

A1 Birtley to Coal House

Scheme Number: TR010031

Update to Planning Statement - clean

APFP Regulation 5(2)(q)
Planning Act 2008

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



Infrastructure Planning

Planning Act 2008

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

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

PLANNING STATEMENT

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CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1	Purpose of this document.....	1
1.2	The Applicant	1
1.3	Requirement for a Development Consent Order.....	2
1.4	Planning Policy Context.....	2
2	THE NEED FOR THE SCHEME	4
2.1	Overview	4
2.2	Scheme Location.....	6
2.3	Existing Land Uses & Character	6
2.4	Description of the Scheme	8
2.5	Key Objectives of the Scheme.....	10
2.6	Supporting Economic Growth.....	12
2.7	A safe and serviceable network.....	13
2.8	A more free-flowing network.....	13
2.9	Improved environment.....	14
2.10	An accessible and integrated network	15
3	SCHEME DEVELOPMENT AND OPTIONS CONSIDERED.....	16
3.1	Introduction	16
3.2	Development history and Alternative Options	16
4	ECONOMIC CASE OVERVIEW	27
4.1	Introduction	27
4.2	Overview of Economic Assessment and Methodology Used	27
4.3	Monetised Benefits	27
4.4	Non-Monetised Benefits	31
4.5	Value for Money	34
5	CONFORMITY WITH PLANNING POLICY AND TRANSPORT PLANS.....	36
5.1	Introduction	36
5.2	Policy Context	36
5.3	Conformity of the Scheme with Local Development Plans.....	43
5.4	Green Belt Policy.....	53
5.5	Planning Balance	63
6	CONCLUSIONS.....	65

Glossary

TERM	DEFINITION
Ancient Woodland	Ancient woodland is defined as an area that has been wooded continuously since at least 1600 AD. Ancient Woodland is divided into ancient semi-natural woodland and plantations on ancient woodland sites. Both types are classed as ancient woods.
Application	The Development Consent Order (DCO) Application.
The Applicant	Highways England
Baseline	A reference level of existing environmental conditions against which a project is measured and controlled.
Biodiversity	Abbreviated form of 'biological diversity' referring to variability among living organisms from all sources including, terrestrial, marine and other aquatic ecosystems and the ecological complexes of which they are part.
Climate Change	Large scale, long term shift in the planet's weather patterns or average temperature.
Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP)	Document setting out methods to avoid, minimise and mitigate environmental impacts on the environment and surrounding area and the protocols to be followed in implementing these measures in accordance with environmental commitments during construction.
DCO Application	The application for a DCO in respect of the Proposed Scheme.
Development Consent Order (DCO)	A DCO is made by the Secretary of State for Transport pursuant to the Planning Act 2008 (2008 Act) to authorise a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP). A draft DCO was submitted with the Application and revised versions of the draft will be submitted throughout the Examination by the Applicant.
Effect	The consequence of an impact on the environment.
Enhancement	Proposals that seek to improve the landscape resource and the visual amenity of the Proposed Scheme and its wider setting, over and above its baseline condition.
Environment Agency	A non-departmental public body sponsored by the United Kingdom Government's Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), with responsibilities relating to the protection and enhancement of the environment in England.

TERM	DEFINITION
Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)	A systematic means of assessing a development project's likely significant environmental effects undertaken in accordance with the Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017.
EIA Regulations 2017	The Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 which prescribe the information to be included in the Environmental Statement and the consultation to be carried out in connection with development requiring an Environmental Statement.
Environmental Statement	A statement that includes the information that is reasonably required to assess the environmental effects of a development and which the applicant can, having regard in particular to current knowledge and methods of assessment, reasonably be required to compile, but that includes at least the information required in the EIA Regulations 2017 and which is prepared in accordance with the latest Scoping Opinion adopted by the Secretary of State (where relevant).
Examining Authority (ExA)	The Inspector or Panel appointed from the Planning Inspectorate to be responsible for conducting the Examination of, and recommendation to the Secretary of State as to a decision on, the DCO Application.
Exceedance	A period of time where the concentrations of a pollutant is greater than the appropriate air quality standard.
Feature	Particularly prominent or eye-catching elements in the landscape, such as tree clumps, church towers or wooded skylines OR a particular aspect of the Proposed Scheme.
Greenhouse Gas (GHG)	Greenhouse gases are gases that absorb and emit radiation at specific wavelengths within the spectrum of infrared radiation emitted by the Earth's surface, the atmosphere, and clouds. The six main GHGs whose emissions are human-caused are: carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, hydrofluorocarbons, perfluorocarbon and sulphur hexafluoride. In combination, these GHG emissions are commonly expressed in terms of 'carbon dioxide equivalents' (CO ₂ e) according to their relative global warming potential. For this reason, the shorthand 'carbon' may be used to refer to GHGs.
Habitat	The environment in which populations or individual species live or grow.
Harm	Change for the worse, here primarily referring to the effect of inappropriate interventions on the heritage values of a Heritage Asset.

TERM	DEFINITION
Impact	A physical or measurable change to the environment attributable to the Proposed Scheme.
Land use	What land is used for, based on broad categories of functional land cover, such as urban and infrastructure use and the different types of agricultural and forestry.
Landscape	An area, as perceived by people, the character of which is a result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors.
Likely significant effect	An effect is the consequence of an impact or change to the environment. Effects do not have quantifiable values (e.g. opening up of new views as a result of loss of trees/hedgerows), but have significance (e.g. major, moderate or minor). Those effects predicted to have a significance of moderate to major are classified as likely significant effects
Local Development Plan	The set of documents and plans that sets out the local authority's policies and proposals for the development and use of land in their area. The Local Development Plan for Gateshead Council is the Core Strategy and Urban Core Plan (CSUCP) for Gateshead and Newcastle upon Tyne 2010 – 2030, Gateshead Local Plan Policies March 2015 and Making Spaces for Growing Places (MSGP) Draft Plan.
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)	A document that sets out government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied.
National Policy Statement (NPS)	Overarching policy designated under the Planning Act 2008 concerning the planning and consenting of NSIPs in the UK. The relevant NPS for the Scheme is the National Networks National Policy Statement (referred to as NNNPS within this document).
Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP)	<p>A project meeting the criteria for a “nationally significant infrastructure project” set out in section 14 of the Planning Act 2008, and therefore requiring authorisation under the 2008 Act by way of a DCO.</p> <p>The Proposed Scheme constitutes a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) by virtue of s.14(1)(h) and s.22(1)(b) of the 2008 Act as it is an alteration of a highway which is wholly within England, the Applicant is the strategic highways authority and the area of development is greater than the relevant limit set out in s.22(4) which is 12.5 ha, as speed limits will be in excess of 50mph for any class of vehicle.</p>

TERM	DEFINITION
Planning Inspectorate (the Inspectorate)	The government agency responsible for administering and examining applications for development consent for NSIPs under the Planning Act 2008 on behalf of the Secretary of State.
Receptor	A component of the natural, created or built environment such as a human being, water, air, a building, or a plant that has the potential to be affected by the Proposed Scheme.
Requirements	The 'requirements' at Schedule 2 to the draft DCO that, amongst other matters, are intended to control the final details of the Proposed Scheme as to be constructed and also to control its operation, amongst other matters, to ensure that it accords with the EIA and does not result in unacceptable impacts.
Scoping	An exercise undertaken pursuant to regulation 10 of the Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 to determine the topics to be addressed within the Environmental Statement.
Scoping Opinion	A written statement by the Secretary of State as to the information to be provided in the Environmental Statement; for the Proposed Scheme. This was provided by the Planning Inspectorate on 18 December 2017.
Townscape	The character and composition of the built environment including the buildings and the relationships between them, the different types of open urban space, including green spaces, and the relationship between buildings and open spaces.
Visual amenity	The overall pleasantness of the views people enjoy of their surroundings, which provides an attractive visual setting or backdrop for the enjoyment of activities of the people living, working, recreating, visiting or travelling through the area.
Visual Effects	Effects on specific views and on the general visual amenity experienced by people.
Water Framework Directive	European Union Directive which commits member states to achieve good qualitative status of all water bodies.
2008 Act	The Planning Act 2008 (as amended) which is the legislation in relation to applications for NSIPs, including pre-application consultation and publicity, the examination of applications and decision making by the Secretary of State.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of this document

- 1.1.1 This Planning Statement (this “Statement”) relates to an application made by Highways England (the “Applicant”) to the Planning Inspectorate (the “Inspectorate”) under section 37 of the Planning Act 2008 (the “2008 Act”) for a Development Consent Order (DCO). If made, the DCO would grant development consent for the A1 Birtley to Coal House (the “Scheme”). A more detailed description of the Scheme can be found in **Chapter 2** of the Environmental Statement (ES) (**Application Document Reference: TR010031/APP/6.1**).
- 1.1.2 The Infrastructure Planning (Applications: Prescribed Forms and Procedure) Regulations 2009 (the “2009 Regulations”) do not specifically require a Planning Statement to accompany an application for development consent. However, it has been submitted as part of a suite of supplementary documents which supports the application in accordance with 5(2)(q) of the 2009 Regulations. This Statement consolidates relevant planning information into a single location.
- 1.1.3 The Examining Authority (ExA) must make a recommendation and the Secretary of State for Transport must decide an application for development consent in accordance with the relevant National Policy Statement (NPS) under section 104(3) of the 2008 Act.
- 1.1.4 This Statement therefore sets out the case for the Scheme, the Scheme objectives and the alternatives considered. It also demonstrates how the Scheme complies with the National Networks National Policy Statement (NNNPS) and other relevant planning policy where it may be important and relevant to the decision. Accordingly, it draws upon the conclusion of the supporting application documents and interprets them against planning policy.
- 1.1.5 This Statement comprises six chapters as described below:
- **Chapter 1** – An Introduction, confirming the details of the Applicant. It explains why the Scheme is a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (“NSIP”), therefore requiring the submission of a DCO application.
 - **Chapter 2** – The need for the Scheme examining the existing issues and considers how these could develop in the future if the Scheme were not to be implemented.
 - **Chapter 3** – How the Scheme has developed over time. It details the alternatives considered and explains how these were refined to arrive at the Scheme subject to the DCO application.
 - **Chapter 4** – This describes the monetised and non-monetised benefits and confirms the economic case for the Scheme.
 - **Chapter 5** – Assesses the Scheme against national and local policy and provides a policy justification.
 - **Chapter 6** – Conclusions

1.2 The Applicant

- 1.2.1 Highways England is the strategic highway company charged with operating,

maintaining and improving England's motorway and major A roads. Formerly the Highways Agency, Highways England became a Government owned company in April 2015.

1.3 Requirement for a Development Consent Order

1.3.1 The Scheme is defined as a nationally significant infrastructure project ("NSIP") under sections 14(1)(h) and 22(1)(b) of the 2008 Act as:

- It comprises the alteration of a highway;
- The highway to be altered is wholly in England;
- Highways England Company Ltd is the strategic highway authority for the highway; and
- The speed limit is 50mph or more and the area of development exceeds the 12.5 hectare threshold at approximately 85.57 hectares.

1.3.2 As a result, the Applicant is required to secure a DCO pursuant to the 2008 Act in order to construct, operate and maintain the Scheme. The application will be examined by an independent ExA who will make a recommendation on whether the DCO should be granted. The Secretary of State will make the final decision on whether to grant the DCO and in what form.

1.4 Planning Policy Context

1.4.1 The Government has published several NPS which set out the policy against which the Secretary of State determines applications for development consent in relation to NSIPs. The NNNPS sets out the need for and the Government's policies to deliver the development of NSIPs on the national road and rail networks in England and so is directly relevant to this application.

1.4.2 As the DCO application for the Scheme is an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) development, the Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 ("EIA Regulations") and Regulation 5(2) of the 2009 Regulations requires an ES to be submitted as part of the application documents. In compliance with these regulations and as set out in the policy contained in the NNNPS, **Chapters 5 to 15** within the ES provide details of the assessments undertaken, a description of the likely significant effects of the Scheme on the environment, as well as measures proposed to reduce and if possible, offset likely significant adverse effects on the environment. Further details can be found in the ES (**Application Document Reference: TR010031/APP/6.1**) and the NNNPS Accordance Table (**Application Document Reference: TR010031/APP/7.2**).

1.4.3 The EIA Regulations and the NNNPS also require DCO applications to set out the alternative options as part of the Scheme development. Further details of these options can be found in **Chapter 3** of this Statement.

1.4.4 The Scheme has also been assessed against the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The NPPF does not contain specific policies for NSIPs, but points to the relevant NPS as the primary decision-making framework for NSIPs. However, the NPPF is capable of being an important and relevant consideration in the determination of the application for the Scheme.

1.4.5 Local policies also apply to the Scheme. The Scheme is bringing forward one of two key transport infrastructure schemes in the region which are considered to be

fundamental to the delivery of the Gateshead Core Strategy and Urban Core Plan's spatial strategy. An assessment of compliance with local and national policies can be found in **Chapter 5** of this Statement.

2 THE NEED FOR THE SCHEME

2.1 Overview

2.1.1 The A1 between Birtley and Coal House forms part of the Newcastle Gateshead Western Bypass (NGWB) in the North East of England. The A1 NGWB runs from junction 65 (Birtley) to junction 80 (Seaton Burn) where the A19 meets the A1.

2.1.2 The A1 NGWB is a route of local and national importance and forms part of Highways England's strategic road network (SRN) serving the metropolitan area of Tyne and Wear.

2.1.3 The A1 NGWB suffers from congestion and capacity issues. A number of studies, since 2002, have been undertaken to assess the congestion and capacity issues on the A1 NGWB, including between junction 65 (Birtley) and junction 67 (Coal House) to make recommendations on how they should be addressed. These include:

- a) Tyneside Area Multi-Modal Study (TAMMS) (2002);
- b) Access to Tyne and Wear City Region Study (2010);
- c) North East Delivering a Sustainable Transport System (DaSTS) Strategic Connectivity Study Report (2010);
- d) Newcastle City Deal (2012);
- e) Highway Agency Pilot Based Strategy Report (2013);
- f) A1 Newcastle Gateshead Western Bypass – Exploration of Dual 3-lane Provisions Initial Infrastructure Report (2013);
- g) Investing in Britain's Future (2013);
- h) Highways Agency Route based Strategy: Evidence Report: London to Scotland East (2014); and
- i) Feasibility Study (2014).

2.1.4 Further details on how the above studies have led to the Scheme which forms this DCO application can be found at **Chapter 3** of this Statement.

2.1.5 The A1 between junction 65 (Birtley) and junction 67 (Coal House) currently comprises:

- Southbound: Two lanes between junction 67 (Coal House) and junction 66 (Eighton Lodge) with an additional climbing lane between Smithy Lane Overbridge and junction 66 (Eighton Lodge) and three lanes between junction 66 (Eighton Lodge) and junction 65 (Birtley); and
- Northbound: Two lanes with a lane/gain drop between junction 65 (Birtley) and junction 66 (Eighton Lodge) and two lanes between junction 66 (Eighton Lodge) and junction 67 (Coal House).

2.1.6 The A1 NGWB is a critical part of both the national and local road network. Traffic flows and journey times have been derived from the Northern Regional Transport Model. Analysis of network performance in the Transport Assessment Report (**Chapter 3, Application Document Reference: TR010031/APP/7.3**) indicates that the section between junction 67 (Coal House) and junction 65 (Birtley)

experiences significant congestion with two-way traffic flows exceeding the North of England (NW, NE, YandH) benchmark for Dual Links¹. It is noted that the benchmark in the RIU data includes 3-lane links, and that the A1 NGWB is largely comprised of 2-lane links. This illustrates the high level of demand experienced on certain sections of this network.

- 2.1.7 The current Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) flow northbound between junction 65 (Birtley) and junction 66 (Eighton Lodge) is 46,103, and 43,769 between junction 66 (Eighton Lodge) and junction 67 (Coal House). The current AADT flow southbound between junction 65 (Birtley) and junction 66 (Eighton Lodge) is 49,828, and 45,951 between junction 66 (Eighton Lodge) and junction 67 (Coal House). The North of England average is 32,996.
- 2.1.8 Some of the underlying factors causing congestion between junction 65 (Birtley) and junction 67 (Coal House) include: increased traffic demand due to developments (e.g. new residential developments in Birtley and the potential for employment and retail developments in Team Valley Trading Estate) in the region; and increased traffic demand following the opening of the A1 Coal House (junction 67) to Metro Centre (junction 71) improvement scheme in 2016.
- 2.1.9 As set out in **Tables 12-12, 12-13 and 12-15** within **Chapter 12** Population and Human Health of the ES (**Application Document Reference: TR010031/APP/6.1**), driver stress caused by congestion is particularly high in morning peak times on the northbound carriageway.
- 2.1.10 **Figures 3-7 and 3-8** of the Transport Assessment Report (**Application Document Reference: TR010031/APP/7.3**) show that, from October 2009 to September 2011 junction 65 (Birtley) to junction 67 (Coal House) experienced the worst overall delays along the Scheme. It shows that the link between junction 65 (Birtley) and junction 66 (Eighton Lodge) experienced average monthly vehicle hour delays in the region of 1,000 and 2,000 hours per km per month. The section between junction 66 (Eighton Lodge) and junction 67 (Coal House) experienced monthly vehicle hour delays of over 4,000 hours per km with the worst delays experienced in the morning peak. Particular pinch points include congestion at junction 67 (Coal House); at Allerdene Bridge; and on the A1 between junction 65 (Birtley) and the A194(M) Interchange.
- 2.1.11 The Scheme is expected to reduce journey times during all hours from 2023 (opening year). The greatest reduction predicted is 2 minutes and 11 seconds between the 'do something' (with the Scheme) and 'do minimum' (without the Scheme) scenarios, on the southbound section between junction 65 (Birtley) and junction 67 (Coal House) during the evening peak in 2038 (design year). This represents a reduction in journey time from 11 minutes and 7 seconds to 8 minutes and 56 seconds. Further details can be found in **Chapter 4** of the Transport Assessment Report (**Application Document Reference: TR010031/APP/7.3**).
- 2.1.12 In addition, the existing Allerdene Bridge, where the A1 crosses the East Coast Main Line ("ECML"), requires significant maintenance due to its condition. This maintenance would have been required nonetheless even if the Scheme was not being promoted. If this structure were to become unusable it would heavily impact on traffic use of the A1 and cause significant congestion issues in the area due to

¹ Data provided by Yorkshire and North East Performance Intelligence Unit (YNE).

the lack of alternative routes.

- 2.1.13 In the morning peak period (without the Scheme), the two-way total traffic between junction 65 (Birtley) and junction 66 (Eighton Lodge) is forecast to grow by 16% and 26% between junction 66 (Eighton Lodge) and junction 67 (Coal House) by 2038. This is largely due to the planned growth in the Newcastle, Gateshead and wider region, largely due to a number of proposed development sites to be delivered through the Newcastle/Gateshead Local Plan. This additional traffic demand will further exacerbate the congestion and capacity issues experienced on the A1 NGWB, particularly between junction 65 (Birtley) and junction 67 (Coal House). Further details can be found in the Transport Assessment Report (**Application Document Reference: TR010031/APP/7.3**).

2.2 Scheme Location

- 2.2.1 The Scheme is situated in the North East of England approximately 3km from Gateshead Town Centre and 4km from Newcastle City Centre, and is located within the administrative area of Gateshead Council. Further details can be found on the Location Plan (**Application Document Reference: TR010031/APP/2.1**).

2.3 Existing Land Uses & Character

- 2.3.1 The Scheme is located on the southern edge of the urban area of Gateshead. The A1 generally forms a boundary to Gateshead Town Centre which extends to the north of the A1. The land to the south of the A1 is characterised by a combination of residential, rural, industrial, recreational, open space and urban fringe land uses. These are described in detail below.
- 2.3.2 The Scheme and much of the area surrounding it falls within (or partly within) the Green Belt, namely Tyne and Wear Green Belt around Gateshead and Newcastle. Full details on the Green Belt are considered further in **Chapter 7 Landscape and Visual of the ES (Application Document Reference: TR010031/APP/6.1)** including a description of its characteristics.
- 2.3.3 With the exception of the settlement of Birtley which is a town situated approximately 7km to the south of Gateshead, all of the land south of the A1 is designated as Green Belt by the Gateshead Core Strategy and Urban Core Plan. To the north of the A1, the Green Belt designation extends from just south of Allerdene and Harlow Green and encompasses the site of the Angel of the North and agricultural land between junction 66 (Eighton Lodge) and junction 65 (Birtley).
- 2.3.4 There are three Noise Important Areas (NIAs) located along the A1, at junction 65 (Birtley), north west of junction 65 and west of Willowbeds Farm (see Environmental Constraints Plan, **Figure 2.2** of the ES (**Application Document Reference: TR010031/APP/6.2**)).
- North of Junction 67 (Coal House)*
- 2.3.5 The area to the north of junction 67 (Coal House) is characterised by Team Valley Trading Estate. To the west and north-west of junction 67 (Coal House) lies Ravensworth Park Conservation Area, which includes several listed buildings including the Grade II listed Ravensworth Park Farmhouse. This area also includes Lady Park which is made up of a small number of residential properties.
- Junction 67 (Coal House) to Junction 66 (Eighton Lodge)*

- 2.3.6 The land to south-west of junction 67 (Coal House) is predominantly rural and is characterised by open farmland with occasional farm buildings. This area includes the Ravensworth Park Conservation Area; Ravensworth Coalmill Scheduled Monument (SM); and Ravensworth Castle SM. The village of Lady Park lies close to the northbound carriageway approximately 450m from the junction and is within a Conservation Area. An area of Ancient Woodland, known as Shanks Wood, which adjoins the Scheme is located between Lobley Hill and Lady Park approximately 25m from the A1.
- 2.3.7 The River Team is the main watercourse in the area. The River Team floodplain occupies an area from the outskirts of Birtley in the south, through Lamesley and passing under junction 67 (Coal House). The River continues through the Team Valley Trading Estate and ultimately joins the River Tyne near Dunston west of Gateshead Town Centre.
- 2.3.8 Team Valley Trading Estate lies to the north of junction 67 (Coal House). It is a major strategic employment site within the region. There are approximately 700 companies, with a number of large international companies, located on the trading estate.
- 2.3.9 The area to the north of the A1 between junction 67 (Coal House) and junction 66 (Eighton Lodge) comprises the residential areas of Chowdene, Allerdene, Harlow Green and Eighton. These are separated from the A1 by woodland.
- 2.3.10 The A1 crosses the ECML via the existing Allerdene Bridge approximately 500m east of junction 67 (Coal House).
- 2.3.11 Land south of the A1 between junction 67 (Coal House) and junction 66 (Eighton Lodge) is relatively rural with the exception of the ECML and Tyne Marshalling Yard. The village of Lamesley is situated to the west of Tyne Marshalling Yard.
- 2.3.12 There are a number of local wildlife sites near to the Scheme including Lamesley Pastures Local Wildlife Site (LWS) approximately 650m from the A1 and Longacre Wood (LWS) which is approximately 22m from the A1.
- Junction 66 (Eighton Lodge) to Junction 65 (Birtley)*
- 2.3.13 Extending underneath the A1 south of junction 66 (Eighton Lodge), the Bowes Railway Line is an LWS, an SM and a bridleway, known as Longbank Bridleway, for much of its length. This feature is important because it is one of the earliest and best-preserved examples of a rope haulage system. The Bowes Railway Line passes under the A1 (the Longbank Bridleway Underpass) between junction 66 (Eighton Lodge) and junction 65 (Birtley). The underpass runs beneath the A1 on a skewed north-east to south-west alignment, providing a bridleway function and forming part of the Great North Forest Heritage Trail. The underpass comprises an arch-shaped structure extending the width of the former railway line and is currently unlit.
- 2.3.14 In the immediate vicinity of junction 66 (Eighton Lodge) there are a cluster of buildings comprising The Angel View Inn public house and Eighton Lodge care home.
- 2.3.15 The character of the land south of the A1 between junction 66 (Eighton Lodge) and junction 65 (Birtley) is principally residential and forms the northern outskirts of Birtley.
- 2.3.16 The area to the west of junction 65 (Birtley) is dominated by industrial uses and

the residential areas of Ayton, Blackfell and Oxclose. The Portobello industrial area is located south west of the junction.

2.4 Description of the Scheme

2.4.1 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).

2.4.2 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 a 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 re-constructed; 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).

2.4.3 It has been identified that significant settlement issues may occur following construction of the new Allerdene Bridge and structures associated with it. The Scheme is therefore proposing two design options for the replacement of the existing bridge. These are an Embankment option; and a Viaduct Option. This will allow flexibility in the DCO application to undertake further investigation of the settlement issue during detailed design of the Scheme.

2.4.4 Further information on the design options are as follows:

Embankment Option

- 2.4.5 The existing Allerdene Bridge would be replaced with a single span steel bridge (approximately 62m in length) that is two additional lanes wider than the existing bridge in order to improve capacity. The height of the bridge and A1 at this section would also be raised to ensure the bridge meets Network Rail clearance requirements.
- 2.4.6 An embankment would be constructed either side of the bridge and extend between the eastern extent of Kingsway Viaduct and tie-in to the existing alignment to the north of Smithy Lane Overbridge. The proposed embankment would be located adjacent to the existing A1 embankment and extend up to 12m high, with the side slopes at a gradient of 1:3. Ground improvement for the embankment in the form of rigid inclusions, would be constructed extending to a depth of 30m below existing ground level. A load transfer platform (likely to be constructed from granular fill and basal geogrid) would span across the rigid inclusions, upon which the embankment would be constructed. The embankment would be constructed from standard earthwork materials.

6/7 Span Viaduct Option

- 2.4.7 Allerdene Bridge would be replaced with a viaduct structure (with a maximum length of 290m) of six spans (the six span option) or seven spans (seven span option).
- 2.4.8 Both the 6 and 7 span proposed viaduct options would be supported on rigid piled foundations. The depths are expected to vary between 40m and 50m in length, all founded in competent rock. The structure would have three components as follows:
- i. Superstructure – The north and southbound A1 carriageway would be two structurally independent decks. The main girders are expected to comprise fabricated weathering steel plate sections acting compositely with a reinforced concrete deck.
 - ii. Substructure – The intermediate piers would comprise reinforced concrete piers or alternatively a series of columns interconnected via a reinforced concrete cross head beam at the top and a pile cap at the base. The end supports (abutments) would comprise reinforced concrete cantilever construction.
 - iii. Foundations – The foundation to the intermediate piers/abutments would comprise reinforced concrete bored pile foundations with a minimum diameter of 900mm and an embedment depth of 40m (with a maximum length of 310m). All of the proposed viaduct options would be supported on rigid piled foundations. The depths are expected to vary between 40m and 50m in length, all founded in competent rock.

3 Span Option

- 2.4.9 As set out at 2.4.10 below, an application has been made to amend the Application so as to introduce a third option for the replacement of Allerdene Bridge with a 3 span option.
- 2.4.10 Under this option, Allerdene Bridge would be replaced with a viaduct structure – comprising three spans (the 3 span option) (with a central span (of approx. 65m in length), which would pass over the railway, with back spans to the east and west of the railway (each approx. 45m in length). The proposed 3 span viaduct option would be supported on rigid piled foundations. The depths are expected to vary between 40m and 50m in length, all founded in competent rock. The structure

would have three components as follows:

- i. Superstructure – The north and southbound A1 carriageway would be two structurally independent decks. The main girders are expected to comprise fabricated weathering steel plate sections acting compositely with a reinforced concrete deck.
- ii. Substructure – The intermediate piers would comprise reinforced concrete piers or alternatively a series of columns interconnected via a reinforced concrete cross head beam at the top and a pile cap at the base. The end supports (abutments) would comprise reinforced concrete cantilever construction.
- iii. Foundations – The foundation to the intermediate piers/abutments would comprise reinforced concrete bored pile foundations with a minimum diameter of 900mm and an embedment depth of 40m.

2.4.11 A detailed description of these options and the overall Scheme can be found in **Chapter 3** Assessment of Alternatives of the ES (**Application Document Reference: TR010031/APP/6.1**).

2.5 Key Objectives of the Scheme

2.5.1 The key objectives of the Scheme are as follows:

- **Supporting Economic Growth**– The Scheme forms part of a wider government initiative for growth in the North East and aims to support economic growth by improving the road to the Newcastle and Tyneside area.
- **A safe and serviceable network** - The Scheme aims to reduce accidents and improve journey time reliability which will lead to a reduction in driver stress and delays.
- **A more free-flowing network** - The traffic model used to design the Scheme predicts that road users travelling through the Scheme will benefit significantly from reduced journey times as a result of the proposal.
- **Improved environment** - The environmental effects resulting from the Scheme have been considered during previous stages of development. Measures to mitigate potential effects on the local environment have been identified and will be further refined as the Scheme design is finalised. Opportunities to improve the local environment are also being sought as part of the final Scheme design.
- **An accessible and integrated network** - The proposed Scheme will provide improved connectivity with the local road network. Access and safety for pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders will be considered as part of the Scheme. We are upgrading the road to accommodate abnormal loads which will future proof the route and reduce the impact on the local road network.

2.5.2 The Government has produced a series of NPS, including the NNNPS which applies to the national road network. In the Summary of Need, Page 9 of the NNNPS states that “*the government will deliver national networks that meet the country’s long term needs; supporting a prosperous and competitive economy and improving overall quality of life, as part of the wider transport system*”.

2.5.3 The NNNPS lists four strategic objectives that it aims for national networks to deliver. These are as follows:

- Networks with the capacity and connectivity and resilience to support national and local economic activity and facilitate growth and create jobs
- Networks which support and improve journey time quality, reliability and safety
- Networks which support the delivery of environmental goals and move to a low carbon economy
- Network which join up our communities and link effectively to each other.

2.5.4 **Table 1** below sets out how the Scheme objectives fit with the NNNPS strategic objectives:

Table 1 – Scheme Conformity with the NNNPS Objectives

NNNPS Vision and Strategic Objectives	Conformity of the Scheme
<p>Networks with the capacity and connectivity and resilience to support national and local economic activity and facilitate growth and create jobs.</p>	<p>The Scheme is designed to improve traffic flows and reduce driver delays currently experienced on this section of the A1 NGWB, which is a strategically important part of the road network for the regional and national economy. The Scheme would reduce delays in the vicinity of the Team Valley Trading Estate which is a strategic employment area and plays a key role in the government’s investment strategy for creating jobs in the North East. The Scheme would provide additional capacity to support the Team Valley Trading Estate, of which more details are provided later, at Chapter 5 of this Statement</p>
<p>Networks which support and improve journey quality, reliability and safety.</p>	<p>The addition of new lanes will contribute to the free-flow of traffic on the A1 reducing driver delays and time lost for business users and reducing stress for all users. The Transport Assessment Report (Application Document Reference: TR010031/APP/7.3) also demonstrates that the Scheme will improve safety on local roads by reducing accidents (see Figure 5-1 of Transport Assessment Report), as well as on the SRN.</p> <p>The replacement of the Allerdene Bridge would improve the reliability of this section by avoiding the likely need for emergency maintenance and repair of the aging structure, and disruption to highways users. Safety would be improved through better signage and traffic information, and stress reduction.</p>

	Benefits in terms of reduced accidents are also highlighted in Chapter 5 of the Transport Assessment Report.
Networks which support the delivery of environmental goals and the move to a low carbon economy.	The Scheme is designed to provide an overall environmental enhancement, in particular through improved landscaping, water management (through Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) and other measures), and noise reduction (through improved carriageway surfacing and additional noise barriers). There would also be some small initial improvements in air quality and carbon emissions through reduced congestion, although increased capacity may mean that benefits are offset as traffic levels increase (see Table 5-11 and 5-12, Chapter 5 Air Quality of the ES (Application Document Reference: TR010031/APP/6.1)). The assessment of effects on the environment, including climate change (Chapter 14 Climate), is set out in the ES.
Networks which join up our communities and link effectively to each other.	The Scheme would relieve congestion on the SRN and therefore help to join up communities by reducing delays that currently make travel difficult on this section of the A1. The Scheme would retain existing connectivity between communities on either side of the A1.

2.5.5 Highways England's Environmental Strategy published in 2017, places a strong emphasis on protection, conservation and enhancement of the environment, specifically the topics of noise, air quality, water quality and flooding, biodiversity, landscape and cultural heritage. An ES has been produced in support of this Scheme. The following chapters of the ES address the topics emphasised in the strategy: noise (**Chapter 11**); air quality (**Chapter 5**); water quality and flooding (**Chapter 13**); biodiversity (**Chapter 8**); landscape (**Chapter 7**); and cultural heritage (**Chapter 6**) of the ES (**Application Document Reference: TR010031/APP/6.1**).

2.5.6 Highways England's Sustainable Development Strategy, published in 2017, aims to communicate Highways England's approach and priorities for sustainable development to its key stakeholders. Highways England is keen to ensure its actions in the future will further reduce the impact of its activities seeking long-term and sustainable benefits to the environment and the communities it serves. The main benefits of the Scheme to the environment is a general shift in the number of receptors towards lower effect levels for those living adjacent to the Scheme and potential improvements to the local water environment (see **Chapters 11 and 13** of the ES) (**Application Document Reference: TR010031/APP/6.1**).

2.6 Supporting Economic Growth

- 2.6.1 The Scheme would support economic growth and development objectives for Gateshead and the wider North East region, as set out in **Chapter 5** of this Statement. The Scheme forms part of a wider government initiative for growth in the North East and aims to support economic growth by improving the A1 to the Gateshead, Newcastle and Tyneside area.
- 2.6.2 Congestion on the road network is likely to stifle growth and deter new development if the existing congestion issues are not addressed.
- 2.6.3 The Scheme would support the government's initiative for growth in the North East region by improving access to the Team Valley Trading Estate. The Team Valley Trading Estate currently comprises approximately 700 businesses and over 20,000 employees. Investment on the estate is promoted on the basis of proximity to the A1 and SRN and it depends upon improved capacity of the A1 to reduce congestion and journey times.

2.7 A safe and serviceable network

- 2.7.1 The Scheme would support a safe and serviceable network by aiming to reduce accidents and improve journey time reliability. Accidents have both an economic cost (including lost productivity, direct costs to the NHS and emergency services, and cost to individuals) and a social cost in terms of pain and suffering of individuals and families. In addition, accidents and incidents can cause significant disruption to the A1 when they occur.
- 2.7.2 Between junction 65 (Birtley) and junction 67 (Coal House) there have been 123 slight collisions, 8 serious collisions and 1 fatal collision recorded between 2013 and 2017. The majority of incidents occur near to, or at, junctions and slip roads. Further details about the accidents savings that the Scheme will bring can be found at **Chapter 4** of this Statement and **Chapter 5** of the Transport Assessment Report (**Application Document Reference: TR010031/APP/7.3**).
- 2.7.3 The Scheme is designed to improve journey time reliability and network resilience by upgrading the A1 to provide a modern high-standard strategic route. Through the provision of additional lanes northbound this will help manage local traffic using the A1 to travel short distances between junctions on this stretch. The increased capacity would have sufficient resilience to cope with the expected growth in road traffic for 15 years to 2038 after opening of the Scheme in 2023. **Table 4-1** of the Transport Assessment Report (**Application Document Reference: TR010031/APP/7.3**) shows future forecast traffic flows both with the Scheme (Do Something) and without the Scheme (Do Minimum).
- 2.7.4 Reliability would also be improved by the proposed replacement of Allerdene Bridge over the ECML. The bridge is over 40 years' old and due to its condition is subject to frequent and often unplanned maintenance and repair requirements that cause substantial disruption to users of the A1. The replacement structure would be designed to have advanced access provision and a reduced requirement for maintenance purposes so as to be less disruptive to road users, therefore necessary maintenance will be reduced.

2.8 A more free-flowing network

- 2.8.1 The Scheme would support a more free-flowing network and help reduce traffic

congestion on the A1 through Gateshead and Newcastle, complementing the recent upgrade between Coal House and the Metro Centre, by increasing capacity along the route and at existing junctions. The Scheme is expected to reduce journey times during all hours, with greatest reduction being 2 minutes and 11 seconds southbound during the evening peak. Further details can be found in **Chapter 4** of the Transport Assessment Report (**Application Document Reference: TR010031/APP/7.3**). This is likely to improve user experience by reducing frustration and stress due to stop-start traffic and making the network more reliable for all road users (see **Paragraph 12.8.4** within **Chapter 12** Population and Human Health of the ES (**Application Document Reference: TR010031/APP/6.1**)).

2.8.2 Creating a more free-flowing network will improve journey times during peak hours by up to 2 minutes and 11 seconds, improving the performance of this section of the A1 for road users. In addition, improving operational capacity along the extent of the Scheme will likely attract traffic (see **Table 4-2** of the Transport Assessment Report (**Application Document Reference: TR010031/APP/7.3**)) from the local road network, improving conditions on local roads as well as the SRN. For further details on the journey time savings the Scheme is expected to bring see **Chapter 4** of the Transport Assessment Report.

2.8.3 The Scheme would achieve this by providing additional capacity through widening from three lanes to four lanes between junction 67 (Coal House) and junction 65 (Birtley) southbound and three lanes with an additional lane to help manage traffic joining and leaving the A1 between junction 65 (Birtley) and junction 67 (Coal House) northbound. **Table 4-1** of the Transport Assessment Report (**Application Document Reference: TR010031/APP/7.3**) shows future forecast traffic flows both with the Scheme (Do Something) and without the Scheme (Do Minimum).

2.9 Improved environment

2.9.1 The Scheme is supported by an EIA to establish the impacts and mitigation measures needed to meet the Scheme objective to keep environmental impacts to a minimum and this is reported in the ES (**Application Document Reference: TR010031/APP/6.1**).

2.9.2 The reduction in congestion achieved by the Scheme would result in some initial reduction in carbon emissions (see **Chapter 14** Climate of the ES (**Application Document Reference: TR010031/APP/6.1**)) although traffic growth would tend to offset this benefit over time. Therefore, the overall impact of the Scheme on air quality will be small or imperceptible (see **Chapter 5** Air Quality of the ES (**Application Document Reference: TR010031/APP/6.1**)).

2.9.3 The A1 is a source of noise for nearby residents and other sensitive receptors e.g. community facilities, places of worship, schools (see **Appendix 11.9** of the ES (**Application Document Reference: TR010031/APP/6.3**)). The Scheme is designed to result in an improvement to the noise environment for the majority of nearby receptors, particularly those in NIAs. A number of dwellings and other receptors will also experience an increase in noise levels, but the number experiencing a decrease is significantly higher (see **Table 11-26** of **Chapter 11** Noise and Vibration of the ES (**Application Document Reference: TR010031/APP/6.1**)). This would be achieved through the provision of improved

carriageway surfacing to reduce noise from traffic using the A1; and new and improved noise barriers. **Chapter 11** Noise and Vibration of the ES (**Application Document Reference: TR010031/APP/6.1**) confirms overall the Scheme gives rise to a significant beneficial effect following opening (2023) through to the design year (2038) (see **Table 11-27** of **Chapter 11** Noise and Vibration of the ES (**Application Document Reference: TR010031/APP/6.1**)).

- 2.9.4 The current water environment would be improved through the provision of SuDS surface water management features and a reduction in the use of culverts to carry watercourses across the A1. For further details see **Chapter 13** Road Drainage and the Water Environment of the ES (**Application Document Reference: TR010031/APP/6.1**) and the Water Framework Directive (WFD) Assessment (see **Appendix 13.2, Application Document Reference: TR010031/APP/6.3**).

2.10 An accessible and integrated network

- 2.10.1 The Scheme would provide an accessible and integrated network and has considered measures for walkers, cyclists and horse riders (WCHs).
- 2.10.2 Improvements for WCHs have been considered in the form of a Walking, Cycling and Horse-Riding Assessment and Review, as discussed in **Chapter 6** of the Transport Assessment Report (**Application Document Reference: TR010031/APP/7.3**).
- 2.10.3 As set out in **Chapter 12: Population and Human Health** of the ES (**Application Document Reference: TR010031/APP/6.1**), the Scheme is predicted to result in a net improvement to the WCH facilities within the vicinity. During operation, improvements to walking, cycling and horse-riding routes would improve existing facilities associated with user safety, enhance access and improve community connectivity to the wider footpath network.
- 2.10.4 **Chapter 12** of the ES notes that the operational phase of the Scheme would maintain existing routes (delivering minor improvements to these) for WCHs by providing a replacement North Dene Footbridge and improved Longbank Bridleway. Compared to the existing WCH provision, the Scheme would provide improved safety for walkers, cyclists and equestrians and improved facilities to cross the A1 for work and social purposes.

3 SCHEME DEVELOPMENT AND OPTIONS CONSIDERED

3.1 Introduction

- 3.1.1 This chapter provides a history of the Scheme development and a summary of the selection process involved in determining a preferred route and design for the Scheme. The chapter also presents the various options that were considered through the development process and the reason behind their subsequent adoption or removal.
- 3.1.2 The alternative options considered for the Scheme are also set out in **Chapter 3 Assessment of Alternative of the ES (Application Document Reference: TR010031/APP/6.1)**.

3.2 Development history and Alternative Options

- 3.2.1 Development of the improvements to the A1 NGWB, which includes Birtley to Coal House, has taken place over a period of several years. **Table 2** below sets out a timeline for the history of the development of the Scheme including the various studies undertaken to address congestion and capacity issues on the A1 NGWB.

Table 2 – History of Scheme Development

Date	Timeline
July 1998	<p>‘A New Deal for Trunk Roads in England’</p> <p>Following a change in Government, this White Paper announced a new approach to the appraisal of different solutions to transport problems. It also provided a framework for taking forward multi-modal studies which included the Tyneside Area Multi-Modal Study (TAMMS) which was commissioned in 2000.</p>
November 2002	<p>Tyneside Area Multi-Modal Study (TAMMS)</p> <p>Report published setting out the outcome of the study. The report identified that the A1 Newcastle Gateshead Western Bypass (NGWB) experiences regular peak hour congestion between Blaydon interchange to the north (A695/A694/A1114) and junction 65 (Birtley) due to the conflict in this area between local and longer distance traffic. The report recommended a number of highway measures for further study on the A1 NGWB which included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A1 Gateshead Western Bypass Widening • A1 Junction Rationalisation

<p>May 2010</p>	<p>Access to Tyne and Wear City Region Study (undertaken by Aecom on behalf of Department for Transport (DfT) ONE North East)</p> <p>The study provided a review of transport related issues and challenges in the Tyne and Wear Region. The study highlights the A1 NGWB as experiencing significant network stress with corresponding impacts on the economy, environment and quality of life.</p>
<p>June 2010</p>	<p>North East Delivering a Sustainable Transport System (DaSTS) Strategic Connectivity Study Report (undertaken by Atkins on behalf of ONE North East)</p> <p>The DfT and its North East partners identified 16 high level city and regional challenges. One of these challenges was to address congestion problems on the A1 NGWB and the difficulties of large numbers of commuter journeys from South East Northumberland and North Durham.</p>
<p>July 2012</p>	<p>Newcastle City Deal</p> <p>The DfT announced that it would work with local partners on the development of measures to address congestion on the NGWB, specifically agreeing to refresh the business case for the proposals at Lobley Hill. This subsequently became the A1 Coal House to Metro Centre scheme which was completed in July 2016.</p> <p>The A1 NGWB is identified as a key link for commuter, freight and business journeys across Tyneside. Congestion on the A1 NGWB is identified as a major constraint in preventing the expansion of the Team Valley Trading Estate (adjacent to junction 67, Coal House) and bringing forward a number of major housing sites needed to accommodate population growth.</p>
<p>March 2013</p>	<p>Highway Agency Pilot Based Strategy Report: A1 West of Newcastle</p> <p>DfT and the Highways Agency undertook a pilot Route Based Strategy of the A1 NGWB. The Strategy identifies considerable delays along the A1 NGWB in its 2019 and 2029 future forecasts including along the Scheme between junction 65 (Birtley) and junction 67 (Coal House) during the weekday morning and evening peaks. The overall condition of Allerdene Bridge is also identified as being of concern, for its long-term serviceability.</p> <p>The Study proposed that future investment is recommended at a number of key locations including Eighton Lodge (junction 66), Coal House (junction 67) and the replacement of Allerdene Bridge.</p> <p>The government subsequently committed to fund the</p>

	development and delivery of one of the previously identified proposals (Lobley Hill) in the 2012 Autumn Statement and an extension to the scope of the scheme was announced following the 2013 Autumn Statement.
April 2013	<p>A1 Newcastle Gateshead Western Bypass – Exploration of Dual 3-lane Provisions Initial Infrastructure Report</p> <p>The Independent Economic Review report produced by the North East Local Enterprise Partnership identified the need to provide greater capacity and reliability on the A1 NGWB. This report sets out how these improvements could be delivered considering a maximum road width of three lanes and identifying the limitations of the corridor’s existing structures, including Allerdene Bridge, junction 66 (Eighton Lodge) and junction 67 (Coal House). The report recognises the Lobley Hill scheme and requirement for greater provision at the Coal House Interchange.</p>
June 2013	<p>Investing in Britain’s Future (produced by HM Treasury)</p> <p>This report was produced following the 2013 Spending Review and sets out details of the Government’s proposed infrastructure investment across the strategic road network. The report proposes a number of feasibility studies to identify and fund solutions to tackle some of the most notorious and long-standing road hot spots in the country, including the A1 NGWB.</p>
April 2014	<p>Highways Agency Route Based Strategy: Evidence Report: London to Scotland East</p> <p>The strategy identifies this part of the A1 as one of the ten least reliable journey time locations on the route between London and Scotland East. Allerdene Bridge is identified as requiring significant ongoing maintenance expenditure and possible replacement within the Strategy period.</p>
2014- 2015	<p>Feasibility Study</p> <p>The Feasibility Study (undertaken in 2014 and published in 2015) was produced in response to the Government’s Investing in Britain’s Future Strategy in 2013. The Feasibility Study determined the existing issues on the A1 NGWB and prioritised the sections which most urgently need attention. It recommended that widening the A1 from two lanes to three lanes between junction 67 (Coal House) and junction 65 (Birtley), including replacement of Allerdene Bridge, would help address current congestion and the forecasted traffic demand. These works were proposed to be taken forward in the Roads Investment Strategy (RIS) for delivery in the current road period (2015/16-2019/20), with start of works by March 2020.</p>

Options identification

- 3.2.2 The Scheme is primarily a capacity enhancement scheme, although the replacement of the existing Allerdene Bridge over the ECML is important for two reasons; first it is necessary now to replace the structure as explained at **paragraph 2.1.12** of this Statement; and secondly because the narrow existing structure is a constraint to the provision of additional lanes between junction 67 (Coal House) and junction 66 (Eighton Lodge) - i.e. it would preclude the delivery of additional capacity.
- 3.2.3 Therefore, in designing the Scheme, the key consideration was the treatment of the Allerdene Bridge. Three alternatives were identified at Options Identification Stage in 2016; each with the same alignment and cross section between junction 66 (Eighton Lodge) and junction 65 (Birtley) where widening of existing structures was possible. The main difference between the alternatives was the approach to replacing Allerdene Bridge which included; either within the existing footprint or to the south of the existing structure. Options involving realignment to the north of the existing structure was discounted because it would move the A1 closer to residential properties at Chowdene Bank and industrial/retail developments in Team Valley Trading Estate.
- 3.2.4 The three options that were considered are described below:
- Option 1 – Allerdene Bridge would be replaced in its current location. This would require a temporary bridge, requiring additional temporary land take, to be constructed to carry traffic over the A1 whilst the new bridge is constructed. This option would be a more complex scheme to construct requiring more traffic management and a longer construction period;
 - Option 2 – Allerdene Bridge would be replaced approximately 40m to the immediate south of its current location, improving the existing road alignment and improving road safety;
 - Option 3 – Replacement of Allerdene Bridge approximately 200m south of the existing structure: this would require the section of the A1 between junction 67 (Coal House) and junction 66 (Eighton Lodge) to be reconstructed off-line. This option would require significant additional land than option 1 or option 2 due to the length of the realigned section of highway and would result in a completely new layout of the junction 67 (Coal House) roundabout with the existing structure being demolished and replaced

Option Selection

- 3.2.5 At the Option Selection Stage, the assessment considered the different options and explored issues that presented a risk to the development of the Scheme. An environmental appraisal of the options was undertaken to understand the potential environmental effects.
- 3.2.6 It was concluded that the benefits for all three options were similar but the costs for Option 3 were significantly higher with more land take and a larger impact on the surrounding environment and nearby sensitive receptors. Option 3 represented 'medium' value for money, compared to Options 1 and 2 which represented a 'high' value for money. It also had a long construction duration, which was similar to the construction duration of Option 1, but significantly longer than Option 2.

3.2.7 A summary of the options assessment is provided in **Table 3** below:

Table 3 – Summary of Options Assessment

Category	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
Value for money (VfM) represented by BCR	3.157	3.083	1.559
Scheme cost	245.9	245.6	479.7
Construction duration	4yrs 7m	3 yrs	4yrs 6m
Environmental impacts	Slight adverse	Slight adverse	Moderate adverse
Meets Scheme objectives	Yes	Yes	Yes

3.2.8 The appraisal carried out during the Option Identification Stage concluded that Option 3 should be omitted from further assessment. The benefits for all three options were similar, but the costs for Option 3 were significantly higher with more land take and a larger impact on the surrounding environment, particular in regard to impacts on landscape, heritage and biodiversity. This option therefore did not offer good value for money compared to Option 1a and Option 1b. As a result of the assessment above only Options 1 and 2 were shortlisted at the Option Selection stage to be taken to non-statutory consultation.

Non-Statutory Public Consultation

3.2.9 In autumn 2016, Highways England presented its initial Scheme proposals to the public to obtain feedback. Options 1 and 2 (re-named Options 1b and 1a respectively) were presented as follows:

- Widening of the existing road to provide a three-lane carriageway;
- Providing extra lanes between junctions to help manage traffic joining and leaving the A1;
- Modifications to existing structures at junction 66 (Eighton Lodge) and junction 67 (Coal House) to accommodate the addition lanes.

3.2.10 The principal difference between the options was that Option 1a involved replacing Allerdene Bridge south of its current location, whereas Option 1b would replace Allerdene Bridge in its current location and hence would require a longer construction period.

3.2.11 **Figure 1** below shows the proposed replacement of Allerdene Bridge in the line with Option 1a and **Figure 2** shows the proposed replacement of Allerdene Bridge in line with Option 1b. **Figure 3** shows the full extent of the Scheme based on Option 1a.

Figure 1 – Option 1a

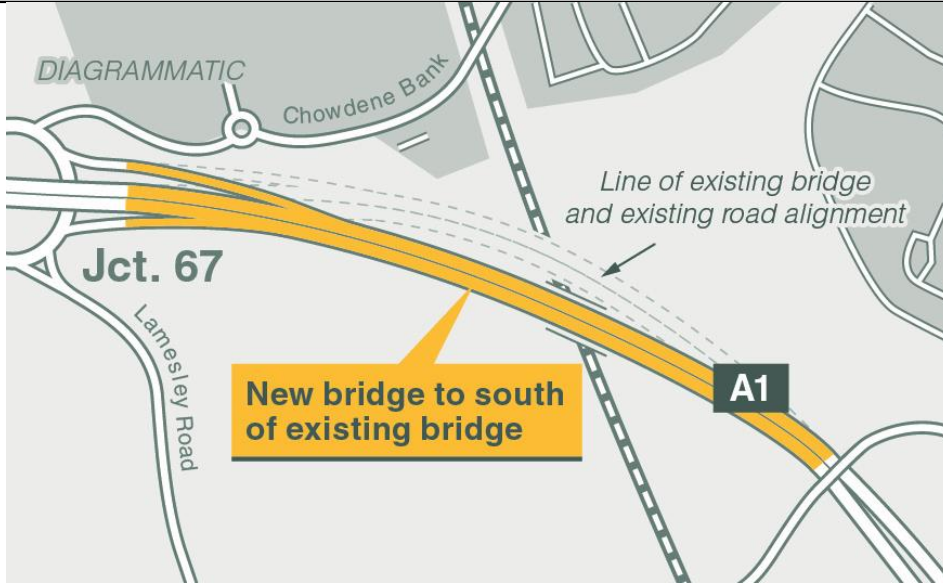
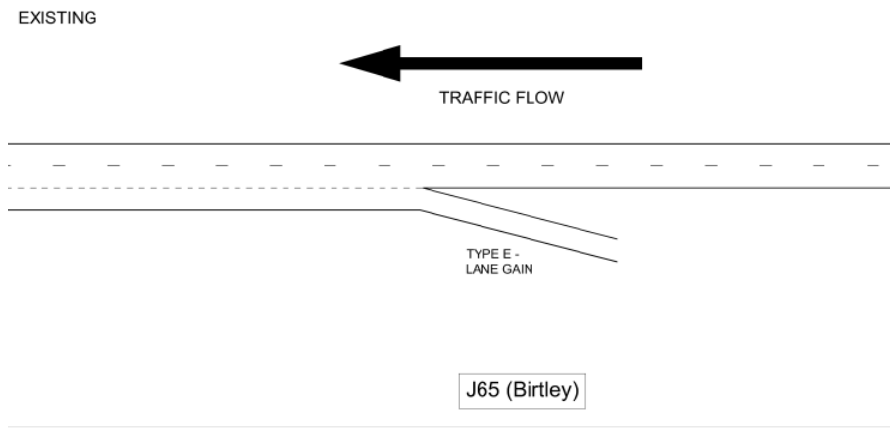
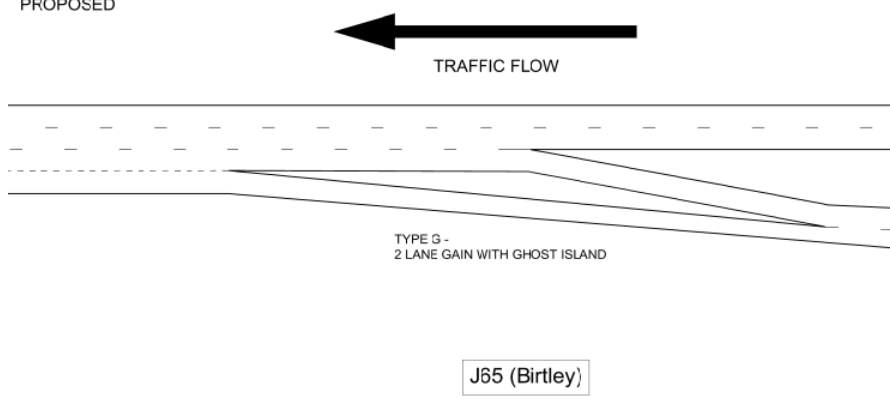
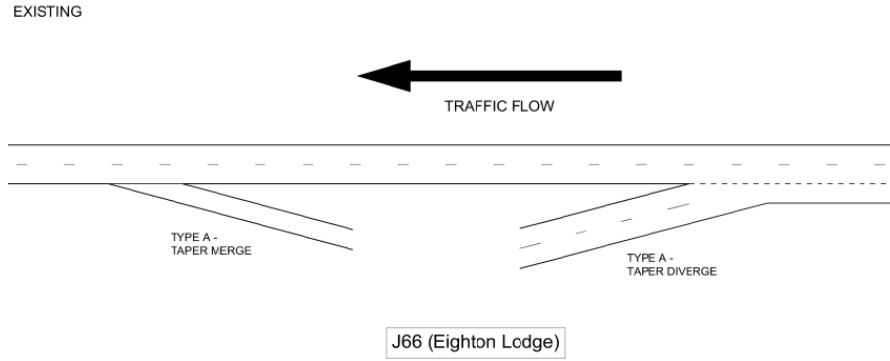
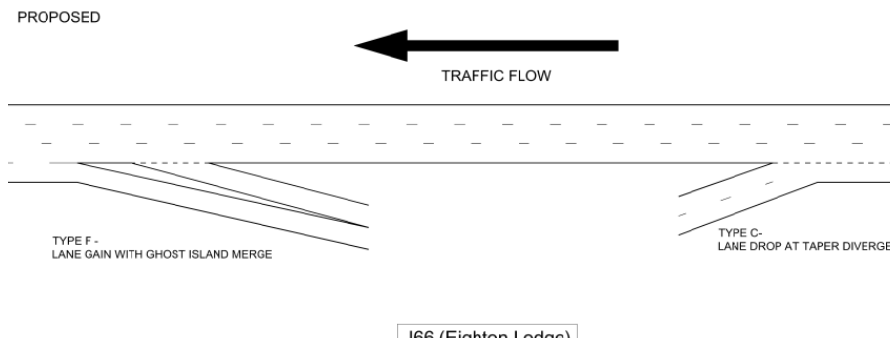


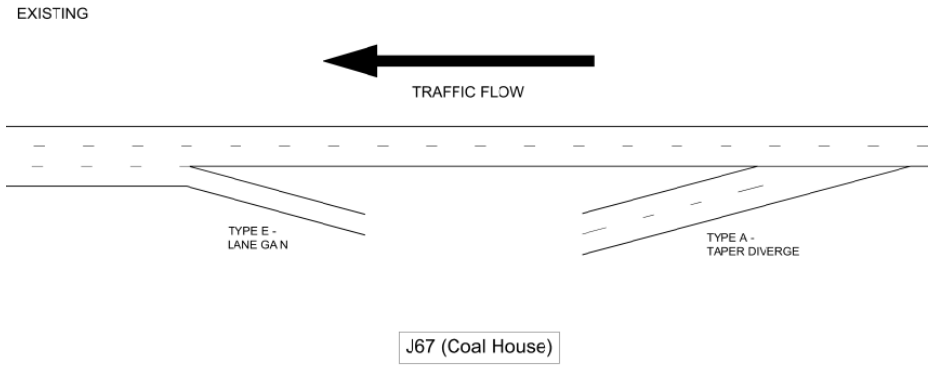
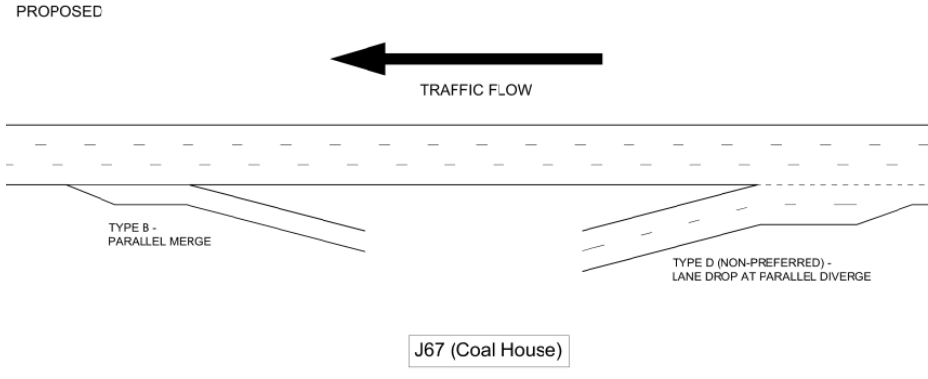
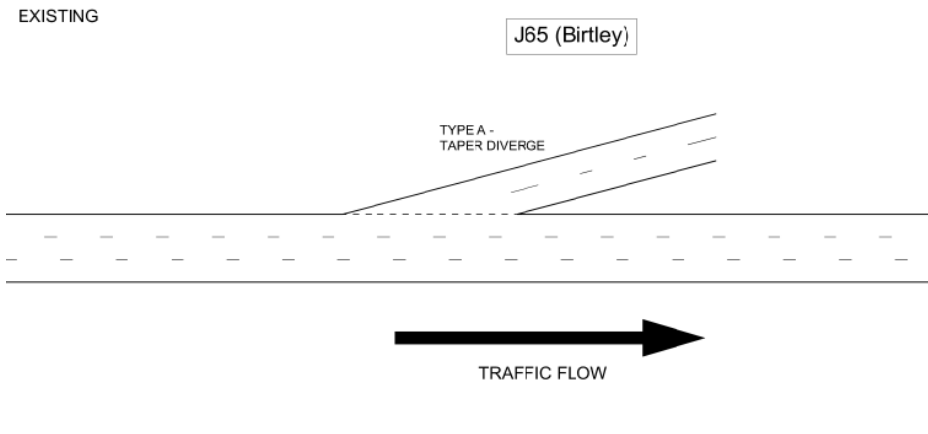
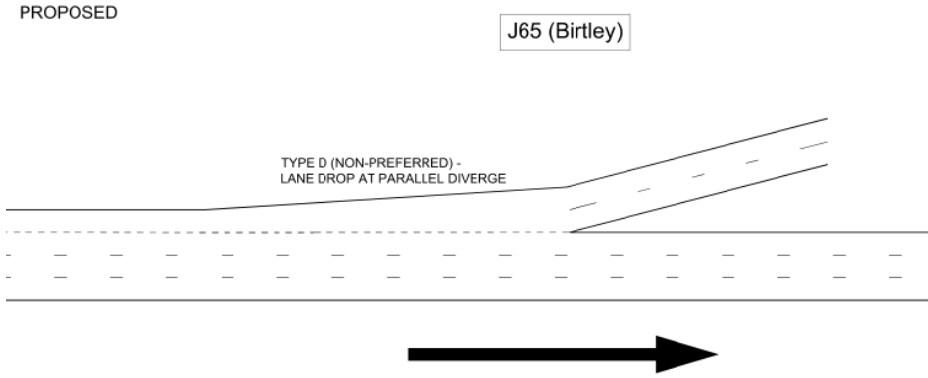
Figure 2 – Option 1b

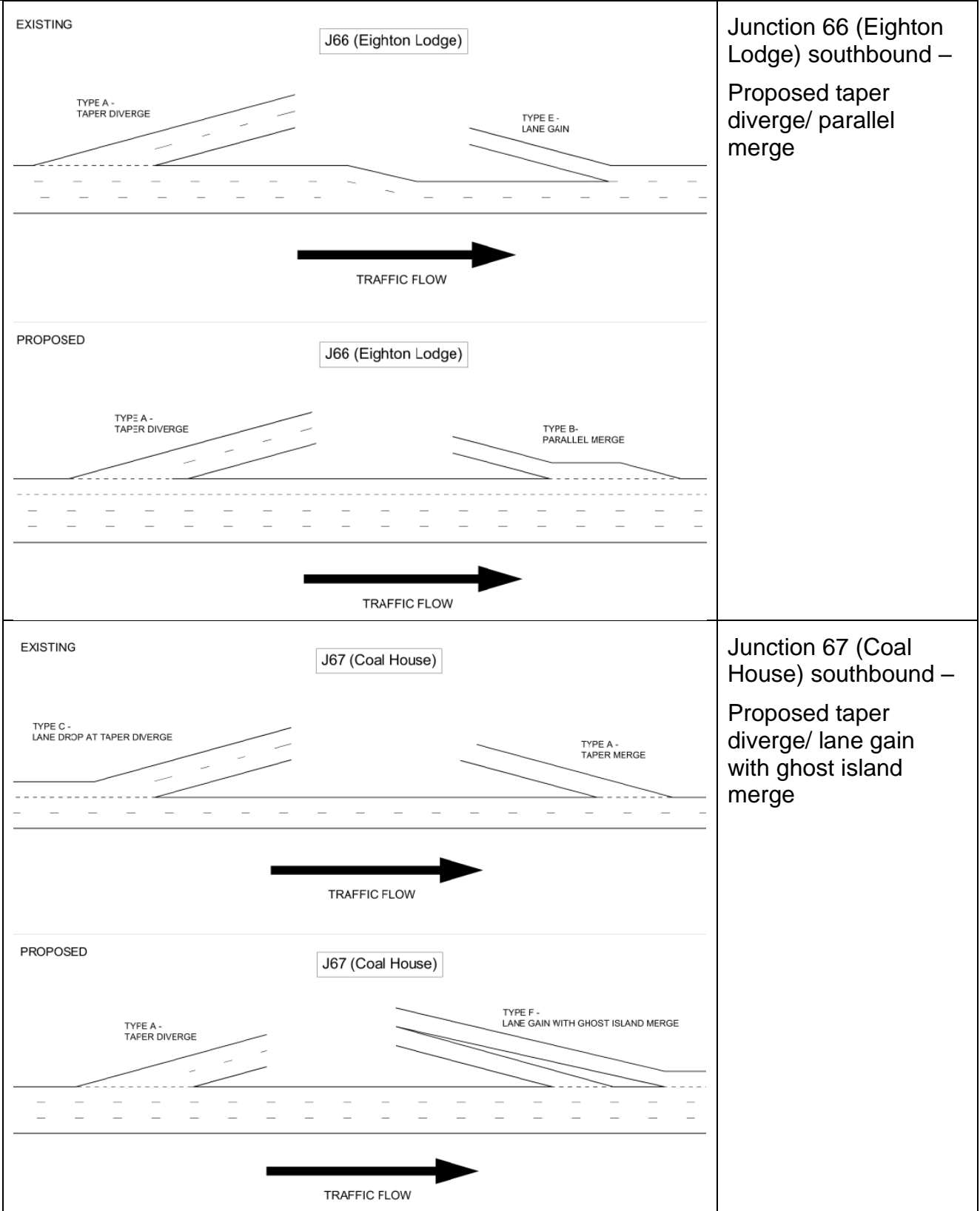


Figure 3 – Junction Schematics based on Option 1a

Junction Schematics	Description
<p>EXISTING</p>  <p>J65 (Birtley)</p> <p>PROPOSED</p>  <p>J65 (Birtley)</p>	<p>Junction 65 (Birtley) northbound –</p> <p>Proposed two lane gain with ghost island</p>
<p>EXISTING</p>  <p>J66 (Eighton Lodge)</p> <p>PROPOSED</p>  <p>J66 (Eighton Lodge)</p>	<p>Junction 66 (Eighton Lodge) northbound–</p> <p>Proposed lane gain with ghost island merge/ lane drop at taper diverge</p>

A1 Birtley to Coal House
Planning Statement

<p>EXISTING</p>  <p>J67 (Coal House)</p> <hr/> <p>PROPOSED</p>  <p>J67 (Coal House)</p>	<p>Junction 67 (Coal House) northbound- Proposed parallel merge/ lane drop at parallel diverge</p>
<p>EXISTING</p>  <p>J65 (Birtley)</p> <hr/> <p>PROPOSED</p>  <p>J65 (Birtley)</p>	<p>Junction 65 (Birtley) southbound – Proposed lane drop at parallel diverge</p>



3.2.12 Following further traffic modelling there was a requirement to amend the design of the Scheme to include four lanes southbound through junction 66 (Eighton Lodge) to accommodate the predicted flows.

Preferred Route Announcement

- 3.2.13 Option 1a was announced as the preferred route in July 2017. This option was chosen as:
- It met all the Scheme objectives;
 - It was the most cost effective option;
 - It represented better value for money;
 - It had a shorter construction programme;
 - It offered an improved alignment of the A1; and
 - It was the preferred option by the majority of respondents to the non-statutory consultation undertaken in 2016.

Change request

- 3.2.14 An application was made to the Examining Authority to amend the Application to introduce certain proposed changes to the Scheme. These are detailed further in the Planning Addendum, which also considers these changes, but are also described briefly below.
- 3.2.15 The proposed changes were identified as a result of design development which has continued to be undertaken by the Applicant and its advisers since the Application for a DCO was made. The continued development of the design is being made in order to release efficiencies and design benefits. Some of the benefits and reasons why the design changes have been made are referenced below.
- 3.2.16 **Change 1** - The inclusion of further design flexibility is in relation to the proposed replacement Allerdene railway bridge. The draft DCO [REP2-044 and 045] currently allows for the replacement of Allerdene Railway bridge by a single span integral bridge or a 6/7-span viaduct. It is further proposed to enable the inclusion of a design for a 3-span viaduct under the DCO. The main benefits of this proposed change are that it would reduce the amount of material required to construct the approach embankments, reduce the construction programme by an estimated six month period and reduce the duration of traffic delays to road users due to the shorter construction period.
- 3.2.17 **Change 2** - Providing flexibility as to the formation and the road layout of the Scheme to enable narrower lanes to be provided between the existing narrow lanes north of junction 67 and approximately chainage 11150 over Kingsway Viaduct at junction 67. The current scheme proposes full width lanes. This proposal is to allow narrower lanes extending over approximately 750m of the length of the Scheme to be introduced. The main benefits of this change are that it significantly reduces the construction work and impacts on road users, reduces/removes the realignment works to junction 67 (Coal House) roundabout, provides potential for improved driver behavior and compliance with mandatory speed limits, and anticipated operational safety benefits; and
- 3.2.18 **Change 3** - The inclusion of additional land within the application at junction 67 for

an extension of the existing site compound, to be used for material stockpiling. This land currently sits outside the proposed Order limits and it is proposed that powers of temporary occupation are extended to the land during construction of the Scheme. The main benefits of this change are that it would reduce the overall construction duration by up to 6 months (in combination with Change 1) of the proposed earth embankment for the replacement Allerdene Railway Bridge. It would reduce the duration of temporary traffic management and road works on the A1, reduce the length of disruption to residents, reduce the length of time that the Scheme requires possession of other temporary land and realise the economic benefits the Scheme will deliver to the local area up to six months earlier than originally planned.

4 ECONOMIC CASE OVERVIEW

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 This chapter outlines the economic assessment of the Scheme. It presents the expected benefits and dis-benefits associated with the Scheme and the Scheme's overall value for money.

4.2 Overview of Economic Assessment and Methodology Used

4.2.1 The economic case of the Scheme has been based on a 60-year appraisal period in accordance with Department for Transport (DfT) online Transport Appraisal Guidance (WebTAG).

4.2.2 The assessment considers the calculation of impacts, both positive and negative, that are typically expressed in monetary terms. This includes the capital cost of the Scheme and any tax revenue generated by the Scheme and compares them against benefits such as travel time and accident savings.

4.2.3 Costs and benefits occur throughout the duration of the assessment period; the construction costs occur before the Scheme opens whilst benefits occur in the 60 years following completion of the Scheme. Costs and benefits are discounted to present values (ie: benefits accrued today are considered to be of greater value than those realised further into the future). As such the stream of costs and benefits is discounted to 2010 using the DfT standard discount rate.

4.2.4 Scheme costs and monetised impacts (costs and benefits) are summed to produce a Benefit Cost Ratio (BCR); the amount of benefit being bought for every £1.00 of cost to the public purse.

4.2.5 Once impacts that can be expressed in monetary terms have been calculated the assessment captures the remaining impacts that cannot be monetised within an Appraisal Summary Table (AST). The AST is a summary for decision makers containing key economic, environmental and other information drawn from existing documents such as cost benefit analysis and the ES (**Application Document Reference: TR010031/APP/6.1**). Together this information can then be used to determine the value for money for the Scheme.

4.2.6 A scheme's value for money is categorised based on the BCR as follows:

- Poor value for money if the BCR is less than 1.0;
- Low value for money if the BCR is between 1.0 and 1.5;
- Medium value for money if the BCR is between 1.5 and 2.0;
- High value for money if the BCR is between 2.0 and 4.0; and
- Very high value for money if the BCR is greater than 4.0.

4.3 Monetised Benefits

4.3.1 An assessment and monetisation of the expected economic, environmental and social benefits associated with the Scheme has been undertaken in accordance with DfT guidelines. The initial BCR contains all costs and benefits that are routinely quantified within economic assessments of transport schemes. The

adjusted BCR for the Scheme includes benefits associated with journey time reliability as well as those defined as wider economic benefits.

- 4.3.2 A summary of the monetised economic, environmental and social benefits for the Adjusted BCR for both design options for the replacement of Allerdene Bridge (Embankment option and Viaduct option) is provided in **Table 4** and **Table 5** below.

Table 4 – Summary of Monetised Benefits (Embankment Option)

Benefits		Initial BCR	Adjusted BCR	Costs
Economic Benefits	Economic Efficiency: Business Users and Providers	£125,727	£125,727	
	Construction Impacts	-£3800	-£3800	
	Wider economic impacts	N/A	£146,330	
Environmental Benefits	Noise	£6,876	£6,876	
	Air Quality (NOx & PM ₁₀)	-£2,298	-£2,298	
	Greenhouse Gases (WebTAG)	-£11,234	-£11,234	
Social Benefits	Economic Efficiency: Consumer Users (Commuting)	£67,932	£67,932	
	Economic Efficiency: Consumer Users (Other)	£47,556	£47,556	
	Accident Costs	£12,949	£12,949	
	Journey Time Reliability	N/A	£16,624	
	Wider Public Finances (Indirect Taxation Revenues)	£12,645	£12,645	
	Total	£256,353	£419,307	£171,249
Net Present Value		£85,103	£248,057	
Benefit to Cost Ratio		1.50	2.45	

Table 5 – Summary of Monetised Benefits (Viaduct Option)

Benefits		Initial BCR	Adjusted BCR	Costs
Economic Benefits	Economic Efficiency: Business Users and Providers	£125,727	£125,727	
	Construction Impacts	-£3800	-£3800	
	Wider economic impacts	N/A	£146,330	
Environmental Benefits	Noise	£6,876	£6,876	
	Air Quality (NOx & PM ₁₀)	-£2,298	-£2,298	
	Greenhouse Gases (WebTAG)	-£11,234	-£11,234	
Social Benefits	Economic Efficiency: Consumer Users (Commuting)	£67,932	£67,932	
	Economic Efficiency: Consumer Users (Other)	£47,556	£47,556	
	Accident Costs	£12,949	£12,949	
	Journey Time Reliability	N/A	£16,624	
	Wider Public Finances (Indirect Taxation Revenues)	£12,645	£12,645	
Total		£256,353	£419,307	£184,848
Net Present Value		£71,504	£234,459	
Benefit to Cost Ratio		1.39	2.27	

4.3.3 It should be noted that the regeneration benefits only consider the effect of a scheme on regeneration areas. There is no single definition of regeneration areas,

but these areas will have been designated for specific policy purposes related to economic development under the UK Government's or European Union's regeneration programmes. The Scheme does not have any effect on the regeneration areas in which it is located.

- 4.3.4 The Change request [EXA/D4/002], submitted in respect of the Application on 20 April 2020, sets out the proposed changes to the Scheme in order to release efficiencies and design benefits in Section 2 of that document, should they be included in the Application. The 3 span option optimizes the benefits of the Scheme to ensure that the scheme is brought forward for the public benefit. Therefore, the 3 span option is considered to bring greater monetised benefits compared to the 6/7 span, and single span viaduct options, due to a shorter construction programme and requirement for fewer materials for construction.

Economic Benefits

- 4.3.5 The Scheme would increase the capacity of the SRN along the Birtley to Coal House section of the A1 NGWB. The additional capacity will contribute to reduce congestion and reduce delays in the vicinity of the Scheme, leading to a significant decrease in lost productive time and subsequent increase in business user and transport service provider benefits. Further details can be found in **Chapter 4** of the Transport Assessment Report (**Application Document Reference: TR010031/APP/7.3**).

- 4.3.6 Business users and transport service providers would therefore significantly benefit from the Scheme through:
- reduced travel times;
 - improved access for suppliers and customers; and
 - reduced vehicle operating costs, such as fuel, vehicle maintenance and mileage-related depreciation.

- 4.3.7 After accounting for impacts associated with delays during construction and maintenance the combined monetised value of these benefits is forecast to be **£251.1 million** including benefits related to journey time improvements with the Scheme, construction impacts on journey times and the improvements in accidents.

Environmental Benefits

- 4.3.8 Detailed assessment and appraisal has been undertaken to consider the full environmental impacts associated with the Scheme, please refer to the ES (**Application Document Reference: TR010031/APP/6.1**) for full details. The following is a summary of the topics found to provide environmental benefit.

- 4.3.9 Noise impacts have been assessed and appraised in the ES. The increase in flow and speed of traffic on the A1 would result in some perceptible decreases in noise but negligible improvements in noise for most receptors. There are no predicted noise levels above 80dB LAeq.16h (measured between 0700 and 2300 hours), and no properties are eligible for noise insulation. The monetised value of the impact on noise is forecast to be **£6.9 million**.

- 4.3.10 Detailed assessment and appraisal has been undertaken to consider the local air quality impacts of the Scheme. The air quality assessment has also considered the impact on greenhouse gas emissions. Overall there is a negative impact on local

air quality and regional emissions in monetary terms (rather than absolute terms) with the Scheme. This can be attributed to the increase in flow and speed of traffic on the A1. The monetised value of the predicted change in local air quality is forecast to be **-£2.3 million**.

- 4.3.11 However, the Scheme is not predicted within the ES (**Application Document Reference: TR010031/APP/6.1**) to result in any air quality exceedances and it is concluded that its effect is not significant. It would not lead to non-compliance with the Ambient Air Quality Directive. The monetary assessment differs from the ES as it looks at all the changes in air quality and classifies them as to whether there are significant effects at receptors or not according to a defined set of criteria. It then reaches a conclusion based on whether or not there are significant effects.
- 4.3.12 The monetary calculation is based on absolute quantities of emissions across all receptors that doesn't take into account whether or not there are significant effects but places a monetary value based on the absolute changes from current levels. It gives a numerical figure to include in the cost-benefit analysis but one which is often more pessimistic (or sometimes more optimistic) than the picture emerging from the environmental impact assessment (EIA).

Social Benefits

- 4.3.13 As previously noted within this Statement, the Scheme will provide additional capacity, alleviating congestion and delays and improving journey times on the SRN.
- 4.3.14 Commuters and other users would benefit significantly from reduced congestion, improved journey times and associated reduced vehicle operating costs such as fuel, vehicle maintenance and mileage related depreciation. The combined monetised value of these benefits is forecast to be **£241 million**.
- 4.3.15 The Scheme is expected to have a positive impact on road safety. The accident benefits could be as a result of either the reduction in the accident rate due to the Scheme or a reduction in the traffic flow on the local road network as traffic diverts onto the A1. The overall effect on accidents is an expected reduction of 290 accidents over the 60 year appraisal period (see **Table 5-1** of Transport Assessment Report (**Application Document Reference: TR010031/APP/7.3**)). The monetised value of these benefits is forecast to be **£12.9 million**.

4.4 Non-Monetised Benefits

- 4.4.1 An assessment of anticipated non-monetised benefits associated with the Scheme has been undertaken and is outlined below.

Environmental and Social Non-Monetised Benefits

- 4.4.2 The effects of the presence of the Scheme on the environment and local communities are summarised in this section taking into account all mitigation measures including those proposed in order to overcome any site specific issues remaining after design principles and environmental measures have been applied.
- 4.4.3 The assessment of the impact of the Scheme upon the landscape is assessed in **Chapter 7** Landscape and Visual of the ES (**Application Document Reference: TR010031/APP/6.1**). The assessment concludes that there would be a moderate adverse effect on the Team Valley as a result of either the newly constructed Allerdene Embankment or Viaduct option prior to the establishment of

replacement or enhanced planting, as the new structure would introduce a perceptible feature onto the landscape, particularly from the flatter areas immediately to the south and within broader views on rising ground to the west. The effect is expected to reduce to slight adverse for the Embankment option following establishment of the landscape character features such as woodland planting. The Viaduct option would remain as a moderate adverse effect as a result of the extent of the viaduct and limited wider capacity to mitigate effectively. Elsewhere the impact of the Scheme on the landscape is assessed to be neutral following establishment of the landscape strategy.

- 4.4.4 Visual effects on sensitive receptors including residential properties, hotels, recreational locations and the Angel of the North have been assessed in **Chapter 7 Landscape and Visual of the ES (Application Document Reference: TR010031/APP/6.1)** to be no more than slight adverse in the first winter (2023) following the opening of the Scheme. The conclusion is the same for the Allerdene Embankment and Viaduct options.
- 4.4.5 Upon completion of the construction phase, the view for the majority of receptors would be comparable with those currently experienced, particularly for those with longer distance views. A total of 11 out of 486 residential properties would experience a moderate adverse effect on their views. A small number of receptors located along the northern edge of Birtley would, as a result of the construction of an environmental barrier, be subject to an improvement in their outlook with the carriageway and traffic being largely screened from the majority of ground floor views. Only two recreational receptors, Longacre Wood and a Public Right of Way near Kingsway Viaduct, are considered likely to experience a significant adverse effect on views, due to vegetation loss. Summer effects would be less due to intervening vegetation screening view of the Scheme, and the number of receptors experiencing a significant visual effect would be reduced.
- 4.4.6 The assessment concluded that the presence of the Scheme would not result in any adverse effects on cultural heritage assets, including both designated and non-designated assets once construction is completed (see **Chapter 6 Cultural Heritage of the ES (Application Document Reference: TR010031/APP/6.1)**). The effect on the Angel of the North (a non-designated cultural heritage asset) would be minor beneficial due to the removal of trees to improve its setting.
- 4.4.7 The assessment concluded that the impact on biodiversity including local wildlife sites, green corridors, and habitats would be moderate adverse, and that impacts would be neutral for protected species. There were no significant differences between the Embankment option, 6/7 span viaduct options and the three span option for Allerdene Bridge (see **paragraph 8.1.4 of Chapter 8 Biodiversity of the ES [APP-029]** and Addendum to the Environmental Statement Application [AS-016]). There would be a slight beneficial impact on the water environment due to the introduction of treatment and attenuation of previously unmitigated highway runoff. Potential impacts on the Allerdene Burn and River Team could result from the removal of the existing Allerdene culvert under the A1, which may require over pumping or direct transfer of sediment into the watercourse as the culvert to be removed entirely and replaced by an open channel ditch for the Viaduct option (see **Section 13.8 of the ES [APP-034]**). However, with the implementation of mitigation measures during construction, and potential for enhancement (such as daylighting the channel which could potentially provide ecological benefits as well for the 6/7 span viaduct options and to a greater extent the 3 span option, and

implementation of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) the net impacts would be not considered significant. For the Embankment Option and the 3 span option, the existing Allerdene culvert would be removed entirely and replaced by a new culvert structure with an enhanced hydraulic capacity and therefore no adverse impact to the existing watercourse is anticipated. There would also be a further benefit as the design life of the new structure (120 years) would supersede that of the existing structure (74 years). The 3 span option has the benefit of providing the same culvert channel length as the single span option but with a shorter culverted realigned section compared to the 6/7 span viaduct options.

- 4.4.8 The assessment of effects on Population and Human Health in **Chapter 12** of the ES (**Application Document Reference: TR010031/APP/6.1**) has concluded that a beneficial effect on journey quality would result from the Scheme due to reduced driver stress caused by frustration, fear of accidents and route uncertainty. There would also be a slight beneficial impact on physical activity for WCH users as the Scheme would improve safety, enhance access and improve community connectivity to the wider footpath network. The reduction in traffic congestion along the carriageway as a result of the Scheme would improve safety for WCHs using the adjacent footways and cycleways. The long term effect on WCH users would be slight beneficial.
- 4.4.9 An assessment of the WCH route amenity is reported in the WCH Report appended to the Transport Assessment Report (**Application Document Reference: TR010031/APP/7.3**). With the Scheme in place, surrounding communities would benefit from greater connectivity. This, together with air quality improvements, is likely to have a permanent slight beneficial effect on the health of the local population. The Scheme is also expected to have slight beneficial effects on the local economy, tourism and recreation once operational.
- 4.4.10 In addition to the benefits referenced above, the following non-monetised benefits of the design changes (as referenced in the Planning Addendum) would be as follows:
- The 3-span arrangement with reinforced earth approach embankments, particularly when deployed in with temporary possession of the additional land identified for stockpiled material provides a more efficient option than the 6/7 span and single span options in terms of construction activities and duration which, in turn, provides environmental benefits;
 - The 3-span arrangement would reduce the amount of material required to construct the approach embankments by approximately 60,000m³ when compared to the single span arrangement. This would reduce the construction programme by an estimated 6 months period (from 36 months for the single span option within the Application to 30 months for the 3-span arrangement). This would result in fewer associated construction vehicle movements which equates to a reduction of an estimated 6,900 deliveries of fill material in 8-wheeled tipper wagons based on an approximate overall import delivery rate of 500m³ per day;
 - Reduced duration of traffic delays to road users due to the shorter construction period, with associated savings in carbon and other emissions.

Similarly, the capacity and safety benefits associated with the scheme would be delivered sooner by an equivalent amount;

- The 3-span alternative would provide an efficient superstructure design, reducing the steelwork tonnage required to support the bridge deck. This also simplifies deliveries to site, and reduces the construction risk and complexity of lifting beams into place above the railway;
- As the footprint of the embankments would reduce due the steepened earth slopes, fewer rigid inclusions would be required to stabilise the ground. This would reduce construction noise pollution and the volume of concrete materials required;
- The use of a 3-span structure alternative would combine benefits associated with both the 6/7 span and single span options as included in the Application

4.5 Value for Money

4.5.1 The assessment and monetisation of expected economic, environmental and social benefits associated with the Scheme has been undertaken in accordance with DfT guidelines. The results of the Transport Users Benefit Analysis (TUBA) have been combined with the results of the accident analysis, the construction travel time dis-benefits, the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB), greenhouse gas analysis and DMRB noise analysis to provide a combined Present Value of Benefits (PVB).

4.5.2 The PVB is then taken forward to be compared with the Present Value of Costs (PVC) to create a BCR as part of the Analysis of Monetised Costs and Benefits (AMCB). The results are shown in **Table 6** and **Table 7** below which demonstrate an adjusted BCR of 2.45 for the Embankment option and 2.27 for the Viaduct option.

Table 6 – Embankment Option

Description	Benefits/Costs	Total (£M)
Initial BCR	PVB	256.4
	PVC	171.2
	NPV	85.1
	Initial BCR	1.50
Adjusted BCR - Including Journey Time Reliability (JTR) Benefits and Wider Economic Benefits (WEBs)	JTR	16.6
	WEBs	146.3
	PVB (including JTR and WEBs)	419.3
	NPV	248.0
	Adjusted BCR	2.45

Table 7 – Viaduct Option

Description	Benefits/Costs	Total (£M)
Initial BCR	PVB	256.4

	PVC	184.8
	NPV	71.5
	Initial BCR	1.39
Adjusted BCR - Including Journey Time Reliability (JTR) Benefits and Wider Economic Benefits (WEBs)	JTR	16.6
	WEBs	146.3
	PVB (including JTR and WEBs)	419.3
	NPV	234.5
	Adjusted BCR	2.27

- 4.5.3 Note that the Adjusted BCR for the Scheme includes the benefits associated with journey time reliability, as well as those defined as wider economic benefits.
- 4.5.4 As detailed in the tables above, irrespective of which Allerdene Bridge option is constructed the Scheme demonstrates high value for money.
- 4.5.5 Non-monetised Benefits have been updated to set out the benefits that can be achieved by the Scheme design changes in the Planning Addendum including the 3 span option, narrower lanes and additional land in the construction compound. Whilst the 3 span option is expected to be better value for money than the 6/7 span viaduct options due to an anticipated shorter and less complicated construction programme.

5 CONFORMITY WITH PLANNING POLICY AND TRANSPORT PLANS

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 This chapter provides an assessment of the Scheme's strategic alignment and conformity with national and local planning policies, as well as transport programmes and transport policies.

5.1.2 In the National Infrastructure Delivery Plan 2016, the Government is clear about the importance of investment in transport infrastructure to stimulate economic growth and the role of a functioning transport system as essential to the success of the UK economy. The NNNPS and other policy documents highlighted below demonstrate the Government's commitment to support investment in the SRN.

5.2 Policy Context

National Planning and Government's Transport Policy

5.2.1 The following national planning policy will be taken into account in the decision making process:

- National Networks National Policy Statement (NNNPS) 2015
- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2019
- Road Investment Strategy 2015 – 2020
- Highways England Delivery Plan 2015 – 2020
- National Infrastructure Delivery Plan 2016 – 2022

5.2.2 This section demonstrates how the Scheme conforms with the objectives and aspirations set out within national planning and Government policy at a strategic level.

NNNPS 2015

5.2.3 Section 104 of the 2008 Act states that when deciding an application for an NSIP, the Secretary of State must decide the application in accordance with any relevant national policy statement, except to the extent that one or more of subsections (4) to (6) applies. These subsections provide that the Secretary of State should not determine the application in accordance with the relevant NPS when his satisfied that do so would:

- Lead to the UK being in breach of its international obligations;
- Be unlawful;
- Lead to the Secretary of State being in breach of any duty imposed by or under any legislation;
- Result in adverse impacts of the development outweighing its benefits; or
- Be contrary to legislation about how the decisions are to be taken.

- 5.2.4 The NNNPS sets out the Government's vision and policy against which the Secretary of State will make decisions on applications for development consent for NSIPs on the strategic road and rail networks.
- 5.2.5 The NNNPS is not scheme specific and does not set out a programme of road schemes, but instead deals with policy relating to DCO applications for road and rail schemes at a strategic level. In particular, it also sets out the principles by which applications for road and rail schemes should be assessed. NNNPS paragraph 2.2 states that:
- "There is a critical need to improve the national networks to address road congestion and crowding on railways to provide safe, expeditious and resilient networks that better support social and economic activity; and to provide a transport network that is capable of stimulating and supporting economic growth"*
- 5.2.6 The NNNPS sets out general policies in accordance with which applications relating to national networks infrastructure are to be decided. Paragraph 4.2 states that:
- "Subject to the detailed policies and protections in the NPS, and the legal constraints set out in the Planning Act, there is a presumption in favour of granting development consent for national networks NSIPs that fall within the need for infrastructure established in the NPS".*
- 5.2.7 Paragraph 4.3 states that:
- "In considering any proposed development, and in particular when weighing its adverse impacts against its benefits, the Examining Authority and the Secretary of State should take into account:*
- Its potential benefits, including the facilitation of economic development, including job creation, housing and environmental improvement, and any long term or wider benefits; and*
 - Its potential adverse impacts, including any longer-terms and cumulative adverse impacts, as well as any measures to avoid, reduce or compensate for any adverse impacts"*
- 5.2.8 Paragraph 2.22 of the NNNPS states that:
- "Without improving the road network, including its performance, it will be difficult to support further economic development, employment and housing and this will impede economic growth and reduce people's quality of life. The Government has therefore concluded that at a strategic level there is a compelling need for development of the national road network"*
- 5.2.9 In the Summary of Need on page 9 of the NNNPS the following vision and strategic objectives are set out:
- "The Government will deliver national networks that meet the country's long-term needs; supporting a prosperous and competitive economy and improving overall quality of life, as part of a wider transport system, This means:*
- Networks with the capacity and connectivity and resilience to support national and local economic activity and facilitate growth and create jobs,*
 - Networks which support and improve journey quality, reliability and safety,*
 - Networks which support the delivery of environmental goals and the move*

to a low carbon economy,

- *Networks which join up our communities and link effectively to each other.”*

5.2.10 The conformity of the objectives of the Scheme with the “*vision and strategic objectives*” of the NNNPS is set out in **Table 1**, in **Chapter 2** of this Statement.

Table 8 – Conformity of the Scheme with NNNPS Vision and Strategic Objectives

NNNPS Vision and Strategic Objectives	Conformity of the Scheme
<p>Networks with the capacity and connectivity and resilience to support national and local economic activity and facilitate growth and create jobs.</p>	<p>The Scheme is designed to improve traffic flows and reduce driver delays currently experienced on this section of the A1 NGWB, which is a strategically important part of the road network for the regional and national economy. The Scheme would reduce delays in the vicinity of the Team Valley Trading Estate which is a strategic employment area and plays a key role in the government’s investment strategy for creating jobs in the North East. The Scheme would provide additional capacity to support future development of the Team Valley Trading Estate.</p>
<p>Networks which support and improve journey quality, reliability and safety.</p>	<p>The addition of new lanes will contribute to the free-flow of traffic on the A1 reducing driver delays and time lost for business users and reducing stress for all users. The Transport Assessment Report (Application Document Reference: TR010031/APP/7.3) also demonstrates that the Scheme will improve safety on local roads by reducing accidents (see Figure 5-1 of Transport Assessment Report), as well as on the SRN.</p> <p>The replacement of the Allerdene Bridge would improve the reliability of this section by avoiding the likely need for both routine and emergency maintenance and repair of the aging structure, and subsequent disruption to highways users. Safety would be improved through better signage and traffic information, and stress reduction.</p> <p>Benefits in terms of reduced accidents are also highlighted in Chapter 5 of the Transport Assessment Report</p>

<p>Networks which support the delivery of environmental goals and the move to a low carbon economy.</p>	<p>The Scheme is designed to provide an overall environmental enhancement, in particular through improved landscaping, water management (through SuDS and other measures), and noise reduction (through improved carriageway surfacing and additional noise barriers). There would also be some small initial improvements in air quality and carbon emissions through reduced congestion, although increased capacity may mean that benefits are offset as traffic levels increase (see Table 5-11 and 5-12, Chapter 5 Air Quality of the ES, Application Document Reference: TR010031/APP/6.1). The assessment of effects on the environment, including climate change (Chapter 14 Climate), is set out in the ES.</p>
<p>Networks which join up our communities and link effectively to each other.</p>	<p>The Scheme would relieve congestion on the SRN and therefore help to join up communities by reducing delays that currently make travel difficult on this section of the A1. The Scheme would retain existing connectivity between communities on either side of the A1.</p>

- 5.2.11 The Scheme has been developed to be in conformity with the NNNPS. A full assessment of how the Scheme conforms to the NNNPS objectives, including its technical assessment requirements is provided in the NNNPS Accordance Table (**Application Document Reference: TR010031/APP/7.2**).
- NPPF 2019**
- 5.2.12 The NPPF was first published by the Department for Communities and Local Government in March 2012 and was most recently updated by the now Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) in February 2019. The NPPF sets out the Government's economic, environmental and social planning policies for England. These policies set out a national strategy for sustainable development. The Government intends that this vision should be interpreted and applied locally to meet aspirations.
- 5.2.13 Paragraph 1.17 of the NNNPS states that the NPS and NPPF are consistent, with paragraph 1.18 stating that the NPPF will be an important and relevant consideration "*but only to the extent relevant to [the] project*". Therefore, it is necessary to consider the extent of any relevance and compliance with policies that it contains.
- 5.2.14 The NPPF promotes a "*presumption in favour of sustainable development*". This presumption requires that economic, social and environmental considerations should be assessed in the determination of development proposals. The document is clear that development proposals that accord with the development plan and are considered sustainable, should be approved without delay.
- 5.2.15 The NPPF is explicit about the role of the NPS – here, the NNNPS – being the

primary decision-making document for NSIPs under the 2008 Act. Paragraph 5 of the NPPF state that:

“This Framework does not contain specific policies for national significant infrastructure. These are determined in accordance with the decision-making framework set out in the Planning Act 2008 (as amended) and relevant national policy statements for major infrastructure, as well as any other matter that are relevant (which may include the National Planning Policy Framework). National policy statements form part of the overall framework of national planning policy, and may be a material consideration in preparing plans and making decisions on planning applications”.

5.2.16 The NPPF is clear about the need for economic growth and the role planning has to play in facilitating it. Paragraph 8 states:

“To help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure”.

5.2.17 The Scheme objectives are consistent with the NPPF. Delivery of the Scheme would provide improved capacity, safety and connectivity of the SRN. This will contribute towards the more efficient and sustainable functioning of the infrastructure of the A1 and North East Region.

5.2.18 Due to the Scheme falling within Green Belt, the policies relating to the Green Belt in the NPPF are relevant to the Scheme, as set out under Paragraph 5 of the NPPF. The Green Belt is considered separately within this Statement at **section 5.4.**

Road Investment Strategy (RIS) (2015 – 2020) November 2016

5.2.19 In its RIS published in December 2014 and last updated in November 2016, the Government set out its plan for long term investment in the roads networks, and in particular the SRN. Its “Strategic Vision” within Part 1 of the Strategy sets out that it wants Highways England to:

“Make the network safer and improve user satisfaction, while smoothing traffic flow and encouraging economic growth. We want to see Highways England delivering better environmental outcomes and helping walkers, cyclists and other vulnerable users of the network at the same time as achieving real efficiency and keeping the network in good condition”.

5.2.20 Pages 12 to 16 of the Strategic Vision recognises that the SRN has a vital role to play in delivering Government’s goals for national networks as outlined in the four strategic goals of the NNNPS:

- *“providing capacity and connectivity to support national and local economic activity;*
- *Supporting and improving journey quality, reliability and safety;*
- *Joining our communities and linking effectively to each other; and*
- *Supporting delivery of environmental goals and the move to a low carbon economy”*

5.2.21 The Strategic Vision sets out that the SRN is vital to British businesses and local

and national economies, but that capacity problems leading to increased congestion have become a major issue. It recognises that the SRN has a good safety record and provides the lifeline for the logistics of everyday life, but that congestion is having a major effect on reliability.

- 5.2.22 The Strategic Vision acknowledges that the SRN links people, places and different transport modes, but that busy roads can generate noise and sever access in towns and villages, impeding cyclists and walkers. It also explains that, moving forward, the SRN needs to be designed and constructed to the highest environmental standards, with low noise surfacings to be used where possible.
- 5.2.23 Page 36 of the Strategic Vision sets out the problems that increased congestion across the SRN would cause if action and investment were not undertaken by 2040. These are:
- *“16 hours stuck in traffic for every household each year;*
 - *28 million working days lost per year;*
 - *£3.7 billion annual cost to the freight industry, which could see prices increase on the High Street and beyond;*
 - *Impeded travel between regions that hampers business;*
 - *Longer travel times that constrain possible job opportunities;*
 - *Negative impacts on efforts to spur economic growth, with enterprise zones, potential housing sites and areas of high growth held back by bottlenecks;*
 - *Increased stress on roads to ports and airports, making it harder for British businesses to access export markets; and*
 - *Safety and environmental suffering as congested traffic is more polluting and there is an increased risk of accidents”*
- 5.2.24 Part 2 of the Investment Plan of the RIS lists key investments on the SRN. A total of £15.2 billion is committed by Government to the enhancements and long-term maintenance of the network between 2015/16 and 2020/21 including 127 major enhancements. The Scheme is included in the RIS as a key investment on the SRN that the Government has committed the full anticipated funding provided that the necessary statutory approvals are granted and the Scheme continues to demonstrate value for public money.
- Highways England Delivery Plan and Strategic Business Plans 2015 – 2020**
- 5.2.25 The Applicant was given powers to operate, maintain and improve England’s motorways and major A roads by the Government in 2015. As identified in the Applicant’s Delivery Plan 2015 – 2020 they aim to *“increase road capacity while modernising the motorway network and our major A roads”*.
- 5.2.26 The Applicant has five objectives in order to operate, maintain and modernise the SRN in the interests of the users. These objectives are to:
- Support economic growth;
 - Establish a safe and serviceable network;
 - Provide a more free-flowing network;

- Improve the environment; and
- Create an accessible and integrated network.

5.2.27 Annex A of the Delivery Plan provides a set of plans that identify the major improvements planned to be delivered across the network. The Scheme is identified in Annex A of the Delivery Plan.

National Infrastructure Delivery Plan (2016 – 2021)

5.2.28 The National Infrastructure Delivery Plan (NIDP) published by HM Treasury in March 2016, which updates and replaces the National Infrastructure Plan is clear about the link between a fit for purpose infrastructure network, social sustainability and a thriving economy and, therefore the need for investment in infrastructure.

5.2.29 The NIDP Executive Summary states that:

“Infrastructure is the foundation upon which our economy is built. The Government remains determined to deliver better infrastructure in the UK to grow our economy and improve opportunities for people across the country”

5.2.30 **Table 9** below identifies the key objectives in the NIDP relevant to the Scheme extracting text from that document.

Table 9 – Key Objectives of the NIDP

Paragraph	Key Objective
1.20	<i>“economic infrastructure networks are vital to improving quality of life but also integral to the creation of new places to live and work alongside plans for major housing and regeneration schemes and social infrastructure”</i>
3.1	<i>“.....Roads are fundamental to modern society. They keep people connected, making it possible to travel to work and leisure. The road network brings communities closer together, providing users with freedom and flexibility that is unrivalled by other modes of transport. That is why roads are the backbone of the transport system”</i>
3.3	The main issues identified by the NIDP are that <i>“the quality of the network has declined and congestion, noise and poor air quality have become problems at certain hotspots. Poor or missing links mean cities which are close together do less business with one another”</i>
3.4	Therefore, the objective of the NIDP in relation to road infrastructure is to <i>“build a better network with smarter roads that use technology and modern road building techniques. In this way it can ensure the country has a road network that drives, instead of constrains growth”</i>
3.7	The Government established Highways England in 2015 giving them the powers to operate, maintain and improve England’s motorways and major A roads. This was part of demonstrating the Government’s aim and commitment to <i>“delivering a step-change in investment in the Strategic Road</i>

	<i>Network and to introducing significant additional road capacity”</i>
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5.2.31 The Scheme aligns with the paragraphs set out in the table above as it would improve the quality of the SRN by tackling congestion, connectivity, reliability, accessibility, capacity, safety and resilience issues on the A1 between Birtley and Coal House. The Scheme would also be built to contribute towards ensuring the country has an SRN that drives growth through a better designed network.

Summary

5.2.32 The policy documents reviewed in this section underline the Government’s commitment to investment in transport infrastructure and emphasize the role this investment has in stimulating economic growth and social sustainability as well as managing the operation of the UK economy. The aims and objectives of the Scheme are directly in line with the national frameworks and illustrate the need for the Scheme on a national level and align with the Government’s strategy for investment in the North East.

5.3 Conformity of the Scheme with Local Development Plans

5.3.1 Although the NNNPS is the primary planning policy document for decision making on the Scheme, local development plans still have relevance to the Scheme as they provide local land use designations and allocated land in terms of where future development is planned to occur. They are important in defining the Scheme objectives, designing the Scheme and agreeing appropriate mitigation. Local Authorities, take into account development plan policies when preparing their Local Impact Report, which they prepare in response to the Examining Authority once the DCO application is submitted.

5.3.2 The Scheme is located wholly within the Gateshead Council administrative area, although at junction 65 (Birtley) it is adjacent to the boundary with Sunderland City Council. Accordingly, this section focuses on the development plan and associated supplementary guidance for Gateshead Council, but also takes account of any relevant policy and guidance for Sunderland City Council.

Gateshead Development Plan

5.3.3 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 polices of the Gateshead Unitary Development Plan 2007.

5.3.4 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.

5.3.5 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 (“Submission Draft Plan”) was published in

October 2018 and this Submission Draft Plan is the version of the MSGP that the Council intends to submit for examination in 2019.

- 5.3.6 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 tested at Examination in Public.
- 5.3.7 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.

Core Strategy and Urban Core Plan (Local Plan Parts 1 and 2)

- 5.3.8 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.
- 5.3.9 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. 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.
- 5.3.10 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"
- 5.3.11 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.
- 5.3.12 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"*.
- 5.3.13 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".
- 5.3.14 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 in-commuting 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.

- 5.3.15 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 NGWB will inevitably affect the travel decisions of airport users.
- 5.3.16 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”*
- 5.3.17 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.
- 5.3.18 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
- 5.3.19 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 and will be improved by the Scheme.
- 5.3.20 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.
- 5.3.21 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”.

- 5.3.22 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 sliproads, 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”.

- 5.3.23 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.

Gateshead UDP Saved Policies

- 5.3.24 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;”

5.3.25 Policy ENV44 and ENV47 seek the protection and possible enhancement of trees and wildlife habitats.

5.3.26 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.”*

5.3.27 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”*.

Conformity of the Scheme with the Core Strategy, Urban Core Plan and UDP

5.3.28 The Scheme is in conformity with the Core Strategy and Urban Core Plan in bringing forward on of two key transport infrastructure schemes that are said to be fundamental to the delivery of the Plan’s spatial strategy. This is considered by the Plan as important not only to improving connectivity on the SRN, but in particular to relieving congestion on the A1 NGWB. The Scheme includes UTMC's that will allow the public to make more informed travel choices.

5.3.29 The Scheme’s conformity with Green Belt policy is addressed in **section 5.4** of this Statement.

5.3.30 The Scheme’s conformity with the saved policies of the UDP which seek to protect and enhance the environment are addressed in **section 5.3** of this Statement below.

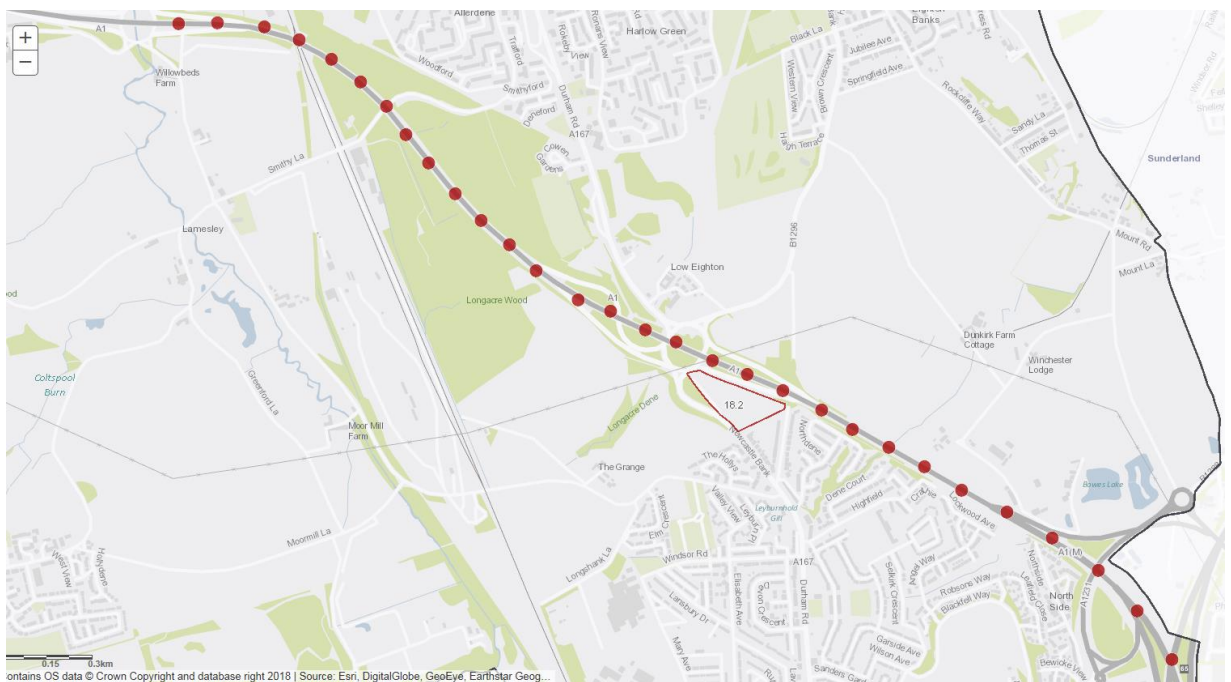
Making Spaces for Growing Places (Local Plan Part 3)

5.3.31 The Submission Draft MSGP published in October 2018 sets out proposed site allocations and development management policies for Gateshead, that will complement and support the Core Strategy and Urban Core Plan. The Submission Draft MSGP whilst at a relatively advance stage in development has not yet been the subject of an examination. Nevertheless, 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.

5.3.32 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.

- 5.3.33 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.
- 5.3.34 Section 6 of the Submission 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 (see **Figure 4** below).

Figure 4: Safeguarded Transport Land



- 5.3.35 MSGP18.2 safeguards a triangle of land near junction 66 of the A1 at Eighton Lodge for a Park and Ride.
- 5.3.36 Section 7 People and Places of the Submission Draft MSGP refers to issues that may affect people’s quality of life such as noise, traffic and parking congestion, smells and fumes. Relevant policies set out in this section have been addressed where appropriate in the ES (**Application Document Reference: TR010031/APP/6.1**). The Scheme will not result in a more than 3dB increase at dwellings and other receptors (see **Table 11-26** of **Chapter 11** Noise and Vibration of the ES). The Scheme will not result in any exceedances of National Air Quality Objective thresholds (see **Chapter 5** Air Quality of the ES). The Scheme will not cause ground contamination and mitigation measures have been identified to prevent this during construction (see **Section 9.9** of the ES).
- 5.3.37 MSGP25 promotes quality design, especially within key routeways such as the A1 corridor. The Scheme aims to provide high quality design, including the landscape strategy, in accordance with MSGP25.
- 5.3.38 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. This is addressed in **Chapter 13** Road Drainage and the Water

Environment of the ES (**Application Document Reference: TR010031/APP/6.1**).

- 5.3.39 MSGP31 Water Quality and the Water Environment requires that the quantity and quality of surface and groundwater bodies should be protected and where possible enhanced in accordance with the Northumbria River Basin Management Plan. This is address in **Chapter 13** of the ES (**Application Document Reference: TR010031/APP/6.1**).
- 5.3.40 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.

Conformity of the Scheme with the Submission Draft MSGP

- 5.3.41 The Scheme is in conformity with the Submission Draft MSGP in that it brings forward one of its key infrastructure proposals, using land identified in MSGP18.5 as a safeguarded site for the “A1 Birtley to Coalhouse” transport improvement.
- 5.3.42 Development management policies aimed at setting appropriate standards for any development taking place within the Gateshead area are addressed as appropriate in the relevant chapters of the ES (**Application Document Reference: TR010031/APP/6.1**). The Scheme complies with MSGP policy with regard to amenity issues through having no significant effect on air quality and bringing about a net reduction in noise experienced by residents. The design of the Scheme is in general conformity with the aims of the MSGP, as demonstrated in relation to specific policies, through addressing those spatial policies that are relevant to the Scheme including flood management and contributing to green infrastructure through mitigation measures proposed as part of the Scheme as detailed in **Section 7.9 and 13.9** of the ES.

Gateshead UDP Saved Policies

- 5.3.43 The saved Gateshead UDP policies from July 2010 were assessed for their conformity with the first NPPF published in November 2012. In some cases, the conclusion was reached that parts of the policies, or whole policies, were not in conformity. Parts of policies which were not in conformity with the NPPF have been struck through and the Council advises that these policies should not be accorded weight. It should be noted that the saved policies have not been assessed for conformity with the NPPF published in February 2019.
- 5.3.44 The UDP saved policies do not contain any policies directly relevant to the Scheme although there are a number of development management policies that may be relevant, such as need to investigate archaeological remains, which are taken into account in the relevant chapters of the ES (**Application Document Reference: TR010031/APP/6.1**). As these policies will be superseded by policies in the MSGP, compliance with such policies has been addressed above in relation to the equivalent MSGP policies.

Supplementary Planning Documents

- 5.3.45 Gateshead Council has prepared a number of SPDs that may be material considerations in planning decisions. The SPDs relate to hot food takeaways, residential design, Coatsworth Road Conservation Area, Exemplar Neighbourhoods, and householder extensions and alterations. Highways England is not entering into a Planning Obligation for the Scheme and therefore the SPD on Planning Obligations is not relevant. Therefore, only the Placemaking SPD

referred to below is likely to be relevant to the Scheme.

Placemaking SPD

- 5.3.46 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.
- 5.3.47 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 endeavor 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”*.

Sunderland Development Plan

- 5.3.48 The current development plan for Sunderland comprises the Core Strategy and Development Plan 2015 – 2033 with saved policies of the Unitary Development Plan (UDP) 1998.
- 5.3.49 The Core Strategy is a strategic planning framework that will guide development in Sunderland City to 2033.

Sunderland Core Strategy and Development Plan 2015 – 2033

- 5.3.50 The Core Strategy and Development Plan (2015- 2033) was adopted by Sunderland City Council on 30 January 2020. It sets out long-term development across the city to 2033. Sunderland's Local Plan is in three Parts:
- Part One – Core Strategy and Local Plan (The Plan)
 - Part Two – Allocations and Designations Plan (A&D Plan)
 - Part Three – Internationally Advanced Manufacturing Park (IAMP) Area Action Plan (AAP) (2017 – 2032)
- 5.3.51 The Plan and the IAM AAP superseded saved policies of the Sunderland Unitary Development Plan (UDP) 1998 UDP Alterations No. 2 (2007). The Plan includes development policies and general site allocations, land use designations and development management policies. Part Two, the A&D Plan, has not yet been adopted and a number of policies remain as saved policies and part of the Development Plan until such time as the A&D plan is adopted. The saved policies are not considered relevant to the scheme and are therefore not considered in this Planning Statement.
- 5.3.52 There is a third part to the Local Plan, the International Advanced Manufacturing Park (IAMP) Area Action Plan (AAP) 2017 – 2032, which was adopted in 2017, but this not relevant due to the remoteness from the Scheme (approximately 6km).
- 5.3.53 The closest part of Sunderland to the Scheme is the town of Washington, which is described in paragraph 2.10 of the Core Strategy and Development Plan as a highly sustainable location, with excellent transport links to the City Centre, Durham, Gateshead, Newcastle and significant job opportunities at the IAMP,

Follingsby Park and within Washington. The town centre of Washington is located approximately 1.5km to the east of the Scheme boundary but its surrounding development extends up to the Scheme boundary. The nearest development is the Crowther Industrial Estate located adjacent to junction 65 (Birtley). The A1231 is described at paragraph 2.74 as one of the six key road connections linking Sunderland to the A1.

- 5.3.54 Strategic Priority 11 is *“To promote sustainable and active travel and seek to improve transport infrastructure to ensure efficient, sustainable access”*. There are no relevant local highway schemes connecting with the Scheme.
- 5.3.55 Strategic Policy SP1: Spatial strategy includes *“protecting Sunderland’s character and environmental assets including Settlement Breaks, greenspaces, Open Countryside and Green Belt”*. Although the Core Strategy and Development Plan proposes changes to the Green Belt boundary to meet housing demand, there are not changes proposed in the area adjacent to the Scheme.
- 5.3.56 The employment areas located on the west side of the Washington and to the east of the A194(M), Crowther and Armstrong, are allocated in Policy EG2 as Key Employment Areas; these are existing employment areas that have a degree of safeguarding as they are *“still required to meet anticipated needs for employment floorspace over the Plan period, but are recognised as older and less effective employment areas, in locations of weaker demand”*.
- 5.3.57 Policy NE6 Green Belt is to “Check the unrestricted sprawl of the built up area of the city” and that “Development in the Green Belt will be permitted where the proposals are consistent with the exception list in national policy subject to all other criteria being acceptable.” The Land between the A194 and the boundary with Gateshead is Green Belt, forming part of the Tyne and Wear Green Belt. The A194 forms the southern boundary of the Green Belt;. Policy NE6 is consistent with national policy as such it does not require any additional consideration than already given in the previous revision of the Planning Statement. Compliance of the Scheme is Green Belt Policy is considered in more detail in **section 5.4** below.

City of Sunderland UDP Saved Policies

- 5.3.58 The City of Sunderland UDP saved policies do not contain any policies relevant to the Scheme. The deleted policies have been superseded by the core strategy policies set out below.

City of Sunderland Core Strategy

- 5.3.59 The Sunderland City Council Core Strategy and Development Plan 2015-2033 was adopted in January 2020.
- 5.3.60 Core Strategy Policy NE6 relates to the protection of the Green Belt. The policy does not raise any additional policy requirements in relation to the Green Belt designations over and above national policy. National and local policy with regard to Green Belt is considered separately in section 5.4 of this Statement.
- 5.3.61 Core Strategy Policy SP1 relates to the Development Strategy part (1) (v) identifies a priority of delivering sufficient infrastructure to meet identified needs.

Conformity with the Sunderland Development Plan

- 5.3.62 The Scheme does not have any direct effect any of Sunderland City Council's land and therefore there is no conflict with the Core Strategy and Development Plan's land allocations including Green Belt policy NE6. The Scheme will help to improve connectivity to and from the A194(M) supporting the City's Core Strategy Priority 5, Economic Growth and Strategic Policy SP1..

Planning Guidance

- 5.3.63 There is no Sunderland Planning Guidance or adopted Supplementary Planning Documents relevant to the Scheme. A draft Planning Obligations SPD was published for consultation in May 2018 and provides further guidance in relation to specific policies within the draft Core Strategy and Development Plan. The SPD confirms that financial contributions will be sought only where a site-specific need has been identified.

Strategic Alignment of the Scheme with Local Transport Plans

- 5.3.64 Transport planning for Gateshead along with Sunderland, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, South Tyneside, North Tyneside, County Durham and Northumberland is undertaken by the North East Combined Authority (NECA) on behalf of the seven local authorities. NECA was established by Newcastle-upon-Tyne, North Tyneside and Northumberland County Council in April 2014 and was extended to include County Durham, Gateshead, South Tyneside and Sunderland in November 2018. Its ambition is "to create the best possible conditions for growth in jobs, investment and living standards, making the North East an excellent place to live and work." Its role intends to support a growing economy and workforce through attracting capital investment and people to the area.

Transport Manifesto 2016 - 2036

- 5.3.65 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 will inform the region's Transport Plan, was expected to be consulted on in 2018. The Manifesto states its support for existing proposals to improve roads including the "*M1 extension to Gateshead, A1 dualling in Northumberland, Western Bypass enhancements and A19 junction upgrades*".

Tyne and Wear Local Transport Plan 3 Strategy 2011 - 2021

- 5.3.66 This 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. The most recent Delivery Plan covers the period 2011 – 2014 and, following formation of NECA and Transport North East will not be reviewed. LTP3 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).
- 5.3.67 The Delivery Plan 2011 – 2014 identified (paragraph 2.28) the A1 corridor through Gateshead and Newcastle as a major location for employment and regeneration that experiences major problems of traffic congestion. The Plan states:
- "Minimising and wherever possible, reducing congestion problems on the A1 are central to the successful regeneration of this accessible urban corridor with its large areas of brownfield land. Transport measures which would help support*

future development and activity include: Selective improvement to the A1 itself to increase capacity, improve safety and reduce conflicts between weaving traffic, principally at Lobley Hill”.

- 5.3.68 The Delivery Plan goes to say (paragraph 2.38) *“Although it is envisaged that schemes affecting the A1 will continue to be the responsibility of the Highways Agency, the Council will continue to support and promote these given their importance to future regeneration prospects in the A1 corridor”.*

Conformity with the Transport Plan

- 5.3.69 Transport planning for Gateshead as part of the North East region is in a transition phase, but the most recent Transport Plan for the area and the current Manifesto that will form the basis for future transport planning are firmly focused on the need for improvement to the A1 corridor through Gateshead to relieve congestion and enable economic development.

5.4 Green Belt Policy

- 5.4.1 The Scheme comprises development within the Green Belt. Green Belt policy in respect of the NPPF recognises that there are five purposes to Green Belt designation including *“assisting the safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment”* (paragraph 134). *“Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances”* (paragraph 143) where it does not support the purposes of the designation. Very special circumstances will not exist unless harm to the Green Belt is outweighed by other considerations (paragraph 144). Some forms of development *“are also not inappropriate in the Green Belt provided they preserve its openness and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it”* (paragraph 146). This includes *“local transport infrastructure which can demonstrate a requirement for a Green Belt location”* (paragraph 146 (c)).
- 5.4.2 The NNNPS states at paragraph 5.178:
“When located in the Green Belt national networks infrastructure projects may comprise inappropriate development. Inappropriate development is by definition harmful to the Green Belt and there is a presumption against it except in very special circumstances. The Secretary of State will need to assess whether there are very special circumstances to justify inappropriate development. Very special circumstances will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations. In view of the presumption against inappropriate development, the Secretary of State will attach substantial weight to the harm to the Green Belt, when considering any application for such development.”
- 5.4.3 This section considers the extent of potential harm to the Green Belt arising from the construction and operation of the Scheme, and provides a view on whether very special circumstances apply as set in the NPPF, NPS and in local planning policy as described in **Section 5.3** above.
- #### **Inappropriate Development**
- 5.4.4 As detailed above, inappropriate development is by definition, harmful to the Green Belt. Certain types of development are considered by Government not to be inappropriate to the Green Belt provided they preserve the openness and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it. These include

“engineering operations” and “local transport infrastructure which can demonstrate a requirement for a Green Belt location” (NPPF, paragraph 1.46).

- 5.4.5 As the Scheme is part of the SRN, strictly speaking it would not fall within the category of *“local transport infrastructure”* even though it is expected to benefit local traffic through relieving congestion. However, the Scheme is able to demonstrate a requirement for a Green Belt location which forms a part of the test under NPPF paragraph 146, since even online options would represent development in the Green Belt as the designation includes the A1 between junction 67 (Coal House) and the edge of Birtley.
- 5.4.6 The Scheme would include *“engineering operations”*, which NPPF paragraph 146 states would not be inappropriate provided they preserve the openness of the Green Belt. The Scheme includes engineering operations that are considered not to undermine the openness of the Green Belt, including below ground and ground level works such as grouting and carriageway widening. However, the Scheme also includes above ground structures such as new bridges, gantries, embankment and extensions to bridges and gantries to accommodate a widened carriageway. Whilst in the view of the Applicant it can be concluded that the openness of the Green Belt is not affected, such above ground structures may conservatively and on a precautionary basis be considered to have a detrimental effect on the openness of the Green Belt.
- 5.4.7 Additional effects on the openness of the Green Belt are likely to arise during the construction phase. During construction there would be a need for temporary buildings and structures, including two construction compounds, and the storage of materials, large plant and machinery. Such facilities, albeit temporary, would be unlikely to preserve the openness of the Green Belt.
- 5.4.8 In addition to preserving the openness of the Green Belt, forms of development which NPPF considers not to be inappropriate must also pass the test of not conflicting with any of the purposes of including land in the Green Belt. The five purposes of including land in the Green Belt are set out in paragraph 134 of the NPPF and are as follows:
- to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas;
 - to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
 - to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
 - to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
 - to assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.
- 5.4.9 Whilst encroachment on the surrounding countryside by the Scheme would be limited in extent, there would nevertheless be an expansion of the A1 within the Green Belt beyond its existing confines. Consequently, the Scheme may conflict with the purpose of safeguarding the countryside from encroachment. It is not considered that the Scheme would conflict with the other four purposes of including land in the Green Belt.
- 5.4.10 Further to the discussion above, it is concluded, on a precautionary basis, that the Scheme may represent inappropriate development in the Green Belt by virtue of its conflict with the aims of preserving openness and safeguarding the countryside

from encroachment.

- 5.4.11 The main construction works are split into eight areas as follows:
- NGN Works
 - Aspect 1 – site mobilization
 - Aspect 2 – works on the ECML that are required for the demolition and replacement of Allerdene Bridge
 - Aspect 3 – to and through the approach at junction 67 (Coal House)
 - Aspect 4 – Allerdene Bridge
 - Aspect 5 – east of Allerdene Bridge to junction 65 (Birtley)
 - Aspect 6 – tie-in works
 - Aspect 7 – removal of Allerdene Bridge and approaches
 - Aspect 8 – site demobilization
- 5.4.12 Aspects 3, 4 and 5 together cover the full length of the Scheme. They are identified separately as each has a different Traffic Management (TM) strategy to enable the works to be constructed. Further details of the works proposed within each aspect listed above can found in Section 2.9 of the ES (APP-023).
- 5.4.13 Two main construction compounds and two working construction compounds (Figure 1 in Appendix A of the Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan, Application Document Reference: TR010031/APP/7.4) will be set up to enable the Scheme to be built. The main construction compounds will include staff parking, site accommodation, materials storage, road sweepings management, facilities to wash vehicles and plant and vehicle maintenance areas. The main compounds will be secured and fenced with 24-hour security provided and will be hard surfaced and will implement a one-way system.
- 5.4.14 The compounds will be located as follows:
- Junction 66 Eighton Lodge compound - to the north of the A1, north east of Eighton Lodge roundabout
 - Junction 67 Coal House compound - to the south of the A1, east of Coal House roundabout on NGN land
- 5.4.15 The working compounds will be smaller compound areas set up to enable specific works at Longbank Bridleway Underpass (widening) and Allerdene Bridge (demolition) and will comprise a secure fenced and gated area with site welfare, parking and materials storage. The working compounds are located as follows:
- Longbank compound - to the north of the A1, west of Longbank Bridleway Underpass
 - Allerdene compound - to the north east of the existing Allerdene Bridge
- 5.4.16 The following potential adverse impacts on visual amenity are anticipated as a result of the construction compounds:
- The compounds would form a new, and from some locations, a highly conspicuous feature within views from nearby receptors

- The impact of temporary spoil heaps, material storage, and site compounds throughout the construction phase would be frequent changes to the perception of the existing A1 and the broader landscape associated with the corridor
- Temporary lighting from the compounds and during the construction phase would result in the light potentially spilling over into adjacent areas.

5.4.17 Specific to the impacts upon Green Belt, the presence of temporary construction compounds would result in a temporary reduction in the perception of openness. In particular, the re-alignment of the A1 and Allerdene Bridge would extend for a construction period of three years, during which there would be a period of five months where the existing bridge would be retained whilst the proposed Allerdene Bridge is being constructed.

5.4.18 However, measures would be applied during construction of the Scheme in order to reduce the magnitude and duration of impacts. These include:

- Areas would be cleared for construction as close as possible to works commencing and topsoiling, reseeding and planting would be undertaken during the next available season after sections of work are complete
- As far as practicable, plant and material storage areas would be sited so as to avoid landscape and visual impact
- Construction sites would be kept tidy (e.g. free of litter and debris) through robust site compound management
- Work during hours of darkness would be avoided as far as practicable and where necessary directed lighting would be used to minimise light pollution/glare
- Lighting levels would be kept to the minimum necessary for security and safety

5.4.19 The Scheme is largely associated with the existing A1 corridor, and the local widening and online improvements would, with appropriate roadside mitigation, avoid impacts on the qualities of the open countryside, and particularly a change in the sense of openness experienced by local residents or visitors to the area. This is of particular relevance within the transitional landscape that forms the buffer between Gateshead and Birtley, and proposed modifications to the existing A1 corridor would not be perceptible within the majority of this landscape, avoiding the urbanising impact of the road and perceptible loss in the sense of openness.

5.4.20 The exception to this would be the new Allerdene Bridge, and both the Allerdene embankment option or Allerdene viaduct option are anticipated to have noticeably different associated impacts.

5.4.21 The Allerdene embankment option would place the re-aligned A1 corridor within the northern fringes of the Green Belt designation, extending southwards the urban influence of Gateshead to the north, and within the fields to the north of Lamesley. The associated embankment would initially appear as a new, engineered slope and associated traffic would be visible on an interim horizon, crossing the bridge. The associated embankment slopes would, by the Design

Year 15, have associated woodland planting established, reducing the degree to which the realigned A1 would be perceived and the associated impact on the perception of openness.

- 5.4.22 The Allerdene viaduct option would place the re-aligned A1 on a similar horizontal alignment of comparable height with the Allerdene embankment option and would similarly extend the urban influence of Gateshead within the existing Green Belt designation. However, the Allerdene viaduct option would, in contrast to Allerdene embankment option, result in a stark structure, longer in length, impacting over a greater distance. Whilst this option would offer greater perception to the north of the viaduct, the supporting columns would disrupt these views and the capacity to mitigate through screen planting would be limited. The impacts associated with the realigned A1 and associated traffic would remain visible, the associated impacts on the perception of openness remaining to the Design Year 15 and beyond. The physical loss of Green Belt would be lower for Allerdene viaduct option compared to Allerdene embankment option as the footprint would be smaller. However woodland planting associated with Allerdene embankment option slopes would be more extensive and is anticipated in being more effective in softening the appearance of the embankment and screening associated traffic.
- 5.4.23 Both Allerdene embankment option and Allerdene viaduct option would result in the former A1 alignment being the subject of woodland planting to soften the appearance of the existing embankments which would remain after the existing Allerdene bridge is demolished. Whilst this would contribute to the wooded appearance of the restored landscape to the north of the A1 it would not substantially increase the sense of openness with the woodland creating a visual screen to views experienced from the southern fringes of Gateshead.
- 5.4.24 The impact of the Scheme on the Gateshead Green Belt would be a perceptible loss of designated open countryside, arising as a result of the realignment of the A1. Allerdene viaduct option would, as a result of the longer structure and visual prominence of the structure itself, result in a perceptible impact on the Green Belt. Allerdene embankment option would result in a slightly larger area of Green Belt being impacted, however the sense of openness would be restored in part by the successful establishment of associated planting on the engineered slopes, reducing the visual prominence of the realigned A1.
- 5.4.25 The impact of the Scheme subject to the proposed changes, and Changes 1 (3-span viaduct) and 3 (additional land) in particular have also been considered. Change 1 would result in impacts most closely resembling those of the Viaduct option on the Green Belt, and Change 3 would result in a larger extent of temporary impact as a result of the inclusion of additional land within the area affected by construction. Nevertheless, overall the conclusions relevant to harm to the Green Belt would not be materially affected by the inclusion of the proposed changes in the Application.

Other Harm

- 5.4.26 As established in **paragraph 5.4.2** of this Statement, the Scheme would cause harm to the Green Belt due to it comprising inappropriate development. The NNNPS requires that “*any other harm*” is also taken into consideration by the Secretary of State before considering whether harm to the Green Belt is outweighed by very special circumstances.

Landscape and Visual

- 5.4.27 Other harm may arise due to the effect of the Scheme on the landscape and views across the Green Belt. **Chapter 7 Landscape and Visual of the ES (Application Document Reference: TR010031/APP/6.1)** assesses landscape and visual effects of the Scheme with regards to openness.
- 5.4.28 The landscape and visual assessment finds that the sense of openness is already disturbed by the A1 and the ECML, but this would be further disrupted by demolishing the existing Allerdene Bridge and replacing it further to the south with either a bridge or viaduct. The impact on these views is also identified in Chapter 6: Cultural Heritage of the ES (**Application Document Reference: TR010031/APP/6.1**).
- 5.4.29 With regard to the landscape and visual effects of the Scheme on the Green Belt, the landscape and visual assessment finds that there would be temporary impacts as a result of construction of the Scheme and the presence of temporary construction compounds. In particular the construction phase of re-alignment of the A1 and the construction of the new Allerdene Bridge would extend for a period of three years, during which time new structures would be under construction whilst existing structures would remain in place.
- 5.4.30 During the operational phase, the Scheme would not represent a material change in the area of Green Belt as the original road alignment would be restored through woodland planting. In the period following completion there would initially be a perceptible change in the sense of openness, until such time as growth in woodland planting results in the restored areas merging with the surrounding countryside.
- 5.4.31 Permanent landscape and visual effects on the Green Belt associated with the Allerdene Bridge Viaduct option (including the 3 span option where included in the Application) are assessed to represent a perceptible change in the area of the Green Belt due to the longer structure and visual prominence of the structure itself. The Embankment option would result in a slightly larger area of the Green Belt being impacted. However, the sense of openness would be restored in part by the successful establishment of associated planting on the engineered slopes, reducing the visual prominence of the realigned A1 (see **paragraph 7.8.38** of the ES (**Application Document Reference: TR010031/APP/6.1**)).

Air Quality

- 5.4.32 chapter 5 Air Quality of the ES (**Application Document Reference: TR010031/APP/6.1**) states that there is potential for impacts from construction works, however, with the application of the good practice measures detailed in Section 5.9 of Chapter 5 Air Quality, there would be no significant effects as a result of construction dust. No significant air quality effects from construction traffic impacts are likely with the application of the Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP, Appendix B of the CEMP (**Application Document Reference: TR010031/APP/7.4**)).
- 5.4.33 In relation to population exposure to pollution during the operation phase, air quality modelling demonstrates that pollutant concentrations are within the air quality objectives set in IAN 174/13 at all selected receptors in the Scheme opening year. Therefore, there are no significant effects from the Scheme on human health during operation.

Cultural Heritage

- 5.4.34 Chapter 6 Cultural Heritage of the ES (**Application Document Reference: TR010031/APP/6.1**) finds no significant adverse or beneficial effects during operation but acknowledges a moderate adverse effect on the Bowes Railway scheduled monument.

Biodiversity

- 5.4.35 The Scheme would result in the permanent direct loss of habitat within the area of permanent works and the temporary loss of habitat for temporary works, such as site compounds, storage areas and site access roads. Appendix 8.13 of the ES (Application Document Reference: TR010031/APP/6.3) provides full details of all habitat loss. Table 8- 13 summarises the area of priority habitat within the Scheme Footprint, which is due to be lost, with linear habitats detailed within Table 8-14. Compensatory habitat creation (mitigation planting) has been developed and incorporated into the landscape plan. Specific mitigation measures (for example, areas of habitat creation) are presented in the Landscape Mitigation Design in Figure 7.6 of the ES (Application Document Reference: TR010031/APP/6.2).

Geology and Soils

- 5.4.36 The construction phase of the Scheme would result in the temporary land take of approximately 5.55 hectares of Grade 3a land of high sensitivity and 7.28 hectares of Grade 3b land of medium sensitivity. 9.10.3. Following the construction, temporary land take areas would be reinstated back to their former agricultural use in line with the Soil Handling Strategy, although it is acknowledged not all land would be restored to the soil quality prior to construction.
- 5.4.37 During the construction phase of the development there would be vehicles regularly using and parking within the site compound, this would generate the potential for fuels or oil leaks from vehicles, which may result in pollution of controlled water bodies (underlying aquifers and surrounding surface watercourses, particularly the River Team). However, proposed pollution control measures incorporated as part of the CEMP would mitigate the associated potential adverse impacts.

Material Resources

- 5.4.38 The Allerdene embankment option has a greater impact on the total volume of materials consumed in comparison to the Allerdene viaduct option. It is currently anticipated that any of the Allerdene viaduct options (including the three span option) would generate more arisings which can be recovered but would generate slightly more waste for landfill disposal compared to Allerdene embankment option. Therefore, the Allerdene viaduct option has a comparatively greater adverse effect on landfill capacity, however the difference between the two options is minimal.

Noise and Vibration

- 5.4.39 Chapter 11 Noise and Vibration of the ES concluded that construction noise can be mitigated to avoid significant impacts and there will be a net benefit to noise levels once the scheme is operational due to improving the operation of the A1 and replacing the surface with a quieter material.

Road Drainage and the Water Environment

5.4.40 With the implementation of the proposed mitigation measures (see paragraphs 13.9.4 and 13.9.25 of Chapter 13 Road Drainage and the Water Environment of the ES) the magnitude of impact on water quality, flood risk, human safety and groundwater during the construction phase would be negligible.

Population and Human Health

- 5.4.41 The effects on motorised travellers during construction would be some temporary disruption on the A1 and the surrounding local road network during which would cause a temporary increase in driver stress. The construction programme for both the Allerdene viaduct option and the embankment option would be the same, and it is therefore considered that driver stress would be comparable for both options during construction. In the short term, vegetation screening would be reduced until mitigation planting reaches maturity, which may enhance the views in some locations such as both north and southbound views of the Angel of the North to the west of Coal House roundabout. However, it may also result in a less pleasant road user experience in some carriageway locations travelling adjacent to the Team Valley Trading Estate. In contrast, once the Scheme is operational, it is anticipated that driver stress would be reduced due to the additional capacity provided by the Scheme to alleviate congestion and improve journey times.
- 5.4.42 During construction there will be some temporary reduced amenity for non-motorised travelers when using PRowS and non-designated footpaths near to the construction works. The temporary diversions and closures required for PRow affected by the Scheme would result in increased journey length for these non-motorised travelers. A list of the PRow that would be impacted directly by the construction works and the following diversions or WCH route closures are provided in Table 12-17 of Chapter 12 Population and Health of the ES. However, during operation, there would not be any diversions required and it is anticipated that WCH facilities and connectivity would be improved as a result of the Scheme.
- 5.4.43 During construction there may be some disruption to rail travel between Chester-le-Street and Newcastle due to nighttime track closures for works around Allerdene Bridge, although these would be limited to overnight weekend possessions which would minimise disruptions to rail travellers. It is unlikely that rail travellers would be impacted by the Scheme once operational.
- 5.4.44 Local motorised and non-motorised travellers may be temporarily affected by community severance when accessing local community facilities during construction as traffic management measures are implemented and PRowS are diverted. However once the Scheme is operational, it is anticipated that there will be no further impacts on community severance.
- 5.4.45 During construction there would be a total of 4.5 hectares of temporary private and community land loss for the proposed two main site compounds and two working compounds (this would be a total of 8.4 hectares including approximately 3.9 hectares of additional land included as a result of Change 3). This land would be returned to the existing use after construction is complete. The earthworks design has been revised to avoid land take in the area of Longacre Woods, and the proposed earthworks are now all within Highways England land and no permanent land acquisition is required. During operation, there would be a total of 56.66 hectares of permanent land loss for works, as shown in Table 2-2 in

Chapter 2, The Scheme of this ES (Application Document Reference: TR010031/APP/6.1). Public Open Space will be required for the replacement of North Dene Footbridge at Crathie, North Birtley as shown indicated by the Special Category Land Plans Key Plan (Application Document Reference: TR010031/APP/2.8). A total area of 3.3 hectares of community land will be permanently required for the widening of the current A1 highway, this will include small sections of land adjacent to the southbound carriageway, running from Smithy Lane to the Angel of the North.

- 5.4.46 The Scheme is located in an area which experiences an inequality in health, has areas of deprivation and where overall, the population health is worse than the national average. During construction, health has the potential to be negatively affected due to a number of determinants being adversely impacted including: driver stress; community severance; accessibility; route safety; amenity value; air quality (from construction dust, see Chapter 5 Air Quality of the ES), and noise (from night-time works, see Chapter 11 Noise and Vibration of the ES). Once operational, the Scheme is expected to have a beneficial impact on accessibility. There are no properties that are expected to experience a worsening or improvement in air quality, and the Scheme would provide an overall net benefit in terms of reducing road traffic noise.
- 5.4.47 There is potential that traffic management measures during the construction could cause disruption to commuters and business travel on the local road network, however, there is also potential for a beneficial impact on the local economy as expenditure within the local supply chain is anticipated to increase during the construction works. During operation, reduced delays on the road network have the potential to provide beneficial impacts to the local economy with improved commuter and delivery journey times.
- 5.4.48 Due to the disruption to the road network and diversions to PRoW during construction, local tourism and recreation facilities may experience some temporary impacts due to limited access to such facilities or increased journey time for visitors to reach such facilities. During operation, there is the potential for beneficial impacts through improved access to the Angel of the North Fishing Lakes, Bowes Incline Hotel and the Bowes Manor Equestrian Centre.
- 5.4.49 Chapter 12 Population and Human Health of the ES concludes that construction related other harm includes traffic delays and driver stress, community and commuter severance, and reduced accessibility and amenity value, and the operational benefits will be improved journey times and beneficial effects to the economy and tourism. The overall benefits of the Scheme are considered to outweigh the other harm, and the effects to Population and Human Health are not considered to be significant enough for the Scheme to be considered inappropriate Green Belt development. An "Other Harm" Assessment has been carried out and forms part of this Planning Statement.

Very Special Circumstances

- 5.4.50 The NNNPS and NPPF state that the Secretary of State will need to assess whether there are very special circumstances to justify inappropriate development. They go on to say that very special circumstances will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.

- 5.4.51 Whilst it is acknowledged that the Scheme represents harm to the Green Belt, determining the extent of the harm is an important consideration when assessing whether harm would be outweighed by other issues. It is noted that the Green Belt includes the A1 itself and therefore online and offline impacts would be the same. The extent of potential harm that would be caused to the Green Belt by the Scheme is considered to be limited in extent for the reasons given below:
- Impact on openness would be confined to those locations in which significant new or extended structures are proposed;
 - Impacts on openness would take place within the context of existing highway infrastructure so would not be a significant change in terms of character and function of the Green Belt;
 - The degree of encroachment on the undeveloped Green Belt would be small; and
 - Construction effects would be short term, with land required temporarily for construction would be re-instated to its original condition following completion of the Scheme.
- 5.4.52 The factors identified above suggest that, whilst there would be harm to two of the fundamental aims of the Green Belt (openness and protecting the countryside from encroachment), the extent of the harm would be limited.
- 5.4.53 For the purposes of demonstrating that very special circumstances exist in relation to the Scheme, the following key issues are considered relevant:
- Delivery of Government policy and programmes;
 - Conformity with local development plan policy and allocations for delivery of the transport infrastructure;
 - Environmental benefits;
 - Economic benefits;
 - Availability of alternatives.
- 5.4.54 These key issues are given more detailed consideration below.
- Delivery of Government Policy and Programmes**
- 5.4.55 The Scheme forms part of the Government's vision and strategic objectives for improving the UK's transport infrastructure as set out in detail in **section 5.2** of this Statement. The Scheme would meet the critical need identified to address road congestion to provide safe, expeditious and resilient networks that better support social and economic activity; and to provide a transport network that is capable of stimulating and supporting economic growth as set out in the NNNPS.
- Conformity with Local Development Plan Policy and Allocations for Delivery of Transport Infrastructure**
- 5.4.56 The Gateshead Submission Draft Local Plan Making Space for Growing Places Policy MSGP18.5 makes specific provision for the Scheme. The safeguarded land identified in this Plan includes land within the Green Belt.
- Environmental and Economic Benefits**
- 5.4.57 The Scheme objectives include both environmental improvements and supporting

economic growth. The economic case for the Scheme is set out in detail in **Chapter 4** of this Statement.

Economic Benefits

- 5.4.58 The Gateshead draft Local Plan Making Space for Growing Places makes it clear that the Team Valley Trading Estate is seen as the region's premier industrial estate. The continued prosperity of the Team Valley Trading Estate would be supported by the Scheme.

Availability of Alternatives

- 5.4.59 The Scheme is designed to enhance the existing transport network within a specific section of the A1 NGWB. Improvement of this stretch of the SRN inevitably required works to be undertaken adjacent to the existing infrastructure. **Chapter 3 Assessment of Alternatives of the ES (Application Document Reference: TR010031/APP/6.1)** and **Chapter 3** of this Statement sets out the alternatives considered. All options considered fall within the Green Belt, including the online option, and it was not possible to avoid impacting the Green Belt. The Scheme was progressed as the preferred option on the basis of overall economic, social and environmental benefits associated with the Scheme which included consideration of Green Belt policy, although it was not a determining factor in choosing the preferred option since the impacts would have been the same for all of the options.
- 5.4.60 In summary it is concluded that the limited degree of harm identified is considered to be outweighed by the very special circumstances that exist in relation to the impact of the Scheme on the Green Belt.

5.5 Planning Balance

- 5.5.1 As set out in **Table 1** of this Statement, the Scheme has been designed to meet the objectives of the NNNPS. In particular, it has been designed to improve traffic flows and reduce delay, support economic growth, and improve journey quality, reliability and safety. It has also been designed to support the delivery of environmental goals and join up communities.
- 5.5.2 The economic, social and environmental benefits of the Scheme are described above in **Section 4.3 and 4.4** (both monetised and non-monetised). The benefits of the Scheme include additional capacity resulting in reduced congestion and delay, improved road safety (avoidance of 290 accidents over 60-year life of the Scheme), and improved access to businesses leading to reduced operational costs for those businesses. This has been calculated to provide **£251.1 million** monetised benefits.
- 5.5.3 The environmental (non-monetised) benefits include an improvement in the visibility of the Angel of the North from vegetation clearance, and improvements in the water environment due to better treatment of run off. The use of noise reducing surfacing may lead to reduction in noise at a small number of receptors. WCHs will also benefit from improved safety, accessibility and connectivity of routes resulting from reduced congestion.
- 5.5.4 These benefits must be weighed against the adverse impacts predicted in the ES (**Application Document Reference: TR010031/APP/6.1**). In particular, there will be a moderate adverse landscape effect on the Team Valley from the construction of either the Allerdene Viaduct or Embankment option, although there is a higher

likelihood in the reduction of the effect to slight adverse with the Embankment option once mitigation planting has been established.

- 5.5.5 As set out in **Section 5.4** above, there is also likely to be an adverse impact on the Green Belt designation, but the harm is likely to be outweighed by the wider benefits of the Scheme and the very special circumstances described above. Therefore, on balance, the Applicant considers that the benefits of the Scheme will outweigh any harm predicted. Mitigation measures have been identified as set out in **Chapters 5 to 15** of the ES (**Application Document Reference: TR010031/APP/6.1**) to ensure that the harm is reduced as far as possible.
- 5.5.6 The design changes referred to in the Planning Addendum include narrower lanes and 3 span replacement viaduct option, shorter culvert, smaller operational boundary and reduction in the construction period and extent of operational land required by the Scheme. In addition, the Addendum to the Environmental Statement [AS-016] is expected shows minor environmental improvements. The proposed design changes covered by this document are considered to enable the Scheme to perform better from a town planning perspective.

6 CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1.1 This Statement is supported by the NNNPS Accordance Table (**Application Document Reference: TR010031/APP/7.2**) which sets out policy in accordance with which the application for a DCO in relation to the Scheme must be decided. It has been prepared to demonstrate that there is a clear case for the Scheme grounded in national and local planning policy.
- 6.1.2 The NNNPS, NIDP and the RIS set out a strong position of support in delivering national networks that meet the country's long-term transport needs, whilst supporting a prosperous and competitive economy and improving the quality of life for all.
- 6.1.3 The Scheme would relieve traffic congestion on the A1 NGWB, which is part of the SRN in the North East Region, making life easier and safer for all road users. This Statement has demonstrated that the Scheme is classified as high value for money in terms of its BCR.
- 6.1.4 The NNNPS paragraph 2.2 states that: "*There is a critical need to improve the national networks to address road congestion and crowding on railways to provide safe, expeditious and resilient networks that better support social and economic activity; and to provide a transport network that is capable of stimulating and supporting economic growth*". The proposed Scheme contributes to a highway network that reduces congestion, is safer, more resilient, and more sustainable for all users including walking, cycling and horse-riding (WCH).
- 6.1.5 The Scheme would provide benefits to long-distance through traffic and to local drivers and their passengers, resulting in economic benefits through reducing travel time and opening up nearby areas for new employment and residential development.
- 6.1.6 The Scheme would improve safety, providing benefits to both long-distance through traffic and local traffic. Overall it is anticipated that the Scheme would reduce accident rates along this stretch of the A1 NGWB.
- 6.1.7 In addition to the benefits set out above, the changes to the design described in the Planning Addendum bring several additional benefits by the design changes that are comprised in narrower lanes, the 3 span option and additional construction compound.
- 6.1.8 The 3-span option would have more efficient construction activities and duration, minimising environmental impacts and potential harm to the Green Belt.
- 6.1.9 Less material is required to construct the 3 span option compared to the other options. This would reduce the construction programme by an estimated six months, along with the additional construction compound, and would require fewer associated construction vehicle movements.
- 6.1.10 The carbon footprint and emissions of constructing the 3 span option will also be lower due to reduced construction traffic and delays to road users due to the shorter construction period.
- 6.1.11 The 3-span alternative would provide an efficient superstructure design, resulting

in smaller embankment footprints, reduced ground stabilisation requirements, reducing the steelwork supports for the bridge deck, simplifying and reducing deliveries to site.

- 6.1.12 The use of a 3-span structure alternative would combine benefits associated with both the 6/7 span and single span options as included in the Application such as:
- Reduced settlement risk;
 - Simplification of temporary construction works at the temporary abutment.
- 6.1.13 The main benefits of the design change resulting in narrower lanes are that it significantly reduces the construction work and impacts on road users and reduces the realignment works to junction 67 (Coal House) roundabout.
- 6.1.14 This in turn provides the potential for improved driver behavior, compliance with mandatory speed limits, and anticipated operational safety benefits in locating the transition between narrower and full width lanes.
- 6.1.15 This proposed change is also intended to link more effectively to the recently implemented A1 Coal House Metro Scheme which already provides narrower lanes.
- 6.1.16 The additional construction compound would reduce the overall construction duration by up to 6 months of the proposed earth embankment for the replacement Allerdene Railway Bridge (in combination with the 3-span option).
- 6.1.17 The additional compound would also reduce the duration of temporary traffic management and road works on the A1, reduce the length of disruption to residents, reduce the length of time that the Scheme requires possession of other temporary land and realise the economic benefits the Scheme will deliver to the local area up to six months earlier than originally planned.
- 6.1.18 The Scheme is supported by an EIA to establish the impacts and mitigation measures needed to meet the Scheme objective to keep environmental impacts to a minimum and this is reported in the ES (**Application Document Reference: TR010031/APP/6.1**). The assessment has demonstrated the Scheme's overall compliance with relevant national and local policies, local transport plans and associated supplementary plans, and has shown that on balance any negative effects of the Scheme are outweighed by the predicted benefits.