



LOCAL IMPACT REPORT

A1 Birtley to Coal House Improvement Scheme



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1. Introduction

- 1.1 A Local Impact Report (LIR) is defined according to Section 60(3) of the Planning Act 2008 as ‘a report in writing giving details of the likely impact of the proposed development on the authority’s area.’ It should be used by Local Authorities as the means by which their existing body of knowledge and evidence of local issues can be fully and robustly reported to the Examining Authority. It should draw on existing local knowledge and experience.
- 1.2 This is a Local Impact Report relating to the application by Highways England to widen the A1 from 2/3 lanes to 4 lanes in both directions between Junction 65 (Birtley), Junction 66 (Eighton Lodge) and Junction 67 (Coal House). This report has been produced in accordance with Version 2 of the Local Impact Report Guidance (the Advice Note) produced by The Planning Inspectorate dated April 2012 and considers the likely impacts of the proposed development on Gateshead, being the Local Authority within whose administrative area where the works will take place.
- 1.3 The Advice Note states that when the Examining Authority decides to accept an application, it will ask the relevant local authorities to prepare a Local Impact Report and this should be prioritised whether or not the local authority considers that the development would have a positive, negative or neutral effect on the area. The Report may include any topics that they consider to be relevant to the impact of the development on their area as a means by which their existing body of knowledge and evidence on local issues can be fully and robustly reported to the Examining Authority.
- 1.4 The LIR may also comment on the development consent obligations and the requirements and also any relevant representations.
- 1.5 In producing the LIR the Council has not sought the views of local interest groups as to any particular matters that should be reflected in the report because the parish councils and other local groups have the opportunity, through the consultation process, to make their observations direct to the National Infrastructure Directorate. It should be noted here that there is one Parish Council in Gateshead (Lamesley).
- 1.6 The LIR has been written so as to incorporate the topic areas suggested in the Advice Note (set out above), the subject areas in the Environmental Statement, and the obligations and proposed requirements submitted with the application for Development Consent Order (DCO).

2. Gateshead Context

- 2.1 Gateshead sits within the Tyne and Wear conurbation. It has the natural boundary of the River Tyne to the north, with Newcastle City Council's area on the north bank of the Tyne. The Council also has neighbouring local authority boundaries with Sunderland to the south/east, South Tyneside to the east, Northumberland to the west and Durham to the south/west.
- 2.2 The Tyne and Wear conurbation is relatively remote from other major conurbations. The nearest English Core City, Leeds is 95 miles south of Gateshead, and it is 106 miles north to Edinburgh. Rail and air connections are good. There is a fast and frequent rail service on the East Coast Main Line to London and Scotland, with regular cross-country services to most other major cities.
- 2.3 The Borough is bisected north/south by the A1(T) Western Bypass and a number of other key roads that intersect the A1(T) to provide east/west links across and beyond the Borough to the neighbouring authorities of Sunderland, South Tyneside, Newcastle, Durham and Northumberland.
- 2.4 Gateshead benefits from access to the Tyne and Wear Metro system, which provides public transport accessibility in the eastern and central parts of the Borough, with 5 metro stations giving access to Gateshead Town Centre, Gateshead Quays area as well as further afield to Newcastle, South Tyneside and Sunderland.
- 2.5 Gateshead also benefits from access to local rail services, which provides access to Sunderland and South Tyneside to the east, Newcastle for national rail services, and west to the Tyne Valley and ultimately Carlisle.
- 2.6 Gateshead also benefits from extensive bus services that transverse the length and breadth of the Borough and provide good accessibility to and from the major centres and transport hubs.

3. Details of the Proposal

- 3.1 The Scheme is approximately 6.5km in length and is situated between land to the north of junction 67 (Coal House) and junction 65 (Birtley).
- 3.2 A summary of the Scheme features are as follows:
- a) New verge mounted traffic signs north of junction 67 (Coal House).
 - b) Upgrade of existing technology along the route, including upgrade or installation of new systems where required to include Variable Messaging Systems (VMS), closed circuit television (CCTV) cameras and Motorway Incident Detection Automatic Signaling (MIDAS). Where the existing technology does not meet current standards, it would be upgraded to current standards.
 - c) Widening the existing carriageway through junction 67 (Coal House) from two lanes to three lanes in each direction. In addition, Kingsway Viaduct, which carries the A1 over the junction 67 (Coal House) roundabout would be retained but widened to accommodate the additional lanes.
 - d) Between junction 67 (Coal House) and junction 66 (Eighton Lodge) the A1 would be widened from two lanes to three with lane gain/drop arrangement on the northbound carriageway; and from two lanes (and partial climbing lane) to four lanes on the southbound carriageway. Smithy Lane Overbridge would be retained.
 - e) Through junction 66 (Eighton Lodge) the A1 would be widened from two lanes to four on the northbound carriageway and from two lanes (with a partial climbing lane) to four lanes on the southbound carriageway. All three bridges (known as 'Eighton Lodge underbridges') on this section would be widened.
 - f) Between junction 66 (Eighton Lodge) and junction 65 (Birtley) the carriageway in each direction would be widened from three lanes to four lanes. Of the three bridges on this section; North Side Overbridge would be retained; North Dene Footbridge would be demolished and reconstructed; and Longbank Bridleway Underpass would be widened.
 - g) Replacement bridge structure where the A1 crosses over the ECML, 40m to the immediate south of the existing Allerdene Bridge structure which would tie into the existing carriageways at junction 67 (Coal House) and north of junction 66 (Eighton Lodge).

4. Local and National Development Plans/Policy

- 4.1 The current development plan for Gateshead comprises the Core Strategy and Urban Core Plan for Gateshead and Newcastle upon Tyne 2010 – 2030 (Adopted 2015) together with saved policies of the Gateshead Unitary Development Plan 2007.
- 4.2 The Core Strategy and Urban Core Plan is a strategic planning framework that will guide development in Gateshead and Newcastle to 2030. It has been developed jointly by Gateshead Council and Newcastle City Council (the “Councils”) and covers the whole of the area within the administrative boundaries of Gateshead and Newcastle.
- 4.3 The Core Strategy and Urban Core Plan form Part 1 and 2 of the Local Plan and will be supplemented in due course by Making Spaces for Growing Places (“MSGP”) which will form Part 3 of the Local Plan. The MSGP sets out more detailed policies for the Borough, including development management policies to guide decision making on planning applications. It defines areas allocated or designated, for specific purposes. The draft MSGP was published for consultation in October 2017. A further draft was published in October 2018 and this Draft Plan is the version of the MSGP that the Council submitted for examination in 2019. The Council expects a decision on the MSGP Spring/Summer 2020.
- 4.4 Once the MSGP is adopted, Parts 1, 2 and 3 of the Local Plan will supersede the remaining saved policies from Gateshead’s Unitary Development Plan (UDP). However, at the time of writing the saved policies of the UDP carry greater weight since the MSGP has not yet been approved for adoption.
- 4.5 Gateshead Council has a number of supplementary planning documents (SPDs) that provide further guidance on specific matters and are considered capable of being material considerations in planning decisions. Relevant to the Scheme is the Gateshead Placemaking SPD.
- 4.6 **Core Strategy and Urban Core Plan (Local Plan Parts 1 and 2)**
The most up-to-date part of the adopted development plan is the Core Strategy and Urban Core Plan (the “Plan”) and therefore this takes precedence in decision making.
- 4.7 The Plan sets an ambitious agenda for achieving economic prosperity, delivering healthy sustainable communities and tackling climate change. During the Plan period to 2030 it aims to provide 8,000 new jobs and 11,000 new homes in Gateshead. In the Plan area overall 22,000 jobs and 30,000 homes are proposed.
- 4.8 Many of the new homes are planned for a new community, Metrogreen, which is located on the south bank of the Tyne accessed from the A1.

- 4.9 The Plan, in describing the spatial characteristics of Gateshead and Newcastle at paragraph 3.6, notes that road links are dominated by the A1 to the south and north, and the A69 west to Carlisle and sets out:
- “within the conurbation capacity on the A1 continues to be an issue. It is one of the most congested strategic routes in England”
- 4.10 Whilst the Gateshead and Newcastle area provides 299,000 jobs (2010) approximately 45% of workers live outside the area, indicating a high level of inward commuting.
- 4.11 The Plan sets out at paragraph 4.3 twelve strategic objectives (SO) to deliver its vision, SO 07 is to “Manage and develop our transport system to support growth and provide sustainable access for all housing, jobs, services and shops”.
- 4.12 The Plan identifies four Key Employment Areas, the largest of which by area is Team Valley Trading Estate, which focuses on advanced manufacturing and engineering. The Plan refers at Paragraph 7.12 to the Team Valley Trading Estate as follows:
- “Strategically it is important to protect and enhance Team Valley Trading Estate given its importance in the region as the premier industrial estate. It continues to be a major economic driver in the region providing a wide range of marketable office and industrial premises, in a well laid out and attractive environment that benefits from direct access to the A1”.
- 4.13 The Plan sets out Strategic Policies for the Gateshead and Newcastle area, the first of which relate to economic prosperity. Paragraph 9.5 explains that while housing policies will encourage more economically active households to live and work in Gateshead and Newcastle, the area will continue to rely on some incommuting for a proportion of its skilled labour force. Sustainable growth measures will ensure that while there will be a slight increase in commuting, the proportion of jobs filled by in-commuters will decrease.
- 4.14 The Plan recognises the importance of transport and other infrastructure which supports economic activity. It highlights Newcastle International Airport as a major asset, which provides easy access to surrounding areas. It should be noted that Newcastle International Airport is accessed from Gateshead via the A1 at junction 77 (Ponteland Road) meaning that journey time reliability over the section of the A1 will inevitably affect the travel decisions of airport users.
- 4.15 Section 11 is concerned with Transport and Accessibility, which are said to be fundamental to the delivery of the Plan’s spatial strategy. Policy CS13 Transport is concerned with measures to deliver an integrated transport network, including improving the operation of the transport network and its wider connections by various measures such as:

“i. Promoting and facilitating improvements to wider networks where it is demonstrated that they have an acceptable impact on the local transport network and environment”

and

“iv. The creation of additional capacity on the Strategic Road Network, including the provision of an additional lane on the A1 in both directions from the A1/A19 Interchange at Seaton Burn to the Scotswood slip-roads, and between the southern extent of the Lobley Hill Major Scheme improvements at Coalhouse and the A1/A194(M) bifurcation at Birtley”

- 4.16 The Plan notes at paragraph 11.16 that the Councils have a statutory duty to manage the rights of way network and to publish a Rights of Way Improvement Plan (part of the Local Transport Plan). The Plan confirms that the Councils will seek to ensure that development accommodates the network, or if this is not possible, to provide suitable replacement links.
- 4.17 Paragraph 11.23 of the Plan states that Park and Ride facilities “will play a role in reducing congestion”. Facilities need to have convenient car access and be located on high-frequency transport corridors. Bus-based Park and Ride will be pursued primarily at the following locations:
- Eighton Lodge
 - Follingsby
 - Lobley Hill
- 4.18 Of these locations, Eighton Lodge will be accessed via junction 66 of the A1 in the vicinity of the Scheme. The junction is currently affected by the congestion experienced on the A1.
- 4.19 A key theme of the Plan’s transport policy is to improve the operation of existing air, rail and road transport networks that can help link the area nationally and internationally. Developing these networks to meet local demands and to strengthen strategic connections will be crucial to sustainable development in the Plan area.
- 4.20 Paragraph 11.28 states that:
- “Strategic international, national and regional connections are very important in the way that Gateshead and Newcastle are seen by the rest of the world. Perceived isolation has an impact on the image of Gateshead and Newcastle as a place to live and to do business. Improvements on this scale will predominantly be delivered in partnership with outside agencies such as the Highways Agency or Network Rail as part of national programmes”.
- 4.21 The Plan goes on to explain at paragraphs 11.31 to 11.34 its support for improvement to the SRN in detail:

“The Strategic Road Network serving the area (A1, A69, A194(M) and A696) is essential for connectivity which will help secure economic growth and prosperity for Gateshead and Newcastle. The councils will work with the Highways Agency to facilitate enhancements to these strategic corridors, giving better access to other major towns and cities and to international gateways.”

“While supporting improvements across the Strategic Road Network is important, tackling congestion on the A1 is our priority. As part of the Newcastle City Deal (July 2012), it was agreed that the Department of Transport, the Highways Agency, the councils and other local partners would develop an investment programme to reduce congestion on the A1 Western Bypass, and finalise a business case for an improvement scheme at Lobley Hill. The funding for this scheme is now in place to allow completion by 2017. The Highways Agency has also now published its wider route based strategy for this section of the A1 which sets out a number of possible further interventions, including schemes to provide additional capacity, reduce speed limits and introduce traffic signal controlled access to the route. Further work by the Highways Agency has suggested that the A1 is likely to require an additional lane of capacity in both directions along much of this route. These additional lanes are likely to be needed from Seaton Burn to the Scotswood Road north-facing slip roads, and then from the southern extent of the Lobley Hill Major Scheme to the A1/A194(M) bifurcation at Birtley.”

“The promotion of sustainable modes of transport and the delivery of infrastructure improvements will be supported by further development of the area’s intelligent transport system - Urban Traffic Management Control (UTMC). The introduction of UTMC will make best use of the existing road network for all modes of transport and provide valuable information to those who seek to move around the Urban Core. The system will manage traffic flows, car parking and priority for sustainable modes of transport giving valuable information to the travelling public, enabling them to make more informed travel choices”.

- 4.22 Policy CS5 is concerned with employment and economic growth opportunities, including amongst other things advanced manufacturing and engineering at Team Valley and expanding the rural economy by supporting growth in leisure, culture and tourism.
- 4.23 Further to paragraph 4.3 of the Plan referred to previously, SO5 seeks to “Expand leisure, culture and tourism providing for all age groups”. Paragraph 9.37 of the Plan sets out that Gateshead’s leisure, culture and tourism attractions are spread across 3 spatial character areas, of which the Angel of the North is specifically referenced within the “Rural and Village Area”. In response to that policy CS8 is concerned with leisure, culture and tourism and seeks to improve the range and quality of leisure, culture and tourism within Gateshead.

- 4.24 Policy CS9 is concerned with existing communities, including amongst other things maintaining and improving facilities, services and the local environment.
- 4.25 Policy CS14 is concerned with wellbeing and health, including amongst other things preventing negative impacts on residential amenity and wider public safety from noise, ground instability, ground and water contamination, vibration and air quality.
- 4.26 Policy CS15 is concerned with place making, including amongst other things responding positively to local distinctiveness and character, and respecting and enhancing significant views and the setting of heritage assets.
- 4.27 Policy CS16 is concerned with climate change, including amongst other things minimising its contributions and providing resilience to the ongoing and predicted impacts of climate change.
- 4.28 Policy CS17 is concerned with flood risk and water management, which sets out that development will avoid and manage flood risk from all sources, taking into account the impact of climate change over its lifetime.
- 4.29 Policy CS18 is concerned with green infrastructure and the natural environment, including amongst other things protection, enhancement and management of green infrastructure assets.
- 4.30 Policy CS19 is concerned with the Green Belt and confirms that the designated Tyne and Wear Green Belt will be protected in accordance with national policy.
- 4.31 The Core Strategy and Urban Core Plan for Gateshead and Newcastle upon Tyne 2010-2030... https://www.gateshead.gov.uk/media/7765/Core-Strategy-and-Urban-Core-Plan-for-Gateshead-and-Newcastle/pdf/Core-Strategy-and-Urban-Core-Plan-for-Gateshead-and-Newcastle_SMALLER.pdf?m=63661910309250000
- 4.32 Gateshead UDP Saved Policies
- Policy DC1 relates to the general considerations in constructing new development and states that planning permission will be granted where it:
- c) achieves an improved landform, landscape or beneficial after-use;
 - d) does not have an impact on statutorily protected species;
 - e) takes opportunities to undertake advance planting/screening;
 - g) is located and designed to conserve energy and be energy-efficient, and uses sustainable building techniques in construction,...
 - h) does not significantly pollute the environment with dust, noise, light, emissions, out-fall, or discharges of any kind;
 - j) has no adverse impact on the substrata drainage or the quality of water in watercourses, lakes, ponds or groundwater;

- l) includes a waste audit or site waste management plan, where large volumes of waste or secondary aggregates are likely to be produced during development;...
- p) addresses the issues of potential land contamination, derelict land, hazardous substances and ground stability;

- 4.33 Policy DC2 seeks to protect residential amenity.
- 4.34 Policy ENV44 and ENV47 seek the protection and possible enhancement of trees and wildlife habitats.
- 4.35 Policy ENV51 seeks to safeguard wildlife corridors.
- 4.36 Policy ENV61 sets a limit on the changes in noise levels, stating “New noise generating development will not be permitted if the rating level would exceed the pre-existing background noise level by 10 dB(A) or more for existing noise sensitive land uses. Where the increase in the noise level would be less than 10 dB(A), the developer will be expected to demonstrate that acceptable noise levels can be achieved.”
- 4.37 Policy CFR26 requires that “Natural greenspace accessible to the public should be available so that, as far as possible, sites of at least two hectares are within 0.5 kilometres of all homes”.
- 4.38 The saved policies from Gateshead Council’s Unitary Development Plan (UDP) 2007... <https://www.gateshead.gov.uk/media/1935/Gateshead-Unitary-Development-Plan-2007/pdf/GatesheadUnitaryDevelopmentPlan2007.pdf?m=636669086176200000>
- 4.39 Making Spaces for Growing Places (Local Plan Part 3)
The Draft MSGP sets out proposed site allocations and development management policies for Gateshead, that will complement and support the Core Strategy and Urban Core Plan. The Draft MSGP as emerging policy it is relevant in demonstrating the direction of travel for policy making in Gateshead and provides further details with regard to planned development areas.
- 4.40 The Team Valley Trading Estate is confirmed in Policy MSGP2 as one of Gateshead’s two Key Employment Areas. Six Main Employment Areas are identified in Policy MSGP3, including Durham Road and Portobello both in Birtley, which are described collectively at paragraph 4.7 as “a significant asset for the region’s economy” and situated in accessible locations across the Borough.
- 4.41 Policy MSGP10 Housing sites allocation states that provision is made for 104.17 hectares (gross) of housing land supply over the plan period. Of these allocated sites there are none adjacent to the Scheme and the closest is in Harlow Green (10.65 hectares) and three in Birtley (10.62, 10.66 and 10.67 hectares). All the sites identified in Birtley are within the built-up area.

- 4.42 Section 6 of the Draft MSGP deals with Transport and Accessibility including at MSGP18, safeguarding land for transport improvements. MSGP18.5 identifies the “A1 Birtley to Coalhouse” as one of the safeguarded sites.
- 4.43 MSGP18.2 safeguards a triangle of land near junction 66 of the A1 at Eighton Lodge for a Park and Ride.
- 4.44 Section 7 People and Places of the Draft MSGP refers to issues that may affect people’s quality of life such as noise, traffic and parking congestion, smells and fumes.
- 4.45 MSGP19 addresses residential amenity.
- 4.46 MSGP20, 21 and 22 address noise, air quality and ground contamination respectively.
- 4.47 MSGP25 promotes quality design, especially within key routeways such as the A1 corridor.
- 4.48 MSGP26 addresses heritage assets.
- 4.49 MSGP28 addresses archaeology.
- 4.50 MSGP30 Flood Risk Management makes specific reference to the River Team catchment, and states that development within the River Team catchment should consider the Team Valley Surface Water Management Plan and River Team Flood Masterplan.
- 4.51 MSGP31 Water Quality and the Water Environment requires that the quantity and possible enhanced in accordance with the Northumbria River Basin Management Plan.
- 4.52 MSGP32 addresses green infrastructure and flood management.
- 4.53 MSGP33 aims to ensure that the development protects and, where appropriate, contributes to green infrastructure. Green infrastructure includes the Team Valley which is identified as presenting opportunities for improvement.
- 4.54 MSGP37 and 38 address woodland, trees and hedgerows, and biodiversity and geodiversity respectively.
- 4.55 The Draft MSGP, which is intended to replace the UDP, is expected to be adopted in Spring/Summer 2020....
https://www.gateshead.gov.uk/media/10000/MSGP-Submission-Draft-October-2018/pdf/MSGP_Submission_Draft_2018.pdf?m=636765968077930000

4.56 Placemaking Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

The Placemaking SPD expands on policy MSGP25. The purpose of the Placemaking SPD is to set out detailed planning policy guidance on the principles of good design for all types of development within Gateshead, and to explain how policies will be applied. The intention is to achieve a distinctive, accessible, safe and sustainable built and natural environment reflecting the special character of the Borough's heritage and its varied townscapes and landscapes.

4.57 Although much of the SPD is focused on buildings, section D4.4 is concerned with routeways and gateways. Seven key routeways have been identified and these include the A1 corridor and the ECML. Development located adjacent to these routeways should endeavour to "to ensure developments in the vicinity of these gateways and routeways are of the highest design standard and make a positive contribution to the arrival experience".

4.58 Gateshead's Placemaking SPD

<https://www.gateshead.gov.uk/article/3093/Gateshead-Placemaking-SPD>

4.59 National Networks National Policy Statement

The National Networks National Policy Statement (NPS) was published in December 2014. It sets out Government policy relating to the delivery of nationally significant infrastructure projects relating to the road and rail networks. It reflects the importance given to maintaining well connected and high performing networks with sufficient capacity to meet long term needs and support economic growth, including need at a local level. The A1 Birtley to Coal House Scheme will deliver improved connectivity and increased capacity on the A1 Western Bypass.

4.60 It recognises that the consequences of traffic congestion can be both economic, in terms of constraining economic activity and growth as well as environmental such as harmful emissions affecting air quality. Measures to improve the road network will include junction upgrades and increased capacity on trunk roads and these will be implemented alongside measures to encourage less reliance on the private vehicle and rolling out improved technology.

4.61 Detailed guidance is provided about the need to ensure that new development is appropriately mitigated to avoid environmental and social impacts but it is also recognised that some adverse local effects may remain. A range of specific impacts are set out in the guidance.

4.62 National Planning Policy Framework

The revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) came into effect in 2019 and promotes sustainable development. It replaced and simplified a large number of policy pages about planning. The Planning Practice Guidance to support the NPPF is published online and regularly updated. These act as guidance for Local Planning Authorities and decision-takers, both in drawing up plans and making decisions about planning applications.

4.63 Separate National Policy Statements have been produced to set out the material considerations relating to nationally significant infrastructure projects and these reflect the key aims of sustainable development set out in the NPPF.

4.64 North East Strategic Economic Plan

The Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) was published in March 2014 by the North East Local Enterprise Partnership, and then refreshed in 2019. Its overall vision is to provide over one million jobs in our economy by 2024. It is expected much of this will be achieved through growth in business services, where the A1 Western Bypass already provides a vital link to a range of medium and large businesses; new economies such as creative and technology, media and telecoms; low carbon and renewable technologies.

4.65 The SEP sets out six strategic themes to address challenges and deliver economic growth – one of these is to develop the places for business to invest and for people to live and another is transport and digital connectivity to allow people to move around for work and leisure and connect the North East to the national and international economy. In completing A1 Birtley to Coal House Improvement Scheme, it is considered that this will help address the SEP challenges on delivering economic growth.

4.66 In terms of transport, the SEP notes that to achieve its economic growth aspirations, it will be necessary for people and goods to be transported within, into and out of the area. It goes on to note that the presence and effectiveness of road, rail, air and sea connections can limit aspiration and the north east will not attract investment if the transport networks do not function effectively.

4.67 It recognises that reducing congestion on the road network, namely the A1 and A19, is necessary to ensure that constraints on economic investment are relieved. Investment in the road network will have significant economic benefits for the region and enable developments in growth corridors to be delivered. The SEP identifies investment in known bottlenecks on the network and in additional capacity and traffic management, as well as encouraging more use of sustainable transport among its priorities.

4.68 Tyne and Wear Local Transport Plan

Local Transport Plan 3 (LTP3) was the third Local Transport Plan for Tyne and Wear and includes a ten-year strategy (2011 – 2021) covering all forms of transport in Tyne and Wear. It was produced by the former Tyne and Wear Integrated Transport Authority (ITA) on behalf of the six LTP Partners – the five Tyne and Wear local authorities (including South Tyneside and Sunderland) and Nexus, the local Passenger Transport Executive. The responsibilities of the ITA passed to North East Combined Authority (NECA) from April 2014.

4.69 The vision for transport in Tyne and Wear was that the area will have a fully integrated and sustainable transport network, allowing everyone the

opportunity to achieve their full potential and have a high quality of life. The strategic networks will support the efficient movement of people and goods within and beyond Tyne and Wear, and a comprehensive network of pedestrian, cycle and passenger transport links will ensure that everyone has access to employment, training, community services and facilities. Five goals were adopted to meet the vision:

- To support the economic development, regeneration and competitiveness of Tyne and Wear, improving the efficiency, reliability and integration of transport networks across all modes;
- To reduce carbon emissions produced by local transport movements, and to strengthen our networks against the effects of climate change and extreme weather events;
- To contribute to healthier and safer communities in Tyne and Wear, with higher levels of physical activity and personal security;
- To create a fairer Tyne and Wear, providing everyone with the opportunity to achieve their full potential and access a wide range of employment, training, facilities and services; and
- To protect, preserve and enhance our natural and built environments, improving quality of life and creating high quality public places.

4.70 Transport Manifesto 2016 – 2036

The Transport Manifesto sets out the aims and ambitions of NECA, which has established a single identity for travel in the region known as Transport North East. The Manifesto states its support for existing proposals to improve roads including the “A1 dualling in Northumberland, Western Bypass enhancements and A19 junction upgrades”.

4.71 In terms of the A1, the need for improvements to the Western Bypass was identified a number of years ago with the Department for Transport (DfT) having accepted that the A1 is experiencing significant network stress with corresponding impacts on the economy, environment and quality of life. The DfT later announced that it would work with local partners on the development of measures to address the issues with road safety and congestion on the A1 Western Bypass. Improvements at Birtley to Coal House remain a regional priority and the major scheme investment is welcomed.

4.72 North East Combined Authority [NECA] Regional Transport Plan

Transport is of strategic importance to the North East, and the collaborative working of both Combined Authorities allows effective decision making across the region, which ensures that the local needs and priorities are delivered. The creation of North East Combined Authority in 2014 placed the responsibility for strategic decision making for transport, economic development and skills onto a new body made up of the seven local authority leaders and the chairman of the North East Local Enterprise Partnership. The North East Joint Transport Committee brings together a total of seven members from each of the Constituent Authorities of the region; four Members from the North East Combined Authority and three Members from the North of

Tyne Combined Authority in accordance with the Order that was created in November 2019.

- 4.73 As part of this process, the third Tyne and Wear Transport Plan (LTP3) is to be replaced by a Regional Transport Plan covering the North-East area. This plan will set out our key policies, the new and collaborative ways in which we work and establishes a delivery programme which will aid us in achieving our goals.

5. Local Impacts Assessment

- 5.1 Gateshead Council has assessed the local impacts resulting from the scheme proposals and designated them in terms of whether the impact is on balance considered to be positive, neutral or negative. This determination has been completed using the suite of supporting evidence available as part of the DCO application (TR010031) for the scheme.

Air Quality/Noise and Vibration – Neutral Impact

- 5.2 The Council agrees with the methodologies used and the assessments of the impacts (construction and operational). In respect of air quality, the assessment conclusion is accepted that there will not be any exceedance of the NO₂ air quality standards (residential receptors), nor any impact on the town centre AQMA or proposed Tyneside CAZ.
- 5.3 Fugitive dust emissions from construction will need to be controlled and the outlined dust management plan is a necessity. A point of contact, for public complaints/information and local authority liaison (dust, noise, etc), will need to be established.
- 5.4 During the construction phase, the Council is concerned with the adverse noise impacts of the scheme given that a number of properties lie in close proximity to it. However, the Council respects that a number of mitigation measures are proposed to minimise this noise as part of the CEMP.
- 5.5 To minimise the local noise impact of construction works on residential receptors close to the construction area, the Council is content with the identified measures in the CEMP and REAC.

Biodiversity, Ecology and Natural Environment – Negative Impact

- 5.6 The proposals will result in the direct loss of 14.13ha combined priority woodland habitat (Embankment) and 13.83ha combined priority woodland habitat (Viaduct). This includes the loss of 57m² of Long Acre Wood Local Wildlife Site. Replacement/compensation woodland creation totaling 14.88ha (Embankment) and 14.33 (Viaduct) is proposed. Given the considerable time lag in achieving the same level of ecological value and function as that to be lost; it is considered that a significant increase in the provision of replacement/compensation woodland creation is required.
- 5.7 The Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland (CIEEM, 2018) state:
- 6.7 Replacement ratios of compensatory habitat greater than one-to-one are frequently appropriate because of the uncertainty inherent in compensation, particularly in cases which require ecological restoration, habitat creation or translocation of species or habitats. The scientific basis for deriving appropriate ratios is not exact and will vary depending on the habitat or species concerned. Increased replacement ratios can also help take account of the time lag in delivering compensation and regaining the same maturity,

complexity and diversity of habitats and the full complement of species as those affected.

- 5.8 In addition to impacts on biodiversity, the proposed loss of c.14ha of established, semi-mature/mature woodland has implications for the borough in terms of reduced ecosystems services, including air and water quality and carbon sequestration.
- 5.9 Both options are anticipated to result in the direct loss of 6.79ha of priority grassland habitat. Replacement/compensation species rich grassland habitat creation of 6.41ha (Embankment) and 5.94ha (Viaduct) is proposed. Again, the replacement ratio of species rich grassland is considered to be inadequate. Similarly, the proposals are predicted to result in a net loss of dense/continuous scrub habitat and running water. Hedgerow is the only habitat type for which a significant increase in area/length is proposed.
- 5.10 There appears to be some discrepancy between the figures provided for habitat loss and habitat creation within different sections of the Biodiversity chapter of the Environmental statement (e.g. Pg. 53 Table 8.17 – Priority habitat creation across the scheme footprint and Pg. 64 para. 8.10.7).
- 5.11 The need to ensure the proposed scheme delivers appropriate and proportionate levels of ecological compensation, particularly with regards to the creation of replacement priority habitat(s), is of particular concern as the scheme does not propose to provide any compensation for the direct/permanent loss of non-priority habitats and as a national infrastructure project is exempt from having to provide biodiversity net gains.
- 5.12 In addition to the above, the opportunity to better understand, discuss and address the following key issues with the 'project team' and Council colleagues is considered necessary:
- The relative benefits/disbenefits of the two options (i.e. embankment and viaduct) for biodiversity.
 - Realignment of the Allerdene culvert.
 - Appropriate mitigation for the areas of Council land to be impacted by the scheme.
 - Compensatory habitat creation and maintenance issues relating to Bowes Railway LWS and Longbank underpass.
 - Mitigation measures for otter during the construction and operation of the proposed scheme.
 - Predicted impacts and proposed mitigation relating to breeding and wintering waders.
 - Impacts on ecological connectivity and wildlife mortality associated with the use of acoustic fencing and concrete step barriers.
 - Details of landscaping proposals/habitat creation.
 - Provision of species specific mitigation/enhancement measures including bat and bird boxes (what and where)

- 5.13 On the basis of the information available; it is currently considered that delivery of the proposed Scheme (both options) is not achievable within acceptable ecological limits.

Archaeology and Cultural Heritage – Significantly harmful to the Angel and Neutral (all other areas)

- 5.14 The Environmental Statement (ES) dated August 2019 has been produced by Highways England (HE). Chapter 6 of the document refers to the Cultural Heritage assessments that have been undertaken. Chapter 7 refers to the landscape and visual assessments that have been undertaken.
- 5.15 The Council considered that the approach set out in chapter 6 is appropriate. The Tyne & Wear Archaeology Officer who provides advice to Gateshead Council was consulted by Highways England on the preparation of this chapter of the ES and is satisfied with the methodology used and the baseline assessments.
- 5.16 The impacts on the defined archaeology sites have been assessed during the construction phase, with the impacts foreseen to be of negligible and low value. Further to this, the assets are well understood in terms of their function and date.
- 5.17 The impacts on the Bowes Scheduled Ancient Monument have been discussed with Historic England. The Council agrees with the Historic England that the assessment of harm set out in chapter 6 of the ES does not properly reflect the impact of the proposed works on the significance of the Bowes Railway. There will be substantial harm to a limited section of the monument but overall, a moderate adverse effect.
- 5.18 The Council welcomes the initial survey work of the areas of land to be used for compounds. However, this work does not include the additional land use to the east of Lamesley Conservation Area. This level of survey should be extended to that site.
- 5.19 During the construction phase, there is an appreciation that the siting of the temporary site compound to the east of Lamesley Conservation Area will have adverse impacts on the setting of the conservation area. The Council recognises that this is a temporary effect and that there is no long term harm to the significance of the conservation area.
- 5.20 From reviewing the above, the Council considers that the archaeological impacts of the scheme are not substantial, and the referenced issues are mitigated through the measures identified within the CEMP and draft requirement 9.
- 5.21 Chapters 6 and 7 of the ES refer to the cultural significance Angel of the North and its setting. The Council also references the NECT study (2018) – A Study of the Significance which the Angel gains from its Setting and the

Southern Green Options Appraisal for Managing and Enhancing the Angel (January 2020).

- 5.22 The cultural assessment states that the scheme will have short term impacts on the setting of, and views of the Angel due to construction works. The scheme allows for continued access to the Angel by visitors and residents during the course of the construction works which is welcome. The Council accepts that this impact arising from the construction works is short term.
- 5.23 The scheme will have longer term impacts on the setting of, and views of, the Angel. The Council considers that the impacts arising from the number and position of gantries along the A1, and the design of the proposed footbridge, from the approach to the footbridge through to Team Valley/Lamesley junction are significantly harmful not neutral.
- 5.24 The scheme will initially remove a large amount of the existing tree growth around the Angel in order to facilitate the construction works. The Council commissioned Southern Green in 2019 to produce an options appraisal for the Angel landscape setting. The Council's preferred option is to implement option 3 'Revealing the Angel'. This follows directly from the tree clearance works which will be carried out to facilitate construction. Therefore, the impact of the proposed gantries and new footbridge must be assessed against a cleared landscape background and not the existing tree cover.
- 5.25 The Council commissioned a study examining the significance of the setting of, and views of the Angel in 2018. The report observes that the Angel is intended to be boldly exposed to the passing traffic. The effects of the proposed bridge design and gantries can be clearly understood from the images set out on page 57 of the NECT report. The design of the bridge will fully obscure views of the Angel on the northbound approach. Once past the footbridge the views remain obscured by the proposed gantries. The effects of the infrastructure proposed on the north bound approach to the Angel are replicated on the south bound approach. This harmful impact on the views of, and experience of the Angel as you pass by on the A1 is significant.
- 5.26 The draft CEMP part CH1 states that less dense replanting will be implemented to enable greater visibility of the Angel, and at L14, that the woodland to the south of the Angel would be subject to tree management to improve the visibility of the Angel. Draft requirement 5 refers to the detail of the approved landscape plan. The proposed landscape plan is set out at figure 7.6 of the ES.
- 5.27 From reviewing the above, the Council considers that the scheme submitted in the ES and referred to at CH1 and L14 of the draft CEMP does not respond to the issues set out in the NECT report. The Council requests that the scheme presented at figure 7.6 is revised to align with the Council's preferred option (option 3) set out in the SG report. The scheme as presented has a harmful and negative effect on the significance of the Angel.

Landscape and Visual Effects – Negative Impact

- 5.29 The Council is satisfied with the methodology, initial assessment of the baseline conditions and agreed selection of viewpoints, receptors and photomontage locations. However, the extent and adverse impact of the overhead signage and replacement footbridge became apparent at a later stage, and assessment and mitigation of this is ongoing.
- 5.30 This scheme is largely an on-line widening of an existing major road so the harm is in intensifying existing unattractive aspects of the highway corridor and in removing established mitigation measures, re-exposing the adverse impacts of the initial construction.
- 5.31 The widening of carriageway within the existing highway corridor in the southern part of the scheme will result in the loss of mature vegetation which cannot be fully reinstated within the site boundary. The widened road and associated infrastructure will be more visible within the semi-rural, recreational greenbelt landscape. From the Low Eighton roundabout northwards, the mitigation planting will ultimately be more effective and may reduce adverse impacts to negligible by the design year of 15 years post-completion.
- 5.32 The main adverse landscape impacts are medium term, resulting from the loss of roadside vegetation and will be mitigated to varying extents by the maturing of the landscape scheme from year 15 onwards.
- 5.33 The main adverse visual impacts are on users of the A1 viewing the Angel, due to the obstruction of views by new overhead structures, and views from the Angel, and this is a permanent change. Consideration of the extent of the impacts and mitigation is ongoing
- 5.34 There would be short-term adverse impact during construction from the works and compounds. This is expected to be of several years duration but would ultimately be temporary.
- 5.35 In landscape and visual terms the embankment option with sufficiently shallow side-slopes for woodland planting is preferable at Allerdene Bridge. It will ultimately screen much of the road from the receptors and visually link the woodlands at Longacre and Ravensworth estate across the valley.
- 5.36 The location of any off-site compensation planting has not been identified. No off-site mitigation planting has been provided.

Flood Risk, Water quality & Drainage – Neutral/Negative Impact

- 5.37 The impact upon flood risk and water quality of the proposed drainage scheme would be neutral if the currently proposed scheme is amended to more naturalised design of watercourse realignments; inlet and outlet features; and the drainage basin. Naturalistic design is essential to mitigate against the increased size of the concrete abutments to the Coalhouse

Viaduct which are against the principles of the WFD which looks to minimise engineered elements.

- 5.38 In addition to supporting WFD objectives, a more naturalistic design of the drainage features would comply with the objectives of the River Team Catchment Partnership and the emerging Gateshead Local Plan policies MSGP Policy 30:1a and b which require not culverting or building over watercourses wherever practicable; and encouraging catchment management through the removal of existing culverts and hard engineering.
- 5.39 If the engineered approach to drainage design is followed, as illustrated in the drawings submitted to date, then the impact would be slight adverse.
- 5.40 As the detail design of the drainage system has not been submitted, I am unable to comment on other aspects of the scheme such as flood risk to the River Team, and impact upon water quality in the Team. If best practice is followed, and an appropriate drainage construction management plan followed, then the impacts during the construction stage and the operational stage should be neutral.

Ground conditions – Neutral Impact

- 5.41 The site development area has been assessed and inspected as part of the Council's Contaminated Land strategy, as part of the Local Authorities' obligations under Part IIA of the Environmental Protection Act of 1990 and has not been determined as "Contaminated Land". However, it is situated on potentially contaminated land based on previous historic uses, i.e. mainly from previous mining use and areas containing previously demolished buildings.
- 5.42 However, overall the potential level of contamination possibly being a hazard to site operatives and future site users is considered to be LOW, and that significant contamination of soils and made ground beneath these areas is not anticipated.
- 5.43 The development area contains sections that are situated within or very near to a Coal Authority defined "Development High Risk Area" (formerly known as Coal Mining Development Referral Areas). These are areas, based upon Coal Authority records, where the potential land instability and other safety risks associated with former coal mining activities are likely to be greatest. This is because of the existence of possible or previous shallow coal mine workings within the site boundaries and mine shafts near to development area.
- 5.44 During the construction phase, the scheme will have a potential impact on ground conditions with possible risk from potential land contamination, land gas and coal mining issues. However, the Council is content with the mitigation measures proposed and the assessment of potential impacts. Once the scheme is operational, there could be slight impacts relating to contamination left from fill material. However, the defined measures in the Environmental Statement (ES) would mitigate any concerns. The Environmental Statement (ES) document refers to the Ground Condition

assessments that have undertaken which have been carried out satisfactorily.

- 5.45 Where development is proposed on land which there is reason to believe that there is either unstable or potentially unstable land, and at potential risk from mitigating contamination, a remediation strategy will be required. During the construction phase, the scheme will have an impact on ground conditions and potential effect from mining issues will require the applicant to carry out additional investigations to determine the nature of the ground conditions and allow development subject to preventative, remedial or precautionary measures within the control of the applicant. As a result, there is a potential risk from potential land contaminants and coal mining. However, the mitigation measures recommended and the assessment of potential impacts to date within the ES is acceptable.
- 5.46 Site works must be completed in accordance with a CL:AIRE compliant Materials Management Plan (MMP) to ensure re-used material does not present a risk to human health or the Environment. This would ensure any contaminated material is re-used suitably as part of the cut and fill earthworks associated with the Scheme. In addition, contract works should be undertaken in accordance with a suitable Remedial Strategy, to be agreed with Gateshead Council ahead of site works starting.

Transport and traffic – Positive Impact

- 5.47 The value of the proposed improvement to the transport network in Gateshead is recognised in Policy CS13 of the Core Strategy for Gateshead and Newcastle upon Tyne, which states:

‘The enhancement and delivery of an integrated transport network to support sustainable development and economic growth will be achieved by:

2. Improving the operation of the transport network and its wider connections by:

iv. The creation of additional capacity on the Strategic Road Network, including.....between the southern extent of the Lobley Hill Major Scheme improvements at Coalhouse and the A1/A194(M) bifurcation at Birtley.’

- 5.48 The improvements are particularly important because:
- They will see the replacement of the existing bridge over the East Coast Main Line at Allerdene. This has had major maintenance difficulties for a number of years. The risks to the local transport network from any failure to replace this are:
 - Increased need for diversion of traffic onto local roads and resulting congestion. Reduced capacity on the A1 due to major repairs to the bridge in 2009 saw traffic on some local roads more than double;

- Diversion of abnormal loads onto local routes. This is already in place, meaning that such loads have to travel through the main urban area of Gateshead, close to residential property;
- Potential disruption to passenger and freight traffic on the East Coast Main Line;
- They will improve road safety. Chapter 5 of the Transport Assessment (TR010031-000595-7.3) explains how the improvement will draw traffic from local roads with relatively high accident rates to the A1 (which has a lower one) leading to a net reduction of accidents. Table 5.1 of the Transport Assessment quantifies these benefits;
- The scheme will improve traffic flow and reduce congestion. The benefits of this are estimated in Chapter 4 of the Transport Assessment. The major role of the A1 as a travel corridor both to and through central Tyneside emphasises the importance of ensuring its effectiveness for traffic movement is sustained. It serves key residential and business locations in Gateshead including Team Valley Trading Estate and the Metro Centre/Metro Green, as well as providing the main road link from the south (via the A184) to central Tyneside. While it is not, in itself, a sustainable transport link it is nevertheless seen as central to promoting development in urban locations where the opportunity to maximise accessibility to disadvantaged people and by non-car modes can be maximised.

5.49 Walking and cycling

The Council is keen to promote the use of sustainable transport wherever possible. The existing A1 represents a significant barrier to pedestrian and cycle movement and the scheme represents an opportunity to overcome these wherever possible.

5.50 The Transport Assessment Report (APP-173) includes as Appendix D a 'walking, cycling and horse riding assessment review.' A number of proposals for improving facilities are outlined in section 5 of the review and in general these are welcomed. However it is not clear to what extent the proposals identified for implementation by Highways England have, or are being, included in the detailed design of the scheme. Additionally in some cases alternative delivery paths have been identified, and it is not always clear why this is the case. From a Council perspective the issue of overriding importance is not the delivery mechanism, but in ensuring the improvements proposed are implemented.

5.51 In relation to promoting the use of sustainable transport the Council has raised the following specific concerns concerning the transport and traffic impact of the proposals:

- Making additional efforts to reduce the severance impact of the A1 on pedestrians and cyclists, particularly at Coal House junction;
- The need to develop complementary programmes of measures aimed at reducing the risk of:
 - Scheme benefits being eroded by increased traffic generation;

- Increased car dependence. This is important in reducing the risk of the scheme coming into conflict with climate change and health objectives.

5.52 The above concerns are set out in more detail in separate submissions to the Examination, notably in the response to Examination Questions 1.9.5 and 1.9.11. While important they represent matters of detail in the proposal and do not undermine the overall benefit in transport terms.

5.53 Climate emergency

The declaration of a Climate Emergency inevitably raises questions over any proposals to increase road capacity. While such concerns are acknowledged it is considered they do not outweigh the need for this improvement.

5.54 Decarbonisation of the transport network will require investment across a range of measures, including better walking, cycling and zero carbon public transport as well as investment in zero emission vehicles. However the economic and social needs of the Tyneside area will still require a major traffic route through western Gateshead, which the A1 provides. While some reduction in traffic levels overall can be expected it is likely that these will be focused on the local road network as the shorter journeys found on this are more readily substitutable by other modes. In addition it is on local roads that there will be most need to reallocate existing road space to other modes, potentially leading to a shift in general traffic towards the A1. Work on the Tyneside Air Quality project (see response to Examination question 1.1.2) already suggests this is likely to be the case.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1 This report has been produced to consider the Local Impacts of the A1 Birtley to Coal House improvement scheme located in Gateshead.
- 6.2 This report has been prepared in accordance with the advice and requirements as set out in the Planning Act 2008, the Localism Act 2011 and Advice Note One: Local Impact Reports (Version 2, April 2012, The Planning Inspectorate).
- 6.3 The delivery of improvement works at this location has been an ambition for a number of years.
- 6.4 There is congestion at this key part of the A1 Western Bypass and this development will provide a means to relieve congestion by providing additional traffic capacity and improve the free flow of traffic on the A1.
- 6.5 The construction of highway improvement works inevitably has impact on the local landscape, key landmarks, ecology and amenities in terms of noise and air quality. Construction works can also have a temporary adverse impact on traffic movement.