

A1 Birtley to Coal House

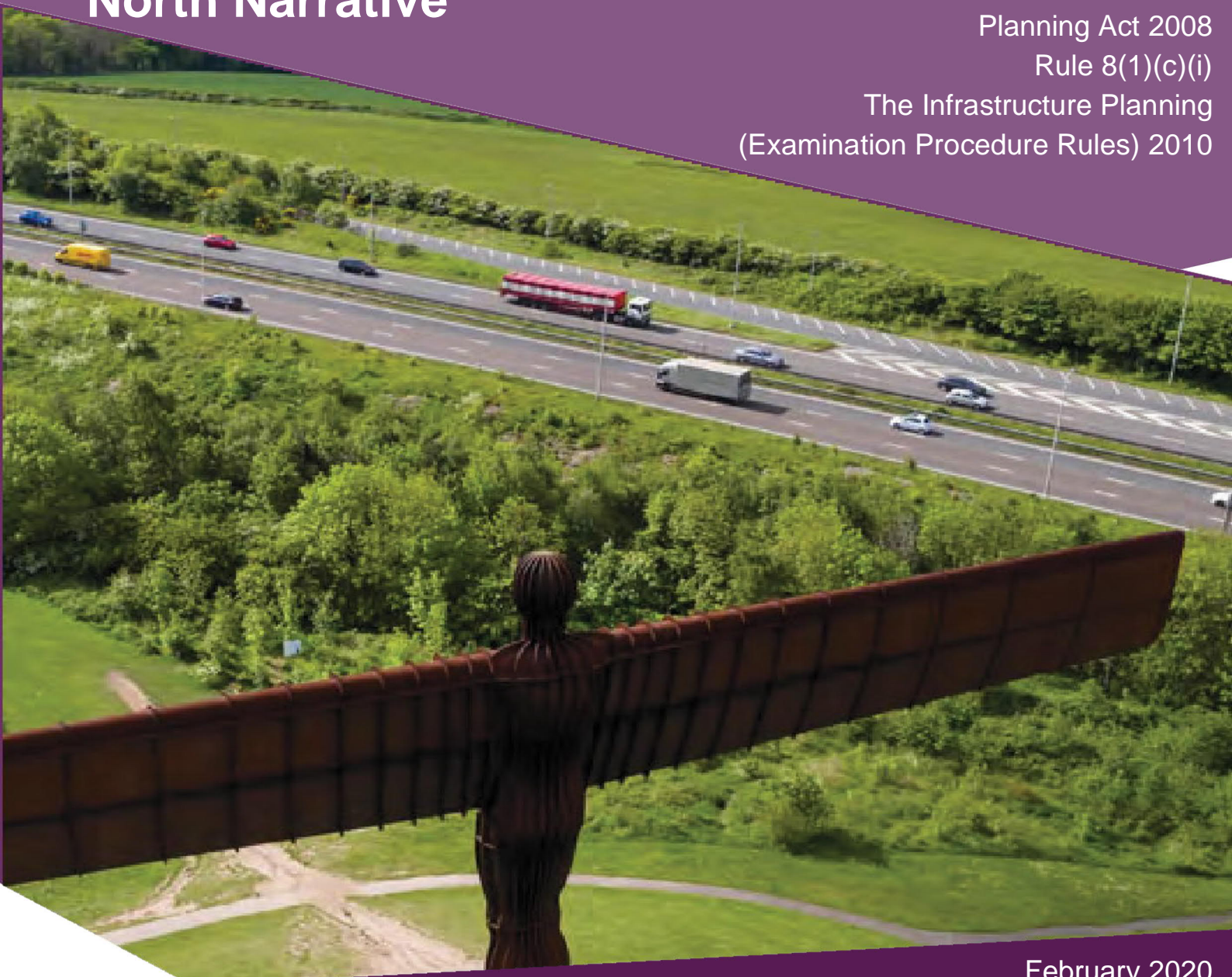
Scheme Number: TR010031

Applicant's Responses to ExA's First Written Questions – Appendix 1.5.A - Angel of the North Narrative

Planning Act 2008

Rule 8(1)(c)(i)

The Infrastructure Planning
(Examination Procedure Rules) 2010



Infrastructure Planning

Planning Act 2008

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(Examination Procedure Rules) 2010**

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

APPLICATION'S RESPONSES TO EXA'S FIRST WRITTEN QUESTIONS

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1.1 Section 1 - Introduction

Purpose of this Document

- 1.1.1 The purpose of this document is to demonstrate how the presence of new gantries along the A1 between Birtley (junction 65) and Coal House (junction 67) junctions would modify the way in which view of the Angel of the North would be perceived by users of the A1 corridor between junction 67 and junction 65 by providing a commentary on the sequence of views approaching from the north and the south, and the East Coast Mainline railway (ECML) in a northerly direction (southbound views are constrained by the direction of travel and angle of view) .
- 1.1.2 The document does not comment upon the significance of effects upon the landscape or upon views. This is set out in Chapter 7: Landscape and Visual of the Environmental Statement (ES) [APP-028].

Existing Baseline Information

- 1.1.3 The Angel of the North is visible across a wide area of the landscape, particularly to the west that comprises the Team Valley. As part of the assessment of landscape and visual effects (Chapter 7: Landscape and Visual of the Environmental Statement (ES) [APP-028]), viewpoints were selected in consultation with Gateshead Council (refer to Appendix 4.4: Environmental Consultation of the ES [APP-106]), a number of which include the Angel of the North within the view and were subsequently assessed in conjunction with associated receptors (refer to Appendix 7.1 – Visual Effects Schedule of the ES [APP-121]). These comprised:
- Viewpoint 1 – Receptor P2
 - Viewpoint 4 – Receptors R7, H1, and P3
 - Viewpoint 5 – Receptor O2
 - Viewpoint 6 – Receptor R8, H1
 - Viewpoint 9 – H3
 - Viewpoint 14 – Receptor P15
 - Viewpoint 16 – Receptor H5
 - Viewpoint 21 – Receptor P18, P19
 - Viewpoint 23 – Receptor P22
 - Viewpoint 31 – Receptor P1a, P7
- 1.1.4 In addition, views of the Angel of the North are recorded in photomontages, refer to Figure 7.7 Viewpoint Photomontages of the ES [APP-062 to APP-071].
- Figure 7.7 Viewpoint Photomontages - Viewpoint 5 – A of the ES [APP-062] and Figure 7.7 Viewpoint Photomontages - Viewpoint 5 – B of the ES [APP-063] – Banesley Lane Woodland – Distant view of the Angel of the North on the horizon – refer to Receptor O2 in Appendix 7.1 – Visual Effects Schedule of the ES [APP-121] for an assessment of the predicted effects.
 - Figure 7.7 Viewpoint Photomontages - Viewpoint 6 – A of the [APP-064] and Figure 7.7 Viewpoint Photomontages - Viewpoint 6 – B [APP-065]– Lamesley Road – The Angel of the North is visible from this viewpoint on

the distant horizon with the new crossing of the East Coast Main Line (ECML) in the middle distance. Refer to Receptor R8 and H1 in Appendix 7.1 – Visual Effects Schedule of the ES [APP-121] for an assessment of the effects on this viewpoint.

- Figure 7.7 Viewpoint Photomontages - Viewpoint 30 of the [APP-071]– Kibblesworth – The Angel of the North is visible from this viewpoint in the far distance, set against the rising landform towards Eighton Banks on the distant horizon. Refer to Receptor R41, P8 and the western end of P9 in Appendix 7.1 – Visual Effects Schedule of the ES [APP-121] for an assessment of the predicted effects.

- 1.1.5 Views from the ECML were not included as one of the agreed viewpoints for assessment within the Chapter 7 Landscape and Visual Effects (APP-028). Direct views of the Angel of the North from the ECML occur for a short distance (approximately 450m) to the north west of Birtley and the existing view and predicted changes are described in 1.2.18 to 1.2.20. The sculpture is briefly visible within the transient view to the north east, between existing development and woodland immediately alongside the railway line. The A1 is not readily visible within the view; woodland and landform combining to screen views of traffic and structures therein.

Current Landscaping Proposals

- 1.1.6 Chapter 7: Landscape and Visual (APP-028) and Figure 7.6 Landscape Mitigation Design (APP-061) of the ES proposes landscape mitigation within the highway boundary adjacent to the Angel of the North site. This includes re-planting of the reprofiled cutting slopes with a woodland edge mix that comprises approximately 85% shrub species, avoiding the establishment of tall (< 5m) tree species.
- 1.1.7 With reference to the preservation of the views of the Angel of the North, the objective of the Scheme is to mitigate its own effects, the measures to do so would be secured through reference to L15 of the Outline CEMP (APP-174) and Figure 7.6 Landscape Mitigation Design (APP-061). Any further work which is related to the Angel of the North and its setting (as opposed to the Scheme) is strictly speaking outside the scope of the Scheme.
- 1.1.8 **Nevertheless, and to this end Highways England is continuing dialogue with Gateshead Council's heritage, landscape and planning officers to ensure that the landscape strategy for the Scheme (Figure 7.6 Landscape Mitigation Design [APP-061]) may be amended to reflect the desire to reduce the degree to which the views both to and from Angel of the North are affected by the surrounding vegetation.**

1.2 Section 2 – Impact of Gantries on the Angel of the North

Assessment Methodology

- 1.2.1 WSP have undertaken an exercise to demonstrate how the presence of new gantries would modify the way in which views of the Angel of the North would be perceived from within the existing A1 corridor. This has included the preparation of a short drive through of the infraworks model, in which an aerial

image has been overlain on a model of the terrain (including substantial blocks of woodland). Gantries and the Angel of the North have been added to this model, along with the structures associated with overbridges and junctions. In preparing this drive through, the following information has been used:

- Ground data
 - Proposed – Design Fix current at end of Preliminary Design stage (no changes made by WSP in the interim)
 - Existing [Angel of the north mound] – National LIDAR Programme Point Cloud 2017
 - Existing [elsewhere] – SRTMGL1 30m DEM data (standard Infracore data)
- Gantries & Structures –
 - Proposed – Most recent gantries prepared for the federated model
 - Existing – Based on Topographical information
- Vegetation – National LIDAR Programme Point Cloud 2017
- Satellite imagery – Bing Maps

1.2.2 The camera is set at a height of 1.5m to represent an eye level view and travels along the A1 at a speed of 50mph.

1.2.3 A short narrative of the existing and modified views experienced by the occupants of vehicles has been outlined below, described in a southbound and northbound direction of travel.

A1 Birtley to Coal House Southbound Narrative

Existing

1.2.4 The views experienced when travelling south on the A1 from junction 67, incorporate views of Gateshead, Team Valley Trading Estate and a low ridgeline that extends broadly north. Punctuating the horizon are the outlines of several high-rise developments and the outline of the Angel of the North.

1.2.5 Whilst more distant awareness of the Angel of the North occurs north of Junction 67 of the A1, as the A1 alignment shifts eastwards the direction of the view ahead is orientated directly towards the Angel of the North and its unique outline does, for a time, become the focus of the view experienced by the travelling public.

1.2.6 With the exception of the existing Smithy Lane overbridge, a single overhead motorway signal sign, and some taller roadside vegetation, the existing views of the Angel of the North are largely uninterrupted. However, as the A1 rises to the west, the base of the Angel of the North is gradually obscured by a broad tract of woodland between the A1, the A167 and Smithy Lane. At the point at which the A1 crosses the ECML the base of the wings of the Angel are below the horizon and the outline becomes less distinctive. Views of the Angel of the North continue to diminish as woodland increasingly limits views to the east. It is only at the divergence of the off-slip road with the main carriageway at junction 66, that some filtered views of the Angel of the North are discernible to the north of the view. These rapidly decrease as occupants of vehicles pass

through Junction 66 and cross the crest of the ridgeline and the Angel of the North is to the rear and no longer forms a focal point within the view.

Proposed Scheme

- 1.2.7 Cross reference should be made to Figure 7.6: Landscape Mitigation Design [APP-061] for chainages. This is appended to this note in **Appendix 1** for ease. The introduction of the proposed gantries would initially, and from within the Team valley, avoid the horizon being interrupted by new elements (refer to Plate 1). The Angel of the North remains the distinctive feature of the distant horizon. Travelling southbound from junction 67, the first cantilever gantry (chainage 11090) and adjacent superspan gantry (chainage 11150) would, with the A1 orientated east, punctate the horizon east of junction 67. However, views of the Angel of the North to the south east would remain, with only a brief interruption to the view as the gantries are passed.

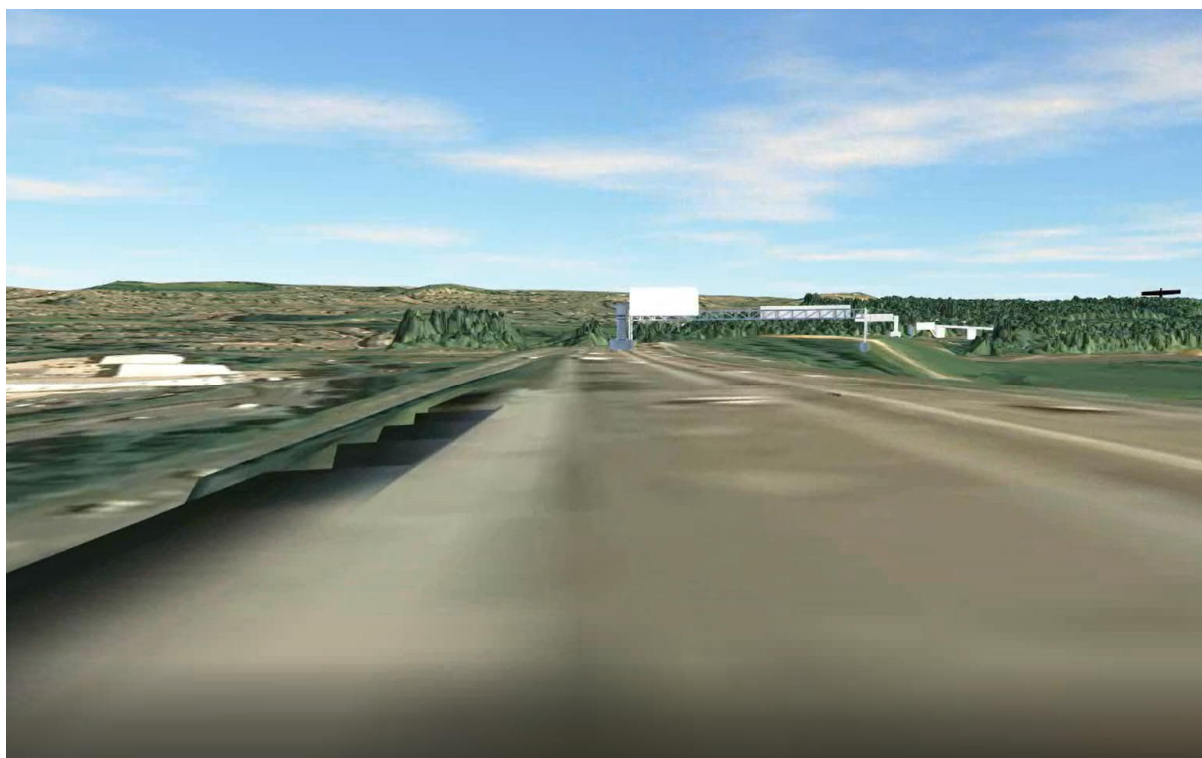


Plate 1 The view from within the valley, the Angel of the North remains visible on the horizon

- 1.2.8 The third cantilever gantry (chainage 11370) on the northbound side, would interrupt the view of the Angel of the North briefly (refer to Plate 2). Following this, the base of the Angel of the North gradually descends below the horizon, screened by vegetation in the landscape.

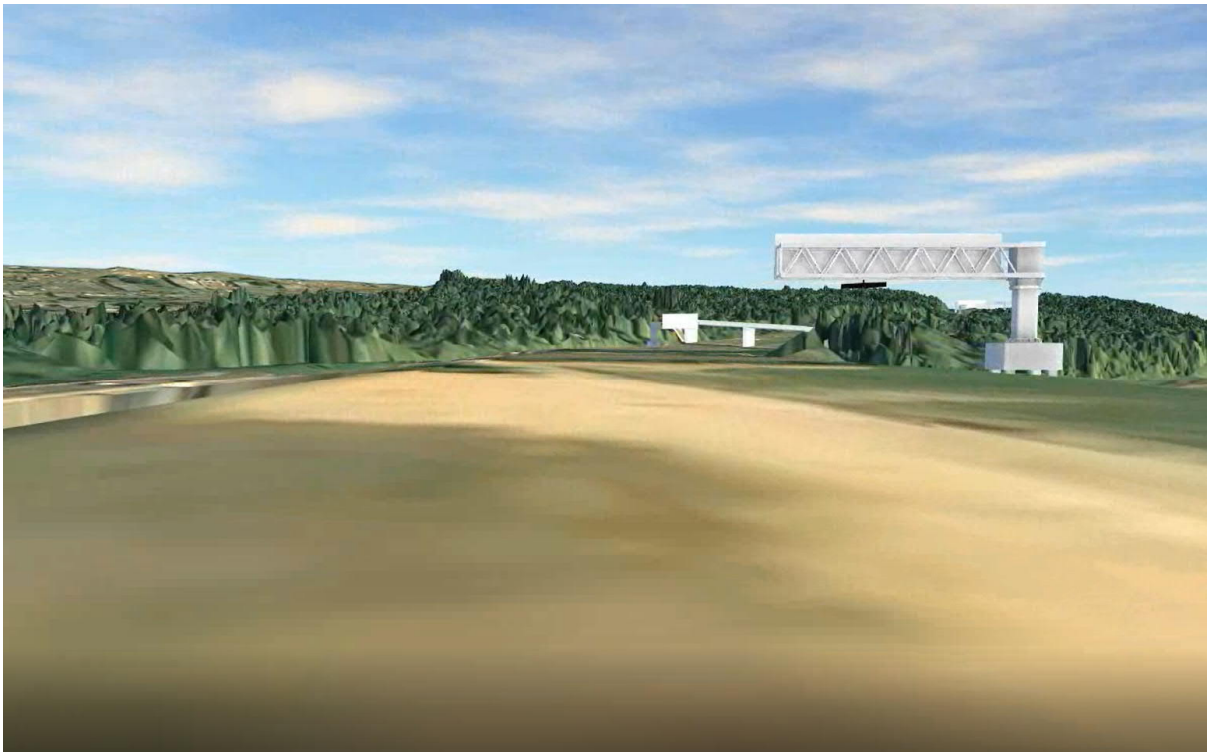


Plate 2 East of Junction 67, the view would be briefly interrupted by a cantilever structure as the Angel of the North gradually descends behind the horizon of woodland

- 1.2.9 As Smithy Lane is approached (refer to Plate 3) a cantilever gantry (chainage 11680) immediately west of the bridge remains below the horizon, the angle of the view and intervening woodland masking the distinctive outline of the Angel of the North. By the time the gantry and bridge are reached, the sculpture has all but disappeared behind the woodland., On passing the bridge the view is not wholly different to the existing experience.

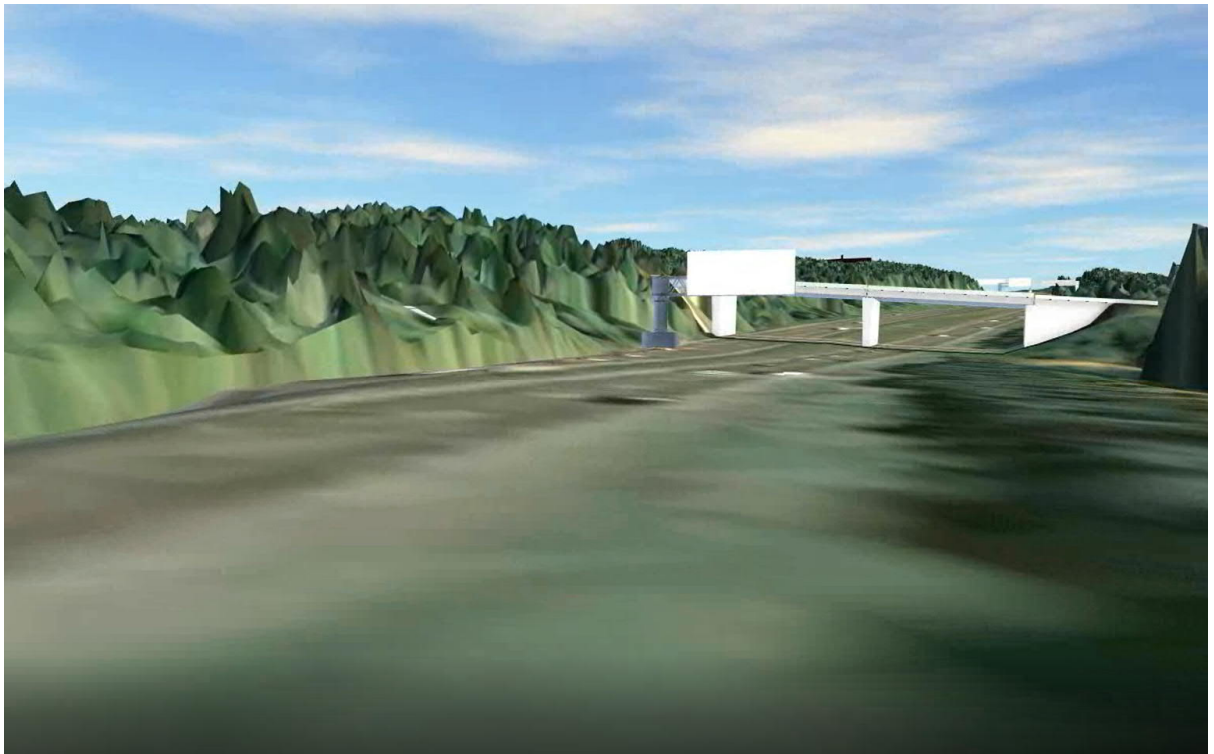


Plate 3 Approaching Smith Lane Bridge, the proposed cantilever gantry would combine with the bridge as the Angel of the North disappears further behind the woodland

- 1.2.10 East of Smithy Lane overbridge, and with the Angel of the North hidden behind intervening landform and vegetation, the orientation of the view is south east (refer to Plate 4) and two cantilever structures (refer to Figure 7.6: Landscape Mitigation Design [APP-061], chainages 12180 and 12270) would visually combine to appear as a single element on the horizon. At this point the Angel of the North would remain screened by the intervening broad tract of woodland to the east of the A1.



Plate 4 Approaching Junction 66, the view is constrained by woodland within the landscape, views of the Angle of the North would be screened by existing woodland

- 1.2.11 On approaching the off slip of Junction 66 (refer to Plate 5 and Plate 13) the superspan gantry (chainage 12450) dominates the forward view and the horizon as the top of the ridgeline is reached. The Angel of the North starts to emerge at the northern end of the woodland and in a sideways view, similar to that currently experienced. Upon passing this superspan gantry (chainage 12450), the views of the Angel of the North would be all but gone from the direct line of sight, and only fleeting views from the passenger windows would be interrupted by the gantry support structures.

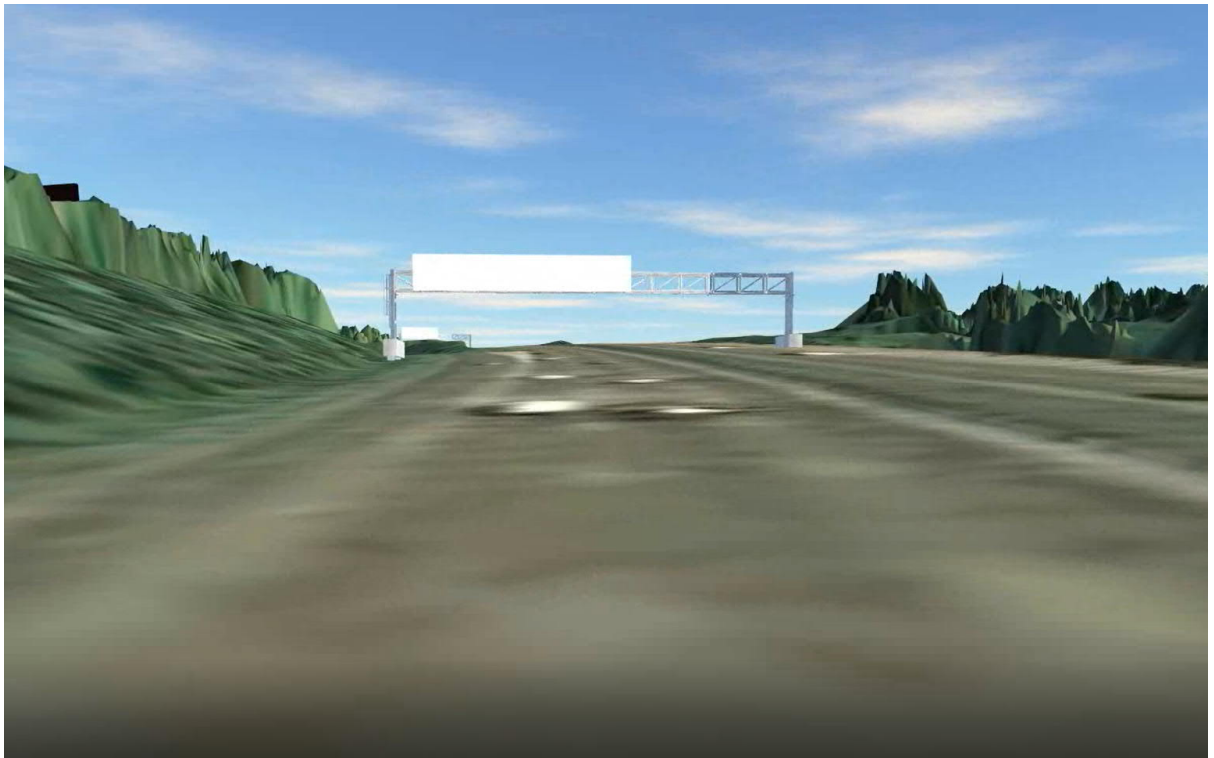


Plate 5 Approaching the off slip of Junction 66, the superspan gantry would dominate the view, however the Angel of the North would start to emerge to the north from beyond the woodland

A1 BCH Northbound Narrative **Existing**

- 1.2.12 Travelling north from Junction 65, the A1 descends the landform in a north westerly direction. To the north and visible above the existing roadside vegetation is the open countryside towards Eighton Banks and ahead the distinctive North Dene overbridge that links Birtley to the north and Eighton Banks.
- 1.2.13 Approaching the existing North Dene footbridge from the south, the Angel of the North is a partially obscured feature of the landscape and, as a result of the angle of the view, the top of the sculpture barely breaks the horizon and its base is concealed by the intervening landform combined with vegetation within the wider landscape. West of the footbridge, views along the A1 are enclosed by mature roadside vegetation and as a result the first uninterrupted and distinctive view of the Angel of the North does not emerge until passing through junction 66, upon which the distinctive wings of the Angel are instantly recognisable above the horizon.
- 1.2.14 The views of the Angel of the North remain to the north west and within the immediate line of sight for the occupants of vehicles, the scale of the sculpture gradually becoming apparent as the distance decreases. On approaching the northbound on-slip of Junction 66, the Angel of the North is the most dominant feature of the skyline, contrasting with the distant ridge that forms the opposing flank of the Team Valley. On passing to the south of the Angel of the North the base of the sculpture is gradually screened by roadside vegetation such that

the focus of the views returns to the north west, as the elevation descends towards the valley, and the Team Valley Trading Estate becomes more apparent in the distance.

Proposed Scheme

- 1.2.15 West of junction 65, distant views of the top of the Angel of the North would be interrupted by two superspan gantries (chainages 14210 and 14330), and partially obscured by a cantilever gantry on the northbound carriageway (refer to plate 6).



Plate 6 Immediately west of Junction 65 overbridge, channelled views along the A1 would be interrupted by a combination of gantries and the replaced footbridge at Birtley

- 1.2.16 On approaching Birtley and the new North Dene footbridge views would be uninterrupted and would be largely unchanged (refer to Plate 7) with the view of the Angel of the North being obscured briefly by the replacement footbridge. On passing beneath the replacement footbridge (refer to plate 8) views of the Angel of the North would be temporarily obscured by a combination of a cantilever gantry (chainage 13630) and superspan gantry (chainage 13510), approaching junction 66 at which point the sculpture is obscured from view by existing retained vegetation within the landscape.

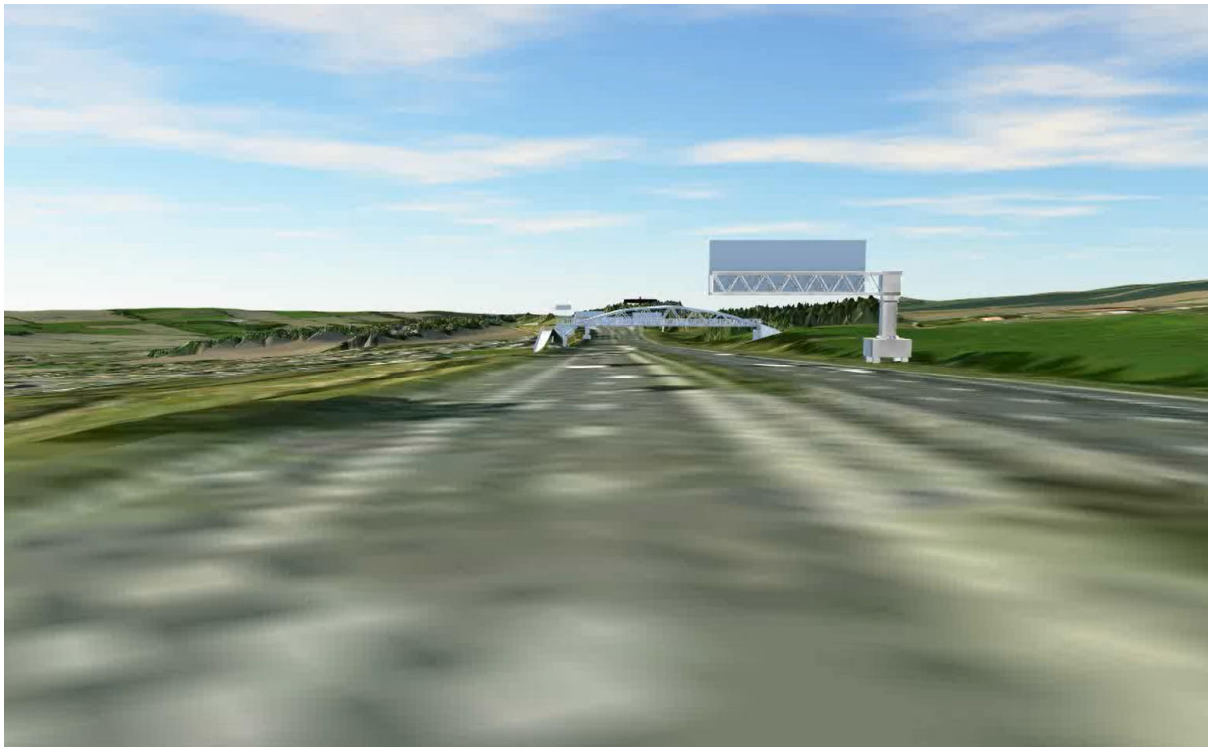


Plate 7 Approaching Birtley and the replacement footbridge, the view of the Angel of the North would be interrupted by the structures

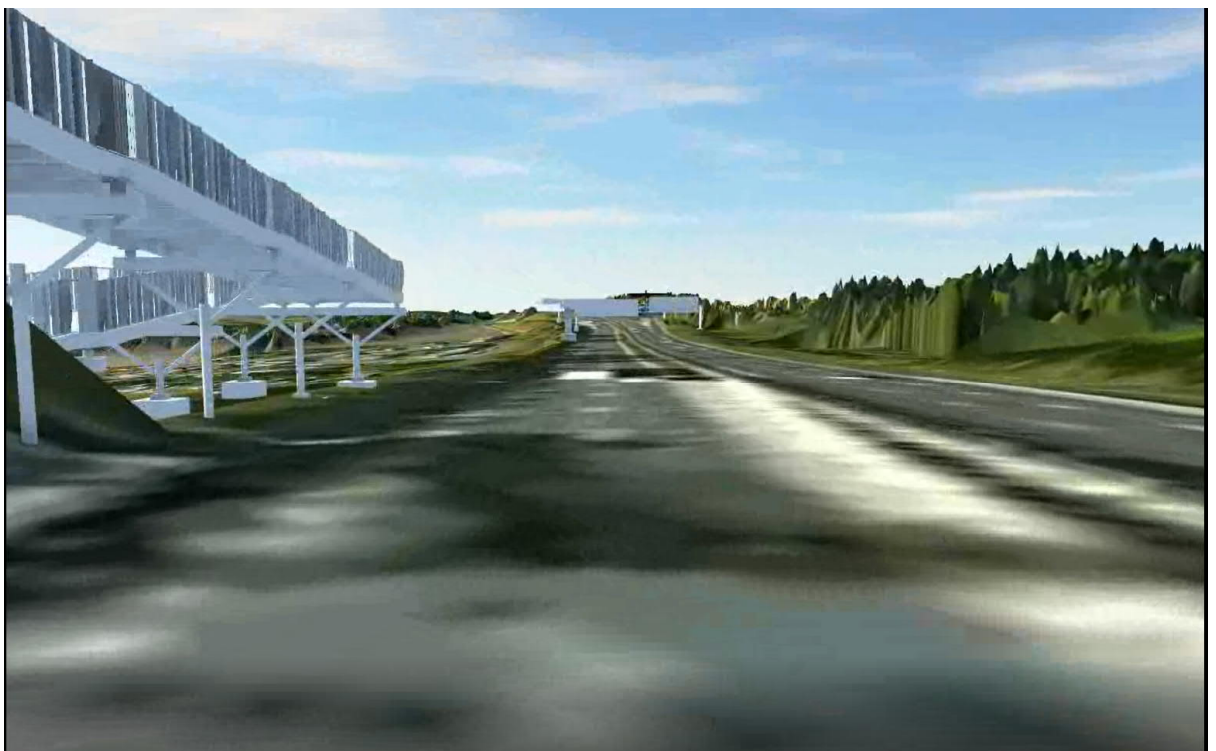


Plate 8 On passing the replacement footbridge, the combined effect of the cantilever and superspan structures would interrupt the view of the Angel of the North as it descends beyond intervening woodland

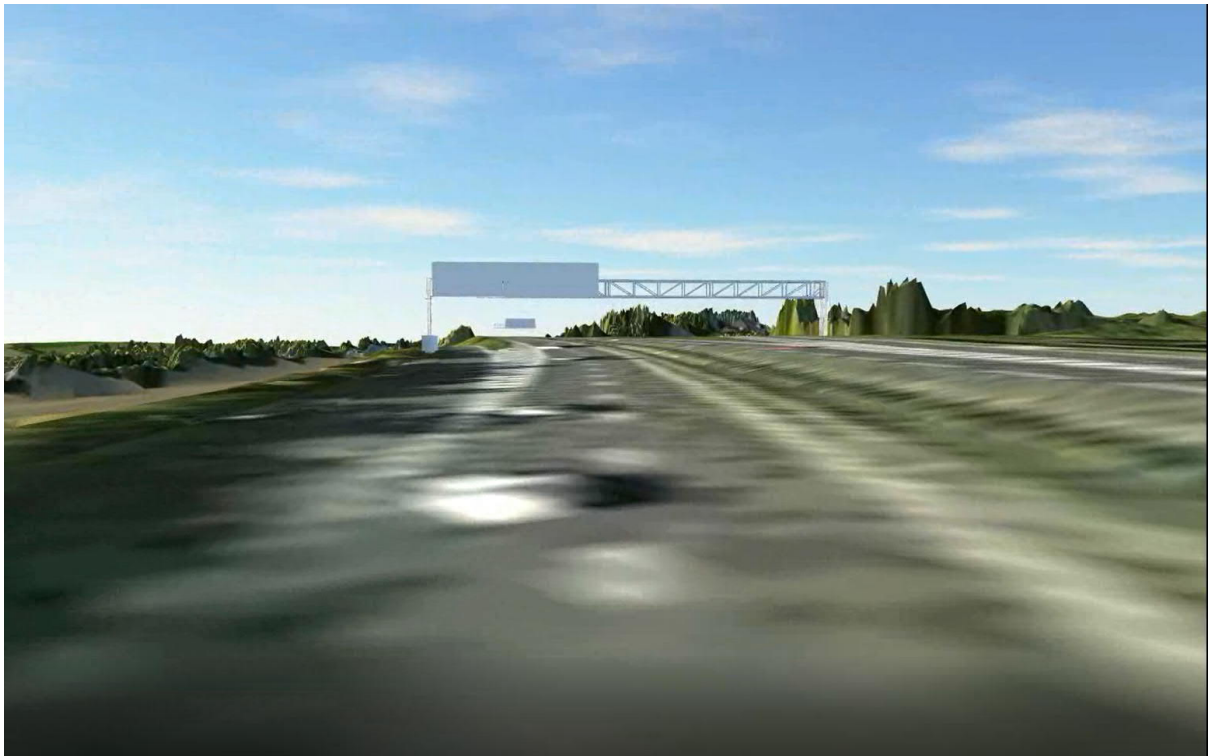


Plate 9 On passing the Junction 66 northbound off slip the Angel of the North would be screened by woodland, the proposed superspan gantry would be a prominent feature of the view

- 1.2.17 From the divergence of the northbound off slip of junction 66 to the centre of the junction, the Angel of the North is obscured (refer to Plate 9) only upon approaching the northbound on slip does the sculpture re-emerge as a prominent feature of the horizon (refer to Plate 10 and Plate 14). Whilst not obscured by a proposed gantry, a superspan gantry (chainage 12870) would break the horizon in a similar manner, briefly interrupting the view as the gantry is passes. From this point the Angel of the North gradually reduces in prominence as the A1 descends towards the Team Valley.



Plate 10 On passing through Junction 66 and as the vegetation breaks, the Angel of the North would remerge and a direct view of the upper part of the sculpture would dominate the view

Views from the ECML

Existing View

- 1.2.18 A view of the Angel of the north is only clearly visible when travelling in a northerly direction and from east facing windows of the carriages.
- 1.2.19 The Angel of the North emerges from beyond hedgerow trees immediately north of warehouses and industrial units off Longshank Lane. The distinctive form of the sculpture remains visible for a fleeting view as the train travels north on embankment before it disappears behind Longacre Wood east of the ECML.

Proposed Scheme

- 1.2.20 From the ECML, the curvature of the landform places the A1, its existing lighting columns and proposed gantries associated with junction 66 below the horizon, refer to Plate 11. As a result, the Scheme is not predicted to substantially interrupt the existing views experienced.

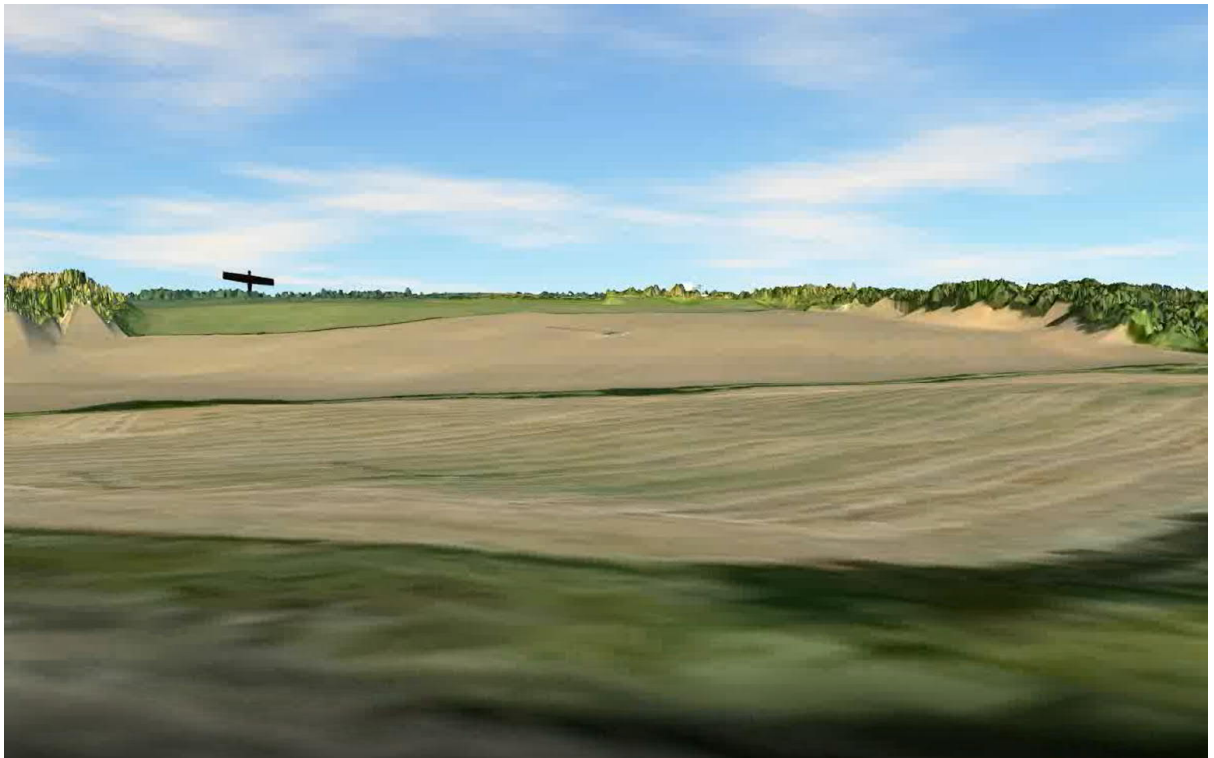


Plate 11 – The view from the ECML would not be interrupted by the existing A1, or proposed gantries associated with junction 66

Conclusion

- 1.2.21 The presence of additional gantries would, in the context of the existing A1 and in the appreciation of the Angel of the North, result in a perceptible worsening of the views. However, the interruption of the view by gantries is typically brief as the views experienced by the occupants of moving vehicles are transitory.
- 1.2.22 Southbound views are not substantially impacted by the gantries as within more distant views, and with the Angel of the North occupying an elevated location overlooking the valley, the distinctive outline remains conspicuous on the horizon. Approaching Smithy Lane overbridge, woodland combines with the landform to obscure views as distance to the sculpture is reduced and the A1 corridor becomes enclosed by woodland either side.
- 1.2.23 Northbound views from junction 65, are experienced at a similar elevation and along a straight section of the A1, as a result the combined impact of the gantries would in combination with woodland to the south east of the sculpture, intermittently obscure the view of the Angel of the North. The effect of the gantries and replacement North Dene footbridge, in combination with woodland planting would be a worsening of the views experienced by the occupants of vehicles using the A1.
- 1.2.24 The views experienced by the occupants of northbound trains is not predicted to be perceptibly changed as a result of the presence of gantries along the A1.



Plate 12 - Location of Wireframe diagram

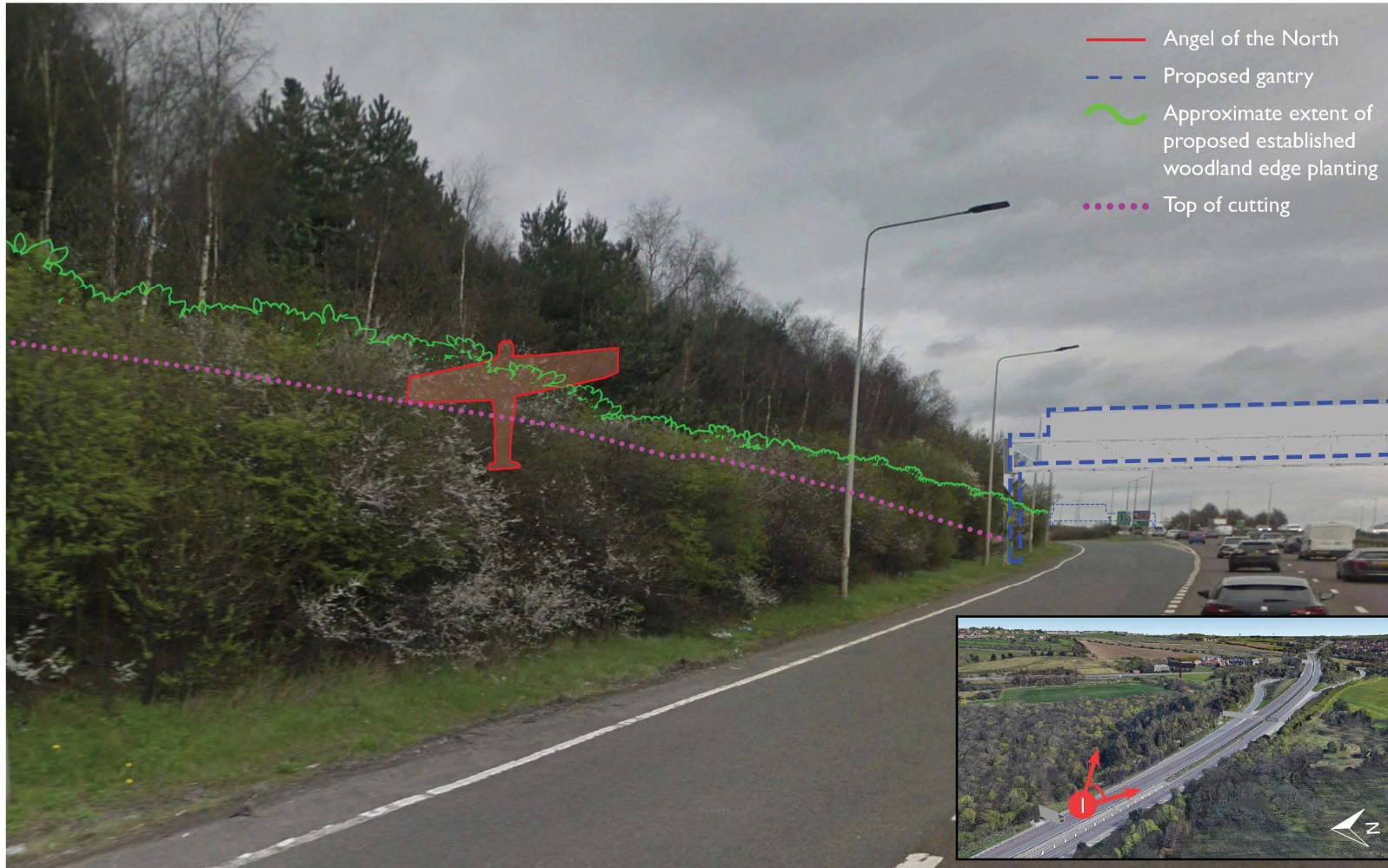


Plate 13 – View 1 (wireframe) of the approach from the north (junction 66 exist slip road)



Plate 14 – View 2 (wireframe) of the approach from the south (junction 66)