

Proof of Evidence of Harvey Emms

BA (Hons) MRTPI

The Northumberland Line

Client: Malhotra Commercial Properties Ltd.

October 2021

LICHFIELDS



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1.0 Professional Profile

Qualifications

- 1.1 My name is Harvey Edward Emms. I am Head of Office, Head of Public Sector (North) and a Senior Director at Lichfields planning and development consultancy based at The St Nicholas Building, St Nicholas Street, Newcastle upon Tyne.
- 1.2 Lichfields is one of the UK's largest independent planning consultancies and was RTPI Planning Consultancy of the Year for three successive years (2011/12 – 13/14).
- 1.3 I was elected to membership of the Royal Town Planning Institute in October 1993.
- 1.4 I hold an Honours Degree in Town and Country Planning from the University of Newcastle upon Tyne.

Experience

- 1.5 Prior to joining Lichfields in 2014, I was Director of Housing Planning and Transportation at Newcastle City Council. I have over 30 years of experience in working for both the public and private sectors.
- 1.6 I have worked in the North East for over 20 years in various senior management positions.
- 1.7 During my time at Newcastle City Council, I held the title of Chief Planner, and was responsible for producing the Tyne and Wear Local Transport Plan. In this position, I also chaired the Regional Transport Board (RTB) and sat on the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) Steering Group, and Regional Transport Strategy (RTS) Steering Group.
- 1.8 In my role as RTB Chair, I oversaw the prioritisation of major transport schemes across the North East and reviewed the business cases for schemes; evaluated value for money and prioritised which schemes could be delivered under the regional funding allocation.
- 1.9 I have been Policy Advisor to the Tyne and Wear Integrated Transport Authority (TWITA) advising the Committee on transport policy matters and delivery of projects and priorities.
- 1.10 I have also overseen the delivery of major schemes across the North East, including Newcastle Station Central Gateway Project (Phase 1), A1 Western Bypass via the City Deal, and on behalf of the PTE, I was expert witness for both planning and transport planning for the successful delivery of the 2nd Tyne Crossing (TT2).
- 1.11 I was Non-Executive Director of Nexus (the T&W PTE) from 2005 – 2014. During this time, I oversaw the Metro Reinvigoration programme which included the upgrade of the metro stations, rolling stock and infrastructure on the existing metro network.
- 1.12 I was the Newcastle representative on the East Coast Mainline Local Authority Board, and also represented the North East Authorities on the early assessment of the High-Speed Rail (HSR2) Development Group, chaired by Jim Steer.
- 1.13 I am very familiar with the development of transport business cases, and the assessment and delivery of major transport schemes.

Declaration

- 1.14
- 1.15 I have been the director at Lichfields leading all our work for Malhotra Commercial Properties in connection with their landholdings at Kenilworth Road, Ashington, which are potentially

affected by The Northumberland Line project and have agreed to give planning evidence at this Inquiry.

- 1.16 It is my professional planning opinion that the evidence presented by the sponsoring body does not justify the need to acquire the Malhotra land to deliver a car park of the scale proposed to support the Ashington Station.
- 1.17 The evidence which I have prepared in this Proof of Evidence is true. It has been prepared and is given in accordance with the guidance of my professional institution, The Royal Town Planning Institute. I confirm that the opinions expressed are my true and professional opinions.

2.0 Introduction

Purpose of the Statement

- 2.1 I have prepared this Evidence on behalf of my client, Malhotra Commercial Properties Ltd., in response to a Transport and Works Act Order (‘TWAO’) application submitted to the Secretary of State for Transport by Northumberland County Council (‘the Applicant’). The application seeks to authorise certain matters relating to The Northumberland Line development which includes the delivery of a new station and associated infrastructure at Ashington, Northumberland.
- 2.2 My client owns a brownfield development site for a care home at Kenilworth Road, Ashington, which lies adjacent to the proposed Northumberland Line and, in particular, the proposed new station at Ashington.
- 2.3 On 10 September 2021, Northumberland County Council granted planning permission for the following development on land at Station Yard Car Park, Station Road, Ashington (‘the application site’):
- “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.”*
- 2.4 To facilitate the new station and associated infrastructure, the above planning permission (reference: 21/00387/CCD) makes provision for 69 no. car parking spaces to be located on the land within my client’s ownership. Accordingly, my client has serious concerns that the configuration of the approved Ashington Station and its associated car parking would result in the loss of their development site at Kenilworth Road.
- 2.5 This Statement has therefore been prepared in the context of my client’s ownership of, and proposals for, their development site and sets out the grounds on which we wish to object to the subject TWAO application.

Context

- 2.6 My client generally welcomes the reintroduction of passenger services between Ashington and Newcastle Central and supports the overall development of The Northumberland Line, including the six new railway stations.
- 2.7 I support the principle of a new station at Ashington and acknowledge the importance of the proposals to the wider region to deliver a sustainable transport rail solution which will provide additional public transport services to connect South East Northumberland to Newcastle and the wider rail network. I recognise that the development is considered a key priority to secure the future reintroduction of passenger rail service on the existing line between Benton Junction and Woodhorn and that the Applicant is seeking to take forward this proposal to a rapid programme.
- 2.8 However, there is no convincing case presented by the Applicant setting out why my client’s land is required for the development. My client has serious concerns that the configuration of the new Ashington Station and its associated car parking would result in the loss of their

development site at Kenilworth Road, which is currently subject to a live planning application for the development of a care home facility.

- 2.9 By way of background, my client's site was occupied by the former Essendene Care Home up until its demolition in around 2008. Whilst the site has since lain vacant, my client has advanced proposals for the development of a new state of the art care home on the site. This culminated in the submission of a planning application in 2020 for the following development:

"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"

- 2.10 Despite having been submitted in December 2020, and indeed well in advance of the application for the new Ashington Station, this planning application (reference: 20/04423/OUT) is currently with Northumberland County Council for determination. The scheme is fully compliant with both local and national planning policy and there is no overriding planning reason as to why planning permission would not be granted for the development. Floor plans of the proposed development are included at Appendix 1.

- 2.11 As well as retaining the site's most recent care home use, my client's proposal would have the added benefit of increasing housing supply and diversifying the housing mix within the Northumberland County Council administrative area. Given the site's planning history, its sustainable location and the range of significant economic benefits associated with the scheme (as discussed later in this statement), we anticipate that planning permission for the proposed new care home development should be granted in due course.

- 2.12 Funding has been secured and Malhotra Commercial Properties Ltd. are well placed to deliver the proposed development once planning permission is granted.

3.0 Site Context

3.1 My client's land ownership extends to approximately 0.47 ha and currently comprises vacant brownfield land to the south of Ashington Town Centre. The site was previously occupied for many years by the former Essendene Care Home, which was demolished circa 2008. Vehicular access to the site was formerly provided by a now-redundant turning head to the north west corner.

3.2 The site is bound by:

- Open grassed parkland and a surface level car park to the north;
- The railway line to the east;
- A small footpath at the rear of Ashbourne Crescent residential properties to the south; and
- Kenilworth Road to the west, beyond which lies Ashington Cricket Club.

3.3 The site is set out below in Figure 3.1:

Figure 3.1: Client land ownership



Source: Space Architects

3.4 The site's boundaries are well planted with a considerable number of relatively mature trees. The trees on the boundary are considered to provide a feature within the landscape and contribute towards the visual amenity of the site and local area.

3.5 Larger nearby structures which break in scale and form from the dominant residential grain include Wansbeck Square to the north, Ashington Cricket Club pavilion to the north west and Hatchmeadow sheltered housing development to the east.

4.0 The Grounds for Objection

4.1 This Section sets out the reasons why, by reference to guidance published by Network Rail and the office of Rail and Road, accessible travel policies may be achieved without the inclusion of Plots 323 and 324.

4.2 I will also by reference to the Rail Industry Guidance demonstrate that the acquiring authority appear to have miscalculated the car parking requirements for Ashington Station.

Local Planning Policy Context

4.3 Section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 stipulates that planning applications should be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In addition, The National Planning Policy Framework 2021 ('NPPF') sets out at paragraph 48 that local planning authorities may give weight to relevant policies in emerging plans according to:

- The stage of preparation of the emerging plan (the more advanced its preparation, the greater the weight that may be given);
- The extent to which there are unresolved policies (the less significant the unresolved objections, the greater the weight that may be given); and
- The degree of consistency of the relevant policies in the emerging plan to this Framework (the closer the policies in the emerging plan to the policies in the Framework, the greater the weight that may be given).

4.4 In account of the above, the development plan relevant to this TWAO application comprises the following:

- Saved Policies from the Wansbeck District Local Plan ('WDLP') (2007); and
- The Northumberland Local Plan – Publication Draft Plan (Regulation 19) ('NLP') (2019).

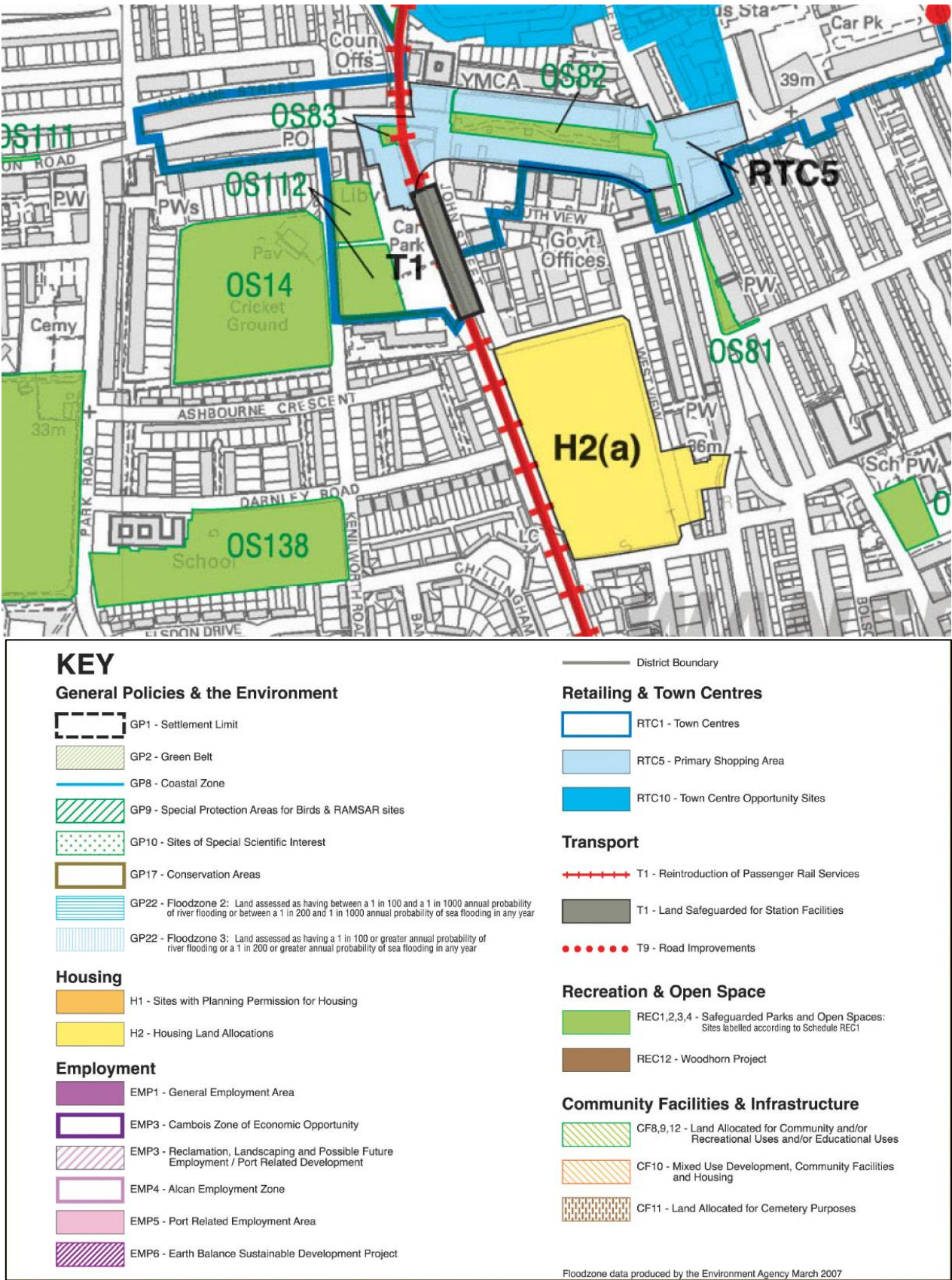
4.5 The following policies are considered particularly relevant to the subject TWAO application:

- **WDLP Policy T1 (Ashington, Blyth and Tyne Rail Line):** *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.*
- **Emerging NLP Policy TRA 5 (The Northumberland Line):** *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, 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.*

4.6 My client's site is neither allocated nor safeguarded for any use associated with the Northumberland Line in either the adopted or emerging statutory development plan.

4.7 To the contrary, my client's land is partly allocated as safeguarded parks and open spaces under WDLP Policy Rec 1, 2, 3, 4 (Recreation and Open Space). Furthermore, the WDLP proposals map only depicts the proposed Ashington station as an allocation under Policy T1 within the track bed and adjacent railway corridor. This is evident in Figure 4.1 below:

Figure 4.1: WDLP Policy T1



Source: Wansbeck District Council

- 4.8 Similarly, emerging NLP Policy TRA 5 only broadly identifies Ashington as one of the locations for proposed stations on the Northumberland Line. The NLP does not safeguard a specific site for the proposed Ashington station, nor any land required for associated facilities such as car parking. With respect to the Northumberland Line, paragraph 9.36 of the NLP sets out the following:
- “Various options are currently being appraised, including station location, service frequency and considering the infrastructure that would be required to support the development and operation of the line. This includes any infrastructure requirements at level crossings to ensure safe operation of the rail network and minimise delay on the surrounding road network. Depending on the outcome of this work, some development may be required within the Green Belt. Subject to the on-going appraisal work and development needs identified, the Council may need to prepare a Development Plan Document to deal specifically with the Northumberland Line.”*
- 4.9 It is my understanding that a Development Plan Document relating to the Northumberland Line is yet to be produced by the Applicant. The above extract from the NLP is included at Appendix 2.
- 4.10 In account of the above, it is clear that my client’s land has not been identified and is not allocated under any current local planning policy for development which will facilitate the delivery of the proposed Ashington Station and its associated car parking. This should not therefore provide a planning impediment to my client’s long-held intention to re-establish a care home use on the site at the earliest opportunity, meeting local housing need and diversifying the housing mix within the Council’s administrative area whilst making effective use of previously developed brownfield land.

Transport Considerations

- 4.11 It is acknowledged that my client has been approached by representatives of the Northumberland Line regarding acquisition of their land holdings. Whilst any discussion regarding acquisition should reflect the true commercial value for the site, it is noted that the Highways General Arrangement Plan (reference: 070001 Rev P05), included at Appendix 3, suggests that land within my client’s ownership is to be used for car parking for the proposed Ashington station, equating to approximately one third of the station’s total parking capacity.
- 4.12 A Transport Assessment (‘TA’) (dated January 2020) was prepared by AECOM to accompany the planning application for the development of the Ashington station. A copy of the TA is included at Appendix 4. The purpose of the TA was to *“provide an independent, comprehensive and systematic review of the transport implications relating to the proposed development”*. The assessment identifies the anticipated transport impacts of the scheme and outlines whether any necessary improvements to accessibility and safety for all modes of travel are required. It is noted that, at the time of writing, the TA does not form part of the Inquiry Core Documents as key evidence.
- 4.13 As set out in paragraph 5.1.4 of the TA, the development is to provide 275 car parking spaces including passenger drop-off/taxi bays. Paragraph 5.3.2 confirms that a demand and revenue forecasting exercise was undertaken to inform the reopening of the railway line to passenger services. This work included forecasting the number of passengers that will use the station and their modal choice, providing an indication as to the level of car parking provision required.
- 4.14 The demand and revenue forecasting exercise confirmed that, based on a worst-case scenario, the maximum number of car parking spaces required for the Ashington Station was 186 no. spaces. These spaces are to be delivered in the location of an existing car park (known locally as

Wilko car park) which comprises 113 no. spaces. This existing car park serves the wider town centre and is acknowledged by the TA as being “*well used*”.

- 4.15 The TA confirms at paragraph 5.3.3 that the existing 113 no. spaces should not be displaced due to the potential implications upon the surrounding highway network. Accordingly, the TA sets out that the proposed development generates an actual requirement of 299 parking spaces; crudely adding the maximum 186 no. required to serve the station itself and the 113 no. to be retained. This theoretically results in a shortfall of 24 spaces relative to the planning application scheme. Paragraph 5.3.4 of the TA confirms:

“It is not possible to accommodate a total of 299 car park spaces within the existing available land with a surface level car park. A decked solution is not desirable due to the cost and the visual intrusion that it might create. The aim of car park design was to provide as many spaces as possible within the land available. A design for the car park has therefore been produced for 275 spaces and therefore does not fully accommodate the 299 spaces required for the demand of the Northumberland Line. This means a shortfall of 24 parking spaces.”

- 4.16 Calculations of the cost of car parking provision is included in the Engineering Justification Paper included at Appendix 5.

- 4.17 It is noted that the Highways General Arrangement Plan (reference: 070001 Rev P05) forms one of the approved plans as set out in Condition 2 of planning permission 21/00387/CCD. It is important to note that this plan indicates that the development will deliver 270 no. parking spaces only. It is therefore important to note that the shortfall of required parking spaces is in fact 29 no. spaces in the approved layout – not 25. This further reduction in the number of spaces provided as part of the development is acknowledged in paragraph 7.12 of the application’s Committee Report which states:

“The application originally proposed that the new car park would include provision for 275 car parking spaces but that 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.”

- 4.18 A copy of the Committee Report is included at Appendix 6.

- 4.19 This statement appears to suggest that some people who would theoretically be travelling to Ashington by car to access the station (in their calculations) would actually use public transport or walk/cycle to the site – which is not reflected in the evidence and appears to be a throw away and unsubstantiated comment to “balance the books”.

- 4.20 Notwithstanding this, it is important to note that the demand and revenue forecast exercise relies upon data which predates the Covid-19 pandemic. There is no demand study prepared post pandemic to corroborate demand from end users for car parking. The assessment is therefore not a true representation of post-Covid-19 parking demand levels and does not reflect the present use of the existing car park. Accordingly, further evidence should have been provided to justify the need for the proposed levels of car parking and to determine whether my client’s land is indeed required to deliver the parking requirements of the development.

- 4.21 The situation is further confused by the ‘Northumberland Line Car Parking Requirements Technical Note’, which was prepared and appended to the TA. A copy of this Technical Note is included at Appendix 7. The technical note sets out as a range that “*Ashington station is estimated to require a car park with between 80 and 180 spaces.*”. This requirement represents

a huge variation of 100 no. spaces and is based on modelling using averaging from stations which are not necessarily comparable with Ashington Station. Indeed, the 'comparable' station at Morpeth used as part of this exercise is in fact a mainline train station with connecting services.

- 4.22 The Technical Note sets out at Page 5 that Blyth Bebside station, which forms one of the six stations to be delivered as part of the Northumberland Line development, is estimated to require between 100 and 200 spaces. However, the Technical Note further sets out that due to its proposed location directly off the A189, Blyth may be attractive for longer distance journeys from origins further north such as Ashington.
- 4.23 In addition, the 270 spaces provided as part of the Ashington Station seeks to re-provide the full extent of 113 no. spaces in the current town centre car park, with no apparent evidence regarding the extent to which the spaces must be provided as part of the station development itself. For example, should the new station be subject to parking charges and/or specialist security arrangements, it is likely that existing users of the car park would instead be displaced to alternative free parking elsewhere within the Town Centre. The contradictions within these assumptions must be explained in order to properly understand whether or not there is a compelling need to acquire my client's site.
- 4.24 I consider that the capacity analysis is flawed and is susceptible to double counting, and does not reflect post-Covid trip levels. I do not consider that sufficient compelling evidence has been provided to support the level of car parking provision on this site to meet the needs of its operation as a station car park.
- 4.25 In my view, the simple addition of the maximum projected car occupancy for the station added to short term parking based on pre-Covid occupancy levels is actually contrary to national and local policy and seeks to actively encourage further car use and parking in Ashington Town Centre. This is only exacerbated by the lack of car parking controls (such as pricing and access and timing restrictions).

Car Parking Management

- 4.26 Upon review of the Highways General Arrangement Plan (reference: 070001 Rev P05), there is no clear indication of how the car park will be managed. The general car park arrangement drawing currently makes no provision for on-site staff facilities, ticket booths or CCTV cameras. I would, therefore, question the security of the car park which will be a clear consideration of users – particularly those leaving cars for their daily commute and returning into the evening.
- 4.27 I note that Condition 21 of the decision notice stipulates that an Operation, Management and Maintenance strategy detailing how the car parking area will be managed is to be submitted prior to the car parking area being made available for public use, however, at the time of writing, there is no evidence in any supporting documents demonstrating any of this detail and no other relevant documentation has been submitted. There is also no indication of car park pricing if this is to be applied.
- 4.28 These matters should be addressed by the Applicant and evidence shared in advance of the inquiry.

Planning Application Reference 20/04423/OUT

- 4.29 My client has advanced proposals for the development of a new purpose-built care home on the application site. A planning application (reference: 20/04423/OUT) was submitted to the Council on 19 February 2021 for the following development:

“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”

- 4.30 This development would not only retain the application site’s most recent care home use but would also have the added benefit of increasing housing supply and diversifying the housing mix within the Council’s administrative area. Given the site’s historic use as a care home, its sustainable location and the live proposal currently under consideration, it is considered that this site is available and eminently suitable in planning terms for the proposed care home use.
- 4.31 The proposed care home development would secure significant local economic benefits including the following:
- Inward investment to the local community of approximately £8.4 million;
 - Supporting 135 direct FTE construction jobs and 160 indirect and induced FTE jobs in the supply chain and related services throughout the one year build period;
 - Delivering an uplift in Gross Value Added (GVA) (economic output) of £17.9 million;
 - Generating 80 direct operational FTE jobs and a further 35 indirect and induced FTE jobs across the wider region (as well as £2.3 million per annum in additional GVA);
 - Providing £1.6 million in wages per annum through the increase in direct employment;
 - Generating additional expenditure in the local area arising from an increase in local residents; and
 - Providing a boost to Local Authority revenue by generating additional Council Tax.
- 4.32 As such, it is my client’s firm position that this site is not available and will be developed for a care home use subject to planning. Nor, in my view, is there any compelling evidence as to why the site is required as a car park in conjunction with the development of the proposed Northumberland Line.
- 4.33 The proposed development of a care home is considered to conform with both local and national planning policy. The development would increase the housing supply and diversify the housing mix within the Ashington area, whilst providing a key facility for the local community.

5.0 Summary and Conclusions

- 5.1 It is clear that my client's land has not been identified and allocated under any current local planning policy for development which will facilitate the delivery of the proposed Ashington Station and its associated car parking. There is no demand study prepared post pandemic to corroborate demand from end users for car parking and the capacity analysis is flawed and is susceptible to double counting.
- 5.2 In addition, there is no submitted evidence which sets out management arrangements for the car park and pricing strategy to ensure that the site is a viable and sustainable proposition. It is therefore clear that the acquiring authority have failed to provide the overwhelming evidence to meet the relevant public interest test.
- 5.3 There is an alternative and live proposition for the site as a care home which is policy compliant, secures local jobs and provides much needed residential accommodation to support those in need of care. In light of the above, Malhotra Commercial Properties Ltd. maintain their fundamental objection to the compulsory purchase order.

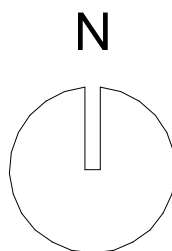
Appendix 1 Planning Application Reference 20/04423/OUT: Floor Plans

Legend				
<div></div>	Accommodation	Bedroom Type	Number of Rooms	Levels
<div></div>	Care Home	Standard	2	Ground
		"oversized" standard	12	Ground
		Premium	12	Ground
		TOTAL	26	
<div></div>		Standard	4	First
		"oversized" standard	16	First
		Premium	12	First
		TOTAL	32	
<div></div>		TOTAL ROOMS	58	
		Standard	0	Ground
		"oversized" standard	6	Ground
		Premium	6	Ground
<div></div>	Specialist Unit	TOTAL	12	
		TOTAL ROOMS	12	



1 Ground Floor Plan (Option 2)

1 : 200



Status	Project Status		
Project	Ashington Care Home		
Drawing	Ground Floor Plan (Option 2)		
Project No.	06860	Dwg. No.	A(00)GAP101
Scale at A1	1 : 200	Drawn	HWV
		Checked	DC

this drawing is copyright - check all dimensions on site - inform architect / so of any discrepancies - work to figured dimensions only - do not scale

space

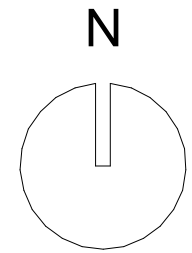
Legend

Accommodation	Bedroom Type	Number of Rooms	Levels
Care Home	Standard	2	Ground
	"oversized" standard	12	Ground
	Premium	12	Ground
	TOTAL	26	
Specialist Unit	Standard	4	First
	"oversized" standard	16	First
	Premium	12	First
	TOTAL	32	
Specialist Unit	Standard	0	Ground
	"oversized" standard	6	Ground
	Premium	6	Ground
	TOTAL	12	
Specialist Unit	Standard	0	Ground
	"oversized" standard	6	Ground
	Premium	6	Ground
	TOTAL	12	
Specialist Unit	Standard	0	Ground
	"oversized" standard	6	Ground
	Premium	6	Ground
	TOTAL	12	



I First Floor Plan (Option 2)

1 : 200



Appendix 2 Northumberland Local Plan: The Northumberland Line Extract

points of conflict to be created on the road and rail networks; and seeks to ensure the impact of development on level crossings is addressed in dealing with relevant planning applications.

- 9.36** The South East Northumberland corridor from the Seaton Valley to Ashington currently does not have rail passenger services. A key priority of the Council is the reintroduction of passenger services on the Northumberland Line (formerly known as the Ashington, Blyth, Tyne Line). This will help facilitate development growth across the South East Delivery Area. The line has significant potential to improve links between the towns, encourage access to employment opportunities, and incentivise employers to locate in South East Northumberland, in addition to its current freight transport role. Significant steps have been made in taking long held aspirations for the line forward. This includes progressing plans through a Network Rail Governance for Railway Investment Projects (GRIP) study and assembling funding bid packages. Various options are currently being appraised, including station location, service frequency and considering the infrastructure that would be required to support the development and operation of the line. This includes any infrastructure requirements at level crossings to ensure safe operation of the rail network and minimise delay on the surrounding road network. Depending on the outcome of this work, some development may be required within the Green Belt. Subject to the on-going appraisal work and development needs identified, the Council may need to prepare a Development Plan Document to deal specifically with the Northumberland Line.
- 9.37** A further opportunity may be available in the long term, to link Ponteland to the Tyne and Wear Metro system. A dismantled railway alignment⁽⁷²⁾ suggests a possibility for extension of the existing Metro network beyond its existing terminus at Newcastle Airport. Such potential would need to be subject to further investigation.
- 9.38** In addition, there is potential for the reopening of other lines and stations across Northumberland, for example:
- The South Tynedale Railway which has potential to link the North Pennines AONB and South Tynedale with the national railway network at Haltwhistle;
 - The Aln Valley Railway, which would not only provide a new visitor attraction but would also open a transport corridor between Alnwick and the East Coast Main Line at Alnmouth;
 - The potential reopening of Belford Station on the East Coast Main Line and Gilsland Station on the Tyne Valley Line.
- 9.39** In order to maximise opportunities for the movement of goods, minerals and waste by rail there is a need to safeguard existing rail freight interchanges in Northumberland. Identified potential includes an additional rail facility near West Sleekburn for the transport of waste. Existing freight facilities at the former Rio Tinto

72 As identified in the Nexus Metro Strategy 2030 Background Information and the North East Combined Authority document "The combined future of Metro and Local Rail in the North East" Background Document.

Appendix 3 Highways General Arrangement Plan (Reference: 070001 Rev Po5)



SAFETY, HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION BOX

IT IS ASSUMED THAT WORKS ON THIS DRAWING WILL BE CARRIED OUT BY A COMPETENT CONTRACTOR WORKING, WHERE APPROPRIATE, TO AN APPROPRIATE METHOD STATEMENT

THIS DRAWING IS TO BE USED ONLY FOR THE PURPOSE OF ISSUE THAT IT WAS ISSUED FOR AND IS SUBJECT TO AMENDMENT

Notes

1. THIS DRAWING IS TO BE READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH ALL OTHER RELEVANT DOCUMENTATION.

2. ALL DIMENSIONS IN MILLIMETERS, UNLESS STATED OTHERWISE. ALL CHAINAGES, LEVELS AND COORDINATES ARE IN METERS, UNLESS STATED OTHERWISE.

3. ALL ROAD WORKS TO BE IN ACCORDANCE WITH MCHW VOLUME 1 SPECIFICATION FOR HIGHWAY WORKS

4. REFER TO CIVILS DRAWINGS REFER TO 60601435-ACM-07-ZZ-DRG-ECV-000002 FOR DETAILS OF STATION PLATFORM

5. FOR TYPICAL CROSS SECTIONS REFER TO DRAWINGS 6060145-ACM-07-ZZ-DRG-EHW-070002 & 070003.

6. FOR PROPOSED DRAINAGE LAYOUT REFER TO DRAWING 6060145-ACM-07-ZZ-DRG-EHW-070006

7. FOR TRAFFIC SIGNS AND ROAD MARKINGS REFER TO DRAWING 6060145-ACM-07-ZZ-DRG-EHW-070004.

8. FOR STREET LIGHTING LAYOUT REFER TO DRAWING 6060145-ACM-07-ZZ-DRG-EPT-000067.

9. FOR LANDSCAPING LAYOUT REFER TO DRAWING 6060145-ACM-XX-ZZ-DRG-EEN-000013.

10. NO. OF CAR PARKING SPACES PROVIDED:
- 233 No. STANDARD
- 18 No. DISABLED (7%)
- 19 No. ELECTRIC VEHICLE (7%)

11. ASSETS EAST OF (AND INCLUDING) THE NETWORK RAIL FENCING ARE TO BE OWNED AND MAINTAINED BY NETWORK RAIL.

Issued for Planning

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Appendix 4 Transport Assessment: Northumberland Line – Ashington


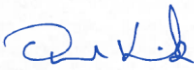


Northumberland Line – Ashington

Transport Assessment

Northumberland County Council

January 2020

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1. Introduction

1.1.1 AECOM is currently working with Northumberland County Council to reintroduce passenger services on the railway line between Ashington and Newcastle. As part of the scheme, five new railway stations will be delivered, with a six station in North Tyneside upgraded to serve both heavy rail and the Tyne and Wear metro. The six stations are as follows:

- Ashington (Northumberland);
- Bedlington (Northumberland);
- Blyth Bebside (Northumberland);
- Newsham (Northumberland);
- Seaton Delaval (Northumberland);
- Northumberland Park (North Tyneside).

1.1.2 The route of the railway line and the proposed stations is shown in Figure 1. The scheme is hereinafter known as the Northumberland Line.

Figure 1. Northumberland Line Scheme



1.2 The Brief

- 1.2.1 AECOM has been commissioned by Northumberland County Council (NCC) to undertake a Transport Assessment (TA) to support a planning application for the construction of a new station with proposed car park at Ashington associated with the above proposals.
- 1.2.2 Each of the six proposed stations within the SEN corridor will be assessed on its own merits. This Transport Assessment will only assess the proposed station at Ashington.
- 1.2.3 The purpose of this TA is to provide an independent, comprehensive and systematic review of the transport implications relating to the proposed development. It identifies the anticipated transport impacts of the scheme and outlines whether any necessary improvements to accessibility and safety for all modes of travel are required.
- 1.2.4 The TA has been prepared in accordance with the Planning Practice Guidance – Travel Plans, Transport Assessments and Statements in Decision Taking (March 2014).
- 1.2.5 A Scoping Report was submitted to Northumberland County Council in April 2020 detailing the proposed methodology for undertaking the Transport Assessment and is attached to this TA as Appendix A. The Assessment has been prepared in accordance with the comments on the Scoping Report provided by NCC in September 2020. A level crossing impact study has also been undertaken and that report should be read as part of the planning application.
- 1.2.6 An outline Construction Environment Management Plan (CEMP) and signage strategy is envisaged to be conditioned as part of the planning decision.

1.3 COVID-19

- 1.3.1 Given the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the ability to collect up to date traffic data on the local highway network that is considered representative of 'normal' operating conditions, AECOM proposed assessing the potential traffic impact on the local highway network using historical data sources. This approach was agreed during scoping discussions with NCC.
- 1.3.2 Where no historical data exists, it has been agreed during scoping with NCC that some junction assessments will not be undertaken at this time.

1.4 Report Structure

- 1.4.1 The report from here on follows the following structure:
 - **Section 2** – Provides context for the development in relation to relevant policies and guidelines;
 - **Section 3** – Examines the existing highway conditions surrounding the proposed station;
 - **Section 4** – Examines the accessibility by sustainable transport;
 - **Section 5** – Provides details of the proposed development;
 - **Section 6** – Determines the Trip Generation and Distribution at the Site;
 - **Section 7** – Assesses the Impact on the surrounding highway network as a result of the proposed development;
 - **Section 8** – Considers recent accident data in relation to the site; and
 - **Section 9** – Provides a concise summary and conclusion.

2. Policy

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 This Chapter will consider transport-related policy and guidance, as set out in the following documents:

- The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF);
- Transport White Paper: The Future of Transport - A Network for 2030;
- Transport for the North – Strategic Development Corridors;
- The Local Transport Plan (LTP3);
- Northumberland Local Plan
- Northumberland County Council – Economic Strategy; and
- Nexus Metro and Local Rail Strategy;

2.2 National Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

- 2.2.1 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.
- 2.2.2 The NPPF is based on a range of core planning principles, which are aimed at supporting the focus on sustainable plan-led development.
- 2.2.3 Transport specific policies play a key role in supporting and achieving the core planning principles and are intrinsically linked to the objective of sustainable development. The NPPF specifically states that development should only be prevented or refused on transport grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety or where the residual cumulative impacts of development are severe.
- 2.2.4 The NPPF seeks to encourage solutions to support reductions in gas emissions and reducing congestion which should be enshrined in Local Plans, including:
- Supporting key interchange facilities;
 - Provision of viable infrastructure to support sustainable development (e.g. electric charging points);
 - Prioritise sustainable modes of transport and support development with good access to public transport;
 - Provide a balanced land-use approach encouraging mixed use development which reduce the need to travel; and
 - Create attractive town centre environments which are supported by appropriate car parking charging mechanisms.
- 2.2.5 Paragraph 108 of the NPPF also states that whilst assessing applications for development, it should be ensured that:
- appropriate opportunities to promote sustainable transport modes can be – or have been – taken up, given the type of development and its location;
 - safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all users; and
 - any significant impacts from the development on the transport network (in terms of capacity and congestion), or on highway safety, can be cost effectively mitigated to an acceptable degree.
- 2.2.6 Paragraph 106 of the NPPF refers to parking standards and states that:
- “Maximum parking standards for residential and non-residential development 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 city and town centres and other locations that are well*

served by public transport (in accordance with chapter 11 of the Framework). In town centres, local authorities should seek to improve the quality of parking so that it is convenient, safe and secure, alongside measures to promote accessibility for pedestrians and cyclists."

- 2.2.7 In this respect, there should be no limit on the number of spaces provided at each of the stations unless the increased traffic around the station would impact on the performance of the highway network or where there is a case for optimising the density of development at town centre locations.
- 2.2.8 The core planning principles above provide a framework to provide inclusive, accessible, well connected and sustainable development.

Transport White Paper: The Future of Transport - A Network for 2030

- 2.2.9 The Government's vision for a sustainable local transport system is set out in the January 2011 Transport White Paper: "Creating Growth, Cutting Carbon – Making Sustainable local Transport Happen."
- 2.2.10 The White Paper acknowledges that transport provision is essential for economic growth if the Government is to improve the economic deficit which it is currently facing. However, the Paper also recognises, that the current levels of carbon emissions from transport cannot be sustained if the nation is to meet its national commitments on climate change as well as creating a safer and cleaner environment in which to live. With this in mind, the Government highlights sustainable transport solutions as a means by which the economy can grow which will also see a positive impact on the local environment.
- 2.2.11 The Transport White Paper highlights how local authorities are free to set their own parking policy and charges for the local area. Local authorities are encouraged to provide electric charging points in car parks.
- 2.2.12 In respect to the Northumberland Line, the aim is to restore a rail line to reach a wider area which currently has poor public transport facilities.

Transport for the North (TfN) Strategic Development Corridors

- 2.2.13 TfN has recently published a multi-modal, long-term Strategic Transport Plan for the North of England. The objective is to connect the key economic areas of the North to drive growth, improve access to jobs and ensure the North is a great place to invest and live. The Plan aims to inform how the Government, Network Rail, Highways England and HS2 Ltd work with TfN to deliver investment in transport infrastructure.
- 2.2.14 Seven broad corridors of opportunity have been identified. Each corridor represents an area where evidence suggests investment in transport infrastructure will enable transformational economic growth. The proposals for improvements in the Strategic Development Corridors will consider the needs of people and business and align with local transport investment.
- 2.2.15 'Connecting the Energy Coasts' is one such corridor aimed at:

Improving connectivity between some of the UK's important non-carbon energy advanced manufacturing, research assets, and economic centres in Cumbria, Lancashire, North Yorkshire, the North East and Tees valley.

Transport investment within this corridor could also unlock employment, supply chain and housing opportunities as part of the Government's Industrial Strategy... Poor transport infrastructure is currently a key constraint to securing this potential investment. Improving transport links within this corridor would also support growth in the tourism and leisure industry.
- 2.2.16 This is particularly pertinent to the industries evolving around the Blyth Estuary and Energy Central. The aim for this corridor is to better connect people and goods between energy and research assets along the North West and North East coastlines and the national road and rail networks, to provide a more resilient East-West route across the North of England. In policy terms, the strategic development corridors support all of the more local policy documents summarised elsewhere in this assessment.

2.3 Local Policy

The Local Transport Plan (LTP3)

- 2.3.1 The Third Local Transport Plan for Northumberland (LTP3) is the statutory transport plan for the Northumberland and sets out the overall vision and objectives for the period 2011-2026. The proposed car park will operate in line with LTP3 in supporting the growth of local economy, enhance accessibility to the town centre and promote low carbon initiatives by providing electric vehicle charging bays.
- 2.3.2 The LTP's vision for the 15-year period is as follows: "To make Northumberland a place that is resilient for the future."
- 2.3.3 The vision is underpinned by the following five objectives:
- Economy;
 - Low Carbon;
 - Accessibility;
 - Health and Safety; and
 - Quality of Life.
- 2.3.4 A Regional Transport Plan is currently under development following the broad vision set out in the NECA One Journey, a 20-year transport manifesto for the North East. The governance changes recently will still enable the North of Tyne Combined Mayoral Authority to help develop and advise the regional transport strategy, ensuring it is fit for purpose for the agenda of the newly formed combined authority.

Northumberland Local Plan

- 2.3.5 The Local Plan set out policies to provide the needs for Northumberland for a 20-year period through to 2036. The Local Plan is currently is currently being examined and is therefore at an advanced stage of preparation.
- 2.3.6 The Local Plan for Northumberland sets out policies to provide the needs for Northumberland for a 20 year period through to 2036. One of the key strategic objectives of this plan is to improve connectivity and movement in order to meet the changing needs of people and places. This will be achieved by utilising existing infrastructure and securing the delivery of new and necessary infrastructure upgrades. The Northumberland Line scheme will make a big contribution to delivering this objective.
- 2.3.7 Given the nature of the Northumberland Line scheme, no minimum or maximum parking standards are provided by NCC in the Local Plan. However, the Plan states that the following should be taken into consideration:
- The road safety and environmental problems as a result of increased parking demand in the area; and
 - The impact on any parking restrictions, or lack of, in force on highways in the area.
- 2.3.8 Policy TRA 1 Promoting Sustainable Connection (Strategic Policy) states that the Council will support the 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 transport assessments/transport statements, and travel plans, and where appropriate delivery/servicing plans.
- 2.3.9 Policy TRA 2 The effects of development on the transport network states that all developments affecting the transport network will be required to:
- Provide effective and safe access and egress to the existing transport network;
 - Include appropriate measures to mitigate and manage any adverse impacts on the transport network including any contribution to cumulative impacts;
 - Minimise conflict between different modes of transport, including measures for network, traffic and parking management;
 - Facilitate the safe use of the network, including suitable crossing points, footways and dedicated provision for cyclists where necessary;
 - Suitably accommodate the delivery of goods and supplies, access for maintenance and refuse collection; and
 - Minimise any adverse impact on communities and the environment, including noise and air quality.
- 2.3.10 Policy TRA 5 focuses on securing the re-introduction of passenger services along the Northumberland Line. A key priority of the Council is the reintroduction of passenger services on the Northumberland Line. This will help facilitate development growth across the South East Delivery Area. The line has significant potential to improve links between the towns, encourage access to employment opportunities, and incentivise employers to locate in South East Northumberland, in addition to its current freight transport role.
- 2.3.11 The following sites for stations have been identified within the Policy TRA 5 and land will be safeguarded at the following locations:
- Woodhorn;
 - Ashington;
 - Bedlington Station;
 - Blyth Bebside;
 - South Newsham;
 - Seaton Delaval; and
 - Seghill (future phase)
- 2.3.12 This transport assessment will set out the proposals and suitability of the site for future development of the area and detail level of car parking required.

Northumberland County Council – Economic Strategy

- 2.3.13 NCC's economic strategy sets out two priorities for transport:
- Ensuring that Northumberland is well connected into the regional economy, with the best possible intra-regional connectivity and external connections via national and international road, rail and air routes;
 - Improving transport and infrastructure within Northumberland and the Region.
- 2.3.14 The economic strategy cites the reopening of the Northumberland Line to passenger services as a core project within Northumberland due to the catalytic effects it could have for other development. A strategic growth corridor is being promoted alongside the Northumberland Line and significant investment and regeneration is ongoing in Ashington town centre.

- 2.3.15 The strategy also recognises that the scheme will provide improved access to Tyne and Wear, which will allow local residents to access additional opportunities. The need to enhance economic growth in Northumberland, and provide improved connectivity to opportunities in neighbouring areas, is further emphasised when considering the proposals set out in the Northumberland Local Plan.
- 2.3.16 The Plan sets out the strategic planning policies for the County and makes provision for 17,700+ new homes in Northumberland between 2016 and 2036. The strategy acknowledges that the provision of new transport infrastructure will be essential to achieving these growth aspirations.

Nexus Metro and Local Rail Strategy, 2016

- 2.3.17 A new Metro and Local Rail Strategy was developed 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 underused and disused railway assets and alignments across the region.
- 2.3.18 The objectives of the Metro and Local Rail Strategy are:
- To provide reliable, accessible and comfortable Metro and Local Rail services with high levels of customer satisfaction within available resources;
 - To grow the Metro and Local Rail network and their modal share as part of an integrated public transport network; and
 - To achieve value for money.
- 2.3.19 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.

2.4 Summary

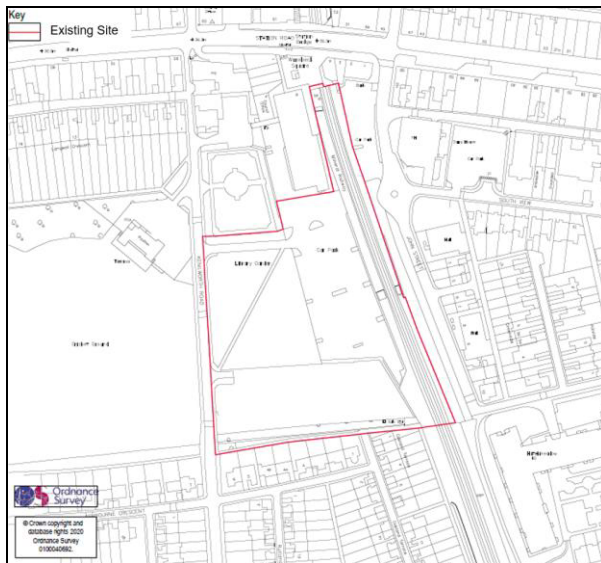
- 2.4.1 It is considered that the proposed development will operate in a manner in keeping with the overarching objectives of the Northumberland Local Plan and NPPF in terms of supporting local economic growth as well as ensuring the site is accessible with suitable level of parking.

3. Existing Highway Conditions

3.1 Introduction

- 3.1.1 This section describes existing land uses and highway conditions both at and within the vicinity of the proposed station. The proposed station location is adjacent to Kenilworth Road and Station Yard car park.
- 3.1.2 The site is currently partially occupied by Station Yard car park which is to be expanded south into an existing field, and west into an existing green space area east of Kenilworth Road. The site is accessed via a priority T-junction at Kenilworth Road which serves as an access to the existing car park, which will also be utilised as a vehicular access to the proposed station. The existing site is shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Existing Site



Source: AECOM (Drawing Ref: 60601435-ACM-XX-ZZ-DRG-LEP-000015)

3.2 Surrounding Highway Network

- 3.2.1 Figure 3 shows the location of the proposed station in relation to the surrounding local road network (LRN).

Figure 3. Surrounding Local Road Network



Source: Googlemaps, 2020

3.2.2 The Local Road network described in this section, consists of:

- Kenilworth Road;
- Green Lane;
- Station Road; and
- A196 North Seaton Road.

Kenilworth Road

3.2.3 Kenilworth Road is subject to 20mph speed limit and runs in a north-south direction between Station Road and Green Lane. To the north, the carriageway operates a one-way system for approximately 75m running south from Station Road, beyond which it becomes a two-way carriageway. The carriageway is subject to traffic calming measures including road humps and chicanes consisting of road narrowing, with northbound traffic giving way to southbound traffic as shown in Figure 4.

Figure 4. Traffic Calming Measures at Kenilworth Road



Source: Google Maps, 2020

- 3.2.4 Towards the northern section of the carriageway, it is subject to a traffic regulation order of no stopping at any time which is indicated on-ground by double yellow lines.
- 3.2.5 Footways and street lighting are present on both sides of the carriageway throughout its duration. Uncontrolled pedestrian crossings consisting of lowered kerbs are accommodated at various points of the carriageway.
- 3.2.6 Kenilworth Road provides access to Station Yard car park via a priority T-junction, no footways are provided along the duration of the access road into the car park however, a pedestrian link is provided across the open greenfield space provided to the west of the car park, feeding into the footway provided to the east of the carriageway, as shown in Figure 5. At the entrance to the car park where it forms a T-junction with Kenilworth Road, there is a “no motor vehicles” sign present, also shown in Figure 5 on the right.

Figure 5. Station Yard Car Park Access Priority T-junction



Source: Google Maps, 2020

Green Lane

- 3.2.7 Green Lane is a two-way single carriageway subject to 20mph speed limit. To the east, the carriageway feeds into the A196 North Seaton Road via a signalised T-junction with pedestrian crossing present at each arm which also include lowered kerbs and tactile paving.
- 3.2.8 There are traffic calming measures present consisting of speed bumps and on-road “20” speed limit and “slow” markings.
- 3.2.9 Approximately 90m west from its junction with the A196, an automatic half barrier level crossing is present with yellow junction box and level crossing lights. The crossing is protected by barriers on the approaching carriageways only as shown in Figure 6.

Figure 6. Station Yard Car Park Access Priority T-junction



Source: Google Maps, 2020

- 3.2.10 Uncontrolled pedestrian crossings are provided at various locations throughout the duration of the carriageway consisting of lowered kerbs and pedestrian refuge island. At the point where the Kenilworth Road forms a junction with Green Lane a crossing is provided on each side of the junction as shown in Figure 7.

Figure 7. Uncontrolled Pedestrian Crossing at Green Lane



Source: Google Maps, 2020

- 3.2.11 For the majority of the length of Green Lane a footway is provided on both sides of the carriageway; within proximity of the level crossing, a footway is only provided to the east of the carriageway.

Station Road

- 3.2.12 Station Road is a two-way single carriageway subject to 20mph speed limit. The frontages along the carriageway are predominantly a mixture of retail and residential units. The carriageway runs in a west – east direction, running between Booths Road and the A196 North Seaton Road.
- 3.2.13 At the point where Station Roads meets the A196 North Seaton Road, the carriageway is subject to one-way operation for approximately 205m, only allowing westbound travel (from the junction of Station Road with the A196). No entry signs are present at the end of the one-way system as shown in Figure 8.

Figure 8. Uncontrolled Pedestrian Crossing at Green Lane



Source: Google Maps, 2020

- 3.2.14 Within the one-way system, a number of parking bays are present on the south side of the carriageway which are subject to operation times from 8am to 6pm, allowing parking for 30min and no return within 2 hours. Through this section of the carriageway, footways measure approximately 2.7m, accommodating street furniture consisting of benches and planting.
- 3.2.15 The carriageway accommodates a number of pedestrian crossings including signalised crossings, uncontrolled pedestrian crossings consisting of lowered kerbs and tactile paving as well as zebra crossings which also include a pedestrian refuge island.

- 3.2.16 At the point where Station Road becomes a two-way single carriageway, a number of parking bays are provided at various locations throughout the length of the carriageway which offer 2-hour free parking from 8am until 6pm, Monday to Saturday with no return for 2 hours.
- 3.2.17 There are also two taxi ranks present, one to the north and south of the carriageway, respectively. A number of bus stops are also accommodated.

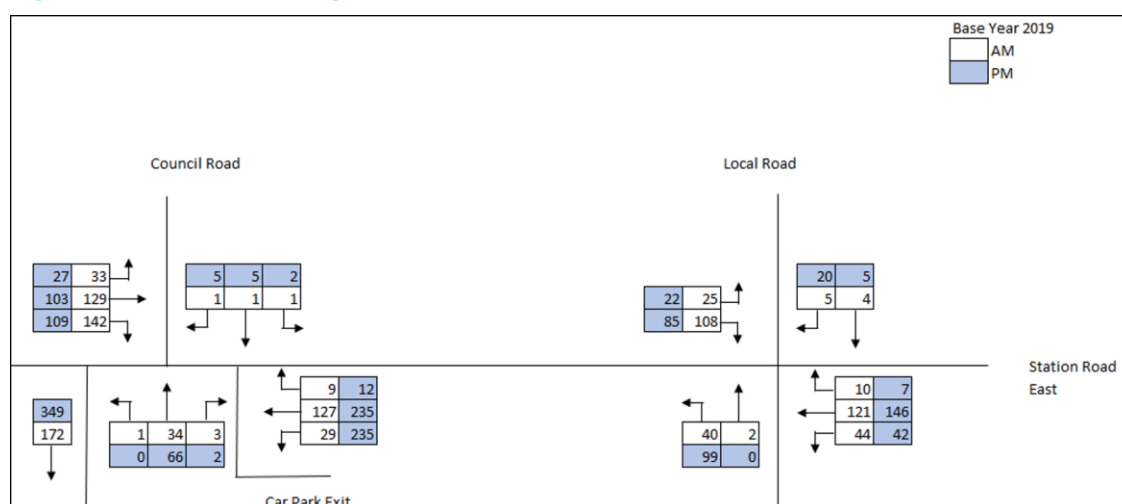
A196 North Seaton Road

- 3.2.18 The A196 North Seaton Road runs in a north – south direction for approximately 9.7km between Morpeth and Ashington. Within close proximity of the site it is a two-way single carriageway subject to 30mph speed limit, street lighting is provided on both sides of the carriageway. The A196 North Seaton Road accommodates a number of signalised and uncontrolled pedestrian crossings consisting of lowered kerbs and tactile paving. Pedestrian guardrails are present in close proximity of the signalised crossings.
- 3.2.19 There are a number of parking bays present in addition to a taxi rank.

3.3 Baseline Traffic Flows

- 3.3.1 As part of establishing the existing condition and developing a robust baseline for assessment, a data collection exercise has been undertaken to establish current traffic flows on the network. AECOM utilised existing available data for the area, using Manual Classified Count (MCC) previously conducted by MHC in May 2019 on behalf of AECOM at Station Road / John Street T-junction and Station Road / Kenilworth Road / Council Road crossroads.
- 3.3.2 The MCC was conducted on Tuesday 21st of May 2019 for a duration of 12 hours between 07:00 and 19:00. The MCC revealed that 08:30 – 09:30 was the AM peak and 16:45 – 17:45 was recorded as PM peak. Baseline data is shown in Figure 9. Traffic Flow Diagrams are attached to this TA as Appendix B.

Figure 9. Baseline Flow Diagram



- 3.3.3 The MCC recorded that during the AM Peak there were 127 Passenger Car Unit (PCU) travelling westbound and 129 PCU eastbound along Station Road at its junction with Council Road. During the PM peak, there were 235 PCU travelling westbound and 103 PCU eastbound.
- 3.3.4 The MCC also revealed that during the AM Peak there were 172 PCU travelling southbound along Kenilworth Road. During the PM peak, there were 349 PCU travelling southbound.

Baseline Traffic Flows Background

- 3.3.5 AECOM commissioned MCC and Queue surveys in order to inform the Grip 3 (optioneering) phase of the station design. The intention was to update these surveys prior to the preliminary design phase. As previously mentioned, the impact of COVID-19 meant that this was no longer possible, as such, in

agreement with NCC these surveys were utilised as part of the historic data set to establish the 2019 baseline flows. It is important to note that these surveys were carried out in 2019 during a neutral month and day and are therefore considered acceptable to use in establishing the 2019 baseline. The surveys were intended to be updated post optioneering primarily to address any shortfalls in count locations, however, these surveys are considered to be robust. The JTC and queue data can be found in the Appendix C.

3.4 Summary

- 3.4.1 This section has provided an overview of nearby local roads that will provide access to the proposed station.

4. Sustainable Access to the Site

4.1 Introduction

- 4.1.1 This sub-section summarises the accessibility to the proposed station, demonstrating the accessibility and connectivity of the site.

4.2 Pedestrian Connectivity

- 4.2.1 A distance of 2km is regarded as the preferred maximum acceptable walking distance for pedestrians without mobility impairments for some common facilities. The report 'Providing for Journeys on Foot', by the Institute of Highways and Transportation (CIHT) dated 2000 includes the preferred walking distances shown in Table 1.

Table 1. CIHT Walking Distance Guidance

CIHT Standard	Town Centres	Commuting/ School	Elsewhere
Desirable	200m	500m	400m
Acceptable	400m	1km	800m
Preferred Maximum	800m	2km	1.2km

Source: *Providing for Journeys on Foot. CIHT, 2000*

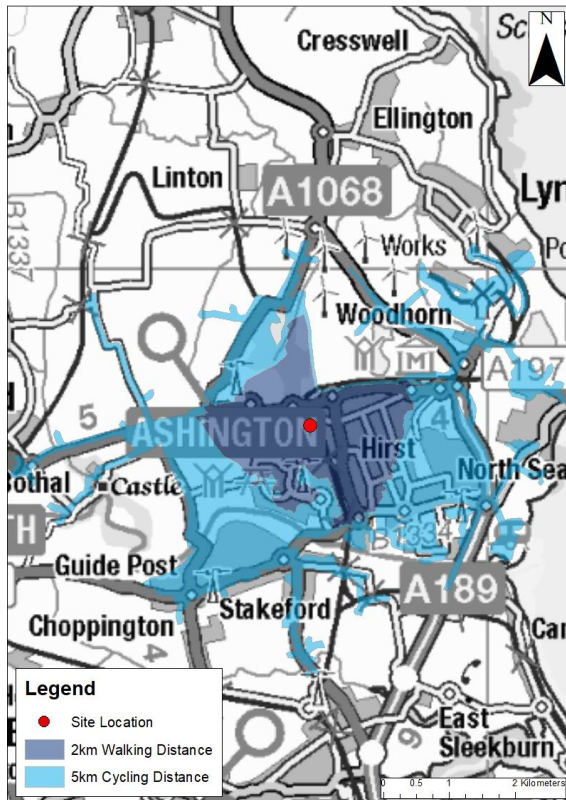
- 4.2.2 Table 1 illustrates that 2km is regarded as the preferred maximum acceptable walking distance for pedestrians for some common facilities such as commuting to work or school.
- 4.2.3 Table 2 summaries the approximate walking distance to a number of key local facilities within the vicinity of the proposed station, from the approximate centre of the site.

Table 2: Desirable Walking Distance

Facility	Walking Distance	Within 2km
Pubs and Restaurants	400m – 1.4km	Yes
Retail outlets	300m – 2km	Yes
Core retail area	500m	Yes

- 4.2.4 The area surrounding the proposed station has reasonable pedestrian links which are well lit, providing accessibility to local residential areas and local amenities. Existing access from the site to Station Street and east to Ashington centre can be made either via Kenilworth Road, or an existing pedestrian ramp leading to Wansbeck Square.
- 4.2.5 The proposed station is easily accessible to nearby residential areas which fall within 2km walking distance including residential streets accessed from Kenilworth Road as well as residential area bound by Booths Road to the west, Rotary Parkway to the north and Asda Supermarket to the east.
- 4.2.6 A controlled pedestrian crossing can be found 140m north of the existing access at Kenilworth Road / Station Road junction, this provides a safe crossing towards residential and retail areas within walking distance of the proposed station. There is a good provision of uncontrolled pedestrian crossings throughout the duration of Kenilworth Road and nearby residential roads.
- 4.2.7 The proposed station is within an acceptable walking distance of a wide variety of local amenities located along Station Road which is approximately 3-minute walk (210m) from the centre of the site.
- 4.2.8 Figure 10, shows the 2km walking and 5km cycling isochrones, demonstrating that the site is well within the maximum walking distance to the town centre and retail units located along Station Road and the A196 North Seaton Road.

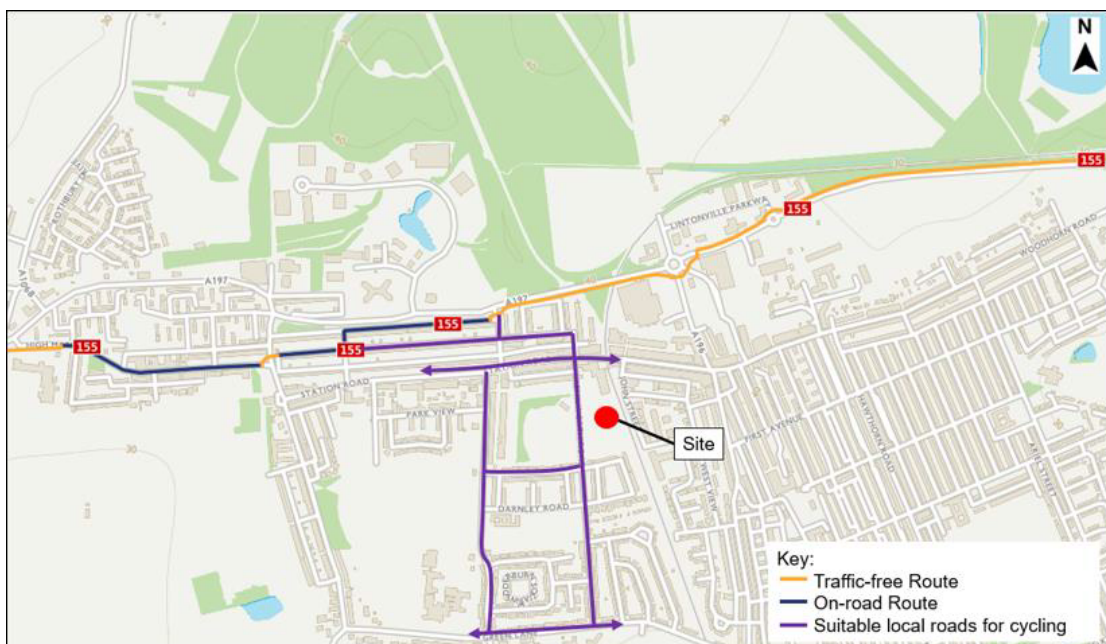
Figure 10. Walking and Cycling Isochrones



4.3 Local Cycle Network

- 4.3.1 Current planning guidance published by Sustrans and the National Travel Survey state that cycling has the potential to substitute short car trips, particularly those less than 5km and has the potential to cater for many more trips than current levels. Cycle use is considered a feasible means of transport over short to medium distances. As previously shown in Figure 11, majority of the residential areas are within Ashington's 5km cycling distance. Cycling network within close proximity of the site is shown in Figure 11.

Figure 11. Cycling Network



Source: Sustrans, 2020

- 4.3.2 A cycle route is provided to the north of the A197, known as route 155 of the National Cycle Network between Morpeth and Newbiggin by the Sea. The route is a combination of on-road and traffic-free provision and links in with a number of traffic-free local routes. Route 155 provides an opportunity to reach the station via cycling from residential areas of Ashington.
- 4.3.3 A number of surrounding local roads have been identified as suitable for more confident and experienced cyclists to reach Route 155 as well as residential and retail areas as shown in Figure 11. The local road identified as suitable for commuting purposes are subject to 20mph speed limit and speed calming measures therefore, encouraging low speeds and cycling.

4.4 Public Transport Connection

- 4.4.1 The bus is generally considered a viable mode of travel over short and medium distances although some routes and services with limited stops can make longer distances viable. The CIHT in their document 'Planning for Public Transport in Developments' (1999) advises that bus stops should be located within 400m of a development for ease of accessibility.
- 4.4.2 The proposed station is located approximately 750m from Ashington Bus Station to the east. As discussed in Section 4.2.4 an accessible route to central Ashington including this location is to be developed as part of the station proposals. It is anticipated that the presence of the rail station would ensure operators take advantage of the existing bus stop located along Station Road, approximately 250m from the centre of the site as shown in Figure 12. Currently, whilst the bus infrastructure is present at these locations, there are no active bus services using them.
- 4.4.3 Further two operational bus stops are located to the west of the Station Road, approximately 450m from the centre of the site.

Figure 12. Bus Stop Locations



- 4.4.4 A bus stop on the northern side of the carriageway along Station Road is provided with a shelter and timetable. Bus cages are present at both bus stops, with westbound services stopping on the main carriageway. The northern bus stop accommodates an inset bus layby. Both bus stops offer regular services to Morpeth and Bedlington. Table 3 provides summary of existing bus services.

Table 3. Existing Bus Services

Service	Route	Approximate Frequency	
		Monday - Fridays	Weekends
35	Woodhorn Church – Newbiggin by the Sea	Every 20 min	Every hour
434	Linton – Bedlington Station via Ashington	Every hour	Every hour*

*No service on Sunday

- 4.4.5 The 35 operates from 06:23 until 18:17 on weekdays meanwhile 434 operates from 09:26 until 14:21. It is reasonable to assume that these services will have some attractiveness to commuters to reach residential areas and shopping area of Ashington as an alternative to walking and cycling.

4.5 Summary

- 4.5.1 This section also demonstrates that the proposed station is well connected to local pedestrian and cycling network and is within acceptable walking distance to greater majority of Ashington.

5. Development Proposals

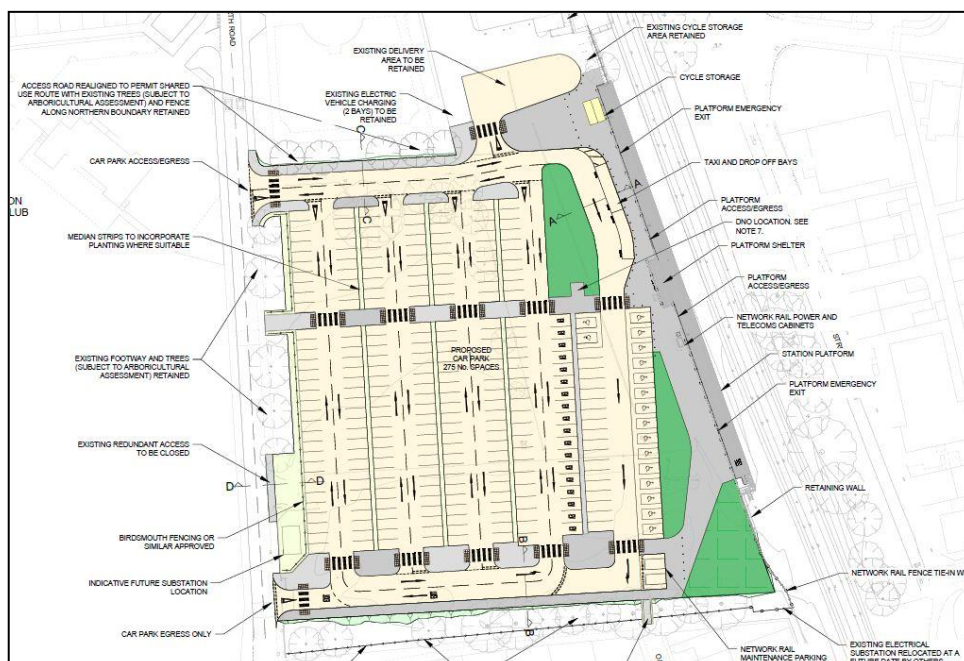
5.1 Introduction

- 5.1.1 This Section sets out the development proposals from NCC for the construction of a new station with proposed car park at Ashington associated with the proposed re-introduction of the Northumberland Line scheme.
- 5.1.2 The proposed station and re-introduction of the passenger services on Northumberland Line will offer a real alternative for commuting into Ashington and Newcastle as well as providing opportunities to travel further afield.
- 5.1.3 The route between Newcastle and Ashington station is 30 km in length. The first 6.8 km between Newcastle and Benton North Junction are part of the East Coast Main Line (ECML). The route between Benton North Junction and Ashington is cleared for passenger services (modern Diesel Multiple Unit (DMU)) as far as Bedlington North Junction only. The route has 10 timetabled freight services in each direction per weekday operating from the south serving Lynemouth and Port of Blyth and 1 movement per day between Blyth and Fort William running via Morpeth.
- 5.1.4 Bedlington station will operate two trains per hour. Newcastle Central can be reached within 30 minutes and the station will enhance the existing network and will provide the following:
- New station with ancillary uses;
 - 275 space car park;
 - Taxi / and passenger drop off areas;
 - A rail footbridge with accessible lifts; and
 - Upgrading the existing access road and junction.

5.2 Proposed Station

- 5.2.1 The proposed station will provide a car park which will also accommodate a passenger drop-off / taxi bays. Figure 13 shows the proposed station layout, the indicative layout can be seen in more detail in Appendix D.

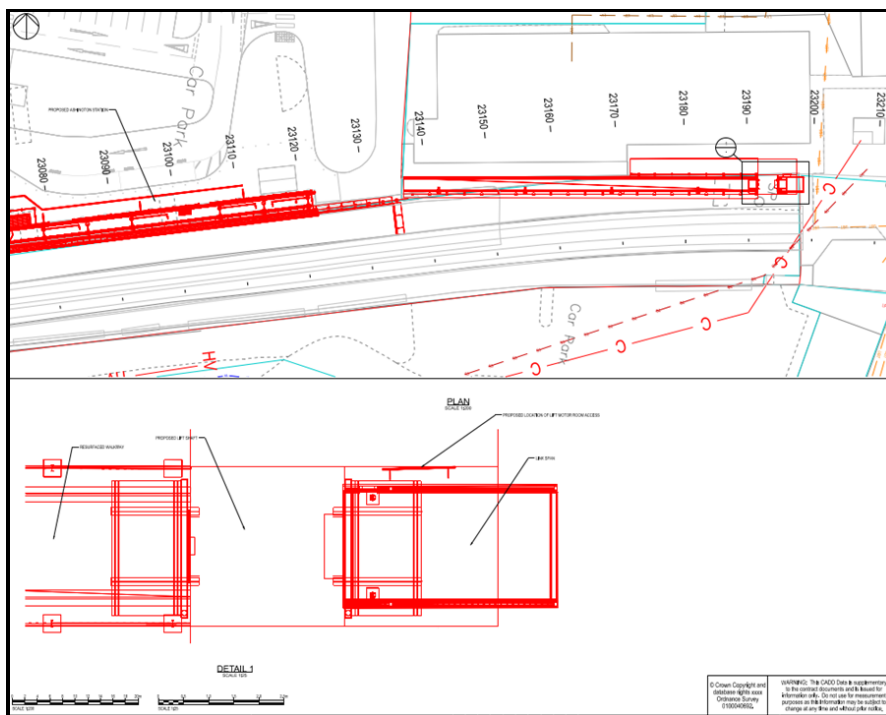
Figure 13. Proposed Station Indicative Layout



Source: AECOM, Drawing No. 60601435-ACM-07-ZZ-DRG-EHW-070001

- 5.2.2 Shelters will be provided at both platforms along with up to date timetables. Adequate signage will be provided for pedestrians and cyclists movements as well as vehicular traffic. Signage will be provided to amenities within the station such as lift and stairs.
- 5.2.3 The lift will be located to the north-east of the car park, it will provide an accessible pedestrian route to John Street to the east, enabling connectivity between the station and central Ashington via Station Road. The proposed lift is shown in Figure 14 and can be seen in more detail in Appendix D.

Figure 14. Proposed Lift



Source: AECOM, Drawing No. 60601435-ACM-07-ZZ-DRG-EST-001305 /P01.1

5.3 Proposed Car Park

- 5.3.1 Given the nature of the Northumberland Line scheme, no minimum or maximum parking standards are provided by NCC in the Local Plan. However, the Plan states that the following should be taken into consideration:
- The road safety and environmental problems as a result of increased parking demand in the area; and
 - The impact on any parking restrictions, or lack of, in force on highways in the area
- 5.3.2 AECOM has undertaken a demand and revenue forecasting to inform the reopening of the railway line to passenger services. This work included forecasting the number of passengers that will use each station and their mode choice in accessing each station. This provides an indication as to the level of car parking provision that is needed at each station. However, when making a decision around the size of car parks, local factors should be considered such as, policy objectives and development aspirations. The level of car parking provision appropriate at each station was calculated within the 'Northumberland Line Car Parking Requirements' Technical Note attached in Appendix E. The purpose of the technical note was to discuss the requirements for car parking at each new station and draw some conclusions as to the number of spaces that should be provided.
- 5.3.3 Based on a worst-case scenario the outputs from the demand forecasting state that, the maximum number of car park spaces required for this station is 186. It is proposed that the car park for Ashington Station is located on the site of an existing car park, which serves the town centre. The existing car park (known locally as Wilko car park) has 113 spaces and is well used. To ensure that this car park demand is not displaced, which could have implications on the performance of the highway network, the number

of car parking spaces at the proposed station was determined to be 299 which includes the existing car park spaces (113 spaces) and worst-case scenario output (186 spaces).

- 5.3.4 It is not possible to accommodate a total of 299 car park spaces within the existing available land with a surface level car park. A decked solution is not desirable due to the cost and the visual intrusion that it might create. The aim of car park design was to provide as many spaces as possible within the land available. A design for the car park has therefore been produced for 275 spaces and therefore does not fully accommodate the 299 spaces required for the demand for the Northumberland Line. This means a shortfall of 24 parking spaces.
- 5.3.5 However, as the proposed Ashington Station is located in the centre of Ashington and should be accessible by sustainable modes of transport (as stated in Section 4). It is recognised however, that public transport links to the station could be improved to compliment the benefits of the Northumberland Line. Given that the proposed car park will have a deficit of 24 spaces which cannot be accommodated within the available land, improved public transport links should help address any shortfall in supply of car park spaces.
- 5.3.6 Northumberland County Council will work with public transport providers to improve bus links to the proposed Ashington Station.
- 5.3.7 Following design development, the station and car park layout accommodates 275 spaces, including 17 accessible spaces (6%) and 18 EV charging bays (6.5%). The car park will operate a one-way circulatory system within the drop-off and accessible parking areas with two-way access to the other parking bays. Pedestrian footways are proposed within the car park including uncontrolled pedestrian crossings consisting of lowered kerbs to provide a safe pedestrian route towards the station. Cycle parking will be provided.

5.4 Proposed Access

- 5.4.1 The station proposals include a revised priority junction on Kenilworth road designed in line with DMRB standards, Manual for Streets 2 and NCC design standards.
- 5.4.2 Pedestrian connections will be provided to both sides of the access road, connecting with the existing pedestrian network along Kenilworth Road, the car park and platforms.
- 5.4.3 Access to the station car park will be provided via a new 2.0m wide unobstructed walking route adjacent to the platform. The current proposals include an accessible lift, to be located adjacent to the existing footbridge structure which would be a minimum Type 2 in accordance BS EN 81-70: 2018 meeting the requirements set out in Commission Regulation (EU) No. 1300/2014. A section of the existing footbridge parapet will be removed to accommodate pedestrian access to the lift directly from Wansbeck Square from the station platform.

6. Trip Generation and Distribution

6.1 Introduction

- 6.1.1 This Section of the report provides an assessment of the likely trip rate associated with the proposed station, based on the spreadsheet model developed by AECOM (and described in section 6.4 below).

6.2 Traffic Growth

- 6.2.1 Traffic growth factors have been obtained from TEMPro software. The use of TEMPro v7.2 software is generally recognised as the industry standard tool for determining traffic growth factors to apply to base flows in order to estimate future year traffic flows.
- 6.2.2 The local growth factors to be applied to the 2019 Base Flows are shown in Table 4. The TEMPro data is included in Appendix F.

Table 4. TEMPro Growth Factors

	AM Peak	PM Peak
2019 – 2039	1.12855	1.1201

6.3 Committed Developments

- 6.3.1 As agreed in the Scoping Note, Table 5 details the committed developments which have been included within the assessment.

Table 5. Ashington Station Committed Developments

Proposed Site	Size of Development Dwellings or HA	TA Available?
00/00009/REMA Seaton Vale, Land at Summerhouse Lane	622 dwellings	No
11/02572/OUT Land to the South East of Wansbeck General Hospital	97 dwellings	Yes (TS)
16/02432/OUT Land to the West, A189 between N.Seaton Road and Woodhorn roundabout. Proposed Housing Growth Point	Up to 600 dwellings	Yes
16/04348/OUT Land at North Seaton (North phase)	up to 200 dwellings	Yes
17/02323/OUT Former Alcan Site	c. 121,000sqm B1(c), B2, B8 and ancillary	
00/00009/REMA Seaton Vale, Land at Summerhouse Lane	622 dwellings	No
11/02572/OUT Land to the South East of Wansbeck General Hospital	97 dwellings	Yes (TS)
16/02432/OUT Land to the West, A189 between N.Seaton Road and Woodhorn roundabout. Proposed Housing Growth Point	Up to 600 dwellings	Yes

- 6.3.2 The following sites have been discounted from the assessment due to their long distance from the station and the available flow information within the planning portal documents not providing sufficient information on traffic movements to allow development trips to be applied to the network assessed:

- 00/00009/REMA Seaton Vale, Land at Summerhouse Lane
- 11/02572/OUT Land to the South East of Wansbeck General Hospital; and
- 16/04348/OUT Land at North Seaton (North phase)

Land to the West, A189 between N.Seaton Road and Woodhorn roundabout

- 6.3.3 The available flow information for the development was interrogated. Based on the predicted flow information provided it was considered that the only impact to be assessed within this TA was at the A1068/A197 priority junction based on the assumption that the flow to/from the site using the A197 would be split by existing observed turning proportions. With no information to the contrary it was assumed that no development trips from this site would pass directly through the junctions in close proximity to the station assessed within this TA.
- 6.3.4 However as detailed earlier within this report, there is currently no turning count data available at the A1068/A197 priority junction and as a result flows from this development were not added to the assessed network.

Former Alcan Site

- 6.3.5 The available flow information for the development was interrogated. Based on the predicted flow information provided it was considered that the only impact to be assessed within this TA was at the A1068/A197 priority junction and the Station Road West/Kenilworth Road junction. In the case of the A1068/A197 priority junction this was based on the assumption that the flow to/from the site using the A197 would be split by existing observed turning proportions.
- 6.3.6 However as detailed earlier within this report, there is currently no turning count data available at the A1068/A197 priority junction and as a result flows from this development were not able to be added at that junction.
- 6.3.7 The flow information within the planning documents also showed traffic using Kenilworth Road. However the provided flow diagrams have shown both Kenilworth Road and Park Road as having direct access onto the A197. Both of these roads however first connect to Station Road before connecting to an unnamed road (adjacent to Seventh, Eighth and ninth Row) before joining the A197 at a roundabout. The flows have therefore had to be interpreted and adjusted. As Kenilworth Road is one-way southbound, the flows entering Kenilworth Road have been assumed to be turning right from Station Road due to the routing from the A197 described above. Flows depicted as exiting Kenilworth Road to the north have been assumed to instead use Park Road and therefore not included in the assessment.
- 6.3.8 In summary, it is considered that this will provide a robust assessment of the committed development proposals.

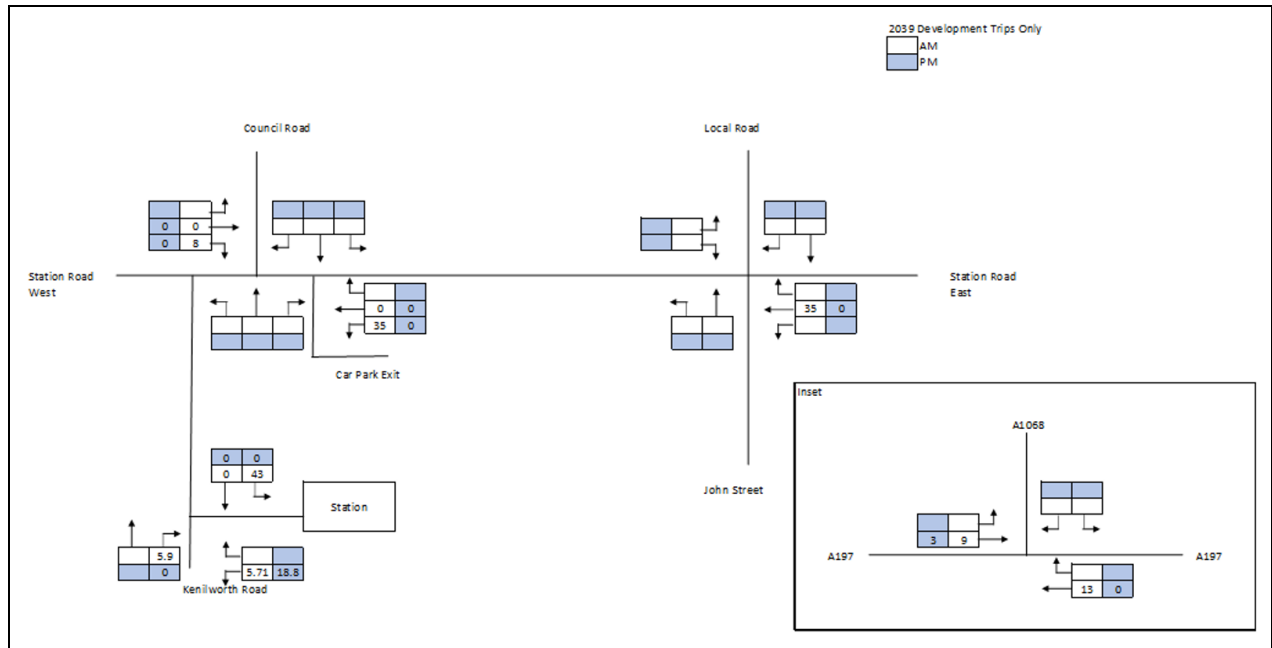
6.4 Trip Generation and Distribution

- 6.4.1 During the Outline Business case the demand modelling was agreed by NCC highways authority. Part of the agreed approach was the development of a spreadsheet based mode choice model.
- 6.4.2 The mode choice model represents trip decision making in the south east Northumberland corridor only. Longer distance movements are included within the model by an uplift factors derived from observed levels of rail demand on other rail corridors into Newcastle.
- 6.4.3 The basic model is a hierarchical logit model, with coefficients representing costs (e.g. fares, fuel costs, parking charges, etc.), in-vehicle time and out-of-vehicle time (e.g. walk time, wait time, etc.). There are also mode constants for the public transport and P&R modes (i.e.: a weighting to represent traveller's preference for one mode compared to another once time and cost impacts have been removed).
- 6.4.4 The way the model works is that the disutility to travel by each mode (in this case car, P&R (Metro), bus or rail) is calculated for each valid movement in the model. Disutility is another name for generalised cost and is made up of the costs of travel, the in-vehicle times and the out-of-vehicle times. A logit formula is then applied using these disutilities in order to determine mode shares by movement.
- 6.4.5 The spreadsheet model derived the matrix of person trips to each proposed station for the AM and inter peak (IP) average hour. Using TAG guidance, standard percentages were used to convert into journey purpose and vehicle trips using standard percentages. The return journeys were calculated using return factors derived from the Road Side Interviews conducted for Blyth.
- 6.4.6 Data from Morpeth's existing station and car park were used to form assumptions of modal shift and drops offs. It was assumed 62% of vehicles park at the station with 38% being dropped off by a partner. The drop off vehicles have been included with the traffic existing the station. For this TA a sensitivity test

has been included on all models, with includes 36% of vehicles entering and leaving the station within the modelled hour.

- 6.4.7 Trips are distributed on the network according to the lowest generalised cost, where both distance and journey time are taken into consideration. More information in relation to the demand modelling methodology is documented in the Northumberland Line Economic Appraisal Report.
- 6.4.8 This TA is focused on the local roads surrounding the proposed station at Ashington, Figure 14 illustrates the proposed impact of the introduction of the railway station for a typical morning and afternoon peak. Where trips increase above 30 two-way trips at junctions, they were highlighted for assessment which is detailed in Section 7 of this report.

Figure 15. Proposed Trip generation 2039



7. Impact Analysis

7.1 Local Highway Network Impacts

Introduction

- 7.1.1 The predicted traffic generated from the proposed development has been added to the baseline network data to assess how the site accesses will operate upon completion.
- 7.1.2 Due to the nature of the development it is expected that some of these trips will be existing trips on the highway network within the surrounding area. This is based on the assumption that the new station will provide an opportunity for Ashington residents to park at the station and reach their final destination such as Newcastle or Ashington via train. Therefore, a distribution and impact is only assessed at the junctions within immediate vicinity of the proposed station.
- 7.1.3 As part of scoping, NCC requested the following junctions be assessed:
- Proposed new access / Kenilworth Road (priority junction);
 - A1068 / A197 (priority junction);
 - Station Road / Kenilworth Road / Council Road / Car Park Access (signalised); and
 - Station Road / John Street (priority junction).
- 7.1.4 It is noted that the existing road network to the south of the station site offers a number of access and egress routes via streets including Briardene, North Seaton Road, and Green Lane. It is anticipated that traffic will distribute across a range of routes dependent on trip origin and destination. This will ensure limited impact on any one specific junction in addition to those scoped for assessment.
- 7.1.5 Assessment of the level crossing on Green Lane is presented in the level crossing impact study (AECOM 2016) submitted alongside this application.
- 7.1.6 The appropriate industry standard modelling software ARCADY from the TRL software 'Junctions 9' has been used to model the operation of the priority roundabout, with the geometric parameters and observed traffic flows of each junction entered into the computer package.
- 7.1.7 In ARCADY, the time periods assessed are divided into a number of 15-minute time segments in order to simulate the likely arrival pattern of traffic more effectively. The results returned in the models are the Ratio of Flows to Capacity (RFC) and Mean Maximum Queue (MMQ) in each time segment, measured in number of vehicles. The maximum RFC value for each movement is likely to be observed over the central 15-30 minute period of the hour under consideration.
- 7.1.8 RFC values between 0.00 and 0.85 are generally accepted as representing stable operating conditions, values between 0.85 and unity represent variable operation (i.e. possible queues building up at the junction during the period under consideration and increases in vehicle delay moving through the junction). RFC values in excess of unity represent overloaded conditions (i.e. congested conditions).
- 7.1.9 LinSig is used to model the operation of signalised junctions and has been used for the Station Road / Kenilworth signalised junction. LinSig reports a Degree of Saturation (DoS) for each link (i.e. demand / available capacity) and MMQ recorded in Passenger Car Units (PCUs). A DoS between 0% and 90% is generally considered as representing stable operating conditions, values between 90% and 100% represents a constrained scenario (i.e. possible queues building up at the junction and increases in vehicle delay). DoS beyond 1.00 represents overloaded conditions and a junction working beyond theoretical capacity.
- 7.1.10 The junction has been modelled with for following scenarios for both the AM and PM peak periods:
- Base (2019);
 - Base + Committed (2039); and
 - Base + Committed + Development (2039)
 - Base + Committed + Development Sensitivity Test (2039)

- 7.1.11 Full outputs can be found in Appendix G. The sensitivity test includes 36% of vehicles entering and leaving the station within the modelled hour. This represents people being dropped off in the morning.

7.2 Proposed Station Access / Kenilworth Road

- 7.2.1 As noted earlier in this report, due to Covid-19 undertaking representative surveys this year was not possible and no historical data for the proposed access junction was available. However, there was survey data for the adjacent junction along to enable a baseline assessment to take place. These surveys have been used for the proposed access.
- 7.2.2 The vehicles leaving the car park have been modelled to utilise the Wilkinson's car park exit onto Station Road within the sensitivity test, as agreed with NCC in September 2020. These trips have been accounted for within the Station Road / Kenilworth Road LinSig presented in sub-section 7.4.
- 7.2.3 Junction orientation is as follows:
- Arm A – Kenilworth Road SB
 - Arm B – Station Car Park
 - Arm C – Kenilworth Road NB
- 7.2.4 Table 6 shows the 2039 base + committed + development for do something scenario.

Table 6. 2039 Model Outputs

Arm	2039 Base + Committed + Development			
	AM Peak		PM Peak	
	RFC	Queue (PCU)	RFC	Queue (PCU)
Stream B-C	0.00	0	0.03	0
Stream B-A	0.00	0	0.00	0
Stream C-AB	0.01	0	0.00	0

- 7.2.5 As demonstrated in Table 6, the junction will have no capacity issues in 2039 base + committed + development scenario due to the low levels of turning traffic meaning there is no delay on any arm.

Sensitivity Test

- 7.2.6 As agreed with NCC a sensitivity test was undertaken, Table 7 shows the outputs from the 2039 base + committed + development sensitivity test.

Table 7. Sensitivity Test

Arm	2039 Base + Committed + Development Sensitivity			
	AM Peak		PM Peak	
	RFC	Queue (PCU)	RFC	Queue (PCU)
Stream B-C	0.00	0	0.00	0
Stream B-A	0.00	0	0.00	0
Stream C-AB	0.01	0	0.00	0

- 7.2.7 The sensitivity test resulted in no change of queuing at the junction, there has been a decrease in RFC however as previously mentioned, for the sensitivity test vehicles are leaving the car park via the Wilkinson's car park exit onto Station Road hence, the reduction in RFC to 0.

7.3 A1068 / A198

- 7.3.1 During scoping discussions NCC requested the A1068 / A198 junction to be added to the assessment. However, due to COVID-19, NCC have agreed that no traffic surveys are required to be undertaken in support of this application. Therefore, no capacity assessments have been undertaken for this junction within this report.

7.4 Station Road / Kenilworth Road / Council Road

7.4.1 Table 8 show the results of the LinSig modelling of the Station Road / Kenilworth / Council Road signalised crossroads for the base year.

Table 8. 2019 Base Model Output

Arm	2019 Base			
	AM Peak		PM Peak	
	DoS (%)	MMQ	DoS(%)	MMQ
Station Road (east)	23.7	2.6	36	4.3
Council Road	0.9	0.1	4	0.2
Station Road (west)	33.5	2.5	26.6	1.9
Car Park Exit	11.7	0.7	20.9	1.3
PRC Over All Lanes (%)	168.5		150	
Total Delay (pcu/hr)	2.7		3.36	

7.4.2 In order to ensure the base models are representative of the on-ground conditions, the models has been calibrated and validated. The methodology has included:

- Model Calibration – geometric data for the junction was used for calibration purposes, geometries have been input into LinSig, these measurements have been validated within AutoCAD; and
- Model Validation – the model has been validated by achieving average queue in the model approximate to those observed.

7.4.3 Observed queues is shown in Table 9.

Table 9. Base Queues Observed and Modelled

Arms	AM 2020 Base (pcu)		PM 2020 Base (pcu)	
	Observed	Modelled	Observed	Modelled
Council Road	0	0.1	0	0.2
Station Road E	2	2.6	4	4.3
Car Park Exit	No data		No data	
Station Road W Lane 1	3	2.5	2	1.9

7.4.4 Table 9 shows that the base model for Station Road / Kenilworth Road / Council junction model is showing representative queues when compared to the observed queues.

7.4.5 Table 10 shows the results of the 2039 base + committed and base + committed + development scenarios.

Table 10. 2039 Base + Committed + Dev Model Output with DM and DS Scenarios

Arm	2039+Committed				2039+Committed + Development			
	AM Peak		PM Peak		AM Peak		PM Peak	
	DoS (%)	MMQ	DoS(%)	MMQ	DoS(%)	MMQ	DoS(%)	MMQ
Station Road (east)	21.2	2.5	35.1	4.6	25.5	3.1	35.1	4.6
Council Road	2.2	0.1	7.9	0.3	2.2	0.1	7.9	0.3
Station Road (west)	32.5	2.4	27.1	2	33.3	2.4	27.6	2
Car Park Exit	27	1	34.8	1.7	27	1	34.8	1.7
PRC Over All Lanes (%)	176.9		156.5		170.3		156.5	
Total Delay (pcu/hr)	2.54		3.56		2.77		3.59	

7.4.6 Table 10 shows that the junction will continue to operate within capacity both with and without the proposed development traffic, with highest MMQ of 3 and 5 vehicles at the Station Road (east) during

AM and PM peak, respectively. Similar MMQ are observed during the Do Something scenario with 4 and 5 vehicles queuing during AM and PM peak, respectively.

Sensitivity Test

- 7.4.7 As agreed with NCC a sensitivity test was undertaken Table 11 shows the outputs from the 2039 base + committed + development for do something scenario sensitivity test.

Table 11. Sensitivity Test

Arm	2019 Base			
	AM Peak		PM Peak	
	DoS (%)	MMQ	DoS(%)	MMQ
Station Road (east)	23.9	2.8	38.6	4.9
Council Road	1.7	0.1	7	0.3
Station Road (west)	40.2	3	28.9	2.1
Car Park Exit	29.9	1.5	36.7	2.1
PRC Over All Lanes (%)	123.8		132.9	
Total Delay (pcu/hr)	3.3		4.02	

- 7.4.8 The sensitivity test resulted in no change to RFC or queuing at the junction, with highest MMQ of 3 and 5 vehicles at the Station Road (east) during AM and PM peak, respectively.

7.5 Station Road / John Street

- 7.5.1 Junction orientation is as follows:

- Arm A – Station Road (eastbound);
- Arm B – Station Road (westbound); and
- Arm C – John Street

- 7.5.2 Table 12 shows the result of the Junction 9 modelling of the Station Road / John Street junction for 2019 base.

Table 12. 2019 Base Model Outputs

Arm	2019 Base			
	AM Peak		PM Peak	
	RFC	Queue (PCU)	RFC	Queue (PCU)
Stream B – AC	0.38	0.6	0.43	0.7
Stream C – AB	0	0	0	0

- 7.5.3 Table 12 demonstrates that the junction operates within capacity both with and without proposed development traffic with RFC of 0.38 and 0.43 during AM and PM peak, respectively. The maximum queuing during both peaks is 1 vehicle.

- 7.5.4 In order to ensure the base models are representative of the on-ground conditions, the models has been calibrated and validated. The methodology has included:

- Model Calibration – geometric data for the junction was used for calibration purposes, geometries have been calculated within ARCADY, these measurements have been validated within AutoCAD; and
- Model Validation – the model has been validated by achieving average queue in the model approximate to those observed.

- 7.5.5 Observed queues is shown in Table 13.

Table 13. Base Queues Observed and Modelled

Arms	AM 2020 Base (pcu)		PM 2020 Base (pcu)	
	Observed	Modelled	Observed	Modelled
Station Road E	2	0.6	2	0.7
John Street	0	0	1	0
Station Road W	1	0	0	0

7.5.6 Table 14 shows the 2039 model results for both with and without proposed development traffic.

Table 14. 2039 Model Outputs

Arm	2039 Base + Committed				2039 Base + Committed + Development			
	AM Peak		PM Peak		AM Peak		PM Peak	
	RFC	Queue	RFC	Queue	RFC	Queue	RFC	Queue
Stream B – AC	0.44	0.8	0.50	1	0.52	1.1	0.5	1
Stream C – AB	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

7.5.7 Table 14 shows, the junction will continue to operate within capacity 2039 base + committed scenario with an RFC of 0.44 and 0.50 queuing of 1 vehicle during AM and PM peak, respectively.

7.5.8 The junction will also continue to operate within capacity under the 2039 base + committed + development scenario with an RFC of 0.52 and 0.5 during AM and PM peak, with maximum queuing of 2 vehicles.

Sensitivity Test

7.5.9 As agreed with NCC a sensitivity test was undertaken to Table 15 shows the outputs from the 2039 base + committed + development for do something scenario sensitivity test.

Table 15. Sensitivity Test

Arm	2039 DS Sensitivity Test			
	AM Peak		PM Peak	
	RFC	Queue (PCU)	RFC	Queue (PCU)
Stream B – AC	0.44	0.8	0.5	1
Stream C – AB	0	0	0	0

7.5.10 The sensitivity test resulted in no significant change to RFC or queuing at the junction.

7.6 Station Road / John Street / Local Road

7.6.1 Junction orientation is as follows:

- Arm A – Station Road;
- Arm B – Local Road; and
- Arm C – John Street

7.6.2 Table 16 shows the result of the Junction 9 modelling of the Station Road / John Street / Local Road junction for 2019 base.

Table 16. 2019 Base Model Outputs

Arm	2019 Base			
	AM Peak		PM Peak	
	RFC	Queue (PCU)	RFC	Queue (PCU)
Stream B – AC	0.02	0	0.06	0.1
Stream C – AB	0.03	0	0.02	0

7.6.3 Table 16 demonstrates that the junction operates within capacity during AM and PM peak with RFC of 0.03 and 0.02 during AM and PM peak, respectively. The maximum queuing during both peaks is 1 vehicle.

7.6.4 In order to ensure the base models are representative of the on-ground conditions, the models has been calibrated and validated. The methodology has included:

- Model Calibration – geometric data for the junction was used for calibration purposes, geometries have been calculated within ARCADY, these measurements have been validated within AutoCAD; and
- Model Validation – the model has been validated by achieving average queue in the model approximate to those observed.

7.6.5 Observed queues is shown in Table 17.

Table 17. Base Queues Observed and Modelled

Arms	AM 2020 Base (pcu)		PM 2020 Base (pcu)	
	Observed	Modelled	Observed	Modelled
Local Road	0	0	1	0.1
John Street	0	0	1	0
Station Road W	1	0	0	0

7.6.6 Table 18 shows the 2039 base + committed and 2039 base + committed + development scenarios.

Table 18. 2039 Model Outputs

Junction Arm	2039 Base + Committed				2039 Base + Committed + Dev			
	AM Peak		PM Peak		AM Peak		PM Peak	
	RFC	Queue	RFC	Queue	RFC	Queue	RFC	Queue
Stream B – AC	0.02	0	0.07	0.1	0.02	0	0.07	0.1
Stream C – AB	0.03	0	0.02	0	0.03	0	0.02	0

7.6.7 Table 18 shows, the junction will continue to operate within capacity with Do minimum scenario and Do Something scenario.

Sensitivity Test

7.6.8 As agreed with NCC a sensitivity test was undertaken Table 19 shows the outputs from the 2039 base + committed + development for do something scenario sensitivity test.

Table 19. Sensitivity Test

Junction Arm	2039 DS Sensitivity Test			
	AM Peak		PM Peak	
	RFC	Queue (PCU)	RFC	Queue (PCU)
Stream B – AC	0.02	0	0.07	0.1
Stream C – AB	0.03	0	0.02	0

7.7 Sustainable Mode Shift to Rail Impacts

- 7.7.1 As part of the aforementioned Demand Modelling assessment a spreadsheet based mode choice model was built to represent trip decision-making in the South East Northumberland (SEN) corridor only. Longer distance movements would be represented by the application of an appropriate demand uplift factor based on observed levels of rail demand on other rail corridors into Newcastle.
- 7.7.2 The mode choices represented in the model are car, bus, Tyne & Wear Metro (via Park & Ride (P&R)) and rail.
- 7.7.3 The spreadsheet-based mode-choice demand model assessed a number of options. To identify the likely mode shift and car parking requirements the 'full scheme under a concession operation' option has been used as it is considered the 'worst case' scenario for design purposes as it generates the greatest demand.
- 7.7.4 With this option the predicted average weekday demand is 4,713 return journeys with an annual demand of 1,453,000 return journeys. The model estimates the mode source of patronage in 2039, as:
- 2.9% from Rail/Metro
 - 45.5% from car
 - 17.8% from bus
 - 21.9% induced (internal mode area)
 - 9% long distance (other modes)
 - 3% long distance (induced)
- 7.7.5 Car is the primary source of demand for the scheme in all cases, accounting for circa 45% of rail demand. Approximately 18% of journeys using the new rail service have transferred from bus. It should be noted that the long distance 'other' modes will include transfer from car, coach and rail too.
- 7.7.6 In terms of demand, there are two key impacts to the scheme; modal transfer to rail resulting in less usage of car, bus or P&R (Metro) and increased usage of these other modes as a means of access and/or egress to/from the rail stations.

7.8 Bus Impacts

- 7.8.1 The impact on bus usage demonstrates a slight net increase in bus journeys across the study corridor, as the new journeys by bus to access the rail stations outweighs the loss of bus trips due to the modal transfer from bus to rail.

7.9 Metro Impacts

- 7.9.1 The impact on Metro is different to bus as there is very little modal transfer to rail from Metro, but Metro benefits from the excellent connections provided between rail and Metro at Northumberland Park (and to a lesser extent at Manors and Newcastle).

7.10 Summary

- 7.10.1 Detailed junction capacity analysis has been carried out at the junctions within the study area to determine the impact of the proposed station. All junctions assessed will continue to operate within capacity under the 2039 base + committed + development. The results demonstrate that the proposed access will operate within capacity during all scenarios with the method applied.
- 7.10.2 The assessment methodology has been agreed during scoping discussions with NCC with full cognisance by both parties of the data limitations imposed by the current COVID-19 pandemic. It is considered that this agreed methodology as described within this TA represents an appropriately robust assessment despite the collection of new traffic flow data not being possible. Should NCC require future

data collection when traffic flows are deemed to have reverted to 'normal operation' and further assessment in order to check the impact assessment contained within this TA, then a programme of assessment/monitoring should be conditioned rather than affecting the determination of the application.

8. Highway Safety Analysis

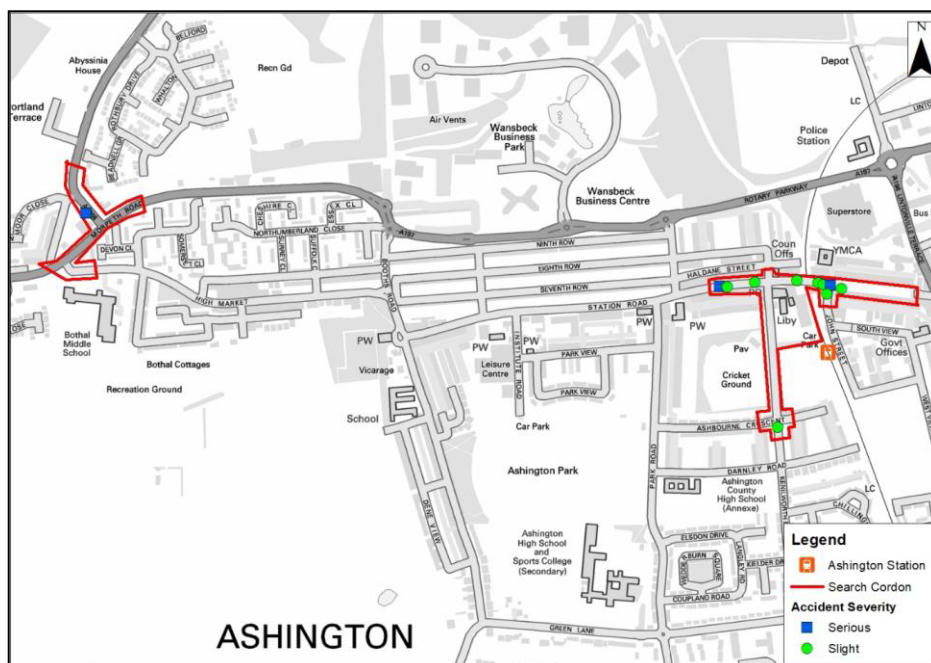
8.1 Introduction

- 8.1.1 To ensure that there are no underlying highway issues, collision data has been analysed and is attached to this TA in Appendix H.

8.2 Analysis

- 8.2.1 A review of the data has been undertaken using collision data provided by NCC for the most recent five - year period from September 2015 and ending in April 2020. The A1068 / A197 junction to the north – west of the main search cordon has been added to the study area upon request from NCC. The study area is shown in Figure 15.

Figure 16 Personal Injury Collision (PIC) Search Cordon



- 8.2.2 A total of 11 collisions occurred over the five-year period within the search cordon. No fatal collisions have been recorded. None of the collisions occurred within the close proximity of the proposed access to the station car park

- 8.2.3 Table 20 provides a summary of the collisions by the severity, year and casualty type.

Table 20. Collisions by Severity and Year

Year	Slight	Serious	Fatal	Total
2015	2	0	0	2
2016	3	0	0	3
2017	1	2	0	3
2018	2	1	0	3
2019	0	0	0	0
2020	0	0	0	0
Total	8	3	0	11

- 8.2.4 Of the three serious collision recorded, one involved a cyclist at Station Road junction with Duke Street. The collision can be attributed to poor turn / manoeuvre and failing to look; the accident occurred when a

vehicle turning right from Duke Street onto Station Road failed to notice / leave enough space for a cyclist turning right from Station Road to Duke Street.

- 8.2.5 The second serious collision can be attributed to poor manoeuvre, the accident happened when a motorcyclist attempted to overtake a vehicle, lost control and collided with an oncoming vehicle.
- 8.2.6 The remaining serious collision can be attributed to carelessness of the driver who was being pursued by a police vehicle. The vehicle has lost control on a bend, crossing the carriageway before hitting a metal pole and railing before coming to rest.
- 8.2.7 A total of five of eight collisions were recorded as slight and all involved a pedestrian movement. These collisions however, did not occur in a cluster and all have been attributed to “failure to look properly”.
- 8.2.8 The remaining three slight collisions were recorded along Station Road. Two occurred when a pedestrian failed to look whilst crossing the road and stepped into a path of oncoming vehicle. One occurred along John Street, when a pedestrian failed to look properly and stepped into the path of an oncoming vehicle.
- 8.2.9 Three slight collisions all happened whilst a parked vehicle was re-joining or reversing out of a parking bay. All three collisions can be attributed to driver of vehicle failing to look properly and carelessness. These did not occur at the same location.
- 8.2.10 Seven out of the eight collisions recorded occurred at different locations along Station Road. No collisions occurred at pedestrian crossings.
- 8.2.11 The eighth collision was reported along Kenilworth Road junction with Ashbourne Crescent when one of the two parked vehicles reversed at speed into the second vehicle, pushing it onto a pedestrian.

8.3 Contributing Factors

- 8.3.1 Table 21 summarises some of the attributes that contributed to the collisions.

Table 21. Vehicle Collisions Attributes

Attributes	Severity		
	Slight	Serious	Total
Failed to look properly	6	0	6
Carelessness	2	1	3
Poor Turn or manoeuvre	0	2	2
Total	8	3	11

- 8.3.2 As demonstrated in Table 21, none of the collision can be attributed to highway design issues, majority of the collisions are attributed to “failed to look properly” and “carelessness”.

8.4 Summary

- 8.4.1 This section has provided a review of the collision data for the most recent five - year period provided by NCC. The collision data revealed that there are no underlying highway design and / or safety issues within the search cordon.

9. Summary and Conclusion

9.1 Summary

- 9.1.1 AECOM has been commissioned by Northumberland County Council (NCC) to prepare a Transport Assessment in support of a planning application for the construction of a new station with proposed car park at Ashington associated with the proposed re-introduction of the Northumberland Line scheme.
- 9.1.2 This report has considered the key transport related strategies and policies at national, regional and local level that relate to the proposed residential development.
- 9.1.3 The existing baseline conditions of the site in relation to the existing local highway network have been reviewed to determine suitability for the proposed development.
- 9.1.4 The accessibility of the site has been considered. Particular attention has been paid to sustainable modes of travel. This exercise identified that the site is suitably accessible by sustainable modes of travel.
- 9.1.5 The proposed station facilities and car park design will be compliant to NCC design and parking standards, with secure cycle storage provided and provision of new uncontrolled pedestrian crossings.
- 9.1.6 The car park will consist of 275 bays, including accessible parking bays and electric vehicle parking bays.
- 9.1.7 The methodology for the vehicle trip generation and distribution has been provided and justified. Historical data has been utilised including Manual Classified Counts (MCC) undertaken in May 2019 to establish the baseline. The baseline traffic has been growthed using TEMPro v7.2 in order to model future scenarios.
- 9.1.8 The junctions on the local highway network have been assessed to ascertain the likely impact of the proposed development.
- 9.1.9 The road accident data for the most recent 5-year period was obtained from NCC. This data was analysed and as no obvious patterns or trends were discovered it is considered that the additional development traffic would not impact upon road safety on the road network.

9.2 Conclusion

- 9.2.1 The suitability of the site and the development has been considered in terms of highway and transportation issues.
- 9.2.2 The traffic impact analysis has established the existing junctions would operate successfully in the future years; however the proposed site access will need to be reassessed once new surveys can be undertaken.
- 9.2.3 The road safety record of the highway network within the study area has been examined and no significant road safety problems have been identified.
- 9.2.4 Thus, based on the findings within this TA, it is concluded that there will not be a significant impact on the surrounding highway network in terms of capacity and safety as a result of the development traffic. Therefore, in the context of paragraph 109 of the NPPF, planning permission should not be withheld for this application on transport or highway safety grounds.

Appendix 5 Engineering Justification Paper



Northumberland Line Conversion

The engineering justification for using the Malhotra land

Document reference details

<i>Client:</i>	Northumberland County Council	<i>Project and Doc No.:</i>	2001-430-031
<i>Project:</i>	Northumberland Line Conversion	<i>Version and Status:</i>	V2-0 Issue
<i>Lead author:</i>	Julian Sindall	<i>Issue Date:</i>	24 Sep 2021
<i>Filename:</i>	2001-420-031 Case for Malhotra land v2-0 Issue.docx		
<i>Disclaimer:</i>	Cadenza Transport Consulting Ltd ("Cadenza") has prepared this <i>The engineering justification for using the Malhotra land</i> for Northumberland County Council based on a specific brief and information available at the time of preparation. Cadenza accepts no liability for any use beyond the specified brief or by third parties for any use unless expressly agreed with Cadenza in writing.		

Document history

Version	Status / Description	Created	Reviewed	Authorised	Date
V1-0	Internal Issue	J Sindall	Selected Project Team	J Sindall	17 Sep 2021
V2-0	Issue	J Sindall	R Turney	J Sindall	24 Sep 2021

1 Summary

This note has been prepared to set out the engineering justification for acquiring the Malhotra land for the purposes of providing car parking for the proposed new Ashington station.

Without the Malhotra land, any new car park for Ashington station is likely to be full within the first three to four years of operations. Such a failure to adequately plan for even the near future would undermine the purposes of the Northumberland Line scheme to enhance the local economy along the route and at Ashington in particular.

Developing the scheme without the Malhotra land would mean that Northumberland County Council (NCC) would be faced with considerable additional disruption and cost associated with retrofitting a second level to a congested car park leading to further loss of local economic benefit.

By contrast, developing an at grade scheme on the Malhotra land would be significantly more cost-effective and provide sufficient capacity for expected high street and Northumberland Line demand, with some headroom for additional capacity at marginal cost if the project exceeds its reasonable expectations.

2 Demand for parking spaces at Ashington station

The project team has assessed that the highest demand case is for 186 spaces for users of the railway in 2039, fifteen years from the proposed opening date. The basis for this is the rail demand forecasts that informed the Outline Business Case (OBC), that were determined using a multi-modal choice model developed in line with standard DfT Transport Appraisal Guidance (TAG), and then the application of appropriate factors to translate this into a demand for car parking spaces. Information from the OBC was used to develop the Ashington station car park layout.

Since the OBC was submitted, the scheme design has progressed through to Full Business Case (FBC) and the demand for car park spaces has been reduced in the interim to 99 spaces in 2028 in accordance with DfT guidance for impacts from the Covid pandemic on rail demand.

As at September 2021 there are currently 122 car parking spaces within the existing Station Yard South car park (up from 113 in 2018), which occupies the land used by the proposed Ashington station car park. This car park currently serves the town centre. The most recent pre pandemic Ashington parking study, commissioned by NCC in 2016, showed that maximum occupancy of 113 spaces reached 100%. As noted in the Transport Assessment accompanying the planning application, replacing those parking spaces and meeting the 2039 modelled demand would require a car park of 299 spaces previously, and now 308 spaces (122+186), which cannot be fully accommodated on a single level even including the Malhotra land.

If the project were constrained to only using the available at grade land at Ashington identified in the Order documents, but without the Malhotra land, the design team has provided a preliminary optimistic assessment that circa 150 spaces would be available within the remaining site area (though a more realistic assessment is closer to 130 spaces). This assessment is based on a station car park design that would satisfy NCC's planning requirements and Network Rail standards which include guidance for accessibility; and provide wider facilities associated with a rail station car park. These include: cycle provisions, including accessible storage to be designed in accordance with parking and cycle standards; public and taxi drop off areas; and, Network Rail maintenance access facilities.

A spot survey on the day of the Pre-Inquiry Meeting, Tue 21 September 2021, showed a maximum of 70 cars parked in the car park, representing 57% of current capacity. Even taking a worse hypothetical and extremely pessimistic case that 50% of the existing spaces are no longer used due to Covid impact (which is a significantly greater impact than DfT guidance requires for the railway), that would mean c. 61 of the existing spaces were needed for town centre use in the long term.

If a car park of no more than 150 spaces could be provided, that would leave at most 89 spaces for Northumberland Line use. Since the Covid-adjusted interim demand for the Northumberland Line is forecast to be 99 spaces in 2028, this indicates that the demand would exceed capacity by ten spaces less than four years after operations begin. In the longer term, increasing railway passenger demand would obviously further outstrip supply. If parking demand for the town centre approached pre-Covid levels, there would be very few parking spaces available to meet rail demand.

It would be unacceptable for Northumberland County Council to invest in a public scheme intended to boost the local economy and to encourage car users to transfer to trains, only to find that demand exceeded capacity within three to four years, even when taking an extremely pessimistic view of the effects of Covid, and an optimistic view of the number of spaces deliverable within the land space. A more realistic view would simply mean demand exceeded capacity even earlier. Unless an adequately sized car park is delivered, the economic and transport objectives of the scheme would be undermined.

The additional space can only be delivered by more dense use of the land space, through a multi-deck car park, or by extending out onto the Malhotra land, or some combination. These options are discussed further below.

3 Decked car park option

The option of building up has been assessed by developing a preliminary station car park design including a decked structure of 80m x 32m floor area plus surface level parking for disabled spaces, circulation and drop-

off etc.. This would provide approximately 246 spaces and would only be sufficient to meet the 2039 Northumberland Line high forecast demand if demand for town centre parking were still constrained to no more than 51% of pre-covid levels eighteen years from now (noting that this level has already been exceeded in the recent survey).

The decked car park scheme cost is estimated to be approximately £5.4m, based on cost rates using the latest industry standard SPONS data. A further disadvantage of a decked car park is that it would be necessary to displace the existing car parking during construction, with attendant disruption caused.

4 At grade expansion option

The proposed solution of an at grade car park extending onto the Malhotra land could provide approximately 270 spaces, providing for either 100% of 2039 highest Northumberland Line demand and 69% of pre-Covid high street demand, or 100% of pre-Covid high street demand and 148 spaces (which would provide all of the expected Northumberland Line demand and 80% of the 2039 highest forecast demand).

The cost of building such a car park using the same SPONS source data is approximately £1.6m plus the cost of the Malhotra land. NCC's cost estimate for the Malhotra's proposed use of land is between £300k and £450k. At the upper end of this estimate, the total cost of building sideways out onto the Malhotra land becomes £2.1m.

The cost differential is significant at more than £3m to avoid using the Malhotra land or, worse, retrofitting a second deck to a popular car park no more than four years after the Northumberland Line is operational, because the additional logistics involved would make the installation even more expensive.

5 Use of part of the Malhotra land

Although it would be theoretically possible to only use part of the Malhotra land, there would come a tipping point where the remaining space were uneconomical for the proposed nursing home. We cannot assess what this tipping point would be for the Malhotra group. However, the replacement of the current spaces plus meeting the predicted 2039 railway demand would require 308 spaces, and even with the Malhotra land only 270 spaces can be delivered, there is no realistic "headroom" in the short to medium term to justify taking only part of the Malhotra land. If constrained to take only part of the Malhotra site, the project would carry the risk of still having to provide a raised deck level earlier than otherwise necessary or accept suppressed demand if either the scheme proves more popular than anticipated, or the Covid impact long term were less than anticipated.

6 Conclusion

In conclusion, the purpose of the car park at Ashington is to facilitate the economic growth of the town centre by ensuring that sufficient spaces are provided to at least replicate current capacity, and to support the take-up of the Northumberland Line by providing sufficient additional capacity to meet expected demand. It is also prudent to maintain the ability to expand in a cost-effective manner towards the high railway demand case or greater high street demand as needed.

However, the immediate need for the Malhotra land derives from the fact that, even when taking an extremely pessimistic view of the Covid impact, demand will outstrip capacity within three to four years of the Northumberland Line being operational. The proposed solution using the Malhotra land would be expected to provide suitable capacity for at least the first fifteen years of operations and represents prudent and proportionate use of powers and funds.

The need for the Malhotra land has been confirmed by the recent grant of planning permission (on 10 September 2021) for the development of the station and car park. Condition 15 requires the Malhotra land to be acquired before the development commences, and prevents the station from becoming functional for passenger rail services until the development of the car park has been completed. Accordingly, the Malhotra land has been found to be necessary, and it is required to implement the permission in accordance with its terms.

Appendix 6 Planning Reference 21/00387/CCD Committee Report



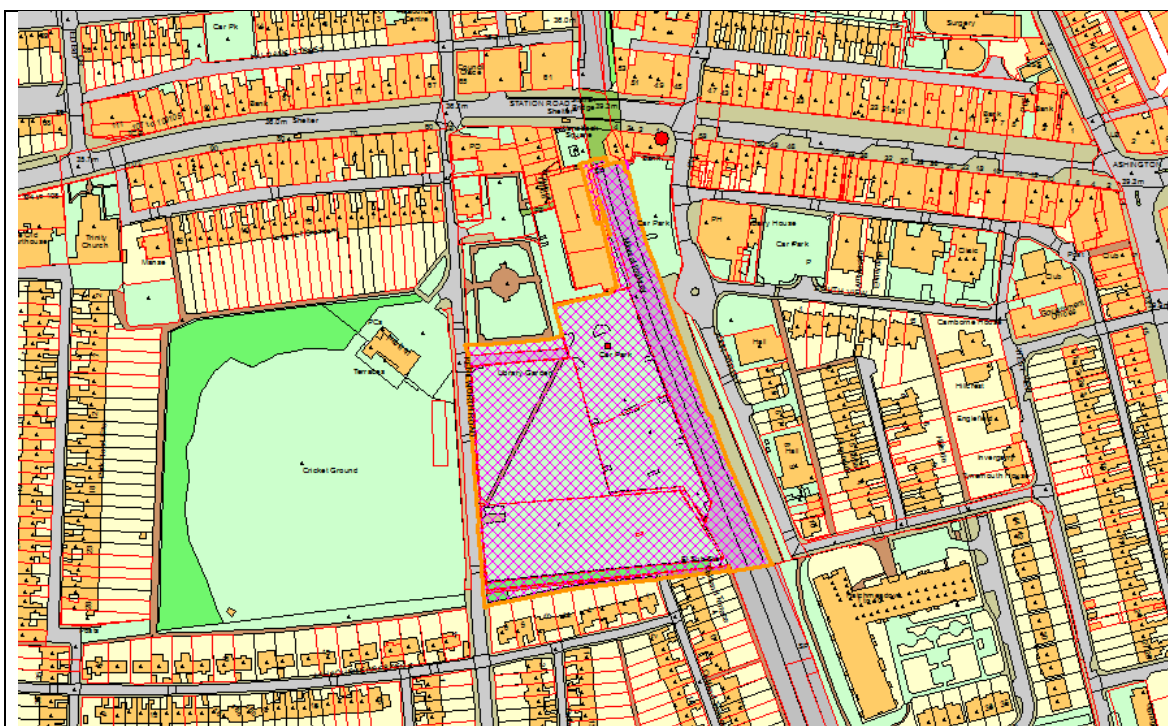
Northumberland

County Council

Strategic Planning Committee, 7 September 2021

Application No:	21/00387/CCD		
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.		
Site Address	Station Yard Car Park North, Wansbeck Square, Station Road, Ashington, Northumberland, NE63 9XH		
Applicant:	Northumberland County Council County Hall, Morpeth, NE61 2EF	Agent:	Mr Allen Creedy 72 B-Box Studios, Newcastle , NE2 1AN
Ward	Ashington Central	Parish	Ashington
Valid Date:	23 February 2021	Expiry Date:	30 September 2021
Case Officer Details:	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 dBLAaq (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) 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) should be contacted to arrange a survey.
7. The Council's Traffic Management Section at 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 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 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 7 Northumberland Line Car Parking Requirements Technical Note

Subject:	Northumberland Line Car Parking Requirements		
Prepared by:	Gemma Paget	Date:	02/06/2020
Checked by:	Andy Coates	Date:	17/07/2020

1. Introduction

AECOM is currently working with Northumberland County Council to reintroduce passenger services on the railway line between Ashington and Newcastle. As part of the scheme, five new railway stations will be delivered, with a sixth station in North Tyneside upgraded to serve both heavy rail and the Tyne and Wear metro. The six stations are as follows:

- Ashington (Northumberland);
- Bedlington (Northumberland);
- Blyth Bebside (Northumberland);
- Newsham (Northumberland);
- Seaton Delaval (Northumberland);
- Northumberland Park (North Tyneside).

The route of the railway line and the proposed stations is shown in Figure 1 overleaf. The scheme is hereinafter known as the Northumberland Line.

One of the key objectives of the Northumberland Line scheme is to improve connectivity within, and beyond, South East Northumberland using sustainable modes of transport. However, to achieve this objective, the railway stations serving the line need to be accessible from a wide catchment area. It is acknowledged that, for many people wanting to use the train service, there will be a reliance on the car to access the station. A decision therefore needs to be taken as to the level of car parking provision at each station.

AECOM has undertaken demand and revenue forecasting to inform the reopening of the railway line to passenger services. A key element of this work is forecasting the passengers that will use each station and how these passengers will access the station. This work, therefore, gives a good indication as to the level of car parking provision that is needed at each station. However, when making a decision around the size of car parks, other factors should be taken into consideration, including local factors at each station, policy objectives and development aspirations. The purpose of this technical note therefore is to discuss the requirements for car parking at each new station and draw some conclusions as to the number of spaces that should be provided.

2. Structure

The key objective of this technical note is to agree the car parking sizes to be provided at each new station on the Northumberland Line; given Northumberland Park is an existing station, it is outside the scope of this assessment. To achieve this objective, the technical note has been structured as follows:

- Transport policy: A summary of key national and local transport policy relevant to the provision of car parking spaces;
- Demand forecasting: A summary of the demand forecasting process and the projected car parking spaces needed at each station;
- Stations: A summary of the proposals for each railway station and the local factors that impact on the size of the car park at each station;
- Summary and conclusions: Summary of the technical note and recommendations for car parking sizes to be taken forward for the design of the scheme.

Figure 1: Northumberland Line Scheme



3. Transport Policy

The government is committed to delivering transport infrastructure that delivers economic growth, whilst contributing to a reduction in carbon emissions. This is outlined in the Transport White Paper: The future of Transport – A Network for 2030, which recognises that travel is needed if economic growth is to be promoted.

This is never more true of South East Northumberland, which has struggled to regenerate since the closure of the mining industries in the late 1980s and 1990s. It is acknowledged that, to generate economic growth in the South East Northumberland area, better transport connections need to be provided to connect people to jobs.

The Transport White Paper provides little guidance on the provision of car parking spaces. The document states that local authorities are free to set their own parking policy and charges for the local area. However, as part of any car parking provision, local authorities are encouraged to provide electric charging points within the development.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications. It was published in February 2019 by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.

One of the key elements retained in the NPPF is the presumption in favour of sustainable development. The NPPF states that 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. Recognition is given to the role this can play in reducing congestion and emissions and improving air quality and public health. In the case of the Northumberland Line, providing car parks at each station means that for many people, using the railway to access their place of work or leisure, becomes a real alternative to the car.

Paragraph 106 of the NPPF refers to parking standards and states that:

“Maximum parking standards for residential and non-residential development 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 city and town centres and other locations that are well served by public transport (in accordance with chapter 11 of the Framework). In town centres, local authorities should seek to improve the quality of parking so that it is convenient, safe and secure, alongside measures to promote accessibility for pedestrians and cyclists.”

In this respect, there should be no limit on the number of spaces provided at each of the stations unless the increased traffic around the station would impact on the performance of the highway network.

The Local Plan for Northumberland sets out policies to provide the needs for Northumberland for a 20 year period through to 2036. One of the key strategic objectives of this plan is to improve connectivity and movement in order to meet the changing needs of people and places. This will be achieved by utilising existing infrastructure and securing the delivery of new and necessary infrastructure upgrades. The Northumberland Line scheme will make a big contribution to delivering this objective.

Given the nature of the Northumberland Line scheme, no minimum or maximum parking standards are provided by NCC in the Local Plan. However, the Plan states that the following should be taken into consideration:

- The road safety and environmental problems as a result of increased parking demand in the area; and
- The impact on any parking restrictions, or lack of, in force on highways in the area.

These elements are discussed in greater detail in section 5 of this technical note.

4. **Demand Forecasting**

The rail demand generated by the Northumberland Line has been forecast using a spreadsheet-based mode-choice model. The structure of the model is documented in the Northumberland Line Economic Appraisal Report, included as an appendix to the Outline Business Case. The estimation of car park sizes at each station depends directly on outputs from this model. These include the forecast modelled demand (average per hour) for a given year and the 'zone to station' allocation for the 'car available' demand.

The average daily number of passengers accessing a rail station by car has been estimated based on the average hourly-demand from the model. Induced and long-distance demand have also been factored in. There are a number of inherent assumptions around the demand that feeds this calculation, which are summarised below. Italics denote whether this presents an upside risk (i.e. more car park spaces might be required) or a downside risk (less car park spaces might be required).

- There is always a certain level of 'forecasting risk' associated with any demand forecasts *<upside or downside risk>*;
- It is assumed that all demand from within the immediate walk-in catchment zone around each station will walk to the station. In practice, some of this demand could use other modes, including car *<upside risk>*;
- The assumption has been made that all 'car available' demand that originates beyond the immediate walk-in catchment zone will use car to access a station¹. In practice, some of this demand could use other modes to access the station (e.g. bus, walk, cycle, taxi) *<downside risk>*;
- Zones are allocated to specific stations in the demand model. In practice, there could be some alternative stations used (e.g. south Ashington zones using Blyth Bebside station) *<upside or downside risk>*.

Converting Demand into Estimates of the Number of Car Park Spaces Required

Two scenarios have been defined for the estimation of the number of vehicles parking at a station's car park, based on assumptions using National Rail Passenger Survey (NRPS) data and assumptions on average car occupancies. These scenarios provide the low and high end of a range that the demand for car park spaces (i.e. size of the car park) is likely to fall within.

The low scenario assumes that 42% of rail demand that uses a car to access the station uses the station's car park, based on the average across all stations in the North East². An average car occupancy rate of 1.49 people per car (average weekday car occupancy as stated by the TAG Databook, Table A1.3.3) has then been used to calculate the actual number of cars that want to park at the station.

The high scenario assumes that 64% of rail demand that uses a car to access the station uses the station's car park, based on Morpeth station data³. An average car occupancy rate of 1.43 people per car (average 7am to 10am weekday car occupancy as stated by the TAG Databook, Table A1.3.3) has then been used to calculate the actual number of cars that want to park at the station.

It needs to be acknowledged that these conversion factors used to convert 'rail demand using car to access a station' to 'actual demand for car park spaces' could vary on a station-by-station basis and are themselves based on observed data elsewhere and existing guidance.

The number of car parking spaces required at each station have been estimated based on a target occupancy rate of 85%, in line with the *Guidelines on the Preparation of Parking Strategies and Management* by the Institute of Highways and Transportation. This is not a risk, per se, but an application of guidance that adds further car parking spaces as an allowance for being able to find a space.

¹ With an associated assumption that all 'no car available' demand will use bus to access the station

² Which would therefore mean that 58% of rail demand that uses a car to access the station have been dropped-off ('kiss-and-ride')

³ Which would therefore mean that 36% of rail demand that uses a car to access the station have been dropped-off ('kiss-and-ride')

Based on regional station studies, two assumptions have been made for car park space re-occupancy rates, representing the number of times a car park space is used per day (1.25 in the low scenario and 1.10 in the high scenario). This range has been defined to cover considered risk around this assumption.

Results

Figure 2 presents the estimated car park sizes required to accommodate rail demand accessing each station by car in 2039, for each modelled scenario. This shows that the potential size of car park varies at each station site depending on whether it is Phase 1 or the Full Scheme (Phase 2), and also whether the operation of the service is Franchise or Concession based.

Ashington station is estimated to require a car park with between 80 and 180 spaces.

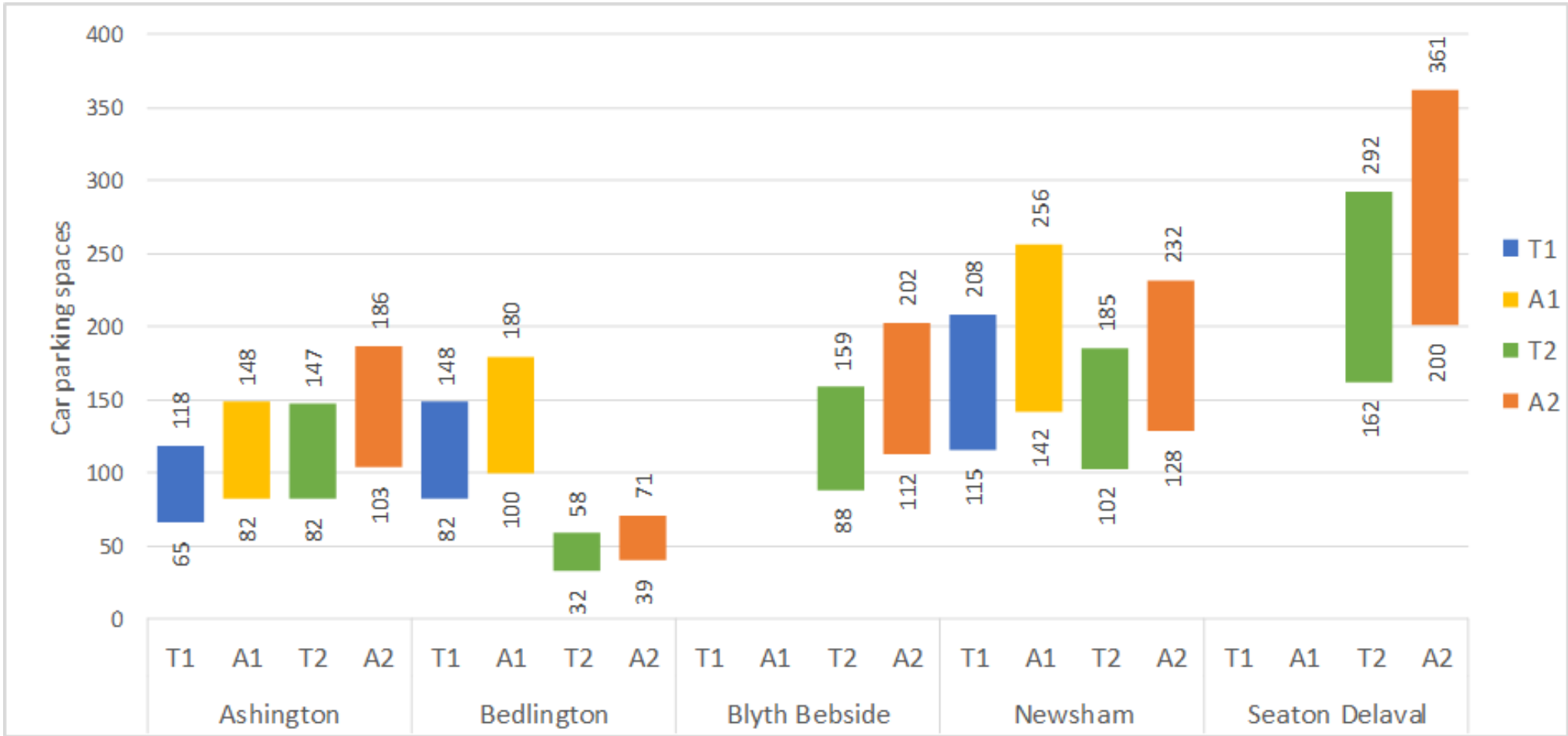
Bedlington station car park might require a similar level of spaces to Ashington if Blyth Bebside station is not built. However, in a scenario where Blyth Bebside station exists, then the demand for car park spaces at Bedlington drops considerably to between 30 and 70 spaces.

Blyth Bebside station car park is estimated to require between 100 and 200 spaces. However, the location of this station just off the A189 means that it might be attractive for longer distance journeys from origins further north, such as Ashington or Newbiggin-by-the-Sea. The inability to model these trips in this way is a constraint of the modelling tool, as highlighted in the previous section. The estimates for this station therefore, might be considered on the low side.

Newsham station car park is estimated to require between 100 and 250 spaces. The demand for spaces reduces slightly once stations at Blyth Bebside and Seaton Delaval are opened.

Seaton Delaval station car park is estimated to require between 160 and 360 spaces. This reflects the catchment area that this station has beyond the immediate walk-in catchment, which includes eastern parts of Cramlington, Seghill, Hartley, New Hartley, Old Hartley and Holywell.

Figure 2: Estimated Car Park Sizes, 2039



Identifying a Single Car Park Size Value

To inform the design of the station car parks, there is a need to identify a single value for the number of car park spaces required at each station. To identify this value, Option A2 has been used. This is the full scheme under a concession operation. It is considered the 'worst case' scenario for design purposes as it generates the greatest demand. Given the aspiration to deliver the full scheme, this seems the most appropriate scenario to consider.

A number of factors are used to convert the demand from the A2 scenario into a car park size requirement. An option to consider alongside the low and high range presented above, is to use an average value that sits in the middle of the low and high range. This is summarised in the table below.

Table 1: Demand Conversion Factors

Assumption/Factor	Low	Average	High
% of people who use a car to access station that park at the station car park	42%	53%	64%
Average car occupancy rate	1.49	1.46	1.43
Car park space re-occupancy rate	1.25	1.175	1.10

Taking each of these in turn, a decision needs to be made as to the most appropriate value to use to determine a single value for the required car park spaces at each station.

In terms of the percentage of people who use car to access the station, that park at the station car park, the low value of 42% is based on data from a number of stations across the North East, whereas the high value comes from data at Morpeth station specifically. There is a case for using either of these values; a sample across stations in the North East might be considered more appropriate, but what happens at Morpeth station could be considered representative of what might occur on the Northumberland Line. Therefore, the average value of 53% might present the most appropriate solution.

In terms of average car occupancy rates, these values have been sourced from TAG guidance and not local data. In the absence of local data, the use of TAG guidance remains the most suitable source. The high value of 1.43 is based on the morning peak period and, given that most car parks fill up during the morning peak, it is considered appropriate to use this value to determine a single value of car park spaces.

The rate of use of a car park space is a function of whether a station is predominantly used by commuters or not. A low turnover rate (eg: 1.10) means that a car park space is only really used by a commuter parked there all day. The demand profile on the Northumberland Line suggests a more balanced demand over the whole day and therefore, if choosing a single value, the value of 1.25 is more appropriate.

On the basis of the above, a number of possible 'single values' have been identified as follows:

- Based on the 'worst case' (high end of range for Option A2);
- Based on an average (for Option A2); or
- Taking the selected factor values as discussed above (for Option A2).

Table 2: Estimates of Car Park Sizes (single values – all based on Option A2) - 2039

Station	Worst Case	Average	Selected Values
Ashington	186	142	136
Bedlington	71	54	52
Blyth Bebside	202	154	147
Newsham	232	176	169
Seaton Delaval	361	274	263

There is little difference in the table above between the ‘average’ and ‘selected values’ car park sizes. In each case, they represent a circa 25% reduction on the worst case values. However, it must be recognised that the worst case scenario could materialise and therefore, if the size of the car park under a worst case scenario can be accommodated within the available land and budget for the scheme, the design of the car park should be progressed to achieve this number.

As the scheme is further refined and more information becomes available, the size of the car parks can be revisited, with the number of spaces reduced if required.

5. Stations

The previous section of this note identified the required size of the car park based on the outputs from the demand forecasting work for the Northumberland Line. It is also important that local characteristics at each site are taken into consideration, to ensure that the proposed car parking size is realistic, achievable and aligns with local policy for that area. Each of the stations are therefore considered in turn, in the remaining sections of this technical note.

Ashington

The proposed station at Ashington is located on the site of the former Ashington Station. Based on the outputs from the demand forecasting work, the maximum number of car park spaces required at this station is 186.

It is proposed that the car park for Ashington Station is located on the site of an existing car park, which serves the town centre area of Ashington. The existing car park has 113 spaces and is well used. To ensure that this car park demand is not displaced, which could have implications on the performance of the highway network, the number of car park spaces at the proposed station should include existing availability. The maximum number of car park spaces required at Ashington Station, therefore, is 299.

It is not possible to accommodate 299 car park spaces within the existing available land with a surface level car park. A decked solution is not desirable due to the cost and the visual intrusion that it might create. A design for the car park has therefore been produced assuming that additional land to the south of the existing car park can be purchased; this land is currently owned by Malhotra Land. The design is for 275 spaces and therefore does not fully accommodate the existing car park spaces and the worst case demand for the Northumberland Line.

The proposed Ashington Station is in the centre of Ashington and should be accessible by sustainable modes of transport. It is recognised however, that public transport links to the station could be improved to complement the benefits of the Northumberland Line. Given that 299 car park spaces cannot be accommodated within the available land, even with the purchase of the Malhotra Land, it is recommended that focus is given to improving public transport links to the station. Improved public transport links should help address any shortfall in supply of car park spaces, regardless of the status of the Malhotra Land.

Development aspirations for Ashington also need to be taken into consideration when determining the car parking provision at Ashington Station. Ashington town centre is a focal point for regeneration and

the improved transport links provided by the Northumberland Line should help ensure it becomes a destination in its own right. It is important that these development aspirations are not negatively impacted by traffic congestion caused by vehicles accessing and egressing the Ashington Station car park. The impact of the car park demand on highway congestion also needs to be taken into consideration before agreeing the final car park sizes.

Following a discussion between the Northumberland Line design team and Northumberland County Council, it was agreed that the Malhotra land should be purchased, subject to agreeing a suitable price. A design for a surface access car park with 275 spaces should therefore be progressed. This is subject to the outputs from traffic assessment work, which will demonstrate whether the highway network can accommodate this increase in demand.

Alongside the design of the Northumberland Line scheme, Northumberland County Council will work with public transport providers to improve bus links to the proposed Ashington Station. This will help address the shortfall in car park supply to accommodate the worst case parking demand. Should it not be possible to purchase the Malhotra Land, further work will be undertaken to improve access to Ashington Station through sustainable modes of transport. However, at this point, the decked solution for a car park may need to be revisited.

Recommendation: Progress car park design based on a surface car park solution with 275 spaces and the purchase of the Malhotra land.

Bedlington

The proposed station at Bedlington is located on the site of the former Bedlington Station. Based on the outputs from the demand forecasting work, the maximum number of car park spaces required at this station is 71.

The preferred location for a car park at Bedlington Station is still to be agreed. This is due to the limited number of sites available, which could accommodate the forecast demand. A design for the car park has been produced, which has 75 car park spaces. The site of this car park is to the north of Barrington Road and west of the railway line. However, a number of safety concerns have been raised as to the location of this site. Whilst other sites have been identified, it will prove difficult to accommodate 71 car park spaces when taking account of existing demand.

The location of the proposed Bedlington Station means that it is easily accessible by sustainable modes of transport. Bus stops are located on Ravensworth Street, only a short walking distance from the station entrance, with a frequent bus service connecting the station to the wider Bedlington area. Residential areas are also only a short walking distance from the station.

Given the good transport links to the station by sustainable modes of transport, it is reasonable to restrict car park supply at the station, whilst promoting sustainable modes of access. However, the risks of this approach need to be understood, as anecdotal evidence provided during the public consultation for the scheme suggests that car parking supply in the immediate vicinity of the proposed station is an issue. To ensure the Northumberland Line scheme does not produce an issue of on-street parking in the Bedlington Station area, Northumberland County Council may need to consider parking restrictions in the streets immediately surrounding the station.

Following a discussion between the Northumberland Line design team and Northumberland County Council, it was agreed that the car park for Bedlington Station should be progress based on the most accessible site, which may mean a shortfall in car park supply compared to the forecast worst case scenario for demand. Work will be undertaken to promote sustainable access to the site whilst considering whether parking restrictions in the immediate vicinity of the station are necessary.

Recommendation: Progress car park design based on most accessible site and the maximum number of spaces the available land permits

Blyth Bebside

The proposed station at Blyth Bebside is located on the south side of the A193 and will be accessed from a priority junction on Errington Street. Based on the outputs from the demand forecasting work, the maximum number of car park spaces required at this station is 202.

A number of car park designs for the Blyth Bebside station have been considered, taking account of the forecast demand for car park spaces and the availability of land. Car park design drawings are currently available showing 205 car park spaces, 293 car park spaces and 500 car park spaces.

Given its proximity to the A189, the Blyth Bebside station is being promoted as a strategic park and ride site. It is expected that vehicles travelling from further afield and using the A189 to access Tyne and Wear will park at the Blyth Bebside station and use the Northumberland Line to complete their journey.

The structure of the mode-choice model used to forecast demand for the Northumberland Line scheme means that it is not possible to fully reflect the demand that will likely use the Blyth Bebside station. In the mode-choice model, demand is allocated to the nearest station and does not take account of how accessible each station is. Based on this limitation within the modelling approach, it is reasonable to assume that demand for parking at the Blyth Bebside station will be higher than that forecast.

The Blyth Beside site is segregated from the main urban centre of Blyth by the busy A189 dual carriageway. Pedestrian and cycling facilities between Blyth and the proposed Bebside Station are considered poor, and public transport services to the proposed station are infrequent. This means that there is likely to be a greater reliance on the car to access this station. It is however noted that work is ongoing to look at how pedestrian access to the station could be improved.

The A189/A193 grade separated junction to the east of the proposed station is known to be congested in the AM and PM peak periods. Vehicles are often observed to queue back down the slip roads onto the A189. Blyth has been identified in the Local Plan as an area for employment growth, which will only serve to increase this congestion. Whilst the Northumberland Line scheme is seen as key for removing vehicles from the highway network, the location of the Blyth Bebside station is likely to put increased pressure on an existing congestion hotspot. The size of the car park for the Blyth Bebside station therefore will be dependent on the ability of the A189/A193 grade separated junction to accommodate this increase in traffic.

Following a discussion between the design team and Northumberland County Council, it was agreed that a car park of 293 spaces would be progressed for Blyth Bebside station. This will accommodate the worst case scenario from the demand forecasting work, but also takes into account the likely underestimation of demand from people travelling from further afield. The size of the car park will be reviewed following traffic assessment work to assess the highway impact on the A189/A193 junction.

Recommendation: Progress car park design based on a 293 space car park

Newsham

The proposed station at Newsham is located on the south side of the A1061 and will be accessed from a fourth arm at the A1061/B1523 roundabout. Based on the outputs from the demand forecasting work, the maximum number of car park spaces required at this station is 232.

The Newsham Station is located on the fringes of Blyth in greenbelt land. Although development in the greenbelt is against Northumberland County Council policy objectives, a car park in this location will encourage a modal shift to sustainable modes of transport and is therefore expected to be accepted. The location of the station on the fringes of the town means that there is likely to be a dependency on travelling to the station by car from residential areas of Blyth further afield.

A design for Newsham station has been prepared which can accommodate the 232 spaces required, based on the outputs from the demand forecasting work; given the land, the proposed design has 233 spaces. Should the location of the station need to change, to complement designs being carried out for the dualling of the A1061, it will still be possible to have 232 spaces within the available land parcel.

Whilst there are no obvious issues at Newsham in designing a car park to accommodate the worst case demand for car parking from the demand forecasting work, it is acknowledged that sustainable access

to the station could be improved and promoted as an alternative to the car. The station is within walking/cycling distance of a large residential area and the station is served by key bus routes into Blyth.

Following a discussion between the design team and Northumberland County Council, it was agreed to progress the design for Newsham Station based on 233 car park spaces, but with a recognition that work should be done to promote the use of sustainable modes of transport to access the station.

It is noted that the project team is still in discussions with the residents of Railway Cottages on how to provide private car parking and the requirements for private parking have not been assessed and considered within this note.

Recommendation: Progress car park design based on a 233 space car park

Seaton Delaval

The proposed station at Seaton Delaval is located south of the A192, east of the railway line and west of the main village. Based on the outputs from the demand forecasting work, the maximum number of car park spaces required at this station is 361. This larger car park at Seaton Delaval reflects the catchment area of the station, which extends to eastern parts of Cramlington, Seghill, Hartley, New Hartley, Old Hartley and Holywell.

A car park design has been prepared for Seaton Delaval, with provision for 274 spaces; this is the 'average' number of spaces that might be required and does not provide sufficient spaces for the worst case scenario. However, it is acknowledged that the car park can be phased to 361 spaces, as and when demand requires it. Given the size of the car park in a semi-rural location, it is felt that this approach will minimise the impact of the car park on the landscape of the area, whilst future proofing the station for an increase in demand in the future.

Due to the large catchment area for Seaton Delaval Station, a large proportion of people using the Northumberland Line scheme will be reliant on their car to access the station. However, a review of transport connections to the proposed Seaton Delaval Station has shown that there are opportunities to improve connections to nearby villages. This is particularly true of Seghill, which is located to the south of the station site and is accessible by a footpath. This footpath would need to be upgraded to promote this route as a means of accessing Seaton Delaval station.

There are known highway capacity issues within the vicinity of the proposed Seaton Delaval station. Whilst the car park size needs to accommodate the forecast demand for the station, highway capacity improvement measures may need to be delivered alongside this car park to ensure that highway network performance is not unduly impacted.

Following a discussion between the design team and Northumberland County Council, it was agreed to progress with the current design for 274 spaces, provided that the size of the car park can be increased in the future if required. Final agreement on the car park size at Seaton Delaval Station will be dependent on the outcome of transport assessment works to determine any necessary highway mitigation measures. Work should be undertaken to improve the pedestrian and cycling links to the station from nearby villages.

Recommendation: Progress car park design based on a 274 space car park

6. Summary and Conclusions

AECOM is currently working with Northumberland County Council to reintroduce passenger services on the railway line between Ashington and Newcastle. As part of the scheme, five new railway stations will be delivered, with a six station in North Tyneside upgraded to serve both heavy rail and the Tyne and Wear metro.

To progress the design of the Northumberland Line scheme, a decision needs to be taken on the size of the car park to be provided at each of the new stations. This should be informed by demand forecasting work undertaken for the scheme, but also taking account of local conditions, transport policy objectives and development aspirations.

This technical note has summarised the outputs from the demand forecasting work, which give a number of required spaces at each station based on the worst case scenario; i.e. the scenario which generates the most demand for car parking at the station. A review of each station has been undertaken to determine whether it is possible to accommodate this number of spaces within the available land, and to identify whether any other measures are needed to promote alternative modes of transport for accessing the stations.

The final recommendations for progressing the design of each station are summarised in the table below.

The design for car parks at each new station on the Northumberland Line should be progressed based on the following number of spaces:

- Ashington: 275 spaces
- Bedlington: The number of spaces possible within the available land (not to exceed 71 spaces)
- Blyth Bebside: 293 spaces
- Newsham: 233 spaces
- Seaton Delaval: 274 spaces

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