE) has confirmed that no active nests are present within the 5 days prior. In the event any active nests are recorded at this time the SQU shall implement a buffer zone around the feature into which no works will progress until the SQE confirms that the nest is no longer active.
- f. Works shall proceed to an appropriately precautionary method statement produced by a SQE to minimise the risks of protected or notable species being adversely affected.
- g. Any trenches opened as part of the works shall be closed on the same day. Where this is not possible, either one side of the trench shall be cut to an angle of no more than 45 degrees, or a plank large enough for a person to walk up shall be installed each night, to provide wildlife with an escape route. The trenches shall be checked each morning, prior to the recommencement of works, to ensure no protected or notable species have become trapped.
- h. Appropriate Rot Protection Areas, as advised by a suitably qualified arborist, shall be implemented around the trees which are to be retained within the site, into which no construction works, including stockpiling materials, shall extend. Heras fencing shall be used throughout the works to ensure the protection of these features, if required.
- i. Site clearance works shall use methods recommended by a suitably qualified arborist, to minimise potential impacts upon adjacent trees that are to be retained.
- j. Any sightings of protected species within the works area shall be recorded in the site diary and the project ecologist shall be notified immediately. In the event any great crested newts are identified on site when the project ecologist is not present, all works shall cease immediately and a SQE shall be contacted for advice on how to proceed.

Reason: To maintain the biodiversity value of the site and avoid harm to protected species that may be present.

- 9 No development shall commence unless and until a scheme ("the offsetting scheme") for the offsetting of biodiversity impacts at the site has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The offsetting scheme shall include:

- a. A methodology for the identification of receptor site(s).
- b. The identification of receptor site(s).
- c. Details of the offset requirements of the development (in accordance with the recognised offsetting metrics standard outlined in the Defra Metrics Guidance dated March 2012).
- d. The provision of arrangements to secure the delivery of the offsetting measures (including a timetable for their delivery).
- e. A management and monitoring plan (to include for the provision and maintenance of the offsetting measures in perpetuity).

The written approval of the LPA shall not be issued before the arrangements necessary to secure the delivery of the off-setting measures have been executed.

The offsetting scheme shall be implemented in full accordance with the requirements of the approved scheme.

Reason: To provide net gains for biodiversity in accordance with the NPPF and emerging Northumberland Local Plan Policy ENV1.

- 10 If contamination not previously considered is identified during site operations than an additional Method Statement regarding the material shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall not be brought into use until the measures in the approved Method Statement have been carried out to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority. If no contamination is found during site operations a signed statement to that effect shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Plan Authority before the development is brought into use.

Reason: To ensure that risks from contamination to future users of the land are minimised in accordance with emerging Northumberland Local plan Policy POL1.

- 11 During the construction period there shall be no noisy activity from mobile plant, pneumatic equipment or power tools audible at the site boundary on Sundays, Bank Holidays or outside the hours of 08.00 - 18.00 Monday to Friday and 08.00 - 13.00 on Saturdays, unless agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To protect residential amenity and provide a commensurate level of protection against noise.

- 12 Deliveries to and collections from the site during the construction phase of the development shall not be allowed on Sundays, Bank Holidays or outside the hours of 08.00 - 18.00 Monday to Friday and 08.00 - 13.00 on Saturdays, unless agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To protect residential amenity and provide a commensurate level of protection against noise.

- 13 Development shall not commence until details for the construction site access along public right of way 300/178 have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Any reinstatement of the existing route and the adjacent land which may be required shall (if required) be undertaken with the agreement in writing of the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interest of users of the PROW.

- 14 Prior to the development coming into use, details for the construction of the bridleway and footpath sections linking directly to the footbridge on both sides of the new footbridge shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter the development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In the interests of users of the PROW.

- 15 Prior to the development coming into use, a detailed landscaping and hard surfacing plan covering areas to be agreed with the Local Planning Authority shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Narrow and sharp path junctions shall be avoided with splays and hard surfaced junctions. Thereafter the development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details and all soft landscaping shall be implemented in the first available planting season following completion of the development.

Reason: To avoid the development of unsurfaced desire line routes.

- 16 The area of woodland planting proposed to the rear of 89 Chase Meadows shall be a minimum of 1.5 metres from the realigned bridleway surface of 300/178 to avoid any future encroachment of overhanging vegetation. Details of the proposed planting shall be agreed with the Local Planning Authority and shall be implemented in the first available planting season following completion of the development.

Reason: In the interest of users of the bridleway.

In dealing with the application we have worked with the applicant in a positive and pro active manner and have implemented the requirement in paragraph 38 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

## Notes to Applicant

1. The developer is required to submit an application for the diversion of public rights of way 300/013, 300/016, 300/022 and 300/178 under section 257 TCPA 1990 to reflect the realignment of the public rights of way for the new footbridge, unless this is covered by a TWAO.
2. The application for the temporary closure of sections of paths 300/13, 300/16, 300/022 and 300/178 will be required prior to any works starting on site. It is recognised that a closure will be necessary for the bridge construction and that the provision of alternative routes is unlikely.
3. A highway condition survey shall be carried out before the commencement of demolition and construction vehicle movements from the site.
4. Building materials or equipment shall not be stored on the highway unless otherwise agreed.
5. In accordance with the Highways Act 1980, mud debris or rubbish shall not be deposited on the highway.
6. The developer shall ensure that lighting does not cause annoyance to any nearby receptors.
7. Under the Coal Industry Act 1994 any intrusive activities, including site investigation boreholes, and / or any subsequent treatment of coal mine workings / coal mine entries for ground stability purposes require the prior approval in writing of the Coal Authority, since such activities can have serious public health and safety implications. Failure to obtain permission will result in trespass with the potential for court action.

## NOTES

- If you are aggrieved by the decision of your Local Planning Authority to refuse permission for the proposed development or to grant it subject to conditions, then you can appeal to the First Secretary of State under section 78 of The Town and Country Planning Act 1990.
- If this is a decision on a planning application relating to the same or substantially the same land and development that is already the subject of an enforcement notice, if you want to appeal against your local planning authorities decision on your application, then you must do so within 28 days of the date of this notice.
- If an enforcement notice is served relating to the same or substantially the same land and development as in your application and if you want to appeal against your local planning authority's decision on your application, then you must do so within: 28 days of the date of service of the enforcement notice, or within six months (12 weeks in the case of a householder appeal) of the date of this notice, whichever period expires earlier.
- If you want to appeal, then you must do so within six months of the date of this notice (if this is a decision to refuse planning permission for a householder application or a decision to refuse planning permission for a minor commercial application, if you want to appeal against your local planning authority's decision then you must do so within 12 weeks of the date of this notice) using a form which you can get from the Planning Inspectorate at Temple Quay House, 2 The Square, Temple Quay, Bristol BS1 6PN or online at [www.gov.uk/appeal-planning-inspectorate](http://www.gov.uk/appeal-planning-inspectorate).
- The Secretary of State can allow a longer period for giving notice of an appeal, but he will not normally be prepared to use this power unless there are special circumstances which excuse the delay in giving notice of appeal.
- The Secretary of State need not consider an appeal if it seems to him that the local planning authority could not have granted planning permission for the proposed development or could not have granted it without the conditions they imposed, having regard to the statutory requirements, to the provisions of any development order and to any directions given under a development order.
- In practice, the Secretary of State does not refuse to consider appeals solely because the local planning authority based their decision on a direction given by him.

### Purchase Notices

- If either the local planning authority or the First Secretary of State refuses permission to develop land or grants it subject to conditions, the owner may claim that he can neither put the land to a reasonably beneficial use in its existing state nor render the land capable of a reasonably beneficial use by the carrying out of any development which has been or would be permitted.
- In these circumstances, the owner may serve a purchase notice on the Council in whose area the land is situated. This notice will require the Council to purchase his interest in the land in accordance with the provisions of Part VI of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

## Appendix L

### Hospital crossing planning statement





# Planning Statement

Prepared in support of a planning application for a new pedestrian underpass to replace Ashington Hospital Footpath Crossing

60601435-SLC-P-270-H-PS

# Content

<b>1</b>	<b>Introduction to the scheme .....</b>	<b>4</b>
1.1	Overview of the scheme.....	4
1.2	Underpass at Ashington Hospital Footpath Crossing: Planning application.....	4
1.3	Underpass at Ashington Hospital Crossing: Transport and Works Act Order .....	4
1.4	Applicant and Agent .....	5
1.5	The Scheme .....	5
1.6	Supporting Information.....	6
1.7	Structure of this statement.....	7
<b>2</b>	<b>Site Context .....</b>	<b>8</b>
2.1	Introduction .....	8
2.2	Planning History of the Site.....	8
2.3	Committed Development.....	8
2.4	Site Description.....	9
2.5	Site-specific environmental and land use constraints .....	10
<b>3</b>	<b>Proposed Development .....</b>	<b>11</b>
3.1	Introduction .....	11
3.2	Planning Application .....	11
3.3	Reasons for the proposed development.....	11
3.4	Elements of Development Proposals .....	12
3.5	Summary .....	13
<b>4</b>	<b>Landscape Overview .....</b>	<b>14</b>
4.1	Introduction .....	14
4.2	Impact on Landscape Character .....	14
4.3	Impact on Visual Amenity .....	18
4.4	Conclusion .....	19
<b>5</b>	<b>Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan.....</b>	<b>21</b>

5.1	Introduction .....	21
5.2	Purpose of CEMP .....	21
5.3	Environmental Control Measures.....	21
5.4	Summary .....	22
<b>6</b>	<b>Planning Policy Context .....</b>	<b>23</b>
6.1	Introduction .....	23
6.2	Northumberland Development Plan .....	24
6.3	Wansbeck District Local Plan (July 2007).....	25
6.4	Northumberland Local Plan Regulation 19 Publication Draft (May 2019).....	29
6.5	National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2021) .....	35
<b>7</b>	<b>Planning Assessment.....</b>	<b>38</b>
7.1	Introduction .....	38
7.2	Accordance with Northumberland Development Plan .....	38
<b>8</b>	<b>Material Considerations .....</b>	<b>58</b>
8.1	Introduction .....	58
8.2	National Design Guide (2019).....	58
8.3	Northumberland Local Transport Plan (LTP3) (2011).....	59
8.4	North East Combined Authority Transport Manifesto (2016).....	60
8.5	Transport for the North Strategic Transport Plan (2019).....	60
8.6	The Road to Zero Strategy (2018).....	61
8.7	Northumberland Economic Strategy (2018).....	62
8.8	Nexus Metro and Local Rail Strategy (2016).....	62
8.9	Summary .....	62
<b>9</b>	<b>Case for Planning Permission to be granted .....</b>	<b>64</b>
9.1	Introduction .....	64
9.2	Accordance with local and national policies.....	64
9.3	Benefits of the Scheme .....	64
9.4	Conditions .....	65
9.5	Additional information .....	67
	<b>Appendix A: Adopted and Emerging Local Plan Policies Map.....</b>	<b>134</b>
9.6	Emerging Northumberland Local Plan policies map .....	134

## Table of Figures

Figure 1.1 Northumberland Line.....	6
Figure 2.1 Red Line Boundary Plan.....	9
Figure 2.2 Extract from Emerging Northumberland Local Plan Reg 19 Draft and Adopted Wansbeck District Local Plan.....	10
Figure 3.1 Proposed site layout.....	12
Figure 4.1 Access to footpath from Darnley Road looking south.....	16
Figure 4.2 View north as existing Level Crossing to Darnley Road.....	16
Figure 4.3 View south-west to Chillingham Crescent.....	16
Figure 4.4 Access to footpath from Chillingham Crescent.....	16
Figure 4.5 View north-east experienced while traveling from Chillingham Crescent to crossing.....	16
Figure 4.6 footpath south towards access to Chillingham Crescent.....	16
Figure 4.7 View on approach to crossing from Chillingham & Darnley Road assess.....	16
Figure 4.8 View east while crossing from Chillingham and Darnley Road access.....	16
Figure 4.9 path on eastern side running parallel to railway connecting Roseneath Ct and John Street.....	17
Figure 4.10 looking west from Roseneath Ct towards railway.....	17
Figure 4.12 Access to crossing from Roseneath Ct.....	17
Figure 4.11 Entrance to access from Roseneath Ct.....	17
Figure 4.14 View facing west from Roseneath Ct entrance.....	17
Figure 4.13 Entrance to crossing from Roseneath Ct.....	17
Figure 4.15 View east from rear of Chillingham Crescent towards PROW Footpath 600/019.....	17
Figure 4.16 View west from Roseneath Ct towards railway corridor.....	17
Figure 4.17 View facing south from PROW Footpath 600/100 pedestrian crossing.....	18
Figure 4.18 Snip of drawing Rights of Way Plans, Sheet 16, Rev 3 - Demonstrating the proposed diversion of the footpaths.....	19

# Document Control

## Version Control

Version No.	Date	Created/Modified by	Notes
V.04	22/09/2021	Alannah Healey and Emily Floeser	Final

## Approvals

Version No.	Name of approver	Title & organisation	Date
V.04	Peter Gillan	Senior Planner, SLC Property	22/09/2021



# 1 Introduction to the scheme

## 1.1 Overview of the scheme

- 1.1.1 The scheme seeks to re-introduce passenger services onto the existing freight line between the city of Newcastle upon Tyne and the town of Ashington in Northumberland.
- 1.1.2 The railway line is known as the 'Northumberland Line' and was formerly known as the Ashington Blyth and Tyne Line (ABT). ['the scheme'].
- 1.1.3 The scheme includes the construction of six new railway stations and associated infrastructure. This planning statement has been prepared in support of the planning application for the proposed underpass and works associated with the closure of the level crossing known as 'Hospital'. ['the application'].

## 1.2 Underpass at Ashington Hospital Footpath Crossing: Planning application

- 1.2.1 This Planning Statement supports and accompanies an application for planning permission for the development associated with the construction and operation of a new pedestrian underpass at Ashington Hospital Footpath Crossing (hereinafter referred to as 'Hospital Crossing'), to replace the existing level crossing which is located approximately 200 metres to the south of the site of the proposed railway station at Ashington. Further details of the proposed development are provided in Section 5 of this Planning Statement.

## 1.3 Underpass at Ashington Hospital Crossing: Transport and Works Act Order

- 1.3.1 A Public Right of Way currently crosses the railway line at the existing level crossing. An application for an Order under the Transport and Works Act 1992 (TWAo) has been submitted to the Secretary of State for Transport. The TWAo, if made, will, amongst other things, authorise the closure of the level crossing and associated Public Right of Way (600/100) and provide for the creation of a new public right of way through the proposed underpass.
- 1.3.2 It is also proposed that the TWAo authorises minor permanent diversions to the existing footpath to the west of the railway line (600/019) to accommodate access to the proposed underpass<sup>1</sup>, and temporary closures of 600/019 and 600/100, 300/178 as required for the duration of the construction.

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<sup>1</sup> This application for planning permission does not seek consent for the diversion of the PROWs as this will be authorised through the TWAo.

- 1.3.3 The scope of the planning application includes the physical works necessary for the temporary and permanent diversion of the public rights of way, and the permanent and temporary closure of that section of PROW as set out in this section. It is anticipated that these details will be the subject of a condition.

## **1.4 Applicant and Agent**

- 1.4.1 SLC Property Ltd has been instructed on behalf of Northumberland County Council to prepare this planning application.

## **1.5 The Scheme**

- 1.5.1 The Northumberland Line proposes to offer a direct passenger service between Newcastle Central to Ashington, with a proposed journey time of approximately 35 minutes. The scheme seeks to encourage a modal shift towards rail travel, assisting in reducing congestion and therefore improving journey times both on the local highway network, and for users of public transport.
- 1.5.2 It is proposed service will call at the existing Manors railway station and at six proposed new station sites.
- 1.5.3 Five of the six proposed railway stations are located within the Northumberland County Council (NCC)'s administrative boundary: Seaton Delaval, Newsham, Bebside, Bedlington and Ashington. The proposed underpass at Hospital crossing is located within NCC's administrative boundary. The proposed railway station at Northumberland Park is located within the North Tyneside Council administrative boundary. There are no new stations proposed within the Newcastle City Council administrative boundary, however passenger services along the Northumberland Line will operate to and from Newcastle Central station.
- 1.5.4 The introduction of passenger trains onto the railway line increases the risk of accidents at level crossings. As such, the scheme requires that some of the level crossings are upgraded or permanently closed. An underpass is proposed to replace the existing Ashington Hospital Footpath Crossing to decrease the risk associated with the operation of a level crossing at this location. The reasons for the proposed underpass are further explained in Section 5 of this document.
- 1.5.5 Figure 1.1 illustrates the approximate location of the railway stations and Hospital Crossing.

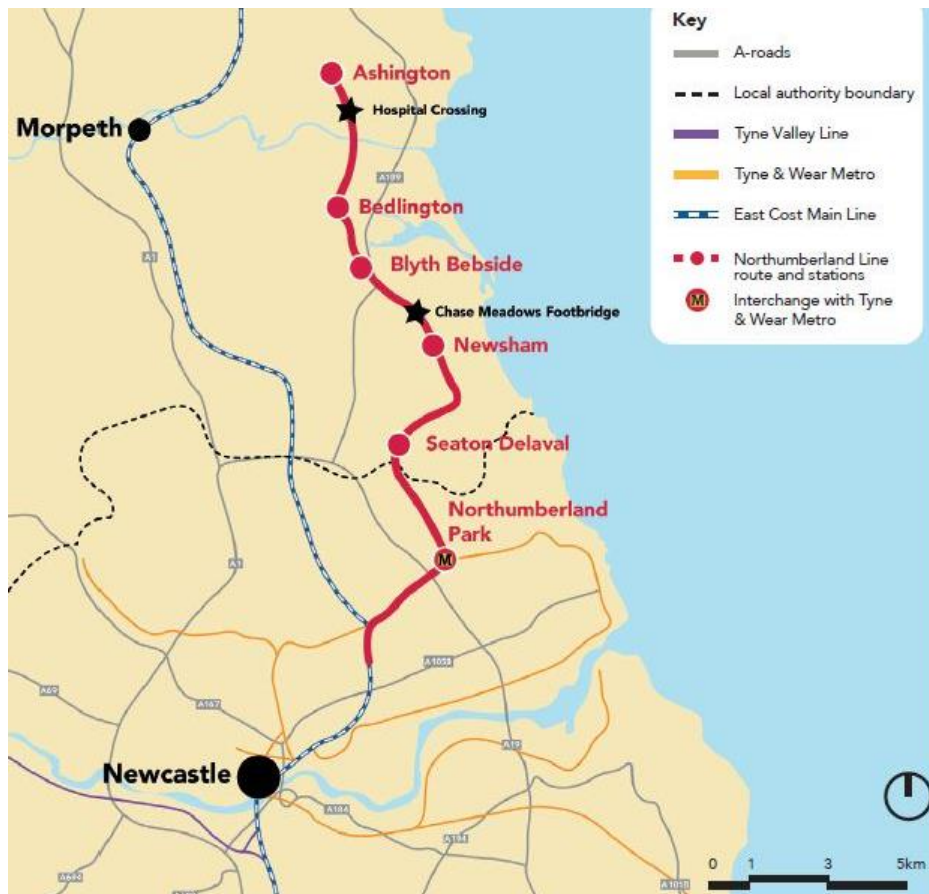


Figure 1.1 Northumberland Line

## 1.6 Supporting Information

1.6.1 The application for planning permission is accompanied by the supporting information identified as required by the local planning authority in discussions prior to submission. The nature, extent and scope of the supporting information is in accordance with the advice and recommendations given by officers of the local planning authority. The schedule of submitted information is summarised in Figure 1.2.

Document/Plan reference number	Name of document/Plan
60601435-ACM-XX-ZZ-DRG-LEP-000022	Site Location Plan
60601435-ACM-07-ZZ-DRG-EST-000809	Hospital Crossing Existing GA and Existing Section Sheet 1
60601435-ACM-07-ZZ-DRG-EST-000810	Hospital Crossing Existing GA and Red Line Boundary Sheet 2
60601435-ACM-07-ZZ-DRG-EST-000811	Hospital Crossing Underpass Proposed GA Sheet 1 of 5
60601435-ACM-07-ZZ-DRG-EST-000812	Hospital Crossing Underpass Proposed GA Sheet 2 of 5 No utilities
60601435-ACM-07-ZZ-DRG-EST-000813	Hospital Crossing Underpass Proposed Planning GA Sheet 3
60601435-ACM-07-ZZ-DRG-EST-000814	Hospital Crossing Underpass Proposed Planning GA Sheet 4
60601435-ACM-07-ZZ-DRG-EST-000815	Hospital Crossing Underpass Proposed Sections Sheet 5 of 5
60601435-ACM-XX-ZZ-DRG-EEN-000509	Landscape Plan
60601435-SLC-P-270-H-ECIA	Ecological Impact Assessment
60601435-SLC-P-270-H-DAS	Design and Access Statement
60601435-SLC-P-270-H-SCE	Statement of Community Engagement
60601435-ACM-07-ZZ-REP-EGE-000002	Preliminary Structures Sources Survey

Document/Plan reference number	Name of document/Plan
N/A	Hospital Crossing Underpass Arboricultural Impact Assessment

*Figure 1.2 Schedule of supporting information*

## 1.7 Structure of this statement

- Section 2 summarises the engagement with the local planning authority and stakeholders.
- Section 3 introduces the application site and describes the surrounding areas
- Section 4 describes the proposed development
- Section 5 provides an appraisal of the landscape and visual impacts of the scheme.
- Section 6 provides an Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan.
- Section 8 addresses the proposed development against the policies identified in Section 7.
- Section 9 describes the material considerations
- Section 10 provides a summary of the case for planning permission to be granted.



## **2 Site Context**

### **2.1 Introduction**

- 2.1.1 This section describes the existing site, adjacent land uses and provides a contextual overview of those considerations which have informed the designs of the submitted scheme. Further details of those considerations and how the submitted scheme has been informed based on an understanding of those considerations and appraisal of alternative development options, are set out in the Design and Access Statement which is submitted in support of this statement.

### **2.2 Planning History of the Site**

- 2.2.1 A desk-based review of the planning applications which have been submitted to and either: consented, refused or withdrawn on the land which comprises the application site has been undertaken.
- 2.2.2 A review of Northumberland County Council's planning public access system undertaken on the 15<sup>th</sup> June 2021 identified that there are not known to be any relevant planning applications and other related applications pertaining to the site, other than the Request for a Screening Opinions submitted to assess the potential requirement for an EIA to support the planning applications for the Northumberland Line scheme.

### **2.3 Committed Development**

- 2.3.1 A review of planning applications on land adjacent to the site (both determined and in the process of being determined) has been undertaken to identify any consented developments which may be material considerations in the determining of a planning application for the proposed underpass.
- 2.3.2 The site to the east of the proposed underpass was the site of the former Ashington Hospital, from which the name of the existing level crossing is derived. The site is now a residential development approved in 2008 and has been subsequently implemented (application number 07/00306/OUT).
- 2.3.3 It is considered the scheme which is the subject of this planning application would not preclude or impact on the delivery of the identified committed developments. The existing level crossing at Hospital provides access from the residential properties to the east, and town centre to the northeast, to residential properties to the west, including Ashington High school. It is considered the proposed development will support the development by improving the safety of current and future residents in Ashington.

## 2.4 Site Description

- 2.4.1 The site of the existing level crossing is located approximately 200 metres to the south of the proposed new station at Ashington, one of six stations which are proposed to be constructed as part of the Northumberland Line scheme. Those proposed railway stations are the subject of separate planning applications which have been submitted to the local planning authority in parallel to this application.
- 2.4.2 The railway corridor is bound to the east by residential properties on Featherwood Drive and Roseneath Court. The railway corridor is bound to the west by residential properties on Chillingham Crescent, Darnley Road and Oakland Terrace.
- 2.4.3 The level crossing is accessed to the west via a designated Public Right of Way (600/019) from Darnley Road and Public Right of Way (600/100) from Chillingham Crescent. The level crossing is accessed to the east from via Public Right of Way (600/100) from Roseneath Court.
- 2.4.4 An application for an Order under the Transport and Works Act 1992 (TWAO) has been submitted to the Secretary of State for Transport. The TWAO, if made, will, amongst other things, authorise the closure of the level crossing and associated Public Right of Way (600/100) and provide for the creation of a new public right of way over the proposed underpass. It is also proposed that the TWAO authorises a minor diversion to the existing footpath to the west of the railway line (600/019) to accommodate access to the proposed underpass.

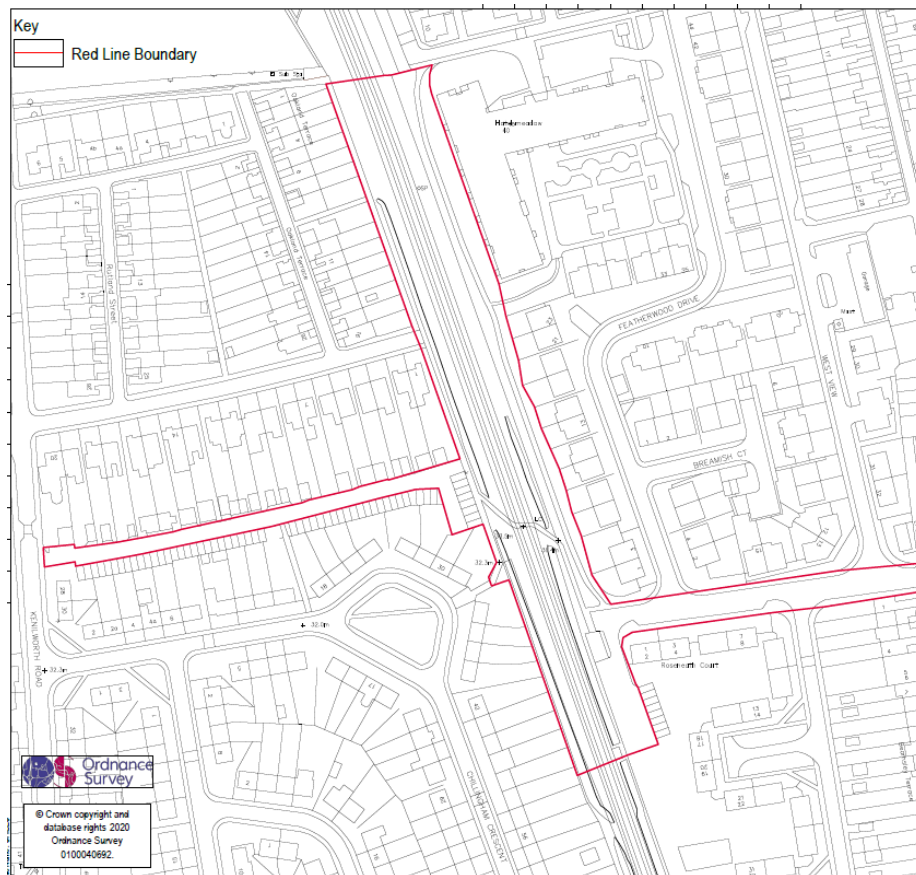


Figure 2.1 Red Line Boundary Plan

## 2.5 Site-specific environmental and land use constraints

- 2.5.1 The site-specific policy constraints and land-use designations that pertain to the site are shown on Figure 2.2 extracted from the adopted Wansbeck District Local Plan, and the emerging Northumberland Local Plan. This section presents an overview of the constraints, which are assessed in the subsequent chapters of this planning statement.



*Figure 2.2 Extract from Emerging Northumberland Local Plan Reg 19 Draft and Adopted Wansbeck District Local Plan*

- 2.5.2 The site of the proposed underpass is located within the settlement boundary for the town of Ashington.
- 2.5.3 The railway line is safeguarded for the reintroduction of passenger trains in Policy T1 of the Adopted Wansbeck District, and TRA5 in the emerging Northumberland Local Plan.
- 2.5.4 The site to the east of the railway line is an allocated for housing in the adopted plan. This allocation has subsequently been implemented and is now known as Featherwood Drive.
- 2.5.5 The identified policy constraints and land use designations referenced above are more fully set out in Section 6 and assessed in Section 7 of this statement.

## 3 Proposed Development

### 3.1 Introduction

- 3.1.1 This section presents the detail of the development proposals which are the subject of this application for planning permission.

### 3.2 Planning Application

- 3.2.1 This planning statement has been submitted in support of an application for planning permission for:

*‘Construction of a new covered pedestrian underpass to replace existing level crossing, including works to public rights of way. Construction of soft and hard landscaping, surface and subsurface drainage, utilities and other services, boundary treatment and other associated works’*

- 3.2.2 An application for an Order under the Transport and Works Act 1992 (TWAO) will be submitted to the Secretary of State for Transport in due course. An overview of the matters which are the subject of the TWAO is provided at Section 1.3 of this Planning Statement.

### 3.3 Reasons for the proposed development

- 3.3.1 The ‘Northumberland Line’ scheme proposes the construction of six new railway stations to deliver half hourly services from Ashington to Newcastle. At present, the existing railway line is used only by freight services. The simple act of introducing passenger trains onto the railway increases the potential risk of injury and fatality at each crossing. The increased risk at each of the level crossings means that all of them need to be assessed to ensure the risk is managed to acceptable industry levels, based on relevant safety legislation, standards and guidance. The risk calculation includes consideration of the number of trains, speed, current pedestrian and vehicular usage as well as any additional usage as a consequence of the scheme (e.g., identify if there more cars driving over a level crossing to access a new station). As such, the scheme to re-introduce passenger rail services on the Northumberland Line requires that some of the level crossings are upgraded and some are permanently closed. A risk assessment was undertaken by Network Rail for each level crossing to inform the proposed intervention.
- 3.3.2 The existing Hospital crossing currently connects Ashington Academy and residential properties from the west to Ashington town centre. The risk assessment identified that the level crossing is well used by children, and the highest usage of the crossing is between 0800 to 0900, and in the afternoon between 1530 and 1630. As well as Ashington Academy, evidence suggests that the level crossing also provides direct access to Ashington Central First School (300 metres to the east). The proximity of a number of schools to the crossings substantially increases the risk associated with the use of the crossing due to the number of vulnerable users (ie school children). Furthermore the risk assessment identified that the level crossing is likely to suffer from high levels of misuse (anecdotal evidence).

- 3.3.3 As a consequence of the above, the risk assessment concluded that the closure of the level crossing was the safest intervention at this location. The alternative route for users is to the north or south of Hospital level crossing either via Station Road overbridge or Green Lane level crossing. Any additional users over Green Lane, increases the risk of conflict at the level crossing. As there is only one footpath over the level crossing, adding more pedestrian users over this level crossing is not preferable and, consequently, a replacement for Hospital level crossing was considered the preferable option.
- 3.3.4 During the public consultation, two options were being considered to replace the existing level crossing- a footbridge adjacent to the site of the proposed new railway station at Ashington, or an underpass in close proximity to the existing level crossing location. The footbridge proposed a significant diversion (located approximately 250 metres to the north of the existing crossing). The footbridge would have required ramps of a significant length to ensure that accessibility and inclusivity requirements were met at the site. Consequently, the solution would have had a considerable impact on visual amenity and require the removal of a number of trees which currently provide screening between John Street and the railway line.
- 3.3.5 In contrast, an underpass solution is capable of being provided in closer proximity to the level crossing, thus reducing the risk of displacement to other crossing points such as Green Lane. Due to a more modest height than a footbridge, the underpass is considered to have a lesser impact on visual amenity and consequently has less impact on neighbouring properties by removing privacy and overlooking concerns. Furthermore, the underpass requires less land to be acquired to facilitate construction and requires less ongoing maintenance than a footbridge. As a result of the above factors, the underpass was considered to be the more appropriate solution at this location (located approximately 55 metres north of the existing level crossing due to the existing site constraints surrounding the crossing).

## 3.4 Elements of Development Proposals

- 3.4.1 Figure 5.1 indicates the site layout for the proposed underpass.

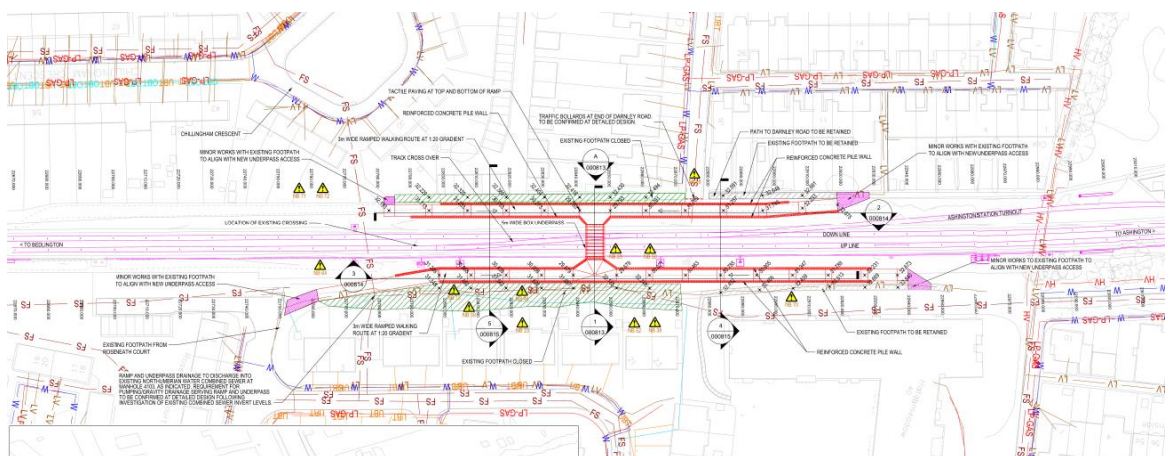


Figure 3.1 Proposed site layout

3.4.2 The elements of the proposed development which are the subject of this application for planning permission are summarised below. This summary should be ready in conjunction with submitted plans and Design and Access Statement submitted in support of this application

1. Construction of a 5-metre-wide box underpass
2. Reinforced Concrete Pile Wall
3. Minor works to align proposed underpass access with existing footpaths

3.4.3 The TWAO is proposed to authorise the works as set out in section 1.3 of this document.

## **3.5 Summary**

3.5.1 The emerging proposals have attracted support based on pre-application discussions with local planning authority officers and key stakeholders. Section 7 assesses compliance of the proposed development against those local and national planning policies.



## 4 Landscape Overview

### 4.1 Introduction

- 4.1.1 This section provides an overview of the potential impact of the proposed development on landscape and visual amenity.

### 4.2 Impact on Landscape Character

- 4.2.1 The character of the site is that of a railway corridor between two residential developments. This is demonstrated in Figures 4.1 – 4.16. The character of the site experienced by the neighbouring residential properties is highly influenced by the extensive fencing of the PROW Footpaths and the railway corridor, creating an industrial character adjacent to the residential properties. For pedestrians traveling along the PROW footpaths, the character is influenced by the high level of enclosure created by chain-linked fencing installed tightly adjacent to the footpaths. A variety of self-seeded grasses, wildflowers, and shrubs are within the railway corridor, creating a green feature within the area.
- 4.2.2 The character of the existing footpath to the west of the railway line, from Darnley Road to the crossing entrance (600/019) and from Chillingham Crescent to the crossing (600/100) is an enclosed space with little visibility of the wider landscape and little to no visibility from the outside to allow for safety measures. The footpath is enclosed by a chain-link fence to the east and while to the west is dense hedging, close board fencing, or building walls along the boundaries of neighbouring residential properties, as shown in Figures 4.1 to 4.6. As pedestrians turn east from PROW Footpaths 600/019 and 600/100 the view is still quite enclosed until they reach the railway line itself, as demonstrated in Figures 4.7 and 4.8.
- 4.2.3 Figures 4.9 to 4.11 demonstrate the two approaches PROW Footpath 600/100 from the north-east, the pedestrian path from John Street, and the east, from Roseneath Court. The approach to the crossing from the east is similar to the approach from the west with high fencing located tight against the footpath and a gate at the entrance to the crossing, as demonstrated in Figures 4.12 and 4.13. The view experienced from the crossing facing west is one of a residential area edged by a well fenced railway corridor, as demonstrated in Figure 4.14.
- 4.2.4 The character of the site will continue to reflect the edge of settlement and railway corridor in which the site sits. Whilst the underpass proposes a new structure and fencing within the landscape, it is considered that this infrastructure will not be incongruous with the existing landscape given the prevalence of rail related development within the local area.
- 4.2.5 The submitted Arboricultural Impact Assessment sets out the likely principal direct and indirect impacts of the Proposed Development on the trees on of immediately adjacent to the Site. The assessment includes a summary of those trees to be removed, tree works and incursions related to the Proposed Development.

- 4.2.6 The development propose a total loss of four individual trees, part of two tree groups and four full groups are to be removed to facilitate the installation of a new underpass railway crossing.
- 4.2.7 This consists of part of two tree groups, two full groups and one individual tree of low quality (category C) and three individual trees and one tree group identified as unsuitable for retention (category U) in the context of the current land use.
- 4.2.8 In addition, the Assessment identifies 4 additional trees that are unsuitable for retention and recommended for removal. Two of third-party ownership (identified as T19, T29), T51 and T54, were identified as unsuitable for retention (Category U, Dead, diseased, dying or dangerous).
- 4.2.9 The development proposes to plant approximately 14 trees to the east of the proposed underpass; two native hedgerows planted to the west of the proposed underpass; along with amenity grass throughout the site.
- 4.2.10 The species will reflect those existing on site along with those proposed within the Northumberland Biodiversity Action Plan. The proposed planting will help to improve the level of biodiversity in the area of the site and help to mitigate the loss of the existing trees.





Figure 4.1 Access to footpath from Darnley Road looking south



Figure 4.2 View north as existing Level Crossing to Darnley Road



Figure 4.3 View south-west to Chillingham Crescent



Figure 4.4 Access to footpath from Chillingham Crescent



Figure 4.5 View north-east experienced while traveling from Chillingham Crescent to crossing.



Figure 4.6 footpath south towards access to Chillingham Crescent.



Figure 4.7 View on approach to crossing from Chillingham & Darnley Road access.



Figure 4.8 View east while crossing from Chillingham and Darnley Road access.





Figure 4.16 path on eastern side running parallel to railway connecting Roseneath Ct and John Street



Figure 4.16 looking west from Roseneath Ct towards railway



Figure 4.16 Entrance to access from Roseneath Ct.



Figure 4.16 Access to crossing from Roseneath Ct.



Figure 4.16 Entrance to crossing from Roseneath Ct.



Figure 4.16 View facing west from Roseneath Ct entrance.



Figure 4.16 View east from rear of Chillingham Crescent towards PROW Footpath 600/019



Figure 4.16 View west from Roseneath Ct towards railway corridor.

## 4.3 Impact on Visual Amenity

### Residential Properties

- 4.3.1 Inter-visibility between the proposed underbridge and the existing residential properties has been considered through the design process. Currently there is inter-visibility between the pedestrian crossing and the first storeys of the existing residential properties adjacent to the railway corridor, with some visibility from ground floors. This is demonstrated within Figures 4.7, 4.8 and 4.14.
- 4.3.2 The proposed scheme includes mitigation in the form of specimen tree and native hedge planting to ensure the proposal sits appropriately within the landscape setting.
- 4.3.3 The proposed underbridge will be filtered from the view experienced by the residential properties to the east as the proposed specimen trees will be on an existing rise in the landscape along the east boundary. With the maturing of the proposed specimen trees the inter-visibility will further reduce between pedestrians on the paths and the residential properties to the east. On the west side of the railway corridor there will be a limited loss of existing vegetation. The introduction of two sections of native hedge, to tie into the existing hedge along the west boundary, will filter views from the neighbouring residential property, increase biodiversity within the site, and create a green boundary along the west side of the corridor.
- 4.3.4 During construction, adjacent residential properties may experience a temporary adverse visual impact. However, due to the anticipated short-term duration of the works, it is not anticipated that the construction phase will result in any significant adverse impact to visual amenity of residents or the landscape setting of the site. There are trees proposed to be removed during the construction phase to accommodate the development. However, the trees proposed to be removed are not directly adjacent to the existing residential properties and will therefore not detract from the visual amenity experienced by those residents. Further details of the proposed tree works are set out in the Arboricultural Impact Assessment and Landscape Design submitted in support of this application.

*Figure 4.17 View facing south from PROW  
Footpath 600/100 pedestrian crossing*

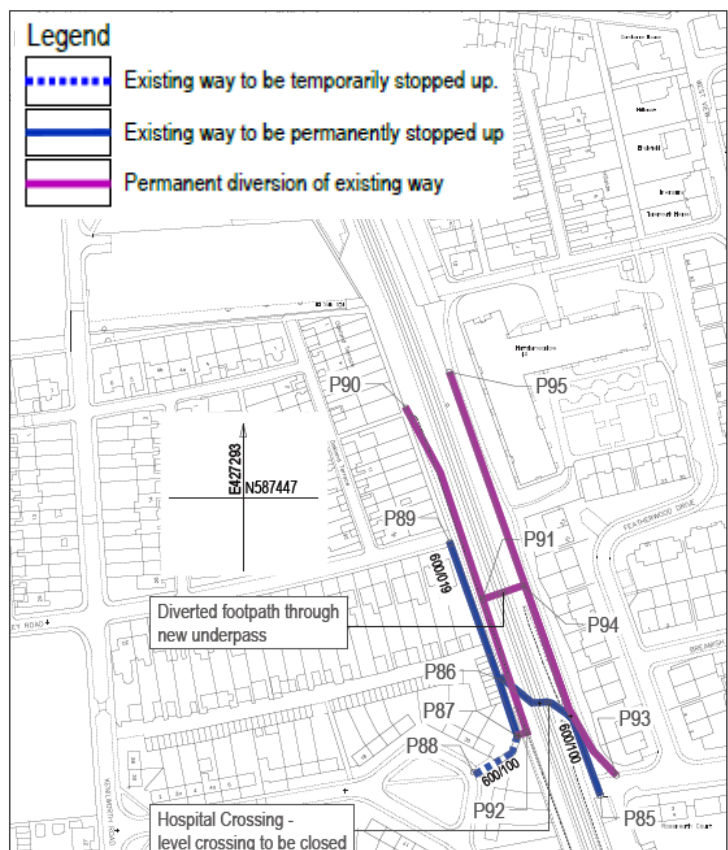




- 4.3.5 Based on the existing inter-visibility between the residential properties and the railway corridor, it is assumed that existing views from the first storey windows it is currently possible to view the railway corridor and associated features. As such, it is considered the proposed underpass and associated infrastructure would not form an incongruous addition to the existing landscape.
- 4.3.6 On this basis, it is not considered the construction and operation of the proposed underbridge will have a significant impact on the visual amenity of adjacent residential properties.

### Public Right of Way Network

- 4.3.7 As pedestrians travel along Footpaths 600/019 and 600/100 along the west side of the railway corridor views of the surrounding area are blocked and filtered by the enclosure of the footpaths by palisade fencing, chain link fencing, close board fencing and adjacent buildings. The section of PROW Footpath 600/100 on the east side of the railway corridor is enclosed by palisade fencing and vegetation.
- 4.3.8 As pedestrians travel along PROW Footpaths 600/019 and 600/100, the character of the landscape is highly influenced by the existing railway corridor with features such as the railway line, palisade fencing and chain-link fencing, as demonstrated in Figures 4.1 to 4.14. As such, due to the proximity to the railway corridor, an underpass would not be an incongruous feature given the prevalence of railway infrastructure within the existing landscape. As such, the introduction of an underpass is not considered to have a significant impact on the visual amenity of those traveling along the Public Right of Way network.



*Figure 4.18 Snip of drawing Rights of Way Plans, Sheet 16, Rev 3 - Demonstrating the proposed diversion of the footpaths.*

## 4.4 Conclusion

- 4.4.1 The landscape overview has reviewed the existing

characteristics of the site and the local area. It has also reviewed the features of the proposed underbridge and the existing views within and around the site.

- 4.4.2 The landscape overview considers that the construction and operation of the proposed underpass will not significantly impact the character of the area as experienced by pedestrians and equestrians traveling the PROW footpaths or the residential properties within the local area.
- 4.4.3 Furthermore, the landscape overview considers that impact on visual amenity of PROW users and residents of the local area will not be significant.

## 5 Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan

### 5.1 Introduction

- 5.1.1 This section presents an outline Construction Environment Management Plan (CEMP), produced to accompany the application for a new underpass to replace the existing level crossing known as 'Hospital'.

### 5.2 Purpose of CEMP

- 5.2.1 The outline CEMP contains control measures, and the standards to be implemented throughout the construction of the works in order to mitigate the potential impacts of the development.
- 5.2.2 The Contractor would be responsible for producing the final CEMP in accordance with the requirements set out in this document. It is likely that the final CEMP would be a condition of planning to be agreed with and approved by Northumberland County Council before commencement of development. The CEMP will therefore evolve and is subject to refinement, amendment and expansion as necessary.

### 5.3 Environmental Control Measures

- 5.3.1 General site management measures include those listed below
1. Excavation plant machinery will be fitted with fuel spill kits.
  2. Lighting will be positioned and directed so as not to unnecessarily intrude on adjacent buildings and land uses (including foraging habitats) and prevent any unnecessary interference with local residents.
  3. Welfare facilities will be provided on site and maintained by a licenced Waste Carrier.
  4. Vehicle/equipment washing facilities will be positioned away from watercourses and constructed with a drainage system which will capture runoff and effluent which will then be contained for proper treatment as per the Surface Water Management Plan.
  5. To minimise noise, vibrational and air quality impacts from vehicles and plant/equipment, the Contractor(s) will instigate behavioural policies for all site staff. This will include:
    - Minimising traffic to site by 'sharing' vehicles or by the use of a site bus (this will be detailed in the Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP);

- Avoidance of part load deliveries (this will be detailed in the CTMP);
  - Utilisation of a pre-booked delivery policy to minimise holding vehicles prior to loading or unloading (this will be outlined in the CTMP); and
  - Ensuing that all construction plant, vehicles and equipment are turned off rather than left idling while awaiting usage (this will be detailed in the CTMP). Where feasible use of hybrid generators which help reduce noise and fuel consumption.
6. Areas will be clearly marked and managed to prevent them becoming overfilled and ensure that the areas are suitable for the materials stored.
7. Hazardous materials such as fuel will be stored within secure compound areas to prevent spillage, theft or malicious damage. A single Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) area will be established to ensure the correct level of protection against fire spills and other chemical hazards. This will prevent sub-contractors and others creating individual stores, which are then not recorded or controlled.

## 5.4 Summary

- 5.4.1 Any planning conditions and commitments made following submission of the planning application (if required) would be incorporated into the CEMP by the appointed Contractor(s) who would be responsible for developing the outline CEMP into the full, detailed CEMP to be signed off by the Local Authority.
- 5.4.2 It is assumed that a number of Contractors (including specialist contractors and sub-contractors) may be appointed during construction. All site construction staff, including sub-contractors, would be required to comply with the CEMP throughout the entire construction stage of the proposed development. Regular site monitoring and site audits will be undertaken by the Contractor's Environmental Manager.
- 5.4.3 Appropriate measures/ precise details of which in a detailed CEMP which will be prepared to discharge relevant conditions on a planning permission for the scheme.

## 6 Planning Policy Context

### 6.1 Introduction

- 6.1.1 This section outlines the principal planning policies that pertain to the proposed development. It is important to note that the thematic survey reports and assessments submitted in support of this application contain further additional information and further details of other relevant policies (e.g. ecology).
- 6.1.2 In England, there is a hierarchical structure of policy covering national and local planning. At a national level the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's planning policies and how these are expected to be applied. At a local level, development plans set out planning policy for the area.
- 6.1.3 Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 6.1.4 Therefore, the starting point from a planning perspective in the determination of this planning application is the development plan. The development plan in respect of the application site comprises the Wansbeck District Local Plan (July 2007).
- 6.1.5 The NPPF advises at paragraph 48 that, in respect of development plans adopted prior to publication of the NPPF, local planning authorities should afford due weight to relevant policies according to their degree of consistency with the NPPF; the closer the policies in the Plan to the policies in the NPPF, the greater the weight that may be given.
- 6.1.6 In accordance with paragraph 48 of the NPPF, weight may also be given to the policies in emerging plans, depending on the stage of preparation of the plan, the extent to which emerging policy aligns with the NPPF and the extent of unresolved objections to the emerging plan. The latest version of the Northumberland Local Plan was submitted to the Secretary of State for examination in May 2019 and examination took place in late 2021. A consultation on the Schedule of Proposed Main Modifications closed on the 4<sup>th</sup> August 2021. As such, the local plan is at an advance stage of preparation and therefore relevant policies in this Plan are a material consideration in determining this application and it is considered that such policies can be afforded some weight at this time.
- 6.1.7 Paragraph 11 of the NPPF provides definitive guidance on how applications should be determined by stating:

*"Plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development. For decision-taking this means:*



*Approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:*

- i. The application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or*
- ii. Any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework as a whole.”*

## **6.2 Northumberland Development Plan**

6.2.1 Northumberland County Council was established as a unitary authority on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2009 following Local Government Reorganisation. It replaced the former County Council and six District/ Borough Councils of Alnwick, Berwick, Blyth Valley, Castle Morpeth, Tynedale and Wansbeck.

6.2.2 The former Northumberland local planning authorities had produced their own Development Plans to guide development within their administrative boundaries, of relevance to this application are:

- The saved Local Plan policies (under the Secretary of State’s Direction) of the Wansbeck District Local Plan (2007).

6.2.3 Policies contained within those documents that have been ‘saved’ under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 will remain in force and will continue to provide the basis for planning decisions until replaced by subsequent Development Plan Documents.

6.2.4 These documents, together with any made Neighbourhood Plans, have been brought together to form the ‘Northumberland Consolidated Planning Policy Framework’.

6.2.5 Planning law states that planning applications should be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The NPPF is a material planning consideration in the determination of planning applications. The closer the policies in the Development Plan to the policies in the NPPF, the greater the weight that can be given to the development plan policies.

6.2.6 Northumberland County Council is focusing on the preparation of a Local Plan for Northumberland. The Northumberland Local Plan will:

- set the strategic planning policies of the Council;
- provide the planning principles, including detailed development management policies to guide future development and planning decisions in Northumberland to 2036;

- set the general scale and distribution of new development which is required to meet Northumberland's needs to 2036;
- include strategic allocations as well as detailed land allocations and designations; and
- include site specific proposals for the development, protection and conservation of land.

6.2.7 Once adopted, the emerging Northumberland Local Plan will supersede those existing development plan documents which collectively comprise the 'Northumberland Consolidated Planning Policy Framework'.

6.2.8 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states that:

*"If regard is to be had to the development plan for the purpose of any determination to be made under the planning Acts the determination must be made in accordance with plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise."*

6.2.9 The NPPF advises at paragraph 213 that, in respect of Development Plans adopted prior to publication of the NPPF, local planning authorities should afford due weight according to their degree of consistency with the NPPF (the closer the policies in the Plan to the policies in the NPPF, the greater the weight that may be given).

6.2.10 In accordance with paragraph 48 of the NPPF, weight may also be given to the policies in emerging plans depending on the stage of preparation of the plan, the extent to which emerging policy aligns with the NPPF and the extent of unresolved objections to the emerging plan. The latest version of the Northumberland Local Plan was submitted to the Secretary of State for examination in May 2019 and examination took place in late 2021. A consultation on the Schedule of Proposed Main Modifications closed on the 4th August 2021. As such, the local plan is at an advance stage of preparation and therefore relevant policies in this Plan are a material consideration in determining this application and it is considered that such policies can be afforded some weight at this time. As such, this Planning Statement considers both the extant and emerging local planning policies that are of relevance to the determination of this application for planning permission.

### **6.3 Wansbeck District Local Plan (July 2007)**

6.3.1 The relevant policies of the extant Local Plan that pertain to the scheme which is the subject of this planning application are identified as follows:

#### **Policy GPI: Spatial Strategy**

6.3.2 Policy GPI states that provided that proposals are in accordance with other policies of the Plan, development on previously developed sites and buildings with settlement limits will be permitted. Development on greenfield sites within settlement limits will only be permitted if:

- The site is allocated for development; or
- It can be demonstrated that the development will meet an identified and justified need and no suitable alternative previously developed site is available.

#### **Policy GP4: Accessibility**

- 6.3.3 Policy GP4 stipulates that new development should be located to reduce the need to travel and to minimise journey length. It should be accessible to all users by a choice of means of transport including buses, walking and cycling.

#### **Policy GP5: Landscape Character**

- 6.3.4 Policy GP5 states that development must respect the character of the District's landscape. Proposals will be assessed in terms of:

- The siting, scale and design of buildings and materials; and
- The effect on distant views

#### **Policy GP6: Trees and hedgerows**

- 6.3.5 Policy GP6 states that the authority will seek to protect trees, woodlands and hedgerows in the District and will encourage new planting, particularly of native species. Development which would result in the loss of healthy trees which make an important contribution to the quality of the environment will not be permitted unless there are overriding social or economic benefits to the community and compensatory off-site provision of landscape infrastructure is made. Healthy trees lost as a consequence of development shall be replaced with trees of an equivalent standard.

#### **Policy G13: Biodiversity and wildlife networks**

- 6.3.6 Policy G13 states that the value to biodiversity of all sites proposed for development will be considered when planning applications are determined whether or not they are designated sites. Particular importance will be attached to the protection of priority habitats and species in Wansbeck. Where proposals affect a habitat which contributes, or could potentially contribute, to a network of natural habitats the developer will be required to protect and enhance the network.

#### **Policy GP22: Flood risk and erosion**

- 6.3.7 Policy GP22 states that developers are required to consider the risk to their development from flooding and erosion and to consider any possible effect of their development on flood risk or erosion elsewhere. Development in areas of flood risk will not be permitted unless a flood risk assessment has been carried out and it can be demonstrated that:
- There is no reasonable alternative development option available which would involve no risk or a lower risk of flooding; and

- The development does not increase the risk of flooding elsewhere; and
- Satisfactory protection measures can be carried out at the expense of the developer and maintained for the lifetime of the development

**Policy GP23: Pollution and nuisance**

6.3.8 Policy GP23 states that when determining planning applications, the authority will consider whether a proposed development has the potential to cause pollution or nuisance. Planning permission will not be granted for development liable to cause significant harm to either:

- Human health and safety
- The amenity of local residents and other land users
- The quality and enjoyment of all aspects of the environment

**Policy GP25: Noise**

6.3.9 Policy GP25 states that when determining planning applications, the authority will consider the levels and characteristics of any noise which may be generated as a result of permitting the development. The likely impact will be assessed in terms of the following:

- Any disturbance to people living in the area; and
- Any disturbance to other noise-sensitive uses such as hospitals, schools, colleges, offices and community buildings; and
- Any effect on people's enjoyment of the outdoor environment including gardens, parks, the coast and the countryside; and
- Any disturbance to wildlife or livestock

**Policy GP30: Visual Impact**

6.3.10 Policy GP30 states that all proposed development will be assessed in terms of its visual impact. Developments which in visual terms would cause significant harm to the character or quality of the surrounding environment will be refused.

**Policy GP31: Urban Design**

6.3.11 Policy GP31 states that when considering any proposed development, the authority will require high standards of urban design to:

- Promote character in townscape and landscape and establish local identity; and
- Clearly define public and private spaces; and
- Encourage accessibility; and

- Make places with a clear image that is easy to understand, by providing recognisable routes, intersections and landmarks; and
- Promote diversity and choice through a mix of compatible developments and uses that work together to create viable places that respond to local needs.

#### **Policy GP32: Landscaping and the Public Realm**

6.3.12 Policy GP32 states that developers are required to incorporate a high standard of landscape treatment in their developments. When submitting planning applications, developers will be required to demonstrate that:

- Any existing landscape features of value including trees, shrubs, hedgerows and ponds, will be retained, protected and used to advantage as part of the development; and
- New landscape features will be introduced which enhance the visual quality of the development, reduce its impact and provide habitat for the district's wildlife; and
- New landscape features to be introduced will be appropriate to the use and character of the development and its location; and
- Opportunities to create new public spaces and improve existing ones have been considered.

#### **Policy GP35: Crime Prevention**

6.3.13 Policy GP35 states that development proposals will be expected to have regard to the objectives of 'planning out crime' through the incorporation of measures such as:

- Promotion of schemes that increase the range of activities that maximise the opportunities for surveillance,
- Maximising the amount of defensible space which is controlled, or perceived to be controlled, by occupiers,
- A high standard of street lighting

#### **Policy T1: Ashington, Blyth and Tyne Rail Line**

6.3.14 Policy T1 states that the re-introduction of passenger services on the rail line between Newcastle and Ashington will be supported and promoted. Land which may be required for associated facilities such as stations, bus stops and car parks will be safeguarded.

#### **Policy T3: Provision for cyclists**

6.3.15 Policy T3 states that improved facilities for cycling in the District will be sought. Cyclists will be provided for as part of highway and traffic management schemes and by developers as

part of new developments. Provision will include the development of safe and convenient routes and cycle parking facilities. Developers will be required as a condition of planning permission to provide cycle parking as part of their developments.

**Policy T4: Provision for walking**

- 6.3.16 Policy T4 states that measures to assist and encourage walking will be sought including the development of a comprehensive network of footpaths and footways. Developers will be required to provide safe, convenient and pleasant routes for pedestrians.

**Policy T5: Access for people with reduced mobility**

- 6.3.17 Policy T5 states that an environment which is accessible to all will be sought. Developers will be required to make appropriate provision for those with reduced mobility as part of their developments.

**Policy REC11: Access to the countryside and coast**

- 6.3.18 Policy REC11 states that improvements to the network of recreational footpaths, cycle routes and bridleways in the District will be sought. When new routes are planned, the impact on existing uses and interests will be taken into account and potential harm minimised. Existing routes will be protected.

## **6.4 Northumberland Local Plan Regulation 19 Publication Draft (May 2019)**

- 6.4.1 The NPPF advises at paragraph 48 that weight may also be given to the policies in emerging plans depending on the stage of preparation of the plan, the extent to which emerging policy aligns with the NPPF and the extent of unresolved objections to the emerging plan. The latest version of the Northumberland Local Plan was submitted to the Secretary of State for examination in May 2019 and examination took place in late 2021. A consultation on the Schedule of Proposed Main Modifications is currently open until the 4th August 2021. It is therefore considered that relevant policies can be given some weight presently and can be given increasing weight as the Plan moves towards adoption.
- 6.4.2 The relevant policies of the emerging Northumberland Local Plan that pertain to the scheme which is the subject of this planning application are identified as follows:

**Policy STP2: Presumption in favour of Sustainable Development**

- 6.4.3 Policy STP2 states that when considering development proposals, the Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). It will always work pro-actively

with applicants to seek to find solutions that mean proposals that improve the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area can be approved wherever possible.

### **Policy STP3: Principles of Sustainable Development**

- 6.4.4 Policy STP3 states that in applying the presumption in favour of sustainable development in Northumberland and to deliver against economic, social and environmental objectives, development proposals will be expected to deliver across the range of the economic, social and environmental factors, and adhere to the following principles where appropriate:
- Contribute to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy across Northumberland, support more and better jobs, protect and enhance the vitality and viability of Northumberland's town centres and other important economic sectors;
  - Minimise their impact upon local amenity for new or existing residents and businesses, adjoining premises and land uses;
  - Support and provide opportunities to improve health, social and cultural wellbeing for all, and provide the infrastructure which is required to enhance the quality of life of individuals and communities;
  - Demonstrate high quality sustainable design which is accessible to all, and which respects and enhances the local distinctiveness of the natural, historic and built environment, helps promote a sense of place, reduces the need for energy, and facilitates flexible and adaptable buildings and environments;
  - Be accessible by, or be able to be made accessible by public transport, walking or cycling where feasible, thereby reducing the need to travel for both people and goods, and the dependence on travel by private car;
  - Make best use of existing facilities and infrastructure, whilst making appropriate provision for new or additional infrastructure as required;

### **Policy STP4: Climate change mitigation and adaptation**

- 6.4.5 Policy STP4 states that Development proposals should mitigate climate change and contribute to meeting nationally binding targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. When determining planning applications, support will be given to how development proposals that help mitigate climate change and consideration will be given to how proposals:
- Through their location, layout and pattern of development, reduce the need to travel for both people and goods, and encourage sustainable modes of transport, including walking, cycling and the use of public transport.

### **Policy STP5: Health and wellbeing**

6.4.6 Policy STP5 states that development which promotes, supports and enhances the health and wellbeing of communities, residents, workers and visitors will be supported. Development proposals will be required to demonstrate that they:

- are safe, comfortable, inclusive and attractive and prioritise pedestrian and cycle movement;
- provide access to a range of facilities including public transport, health, education, social care, green spaces, sport, play and leisure facilities

6.4.7 The policy requires that a Health Impact Assessment Screening be submitted for all major development proposals to determine whether the potential impact on health resulting from the development warrants any further assessment. Where further assessment is warranted, a proportionate Health Impact Assessment will also be required to be submitted as part of the application. A Health Impact Assessment will be required to include proposals to mitigate any adverse health impacts, maximise potential positive impacts, and help reduce health inequalities.

**Policy QOP1: Design Principles**

6.4.8 Policy QOP1 states that in determining planning applications, design will be assessed against the following design principles, in accordance with the Northumberland Design Guide.

**Policy QOP2: Good Design and Amenity**

6.4.9 Policy QOP2 states that development will be required to provide a high standard of amenity for existing and future users of the development itself and preserve the amenity of those living in, working in or visiting the local area.

6.4.10 Development which would result in unacceptable adverse impacts on the amenity of neighbouring uses, in terms of both individual and cumulative impacts, will not be supported.

**Policy QOP4: Landscaping and Trees**

6.4.11 Policy QOP4 states that where relevant, new development will be expected to incorporate well-designed landscaping and respond appropriately to any existing landscape features. Development proposals should ensure that:

- Landscaping design is of a high quality, in accordance with the principles set out in Policy QOP 1;
- Existing features which contribute towards the character of the area, or amenity, are retained wherever possible and sympathetically incorporated into the overall design of the scheme;
- Any hard or soft landscaping is appropriate, functional and well-integrated into the design of the development;



- Trees, and other spaces and features that provide green and blue infrastructure, are preserved, enhanced and introduced into the landscaping scheme wherever possible;

#### **Policy QOP6: Delivering well-designed places**

6.4.12 Policy QOP6 states that proposals are expected to meet the local design expectations set out in design policies within the Plan, the Northumberland Design Guide, and any other design guidance. Proposals are expected to respond to any character assessments that form part of or support the Plan. Where a Design and Access Statement is required as part of a planning application, there must be a clear and proportionate demonstration of:

- How relevant design policies, the Northumberland Design Guide, character assessments and any other design guidance supporting the Plan, have been integral to the design development process;
- A robust analysis of the context and character of the site and the local area, in addition to the functional requirements of the intended use;
- The design concept and the evolution of the design development through drawings or models, including explanatory text as appropriate; and
- Where relevant, how consultation with communities and other relevant stakeholders has informed the design.

#### **Policy TRA1: Promoting sustainable connections**

6.4.13 Policy TRA1 states that the council will support development that:

- Promotes a spatial distribution which creates accessible development, reduces the need to travel by car, and maximises the use of sustainable modes of transport;
- Promotes good design principles in respect of the permeability, connectivity and legibility of buildings and public spaces; and inclusive access;
- Promotes sustainable transport choices, including supporting, providing and connecting to networks for walking, cycling and public transport; and infrastructure that supports the use of low and ultra low emission vehicles;
  - a. Ensures delivery of cycle parking and supporting infrastructure;
  - b. Protects, enhances and supports public rights of way;
  - c. Supports the delivery of reliable, safe and efficient transport networks, in partnership with other organisations, service providers and developers;

- d. Requires development to be designed to enable charging of plug-in and other ultra low emission vehicles in safe, accessible, convenient locations; and
- e. Requires development proposals which generate significant amounts of movements to be supported by a Transport Assessment/ Transport Statement, and Travel Plans, and where appropriate, delivery/servicing plans.

**Policy TRA5: Rail transport and safeguarding facilities**

6.4.14 Policy TRA5 states that development which would prevent the reintroduction of passenger rail services on the Northumberland Line along with associated stations, facilities and access to them from adjacent highways, and continued rail freight use of the Northumberland Line, its associated branch lines (including the branch line from Bedlington to Morpeth via Choppington, the Butterwell line north of Ashington and the line from Woodhorn to Newbiggin-by-the-Sea) and supporting infrastructure will not be supported.

6.4.15 Sites for stations have been identified and land will be safeguarded at the following locations:

- Woodhorn
- Ashington
- Bedlington Station
- Blyth Bebside
- South Newsham
- Seaton Delaval
- Seghill

6.4.16 The policy goes on to state that measures to improve public safety at level crossings will be supported. Improvement, alteration or closure of level crossings, or appropriate contributions towards the implementation of such works, may be secured through the grant of planning permission for development where it can be demonstrated, to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority, that those works are directly related to the impact that development may have on the level crossing and they are necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms.

**Policy ENV2: Biodiversity and geodiversity**

6.4.17 Policy ENV2 states that development proposals affecting biodiversity and geodiversity will minimise their impact and net gains for biodiversity will be secured by:

- Avoiding significant harm through location and/ or design. Where significant harm cannot be avoided, applicants will be required to demonstrate that adverse impacts will be adequately mitigated or, as a last resort compensated for;
- Securing net biodiversity gains and/or wider ecological enhancements through new development

### **Policy WAT3: Flooding**

6.4.18 Policy WAT3 states that development proposals will be required to demonstrate how they will minimise flood risk to people, property and infrastructure from all potential sources by:

- Avoiding inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding and directing the development away from areas at highest risk, applying the Sequential Test and if necessary the Exceptions Test, in accordance with national policy and the Northumberland Strategic Flood Risk Assessment. Site Specific Flood Risk Assessments will be required in accordance with national policy and guidance;
- Ensuring that the development will be safe over its lifetime, taking account of climate change, will not increase flood risk elsewhere and where possible, reduce flood risk overall;
- Ensuring that development proposals in areas at risk from flooding are made resistant and resilient, in terms of their layout, mix and/or building design, in accordance with national policy and the findings and recommendations of the Northumberland Strategic Flood Risk Assessment;

### **Policy WAT4: Sustainable Drainage Systems**

6.4.19 Policy WAT4 states that SuDS will be a requirement for any development where it is necessary to manage surface water drainage unless it can be clearly demonstrated:

- That SuDS are not technically, operationally or financially deliverable or viable and that any surface water drainage issues resulting from the development can be alternatively mitigated; or
- That the SuDS scheme will itself adversely affect the environment or safety, including where ponds could increase the risk of bird strike close to the airport or where existing minewater problems could be exacerbated.

### **Policy POL2: Pollution and air, soil and water quality**

6.4.20 Policy POL2 states that development proposals that may cause pollution of water, air or soil, either individually or cumulatively, are required to incorporate measures to prevent or reduce their pollution so as not to cause nuisance or unacceptable impacts on the environment, people or biodiversity. Development proposed where pollution levels are unacceptable, and unable to be mitigated to acceptable levels, will not be supported.

## **6.5 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2021)**

- 6.5.1 The National Planning Policy Framework<sup>2</sup> (NPPF) sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied. It provides a framework within which locally-prepared plans for housing and other development can be produced.
- 6.5.2 Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The National Planning Policy Framework must be taken into account in preparing the development plan, and is a material consideration in planning decisions. Planning policies and decisions must also reflect relevant international obligations and statutory requirements.
- 6.5.3 The NPPF states at paragraph 7 that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. At a very high level, the objective of sustainable development can be summarised as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.
- 6.5.4 Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways (so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across each of the different objectives):
- an economic objective – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;
  - a social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being; and
  - an environmental objective – to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising

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<sup>2</sup> Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (2021) National Planning Policy Framework (p4)

waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.

- 6.5.5 At the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, so that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way.
- 6.5.6 With reference to paragraph 11 of the NPPF, it is important to note that for decision-taking this means;
- approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or
  - where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important are out-of-date, granting permission unless:
    - i) the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or
    - ii) any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.
- 6.5.7 Further advice on decision-taking which is of relevance to the current scheme is provided at paragraph 38 of the Framework;
- 6.5.8 Local planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way. They should use the full range of planning tools available and work proactively with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. Decision-makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible.
- 6.5.9 The early engagement evoked by the NPPF has been undertaken in a bid to assist in the efficiency and effectiveness of the determination of this planning application; paragraphs 39 to 46 of the NPPF highlight the importance of pre-application engagement.

#### **Promoting Sustainable Transport**

- 6.5.10 An integral component in delivering sustainable development and achieving wider sustainability and health objectives is the promotion of sustainable transport, as set out in Section 9 of the Framework. This includes identifying and pursuing opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport use.
- 6.5.11 This section states that the planning system should actively manage patterns of growth in support of these objectives. Significant development should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine

choice of transport modes. This can help to reduce congestion and emissions and improve air quality and public health.

6.5.12 Paragraph 111 states that development should only be prevented or refused on highway grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.

6.5.13 This connotes that a refusal of planning permission on transport grounds will only be justifiable if there are severe impacts arising from the development which cannot be mitigated.

#### **Achieving well-designed places**

6.5.14 The creation of high quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities.

6.5.15 Paragraph 132 states that design quality should be considered throughout the evolution and assessment of individual proposals. Early discussion between applicants, the local planning authority and local community about the design and style of emerging schemes is important for clarifying expectations and reconciling local and commercial interests. Applicants should work closely with those affected by proposals to evolve designs that take account of the views of the community. Applications that can demonstrate early, proactive and effective engagement with the community should be looked on more favourably than those that cannot.

## 7 Planning Assessment

### 7.1 Introduction

- 7.1.1 The application for planning permission is accompanied by the supporting information identified as required by the local planning authority in discussions prior to submission. The scope, extent and nature of the supporting information is in accordance with the advice and recommendations given by officers of the local planning authority.
- 7.1.2 The design of the scheme and scope of the submitted proposals has been conceived with the ambition of satisfying all of the relevant local and national planning, transport and environmental policies.
- 7.1.3 Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the statutory development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 7.1.4 The following sections:
- summarises the evidence that demonstrates how the development proposals accord with the Local Plan (section 7.2–7.4)
  - summarises the evidence that demonstrates how the development proposals accord with national planning policies (section 7.4)
  - confirms that there are no material considerations in the determination of the planning application that should lead to the application being refused (section 8)
  - confirms that the implementation of the scheme would deliver significant public benefits

### 7.2 Accordance with Northumberland Development Plan

- 7.2.1 The development plan in respect of the application site comprises the saved Local Plan policies (under the Secretary of State's Direction) of the Wansbeck District Local Plan (2007).
- 7.2.2 The NPPF advises at paragraph 219 that, in respect of Development Plans adopted prior to publication of the NPPF, local planning authorities should afford due weight according to their degree of consistency with the NPPF (the closer the policies in the Plan to the policies in the NPPF, the greater the weight that may be given).
- 7.2.3 In accordance with paragraph 48 of the NPPF, weight may also be given to the policies in emerging plans depending on the stage of preparation of the plan, the extent to which emerging policy aligns with the NPPF and the extent of unresolved objections to the

emerging plan. The latest version of the Northumberland Local Plan was submitted to the Secretary of State for examination in May 2019 and examination took place in late 2021. A consultation on the Schedule of Proposed Main Modifications closed on the 4th August 2021. It is therefore considered that relevant policies can be given some weight presently and can be given increasing weight as the Plan moves towards adoption.

## **7.3 Wansbeck District Local Plan (July 2007)**

- 7.3.1 The Wansbeck District Local Plan sets out the overall vision and spatial strategy for development in Wansbeck. It currently forms the basis of Northumberland's Local Development Framework and is used to guide planning decisions throughout Wansbeck.
- 7.3.2 The District Local Plan was adopted in July 2007. It now forms part of the statutory development plan for Northumberland. As well as providing the basis for decisions on planning applications, the District Local Plan is used to help shape regeneration, investment and growth within the borough.
- 7.3.3 It is anticipated the Wansbeck District Local Plan will be superseded by the emerging Northumberland Local Plan. Notwithstanding this, the extant District Local Plan currently forms part of the adopted development plan. Those policies of the existing, adopted District Local Plan that are material to the determination of this planning application are set out below.

### **Policy GPI: Spatial Strategy**

- 7.3.4 Policy GPI states that provided that proposals are in accordance with other policies of the Plan, development on previously developed sites and buildings with settlement limits will be permitted. Development on greenfield sites within settlement limits will only be permitted if:
- The site is allocated for development; or
  - It can be demonstrated that the development will meet an identified and justified need and no suitable alternative previously developed site is available.
- 7.3.5 The proposed underpass to replace the existing level crossing at Hospital forms an integral component of the scheme which proposes the re-introduction of passenger services on the Northumberland Line. The re-introduction of passengers services on the Northumberland Line is a strategic priority for the council as set out in the Plan. The proposed underpass seeks improve the safety of users of existing level crossing, as the risk of accidents will increase as a consequence of the increase in train movements on the railway line. It is therefore considered that the proposed underpass supports the council's wider ambitions for the re-introduction of passenger services on the Northumberland Line.
- 7.3.6 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy GPI of the Wansbeck District Local Plan.



#### **Policy GP4: Accessibility**

- 7.3.7 Policy GP4 stipulates that new development should be located to reduce the need to travel and to minimise journey length. It should be accessible to all users by a choice of means of transport including buses, walking and cycling.
- 7.3.8 The proposed underpass is an integral part of the proposed re-introduction of passenger services on the Northumberland Line. The proposed underpass will encourage safe and convenient access for residents to the local Public Right of Way network. The underpass is proposed to be accessed via ramps to improve accessibility for persons of reduced mobility. Furthermore the proposed underpass has a width of 5 metres and therefore provides improved provision for pedestrians and cyclists compared with the existing crossing. The census undertaken at the existing level crossing identified high usage, especially by unaccompanied children commuting to local schools. If the level crossing was closed with no replacement, users would be forced to use Green Lane level crossing to the south, or the overbridge on Station Road to the north to cross the railway line. This has the potential to increase conflict with other road users. As a result, an underpass was considered the most appropriate alternative, providing a segregated crossing for pedestrians and cyclists, thus ensuring safe and uninterrupted access across the railway line.
- 7.3.9 The submitted Design and Access Statement demonstrates that the scheme has been designed to ensure appropriate access is made for all users.
- 7.3.10 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy GP4 of the Wansbeck District Local Plan.

#### **Policy GP5: Landscape Character**

- 7.3.11 Policy GP5 states that development must respect the character of the District's landscape. Proposals will be assessed in terms of:
- The siting, scale and design of buildings and materials; and
  - The effect on distant views
- 7.3.12 The proposed underpass at Hospital has been designed based on a sound understanding of the physical constraints of the site, to ensure that it can be considered to appropriately sit within its landscape setting. Further details in this regard can be found within the Landscape Appraisal in Chapter 4 of this document.
- 7.3.13 The proposed underpass at Hospital has been designed based on a detailed understanding and appraisal of those features of the local area that contribute to landscape character and distinctiveness, and through identifying and appraising the visual impact on different receptors from various viewpoints. It is anticipated that precise details of materials to be used in the construction of the development will be agreed through the subsequent discharge of planning conditions attached to a planning permission.

- 7.3.14 It should also be noted that the entire site is located within the defined settlement boundary, therefore the impact on the open countryside is negligible.
- 7.3.15 It is considered that the proposed station would not have a significant adverse impact on the local landscape.
- 7.3.16 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy GP5 of the Wansbeck District Local Plan.

**Policy GP6: Trees and hedgerows**

- 7.3.17 Policy GP6 states that the authority will seek to protect trees, woodlands and hedgerows in the District and will encourage new planting, particularly of native species. Development which would result in the loss of healthy trees which make an important contribution to the quality of the environment will not be permitted unless there are overriding social or economic benefits to the community and compensatory off-site provision of landscape infrastructure is made.
- 7.3.18 The design of the scheme has been informed by a survey of the trees: within, adjacent to, and nearby to the site, and by the preparation of an Arboricultural Impact Assessment. These documents are submitted with the application.
- 7.3.19 The design of the scheme has been informed by the Landscape Appraisal of the site and surroundings. This document is submitted with the application.
- 7.3.20 These surveys, assessments and appraisals have been used to guide the proposals and in particular to guide the; removal of trees and shrubs from within the site, and the provision of a soft landscaping scheme. The application is supported by an indicative landscaping scheme which seeks to retain and/or replace existing trees, wherever possible. An indication of the landscape proposals and the justification for vegetation removal are set out in the submitted landscaping scheme and arboricultural reports.
- 7.3.21 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy GP6 of the Wansbeck District Local Plan.

**Policy G13: Biodiversity and wildlife networks**

- 7.3.22 Policy G13 states that the value to biodiversity of all sites proposed for development will be considered when planning applications are determined whether or not they are designated sites. Particular importance will be attached to the protection of priority habitats and species in Wansbeck. Where proposals affect a habitat which contributes, or could potentially contribute, to a network of natural habitats the developer will be required to protect and enhance the network.
- 7.3.23 The proposed underpass at Hospital has been designed based on a sound understanding of the ecological and wider environmental sensitivity of the site and adjacent land. The planning application is supported by appropriate ecological and other assessments which

demonstrate that the scheme will not adversely impact on biodiversity and wildlife networks; opportunities for habitat and landscaping improvement, including appropriate mitigation, are to be provided. It is anticipated that the scheme will incorporate measures to improve the biodiversity value of the site, including sensitive landscaping proposals and the installation of bat and bird boxes. The project would be content to accept suitably worded conditions for further details regarding such measures.

- 7.3.24 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy G13 of the Wansbeck District Local Plan.

**Policy GP22: Flood risk and erosion**

- 7.3.25 Policy GP22 states that developers are required to consider the risk to their development from flooding and erosion and to consider any possible effect of their development on flood risk or erosion elsewhere. Development in areas of flood risk will not be permitted unless a flood risk assessment has been carried out and it can be demonstrated that:

- There is no reasonable alternative development option available which would involve no risk or a lower risk of flooding; and
- The development does not increase the risk of flooding elsewhere; and
- Satisfactory protection measures can be carried out at the expense of the developer and maintained for the lifetime of the development

- 7.3.26 The application site is identified as being located within Flood Zone 1 and is therefore at low risk of flooding. The proposed underpass at Hospital has been designed based on a sound understanding of the flood risk pertaining to the site from all sources. The scheme includes appropriate drainage to manage and mitigate the risk of flooding. It should be noted that the application is accompanied by details of proposed drainage, but no site-specific Flood Risk Assessment is submitted, as agreed with officers through pre-application discussions.

- 7.3.27 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy GP22 of the Wansbeck District Local Plan.

**Policy GP23: Pollution and nuisance**

- 7.3.28 Policy GP23 states that when determining planning applications, the authority will consider whether a proposed development has the potential to cause pollution or nuisance. Planning permission will not be granted for development liable to cause significant harm to either:

- Human health and safety
- The amenity of local residents and other land users
- The quality and enjoyment of all aspects of the environment

- 7.3.29 The proposed underpass at Hospital has been designed to accord with all relevant legislation, policies, standards and guidance. This has included detailed pre-application discussions with statutory consultees and key stakeholders to assure the safety credentials of the submitted scheme. It is anticipated that any construction-phase impacts will be appropriately managed through the submission of a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP), which is expected to be required to be imposed as a condition on a planning permission for the development.
- 7.3.30 In summary, the proposed development is considered to appropriately consider pollution control issues and appropriate mitigation measures are to be incorporated to manage any pollution or contamination issues arising as a result of the scheme.

#### **Policy GP25: Noise**

- 7.3.31 Policy GP25 states that when determining planning applications, the authority will consider the levels and characteristics of any noise which may be generated as a result of permitting the development. The likely impact will be assessed in terms of the following:
- Any disturbance to people living in the area; and
  - Any disturbance to other noise-sensitive uses such as hospitals, schools, colleges, offices and community buildings; and
  - Any effect on people's enjoyment of the outdoor environment including gardens, parks, the coast and the countryside; and
  - Any disturbance to wildlife or livestock
- 7.3.32 The proposed development has been designed based on a sound understanding of the site and adjacent land uses. The railway is currently used by freight trains and therefore a level of operational rail noise is already experienced at this location.
- 7.3.33 It is considered that there will be noise impacts during the construction and operational phases of the development; appropriate mitigation is proposed to be implemented to ensure noise impacts are minimised wherever possible.
- 7.3.34 It is anticipated that any construction-phase impacts will be appropriately managed through the submission of a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP), which is expected to be required to be imposed as a condition on a planning permission for the development.
- 7.3.35 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy GP25 of the Wansbeck District Local Plan.

#### **Policy GP29: Land contamination**

- 7.3.36 Policy GP29 states that where there is reason to suspect that land is affected by contamination, applicants for planning permission will be required to submit a report of a

desk study of previous uses of the site and their potential for contamination. Unless the study clearly demonstrates that the risk to the proposed uses is acceptable, furthermore detailed investigations will be required before the application is determined to assess the risks and identify and appraise the options for remediation.

- 7.3.37 Development will only be permitted if sustainable and feasible remediation solutions are adopted to secure the removal of unacceptable risk and make the site suitable for its new use.
- 7.3.38 The proposed underpass has been designed based on a sound understanding of the physical and environmental constraints of the site, including pollution and land contamination. The submitted Phase I Geo-environmental Assessment demonstrates that the proposed development incorporates appropriate mitigation to safeguard the site and adjacent land from significant adverse contamination issues.
- 7.3.39 In summary, the proposed development is considered to appropriately consider land contamination issues and appropriate mitigation measures are to be incorporated to manage any pollution or contamination issues arising as a result of the scheme.
- 7.3.40 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy GP29 of the Wansbeck District Local Plan.

#### **Policy GP30: Visual Impact**

- 7.3.41 Policy GP30 states that all proposed development will be assessed in terms of its visual impact. Developments which in visual terms would cause significant harm to the character or quality of the surrounding environment will be refused.
- 7.3.42 The proposed underpass has been designed based on a sound understanding of the physical constraints of the site, to ensure that it can be considered to appropriately sit within its landscape setting and to ensure that the scheme does not adversely impact on the visual amenity of the area.
- 7.3.43 The proposed underpass has been designed based on a detailed understanding and appraisal of those features of the local area that contribute to landscape character and distinctiveness, and through identifying and appraising the visual impact on different receptors from various viewpoints.
- 7.3.44 It should also be noted that the entire site is located within the defined settlement boundary, therefore the impact on the open countryside is considered to be negligible.
- 7.3.45 It is considered that the proposed station would not have a significant adverse impact on the local landscape character or the visual amenity of the local area.
- 7.3.46 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy GP30 of the Wansbeck District Local Plan.

### **Policy GP31: Urban Design**

7.3.47 Policy GP31 states that when considering any proposed development the authority will require high standards of urban design to:

- Promote character in townscape and landscape and establish local identity; and
- Clearly define public and private spaces; and
- Encourage accessibility; and
- Make places with a clear image that is easy to understand, by providing recognisable routes, intersections and landmarks; and
- Promote diversity and choice through a mix of compatible developments and uses that work together to create viable places that respond to local needs.

7.3.48 The proposed underpass has been designed based on a detailed understanding of the existing and historic site conditions. This includes identifying the needs of all anticipated future users of the underpass.

7.3.49 It is also informed by and advice of all stakeholders including Network Rail, the local planning authority, the local highway authority, residents, businesses and local politicians.

7.3.50 The submitted Design and Access Statement provides further details demonstrating that the submitted scheme is based on a clear understanding of the character and local distinctiveness of the area and confirms that the proposed underpass would make a positive contribution to place-making and encourage accessibility.

7.3.51 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy GP31 of the Wansbeck District Local Plan.

### **Policy GP32: Landscaping and the Public Realm**

7.3.52 Policy GP32 states that developers are required to incorporate a high standard of landscape treatment in their developments. When submitting planning applications, developers will be required to demonstrate that:

- Any existing landscape features of value including trees, shrubs, hedgerows and ponds, will be retained, protected and used to advantage as part of the development; and
- New landscape features will be introduced which enhance the visual quality of the development, reduce its impact and provide habitat for the district's wildlife; and
- New landscape features to be introduced will be appropriate to the use and character of the development and its location; and

- Opportunities to create new public spaces and improve existing ones have been considered

7.3.53 The proposed underpass has been designed based on a sound understanding of the physical constraints of the site, to ensure that it can be considered to appropriately sit within its landscape setting. The application is supported by various landscape and visual impact assessments which confirm that the scheme would not have a significant adverse impact on the wider landscape.

7.3.54 The proposed underpass has been designed based on a detailed understanding and appraisal of those features of the local area that contribute to landscape character and distinctiveness, and through identifying and appraising the visual impact on different receptors from various viewpoints.

7.3.55 It is considered that the proposed underpass would not have a significant adverse impact on the local landscape.

7.3.56 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy GP32 of the Wansbeck District Local Plan.

#### **Policy GP35: Crime Prevention**

7.3.57 Policy GP35 states that development proposals will be expected to have regard to the objectives of 'planning out crime' through the incorporation of measures such as:

- Promotion of schemes that increase the range of activities that maximise the opportunities for surveillance
- Maximising the amount of defensible space which is controlled, or perceived to be controlled, by occupiers
- A high standard of street lighting

7.3.58 The proposed underpass has been designed to seek to 'design out' crime.

7.3.59 The proposed layout, landscaping, lighting and CCTV camera provision have evolved to take account of discussions with key stakeholders, to ensure that opportunities are taken to maximise the safety of the station for all users.

7.3.60 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy GP35 of the Wansbeck District Local Plan.

#### **Policy T1: Ashington, Blyth and Tyne Rail Line**

7.3.61 Policy T1 states that the re-introduction of passenger services on the rail line between Newcastle and Ashington will be supported and promoted. Land which may be required for associated facilities such as stations, bus stops and car parks will be safeguarded.

7.3.62 The proposed underpass is an integral component, and proposed to be delivered as part of, the Northumberland Line scheme. The scheme is therefore specifically supported by Policy T1. The delivery of the new underpass will support and facilitate the council's ambitions for the re-introduction of passenger services on the Ashington, Blyth and Tyne Line.

7.3.63 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy T1 of the Wansbeck District Local Plan.

#### **Policy T3: Provision for cyclists**

7.3.64 Policy T3 states that improved facilities for cyclists in the District will be sought. The proposed underpass seeks to provides a betterment on the existing level crossing arrangement. The development provides safe and convenient across the railway line, with no risk of accidents on the railway line. The development also provides a segregated route from the local road network therefore reducing the risk of conflict with other road users.

7.3.65 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy T3 of the Wansbeck District Local Plan.

#### **Policy T4: Provision for walking**

7.3.66 Policy T4 states that measures to assist and encourage walking will be sought including the development of a comprehensive network of footpaths and footways. The underpass is well used by unsupervised school children. The proposed underpass seeks to provide a betterment on the existing level crossing arrangement by providing a much safer and convenient across the railway line, with no risk of accidents on the railway line. The development also provides a segregated route from the local road network therefore reducing the risk of conflict with other road users.

7.3.67 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy T4 of the Wansbeck District Local Plan.

#### **Policy T5: Access for people with reduced mobility**

7.3.68 Policy T5 states that an environment which is accessible to all will be sought. The existing footpath is narrow and includes users crossing over an operational railway line. The underpass is proposed to have an internal width of 5 metres and therefore seeks to provide a betterment on the existing level crossing arrangement. The underpass will be safer and more convenient to use and will therefore be more accessible for persons with reduced mobility.

7.3.69 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy T5 of the Wansbeck District Local Plan.



## **7.4 Accordance with Northumberland Local Plan Regulation 19 Publication Draft (May 2019)**

7.4.1 The NPPF advises at paragraph 48 that weight may also be given to the policies in emerging plans depending on the stage of preparation of the plan, the extent to which emerging policy aligns with the NPPF and the extent of unresolved objections to the emerging plan. The latest version of the Northumberland Local Plan was submitted to the Secretary of State for examination in May 2019 and examination took place in late 2021. A consultation on the Schedule of Proposed Main Modifications is currently open until the 4th August 2021. It is therefore considered that relevant policies can be given some weight presently and can be given increasing weight as the Plan moves towards adoption.

7.4.2 The relevant policies of the emerging Northumberland Local Plan that pertain to the scheme which is the subject of this planning application are identified as follows:

### **Policy STP1: Spatial Strategy**

7.4.3 Policy STP1 states that sustainable development will be supported within, or immediately adjacent to, the built-up form of Main Towns, Service Centres and Service Villages without defined settlement boundaries, will be supported, if it is commensurate with size of the settlement, and it can be demonstrated that it does not adversely impact upon the character of the settlement.

7.4.4 The proposed underpass forms an integral component of the scheme which proposes the re-introduction of passenger services on the Northumberland Line. The Northumberland Line scheme is a strategic priority of both national and local government and could therefore reasonably be considered to constitute 'essential infrastructure'.

7.4.5 The proposed underpass to replace the existing level crossing at Hospital forms an integral component of the scheme which proposes the re-introduction of passenger services on the Northumberland Line. The re-introduction of passengers services on the Northumberland Line is a strategic priority for the council as set out in the Plan. The proposed underpass seeks improve the safety of users of existing level crossing, as the risk of accidents will increase as a consequence of the increase in train movements on the railway line. It is therefore considered that the proposed underpass supports the council's wider ambitions for the re-introduction of passenger services on the Northumberland Line.

7.4.6 Furthermore, the development is located within the defined settlement boundary. The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy STP1 of the emerging Northumberland Local Plan.

### **Policy STP2: Presumption in favour of Sustainable Development**

7.4.7 Policy STP2 states that when considering development proposals, the Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). It will always work pro-actively

with applicants to seek to find solutions that mean proposals that improve the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area can be approved wherever possible.

- 7.4.8 The proposed underpass at Hospital, given its nature, is considered to represent a sustainable development. The development will provide safe and convenient access to and encourage use of the local Public Right of Way network. The proposed development will facilitate pedestrian flows in and around Ashington town centre.
- 7.4.9 In summary, the proposed underpass is considered to represent a sustainable development. Accordingly, it is considered the local planning authority ought to take a positive approach to the consideration and determination of this planning application.
- 7.4.1 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy STP2 of the emerging Northumberland Local Plan.

#### **Policy STP5: Health and wellbeing**

- 7.4.2 Policy STP5 states that development which promotes, supports and enhances the health and wellbeing of communities, residents, workers and visitors will be supported. Development proposals will be required to demonstrate that they:
- are safe, comfortable, inclusive and attractive and prioritise pedestrian and cycle movement;
  - provide access to a range of facilities including public transport, health, education, social care, green spaces, sport, play and leisure facilities
- 7.4.3 The proposed underpass has been designed to prioritise pedestrian and cycle movements by providing safer mobility across the railway line. The proposed arrangement is much safer for users than the existing level crossing. Furthermore the underpass will be more accessible for persons of limited mobility than the existing arrangement
- 7.4.4 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy STP5 of the emerging Northumberland Local Plan.

#### **Policy QOP1: Design Principles**

- 7.4.5 Policy QOP1 states that in determining planning applications, design will be assessed against the following design principles, in accordance with the Northumberland Design Guide. Proposals will be supported where design:
- Makes a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness and contributes to a positive relationship between built and natural features, including landform and topography;
  - Facilitates an inclusive, comfortable, user-friendly and legible environment;
  - Supports health and wellbeing and enhances quality of life

- 7.4.6 The proposed underpass at Hospital has been designed based on a detailed understanding of the existing and historic site conditions. This includes an appraisal of local features that contribute to local character and distinctiveness, and by identifying the needs of all anticipated future users of the railway station. It is also informed by and advice of all stakeholders including Network Rail, the local planning authority, the local highway authority, residents, businesses and local politicians.
- 7.4.7 The submitted Design and Access Statement provides further details demonstrating that the submitted scheme is based on a clear understanding of the character and local distinctiveness of the area and confirms that the proposed underpass would make a positive contribution to place-making and environmental improvement.
- 7.4.8 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy QOP1 of the emerging Northumberland Local Plan.

#### **Policy QOP2: Good Design and Amenity**

- 7.4.9 Policy QOP2 states that development will be required to provide a high standard of amenity for existing and future users of the development itself and preserve the amenity of those living in, working in or visiting the local area.
- 7.4.10 Development which would result in unacceptable adverse impacts on the amenity of neighbouring uses, in terms of both individual and cumulative impacts, will not be supported.
- 7.4.11 The design of the proposed underpass at Hospital has been informed by a detailed assessment of the potential impacts on the amenity of nearby and adjacent properties, and residents. The design has been based on a sound understanding of the site and adjacent land uses, and in ensuring that the scheme takes account of the amenity of neighbouring land uses etc. Careful consideration has been given to the impacts of the scheme on sensitive receptors, and proposals for mitigating adverse impacts form part of the submission.
- 7.4.12 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy QOP2 of the emerging Northumberland Local Plan.

#### **Policy QOP4: Landscaping and Trees**

- 7.4.13 Policy QOP4 states that where relevant, new development will be expected to incorporate well-designed landscaping and respond appropriately to any existing landscape features. Development proposals should ensure that:

Landscaping design is of a high quality, in accordance with the principles set out in Policy QOP 1;

- Existing features which contribute towards the character of the area, or amenity, are retained wherever possible and sympathetically incorporated into the overall design of the scheme;

- Any hard or soft landscaping is appropriate, functional and well-integrated into the design of the development;
- Trees, and other spaces and features that provide green and blue infrastructure, are preserved, enhanced and introduced into the landscaping scheme wherever possible;

7.4.14 The proposed underpass at Hospital is supported by a landscape scheme which seeks to retain vegetation where possible. Vegetation removal will be required in order to facilitate the installation of the proposed underpass.

7.4.15 Precise details of the landscape proposals and the justification for vegetation removal are set out in the submitted landscaping scheme and arboricultural assessment reports.

7.4.16 The design of the scheme has been informed by a survey of the trees: within, adjacent to, and nearby to the site, and by the preparation of an Arboricultural Impact Assessment. These documents are submitted with the application.

7.4.17 The design of the scheme has been informed by the Landscape Appraisal of the site and surroundings. This document is submitted with the application.

7.4.18 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy QOP4 of the emerging Northumberland Local Plan.

#### **Policy QOP6: Delivering well-designed places**

7.4.19 Policy QOP6 states that proposals are expected to meet the local design expectations set out in design policies within the Plan, the Northumberland Design Guide, and any other design guidance. Proposals are expected to respond to any character assessments that form part of or support the Plan.

7.4.20 The proposed underpass at Hospital has been designed based on a sound understanding of the defining characteristics of the site and the adjacent land uses. The scheme has evolved based on discussions with local authority officers and other key stakeholders to ensure the design of the scheme suitably reflects the wider ambitions of those stakeholders.

7.4.21 The proposed underpass at Hospital is supported by a Design and Access Statement which provides a summary of the design evolution process. The Design and Access Statement should be read in conjunction with this Planning Statement and the submitted Statement of Community Engagement to provide a comprehensive overview of how the submitted scheme has evolved to take account of the observations, guidance and comments received from the local planning authority and other key stakeholders.

7.4.22 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy QOP6 of the emerging Northumberland Local Plan.

### **Policy TRA1: Promoting sustainable connections**

7.4.23 Policy TRA1 states that the council will support development that:

- Promotes a spatial distribution which creates accessible development, reduces the need to travel by car, and maximises the use of sustainable modes of transport;
- Promotes good design principles in respect of the permeability, connectivity and legibility of buildings and public spaces; and inclusive access;
- Promotes sustainable transport choices, including supporting, providing and connecting to networks for walking, cycling and public transport; and infrastructure that supports the use of low and ultra low emission vehicles;
- Ensures delivery of cycle parking and supporting infrastructure;
- Protects, enhances and supports public rights of way;
- Supports the delivery of reliable, safe and efficient transport networks, in partnership with other organisations, service providers and developers;
- Requires development to be designed to enable charging of plug-in and other ultra low emission vehicles in safe, accessible, convenient locations; and
- Requires development proposals which generate significant amounts of movements to be supported by a Transport Assessment/ Transport Statement, and Travel Plans, and where appropriate, delivery/servicing plans.

7.4.24 The proposed underpass at Hospital is an integral part of the proposed re-introduction of passenger services on the Northumberland Line. The scheme includes the provision of measures to encourage safe and convenient access across the railway, on the local Public Right of Way network, and in and around the town of Ashington.

7.4.25 In summary, the proposed underpass at Hospital is anticipated to encourage access to, and use of, the local Public Right of Way network.

7.4.26 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy TRA1 of the emerging Northumberland Local Plan.

### **Policy TRA5: Rail transport and safeguarding facilities**

7.4.27 Policy TRA5 states that development which would prevent the reintroduction of passenger rail services on the Northumberland Line along with associated stations, facilities and access to them from adjacent highways, and continued rail freight use of the Northumberland Line, its associated branch lines (including the branch line from Bedlington to Morpeth via Choppington, the Butterwell line north of Ashington and the line from Woodhorn to Newbiggin-by-the-Sea) and supporting infrastructure will not be supported.

7.4.28 Sites for stations have been identified and land will be safeguarded at the following locations:

- a. Woodhorn
- b. Ashington
- c. Bedlington Station
- d. Blyth Bebside
- e. South Newsham
- f. Seaton Delaval
- g. Seghill

7.4.29 The proposed underpass at Hospital is an integral component, and proposed to be delivered as part of, the Northumberland Line scheme. The scheme is therefore specifically supported by Policy TRA5. The delivery of the new station will support and facilitate the council's ambitions for the re-introduction of passenger services on the Ashington, Blyth and Tyne Line.

7.4.30 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy TRA5 of the emerging Northumberland Local Plan.

**Policy ENVI: Approaches to assessing the impact of development on the natural, historic and built environment**

7.4.31 Policy ENVI states that the character and significance of Northumberland's distinctive and valued natural, historic and built environments, will be conserved, protected and enhanced by:

7.4.32 Giving appropriate weight to the statutory purposes and special qualities of the hierarchy of international, national and local designated and non-designated nature and historic conservation assets or sites and their settings;

7.4.33 Protecting Northumberland's most important landscapes and applying a character-based approach to, as appropriate, manage, protect or plan landscape across the whole County.

7.4.34 The proposed underpass at Hospital has been designed based on a sound understanding of the site and its context, including consideration of the impacts on adjacent land uses. The planning application is supported by detailed surveys and assessments which consider the likely effect of the scheme on natural, historic and built environment receptors, confirming that the scheme would not have a significant adverse impact on those receptors. The scheme will improve access to Northumberland's distinctive and values natural, historic and built environments, helping to ensure they can continue to be continued by this and future

generations, which will assist in the conservation, protection and enhancement of such assets.

- 7.4.35 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy ENVI of the emerging Northumberland Local Plan.

**Policy ENV2: Biodiversity and geodiversity**

- 7.4.36 Policy ENV2 states that development proposals should minimize the impacts on biodiversity and geodiversity and net gains should be secured.
- 7.4.37 The proposed underpass at Hospital has been designed based on a sound understanding of the ecological and wider environmental sensitivity of the site and adjacent land. The planning application is supported by appropriate ecological and other assessments which demonstrate that the scheme will not adversely impact on biodiversity and wildlife networks; opportunities for habitat and landscaping improvement, including appropriate mitigation, are to be provided. It is anticipated that the scheme will incorporate measures to improve the biodiversity value of the site, including sensitive landscaping proposals and the installation of bat and bird boxes. The project would be content to accept suitably worded conditions for further details regarding such measures.
- 7.4.38 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy ENV2 of the emerging Northumberland Local Plan.

**Policy POL1: Unstable and contaminated land**

- 7.4.39 Policy POL1 states that development proposals will be supported where it can be demonstrated that unacceptable risks from land instability and contamination will be prevented and that measures can be taken to effectively mitigate the impacts.
- 7.4.40 The proposed underpass at Hospital is supported by various ground investigations and contaminated land assessments, which are submitted in support of the planning application, to demonstrate that land instability and contamination issues will be appropriately mitigated and managed as part of the proposed development.
- 7.4.41 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy POL1 of the emerging Northumberland Local Plan.

## **7.5 Accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework**

- 7.5.1 The NPPF states at paragraph 7 that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. There are three interdependent, overarching objectives that the planning system must perform in order to contribute to sustainable development:
- an economic objective;

- a social objective; and
- an environmental objective

7.5.2 The proposed underpass at Hospital would deliver economic social and environmental benefits and thereby supports the planning system in fulfilling its fundamental purpose: to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development.

7.5.3 The proposed underpass is part of a sustainable transport project which will deliver a range of economic, social and environmental benefits; supporting the fundamental objectives of the planning system as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework. The scheme can therefore be considered to represent a sustainable development. The NPPF holds a presumption in favour of sustainable development, for decision-taking this means approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay.

### **Promoting Sustainable Transport**

7.5.4 An integral component in delivering sustainable development and achieving wider sustainability and health objectives is the promotion of sustainable development, as set out in Section 9 of the Framework. This section states that applications for development should:

- give priority first to pedestrian and cycle movements, both within the scheme and with neighbouring areas; and second – so far as possible – to facilitating access to high quality public transport, with layouts that maximise the catchment area for bus or other public transport services, and appropriate facilities that encourage public transport use;
- address the needs of people with disabilities and reduced mobility in relation to all modes of transport;
- create places that are safe, secure and attractive – which minimise the scope for conflicts between pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles, avoid unnecessary street clutter, and respond to local character and design standards;
- allow for the efficient delivery of goods, and access by service and emergency vehicles; and
- be designed to enable charging of plug-in and other ultra-low emission vehicles in safe, accessible and convenient locations

7.5.5 The proposed development has given due regard to the above criteria; the scheme has been designed to encourage pedestrian and cycle movements both within the site and adjacent to the site. The scheme will provide safe and convenient access across the railway to the local Public Right of Way network.



- 7.5.6 The proposed layout, lighting, CCTV camera provision and landscaping proposals have been designed to seek to 'design out' crime wherever possible. The proposed cycle parking provision and landscaping are based on the detailed responses received from residents, businesses, local authority officers, local politicians and other stakeholders in the period prior to submission of this planning application.
- 7.5.7 The development is therefore considered to accord with the aims of objectives of section 9 of the NPPF, given that the proposed development by its very nature is promoting access to and use of sustainable modes of transport.
- 7.5.8 It should also be noted that paragraph 109 of the Framework states:
- 7.5.9 "Development should only be prevented or refused on highway grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe."
- 7.5.10 Consequently, it is considered there are no highway grounds that should be used to seek to prevent or refuse the planning application.
- 7.5.11 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Section 9 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

#### **Achieving well-designed places**

- 7.5.12 The NPPF states at paragraph 124 that:
- 7.5.13 "The creation of high quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities. Being clear about design expectations, and how these will be tested, is essential for achieving this. So too is effective engagement between applicants, communities, local planning authorities and other interests throughout the process."
- 7.5.14 The proposed underpass at Hospital has been designed based on a sound understanding of both the historic and existing conditions of the site, the surrounding area and the aspirations of Network Rail, the local planning authority, the local highway authority and other key stakeholders. The scheme has been finessed to take account of comments and observations from residents and local politicians to the preliminary designs which were the subject of an extensive public engagement campaign.
- 7.5.15 The proposed layout, scale, height and extent of the proposed development has been informed based on an understanding of the requirements of 21st Century railway infrastructure, together with an understanding of the context of the site to ensure that the underpass design reinforces the local character and distinctiveness of the site through integration with existing pedestrian, cycle and vehicular routes and being respectful to adjacent land uses.

- 7.5.16 The Design and Access Statement which is submitted in support of this planning application demonstrates that a detailed appraisal of different design options was undertaken to understand the implications of various layouts and access arrangements, culminating in the submitted scheme which is considered to present the optimum viable layout within the budget and other constraints for the scheme.
- 7.5.17 In summary, the proposed underpass is considered to promote high levels of sustainability through encouraging safe and convenient access to the local Public Right of Way network and will help raise the standard of design more generally in this area, whilst ensuring coherence with the overall form and layout of the surrounding area, in accordance with paragraph 131. Accordingly, great weight should be given to the designs which promote high levels of sustainability. The proposed development is therefore considered to accord with the aims and objectives of Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

## 8 Material Considerations

### 8.1 Introduction

- 8.1.1 Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 8.1.2 A material consideration is a matter which should be taken into account in deciding a planning application, or on an appeal against a planning decision. There is no legal definition to prescribe those matters which have the potential to constitute 'material planning considerations'. Case law has held that any consideration that relates to the use and development of land is capable of being a material planning consideration. It is for the decision-maker to determine the weight to be apportioned to each of the considerations.
- 8.1.3 The purpose of this section is therefore to identify and summarise those other policy and guidance documents that do not form part of the statutory development plan that are of particular relevance to the determination of this planning application.

### 8.2 National Design Guide (2019)

- 8.2.1 Published in October 2019, the National Design Guide seeks to provide guidance to assist in the delivery of beautiful, enduring and successful places.
- 8.2.2 The National Design Guide recognises the importance of good design. To this end, the document sets out ten characteristics which ought to be used to assess the design credentials of development. The ten characteristics identified are said to contribute towards the cross-cutting themes for good design set out in the NPPF. The ten characteristics are:
- Context – enhances the surroundings.
  - Identity – attractive and distinctive.
  - Built form – a coherent pattern of development.
  - Movement – accessible and easy to move around.
  - Nature – enhanced and optimised.
  - Public spaces – safe, social and inclusive.
  - Uses – mixed and integrated.
  - Homes and buildings – functional, healthy and sustainable.
  - Resources – efficient and resilient.

- Lifespan – made to last.

8.2.3 The submitted Design and Access Statement demonstrates that the scheme has evolved to take account of the observations, guidance and comments received from the local planning authority officers, together with other key stakeholders including Network Rail. It is considered that the principles set out in the National Design Guide reinforce those principles set out in those design-specific policies contained within the development plan, which the submitted scheme is considered to accord with.

8.2.4 It is therefore considered that the National Design Guide can be given moderate weight in the determination of this planning application. The scheme is considered to represent a sustainable design that suitably takes account of the site context. It is considered that further details that pertain to design considerations, including external material finishes, can be the subject of suitably worded conditions on a planning permission for the scheme.

### **8.3 Northumberland Local Transport Plan (LTP3) (2011)**

8.3.1 The Northumberland Local Transport Plan 2011 – 2026 was adopted on 4th April 2011 as an interim strategy which will be refreshed following the council's adoption of the Northumberland Sustainable Community Strategy and the Northumberland Local Plan.

8.3.2 The LTP3 identifies at paragraph 3.68 that:

8.3.3 “Of particular issue to South East Northumberland is the time it takes to travel into the neighbouring authorities of Tyne & Wear, a key source of employment for residents of Northumberland, and the cost associated with these journeys. For example, public transport journey times from Blyth and Ashington to Newcastle City Centre can take in excess of 40 minutes with a weekly bus pass costing between £15 and £20.”

8.3.4 To address such issues, the Northumberland LTP3 recognises that rail travel will have an increasingly important role in tackling congestion and supporting Northumberland's sustainable economic growth and prosperity.

8.3.5 Paragraph 6.29 of the LTP3 states that:

8.3.6 “The County Council is committed to addressing rail issues in Northumberland through improved partnership working with a wide range of stakeholders. These include rail passengers and representative organisations, the Department for Transport, local authorities and regional partners, Network Rail, rail operators and regulatory bodies.”

8.3.7 Paragraph 6.33 also notes that the lack of available car parking at stations severely restricts passenger growth and demand for rail travel.

8.3.8 Paragraph 6.36 states that re-opening of the Ashington, Blyth and Tyne line to passenger services is one of the principal elements of the new rail strategy to be implemented in partnership with Network Rail and local rail operators over the period of the third LTP.

- 8.3.9 The scheme which is the subject of this application for planning permission would directly support the aims of the LTP3, to improve and encourage use of rails services in order to assist in reducing the economic, social and environmental impacts resulting from the highway congestion and journey time delays across South East Northumberland.
- 8.3.10 It is therefore considered that the Northumberland Local Transport Plan (LTP3) can be given substantial weight in the determination of this planning application. The scheme is considered to directly support the delivery of a scheme which is identified as a strategic transport priority for the council.

## **8.4 North East Combined Authority Transport Manifesto (2016)**

- 8.4.1 The North East Combined Authority was established in April 2014 and brought together the seven councils which serve County Durham, Gateshead, Newcastle, North Tyneside, Northumberland, South Tyneside and Sunderland. The ambition of NECA is to create the best possible conditions for growth in jobs, investment and living standards, making the North East an excellent place to live and work.
- 8.4.2 NECA recognises that effective transport networks are key to economic growth and opportunity for all. This includes links with the North East and connectivity with the rest of the UK, Europe and the rest of the world. The North East Combined Authority's ambition, as set out in its Transport Manifesto, is to provide affordable, attractive, reliable, safe, healthy transport choices for businesses, residents and visitors while enhancing the environment.
- 8.4.3 The NECA's Transport Manifesto supports the opening of new stations on existing rail lines, including the upgrading of freight-only sections for passenger use.
- 8.4.4 The scheme which is the subject of this application for planning permission would directly support the aims of the NECA's Transport Manifesto, to re-introduce passenger services on an existing freight line and to improve the accessibility and connectivity of South East Northumberland to the wider North East.
- 8.4.5 It is therefore considered that the NECA Transport Manifesto can be given moderate weight in the determination of this planning application. The scheme is considered to directly support the delivery of a scheme which is identified as a strategic transport priority for the North East Combined Authority.

## **8.5 Transport for the North Strategic Transport Plan (2019)**

- 8.5.1 Transport for the North (TfN) is the first statutory sub-national transport body in the United Kingdom. It was formed in 2018 to make the case for strategic transport improvements across the North of England. As a partnership, TfN brings the North's local transport authorities together with Network Rail, Highways England and HS2 Ltd and Central Government, to facilitate discussions on the transport infrastructure needed to drive transformational growth and rebalance the UK economy.

- 8.5.2 TfN's Strategic Transport Plan specifically supports the re-instatement of passenger services on the Northumberland Line, between Ashington and Blyth; this rail intervention is prioritised by TfN in the shorter term, in the context of the Department for Transport's Rail Network Enhancements Pipeline process.
- 8.5.3 The scheme which is the subject of this application for planning permission would directly support the aims of the TfN Strategic Transport Plan, to re-introduce passenger services on the Northumberland Line.
- 8.5.4 It is therefore considered that the TfN Strategic Transport Plan can be given moderate weight in the determination of this planning application. The scheme is considered to directly support the delivery of a scheme which is identified as a strategic transport priority for the Transport for the North.

## **8.6 The Road to Zero Strategy (2018)**

- 8.6.1 Whilst there are local policies pertaining to climate change within the Northumberland Local Plan, the climate crisis and the measures set out by Government in the 'Road to Zero: Next steps towards cleaner road transport and delivering our Industrial Strategy' is a material consideration in the determination of this planning application.
- 8.6.2 The Strategy states that in 2016, road transport accounted for 91% of UK greenhouse gas emissions in transport<sup>3</sup>.
- 8.6.3 The amount CO2 emissions per passenger per train is 14 grams. In contrast, a private car can produce 158 grams per passenger<sup>4</sup>. As such, a modal shift to public transport has the potential to dramatically decrease our national energy consumption.
- 8.6.4 The scheme which is the subject of this application for planning permission would support the aims of the 'Road to Zero' strategy, by seeking to establish a viable alternative to the private car that may encourage a modal shift from car to rail travel. Such a modal shift would likely result in air quality.
- 8.6.5 It is therefore considered that the 'Road to Zero' strategy can be given moderate weight in the determination of this planning application. The scheme is considered to support the Government's ambitions to move toward zero emissions.

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<sup>3</sup> Page 28 The Road to Zero: Next steps towards cleaner road transport and delivering our Industrial Strategy (2018)

<sup>4</sup> P79 Transport for the North Strategic Transport Plan 2019

## **8.7 Northumberland Economic Strategy (2018)**

8.7.1 The Northumberland Economy Strategy 2019 – 2024 was formally approved by the council's cabinet in December 2018. The council's ambition as set out in the strategy is to deliver inclusive, industrial growth to support a more productive, prosperous economy.

8.7.2 Priority 5 of the Economic Strategy states that one of the key deliverables to better connect the county is:

“Invest in high quality passenger transport including the reopening of the Northumberland to Newcastle rail line to passengers.”

8.7.3 The scheme which is the subject of this application for planning permission would directly support the aims of the Northumberland Economic Strategy, to reopen the Northumberland Line to passenger services.

8.7.4 It is therefore considered that the Northumberland Economic Strategy can be given substantial weight in the determination of this planning application. The scheme is considered to directly support the delivery of a scheme which is identified as a strategic economic priority for the council.

## **8.8 Nexus Metro and Local Rail Strategy (2016)**

8.8.1 The Nexus Metro and Local Rail Strategy, produced in conjunction with the North East Combined Authority, sets out the proposals for the improved integration between local rail and Metro services, and the potential to exploit under-used and disused railway assets and alignments across the North East region.

8.8.2 The Metro and Local Rail Strategy identifies that the restoration of passenger rail services to the Blyth, Bedlington and Ashington areas is a strategic priority for the NECA because of the significant regenerative benefits of the scheme.

8.8.3 The strategy identifies that Northumberland Park would provide an interchange station to enable easy access between rail, Metro and local bus services – given that park and ride facilities are already available at the station.

It is therefore considered that the Metro and Local Rail Strategy can be given moderate weight in the determination of this planning application. The scheme is considered to directly support the delivery of a scheme which is identified as a strategic priority for both NECA and Nexus.

## **8.9 Summary**

8.9.1 It is considered that there are various considerations that are material to the determination of this planning application. This section has sought to identify and apportion due weight to

each of those considerations, to assist the local planning authority in the determination of this application.

- 8.9.2 It is considered that there are no material considerations that would be sufficient either individually or in conjunction with other considerations that would preclude the granting of planning permission for the submitted scheme.



## 9 Case for Planning Permission to be granted

### 9.1 Introduction

9.1.1 This section brings together the information presented within this planning statement and provides a reasoned conclusion for the support of the application.

### 9.2 Accordance with local and national policies

9.2.1 This planning statement has demonstrated that the proposed underpass and overall scheme accords with the relevant national and local planning policies.

9.2.2 This statement has identified the many and various economic, social and environmental benefits that will be delivered as a result of the proposed development, including the potential for the development to act as a catalyst for further investment and wider regeneration within Ashington and South East Northumberland more widely.

9.2.3 The scheme represents a sustainable development; the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development and therefore this scheme should be supported.

9.2.4 The material considerations that pertain to the application have been identified. This has included demonstrating that there are no material considerations which would prevent the approval of the scheme.

9.2.5 It is requested that the scheme which is the subject of this planning application therefore be approved as submitted.

### 9.3 Benefits of the Scheme

9.3.1 This planning statement has demonstrated that the proposed underpass would accord with both local and national planning policies in terms of encouraging use of public transport through the provision of improved access to the railway network.

9.3.2 The proposed underpass at Hospital will deliver a range of economic, social and environmental benefits.

9.3.3 The economic benefits of the scheme include:

- The development, which forms part of the wider Northumberland Line scheme, will deliver the transport infrastructure which is required to attract inward investment, create additional employment opportunities, enhance economic vitality and encourage further growth in South East Northumberland.

- The development will create local employment opportunities (site operatives and supply chain) during the construction phase

9.3.4 The social benefits of the scheme include:

- The scheme will provide improved safe and convenient access to local amenities including educational institutions, and local Public Right of Way network for residents and local people
- The development forms part of the wider Northumberland Line scheme, which will improve the accessibility and mobility of residents and local people to employment and leisure opportunities across the North East more widely

9.3.5 The environmental benefits of the scheme include:

- Encouraging safe and convenient access to the local Public Right of Way network for residents and local people
- The development will be undertaken in accordance with a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) and a Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP), which will minimise the environmental impacts traditionally associated with urban redevelopment schemes.
- The development will implement a strategy for providing a structured approach to landscaping at the site; introducing native shrub and tree planting

9.3.6 The economic, social and environmental benefits associated with the development would be delivered jointly and simultaneously. As such, the proposed development can be considered to represent a sustainable development.

9.3.7 It is therefore requested that planning permission be granted for the scheme as submitted.

## 9.4 Conditions

9.4.1 Planning conditions, when used properly, can enhance the quality of development and enable development to proceed where it would otherwise have been necessary to refuse planning permission, by mitigating the adverse effects.

9.4.2 The objectives of planning are best served when the power to impose conditions on a planning permission is exercised in a way that is clearly seen to be fair, reasonable and practicable.

9.4.3 Section 70(1)(a) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 enables a local planning authority in granting planning permission to impose “*such conditions as they think fit.*” This power needs to be interpreted in the context of material considerations such as the National Planning Policy Framework, the supporting guidance on the use of planning conditions, and relevant case law.

- 9.4.4 A pre-commencement condition must not be imposed on the grant of permission without the written agreement of the applicant except in the circumstances set out in the Town and Country Planning (Pre-Commencement Conditions) Regulations 2018.
- 9.4.5 Paragraph 55 of the NPPF stipulates that planning conditions should be kept to a minimum, and use only where they satisfy the following tests:
1. necessary;
  2. relevant to planning;
  3. relevant to the development to be permitted;
  4. enforceable;
  5. precise; and
  6. reasonable in all other respects.
- 9.4.6 The plans, surveys, assessments and other information submitted in support of this planning application are considered to be sufficient to demonstrate to the satisfaction of the local planning authority that the scheme would accord with the relevant policies and that there are no material considerations that ought to preclude the granting of a planning permission for the scheme.
- 9.4.7 Although a considerable amount of information is submitted in support of the planning application, it is anticipated that additional details may be required to enable the local planning authority to be assured that the proposed mitigation will be sufficient to deliver the environmental and other benefits that pertain to the scheme. In these situations, to avoid potential prolongation of the determination period, the applicant would wish the local planning authority to attach a condition to a planning permission requiring the submission of a scheme with the additional details/ design information.
- 9.4.8 In line with the tests set out in paragraph 55, this section of the Planning Statement seeks to present an overview of those matters which could be the subject of conditions on a planning permission, in order to seek to avoid possible delays to determination of the planning application as a result of requests from the local planning authority for further information.
- 9.4.9 The applicants would respectfully request the opportunity to review the wording of any draft conditions which are to be imposed, prior to the granting of a permission.
- 9.4.10 The below table presents an overview of those matters which could be the subject of conditions on a planning permission.

Condition Subject	Relevant submitted information	Suggested scope of condition
Design	Proposed Plans, Design and Access Statement (within Planning Statement)	Submission of external materials samples, boundary treatment details,
Trees	Proposed Plans, Arboricultural Impact Assessment	Submission of arboricultural method statement, Tree protection plan
Landscaping	Proposed Plans, Landscape Overview (within Planning Statement)	Submission of finished site level details, hard and soft landscaping details, landscape management plan, signage details
Ecology	Ecological Impact Assessment, including Biodiversity Net Gain calculation	Submission of a scheme for biodiversity enhancement
Construction	Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan (within Planning Statement)	Submission of a construction environmental management plan
Contaminated Land	Preliminary Sources Study Report	Submission of a remediation scheme, verification report, unexpected contamination details if found
Highways	Proposed Plans	Submission of footpath/ public rights of way details.
Lighting	Proposed Plans, Design and Access Statement	Submission of lighting details
CCTV	Proposed Plans, Design and Access Statement	Submission of CCTV details

9.4.11 The above schedule has been drafted to include only those matters which could potentially be pre-commencement or pre-operational conditions and does not include those matters which are likely to be the subject of 'compliance' conditions.

9.4.12 It is respectfully requested that the precise wording of all conditions, including suitable trigger points for discharge where relevant, be agreed with the applicant prior to formal determination of this application for planning permission.

## 9.5 Additional information

9.5.1 In the event that additional information, clarification or further details concerning the proposed development are required during the determination period this will be provided upon request.

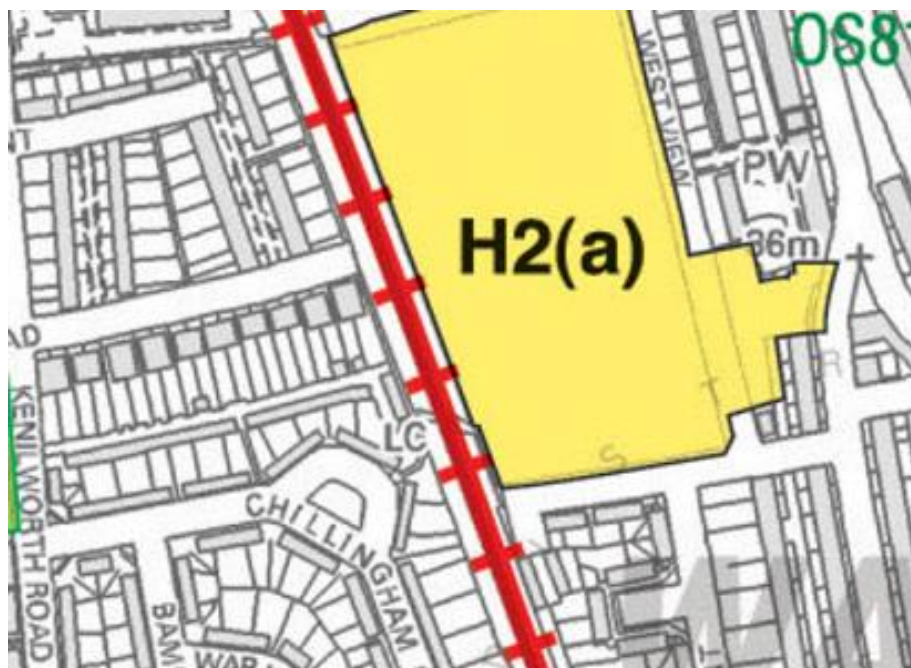
9.5.2 The applicants wish to continue to work closely with the local planning authority to ensure the application can be determined as expeditiously as possible. To this end, we are content to attend meetings as required by officers.

# Appendix A: Adopted and Emerging Local Plan Policies Map

## 9.6 Emerging Northumberland Local Plan policies map



## Adopted Wansbeck District Local Plan



## KEY

### General Policies & the Environment

	GP1 - Settlement Limit
	GP2 - Green Belt
	GP8 - Coastal Zone
	GP9 - Special Protection Areas for Birds & RAMSAR sites
	GP10 - Sites of Special Scientific Interest
	GP17 - Conservation Areas
	GP22 - Floodzone 2: Land assessed as having between a 1 in 100 and a 1 in 1000 annual probability of river flooding or between a 1 in 200 and 1 in 1000 annual probability of sea flooding in any year
	GP22 - Floodzone 3: Land assessed as having a 1 in 100 or greater annual probability of river flooding or a 1 in 200 or greater annual probability of sea flooding in any year

### Housing

	H1 - Sites with Planning Permission for Housing
	H2 - Housing Land Allocations

### Employment

	EMP1 - General Employment Area
	EMP3 - Cambois Zone of Economic Opportunity
	EMP3 - Reclamation, Landscaping and Possible Future Employment / Port Related Development
	EMP4 - Alcan Employment Zone
	EMP5 - Port Related Employment Area
	EMP6 - Earth Balance Sustainable Development Project

District Boundary

### Retailing & Town Centres

	RTC1 - Town Centres
	RTC5 - Primary Shopping Area
	RTC10 - Town Centre Opportunity Sites

### Transport

	T1 - Reintroduction of Passenger Rail Services
	T1 - Land Safeguarded for Station Facilities
	T9 - Road Improvements

### Recreation & Open Space

	REC1,2,3,4 - Safeguarded Parks and Open Spaces: Sites labelled according to Schedule REC1
	REC12 - Woodhorn Project

### Community Facilities & Infrastructure

	CF8,9,12 - Land Allocated for Community and/or Recreational Uses and/or Educational Uses
	CF10 - Mixed Use Development, Community Facilities and Housing
	CF11 - Land Allocated for Cemetery Purposes

Floodzone data produced by the Environment Agency March 2007

## Appendix M

Prior approval for Underbridge 35



**North Tyneside Council**

North Tyneside Council  
Planning, Quadrant  
The Silverlink North  
Cobalt Business Park  
North Tyneside  
NE27 0BY

Network Rail  
Tony Rivero  
Floor 3A/59 George  
Stephenson House  
Toft Green  
York  
YO1 6JT

**Application No: 21/01759/MISGDO**

Your Ref:

Date: 21 September 2021

This matter is being dealt with by:  
Aidan Dobinson Booth  
**Direct Line: 0191 643 6333**

Dear Sir/Madam

**TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990**

**Determination under Part 18(a) of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015**

**Proposal: Prior approval under Part 18, Class A to Schedule 2 of the General Permitted Development Order 2015 (as amended) - Removal of existing underbridge and replace with new subway  
at: Land/Bridge East Of Sharnford Close Backworth NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE**

The Council, as Local Planning Authority, has assessed the above development and considers that the works are permitted development under Part 18(a) of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 and hereby **grants prior approval for this development.**

The development must be carried out in accordance with the written details and plans received by the Council on 27 July 2021 and numbered 21/01759/MISGDO as referenced below:

- 1) Drawing 60601435-ACM-02-ZZ-DRG-EST-000001 Existing General Arrangement I  
Drawing 60601435-ACM-02-ZZ-DRG-EST-000002 Existing General Arrangement II  
Drawing 60601435-ACM-02-ZZ-DRG-EST-000003 Proposed General Arrangement I  
Drawing 60601435-ACM-02-ZZ-DRG-EST-000004 Proposed General Arrangement II  
Location Plan (1:2500)  
Limits Of Deviation Plan



Please note that it is your responsibility to ensure the development is carried out in accordance with plans and information provided. If it later transpires that the development differs from that described in this application please be aware that you may be subject to remedial action and may be required to submit an application for full planning permission.

**How did we do ?**

We would like to take this opportunity to thank you for working with us. We strive to provide our customers with a great customer experience and greatly rely on customer feedback to continuously improve the service we provide. We would be grateful if you could spare a moment to share your thoughts with us by completing this short customer survey: <http://www.northynteside.gov.uk/snap/planning-services-2018/index.htm>;

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Phil Scott', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Phil Scott  
Head of Environment, Housing and Leisure

## Appendix N

Prior approval for Underbridge 36



**North Tyneside Council**

North Tyneside Council  
Planning, Quadrant  
The Silverlink North  
Cobalt Business Park  
North Tyneside  
NE27 0BY

Network Rail  
Tony Rivero  
Floor 3A/59 George  
Stephenson House  
Toft Green  
York  
YO1 6JT

**Application No: 21/01761/MISGDO**

Your Ref:

Date: 21 September 2021

This matter is being dealt with by:  
Aidan Dobinson Booth  
**Direct Line: 0191 643 6333**

Dear Sir/Madam

**TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990**

**Determination under Part 18(a) of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015**

**Proposal: Prior approval under Part 18, Class A to Schedule 2 of the General Permitted Development Order 2015 (as amended) - Removal of existing underbridge and replace with new subway  
at: Land/Bridge North Of Backworth Lane Backworth NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE**

The Council, as Local Planning Authority, has assessed the above development and considers that the works are permitted development under Part 18(a) of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 and hereby **grants prior approval for this development.**

The development must be carried out in accordance with the written details and plans received by the Council on 27 July 2021 and numbered 21/01761/MISGDO as referenced below:

- 1) Drawing 60601435-ACM-02-ZZ-DRG-EST-000101 Existing General Arrangement I  
Drawing 60601435-ACM-02-ZZ-DRG-EST-000102 Existing General Arrangement I  
Drawing 60601435-ACM-02-ZZ-DRG-EST-000103 Proposed General Arrangement I  
Drawing 60601435-ACM-02-ZZ-DRG-EST-000104 Proposed General Arrangement II  
Limits of Deviation  
Location Plan (1:2500)

Smaller scale location plan (1:20,000)

Please note that it is your responsibility to ensure the development is carried out in accordance with plans and information provided. If it later transpires that the development differs from that described in this application please be aware that you may be subject to remedial action and may be required to submit an application for full planning permission.

**How did we do ?**

We would like to take this opportunity to thank you for working with us. We strive to provide our customers with a great customer experience and greatly rely on customer feedback to continuously improve the service we provide. We would be grateful if you could spare a moment to share your thoughts with us by completing this short customer survey: <http://www.northtyneside.gov.uk/snap/planning-services-2018/index.htm>;

Yours faithfully

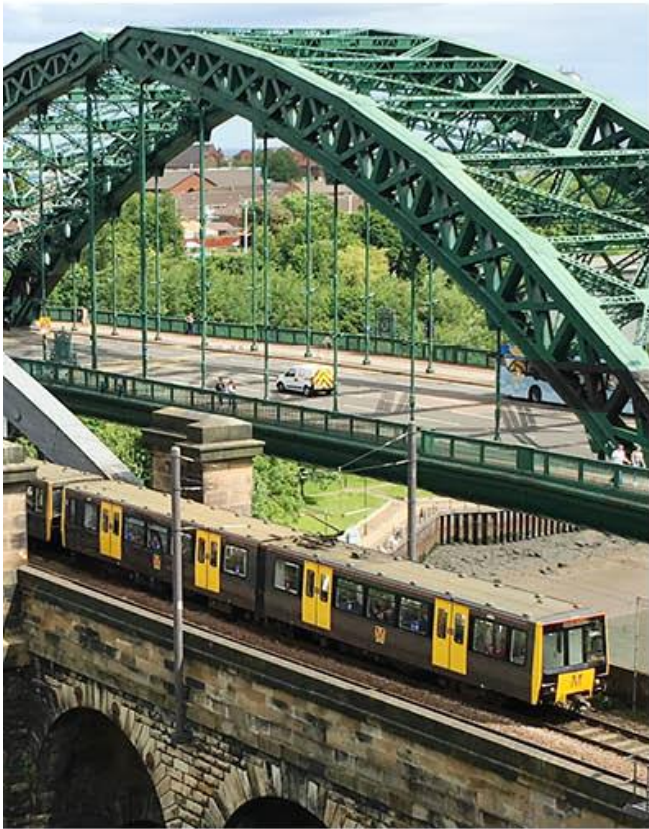
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Phil Scott', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Phil Scott  
Head of Environment, Housing and Leisure

## Appendix O

### Nexus Metro and local rail strategy

# Metro and Local Rail Strategy



**neca**  
north east combined authority



# Contents

<b>1</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION AND POLICY CONTEXT</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1	Introduction	1
1.2	Policy and Strategy Context	3
1.3	Network Overview	8
1.4	Overview of Current and Planned Metro Improvements	16
1.5	Benchmarking and Case Studies	17
<b>2</b>	<b>CURRENT AND FUTURE DEMAND</b>	<b>20</b>
2.1	Introduction	20
2.2	Historical and Current Drivers of Demand	20
2.3	Metro Demand Modelling	23
2.4	Impact of Land-use Planning on Future Demand	26
2.5	Metro Demand Study	29
2.6	Demand for Potential Station Sites on Existing Network	30
2.7	Demand for Local Rail Services	32
2.8	Conclusions and Recommendations	34
<b>3</b>	<b>METRO FLEET RENEWAL</b>	<b>35</b>
3.1	Context	35
3.2	Summary and Recommendations	39
<b>4</b>	<b>METRO TECHNICAL OPTIONS APPRAISAL</b>	<b>41</b>
4.1	Introduction	41
4.2	Metro Power Supply and Energy Recovery	42
4.3	Metro Depot Assessment	44
4.4	Signalling and Control	46
4.5	Energy Supply, Efficiency and Renewables	48
4.6	Essential Renewals post-2021	49
<b>5</b>	<b>DELIVERING EXCELLENT CUSTOMER SERVICE</b>	<b>50</b>
5.1	Introduction	50
5.2	Customer Satisfaction	51
5.3	Train Service Requirements	53
5.4	Passenger Journeys	54
5.5	Fares and Ticketing	56
5.6	Information Provision	58
5.7	Station Facilities	60
5.8	Park and Ride	61
5.9	Recommendations	63



<b>6</b>	<b>FUTURE OPERATING STRUCTURES</b>	<b>65</b>
6.1	Context	65
6.2	New Metro Operating Structures	66
6.3	Conclusions and Recommendations	70
<b>7</b>	<b>METRO AND LOCAL RAIL NETWORK EXTENSIONS</b>	<b>71</b>
7.1	Potential Extension Corridors	71
7.2	Routes to the Airport	73
7.3	The 'Leamside line'	73
7.4	South East Northumberland	74
7.5	Cobalt Corridor	74
7.6	Sunderland re-electrification	75
7.7	South Tyneside Track Dualling	75
7.8	New Routes to and from South Tyneside	76
7.9	New Routes in the Sunderland area	76
7.10	Durham Belmont – Sunderland / South Shields / Newcastle	78
7.11	Team Valley and A1 Gateshead Park and Ride	79
7.12	West Newcastle	79
7.13	Metro to Metrocentre	80
7.14	Local Rail Network Improvements	80
7.15	Network Integration Opportunities	81
7.16	Conclusions and Recommendations	82
<b>8</b>	<b>FUNDING ARRANGEMENTS</b>	<b>84</b>
8.1	Context	84
8.2	Potential Funding Sources	85
8.3	Conclusions and Recommendations	85
<b>9</b>	<b>SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	<b>86</b>
<b>APPENDIX 1</b>	<b>CASE STUDIES OF UK URBAN LIGHT RAIL NETWORKS</b>	<b>89</b>
<b>APPENDIX 2</b>	<b>POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES</b>	<b>103</b>
<b>APPENDIX 3</b>	<b>NEW FLEET SPECIFICATION</b>	<b>108</b>

## TABLES

Table 1	2011 Census Mode of Travel to Work	11
Table 2	Metro Passengers by Age	20



Table 3	Tyne and Wear Population 1981 – 2014	21
Table 4	Gross Value Added 1981 – 2011	21
Table 5	Workplace Commuting Trips into Newcastle upon Tyne, 2011 Census	22
Table 6	Workplace Commuting Trips into Sunderland, 2011 Census	22
Table 7	Characteristics of UK Light Rail Networks	24
Table 8	Metrocar Technical Specification	36
Table 9	UK Light Rail Network Service Frequencies	54
Table 10	Estimated Impacts on Metro Patronage and Revenue of Varying Fares Increases	57
Table 11	Journey Purpose of Park and Ride Users	62
Table 12	Operating Arrangements on UK Light Rail Networks	68

## CHARTS

Chart 1	Projected Metro Demand to 2030 – Current Network	30
Chart 2	Northern Rail Network Patronage Change 2006/07 to 2014/15	33
Chart 3	Train Control Automation Options	46
Chart 4	Metro Passenger Satisfaction Scores	51
Chart 5	Relative Importance of Metro Service Attributes	52
Chart 6	Passenger Satisfaction with Punctuality and Reliability 2010-15	52
Chart 7	Metro Trips by Distance Bands	55

## FIGURES

Figure 1	Metro Network 2016	9
Figure 2	Annual Metro Passenger Movements 2015	10
Figure 3	2015 Indices of Multiple Deprivation in Tyne and Wear	13
Figure 4	Locations within 400m Walk Distance of Metro Stations	14
Figure 5	Northern Service Network 2016	15
Figure 6	Track Renewals at West Jesmond Metro	17
Figure 7	Existing Metrocar Side View	35
Figure 8	Existing Metrocar Overhead View	36
Figure 9	Metro Service at Airport Station	41
Figure 10	Metro Electrical Sub-station	44
Figure 11	Metro Depot, Gosforth	45
Figure 12	Factors Determining Passenger Satisfaction	53
Figure 13	‘Longitudinal’ Seating on London Overground Train	55
Figure 14	Metro Smart Ticketing Infrastructure	58
Figure 15	Indicative Future Metro and Local Rail Network	72
Figure 16	Manchester Metrolink Bombardier M5000 Tram	90
Figure 17	Manchester Metrolink Network 2016	90
Figure 18	Stadler Variobahn Tram, Croydon Tramlink	92
Figure 19	Croydon Tramlink Network	92
Figure 20	NET Tram in Nottingham City Centre	93
Figure 21	DLR Train on Segregated Track	95
Figure 22	Docklands Light Railway Network	95
Figure 23	Glasgow Subway Route Map	97

<b>Figure 24</b>	<b>Current Glasgow Subway Rolling Stock</b>	<b>98</b>
<b>Figure 25</b>	<b>Merseyrail Network</b>	<b>98</b>
<b>Figure 26</b>	<b>Merseyrail Class 507 Train</b>	<b>98</b>
<b>Figure 27</b>	<b>Sheffield Supertram Network</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Figure 28</b>	<b>Tram in Sheffield City Centre</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Figure 29</b>	<b>Vossloh Tram Train Vehicle</b>	<b>102</b>
<b>Figure 30</b>	<b>Future Supertram network showing tram train extension to Rotherham</b>	<b>102</b>
<b>Figure 31</b>	<b>Flexity Swift Vehicle as used in Rotterdam</b>	<b>108</b>

## **Section 1: INTRODUCTION AND POLICY CONTEXT**

### **1.1 Introduction**

- 1.1.1. The expansion, improvement and integration of local rail and Metro services is fundamentally important to the economic growth plans of the North East, and is reflected in the Transport Manifesto's ambitions for rail services.

The North East Devolution Agreement commits to:

"The Combined Authority producing a business case, for consideration by Government, for investment in the Metro network to 2030, including the upgrade of the Metro fleet, potential expansion, and future integration of the Metro with the rail network".

- 1.1.2. A new Metro and Local Rail Strategy is needed to cover the geography of the North East Combined Authority (NECA) area, the integration of local rail and Metro services, and the potential to exploit under-used and disused railway assets and alignments across the region. This strategy builds on earlier work that looked at the Metro network in isolation. Through closer integration with the regional rail network and empowered by the progressive devolution of authority over local rail services, Metro and local rail will deliver a comprehensive network to improve the local economy, environment and society by making rail the travel mode of choice across a wider area of the conurbation.
- 1.1.3. This strategy outlines plans to enable Metro and local rail to further develop the economy of the NECA area by providing reliable, sustainable transport for people to use to get to work, education, healthcare and leisure facilities. By providing centre-to-centre links avoiding highway congestion, the network will help to redefine the mental map of the region and encourage wider journey to work patterns and travel horizons. This approach has proven successful on networks such as London Overground where the emergence of a prominent, unified network has increased awareness of travel opportunities and helped to increase passenger numbers.
- 1.1.4. Metro is now at a pivotal point in its existence. Devised in the 1970s as part of a ground-breaking vision to create a unique fusion of underground 'tube' and suburban light rail operations, Metro is now moving forward to capitalise on its strengths and meet the future transport needs of the region it serves. This will be achieved by three key developments:
- A new fleet of trains
  - Essential infrastructure renewals to ensure that the network operates reliably and efficiently
  - Closer integration between Metro and regional rail to extend the scope and reach of the network
- 1.1.5 The local rail network is also on a path towards positive change, following a long period of stagnation and under-performance resulting from the impacts of infrequent service patterns operated by inadequate rolling stock, and nationally-managed franchises specified and delivered remotely without the energy and attention essential to improve and maintain local product quality. The progressive development of the North East Rail Management Unit (NERMU) under the umbrella of the Rail North framework will result in increasing influence and control over local rail services, expected to lead to full devolved control over the network following the expiry of the current Northern rail franchise in 2025/26. With a new Metro fleet expected to be in service by that date, there is the prospect of a transformational rail offer across the NECA region within

the next decade. Work has already started to achieve this and there is much more to do in terms of planning, investment and co-ordination to achieve this vital goal. In combination, a revitalised Metro and local rail network has the capacity to transform how people travel across the region, widening horizons by making it easy to access jobs, training and education and leisure, and connecting the region in a coherent and sustainable way. Investment in Metro and local rail will reduce the wider impact of transport on the environment, and help to improve levels of health.

### **Vision**

1.1.6. The vision for the strategy is:

***“An integrated, modern and sustainable Metro and local rail network for the NECA region that supports the local economy, environment and society”***

### **Objectives**

1.1.7 The objectives of the Metro and Local Rail Strategy are:

- (a) To provide reliable, accessible and comfortable Metro and Local Rail services with high levels of customer satisfaction within available resources;
- (b) To grow the Metro and Local Rail network and their modal share as part of an integrated public transport network; and
- (c) To achieve value for money.

1.1.8 To help achieve these objectives, the following areas are being developed:

- Specify, procure and introduce a new Metro fleet;
- Design new operating models and procure suppliers;
- Continue essential renewals works for the period 2020-2030;
- Expand the Metro and Local Rail network;
- Secure short and long-term financial arrangements, and
- Improve integration.

1.1.9 The strategy explains how these objectives will be achieved in the following sections.

- **Introduction and Policy Context**:-Describes how the strategy will help to achieve national, regional and local policy objectives and summarises the Metro and local rail networks.
- **Current and Future Demand**:- Sets out the main drivers of demand for Metro and local rail both now and in the future.
- **Fleet Replacement**: – Describes the process which Nexus intends to follow to replace the existing Metro rolling stock with a new fleet of trains.
- **Metro Technical Options Appraisal**: - Evaluates various technical areas that will determine how a versatile and reliable fleet can operate across a resilient network.

- Customer Requirements:- Ensure that the requirements of future Metro and local rail customers are anticipated and provided-for across all aspects of the strategy.
- Operating Frameworks:- Identify future operational models for Metro, taking account of financial, fleet replacement, network and passenger demand considerations.
- Network Extensions Appraisal:- Evaluation of recommendations for Combined Authority consideration and potential subsequent business cases for network extensions.
- Financing:- Identifies potential investment, funding, development and asset opportunities that will enable the successful delivery of the strategy.

1.1.10 At the heart of this strategy is the essential replacement of the existing fleet of life-expired Metrocars and sub-optimal Pacer trains with a reliable new Metro fleet and new and refurbished regional rail trains that will deliver the standards of service the NECA area requires, as well as expanding the scope and reach of an integrated Metro and local rail network.

## **1.2 Policy and Strategy Context**

### **National**

1.2.1. The Government's transport vision is "to make journeys better: simpler, faster and more reliable. Our plan will support jobs, enable business growth, and bring our country closer together". (DfT Single Departmental Plan, 2015-2020). Its objectives to deliver this vision are:

Objective 1 - Boosting economic growth and opportunity;

Objective 2 - Building a One Nation Britain;

Objective 3 - Improving journeys; and

Objective 4 - Safe, secure and sustainable transport.

1.2.2 Under each of these objectives there are statements of what the Government will do to achieve them, for example under Objective 2 – Building a One Nation Britain, the Government commits to greater devolution to areas and working with Transport for the North to deliver the Northern Transport Strategy.

### **National Planning Policy Framework**

1.2.3 The National Planning Policy Framework states, as one of its 12 core planning principles, the need to actively manage patterns of growth to make the fullest possible use of public transport, walking and cycling, and focus significant development in locations which are or can be made sustainable. It goes on to define sustainable transport modes as any efficient, safe and accessible means of transport with overall low impact on the environment, including walking and cycling, low and ultra-low emission vehicles, car sharing and public transport. Metro has the possibility to further meet the aspirations set out in this framework by becoming more energy efficient, more accessible and more reliable, all made possible through the introduction of a new fleet of Metrocars.

## Northern Transport Strategy Objectives

- 1.2.4 The DfT's Northern Transport Strategy policy paper, published in March 2015<sup>1</sup> sets out the aspirations to improve connectivity across the Cities of the North to drive economic growth. The paper sets out that "the North will take a lead in prioritising and planning transformative transport interventions, right across and beyond the North to: transform connectivity; improve journey times; improve capacity and resilience; and simplify the user experience. Our strategy is about using transport to aid change in future patterns of land use and economic growth, with the goal of creating a single economy in the North" (Northern Transport Strategy, 2015, p4).
- 1.2.5 The Northern Transport Strategy also recognises the importance of better city region connectivity at a local level. It states:
- "Better local connectivity to the priority areas for jobs growth. Improved connectivity between communities and key employment growth areas, links to and from high speed rail stations and international gateways, increased local rail/Metro/quality bus capacity and frequency improvements and network extensions;
  - Better local rail, rapid transit and bus - Good quality public transport fleets and infrastructure. Good customer information, connections that work and a positive journey experience...providing door-to-door local sustainable transport; and
  - City regions where people and goods can travel reliably on road and public transport networks, helped by better real time traffic management and driver information, well maintained roads, metro and local rail, and simplified fare structures".
- 1.2.6 This strategy advocates the creation of a 'Northern Powerhouse' which harnesses the collective strengths of the North of England's major urban areas by targeted investment to improve the Northern economy, in part through the provision of better communications. In part this aim will be met by better transport links between the different areas of the North, which will be a major element of the activities of Transport for the North and Rail North as described below.
- 1.2.7 But good public transport within the North's city regions is also important, a point highlighted in recent Centre for Cities report<sup>2</sup> which uses case studies from elsewhere in Europe to demonstrate that conurbations such as the Rhine-Ruhr in Germany and The Netherlands' Randstad out-perform their national economies by the presence of strong agglomeration benefits which are derived in part from excellent public transport links *within* these major urban areas. The report argues that successful city regions require a combination of increased city density and a larger pool of skilled workers. To facilitate these, investment in sustainable transport links is essential to provide reliable, affordable mass transit links. 93% of the NECA area's workforce live and work within the same city region, a notably higher proportion than areas such as the Sheffield and Liverpool city regions (84% and 83% respectively).
- 1.2.8 Higher levels of agglomeration and 'knowledge spillovers' tend to occur those in areas of greatest density of economic activity, which are often locations prone to traffic congestion. The report suggests that the problems and solutions of such areas are best understood and addressed by those involved in their governance, and that good urban transport links are a critical part of the route towards success.
- 1.2.9 The Centre for Cities report recommends that the best way to improve the economic performance of individual city regions is to focus investment on removing the barriers to the creation of a wider labour pool

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<sup>1</sup> The Northern Powerhouse: one agenda, one economy, one North – a report on the Northern Transport Strategy

<sup>2</sup> Building the Northern Powerhouse - Lessons from the Rhine-Ruhr and Randstad. Centre for Cities June 2016.

and to increase economic and social agglomeration. It suggests that the high-performing city regions of Rhine-Ruhr and the Randstad do not act as one labour market, but as a number of them. This means that transport systems within city regions are more important for enabling businesses to access workers and workers to access jobs than transport links between cities, and that if the Northern Powerhouse is to be successful, then it must primarily focus on making its cities more attractive to business investment. The Metro network will play a key role in this evolving process.

- 1.2.10 Further support of the Northern Powerhouse concept has arisen from the recent publication of the Northern Powerhouse Independent Economic Review<sup>3</sup>, a suite of documents which set out the North's strengths, and the some of the weaknesses, that need to be addressed in order that these can be exploited. The review describes how transport connectivity has a role in promoting a higher employment rate, by improving access to centres of employment, and in promoting higher productivity, by improving the attractiveness of an area for investment, improving access to markets, increasing the pool of workers available to work in higher productivity urban locations, and increasing the effective scale of cities and the associated benefits of agglomeration. The review states that for city centre employment to grow to the maximum extent and the full scale of agglomeration benefits realised, it will need to be accommodated by enhanced public transport connectivity within city regions. This will entail coherent, user-friendly joined-up networks, involving frequent rail services (including cross-city operations), light rail and bus, all supported by smart, multi-modal ticketing with simplified fares. Metro and Local Rail will therefore act as key enablers in this process.

#### **DfT Rail Objectives**

- 1.2.11 Local rail is also an important priority of national government policy. This this is reflected by the commitment to remove Class 142 and 144 Pacer trains from services operated under the Northern rail franchise by the end of 2019, and to inject new rolling stock into network operations - although not for the time being within the NECA area. Of greater long-term significance is the DfT's commitment to the progressive devolution of the day-to-day management of franchised rail operations to a regional rail management unit within the framework of Rail North, with input and influence developing within the current franchise period leading to full devolution of franchise specifications within the next decade. Potential long-term proposals for sections of the national rail network such as electrification of the Durham Coast line, (to include Pelaw – Sunderland), the introduction of passenger services on the Ashington Blyth and Tyne line, and the re-use of the Leamside rail corridor are of particular significance to Metro's and local rail's future operations.
- 1.2.12 Rail North is the organisation that has been set up to facilitate the transition from central DfT oversight of the Northern franchise to devolved responsibility. It brings together Local Transport Authorities across the North of England into one cohesive and proactive body, which represents the regional and local economic, transport and strategic objectives for the rail industry. Rail North will enable the 29 local authorities across the North to develop their understanding of rail industry processes and to provide their local experience and expertise to influence franchising outcomes. At present Rail North and the DfT jointly manage the Northern and Transpennine rail franchises; over the coming years, control over decision-making and financial risk will progressively pass from national to regional hands. Rail North has published a Long Term Rail Strategy<sup>4</sup> which sets out an ambitious blueprint for improvements across the North of England. Four key themes - Connectivity; Coherence; Capacity and Cost-effectiveness, are the basis of the strategy.
- 1.2.13 As a further step, in the North East, the North East Rail Management Unit (NERMU), the first of its kind in the country, will see Northern's services in the North East, marketing, development and investment decisions

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<sup>3</sup> Northern Powerhouse Independent Economic Review. Transport for the North June 2016.

<sup>4</sup> Long Term Rail Strategy. Rail North September 2015.

developed in partnership with the NECA and Tees Valley Unlimited for the first time, within the wider Rail North structure. As a result there will be increased local accountability for operational performance, and a strong local focus for further investment. The overall outcome will be the transition from national to regional control of local rail services within the next decade. This is covered in more detail in Section 6.

### **North East Local Enterprise Partnership Strategic Economic Plan**

1.2.14 The North East Local Enterprise Partnership (NELEP) is one of a national network of enterprise partnerships set up by government to make the North East a place where more businesses invest, grow and prosper, delivering more and better jobs for everyone. The NELEP is responsible for delivering the North East Strategic Economic Plan, bringing investment into the area including the £330m Local Growth Deal and championing the North East nationally and globally, to influence and shape the continued economic growth of the area.

1.2.15 The Strategic Economic Plan<sup>5</sup> sets out how the North East economy can, and will, grow in the coming years. The Economic Plan is broken down into six key themes:

1. Innovation: Creating competitive advantage through innovation – building a platform for local businesses to contribute to their own future with the support to excel in whatever area they choose.
2. Business Support & Access to Finance: Providing the framework for business to access the information, advice and finance they need to thrive and grow.
3. Skills: Improving the North East skills base – making sure every subsequent workforce has the right skills to support business growth and to move forward in the most self-sufficient way.
4. Economic Assets and Infrastructure: Developing the areas in which businesses can invest and grow, and people can train and excel.
5. Employability & Inclusion: Sourcing the skills from within the North East by supporting those who can't easily access training and employment.
6. Transport & Connectivity: Creating the best networks – connecting the North East to the national and international economy.

1.2.16 The role of Metro and local rail is significant in assisting the region to deliver its aspirations for economic growth. The Strategic Economic Plan recognises the importance of the Metro system, highlighting that the overriding objectives for the Metro moving forward “are to replace the fleet of Metrocars and extend the reach of Metro beyond its current sphere of operation and the boundaries of Tyne and Wear. Work needs to commence in the medium term to plan for the design and procurement of the replacement fleet”.

1.2.17 There is some evidence that light rail networks can stimulate additional growth. The investment case for Manchester Metrolink extensions (discussed in greater detail in Appendix 2) is partially predicated upon additional light rail corridors across the Greater Manchester conurbation being linked to higher levels of Gross Value Added<sup>6</sup> (GVA) than would otherwise occur. A study into the economic impacts of light rail<sup>7</sup> suggested that light rail can improve the image of a city and contribute to economic regeneration, and that installing a new tram/light rail system could provide a visible, permanent way of showing that an area is being invested in for the future. It suggests that urban renewal enhances economic activity and brings more

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<sup>5</sup> Strategic Economic Plan. North East Local Enterprise Partnership 2014

<sup>6</sup> Gross value added (GVA) is the measure of the value of goods and services produced in an area, industry or sector of an economy.

<sup>7</sup> What Light Rail Can Do For Cities: A Review Of The Evidence: SDG 2005.



visitors, which provides the basis for improvements to public transport, which in turn has the potential to impact positively on property prices, which then stimulates further renewal and regeneration in a “virtuous spiral” thus linking growth in light rail demand with economic growth.

1.2.18 The NELEP is in the process of refreshing their Strategic Economic Plan to ensure that it reflects changing circumstances, taking into account new evidence of the region’s economic position and an evolving public policy environment including a national innovation plan, a new national infrastructure commission and an emerging devolution deal. An evidence update<sup>8</sup> document suggests that to achieve the 1 million jobs target by 2024 as set out in the Plan will require an additional 89,000 jobs over those predicted by current trajectories, requiring greater investment in higher growth ‘smart specialisation’ industries, and a higher rate of workplace participation.

### **Regional Policy and Devolution**

1.2.19 Regional transport policy-making now takes place at the Combined Authority and Local Enterprise Partnership level (LEP). The NECA Transport Plan, currently in preparation, complements the Strategic Economic Plan and will build upon the key messages in the North East Transport Manifesto<sup>9</sup> which envisages an important role for Metro and local rail in establishing the key principles that transport should be easy to use, reliable, affordable and accessible. Four themes underpin this vision

- Easy to use. It should be easy to plan safe journeys, find out the best way to travel, pay for tickets and get all the essential information for your journey;
- Reliable. The transport network should be one that we can rely on to work, with buses and trains running on time and congestion at a minimum;
- Affordable. Transport should be provided at a reasonable cost relative to the journey being made;
- Accessible. Transport should run as near as possible to where people live and want to travel to, and where businesses are (or want to be) located. It should be usable by everyone.

1.2.20 These themes have been expanded into a set of guiding principles that govern what the NECA is trying to achieve. In terms of local rail and Metro, the Manifesto commits to:

- replace outdated Pacer trains and deliver an essential new fleet for the Tyne and Wear Metro
- create a regional express network, with high quality, faster trains and more routes electrified;
- open new local stations on current lines, re-open key disused lines, consider more Park and Ride stations, upgrade freight-only sections to passenger use and build new routes;
- devolve greater control to the region, so local rail and Metro can be managed together to deliver a higher standard for stations, information and customer service; and
- work with rail industry partners to address overcrowding and improve cycle access on trains.

1.2.21 The government is negotiating ‘devolution agreements’ with several areas of the UK which, if implemented, will see the transferral of powers and funding relating to transport and other areas, to regional Combined Authorities. This strategy has been prepared in the expectation that devolution in the NECA area will be progressively implemented. The draft Devolution Agreement between the NECA and Government in relation to transport states:

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<sup>8</sup> The North East Strategic Economic Plan Evidence Base May 2016. NELEP/NECA

<sup>9</sup> Our Journey: A 20 Year Transport Manifesto for the North East. North East Combined Authority 2016.

“The Mayor and the Combined Authority, will create the UK’s first fully integrated transport system, with the ambition to bring together responsibilities for rail, local highways, metro, buses and ferries, for both urban, sub-urban and rural communities. To achieve this ambition Government will consider establishing and devolving a long-term funding programme to support investment in the Metro. This will include:

- Considering, through the spending review, setting a multi-year funding allocation for Metro reinvigoration phase 2, committed up to 2020-21; and
- The Combined Authority producing a business case, for consideration by Government, for investment in the Metro network to 2030, including the upgrade of the Metrocar fleet , potential expansion, and future integration of the Metro with the rail network.

Longer-term, the Mayor and the Combined Authority, will bring forward a business case, for consideration by Government, for the unification and full devolution (beyond the forthcoming Northern franchise) of the management of rail and metro services within the North East, with the aim of creating the UK’s first integrated regional rail network combining light and conventional rail”

1.2.22 These national and regional policy objectives set a coherent framework for the development of a strong and influential Metro and local rail network that will deliver the key aims of both rail and local government devolution, as well as a wide range of local transport benefits.

### **1.3 Network Overview**

#### **Metro**

1.3.1 The current Metro network can be summarised by the following three key statistics:

- 40 million passenger trips per year
- 90 trains
- 60 stations

1.3.2 The majority of stations were purpose-built in the 1980s and vary from large city centre transport interchanges to local suburban stations. Some of the North Tyneside coastal stations are former North Eastern Railway structures adapted to meet present-day requirements. Sunderland station is currently an exception in that it is owned by Network Rail, and operated by Arriva Rail North Ltd.

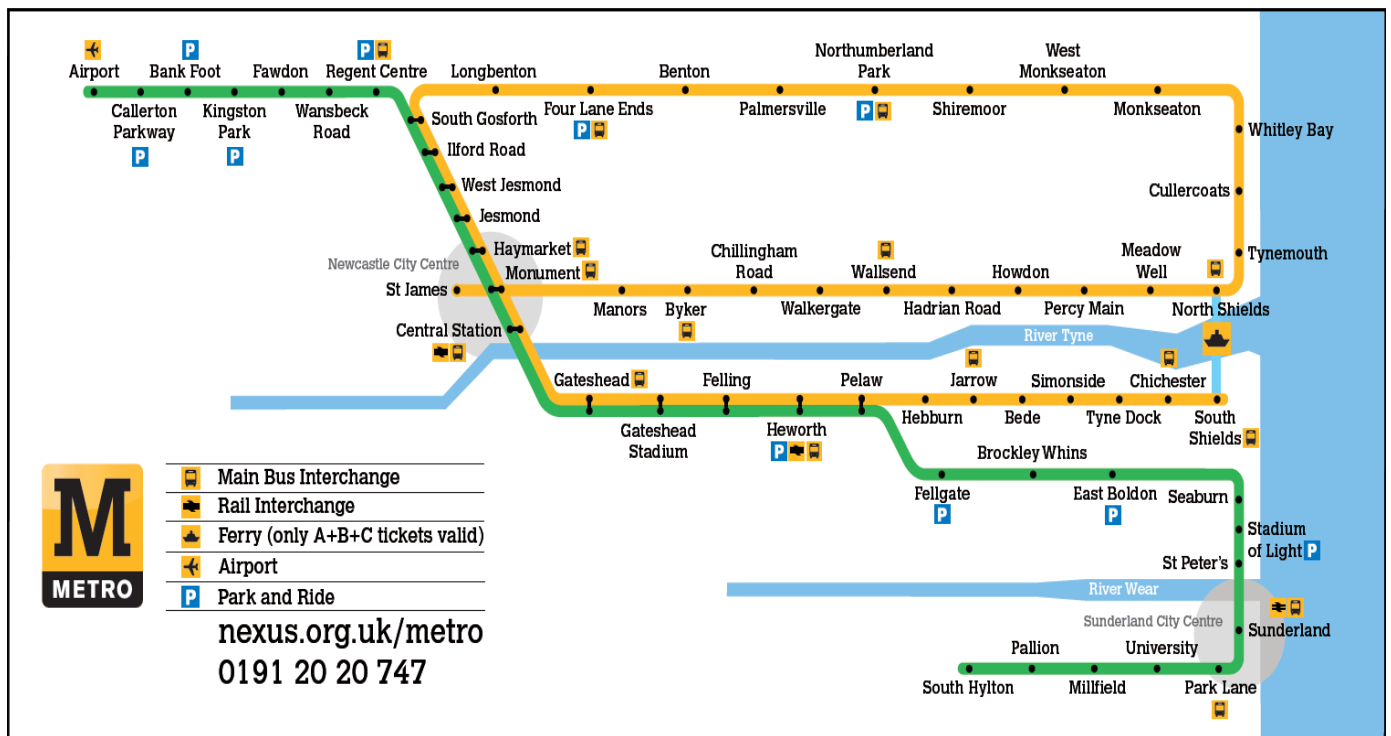


Figure 1: Metro Network 2016

- 1.3.3 Metro connects the key centres of population in Tyne and Wear, as shown in the network map above. Metro is readily accessible (defined as those who live within 800m of a Metro Station) to 350,000 individuals. Passenger surveys (Nexus Business Intelligence patronage figures, adjusted for the frequency of Metro travel) suggest that approximately one quarter of the Tyne and Wear population (297,600 i.e. 27% of 1.1m) uses Metro, with many Metro stations serving as interchanges with other modes of public transport, mainly local bus services but also taxi, national and local rail services and also air transportation.
- 1.3.4 Figure 2 below shows the passenger movements by Metro by Local Authority area in 2015/16. They demonstrate the importance of Metro for providing connectivity and accessibility, across the geography of Tyne and Wear, but also highlight the number of journeys taken within Local Authority boundaries as well, which in most cases is significant.

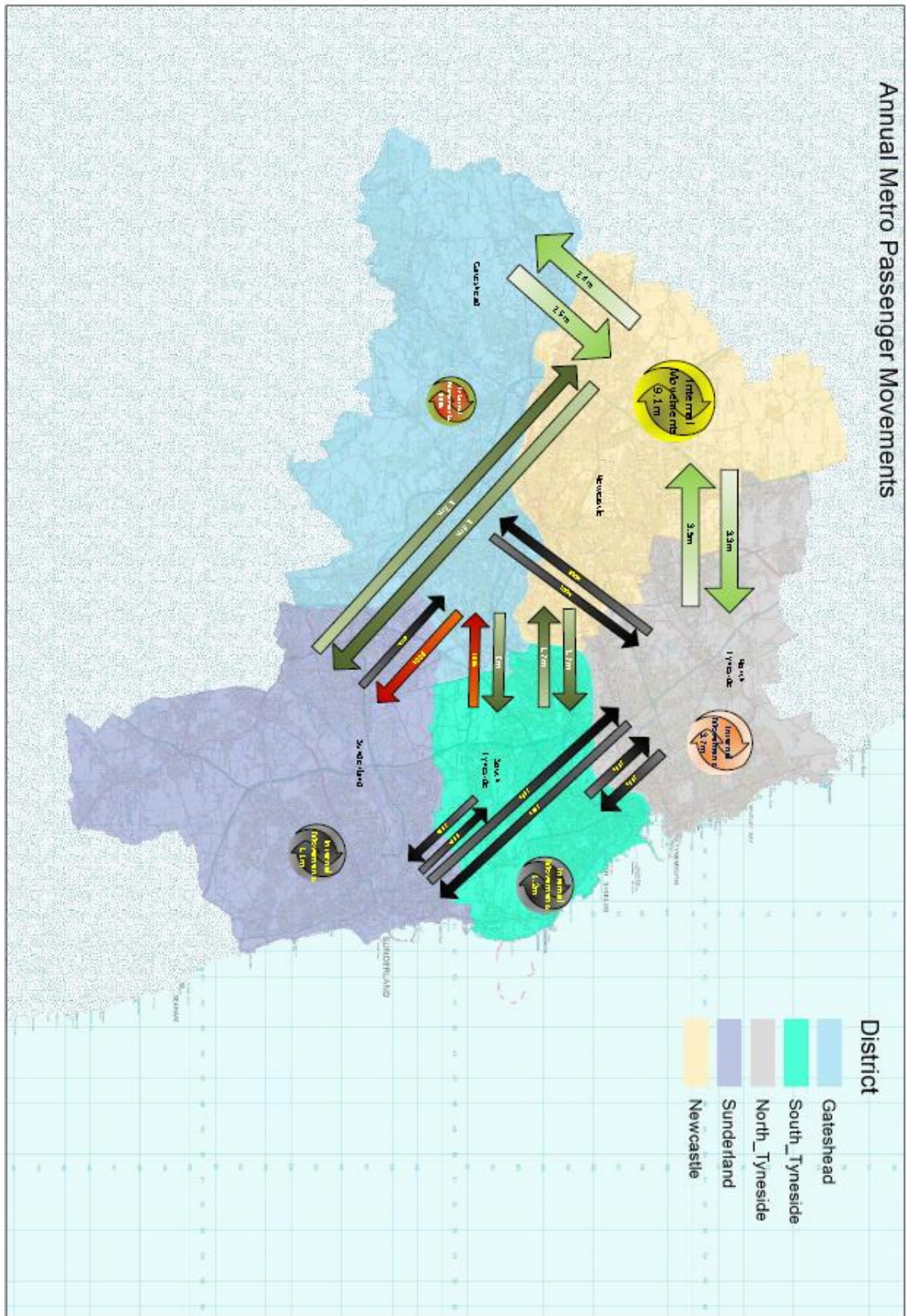


Figure 2: Annual Metro Passenger Movements 2015

- 1.3.5 Metro operations began in 1980, and services to South Shields began in 1984. The system was extended to Newcastle Airport in 1991, providing a 23 minute link to Newcastle city centre. A further extension of the Metro was then undertaken, in 2002, to Sunderland mainly using Railtrack (now Network Rail) infrastructure. Metro was the UK's first modern light rail service, the first to be designed with disabled people in mind, the first to be non-smoking and the first to provide mobile phone and internet reception throughout its underground sections.
- 1.3.6 The Sunderland line extends 18.5km through Sunderland city centre to South Hylton of which 14km is on existing heavy rail line between Pelaw and Sunderland and 4.5km - south of Sunderland along the south bank of the river Wear, to South Hylton - on a previously disused railway alignment. The work entailed signalling work, to allow for 'double blocking' (an additional block behind the first train is kept empty to increase the safety margin between trains, therefore a train cannot enter a section block until the two blocks ahead have been vacated by the preceding train), the electrification of the line which required some track lowering and the reconstruction of four bridges. Other areas of work saw new stations developed as well. It was the culmination of eight years development and planning work involving a very broad range of activities and a pioneer in the practice of joint running between heavy rail and light rail stock, requiring the safety measures described above.
- 1.3.7 Metro plays an important role in multi-modal journeys. Bus and taxi interchanges at locations such as Heworth, Sunderland Park Lane, Regent Centre, Gateshead and Four Lane Ends enable integrated journeys to be made, with through-ticketing products available. Over ten Metro Stations provide car parking for Park and Ride, and almost all have bicycle storage facilities. Interchange with national and local rail services is provided at Newcastle Central Station, Sunderland and Heworth. Metro provides a direct link between town and city centres across Tyne and Wear and Newcastle Airport, from where there are flights to the USA, the Middle East and a range of domestic and European destinations.

	Home	Light Rail	Train	Bus	Car	Foot	Bike	Other	Not Working
England & Wales	6.6%	2.4%	0.7%	4.6%	38.3%	6.3%	1.8%	0.8%	35.5%
North East	4.8%	1.5%	3.2%	5.5%	39.3%	5.9%	1%	0.9%	40.1%
Tyne and Wear	4.1%	3.3%	0.7%	8%	35.7%	5.8%	1.2%	0.6%	35.5%

**Table 1: 2011 Census Mode of Travel to Work**

- 1.3.8 The table above shows the mode of travel to work in the 2011 Census of those aged 16 – 74. The proportion of people using light rail for travel to work in 2011 in Tyne and Wear is not only significantly higher than the light rail figure for England and Wales, but it also overshadows the national figure for travel to work by train. The proportion of people travelling to work by car is the lowest in the UK outside of London, with 27.91% of households in Tyne and Wear having no access to a car. This makes reliance on public transport more important than in other areas, and requiring that the transport network continues to be accessible, reliable, affordable and available.
- 1.3.9 Metro plays a role in offering transport choice for people with mode options. It assists in helping to reduce levels of urban road congestion in Tyne and Wear. Its dedicated infrastructure means that it places no reliance on the highway network, ensuring reliable, congestion-free journeys. This advantage particularly applies along the corridors into urban centres, for shopping, services, education and employment. Metro also provides direct access to major employment sites such as the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) facility in Longbenton, and the Port of Tyne together with the urban centres. With an interchange, employment locations at Cobalt and Silverlink in North Tyneside are also accessible by Metro.
- 1.3.10 From the outset, Metro was designed to be accessible for wheelchair users, with lifts and ramps and level boarding on to Metrocars. Accessibility standards have risen and significant expenditure in the Asset Renewal Plan is focused on meeting and in many cases surpassing national station access standards including the refurbishment of the current Metrocars to meet the requirements of the Rail Vehicle Accessibility Regulations 2010, pending their replacement by a new fleet of trains.
- 1.3.11 Metro is central to future decisions on land-use planning and transport infrastructure investment. The National Planning Policy Framework states as one of its 12 core planning principles, the need to actively manage patterns of growth to make the fullest possible use of public transport, walking and cycling, and focus significant development in locations which are or can be made sustainable, for example in urban centres. It goes on to define sustainable transport modes as any efficient, safe and accessible means of transport with overall low impact on the environment. Although rail services are not cheap to provide, capital investment in the Metro network has already been made and the benefits it provides are substantial and durable. Metro is an instantly recognisable brand. It is popular and easily understood by the people who use it, and the plans outlined in this strategy for further investment and closer integration with the local rail network will keep delivering benefits to users and non-users alike in terms of reducing congestion and providing sustainable accessibility.

### **Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2015**

- 1.3.12 Metro continues to link areas of deprivation with areas of opportunity, as highlighted in Figure xxx below. 23 of the 60 Metro stations on the network are located in the bottom 20% of nationally defined areas of deprivation. The contribution Metro makes to providing good levels of accessibility from these areas to jobs, education and training, health and social facilities and shops must therefore be regarded as very significant. Figure 3 shows the distribution of the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) across Tyne and Wear, with the greater concentration of deprivation along the banks of both the River Tyne and River Wear. In particular, South Tyneside has seen the steepest increase in the country in levels of deprivation over the past five years, compared to the last IMD results in 2010. The borough has seen a 10% increase in deprivation which takes South Tyneside's figure to 28%, and ranks the area as the 23rd most deprived part of England. Alongside this, the North East also showed the highest unemployment rates across Great Britain in 2015 at 8.5%, against the average of just 5.8%.



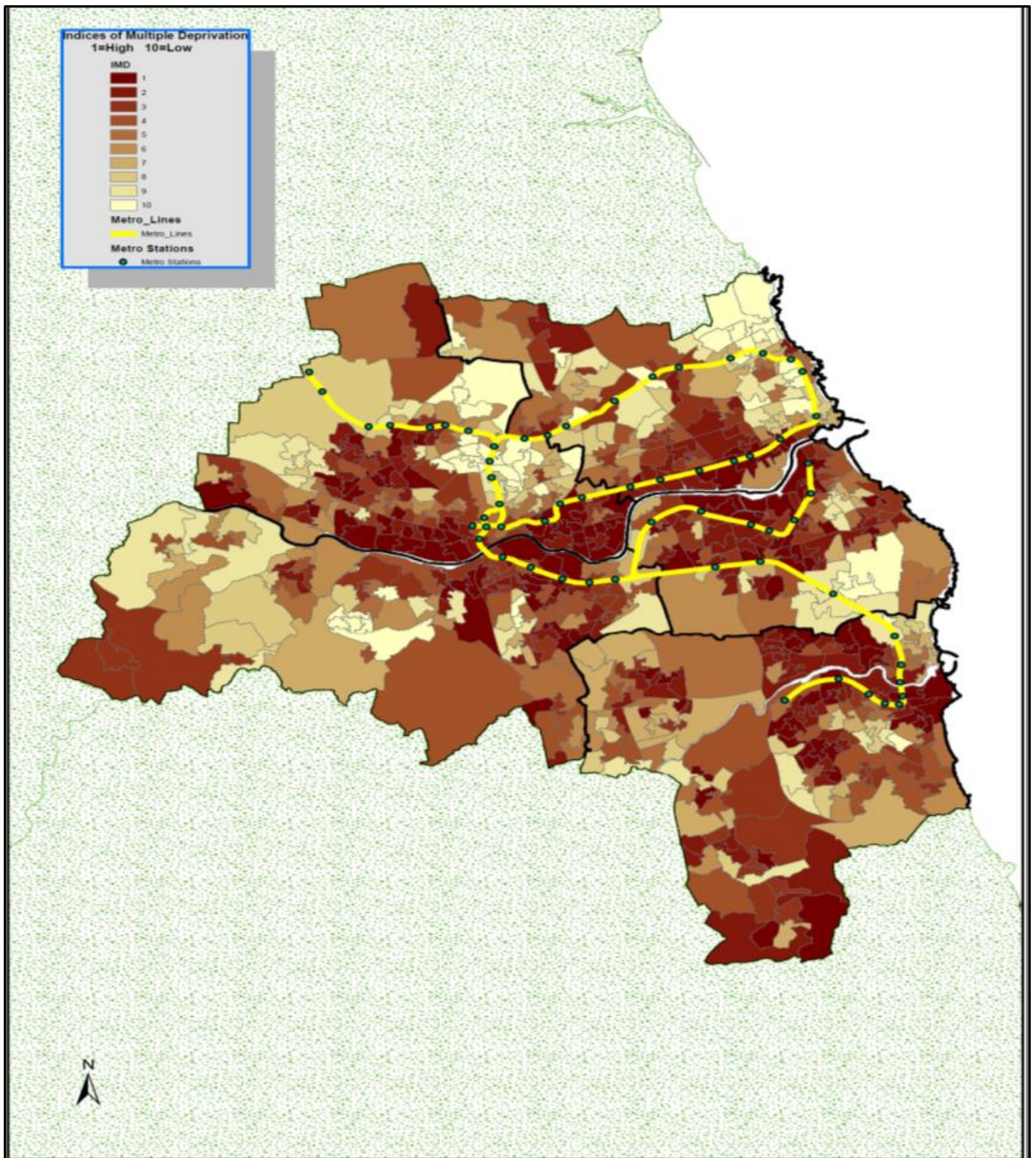


Figure 3 - 2015 Indices of Multiple Deprivation in Tyne and Wear

1.3.13 Metro supports community regeneration, economic development and public health by providing long-term, high-quality accessibility. Many developers plan around Metro as a key means of access because they believe it will be there for the long term. Nexus has built two new stations at Northumberland Park and Simonside in recent times, partly using funding sourced from developer contributions. Developers continue to explore more opportunities for new stations, linked to major planned developments. Providing developments with



close access to the Metro system can assist in integrating planning and transport, making them more sustainable from the outset.

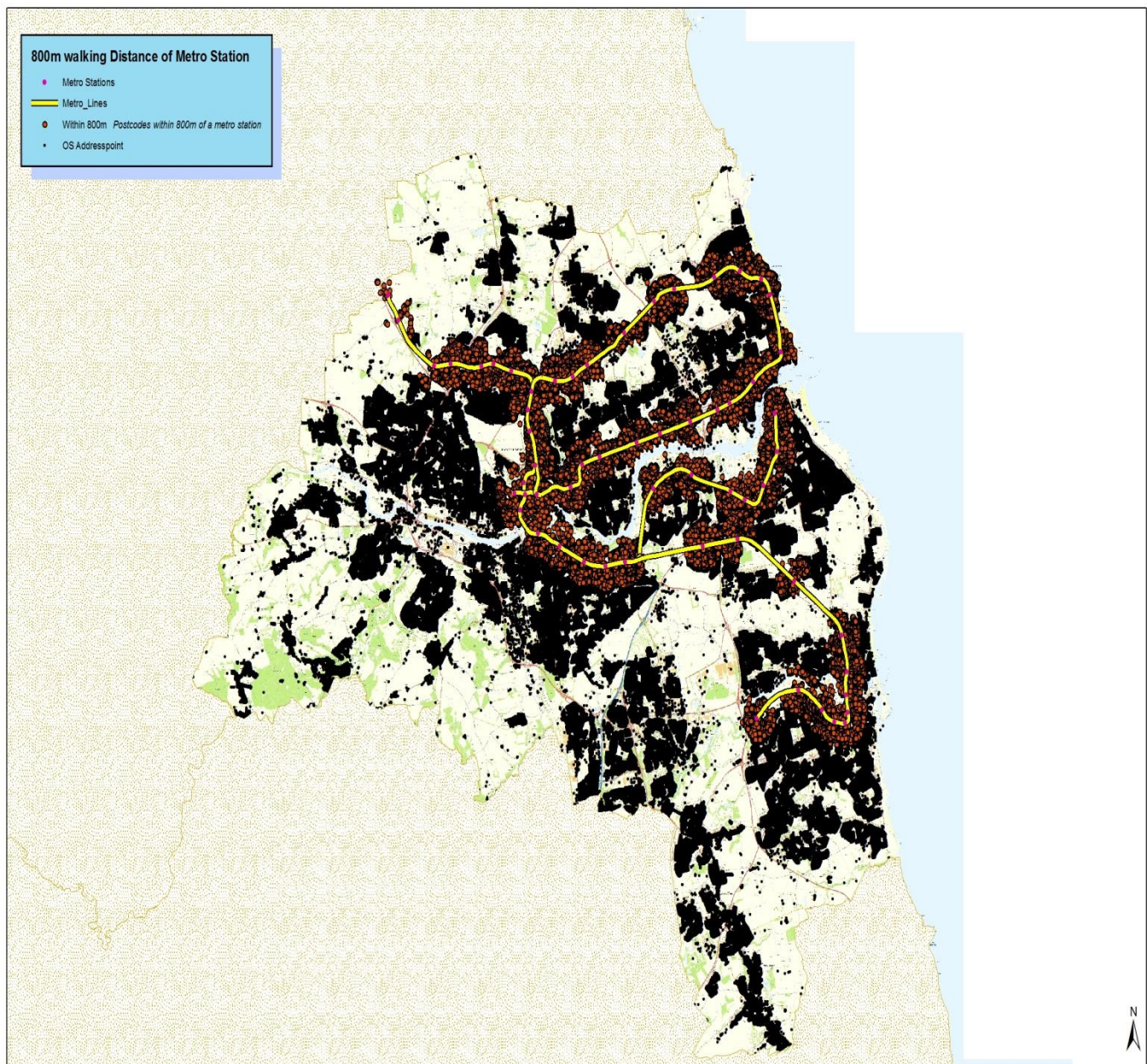


Figure 4 - Locations within 800 metres walk distance of Metro stations

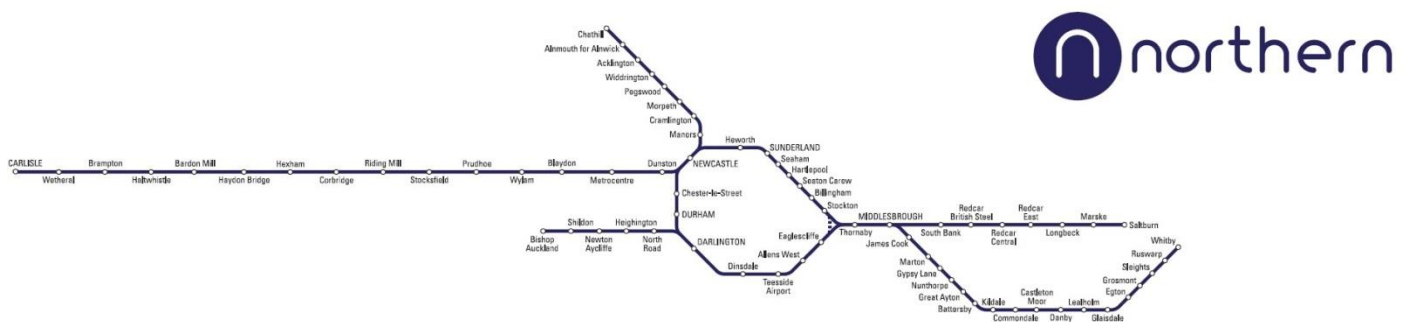
### Local Rail

1.3.14 The local rail network in the NECA region is surprisingly sparse in relation to population. This is for two reasons – the predominance of Metro on much of the former British Rail local rail network, and the long-distance, high speed focus of the East Coast Main Line (ECML). The routes within the NECA area are listed below and are shown on the network diagram below:

- Chathill – Morpeth - Newcastle
- Newcastle – Metrocentre – Hexham – Carlisle
- Middlesbrough – Hartlepool – Sunderland – Newcastle



- 1.3.15 Other routes are operated in the Tees Valley which lie outside the area considered by this strategy, but which are within the NERMU area of responsibility and are part of the same Northern business unit centred upon Heaton depot in Newcastle. Nexus and the NECA will work with colleagues in the Tees Valley Combined Authority, which has similar shared aspirations for improved rail services, to ensure that each area's plans enhance and complement the other. The routes listed above all form part of the Northern franchise; however services along the ECML corridor are also provided by Transpennine and Intercity rail operators. Train services between Sunderland, Heworth and Newcastle are specified and funded by Nexus, with joint ticketing, providing a fast hourly service to augment the basic 12-minute Metro frequency.
- 1.3.16 Currently all Northern services are operated by diesel-powered Pacer and Sprinter multiple unit trains, as has been the case since network privatisation. From 2019 a 'Northern Connect' service will be overlain over the existing pattern between Teesside, Newcastle and Carlisle featuring limited-stop services provided by refurbished trains, and additional Transpennine services will extend to and from Edinburgh providing additional services at some stations in Northumberland.
- 1.3.17 Most Northern stations are unstaffed, and there are no smart ticketing facilities other than between Sunderland and Newcastle. Most services operate to an hourly or half-hourly frequency, and other than ECML services are formed of two or three-car trains. The local rail network clearly has unmet potential and it will be the task of Rail North, the NERMU, NECA and Nexus to ensure that it plays a greater future role in local sustainable transport provision. In the NECA area, closer integration with the Metro network will be a key part of this proposition.



## Rail Freight

15

1.3.19 The main freight flows within the NECA region in 2016 are summarised below. Some are seasonal in nature and most are infrequent by comparison with passenger services.

- Coal for Lynemouth power station via the Blyth and Tyne line (the power station will shortly be converted to biomass operation).
- Coal traffic between Port of Tyne and North Blyth via the Blyth and Tyne line.
- Alumina trains between North Blyth and Fort William via the Blyth and Tyne.
- Biomass imports from Port of Tyne mainly for Drax Power Station via Pelaw and/or Sunderland.
- Nuclear flask traffic between Hartlepool Power Station and Sellafield.
- Cement traffic from Dunbar to Seaham Harbour via Sunderland.
- Opencast coal traffic from Ayrshire to Yorkshire/ Nottinghamshire power stations via Hexham.
- Occasional oil traffic from Lincolnshire to Jarrow oil terminal via Pelaw.
- Long-distance freight flows using the ECML through Newcastle and Durham.

1.3.20 Freight paths to accommodate some of the flows listed above exist to and from the Port of Tyne via Boldon East and West Junctions, sharing the available track capacity between Pelaw and Sunderland with Metro, Northern and other non-passenger services. The capacity of the line from Pelaw to Sunderland is restricted due to the slower acceleration and deceleration of freight trains and the 'double blocking' that is required for shared use of this section. 'Double blocking' refers to the additional space that is required between trains and is enabled by the signalling system, to create an additional layer of safety for Metro services.

1.3.21 Despite rail freight currently standing at a low ebb, there is every possibility that flows could increase in future as part of a concerted shift from road to rail. NECA and its partners will therefore take cognisance of this when planning the technologies and the network capacity required to deliver a step-change in the provision of Metro and local rail services.

#### **1.4 Overview of Current and Planned Metro Improvements**

1.4.1 This section provides a brief overview of investment already under way and in planning that will ensure that Metro's assets are maintained and improved for the long-term.

1.4.2 The Metro Reinvigoration Programme comprises three phases. Phase 1 is now complete and involved provision of a ticketing and gating programme alongside the introduction of smart ticketing products. Phase 2 encompasses the bulk of the asset renewal programme that is currently under way across the network, ensuring that tracks, buildings, systems and stations are maintained and renewed in the best possible condition. Phase 3 comprises fleet renewal and potential signalling and depot improvements. Feasibility work on potential network enhancements and extensions will proceed in parallel with this programme.

1.4.3 Phase 2 of the Metro reinvigoration programme reflects the need to renew many of the essential assets necessary to the safe and efficient operation of the network. It covers an 11-year period from 2009/10 to 2020/2021, covering the network's operating, renewal and maintenance costs with certain enhancements. 90%-funded by the Department for Transport, it provides the base budget and consequent financial security for a decade of Metro operations, in return for the attainment of demanding operational, commercial and renewals targets. With Nexus now at the midway point of the programme, the DfT has indicated its satisfaction with progress to date by confirming the availability of a further three-year roll-forward of funding.

1.4.4 Between 2010 and 2016, £218million has been invested in the current Metro system. 24km of track has been re-laid, 44km of new signal cables and 31km of troughing installed in order to accommodate modern

communications systems for public address, CCTV and Customer Help Points. Stations have been modernised and 18 escalators and 12 lifts replaced across the network with more energy efficient models. The fleet of Metrocars has also been refurbished and there has been investment in safety critical systems such as the in-cab radio and traffic management systems. This investment has improved the operational performance of the system's infrastructure; resulted in no delays caused by rail breaks over the last two years, point failures now occurring every nine years rather than every three, and a 30% reduction in signalling failures. Due to the investment, resilience of the network to extreme weather and the climate has improved.

- 1.4.5 Successful delivery of the Metro reinvigoration programme has relied on the collection and interpretation of full and accurate asset information, thus ensuring that investments are made in the required areas of the business at the most appropriate time. The successful implementation to date of the programme confirms the ability of Nexus to manage and deliver complex and expensive renewals projects. The non-fleet element of the programme covers earthworks, bridges and permanent way, where the guiding principle is to adopt a risk-based and condition-based approach. The overhead line system is being upgraded to an improved specification. Station monitored communication equipment is being replaced during station refurbishment projects, with signalling maintained and upgraded as appropriate pending a decision as to future signalling and control requirements.
- 1.4.6 The programme will safeguard the operation of Metro at its current levels and future-proof the network for expansion, providing a strong foundation for the network to accommodate additional future demands.

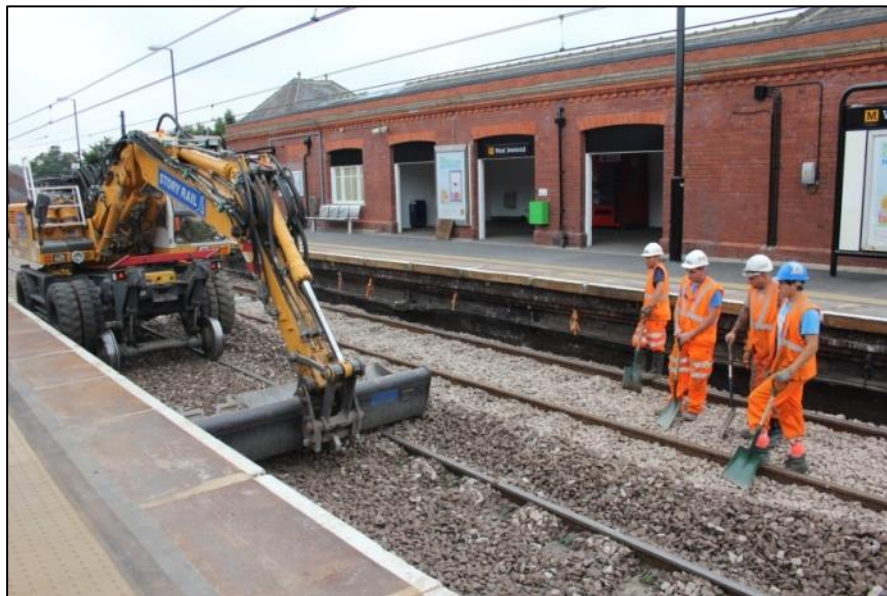


Figure 6 - Track Renewal at West Jesmond Metro

## **1.5 Benchmarking and Case Studies**

- 1.5.1 Nexus is a member of the international NOVA group of metro networks which aims to share best practice and achieve world-wide collaboration across the industry. In 2012, Nexus participated in an international benchmarking exercise which compared key performance indicators across a range of subjects, involving 14 medium-sized light rail networks.

- 1.5.2 Key performance indicators enable performance to be compared on a universally consistent and understandable basis between organisations. Structured KPI comparisons, based on the Harvard Business School balanced scorecard model, can be used for:
- Direct comparisons – to better understand the differences between operators
  - Internal motivation – setting targets for improved performance
  - Identifying high priority problems, strengths and weaknesses
  - Supporting dialogue with government, regulators, and other stakeholders
- 1.5.3 Benchmarking was undertaken around the following key themes:
- Growth, learning and innovation
  - Financial
  - Capacity provision and utilisation
  - Service quality
  - Reliability and availability
  - Safety and security
  - Environment
- 1.5.4 In terms of passengers carried per network kilometre, Metro's performance reflects the comparatively low density of population, longer than average distances between stations on sections of the network compared with other light rail networks, and competition from other modes of transport. This demonstrates the potential for the existing Metro network to accommodate significantly increased patronage levels.
- 1.5.5 In the context of other UK rail networks, a high-level of Metro comparison with the passenger rail network across Scotland is as follows, this highlights the intensive operation of Metro within a small geographical area:
- Around 50% of annual patronage
  - Around 20% of the number of the stations
  - Around 20% of the number of daily weekday departures
- 1.5.6 Metro scores amongst the lowest in terms of operated passenger capacity in relation to network size, indicating the capacity for potential extensions to feed into the existing network, and the comparatively low frequency of services outside of the central Newcastle/Gateshead corridor. This is in itself reflective of the lower than average levels of population density within accessible distances of the network as a whole. This highlighted spare capacity represents a major opportunity for Metro to extend its operations, often at marginal incremental cost, by making best use of existing spare network and infrastructure capacity.
- 1.5.7 Comparing network staff numbers with total numbers of passengers carried, Metro also fares well, reflecting the substantially understaffed nature of the network, but here operational factors come into play to a greater extent; for instance the London Underground could only function to the intensity it does with the level of station staff it employs. Nevertheless Metro's position in the study as the lowest-cost operator in terms of staff costs across a range of metrics per revenue car kilometre including maintenance, train service and station operations indicates that the network as a whole performs efficiently when benchmarked with its peers.
- 1.5.8 Energy usage by Metro was greater than the study average, both in term of kilowatt hours per train kilometre operated and per passenger carried. This reflects the traction technology used on the network and the disproportionate influence of 'fixed' energy consumption on a network with relatively few train

movements. Carbon emissions per passenger kilometre are also high, again reflecting passenger load factors and the use of outmoded rolling stock. Again this highlights the potential within the existing network to accommodate more passengers, and the benefits to be gained from the early introduction of a fleet of more energy efficient trains.

- 1.5.9 Metro has a higher than average level of incidence of crimes per million passenger journeys, although the actual figures are lower than are often perceived by users and non-users. Nevertheless the comparative data highlight the need for continued vigilance to achieve the safest possible conditions for customers and staff.
- 1.5.10 In terms of levels of fare evasion, Metro had historically one of the higher incidences, but the proportion decreased markedly over the period of the study, from around 8% of journeys in 2002 to around 4%. This has fallen further with the implementation of the gating programme at key Metro stations.
- 1.5.11 Fares revenue per passenger journey for Metro is around the average of the networks included within the study. When compared with the cost per passenger journey, it gives a quick view of the degree to which passengers fund its operations. This indicator is affected to a greater extent than others by the influence of national and local government policies towards the funding of light rail networks, alongside the demographics of the areas they serve.
- 1.5.12 In summary Metro currently performs well in terms of operational efficiency and costs; less so in terms of efficiency of use of the available network and passenger capacity, and energy consumption. Details of the outcomes of the benchmarking study have been used to inform various aspects of the strategy and to outline how these areas for improvement will be addressed by its implementation.
- 1.5.13 Included as Appendix 1 are case studies which provide background context on similar light rail networks elsewhere in the UK, the tram-train pilot, and one heavy rail urban network which has similarities with Metro. In each case, an outline of its history and operation provides a fuller picture of UK light rail development and the future plans for each network. They demonstrate how the development of new UK light networks has evolved since Metro opened in 1980, and what is planned for the future.
- 1.5.14 The case studies show that light rail is playing an ever-greater role in the delivery of urban transport solutions, and that new technology can enable Metro to employ proven solutions to deliver future demand requirements and customer expectations. Of particular relevance are the experiences of networks which are challenging conventional thinking on the boundaries between 'light rail' and 'heavy rail' operation.

## **Section 2: CURRENT AND FUTURE DEMAND**

### **2.1 Introduction**

2.1.1 Metro currently carries 40 million journeys per annum. Nexus' monitoring data shows that the main journey purpose for Metro passengers is work (42%), followed by shopping (20%), education (11%) and leisure (11%). The age profile of Metro users is shown in the table below. Nexus research shows that 47% of people travel five times a week or more by Metro, emphasising its importance for work and education trips. 18% of people use the network three or four times a week and a further 18% once or twice a week, showing the importance of the system to commuters and regular travellers.

Age	Percentage
Under 16	8%
17 – 24	20%
25 – 34	24%
35 – 44	14%
45 – 59	17%
60 +	17%

Table 2 - Metro Passengers by Age

- 2.1.2 Forecast increases in demand for Metro and local rail over the period to 2030 suggest that the existing networks will experience a continuing increase in passenger numbers, as has been the case in recent years following a period of falling demand for Metro. Whilst off-peak capacity is ample, peak-time trains are already at or approaching capacity over parts of the network. The future capacity challenge requires the flexibility to invest in additional or longer trains when needed to provide more frequent services to and from a more diverse range of destinations, and in infrastructure to cope with greater passenger numbers.
- 2.1.3 Any changes to the Metro network may generate potential issues of route capacity and increased pressure at key points on the existing network; hence the need for robust forecasting techniques to paint as accurate a picture as possible of how many people can be expected to use Metro in the future.

### **2.2 Historical and current drivers of demand**

2.2.1 The main factors influencing past and present demand for Metro can be summarised as:

- Population levels
- GVA as a measure of economic activity
- Levels of employment
- Rates of car ownership
- Road fuel costs
- Level of Metro fares relative to bus fares and fuel prices
- Size of the economic travel-to-work area
- Impacts of congestion
- Impacts of behavioural change

- 2.2.2 **Population:** Tyne and Wear's population dropped steadily from 1981 to 2001 before stabilising during 2001-2011. Recent census data shows that the population is now slowly increasing. The populations of Northumberland and County Durham have been similarly stable over the period.

1981	1.156 million
1991	1.123 million
2001	1.087 million
2011	1.104 million
2014	1.118 million (est.)

Table 3- Tyne and Wear population 1981 - 2014

- 2.2.3 An indication of **GVA trends over time** is provided by work undertaken by Durham Business School into long-term population and economic trends<sup>10</sup>. A trend of regional GVA over the period 1981-2011 is as follows<sup>11</sup>:

GVA Index (2010 = 100)

1981	61
1986	63
1991	74
1996	79
2001	86
2006	100
2011	101

Table 4 – North East Gross Value Added 1981-2011

Despite the disparity in levels of economic activity between the North East and the UK as a whole over this period, GVA has consistently increased over this 30-year period. One of the main historical correlations with heightened levels of GVA is higher rates of car ownership.

- 2.2.4 **Historical unemployment rates** have fluctuated between 4% and 12% over the period of Metro operation, with the median closer to the upper end of this range. The periods of highest unemployment were 1982-87; 1991-94, and 2008-12. Although there is some inverse correlation between rates of unemployment and propensity to travel, this is complicated by historic trends towards higher rates of car ownership during periods of lower unemployment.
- 2.2.5 The historical relationship between **road fuel costs** and Metro patronage is also partial. Lower petrol and diesel costs are normally accompanied by lower electricity costs due to commodity market linkages, so that driving costs fall at the same time as lower energy costs for Metro. There is some evidence that large increases in road fuel costs may create additional patronage on public transport, although the nominal 30% reduction in retail petrol and diesel prices between 2012 and 2016 does not appear to have had the reverse impact. Recently it is possible that the marginal cost of car use may vary from that historically observed, with the more widespread introduction of hybrid and electrically-powered vehicles, and a higher proportion of motoring costs being accounted for by servicing, insurance and parking.
- 2.2.6 The size of the **economic travel to work area** has increased over time as employees show a willingness to commute further to work, or need to because of the closure of local industries. This strengthens the case for Metro and local rail service extensions and enhancements corridors which extend the reach of the networks beyond traditional boundaries. The trend is quantified by a historic 28% increase in commuting into Tyne

<sup>10</sup> Long Term Employment and Demographic Projections - Report prepared for the Joint Planning Teams of Newcastle City Council and Gateshead Council Prepared by the Policy Research Group (PRG) Durham Business School/St Chad's College

<sup>11</sup> These figures refer to the wider North East rather than specifically to the NECA area.

and Wear between the 1991 and 2001 censuses – from 64,500 to 82,600<sup>12</sup>. There remain some issues of labour mobility caused by some people being unwilling to consider job opportunities in unfamiliar locations, a concern which the simplicity of Metro and local rail as a travel concept can help to address.

- 2.2.7 Data from the 2011 census gives an indication of the market for Metro and local rail services into two key regional centres, Newcastle and Sunderland. The tables give details of commuting trips from other districts within the NECA area<sup>13</sup> by main mode of transport. The data describes journey-to-work flows into local authority areas: not necessarily into city centres.

Originating Area	All Trips	Metro	Rail	Bus	% by Public Transport	% of Public Transport trips by Metro and Rail
County Durham	8682	93	726	862	19.3	48.7
Gateshead	19941	2215	164	4487	34.4	34.6
North Tyneside	24932	5016	321	3309	34.7	61.7
Northumberland	19289	340	739	2173	16.8	33.1
South Tyneside	6484	2703	143	278	48.1	91.1
Sunderland	6161	1277	111	713	34.1	34.1
TOTALS	85489	11644	2204	11822	31.2	53.9

Table 5- [Workplace Commuting Trips into Newcastle upon Tyne, 2011 Census](#)

Originating Area	All Trips	Metro	Rail	Bus	% by Public Transport	% of Public Transport trips by Metro and Rail
County Durham	15709	14	38	1000	6.6	4.9
Gateshead	5883	249	37	562	14.4	33.7
Newcastle	3220	360	36	244	19.9	61.8
North Tyneside	2207	163	20	75	11.7	70.9
Northumberland	1677	24	19	29	4.3	59.7
South Tyneside	8749	434	50	1039	17.4	31.7
TOTALS	37445	1244	200	2949	11.7	32.8

Table 6 - [Workplace Commuting Trips into Sunderland, 2011 Census](#)

- 2.2.8 The data provides some interesting insight into the strengths and weaknesses of the existing Metro and local rail offer, for instance the strong market performance of Metro on key corridors into Newcastle – notably from South Tyneside, where census data suggests that 41.6% of all workplace commuting trips are made using Metro as main mode, and the weaker performance for trips into Sunderland, where rail-based trips lag behind bus and car journeys. This highlights the potential that exists for Metro and local rail to make a greater contribution towards sustainable mobility across the urban area of the combined authority.
- 2.2.9 **Congestion** on the highway network is increasing, if not yet as serious or widespread as elsewhere. The worst delays often occur at those locations where there are the greatest level of job opportunities, such as the NewcastleGateshead Accelerated Development Zone and the Cobalt and Doxford business parks, Team Valley and Metrocentre. These are amongst the locations where network extensions could alleviate congestion and provide sustainable access for all. In central Newcastle, total traffic volumes have not changed significantly over a 30-year period, but this masks a 14% increase in car traffic and a 26% fall in bus movements. By contrast, traffic on the A19 close to the Nissan car plant has increased by 30% in the last 15

<sup>12</sup> Workplace and Commuting in the North East. Prof. Alan Townsend. International Centre for Regional Regeneration & Development Studies 2009.

<sup>13</sup> Source: NOMIS Official Labour Market Statistics



years, and on the A1 by 13%. Changes of this magnitude have resulted in greater congestion on the main Tyne and Wear river crossings, and on the approach to main town and city centres.

2.2.10 Sections of the heavy rail network, such as the ECML are also experiencing congestion due to insufficient capacity; these pressures will increase as demand for inter-city rail travel continues to rise and longer-term with the compelling requirements of HS2 and HS3. The proposals outlined in this strategy offer the opportunity to address both issues: more rail capacity through examination of the use of disused alignments adjacent to major transport corridors, such as the Leamside line and parallel Metro operations in the Team Valley area, whilst the use of redundant 'curves and spurs' by Metro in locations such as the Cobalt and Doxford business parks would address local accessibility issues in areas not hitherto well served by public transport.

2.2.11 Other potential influences of future demand include:

- Low/zero carbon futures – despite current oil price volatility, the long-term trend suggests towards higher prices linked to reduced supply. Just as significant is the related reduction in demand for oil-based fuels, as alternative, more sustainable energy supplies become more prevalent.
- Less reliance on cars, however powered, in urban areas – current high levels of congestion may be an intermediate condition pending more general acceptance of the need to move around our cities and towns in different ways. There is evidence that under-25s display different attitudes towards car ownership to those held by previous generations; should this behavioural trend continue then expectations of urban mobility will alter from existing norms.
- An increase in urban and suburban living – a drift towards rural areas has reversed and may continue to do so as more new housing is built on brownfield sites and in town and city centres.
- Population growth is likely to continue to increase – since Metro opened in 1980 the UK population has increased by 16%; in Tyne and Wear the increase has been around 3%, but could rise more quickly in future given existing pressures on housing and services across London and the south east.
- Changes in planning policy – national guidance states that “plans and decisions should ensure developments that generate significant movement are located where the need to travel will be minimised and the use of sustainable transport modes can be maximised”. All NECA planning authorities aim to locate new developments within walking distance of major public transport corridors where possible.
- Changes in retailing with the rise of internet-based transaction activity.
- The potential impact of disruptive technologies such as Uber and driverless vehicles.

## **2.3 Metro Demand Modelling**

2.3.1 Modelling of demand for new and additional public transport facilities has been extensively refined over time, with a standard suite of models and processes used to define levels of predicted demand which then form the basis for the production of a full business case. Modelling techniques appropriate to Metro are a fusion of general transport models and those specific to light rail networks. The principal modelling techniques used to appraise the demand for public transport and the rationale behind the methods applied in the production of a Metro demand study are described briefly below.

### **Census-based catchment area trip-rate estimation**

2.3.2 A basic method of demand estimation is provided by applying average trip rates based upon the population and number of jobs in 800 metre catchment areas surrounding new and existing stations. The Tyne and

Wear Metro Extensions Feasibility Study<sup>14</sup> applied a weighted average annual trip rate of 98 per year across comparable UK light rail networks<sup>15</sup> to apply to network extension corridors as follows:

<b>Network</b>	<b>Route length (2005)</b>	<b>Population within 800m of a stop (census uplifted by Temprow database)</b>	<b>Annual patronage (million)</b>	<b>Trips per person per year</b>
<b>Tyne and Wear Metro</b>	78	315,555	37	117
<b>Croydon Tramlink</b>	38	205,712	22	107
<b>Manchester Metrolink</b>	39	190,823	20	103
<b>Midland Metro</b>	23	121,250	5	41
<b>Sheffield Supertram</b>	48	160,835	13	80
<b>Nottingham Express Transit</b>	14	81,872	9	104
<b>TOTAL</b>	-	1,076,047	105	98

**Table 7 - Characteristics of UK Light Rail Networks**

- 2.3.3 For the existing Metro network, a trip rate of 117 per year was produced by this method of demand estimation. This method provides an historical proxy of average demand but does not take account of location-specific factors, or of the impact of known future developments.

#### **Passenger Demand Forecasting Handbook (PDFH)**

- 2.3.4 PDFH is the product of decades of research on rail demand forecasting on the national rail network, providing guidance on aspects such as the effects of service quality, fares and external factors on rail demand. It is recognised within the industry as the key source of evidence in this area, but it is not wholly compatible with light rail networks because of their differing characteristics. In the case of the Tyne and Wear network, its ‘heavy rail’ ancestry and the longer distances between stations render PDFH potentially more relevant than to other light rail networks. ‘Heavy rail’ trips between Sunderland and Newcastle Central are estimated via PDFH, for example. In the background work for Metro demand which inform this strategy the PDFH has not been used, although some of the assumptions which underpin it have been included within the parameters of the Metro demand forecasting model. Any improvements to the North East Rail network as identified by this strategy would legitimately be assessed according to PDFH criteria.

#### **Tyne and Wear Transport Planning Model (TPM3)**

- 2.3.5 Transport planning across the Tyne and Wear area has been based for some time on a modelling system comprising a demand model, a highway assignment model and a public transport assignment model forming

<sup>14</sup> Tyne & Wear Metro Extensions Feasibility Study. Arup 2011.

<sup>15</sup> DfT statistics for Light Rail Patronage 2004/05

a unified multi-modal modelling system. The public transport model uses CUBE/TRIPS software and the same zoning system as the other models listed above. A model such as TPM would have a role in providing evidence on the social and environmental benefits of new stations and extensions i.e. changes to the existing Metro network. In a critique<sup>16</sup> of TPM3 on the basis of its use as supporting information for a future business case, it was noted that it can be used alongside the direct demand model, as the outputs of the latter are unlikely to be comprehensive enough to provide the sole source of modelling assumptions.

- 2.3.6 It is for these reasons that the direct demand model is proposed to inform future business cases for additional Metro stations and potential network extensions. TPM3 could be used to provide contributing data in its capacity as a multi-modal validation tool.
- 2.3.7 Fundamental changes to the role and function of the local highway network, such as route closures and road-user charging, cannot be predicted at this time and will reflect future political, economic and environmental trends. They are considered as unlikely to take place over the short to medium-term. Changes of this scale would require recalibration of TPM3 to assess the resulting impact upon future demand for public transport. For the purposes of the strategy, no major changes to the local and strategic highway network going forward are assumed, however the aggregate impact across a wider area of individual network changes and road-space reallocation measures should not be under-estimated. Additional Park and Ride provision is under consideration at several locations; should this be implemented for instance then existing parking and traffic patterns could alter, with a likely outcome being a reduction in the amount of commuter car trips into urban centres.
- 2.3.8 There are currently no plans within the NECA area to introduce a hypothecated revenue flow linking parking receipts with enhanced public transport provision. An example of this elsewhere is the Nottingham Workplace Parking Levy, introduced under the enabling legislation of the Transport Act 2000. Here the 2016/17 levy is £379 per parking space and it is estimated that it will generate in an average of £14 million per year in nominal terms over a 23-year period (approx. £322 million).

#### **Road user charging and other demand-management measures**

- 2.3.9 UK transport authorities continue to gauge public attitudes towards the concept of road user charging. In central London, the daytime congestion charge is now an accepted element of public policy and both its scope and reach have extended over time, however in Manchester and Edinburgh local referenda led to public rejection of the proposals, despite the prospect of an accompanying funding package for transport improvements. Whilst the potentially major implications of area-wide road-user charging for Metro and local rail investment are noted, for the purposes of this strategy it is assumed that it will not be introduced in the NECA area for the foreseeable future.
- 2.3.10 Short of the introduction of a workplace levy or congestion charge, there is evidence that other measures in relation to parking and road-space reallocation may alter commuters' behaviour, in particular meaningful reductions in the amount of all-day parking. These could be introduced within the context of a complementary package of policy instruments.

#### **Energy policy and transport costs**

- 2.3.11 Future energy policy and supply changes in relation to Metro demand are anticipated to be at worst neutral and on balance favourable as resources become more constrained, and Metro is able to benefit from security of supply of electricity generated from a range of energy sources. European Union targets for road vehicle emissions of Nitrogen Dioxide and PM10 concentrations are likely to become increasingly stringent,

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<sup>16</sup> Tyne and Wear Transport Planning Model – The Denvil Coombe Practice 2012

with particular implications for the use of diesel-powered road vehicles within designated Air Quality Management Areas; this will help to boost the competitive position of Metro in these areas, where future economic activity is also expected to be concentrated.

## **2.4 Impact of Land-use Planning upon Future Demand**

- 2.4.1 Future decisions about land use are critical to the future of Metro and local rail, both in terms of the success of the existing networks and the potential and need for service and network enhancements. The NECA area, along with many others, has spent decades dealing with the consequences of new developments located in places that are hard to reach by public transport – this has resulted in unnecessary increased road congestion, and the under-performance of a fixed-track network that may no longer be located as close to as many trip generators as when it was originally planned. Thankfully there is now more awareness of the importance of aligning major developments with the required sustainable transport infrastructure, at both the national and regional level.
- 2.42 Alongside the decentralisation of centrally-imposed planning targets through the publication of the National Planning Policy Framework, land-use planning and the economic development agenda is now more closely linked at a regional and sub-regional level through the Local Enterprise Partnership framework. The North Eastern LEP area is coterminous with that of the NECA, so the future development of Metro and local rail networks needs to be planned and delivered in line with both the LEP's growth agenda and travel-to-work areas, and the strategic direction of the Combined Authority. In this regard the conclusions of the North East Independent Economic Review and the implementation of the Strategic Economic Plan are relevant to the development of robust business cases for Metro and local enhancements, aligned closely to the region's economic and planning priorities.
- 2.4.3 Land-use policy and the future development of the Metro and local rail network must therefore be mutually connected at all stages of development. The permanence and visibility of rail-based transport should be a powerful influence favouring the sustainable development of locations within easy walking distance of stations. Where major new development is proposed, wherever possible it should be located within reach of existing corridors; where this cannot be achieved then consideration needs to be given as to whether Metro or local rail is the best sustainable accessibility solution and, if so, how it can be accommodated and funded as part of the development process. This process has recently been undertaken during initial planning for the construction of the International Advanced Manufacturing Park (IAMP) on the boundaries of Sunderland and South Tyneside. The expansion of the further and higher education sector across the NECA area at locations well-served by public transport, in Newcastle and Sunderland in particular, has increased the level of travel demand by students considerably, with currently about 90,000 students and staff in central Newcastle and 15,000 in Sunderland<sup>17</sup> visiting daily in term-times, a substantial proportion of whom regularly use Metro and local rail.

### **High-level analysis of major land-use proposals adjacent to existing Metro network corridors**

- 2.4.4 This section considers existing Metro corridors. Potential network extensions are considered in Section 7. These proposals were taken account of in the preparation of the Metro demand forecasting study.

#### **Airport – Regent Centre**

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<sup>17</sup> Telegraph University Guide, 2011

- Airport - Increases in passenger and freight flows leading to further development at Newcastle International Airport (passenger numbers estimated to increase to 8.5 million passengers per year by 2030)<sup>18</sup>
- Callerton Parkway / Bank Foot – Proposed residential development of up to 3200 dwellings in three areas south and west of the Metro corridor by 2030<sup>19</sup>
- Kingston Park / Bank Foot- proposed neighbourhood growth area of up to 850 additional dwellings
- Regent Centre - potential redevelopment of the existing under-utilised office complex

#### **South Gosforth – Coast**

- Four Lane Ends - Quorum Business Park - build-out to completion of the business park
- Northumberland Park – further development of Cobalt Business Park and land north of station for residential purposes
- Substantial residential development between Shiremoor and West Monkseaton and north and south of Holystone, with new Metro stations at ‘Killingworth Moor’ and ‘Murton’ posited in the draft North Tyneside local plan

#### **Coast – Wallsend**

- North Shields – Smith’s Dock area residential and retail development
- Hadrian Road / Wallsend – Tyne North Bank Enterprise Zone industrial development

#### **Wallsend – St James**

- Ouseburn Valley commercial and residential development
- Science City development
- Manors - further student and associated developments surrounding/above the station and at King’s Manor

#### **Central Station**

- Development south of the station and substantial hotel and student accommodation provision across the city centre

#### **Gateshead – Heworth**

- Town Centre/East Gateshead/Baltic redevelopment completion
- 400 new houses in the Felling area

#### **Hebburn –Jarrow**

- Industrial and residential development on brownfield sites

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<sup>18</sup> Source Newcastle International Airport Limited Masterplan 2013.

<sup>19</sup> Source: NewcastleGateshead One Core Strategy 2015.

### **Jarrow - South Shields**

- South Shields town centre 365 regeneration

### **Pelaw – Sunderland**

- Mixed-use development at Monkton

### **Sunderland – South Hylton**

- City centre redevelopment
- Pallion - Claxheugh substantial residential development

2.4.5 Known major land-use planning proposals which are in prospect in south east Northumberland and north and east Durham have also been examined in the context of the additional demand that could be forthcoming for Metro and local rail services. In Durham the *County Durham Plan* suggests the following area of development that is potentially relevant:

- Seaham – 950 dwellings by 2030

2.4.6 Northumberland is proposing the following, either related to the Ashington Blyth & Tyne corridor, the Airport branch or the existing route at Northumberland Park/Four Lane Ends Park and Ride:

- South East Northumberland New Growth Point – incorporating the Blyth and Wansbeck districts and the Blyth Estuary Enterprise Zone.
- Large-scale residential development proposed in the Ponteland area

### **Analysis**

2.4.7 Forecasting land-use patterns helps to define future movement patterns across the region. The emphasis in planning terms needs to be on ensuring the active support of stakeholders at all levels that will help ensure that sustainable development is concentrated along corridors easily accessible by Metro, and that any network extensions are planned and promoted in the knowledge that Metro will facilitate access requirements arising from future land-use planning decisions. One of the trends since the opening of Metro has been an increase in the amount of development in locations which Metro cannot serve. The future priority in terms of large-scale development should be to maximise the use of brownfield and greenfield sites close to the existing network, then along corridors where there is consensus that the nature and scale of development is proportionate to a network extension, or where Metro would be key to opening-up sustainable transport opportunities. To strengthen the future prospects of the Metro and local rail network it is proposed that accessibility targets be established for major new development - i.e. easy and convenient access on foot to stations - thus ranking the accessibility of locations according to their ease of access to a frequent rail service.

2.4.8 In conclusion, there is likely to be substantial development across the NECA region in decades to come; this is reflected in the background data underpinning the Metro demand forecast. Wherever possible such development should be concentrated in areas that are currently served by Metro or local rail, or are capable of being served at a later date. This will be achieved through effective liaison between transport and planning disciplines regarding the individual and collective impact of land-use planning decisions.

## **2.5. Metro Demand Study**

- 2.5.1 To provide an independent forecast of future demand for Metro, Nexus commissioned a demand forecasting study in 2012 to provide a range of forecasting scenarios for the existing network and identified potential network extensions. The introduction of new route corridors has an impact upon flows along existing network corridors, mainly in terms of higher frequencies and increased journey opportunities.
- 2.5.2 The forecasting approach adopted in the preparation of the Metro demand study model was that of a direct demand, elasticity-based model which employs observed (historical) relationships between demand and explanatory variables from historic data on the existing network, combined with additional evidence as required from comparable UK networks to estimate future-year demand. In basic terms, the demand between any Metro station pair for a given ticket type is a function of the following variables:
- Fares
  - In-vehicle time for Metro
  - Headway for Metro
  - Endogenous variables, such as Metro punctuality, reliability, number of interchanges
  - Exogenous variables related to population characteristics and land-use such as employment, retail sales, regional GVA
  - Explanatory variables related to competing modes such as bus fares, car parking charges and supply, car times
  - Regular or one-off or regular events which have a predictable effect on Metro demand such as sporting events and engineering works
- 2.5.3 Station catchments were produced using the lowest level of spatial detail, Census Lower Super Output areas, with overlaps dealt with in individual circumstances. Each market segment was subjected to econometric modelling to identify statistically significant drivers of Metro demand with plausible behavioural properties. This process safeguards against importing behavioural evidence from elsewhere, and highlights the importance of specific local factors upon demand for Metro, such as student travel and concessionary travel.
- 2.5.4 Three separate scenarios were modelled as follows:
- High Growth – envisaging faster economic growth in certain industrial sectors
  - Core forecast – assuming a policy neutral environment and a return to economic growth
  - Low Growth – where employment and population stagnate at 2011 (base year) levels
- 2.5.5 The forecast change in passenger numbers on the existing network is shown below, excluding the impact of any subsequent network extensions. At the time of writing, the core forecast is almost exactly as predicted in terms of recorded passenger numbers.

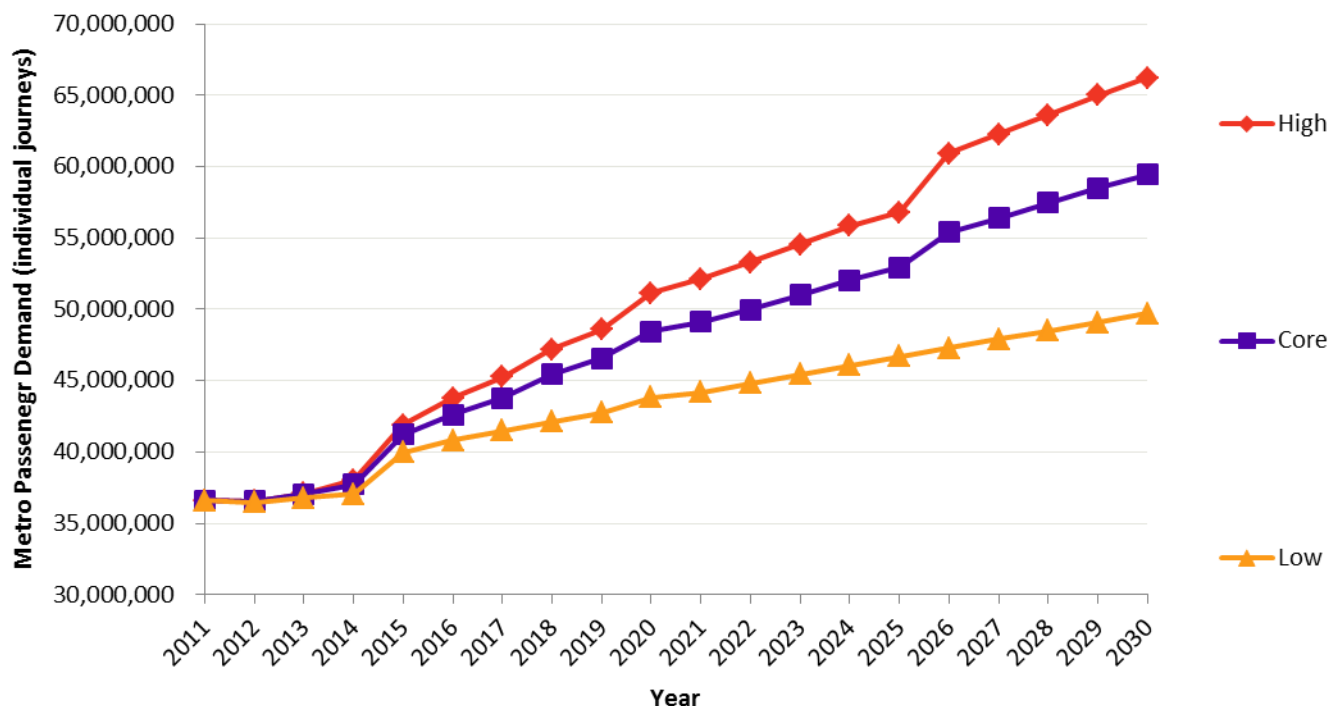


Chart 1- Projected Metro Demand to 2030 - Current Network

2.5.6 In terms of the existing network, the demand study ascribed routes as follows:

Corridor 1	North Tyne loop
Corridor 2	South Shields
Corridor 3	South Hylton
Corridor 4	Airport

2.5.7 Predicted rates of growth varied according to the predicted changes to population and land-use that relate to each corridor. The highest rate of growth was attributed to the South Shields corridor because of known development proposals located along it, with the highest growth in percentage terms – across all growth scenarios – anticipated for the Airport corridor, where continued growth in passenger numbers and associated employment has been forecast by the airport operator. The Pelaw to South Hylton corridor displays the lowest rate of passenger growth across all scenarios.

2.5.8 Translated into revenues, the demand picture alters, largely due to the assumption made that concessionary travel will comprise one of the strongest growth components. Whilst welcome in terms of social inclusion, an unbalanced growth in the number of reduced-fare passengers could impact upon network profitability in the long-term.

## 2.6. Demand for Potential New Station Sites on Existing Network

2.6.1 Alongside the network extension possibilities described in Section 7 there is some potential for additional stations on the existing Metro network. Stations such as Palmersville, Pelaw and Northumberland Park were inserted into the original network, although none have opened since Simonside in 2008, or are currently in planning.



- 2.6.2 New stations may be desirable for a number of reasons. The most common is that they respond to demand from adjacent housing or retail development that has taken place since the network opened. In other locations there may be strategic interchange opportunities that justify the provision of a station on a green-field site, whilst at others it may have been seen as too difficult or too expensive to introduce a new station at the time the network was originally planned.
- 2.6.3 The aggregate impact of additional stations has to be considered in terms of line capacity, signalling, additional operational costs, potential abstraction from adjacent stations and journey times for non-station users. The positive side of the case for additional stations in defined locations is in terms of the potential for developer contributions towards construction costs and net additional revenue, and associated economic, environmental and social benefits.
- 2.6.4 The sites identified in district plans are described below in alphabetical order. There are no firm plans to develop these further at present although they are kept under review particularly where there are potential event triggers such as adjacent developments or improvements to railway capacity.

#### **High Lane Row**

- 2.6.5 This site was referenced in the Tyne and Wear Local Transport Plan as a 'highway congestion intervention' and in Policy SA2 of the South Tyneside Local Development Framework as a location where the site will be safeguarded for the purposes of Metro station construction. The location lies midway between Hebburn and Jarrow stations, and could be potentially abstractive from both given the distances between them. The proposal has the support of South Tyneside Council and would improve sustainable access to this area of Hebburn. Dual-tracking of the South Shields route would provide a potential trigger for consideration of a station at this location; at present the single line formation with passing loops does not allow for any additional station calls. Dualling of the South Shields route is a strategy recommendation, and the circumstances surrounding this location will be reviewed as a business case for track dualling is developed.

#### **Monkton Fell**

- 2.6.6 A site between Pelaw and Fellgate at Monkton Fell on the Network Rail-owned Pelaw - Sunderland line is identified within South Tyneside Council's LDF, primarily as a means of improving public transport access to the adjacent Monkton Business Park. Were this to be progressed further it would require an analysis of line capacity as well as forecast levels of demand, because the route is currently operating close to its maximum capacity. Approval in principle from Network Rail would therefore be required before the proposal could proceed further.

#### **Pallion area**

- 2.6.7 The current Sunderland Unitary Development Plan – to be superseded by the LDF Core Strategy during 2016 - identifies two locations to the east and west of the existing Pallion station that the UDP considers may be appropriate to serving the accessibility needs of potential new development. It is understood that these will not be specifically identified within the adopted LDF.

#### **Murton Gap and Killingworth Moor, North Tyneside**

- 2.6.8 The North Tyneside Local Plan is proceeding towards legal adoption, and major housing developments are planned in green-field locations between West Monkseaton and Shiremoor, and between the A19 and Palmersville. The council is keen to maximise the use of sustainable access modes and two additional Metro stations funded through developer contributions have been suggested as a way to achieve this, if feasible in operational terms. The proposed site serving the Killingworth Moor development lies on a stretch of line

where Metro and the Ashington, Blyth & Tyne lines run parallel, presenting both potential opportunities and implementation issues in terms of the location of a station here.

### **Additional stations on the local rail network**

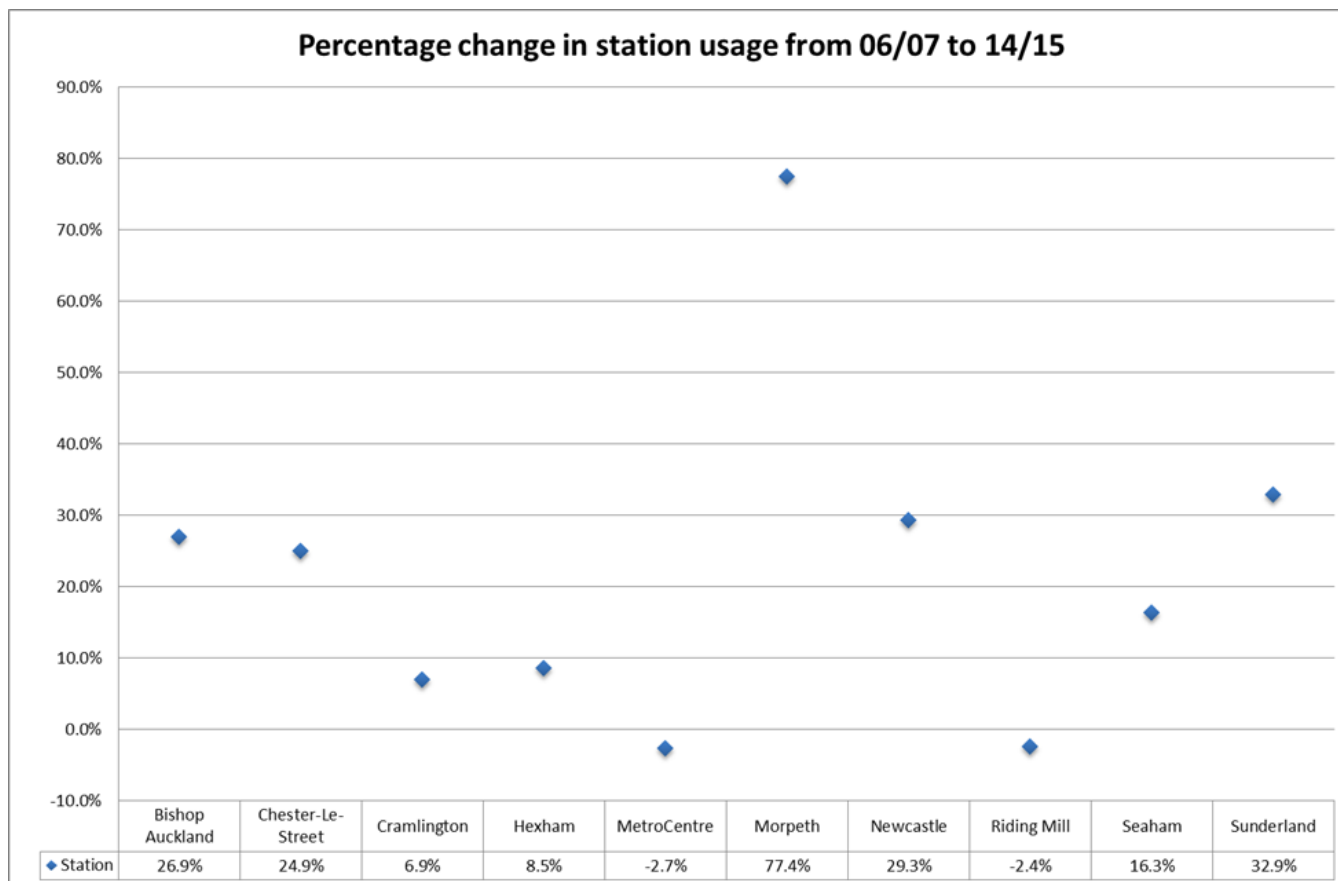
- 2.6.9 The potential also exists to open new stations located on the Northern rail network. Proposals exist for stations at Belford on the ECML north of Chathill, and at Gilsland west of Haltwhistle, and other locations where interest also exists include Killingworth and adjacent to the Baltic Business Park in Gateshead.

## **2.7 Demand for Local Rail Services**

- 2.7.1 The previous Northern rail strategy was predicated upon a 'zero growth' basis by the DfT which subsequent patronage increases demonstrated to be an inaccurate assumption, with growth of 33% on Northern Rail and 71% on Transpennine between 2004/05 and 2012/13. Franchised Intercity services have shown a similar rate of increase, as have Grand Central open access services to and from Sunderland. Firm estimates of future demand are not available over comparable periods with those for Metro; however the industry is continuing to plan for future increases in demand through the procurement of additional rolling stock and infrastructure improvements, from station enhancements to planning for the High Speed Rail network. Data supplied by the Office of Rail and Road shows that the number of local rail journeys within the North East decreased between 2013/14 and 2014/15 to 5.7 million but that this was mainly a result of methodological changes. In 1995/96, the corresponding figure was 3.2 million journeys. Tyne & Wear is the origin or destination point for almost 40% of journeys as it covers the two largest cities, Newcastle and Sunderland<sup>20</sup>.
- 2.7.2 The chart below illustrates the numbers of people using selected stations across the NECA area. It shows an average increase of around 25%, with Morpeth station experiencing a 77% increase. Some stations in the NECA area, such as Dunston, have witnessed even higher increases however these can be attributed to service improvements from a very low baseline figure. Some of the largest patronage increases have been recorded at locations such as Morpeth and Sunderland, where better long-distance services have been introduced over this period. At Chester-le-Street, rail journey times are the fastest of any travel mode especially during peak hours and this factor is likely to have encouraged demand for commuter trips. Elsewhere, the lower than average increase in trips relative to other area of the Northern network recorded over the period may be reflective of suppressed demand resulting from low frequencies and sub-optimal rolling stock.

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<sup>20</sup> Regional Rail Services Passenger Usage. ORR 2016.



**Chart 2 - Network patronage change 2006/07 to 2014/15 (all operators)**

- 2.7.3 Across the region it is likely that the speed, frequency and quality of local rail services may have stifled potential customer demand. Routes such as Middlesbrough to Newcastle feature journey times similar to those offered by competing bus services, which in themselves currently offer superior facilities such as wifi. Improvements in these areas could therefore release pent-up demand for local rail services which will be addressed by the plans of NERMU and Rail North. Network capacity, particularly along the ECML, is likely to be a continuing constraint, although there is scope for longer local trains to operate without the need for accompanying infrastructure improvements.
- 2.7.4 The draft North East Rail Network Study due to be completed in mid-2016, is part of a wider North of England Route Study due to start in 2017. The North East Study uses four national market studies carried out in 2013 as economic forecasts for increased demand for rail travel, and looks at two planning horizons; 2023 (for Network Rail Control Period 6 funding) and 2043. The forecast demand shows a best-case growth scenario which predicts peak demand growth into Newcastle of 38% in 2023 and 99% in 2043. The forecast demand then results in an indicative train service specification and an examination of the capacity of the network to accommodate these services.
- 2.7.5 The impacts upon demand and network capacity of the potential Metro extension corridors is planned to form part of the wider North of England study. This will result in a multi-modal (light rail and heavy rail) analysis of the constraints and opportunities of a wider Metro and local rail network. Further details of the potential service and network improvements under consideration by the North East Rail Network Study are listed at section 7.14 below.

## **2.8 Conclusions and Recommendations**

- 2.8.1 The conclusions of the Metro demand study suggest that future demand is likely to increase, but that the scale of that increase could vary considerably and could occur randomly or be linked to identifiable trends. Trends in land-use policy will be important in encouraging growth in demand for the existing network. Rail's greatest strength and greatest weakness are certainty, and immobility. It is normally much easier to locate development alongside an existing rail corridor than to build new lines to access remote sites. Close liaison with local planning authorities will be important to ensure that the Metro and local rail network can play a full part in meeting the region's sustainable transport needs.
- 2.8.2 The Metro Demand Study is currently being updated and linked into a wider model which will also assess the likely future demand for local rail services, providing a picture of aggregate demand for the wider network. The results of this exercise will be used to assess future requirements in terms of rolling stock and station requirements, and network enhancements.
- 2.8.3 The following recommendations therefore relate to demand for the existing Metro and local rail network:
- Monitor existing and predicted future demand for Metro and local rail closely.
  - Monitor regional and national economic and planning trends.
  - Maximise demand through the delivery of reliable services that meet customer requirements.
  - Liaise closely with the Local Economic Partnership and the local planning authorities across the Combined Authority area to ensure the optimum locations of development proposed within the Strategic Economic Plan and district local plans.
  - Liaise with district planning authorities to ensure that the principles and detailed design of developments are planned so as to maximise accessibility, with accessibility targets to Metro and local rail services applying to large developments.

Work with local authorities on the introduction of new stations on the existing network where these are justified by demand, sought by local communities, and are operationally feasible.

## Section 3: METRO FLEET RENEWAL

### 3.1 Context

- 3.1.1 A key outcome of this strategy will be the replacement of the life-expired existing Metro fleet with new trains which can deliver improved customer benefits, increased operational flexibility and operating cost savings, therefore ensuring the long-term future of the network. Analysis of the costs of further refurbishment of the existing fleet versus fleet replacement<sup>21</sup> suggests that a new fleet will be cost-effective over its design life, as well as being the only way of ensuring that Metro continues to meet user requirements, and takes advantage of new technology across every aspect of the journey experience. The study showed that the present fleet will offer continually diminishing returns over time, and alongside this trend the study cites the possibility of the unforeseen failure of key components across the fleet, once a critical age has been reached.
- 3.1.2 This section summarises work completed and in progress to identify the optimal new rolling stock specification, taking account of customer requirements, network constraints and possibilities, and new technologies. The rolling stock specification will focus on providing a new fleet of Metro cars which will provide a step change in customer experience and be future proofed to provide reliable and affordable Metro services for the next 30 years. In order to achieve policy objectives Metro must achieve high levels of reliability and comfort in order to build passenger satisfaction with the system. However given the Metro system's reliance on public subsidy and, because of the important role Metro plays in underpinning the local economy and the need to maintain fares at affordable levels, on-going operating costs also need to be kept to a minimum to deliver value for money.
- 3.1.3 The current Metro fleet was constructed in the mid-to-late- 1970s and has served its purpose well. During its 35-year lifespan to date the fleet has undergone two significant refurbishments, to renew technical equipment and improve the passenger experience. The second ('¼ Life refurbishment'), completed in 2015, has provided a further short-term lease of life, however current levels of reliability make it clear that the fleet is now approaching the end of its useful life and no longer meets the expectations of its users. The current fleet can also only be used on those routes where 1500V dc overhead lines are present, as it does not have dual-voltage capability. Whilst the maximum design life of the fleet is 2025 without substantial further investment, it is clear that the earlier the fleet can be replaced, the sooner the network can meet those expectations. Nexus is therefore aiming to replace the fleet in advance of this date, so that the wider strategy can be implemented as soon as possible, and in conjunction with the fundamental changes planned for the regional and local rail network in the 2020s.

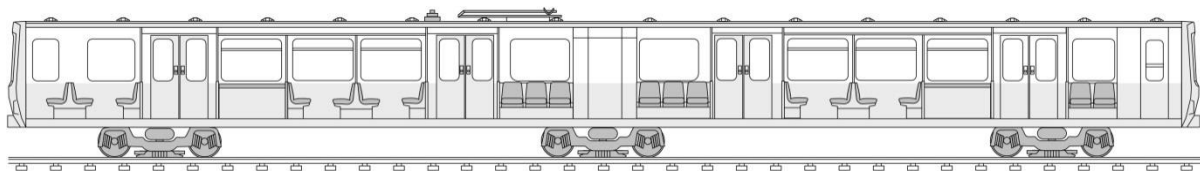


Figure 7 - Existing Metrocar side view

<sup>21</sup> NEXUS Rolling Stock Consultancy NEX 14/30 Option 1- Fleet Life Extension

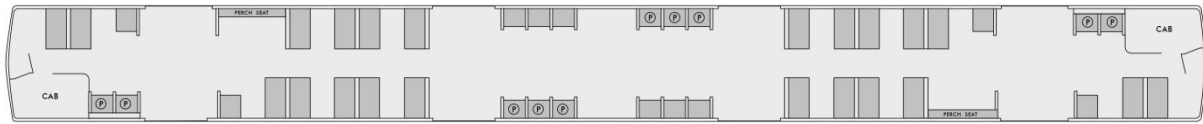


Figure 8 - Existing Metrocar overhead view

Parameter	Value
Length	28.4m
Width	2.65m
Height (excl. pantograph)	3.15m
Track Gauge	1432mm
Max Speed	80Km/h
Power Supply	1500V DC OLE
Vehicle Configuration	High Floor 2 Car Vehicle
Standing Capacity (6p/m2)	230
Seating Capacity	68
Tare Weight	40 Tonnes

Table 8 – Existing Metrocar Technical Specification

- 3.1.4 The existing Metro has inherent characteristics that could prevent an ‘off the shelf’ solution during procurement. Unique attributes of the Metro network which need additional consideration are the 1500V dc overhead line voltage and the 3.15m car body height. The latter presents a particular difficulty as no other light rail vehicle networks are currently utilising high floor vehicles of a similar structural gauge. Typically, other light rail networks have car-body heights of around 3.60m – 3.70m, 500mm more than the Metro fleet, highlighting the unique requirements of the Metro network, when compared to standard and readily available stock.
- 3.1.5 The cost of a new train fleet capable of replicating the current timetable is estimated to be in the region of £300 million. An associated upgrade to the signalling system may cost an additional £100 million, updated depot facilities could cost in the order of £50 million, and upgrades to the electrification equipment could add further £100 million: the total cost of a new like-for-like fleet could therefore be around £550 million. Although more detailed consideration of the opportunity for further fleet life extension measures had to be considered as part of a fleet renewal business case process (in order to demonstrate that a new fleet offers best long-term value for money across a range of metrics), the remainder of this section works on the basis that a new Metro fleet will be specified and procured to meet the aspirations and expectations of future customers.

- 3.1.6 A series of issues and ideas related to a new fleet is described below. These will be subject to further detailed technical assessment and design as the business case and technical specification works continue.

### **Overall vehicle construction**

- 3.1.7 New vehicles will probably be constructed of lightweight, potentially composite, material in line with current best practice, so as to reduce traction energy demand. Nevertheless, they will need to meet the crash-worthiness requirements of joint 'tram-train' type operation on Network Rail lines.
- 3.1.8 New vehicles will be of standard track gauge (1435mm), up to the maximum permissible width (2665mm), and capable of fitting within the Nexus network kinematic envelope in order to be used across the system, including underground. This latter criterion is a significant constraint to the use of 'off the shelf' rolling stock types as described above. The dimensions would also need to conform to Network Rail group standards, in order to be certified for use on that network.
- 3.1.9 Vehicle length is affected by a number of factors:
- Passenger demand, both now and in the future: should changing demand be satisfied by *more* trains, or *longer/shorter* trains?
  - Market research indicating passenger demand for more frequent services and better actual/perceived personal security.
  - Technical issues such as articulation, number of bogies and amount of maintenance required as trains get longer or shorter, as well as whether the signalling and control systems could accommodate additional trains if required.
  - Platform lengths; current minimum platform length on Nexus stations is 65m.
- 3.1.10 The length of light rail vehicles currently in operation varies widely between networks; some examples are discussed further in Appendices 1 and 3. In summary, trains similar to those currently operated offer the flexibility to be used singly or in pairs to meet passenger demands at various times of day, or on lightly-trafficked branches. Longer single-unit trains offer visibility throughout the train and reduced costs related to drivers' cabs, but are less operationally flexible in meeting varying levels of demand, and in terms of maintenance and performance regimes. As the fleet replacement business case is finalised, a preferred option or options will be identified which meets strategic requirements and customer needs.

### **Internal layout**

- 3.1.11 Current Nexus Metro vehicles are 28 metres long, and can carry around 230 passengers at 'crowded' levels of 6 persons/m<sup>2</sup>.
- 3.1.12 It is recognised that there is always a trade-off between amounts of seating and standing, and that naturally most passengers would prefer to have a seat. However, as the median time for Metro journeys is slightly less than 10 minutes, and given the forecasts for increased patronage in future, a case could be made for a lower ratio of seating to overall capacity. Alternatively, seating could be made more space-efficient, such as being 100% longitudinal, or with a proportion being 'fold down' seats, to assist with peak hour loadings.
- 3.1.13 The current fleet has 64 seats per carriage in their 28m length, or 2.3 seats per linear metre. This figure is somewhat higher than UK comparators, again supporting the potential for a reduced seating level in a new fleet, should this prove feasible (sometimes technical issues such as under-floor equipment can preclude this). However, Metro customers' requirements must be taken into account, before deciding the seating to

standing capacity ratio. Most of the light rail products currently available offer seating capacities within 20% of the current level.

3.1.14 It will also be essential to comply with all accessibility legislation and to provide adequate space for prams and pushchairs items of luggage, and potentially full-size bicycles (depending in part upon the outcomes of the current limited 'Bikes on Metro' trial). The existing fleet was not designed with the carriage of bikes in mind, and a degree of compromise is apparent in the terms of the trial that would not necessarily arise in the case of a new fleet (although the trial also relates to non-fleet aspects of the Metro network). Passenger feedback suggests that the current number of wheelchair spaces is adequate, but that additional 'flexible' space is needed for the other categories listed above, suggesting an inevitable trade-off between 'seats' and 'space'.

### **Passenger amenity**

3.1.15 Any new vehicles must include the latest standards of passenger amenity and information. These may change with evolving technology, and are likely to include:

- Information screens and/or displays
- 'Next stop' announcements
- Wi-Fi
- Improved temperature control
- Greater CCTV oversight throughout the train and entrances

### **Energy efficiency**

3.1.16 New vehicles will need to be highly energy efficient as the environmental credentials of transport come under increased scrutiny, and energy costs are likely to resume a long-term upward trend.

3.1.17 The current fleet is not equipped with regenerative braking, which is now standard on almost all new light rail vehicles. This can lead to a traction energy saving of around 15-20% depending upon the intensity of service being operated and the ability of the overhead power supply system to distribute regenerated energy.

### **Vehicle floor height and RVAR access, doors**

3.1.18 The issue of vehicle access height (i.e. high / low floor) has been considered. To ensure compatibility with the existing Metro network infrastructure, it will be necessary for the new fleet to have the same floor height as the current trains. This will also ensure compatibility with the dimensions of Network Rail infrastructure to allow for future additional use of their network by Metro services.

3.1.19 Current Nexus Metro vehicles do not meet the national regulations for disability access, the Rail Vehicle Accessibility Regulations (RVAR), which must be complied with by 2020. Various interim and permanent solutions to meet RVAR requirements are currently being investigated, some of which involve modifications to platforms. New vehicles must be RVAR compliant from the outset, and the most effective ways of achieving this will form part of the new vehicle specification. This is another sound policy reason to seek fleet renewal at the earliest opportunity.

3.1.20 The current 'plug' doors on Metro vehicles are not ideal in terms of maintenance and of health and safety, as well as disabled access. Door design is a further key issue that will be examined in the detailed specification of a new fleet.

### **Operating voltage**



3.1.21 It is proposed that the new fleet will have dual voltage capabilities, with the existing 1500V dc capability augmented by 25kV ac, to enable operation across the national rail network, as all new electrification will be to this national standard. An innovative hybrid 'bi-mode' solution may be required for Metro operation over non-electrified routes, and the availability of such technology will form a part of the vehicle variant option specification process.

### **Vehicle top speed**

3.1.22 Current Metro vehicles have a top speed of 80km/h, though this speed is only attained on certain sections of the network. The scheduled average speed over a full run is 36km/h, including station stops, on both Yellow and Green lines.

3.1.23 In terms of flexibility of operation, there may be some benefit in specifying a higher top speed of up to 100 km/h in a new vehicle. While recognising that worldwide Metro vehicles are generally designed for modest-speed, frequent-stop operation, a higher top speed could allow:

- Shorter journey times encouraging more longer-distance trips.
- The potential of operating more Metro trains on the Sunderland extension which has wider station spacing, or better compatibility with other future Network Rail joint operations elsewhere in the NECA region.
- Improved capability to recover in the event of network disruption.

3.1.24 The Sheffield 'tram-train pilot' vehicles, discussed in Appendix 1, are designed to operate on-street at standard traffic speeds, but then have a maximum speed on Network Rail tracks of 110 km/h. However, a higher top speed for a new Metro fleet would involve many technical considerations such as the impact upon permanent way, bridge structures, changes to braking and signalling systems, and an anticipated trade-off between maximum speed and rates of acceleration.

### **Economic assessment**

3.1.25 All options for a new Metro vehicles design, overall fleet numbers etc., will need to be assessed in terms of their 'whole life' economic cost/benefit ratio, and take into account the operational requirements and characteristics of the Nexus Metro network. As the business case evolves, the optimum number of new trains initially required will be based upon vehicle configuration, anticipated demand and the overall benefit-to-cost ratio. The initial business case is predicated upon a 'like-for-like' replacement of the existing fleet and current service patterns, with any network extensions considered separately at a later date on their own merits. The ability to call-off further batches of new vehicles in the future to meet evolving requirements will be an important part of the forthcoming vehicle procurement process.

## **3.2 Summary and Recommendations**

3.2.1 A new Metro fleet is essential to meet the wider objectives of this strategy and to address the shortcomings of the existing fleet which is now almost life-expired, with neither the reliability nor the flexibility required to meet customers' expectations and the wider objectives of this strategy. New trains will be equipped to travel over new areas of the local rail network with the ability to operate at different voltages, and be designed with customer requirements first and foremost to offer safety, accessibility and reliability.

3.2.2 The regional rail network of the future will be served by a variety of different train types, each of which display fitness for purpose for the journeys they will be undertaking. Drawn together by a visible and

complementary brand, these trains will meet demand for urban rail across the conurbation, with the existing Metro network at its core, reflecting the previous and continuing investment into its infrastructure.

### 3.2.3 Recommendations

- Replacement of the life-expired existing Metro fleet with new trains which can deliver improved customer benefits, increased operational flexibility and operating cost savings.
- Development of a technical specification to achieve Metro fleet renewal.
- Development of a robust business case to secure funding for a new Metro fleet.

## **Section 4: METRO TECHNICAL OPTIONS APPRAISAL**

### **4.1 Introduction**

4.1.1 This section summarises those areas, other than fleet renewal, that Nexus is assessing on behalf of the combined authority as part of continuing work into defining the specification of a refurbished Metro system with greater compatibility with the wider regional rail network. Elements covered in this section build on the work taking place as part of the on-going Asset Renewal Programme (Metro Reinvigoration Phase 2). Completion of this essential renewals process will see the delivery of a network that supports the operation of robust and reliable services, and which can accommodate future customer requirements and increased demand.

4.1.2 The main areas covered are:

- Power supply and energy recovery
- Depot – options for future stabling, servicing and overhaul facilities
- Signalling and control – the safe and flexible operation of the network
- Energy supply, efficiency and renewables – ensuring sustainable continuity of operation

4.1.3 Throughout this process Nexus will examine a range of options to deliver Metro safely and efficiently, with the capacity to increase its future sphere of operation both in terms of increased demand, any potential network extensions, and integration with regional rail operations. Decisions made will reflect safety, customer needs, growing the regional economy, value for money, safety and the intelligent use of new technology to add value and reduce operating costs.



Figure 9- Metro service at Airport station

## **4.2 Metro Power Supply and Energy Recovery**

- 4.2.1 Metro vehicles are currently powered by 1500 volts DC from an overhead line power supply, the only remaining example of this voltage in use in the UK. The other main power supplies in UK operation are:
- (a) 25kV AC overhead, used on all electrified mainline routes, including the East Coast Main Line, and many local rail routes.
  - (b) 750V DC 'third rail', used on the Southern network south of London for historical reasons, and on the Merseyrail network; it is proposed to progressively upgrade these to 25kV AC in the coming years due to operational and safety issues and is not an option for Metro to consider
  - (c) 750V DC overhead; used by almost all tram networks in the UK, e.g. Nottingham, Manchester, Edinburgh etc. (Blackpool and Glasgow are the only exceptions at 600V DC).

### **Current situation at Metro**

- 4.2.2 The nine traction substations and ten distribution substations are all working satisfactorily but are approaching the end of their design life; crucially, they are not equipped to cope with energy regenerated from train braking which in more recent light rail networks can be fed back into the network for other trains, as described below.
- 4.2.3 Nexus has commenced the renewal of Metro's existing overhead line equipment (OLE) on a 'like for like' basis, i.e. replacing worn catenaries and power cables with ones of identical design and cross-sectional area, using funds allocated from the ARP Phase 2. It is recognised that there will be a need for a further OLE upgrade in future, once sub-stations have been equipped with energy regeneration capabilities.

### **Energy Regeneration by Rolling Stock**

- 4.2.4 Trains require electrical energy to accelerate away from stations, but some of this energy can be recovered (or 'regenerated') from the braking system when they brake approaching the next station. With the current fleet, this energy is dissipated as heat, some of which is used to provide interior heating, but most of which is wasted.
- 4.2.5 Modern light rail networks worldwide seek to recover electrical energy from braking, which can be quite considerable, and can also helpfully smooth out 'spikes' in power demand on the OLE.
- 4.2.6 The energy is recovered by using motors and electrical/electronic systems designed to do so. The recovered energy can be re-used to feed recovered energy directly into the overhead line, for use by other trains. It is therefore proposed to bid for funding to install 'reversible substations', which will feed recovered energy from the OLE not required by trains running within the same electrical section, back into the National Grid. Initial estimates suggest that regenerative braking could reduce traction power consumption by 26%, however additional air conditioning units, if fitted to new trains and in use, would raise the consumption by 6%, leading to a potential net reduction of 19%.

### **Voltage change**

- 4.2.7 Consideration has been given to altering the Metro overhead cable voltage on the existing network from 1500V DC to a more typical value, either 750V DC or 25kV AC, at the time of fleet and substation renewal. However, both options would require substantial capital costs over and above those already required, and a significant period of total shutdown of the network. For example, conversion to 750V would require at least twice the number of substations, full replacement of all overhead cables, and most or all masts. 25kV AC

operation on the existing Metro network is not possible due to the increased 'air gaps' required between the cables and any surrounding structures, which could not be achieved on the Nexus-owned network, particularly in the tunnels due to the system's loading gauge.

- 4.2.8 There is no UK precedent for the use of 1500V DC OLE in the context of on-street light rail operations, although informal discussions with the then Office of Rail Regulation suggested that it may not be explicitly ruled out. However as there are currently no plans within the strategy for on-street operation, this option has not been considered further at the present time as if this were to proceed, then a separate low-floor fleet would be required.

#### **Fleet operating voltage**

- 4.2.9 Metro operation on the national 25kV network holds considerable strategic potential. Apart from the Metro network, only the ECML is currently electrified in the NECA area but this is unlikely to remain the case as national network electrification increases with time, and certainly by the Year 2060 design life of the new Metro fleet. Electrification of the existing Network Rail regional rail network to Ashington, Hexham or Teesside would offer opportunities for Metro to integrate more closely with longer-distance electric trains operated by other providers.
- 4.2.10 Nexus' access agreement over Network Rail infrastructure between Pelaw and South Hylton expires in 2032; this timeframe is also one during which the existing electrification infrastructure may need substantial renewal, 30 years after installation. Network Rail would be likely to consider the existing 1500V DC electrification to South Hylton (owned and operated by them with Metro as sole user) as an obstacle to completion of the Durham Coast route electrification through to Newcastle, therefore requiring conversion of the route used by Metro to 25kV AC in any event.
- 4.2.11 Converting the OLE infrastructure on the line from Pelaw to South Hylton to 25kV AC and electrifying the Durham Coast line south of Sunderland would create substantial benefits for all rail services using this corridor. Electrification leads to faster journey times due to the improved acceleration and braking performance of electrically-powered rolling stock which would benefit regional rail services if diesel-powered rolling stock is replaced. Currently, both long distance operators running services to Sunderland, Virgin Trains and Grand Central, have no option but to use diesel trains. 25kV AC electrification would enable these trains to also be formed of electric rolling stock, especially as the rest of the ECML is already electrified. It would also allow for more services to be diverted away from the ECML in times of disruption or engineering works as currently electric trains have to be "dragged" by a "Thunderbird" diesel locomotive. As benefits would therefore accrue at a national as well as regional level, the electrification of the Durham Coast at 25kV AC from Newcastle via Sunderland to Teesside is a NECA priority and it is important that future Metro rolling stock of the future is complementary to this objective in terms of its technical specification.
- 4.2.12 Dual-voltage trains exploit the capital cost-effectiveness of retaining 1500V dc on the existing Metro network while also allowing operation at 25kV AC, by easily and automatically changing between voltages when moving from one network to another. This facility is commonly found on Continental trains and light rail vehicles, such as those in Karlsruhe in Germany. It is also planned on the new Sheffield tram-train and an option for new Merseyrail vehicles (albeit at 750V/25kV rather than 1500V/25kV). The high capital costs and inflexibility involved in converting or providing different voltages on the overhead power supply are swapped for a more modest capital cost for the provision of dual-voltage equipment on the vehicles.
- 4.2.13 Whilst it is possible that routine 25kV operations may not come into effect for some time after a new Metro fleet enters service, installing dual voltage capability at the point of manufacture will be more cost-effective than a later retrofit, and offer full 'future-proofing'. The new fleet base case will justify the inclusion of dual-

voltage capability at the construction stage, on the basis that the dual-voltage equipment will be used over the majority of the fleet's life-span.

## **Recommendations**

4.2.14 It is therefore recommended that:

- Nexus retains 1500V DC operation for its own on-track network.
- Dual-voltage 1500V DC / 25kV AC capability is included within the new Metro fleet specification.
- The new fleet should meet national rail network crash-worthiness standards.
- The energy-efficiency benefits of regenerative braking should be considered in detail in the design of both new vehicles and renewed substations.
- Nexus and Network Rail should liaise closely in terms of plans for future electrification in the North East region.



Figure 10 - Metro electrical sub-station

## **4.3 Metro Depot Assessment**

4.3.1 The current Metro depot at South Gosforth dates from the 1920s. Numerous additions and refurbishments to the building have taken place over the years and the facility operates safely. The site is also in an excellent strategic position on the network, with two rail access points.

4.3.2 However, the current Gosforth Depot has a number of disadvantages:

- the building and infrastructure will become increasingly expensive to maintain and provide a modern, high-quality working environment for staff; a number of features are already identified as requiring capital investment in the medium term;
- the poor energy efficiency of the building is adding to running costs;
- few of the environmentally friendly features often found in modern light rail depots are present, e.g. combined heat and power plant, solar panels, water collection etc.;
- the existing depot is somewhat space-constrained for stabling the existing fleet size (subject to change, depending on the number and design of any new fleet vehicles);

- road access for staff and visitors is not ideal; there is no station attached to the depot as is the case with many modern depots, and car parking is limited, and
- low-loader access for taking train vehicles on and off the network is not possible at Gosforth.

#### 4.3.3 Options to reconfigure Nexus' depot provision include:

- Retaining the existing Gosforth Depot, with significant refurbishment to keep it 'fit for purpose', or even large-scale reconstruction.
- Construction of a brand new 'like for like' main depot in another location, with disposal of Gosforth.
- Provision of additional train 'out-stabling' facilities, irrespective of the main depot's location, to increase engineering capability and improve service flexibility, such as earlier starts and later finishes.

4.3.4 The new Blackpool Trams depot and the replacement Metrolink depot at Trafford are two recent examples of new depot facilities. Should a substantially reconstructed or completely new depot for Metro be required, this best practice may help to design a suitable facility. A new or altered depot may also offer the opportunity to consolidate all Metro operational and management functions onto a single site.

4.3.5 One or more smaller 'out-stabling' facilities will also be investigated. These could help to relieve space pressure on the main depot, while also (depending on location) providing additional flexibility in scheduling, or resilience in the case of major network disruption. Potentially different functions could operate at different sites, e.g. heavy maintenance at the main depot and light maintenance at an out-stabling facility. The rationale for housing an entire Metro fleet at a single location may be less strong in the future with increased train reliability and the possibility of network extensions providing the opportunity for additional stabling locations. There may be scope for smaller secure stabling facilities at termini such as South Shields.

### **Recommendations**

4.3.6 It is recommended that further work be undertaken to evaluate options for the long-term depot and stabling requirements of a Metro fleet. This work should be split into the following work-streams:

- Establishment of options and outline costings to refurbish the existing Gosforth Depot to provide long-term sustainability of operations.
- Estimate the costs of a brand new main depot.
- Identify a policy position about alternative sites for a new main depot, or additional out-stabling facilities.

4.3.7 The conclusions of these work-streams will then be fed into detailed modelling of timetables, staff rostering, resilience issues, and the requirements of the new fleet, with a view to making a final recommendation as to the preferred solution as part of the full business case for fleet renewal.








Figure 11 - Metro Depot, Gosforth



## 4.4 Signalling and control

4.4.1 Decisions around signalling and control technology will be based on the following key principles:

- Total compliance with safety requirements.
- Best use of assets by facilitating maximum throughput of services.
- Appropriate use of new technologies, where justified through cost benefit analysis, and the improvements that can be safely delivered through their use.
- Compatibility with Network Rail protocols and equipment, and / or the flexibility to move safely and seamlessly between different systems.

Grade of Automation	Type of train operation	Setting train in motion	Stopping train	Door closure	Operation in event of Disruption
GoA 0 	Driver with no ATP	Driver	Driver	Driver	Driver
GoA 1 	ATP with driver	Driver	Driver	Driver	Driver
GoA 2 	ATP and ATO with driver	Automatic	Automatic	Driver	Driver
GoA 3 	Driverless	Automatic	Automatic	Train attendant	Train attendant
GoA 4 	UTO	Automatic	Automatic	Automatic	Automatic

ATP: Automated Train Protection      ATO: Automated Train Operation      UTO: Unattended Train Operation

Chart 3 - Train Control Automation Options

4.4.2 Several 'grades' of signalling and control automation exist on light rail networks, which have been defined by the International Association of Public Transport (UITP) as shown in the chart below. These categorisations are 'in principle', and do not specify any particular technology to deliver each grade of automation.

4.4.3 GoA0 is typically used in tram/on-street operation. GoA1 is the 'traditional' heavy-rail mode of operation. GoA2 is operated on many London Underground lines. A driverless GoA3 system operates at the Docklands Light Railway. GoA4 Metro networks exist in many countries outside the UK, but there are currently none in the UK, although Glasgow Subway operations will switch from the current GoA2 to GoA4 over time, once the signalling and control systems have been fully tested and the new train fleet is in service.

### Current Nexus Metro Operation

4.4.4 Metro currently operates on a standard track-circuit-based fixed-block signalling system with 2- or 3-aspect lit signals, inherited from the former heavy rail network on which it is based.



- 4.4.5 Metro vehicle control is currently fully driver-operated (UITP: GoA1). Automatic Train Protection (ATP) is provided by a system-specific 'INDUSI' braking system which applies the emergency brakes if a signal is passed at red. This differs from the standard Network Rail TPWS/AWS system, and INDUSI trackside equipment was installed additionally to TPWS on the Sunderland extension, as the two systems do not interfere with each other.
- 4.4.6 A 'Positive Train Identification' system (PTI) controls the signals at Metro stations, and also the various switches and crossings around the network. Elsewhere signals operate automatically using a standard fixed-block track-circuit operation.
- 4.4.7 There is currently a minimum headway of 3 minutes on the central corridor during peak times. It is understood that the current Metro signalling system could permit 2½ minute headways, but this would require a technical study to confirm: passenger alighting and boarding behaviours also contribute towards overall route capacity.

#### **Infrastructure and Systems Replacement**

- 4.4.8 Asset Renewal Programme (Phase 2) funds are being used to:
- Replace the radio communications system with a "Tetra" system, with a 10-15 year lifespan.
  - Replace the PTI system – again the new system's lifespan will be 10-15 years.
  - Fund an on-going programme of testing and replacement of signalling cables where necessary, both along the track and within interlocking control boxes.
- 4.4.9 Nexus anticipates the requirement for a more substantial renewal of the signalling system in the mid-2020s. It is also anticipated that the INDUSI ATP system will need to be replaced in the mid-2020s, following an earlier refurbishment in the mid-2000s.
- 4.4.10 There is a convergence of requirements for signalling and communications systems renewal and replacement in the mid-2020s, around the same time that any new fleet would be likely to enter service. This offers the opportunity to consider the need for any changes to the existing signalling, control and communications system for Metro. There is potential for increased capacity and more efficient operation, while also allowing for a considerable reduction in lineside equipment and hence maintenance costs, as well as driver staffing costs. A new fleet in service in the 2020s will have a life-span of several decades and while it is possible to retrofit vehicles as part of a complete change of signalling/control system, this would be more cost-effective if done at the time of manufacture. However any significant change in this area would involve significant capital expenditure and potential service disruption, and will only be proposed if there is clear justification in terms of increased passenger demand, requirement for reduced operational costs, or both.
- 4.4.11 Evaluation of technical options is under way as an element of the business case process. Driverless train operation presents significant challenges on the Metro network, as it is not 'closed' or segregated like the Docklands or Glasgow systems – there are six level crossings, further footway and bridleway crossings, and substantial interfaces with neighbouring public and private property. On the national rail network, the future-standard European Train Control System (ETCS) has been pushed back to a 2022 implementation along the East Coast main line at the earliest, with roll-out starting in southern England and progressing northwards. ETCS involves in-cab signalling with no line-side signals, and this Network Rail programme includes the retro-fitting of freight engines with cab equipment, indicating that the subsequent fitment of modern cab signalling is less costly and intrusive than previous versions. In this scenario Nexus can afford to be more 'technology-agnostic' in terms of vehicle specification, and there may be a better case for renewing

the existing signalling on Nexus-owned infrastructure on a like-for-like basis, taking account of the delays in ECTS roll-out and the need for driver vigilance against potential track incursions. Also, the varied nature of future network operations envisaged by this strategy suggests the need for driver-operated trains to deal with different standards and protocols that system extensions will necessitate.

- 4.4.12 Nexus has recently commissioned a condition survey of the existing signalling infrastructure, and has sought independent advice as to the signalling and control options available for future Metro operation. The outcomes of this work will be used to evaluate which option or combination of the options discussed above is likely to be most appropriate.

### **Recommendations**

- 4.4.13 Research into the optimum signalling and control protocols for Metro will need to continue as part of the new train fleet business case specification, ensuring that the chosen solution is safe, value for money, flexible, and not incompatible with similar control systems as may be introduced in the future by Network Rail.

## **4.5 Energy Supply, Efficiency and Renewables**

- 4.5.1 The amount of energy consumed by Metro per *passenger*-kilometre is consistently amongst the highest of its worldwide peer group<sup>22</sup>. This is a result of:

- lack of regenerative braking and general inefficiency of Metro's 1970s-design vehicles
- relatively low service frequency
- relatively low passenger loadings on Metro outside peak hours

Metro performs better in statistics on its energy usage per *train*-kilometre, and is in the best-performing third in terms of overall energy efficiency (i.e. lowest losses) of its operations.

- 4.5.2 In the medium/long term, as a large consumer of electricity, Nexus faces a potential financial threat from electricity price rises; the Community of Metros (CoMET) reported in 2012<sup>23</sup> that almost all member Metro networks worldwide expect electricity prices to increase substantially in the medium to long term.

- 4.5.3 How Nexus uses energy for operating Metro will be important in terms of containing costs, demonstrating environmental sustainability, and possibly in terms of attracting future public sector funding. There is an opportunity for Metro to become a light rail exemplar in sustainable energy use, and energy efficiency across all aspects of its operations as the infrastructure is progressively renewed and older less efficient assets are retired from service. The performance of new rolling stock offers the opportunity for substantial energy cost savings due to its increased energy efficiency, especially if regenerative technologies are employed. There is also the opportunity to increase the environmental performance of other network infrastructure, for instance through the installation of solar panels.

### **Recommendations**

- 4.5.4 It is recommended that:

- Work continues on an on-going basis to identify and implement cost-effective energy-saving opportunities on Metro's existing network and infrastructure
- More work be carried out on the opportunities for renewable energy generation

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<sup>22</sup> CoMET/NOVA report "CO2 Competitiveness" 2009, and later updates

<sup>23</sup> CoMET "Energy Saving Strategies" 2012

- Given its long-term criticality to Metro operation, a formal Energy Strategy be established

#### **4.6 Essential Renewals post-2021**

- 4.6.1 Repair, refurbishment and replacement of the Metro network is an ongoing process, as is the case with all railway networks. The Metro Reinvigoration Programme is designed to progressively replace and renew life-expired assets to reduce the risks of infrastructure failure, improve operational reliability and efficiency, and ensure that the system can continue to operate in perpetuity. Despite the large amount of investment during the period since 2010, Nexus has identified that further essential renewals will be required in the period beyond 2021, when the current government-funded £350m programme comes to an end.
- 4.6.2 Nexus is therefore preparing a business case to obtain government funding for investment in the Metro infrastructure it owns, for a further period. This investment will continue to be based on asset condition, as has been the case throughout the renewals process to date. The preferred option under development outlines the need for a further £518.5m of funding over the period 2021-2035, covering the following key areas: civil engineering works; permanent way; signalling; level crossings; depot equipment; plant; mechanical and electrical; stations; power; capital maintenance, and ticketing and gating. Expenditure on signalling, taking account of the options outlined above is expected to form a major element of this draft programme.
- 4.6.3 By attracting further long-term investment for essential renewals and maintenance of the Metro infrastructure, the network will maintain its resilience, help ensure future reliability, and support NECA's aspirations for reducing congestion and encouraging more sustainable forms of transport.

#### **Recommendations**

- 4.6.4 It is recommended that work continues to full business case status on the continuation of the Metro essential renewals programme post-2021.

## Section 5: DELIVERING EXCELLENT CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

### 5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 Expanding the Metro and local rail customer base is critical to the region's economic and social future, but without a stable and expanding customer base, the economic rationale for service improvements and network extensions can be weakened. Metro has built up a strong brand and reputation with its customers across four decades: the challenge is to maintain and build on this, and to extend this into a clear Metro and local rail brand across the region, through the closer integration of light rail and local rail services portraying a distinctive and positive image. This will be accompanied by a policy of continuous improvement to the range and quality of facilities offered to customers.

5.1.2 This section of the strategy explains how customer service requirements will be identified and implemented so as to continually develop the market for rail-based transport across a wider area of the NECA region. Required improvements will be identified through the outcomes of customer research, including the views of non-users, and the application of best practices from other urban rail networks world-wide. A blueprint for all customer-facing elements will be established to ensure a consistent and high quality product across the current network and any future network extensions. This section examines the areas of customer requirements; fares and ticketing; information provision; station facilities, and Park and Ride.

5.1.3 Establishing and maintaining customer loyalty across all activities is essential:

*“With rising competition, keeping them satisfied may not be enough; organisations should rather work towards maximising customers’ satisfaction as literature proves that only the “very satisfied” customers will be loyal”<sup>24</sup>*

5.1.4 Although all aspects of customer service are important, some factors are consistently rated more highly than others over a period of time. Comparison of the relative importance of customer service attributes cited by Metro users has revealed the most consistently significant were:

- (i) Reliability
- (ii) Punctuality
- (iii) Station cleanliness
- (iv) Value for money
- (v) Train cleanliness
- (vi) Station condition
- (vii) Staff availability
- (viii) Passenger behaviour
- (ix) Train running information

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<sup>24</sup> *Understanding Customer Relationships*. Ipsos MORI 2008

Research undertaken by Transport Focus on other train operators results in similar findings, with personal security also an important factor.

## 5.2 Customer Satisfaction

- 5.2.1 Nexus undertakes passenger satisfaction surveys across the Metro system to gauge what passengers are thinking about the Metro service. The chart below shows overall satisfaction, marked as overall scores out of 10, from 2012/13 through to 2015/16. This corresponds with an increasing number of incidents and reliability issues on the system.

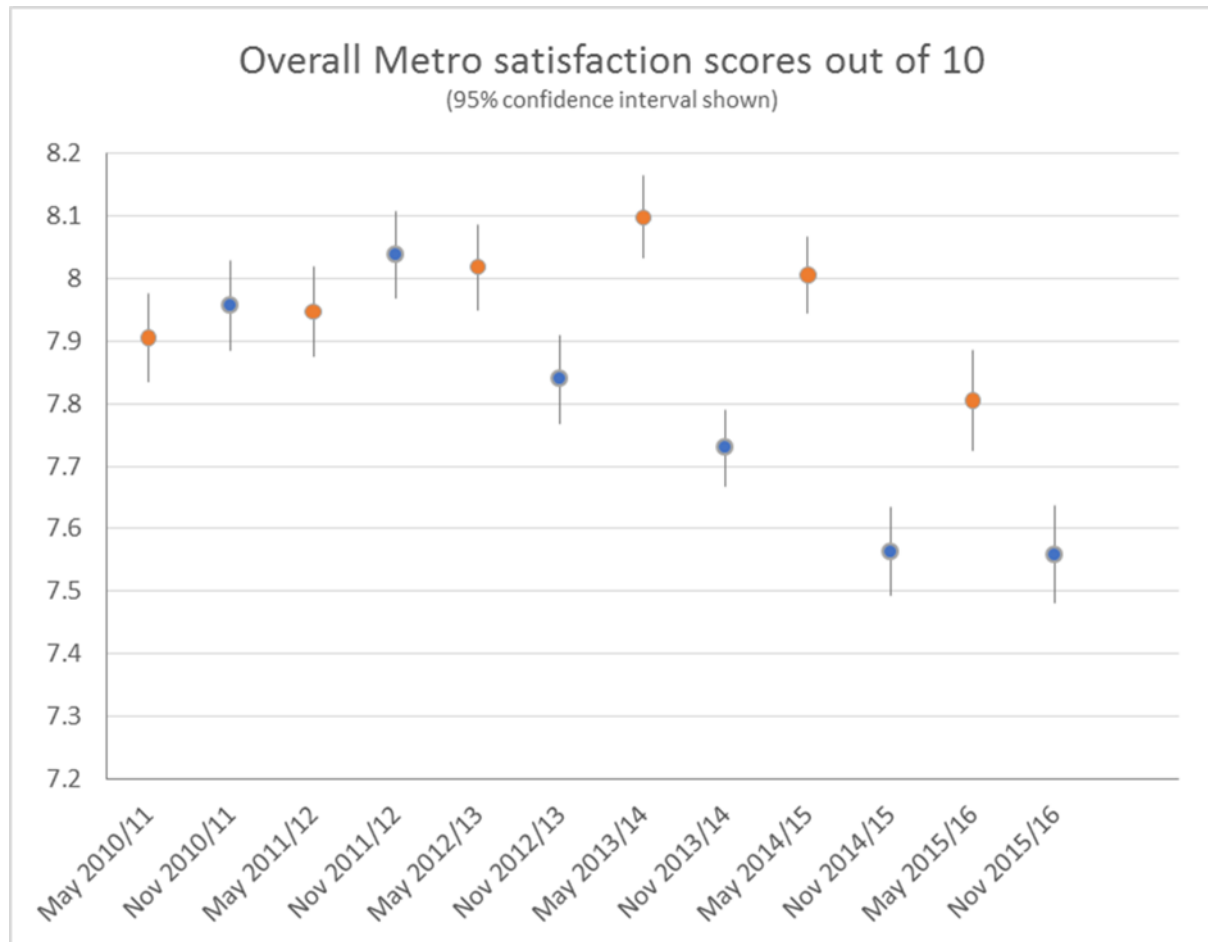


Chart 4 - Metro Passenger Satisfaction Scores

- 5.2.2 The chart below adds to this by ranking the satisfaction of various elements of customer service. It shows the importance of the reliability and punctuality of services in determining customer satisfaction.

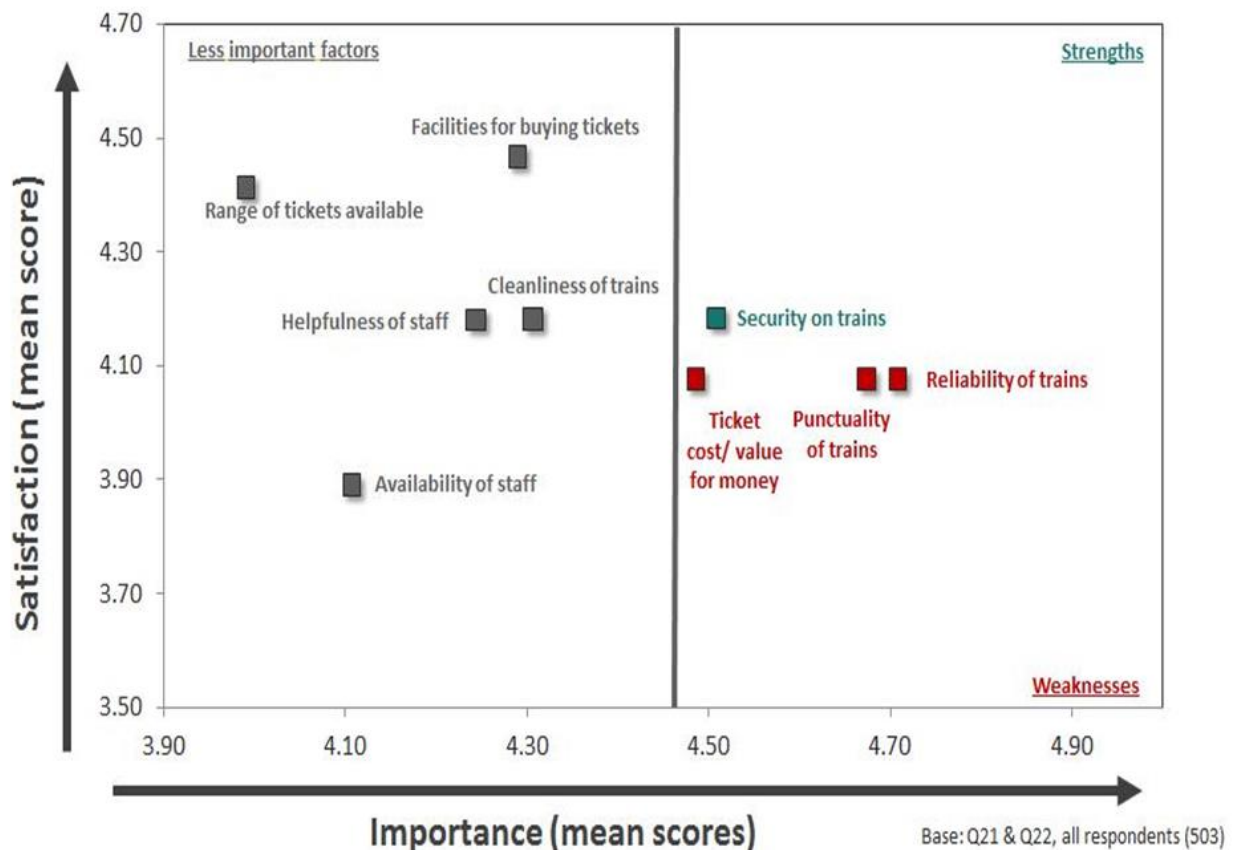


Chart 5 - Relative Importance of Metro Service Attributes

5.2.3 The chart below sets out passenger satisfaction with the reliability of Metro between 2010/11 and 2015/16. The key issue arising is the increase in the proportion of people who have become more dissatisfied with reliability, from 2% in 2010 to 17% in 2015. Above all else, passengers want trains that are reliable. The reliability of trains is extremely important to passengers, and this feeds through to overall views on service reliability, with consequential adverse effects on the reputation of the Metro due to the unreliability of the current fleet. This highlights the urgent need for a new Metro fleet that will restore train reliability to the standards rightly expected by customers.

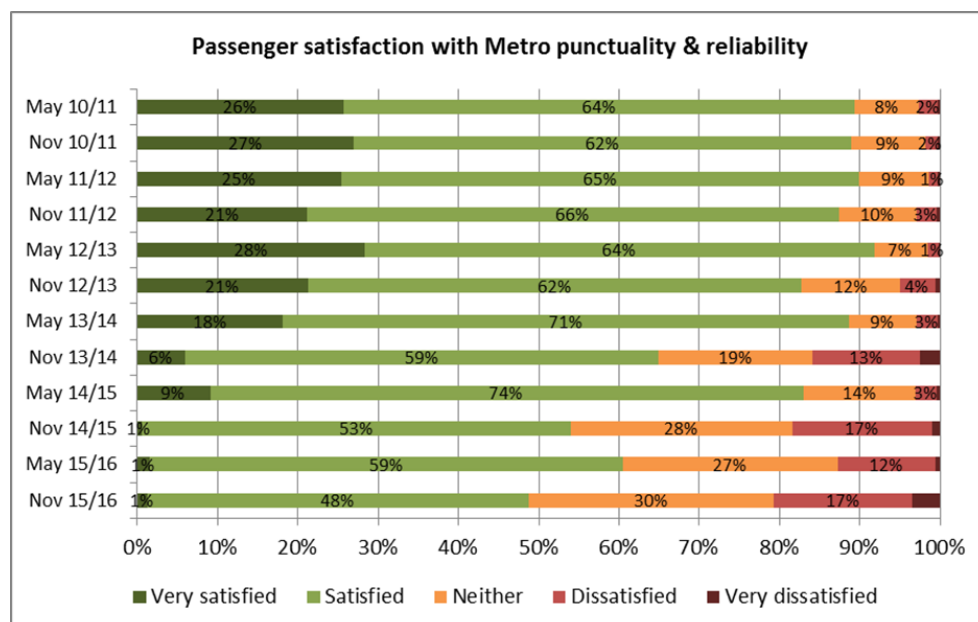


Chart 6 - Passenger Satisfaction with Punctuality and Reliability 2010-2015

5.2.4 These trends are amplified in research undertaken by Transport Focus<sup>25</sup> which shows that the biggest driver for passenger satisfaction scores was the reliability and punctuality of the train, but that the way in which train companies deal with these delays is more significant in affecting users' dissatisfaction with service delivery. This area of customer service will be an important priority for the delivery of the future Metro and local rail network.

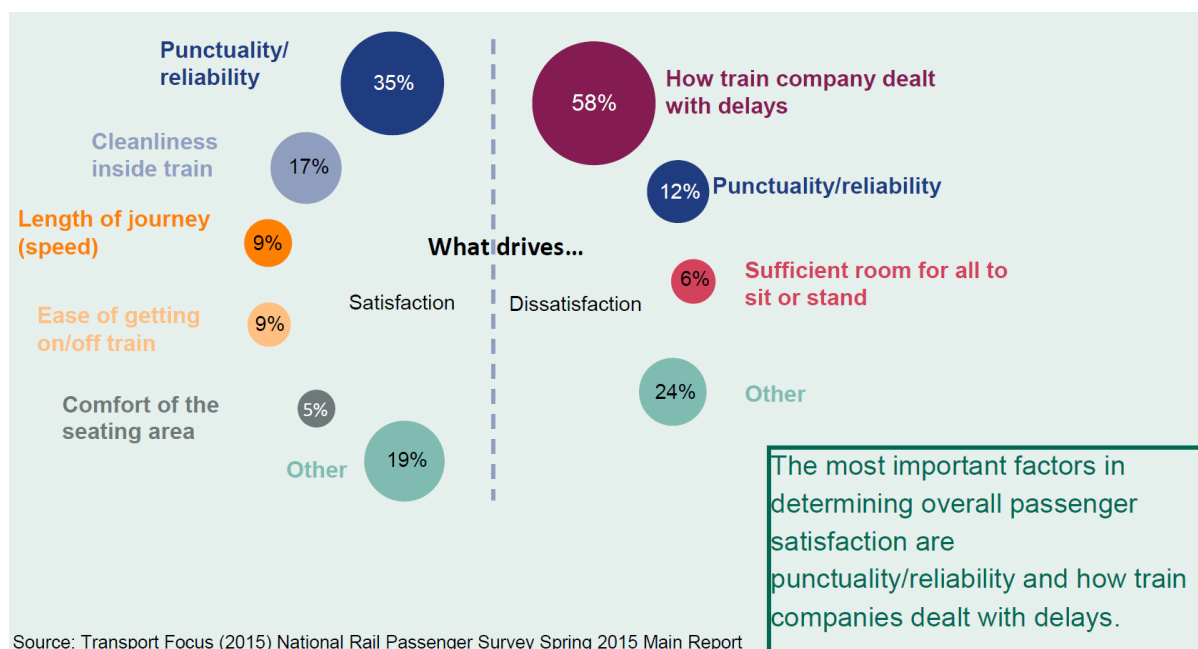


Figure 12- Factors Determining Passenger Satisfaction

### 5.3 Train Service Requirements

5.3.1 Customers are always likely to express a preference for service improvements that offer more frequent services, or over a longer period of each day than at present. Some customer aspirations, such as 24-hour operation, may not be justified by demand or practicable, given the need for network maintenance. Other requests, such as for earlier trains to Newcastle Airport or increases in service frequencies over certain routes or at particular times of day may potentially be justified, and should then be considered on their merits and feasibility.

#### Constraints for Metro service changes

5.3.2 The following constraints are currently assumed as fixed for the purposes of future service patterns and frequencies. They can be altered or removed in future if justified by customer demand or operational requirements, but at present form part of the base case demand and operating scenario. Signalling options could be varied to meet future requirements, and platform lengths could also be increased, although if not all can be altered, then the rationale for lengthening any must be questionable. The assumed base-case constraints are therefore:

- Maximum signalling capacity in the central corridor of 20 trains per hour in each direction.
- Existing platform lengths are retained, capable of accommodating train lengths of up to 60m.

<sup>25</sup> Rail users' drivers of satisfaction; Transport Focus 2015.

- 5.3.3 Taking the existing fleet as a benchmark, the above constraints indicate a maximum of 2560 seats and a theoretical total capacity of around 12600 passengers per hour (crush loading) in each direction through the central South Gosforth to Pelaw corridor. In practice the maximum hourly capacity will be substantially lower, as services operating full and standing would not exploit the maximum theoretical line capacity because of extended station dwell times. Such levels of crush loading would also result in unpleasant conditions in which to travel for any length of time, particularly for more vulnerable passengers. Nevertheless this level of capacity offers some scope for accommodating increased levels of demand – whilst recognising that central Newcastle and Gateshead are not the focus of all trips made on Metro.
- 5.3.4 Fewer constraints would exist on other sections of the network where levels of demand are historically lower. In terms of comparisons with other UK networks, most of which include elements of street-running operations, individual route and combined route frequencies are generally comparable. Over the central sections of the Manchester, Sheffield, Docklands, Tramlink and Tyne and Wear networks, routes combine to at least double the frequencies within central sections, as shown in the table below.

Network	Services per hour (daytime)	Services per hour (evening)
Glasgow Subway	15	7.5
Manchester Metrolink	5	4
Sheffield Supertram	6	3
West Midlands Metro	7.5	4
Nottingham Tram	10	6
Docklands Light Railway	6 to 15	6
London Tramlink	4 to 8	4
Tyne and Wear Metro	5	4

Table 9 – UK Light Rail network service frequencies

- 5.3.5 The table above shows a wide variation in frequencies along light rail corridors and a broad average across these networks of eight services per hour daytime and five services per hour during evenings. On the local Northern rail network by comparison, service frequencies are less frequent, with only Metrocentre to Newcastle offering four trains per hour during daytimes. Working with Rail North and the NERMU, a future priority will be to ensure that wherever justified by demand and operationally feasible, more of the local rail network within the NECA area operates at frequencies comparable to those operated across the Metro network.

## 5.4 Passenger journeys



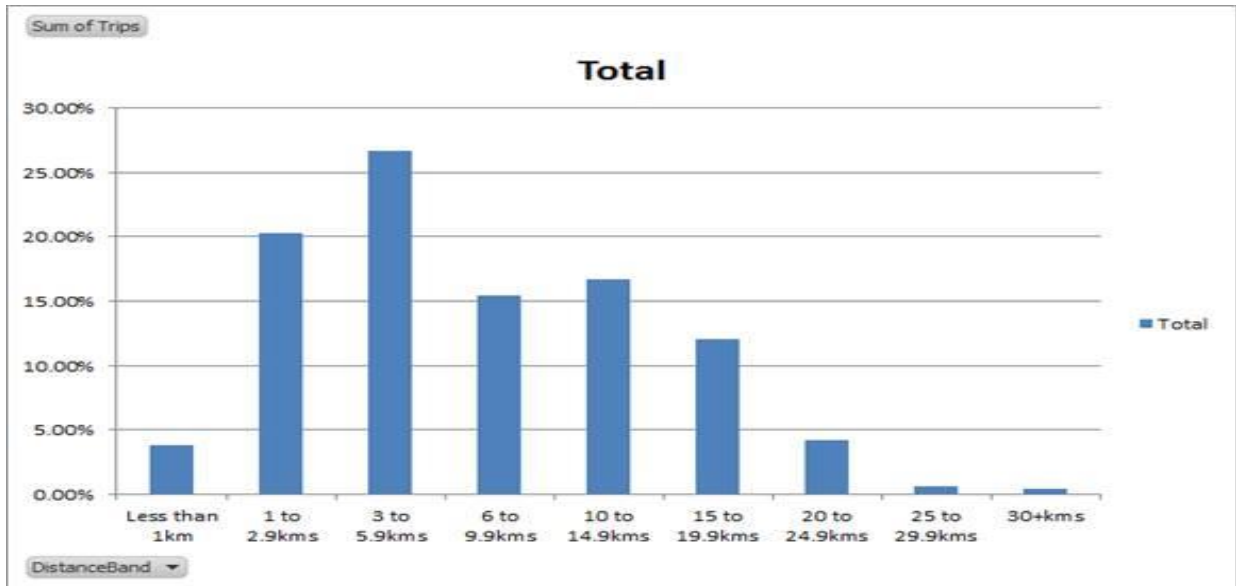


Chart 7 – Metro trips by distance bands

- 5.4.1 The chart above shows the recent distribution of Metro journeys grouped into distance bands. The mean distance travelled on the current Metro network is 8.2kms. The median distance is 5.8 km; based on an average 36km/h travel time; this results in a median on-board time of slightly less than 10 minutes (in addition to a median platform wait time of approx. 4-5 minutes).
- 5.4.2 This highlights the key function of the existing Metro network as a mover of large volumes of people over relatively short distances. This suggests the need for easy access vehicles with swift acceleration and plenty of non-seating space for passengers' luggage, buggies and wheelchairs. Were all of the network to share these characteristics then the customer requirement for vehicle specification would be straightforward; something along the lines of the 'Docklands model' with a large proportion of doors to body length, wide vestibules and a comparatively low number of mainly sideways-facing seats. The new trains used on London Overground, below, typify this configuration.



Figure 13 - 'Longitudinal' seating on London Overground Train

- 5.4.3 However the variety of journey patterns made by Metro makes for a more complex set of requirements. Although most journey lengths are short, there are significant longer-distance flows along such corridors

those linking the North Tyneside coast, South Shields, Sunderland city centre and Airport with central Newcastle and Gateshead. Passengers on these flows pay higher than average fares, and may expect a seat for most if not all of their journey. In addition, over a fifth of Metro passengers are classified as older and/or disabled persons, with a more urgent requirement for seats wherever possible.

- 5.4.4 Competitive journey times can also increase levels of customer demand, especially if they are market-beating as are Metro and local rail links to and from central Newcastle at peak times. One corridor where higher speeds could potentially be a catalyst for growth in customer demand is the Pelaw to Sunderland corridor, where both station spacing and the Network Rail signalling configuration appear suitable for higher-speed Metro operations (heavy rail passenger services here operate at up to 70 mph / 110 km/h). The same rationale would apply to any future extensions using Network Rail infrastructure where there may be track-sharing with potentially faster services

## **5.5 Fares and Ticketing**

- 5.5.1 Customers expect a simple and affordable range of tickets that makes travelling around the region easy and intuitive, and helps to make public transport a practical choice. This will require products that are widely available to buy both on and off the network, and which can be used for integrated journeys across all forms of public transport, maximising the benefits of smart ticketing technology.
- 5.5.2 Metro has a comprehensive range of tickets for travel on the network, these have been simplified in recent years and the introduction of smart ticketing will further help in this regard. The current structure of Metro ticketing differs from those in place on local rail and bus operations. Bus operators each have their own range of tickets tailored to their own commercial needs, and the structure of fares zones varies significantly. Those local rail fares other than the Sunderland to Newcastle fares set by Nexus fall within DfT and franchisees' rules for the national rail network. In addition to operator and mode specific tickets, Network Ticketing<sup>26</sup> offers a range of multi-modal tickets, priced at a premium to those of single operators and applying to a further set of zones. Most Network Ticketing products apply to the Tyne and Wear area only, except for the region-wide Explorer product (which in itself is not valid on most rail services).
- 5.5.3 The overall effect is to offer numerous ticketing options that could apply to various journeys, an over-arching picture of complexity and potential confusion. This is partly due to the workings of the deregulated bus market, but even on the rail-based network the option to buy one ticket from Hexham to Tynemouth, for instance, is not currently available. The full implementation of smart ticketing, where the customer interface is simple and intuitive, will help to alleviate this problem, but it can only be fully removed through the implementation of a zone-based, modally-agnostic fares network across the NECA area and potentially beyond, in line with the longer-term aspirations of Transport for the North.

### **Proposed future ticketing structure**

- 5.5.4 Product simplification will focus upon single tickets, day tickets, monthly and annual tickets with Metro or local rail only, as well as multi-mode options. Depending on any future changes made to the way bus services are delivered across the NECA area, there may also be opportunities to align bus and Metro/local rail fares zones such that they are common to all public transport modes. The potential for bus franchising through the provisions of the Bus Services Bill once enacted could make fares and multi-modal product availability simpler, through the introduction of one set of fares zones and greater product harmonisation. In

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<sup>26</sup> Network Ticketing Limited is a federation of public transport operators in North East England offering multi-modal ticketing products. Nexus as Metro and Ferry owner holds a 37% share in the company.

any event there is a clear requirement for a single fares and ticketing regime for Metro and local rail services across the NECA area. This framework could also accommodate potential niche products to stimulate additional custom during times of lower demand.

### **Under-21 fares**

- 5.5.5 Proposals will also seek to improve the affordability and flexibility of Metro and local rail travel for customers under the age of 21. As the school leaving age increases and the size of the population cohort in further and higher education also rises, then the need to cater for this market, the public transport passengers of the future, will become more urgent.

### **Fare reviews**

- 5.5.6 Fares charged will be reviewed from time to time with NECA agreement and in partnership with the NERMU to reflect market conditions, customer affordability and operational costs. If the Metro and local rail network is extended to new corridors, then it is proposed that the zone-based fare structure will apply also to these new services.
- 5.5.7 For several years, NECA and its forebears have taken a position to only increase Metro fares in line with inflation in contrast to the National Rail network, where fares have generally increased at a rate of Retail Price Index (RPI)+1%. Work undertaken by Nexus to assess the impact of above-inflation fare increases found that revenue would grow despite a negative patronage impact as a direct result of the increase. In the scenario below, inflation is assumed to be 1%, therefore a 2% flat % change applied is the equivalent to RPI+1.

<b>Flat % change applied</b>	<b>Revenue change</b>	<b>Patronage impact</b>
2%	£650k (+1.8%)	-77k
5%	£1.291m (+3.6%)	-301k
10%	£2.656m (+7.4%)	-685k

**Table 10 – Estimated impacts on Metro patronage and revenue of varying fares increases**

### **Smart Ticketing**

- 5.5.8 Smart ticketing makes it easier to apply innovative solutions to meet customers' requirements, such as a daily price cap where the cost of a customer's daily travel will not exceed the price of the relevant day ticket for the trips they have undertaken.



Figure 14 - Metro Smart Ticketing Infrastructure

5.5.9 The North East Smart Ticketing Initiative (NESTI) and its family of products, including the Nexus Pop card, have changed the way people pay to use public transport across the region, yet there is much more to do in order to fully realise the potential of smart technology. For Metro and local rail this means a journey towards a common system of fares and ticketing, so that as far as the customer is concerned, ownership of tracks or trains is irrelevant. The long-term aim of the strategy is therefore to deliver a fully-smart, multi-modal product range, organised on a zonal basis along the lines of Transport for London and other urban transport networks. As technology evolves further this range may take advantage of developments in contactless technology to make paying for Metro even easier for future passengers.

## 5.6 Information Provision

- 5.6.1 Provision of information and the technology which delivers is rapidly evolving. Predicting what will be available in five years, let alone in 15 or more, is an inexact science. Access to accurate and relevant information is important to customers, whether it refers to their daily journey, to short or long term disruption, or to comment, complaints and feedback mechanisms.
- 5.6.2 The ubiquity of smartphones means more and more people now regularly access information on the move, and expect to be able to quickly and easily access live updates and personalised information. As this technology becomes increasingly accessible and sophisticated, the focus for information provision will also evolve, with more emphasis on personalised, integrated, real time information delivered direct to the individual.

5.6.3 Information provision on the future Metro and local rail network will cover three elements:

- journey planning;
- reassurance,
- general information which adds value to the product

5.6.4 One of the key complaints of customers across all aspects of public transport is the provision of information in times of disruption. The provision of timely and accurate information is key to satisfaction with the service when there is a delay, whether planned or otherwise. Transport Focus found that:

“information greatly influences the impact that delays and disruption have on passengers, empowering them to make practical decisions about their journey and reduce stress”<sup>27</sup>.

5.6.5 Passengers want to know:

- About any disruption that will be or is occurring
- What the change is
- The scale of the disruption
- Any alternatives
- Impact on journey time, even if it is an estimate
- Anticipated duration of the problem.

5.6.6 Metro and Northern currently provides this information via social media in addition to visual and audio announcements made at stations for passengers. Transport Focus found that preferred channels for information were electronic real time information and on-board electronic announcements. Internet and social media communications was recognised as a useful source, but should complement other channels and not replace them.

### **Journey Planning**

5.6.7 Information provision should enable individual journey planning, providing integrated travel information for all modes, aiming to minimise waiting times and interchange penalties. It is critical that information provision considers public transport as an integrated network and that journey information links closely to ticketing information to give full information and reassurance during the journey. Nexus will continue to develop apps for smartphones and other mobile devices, enabling individuals to undertake individual journey planning across Metro, local rail and other modes.

5.6.8 All transport providers must take account of the needs of those who for whatever reason may be unwilling or unable to access information in the ways described above. Alternative provision should include face-to-face information via customer service staff who are able to provide information to travelling customers, but also advice and reassurance where required. Staff presence on the Metro network is highly valued by customers, not only for provision of information but also in terms of perceptions of safety and security. Also, in times of disruption, reliance on apps or similar channels might not always be the best way of communicating with customers. Passenger Focus found that whilst passengers were positive about apps which provided this information, they felt they would need an alert to prompt them to look at this section of the app in the first place.<sup>28</sup> Nexus will continue to maximise staff presence on the Metro network,

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<sup>27</sup> Passenger Focus; Bus passengers experience of delay and disruption, Jan 2013

<sup>28</sup> Passenger Focus; Bus passengers experience of delay and disruption, Jan 2013

particularly during evenings, and incentivise them to provide high quality customer service and information provision, within available budgets.

- 5.6.9 Information should also be accessible throughout the full operational hours of Metro and local rail; and this is particularly important in times of disruption. Therefore Nexus and other providers will continue to monitor, manage and update real time sources of information via streams such as Facebook, Twitter and new outlets throughout operational hours.

#### **Adding Value**

- 5.6.10 Digital media and information sources can give significant opportunities to add value to transport information provided to the travelling public, but also to generate revenue to support investment in Metro and local rail . As journey planning develops, such systems should offer genuine multi-modal door-to-door journey planning allowing opportunities to also provide destination information to users, and in doing so may create revenue generation opportunities through advertising of attractions.
- 5.6.11 Opportunities to 'push' information to users, subject to opt-in by passengers, will be investigated, through Bluetooth-enabling stations, and the provision of Wi-Fi on train and at stations.

### **5.7 Station Facilities**

#### **Current situation**

- 5.7.1 Metro in 2016 serves 60 stations, a combination of halt stations, larger interchanges, and substantial city centre stations. These are a mix of ages, styles and designs, depending on when they were built, but as part of ARP Phase 2, significant work is being undertaken to ensure that all stations meet accessibility requirements through installation of items such as tactile surfaces and dual hand-railing. Additionally stations have been rebranded with new furniture and where necessary updates to CCTV and public address systems. All stations are also equipped with help points, passenger information systems and ticket machines, which accept payment by card, cash and pay-wave as well as top-up facilities for smartcards. 13 of the busiest stations have gate-lines installed and in operation; additional CCTV has been installed at these stations as part of this project. Validators are installed at stations which are not gated.
- 5.7.2 There are 31 local rail stations within the NECA area, ranging from remote rural stations to major Intercity stations. Most are unstaffed and the level of passenger facilities varies considerably with a staff presence at some or all times at six stations, to be increased to eight locations by 2019.
- 5.7.3 Nexus received funding through the Local Sustainable Travel Fund to install cycle parking at all Metro stations during 2012-15. This includes 'Cycle Pod' storage at all stations, with more secure solutions such as individual lockers, accessed via Pop cards, at stations where justified by levels of demand. Significant improvements have been made to lighting at the stations, helping not only to improve the appearance of the station, but also improving safety and security by eliminating dark areas. Northern Rail also undertook substantial cycle parking provision across its network of stations during its tenure of the Northern rail franchise.
- 5.7.4 Metro passenger feedback most commonly relates to provision of toilet facilities and the availability of staff, particularly in the evenings. The installation of gate-lines at the 13 busiest stations increases the staffing presence at busy times and also allows for staff previously involved in revenue protection duties at these stations to take a more mobile role around the wider network. Arising from this, the aim is that satisfaction with staffing on the network and safety and security will improve from now onwards. It is not currently

proposed to staff the full network as it does not offer value for public money. Further station gating would increase perceptions of safety and security and will be kept under review as required by possible changes to ticketing technology and where justified by a positive business case resulting from lower levels of fraudulent travel. Toilets will not generally be provided at stations due to the on-going costs of maintenance and the potential for anti-social behaviour, impacting on perceptions of safety and security. This is in line with the policies of most urban rail networks where journey times are short.

#### 5.7.5 Priorities for station improvements include:

- additional measures to improve safety and security including CCTV coverage of help points, and CCTV repeater screens;
- integration with bus services where feasible and required;
- improvements to facilities catering for new customer requirements;
- further accessibility improvements above and beyond required standards where funding is available and site constraints permit;
- real time information provided at all stations and at major interchange points,
- Wifi provision at stations to match on-train provision.

#### **New stations**

- 5.7.6 Any new stations will be designed to facilitate clear and simple integration between Metro and other forms of transport, including bus, cycling and walking. Parking spaces will be provided where space permits, but not be at the expense of interchange with sustainable transport modes. Stations will be constructed to standards outlined in the DfT publication 'Accessible Train Station Design for Disabled People: A Code of Practice' (as may be amended over time) and will be fully compliant with Rail Vehicle Accessibility Regulations in respect of platform / train gap interfaces, once a new train fleet is in operation.
- 5.7.7 New stations will provide high-quality covered waiting facilities for bus where appropriate, with level access where possible between the two modes by providing raised kerbs at bus stands. There is no set template for the design of new Metro stations; the last new station opened in 2008 and in any event the design and facilities at each location are governed primarily by legislation and then by the constraints and opportunities of each location.
- 5.7.8 All new stations will have cycle parking provision, in line with Nexus policy, with StreetPod facilities at smaller, halt stations and more secure provision at larger stations with higher footfall, and major interchange points.
- 5.7.9 Signage to safe cycling and walking routes will be clear from the station and within the design phase Nexus will work with the local authorities to investigate opportunities to improve safe walking and cycling routes surrounding stations.
- 5.7.10 Additional Park and Ride facilities will be considered at specific station locations linked to areas of road congestion as covered in more detail below.

### **5.8 Park and Ride**

- 5.8.1 Metro and local rail networks can often offer a step change in quality, offering journey time reliability that encourages modal shift from car, and Park and Ride facilities are often seen as attractive by car users<sup>29</sup>.

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<sup>29</sup> What can light rail do for cities, a review of the evidence, SDG for pteg February 2005

Manchester Metrolink, despite replacing a well-used rail service, saw up to a 21% shift from car use with associated Park and Ride on its new routes<sup>30</sup>, with similar figures for Sheffield Supertram. Park and Ride is considered to be a key factor in the success of the Nottingham project in terms of encouraging car users to transfer to/from the tram for the city centre leg of their journey<sup>31</sup>. To operate efficiently, Park and Ride facilities must be provided at appropriate locations on rail networks to provide quick and comfortable journeys that avoid areas of highway congestion.<sup>32</sup>

### Current situation

- 5.8.2 Park and Ride sites can significantly increase the catchment area of a Metro station beyond the 800m walking distance typically associated with local light rail networks, Nexus research shows that half of people currently using a Metro Park and Ride site would have used their car for the whole journey, had the site not been available.<sup>33</sup> Overall 4% of Metro users arrive at the station by car with the average journey to and from the Park and Ride sites where Nexus surveys have taken place being 11.4km.
- 5.8.3 38% of Metro Park and Ride users were commuters, particularly into Newcastle city centre where higher parking charges and congestion can make Metro a more attractive journey than driving<sup>34</sup>; this is however a lower rate than that seen elsewhere; for example Merseytravel found that 73% of their Park and Ride users were commuters, with little change in occupancy of car parks after the morning peak<sup>35</sup>. For Metro, peak occupancy is currently between 1000 and 1400 hours; this may be because of the relative ease of city centre areas for peak-hour driving and parking compared to some other urban centres, although there is some evidence that road-space reallocation along certain key corridors is starting to increase highway journey times during peak travel times.
- 5.8.4 Occupancy at Metro Park and Ride sites varies, with some car parks such as at East Boldon regularly over capacity, whilst others are under-used. In addition there is a variety of approaches to parking at different stations: some are formal sites, owned and controlled by Nexus, where parking charges apply, whereas others are less formal sites and a small number of sites are owned by other parties such as local authorities.
- 5.8.5 Research undertaken at Heworth and Four Lane Ends long-stay car parks to determine user profiles at these stations. The table below shows journey purpose and Metro use at each site.

Indicator	Heworth	Four Lane Ends
Purpose: Work	25%	38%
Purpose: Shopping	18%	3%
Also use Metro	48%	13%
Regular use	35%	35%

Table 11 - Journey Purpose of Park and Ride users

- 5.8.6 Heworth was primarily used as a commuter Park and Ride site with almost all users subsequently using Metro whereas Four Lane Ends users were less likely to be using Metro, due to the facility being used as overflow staff parking for drivers working at a major local employer. Analysis of user origin showed that Heworth has a much larger catchment area, with a number of regular users from as far away as

<sup>30</sup> ibid

<sup>31</sup> ibid

<sup>32</sup> ibid

<sup>33</sup> Nexus, Park and Ride Market Research August 2012

<sup>34</sup> ibid

<sup>35</sup> Merseytravel Park and Ride Market Research 2007



Middlesbrough 34 miles away. Four Lane Ends however saw its furthest regular user living only 15 miles away.

- 5.8.7 Ticketing and pricing of Park and Ride facilities are also important considerations that can influence levels of use. Prices should be attractive enough to encourage commuters to break their journey and not drive into city centres, whilst helping to support the costs of providing the facilities. Both users and non-users stated in research that the need to pay twice, once for parking and then again for Metro, was inconvenient and there was a strong feeling that the cost of parking should be integrated into a one-ticket price<sup>36</sup>. This will be addressed as the functionality of smart ticketing increases.
- 5.8.8 Additional sites close to the A1 and A19 trunk roads would be likely to attract the support of the DfT and Highways England. This suggests the potential for Park and Ride facilities to form a component of future business cases for Metro extension corridors, however this would need to be accompanied by robust forecasts of patronage, as past investment in such facilities has not been always been matched by predicted levels of use at certain locations. Depending on the extent of enhancements to the local Metro and rail networks, there may be scope for park and ride facilities to be considered at locations such as at Washington, Follingsby, A1/Team Valley and A695 Scotswood Road, if it can be shown that they strengthen individual business cases.
- 5.8.9 Currently there is a mixed offering of Park and Ride at Metro stations, with different ownerships, charging regimes and qualities of facilities. The aim will be to achieve greater consistency of offering at all sites, including across the local rail network where there is the opportunity to do so, with simplified smart ticketing covering both parking and travel payment, and enhanced levels of safety and security to achieve Parkmark safety accreditation or similar. All sites will be equipped with correctly marked, adequately provisioned disabled parking, drop-off points, electric vehicle charge points, and cycle parking.
- 5.8.10 New facilities will be developed along new corridors where justified, aligned to relieving pockets of congestion on the highway network. These will be high quality facilities, which as well as allowing Park and Ride will provide bus facilities where possible to assist with integration between modes. This should include off-highway facilities, covered waiting areas and options for off-bus ticketing and located conveniently for the entrance to the station. New Metro stations may also have park and ride potential.

## **5.9 Recommendations**

- 5.9.1 Customer requirements are central to many aspects of this strategy. Failure to anticipate and respond to customer needs and preferences risks losing ground in markets where choice exists. Keeping in close touch with Metro and local rail customers, understanding their travel requirements and preferences and continually reshaping the product offer at all levels is essential if the network is to grow in a competitive marketplace. The Metro essential renewals programme will have a positive impact, and new trains and stations are likely to improve customer perceptions further. Not all improvements for customers need to involve major expenditure. Responsiveness, flexibility and attention to detail are all essential attributes for maintaining and enhancing customer loyalty. Establishing contact with non-users and understanding their needs is also important to be successful in increasing the proportion of people choosing to travel by public transport.
- 5.9.2 High-level recommendations for customer requirements can be summarised as follows:

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<sup>36</sup> Future of Metro, Woodholmes Research 2012

- Develop and maintain close contact with Metro and local rail users and non-users to establish a deep understanding of customer requirements.
- Focus on increasing service reliability and on the management of service disruption
- Incorporate customer requirements into the design of new trains as far as practicable.
- Ensure that fares and ticketing products are simple to understand and relate to users' needs.
- Continue to provide accurate and timely proactive and reactive service information in formats that customers want, taking account of wider accessibility needs.
- Create stations that are modern, safe and welcoming.
- Promote Park and Ride facilities where feasible and justified by demand.
- Develop a seamless Metro and local rail customer service that offers product and service consistency across locations and providers.

## **Section 6: FUTURE OPERATING STRUCTURES**

### **6.1 Context**

- 6.1.1 Achievement of the objectives of this strategy will require major changes to the ways in which Metro and local rail are specified and delivered, with the aim of operating a service which is unified and seamless as far as the user is concerned, and which benefits from a single framework of strategy and oversight. The future arrangement for Metro operations is likely to be built around the acquisition and deployment of a new fleet of trains, to be operational in the early part of the 2020's. This is likely to be a very different proposition to the one in place today, in which the operator is responsible for delivering a wide range of operational and customer-related activities.
- 6.1.2 The OJEU process to procure a new operator effective from 1 April 2019 would need to commence around June 2017, by which time funding for the new fleet and on-going revenue support would need to be confirmed. An outline business case for investment in a new train fleet has been produced and discussions are under way with the government to identify funding options.
- 6.1.3 The current concession arrangement is proposed to end in March 2017. Nexus is developing an interim arrangement to cover the period April 2017 to March 2019, which will involve Nexus managing the Metro system directly. During the two year period of direct management, the Metro business will be re-shaped so that it is ready for the introduction of new trains.
- 6.1.4 Local rail services in the North East are provided by a franchise operator, currently Arriva Rail North. Through the process of devolution, this rail franchise (along with TransPennine Express) is jointly managed through a formal partnership arrangement between the Department for Transport (DfT) and Rail North Ltd (RNL). Rail North Ltd is a new body made up of 25 local transport authorities in the North of England, including the NECA. It is expected that over the next seven years control over decision-making and financial risk will progressively pass from the DfT to RNL through this arrangement.
- 6.1.5 A further devolutionary step has been agreed for the North East of England, which is that Arriva will create a Business Unit dedicated to the area, and this will have a strong interface with a North East Rail Management Unit (NERMU) representing the NECA, the Tees Valley, Cumbria and North Yorkshire. The purpose of this arrangement is to have local accountability for operational performance, and to create a local focus for further investment.
- 6.1.6 As part of the formation of Transport for the North as a statutory sub-regional transport body, it is proposed to seek the full devolution of franchising powers from the Secretary of State to the North East Rail Management Unit. This would allow the North East to take full control of its local rail services by direct management of the franchise arrangement beyond 2025/26. This would allow local rail and Metro services to work alongside each other, with a common set of passenger standards and ticketing arrangements. It could also potentially see some routes transferred between Metro and local rail or vice versa, or wholly new journey opportunities created. This would be particularly facilitated by the introduction of a new Metro fleet that could operate in various different modes, including different electrification and signalling standards and on non-electrified routes.
- 6.1.7 The challenges that accompany the delivery of this aim can be illustrated by outlining the current operational frameworks for Metro and local rail, and the changes that will need to be made by 2025 if the wider objectives of the strategy are to be realised.

## Metro

- Rolling stock owned outright by Nexus.
- Operations (train services and customer service) undertaken by DB Regio Tyne and Wear under a concession agreement until March 2017.
- All other infrastructure owned and maintained by Nexus.

## Local Rail

- Northern rail franchise specified and overseen by DfT until franchise expiry in 2025/26.
- Transpennine rail franchise specified and overseen by DfT; franchise expires in 2023/25.
- Northern franchise operated by Arriva Rail North.
- Transpennine franchise operated by FirstGroup plc.
- Rolling stock owned by Rolling Stock Operating Companies (ROSCOs)
- North East management unit (Tyne, Tees and Wear area) managed by Arriva, with oversight from the developing North East Rail Management Unit (NEMU)<sup>37</sup>.

## Changes by 2025

The following changes are anticipated between now and 2025:

- From April 2017 to March 2019 Metro will be operated entirely in-house by Nexus, once the current concession expires.
- New Metro operating structures are to apply from April 2019, as a precondition of continued central government investment.
- A new Metro fleet will be in service.
- Pacer trains will be withdrawn from the regional rail network
- Additional Northern Connect regional express services will be overlain upon the current service pattern
- The NEMU will take on progressively greater oversight of the North East operations of the Northern and Transpennine Rail franchises, with full devolution of the oversight and specification of new, post-2025/26 services in the North East passing to NEMU.

6.1.8 The nature and scale of these changes to operating structures will be a catalyst for many of the aims and objectives of this strategy to be achieved, with a new dual-voltage Metro fleet delivering greater operational flexibility for instance, and a fully-devolved NEMU operating under the auspices of Rail North bringing the planning of all local rail services under the control of the region for the first time. These will be essential building blocks for service enhancements, alongside sound business cases and adequate network capacity.

## **6.2 New Metro operating structures**

6.2.1 At present Nexus maintains ownership of all Metro assets. The maintenance and renewal of tracks and stations is undertaken in-house, with the operation of Metro services outsourced via a concession agreement to DB Regio Tyne & Wear until March 2017. The concession operates on the basis that Nexus takes revenue risk, i.e. that it sets the fares and retains revenues, with the concessionaire responsible for the operation of the service according to contractually agreed targets.

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<sup>37</sup> NEMU consists of representatives of NECA and Tees Valley Unlimited, plus North Yorkshire and Cumbria County Councils in respect of Whitby - Middlesbrough and Carlisle – Newcastle services respectively.

6.2.2 Work is now underway to define new operating structures for Metro post-2019, following the cessation of the current operating concession, proposed for March 2017, and a bridging period of in-house operations. Details of these as at present are as follows:

- Issuance of a Prior Information Notice (PIN) for a contract for the future delivery of Metro operations, in June 2016. The tendering for this contract will be subject to OJEU regulations and will be dependent upon securing a long term funding commitment from DfT; the current revenue grant funding arrangement expires in March 2019. The OJEU process to procure a new operator effective from April 2019 will need to commence around June 2017, by which time funding for the new fleet and ongoing revenue support would need to be confirmed. During the two-year period of direct management, the Metro business will be re-shaped so that it is ready for the introduction of new trains.
- Identification of a preferred scenario for the introduction to service of a new fleet of trains within a business case to be submitted to DfT for central government funding. Two options have been examined that can be followed to deliver a new fleet of trains – direct procurement of new rolling stock by Nexus, or a ‘build operate and maintain’ contract whereby a contract is issued to maintain and operate the existing fleet, supply a new train fleet, manage the transition between the operations of the old and new fleets, and maintain and operate the new fleet. Risks associated with the latter option include restrictions on optimum concession length, the need for adequate fall-back arrangements in the event of financial failure of the concessionaire, and the possibility of Nexus having to underwrite the agreement beyond the duration of the contract.

6.2.3. An indicative timeline for these processes is:

- Prior Information Notice Issued June 2016
- Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU) notice issued by June 2017 – Pre Qualification
- Pre-qualification questionnaire evaluation complete November 2017
- Invitation to Tender Notice issued by January 2018
- Tender Evaluation Commences April 2018
- Contract Award December 2018
- Contract Start April 2019

6.2.4 Other potential operating options for Metro that have been examined during the option selection process include:

**Franchising** – under current legislation only the DfT can let rail operating franchises. Metro is not a train operating company within the meaning of the Railways Act 1993, as a publicly-owned body corporate and not a private organisation – although it is an ‘open access’ operator for the purposes of operations over Network Rail infrastructure between Pelaw and South Hylton.

**Operating Concession** – this is the current arrangement applying until 2017 which involves more rigid terms than a franchise and less commercial risk to the franchisee with an agreed payment structure in return for tightly-specified service delivery. Elsewhere the Merseyrail concession is a similar example of an operating

concession let by a Passenger Transport Executive. Most UK light rail networks use some form of concession arrangement, primarily as a means of accessing additional private sector investment to fund infrastructure improvements and rolling stock. The main disadvantage of this option in the current environment of change is that it does not make provision for the introduction of a new train fleet.

**Combined Infrastructure and Operations Concession** - this option is common in the light rail sector but is unusual in heavy rail. It could be appropriate to revisit this option if, given the greater asset knowledge which now exists, there are potential cost savings from this approach, however it would mark a radical departure from the current operating frameworks, requiring major changes to the status of the existing Nexus infrastructure function.

**Separate Infrastructure and Operator Concessions** - this model is used by UK networks such as Manchester Metrolink where both the provision and maintenance of infrastructure and service delivery are the subject of separate concession agreements, retaining the wheel/rail interface separation. The decision to proceed on a separate infrastructure concession is in effect separate from the decision on the new concession and would be subject to separate evaluation.

**Integration with North East Rail Management Unit operations post-2025/26** - the parameters of the North East rail franchise following the termination of the existing franchise have yet to be determined. Given the extent of inter-working proposed between Metro and local rail operations there may be advantages to be gained from closer integration of operating arrangements between the two networks. At this time however it is premature to speculate how this might be delivered, given the length of time before this could be implemented.

6.2.5 Concession arrangements currently in place on other UK light rail networks are summarised in the table below. Networks such as Metrolink have introduced different concession arrangements relating to the opening of subsequent network extensions and this is an option that could potentially apply to any Metro extensions.

Network	Concession Type	Scope	Duration	Comments
Tyne and Wear Metro - Nexus	Revenue risk with network owner	Operations, train maintenance	7 years expiring 2017	Operator DB Regio Tyne & Wear
Sheffield Supertram - SYPTE	Revenue risk with operator	Operations and maintenance	17 years expiring 2024	Stagecoach plc.
Nottingham Express Transit	Revenue risk with operator (PPP)	Operations and maintenance	23 years to 2034	Tramlink Nottingham
Croydon Tramlink	TfL contract (not a concession), London Tramlink operator	Operations and maintenance	Not applicable	London Tramlink is a division of TfL
Midlands Metro - Centro	Revenue risk with network owner Centro	Operations and maintenance	23 years to 2018	National Express Midland Metro
Manchester	DBFO risk-sharing	Operations and	Varies according	M-Pact Thales

Metrolink - TfGM	with RATP. M-Pact Thales to construct Phase 3b routes	maintenance	to Phase	
Docklands Light Railway	Revenue-share. (Lewisham different)	Operations and maintenance	7/9 years to 2021/23.	Keolis Amey Docklands

Table 12 - Operating Arrangements on UK Light Rail Networks

- 6.2.6 In many local rail concessions, revenue risk lies with the client or is shared with the concessionaire. The only current example of the operator taking revenue risk on the heavy rail urban network is the Merseyrail franchise where as part of the 2002 Concession Agreement, Merseyrail has responsibility for revenue risk for journeys on Northern and Wirral Line rail services and as such has responsibility for setting fares on these services. Transfer of revenue risk to an operator could reduce the ability of Nexus to maintain an overview of the impact of pricing changes on the overall provision of transport within the area at odds with wider transport or social policy objectives.

#### Concession Length

- 6.2.7 The average length of an operating concession at around 7-10 years represents a compromise between being long enough to make it worth the concessionaire's while in terms of investment and subsequent returns, and short enough to take account of changing market circumstances. Where Build, Maintain and Operate arrangements are in place the duration of concessions is often considerably longer to allow for an adequate return on initial investment by the concessionaire. Legally, the maximum period over which a concession can currently be let is 22 years. With the associated costs of a new Metro fleet likely to be included within a future operating contract, the duration of such a contract will reflect this.

#### Other fleet vehicle procurement options

- 6.2.8 Other methods of fleet procurement include:

**Outright purchase** - Ownership of a fleet of new trains has advantages in terms of low on-going asset costs and freedom to operate and maintain without any constraints imposed by third party contractual arrangements. Upfront costs are an obvious disadvantage to this option, alongside the loss of procurement experience and knowledge that may be offered by external contractors. It would also rule out a number of combined framework options including build, operate and maintain arrangements which often offer greater procurement flexibility and lower lifetime costs than would be available via the outright purchase route, plus potentially greater economies of scale and a wider variety of funding and finance options which are available to potential contractors.

**Leasing outside of an operating contract** - Leasing companies (known in the rail industry as ROSCOs) such as Angel Trains, Porterbrook Leasing and Eversholt Rail Group are responsible for providing the vast majority of trains used by British train operating companies, although other organisations may also be keen to enter the market. Leasing would offer cash-flow advantages over outright purchase and procurement outside of an operating contract would allow maintenance to be undertaken by specialist contractors. The main disadvantage of this approach is that it would preclude the ability to achieve economies of scale offered by a build, operate and maintain framework.

**‘Bulk-buying’/joint ownership with other transport authorities** – this option may be superficially attractive however in practice the fleet replacement schedules of urban transport authorities tend not to be aligned, and the bespoke nature of a new fleet required to operate on existing Metro infrastructure also effectively rules it out.

### **6.3 Conclusions and Recommendations**

6.3.1 Operational models for light rail networks are constantly evolving. Prior to the expiry of the current Metro operating concession, Nexus will identify the solution that best delivers the key aims and objectives of this strategy. This work is already well under way, and is being guided by key factors including:

- customer requirements;
- availability of finance;
- build, operate and maintain options;
- opportunities to achieve economies of scale, and
- the flexibility to respond to changing circumstances such as network opportunities and technological changes that dual-voltage Metro trains would introduce.

6.3.2. Discussions are taking place with the DfT to gauge expectations in terms of governance, value for money and passenger benefits anticipated from future operating arrangements. Rail North and the North East Rail Management Unit are also important partners in the process going forward, as decisions taken in respect of the new Metro fleet will have significant impacts upon the specification and operation of a future fully devolved, integrated regional rail network.



**7.1. Potential Extension Corridors**

- 7.1.1 Our industrial heritage has left behind it a network of disused railways that thread across the region. Some are former passenger lines, although many are freight routes connecting mines and factories to ports. As new developments take place around them some could once again become important transport arteries, helping to move people around the North East along unobstructed, uncongested route corridors. Most disused routes remain free from intrusion along their path with many being maintained as footpaths and cycleways, although in some cases new roads and buildings cross the alignments and would require business case feasibility work to establish the costs of restoring a route versus the expected benefits.
- 7.1.2 Nexus believes that existing and disused local rail corridors can be combined with the Metro network to create a single Metro and local rail network, at a lower cost than new-build railways. There are also a number of areas where the existing Metro network can be upgraded to create a more effective service. This can only happen if a strong blueprint is developed by the NECA and its partners, and used to co-ordinate land use and transport planning actions by a wide range of players over the forthcoming years and decades: economic and strategic plans for housing, business and industrial growth; investment decisions by Network Rail, Nexus and local authorities; funding plans from the NECA, the national government, the NELEP, the EU, and local businesses; and train service developments by Nexus, Rail North, Train Operating Companies and Freight Operating Companies.
- 7.1.3 The following sections describe opportunities to grow the Metro and local rail system. Some of these are relatively simple to introduce and could be achieved within five years if funding were to be made available. Others will take many more years to plan and achieve because of their cost and complexity.
- 7.1.4 Almost since the opening of Metro in the 1980s, there have been aspirations to extend the network to increase the proportion of the population who have easy access to the system. This was reflected in subsequent Metro extensions to the Airport and from Pelaw to South Hylton, both of which were achieved using the original 90-strong fleet. Further network extensions have regularly been considered, particularly to areas where there is clear evidence of demand, but which are some distance away from existing stations.
- 7.1.5 In response to these requests, various studies have been commissioned which by and large have recommended the investigation of street-running services, either as extensions of the current network by building discrete on-street routes or mini-networks. The main disadvantages to this approach are threefold – the disproportionately greater cost of establishing on-street operations, the disruption caused to existing road users during the construction phase, and the detachment of such routes from the remainder of the network. Although not abandoning the principle of street running altogether over short distances under clearly defined circumstances, the thrust of this strategy has now moved towards a closer examination of how the same goal described above can be met through other, more cost-effective means.
- 7.1.6 The combination of new train technology and changes in how regional railways will be planned and delivered through rail devolution will allow the Metro and local rail network to integrate and expand. The region contains a legacy of disused rail corridors, curves, junctions and spurs, and some freight-only lines. These could allow the expansion of the local passenger rail network, linked to the Metro network in places, at a fraction of the cost of new-build railway or tram lines. In some cases, Metro extensions identified in the former draft Metro Strategy could be delivered using this approach. It also gives rise to new options, not previously considered, including to parts of the area that are currently a long way from the Metro system.

- 7.1.7 The upshot of these changes is that it allows the Metro network, the local rail network and the trains that operate on them to be considered as a single local rail system when developing plans for the future, subject to making proper provision for other services such as inter-city and freight. The following pages describe opportunities to grow the Metro and local rail system. Some of these are relatively simple to introduce and could be achieved in the short to medium-term, if funding were to be made available – others will take many more years to plan due to their cost and complexity.
- 7.1.8 Following NECA approval, work will start immediately to assess the feasibility of these options, funded through the DfT's Local Major Schemes process, and to create the plans necessary for them to be funded and built. The results of an updated demand model for Metro and local rail will inform this process.
- 7.1.9 The graphic below shows a possible future Metro and local rail network, and shows the relationship between the Metro, local and long-distance rail networks. At this stage the map is indicative and for illustrative purposes only and other routes may be considered.



Figure 15 - Indicative Future Metro and Local Rail Network (note: not all stations shown for clarity)

## **7.2 Routes to the Airport**

- 7.2.1 Newcastle International Airport is a hugely important strategic transport asset for our area, and quality, sustainable transport links to it are integral to our area's future economic success, as is the expansion of its catchment area. The airport currently hosts over 3,200 jobs on site and around 7,800 in the wider region<sup>38</sup>, with around 4,100 and 10,000 jobs respectively predicted by 2021. By 2030 more than 8 million passenger trips per year are forecast, with an estimated regional impact of £1.3 billion per year. The 2013 mode share for Metro at the airport was 18% which compares to 54% by car and 23% by taxi, indicating the potential for further gains in response to better services.
- 7.2.2 The existing Metro service provides a fast, frequent and direct link to Newcastle and Sunderland city centres. Many of the other opportunities described below could provide new rail links to serve the Airport – for example to Washington and Belmont in Durham, and to South Tyneside. In these situations the capacity of the Metro network through the underground sections in Gateshead and Newcastle and the regularity of service patterns will be important considerations in determining future service patterns.
- 7.2.3 Three further opportunities are worthy of exploration:
- expanding the 'depot avoiding line' behind the current Metro depot in South Gosforth, so that direct services could be provided between the Airport and North Tyneside, and potentially to South East Northumberland;
  - reinstating a disused curve east of Benton Metro to connect the west-facing Metro line to the southbound ECML, and onward access to the mainline rail network. The frequency of any service accessing the ECML would be dependent upon the availability of paths along the route to and from Newcastle station, which are expected to be sought after by Intercity and potentially Ashington, Blyth and Tyne line services,
  - considering whether the current airport line could be extended to serve Ponteland.

## **7.3 The 'Leamside line'**

- 7.3.1 The disused Leamside alignment is important for a number of the NECA's ambitions for rail-based connectivity. The current alignment runs from Pelaw Junction to Ferryhill in County Durham, and passes through several locations that currently lack rail services; in particular, Washington. Another disused alignment, running west from the current Metro terminus at South Hylton, joins the Leamside alignment just south of the River Wear at Penshaw. Acting together, these two alignments offer the potential to provide:
- A 'Wearside loop' Metro-style service connecting Sunderland and Washington (described below);
  - Local rail links between Durham (Belmont), Sunderland, South Shields and Newcastle (described below);
  - Along with an upgraded Durham Coast line, additional capacity for passenger and freight services to relieve pressure on the ECML; and
  - In the longer term, a potential route for a high speed rail link from the North East to Yorkshire and beyond.
- 7.3.2 The Leamside alignment remains in Network Rail's ownership and is relatively free from obstructive development, although much of its condition is not currently known to any great degree and there has been

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<sup>38</sup> Newcastle Airport Masterplan 2013.

some adjacent development since it closed to rail traffic in 1991, since when it has been the subject of much discussion as to its future use. As part of the national rail network, at least in terms of ownership, wider planning considerations may come into play. Nexus and NECA through their involvement with Rail North and Transport for the North will continue to monitor any such developments, whilst continuing to develop proposals for regional rail and Metro services where appropriate.

## **7.4 South East Northumberland**

- 7.4.1 Restoring passenger train services to the Blyth, Bedlington and Ashington areas is an agreed priority for the NECA because of its potential to regenerate the area it serves by connecting people to a wide range of jobs, services and training. Northumberland County Council is currently leading a project with Network Rail to examine re-opening the route for passenger traffic by 2020.
- 7.4.2 The project would upgrade an existing freight-only route which begins in Woodhorn (with an option to extend north to Newbiggin-by-the-Sea) and then passes through Ashington, Bedlington, Bebside, Newsham (for Blyth), Seaton Delaval and Seghill, before arriving at Northumberland Park where an interchange station would enable easy access to the Metro system and local bus services; park and ride facilities already exist there. The route then joins the ECML seven kilometres north of Newcastle city centre.
- 7.4.3 The line is a mixture of single and double-track and is not electrified, but over the longer term Nexus believes that it should be double-tracked and electrified to the Network Rail standard of 25kv AC, as well as there being a physical link to the Metro network constructed in the Northumberland Park area.
- 7.4.4 This would allow the route to be served by dual-voltage Metro trains and link onto the Metro system, in addition to the initial offering of conventional rail services to Newcastle Central station – and possibly further, for example to the Metrocentre and Hexham. It would also increase freight capacity and offer efficient diversionary routes via Choppington or Butterwell to the East Coast Main Line.
- 7.4.5 The project currently has Network Rail GRIP2<sup>39</sup> status and is progressing through the five-stage pre-construction governance process which is taking place in parallel with the wider Metro and local rail changes outlined elsewhere in the strategy. As the project progresses towards delivery the future options for integration with Metro will be kept under review.

## **7.5 Cobalt Corridor**

- 7.5.1 The Cobalt and Silverlink areas are major growth engines of the North Tyneside economy, housing around 20,000 jobs, but they are poorly located in relation to rail-based links. Despite being located between the northern and southern loops of the Metro in North Tyneside, they are not particularly close to Metro stations and have therefore been served by bus services to date, some of which connect with Metro at Northumberland Park and Percy Main. Substantial further jobs growth is expected as Cobalt is built out and fully occupied. Further residential development is also committed in the Northumberland Park area. This potential network extension would therefore offer the prospect of achieving substantial economic benefits by linking an existing and growing area of major employment.

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<sup>39</sup> Governance for Railway Investment Projects – the Network Rail management and control process for delivering projects on the operational railway.

- 7.5.2 An opportunity exists to deliver Metro services through the centre of these employment areas through the re-use of an old freight alignment formerly used to transport coal to the Tyne. By linking to the existing Metro route east of Northumberland Park Metro and to the west of Percy Main through services to Cobalt and Silverlink could be introduced, and also potentially from the Ashington, Blyth and Tyne corridor. A new route through the Cobalt area would also facilitate new service patterns such as an 'inner Metro loop' connecting the Wallsend, Cobalt and Four Lane Ends areas. The route also serves further employment locations in the south of the corridor at Tyne Tunnel Trading Estate and West Chirton Industrial Estate.
- 7.5.3 A provisional study of a possible route suggests that a number of level crossings would be required, and as elsewhere the route would be subject to extensive further engineering and financial feasibility, however it would ensure that this major area of jobs growth is served by Metro in its own right, as well as offering possibilities for new patterns of service operations in the North Tyneside area.

## **7.6 Sunderland Re-electrification**

- 7.6.1 A key part of the Metro system provides services in the Sunderland area, using track and infrastructure owned and operated by Network Rail. This section was converted to Metro and the South Hylton extension opened in 2002, and is electrified using Metro's 1500v DC overhead power standard; the stations are managed by Metro (except Sunderland itself). All other aspects of the section, including signalling and operating standards, are in line with normal Network Rail practices. Nexus operates Metro services under a track access agreement with Network Rail, valid until 2032.
- 7.6.2 Nexus and the NECA believe that the best long-term approach is to convert the electrification of this line to the Network Rail standard of 25kv AC. This should make it easier and more cost effective for Network Rail to maintain and manage, and would have wider benefits by enabling the Durham Coast line (including the section from the south side of the High Level Bridge in Gateshead to Pelaw Junction) to be electrified in the longer term; at present, the 1500V dc wiring from Sunderland station northwards is an impediment to the electrification of the whole Durham Coast route that would provide better inter-city and regional services, as well as becoming a valuable main line diversion at times when the route through Durham is closed.
- 7.6.3 Electrification south from Sunderland, through Ryhope and Seaham towards the Horden/Peterlee area would allow these centres of population and business to be served by a Metro-style service appropriate to levels of demand and required destinations. It could also facilitate better connectivity through long-distance links from cities and towns along the Durham Coast line to other parts of the North.
- 7.6.4 The nature and timing of any changes to Network Rail assets are not known. The electrification equipment is now 15 years old and unlikely to be life-expired, and future decisions may be governed by national as well as local transport priorities. A new Metro fleet will therefore require dual voltage specification, so that it is able to operate under both existing and future electrification equipment through the Sunderland area.

## **7.7 South Tyneside Track Dualling**

- 7.7.1 Despite operating at very high frequency throughout the day, the Metro system currently includes lengthy sections of single track at the core of its operation between Bede and Pelaw stations. These limit the timetable that can be offered to and from South Shields, severely hamper service recovery when disruption occurs, and limit growth – for example, new stations sought after by local stakeholders in the Jarrow and

Hebburn areas cannot be placed on the single-track sections, because the route is running at almost full capacity with no way of accommodating the longer journey times that additional station calls would create.

- 7.7.2 In the past a variety of possible engineering solutions have been considered in response to this problem, including shared use of the adjacent single-track Network Rail freight line that connects the Jarrow oil terminal with the rest of the national rail network. Ownership of the oil terminal has recently changed hands and freight trains now use the route once more, following a period during which the line was disused. Nexus believes that it should be possible to convert the freight-only line to become part of the Metro system, although account will need to be taken of future freight traffic requirements.
- 7.7.3 Removal of the single-track sections will ensure that this area of South Tyneside receives better Metro connectivity with the rest of the region, which is important in the context of ensuring the economic regeneration of the borough and enabling a wider range of services in the future. Nexus is currently exploring sources of finance to enable this work to proceed as a priority, subject to a positive business case and clarity as to freight requirements.

## **7.8 New Routes to and from South Tyneside**

- 7.8.1 South Tyneside is already well served by the Metro network in terms of links towards Gateshead, Newcastle and beyond, but direct links between the borough and the south of the area by rail are absent. The South Shields and Sunderland Metro routes are within 3km of each other in the Tyne Dock and Brockley Whins area. Running between them is a single-track freight branch serving Port of Tyne from Boldon East and West Junctions, east of Brockley Whins Metro. There is therefore the potential to use this existing alignment so that Metro services could be provided between these locations.
- 7.8.2 In the Tyne Dock area, a connection with the present Metro route could be achieved on existing railway land. The continuation of freight traffic along the route to and from Port of Tyne as well as Metro would be achieved through twin-tracking. At Boldon East Junction, the Network Rail line towards Sunderland could be used, whilst the Boldon West Junction opens up the possibility of direct journeys between South Shields and the new International Advanced Manufacturing Park (IAMP), Washington and Durham Belmont, through the construction of a new spur heading west of Fellgate Metro, as described below. Existing and planned employment opportunities in the area include Sunderland Software City, Port of Tyne, and the regeneration of South Shields town centre.
- 7.8.3 Whilst another potential alignment exists in the area – the former West Harton mineral line between South Shields and the Tiledsheds area of Boldon – re-use of this route would require another junction with the Sunderland line in close proximity to the existing Boldon East and West junctions. For this reason, and the currently operational status of the Network Rail Port of Tyne route, it is considered that the Brockley Whins option is preferable, especially as it offers potential Metro service options to both the Sunderland and Washington areas from South Tyneside.

## **7.9 New routes in the Sunderland area**

### **Sunderland ‘Circular’**

- 7.9.1 The need to link the Washington area to the Metro and local rail network has been evident since the early days of Metro operation, given its population and the need for better public transport links with Sunderland city centre in particular. Various options including re-use of the Leamside rail corridor and street-running

trams have been considered in the past, but none have gained the necessary momentum towards delivery. However in the context of the strategic development of disused alignments and connecting spurs and curves, there is now the potential to deliver a circular Metro-style service covering Sunderland and Washington.

- 7.9.2 The existing route from the South Hylton Metro terminus could be extended westwards towards Penshaw using the railway formerly linking Sunderland with Durham, and then connecting with the Leamside corridor via a new curve heading northwards over the River Wear and through Washington towards Wardley. In the Wardley area a new spur would be built towards the east, joining up with the existing Network Rail line west of Fellgate Metro then heading back towards Sunderland via East Boldon. Similar new connections are feasible with the South Shields and Newcastle Metro routes east of Pelaw.
- 7.9.3 In the Washington area, preliminary survey work indicates the potential to serve the Galleries area of the town centre, and/or the area to the west of the new 5,000-jobs+ IAMP within the A19 Ultra Low Carbon Enterprise Zone, and also the area close to the Nissan car plant. It is acknowledged that the proximity of the Leamside corridor to the IAMP is not ideal. The designation of the site adjacent to the A19 trunk road results in the potential Metro corridor being situated some way to the west, with the need for a connecting bus link from the Sulgrave area at the former Usworth level crossing. Once more details of the proposed layout of the IAMP are available, Nexus will examine the potential for alternative Metro provision to and from this key area of future employment.
- 7.9.4 Because of the possibility of changes to the electrification of the existing Pelaw to Sunderland/South Hylton Network rail routes, any planned new routes in the Sunderland area should be assumed to be electrified at 25kV AC; this would also align with any national rail proposals to re-open and electrify the Leamside route as a through route capable of accommodating main-line services. There could also be the potential to connect Sunderland with the ECML via South Hylton and Fencehouses.
- 7.9.5 There will be a number of major engineering issues to address before this option can be finalised, including the crossing of the A19 trunk road west of South Hylton, and the adequacy of the Victoria Viaduct over the Wear to handle anticipated traffic levels. Nevertheless the majority of the proposed route, including possible routes through Washington town centre, is relatively free of physical obstacles.
- 7.9.6 This service pattern could open up a large number of new journey opportunities across the Sunderland and South Tyneside areas and beyond and would create a second Metro corridor connecting Wearside with Tyneside, also delivering additional network capacity and operational flexibilities.

#### **Sunderland City Centre to Doxford Park**

- 7.9.7 Consideration of a route between Sunderland city centre and Doxford Park suggests it may be possible to provide rail connections between the two by the use of the former Hetton Colliery railway which used to transport coal to the banks of the River Wear and which latterly has been preserved as a footpath and cycleway.
- 7.9.8 Doxford Park is an established Sunderland suburb, and is also home to the city's biggest business park, Doxford International, a 51 ha site that provides 8,000 jobs. The area surrounding the site experiences peak-time traffic congestion which impacts upon the adjacent A19 trunk road. Bringing Metro-style services to the Doxford area would offer an attractive alternative to car use.
- 7.9.9 Most of the route between Doxford and the city centre is free from development, however structures beneath or over Durham Road and Premier Road would need to be constructed, as well as a spur connecting with the existing Metro network west of University. This proposal requires further feasibility work, but it

offers potential of bringing rail services to Doxford International and to areas of south Sunderland that are not currently served by Metro.

### **Sunderland South Estates**

- 7.9.10 A swathe of land between Doxford Park, Tunstall and Ryhope has been identified as being suitable for large-scale housing development. This is referred to as the South Sunderland Growth Area. Other than the historical Hetton Colliery Railway which has been identified as being potentially suitable for a Metro extension to Doxford, as referred to above, the only other former railway alignment in this area was the Silksworth Colliery Railway between Silksworth and Ryhope which has subsequently been built over for some of its length and incorporated elsewhere into a golf course.
- 7.9.11 House-building is expected to begin shortly in the Chapelgarth area, with development taking place in phases towards Ryhope. Options to serve this growth area as part of this strategy include a Park and Ride site with connecting bus links as part of a new Ryhope Interchange on the Durham Coast line towards Seaham described at section 7.6.3 above, with connecting bus links. Nexus will also investigate any potential opportunities to provide Metro network coverage along this development corridor, within the constraints described above.

### **Sunderland North Estates**

- 7.9.12 A large area of the city to the north of the River Wear is located some distance from the existing Metro network. Communities such as Witherwack, Hylton Castle, Downhill and parts of Castletown developed between the 1930s and 1970s and have since been served by buses other than by a tram route as far west as Southwick which was removed in 1954. There were fewer colliery lines in this area than south of the Wear, and the only former railways in the area, the LNER Hylton, Southwick & Monkwearmouth railway and a branch over the Queen Alexandra Bridge towards Millfield have since been largely built over by the A1231 Wessington Way and the A1290 Kier Hardie Way.
- 7.9.13 This makes the identification of a possible new Metro alignment in the area particularly challenging, however the sizeable population of the North Estates requires that further work into potential options be undertaken, with a view to assessing whether network extensions into this area are feasible. Nexus will undertake this work as part of the wider examination of Metro network enhancements.

## **7.10 Durham Belmont to Sunderland/South Shields/Newcastle**

- 7.10.1 Using some of the routes described in section 7.8 above, the former Leamside line could be used to introduce direct local links between Durham Belmont, Fencehouses and Penshaw, with options to link to South Hylton and Sunderland city centre; or to the Washington, International Advanced Manufacturing Park, Pelaw and South Shields areas. There may also be other former alignments in the area that are potentially suitable.
- 7.10.2 Durham County Council's existing Park and Ride site at the A1/A690 junction at Durham Belmont is ideal for bus interchange and bus and rail-based Park and Ride, with a catchment area including the eastern side of Durham City and also a wide area of east and central County Durham. Fencehouses and Penshaw along the route are areas of substantial new housing construction and would also benefit from new local transport links that avoid the need to use the congested A1 and A19 trunk roads.
- 7.10.3 Work undertaken for the IAMP development suggests a high level of demand from County Durham residents for links to jobs in this area, and this route option opens up a number of new commuting possibilities along a



corridor under-served by existing public transport. Much of the north of County Durham is within easy commuting distance of Tyne and Wear, and the existence of this corridor makes the creation of local rail links with the Sunderland and South Tyneside areas a realistic possibility.

- 7.10.4 The development of route and service options along this corridor will be aided by the evolving capabilities of the NERMU and Rail North to work closely with the NECA and Nexus to understand all of the options for the future use of the Leamside corridor and their inter-dependencies and any potential conflicts.

## **7.11 Team Valley and A1 Gateshead Park and Ride**

- 7.11.1 An opportunity exists to leverage existing Network Rail infrastructure to provide direct train services to and from the Team Valley area. This would require the reinstatement of the short 'Bensham curve', disused rail alignment connecting two existing rail corridors in the Gateshead area to enable rail access down an existing freight-only line to the east side of Team Valley, then running parallel to the East Coast Main Line (ECML) without conflict with Intercity services. This new route could also provide another freight route between Port of Tyne and the ECML.
- 7.11.2 The Team Valley area is one of the largest employment sites in the NECA area with 20,000+ jobs but is affected by increasing highway congestion along the A1 trunk road corridor. The proposed route would serve the eastern side of the Team Valley area and continues south towards Lamesley where proximity to both the ECML and the A1 offers the potential of a parkway-style interchange, "A1 Park & Ride" with a large parking capacity accessed almost directly from the trunk road. This could offer strategic benefits for the relief of trunk road congestion - the A1 in the Team Valley area is one of the worst congestion hotspots in the country, although an improvement scheme has recently been completed by Highways England, it is not considered likely that any further capacity enhancements will be possible. Heading south from Lamesley there is potentially space adjacent to and west of the ECML to allow local rail services to continue towards Birtley and Chester-le-Street area where new housing development is planned. Local environmental impacts and the impacts of ECML improvements to increase line capacity will need to be taken into account.
- 7.11.3 This option could be further developed by greater use of the section of line running parallel to the south bank of the Tyne through Gateshead. This line offers a southbound route from Newcastle using the High Level Bridge over the Tyne, feeding onto the Tyne Valley Line with minimal conflict with the ECML. It could also facilitate the development of a railway station in central Gateshead, and offer through services between Sunderland, South Tyneside, Gateshead, Metrocentre and Team Valley.
- 7.11.4 The use of the line running alongside the ECML should not come at the expense of increased capacity and resilience of the ECML itself. The ECML is of the highest strategic importance to the economic aims of the NECA, and it already struggles to meet the demands currently placed upon it. The NECA will continue to work with Transport for the North, Network Rail and the government to make the case for major investment in the line's capacity and resilience for carrying long-distance passenger and freight traffic.

## **7.12 West Newcastle**

- 7.12.1 The inner west of Newcastle upon Tyne is one of the most densely populated areas of Tyne and Wear, but has yet to gain from the benefits of Metro services in spite of its close proximity to the existing network. When the original network was designed, provision was made at St James for future westward extensions

underground. Recent construction developments in the St James area with deep foundations mean that the potential to tunnel further westwards is greatly reduced, and would be prohibitively expensive in any case.

- 7.12.2 However with a future integrated rail and Metro network, and dual-voltage trains, options exist to use the original Carlisle line out of Newcastle Central station to the north of the Metro Radio Arena, then at the Newcastle Business Park via a new alignment north of the A695 Scotswood Road. This would provide direct links into the national rail network, and Metro services could also be linked to the Metro Centre via a new bridge across the Tyne around 2km east of Scotswood Bridge, providing new journey opportunities between west Newcastle and this major retail and leisure destination.

### **7.13 Metro to Metrocentre**

- 7.13.1 The Metrocentre is a major leisure, retail and employment site, as well as acting as a public transport hub for Western Gateshead. Further development in the Metrocentre area is likely to increase future levels of transport demand. A number of sites east, north and west of the Metrocentre are included within the Metrogreen Strategic Growth Area which forms a component of the NewcastleGateshead One Core Strategy. Gateshead Council is currently preparing an Area Action Plan to facilitate the regeneration of and investment in vacant and underused brownfield land around the Metrocentre. The Plan will look at how public transport can be fully exploited to minimise the impact of additional traffic and congestion generated by new development and improve access to the surrounding area and beyond. Additionally, existing and future pressures on the A1 trunk road corridor may highlight a requirement for more sustainable transport alternatives which Metro and local rail can fulfil.
- 7.13.2 The existing Northern rail service provides frequent links to Newcastle and Hexham, and hourly to Sunderland. Several of the network extension opportunities described above could provide new through local rail links to serve Metrocentre – for example, to and South East Northumberland in addition to existing services to and from Morpeth. The preferred solutions for Metro to serve the Metrocentre are based upon existing use of the Tyne Valley line via Dunston, or via a new Tyne crossing as described in section 7.11 above.
- 7.13.3 Two further new route options may be worthy of more detailed consideration - using the line through Gateshead to access Heworth, South Tyneside and Sunderland directly, avoiding the congested Newcastle Central Station; and using an existing freight spur between Bensham and the Team Valley area to connect to the route to the proposed new A1 Park and Ride site described above.

### **7.14 Local Rail Network Improvements**

- 7.14.1 The draft North East Rail Network Study (NERNS), referred to in Section 2 above, sets out a number of service enhancements required by forecast demand, as well as the capacity and network improvements expected to be required to accommodate them. The outputs of the finalised report and the proposals within this study will be mutually informative in order to assess what physical changes – from platform lengthening to new route construction – may be required to achieve the Metro Futures vision.
- 7.14.2 The draft NERN study identifies that most medium-term demand flows for the period to 2023 can be met by more frequent local rail services, or longer trains, or a combination of both. Routes which fall into these categories include those that will benefit from the additional Northern Connect limited-stop services connecting Carlisle, Hexham, Metrocentre, Newcastle and Teesside, also the Tyne Valley and Durham Coast

services that are not Northern Connect services. Stations along the ECML between Berwick-upon-Tweed and Durham are likely to be mostly served by long-distance express and semi-fast services as at present, with Chester-le-Street, Cramlington and Morpeth requiring a more intensive local service.

7.14.3 In the period to 2023 the NERN study assumes a requirement for network enhancements as follows:

- Ashington, Blyth and Tyne corridor upgraded for passenger services
- Newcastle to Sunderland re-electrified at 25kV ac<sup>40</sup>
- Improved route capacity at Darlington to accommodate Bishop Auckland services
- Tyne Valley platform lengthening as required

7.14.4 Beyond 2023, the draft study has identified a number of major and minor capacity constraints on the regional network that will require a variety of interventions. These are indicative at this stage and will be examined further as the study and its successors are developed further:

- Sunderland to Newcastle – headway improvements through signalling improvements
- Improved route capacity at Darlington to accommodate Bishop Auckland services

7.14.5 The indicative Metro and local network shown as Figure 15 above will bring its own challenges and opportunities. The plans do not directly impinge upon the ECML, and with advances in signalling technology anticipated during the coming decades, there is every likelihood of being able to achieve greater capacity across the network. One area of potential concern is that of station capacity, particularly at Newcastle and Sunderland stations where there is currently little or no surplus platform capacity to accommodate increased service levels.

## **7.15 Network Integration Opportunities**

7.15.1 The planned expansion of the Metro and local rail network will deliver improved connectivity in itself, but the effect of this will be magnified by growth in interchange with private cars (through both park and ride and passenger drop-off points), taxis, bicycles (through high quality cycle storage), walking (through safe walking routes), buses, and longer-distance rail services. Therefore interchange points will be designed into expanded Metro and local rail routes wherever possible, offering a wide range of onward travel opportunities.

7.15.2 The Metro system has always maintained the highest accessibility standards for disabled people and people with reduced mobility, and this will continue to be the case as the new fleet is specified and new stations constructed. In addition the acquisition of a new fleet offers an opportunity to explore whether the carriage of bicycles and mobility scooters can be achieved. The Metro system already benefits from a smart ticketing system through use of the Pop card, and wherever possible this will be expanded onto other modes of travel in particular local rail and bus services. In the longer term, Nexus expects to develop contactless payment on public transport, and by working with Transport for the North, 'account-based ticketing' will be able to offer an integrated travel payment system that joins up transport across the North of England.

7.15.3 The following integration opportunities have been identified at this stage relating to the network extension opportunities that are discussed above.

*Ryhope Park & Ride* - linked to the extension of Metro-style services south of Sunderland.

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<sup>40</sup> Also dependent upon the withdrawal date of the existing Metro train fleet.

*A19 Doxford Park, Park and Ride* – there may be opportunities adjacent to a Metro terminus to attract A19 users.

*Washington, Sulgrave area* – interchange for local bus links for IAMP and Nissan employees.

*Follingsby Park and Ride* – depending upon route selection there may be scope for a combined Metro/local rail and bus park and ride facility at the northern end of the Leamside corridor.

*Metrocentre Interchange* – further development of the existing Intu-owned public transport interchange to accommodate improved local rail/Metro links.

*A1 Lamesley Park and Ride* – served by a new Team Valley extension and to support the Eighton Lodge facility in removing city centre traffic at a site close to the A1.

*Northumberland Park* – improvement of existing facilities reflecting the opportunity to develop the Ashington Blyth and Tyne and Cobalt corridors.

- 7.15.4 Effective integration should also go beyond the above and also include provision for electric car users, car club users, cyclists and pedestrians, with the emphasis on ensuring that all of the real and perceived barriers to integration are removed or reduced as far as possible.
- 7.15.5 There is already limited provision for the carriage of cycles on the local Northern trains network, with up to two carried free of charge at any time without reservations on a first come, first served basis. An increase on this capacity in the future would be a positive move towards facilitating more multi-modal journeys.

## **7.16 Conclusions and Recommendations**

- 7.16.1 The opportunities outlined in this chapter are those considered at this stage to have potential for future development, based upon anticipated demand, land-use changes and the availability of disused alignments and freight routes that could realistically be brought back into use.
- 7.16.2 The identified corridors represent exciting opportunities to extend the reach of Metro and local rail into areas not currently served, or with limited journey opportunities. They will however be subjected to rigorous business case analysis with further detailed technical work to assess their financial and operational viability.
- 7.16.3 Any extensions to the existing network will require extensive consultation and stakeholder engagement involving the NECA, the LEP, local planning authorities and Rail North. The relationship with the regional land-use planning process will be particularly important in helping to define future Metro and local rail requirements linked to strategic developments, and in ensuring that transport corridors are reserved as required.
- 7.16.4 Recommendations are:
- To undertake further technical feasibility work with key stakeholders in respect of those additional Metro and local rail corridors that appear to have the best prospects in terms of demand, deliverability and financing.
  - Collect and assess the economic evidence in order to develop and prioritise business cases for new routes.

- Ensure that these corridors are incorporated as appropriate into long-term transport plans and economic plans.
- Monitor these corridors for forthcoming developments that could be a catalyst for implementation.
- NECA and its partners to take cognisance of current and expected future requirements of rail freight when planning the technologies and the network capacity required to deliver changes to the provision of Metro and local rail services.

## **Section 8: FUNDING ARRANGEMENTS**

### **8.1 Context**

- 8.1.1 Identifying and securing adequate funding is essential to the delivery of this strategy. Renewal of the Metro fleet and the funding of the next phase of asset renewals will be major developments for the NECA and for Nexus. Given the extent of public funding – over £350m – that is already being invested in the ongoing renewals programme, it is vital that further funding is sourced to guarantee the long-term future security and growth of Metro, and to ensure that both fleet and infrastructure are fit for purpose to meet customer demands and to facilitate closer integration with the local rail network.
- 8.1.2 Metro is a vital public service which will cost £95.0m to operate in 2016/17. Whilst almost half of Metro's total operating costs are covered by fare income, it places heavy reliance on a sizeable amount of public subsidy in the form of revenue grant from central government and the NECA (£24.7m and £4.2m respectively in 2016/17). In addition, capital investment in Metro has traditionally been funded from capital grants, meaning that £21.7m of depreciation chargeable to Metro operations in 2016/17 is also financed from central government. Looking ahead, it will be important to secure an on-going long-term commitment to a continuation of this level of public subsidy, and discussions are underway to understand the government's position.
- 8.1.3 Phase 2 of Metro Reinvigoration has provided a step change in investment in essential renewals through the Asset Renewal Programme since 2010; 90% of the current level of capital investment is provided in the form of capital grant from the government, with a 10% local contribution sourced from a combination of 'IT Block' grant and reserves held by the NECA on Nexus' behalf. As planning starts for the renewals programme for 2021/22 onwards, discussions are also taking place with the government about future funding arrangements for this important work.
- 8.1.4 Investment in a new fleet will be significant as described above. The current fleet is almost fully depreciated and to the extent that it is not, depreciation costs are fully funded; therefore unless the acquisition of a new fleet can be funded in its entirety from capital grant, any future financing costs will represent a new, on-going cost that is not currently a feature of Metro's operational budget. It is therefore anticipated that, subject to a suitable business case, the government will make a significant contribution towards the acquisition of a new fleet. Lower operating costs will be sought through lower energy usage and more efficient fleet utilisation, which together with additional fare revenue associated with a more reliable service, may provide some flexibility for a local contribution.
- 8.1.5 The cost of expanding the Metro system will also be significant. Although the options identified in this strategy aim to explore the opportunity of using existing assets wherever possible, nevertheless the capital construction costs of any new railway lines are likely to run in the hundreds of millions of pounds, and new operating costs will be added to existing levels of expenditure. To achieve expansion of the system, investment decisions by Network Rail, Nexus and local authorities will need to be aligned and a clear demand identified for each addition to the network.
- 8.1.6 As part of the work to develop feasibility, Nexus will develop funding options looking at a wide variety of local, national and international sources of finance for both capital investment and associated operational costs. These could potentially include developer contributions, planning gain, and investment from private sector partners.

## **8.2 Potential funding sources**

- 8.2.1 Other UK light rail networks have used a variety of funding sources to achieve fleet renewals and system extensions. No decisions have yet been taken as to which, if any, of these options Nexus will pursue in order to achieve the key objectives of the strategy. A distinction also needs to be made between grants and loans, with the latter imposing potentially significant downstream costs upon the network unless revenues increase by a greater margin.
- 8.2.2 In other conurbations extensions to existing networks are more likely to be funded through a portfolio of funding consisting of grants and/or loans from a variety of sources depending on individual circumstances, including such as the following:
- Central government funding.
  - ‘Planning gain’ and developer contributions.
  - Borrowing against future fares revenue, where there is demonstrable demand evidenced by a sound business case.
  - EU funding for specific objectives, such as through the European Regional Development Fund programme.
  - Regional funding streams, such as the Single Growth Fund.
  - European Investment Bank loan finance.
  - Commercial sponsorship opportunities.
  - Local government funding.
- 8.2.3 For the duration of the existing Northern franchise, local rail services will be funded by the Department for Transport, with the scale of overall subsidy support decreasing sharply over the lifetime of the franchise from £275m per year in 2016/17 to £73m in 2024/25. With the full devolution of North East rail services beckoning from 2025/26 onwards, it will be important to ensure that its funding is sufficient to support the delivery of strategic objectives related to a single Metro and local rail network.
- 8.2.4 A more detailed assessment of potential funding options set out in Appendix 2.

## **8.3 Conclusions and Recommendations**

- 8.3.1 Nexus will actively investigate all options for the future financing of Metro that offer the best combination of security, flexibility and value for public money.
- 8.3.2 NECA and Nexus will work closely with the NERMU, Rail North and the DfT to obtain the highest possible levels of funding to help deliver a high quality integrated local rail network.

**Current and Future Demand**

- Monitor existing and predicted future demand for Metro and local rail closely.
- Monitor regional and national economic and planning trends.
- Maximise demand through the delivery of reliable services that meet customer requirements.
- Liaise closely with the Local Economic Partnership to ensure the optimum locations of development proposed within the Strategic Economic Plan and district local plans. Liaise with district planning authorities to ensure that the principles and detailed design of developments are planned so as to maximise accessibility, with accessibility targets to Metro and local rail services applying to large developments.
- Work with local authorities on the introduction of new stations on the existing network where these are justified by demand, sought by local communities and are operationally feasible.

**Metro Fleet Renewal**

- Replacement of the life-expired existing Metro fleet with new trains which can deliver improved customer benefits, increased operational flexibility and operating cost savings.
- Development of a technical specification to achieve Metro fleet renewal.
- Development of a robust business case to secure funding for a new Metro fleet.

**Metro Power Supplies**

- Nexus retains 1500V DC operation for its own on-track network.
- Dual-voltage 1500V DC / 25kV AC capability is included within the new Metro fleet specification.
- The new Metro fleet should meet national rail network crash-worthiness standards.
- The energy-efficiency benefits of regenerative braking should be considered in detail in the design of both new vehicles and renewed substations.
- Nexus and Network Rail should liaise closely in terms of plans for future electrification in the North East region.

**Metro Depot Facilities**

- Establishment of options and outline costings to refurbish the existing Gosforth Depot to provide long-term sustainability of operations.
- Estimate the costs of a brand new main depot.
- Identify a policy position about alternative sites for a new main depot, or additional out-stabling facilities.

**Signalling and Control**

- Research into the optimum signalling and control protocols for Metro should continue as part of the new train fleet business case specification, ensuring that the chosen solution is safe, value for money, flexible, and not incompatible with similar control systems as may be introduced in the future by Network Rail.



### **Energy Supply, Efficiency and Renewables**

- Continue to identify and implement cost-effective energy-saving opportunities on Metro's existing network and infrastructure
- Undertake more work be carried out on the opportunities for renewable energy generation
- Given its long-term criticality to Metro operation, develop a formal Energy Strategy

### **Essential Renewals post-2021**

- It is recommended that work continues to full business case status on the continuation of the Metro essential renewals programme post-2021.

### **Customer Requirements**

- Develop and maintain close contact with Metro and local rail users and non-users to establish a deep understanding of customer requirements.
- Focus on increasing service reliability and on the management of service disruption
- Incorporate customer requirements into the design of new trains as far as practicable.
- Ensure that fares and ticketing products are simple to understand and relate to users' needs.
- Continue to provide accurate and timely proactive and reactive service information in formats that customers want, taking account of wider accessibility needs.
- Create stations that are modern, safe and welcoming.
- Promote Park and Ride facilities where feasible and justified by demand.
- Develop a seamless Metro and local rail customer service that offers product and service consistency across locations and providers.

### **Concession**

Nexus will identify the solution that best delivers the key aims and objectives of this strategy taking account of the following key factors:

- customer requirements;
- availability of finance;
- build, operate and maintain options;
- opportunities to achieve economies of scale, and
- flexibility to respond to changing circumstances such as network opportunities and technological changes that dual-voltage Metro trains would introduce.

### **Network Extension Corridors**

- Undertake further technical feasibility work with key stakeholders in respect of those corridors Metro and local rail corridors that appear to have the best prospects in terms of demand, deliverability and financing.

- Ensure that these corridors are incorporated as appropriate into long-term transport plans and economic plans.
- Monitor these corridors for forthcoming developments that could be a catalyst for implementation.
- NECA and its partners to take cognisance of current and expected future requirements of rail freight when planning the technologies and the network capacity required to deliver changes to the provision of Metro and local rail services.

## **Finance**

- Nexus will actively investigate all options for the future financing of Metro that offer the best combination of security, flexibility and value for public money.
- NECA and Nexus will work closely with the NERMU, Rail North and the DfT to obtain the highest possible levels of funding to help deliver a high quality integrated local rail network.

## Appendix 1: CASE STUDIES OF OTHER UK URBAN RAIL NETWORKS

### A1.1 Manchester Metrolink

A1.1.1 Manchester Metrolink is a light rail network which serves an increasing proportion of the Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) area including central Manchester, Altrincham, Bury, Oldham, Eccles, Rochdale and Manchester International Airport. It is an example of a network built in response to a need identified during the 1980s for a more integrated and efficient network of public transport due to the poor north-south connections across Manchester city centre. Due to the vagaries of 19<sup>th</sup> century railway development, two almost independent networks came into being north and south of the city centre. At the time the Tyne and Wear Metro was being built, serious consideration was given to a 'Picc-Vic Tunnel' connecting the two Manchester railway hubs, however nothing was progressed and it was not until a decade later that firm plans were made for a surface-level network, part street-running, partly on former suburban rail routes that would plug the accessibility gaps existing between areas of the Greater Manchester conurbation. In this respect there are similarities with the Tyne and Wear Metro; although Metrolink has no deep-level tunnels and Metro does not operate on-street, both use high-floor trains resulting from their legacy of former British Rail routes.

A1.1.2 The first phase opened in 1992 at a cost of £154 million connecting Bury with Altrincham via the streets of central Manchester. It has since grown organically and is now a major urban light rail network with 92 stops, running through 8 out of 10 boroughs of Greater Manchester. The network operates on a mixture of designated light railway alignments (segregated from other traffic) and as an on-street tramway (shared with pedestrians and vehicles). All trams are monitored by CCTV, as well as there being an emergency call point on both trams and platforms. Like Nexus Metro the network is unstaffed apart from train drivers, but is regularly patrolled by a dedicated Metrolink police unit.

A1.1.3 Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) owns the network, and RATP Dev UK Ltd operates and maintains the Metrolink network under a 10-year contract with TfGM which runs until July 2017. The network operates approximately 19 hours per day. Extensions to the network throughout the past five years included to MediaCityUK and Chorlton in 2011, with the most recent extensions to East Didsbury, Ashton-under-Lyne and Manchester International Airport opening during 2013 - 2014. The second city crossing via Deansgate was approved in 2013 and is now under construction, relieving the bottleneck caused by all routes funnelling into the existing Piccadilly route. Once the current expansion programme is due to be completed, Greater Manchester will have one of the largest light rail networks in the UK, with forecasts of 45 million passengers per year comparable with those for Nexus Metro. Annual passenger journeys in 2014/15 were 31.2 million.

#### A1.1.4 Network details

Number of trains	120 (by 2017)
Power supply	750V DC with overhead line equipment
Maximum speed	80 km/h
Tram capacity	206 per train (52-60 seated)
Gauge	1435mm
Park and Ride	At 12 sites across the network
Operating Mode	Driver operated, with line-of-sight signalling (GoA0)



Figure 16 - Manchester Metrolink Bombardier M5000 tram

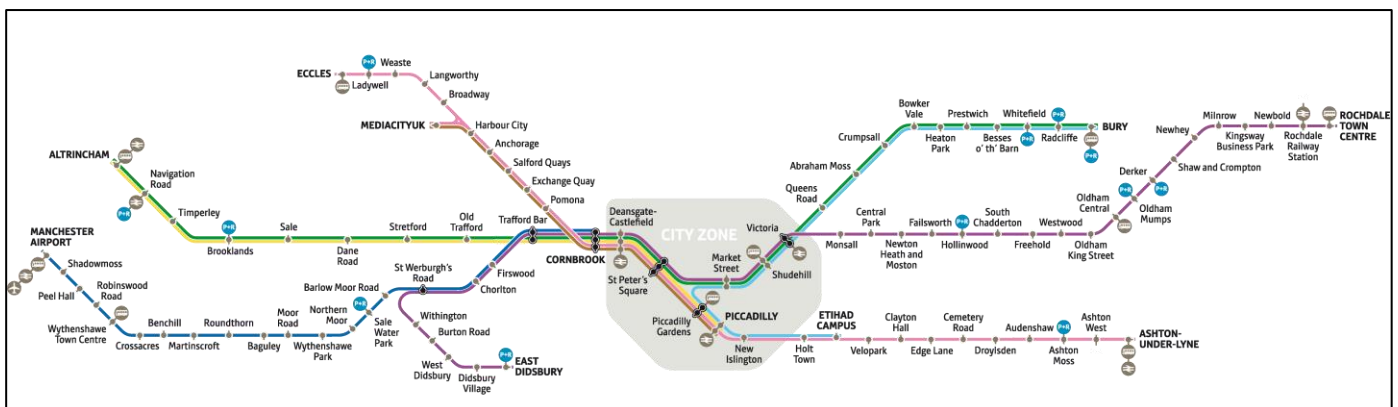


Figure 17- Manchester Metrolink Network 2016

## **A1.2 London Tramlink**

- A1.2.1 London Tramlink is a light rail network in south London operated by London Tramlink, an arm of Transport for London (TfL). It serves seven National Rail stations en route and one interchange with the London Underground. Tramlink runs on a mixture of on-street tracks shared with other traffic, dedicated tracks on public roads and off street tracks consisting of new alignments, former railway lines and one section of alignment (but not track) shared with a third-rail electrified Network Rail line.
- A1.2.2 Traffic began to create serious traffic congestion problems in Croydon area during the 1980s and to help counteract these effects the Croydon Tramlink Act received Royal Assent in 1994 and Tramlink Croydon Limited (TCL) was awarded a 99-year lease to design, finance, build and operate the network. The total project cost around £200 million of which around £125 million was government-funded. In 2008 TfL reached an agreement to buy the Tramlink concession for £98 million and TfL now owns and operates the network outright.
- A1.2.3 The network comprises four routes with an overall track length of 28km. There are 39 stations in total which are unstaffed with automated ticket machines. All stops are fully accessible and include CCTV and a passenger help point.
- A1.2.4 Annual passenger journeys in 2014/15 were 32.3 million. All TfL ticket products are valid on Tramlink. Cash fares and pay as you go Oyster card fares are available as on London buses, although special fares may apply when using Tramlink feeder buses.
- A1.2.5 Tramlink operates at speeds up to 80 km/h on the “line of sight” principle. Signalling is only provided to regulate the movement of trams at junctions and at single line sections. All street running signalling is controlled by the highway traffic signal controllers provided by London Streets. Off street signalling follows highway principles and is managed by LT’s Engineering team.
- A1.2.6 The Mayor’s Transport Strategy for London includes possible extensions to the Tramlink network which could be developed at relatively modest cost. An initial review of potential Tramlink extensions has been prepared and as a result TfL has expressed a wish to carry out initial development on evaluation work on six routes.

### **A1.2.7 Network details**

Number of trains	34 (24 Flexity Swift CR4000 & 10 Variobahn)
Power	750 V DC overhead line supply
Maximum Speed	80 km/h
Capacity	200 (72 seats in newest trams)
Gauge	1435 mm
Park and Ride	No
Operating Mode	Driver operated (GoA0)
Depots	Therapia Lane depot



Figure 18 Stadler Variobahn tram, Croydon Tramlink

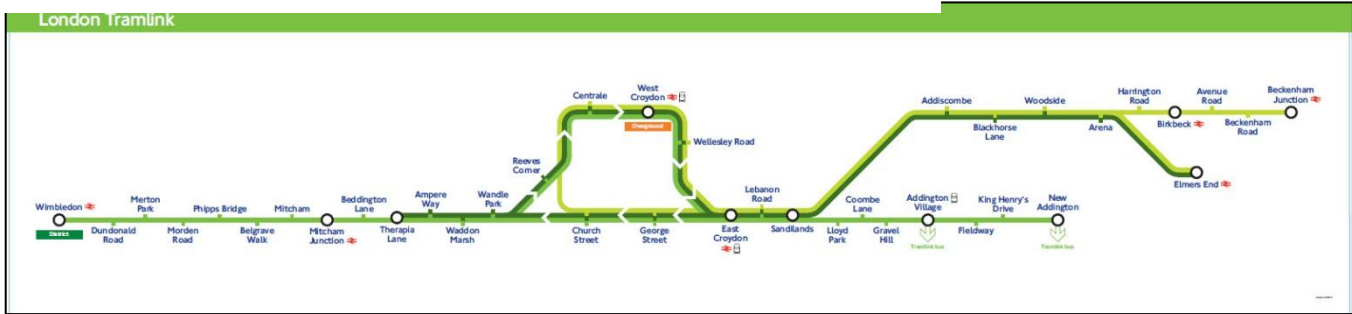


Figure 19 - Croydon Tramlink Network

### **A1.3 Nottingham Express Transit**

A1.3.1 Nottingham Express Transit is a light rail network which runs on a mixture of on-street running and reserved track. The network is 32km long and currently serves 50 stations within the City of Nottingham area.

A1.3.2 Construction of the scheme lasted 16 years from inception to implementation, opening in 2004 at a cost of £200 million. The building of the network was influenced by high population density, and complex road network due to Trent river crossings and road congestion. A special purpose company consortium, Arrow Light Ltd, was created to design, build, fund, operate and maintain NET Line 1.

A1.3.3 Nottingham Express Transit is day-to-day funded through the proceeds of the Nottingham Workplace Parking Levy, which is also the main source of funding for network extensions. Further details of the principles and practicalities of the levy are covered in section 2 of the strategy.

A1.3.4 Annual patronage is currently 8.1 million. Tickets were formerly sold on-board by conductors, but since 2014 they have been replaced with a combination of station based 'ambassadors', platform ticket machines and electronic ticketing.

A1.3.5 A recent development of the network comprised a two-line extension serving the southern and western suburbs of Nottingham. The two lines created an additional 17.4km of track with 28 new stops at a total cost of £570 million. The expansion of Park and Ride policy continues with 2500 new spaces divided between the Chilwell and Clifton terminals.

#### **A1.3.6 Network details**

Number of trains	15 Incento AT6/5 22 Citadis 302
Power	750V DC overhead line supply
Maximum speed	70-80 km/h
Capacity	191-202 (58-62 seated)
Park and Ride	7 sites with over 5000 spaces
Operating mode	Driver operated (GoA0)
Depots	One



Figure 20 - NET Tram in Nottingham city centre

#### **A1.4 Docklands Light Railway**

- A1.4.1 Docklands Light Railway (DLR) is an automated network which opened in 1987 at an initial cost of £77 million to serve the Docklands area of east London. DLR emerged as to serve the need for cost effective public transport to the former Thames docks to stimulate a major programme of regeneration.
- A1.4.2 The initial network comprised two routes but due to the Docklands area developing more quickly than anticipated, trams were extended to 2-car units and the network expanded into the heart of the City of London. There have been additional extensions to the network including to Woolwich Arsenal, Lewisham, London City Airport, and a line from Canning Town to Stratford.
- A1.4.3 Although the majority of the stations are elevated, from the outset the network has been fully accessible. The stations have high platforms, level with the tram floors. Due to the trams being automated (GoA3), a Passenger Service Agent (PSA) is on board every tram and is responsible for patrolling the train, checking tickets, making announcements and controlling the doors. They can also take control of the train if there is equipment failure or in an emergency.
- A1.4.4 The network is 40km long with 45 stations. There are seven main routes, although two routes only operate at certain times of day. Average frequencies of the services are between 6-8 minutes. Passenger journeys for 2014/15 were 110.2 million per annum, up 8.5% compared to the previous year. The network is part of the TfL London ticketing network, which includes Oyster pay as you go. There are no ticket barriers at DLR stations; correct ticketing is enforced by PSAs.
- A1.4.5 Following a successful six-month trial, DLR now allows cyclists to take their bikes on the network outside of peak hours on Mondays to Fridays and without restrictions at weekends and on bank holidays.
- A1.4.6 A future potential extension is from Gallions Reach via Barking to Dagenham Dock, designed to include the provision of five new stations designed to ensure integration with re-development of the area.

#### **A1.4.7 Network details**

Number of cars	149 (2 or 3 cars per train)
Power	750V DC
Maximum speed	80 km/h
Capacity	Total capacity per car of 284 (70 seating)
Gauge	1435mm
Park and Ride	None
Operating mode	Automated with driver-controlled option (GoA3)
Depots	2





Figure 21 - DLR train on segregated track

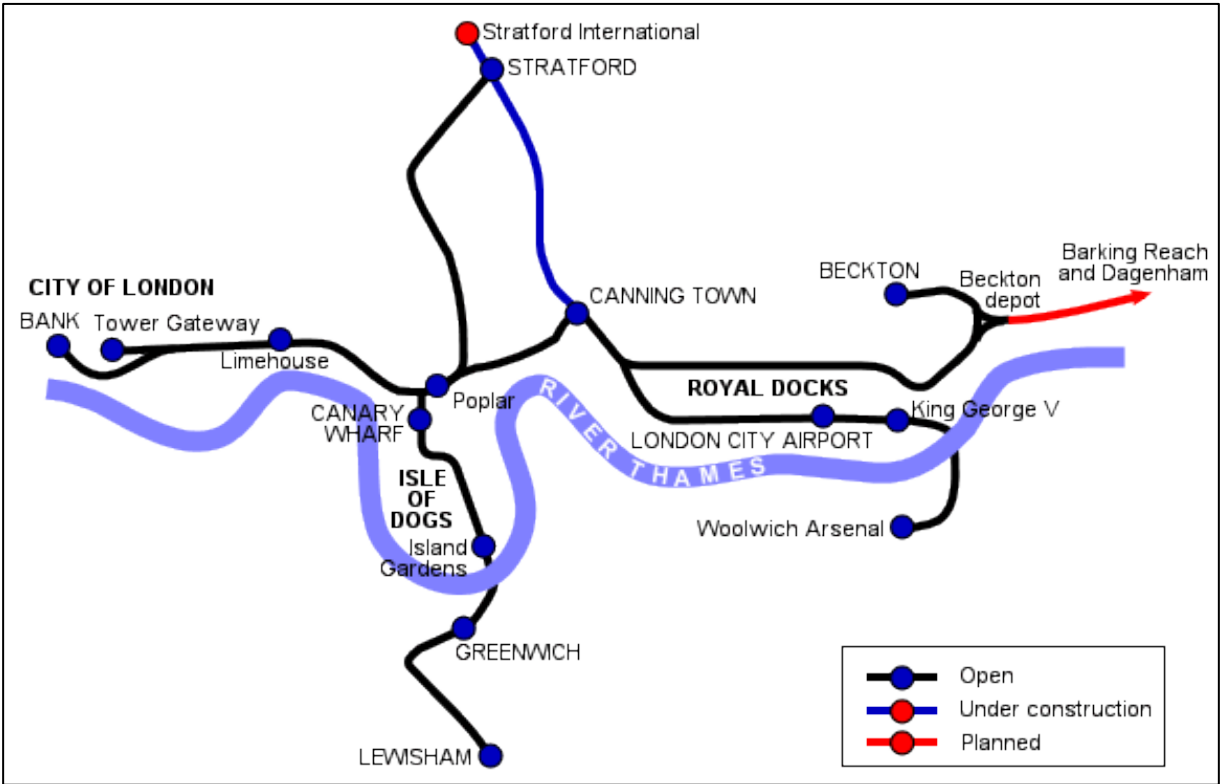


Figure 22 - Docklands Light Railway network

## **A1.5 Glasgow Subway**

A1.5.1 The Glasgow Subway, known locally as the 'Clockwork Orange' has some similarities with Metro in terms of its role in carrying large number of people short distances in inner-city areas; in other respects it is a unique network.

A1.5.2 The Subway has non-standard 1219mm-gauge tracks, and comprises twin tunnels on a 10.6 km circular route north and south of the River Clyde serving inner-city areas of Glasgow. Each circuit takes 24 minutes to complete and at peak times 4-minute headways apply. Smart ticketing technology was in place prior to the 2014 Commonwealth Games. It is owned and operated by the Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT) with approximately 12.5 million journeys made on the network each year. The route is fully underground. Flat fares are used with one fare for each of single, return, day and season tickets regardless of distance travelled.

A1.5.3 The Scottish Government will majority-fund a £300 million revamp of the Subway which will see the replacement of 37 year-old rolling stock. A £200 million contract has been awarded to Stadler Bussnang AG/Ansaldo STS Consortium to supply new trains, signalling and equipment. Due to the unique dimensions of the subway, the 17 new trains will be the same size as the existing stock. However the trains will be four-car sets as opposed to the current three-car sets. This contract is envisaged to deliver the move from partially automatic trains to Unmanned Train Operation (GoA4) using a Communications-Based Train Control (CBTC) network; as the Subway is 100% underground and completely segregated this should be fairly straightforward to implement. Subway trains currently use Automatic Train Operation (GoA2) technology.

### **A1.5.4 Network details**

Number of cars	33 (3 cars per train)
Power	600V DC
Maximum speed	80 km/h
Capacity	Total capacity per car of 284 (70 seating)
Gauge	1219m
Park and Ride	4
Operating mode	Automated, driver starts train (GoA2)
Depots	1

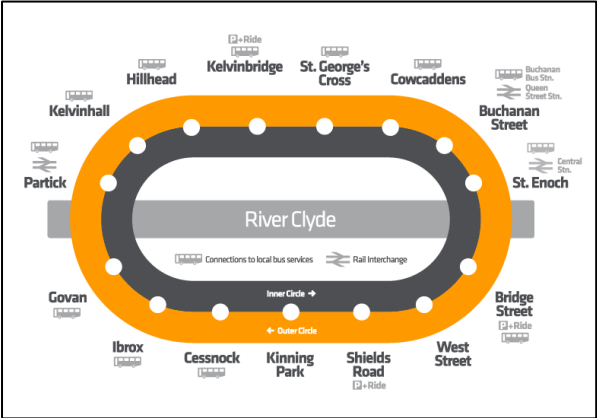


Figure 23 -Glasgow Subway route map



Figure 24 - Current rolling stock

## A1.6 Merseyrail

- A1.6.1 Merseyrail differs from the other UK case studies as it is not a light rail network; however its future direction and the similarities of the Merseyside and Tyne and Wear conurbations make it a useful comparator. The network uses conventional heavy rail rolling stock and operating technology, with track infrastructure owned and operated by Network Rail and trains leased by the train operating company Serco - Abellio.
- A1.6.2 The Merseyrail franchise is awarded by the Merseyside Passenger Transport Executive rather than the DfT. This situation exists because its tracks are self-contained and separates from the rest of the railway network. As a result of this isolation, the franchise-holder has explored the potential for vertical integration - where responsibility for maintenance of the track is transferred from Network Rail to Merseyrail, however for the time being the Integrated Transport Authority has decided against changes to the established framework.
- A1.6.3 The Merseyrail franchise covers a 25-year period from 2003. Because the franchise is locally specified and managed, it has a different focus and delivery framework to that of larger rail franchises. The rolling stock used on Merseyrail will need to be replaced shortly as it dates from the 1970s. New stock will have the option of dual voltage capability so it can be used on both the existing 750V DC third rail and the national standard 25kV AC overhead electrification system. The network is fairly unique in nature, which increases the need for a bespoke fleet of trains. Potential tram train links to the existing network to allow for on-street operation are also being examined.
- A1.6.4 Supporters of longer franchise agreements cite developments such as *M to Go*, a combination of ticket offices and retail stores at several locations across the Merseyrail network. The concession-style structure of Merseyrail means that the franchisee does not take revenue risk, but receives an agreed management fee. However, there are incentives to grow revenue, with profit-share between Merseytravel and Merseyrail above an agreed threshold. So far Merseytravel has re-invested all such profits in the public transport network, such as the refurbishment to Liverpool Central.

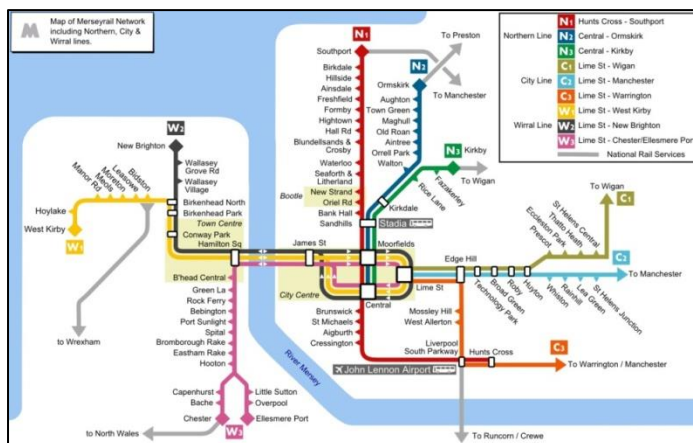


Figure 25 - Merseyrail network



Figure 26 - Merseyrail Class 507 train

## **A1.7 Sheffield Supertram**

- A1.7.1 Supertram is the light rail network for the Sheffield area. It opened in 1994 at a construction cost of £240 million. It is owned by South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive (SYPTe) and operated and maintained by Stagecoach under a long-term operating concession.
- A1.7.2 The network has three lines in total 29km in length running on a mixture of on-street running, reserved right of way, and former railway alignment. Supertram uses its own control network for on-street running and at junctions.
- A1.7.3 Tickets are sold on board via a conductor which improves staff presence on board and allows tickets to be systematically checked. Current ridership stands at 11.5 million passenger journeys per year. The service runs at a frequency of 10 minutes during the day and 20 minutes off peak on the two main lines, Yellow and Blue.
- A1.7.4 The current fleet comprises heavyweight Siemens trams with a high power-to-weight ratio to cope with the steep hills encountered on some of the routes (up to 10% gradient). There is some service integration with commercially operated and secured services across the area, particularly along the Hillsborough corridor.
- A1.7.5 Plans exist alongside the eventual arrival of the HS2 network to the Sheffield area to build a new Supertram line in the Dore area of Sheffield to provide cross-city connections with the proposed Meadowhall high speed rail station.
- A1.7.6 The Supertram network is notable as the location for the current UK tram train trial which will combine operations over Supertram and Network Rail tracks between Sheffield city centre and Rotherham. Further details of the trial are provided in the following case study.

### **A1.7.7 Network details**

Number of trains	25
Power	750 V DC overhead line
Maximum speed	80 km/h
Capacity	88 seated and 155 standing
Gauge	1435 mm
Park and Ride	6 sites
Operating mode	Driver operated, on-board conductor (GoA0)
Depots	Nunnery Lane



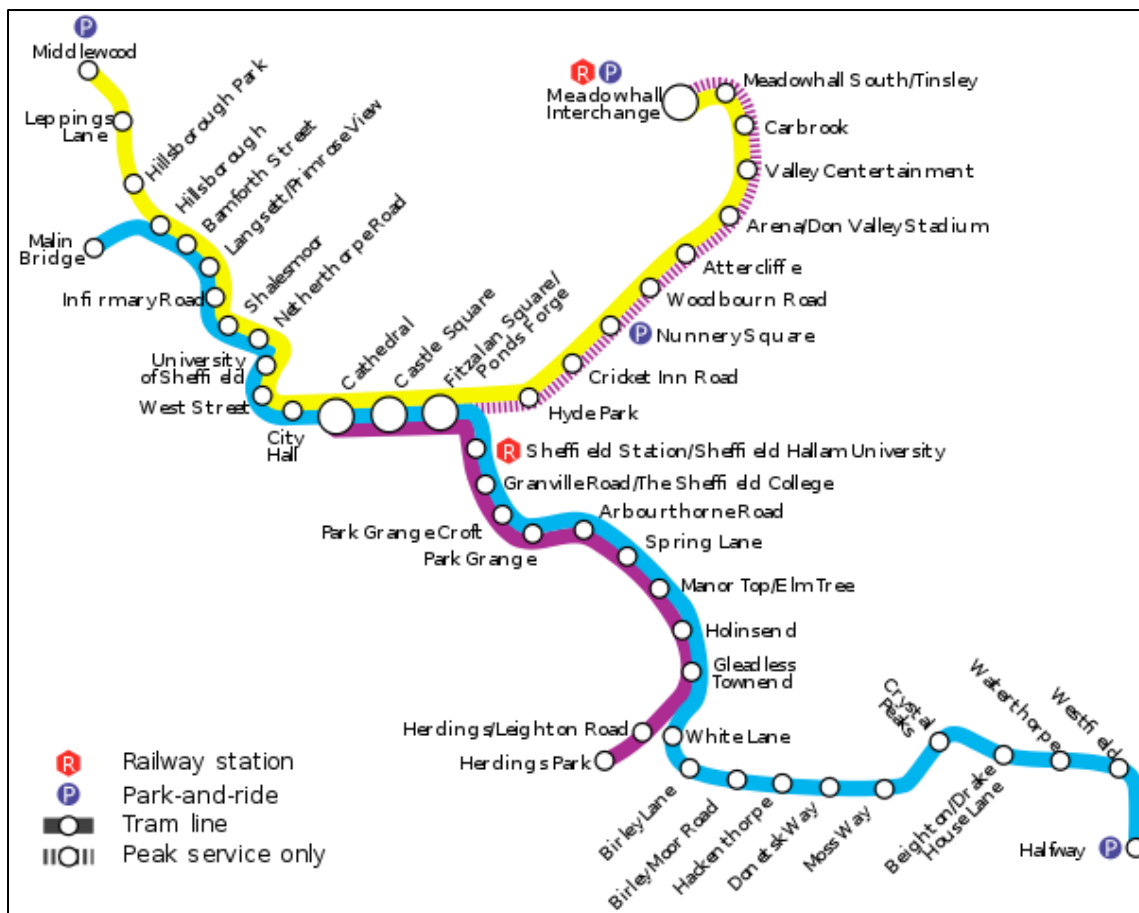


Figure 27 Sheffield Supertram network



Figure 28 - Siemens Tram in Sheffield city centre

## **A1.8 Sheffield Tram-Train Trial**

- A1.8.1 The tram train project is projected to cost £58m, funded around two thirds via DfT grant and one third through Network Rail financing upgrades to its infrastructure. The strategic justification for tram train on this corridor is mainly the potential for regeneration of the corridor. Seven new vehicles are being procured from Vossloh: three for the existing Supertram operation, three for the tram train operation, and one spare; nevertheless all of the new vehicles capable of tram-train operation. The pilot, the first of its kind in the UK, will link the existing light rail Supertram network with the heavy national rail network between Rotherham and Meadowhall shopping centre. The trial is expected to begin in 2018 at the earliest and is running substantially behind its original schedule.
- A1.8.2 A programme of infrastructure schemes and improvements will be delivered in preparation of the service starting, including electrification of the rail line from Meadowhall South to Rotherham Parkgate as well as new track and stations. New tram train vehicles are being manufactured by Vossloh in Spain.
- A1.8.3 The proposed Tram Train service will be fully integrated with the existing Supertram service. The new vehicles have been designed to run on both the Supertram network and the national rail network and are therefore capable of negotiating the steep hills they will encounter on the Supertram network. Tickets will also be fully integrated with Supertram.
- A1.8.4 Not only will the new service provide better links to Rotherham and Rotherham Parkgate but it will enhance capacity on the existing network by providing extra journeys between Sheffield City Centre and Meadowhall South. It is claimed that the project will create up to 35 jobs as well as having wider economic benefits by reinvigorating the local economy by making access easier to major local employment sites.
- A1.8.5 The potential significance for Metro and local rail in the North East is that the trial if successful could pave the way for the more widespread operational integration of light rail vehicles operations on the Network Rail network, once the required technical and operational protocols have been worked through.

### **A1.8.5 Network details**

Number of trains	7
Power	25kV overhead line 750 V DC overhead line
Maximum speed	100 km/h
Capacity	88 seated and 150 standing
Gauge	1435 mm
Operating mode	Driver operated, on-board conductor (GoA0)
Depots	Nunnery Lane



Figure 29 - Vossloh tram train vehicle

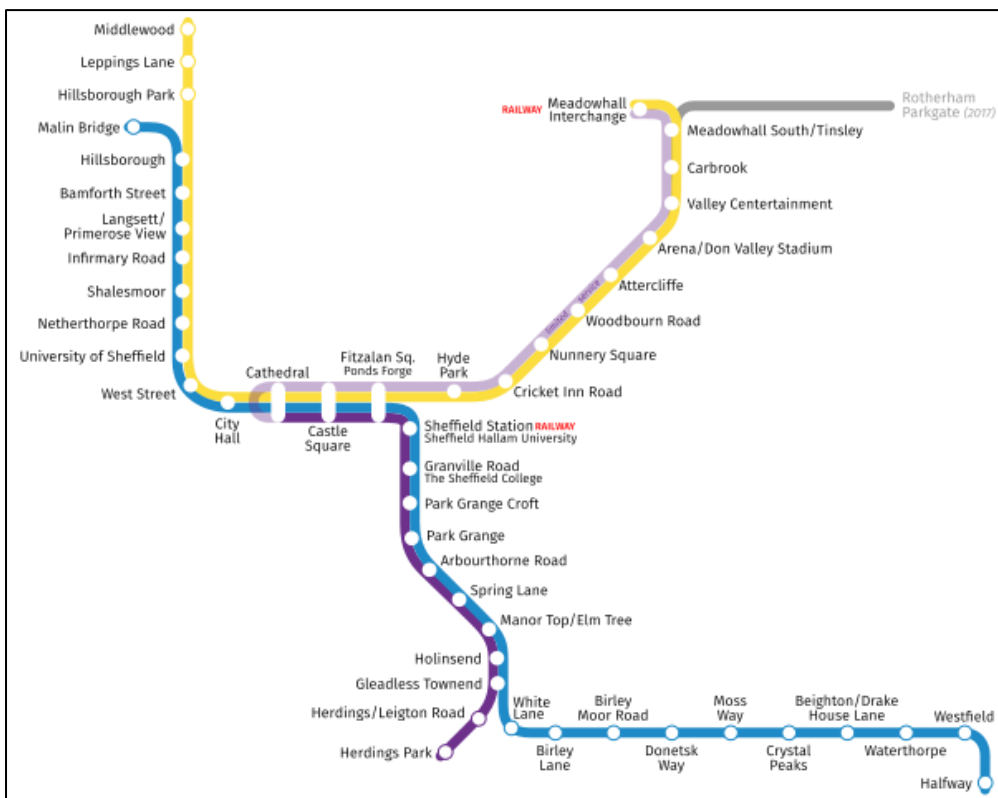


Figure 30 - Future Supertram network showing tram train extension to Rotherham



## **Appendix 2: POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES**

### **A.2.1. EU Funding**

A2.1.1 Funding streams such as the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the European Social Fund (ESF) are usually supplementary sources of funding are awarded on a competitive basis and not therefore guaranteed. In addition, the size, scope and eligibility of ERDF programmes vary over time.

A2.1.2 ERDF is the main vehicle by which the EU delivers its regional policy aiming to address the level of regional imbalances across the member states. As the EU has increased in size, so the focus of ERDF assistance has moved towards poorer and more peripheral nations than the UK. Nonetheless, the fund is still responsible for providing aid to regions to improve their level of economic competitiveness. The indicative allocations of ERDF and ESF for the period 2014-2020 have been announced, with €6.2 billion allocated to England, of which €539.6 million is allocated to the North Eastern LEP area. This is a significant sum however these funds represent the primary source of European funding across the entire LEP area for innovation, business, skills and employment so there will be competition for these resources.

A2.1.3 ERDF support would most likely comprise only a minor element of any total funding package and would be dependent on the applicability of the programme and the availability of funding at a future point in time. Greater Manchester PTE secured 7.5% of the cost of phases 1 and 2 of Metrolink during the 1990s, and Nottingham Tram secured €4.2 million or 1.5% of the cost of the original network in 2004 from ERDF.

### **A.2.2 Central Government Funding**

A2.2.1 Construction of the original Metro network during the 1970s was almost entirely funded by government direct grant. Where fleet replacement and essential renewals are sought the government may expect to see local contributions contributing towards the overall financing package. In terms of any network extensions these will be considered on their own merits; and from the evidence of such proposals elsewhere are less likely to receive majority government funding.

A2.2.2 However central government funding is likely to comprise the largest single element of financial support for the next phase of Metro renewals and expansion. Where this support may differ from that offered in the past is in the conditions attached to its use; for instance, a requirement to institute a defined operating practices in return for guarantees of future funding.

A2.2.3 Metro's dual role of fostering economic development and meeting social needs together with Tyne and Wear's relatively low density of population and level of GVA productivity combine to suggest that the network will not meet its total fixed and operating costs through revenue over the medium term, although long-term demand forecasts are more encouraging.<sup>41</sup> In this environment, central government support will still be vital. In order to establish a convincing business case to government to take forward for detailed consideration and a favourable outcome it will be essential to demonstrate the following:

- Sound value for money with a positive BCR.
- Detailed analysis of operational models to ensure best practice.
- Compliance with national economic, social and environmental policy goals.
- Evidence of private sector and business sector engagement and support.
- Optimal energy efficiency and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions reductions
- Alignment where appropriate with developments on the national rail network.
- A track record of consistent success in major programme delivery.

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<sup>41</sup> Metro Demand Study MVA 2012.

### **A2.3 Regional Government Funding**

A2.3.1 The emerging framework of regional governance offers great potential for the wider Metro network extension proposals to be planned and funded at a level that will improve city region-scale transport networks and meet the aspirations of adjacent areas of County Durham and Northumberland for improved transport links to and from Tyne and Wear. However, unless higher funding levels accompany final devolution arrangements, regional funding is unlikely to meet the bulk of the aspirations of this strategy.

A2.3.2 The Single Growth Fund is potentially a positive opportunity for local contributions towards Metro funding however Metro would be in a competitive funding situation at a regional level. A clear vision of the benefits of Metro will be needed to ensure that the network features highly in the frame of major infrastructure investment decisions.

### **A2.4 Local Government Funding**

A2.4.1 Local government is operating under constrained financial circumstances which are likely to continue over the medium-term. Despite this there may be opportunities to benefit from wider government initiatives targeted at economic regeneration in which Metro will be able to play an integral part. A present day example is the Greater Manchester City Deal which commits to funding an extension of Metrolink to Trafford Park as part of a programme of infrastructure investments that enhances city region-scale GVA, and light rail and tram train enhancements also feature in the City Deal plans of Nottingham and Sheffield respectively.

### **A2.5 Revenue Hypothecation of Local Taxes**

A2.5.1 Nottingham Express Transit directly benefits from a regular income stream, reaped from the proceeds of the city-wide Workplace Parking Levy (WPL). An estimated £322m over a 14-year period will be directly invested in transport improvements, principally the Phase 2 extensions of the tram network towards Clifton and Chilwell. This is set down as a requirement in the legal order accompanying the levy<sup>42</sup>.

A2.5.2 No other UK local authority has yet followed Nottingham's lead with respect to workplace parking levies; given that the population of Tyne and Wear is greater than that of the Greater Nottingham urban area there could be potential for the introduction of such a measure in the long term; however in the meantime this should not be relied upon as a means of financing the future of Metro and local rail in the region.

A2.5.3 Hypothecation of revenue from car travel towards other modes of transport, including public transport, has been present in central London since the introduction of the Congestion Charge in 2003. Currently at £11.50 per day (£10.50 with Auto Pay) with several exemptions, the Charge produced net income of £172.5m in 2014/15<sup>43</sup>. Of this income a substantial proportion is spent on the maintenance and improvement of the Tube. A2.6.5 As with a workplace parking levy, a congestion charge is unlikely to be introduced in the NECA area for the foreseeable future and therefore should not be considered as a potential funding stream.

### **A2.6 Local Tax Increment Financing**

A2.6.1 Tax Increment Financing (TIF) is a public financing method that is used to fund redevelopment, infrastructure, and other community-improvement projects. The provisions for this are contained within the Local Government Finance Act 2012.<sup>44</sup> TIF works by allowing local authorities to borrow money for

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<sup>42</sup> The City of Nottingham Workplace Parking Levy Order 2008

<sup>43</sup> TfL Annual Report and Statement of Accounts. TfL and Mayor of London 2015.

<sup>44</sup> Tax Increment Financing. Commons Library Standard Note 2013

infrastructure projects against the anticipated increase in business rates income expected as a result of the said infrastructure project. The UK TIF model is based on reinvesting a proportion of future business rates from an area back into infrastructure and related development. It applies where the sources of funding available for a scheme to deliver economic growth and renewal cannot cover the cost of infrastructure required by the scheme. The upfront funding may be borrowed from public or private sources, or it may be provided by the developer from capital available to it. Previously local councils had been unable to retain business rates revenues, so had been unable to borrow against them.

A2.6.2 If successful, TIF can lead to increased regeneration and long-term benefits. However key to the success of any TIF initiative is the ability to predict that a long-term increase in the income accruing from business rates will result from the introduction of the infrastructure. To achieve this in the case of Metro it would be necessary to demonstrate how network extensions will unlock development potential, increase economic activity and enhance the benefits of agglomeration. Were councils to confirm through their Local Development Frameworks that all future developments should be prioritised along Metro corridors, this could help with the reliability of predictions for TIF.

A2.6.3 As legislation stands Nexus is not able to raise TIF funding itself; that power rests with rate-levying authorities, so any allocation towards the Metro network would be by agreement with those areas which would benefit from extensions.

A2.6.4 TIF and City Deals have similar structures. The 'earn back' arrangement that Manchester City Council secured through its City Deal will allow the council to invest in transport infrastructure with the benefit of a long term, ring-fenced income stream.

## **A2.7 Prudential Borrowing**

A2.7.1 The Local Government Act 2003 allowed local authorities to borrow to invest in capital works and assets so long as the cost of that borrowing was affordable and in line with principles set out in a professional Prudential Code<sup>45</sup>. Most debt of this type is long term and 74% of this is secured from the Public Works Loan Board<sup>46</sup>, a statutory body operating within the UK Debt Management Office, an Executive Agency of HM Treasury. Fixed rate long-term loans are typically currently available at around 3% for a 20-year period allowing long-term financial planning to take place on this basis subject to reasonable certainty of a future income stream to allow repayment. About 66% of local authorities availed themselves of powers to finance capital expenditure through self-financed borrowing in 2010-11.

### **Earn Back – the Greater Manchester model**

A2.7.2 The Earn Back model applying in Manchester builds on the GM Transport Fund established in 2009 following an unsuccessful referendum on an area-wide congestion charge that would have provided an income stream for transport improvements. Investment is prioritised on the basis of net GVA impacts at the Greater Manchester level; and most of the £1.2bn programme finance is being provided locally through Prudential Borrowing against revenues and a levy on the local authorities, pro-rated to population.

A2.7.3 The Earn Back Model uses a formula, linked to changes in rateable values over time at the conurbation level, to provide a revenue stream to Greater Manchester over 30 years if additional GVA is created relative to a baseline. Earn Back provides an additional incentive for local authorities to prioritise local government spending to maximise GVA growth. If successful in driving economic growth, under Earn Back Manchester will receive a larger proportion of resultant tax take generated from this growth than would otherwise be

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<sup>45</sup> The Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities (Summary) CIPFA 2011.

<sup>46</sup> Local Government Financial Statistics England No.22 2012. DCLG/ONS.

the case under business rate retention. The 'earned back' resources are used for further investment, similarly prioritised on net GVA impact at an area level, in theory creating a genuine 'virtuous circle' which rewards local authorities for delivering growth.

A2.7.4 The Greater Manchester area benefits from this framework because it has the following attributes:

- i. A large local investment fund – GM is pooling resources to generate a £1.2bn local investment fund, which is big enough to drive above average growth.
- ii. The right economic geography – Earn Back will operate across the functional economic area to reduce displacement locally.
- iii. Track record of GVA prioritisation – Greater Manchester has demonstrated the ability to prioritise investment decisions based on impact on GVA through its Transport Fund.
- iv. Strong governance across the economic area.

A2.7.5 Although economic conditions are less favourable in the NECA area, funding arrangements of this type could be applicable for the funding of network extensions.

## **A2.8 Local Authority Bonds**

A2.8.1 Due to increases in the repayment rates applied by the Public Works Loan Board in relation to gilts<sup>47</sup> a number of local authorities have acquired credit ratings to enable themselves to issue bonds on the capital markets. Some authorities are considering pooling their resources in this initiative to achieve economies of scale in expertise, procurement and legal matters, as well as critical mass. An advantage of this method is that local authority bonds are not classed as public sector borrowing, so they can be used to match-fund European grant programmes.

A2.8.2 The longer term success of the concept would depend upon the extent to which the proposal can continue to undercut the level of interest rates offered by the Public Works Loan Board, and on the ability to raise funds on capital markets. However as a type of loan they would merely defer the cost of extension proposals.

## **A2.9 Community Infrastructure Levy**

A2.9.1 Another potential source of funding for individual new Metro stations is the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) which local authorities can levy based on the scale of individual development opportunities. The purpose of CIL is to ensure that costs incurred in providing infrastructure to support the development of an area can be funded (wholly or partly) by owners or developers of land<sup>48</sup>. Therefore if the provision of Metro as a sustainable transport link is seen as key to the opening up of a defined geographical area, then CIL contributions could be applicable in planning terms.

A2.9.2 The nature of the CIL framework is more suited to contributions towards individual stations than entire route corridors. Recent experience with developers of current schemes suggests that transport is one of many recipients of CIL funding, and that the amounts involved are likely to be insufficient to meet the full cost of new stations

## **A2.10 Private Sector Funding**

A2.10.1 Several capital investment schemes in UK light rail networks involve an element of loan finance provided through the UK banking sector. There are two main routes to accessing this type of finance, either directly as a PTE, or indirectly through concession holder(s).

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<sup>47</sup> A bond issued by the UK government

<sup>48</sup> The Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010. HMSO 2010.

A2.10.2 There are many sources of such funding which rely on a commercial rate of return to operate; the cost at any given time dependent on levels of interest rates. A major source of such funding is the European Investment Bank (EIB), a quasi-private sector institution run ‘for the public good’.

A2.10.3 The EIB is the EU’s non-profit long term lending institution which uses finance to fund ‘sound and sustainable projects that contribute to EU policy objectives<sup>49</sup>’. Transport is one of the EIB’s funding priorities and past schemes that have been brought to fruition with the help of EIB loan finance include £500 million of loans over 30 years to the (then) Greater Manchester PTE to fund the third phase of construction of Metrolink, financing new trains and additional infrastructure – some 30% of total project costs. The EIB cites lower financing costs (due to the EIB’s strong institutional backing from EU member governments), fixed interest rates and diversification of finance as amongst the benefits to TfGM.

A2.10.4 EIB funding appears to have potential to provide the level of funding that network extensions would require. TfGM has made repayment assumptions based on future fares revenue that will accrue from new patronage attracted from new and improved Metrolink provision.

### **A2.11 Farebox Income**

A2.11.1 Transport for Greater Manchester’s funding package for Phase 3 of Metrolink includes a degree of Prudential Borrowing against future fare-box revenues.<sup>50</sup> This is potentially a high-risk strategy unless future revenues can be plotted with some degree of certainty. Critically, TfGM and Metrolink have decided to increase fares by 1% above inflation as part of a medium-term financial strategy. A ring-fenced element of fares, or possibly a small additional ‘Network Extension Levy’ could be dedicated towards repayment of borrowings however were these to be applied in a declining market they could result in a loss of patronage which would further depress income.

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<sup>49</sup> [www.eib.org](http://www.eib.org)

<sup>50</sup> City Deal: Future Transport Prioritisation. Greater Manchester Combined Authority 29/07/12.

### Appendix 3: NEW FLEET SPECIFICATION

A3.1 Below are a number of issues surrounding the specification of a new Metro train fleet.

#### Crashworthiness

A3.2 Currently the Network Rail standard for crash-worthiness includes a frontal impact force ('buffer load') of 2000kN, requiring a heavy vehicle structure to withstand. Most worldwide Metro vehicles on typical segregated networks can typically only resist 400kN; however, Nexus Metro vehicles can resist 800kN, which has been accepted by Network Rail on the Sunderland joint operation, due to both robust signalling and control, and the overall relatively low speed on that line. The vehicles for the Sheffield tram-train trial also have an 800kN frontal impact resistance; it is hoped that an outcome of the Sheffield project will be formal acceptance by Network Rail of this standard for all future UK tram-train type joint operations on normal, i.e. not high-speed rail lines. It is assumed that an 800kN impact resistance will be incorporated into any new Metro vehicles, together with other associated features.

#### Closest comparator vehicles to Nexus

A3.3.1 A number of UK light rail vehicles are described in the case studies in Appendix 1. Manchester Metrolink operates the only other high-floor light-rail vehicles in the UK. These are Bombardier 'Flexity Swift' vehicles (designated M5000), whose dimensions and operating characteristics are similar to current Nexus Metro vehicles, albeit substantially more up-to-date in terms of signalling, regenerative braking etc. M5000s also operate on former standard-gauge railways as do Nexus, though they also have a wheel-rail profile enabling them to operate on-street. As with Nexus Metro, M5000s normally operate in coupled 2-car sets. On the other hand, the buffer load of the M5000 is only 400kN.



Figure 31 - Flexity Swift vehicle as used in Rotterdam

A3.3.2 A similar vehicle design from the same 'Flexity Swift' family has been operated on Rotterdam RET since the late 2000s (pictured above). The main differences in this vehicle are that it has an extended 42m length in a single passenger compartment, and has a top speed of 100 km/h. A vehicle of this length could potentially

use less traction energy than a two-car set of 55-60m (albeit its passenger capacity would obviously be less). Other potential advantages of a single passenger compartment are:

- Passengers' improved perceptions of personal safety, due to being always in the same compartment as the driver
- Removal of couplings, leading to reduced maintenance costs and lower operational risks
- Slightly faster driver transition from one cab to the other at the end of a journey

A3.3.3. Sheffield's new Vossloh tram-train pilot vehicles also offer some similarities to Nexus Metro, in terms of running on operational Network Rail tracks, as well as on-street. Their 'buffer load' figure also matches the current Nexus Metro vehicles. However, the Sheffield tram-trains have low-floor external doors, and a single passenger compartment of mixed high/low floor; they are capable of 110 km/h compared to Nexus Metro vehicles' 80 km/h.

A3.3.4 These and other factors will all be taken into account by Nexus when defining the proposed vehicle specification

#### Seating density

A3.4 A table indicating the seating density of some comparator light rail vehicles is shown below, to support the idea that there could potentially be a modest reduction of seating capacity in any future Metro vehicle as referred to in Section 3:

Network	Seating density (seats/linear metre)
Sheffield Supertram (original)	2.5
Rotterdam RET Flexity Swift	2.5
<b>Nexus Metro</b>	<b>2.3</b>
Manchester Metrolink	2.1
Docklands Light Railway	2.0
Nottingham NET	1.9
Edinburgh Tram	1.8 (above-average luggage storage space has been provided on these vehicles due to Airport traffic)

Table 11 - Seating densities on European light rail stock

## Appendix P

### North East Combined Authority (NECA) Transport Manifesto



# Our Journey

## A 20 year Transport Manifesto for the North East Combined Authority

**“To provide affordable, attractive, reliable, safe, healthy transport choices for businesses, residents and visitors while enhancing the environment.”**

Final version – December 2016



# Introduction

In February 2016, we held a public consultation on our Transport Manifesto. This is the final version of the document, and incorporates the feedback you gave us during that consultation. In all, 1,736 responses were received to the consultation.

We began the draft document by asking:

How often have you judged a place you visit by how easy it is to get around? It's time we looked at our own region in the same light.

The time you take and the quality of the journey will probably rank highly. Just as important is knowing the price and how to pay, and finding information instantly. Even on familiar routes we want to be

told everything is running smoothly, or how to avoid delays.

So how do you feel about getting around the North East? Your answer may depend greatly on where you live and where you need to go. But when people struggle to get around, when businesses cannot recruit flexibly or lack strong links to global markets, our economy falters. So we need to ensure the North East receives its fair share of opportunities and funding.

“We expect our local travel to be convenient, with good quality direct links with major town centres and major business parks, whether by bus, Metro or train.”

We expect our local travel to be convenient, with good quality direct links with major town centres and major business parks, whether by bus, Metro or train. And we expect good links to airports and main line stations for longer distance travel.

We expect to find public transport information at the tip of a finger, through smart applications, with simple, good value fares wherever we roam.

Cyclists and pedestrians expect safe, direct routes with clear wayfinding, traffic signals and bike storage that recognise our needs. When we get in the car we expect updates on the road ahead. Transport is a means to an end. We should normally be able to go where we need without thinking hard how to get there.

And we know that we have to travel in a way which shows we care for the natural environment. Our transport choices should be the least damaging to the environment and the most sustainable.

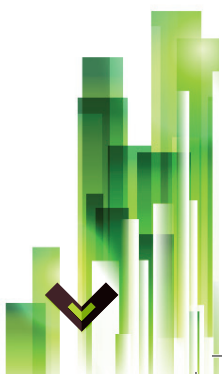
To help achieve all this we will create a single identity for travel in the region - Transport North East. This will be a source for real time information, journey planning and ticket sales, no matter how you travel from door to destination. It will, for example, update you on traffic problems, direct you to a park-and-ride facility and advise you when the next train is due, using smart communication. Transport North East will be a symbol of our region's joined-up and integrated approach to travel.

To realise our ambition we need to take on new responsibilities and secure new funding. We want our transport system to be developed by the people who live and work here, as an asset to promote our vibrant local culture and economy. This will require radical changes and new powers and resources devolved to the region.

For the first time in many decades the region is coming together, as Transport North East, to set a vision. But it is not up to politicians to decide on our transport priorities; the vision of the region has to be one we all contribute to. This document will guide our way for the next two decades, and now it is your turn to let us know what you want.

**Councillor Nick Forbes**

Transport Lead,  
North East Combined Authority



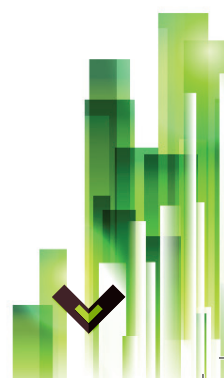
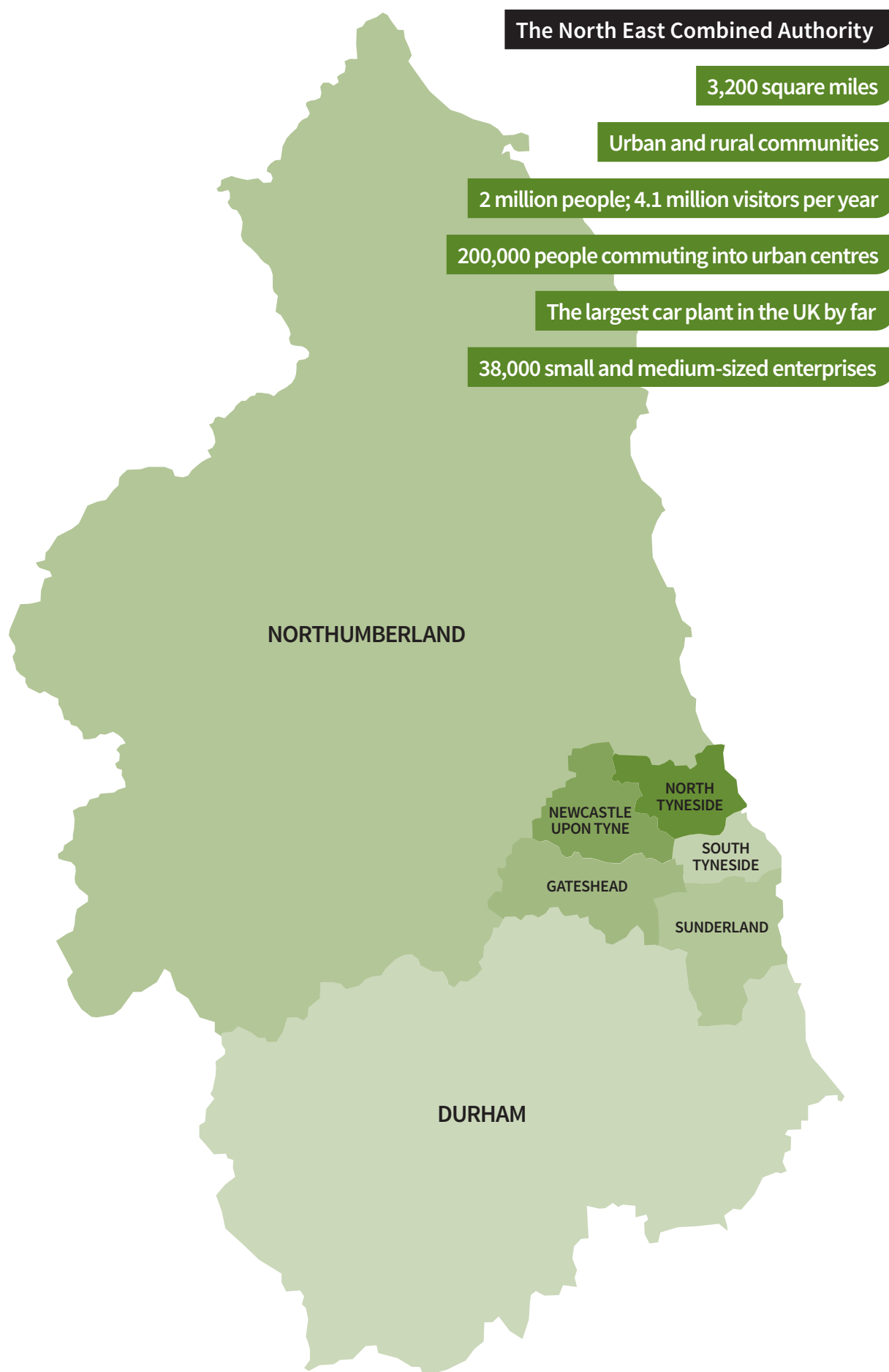
# A single approach to transport

The seven councils in the North East of England (Durham, Gateshead, Newcastle, Northumberland, North Tyneside, South Tyneside and Sunderland) are in a partnership enshrined in law: the North East Combined Authority.

We want to help our economy to grow and to make the North East an excellent place to live and work.

Our transport networks cross council boundaries in a diverse region, so only by working together will we meet people's needs and ambitions, wherever they live.









“The transport network should be one that we can rely on to work.”

## Vision

The North East needs good transport that enables economic growth and sustains jobs and communities.

We want to make sense of transport so that for people who live, work and visit here it is easy to use, reliable, affordable and accessible. Transport must also work for businesses that are located here, or are looking at moving to the North East. We want a transport system that reflects the character of our area: hard-working, efficient, accessible, and friendly.

Transport needs to work for everyone by being:

- 1. Accessible:** it should run as near as possible to where people live and want to travel to, and where businesses are (or want to be) located. It should be usable by everyone.
- 2. Affordable :** as far as possible, transport should be provided at a reasonable cost relative to the journey being undertaken.
- 3. Reliable:** the transport network should be one that we can rely on to work, with buses and trains running on time and congestion at a minimum.
- 4. Easy to use:** it should be easy to plan safe journeys, find out the best way to travel, pay for tickets and get all the essential information for your journey.
- 5. Safe:** the transport network should be, and be seen to be, safe regarding both road safety and also crime and fear of crime on public transport. Vulnerable users should be given greater protection than they currently are.
- 6. Sustainable:** the attractiveness of sustainable modes of transport should be improved. Transport should not have an adverse impact on the environment.
- 7. Integrated:** the transport network should be connected so that people can switch easily between modes, and timings and methods of payment complement each other.



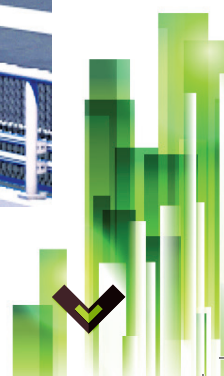




## Our guiding principles

These seven themes above can be expanded into a set of guiding principles, which will govern what we at the North East Combined Authority are trying to achieve:

1. Good access to workplaces, services, shops and leisure.
2. Well-maintained, climate-resilient and safe transport networks.
3. Less road congestion.
4. More sustainable travel.
5. Growth in economic activity.
6. Better air quality and lower carbon emissions.
7. Healthy, active lifestyles.
8. Efficient use of transport assets.
9. Land use planning that favours sustainable travel.
10. Equality of opportunity.
11. Better cycling network.
12. Better connectivity across the UK.
13. Expand the public transport network.





## What is 'Sustainable' Travel?

Sustainable means taking transport decisions now that will reduce carbon emissions from transport, minimise local air pollution and won't create problems for the future.

We believe that sustainable travel is a good thing in its own right. Moving around the local area, participating in the local economy and interacting with other people all contribute to a healthy lifestyle for individuals and to a better society.

Sustainable is also about creating an economic environment that helps businesses to thrive and generates enough jobs for everyone in the North East who needs one.

Walking, cycling, public transport and taxis are all forms of sustainable travel that will grow the local economy and contribute to a healthy and active local culture. They also minimise pollution from greenhouse gas emissions and poisonous particulates in the air we breathe.

Because of this our first preference is for people to travel sustainably to, from and around the North East. Therefore the majority of our activities in transport will be focused on developing our sustainable transport networks.

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**Walking, cycling, public transport and taxis are all forms of sustainable travel that will grow the local economy and contribute to a healthy and active local culture.**

---

## Transport drives competitiveness

Successful business needs transport that is geared to its needs for:

1. Safe, reliable on-time delivery of goods.
2. Employees to be able to get to and from work quickly, easily and affordably.
3. Good connections locally, regionally, nationally and internationally to enable businesses to link up with each other to achieve growth.





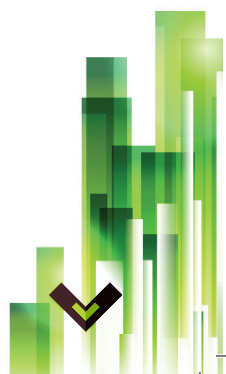
# What is Transport North East? What will it do?

- The North East Combined Authority is the first Transport Authority established in the country with coverage of such substantial urban and rural populations.
- Transport North East will be the new identity for transport functions for the Combined Authority.
- It will design and build transport networks around common standards, and oversee transport operations that deliver connectivity to communities, businesses, and visitors.
- It will also promote the healthiest and greenest ways to move around, and so encourage walking, cycling and the use of public transport wherever possible.
- This means the public should notice no change in standards simply because they have travelled across a council boundary within the North East.

---

**Transport North East  
will be the new identity  
for transport functions for  
the Combined Authority.**

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# Our vision, from your doorstep to the other side of the world...



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**Create safe, attractive, obstruction-free pedestrian routes.**

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## **Walking:** healthy and sustainable local travel

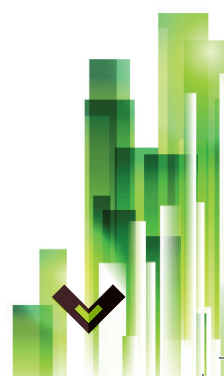
- Create safe, attractive, obstruction-free pedestrian routes including better signage and signals for crossings.
- Improve walking links within and between communities in both rural and urban areas.
- Promote walking to school and work, to tackle inactivity and over-reliance on the car.
- Ensure new developments and roads have walking designed in.
- Continue to reduce pedestrian casualty rates by improving road safety for pedestrians.
- Take account of the needs of disabled pedestrians.



“Improve existing streets and junctions to support cycling.”

## Cycling: quick, healthy and safe

- Build a network of attractive, good quality, safe, strategic urban and rural cycle routes, integrated with transport hubs, workplaces, shopping, leisure and education sites.
- Improve existing streets and junctions to support cycling, including reallocating road space.
- Establish cycle-friendly standards for neighbourhoods, towns and city centres, based on comprehensive parking, clear signage and good maintenance.
- Continue to promote cycling as a positive, sustainable way of improving health and well-being for adults and children alike.
- Continue to reduce cycling casualty rates by improving road safety for cyclists.







## Bus services: underpinning local public transport

- Simple, good value and integrated fares backed by smart payment technology.
- Good network coverage reflecting local needs including in rural areas.
- Easy to use timetable, real-time departure and on-board information.
- Meeting all travellers' accessibility needs.
- Improved levels of punctuality and reliability.
- Priority on highways wherever needed.
- Low-carbon vehicles wherever possible.
- Good access for everyone, including disabled people.
- Measures to tackle crime and fear of crime so it is not a deterrent, particularly late at night.

---

**Integrate taxis into the wider public transport network.**

---



## Taxis (Hackney Carriages and Private Hire Vehicles): flexible public transport

- Integrate taxis into the wider public transport network with better interchange and information.
- Ensure high standards of licensing and provision.
- Encourage greater use of low emission technologies in taxi fleets.



## Local rail and Metro: driving economic growth

- Simple, good value and integrated fares backed by smart payment technology.
- Replace outdated Pacer trains and deliver an essential new fleet for the Tyne and Wear Metro.
- Create a regional express network, with high quality, faster trains and more routes electrified.
- Open new local stations on current lines, re-open key disused lines, consider more Park and Ride stations, upgrade freight-only sections to passenger use and build new routes.
- Devolve greater control to the region, so local rail and Metro can be managed together to deliver a higher standard for stations, information and customer service.
- Work with rail industry partners to address overcrowding and improve cycle access on trains.



- Address reliability and punctuality issues.
- Improve access for everyone, including disabled people.
- Tackle crime and fear of crime so it is not a deterrent, particularly late at night.

“Devolve greater control to the region, so local rail and Metro can be managed together.”

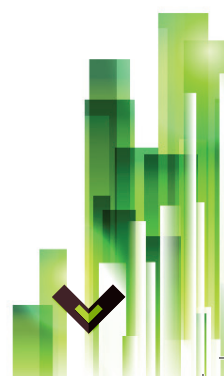




## **Reduce journey times and increase the number of trains to core cities.**

## **National rail services:** joining our economy with others

- Invest, and work with Network Rail, to grow capacity, resilience and reliability of services including for our main line to London and Scotland.
- Improve long-distance connections from market towns in the region.
- Reduce journey times and increase the number of trains to core cities including Leeds, Manchester, Edinburgh and Birmingham.
- Make sure the North East is part of the High Speed Rail network.





**“Expand the existing ‘Pop’ branded smartcard for all local transport.”**

## Making journeys easy: smart travel and information

- Expand the existing ‘Pop’ branded smartcard for all local transport, as well as integrated uses like park-and-ride, cycle storage and Tyne Tunnel tolls.
- Offer affordable fares, particularly to support skills and training, especially for young people.
- Provide real time information for all local transport at stations, selected stops and to mobile devices.
- Develop a network of variable message signs on roads.
- Make full use of the Urban Traffic Management Centre to deliver information to road users.
- Make sure public transport services, timetables, information, fares and tickets are integrated.





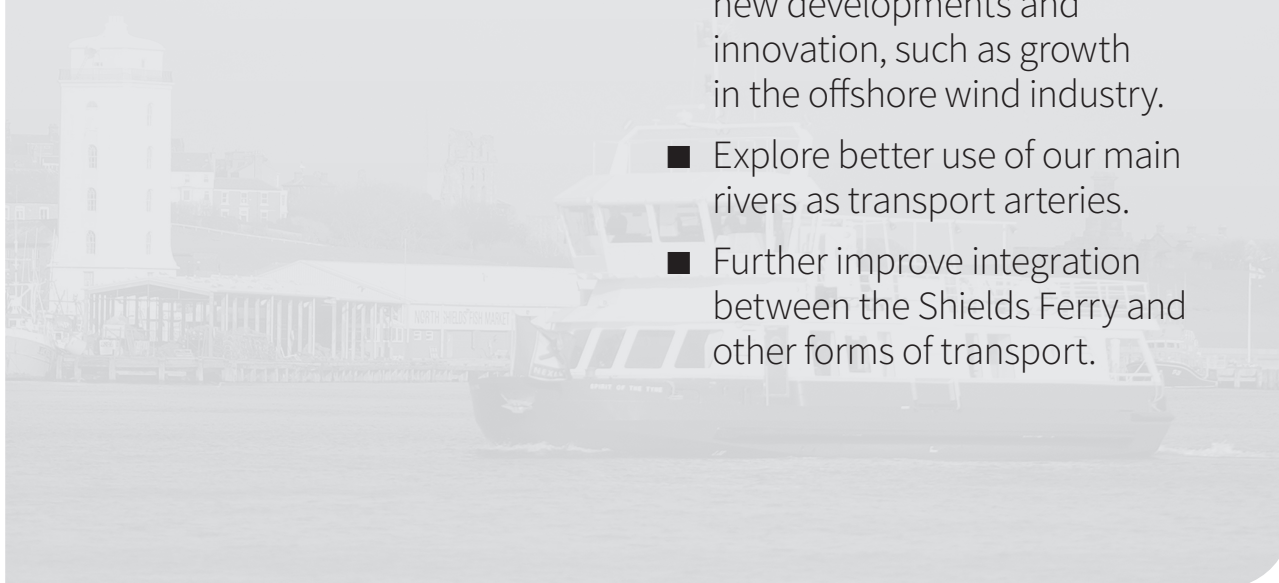


“Ensure our ports can support new developments and innovation.”



## Ports: Gateways to a world of trade

- Improve road and rail links from the region's ports to the rest of the UK.
- Support the growth in cruise traffic to boost tourism and investigate the potential for new North Sea ferry routes.
- Ensure our ports can support new developments and innovation, such as growth in the offshore wind industry.
- Explore better use of our main rivers as transport arteries.
- Further improve integration between the Shields Ferry and other forms of transport.





## Flying the flag for the region: the future for air travel

- Make our airports the preferred choice for people in the North East and surrounding areas.
- Build on the success of direct flights from Newcastle to Dubai by supporting new routes to China and the Far East.
- Increase capacity on Newcastle airport's existing runway, extend terminal facilities and support growth.
- Improve public transport links.

**Promote an efficient,  
safe and sustainable  
freight sector.**



## Moving freight

- Promote an efficient, safe and sustainable freight sector as a major employer and driver for growth.
- Support the North East Freight Partnership to raise standards and provide accurate routeing and mapping.
- Develop a Strategic Rail Freight Interchange as part of moves to encourage a shift from road transport while growing overall business.
- Work with all partners to move freight away from road transport wherever possible.







“Expand rapid vehicle charging points through the region.”

## Innovation

- Develop and expand the successful Urban Traffic Management and Control Centre to promote public transport and reduce congestion.
- Expand rapid vehicle charging points through the region with a common standard across communities, integrated with Highways England’s strategic network.
- Encourage the spread of Car Club sites, especially for Electric Vehicles (EVs).
- Promote ultra-low emission buses, taxis and freight vehicles, while supporting the development of alternative fuels and power sources.
- Promote North East universities and businesses as global leaders in research and technology for sustainable urban development.



“Support existing proposals to improve roads.”

## Roads fit for purpose

- Invest to alleviate congestion and collision hot spots.
- Create well-maintained road space that is safe for all, with good access to key employment and development sites.
- Support existing proposals to improve roads including M1 extension to Gateshead, A1 dualling in Northumberland, Western Bypass enhancements and A19 junction upgrades.
- Consider further proposals if they are consistent with carbon reduction.
- Work with Highways England on A66 and A69 investment to improve cross-Pennine traffic.
- Offer car users better information on journey times, delays, parking and public transport alternatives.
- Reallocate road space to more sustainable forms of transport.
- Improve road safety, particularly for cyclists and pedestrians.
- Address congestion issues.







## Powered Two Wheelers (motorcycles, scooters and mopeds)

- Recognise the benefits of PTWs to users and the environment.
- Facilitate PTWs as a choice of travel within a safe and sustainable transport network.
- Consider the needs of PTW users.
- Ensure good access to secure on and off-road parking for PTWs.



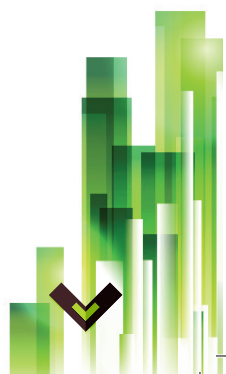
## Joining it all together

- Ensuring that our transport system promotes economic growth.
- Working with health colleagues to ensure people can get to health facilities.
- Promote healthy transport choices including walking and cycling.
- Making sure that new developments and regeneration plans are 'transport friendly' and promote walking, cycling, public transport and car sharing.
- Improving interchange between different forms of transport.
- Working together to unify our existing different policies on:
  - Taxi licensing.
  - Bus and 'no car' lanes – including the times they apply and what vehicles are allowed in them.
  - Planning applications – where these impinge on neighbouring areas.

---

**Ensuring that our transport system promotes economic growth.**

---



# Devolution

As we said at the start, the North East Combined Authority needs to take on new responsibilities and secure new funding, to allow our transport system to be developed by the people who live and work here:

- A local transport budget for many years to come, covering all relevant local highways and sustainable travel funding.
- A potential long-term funding programme for Metro investment including fleet replacement, possible expansion of the Metro network and integration with local rail services.
- Responsibility for the new Northern and Transpennine rail franchises from April 2016, in partnership with other Authorities across the North and the Department for Transport.
- A fully multi-modal smart ticketing and transport information network across the North East and beyond.
- Powers to take forward our plans for bus services.
- Work with national agencies (Highways England, Network Rail, HS2) on a joint agreement specifying improvements for the national road and rail network across the North East.
- A locally-devolved Highways Fund, committed over a multi-year period.



If you need this document in a different format, such as large print, please contact us on **0191 211 6024** or **[transportconsultation@northeastca.gov.uk](mailto:transportconsultation@northeastca.gov.uk)**

For more information on neca visit **[www.northeastca.gov.uk](http://www.northeastca.gov.uk)**





## Appendix Q

### Palmersville Dairy planning statement



**SLC Property**

# **Planning Statement**

**Prepared in support of a planning  
application for a new pedestrian  
underpass at Palmersville**

**60601435-SLC-P-270-Pal-PS**

# Content

<b>1</b>	<b>Introduction to the scheme .....</b>	<b>4</b>
1.1	Overview of the scheme.....	4
1.2	Underpass at Palmersville: Planning application.....	4
1.3	Underpass at Palmersville: Transport and Works Act Order.....	4
1.4	Applicant and Agent.....	4
1.5	The Scheme.....	5
1.6	Supporting Information.....	6
1.7	Structure of this statement.....	6
<b>2</b>	<b>Pre-application Engagement .....</b>	<b>7</b>
2.1	Introduction.....	7
2.2	Pre-application enquiries.....	7
2.3	Pre-submission Stakeholder Engagement.....	7
2.4	Summary.....	8
<b>3</b>	<b>Site Context .....</b>	<b>9</b>
3.1	Introduction.....	9
3.2	Planning History of the Site.....	9
3.3	Committed Development.....	9
3.4	Site Description.....	10
3.5	Site-specific environmental and land use constraints .....	12
<b>4</b>	<b>Proposed Development .....</b>	<b>13</b>
4.1	Introduction.....	13
4.2	Planning Application.....	13
4.3	Reasons for the proposed development.....	13
4.4	Elements of Development Proposals .....	14
<b>5</b>	<b>Landscape Overview .....</b>	<b>15</b>
5.1	Introduction.....	15
5.2	Impact on Landscape Character .....	15
5.3	Impact on Visual Amenity.....	17
5.4	Conclusion.....	20

<b>6</b>	<b>Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan.....</b>	<b>21</b>
6.1	Introduction.....	21
6.2	Purpose of CEMP.....	21
6.3	Environmental Control Measures.....	21
6.4	Summary.....	22
<b>7</b>	<b>Planning Policy Context .....</b>	<b>23</b>
7.1	Introduction.....	23
7.2	North Tyneside Development Plan .....	24
7.3	North Tyneside Local Plan (July 2017) .....	24
7.4	National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2021).....	29
<b>8</b>	<b>Planning Assessment.....</b>	<b>34</b>
8.1	Introduction.....	34
8.2	Accordance with North Tyneside Development Plan .....	34
8.3	Accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework .....	43
8.4	The Planning Balance .....	45
<b>9</b>	<b>Material Considerations .....</b>	<b>47</b>
9.1	Introduction.....	47
9.2	National Design Guide (2019).....	47
9.3	North Tyneside Design Quality Supplementary Planning Document (2008).....	48
9.4	North East Combined Authority Transport Manifesto (2016).....	48
9.5	Transport for the North Strategic Transport Plan (2019).....	49
9.6	The Road to Zero Strategy (2018).....	49
9.7	Nexus Metro and Local Rail Strategy (2016).....	50
9.8	Summary.....	51
<b>10</b>	<b>Case for Planning Permission to be granted .....</b>	<b>52</b>
10.1	Introduction.....	52
10.2	Accordance with local and national policies.....	52
10.3	Benefits of the Scheme.....	52
10.4	Conditions .....	53
10.5	Additional information .....	55

## Table of Figures

Figure 1.1 Northumberland Line.....	5
Figure 3.1 Schedule of committed developments .....	10
Figure 3.2 Site Location Plan .....	11
Figure 3.3 Extract from North Tyneside Local Plan (2017).....	12
Figure 4.1 Proposed site layout .....	14
Figure 5.1 Aerial view of the site (source: Google Pro).....	15
Figure 5.2 View east from recordable path towards the Public Right of Way Footpath Forest Hill 5.....	15
Figure 5.3 View North from A191.....	16
Figure 5.4 View West from industrial estate road towards entrance to Footpath.....	16
Figure 5.5 View north along Footpath from Arnold Clark carpark.....	16
Figure 5.6 View south from Footpath towards industrial estate.....	16
Figure 5.7 View north towards existing level crossing from Footpath.....	16
Figure 5.8 View south across existing level crossing.....	16
Figure 5.9 View facing south from existing underpass.....	16
Figure 5.10 View south from Footpath towards existing level crossing.....	16
Figure 5.11 View south from Footpath towards existing underpass, north of proposed site.....	16
Figure 5.12 Existing view west from the Belway Industrial Estate access road towards the Public Right of Way Footpath Forest Hill 5 and the proposed site.....	17
Figure 5.13 Elevation of proposed underpass. (Source: drawing 60601435-ACM-01-ZZ-DRG-EST-001102).....	18
Figure 5.14 Rights of Way Plan (RoW-Sheet 1-Ro4) showing recordable path, existing footpath, and proposed path diversion.....	18
Figure 5.15 View east from Recordable Path towards Public Right of Way Footpath Forest Hill 5 .....	19
Figure 5.16 View west from Recordable Path toward the north-western section of the site.....	19
Figure 8.1 Summary of policy compliance.....	46

# Document Control

## Version Control

Version No.	Date	Created/Modified by	Notes
V.03	08/10/21	Alannah Healey, Emily Floeser	Final for submission

## Approvals

Version No.	Name of approver	Title & organisation	Date
V03	Matthew Creedy	Head of Planning at SLC Property	08/10/21



# **1 Introduction to the scheme**

## **1.1 Overview of the scheme**

- 1.1.1 The scheme seeks to re-introduce passenger services onto the existing freight line between the city of Newcastle upon Tyne and the town of Ashington in Northumberland.
- 1.1.2 The railway line is known as the 'Northumberland Line' and was formerly known as the Ashington Blyth and Tyne Line (ABT). ['the scheme'].
- 1.1.3 The scheme includes the construction of six new railway stations and associated infrastructure. This planning statement has been prepared in support of the planning application for the proposed underpass and works associated with the closure of the level crossing known as 'Palmersville Crossing'. ['the application'].

## **1.2 Underpass at Palmersville: Planning application**

- 1.2.1 This Planning Statement supports and accompanies an application for planning permission for the development associated with the construction and operation of a new pedestrian underpass at Palmersville, to replace the existing level crossing. Further details of the proposed development are provided in Section 5 of this Planning Statement.

## **1.3 Underpass at Palmersville: Transport and Works Act Order**

- 1.3.1 A Public Right of Way currently crosses the railway line at the existing level crossing. An application for an Order under the Transport and Works Act 1992 (TWAo) has been submitted to the Secretary of State for Transport in due course. The TWAo, if made, will, amongst other things, authorise the closure of the level crossing and associated Public Right of Way (Forest Hall 5) and provide for the creation of a new public right of way through the proposed underpass.
- 1.3.2 It is also proposed that the TWAo authorises minor permanent diversions to an existing non-designated footpath which runs adjacent to the railway line. This footpath is currently the subject of a Definitive Map Modification Order.
- 1.3.3 The scope of the planning application includes the physical works necessary for the temporary and permanent diversion of the public rights of way, and the permanent and temporary closure of that section of PROW as set out in this section. It is anticipated that these details will be the subject of a condition.

## **1.4 Applicant and Agent**

- 1.4.1 SLC Property Ltd has been instructed on behalf of Northumberland County Council to prepare this planning application.

## 1.5 The Scheme

- 1.5.1 The Northumberland Line proposes to offer a direct passenger service between Newcastle Central to Ashington, with a proposed journey time of approximately 35 minutes. The scheme seeks to encourage a modal shift towards rail travel, assisting in reducing congestion and therefore improving journey times both on the local highway network, and for users of public transport.
- 1.5.2 It is proposed service will call at the existing Manors railway station and at six proposed new station sites.
- 1.5.3 Five of the six proposed railway stations are located within the Northumberland County Council (NCC)'s administrative boundary: Seaton Delaval, Newsham, Bebside, Bedlington and Ashington. The proposed footbridge at Chase Meadows is located within NTC's administrative boundary. The proposed railway station at Northumberland Park is located within the North Tyneside Council administrative boundary. There are no new stations proposed within the Newcastle City Council administrative boundary, however passenger services along the Northumberland Line will operate to and from Newcastle Central station.
- 1.5.4 The introduction of passenger trains onto the railway line increases the risk of accidents at level crossings. As such, the scheme requires that some of the level crossings are upgraded or permanently closed. An underpass is proposed at Palmersville to decrease the risk associated with the operation of a level crossing at this location. The reasons for the proposed underpass are further explained in Section 4 of this document.
- 1.5.5 Figure 1.1 illustrates the approximate location of the railway stations and the proposed underpass at Palmersville.

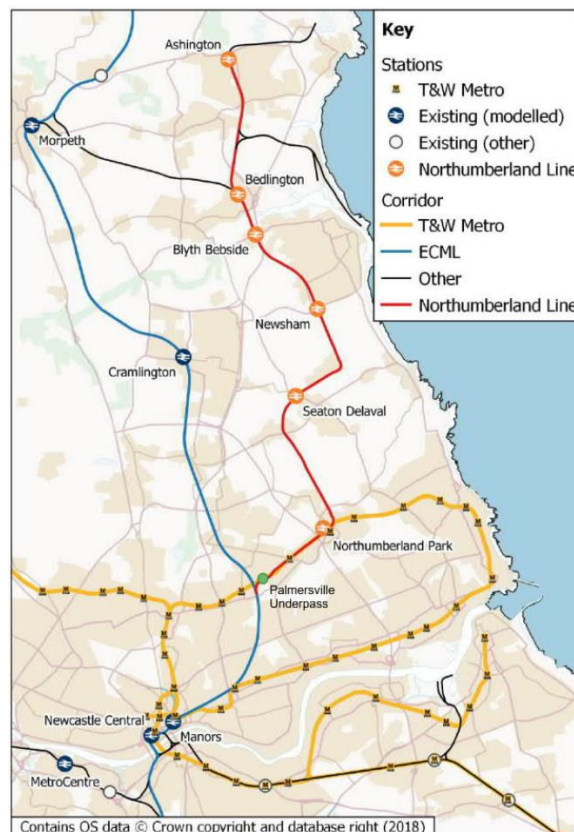


Figure 1.1 Northumberland Line

## 1.6 Supporting Information

1.6.1 The application for planning permission is accompanied by the supporting information identified as required by the local planning authority in discussions prior to submission. The nature, extent and scope of the supporting information is in accordance with the advice and recommendations given by officers of the local planning authority. The schedule of submitted information is summarised in Figure 1.2.

Document/Plan reference number	Name of document/Plan
60601435-ACM-XX-ZZ-DRG-LEP-000021	Site Location Plan
60601435-ACM-01-ZZ-DRG-EST-001101	Underpass Proposed GA Plan View
60601435-ACM-01-ZZ-DRG-EST-001102	Underpass Proposed GA Elevation and Section
60601435-ACM-01-ZZ-DRG-EST-001103	Underpass Proposed GA footpath sections
60601435-ACM-01-ZZ-DRG-EST-001104	Underpass existing GA
60601435-ACM-XX-ZZ-DRG-EEN-000508	Landscape Design
60601435-SLC-P-270-Pal-ECIA	Ecological Impact Assessment (including net gain statement)
Palmersville Dairy Underpass 2021-09-30	Arboriculture Assessment
60601435-SLC-P-270-Pal-SCE	Statement of Community Engagement
60601435-SLC-P-270-Pal-DAS	Design and Access Statement
Palmersville Underpass NIA_01.pdf	Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment
60601435-ACM-01-ZZ-REP-EGE-000003.pdf	Preliminary Sources Study Report

*Figure 1.2 Schedule of supporting information*

## 1.7 Structure of this statement

- Section 2 summarises the engagement with the local planning authority and stakeholders.
- Section 3 introduces the application site and describes the surrounding areas
- Section 4 describes the proposed development
- Section 5 provides an appraisal of the landscape and visual impacts of the scheme.
- Section 6 provides an Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan.
- Section 7 introduces relevant national and local policies for this development.
- Section 8 addresses the proposed development against the policies identified in Section 7.
- Section 9 describes the material considerations
- Section 10 provides a summary of the case for planning permission to be granted.



## **2 Pre-application Engagement**

### **2.1 Introduction**

- 2.1.1 The proposed development has been the subject of extensive and ongoing engagement with officers and Members of North Tyneside Council, and other key stakeholders.
- 2.1.2 This section provides a summary of the formal pre-application discussions and engagement that has been undertaken pertaining to this planning application.

### **2.2 Pre-application enquiries**

- 2.2.1 A formal pre-application enquiry was submitted to North Tyneside Council, as the local planning authority on the 28th September 2020 which proposed the construction of a footbridge to replace the existing level crossing. A formal response to the pre-application enquiry was received from the local planning authority on the 22nd October 2020.
- 2.2.2 Subsequent to this pre-application enquiry, ongoing engagement has been undertaken with North Tyneside Council and other key stakeholders. It was considered that the footbridge would be less accessible for cyclists and other users in its current design. Due to a number of site and design constraints and input from stakeholders, it was considered that an underpass solution would be more accessible to a range of users without providing a significant visual intrusion associated with a ramped footbridge. Consequently, an underpass was identified as the preferred option at this location.
- 2.2.3 Meetings have taken place with the relevant officers at North Tyneside in advance of submission at North Tyneside to review the proposals and confirm the extent of supporting plans and assessments required to support a planning application. A full list of the supporting surveys and assessments which have been submitted is available in Section 1.6 of this document.

### **2.3 Pre-submission Stakeholder Engagement**

- 2.3.1 The preparation of this planning application, and the scope of the submitted information, has been informed by the responses received to the public consultation undertaken from 2019-2021.
- 2.3.2 An Initial public consultation was undertaken between the 2nd and 18th September 2019. The objective was to raise awareness of the scheme and ascertain local perceptions of the scheme. The consultation was undertaken through the provision of 'drop in' events, attended by officers of the council and project team representatives. The 'drop in' events were held in five different locations with a geographical spread along the proposed route. Members of the public were also invited to provide feedback online. The initial public consultation for the overall Northumberland Line scheme received a total 971 responses. Those responses were considered and used to inform the proposals which were the subject of the public consultation in 2020.
- 2.3.3 A second public consultation took place between the 14th of November and 16th December 2020. Discussions were held with officers of the council to confirm the extent, scope, nature, timing and

information of this public consultation. The objective was to ascertain local views on the specific proposals for each of the station sites, together with the scheme as a whole. This included seeking views on a proposed footbridge at Palmersville.

- 2.3.4 As a result of a shift in the proposed design solution from footbridge to underpass, a further public consultation was undertaken from 12th July to 8th August 2021, solely in relation to the proposals at Palmersville.
- 2.3.5 The Statement of Community Engagement submitted in support of this application demonstrates that the project has engaged stakeholders and the local community at the plan-making stage of the proposals when information on the designs was of sufficient level for informed and meaningful engagement. It further demonstrates that the project team has listened and considered the feedback which will feed into the development of the underpass at Palmersville.

## **2.4 Summary**

- 2.4.1 Since receipt of the pre-application response, extensive discussions have been held with North Tyneside Council officers including those from departments for highways, environmental health, and ecology. During these discussions various surveys, assessments and draft designs and proposals have been shared. Those discussions have also confirmed the scope, extent and nature of the information which is required to be submitted in support of the planning application. The submitted scheme takes account of the comments and advice received from the local planning authority. Further details can be found in the submitted Statement of Community Engagement.

## 3 Site Context

### 3.1 Introduction

- 3.1.1 This section describes the existing site, adjacent land uses and provides a contextual overview of those considerations which have informed the designs of the submitted scheme. Further details of those considerations and how the submitted scheme has been informed based on an understanding of those considerations and appraisal of alternative development options, are set out in the Design and Access Statement submitted separately in support of this application.

### 3.2 Planning History of the Site

- 3.2.1 A desk-based review of the planning applications which have been submitted to and either: consented, refused or withdrawn on the land which comprises the application site has been undertaken.
- 3.2.2 A review of North Tyneside Council's planning public access system undertaken on the 1<sup>st</sup> October 2021. The review identified that two separate applications were submitted to permit the *'Provision of 2no. data centre cabins together with the installation of 12no. air conditioning units, 2no. generators and 1no. meter cabinet, all within an outdoor fenced compound with associated access on land off Whitley Road, Bellway Industrial Estate, Newcastle upon Tyne'*. The first application (20/00496/FUL) was submitted in April 2020 and subsequently withdrawn in June 2020. The second application (20/00979/FUL) was submitted in July 2020 and subsequently withdrawn in October 2020. As such, it is not considered that those applications preclude the construction of the proposed underpass.
- 3.2.3 There are not known to be any other relevant planning applications and other related applications pertaining to the site, other than the Request for a Screening Opinions submitted to assess the potential requirement for an EIA to support the planning applications for the Northumberland Line scheme.

### 3.3 Committed Development

- 3.3.1 A review of planning applications on land adjacent to the site (both determined and in the process of being determined) has been undertaken on the 1st October 2021 to identify any consented developments which may be material considerations in the determining of a planning application for the proposed underpass.
- 3.3.2 It is considered the scheme which is the subject of this planning application would not preclude or impact on the delivery of the identified committed developments. It is considered the proposed development will support those committed developments by improve the safety and mobility of current and future residents and visitors across the railway line.

Reference	Address	Description of proposal	Date of Approval
21/01088/FUL	Bellway Industrial Estate Benton NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE	Erection of 1no. steel portal frame detached industrial building and 1no.extension to an existing steel portal frame unit to match the existing with immediate hardscaping to the perimeter external surface areas of the erections. Proposed use class for unit C: B2	Awaiting Decision

Reference	Address	Description of proposal	Date of Approval
21/01725/FUL	British Car Auctions Whitley Road Palmersville Industrial Estate Benton NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE NE12 9SQ	Erection of 7no external lighting columns	16 <sup>th</sup> September 2021
21/01089/FUL	Benton House Benton Business Park Bellway Industrial Estate Benton NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE NE12 9SA	Erection of upper floor extension to existing building to provide additional office space and the installation/extension of car parks	21 <sup>st</sup> July 2021
21/00967/FUL	Land Within Retail Park Whitley Road Palmersville Industrial Estate Benton NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE	Development of a retail unit (Use Class E), including service access, car parking, and all other ancillary works	20 <sup>th</sup> July 2021
21/00437/ECR EG5	Orange Radio Mast Tyn 58 Bellway Industrial Estate Benton NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE	Installation of 1 x 0.3m dish on support pole at 22m on the tower. Installation of 2 x outdoor units (ODU) behind the new dish	4 <sup>th</sup> March 2021
18/01040/FUL	Car Park At Whitley Road Palmersville Industrial Estate Benton NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE	Development of 2no retail units (Use Class A1/A3), including associated servicing, car parking, landscaping, drainage, and other ancillary works	9 <sup>th</sup> November 2019
18/00452/REM	Filed North of 45 Sunholme Drive Wallsend Tyne and Wear	295 dwellings, garages and car parking together with associated boundary treatment and infrastructure pursuant of hybrid application 12/02025/FUL	5 <sup>th</sup> September 2018
16/01885/FUL	Land To The West Of Station Road North And Land South Of East Benton Farm Cottages Station Road North Wallsend Tyne And Wear	Hybrid application; Outline application for approximately 418 residential dwellings (C3 use) with associated highways, infrastructure and landscaping, all matters reserved with the exception of access. Full planning permission for 175 dwellings (C3 use) with associated infrastructure, landscaping, Sustainable Urban Drainage system and access (Amended description)	15 <sup>th</sup> January 2018

Figure 3.1 Schedule of committed developments

## 3.4 Site Description

- 3.4.1 The site of the proposed development is located in Newcastle Upon Tyne, within the Killingworth ward/electoral division, which is in the constituency of North Tyneside. The site is located on the Blyth and Tyne railway line between Benton north junction (to the south west) and Northumberland Park (to the north east).
- 3.4.2 A woodland area separates the Blyth and Tyne railway line from the existing Tyne and Wear Metro immediately to the north of the site. The land to the north of the metro line is a residential area. Land to the south of the site is used for business and employment uses including Bellway Industrial Estate. An industrial site to the southeast of the proposed underpass is occupied by Proctor and Gamble. There is an open field which currently separates the Proctor and Gamble site from the railway corridor.
- 3.4.3 'Palmersville Dairy' is an existing Footpath Wicket (FPW) crossing located at 0m 748yds west on the double tracked BNE line, which currently connects the Bellway Industrial Estate to the south with the residential estates to the north. The existing crossing is a designated Public Right of Way (footpath) known as Forest Hall 5. Immediately to the north of the existing level crossing is an underpass which provides access under

the existing metro Line. There is also a non-designated footpath which runs parallel to the railway corridor on the southern side.

#### 3.4.4 The existing site is comprised of four separate areas

1. Open Field
2. Woodland
3. Railway corridor
4. Existing Public Right of Way (PRoW) (Forest Hall 5 and recordable path)

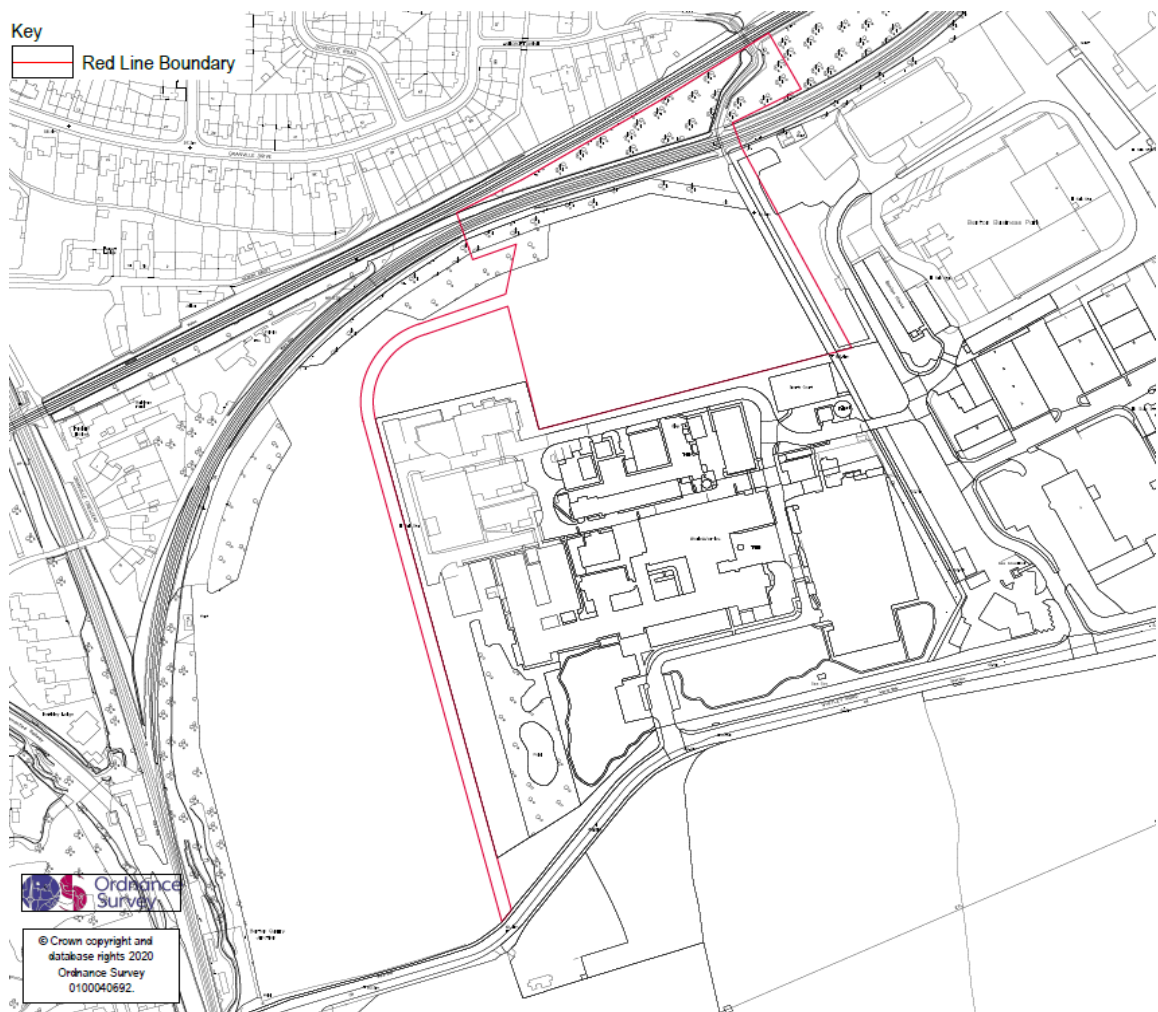


Figure 3.2 Site Location Plan

3.4.5 An application for an Order under the Transport and Works Act 1992 (TWAo) was submitted to the Secretary of State for Transport in May 2021. The TWAo, if made, will, amongst other things, authorise the closure of the level crossing and associated Public Right of Way (Forest Hall 5) and provide for the creation of a new public right of way over the proposed underpass. It is also proposed that the TWAo authorises a permanent diversion to the existing non-designated footpath to accommodate for access to the proposed underpass. This footpath is currently the subject of a Definitive Map Modification Order.



### 3.5 Site-specific environmental and land use constraints

3.5.1 The site-specific policy constraints and land-use designations that pertain to the site are shown on Figure 3.3 extracted from the adopted North Tyneside Local Plan (2017). This section presents an overview of the constraints, which are assessed in the subsequent chapters of this Planning Statement.

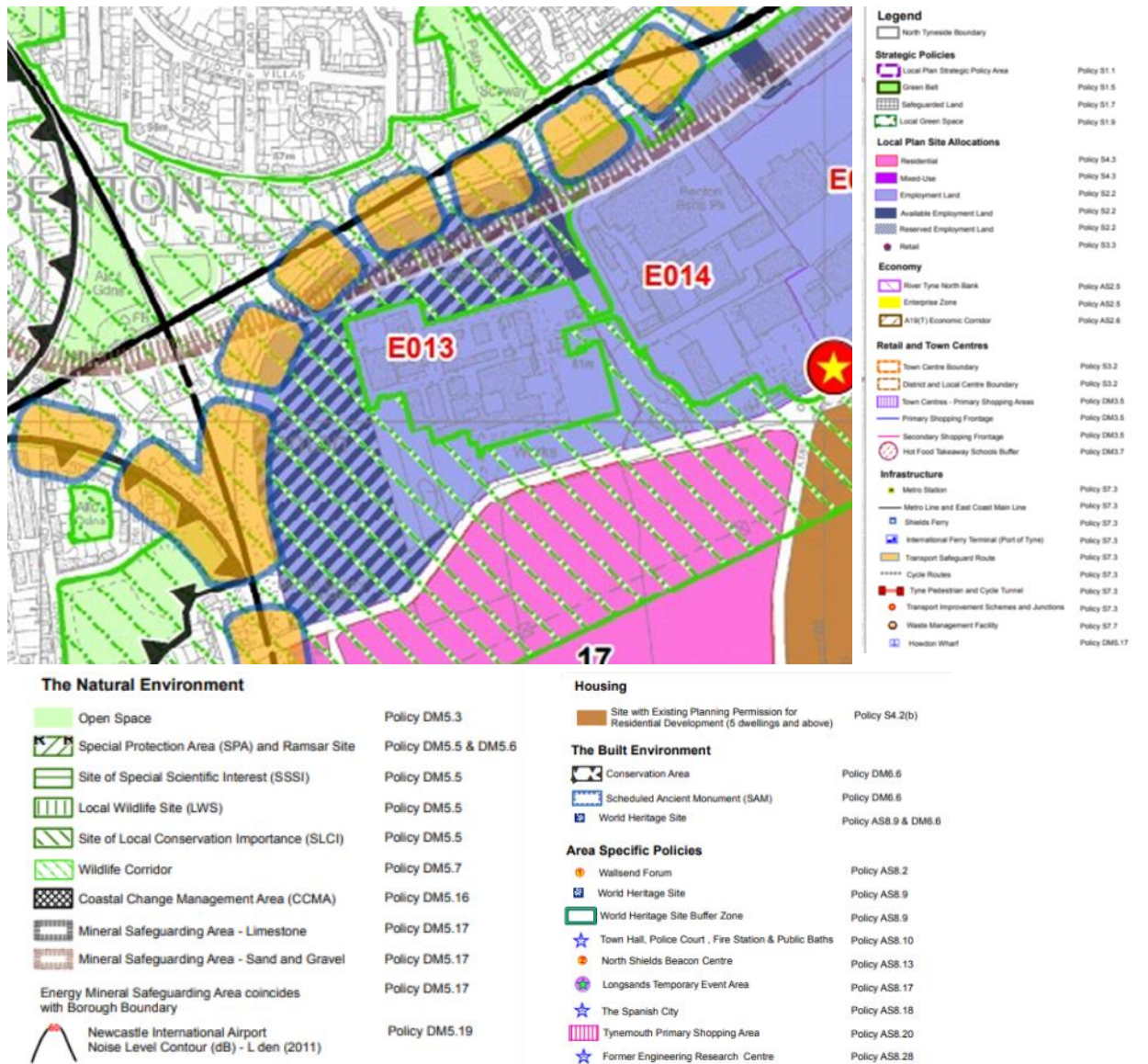


Figure 3.3 Extract from North Tyneside Local Plan (2017)

3.5.2 Land proposed to accommodate the construction of the ramps to the underpass and appropriate landscaping is designated as reserved employment land under Policy S2.2.

3.5.3 Policy S7.3 Transport Safeguard Route designates that the Ashington, Blyth and Tyne Railway as safeguarded for future investment.

3.5.4 Policy DM5.7 of the Local Plan designates sections of the site within a wildlife corridor.

3.5.5 The identified policy constraints and land use designations referenced above are more fully set out in Section 7 and assessed in section 8 of this Statement.

## 4 Proposed Development

### 4.1 Introduction

- 4.1.1 This section presents the detail of the development proposals which are the subject of this application for planning permission.

### 4.2 Planning Application

- 4.2.1 This planning statement has been submitted in support of an application for planning permission for:

*'Construction of an underpass, works to public rights of way, construction of soft and hard landscaping, surface and subsurface drainage, utilities and other services, boundary treatment and other associated works'*

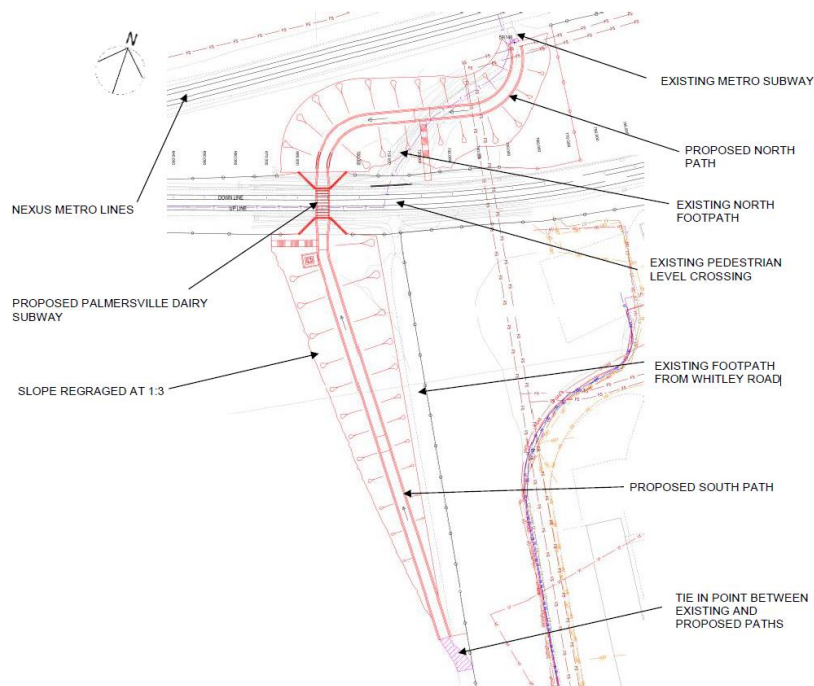
- 4.2.2 An application for an Order under the Transport and Works Act 1992 (TWA0) was submitted to the Secretary of State for Transport in May 2021. An overview of the matters which are the subject of the TWA0 is provided at Section 1.3 of this Planning Statement.

### 4.3 Reasons for the proposed development

- 4.3.1 The 'Northumberland Line' scheme proposes the construction of six new railway stations to deliver half hourly services from Ashington to Newcastle. At present, the existing railway line is used only by freight services. The simple act of introducing passenger trains onto the railway increases the potential risk of injury and fatality at each crossing. The increased risk at each of the level crossings means that some of them need to be upgraded, and some permanently closed, to manage the risk to acceptable industry levels, based on relevant safety legislation, standards and guidance. The risk calculation also includes consideration of the number of trains, speed, and the extent to which the barriers are down
- 4.3.2 At Palmersville a risk assessment undertaken by Network Rail concluded that the closure of the level crossing was the safest intervention at this location. Without a replacement, the length of detour would be 2.7km for users seeking to cross the railway line. This was considered an unacceptable increase in journey time for those users.
- 4.3.3 The crossing currently connects residential properties to the north, to Bellway Industrial Estate and beyond to the south. The proposed development will assist in providing safe and convenient access for residents between key employment, residential and leisure site in the area, and the Public Right of Way network. As such, the underpass is proposed to ensure that an appropriate means of access across the railway line is provided for current and future residents.

## 4.4 Elements of Development Proposals

4.4.1 Figure 4.1 indicates the site layout for the proposed underpass and associated landscaping.



*Figure 4.1 Proposed site layout*

4.4.2 The elements of the proposed development which are the subject of this application for planning permission are summarised below. This summary should be ready in conjunction with submitted plans and Design and Access Statement.

1. Construction of an approximate 4 metre-wide shared pedestrian and cycle box underpass (with 3 metre wide internal footpath)
2. Works to re-align existing footpath with access to proposed underpass
3. Use of a temporary compound and haul road for the storage of materials associated with the works to the proposed underpass
4. Area of landscaping and planting

4.4.3 The TWAO is proposed to authorise the works as set out in section 1.3 of this document.



## 5 Landscape Overview

### 5.1 Introduction

- 5.1.1 This section provides an overview of the potential impact of the proposed development on landscape and visual amenity.

### 5.2 Impact on Landscape Character

- 5.2.1 The character of the site is that of a railway corridor adjacent a residential development to the north, woodland along the railway corridor, an arable field with woodland boundary to the north, and an industrial estate to the east and south.
- 5.2.2 The development proposes a loss of approximately 4,341m<sup>2</sup> of vegetation within and along the railway corridor. Two individual trees, two tree groups and part of two woodland groups are to be removed to facilitate the Proposed Development; this includes part of two woodland groups classed as moderate quality (Category B) and the remaining two individual trees and two tree groups classified as low quality (Category C). A new 1.8m fence is to be installed within or close to retained sections of woodland W12. This can be achieved with a limited impact on trees within the woodland. Further information on tree loss, protection, and suggested installation measures can be found in the Arboricultural Impact Assessment submitted within this application.
- 5.2.3 Tree loss will be mitigated with a robust and high-quality scheme of new tree planting which represents an opportunity to increase the quality, impact, diversity, and resilience of the local tree stock.
- 5.2.4 The development proposes to plant approximately 11,775m<sup>2</sup> of native woodland and approximately 500m of native hedge south of the railway corridor after construction of the underpass. The sides of the proposed embankments will be seeded with wildflowers. The species within the proposed woodland will reflect the Native Woodland habitat requirements as described within the Northumberland Biodiversity Action Plan. The planting will help to improve the level of biodiversity within this area of the site and help to mitigate the loss of the existing woodland.
- 5.2.5 The character of the site will continue to reflect the edge of settlement and railway corridor in which the site sits. Whilst the proposal will add a new structure and extensive planting within the landscape, it is considered these introductions will not be incongruous with the existing landscape given the prevalence of rail related development, woodland along the railway corridor and existing underpass within the local area.



Figure 5.1 Aerial view of the site (source: Google Pro)



Figure 5.2 View east from recordable path towards the Public Right of Way Footpath Forest Hall 5



Figure 5.3 View North from A191

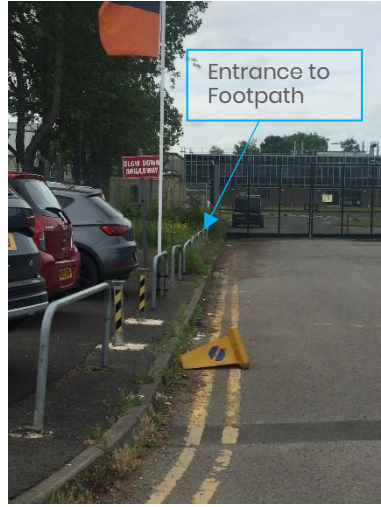


Figure 5.4 View West from industrial estate road towards entrance to Footpath.



Figure 5.5 View north along Footpath from Arnold Clark carpark.



Figure 5.6 View south from Footpath towards industrial estate.



Figure 5.7 View north towards existing level crossing from Footpath



Figure 5.8 View south across existing level crossing.



Figure 5.10 View south from Footpath towards existing level crossing.



Figure 5.9 View facing south from existing underpass.



Figure 5.11 View south from Footpath towards existing underpass, north of proposed site.



## 5.3 Impact on Visual Amenity

### Residential Properties

- 5.3.1 Currently there is no inter-visibility between the affected areas of the pedestrian crossing and adjacent residential properties due to dense woodland and topography. This is demonstrated within Figure 5.7.
- 5.3.2 The proposed scheme includes mitigation in the form of planting to partially screen views of the underpass and to ensure the underpass and associated structures sit well within the landscape setting. On this basis, it is not considered the construction and operation of the proposed underpass will have a significant impact on the visual amenity of adjacent residential properties.

### Industrial Estate

- 5.3.3 There is some intervisibility between the location of the proposals and the neighbouring industrial estate. Figure 5.12 features the oblique view west from the Belway Industrial Estate access road towards the Public Right of Way Footpath Forest Hill 5. The character is highly industrial with weld mesh fencing along the access road and the adjacent Footpath. The arable field in the distance is the proposed location of the site.
- 5.3.4 During construction, adjacent industrial properties may experience a temporary adverse visual impact. However, due to the anticipated short-term duration of the works, it is not anticipated that the construction phase will result in any significant adverse impact to visual amenity of industrial estate or the landscape setting of the site. A number of trees are proposed to be removed during the construction phase to accommodate the development. However, the trees proposed to be removed are not directly adjacent to the existing industrial estate and will therefore not detract from the visual amenity experienced by those businesses.
- 5.3.5 The proposed scheme includes mitigation in the form of planting to partially screen views of the Footpath and to ensure the proposal sits well within the landscape setting. The view features in Figure 5.12 will be altered with the introduction of a native hedge along the edge of the existing footpath, and extensive woodland planting across the section of arable field which is visible from access road. On this basis, it is not considered the construction and operation of the proposed underpass will have a significant impact on the visual amenity of the adjacent industrial estate.

*Figure 5.12 Existing view west from the Belway Industrial Estate access road towards the Public Right of Way Footpath Forest Hill 5 and the proposed site.*



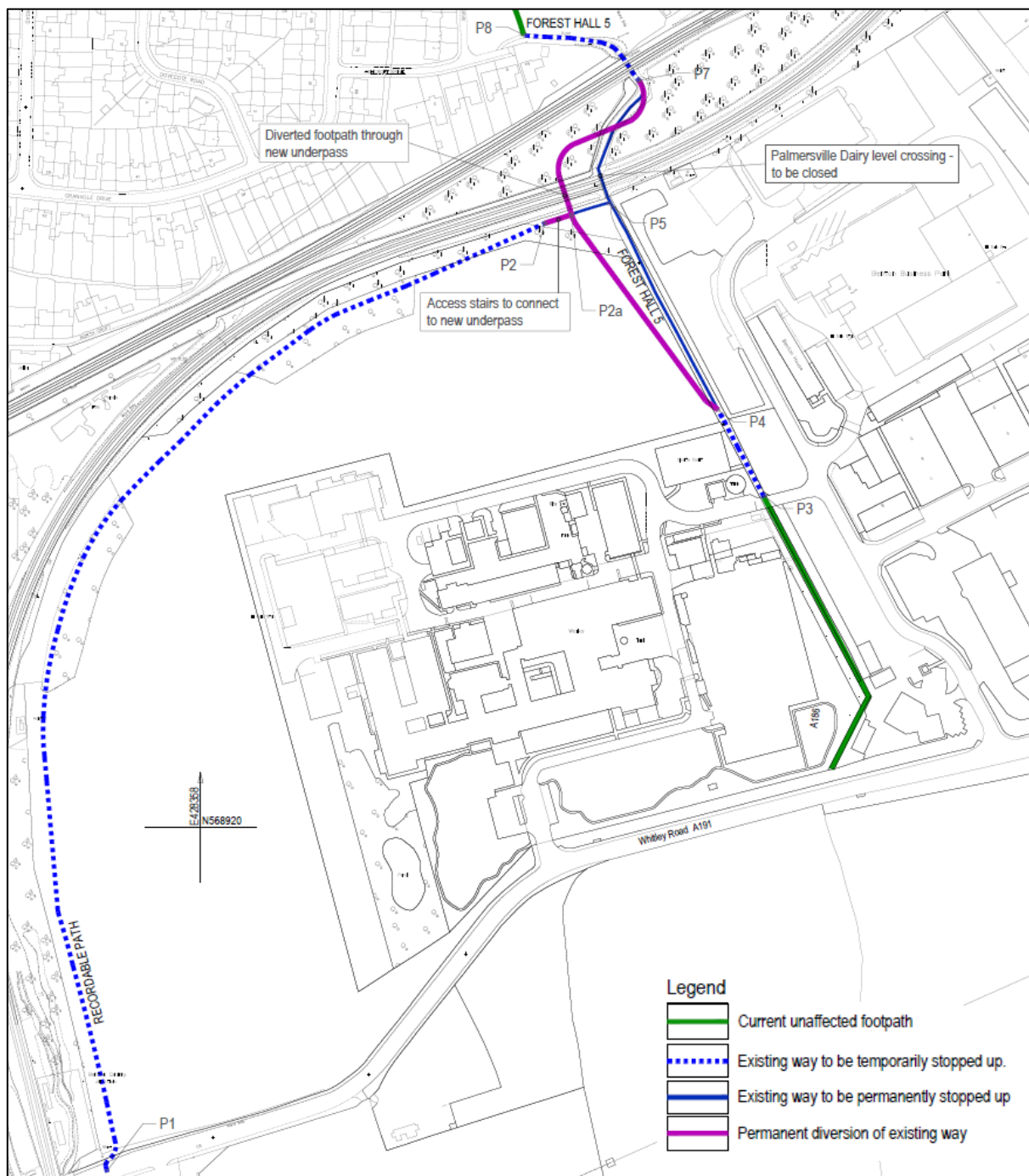


Figure 5.14 Rights of Way Plan (RoW-Sheet 1-Ro4) showing recordable path, existing footpath, and proposed path diversion.

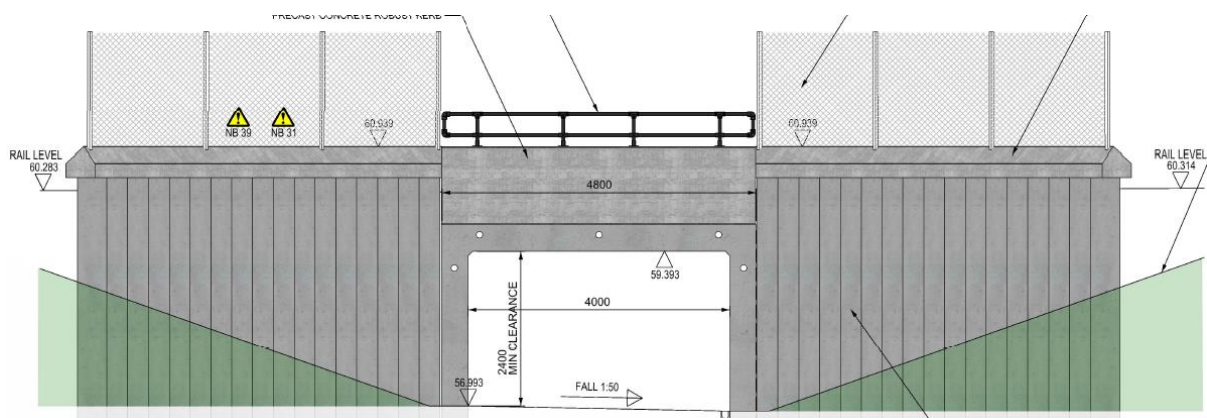


Figure 5.13 Elevation of proposed underpass. (Source: drawing 60601435-ACM-01-ZZ-DRG-EST-001102)

## Public Right of Way Network

5.3.6 As pedestrians travel north towards the site along Footpath Forest Hall 5 it is clearly evident that the traveller is moving through an industrial estate. The footpath is lined by chain link fencing with views into the adjacent business properties, as demonstrated in Figures 5.3 to 5.5. This section of the path and view from this section will not be altered during construction.

5.3.7 Figures 5.7 to 5.10 demonstrate the existing condition of the site and the proposed location of the underpass. After construction the view from the existing footpath shown in Figure 5.6 will change from that of an open agricultural field bound by an industrial estate, to a native hedgerow along the footpath. The public access of this location will be discontinued and diverted approximately 20m to the west, as demonstrated in the Public Rights of Way Plan Figure 5.13. The views of the crossing itself will stay the same; however, access to this area will be limited to rail maintenance.

5.3.8 The character of the landscape heading north along Footpath Forest Hall 5 is highly influenced by the existing railway corridor with features such as the railway line and chain-link fencing. As such, due to the proximity to the railway corridor, a footbridge would not be an incongruous feature given the prevalence of railway infrastructure within the existing landscape. After construction views of the crossing will change for the public from a gated access with chain link fencing, to the access path through an underpass; similar to the existing underpass along the Footpath, as shown in Figure 5.11. The proposed elevation of the underpass is demonstrated in Figure 5.14, which will include a 5m wide path under the pass with a 3m access path. The slopes will be planted with wildflowers while the area to the west will be planted with woodland with a native hedgerow planted to the east.

5.3.9 The proposed and surrounding woodland will continue to provide a woodland backdrop to the proposed underpass. This will allow for the retention of the existing views of woodland experienced by travellers while softening the built form of the railway corridor and the adjacent industrial estate.

5.3.10 As shown within Figure 5.13, a recordable path is located within the woodland along the northern edge of the arable field and connects to the Footpath Forest Hall 5. This path will be temporarily stopped up during construction of the proposal. The majority of the path will not experience any alterations. A small section of the path will be altered into stairs to allow for pedestrians to continue traveling from the recordable path to the Footpath Forest Hall 5. The current approach to the Footpath from the recordable path is visually constrained by surrounding vegetation, as demonstrated in Figure 5.15. As pedestrians get closer to the Footpath the view widens



*Figure 5.15 View east from Recordable Path towards Public Right of Way Footpath Forest Hall 5*



*Figure 5.16 View west from Recordable Path toward the north-western section of the site.*

to include the industrial estate and chain link fencing. Figure 5.16 demonstrates the view west from the recordable path adjacent to the junction of the recordable path and the Footpath. The view contains the dirt footpath directly adjacent to the arable field which is backed by the industrial estate; the footpath continues west along the field edge and into the woodland. After the construction of the proposal, this wider view will become more constrained by the planting of woodland and native hedgerows within the arable field. As this will block views of the industrial estate the proposal is considered a benefit to the visual amenity experienced by those traveling along the recordable path.

- 5.3.11 As such, due to the proximity to the railway corridor, an underpass would not be an incongruous feature given the prevalence of railway infrastructure within the existing landscape. As such, the introduction of a pedestrian bridge over the railway line is not considered to have a significant impact on the visual amenity of those traveling along the Public Right of Way network.

## **5.4 Conclusion**

- 5.4.1 The landscape overview has reviewed the existing characteristics of the site and the local area. It has also reviewed the features of the proposed underpass and the existing views within and around the site.
- 5.4.2 The landscape overview considers that the construction and operation of the proposed underpass will not significantly impact the character of the area as experienced by pedestrians traveling the PROW footpath; or the residential properties to the north.
- 5.4.3 Furthermore, the landscape overview considers that impact on visual amenity of PROW users and residents of Palmersville will be negligible. The overall impact on the landscape is not considered to be significant.



## 6 Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan

### 6.1 Introduction

- 6.1.1 This section presents an outline Construction Environment Management Plan (CEMP), produced to accompany the application for an underpass at Palmersville.

### 6.2 Purpose of CEMP

- 6.2.1 The outline CEMP contains control measures, and the standards to be implemented throughout the construction of the works in order to mitigate the potential impacts of the development.
- 6.2.2 The Contractor would be responsible for producing the final CEMP in accordance with the requirements set out in this document. It is likely that the final CEMP would be a condition of planning to be agreed with and approved by Northumberland County Council before commencement of development. The CEMP will therefore evolve and is subject to refinement, amendment, and expansion as necessary.

### 6.3 Environmental Control Measures

- 6.3.1 General site management measures include those listed below
1. Excavation plant machinery will be fitted with fuel spill kits.
  2. Lighting will be positioned and directed so as not to unnecessarily intrude on adjacent buildings and land uses (including foraging habitats) and prevent any unnecessary interference with local residents.
  3. Welfare facilities will be provided on site and maintained by a licenced Waste Carrier.
  4. Vehicle/equipment washing facilities will be positioned away from watercourses and constructed with a drainage system which will capture runoff and effluent which will then be contained for proper treatment as per the Surface Water Management Plan.
  5. To minimise noise, vibrational and air quality impacts from vehicles and plant/equipment, the Contractor(s) will instigate behavioural policies for all site staff. This will include:
    - Minimising traffic to site by 'sharing' vehicles or by the use of a site bus (this will be detailed in the Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP);
    - Avoidance of part load deliveries (this will be detailed in the CTMP);
    - Utilisation of a pre-booked delivery policy to minimise holding vehicles prior to loading or unloading (this will be outlined in the CTMP); and

- Ensuing that all construction plant, vehicles and equipment are turned off rather than left idling while awaiting usage (this will be detailed in the CTMP). Where feasible use of hybrid generators which help reduce noise and fuel consumption.
- 6. Areas will be clearly marked and managed to prevent them becoming overfilled and ensure that the areas are suitable for the materials stored.
- 7. Hazardous materials such as fuel will be stored within secure compound areas to prevent spillage, theft or malicious damage. A single Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) area will be established to ensure the correct level of protection against fire spills and other chemical hazards. This will prevent sub-contractors and others creating individual stores, which are then not recorded or controlled.

## 6.4 Summary

- 6.4.1 Any planning conditions and commitments made following submission of the planning application (if required) would be incorporated into the CEMP by the appointed Contractor(s) who would be responsible for developing the outline CEMP into the full, detailed CEMP to be signed off by the Local Authority.
- 6.4.2 It is assumed that a number of Contractors (including specialist contractors and sub-contractors) may be appointed during construction. All site construction staff, including sub-contractors, would be required to comply with the CEMP throughout the entire construction stage of the proposed development. Regular site monitoring and site audits will be undertaken by the Contractor's Environmental Manager.
- 6.4.3 Appropriate measures/ precise details of which in a detailed CEMP which will be prepared to discharge relevant conditions on a planning permission for the scheme.



## 7 Planning Policy Context

### 7.1 Introduction

- 7.1.1 This section outlines the principal planning policies that pertain to the proposed development. It is important to note that the thematic survey reports and assessments submitted in support of this application contain further additional information and further details of other relevant policies (e.g., ecology).
- 7.1.2 In England, there is a hierarchical structure of policy covering national and local planning. At a national level the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's planning policies and how these are expected to be applied. At a local level, development plans set out planning policy for the area.
- 7.1.3 Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 7.1.4 Therefore, the primary consideration in the determination of this planning application is the development plan. The development plan in respect of the application site comprises the North Tyneside Local Plan. The North Tyneside Local Plan was adopted on 20th July 2017 and sets out the Council's policies and proposals to guide planning decisions and establishes the framework for the sustainable growth and development of North Tyneside up to 2032.
- 7.1.5 The North Tyneside Local Plan is adopted and up-to-date and is in conformity with the National Planning Policy Framework. The policies contained within the Local Plan can therefore be given full weight in the determination of this planning application.
- 7.1.6 Paragraph 11 of the NPPF provides definitive guidance on how applications should be determined by stating:

*"Plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development. For decision-taking this means:*

*Approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:*

*The application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or*

*Any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework as a whole."*

## 7.2 North Tyneside Development Plan

7.2.1 The North Tyneside Local Plan sets out the Council's spatial vision, strategic objectives and spatial strategy, detailed policies for development management and identifies specific sites for delivery of the Borough's objectively assessed needs for development over the Plan period. The revised Local Plan replaces in full the Unitary Development Plan adopted in 2002.

7.2.2 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states that:

*"If regard is to be had to the development plan for the purpose of any determination to be made under the planning Acts the determination must be made in accordance with plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise."*

7.2.3 Therefore, the starting point from a planning perspective in considering the acceptability or otherwise of the proposals is the development plan. The development plan in respect of the application site comprises the North Tyneside Local Plan.

## 7.3 North Tyneside Local Plan (July 2017)

7.3.1 The Local Plan covers matters including the number of new homes that are needed and where they should be located; the amount and proposed location of new employment land; protection and improvement of important open areas and provision of new ones; provision of new infrastructure and improvement of town centres and community facilities in the Borough.

7.3.2 The relevant policies of the extant Local Plan that pertain to this planning application are identified as follows:

### **Policy S1.1: Spatial Strategy for Sustainable Development**

7.3.3 Policy S1.1 outlines measures to ensure North Tyneside's requirements for homes and jobs can be met with adequate provision of infrastructure. This outlines where employment, housing, retail and tourist developments should be located within the region.

### **Policy S1.2: Spatial Strategy for Health and Wellbeing**

7.3.4 Policy S1.2 states that the wellbeing and health of communities will be maintained and improved by:

- Creating an inclusive built and natural environment
- Promoting and facilitating active and healthy lifestyles, in particular walking and
- Preventing negative impacts on residential amenity and wider public safety from noise, ground instability, ground and water contamination, vibration and air quality

### **Policy S1.4: General Development Principles**

7.3.5 Policy S1.4 identifies the criteria against which the sustainability credentials of new development will be assessed:

- Contribute to the mitigation of the likely effects of climate change, taking full account of flood risk, water supply and demand and where appropriate coastal change
- Be acceptable in terms of their impact upon local amenity for new or existing residents and businesses, adjoining premises and land uses
- Make the most effective and efficient use of available land
- Be accompanied by, and make best use of, existing facilities and infrastructure, particularly in encouraging accessibility and walking, cycling and public transport, whilst making appropriate provision for new or additional infrastructure requirements

#### **Policy S2.1: Economic Growth Strategy**

7.3.6 Policy S2.1 supports proposals which make an overall contribution towards sustainable economic growth, prosperity, and employment in North Tyneside. This includes:

- Town centres and tourism
- Advanced engineering, low carbon, renewable, marine, and off-shore technology, port-related activity and manufacturing
- Office and business investment
- Distribution-major logistics

#### **Policy S3.2: Hierarchy of Centres**

7.3.7 Policy S3.2 outlines the hierarchy of centres within North Tyneside. This policy identifies Northumberland Park as one of four district centres within the borough.

#### **Policy S5.4: Biodiversity and Geodiversity**

7.3.8 Policy S5.4 states that the Borough's biodiversity and geodiversity resources will be protected, created, enhanced and managed having regard to their relative significance. This includes priority to designated sites (both statutory and non-statutory); objectives set out in the BAP and the network of local sites and wildlife corridors.

#### **Policy S7.3: Transport**

7.3.9 Policy S7.3 aims to deliver a modal shift to more sustainable modes of transport, including emphasis on increasing the modal share of public transport, walking, cycling and other nonmotorized modes for journeys both within the Borough and beyond.

- 7.3.10 The policy identifies the Ashington, Blyth and Tyne Railway as a potential for future investment, and as such the railway line is safeguarded.

#### **Policy DM1.3: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development**

- 7.3.11 Policy DM1.3 reiterates the position of the NPPF that there will be a presumption in favour of planning applications that support the delivery of sustainable development.

#### **Policy DM2.3 Development Affecting Employment Land and Buildings**

- 7.3.12 The Council will support proposals on employment land, as shown on the Policies Map, for new or additional development for uses within use classes B1, B2 or B8 or that which is deemed ancillary. Proposals on identified employment land or other buildings in use-class B1, B2 or B8, for uses that could conflict with the development and regeneration of sites for economic development, will be permitted where these proposals would not:

- a. Result in the unacceptable loss of operating businesses and jobs; and,
- b. Result in an excessive reduction in the supply of land for development for employment uses, taking into account the overall amount, range, and choice available for the remainder of the plan period; and,
- c. Have an adverse impact upon the amenity and operation of neighbouring properties and businesses.

#### **Policy DM5.2: Protection of Green Infrastructure**

- 7.3.13 Policy DM5.2 outlines the exceptional circumstances which may warrant the loss of green infrastructure as set out below:

- Where it has been demonstrated that the site no longer has any value to the community in terms of access and function; or
- If it is not a designated wildlife site or providing important biodiversity value; or
- If it is not required to meet a shortfall in the provision of that green space type or another green space type; or
- The proposed development would be ancillary to use of the green infrastructure and the benefits to green infrastructure would outweigh the loss of open space

- 7.3.14 Where development proposals are considered to meet the exceptional circumstances above, permission will only be granted where alternative provision, equivalent to or better than in terms of its quantity and quality, can be provided in equally accessible locations that maintain or create new green infrastructure connections.

7.3.15 Proposals for new green infrastructure, or improvements to existing, should seek net gains for biodiversity, improve accessibility and multi-functionality of the green infrastructure network and not cause adverse impacts to biodiversity.

#### **Policy DM5.5: Managing effects on Biodiversity and Geodiversity**

7.3.16 Policy DM5.5 states that all development proposals should:

- Protect the biodiversity and geodiversity value of land, protected and priority species and buildings and minimise fragmentation of habitats and wildlife links; and,
- Maximise opportunities for creation, restoration, enhancement, management and connection of natural habitats; and,
- Incorporate beneficial biodiversity and geodiversity conservation features providing net gains to biodiversity, unless otherwise shown to be inappropriate.

7.3.17 The policy stipulates that any proposals which are likely to significantly affect priority species or habitats and any designated sites (local or national) will only be permitted where:

- The benefits of the development in that location clearly demonstrably outweigh any direct or indirect adverse impacts on the features of the site and the wider wildlife links; and,
- Applications are accompanied by the appropriate ecological surveys that are carried out to industry guidelines, where there is evidence to support the presence of protected and priority species or habitats planning to assess their presence and, if present, the proposal must be sensitive to, and make provision for, their needs, in accordance with the relevant protecting legislation; and,
- For all adverse impacts of the development appropriate on site mitigation measures, reinstatement of features, or, as a last resort, off site compensation to enhance or create habitats must form part of the proposals. This must be accompanied by a management plan and monitoring schedule, as agreed by the Council.

#### **Policy DM5.7: Wildlife Corridor**

7.3.18 Policy DM5.7 states that development proposals within a wildlife corridor, as shown on the Policies Map, must protect and enhance the quality and connectivity of the wildlife corridor. All new developments are required to take account of and incorporate existing wildlife links into their plans at the design stage. Developments should seek to create new links and habitats to reconnect isolated sites and facilitate species movement.

#### **Policy DM5.9: Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows**

7.3.19 Policy DM5.9 supports strategies and proposals that protect and enhance the overall condition and extent of trees, woodland and hedgerows in the Borough, and:

- Protect and manage existing woodland, trees, hedgerows and landscape features.

- Secure the implementation of new tree planting and landscaping schemes as a condition of planning permission for new development.
- Promote and encourage new woodland, tree and hedgerow planting schemes.
- In all cases preference should be towards native species of local provenance.

#### **Policy DM5.12: Development and Flood Risk**

7.3.20 Policy DM5.12 requires all major developments to demonstrate that flood risk does not increase as a consequence of the proposed development, and that opportunities have been taken to reduce overall flood risk from all sources, taking into account the impact of climate change over its lifetime.

7.3.21 All new development should contribute positively to actively reducing flood risk in line with national policy, through avoidance, reduction, management and mitigation.

7.3.22 In addition to the requirements of national policy, development will avoid and manage flood risk by:

- Helping to achieve the flood management goals of the North Tyneside Surface Water Management Plan and Northumbria Catchment Flood Management Plans; and
- According with the Council's Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, including meeting the requirement for a Flood Risk Assessment for sites over 0.5ha in identified Critical Drainage Areas

#### **Policy DM5.18: Contaminated and Unstable Land**

7.3.23 Policy DM5.18 states that proposals must be accompanied by a report which:

- Shows that investigations have been carried out to assess the nature and extent of contamination or stability issues and the possible effect it may have on the development and its future users, biodiversity, the natural and built environment; and
- Sets out detailed measures to allow the development to go ahead safely and without adverse affect, including, as appropriate:
  - i. Removing the contamination;
  - ii. Treating the contamination;
  - iii. Protecting and/or separating the development from the effects of the contamination;
  - iv. iv. Validation of mitigation measures; and
  - v. v. Addressing land stability issues.

7.3.24 Where measures are needed to allow the development to proceed safely and without adverse effect, these will be required as a condition of any planning permission.

#### **Policy DM5.19: Pollution**

- 7.3.25 Policy DM5.19 requires development proposals that may cause pollution either individually or cumulatively of water, air or soil through noise, smell, smoke, fumes, gases, steam, dust, vibration, light, and other pollutants to incorporate measures to prevent or reduce their pollution so as not to cause nuisance or unacceptable impacts on the environment, to people and to biodiversity.
- 7.3.26 Development will not be supported unless mitigation measures can secure a satisfactory living and working environment.

#### **Policy DM6.1: Design of Development**

- 7.3.27 Policy DM6.1 supports developments of high and consistent design quality. Developments should 'be specific to the place based on a clear analysis the characteristics of the site, its wider context and the surrounding area. Proposals are expected to demonstrate:
- A design responsive to landscape features, topography, wildlife habitats, site orientation and existing buildings, incorporating where appropriate the provision of public art;
  - A positive relationship to neighbouring buildings and spaces;
  - A safe environment that reduces opportunities for crime and antisocial behaviour;
  - A coherent, legible and appropriately managed public realm that encourages accessibility by walking, cycling and public transport;
  - Sufficient car parking that is well integrated into the layout; and,
  - A good standard of amenity for existing and future residents and users of buildings and spaces

#### **Policy DM7.9: New Development and Waste**

- 7.3.28 Policy DM7.9 states that all developments are expected to:
- Provide sustainable waste management during construction and use
  - Ensure a suitable location for the storage and collection of waste
  - Consider the use of innovative communal waste facilities where practicable

## **7.4 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2021)**

- 7.4.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied. It provides a framework within which locally prepared plans for housing and other development can be produced.

- 7.4.2 Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The National Planning Policy Framework must be taken into account in preparing the development plan and is a material consideration in planning decisions. Planning policies and decisions must also reflect relevant international obligations and statutory requirements.
- 7.4.3 The NPPF states at paragraph 7 that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. At a very high level, the objective of sustainable development can be summarised as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.
- 7.4.4 Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways (so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across each of the different objectives):
- an economic objective – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;
  - a social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being; and
  - an environmental objective – to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.
- 7.4.5 At the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, so that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way.
- 7.4.6 With reference to paragraph 11 of the NPPF, it is important to note that for decision-taking this means;
- approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or
  - where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important are out-of-date, granting permission unless:
    - i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or



- ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.

- 7.4.7 The North Tyneside Local Plan is adopted and up-to-date, and in conformity with the policies contained within the NPPF. The policies of the Local Plan can therefore be given full weight in the determination of this planning application.
- 7.4.8 Further advice on decision-taking which is of relevance to the current scheme is provided at paragraph 38 of the Framework.
- 7.4.9 Local planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way. They should use the full range of planning tools available and work proactively with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. Decision-makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible.
- 7.4.10 The early engagement evoked by the NPPF has been undertaken in a bid to assist in the efficiency and effectiveness of the determination of this planning application; paragraphs 39 to 46 of the NPPF highlight the importance of pre-application engagement.

#### **Building a Strong and Competitive Economy**

- 7.4.11 The NPPF places great importance on ensuring the planning system does everything it can to help the create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development.

#### **Promoting Healthy and Safe Communities**

- 7.4.12 The NPPF acknowledges that delivering the social objectives of sustainable development cannot be achieved without healthy, safe and inclusive places. Such places should:
- Promote social interaction, including opportunities for meetings between people who might not otherwise come into contact with each other – for example through mixed-use developments, strong neighbourhood centres, street layouts that allow for easy pedestrian and cycle connections within and between neighbourhoods, and active street frontages;
  - are safe and accessible, so that crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion – for example through the use of clear and legible pedestrian routes, and high quality public space, which encourage the active and continual use of public areas; and
  - enable and support healthy lifestyles, especially where this would address identified local health and well-being needs – for example through the provision of safe and accessible green infrastructure, sports facilities, local shops, access to healthier food, allotments and layouts that encourage walking and cycling.

7.4.13 This section of the NPPF also states that existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless:

- an assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space, buildings or land to be surplus to requirements; or
- the loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location; or
- the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the benefits of which clearly outweigh the loss of the current or former use.

#### **Promoting Sustainable Transport**

7.4.14 An integral component in delivering sustainable development and achieving wider sustainability and health objectives is the promotion of sustainable transport, as set out in Section 9 of the Framework. This includes identifying and pursuing opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport use.

7.4.15 This section states that the planning system should actively manage patterns of growth in support of these objectives. Significant development should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes. This can help to reduce congestion and emissions and improve air quality and public health.

7.4.16 Paragraph 109 states that development should only be prevented or refused on highway grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.

7.4.17 This connotes that a refusal of planning permission on transport grounds will only be justifiable if there are severe impacts arising from the development which cannot be mitigated.

#### **Achieving Well-designed Places**

7.4.18 The creation of high quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities.

7.4.19 Paragraph 128 states that design quality should be considered throughout the evolution and assessment of individual proposals. Early discussion between applicants, the local planning authority and local community about the design and style of emerging schemes is important for clarifying expectations and reconciling local and commercial interests. Applicants should work closely with those affected by proposals to evolve designs that take account of the views of the community. Applications that can demonstrate early, proactive and effective engagement with the community should be looked on more favourably than those that cannot.

## Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment

7.4.20 The conservation and enhancement of the natural environment is fundamental to supporting sustainable development goals.

7.4.21 Paragraph 170 states that planning policies and decisions should contribute to, and enhance the natural environment by:

- protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);
- recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland;
- maintaining the character of the undeveloped coast, while improving public access to it where appropriate;
- minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures;
- preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air and water quality, taking into account relevant information such as river basin management plans; and
- remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate

## 8 Planning Assessment

### 8.1 Introduction

- 8.1.1 The application for planning permission is accompanied by the supporting information identified as required by the local planning authority in discussions prior to submission. The scope, extent and nature of the supporting information is in accordance with the advice and recommendations given by officers of the local planning authority.
- 8.1.2 The design of the scheme and scope of the submitted proposals has been conceived with the ambition of satisfying all of the relevant local and national planning, transport and environmental policies.
- 8.1.3 Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the statutory development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 8.1.4 The following sections:
- summarises the evidence that demonstrates how the development proposals accord with the Local Plan (section 8.2)
  - summarises the evidence that demonstrates how the development proposals accord with national planning policies (section 8.3)
  - confirms that there are no material considerations in the determination of the planning application that should lead to the application being refused (section 9.1)
  - confirms that the implementation of the scheme would deliver significant public benefits.

### 8.2 Accordance with North Tyneside Development Plan

- 8.2.1 The development plan in respect of the application site comprises the North Tyneside Local Plan, adopted in July 2017.
- 8.2.2 The Local Plan sets out the Council's spatial vision, strategic objectives and spatial strategy, detailed policies for development management and identifies specific sites for delivery of the Borough's objectively assessed needs for development over the Plan period. The revised Local Plan replaces in full the Unitary Development Plan adopted in 2002.

#### **Policy S1.1: Spatial Strategy for Sustainable Development**

- 8.2.3 Policy S1.1 states that in order to ensure North Tyneside's requirements for homes and jobs can be met with adequate provision of infrastructure, and in a manner that enables improvements to quality of life, reduces the need to travel and responds to the challenges of climate change, the Spatial Strategy

identifies those urban areas will be the focus for the new employment, housing, and retail development.

- 8.2.4 The proposed underpass forms an integral component of the Northumberland Line scheme which proposes the re-introduction of passenger services. The Northumberland Line scheme is a strategic priority of both national and local government and could therefore reasonably be considered to constitute 'essential infrastructure'.
- 8.2.5 The application site is located in an accessible location, adjacent existing housing and other development and is therefore located in a sustainable location.
- 8.2.6 Additionally, the proposed development has been designed to enhance accessibility and public safety in and around the railway line.
- 8.2.7 In summary, the proposed railway station is considered to be a sustainable development, appropriately located and scaled to accord with the Spatial Strategy.
- 8.2.8 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy S1.1 of the North Tyneside Local Plan.

#### **Policy 1.2: Spatial Strategy for Health and Wellbeing**

- 8.2.9 Policy S1.2 states that the health and wellbeing of communities will be maintained and improved by:
- Creating an inclusive built and natural environment
  - Promoting and facilitating active and healthy lifestyles, in particular walking and cycling
- 8.2.10 The scheme given its nature, represents a is considered to represent an asset towards sustainable development. The underpass will encourage safe and convenient access of the Public Right of Way network, reducing reliance on the private car. The location of the proposed underpass is adjacent to existing housing, employment sites and other amenities and can therefore be considered to be readily accessible by pedestrians and cyclists and encourage active travel in the local area.
- 8.2.11 The scheme has been designed based on a sound understanding of the site and the adjacent land uses. The application is accompanied by various environmental and other assessments to demonstrate that the scheme would not have an unacceptable impact on residential amenity or public safety.
- 8.2.12 The proposed underpass at Palmersville would support the overall scheme of the Northumberland Line, which would deliver economic, social and environmental benefits and thereby support the planning system in fulfilling its purpose: to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development.
- 8.2.13 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy 1.2 of the North Tyneside Local Plan.

#### **Policy S1.4: General Development Principles**

8.2.14 Policy S1.4 states that proposals for development will be considered favourably where it can be demonstrated that they would accord with the strategic, development management or area specific policies of the Plan. Development proposals should

- Contribute to the mitigation of the likely effects of climate change, taking full account of flood risk, water supply and demand and where appropriate coastal change;
- Be acceptable in terms of their impact upon local amenity for new or existing residents and businesses, adjoining premises and land uses;
- Make the most effective and efficient use of available land;
- Be accommodated by, and make best use of, existing facilities and infrastructure, particularly in encouraging accessibility and walking, cycling and public transport, whilst making appropriate provision for new or additional infrastructure requirements

8.2.15 The proposed underpass at Palmersville would improve access to and from the local area for residents, staff and customers of local businesses. The proposed underpass would therefore improve the accessibility and connectivity of Palmersville station and the North East more widely.

8.2.16 The proposed underpass at Palmersville has been designed based on a detailed understanding of the existing and historic site conditions, an appraisal of those features of the local area that contribute to local character and distinctiveness, and through identifying the needs of all anticipated future users of the underpass and considering the advice of all stakeholders including Network Rail, the local planning authority, the local highway authority, residents, businesses and local politicians. submitted Design and Access Statements provides a detailed summary of the design evolution of the underpass and confirms its importance in increasing safe accessibility to all.

8.2.17 The scheme is supported by environmental and other assessments, including a Noise and Vibration Assessment, which are considered to suitably demonstrate that the proposed development would safeguard the amenity of new and existing residents, adjoining premises and land uses.

8.2.18 In summary, the proposed underpass would complement objectives of the overall Northumberland Line Scheme, expanding access opportunities, increasing safety and adapting the local area to the future of transport in the North East. Accordingly, it is considered the local planning authority ought to take a positive approach to the consideration and determination of this planning application.

8.2.19 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy S1.4 of the North Tyneside Local Plan.

### **Policy S2.1: Economic Growth Strategy**

8.2.20 Policy S2.1 supports proposals which will make an overall contribution towards sustainable economic growth, prosperity and employment in North Tyneside.

- 8.2.21 The proposed underpass at Palmersville is designed to promote more sustainable modes of travel by providing safe and convenient access to and from the local highway network, and to key employment sites such as Bellway Industrial Estate.,
- 8.2.22 Furthermore, the proposed underpass is an integral component of the Northumberland Line scheme which will improve accessibility to North Tyneside and South East Northumberland. As such, it is considered the scheme will make a positive contribution towards sustainable economic growth, prosperity and employment in North Tyneside.
- 8.2.23 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy S2.1 of the North Tyneside Local Plan.

#### **Policy S5.4: Biodiversity and Geodiversity**

- 8.2.24 Policy S5.4 states that the Borough's biodiversity and geodiversity resources will be protected, created, enhanced and managed having regard to their relative significance. This includes priority to designated sites (both statutory and non-statutory); objectives set out in the BAP and the network of local sites and wildlife corridors.
- 8.2.25 The proposed underpass at Palmersville has been designed based on a sound understanding of the ecological and wider environmental sensitivity of the site and adjacent land. The planning application is supported by appropriate ecological and other assessments which demonstrate that the scheme will not adversely impact on biodiversity and geodiversity assets. The application includes a substantial area for habitat and landscaping improvements and planting. The details are available in the landscape scheme submitted in support of this application. Furthermore the scheme would be content to accept suitably worded conditions for further details regarding such measures to be submitted for approval.
- 8.2.26 Subject to appropriate mitigation the proposed development can be considered to be in accordance with Policy S5.4 of the North Tyneside Local Plan.

#### **Policy S7.3: Transport**

- 8.2.27 Policy S7.3 aims to deliver a modal shift to more sustainable modes of transport, including emphasis on increasing the modal share of public transport, walking, cycling and other non-motorised modes for journeys both within the Borough and beyond. In particular, the policy safeguards the 'Ashington, Blyth and Tyne railway' for future passenger services.
- 8.2.28 The proposed underpass at Palmersville is an integral component, and proposed to be delivered as part of, the Northumberland Line scheme. The scheme is therefore supported by Policy S7.3. The delivery of the new underpass will support and facilitate the council's ambitions for the re-introduction of passenger services on the Ashington, Blyth and Tyne Line.
- 8.2.29 The overall Northumberland Line scheme would promote greater use of sustainable transport modes, encouraging rail travel for car users for either all or part of their journey to destinations including Northumberland, North Tyneside and Newcastle City Centre; helping to reduce the growth and

reliance on car borne journeys. The scheme also provides measures to facilitate vehicular access to the stations for elderly and mobility impaired users, to ensure the station is accessible for all.

8.2.30 The proposed development is therefore considered to be wholly in accordance with Policy S7.3 of the North Tyneside Local Plan.

#### **Policy DM1.3: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development**

8.2.31 Policy DM1.3 reiterates the position of the NPPF that there will be a presumption in favour of planning applications that support the delivery of sustainable development.

8.2.32 The proposed underpass at Palmersville given its nature, represents sustainable development. The underpass will encourage safe and convenient access on and to the Public Right of Way network, reducing reliance on the private car. The location of the proposed underpass is adjacent to existing housing, employment sites and other amenities and will therefore provide uninterrupted mobility in the local area for those needing to cross the railway line. The proposed underpass at Palmersville is an integral component of the Northumberland Line scheme which will deliver a range of economic, social and environmental benefits; supporting the fundamental objectives of the planning system as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework. The scheme can therefore be considered to represent a sustainable development. The Local Plan, as with the NPPF, holds a presumption in favour of sustainable development, for decision-taking this means approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay.

8.2.33 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy DM1.3 of the North Tyneside Local Plan.

#### **Policy DM2.3 Development Affecting Employment Land and Buildings**

8.2.34 Policy DM2.3 seeks to enable flexibility in the use and development of employment land whilst ensuring that developments support the overall growth and prosperity of North Tyneside.

8.2.35 To achieve this flexibility it seeks to ensure that applications for development on employment land are considered on the basis of their impact on the economic prosperity of North Tyneside, rather than whether the use proposed falls within the planning use classes B1, B2 and B8. This is to ensure sufficient flexible opportunities for businesses that are in use classes B1, B2 and B8 are retained, but also that full use can be made of the economic potential of land in highly sustainable and accessible locations across North Tyneside.

8.2.36 The site of the proposed underpass is designated in the local plan as provision of land for future employment development. The proposed underpass is not designated within the use classes of B1, B2 or B8. The proposed underpass requires a small removal of designated employment land to facilitate mobility across the railway line. The site is not currently used as employment land and would therefore not result in an unacceptable loss of the existing operational business. The total area of employment land within of the RLB is 2.74 hectares, of which 1.8ha is to be permanently appropriated for the purpose of the proposed development. The total land reserved land designated within the local plan is 8.51 ha (Policy Map Ref: E013). As such, the reduction in the supply of land available for development is not considered to be excessive.



8.2.37 It is considered the proposed development will support the operation of neighbouring businesses by improving safety, mobility and accessibility between the north and south of the railway line. Furthermore, the proposed landscaping scheme will improve the amenity of the area for those neighbouring properties and businesses. As such, it is considered that the proposed development does not preclude the future use of the remainder of the site for employment uses. The applicant is in ongoing discussions with the Proctor and Gamble to ensure that the proposed development does not have an adverse impact upon the operation of the existing Proctor and Gamble compound, nor preclude aspirations they have for the site. To this end, the scheme is considered to be in accordance with Policy DM2.3 of the North Tyneside local plan.

#### **Policy DM5.5: Managing effects on Biodiversity and Geodiversity**

8.2.38 Policy DM5.5 states that all development proposals should:

- Protect the biodiversity and geodiversity value of land, protected and priority species and buildings and minimise fragmentation of habitats and wildlife links; and,
- Maximise opportunities for creation, restoration, enhancement, management and connection of natural habitats; and,
- Incorporate beneficial biodiversity and geodiversity conservation features providing net gains to biodiversity, unless otherwise shown to be inappropriate.

8.2.39 The proposed underpass at Palmersville has been designed based on a sound understanding of the ecological and wider environmental sensitivity of the site and adjacent land. The planning application is supported by appropriate ecological and other assessments which demonstrate that the scheme will not adversely impact on biodiversity and geodiversity. Whilst it is acknowledged the scheme will result in unavoidable loss of habitat to facilitate the construction of the underpass, the scheme includes extensive habitat and landscaping improvement, including appropriate mitigation within the site to ensure that the proposed development meets biodiversity net gain. The scheme would be content to accept suitably worded conditions for further details regarding such measures.

8.2.40 Subject to appropriate mitigation the proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy DM5.5 of the North Tyneside Local Plan.

#### **Policy DM5.7: Wildlife Corridors**

8.2.41 Policy DM5.7 states that development proposals within a wildlife corridor, as shown on the Policies Map, must protect and enhance the quality and connectivity of the wildlife corridor. All new developments are required to take account of and incorporate existing wildlife links into their plans at the design stage. Developments should seek to create new links and habitats to reconnect isolated sites and facilitate species movement.

8.2.42 The proposed underpass at Palmersville has been designed based on a sound understanding of the site and its ecological importance. The site has been the subject of extensive ecological surveys and the submitted Ecological Assessment demonstrates that the scheme would not have a significant adverse ecological impact and proposes to accommodate on site biodiversity net gain. The

development will be undertaken in accordance with the recommendations of the Ecological Assessment so as to ensure that opportunities are taken to support and enhance existing wildlife links.

8.2.43 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy DM5.7 of the North Tyneside Local Plan.

#### **Policy DM5.9: Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows**

8.2.44 Policy DM5.9 supports strategies and proposals that protect and enhance the overall condition and extent of trees, woodland and hedgerows in the Borough, and:

- Protect and manage existing woodland, trees, hedgerows and landscape features.
- Secure the implementation of new tree planting and landscaping schemes as a condition of planning permission for new development.
- Promote and encourage new woodland, tree and hedgerow planting schemes.
- In all cases preference should be towards native species of local provenance.

8.2.45 The proposed underpass at Palmersville is supported by a sensitive landscaping scheme, which seeks to retain and/or replace existing trees, wherever possible. Precise details of the landscape proposals and the justification for tree removals are set out in the submitted landscaping scheme and arboricultural assessment reports.

8.2.46 Subject to appropriate new planting the proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy DM5.9 of the North Tyneside Local Plan.

#### **Policy DM5.12: Development and Flood Risk**

8.2.47 Policy DM5.12 requires all major developments to demonstrate that flood risk does not increase as a consequence of the proposed development, and that opportunities have been taken to reduce overall flood risk from all sources, taking into account the impact of climate change over its lifetime.

8.2.48 All new development should contribute positively to actively reducing flood risk in line with national policy, through avoidance, reduction, management and mitigation.

8.2.49 The application site is identified as being located within Flood Zone 1 and is therefore at low risk of flooding. The proposed underpass has been designed based on a sound understanding of the flood risk pertaining to the site from all sources. The scheme would not increase the risk of flooding either to the site or adjacent land.

8.2.50 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy DM5.12 of the North Tyneside Local Plan.

#### **Policy DM5.18: Contaminated and Unstable Land**

8.2.51 Policy DM5.18 states that proposals must be accompanied by a report which:

- Shows that investigations have been carried out to assess the nature and extent of contamination or stability issues and the possible effect it may have on the development and its future users, biodiversity, the natural and built environment; and
- Sets out detailed measures to allow the development to go ahead safely and without adverse affect.

8.2.52 The proposed underpass at Palmersville is supported by various ground investigations and contaminated land assessments, which are submitted in support of the planning application, to demonstrate that land instability and contamination issues will be appropriately mitigated and managed as part of the proposed development.

8.2.53 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy DM5.18 of the North Tyneside Local Plan.

#### **Policy DM5.19: Pollution**

8.2.54 Policy DM5.19 requires development proposals that may cause pollution either individually or cumulatively of water, air or soil through noise, smell, smoke, fumes, gases, steam, dust, vibration, light, and other pollutants to incorporate measures to prevent or reduce their pollution so as not to cause nuisance or unacceptable impacts on the environment, to people and to biodiversity.

8.2.55 The proposed underpass at Palmersville is supported by various noise, vibration, and other environmental assessments, which are submitted in support of the planning application, to demonstrate that environmental impacts will be appropriately mitigated and managed as part of the proposed development.

8.2.56 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy DM5.19 of the North Tyneside Local Plan.

#### **Policy DM6.1: Design of Development**

8.2.57 Policy DM6.1 supports developments of high and consistent design quality. Developments should 'be specific to the place based on a clear analysis the characteristics of the site, its wider context and the surrounding area. Proposals are expected to demonstrate:

- A design responsive to landscape features, topography, wildlife habitats, site orientation and existing buildings, incorporating where appropriate the provision of public art;
- A positive relationship to neighbouring buildings and spaces;
- A safe environment that reduces opportunities for crime and antisocial behaviour;
- A coherent, legible and appropriately managed public realm that encourages accessibility by walking, cycling and public transport;
- Sufficient car parking that is well integrated into the layout; and,

- A good standard of amenity for existing and future residents and users of buildings and spaces

8.2.58 The proposed underpass at Palmersville has been designed based on a detailed understanding of the existing and historic site conditions. This includes an appraisal of local features that contribute to local character and distinctiveness, and by identifying the needs of all anticipated future users of the underpass. It is also informed by advice of all stakeholders including Network Rail, the local planning authority, the local highway authority, residents, businesses and local politicians.

8.2.59 The submitted Design and Access Statement provides further details demonstrating that the submitted scheme is based on a clear understanding of the character and local distinctiveness of the area and confirms that the proposed underpass and associated landscape planting would make a positive contribution to place-making and environmental improvement.

8.2.60 The proposed development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Policy DM6.1 of the North Tyneside Local Plan.

## 8.3 Accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework

8.3.1 The NPPF states at paragraph 7 that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. There are three interdependent, overarching objectives that the planning system must perform in order to contribute to sustainable development:

- an economic objective;
- a social objective; and
- an environmental objective

8.3.2 The proposed underpass at Palmersville and the associated Northumberland Line scheme would deliver economic social and environmental benefits and thereby supports the planning system in fulfilling its fundamental purpose: to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development.

8.3.3 The proposed underpass is an integral component of a sustainable transport project which will deliver a range of economic, social and environmental benefits; supporting the fundamental objectives of the planning system as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework. The scheme can therefore be considered to represent a sustainable development. The NPPF holds a presumption in favour of sustainable development, for decision-taking this means approving development proposals that accord with the local development plan without delay.

### Promoting Sustainable Transport

8.3.4 An integral component in delivering sustainable development and achieving wider sustainability and health objectives is the promotion of sustainable development, as set out in Section 9 of the Framework. This section states that applications for development should:

- give priority first to pedestrian and cycle movements, both within the scheme and with neighbouring areas; and second – so far as possible – to facilitating access to high quality public transport, with layouts that maximise the catchment area for bus or other public transport services, and appropriate facilities that encourage public transport use;
- address the needs of people with disabilities and reduced mobility in relation to all modes of transport;
- create places that are safe, secure and attractive – which minimise the scope for conflicts between pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles, avoid unnecessary street clutter, and respond to local character and design standards;
- allow for the efficient delivery of goods, and access by service and emergency vehicles; and
- be designed to enable charging of plug-in and other ultra-low emission vehicles in safe, accessible, and convenient locations

- 8.3.5 The proposed development has given due regard to the above criteria; the scheme has been designed to encourage pedestrian and cycle movements both within the site and adjacent to the site. The scheme will provide safe and convenient access across the railway to the local Public Right of Way network. The scheme provides a betterment on the existing arrangement in providing a 3-metre-wide footpath which does not require crossing over an operational railway line.
- 8.3.6 The development is therefore considered to accord with the aims of objectives of section 9 of the NPPF, given that the proposed development by its very nature is promoting access to and use of sustainable modes of transport.

#### **Achieving well-designed places**

- 8.3.7 The NPPF states at paragraph 126 that:

*“The creation of high-quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities. Being clear about design expectations, and how these will be tested, is essential for achieving this. So too is effective engagement between applicants, communities, local planning authorities and other interests throughout the process.”*

- 8.3.8 The proposed underpass at Palmersville has been designed based on a sound understanding of both the historic and existing conditions of the site, the surrounding area and the aspirations of Network Rail, the local planning authority, the local highway authority, and other key stakeholders. The scheme has been finessed to take account of comments and observations from residents and local politicians to the preliminary designs which were the subject of an extensive public engagement campaign.
- 8.3.9 The proposed layout, scale, height, and extent of the proposed development has been informed based on an understanding of the requirements of 21<sup>st</sup> Century railway infrastructure, together with an understanding of the context of the site to ensure that the design reinforces the local character and distinctiveness of the site through integration with existing pedestrian routes and being respectful to adjacent land uses.
- 8.3.10 The Design and Access Statement submitted in support of this Planning Statement demonstrates that a detailed appraisal of different design options was undertaken to understand the implications of various layouts and access arrangements, culminating in the submitted scheme which is considered to present the optimum viable layout within the budget and other constraints for the scheme.
- 8.3.11 In summary, the proposed underpass is considered to promote high levels of sustainability through encouraging safe and convenient access to the local Public Right of Way network and will help raise the standard of design more generally in this area, whilst ensuring coherence with the overall form and layout of the surrounding area, in accordance with paragraph 134. Accordingly, great weight should be given to the designs which promote high levels of sustainability. The proposed development is therefore considered to accord with the aims and objectives of Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

## 8.4 The Planning Balance

- 8.4.1 With reference to the above planning assessment, it is considered that the proposed development accords with the relevant policies of the North Tyneside Local Plan as summarised in Figure 8.4 below and the Development Plan as a whole. The supporting surveys and assessments submitted in support of the planning application identify the various environmental effects associated with the proposed development but conclude that with the adoption of appropriate mitigation measures during both the construction and operational phases, there would be no significant adverse effects as a result of the proposed development.
- 8.4.2 The approval of the planning application would facilitate safe and convenient access for residents of Palmersville to the local Public Right of Way network.
- 8.4.3 In addition to the proposed development's accordance with the policies of North Tyneside Local Plan, it is further considered that the proposed development accords with the relevant policies of the NPPF which is a material planning consideration.
- 8.4.4 For these reasons it is considered that the positive benefits of the proposed development outweigh any minimal harm and the application accords with the Development Plan, as summarised in the table below.

North Tyneside Development Policy	
<b>Principle of Development</b>  Policy S1.1, S1.2, S1.4, S2.1, S2.2 S3.2, DMI.3, DM2.3	<p>The proposed development would assist in providing safe and convenient access for pedestrians under the railway to the local Public Rights of Way network. The re-opening of the Northumberland Line to passenger rail services, of which the new underpass at Palmersville is an integral component, is specifically supported by the policies within the Tyneside Local Plan.</p> <p>The site of the proposed development is designated as reserved employment land. However, it is considered the submitted scheme meets the tests identified in Policy DM2.3 in that the site will not result in an unacceptable loss of operating businesses or result in an excess reduction in the supply of land for development. It is considered the proposed landscaping scheme will enhance the amenity of neighbouring properties and residents.</p>
<b>Design</b>  Policy S1.4, DM6.1	<p>The submitted scheme aims to provide a footbridge that is well integrated within its surroundings and which takes opportunities to encourage safe and convenient access for pedestrians to the local Public Rights of Way network. The design of the submitted scheme seeks to suitably safeguard the amenity of local residents, including the provision of a landscaping scheme. The Design and Access Statement submitted in support of this application provides describes the evolution of the scheme and how the design suitably reflects the ambitions of the local planning authority and other key stakeholders.</p>
<b>Health and wellbeing</b>	<p>The scheme is designed to ensure that appropriate access is provided for all users. The scheme will improve access to the</p>

North Tyneside Development Policy	
Policy S1.2	local Public Rights of Way network for residents, including key employment, residential and leisure sites in the area.
<b>Landscape</b>  Policy DM5.9, DM6.1	<p>The proposed development has been designed based on a sound understanding of the site and its context. The scheme will incorporate sensitive landscaping to ensure the scheme makes an appropriate contribution to the local area. Tree removals are required in order to facilitate the installation of the proposed underpass, which will extend north to south across the existing railway line. Tree removals are required due to a direct conflict with the position of the proposed underpass, alteration to the PROW alignment and to allow working space for its installation. Such removals will also prevent any foreseeable future conflict with the Proposed Development and any retained trees.</p> <p>The Landscape Appraisal section of this Planning Statement and the submitted Arboricultural Impact Assessment provides further details in this regard.</p>
<b>Transport and Access</b>  Policy S7.3, AS2.6, DM6.1, DM7.4	<p>The proposed development has been designed to ensure safe and convenient access to the underpass is provided for all users. The Design and Access Statement submitted in support of this Planning Statement provides further details regarding the considerations that have influenced the submitted scheme to ensure appropriate access and connections with the local Public Right of Way network are provided.</p>
<b>Ground Conditions</b>  Policy DM5.18, DM5.19	<p>The scheme has been designed based on an understanding of the existing ground conditions. A geo-technical assessment has been submitted which provides further details on the ground conditions, which have been used to inform the submitted proposals.</p>
<b>Water Quality, Flood Risk and Drainage</b>  Policy DM5.12, DM5.14	<p>The scheme has been designed based on an understanding of the flood risk and drainage requirements of the site. Discussions with the LLFA have informed the submitted proposals. Officers have confirmed that a Flood Risk Assessment is not required to be submitted in support of the planning application, given the nature of the proposed development, size of the application site and that the site is not at risk of flooding and that appropriate drainage is provided.</p>

*Figure 8.1 Summary of policy compliance*



## 9 Material Considerations

### 9.1 Introduction

- 9.1.1 Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 9.1.2 A material consideration is a matter which should be taken into account in deciding a planning application, or on an appeal against a planning decision. There is no legal definition to prescribe those matters which have the potential to constitute 'material planning considerations'. Case law has held that any consideration that relates to the use and development of land is capable of being a material planning consideration. It is for the decision-maker to determine the weight to be apportioned to each of the considerations.
- 9.1.3 The purpose of this section is therefore to identify and summarise those other policy and guidance documents that do not form part of the statutory development plan that are of particular relevance to the determination of this planning application.

### 9.2 National Design Guide (2019)

- 9.2.1 Published in October 2019, the National Design Guide seeks to provide guidance to assist in the delivery of beautiful, enduring and successful places.
- 9.2.2 The National Design Guide recognises the importance of good design. To this end, the document sets out ten characteristics which ought to be used to assess the design credentials of development. The ten characteristics identified are said to contribute towards the cross-cutting themes for good design set out in the NPPF. The ten characteristics are:
- Context – enhances the surroundings.
  - Identity – attractive and distinctive.
  - Built form – a coherent pattern of development.
  - Movement – accessible and easy to move around.
  - Nature – enhanced and optimised.
  - Public spaces – safe, social and inclusive.
  - Uses – mixed and integrated.
  - Homes and buildings – functional, healthy and sustainable.
  - Resources – efficient and resilient.

- Lifespan – made to last.

- 9.2.3 The submitted Design and Access Statement demonstrates that the scheme has evolved to take account of the observations, guidance and comments received from the local planning authority officers, together with other key stakeholders including Network Rail. It is considered that the principles set out in the National Design Guide reinforce those principles set out in those design-specific policies contained within the development plan, which the submitted scheme is considered to accord with.
- 9.2.4 It is therefore considered that the National Design Guide can be given moderate weight in the determination of this planning application. The scheme is considered to represent a sustainable design that suitably takes account of the site context. It is considered that further details that pertain to design considerations, including external material finishes, can be the subject of suitably worded conditions on a planning permission for the scheme.

### **9.3 North Tyneside Design Quality Supplementary Planning Document (2008)**

- 9.3.1 The North Tyneside Design Quality Supplementary Planning Document was adopted by the Council on 14th May 2018 and provides guidance on how developments can achieve a high-quality design in a way that respects the local context.
- 9.3.2 The submitted Design and Access Statement demonstrates that the scheme has evolved to take account of the observations, guidance and comments received from the local planning authority officers, together with other key stakeholders including Network Rail. It is considered that the principles set out in the North Tyneside Design Quality SPD reinforce those principles set out in those design-specific policies contained within the development plan, which the submitted scheme is considered to accord with.
- 9.3.3 It is therefore considered that the North Tyneside Design Quality SPD can be given moderate weight in the determination of this planning application. The scheme is considered to represent a sustainable design that suitably takes account of the site context. It is considered that further details that pertain to design considerations, including external material finishes, can be the subject of suitably worded conditions on a planning permission for the scheme.

### **9.4 North East Combined Authority Transport Manifesto (2016)**

- 9.4.1 The North East Combined Authority was established in April 2014 and brought together the seven councils which serve County Durham, Gateshead, Newcastle, North Tyneside, Northumberland, South Tyneside and Sunderland. The ambition of NECA is to create the best possible conditions for growth in jobs, investment and living standards, making the North East an excellent place to live and work.
- 9.4.2 NECA recognises that effective transport networks are key to economic growth and opportunity for all. This includes links with the North East and connectivity with the rest of the UK, Europe and the rest of the world. The North East Combined Authority's ambition, as set out in its Transport Manifesto, is to provide affordable, attractive, reliable, safe, healthy transport choices for businesses, residents and visitors while enhancing the environment.

- 9.4.3 The NECA's Transport Manifesto supports the opening of new stations on existing rail lines, including the upgrading of freight-only sections for passenger use.
- 9.4.4 The scheme which is the subject of this application for planning permission would directly support the aims of the NECA's Transport Manifesto, to re-introduce passenger services on an existing freight line and to improve the accessibility and connectivity of South East Northumberland to the wider North East.
- 9.4.5 It is therefore considered that the NECA Transport Manifesto can be given moderate weight in the determination of this planning application. The scheme is considered to directly support the delivery of a scheme which is identified as a strategic transport priority for the North East Combined Authority.

## **9.5 Transport for the North Strategic Transport Plan (2019)**

- 9.5.1 Transport for the North (TfN) is the first statutory sub-national transport body in the United Kingdom. It was formed in 2018 to make the case for strategic transport improvements across the North of England. As a partnership, TfN brings the North's local transport authorities together with Network Rail, Highways England and HS2 Ltd and Central Government, to facilitate discussions on the transport infrastructure needed to drive transformational growth and rebalance the UK economy.
- 9.5.2 TfN's Strategic Transport Plan specifically supports the re-instatement of passenger services on the Northumberland Line, between Ashington and Blyth; this rail intervention is prioritised by TfN in the shorter term, in the context of the Department for Transport's Rail Network Enhancements Pipeline process.
- 9.5.3 The scheme which is the subject of this application for planning permission would directly support the aims of the TfN Strategic Transport Plan, to re-introduce passenger services on the Northumberland Line.
- 9.5.4 It is therefore considered that the TfN Strategic Transport Plan can be given moderate weight in the determination of this planning application. The scheme is considered to directly support the delivery of a scheme which is identified as a strategic transport priority for the Transport for the North.

## **9.6 The Road to Zero Strategy (2018)**

- 9.6.1 Whilst there are local policies pertaining to climate change within the North Tyneside Local Plan, the climate crisis and the measures set out by Government in the 'Road to Zero: Next steps towards cleaner road transport and delivering our Industrial Strategy' is a material consideration in the determination of this planning application.

- 9.6.2 The Strategy states that in 2016, road transport accounted for 91% of UK greenhouse gas emissions in transport<sup>1</sup>.
- 9.6.3 The amount CO2 emissions per passenger per train is 14 grams. In contrast, a private car can produce 158 grams per passenger<sup>2</sup>. As such, a modal shift to public transport has the potential to dramatically decrease our national energy consumption.
- 9.6.4 The scheme which is the subject of this application for planning permission would support the aims of the 'Road to Zero' strategy, by seeking to establish a viable alternative to the private car that may encourage a modal shift from car to rail travel. Such a modal shift would likely result in air quality.
- 9.6.5 The proposed underpass would also support active travel by improving cycling and pedestrian infrastructure in the borough.
- 9.6.6 It is therefore considered that the 'Road to Zero' strategy can be given moderate weight in the determination of this planning application. The scheme is considered to support the Government's ambitions to move toward zero emissions.

## **9.7 Nexus Metro and Local Rail Strategy (2016)**

- 9.7.1 The Nexus Metro and Local Rail Strategy, produced in conjunction with the North East Combined Authority, sets out the proposals for the improved integration between local rail and Metro services, and the potential to exploit under-used and disused railway assets and alignments across the North East region.
- 9.7.2 The Metro and Local Rail Strategy identifies that the restoration of passenger rail services to the Blyth, Bedlington and Ashington areas is a strategic priority for the NECA because of the significant regenerative benefits of the scheme.
- 9.7.3 It is considered the proposed underpass is a key component off the Northumberland Line scheme and therefore is supported by the aims of the Nexus Metro and Local Rail Strategy.
- 9.7.4 It is therefore considered that the Metro and Local Rail Strategy can be given moderate weight in the determination of this planning application. The scheme is considered to directly support the delivery of a scheme which is identified as a strategic priority for both NECA and Nexus.

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<sup>1</sup> Page 28 The Road to Zero: Next steps towards cleaner road transport and delivering our Industrial Strategy (2018)

<sup>2</sup> P79 Transport for the North Strategic Transport Plan 2019

## 9.8 Summary

- 9.8.1 It is considered that there are various considerations that are material to the determination of this planning application. This section has sought to identify and apportion due weight to each of those considerations, to assist the local planning authority in the determination of this application.
- 9.8.2 It is considered that there are no material considerations that would be sufficient either individually or in conjunction with other considerations that would preclude the granting of planning permission for the submitted scheme.

## 10 Case for Planning Permission to be granted

### 10.1 Introduction

10.1.1 This section brings together the information presented within this planning statement and provides a reasoned conclusion for the support of the application.

### 10.2 Accordance with local and national policies

10.2.1 This planning statement has demonstrated that the proposed underpass and overall scheme accords with the relevant national and local planning policies.

10.2.2 This statement has identified the many and various economic, social and environmental benefits that will be delivered as a result of the proposed development, including the potential for the development to act as a catalyst for further investment and wider regeneration within the North East.

10.2.3 The scheme represents a sustainable development; the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development and therefore this scheme should be supported.

10.2.4 The material considerations that pertain to the application have been identified. This has included demonstrating that there are no material considerations which would prevent the approval of the scheme.

10.2.5 It is requested that the scheme which is the subject of this planning application therefore be approved as submitted.

### 10.3 Benefits of the Scheme

10.3.1 This planning statement has demonstrated that the proposed underpass would accord with both local and national planning policies in terms of encouraging use of public transport through the provision of improved access to the railway network.

10.3.2 The proposed underpass at Palmersville will deliver a range of economic, social and environmental benefits.

10.3.3 The economic benefits of the scheme include:

- The development, which forms part of the wider Northumberland Line scheme, will deliver the transport infrastructure which is required to attract inward investment, create additional employment opportunities, enhance economic vitality and encourage further growth in North Tyneside.
- The development will create local employment opportunities (site operatives and supply chain) during the construction phase.

- The development will improve accessibility from residential areas to the north of the railway line to key employment sites to the south, including Bellway Industrial Estate.

10.3.4 The social benefits of the scheme include:

- The scheme will provide improved safe and convenient access between residential areas and key employment sites in the borough and improve access to the local Public Right of Way network for residents and visitors.
- The development forms part of the wider Northumberland Line scheme, which will improve the accessibility and mobility of residents and local people to employment and leisure opportunities across the North East more widely.

10.3.5 The environmental benefits of the scheme include:

- Encouraging safe and convenient access to the local Public Right of Way network for residents and local people
- The development will be undertaken in accordance with a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) and a Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP), which will minimise the environmental impacts traditionally associated with urban redevelopment schemes.
- The development will implement a strategy for providing a structured approach to landscaping at the site; introducing native shrub and tree planting

10.3.6 The economic, social and environmental benefits associated with the development would be delivered jointly and simultaneously. As such, the proposed development can be considered to represent a sustainable development.

10.3.7 It is therefore requested that planning permission be granted for the scheme as submitted.

## 10.4 Conditions

10.4.1 Planning conditions, when used properly, can enhance the quality of development and enable development to proceed where it would otherwise have been necessary to refuse planning permission, by mitigating the adverse effects.

10.4.2 The objectives of planning are best served when the power to impose conditions on a planning permission is exercised in a way that is clearly seen to be fair, reasonable and practicable.

10.4.3 Section 70(1)(a) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 enables a local planning authority in granting planning permission to impose “*such conditions as they think fit*.” This power needs to be interpreted in the context of material considerations such as the National Planning Policy Framework, the supporting guidance on the use of planning conditions, and relevant case law.

10.4.4 A pre-commencement condition must not be imposed on the grant of permission without the written agreement of the applicant except in the circumstances set out in the Town and Country Planning (Pre-Commencement Conditions) Regulations 2018.

10.4.5 Paragraph 55 of the NPPF stipulates that planning conditions should be kept to a minimum, and use only where they satisfy the following tests:

1. necessary;
2. relevant to planning;
3. relevant to the development to be permitted;
4. enforceable;
5. precise; and
6. reasonable in all other respects.

10.4.6 The plans, surveys, assessments, and other information submitted in support of this planning application are considered to be sufficient to demonstrate to the satisfaction of the local planning authority that the scheme would accord with the relevant policies and that there are no material considerations that ought to preclude the granting of a planning permission for the scheme.

10.4.7 Although a considerable amount of information is submitted in support of the planning application, it is anticipated that additional details may be required to enable the local planning authority to be assured that the proposed mitigation will be sufficient to deliver the environmental and other benefits that pertain to the scheme. In these situations, to avoid potential prolongation of the determination period, the applicant would wish the local planning authority to attach a condition to a planning permission requiring the submission of a scheme with the additional details/ design information.

10.4.8 In line with the tests set out in paragraph 55, this section of the Planning Statement seeks to present an overview of those matters which could be the subject of conditions on a planning permission, in order to seek to avoid possible delays to determination of the planning application as a result of requests from the local planning authority for further information.

10.4.9 The applicants would respectfully request the opportunity to review the wording of any draft conditions which are to be imposed, prior to the granting of a permission.

10.4.10 The below table presents an overview of those matters which could be the subject of conditions on a planning permission.

Condition Subject	Relevant submitted information	Suggested scope of condition
Design	Proposed Plans, Design and Access Statement (within Planning Statement)	Submission of external materials samples, boundary treatment details,



Condition Subject	Relevant submitted information	Suggested scope of condition
Trees	Proposed Plans, Arboricultural Impact Assessment	Submission of arboricultural method statement, Tree protection plan
Landscaping	Proposed Plans, Landscape Overview (within Planning Statement)	Submission of finished site level details, hard and soft landscaping details, landscape management plan, signage details
Ecology	Ecological Impact Assessment, including Biodiversity Net Gain calculation	Submission of a scheme for biodiversity enhancement
Construction	Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan (within Planning Statement)	Submission of a construction environment management plan
Contaminated Land	Preliminary Sources Study Report	Submission of a remediation scheme, verification report, unexpected contamination details if found
Highways	Proposed Plans	Submission of footpath/ public rights of way details.

10.4.11 The above schedule has been drafted to include only those matters which could potentially be pre-commencement or pre-operational conditions and does not include those matters which are likely to be the subject of 'compliance' conditions.

10.4.12 It is respectfully requested that the precise wording of all conditions, including suitable trigger points for discharge where relevant, be agreed with the applicant prior to formal determination of this application for planning permission.

## 10.5 Additional information

10.5.1 In the event that additional information, clarification or further details concerning the proposed development are required during the determination period this will be provided upon request.

10.5.2 The applicants wish to continue to work closely with the local planning authority to ensure the application can be determined as expeditiously as possible. To this end, we are content to attend meetings as required by officers.

**Document ends**