

THE CITY OF DURHAM TRUST

Web site: <http://www.DurhamCity.org>

c/o Blackett, Hart & Pratt, LLP
Mandale Business Park
Belmont
Durham, DH1 1TH

29 November 2023

Holly Dutton
The Planning Inspectorate
Room 3D
Temple Quay House
2 The Square
Bristol
BS1 6PN

By email only to: holly.dutton@planninginspectorate.gov.uk

**Planning Appeal:
APP/X1355/W/23/3330836 (lead case), land at Sniperley Park.
APP/X1355/W/23/3331745, land north and east of Sniperley Farm, Durham.**

STATEMENT OF CASE OF THE CITY OF DURHAM TRUST

1. The City of Durham Trust is a civic society founded in 1942 that works to protect and enhance the natural and built heritage of Durham City and its surroundings. The land at Sniperley Park falls within this area and the Trust has taken an active part in both the development of the County Durham Plan that allocates this site for housing and in the various consultations associated with the particular planning applications.
2. The City of Durham Trust has been closely involved in the emergence of Sniperley Park as Site H5 in the approved County Durham Plan and especially in the independently examined and modified wording of Policy 5. For the avoidance of any doubt, the Trust fully supports the approved County Durham Plan's policies relating to the Sniperley Park housing allocation. It looks to the County Council to uphold those and all the other relevant policies of the County Durham Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.
3. The Trust considers that it can assist the Inquiry by virtue of the fact that it is completely independent of Durham County Council and on many occasions has opposed its planning decisions. Accordingly it can provide unsolicited validation of any grounds for refusal in these cases.
4. At the time of writing this submission, Durham County Council had not yet indicated on what grounds it might refuse either application, and Bellway's Statement of Case was also unavailable. Accordingly this Statement of Case is based on an assumption that the grounds will be a subset of the reasons for refusal of the previous, withdrawn applications from each appellant. The Trust believes that it can add particular value to the public inquiry with regard to the following reasons for refusal, if applicable: Masterplan; Design and Quantity of Development; Sustainable Transport; and Links to the Sniperley Park & Ride site.

THE CITY OF DURHAM TRUST

5. Most of the arguments in this Statement of Case have already been advanced in the letters of objection to the various applications which the Trust has submitted, which will be included within the documents provided to the Inspector. Several documents have been revised by the applicants in the course of the last year, dealing with a few points of objection, but giving rise to others. Also, in objecting to the Bellway outline application, the Trust referred to its objections to the hybrid application, and not all these documents will be attached to the outline application. The Trust has therefore endeavoured to set out the updated main points of its argument clearly within this Statement of Case to assist the Inspector, even though this will duplicate some material.
6. This statement supersedes the Statement of Case of 14 November which covered the County Durham Land (CDL) application alone.
7. Section 5.4 of the draft Statement of Common Ground between CDL and the Council lists the documents which form part of the planning application. A substantial number of these are dated after 27 June which is the last date of any public document on the planning portal other than the appeal documentation. The documents which may have significance for the Trust's submission include:
 - Healthy Active Travel Connectivity Plan Review
 - Vectos HATCP Update Review
 - Sniperley Joint s106 Schedule Submission, and covering email
 - Vectos Bus Subsidy Calculations
 - Email to DCC with Clarity on Road Widths
 - Vectos Updated Note with Bus Subsidy Calculations
 - Section 106 Table (CDL and Bellway)
 - Vectos Note on Sniperley Roundabout Improvement Works
 - Draft Planning Conditions
 - Covering Email to DCC (with Draft Conditions)

The Trust notes that the Building for Life assessment, mentioned in paragraph 5.8 of the Statement of Case, has also not been made available to the public. The Trust therefore reserves its position on any parts of the planning applications which have yet to be made public.

8. The Trust draws the Inspector's attention to the fact that both the draft CDL Statement of Common Ground, and CDL's Statement of Case omit any consideration of the final two paragraphs of Policy 5, which follow point 'u' and apply to both Sniperley Park and Bent House Lane. The penultimate paragraph has a strong bearing on transport:

In order to reduce the dominance of car traffic and improve the permeability, both sites will incorporate convenient, safe and high quality bus, pedestrian and cycle routes within, and connecting to, adjoining facilities. A Transport Assessment and Travel Plan for each site will also be required to ensure that reliance on the private car is reduced and to mitigate the impact of increased traffic in accordance with Policy 21 (Delivering Sustainable Travel) and Policy 22 (Durham City Transport). The movement frameworks of each site should also incorporate any relevant schemes within the Durham City Sustainable Transport Delivery Plan.

THE CITY OF DURHAM TRUST

Masterplan for Sniperley Park

9. Policy 5 of the County Durham Plan states that:

Development is required to be comprehensively masterplanned and 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.

10. It is not clear which masterplan and design code (the Council's or the Appellants'), if any, will be applied to subsequent reserved matters applications if the appeal is allowed. To avoid further dispute and delay, the Trust considers this should form part of the determination of the appeals. The CDL Statement of Common Ground does not include reference to either masterplan in paragraphs 5.2 or 5.3 which lists the plans and documents that would be approved if the appeal were allowed. If the whole of the site is to be covered by a single masterplan, this must be established in both of the outline applications which are linked in this appeal.

11. The Trust further notes that in addition to the joint "Comprehensive Masterplan" submitted by the appellants, County Durham Land has also submitted a single page "Illustrative Masterplan" covering only the CDL portion of the site. Bellway has submitted two drawings with files entitled "Alternative Masterplan proposed layout" sheets 1 and 2, and a single-page drawing with "Illustrative Masterplan" as part of the filename. The status of these will need to be established.

12. The road layout of the appellants' Comprehensive Masterplan differs from the Council's Adopted Masterplan in three significant respects:

- location of the A167 roundabout lying north of the Park and Ride roundabout, which will lead to a link road to the B6532
- location of the local centre
- alignment of the B6532 link to the Park and Ride roundabout, which also connects to the link road through the Bellway site to the A691

13. While these are all on the CDL-controlled part of the H5 allocation, the placing of the local centre, in particular, has a strong bearing on the design and layout of the Bellway part of the allocation. This must be resolved prior to any granting of full planning permission, and it would be best if this could be achieved through the current outline application from CDL.

14. Currently the CDL outline application reserves all matters apart from access, and only includes detailed designs for the junctions and crossings on the A167 and Potterhouse Lane. Those on the B6532 have not been submitted in final form. It appears that the alignment of the link road between the CDL and Bellway sites, and the location of the local centre are not among the key matters covered by the CDL outline application.

15. The appellants' Comprehensive Masterplan sees the local centre positioned on the Durham City side of the electricity transmission lines, adjacent to the primary school. It is shown aligned at right angles to the B6532. The Council's Adopted Masterplan has the local centre on the Sacriston side of the transmission lines, straddling the B6532. The Trust is of the view that the

THE CITY OF DURHAM TRUST

Adopted Masterplan is better able to fulfill the vision of the B6532 becoming a “Front Street” for the new community. The local centre would be more central to the development, and more accessible to the houses along the outer edge.

16. The impact of the masterplan differences on bus access and the active travel network are described below in paragraphs 60-62, 115-118 and 125-125.
17. The Trust considers all these matters relating to access should be included in a single masterplan which is approved at the outline stage for each site.

Phasing of the development

18. While the appellants' joint Comprehensive Masterplan includes information on the phasing of the overall development, it includes no timescales. The whole of the Bellway portion and part of the CDL portion is allocated to Phase 1 of three. The retail at the local centre arrives in Phase 2, meaning that residents will not initially have access to food shops within walking distance, and indeed according to para. 5.74 of the CDL Statement of Case the retail would only be provided prior to the 800th dwelling in the CDL allocation.
19. In the separate application from Bellway there is a more detailed phasing plan for the Bellway land, with different numbering, but that part of the site closest to the Park and Ride is almost last to be developed, which will suppress the use of P+R bus services by the new residents and also constrain the active travel options. The Trust would expect to see the areas shown as Bellway Phases 3a and 4a to be prioritised over those parts of Bellway Phase 2 which are north-west of the overhead wires and the main access road. This will maximise the update of sustainable transport options. The most opportune moment for people to change their travel habits is when moving house, and if the Bellway Phase 2 houses are not immediately connected to the Park and Ride site, this opportunity will be squandered. The wording for a condition to secure active travel access is proposed in Appendix A.
20. The Trust considers that these phasing issues should be examined when considering the adequacy of the proposed masterplans, with the aim of ensuring as early as possible in the build-out of the development that residents have access to the local amenities which they need in order to minimise use of the private car.

Quantity of development: access, and the environmental impact

21. The outline applications reserve all matters apart from access, but the quantity of development is a key part of the determination of the suitability of access, as are the quantity and placement of car parking and the expected share for different travel modes. The site was released from the green belt for housing, in preference to building on sites beyond the green belt, because of the scope for sustainable transport to existing amenities to the east of the A167 and to the many local employment opportunities including the proposed business park at Aykley Heads.
22. Despite this context, both applications have assessed the highways impact using modal shares for private car travel which significantly exceed that recorded at the 2011 census for the existing residential areas to the east of the A167. The CDL methodology has used TRICS data to estimate a modal share of

THE CITY OF DURHAM TRUST

69.2%. The Bellway application proposes an initial 73% car/van trip share in Table 6.2 of the travel plan (contained within the Transport Assessment), based on the 2011 census figures for E02004310, the middle-layer super output area (MSOA) within which the site falls. This is quite a wide area, and includes Witton Gilbert, Bearpark, parts of Ushaw Moor and Broom Park, all of which lie firmly outside the core Durham urban area. The proposed Travel Plan reduction target is 5 percentage points over five years, giving a Car Driver target of 68%. This reduction is described as “modest” in para. 10.169 of the Bellway outline application's Environmental Statement, Chapter 10.

23. By comparison, the 2011 census figure for Car Drivers in the MSOA covering Framwellgate Moor and Pity Me was 63%. Looking at lower-layer super output areas (LSOAs) shows variation between neighbourhoods, but none of these attain the levels used by the appellants for their assessment. The new “sustainable urban extension” should be certainly expected to have travel to work patterns differing from those found in the existing villages which make up the bulk of the E02004310 census area. Indeed, this was a key part of the argument for making the green belt release in the first place.
24. It might be argued that exercising caution and taking a pessimistic view of the initial car modal share and a “modest” 5% reduction target will lead to the identification and design of highway interventions which will be more robust and future-proof. Indeed, this type of approach is often agreed with the local Highway Authority. But that should not mean that the actual Travel Plan targets take the same pessimistic view. Moreover, the assumption of a high, rural modal share has resulted in a car-first design. This is particularly evident in the Bellway hybrid application, which shows how the detail of the street layout would be realised. But it is also a common thread within both outline applications which, despite reserving all matters apart from access, fail to detail the network and access arrangements for active travel, and only provide detailed plans for the main road junctions.
25. There is also an assumption that to be future-proof the designs should allow for further motor traffic growth. For example, in the Highway Authority response to the Bellway application, p. 11 para. 2, the capacity modelling for the proposed A691 access roundabout is mentioned as being “*designed to carry the expected levels of traffic in the Total 2036 scenario and beyond*”. The modelling shows “*a maximum RFC of 0.67, well within design capacity*”. As described on p. 8, capacity is reached when the RFC (Ratio to Flow Capacity) value is 1.0, but 0.85 is commonly taken as a threshold above which further investigation is advisable. The design allows for considerable traffic growth. The design approach contrasts with the Council's adopted Climate Emergency Response Plan 2, which rightly seeks to achieve a considerable reduction in vehicle miles and lower individual car ownership rates in order to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
26. The narrowness of the design process is clear when reviewing the Environmental Impact Assessment submitted as part of the Bellway outline application. As stated in section 4.0 of the non-technical summary of the Environmental Statement, the EIA regulations require an account of the alternatives that were considered. The Trust concurs that the applicant is justified in not including an assessment against a “do nothing” option or a non-housing use. But the applicant's consideration of alternative designs is far from adequate to achieve the best environmental outcome. The applicant has compared the current submission only with previous iterations of the same basic

THE CITY OF DURHAM TRUST

concept that formed the previous, withdrawn applications. It may be that the characteristics of the open space have been enhanced following consultation with DCC, but other environmental impacts are completely unexplored. All proposals submitted so far have been typical of most edge-of-settlement greenfield development that has commonly been built for the last couple of decades. By contrast, Policy 5 and the council's Adopted Masterplan envisage a development "*incorporating sustainable development principles*". This is not realised in the access and layouts proposed for the site, which will do very little to reduce car dependence or steer residents towards sustainable transport modes.

27. While the site location is suitable for serving by public transport, and connections by walking and cycling can be created, the proposed built form, generous car parking provision, and proximity to the road network could easily outweigh these positives. There are alternative styles of development which the Environmental Statement should consider. The Trust commends to the Inspector's attention the recommendations in section 6 (p. 28-31) of the Transport for New Homes report "Building car dependency: the tarmac suburbs of the future" (2022). A greater proportion of apartments and other denser forms, partially decoupling ownership of dwellings from allocation of car parking, and a layout which gives priority to pedestrian and cycle movements, as required by NPPF 112(a), would have a far more positive environmental impact and align more closely with Policy 5 and the council's Adopted Masterplan. This is discussed further in the Car Parking section below, paragraphs 42-49.
28. In allowing too easy dispersal of motor traffic from the site, the developments are likely to attract residents who wish to commute longer distances using the good road links to Tyneside and, to a lesser extent, to Darlington and Teesside that are available from this location. This risks squandering the locational opportunities of the site that justified its removal from the Green Belt as a sustainable urban extension to Durham City. The special reasons for releasing the site did not include becoming part of the housing supply for the wider region and so the approach to traffic management should seek to minimise such an outcome.
29. In its submission to the Council's consultation on its masterplan, which we attach, the Trust argued for a more radical layout to prioritise sustainable transport access to the site and discourage shorter car journeys. Nevertheless without changing the basic road layouts, the Council's masterplan and the applications under appeal could be strengthened by restricting some through routes by the use of bus gates or cycle/walking filters. The Trust submits that this is needful and justified by Policies 5, 21, 22 and NPPF section 9 in the context of the Council's Climate Emergency Response Plan 2. Through routes which could be blocked to motor vehicles or permitted only for buses include:
 - The portion of the B6532 from just north of New College to the junction with the proposed new link to the A167 Park and Ride roundabout.
 - The proposed link road through the development from the A691 to B6532.
 - The proposed link from the A167 (opposite Woodbine Road) to the B6532 by the proposed primary school site.

THE CITY OF DURHAM TRUST

- Potterhouse Lane

30. The object of any such traffic filters would be to reduce the convenience of short car journeys and so promote sustainable alternatives. Car access to all parts of the site would be maintained, but there might be fewer options for access points. The Healthy Active Travel Connectivity Plan includes as intervention 16 (see map on p. 12 and key on p. 13) “Bus and cycle only-road along the B6352 from the site to New College” to be funded by the developers, corresponding to the first of the possibilities listed above.

Quantity of development and design

31. The Trust considers that the quantity of housing proposed will result in poor design and limited character areas unsupported by a consistent Design Code, contrary to Policies 5 and 29 of the County Durham Plan.

32. In particular the Trust considers that the submitted information fails to deliver Design Codes as recognised in the guidance issued by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government - *Guidance Notes for Design Codes, 2021*. The design approaches are based on basic collections of standard house types, lacking County Durham or Durham City distinctiveness.

33. The Trust considers that exceeding the Policy 5 figure of 1,700 homes is also likely to affect the design quality, and will limit the scope to deliver on important policy requirements applicable to both parts of the site, such as:

- orientation of houses to optimise thermal comfort and solar PV;
- legibility, priority and directness for the path network;
- maintaining the relationship of the Hall with land to the north and with Sniperley Farm;
- higher quality public space and parkland.

34. The Bellway hybrid application, DM/22/03778/FPA, which may also become the subject of a non-determination appeal, exhibits many of these design issues. The Trust's detailed reasoning is set out in its responses to that application which were appended to its objection to the outline application dated 26 April 2023 and may be found at p. 5 onwards of that document (filename “3362635-Public Comment-THE CITY OF DURHAM TRUST.pdf”). Some relevant sections are included in Appendix B below for the Inspector's convenience. The appellants must demonstrate that good quality design can be achieved in order for the increase in the number of dwellings to be approved. The current hybrid application for the Bellway site does not achieve this, and the Trust asks the Inspector to consider whether this is an unavoidable consequence of the increase in housing proposed.

35. With regard to Policy 5(g), it is clear that the linear park must maintain “*the relationship of the Hall with land to the north and with Sniperley Farm*”. In response, the DCC Adopted Masterplan p. 34-35 (Landscape and Green Infrastructure) includes a broad and straight section of linear park labelled “The Avenue” providing a vista north-east from the Hall, and a direct cycle and walking route, both reaching as far as the B6532, crossing both the Bellway and the CDL land holdings. On p.37 the DCC Masterplan shows an aerial image outlining the scope of the vista, which extends the full width of the Hall, tapering to the boundary of the Bellway and CDL land holdings.

THE CITY OF DURHAM TRUST



36. The joint Comprehensive Masterplan submitted by the appellants shows a much narrower strip of parkland which is not in alignment across the site boundaries, with a somewhat indirect path layout. This satisfies neither the requirements of Policy 5(g) nor of the penultimate paragraph of Policy 5.
37. The following image from Bellway's hybrid application demonstrates the extent to which Bellway's proposal, conforming with the appellants' masterplan, impinges on the vista envisaged in the DCC Masterplan, with a row of houses blocking a substantial part of the view. The Trust has added the red dotted lines to match the lines on the DCC aerial image.



Quantity of development and the wider highways impact

38. Much focus was placed in the Examination in Public on the capacity of the road network to cope with the 1,700 houses proposed by the County Council; indeed, the position taken by the County Council was that a Western Relief Road was needed if more than 350 houses were built at Sniperley. The Inspector in his Final Report dismissed this proposition, deleted reference to the relief roads, and instead included *“other requirements that are necessary to ensure safe and suitable access to the Sniperley Park site and that the residual cumulative impacts on the wider road network are not severe.”*
39. The EiP Inspector amended Policy 5, specifically adding most of the text which now forms clause (l), including:

capacity improvements along the A167 corridor from Neville’s Cross to Sniperley, including improvements to Sniperley Roundabout” and retaining text to require “a contribution to delivering sustainable transport in accordance with policies 21 (Delivering Sustainable Transport) and 22 (Durham City Transport)

Note that these contributions are distinct from any measures to achieve connections to the existing development to the east of the A167 required by clause (j), and that various measures mentioned in Policy 22 which are relevant to the Sniperley development are laid out in greater detail in the Durham City Sustainable Transport Delivery Plan, as referred to in the penultimate clause of Policy 5.

40. The Highway Authority response of 29 June considers that the increased motor traffic can largely be accommodated on the existing road network, and remarks that an assessment of the A167 south of the Sniperley roundabout was excluded from the scoping (p. 5). The response continues by stating that the Neville's Cross and Toll House Road junctions already experience queues and delays and that with the Sniperley Park development expected to contribute “only 5%” additional traffic at these junctions, a planning obligation to fund amelioration could not be justified under the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010. This approach appears to be contrary to the assessment of the EiP Inspector. NPPF para. 111 allows an application to be refused on highways grounds if the residual cumulative impact of development is severe. By including the word “cumulative” it is clear that the impact, even if small, of a particular development can be found to be unacceptable if cumulatively the impact is severe. The wording does not support adding more traffic to a situation which is already bad simply because it is bad already. The Trust does not share the view of the Highway Authority that a 5% increase in traffic is a “relatively small additionality”. Indeed, in this case 5% of a very significant amount of existing traffic at the Neville's Cross and Toll House Road junctions would be itself a lot of traffic.
41. The Inspector of the County Plan rejected the proposed Western Relief Road for several reasons including because it *“would cause significant harm to the rural landscape”* including the settings of several heritage assets. It is essential that sufficient measures to promote sustainable transport are included in the

THE CITY OF DURHAM TRUST

planning obligations for the Sniperley Park development to minimise the cumulative impact on those parts of the existing road network which are congested, including the environmental impact on air quality and pollution, and to avoid the need for a relief road arising again in the future. With the numbers of dwellings proposed significantly exceeding the Policy 5 allocation, the appeal should carefully consider whether it is appropriate for further active travel measures identified in the Healthy Active Travel Connectivity Plan (HATCP) and the Durham City Sustainable Transport Delivery Plan (DCSTDP) to be funded through planning obligations on the Sniperley site.

Car parking

42. The Trust asks the Inspector to consider whether conditions on the quantity, design and distribution of car parking should be settled as part of the determination of these appeals, considering that these can affect car use, and thus the suitability of the access, which is the sole unreserved matter in each case.
43. In particular, the Trust is concerned about the recently-adopted DCC Parking and Accessibility SPD, which sets a requirement for a high quantity of residential car parking. The Trust made representations at each stage of the consultation on the SPD, and maintains the view that it does not meet the requirements of Policy 21, including wording which was inserted by the County Plan EiP Inspector. The applicants, Highways England and the Home Builders Federation all objected to, or expressed concern, at the high levels of residential car parking required by the SPD, which exceed local car ownership levels and may therefore not be in accord with NPPF para. 107(d). Nor does the SPD take into account the issues required to be considered in para. 107(a-c).
44. The Council has indicated that a deviation from the residential car parking guidance given in the SPD may be considered "*in certain circumstances which can be evidenced, for example, for reasons of sustainability, design or viability*" (para. 4.3). There is, however, no indication in the SPD as to the degree of variance which will be entertained nor any encouragement to reduce the demand for residential car parking, and thereby allow for reduced provision, through measures such as active travel, car club schemes, or good public transport access. The Trust, in its final consultation response, provided a proposal for a detailed model with varying parking requirements across the county based on 2021 census data for local car ownership rates. The model also allowed a balance to be struck between allocated and unallocated car parking provision. The Trust considers that setting an appropriate, and not excessive, level of car parking is an important aspect of achieving suitable access arrangements and enabling the realisation of a masterplan which can achieve all the aims of Policy 5.
45. The Design and Access Statements of each outline application (p. 92 for Bellway, p. 52 for CDL) cover car parking to some extent, confirming that it is intended to be predominantly on-plot car parking, and in Bellway's case giving an indication of the number of spaces based on the number of bedrooms per house. The Trust is unsure whether approving the outline applications implies approval for these aspects too, which would then carry weight in any further reserved matters applications, or whether the whole question of quantity, design and distribution of car parking would be a matter for those reserved matters applications.

THE CITY OF DURHAM TRUST

46. The balance between allocated (e.g. in-curtilage) and unallocated parking have an important bearing on the promotion of sustainable transport, the quality of design, and on the efficient use of land. NPPF paras. 124 and 125 are particularly applicable, and recommend the use of design guides, codes and masterplans to support the efficient use of land. While the DCC Parking and Accessibility SPD assumes in-curtilage provision of allocated car parking (para. 4.2) and discourages tandem parking (i.e. two or more vehicles parked end-to-end on a driveway, para. 4.12) this immediately conflicts with the DCC Building for Life SPD para. 11.5 which recommends at least half of the street frontage to be landscaped to reduce vehicle domination and suggests alternative car parking solutions for higher density situations. Paragraph 11.2 of the same SPD recommends on-street parking for its potential to be more space efficient and to encourage social contact. This is supported by Manual for Streets para. 8.3.11.
47. The Trust is of the view that requiring car parking levels in line with the DCC Parking and Accessibility SPD, located predominantly in-curtilage, will encourage greater car use, reduce the viability of the scheme and the scope for green spaces, and will make it very challenging to achieve high quality design.
48. How much parking should be provided is a matter of debate. The Transport for New Homes report cited above suggests that for a sustainable location and good public transport it is possible to limit parking to one space per home, and provide separate spaces in the area for people to rent if they need to. Other patterns of provision can be envisaged which would allow a reduction in the in-curtilage car parking quantities without going as far as the Transport for New Homes ideal.
49. At Sniperley Park there is a unique opportunity of allowing residents to rent Park and Ride spaces for use in the evenings when the car park is emptier. Streets within a suitable distance of the Park and Ride car park could be designed car-free, with no or minimal parking available outside the houses, and narrower access roads primarily for refuse collection, deliveries and cycling or walking. With the cost of the car parking decoupled from the house ownership, this would provide an incentive for people to limit and reduce their car ownership, in line with the demand reduction targets of the DCC Climate Emergency Response Plan 2. These measures could be combined with more car club provision, as encouraged by para. 4.4 of the council's Building for Life SPD. With less need to provide residential parking spaces and access road capacity, land could be reallocated to green space without reducing the density of the development or the yield for the developer.

Sustainable Transport

50. The Trust considers that the proposed developments do not deliver adequate sustainable transport options to future residents. These options depend on delivering the full package of mitigations contained within the Healthy Active Travel Connectivity Plan, designing cycle access that fully complies with LTN 1/20, and providing suitable bus services without extending journey times of existing bus services. The Council's Climate Emergency Response Plan 2 aims for a future with lower car use and lower individual car ownership, with shorter-term targets including substantial reductions in fossil fuel cars and/or vehicle mileage. The Trust's view is that sustainable transport measures must be afforded considerable weight in determining the applications. The following sections elaborate on these issues.

THE CITY OF DURHAM TRUST

Bus access

51. Ensuring that residents of the development site have convenient access to bus services is an important aspect of the sole non-reserved matter, access, and also of the layout and interfacing of the two land-holdings through the adoption of an appropriate masterplan. This topic therefore affects both applications and will need careful handling through demonstration of the suitability of the proposed layouts and through the application of suitable conditions.
52. The recently-adopted Parking and Accessibility SPD continues previous policy and guidance in stating (para. 4.23) that *“the maximum walking distances to the nearest bus stop from any residential property should ideally not be greater than 400m”*. An exception is made for the more rural areas of the county where there are no frequent bus services, but this should not apply to the “sustainable urban extension” of Sniperley Park. The 400m distance is consistent with the council's Building for Life SPD and the DfT's December 2021 edition of *Inclusive mobility* which states (p. 84) that *“in residential areas, bus stops should ideally be located so that nobody in the neighbourhood is required to walk more than 400 metres from their home”*. The council's Adopted Masterplan states (p. 41) that *“all parts of the site should be within 400m walk of a bus stop”*.
53. The Trust considers that for a “sustainable urban extension” best practice should be adhered to. The 400m figure dates back to a Department of Environment circular of 1973 when car ownership was lower and bus services were less affected by congestion. The CIHT updated their recommendations in 2018 in the publication “Buses in urban environments”. Table 4 of this publication recommends a maximum walking distance varying between 300m (if services are less than every 12 minutes), 400m (for a single route running at least every 12 minutes) to 500m for bus stops on core bus corridors with two or more high-frequency services. The service frequencies certainly give no leeway to exceed the 400m distance. Paragraph 5.223 of the County Durham Plan supports Policy 21 and notes that the **“proximity and frequency of bus services is a key consideration”**. The publication recommends:

that new developments be planned with sufficient compactness and density to enable the maximum walking distances to bus stops shown in Table 4 to be achieved with viable services.

54. The publication also observes that where major roads may need to be crossed, the additional walking time will need to be factored in for the bus to remain competitive with the car. This is relevant to the use of the proposed A691 bus stops, where to access the west-bound bus stop pedestrians will have to cross the A691 without the aid of anything more than a refuge and a nearby 40mph speed limit reducing from 60mph.

Bellway

55. In Bellway's hybrid application bus access is covered in the Environmental Statement, Chapter 10: Transport and Access. After quoting the recent CIHT guidance, Bellway states (para. 10.130) that the DCC guidance *“cites a desirable maximum walk distance to a bus stop of 400m and an absolute maximum walk distance of 800m”*. The Trust has found no reference to the “absolute maximum” of 800m in any published DCC policy. In the “Summary of Sustainable Transport

THE CITY OF DURHAM TRUST

Proposals" dated May 2023 and prepared on behalf of Bellway by Milestone Transport Planning pages 2 to 4 deal with the walking distance to bus stops and include helpful diagrams of the indicative layout. Relying on just the proposed A691 bus stops and the Park and Ride, it is stated that 75% of the dwellings will be within 400m of a stop. This would eventually rise to 96% of dwellings, but this depends on bus services being provided along the access road linking the A691 and B6532, and a pedestrian link from the northernmost end of the site through the CDL land to the B6532.

56. The consultant states the percentage of houses within various other distances (500m, 800m and 1km). The 500m figure is described as "DCC guidance (preferred)" but the Trust does not recognise this figure as having any basis in policy. The 800m figure is described as "CIHT guidance (preferred maximum)". The Trust has not identified the origin of this either, but it could be the CIHT guidance for distances to major transport hubs such as railway stations. The 1km figure is justified by reference to an AECOM report supporting Durham County Council's own application for extending the Park and Ride car park, but following up the CIHT guidance cited by AECOM it is clear that this is incorrectly applied.
57. Therefore the Trust maintains that the 400m figure should be the maximum walking distance allowed, and a target of 300m should be aimed for by planning the development with sufficient compactness and density, given the low frequency of the bus services. The phasing of the development is of concern, given the indications in Bellway's Phasing Plan, as noted above, that large parts of the site would be completed before the link to the Park and Ride is available.
58. The Trust asks that a condition be applied such that each tranche of housing cannot be occupied unless a regular bus service to Durham city centre is accessible within 400m. If Bellway wishes to develop the whole site before the B6532 links are available, it would be possible to satisfy this condition through the appellant subsidising a temporary service.
59. The Bellway Transport Assessment makes little comment on the evening bus services, which on the A691 are only hourly. Without good evening bus services anyone living in the proposed housing would be stranded and unable to access evening employment, social or leisure activities unless they have access to a car. It is a simple fact that those who own cars are very much less likely to use bus services, even when the services are frequent. This will very much reduce the take-up of sustainable transport from the site. The Trust is of the view that financial support for more frequent evening bus services in order to establish bus use by new residents would be appropriate.

Masterplan implications

60. Turning to the appellants' jointly submitted Comprehensive Masterplan, the access roundabout proposed by CDL on the A167 is much further south than that proposed in the Council's masterplan, and reduces the likely catchment area of the proposed bus service to the Arnison Centre, meaning that dwellings in the northern part of the site (e.g. along Potterhouse Lane) will be too far from a bus stop. The proposed diversion of the existing 16/16A service away from the B6532 attempts to remedy this, but will extend existing bus journey times.

THE CITY OF DURHAM TRUST

61. The County Council's Adopted Masterplan also has the link from the A167 at Woodbine Road join the B6532 at the local centre, meaning that it has to cross the linear park. This again brings bus services further north in the site. The route would require careful design to minimise the severance of the park, but this should be achievable. If it was limited to buses, as the Trust suggests in paragraph 21, that would be a good solution.
62. The Trust considers that the Council's masterplan provides for more effective and convenient bus access, as more of the houses would be within a suitable range of the bus stops and diversions of existing services would be unnecessary. Within the CDL area of the site, the appellants' masterplan layout can therefore be held to fail the following requirements:
- to “*maximise the catchment area for bus services*” (NPPF para. 112a)
 - provide “*appropriate, well designed, permeable and direct routes for bus access*” (CDP Policy 21)
 - to “*incorporate convenient, safe and high quality bus ... routes within, and connecting to, adjoining facilities*” (CDP Policy 5, penultimate paragraph).

Active travel network within the site

63. The outline applications reserve all matters except access. Aside from the signalised crossing of the A167 adjacent to Woodbine Road, in the CDL application, detailed plans of construction are only provided for the motor traffic access. While Active Travel England has not submitted a response to the Bellway application, their response of 9 November 2023 to the CDL application is critical of the lack of detail for active travel access (see foot of p. 2).
64. The focus of the approach to the outline applications is very much on establishing the design of the road access into each site, and, of course, seeking to demonstrate that the impact on the road network is acceptable. Bus access and the internal road layout have considered to the extent necessary to plan bus services and model the motor traffic impact at each junction.
65. By contrast, the active travel network through the site is left rather vague. It is not clear which routes shown at small scale in the Comprehensive Masterplan might be lit, which are wide enough for shared-use, what standard of crossings might be used, or how pedestrians and cyclists will be given priority within the site in accordance with NPPF para. 112(a) and County Durham Plan policy 24(c). The design priorities seem to be exactly the opposite those envisaged by the NPPF, Manual for Streets, the ‘Durham City Sustainable Travel Delivery Plan’ and Policy 21(a), namely, to consider pedestrians first, then cyclists, then public transport users, then specialist service vehicles, and to consider other motor traffic last.
66. The Council's Adopted Masterplan principle 10 requires “*a sensitive movement network that promotes active travel over the use of cars*”. The Sniperley Healthy Active Travel Connectivity Plan lists a number of Key Design Principles (KDP) which should be observed by the application.

67. Giving priority to pedestrian and cycle movements should surely entail:

THE CITY OF DURHAM TRUST

1. designing the development around a core active travel network which is attractive and direct;
2. where possible giving pedestrians and cyclists priority over motor vehicles, e.g. at crossings.

Bellway

68. The proposed layout plans submitted with the Bellway outline application (filenames including “Figure 3.1 – Illustrative Masterplan” and “Figure 4.1 – Alternative Masterplan” (proposed layout sheets 1&2) give the impression that the design prioritises motor traffic access to the site. Footways are provided along access roads, but are not continuous across side roads (which could have provided “*priority first to pedestrian movements*”), and often cease partway along each cul-de-sac, even when the route links to connections to the external path network. The adoptable cyclepath from the Park and Ride site has no priority at the many places where it crosses side roads, meaning that cycling might actually be safer and more convenient on the access road itself. The off-road path network is primarily round the edges of the site and is on balance more suited to leisure than making journeys.
69. The detail of the interior road and path layout is a reserved matter, but the intention of including the drawing with filename “Figure 3.2 – Movement Network Parameter Plan” is presumably to establish planning permission for the general layout. The Trust would ask the Inspector to consider whether a well-designed active travel network can be achieved at the reserved matters application stage within the parameter plan that would be approved with the outline application.

County Durham Land

70. The County Durham Land application includes a greater number of drawings for junctions on the periphery of the site, and from these a clearer idea can be established of the design intentions for the active travel network. The 3.0m shared cycle/pedestrian paths shown in the submitted junction drawings do not adhere to LTN 1/20 which prefers separation of cycle and pedestrian infrastructure in urban environments. The response from Active Travel England (p.2) encourages “*the appellant to adopt segregated cycle lanes on both roundabout designs, as well as Main and Primary streets within the site, and discount shared use routes that often amount to 3m-wide pavements which subsequently interact with street furniture, reducing the useable width further. This is particularly important given predicted traffic flows through the site.*”
71. In the Durham City Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) the B6532 through the site has been identified as requiring upgrading as a primary cycling route. CDP Policy 21 requires development to contribute, where possible “*to the development of a safe strategic cycling and walking network and in particular the routes set out in Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans*”. The Trust would therefore expect to see separated cycleways along the B6532, not just shared use. There is no evidence even of a shared use path in the submitted drawings of the Potterhouse Lane / Trouts Lane junction (Drawing 226483/P-04). A drawing of the Proposed B6532 / Link Road (East) Junction (Drawing 226483/P-03), at an earlier stage of development, is found in the

THE CITY OF DURHAM TRUST

Environmental Statement Vol. 3 Chapter D at p. 141 of the PDF. This shows a 3m shared use facility but does not indicate how cyclists would access the junction. The Active Travel England response expresses related concerns on p.3.

72. At none of the crossings shown in the submitted drawings do pedestrians or cyclists appear to have priority. NPPF para. 112(a) states that applications for development should “*give priority first to pedestrian and cycle movements, both within the scheme and with neighbouring areas*”. While it is possible to achieve this in other ways, for example by ensuring that pedestrian and cycle networks have better coverage and are more direct than the motor vehicle options, that has not been demonstrated with this application. The Building for Life statement on p. 25 of the second PDF file for the Design and Access Statement is unconvincing in response to the question about whether streets can be used as social spaces where children can play safely:

The fundamental principle of development is to present a clear route hierarchy and street character. The extensive use of softer roadscapes should promote pedestrian priority over the vehicle. Generous landscape buffers to development edges prioritise pedestrians and provide for informal play and recreational use. Secondary and tertiary routes look at how pedestrian priority can be provided through the use of road markings and shared surfacing.

73. The pedestrian and cycle network within the CDL site has been outlined in the application. The extent of the network falls short of that envisaged in the DCC Adopted Masterplan. Moreover, the network as outlined would not be secured through this application and would be at risk of being downgraded in subsequent reserved matters applications.

Conclusion

74. The Trust would like to see a masterplan for the active travel network established as part of the approval of the outline applications to set a benchmark for the connectivity and provision and ensure coherence across the whole site. This should establish which routes would require walking and cycling separation, lighting, and how priority for pedestrians and cyclists is to be achieved.

Design of proposed junctions

75. The only actual permission for construction sought in the outline applications relates to a number of new or remodelled road junctions. There are deficiencies in relation to active travel with all the designs which will impact the take-up of sustainable modes, contrary to NPPF para. 104(c, e), 110(a,b,c), 112(a,b,c), and County Durham Plan policies 21(b) and 24(c). Most of the issues detailed below can be remedied without affecting the amount of land that needs to be allocated to the highway, and some will not involve extra cost.

THE CITY OF DURHAM TRUST

Bellway A691 access junction

76. As it stands the Bellway outline application, if approved, would permit the construction only of the A691 access junction and a stretch of road leading towards the site. The new junction would interrupt the existing A691 shared-use cycle/footway on the north side of the A691 which leads to Witton Gilbert. The proposed roundabout is poorly-designed for active travel and should not be approved as it stands.
77. Table E/4.1 of CD195 Designing for cycle traffic (Highways England, September 2019) indicates that for a cycle route crossing a two-lane roundabout entry as shown in the proposals, a parallel light-controlled pedestrian/cycle crossing would be required. As the traffic volumes expected on the roundabout arm accessing the Bellway site will be relatively low, an unsignalised crossing, or a parallel zebra/cycle crossing may be compliant if the roundabout is redesigned for single-lane entry/exit of the site access arm and if the geometry of the roundabout is tightened to reduce vehicle speeds. The cycle route should be designed in accordance with LTN 1/20 chapter 10 which deals with junctions and crossings.
78. Formal bus stops on the A691 are proposed, and this is welcome. Unfortunately the only crossing to access the west-bound bus stop is an uncontrolled crossing at the roundabout. The road currently has a 60mph limit but the developers propose that it be lowered to 40mph. The current geometry of the roundabout would, however, allow for quite high speeds. Table 3 of the CIHT publication Planning for Walking (March 2015) suggests that for 40mph roads uncontrolled crossings or central refuges are only appropriate in low flow environments, which is clearly not the case here. For the A691 a zebra or signal controlled crossing would be recommended.
79. Without proper crossings of A691, the access to the bus stops cannot be considered safe. The X5 and X15 buses on this road would provide useful access to St Leonard's School, for example, but without safe crossings parents would be more likely to drive their children there and back.

County Durham Land road junctions

80. The CDL outline application seeks permission for the following works, listed going clockwise round the perimeter of the site:
- Potterhouse Lane / Trouts Lane junction improvement
 - Potterhouse Lane shared-use foot/cycleway and access junctions
 - New controlled pedestrian (and possibly cycle) crossing of the A167.
 - New A167 roundabout to allow for building of link road to join B6532 from the north-east.
 - Remodelled A167 Park and Ride roundabout allowing for building link road joining B6532 from the south-west.
81. The designs for the junctions of the two new link roads with the B6532, and works to create a cycle route along the B6532, have not been included in the formal application, although drawings for all these works can be found at p.

THE CITY OF DURHAM TRUST

140-154 of the Environmental Statement Volume 3 Chapter D.

82. Several of the proposed works fall into the scope of Policy 5(j) which requires connections “to the existing development to the east of the A167 through suitable, convenient, safe and attractive cycleways and footpaths”. All of the designs fail to comply with LTN 1/20 and other design guidance. Details of the design issues are given in Appendix D below.
83. Active Travel England has provided comments on the CDL application (9 November 2023). ATE has not provided a full assessment, but has reviewed the plans for two A167 junctions, the Potterhouse Lane / Trouts Lane junction, and the upgrading of Potterhouse Lane. In all cases ATE has identified various ways in which the design approach does not align with LTN 1/20 which is the current applicable guidance and encourages the appellant to improve the designs. ATE also considers that “given that access approval is sought within this submission, details of all pedestrian and cycle access points should be provided in full given their role in achieving sustainable development” (foot of p. 2). This comment could equally appropriately apply to the Bellway outline application.
84. Another issue with the crossings of the A167 which needs to be resolved is the question of the speed limit on the section from the Pity Me roundabout to the A167 Park and Ride roundabout. This road currently has a national speed limit of 60mph. It has a wide carriageway with central hatching, and has been narrowed by continuous painted lines on each side (which are **not** on-road cycle lanes). It was originally built as a three-lane carriageway, as part of the A1 Pity Me Bypass, hence the carriageway width of over 10m. There is a shared-use foot/cycleway on the east side. The following picture shows where a public footpath crosses the 60mph limit road by the end of Woodbine Road, the location of the proposed signalised crossing in CDL's application, and the approximate location of the access roundabout envisaged in the DCC Adopted Masterplan.



85. The CDL outline application proposes lowering the speed limit to 40mph along the whole length of this road from the Pity Me roundabout to the A167 Park and Ride roundabout.

THE CITY OF DURHAM TRUST

86. The Trust notes that the Highway Authority (response to CDL application dated 13 March 2023, p. 14) considers that the proposed lowering of the speed limit is not appropriate because the 40mph limit would not be observed. This is presumably because of factors such as the width of the carriageway, the lack of lighting, and the vegetation, all of which suggest a rural trunk road.
87. If the 60mph limit is retained, any crossings of the A167 would be required to be grade-separated (bridge or subway) rather than merely signalised, according to LTN 1/20 Table 10-2. The Trust notes the Strategic Traffic Manager's advice on p. 14 is therefore not in accord with this national design guidance. The Trust is, however, in agreement that a 40mph limit is less likely to be observed on this stretch of the A167 without further engineering measures.
88. In the response to the CDL outline application (p. 2, penultimate paragraph) from Active Travel England it is stated that the cycleway alongside the eastern edge of the A167 is not compliant with LTN 1/20 at present, as it is shared with pedestrians. It could be argued that the low pedestrian footfall and non-urban nature of the route would allow for shared use, according to the criteria laid down in LTN 1/20 para. 6.5.6 and section 1.6(2). Whether or not this is the case, the Trust notes that the route also lacks the absolute minimum 2.0m separation from the main carriageway required by LTN 1/20 Table 6-1 for a route alongside a 60mph road.
89. The Trust suggests the issues of the speed limit compliance, signalised crossing, and quality of the A167 cycle route could all be addressed by reallocating one lane of the formerly three-lane highway as a 3m side segregated cycleway. This could be done relatively cheaply using bolt-down kerb units. The narrowing of the carriageway would allow the 40mph limit to be introduced and would make the proposed at-grade signalised crossings acceptable. A redesign of the proposed A167 access roundabout and the alterations to the A167 Park and Ride roundabout would be required to accommodate the new segregated cycleway.
90. The following image shows a former two-lane slip road near Houghton-le-Spring which was recently converted using bolt-down kerb units to create a bidirectional cycle lane. Occasional gaps in the kerb allow for drainage without costly works.



THE CITY OF DURHAM TRUST

91. In view of the various ways in which the plans for the construction of the road access do not align with current guidance on cycle and walking route design, the Trust considers that they cannot be approved in their current form. Although it is likely to be possible to attain a high level of compliance without significant changes to the highways land envelope, there are many wide-ranging and inter-linked matters that would be hard to resolve solely by applying conditions.

Active Travel: off-site improvements

92. The Trust will provide evidence supporting the need for the mitigations contained within the Healthy Active Travel Connectivity Plan, and would go beyond this plan in seeking higher quality provision in some cases, in accord with the submission of 9 November 2023 from Active Travel England. The HATCP revision, which has not been made available to the public, may be relevant here, and the Trust reserves the opportunity to comment on this. Delivery of the HATCP measures, and of relevant schemes from the Durham City Sustainable Transport Delivery Plan are required (by Policy 5(I) and Policy 22 via the penultimate paragraph of Policy 5), but without sight of the proposed planning obligations the Trust cannot state at present whether the applications deliver adequately these off-site improvements.

93. According to the Highway Authority response of 29 June 2023 (foot of p. 4) it is up to other teams within Durham County Council to assess the impact of the development on walking, cycling and public transport accessibility. The Sustainable Transport team has not, as yet, submitted a response. The Trust's submissions to this, and previous iterations of this application, were independent of the advice of that team, and our objections are in line with the recent response to the CDL application from Active Travel England.

94. Some indications of the discussions between the Council and the appellants have been made public through minutes of a meeting included within one of the submissions attached to the Bellway hybrid application, and via the CDL response to the HATCP proposals contained in Appendix C at p. 197 of the CDL Environmental Statement Volume 3 Chapter D. The following paragraphs offer the Trust's opinion on what we have been able to discern from the information so far made public.

County Durham Land

95. The Trust welcomes the agreement to provide or contribute to HATCP interventions 1, 7, 10, 11, 15, 21 and 22, and accepts that the Sniperley allocation should not be expected to contribute to some of the other identified interventions.

96. Interventions 3-5 would create safer cycling access to the Arnison Centre and various employment sites nearby, but DCC does not, apparently, require a contribution for this work. No intervention is proposed at the Pity Me roundabout either. The Trust considers that for access to the Arnison Centre from Sniperley these interventions are very important.

97. Interventions 16-19 would create safer cycling access along the B6532 past New College, the Blackie Boy roundabout and along Dryburn Road. The

THE CITY OF DURHAM TRUST

applicant is offering a shared-use facility along the B6532 as far as New College. Shared use is not recommended in LTN 1/20 where there is likely to be high pedestrian or cycle flow, so this would need assessment. The Trust's preferred intervention would be to make this section of road bus and cycle only as proposed in HATCP intervention 16. The bulk of the B6532 traffic could be diverted onto the proposed link from the B6532 to the A167 Park and Ride roundabout, leaving the current B6532 as a bus priority route towards Durham past New College. This would also give opportunities for making the Blackie Boy roundabout safer.

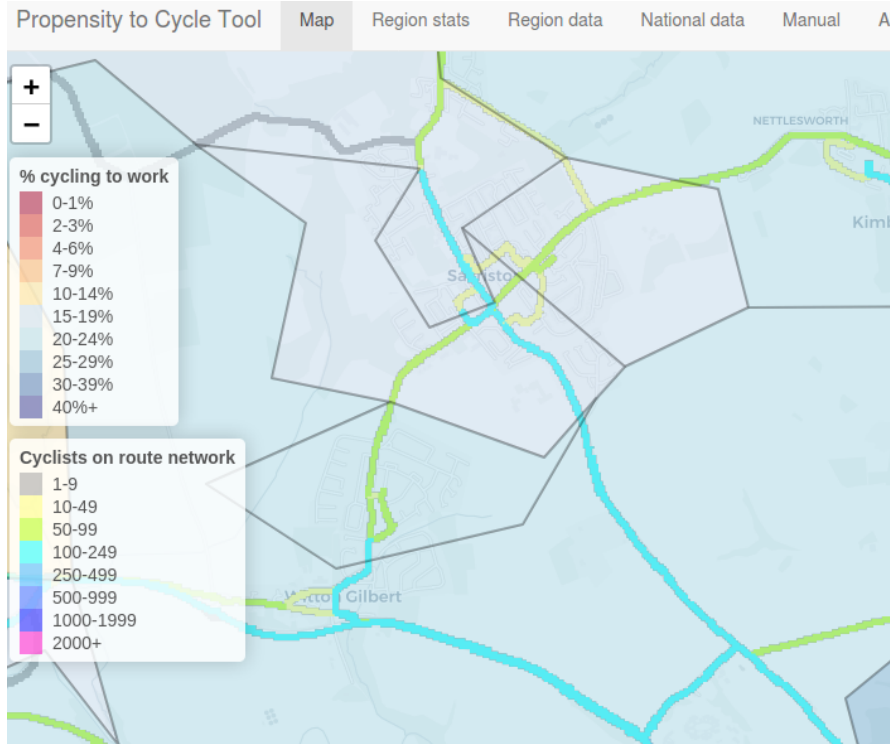
98. It is unclear why DCC are not seeking contributions from the Sniperley allocation towards the other B6532 interventions. Policy 5 requires the movement framework to incorporate relevant schemes from the Durham City Sustainable Transport Delivery Plan, and the north-west corridor along the B6532 was identified in section 4.5 of that plan with several schemes which are highly relevant to sustainable travel from Sniperley to the hospital, Aykley Heads and the city centre. Indeed, the Durham City Sustainable Transport Delivery Plan formed a key part of the evidence base for the County Plan, helping to demonstrate that the Sniperley Park green belt release could be made sustainable.

99. In respect of intervention 24, a shared use path from Potterhouse Lane to Sacriston, the CDL document states:

DCC have advised that no improvements are required from the Sniperley Allocation. Based on total person trip rates, cycle mode share and census distribution, just 7 daily two-way cycle trips are forecast to Sacriston.

100. The Trust objects to this position. The Inspector of the County Plan accepted that sustainable transport interventions should form part of the response to the impacts of the development of the former green belt allocations. Producing modal shift from driving to cycling on the Sacriston to Durham route helps to reduce the need for increases in junction capacity on the A167. Existing cycle mode share, whether via trip rates estimated through TRICS or via census data, is not adequate to estimate potential demand. The Department for Transport recommends the use of the Propensity to Cycle Tool which models potential demand for cycling under various scenarios (and importantly takes account of hills). Looking at the best case scenario, with high quality cycle networks and wide uptake of e-bikes, cycle commuting in Sacriston is modelled to increase from eight at the 2011 census to over 300 daily commuters, representing 18% of travel to work from the area and reducing the number of car drivers by over 200. Most of that commuting would be on the B6532 as shown from this excerpt.

THE CITY OF DURHAM TRUST



101. The County Council is not going to achieve the transformation in transport required by the Climate Emergency Response Plan 2 without delivering high quality links such as this. If DCC has secured funding through another source the Trust would withdraw this element of the objection.

Bellway

102. The Bellway hybrid application included a full Transport Assessment and various appendices. These included notes of a meeting of November 2022 between both appellants and the Council at which the sustainable travel interventions in the Health Active Travel Connectivity Plan were discussed. Section 10 of the Transport Assessment list HATCP interventions which Bellway was prepared to fund. There were also drawings of a proposed interrim crossing of the main Sniperley roundabout and of plans for a walking and cycling route to Framwellgate Moor Primary School.

103. The Trust has not been able to locate any of this material in the outline application. While the outline application only seeks permission for the construction of the A691 access roundabout and a short stretch of road it is clear that, if approving the application in outline, the Council would be seeking to secure the conditions and other planning obligations to ensure the timely funding and delivery of the off-site interventions. The Trust's position on these interventions is therefore offered in the hope it will assist the Inspector.

104. The Trust would expect to see enhancements to the pedestrian and cycling environment to provide safe crossings of existing roads, including at all the roundabouts, and high quality continuous links to the Framwellgate Moor shops and schools, to the County Hall roundabout (linking to existing routes to the city centre), and to Durham Johnston School. It is understood that funding for some of these measures has been secured independently by the Council, but no detailed designs have yet been released. Plans for signalling the Sniperley

THE CITY OF DURHAM TRUST

roundabout, which include signalised routes for pedestrians and cyclists, were recently released via a Freedom of Information request having been prepared for the Council by AECOM. Implementation of these plans would go part way towards meeting the active travel connectivity needs.

105. The Trust very much welcomes the commitment (in Bellway's hybrid application) to creating a largely off-road walking and cycling route to Framwellgate School, and would be keen to provide practical input to the refinement of this scheme, which relies rather heavily on shared-use pavements when some sections could enable separation of cycling and walking. Shared use provision is strongly discouraged by LTN 1/20 Section 1.6(2). The main weakness in the proposal, however, is the failure to tackle the Blackie Boy roundabout. Without safe crossings there, it is likely that many parents will not be prepared to let their children travel unaccompanied to the school. There is scope for reducing the traffic at the Blackie Boy roundabout if HATCP intervention 16 is delivered, but this depends on delivery of the A167 Park and Ride to B6532 link road within the CDL site.
106. The Trust would like clarity on the delivery of the Sniperley roundabout improvements. One drawing submitted with the Bellway hybrid application shows the widening of the entry to the roundabout from Dryburn Park as the sole intervention. It is said that the additional traffic generated by the development will make it harder for drivers to gain access to the roundabout from Dryburn Park and the widening will reduce the impact. Widening may make it harder for pedestrians and cyclists to cross this arm of the junction.
107. The drawings submitted by Bellway for the proposed cycle/walking route from the Park and Ride to Framwellgate School includes a zebra crossing of the northern (A167) arm of the roundabout. The Trust has also seen plans for signalising the whole roundabout. These plans create much better cycling routes, but still fail to assist vulnerable road users at the Dryburn Park arm.
108. The Trust is of the view that signalising the roundabout should be completed before the occupation of any of the Sniperley Park site, as the current roundabout is very discouraging for active travel, and would prioritise this over most other interventions.
109. The Trust objects to the fact that widening of the A167 cycle route to Durham Johnston School appears to have been dropped by the Council, perhaps because most secondary school children resident in Sniperley park would be expected to go to Framwellgate School. Policy 5(l) explicitly requires contribution to A167 capacity enhancement between the Sniperley roundabout and Neville's Cross. The Trust would prefer to see this carried out by eliminating some of the central hatching in order to accommodate a two-way cycle track, protected by kerbs, along the eastern side of the A167. This would enable modal shift on this corridor and thereby increase capacity, and would reduce conflict between people walking and cycling.
110. The A691 Park and Ride roundabout must not be forgotten: it also currently has pedestrian/cycle crossings which are not compliant with the current guidance.
111. The Trust has included in Appendix C an assessment of the Bellway hybrid

THE CITY OF DURHAM TRUST

application according to the Active Travel England planning application assessment toolkit. Most aspects are also relevant to the outline application. It helps to demonstrate the criteria which ATE regards as significant for promoting walking and cycling in compliance with local and national planning policies.

Travel Plan

112. As mentioned above, the targets proposed in the Travel Plans submitted with each application are not ambitious enough in reducing car travel, given that they exceed the car travel rates for the area east of the A167. Note that the Bellway hybrid application includes a Travel Plan, but the Trust has not been able to locate a Travel Plan in the documents attached to the outline plan although its existence is mentioned in other documents forming part of the outline application. In response to the similar 2021 Bellway hybrid application (which was withdrawn after the 2022 appeal) National Highways submitted a Technical Memorandum which expressed concern about the Travel Plan targets:

We would also suggest that a targeted 5% reduction in the proportion of future households travelling by car in peak periods is not ambitious enough, especially considering the opportunities to link to the proposed development to an existing, and possibly expanding, P&R.

Indeed, the Environment Statement, Chapter 10 accompanying the Bellway outline application characterises it in para. 10.169 as “a modest 5% Travel Plan reduction in vehicular movements”.

113. The Trust is also of the view that the measures to promote sustainable transport within the Travel Plans are not adequate: the Travel Plans should identify possible additional infrastructure or subsidy measures to be introduced if the targets are not met, not just marketing proposals. As stated in the Active Travel England planning application assessment toolkit, “Travel Plans / Framework travel Plans must clearly outline the modal share targets, proposed measures, monitoring strategy, **and the remedial measures in the event these are not met**” (emphasis added).

114. In summary, the Trust considers that the Travel Plan for each site:

- should have a lower starting target for car/van use.
- will need more ambitious targets for reducing carbon emissions in line with the Transport for the North Decarbonisation Plan and the Council's Climate Emergency Response Plan 2
- should incorporate working from home as a mitigation, including hybrid working

A condition should require an annual travel survey of residents which:

- achieves a statistically significant sample size
- assesses the distance travelled as a proxy for emissions, not just the mode of travel
- is sophisticated enough to cope with a changing mixture of in-person and

THE CITY OF DURHAM TRUST

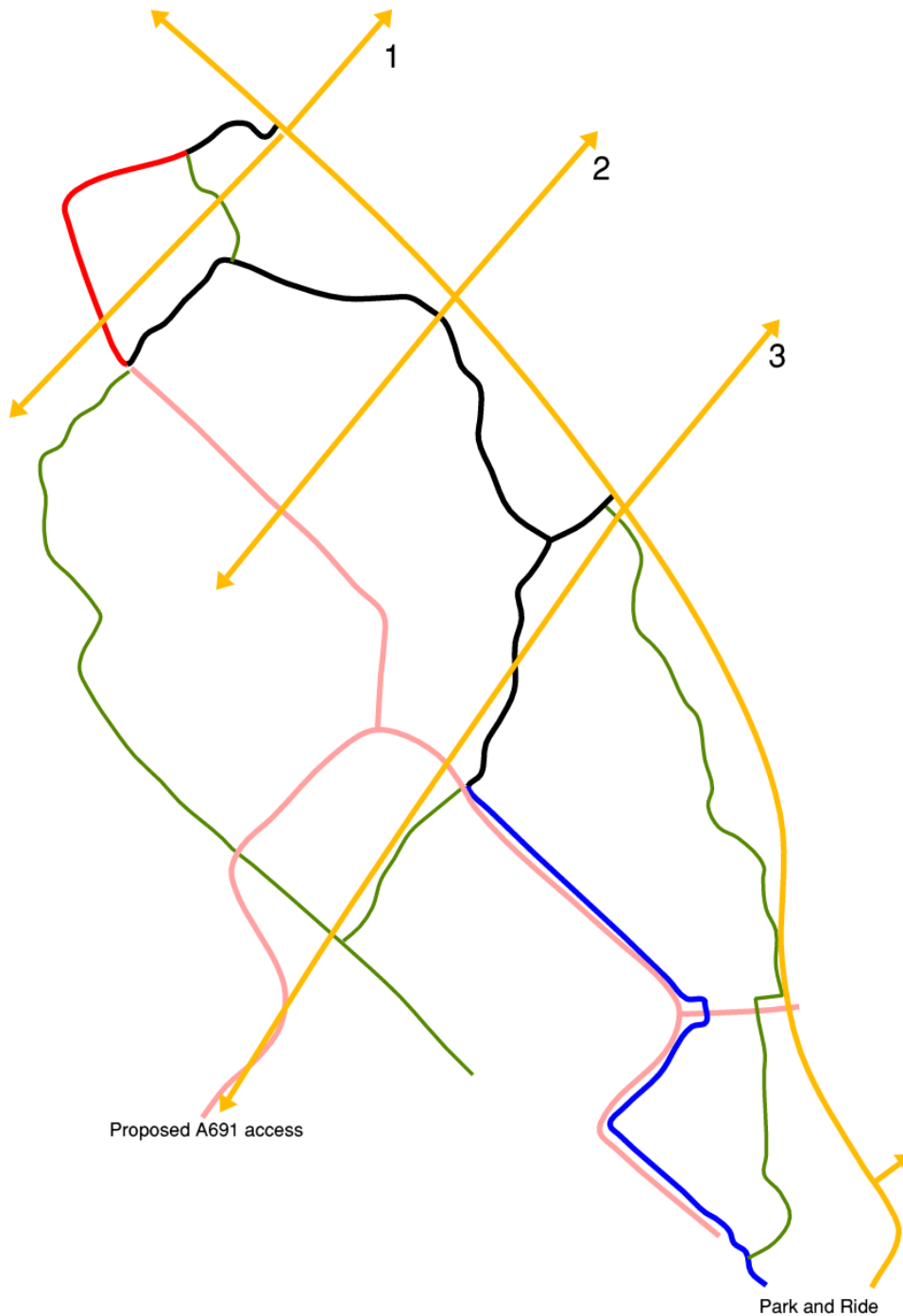
at-home working in a hybrid working environment

- is made freely available to the Council and to the public for analysis.

Links to the Sniperley Park and Ride Site

115. Safe and attractive links to the Park and Ride site are required by CDP Policy 5(k). It is not clear in the policy wording whether walking, cycling or motor traffic links are intended, but the stipulation “safe and attractive” suggests active travel is intended. The Council's adopted masterplan included a key cycle and pedestrian route along the boundary of the County Durham Land and Bellway sites, leading directly to the Park and Ride. This was omitted in the appellants' masterplan and in all the applications from CDL and Bellway.
116. The outline layout shown in the County Durham Land application relies solely on the main highway network as it approaches the Park and Ride site, and shows no links to the site itself. Other foot and cycle paths are shown linking from the CDL site to the Bellway site, but the layout of the Bellway proposals (as shown in full in the hybrid application, and the Movement Hierarchy Plan of the outline application) does not provide for attractive links onward to the Park and Ride.
117. The pedestrian and cycle links from the Bellway site to the Park and Ride is somewhat indirect, even for access from the Bellway site. This is illustrated in the following scale diagram, which the Trust has produced by tracing the Bellway plans and the Council's Masterplan. The yellow lines are the indicative pedestrian and cycle links in the Council's Masterplan, including a long and direct route heading along the boundary of the two sites giving access to the Park and Ride at one end, and extending into the CDL site at the northern end. The other lines represent roads and paths within the Bellway site, indicating the routes which are possible to access the Park and Ride from the rest of the site. Some roads and paths have been omitted for clarity.

THE CITY OF DURHAM TRUST



118. To access the Bellway site by cycling from the Park and Ride one would first use the shared-use off-road path alongside the access road (depicted in blue on the diagram). There would then be a choice of using shared use paths away from the road (shown in black) or the other access roads (shown in pink) to proceed towards the northern end of the site. To cut through to the CDL site at the northern end, cyclists would need to use a portion of access road (shown in red), as the off-road path becomes pedestrian-only (shown in green) for a short stretch. People accessing the Park and Ride site on foot would have the additional choice of using other pedestrian-only paths (shown in green).

119. The cycle route from the Park and Ride site, which initially follows the internal road network, has five crossings over side roads. Despite NPPF para. 112(a)

THE CITY OF DURHAM TRUST

and the Key Design Principles of the Healthy and Active Travel Connectivity Plan, priority at crossings has not been given to pedestrians and cyclists. Good cycle access is particularly important to delivering sustainable travel options as the Transport Assessment reveals that most amenities are beyond the typical 2km walking distance.

120. Most of the off-road paths in Bellway's Movement Hierarchy Plan are more suited to leisure use: they are less direct than the access roads and more wiggly. In the Trust's view they thus fail the requirement of Policy 5(k) for "attractive" links. The network does not prioritise pedestrian and cycle access, contrary to CDP Policy 29(m.2) and NPPF para. 112(a).
121. The Trust considers therefore that neither application meets the requirements of Policy 5(k). There needs to be proper co-ordination between the designs of each site which can most easily be achieved through adherence to the Council's Adopted Masterplan. The main pedestrian and cycle path network should be given priority in the design and be designed primarily with journeys, rather than leisure, in mind.
122. It would still be possible to provide the key spine route along the boundary, either within the Bellway or the County Durham Land holdings, without requiring major changes to either outline application under consideration. It is essential to resolve how the spine route is to be delivered if the Sniperley Park site is to be one "incorporating sustainable development principles" (Policy 5 para. 2) and "*connected to the existing development to the east of the A167 through suitable, convenient, safe and attractive cycleways and footpaths*" (Policy 5j) with "*attractive and safe links between the housing and the existing Park and Ride facility*" (Policy 5k) which "*reduce the dominance of car traffic and improve the permeability [by incorporating] convenient, safe and high quality ... pedestrian and cycle routes within, and connecting to, adjoining facilities*" (Policy 5 penultimate paragraph).

Other missing links in the proposed active travel network

123. The Council Masterplan shows three pedestrian and cycle links between the Bellway and CDL sites, in addition to the access along the link road. They are numbered 1-3 on the above scale diagram. The Bellway Movement Hierarchy Plan only includes two links (shown in black). The density of an active travel network is a key factor in encouraging journeys by walking and cycling. The Trust asks that the Council's Masterplan be implemented in this respect.
124. Whilst the site for the local centre is on the CDL-controlled part of the H5 allocation, the placing of the local centre has a strong bearing on the design and layout of the Bellway part of the allocation. If the local centre is placed on the Sacriston side of the electricity transmission line, in accord with the DCC Adopted Masterplan, then links 1 and 2 assume a much greater importance. The Trust objects to the indirectness of link 1, and the lack of link 2. Even if the local centre is located according to the appellants' masterplan, link 1 is also relied upon for achieving the 400m distance to B6532 bus stops from the northern part of the Bellway site, and should be direct in order to prioritise pedestrian and cycle movements. The Bellway proposals therefore do not provide a convenient, direct and legible network for this part of the site: the proposed routes are disrupted by the locations of the SUDS ponds and do not

THE CITY OF DURHAM TRUST

align well with the proposed CDL layout. The Trust considers that the location of the local centre and the access via the path network should be established through any approval of outline applications.

125. Link 3 in the Masterplan is on the alignment of the overhead power lines, and in the CDL site would link to the primary school. The DCC Masterplan shows it reaching as far as the A691. The Bellway application does not achieve this connection: the paths within the green space adjacent to the A691 do not connect to the proposed bus stops or the footways and cycle paths alongside the A691, and instead people would need to use the main access road.



126. The Active Travel England response to the CDL application states at the foot of p. 2 that *“given that access approval is sought within this submission, details of all pedestrian and cycle access points should be provided in full given their role in achieving sustainable development”*. This would also clearly apply to the Bellway application, and the access from the A691.

Compensatory improvements to the Green Belt

127. Policy 5(h) requires *“new public rights of way linking to the wider footpath network in the Browney Valley to the south”* but the Bellway proposals do not include any, either in the outline application which is the subject of the appeal or in the hybrid application. A comment from the Rights of Way Officer was submitted on 20 January 2023 in relation to the hybrid application pointing out that there is currently no suitable connection to the wider footpath network: *“to reach footpaths 12 and 13 from footpath 9 or the proposed site entrance without trespassing entails a walk of approximately 1km alongside the A691”*. In the view of the Trust, to comply with Policy 5(h) there should be at least one new public footpath from the development, via a suitable crossing of the A691, passing through the compensatory improvement land to Witton Gilbert Footpath 12. The Inspector may consider establishing this requirement through a condition on the outline application, given that it has a bearing on access.

THE CITY OF DURHAM TRUST

128. North of the CDL site compensatory improvements are proposed. Part 2 of Policy 5(h) stipulates “*new public rights of way providing opportunities for circular walks and linking to the wider footpath network to the north*”. The CDL application form, however, states that no new public rights of way are to be provided within or adjacent to the site. The appellants' Comprehensive Masterplan does not indicate any paths in the green belt land which is to be improved, though a crossing of Potterhouse Lane to access the land is mentioned.

Conditions

129. If approval is granted to either or both applications, the Trust would expect to see conditions applied covering the topics listed in the Statement of Common Ground between the CDL and the Council. As the Inquiry process proceeds, the Trust may wish to suggest proposals for conditions to achieve compliance with local and national policy, for example regarding encouragement of sustainable transport, access to public transport, layout and design details of walking and cycling networks, including their phasing, and requirements for Travel Plans. Please see Appendix A for the suggestions we are able to make at this stage.

Conclusion

130. The Trust considers that there are grounds for refusal which are robust and are supported by local and national policy. Importantly, the reasons for refusal advanced by the Trust were put forward independently of the County Council, in our objections of 11 February 2023 (CDL) and 26 April 2023 (Bellway). This demonstrates that our contribution to this Appeal is well-founded and drawn from our own careful consideration of the appellants' planning applications.

131. The appeal proposals are contrary to Policies 5, 21, 22, 24 and 29 of the adopted County Durham Plan and to the provisions of the NPPF as set out above, without compelling grounds for setting these policies or provisions aside. Accordingly, the City of Durham Trust submits that these appeals should be dismissed.

Yours sincerely

John Lowe,

Chair, City of Durham Trust

November 2023

THE CITY OF DURHAM TRUST

Appendix A: Conditions

As an illustration of the difficulties which residents might experience if conditions are not carefully applied, the Trust offers the recent example of the Mount Oswald estate which was masterplanned with a good network of recreational paths, connections to the surrounding path network, and a cycle route alongside the main access road.

- Some of the key links were still not open several years after the first houses were occupied, including the shortest routes to primary schools.
- The cycle route and footway by the new college accommodation at Mount Oswald was only properly surfaced two years after the colleges opened.
- Where dropped kerbs were provided, some were unusable by wheelchairs because of delay in bringing the carriageway up to the finished level.

Regarding phasing of the Bellway development, the Trust suggests the following condition be applied:

‘No part of the development shall be occupied until

- the pedestrian and cycle route to the Park and Ride bus stop has been finished and opened;
- the new A691 bus stops have been provided, including a suitable crossing to the west-bound stop, and linked to the development via direct pedestrian path connections;

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 wheelchairs, 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.

If the conclusion of the Inspector is to approve the application, the Trust would wish to see a number of additional conditions:

- to ensure the timely provision of bus services entering the site.
- to give priority over side roads, where possible, for the main shared-use pedestrian/cycle paths via appropriate engineering methods such as continuous footways, tight corner radii, or raised junction tables.
- to redesign the A691 roundabout access to the site to prioritise the A691 cycle route via crossings conforming with LTN 1/20.
- to increase footway widths to a minimum of 2.0m.

THE CITY OF DURHAM TRUST

- to provide LTN 1/20 compliant crossings of the A691 and A167 Park and Ride roundabouts, and of the main Sniperley Roundabout (the last is possibly already included in Bellway's proposals).
- to make the proposed upgraded route to Framwellgate School conditional on further design iterations in order to comply with LTN 1/20 throughout the length of the route.

The delivery of all these measures should be early enough to benefit residents of the new development from the outset.

THE CITY OF DURHAM TRUST

Appendix B

Excerpts from the City of Durham Trust's objections to Bellway's hybrid application DM/22/03778/FPA which are referred to in the main Statement of Case above. These illustrate the design issues which result from increasing the number of dwellings beyond the number given in Policy 5, or from other land pressures such as car parking provision or the mix of dwelling types chosen.

House orientation

Optimising building sustainability entails careful alignment of buildings to take advantage of solar gain and optimise solar panel orientation. The new Building Regulations Part O also requires house-builders to limit solar gain in summer to avoid overheating. The Sustainability Checklist asks developers about the orientation of the main living areas of homes, and whether a thermal comfort/overheating assessment has been performed.

The applicant claims that 42% of houses will be oriented in a southerly direction. Looking at the proposed layouts it is clear that the vast majority of houses are oriented with their corners pointing directly to the compass points, and thus have one of their windowless side walls facing either SW or SE. The main access roads are aligned SE to NW and so many houses will receive no solar gain through windows until the afternoon. This might be an advantage in hot summers, but will not help reduce heating bills. The applicant has not answered the question about the thermal comfort/overheating assessment.

Policy 29 Design

The newly submitted plans remain firmly rooted in standard volume house-builders' layouts and house types.

The DCC Adopted Masterplan envisages a wider range of layouts and house types, with more use of denser forms such as terraces and apartments allowing greater freedom in disposition of green space, car parking and the path network. Exceeding the Policy 5 figure of 1,700 homes has also affected the design quality. This has led to some of the failures in policy compliance already mentioned, including:

- orientation of houses to optimise thermal comfort and solar PV;
- lack of legibility, priority and directness for the path network;
- car parking provision which is inefficient in land take and "locks in" parking use when a move to lower car ownership is required;
- poor handling of the setting for Sniperley Hall, and the narrowness of the linear park provision.

When other built forms have been deployed, these have not been to best advantage. The apartment blocks, with no private green space, are clustered together overlooking the Park and Ride car park. While proximity to the Park and Ride may advantage households without a car, a better balance could have been achieved by siting the apartments adjacent to the parkland and with better access to the on-site amenities such as the future school and local centre.

The design code is little more than a delineation of 'character' areas and associated

THE CITY OF DURHAM TRUST

finishes. There is no analysis of how those areas and finishes have evolved. It reads as a retrospective description and not an active design document.

There is no credible attempt to show in what way the proposed units are related to Durham City and its setting and in what way they are distinctive in design. Identifying local later 20th-century houses offers no guide to local distinctiveness. The tight packing of units, and predominantly built and paved street frontages are going to be very similar to many other County developments and those found throughout England.

As an example, there are three specific areas of design.

1. Sniperley Farm remains omitted from this application and is covered by an isolated and separate application. The amended plans offer no clear and positive design relationship to the farm and could have generated an obviously distinctive character area. That shown only offers some materials changes on the standard house types.
2. The site vision offered 'verdant tree-lined avenues'. While there is some street tree planting, this is weakened by the number and clustering of the off street parking bays - resulting in long stretches of hard landscape and car parked frontage. Most street planting is in private front garden areas and its success and retention will be completely dependent on the care and attitude of the house-owner. The reality is far from the 'verdant' vision shown in the Design and Access statement incorporating the Design Code.
3. The setting to Sniperley Hall is basic in concept and fails to positively enhance either the Hall or the new development. The partial open space buffer is minimal with no screening other than a new hedgerow, and the remainder of the boundary area is formed from relatively small rear gardens.

The open spaces clustered round the access road from the A691 remain unattractive for use due to proximity to the roads and isolation at the edge of the site. As an example, this would have offered opportunities for creating distinctiveness and unique site character.

THE CITY OF DURHAM TRUST

Appendix C: Active Travel England criteria

This table assesses the Bellway outline application against the Active Travel England planning application assessment toolkit, which ATE would use if responding as a statutory consultee. The Trust considers that the application fails against the following criteria for the reasons given.

Criterion	Description	Trust response
ATEPAF_102 Transport Assessment: qualitative analysis	Transport Assessments must provide a qualitative analysis of the current infrastructure of the surrounding area, taking into account how additional movements across all modes of transport will impact upon the capacity of public transport, walking, Wheeling & cycling networks	The Transport Assessment does not evaluate the crossings provided for walking and cycling access to the surrounding area. The local cycling map is reproduced but there is no evaluation of quality.
ATEPAF_104 Walking routes to a primary school	A high-quality walking connection should be provided (or already exist) from the site to a primary school. Refer to Manual for Streets and CIHT Designing for Walking for details ...	Upgrades to the walking route to Framwellgate Moor Primary School are proposed, but a safe crossing of the A691/A167 Park and Ride link is lacking, and of the B6532 at the Blackie Boy roundabout. A new primary school is proposed in the adjacent outline application area, but is not clear if there will be a suitable crossing of the B6532 or if the footpath link will be lit.
ATEPAF_105 Walking routes to a food shop	A high-quality walking connection should be provided from the site to a food shop selling fresh fruit & veg or services which benefit the community e.g. medical services. Refer to Manual for Streets and CIHT Designing for Walking for details ... As a minimum routes must be 2m wide (with limited pinch points of 1.5m due to street furniture) ... include appropriate crossings in compliance with LTN 1/20 Table 10-2	Route is not 2m wide (footways within the site are following DCC guidance of 1.8m width). Crossings of A691/A167 Park and Ride link road and Blackie Boy roundabout are uncontrolled and do not comply with LTN 1/20 Table 10-2.
ATEPAF_107 Safety at junctions (off-site)	All new or improved off-site junctions should be designed in line with the movement hierarchy: pedestrians, followed by cyclists, public transport users and private motor vehicles. The Junction Assessment Tool from LTN 1/20 should be used	The A691 Park and Ride roundabout remains with red movements in the JAT. The A167 Park and Ride roundabout may be upgraded in conjunction with the neighbouring application, but will still lack one suitable crossing. The applicant proposes a contribution to improvements at

THE CITY OF DURHAM TRUST

	for the design of all junctions except priority junctions between minor roads with flows below 500vpd.	the A691/A167 Sniperley Roundabout but this currently has multiple 0 scores in the JAT and the nature of the upgrade is unclear.
ATEPAF_108 Cycle routes to key destinations	The development should provide off-site LTN 1/20 compliant routes to relevant destinations such as schools, local centres, employment centres, railway stations and the existing cycle network.	Cycle routes to local centre at Framwellgate Moor, employment at Aykely Heads and Durham city centre are not compliant with LTN 1/20. The proposed improvement to the route to Framwellgate Moor Primary School is also non-compliant in part.
ATEPAF_110 Crossings (external to the site)	Where appropriate, the provision of crossings to an appropriate type and specification must be provided along forecasted desire lines.	Non-compliant crossings include A691/A167 Park and Ride link, Blackie Boy roundabout, Sniperley roundabout.
ATEPAF_114 Walking routes to nearest public transport nodes	A high-quality walking connection should be provided from the site to a public transport node.	Footways are proposed to be 1.8m wide, so not compliant. There is no compliant crossing of the A691 to the west-bound bus stop. Proposed bus stops on the site are accessible, but delivery depends upon the approval and construction of the adjacent site.
ATEPAF_121 Through traffic	The site accesses must be arranged to prevent private vehicle drivers from using the site as a shortcut while undertaking longer journeys ...	Depending on congestion levels on main roads, the proposed link from the B6532 to the A691 through the site may allow for use as a shortcut. The Trust suggests use of a bus gate.
ATEPAF_122 Safety at junctions (internal to the site, including site accesses)	All new or improved off-site junctions should be designed in line with the movement hierarchy: pedestrians, followed by cyclists, public transport users and private motor vehicles. The Junction Assessment Tool from LTN 1/20 should be used for the design of all junctions except priority junctions between minor roads with flows below 500vpd.	Side roads have no junction treatment. Radii exceed those recommended in MfS and MfS2. The proposed new access roundabout on the A691 has a JAT score of zero.
ATEPAF_131 Travel Plan	Travel Plans / Framework travel Plans must clearly outline the modal share targets, proposed measures, monitoring strategy, and the remedial measures in the event these are not met.	Remedial actions and measures are limited to promotional work. Travel Plan targets allow for a higher car modal share than found in neighbouring residential areas in the 2011 census.

THE CITY OF DURHAM TRUST

Appendix D: CDL application - assessment of proposed road junctions

The Trust has examined the applicant's submitted proposals for road junctions, with particular attention to walking and cycling use. Reference below is also made to the Road Safety Audit (RSA) results in Appendix B of the Environmental Statement Volume 3 Chapter D which can be found at p. 157 onwards of the submitted PDF. Page references to the RSA are to the pages within the PDF, not the internal page numbering of the report.

Proposed A167 Controlled Crossing. Drawing 226483/P-06

The previous application offered only a pedestrian refuge at this location. A controlled crossing is certainly necessary according to LTN 1/20 Table 10-2, and the Trust welcomes this improvement.

If the speed limit is reduce to 40mph then an at-grade crossing could be made compliant with the guidance. The proposed design does not comply with LTN 1/20 paragraphs 10.4.19 to 10.4.20 which advise against using staggered crossings for cycling, and advise care in the decision as to whether guard rails should be provided. The 3m width of the refuge is the minimum recommended (para. 10.4.7) for a non-staggered crossing for use by cycles. If the crossing is to be staggered and have guard rails then the refuge should be wider. A single-stage toucan would give greater priority to active travel, minimising the severance effect of the A167. Being sufficiently far from any junctions, the carriageway width could be narrowed without loss of capacity on the approach to the crossing, helping to reinforce the speed limit reduction from 60mph to 40mph. A single-stage crossing over the full width of the current carriageway might give rise to road safety audit concerns.

If the speed limit is not reduced, then a grade-separated crossing will be required. A bridge might be possible, considering that the land is much higher in Woodbine Road, but the bridge approaches on both sides would need to cater for cycling and users with disabilities.

The footway leading to the northbound bus stop would not be likely to be used by cyclists so need not be 3m wide, however the Strategic Design Code (p. 67) features a cycle track heading north on the west side of the A167. It is unclear if this drawing supports provision of that route.

Proposed Junction Improvement A167 Park & Ride Roundabout. Drawing 226483/P-01

The Trust welcomes the proposal for a single-stage toucan crossing on the north arm of the roundabout to cross the A167. The RSA (p. 168) criticises this choice and suggests a staggered crossing would be more appropriate. Staggered crossings on cycle routes are strongly discouraged by LTN 1/20, however. The Trust supports the designer's response to the audit in retaining the single-stage crossing (RSA p. 190). The Trust suggests that in addition to address the safety concerns more should be done to reduce motor vehicles speeds through appropriate design choices. An alternative approach outlined in LTN 1/20 is a single stage cycle crossing parallel with a pedestrian crossing in two stages via a central refuge.

The speed limit for this roundabout would be 40mph. As such, LTN 1/20 Table 10-2 would require any crossings to be signalised (unless grade-separated). There is no particular need to provide cycle crossings of arms B or C (A167 heading south, and link road to P+R) but arm D, crossing the new link road to the B6532, will require a suitable crossing. It may not be needed much by residents of the proposed development, but anyone cycling between Witton Gilbert and Framwellgate Moor

THE CITY OF DURHAM TRUST

via the A691 cycle path would be likely to use this crossing. Provision of a signalised crossing might also help to address concerns about vulnerable road user visibility at crossings noted in the RSA (p. 171).

The entry angles, while within range, are relatively low, and the entry path radii are high, exceeding the exit kerb radii, contrary to CD 116 para. 3.29.1. The Trust is of the view that these values will provide inadequate deflection through the roundabout and will encourage and enable high speeds. This will increase the danger to any pedestrians and cyclists crossing and may therefore suppress active travel. This would be a major concern if the A167 north of the roundabout retained the current 60mph limit.

Proposed Potterhouse Lane Improvement. Drawing 226483/P-05

The Trust welcomes the commitment to a 3m cycleway alongside this road. The buffer of 0.5m only complies with the absolute minimum for a 40mph road. The desirable minimum horizontal separation according to LTN 1/20 Table 6-1 is 1.0m (see also CD195 Table E/3.26), but it is noted that the detailed designs locate the cyclepath well away from the road, outside the current highway boundary.

The side road turnings should be designed to give cyclists and pedestrians priority over turning traffic, reinforcing the newly revised Highway Code and in compliance with NPPF 112(a), that “development should give priority first to pedestrian and cycle movements, both within the scheme and with neighbouring areas”. The RSA (p. 174) is critical of the lack of compliant crossings.

The side roads have been designed with corner radii of 10m, which would appear to be the minimum radius as advised by CD123 para. 5.6.2 when larger vehicles have to be accommodated. However other guidance including Manual for Streets 2 and LTN 1/20 recommend tighter radii to enhance pedestrian and cyclist safety. Manual for Streets 2 notes that TD 42/95 (the predecessor of CD123) should “not be taken as representing best practice when the needs of vulnerable road users are to be prioritised”. LTN 1/20 suggests that when giving priority to cyclists corner radii of no more than 4.0m should be used (para. 10.5.16). For occasional use by larger vehicles (e.g. refuse collection and buses) the turning may be made by crossing into the opposing lane.

The Trust asks that these changes be made before any application is approved, or that they be secured by condition.

Proposed A167 Link Road Junction. Drawing 226483/P-07

The following evaluation again assumes a reduction in the speed limit on the A167 to 40mph. If it is maintained at the national speed limit, grade-separated crossings (bridges or underpasses) will need to be provided for people walking or cycling.

LTN 1/20 para. 10.7.1 notes that 20% of cyclist killed or seriously injured casualties occur at roundabouts. The Trust therefore welcomes the provision of a single-stage toucan crossing on the southern arm of the roundabout, particularly in view of the fact it aligns closely with the waggonway: this is a considerable improvement over the previous application where the uncontrolled crossing was several metres removed from the waggonway. Onward connection to the waggonway on the west side should also be included. The roundabout impinges on the current alignment of the shared use cycle path on the east side of the A167 and no diversion is depicted in the plans. This needs to be remedied.

The other two arms of the roundabout only have at-grade uncontrolled crossings with refuges. This does not comply with LTN 1/20 (see para. 10.7.14). The Trust

THE CITY OF DURHAM TRUST

suggests that the crossing of the northern arm could be removed, and the western arm should be provided with a suitable crossing, which could be set back some distance from the junction without inconveniencing users, bringing it within the 30mph limit. The predicted traffic levels (see line 35 in Table D5.2 of the Environmental Statement Volume 2 Chapter D) suggest that a parallel crossing (zebra with cycle crossing alongside) or even a cycle priority crossing would be suitable here. See LTN 1/20 Table 10-2.

The checklist of parameters from CD 116 gives great cause for concern. The entry angles for arms B and C are lower than the design requirement, and that of arm A is at the lower end of the 20°-60° range. Higher angles would tighten the geometry, increase deflection, and thereby reduce motor vehicle speeds, enhancing pedestrian and cyclist safety. The entry path radii are higher than is desirable, and the exit kerb radii are also very high. Ideally the exit kerb radius should be 40m (CD 116 para. 3.29.2) and the largest entry radius should be less than this (CD 116 para. 3.29.1). Instead we have entry path radii ranging from 62m to 96m and exit path radii of 40m, 80m and 90m.

This presents particular challenges for arms A and C because the very high exit radius is coupled with the uncontrolled crossings, making it much harder for pedestrians and cyclists to cross in safety and with confidence.

Potterhouse Lane / Trouts Lane Junction Improvement. Drawing 226483/P-04

As this part of the site is intended to have a 40mph limit for the peripheral roads and 30mph as the B6532 enters the development, the corner radii again are concerning. There is no reason to provide a corner radius as large as 15m turning left from the B6532 into Potterhouse Lane, even if CD123 is being followed rather than LTN 1/20 and Manual for Streets 2.

According to the DCC adopted Masterplan and Healthy Active Travel Connectivity Plan (HATCP) segregated cycle tracks would be provided along the full length of the B6532 from Potterhouse Lane to the A167 roundabout (ref. 22 in the HATCP interventions list) and onward to Sacriston (ref. 24). Although the Trust understands that the funding for the latter may be disputed, the design for the Potterhouse and Trouts Lane junctions should nevertheless incorporate the cycle tracks and appropriate means for people to join/leave them in order to access the other routes at these junctions. The RSA (p. 172) also criticises the lack of crossing points. It would not be appropriate to approve this plan as currently submitted.

Other drawings

The above plans are the only ones mentioned in the Covering Letter from Lichfield. As well as being submitted as separate drawings, they are also included in pages 140-154 to of the Environmental Statement Volume 3 Chapter D, along with the following additional drawings, which the Trust assumes will not have construction approval if the outline application is approved:

p. 141 - Proposed B6532 / Link Road (East) Junction. Drawing 226483/P-03

This design prioritises motor traffic flow over active travel convenience with large corner radii and a right-turn lane. Central islands might provide crossing facilities rather far from the junction. There is nothing to show how the walking and cycling network would function at this junction.

p. 145 - Proposed B6532 / West Link Road Junction (Option 1). Drawing 226483/P-02.1

An incomplete junction drawing, but again, the provision of a right-turn lane will

THE CITY OF DURHAM TRUST

make it difficult to provide legible, direct and safe cycle and pedestrian links at this junction. Rather than attempting to accommodate high levels of motor traffic flow, the design should prioritise active travel.

p. 146 – **Proposed B6532 / West Link Road Junction (Option 1). Drawing 226483/P-02.2**

This drawing is incomplete and mislabelled, as it is Option 2. Cycle and walking provision not elaborated.

p. 154 – **Proposed Shared Use Route B6532. Drawing 226483/PD03**

This shows a 3m wide (plus 0.5m verge) from the link road junction to the New College access point, on the north/east side of the B6532, which the applicant has committed to provide. The drawing does not show how the path would allow a safe transition to the surrounding network at either end.

The LTN 1/20 guidance does not completely rule out shared provision in these circumstances, but its use is discouraged if there are likely to be high pedestrian or cycle flows. As this would form part of the main route into the centre of Durham from the development, connecting to locations such as the University Hospital of North Durham and Aykley Heads, higher rates of usage should be anticipated. While the carriageway could be narrowed to 6.0m, this would be an expensive way of reallocating space.

The Healthy and Active Travel Connectivity Plan envisaged dedicating this section for bus and cycle-only use. The Sniperley development involves providing additional link roads, and there is the danger that this may release suppressed demand and increase motor traffic. The Trust would therefore support measures such as the bus/cycle-only option which will give advantages to sustainable transport. Such a change would also help to deal with active travel challenges at the Blackie Boy roundabout.