THE CITY OF DURHAM TRUST

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10 February 2025

Mr Steve France
Durham County Council Planning Department
PO Box 274
Stanley, Co. Durham
DH8 1HG

Dear Mr France,

DM/24/03487/OUT Land To SW of 27 Durham Road West Bowburn DH6 5AU

Outline application for the erection of up to 20 dwellings and associated open space, SuDs and infrastructure (all matters reserved except access)

Pedestrian connection to north-east

The Trust welcomes the intention to provide direct pedestrian access north-east from the site to the Durham Road. The Planning Statement, para. 5.41 states that the indicative layout:

> … includes a pedestrian route to Bowburn from the northeast of the development. The provision of these will be confirmed at the Reserved Matters stage.

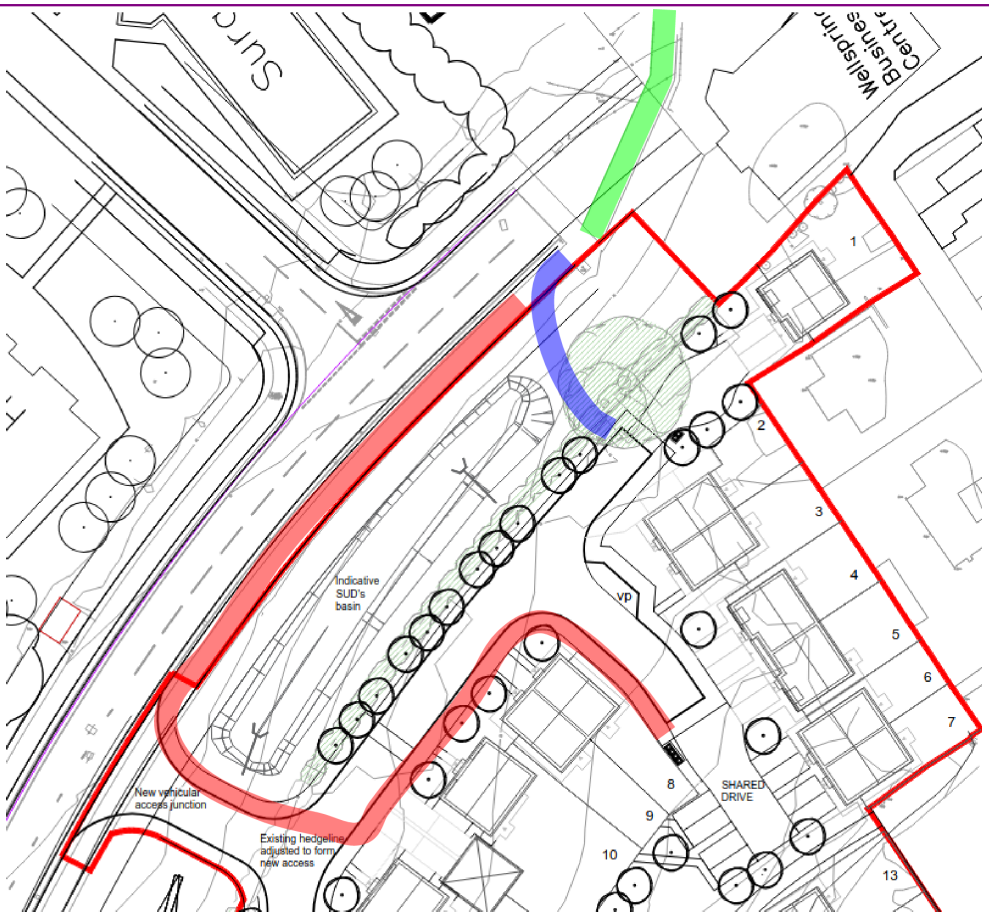
The outline application seeks approval for access and reserves all other matters. Policy 21 sets out a hierarchy for delivery and investment in transport modes, with walking and cycling coming before motor traffic. NPPF para. 115 seeks to ensure that "sustainable modes are prioritised" and para. 117 states that applications should "give priority first to pedestrian and cycle movements, both within the scheme and with neighbouring areas".

Therefore the Trust considers that the planning authority should apply a condition requiring the provision of a pedestrian (and preferably also cycle) link north-east from the site to the Durham Road. While the exact design of the link may be reserved at this stage, the provision of the link should be secured with the approval of the outline application.

Pedestrian connection to north-west

The Trust also considers that there should be a pedestrian and cycle link northwards onto Rosalind Frankland Way to shorten the distance that people would need to travel from the development to the link through to Edna Street and Durham Road.

In the following excerpt from the drawings the green route indicates the existing pedestrian link which leads from the end of Rosalind Frankland Way through to Edna Street and Durham Road. The red overlay shows the route that someone would need to walk using the proposed access to the site. This can be substantially shortened if the blue link shown below is also provided. This should be secured at the outline application stage through a condition.



At the reserved matters stage it would be desirable to minimise the walking distance from each dwelling to the pedestrian connections out of the site.

Road access to site

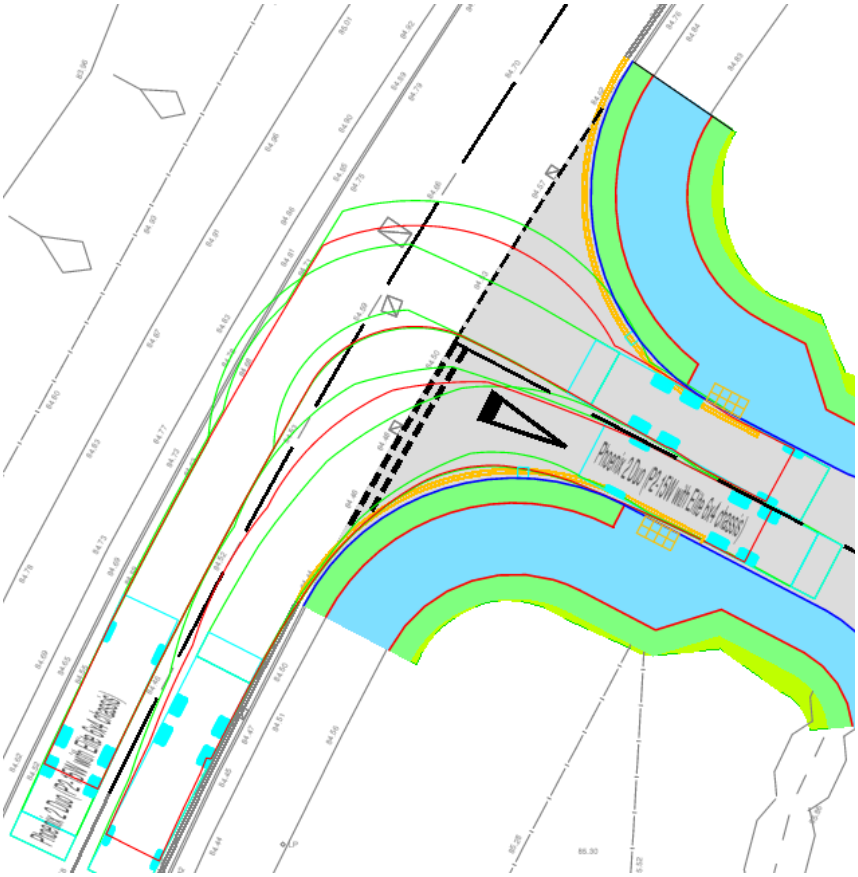
The Trust objects to the design of the access junction proposed on Bowburn Way because it does not prioritise pedestrian and cycle access across the junction. The design disrupts an existing well-designed, direct route for walking and cycling access, and therefore conflicts with Policy 21(b) of the County Plan. The design does not comply with LTN 1/20 or *Manual for Streets* which are national design guidance documents brought into County Durham policy via references in the County Durham Strategic Cycling and Walking Delivery Plan. Policy 21 requires that all development should have regard to the policies of the Delivery Plan and this includes observing the design guidance which is recommended therein.

While the design may comply with the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB), this is not the appropriate standard to use for a side road junction serving a development of only 20 properties.

Changes which would improve compliance with active travel design guidance include:

- reducing the radius of the corners, which are shown as 10m;
- providing a continuous and level pedestrian and cycle surface across the junction, to help enforce pedestrian and cycle priority in accordance with Highway Code Rule H2;
- adopting one of the junction designs suggested in LTN 1/20, rather than following DMRB.

The swept path analysis included in the drawings shows that the designers have used corner radii which allow large vehicles like a refuse lorry to enter or leave the development with little or no encroachment on the opposite side of the carriageway.



Large vehicles will only rarely enter a development of 20 houses. It would not cause any difficulty if the refuse lorry had to cross the centre line in order to navigate the junction, as occurs in many older streets. With larger corner radii, cars will be able to take the junction faster, resulting in more danger for any pedestrians or cyclists who are crossing.

Manual for Street 2 para. 9.3.13 states:

> Raised crossings across the mouth of minor road junctions are very helpful to pedestrians, and provide an element of informal priority at this key conflict point. Tight corner radii help to reduce the speed of turning traffic and help make the crossing movements easier and safer.

Manual for Streets 2 paragraphs 9.4.10 and 9.4.11 are also relevant:

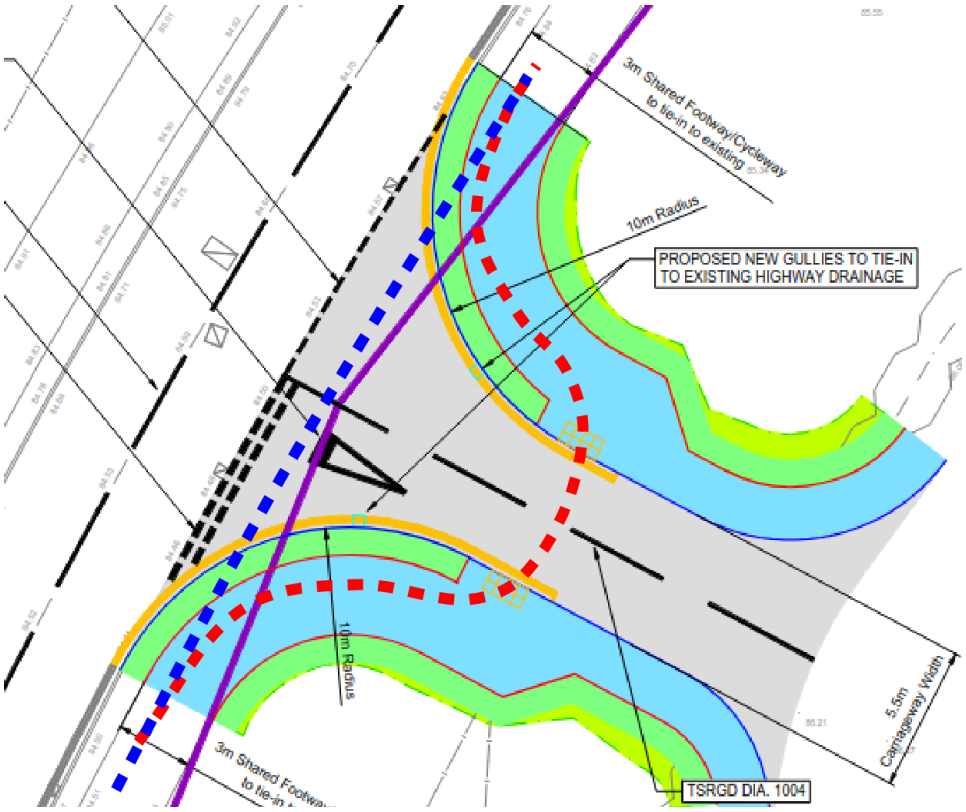
> As noted in Sections 6.3 and 6.4 of MfS1, tight corner radii help pedestrians and cyclists to travel across and through junctions by reducing the speed of turning vehicles. Advice contained in TD 42/95, that minimum corner radii should be 6m in urban areas, should therefore not be taken as representing best practice when the needs of vulnerable road users are to be prioritised.
>
> Larger vehicles can still negotiate junctions where minimal (1m or less) corner radii are used, depending on the width of the junction arms they are turning to and from. In many cases it will be better to have slightly greater carriageway widths at the junction, rather than generous corner radii, or accept that larger vehicles occasionally cross into the opposing lane.

Note that even the superseded advice in TD 42/95 suggests a corner radius of 6m, which is considerably less than the 10m proposed in the application. Manual for Streets gives an example design code in Figure 3.12 with 4m corner radii. Other references to minimising corner radii are found in paragraphs 6.3.12, 6.3.13, 6.4.6 and 7.3.6, and figures 6.3 and 6.15.

LTN 1/20 paragraph 7.6.10 states:

> Tight kerb radii at side roads will help to reinforce lower speeds for turning vehicles and offer a better crossing environment for pedestrians and should be used more widely (see Figure 7.10). Side Road Entry Treatments (raised tables across the junction mouth) will also help. Research carried out in London found that such treatments have significant safety benefits, with a 51% reduction in cyclist collisions where they were installed.

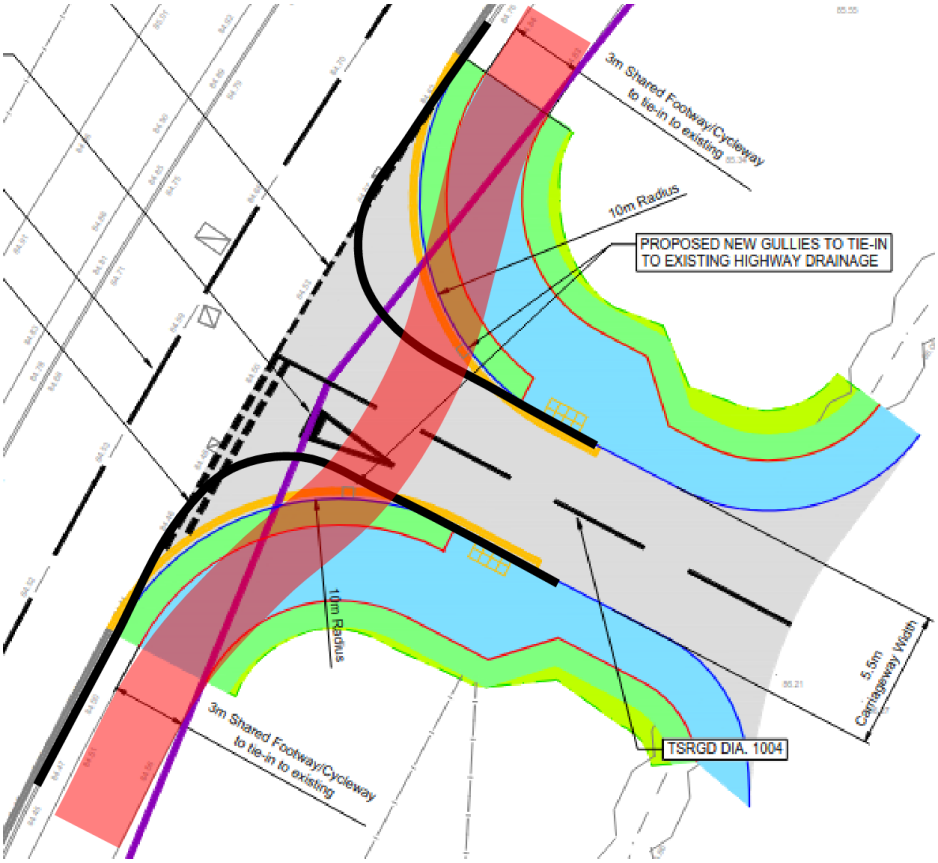
As well as slowing traffic and improving safety, reducing the corner radii will keep the pedestrian and cyclist movements closer to the desire line through the junction. The following drawing excerpt shows the desire line in blue dashes, and the actual route pedestrians and cyclists will have to take as red dashes.



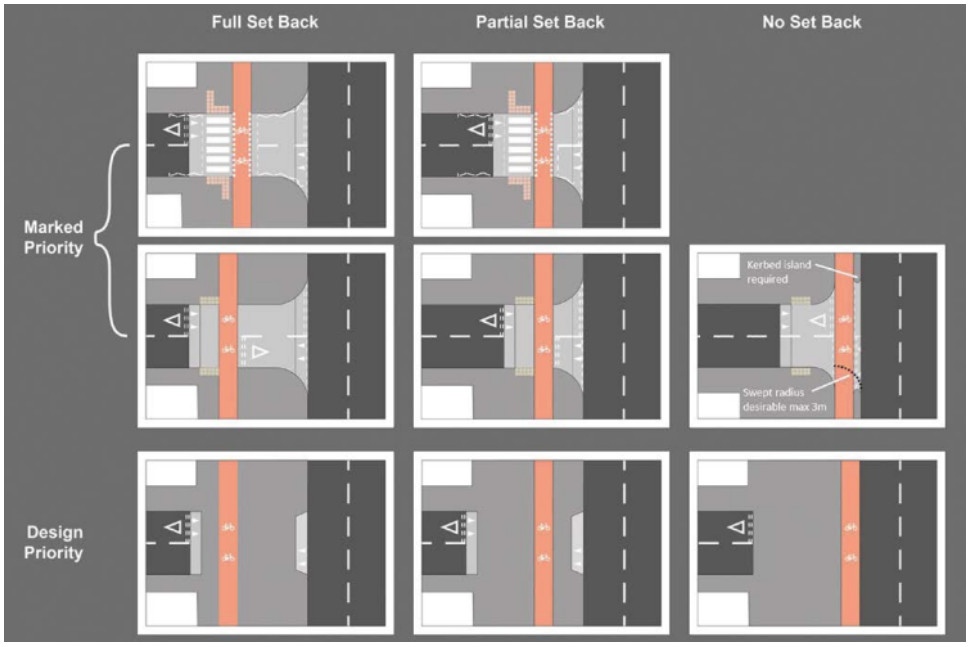
When a pedestrian or cyclists is using a junction like that proposed, as they turn the corner off the main road to access the dropped kerbs, they will have their backs to approaching traffic, which makes it harder to use the junction safely. The tight corners also require cyclists to brake, even if there are no other vehicles around, which increases the energy expended and lengthens the journey time. If this pattern of junction is repeated across an estate, as has unfortunately been the case in the Integra 61 development, this makes the cycle route unattractive to users. It reinforces the impression that the needs of people who are walking and cycling are subservient to those of the motorists.

The following amended drawing shows corners of approximately 4m radius in solid black (but lower would be better). The alignment of the pedestrian and cycle path (shown in red) moves gently away from the carriageway on the approach to the crossing, allowing cyclists to maintain

their speed and minimise muscle effort, and ensuring that pedestrians and cyclists can easily see in all directions for approaching vehicles.



Several designs are possible. The Trust would favour a raised junction table and continuous footway across the junction to give visibility to the priority which should be shown to pedestrians and cyclists in this situation. LTN 1/20 Figure 10.13 depicts various designs for parallel foot and pedestrian crossings with and without a set back from the carriageway. These could easily be adapted to the shared-use environment on Rosalind Franklin Way.



It is worth noting that Rosalind Franklin Way has a shared pedestrian-cycle path on each side, separated from the carriageway by a verge. The proposed junction is at the far end of the road access to the Integra 61 estate, and will be used by comparatively few vehicles compared to roads nearer the vehicular entrance of the estate. But in terms of pedestrian and cycle access, this junction is very close to a key active travel connection to Bowburn village, and will therefore be used by many of the people walking or cycling to the Integra 61 estate. The current design prioritises motor vehicle access to just 20 houses above active travel access to the whole estate.

These changes would help to satisfy the requirement of NPPF para. 177 to “give priority first to pedestrian and cycle movements, both within the scheme and with neighbouring areas”.

Yours sincerely,

John Lowe

Chair, City of Durham Trust