Hearing Statement – Matter 4

Doncaster Local Plan

On behalf of Metroland

August 2020
I. **Introduction**

1.1. This is a Hearing Statement prepared by Spawforths on behalf of Metroland in respect of:

- Matter 4: Green Belt

1.2. Metroland has significant land interests in the area and has made representations to earlier stages of the Local Plan process.

1.3. The Inspector’s Issues and Questions are included in **bold** for ease of reference. The following responses should be read in conjunction with Metroland comments upon the submission version of the Doncaster Local Plan, dated September 2019.

1.4. Metroland has also expressed a desire to attend and participate in Matter 4 of the Examination in Public.
2. **Matter 4 – Green Belt**

Q4.1. *Were all reasonable options for meeting identified development needs in non Green Belt locations fully examined during the preparation of the Plan? In particular:*

a) *Does the Plan make as much use as possible of suitable brownfield sites and underutilised land?*

b) *Would the Plan be effective in optimising the density of development and making effective use of land in line with chapter 11 of the NPPF?*

c) *What would the consequences be for sustainable development of accommodating all development needed during the Plan period in non Green Belt locations?*

d) *Was the Plan informed by discussions with neighbouring authorities about whether they could accommodate some of the Borough’s identified need for development?*

Part A

2.1. Metroland have no specific comment to make in response to this matter.

Part B

2.2. Metroland have no specific comment to make in response to this matter.

Part C

2.3. Paragraph 59 of the Framework is clear 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.

2.4. Metroland supports the release of Green Belt land for housing in Doncaster MUA. The settlement is the focus for growth and employment. Doncaster MUA is constrained to the north by Flood Risk and to the west by Green Belt. It is necessary to release some Green Belt
land to ensure that the identified needs to ensure the long term economic growth of the Borough can be met. Not reviewing or releasing Green Belt land around Doncaster MUA would have placed additional pressure on land liable to Flood Risk contrary to the Framework, or serve to push development out to the few relatively unconstrained settlements, leading to unsustainable patterns of development. Exceptional circumstances exist within Doncaster to support the review of Green Belt and subsequent release of Green Belt sites.

2.5. Metroland supports release of Site 115, Balby (Q 4.3)

2.6. The presumption in favour of sustainable development is at the heart of the Framework. The Framework is clear that this means meeting the development needs of an area and ensuring that Plans are flexible. Without a considered release of Green Belt land within Doncaster, the ability to meet the identified housing needs would be hindered, this would have significant implications on the delivery of the Plans wider objectives and in particular economic growth of the Borough.

Part D

2.7. Metroland has no specific comment in relation to this point.

Q4.2. Assuming it is necessary to remove land from the Green Belt, did the approach taken in the Plan give first consideration to land which has been previously developed and/or is well served by public transport?

2.8. Metroland has no specific comment on this issue.

Q4.3. Would development on each of the eight housing allocations removed from the Green Belt promote sustainable patterns of development?
2.9. Metroland considers that the identified need for housing cannot be met within Doncaster MUA without the release of Green Belt sites. Doncaster MUA is the most sustainable settlement within the Borough and is therefore the focus of growth within the borough.

2.10. Metroland supports the release and identification of Site 115: Alverley Lane, Balby for residential development. The site is located in a highly sustainable location and has residential development to the north, east and west. In relation to the Sustainability Appraisal the Council state in proposing to allocate the site that: “the site also performs strongest through the Sustainability Appraisal of all the extension sites”.

2.11. The release of Green Belt Site 115 goes towards meeting the identified needs within Doncaster. The site itself is capable of delivering a full range and mix of housing to ensure a balanced housing supply in the borough. The site is located within a highly sustainable location. It performs well in the sustainability appraisal. It is within easy walking distance to Springwell Lane local centre with a range of facilities. The site is well served by buses and provides for opportunities for sustainable travel to work in Doncaster and beyond with access to Doncaster railway station. Metroland’s earlier representations and accompanying advocacy conclude that the site is sustainably located, suitable and available.

Q4.4. How would development on each of the eight housing allocations removed from the Green Belt affect the purposes of including land in the Green Belt?

2.12. Metroland supports the proposed release of Site 115 Alverley Lane, Balby from the Green Belt and its allocation for housing. The site does not perform a Green Belt function and is small and erroneous projection of Green Belt. Metroland considered the performance of site 115 against the five purposes of the Green Belt within its Advocacy Report and section 17 of the original representations. In summary Metroland maintain that the site at Alverley Lane, Balby fails to perform any of the five Green Belt functions that are established within the Framework. The site therefore provides an opportunity for a logical and justified release from the Green Belt for housing.

2.13. In identifying the site Doncaster Council state:
2.14. “The newly formed defined boundary would be a densely vegetated dismantled railway corridor to the south of the site and is considered to be strongly defined, recognisable and likely to be permanent. The resultant Green Belt boundary would result in a rounding of the existing built form and concluded as being a strong and defensible boundary”.

2.15. The Green Belt Review states: that “the Green Belt in this location has a low-moderate role in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment” and that “given the strength of the proposed boundary” the site has no role in preventing neighbouring towns from merging.

2.16. Metroland consider that the Green Belt in this location is irregular and development of the site would not have a material impact on the Green Belt. The development of this site will not have a significant impact on any of the reasons for the Green Belt designation in the area. The site therefore should be released and allocated to meet the identified and significant need for new housing in the area.

**Q4.5.** Are the suggested changes in the Council’s response to PQ10 necessary to make the Plan sound, and would they ensure that the proposed boundaries around each of the eight housing allocations removed from the Green Belt are clearly defined using physical features that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent?

2.17. Metroland has no specific comment in relation to this issue.

**Q4.6.** Will the proposed Green Belt boundaries around each of the eight allocations removed from the Green Belt need to be altered again at the end of the Plan period?

2.18. Metroland has no specific comment in relation to this issue.
Q4.7. Are the suggested changes set out in the Council’s responses to PQ9 and PQ10 necessary to make the Plan sound, and would they be effective in securing compensatory improvements to the environmental quality and accessibility of remaining Green Belt land that would offset the impact of removing the eight housing allocations from the Green Belt?

2.19. In response to PQ10, the Council propose the following modification to all Green Belt Allocations: ‘As the site allocation results in the loss of Green Belt land, this must be compensated for by contributing to improving the environmental quality and accessibility of remaining Green Belt land within the vicinity of the site. Details of specific sites and projects will be established in discussion with the Council.

2.20. Metroland has undertaken a full suite of technical assessments to demonstrate the delivery of Site 115: Alverley Lane, Balby and prepared an advocacy report which is supported by an illustrative masterplan. As part of that approach the proposed masterplan includes potential compensatory measures, including greater access to the bridleway to the south and to the countryside beyond.

2.21. Metroland is concerned that at present the proposed policy and amendments is not sufficiently clear to implement. Metroland is concerned about the lack of clarity and evidence to support the proposed policy approach, which provides uncertainty. There is insufficient detail to understand what the specific compensatory improvements will be, how they will be secured and on what terms and therefore what the implications will be on delivery, particularly as Metroland can provide such measures as part of the proposed scheme.

Q4.8. Have exceptional circumstances to justify removing each of the eight housing allocations from the Green Belt been fully evidenced and justified?

2.22. The Framework is clear that plans should positively seek opportunities to meet the development needs of their area, and be sufficiently flexible to respond to change. As a
minimum strategic policies should provide for objectively assessed need for housing (paragraph 11), and that ‘a sufficient amount and variety of land can come forward where it is needed’ (Paragraph 59).

2.23. In the Borough of Doncaster approximately 46% of the area is designated as Green Belt. This is the western part of the Borough which forms part of the South Yorkshire Green Belt surrounding urban areas.

2.24. The Framework considers that Green Belt boundaries can change “in exceptional circumstances”. Such a circumstance exists through the significant need to provide housing in Doncaster. To meet the housing need and economic growth aspirations the Council has stated it will need to revise the Green Belt boundaries for the emerging Local Plan and beyond to provide the new boundaries with some permanence.

2.25. Metroland consider that exceptional circumstances to support the release of site 115, and additional Green Belt sites that are in line with the strategy in sustainable locations in Doncaster MUA. These circumstances relate to the acuteness of need within the Plan, noting that Metroland consider actual need is higher. The significant flooding constraints in the district, and deficiencies in supply in Doncaster when considered against the Plans proposed distribution, deficiencies in overall supply (refer to response to Matter 5).

2.26. In relation to Site 115: Alverley Lane, Balby The site does not currently perform a Green Belt function and its release would help to establish a more appropriate and robust Green Belt boundary. The isolated nature of the site from the surrounding Green Belt means that its release will not impact on the openness of the Green Belt. The site is bounded by the urban area to the north, east and west. To the south is the raised, disused railway with associated tree belt, which would form a robust new urban edge and Green Belt boundary. This boundary would accord with the Framework and ensure the Green Belt is well defined for the long-term. The disused railway and tree belts are distinct features beyond which the urban edge will not encroach, thus ensuring permanency is maintained.
2.27. The Alverley Lane, Balby site is therefore a unique opportunity to meet the housing need and economic growth aspirations whilst delivering significant benefits for the area. The Council has stated in identifying the site that “the existing boundary is considered to be an irregular and inconsistent existing built form boundary” and that if the site were to be allocated then:

2.28. “The newly formed defined boundary would be a densely vegetated dismantled railway corridor to the south of the site and is considered to be strongly defined, recognisable and likely to be permanent. The resultant Green Belt boundary would result in a rounding of the existing built form and concluded as being a strong and defensible boundary”.

2.29. It is clear from the site location plans and analysis that development of the site would not have a material impact on the Green Belt. The development of this site will not have a significant impact on any of the reasons for the Green Belt designation in the area. The new Green Belt boundaries will be drawn to provide a long term robust boundary. The development will not result in the coalescence of neighbouring towns, and will not encroach on the countryside nor affect the setting and special character of an historic town.

2.30. This view is reflected in the Council’s assessment of the site, which concludes that “the Green Belt in this location has a low-moderate role in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment” and that “given the strength of the proposed boundary” the site has no role in preventing neighbouring towns from merging. Therefore, although the site is in the Green Belt it is a logical scheme with significant major benefits.

Q4.9. Have exceptional circumstances to justify making the other changes to the Green Belt referred to in the Council’s response to PQ8 been fully evidenced and justified?

2.31. Metroland has no specific comment in relation to this issue.
Q4.10. Assuming that I conclude that the Plan identifies sufficient land to ensure that justified development needs can be met in suitable locations throughout the Plan period, would there be exceptional circumstances to justify taking additional land out of the Green Belt at the present time, for example to try to ensure that Green Belt boundaries will not need to be altered again at the end of the Plan period?

2.32. Metroland consider that ‘safeguarded sites’ should be identified, to ensure that the Plan is sufficiently flexible consistent with the requirements of the Framework, and to ensure that the Green Belt boundaries will not need to be altered again at the end of the Plan period – or in advance.

Q4.11. Is policy 2 part 6 justified and consistent with national policy relating to development in the Green Belt, in particular that related to “limited infilling in villages”? 

2.33. Metroland has no specific comment to make in relation to this issue.

**Proposed Change**

2.34. To overcome the objection and address soundness matters, the following changes are proposed:

- Provide greater clarity with reference to compensatory measures sought for individual sites.
Appendix 1: Site 115, Alverley Lane, Advocacy
Doncaster

ALVERLEY LANE, BALBY

METROLAND
Introduction

The land at Alverley Lane, Balby presents a sustainable development opportunity to provide much needed new housing for Doncaster. The site is being promoted by Metroland as a development opportunity that can deliver circa 220 dwellings.

This advocacy document has been produced for the site at Alverley Lane, Balby. The site is being advocated to Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council as part of the Local Plan Review. This document presents information to support the Site’s release from the Green Belt and allocation for residential development by assessing its credentials against the five greenbelt tests and demonstration of sustainability, suitability and deliverability.

The Site

The site is located to the south of Alverley Lane, Balby and is a protrusion of Green Belt within an existing residential area of Doncaster. It is physically separated from the wider Green Belt by a raised, disused railway line and tree belt. The site is circa 6.5 ha in area and can accommodate in the region of 220 dwellings.

The site is in an area on the southern edge of Balby close to facilities and services, including Woodfield Plantation and Springwell Lane Local Centres, Tickhill Road Hospital and employment facilities at Woodfield Park employment facilities. In relation to schools the site is located close to Carr Lodge Park Academy and Balby Carr Community Academy.

The site therefore represents a highly sustainable development opportunity with access to existing facilities and services. It is a logical extension to the urban area of Doncaster and supports the continued housing and economic growth of the town.

Scope

This Advocacy Report will set out the context and ambitions for the site at Alverley Lane, Balby, before analysing and explaining the site’s justification for Green Belt release, sustainability, availability, suitability, achievability and deliverability in the context of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework).

An indicative masterplan for the site will show the potential for the site including green and blue infrastructure, movement and connectivity. The masterplan shows a scheme based on a number of technical assessments including highways, ecology, flood risk and ground. The proposal provides significant benefits which are explained throughout the report including the provision of a range and choice of house types and tenure, job creation and economic growth.
Planning and Housing Need

There is a significant and recognised housing crisis within the UK. The country needs to provide around 300,000 homes per year to keep up with population growth and to start to tackle years of undersupply. Within Yorkshire significant stresses on housing supply also exist. The Local Authorities in Doncaster, Wakefield, Barnsley, Rotherham, Sheffield, Selby and Leeds need to provide at least 11,670 new homes per year cumulatively.

The Revised National Planning Policy Framework 2018 (the Framework) states that local authorities should meet their objectively assessed housing needs in full and to boost significantly the supply of housing. The current Core Strategy also recognises the need to deliver a sufficient supply of housing and support economic development and growth now to create sustainable communities.

The Borough of Doncaster is located on the crossroads of the main arterial routes of the A1(M) and M18 Motorways as well as being a major station on the East Coast Mainline and is located on a key route between the Region and the east coast ports. Doncaster is an integral part of the Sheffield City Region and the ambitious growth aspirations. The Strategic Economic Plan sets out the Sheffield City Region’s plans to transform the local economy over the next decade. At the heart of the plan is the creation of 70,000 new private sector jobs and 6,000 new businesses.

Therefore, to achieve the aspired growth that the City Region is seeking to achieve and is securing Government funding for the level of new housing needs to reflect the ambitions of the Strategic Economic Plan.

Furthermore, the Sheffield City Region Integrated Infrastructure Plan states:

"A quality housing offer has a crucial role to play in the future economic growth of the City Region. It is essential to attracting and retaining a skills base that supports inward investment as we as meeting existing and future community needs and retention of Sheffield City Region (SCR) talent."

"It has been identified that between 70,000 and 100,000 additional homes are needed in SCR to support the proposed economic growth over the next 10 years. These will have the dual benefit of providing accommodation that underpins the proposed increase in employment (70,000 jobs), as well as the wider economic benefits that housing investment brings."

The current wider economic context in the country is also relevant. The economic decline and associated recovery, its impact on the housing market and increasing housing crisis means schemes that assist economic and housing growth, are high on the Government’s priorities. The Localism Act, the Revised Framework, ministerial statements and budgets recognise the importance of housing and the significant economic imperative of encouraging new development proposals within appropriate and sustainable locations. Within this context, the planning system plays a crucial role in this approach to facilitating new development proposals.

Doncaster is a sub-regional centre providing a sustainable location comprising a wide variety of housing, commercial and employment opportunities and good rail and road connections to the wider area. Balby forms part of the ‘Doncaster Main Urban Area’ within the emerging Doncaster Local Plan. The Doncaster Main Urban Area is required to provide at least 50% of the housing growth (7,136-7,696 homes).

Therefore, Alverley Lane site therefore represents an opportunity to provide quality housing in a sustainable location to go towards meeting the housing needs of delivering much needed new homes within Doncaster.
CONNECTION TO PUBLIC RIGHT OF WAY

PUBLIC OPEN SPACE

SURFACE WATER STORAGE BENEATH POS

POTENTIAL SURFACE WATER DRAIN ROUTE

BUILDINGS FACE ONTO ALVERLEY LANE

DISUSED RAILWAY EMBANKMENT FORMS NEW URBAN EDGE

CONNECTION TO PUBLIC RIGHT OF WAY

Annotated Illustrative Masterplan 1:2,500
Available and Suitable

The site is available, suitable and achievable and is deliverable in accordance with the Framework and represents a sustainable residential opportunity on the edge of an established residential area. The landowner Metroland is promoting the site and there is interest from Persimmon Homes which further demonstrates the site’s deliverability.

Availability
The land is being promoted by Metroland Ltd as landowner. The site is therefore available in accordance with the Framework and the National Planning Practice Guidance (PPG).

Suitability
The Council has established the need for a Green Belt Review and has undertaken the work, supporting the release of Green Belt sites. The site provides a vitally important opportunity to meet the housing needs of the District, which provides the exceptional circumstances to justify the release of the site from the Green Belt.

The proposed site utilises a distinct element of the existing Green Belt which is a protrusion into the Doncaster Main Urban Area. The site is separated from the wider Green Belt by the disused railway line to the south which provides a topographic feature separating the site from the wider Green Belt as well as screening views between the site and the wider Green Belt. The development of the site will be an efficient use of land to provide quality development and new homes for the Doncaster Main Urban Area. The site is identified for development within the Draft Doncaster Local Plan.

The site is located in a highly sustainable location and has residential development to the north, east and west. The site is within easy walking distance to Springwell Lane Local Centre with a range of facilities provided there as well as greater facilities within Doncaster Town Centre, a short bus ride away. There are a large number of primary and a secondary schools in the vicinity of the site.

The site is well served by buses providing opportunities for sustainable travel to work in Doncaster and beyond with access to Doncaster Railway Station.

The Council state in proposing to allocate the site that:

The site also performs strongest through the Sustainability Appraisal of all the extension sites.

The technical work that underpins the masterplan confirms that there are no known constraints to development. The development will provide additional quality development that will benefit the Doncaster and wider district with economic, environmental and social benefits. It is therefore considered that the development is suitable. It is therefore considered that the proposed allocation of the site at Alverley Lane, Balby is suitable, in accordance with national guidance.
Green Belt

The housing needs of Doncaster are putting severe pressure on the local authority to review the Green Belt. To meet the housing requirement Doncaster Council recognises that some Green Belt land will need to be released for new housing land. Alverley Lane, Balby is an erroneous portion of Green Belt within the urban area and is therefore a unique opportunity to positively use the Green Belt and meet the housing need for the area.

In the Borough of Doncaster approximately 46% of the area is designated as Green Belt. This is the western part of the Borough which forms part of the South Yorkshire Green Belt surrounding urban areas.

The Framework considers that Green Belt boundaries can change “in exceptional circumstances” as part of a Local Plan review. Such a circumstance exists through the significant need to provide housing in Doncaster. To meet the housing need and economic growth aspirations the Council has stated it will need to revise the Green Belt boundaries for the emerging Local Plan and beyond to provide the new boundaries with some permanence.

The site does not currently perform a Green Belt function and its release would help to establish a more appropriate and robust Green Belt boundary. The isolated nature of the site from the surrounding Green Belt means that its release will not impact on the openness of the Green Belt. The site is bounded by the urban area to the north, east and west. To the south is the raised, disused railway with associated tree belt, which would form a robust new urban edge and Green Belt boundary.

This boundary would accord with the Framework and ensure the Green Belt is well defined for the long-term. The disused railway and tree belts are distinct features beyond which the urban edge will not encroach, thus ensuring permanency is maintained.

The Alverley Lane, Balby site is therefore a unique opportunity to meet the housing need and economic growth aspirations whilst delivering significant benefits for the area. The Council has stated in identifying the site that “the existing boundary is considered to be an irregular and inconsistent existing built form boundary” and that if the site were to be allocated then:

“The newly formed defined boundary would be a densely vegetated dismantled railway corridor to the south of the site and is considered to be strongly defined, recognisable and likely to be permanent. The resultant Green Belt boundary would result in a rounding of the existing built form and concluded as being a strong and defensible boundary”.

It is clear from the site location plans and analysis that development of the site would not have a material impact on the Green Belt. The development of this site will not have a significant impact on any of the reasons for the Green Belt designation in the area. The new Green Belt boundaries will be drawn to provide a long term robust boundary. The development will not result in the coalescence of neighbouring towns, and will not encroach on the countryside nor affect the setting and special character of an historic town.

This view is reflected in the Council’s assessment of the site, which concludes that “the Green Belt in this location has a low-moderate role in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment” and that “given the strength of the proposed boundary” the site has no role in preventing neighbouring towns from merging. Therefore, although the site is in the Green Belt it is a logical scheme with significant major benefits.

Alverley Lane, Balby is a site does not perform any the five Green Belt functions and as such is an appropriate site for release.
Comprehensive Settlement Analysis Plan 1:5,000
The Alverley Lane site is located to the south of Balby in Doncaster. The site is within walking distance of Woodfield Plantation and Springwell Lane Local Centres (under 800m). There are also numerous bus services which pass close to the site connecting the area with central Doncaster.

Doncaster Railway Station is 2.5 miles from the site and can be reached following a 13 minute bus ride from Tickhill Road.

Doncaster station is extremely well connected by the East Coast Mainline with services to London (2 hrs), Leeds (33 mins), Newcastle (1:30 hrs), Manchester Airport (1:44 hrs), York (20 mins), Sheffield (26 mins), Penzance (7:45 hrs) and Hull (50 mins) among other places. The ease of access to the station from the site using public transport adds to the sustainability of the site.

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<tr>
<th>Facility</th>
<th>Distance to closest (miles)</th>
<th>Approx journey time (mins)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>8 mins Walk</td>
<td>Springwell Lane</td>
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<tr>
<td>Local Shop(s)</td>
<td>0.3 miles</td>
<td>7 mins Walk</td>
<td>Springwell Lane</td>
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<td>Post Office</td>
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<td>13 mins Bus</td>
<td>Doncaster</td>
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Carr Lodge Academy, to the west, and Mallard Primary School, to the north of the site provide primary education. Both of these schools are approximately 20 minutes walk (1 mile) from the site. The closest secondary school is Balby Carr Community Academy school which is located approximately 25 minutes walk (1.3 miles) to the north-east of the site.

The bus services along Tickhill Road, adjacent to the site providing up to four buses an hour into Doncaster Town Centre. Further twice hourly services are available into Doncaster from Springwell Lane.
View from the north-eastern corner of the site looking downhill towards the disused railway line. The image shows the 1970s (approx) detached houses overlooking Alverley Lane (right) as well as the greenhouses and farm buildings within the site boundary (left).

Tickhill Road looking north showing the historic wall of Woodfield Park (right).

View towards Tickhill Road/Alverley Lane junction from Alverley Lane.
View from north-western corner of the site looking uphill towards the rear of properties on Tickhill Road and the greenhouses and farm buildings within the site.

The neighbouring site (immediately west of the site) appears to be in a state of disrepair.

The bus turning area on Springwell Lane where buses can be caught into Doncaster Town Centre.

View looking east along the bridleway on top of the disused railway embankment.

Tickhill Road forms a major route into Doncaster. This image is looking north towards the Alverley Lane junction.
A SWOT analysis has been undertaken with the conclusions used to inform the design process. Detailed technical reports have also been undertaken and are summarised in the following sections of this Advocacy Report. In addition, collaboration between Metroland and Persimmon Homes will ensure the Site would be delivered expeditiously.

The masterplan design proposal seeks to maximise the opportunities this sustainable site provides. The technical assessments demonstrate there are no known constraints that could not be suitably mitigated satisfactorily or that would prevent this site from coming forward within the plan period. They also identify positive opportunities for enhancement and betterment. The site is therefore achievable in accordance with the Framework.

Metroland has the full support of national house builder Persimmon Homes in ensuring this site is deliverable in accordance with the Framework and can be relied upon to deliver new homes within the emerging Plan.
Site Issues & Opportunities

The Site at Alverley Lane provides a number of positive opportunities which any proposed development can utilise in order to enhance Balby neighbourhood and to integrate the development into Doncaster.

The Site
The total site is approximately 6.5ha located on the southern edge of Balby.

Topography
The site slopes gently from the high point in the north-western corner to the low point in the south-eastern corner. The disused railway embankment on the southern edge of the site is raised above the site.

The site is enclosed with no views possible into the site from the surround area due to the surrounding housing and railway embankment.

Access
Alverley Lane is a long road running adjacent to the site providing multiple opportunities for highways access. Along the south of the site runs the disused Edlington / Dearne Valley Railway Embankment with a footpath and bridleway running along the old track route. There may be opportunity to provide pedestrian and cycle connection to this route from within the site.

Ecology
The site is of low ecological value, however the Edlington / Dearne Valley Railway Embankment Local Wildlife Site (LWS) runs adjacent to the southern boundary of the site. There may be opportunity to enhance the existing ecological habitat.

Transport
The site is well served by existing bus services with regular services on Tickhill Road and Springwell Lane linking the site with central Doncaster.

Drainage
It is considered that infiltration drainage techniques are unlikely to perform on the site due to the underlying ground conditions.

It is considered that connections to the local surface water sewer systems along with surface water storage will be the most appropriate solution for the site.
Analysis of potential Wildlife Corridors and Higher Value Habitat

- Potential wildlife corridor
- Higher value habitat
- Barriers to wildlife
- Site Boundary

There are no standing water bodies on Site or within 500m of its boundaries.
Brooks Ecological were commissioned to carry out an ecological appraisal at land at Alverley Lane, Balby in September 2018. The site is of low ecological value owing largely to its history of agricultural use.

The site is occupied by habitats much affected by agricultural management, which are considered to be of low ecological value, and their presence should not pose a constraint to development.

The adjacent railway embankment has been designated as a Local Wildlife Site (LWS), reflecting its value at a local level. The scale of this development and established infrastructure within the LWS mean that impacts are considered unlikely.

The trees and hedges present on the site’s boundaries could be retained, however any loss that is required should be compensated for through planting of new native trees and hedges elsewhere within the proposed scheme.

Wildlife Corridors
The A1(M) and the M18, found to the southwest and south respectively, are significant barriers to wildlife.

The disused railway to the south of the Site provides a good wildlife corridor with strong links to the site. Although this corridor is truncated to the west by the A1(M), it provides a minor link between the site and Potteric Carr Nature Reserve (SSSI) to the east, albeit, severed by the White Rose Way bypass.

Local Wildlife Sites (LWS)
St Catherine’s Railway Embankments, Delves and Cuttings (site 2.24) is found immediately south of the application site and serves to link several other sites along its length to the application Site, including Potteric Carr Nature Reserve Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), albeit partially severed by the White Rose Way bypass.

The potential for impacts on these designations is considered to be limited based on the scale and nature of the proposed development, topography and the existing strong infrastructure along St Catherine’s Railway Embankments.

Summary
The appraisal has concluded that site is of low ecological value owing largely to its history of agricultural use. Therefore, through the site’s residential development there is the potential opportunity to enhance ecology in the area through planting of new native trees/hedges within the scheme.
Highways and Access

Curtins has undertaken an Access Strategy, which concludes that a single point of access should be provided from Alverley Lane. The site is in an accessible and sustainable location and the proposed scheme can be accommodated on the local highway network.

**Highways**
The main highway access will be taken from Alverley Lane, in between the junctions of Hanbury Close and Melford Drive giving more than 43m stopping sight distance. The location of the proposed access is considered to be in the best location for access to the new residential area. New footways will be required on the south side of Alverley Lane for pedestrians to gain access into the new development.

Alverley Lane is a 30mph road, the development of the site for circa 220 properties will therefore have no significant adverse impact on the local highway network. The site access is acceptable in geometric terms and will allow the safe passage of all road users into the site including cyclists and pedestrians.

**Pedestrian and Cycle Infrastructure and Accessibility**
The flat topography surrounding the site makes cycling an attractive mode of travel for potential residents. The new residents of the proposed scheme could potentially cycle into Balby and onto the River Don towpath to Doncaster Town Centre.

It was observed during the site visit that the existing footways, in the immediate vicinity of the development site, were in good condition and could potentially be used by cyclists to travel further afield.

**Summary**
Therefore, the site is in a sustainable location, with existing bus stops in close proximity to the site. Doncaster Town Centre is therefore eminently accessible via sustainable transport modes.
Flood Risk and Drainage

A preliminary Drainage Appraisal and Flood Risk Assessment was undertaken by Walker Ingram Associates in Sept 2018. The Environment Agency identifies the site as being in Flood Zone 1 with a low risk of flooding for rivers or the sea. The site is also identified as having a low or very low probability of surface water flooding.

The site is not at risk from flooding. The site is identified by the Environment Agency as being in Flood Zone 1, which is a less than 1 in 1,000 chance of river or sea flooding in any one year. There are no recorded flooding incidents on the site.

The site has a prominent fall in a south westerly direction which becomes less pronounced towards the southern boundary. Levels continue to fall slightly to the west following the flow of a field ditch that is located between the site and a steep embankment up to the disused railway line.

A watercourse/ditch is located along the southern boundary of the site that takes run off from the fields and disused railway embankment. Although the watercourse will take very little runoff if the site gets developed, and due to the topography of the site flooding from this source is considered to be low risk.

The Environment Agency surface water flood maps shows most of the proposed site to be within a low and very low risk area, with no potential surface water flood routes affecting the site.

In relation to groundwater the Geological Survey Maps of Great Britain available on the BGS website indicates that the site is underlain by the Edlington Formation - Mudstone, Calcareous. The superficial deposits on site consist of Till (boulder clay), Mid Pleistocene - Diamicton. Considering the geology beneath the site, and presence of watercourses within and close proximity to the site, it is anticipated that the site is impermeable and, therefore, flooding from this source is considered to be low risk.

As the site is Greenfield, surface water runoff shall be restricted to the existing greenfield runoff rate for the site.

The proposed surface water drainage system shall be restricted to the agreed discharge rate with appropriate attenuation for a 1 in 100 year storm plus climate change event and 10% urban creep incorporated into the design, prior to discharge into the watercourse or sewer. The detailed design and calculations shall be submitted to the Planning Authority for approval prior to construction on the development site.

Sustainable Drainage Systems of infiltration techniques are considered to be unsuitable on this particular site due to the geological parameters of the natural soils. However, it will be necessary to carry out appropriate infiltration tests in accordance with BRE Digest 365 ‘Soakaway Design’ prior to construction on site and the results presented in a report for the approval of the Planning Authority.

Yorkshire Water has confirmed that foul water domestic waste should discharge to the 225mm diameter public foul sewer recorded in Alverley Lane, at a point adjacent to the site.

Summary
The site in relation to flood risk and drainage matters the site is developable.
Historical Mapping

1854 OS Map

1931 OS Map

1972-1974 OS Map

2000 OS Map

Source map scale - 1:10,000
Published 1966 - 1967

Source map scale - 1:10,560
Published 1854

Source map scale - 1:10,560
Published 1931

Source map scale - 1:10,560
Published 2000

Ordnance Survey Plan
2000 OS Map

10 years or so for urban areas.
1:10,000 maps were produced using the Transverse Mercator Projection. The maps were initially overprinted with the National Grid. In 1970, the first unfinished - with all military camps and other strategic sites removed. These the 1:10,560 mapping from a number of sources. The maps appear areas. In the late 1940`s, a Provisional Edition was produced, which updated the 1:10,560 maps. The published date given therefore is the 1:2,500 scale was adopted for mapping urban areas; these maps were used to update the 1:10,560 maps. The published date given therefore is the scale adopted for England, Wales and Scotland in the 1840`s. In 1854 The historical maps shown were produced from the Ordnance Survey`s Historical Map - Slice A

Map Name(s) and Date(s)

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Map Name(s) and Date(s)
Eastwood & Partners has prepared a Geoenvironmental Phase 1 Desk Study for the site in July 2018. The Desk Study did not identify any geoenvironmental constraints which would prevent the development of the site.

The Assessment shows that there are no constraints to delivery from a geoenvironmental perspective.

In general, a limited thickness of made ground is expected along the north eastern side of the site below and around the existing and former buildings. Topsoil is expected to cover the majority of the remainder of the site, with clay overlying mudstone bedrock expected across the majority of the site. In the western corner of the site, Glacial Till is expected overlying limestone bedrock, although the thickness of the superficial deposits is not known at present. Shallow groundwater, or perched groundwater, may be present on the site.

Site History
In terms of the history of the site the earliest map, dated 1854, shows the surrounding area to be predominantly fields. Fox Hole Farm or Springwell Grange is present adjacent to the northern corner of the site. Some springs are identified around 100m south west of the site and a well (named as St Catherine’s) is shown 200m south of the site. By 1893 Balby Brick works is shown around 700m north of the site and two quarries are present around 450m and 650m south east of the site.

The 1902 map shows St Catherine’s well now has a hydraulic ram and sluice and the springs are not identified. The quarries are also not shown on the 1904 map. By 1930 a railway line has been constructed along the southern boundary of the site. In addition houses have been constructed northwards along Tickhill Road opposite Springwell Grange and the village of Balby (approximately 1.5 km north) has begun to expand southwards towards the site.

St Catherine’s Well remains shown, although the ram and sluice are not shown from the 1962 map onwards. St Catherine’s Well stream is shown running southwards from the well, and the immediately surrounding land is labelled as having ‘issues’, which usually refers to drainage matters.

The A1 is shown on the historical maps from 1966 approximately 450m west of the site in a north west to south east orientation. The 1972 map shows both brickworks have become disused and houses now border both the northern and eastern sides of the site. The expansion of Balby continues in the surrounding area up till present day. The railway line becomes disused by 1993.

Within the site the earliest historical map, dated 1854, shows the site to be comprised of several fields. Alverley Lane is present in its current orientation although unnamed. The 1930 map shows a small water feature, possibly a pond, on the north eastern boundary. It is not shown on any of the other maps.

Summary
Traditional strip or trench fill footings are expected to be suitable, taken down through any made ground and constructed within the natural clay to an expected minimum depth of 900mm.

Due to the expectation that the underlying natural ground will predominantly comprise clay, soakaways are not expected to be a viable method of surface water drainage. A piped discharge will be required, with onsite attenuation.
Key Design Principles Plan 1:2,500

- Key Access Road
- Key Pedestrian Route
- Public Open Space
- Wildlife Buffer
- Vehicular Access

- Buildings face onto Averley Lane
- Connection to Public Right of Way
- Buffer alongside local wildlife site
- Connection to Public Right of Way

Key:
- Main Access Road
- Key Pedestrian Route
- Public Open Space
- Wildlife Buffer
- Vehicular Access
Development Principles

The approach of the masterplan is to provide housing which integrates with the surrounding area making the most of the surrounding landscape and the pedestrian links. These elements of the masterplan will help to integrate the extended urban edge into Balby.

A number of principles have been identified above as a result of the baseline assessment. The following key design principles inform the design concept and are present in the final scheme. They are as illustrated on the plan opposite:

**Highways Layout**
The main vehicular site access will be located on Alverley Lane with internal loop roads within the proposed development.

**Drainage**
It is proposed that the Sustainable Urban Drainage solution be provided as a storage within or beneath the public open space.

**Trees and Public Open Space**
The main public open space (POS) within the development lies on the western edge of the site separating the new homes from the existing employment use. Trees will be used within the scheme to identify key pedestrian routes.

**Ecology**
There is potential within the illustrative masterplan within the open space to enhance local habitats.

**Access**
The masterplan allows for pedestrian/cycle linkages through the site to the disused railway embankment to the south. This route will provide opportunity for the new residents to walk or cycle to the Tesco and other facilities within the Woodfield Plantation Local Centre encouraging sustainable movement in the local area.

It will be necessary to work with the council Ecologist to determine the suitability of these connections into the LWS.

**Residential Design**
Creation of a high quality residential extension to Balby having its own distinct identity of appropriate scale and character for the site. More generic design principles which will be applied to the scheme are as follows:

- Character - a place with its own identity
- Continuity and enclosure - where public and private spaces are clearly distinguished
- Quality of the public realm - a place with attractive outdoor areas
- Ease of movement - a place that is easy to get to and move through
- Legibility - a place that is easy to navigate
- Diversity - a place that offers variety and choice
Conclusion

Alverley Lane, Balby is demonstrated to be a justified release form the Green Belt, is available, suitable achievable and deliverable in accordance with the Framework and represents a sustainable residential development opportunity to deliver new housing to meet the needs of the Doncaster Main Urban Area and the wider Borough.

There is a need for Doncaster Council to review their Green Belt boundaries in order to meet the identified housing need in the area. Doncaster has confirmed through its assessment work the justification and requirement for the site to be removed from the Green Belt to enable the delivery of housing. In addition the Council goes further stating that the existing Green Belt boundary is irregular and inconsistent and that the proposed new Green Belt boundary would become stronger and defensible for the future. In relation to sustainability the Council states the site is the strongest performing urban extension site within the Sustainability Appraisal This document undertakes a separate assessment and full supports these conclusions.

This Advocacy Report confirms there are exceptional circumstances supporting the release of the site from the Green Belt due to the urgent need to meet Doncaster’s housing need and ambitions for growth. Metroland own the site, which is therefore available for development within the plan period. The site is in a sustainable area close to a range of services and facilities and public transport routes. The site is therefore suitable for residential development.

The technical work undertaken to date has influenced the indicative masterplan. It has also shown that there are no known constraints, that could not be suitably mitigated, that would prevent this site coming forward within the plan period:
- The highway work confirms the suitability of the site access and highway network to accommodate the proposed development.
- The site is not in an area at risk of flooding. The drainage work has identified a drainage strategy for the site. It has confirmed the attenuation required on site and demonstrated the suitability of the area identified on the masterplan for this purpose.
- Ecological survey work has confirmed there are no ecological constraints to the development of the site.
- Ground investigation has confirmed the suitability of the site to accommodate future development and the type of foundations that would be required.

The indicative masterplan shows how a mix of housing can be accommodated within the site, alongside connectivity, landscaping and drainage features. The site has support from Persimmon Homes and Ongo Homes (Registered Provider).

As such, the development of the site, as shown within the indicative masterplan, is considered achievable and deliverable.

Furthermore, the development of the site will bring forward additional economic benefits to the area. The relationship between economic performance in an area and housing is complex, but having the right quantity, quality and balance of housing in an area is necessary for economic growth. The development of the Alverley Lane, Balby scheme can therefore support local economic growth, both through direct job creation through the construction phase of the scheme, but also through the increased population which will create sustainable local jobs from the increased demand for goods and services.

It has therefore been demonstrated that the site is a justified release from the Green Belt and is available, suitable, achievable and deliverable for the provision of much needed housing in full accordance with national planning policy and guidance.
Key Benefits

- Optimum location to assist in the continued growth of the Doncaster Main Urban Area
- The delivery of circa 220 new homes in a range of house types, sizes and tenure
- Circa 770 new jobs (direct and in-direct) from the construction of the residential scheme alone
- Gross Value Added of around £50.6 million
- Circa £5.45 million Annual Household Expenditure
- At least £1.1 million of first occupation expenditure