

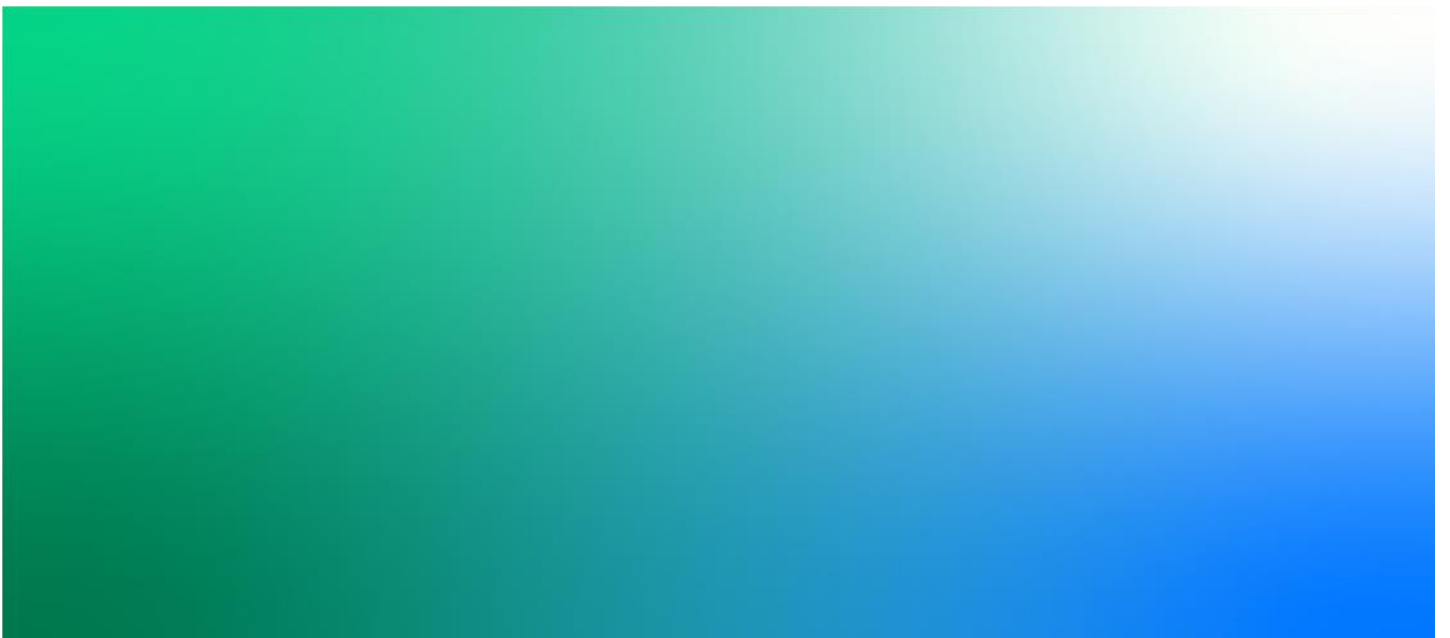


Bishop Auckland Bus Station and Car Park

PLANNING STATEMENT

BL000034-JAC-XX-XX-RP-T-00002 | P02

17/05/23



Bishop Auckland Bus Station and Car Park

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Contents

- 1. Introduction..... 1**
- 1.1 Background 1
- 1.2 Content of this Document 1
- 1.3 Supporting Information..... 1
- 2. Site Location and Context..... 3**
- 2.1 Location 3
- 2.2 Site History 3
- 2.3 Existing Site 3
- 3. The Proposed Scheme 5**
- 3.1 Background 5
- 3.2 Proposed Bus Station 5
- 3.3 Proposed Car Park 6
- 3.4 Proposed Substation 6
- 3.5 Bin Store 7
- 3.6 Landscaping..... 7
- 3.7 Construction Programme 7
- 4. Environmental Considerations 8**
- 4.1 Introduction 8
- 4.2 Air Quality 8
- 4.3 Noise 8
- 4.4 Sustainability 9
- 4.5 Ecology..... 9
- 4.6 Coal Mining 10
- 4.7 Land Contamination 10
- 4.8 Heritage 11
- 4.9 Transport..... 11
- 4.10 Lighting 12
- 4.11 Drainage 12
- 5. Planning Policy Review..... 13**
- 5.1 Background 13
- 5.2 National Planning Policy Framework..... 13
- 5.2.1 Section 7: Ensuring the vitality of town centres..... 13
- 5.2.2 Section 8: Promoting healthy and safe communities..... 13
- 5.2.3 Section 9: Promoting sustainable transport..... 14
- 5.2.4 Section 11: Making effective use of land..... 14
- 5.2.5 Section 12: Achieving well-designed places..... 14
- 5.2.6 Section 14: Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change 15
- 5.2.7 Section 15: Conserving and enhancing the natural environment 15

5.2.8	Section 16: Conserving and enhancing the historic environment.....	16
5.3	Local Planning Policy	16
5.3.1	County Durham Plan	16
5.4	Other Material Considerations.....	25
5.4.1	National Planning Practice Guidance.....	25
5.4.2	Bishop Auckland Masterplan Update	27
6.	Conclusions	28

Appendix A. List of Drawings

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Jacobs UK Ltd has been commissioned by Durham County Council (DCC) to prepare and submit a planning application for the proposed Bishop Auckland Bus Station and Car Park, which will replace the existing bus station facility in Bishop Auckland, Durham (hereafter 'the Scheme').

Bishop Auckland is the beneficiary of ongoing public and private sector investment into a range of regeneration projects. This includes the Auckland Project which aims to revive the town centre, focussing on historical attractions to improve the local economy and draw tourists to the town. The number of visitors to the town is predicted to grow rapidly to an estimated 750,000 visitors per year by 2028¹.

To support the increase in visitor numbers, DCC is seeking to redevelop the existing town centre bus station site to provide a new bus station facility and car park. The proposed bus station will provide an indoor waiting area with public and staff facilities. This will offer a significant improvement over the existing outdoor bus waiting areas by improving passenger comfort and visitor experience when arriving in Bishop Auckland. The new car park will support the growing tourism demand by providing additional car parking capacity near the town centre.

As part of the redevelopment of the site, the existing buildings / structures on the site will be demolished, including a bus operator facilities building, public toilets, a small cafe kiosk, and 10 bus shelters. The majority of these buildings are relatively small; however, the public toilets and bus operator facilities building are both greater than 50m³ in volume.

1.2 Content of this Document

This Planning Statement contains the following information:

- **Chapter 2: Site Location and Context** - describes the application site and the surrounding area
- **Chapter 3: The Proposed Scheme** - provides details regarding the background for the Scheme, a description of the different elements of the Scheme, and the anticipated construction programme
- **Chapter 4: Environmental Considerations** - provides an overview of the technical reports submitted with the planning application
- **Chapter 5: Planning Policy Review** - assesses the proposals against pertinent planning policies at a local and national level
- **Chapter 6: Conclusions** – provides a summary of the Scheme and key findings from this document

1.3 Supporting Information

The planning application is accompanied by a suite of supporting information in addition to this document as detailed below:

- Site location plan, block plan and other relevant drawings (see **Appendix A**)
- Design and Access Statement (DAS)
- Community Engagement Statement

¹ Vision Capacity Report – Auckland Project, November 2019

- Air Quality Assessment
- Noise Impact Assessment
- Sustainability Assessment
- Ecological Appraisal
- Coal Mining Risk Assessment
- Geoenvironmental and Preliminary Geotechnical Desk Study
- Archaeological Desk Based Assessment
- Statement of Significance
- Written Scheme of Investigation
- Transport Assessment
- Lighting Statement
- Drainage Strategy Report
- Outline Construction Management Plan

2. Site Location and Context

2.1 Location

Bishop Auckland is located 12 miles northwest of Darlington and 12 miles southwest of Durham. The application site covers the existing bus station and is situated toward the north of Bishop Auckland, to the southwest of the historic core (see **Figure 1** and the Location Plan (Ref: BL000034-JAC-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-00002)). It is located within a 10-minute walk to the Marketplace and within a 5-minute walk of both shopping thoroughfares, Newgate Street and Fore Bondgate. The site is located adjacent to the A689 with a roundabout providing direct vehicular access to the site.

Adjacent to the northern boundary of the site is the Bishop Auckland conservation area, which extends to the north encompassing Fore Bondgate and beyond. To the north and east of the site are several listed buildings; however, none of these are in immediate proximity to the site. Newgate Shopping Centre is located directly to the east of the site.

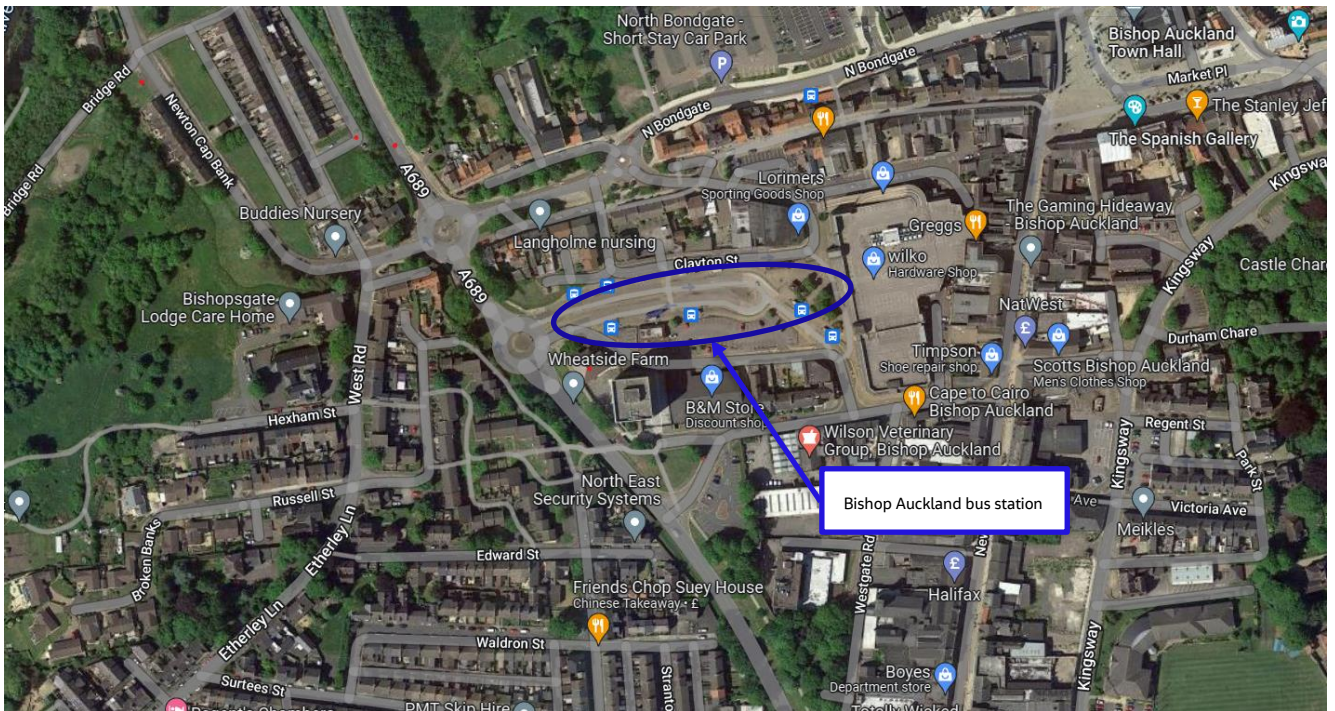


Figure 1: Site Location (source: Google Maps 2023)

2.2 Site History

From the late 1800's up until the 1960's the site was primarily occupied by terraced housing, an auction mart, parking, and light industrial buildings. An Odeon cinema also stood on the southern boundary of the site. The construction of Vinovium House on the southwest corner of the site marked the first major development in the area. This was later followed by the clearing of large areas of the site for the Newgate Shopping Centre and the bus station developments which remain to this day.

2.3 Existing Site

The existing bus station facility is composed of three parts:

- An external bus station to the north comprising 10 bus shelters

- A car park to the south
- A pedestrian area to the east, adjacent to Newgate Shopping Centre

As noted in Chapter 1, a few small buildings / structures exist on the site, being a bus operator facilities building, public toilets, a small cafe kiosk, and bus shelters. All of these will be removed as part of the proposals.

Vehicles largely take precedence across the site with large areas of hardstanding. There are a couple of raised planters in the pedestrian area, with a total of 19 existing trees on the site. The adjacent buildings are generally no more than two or three stories high aside from a taller office tower block southwest of the site (Vinovium House).

The site is bounded by a range of building types including residential and commercial properties. The eastern boundary is occupied by Newgate Shopping Centre, which also extends and wraps around into George Street and Tenters Street. The northern boundary is composed of a range of commercial and residential properties, many providing access to rear service yards. The southern boundary is also occupied by a range of commercial properties including a retail store and the eight-storey office block, Vinovium House.

The site area is just under one hectare.

3. The Proposed Scheme

3.1 Background

Bishop Auckland is undergoing a major regeneration, partly funded through private investment, with various projects that focus on the historical attractions the town has to offer. Whilst the regeneration is principally aimed at tourists it is forecast that the regeneration will provide a wider boost to the local economy and present further opportunities to the high street and surrounding area.

The existing bus network into and around Bishop Auckland is well utilised, providing low cost connections into the town for locals and tourists from Durham and nearby communities.

As noted in Section 1.1, the number of visitors to the town is predicted to grow rapidly to an estimated 750,000 visitors per year by 2028. To support the increase in visitor numbers, DCC is seeking to redevelop the existing town centre bus station site, to provide a new bus station and car park to improve passenger comfort and visitor experience when arriving in Bishop Auckland. The development will support the growing tourism demand by providing additional car parking capacity near the town centre.

The Scheme is comprised of two main elements:

- A new bus station accommodating eight bus bays and a waiting hall and staff / passenger facilities
- An external car park that provides 125 spaces

The proposed site layout is arranged with the car park located to the west and the bus station to the east. A widened public realm area is formed in the north-eastern corner of the site, providing safe routes for car park and bus users into the wider town.

The scheme aims to make a wider positive contribution to the town by enhancing the quality of the local environment to the site, reducing traffic movement, and establishing a stronger connection between the bus station site and the town centre.

3.2 Proposed Bus Station

As noted in Section 3.1, the proposed bus station is in the eastern part of the site, between the proposed car park and Newgate Shopping Centre. The bus station building is composed of two elements: a passenger waiting hall and staff / passenger facilities. To the south of the bus station building is a manoeuvring zone for buses which facilitates a drive in reverse out operation.

The main entrances are to be located on the northern elevation, connected to the pedestrian area outside which links the car park and bus station to the wider town centre. An additional entrance is provided on the southern side of the building for passengers approaching the site from the south.

Upon entering the bus station building, users would enter directly into the circulation concourse which spans the full length of the waiting hall. This zone would connect the facilities accommodation in the west with all eight bus stands as well as both entrances. The concourse is designed to allow efficient movement between stands and to enable clear visibility between stands, this is also aided by the pitched roof form.

The eight bus stands are equally spaced along the southern elevation. Each stand provides queuing space for up to 20 passengers. The queuing zones are defined by the seating arrangement which prevents sprawl into adjacent queuing areas or the main concourse. Each stand provides seating for up to six passengers with varied seating types for different user groups in compliance with the Equality Act 2010. A dedicated wheelchair position is also provided at each stand. In the instance where a bus pulls into another stand, the open layout of the bus station allows for straightforward movement to an alternative stand.

Each bus stand has an automated sliding door providing controlled access to an external boarding area to the south. A zone for digital signage and stand number is provided above each boarding door. When passengers enter or exit the building via the boarding doors, they would be protected from rainfall by a canopy which is formed as part of the main roof structure.

A freestanding coffee / retail unit is located at the western end of the waiting hall.

Public and staff facilities are located at the western end of the bus station. All public accommodation is arranged over the ground floor. Public toilets, baby changing, and changing places facilities are accessed via a short corridor connected to the waiting hall. This creates a separation to the main waiting area, improving privacy whilst maintaining good accessibility. Sliding glazed doors will segregate the waiting hall for operational control, security and to separate the unheated waiting hall space from the heated accommodation.

The management office and bus operators' facilities are accessed via a secure entrance in the same corridor. The management office is designed to accommodate up to two people and has a window into the bus station for surveillance of the waiting hall. The operators' office has seating for up to six people as well as a small kitchenette. Access to separate staff toilet facilities is also provided within the secure area. Mechanical and electrical plant rooms serving the bus station are located at the far west of the building and on the first floor above the accommodation block. Access to all plant related spaces is via a secure gated zone adjacent to the car park. This area also provides secure space for external bin storage. A cleaner's cupboard is located off the internal corridor for easy access to both the public and staff areas.

3.3 Proposed Car Park

The proposed car park is in the western part of the site, spanning between Clayton Street to the north and Saddler Street to the south. The existing roundabout exit on the A689 at the western side of the site will be used by vehicles entering the car park area. The roundabout entry from Saddler Street will be used by both buses and vehicles exiting the car park area. Both A689 entries and exits will remain broadly unchanged.

Vehicular access is provided off the A689 with a roundabout providing direct access to the site. Vehicles will be separate from the bus parking area.

The car park will contain 125 spaces, including:

- One dedicated space for the substation (see Section 3.4)
- Nine accessible spaces, including two accessible Electric Vehicle Charging (EVC) spaces
- Six active EVC spaces
- 14 passive EVC spaces
- Four motorcycle spaces

Pedestrian circulation routes would be clearly marked and provided throughout, enabling safe movement around the car park.

There are also plans to redevelop the Newgate Shopping Centre car park; however, these proposals are not included in this planning application.

3.4 Proposed Substation

A single storey substation is proposed as new utility connections will be required to the site for the car park and the bus station. This includes connections to the mains electricity supply from the distribution network operator,

Northern Powergrid. The substation building will also house an Information and Communications Technology comms room, which will be a self-contained room with a separate access.

The substation will be in the western part of the site, near the southern boundary. As noted above, the substation will have a dedicated car parking space, located to the north of the building.

3.5 Bin Store

Refuse and recycling bins will be located within a bin store enclosure in the car parking area, to the west of the bus station building.

3.6 Landscaping

The landscape planting strategy for the site is contextually responsive to the existing planting used in the town centre and will enhance the site's biodiversity by introducing native species and flower rich seeding mixes. The landscape design achieves a net gain for biodiversity.

A total of 19 existing trees will be impacted by the proposed works. There are 53 new trees proposed which means there will be a net increase of 34 trees on the site.

Retaining visual surveillance north to south across the western external car park has also been of high importance, with the aim of reducing anti-social behaviour. Therefore, tree planting species around the car park will be specified as clear stem and heavy standard only. Proposed shrubs have been carefully selected based on their low growing characteristics to also ensure visibility across the external space is maintained.

Proposed Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) will comprise of a simplistic, low maintenance palette of grasses that are tolerant of both drier and wetter conditions throughout the year.

3.7 Construction Programme

Subject to planning permission being granted for the Scheme, construction is anticipated to commence in September 2023. It is envisaged that the construction stage of the project will extend across an indicative 14-month programme duration. This will include site set-up, site clearance, removal of three small scale brick buildings and construction of the new bus station and surface car park.

4. Environmental Considerations

4.1 Introduction

Several relevant environmental impacts have been assessed as part of the development of the Scheme and are summarised in this chapter. These relate to air quality, noise, sustainability, ecology, coal mining, contamination, heritage, transport, lighting, and drainage.

4.2 Air Quality

An Air Quality Assessment has been prepared, which outlines the potential air quality effects resulting from the construction and operation of the Scheme on human and ecological receptors. Specifically, it includes consideration of dust emissions generated by demolition, earthworks and construction-related activities during the construction phase, and exhaust emissions of pollutants to air from road vehicles (e.g. cars, vans, buses, and lorries) on the local road network during operation of the Scheme. Emissions from road traffic during construction were screened out from the assessment.

The assessment identifies several appropriate good practice mitigation measures to manage and control dust emissions during the construction phase. These include a dust management plan, which has been included in the Outline Construction Management Plan. The report concludes that with the identified measures in place, air quality effects would not be significant and any residual impact would be manageable.

The assessment of road traffic emissions demonstrated that any changes in air quality at human receptor locations would be negligible, and therefore not a significant effect on air quality.

4.3 Noise

A Noise Impact Assessment has been prepared for the construction and operation of the Scheme. The assessment advises that during the construction phase it is anticipated that the noise and vibration impact of the Scheme would be not significant. A quantitative construction noise and vibration assessment will be undertaken as part of the Outline Construction Management Plan when the principal contractor is appointed. This will be submitted to DCC for agreement prior to works starting on the site.

The assessment concludes that the character of the noise produced by the operation of the Scheme will be the same as produced currently at the site and will include slow moving buses and cars entering the site, manoeuvring, and leaving the site. As such, it is considered unlikely that the Scheme would result in significant noise effects from vehicle movements at noise sensitive receptor locations.

The noise impact of fixed plant items during operation of the Scheme have been assessed, including:

- Two variable refrigerant flow units located on the roof of the new bus station building
- Air handling units located internally within the first-floor plant room of the new bus station building
- One condenser unit at ground level against the west facing façade of the bus station building
- The substation transformer located in the car park

It was found that the acoustic mitigation recommended in relation to the louvres for the air handling units and for the ground level condenser unit, would result in no noise impact being likely to occur in either daytime or night-time operation.

It is recognised that the preliminary plant specification available during the design process may be subject to change as the Scheme progresses. As such, a suitable noise condition is suggested for any planning permission granted for the Scheme.

4.4 Sustainability

The Sustainability Assessment covers a range of considerations for the Scheme, including construction methods, material selections, fabric and building performance. A range of strategies have been considered and progressed to minimise the environmental impact of the Scheme.

The key sustainability components considered include an energy strategy, renewable energy targets, CO₂ emissions, daylight, and all services. These factors and attributes have informed the design regarding the material sections, the building fabric, the ventilation, and lighting etc. Local environmental factors were also considered such as ecology, local transport, and acoustic performance / noise considerations.

The Scheme is targeting a 'Very Good' BREEAM rating with the potential to achieve 'Excellent' for the bus station building. The proposed bus station is currently on target to being carbon neutral through the inclusion of several whole-life carbon reduction measures, including:

- Use of timber for structural elements (reduced embodied carbon)
- Efficient thermal envelope with high levels of insulation
- Natural ventilation and no heating provided for the waiting hall
- Demand-responsive, efficient heating and cooling systems for the accommodation block
- High efficiency lighting (including zoning and controls for daylight and occupancy)
- On-site renewables (photovoltaic array on accommodation block roof)
- Electricity as fuel source for heating / cooling (operational stage carbon impact will reduce over time as grid carbon intensity decreases)

4.5 Ecology

An Ecological Appraisal has been prepared for the Scheme, which includes a bat roost potential survey. The study area comprises a 2km buffer around the red line boundary for the application site.

The application site has limited potential for biodiversity given its urban nature and location. Section 3.1 of the Ecological Appraisal states *"The site is located within the urban setting of Bishop Auckland. The site is immediately surrounded by area dominated by developed land and hard standing in the form of roads and buildings. Some limited habitat is present including street trees and small patches of amenity grassland. The closest semi-natural habitat to the site is grassland and trees surrounding the River Wear approximately 170 metres to the north of the site. However, this is separated by a busy pedestrian area and roads which likely act as a barrier to movement for most species"*.

There are no statutory or non-statutory sites within the study area.

As previously noted, the site contains 19 trees, which will be removed to accommodate the Scheme. Replacement tree planting will consist of approximately 53 trees, including *Betula*, *Prunus* and *Pyrus* species. Further, the SuDs features will be planted with tall grasses, areas of lawn with shrub planting will be provided in the western part of the site, a green roof will be provided over the new bus station and will comprise a standard sedum mix.

Section 4.2 of the Ecological Appraisal concludes that *“Although the replacement planting of trees is not likely to offset the impact of the loss of existing trees on its own, it is anticipated that the significant increase in green space within the landscape design will result in a biodiversity net gain for the site”*.

In terms of bats, the bat roost potential surveys indicated that there were negligible opportunities offered by the built area within the red line boundary.

4.6 Coal Mining

The site is located within a Development High Risk Area as designated by The Coal Authority; therefore, a Coal Mining Risk Assessment has been undertaken for the Scheme.

The anticipated foundation type for the bus station and substation is a shallow foundation. No deep foundation (piling) is proposed

The document confirms in Section 4.5 that *“No mine shafts or other mine entries are recorded at the site in any of the reviewed sources of information. In the wider area, several disused mine shafts are recorded on both the historical mapping (5) and the BGS geological mapping (1) with the closest approximately 550m north of the site”*. Irrespective of this, the site is in an area where The Coal Authority believe there is coal at or close to the surface, and this coal may have been worked at some time in the past. The document states in Section 4.5 *“The potential presence of coal workings at or close to the surface should be considered, particularly prior to any site works or future development activity, as ground movement could still be a risk”*.

Given the lack of existing information on ground conditions at the site, the document recommends that an intrusive investigation is carried out prior to development of the land. This shall focus on the thickness and nature of the superficial deposits. Given that bedrock is anticipated to be in the order of 40m deep and deep foundations are not proposed, the accurate depth to rock head and an investigation into the presence of a workable coal seam is not considered necessary. The thickness and nature of the superficial geology onsite are to be investigated only.

4.7 Land Contamination

A Geoenvironmental and Preliminary Geotechnical Desk Study has been prepared for the Scheme, which reviews land contamination and geotechnical risks and constraints associated with the Scheme.

In terms of geoenvironmental considerations, the desk study identified potential contamination sources and several potential pollutant linkages at the site. Uncertainties have been identified that require further investigation. In order to address the uncertainties and refine the preliminary conceptual site model, the desk study advises that a ground investigation is required to determine the extent and nature of potential contamination on site with respect to human health and property receptors. It will also be used to confirm that the surmised risk to controlled waters (surface and groundwater) is low.

In terms of geotechnical considerations, superficial deposits comprising alternating layers of sand, gravel and clay (Glacial Till) are expected to extend beyond the depth of the proposed foundations. The underlying Glacial Till (boulder clay), whilst predominantly cohesive, may contain boulders of bedrock which can be problematic during investigation and construction works. Whilst not expected to be encountered, the Pennine Middle Coal Measures Formation is at depth. The High Main and Five Quarter coal seams are shown as trending northeast to southwest across the centre of the site. These shallow coal seams may have been worked in the past resulting in the potential for voids to be present; however, any voiding is expected to be too deep to influence the proposed works.

Given the lack of existing information on ground conditions at the site, it is recommended that an intrusive investigation is carried out prior to development of the land. In particular, the thickness and nature of the Made Ground and composition of the superficial geology onsite should be obtained.

4.8 Heritage

The following reports have been prepared to cover heritage considerations relevant to the Scheme:

- Archaeological Desk Based Assessment
- Statement of Significance
- Written Scheme of Investigation

Archaeological Desk Based Assessment

An Archaeological Desk Based Assessment has been prepared for the Scheme. The assessment aims to assess the archaeological implications of the Scheme in line with national planning policy. The assessment identified archaeological potential beneath the existing ground surface within the site. The proposed reconfiguration of the bus station and introduction of car parks will involve the removal and /or damage of such deposits.

There has not been a great deal of archaeological fieldwork undertaken in Bishop Auckland's historic town centre, so there is a general dearth of information on the extents to which significant archaeological remains survive.

The assessment advises that given the uncertainties regarding the presence and nature of archaeological remains, it would be consistent with the directions in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) to ground-truth the indicative potential borne out in this report. This course of action is the only way to establish the presence, extent and significance of buried archaeological remains.

Statement of Significance

A Statement of Significance has been prepared for the Scheme as it has been identified as having a potential impact on the historic environment in Bishop Auckland. This report assesses the nature of the historic environment resources in terms of built heritage and historic landscapes, and determines the magnitude of impact upon them.

As noted in Section 2.1, the application site is adjacent to the Bishop Auckland conservation area. The report advises that *"there will be no physical impacts on the conservation area or the historic environment within it. The proposed scheme has the potential to change the setting of the designation, with a resultant effect on the value of the asset. Given its position, design and the nature of the one part of the conservation area nearest the proposed development, the change to setting, both visual and historic, has been quantified as a negligible one"*. In addition, the Scheme will not have a negative effect on built heritage or historic landscapes in or around its location.

Written Scheme of Investigation

A Written Scheme of Investigation to review impacts on the archaeological resource has also been prepared for the Scheme. This document is a detailed method statement for an archaeological trial trench investigation. It is also a method statement for a watching brief on geotechnical ground investigation, which will be carried out concurrently with the archaeological trial trenching.

4.9 Transport

A Transport Assessment has been prepared for the Scheme. The purpose of the Transport Assessment is not only to support the redesign of the bus station facility, but to demonstrate that the increase in users on the local road network as a result of such tourist developments are not detrimental, and if so that appropriate mitigation is undertaken.

Section 6.5.1 of the Transport Assessment advises that in addition to the changes directly associated with the bus station upgrade, a general increase in the volume of traffic in the town is assumed to require the need for wider upgrades to the Bishop Auckland road network. As a result, upgrades have been planned at the A688 / A689 /

B6282 and A688 / A689 Coundon Gate Roundabouts on the A688 to the southeast of Bishop Auckland, as well as at the A689 / Kingsway junction and A689 / Princes Street Roundabout in the centre of the town. The report states *“As with the alterations to the bus station and car park layout, these changes are unlikely to influence bus routes into and out of Bishop Auckland, however, they intend on helping to reduce congestion on roads in Bishop Auckland, improving journey times and reducing service delays”*.

Section 7.6 of the Transport Assessment provides a summary for the assessment of sustainable transport and states *“The proposed bus station will provide a much-improved gateway and passenger experience for bus users in Bishop Auckland. Although the current schedule of services will transition to operate from the new bus station, it is hoped that the new facility will provide greater incentive for local trips to be made by bus with improved amenity, sheltered waiting areas and more legible user experience promoting bus services in the area”*. It also advises that the Scheme will provide improvements to the local pedestrian environment, including a significant improvement to the public realm.

4.10 Lighting

A Lighting Statement has been prepared for the Scheme, which provides details about the lighting design. The statement provides the background and design intent, with a detailed narrative of the mitigations made to minimise sky-spill or adverse glare.

The statement notes that the closest residential properties to the site are on Clayton Street, Saddler Street and are not high-rise buildings. There are no adverse lighting trespass factors that have been identified. Further, having reviewed the buildings aspect and occupancy of the windows that give visibility towards the site, the windows are generally secondary spaces being kitchens, bathrooms and secondary bedrooms. In any event no lighting fixtures that would cause direct luminous intensity glare to these residential / commercial properties are proposed.

The summary in the statement advises that *“Comprehensive analysis and site investigations have been carried out to identify any potential lighting issues related to the proposed new car park and bus station.*

Care and attention have been given to the design to mitigate the risks of adverse sky-spill, glare, light trespass, or annoyance.

The lighting standards and design guidance documents have been followed. The site-specific lighting model demonstrates that the resulting light levels are appropriate and aligned with the brief whilst accounting for UK practices for illumination”.

4.11 Drainage

A Drainage Strategy Report has been prepared which outlines the foul and surface water drainage design proposals for the Scheme.

The report notes that the site is within Flood Zone 1, which is classed as having less than 1 in 1000 (<0.1%) chance of river flooding in any one year. In accordance with Table 3 of the NPPF Technical Guidance all forms of development are considered appropriate within Flood Zone 1.

The report advises that the Scheme will follow best practice using SuDS to both intercept stormwater at source and treat the runoff from roofs, hardstandings and other impermeable areas. Details for the maintenance and management of the proposed SuDS are included in the report.

The report advises that peak flows from the Scheme will be restricted to less than or equal to the equivalent greenfield runoff rates for the respective 1 in 1 year, 1 in 30 year and 100 year return period events using a complex control chamber. The SuDS will be designed to accommodate all storms up to and including the 100 year return period event with a 45% allowance for climate change. Unaffected areas within the site planning boundary will remain unchanged and continue to discharge as existing.

5. Planning Policy Review

5.1 Background

This chapter identifies relevant national and local planning policy, including the site's policy allocation and any relevant local designations. It assesses these policies against the need for the Scheme and its design, and against other relevant environmental considerations.

5.2 National Planning Policy Framework

The NPPF, last updated in July 2021, sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how they should be applied. It constitutes guidance for Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) and decision takers both in respect of plan preparation and as a material consideration in determining planning applications; it draws attention to Section 19(2) (a) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, which requires policy makers to have regard to national policies and advice in guidance issued by the Secretary of State.

Chapter 2 of the NPPF sets out the *"presumption in favour of sustainable development"* in terms of economic, social and environmental objectives. Paragraph 47 of the NPPF reiterates the importance of the local development plan when dealing with planning applications, whilst highlighting that other considerations may affect the determination, and states:

"Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise".

Key paragraphs from the NPPF of relevance to the Scheme are set out below:

5.2.1 Section 7: Ensuring the vitality of town centres

Section 7 of the NPPF advises that *"Planning policies and decisions should support the role that town centres play at the heart of local communities, by taking a positive approach to their growth, management and adaptation"*.

Bishop Auckland is currently benefitting from a range of regeneration projects, including the Auckland Project which aims to revive the town centre. The Scheme will improve the current bus station facility in the town and will provide further car parking for visitors. The wider objective of the project is to provide a functional and high-quality transport hub that will be used by residents and to support future growth in tourism.

The Scheme will be located on the same site as the existing bus station facility, which is on the edge of the primary shopping area. The proposed site layout has been designed to connect the car park and bus station to the town. From the northeast corner of the site, there are three key pedestrian routes with access into the wider town centre. The orientation of the bus station has been planned to encourage natural movement of pedestrians' northwards toward Fore Bondgate, thereby providing the most direct link to the historical core of the town. It is envisaged that this route will play a key role in future tourism growth and may provide scope for future regeneration and public realm improvement works.

5.2.2 Section 8: Promoting healthy and safe communities

Section 8 of the NPPF relates to providing healthy, inclusive and safe places. The section provides a number of ways in which a development can help to promote healthy environments. Paragraph 92b of the NPPF advises that this includes places that *"are safe and accessible, so that crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion – for example through the use of attractive, well-designed, clear and legible pedestrian and cycle routes, and high quality public space, which encourage the active and continual use of public areas"*.

Paragraph 93d of the NPPF advises that in order to provide facilities and services the community needs, decisions should *"ensure that established shops, facilities and services are able to develop and modernise, and are retained for the benefit of the community"*.

The design of the Scheme has taken account of a number of factors in regard to safety. This includes the layout of the bus station building, bus parking area, and car parking area. The bus station building will have a visually 'open' concourse and waiting areas which will provide high levels of natural surveillance. Security will be on site all day, and the manager's office will provide space for CCTV monitoring. Further details regarding the design are provided in the DAS.

The Scheme provides links to existing pedestrian routes in the area. Further, cycle parking facilities will be provided on the eastern façade of the bus station building.

5.2.3 Section 9: Promoting sustainable transport

Section 9 of the NPPF advises that transport issues should be considered from the earliest stages of development proposals, so that:

- a) *The potential impacts of development on transport networks can be addressed;*
- b) *Opportunities from existing or proposed transport infrastructure, and changing transport technology and usage, are realised – for example in relation to the scale, location or density of development that can be accommodated;*
- c) *Opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport use are identified and pursued;*
- d) *The environmental impacts of traffic and transport infrastructure can be identified, assessed and taken into account – including appropriate opportunities for avoiding and mitigating any adverse effects, and for net environmental gains; and*
- e) *Patterns of movement, streets, parking and other transport considerations are integral to the design of schemes, and contribute to making high quality places”.*

A review of existing policy and strategy documents has been undertaken in the Transport Assessment to assist in the identification of the current conditions in the Bishop Auckland study area. This review has provided an understanding of the local and national policies affecting the Bishop Auckland area, including transport policies, land use policies and approved/committed plans for development that will impact upon the travel and transport network in the town. This review has also helped to shape the need for the bus station redevelopment, which are consistent with the specific policies and strategies, including the NPPF and the County Durham Plan (CDP) reviewed below. Further, information provided regarding the design of the Scheme in the DAS demonstrates that the relevant criterion listed in Section 9 of the NPPF have been addressed.

5.2.4 Section 11: Making effective use of land

Paragraph 119 of the NPPF seeks to promote an effective use of land while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions. It advocates for the use of brownfield land.

The Scheme is of a high quality design and will be located on the same site as the existing bus station facility. As such, it meets the requirements of Section 11 of the NPPF.

5.2.5 Section 12: Achieving well-designed places

Paragraph 126 of the NPPF states *“The creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities”.* It also advocates for effective engagement between applicants, communities, local planning authorities and other interests throughout the process.

The Scheme provides a visually attractive architecturally designed building, with a well-considered layout and provision of appropriate landscaping. The development is adjacent to the Bishop Auckland conservation area and has been designed to be in keeping with existing development in the area through the use of materials, an appropriate colour palette, and landscaping, as detailed in Section 5.14 of the DAS.

It is not possible to retain the existing trees on the site; however, replacement planting is proposed which is appropriate to the location and nature of the development.

As per the requirements of paragraph 132 of the NPPF, design quality has been considered throughout the evolution of the Scheme and discussions have taken place with DCC, key stakeholders and the community. Further details are provided in the Community Engagement Statement.

The bus station building has been designed to BREEAM 'very good' standard and the development incorporates sustainable features such as a green roof, SuDS, and photovoltaic (PV) panels. Details about the form and layout of the proposals are included in the DAS.

5.2.6 Section 14: Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change

Section 14 of the NPPF advises that the planning system should support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate, taking full account of flood risk and coastal change. It also sets out when SuDS are required for a development.

As previously mentioned, the site is located within Flood Zone 1 and is below one hectare in area. The Scheme does not constitute a 'major' development; however, SuDS are proposed as part of the Scheme.

The Drainage Strategy Report for the Scheme advises that by incorporating SuDs and restrictions on peak flows to less than or equal to the equivalent runoff rates, the Scheme complies with the requirements of the NPPF by protecting the users of the development and reducing the flood risk to third parties beyond the site. Appropriate levels of treatment will be provided within the combination of proposed SuDS measures to minimise the risk of contamination to the receiving watercourse.

5.2.7 Section 15: Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

Section 15 of the NPPF sets out the principles and requirements to protect and enhance the natural and local environment. Paragraph 174 seeks to conserve and enhance the natural and local environment, by:

"d) Minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures".

Paragraph 180 of the NPPF seeks to conserve and enhance biodiversity. It advocates for a net gain for biodiversity.

As noted in Section 4.5 above, the site has limited potential for biodiversity given its urban nature and location. The Scheme includes landscaping throughout the site, which is contextually responsive to the existing planting used in the town centre and will enhance biodiversity on the site by introducing native species and flower rich seeding mixes. The landscape design will achieve a net gain for biodiversity.

In terms of ground contamination, paragraph 183 of the NPPF advises that sites should be suitable for their proposed use and that adequate site investigations should be undertaken to inform assessments.

As noted in Chapter 4, a Geoenvironmental and Preliminary Geotechnical Desk Study has been prepared for the Scheme, which reviews land contamination and geotechnical risks and constraints associated with the Scheme. The report concludes that a ground investigation is required to determine the extent and nature of potential contamination on site with respect to human health and property receptors. It will also be used to confirm that the surmised risk to controlled waters (surface and groundwater) is low. The report also recommends that an intrusive investigation is carried out prior to development of the land given the lack of existing information on ground conditions at the site.

Paragraph 185 of the NPPF seeks to provide development that is appropriate to its location. This includes reducing the impacts of noise and limiting the impacts of light pollution.

As previously noted, the Scheme is in the same location as the existing bus station facility. Noise impacts have been addressed through the preparation of a Noise Impact Assessment and lighting has been assessed in the Lighting Statement as detailed in Chapter 4.

In terms of air quality, paragraph 186 of the NPPF advises that opportunities to improve air quality or mitigate impacts should be identified. This requirement has been met through the preparation of an Air Quality Assessment. Further details are provided in Chapter 4.

5.2.8 Section 16: Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

Section 16 of the NPPF is in regard to conserving and enhancing the historic environment. Paragraph 194 of the NPPF confirms 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 and provides guidance for the level of detail required. Further, paragraph 197c of the NPPF advises that LPAs should take account of *"the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness"*.

As previously noted, the site is adjacent to the Bishop Auckland conservation area. Various cultural heritage assessments have been undertaken for the Scheme, as detailed in Chapter 4. The Statement of Significance advises that there will be no physical impacts on the conservation area or the historic environment within it, and the site setting, both visual and historic has been assessed as being negligible.

There is a potential for buried archaeology within the site and the Scheme will involve the removal and/or damage of such deposits. As existing information is limited, the Written Scheme of Investigation provides a detailed method statement for an archaeological trial trench investigation. It also includes a method statement for a watching brief on geotechnical ground investigation, which will be carried out concurrently with the archaeological trial trenching.

5.3 Local Planning Policy

The local development plan is made up of the CDP (adopted 2020) as well as the 'saved' policies from the County Durham Minerals Local Plan (adopted 2000) and the County Durham Waste Local Plan (adopted 2005). A review of the CDP is provided below.

5.3.1 County Durham Plan

A review of the CDP Policies Map has been undertaken, which identifies the following within or adjacent to the site:

Within:

- Retail hierarchy and development – town centres
- Coalfield development high risk area
- Service mined coal resource area

Adjacent to:

- Primary shopping area
- Bishop Auckland conservation area
- An area of archaeological interest

The key parts of the policies from the CDP that are pertinent to the Scheme are set out and the proposals have been appraised against them below:

Policy 9: Retail Hierarchy and Town Centre Development

Policy 9 of the CDP sets out the retail hierarchy for Durham, with Bishop Auckland being identified as a Sub Regional Centre. The policy states *“The Plan will look to support new town centre development across all of the county’s centres that will improve choice and bring about regeneration and environmental improvements”*.

The Scheme is one of a number of projects to regenerate Bishop Auckland. It will be located on the same site as the existing bus station facility and will improve links between the town centre and the bus station, as well as improving the current provision of car parking in the town centre. Sustainability has been a key factor in the design of the bus station and it has been designed to be carbon neutral and achieve a minimum of BREEAM ‘very good’ rating. As such, the Scheme is wholly consistent with this policy.

Policy 21: Delivering Sustainable Transport

Policy 21 of the CDP requires development to facilitate investment in safe sustainable modes of transport. This includes by providing appropriate, well designed, permeable and direct routes for walking, cycling and bus access. Further, development should deliver sustainable transport by:

- “c. Ensuring that any vehicular traffic generated by new development, following the implementation of sustainable transport measures, can be safely accommodated on the local and strategic highway network and does not cause an unacceptable increase in congestion or air pollution and that severe congestion can be overcome by appropriate transport improvements*
- d. Ensuring the creation of new or improvements to existing routes and facilities do not cause unacceptable harm to the natural, built or historic environment”*.

The policy sets out principles that will be used to determine cycle and parking provision in development, including requirements for cycle parking and secure storage of cycles, limiting car parking, and the provision of electric vehicle charging bays.

The movement of vehicles has played a central role in the development of the proposed site layout and has been assessed in the Transport Assessment. Further, as detailed in Section 5.1 of the DAS *“The aim of the proposed layout is to reduce unnecessary traffic movement across the site by revising the existing road network and making connections into the site as direct as possible. The benefits of this are twofold; it has the potential to reduce traffic congestion, and to improve pedestrian safety by reducing the number of vehicles near pedestrian routes”*.

In terms of pedestrians, the public realm to the north of the bus station will be wider than the existing public realm and will create the primary pedestrian route to connect the site to the town. Another pedestrian route is provided on the southern side of the bus station to provide a connection to Saddler Street. Cycle parking facilities will be provided on the eastern side of the bus station. Further, provision is made in the car park for the charging of electric vehicles.

An assessment of the transport implications of the Scheme is provided in the Transport Assessment, which does not anticipate any significant changes to sustainable transport, with the most significant changes relating to improvements to the pedestrian environment.

For these reasons, it is considered that the Scheme will meet the requirements of Policy 21 of the CDP.

Policy 24: Provision of New Transport Infrastructure

Policy 24 of the CDP states:

"New and improved transport infrastructure will be permitted where it meets all of the following criteria:

- a. *Is necessary to improve the existing highway network and/or public transport infrastructure;*
- b. *Minimises and mitigates any harmful impact upon the built, historic and natural environment and the amenity of local communities including by incorporating green infrastructure; and*
- c. *Makes safe and proper provision for all users which prioritises the movement of pedestrians, cyclists and public transport.*

Transport infrastructure proposals should also meet at least one of the following criteria:

- d. *Supports economic growth;*
- e. *Enhances connectivity either within the county or with other parts of the region; or*
- f. *Accommodates future development sites".*

Details about how the Scheme will meet these criteria is provided below:

- a. The current bus station facility in Bishop Auckland comprises 10 bus shelters, which are relatively basic and in need of maintenance. The shelters are not of a quality expected for a modern transport system in an expanding town centre. Further, there is very little signage or passenger information, making the site hard to find and navigate for unfamiliar users. DCC has identified that the bus station facility is in need of replacement as part of the proposals to revive the town centre and cater for increasing numbers of visitors to the town.
- b. The Scheme incorporates green infrastructure to improve the public realm, meet the requirements for a BREEAM 'very good' rating, and provide a net gain for biodiversity. The landscaping design is sympathetic to the historic character of the wider area.
- c. The Scheme has been designed to provide a safe and accessible facility for all users, including pedestrians, cyclists, buses and other vehicles. Details regarding this are provided in the Transport Assessment and DAS.
- d. The Scheme will support the economic growth of Bishop Auckland by providing a high quality development that will support the growth in tourism predicted for Bishop Auckland.
- e. The bus station will continue to provide connectivity to locations within and outside the county.
- f. The Scheme is located on the same site as the existing bus station facility. It has been designed to cater for increased usage of the bus station facility and provides further car parking for the town centre. In this respect, the Scheme provides for future development of other sites in the town.

Policy 26: Green Infrastructure

Policy 26 of the CDP states *"Development will be expected to maintain and protect, and where appropriate improve, the county's green infrastructure network. This will in turn help to protect and enhance the county's natural capital and ecosystem services. Development proposals should incorporate appropriate Green Infrastructure (GI) that is integrated into the wider network, which maintains and improves biodiversity, landscape character, increases opportunities for healthy living and contributes to healthy ecosystems and climate change objectives.*

New Green Infrastructure will be required to be appropriate to its context and of robust and practical design, with provision for its long term management and maintenance secured. The council expects the delivery of new green space to make a contribution towards achieving the net gains in biodiversity and coherent ecological networks as required by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)".

Proposed landscaping for the site will be appropriate for the nature of the development and consistent with landscaping in the wider context. Green Infrastructure, such as the proposed green roof on the bus station and the proposed SuDs, will be low maintenance.

As previously mentioned, the amount of landscaping on the site will increase from the existing situation, resulting in a net gain for biodiversity.

Policy 29: Sustainable Design

Policy 29 of the CDP sets out the requirements for development to achieve well designed buildings and places. It also sets out several criteria for proposals to meet, including:

- a. Contribute positively to an area's character, identity, heritage significance, townscape and landscape features, helping to create and reinforce locally distinctive and sustainable communities;*
- b. Create buildings and spaces that are adaptable to changing social, technological, economic and environmental conditions and include appropriate and proportionate measures to reduce vulnerability, increase resilience and ensure public safety and security;*
- c. Minimise greenhouse gas emissions, by seeking to achieve zero carbon buildings and providing renewable and low carbon energy generation, and include connections to an existing or approved district energy scheme where viable opportunities exist. Where connection to the gas network is not viable, development should utilise renewable and low carbon technologies as the main heating source;*
- d. Minimise the use of non-renewable and unsustainable resources, including energy, water and materials, during both construction and use by encouraging waste reduction and appropriate reuse and recycling of materials, including appropriate storage space and segregation facilities for recyclable and non-recyclable waste and prioritising the use of local materials;*
- e. Provide high standards of amenity and privacy, and minimise the impact of development upon the occupants of existing adjacent and nearby properties; and*
- f. Contribute towards healthy neighbourhoods and consider the health impacts of development and the needs of existing and future users, including those with dementia and other sensory or mobility impairments".*

The information provided below outlines how the Scheme meets these criteria:

- a. The Scheme has gone through an iterative design process, which takes account of the location of the bus station facility and operational requirements. It is recognised that the redevelopment of the site has the potential to play a key role within the wider regeneration of Bishop Auckland. The scale of development takes account of existing developments in the area, and the heritage of the area has been respected through the choice of finishes and proposed landscaping.
- b. Technology will be used to provide passengers with up to date information through the use of real time information screens. Further, the design takes account of public safety and security as detailed elsewhere in this report and in the DAS.
- c. As previously noted, the bus station has been designed to be carbon neutral. This includes the use of PV panels to generate power for the site.
- d. The Sustainability Statement provides details for the materials chosen for the Scheme. It also provides information on how water usage will be minimised and the provision of rainwater harvesting in the design. The interior of the bus station building will benefit from good natural illumination, which will help save energy. The LED lighting proposed will be programmed and set to reduce energy use. The Sustainability Statement

also advises that during site clearance suitable material will be stockpiled for reuse on the site, and to reduce the volume of earthworks required, the design is sympathetic to the sloping nature of the site.

The Scheme provides for the disposal and segregation of facilities for recyclable and non-recyclable waste.

- e. The area surrounding the application site predominantly contains commercial properties. Existing buildings adjacent to the site are generally no more than two or three stories high except for Vinovium House. The form of the bus station building represents an appropriate massing in relation to the site, with the northern low point facing the town to provide a human scale building, while the high point on the south side of the structure extends naturally to create a canopy between the buses and the station. For these reasons, and due to the proposals providing an improvement for occupiers of the nearby commercial properties as a result of the improved car park layout and planting proposals, it is considered that the standards of amenity and privacy for these commercial properties will be maintained.

There are no residential properties in close proximity to the proposed bus station building. Residential properties are located to the north of the western end of the site, on Clayton Street and Grainger Street. These dwellings are predominantly side on to the application site or are set back from the site, behind car parking areas. In order to minimise impacts on these residential properties the proposed car park is surrounded by green areas with low level planting and trees to screen and soften the appearance of the car park for the adjacent residential properties, which is an improvement on the existing hardscaping.

Rear yards, including car parking areas, for a small number of residential properties are located to the south of Saddler Street, at the eastern end of the application site. These properties front Tenters Street. It is not anticipated that the privacy of residents in these properties will be reduced as the bus station building will be located near the northern boundary of the application site and there are existing brick walls along the boundaries of these properties, which provide screening to their rear yards.

- f. The Scheme will replace existing open bus shelters with a bus station building. This will have a number of health benefits through providing a space to wait in comfort indoors during winter or adverse weather conditions. The Scheme will also benefit the health of pedestrians and cyclists due to the design considerations and facilities on site, and through improved linkages to other parts of the town centre.

Safety has been a key consideration in the design as detailed elsewhere in this report (see Section 5.2.2) and in the DAS.

The designs for the Scheme have been developed to comply with the design requirements of Building Regulation Approved Document Part M, BS8300. This includes the provision for enlarged toilet facilities, baby changing facilities, and changing places facilities. The Scheme has also been developed to comply with the Department for Transport guide to 'Inclusive Mobility', including the use of tactile flooring to aid visually impaired passengers, dedicated space for wheelchair waiting, and a comprehensive signage strategy.

Policy 29 also sets out several criteria for landscape proposals, including:

- g. Respond creatively to topography and to existing features of landscape or heritage interest and wildlife habitats;*
- h. Respect and where appropriate take opportunities to create attractive views of and from the site;*
- i. Reflect in the detailed design any features characteristic of the locality such as boundaries, paving materials and plant species;*
- j. Create opportunities for wildlife including though the use of locally native species;*
- k. Make appropriate provision for maintenance and long term management;...".*

The information provided below outlines how the Scheme meets these criteria:

- “g. The landscaping proposals for the Scheme have taken account of the sloping topography of the site and the existing landscape, heritage and wildlife in the area. This is addressed in detail in the Ecological Appraisal and the DAS.
- h. Views of and from the site have been considered during the design process and are detailed in the DAS.
- i. Features characteristic of the locality have also been considered during the design process and are detailed in the DAS.
- j. The proposed planting scheme includes locally native species.
- k. Replacement trees will be managed as standard street trees. This will involve regular management including pruning to ensure the health of the trees and safety to the public. Trees to the east of the site will be set within sustainable drainage areas planted will tall grasses. The tall grasses will require minimal management and should be self-sustaining.

Further details for the maintenance and management of the SuDS are included in the Drainage Strategy Report.

Areas of lawn with shrub planting will be provided in the west of the site. The lawn mix chosen is a flower rich mix to provide additional benefit to wildlife. The Ecological Appraisal advises that the lawn should be maintained at a short sward height (25 - 40 millimetres) during the first year of management. Regular mowing should be done in subsequent years, with periods of relaxation of 4 - 6 weeks during May – July to allow flowers to bloom.

The proposed green roof will require minimal to no maintenance and should be self-sustaining.

In terms of places and spaces, Policy 29 states:

“Major development proposals and those which affect, or add to, the public realm should:

- m. Create a well-defined, easily navigable and accessible network of streets and spaces which respond appropriately to local context, to ensure that:*
 - 1. The public realm, including new roads, paths and other rights of way, open spaces, hard and soft landscaping, boundary features and other structures, are designed to be functional, well-managed safe and durable, taking into account the lifetime needs of its users;*
 - 2. Convenient access is provided for all users whilst prioritising the needs of pedestrians, cyclists, public transport users, people with a range of disabilities, and, emergency and service vehicles;*
 - 3. Connections are made to existing cycle and pedestrian networks;*
 - 4. The public realm benefits, where possible, from natural surveillance;*
 - 5. Amenity open space is designed with regard to the local micro-climate including sunlight, shade and shelter; and*
 - 6. Private and communal amenity space is well-defined, defensible and appropriate in its design, size and location to the needs of its users”.*

The DAS provides information for the Scheme regarding the public realm and accessibility.

In terms of buildings, Policy 29 states *“All major new non-residential development will be required to achieve Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM) minimum rating of ‘very good’ (or any future national equivalent)”*. The Scheme meets this requirement.

Overall, for the above-mentioned reasons it is considered that the Scheme will meet the requirements of Policy 29 of the CPD.

Policy 31: Amenity and Pollution

Policy 31 of the CDP states *“Development will be permitted where it can be demonstrated that there will be no unacceptable impact, either individually or cumulatively, on health, living or working conditions or the natural environment and that can be integrated effectively with any existing business and community facilities. The proposal will also need to demonstrate that future occupiers of the proposed development will have acceptable living and/or working conditions. Proposals which will have an unacceptable impact such as through overlooking, visual intrusion, visual dominance or loss of light, noise or privacy will not be permitted unless satisfactory mitigation measures can be demonstrated whilst ensuring that any existing business and/or community facilities do not have any unreasonable restrictions placed upon them as a result.*

Development which has the potential to lead to, or be affected by, unacceptable levels of air quality, inappropriate odours, noise and vibration or other sources of pollution, either individually or cumulatively, will not be permitted including where any identified mitigation cannot reduce the impact on the environment, amenity of people or human health to an acceptable level. Development which does not minimise light pollution and demonstrate that the lighting proposed is the minimum necessary for functional or security purposes will not be permitted....”

Visual intrusion and dominance have been considered during the design process, as detailed in the DAS. This includes a range of massing options being considered for the bus station building, with the preferred option representing an appropriate massing in relation to the site and its surroundings.

As noted in Chapter 4, an Air Quality Assessment, Noise Impact Assessment, and Lighting Statement have been prepared to assess the impacts of the Scheme. Where necessary, mitigation measures will be provided to minimise any impacts and an Outline Construction Management Plan has been submitted with the application.

Policy 32: Despoiled, Degraded, Derelict, Contaminated and Unstable Land

Policy 32 of the CDP states *“Development will not be permitted unless the developer can demonstrate that:*

- a. Any existing despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated or unstable land issues can be satisfactorily addressed by appropriate mitigation measures prior to the construction or occupation of the proposed development;*
- b. The site is suitable for the proposed use, and does not result in unacceptable risks which would adversely impact on the environment, human health and the amenity of local communities; and*
- c. All investigations and risk assessments have been undertaken by an appropriately qualified person”*.

The Scheme meets the requirements of this policy through the preparation of a Geoenvironmental and Preliminary Geotechnical Desk Study. The report recommends that further investigations are undertaken to address uncertainties.

Policy 35: Water Management

Policy 35 of the CDP sets out requirements regarding the management of surface water. For new development the policy requires that there is no net increase in surface water runoff for the lifetime of the development. Further, on previously developed land, as close as practicable to a greenfield rate must be achieved. In terms of the order of priority for surface water disposal. The first option is infiltration or a soak away system.

Policy 35 also requires part of the development site to be set aside for surface water management and uses measures that do not increase flood risk elsewhere.

The drainage strategy for the Scheme involves the capture of surface water from within the site via dedicated attenuation tanks located under the car park and under the bus station manoeuvring area.

Other means of surface water collection include the use of SuDS, which will help slow flow rates prior to water entering the attenuation tanks. A green roof will be provided on the bus station building and will collect and convey water to a rainwater harvesting system for reuse in the bus station facilities. Sunken rain gardens will be provided to the north of the bus station building and in two separate locations south of the bus station building. Flows from the green roof, overflow from the rainwater harvesting system, and localised hard-standing areas in the immediate vicinity north of the bus station building will be conveyed into the rain garden. It is assumed at this stage that the rain gardens will be tanked with an impermeable liner due to the anticipated poor infiltration rates of the underlying strata. In addition, the parking bays will be a permeable blockwork surface to visually break up the surface material in the car park area, whilst contributing to surface water management during storm events.

In regard to SuDS, criterion h of the policy advises that *“Where SuDS are provided arrangements must be put in place for their whole life management and maintenance. Where appropriate SuDS should contribute to the provision of Green Infrastructure and biodiversity net gains”*. The proposed SuDS include low maintenance landscaping and the Scheme will meet the requirement for biodiversity net gains.

For the above-mentioned reasons, it is considered that the Scheme meets the requirements of Policy 35 of the CDP.

Policy 36: Water Infrastructure

Policy 36 of the CDP sets out a hierarchy of drainage options for foul water, with the first priority being connection to a public sewer.

It is proposed to discharge foul flows from the bus station building to the combined sewer network in Clayton Street via an indirect connection. Proposed discharge rates and point of connection are subject to Northumbrian Water's approval. As such, it is considered that the Scheme meets the requirements of Policy 36 of the CDP.

Policy 39: Landscape

Policy 39 of the CDP states *“Proposals for new development will be permitted where they would not cause unacceptable harm to the character, quality or distinctiveness of the landscape, or to important features or views.*

Proposals will be expected to incorporate appropriate measures to mitigate adverse landscape and visual effects”.

The design of the Scheme seeks to minimise landscape and visual effects. Replacement planting will be provided to mitigate the removal of existing trees on the site. A range of massing options were reviewed for the bus station building, with the preferred option being developed further to provide a building that represents an appropriate massing in relation to the site and its surroundings. Account was also taken of the setting of the site, given its close proximity to the Bishop Auckland conservation area. Further details regarding the design are provided in the DAS.

Overall, it is considered that the Scheme complies with the requirements of Policy 39 of the CDP.

Policy 40: Trees, Woodlands and Hedges

In regard to trees, Policy 40 of the CDP states *“Proposals for new development will not be permitted that would result in the loss of, or damage to, trees of high landscape, amenity or biodiversity value unless the benefits of the proposal clearly outweigh the harm”*. It also advises that proposals for development will be expected to retain existing trees where they can make a positive contribution to the locality or to the development. Where trees cannot be retained, suitable replacement planting and ongoing maintenance and management is required.

Currently the site contains 19 immature trees. These trees have some potential to support nesting birds although this is limited due to the lack of structure within the trees and the high levels of disturbance surrounding the trees. No potential bat roost features were noted on trees within the site.

It is not possible to retain the existing trees on the site; therefore, the planting of 53 new trees is proposed.

For the above-mentioned reasons, it is considered that the Scheme meets the requirements of Policy 40 of the CDP.

Policy 41: Biodiversity and Geodiversity

Policy 41 of the CDP states *“Proposals for new development will not be permitted if significant harm to biodiversity or geodiversity resulting from the development cannot be avoided, or appropriately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for”*. It also sets out the requirement for providing net gains for biodiversity.

As previously noted, the site has limited potential for biodiversity given its urban nature and location, and there are no statutory or non-statutory sites within the study area.

Although the replacement planting of trees is not likely to offset the impact of the loss of existing trees on its own, it is anticipated that the significant increase in green space within the landscape design will result in a biodiversity net gain for the site.

As such, the Scheme will meet the requirements of Policy 41 of the CDP.

Policy 44: Historic Environment

Policy 44 of the CDP deals with heritage assets and states *“Development will be expected to sustain the significance of designated and non-designated heritage assets, including any contribution made by their setting. Development proposals should contribute positively to the built and historic environment and should seek opportunities to enhance and, where appropriate, better reveal the significance and understanding of heritage assets whilst improving access where appropriate”*.

In regard to conservation areas, particular regard will be had to:

- “f. The demonstration of understanding of the significance, character, appearance and setting of the conservation area and how this has informed proposals to achieve high quality sustainable development, which is respectful of historic interest, local distinctiveness and the conservation or enhancement of the asset;*
- g. The manner in which the proposal responds positively to the findings and recommendations of conservation area character appraisals and management proposals; and*
- h. Respect for, and reinforcement of, the established, positive characteristics of the area in terms of appropriate design (including pattern, layout, density, massing, features, height, form, materials and detailing)”*.

As previously noted, a number of reports have been prepared in regard to heritage, including an Archaeological Desk Based Assessment, Statement of Significance, and Written Scheme of Investigation. Further, as previously noted the design has considered the setting of the site, given its close proximity to the Bishop Auckland conservation area. Overall, it is considered that the Scheme will meet the requirements of Policy 44 of the CDP.

Policy 47: Sustainable Minerals and Waste Resource Management

Policy 47 of the CDP sets out DCC’s aspiration for a sustainable resource economy. It requires that waste is managed in line with the waste hierarchy, including supporting proposals that minimise waste reduction, and supporting opportunities for the on-site management of waste.

As noted above, during construction materials that can be reused will be stockpiled on the site and will be used to construct the Scheme. Further, facilities will be provided on the site for the appropriate disposal of waste and recyclable materials. As such, the Scheme will meet the requirements of Policy 47 of the CDP.

5.4 Other Material Considerations

5.4.1 National Planning Practice Guidance

In March 2014, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (formerly the Department for Communities and Local Government) launched a National Planning Policy Guidance web-based resource. The following guidance is relevant for the Scheme:

Before submitting an application (revised 2019)

This guidance provides an overview of the value of pre-application engagement. It recognises that the approach to pre-application engagement needs to be tailored to the nature of the proposed development and the issues to be addressed, with the main parties generally involving the applicant, the LPA, statutory and non-statutory consultees, elected members and local people.

The pre-application engagement undertaken for the Scheme is outlined in the Community Engagement Statement.

Design: process and tools (revised 2019)

This guidance sets out information for planning well-designed places. It states *“Good design is set out in the National Design Guide under the following 10 characteristics: context, identity, built form, movement, nature, public spaces, uses, homes and buildings, resources, and lifespan”*.

Information regarding the design of the Scheme is set out in the DAS.

Healthy and safe communities (revised 2022)

The guidance states *“The design and use of the built and natural environments, including green infrastructure are major determinants of health and wellbeing. Planning and health need to be considered together in two ways: in terms of creating environments that support and encourage healthy lifestyles, and in terms of identifying and securing the facilities needed for primary, secondary and tertiary care, and the wider health and care system (taking into account the changing needs of the population)”*. In terms of good design, the guidance states *“Good design that considers security as an intrinsic part of a masterplan or individual development can help achieve places that are safe as well as attractive, which function well, and which do not need subsequent work to achieve or improve resilience. However good security is not only about physical measures and design; it requires risks and mitigation to be considered in a holistic way”*.

The provision of a high quality, inclusive design was a key consideration for the Scheme. Further details are provided in the DAS.

Historic environment (revised 2019)

This provides guidance on enhancing and conserving the historic environment. It states *“Conservation is an active process of maintenance and managing change. It requires a flexible and thoughtful approach to get the best out of assets as diverse as listed buildings in every day use and as yet undiscovered, undesignated buried remains of archaeological interest”*.

As previously noted, an Archaeological Desk Based Assessment, Statement of Significance, and Written Scheme of Investigation have been prepared for the Scheme which assess the heritage potential of the site and heritage considerations within the surrounding area.

Land affected by contamination (revised 2019)

This provides guiding principles on how planning can deal with land affected by contamination. The guidance advises that the role of planning when dealing with land that may be contaminated is *"To ensure a site is suitable for its new use and to prevent unacceptable risk from pollution, the implications of contamination for development should be considered through the planning process to the extent that it is not addressed by other regimes"*.

A Geoenvironmental and Preliminary Geotechnical Desk Study has been prepared for the Scheme in line with this guidance. An overview of this report is detailed in Chapter 4.

Light pollution (revised 2019)

This guidance sets out the light pollution considerations that planning needs to address. It states *"Artificial lighting needs to be considered when a development may increase levels of lighting, or would be sensitive to prevailing levels of artificial lighting. Artificial light provides valuable benefits to society, including through extending opportunities for sport and recreation, and can be essential to a new development. However, for maximum benefit, it is important to get the right light, in the right place and for it to be used at the right time"*.

A Lighting Statement has been prepared for the Scheme in line with this guidance. An overview of this report is detailed in Chapter 4.

Natural environment (revised 2019)

The natural environment sections of the guidance detail key issues in implementing policy to protect and enhance the natural environment, including local requirements. The guidance provides information on net gain and how it can be achieved.

An Ecological Appraisal has been prepared for the Scheme in line with this guidance. An overview of this report is detailed in Chapter 4.

Noise (revised 2019)

This guidance advises on how planning can manage potential noise impacts in new development. It states *"Noise needs to be considered when development may create additional noise, or would be sensitive to the prevailing acoustic environment (including any anticipated changes to that environment from activities that are permitted but not yet commenced)"*.

A Noise Impact Assessment has been prepared for the Scheme in line with this guidance. An overview of this report is detailed in Chapter 4.

Travel Plans, Transport Assessments and Statements (2014)

This guidance provides information regarding the contents of Travel Plans, Transport Assessments and Statements, which are required for all developments which generate significant amounts of movements. In regard, to Transport Assessments and Statements, the guidance advises that the need for, scale, scope and level of detail required of a Transport Assessment or Statement should be established as early in the development management process as possible as this may therefore positively influence the overall nature or the detailed design of the development.

A Transport Assessment has been prepared for the Scheme in line with this guidance. An overview of this report is detailed in Chapter 4. A Travel Plan is not required for the Scheme.

Waste (2015)

In terms of new development, the guidance seeks to integrate local waste management opportunities into these developments. It sets out the waste hierarchy, which applies as a priority order in waste prevention and management legislation and policy: a. prevention; b. preparing for re-use; c. recycling; d. other recovery, e.g. energy recovery; and e. disposal.

As previously noted, the Scheme will reuse materials onsite where appropriate. In addition, provision will be made for the separate disposal of refuse and recyclable materials.

Water supply, wastewater and water quality (revised 2019)

This guidance provides information for water supply, wastewater and water quality considerations for planning applications.

A drainage strategy was prepared during the design of the Scheme to address the requirements for water supply and the disposal of foul water. Further details for the proposals are provided in the DAS.

5.4.2 Bishop Auckland Masterplan Update

Bishop Auckland is covered by a masterplan produced by DCC – the Bishop Auckland Masterplan Update (December 2016). Masterplans help to guide investment, set down how towns can develop and can be a material consideration for planning applications.

The Masterplan advises on page 3 that *“Bishop Auckland is currently experiencing significant levels of investment. The Council is carrying out major improvements in the Market Place and is supporting the Auckland Castle Trust’s developments, with a range of projects and initiatives which include the development of Auckland Castle, creation of the Welcome Tower and art gallery, Eleven Arches and the delivery of season two of Kynren. The projects will create local, regional, national and international visitor interest”*.

The Masterplan does not specifically mention the replacement of the existing bus station facility; however, it is noted that future developments included commitments to continue to improve access to the town and the parking provision, as well as support the regeneration of the town and refocusing of the role of the town centre and continuing to attract investment into the town to support further regeneration.

6. Conclusions

This Planning Statement supports the planning application submitted to DCC for the redevelopment of the existing bus station facility in Bishop Auckland, which involves the demolition of existing bus station buildings / structures and construction of a new bus station and car park. The Scheme forms part of a wider range of regeneration projects in Bishop Auckland and will support the growing tourism demand in the town.

There is a clear and strong focus on achieving sustainable growth at the heart of national planning policy. The delivery of new sustainable transport infrastructure is a key driver in delivering economic reform and vitality of the Durham economy. Although there is no site specific allocation in the CDP, local planning policy nevertheless clearly supports the development of a new bus station facility on the existing bus station site.

During the design process, careful consideration has been given to the urban nature of the site and its surroundings, including the adjacent Bishop Auckland conservation area. The Scheme has been designed to enhance the landscape and surrounding areas, for example, through the use of appropriate materials and a similar colour palette to existing development in the area, and through increasing the amount of landscaping on the site.

In conclusion, it is considered the benefits of a new bus station and car park will deliver the necessary infrastructure to revive the town centre and cater for the predicted growth in visitor numbers. Planning policy supports the development of a new bus station facility and there are no material planning considerations that indicate planning permission should not be granted for the Scheme.

Appendix A. List of Drawings

Drawing name	Drawing no.	Revision no.
Block Plan As Existing	BL000034-JAC-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-00001	P01
Location Plan As Existing	BL000034-JAC-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-00002	P02
Location Plan As Proposed	BL000034-JAC-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-00003	P02
Demolition Plan	BL000034-JAC-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-00004	P02
Site Plan As Existing	BL000034-JAC-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-00005	P02
Site Plan As Proposed	BL000034-JAC-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-00006	P02
Site Elevations As Existing	BL000034-JAC-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-00007	P01
Site Elevations As Proposed	BL000034-JAC-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-00008	P01
Site Sections As Existing	BL000034-JAC-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-00009	P01
Site Sections As Proposed	BL000034-JAC-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-00010	P01
Site Plan Bus Station & Surface Car Park	BL000034-JAC-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-00011	P02
Bus Station General Arrangement Ground Level	BL000034-JAC-BS-S0-DR-A-00001	P01
Bus Station General Arrangement First Floor Level	BL000034-JAC-BS-S1-DR-A-00002	P01
Bus Station General Arrangement Roof Level	BL000034-JAC-BS-SR-DR-A-00003	P01
Bus Station Bin Store General Arrangement	BL000034-JAC-BS-ZZ-DR-A-00004	P01
Bus Station Sections	BL000034-JAC-BS-ZZ-DR-A-00005	P01
Bus Station Elevations	BL000034-JAC-BS-ZZ-DR-A-00006	P01
Substation General Arrangement Ground and Roof Level	BL000034-JAC-SS-ZZ-DR-A-00001	P01
Substation Elevations and Sections	BL000034-JAC-SS-ZZ-DR-A-00002	P01