

A1 Birtley to Coal House

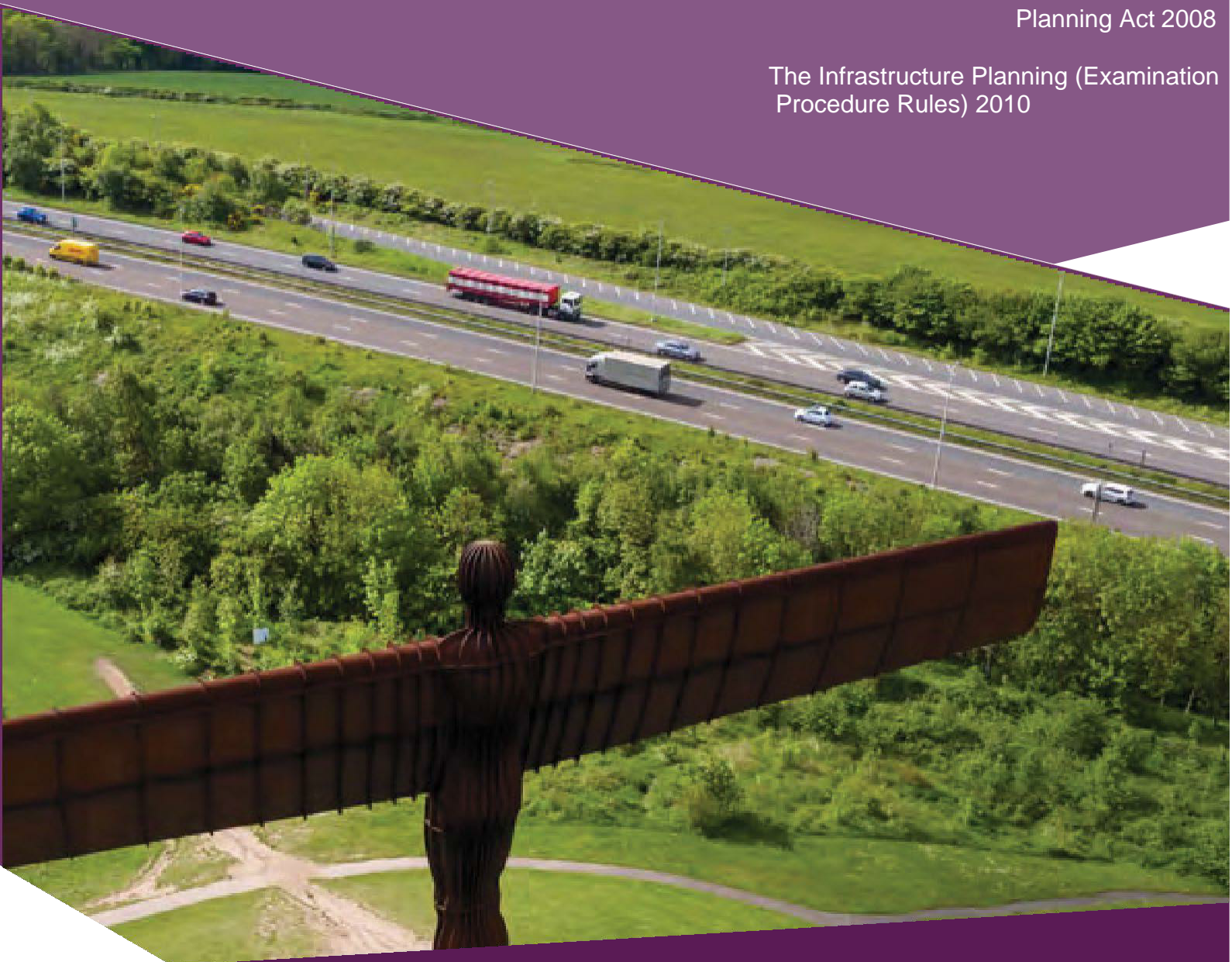
Scheme Number: TR010031

ES Addendum: Additional Land - Non-Technical Summary

APFP Regulation 5(2)(a)

Planning Act 2008

The Infrastructure Planning (Examination
Procedure Rules) 2010



Infrastructure Planning

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(Examination Procedure Rules) 2010**

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

ES Addendum: Additional Land - Non-Technical Summary

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INTRODUCTION

An application for a Development Consent Order (DCO) was submitted by Highways England to the Secretary of State for Transport via the Planning Inspectorate on 14 August 2019. The DCO would, if made, grant consent for the A1 Birtley to Coal House Scheme. The application was accompanied by an Environmental Statement (ES) which considered if there would be significant effects on the environment as a result of the Scheme.

Further design development has continued to be undertaken by Highways England in order to realise efficiencies and design benefits. This is particularly important in optimising a scheme being delivered by the public sector in the public interest.

As a result of the further design development additional land at junction 67 (Coal House) not included in the application submitted in August 2019 has now been identified to allow material stockpiling during construction of the Scheme.

In order to assess any environmental impacts of including the additional land, an environmental impact assessment has been carried out. This Non-Technical Summary presents a summary of the outcome of the assessment in non-technical language. It is not a duplication of the Non-Technical Summary of the ES submitted with the application and so should therefore be read in conjunction with it – a copy of the Non-Technical Summary submitted with the application can be found at

<https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/projects/TR010031/TR010031-000592-6.4%20Environmental%20Statement%20-%20Non-Technical%20Summary.pdf>

NEED FOR THE ADDITIONAL LAND

The additional land would allow the main contractor, who are responsible for constructing the Scheme, to optimise the programme for construction of the proposed earth embankment for the new Allerdene Bridge to the west of the East Coast Main Line (ECML).

A larger material stockpile area, in the form of the additional land, adjacent to the Scheme Footprint at Allerdene would reduce the number the vehicle movements on the A1, compared to smaller stockpiles be adopted along the corridor of the A1 with the existing compound arrangement. The just-in-time delivery approach for the embankment fill material would increase the peak vehicle movements on the A1. The use of a larger stockpile area, created over a longer period of time adjacent the works, would remove the peak construction traffic on the A1, but 'smooth' it over a longer period of time lessening the impact on road users and sensitive receptors. The larger stockpile would enable construction plant used for earthworks operations to work more efficiently than placing the same material at a slower rate when relying upon the material to be transported to the deposition area at a just-in-time fashion.

Temporary possession of the additional land would enable the overall construction programme to be reduced by up to six months, resulting in a 30-month construction programme, compared to a 36-month construction programme.

It would deliver the following benefits:

- Reduce the impact to road users as the duration of the temporary traffic management and road works on the A1 main line will be reduced accordingly. This will enable road users to enjoy the journey time savings from the new road six months earlier than planned.
- Reduce the length of disruption to residents and in particular those who live alongside the A1.
- Reduce the length of time that the Scheme requires possession of other temporary land. This will enable the Scheme to return the land back to its original state and the land owners to recommence enjoyment of their land up to six months earlier than originally planned.
- Realise the economic benefits that the Scheme will deliver to the local area up to six months earlier than originally planned.

SCOPE

A desktop assessment was carried out to identify potential environmental impacts associated with including the additional land in the application. The outcome of this informed an environmental impact assessment scoping exercise to identify those environmental topics that would require a full environmental assessment. The following topics were identified for further assessment:

- Cultural heritage.
- Landscape and visual.
- Biodiversity.
- Population and health.

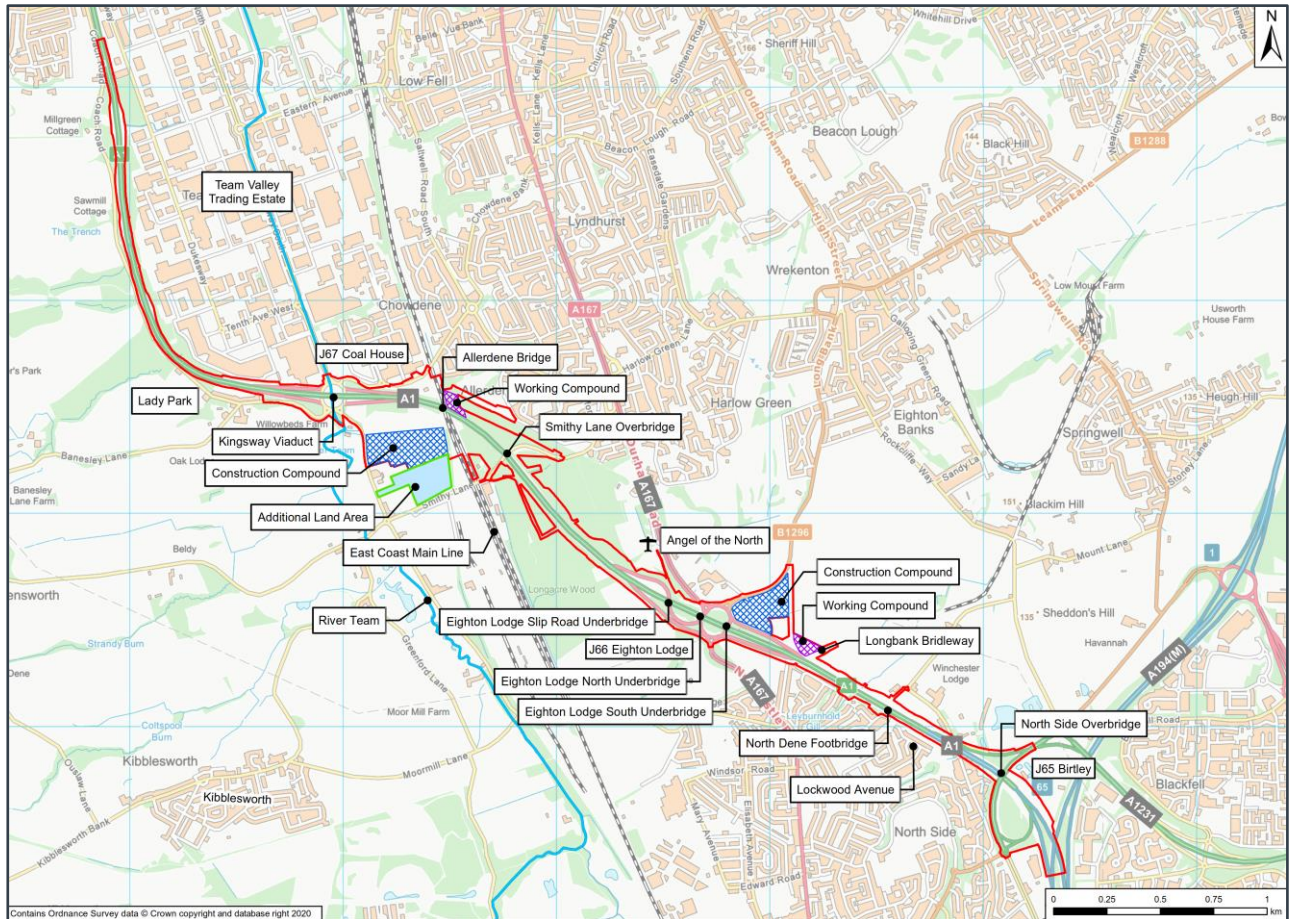
An addendum to the ES has been produced which presents the outcome of the assessment of the likely significant effects for these topics as a result of including the additional land.

For other topics considered in the ES, there are no anticipated changes in impacts or effects from those previously stated in the ES [APP-030] and therefore these other topics are scoped out.

THE ADDITIONAL LAND

The location of the additional land is shown on **Figure 1 Scheme Plan** below.

Figure 1 - Scheme Plan

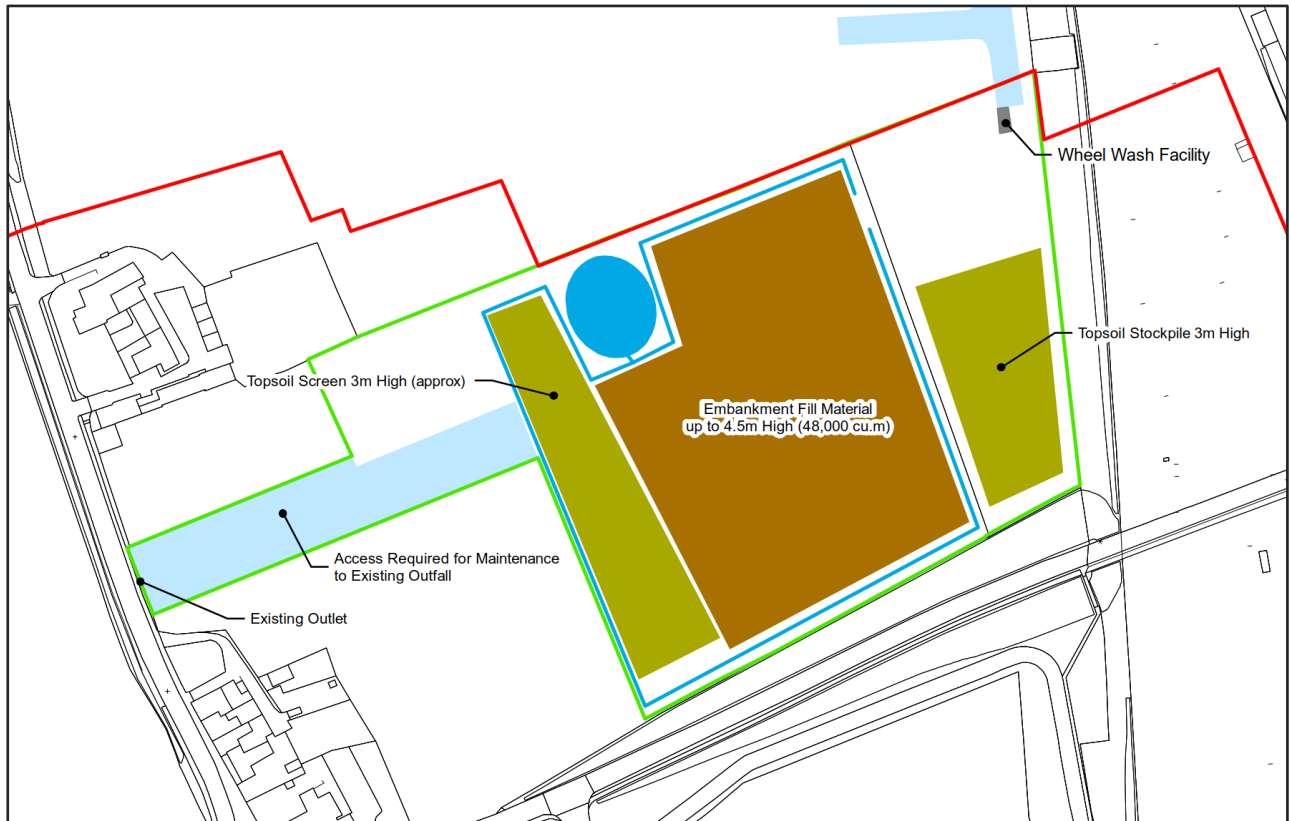


The additional land, along with an area immediately to the west, is currently used for horse grazing and there are horse stables associated with this land use to the south west. To the south west is Lamesley Meadows Local Wildlife Site (LWS), located on the junction of Lamesley Road and Hags Lane. The additional land is bounded to the north by agricultural land with the A1 beyond and to the south and east respectively by Smithy Lane and Network Rail land the ECML. The additional land is bounded to the west by grazed agricultural land and the Lamesley Conservation Area; further west is St Andrews Church Hall and residential properties which are located along Lamesley Road.

PROPOSED USE

This land would be used for the temporary stockpiling of approximately 57,000m³ of topsoil, subsoil and bulk fill material as detailed in **Figure 2** below.

Figure 2 - Indicative layout for the Additional Land



The hard-surfaced access track within the existing proposed compound at junction 67 (Coal House) would be extended into the additional land. The additional land would be fenced. Topsoil bunds 3m high would be established around the perimeter of the stockpile area to screen the properties on Lamesley Road and these would be grass seeded to prevent dust. The material stockpiled within the bunds would be up to 4.5m high and would be a combination of both granular and cohesive material. This would be placed within a sealed bund.

An attenuation pond would be provided to manage temporary drainage and surface water runoff from the additional land. The pond would be excavated into existing ground and an external bund constructed around the perimeter using the excavated arisings. The attenuation pond would be designed to enable surface water and any associated debris (sediments) to be collected without increasing off site flows or sediment. The water would flow to the discharge point via gravity.

No lighting or night-time activities are proposed in the additional land required for stockpiling.

CULTURAL HERITAGE

OVERVIEW

The cultural heritage assessment considers the impacts and effects of the use of the additional land on both buried heritage assets (e.g. archaeological finds) and above ground heritage assets (e.g. structures and landscapes of heritage interest).

A review of the local historic environment records has been undertaken which identified cultural heritage assets in the vicinity of the additional land including the historic settlement centre of Lamesley, an area of medieval ridge and furrow and Lamesley Conservation Area.

A geophysical survey (a survey which looks at conditions of the ground and below ground without having to disturb the soil) was completed to determine the likely presence of buried archaeological finds. The survey only revealed a likely minor watercourse and a former hedgerow. This indicates that there are unlikely to be any significant buried archaeological finds present.

CONSTRUCTION

The use of the additional land would have a temporary impact on the Lamesley Conservation Area, due to views of the temporary stockpiles. This would result in a significant effect on Lamesley Conservation Area, but this effect would only be during construction and would therefore be temporary.

Ground disturbance at the additional land has the potential to result in the permanent loss of the possible remains of the medieval ridge and furrow. However, both a site visit and the geophysical survey indicated that there were no significant extents of ridge and furrow within the additional land and the effects on the medieval ridge and furrow are therefore not considered to be significant.

The use of the additional land would lead to permanent loss of previously unrecorded buried heritage assets; however the geophysical survey suggests that there are no remains of archaeological value within the additional land. Therefore, it not considered that the effects on unrecorded buried heritage assets would be significant.

LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL

OVERVIEW

The landscape and visual assessment consider the impacts and effects of the use of the additional land on landscape character and visual amenity. The baseline landscape and visual conditions have not changed from those reported in the Non-Technical Summary that accompanied the ES at application. The additional land is located within a rural landscape of mixed pasture and arable fields and is characterised by a combination of surrounding

land uses including residential, recreational, industrial and open space. The additional land is within the designated Green Belt land, namely the Tyne and Wear Green Belt. The ECML is immediately to the north of the additional land and the A1 is close by, both of these elements form strong visual and audible elements of the landscape.

The additional land falls within the Team Valley Local Landscape Character Area. The character boundary is defined to the north and east by Gateshead urban edge, to the south by the River Tea, flowing north-east from High Urpeth and to the west by a wooded ridge at Ravensworth.

CONSTRUCTION

The use of the additional land would temporarily affect the perception of this area as a rural landscape. To reduce this impact 3m high topsoil bunds would be located to the west of the additional land to provide screening to nearby properties. Further, the hedge which crosses the additional land would be retained except for a small length that would be removed for access to the site.

There would no change in the effects reported on the Team Valley Local Landscape Character Area or on occupiers or users of local visual receptors in the vicinity of the additional land. Whilst the additional land would extend the influence of the construction activity to the south, the Scheme is already anticipated to give rise to significant effects, and this would not change.

BIODIVERSITY

OVERVIEW

The biodiversity assessment considers the impacts and effects of the use of the additional land on the natural environment. The additional land comprises semi-improved grassland fields used to graze horses. It also includes a hedge which is designated as a habitat of principal importance. The additional land was identified as containing habitat suitable for bats and wintering/breeding birds. The additional land is located 0.08km southwest of Lamesley Meadow Local Wildlife Site (LWS). Ecology surveys currently undertaken have identified habitat for bats, breeding birds and wintering birds on the additional land. Additional species specific ecology surveys are being carried out to further inform any mitigation requirements.

CONSTRUCTION

The use of the additional land would result in the temporary loss of the hedge priority habitat. There could also be some impacts on habitats at Lamesley Meadows LWS due to noise or dust from earth moving activities within the additional land. There is the potential for impacts on bats and wintering birds due to the loss of habitat for foraging and due to disturbance from the construction activities at the site. Additionally, there is the potential for mortality and injury of wintering birds. In order to reduce impacts during construction an earth bund would be constructed, prior to embankment fill materials being imported which

would reduce noise impacts to the surrounding areas for a time, noise generating equipment would be sited away from sensitive areas and damping down would be utilised to reduce dust. Following the completion of the construction activities, the land would be reinstated to its pre-existing condition. With this mitigation in place there would be no significant effects on Lamesley Meadows Local Wildlife Site or on wintering birds or bats. There would be no change to the significant effects which are already reported on habitats.

POPULATION AND HUMAN HEALTH

OVERVIEW

The population and human health assessment considers the impacts and effects on private and community land take. The additional land is currently used for horse grazing, and there are horse stables to the south west of the additional land. The additional land is located in close proximity to residential properties located off Lamesley Road, as well as Lamesley Childcare centre which is based at St Andrews Church Hall.

CONSTRUCTION

During construction, the use of the additional land would result in the temporary loss of private land. In order to minimise the impact, land take will be minimised to ensure land is retained for grazing horses. This measure will be agreed through engagement with the landowners to understand their needs during construction. The additional land will be returned to its former use following completion of the Scheme. Following the application of these measures, it is considered that effects on private land would not be significant. It should be noted that a separate Agricultural Land Holdings Assessment report, prepared to assess the impacts on farm holdings from the additional land, will be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate during the course of the examination.

COMBINED EFFECTS

OVERVIEW

A review of the technical assessments provided in the scoping exercise and in the ES Addendum was carried out in order to identify new or different environmental effects, or those that could combine to result in an effect of greater significance. Potential impacts associated with the additional land that could result in in-combination effects included impacts relating to increased noise, increased dust, the temporary loss of private land and impacts to landscape setting and views.

CONSTRUCTION

Following the implementation of mitigation measures during construction of the Scheme, the combined effect on residents, local area and users of footpaths would be temporary and of minor significance (not significant). The assessment of the combined effects of the additional land concluded that there would be no significant effects as a result of the additional land.

CONCLUSION

This NTS presents a summary in non-technical language of the environmental assessment that has been undertaken for the additional land which will be used for material stockpiling during construction. A desktop assessment identified that four environmental topics required further assessment (Cultural Heritage, Landscape and Visual, Biodiversity and Population and Human Health). In addition, a combined effects assessment has been undertaken.

The assessments presented in this ES Addendum have concluded that although the use of the additional land would result in impacts, overall the use of the additional land would not result in additional significant effects to those previously presented in the ES and effects would be comparable.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

At the time of publication of this Non-Technical Summary in April 2020, which should be read in conjunction with the previously published Non-Technical Summary, published in August 2019, the DCO examination has entered week 13. The Examining Authority has a duty to complete the examination of the application by the end of a period of six months, beginning with the day after the close of the Preliminary Meeting. The Preliminary Meeting was held on 21 January 2020. The examination of the application primarily takes the form of consideration of written submissions. Registered interested parties can send written comments to the Planning Inspectorate.

On completion of the examination after six months, the Examining Authority will then have 3 months to consider its recommendation. This recommendation and a supporting report will then be passed to the Secretary of State for Transport, who will have 3 months to decide whether to grant a Development Consent Order.

Finally, when the Secretary of State's decision is published, there will be a 6-week High Court challenge period. If there are no High Court challenges, the decision will be final.

The Environmental Statement Addendum and supporting documents can be viewed online at: <https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/projects/North%20East/A1-Birtley-to-Coal-House-Improvement-Scheme/>

Further information about the Planning Act 2008 process and DCO can be found on the PINS National Infrastructure Planning website:
<http://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/>

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