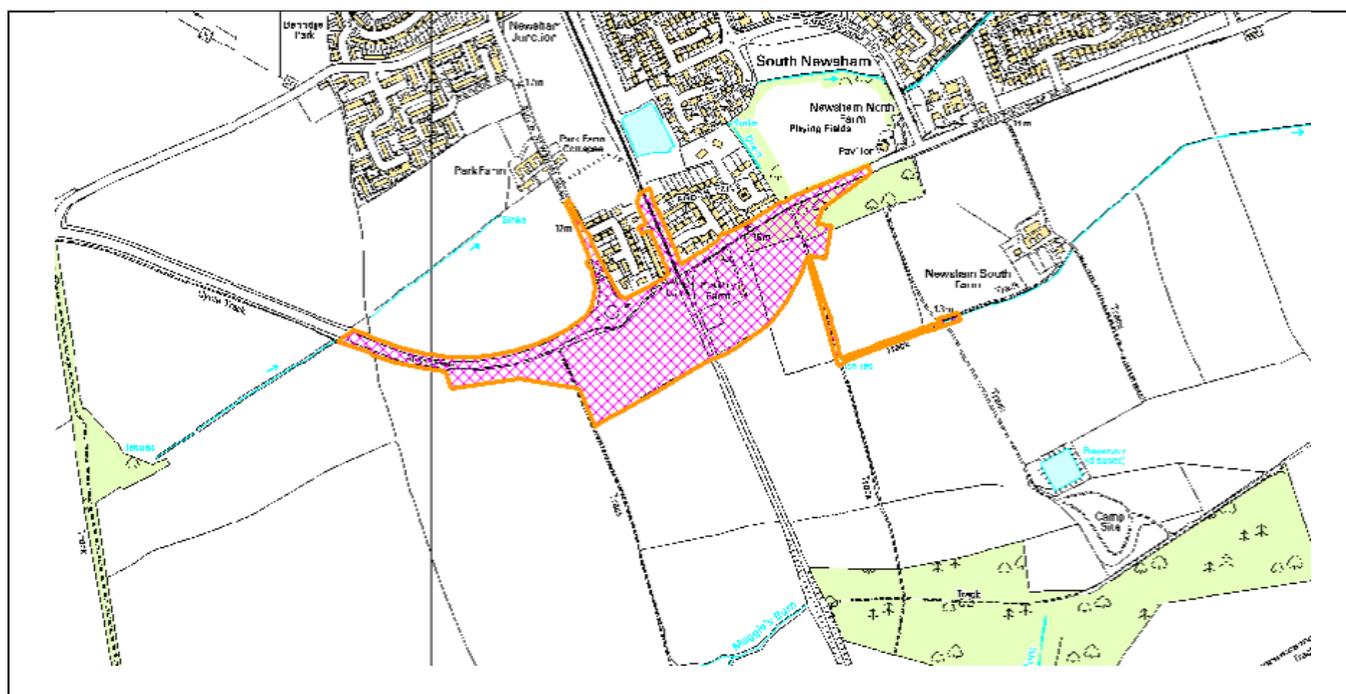




# Northumberland County Council

## Strategic Planning Committee, 1 March 2022

<b>Application No:</b>	21/03720/CCD		
<b>Proposal:</b>	Construction of a two-platform railway station including: pedestrian lifts, stepped pedestrian access, new highway accesses; construction of overbridge to carry diverted A1061 with shared footway and cycleway. Modifications to existing highways including new roundabouts and realignment of local roads and construction of new access roads from the highway; provision of parking for buses, cars, electric vehicles, motorcycles, cycles, and taxis; works to of public rights of way. Construction of facilities ancillary to the station including, lighting, soft and hard landscaping, surface and subsurface drainage, utilities and other services, boundary treatment and other associated works		
<b>Site Address</b>	Land South of The A1061, South Newsham Road, Blyth, Northumberland		
<b>Applicant:</b>	Northumberland County Council, County Hall, Morpeth, NE61 2EF,	<b>Agent:</b>	Miss Alannah Healey 72 B-Box Studios, Newcastle, NE2 1AN,
<b>Ward</b>	South Blyth	<b>Parish</b>	Blyth
<b>Valid Date:</b>	24 September 2021	<b>Expiry Date:</b>	15 March 2022
<b>Case Officer Details:</b>	Name: Mr Gordon Halliday Job Title: Consultant Planner Tel No: 07785 727053 Email: <a href="mailto:gordon.halliday@northumberland.gov.uk">gordon.halliday@northumberland.gov.uk</a>		



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**Recommendation:** That this application be GRANTED permission

## **1. Introduction**

1.1 Under the provisions of the Council's current Scheme of Delegation, in cases where the local authority is the applicant in respect of a planning application, it is required to be determined by the Planning Committee.

## **2. Description of the Proposal**

2.1 The Northumberland Line scheme seeks to re-introduce passenger services onto the existing freight line that runs between Newcastle Central Station and Ashington. The scheme includes the construction of six new railway stations and associated infrastructure. It is envisaged that there will be a half hourly service with an anticipated journey time between Newcastle and Ashington of 35 minutes.

2.2 The railway line was formerly known as the Ashington, Blyth and Tyne Line. Passenger services on the line ceased in 1964 since when freight trains have continued to operate.

2.3 This application is for the construction and operation of a new railway station in Newsham, Blyth. The original railway station at Newsham was opened in 1951 and was located adjacent to Newsham Junction where one line went north to Ashington and one line continued into the centre of Blyth. The latter line is now disused. The site of the proposed station is located some 700 metres south of the site of the original station that served the area between 1851 and 1964 when it was closed as part of the Beeching cuts. The site for the proposed station is adjacent to the A1061 to the southwest of Blyth. Residential properties at Railway Cottages, Blagdon Drive and Park Farm Villas are located to the north of the site. Almost the entire site, including all of the land proposed for development south of the A1061, is in the Green Belt.

2.4 The site of the proposed development has an area of 11.9 hectares. It comprises the following areas.

- A residential property (Arden House) to the east of the railway line.
- A poultry farm to the east of the railway line.
- Agricultural fields to the west and east of the railway line.
- Woodland on the eastern flank of the site.
- The railway corridor.
- The A1061 to the north; and
- Public Right of Way (300/031) on the western flank and Public Right of Way (300/162) on eastern flank.

2.5 The development proposals include the following main elements.

- Two platforms approximately 100 metres in length including lifts, stairs, footbridge, help points, platform lighting, CCTV and waiting shelters.
- Ticket vending machines and customer information screens with real time information at the station entrance.
- Car parking on both sides of the railway line with up to 237 spaces including 17 spaces with electric vehicle charging and 15 disabled parking spaces. The car parks will have a taxi drop off area, bus stop and cycle storage facilities.
- Realignment of the A1061 including construction of an overbridge facilitated by modifications to the existing roundabout, and the construction of a new roundabout to the east.
- The Public Rights of Way will be the subject of localised short diversions to facilitate the construction and operation of the station infrastructure.
- Provision of a drainage attenuation basin to the southwest of the site.
- Off-site habitat creation in compensation for the loss of biodiversity within the site.
- Off-site woodland planting in compensation for the loss of woodland on the site.
- Hard and soft landscaping including specimen tree planting on the site boundaries and swales, grass, shrub and tree planting between car parking bays.

2.6 It is anticipated the construction of the station will be undertaken in a period of approximately 11-15 months, subject to safety, access and other considerations.

2.7 The existing railway line is single track in the Newsham area and the scheme proposes that this will be upgraded to twin track in this location, hence the requirement for platforms and car parking provision on both sides of the track.

### **3. Planning History**

Reference Number: 19/02151/SCREEN

Description: Request for a Screening Opinion- Provision of six new train stations, associated upgrading and refurbishment of existing rail infrastructure and engineering works and the reintroduction of passenger train services.

Status: SCREEN

Reference Number: 20/02243/SCREEN

Description: Request for a Screening Opinion- Provision of six new train stations, associated upgrading and refurbishment of existing rail infrastructure and engineering works and the reintroduction of passenger train services.

Status: SCREEN

#### 4. Consultee Responses

Blyth Town Council	No response received.
Natural England	No objection.
The Coal Authority	No objection subject to the imposition of conditions requiring intrusive site investigations to be carried out prior to the commencement of development to ensure that adequate information on ground conditions and coal mining legacy is available for appropriate remedial and mitigatory measures to be identified and carried out before building works commence on site.
Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA)	No objection subject to the imposition of planning conditions to control surface water and ensure that the risk of flooding does not increase.
Northumbria Police	Have liaised with British Transport Police (BTP) and the submitted comments also reflect the views of BTP. Suggestions made for designing out crime in the proposed development.
County Highways	No objection subject to the imposition of conditions and informatives in relation to highway safety, sustainable transport and car / cycle parking considerations.
County Archaeologist	No objection subject the imposition of a condition as the site is of archaeological interest.
County Ecologist	No objection subject to conditions.
Public Protection	No objection subject to the imposition of conditions related to tannoy noise, acoustic barrier details, construction noise and vibration, enabling works, land contamination and construction delivery and collection hours.
Strategic Estates	No response received.
Countryside / Rights of Way	The proposed layout has an impact on the northern end of two public footpaths (300/031 and 300/162), requiring their diversion. The appropriate legal changes to these public footpaths will need to be carried out
Fire & Rescue Service	No objection.
Northumbria Ambulance Service	No response received.
South SE Tree And Woodland Officer	No response received.
Climate Change Team	No response received.
Building Conservation	Support the application that is in accordance with the NPPF and recommend that conditions be imposed relating to the design and colour palette for station infrastructure (shelters, lighting, signage, furniture etc.) to ensure continuity and quality in the appearance and design of the scheme.
Port of Blyth	No response received.
Network Rail	Fully support the re-introduction of a passenger service along the railway. Also support the closure of the adjacent railway level crossing on safety grounds and this is an important aspect in helping fulfil Network Rail's policy of reducing risks at level crossings nationwide. Planning conditions, including

	construction hours, should not fetter Network Rail in performing its normal operating and maintenance functions on the line.
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## 5. Public Responses

### 5.1 Neighbour Notification

Number of Neighbours Notified	142
Number of Objections	10
Number of Support	6
Number of General Comments	0

#### Notices

5.2 Statutory public / public right of way site notices were posted on 5 October 2021 and a press notice was placed in the News Post Leader.

#### Summary of Responses:

5.3 The letters of support refer to the benefits that the Northumberland Line scheme will bring to the area.

5.4 The letters of objection raise the following points

- if charges at the station car park are introduced in the future, this will lead to indiscriminate parking in local streets.
- The provision of 12 parking spaces for the 16 properties at Railway Cottages is inadequate. Parking is required for emergency services, deliveries and visitors.
- The blocking of the railway crossing at South Newsham will make residents, many of whom are elderly, have to walk further and have to use footbridge.
- Increased noise, litter and ant-social behaviour for residents of Railway Cottages and Blenheim Drive.
- Adverse impact on ability to horseride in the locality.
- The station together with new housing will lead to increased congestion on local roads, in particular the A1061.
- Adverse impact on the local environment through removal of greenspace and increased road traffic outweigh any economic benefits.
- Rail maintenance will take place outside normal working hours to the detriment of local amenity.
- Concerns regarding impact on stability of properties at Railway Cottages and effects of pile driving.
- Noise pollution from tannoy announcements.
- Existing field suffers from drainage problems.
- Floodwater behind signal box seeps under the road through railway Cottages.
- Too many car parking spaces are being provided.
- There is a good bus service to Newcastle at present.
- Loss of right of way across the railway line. Gated access across the railway could be provided.
- The proposed 2.5 metre sound barrier will result in a strip of 'no man's land' and will be a visual intrusion. This area could be used for parking.

- Carbon footprint of the proposed development will be enormous.
- Increased air pollution from both cars and trains.
- A well-established wood providing habitats for wildlife will be removed.
- Passenger trains have not run for 50 years and are not needed now.
- Destruction of open countryside used by walkers, cyclists and horse riders.
- The station should be located at Newsham not South Newsham.
- There was inadequate pre-application consultation during a period that was subject to Covid restrictions.

5.5 The above is a summary of the comments. The full written text is available on our website at: <http://publicaccess.northumberland.gov.uk/online-applications//applicationDetails.do?activeTab=summary&keyVal=QZQNA3QSJCD00>

## 6. Planning Policy

6.1 In accordance with Section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, planning applications should be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In this case the development plan comprises the Blyth Valley Borough Local Development Framework Core Strategy (BVBCS) (2007), the Blyth Valley Borough Local Development Framework Development Control Policies (BVBDCP) (2007) and saved policies from the Blyth Valley Borough Local Plan (BVBLP) (1999).

6.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2021) and Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) are material considerations in determining this application.

6.3 Paragraph 48 of the NPPF states that weight can be given to policies contained in emerging plans dependent upon three criteria: the stage of preparation of the plan; the extent to which there are unresolved objections to policies within the plan; and the degree of consistency with the NPPF. The independent examination of the Northumberland Local Plan (NLP) has concluded, and the Inspectors' report is published on the Council's website. The Inspectors consider that subject to a number of recommended Main Modifications, the NLP is 'sound' and provides an appropriate basis for the planning of the County. The plan is in the final stage of preparation, there are no unresolved objections, and the plan is consistent with national policy, and therefore significant weight should be given to the policies in the NLP.

6.4 The following policies in the BVBCS are relevant to the consideration of the application.

SS1 Regeneration and Renaissance of Blyth Valley 2021
SS3 Sustainability Criteria
A2 Pedestrian / Cycle Routes
A3 Ashington, Blyth and Tyne Line

6.5 The following policies in the BVBDCP are relevant to the consideration of the application.

DC1 General Development
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DC3 Development in the Green Belt and in the Countryside
DC11 Planning for Sustainable Travel
DC16 Biodiversity
DC17 Landscape, General Protection and Restoration
DC19 Drainage and Flood Risk
DC21 Pollution Control
DC22 Noise Pollution
DC27 Design of New Developments

6.6 The following saved policies in the BVBLP are relevant to the consideration of the application.

STP1 Spatial Strategy
STP2 Presumption in favour of Sustainable Development
STP3 Principles of sustainable Development
STP4 Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation
STP5 Health and Wellbeing
QOP1 Design Principles
QOP2 Good Design and Amenity
QOP4 Landscaping and Trees
QOP6 Delivering well designed Places
TRA1 Promoting Sustainable Connections
TRA2 The Effects of Development on the Transport Network
TRA4 Parking Provision in New Development
TRA5 Rail Transport and Safeguarding Facilities
E2 Nature Conservation: General Protection of Wildlife
E3 Landscape: General Approach
E5 The Protection of Tree and Shrub Cover
E12 Archaeology
G9 Development in Countryside Beyond Green Belt
G10 Development Criteria in the Countryside
M8 Car Parking

6.7 The following policies in the NLP are relevant to the consideration of the application.

STP 1: Spatial Strategy
STP2: Presumption in favour of Sustainable Development
STP3: Principles of Sustainable Development

STP4: Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation
STP5: Health and Wellbeing
STP 8: Development in the Green Belt
QOP1: Design Principles
QOP2: Good Design and Amenity
QOP4: Landscaping and Trees
QOP6: Delivering Well-designed Places
TRA1: Promoting Sustainable Connections
TRA2: The Effects of Development on the Transport Network
TRA5: Rail Transport and Facilities
ENV1: Approaches to assessing the impact of development on the natural, historic and built environment
ENV2: Biodiversity and Geodiversity
ENV7: Historic Environment and Heritage Assets
WAT3: Flooding
WAT4: Sustainable Drainage Systems
POL1: Unstable and Contaminated Land
POL2: Pollution and Air, Soil and Water Quality
INF 5: Open Space and Facilities for Sport and Recreation

6.9 The following documents are also relevant in the consideration of the application.

North East Local Economic Partnership. Strategic Economic Plan (2017)

Northumberland Economic Strategy 2019-2024. (2018)

Northumberland Line Economic Corridor Strategy, (February 2021)

Northumberland Landscape Character Assessment (2010)

## 7. Appraisal

7.1 The main issues for consideration in the determination of this application are:

- Principle of the development
- Economic considerations
- Impact on the Green Belt
- Provision for car parking
- Other highway considerations
- Impact on residential amenity
- Impact on the character and appearance of the area
- Impact on biodiversity
- Impact on heritage assets

Principle of the Development

7.2 Policy SS1 in the BVBCS identifies the Ashington, Blyth and Tyne (ABT) Line as a district-wide priority for achieving an economic and social renaissance by 2021.

Policy A3 in the BVBCS states that the re-introduction of passenger rail services on the ABT line will be supported by safeguarding the route and land for possible stations including at Newsham.

7.3 The key diagram for the BVBCS does not identify sites for possible stations. The BVBLP had identified the site where a station had previously existed. However, this was not a saved policy so does not form part of the current Development Plan for the area.

7.4 The NLP also identifies the reintroduction of passenger rail services on the Northumberland Line as a key priority of the Council provided any significant adverse impact on the environment and communities can be mitigated. It also promotes the development of public transport interchanges at key locations along the line. Policy TRA5 in the NLP also supports the re-introduction of passenger rail services on the Northumberland Line.

7.5 Policy TRA5 identifies Newsham as one of the locations for stations on the railway line. The Publication Draft of the emerging NLP does not safeguard a specific site for the station, simply showing the station as a point close to the existing A1061 road and the location that is now proposed in the planning application.

7.6 The proposed siting of the station has been determined based on an appraisal of alternative options. The alternative sites for the proposed railway station included adjacent to the site of the original Newsham station. However, sites to the north of the railway station were constrained by existing building development adjacent to the railway line. Any potential alternative sites were not large enough to provide for the anticipated car parking demand at the station. This includes the site of the original Newsham station. Furthermore, the proposed station at Newsham could not be sited further north due to it being in direct conflict with the proposed railway station at Bebside. Any sites to the south would not have been well related to the existing settlement. It is noted that there has been substantial house building in the southern parts of Blyth that would be easily accessible by various means of transport to the proposed new station

7.7 The proposed railway station at Newsham is an integral component of the Northumberland Line scheme. It is concluded therefore the principle of the development of the station is in accordance with Policies SS1 and A3 in the BVBCS and policy TRA5 in the NLP. Other aspects of the proposals, notably the impact on the Green Belt, highway considerations and the implications for residential amenity, are dealt with in later sections of this appraisal.

#### Economic considerations

7.8 The County Council and various regional bodies consider that the re-opening of the Northumberland Line for passenger rail services will be a key to future economic development in South East Northumberland.

7.9 In the North East Local Economic Partnership's Strategic Economic Plan, the introduction of passenger services to the line is cited as necessary to the achievement of the plan's connectivity goals. The Northumberland Economic Strategy recognises that increased connectivity will bring huge benefits, especially to the deprived communities of South East Northumberland. The Strategy identifies the reopening of the Northumberland Line to passengers as a key priority.

7.10 The Strategy for the Northumberland Line Economic Corridor seeks to capitalise upon the reintroduction of passenger rail services between Ashington and Newcastle as a catalyst for transformational change. It states: *'The Northumberland Line is expected to have a major impact on the local economy by facilitating economic activity and improving public transport accessibility, providing the foundations for a new and ambitious clean growth economic corridor to be established'*.

7.11 It is concluded that the economic considerations support the principle of the development and should be given substantial weight.

#### Impact on the Green Belt

7.12 Almost the entire application site, including all of the land proposed for development south of the A1061, is in the Green Belt, as defined in the BVLP and the NLP.

7.13 Policy DC3 of the BVBDP states that there is a presumption against inappropriate development in the Green Belt and that new development in the countryside will not be permitted unless it is for certain defined uses. It also states that where new developments are to be permitted they will be expected to demonstrate that a sequential search has been undertaken and there are no more suitable sites available. Policy STP 8 in the NLP states that inappropriate development in the Green Belt will not be supported except in very special circumstances where other considerations clearly outweigh the potential harm to the Green Belt and any harm resulting from the proposal.

7.14 The NPPF states (paragraph 137) that *'the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence'*. It continues by stating (paragraph 147) that *'inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances'*. Paragraph 150 identifies forms of development that are not inappropriate provided they preserve openness and do not conflict with the purposes of including the land in the Green Belt. These include *'local transport infrastructure which can demonstrate a requirement for a Green Belt location'*.

7.15 There are therefore four aspects to consider. First whether a sequential test has found no suitable sites outside the Green Belt. Second whether the proposed development represents inappropriate development. Third whether the impact on 'openness' is acceptable. Fourth whether the proposed development conflicts with the purposes of including the land in the Green Belt. These are considered in the following paragraphs.

7.16 The alternative sites that were considered for the proposed development are referred to in paragraph 7.6 above. It is considered that the applicant has demonstrated that it would not be possible to develop the station and its associated infrastructure, including the car park and access, on land to the north of the A1061 that is not designated as Green Belt.

7.17 In respect of whether the proposed development represents *'inappropriate development'* it is considered that the proposed development as a whole represents *'local transport infrastructure'* under the terms of NPPF paragraph 150. It is relevant

to note that case law has confirmed that a car park that serves a purpose beneficial to a community, as opposed to serving a private development, could be classified as 'local transport infrastructure' within the terms of paragraph 150 of the NPPF. The proposed station similarly clearly serves a purpose beneficial to the community. A relevant consideration is whether the full extent of the proposed car parking is required to service the new station. An assessment of the proposed car parking provision is set out later in this report and this concludes that the full extent is justified. Accordingly it is concluded that the proposed car parking conforms to paragraph 150 of the NPPF. Overall therefore it is concluded that the proposal for local transport infrastructure does not represent 'inappropriate development' in the Green Belt.

7.18 In respect of 'openness' there are elements of the proposed development that will not affect openness, in particular the landscaping and attenuation basin are open land uses that can be regarded as appropriate land uses in the Green Belt. The proposed development does include certain elements, notably the lifts and bridge at the station and the bridge over the railway for the realigned A1061, whose vertical dimension could be considered to affect openness, but the car park also would have an impact on openness. A Landscape, Townscape and Visual impact Assessment (LTVIA) document was submitted as part of the application and it is helpful to consider its assessment of the impact of the proposals on openness.

7.19 The LTVIA notes that *'the level of openness within and surrounding the site is highly influenced and limited by the existing built form of South Newsham north of the A1061; the existing railway buildings and features south of the A1061; existing residential and commercial properties to the east of the Newsham Station railway corridor; and the existing vegetation in the forms of woodland and hedgerows which form a series of green boundaries and limits openness within the Green Belt. The scheme will require the removal of existing vegetation within the site in order to produce the station platforms, pedestrian lifts and footbridge, the overbridge, and car parking. The largest source of effect to the site will be through the introduction of an overbridge, to allow the A1061 to cross over the railway corridor without a level crossing. Embankments to the north and south of the proposed road will support the overbridge. The embankments will be planted with woodland and additional woodland will be planted to create a 10m buffer between the embankment and the Green Belt to the south. This expanse of woodland will connect with the existing woodland to the east and the existing and proposed hedgerows to the west, creating a solid green boundary along the south edge of the A1061'*.

7.20 The LTVIA concludes that *'the magnitude of the effect of the proposal on the landscape openness of the site is considered to be moderate. This is due to the proposals causing a change in landscape character, but one which introduces compatible or complementary elements of landscape character through the increase of woodland planting within the area and lack of buildings included within the scheme'*. This moderate effect on openness needs to be weighed in the planning balance.

7.21 In respect of whether the proposed development represents a conflict with the purposes of including this land within the Green Belt, it is considered that the main reasons for Green Belt designation here is to maintain the separation of settlements, to prevent encroachment and to encourage urban regeneration. The nearest settlement to the south of Blyth is New Hartley and the effect of the proposed development would be to bring urbanising features between 10 and 15% closer to

New Hartley This is considered to be acceptable. The nearest settlement to the west is Cramlington approximately two kilometres away but the proposed development is not considered to affect separation to the west. The proposed development clearly would encourage urban regeneration as referred to in paragraphs 7.8 to 7.11 of this report.

7.22 It is concluded therefore that the proposal will have an effect on the openness of the Green Belt but that this will be limited by the various landscaping and planting proposals. It is relevant also to note that the proposed new alignment of the A1061 will provide a sense of containment and a clear demarcation between the open Green Belt countryside to the south and the urbanising elements of the proposed development. Suitably landscaped the proposed embankments for the realigned A1061 and the overbridge could allow for a degree of screening of the car park and station structures when viewed from the south and east. It has been concluded above that the proposal does not represent 'inappropriate development' in the Green Belt but even if it was considered to be 'inappropriate development it is agreed that the proposal's contribution to urban and economic regeneration of the area would represent the *'very special circumstances'* that the NPPF requires to be demonstrated if projects are to proceed.

7.23 Overall therefore, notwithstanding the limited impact on openness and taking into account the absence of suitable alternative sites and the proposal's contribution to urban and economic regeneration of the area, it is concluded that the proposed development conforms with Policy DC3 in the BVBDGP, Policy STP8 in the NLP and the relevant provisions in the NPPF in respect of development in the Green Belt.

#### Provision for Car Parking

7.24 Policy M8 in the BVBLP states that new development should seek to minimise the area devoted to car parking, whilst complying with parking standards and safeguarding existing provision. Policy DC 11 in the BVBDGP states that planning permission for new development will not be permitted unless it meets various criteria including providing an appropriate number of car and cycle parking provision. Appendix A in the BVBDGP sets out car parking standards for various types of development. Railway stations are not specifically mentioned so would fall under 'sui generis' for which it is stated that provision will depend on the size and location of the development and the extent to which it will generate trips. The text in the appendix states that car parking standards ensure that new developments provide adequate off-street whilst avoiding the over-provision of car parking.

7.25 Policy TRA4 in the NLP states that an appropriate amount of off-street vehicle parking sufficient to serve new development should be made available in safe, accessible and convenient locations. However, the NLP does not identify any minimum or maximum parking standards for developments such as the Northumberland Line. The NPPF states that maximum parking standards should only be set where there is clear and compelling justification that they are necessary for managing the local road network or for optimising the density of development in town centres where the aim should be to improve the quality of parking alongside measures to promote accessibility by pedestrians and cyclists (paragraph 108).

7.26 It is proposed to provide two new car parks, one on each side of the railway line, providing up to 237 spaces with the western car park having 140 spaces and the eastern car park 97 spaces. This split reflects the broad anticipated split of

access routes from Newsham for the western car park and South Beach for the eastern car park. It is not possible to determine users' preference for parking in one car park over the other. Consideration will be given at the detailed design stage for the signing strategy to the provision of reactive signing to indicate whether spaces may be available on the approach to the car parks and is secured by a recommended condition. There would be 15 accessible spaces and 17 electric vehicle-charging bays. The car parks will each accommodate a drop-off area and taxi pick up / drop off area. The internal layout of the car parks allows for pedestrian access between the car parking aisles through the provision of footways and internal pedestrian crossing routes that connect to the desire lines from the car parks to the station platforms.

7.27 The Transport Assessment (TA) submitted with the planning application includes information on forecasting the number of passengers that would use the proposed station and how they would travel to the station. The forecasting identified a demand for 232 car parking spaces would be required for the new Newsham station in 2039.

7.28 Some local residents have indicated that the number of car parking spaces has been overestimated and the proposed car park is too large. Members will recall that in the Committee report for the Seaton Delaval Station application, a considerable amount of information was presented which in summary supported the methodology used in the forecasting and modelling of car parking requirements. Some of that is relevant also for this application. County Highways have reviewed the information provided on future car parking requirements in the Transport Assessment and have endorsed its findings.

7.29 The effects of the pandemic were considered in the officer report to Committee on the proposed Ashington Railway Station. It was pointed out that the applicants acknowledged that the original modelling was based on pre-pandemic 2019 data, but that recent traffic flow data demonstrated that traffic flows had largely recovered to pre-pandemic levels. Furthermore it was considered to be too early to assess if travel behaviours will return to pre-Covid patterns or have changed permanently as a consequence of the pandemic. They considered that it was not unreasonable to use pre-pandemic information on travel behaviour to inform parking provision and designs for the Northumberland Line scheme. County Highways agreed with this assessment. For Newsham additional traffic surveys were carried out at the Blagdon Drive junction in June 2021 when Covid restrictions had been lifted sufficiently to allow representative surveys to be undertaken.

7.30 County Highways note that car parking requirements and highway impacts have been assessed upon the basis of free car parking being provided. The Cabinet has agreed that there should be no charging at Northumberland Line car parks for one year following which there will be a review. County Highways recommend a planning condition is imposed to ensure that the impacts of any change in car parking charging strategy is addressed through the planning process and any mitigation that might be required is provided as part of any change in strategy.

7.31 County Highways have also recommended a car parking management condition to allow future flexibility in the management of the car parks and the number of EV, disabled and other operational bays within the site to reflect the future usage and make up of parking demands. This will allow also for the provision of EV charging for some disabled bays. It will also detail how access roads, drainage,

landscaping, CCTV and lighting will be operated, managed and maintained upon completion of the development and the boundaries between any multiple parties in this respect. This strategy secures the ongoing management and maintenance of the development and also ensures that if there are any changes to these elements in the future, revised details will need to be reviewed and approved through the submission of revised information.

7.32 Following the scheme-wide consultation that took place in November and December 2020, residents of Railway Cottages raised concerns regarding the impact of the proposals on the availability of car parking for the 16 properties that comprise Railway Cottages. As a result of representations received on that consultation, the submitted proposals include the provision of a car parking layby for 12 parking places adjacent to the proposed access road to the western car park and Railway Cottages. There is an existing issue with on-street parking in this location associated with Railway Cottages where parking currently occurs on the highway, with some vehicles parking half on and half off the existing footway and footway / cycleway. Whilst not exclusively for residents of Railway Cottages, County Highways support this provision in order to improve safety along the new access road to the car park. County Highways consider it unlikely that station users would use these bays due to the occupancy by Railway Cottage residents and the increased walking distance to them from the station platform compared to using the western car park itself.

7.33 Some residents have submitted objections to the planning application that this level of provision is insufficient for a demand that will include not just residents but also visitors, deliveries, emergency services etc. Residents have pointed out that they currently also have access to a small area of vacant land to the east of the level crossing and south of the A1061 where 4 / 5 cars are able to park. This area, which is owned by Network Rail, will not be available to residents as it is required as part of the proposed development. Emergency vehicles (and other vehicles) will be able to continue to access the properties via the back lane that runs to the east of the properties, although this lane is not wide enough to allow vehicles to pass if there are vehicles parked in the lane.

7.34 The applicants were asked to comment on these representations and have provided the following comments.

*7.35 'Residents currently informally park their cars on the northern footway of South Newsham Road. The proposed layout of the scheme provides an opportunity to formalise existing parking here through provision of a parking area. As such, the proposals do not seek to provide for additional parking but seek to safeguard and formalise the existing arrangement for existing demand. The area available for parking has been maximised within the constraints of the layout, considering other competing demands on space. For example, the formalised access to the Railway Cottages and car park to be east; and suitable pedestrian crossing facilities; the car park exit and side junction to the west. Formalising parking outside of the parking area specified would lead to safety issues due to required junction visibility splays and crossing protection areas. The area available for parking has been maximised within the constraints of the layout, considering other competing demands on space. For example, the formalised access to the Railway Cottages and car park to be east; and suitable pedestrian crossing facilities; the car park exit and side junction to the west'.*

7.36 Residents have also suggested that the land to the rear of Railway Cottages could be used for residents' parking. Regarding this suggestion the applicants have provided the following comments.

7.37 *'The project team have explored a number of options for car parking at this location with residents. Two options for the land at the back of Railway Cottages have been discounted.*

*(i) The land at the back of Railway Cottages is adopted as highway which would require it to be laid out according to highway standards. We understand there are no formal permissions for residents to park along the kerb or in the triangle of land – even though residents have informally done so. Existing parking on the kerb in close proximity to the level crossing also presents a hazard to the operational railway. Discounted on grounds of safety.*

*(ii) Residents of Railway Cottages enter into a shared ownership with maintenance obligation for the land at the rear of the cottages. There was no consensus of opinion on this option, some residents advised that they could not or would not pay others did not want a long-term liability for the use of the space. Discounted due to the concept of a shared ownership model being deemed unacceptable by residents.*

7.38 *"As such, the scheme has sought to formalise the existing kerb-based parking along the north side of the approach road into parking bays. This will provide c. 12 spaces, which is in addition to other parking provision in this area (including the station car park itself). These parking spaces will not be 'residents only' on the basis the station car park provides more convenient parking provision for station users. NCC will monitor parking in this area, if off street parking becomes an issue, then residents could apply for these spaces to become designated residents parking under a permit scheme which would be free for the first year but chargeable after that'.*

7.39 Whilst recognising the issues raised by residents of Railway Cottages, it is considered that the car park proposals in the application, subject to the imposition of appropriate planning conditions, are in accordance with Policy M8 in the BVBLP, Policy DC 11 in the BVBDPC, Policy TRA4 in the NLP and the NPPF.

#### Other Highway Considerations

7.40 Policy DC 11 in the BVBDPC states that planning permission for new development will not be permitted unless it meets various criteria including improving the integration of different modes of travel, encouraging the use of public transport and demonstrate safe and efficient access. Policy TRA1 in the NLP requires the transport implications of development to be addressed as part of any planning application and sets out various planning criteria that the development will be required to address. The NPPF requires applications for developments requiring significant amounts of movement to be supported by a transport assessment so that the likely impacts of the proposal can be assessed (paragraph 113).

7.41 A Transport Assessment (TA) has been submitted to support the proposed development. The assessment identifies the anticipated transport impacts of the proposed development and outlines whether any necessary improvements to accessibility and safety for all modes of travel are required. The assessment methodology was agreed in advance of the submission of this application through

detailed pre-application discussions between County Highways and the applicants and their consultants.

7.42 The highways works to support this application are significant. This is primarily linked to the need to provide a replacement railway crossing following the recommended closure of the existing A1061 Newsham Level Crossing. The proposed closure of the Newsham Level Crossing improves road safety at this location through the removal of the potential conflicts between road users and railway users. County Highways note that the closure has been recommended by the Route Level Crossing Manager for Network Rail, who was the expert witness for level crossing closures as part of the Transport Works Act Order (TWAO) inquiry for the scheme. The Proof of Evidence submitted to the inquiry considered the safety aspect of the level crossings through the undertaking of a qualitative and quantitative risk assessment resultant from the proposals and the increase in train movements on the line. The assessment of the current situation and potential mitigation options at the Newsham Level Crossing considered the increased frequency of closures, the interaction of traffic movements, line speed implications, signalling and the behaviour of all users at a level crossing. The assessment also included a risk ranking comparing all level crossings in the Eastern Region and how this rank changed with the various interventions considered. In his assessment of these matters it was his expert opinion that technological improvements to the existing level crossing would not suitably address the risks associated with its retention on the balance of safety, public behaviour and implications on the operation of the railway itself. It was therefore his recommendation, that the level crossing was closed when considering these factors.

7.43 In supporting the expert position in relation to rail safety, an alternative provision for a bridge has been proposed. This measure will remove the harm associated with a level crossing in its entirety and County Highways consider that it is an acceptable form of mitigation that will achieve the improvements to rail safety, but also remove the delay and queuing that creates part of the risk associated with a level crossing. The removal of delay and queuing can also be considered as an overall improvement to the free flow operation of the highway, for all users, in this instance. The replacement of a level crossing with a bridge will provide additional resilience to the overall highway network providing a route into the southern part of Blyth via the A1061 South Newsham Road that is not restricted by level crossing closures as is currently the case.

7.44 This has been achieved through the provision of a new road overbridge to the railway line to the south of the current alignment of the A1061 South Newsham Road. To facilitate this bridge and provide acceptable approach gradients to the structure a realignment of the A1061 to the south is necessary. The applicant has proposed two roundabout junctions on either approach to bridge. A priority ghost island junction on the realigned B1523 South Newsham Road provides access to the western car park and the former A1061 South Newsham Road alignment retaining highway access to Railway Cottages. A mini-roundabout is provided between the new access junctions to the eastern car park and Blagdon Drive retaining highway access to Blagdon Drive from the realigned A1061. The highways works have been subject to a Stage 1 Road Safety Audit and the revised layouts submitted reflect the findings of this audit with the applicant's designer confirming in writing that any further amendments at the detailed design stage can be accommodated within the red line boundary of the application.

7.45 County Highways have recommended conditions to secure the engineering details of the proposed highways works, both on the existing and future highway and to ensure that the A1061 bridge is constructed and available for use by all road users prior to the A1061 Newsham Level Crossing being permanently closed to highway users. These engineering detail conditions will also include the requirement to submit details pertaining to the A1061 bridge, which will form a highway structure, including details of Road Restraint Systems to prevent vehicle incursion onto the railway and approach embankments and means by which pedestrians, cyclists and equestrian are protected from leaving the proposed shared use footway/cycleway in this area.

7.46 The detailed design of the highways works will be subject to a further three stages of Road Safety Audit through the lifetime of the detailed design and early operation of the development. County Highways are therefore satisfied that the submitted details and the future information required to discharge the recommended conditions mean that there are no inherent road safety issues with the proposals. A condition is also recommended in respect to the potential road safety impacts during the construction phase of the development through the submission of a Transport and Construction Method Statement.

7.47 As a result of the development the extent of the adopted highway will be amended. The new sections of roads, primarily linked to the A1061 bridge works and associated connections, will need to be adopted as public highway to retain the highway designation along the A1061. As this is an NCC scheme, no S38 Agreement can be entered into and the designation of the new roads as highway will follow as part of the construction and delivery process of the scheme. The recommended highways works conditions will ensure control over the engineering details to ensure that the works are constructed to adoptable standards.

7.48 There is a requirement to permanently Stop Up the Public Highway because of the highways works. The extent of this Stopping Up is primarily linked to the closure of the Level Crossing. It is proposed that highway rights between the Level Crossing and the new Blagdon Drive / eastern car park access junction are removed as there is no benefit to the Highway Authority in this being retained following the closure of the level crossing and the proposed use of the current section of A1061 South Newsham Road as the exit to the eastern car park. Partial extents of existing highway around the current A1061 / B1523 Roundabout also need to be Stopped Up to facilitate the western roundabout, western car park SuDs and realignment of the western access road (currently A1061 South Newsham Road).

7.49 Whilst the use of Section 247 of Town and County Planning Act can be used to Stop Up a Highway once planning permission is granted, the Transport and Works Act Order (TWAO) for the Northumberland Line scheme includes the provision for Highway Stopping Up. The extents of the Stopping Up detailed above are included in the Transport and Works Act Order submission, which is currently being considered by the Inspector following the completion of the TWAO Inquiry last year. The potential granting of the TWAO is separate to the Planning Application and does not impact upon the layout as proposed.

7.50 The extents of the highway stopping up have been provided to ensure all existing dwellings at Railway Cottages and Blagdon Drive retain their direct access to the adopted highway.

7.51 The Transport Assessment includes a review of access routes and sustainable transport options for users of the development and demonstrates the

linkages for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users to the proposed station. The proposed station has direct pedestrian and cyclist access to Newsham and South Beach utilising existing routes for pedestrians and cyclists. The proposed layout provides for direct connectivity for pedestrians and cyclists to access the station infrastructure but also retains connectivity as a result of the highway works required to provide the A1061 bridge across the railway. The proposals incorporate those improvements that are already secured under the planning permission for the adjacent housing development to the north of the A1061 Laverock Hall Road. For pedestrians and cyclists impacted upon by the closure of the Level Crossing, alternative routes are provided using the proposed road bridge, which includes a shared pedestrian/cyclist route to the north of the carriageway that will connect to existing infrastructure. Pedestrians will also have the opportunity during operational times of the railway and station to use the proposed station bridge (and lifts) to cross the railway. Connectivity within the two car parks allow for this alternative route to be used during the operational hours of the new station.

7.52 The development impacts upon existing bus stops on the B1523 South Newsham Road to the north of the site and the A1061 South Newsham Road to the east of the site. These bus stops have been relocated to cater for the revised road layout and, following amendments made because of the Stage 1 Road Safety Audit, are shown in acceptable locations. The detailed design process will further refine the proposals with engineering details in respect to the highways works recommended to be secured by condition. Bus stops are additionally provided within the site in the form of a double length bus stop layby within the eastern car park. However, the submitted details do not indicate any provision of Equality Act compliant kerbing or a shelter at the internal bus stop. These items will be secured through the detailed design of the proposals. Vehicle swept path analysis submitted with the application demonstrates that bus access can be accommodated within the design of the eastern car park and its approach roads.

7.53 New pedestrian and cyclist signage is likely to be required in relation to directing pedestrians and cyclists along the routes intended within the design, especially in relation to cyclist access. Whilst the submitted traffic signs drawing does not show this, these details can be conditioned as part of any approval given and a condition is recommended to this effect.

7.54 Following detailed assessment, County Highways have therefore generally endorsed the findings of the submitted Transport Assessment, including the minor revisions made to the originally submitted proposals, and have raised no objection to the proposed development subject to the imposition of planning conditions in the interests of highway and pedestrian safety and the amenity of local residents

7.55 It is concluded therefore that subject to the imposition of appropriate planning conditions the proposals are in accordance with Policy DC11 in the BVBDGP, the NPPF and policy TRA1 in the NLP.

#### Impact on residential amenity

7.56 Policy DC1 in the BVBDGP states that development proposals will be expected to have no adverse impact on the amenities of residents of nearby residential properties. Policy DC22 states that wherever practicable potentially noisy developments should be located away from one another.

7.57 Policy STP5 in the NLP states that *'Development proposals will be required to demonstrate where relevant and in a proportionate way, that they ... (f) prevent negative impacts on amenity; (g) protect, and alleviate risk to people and the environment, and do not have a negative impact on ... vibration, air and noise pollution'*.

7.58 The main impacts on residential amenity dealt with in this section of the report are noise, vibration, air quality and artificial lighting. Car parking has been dealt with above and visual impact is dealt with in a later section of this report.

### Noise

7.59 Public Protection have identified the main residential receptors for noise from the proposed development as Nos. 1 – 16 Railway Cottages, Nos. 1 -3, 5 – 8, 24 and 25 Blagdon Drive and Nos. 13 and 14 Park Farm Villas. These dwellings are already receptors to noise from the current freight rail traffic. However, the proposal will increase the number of train movements on the line from the current 30 freight trains per week by 64 passenger trains each day.

7.60 Whilst noise from trains is transitory, the proposed half hour frequency for passenger services represents a significant increase on current levels and at stations the impact will be greater as passengers disembark and board. However, the noise from railcars at the station is predicted to be 36 to 54 dBLA<sub>aq</sub> (without mitigation), which is between 24 dB below and up to 3 dB over the measured current baseline daytime level. The proposal is to use diesel railcars, therefore most train engines will be located under the chassis of the railcar and a certain amount of noise attenuation will be provided at the station from the platform acting as a barrier. Acoustic barriers on both sides of the track are proposed to provide mitigation to 20 properties at Railway Cottages and Blagdon Drive.

7.61 Public Protection note that the 'worst case scenario' relates to night-time noise from passing trains. The night period is 23.00 – 07.00 and during these periods it is anticipated that three empty trains (05.47, 06.11 and 23.15) and three stopping trains (06.19, 06.46 and 06.48) will pass through Newsham Station. However, the much heavier freight trains with a greater number of wagons currently pass through the area during the 06.00 – 07.00 period. Public Protection therefore conclude that given the limited number of passenger traffic movements (passing and stopping) in a small proportion of the night period, the predicted night-time noise impacts are expected to be in the Lowest Observed Adverse Effect Level (LOAEL) when taken against the existing rail traffic. In addition the proposed acoustic barriers should provide a degree of attenuation. The closure of the level crossing will also provide benefits as barrier alarms will no longer operate and there will be a reduction in noise through the realignment of the A1061 road.

7.62 A new source of noise from the proposed development would be the tannoy system. Whilst final details of the tannoy system are not yet available Public Protection consider that the noise impacts will be acceptable. Even at night the noise impact would meet the internal limit in BS 8223 of 30dB LA<sub>eq</sub> (accounting for 15dB of attenuation through an open window) and below the existing background level at night of 51dB LA<sub>eq</sub>. Notwithstanding this, Public Protection have recommended a planning condition requiring details of how noise from the tannoy will operate and be managed and controlled during the night period.

7.63 The noise levels at the nearest receptors from the operational noise from the use of the car park is predicted to be 20 to 50 dB LAeq ground floor and 24 to 52 db LAeq first floor at the nearest receptors. This, in isolation from the other operational noise impacts, is below the measured daytime background levels of 46 to 51 db LAeq at these receptors. The properties that would be most affected are the residential dwellings north of the existing A1061 road but even at the most affected, the predicted level is almost the same as the current ambient noise level. Most of the use of the car park will be during the acoustic daytime period, although it is likely that there will be cars arriving for the first train at 06.19.

7.64 The predicted cumulative daytime noise impact at the nearest receptors without mitigation is between -16 to +5 dB in relation to the measured existing ambient daytime levels of 46dB to 61db LAeq. As previously stated, noise attenuation in the form of two acoustic barriers is proposed north of the station providing attenuation to the dwellings at Railway Cottages and Blagdon Drive. This attenuation mitigates noise levels in these dwellings by -10 dB to 0 dB in relation to non-mitigated noise levels. Details of the acoustic barriers will be secured through a planning condition.

7.65 The recommended conditions require the submission of a construction noise and vibration management plan for the approval of the Local Planning Authority. That plan would be required to provide details of the construction work and methodologies, measures for the control and reduction of noise emissions associated with construction works, liaison with local residents and arrangements for noise monitoring. Final details of the construction schedule and plant to be used are not yet available, however, the applicants have stated that working at night-time and weekends would be necessary, as the line would remain open during construction for the operation of freight services. The expectation would be that the activities that might generate most noise, such as platform construction, groundworks and tarmacking the car park, would be carried out during normal working hours as far as practicable and this could be controlled through the approval of the planning condition or by a COPA Section 61 'prior approval' or a combination of both. Public Protection also point out that there are noise limits under British Standards 5228 (Code of practice for noise and vibration control on construction and open sites) that they would expect the applicants to adhere to. The applicants estimate that the overall construction period would be up 11 - 15 months subject to access, safety and other considerations but construction would not be continuous. Individual activities such as the construction of the platforms and car park are likely to take place within discrete periods of time of much lesser duration. The construction programme will be refined now that the main contractor for the scheme has been appointed.

7.66 Subject to the imposition of appropriate conditions, Public Protection have raised no objections based on noise, either during the operational phase or during construction.

### *Vibration*

7.67 Vibration levels from the proposed railcars are likely to be minimal, especially when compared to the longer and heavier freight trains already using the line and would be significantly below levels that would be noticeable at nearby dwellings. Vibration from plant and machinery during the construction phase will depend on the schedule of works and plant to be used. As the detailed works and plant are not yet known, this is the subject of a planning condition.

### *Air Quality*

7.68 The railcars will be diesel and there is currently no plan to electrify the line, although the design of the scheme (e.g. the height of bridges) does allow for electrification at some future date. The railcar engines would be similar to those used to drive a large heavy goods vehicle. It is anticipated that the air quality impact from the operation of the passenger railway service would be minimal. No assessment of air quality impacts from the operation of the rail service was required under current Government guidance.

7.69 The applicants have modelled the road traffic air quality impacts that would arise from traffic flows resulting from vehicles travelling to and from the proposed railway station. The modelling has indicated that impacts would either be negligible or beneficial. Public Protection consider that this is acceptable having regard to the site's and receptors' location near the busy A1061 road and are not recommending any mitigation or planning conditions. It is noted that the realignment of the road and removal of stationary traffic at the existing level crossing will benefit some receptors.

### *Artificial Lighting*

7.70 The external lighting on the platform and car park would be some distance from any receptors and Public Protection have raised no issues with the proposals but they have recommended a condition requiring further details to be submitted for approval. Also, as referred to below, the County Ecologist is concerned about the impact of artificial lighting on protected species and the recommended lighting condition also covers this aspect.

### *Conclusion on Impact on residential Amenity*

7.71 It is concluded that with the proposed mitigation measures and subject to the imposition of appropriate planning conditions, the proposed development complies with Policies DC 1 and DC 22 in the BVBDGP and Policy STP5 in the emerging NLP.

### *Impact on the Character and Appearance of the Area*

7.72 Policy DC1 in the BVBDGP states that development proposals will be expected to be of a high standard of design and landscaping which takes account of existing natural and built features, the surrounding area and neighbouring land uses. Policy DC17 in the BVBDGP states that development should contribute to restoration, enhancement, repair and maintenance of the landscape in and around which it is situated. Development with landscape and visual impacts will be assessed against the extent to which it will cause unacceptable visual harm and various planning and environmental criteria relating to the character and features of the area. Policy DC27 of the BVBDGP states that new developments will be expected to achieve a high standard of design. Policy E3 in the BVBLP states that proposals will be assessed according to their effects on the intrinsic qualities of the landscape type or types that they affect with account taken of any positive landscape related measures proposed as part of the development.

7.73 Policy QOP2 in the NLP requires development to provide a high standard of amenity for users and not cause unacceptable harm to the amenity of those living in the area. Development proposals should ensure that the physical presence and design of the development preserves the character of the area and does not have a

visually intrusive or overbearing impact on neighbouring uses. Policy QOP4 in the NLP states that: *'Where relevant, new development will be expected to incorporate well-designed landscaping and respond appropriately to any existing landscape features'*.

7.74 The Government has given centre stage in the recent revisions to the NPPF to raise the standards of design and quality of new development. Paragraph 126 of the NPPF states: *'Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities'*. Paragraph 130 states that planning decisions should ensure (inter alia) that developments are *'visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping'* and that they are *'sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting'*.

7.75 A Design and Access Statement (DAS) and a Landscape, Townscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LTVIA) were submitted with the application. The DAS states that the scale and layout of the development are in response to railway operational and engineering constraints. The two 100m long platforms are designed to safely accommodate trains with up to four carriages. The station size and layout have been designed to meet estimated passenger numbers whilst the scale of the proposals is dictated to by Network Rail standards, national legislation and the railway engineering and operating requirements.

7.76 The platforms will be of precast concrete construction with asphalt surfacing. Platform furniture and facilities will be designed and coloured to align with the train operating company's branding requirements. The waiting shelters on the platforms will provide protection for passengers during inclement weather. A single span overbridge, with lift and stepped access, will allow access to both platforms from the car parks. The car parks and station forecourt area will consist of line marked tarmac with raised kerb pavement and forecourt areas.

7.77 The DAS refers to various changes that were made to the design of the scheme following pre-application consultations. As a result of safety risks at the level crossing, a road overbridge is proposed as a diversion to the A1061. This includes the closure of Newsham level crossing. The size of the proposed car park has increased to 237 spaces to provide for the potential growth up to the year 2039 and as a result of the increase in car parking and the need to provide an overbridge, it was confirmed that land both to the east and west of the railway line would be required to implement the scheme. These changes were included in a scheme-wide consultation that took place in November and December 2020. As a result of representations received on that consultation, 12 parking places have been provided for residents of Railway Cottages.

7.78 The design of the proposed stations on the Northumberland Line, including the station at Seaton Delaval, has sought to provide functional and modern railway stations which are compliant with the relevant Network Rail and other industry standards, including those related to accessibility and inclusivity, whilst respecting the local townscape and historic importance of the line's industrial heritage. As referred to in the section below on 'impact on heritage assets' the Building Conservation supports the design of the station subject to the imposition of a planning condition requiring details relating to the design and colour palette for

station infrastructure to be submitted to ensure continuity and quality in the appearance and design of the scheme as a whole.

7.79 The LTVIA seeks to provide an understanding of the baseline landscape, townscape and visual conditions of the site and surrounding area. This is to determine likely effects which may arise as a result of the development and highlight mitigation measures to reduce, offset or compensate for such impacts. It uses a combined approach, which considers landscape, townscape and visual issues independently so as to gain a holistic understanding of the impact of the proposed development on landscape, townscape, and visual receptors.

7.80 The application site is located on the edge of South Newsham and currently comprises mainly agricultural fields enclosed by hedgerows and a small area of woodland in the northeast corner of the site.

7.81 There are no landscape or townscape designations affecting the site but most of the site is within the Green Belt, as discussed earlier in this report. The site is within Landscape Character Area 42a 'Ashington, Blyth and Cramlington', where built development is a typical characteristic. Whilst the site lies adjacent to the built development of South Newsham north of the A1061, the road provides a strong separation from the predominantly open farmland to the south.

7.82 The main change in relation to the landscape character is that its current uses will change to a railway station with associated car parks and facilities, including the overbridge for the realigned A1061 road. The scheme includes the planting of woodland, landscaping, SuDs features and an attenuation basin. The perception of change will clearly be considerable though it can be expected that this will reduce over time as the proposed buffer, tree, hedge and shrub planting associated with the development begins to establish.

7.83 The LTVIA found that there would be limited views of the proposals within the wider area with the majority of views restricted to the immediate area due to the built form of South Newsham and Blyth, the limited change in elevation and the existing woodland and hedgerows. With the mitigation measures proposed the main effects would be experienced by the residential properties along the northern boundary of the site, vehicles travelling along the A1061 and pedestrians walking on the footpaths in the vicinity of the site.

7.84 It is considered that the methodology used for the LTVIA is appropriate for the proposed development in this location and that its assessments of the impacts are accurate. To mitigate the changes, various landscape features have been incorporated within the proposed development and the detail of these are the subject of recommended planning conditions should the Committee resolve to grant planning permission.

7.85 It is concluded that with the proposed mitigation measures and subject to the imposition of appropriate planning conditions, the proposed development complies with Policies DC1, DC17 and DC27 in the BVBDGP, Policy E3 in the BVBLP and Policies QOP2 and QOP4 in the NLP.

## Impact on biodiversity

7.86 An Ecological Impact Assessment was submitted with the planning application. It notes that development at the site will lead to a net loss of biodiversity. The County Ecologist has raised no objections to the proposed development subject to the imposition of appropriate planning conditions, including the submission of a scheme of biodiversity net gain. The net gain may be achieved through the provision of on-site or off-site habitat creation.

7.87 The potential ecological impacts of the development have been identified as follows.

- The loss or disturbance of habitats of up to local parish botanical value, but comprising areas of low botanical importance, including a small area of young broadleaved plantation woodland, hedgerows and shrub. The quality of the plantation woodland is not considered to be significant.
- Potential harm or disturbance to any protected species present within the site including roosting bats.
- Spread of invasive non-native plant species.
- Loss or disturbance of habitats of low value to red squirrel, local value to bats and badger and local parish level value to birds.

7.88 Overall the Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment for the site shows an increase of 27% or 8.35 biodiversity units between the existing site and the proposed landscaping scheme, excluding linear features such as hedgerows which show a loss of 28% or 3.7 units. However, the trading standards within the metric are not met for the loss of shrub, as the landscaping plans do not include a suitable compensation habitat of the same or higher distinctiveness. The development will therefore lead to a net loss of biodiversity.

7.89 A metric based approach securing a 10% gain has been agreed for the Northumberland Line scheme and this may be secured across the whole scheme or for individual stations as appropriate. In relation to this application the County Ecologist considers that flood prevention measures associated with the development of the realigned A1061 may be a suitable location for net gain.

7.90 The provision of net gains for biodiversity in accordance with the NPPF and Policy ENV1 in the NLP is the subject of a recommended planning condition. Other recommended conditions relate to mitigation measures, a lighting scheme and an amended Construction Environmental Management Plan to maintain the biodiversity value of the site and avoid harm to any protected species that may be present.

7.91 The broadleaved plantation woodland that will be lost is part of an area that is protected under Policy D16 of the BVBDP. This protection has been carried forward through Policy INF5 in the NLP requiring the loss from the proposed development being replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location. The proposals for landscaping including tree provision provide some compensation and discussions are continuing with the applicant regarding additional compensation that might include new footpath provision associated with the proposed drainage ponds and linked to the existing PROW network. This is the subject of a recommended planning condition.

## Impact on heritage assets

7.92 The application site is not within a Conservation Area and does not contain any listed buildings. However, the proposed area for development has the potential to impact the setting of the Seaton Delaval Conservation Area and significance of various heritage assets, including the surviving 19<sup>th</sup> century Newsham South Signal Box and the 19<sup>th</sup> century terrace of cottages (Railway Cottages).

7.93 The Council's Building Conservation Team has assessed the impact of the proposed development on each of these heritage assets. It has concluded that whilst the development proposals would result in change to the landscape, it is not considered harmful to the setting and significance of the Seaton Delaval Conservation Area. The Building Conservation Team consider that the heritage significance of Railway Cottages is limited because the properties on the terrace have been modified through the construction of modern extensions to the rear and the inclusion of render and harling finishes. The proposed development would also change the setting of the 19<sup>th</sup> century signal box but the team do not consider that this would warrant refusal of the planning application.

7.94 The Building Conservation Team therefore supports the application and recommends that details relating to the design and colour palette for station infrastructure (shelters, lighting, signage, furniture etc.) are conditioned to ensure continuity and quality in the appearance and design of the scheme. An appropriate condition is included in the recommended conditions should the Committee decide to grant planning permission.

7.95 An archaeological geophysical survey was undertaken over the western half of the site in 2020, followed by a programme of archaeological evaluation trenching across the site in winter 2021. The evaluation targeted anomalies identified via the geophysical survey including areas not included in the geophysical survey. The trial trenching confirmed the existence of a rectangular enclosure of characteristic late prehistoric form. This feature has been interpreted as the remains of a 'roundhouse' dwelling. Evidence of prehistoric activity elsewhere within the site included 'potboilers' (stones used to heat water) in pits subject to sample evaluation and the remains of butchered animal bones in the enclosure ditches. Evidence of medieval and post-medieval activity was also recorded in the form of ridge and furrow earthworks and associated ditches, although such features are typical of the landscape and were not unexpected. The proposed development would result in the total loss of these remains.

7.96 The County Archaeologist has advised that these archaeological remains should be regarded as 'non-designated heritage assets' with archaeological interest for the application of national planning policy. The County Archaeologist has agreed an appropriate programme of archaeological mitigation with the applicant's archaeological consultant that is consistent with the objectives of paragraphs 56 and 205 of the NPPF. The agreed programme will initially comprise a targeted 'strip, map and record' exercise of the areas of most significant archaeological interest, followed by further work on an extended area if justified by the initial works.

7.97 The County Archaeologist is therefore raising no objection on archaeological grounds, subject to the detail of an appropriate programme of mitigation being agreed with the applicant. Such a condition would be in line with paragraph 205 of

the NPPF and is included in the recommended conditions should the Committee agree to grant planning permission.

Other matters

### *Drainage*

7.98 A Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) was submitted with the planning application. This identified that the site may be at the risk of flooding due to two existing watercourses in close proximity to the site. As a result hydraulic modelling work was undertaken to understand the extent of risk that might be required. The FRA and Hydraulic Modelling Study have been reviewed by the Local Lead Flood Authority who have raised no objection subject to the imposition of planning conditions to control surface water and ensure that the risk of flooding does not increase.

7.99 Local residents have raised concerns that the field west of the railway line has standing water present at certain periods and that the proposals might increase the risk of flooding to their properties. However, the development will have a positive drainage system with drains, pipes and ponds that will directly intercept and drain this water. The drainage system will therefore resolve the current drainage problems.

### *Coal Mining Legacy*

7.100 The application site falls within the defined Development High Risk Area, therefore there are coal mining features and hazards that need to be considered in relation to the determination of the application. Coal Authority information indicates that historic unrecorded underground coal mining activity is likely to have taken place at shallow depth associated with thick seam outcrops at the application site. A Preliminary Sources Study Report was submitted with the application. This has been assessed by the Coal Authority who agree with its conclusions and recommendations. The Coal Authority raise no objection to the proposed development subject to the imposition of conditions requiring investigations to establish the exact situation regarding coal mining legacy issues at the site.

### *Land Contamination*

7.101 The application is supported by a Phase 1 desk stop study for potential land contamination that has recommended that various intrusive investigations be carried out prior to development. Public Protection have endorsed the findings of the study and have recommended conditions requiring site investigations to be carried out to identify any potential contamination from past historical uses of the site.

### *Public Rights of Way*

7.102 The proposed layout has an impact on the northern end of two public footpaths (300/031 and 300/162), requiring their diversion. The appropriate legal changes to these public footpaths will need to be carried out. The public rights of way team has raised no objection to the proposals.

### *Enabling Works*

7.103 The applicants have submitted a programme of works for the construction of the proposed development. This includes information on proposed 'enabling works'

that would be carried out in advance of the formal commencement of development. The main priorities for the enabling works are vegetation clearance and tree works that the applicant is seeking to carry out before the bird-nesting season.

### *Equality Duty*

7.104 The County Council has a duty to have regard to the impact of any proposal on those people with characteristics protected by the Equality Act. Officers have had due regard to Sec 149(1) (a) and (b) of the Equality Act 2010 and considered the information provided by the applicant, together with the responses from consultees and other parties, and determined that the proposal would have no material impact on individuals or identifiable groups with protected characteristics. Accordingly, no changes to the proposal were required to make it acceptable in this regard.

### *Crime and Disorder Act Implications*

7.105 Policy DC1 in the BVBDP states that development proposals will be expected to minimise the risk of crime through appropriate design and layout. The Planning Statement submitted with the application states that the design of the proposals has been informed by guidance received from Northumbria Police and British Transport Police. The 'Designing Out Crime' units of both organisations have been consulted on the planning application and have provided recommendations for various measures to assist in reducing the fear of crime and disorder for passengers using the railway and rail staff, including measures related to CCTV, lighting and access. The Design and Access Statement states that the design of the station platform and car park have been developed to include suitable lighting, CCTV, public address system and passenger help points to create an environment which makes vulnerable users feel safe and secure when using the station and its facilities. Some local residents have raised concerns that the proposed development might lead to anti-social behaviour as a result of the increased numbers of people in the area. However, the measures referred to above such as lighting and CCTV will also assist in reducing the likelihood of anti-social behaviour. These matters are the subjects of planning conditions. It is concluded that the policy requirements have been met.

### *Human Rights Act Implications*

7.106 The Human Rights Act requires the County Council to take into account the rights of the public under the European Convention on Human Rights and prevents the Council from acting in a manner, which is incompatible with those rights. Article 8 of the Convention provides that there shall be respect for an individual's private life and home save for that interference which is in accordance with the law and necessary in a democratic society in the interests of (inter alia) public safety and the economic wellbeing of the country. Article 1 of protocol 1 provides that an individual's peaceful enjoyment of their property shall not be interfered with save as is necessary in the public interest.

7.107 For an interference with these rights to be justifiable the interference (and the means employed) needs to be proportionate to the aims sought to be realised. The main body of this report identifies the extent to which there is any identifiable interference with these rights. The Planning Considerations identified are also relevant in deciding whether any interference is proportionate. Case law has been decided which indicates that certain development does interfere with an individual's rights under Human Rights legislation. This application has been considered in the

light of statute and case law and the interference is not considered to be disproportionate.

7.108 Officers are also aware of Article 6, the focus of which (for the purpose of this decision) is the determination of an individual's civil rights and obligations. Article 6 provides that in the determination of these rights, an individual is entitled to a fair and public hearing within a reasonable time by an independent and impartial tribunal. Article 6 has been subject to a great deal of case law. It has been decided that for planning matters the decision making process as a whole, which includes the right of review by the High Court, complied with Article 6.

## **8. Conclusion**

8.1 The reintroduction of passenger rail services on the Northumberland Line would bring considerable benefits to communities in southeast Northumberland. The proposed station at Newsham forms an important part of the overall scheme and is in accordance with Development Plan policy.

8.2 The site of the proposed station is in the Green Belt immediately to the south of the A1061 and is some 700 metres south of the historic station at Newsham that served the area between 1851 and 1964 when it was closed as part of the Beeching cuts. The proposed siting of the station has been determined based on an appraisal of alternative options. Sites to the north of the railway station were constrained by existing building development adjacent to the railway line. Any potential alternative sites, including adjacent to the site of the previous Newsham station, were not large enough to provide for the anticipated car parking demand at the station. Furthermore, the proposed station at Newsham could not be sited further north due to it being in direct conflict with the proposed railway station at Bebside. Any sites to the south would not have been well related to the existing settlement. There has been substantial house building in the southern parts of Blyth that would be easily accessible by various means of transport to the proposed new station.

8.3 In respect of the site's location in the Green Belt there are four aspects to consider. First whether a sequential test has found no suitable sites outside the Green Belt. Second whether the proposed development represents inappropriate development. Third whether the impact on 'openness' is acceptable. Fourth whether the proposed development conflicts with the purposes of including the land in the Green Belt. Each of these has been considered in this report and overall, notwithstanding the limited impact on openness and taking into account the absence of suitable alternative sites and the proposal's contribution to urban and economic regeneration of the area, it is concluded that the proposed development conforms with national and local Green Belt policy.

8.4 The implications of the proposed development for local highway conditions have been the subject of particular scrutiny. Following detailed discussions, a Stage 1 Road Safety Audit and the submission of revised plans, County Highways have endorsed the detailed proposals for the car parking provision (including the proposals in relation to Railway Cottages), the closure of the existing level crossing, the realignment of the A1061 and the associated highway works that will be required. County Highways consider that the proposals are acceptable subject to the imposition of appropriate planning conditions.

8.5 The various impacts of the proposals including on residential amenity, biodiversity, heritage assets, plantation woodland and landscape character and quality, have all been assessed in this report and have been found to be acceptable subject to the imposition of appropriate planning conditions.

8.6 It is concluded that the proposals overall are in accordance with Development Plan policies, the NPPF and the NLP and that the planning balance, in particular taking into account the economic benefits that the scheme will generate, weighs in favour of granting planning permission subject to appropriate planning conditions.

## **9. Recommendation**

**9.1** That this application be GRANTED permission subject to the following conditions

### General

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun not later than three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).

2. The development hereby permitted shall not be carried out otherwise than in accordance with the following plans and documents.

### Plans

60601435-ACM-XX-ZZ-DRG-LEP-000012 (Rev PO1) Site Location Plan  
60601435-ACM-04-ZZ-DRG-EHW-040052 (Rev PO5) Newsham Car Park General Arrangement  
60601435-ACM-04-ZZ-DRG-EHW-040053 (Rev PO5) Highways Typical Cross Sections – Existing and Proposed Sheet 1  
60601435-ACM-04-ZZ-DRG-EHW-040054 (Rev PO3) Highways Typical Cross Sections – Existing and Proposed Sheet 2  
60601435-ACM-04-ZZ-DRG-EHW-040058 (Rev PO3) Highways Typical Cross Sections – Existing and Proposed Sheet 3  
60601435-ACM-05-ZZ-DRG-EHW-040055 (Rev PO4) Highways Drainage Layout Sheet 1 of 2  
60601435-ACM-05-ZZ-DRG-EHW-040056 (Rev PO4) Highways Drainage Layout Sheet 2 of 2  
60601435-ACM-04-ZZ-DRG-EHW-040057 (Rev PO2) Car Park Traffic Sign and Road Marking Layout  
60601435-ACM-04-ZZ-DRG-EHW-040059 (Rev PO2) Vehicle Tracking  
60601435-ACM-04-ZZ-DRG-EHW-040063 (Rev PO1) Vehicle Tracking Sheet 2 of 2  
60601435-ACM-04-PL-DRG-ECV-000002 (Rev PO2) Existing Platform General Arrangement  
60601435-ACM-04-PL-DRG-EHW-040060 (Rev PO2) Existing Public Utilities Layout  
  
60601435-ACM-04-PL-DRG-ECV-000003 (Rev PO3) Platform General Arrangement  
60601435-ACM-04-PL-DRG-ECV-000007 (Rev PO3) Platform Existing and Proposed Platform Sections and Details

60601435-ACM-04-PL-DRG-ECV-000008 (Rev AO1) Platform Services General Arrangement  
60601435-ACM-04-PL-DRG-ECV-000010 (Rev PO3) Platform Drainage General Arrangement  
60601435-ACM-04-PL-DRG-ECV-000011 (Rev AO1) Platform Elevations  
60601435-ACM-04-PL-DRG-ECV-000100 (Rev AO1) Level Crossing Closure General Arrangement  
60601435-ACM-04-ZZ-DRG-EST-000301 (Rev PO2) Footbridge Proposed GA Sheet 1 of 3  
60601435-ACM-04-ZZ-DRG-EST-000302 (Rev PO1.3) Footbridge Proposed GA Sheet 2 of 3  
60601435-ACM-04-ZZ-DRG-EST-000303 (Rev PO1.3) Footbridge Proposed GA Sheet 3 of 3  
60601435-ACM-04-ZZ-DRG-EST-000304 (Rev AO1) Newsham Station Footbridge Existing Arrangement  
60601435-ACM-04-ZZ-DRG-EST-000044 (Rev AO1) E&P Proposed Schematic Newsham Station  
60601435-ACM-04-PL-DRG-EHW-040051 (Rev PO5) A1061 Newsham Realignment Plan and Profile  
60601435-ACM-04-ZZ-DRG-EST-001205 (Rev AO1) A1061 Overbridge Proposed General Arrangement Sheet 1 of 3  
60601435-ACM-04-ZZ-DRG-EST-001206 (Rev AO1) A1061 Overbridge Proposed General Arrangement Sheet 2 of 3  
60601435-ACM-04-ZZ-DRG-EST-001207 (Rev AO1) A1061 Overbridge Proposed General Arrangement Sheet 3 of 3  
60601435-ACM-04-ZZ-DRG-HLG-001301 (Rev AO1) Highways Lighting Proposed Lighting Layout Sheet 1 of 2  
60601435-ACM-04-ZZ-DRG-HLG-001302 (Rev AO1) Highways Lighting Proposed Lighting Layout Sheet 2 of 2  
60601435-ACM-04-ZZ-DRG-HLG-001303 (Rev AO1) Highways Lighting Contours Layout Sheet 1 of 2  
60601435-ACM-04-ZZ-DRG-HLG-001304 (Rev AO1) Highways Lighting Contours Layout Sheet 2 of 2  
60601435-ACM-04-ZZ-DRG-HLG-001305 (Rev AO1) Highways Lighting Calculation Results Sheet 1 of 2  
60601435-ACM-04-ZZ-DRG-HLG-001306 (Rev AO1) Highways Lighting Calculation Results Sheet 2 of 2  
60601435-ACM-04-ZZ-REP-HLG-001301 (PO2) Lighting Calculation Report  
60601435-ACM-04-ZZ-SKT-HLG-001301\_1 (PO2) Highways Lighting Proposed Lighting Class Sheet 1 of 1  
60601435-ACM-04-ZZ-DRG-EPT-000045 (Rev AO1) E&P Proposed Lighting Layout  
60601435-ACM-04-ZZ-DRG-HLG-001307 (REV AO1) Highways Lighting Overall Lighting Layout  
60601435-ACM-05-ZZ-DRG-EHW-040062 (Rev PO1) Flood Compensation Basin

## Documents

Newsham Arboricultural Impact Assessment, Aecom for Northumberland County Council. September 2021.

Newsham Level 2 Updated Flood Risk Assessment. Aecom for Northumberland County Council. November 2021 (rev DO4)

Newsham Ecological Impact Assessment. SLC Property. September 2021 (Rev VO3)

Phase 1: Desk Study (The Northumberland Line – Preliminary Sources Study Report – Newsham). Aecom. 8 March 2021 (Rev PO1)  
Newsham Enabling Works. Morgan Sindall for Northumberland County Council. 25 January 2022 (Reference No. 166967 MSI SN03 ZZ STR DEL 000001 Rev P1.3) as amended by email from Alannah Healey dated 28 January 2022.

Reason: To ensure that the approved development is carried out in accordance with the approved plans and documents.

3. The development hereby permitted shall not be commenced until plans of the site showing the existing and proposed ground levels have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Such levels shall be shown in relation to a fixed and known datum point. Thereafter, the development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure that the work is carried out at suitable levels in relation to adjoining properties and highways, having regard to amenity, access, highway and drainage requirements in accordance with the NPPF.

#### Environmental Matters

4. The development hereby permitted shall not be commenced until a Construction Environmental Management Plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved Management Plan shall be adhered to throughout the construction period. The Management Plan shall provide for:

a. An assessment of construction noise and vibration including detailing measures for the control and reduction of noise and vibration emissions associated with earthworks and construction.

b. Details of the disposal of surface water from the development through the construction phase.

c. Equipment cleaning and washing facilities.

d. Excavation plant machinery to be fitted with fuel spill kits.

e. The provision of welfare facilities that shall be maintained by a licenced Waste Carrier.

f. Details of behavioural policies for all site staff to minimise noise, vibration and air quality impacts from vehicles, plant and equipment.

g. The engines / generators of all construction vehicles, plant and equipment shall be turned off when not in use. Hybrid generators shall be used wherever practicable to reduce noise and fuel consumption.

h. Details of the measures to be taken to protect existing trees that will not be removed as part of the development

Reason: To prevent nuisance in the interests of residential amenity in accordance with the NPPF, to ensure that the risk of flooding does not increase during the

construction phase, to limit the siltation of any site surface water features, to ensure the welfare of site operatives and to ensure trees are protected from construction works.

5. Details of the proposed boundary treatment to the site shall be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority. The details shall include plans showing the location of existing, retained and proposed new boundary treatments and scaled drawings indicating the positions, height, design, materials, type and colour of the proposed new boundary treatments. The approved scheme shall be implemented before the station is brought into operational use.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity of the area and to ensure that the proposed development does not have an adverse effect upon the appearance of the area in accordance with Policies DC21 and DC27 of the Blyth Valley Borough Local Development Framework Development Control Policies

6. Notwithstanding the details submitted, prior to the commencement of development samples of all materials, colours and finishes to be used on all external surfaces shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter the development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity of the area and to ensure that the proposed development does not have an adverse effect upon the appearance of the area in accordance with Policy DC27 of the Blyth Valley Borough Local Development Framework Core Strategy.

7. Not later than three months after the commencement of development a scheme to offset the loss of protected plantation woodland shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved scheme shall be commenced no later than the first planting season after the proposed development is brought into use.

Reason: To provide compensation for the loss of protected plantation woodland in accordance with Policy DC16 of the Blyth Valley Borough Local Development Framework Development Control Policies.

#### Land Stability

7. No development shall commence until;

a) a scheme of intrusive investigations has been carried out on site to establish the risks posed to the development by past coal mining activity, including recorded mine entries present within influencing distance of the site and shallow underground mine workings; and

b) any remediation works and/or mitigation measures to address land instability arising from coal mining legacy, as may be necessary, have been implemented on site in full in order to ensure that the site is made safe and stable for the development proposed.

The intrusive site investigations and remedial works shall be carried out in accordance with authoritative UK guidance

Reason: To ensure the safety and stability of the development, as the site lies in an area where historic unrecorded shallow mine workings are likely to have taken place, in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework.

8. Prior to the occupation of the development, or it being taken into beneficial use, a signed statement or declaration prepared by a suitably competent person confirming that the site is, or has been made, safe and stable for the approved development shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority for approval in writing. This document shall confirm the methods and findings of the intrusive site investigations and the completion of any remedial works and/or mitigation necessary to address the risks posed by past coal mining activity.

Reason: To ensure the safety and stability of the development, as the site lies in an area where historic unrecorded shallow mine workings are likely to have taken place, in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework.

### Biodiversity

9. The development hereby permitted shall not be commenced unless and until a scheme for biodiversity net gain has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme may include on-site habitat creation, off-site habitat creation or both. The scheme shall include:

- a. Details of the biodiversity net gain requirements of the development (in accordance with the recognised offsetting metrics standard outlined in the Defra Metrics Guidance using the most up-to-date version of the metric at the date of assessment) and the CIEEM, CIRIA, IEMA Biodiversity Net Gain: Good Practice Principles of Development (2019); and either
- b. The provision of arrangements to secure the delivery of the offsetting measures either on or off-site (including a timetable for their delivery); and
- c. A management and monitoring plan (to include for the provision and maintenance of the offsetting measures in perpetuity); or
- d. The provision of a net gain payment to enable the Local Planning authority to provide the necessary net gain measures; and where necessary
- e. a methodology for the identification of receptor site(s); and
- f. the identification of receptor site(s).

The written approval of the Local Planning Authority shall not be issued before the arrangements necessary to secure the delivery of the offsetting measures have been executed. The offsetting scheme shall be implemented in full accordance with the requirements of the approved scheme.

Reason: To provide net gains for biodiversity in accordance with the NPPF.

10. No development shall take place unless in accordance with the mitigation measures detailed in the report *Ecological Impact Assessment Newsham Station. SLC Property. September 2021*, unless otherwise agreed in writing, including:

- a. Priority within the planting scheme to be given to native species or those of known value to wildlife, ideally of local provenance.
- b. The habitats to be retained and created for wildlife shall be subject to an appropriate management regime for the lifetime of the development.
- c. Installation of at least 20 bat boxes and 20 new nest boxes within the retained mature trees or integrated into new structures where possible.
- d. Works will proceed to an appropriate precautionary method statement produced by a Suitable Qualified Ecologist (SCE) to minimise the risk of protected or notable species being adversely affected.
- e. Works will not commence until a checking survey has been completed by a Suitable Qualified Ecologist (SCE) to ensure no badger setts have been created within 30 metres of the site boundary between the time of the original survey and the start of works on site.
- f. Vegetation clearance will be undertaken outside of the nesting bird period (1 March – 30 September inclusive) in order to minimise the risk of nesting birds being adversely affected. If this is not possible, works will not commence unless a checking survey by a Suitable Qualified Ecologist (SCE) has confirmed that no active nests are present within the 5 days prior. In the event any active nests are recorded the SCE will implement a buffer zone around the feature into which no works will progress until the SCE confirms that the nest is no longer active.
- g. No tree felling, trimming or other arboricultural works will be undertaken on any of the mature trees within or adjacent to the site without a SCE first being consulted.
- h. Works will not commence until those individuals undertaking the works have a received a toolbox talk from a SCE, to ensure they are aware of the potential presence of protected species on site, signs to look out for, working methods to be implemented and what to do in the event of any protected species being recorded during the works.
- i. Vegetation clearance works will be undertaken using a two-stage cut, the first cut down to a maximum of 10 centimetres, followed by a second down to ground level. Any amphibians found during the checks will be moved to a suitable vegetated area outside the site which will not be the subject of further disturbance.
- j. Any trenches opened as part of the works will ideally be closed on the same day. Where this is not possible, either one side of the trench will be cut to an angle of no more than 45 degrees, or a plank large enough for the person to walk up will be installed each night, to provide wildlife with an escape route. The trenches will be checked each morning, prior to the recommencement of works, to ensure no protected or notable species have become trapped.
- k. Appropriate Root Protection Areas will be implemented around the mature trees which are to be retained, into which no construction works (including the stockpiling of materials) will extend. Heras (or similar) fencing will be used throughout the works to ensure the protection of these features, if required.

I. Any sightings of protected species within the works will be recorded in the site diary and the project ecologist will be notified immediately. In the unlikely event any great crested newts are identified on site when the project ecologist is not present, all works will cease immediately and a SQE will be contacted for advice on how to proceed.

Reason: To maintain the biodiversity value of the site and avoid harm to protected species that may be present in accordance with Policy DC16 of the Blyth Valley Borough Local Development Framework Development Control Policies document.

11. Works to any buildings likely to affect known roosts shall not in any circumstances commence unless the Local Planning Authority has been provided with either:

a. a licence issued by Natural England pursuant to Regulation 55 of The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) authorising the specified works to proceed; or

b. confirmation that the site is registered on a Bat Mitigation Class Licence issued by Natural England; or

c. written justification by a SCE confirming why a licence is no longer required.

The development shall then only be carried out in accordance with all the recommendations for mitigation and compensation which detail the methods for maintaining the conservation status of bats unless otherwise approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority or varied by a European Protected Species licence subsequently issued by Natural England.

Reason: To maintain the favourable conservation status of a European protected species.

#### Landscaping

12. All works shall be undertaken in accordance with the submitted Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AECOM September 2021) (AIA) and the Tree Protection Plan (Appendix E of the AIA). If there are any changes to the design of the development hereby approved, a final Tree Protection Plan and Arboricultural Method Statement, which shall also be informed by the requirements in BS 5837:2012 Trees in Relation to Design, Demolition and Construction, shall be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority. No development or other operations, including any works within the root protection area (RPA) of the retained trees shall take place except in accordance with the approved AIA or any approved revised AIA.

Reason: In order that retained trees are protected during construction and to ensure that the proposed development does not have an adverse effect upon the appearance of the area in accordance with Policy DC17 of the Blyth Valley Borough Local Development Framework Development Control Policies

13. Within three months of start on site, a detailed landscaping scheme shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The

landscaping scheme shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details within the first available planting season following the approval of details.

Reason: To ensure that important features are protected and retained in the interests of amenity and to ensure a satisfactory standard of landscaping in accordance with Policy GD17 of the Blyth Valley Borough Local Development Framework Development Control Policies.

14. No trees, shrubs or hedges within the site which are shown as being retained in the approved landscaping scheme required by condition 13, shall be felled, uprooted, wilfully damaged or destroyed, cut back in any way or removed during the development phase other than in accordance with the approved plans or without the prior written consent of the Local Planning Authority. Any trees, shrubs or hedges removed without such consent, or which die or become severely damaged or seriously diseased within three years from the completion of the development hereby permitted shall be replaced, within the next planting season, with trees, shrubs or hedge plants of similar size and species unless the Local Planning Authority gives written consent to any variation.

Reason: To ensure that important features are protected and retained in the interests of amenity and to ensure a satisfactory standard of landscaping in accordance with Policy DC17 of the Blyth Valley Borough Local Development Framework Development Control Policies.

#### Highways and Car Parking

15. Prior to the commencement of passenger rail services at the station the car parking areas indicated on the approved plans, including any disabled and EV car parking spaces contained therein, shall be hard surfaced, sealed and marked out in parking bays in accordance with the approved plans. Thereafter, the car parking areas shall be retained in accordance with the approved plans and shall not be used for any purpose other than the parking of vehicles associated with the provision of passenger rail services at the station.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety, in accordance with Policy M8 of the Blyth Valley Borough Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

16. Prior to the commencement of passenger rail services at the station, a car parking management strategy detailing the number of car parking spaces, including disabled, EV and other spaces for non-public use, and details as to how these spaces will be made available, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved strategy shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details before the commencement of passenger rail services at the station.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and sustainable development, in accordance with Policy M8 of the Blyth Valley Borough Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

17. Prior to the commencement of passenger rail services at the station, details of the proposed advanced directional signage for vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. No

passenger rail services at the station shall commence until the details have been implemented in accordance with the approved plans.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and sustainable transport, in accordance with Policy A2 of the Blyth Valley Borough Local Development Framework Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework.

18. Prior to the car parking areas being made available for public use, an Operation, Management and Maintenance Strategy for the development shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The operation, management and maintenance strategy shall detail how the areas of the development including the car parking areas, access roads, drainage, landscaping, CCTV and lighting will be operated, managed and maintained upon completion of the development and the boundaries between any multiple parties in this respect. Following the car parking areas being made available for public use, the development shall be managed and maintained in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and local amenity, in accordance with Policy M8 of the Blyth Valley Borough Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

19. Prior to any change in charging strategy for the car parking area, details of the amendments and any associated mitigation associated with that change shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved details and associated mitigation shall be implemented prior to the change in charging strategy being implemented.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety, in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework.

20. Prior to the commencement of passenger rail services at the station, the cycle parking shown on the approved plans shall be implemented in accordance with the approved plans. Thereafter, the cycle parking shall be retained in accordance with the approved details and shall be kept available for the parking of cycles at all times.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and sustainable development, in accordance with Policy A2 of the Blyth Valley Borough Local Development Framework Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework.

21. Development shall not commence until a Transport Construction Method Statement, together with a supporting plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved Transport and Construction Method Statement shall be adhered to throughout the construction period. The Transport and Construction Method Statement and plan shall, where applicable, provide for:

- a. details of temporary traffic management measures, temporary access, routes and vehicles;
- b. vehicle cleaning facilities;
- c. the parking of vehicles of site operatives and visitors;
- d. the loading and unloading of plant and materials;
- e. storage of plant and materials used in constructing the development.

f. measures to maintain access and mitigate impacts of the construction period to residents of Railway Cottages and Blenheim Drive.

Reason: To prevent nuisance in the interests of residential amenity and highway safety, in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework.

22. The existing A1061 Newsham Level Crossing shall not be permanently closed to any highway users until the approved A1061 Bridge and its approaches from the adopted highway have been provided for the use of all highway users to cross the railway.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety, sustainable transport and to retain access across the railway, in accordance with Policy M8 of the Blyth Valley Borough Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

23. Prior to the commencement of works to the existing highway, details of the proposed highways works to facilitate the development, including access by sustainable modes of transport, on the A1061 South Newsham Road, B1523 South Newsham Road, A1061 Laverock Hall Road and Blagdon Drive as shown indicatively in the approved plans shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. No passenger rail services at the station shall commence until the highways works have been implemented in accordance with the approved plans.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety, in accordance with Policy M8 of the Blyth Valley Borough Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

24. Prior to the commencement of works to streets that are intended form part of the future adopted highway full engineering, drainage, street lighting and constructional details of these streets, including structural details and road restraint systems, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter, the development shall be constructed in accordance with the approved details prior to the commencement of passenger rail services at the station, unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety; to ensure a satisfactory appearance to the highways infrastructure serving the approved development; and to safeguard the amenities of the locality and users of the highway in accordance with Policy M8 of the Blyth Valley Borough Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

25. No temporary access shall be formed to the A1061 or B1523 until details of the temporary construction access point and a timeline for its use have submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and implemented in accordance with the approved plans. The temporary access shall be retained in accordance with the approved plans and the agreed timetable for use.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety, in accordance with Policy M8 of the Blyth Valley Borough Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

#### CCTV

26. A scheme for the provision of a network of closed circuit television cameras (CCTV), including the proposed location cameras, mounting columns, proposals for the use and management of the system and proposals for its installation shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The CCTV

system shall be installed in accordance with the approved details before the station is brought into operational use.

Reason: In the interests of the safety and security of users of the station and car park in accordance with the NPPF.

#### Noise and Vibration

27. Prior to any amplified voice or tannoy system becoming operational, full details of the system shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority to show how the system will be operated and managed to minimise noise impacts to local noise sensitive receptors. The proposed system shall be installed and operated in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To protect residential amenity and provide a commensurate level of protection against noise in accordance with Policy DC22 of the Blyth Valley Borough Local Development Framework Development Control Policies.

28. Prior to the development being brought into use, details of the acoustic barrier(s) as outlined in the document Newsham Station Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment, Aecom. December 2020 shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The details shall include location, specification, design and performance. The approved scheme shall be implemented in full before the development is brought into use and shall be maintained to ensure it meets the agreed performance for the lifetime of the development.

Reason: To protect residential amenity and provide a commensurate level of protection against noise in accordance with Policy DC22 of the Blyth Valley Borough Local Development Framework Development Control Policies.

29. No development shall take place until a construction noise and vibration management plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The plan shall detail measures for the control and reduction of noise and vibration emissions associated with demolition, earthworks and construction, liaison with local residents and arrangements for noise monitoring. The development shall be carried out in full accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To protect residential amenity and provide a commensurate level of protection against noise and vibration in accordance with Policy DC22 of the Blyth Valley Borough Local Development Framework Development Control Policies.

30. During the demolition and construction period, there shall be no deliveries to or collections from the site, on Sundays or Bank Holidays or outside the hours of 08.00 – 18.00 on Monday to Friday or 08.00 – 13.00 on Saturday, unless agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To protect residential amenity and provide a commensurate level of protection against noise in accordance with Policy DC22 of the Blyth Valley Borough Local Plan.

## Contaminated Land

31. No development shall take place beyond the 'enabling works' identified under condition 2, until an appropriate scheme of assessments, investigations and remediation has been carried out as detailed below, unless those assessments and investigations demonstrate that remediation is not required, and the Local Planning authority dispenses with any such requirement in writing.

a. Further site investigations are recommended in the Phase 1: Desk Study (The Northumberland Line – Preliminary Sources Study Report – Newsham Station Appendix 03. Aecom. 8 March 2021) and shall be carried out to fully and effectively characterise the nature and extent of any land contamination and / or pollution of controlled wastes. These shall specifically include a risk assessment that adopts the Source-Pathway-Receptor principle, in order that any potential risks are adequately assessed, taking into account the site's existing status and proposed new use. The site investigation and findings shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority without delay upon completion.

b. Where remediation is shown to be necessary, a written Method Statement (or Remediation Strategy) detailing the remediation requirements for the land contamination and / or pollution of controlled waters affecting the site shall be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority. All requirements shall be implemented and completed to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority. No deviation shall be made to the approved scheme without express written agreement of the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure that risks from land contamination to the future users of the land are minimised and to ensure that the development can be carried out safely without unacceptable risks to future users in accordance with Policy DC21 of the Blyth Valley Borough Local Development Framework Development Control Policies.

32. The development hereby permitted shall not be brought into use or continue in use until a full closure (Verification Report) report has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The report shall provide verification that the required works regarding contamination have been carried out in accordance with the approved Method Statement(s). Post remediation sampling and monitoring results shall be included in the closure report to demonstrate that the required remediation has been fully met.

Reason: To ensure that risks from land contamination to the future users of the land are minimised and to ensure that the development can be carried out safely without unacceptable risks to future users in accordance with Policy DC21 of the Blyth Valley Borough Local Development Framework Development Control Policies.

33. If during the development, contamination not previously considered is identified, then an additional Method Statement regarding this material shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall not be brought into use until the measures proposed to deal with the contamination have been carried out. Should no contamination be found during development then the developer shall submit a signed statement indicating this to discharge this condition.

Reason: To ensure that risks from land contamination to the future users of the land are minimised and to ensure that the development can be carried out safely without unacceptable risks to future users in accordance with Policy DC21 of the Blyth Valley Borough Local Development Framework Development Control Policies.

### Drainage

34. Prior to the installation of any drainage within the car park details of the attenuation tank, swales and basin, including information on lining and vegetation, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall thereafter be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure the effective disposal of surface water from the development in accordance with Policy DC19 of the Blyth Valley Borough Local Development Framework Development Control Policies.

35. The surface water mitigation scheme shall be undertaken in accordance with the submitted South Newsham - Draft Hydraulic Modelling Report” Rev 0, dated 26 November 2021 - AECOM and drawing 60601435-ACM-04-ZZ-DRG-**EHW-040062** Rev P01 “Newsham Flood Compensation Basin”. If there are any changes to the design of the surface water management scheme, a final Hydraulic Modelling Report and related drawings shall be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall thereafter be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure the effective mitigation of surface water flood risk on and off site in accordance with Policy DC19 of the Blyth Valley Borough Local Development Framework Development Control Policies.

### Lighting

36. Prior to first use a lighting scheme for all areas of the site including, but not restricted to, the car park and footpaths, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall show how and where external lighting shall be installed (through the provision of appropriate lighting contour plans and technical specifications) so that it can be clearly demonstrated that areas to be lit will not unduly affect residential amenity or prevent bats using their territory (e.g. for foraging or commuting) or having access to their breeding sites and resting places. All external lighting shall be installed in accordance with the approved scheme and no external lighting shall otherwise be installed without prior approval in writing from the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To protect residential amenity and maintain connectivity along commuting and feeding corridors for protected animal species in accordance with the NPPF.

### Archaeology

37. A programme of mitigation is required in accordance with the agreed Newsham Station Written Scheme of Investigation AECOM for Northumberland County Council January 2022. The programme of archaeological mitigation shall be implemented in full to reporting and archiving Stages before the condition can be fully discharged. In accordance with paragraph 14.3 of the Written Scheme of

Investigation, all stages of reporting and publication, if required, will be completed within 18 months of the completion of fieldwork.

Reason: The site is of archaeological interest and to comply with Policy E12 of the Blyth Valley Borough Local Plan and the NPPF.

Informatives:

1. Any intrusive activities including initial site investigation boreholes, and / or any subsequent treatment of coal mine workings / coal mine entries for ground stability purposes require the written permission of The Coal Authority, since such activities can have serious public health and safety implications. Failure to obtain permission will result in trespass, with the potential for court action.
2. The prevention of nuisance is the responsibility of the developer and their professional advisors. Developers should, therefore, fully appreciate the importance of professional advice. Failure to address issues of noise, dust and light at the development stage does not preclude action by the Council under Section 79 of the Environment Protection Act 1990 in respect to statutory nuisance.
3. British Standards 5228 (Code of practice for noise and vibration control on construction and open sites) sets out noise limits that the developers will be expected to adhere to, particularly in relation to working outside 'normal working hours'.
4. There shall be no burning of any material associated with the construction phase of the development.
5. It is recommended that the lighting scheme approved under condition 36 is designed in consultation with the project ecologist and follow guidance set out in Institution of Lighting Professionals Advice Note 08/18 (2018).
6. An application for the temporary closure and / or diversion of sections of two public footpaths (300/031 and 300/162) will be required prior to any works starting that might affect the footpaths. No works, including preliminary investigations, test boring or temporary closure should take place that might affect two public footpaths (300/031 and 300/162), without the prior agreement from the Area Countryside Officer.
7. It is recommended that technical approval is obtained for all street details that will form the future adopted highway from the Local Highway Authority prior to the submission of such approved details to the Local Planning Authority to discharge condition 23 of this permission. Highway Development Management can be contacted at [highwaysplanning@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:highwaysplanning@northumberland.gov.uk).
8. Offsite highway works required in connection with the proposed development are controlled by the Council's Technical Services Division. These works should be carried out before the car parking area is made available for public use. The Council will undertake such works at the applicant's expense. Highways Development Management ([highwaysplanning@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:highwaysplanning@northumberland.gov.uk)) should be contacted to progress this matter.

9. A highway condition survey should be carried out before the commencement of demolition and construction vehicle movements from the site. Highways Development Management ([highwaysplanning@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:highwaysplanning@northumberland.gov.uk)) should be contacted to arrange a survey.

10. The Council's Traffic Management Section at [highwaysprogramme@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:highwaysprogramme@northumberland.gov.uk) should be contacted before and during the construction period in respect of any impacts to current and proposed Traffic Regulation Orders.

11. Building material or equipment shall not be stored on the highway unless otherwise agreed. The Streetworks Team on 0345 600 6400 should be contacted for Skips and Containers licences.

12. The Council's Lighting Section at [highwaysstreetlighting@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:highwaysstreetlighting@northumberland.gov.uk) should be contacted before and during the construction period with respect of street lighting to ensure sufficient illumination levels of the public highway.

13. In accordance with the Highways Act 1980, no mud, debris or rubbish shall be deposited on the highway.

14. Road safety audits are required to be undertaken. The Council offers this service and can be contacted at [highwaysplanning@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:highwaysplanning@northumberland.gov.uk) or 01670 622979.

15. Technical Approval of Highways Structures is required. You should contact Highway Development Management at [highwaysplanning@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:highwaysplanning@northumberland.gov.uk)

16. The demand for EV car parking spaces is likely to increase in the future to reflect the inevitable increased take up of electric vehicles.

17. Works that do not constitute 'development' or are permitted by virtue of the provisions of the General Permitted Development Order will not require formal discharge to be obtained prior to such works being undertaken.

18. The Council's Conservation Team should be contacted to discuss the scope of an appropriate mitigation programme and approve specifications for archaeological work as necessary. This may be a chargeable service as set out in the Conservation Team's charging policy that is available on the Council's website.

**Date of Report:** 16 February 2022

**Background Papers:** Planning application file 21/03720/CCD