

This document is intended to fulfil the action assigned to Mark Hawes in the Open Floor Hearing on the 22<sup>nd</sup> February. The action involves responding to the Applicant response submitted via REP3-026 Highways England Deadline 3 Submission - 7.15 Applicant's Responses to Written Representation (table 1-6).

In responding to this document each commentary refers back to the unique identifier used in table 1-6.

#### **Follow-up response to deadline 3 comments from the Applicant – Reference first comment**

1. We very much welcome the statement from the Applicant to commit to providing mitigation. Similarly, we are happy to continue working with the Applicant to search for solutions.

#### **Follow-up response to deadline 3 comments from the Applicant – Reference 1**

1. The 2<sup>nd</sup> point made by the Applicant is out of context and not relevant here as it is referring to the adverse visual effect to the west and north of the property. The original context is referring to the impact of acquiring 1-8b which is on the eastern boundary.
2. Point 3 from the Applicant in this section states, *In terms of the loss of a “private and secure play area”, there is no acquisition of garden ground in this location as part of the Scheme. As such there is no such loss. There is no additional overlooking and no impact on privacy.* This statement is incorrect in every aspect. The road does involve the acquisition of part of the garden, we do lose all privacy with the road wrapping around the garden and cutting across the north east corner. This is a quiet peaceful spot in the garden where we regular sit to enjoy the views and wildlife. The construction of the access road will mean that all parts of this garden will be exposed to the road and the outlook to the North, West and South will be dominated by the access road.
3. In point 5 the Applicant has said “the design of the access road has sought to avoid unnecessary removal of trees along the property boundary”. In this instance the designer can very easily avoid felling the trees and spoiling a garden haven by simply moving the road a short distance into an arable field which is already being used for the road.
4. The Applicant also states in point 5, *“The loss of the limited number of trees (anticipated to be less than 10 no., subject to detailed design) is not anticipated to significantly reduce the enjoyment of the garden space”.* I do not understand how the Applicant is qualified to offer such a strong subjective opinion, as they have never had the opportunity to enjoy the space or understand how we use it. Indeed, the Applicant designer acknowledges later that they have not had the opportunity to visit the site. The use of aerial maps gives a one-dimensional view and cannot relay the real feeling of a place. I can categorically state that this is our favourite spot in the garden and once the access road is constructed, we will no longer use it. The construction of the road will effectively nullify all the things that we love about this area.

#### **Follow-up response to deadline 3 comments from the Applicant – Reference 1A**

1. The Applicant states, *the permanent acquisition of rights over land 1-8b (as shown on the Land Plans [APP-006]) would not result in the loss of over 50 mature deciduous trees.* Although I am relieved the read that the Applicant will not fell all the trees in the acquired area. However, at this stage of the design, the Applicant cannot provide any guarantees on what part of the hedgerow and trees will be felled. As the acquired area includes over 50 trees a worst case outcome would involve all the trees being felled.

2. The Applicant states, "Further, there is no hedgerow habitat present within land parcel 1-8b. Land parcel 1-8b represents the eastern edge of a small woodland block that comprises two parallel lines of trees and a central corridor/path wide enough for vehicular access". This description of the garden is both inaccurate and very clinical in describing what is a beautiful garden haven to us. It illustrates why the Applicant designer (who acknowledges that they have not visited the site) does not feel a need to preserve it. For accuracy, the boundary of this area is demarked by an old hedgerow, which admittedly does need some attention. The trees are randomly placed around a mowed path which runs through the wood.
3. Point 3 from the Applicant. We have invested a lot of time in encouraging wildlife in this area. The wrap around nature of the new access road will create a barrier around woods preventing its use by some wildlife. The wildlife does not need be on the protected species list for us to enjoy. For example, we particularly enjoy watching deer in the woods. Unfortunately, it is highly likely that the construction of the road will deter them.

#### **Follow-up response to deadline 3 comments from the Applicant – Reference 1B**

1. The original point made in reference 1B was to highlight the additional security risk as a result of the new access road. The first point from the Applicant is out of context here.
2. The 2<sup>nd</sup> point suggests that a boundary fence will enclose the new access road to help mitigate the security risk. Having looked at the plans I cannot find any reference to this boundary fence which follows the route of the road.
3. Point 3 from the Applicant. I am not clear what the Applicant means by the "boundary treatment measures" as I am not aware of any such measures and I doubt that they would be effective in reducing the security risk.

#### **Follow-up response to deadline 3 comments from the Applicant – Reference 1C**

1. The first response from the Applicant is out of context as it refers to the point of view from the west boundary rather than the woods on the eastern boundary which is the original point made.
2. Point 3 from the Applicant suggests that the formation of the PMA would not give rise to a significant impact to the outlook. The new access road approaches from the south replacing the rolling fields outlook referred to. It then wraps around the eastern hedgerow boundary of the property, before heading west across the north eastern corner of our property. As such the access road will dominate the south, west and north outlook when viewed from the wooded garden in question. In addition, the proposed lay-by and dual carriageway will also be in plain view as you look west from this point. If the road is in plain site that it also means that the users of the road can also see directly into this area of the garden.
3. Point 4 from the Applicant suggests that the road will only service two households. This is not correct as the road is also intended to be used by the farmer and Northumbrian Water. Furthermore, the referenced neighbour has business aspirations to develop the property as part of a buy to let arrangement thereby increasing the level of traffic. Based upon current usage this is likely to exceed 20 vehicle journeys a day along with a number of people on foot.

### **Follow-up response to deadline 3 comments from the Applicant – Reference 1D**

1. The response from the Applicant makes reference to fencing to help mitigate some of the security risk. Whilst this will be helpful it will not remove the risk.
2. As a point of note I was not able to find any details on the type of fence being proposed here and therefore unable to assess whether it will provide any security.

### **Follow-up response to deadline 3 comments from the Applicant – Reference 1E**

1. Point 1 from the Applicant. The felling of trees and hedgerow will impact wildlife through the loss of habitat, shelter and connectivity through the reduction of habitat condition. This area instead can be enhanced to mitigate for the impact of replacement of habitat for hard standing and the dualling through the planting of native shrubs creating a varied structure, and installing bat and bird boxes. The trees themselves are mature and provide carbon sequestration, loss of these trees would result in the release of CO<sub>2</sub> which would contribute to global warming. This is also contradictory to Northumberland Climate Change Action Plan 2021-23 (Northumberland County Council - Climate Change Action Plan 2021-23 )and any trees lost would need to result in the planting of at least three trees although it will be decades until they reach the value of the current trees in place.
2. Point 2 from the Applicant. Moderate roosting suitability does not rule out maternity use as it is possible bats could use moderate roosting features for a maternity colony. Although standard practice if no bats have been recorded an updated survey will need to be carried out if it has been over a year since the last survey as bats are known to alternate roosts between years. Tree surveys also often do not retain evidence of bats presence due to weathering and bat activity surveys on trees are questionable in their accuracy/effectiveness due to the difficulty in seeing features during full leaf when bats should be present.
3. Point 3 from the Applicant. Mitigation of nest loss should also include replacement habitat and enhancement as per National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2019 in the form of bird boxes for a variety of species which have been recorded on site or within the desk study from ERIC (Environmental Records Information Centre North East).
4. Point 5 from the Applicant. Will these enhancements take place prior to the roads being built and the duelling of the A1? The use of mitigation is diminished if the species have already been detrimentally impacted as a poor season could have drastic impacts on local populations down the line.
5. Point 6 from the Applicant. Connectivity to different habitat parcels should be a consideration and mitigation elsewhere benefits the species there rather than where the impact takes place. Opportunity to enhance the area by creating a permeable network along the woods, retain the trees and instead enhance through native planting of a varied structure which extends along the tree line with native species rich hedgerow to the stream to the south. Thereby benefiting the wildlife present in the area and creating enhanced habitat rather than offsite mitigation only.

### **Follow-up response to deadline 3 comments from the Applicant – Reference 1F**

1. Point 1 from the Applicant suggests that the wooded area does suffer from noise and air pollution. Although we can hear some road noise when the wind blows from the west,

otherwise the area is far enough away from the current a1 road to not suffer. On previous visits from the Applicant, it has been noted how peaceful and quiet the area is.

2. Air Quality response from the Applicant. Although I understand that the additional fumes and pollution from passing vehicles is not likely to exceed legal thresholds it will be unpleasant to breathe fumes from passing vehicles in this area.
3. Applicant response to Noise. Much of the response provided by the Applicant is out of context here. The original point was made to highlight that the noise of the vehicles using the new access road will intermittently spoil the enjoyment of this area. This noise will be much louder than any other noise in the area especially as there are no speed limits on the road. Based upon current usage this is expected to exceed 20 vehicle journeys a day.

#### **Follow-up response to deadline 3 comments from the Applicant – Reference 1G**

1. I acknowledge and welcome the intent to preserve the trees and hedgerow but do not understand why this cannot be achieved here as there is a simple alternative to take up a little more of the arable field which already forms the main route of the road.
2. The Applicant again states *“The loss of the limited number of trees (anticipated to be less than 10 no., subject to detailed design) is not anticipated to significantly reduce the enjoyment of the garden space”*. I do not understand how the Applicant is qualified to offer such a strong subjective opinion, as they have never had the opportunity to enjoy the space or understand how we use it. Indeed, the Applicant designer acknowledges later that they have not had the opportunity to visit the site. The use of aerial maps gives a one-dimensional view and cannot relay the real feeling of a place. I can categorically state that this is our favourite spot in the garden and once the access road is constructed, we will no longer use it. The construction of the road will effectively nullify all the things that we love about this area.

#### **Follow-up response to deadline 3 comments from the Applicant – Reference 1H**

1. Although the reason for acquiring the 1-8a parcel is well understood it is concerning that such a critical design feature to the household remains outstanding as such a late stage in the process. The point of access to the property is crucial to the overall integrity of the property. The current outline proposal does not lend itself to the layout of the property and will require removal of trees further exposing the 7 lanes of tarmac. In addition, the current access route is less than picturesque and the owner of the neighbouring property has stated in the strongest terms that do not accept this point of access to our property.
2. Given the above position we very much welcome the opportunity to discuss with the Applicant an alternative point of access to the property.

#### **Follow-up response to deadline 3 comments from the Applicant – Reference 2**

1. Point 1 from the Applicant suggests that the layby is 200m north of the property. This is not consistent with our estimation which suggests that it is circa 150m from the property and only 75 metres from the access road leading to the property. More importantly the runoff road for the layby starts to widen at our property and as such the layby is prominent feature on most points of view from the property.

2. Point 2 from the Applicant includes an explanation of why this position was chosen. Although I appreciate reading, for the first time, the rationale behind why this position I am surprised that to see that the close proximity to housing is not an important consideration here. Despite the explanation I am struggling to understand why the layby could not have remained in the current position further north. As this has been in place for over 30 years, I assumed that it must have met the required criteria.
3. Point 3 from the Applicant suggests that the views are “oblique”. This is not correct as the layby will be in plain site from the majority of the garden and particularly those areas, we use the most. Crucially it will form the main outlook from the point of access to our property directly impacting upon kerb appeal.
4. Point 5 from the Applicant suggests that the current bus stop poses the same issues that a layby does. As an active bus stop, (with restrictive space) vehicles are not permitted to park for convenience as such vehicles are deterred from using. This is in contrast to a layby where vehicles are actively encouraged to stop. Furthermore, unlike the layby, the bus stop is not part of the main outlook.
5. Point 6 from the Applicant highlights a fundamental difference in how to measure the visual effect. It would appear that the Applicant has assessed the impact from a single point of view which sits behind existing trees and next to the sound barrier. It is very rare that we utilise this space to enjoy the view from the property. With the view limited to the trees in this area I can now see why the Applicant has assessed the visual impact as minimal. It is far more relevant and informative to consider the outlook from those areas of the garden that are used the most to enjoys the views. Unfortunately, there is minimal natural shielding available in these areas.
6. Point 7 from the Applicant suggests that the sound barrier and the existing vegetation will be sufficient to mask the worst of the views. As the sound barrier only covers a short stretch of the western boundary it does not provide any benefit to masking the northerly outlook and the 7 lanes of tarmac. Similarly, the existing vegetation will provide no benefit here. It is disappointing to read that the sound barrier is the only mitigation on offer to mask the views of the layby and new carriageway.
7. The Applicant suggests in point 7 that the visual effects will be improved “*as mitigation along the boundary matures*”. Not sure what is being referred to here as I am not aware of any in the mitigation plan for my boundary. I assume the Applicant is referring to the mitigation actions that we are having to take to plant further trees.

#### **Follow-up response to deadline 3 comments from the Applicant – Reference 2A**

1. Point 1 from the Applicant suggests that the layby is 200m north of the property. This is not consistent with our estimation which suggests that it is circa 150m from the property and only 75 metres from the access road leading to the property. More importantly the runoff road for the layby starts to widen at our property and a such the layby is prominent feature on most points of view from the property.
2. The Applicant also suggests in point 1 that the visual effects will be improved by the boundary vegetation. Not sure what is being referred to here as I am not aware of any in the mitigation plan for my boundary.

#### **Follow-up response to deadline 3 comments from the Applicant – Reference 2B**

1. Point 1 from the Applicant suggests that the layby is 200m north of the property. This is not consistent with our estimation which suggests that it is circa 150m from the property and

only 75 metres from the access road leading to the property. More importantly the runoff road for the layby starts to widen at our property and as such the layby is a prominent feature from most points of view from the property.

2. Point 1 from the Applicant. If they do cross the road they can easily access the property via the path and gateway into the property

#### **Follow-up response to deadline 3 comments from the Applicant – Reference 2C**

1. Point 1 from the Applicant suggests that the layby is 200m north of the property. This is not consistent with our estimation which suggests that it is circa 150m from the property and only 75 metres from the access road leading to the property. More importantly the runoff road for the layby starts to widen at our property and as such the layby is a prominent feature from most points of view from the property.
2. Point The bus stop is not a legitimate place to stop and would raise suspicion whereas people are actively encouraged to stop at a layby for any length of time. Given the convenience of parking at a layby without risk of being challenged it seems obvious that this is how a burglar (opportunist or planned) would attempt a burglary.

#### **Follow-up response to deadline 3 comments from the Applicant – Reference 2D**

1. Point 1 from the Applicant suggests that the layby is 200m north of the property. This is not consistent with our estimation which suggests that it is circa 150m from the property and only 75 metres from the access road leading to the property. More importantly the runoff road for the layby starts to widen at our property and as such the layby is a prominent feature from most points of view from the property.
2. In addition, the Applicant suggests that the views are “oblique”. This is not correct as the layby will be in plain site from the majority of the garden and particularly those areas we use the most. Crucially it will form the main outlook from the point of access to our property directly impacting upon kerb appeal
3. The current views to the north of the property include 13 mature coronation trees and hedgerow which will be felled to accommodate the expansion. The additional breadth of the layby will constrain what can be achieved in replicating the original avenue arrangement. Furthermore, what is achieved will take a number of years before they can have any impact on the visual effect.

#### **Follow-up response to deadline 3 comments from the Applicant – Reference 2F**

1. Point 1 response from Applicant. Unfortunately, being exposed to passing traffic does not appear to act as a deterrent to other users of laybys along the A1. Although layby bins are emptied once a week it is also common to see an overflow of rubbish strewn across the area of the layby.

#### **Follow-up response to deadline 3 comments from the Applicant – Reference 3**

1. Point 1 from the Applicant. I am reassured to hear that there is will not be an operational depot with offices and equipment store. I referenced the Swale and soil deposit work in this area as a depot as this is how it was referenced in the past by the Applicant.

Notwithstanding, all of the points raised in written statement are still relevant and remain outstanding. I stand corrected and will not refer to it as a depot in the future.

2. Point 2 from the Applicant. I appreciate the explanation for why this particular site was chosen but I still do not understand why it was necessary to place the site within 50 meters of our property.
3. Point 3 from the Applicant highlights additional information that I was not aware of. I understand that a further permanent access road will be constructed to maintain the Swale and to facilitate access to lorries transferring soil. This is a further disappointment as additional mature trees will need to be felled to accommodate large HGV vehicles. As the site of this access road is less than 30 meters from our property this will be a further detriment to the visual effect.
4. Point 1 Air Quality from the Applicant. Given the close proximity to the property the movement of large vehicles in and out of the soil deposit area will undoubtedly increase fumes and dust.
5. Points on Noise from the Applicant. Given the close proximity to the property the movement of large vehicles in and out of the soil deposit area will increase noise levels at the property.

#### **Follow-up response to deadline 3 comments from the Applicant – Reference 3A**

1. Whilst I welcome the extra information provided it has not changed my concerns, indeed in looking at the extra information it has heightened our concerns given close proximity of the additional access road and the additional trees to be felled to facilitate the access road.

#### **Follow-up response to deadline 3 comments from the Applicant – Reference 3B**

1. It is reassuring that there is some acknowledgement that the loss of the charming cottage does represent a direct adverse visual effect. When aggregated together with all the other visual effects highlighted previously this does constitute an overall significant effect, especially when you consider the point of view from the area of the garden that are commonly used.

#### **Follow-up response to deadline 3 comments from the Applicant – Reference 3C**

1. The footpath referred to is clearly marked on all the plans shared by the Applicant. Although not recognised as a formal public footpath it has been maintained by Northumberland County council to provide easier access to the public. Given the low levels of traffic on the single carriageway it is safe to cross the road at my property and use this path through the woods to access other public rights of way. As suggested in the response the dualling of the road will prevent any access to the west, hence for the reason for the land locked statement.

#### **Follow-up response to deadline 3 comments from the Applicant – Reference 3D**

1. The comments provided include new information that I was not aware of. Unfortunately, none of it is good news and has served to heighten my concerns further. Based upon the

information provided the HGV vehicles will access the soil deposit via the gate directly across the road from my property. In addition, I understand that an additional permanent maintenance road will be constructed directly across the road from our property to facilitate future maintenance of Swale 1. This access road is in addition to the 7 lanes of tarmac previously referred to. Furthermore, the visual outlook is made worse with the felling of trees in the woods thereby making the A697 clearly visible.

**Follow-up response to deadline 3 comments from the Applicant – Reference 3E**

1. As highlighted above the additional information on the access to the soil store has increased my concerns. Given the close proximity to our property and the limited mitigation measure the additional traffic to access the soil will increase noise and worsen air quality. In addition, having a major soil deposit within 50 metres of the property will directly impact the levels of dust given the predominant westerly winds.

**Follow-up response to deadline 3 comments from the Applicant – Reference 3F**

1. We appreciate the explanation on why this site was chosen, but we remain surprised that the close proximity the cluster of houses does not appear to part of the criteria in deciding upon the optimum position. The net impact of this decision has the following impact on the properties in the area:
  - a. Additional permanent access road in view
  - b. Felling trees will expose the A697 which is currently hidden.
  - c. A significant number of trees to be felled to accommodate the access.
  - d. Additional HGV traffic within 30 metres of our property.
  - e. Additional adverse impact on noise, dust and air quality.
  - f. Overall adverse impact on visual effect.

**Follow-up response to deadline 3 comments from the Applicant – Reference 4**

1. Point 2 from the Applicant suggests that there was no cost benefit to acquiring the two properties. This is not correct. A business case was presented that demonstrated that the costs of constructing the additional access road to the two properties was greater than the cost of acquiring the two properties. In addition, there was a 6-month window where the owners at the time were open to this proposal.
2. Point 3 from the Applicant highlights that the new owner of neighbouring property is happy with the proposal. This is not entirely true as they have made it very clear that they are not happy with the current point of access to our property. Given the different circumstances of the two properties it is less than fair to make such a comparison. The new owner bought the property at a reduced price knowing the full extent of the changes and Impact. We understand that the property has been bought on a buy to let basis and as such the new access road will remove existing covenant constraints and facilitate business expansion aspirations. These circumstances are very different to our losing many benefits that we have enjoyed at our family home for over 25 years.



#### **Follow-up response to deadline 3 comments from the Applicant – Reference 4A**

1. In buying the property we looked upon the 20-minute commute to Newcastle and Alnwick as a key benefit. As such we have been more than happy with the current access arrangement for over 25 years. As they stand the proposed plans for the new access road remove many benefits replacing them with a catalogue of negative changes and long-term legacy issues. I am hopeful that as a result of further discussions with the Applicant that some improvements can be made to the current design.

#### **Follow-up response to deadline 3 comments from the Applicant – Reference 4B**

1. Given the history of conflict and contention it is absolutely crucial that a sustainable usage/ maintenance model is established to avoid placing additional burden and stress on the household. For a variety of reasons which have been previously documented, leaving responsibility for maintenance with the property owners will not work in this instance. I would welcome the opportunity to discuss further with the Applicant other options, in particular, the suggested management association approach.
2. This issue of road adoption was raised at one of the Issue Specific hearings. I understood that the road could not be adopted by the council as the road was being used by residential properties. Is this correct?

#### **Follow-up response to deadline 3 comments from the Applicant – Reference 4C**

1. The majority of Applicant response is out of context as it refers to the impact of dual carriageway to the west of the property and not the impact of the new access road on the eastern boundary.
2. The new access road approaches from the south replacing the rolling fields outlook referred to. It then wraps around the eastern hedgerow boundary of the property, before heading west across the north eastern corner of our property. As such the access road will dominate the south, west and north outlook when viewed from the wooded garden in question. As the Applicant designer acknowledges that they have not visited the site I am sure that they would have a different perspective if they were to do so.

#### **Follow-up response to deadline 3 comments from the Applicant – Reference 4D**

1. Although we can hear some road noise in the woodland when the wind blows from the west, otherwise the area is far enough away from the current a1 road to not suffer. On previous visits from the Applicant, it has been noted how peaceful and quiet the area is.
2. The noise from vehicles using the new access road will intermittently spoil the enjoyment of this area. This noise will be noticeably louder than any other experienced in the area especially as there are no speed limits on the road. Based upon current usage this is expected to exceed 20 vehicle journeys a day.
3. Although I understand that the additional fumes and pollution from passing vehicles is not likely to exceed legal thresholds it will be unpleasant to breathe fumes from passing vehicles in this area.

**Follow-up response to deadline 3 comments from the Applicant – Reference 4E**

1. The comments provided the Applicant do not provide any assurance on security.
2. Please see previous comments relating to loss of enjoyment and privacy.
3. The 2<sup>nd</sup> point suggests that a boundary fence will enclose the new access road to help mitigate the security risk. Having looked at the plans I cannot find any reference to this boundary fence which follows the route of the road.

**Follow-up response to deadline 3 comments from the Applicant – Reference 4F**

1. In buying the property we looked upon the 20-minute commute to Newcastle and Alnwick as a key benefit. As such we have been more than happy with the current access arrangement for over 25 years. Adding an additional 15 minutes to the travel time is not seen as an “enhanced amenity”.
2. The Applicants response suggests that the extra 15 mins time will be offset by the increased speed when travelling on the new carriageway. I would need to travel circa 60 miles on dual carriageway to offset the lost time.
3. The additional time to travel will pose problems to others users looking to access the property, including emergency services. In the absence of google maps coverage it will more difficult to find the property.

**Follow-up response to deadline 3 comments from the Applicant – Reference 4G**

1. Unfortunately, existing contentions and a history of conflict suggests that any such covenants placed will not be followed leaving a legacy of issues.

**Follow-up response to deadline 3 comments from the Applicant – Reference 4H**

1. The need to travel across 5 properties to get access to the rear of the property in the car places extra burden on the property and will not be attractive to future owners.

**Follow-up response to deadline 3 comments from the Applicant – Reference 4I**

1. The vast majority of the population are able to access their property via public roads without constraints and not being dependent upon reasonable behaviour from the other property. Although a simple benefit it is nonetheless a very important one that I fully appreciate. I would have purchased the property had this been in place 25 years ago.

**Follow-up response to deadline 3 comments from the Applicant – Reference 4J**

1. The point being raised was not about budget but more about the additional burden and the dependency on other property owners.

**Follow-up response to deadline 3 comments from the Applicant – Reference 4K**

1. Unfortunately, the response provided does not alleviate our concerns here. However, we do welcome the opportunity to explore alternative options with the district valuer as suggested.

**Follow-up response to deadline 3 comments from the Applicant – Reference 4L**

1. A business case was presented that demonstrated that the costs of constructing the additional access road to the two properties was greater than the cost of acquiring the two properties. In addition, there was a 6-month window where the owners at the time were open to this proposal. The business case was not based upon just the one property.

**Follow-up response to deadline 3 comments from the Applicant – Reference 5**

1. We welcome the additional information provided to explain the approach.

**Follow-up response to deadline 3 comments from the Applicant – Reference 5A**

1. I understand the rationale for removing bus stop but to date there has been no recognition that this represents a loss of benefit to the household.

**Follow-up response to deadline 3 comments from the Applicant – Reference 5B**

1. The Applicant offers a number of options but none are feasible given the distances that need to be walked and the additional bus changes. The reality is that we will now have to walk 2k to the X15 bus service to Newcastle. Given the route over fields this is not a safe option for my family on dark nights.

**Follow-up response to deadline 3 comments from the Applicant – Reference 5C**

1. It is reassuring to read that there is an aspiration, if funds can be found, to improve the cycle links.

**Follow-up response to deadline 3 comments from the Applicant – Reference 5D**

1. This point was raised to highlight a shortcoming in the plans not to raise the subject of compensation.
2. In looking at the previous usage the bus service was used on a daily basis. Although this may represent a low usage it is still a vital service especially when there is no alternative transport available. The removal of the bus service means that we have to be a multi car family when we prefer not to be.

**Follow-up response to deadline 3 comments from the Applicant – Reference 6**

1. Point 1 from the Applicant suggests that there are only 6 lanes rather 7. In this instance I do not think the Applicant is taking into account the new access road which is also in plain view. In addition, the Applicant has not factored in the additional access road required to maintain the Swale and provide access to the soil deposit.
2. Point 2 from the Applicant highlights a fundamental difference in how to measure the visual effect. It would appear that the Applicant has assessed the impact from a single point of view which sits behind existing trees and next to the sound barrier. It is very rare that we utilise this space to enjoy the view from the property. With the view limited to the trees in this area I can now see why the Applicant has assessed the visual impact as minimal. It is far more relevant and informative to consider the outlook from those areas of the garden that

are used the most to enjoys the views. Unfortunately, there is minimal natural shielding available in these areas.

3. Point 3 from the Applicant suggests that the outlook to the west will be returned after construction. This is not true as a number of mature trees would have been felled and North Gate House will be demolished leaving a view of the A697 and the Swale access road.
4. Point 4 from the Applicant suggests that the access road would not be readily visible from the property. The new access road approaches from the south replacing the rolling fields outlook referred to. It then wraps around the eastern hedgerow boundary of the property, before heading west across the north eastern corner of our property. As such the access road will dominate the south, west and north outlook when viewed from the wooded garden in question. In addition, the proposed lay-by and dual carriageway will also be in plain view as you look west from this point. If the road is in plain site that it also means that the users of the road can also see directly into this area of the garden.
8. Point 5 from the Applicant suggests that the noise barrier will help mask some of the visual effects. As the sound barrier only covers a short stretch of the western boundary it does not provide any benefit to masking the northerly outlook on 7 lanes of tarmac. Similarly, the existing vegetation will provide no benefit here. It is disappointing to read that the sound barrier, which does not help, is the only mitigation on offer to mask the views of the layby and new carriageway.

#### **Follow-up response to deadline 3 comments from the Applicant – Reference 6A**

1. I welcome confirmation that the road will not be constructed with tarmac and so will not further worsen the 7 lanes already on view.

#### **Follow-up response to deadline 3 comments from the Applicant – Reference 6B**

1. The new access road approaches from the south replacing the rolling fields outlook referred to. It then wraps around the eastern hedgerow boundary of the property, before heading west across the north eastern corner of our property. As such the access road will dominate the south, west and north outlook when viewed from the wooded garden in question. If the road is in plain site that it also means that the users of the road can also see directly into this area of the garden.

#### **Follow-up response to deadline 3 comments from the Applicant – Reference 6C**

1. In considering the impact on the visual effect the following trees are being felled:
  - a. A number of trees are being felled to west to facilitate the Swale watercourse.
  - b. Further trees are being felled to create a permanent access route for Swale 1 maintenance and to allow access for soil deposit.
  - c. 13 Coronation trees are being removed on the western side of the A1.
  - d. Potential for trees to be felled in 18a to facilitate access to the property
  - e. Trees are hedgerow are to felled on the east boundary to facilitate the new access road.