

City of Durham Trust – Objection

DM/20/03558/OUT Land To The East Of Regents Court Sherburn Road Durham

Proposed residential development of up to 440 dwellings (outline including access).

Introduction

1. The Trust understands that this site is intended as a sustainable urban extension based on the approval of the County Durham Plan (CDP). The proposals for the site must meet all the requirements for new development spelled out in the CDP. This should include transport, energy sustainability and positive design contribution. Impacts on heritage assets, especially the World Heritage site (WHS), their settings and landscape should also be adequately assessed and harm avoided or mitigated. All these requirements are reinforced by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). This is also backed up by the National Design Guide (NDG) and the Durham County Council's own Building for Life Supplementary Planning Document (BfL) as well as other guidance.
2. The Trust finds that there is a range of failures against these requirements. Having had poor experience when raising such issues with Banks Property Ltd (BPL) as comments, there is no option for the Trust except to submit an objection to the scheme in the hope that the scheme's shortcomings will be remedied before resubmission after rejection or withdrawal.
3. The outline application leaves everything other than access to the A181 to being dealt with through Reserved Matters which are apparently intended for individual submission by various developers of the site. The only satisfactory way in which different developers can produce a coherent realisation of **CDP Policy 5** and other relevant policies of the County Durham Plan is to provide a fully worked-up Masterplan for the whole of H6 together with a Design Code that secures such matters as the location of the affordable housing.
4. Instead, the illustrated layout of the scheme offers no indication of rising fully to the challenge of this sensitive site or to the sustainability needed to address the climate emergency. As presented, the masterplan could well have been submitted at any time in the past 40 years or more, almost anywhere in the UK where design, sustainability opportunities and contextual sensitivities were not leading the scheme.
5. Whilst there are many accompanying statements on such essential aspects as design, access and movement, these do no more than provide a narrative to the outline application; it follows that the quality of the development as a sustainable and exemplary 'gateway' to Durham City depends upon adherence to the requirements set out in the policies of the County Durham Plan. This is the approach we have adopted, and expect the County Council to be equally faithful to the sustainability and other policies of the Plan.

6. The Trust has engaged with BPL as part of their consultation programme. BPL has yet to provide feedback. The Trust has responded with openness and transparency – indicating the range of concerns it has, based upon the County Durham Plan, especially in relation to sustainability/cycling/walking and heritage/landscape. It is extremely disappointing that this has turned out to be a simple ‘tick box’ exercise as BPL has failed to respond to this information and chosen instead to submit the application without any meaningful dialogue very shortly after commencing the consultation. The Trust also twice requested a meeting with the Durham County Council Head of Development and Housing and his officers with the intention of avoiding the need to object to the scheme, but has received no response.

7. The Trust’s response is shaped by the statutory policies of the County Durham Plan (CDP). The CDP proposes this housing site as a ‘sustainable urban extension’ under **Policy 5** and the Trust has collated its comments under the broad heading of sustainability broken down into energy, transport, design and heritage/landscape. It shows what is needed to overcome the failings of the proposals and supporting information in the ‘**Action Points**’ at the end of each section.

The Policies of the County Durham Plan

8. **Policy 5** requires the Sherburn Road housing allocation H6 to be comprehensively masterplanned - ‘*Development is required to be comprehensively masterplanned*’. This will need to demonstrate how the phasing of development on these sites will have regard to the provision and timing of the infrastructure and services necessary to support them. It is to be noted that the submitted illustrative masterplan and Design Code cannot effectively deal with the part of the site to the west that is not in BPL ownership without demonstration of cooperation in tackling development.

9. The outline application provides merely an illustrative development framework with its contents being nothing more than “possibilities”. Nor is there any indication of phasing other than the westerly plot being independent of the rest. A masterplan that complies with **Policy 5** is essential, and this application fails that requirement.

10. The quantity of dwellings is similarly vague. Para 5.35 of BPL’s Planning Statement says:

‘Due to the inclusion of the southern landscaping belt which now forms part of the red line boundary, the gross site area has increased from the Policy 4 figure which would result in an estimated yield of 440 dwellings across the H6 (Sherburn Road) housing allocation.’

This is simply wrong: **CDP Policy 4** covers the whole of H6 and is for 420 dwellings in total whereas BPL suggest 500 dwellings across the whole of H6. BPL are seeking a significant increase in the quantity of development here. There is also no indication that there has been consideration of the impact of increasing the density on heritage and landscape. It may well reduce the space otherwise available within the layout for gardens and green space. House units may be smaller and storeys increased with greater impact on the landscape. There potentially may be more cars to accommodate on surrounding road network with sustainable transport implications.

11. **CDP Policies 4 and 5** must be complied with for the number of dwellings to be provided on the BPL part of H6, namely 387 by the Trust's estimate, unless there are compelling benefits to be gained by accepting Bank's significantly higher figure of 440, such as enabling the provision of **Policy 15's** requirement that 25% (i.e. 110) are affordable; that 66% (i.e. 290) are to Building Regulations Requirement M4 (2) (accessible and adaptable dwellings) standard; and 10% (i.e. 44) to be of a design and type that will increase the housing options of older people, as part of the 66% built to M4(2) standard.

12. **Policy 5** goes on to set out very clear requirements on sustainability, design, landscape, and other key aspects which are dealt with later in our objection.

13. **Policy 15** lays down very important requirements on housing need: 25% to be affordable and 66% to be accessible and adaptable, and 10% to be suitable for older people. The outline application's Planning Statement says that these will be addressed at reserved matters stage. As we have already pointed out, that is clearly unworkable via separate developers each pursuing their own reserved matters without an approved comprehensive Masterplan. The same is true for compliance with '**Policy 19 'Type and Mix of Housing'**'.

Action Point 1 – CDP Policies 4, 5 and 15 – provide a full assessment of phasing/ownership and housing density including benefits vs disbenefits, and how affordable housing and space standards will be met. Demonstrate how this will be achieved in a comprehensive masterplan and reinforced in the Design Code

Energy and Resource Use

14. Sustainable urban drainage (SUDS) is one element required to respond to sustainability. It is shown but questions remain over its relationship to the open space and connection to drainage/watercourse systems, potentially off site. SUDS is broadly indicated as a pond system but without any outflow. The use of open water in close proximity to housing is often a difficult managerial issue and SUDS systems include dry swales for periods of high intensity run off. The illustrated system may not work as shown. Given the Green Belt compensatory proposals on adjacent BPL ownership, there is substantial scope for introducing this area into the system. Even at this outline stage clarity of the principles to be followed is missing.

15. As this is an outline application there may not be full supporting evidence about the detail of how it is proposed to tackle the climate emergency by ensuring sustainable energy measures. However, the layout as shown in the illustrative framework and detail in the Design Code does impact on sustainability and should adequately respond to policy requirements.

16. The Trust can find no references to building orientation or avoidance of shading for maximising passive solar gain. These principles should form the layout for a masterplan and would contribute to complying with **Policy 29(c)**.

17. It should be made more clear how the applicant intends to ensure a high rating under the Housing Quality Mark assessment. This requirement is completely missing from the Design Code submitted.

18. Much greater attention is needed to principles of minimising energy and resource use and incorporating alternative energy production or future proofed heating.

Action Point 2. CDP Policy 5 – Demonstrate practicality of SUDS suggestions before including them in a masterplan. Demonstrate how A1(M) drainage may be incorporated into the SUDS provision and whether this might impact on the layout. **CDP Policy 29.** Identify the principles of sustainability that will be observed to meet all the sustainability requirements of this policy. Identify which standards will be met, noting reasons if external standards are not to be used. Show how impacts on layout will be incorporated into the illustrative layout and how the Design Code will fully reinforce sustainability.

Transport (See full details in Appendix A)

19. The Trust makes the following objections relating to transport:

- The Bent House Lane / A181 junction design is not acceptable. If Bent House Lane is to be closed to motor vehicles at the north end, cycle access must be maintained, but the proposed design does not comply with national guidance.
- Various highway features for which the applicant is seeking approval at the outline stage are not compliant with design guidance such as LTN 1/20 and the Manual for Streets, and will require detailed redesign:
 - motor vehicle restrictions on Bent House Lane;
 - link from Bent House Lane to the Damson Way junction;
 - cycle access to the site from Dragon Lane and the A181;
 - pedestrian and cycle path on the south side of the A181, including arrangements for crossing the main site access road.
- There is insufficient detail on the provision and management of car parking, which is of great significance. The Trust accepts that the detail must be a reserved matter, but the principles of provision and layout should be fully set out in the Design Code. More could be done to promote sustainable transport by avoiding traditional parking layouts. Residential cycle parking is also inadequately covered.
- The Travel Plan initiatives are not very onerous and may have little impact. A short-term bus pass is mentioned, but all the other initiatives are promotional. The targets are not very stretching, and yet could be hard to achieve given the weakness of the plan.
- Parts of the site do not meet the Council's Parking and Accessibility Standards for access to bus services, or the requirement of **CDP Policy 5** for bus access within the site. There is insufficient information about the proposed bus pass scheme in the Framework Travel Plan.
- Off-site improvements are not indicated fully but are required to assist in mitigating the impact of additional traffic generated by the site and making the site truly

accessible. Contributions should be secured towards the following, as is considered proportionate and reasonable:

- cycling route to Laurel Avenue and Mill Lane for primary schools, and on to Gilesgate
- walking and cycling routes on Damson Way, and at the junction with Renny's Lane to facilitate access to the secondary school at Belmont.
- walking and cycling routes to access shops on Dragon Lane
- access to employment sites such as Belmont Industrial Estate and Durham University
- access to Sherburn and Sherburn House, including making the A181/B1198 junction safe for walking and cycling

20. However, the Trust welcomes:

- the proposed vehicular site access via a priority junction, rather than a signalised junction;
- provision of cycle parking at the new A181 bus stop, but notes that if a cycle hire scheme was to be introduced it would need a central location, not at bus stops
- path enhancements and new rights of way, this could be secured via a Section 106 agreement;
- the connections to the existing Sherburn Road estate;
- the provision of multi-user paths throughout the site.

21. Any scheme approved will need to:

- Impose a condition should be applied to ensure that the proposed new bus stops, and the main walking and cycling connections likely to be beneficial for everyday journeys from each zone of the site should be open and properly surfaced before any houses in that zone are occupied.
- Ensure that the Design Code should be augmented to cover design parameters for streets within the development. The Trust would like to see tight corner radii at all internal junctions to ensure vehicle speeds are kept low, and raised tables and clear surfacing giving priority to the multi-user path network where this crosses motor vehicle routes.
- Ensure that enhancement of access to the remaining Green Belt also considers routes the Trust suggested in a document previously shared with BPL, and improvements to drainage and surfacing of existing paths.

Assessing the Application on Transport Grounds

22. NPPF and the policies of the County Plan give the County Council the power to refuse the application on wider transport grounds, even if the residual cumulative highways impacts are less than severe. The Trust demonstrates in the following report that aspects of the Transport Assessment, Travel Plan, and the site access and design are not acceptable in policy terms, but it is acknowledged that there are positive outcomes of the development which may balance these. The question is therefore one of weight. There is general recognition of the need for radical change in transport outcomes in the UK. Recently the Council's proposed Durham relief roads were judged incompatible with national policy, and

deleted from the County Plan. The publication in July of LTN 1/20 and “Gear change”, the government's vision for cycling and walking, marks a new drive for reducing car dependence. The Council has declared a climate emergency: transport accounts for around a third of carbon emissions and, unlike other sectors, has not achieved any emissions reductions since 1990. West of the site the A181 feeds into an Air Quality Management Area, and it is estimated that a third of the traffic generated by the site will enter this AQMA, contributing to a major risk to human health

23. For all these reasons, the Trust believes that sustainable transport matters should be given considerable weight in determining planning applications, especially as the location, design, and built form of development can lock in travel habits over long time periods.

24. In relation to this particular application, the preamble to Policy 5 of the County Durham Plan summarises the exceptional circumstances which justified the proposed site being removed from the Green Belt. One of these points was:

‘Maximising the number of journeys undertaken by sustainable means such as walking, cycling and public transport and minimising overall journey distances and times. This will help address congestion and associated issues such as air quality and carbon emissions and enable the creation of a more sustainable transport network across the city.’

It follows that to live up to the epithet of ‘sustainable urban extension’ the greatest attention should be paid, in transport terms, to maximising the sustainable transport uptake from the development. Relying on the location alone is insufficient.

25. The Trust would expect to see

- the development connected to a high quality walking and cycling network
- measures to enable and encourage use of buses
- site layout which encourages sustainable modes as the 'first choice option'
- an ambitious Travel Plan which robustly estimates the carbon impact of the scheme
- attention to detail in the design of walking and cycling infrastructure, complying with LTN 1/20 and other recent design guidance

Action Point 3. CDP Policies 5, 21. 22 and 25 - Demonstrate how the development will meet all the requirements of these policies and guidance from their supporting text. Show this in full assessments and on a masterplan, in a travel plan and in a full design code. Show how the requirements of the **DCC Design Guide for Residential Development, 2104**, the **Durham City Sustainable Transport Delivery Plan** and **LTN 1/20** are to be met. Show clearly and explain which design guidance is to be observed and which is not to be used.

Design

26. Inherent weakness in the layout together with others shown in the assessment in the following section, mean that the illustrated layout is set to fail against CDP sustainable design policy.

27. It is well recognised locally that the adjacent Sherburn estate buildings, despite some tree screening are extremely prominent and intrusive on the skyline, impacting on a range of heritage and landscape assets. The illustrated layout shows an almost identical arrangement of house units on the skyline to the east of Bent House Lane.

28. The analysis of local distinctiveness and placemaking leading into character zoning is especially weak. The layout shown has no relationship to the historic areas in Durham and actually has much greater similarity to post war expansion. There are similarities, in part, to the adjacent estate. Illustrations of nearby Gilesgate historic development are not matched by any block patterns submitted. The development is a similar regular and repetitive rhythm of blocks based on a traditional road layout. The local buildings shown as examples are mostly terraced, often entered from the street and organically evolved under different ownerships and builders over significant periods of time. None of this will apply to the submission.

29. There are particular dangers in applying suggestions for render finishes borrowed from historic Gilesgate. As the Kepier Heights (on the northern approach into the City) and other skyline/prominent developments demonstrate, using render can greatly exacerbate their visual intrusion.

30. There is a potentially more distinctive layout along the central open space and boulevard which might be reinforced through detailed design. Edge character formation around the open space may well be less successful if the SUDS system does not result in an all seasons water supply to the ponds. Distinctiveness is unproven, relationship to Durham building patterns equally so.

31. The suggestion of traditional house forms without defining the choice in the Design Code and explaining the reasoning for omitting contemporary design is a clear weakness. As illustrated it leads to weak building types that are pale echoes of Durham's distinctive character.

32. The layout pattern's response to topography, and therefore its impact on the surrounding landscape and heritage assets with their setting, isn't shown and cannot be recognised in the sample layout. The points made above and below under *Landscape and Heritage* show the weakness of the initial assessment. What is also missing are the requirements needed to be imposed on layout and design approach to minimise negative impact. As this will affect site layout even an illustrative layout should have demonstrated a valid approach to design. The layout shown is used to support the design of the access point into the site and is very likely to guide any smaller development parcels if the site is subdivided.

33. Because of the inherent failures in layout, supporting sustainability, establishment of character and the wide range of negative impacts on heritage and landscape, the Design Code is unacceptable in its current scope and detail. It fails to address the underlying problems in the proposal. Its local illustrations bear little relationship to the layout shown. It remains doubtful that it will prove sufficient to coordinate design if the site is sub-divided into development plots and the adjacent non-BPL land incorporated. Structural and off site landscape and its maintenance and SUDS, for example, need centrally coordinated control and not parcelling up among individual developers.

34. For these reasons, even at this outline stage, the proposals fails against **CDP Policy 29** Sustainable Design, section a. They also fail against **NPPF 12** - Achieving Well Designed Places, Sections 127 c – Sympathetic to local character, d – Sense of place. It fails to trigger ‘weight’ under section 131 by being neither outstanding nor innovative. There is a clear failure against three of the **National Design Guide’s** characteristics – **Context** – enhances the surroundings. **Identity** -attractive and distinctive, and **Built Form** – a coherent pattern of development.

Action Point 4. CDP Policy 29 – demonstrate how the proposals, a masterplan and a design code will fully meet its requirements. **NPPF 12** – Show how its requirements will be fully met. **National Design Guide** – Show how its guidance is to be observed fully.

Landscape and Heritage

35. The main area of concern is the lead edge of the development as it fronts the Wear valley and its return along the River Pitting (Old Durham Beck) as it flows from Sherburn House. The issues are with the development on the skyline and the stack up of the development in views from the south. This is common to both heritage and landscape. For information, the summary of areas of concern provided to BPL are attached as **Appendix B. Bent House Lane Housing Development. Heritage, Green Belt and Landscape Significance**

Landscape

36. There remain key views that have not been explored in the submitted Landscape and Visual Appraisal. The attached **Appendix B** below indicates the views originally not made available for consultation, a situation now partly remedied. However remaining omissions are:

*(Numbering refers to Appendix 1 of **Appendix B** below)*

A. View to the WHS from the Bent House Lane as it breaks through the tree belt on the perimeter of the developments site – vital for showing range of receptors of views of the site from the historic city core..

E. Whitwell Grange – view of the site including the WHS in the panorama. A key historic approach, linking landscape to pilgrimage approach through the landscape.

I. Across the WHS to the site from Observatory Hill. The site development has the potential to increase urban sprawl in the backdrop to the WHS. Sherburn Rd Estate and the Bent House Farm Poplar trees are on view and there is a strong risk of further penetration into the view from the lead edge of the development east of Bent House Lane.

K. Sunderland Bridge – There is a distant view especially at night to the Sherburn Road Estate with a risk of further view penetration by the development, again east of Bent House Lane.

Additionally the intervisibility of the WHS in its Inner and Wider Settings was only very broadly indicated in the WHS Management Plan and varies between the two depictions. Only a new and full analysis for this site will establish this. BPL were alerted to this in the Trust's comments – see **Appendix B**.

37. The section of the proposed development east of Bent House Lane will intrude into the landscape area of the valley on the skyline. Skyline impact weakens moving south and west but more of the site becomes visible from a few viewpoints. Areas close to the site are visible in cross WHS views (see below). Proposed tree belts are simplistic edge blocks, will take at least 20yrs plus to become effective and fail to take into account that the development behind them is on rising ground – lengthening the time taken for screening. The interplay of the screening with planting within the core of the development and the compensatory Green Belt planting is not analysed. Future management of landscape mitigation is as essential as adequate design and quality of initial planting. The principles of the ongoing management system and the responsible organisation need definition. Notwithstanding any development phasing or separation of ownership, it is also essential to carry out planting as soon as possible and before full development takes place.

38. Bent House Lane suffers greatly from the intrusion of the Sherburn Estate and the new proposal extends a similar prominent built frontage to the Lane.

39. There will be visual intrusion into the Area of Higher Landscape Value (AHLV), potentially only partially mitigated by at least 20yrs+ tree growth. The Wear Valley is already significantly negatively impacted upon by the buildings and the pitch lighting of the University Sports Centre. The house and street lighting of the new development will be a further negative impact. The A1(M) also has a very major negative impact.

40. The other areas of BPL ownership are very intensively cultivated right up to the field edges, this makes the River Pitting (Old Beck) footpath (FP90) almost impassable in wet conditions. Designated footpath access is physically discouraged. There is much greater scope for bio-diversity enrichment by organising field edge fallow areas linked to new hedgerow and tree planting.

41. The negative impact on the landscape is therefore cumulative and includes Bent House Lane and the access through the Wear valley. It is caused by the lead edges of the proposed development and 'stacking up' of development up the contours from the south. Mitigation is limited and fails to exploit the area's full potential by not utilising the compensatory area

to deal selectively with view mitigation. This could be by planting based on a more thorough and complex analysis and may well complement and be more effective than relying on simple boundary tree belts alone.

42. The submission fails to fully understand and analyse the full impact of views to and from the site leading also to further weakness in the heritage appraisal. As the area surrounding the development site is also the Green Belt the negative landscape impacts also apply to it.

43. The proposals therefore fail against **CDP Policy 20** – Harms Green Belt (See NPPF Reference below), **Policy 26** – Fails to improve green infrastructure, failing to maintain landscape character. **Policy 29** – a. Fails to contribute positively to landscape features, g. Fails to contribute creatively to topography and landscape interest, l. fails to provide adequate level of structural landscaping. **Policy 39**, Fails to incorporate adequate mitigation against adverse landscape and visual effects. **NPPF – 127 c** Will not ensure development sympathetic to local character, history and landscape setting, **144** – requires substantial weight for harm by development to Green Belt, **170** – Fails to protect and enhance valued landscape

Action Point 5 – CDP Policies 20, 26, 29 and 39 - Demonstrate how these are to be met fully within the submitted information and the harm described fully avoided or mitigated.

Heritage

44. There are key weaknesses in the Heritage Statement submitted. These are:

- i) Undue reliance on the static viewpoints from the Landscape and Visual Appraisal – this is specifically cautioned against by ICOMOS (the UNESCO WHS advisory body)
- ii) Missing viewpoints from the landscape assessment, especially cross City including the WHS and to the WHS. Intervisibility information was unreliable (*as noted in Landscape Para. 36 above*).
- iii) The WHS inner setting extends further into the site than the boundary to Bent House Farm – the relevance of this is missed in the submission. The wide boundary definition was drawn starting at the developed lead edge of Sherburn Road specifically to include it because of its visibility. The boundary starts behind Bent House Lane Farm and extends for some distance into the site.
- iv) The individual assessments are not accumulated to give a full understanding of the landscape surrounding the development site. Settings to individual assets are not explored.
- v) Maiden Castle was omitted from impact analysis
- vi) Impact was unduly based on unproven or unreliable mitigation ensuing from the landscape proposals
- vii) Cumulative impact of major detractors locally was missed
- viii) Intangible heritage and the weight attaching to heritage assets, their setting and the aggregated landscape containing them was missed
- ix) Although referenced, the ICOMOS methodology for estimating WHS impact was not used.

45. The collective assessment using these added factors in combination with a properly weighted analysis of the submitted information would conclude that this section of the Wear Valley from Shincliffe Bridge through to Pelaw Wood is of very high value. This is in relation to WHS, the approaches into the City, Old Durham and to the immediate higher areas to the south.

46. Maiden Castle has its own setting being a remnant of pre Roman settlement of which there are no other visible traces. Later the valley becomes the Roman Villa landscape. With the establishment of the Cathedral and Castle the landscape becomes fully tied and integrated with it and its offshoots. The link to Sherburn House and pilgrimage routes are part of the intangible heritage adding significance to the landscape around the development site. Old Durham brings its own layer of significance relating to the medieval landscape and the WHS. Later 19thC industrial use has extensively reshaped the area and in itself is significant but has left relatively few traces. It is an attractive landscape area with its own character and rich in historical significance.

47. The surrounds to the development are therefore cumulatively more significant than separate heritage asset assessment reveals. The full relationship to the WHS is therefore not properly assessed for significance and as a consequence negative impact is underestimated. Part of the development site itself is the inner setting to the WHS. The impact on the significance of Old Durham Gardens and the Whitwell Grange approach to the WHS through its setting is missed/underestimated.

48. The point is that the combined significance is greater than the submission shows. Cumulative damage to this hinterland from the Durham University Sports Centre and the A1(M) are not referenced and the capacity of the negative impact caused by the new proposals being amplified is missed.

49. Ultimately, accepting that under the CDP some form of development will be constructed on the site, the high negative impact of the lead edge of the site and cumulative rooftop coalescence from the south need greatly increased design and layout work and more focused attention on effective mitigation.

50. A warning has been very clearly served on the County Council by ICOMOS in relation to its regulatory failure to protect the WHS setting triggered by the proposed Business School development in Elvet:

*“This proposal (**Business School**) highlights the high vulnerability of the immediate setting of the property (WHS) and ICOMOS advises that a reappraisal of regulations for the immediate setting of the property should be undertaken urgently to ensure that development is limited and, where appraise (sic), is of a size and form that is compatible with supporting attributes of OUV.”*

‘Immediate setting’ is taken as meaning the WHS Management Plan Inner Setting. This development, if approved, runs the high risk of being counted as further harm to the WHS Outstanding Universal Value (OUV), particularly when assessed cumulatively with other recent City developments. Part of the inner setting will be lost, it potentially negatively impacts on views relating to the WHS and demonstrably will affect the quality of the

landscape approach to the WHS. This is unnecessary because it can be avoided by adequate design and mitigation based on a more thorough understanding of the area and the impact on it.

51. Currently the proposal fails against: **CDP Policy 29 a** – fails to contribute positively to area’s heritage significance, **Policy 44 Historic Environment** – Fails to sustain significance of heritage assets, **Policy 45 WHS** – Fails to sustain and enhance the significance of the WHS, is not based on understanding of OUV, fails to protect the OUV and immediate setting. **And NPPF: Para. 189-** fails to describe significance, **190** – Fails to analyse effects on significance, **194** Lack of convincing justification for harm to significance, **196** – failure to weigh harm against public benefit.

Action Point 5 – **CDP Policies 29, 44 and 45** – Demonstrate how the submitted information will fully meet these policies. **NPPF Paras. 189, 190, 194 and 196** show how these requirements will be met.

Summary

52. The Trust believes it has established the scheme’s failure against housing density and sustainability CDP policies including energy, transport, landscape and heritage. The assessment information is weak and has omissions and inaccuracies, and is insufficient as a basis for an approval. The Design Code is very weak and offers little to ensure that the policies of the CDP will be met and it fails against the sustainability requirements as demonstrated above.

53. The process by which off site works relating to transport or landscape and any on site advance planting is not been shown in the submitted documentation. Part of the site isn’t in the applicant’s ownership. These are very clear weaknesses in showing how such a prominent and important site is to be phased, developed and incorporated within its surrounds and setting.

54. The Trust therefore objects to the application in the hope that following rejection or withdrawal, a much more considered scheme will be submitted, one that is correctly assessed against County Durham Plan policies and properly designed with sustainability to the fore.

Appendix A – Transport Assessment

Transport Assessment para. 2.2.6 states that two PPG notes have been specifically considered in the preparation of the report. The PPG note *Travel Plans, Transport Assessments and Statements* (published 2014) states that Transport Assessments and Travel Plans should be “brought forward through collaborative ongoing working” between various bodies including the local planning authority, bus and train operators and other relevant bodies. It also recommends engaging communities and local businesses in Travel Plans and Transport Assessments to support higher levels of walking and cycling.

There is no evidence of collaborative working with any body other than DCC and Highways England (see Transport Assessment para. 1.5.2). The Trust sought to engage with the developer, and provided a detailed paper on walking and cycling accessibility, but the promised response was not forthcoming and our paper made little or no impact on the submitted application.

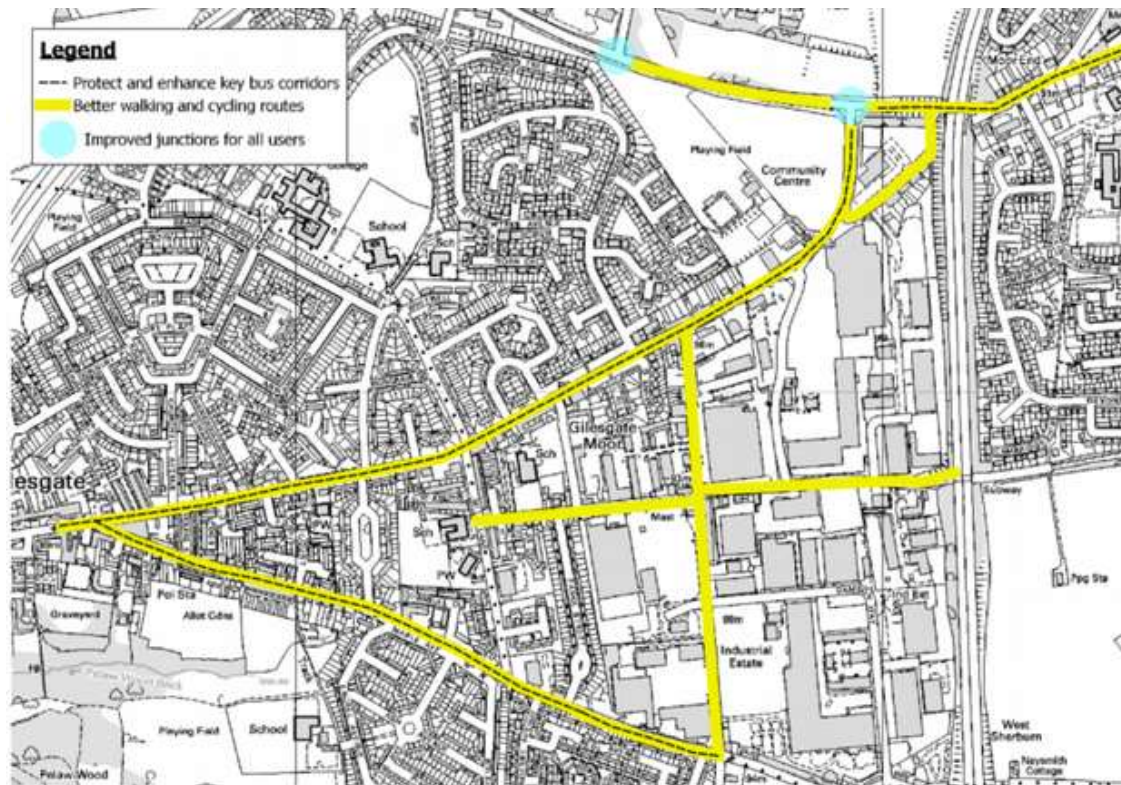
Accessibility of the site

Section 5 of the Transport Assessment seeks to demonstrate the accessibility of the site by sustainable modes. Table 5.1 lists the closest amenities (supermarket, post office, bank, public house, etc.) to the site and states the distance to walk or cycle to each from the development, together with any relevant bus services. Measurements are given from the centre of the site, so some distances will be 200m further. Many of the distances to facilities are around 800m, the distance limit of the '15 minute city' concept. Some are considerably further: it is doubtful whether anyone will choose to walk, cycle or catch the bus to the nearest post office in Sherburn Village, for example. Section 5.3 reviews access to employment opportunities. A number of sites are within a reasonable distance, but many major employers in the city are beyond the typical walking distance.

The real weakness of the assessment lies in how it characterises the quality of the sustainable transport network. Paragraph 5.2.4 asserts that “the site is located adjacent to an established built-up area which is considered suitable for walking and cycling trips”. This is emphatically not the case for cycling, and there are some serious deficiencies in the walking provision too.

A similar assertion is made on Drawing PA15 “Accessibility to Local Facilities” where retail, employment and education sites are linked to the development by a set of routes which are labelled “Safe route to retail and schools”. The diagram clearly only covers walking. Controlled crossing points are shown, but dangerous crossings and unsafe routes are not identified, even though some of the “safe routes” include unsignalised crossings over roads carrying significant motor traffic. Nor does the drawing show routes to the amenities in Table 5.1 which are further away from the site.

By contrast, analysis commissioned by Durham County Council and adopted in the Durham City Sustainable Transport Strategy records that all the major links and junctions leading into this established built-up area require improvement for walking, cycling and bus access, as is shown by the following map (below):



Two junctions are highlighted on the map, but applying the Junction Assessment Tool from Appendix B of LTN 1/20 demonstrates that none of the main junctions shown on the above map are considered safe for cycling at present. Of these, the best facility is at Bent House Lane itself. Because there is so little traffic on Bent House Lane, a cyclist exiting the lane via the traffic lights is probably safer than at any other junction in Durham City, but the applicant short-sightedly proposes removing this provision.

The significance of the poor quality of the current cycling infrastructure can be appreciated by looking at the output of the DfT's Propensity to Cycle Tool. It estimates that with a Dutch-quality cycle network, travel to work by bicycle from the County Durham 029D Lower Super Output Area, which covers Old Durham and the Sherburn Road and Woodlands estates, would rise from the current level of 2% of commuting journeys to 21%, or to 28% with wider uptake of e-bikes.

The Trust accepts that the site has potential for sustainable transport, but this will not be realised without improvements to the surrounding network which the developer does not propose to deliver. The question to be asked, when looking at Table 5.1, is “why would anyone choose to leave the car at home when travelling to these facilities?”. Even trips to the local shops are likely to be made by car, considering that the Dragon Lane retail area has been designed to prioritise car use.

The Trust does not, therefore, accept the Transport Assessment's conclusion, in section 5.5, that the sustainability of the site has been demonstrated. To mitigate this contributions should be sought towards off-site improvements.

Bus access

As described in the Transport Assessment, a number of services will be available from the relocated bus stops on the A181. It is stated that all dwellings will be within 500m of the bus stops, and with

the greater density housing areas being closer to the A181, the number of houses falling beyond the 400m limit required by the council's Parking and Accessibility Standards is reduced.

CDP Policy 5 does state that each green belt release site “will incorporate convenient, safe and high quality bus, pedestrian and cycle routes within, and connecting to, adjoining facilities”. There is no indication that the applicant intends to incorporate convenient high-quality bus routes within the site as required by the policy, even though this would allow the development to satisfy the 400m maximum distance limit of the Parking and Accessibility Standards. The layout of the site does not facilitate a through bus route being diverted to serve the estate, so the most that could be achieved would be extending the Scarlet Band S1 service into the site. This might help with access to shops and to the University's Mountjoy campus.

The Trust supports the proposal to provide cycle parking at the new A181 bus stops. Such provision is common in the Netherlands and increases the catchment area of bus services. Linking it with a possible cycle hire scheme (mentioned in para. 4.4.2 of the Transport Assessment) is not such a good idea. A cycle hire station might be better located close to the centre of the development.

Although there would be a frequent service towards the city centre, including buses every twenty minutes serving Aykley Heads and the Arnison Centre, the east-bound services are not frequent or fast enough to attract commuters who have the option of using a car. Around a third of commuters would head eastwards according to paragraph 6.3.4 of the Transport Assessment.

Travel Plan

The PPG note gives the primary purpose of a Travel Plan as identifying “opportunities for the effective promotion and delivery of sustainable transport initiatives” and “through this to thereby reduce the demand for travel by less sustainable modes”.

Travel Plans “should also consider what additional measures may be required to offset unacceptable impacts if the targets should not be met”. The Framework Travel Plan submitted does not do this.

The Travel Plan promises a short-term bus pass for free travel on local services to each household on first occupation. The DfT's 2008 publication *Building sustainable transport into new developments: a menu of options for growth points and eco-towns* offers an example of best practice, on p. 21, of a site in Chelmsford where new residents were given a year's free bus pass for two people in each household and additional morning and evening services were subsidised. The Travel Plan does not give sufficient detail on the scheme proposed by the applicant. How short is a “short-term” bus pass? How many passes will be available to each household? There is no indication that the applicant has liaised with any of the local bus operators.

Measures such as bus passes can be effective in changing travel habits, but the Travel Plan monitoring and further measures will be key. Although PAS 500:2008 is designed for workplace travel plans, there are key aspects of the specification which should be applied. For example there should be an indicative budget for the Travel Plan, and a contingency budget to fund further measures if the travel surveys show insufficient reduction in car journeys. The enforcement mechanisms must be clear given that various parts of the development will be built by separate housebuilders, each operating their own Subsidiary Travel Plan.

Aside from the short-term bus passes, the Travel Plan lists only initiatives that are promotional, which could be achieved via a leaflet drop. The Communication Strategy in section 6.2 even suggests that the information may be in the form of a PDF or a website link. While there is some sense in providing electronic information when so many of the initiatives consist of promotion of web-sites,

without a commitment to a range of printed materials being sent to all householders, it is quite likely that many occupants will not engage with the programme. Section 5.5.3 of the Durham City Sustainable Transport Delivery Plan advocates high-quality well-designed welcome packs for all new residents and household visits by travel advisers. Paragraph 6.2.3 of the Travel Plan promises a personalised journey planning service which will be available to all residents. This is to be welcomed, but without any indication of the time that will be committed to this work it is hard to judge how effective it will be.

Why are there not proposals for membership of a car club, with dedicated parking spaces for car club cars? The Durham City Sustainable Transport Delivery Plan says that provision of car club vehicles should be considered in new developments (see section 5.5.2). It also gives a case study, on p. 65, of a 500-dwelling site in York where the developer offered £150 vouchers towards bike purchase or bus season tickets, free car club membership and £50 drive time, and a community bike loan scheme. The Framework Travel Plan offered by the applicant is very poor by comparison.

The applicant has used the 2011 census figures for travel to work for the middle layer super output area (MSOA) in which this site is located. From a baseline of 47.4% of workers driving a car or van to work, it is proposed to reduce this by five percentage points to 42.4% over the course of the first three years of the Travel Plan's operation.

The Trust has looked at the smallest level of Output Area from the census, taking the three Output Areas that cover Old Durham and the estates to the south of the A181, which will have similar levels of accessibility to the proposed new estate. For this smaller area, 43.3% of work travel is by driving a car or van. That is only slightly in excess of the proposed target in the Travel Plan. The estates have lower car ownership than Durham as a whole, but also much higher unemployment. The income distribution, and levels of car ownership can have more of an influence on travel behaviours than the accessibility of the location.

The percentage share of different modes of transport is a very crude proxy for carbon emissions. Shorter journeys are much more likely to switch from car to sustainable modes, so if a drop of five percentage points in car use is achieved over the first three years, the actual drop in emissions will be much less. Yet the government is aiming for a 68% cut in emissions by 2030, almost 7 percentage points per year. Much will have to come from a switch to electric vehicles coupled with decarbonising the electricity grid, but modal shift is going to be needed on a larger scale than that envisaged in the proposed Travel Plan. Durham University's recently adopted Sustainable Travel Plan, which is aligned to government targets, aims for a reduction in single occupancy car journey share of almost 22 percentage points over the next five years.

Perhaps an even bigger factor in reducing carbon emissions over the next few years will be how many people switch to working from home. The Travel Plan should be made more rigorous by looking not just at the means of transport people use but also:

- how far they travel
- how frequently they travel
- the size and means of propulsion of any vehicle

Obtaining this information via the survey will allow a much more robust assessment of carbon emissions and of the success of the plan.

In conclusion the Framework Travel Plan as currently drafted is nowhere near sophisticated enough to have the required impact on travel behaviours and carbon emissions. Its targets are insufficiently demanding, it does not propose a budget, the proposed initiatives are mainly promotional, and it

does not identify additional initiatives that could be put into effect if the targets are not met. In outline form it does not appear to meet the expectations of the Durham City Sustainable Transport Delivery Plan section 5.5.

A good Travel Plan will affect the transport impacts of the site. Without an adequate Travel Plan at the outline planning application stage there is insufficient information to assess whether the County Durham Plan Policy 21 requirements to promote sustainable transport will be met. Transport must be looked at holistically, with the Travel Plan, site design and access arrangements, and possible off-site improvements working together to achieve the policy objectives. The Trust therefore considers that approving the application in its current form would be unsatisfactory, even if a compliant Travel Plan is secured subsequently via a planning condition.

Justification for developer contributions

Policy 25 of the County Durham Plan covers the use of planning conditions and obligations. This should allow the Council to secure contributions from the developer towards off-site infrastructure improvements to mitigate the impact of the development. For example, the need for cycling and walking improvements along the A181 from Bent House Lane to Sherburn Road Ends, and along the length of Dragon Lane were identified in the Durham City Sustainable Transport Delivery Plan (DCSTDP). The current application being the only major development likely to come forward locally in the Plan period, the need for contributions should be considered. This is consistent with PPG note *Travel Plans, Transport Assessments and Statements* which allows for measures which “may assist in creating new capacity within the local network that can be utilised to accommodate the residual trip demand of the site(s) under consideration”. The penultimate paragraph of CDP **Policy 5** says that “the movement frameworks of each site should also incorporate any relevant schemes within the Durham City Sustainable Transport Delivery Plan”. No such schemes have been included in the outline application.

Paragraph 5.248 of the County Durham Plan, supporting text for **Policy 25**, states that to “provide certainty, known infrastructure requirements and associated developer contributions will be set out at the pre-application stage”. It was with this in mind that the Trust asked for a meeting with appropriate officers prior to the submission of the application, but this request was not met. It is disappointing therefore that the Transport Assessment does not recognise the deficiencies in the local active travel network or propose any improvements. The reference to the DCSTDP in **CDP Policy 5** should have been a clear signal to the developer that off-site improvements were likely to be necessary.

The Council should be able to identify the priorities for improvement through the work carried out to prepare the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) for Durham City. **CDP Policy 21** requires that development, where possible, contribute to the development of a safe strategic cycling and walking network and particularly routes identified in the LCWIP.

The Council gradually built up contributions towards the Damson Way / Renny's Lane link road because of the identified need to reduce congestion in the area. As the need for cycling and walking improvements has been evidenced in the DCSTDP, and incorporated in County Plan policies, there is a strong case to obtain contributions towards sustainable transport.

The Trust suggests consideration of the following, in rough order of importance:

Primary school access

The centre of the development site is 1.2 km from the nearest school, and while at that distance some parents might walk their children to school the majority would likely drive. A safe and attractive cycling route to the primary schools at Laurel Avenue and Mill Lane could therefore provide a sustainable alternative, and significantly reduce the impact of school run traffic. It would also provide part of a link towards the city centre for commuting. This need is identified in the DCSTDP.

To encourage more walking and cycling the Council should look at the “school street” concept, closing the area around the schools to motor traffic at the start and end of the school day. Mill Lane is a wide road with speed humps, but with a lot of pavement parking, which suggests that traffic levels are still too high.

Secondary school access

Students travelling to the nearest secondary school, at Belmont, could use Damson Way and Renny's Lane to pass under the A1(M) and to reach the school via the reasonably quiet streets of the Belmont estate. The main issue needing attention is the section of road on Renny's Lane which has a lot of industrial traffic. A protected cycle path is required for this section.

The pedestrian route crosses and recrosses the new northern link from Damson Way to Renny's Lane. This road is also used by significant numbers of heavy vehicles which would pose a threat to children. Both crossing points are at junctions or points with wide access to properties. Although it would require further land acquisition, it should be possible to provide a continuous footway on the eastern side of the new link, which would greatly reduce the risk to unaccompanied secondary school children.



Point at which the east side footway ends



Verge gradually narrows, but enough land on the other side of the fence is unused to allow widening to provide a footway.

Access to retail on Dragon Lane

Foot access to Dragon Lane could be improved by redesigning the two-lane exit and the entry to the car parks of the large retail stores to incorporate raised tables and clear pedestrian priority. Crossing Dragon Lane itself is difficult except where there are signals at major junctions. This creates issues of severance for pedestrian journeys.

The Bent House Lane / A181 / Dragon Lane junction is currently largely unsuitable for cycling, and Dragon Lane itself is of poor design. Removing some of the ghost right turn lanes which serve commercial properties would not significantly impede the traffic flow, but would allow cycle lanes to be provided and also could assist pedestrians in crossing by narrowing the carriageway for motor traffic.

The need for improvements is included in the DCSTDP.

Access to employment sites

As identified in the DCSTDP, access to Belmont Industrial Estate requires improvement. The sole approach road has a 60mph limit and is unsuitable for cycling. Walking access could also be improved. One option is to use the alignment of Belmont footpath no. 6, away from the link road.

Access to the city centre from the proposed housing estate is possible via the National Cycle Network route 14, but as this route is unlit a significant proportion of the population would not choose to use it after dark and so it cannot be relied on as the sole commuting route to the city centre. This adds to the case for improving the route west along the A181.

Access to the east

The vehicle trip generation estimates in paragraph 6.3.4 of the Transport Assessment show that about a third of journeys would head eastwards over the A181. If any of these trips are to be made by non-motorised modes then the A181/B1283 junction needs to be made safe and the paths alongside these main roads will need upgrading. As the B1283 path is on the south side of the road, the Trust suggests that a signalised crossing over the A181 should be provided, and the route

extended westwards on the south side of the A181 over the A1(M) to join with the existing route opposite the end of Damson Way.

Currently the junction is extremely hostile on foot or by bike:



The existing footway on the B1283 is narrow and of poor quality. A woman using a powered wheelchair, forced to use the carriageway, was killed on this road in 2010.

Site access arrangements

The applicant seeks approval at this stage only for the road access arrangements to the site.

Restrictions on access to Bent House Lane

The applicant proposes that motor vehicle access to Bent House Lane shall in future be via the new housing estate. It is not clear from the documentation what has impelled the applicant to propose this change. Is it solely to improve the “efficiency and operation of the junction” and to enable “additional green time to be allocated to other traffic stages” (Design and Access Statement para. 10.16)? Transport Assessment para. 8.3.13 would suggest not, as the closure of Bent House Lane is not required to accommodate the additional traffic at the junction. Is it to improve the route for pedestrians and cyclists “by reducing exposure to traffic” as mentioned in Transport Assessment para. 4.5.1? It would be a minor improvement as there is so little traffic at present.

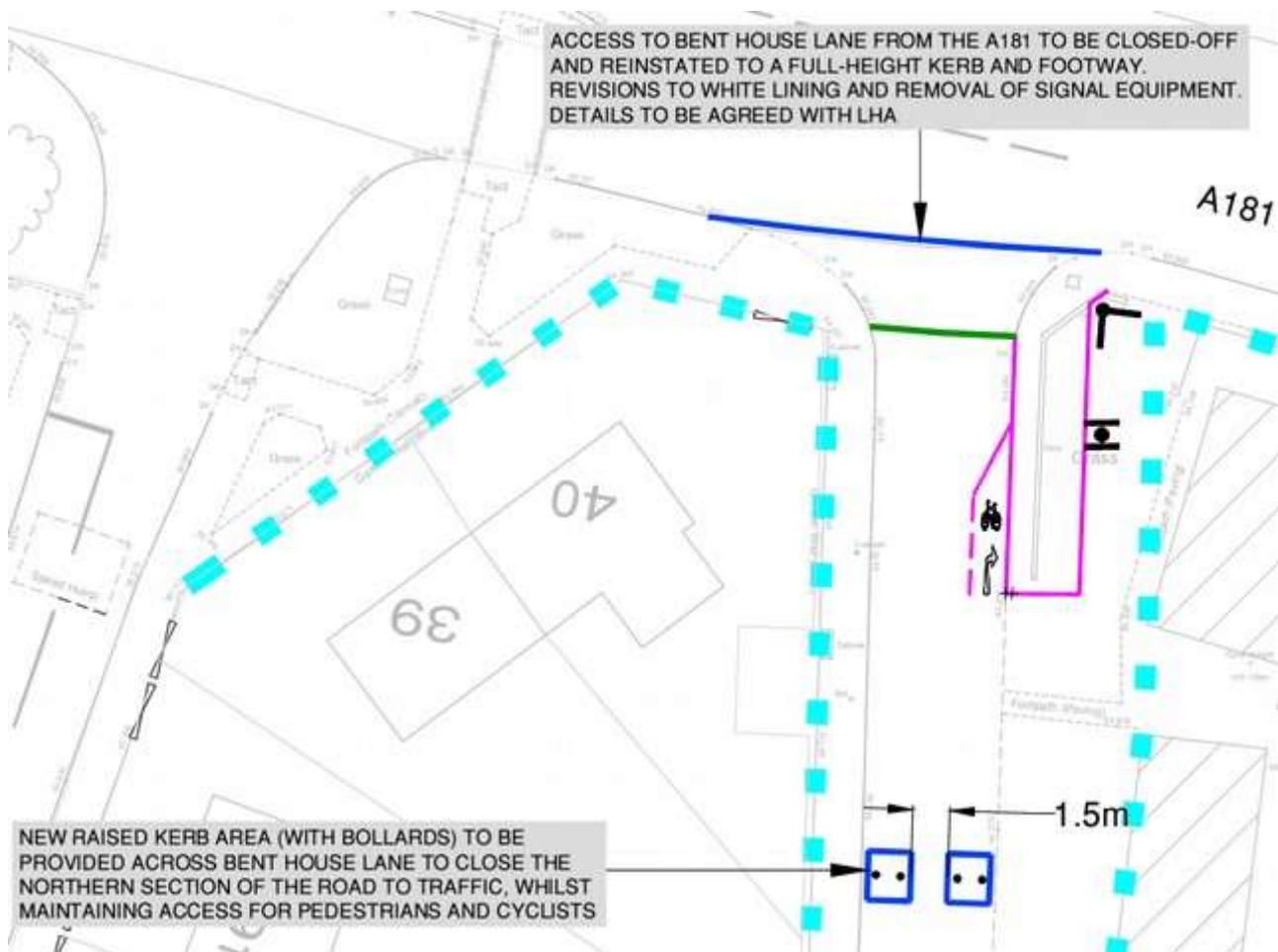
The Trust concludes that the main reason for making this change is to allow the pocket of land to the west of Bent House Lane to be linked by road to the rest of the site. The only way this can be done without creating vehicular access to the northern end of Bent House Lane from the eastern part of the site is by cutting off the current access to Bent House Lane.

The Trust accepts that it is necessary to prevent residents of the new estate from driving out via Bent House Lane, but the changes will entail some measure of inconvenience to existing residents of Bent House Lane and Old Durham. The only viable alternative would seem to be to create vehicular access to the land west of Bent House Lane from the existing Sherburn Road estate from one of the two roads that have the potential to link to the field.



Proposed design for Bent House Lane junction

The drawings show the north end of the lane blocked up and a new kerb line linking the A181 footways on either side of the lane. Access via a dropped kerb on the right hand side of the road would allow cyclists to join the pavement and proceed eastwards along the A181 towards the new junction with Damson Way. This footway was recently improved and designated for shared pedestrian and cycle use.



Actually, the drawing is already out of date, because the County Council recently provided better access to the A181 shared use path from further south:



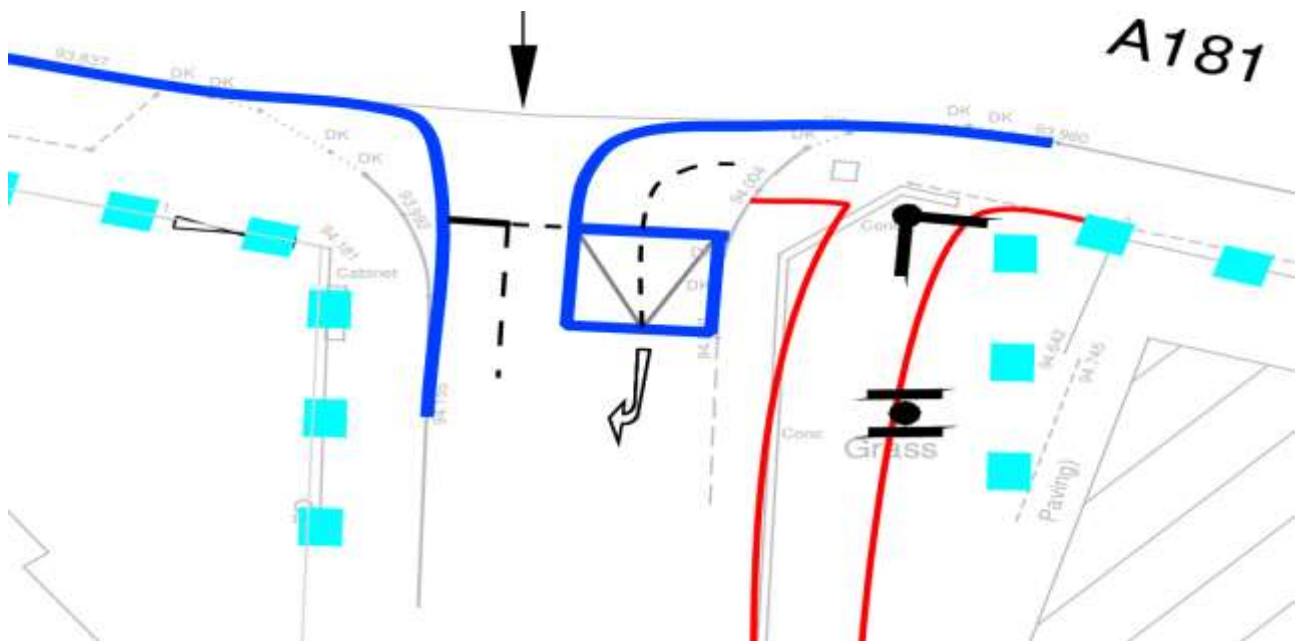
For users approaching the junction from the east along the A181, the Council's design caters only for those turning south down Bent House Lane. There also needs to be provision for cyclists to continue along the A181 towards the city centre, or to turn right onto Dragon Lane. Once the new housing estate is developed, there will be more people wishing to make these movements. A cycle route from Sherburn Village along the B1283 would also add to the cycle traffic here.

The Trust has two objections to the applicant's proposed design.

The raised area with bollards shown a few yards south of the junction has a 1.5m wide gap for cyclists to use. This would only allow one-way cycle traffic at a time. A minimum of 3m width is required for two-way cycle traffic (LTN 1/20 Table 5-2), with 200mm additional width if there is a raised kerb (LTN 1/20 Table 5-3). A bollard could be placed in the middle to prevent motor vehicles from accessing the stub of the road, in which case a further width allowance should be made.

More significantly, although the applicant states that access for cyclists will be maintained, the reinstatement of a full height footway across the mouth of the lane and the loss of the signal equipment make the lane considerably less suitable for cyclists wishing to access Dragon Lane and the A181 westwards. The County Council may intend to re-route National Cycle Network Route 14 through the new development in order to access Damson Way more directly, but people making local journeys by cycle will still want to use Dragon Lane (for access to shops) and Sherburn Road (for example, to access the primary schools at Laurel Avenue and Mill Lane).

The Trust asks that cycle access be maintained at this junction. A design is suggested below. The red lines show the approximate route of the shared use path recently built by the Council.



For heading north or west across the existing junction, a narrowed carriageway is shown. Miniature cycle lights would be activated automatically or via push-button. As the stop line would be about 10m closer to the A181 than at present, the duration of the phase could probably be reduced. Retaining the facility for cycles would not have much impact on the operation of the junction. The Transport Assessment para. 8.3.13 supports this position: it is said that the Dragon Lane junction will operate within capacity in 2030 with the new traffic generated via the proposed main access road to the site, even without the removal of the existing Bent House Lane traffic. Therefore there is every reason to retain the signalised facility for cyclists.

On the right, an end-on ramp, rather than a sideways dropped kerb, could lead onto the footway for cyclists heading east along the A181 shared use path. In the opposite direction, cyclists could turn, as indicated by the arrow, to join the carriageway and use the signalised junction to access Dragon Lane or continue west on the A181. There would also need to be a dropped kerbs and tactile paving for pedestrians walking along the south side of the A181.

This small modification to the proposals would preserve the existing cycle network and is the minimum necessary, but the County Council should have a view as to how the changes could contribute to the medium term strategy which would include protected cycle lanes westwards on the A181 and northwards on Dragon Lane, and how the various possible junction movements can be accommodated.

Currently the junction arrangements at Dragon Lane are very poor for cycling, and a more comprehensive redesign is needed to achieve LTN 1/20 compliance. Applying the Junction Assessment Tool from LTN 1/20 Appendix B to the current junction confirms that most of the possible cycle movements across this junction are considered unsafe. There is a toucan crossing for north-south movements, but access to the facility is awkward from Bent House Lane, and the shared use path which it leads to would not meet many of the LTN 1/20 requirements either. For pedestrians, there is no crossing on the eastern arm of the junction. There will be greater demand for such a crossing when the proposed housing site is occupied.

Many of the facilities that people might wish to access from the new development cannot be reached except via this junction. People cycling to or from the local primary schools with their

children, travelling to the Dragon Lane supermarkets and other shops, or cycling to or from the city centre via the main road would all have to navigate this junction.

Without considerable improvements for cycling at this junction, the accessibility of the site by bicycle is going to be limited.

Link from Bent House Lane to Damson Way

Although detailed design drawings of the motor vehicle access to the site have been provided, the walking and cycling link, which is intended to form part of a rerouted National Cycle Network route 14, has only been sketched out on the indicative masterplan.

The following excerpt has been annotated to show:

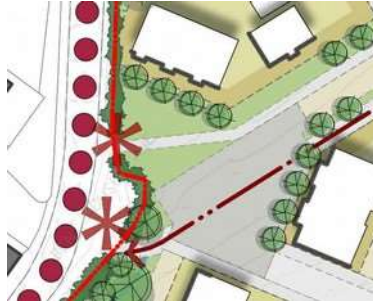
- current route (blue dotted line)
- route sketched in masterplan (red solid line)
- most direct route possible (red dashed line)

Although the proposed diversion is reasonably direct to start with, at the Bent House Lane end, it becomes increasingly indirect towards the Damson Way end as it interacts with the main vehicular access road, the proposed new bus stop, and the change in land ownership.



The Trust supports the proposal to form the junction with Bent House Lane at the bend in the road, but there are several improvements that should be made, and which could be secured by conditions on the outline planning application.

Looking at a few parts of the masterplan in greater detail we see:



The path starting with an unnecessary bend in the route at the junction with Bent House Lane. To be legible as a main cycling and walking route the path should be straight and obvious.



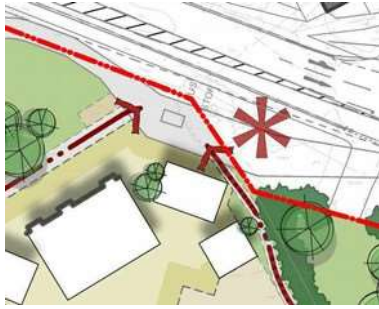
The path being separated from residential access to a parking courtyard. The Trust supports this concept.



The path crossing a residential street which gives access to at most a dozen dwellings, but without priority over the motor traffic. The path should preferably cross on the level, via a raised table, with a continuous surface treatment to indicate continuity and priority. See LTN 1/20 para. 10.4.11 and Figure 10.6.



The path crossing a minor side street, and then the main access road with a considerable diversion from the desire line. An alternative crossing of the main access road (red dotted line) would have cut out one road crossing here. Prioritising the pedestrian and cycle traffic here could have been demonstrated by bending the road to give a more direct alignment for the path.



The design of the bus stop, and separation of cyclists from pedestrians accessing the bus stop needs to be considered in the light of LTN 1/20 section 6.6. The site access drawing does not provide detailed dimensions for the clear width of the path alongside the bus shelter.

No dimensions are given on the plan, but it is estimated that the path is about 3m wide, and is shown with a single shared surface. According to LTN 1/20 Table 6-3 this would accommodate flows of up to 300 pedestrians and 300 cyclists per hour. The Council should consider whether this is adequate to accommodate the desired increase in active travel which is being sought through the County Durham Strategic Cycling and Walking Delivery Plan, or whether a separate surface for each mode is required.

As well as the plan view in the masterplan, the Design and Access Statement (app. 1/11) also shows a sketch (shown below) of where the new link meets Bent House Lane. The yellow dashed line has been added below to highlight the main link from Bent House Lane to Damson Way. For this to be legible as a main route it should be redesigned to make a junction with Bent House Lane which is straight and obvious.



To achieve a better quality of route design the Trust suggests the following conditions:

Prior to the construction of any roads within the site, detailed design drawings for a walking and cycling path from a point close to 11 Bent House Lane and connecting to the shared use path close to the junction of the A181 and Damson Way shall be submitted to and approved

in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The submitted plan shall be in compliance with the LTN 1/20 design guidance for cycle routes and the route shall be separated as far as possible from motor traffic, shall have priority, where appropriate, at any road crossings, and shall not diverge from the most direct alignment unless this is justified for reasons of safety or practicality.

Reason: to give priority to pedestrian and cycle movements and to promote sustainable transport methods in accordance with Policy 21 of the County Durham Plan and Part 9 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

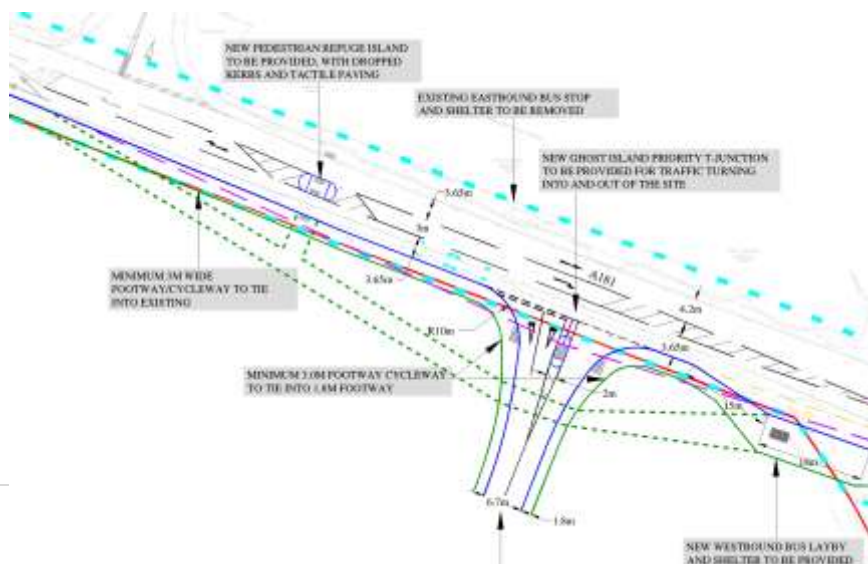
Main site access road

Because the applicant does not control the north-east portion of the site, an access point is proposed to the west of the signalised Damson Way junction. The proposal is for a priority T junction with two exit lanes from the site and a right turn lane to enter the site from the A181.

The Trust broadly supports the carriageway arrangements, especially the lack of signal control on the junction. A traffic-light controlled exit from the site could have given undue priority to traffic from the proposed housing estate and encouraged car use for short journeys. If there is any likelihood that a signalised junction will be found to be necessary, then the junction must instead be formed opposite Damson Way in collaboration with the landowner of the other part of the site.

The Trust supports the provision of a pedestrian refuge to the west of the access road, but it is noted elsewhere that the Trust considers it will be necessary to provide a signalised crossing of the eastern arm of the A181 / Dragon Lane / Bent House Lane junction as part of a comprehensive plan for that junction which will also accommodate protected cycle movements. The Trust notes that the right-turn ghost island off the A181 into the site does not provide protection for cyclists making this manoeuvre either. In order for cyclists to access the site from the west, improvements will be required in line with LTN 1/20 either at this junction or at the Dragon Lane junction.

The Trust objects to the shared use footway design and its crossing of the main access road. As the access road has a two-lane exit it will be dangerous to use the proposed crossing point so close to the mouth of the road. The geometry of the approach is also unsuitable for use by bicycle.



This excerpt (above) from the plans (with vehicle tracking paths removed for clarity) shows the proposed access road with its two-lane exit onto the A181 and with tactile paving and a refuge for use by cyclists and pedestrians.

The refuge is only 2m deep. Refuges should be at least 3m long in the direction of travel for the cyclist. See LTN 1/20 para. 10.4.7.

The positioning of the crossing is sub-optimal. With the 10m radius corners provided for large vehicles, cars entering into the main access road will not have to reduce speed very much. The two-lane exit onto the A181 will result in two independently-moving queues of traffic which pedestrians and cyclists would have to cross. Cyclists negotiating the crossing will have to turn about 60° away from the main road. This reduces their ability to see over the shoulder vehicles which might potentially be turning off the main road.

For all these reasons the Trust asks that the crossing be relocated as indicated approximately by the green dashed lines added to the above diagram. The long tapered approach from the west is designed to minimise the additional distance resulting from the diversion from the desire line. From the east the setting back of the bus stop helps in the transition to the set-back crossing point. The carriageway may need to be widened to accommodate a 3m deep refuge, or, with the increased distance from the junction it may not be necessary to have a refuge, especially if a raised table and give way markings allow pedestrians and cyclists priority. Section 10.5 of LTN 1/20 gives guidance on priority junctions. With sufficient set-back away from the main junction, and low speeds and traffic volumes, the Trust believes this should be possible.

Between the path and the A181 carriageway the new alignment would allow a grass verge to be provided. LTN 1/20 recommends a horizontal separation of at least 0.5m between the carriageway and a cycle track on a 30mph road, or 1m on a 40mph road, so the Trust's proposal would be an improvement on the current shared use path which has no horizontal separation.

This change should not be significantly different in cost from the applicant's proposal: the deviation shown is along that length of the A181 where the existing kerb and footway would have to be excavated to construct the applicant's design. In fact, by constructing the new path first, before the works on the main carriageway, it may be possible to keep a cycle and pedestrian route open throughout the course of the works.

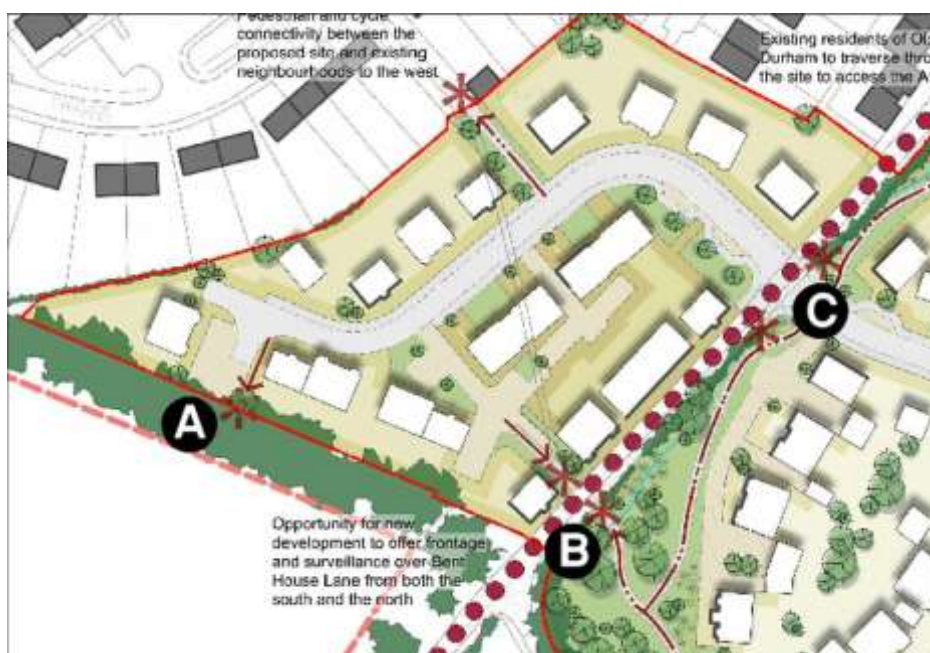
Note that the Trust's proposal does not interfere with the use of the land for housing. The following excerpt from the indicative masterplan shows that the area through which the realigned path would pass is intended to be grassed. Paths through this area are also shown, but these are set back too far to serve the purpose of replacing the A181 shared use path.



Connections to Cuthbert Avenue (Sherburn Road Estate)

Policy 5(t) requires that the development be integrated with the existing development to the west of Bent House Lane. The proposals for linkage are sketched on Drawing PA06, the Annotated Illustrative Development Framework Plan (excerpt shown below).

The Trust is very supportive of the fact that a number of pedestrian (and potentially cycle) links are to be provided. Link A will allow residents of the existing estate to access the informal path towards



Laurel Avenue Primary School, which is proposed to be upgraded by the applicant. Link B will maintain the link from the existing estate to Bent House Lane for travel in the direction of Shincliffe and Old Durham, as well as linking to the multi-user path network in the new estate. Link C will allow

residents of the new estate access to the Sherburn Road estate on foot and by cycle, supporting the use of the community centre there in compliance with Policy 5(o).

As this is only an illustrative framework plan at this stage, the exact connections will have to be secured at the reserved matters stages, unless the Planning Authority considers it appropriate to define these via a planning condition.

Layout and infrastructure within the site

Multi-user path network

The Trust is supportive of the concept of the multi-user path network which is required by Policy 5(t). It is good to see that those routes which would be likely to be useful for everyday journeys are mostly overlooked, with active frontages. The paths could be given priority over vehicle movements within the site via the use of designs such as raised tables. This would support Action 4 of Objective 3 of the County Durham Strategic Cycling and Walking Delivery Plan (2019). Policy 21 of the County Durham Plan states that all development should have regard to the policies in the Strategic Cycling and Walking Delivery Plan.

The need for social safety on paths which are used for travel, and the issue of priority, could have been made more explicit in the outline application as they are important factors in the take-up of active travel.

Prioritising pedestrians in street designs

The Design and Access Statement refers extensively to the 2014 Durham Residential Design Guide (DRDG). Section 5.2 of that guide (p. 63) covers junctions, and requires minimum corner radii of 6m, or 4m in exceptional circumstances with the agreement of Highways Development Control. The Trust questions this requirement. Manual for Streets 2 (MfS2) paragraph 9.4.10 says:

As noted in Sections 6.3 and 6.4 of MfS1, tight corner radii help pedestrians and cyclists to travel across and through junctions by reducing the speed of turning vehicles. Advice contained in TD 42/95, that minimum corner radii should be 6m in urban areas, should therefore not be taken as representing best practice when the needs of vulnerable road users are to be prioritised.

The following paragraph suggests that “in many cases it will be better to have slightly greater carriageway widths at junctions, rather than generous corner radii” and points out that larger vehicles can be expected to cross into the opposing lane to negotiate corners. The Design Guidance, Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013 includes raised table and blended side road design elements where the preferred corner radii are as low as 2m or 3m. The County Durham Strategic Cycling and Walking Delivery Plan (2019) lists the Welsh Active Travel guidance as one of the good practice guidelines to be followed to design cycling and walking infrastructure (see Section 4.4, Building Block 1; Objective 3, Action 4; Objective 4, Action 1).

NPPG para. 110(a) states that developments should give priority first to pedestrian and cycle movements. Therefore MfS2 paragraph 9.4.10 should apply, and corner radii should be reduced to 4m or even lower, in accordance with the design guidance referenced in the County Durham Strategic Cycling and Walking Delivery Plan.

County Durham Plan Policy 21 and NPPF para. 110(b) also require that the needs of disabled people are addressed. Having continuous level footways across side roads, as suggested in various design guides, reduces the need for dropped kerbs as well as reducing traffic speeds to improve safety. Where walking routes are interrupted by carriageways, dropped kerbs must be provided. There are

some side roads in the new Mount Oswald estate which lack dropped kerbs where wheelchair users may have to divert down the side road to a residential driveway in order to cross the road.



Dropped kerbs lacking in Mount Oswald estate.

Most recent streets in County Durham incorporate driveways where the gradient for cars to access the drive applies across much of the width of the footway. This can be an issue for wheelchair users and those propelling children's buggies, as the conveyance will naturally steer into the road. Current practice in the Netherlands is to keep the footway level (with a slight crossfall for drainage) and provide steeper sloping kerbs for vehicle access, and this arrangement was more common on British streets until about 1980. Recently a “Dutch Entrance Kerb” made to British dimensions has come on the market, and the Trust urges that these be considered for use on the estate. The kerbs may add expense, but time will be saved because the footways will be simpler to lay out.

See <https://www.aggregate.com/products-and-services/commercial-landscaping/kerbs/dutch-kerb>

The Trust suggests that the Design Code (Appendix One of the Design and access Statement) should be amended to include stipulations on driveway access and junction design including corner radii, dropped kerbs and continuous footways. These changes could be secured via a planning condition. The Durham Residential Design Guide could also be revised to have greater regard to vulnerable road users.

Timely completion of pedestrian and cycle routes

It is important that walking and cycling routes are completed before the first occupiers move in, along with the relocated bus stops, as the best time for people to form new travel habits is when they move house. The proposed rerouting of the National Cycle Network route 14 and the shared use path along the A181 should certainly be open before the first houses are occupied. As the build-out progresses any further paths allowing occupiers to access Bent House Lane, Dragon Lane and the bus stops by Damson Way must be opened before the houses are occupied.

The Mount Oswald estate was masterplanned with a good network of recreational paths, connections to the surrounding path network, and a cycle route alongside the main access road, but some of the key links are not yet open, even though houses have been occupied for a couple of years.



Path leading to A167 at NW corner of Mount Oswald

The cycle route and footway by the new colleges has not yet been properly surfaced, several months after the colleges opened. Where dropped kerbs have been provided, some of them are unusable by wheelchairs because the carriageway has not yet been brought up to the finished level.

A planning condition could be applied as follows:

‘No part of the development shall be occupied until

- a) the pedestrian and cycle shared use path along the south side of the A181 from the junction of Bent House Lane to the junction with Damson Way has been diverted and opened;
- b) the pedestrian and cycle route from close to 11 Bent House Lane linking to the shared use path close to the junction of the A181 and Damson Way has been constructed and opened;
- c) new or relocated bus stops with shelters have been provided to serve the site.

These facilities shall thereafter be kept open while any further construction work proceeds. No plot shall be occupied until the main pedestrian and cycle routes connecting that plot to the surrounding network are available for use, including by wheelchair users, and these routes, or reasonably convenient alternatives, shall be kept open while any further construction work proceeds.’

Reason: to give priority to pedestrian and cycle movements, to address the needs of people with disabilities, and to promote sustainable transport methods in accordance with Policy 21 of the County Durham Plan and Part 9 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Car access and parking

The illustrative framework plan shows a very traditional road layout. There is some variation by having a few of the properties front onto the path network or onto driveways shared by a small number of houses, and the applicant has sought to demonstrate local inspiration for the spaces around the central green. There is no getting away from the fact that all properties have road access

and parking spaces by the door. For car travellers the route from the parking space to the house will come to define the main access to the house, no matter how scenic the official “front” of the property is.

Considering that people very rarely keep cars in garages these days, it is surprising to see a design with many detached garages that would have been in vogue in the 1970s. It is important for households to have suitable storage space for sufficient bicycles and mobility aids, and traditional garages can be good for this, but overall the Trust would prefer to see adequate storage incorporated into the footprint of the main dwelling, and any space saved used to provide more living space which is likely to be in demand as home-working becomes more prevalent.

The framework plan and the Design Code are also predicated on providing multiple car parking spaces per dwelling. It is regrettable that Durham County Council has taken a “predict-and-provide” approach to residential car parking in the Parking and Accessibility Guidelines. The NPPF does give criteria which allow for restraint on car parking provision, but the Council has chosen not to avail itself of these opportunities except in the city centre. For a “sustainable urban extension” the development should be more ambitious in its support for sustainable transport and in measures to discourage car use. In the context of new residential developments, section 5.5.2 of the Durham City Sustainable Transport Delivery Plan says that “parking standards should resist the over-provision of parking”, and that the “way in which developments are laid out should promote sustainable modes as the 'default option'”.

The 2008 Department for Transport publication *Building sustainable transport into new developments: a menu of options for growth points and eco-towns* suggested design features to encourage sustainable transport including “limited private vehicle access to homes and services” and “car-free areas within a development [which] may be combined with safe and secure parking provision separate from the residential area, perhaps on the development's periphery”. It also suggested charging for residential car parking, though this will only work if there are controlled parking zones to avoid overspill parking in neighbouring estates.



Footway parking on Mount Oswald estate.

The design code in Appendix One of the Design and Access Statement gives a few hints as to the parking arrangements for the different character areas, mainly in terms of whether the parking will be to the side or the back of the properties. The Trust welcomes the general aim to avoid streets dominated by car parking and is supportive of the proposal for visitor parking bays provided at the

rate of one per 4 dwellings, as described in para. 10.34 of the Design and Access Statement. Parking in defined bays helps to make streets safer for cyclists, especially children, and reduces the tendency for motorists to impede foot traffic by parking on footways. Care will need to be taken that the bays are well-distributed as many people are reluctant to walk very far after parking.



A visitor parking bay in Mount Oswald stands empty while a car is parked on the footway 100m away

There is scope to be more radical in the street design, by having groups of houses without road access up to the door, parking being located in an adjoining secure shared area. Locating clusters of houses like this close to the main pedestrian and cycle routes would encourage people to use these modes and lessen the number of short car trips generated by the development. Charging arrangements for electric vehicles would need to be included.

There is a history of anti-social use of motorbikes in the neighbourhood, including on Bent House Lane and in Pelaw Woods. The Sherburn Road Estate has had all of the loops in the street network closed off with kerbs and sometimes walls or concrete blocks to reduce anti-social behaviour. It may be necessary to rethink the street network with many loops which is shown in the masterplan, but any restrictions should be filtered to allow through routes for walking and cycling.

Recreational routes

CDP Policy 5(t) requires the provision of “an enhanced recreational route attractive to all users linking Sherburn Road to Durham City centre”. It is not clear how the current application meets this requirement.

The Trust welcomes the applicant's proposals for additional footpaths in the green belt shown on Drawing PA17 “Compensatory Improvements to Land Remaining in Green Belt”. If the path proposed from Bent House Lane towards Laurel Avenue is provided with a surface suitable for use with children's buggies, this might be an attractive route to the primary school from the new estate. The Trust would expect to see all the new paths proposed secured in a legally binding manner, including their adoption as public rights of way.

The Trust made various other footpath proposals to Banks Group during the pre-application consultation, including:

- reinstatement of the missing footbridge on Durham City footpath 82

- drainage and surfacing work on Durham City footpaths 88 and 90
- improvement of the surface and rerouting the Bent House Lane bridleway over the Old Durham Beck vehicular bridge
- safe crossing points of the B1198 to connect with recreational routes including Shincliffe footpath 18
- a path on a new alignment from the Bent House Lane bridleway close to its junction with footpath 90, linking to the River Wear path via a disused footbridge over the Old Durham Beck.

Details of these can be found in a separate paper shared with Banks Group as part of their consultation.

Appendix B - Comments Previously Provided to Banks Property Ltd

Heritage, Green Belt and Landscape Significance

1. Introduction

The Trust wishes to draw attention to a number of factors to be considered alongside other requirements in the evolution of the masterplan of the housing site. There were weaknesses and underestimates of significance within the County Durham Plan's generalised supporting documents assessing the green belt and heritage significance. There are also points of weakness in the initial assessment submitted for this housing site as part of the County Durham Plan (CDP) consultation.

Ultimately the impact of the Trust's review is to draw greater attention to the impact on significance and the sensitivity of the site and particularly its lead edges.

This review attempts to isolate some of the key points while attempting to avoid duplication of previous work. It will help the Trust form its comments on any subsequent proposals.

2. Visual Setting

Key View Areas

- A. The role of the River Wear and its 'green fingers' as it flows into and out of Durham City is generally understood. For this site, the valley sides are important features and their role in defining the setting of the historic city and the World Heritage Site (WHS) is of relevance.
- B. There is a relatively well defined area surrounding the site enclosed by the valley sides of the Wear and tributaries, stretching as far as Shincliffe Bridge. Beyond a pinch point at Shincliffe it extends westwards towards Sunderland Bridge and eastwards along the River Pitting (Old Durham /Sherburn House Becks) to Sherburn House. This is unnecessarily fragmented into different zones in the CDP Green Belt assessment.
- C. The development site forms part of the broadly defined inner setting boundary as previously indicated. Including and beyond the WHS inner setting, the area is a key part of the Green Belt and Area of High Landscape Value (AHLV).
- D. The rising valley sides and their topography offer occasional views of the WHS and the site. Within the City these also form a sequence of hillsides with view points of the WHS.
- E. Beyond the valley sides there is an intermediate terrace that also offers occasional views of the WHS and site.
- F. In the distance the secondary area of rising ground defines the plateau to west and south.

Additional Views are shown in Appendix 1.(Of this Appendix B)

These are:

- A. View to the WHS from the tree belt fringing the site at Bent House Lane – shows the potential for City Centre and WHS views back to site boundary
- B. View to the Sherburn Road Estate and site boundary from Old Durham Gardens entrance and informal parking area.
- C. View to the Sherburn Road Estate and site boundary from Mill Lane close to Shincliffe Kennels
- D. Glimpse view of the WHS from close by Mill Lane /A1 bridge
- E. Panoramic view of the site and WHS from Whitwell Grange
- F. View to the site from the A1 approaching from the south

- G. WHS panoramic view from Grand View – detailed view
- H. Panoramic view from site at Bent House Lane – shows the range of potential views into the site
- I. Panoramic view from Observatory Hill – shows WHS and Sherburn road estate – edge of the site.
- J. Panoramic view from High Shincliffe– shows the WHS and Sherburn Road estate
- K. Distant view from Sunderland Bridge – shows Sherburn Road estate. This is also an important glimpse view from Croxdale railway viaduct.

3. View Limitations

The Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) approach to establishing views, receptors and photographs is very useful, especially when incorporating modelling of new development proposals. However, it has limitations when used in relation to Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA). It can fail to capture the way people both see and respond to views and the depth of cultural context. It can also limit the assessment of Green Belt impact assessment and to some extent the AHLV.

It is to be noted that the International Council on Monuments and Site (ICOMOS) advice on assessing WHS impact also draws attention to inherent problems within the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process:

‘EIA frequently disaggregates all the possible cultural heritage attributes and assesses impact on them separately, through discrete receptors such as protected buildings, archaeological sites, and specified view-points with their view cones, without applying the lens of OUV to the overall ensemble of attributes.’

And

‘Cumulative impacts and incremental changes (adverse) may also more easily pass undetected.’

There are instances where significance is based upon a broader and more dynamic approach:

- A. The static standard viewpoints fail to pick up wider panoramic views, people constantly adjust their view to take in more than a standard camera angle and respond more to detail.
- B. People’s experience of views is mostly dynamic as they move around a landscape or heritage area. A complex sequence of static views would reveal this but is very cumbersome. Key approaches to the Cathedral for instance have a view to the WHS that comes and goes with the variations in topography, trees and buildings but can be very important in understanding significance. A major detractor will have a bearing on people’s perception particularly if it is passed on the approach to an asset.
However, this does not imply that a particular view is dispensable in the context of an approach offering multiple views – this has wrongly been used to help justify loss of a view in Durham. It should show the need to raise the importance of the links between viewpoints not to weaken support for views.
- C. For this WHS the first view of the Cathedral and Tower was very significant for pilgrims and those associate with the religious estate, what appears small in a standard photographic view was, and to some extent still is, important to people approaching the WHS.
- D. Major historic assets and the setting to them accumulate a substantial wealth of intangible significance through use and cultural evolution. This adds weight to their appreciation and can flavour current appreciation of assets. This has been drawn into the recent WHS Management Plan.

- E. There are also nighttime views from buildings, roads or paths still in use outside of daylight hours.

4. Negative and Cumulative Impact

There are a number of obvious detractors in affecting the area surrounding the site.

The two Wear green approaches have both suffered from developments impacting negatively on their extent and quality. From Frankland, the Milburngate and Riverwalk developments have both reduced views of the WHS and inner setting. The new DCC headquarters building and car park have obscured a WHS view and extended buildings into the green edge of the city.

From the south running past this site, Maiden Castle Sports Centre is a very substantial negative impact by day on night within the landscape, the setting to Old Durham and Maiden Castle. The A1 is also a significant detractor, visually and through noise and light intrusion. The proposed University Business School remains a potential threat.

The Sherburn Road estate (and corner development to Bent House Lane) is very high impact as it sits on the skyline and intrudes into the valley, distant views and the edge of the WHS inner setting. To a minor extent the tree belt to the edge of the estate softens the view of the lead houses but does not obscure it. The estate intrudes into the setting of Old Durham Gardens, Maiden Castle, the Bent House Lane approach down into the valley and can be seen as far away as Sunderland Bridge, especially at night.

More minor but locally noticeable intrusions are the overhead electric supply cables supplying buildings within the valley area.

As mentioned, the A1 and Maiden Castle Sports Centre are serious light pollutants and the impact of Sherburn Road estate is increased at night by house and street lighting. A previous study indicated the value of the area close to the WHS for its dark setting – helping create the night time character of the WHS and support increased impact for the WHS floodlighting.

All these can variously be drawn in as cumulative impacts of varying intensity in relation to the site, with special emphasis on the adjacent development.

Attention is drawn to the recent comment by ICOMOS on the University Business School proposal:

'This proposal (Business School) highlights the high vulnerability of the immediate setting of the property (WHS) and ICOMOS advises that a reappraisal of regulations for the immediate setting of the property should be undertaken urgently to ensure that development is limited and, where appraise (sic), is of a size and form that is compatible with supporting attributes of OUV.'

What constitutes 'Immediate setting has yet to defined but in the context of the WHS management Plan is likely to mean inner setting.

5. Key Areas of Significance

The River Wear Valley

This is both site and setting of a significant number of historically important built and natural assets. It has its own significance because of the density and number of these – including those close to the Bent House Lane site. Its use from the Norman invasion onwards is clearly demonstrated and the

later control by the Cathedral was very extensive, affecting all of Durham City's surrounds. It offers a very rich layering of assets and associated cultural significance.

World Heritage Site

As noted, the lead parts of the site and Sherburn Road estate form the broadly defined boundary to the WHS inner setting. The boundary follows the skyline and defines the approach down to Old Durham and onward to the WHS. The inner setting is the key area containing the WHS and its historic city context – separating the city core from later development and maintaining its small scale emphasising the impact of the WHS. The inner setting is not wholly dependent on direct views from the WHS. However, there will be views to the lead edge of the site from the Castle buildings and cross city views over the WHS from a range of private buildings in the inner city.

Pilgrimage approaches and Cathedral tower views were and still are significant. Historic routes are not fully identified but there are references to pilgrims approaching for the south, probably through the area surrounding the site. The relationship to the WHS is not only defined by where the Cathedral and tower are visible from. The depiction of the tower intervisibility area shown in the WHS Management Plan is only indicative and is not to be relied upon for analysis of this site.

Old Durham and Old Durham Gardens

These have accumulated historical and cultural significance. The Gardens specifically relate to Cathedral views. Their setting is partly contained with the local topography but Bent House Lane and the approach road are very significant in appreciation of both landscape and WHS. The setting extends out to the edge of Sherburn Road estate and the site.

Maiden Castle

Often missed from appraisals, this is an important Iron Age fort and has its own very extensive landscape setting extending through to the site, the valley and beyond. It is important in cross city views.

Roman Remains

Little is known of the villa discovered by remains removed during gravel workings, there is no visible presence. The potential route of the often mentioned but more elusive Cade's Road is thought to extend across the valley area and had river crossings. There is cumulative cultural significance from these.

Nineteenth Century Industrial Development

Now almost entirely removed with only some railway and wagonway remains, there was a significant area of colliery workings, railways and brick/tile works. This was through the River Pitting area (Shincliffe Bottoms approximately). This development is an important part of County Durham and the City's evolution.

Sherburn House

This was a religious establishment with clear links with the Cathedral. This is now weakened by the severance caused by the A1 but still has a footpath link with a significant view of the WHS.

Site of Shincliffe Mill and Shincliffe Historic Bridges

There are no remains of either but there may possibly be remnants of the Mill's water system. They are part of the cultural significance of the area. The remaining parts of the 1826 Bridge are significant and to a limited extent have their own setting.

A1M

As well as being a detractor the view from the south is the first view of Durham city for large numbers of vehicle travellers and the site is prominent in that view.

The Green Belt

The area collects together various settings and assets. It has its own criteria for significance but should be scored highly for its prevention of sprawl into Wear Valley edges and skylines, prevention of convergence with surrounding villages, safeguarding the countryside and most of all, the City setting. So far the DCC appraisal and Banks Property CDP landscape submission have undervalued it. The site is more visible than supposed and is more present in historic asset settings and key landscape areas.

Area of Higher Landscape Value

The surrounding areas and settings are clearly of high value, despite changes caused by the former industrial area, hedgerow loss and A1 intrusion. The site has a role in offering views to the higher value areas and new development will cause view loss and reduce the quality of the landscape.

Biodiversity

Without access to biodiversity audits, this is assumed. There are various ecological impacts possible from extension of development on the valley area. The valley river and tributaries together with wooded habitats will be significant. The gorge immediately surrounding the WHS is noted for its distinctive biodiversity. There is a relationship to the climate emergency and its impacts and in turn issues relating to the Wear catchment. The site and its drainage will also relate to this.

6. Potential Impact on Significance

Part of the capacity of development on the site to impact on the areas the Trust identifies has been acknowledged. This review returns to the same key part of the site. This is its lead edge but with the addition of all of the leading part of the site rather than just its boundary.

The difference is that the Trust identifies a greater extent of WHS inner setting within the site, greater visibility of the development site and increased significance in relation to a number of key assets and areas. It is a very sensitive area in relation to landscape, Green Belt and heritage. It also identifies as a secondary area of sensitivity the remainder of the site for views across the landscape and distant viewpoints and approaches. The way site layout and design relates to this and how offsite mitigation can be effective will determine whether the site development is of high negative and cumulative impact or whether this is minimised.

Lighting will also be capable of being a substantial intrusion due to the raised position of the site. Building and street layout will affect night time views.

Tree belts as already suggested may not achieve all the necessary mitigation due to the topography and relatively slow growth. This review does not deal with energy sustainability and tree screening may negatively affect solar performance of buildings.

(Appendix 1) – Additional Views



A) Clear and significant view to the WHS from Bent House Lane as it crosses the site tree boundary.



B) View to the Sherburn Road Estate and site boundary from Old Durham Gardens entrance and informal parking area.

(Possibly view 12 missing from Banks Property CDP submitted landscape assessment)



C) View to the Sherburn Road Estate and site boundary from Mill Lane, Shincliffe Kennels to the right. (Broadly similar to Banks Property CDP Submission View 4)



D) Glimpse view of the WHS from close by Mill Lane /A1 bridge and Banks Property CDP Submission View 5



E) Panoramic view of the site and WHS from Whitwell Grange



F) Substitute for view from A1 into the site approaching from the South



G) WHS panoramic view from Grand View – site is to right of Sherburn Road estate (Approximately as can be seen from Banks property CDP submission View 9)



H) Panoramic view from Bent House Lane – detail reveals potential viewpoints into the site from west and south.



I) Panoramic view from Observatory Hill – shows WHS and Sherburn House estate – edge of Banks site.



J) Panoramic view from High Shincliffe– shows WHS and Sherburn House estate



*K) Distant view from
Sunderland Bridge –
shows Sherburn
House estate*