

A1 Birtley to Coal House

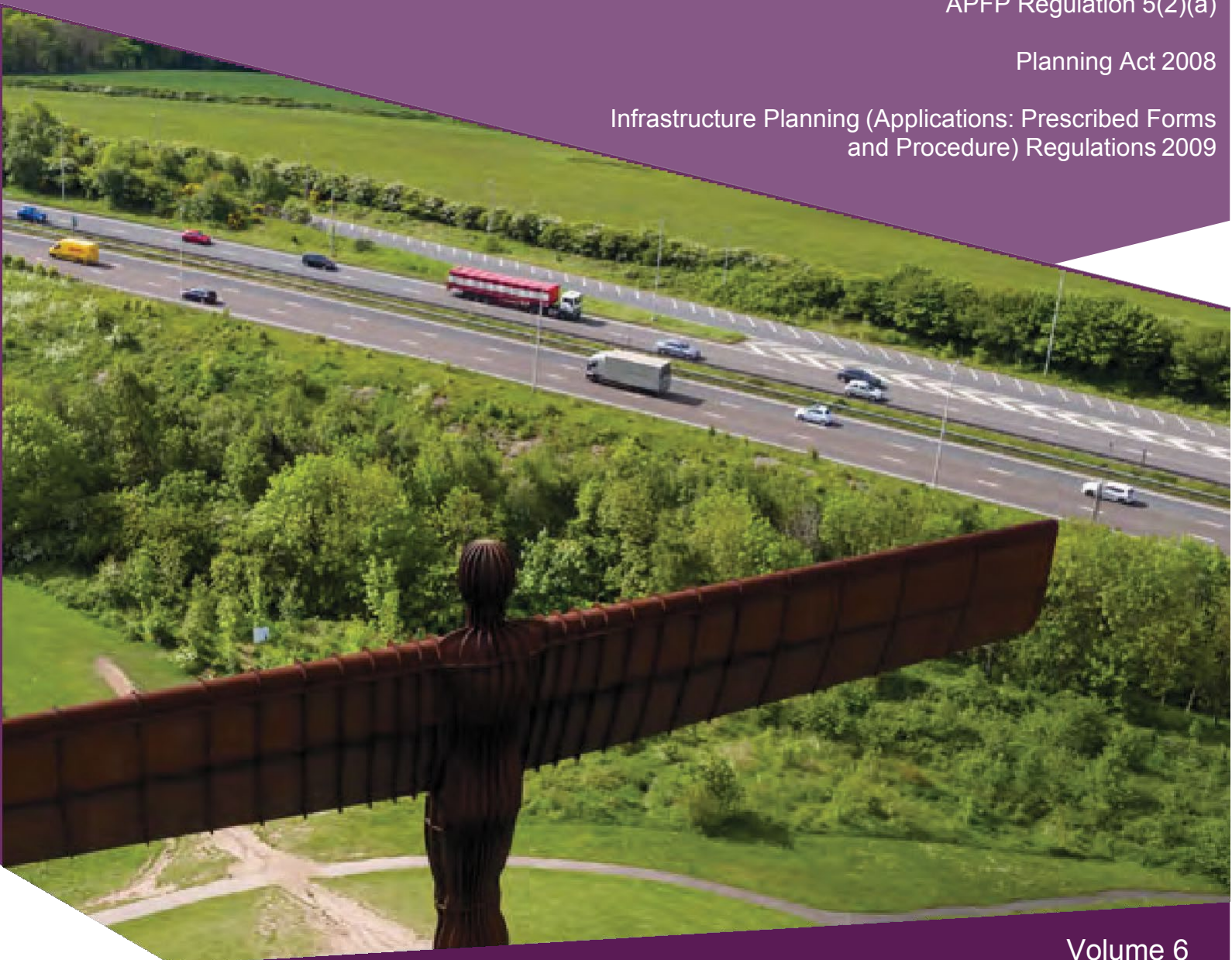
Scheme Number: TR010031

6.1 Environmental Statement Chapter 1 Introduction

APFP Regulation 5(2)(a)

Planning Act 2008

Infrastructure Planning (Applications: Prescribed Forms
and Procedure) Regulations 2009



Infrastructure Planning

Planning Act 2008

**The Infrastructure Planning
(Applications: Prescribed Forms and
Procedures) Regulations 2009**

**A1 Birtley to Coal House
Development Consent Order 20[xx]**

Environmental Statement

Regulation Reference:	APFP Regulation 5(2)(a)
Planning Inspectorate Scheme Reference	TR010031
Application Document Reference	TR010031/APP/6.1
Author:	A1 Birtley to Coal House Project Team, Highways England

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1.1. This Environmental Statement (ES) relates to an application made by Highways England (the Applicant) to the Planning Inspectorate (the Inspectorate) on behalf of the Secretary of State for Transport under section 37 of the Planning Act 2008 (2008 Act) (**Ref 1.1**) for a Development Consent Order (DCO). If made, the DCO would grant consent to construct and operate the proposed works to the A1 Trunk Road between Birtley (junction 65) and Coal House (junction 67) (the Scheme). A detailed description of the Scheme can be found in **Chapter 2** of this ES. The Scheme is a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) which must be authorised by a DCO.
- 1.1.2. This ES reports the results of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). EIA is an iterative process that aims to gain an in-depth appreciation of beneficial and adverse environmental consequences of a scheme. The purpose of the ES is to present the findings of the EIA for the Scheme in a way that ensures that the significant environmental effects are sufficiently described and understood for the purposes of an application for development consent.
- 1.1.3. This ES provides sufficient information to reach a reasoned conclusion on the significant environmental effects of the Scheme. The ES is also intended to enable other interested parties who have a role, or wish to participate, in the statutory decision-making process to understand the nature of the Scheme.
- 1.1.4. This ES has been produced in compliance with Schedule 4 of the Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (**Ref 1.2**) (EIA Regulations), which states the following should be included:
- a)** A description of the proposed development comprising information on the site, design, size and other relevant features of the development.
 - b)** A description of the likely significant effects of the proposed development on the environment.
 - c)** A description of any features of the proposed development, or measures envisaged to avoid, prevent or reduce and, if possible, offset likely significant adverse effects on the environment.
 - d)** A description of the reasonable alternatives studied by the applicant, which are relevant to the proposed development and its specific characteristics, and an indication of the main reasons for the option chosen, taking into account the effects of the development on the environment.
 - e)** A non-technical summary of the information.
 - f)** Any additional information relevant to the specific characteristics of the development or type of development and to the environmental features likely to be significantly affected.

- 1.1.5. The scope of this ES has also been informed by engagement with the Inspectorate through a request to them for a Scoping Opinion. The request was made on 8 November 2017 and was accompanied by a Scoping Report. The Scoping Opinion was received on 18 December 2017. The Scoping Opinion and the Scoping Opinion Response Table are presented in **Appendix 4.1** of this ES (**Application Document Reference: TR010031/APP/6.3**). The Scoping Report and the Scoping Opinion are also available to view via the following links:
- a. The Scoping Report: <https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/projects/TR010031/TR010031-000010-TR010031%20-%20Scoping%20Report.pdf>
 - b. The Scoping Opinion <https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/projects/TR010031/TR010031-000032-A1BC%20-%20Scoping%20Opinion.pdf>
- 1.1.6. This ES is structured as follows:
- a. ES main text, setting out the environmental assessment in Chapters (**Application Document Reference: TR010031/APP/6.1**).
 - b. ES figures, including drawings, photos and other illustrative material (**Application Document Reference: TR010031/APP/6.2**).
 - c. ES technical appendices (Application Document Reference: TR010031/APP/6.3).
 - d. Non-Technical Summary (NTS) (Application Document Reference: TR010031/APP/6.4).
- 1.1.7. This ES is organised into 16 chapters similar to that described in the Scoping Report for this Scheme. This ES is in accordance with the EIA Regulations and follows the content structure set out below:
- a. **Chapter 1** – Introduction to the ES including the purpose of the document and a brief description of the legislative and policy framework.
 - b. **Chapter 2** – “The Scheme” provides information on the need for the Scheme, a description of the Scheme, and the Scheme objectives.
 - c. **Chapter 3** – “Assessment of Alternatives” provides a description of alternatives considered.
 - d. **Chapter 4** – “Environmental Assessment Methodology” summarises the EIA process.
 - e. **Chapters 5 to 14** – detail the EIA process, legislative and policy framework, methodology, design, mitigation and enhancement measures and the likely significant effects for each of the environmental topics, namely:
 - i. Chapter 5 Air Quality
 - ii. Chapter 7 Landscape and Visual
 - iii. Chapter 8 Biodiversity
 - iv. Chapter 9 Geology and Soils
 - v. Chapter 10 Material Resources
 - vi. Chapter 11 Noise and Vibration
 - vii. Chapter 12 Population and Human Health

- viii. Chapter 13 Road Drainage and the Water Environment
 - ix. Chapter 14 Climate
 - f. **Chapter 15 – “Cumulative and Combined Assessment”** details the methodology and outcomes of the assessment of cumulative and in-combination effects.
 - g. **Chapter 16– “Summary”** provides a summary of the likely significant effects reported in the ES.
- 1.1.8. A glossary of technical terms and abbreviations is included in **Chapter 0** of this ES.
- 1.1.9. Although this ES is a stand-alone report, there are other documents that have been produced to support the application for development consent, and which are relevant to the EIA process. All documents that have been referred to in this ES are referenced within the text.
- 1.1.10. In addition to this ES, a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) **Appendix 8.2 (Application Document Reference: TR010031/APP/6.3)** and Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) **Appendix 13.1 (Application Document Reference: TR010031/APP/6.3)** have been carried out to support information presented within this ES. The ES also utilises information from the Transport Assessment Report (TAR) (**Application Document Reference: TR010031/APP/7.3**).

1.2 OVERVIEW OF THE SCHEME

- 1.2.1. The Scheme is located between land north of junction 67 (Coal House) and junction 65 (Birtley) of the A1 in Gateshead. It aims to increase capacity and reduce congestion along this section of the A1 trunk road. Most of the work would take place within the existing highway boundary. However, some permanent and temporary land-take would be required alongside the A1 at certain points to enable the additional carriageway to be constructed and for the construction of an offline replacement for Allerdene Bridge.
- 1.2.2. The Scheme would provide additional road capacity by widening of the southbound carriageway from three to four lanes and widening of the northbound carriageway from two to three lanes (with an additional lane between junctions) between junction 67 (Coal House) and junction 65 (Birtley). The additional lane between the junctions would help manage traffic joining and leaving the A1 on the northbound carriageway. The Scheme would also include changes to signage and road markings on the southbound carriageway between just south of junction 68 (Lobley Hill) and junction 67 (Coal House).
- 1.2.3. The Scheme includes a replacement bridge structure where the A1 crosses over the East Coast Main Line (ECML), 40m to the immediate south of the existing Allerdene Bridge structure, which would tie in to the existing carriageways at junction 67 (Coal House) and north of junction 66 (Eighton Lodge). The Scheme would include a replacement North Dene Footbridge located between junction 66 (Eighton Lodge) and junction 65 (Birtley) to accommodate the widening of the A1. Diversion of existing utilities would also be required as part of the Scheme.

- 1.2.4. The objectives and need for the Scheme are set out in the Planning Statement (**Application Document Reference: TR010031/APP/7.1**).

1.3 LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY FRAMEWORK

- 1.3.1. The Scheme is defined as an NSIP under Section 14(1)(h) and Section 22(1)(b) of the 2008 Act because:
- a. It comprises the alteration of a highway.
 - b. The highway to be altered is wholly within England.
 - c. Highways England Company Ltd is the strategic highway authority for the highway.
 - d. The speed limit is 50mph or greater and the Scheme Footprint at 85.57 hectares is greater than the 12.5 hectares threshold.
- 1.3.2. In accordance with the above legislation, a DCO is required to build, operate and maintain the Scheme.
- 1.3.3. The size of the Scheme means it is classified as an Annex II highway development 10(b) (e) of the EIA Directive (2014/52/EU). It should also be noted that the Scheme has been identified as being in a “sensitive area” due to the location of the Bowes Railway Scheduled Monument (SM) which lies within the Scheme Footprint. Sensitive Areas are defined in Regulation 2 of The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (**Ref 1.3**).
- 1.3.4. This ES has been prepared and submitted to comply with the requirements of Regulation 5(2)(a) of the Infrastructure Planning (Applications: Prescribed Forms and Procedure) Regulations 2009 (**Ref 1.4**) (2009 Regulations). This requires an application for a DCO to be accompanied by an ES if the Scheme has been identified as an ‘EIA development’.
- 1.3.5. This ES will be submitted as part of the application for development consent, alongside a number of other documents.
- 1.3.6. In addition to the DCO, there are other regulatory regimes that have to be complied with and licences and/or consents that would need to be obtained to allow the Scheme to proceed including:
- a. European Species and Notable species licences
 - b. Environmental Permit: Flood Risk Activities
 - c. Ordinary Watercourse Consent
 - d. Waste exemption for re-use of material on site (if required)
- 1.3.7. Details of how these other regulatory regimes and consent requirements have been, or are to be addressed, are set out in the Consents and Agreements Position Statement (**Application Document Reference: TR010031/APP/3.3**).
- 1.3.8. In addition to this ES, the following application documents have been produced in accordance with Regulation 5 of the 2009 Regulations:

- a. Statement Relating to Statutory Nuisance - Reg 5(2)(f) (**Application Document Reference: TR010031/APP/5.2**).
- b. Habitat Regulations Assessment - Reg 5(2)(g) **Appendix 8.2** of this ES (**Application Document Reference: TR010031/APP/6.3**).
- c. Plan and Assessment of Nature Conservation Effects - Reg 5(2)(l). The relevant plans are in **Figure 8.1** and **Figure 8.2** of this ES (**Application Document Reference: TR010031/APP/6.2**). The assessment of nature conservation effects is contained within **Chapter 7 Landscape and Visual**, **Chapter 8 Biodiversity** and **Chapter 13 Road Drainage and the Water Environment** of this ES (**Application Document Reference: TR010031/APP/6.1**) and **Appendix 13.2** of this ES (**Application Document Reference: TR010031/APP/6.3**).
- d. Plan and Assessment of Historic Environment Effects - Reg 5(2)(m). The relevant plans are **Figure 6.1** and **Figure 6.2** of this ES (**Application Document Reference: TR010031/APP/6.2**) and the Assessment is within **Chapter 6 Cultural Heritage** of this ES (**Application Document Reference: TR010031/APP/6.1**)
- e. Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) - Reg 5(2)(e) **Appendix 13.1** of this ES (**Application Document Reference: TR010031/APP/6.3**).

1.4 RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

- 1.4.1. Key planning policies have been considered during the design phase of the Scheme and specific guidance and policies that apply to the various technical assessments that have been undertaken are described further in relevant chapters of this ES. Under section 104 of the 2008 Act, the determination of the application for development consent in respect of the Scheme must be made in accordance with any relevant national policy statement (NPS) designated by the Secretary of State for Transport, except in limited circumstances. The relevant NPS is the National Policy Statement for National Networks (NPS NN) (**Ref 1.5**).

NATIONAL POLICY STATEMENT FOR NATIONAL NETWORKS

- 1.4.2. The NPS NN sets out the Government's policies for rail and road NSIPs for England. It also provides for the policies applying to promoters of linear schemes, in this case Highways England.
- 1.4.3. Other national, regional and local policies that may be important and relevant to the decision on the grant of development for the Scheme are briefly described below and further details can be found in the Planning Statement (**Application Document Reference: TR010031/APP/7.1**):

NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

- 1.4.4. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (**Ref 1.6**) is a statement of central government guidance on planning policy, which, when introduced in 2012, replaced the previous system of topic-specific Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) and Planning Policy Statements (PPS). The NPPF was revised in July 2018 and updated in February 2019.

GATESHEAD COUNCIL LOCAL PLAN

- 1.4.5. The NPPF places a requirement upon Local Planning Authorities to produce a set of planning documents called the Local Plan. The Gateshead Council Local Plan covers the full set of planning policies that will manage and influence future development in Gateshead and is currently made up of several documents including:
- a. Core Strategy and Urban Core Plan (CSUCP)** for Gateshead and Newcastle upon Tyne 2010-2030 (adopted 2015) (**Ref 1.7**) is a strategic planning framework that will guide development in Newcastle and Gateshead to 2030. It is the first part of both councils' Local Plan, and covers the whole of the area within the administrative boundaries of Gateshead and Newcastle.
 - b. Gateshead Local Plan Policies** (adopted 2015) (**Ref 1.8**) comprises policies recently adopted as part of the Core Strategy and Urban Core Plan, and the saved policies of the Gateshead Unitary Development Plan 2007.
 - c. Making Spaces for Growing Places Draft Plan (October 2017)** sets out more detailed policies for across the Borough, including development management policies to guide decision making on planning applications and defines areas allocated, or designated, for specific purposes.

TYNE AND WEAR LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN 3 STRATEGY 2011-21 (2011)

- 1.4.6. Tyne and Wear Local Transport Plan 3 Strategy 2011-21 (2011) (**Ref 1.9**) is the third Local Transport Plan (LTP3) for Tyne and Wear. It comprises a ten-year strategy covering all forms of transport in Tyne and Wear, in a series of three-year delivery plans setting out how the strategy will be put into effect at a local level. This Plan was produced by the Tyne and Wear Integrated Transport Authority on behalf of the five local authorities in Tyne and Wear (Gateshead, Newcastle, North Tyneside, South Tyneside and Sunderland).
- 1.4.7. Strategic transport policy in the region is now overseen by the North-East Combined Authority across seven local authority areas (Gateshead, Newcastle, North Tyneside, South Tyneside, Sunderland, County Durham and Northumberland). The Combined Authority is presently producing a Transport Plan for the region which will supersede the current LTPs for Tyne and Wear, Durham and Northumberland.

HIGHWAYS ENGLAND GUIDANCE AND STANDARDS

- a. Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) (Ref 1.10)** – the 15 volumes of DMRB provide guidance for all aspects of the design of roads and bridges in the UK. Volume 10 covers environmental mitigation (through environmental design and management) and Volume 11 governs EIA. Other volumes cover other aspects of the design and preparation of highways schemes.
- b. Highways England Biodiversity Plan (Ref 1.11)** - This Highways England biodiversity plan aims to halt the decline in the vitality of habitats and plant and animal populations on and around the road network. The Biodiversity Plan contains five key outcomes, with a

range of actions designed to achieve these outcomes by the end of the plan period (2020).

- c. **Highways England Licence (Ref 1.12)** – Highways England is a government company that operates under a licence granted by the Secretary of State in April 2015. This document sets out the Secretary of State’s statutory directions and guidance to Highways England and includes duties with regards to the environment and sustainable development and design.

1.5 THE APPLICANT

- 1.5.1. Highways England is the Strategic Highways Company as defined in the Infrastructure Act 2015. It is responsible for the operation, maintenance and improvement of England’s motorways and major ‘A’ roads. Highways England is defined as the Applicant under the 2008 Act.

1.6 COMPETENT EXPERT EVIDENCE

- 1.6.1. The EU Directive 2014/52/EU paragraph 33 requires that:
- 1.6.2. “Experts involved in the preparation of environmental impact assessment reports should be qualified and competent. Sufficient expertise, in the relevant field of the project concerned, is required for the purpose of its examination by the competent authorities in order to ensure that the information provided by the developer is complete and of a high level of quality.”
- 1.6.3. The competence of those persons contributing to the production of each ES chapter is included in each individual chapter. The competence of those persons involved in the coordination of this ES is included in **Table 1-1** below.

Table 1-1 - Competent expert evidence: EIA coordination and management

Name	Role	Qualifications	Experience
Nicola Ashworth	Environmental Assessment Lead – responsible for co-ordinating the ES	BSc in Geography MSc in Environmental Engineering Member of the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment Chartered Environmentalist	18 years’ experience in environmental management of engineering schemes. Nicola was the environmental assessment lead for the Scheme for Options Selection. Other recent relevant experience includes environmental coordinator for A1 Coal House to Metro Centre Improvement scheme (Construction Preparation stage) and the A19 A1058 Coast Road Junction Improvement scheme (Preliminary Design stage to Construction, Commissioning & Handover).

Name	Role	Qualifications	Experience
Kevin Stubbs	Technical Director – responsible for technical review and delivery of the ES	HND in Rural Resources and their Management MA in Landscape Management Chartered Member of the Landscape Institute Member of the Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management	30 years' experience in the environmental sector. Kevin was the technical director for the Scheme during Options Identification and Options Selection stages. Other recent relevant experience includes technical director for A19 Norton to Wynyard Improvement scheme (Preliminary Design stage) and the A1 Scotswood to North Brunton Improvement scheme (Options Identification & Options Selection stages).

1.7 ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT AVAILABILITY

- 1.7.1. Electronic copies of the ES and NTS can be accessed at:
<https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/projects/north-east/a1-birtley-to-coal-house-improvement-scheme/>
- 1.7.2. In addition, electronic copies may be made available on disk and USB via request to the Applicant on the address below.

A1 Birtley to Coal House Project Team
 Highways England
 Lateral
 8 City Walk
 Leeds
 LS11 9AT
 Email: A1BirtleytoCoalhouse@highwaysengland.co.uk

1.8 AVAILABILITY OF FURTHER INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHEME

- 1.8.1. Any requests for further information about the Scheme should be made in writing to the A1 Birtley to Coal House Project Team at the address detailed above.

REFERENCES

Ref. 1.1 The Planning Act 2008. Available at:

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2008/29/contents>

Ref. 1.2 The Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017. Available at: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2017/572/contents/made>

Ref. 1.3 The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017. Available at: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2017/571/contents/made>

Ref. 1.4 The Infrastructure Planning (Applications: Prescribed Forms and Procedure) Regulations 2009. Available at:

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2009/2264/contents/made>

Ref. 1.5 Department for Transport, 2014. Policy paper. National policy statement for national networks. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-policy-statement-for-national-networks>

Ref. 1.6 Communities and Local Government, 2019. Policy paper. National Planning Policy Framework. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>

Ref. 1.7 Core Strategy and Urban Core Plan for Gateshead and Newcastle upon Tyne 2010-2030 (adopted 2015). Available at:

https://www.newcastle.gov.uk/sites/default/files/wwwfileroot/planning-and-buildings/planning-policy/planning_for_the_future_core_strategy_and_urban_core_plan_2010-2030.pdf

Ref. 1.8 Gateshead Council, 2015. Gateshead Local Plan Policies (adopted 2015). Available at: <https://www.gateshead.gov.uk/media/1907/Gateshead-Local-Plan-Policies-2015/pdf/Gateshead-Local-Plan-Policies-27-Mar-15.pdf?m=636669081011070000>

Ref. 1.9 Tyne and Wear Integrated Transport Authority, 2011. Tyne and Wear Local Transport Plan 3 Strategy 2011-21 (2011). Available at:

<http://www.tyneandwearitp.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2011/03/Executive-Summary-for-web.pdf>

Ref. 1.10 Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB). Available at:

<http://www.standardsforhighways.co.uk/ha/standards/dmr/b/>

Ref. 1.11 Highways England, 2015 (last updated 2018). Corporate report. Biodiversity plan and 2016-17 report. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/biodiversity-plan>

Ref. 1.12 Department for Transport, 2015. Highways England: Licence. Published April 2015. Available at:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/431389/strategic-highways-licence.pdf

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psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

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