

South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive (SYPTE)

A61 Old Mill Lane

Planning Statement

Report Ref

Draft 1 | 10 Nov 2021

This report takes into account the particular instructions and requirements of our client.

It is not intended for and should not be relied upon by any third party and no responsibility is undertaken to any third party.

Job number 253511-00

Ove Arup & Partners Ltd
Admiral House Rose Wharf
78 East Street
Leeds LS9 8EE
United Kingdom
www.arup.com

ARUP

Contents

	Page
1 Introduction	1
1.1 Purpose of this statement	1
1.2 Planning Application Supporting Documentation	1
1.3 Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Screening and Pre-application discussions	2
2 Site Background	5
2.1 Site Location	5
2.2 Designations and Constraints	6
2.3 Relevant Planning History	6
3 Proposed Development	7
3.1 Description of Development	7
3.2 Need for the Development	8
4 Design and Access Statement	9
4.1 Overview	9
4.2 Design Policy Considerations	9
4.3 Layout	9
4.4 Scale	10
4.5 Appearance	11
4.6 Landscaping	11
4.7 Access	11
5 Compliance with Planning Policy	12
5.1 Overview	12
5.2 Barnsley Local Plan 2019	12
5.3 National Planning Policy Framework	21
6 Case for the Proposed Development	25
7 Summary	26

Appendices

Appendix A

Existing Site Photographs

1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose of this statement

This planning statement accompanies a full planning application made on behalf of South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive (SYLTE) for a transport project comprising the widening of the A61 at Old Mill Lane including the existing bridge over the River Dearne and re-decking of the existing road to tie in with the widened section.

The purpose of this statement is to review the proposed development against adopted and emerging national and local planning policy.

The statement is structured as follows:

- Chapter 2 provides a description of the site location, background and any planning history;
- Chapter 3 describes the development proposals;
- Chapter 4 provides the Design and Access Statement;
- Chapter 5 sets out relevant adopted and emerging planning policy and appraises the proposed development against relevant policy;
- Chapter 6 summarises the case for the proposed development; and
- Chapter 7 concludes the statement.

1.2 Planning Application Supporting Documentation

The application submission is accompanied by the following documents:

- Application Forms and Ownership Certificates;
- Site Location Plan and Application Drawings;
- Planning Statement;
- Arboricultural Assessment;
- Air Quality Assessment;
- Flood Risk Assessment;
- Geotechnical and Geoenvironmental Desk Study;
- Ground Conditions and Contaminated Land Assessment;
- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment;
- Bat and Otter Surveys;
- Transport Statement; and
- Archaeological Desk-based Assessment.

1.3 Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Screening and Pre-application discussions

A formal request for an EIA screening opinion was submitted to Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council (BMBC) on 27th March 2018, under Regulation 6 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (England) Regulations 2017.

The Council provided a response dated 1st May 2018 advising that the proposal is unlikely to have significant effects on the environment and an EIA **is not** therefore required. Due to changes to the red line development boundary since the original screening opinion, a further screening request has been submitted to BMBC in November 2021.

Pre-application discussions have taken place (2018/ENQ/00133) with Andrew Burton and various departments including technical officers of Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council. A summary of the advice given is provided below:

Department /Officer	Summary of Advice	Date	Applicant Response
South Yorkshire Mining Advisory Service (Paul James)	Coal mining risk assessment and consultation not required.	Email 26/02/2018 and 19/04/2018	Advice noted. A Coal Mining Risk Assessment is provided in the Ground Conditions report.
The Coal Authority	Would expect application to include a statement in respect of coal mining legacy why this is not considered to pose a risk to the development	Letter 03/05/2018	Section 6.2 of the Ground Conditions report includes a coal mining risk assessment
Pollution Control (BMBC – Air Quality) (Chris Shields)	Air Quality Assessment required as scheme is close to Harborough Hill Road AQMA. No noise assessment requested.	Email 27/02/2018	An Air Quality Assessment has been carried out and accompanies the application, demonstrating no adverse impacts on air quality.
	Methodology agreed and draft report reviewed. No objections to operational phase assessment. No comments provided on construction phase.	Email 01/05/2019	
Pollution Control (BMBC - Noise) (Paul Denton)	Due to location there would be minimal noise impact on any properties. Only concern would be construction noise and suggest that construction method statement provided prior to work commencing.	Email 23/04/2018	No noise impacts are expected for the operational phase. Construction impacts can be managed and mitigated through a Construction Environmental Management Plan

Pollution Control (BMBC – Noise) (Adam Cattell)	Only concern would be construction noise and suggest that a Construction Environmental Management Plan could be provided and agreed as a pre-commencement condition.	Telephone 20/01/2021	No noise impacts are expected for the operational phase. Construction impacts can be managed and mitigated through a Construction Environmental Management Plan
Yorkshire Water (Stephanie Walden)	Developer should note significant amount of water and waste water infrastructure located within the site boundary. Its presence must be taken into account and protective measures likely to be required.	Letter 17/04/2018	Advice Noted. Utility information has been obtained and has informed the scheme design.
Environment Agency (Beverley Lambert)	Flood Risk Assessment required and may require Environmental Permit. Require no further restriction to the watercourse and bridge not lowered any further than the existing bridge. Potential to cause pollution to water environment during construction – consider mitigation measures required to avoid pollution.	Letter 26/04/2018	A Flood Risk Assessment and Ground Conditions reports have been prepared and accompany the application. The result of testing indicates that made ground is unlikely to be severely contaminated and the risk is considered low. General good practice will prevent the loss of quantities of cement or grout into the watercourse.
Biodiversity (BBMC - Trevor Mayne)	Standard pre-application advice provided - Ecological report from suitably qualified consultants required. Extended Phase 1 survey required. Data records to be obtained and any mitigation measures to be detailed.	Response May 2017	The application is accompanied by a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and accompanying protected species surveys. The application will also be accompanied by an Arboricultural Report and an Arboricultural Impact Assessment, which concludes that the removal of some trees are necessary and the consequences of the proposal outweighs the negatives of the tree removal. It also states the removal can be mitigated via a tree planting scheme.

Archaeology (SYAS – Andy Lines)	An Archaeological Desk Based Assessment should be undertaken to establish the baseline position. A map regression exercise should also be undertaken.	Letter 15/05/2018	Desk-based assessment and map regression accompany the application.
Pollution Control (BMBC – Contamination) (John Scott)	No comments to make with regards to any contamination issues.	Email 26/04/2018	Response noted.
Highways (BMBC – Barbara Wilson)	Scope of Transport Assessment provided and agreed.	Telephone conversations with Arup April 2019	Scope of Transport Assessment provided in supporting documents
Highways (BMBC – Jason Thomas)	Scope of Transport Statement provided and agreed	Email 25/06/2021	Scope of Transport Statement provided in supporting documents

Given the nature of the proposed development, widening the existing road beyond the current highway extents, there are a number of third-party landowners which would be affected by the proposed development to accommodate the scheme. Consultation has been held with landowners during the preparation of the planning application. Relevant notices have been served on all landowners as part of this application and discussions with landowners are ongoing.

2 Site Background

2.1 Site Location

The Old Mill Lane Bridge is located to the north of Barnsley Town Centre and forms part of the A61 leading to Wakefield Road. The bridge is part of the route connecting Barnsley Town Centre to Wakefield to the north and the M1 to the south, which forms part of the Strategic Road Network (SRN) for a short stretch between the A616 and the M1 junction 36 at Tankersley.

To the north of the site are large retail units including Greggs and the Salvation Army donation centre. Further large retail units including Aldi and Wickes are also located to the east of Old Tannery Road to the east side of the A61 Old Mill Lane. The River Dearne passes under the Old Mill Lane bridge from west to east, with extensive tree planting lining the River Dearne corridor. To the south of the site is a large retail unit containing B&M Bargains Store, to the west is an Asda Superstore and further tree planting.

The site includes the north eastern corner of the Asda car park, which leads to an access track onto the riverside path, a gas governor, pedestrian access and egress onto Old Mill Lane.

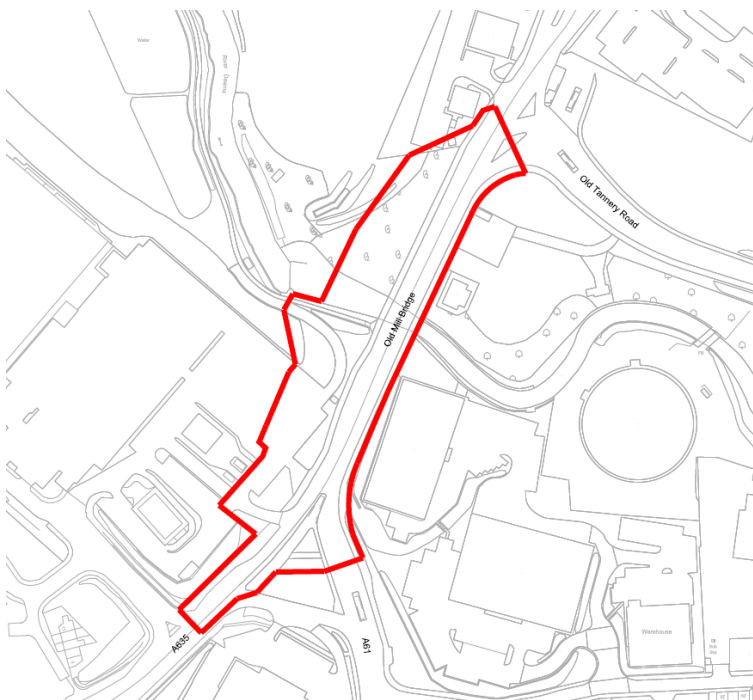


Figure 1 - Site Location

2.2 Designations and Constraints

The site is located within and in close proximity to a number of designations and constraints, including those identified on the Local Plan map following its adoption.

Greenspace known as 'Fleets Dam' and 'Dearne Valley Old Mill' is identified on the Council's policies map within the Dearne Valley river corridor. This land is also identified as a Local Wildlife site recognised as having biodiversity and/or geological value (Old Mill Lane). It is designated for a Daubenton's bat roost within a culvert to the east of Old Mill Lane. The greenspace is also within the Green Belt, defined as land to be kept mainly free from development. Land east of Old Mill Lane is defined as a Nature Improvement Area on the Council's policies map.

Flood risk maps identify the site as being within Functional Floodplain (Flood Zone 3) because the Old Mill Lane bridge crosses the River Dearne.

To the north-west side of the application site is a group (G1) of trees covered by Tree Preservation Order (TPO) No. 38. To the north-east side of the site is a mixed deciduous woodland (W1) covered by TPO reference no. 5.

2.3 Relevant Planning History

Previous planning applications close to the site include historical applications for retail development. The following more recent applications are considered to be most relevant to the development proposals.

Application Number	Description	Decision	Date
2006/1509	Construction of new highway, pedestrian/equestrian underpass, landscaping and associated works	Approved	06/09/2007
2010/1019	Variation of condition 8 of application 2006/1509 (A61 QBC Phase 3) to allow surface water run off from adjacent site	Approved	29/09/2010
2009/1439	Conversion of existing landscaped area into additional customer car parking area	Refused	22/01/2010

3 Proposed Development

3.1 Description of Development

The proposed development comprises the widening of the existing highway at Old Mill Lane, including the Old Mill Lane Bridge. The existing bridge currently comprises three lanes, with a pedestrian footway on either side of the carriageway.

The proposals would widen the highway to provide five lanes each measuring 3.5m in width. This would include four lanes and a separate bus lane. A cycle and pedestrian path would be provided on either side of the carriageway. The bridge would be widened by approximately 7m to accommodate the additional lanes, resulting in a total width for the bridge of approximately 25m.

Alterations would be made to the bridge structure to support the proposed extension. Access stairs leading from the bridge to the Transpennine trail below would also be repositioned to take into account the relocated edge of the widened bridge.

The widening of the A61 would require the relocation of the existing bus stop and bus shelter, an existing gas governor and a memorial located within landscaping between Old Mill Lane and the Asda car park. A number of trees would be lost which would be necessary in order to deliver the development, which includes trees covered by a TPO on the northern bank of the River Dearne.

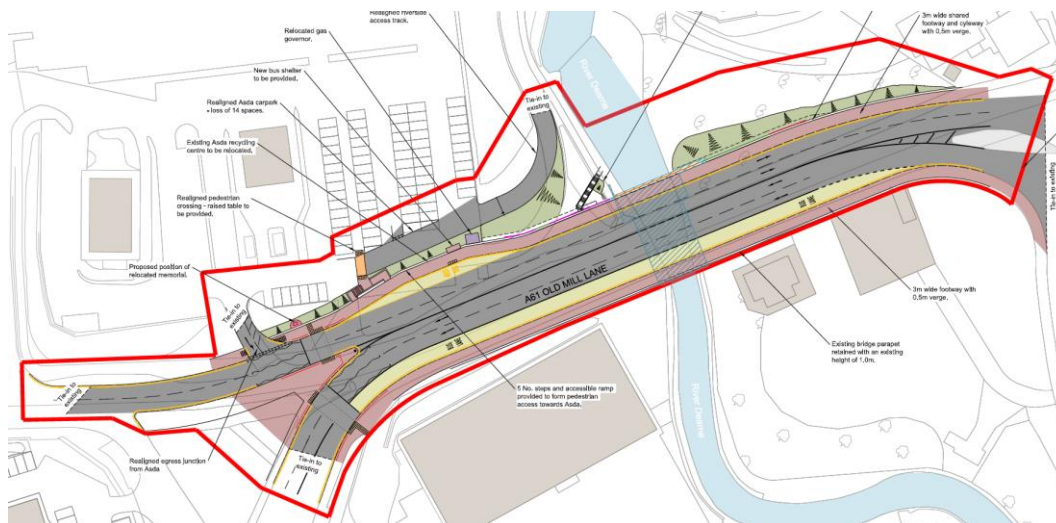


Figure 2 – Proposed General Arrangement

3.2 Need for the Development

The application site forms part of the A61 corridor, which is a strategic route linking Barnsley to Wakefield and the M1 motorway. The route currently suffers from congestion, significant delay and journey time variation for buses and general traffic.

Arup undertook a feasibility study in 2017 to assess the impacts of a range of potential interventions along the A61 corridor in Barnsley. This included capacity enhancement and adjustments to signal operation at several junctions and the Old Mill Lane bridge. Schemes were assessed both in isolation and in combination, to present the options which showed the biggest benefit in terms of improving journey times and flow for buses and general traffic.

The study found that the Old Mill Lane bridge is a bottleneck for southbound traffic (towards the town centre), and that the benefits of other junction improvement schemes along the corridor would only be realised once the bridge widening scheme is in place. The bridge widening is therefore considered to be a crucial starting point to deliver other potential interventions in the future (which are not subject to this application).

Modelling has identified significant benefits to be delivered from the widening of the carriageway to create two additional lanes. This would enable a bus lane to be provided, as well as upgrading existing pedestrian footways to provide opportunities to encourage sustainable travel including walking and cycling.

4 Design and Access Statement

4.1 Overview

This Design and Access Statement has been provided to:

- Explain the design principles and concepts that have been applied to the proposed development; and
- Demonstrate the steps to appraise the context of the proposed development, and how the design of the development takes the context into account.

4.2 Design Policy Considerations

The following design policies from the Development Plan and National Planning Policy Framework are considered to be relevant. Consideration has been given to these local plan policies and national guidance in developing the scheme design.

National Planning Policy Framework

- Section 12: Achieving well-designed places

Barnsley Local Plan 2019

- Policy GD1 – General Development
- Policy D1 – High Quality Design and Place Making
- Policy LC1 – Landscape Character

4.3 Layout

This application is for the widening of the existing highway along Old Mill Lane and the proposed layout utilises existing highway infrastructure. The development would include two additional inbound lanes, providing one for general traffic and the other for buses, cyclists, and taxis (subject to highway authority approval). Currently, there are no cycle facilities over the Old Mill Lane bridge. The proposal would provide two 3.5m shared pedestrian-cycleways to both sides of the carriageway.

The road forms part of the ‘core bus network’ with bus stops in each direction serving a total of 14 services per hour during the weekday daytime. The layout incorporates a replacement bus stop and bus shelter as part of the widened section of highway adjacent to the Asda car park.

The layout seeks to provide replacement facilities, ensuring that replacement steps and access track are re-provided to serve the Transpennine trail. The development also makes alternative provision for a replacement gas governor and the relocation of an existing memorial within landscaping between the Old Mill Lane and the Asda car park. The location and layout of the proposed road and bridge widening scheme is a direct result of its function as a means of improving connectivity between the town centre and local and regional conurbations.

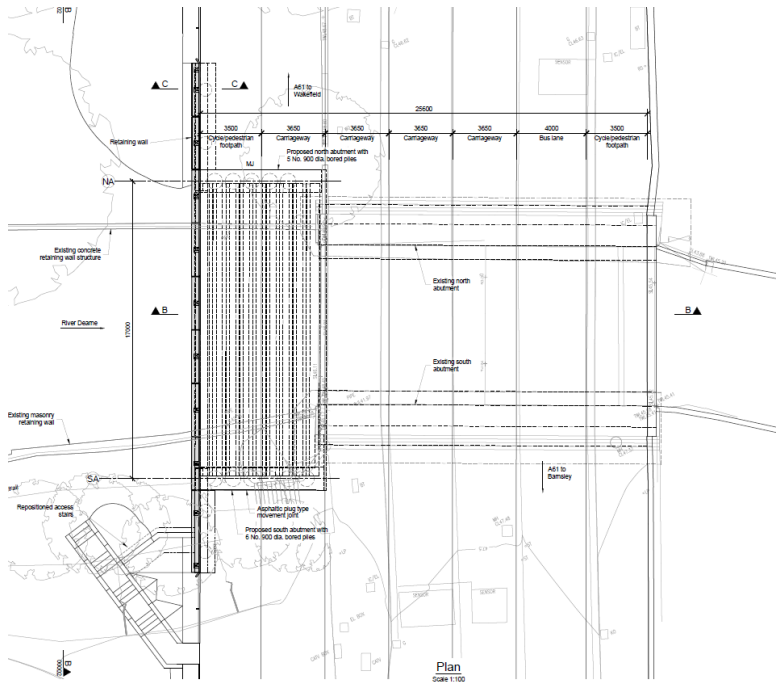


Figure 3 - Proposed Bridge Layout

4.4 Scale

This application proposes widening of the Old Mill Lane bridge and is limited to the extent necessary to deliver necessary and safe improvements to connectivity along the strategic road network. The scale of development includes a 7m widening of the existing bridge deck, which measures 17m in length. The height and massing of the bridge would not significantly differ from existing. The development would tie-in to junction arrangements at Old Tannery Road to the north, and the gyratory to the south. Accordingly, the scale of the proposals is functional in order to provide a safe and effective connection for pedestrians, cyclists and buses, whilst tying-in to existing infrastructure.

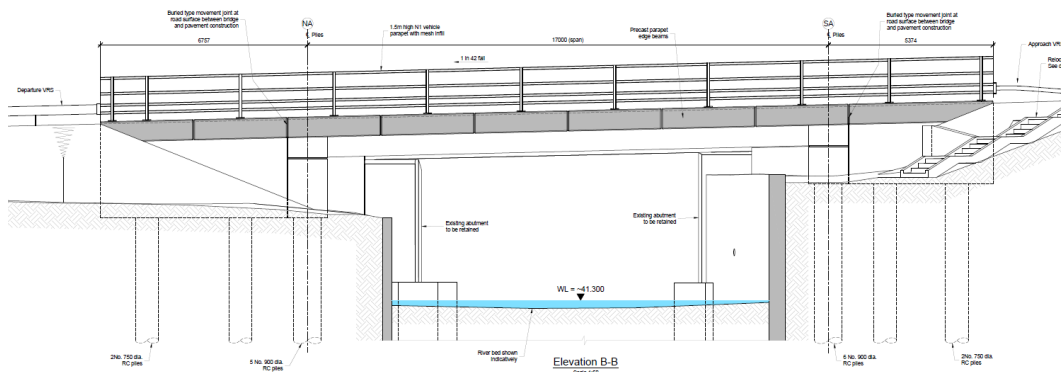


Figure 4 – Proposed Bridge Elevation

4.5 Appearance

The bridge deck will be precast concrete with a 1.5m high vehicle parapet with mesh infill. The deck will be supported by 900mm diameter reinforced concrete piles. The carriageway proposes a widened highway finished with a black bituminous footway and cycleway.

Earthworks will tie the proposed development into existing levels adjoining the site. This will enable soft landscaping and replacement planting along the western extent of the development which, will provide a high-quality environment following completion of the works.

4.6 Landscaping

The proposals would impact on existing landscape features alongside Old Mill Lane in order to deliver the physical works and enable construction. This includes the loss of trees alongside the Asda car park and the bridge, including the loss of trees forming part of the protected group to the northern bank of the River Dearne. Earthworks will tie the proposed development into existing levels adjoining the site. This will enable soft landscaping and replacement planting along the western extent of the development which, will provide a high-quality environment following completion of the works.

4.7 Access

The scheme will provide a high-quality connection to Barnsley Town Centre for pedestrians and cyclists, with segregation between the pedestrian/cycle route and proposed bus lane ensuring the safety of all users.

The proposed development ensures that safe and suitable access is maintained to and from the Asda store and car park, including a pedestrian access and vehicular egress onto Old Mill Lane. A realigned concrete staircase will maintain access to the Public Right of Way footpath at the south west bank of the River Dearne from the Old Mill Bridge.

5 Compliance with Planning Policy

5.1 Overview

This section demonstrates the proposed scheme's compliance with national and local planning policy. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states that:

'If regard is to be had to the development plan for the purpose of any determination to be made under the Planning Acts, the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.'

5.2 Barnsley Local Plan 2019

The statutory development plan for Barnsley is the adopted Barnsley Local Plan, which was adopted by the Council on 3rd January 2019, following an examination period of just under two years.

The following policies of the Local Plan are considered to be particularly relevant to the development proposals:

- Policy SD1 – Presumption in favour of Sustainable Development
- Policy GD1 – General Development
- Policy LG2 – The Location of Growth
- Policy T1 – Accessibility Priorities
- Policy T3 – New Development and Sustainable Travel
- Policy T5 – Reducing the Impact of Road Travel
- Policy LC1 – Landscape Character
- Policy HE6 – Archaeology
- Policy TC1 – Town Centres
- Policy GI1 – Green Infrastructure
- Policy GS1 – Green Space
- Policy BIO1 – Biodiversity and Geodiversity
- Policy GB1 – Protection of Green Belt
- Policy CC3 – Flood Risk
- Policy Poll1 – Pollution Control and Protection
- Policy AQ1 – Development in Air Quality Management Areas

The schemes compliance with each of these policies is addressed in turn below.

5.2.1 Policy SD1 – Presumption in favour of Sustainable Development Policy

Policy SD1 reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development which is set out within the National Planning Policy Framework. This provides that the Council will take a positive approach when considering development proposals. The Council will work proactively with applicants to find solutions and approve proposals which improve the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area.

Policy Compliance

The proposals are considered to improve the economic and social conditions in the area. The development will encourage sustainable means of travel through the provision of improved pedestrian and cycle facilities, and an improved bus corridor. There would be significant environmental benefits from improved connectivity, reduced congestion and encouraging more sustainable modes of travel. There would be some limited adverse impacts on the environment through the construction phase and from the physical development itself, including the loss of mature trees.

The Barnsley Local Plan has recently been adopted and its policies can therefore be considered up to date. Discussions have taken place with officers to agree the level of information required to accompany an application and to outline the need for the proposed development. The applicant welcomes positive discussions with the Local Planning Authority in accordance with Policy SD1.

5.2.2 GD1 – General Development

Policy GD1 outlines general development criteria to be applied to all development. This covers matters relating to neighbour amenity and neighbouring land uses, drainage, landscaping and trees, and minimising adverse impacts on the environment.

Policy Compliance

The proposed development relates to a widening of the existing Old Mill Lane Bridge to the west. In respect of neighbour amenity, a supermarket car park is located south of the site, with other commercial uses located to the east side of Old Mill Lane. Whilst there would be some adverse visual, noise and disturbance and traffic impacts during the construction period, these would be short-term. It is considered that there would be no longer-term adverse impact on any residential or commercial uses as a result of the proposed development.

The EIA screening opinion provided by Barnsley Council acknowledged the potential to impact on protected species and trees, noting that providing the appropriate licenses are secured relating to bats and tree impacts are kept to a minimum overall, the natural environment is capable of absorbing the development.

Impacts on the local environment from the existing bridge would be reduced through an improved bridge design. The proposals would result in the removal of some mature trees, although the density of vegetation retained close to the site and the enhanced design will serve to minimise the effect of physical development in this location.

In the context of the scheme, construction impacts of the development are considered to be short-term in duration. In the longer term, the development has potential to provide improvements through reduced congestion.

5.2.3 Policy LG2 – The Location of Growth

Policy LG2 sets out that in support of Barnsley Town Centre, priority will be given to development in Urban Barnsley, followed by Principal Towns, followed by Villages. The policy provides that Urban Barnsley will be expected to accommodate significantly more growth than any individual Principal Town to reflect the settlement hierarchy.

Policy Compliance

Policy LG2 encourages development in Urban Barnsley as the main focus for housing, employment, shopping, health, leisure, business and public services in the region. The A61 currently forms a key route connecting Barnsley Town Centre south to Wakefield and north to the M1. The development proposals will help to address existing issues along this section of highway. The policy also outlines the importance of Barnsley Town Centre and the proposed works will provide a sustainable transport solution by helping to encourage future development in Urban Barnsley and support its role as a sustainable location and focus for growth.

5.2.4 Policy T1 – Accessibility Priorities

Policy T1 provides the Council's Accessibilities Priorities for Barnsley focussing on development-transport corridors.

The Policy outlines Transport Strategy programmes focused on development-transport corridors as shown in the Accessibility Priorities diagram. This includes to:

- Improve sustainable transport and circulation in the AIZ area;
- Implement transport network improvements as supported by evidence from modelling, feasibility studies, consultation, surveys, community engagement etc;
- Facilitate sustainable transport links to and from employment, interchange, community and leisure facilities including provision for car parking and enhancing the non-car role of the transport corridor; and
- Promote high quality public transport linking the AIZ to significant places of business.

Policy Compliance

The Accessibility Priorities Diagram accompanying Policy T1 identifies Urban Barnsley within the Accessibility Improvement Zone (AIZ).

The proposals are supported by modelling evidence which demonstrates that the development will improve sustainable transport and circulation in the AIZ and part of the core bus network. In particular, this will provide improved journey times, bus connections

which are more reliable and will encourage more sustainable travel through walking and cycling. Accordingly, the development helps to achieve the accessibility priorities set out in Policy T1 of the recently adopted Local Plan.

5.2.5 Policy T3 – New Development and Sustainable Travel

Policy T3 sets out the location and travel requirements for new development to encourage sustainable travel. This includes that development is located and designed to reduce the need to travel, be accessible to public transport and meet the needs of pedestrians and cyclists.

Policy Compliance

The proposed development provides transport infrastructure specifically designed to support improvements to bus reliability, journey times and improve safety for pedestrians and cyclists. The scheme strongly supports the spatial strategy of the Local Plan by promoting growth in sustainable and accessible locations and supporting public transport improvements for development in Urban Barnsley.

5.2.6 Policy T5 – Reducing the Impact of Road Travel

Policy T5 seeks to reduce the impact of road travel by:

- Developing and implementing robust, evidence-based air quality action plans to improve air quality;
- Improve efficiency of vehicles and goods delivery, and reduce exhaust emissions; and
- Implementing measures to ensure the current road system is used efficiently.

Policy Compliance

The development would put measures in place to enable the road system to be used more efficiently, providing sustainability benefits to a range of road users and associated benefits on the local environment.

The application is accompanied by a Transport Statement and an Air Quality Assessment. Whilst there is no change in traffic movements predicted from the widening and re-decking of the A61, the accompanying reports demonstrate that the proposed scheme will relieve congestion. The effect of the proposed scheme on local air quality is therefore not considered to be significant.

The scheme will provide improvements for a range of modes of travel and ensuring the road system is used more efficiently. In particular, the bus will become a more attractive option, supporting a transition from reliance on the private car and reducing the overall impact of road travel. The scheme will also enable potential for further improvements to the A61 corridor in the future.

5.2.7 Policy LC1 – Landscape Character

Policy LC1 seeks that development will retain and enhance the character and distinctiveness of the individual Landscape Character area in which it is located, as set out in the Barnsley Landscape Character Assessment.

The development relates to the Old Mill Lane Bridge over the river Dearne. Within the Landscape Character Assessment, the river corridor is identified within the C3: Upper Dearne Lowland Valley Floor.

Policy Compliance

The Barnsley Landscape Character Assessment from 2002 identifies the site within the C3 character area. The 2016 review confirms that the character area is largely unaffected since the 2002 assessment.

Key characteristics of the C3 Landscape Character area include that transport and communication routes cross or follow the valley floor including the M1 motorway, major and secondary roads, active railway and pylons. Other features include strips of mature trees and scrub, old stone walls, bridges and occasional buildings.

Bridges over the valley floor are recognised as a key feature of the landscape within the Landscape Character assessment. There will be some loss of mature trees to accommodate the widened bridge, although the bridge will continue to be viewed in the context of the existing highway infrastructure. The group of trees to the north of the bridge will largely be retained and will continue to provide a transition to the Dearne Valley Green Heart Corridor along the river valley. Whilst the proposal would increase the width of the existing bridge, its design and massing will ensure there is no material adverse impact on the character and appearance of the area. Accordingly, the development is considered to retain the landscape character in accordance with Policy LC1.

5.2.8 Policy HE6 – Archaeology

Policy HE6 relates to development on sites where archaeological remains may be present and outlines that applications must be accompanied by an appropriate archaeological assessment.

Policy Compliance

An archaeological desk-based assessment and monitoring of preliminary ground investigation works has been undertaken and accompanies the application. An assessment of the significance of any recorded heritage assets within a 500m zone has been undertaken, together with an assessment of any potential impacts. A map regression exercise and walkover survey identified remains relating to a 19th-century water management system to the north of the river.

The desk-based assessment established that there is potential for buried archaeological features of interest to be encountered during the proposed works. These are likely to relate to mill buildings that previously occupied the site, as indicated by the remains of the mill race noted immediately to the west of the proposed development area.

5.2.9 Policy TC1 – Town Centres

Policy TC1 provides the hierarchy of centres, with primacy given to Barnsley Town Centre as the dominant town centre in the borough. Support is given for maintaining and enhancing the vitality and viability of the centres, with the majority of new retail and town centre development directed to Barnsley Town Centre, to fulfil its regional role.

Policy Compliance

The development provides accessibility improvements to Barnsley Town Centre and will help to fulfil its sub regional role to support existing town centre uses and encourage new retail and town centre development. The transport improvements will help to maintain and enhance the vitality and viability of the town centre, improving the attractiveness of town centre facilities and services in accordance with Policy TC1 of the Local Plan.

5.2.10 Policy GI1 – Green Infrastructure

The Council aims to protect, maintain, enhance and create an integrated network of connected and multi-functional Green Infrastructure assets. This is to provide a range of benefits including enhancing the quality of life for residents and visitors, enhancing biodiversity and landscape character and improving opportunities for recreation and tourism.

Policy Compliance

The area in which the bridge is located is within the Dearne Valley Green Heart Corridor which forms part of Barnsley's Green Infrastructure network. Policy GI1 of the Local Plan seeks to protect open space within these corridors. Whilst the proposals would widen the Old Mill Lane bridge which crosses the Green Infrastructure asset, this would not significantly affect the use of the space for a range of opportunities including recreation and biodiversity enhancement. However, the bridge extension is of a design and appearance which is sympathetic to the existing structure. This will protect the character and appearance of the local environment and thereby encourage active use of the Dearne Valley Green Heart Corridor.

5.2.11 Policy GS1 – Green Space

Policy GS1 relates to Green Space and seeks to improve existing green space to meet the standards in the Council's Green Space Strategy. The policy recognises that green spaces serve a wide range of functions including for amenity, recreation and wildlife. The policy provides the requirements to secure new green space as part of new developments and also prevents the loss of green space unless any of the following apply.

- An assessment shows that there is too much of that particular type of green space and its loss would not affect the existing and potential green space needs of the borough; or

- The proposal is for small scale facilities needed to support or improve the proper function of the green space; or
- An appropriate replacement green space of equivalent or improved quality, quantity and accessibility is provided which would outweigh the loss.

Policy Compliance

Land within the river corridor below the bridge comprises Fleets Dam, which is identified as an area of green space in the Local Plan. As set out under Policy GI1 above, the proposal would provide an improved road and bridge across the river corridor and would be located wholly within the extent of the river valley. This would ensure there is no reduced access to useable green space and would not affect the proper function of the green space. The retention of trees within the river corridor will ensure that there is an appreciation of the green space and access continues to be provided to the public right of way from the widened bridge structure.

5.2.12 Policy BIO1 – Biodiversity and Geodiversity

Policy BIO1 seeks to conserve and enhance the biodiversity and geological features of the borough. This includes protecting and improving habitats and species. The policy seeks to conserve and enhance the form, character and distinctiveness of natural assets including the river corridors as natural floodplains and important strategic wildlife corridors.

Policy Compliance

The land within the river corridor is identified as Old Mill Lane, which is a defined area identified as having biodiversity and/or geological value. Dearne Valley Park LNR is located approximately 200m east of the site.

The application is accompanied by a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) and Otter and Bat Surveys. The PEA identifies that the Old Mill Lane Local Nature Reserve (LNR) is located within the site and is designated for a Daubenton's maternity bat roost within a culvert. Due to the presence of the confirmed roost within the culvert, a mitigation licence will be required from Natural England to proceed with the works. This is due to the potential for disturbance of bats within the culvert during the works. A licence application can be submitted once planning consent has been attained.

The PEA recommended that Otter surveys are undertaken along the River Dearne. Surveys have been undertaken which confirmed the presence of otter within the survey area, but no resting places were located. The report recommends a Reasonable Avoidance Measures Method Statement (RAMMS) is prepared for works on site.

The PEA seeks to avoid the loss of trees, seeking replacement for any loss and recommends that any works which are likely to damage a breeding bird nest should be carried out outside of the bird nesting season. Mitigation measures in accordance with the recommendations of the PEA and relevant surveys will ensure no adverse impacts on protected species. Whilst some loss of trees is unavoidable as part of the scheme, replacement landscaping can be provided to offset the impacts of the development.

5.2.13 Policy GB1 – Protection of Green Belt

Policy GB1 provides the policy for controlling development within the Green Belt, the extent of which is defined on the Policies Map. The policy protects the Green Belt from inappropriate development in accordance with national planning policy.

National planning policy provides that the construction of new buildings is inappropriate in the Green Belt, with exceptions for types of development which are not inappropriate (Paragraph 145). Paragraph 146 provides that other forms of development are not inappropriate, provided they preserve openness and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it. This includes local transport infrastructure which can demonstrate a requirement for a Green Belt location.

Policy Compliance

Land to both sides of the bridge within the river corridor is located within the defined Green Belt, the existing bridge itself is not within the Green Belt. The project seeks to alleviate congestion and improve public transport connectivity in this location. It forms an extension of the existing infrastructure and can only be delivered in the proposed location to provide the intended benefits to the local highway network.

Given that the proposal forms local transport infrastructure which has a functional need to be delivered in this location and the proposal relates to the widening of the existing bridge, the physical impact of development is limited, and the proposal complies with the requirements with the NPPF. Accordingly, the development protects the Green Belt from inappropriate development and is also in accordance with Policy GB1.

5.2.14 Policy CC3 – Flood Risk

Effects of development on flood risk are assessed against Policy CC3, which seeks to reduce the extent and impact of flooding. The policy seeks to avoid development from being at unacceptable risk of flooding or from giving rise to flooding elsewhere. Flood Risk Assessments are required in Flood Zones 2 and 3, and in Flood Zone 1 where the site exceeds 1ha in area. The policy only permits water compatible development or essential infrastructure, where there would not be a harmful effect on the ability of the land to store floodwater.

Policy Compliance

The site location is identified as being within Flood Zone 3b (Functional Floodplain), albeit that the proposal relates to the bridge over the River Dearne and would not, itself, be at risk of flooding. However, the bridge would extend within the functional flood plain and the application site is also over 1 hectare in area. Therefore, a site-specific Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) has been prepared to accompany the application.

The bridge is designed to ensure the structure would not restrict the flow of water when compared to the existing structure. However, the widening of the bridge would take place within the flood plain storage area and the effect of this has been modelled to ensure there would be no harmful effect on the ability of land to store floodwater. The FRA considers the effect of the development including the potential to increase flood risk downstream.

The FRA concludes that impacts in all events modelled would not result in or impact any sensitive receptors. The increase in peak flood extent does not encroach on any property or receptors, there is no additional hazard to any roads and would not significantly increase flood risk to third parties.

Mitigation comprises increasing the steepness of embankments at the base of the bridge on the upstream side. This prevents additional water being held in storage upstream or downstream and prevents increase to fluvial flood risk, and negates the addition of a retaining wall in the scheme.

5.2.15 Policy Poll1 – Pollution Control and Protection

Policy Poll1 seeks to ensure that development would not result in an increase in air, surface water and groundwater, noise, smell, dust, vibration light or other pollution which would unacceptably affect or cause a nuisance to the natural and built environment or to people. The policy also expects the effects of any possible pollution to be minimised and mitigation measures to be provided where appropriate.

Policy Compliance

An Air Quality Management Area (Barnsley AQMA No. 4) is located to the south of the site. An Air Quality Assessment has been prepared which includes a review of existing air quality conditions in the vicinity of the proposed development and provides an assessment of the potential changes in air quality arising from the construction and operation of the proposed development.

The assessment identifies that construction dust can be mitigated through a Construction Environmental Management Plan to include site management, monitoring and maintenance measures to greatly reduce or eliminate dust emitting activities. This will ensure there are no significant effects from the construction phase. There is no predicted change in traffic movements from the widening and re-decking of the A61. The proposed scheme will relieve congestion and the effect of the proposed scheme on local air quality is therefore not considered to be significant.

Appropriate drainage infrastructure would be included as part of the design and this would ensure no adverse impacts to ground and surface water. There are no residential properties in close proximity to the site which would be significantly affected by noise or disturbance. During the construction phase, there would be some noise, disturbance and traffic impacts, although such impacts would be limited and short-term in duration. Such effects would be mitigated through the Construction Environmental Management Plan.

5.2.16 Policy AQ1 – Development in Air Quality Management Areas

Policy AQ1 relates to development which impacts on areas sensitive to air pollution and seeks to ensure that development will not have a harmful effect on health. The policy seeks to permit development which could cause more air pollution only where an assessment shows that there will not be a significantly harmful effect on air quality.

The policy also sets out that development which impacts on sensitive to air pollution due to traffic emissions will be expected to provide mitigation relative to increased traffic emissions generated.

Policy Compliance

The site itself is not within an Air Quality Management Area, although the application is accompanied by an Air Quality Assessment given the potential to impact on Barnsley AQMA No. 4 along the A61, Harborough Hill Road, to the south.

There will be some short-term impacts during the construction phase including some noise, disturbance and a medium risk of dust impacts. However, any noise would not adversely impact on any residential or commercial properties. The accompanying Air Quality Assessment has demonstrated that dust impacts can be mitigated to ensure resulting impacts can be reduced to negligible levels.

Operational phase traffic data shows there is no predicted increase in vehicle numbers predicted with the proposed scheme in operation. The scheme will relieve congestion which will improve flow of traffic during peak times, but there is no change in overall Annual Average Daily Traffic expected.

5.3 National Planning Policy Framework

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), supported by the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG), provides the overarching planning policy position for England. The NPPF does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making, but highlights the importance of an up-to-date plan and is a material consideration in the determination of applications.

5.3.1 Presumption in favour of sustainable development

Paragraphs 10 and 11 of the NPPF set out the presumption in favour of sustainable development so that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way. For decision-taking, this means:

- *Approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or*
- *Where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:*
 - The application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or
 - Any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.

Policy Compliance

The development has been considered against relevant policies in the adopted Barnsley Local Plan. The policies themselves are considered to be up-to-date and suitable for decision making and the development is demonstrated to be in accordance with those relevant policies. The proposal would provide economic benefits through improving access to employment and the range of facilities and services in Barnsley Town Centre. Social benefits would be achieved through improvements to journey times and sustainable travel, including bus reliability and opportunities for walking and cycling. The development is also demonstrated to have no significant adverse impact on the local environment. The development would also preserve the openness and permanence of the Green Belt and provide measures for protected species.

5.3.2 Promoting sustainable transport

Section 9 of the NPPF relates to sustainable transport. Paragraph 109 provides that development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.

Paragraph 110 requires that developments should give priority first to pedestrian and cycle movements and facilitating access to high quality public transport services and appropriate facilities that encourage public transport use.

Policy Compliance

The application is accompanied by a Transport Statement which demonstrates the improvements which would be delivered from the proposed widening of the bridge. Public transport efficiency and reliability would be improved from the introduction of a designated bus lane. Pedestrian and cycle safety would be increased as a result of designated pedestrian and cycle lanes. Delivering the bridge widening works will enhance accessibility and support the Town Centre's role as a focus for growth. More sustainable modes of travel will also be encouraged, and the proposed development is therefore in accordance with Section 9 of the NPPF.

5.3.3 Achieving well-designed places

Section 12 of the NPPF outlines the importance of good design and that it is a key aspect of sustainable development that creates better places in which to live and work. Paragraph 127 seeks that decisions create places that function well for the lifetime of the development, are visually attractive, sympathetic to local character and history. It also seeks to establish or maintain a strong sense of place and create places which are safe, inclusive and accessible and promote health and wellbeing.

Policy Compliance

The design of development and widening of the bridge is functional in providing local transport improvements. The widening of existing infrastructure is necessary and avoids a need for additional structures which may otherwise have a significantly greater impact on the local landscape. The development is also designed to be sympathetic to the local character, using appropriate materials to minimise its impact. The design of the bridge will also contribute to creating a safe environment to promote access to the Transpennine Trail green space, therefore supporting health and wellbeing.

5.3.4 Protecting Green Belt land

Section 13 provides protection to the Green Belt to keep land permanently open and prevent urban sprawl. In terms of proposals affecting the Green Belt, inappropriate development is by definition harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances.

Paragraph 145 outlines that the construction of new buildings is inappropriate in the Green Belt, but lists some exceptions to this including agriculture, outdoor sport and recreation, replacement of buildings, limited infilling, redevelopment and affordable housing.

Paragraph 146 lists certain other forms of development which are not inappropriate providing they preserve openness and do not conflict the purposes of including land within it. These include:

- Engineering operations;
- Local transport infrastructure which can demonstrate a requirement for a Green Belt location;
- Reuse of buildings; and
- Material changes in the use of land.

Policy Compliance

The proposal comprises local transport infrastructure which requires a Green Belt location. The existing bridge is not within the Green Belt, although any widening of the bridge would extend into the Green Belt. There is a need for the development to be located in this location due to the direct effect it has in alleviating congestion and supporting sustainable modes of travel across this particular section of highway. Development of alternative sites would not achieve these benefits.

The widening of the bridge would not have a harmful impact on openness. The extension of the bridge would result in approximately 7m increase in width. The bridge would tie into the existing bridge and therefore would not significantly increase its height or massing..

5.3.5 Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

Section 15 relates to the conservation and enhancement of the natural environment. This seeks to protect and enhance valued landscapes and sites of biodiversity or geological value, recognise the character and beauty of the countryside and minimise impacts on and provide net gains for biodiversity.

Policy Compliance

The existing bridge is functional in its design and would be seen in the context of the existing highway. Therefore, the visual impact on the river corridor would not significantly impact on the local landscape character.

The application is accompanied by a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Otter and Bat Surveys which consider the effects of the proposed development on protected species. The assessments demonstrate that protected species would not be harmed as a result of the development. Mitigation measures are proposed, including obtaining Natural England licences and carrying out construction works at times of the year when the impacts on biodiversity can be minimised.

6 Case for the Proposed Development

The assessment in Section 5 has demonstrated broad compliance with all policies in the adopted Barnsley Local Plan. This section summarises the case for the proposed development, taking into account all material considerations.

Environmental Impacts

A range of environmental effects have been considered as part of the assessments which accompany the application. There is demonstrated to be no significant adverse impact including on flood risk, local air quality, biodiversity, noise and landscape character. Mitigation measures can be secured to address any adverse effects. The development would extend into the green belt, although the proposal is not inappropriate development, forming local transport infrastructure with a need to be in the proposed location. There would be some loss of protected trees to accommodate infrastructure. However, the impact would be limited as part of a much larger group of trees in the wider landscape. Replacement planting would be undertaken to mitigate the loss of trees as a result of the development.

The development has been designed to minimise its impact on flood risk and protect access to green space. Some environmental effects including noise, traffic and disturbance would occur during the construction phase. Such effects would be short term and mitigation measures can be secured through a Construction Environmental Management Plan to ensure no significant or longer-term impact on the local environment.

Economic Impacts

The benefits through improved connectivity will reinforce Barnsley Town Centre in the spatial strategy and its role as a centre at the sub-regional level. The development will support Barnsley in attracting business investment and employment opportunities. Significant benefits would be delivered from improved journey times, connectivity and access to key town centre uses including business, retail and leisure uses from the provision of more attractive, efficient and sustainable modes of travel. The improvements at Old Mill Lane bridge will support potential future transport improvements, which will further promote investment in Barnsley Town Centre.

Social Impacts

Social benefits would also be achieved from improvements to the local highway network, including the provision of a designated bus lane to improve journey times. The proposals will encourage sustainable travel including opportunities for walking with safer and quicker cycling routes. This will provide improved access to employment, leisure and retail opportunities in Barnsley Town Centre. Health benefits would also result from encouraging walking and cycling, including access to existing green space in the connecting river corridor. Reduced journey times and improved bus reliability will improve the wellbeing of local residents and commuters.

7 Summary

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act states:

“If regard is to be had to the development plan for the purpose of any determination to be made under the planning Acts, the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise”.

In addition, paragraph 11 of the NPPF states that Local Planning Authorities should:

“Approve development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay”.

The proposed widening of the Old Mill Lane Bridge is demonstrated to comply with relevant policies of the recently adopted Barnsley Local Plan. The NPPF is a material consideration which lends further weight in favour of the proposal.

The proposed road widening scheme is considered to represent a highly sustainable form of development. The highway improvements help to alleviate the existing inbound bottleneck by creating additional capacity and reducing delay at the gyratory signals. The development provides the following benefits:

- Reducing congestion;
- Improving inbound flow and journey times for buses and general traffic;
- Reducing bus journey time variability;
- Provision of upgrades to existing footways to accommodate cycle and pedestrian facilities to encourage sustainable modes of travel; and
- New southbound bus lane offers a safer and quicker cycling route into the town, allowing cyclists to bypass queues approaching the gyratory.

This assessment has shown that the public benefits of the proposed development are considerable, and the proposed development would contribute to a range of economic, social and environmental sustainable development objectives. This includes enhancing the role of Barnsley Town Centre in providing access to a range of business, retail and leisure opportunities and promoting the health and wellbeing of local residents and businesses.

This Planning Statement demonstrates that the proposed development is in accordance with the statutory development plan. The broad compliance with policies in the NPPF lends further weight in favour of the scheme and, accordingly, planning permission should be approved without delay.

Appendix A

Existing Site Photographs



Existing Bridge Elevation



Trees to north-west bank



Old Mill Lane Bridge looking south



Existing Steps to Public Right of Way



Existing Gas Governor



Asda Recycling Centre

