



## Chapter 1: Summary:

1.1 This Local Impact Report has been prepared by Laura Drew on behalf of Barnard Castle Town Council [BCTC]. It offers our assessment of the potential impact of the Preferred Route advanced by National Highways for consent. It further sets out the reasoning behind the Council's decision to object to National Highways' choice of Rokeby junction design for the Black route from Cross Lanes to Rokeby, and their request that the Blue alternative junction route be used instead.

1.2 We recognise that Highways England have been rebranded as National Highways since the project consultation began. We will use the new naming in our impact report but will continue to use Highways England in referencing the documentation they produced in relation to the route, since that was the branding which was in use at the time.

1.3 When preparing their Preferred Route, National Highways' traffic modelling predicted an increase in traffic down the B6277 through Startforth and into Barnard Castle over the County Bridge, heading up The Bank.

5.8.30 Preliminary traffic modelling showed that the proposals for Cross Lanes and Rokeby Junctions may encourage more traffic (cars and light goods vehicles) to use the B6277 to access Barnard Castle, as the proposals at Rokeby would result in a longer route for traffic coming from the east, which would ordinarily travel by Barnard Castle Road to access the town.

1.4 All three main routes into Barnard Castle are unsuitable for heavy traffic flow. This is not something that can be easily rectified. However, if the three routes are sensibly balanced, congestion is eased. The major issue with the proposed junction was the significant unbalancing of traffic flow into town along the B6277, away from the Rokeby junction route along Newgate.

1.5 National Highways produced a Local Traffic Report which showed there was "traffic transfer from Barnard Castle Road to the B6277 Moorhouse Lane" to access Startforth and Barnard Castle<sup>1</sup> This is

not simply a natural growth from the improved A66, but rather a specific issue created by the Black junction route.

1.6 According to the National Highways timeline (as set forth in the Route Development Report), after the announcement of the May 2020 Preferred Route for the Cross Lanes-Rokeby section of the A66 dualling project, local feedback raised several concerns - especially about the likelihood of increased traffic down the B6277 Moorhouse Lane. Community Liaison Group meetings supported moving the junction closer to the original location, as did the affected landowner and the local authorities.<sup>2</sup> This feedback led National Highways to develop an alternative junction, which moved the junction east.<sup>3</sup>

1.7 National Highways involved local stakeholders and produced an eastern alternative, the Blue route from Cross Lanes to Rokeby. This route was determined to be better for Commercial and Residential stakeholders by the sifting process and is supported by local groups.<sup>4</sup>

5.8.80 The alternative eastern junction locates the proposed Rokeby Junction closer to the site of the existing at-grade crossing, which better maintains current traffic distribution between the C165 Barnard Castle Road and B6277 Moorhouse Lane when compared to the baseline junction. This removes the need for westbound vehicles travelling to or from Barnard Castle to undertake an additional 2.5km U-turn route associated with the baseline junction, which increases the journey time into Barnard Castle.<sup>5</sup>

1.8 Highways' reason for developing the Blue route was to ensure "the primary flow of westbound vehicles travelling to and from Barnard Castle uses this junction and not the Cross Lanes junction".<sup>6</sup> This adjustment of traffic behaviour "improves journey times, negates possible issues at The Sills and Barnard Castle Bridge and is considered safer for walkers, cyclists and horse riders [WCH] using the B6277 Moorhouse Lane."<sup>7</sup>

1.9 It was therefore disappointing to learn that Highways, seemingly based solely on Historic England's heritage assessment, had rejected the Blue route and continued on with the Black route to Statutory Consultation. It is the belief of BCTC, on behalf of their residents, that this choice will have undesirable consequences, which have been set out in detail below under the headings [Congestion and Safety](#), [Public Health](#), [Heritage](#), [Natural Landscape](#), and [Economics](#).

1.10 Given that the expected increase in traffic is a direct consequence of the choice of junction, it follows that any damaging impact from that traffic is also a direct consequence of that choice. As such, we believe the potential harmful impact of this traffic increase on Barnard Castle should be seen as a relevant material consideration in the planning process.

1.11 Despite the “reassurance” from National Highways that they are in compliance, we believe that the Black route conflicts with the National Planning Policy Framework Revised 2021 [NPPF] under sections 6 (strong, competitive economy), 7 (the vitality of town centres), 8 (promoting healthy and safe communities), 9 (promoting sustainable transport), 15 (conserving and enhancing the natural environment), and 16 (conserving and enhancing the historic environment).

1.12 We further believe it is not reflective of the requirements of the National Networks National Policy Statement 2014 [NPS] on linear infrastructure development in terms of heritage, the environment and safety. We also believe it is in breach of the NPS with regards to at least 5.127, 5.128 and 5.133.

1.13 Historic England previously stated their opinion that the Blue Route will cause “substantial harm” to two heritage assets.<sup>8</sup> Given the opinion that “substantial harm” would be caused to heritage assets, National Highways have returned to the Black route at the Rokeby junction based on their obligation to avoid harm under NPS 5.133. The NPS allows consent to be granted - even when “substantial harm” might be expected to heritage assets – if “it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or loss of significance is necessary in order to deliver substantial public benefits that outweigh that loss or harm [NPS 5.133]” (language that is mirrored in NPPF 201). This would allow the community-backed Blue junction route to be considered as an alternative, assuming it offered the necessary public benefits, particularly as both Historic England and National Highways now concede that the damage caused by either route does not amount to “substantial harm”.

1.14 However, at the recent Issue Specific Hearing 1 held at the Witham Hall on 30<sup>th</sup> November, Historic England stated that the “harm” caused by either route fell short of “substantial harm”. National Highways also conceded this point. This is a frustrating revelation as it removes the only justification for the Black route – as will be shown, National Highways own sifting process showed the Blue route to be better than the Black; support from residents, all the relevant councils, affected businesses and landowners is wholly for the Blue route.

1.15 We do not believe that adequate investigation has been undertaken by Highways England on the potential deleterious impact of the Black Route on the wider surroundings and population via the predicted increase in traffic from the Cross Lanes junction.

1.16 We do not believe that Historic England’s previous assessment is accurate in its assessment of either the Black or Blue route.

1.17 We further contend that our objections below demonstrate the public benefits of not choosing the Black route outweigh the potential harm and, accordingly, we request the Black junction option at Rokeby be rejected in favour of the Blue eastern alternative junction.

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## Chapter 2: National and local planning policy having relevance to the Local Impact Report

2.1.1 BCTC supports dualling the A66. We recognise the significant economic and safety benefits that dualling our local section will bring. We also have no objections to the design and layout of the Cross Lanes junction. We do, however, have significant objections to Highways England's choice of the Black junction option at the Rokeby end.

2.1.2 In preparing this Local Impact Report, the Council have been guided by four principal planning strategies. In assessing the potential effects of the Cross Lanes-Rokeby section of the A66, the Council aim to work within planning policy, in order to demonstrate the relevance of their objections.

### National Networks National Planning Statement 2014

2.2.1 Section 104 of the Planning Act 2008 requires the Secretary of State to consider the relevant national policy statement when deciding whether to approve a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project [NSIP]. For road and rail networks, that is the NNNPS.

2.2.2 The NNNPS states that this NPS will be the "primary basis for making decisions on development consent applications" for NSIP [NPS 1.2]. As such, any consideration of local impacts must take note of the strategic vision which guides the A66 dualling project.

2.2.3 Paragraph 4.3 states that:

NPS 4.3 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;
- its potential adverse impacts, including any longer-term and cumulative adverse impacts, as well as any measures to avoid, reduce or compensate for any adverse impacts.

2.2.4 BCTC recognises that the presumption is in favour of granting consent for national networks [NPS 4.2]. We do not seek to challenge the consent for the project overall. We simply seek a modification to the route, one which has already been discussed, developed and investigated by National Highways. As such, we request that (for our objections) the benefits and adverse impacts

are considered specifically in relation to the two junction options, rather than against the entire project.

## National Planning Policy Framework Revised 2021

2.3.1 The NPPF sets out Government economic, environmental, and social planning policies for England – especially in terms of sustainable development. Although the NPS is the primary basis for decisions, the NPS and NPPF are consistent [NPS 1.17] and the NPPF can be an important and relevant consideration, though “only to the extent relevant to [the] project” [NPS 1.18].

2.3.2 We will refer to NPPF policies throughout the document where we believe there is relevance to the consideration of the choice of Rokeby junction. We recognise that the NPPF does not contain “specific policies” for NSIP [NPPF 5], however the NPPF is an important consideration in recognising where specific development is at odds with Government planning policy at a local level.

## Local Development Plans

2.4.1 Although the NPS is the primary planning document for decision making, local plans may have relevance where they illuminate local planning concerns and local issues. These will not be represented in the NPS, as it is not scheme or location specific. Local plans can then help define scheme objectives and inform area-appropriate development. There are two main local plans which we will be drawing on for our report: the County Durham Plan [CDP] and Teesdale District Local Plan [TDLP].

## County Durham Plan, Adopted 2020

2.4.2 The plan seeks to “create the conditions and the framework for an ambitious and deliverable future for our residents and businesses” [CDP Foreword]. “The Plan provides the policy framework for the county up to 2035 to support the development of a thriving economy, so that our residents can experience the benefits that ensue as a result.” [CDP 1.3] It has been developed in accordance with the NPPF [CDP 1.3].

2.4.3 The plan recognises Barnard Castle as a “key location for local and regional businesses contributing to the employment base and local economy” [CDP 2.7]. Given the relative significance



of Barnard Castle within County Durham, we believe that reference to the plan will help position the town (and the impact on it) in relation to the wider county.

#### Teesdale District Local Plan, Adopted 2002

2.4.4 This plan set out the development strategy for Teesdale. Although Teesdale District Council was abolished in 2009, the Local Plan is a “key component of the Development Plan for the former district and is therefore a material consideration during the determination of planning applications”.<sup>9</sup> Given the Plan’s continuing relevance to County Durham planning for the Teesdale area, we refer to the Plan where we believe its policies are germane to the issue at hand.

## Chapter 3: Character of town

### Heritage and Tourism

3.1.1 Barnard Castle is built around the main coaching road running through its centre. This road comprises Bridgegate, The Bank, the Market Place and Galgate. The Bank and Market Place meet a fourth road, Newgate, at the 18<sup>th</sup> century Butter Market. Around this central road are a maze of cobbled streets and winding lanes, incorporating Georgian and Victorian architecture. Most houses have the typical “dales town” appearance, with glowing yellow stone and rich dark grey slate roofs. Barnard Castle’s historic character is “unique” [TDLP 4.1.4].

#### Important locations - Barnard Castle

3.1.2 The eponymous castle was built by Bernard Baliol in c.1109-1125, though later development continued until the 14<sup>th</sup> century. Some of the original 12<sup>th</sup> century ringwork still survives. In 1630, Sir Henry Vane dismantled parts of Barnard Castle to expand Raby Castle nearby.<sup>10</sup>

3.1.3 The Castle is important as an example of a ring work which developed into a shell keep.<sup>11</sup> There are only 200 examples of ringworks in England and shell keeps on ringworks are rarer still, with only 8 examples known.<sup>12</sup> The castle is one of a very small number of Norman fortifications of this kind, making the castle of great significance in understanding the period.

#### Important locations – Bowes Museum

3.1.4 Built by John Bowes (illegitimate son of the 10<sup>th</sup> Earl of Strathmore) for his French actress wife Josephine, the museum is housed in a Grade 1 listed French chateau surrounded by a registered park and garden. The collection is no less surprising and impressive than the ornate housing. It has a huge collection of pictures, ceramics, textiles, tapestries, clocks and costumes. Perhaps the most famous exhibit is the silver swan, a delicate and mesmerising automaton.<sup>13</sup> The art collection includes a Canaletto, a Sassetta, a Van Dyck and five works by Chaplin.<sup>14</sup> The Bowes hosts regular exhibitions, with past highlights including Pre-Raphaelite painters, Yves Saint Laurent, and Martin Kinnear’s *Regeneration*.

## Important locations – the County Bridge

3.1.5 The bridge is reputed to have been built in the 1300s, but the current structure likely dates originally to 1569 (with a dating stone on the bridge recording it incorrectly as 1596).<sup>15</sup> It is an arched bridge, with stone parapets. It has been weakened by traffic and currently has a 7.5t weight limit in place.

## Important locations – Market Hall

3.1.6 Also known locally as the Butter Market, this octagonal structure was built in 1747. It is a two-storey structure, with a colonnaded walkway topped by a cupola. The weathervane has two small holes, ostensibly bullet holes from a shooting competition between a gamekeeper and soldier.<sup>16</sup> The building has variously been a court, jail, town hall and butter market. Currently it forms a *de facto* roundabout at the junction of The Bank, Market Place and Newgate.

## Important locations – St Mary's Anglican Church

3.1.7 The Grade 1 listed church was originally founded in 1130, but only a small amount of the original medieval church remains. It was rebuilt in the Victorian era, when the current clock tower was built. It still maintains the town's connection to Richard III, with a figurehead of him as Duke of Gloucester and a carved stone boar on an outside wall. Richard planned a religious college, to be centred on the church, but that project died with Richard at Bosworth. Sir George Bowes, who held the castle for Elizabeth, is buried here, along with 149 victims of a cholera outbreak, commemorated together in the graveyard. In its history the church has served as town hall, playhouse and fire station. The Durham Militia laid up their colours in the church and gather still for Remembrance Sunday parades.<sup>17</sup>

3.1.8 As well as tourism, the town profits from the past through the noted antiques shops that line The Bank and Market Place. Antiques Road Show and Bargain Hunt alumnus David Harper has a shop here.

3.1.9 The tourist trade supports many other businesses in town, including cafes, pubs and restaurants; caravan sites; BnBs; and boutique clothing shops.

3.1.10 Events during the lockdown generated a certain notoriety for Barnard Castle, with the Castle seeing a 20% bump in tourism on 2019 levels from those discovering the town for the first time.<sup>18</sup>

## Setting

3.2.1 Barnard Castle lies on the edge of the Tees Valley within the District of Teesdale, an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. It is one of two towns in the district and lies almost on the border with Yorkshire, and is at the borders of the Sees of Durham and Ripon. The centre of the County Bridge used to be used for illicit weddings by “Reverend” Alexander Hilton, owing to being in neither Bishopric, and thus out of the jurisdiction of both.<sup>19</sup>

3.2.2 Barnard Castle is in a rural area, surrounded by farmland, nature reserves, and woodland trust land. Many people locally are employed in, or live by, rural occupations such as farming, forestry and fisheries. The town is surrounded by green space, including the Demesnes, Flatt’s Wood, and Deepdale Nature Reserve.

3.2.3 In common with many rural areas across the country, there are extensive walking trails in and around Barnard Castle. Many of these form sections of the Teesdale Way, a long-distance trail stretching from the East to the West of the North East. There is also walking in Flatt’s Wood, an area of woodland which climbs from the Tees side along the edge of the town, near the Castle. The rural landscape of the town and its environs is a major element in tourism.

3.2.4 These walks were a recognised policy element of the Teesdale District Local Plan:

8.2.3 Teesdale, due to its sparse population and the predominance of high quality countryside throughout the area, presents both residents and visitors with a range of easily accessible informal recreation opportunities, such as walking, riding, sports and active recreation.

3.2.5 The major drawback to the rural location is the lack of local amenities. The closest major hospital is Darlington; there is no cinema or dedicated theatre in town; until recently, the only major shopping site was a Morrison’s supermarket, though this has recently been joined by a Lidl’s. The poor local transport links (the railway station closed during Beeching cuts) make residents reliant on cars for transport. This makes parking difficult and leads to congestion, especially when combined with traffic coming off the A66.

## Population

3.3.1 According to the Office of National Statistics 2011 UK Census, the population of Barnard Castle Parish was 5,495.<sup>20</sup> Of this, 25.6% were aged 65+ and 19% were under 18. The town will likely have grown since then, but unfortunately the 2021 Census data is not available beyond larger regional breakdowns. According to the released 2021 data, the current percentage of 65+ in County Durham is 21.3% and under-15s is 15.8%.<sup>21</sup> In addition to this, the next-door parishes of Startforth and Marwood (who effectively form part of the town due to both proximity and the use of shared services) had a population of 1,361 and 529 respectively.<sup>22</sup>

3.3.2 The population of Barnard Castle continues to rise. More than 300 new builds have been completed in and around town and more than 100 are currently under construction. Average house prices over the last 12 months are:

- Detached: £343, 679
- Semi-detached: £222,143
- Terraced: £186, 844
- Flats: £148,850<sup>23</sup>

## Business

3.4.1 In addition to the tourist, antique and service trades and the rural economy, there are two major employers in town.

3.4.2 GlaxoSmithKline built their first manufacturing and packaging suite in town in the 1940s, and they have been strong investors in the area ever since. It remains one of their biggest secondary manufacturing sites, employing over 1000 people. They recently opened a new facility after a £90m investment.<sup>24</sup>

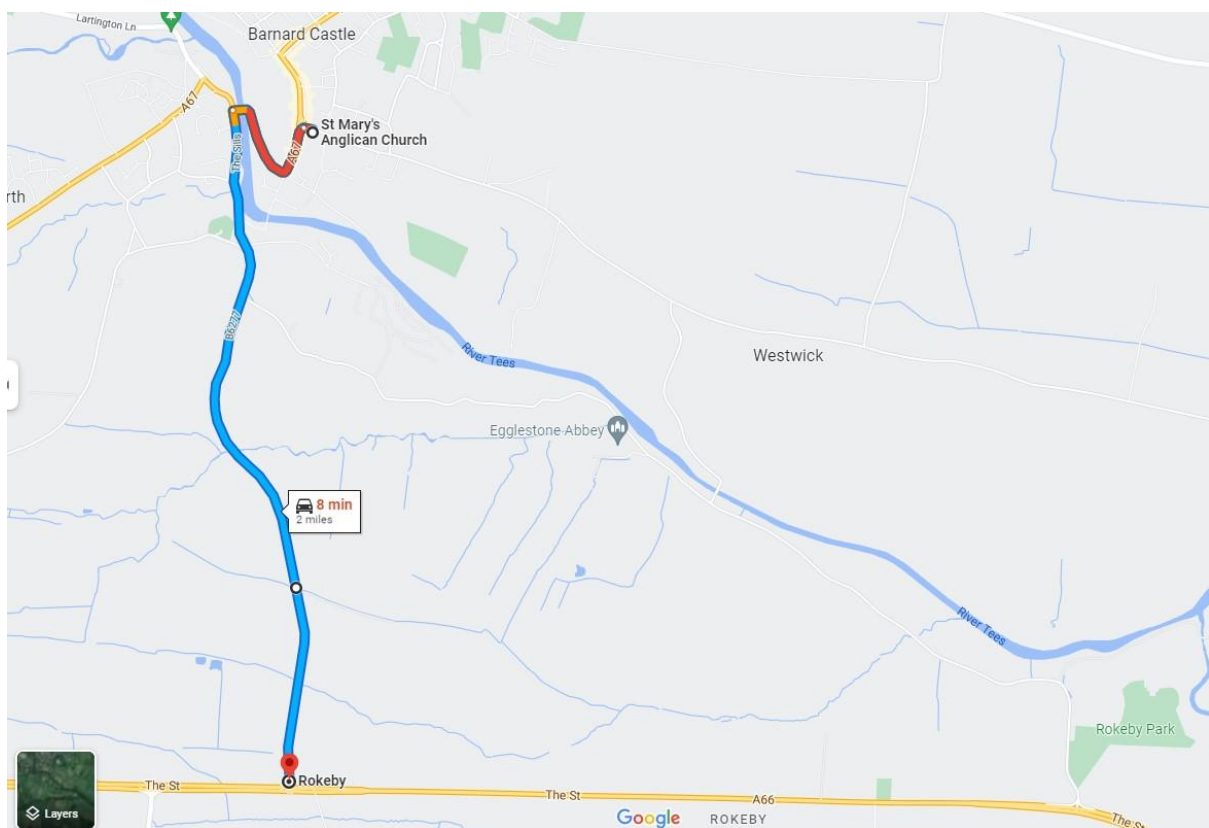
3.4.3 The other major employer in town is HMYOI Deerbolt, a young offender institution for 18–24-year-old men with a capacity for 539 inmates. It opened on the site of the army camp, which closed in 1973.

3.4.4 Barnard Castle is a Large Town Centre [CDP Policy 9 Retail Hierarchy and Town Centre Development] and is recognised as a “key location” in County Durham’s economy [CDP 2.7].

## Chapter 4: The road to Barnard Castle from Cross Lanes

4.1 The expected unbalancing of the traffic flow from the Black junction will push increased traffic down a B-road ill-suited to heavy traffic flow. From this road, it will turn over a historic bridge with a 7.5t weight limit [what Highways call the Barnard Castle Bridge, the County Bridge from here on] and travel up a steep hill to a historic monument hemmed in with tight turns, as the following pictures will show.

Fig. 1 Map of route Cross Lanes junction to top of The Bank



Source: Google Maps directions: Cross Lanes to St Mary's Barnard Castle. Created 26/08/2022 13:15

4.2 After driving down the winding B6277, with blind corners, dips, and occasional intrusion from wildlife, the driver reaches Church Bank, marking the entrance into Startforth.



Fig. 2. Top of Church Bank (B6277)



4.3.1 View from the top of Church Bank (B6277) coming from the A66 and leading towards The Sills in Startforth. This shows the large turn from the left and (at the end on the right-hand side) the semi-concealed exit of The Lendings, a road giving access to several houses.

Fig. 3. Reverse view towards Fig. 2



4.3.2 The same point looking backwards past The Lendings exit on the left and exit on the right, showing the concealment of both exits by the sharp bend of the B6277 towards the A66.

Fig. 4 Church Bank from Startforth



4.3.3 The view back up Church Bank showing the sharp turn. This turn makes visibility difficult in both directions. The sharp drop requires heavy braking to avoid breaking the speed limit and entering the lower road at dangerous speeds. Note the road is hemmed in on both sides.



Fig. 5 Junction of B6277 and Gill Lane



4.3.4 This continues towards the camera from Fig. 4, towards the County Bridge. The road on the side is Gill Lane, a steep hill of a residential street. The road bends sharply again at the left side of the picture, making it difficult to see either direction when turning from Gill Lane onto The Sills (as the B6277 has now become). Turning right to Gill Lane is made difficult by foliage cover towards Church Bank.

Fig. 6 Obstructed pavement opposite Gill Lane



4.3.5 This picture shows a close-up of the lamppost visible on the left in Fig. 5. Note the almost complete obstruction of the pavement. A single person can pass; otherwise, people are forced into the road opposite Gill Lane round a low visibility corner (especially when the trees are covered in leaves). It is impassable for pushchairs, wheelchairs, and dog walkers. Other lampposts along the road have a similar effect.

Fig. 7 Close up of Fig. 6



4.3.6 Close up of the same lamppost, showing the visibility issue caused by foliage on the trees – this visibility issue also affects Gill Lane and anyone turning right onto Gill Lane from The Sills.

Fig. 8 The Sills towards Gill Lane



4.3.7 Further down The Sills, away from Gill Lane in the direction of the County Bridge but facing away from it. Cars regularly park the length of the left-hand side. Traffic either squeezes into one-and-a-half lanes or waits to pass, leading to delays back towards the Bridge.



Fig. 9 Turn from B6277 onto the County Bridge



4.3.8 Facing the opposite way to Fig. 8 and further down the road towards the County Bridge. This shows the near- 90° right-hand turn onto the single lane bridge. The road slopes up slightly as well, making starting from a standstill more difficult. This direction is currently the shortest green traffic light duration, owing to the importance of the A67 over the bridge versus the B-road. The pavement on the right-hand side does not continue over the bridge, meaning people cross from that corner over to the bridge across the lane of traffic.

Fig. 10 View towards Fig. 9 across the County Bridge



4.3.9 Looking across the County Bridge, back towards the junction in Fig. 9. That picture is to the left after crossing the bridge. Note neither turning can be seen clearly, as both turn away at 90°. The pavement is single width, only on one side and only has one passing place in the middle. Pushchairs, wheelchairs, dog walkers and large groups will force people into the road. The road itself is single carriage and narrow.

Fig. 11 View of the County Bridge from Bridgegate



4.3.10.1 This is a picture of the approach to the County Bridge from The Bank. This is looking towards Fig. 10. The pavement on the left-hand side of the picture stops shortly after the bridge begins. Again, this is a near 90° turn. The road approaching the Bridge is Bridgegate.

4.3.10.2 The three-way light control leads to backed up traffic up the Bank and into Market Place whenever there is any issue with the A66 and at times of increased traffic (such as tourist season in the Summer and during Appleby Horse Fair).

Fig. 12 View of the bottom of The Bank from Bridgegate



4.3.11 This picture shows the opposite end of Bridgegate, facing the opposite direction from the above shot. On the right is the Grade II listed Blue Bell pub. The road turns away sharply to the left to climb The Bank.

Fig. 13 View up The Bank



4.3.12 The Bank is a steep climb flanked on both sides by parked cars. The cars restrict the roadway to the degree that large vehicles on The Bank will stop one lane of traffic. Cars go in and out from parking spaces, also affecting traffic. Bridgegate is to the left. This picture is taken at the end of the road, with the Blue Bell on the left out of shot, and the opening of Thorngate (a short road which terminates at the river) marked by the give way stripes. Most buildings on this road are listed.



Fig. 14 View down The Bank



4.3.13 The view back down The Bank, showing the considerable drop, parked cars, and (at the bottom where the white car is horizontal on), the right turn onto Bridgegate. Straight ahead is Thorngate and there is a small turning to the left just past the post office van near the bottom on the left. Just to the right, out of shot, is a traffic island.

Fig. 15 View of the top of The Bank past the Butter Market



4.3.14 The top of The Bank with the Grade I listed Butter Market on the right. This is from Newgate, with Grade I listed St Mary's on the left. Farm traffic through town can block all the roads shown whilst passing. The Bank drops away to the left and Fig. 14 was taken from just slightly out of shot to the left.

## Chapter 5: Traffic Congestion and Road Safety

- We contend National Highways have not properly assessed the B6277/A67 route down which they expect the Black route will push traffic, to determine if it is capable of handling the excess and is thus a valid and safe alternative to the Blue route.
- We contend that National Highways have not properly assessed the risk to and from traffic using the B6277/A67 and given it proper weighting in their sifting process when deciding if a western junction at Rokeby was a valid option.
- We contend that National Highways have both failed to properly assess risks to walkers, cyclists and horses along the affected route and ignored such risks where they have been identified.
- We contend that, given this, Highways England have not properly considered all the implications from and conflicts with the NPPF and NPS (as well as local planning policy) created by this route.
- We contend that the newest traffic figures on which National Highways now rely are at odds with the previous figures, with no adequate explanation as to how these figures were calculated.

5.1.1 Traffic levels and movement through Barnard Castle have long been recognised as a problem.

In 2002, Teesdale District Council considered a bypass to alleviate some of the issue. In the Teesdale District Local Plan, they identified the weight limit on the County Bridge as a significant factor in traffic problems [TDLP 9.1.1], along with problems from increasing car ownership, and stated:

TDLP 9.5.4 The impact of motor vehicles on the historic parts of settlements and commercial and residential areas throughout the District, has become increasingly detrimental to amenity and public safety.

5.1.2 Unfortunately, no further action was taken, and 16 years later relief roads and HGV permit options were still being debated.<sup>25</sup> Whenever there is an issue on the A66, traffic diverts through the town from both junctions causing severe congestion and occasionally gridlock.<sup>26</sup>

5.1.3 According to Durham County Council Parking Policy 2016-19, Barnard Castle has at least 82% car ownership – the highest listed ownership level of all 12 listed towns/cities, including Durham itself.<sup>27</sup> This is due to the town's rural location, lack of major facilities (e.g., cinemas, hospitals) and low public transport provision. Such bus services as we do have remain essential for some of the population for access to surrounding area, especially to Darlington (our nearest major hospital). We already have a poverty of access to public transport, and increased congestion in town affects bus journeys through delays.

#### 5.1.4 The A66 project was introduced because:

Drivers face congestion, delays at key junctions and substandard access to jobs and leisure locations. That is why we are investigating ways to improve journeys on the A66 by raising the whole route to dual carriageway standard.<sup>28</sup>

5.1.5 Given the history, it is regrettable that National Highways, seemingly only at the behest of Historic England, recommended the Black Route, when it is known that the eastern alternative junction at Rokeby ensures “the primary flow of westbound vehicles travelling to and from Barnard Castle uses this junction and not the Cross Lanes junction”.<sup>29</sup> As Highways explain:

This traffic behaviour improves journey times, negates possible issues at The Sills and Barnard Castle Bridge and is considered safer for walkers, cyclists and horse riders [WCH] using the B6277 Moorhouse Lane.<sup>30</sup>

5.1.6 BCTC believes the route along which the extra traffic will be pushed is not suitable. The local road network is not designed for significant road traffic and existing problems will be worsened, with undesirable impacts in several areas. Highways themselves recognised that local roads are “unsuitable” for large increases of traffic in their Traffic Impacts of Construction assessment.<sup>31</sup>

5.1.7 The Bank itself is difficult to ascend, given the frequency of blockages in either lane from parked cars, and traffic weight from the three entrances to the Market Cross circle. Heavier vehicles add to the risk of accidents when carrying out hill starts because of congestion. All of this combines to make the route riskier for increased (and potentially larger) traffic.

5.1.8 This is exacerbated by the critical nature of the road through town. There is little (or no) alternative, meaning it is the single route for residents and external traffic alike. The side roads are either too narrow for easy vehicle passage or dead ends. This does not allow for a quick bypass of a clogged central area. Whichever end of town you live at, if you need to get to the other there is no practical choice bar the road through the middle of town.

5.1.9 There are several factors which contribute:

- It is used for residents’ deliveries – e.g. to businesses in the centre of town.
- It is used for the school run twice a day. The rural nature of the area means children come into (and go out from) town as there are few local school options.
- There are two official car parks and parking on the cobbled area in the centre of Horse Market. This does not allow for the number of cars which use town during the day. The layout of the cobbled parking requires cars to drive directly onto the road into oncoming traffic, increasing traffic risk and potential blocks to the main road.
- The congestion issue is made worse by the closure of part of the town centre for Market Day once per week (with increased traffic and parking demands).

- During the 4-6 weeks around the annual Appleby Horse Fair, congestion is also much worse both from the prevalence of horse-drawn traffic, and from the parking restrictions along Bridgegate, which lead to greater roadside parking elsewhere.

5.1.10.1 Concerns about manoeuvring around the Market Cross and illegal crossing of the County Bridge are not unfounded. The following picture shows an HGV attempting the turn off the bridge. This took place during a diversion away from the A66, showing traffic off the A66 has a significant effect on town.

Fig. 16 HGV crossing the County Bridge



A photograph by a Barnard Castle resident showing an HGV crossing the 7.5t weight limit County Bridge from Carter, Nicky. "Pressure mounts on chiefs after diversion road chaos." Teesdale Mercury, 12 February 2020



Fig. 17 HGV turns across The Bank round the Butter Market



Picture from McFarlane, Katie. "Mixed reviews for plans to reduce Barnard Castle's HGV traffic", Teesdale Mercury 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2018

5.1.10.2 This picture shows the tight corner for such vehicles (note the traffic backed up down The Bank whilst the lorry turns). The increased distance to the western Black junction may push more HGV drivers to risk the County Bridge crossing to save time.

5.1.11 Lorries are known to reverse down Bridgegate (from the County Bridge towards the Blue Bell pub) when the drivers realise they are not allowed to cross the bridge. They turn backwards off the road into Thorngate and return up The Bank. This is dangerous - and impossible if weight of traffic behind them prevents such actions. Requiring such manoeuvres is especially undesirable given the government plans for changes to HGV licences and specifically the removing of reversing from the main test.<sup>32</sup>

5.1.12 The NPS has a concern for safety, in order to maintain the high standard of British roads [NPS 3.9-3.10]. We believe that there are numerous road safety implications arising from the choice of junction, including risks to drivers, pedestrians, cyclists and horses (which have been noted by National Highways).<sup>33</sup>

5.1.13.1 There is an increased risk to pedestrians in town beyond just the traffic increase. The roads down which the increased traffic will travel were not designed with pedestrian safety in mind. As can be seen from the photographs of the route [Figs 2-15], pavements are narrow, often blocked by lampposts and parked cars, and lack safe crossing places. The risk is worsened for those with pushchairs or wheelchairs and for dog walkers. There is no safe crossing point on Bridgegate. The

Bank has only two traffic islands. The first is at the bottom, right after the turn onto the road, and the other is at the top where The Bank meets the Market Cross.

Fig. 18 Traffic island at the bottom of The Bank



5.1.13.2 This picture the corner of Thorngate and Bridgegate, with the Blue Bell to the left.

Fig. 19 View towards Bridgegate from traffic island in Fig. 18



5.1.13.3 View towards Bridgegate from the traffic island, middle of The Bank at the bottom (Blue Bell pub visible on left opposite side of road).

Fig. 20 View from other side of road from traffic island



5.1.13.4 View from opposite side of the road from above, looking towards the Blue Bell pub with no visibility of Bridgegate (and no visibility for drivers coming round the corner).



Fig. 21 Top of The Bank



5.1.13.5 At the top, looking down The Bank, just to the left in the road is the traffic island. This picture looks away from the Market Cross, which is out of shot to the left. The view down The Bank is obscured by parked vehicles. You need to begin crossing before you get a clear view of traffic.

Fig. 22 View towards Butter Market from The Bank's top traffic island



5.1.13.6 On the traffic island at the top with the Market Cross in the top left of picture. Newgate leading past St Mary's is visible, but this is the best view available of oncoming traffic round the Market Cross from the Market Place. Hints can be taken from the action of traffic coming onto The Bank from Newgate, but otherwise it can be difficult for drivers and pedestrians alike to be aware of each other's presence.

5.1.14 These concerns extend to The Sills through Startforth - it only has pavement consistently along the river side. The river side joins the County Bridge on the side where the bridge has no pavement. To walk down the pavement side of The Sills, pedestrians must cross the A67 just past the County Bridge lights [figure 9], walk up the non-river side and then return across the A67, at a point which has poor visibility of the bridge itself [figure 8].

5.1.15 There is a small area of pavement at the foot of The Sills [figure 8] to allow access to pedestrians. Pedestrians wishing to access The Sills must cross the A67 three times if coming from the Bridge – all at points of reduced visibility. There is no pavement proper until the road [Figure 3] leading up to Startforth Road. This road is only accessible from the pavement using steep stone stairs. Anyone with mobility issues, in a wheelchair, with dogs or a pushchair must walk around by the road before reaching the pavement. This turning off is at the end of Moorhouse Lane, which will see increased traffic according to the every available modelling done by National Highways.

5.1.16 All of this, along with parked cars, the narrow roadway, and poor general visibility, makes using The Sills dangerous for pedestrians. This was demonstrated on the 16th September this year. A

hit-and-run took place on The Sills, requiring a 50-year-old woman to be treated at hospital for her injuries.<sup>34</sup>

## Council Opinion

5.2.1 The result of increased traffic along this route is to invite regular congestion and more frequent traffic accidents, which puts pedestrians and cyclists at greater risk. This is in direct opposition to NPPF para. 112 (c) which requires that applications for development should:

NPPF 112(c) create places that are safe, secure and attractive – which minimise the scope for conflicts between pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles, avoid unnecessary street clutter, and respond to local character and design standards

5.2.2 Likewise, the Road Investment Strategy requires National Highways to:

Make targeted improvements at problem locations, for example at junctions or other locations where there is a need to address safety issues, or where nonmotorised users are required to use the SRN for short distances to access rights of way on either side of the road.<sup>35</sup>

5.2.3 The eastern junction was stated by Highways England to be the safer option. In their words it “is considered safer for walkers, cyclists and horse riders using the B6277 Moorhouse Lane.”<sup>36</sup> “The alternative eastern junction also provides a safer crossing for cyclists travelling to and from Greta Bridge when compared to the baseline junction.”<sup>37</sup>

5.2.4 NPPF section 8 “Promoting healthy and safe communities”, para 92(c), requires development to “encourage walking and cycling”. NPPF Sec. 9 (Promoting sustainable transport) encourages pursuing opportunities to promote walking and cycling and requires priority to be given first to pedestrians and cyclists “both within the scheme and with neighbouring areas [NPPF 104c and 112a]”. Neither of these aims are served by the Black route’s effect on traffic flow through the centre of town.

5.2.5 Part of Highways’ stated aim is “Designing a safer A66” – indeed, one of their “three priorities” is “Safety”.<sup>38 39</sup> The Council (as with other local stakeholders) welcomed Highways’ full consultation through the developmental stages of the process (in support of NPPF 9.106 (b)). It is sad that they ignored the overwhelming community input (which Highways recognise is in favour of safety in

5.8.91 of the Development Report) and ignored their own conclusions during the sifting process to select the more dangerous route.<sup>40 41</sup>

5.2.6 The NPPF states that development can be refused on highways grounds “if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe [NPF 111].” Historic England’s assessment will lead to increased congestion and risk for the people of Startforth and Barnard Castle.

5.2.7 The NPS allows consent to be granted, - even when “substantial harm” might be expected to a heritage asset – if “it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or total loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss [NPS 5.133]”. That rejecting the Black route and choosing the Blue “is of a nature or scale to be of benefit to the public at large and not just be a private benefit”, can be shown by the concerted opposition of local stakeholders to the Black route.<sup>42</sup> The residents and councils of Barningham, Startforth and Barnard Castle, as well as Durham County Council, have all objected on traffic congestion and safety grounds.

5.2.8 A single stakeholder submission has led to the discarding of the sifting process - which revealed that the eastern alternative was superior in Traffic Volume, Journey Time Savings, Safety and Accessibility including WCH Opportunities - and the selection of the more dangerous Black route.<sup>43</sup> We request that this be reversed and the safer and more efficient Blue junction route be granted consent instead.

## Chapter 6: Public Health Impact and associated costs:

- We contend that increasing traffic down the selected route will, of necessity, lead to a commensurate increase in traffic-related air pollution [TRAP] out of proportion to the rest of town, owing to the lack of proper traffic balancing.
- We contend that the increase in traffic down the selected route will lead to congestion, which will further increase TRAP beyond the immediately affected route.
- We contend that even small increases in air pollution have a significant effect on mortality and long-term conditions – especially for our vulnerable elderly and under-18 populations.
- We contend that increases in air pollution, where avoidable, are in conflict both with wider government policy and the aims of the NPPF and NPS.

6.1.1 Highways England have stated their belief that traffic flow along The Sills to The Bank will increase if the Black route is selected, thus significantly increasing air pollution along that route. As shown above, the choice of route will increase congestion into the centre of town. Congestion is not merely annoying and economically damaging; there is a significant increase in the concentration of air pollutants from idling car engines. This has a greater negative effect on both those inside the vehicles and on passers-by.<sup>44</sup>

6.1.2 Various factors contribute to the increase in air pollution from congestion:

In the present analysis, “congestion-related” impacts incorporate multiple interactions that occur with congestion. First, congestion lowers the average speed, which increases travel time and exposure on a per vehicle basis...Second, congestion diminishes dispersion of vehicle-related pollutants since vehicle-induced turbulence depends on vehicle speed (Benson, 1989). Thus, lower vehicle speeds can increase pollutant concentrations from roadway sources. Third, congestion can change driving patterns, resulting in an increased number of speedups, slowdowns, stops and starts, which increase emissions compared to “cruise” conditions, especially with high power acceleration.<sup>45</sup>

6.1.3 As Michael Gove said when he launched the Clean Air Strategy 2019: “The evidence is clear. While air quality has improved significantly in recent years, air pollution continues to shorten lives, harm our children and reduce quality of life.”<sup>46</sup> According to DEFRA “the major threat to clean air is now posed by traffic emissions.”<sup>47</sup> Whilst other industrial and domestic pollutant sources are improving over time “traffic pollution problems are worsening world-wide.”<sup>48</sup>

6.1.4 There are significant personal and economic costs associated with air pollution. As Public Health England point out:

Respiratory disease is one of the 3 most common causes of mortality in the UK, alongside heart disease and non-respiratory cancers. In 2012, 20% of all deaths in the UK were due to respiratory causes, most commonly

lung cancer (6.2%), chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) (5.3%) and pneumonia (5.1%). While mortality from heart disease and many non-respiratory cancers is falling, the number of people killed each year by lung disease is staying the same.<sup>49</sup>

The cost to the NHS of air pollution related respiratory illness is also significant:

Between 2017 and 2025, the total cost to the NHS and Social Care of air pollution in England is estimated to be £1.60 billion for PM2.5 and NO2 combined (£1.54 billion for PM2.5 and £60.81 million for NO2) where there is robust evidence for an association between exposure and disease. If we include the costs for diseases where there is less robust evidence for an association, then the estimate is increased to an overall total of £2.81 billion for PM2.5 and £2.75 billion for NO2 in England between 2017 and 2025.<sup>50</sup>

Fig. 23 Mortality rates per 100,000 persons for respiratory disease

		<span style="background-color: #d9ead3;">Better 95%</span> <span style="background-color: #fcf8e3;">Similar</span> <span style="background-color: #f2dede;">Worse 95%</span> <span style="background-color: #d9ead3;">Lower</span> <span style="background-color: #fcf8e3;">Similar</span> <span style="background-color: #f2dede;">Higher</span> <span style="background-color: #fff2cc;">Not compared</span>													
Indicator	Period	England	North East region	County Durham	Darlington	Gateshead	Hartlepool	Middlesbrough	Newcastle upon Tyne	North Tyneside	Northumberland	Redcar and Cleveland	South Tyneside	Stockton-on-Tees	Sunderland
Under 75 mortality rate from respiratory disease (Persons)	2017-19	34.2	44.5	43.0	47.3	48.2	49.4	69.3	46.3	40.0	31.3	49.0	54.3	42.0	45.3
Under 75 mortality rate from respiratory disease (Male)	2017-19	39.7	48.5	47.0	49.0	50.5	56.7	83.7	47.0	44.5	38.3	54.0	60.9	36.7	48.9
Under 75 mortality rate from respiratory disease (Female)	2017-19	29.0	40.6	39.2	45.6	46.1	42.2	56.0	45.7	35.8	24.8	44.3	48.2	47.0	42.1
Under 75 mortality rate from respiratory disease considered preventable (2019 definition)	2017-19	20.0	29.4	30.3	28.0	30.8	28.9	43.2	30.6	25.7	21.0	32.1	38.9	25.7	30.9
Under 75 mortality rate from respiratory disease considered preventable (2016 definition)	2016-18	19.2	26.7	27.7	23.1	29.6	26.6	35.5	29.9	23.4	17.6	24.7	39.7	25.8	27.9
DiUPR - Respiratory disease (%), Persons, All Ages.	2016	32.2	32.7	37.1	41.3	33.4	26.8	32.7	33.8	30.5	31.1	38.0	31.9	32.1	23.9
Mortality rate from respiratory disease, ages 65+ years	2017-19	616.1	727.0	738.8	708.6	681.2	818.0	820.5	731.7	710.5	610.3	732.7	853.9	687.8	811.3

Source: Public Health England. *Public Health Profiles Counties and UAs in North East mortality rates per 100,000 persons for respiratory diseases*

6.1.5 Barnard Castle is in the top 20% most deprived areas in the country for health by the Indices of Deprivation.<sup>51</sup> During the 2011 Census, respondents were asked to rate their health. In Barnard Castle, those responding “very good” was less than the national average. Likewise, the percentage rating their health “very bad” was higher than the national average.<sup>52</sup> The North East and North West of England tied for the highest national deaths from respiratory causes by standardised mortality rate for 2013-7.<sup>53</sup>

6.1.6 The population of Barnard Castle, Marwood and Startforth was 7385 people (2011 Census), and with the significant recent home-building programmes in all three parishes, can now be

reasonably assumed to be over 8000. Of this, 25.6% were aged 65+ and 19% were under 18.<sup>54</sup> The aging population is especially susceptible to respiratory risks from air pollution, which is “associated with lower baseline lung function and accelerated lung function decline in the elderly, a population sensitive to the effects of particles.”<sup>55</sup>

6.1.7 Approximately 16% of residents are below the age of 18, and younger children are especially susceptible to air pollution effects.<sup>56 57</sup>

6.1.8 The harmful effects of increased Traffic Related Air Pollution (TRAP) are many, through its various toxic elements like NO<sub>2</sub> and Particulate Matter. For children, this can include:

- Asthma – multiple studies have shown that living near road vehicle traffic increases the risk of asthma (and possibly other allergic diseases) in both children and adults.<sup>58 59</sup> “Proximity to major roads is associated with increased risks of recurrent wheeze and asthma in young children.”<sup>60</sup> There is also support for the hypothesis that exposure to TRAP reduces ventilatory function in children.<sup>61</sup>
- Eczema – which has been found to be sensitive to TRAP. Effects emerge even in lower polluted small-town-areas and TRAP leads to longer duration in exposed children.<sup>62</sup>
- Diabetes – There is growing evidence that long-term exposure to TRAP is associated with diabetes mellitus and “This association can be observed at concentrations below air quality guidelines.”<sup>63</sup>

As well as the effects of air pollution, increased noise can be negatively associated with the mental health of children and adolescents, particularly in low-income groups.<sup>64</sup> Barnard Castle is in the top 40% most deprived areas for Income.<sup>65</sup>

6.1.9 For elderly populations there is evidence of increased risk from Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease<sup>66 67</sup>. As well, there is a more general lung decline from TRAP.<sup>68</sup> A new risk has also arisen with Covid cases and death rates. TRAP is associated with Covid-19 severity and mortality, further specifically affecting the town’s elderly population.<sup>69</sup>

6.1.10 For all ages, increased exposure to NO<sub>2</sub> can increase cardiovascular and respiratory mortality. Studies have shown this is the case for both short and long-term exposure.<sup>70 71</sup> People have been shown to detect poor air quality below guideline concentrations. A study found “Six-monthly nitrogen dioxide concentrations correlated consistently with the prevalence of reported annoyance related to air pollution and traffic exhaust fumes.”<sup>72</sup>

6.1.11 Particulate Matter is a major contributor to TRAP. PM2.5 is consistently associated with increased lung cancer risk and mortality.<sup>73</sup> PM2.5 also contributes to heart disease as:

In addition, numerous findings indicate that even a few hours to weeks of short-term exposure to PM particulates can trigger CVD-related mortality and events, especially among the susceptible individuals at great risk including the elderly or the patients with pre-existing coronary artery disease.<sup>74</sup>

6.1.12 As if this was not enough, whilst not yet proven, there is even suggestive evidence for a connection between exposure to air pollution and cognitive decline. “Plausible toxicological mechanisms have been demonstrated and the evidence as a whole suggest that vehicular pollution, at least, contributes to cognitive impairment.”<sup>75</sup>

6.1.13 It might be argued that the effects will be mitigated by the introduction of electric cars. However, the government date for a ban on new petrol vehicles is 2030. Until then, new cars will still enter the roads. Likewise, 2030 is not a magic date at which all older cars will disappear. People will still own and drive fossil-fuel powered vehicles – and sell them second hand. As well, whilst noise levels may well fall, and greenhouse gas emissions will drop, there is evidence that “the threat to the human respiratory tract is only marginally decreased by the transition from conventional to electric powertrain vehicles, as the “large contribution to PM emission from all the analyzed cars was from tyre and break wear.”<sup>76</sup>

6.1.14 The NPS addresses exactly this issue. NPS 3.8 argues that NO2 and PM10 might be expected to decrease over time, owing to improved vehicle design and electric vehicles. However, this ignores the harmful effects of PM2.5, as well as other forms of pollution (e.g. light, noise, vibration) which arise from increased traffic.



Fig. 24 Summary of established robust associations ('strong evidence') and less robust associations ('weaker evidence') for P[articulate]M[atter]2.5 and NO2

	<b>Long term exposure to PM2.5</b>	<b>Long term exposure to NO2</b>
Stronger evidence for an association	Coronary heart disease Stroke Lung cancer Asthma (children)	Asthma (children)
Evidence less certain or emerging evidence of associations	Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (as chronic bronchitis) Diabetes Low birth weight	Asthma (adults) Diabetes Lung cancer Low birth weight

Source: Public Health England. *Estimation of costs to the NHS and social care due to the health impacts of air pollution*. PHE Publications, 2018.

## Council Opinion

6.2.1 Around 8000 people live in and around Barnard Castle and will be affected daily by increased traffic congestion. Those living on the affected route will suffer disproportionately, as instead of balancing the traffic across town, a significant part will be concentrated on that approach.

Approximately 45% (elderly and children) are at increased vulnerability to toxic exhaust gases and particulate matter.<sup>77</sup> This is important, as the NPPF Guidance on Air Quality states that:

Air quality may also be a material consideration if the proposed development would be particularly sensitive to poor air quality in its vicinity.<sup>78</sup>

6.2.2 Respiratory illnesses have a significant cost to the NHS and cause issues for local authorities, as well as wider economic issues through missed workdays or early deaths.<sup>79</sup> Although National Highways choice of the Black Route “only” directly affects several thousand people on a daily basis, it has a wider public implication via hidden costs of physical and mental illness.<sup>80</sup> One study on the link between congestion, pollution and infant health concluded “that even at today’s lower levels, reducing both ambient pollution and traffic congestion has substantial opportunity for health gains.”<sup>81</sup>

6.2.3 There is comprehensive guidance to the interpretation and implementation of the NPPF on Air Quality. This guidance asks developments to consider the “opportunities to improve air quality or mitigate impacts, such as through traffic and travel management”.<sup>82</sup> Instead, traffic management will negatively affect air quality.

6.2.4 There has been no consideration as to the baseline local air quality, whether this change in traffic will significantly affect quality, and whether this will affect the local population.<sup>83</sup> Without proper studies, it is impossible to know how the Black route will affect the health of thousands of people and thus properly determine whether the impact outweighs the harm to St Mary's Rokeby and the surrounding land.

6.2.5 The NPS requires assessment of risks to human health in the area of development:

NPS 4.81 As described in the relevant sections of this NPS, where the proposed project has likely significant environmental impacts that would have an effect on human beings, any environmental statement should identify and set out the assessment of any likely significant adverse health impacts.

The NPS recognises that the effects of changes in air quality “can cover a large area, well beyond an individual scheme” [NPS 5.5]. In this case, the increased likelihood of congestion because of the junction choice will affect air quality away from the A66 route.

6.2.6 The impact outside of the immediate area of the two junction options is of direct relevance to the choice of routes. The NPPF guidance states [our emphasis]:

Considerations that may be relevant to determining a planning application include whether the development would:

Lead to changes (including any potential reductions) in vehicle-related emissions **in the immediate vicinity of the proposed development or further afield**. This could be through the provision of electric vehicle charging infrastructure; altering the level of traffic congestion; significantly changing traffic volumes, vehicle speeds or both; or significantly altering the traffic composition on local roads.<sup>84</sup>

6.2.7 This choice affects traffic congestion, traffic volumes, vehicle speeds, and traffic composition on the roads which will bear the brunt of the increased flow. We therefore believe that these issues must be considered seriously when assessing the legitimacy of the Black route.

6.2.8 CDP Policy 21 (Delivering Sustainable Transport) states requires “All developments shall deliver sustainable transport by”:

CDP Policy 21c. ensuring that any vehicular traffic generated by new development, following the implementation of sustainable transport measures, can be safely accommodated on the local and strategic highway network and does not cause an unacceptable increase in congestion or air pollution and that severe congestion can be overcome by appropriate transport improvements.

6.2.9 CDP Policy 31 (Amenity and Pollution) further states that:

CDP Policy 31 Development which has the potential to lead to, or be affected by, unacceptable levels of air quality, inappropriate odours, noise and vibration or other sources of pollution, either individually or cumulatively, will not be permitted including where any identified mitigation cannot reduce the impact on the environment, amenity of people or human health to an acceptable level.

6.2.10 Whilst we accept that the NPS holds primacy for determining consent, we would argue that mitigation exists to reduce each factor listed in this policy. Choosing the Blue route would rebalance the traffic flow away from this unsuitable route, and thus reduce the associated pollution. We do not seek to elevate the CDP above the NPS, but simply request the use of the junction which best fits local planning policy.

6.2.11 Protecting the residents of the Barnard Castle area from increased health risks from air pollution is in line with the Clean Air Strategy and “economic, social or environmental objectives as described in the National Planning Policy Framework”.<sup>85</sup> As such, this health impact must be taken to be a genuine public good and a compelling reason to reject the Black Route for the safer and healthier Blue Route.

## Chapter 7: Built landscape – heritage costs

- We contend that Historic England’s heritage assessment of Rokeby Park and Gardens does not properly engage with either the historical narrative of the park, or the physical realities of the landscape.
- We contend that in asserting that the Black route is the only option in compliance with the NPS, no consideration has been given to the potential damage to other heritage assets – notably the Grade I listed County Bridge and Market Cross in Barnard Castle.
- We contend that Historic England’s view that the harm caused by the Blue route is significant, whereas the Black route only causes harm, is flawed in both determinations.
- We contend that by selecting the Black route, National Highways are in opposition to the vision and requirements of both the Historic Environment section of the NPS and Section 16 (conserving and enhancing the historic environment) of the NPPF.

### Rokeby Estate:

7.1.1 Historic England have made the assessment that, because the Rokeby Junction will be placed away from Rokeby Church and the Park and Garden, the Black route causes “harm”, whereas the Blue route would cause “substantial harm” to those heritage assets.<sup>86</sup> There is also a suggestion that the Blue route will destroy a piece of ancient woodland.

7.1.2 This fails to take account of the wider context of the Estate beyond the designated park and garden. The Estate was designed with the Church on its mound as the Western gateway, with Thorpe Farm providing a similar mirrored gateway to the East. The road and junction under the Black proposal will encroach beyond the defined Roman Road to the west of the Church and will be highly visible as the land falls away to the north and south, spoiling the setting of the Church.

7.1.3 In contrast, the Blue route’s Rokeby junction is more easily concealed by the natural shape of the land at Joy’s Pasture, which will allow the underpass entrance to be effectively hidden from both the West Lodge and the C165. The opinion does not reflect the actual design of the land and will cause greater damage to the historical narrative of the park than the Blue Route. The ancient woodland which they refer to has been replanted in the last decade, and no longer meets that definition. It is public record that the only landowner affected by both junctions (the Mortham Estate) is in favour of the Blue route because (contrary to the opinion of Highways and Historic England) it is less damaging to the Estate.<sup>87</sup>

## Heritage assets in Barnard Castle:

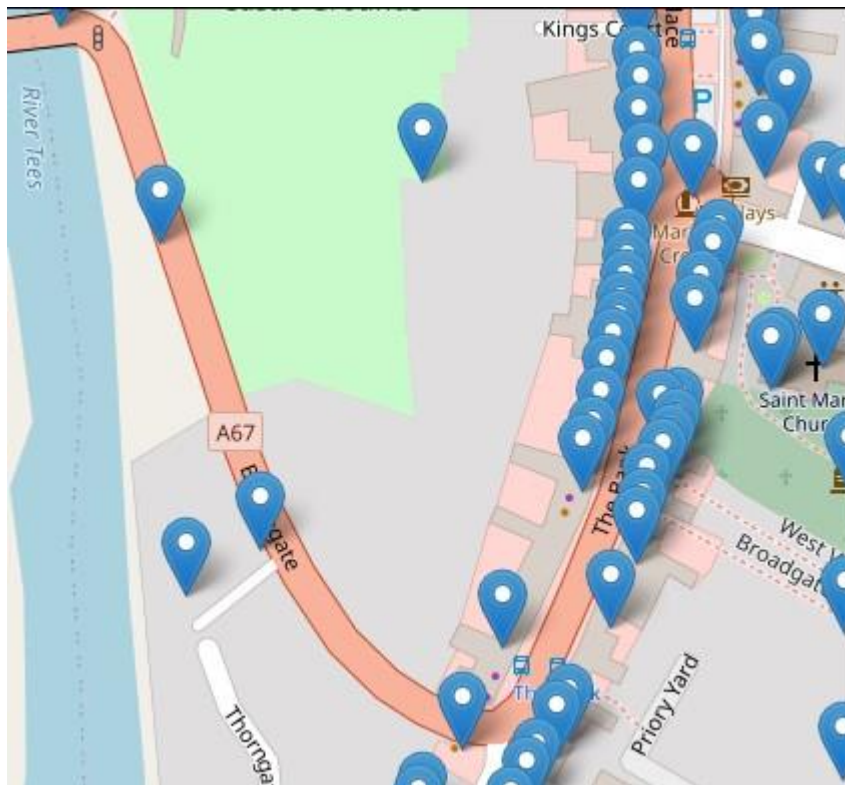
7.2.1 Historic England had a specific remit under the NPS at the behest of Highways England, which was to assess the potential sites for the junction from a heritage impact standpoint. Paragraph 5.127 of the NPS requires that:

NPS 5.127 The applicant should describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the asset's importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant Historic Environment Record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise...

7.2.2 Historic England made their assessment, and their choice was made, but only from the viewpoint of two sites specifically at the location of the junction. No consideration was asked for, or given to, heritage assets further afield which would be directly and materially affected by the choice of junction. We do not seek here to question their judgement on the risk to St Mary's, but instead, wish to apply their own methods to the wider area affected by their choice.

7.2.3 The law of unintended consequences has shown us that no choice exists in a vacuum. It is public record that National Highways believe Historic England's preferred choice will increase traffic through Startforth and Barnard Castle.<sup>88</sup> This increased traffic is concomitant with the choice of junction; traffic effects directly flow, then, from that choice, and should be considered as part of the planning process. Given this, historic assessment should have been undertaken for the dozens of listed sites, monuments and buildings on the route this traffic will take. Without this, no credible assessment can be made of the potential harm caused by the Black route.

Fig. 25. Map of Barnard Castle showing listed structures



Each blue marker represents a listed structure. The top left of the map shows the County Bridge entering Bridgegate, with the turn up The Bank to the Market Cross on the right-hand side of the map. The area of green on the left-hand side represents the site, grounds and walls of the eponymous castle.

*See Appendix for list of structures.*

Source: British Listed Buildings. [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] Accessed 19/08/2022

7.2.4 Barnard Castle is a Conservation Area within County Durham.<sup>89</sup> Teesdale District Local Plan states that:

TDLP 4.6.1 The District Council has a statutory duty to designate as Conservation Areas those parts of the District which are considered to be of special architectural or historic character and worthy of preservation and enhancement. Conservation Areas may be designated on the basis of the quality of groups of buildings, the special character of spaces enclosed by buildings, e.g. village greens, a historic street pattern, or the character of elements of the street scene, e.g. shop fronts, steps, railings, lamp posts and trees.

7.2.5 As the Character Appraisal (commissioned by Teesdale District Council in 2008) explained:

It is this combination of architectural styles and medieval plan form which make Barnard Castle a distinctive historic place. While the medieval period was to determine the historic character through the street pattern, the Georgian period determined the historic character at first and second floor levels, the Victorian period was to determine the character at street level through its shop fronts and in the expanding suburbs built in response to growing industry and improved transport.<sup>90</sup>

7.2.6 The District Council believed that Barnard Castle's historic character was "unique" and said it had been "recognised nationally as one of the 51 most historically and architecturally important towns in Great Britain" [TDLP 4.1.4].

7.2.7 As Historic England explained regarding St Mary's, Rokeby: "The church is already harmed by the noise, pollution and traffic of the existing A66 single carriageway..."<sup>91</sup> Their belief is that



additional traffic will cause additional damage. This would mean that the imposition of additional traffic along Moorhouse Lane, Bridgegate, and the Bank will have the same effect on the dozens of historic buildings on the affected route and further into town.

7.2.8 The local houses – and particularly those on the Listed Buildings register – are constructed of local sandstone and limestone.<sup>92</sup> It is known that the effect of air pollution on sandstone, limestone and marble is high.<sup>93</sup> These effects include losses of mass, changes in porosity, discolouration and embrittlement – with the effect of particulate matter, especially from diesel vehicle emissions, of increasing significance.<sup>94</sup>

7.2.9 In the case of residential properties, the roadway often runs less than a metre from the buildings in question. The Grade I listed castle ruin which lends the town its name already suffers from slippage and collapse of its lower walls. The increased “noise, pollution and traffic” under it on Bridgegate could well exacerbate this further through vibration and the corrosive action of exhaust fumes.

7.2.10 The County Bridge, which has daily traffic flow over it, suffers frequent damage from heavy goods traffic – especially overweight vehicles leaving the A66 – as seen as recently as February 2020.<sup>95</sup> As pointed out in the Teesdale Mercury article:

Mark Readman, highway services manager at Durham County Council, said they were aware of the damage to the County Bridge and engineers have already assessed the situation.

He added: “The effected [sic] stones are relatively new as the section had been damaged previously...”<sup>96</sup>

The Market Cross, which acts as a quasi-roundabout, suffers similarly through incautiously driven HGVs.<sup>97</sup>

## Council Opinion

7.3.1 Historic England's plan to save one little-used or visited landmark will instead significantly affect dozens of continually used ones. NPS 5.129 requires the Secretary of State to consider "the particular nature of the significance of the heritage asset and the value that they hold for this and future generations." Historic England has assessed potential harm to two assets at the specific site of the junction but has not assessed the broader harm cascading from their choice.

7.3.2 As National Highways have pointed out, they have a duty to obey the NPS. Under that strategy: NPS 5.131 When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, the Secretary of State should give great weight to the asset's conservation. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be. Once lost, heritage assets cannot be replaced and their loss has a cultural, environmental, economic and social impact. Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting. Given that heritage assets are irreplaceable, harm or loss affecting any designated heritage asset should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of a grade II Listed Building or a grade II Registered Park or Garden should be exceptional. Substantial harm to or loss of designated assets of the highest significance, including World Heritage Sites, Scheduled Monuments, grade I and II\* Listed Buildings, Registered Battlefields, and grade I and II\* Registered Parks and Gardens should be wholly exceptional.

7.3.3 Further, the NPPF (which supersedes English Heritage guidance PPS5 that originally supported the NPS) states that:

NPPF 200. Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification.

7.3.4 Barnard Castle Town Council does not believe Historic England's concerns represent convincing enough justification for the risk to dozens of listed structures. We also do not believe they have complied with policy, as they have not provided assessments for all those structures affected [NPS 5.127-133].

7.3.5 In addition, Historic England's choice is also in opposition to elements of the County Durham Plan Objective 10 (Built and Historic Environment) confirms the Plan aims to:

CDP Objective 10 Protect and enhance the significance of County Durham's locally, nationally and internationally important built and historic environment, including its wide range of buildings, sites, archaeology, parks and gardens and other heritage assets.

7.3.6 CDP Policy 21 (Delivering Sustainable Transport) requires developments to produce sustainable transport by "ensuring the creation of new or improvements to existing routes and facilities do not cause unacceptable harm to the natural, built or historic environment [CDP Policy 21d].

### 7.3.7 Policy 44 Historic Environment further states:

#### **Designated Assets**

Great weight will be given to the conservation of all designated assets and their settings (and non-designated heritage assets of archaeological interest that are demonstrably of equivalent significance to scheduled monuments). Such assets should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.

Critically, the Council seeks to protect assets according to their significance, rather than the level of harm expected. Barnard Castle has five Grade I listed structures on or about the route along which the increased traffic will flow (The County Bridge, Barnard Castle, Blagrove's, The Butter Market, St Mary's Anglican Church). Under the CDP, these would rate higher protections than the grade II listed St Mary's Rokeby.

7.3.8 Teesdale District Plan is similarly concerned for local heritage. The Plan's objectives [TDLP 4.4.1] are:

- To ensure the preservation and retention of listed buildings in the District.
- Protect Conservation Areas from insensitive development.

TDLP 4.5.2 Over 1,000 individual buildings within the District have been listed as being of special architectural or historical interest. These buildings and their settings constitute a finite environmental, cultural and economic resource and are afforded protection as such by the requirement for owners or developers to obtain 'listed building consent' from the Local Planning Authority for works to the building e.g. demolition, alterations and extensions to the existing structure, or for any development within its setting which would adversely affect the character of the building.

7.3.9 TDLP Policy BENV4(c) only permits development if "the proposal does not generate excessive traffic, parking, noise or other environmental problems which would be detrimental to the character and appearance of the conservation area".

7.3.10 Historic England and Highways England have not engaged with the ramifications of their chosen route beyond the effect on a single building and a small section of surrounding woodland – which as they admit, contains land which is "not in the registered area", but rather "a 'borrowed' landscape".<sup>98</sup> This is despite National Highways recognising the existence of potential issues at the County Bridge at least.<sup>99</sup> Their assessment of the Park and Gardens does not correctly reflect the actual lay of the land – the listing (on which they appear to have relied) is out of date in key specifics.

7.3.11 Not only does Historic England's choice cause greater damage to the wider Mortham estates, but it also causes greater damage to the wider heritage area. No due diligence has been done on the effects of traffic on the heritage assets and Conservation Area of Barnard Castle. The assumption

that the Black route only does “harm” to heritage assets is unsupported in the wider area directly affected by this choice.

7.3.12 NPS 5.133 and NPPF 201 allow consent to be granted, even when “substantial harm” to heritage assets might be expected, if “it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or total loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss”. According to the government guidance on the Historic Environment relating to the NPPF, “What is meant by public benefits” includes heritage benefits. “Examples of heritage benefits” may include “reducing or removing risks to a heritage asset”.<sup>100</sup>

7.3.13 We would argue that the Black Route does not reduce traffic damage to heritage assets. It merely diverts the deleterious effects (as documented by Historic England and many academic articles) to dozens of actively used, lived-in, visited and enjoyed listed buildings and monuments. Avoiding this damage would offer significantly more public benefit than protecting a single isolated and rarely visited site and the associated area of parkland. As such, consent should be granted to the alternate Blue route even if “significant harm” genuinely arises from it.

## Chapter 8: Natural Landscape

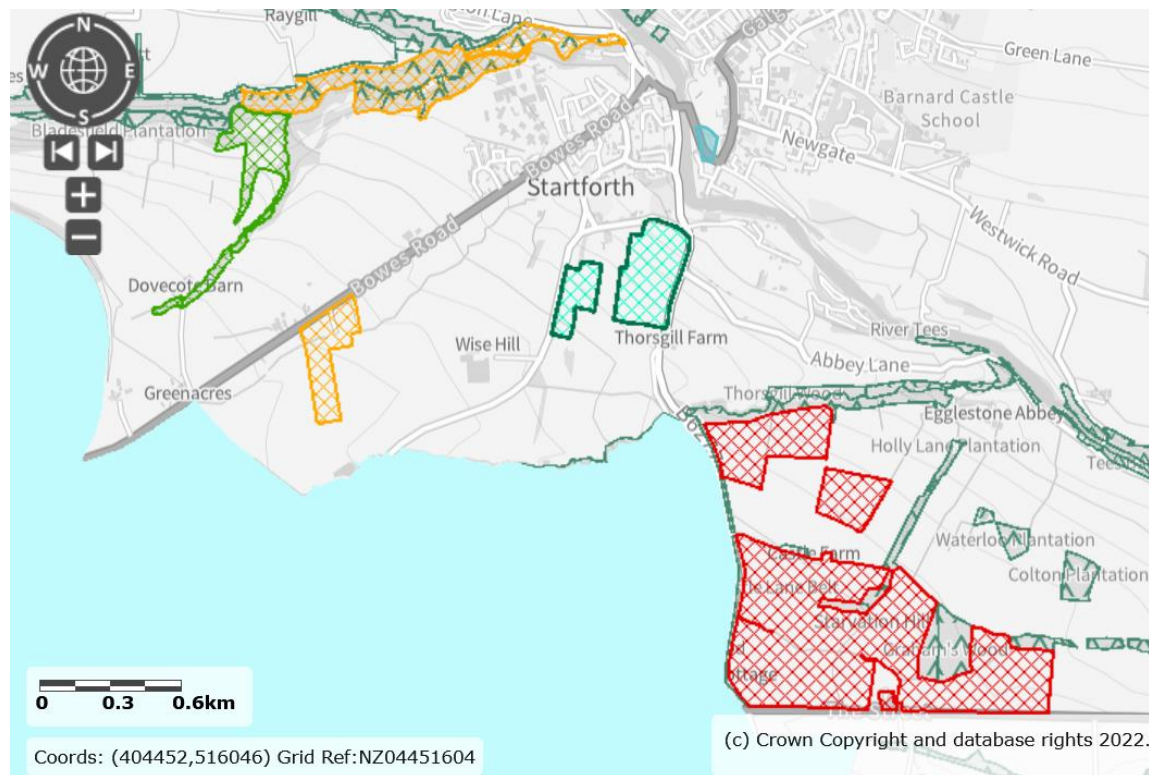
- We contend that the increase in air pollution arising from the increased traffic from the Black junction, and associated congestion, will have a significant effect on the local environment.
- We contend that Barnard Castle is in a rural area, reliant on its green space for economic benefits from tourism and farming, and as such, increased pollution will have a depressive effect on the local economy.
- We contend that the protection of the countryside is an element of sustainable development, and as such, a central plank of national and local planning policy and should thus be a material consideration in the granting of any consent.

### Local Area

8.1.1 Barnard Castle is in a rural area, surrounded by nature reserves and farmland. Many in the area are reliant on the countryside for employment and the town's economy is heavily supported by tourism, both for heritage sites and the local countryside.

8.1.2 The following image is taken from DEFRA's magic map, which provides geographic information about the natural environment from across government.

Fig. 26 DEFRA Magic Map of the area around Barnard Castle



Source: DEFRA magic map <https://magic.defra.gov.uk/MagicMap.aspx> Accessed 28/08/2022

8.1.3 This map shows the area around Startforth and Barnard Castle. The B6277 Moorhouse Lane runs up from the bottom of the map towards the town. The darker grey road is the A67, with the distinctive sharp turn being the junction between Bridgegate and The Bank.

8.1.4.1 The various coloured areas represent designated natural areas:

- The yellow hatched area towards the top of the map is Deepdale Nature Reserve. This is a Countryside Stewardship Agreement Management area (Higher Tier).
- The red hatched area to the bottom right is farmland registered as a Countryside Stewardship Agreement Management area (Middle Tier).

8.1.4.2 A Countryside Stewardship award “funds projects to restore habitats, improve water quality and woodland, reduce flood risk, protect landscapes, and provide year-round food and shelter for pollinators, birds and other wildlife.”<sup>101</sup>

- The areas marked with green triangles are English Woodland Grant schemes.
- The light blue area is a Less Favoured area of farmland. This, and the red hatched area, are both on the side of the B6277, which will be affected by the increased traffic from the Black junction.



8.1.4.3 Less Favoured is an EC Designation recognising disadvantaged farmland where the natural characteristics make it more difficult to farm competitively. The scheme provided special measures to support farming in these areas.

8.1.5 Objective 9 of the County Durham Plan (Natural Environment) aims to

CDP Objective 9 Protect, enhance, maintain and manage the county's locally, nationally and internationally important natural environment, including through securing net gains, protecting connectivity and recognising the wider benefits from natural capital.

8.1.6 TDLP 9.3.1 looks to the policies in the plan to "To reduce the adverse environmental impact of motorised travel."

### Specific local natural features

8.2.1 Barnard Castle is home to a wide variety of flora and fauna, ranging from the quotidian to the rare. An overview can be found here: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] There are also areas of green space, both wild and planned. Some highlights include:

#### Deepdale Nature Reserve.

8.2.2.1 Deepdale is an ancient semi-natural wood, which has been wooded for more than 400 years, and is mentioned in Sir Walter Scott's "Rokeby". This age has encouraged species of woodland flowers including scarcer plants like Yellow Star of Bethlehem, Bird's Nest Orchid, Wood Barley, Toothwort and Early Purple Orchid.

8.2.2.2 Nesting boxes encourage nesting by special species like Pied Flycatcher, Spotted Flycatcher, Marsh Tit, Redstart, Lesser Spotted Woodpecker, Nuthatch and Treecreeper, as well as more common species.

8.2.2.3 Deepdale also hosts three species of butterfly that are rare in Teesdale – the Holly Blue, the Purple Hairstreak and the White Letter Hairstreak.

8.2.2.4 Deepdale is the home to Bright Woods Forest School, which gives local children (and adults) the chance to enjoy nature in a protected environment. It also features local walks, which are popular with walkers.

8.2.2.5 The entrance to Deepdale is less than half a mile from the County Bridge, where traffic will be concentrated by the Black route.

8.2.2.6 Information taken from: [REDACTED]

## The Tees River

8.2.3.1 Amongst the creatures that live in and around the river are:

- Mayfly
- Otters
- Bats – soprano, pipistrelle and Daubenton’s all hunt over the river
- Brown Trout
- Atlantic Salmon

The native white-clawed crayfish have been almost completely wiped out by American signal crayfish, but the signal crayfish do provide good food for the otters.

8.2.3.2 The Trout and Salmon are one of the biggest signs of the revitalisation of the river, as these species need clean, flowing water to thrive. Salmon were thought to have died out in the Tees but improving water quality has brought them back.

8.2.3.3 Numerous bird species including Goosander, wood warblers and grey wagtail are all seen along this stretch of the Tees. Occasionally, there are kingfishers, oystercatchers and heron.

8.2.3.4 The riverbank under the green bridge across the Tees at the bottom of Barnard Castle, has long been home to a thriving colony of ducks. This bridge is about 200m from the bottom of The Bank.

8.2.3.5 The Sills in Startforth (part of the approach from the Cross Lanes junction into town) runs parallel with the river for its length. As well, the traffic will flow over the river at the County Bridge, and then parallel it along Bridgegate.

## Demesnes and Scar Top

8.2.4.1 These are two green areas within the town, both under the management of the Town Council. The Demesnes is a large, grassed area used by dog walkers, tourists, and local families for leisure and relaxation. It has also been used for town events and festivals.

8.2.4.2 Scar Top is the area outside the Castle at the top of town. The council administer the gardens surrounding Woodleigh, where the Council offices are housed. The main gate of the castle opens onto the area. This area has also been used for events and is a commonly used spot for relaxing and leisure.

8.2.4.3 Both areas have well-used children's play parks, and both are also within c250m of opposite ends of Bridgegate, where the increased traffic will flow.

## Farms

8.2.5 Barnard Castle is almost surrounded by farmland, much of which is tenanted from the larger Mortham Estate. A simple yell search finds more than 25 listed farmers around a 3-mile radius of the town.<sup>102</sup> Along with other rural employment (such as tourism, fisheries and horses), farming is a large contributor to the local economy, as well as supplying local restaurants and shops.

## Council Opinion

8.3.1 During lockdown the UK experienced a revitalisation of animal and bird life, owing to the cessation of noise and pollution.<sup>103</sup> Barnard Castle was no exception, with the bird sounds becoming louder and more common. The increase in congestion may well reverse this, as pollution and ambient noise have significant effects on birds in urban environments.<sup>104</sup>

8.3.2 The town is very lucky to have so much local green space, and associated wildlife, but all this be put at risk by increased congestion, as air pollution (and especially PM) increases. The Tees will be put at risk if the air pollution in town increases, especially as part of the affected route runs parallel to it.

8.3.3 It is known that PM and other pollutants can be distributed via wind and precipitation, influencing the quality of soil and water at a distance from their proximate source.<sup>105</sup> "Air pollution can influence the quality of soil and water bodies by polluting precipitation, falling into water and soil environments."<sup>106</sup>

Hence, air pollution has deleterious effects on both soil and water. Concerning PM as an air pollutant, its impact on crop yield and food productivity has been reported. Its impact on watery bodies is associated with the survival of living organisms and fishes and their productivity potential.<sup>107</sup>

8.3.4 Given the importance of protecting the natural environment from pollution, there are numerous policy references and requirements for new developments.

8.3.5 The NPS recognises that for road networks to be sustainable they “should be designed to minimise social and environmental impacts [NPS 3.2]. As part of this, applicants should “avoid and mitigate” environmental impacts “in line with the principles set out in the NPPF and the Government’s planning guidance” [NPS 3.3].

8.3.6 The NPPF has an environmental objective for sustainable development:

NPPF 8. to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.

8.3.7 It requires that planning decisions should protect the environment by:

NPPF 174. (e) preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air and water quality, taking into account relevant information such as river basin management plans

8.3.8 Durham County Council is a member of the Durham Biodiversity Partnership, which is now part of the North East England Nature Partnership. This is a Local Nature Partnership arising from the Natural Environment White Paper *The Natural Choice*. Their concern for the beautiful landscape of the county is reflected in the County Durham Plan.

Objective 9: Natural Environment - Protect, enhance, maintain and manage the county’s locally, nationally and internationally important natural environment, including through securing net gains, protecting connectivity and recognising the wider benefits from natural capital.

8.3.9 Two policies reiterate this policy. Policy 21 Delivering Sustainable Transport requires that “creation of new or improvements to existing routes and facilities do not cause unacceptable harm to the natural, built, or historic environment [CDP 21d]. Policy 24 Provision of Transport Infrastructure states that new or improved transport infrastructure will be permitted if certain criteria are met. One is that “it minimises and mitigates any harmful impact upon the built, historic and natural environment” [CDP 24b].

8.3.10 This concern descends from the Teesdale Local Plan, which required proposals showed they did “not unreasonably harm the landscape and wildlife resources of the area” [TDLP Policy ENV1]. Policy ENV16 of the Plan stated that the council would resist developments which would have

“significant detrimental impact on natural features and wildlife habitats of rivers and streams and their corridors” [TDLP Policy ENV16].

8.3.11 By increasing traffic to unsuitable levels along the B6277 and through the centre of town, the choice of the Black junction will increase air pollution in that area. Given the large areas of green space, woodland, wildlife habitat, farms and waterways in the immediate environs of this area, there will be inevitable environmental impact. The Blue route avoids this pollution increase by diverting traffic to a more suitable route to rebalance the levels.

8.3.12 By redistributing the traffic, the Blue route also helps mitigate congestion risk. Congestion is known to worsen pollution, meaning that the impact of traffic will go beyond the number of vehicles. This greater increase in pollution will affect the wider area, through the dispersal of pollutants by wind and rain.

8.3.13 This puts the Blue route in greater agreement with national and local planning, which seeks to avoid unnecessary air (and other) pollution arising from developments. We therefore argue that the Blue route represents the better choice for the natural landscape of Barnard Castle and those who use it for pleasure and rely on it for a living.

## Chapter 9: Economic

- We contend that an increase in traffic along the B6277/A67 route will have a depressive effect on the local economy via congestion and pollution.
- We contend that increased congestion and pollution will have a depressive effect on local house prices.
- We contend that national and local planning aims to support local economies, especially NPPF 6 (strong, competitive economy) and 7 (the vitality of town centres).
- We contend that given congestion is likely to increase owing to the selection of the Black route, selecting the Blue junction at Rokeby will be more in line with planning policy and offer significant benefit to the town and its environs.

9.1.1 Although perhaps not appearing as important as issues of congestion, risk of traffic accidents, public health, and the damage to heritage assets, there are other issues by which increased traffic will affect the quality of life in the town.

9.1.2 When the Teesdale District Local Plan was written, 41% of people in Teesdale District worked in Barnard Castle. “Considerations of the issues relating to employment and the local economy are therefore heavily influenced by the dominant position of Barnard Castle as an employment centre” [TDLP 6.0.1].

### Farmland

9.2.1 “Agriculture is also important for its impact on the landscape and its ecological importance. Approximately 79% (66,360 hectares) of the area of Teesdale is given over to agriculture. This indicates the importance of agriculture, not only for its economic and employment aspects but for its role in the landscape and ecology of the district [TDLP 3.15.2].”

9.2.2 As mentioned under environmental effects on the natural landscape [REDACTED] increased pollution damages farmland, from toxins and particulate matter absorbed by the soil and water.



9.2.3 Local concerns have been raised during the consultation process about the effects of the black junction on local farmers:

5.8.46 It was also made clear that there were local concerns that the junction location announced as part of the Preferred Route in May 2020 would have negative impacts on existing arable farmland, and a consequent commercial impact on tenanted properties.<sup>108</sup>

9.2.4 Farming requires regular access to free travelling roads, for the purpose of transporting fresh food and unruly livestock. Farm lorries (and other slow-moving farm vehicles) are a regular part of local traffic through the town. If the local roads become increasingly congested, this will cause delays. Delays are economically damaging.

## Tourism

9.3.1 Tourism is a significant factor in the economy of County Durham. Durham County Council identified it “as an important growth factor, responsible for more than 12,000 jobs, 20 million visitors and nearly £1 billion of spend in the county.”<sup>109</sup>

9.3.2 According to the County Durham Plan:

CDP 5.22 Planning for tourism should make the most of our assets, enriching them rather than harming the very character, quality and beauty that makes them attractive to residents and visitors. This can be achieved by ensuring development is appropriately located and levels of visitor activity are not likely to significantly affect protected sites and species, particularly those of national and European importance.

9.3.3 Tourism is also a major consideration for Barnard Castle. The town boasts not only beautiful natural landscapes, but also several heritage sites, museums, and other attractions. These include the Bowes Museum and the Castle itself, which are amongst the most visited attractions in County Durham, with over 20,000 visitors per year [CDP 5.16].

9.3.4 Barnard Castle and the Bowes Museum were recognised as a tourist attraction by the Teesdale District Local Plan, and that “Tourism is a major factor in the local economy and contributes to the maintenance and enhancement of employment opportunities and services” [TDLP 8.1.1]. The TDLP sought to encourage tourism and maximise its benefits to “visitors and residents alike” [TDLP 8.1.3].

9.3.5 The County Durham Plan enshrines the importance of tourism in Objective 15 (Visitor Economy): CDP Objective 15 Strengthen County Durham’s role as a visitor/tourist destination through supporting and enhancing existing attractions, visitor accommodation, townscapes, landscapes and the historic and natural environment.

9.3.6 To achieve this CDP 5.206 states that:

CDP 5.206 The council is committed to delivering a high quality integrated and sustainable transport network which supports our aspirations for a strong economy, a vibrant tourism offer and improved quality of life for all of our residents, including reducing air pollution and emissions of CO2.

9.3.7 We believe that there may well be an effect on tourism to or through the town owing to:

- Increased pollution
- Difficulty driving through town
- Damage to heritage sites from traffic
- The views being damaged by passing traffic, particularly higher-sided HGVs (as Historic England have objected to over Rokeby)<sup>110</sup>

9.3.8 Congestion, pollution and the aesthetics of traffic jams all make the town less pleasant to visit.

Congestion will also make driving caravans more difficult, potentially discouraging such visitors.

Increased traffic will put further strain on the existing parking in town, which makes visiting town more difficult.

## Town Centre

9.4.1 Other industries in town rely on tourism for their survival, as recognised in the TDLP 8.1.2.

There are numerous cafes and restaurants, boutique clothing shops, bed and breakfasts, pubs and venues which all benefit from tourism. Barnard Castle is a “Large Town Centre” in terms of the County Durham Plan [CDP Policy 9 Retail Hierarchy and Town Centre Development].

9.4.2 At least a dozen cafes and restaurants, between the bottom of The Bank and the Post Office at the Galgate corner (thus on a direct route through town from the County Bridge), have some form of outdoor space on the side of the road. Outdoor seating suffers from the effects of increased traffic, reducing the available space for covers.

9.4.3 All this will have a commensurate effect on businesses, causing economic issues and potentially pushing the town further down the Indices of Deprivation. If these businesses fail or have reduced income, this can reduce the need for additional staff, affecting local employment. Local businesses can be further affected by congestion causing delivery delays.

## Market Place

9.5.1 The Market Place on the cobbles in the centre of town is used weekly for a market, with a farmer's market taking place monthly. Like the tourist trade, difficulties parking and increased congestion will cause issues for the market, from reduced footfall, delivery delays, and difficulties setting up and breaking down.

9.5.2 Just as with outdoor seating for cafes, market traders will also be affected by air pollution. One study showed (compared to office workers) exposure in street traders was associated with a long list of symptoms including coughs, rapid heartbeat, headaches, dermatitis and chest pains. Persistent PM2.5 exposure increases occurrence of respiratory and cardiovascular symptoms.<sup>111</sup>

## General issues

9.6.1 This economic effect will be felt by residents as well: environmental and noise pollution and increased traffic are three of the issues *Which* identified as reducing house price in a 2018 article.<sup>112</sup> Investopedia likewise identified issues which can make houses on main roads less desirable – noise, dust and pollution, and parking.<sup>113</sup>

9.6.2 A 2015 study in the *Journal of Real Estate Practice and Education* found that “traffic noise systematically poses an environmental nuisance discount on housing values.”<sup>114</sup> It further showed “that not only the discount on the housing values increases in traffic noise levels, but also high intensity of traffic congestion and usage leads to a further discount on housing values.”<sup>115</sup> This is a long-recognised issue. A 1982 article in the *Journal of Sound and Vibration* found “that noise has a significant and consistent effect” on house prices.<sup>116</sup>

9.6.3 Residents will also suffer from delays in deliveries and the damage to homes from increased traffic along the BN6277/A67, owing to the number of listed buildings on that route which are personal homes.

9.6.4 The effects of air pollution can take a personal economic toll as well. Long Term Conditions like respiratory illness, cardiac problems, diabetes, asthma and other ailments have all been variously linked to pollution – not to mention the links between increased traffic and stress and anxiety. LTC sufferers face reduced earning potential, owing to

- medical appointments;
- debilitating symptoms;
- periods of illness;
- complete inability to work and
- early death.

9.6.5 Loss of individual earning power equates to a wider local and national economic drain. This manifests in:

- reduced personal spending power;
- loss of tax revenue;
- and welfare payments.

9.6.6 The Northern Health Science Alliance estimated that:

30% of the £4 per person per hour gap in productivity (or £1.20 per hour) between the Northern Powerhouse and the rest of England is due to ill-health. Reducing this health gap would generate an additional £13.2Bn in UK GVA.<sup>117</sup>

As well:

- Reducing the number of working age people with limiting long-term health conditions by 10% would decrease rates of economic inactivity by 3 percentage points in the Northern Powerhouse
- If they experience a spell of ill health, working people in the Northern Powerhouse are 39% more likely to lose their job compared to their counter-parts in the rest of England. If they subsequently get back into work, then their wages are 66% lower than a similar individual in the rest of England.<sup>118</sup>

## Wider costs

9.7.1 Other costs would likely include:

- The cost to local authorities for repairing the County Bridge and the Butter Market – as well the issues arising if the roads need to be shut to accommodate this.
- The costs to the NHS of LTCs arising from air pollution or road traffic accidents.
- Damage to the local economy from reduced tourism and reduction in personal spending because of LTCs.

## Council Opinion

9.8.1 The NPS is not scheme specific. It thus falls to the NPPF and local plans to inform the Council's approach to this section of the Local Impact Report.

9.8.2 The NPPF requires development to "Build a strong, competitive economy" (section 6) and ensure "the vitality of town centres" (section 7). As part of this, planning policies should "address potential barriers to investment" such as "poor environment" [NPPF 6.82]. NPPF 6.85 further requires that:

NPPF 85 Planning policies and decisions should recognise that sites to meet local business and community needs in rural areas may have to be found adjacent to or beyond existing settlements, and in locations that are not well served by public transport. In these circumstances it will be important to ensure that development is sensitive to its surroundings, does not have an unacceptable impact on local roads and exploits any opportunities to make a location more sustainable (for example by improving the scope for access on foot, by cycling or by public transport).

9.8.3 This choice of route has been stated to have significant impact on local roads and, as pointed out previously, makes access worse by foot and cycling (owing to the increased risk at the junctions and on the B6277 [REDACTED] as well as on the roads themselves) and by public transport (owing to congestion through town delaying buses).

9.8.4 Neither of these NPPF aims are supported by increasing congestion through town. Nor are they served by any damaging impact to rural employment, the tourist trade, nor by potential personal economic impacts. Thus, the Blue junction choice is the better option for the town.

## Chapter 10: Closing arguments

10.1.1 It is important to state up front, that Barnard Castle Town Council does not oppose the A66 dualling project and believes its aims and design are (in principle) both a benefit to the local area and in line with national planning policy.

10.1.2 BCTC also does not oppose the choice of junction at Cross Lanes, believing that the amended plan advanced at Statutory Consultation best serves the needs of the local area.

10.1.3 However, BCTC does not approve of the choice of the Black junction for the Rokeby end of the Cross Lanes-Rokeby section of the A66. The Council believes this will have a detrimental effect on the local area and does not believe the choice is in line with national and local planning policies.

Our objections are as follows:

### Historic England heritage assessment

10.2.1 We believe that the submitted heritage assessment by Historic England is flawed in its conclusions.

10.2.2 We believe that Historic England have mischaracterised and misunderstood the local landscape of Rokeby Park and Gardens. We believe that the Blue junction at Rokeby Park and Gardens will not cause "substantial harm" and further affects the Park less than the Black junction.

10.2.3 We also believe that, by driving more traffic down the B6277 and over the County Bridge into Barnard Castle, the Black route exposes more than forty listed structures to increased risk of harm from traffic action. We believe the number and significance of these structures means that Historic England's decision that the Black route only causes "harm" is inaccurate.

10.2.4 Critically, we believe that the lack of historic assessment for each of the affected structures is a breach of duty under NPS 5.127-5.128. National Highways believe that the Black junction will increase traffic flow. That traffic flow will increase the risk to the affected heritage assets (if Historic England are correct about the risk to St Mary's Rokeby). Thus, the risk to the heritage assets in Barnard Castle must be seen as direct effect of Highway's choice of junction and should be assessed as St Mary's and the Park and Gardens were.



### 10.2.5 Under 5.128 of the NPS:

NPS 5.128 In determining applications, the Secretary of State should seek to identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by the proposed development (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset), taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise from:

- relevant information provided with the application and, where applicable, relevant information submitted during examination of the application;
- any designation records;
- the relevant Historic Environment Record(s), and similar sources of information;
- representations made by interested parties during the examination; and
- expert advice, where appropriate, and when the need to understand the significance of the heritage asset demands it.

10.2.6 We believe that without such assessment, it is impossible to offer definitive judgement at this point on the relative merits of the two choices of junction. Taking into account our belief that the Blue route is the less harmful choice in terms of Rokeby Park and Gardens, we do not believe that the heritage statement is a true reflection of the junction options. Given this, we do not believe Historic England's opinion should have been given the weight it has by National Highways during statutory consultation.

### Suitability of the Black junction

10.3.1 Given that the choice of the Black junction increases the traffic along the affected route into Barnard Castle, any malign impact arising from that traffic action must be seen as a direct effect of that junction choice.

10.3.2 The route is not suitable for the traffic levels which will be created by the adoption of the Black junction at Rokeby.

- The increased traffic flow will increase congestion through the lower part of town and onwards.
- The increased traffic will bring with it risk disproportionate to the simple increase, owing to lack of adequate pavements and crossing points, and the difficult and hazardous roads.
- The increase in congestion will increase local air pollution, affecting a vulnerable population's health, local heritage assets, and the local environment and farmland.
- The combination of these will depress quality of life in town and carry potential economic burdens.

10.3.3 We contend that the choice of the Black route is in direct and indirect conflict with the wider aims and specific paragraphs of the National Planning Policy Framework, and the Guidance relating to the NPPF. It is also in conflict with elements of the National Networks National Policy Strategy. In

addition, it is in opposition to stated policies of both the County Durham Plan and the Teesdale District Local Plan.

10.3.4 Given this and given the unsuitable nature of the affected route for heavy traffic flow, we believe that the Black route is not a viable option.

## Public Benefit

10.4.1 Even if the historic assessment is accepted as full and accurate, the NPS allows for “substantial harm” to heritage assets if “it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or total loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss” [NPS 5.133]. We would hope we have demonstrated that there are clear public benefits arising from the adoption of the Blue route.

10.4.2 The Black route is injurious to:

- Congestion
- Safety
- Public Health
- Heritage assets
- Environment
- Economy

10.4.3 The Blue junction choice, in comparison, leads to better Traffic Volume, Journey Time Savings, and Safety. It is better for Residential and Commercial stakeholders – and is stated to be the preference of the landowner affected by the development. It also has engineering benefits, particularly in terms of drainage and utilities. The main areas where it is believed that the Black route is superior are in heritage and landscape impacts, which we believe is inaccurate.

10.4.4 One of National Highways’ three priorities (as detailed in the Route Development Report) is Customer: “We will shape our future by listening to, predicting and responding to the needs of our customers.”<sup>119</sup> The NPPF reflects the same concern for public involvement throughout the early development period. NPPF 106b states that planning policies should:

NPPF 106(b) be prepared with the active involvement of local highways authorities, other transport infrastructure providers and operators and neighbouring councils, so that strategies and investments for supporting sustainable transport and development patterns are aligned.

It is a shame that these principals have been overlooked and the community-led Blue route rejected in favour of the original option that Highways recognised was flawed.

10.4.5 “Public benefits should flow from the proposed development.”<sup>120</sup> We believe that the traffic impact from the Black route on Barnard Castle and its environs is such that the Blue route offers substantial public benefit, from mitigating or avoiding those impacts.

## Conclusion

NPPF 185. Planning policies and decisions should also ensure that new development is appropriate for its location taking into account the likely effects (including cumulative effects) of pollution on health, living conditions and the natural environment, as well as the potential sensitivity of the site or the wider area to impacts that could arise from the development.

10.5.1 This project represents a once-in-a-generation investment in infrastructure, which is rightly hailed for its likely uplifting benefits to the economy of the North. Therefore, it is vital that the individual details of the route are right, that the choices made best reflect the realities on the ground. Once the road is in use, there will be no easy way to rectify a mistake.

10.5.2 We recognise that the modelling only represents one set of traffic data. Traffic numbers fluctuate, and this will alter the actual number of vehicles using the Cross Lanes exit. However, this set of numbers does support National Highways belief that the western Black junction encourages traffic to use the Cross Lanes junction by preference.<sup>121</sup>

10.5.3 We cannot rely, over the lifetime of the scheme, on falling vehicle numbers on the road network to protect the town from the impacts of disproportionately directed traffic. National Highways believe that “traffic numbers will increase on the A66 with or without the project”.<sup>122</sup> Car ownership in Barnard Castle will not significantly decrease without massive improvement of local public transport. The farms around the town will need to move large vehicles and goods on the local roads. If future traffic use diverges upwards from current modelling, we will return to the problems which these numbers predict.

10.5.4 The Blue route encourages a more balanced flow of traffic through and around the town. The Blue route therefore mitigates any possible future development in traffic use. Individual changes in modelling show that new information produces new figures. It may not be possible to definitively state how traffic will change in the future, but it is possible to create the best possible circumstances

now for adapting to those changes as they happen. It will not be possible once the junction has been built.

10.5.5 We recognise many of our concerns may appear minor when taken individually. We believe, however, that in concert they represent significant aggravating impact from the altered traffic balancing arising from the choice of the Black junction. In addition, across the lifetime of the route, we believe there will be significant cumulative degradation of the quality of life of the affected area. We therefore request that the Blue eastern alternative junction be selected instead of the submitted Black junction.

## Appendix: List of listed buildings between the County Bridge and the Butter Market

1. Bridge End House – 1121649
2. Forecourt Walls, Railings and Gate to Number 5 – 1121650
3. The White Swan Public House and Swan Cottage – 1121648
4. Barnard Castle Bridge, over the River Tees – 1121647
5. Barnard Castle Bridge, attached wall to the South East – 12011056
6. The Castle – 1218822
7. Milestone at NZ 0484 1631 – 1201057
8. 22 Bridgegate – 1201055
9. Former Mill to rear of Number 22 – 1282875
10. Blue Bell Public House – 1201690
11. Charlton House and Attached Rear Wall – 1291743
12. Numbers 4 and 6 and Attached Rear Wall – 1282557
13. Johanson House – 1201315
14. Bank Cottage – 1218809
15. Number 51 (The Bank) – 1282721
16. 38-44 The Bank – 1291777
17. 36 The Bank – 1201314
18. 34 The Bank – 1218764
19. Blagraves – 1201313
20. 29 The Bank – 1291805
21. 28 The Bank – 1282760
22. 27 The Bank – 1218748
23. 26 The Bank – 1201312
24. Douglas House – 1201311
25. 24 The Bank - 1291798
26. K6 Telephone Kiosk – 1218721
27. 22 The Bank – 1201310
28. The Old Well – 1218711
29. 17 The Bank – 1201309
30. 15 The Bank – 1218708
31. 13 The Bank – 1201308
32. 12 The Bank - 1218696
33. 11 The Bank – 1201307
34. 10 and 10a The Bank - 1218678
35. 9 The Bank – 1201306
36. 8 The Bank - 1218665
37. 7 The Bank – 1218656
38. 6 The Bank – 1201305
39. 1 and 3 The Bank – 1291864
40. 2 and 4 Market Place – 1217861
41. Market Cross – 1201323
42. Barclays Bank – 1292243
43. Church of St Mary – 1218277

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