MONCKTON COKE WORKS, ROYSTON, BARNSLEY

Planning, Design & Access Statement For Reinstatement of Railway Siding

Representations on Behalf of Monckton Coke & Chemical Company Limited

October 2013

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PLANNING / DESIGN / DELIVERY

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 This Planning, Design and Access Statement has been prepared by Barton Willmore LLP on behalf of Monckton Coke & Chemical Company Limited (hereafter referred to as 'The Applicant') and provides background information in support of a full planning application to obtain planning consent for the reinstatement of a railway siding associated with the Monckton Main Colliery and the Royston Drift Mine which closed in the 1980s. The proposal also includes the introduction of an unloading and loading facility to allow for the transportation of coal and coke by rail at Monckton Coke Works.

About Monckton Coke and Chemical Company Limited

1.2 Coke has been made on the Monckton site at Royston near Barnsley in South Yorkshire for over 130 years and Monckton Coke and Chemical Limited owns and operates the coal carbonising and by-products plant and is a subsidiary of Hargreaves group of companies.

1.3 Monckton is the only independent coke production plant in the UK and is operated on a 365 days, 24-hour basis and directly employs approximately 140 personnel. The plant imports 260,000 tonnes of coal per annum that produces circa 210,000 tonnes of coke.

1.4 The Company is ranked as one of Europe's leading producers of high-quality metallurgical coke which is destined for use in glass, detergents and steel manufacturing. The coke is also used for home heating.

1.5 The process of producing coke means coal is 'baked' in high-temperature ovens in the absence of air for about 20 hours. During the baking process, by-products such as Benzole, Tar and ammoniacal liquor are removed, leaving a coke with a high carbon content. Many of the by-products that come from coke making at Monckton are recycled and sold.

1.6 Most importantly, the gas from Monckton coke ovens is used in a combined heat and power plant that can generate up to 11 megawatts of electricity. Not only does this supply all the electricity needed on-site, the surplus electricity is sold to the national grid – enough to provide power for more than 1,000 homes.

Pre-Application Consultation

1.7 As part of the preparation for the planning application, pre-application consultation has been undertaken with Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council.

1.8 As part of the pre-application process a Screening Opinion Request under the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (England and Wales) Regulations 2011 was submitted to the Local Planning Authority (LPA) on the 1st May 2013 in respect of the potential requirement for an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) for the proposed development. A formal Screening Opinion was issued by the LPA on the 10th May 2013 confirming that an Environmental Impact Assessment is not required.

2.0 The Site and Its Surroundings

The Site

2.1 The Application Site (hereafter referred to as the 'Site') is approximately 3 hectares in size and comprises of a linear strip to the north of the existing Monckton Coke and Chemical Works (hereafter referred to as the MCCW Site). The Site stretches from an existing spur off the Monk Bretton branch line to the west to the eastern boundary of the MCCW Site adjacent to the B6428 and includes a linear area leading to the central area of the MCCW Site.

2.2 The Site is bound by the following land uses:

- To the north by a high embankment, extensive woodland area, a coal yard area, sewage works and some open land;
- To the east by the B6428;
- To the west by the Monk Bretton branch line; and
- To the south by Monckton Coke Works.

2.3 The MCCW Site had historically benefited from a rail network connection that served the site, the Monckton Main Colliery and the Royston Drift Mine enabling the transportation of coal and coke to their markets. The extensive local rail network was operational from the late 19th Century up until the late 1980s, however, over the last forty years the tracks have undergone a staged removal process, apart from the initial spur off the Monk Bretton branch line.

Site Surroundings

2.4 The surrounding area is predominantly characterised by the MCCW Site which entails 14 hectares of land primarily to the south of the Site. It provides coke and by products operating on a 24 hour basis 365 days a year.

2.5 There is an extensive woodland area to the north of the site which forms part of a local wildlife site and lies within the Green Belt as well as falling within the administrative boundary of Wakefield Metropolitan District Council. Also to the north, is an existing sewage treatment plant, some open land and a coal yard area with existing palisade fencing providing security to the existing MCCW Site. There are some properties further north adjacent to the B6428 which are of a residential nature with the nearest property located approximately 125 metres from the northern boundary of the Site.

2.6 The eastern boundary of the Site adjoins the B6428 which is a very popular and well used route between Baurgh Green in Barnsley and Featherstone in Wakefield.

2.7 The western edge of the Site adjoins the Monk Bretton branch line which is currently in use by no more than three trains per week to deliver sand to the glass factory at Monk Bretton which lies to the west of the MCCW Site.

3.0 Proposed Development

3.1 The proposed development seeks to reinstate part of a former railway siding which ceased use in the 1980s. The railway siding proposed will comprise of a single track railway line starting from the existing spur off the Monk Bretton branch line and will run towards to the western boundary of the Site into the current operational area of the MCCW Site. The single track railway will then separate into two separate parallel single tracks where unloading of coal and the loading of coke will take place within the existing MCCW Site. The proposed railway siding seeks to accommodate a locomotive visiting the MCCW Site up to eight times a week with no more than two visits per day (five coal trains in and three coke trains out).

3.2 The proposal includes unloading and loading infrastructure comprising of a concrete pad to house a dedicated mobile crane with clam shell grab bucket, a tail end hopper that feeds onto a conveyor. The conveyor is gantried on a series of supporting pillars across the existing site stocking area. Part of the development also comprises of a rail weighbridge on the proposed rail track, two coke loading areas (which are no more than nominated areas of the site) and perimeter fencing with a gate across the proposed rail track.

3.3 The coal trains are scheduled to arrive at the Site in the morning (6am onwards) and be unloaded by the mobile crane grab which will then deposit the coal onto the conveyor. The coal would be transported by the conveyor across the site and deposited at existing stocking areas, existing on-site wheel loaders will be used to rehandle the coal as required.

3.4 The coke exportation can commence once the coal has been unloaded. Two coke stocking areas adjacent to the track are designated and coke loading will be undertaken by existing on-site wheel loaders.

3.5 In summary the proposed development involves the screening and relaying of a remaining ballast line left in situ, the reinstatement of a single track railway line from the spur off the Monk Bretton Branch Line to the MCCW Site and the development of associated unloading and loading infrastructure.

3.6 The reinstated railway track would have a strategic significance by linking the site to the rail network and enable the Applicant to move coal to the Monckton Site from Redcar Ore Terminal at Teesport and the outward movement of coke (up to 60 percent produced each year) to a limited number of customers with rail facilities. Presently, coal transported to the Monckton Site is from Teesport and all of the coke exported to clients. Constructing this

facility would severely reduce the number of daily transport movements on the local and strategic road network.

4.0 Planning Policy

National Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework

4.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (hereafter referred to as the 'Framework') was published on 27th March 2012. At the heart of the document is a presumption in favour of sustainable development which should be seen as a golden thread running through both plan-making and decision taking. For decision making this means approving development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay and where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out-of-date, granting permission unless:

- Any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole; or
- Specific policies in the Framework indicate development should be restricted.

4.2 One of the key core planning principles in the Framework is to support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate and another is to focus significant development in locations which are or can be made sustainable.

4.3 Paragraph 30 of the Framework stipulates that encouragement should be given to solutions which support reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and reduce congestion. The following paragraph goes on to say that local authorities should work with neighbouring authorities and transport providers to develop strategies for the provision of viable infrastructure necessary to support sustainable development such as rail freight interchanges.

4.4 The Framework supports opportunities for the use of sustainable transport modes for the movement of goods such as accommodating the efficient delivery of goods and supplies.

4.5 Chapter 9 of the Framework seeks to ensure that Green Belt land is protected. It sets out that the Green Belt serves the following five purposes:

- To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
- To prevent neighboring towns merging into one another;
- To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
- To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
- To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

4.6 Paragraph 81 says that:

> **"Once Green Belts have been defined, local planning authorities should plan positively to enhance the beneficial use of the Green Belt, such as looking for opportunities to provide access; to provide opportunities for outdoor sport and recreation; to retain and enhance landscapes; visual amenity and biodiversity; or to improve damaged and derelict land."**

4.7 Paragraph 90 says that:

> **"Certain other forms of development are also not inappropriate in Green Belt provided they preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land in Green Belt. These are:**
>
> - **Mineral extraction;**
> - **Engineering operations;**
> - **Local transport infrastructure which can demonstrate a requirement for a Green Belt location;**
> - **The re-use of buildings provided that the buildings are of permanent and substantial construction; and**
> - **Development bought forward under a Community Right to Build Order."**

Local Planning Policy

Barnsley Core Strategy (adopted 2011)

4.8 At the outset of the Barnsley Core Strategy, the document portrays the challenges that the borough will face over the plan period. The key challenge is to promote sustainable development and reducing the borough's impact on climate change which are overriding principles of the Core Strategy. Another challenge with regard to transport is that poor air quality is recognised as a growing problem with 6 Air Quality Management Areas having declared as a result of traffic pollution.

4.9 Eight strategic objectives are identified within the document including the following:

- Objective 2: To improve access, movement and connectivity with sustainable travel by a variety of measures including reducing transport emissions of green house gases in order to tackle climate change and minimising other pollutants to improve air quality; and
- Objective 4: To make efficient use of land and infrastructure including making the best use of existing and proposed infrastructure.

4.10 Policy CSP1 (Climate Change) sets out that development will be expected to reduce and mitigate the impact of growth on the environment and carbon emissions.

4.11 Policy CSP19 (Protecting Existing Employment Land) seeks to protect existing employment land in order to safeguard existing or potential jobs.

4.12 Policy CPS24 (Safeguarding of Former Railway Lines) stipulates that the Council will look to safeguard land within and adjacent to existing and historical rail alignments to accommodate the potential reinstatement of former strategic railway lines. Where it is not possible to use the original alignment, the Council will work with delivery partners to identify any appropriate alternative routes. The supporting text to this policy on page 109 of the Core Strategy specifically states that reinstatement would increase the opportunity for the borough's freight to be transported by rail. It specifically makes reference to the current railhead at Monk Bretton, used by the glass industry and identifies it as the only dedicated freight link in Barnsley.

4.13 Policy CSP28 (Reducing the Impact of Road Travel) looks to reduce the impact of road travel by working with our sub regional partners, fleet and freight operators to improve the efficiency of vehicles and goods delivery, and reduce exhaust emissions.

Barnsley Unitary Development Plan (1998)

4.14 The Site is allocated in the Barnsley Unitary Development Plan (1998) as being part within an Employment Policy Area and part within the Green Belt. The disused Barnsley Canal to the south-west of the site is designated as a Nature Conservation Area. Land to the north of the Site comprises of a Local Wildlife Site, a Wildlife Habitat Network Area and land within the Green Belt as shown in the adopted Wakefield Allocations DPD.

5.0 Design & Access

5.1 This chapter provides a statement on the design concept and principles to fulfil the validation requirements for the provision of a Design and Access Statement.

Land Use

5.2 The development will be used to assist with the transportation of Coal to the MCCW Site and the exportation of Coke from the MCCW Site. It includes the reinstatement of part of a previous railway siding which was in situ up until the 1980s.

Amount and Scale

5.3 The proposed development is for a railway siding comprising predominantly of a single track railway line which separates in to two separate tracks to allow unloading and loading to take place from both tracks within the existing MCCW Site. The railway siding will accommodate a locomotive up to eight times a week, five times to deliver coal and three times to export coke.

5.4 Other associated infrastructure includes two loading areas, conveyor, rail weighbridge and 2.4 metre high fencing. Apart from the conveyor which at its highest point is approximately 7.5 metres in height, the vertical scale of the development can be constituted as low level.

Layout

5.5 The proposed development involves the part reinstatement of a previous railway siding and the layout is dictated by the requirement to connect the new track with the existing spur off the Monk Bretton branch line and with the proposed unloading/loading areas within the northern part of the MCCW Site. It has been designed to provide a facility that offers a safe and efficient method to unload coal for transportation across the wider site area. Removal and realignment of the existing fence line and inclusion of new fencing of up to 2.4 metres in height fence is being proposed around some perimeter sections of the site to prevent unauthorised access and to provide a safe working area (all within land designated within the Barnsley LDP for employment purposes) No fencing has been proposed within the Green Belt.

5.6 The conveyor which is approximately 224 metres long extends from the proposed loading area to a central area within the existing MCCW Site.

5.7 The proposed layout is illustrated on the accompanying proposed site plan.

Landscaping

5.8 The existing sloped topography to the north and semi-mature woodland to the north and east along the existing freight rail line provide screening to much of the operations. A large vegetated bund adjacent to the northern site boundary provides immediate screening of the proposed track and unloading area from views to the north.

5.9 The new rail line will run on an existing ballast track retained from previous rail activity through a belt of colonised scrub and trees. Vegetation removal will be required to facilitate the works, however, the thinning will be limited to a narrow corridor either side of the rail track and an area adjacent to the former rail bridge on the B6248.

5.10 In order to mitigate the vegetation loss and provide additional screening to the development a number of native tree and shrub mix belts are proposed within the application boundary in the following locations:

- Adjacent to the B6248 to augment the existing vegetation retained including the corner of the access track along the northern boundary;
- Infilling along the existing bund to the north of the site where earthworks have been carried out; and
- To the fence line adjacent to the reservoir and sump.

5.11 The planting mix is based on existing species found in the location and includes transplants, feathers and standard trees to provide a mix of maturity and add value to the biodiversity of the site. Thorny shrub species have been specified in large quantities to improve security to the site boundaries and enhance the biodiversity with flowering shrubs and berries attractive to birds and insects. Below is the list of species and percentage mixes:

Table 5.0- Existing and Proposed Species and Percentage Mixes

Name	Common name	Height	Form	Mix (%)
Betula pendula	Silver Birch	1.2-1.8m	Feather	10
Corylus avellana	Hazel	40-60cm	Transplant	5
Crataegus monogyna	Hawthorn	40-60cm	Transplant	20
Fagus sylvatica	Beech	40-60cm	Transplant	5
Ilex aquifolium	Holly	30-40cm	Transplant	5
Prunus spinosa	Blackthorn	40-60cm	Transplant	20
Quercus petraea	Sessile Oak	40-60cm	Transplant	10
Rosa canina	Dog Rose	40-60cm	Transplant	15
Salix caprea	Goat Willow	1.2-1.8m	Feather	5
Viburnum opulus	Geulder Rose	40-60cm	Transplant	5

5.12 The larger tree species have been specified to provide some height to the planting along the B6428 and the northern boundary, the species are as follows:

Table 5.1 – Larger Tree Species

Name	Common name	Height (m)	Girth (cm)	Form
Betula pendula	Silver Birch	4.25-6.0	14-16	EHS
Prunus avium	Wild Cherry	4.25-6.0	14-16	EHS
Sorbus aucuparia	Rowan	4.25-6.0	14-16	EHS

5.13 In addition to the mitigation planting, the cut wood and branches from the tree and scrub thinning will be retained on site where possible or provided in agreement with neighbouring land owners as habitat piles for invertebrates to aid foraging bats and birds.

Appearance

5.14 Apart from the unloading and loading infrastructure, the majority of the proposed development comprises of a railway track which will sit at ground level and will be well screened by existing and in time, the proposed additional vegetation (see section 5.10) and the movement of perimeter screening mounds. A 2.4 metre high fence will be erected around part of the site such as the loading areas and existing operational part of the site to prevent unauthorised access. Gated access will be installed across the relevant section of track to provide security when the track is not in use. A significant part of the track to the west (between the site and the spur connection to the Monk Bretton Branch Line) will not be secured by fencing as this is not considered necessary and will minimise the overall visual appearance of the proposed development.

Access

5.15 Locomotives will enter the rail siding from the west along the reinstated stretch of single track which connects to the Monk Bretton branch line. Due to the nature of the operations access to the rail siding by unauthorised visitors and members of the public is not permitted. As a result, there are no pedestrian specific or way marked access routes to the rail siding. Vehicular access to the site can be achieved through the existing Monckton Coke Works site. Unrestricted truck movements across the MCCW Site will continue to allow internal movement of materials.

6.0 Planning Assessment

Principle of Development

6.1 The principle of promoting sustainable development is a golden thread which runs through the Framework and is at the heart of the Government's planning agenda. This requirement to promote sustainable development applies to all developments and a whole range of policies contained in the NPPF provide guidance on how to assess the overall sustainability of a proposed development. The Framework sets out three dimensions to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. For the environmental role, the Framework specifically states that there is a requirement to mitigate and adapt to climate change including the move to a low carbon economy. One of the core principles in the Framework echoes this by saying that planning should support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate.

6.2 The proposed development is in itself clearly sustainable in principle as it proposes to reduce the volume of HGV's on the strategic road network by removing circa 55 one way HGV trips on a daily basis. It seeks to utilise the nearby Monk Bretton branch line by reinstating a former railway siding to significantly reduce the amount of coal which is imported to the site by road and an estimated 60% of the overall exported coke (based on 2012 export figures)

6.3 With regards to the location of development, the proposed development requires an area of land in between the Monk Bretton branch line and the MCCW Site to accommodate the proposed development. Therefore this location should not prejudice the principle of development, as invariably this type of development has severe restrictions as to where it can be sited to fulfil and serve its purpose. In order to make the proposed development viable, the development would need to be positioned in close proximity to the operational site and work in conjunction with existing operations. Fundamentally, it needs to link to the local rail network connection including the existing spur connection already in place.

6.4 A large proportion of the Site is currently brownfield land designated within a wider employment area and outside of the Green Belt. A small proportion of the application site falls within the Green Belt, however, it is important to note that this area of land within the Green Belt has been previously developed having served a former railway siding up until the 1980s.

Employment

6.5 As stated above, the majority of the site lies within a designated employment area forming part of the wider site for the MCCW Site. It is also within this area where the loading area and the conveyor will be situated to unload and load coal and coke. The proposed development seeks to help the existing MCCW Site to continue to operate but in a much more sustainable manner to help reduce carbon emissions on a daily basis.

Green Belt

6.6 As a small proportion of the Site falls within the Green Belt, Green Belt polices at national and local level apply.

6.7 The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open and therefore the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence.

6.8 In paragraph 90 of the Framework, it says that certain forms of development are not inappropriate in the Green Belt provided they preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land in the Green Belt and these include engineering operations and local transport infrastructure which can demonstrate a requirement for a Green Belt location. As the proposed development comprises of engineering works and is to provide a local transport link between an established large employment site on the edge of the Green Belt and an existing branch line with a low visual impact, it is judged that the proposed development is appropriate development in the Green Belt. The element of the proposal within the Green Belt will have a minimal impact upon the openness of the Green Belt. Furthermore, the proposed development does not conflict with the five purposes of including land within the Green Belt.

6.9 Paragraph 80 of the Framework sets out the following five purposes upon which Green Belt serves:

- To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
- To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
- To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
- To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
- To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

6.10 With regard to the above five purposes, it is considered that the application site does not conflict with any of the above five purposes given that the only part of the proposed

development that falls within the Green Belt is the reinstatement of a single track railway line which will retain the openness of the Green Belt.

Transport

6.11 Transport policy embedded within the NPPF aims at facilitating a shift from a reliance on car and HGV transport methods for moving people and goods to using more sustainable modes of transport (inclusive of rail transport). This is touched upon in paragraph 30 where linkages are made between sustainable transport modes generating lower emissions (when making a comparison on moving the same amount of people or goods by the car or HGV) and the removal of movements off the road network. This paragraph states that encouragement should be given to solutions which support reductions in green house gas emissions and reduces congestion.

6.12 As described within section 3, the proposed development aims at utilising the rail network.. Historically all goods were moved by rail however there was a gradual shift onto the road network and in the 1980s, road transportation became the only option. Therefore the development can express a positive effect by reducing congestion on the local road network and support the reduction in green house gas emissions by utilising a sustainable transport mode.

6.13 Paragraph 32 of the NPPF acknowledges the need for providing a Transport Statement or Transport Assessment for all developments that generate significant amounts of movement, confirming that in assessing any such submissions development should only be prevented "*where the residual cumulative impacts of development are severe".* It is considered that the development will generate one to two locomotive trips per day which would not constitute a significant amounts of movement on the rail network and it could be argued that when assessing the overall transport implications of the development, the locomotive movements will significantly offset (reduce) the number HGV movements and therefore not generating movements negating the need for a transport assessment. Notwithstanding this, an understanding to the impact on transport movements will be explained within this section.

6.14 The MCCW Site imports circa 260k tonnes of coal per annum and exports circa 210k tonnes of coke per annum, all by road. The importation of coal to the site has changed in recent times and up until 2013, MCCW was supplied by coal from Maltby Colliery (Rotherham), however due to serious geological and safety problems at Maltby, the site has been mothballed and an alternative source of coal was required.

6.15 Presently coal of equally high standard is being sourced and imported to Redcar Ore Terminal at Teesport, North Yorkshire and then transported to the MCCW Site. This is approximately a

100 mile one way trip for a HGV. The terminal at Teesport is rail connected and has the required infrastructure to enable coal loading.

6.16 The exportation of coke goes to markets across Europe including businesses in the UK. With certain ports and businesses having access to rail unloading facilities, the large percentage of the coke can be exported from MCCW via rail.

6.17 Presently, HGV movements to and from the Site are structured between 7am and 7pm Monday to Friday. No movements occur on Saturday, Sunday or on a Bank Holiday. Therefore, by discounting weekends and bank holidays this leaves 254 days available for transportation each year.

6.18 It is anticipated that switching to rail transport could reduce the need to import coal to the Site by road by 100% and export coke from the Site by road by 60%.

6.19 Table 6.0 (below) expresses the existing HGV trips (one way) generated by the importation of coal and export of coke, this is based on tonnages used over the last financial year and were a reduction on previous years productions. The table also calculates the potential reduction in transport movements if the development is permitted.

Table 6.0 HGV Daily Trip Generations

Material	Annual tonnage	HGV existing daily calculations		Potential change (%) with rail siding operational	HGV daily calculations with rail siding operational		HGV trip reduction
		tonnes	HGV trips (one way)		tonnes	HGV trips (one way)	
Coal	260,000	1024	37	-100	0	0	-37
Coke	210,000	827	29	-60	84,000	11	-18
total			66			11	-55

6.20 The HGV trips have been calculated based on using Hargreaves own haulage fleet that can transport 28 tonne loads at a time. This gives approximately 37 one way HGV trips for coal and 29 one way trips for coke.

6.21 By implementing the proposed development, there is the potential to reduce the HGV movements associated with coal importation from 37 movements to 0 movements and for coke exportation from 29 movements to 11 movements per day. Therefore overall transport movements could be reduced from 66 HGV movements down to 11 HGV movements which is a reduction of 55 movements.

6.22 Table 6.0 expresses the potential reduction in road borne transport movements on a daily basis. Table 6.1 expresses the same information however calculating one way HGV movements over the full year.

Table 6.1 Annual HGV One Way Trip Generations

Material	Annual Tonnage	Existing Annual HGV movements	Annual HGV movements with rail siding operational	Potential reduction
Coal	260,000	9,286	0	-9,286
Coke	210,000	7,500	3000	-4,500
Total	470,000	16,786	3000	-13,786

6.23 On calculating the overall HGV movements needed to operate MCCW on an annual basis, then the existing impacts on the local road network can be understood. By implementing the proposed development this could potentially remove 13,786 HGV movements from the local road network, giving a strong argument that this will have a positive effect on reducing green house gas emissions and reducing congestion. This will play a role in the Government's overall aim of contributing to sustainable development.

6.24 In the event of an indigenous surface coal mine gaining planning permission within the local area, the quality of the coal will be assessed and if considered suitable for use at the MCCW Site then the transport arrangements would need to be reviewed. It would not be considered logical or sustainable to transport this coal to Teesport, load onto a train and then railed to MCCW Site.

6.25 Consequently it is considered that the proposed development would not discernibly or materially worsen the existing operation of the highway network.

Ecology

6.26 A walkover survey of the site was completed in March 2013 with further surveys undertaken in May 2013. From this, a Phase 1 Habitat Survey was produced in May 2013 by AES-LTD. Further surveys and evaluations were undertaken throughout the year due to the habitats recorded within and immediately adjacent to the site boundary and the potential for habitats and species of ecological importance to occur.

6.27 As the majority of the application site comprises of land within the existing Coke Works and the ballast area which has been a rail siding previously, there is limited ecology consisting of a disturbed environment and area of hardstanding. The ballast area is bordered either side by regenerated scrub/juvenile trees which will need to be lopped as part of the proposed

development. The botanical ecological value of the habitat 'unimproved' grassland is diminished due to the encroachment of scrub which constituted approximately 65% of the area, however, through survey this area has been found to be of value to Great Crested Newt (GCN) and grass snake. A licence will be required to translocate/exclude GCN from this area and a method statement to clear the area of grass snake will be prepared. Preliminary discussions have also taken place for offsite Mitigation on the adjacent Rabbit Ings Country park. No bat roosts were recorded on site and scrub/trees are to be loped/felled offering potential for roosting bats, however, a tree work method statement will be followed to ensure that any possible risk of disturbance to bats is kept to a minimum.

6.28 No characteristic signs of badgers or their activities were recorded during surveys, however a checking survey will be carried out prior to construction. There may be a low risk to breeding birds, therefore it has been recommended that any tree felling or ground level vegetation clearance will take place outside the breeding period (March to August).

Noise

6.29 Following the construction stage, the noise generated from the proposed development will be associated with a locomotive arriving at site up to eight times per week and no more than twice in one day, the unloading of coal and the transportation of coal from the unloading pad to the stockpiling area. The principles of moving and transportation of coke and coal within the existing site is already established and it is considered the altered activities are not considered to be a significant change to the existing sources or levels of noise.

6.30 Furthermore, the realignment and regrading of the northern soil mound will maintain a noise attenuation barrier between the sources of noise generation and the nearest properties to the north of the site which are located approximately 125 metres away.

6.31 Therefore any noise associated with the proposed development is not expected to be above and beyond what is already experienced at the site. To confirm that noise levels from the proposed operations will not exceed the appropriate criteria, a noise assessment has been commissioned and will be submitted to support the planning application.

Dust

6.32 The principle activities on site and their potential to generate dust emissions in the absence of mitigation measures are presented below:

- Delivery of coal;
- Stockpiling of coal and coke;
- Coal re-handling; and
- Transportation (internal haulage routes).

6.33 The amount of dust generated by each activity depends on the size of particles and, crucially, upon their moisture content. Dust emissions are greatest when there is a plentiful supply of small dry particles.

6.34 These principal activities that would give rise to potential for dust emissions from the development have been previously identified through the operation of the MCCW and accepted site mitigation measures are incorporated into existing operational practices, these are:

- Rain guns (water cannons) are used to spray the coal and coke stockpiles and unmade internal haul roads;
- A dedicated water bowser to supplement the rain guns is used on the unmade internal haul roads; and
- The internal made roads (concrete) and external tarmac road (Lund Hill Lane) are cleaned/cleared at least twice a day by the dedicated onsite road sweeper.

6.35 If the proposed development is accepted, two of the principle activities are anticipated to alter. These are the delivery of coal and the areas of transportation of coal on internal haul routes. Hargreaves does not anticipate the altering of these activities giving rise to increased generation of dust emissions for the following reasons:

- The coals transported to site will have a moisture content of between 8-15% and when handled by the wheel mounted cranes from rail truck to unloading pad or by the wheel loaders moving the coal to stockpiles, the coal has sufficient moisture content to not allow fine dust particles to be emitted;
- The crane operators will ensure drop heights are kept to a minimum when releasing the coal;
- The location of rain guns will be reviewed to ensure the realigned internal haul roads are kept moist; and
- The dedicated water bowser is onsite for use.

6.36 It is considered that the adjustment to the existing dust mitigation measure will negate any potential negative impacts of the proposed development in relation to fugitive dust being emitted from the site.

Cultural Heritage

6.37 The overarching guidance for determining application which impact upon the setting of a listed building or conservation area is included in s66 and s72 of the *Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990*, which requires that any development preserves or enhances the setting of a listed building and/or conservation area.

6.38 This guidance is transposed into Section 12 of the NPPF, whereby further elaboration is provided confirming that 'in determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting.'

6.39 The site is not located within a designated Conservation Area and does not include any listed buildings or scheduled ancient monuments; furthermore no listed buildings are located within close proximity to the site.

6.40 It is therefore considered that the proposed development will not have any impact upon Heritage Assets and as such is wholly compliant with the guidance contained within the NPPF.

6.41 The majority of the Site forms part of the operational MCCW Site and therefore it is unlikely that any archaeological remains will be in situ. The remaining part of the site was previously used to host a former single track railway line. Similarly the site is not located within any areas of known archaeological importance and as a result of the shallow depth at which the track and associated infrastructure will be built, it is not considered that any further evidence needs to be submitted to demonstrate that the proposals will impact upon any archaeology.

Landscape

6.42 The immediate landscape features such as the established Coke Works and vegetated boundaries, the tree line corridors of the rail line and B6428 and woodland to the northern hillside are characteristic of a wider landscape affected by Coal mining and its associated infrastructure.

6.43 The proposed development is in keeping with the current function and infrastructure of the existing Monckton Coke works. It is predominantly contained within a narrow corridor within the colonised scrubby woodland and within the existing Coke working area. It can be sensitively accommodated in this location whilst ensuring the preservation of local amenity and the character of the wider landscape.

6.44 Due to the extent of the current working areas visible and existing earthworks and vegetation to site boundaries much of the development area will have little change on the landscape and the local amenity of the area. Where the development is brought closer to the B6248 any potential receptors are likely to have slight to moderate changes in their visual amenity. A landscape mitigation planting scheme along the road corridor and to the site boundaries with a mix of species, heights and maturity will assist in absorbing the development back into the surrounding landscape and reduce any impacts to visual amenity.

Trees

6.45 A Tree Report has been carried out by JCA Consultants and concludes that the trees surveyed were generally found to be in a good to fair condition. It recommends a root protection area for each tree or group marked on the accompanying Tree Constraints Plan and recommends that an Arboricultural Method Statement is produced prior to commencement of development.

Flood Risk

6.46 The site identified is located within Flood Zone 1 as per the Environment Agency's Indicative Flood map. This therefore confirms that the site itself will not be at risk from flooding and that the development of this site with further built form will not relocate flood waters to any alternative sites, thereby exacerbating flooding problems elsewhere.

6.47 The site exceeds 1 ha in size and therefore does require a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) to be carried out. The FRA concludes by saying that the proposed development is not at significant flood risk, especially in light of the type of development proposed.

6.48 Furthermore as the Site is located within Flood Zone 1 it is sequentially located in an area least prone to flooding and therefore meets the sequential test as established in the NPPF and the accompanying technical guidance. Similarly as per Table 3 in the Technical Guidance to the NPPF, there is no requirement to carry out an exception test to justify the development.

6.49 The accompanying Flood Risk Assessment proposes measures to accommodate the possibilities of flood from extreme storm or blocked sewers by recommending that external levels fall to non-critical areas, such as landscaping where the water can pond without affecting existing buildings or third party land. It is considered that appropriate mitigation measures can be achieved on site.

Drainage

6.50 In light of the proposed development, the runoff is expected to have a very low environmental risk and it is assumed that any foul or industrial waste created from the site's operation will not be disposed of within the Site boundary. Therefore no specific filtration or other water quality measures will be included within the proposal and the proposed development is not expected to have a negative impact on surface water quality.

6.51 The majority of surface water will continue to soak away naturally across the site however the run-off generated by the hardstanding area will be collected, stored and then can be used for onsite operations.

Sustainability

6.52 It is important to highlight that many of the by-products that come from coke making at the MCCW Site are recycled and sold.

6.53 Furthermore, the gas from the coke ovens on the MCCW Site are used in a combined heat and power plant that can generate up to 11 megawatts of electricity. Not only does this supply all the electricity needed on site, but the applicant also sells surplus electricity to the national grid and of a quantity to provide power for more than 1,000 homes.

Socio- Economic Benefits

6.54 The MCCW Site is the only independent coke production plant in the UK and is ranked as one of Europe' leading producers of high quality metallurgical coke. It produces circa 200,000 tonnes of coke per year which is then used for use in glass, detergents and steel manufacturing and coke used for home heating.

6.55 The nature of the proposed development is such that there are a number of socio economic considerations. The reinstatement of the railway track will ensure the continuity of coal supply and coke exportation to and from Monckton Coke Works in a much more sustainable and economic manner, with the inherent economic advantages associated with that, and the removal of a significant number of HGV's from the local and strategic road network.

7.0 Conclusion

7.1 National and local planning policy promotes development which results in the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and reduces congestion. One of the key aims is to support the transition to a low carbon future such as the use of more sustainable transport modes for the movement of goods.

7.2 This Planning, Design and Access Statement demonstrates that the proposed development has taken into account the proposals accordance in principle with national, and local planning policies. Furthermore this statement highlights the findings of the accompanying technical reports which demonstrate how the proposed development will not have an adverse impact on the built environment, surrounding landscape and the natural environment.

7.3 It is judged that the proposed development is not inappropriate development in the Green Belt given that the only development proposed within the Green Belt is the reinstatement of a single track railway line which constitutes local transport infrastructure where there is a strong justification for it being required in a Green Belt location. Furthermore, due to its low visual impact, this part of the proposal will preserve the openness of the Green Belt and would not conflict with the purposes of including land in the Green Belt.

7.4 In light of the above, the principle of the proposed development is supported at both national and local policy level and no site specific constraints have been identified following submission of supporting documentation. It is therefore judged that the site is policy compliant and no material considerations exist to outweigh compliance with the Framework and development plan. It is therefore requested that planning permission is granted.