



County Planning Committee

Date **Wednesday 11 June 2025**
Time **1.00 pm**
Venue **Council Chamber, County Hall, Durham**

Business

Part A

1. Apologies
2. Substitute Members
3. Declarations of Interest
4. Minutes of the meeting held on 2 April 2025 (Pages 3 - 10)
5. Applications to be determined
 - a) DM/23/03633/FPA - Land West Of 20 Pont Road, Leadgate DH8 6HE (Pages 11 - 58)

Detailed planning application for the erection of 97 no. 2, 3 and 4 bedroom dwellings with associated works (Amended Description).

Helen Bradley
Director of Legal and Democratic Services

County Hall
Durham
3 June 2025

To: **The Members of the County Planning Committee**

Councillor J Campbell (Chair)
Councillor D Bellingham (Vice-Chair)

Councillors A Bell, ML Franklin, S Franklin, D Freeman,
K Hope, L Maddison, A Schulman, J Stephenson, M Wilkes and
S Woodhouse

Contact: Kirsty Charlton

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DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

At a Meeting of **County Planning Committee** held in Council Chamber, County Hall, Durham on **Wednesday 2 April 2025 at 10.00 am**

Present:

Councillor G Richardson (Chair)

Members of the Committee:

Councillors J Atkinson, D Boyes, J Elmer, J Higgins, C Martin, A Savory, A Simpson and G Smith

1 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A Bell, P Jopling, K Shaw and S Zair.

2 Substitute Members

There were no substitute Members in attendance.

3 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

4 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 5 March 2025 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

The order of business was changed to hear item no. 5b) first.

5b) DM/23/01451/MIN - Hulands Quarry And Adjoining Land To The East, The Street, Bowes, DL12 9JW (Barnard Castle West)

The Committee received a report of the Senior Planning Officer with regards to an application for a proposed eastward extension to Hulands Quarry for the winning and working of 9.79 million tonnes of Carboniferous Limestone and continued use of the site offices and mineral processing plant including the asphalt plant and the recycling of imported road planings and road base until 14 September 2057 and the completion of restoration by 14 March 2059

(Resubmission) at Hulands Quarry And Adjoining Land To The East, The Street, Bowes, DL12 9JW (for copy see file of minutes).

Councillor Martin noted that there were no objectors in attendance and advised that policy placed a higher weight on developments for the extraction of minerals and the use of land for industry and jobs. He moved the recommendation to approve the application, as outlined in the report.

Councillor Elmer referred to the aerial photograph which showed a well established, old woodland with significant ecological value. He appreciate there would be an overall biodiversity net gain but asked for an explanation on how this had been achieved, since this area would be lost. The Senior Planning Officer referred to the biodiversity net gain metric and advised that the net gain was achieved through the overall planting through restoration. He referred to Phase 3b and advised that whilst it would be lost throughout the development, it would be brought back at the end. Councillor Elmer responded that it was not easy to replace old woodland, the trees took hundreds of years to mature. The Senior Planning Officer advised that it was not identified as ancient woodland but he agreed it was well established, however the matrix showed an improvement.

Councillor Atkinson seconded the recommendation to approve the application.

Resolved

That the application be APPROVED subject to completion of agreements under Section 39 of The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 to secure biodiversity management for the life of the development and Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to extinguish previous planning obligations associated with Hulands Quarry and the existing planning permission, and to impose 5 years extended aftercare and future dedication of new rights of way, and the conditions outlined in the report.

5a) DM/21/02616/WAS - Spring Gardens Farm, Howden Bank, Lanchester, Durham, DH7 0QR (Lanchester)

The Committee received a report of the Principal Planning Officer with regards to an application for Agricultural land improvements utilising imported soil materials at Spring Gardens Farm, Howden Bank, Lanchester, Durham, DH7 0QR (for copy see file of minutes).

The Strategic Development Manager gave a detailed presentation which included a site location plan, aerial photograph, site photographs from various locations and plans showing a topological survey, proposed fill area, proposed restoration and temporary site access.

Councillor P Jackson addressed the Committee on behalf of Lanchester Parish Council to object to the proposal. They had considered the planning balance and their judgement differed from that of the Planning Officer. The application did not accord with County Durham Plan waste policy, there was no demonstrable need for the site and the waste soil could continue to be disposed at other sites in the County. He advised that Greencroft Parish Council were in agreement.

The proposal did not accord with County Durham Plan policies for;

- Waste
- Sustainable Transport
- Highways and Traffic
- Amenity
- Landscape
- Flood risk
- Heritage
- Agricultural land

In addition the proposal was contrary to Lanchester Neighbourhood Plan Policy. It was an area of high landscape value and the proposals did not conserve or enhance the special qualities of the landscape.

The location was problematic and he raised concerns relating to land drainage. There was a collapsed culvert which had not been rectified. The listed building had deteriorated and was almost derelict and there was an invasion of Himalayan Balsam, and no enforcement had been progressed.

There had been a long term failure to maintain the land and improve its productivity and the report confirmed that if the application was approved, the site would improve, however years of neglect should not be a reason to ignore policies.

He referred to the Sustainable Transport Policy and advised that the traffic information was not always reported or up to date. Howden Bank was very steep and had numerous access to dwellings which had the potential for accidents. The application had estimated 25 lorries travelling in and out of the site and this could last for more than four months. New signage was being installed due to the ongoing issues at the crossroads at Maiden Law. St Bedes School was congested at peak times which would restrict access. The Parish Council implied that the proposal would have an unacceptable adverse impact to the highway.

With regard to amenities, the Applicant had described the project as small scale, of short duration with low impact however the Parish Council

disagreed as did residents. There was a local end of life care hospice that would be affected by the increased traffic movements.

The site was on agricultural land that was productive under the previous ownership and it could be enhanced without need to change anything. The Parish Council suspected that the benefits to agriculture were secondary and the prime intention for the proposal was for financial gain or to facilitate potential development in future.

If the application was approved, it would set an alarming precedent for other similar schemes and he asked the Committee to take full account of the significant adverse impact and refuse the application.

Mr Ollivere addressed the Committee as a local resident, in objection to the proposal. He agreed with the statement of the Parish Council and suggested that policies 31 and 21 were important enough contraventions to refuse the application alone but others in relation to water management, waste management and the necessity of the proposal which was in an area which has been left to deteriorate over many years.

His property was located at the south west corner of the site and the proposed access was within 12m of his exit point. He predicated that there would be a vehicular movement every 10 -15 minutes which would impact on his amenity. He did not see any benefit of the proposal and the poor state of the land near the residence was down to the Applicant. In the forty years he had lived in the area, there had been three separate farmers who had each maintained the land, grazing animals and growing hay, however since the Applicant had taken over the property, there had been no effort to farm the land other than to graze horses. The farm buildings were all in a state of disrepair and in his opinion, the proposal was not an agricultural improvement but that of land management that would significantly impact amenity and public safety.

He referred to the access on a road described by the AA as the most dangerous road for 17-25 year olds in the country. There was poor visibility from Annfield Plain to Lanchester, but particularly on the bend and there was a danger from speeding within 60m from where lorries were entering the site. Two streams passing the area underground were a high flood risk. Mr Ollivere advised that in 2020 the Applicant was using the land to dispose of waste without permission. There were no benefits to the proposal and he asked Members to reject it.

The Applicant, Mr S Graham explained that he was applying for planning permission as a footpath between the fields had collapsed due to storm damage six years prior. The subsequent erosion was impacting on the trees and fields and had resulted in damage to fences and gateways. It had made

the area impossible for grassland management and it was not only cosmetic, but necessary to move forward and rotate the livestock. The proposal was on the most important area on the farm and connected the adjacent fields.

Finally, Mr Graham referred to the impact of the process, the misleading comments made by residents and significant costs associated with the application, which he advised was simply to develop the land and business, whilst also improving the environment.

Councillor Martin noted that the site appeared to be wasteland that did not serve any purpose. He questioned the reasons for the objections and advised that there was a risk attached to the land as anything could happen to it. All applications presented some form of harm however this proposal was for a four month period that would ultimately provide some protection and provide long term agricultural sustainability.

Councillor Elmer advised that the quantity of soil imported to the site would be extremely expensive to buy and the Applicant would not be able to recover the cost through its future use. He questioned whether the application was for agricultural development or to enable waste management. The Strategic Development Manager confirmed that the proposal would result in agricultural achievement and to achieve that the Applicant was importing waste soil from development sites. Whilst it would have been expensive to buy, it was waste from development sites and was managed as such. Councillor Elmer concluded that due to the expense of importing top soil, the scheme was not financially viable and therefore assumed that it was an application for the disposal of waste. The Strategic Development Manager confirmed that he was unable to comment on the viability, however condition 16 limited the material imported to top soil and sub soil, and testing was required to ensure it was appropriate, therefore there was some control.

Councillor Atkinson summarised the application as a proposal to allow the landowner to improve the land and it was clear from the site photographs that this was required. The scheme improve the condition of the land and he queried the reference to waste as it was restricted to the importation of soil. In response to a question, the Strategic Development Manager confirmed that the application was for the removal of soil from a development site and this was managed in regulatory terms as the disposal of soil as waste. Until recycled for a future use, it was classified as waste.

The Applicant confirmed that the soil would be tested to ensure it was clean soil so that the land could be used to grow hay for horses. The intention was to have more livestock and whilst there were other fields, they were used by horses and there were no fields to move animals through. This would be used as a holding field. It was an unsightly area of land outside of his house

he had an opportunity to level it with clean soil and put a fence around and purchase cattle.

Councillor Boyes was very familiar with the area and had concerns regarding road safety. He described it as a winding, narrow road that had a speed limit of 30 mph from Maiden Law to 60 mph. As a driving instructor he would not take people on the road as it was far too dangerous. With the predicted volume of wagons every few minutes, there was potential for accidents, and it was even more dangerous in winter. He also had concerns regarding flood risk and the potential impact of water running down the hill. There had been a well-documented flood in recent years in Lanchester which had been reported internationally.

The Highway Development Manager advised that this was an A road which carried over 8000 vehicles per day. If Members were minded to refuse against the application on cumulative impact, 50 additional vehicles a day was a very low increase and would be difficult to substantiate an objection. In relation to road safety the accident data held by the Council had only one minor accident reported within the previous five years and therefore an objection would be difficult to substantiate based on these records.

Councillor Boyes queried whether the accident data was based on emergency response attendance as he was aware of three accidents within the previous few weeks. The Highway Development Manager explained that during an appeal process an Inspector would not consider anecdotal evidence in relation to accidents, and would only consider formally recorded accidents which are held in the Council's accident database as evidence to support a refusal on road safety. For clarity, it included accidents which had resulted in emergency responders or notification of damage.

The Strategic Development Manager confirmed that a new access was proposed to be created and removed to facilitate the proposed vehicles. In relation to flooding, there was a watercourse on site that would need to be modified however the flood risk assessment had been reviewed by the Council's Drainage Team who advised that the proposal would not increase the risk of flooding elsewhere.

In response to a question from the Chair, the Parish representative, Councillor Jackson advised that due to the village being situated at the bottom of a valley, the water travelled from all directions, however Howden Bank was a significant problem.

Councillor Atkinson considered the application to be a genuine attempt to facilitate improvements to land and he did not consider top soil as waste. In terms of the highway impact, it was common to have difficulties with wagons when making improvements to properties however this was a temporary

inconvenience. He moved a motion to approve the application as per the recommendations outlined in the report.

Councillor Elmer was left with some concerns as the land was essentially a void with a proposal to fill it and level out with high quality agricultural materials. This was not the typical way a landowner would fill a void, they would use an inert material and then top it with a high quality material. Members had not been made aware of the grade of the soil to be used and in his opinion, it seemed like an attempt to gain an income from enabling people to dispose of inert materials.

In response to a question from the Chair, the Applicant confirmed that he was purchasing soil to improve his land.

Councillor Martin seconded the motion to approve the application.

Resolved

That application be APPROVED subject to the completion of an agreement under Section 39 of The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 to secure offsite biodiversity management for the life of the development and the conditions outlined in the report.

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Planning Services

COMMITTEE REPORT

APPLICATION DETAILS

APPLICATION No:	DM/23/03633/FPA
FULL APPLICATION DESCRIPTION:	Detailed planning application for the erection of 97 no. 2, 3 and 4 bedroom dwellings with associated works (Amended Description).
NAME OF APPLICANT:	Gleeson Homes
SITE ADDRESS:	Land West Of 20 Pont Road, Leadgate DH8 6HE
ELECTORAL DIVISION:	Derwent and Pont Valley
CASE OFFICER:	Callum Harvey Senior Planning Officer Tel. 07393 469 380 Callum.Harvey@durham.gov.uk

DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE AND PROPOSALS

The Site

1. The application site comprises two agricultural fields measuring a total of 5.13 hectares (ha) in area. The site is located directly to the northwest of the settlement of Leadgate, which forms part of the wider Consett Cluster. To the northwest of the site lies agricultural land, with the residential areas known as Bradley Bungalows and Pont Bungalows located further beyond. To the northeast lies Pont Road (also known as Pont Lane), with woodland beyond. To the southeast lies a residential area around Tyne Avenue. To the southwest lies a paddock with residential properties along Fourth Street beyond.
2. The site features a gradient from the southern corner down to the northwestern boundary. The site is clearly visible when travelling along Pont Road to the northeast, and from public vantage points at Bradley Bungalows to the northwest.
3. The site is located in the countryside.
4. The site is not covered by any landscape designations, with the nearest designated Area of Higher Landscape Value located 25m to the northeast.
5. The entirety of the site lies within the Coalfield Development High Risk Coal Area as identified by the Coal Authority. The site also lies within the surface mined coal

resource area and the mineral safeguarding area for coal as defined in the County Durham Plan. There are no known mineshafts within the site, with the nearest shafts being located approximately 300m to the northwest of the site, in the field nearest Bradley Bungalows and adjacent to Pont Road.

6. There are no designated heritage assets within or adjacent to the site, with the nearest listed building being the Grade II listed Church of St Ives, located on St Ives Road approximately 480m to the southeast of the site. The nearest Conservation Areas are Blackhill to the west, Medomsley to the north and Iveston to the southeast, all approximately 2km from the site. There is no intervisibility between the site and these assets due to levels of the landscape and due to built form.
7. The site falls within Flood Zone 1 as identified by the Environment Agency, which is the lowest risk area of fluvial (river) flooding. There are small pockets of Low Risk Areas of surface water flooding at the western corner of the site, with the northeastern edge of site also within the Low Risk Area. There are some small pockets of Medium Risk Areas at the northeastern edge of the site. There are no High Risk Areas within the site.
8. There are no ecological designations within the site, with the nearest designated Local Wildlife Site being Brooms Pond, located approximately 1km east of the site adjacent to the A692 / A693 junction. The nearest designated Ancient Woodland is Billingside Wood located approximately 20m to the north across Pont Road. The nearest registered pond is 650m to the north.

The Proposal

9. The application seeks full planning permission for the erection of 97 dwellings, and associated landscaping and infrastructure. The development proposes the following mix of dwellings:
 - 10 two-bedroom bungalows;
 - 13 two-bedroom houses;
 - 46 three-bedroom houses; and
 - 28 four-bedroom houses.
10. The application submits the following Affordable Housing provision, to be secured under a legal agreement:
 - 10 Discount Market Sale units; and
 - 5 Affordable Rent units.
11. The development would be a mix of single storey and two storey dwellings, each with their own parking areas and private rear gardens. The dwellings would comprise brick elevations, concrete roof tiles, and upvc windows and doors. Boundary treatments comprise vertical timber fencing.
12. Each property would have in-curtilage car parking, whilst an additional 28 visitor parking bays would be distributed across the site. Each dwelling would also benefit from an Electric Vehicle charging point in accordance with the relevant Building Regulations. All garages would measure a minimum of 6m x 3m internally.
13. The development would be served by a new vehicular access from Pont Road/Pont Lane to the northeast. The construction of the T-junction would result in the loss of some existing trees and scrub adjacent to Pont Road. Footpath links are also proposed

along the southeastern site boundary, connecting to the existing public footpaths at Eden Avenue, Trent Dale, and Wear Avenue.

14. The proposal also seeks to create Sustainable Urban Drainage System (SuDS) basins at the northern and northeastern corners of the site. A large swale is also proposed along the northwestern edge of the site. All driveways and private shared surfaces would feature permeable paving.
15. The application indicates that the proposed residential dwellings would be of a sustainable design and would be constructed using sustainable methods in accordance with current Building Regulation requirements.
16. The current application is being reported to the County Planning Committee as it is residential development with a site area of more than 4 hectares.

PLANNING HISTORY

17. There is no history of planning applications at the site.

PLANNING POLICY

NATIONAL POLICY

18. A revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published in December 2024. The following elements of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) are considered relevant to this proposal:
19. *NPPF Part 2 – Achieving sustainable development.* The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development and therefore at the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. It defines the role of planning in achieving sustainable development under three overarching objectives – economic, social and environmental, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways. The application of the presumption in favour of sustainable development for plan-making and decision-taking is outlined.
20. *NPPF Part 4 – Decision-making.* Local planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way. They should use the full range of planning tools available, including brownfield registers and permission in principle, and work proactively with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. Decision-makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible.
21. *NPPF Part 5 – Delivering a Sufficient Supply of Homes.* To support the Government's objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes, it is important that a sufficient amount and variety of land can come forward where it is needed, that the needs of groups with specific housing requirements are addressed and that land with permission is developed without unnecessary delay.
22. *NPPF Part 6 - Building a Strong, Competitive Economy.* The Government is committed to securing economic growth in order to create jobs and prosperity, building on the country's inherent strengths, and to meeting the twin challenges of global competition and a low carbon future.

23. *NPPF Part 8 – Promoting healthy and safe communities.* The planning system can play an important role in facilitating social interaction and creating healthy, inclusive communities. Developments should be safe and accessible; Local Planning Authorities should plan positively for the provision and use of shared space and community facilities. An integrated approach to considering the location of housing, economic uses and services should be adopted.
24. *NPPF Part 9 – Promoting sustainable transport.* Encouragement should be given to solutions which support reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and reduce congestion. Developments that generate significant movement should be located where the need to travel will be minimised and the use of sustainable transport modes maximised.
25. *NPPF Part 11 – Making Effective Use of Land.* Planning policies and decisions should promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions. Strategic policies should set out a clear strategy for accommodating objectively assessed needs, in a way that makes as much use as possible of previously-developed or 'brownfield' land.
26. *NPPF Part 12 – Achieving Well-Designed Places.* The Government attaches great importance to the design of the built environment, with good design a key aspect of sustainable development, indivisible from good planning.
27. *NPPF Part 14 – Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change.* 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 should help to: shape places in ways that contribute to radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, minimise vulnerability and improve resilience; encourage the reuse of existing resources, including the conversion of existing buildings; and support renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure.
28. *NPPF Part 15 – Conserving and enhancing the natural environment.* Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment.
29. *NPPF Part 16 – Conserving and enhancing the historic environment.* Heritage assets range from sites and buildings of local historic value to those of the highest significance, such as World Heritage Sites which are internationally recognised to be of Outstanding Universal Value. These assets are an irreplaceable resource and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations.
30. *NPPF Part 17 Facilitating the sustainable use of minerals* – It is essential that there is a sufficient supply of minerals to provide the infrastructure, buildings, energy and goods that the country needs. Since minerals are a finite natural resource, and can only be worked where they are found, best use needs to be made of them to secure their long-term conservation.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/national-planning-policy-framework>

NATIONAL PLANNING PRACTICE GUIDANCE:

31. The Government has consolidated a number of planning practice guidance notes, circulars and other guidance documents into a single Planning Practice Guidance Suite. This document provides planning guidance on a wide range of matters. Of

particular relevance to this application is the practice guidance with regards to; air quality; historic environment; design process and tools; determining a planning application; flood risk; healthy and safe communities; land affected by contamination; housing and economic development needs assessments; housing and economic land availability assessment; light pollution; natural environment; neighbourhood planning; noise; open space, sports and recreation facilities, public rights of way and local green space; planning obligations; travel plans, transport assessments and statements; use of planning conditions; and water supply, wastewater and water quality.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/planning-practice-guidance>

LOCAL PLAN POLICY:

County Durham Plan (October 2020)

32. Unless specifically stated elsewhere in this report the policies of the County Durham Plan are considered to be consistent with the updated NPPF.
33. *Policy 1 – Quantity of Development.* Outlines the levels of employment land and housing delivery considered to be required across the Plan period.
34. *Policy 6 – Development on Unallocated Sites.* States that development on sites not allocated in the County Durham Plan or in a Neighbourhood Plan, but which are either within the built-up area or outside the built-up area but well related to a settlement, will be permitted provided it accords with all relevant Development Plan policies, and:
 - a. is compatible with, and is not prejudicial to, any existing, allocated or permitted use of adjacent land;
 - b. does not contribute to coalescence with neighbouring settlements, would not result in ribbon development, or inappropriate backland development;
 - c. does not result in the loss of open land that has recreational, ecological or heritage value, or contributes to the character of the locality which cannot be adequately mitigated or compensated for;
 - d. is appropriate in terms of scale, design, layout, and location to the character, function, form and setting of, the settlement;
 - e. will not be prejudicial to highway safety or have a severe residual cumulative impact on network capacity;
 - f. has good access by sustainable modes of transport to relevant services and facilities and reflects the size of the settlement and the level of service provision within that settlement;
 - g. does not result in the loss of a settlement's or neighbourhood's valued facilities services unless it has been demonstrated that they are no longer viable;
 - h. minimises vulnerability and provides resilience to impacts arising from climate change, including but not limited to, flooding;
 - i. where relevant, makes as much use as possible of previously developed (brownfield) land; and
 - j. where appropriate, it reflects priorities for urban regeneration.
35. *Policy 10 – Development in the Countryside.* States development in the countryside will not be permitted unless allowed for by specific policies in the Plan, by relevant policies within an adopted Neighbourhood Plan relating to the application site, or where the proposal relates to one or more of the following exceptions; economic development, infrastructure development or the development of existing buildings. New development in the countryside must accord with all other relevant development plan policies and with the General Design Principles set out in Policy 10.

36. *Policy 14 – Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land and Soil Resources.* States that development of the best and most versatile agricultural land will be permitted where it is demonstrated that the benefits of the development outweigh the harm, taking into account economic and other benefits.
37. *Policy 15 – Addressing Housing Need.* Establishes the requirements for developments to provide on-site affordable housing, the circumstances when off-site affordable housing would be acceptable, the tenure and mix of affordable housing, the requirements of developments to meet the needs of older people and people with disabilities, and the circumstances in which the specialist housing will be supported. The Policy states that on sites with 10 or more units, 10% of the homes provided should be for affordable home ownership (starter homes, discount market sale housing and other affordable routes to home ownership). In line with the requirements in Table 8 of the Plan, any contribution above 10% should be provided as affordable housing for rent. The Policy goes on to state that where it can be evidenced by the applicant to the Council's satisfaction that this tenure mix would make the required affordable housing contribution unviable or that alternative affordable housing products are required to meet local needs, then proposals for an alternative tenure mix as proposed by the applicant will be considered.
38. *Policy 19 – Type and Mix of Housing.* States that on all new housing developments the Council will seek to secure an appropriate mix of dwelling types and sizes, taking account of existing imbalances in the housing stock, site characteristics, viability, economic and market considerations and the opportunity to facilitate self build or custom build schemes.
39. *Policy 21 – Delivering Sustainable Transport.* States that all development shall deliver sustainable transport by (in part) 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 congestions or air pollution and that severe congestion can be overcome by appropriate transport improvements.
40. *Policy 25 – Developer Contributions.* States that new development will be approved where any mitigation necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms is secured through appropriate planning conditions or planning obligations.
41. *Policy 26 – Green Infrastructure.* States that development will be expected to maintain and protect, and where appropriate improve, the County's green infrastructure network. Advice is provided on the circumstances in which existing green infrastructure may be lost to development, the requirements of new provision within development proposals, and advice in regard to public rights of way.
42. *Policy 27 - Utilities, Telecommunications and Other Broadcast Infrastructure.* Requires all residential and commercial development to be served by a highspeed broadband connection, where this is not appropriate, practical or economically viable developers should provide appropriate infrastructure to enable future installation.
43. *Policy 29 – Sustainable Design.* Requires all development proposals to achieve well designed buildings and places having regard to advice within Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) and sets out detailed criteria which sets out that where relevant development is required to meet including; making a positive contribution to an areas character and identity; provide adaptable buildings; minimise greenhouse gas emissions and use of non-renewable resources; providing high standards of amenity and privacy; contributing to healthy neighbourhoods; providing suitable landscape

proposals; provide convenient access for all users; adhere to the Nationally Described Space Standards (subject to transition period).

44. *Policy 31 – Amenity and Pollution.* Sets out that 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 they can be integrated effectively with any existing business and community facilities. Development will not be permitted where inappropriate odours, noise, vibration and other sources of pollution cannot be suitably mitigated against, as well as where light pollution is not suitably minimised. Permission will not be granted for sensitive land uses near to potentially polluting development. Similarly, potentially polluting development will not be permitted near sensitive uses unless the effects can be mitigated.
45. *Policy 32 – Despoiled, Degraded, Derelict, Contaminated and Unstable Land.* States [in part] that development will not be permitted unless the developer can demonstrate that 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.
46. *Policy 35 – Water Management.* Requires all development proposals to consider the effect of the proposed development on flood risk, both on-site and off-site, commensurate with the scale and impact of the development and taking into account the predicted impacts of climate change for the lifetime of the proposal. All new development must ensure there is no net increase in surface water runoff for the lifetime of the development. Amongst its advice, the policy advocates the use of SuDS and aims to protect the quality of water.
47. *Policy 36 – Water Infrastructure.* Advocates a hierarchy of drainage options for the disposal of foul water. Applications involving the use of non-mains methods of drainage will not be permitted in areas where public sewerage exists. New sewage and waste-water infrastructure will be approved unless the adverse impacts outweigh the benefits of the infrastructure. Proposals seeking to mitigate flooding in appropriate locations will be permitted though flood defence infrastructure will only be permitted where it is demonstrated as being the most sustainable response to the flood threat.
48. *Policy 39 – Landscape.* States that 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 and that development affecting valued landscapes will only be permitted where it conserves, and where appropriate enhances, the special qualities of the landscape, unless the benefits of the development in that location clearly outweigh the harm.
49. *Policy 40 – Trees, Woodlands and Hedges.* States that proposals will be expected to retain existing trees where they can make a positive contribution to the locality or to the development, maintain adequate standoff distances between them and new land-uses, including root protection areas where necessary, to avoid future conflicts, and integrate them fully into the design having regard to their future management requirements and growth potential.
50. *Policy 41 – Biodiversity and Geodiversity.* States that 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.

51. *Policy 43 – Protected Species and Nationally and Locally Protected Sites.* Development proposals that would adversely impact upon nationally protected sites will only be permitted where the benefits clearly outweigh the impacts whilst adverse impacts upon locally designated sites will only be permitted where the benefits outweigh the adverse impacts. Appropriate mitigation or, as a last resort, compensation must be provided where adverse impacts are expected. In relation to protected species and their habitats, all development likely to have an adverse impact on the species' abilities to survive and maintain their distribution will not be permitted unless appropriate mitigation is provided or the proposal meets licensing criteria in relation to European protected species.
52. *Policy 44 – Historic Environment.* States that great weight will be given to the conservation of all designated assets and their settings (and non-designated heritage assets of archaeological interest that are demonstrably of equivalent significance to scheduled monuments)(164). Such assets should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance. This aligns with Chapter 16 of the NPPF.
53. *Policy 56 - Safeguarding Mineral Resources.* States that planning permission will not be granted for non-mineral development that would lead to the sterilisation of mineral resources within a Mineral Safeguarding Area. This is unless it can be demonstrated that the mineral in the location concerned is no longer of any current or potential value, provision can be made for the mineral to be extracted satisfactorily prior to the non-minerals development taking place without unacceptable adverse impact, the non-minerals development is of a temporary nature that does not inhibit extraction or there is an overriding need for the non-minerals development which outweighs the need to safeguard the mineral or it constitutes exempt development as set out in the Plan. Unless the proposal is exempt development or temporary in nature, all planning applications for non-mineral development within a Mineral Safeguarding Area must be accompanied by a Mineral Assessment of the effect of the proposed development on the mineral resource beneath or adjacent to the site of the proposed development.

Supplementary Planning Documents

54. Biodiversity SPD (April 2025) - Provides guidance to improve biodiversity delivery within new developments.
55. County Durham Design Code SPD (2024) - Provides local design guidance to help developers create well-designed schemes that fit in well with their context and setting. The SPD is supported by Settlement Character Studies and includes examples of design coding for the different types of settlement found in County Durham.
56. Development Viability, Affordable Housing and Financial Contributions SPD (2024) – Provides guidance on how CDP Policy 25 and other relevant policies requiring planning obligations for affordable housing or other infrastructure will be interpreted and applied.
57. Trees, Woodlands and Hedges SPD (2024) – Provides guidance on good practice when considering the impacts of development on trees, woodlands, and hedgerows, as well as new planting proposals.
58. Residential Amenity Standards SPD (2023) – Provides guidance on the space/amenity standards that would normally be expected where new dwellings are proposed.

59. Parking and Accessibility SPD (2023) – Provides guidance on parking requirements and standards.
60. County Durham Building for Life SPD (2019) – Provides guidance on the application of the Building for Life standards and the Design Review process referenced in CDP Policy 29 to ensure well-designed major residential development proposals.

<https://www.durham.gov.uk/cdp>

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN:

61. The application site is not within a designated Neighbourhood Plan area.

CONSULTATION AND PUBLICITY RESPONSES

62. The revised NPPF was published in December 2024. Within this report all references to the NPPF are to the December 2024 version. Where consultees have referred to paragraph numbers of the previous NPPF these have been updated.

STATUTORY RESPONSES:

63. *Highways Authority* – Advise that following receipt of further information, they have no concerns with the proposed access onto Pont Road/Pont Lane, subject to conditions securing submission and approval of final details off off-site works along the highway to ensure the new access would be safe. The Highways officer also has no concerns with the proposed layout of the site, with the proposed car parking arrangement, or with the route and extent of footways within the site which are to be offered up for adoption.
64. *Drainage & Coastal Protection (Lead Local Flood Authority)* – Advise that following receipt of amended plans, they make no objection to the application, subject to recommended conditions.
65. *Northumbrian Water* – No objection subject to condition.
66. *Coal Authority* – Note that the application site falls within the defined Development High Risk Area, and note the submitted documents in support of the application. They make no objection and do not recommend any conditions.

INTERNAL CONSULTTEE RESPONSES:

67. *Spatial Policy* – offer key policy observations in relation to the proposed development. They note the site is not allocated for development in the County Durham Plan and is in the countryside, therefore Policies 6 and 10 are applicable. They also advise that there are no concerns in relation to the Mineral Safeguarding Area designation which covers the site, in respect of Policy 56.
68. Advice is also provided in respect of Policy requirements in relation to National Described Space Standards (NDSS), M4(2) standards, design, transport and highways, green infrastructure, mining legacy, and developer contributions.
69. *Access & Rights of Way* – Advise there are no registered or claimed public rights of way within or abutting the development site.

70. *Affordable Housing* – Note that following receipt of this application, there has been a change in national policy in relation to affordable requirements, with an emphasis placed on affordable rent, and the proposal has amended the proposed affordable housing offer to reflect this. They also note the proposal would meet an identified local need, with the provision of both 2 and 3 bed homes for affordable rent and purchase. They advise the location of the affordable housing is reasonably distributed across the site.
71. They also advise that the submitted details to determine Open Market Value and determine the level of discount for Discount Market Sale units are acceptable. They are therefore able to accept the submitted 20% discount for this site.
72. *Archaeology* – Advise that following receipt of further information they have no concerns with the proposal, and no conditions are recommended.
73. *DCC Active Travel* – Have requested the application updates the supporting technical information to reflect up-to-date standards.
74. *DCC Sustainable Travel* – Advise that the submitted Travel Plan is acceptable, and no further details are required. No conditions are recommended.
75. *Design and Conservation* – The development (as amended) has been assessed through the Councils Design Review Panel. The Design Review re-score on 4th December 2024 concluded that the amended proposal received 0 'Red', 4 'Amber', and 8 'Green' scores.
76. *Ecology* – Note that the application proposes to purchase biodiversity units to meet the policy requirement for a net gain for biodiversity, and advise this approach is sound. Also advise a Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP) can be secured with a suitable condition, alongside conditions securing the installation of built in bat and swift boxes in 10% of properties (locations and type to be agreed), and securing the purchase of biodiversity units.
77. *Education* – Advise that, based on the methodology set out in the Council's adopted Development Viability, Affordable Housing and Financial Contributions SPD, that the proposed development of 97 dwellings would produce 7 Nursery age pupils, 25 pupils of primary school age, 13 pupils of secondary age, 1 post-16 pupil, and 0.97 SEND pupils.
78. In relation to Primary School pupils, there would be sufficient space at the Primary Schools which are located within 2 miles of the site to accommodate the pupils generated by the development. Therefore, no contribution would be required to facilitate the provision of additional teaching accommodation for Primary Schools.
79. In relation to Secondary School pupils, there would not be sufficient space at the nearest Secondary School, which is Consett Academy, to accommodate the pupils generated by the development. Therefore, a contribution of £316,056 (13 pupils x £24,312) should be sought to mitigate for the impacts of the development.
80. In relation to SEND pupils, the Education officer advises there is a shortage of SEND places across the County. In order to mitigate the impact of the development on SEND provision, they advise a contribution of £81,461 (0.97 pupils x £83,980) would be required. This contribution can be secured by way of a Section 106 Agreement.

81. *Environmental Health (Air Quality)* – Raise no concerns following receipt of updated Construction Management Plan, which should be secured as an approved document. No further conditions are recommended.
82. *Environmental Health (Contamination)* – Raise no concerns subject to a recommended condition.
83. *Environmental Health (Nuisance)* – Raise no concerns, and no conditions are recommended.
84. *Landscape* – Refer to advice provided as part of Design Review comments. No conditions are recommended.
85. *Public Health* – Raise no concerns, and no conditions are recommended.
86. *Trees* – Raise concerns with proximity of dwellings to hedgerow which forms southwestern edge of the site, and loss of trees are northeastern edge of the site.

EXTERNAL CONSULTEE RESPONSES:

87. *Natural England* – Have not responded to the consultation.
88. *NHS* – raise no objection subject to a financial contribution of £46,851 toward increasing GP surgery capacity. The sum can be secured by a Section 106 Agreement.
89. *Police Architecture Liaison* – raise no objection. Advice has been provided on design and layout of the development.

PUBLIC RESPONSES:

90. The application has been advertised in the local press (the Northern Echo), by site notice, and through neighbour notification letters.

Objection

91. 61 letters of objection have been received from the public; comprising 52 letters of objection from 22 nearby properties, 7 further letters of objection from no given address, 1 further objection from a consultant on behalf of a landowner elsewhere in Leadgate, and 1 further objection from Leadgate and District Historical Society. The received objections raise the following concerns:
 - Loss of countryside
 - Loss of land with visual amenity value
 - Impact on character of Leadgate and surrounding area
 - Unsustainable location
 - Public transport is poor during winter months
 - Capacity of local schools, dentists, doctor surgeries, and play areas
 - Lack of employment opportunities in Leadgate and in the wider Consett area
 - Increased flood risk
 - Capacity of sewer network
 - Access onto Pont Road/Pont Lane and highway safety concerns
 - Increase in traffic and subsequent highway safety, pollution, and noise concerns
 - Ecological impact
 - Alternative suitable sites located elsewhere, including allocated sites

- Empty properties nearby should be renovated and brought back into use first
- Overpopulated settlement
- Increase in crime
- Contamination risk during works
- Noise impact during works
- Vibration impact during works
- Air and dust pollution and carbon emissions during works
- Light pollution
- Impact on amenity of neighbouring properties through overlooking and overbearing
- Lack of solar panels and grey water recycling shown on dwellings
- Loss of trees
- Removal of soils
- Local residents would not benefit from proposed dwellings due to affordability
- Broadband and other utility capacity
- Land stability
- Archaeological impact

92. Concerns have been raised over the loss of land in the Green Belt, however the site is not located in the Green Belt. Concerns have also been raised in respect of de-valuing properties and loss of private views, however these are not material planning considerations.

Elected Members

93. No comments from Councillors received.

The above is not intended to list every point made and represents a summary of the comments received on this application. The full written text is available for inspection on the application file which can be viewed at <https://publicaccess.durham.gov.uk/online-applications/search.do?action=simple&searchType=Application>

APPLICANT'S STATEMENT:

94. The site provides a sustainable development opportunity and would contribute to the provision of a mix of housing size, types and affordability in Leadgate, particularly promoting family housing and appropriate dwellings which allow people to stay in their local community. The proposals aim to deliver quality new homes to local people in addition to providing much needed new housing in this location. Gleeson have an ethos of providing high quality, low cost homes, predominantly targeting first time buyers and those looking to advance onto the property ladder. Therefore, we are conscious of affordability for a couple who are on the national living wage when setting all open market values, ensuring that a couple can afford to purchase a property on all of our developments.
95. This planning application has considered all relevant planning policy matters in respect of the proposal bringing forward residential development. At a national, regional and local planning policy level, there remains a priority for development in urban areas to which this site would accord, as well as addressing the housing shortage faced at all levels. The site is fully compliant with the adopted County Durham Local Plan, as well as satisfying all the components of the CDP Policy 6 (Development on Unallocated Sites). The development will also fully comply with Local Policy and contribute towards meeting the needs of the county's existing and future residents by providing 100% space standard dwellings, 66% M4(2) compliant dwellings and meeting the needs of older people and people with disabilities by providing bungalows. 15% (15no.) of units on the site will also be designated as affordable homes in the form of Discount Market Sale and Affordable Rent, ensuring affordability across all levels.

96. Additionally, the site will integrate well into the locality through design proposals and density accords with National Planning Policy. The Applicants have undertaken considerable dialogue with architects, local residents, consultants and relevant officers at the Council to ensure that the scheme not only delivers high quality design, but also responds to the aspirations of the local community. The scheme has sensitively designed to ensure its well related to the existing settlement of Leadgate with sizeable landscape buffers to screen the development and create a strong settlement edge as well as ample, usable open space on site. Indeed, the proposals have been amended through the formal planning submission process, to take into account the comments made and ensure the visions of the development remained in line with Planning Officers.
97. The site lies on the edge of a residential area in close proximity to services and facilities including access to sustainable travel options such as bus services and footpath links. There is ready access to local amenities, schools and employment sites, making the development socially sustainable.
98. Development of the site will bring a number of direct social and economic benefits directly to Leadgate and the surrounding area, including:
- A selection of 97no high quality new homes including 10no bungalows and 15no affordable units.
 - A health contribution of £46,851 towards increasing the GP surgery capacity at Leadgate Surgery.
 - A contribution of £316,056 to be used towards the provision of additional secondary school teaching accommodation at Consett Academy and £83,980 towards the provision of SEND education within County Durham.
 - Provision of 3.60 acres of open space on site as well as a contribution of £143,618.20 towards the provision of new and improvement of existing public open space within the Electoral Division.
99. The value of the community is crucial to Gleeson and this is demonstrated through the Community Matters Programme. Gleeson understand the importance of involving the community before and during the construction of a development and leaving a legacy once the works are complete. Community engagement is a crucial part of the development process, and Gleeson will work closely with the local schools to make an impact in a positive way by promoting strong community ties and inspiring the future generations. We want to inspire the younger generation with our presence in the area and be part of the learning of local school children. In addition, through the Community Matters Programme, Gleeson are committed to provide 'Local Jobs for Local People' and offer priority of employment to those living within 2 miles of each site, ensuring that the benefit of jobs and spend go to directly to the local community.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS AND ASSESSMENT

100. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 sets out that if regard is to be had to the development plan, decisions should be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In accordance with advice within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), the policies contained therein are material considerations that should be taken into account in decision making, along with advice set out in the Planning Practice Guidance notes. Other material considerations include representations received.

101. In this context, it is considered that the main planning issues in this instance relate to the principle of development, landscape and visual impact, agricultural land and soil resource, type and mix of housing, addressing housing need, layout and design, trees and hedgerows, residential amenity, highway safety, public rights of way, ecology, surface water and foul drainage, heritage and archaeology, contaminated land and coal mining risk, energy efficiency, planning contributions and other matters.

Principle of Development

102. Planning law requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The NPPF is a material planning consideration. The County Durham Plan (CDP) is the statutory development plan and the starting point for determining applications as set out in the Planning Act and reinforced at Paragraph 12 of the NPPF. The CDP was adopted in October 2020 and provides the policy framework for the County up until 2035 and is therefore considered up to date.
103. Paragraph 11 of the NPPF establishes a presumption in favour of sustainable development. For decision taking this means:
- c) approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or
 - d) where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:
 - i) the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or,
 - ii) any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.
104. Paragraph 11 of the NPPF establishes a presumption in favour of sustainable development. For decision taking this means approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay (Paragraph 11 c). Accordingly, Paragraph 11(d) of the NPPF is not engaged.

Housing Land Supply

105. Policy 1 of the County Durham Plan (CDP) states that in order to meet the needs and aspirations of present and future residents of County Durham, and to deliver a thriving economy, the following levels of development are proposed up to 2035:
- a. *300 hectares of strategic and general employment land for office, industrial and warehousing purposes; and*
 - b. *a net minimum of 24,852 new homes of mixed type, size and tenure over the period 2016 to 2035 (1,308 new homes per year).*
106. Following the publication of an updated Five Year Housing Land Supply Position Statement in May 2025, as of the 1st April 2025 the County Council can demonstrate a 6.14 year supply of deliverable sites. This includes the policy required 5% buffer, reflecting strong past housing delivery in County Durham, and a 150% Housing Delivery Test (HDT) score for 2023.

107. Whilst officers note that demonstrating sufficient housing land supply is a minimum requirement and not a ceiling, the ability to clearly demonstrate sufficient housing land supply is a benefit in the decision-making process and is an important material consideration in the event that a conflict with the County Durham Plan is identified.

Location within the Countryside

108. The site is considered to be outwith the built-up area of Leadgate and is therefore in the countryside, as described in the definition of a built-up area in the Glossary of the CDP. Policy 10 of the CDP therefore applies, which states that development in the countryside will not be permitted unless allowed for by specific policies in the CDP, by relevant policies within an adopted neighbourhood plan relating to the application site, or where the proposal relates to one or more of a number of exceptions stated in the Policy. The proposal does not meet any of those exceptions, and the site is not located within a Neighbourhood Plan area, therefore in order to accord with Policy 10, the proposal must accord with a relevant Policy in the CDP – in this instance the only relevant Policy is Policy 6 of the CDP.
109. Whether the proposal accords with or conflicts with Policy 6 will be considered below.
110. Officers have also considered the proposal against the relevant criteria under Policy 10. Criteria p) states that new development in the countryside, by virtue of their siting, scale, design and operation, must not be solely reliant upon unsustainable modes of transport. New development in countryside locations that is not well served by public transport must exploit any opportunities to make a location more sustainable including improving the scope for access on foot, by cycle or by public transport. Whether the proposal accords with criteria p) will also be considered later in this report. The proposal would not conflict with any other criteria under Policy 10.

Unallocated site

111. In order to meet the housing need of the County, the CDP has allocated a number of sites for housing development under CDP Policy 4. The site subject to this application is not one of those allocated for residential development in the CDP.
112. The site is immediately adjacent to the built form of Leadgate, therefore Policy 6 of the CDP applies. Policy 6 states that development on sites not allocated in the County Durham Plan or in a Neighbourhood Plan, but which are either within the built-up area or outside the built up area but well related to a settlement, will be permitted provided it accords with all relevant Development Plan policies, and conforms with criteria (a) to (j) of the Policy (as highlighted above).
113. Officers note that in order for criteria a) to j) to be applicable, the site first needs to be considered well-related to the settlement. Paragraph 4.110 of the CDP explains that when assessing whether a site is well-related to a settlement, the physical and visual relationship of the site to the existing built-up area of the settlement will be a key consideration. Paragraph 4.111 goes on to state that the Council wants to ensure that new development does not detract from the existing form and character of settlements and will not be harmful to their surroundings. In determining whether a site is appropriate for new development, the relationship with adjacent buildings and the surrounding area will be taken into account along with the current use of the site and compatibility of the proposal with neighbouring uses.
114. Officers are mindful that the site is formed of two open fields which are not open to the public, which lie beyond the existing built form of the settlement. The site is bound to

the east by dwellings and to the southwest by a small private paddock with further dwellings beyond. To the northeast lies Pont Road with a woodland beyond. The site is not covered by any landscape designations, with the nearest designated Area of Higher Landscape Value located 25m to the northeast. The site is visible from public vantage points along Pont Road and from Bradley Bunaglows and Pont Bungalows to the northwest. It is considered that the site is well contained within the surrounding built form to the south and east, and by the woodland to the north. Whilst the site would be visible from the northwest, it would be seen within the context of the built form to the east and south. The site is of some visual amenity value, however this is considered to be limited. Subject to the provision of an acceptable landscape buffer along the length of the northwestern edge of the site, it is considered that the proposal could establish a robust settlement edge, providing defined visual separation with Bradley Cottages to the north west. Within the site's immediate context there is scope for a housing development in this location to be well-related to Leadgate in a visual sense and in respect of built form. The design, layout and landscape considerations for this proposal are set out in greater detail later in this assessment.

115. In terms of physical relationship to the settlement, the adjacent residential development to the southeast and to the southwest beyond the private paddock is noted by officers. The distances to the nearest bus stops, facilities and amenities, and whether they would be desirable connections, are considered later in this report. Subject to sufficient footpath connections along the southwestern edge of the site there is scope for a housing development in this location to be well-related to Leadgate in a physical sense.
116. Officers have also considered the proposal against the relevant criteria under Policy 6:
117. Regarding Policy 6 a), the proposal is required to not lead to an adverse impact on any existing, allocated or permitted use of adjacent land. Officers are mindful of the surrounding landscape to the northwest and north, and the acceptability of the proposed landscape buffer as mitigation is considered later in this report. Officers are also mindful of the proximity of existing dwellings to the southwest and southeast, and the impacts in respect of noise, dust, odour and other amenity impacts are also considered later in this report.
118. Regarding Policy 6 b), officers note that if the site were to be developed, the adjacent fields to the northwest would still form a buffer to prevent coalescence between the northern end of Leadgate and Pont Bungalows, Bradley Cottages and the fledgling Pont Burn to the northwest. The proposal also includes a landscape buffer along the northwestern edge of the site to form a robust settlement edge. It is considered that the proposal does not contribute to coalescence with neighbouring settlements. The proposal would also not result in ribbon development or inappropriate back land development.
119. Regarding Policy 6 c), the proposal is required to not lead to a loss of open land that has recreational, ecological or heritage value, or contributes to the character of the locality which cannot be adequately mitigated or compensated for. It is noted that the site is visually open land as highlighted above, though is in private ownership and therefore does not offer recreational value above its wider inclusion visually in an edge of settlement location. Ecological, heritage and landscape amenity matters are considered later in this report.
120. Regarding Policy 6 d), the proposal is required to be appropriate in terms of scale, design, layout, and location to the character, function, form and setting of, the

settlement. Visual amenity and sustainability matters are considered later in this report.

121. Regarding Policy 6 e), the proposal is required to not be prejudicial to highway safety or have a severe residual cumulative impact on network capacity. Highways safety matters are considered later in this report.
122. Regarding Policy 6 f), the proposal is required to have good access by sustainable modes of transport to relevant services and facilities, as well as and reflect the size of the settlement and the level of service provision within that settlement. Sustainability matters are considered later in this report.
123. Regarding Policy 6 g), the proposal would not result in the loss of valued facilities or services.
124. Regarding Policy 6 h), the proposal is required to minimise vulnerability and provide resilience to impacts arising from climate change, including but not limited to, flooding. Drainage matters are considered later in this report.
125. Regarding Policy 6 i) and j), the development does not utilise previously developed land, and is not within the built-up area; whilst there is no specific conflict with these criteria of Policy 6, the policy does not provide support for the proposals in this respect.

Locational Sustainability

126. Regarding the sustainability of the development, Policy 21 of the CDP provides clarity on what the CDP requires in respect of sustainability, with Policy 21 requiring more than just public transport connections. Policies 6 f) and 10 p) build upon these areas and cover public transport connection considerations.
127. Paragraph 7 of the NPPF states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, including the provision of homes, commercial development and supporting infrastructure in a sustainable manner. At a very high level, the objective of sustainable development can be summarised as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Paragraph 8 of the NPPF goes on to state that achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways. These are an economic objective, a social objective, and an environmental objective.
128. Policy 21 of the CDP requires the delivery of sustainable transport by facilitating investment in safe sustainable modes of transport, providing appropriate, well designed, permeable and direct routes for walking, cycling and bus access, so that new developments clearly link to existing services and facilities together with existing routes for the convenience of all users. The Policy requires all development to have regard to the policies set out in the County Durham's Strategic Cycling and Walking Delivery Plan and, where possible, contribute to the development of a safe strategic cycling and walking network and in particular the routes set out in Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans. It also requires development to have regard to the Parking and Accessibility Supplementary Planning Document. Policy 22 of the CDP supports modal shift and sustainable transport improvements.
129. Policy 21 first requires the transport implications of development to be addressed as part of any planning application, where relevant this could include through Transport

Assessments, Transport Statements and Travel Plans. This is discussed in the highway safety section of this report.

130. Turning first to criteria a) and b) of Policy 21, it is noted that these criteria prioritise pedestrian connectivity ahead of cycling and bus transport. Officers are mindful of the CIHT's Planning for Walking (2015) guidance which states under Section 6.4:

"Building Sustainable Transport into New Developments (DfT, 2008) gives the following advice on pedestrian catchment areas: Traditional compact town layouts: Walking neighbourhoods are typically characterised as having a range of facilities within 10 minutes' walking distance (around 800 metres). However, the propensity to walk or cycle is not only influenced by distance but also the quality of the experience; people may be willing to walk or cycle further where their surroundings are more attractive, safe and stimulating. Developers should consider the safety of the routes (adequacy of surveillance, sight lines and appropriate lighting) as well as landscaping factors (indigenous planting, habitat creation) in their design. The power of a destination determines how far people will walk to get to it. For bus stops in residential areas, 400 metres has traditionally been regarded as a cut-off point and in town centres, 200 metres (DOENI, 2000). People will walk up to 800 metres to get to a railway station, which reflects the greater perceived quality or importance of rail services."

131. Officers are also mindful of more recent guidance by Active Travel England in their Standing Advice Note: Active Travel and Sustainable Development (June 2024). The document states that:

"The government's ambition is for England to be a great walking and cycling nation, supporting a shift in the way people across England think about undertaking short journeys within towns and cities. The aim is for walking, wheeling (trips made by wheelchair and mobility scooters) and cycling to be seen as the most convenient, desirable and affordable way to travel." In respect of pedestrian access to local amenities, the document states: "A mix of local amenities should be located within an 800m walking and wheeling distance (using well-designed routes) of all residential properties or staff entrances for workplace facilities. Trip lengths to key amenities should be derived from isochrone maps using an appropriate point within the application site, rather than straight-line distances from site boundaries or main access points. Footpaths/ways to local amenities should conform to the National Design Guide standards of being safe, direct, convenient and accessible for people of all abilities, which includes but is not limited to routes that:

- have a minimum width of 2m, with limited pinch points no less than 1.5m;*
- are step-free;*
- have a smooth, even surface;*
- have seating at regular intervals;*
- are uncluttered;*
- have good natural surveillance and clear lines of sight;*
- have street lighting;*
- have wayfinding; and*
- have crossing points suitable for the speed and traffic flow of the road(s)."*

132. In relation to cycling accessibility, the document states that: "

"Off-site cycling infrastructure to a range of local amenities, and town centres, railway stations, employment areas and the National Cycle Network as appropriate, should be coherent, direct, safe, comfortable and attractive in line

with the five core design principles and geometric requirements in LTN 1/20. The development should not be reliant on shared use routes in full or intermittently, which conflicts with the government's clear position in paragraph 1.6.1 (2) of LTN 1/20 that cycles must be treated as vehicles and not as pedestrians. Where on-road provision would be utilised, there should be sufficient protection from motor traffic in accordance with the suitability and segregation standards in LTN 1/20." In relation to access to public transport, the document states: "Most buildings within the application site should be within 400m of a high-frequency bus stop or 800m of a rail/light station or tram stop, with appropriate facilities. Local bus stops should have good natural surveillance and provide seating, lighting, shelter, real-time passenger information and raised bus boarders or specialist kerbs. Local rail stations should provide cycle parking, including spaces for non-standard cycles footpaths/ways to public transport nodes should conform to the design standards."

133. Officers note that Policy 21 a) requires proposed development to deliver, accommodate and facilitate investment in safe sustainable modes of transporting in the following order of priority:
 - those with mobility issues or disabilities,
 - walking,
 - cycling;
 - then bus and rail transport.

134. Turning first to occupiers of the development with mobility issues or disabilities, a condition is recommended to secure at least 66% of the total number of dwellings to conform to Buildings Regulations M4(2) standard. The design of footpaths and crossings to be adopted by the County Council as the Local Highway Authority would also need to be Equality Act (2010) compliant, and would be secured through the technical approval process under the Highways Act, separate from the Planning process.

135. Turning next to pedestrian connections, officers are mindful of the 800m standard to the nearest facilities and amenities is established by the CIHT guidance and ATE guidance referenced above. Officers note the shortest actual walking routes to the nearest facilities and amenities from the centre of the residential part of the site are:
 - Leadgate Methodist Church approx. 340m actual walking distance to the south via Wear Avenue and Tyne Avenue;
 - Watling Spaces at The Roxy, a community centre located on the B6309 Watling Street approx. 610m actual walking distance to the south via Wear Avenue and Tyne Avenue;
 - Leadgate Surgery and Pharmacy on the B6309 Watling Street approx. 660m actual walking distance to the south via Wear Avenue and Tyne Avenue;
 - Leadgate Post office on St Ives Road approx. 740m actual walking distance to the south via Wear Avenue, Tyne Avenue and Watling Street;
 - Leadgate Working Mens Club on St Ives Road approx. 750m actual walking distance to the south via Wear Avenue, Tyne Avenue and Watling Street;
 - Co-op Retail Store on Front Street approx. 750m actual walking distance to the south via Wear Avenue, Tyne Avenue and Watling Street;

- Leadgate & District Community Association approx. 800m actual walking distance to the south via Wear Avenue, Tyne Avenue and Watling Street;
 - Leadgate Primary Upper School approx. 1,200m actual walking distance to the south via Wear Avenue, Tyne Avenue, Watling Street, Durham Road and Alder Grove.
136. The above list relies upon sufficient footpath and cycling connections within the site to the boundary with Wear Avenue, which the application proposes.
137. The above list notes a range of facilities and amenities which are within the 800m distance standard, due to the proximity of the site to the centre of Leadgate. Officers note the Primary School, at 1,200m, is 400m beyond the walking distance standard, which weighs against the sustainability credentials of the proposal. However, the route to the Primary School is well surfaced, is fully lit, and benefits from natural surveillance along its length. The route also passes through the centre of Leadgate which benefits from a range of other services and amenities. This combination of factors makes the walking route to the Primary School more desirable. Given this, and the range of other facilities and services which are within the 800m standard, on balance it is considered that the distance to the nearest Primary School does not lead to the site being an unsustainable location for housing.
138. Turning next to public transport connections, officers note the bus stops on Tyne Avenue, approximately 250m to the south of the site via Wear Avenue. The stops are served by the 16, 16A and 16B services, which cumulatively, provide frequent, direct connections to Durham City 7 days a week. It is considered that these existing services provide attractive, convenient and desirable public transport connections.
139. Following the above assessment it is considered that the site is a sustainable location for housing, in accordance with Policies 21 a), 21 b), 6 f), and 10 p) of the CDP.
140. Regarding criteria 21 c), the impact on the capacity of the road network will be considered later in this report under Highway safety.
141. Regarding criteria 21 d), it is considered that the proposed pedestrian connections along the southeastern edge of the site would not have an adverse impact on the natural and built environment, and are therefore acceptable. The proposed vehicular access and adjacent footpaths onto Pont Road/Pont Lane to the northeast of the site would lead to the loss of existing trees, which will be considered later in this report.
142. The submitted Travel Plan is also a material consideration, as Travel Plans set out a strategy which encourages occupiers of a development to shift away from private vehicle use to other modes of transport. The Sustainable Travel officer has been consulted and they have advised that further information is required before the Travel Plan can be found wholly acceptable. Officers note that the submitted Travel Plan is mostly acceptable, and that the required details are relatively minor amendments. Therefore, Officers consider that the submission of an updated Final Travel Plan, with these amendments can be secured by condition.

Conclusion on Principle of Development

143. The site is not allocated for housing in the County Durham Plan, and is in the open countryside. However, officers consider that the site is in a sustainable location, which is well related to the settlement of Leadgate. Subject to detailed design matters it is considered that the principle of developing this site for housing is acceptable in accordance with Policies 6, 10 and 21 of the County Durham Plan.

Addressing Housing Need

Type and Mix of Housing

144. Paragraph 5.187 of the CDP recognises that the County has an imbalanced housing stock in relation to type and mix. CDP Policy 19 therefore states that, on all new housing developments, the Council will seek to secure an appropriate mix of dwelling types and sizes, taking account of existing imbalances in the housing stock, site characteristics, viability, economic and market considerations and the opportunity to facilitate self-build or custom-build schemes. Paragraph 60 of the NPPF states that to support the Government's objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes, it is important that a sufficient amount and variety of land can come forward where it is needed, that the needs of groups with specific housing requirements are addressed, and that land with permission is developed without unnecessary delay. The overall aim should be to meet as much of an area's identified housing need as possible, including with an appropriate mix of housing types for the local community.
145. The proposal seeks consent for 97 dwellings of the following mix:
- 10 two-bedroom bungalows;
 - 13 two-bedroom houses;
 - 46 three-bedroom houses; and
 - 28 four-bedroom houses.
146. The application submits the following Affordable Housing provision, to be secured under a legal agreement:
- 10 Discount Market Sale units; and
 - 5 Affordable Rent units.
147. This proposed mix of dwellings is considered acceptable. The mix and tenure of the proposed affordable units is considered in detail below.

Meeting the Needs of Older People and People with Disabilities

148. CDP Policy 15 also aims to meet the needs of older people and people with disabilities, achieving this in two ways.
149. The first part is that 66% of the units on schemes of 5 units or more need to be accessible and adaptable to meet the needs of older people and people with disabilities. This is achieved by adhering to Building Regulations Requirement M4(2) (accessible and adaptable dwellings) standard.
150. Based on the proposed 97 dwellings, 64 would be required to be built to M4(2) standard. The submitted Housing Layout drawing (Revision Q) states that 70% of the dwellings would be built to M4(2) standard, which exceeds the 66% requirement. Notwithstanding the submitted details the Spatial Policy officer advises that a compliance condition be used to secure at least 66% of dwellings be constructed to Building Regulations Requirement M4(2) (accessible and adaptable dwellings) standard.
151. The second part of CDP Policy 15 requires a minimum of 10% of the total number of dwellings on the site to be of a design and type that increases the housing options of older people. This means it has to be built as a suitable product from the outset, so that it is available at the point of first occupation (i.e. now/immediately) to meet the needs of older people. These properties should also be built to M4(2) standard and

would contribute to meeting the 66% requirement set out above. They should be situated in the most appropriate location within the site for older people. Appropriate house types considered to meet this requirement include:

- level access flats;
- level access bungalows; or
- housing products that can be shown to meet the specific needs of a multi-generational family.

152. The proposal includes 10 single storey bungalows, which equates to 10% of the proposed 97 dwelling scheme. The distribution of the proposed bungalows is considered acceptable and in accordance with CDP Policy 15.
153. The proposed bungalow provision is acceptable, in accordance with Policy 19 of the CDP and with Part 5 of the NPPF.

Affordable Housing Provision

154. Policy 15 of the CDP establishes the requirements for developments to provide on-site affordable housing, the circumstances when off-site affordable housing would be acceptable, the tenure and mix of affordable housing, the requirements of developments to meet the needs of older people and people with disabilities, and the circumstances in which the specialist housing will be supported. The Policy states that on sites with 10 or more units, 10% of the homes provided should be for affordable home ownership (starter homes, discount market sale housing and other affordable routes to home ownership). In line with the requirements in Table 8 of the Policy, any contribution above 10% should be provided as affordable housing for rent. The Policy goes on to state that where it can be evidenced by the applicant to the Council's satisfaction that this tenure mix would make the required affordable housing contribution unviable or that alternative affordable housing products are required to meet local needs, then proposals for an alternative tenure mix as proposed by the applicant will be considered.
155. The site is within the 'medium' viability area as identified in the County Durham Plan. Major-scale residential developments in this area are required to provide at least 15% of dwellings as affordable housing. It is noted that the provision of 15 affordable units within a legal agreement equates to 15% of dwellings across the proposed 97 dwelling development, which is acceptable.
156. Whilst the provision of 15 affordable units via a legal agreement is an acceptable amount of units, officers have also carefully considered the distribution, type, mix and tenure of the proposed affordable units.
157. Turning first to the distribution of the affordable units across the development, this is considered acceptable, and would result in a mixed and balanced community across the development.
158. Turning next to the type and mix of the affordable units, the Affordable Housing Officer has reviewed the updated Affordable Housing Needs Assessment and notes the provision of 2 and 3 bed affordable units would address an identified local need.
159. In respect of tenure of units, it is noted that the proposal is for 10 Discount Market Sale units, and 5 Affordable Rent units. This provision is in accordance with Policy 15 & national policy and is acceptable.
160. Regarding the Discount Market Sale units, the Affordable Housing officer advises that the submitted details to determine Open Market Value and determine the level of

discount for Discount Market Sale units are acceptable. They are therefore able to accept the submitted 20% discount for this site.

161. Due to the above considerations, the proposed affordable housing offer is acceptable in accordance with Policies 15 or 19 or the County Durham Plan and with the NPPF.

Residential amenity

162. CDP Policies 29 and 31 outline that developments should provide high standards of amenity and privacy, minimise the impact of development upon the occupants of existing adjacent and nearby properties, and not lead to unacceptable levels of pollution. The Policies are informed by Parts 12 and 15 of the NPPF, which require that a good standard of amenity for existing and future users be ensured, whilst seeking to prevent both new and existing development from contributing to, or being put at unacceptable risk from, unacceptable levels of pollution including noise pollution.
163. Paragraph 180 of the NPPF states that planning decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of air or noise pollution. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air quality and water quality. Paragraph 191 of the NPPF states that planning decisions should ensure that new development is appropriate for its location taking into account the likely effects of pollution on health, living conditions and the natural environment, as well as the potential sensitivity of the site or the wider area to impacts that could arise from the development. Paragraph 192 of the NPPF advises that planning decisions should sustain and contribute towards compliance with relevant limit values or national objectives for pollutants. Opportunities to improve air quality or mitigate impacts should be identified, such as through traffic and travel management, and green infrastructure provision and enhancement. Paragraph 193 of the NPPF advises that planning decisions should ensure that new development can be integrated effectively with existing businesses and community facilities (such as places of worship, pubs, music venues and sports clubs).

Construction Period

164. The Environmental Health (Air quality) officer has been consulted and they advise that their initial concerns regarding the Construction Management Plan have been addressed. They advise that the CMP should form an approved document should permission be granted, and have not recommended any further conditions.
165. The Environmental Health (Nuisance Action) officer has also been consulted. They advise that the submitted noise, odour and air quality impact assessments do not identify any unacceptable adverse impacts, and that the development is unlikely to cause a statutory nuisance. They therefore have no objection, and no conditions are recommended.
166. Officers are mindful that the construction traffic would utilise Pont Road/Pont Lane to the northeast of the site, however it is considered that there would be sufficient safeguards in the Construction Management Plan, Noise Impact Assessment and Odour Assessment to ensure the construction period would not lead to a loss of residential amenity that would warrant refusal of the application.
167. It is considered that the proposal would preserve the amenity of neighbouring residents during the construction period. The Construction Management Plan, Noise

Assessment, Odour Assessment, and Air Quality Assessment would also be listed as approved documents to secure implementation of the mitigation measures included therein, in the interest of the amenity of neighbouring residents.

Separation Distances

168. The Council's Residential Amenity Standards Supplementary Planning Document (RAS SPD) provides detailed guidance on the assessment of separation distances between proposed dwellings and between existing and proposed dwellings. The RAS SPD seeks separation distances of:-
- *A minimum distance of 21.0m between habitable room windows, where either dwelling exceeds single storey, and a minimum of 18.0m between habitable room windows and both dwellings are single storey.*
 - *Where a main facing elevation containing a habitable room window is adjacent to a gable wall which does not contain a habitable room window, a minimum distance of 13.0m shall be provided where either dwelling exceed single storey or 10.0m where both dwellings are single storey.*
169. Officers also note that this particular site features a gradient from the southern corner sloping down to the northern corner the RAS SPD provides further guidance in relation to changes in levels, stating: *To compensate for these changes the separation / privacy distances cited above should be increased by 3m for every additional storey height (including rooms within the roof space which contain windows) above two storeys. Where there is a significant change in levels, the minimum separation/privacy distance will increase by 1m for every full 1m that the floor level of the development would be above the affected floor level of the neighbouring property.* The RAS SPD does however recognise that there may be instances where these instances can be relaxed, including for design purposes or to address wider material considerations.
170. Officers have carefully considered the proposed separation distances in line with the above guidance, and it is considered that the proposed separation distances are sufficient. All gardens within the development would achieve minimum garden depths of 9m, however there are retaining structures between some internal rear gardens, the highest of which is 1.8 metres (plots 38/43). In these instances, a 1.8m high close boarded fence is proposed to separate all private rear garden areas that will maintain privacy to external gardens but also prevent overlooking between upper floor rooms of adjacent properties.
171. Overall the development complies with Policies 29 e) and 31 of the CDP, and the NPPF in this respect.

Layout and Design

172. A Building for Life Supplementary Planning Document (2019) (BfL SPD) has been adopted by the Council, and this is a key document used in the assessment of Major scale housing developments which is referred to in Policy 29 of the County Durham Plan. In recognition of national planning advice and to achieve high quality housing developments, the Council has adopted an internal Design Review process to assess schemes against the Building for Life 12 (BfL 12) Standards. The BfL SPD formalises the review process and establishes the guidelines and standards for its operation and is linked to the Sustainable Design Policy (29) in the County Durham Plan. The scoring is based on a traffic light system with the aim of the proposed new development to secure as many "Greens" as possible, minimise the number of "Ambers" and avoid "Reds". The more "Greens" achieved the better the development will be, "Ambers" are usually concerns that can be raised to "Green" with revisions, whereas a "Red" gives a warning that a particular aspect needs strong reconsideration.

173. CDP Policy 29 states that schemes with one or more Red scores will not be acceptable and will be refused planning permission unless there are significant overriding reasons.
174. Part 12 of the NPPF seeks to achieving well-designed places. Paragraph 131 within Part 12 states that 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.
175. The development (as amended) has been assessed through the Councils Design Review Panel. The Design Review re-score on 4th December 2024 concluded that the amended proposal received 0 'Red', 4 'Amber', and 8 'Green' scores.
176. In respect of Question 1: Connections to help integrate the development with its surroundings, the proposal includes 3m wide multi user connections to the east and south, providing desirable connections into the centre of Leadgate and to the bus stops along Tyne Avenue. The proposal scores Green in respect of connections.
177. In respect of Question 2: Proximity to facilities and amenities, as discussed earlier in this report it is considered that the proposal is in sufficient proximity to a range of facilities and services in the centre of Leadgate, whilst sufficient connections have been provided to enable convenient access on foot or by bicycle. The proposal scores Green in this respect.
178. In respect of Question 3: Public transport, as discussed earlier in this report it is considered that the proposal is in sufficient proximity to bus stops which provide frequent, direct connections to Durham City. Sufficient connections have been provided to enable convenient access on foot or by bicycle to these stops. The proposal scores Green in this respect.
179. In respect of Question 4: Meeting local housing requirements, as discussed earlier in this report it is considered that the proposed development would include an acceptable affordable housing provision, an acceptable bungalow provision, and an acceptable amount of M4(2) compliant dwellings. The proposed mix of housetypes is also considered acceptable. The proposal scores Green in respect of Question 4.
180. In respect of Question 5: Character, following receipt of amended plans showing an improved landscape buffer along the northwestern site boundary, and a reduction in density of dwellings, and introduction of character areas including amended housetypes, the Character of the development has been improved within possibilities presented by the context of the site constraints. The proposal scores Amber in respect of Question 5.
181. In respect of Question 6: Working with the site's constraints and surrounding context, amended plans have been received showing an improved landscape buffer along the northwestern site boundary, whilst the layout has been amended to reduce the potential impact on the hedgerow which forms the southwestern site boundary. The proposal scores Amber in respect of Question 6.
182. In respect of Question 7: Creating well defined streets and spaces, amended plans have been received showing more street trees within the development, and the relocation of the substation away from a visually prominent point at the site access. The proposal scores Amber in respect of Question 7.

183. In respect of Question 8: Wayfinding, amended plans have been received showing more street trees to reinforce a street hierarchy. Given the size and layout of the site, and the inclusion of true corner-turner units, it would be difficult to get lost within the proposed development. The proposal scores Green in respect of Question 8.
184. In respect of Question 9: Streets for all, following receipt of amended plans it is noted that the highway layout is now designed to encourage low vehicle speeds and allow for social space in front of dwellings. The proposal scores Amber in respect of Question 9.
185. In respect of Question 10: Car parking, the updated car parking provision and visitor parking provision is considered acceptable. The proposal scores Green in respect of Question 10.
186. In respect of Question 11: Public and private spaces, following receipt of amended plans it is noted that sufficient public open space has been provided, along with provision of a swale along the northwestern edge of the site. Whilst the Drainage officer had initially sought a greater level of integrated drainage within the built form of the site, they have accepted the current drainage layout. The proposal scores Amber in respect of Question 11.
187. In respect of Question 12: External storage, it is noted that there is sufficient space for storage in private gardens. Details of cycle storage can be secured by condition. The proposal scores Green in respect of Question 12.
188. Overall, it is concluded that in general design terms the proposals would result in the development of a site that would be read as a natural extension of the built form at Leadgate. The provision of a landscaped buffer along the northwestern boundary would provide a robust settlement edge. The scheme would provide for an attractive, high-quality layout, with appropriate amenity open space and play space, and sufficient integrated drainage. The applicant has worked with officers to address some initial concerns with the layout, resulting in an improved scheme which has received no Red scores. It is considered that the layout and design of the development is acceptable. The proposal accords with Policy 29 of the CDP and with Part 12 of the NPPF.

Landscape and Visual Impact

189. CDP Policy 39 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. Development affecting designated Areas of Higher Landscape Value will only be permitted where it conserves, and where appropriate enhances, the special qualities of the landscape, unless the benefits of development in that location clearly outweigh the harm. Development proposals should have regard to the County Durham Landscape Character Assessment and County Durham Landscape Strategy and contribute, where possible, to the conservation or enhancement of the local landscape.
190. Officers are mindful that the site is formed of two open fields which are not open to the public, which lie beyond the existing built form of the settlement. The site is bound to the east by dwellings and to the southwest by a small private paddock with further dwellings beyond. To the northeast lies Pont Road with a woodland beyond. The site is not covered by any landscape designations, with the nearest designated Area of Higher Landscape Value located 25m to the northeast. The site is visible from public vantage points along Pont Road and from Bradley Bungalows and Pont

Bungalows to the northwest. It is considered that the site is well contained within the surrounding built form to the south and east, and by the woodland to the north. Whilst the site would be visible from the northwest, it would be seen within the context of the built form to the east and south. The site is of some visual amenity value, however this is considered to be limited.

191. Subject to the provision of an acceptable landscape buffer along the length of the northwestern edge of the site, it is considered that the proposal could establish a robust settlement edge, providing defined visual separation with Bradley Cottages to the north west, and is supported by Landscape Officers. The landscape buffer would help reduce the visual impact of the development to a degree which can be justified given the benefits of the development.

192. It is therefore considered that the proposal would not lead to an unacceptable adverse impact on the visual amenity of the surrounding area, including the surrounding landscape at a local level. The proposal is in accordance with Policy 6 c) and d) of the CDP, with Policy 10 L), o) and r) of the CDP, and with Policy 39 of the CDP, and with Paragraphs 135 and 187 of the NPPF.

Trees and Hedgerows

193. In respect of trees, CDP Policy 40 states that 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. Officers note that no trees are sought to be removed.

194. In respect of hedgerows, CDP Policy 40 goes on to state that proposals for new development will not be permitted that would result in the loss of hedges of high landscape, heritage, amenity or biodiversity value unless the benefits of the proposal clearly outweigh the harm. Proposals for new development will be expected to retain existing hedgerows where appropriate and integrate them fully into the design having regard to their management requirements. Where any hedges are lost, suitable replacement planting or restoration of existing hedges, will be required within the site or the locality, including appropriate provision for maintenance and management.

195. Paragraph 136 of the NPPF states that trees make an important contribution to the character and quality of urban environments and can also help mitigate and adapt to climate change.

196. It is noted that no trees within or adjacent to the site are protected by a Tree Preservation Order.

197. The application seeks to remove a number of trees along the northeastern site boundary, to enable construction of the proposed access onto Pont Road. The Trees officer has been consulted and raises concerns with this loss of trees. Officers are mindful that the location of the access has been informed by discussions with Highways officers, given the gradient of Pont Road and required visibility splays. Whilst the loss of some of the existing trees alongside Pont Road is regrettable given their amenity value as a group, their loss is considered justified, whilst some of the existing trees would still be retained, and details of replacement planting can also be secured by condition.

198. The application also seeks to locate proposed dwellings adjacent to an existing hedgerow which forms part of the southwestern edge of the site. The Trees officer has raised concerns with the proximity of the proposed development on this hedgerow. The applicant has responded to these concerns by amending their layout to reduce

the potential impact on the hedgerow. Whilst officers note that the hedgerow is proposed to be retained, it is not of particularly high amenity value, whilst the proposal seeks to improve the quality of the existing hedgerow along the northwestern edge of the site which is of far greater amenity value in order to provide a settlement edge.

199. Details of Tree Protection measures during the works for the retained trees along Pont Road are included within the submitted tree report and are considered acceptable and could be conditioned.
200. The proposal therefore does not conflict with CDP Policies 10 and 40, or with the NPPF, in respect of impact on existing trees.

Highway Safety

201. Policy 21 c) of the CDP requires proposals to ensure 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.
202. Paragraph 115 of the NPPF states that when assessing proposals, it should be ensured appropriate opportunities to promote sustainable transport modes can be – or have been – taken up, given the type of development and its location. It should also be ensured that safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all users; that the design of streets, parking areas, other transport elements and the content of associated standards reflect current national guidance, including the National Design Guide and the National Model Design Code; and that any significant impacts from the development on the transport network (in terms of capacity and congestion), or on highway safety, can be cost effectively mitigated to an acceptable degree.
203. Paragraph 116 of the NPPF then states that development should only be refused on transport grounds where the residual cumulative impacts on development are severe. Policy 21 of the County Durham Plan outlines that development should not be prejudicial to highway safety or have a severe cumulative impact on network capacity. It also expects developments to deliver well designed pedestrian routes and sufficient cycle and car parking provision.
204. The development would be served by a new vehicular access from Pont Road (also known as Pont Lane) to the northeast. The construction of the T-junction would result in the loss of some existing trees and scrub adjacent to Pont Road. Footpath links are also proposed along the southeastern site boundary, connecting to the existing public footpaths at Eden Avenue, Trent Dale, and Wear Avenue.
205. Each property would have in-curtilage car parking, whilst an additional 28 visitor parking bays would be distributed across the site. Each dwelling would also benefit from an Electric Vehicle charging point in accordance with the relevant Building Regulations. All garages would measure a minimum of 6m x 3m internally.
206. The Highways officer has been consulted and following receipt of further information, they have no concerns with the proposed access onto Pont Road/Pont Lane, subject to conditions securing submission and approval of final details off off-site works along the highway to ensure the new access would be safe. The Highways officer also has no concerns with the proposed layout of the site, with the proposed car parking arrangement, or with the route and extent of footways within the site which are to be offered up for adoption.

207. Electric Vehicle charging points are proposed at each dwelling and this is considered acceptable. Their provision can be secured by condition.
208. Subject to conditions it is considered that the proposal would not have an adverse impact on highway safety in accordance with Policies 6 e), 21 and 29 of the CDP and with the NPPF.

Ecology

209. Policy 26 of the CDP states that development proposals should incorporate appropriate Green Infrastructure (GI) that is integrated into the wider network, which maintains and improves biodiversity. The Policy later states that 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).
210. Policy 41 of the CDP states that 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. Proposals for new development will be expected to minimise impacts on biodiversity by retaining and enhancing existing biodiversity assets and features and providing net gains for biodiversity including by establishing coherent ecological networks. Measures should be appropriate, consistent with the biodiversity of the site and contribute to the resilience and coherence of local ecological networks.
211. Policy 43 of the CDP then states that in relation to protected species and their habitats, all development which, alone or in combination, has a likely adverse impact on the ability of species to survive, reproduce and maintain or expand their current distribution will not be permitted unless:
 - a. appropriate mitigation, or as a last resort compensation, can be provided, which maintains a viable population and where possible provides opportunities for the population to expand; and
 - b. where the species is a European protected species, the proposal also meets the licensing criteria (the 3 legal tests) of overriding public interest, no satisfactory alternative and favourable conservation status.
212. Part 15 of the NPPF seeks to ensure that developments protect and mitigate harm to biodiversity interests, and where possible, improve them.
213. Paragraph 186 of the NPPF sets out the Government's commitment to halt the overall decline in biodiversity by minimising impacts and providing net gains where possible and stating that development should be refused if significant harm to biodiversity cannot be avoided, mitigated or, as a last resort, compensated for. CDP Policy 41 reflects this guidance by stating that 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. CDP Policy 43 states that development proposals that would adversely impact upon nationally protected sites will only be permitted where the benefits clearly outweigh the impacts whilst adverse impacts upon locally designated sites will only be permitted where the benefits outweigh the adverse impacts. The Policy also considers protected species and their habitats.
214. The presence of protected species is a material consideration in planning decisions as they are a protected species under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and the European Union Habitats Directive and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). The Habitats Directive prohibits the deterioration,

destruction or disturbance of breeding sites or resting places of protected species. Natural England has the statutory responsibility under the regulations to deal with any licence applications but there is also a duty on planning authorities when deciding whether to grant planning permission for a development which could harm a European Protected Species to apply three tests contained in the Regulations in order to determine whether a licence is likely to be granted. These state that the activity must be for imperative reasons of overriding public interest or for public health and safety, there must be no satisfactory alternative, and that the favourable conservation status of the species must be maintained. Brexit does not change the Council's responsibilities under the law.

215. There are no ecological designations within the site, with the nearest designated Local Wildlife Site being Brooms Pond, located approximately 1km east of the site adjacent to the A692 / A693 junction. The nearest designated Ancient Woodland is Billingside Wood located approximately 20m to the north across Pont Road. The nearest registered pond is 650m to the north.

Protected Species

216. The application is supported by a suite of ecology surveys which have been reviewed by the Ecology officer who considers their methodologies and conclusions to be sound.
217. In respect of newt and badgers, no evidence of these species has been identified within or near to the site, and no mitigation measures are required.
218. In respect of bats and birds, integrated bat and bird boxes as part of the construction of the dwellings would be required and can be secured by condition.
219. In respect of hedgehogs, mitigation measures during the construction period and the use of 'hedgehog gaps' in boundary fences would be required. Compliance with these mitigation measures in the submitted ecology report would be secured by listing the submitted ecology survey report as an approved plan/document under Condition 2.
220. As no protected species would be interfered with and no need for a licence, there is no requirement to apply the derogation tests. Subject to the above mitigation measures the proposal would not have an adverse impact on protected species.

Biodiversity Net Gain

221. BNG is a way of creating and improving natural habitats, making sure that development has a measurably positive impact ('net gain') on biodiversity, compared to what was there before development. Because this application was received in 2023, there is not a statutory requirement for the proposal to achieve 10% BNG. However Policy 41 of the CDP still requires this proposal to demonstrate 'a' BNG.
222. The application is supported by an updated BNG Metric (Version 4, April 2025) which submits that there would be an on-site loss of 32.3 habitat units, equating to a 78% biodiversity net loss. The application seeks in lieu to provide sufficient Net Gain using off-site credits which would also off-set the above biodiversity loss. The Ecology officer considers this approach sound.
223. The Ecology officer has advised that a Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP) is required in respect of the on-site BNG measures. The submission, approval, implementation and monitoring (including fees) of this HMMP can be secured through a legal agreement under S39 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981.

Summary of Ecology Matters

224. Subject to the mitigation measures being secured the proposal would not have an adverse impact on protected species. The on site BNG measures are insufficient to achieve a gain therefore the proposal would deliver a BNG in an off-site location by relying on purchasing credits. The proposal therefore accords with CDP Policies 6 c) and 10 L) in respect of ecological matters, as well as with CDP Policies 41 and 43, and with Part 15 of the NPPF.

Surface Water and Foul Drainage

225. CDP Policies 35 and 36 relate to flood water management and infrastructure. CDP Policy 35 requires agreement of flood risk and use of sustainable drainage systems with all development proposals required to consider the effect of the proposed development on flood risk, both on-site and off-site, commensurate with the scale and impact of the development and taking into account the predicted impacts of climate change for the lifetime of the proposal. It is not reasonable for development proposals to mitigate separate existing issues. Policy 35 also states that for major developments such as the current proposal, the management of water must be an intrinsic part of the overall development.
226. Policy 36 addresses the disposal of foul water in the consideration of development proposals, and the hierarchy of drainage options that must be considered and discounted for foul water. National advice within the NPPF and PPG with regard to flood risk advises that a sequential approach to the location of development should be taken with the objective of steering new development to flood zone 1 (areas with the lowest probability of river or sea flooding). When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should ensure flood risk is not increased elsewhere and only consider development appropriate in areas at risk of flooding where a sequential test and some instances exception test are passed, informed by a site-specific flood risk assessment.
227. Part 14 of the NPPF directs Local Planning Authorities to guard against flooding and the damage it causes. Protection of the water environment is a material planning consideration and development proposals, including waste development, should ensure that new development does not harm the water environment. Paragraph 180 of the NPPF advises that planning decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of water pollution. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as water quality.
228. Paragraph 173 of the NPPF states that when determining any planning applications, local planning authorities should ensure that flood risk is not increased elsewhere. Where appropriate, applications should be supported by a site-specific flood-risk assessment. Development should only be allowed in areas at risk of flooding where, in the light of this assessment it can be demonstrated that it incorporates sustainable drainage systems, unless there is clear evidence that this would be inappropriate, and any residual risk can be safely managed.
229. The site falls within Flood Zone 1 as identified by the Environment Agency, which is the lowest risk area of fluvial (river) flooding. There are small pockets of Low Risk Areas of surface water flooding at the western corner of the site, with the northeastern edge of site also within the Low Risk Area. There are some small pockets of Medium Risk Areas at the northeastern edge of the site. There are no High Risk Areas within the site.

230. The proposal seeks to create Sustainable Urban Drainage System (SuDS) basins at the northern and northeastern corners of the site. A large swale is also proposed along the northwestern edge of the site. All driveways and private shared surfaces would feature permeable paving.
231. The Drainage officer has been consulted and they advise that following receipt of amended plans, they make no objection to the application, subject to a condition securing submission and approval of a SuDS Management Plan prior to works commencing, and securing the subsequent implementation of those details. Compliance with the submitted Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy would be secured by listing the document and associated drawings as approved plans/documents under Condition 2.
232. Subject to the recommended condition, the proposal would not lead to a greater surface water flood risk either within the site or potentially elsewhere, whilst the proposed approach to surface water drainage forms an intrinsic part of the development. The proposal therefore accords with Policies 29 and 35 of the CDP and with the NPPF in this respect of surface water drainage.
233. The proposal seeks to connect to the mains sewer. Northumbrian Water have been consulted, and they have responded with no objection subject to a recommended condition which ensures the discharge rate from the development to their sewer network is within required limits. It is considered that the proposed foul drainage solution accords with Policy 36 of the CDP.

Heritage and Archaeology

234. In assessing the proposed development regard must be had to the statutory duty imposed on the Local Planning Authority under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of a conservation area. In addition, the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 also imposes a statutory duty that, when considering whether to grant planning permission for a development which affects a listed building or its setting, the decision maker shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. If harm is found this gives rise to a strong (but rebuttable) statutory presumption against the grant of planning permission. Any such harm must be given considerable importance and weight by the decision-maker.
235. CDP Policy 44 seeks to ensure that developments should contribute positively to the built and historic environment and seek opportunities to enhance and, where appropriate, better reveal the significance and understanding of heritage assets. Part 16 of the NPPF requires clear and convincing justification if development proposals would lead to any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset.
236. There are no designated heritage assets within or adjacent to the site, with the nearest listed building being the Grade II listed Church of St Ives, located on St Ives Road approximately 480m to the southeast of the site. The nearest Conservation Areas are Blackhill to the west, Medomsley to the north and Iveston to the southeast, all approximately 2km from the site.
237. There is no intervisibility between the site and these assets due to levels of the landscape and built form. The proposed development would not have an adverse impact on the setting of above-ground heritage assets.

238. In respect of Archaeology, Paragraph 200 of the NPPF states that where a site on which development is proposed includes, or has the potential to include, heritage assets with archaeological interest, Local Planning Authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation.
239. Footnote 68 of the NPPF states that non-designated heritage assets of archaeological interest, which are demonstrably of equivalent significance to scheduled monuments, should be considered subject to policies for designated heritage assets. Therefore Paragraphs 200, 206 and 207 the NPPF are applicable, which require any harm to or loss of such assets to require clear and convincing justification. This is reflected in Policy 44 of the CDP.
240. The application is supported by an archaeological evaluation report which concludes that further survey work is not required. The Archaeology officer has been consulted and advises that following the findings of the submitted report they have no concerns with the proposal, and no conditions are recommended.
241. It is considered that the proposal would cause no harm to heritage assets or archaeological remains, therefore there would be no conflict with CDP Policies 10 or 44, or with Part 16 of the NPPF, or with the Listed Building Act, in this respect.

Contaminated Land and Coal Mining Risk

242. CDP Policy 32 states that development will not be permitted unless the developer can demonstrate that the site is suitable for the proposed use, and that the proposal does not result in unacceptable risks which would adversely impact on the environment, human health and the amenity of local communities. Part 15 of the NPPF (Paragraphs 124, 180, 189 and 190) requires the planning system to consider remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land where appropriate. Noting that where a site is affected by contamination or land stability issues, responsibility for securing a safe development rests with the developer and/or landowner.
243. The entirety of the site lies within the Coalfield Development High Risk Coal Area as identified by the Coal Authority. The site also lies within the surface mined coal resource area and the mineral safeguarding area for coal as defined in the County Durham Plan. There are no known mineshafts within the site, with the nearest shafts being located approximately 300m to the northwest of the site, in the field nearest Bradley Bungalows and adjacent to Pont Road.
244. The Coal Authority have been consulted and they note the submitted documents in support of the application. They have no objection to the proposal, and do not recommend any conditions.
245. In relation to mine gas emissions from historic coal workings, they note the associated risks should always be considered by the County Council as the Local Planning Authority. This will be considered by the Environmental Health and Consumer Protection (Contaminated Land) officer.
246. The Environmental Health and Consumer Protection (Contaminated Land) officer has been consulted and they have no objection subject to a condition securing verification of land contamination mitigation measures. The application has submitted details of how the site would be remediated during the works, which are considered acceptable.

247. Subject to the condition outlined above, the proposal would not result in unacceptable risks which would adversely impact on the environment, on human health, or on the amenity of local communities. The proposal therefore accords with Policies 6, 10 and 32 of the CDP and with Paragraphs 187 f), 196 and 197 of the NPPF.

Planning Contributions

248. CDP Policy 25 states that new development will be approved where any mitigation necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms is secured through appropriate planning conditions or planning obligations. Such mitigation will relate to the provision, and/or improvement, of physical, social and environmental infrastructure taking into account the nature of the proposal and identified local or strategic needs. Policy 25 goes on to state that developers will be required to enter into Planning Obligations which are directly related to the development and fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development, in order to secure the mitigation that is necessary for a development to be acceptable in planning terms. Policy 25 reflects Paragraphs 55 and 57 of the NPPF.
249. The Council has recently published a Development Viability, Affordable Housing and Financial Contributions Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), dated April 2024. This document supports Policy 25 of the CDP and provides guidance on how the required contributions are calculated.
250. CDP Policy 25 requires planning applications which do not propose policy compliant levels of affordable housing and/or obligations necessary to mitigate the impact of development will need to be supported by a robust viability assessment. Any viability assessment accompanying a planning application should refer back to the assessment that informed the Plan and provide evidence of what has changed since then. No such assessment has been submitted as part of this application.
251. Under the provisions of Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) the applicant is proposing a planning obligation should planning permission be granted covering a number of matters as set out below.

Affordable Housing

252. If planning permission were to be granted, a Section 106 agreement would be required to secure the following provision in accordance with CDP Policy 15:
- 10 Discount Market Sale units; and
 - 5 Affordable Rent units.

Education

253. Based on the methodology set out in the Council's adopted Securing Developer Contributions towards Education Provision in County Durham, the proposed development of 97 dwellings would produce 7 Nursery age pupils, 25 pupils of primary school age, 13 pupils of secondary age, 1 post-16 pupil, and 1 SEND pupil.
254. In relation to Primary School pupils, there would be sufficient space at the Primary Schools which are located within 2 miles of the site to accommodate the pupils generated by the development. Therefore, no contribution would be required to facilitate the provision of additional teaching accommodation for Primary Schools.
255. In relation to Secondary School pupils, there would not be sufficient space at the nearest Secondary School, which is Consett Academy, to accommodate the pupils generated by the development whilst maintaining a 5% surplus. Therefore a

contribution of £316,056 (13 pupils x £24,312) would be required to facilitate the provision of additional teaching accommodation for Consett Academy.

256. In relation to SEND pupils, the Education officer advises there is a shortage of SEND places across the County. In order to mitigate the impact of the development on SEND provision, they advise a contribution of £81,460 (0.97 pupils x £83,980) would be required. This contribution can be secured by way of a Section 106 Agreement.

Healthcare

257. The NHS has been consulted and advise that a contribution of £46,851 is required toward increasing local GP surgery capacity to accommodate the development. The sum can be secured by a Section 106 Agreement.

Public Open Space Provision

258. CDP Policy 26 requires proposals for new residential development to make provision for open space to meet the needs of future residents having regard to the standards of open space provision set out in the Open Space Needs Assessment (OSNA). The OSNA sets out the most up to date position in respect to open space provision across the county and provides a formula for calculating requirements on a site-specific basis.
259. Using the OSNA's methodology, it is noted that a scheme of 97 dwellings would lead to 213 persons, at 2.2 persons per household. At 1000 persons per hectare of open space, the following open space would normally be expected on-site for a 97 unit scheme:
- Amenity/ Natural Green Space: 3,201 sq.m.
 - Play Space for Children (non-equipped): 107 sq.m.
260. An Open Space Needs Statement has been submitted as part of the Planning Statement, and an accompanying site plan have been submitted highlighting all public open spaces across the site.
261. Turning first to Amenity/ Natural Greenspace, the submitted plans show a sufficient amount provided at the northern end of the site. Officers are mindful that this part of the site is constrained by easements for underground sewers, preventing housing to be built at the northern end of the site. Focusing open space provision at this part of the site is therefore justified.
262. Turning next to Play Space for Children, the submitted plans show a play area of sufficient size at the northern end of the site. The play area would benefit from natural surveillance from nearby dwellings. Precise details of the play area and of its ongoing maintenance can be secured by condition.
263. In respect of other public open space typologies, the following financial contributions would normally be expected for a 97 dwelling development toward off-site provision, unless the 50% discount applies:
- Allotments: £57,618
 - Parks and Recreation: £215,107.20
 - Play Space (Youth): £14,551.20
264. Turning first to Allotments, the nearest are located on the north side of Pont Road/Bradley Bungalows, around 400m northwest of the site when measuring the nearest walking route. This falls below the 480m access standard established in Table 12 of the Council's OSNA document, therefore the 50% discount toward this provision

does apply. Consequently, a reduced contribution of £28,809 is sought toward off-site Allotment provision.

265. Turning next to Parks and Recreation, the nearest is located to the northwest of First Street and northeast of Watling Street, to the northwest of the site. The area is around 730m from the site when measuring the nearest walking route. Whilst this is beyond the 600m access standard established in Table 12 of the Council's OSNA document, the distance is still within the 12-13 minute walking time standard which is also set out in Table 12. Therefore the 50% discount toward this provision does apply. Consequently, a reduced contribution of £107,553.60 is sought toward off-site Parks and Recreation provision.
266. Turning next to Play Space for Youths, the nearest is located at the same place as the Parks and Recreation as described above; to the northwest of First Street and northeast of Watling Street, to the northwest of the site. The area is around 730m from the site when measuring the nearest walking route. Whilst this is beyond the 720m access standard established in Table 12 of the Council's OSNA document, the distance is still within the 15 minute walking time standard which is also set out in Table 12. Therefore the 50% discount toward this provision does apply. Consequently, a reduced contribution of £7,255.60 is sought toward off-site Play Space for Youths provision.
267. To summarise, the proposed on-site open space provision is acceptable. A £143,618.20 contribution is sought toward off-site open space provision which can be secured through a legal agreement.

Biodiversity Net Gain

268. The application is supported by an updated BNG Metric (Version 4, April 2025) which submits that there would be an on-site loss of 32.3 habitat units, equating to a 78% biodiversity net loss. The application seeks to provide sufficient Net Gain using off-site credits which can be conditioned. The submission, approval, implementation and monitoring of the on-site Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP) as well as necessary monitoring fees can be secured through a legal agreement under S39 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981.

Other Matters

Agricultural Land and Soil Resource

269. In respect of agricultural land, CDP Policy 14 states that development of the best and most versatile agricultural land will be permitted where it is demonstrated that the benefits of the development outweigh the harm, taking into account economic and other benefits. Paragraph 180 of the NPPF states that Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils, in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan.
270. The application is supported by an Agricultural Land Classification report, which concludes that the whole site is Grade 3B (moderate quality) agricultural land. Officers note that Grade 3B land is not classed as Best and Most Versatile (BMV) by the NPPF. The proposal would therefore not conflict with CDP Policy 14 in this respect.
271. In respect of managing soil resources, CDP Policy 14 states that all development proposals relating to previously undeveloped land must demonstrate that soil

resources will be managed and conserved in a viable condition and used sustainably in line with accepted best practice.

272. The application is supported by a Soil Resource Management Strategy, which is considered sufficient. Whilst the layout of the proposal has been amended since the submission of this document, this has not changed the proposed strategy. The proposal does not conflict with CDP Policy 14 in this respect.

Safeguarding Mineral Resources

273. CDP Policy 56 advises that planning permission will not be granted for non-mineral development that would lead to the sterilisation of mineral resources within a Mineral Safeguarding Area, or which will sterilise an identified 'relic' natural building and roofing stone quarry as shown on Map C of the policies map document unless certain criteria apply.
274. The site lies within the surface mined coal resource area and mineral safeguarding area as defined in the CDP. Officers note the coal beneath the site would be very problematic to extract due to a number of factors. Such factors include the financial viability to extract minerals beneath the site, that the mineral is coal which is in abundance elsewhere in the County, that demand for coal is expected to fall in the future in light of the UK's commitment to phase out coal power, and that extraction of minerals in this location would lead to significant impacts on the environment and the amenity of neighbouring residents.
275. Officers therefore have no concerns with the application on mineral safeguarding grounds. It is considered that the proposal would not conflict with Policy 56 of the CDP or with Part 17 of the NPPF.

Energy Efficiency

276. CDP Policy 29 requires proposals to 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. The Policy goes on to require proposals to 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.
277. CDP Policy 29 also refers specifically to reducing CO₂ emissions for new buildings based upon building regulations requirements at the time the County Durham Plan was adopted in 2020, however Part L of the Building Regulations has since been revised in 2021, and the levels now required exceed that of Policy 29 of the CDP. The applicant will be required to accord with those Building Regulations which would be enforced outside the Planning process. These Building Regulations require a further 31% reduction in carbon emissions over previous 2013 Building Regulations.
278. Electric Vehicle charging points are proposed at each dwelling and this is considered acceptable. Their implementation can be secured by condition.
279. Air source heat pumps are proposed. The proposal includes a number of energy efficiency measures relating to heating, water, lighting, materials and construction method, in response to Building Regulation requirements as mentioned above.

Combined with the proposed EV charging point provision and cycle parking provision at each dwelling, it is considered that roof mounted solar panels are not required for the proposal to comply with Policy 29 of the CDP.

280. For the above reasons, the proposal would be an energy efficient form of development which would not conflict with CDP Policies 10 and 29 or with Parts 9, 12 and 14 of the NPPF in this respect.

Broadband

281. CDP Policy 27 relates to utilities, telecommunications and other broadband infrastructure and requires any residential and commercial development to be served by a high-speed broadband connection and where this is not appropriate, practical or economically viable, developers should provide appropriate infrastructure to enable future installation.
282. Paragraph 118 of the NPPF states that advanced, high quality and reliable communications infrastructure is essential for economic growth and social well-being. Planning policies and decisions should support the expansion of electronic communications networks, including next generation mobile technology (such as 5G) and full fibre broadband connections. Policies should set out how high quality digital infrastructure, providing access to services from a range of providers, is expected to be delivered and upgraded over time; and should prioritise full fibre connections to existing and new developments (as these connections will, in almost all cases, provide the optimum solution).
283. In considering this policy requirement, due the location of the development adjacent to the settlement of Leadgate, there would be existing high-speed broadband availability in the area to comply with CDP Policy 27. Details of broadband provision could be secured by condition in accordance with CDP Policy 27 and Paragraph 118 of the NPPF.

Public Representations

284. Concerns have been raised by the public over the loss of land in the Green Belt, however the site is not located in the Green Belt.
285. Concerns have also been raised in respect of de-valuing properties and loss of private views, however these are not material considerations when assessing and determining this planning application.

Public Sector Equality Duty

286. Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 requires public authorities when exercising their functions to have due regard to the need to i) the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other prohibited conduct, ii) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it and iii) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share that characteristic.
287. In this instance, officers have assessed all relevant factors and do not consider that there are any equality impacts identified. Accordingly, no changes to the proposal were required to make it acceptable in this regard.

CONCLUSION

288. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 sets out that planning applications be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The NPPF is a material consideration in planning decisions.
289. The site is not allocated for housing in the County Durham Plan, and is in the open countryside. However, officers note that the site is in a sustainable location, which is well related to the settlement of Leadgate. Subject to detailed design considerations it is considered that the principle of developing this site for housing is acceptable in accordance with Policies 6, 10 and 21 of the County Durham Plan.
290. As explained in this report, the applicant has worked proactively with officers to address some initial concerns, and the proposed design and layout of the proposal is now acceptable, whilst there are no outstanding technical concerns. No consultees have raised objections with the amended scheme. Conditions securing further details have been recommended where required.
291. The proposal would deliver 15 affordable homes, which would address both an identified local need and a County wide need. The proposal would also deliver 10 single storey bungalows, which would also address identified local need and a County wide need. This is also to be afforded weight in favour of the proposal.
292. The proposal would deliver a Biodiversity Net Gain using off-site measures, which is to be afforded weight in favour of the proposal.
293. The proposal seeks to provide £587,985.20 in total contributions in order to mitigate its impact on local schools, on GP capacity, and on public open spaces.
294. It is considered that the proposal is acceptable, therefore officers recommend that the application be approved.

RECOMMENDATION

295. That the application be **APPROVED** subject to the following conditions, and completion of an agreement under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1991 (as amended) to secure:
- 15% of Affordable housing on-site comprising 10 discounted sale and 5 Affordable Rent units;
 - £316,056 contribution toward increasing capacity at Consett Academy;
 - £81,460 contribution toward increasing capacity at SEND schools across the County;
 - £46,851 contribution toward increasing NHS GP surgery capacity;
 - £143,618.20 contribution toward improving public open spaces; and
 - a Section 39 agreement to secure an on-site Biodiversity Management and Monitoring Plan as well as long term management, maintenance and monitoring and associated fees.

Time Limit

- 1) The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: Required to be imposed pursuant to Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

Plans

2) The development hereby approved shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans and documents:

Plans

2214.01.01 – Location Plan

2214.04.01 Revision Q – Housing Layout

2214.06.01 Revision R – Boundary Treatments

2214.09.01 Revision Q – Affordable Housing

2214.09.02 Revision P – Adoption Plan

23/325/TR/004 Revision B – Pont Lane Proposed Speed Reduction Measures

5053/1 Revision E – Detailed Landscape Proposals (1 of 5)

5053/2 Revision E – Detailed Landscape Proposals (2 of 5)

5053/3 Revision E – Detailed Landscape Proposals (3 of 5)

5053/4 Revision E – Detailed Landscape Proposals (4 of 5)

5053/5 Revision E – Detailed Landscape Proposals (5 of 5)

5053/6 Revision E – Detailed Landscape Proposals

D001 Revision 4 – Overall Engineering Layout

D002 Revision 3 – Engineering Layout Sheet 1

D003 Revision 3 – Engineering Layout Sheet 2

D004 Revision 3 – Engineering Layout Sheet 3

D100 Revision 3 – Proposed Levels Plan Sheet 1

D101 Revision 3 – Proposed Levels Plan Sheet 2

D102 Revision 3 – Proposed Levels Plan Sheet 3

D200 Revision 4 – Manhole Schedules

D201 Revision 2 – Flood Routing Plan

D202 Revision 2 – Drainage Areas Plan

D203 Revision 2 – Typical SuDS Details

D206 Revision 2 – Proposed Drainage Plan Sheet 1

D207 Revision 2 – Proposed Drainage Plan Sheet 2

D208 Revision 2 – Proposed Drainage Plan Sheet 3

D300 Revision 3 – Road Longsections Sheet 1

D301 Revision 4 – Road Longsections Sheet 2

D302 Revision 4 – Road Longsections Sheet 3

D500 Revision 2 – Surface Finishes Plan

D600 Revision 3 – Direct Comparison Cut and Fill Plan

D700 Revision 2 – Road Construction Details

D701 Revision 2 – Drainage Construction Details

D702 Revision 1 – Typical Permeable Paving Details

D800 Revision 2 – S38 Plan

D801 Revision 2 – SuDS Maintenance Plan

D802 Revision 2 – S104 Plan

D803 Revision 2 – S185 Plan

Housetypes and Garages

21-250-R-0001 Revision C03 – 250 House Type Rural
21-250-U-0001 Revision C03 – 250 House Type Urban
21-254-R-0001 Revision C02 – 254 House Type Rural
21-254-U-0001 Revision C04 – 254 House Type Urban
21-350-R-0001 Revision C05 – 350 House Type Rural
21-350-U-0001 Revision C06 – 350 House Type Urban
21-354-R-0001 Revision C04 – 354 House Type Rural
21-354-U-0001 Revision C05 – 354 House Type Urban
21-355-R-0001 Revision C06 – 355 House Type Rural
21-355-U-0001 Revision C07 – 355 House Type Urban
21-358/9-R-0001 Revision C03 – 358/9 House Type Rural
21-358/9-U-0001 Revision C05 – 358/9 House Type Urban
21-360-R-0001 Revision C04 – 360 House Type Rural
21-360-U-0001 Revision C05 – 360 House Type Urban
21-361-R-0001 Revision C07 – 361 House Type Rural
21-361-U-0001 Revision C09 – 361 House Type Urban
21-450-R-0001 Revision C03 – 450 House Type Rural
21-450-U-0001 Revision C05 – 450 House Type Urban
21-454-R-0001 Revision C06 – 454 House Type Rural
21-454-U-0001 Revision C05 – 454 House Type Urban
21-455-R-0001 Revision C03 – 455 House Type Rural
21-455-U-0001 Revision C03 – 455 House Type Urban

SD-100 Revision F – 1800mm High Close Boarded Timber Fence
SD704 Revision E – Sales Garage Details
SD705 – 2/3 Bed – Code Shed Details
SD1700 Revision D – 3m x 6m Internal Dimension Detached Single Garage Details
SD1701 Revision D – 3m x 6m Internal Dimension Detached Double Garage Details

Technical Reports

Affordable Housing Market Assessment, by Hamilton Willis received 20th May 2025.

ARB/AE/3220 – Arboricultural Survey, Arboricultural Impact Assessment and Arboricultural Method Statement, by Elliott Consultancy Ltd

Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment V4, by OS Ecology dated April 2025.

Construction Management Plan Revision A, by Gleeson

NJD23-0156-001R Noise Assessment, by NJD dated November 2023
NJD23-0156-002R Air Quality Assessment, by NJD dated November 2023

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal V2b, by OS Ecology dated December 2023

RL/FRADS/23094 Revision 6 - Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy, by RWO dated 29.04.2025

RWO/GIR/G22011 Version 2 - Phase II Geoenvironmental Ground Investigation Report, by RWO

Soil Resource Management Strategy, by Gleeson

Travel Plan Revision 05 by Bryan G Hall, dated 25.03.2025

Reason: To define the consent and ensure that a satisfactory form of development is obtained in accordance with Policies 6, 10 and 29 of the County Durham Plan and Parts 12 and 15 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Highways

3) No dwelling shall be occupied until full engineering, drainage, street lighting, and constructional details for streets to be adopted by the local highway authority are submitted and approved by the Local Planning Authority.

The development shall follow the approved details unless otherwise agreed.

Reason: In the interest of highway safety, in accordance with Policy 21 of the County Durham Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

4) No dwelling shall be occupied until detailed engineering and specification drawings for the following have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority:

- a) An improved and relocated village gateway feature and traffic improvements;
- b) A new road marking scheme (as indicatively shown on Plan Ref: 23/325/TR/004 Rev B);
- c) Realignment of the footway/parking layby on Pont Lane/Pont Road (as indicatively shown on Plan Ref: 23/325/TR/004 Rev B).
- d) A timetable for the implementation of the above speed reduction measures.

The scheme shall be completed in accordance with the approved details and timings thereafter.

Reason: In the interest of highway safety, in accordance with Policy 21 of the County Durham Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

5) No dwelling shall be occupied until the refuse storage provision for that dwelling, as indicated on the approved plans, has been implemented and made available for use.

Thereafter, the refuse storage provision shall be retained in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity and highway safety, in accordance with Policies 21 and 29 of the County Durham Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

6) No dwelling shall be occupied until the cycle parking provision for that dwelling as detailed on the approved plans has been implemented and made available for use.

Thereafter, the cycle parking shall be retained in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In the interest of sustainable development, in accordance with Policies 21 and 29 of the County Durham Plan, and the National Planning Policy Framework

7) No dwelling shall be occupied until the Electric Vehicle Charging Point for that dwelling as detailed on the approved plans has been installed and made available for use.

Thereafter, the charging points shall then be retained for use at all times for the lifetime of the dwelling.

Reason: In the interest of sustainable development, in accordance with Policies 21 and 29 of the County Durham Plan, and the National Planning Policy Framework

8) No dwelling shall be occupied until the car parking area for that dwelling as detailed on the approved plans have been hard surfaced, sealed and marked out as parking bays in accordance with the approved plans.

Thereafter, the car parking area shall be retained in accordance with the approved plans and shall not be used for any purpose other than the parking of vehicles associated with the dwelling.

Reason: In the interest of highway safety, in accordance with Policy 21 of the County Durham Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Landscaping

9) Notwithstanding the hereby approved plans, prior to the construction of the hereby approved vehicular access, precise details of the location, species and timing of replacement planting of the trees to be felled as part of the vehicular access works, including provision of visibility splays, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Replacement planting shall be on at least a 1:1 basis and shall be located in an appropriate location within the site.

The development shall then be carried out in accordance with the approved details and timetable agreed.

Reason: In the interests of the visual amenity of the area, in accordance with Policies 29 and 40 of the County Durham Plan, and with the National Planning Policy Framework.

10) All planting, seeding or turfing and habitat creation in the approved details of the landscaping scheme shall be carried out in the first available planting season following the practical completion of the development.

No tree shall be felled or hedge removed until the removal/felling is shown to comply with legislation protecting nesting birds and roosting bats.

Any approved replacement tree or hedge planting shall be carried out within 12 months of felling and removals of existing trees and hedges.

Any trees or plants which die, fail to flourish or are removed within a period of 5 years from the substantial completion of the development shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species.

Replacements will be subject to the same conditions.

Reason: In the interests of the visual amenity of the area, in accordance with Policies 29 and 40 of the County Durham Plan, and with the National Planning Policy Framework.

Public Open Space

11) Prior to the occupation of the first dwelling, precise details of the play area to be located within the site shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

The play area shall then be constructed and made available for use prior to the occupation of the 49th dwelling, in accordance with the approved details and retained thereafter for the lifetime of the development.

Reason: In the interest of ensuring the delivery of play area of acceptable quality, in accordance with Policies 26 and 29 of the County Durham Plan, and the National Planning Policy Framework.

12) In the event of proposals to maintain the play area by means other than through transfer to the Local Authority, details of the alternative maintenance scheme shall be submitted to and approved in by the Local Planning Authority.

The agreed maintenance schedule shall then be implemented in perpetuity.

Reason: In the interest of ensuring the delivery of a play area of acceptable quality, and in the interest of securing its long term maintenance, in accordance with Policies 26 and 29 of the County Durham Plan, and the National Planning Policy Framework.

13) In the event of proposals to maintain the amenity/natural green space within the site by means other than through transfer to the Local Authority, details of the alternative maintenance scheme shall be submitted to and approved in by the Local Planning Authority.

The agreed maintenance schedule shall then be implemented in perpetuity.

Reason: In the interest of ensuring the delivery of public open space of acceptable quality, and in the interest of securing its long term maintenance, in accordance with Policies 26 and 29 of the County Durham Plan, and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Ecology

14) Prior to the first dwelling being constructed beyond damp proof course level, details of the location of bat and bird boxes, along with details of the type of box, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

The boxes shall be integrated into the external walls of at least 10% of the proposed dwellings, in accordance with the mitigation measures recommended in the hereby approved 'Preliminary Ecological Appraisal V2b', by OS Ecology dated December 2023/

The development shall then be constructed in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In the interest of conserving protected species, in accordance with Policies 10, 41 and 43 of the County Durham Plan, and with Part 15 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Drainage

15) No development including ground clearance or remediation works shall commence until a build programme and timetable for the construction of the critical surface water infrastructure has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The programme must include, amongst other matters, details of the outfall structure, control devices, attenuation/storage, temporary control measures during the construction phase and measures to control silt levels entering the watercourse. The order of works to be undertaken

must be identified and timescale for delivery. The development thereafter shall be completed in accordance with the details and timetable agreed.

Reason: To ensure that critical surface water infrastructure is in place to adequately deal with and dispose of surface water prior to the construction of the development, in accordance with Policy 35 of the County Durham Plan and Parts 14 and 15 of the National Planning Policy Framework. Required to be a pre-commencement condition to ensure that water infrastructure is in place at an early stage of the development to adequately manage surface water.

16) Notwithstanding the hereby approved plans, no development other than intrusive site investigations or land remediation works shall commence until a SuDS Management Plan is submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall be developed in accordance with the Council's Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) Adoption Guide 2016 (or in an equivalent document if replaced).

Thereafter, the development shall be completed in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure that surface and foul water are adequately disposed of, in accordance with Policies 35 and 36 of the County Durham Plan and Parts 14 and 15 of the National Planning Policy Framework. Required to be pre-commencement to ensure the drainage requirements of the development are adequately designed into the layout of the development.

17) The development shall be implemented in line with the drainage scheme contained within the submitted document entitled "RL/FRADS/23094 Revision 6 - Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy" by RWO dated 29.04.2025.

The drainage scheme shall ensure that foul flows discharge to the combined sewer at manhole 6314 and ensure that surface water discharges to the surface water sewer at manhole 6306. The surface water discharge rate shall not exceed the available capacity of 27l/sec that has been identified in this sewer.

Reason: To ensure that surface and foul water are adequately disposed of, in accordance with Policies 35 and 36 of the County Durham Plan and Parts 14 and 15 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Contaminated Land

18) Remediation works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved remediation strategy. The development shall not be occupied until such time a Phase 4 verification report related to that part of the development has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure that the remediation works are fully implemented as agreed and the site is suitable for use, in accordance with Policy 32 of the County Durham Plan and Part 15 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Footpath Connections

19) Prior to the occupation of the 10th dwelling, the hereby approved footpath links at the southeastern boundary to Trent Dale and Eden Avenue shall be constructed and made available for use.

Reason: In the interest of promoting sustainable travel, in accordance with Policy 21 of the County Durham Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

20) Prior to the occupation of the 67th dwelling, the hereby approved footpath link at the southeastern boundary to Wear Avenue shall be constructed and made available for use.

Reason: In the interest of promoting sustainable travel, in accordance with Policy 21 of the County Durham Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Substation

21) Prior to the construction of the substation hereby approved, full details of its design, appearance and scale shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

The substation shall then be constructed in accordance with the details approved.

Reason: In the interests of the visual amenity of the area in accordance with Policy 29 of the County Durham Plan and Part 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Broadband

22) Prior to the construction of the first dwelling, details of the means of broadband connection to the site shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter, the development shall be carried out in accordance with the agreed details.

Reason: To ensure a high quality of development is achieved and to comply with the requirements of Policy 27 of the County Durham Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Working Hours

23) No external construction works, works of demolition, deliveries, external running of plant and equipment shall take place other than between the hours of 0730 to 1800 on Monday to Friday and 0730 to 1400 on Saturday.

No internal works audible outside the site boundary shall take place on the site other than between the hours of 0730 to 1800 on Monday to Friday and 0730 to 1700 on Saturday.

No construction works or works of demolition whatsoever, including deliveries, external running of plant and equipment, internal works whether audible or not outside the site boundary, shall take place on Sundays, Public or Bank Holidays without express permission from the Local Authority.

Banksmen will be employed to escort deliveries and manage traffic when reversing onto the public highway or other activity which may impact on road safety. All off-loading of plant, equipment and materials will be carried out on site and vehicles would turn around before leaving.

Reason: To protect the amenity of neighbouring residential properties from the development in accordance with Policy 31 of the County Durham Plan and Part 15 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Retention of Garages and Drives

24) Before the dwelling(s) hereby approved are occupied those with garage(s) and hardstanding(s)/drive(s) shall be constructed and made available for use, thereafter they shall

be used and maintained in such a manner as to ensure their availability for the parking of private motor vehicles.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety in accordance with Policy 21 of the County Durham Plan and Part 9 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Housing Technical Standards

25) All dwellings hereby approved shall include 66% of properties built to a standard which meets the requirements set out in M4(2) of the Building Regulations 2010 Approved Document Part M: Access to and use of building (as amended) or any updated version of replacement document, and 10% of properties designed for older persons.

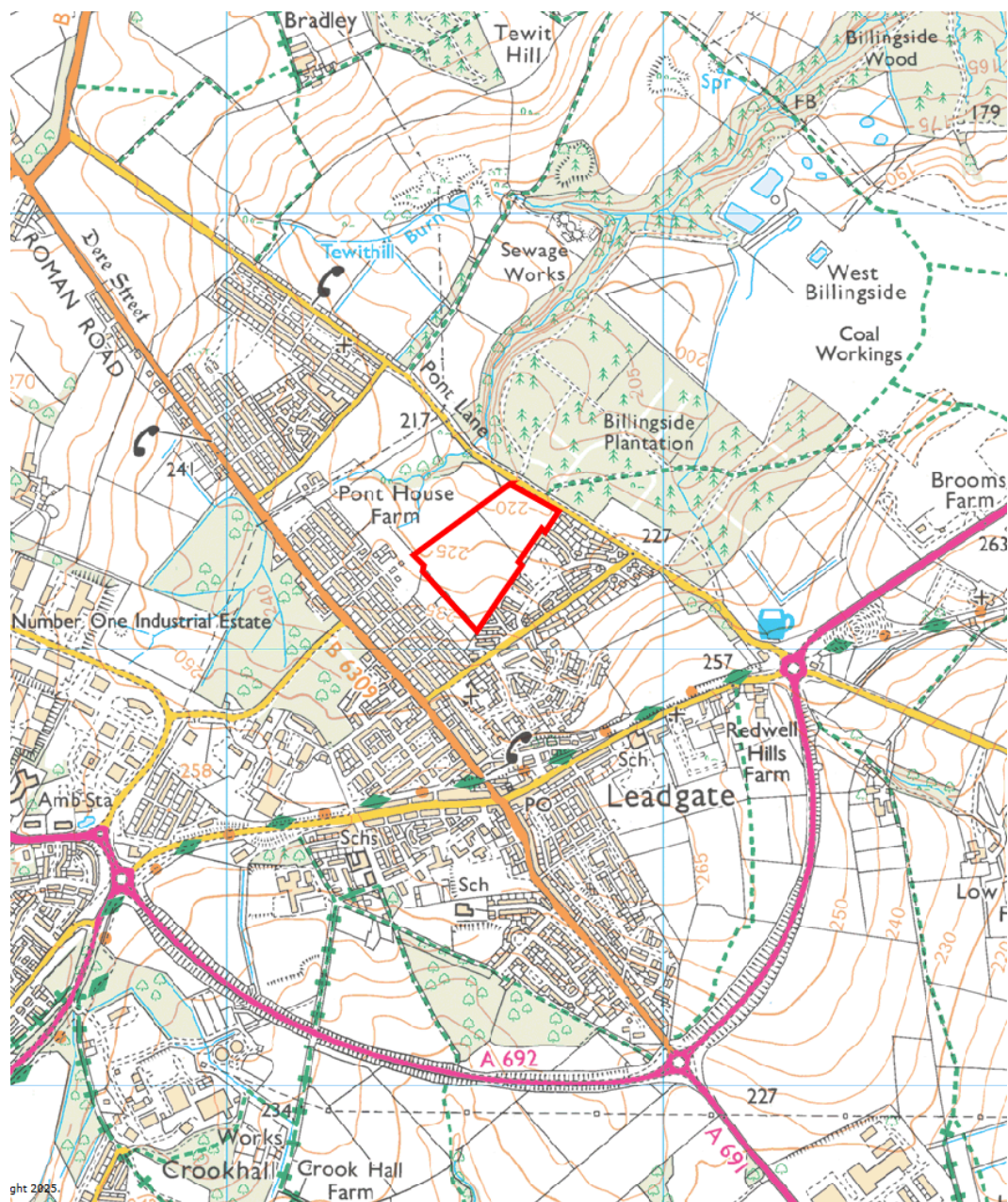
Reason: In the interests of meeting the needs of older people and people with disabilities and to comply with Policy 15 of the County Durham Plan and Part 5 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

STATEMENT OF PROACTIVE ENGAGEMENT

In accordance with Article 35(2) of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015, the Local Planning Authority has, without prejudice to a fair and objective assessment of the proposals, issues raised and representations received, sought to work with the applicant in a positive and proactive manner with the objective of delivering high quality sustainable development to improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area in accordance with the NPPF.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Submitted application form, plans, supporting documents and subsequent information provided by the applicant
- Statutory, internal and public consultation responses
- The National Planning Policy Framework
- National Planning Practice Guidance Notes
- County Durham Plan (2020)
- Active Travel England Standing Advice Note: Active Travel and Sustainable Development (June 2024)
- CIHT Better Planning, Better Transport, Better Places (August 2019)
- CIRIA The SuDS Manual (2015)
- Great Lumley Appeal Decision, DCC reference: DM/22/00584/FPA; PINS reference: APP/X1355/W/23/3334214



Planning Services

DM/23/03633/FPA

Detailed planning application for the erection of 97 no. 2, 3 and 4 bedroom dwellings with associated works (Amended Description).

Land West Of 20 Pont Road, Leadgate DH8 6HE

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Comments

Date June 2025

Scale Not to Scale