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# Inspector's Matters Issues and Questions

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## Examination of the Darlington Local Plan

### Part 1 Hearings

### (Matter 4 – Housing Development)

### Appendix M4.2: Highways and Accessibility

- 1. INTRODUCTION**
- 1.1. We have been instructed on behalf of our clients, Hellens Land Limited (HLL) and Homes England (HE), Greater Faverdale/Burtree Garden Village allocation, to submit a response to the Examination of the Darlington Local Plan: Inspector's Matters, Issues and Questions.
- 1.2. As part of the response to Matter 4, we have prepared this Appendix (M4.2) by way of a summary of the key transport issues relating to the allocation.
- 1.3. This Statement should be read in conjunction with all previous representations made on behalf of our clients in relation to Greater Faverdale/Burtree Garden Village and Matter 4.

## 2. ACCESSIBILITY

- 2.1 The proposed development includes a transport corridor through the core of the site incorporating not only vehicle traffic movements but also segregated footways and shared pedestrian/cycleways on either side. The active travel links extend along the full length of the transport corridor and incorporate suitable crossing points linked to the wider expansion of the active links within the development masterplan and giving due consideration to the existing PROW network that exists within the site boundary. The crossing points include a Pegasus Crossing for the bridleway that exists within the site to accommodate the safe movement of equestrians, as well as a Toucan Crossing in and around the location of the bespoke neighbourhood centre and other community facilities. The masterplan has been developed to accommodate all modes of travel.
- 2.2 Bus stops are also provided along the transport corridor and agreement has been reached with the bus operators to extend and/or divert existing services to accommodate short-term and long-term public transport provision to serve the development. The site will be within a 400m walking distance of bus stops located on Rotary Way or along the transport corridor. The focus has been on the development to be delivered within the plan period, but public transport options have also been considered within the wider development masterplan to ensure that the infrastructure exists to deliver services within an acceptable walking distance.
- 2.3 Discussions have taken place with local bus operators as part of the master planning process in relation to existing bus services being routed through the Greater Faverdale site increasing the accessibility of bus stops as development comes forward.
- 2.4 The active links will extend beyond the boundary of the site, with toucan crossings installed on Rotary Way and the shared pedestrian/cycleway linked to the existing pedestrian/cycleway network. To the north the development ties in with the proposed Heritage Railway Route, which plans to provide a walking and cycling route along the Stockton & Darlington Railway corridor, the first public railway, by 2025, to mark its 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary.
- 2.5 The expansion of the existing active transport links network within the development integrates the site with surrounding and available shops, services and education. There is also the intention to deliver a bespoke neighbourhood centre and other community facilities within the allocation over time, with the proposed active travel infrastructure links being focused on connectivity to these facilities.

2.6 The physical barriers to the movement by walking and cycling are addressed with proposed crossing points at key locations along Rotary Way, Burtree Lane and the onsite transport corridor and the overall expansion of the existing pedestrian and cycling infrastructure.

### 3. Highways Modelling and Mitigation

3.1 The impacts associated with the proposed development allocations have been assessed using the Tees Valley strategic Cube (Voyager) model to understand the overall impact of development. More detailed assessment has then been undertaken around the key transport corridors using three micro-simulation transport models<sup>i</sup>; the 'Conniscliffe Aimsun Model', covering the west of Darlington, being the one that focuses on the impacts most closely linked to the Faverdale development.

3.2 The modelling work concludes the overall assessment is that the Local Plan will not have a severe impact on the highway network<sup>ii</sup>. The approach is considered sound and justified.

3.3 Interventions are identified within the Local Plan<sup>iii</sup> to deliver the allocations within the plan period, with developer contributions and other sources identified as the mechanisms to fund the schemes<sup>iv</sup>. With regard to Greater Faverdale, the following highways improvements are deemed necessary and have either been delivered or are identified within the IDP:

- NW1: A68/Rotary Way Roundabout improvement (by 2020) – This has been delivered.
- NW3: Cockerton Roundabout Improvement (by 2020)
- NW4: Woodland Road/Staindrop Road/Carmel Road North Roundabout Improvement (2025)
- NW5: Faverdale Link Road Phase 1 (by 2025) – To be delivered on site.
- NW8: Faverdale Link Road Phase 2 (by 2030) – To be delivered on site.

3.4 The NW5/NW8 interventions are the 2 parts of the link road through the Greater Faverdale/Burtree Garden Village that connects Rotary Way and Burtree Lane. The junctions at either end are roundabouts.

- At Rotary Way the link road will form an upgrade to the 4th arm to the existing roundabout.
- At Burtree Lane the site access will be in the form of a new roundabout junction.

3.5 The link road through the development has been designed to be multi-functional. It provides a strategic link in terms of the distribution and assignment of the allocated sites to the wider road network, forming part of the longer-term vision for an orbital road connecting the existing radial routes serving the town. In a more local context, the link road extends/expands the existing active travel links in the area for walking and cycling, as well as accommodating the existing PROW connections within the development area. Suitable crossing points are included along the link road as well as along Rotary Way and Burtree Lane to remove the physical barriers to active travel. The crossing points include a Pegasus Crossing on the link road to facilitate equestrians. Agreement has been reached with the bus operators over the short-term and long-term provision of bus services to facilitate the development. The improvements along the A68 corridor (NW1, NW3, NW4) will improve journey times along this section of the strategic highway network, which will also benefit from the completion of the link road (NW5, NW8) through the site. There is a relevance to the identified interventions in the context of the Faverdale site, both in terms of improving operational capacity and accessibility by active and sustainable modes of travel.

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<sup>i</sup> Darlington Borough Council - Local Plan 2016-2036: Infrastructure Delivery Plan – Assessing Highways Impacts.

<sup>ii</sup> Darlington Borough Council - Transport Topic Paper dated February 2021.

<sup>iii</sup> Darlington Borough Council - Local Plan 2016-2036: Infrastructure Delivery Plan – Map 1

<sup>iv</sup> Darlington Borough Council - Local Plan 2016-2036: Infrastructure Delivery Plan – Assessing Highways Impacts.