

NORTHUMBERLAND LINE ORDER
APPLICANT'S UPDATE TO INQUIRY (ISSUE NO. 2)

11 NOVEMBER 2021

1. This note provides responses to the queries raised by the Inspector on day 2 of the inquiry (10 November 2021). The responses are set out below under the name of the relevant witness.

STUART McNAUGHTON

Sources for problems identified in paragraphs 3.3 and 3.4

2. The text of paragraph 3.3 is adapted from the first paragraph on p.11 of the Outline Business Case (OBC) (APP-40-0).
3. Paragraph 3.4.1 (**car ownership**) – the forecast that car ownership is set to increase in South East Northumberland is set out in Table 2-7 of the OBC (see p.38) and is summarised at paragraph 2.3.7 of the OBC. Table 3 of the South East Northumberland Public Transport Corridor Study (APP-39) also sets out the future projections for car ownership in the area (see p.22).
4. Paragraph 3.4.2 (**mode share**) – the box labelled 'Emerging Challenges' on p.24 of the OBC sets out that public transport usage in Northumberland is lower than the national average. Paragraph 2.3.7 of the 'South East Northumberland Public Transport Corridor Study' (the 'Public Transport Corridor Study') (APP-39) sets out that private motor car usage is higher in Northumberland than the national average. Information about congestion and air quality can be found in section 2.4.1 of the OBC and section 4 of the Public Transport Corridor Study.
5. Paragraph 3.4.3 (**commuter trips**) – Figure 11 of the Public Transport Corridor Study contains data on the outflow of commuters from Northumberland to Tyne and Wear (see p.25). Figure 18 of the Public Transport Corridor Study presents the A19 Congestion Portrait.
6. Paragraph 3.4.4 (**links of economic importance**) – Table 17 of the Public Transport Corridor Study contains information about public transport journey times to key employment sites.
7. Paragraph 3.4.5 (**accessibility**) – section 3.8 of the Public Transport Corridor Study contains information relating to public transport accessibility.
8. Paragraph 3.4.6 (**environmental issues**) – section 5.4.4 of the Public Transport Corridor Study contains information relating to air quality and how this is impacted by transport emissions. Section 4.5.3.2 and Table 4-7 of the OBC set out further information relating to air quality.
9. Paragraph 3.4.7 (**housing**) – section 2.3.1 of the OBC addresses the under delivery of housing in South East Northumberland, referring to the Northumberland Draft Local Plan (see p.28). Sections 2.3.3.5 and 2.5.1 of the Public Transport Corridor Study also contain information relating to local housing provision.

Mode shift objective (paragraph 4.1.2)

10. The mode shift objective is set out in principle in the Public Transport Corridor Study (see section 3.3.2 on p.23) and the Outline Business Case ('OBC') [APP-40] (see Objective 2 on p.62). The specific target of 4% mode shift is based on the outputs of the demand modelling and reflects the anticipated modal shift as a result of the introduction of the train service.

Impact on business case of delay to introduction of electric rolling stock

11. If battery electric multiple units (BEMU) rolling stock was not introduced in 2026 as anticipated, the impact on Scheme costs and benefits would be as follows:
 - a. There would be no impact on the capital costs of the Scheme.
 - b. There would be a slight reduction in annual operational expenditure of circa 5%. BEMU annual opex is 5% higher than the class 158 annual opex (according to figures provided by Northern Trains).
 - c. There is also an impact on benefits. BEMU journey times are slightly quicker. For the purposes of the business case, demand increases by 3% when the BEMU is introduced.

Length of line the Scheme

12. The length of the route from Benton North Junction to Ashington station is 23.0km
13. The length of the route from Newcastle Central to Ashington station is 30.0km

Mobilisation costs for Northern Trains

14. As confirmed in Mr McNaughton's evidence, service mobilisation (e.g. driver training and recruitment) would not normally be included in a transport business case. Northern Trains has confirmed that these costs include commercially sensitive information. The Applicant is seeking further clarification from Northern and will aim to give the inquiry a broad indication of the likely level of mobilisation costs without disclosing any commercially sensitive information.

JULIAN SINDALL

Holywell UWC (Table 3)

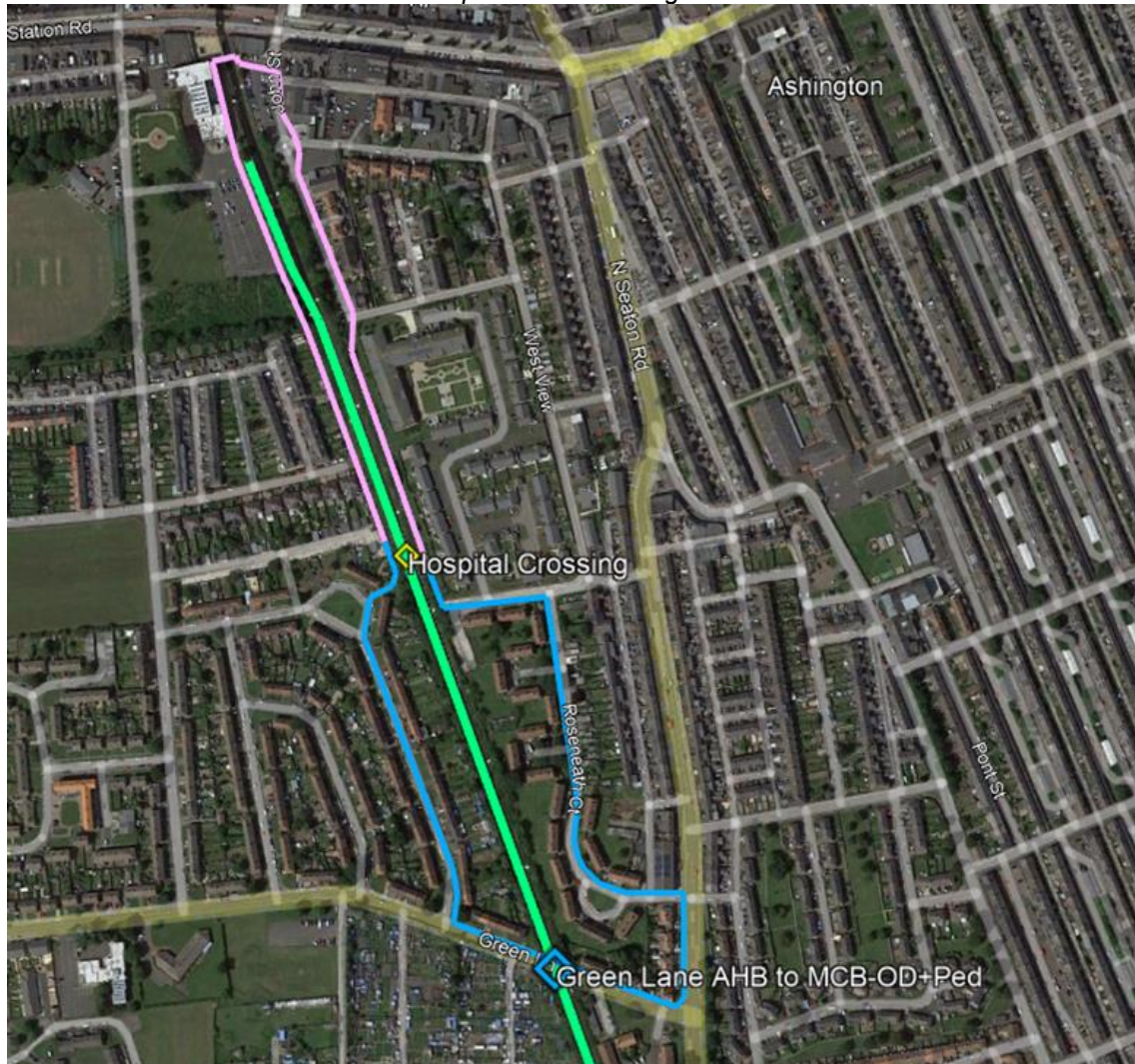
15. Table 3 – The position in respect of Holywell UWC has changed since Julian Sindall's proof was prepared. Holywell UWC is no longer proposed to be closed through the Order. This has been determined following further review by Network Rail in light of the objection from Northumberland Estates. The closure is not regarded as necessary, as the crossing is not currently in use and the gates on either side of the railway are locked. The rights across the crossing will therefore not be extinguished.
16. There is one point of correction to the verbal clarification provided to the inquiry on 10 Nov. In verbal submissions, the Applicant stated that the crossing would therefore become what is known as a sleeping dog'. In fact, this is not the correct term. The rights across the crossing will remain, but it will simply not be in use.

Distance between Hospital level crossing – Ashington Station and Green Lane level crossing

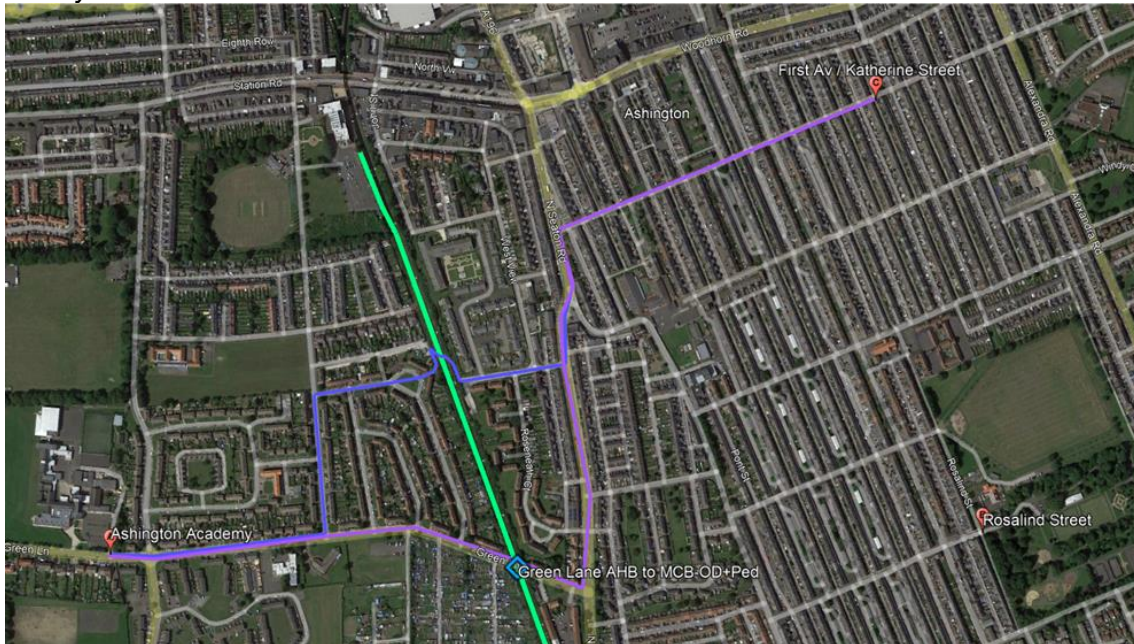
17. The distance between Hospital level crossing and Ashington Station and Green Lane level crossing are given below:
18. If Hospital level crossing was closed with no replacement, the walking distance diversion from one side of the existing crossing to the other is approximately 845m to the north via Ashington station ramp and steps (see pink line on Plan 1 below), or 1,000m to the south via Green Lane (see blue line on Plan 1 below).
19. In practice, few people would actually make this journey; most pedestrians are likely to be travelling from further to the west of the site, to a point further to the east e.g. a nominal route from Ashington Academy to north east Ashington would be 1,700m via Hospital crossing, or

1,960m via Green Lane i.e. an increase of approx. 260m or 15% (see purple line on Plan 2 below).

Plan 1: Notional diversion route at Hospital level crossing



Plan 2: Notional diversion routes between origin and destination points east and west of the railway



Users of Hospital level crossing (paragraph 3.88)

20. Darren Lord has reviewed the census data and determined that there are an average of 167 vulnerable users using the crossing on a weekday. Around 95% of these are unaccompanied children. Note, the survey was carried out in September i.e. during term time.

Consultation on alternatives to underpass

21. In response to the Inspector's question with regards to alternatives to the underpass, the primary options that will be considered are:
 - a. Closure with no alternative/replacement crossing
 - b. Closure with a bridge roughly in the location of the current crossing
 - c. Closure with a bridge in the vicinity of Ashington Station
22. The Applicant would expect it will take up to 6 months to develop the options, carry out any necessary consultation and progress outline design to a preferred option, although this time period may be reduced if a closure with no replacement is selected. Any alternative would be taken forward by Network Rail under the relevant procedures in the Highways Act 1980.

RUSSELL MILLS

Mr and Mrs Doyle

23. The Applicant is aiming to submit a joint statement with Mr and Mrs Doyle confirming that heads of terms for the purchase of the whole of the site have been agreed. A draft form of words has been sent to Mr and Mrs Doyle's solicitor. As soon as the wording is approved, it will be submitted to the inquiry.

Transfer of benefit of the Order

24. The Inspector asked whether, in view of the proposed delivery arrangements for the Scheme, it is necessary for article 27 of the draft Order to provide that the benefit of the Order may be transferred to *any* party, rather than only to Network Rail.
25. The Applicant considers this provision is appropriate to provide flexibility to enable the benefit of any provisions of the Order to be transferred to another person if required. At the moment, there is no intention that such a transfer would be required. But circumstances could arise in which this would be appropriate. For example, it may be determined that the contractor rather than NCC should be responsible for exercising the power of temporary possession to secure land required for temporary worksites.
26. This is a standard provision which is included in statutory instruments authorising infrastructure. Under paragraph 27(4) a transfer to a party other than Network Rail requires the Secretary of State's consent, and the Secretary of State would need to be satisfied that the transferee could meet any liabilities associated with the exercise of the power transferred.

Temporary stopping up of streets

27. Schedule 4 to the draft Order identifies those streets which the Applicant knows will need to be temporarily stopped up during construction. Although the Scheme has now appointed a construction contractor, it is not possible at this stage to determine that no other streets will need to be temporarily stopped up during construction. The detailed construction methodology (e.g. type of plant used) has not yet been determined and this could influence whether not any temporary street closures are required.
28. Accordingly, it is appropriate that article 9 (formerly article 10) provides flexibility for the Council to temporarily stop up any street should this be necessary for the purposes of construction. The power can only be exercised with the consent of the street authority which may attach reasonable conditions to any such consent.