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T1:- PREAMBLE

The infrastructure in Ponteland has not improved in line with the growth in population and housing changes. Local roads are in poor condition especially in Darras Hall. Ponteland is exceptional in the very high car ownership of residents with only 12.5% of households having no car and 48.8% having two or more cars. There is a heavy toll of wear and tear on Ponteland roads because of car numbers, heavy school traffic, lorry traffic serving the area together with commercial traffic using Ponteland as a link between the A1 and A69.

Responsibility for the roads remains with Northumberland County Council (NCC) and the Highways Agency (HA). The Ponteland Town Council acts as a lobby both on the NCC and HA; the Town Council continues pressure the bodies responsible for the decline in our road stock.

T2 HIGWAYS

T2.1 Introduction

Heavy goods vehicles, tourist traffic and especially schools traffic continue to cause environmental and safety problems on the A696 and North Road as well as Thornhill Road, Broadway in Darras Hall and Callerton Lane. Then of course there are always road works and services needing to dig up the highway.

Traffic volumes have increased substantially creating a greater need for a Relief Road. The A696 Trunk Road runs through the centre of Ponteland village and the presence of heavy goods traffic in particular in the main streets is giving rise to environmental and safety problems. The last significant improvement to traffic in Ponteland took place 23 years ago with the opening of the Callerton Lane Link Road, (Rotary Way). This removed a substantial amount of commuter traffic from the village centre but there are still significant highway and environmental benefits to be gained through the provision of the A696 Ponteland Relief Road.

The A696 through Ponteland serves a number of purposes; it is the principal route through the Town and is part of the A696 Trunk Road from Newcastle to Jedburgh and beyond. It also serves as part of the village centre, being the historic Main Street with a number of commercial businesses along its length. There are also fairly high pedestrian flows at certain points across Main Street. The County Council has introduced more zebra crossings to help pedestrian flow.

With the approval of expanded Army Training Activities at Otterburn, this road has come under further pressure and the competing demands for the road space are being considered within the Local Transport Plan. There are also specific requirements of army convoys that need to be incorporated in any potential schemes. The County Council, former Borough Council and the current Town Council are keen to see improvements to the Main Street and will need to consider many issues in this plan. Detailed local consultation on specific proposals will be carried out prior to implementation of improvements. In developing any proposals, the Authorities will also ensure co-ordination with any major schemes arising out of the Otterburn Inquiry such as the renewed calls for the Ponteland Relief Road and the opportunities that can then be created for prioritising space for other road users and improving the environment of the Main Street.

T2.1.1 Estimated Number of Cars through Ponteland

The following figures are based on an estimated average number of cars per household. A number of properties in the South & West Wards of Ponteland in particular, house in some cases 6+ people. Within these two wards, the estimated car numbers by household are given assuming an average of 2 and 3 cars per residence.

North Ward: 1082 households x Estimated 1.2 cars per household = 1298 cars
(A number of residential properties in North Ward have a lower ratio of cars per household)
East Ward: 1199 households x Estimated 1.5 per household = 1798 cars
West Ward: 1010 households x Estimated 2.0 per household = 2020 cars
South Ward: 1059 households x Estimated 3.0 per household = 3177 cars

Total Estimated Cars in Ponteland Town Council area (2012) = 8293 cars

T3.1 Evidence

T3.1.2 Department of Transport in relation to Ponteland

The figures that follow are taken from the Department of Transport Forecasts (DoTF) for 2013. To confirm these figures and see a much more substantial review and detailed analysis the reader will need to visit the DoTF websites rather than copy some 60 pages and attach them to this report.

In 2012 there were 34.5 million vehicles of which 28.7 million were cars.
The estimated number of miles travelled being some 255 billion miles.

The DoTF have three forecasts, low average and high of expected miles travelled in 2040.
Low mileage estimated as 325 billion miles.

- Average mileage at 375 billion miles.
- High mileage at 445 billion miles.

Taking a starting point from 1996 as being 100% of cars on the road in 2011 that percentage has increased to 116%, i.e. an increase of 16% of cars on the road since 1996.

The forecast provided is that from 2011 to 2031 the numbers of cars on the road will increase again between a low of 14% and a high of 38%.

This means that the current level of cars changes from 28.7 million to a low increase of 33.3 million (4.6 million extra) and to a high of 46.2 million (17.5 million extra) cars on the road.

From a traffic survey PTC commissioned in December 2012 and January 2013 the number of cars along the A696 on Main Street Ponteland was 6,182 west bound and a similar number east bound over a 24 hour period. Over a Sunday the figures were slightly less at over 4,000 each way. It is accepted that a full traffic survey needs to be carried out in and around Ponteland over the 4 seasons, Spring, Summer, Autumn and Winter using Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) software. Thus a true picture can be built up, however if the County agree to carry out a survey this will not be in time for the Neighbourhood Planning process.

Using the percentage from the DoTF the new figures of traffic in Main Street become 7,188 as a low increase and 9,812 as a high increase with the certainty that traffic will back up on more occasions past 0.8 of a mile.

T3.1.3 Ponteland and the effect of DoTF figures

Taking the estimated number of cars owned in Ponteland from T2.1.1 of 8,293 and multiply this by the forecast figures of low (14%), and high (38%) for the year 2031.

By year 2031 Ponteland cars owned of 8,293 becomes 9,643 cars for a low estimate and 13,375 cars for a high estimate. It is accepted that Ponteland is high ratio of car ownership per the population so one can expect the increase to be towards the higher end rather than the lower end.

The DoTF figures nationally estimate that some 4.6m to 17.5m extra cars could be on the road by the year 2031.

T3.1.4 Ponteland at Current Date

T3.1.5 Observations

It has already been observed that on occasions the traffic is backed up from the centre of Ponteland (traffic lights on Main Street where the bridge is) towards the airport where the roundabout on Rotary Way and the Badger Pub and Dobbies Garden Centre is (0.8 of a mile).

Since the centre of Ponteland is just single carriage way it is a problem for cars wanting to coming from the West and wanting to cross over into the supermarkets of Waitrose and or Sainsbury's. This causes a tail back.

Those coming out of the Estate from the Golf Course onto the A696 and wanting to turn right towards the centre of Ponteland frequently need to turn left towards the Rotary Way roundabout so that they can come back towards Ponteland. The churches have advised Undertakers to allow an extra 10 to 20 minutes at certain times so that the church service is not overly delayed.

There is also an appreciable increase in volume due to cars in the morning going to North Shields for the Ferry and again in the afternoon when cars from the Ferry heading North.

T3.1.6 Ponteland and the future

Since occasionally the traffic is backed up some 0.8 of a mile (already observed) it can be estimated that over the coming years the traffic will soon be backed up much further than 0.8 of a mile. Actually this scenario gets worse very quickly as quite a volume of traffic coming from the direction of the airport towards Ponteland wants to turn left at the Rotary Way roundabout towards Darras Hall Estate.

This means that it is entirely likely that the traffic will now be backed up towards the turn off for Dinnington roundabout. This compounds the effect of traffic wanting to head towards Dinnington which means that the traffic in all likely-hood will be backed up to the large Airport roundabout. Once this happens the Airport traffic will be affected so one can see a real traffic jam occurring.

T4.2 DEBATE OVER A RELIEF ROAD

T4.2.1 Campaign for a Ponteland relief road

Calls for a Ponteland Relief Road have been made for around 50 years and the growth in population and traffic makes a Relief Road more necessary than ever before. Construction of a long awaited Relief Road would relieve problems as well as bring benefits to Ponteland.

A Relief Road would alleviate the amount of traffic travelling through Ponteland particularly along the A696 in a north – south direction and it would ease congestion and improve the environment.

T4.2.2 County Council support for a Ponteland relief road

In 2003, the Borough Council supported the proposal for a Ponteland Relief Road and although the Borough Council no longer exists, we believe that Northumberland County Council still supports this policy.

A Relief Road has been requested and proposed for Ponteland for about 50 years without success. The former Department of Transport agreed that a reassessment of the need for the Ponteland Relief Road would be undertaken following the opening of the Newcastle Western Relief Road, the Callerton Lane Link Road and the Woolsington Relief Road, with subsequent rationalisation of traffic patterns. This survey work was undertaken as long ago as May 1992 but we are still awaiting progress on the Relief Road and we continue to include it as a vital part of the Plan for Ponteland despite no progress being made.

T4.2.3 Relief road in stages

The Relief Road need not be built all in one go as it could be achieved in three stages. The first stage could go from the A696 just North of Ponteland to the North Road coming out of Ponteland. The second stage would run from the North Road to a point just North of Eland Green coming out on the Berwick Hill Road. The third stage would travel from Berwick Hill Road to the roundabout at the end of Rotary Way or the Dinnington roundabout. Therefore a three-stage process would spread the cost of the build.

T4.2.4 Possible RELIEF ROAD ROUTES

The attached map in Appendix 2 shows that are 4 routes that could be taken for a Relief Road.

The A696 through Ponteland was formerly part of the Trunk Road Network and a key element of the highway infrastructure that serves the Army Training Facilities at Otterburn. These have been expanded after having been granted approval by the Secretary of State after a Public Inquiry. As a result a greater number of larger Army convoys travel along the A696 through Ponteland. Whilst the justification for the Ponteland Relief Road was not fully discussed at that Inquiry, the increased usage further highlights the need for the Relief Road and whilst it was not included within the Local Transport Plan Programme (2001-2006) it is essential that advance works to promote and justify the scheme can continue and that the alignment of the route is protected.

T4.2.5 Relief road and Ponteland golf course

The NPG recognises the Golf Club's concern and consequently suggests Route 3 which skirts round the outer reaches of the golf course.

T4.2.6 Proximity of relief road to residential areas

In supporting the outer line of the Relief Road, the NPG is aware of its relative proximity to residential properties in the north and east of Ponteland village and this will require significant landscaping and screen planting to be included when the Relief Road is built in order to minimise the impact of the road on existing properties.

T4.2.6.1 Policy

To alleviate traffic congestion in the centre of Ponteland a Relief Road must be planned and built as soon as possible to stop the inevitable gridlock that will occur.

T5.2.7 SCHOOLS

T5.2.7.1 Introduction

In addition to 2 nurseries, there are 3 schools on Darras Hall and 2 in Ponteland village. The middle and high schools on Darras Hall share the same site on Callerton Lane whilst the first school, Darras First, is situated 1 mile west near the Broadway shops.

The 2 schools in Ponteland village, Ponteland First and Richard Coates Middle School occupy adjoining sites on Thornhill Road.

T5.2.7.2 Thornhill Road Area (Middle and First School)

There is a serious problem in Ponteland with schools traffic. At school opening and closing times, parents form a long line of parked cars that blocks off one side of a road and restricts use of the road by other car owners.

T5.2.7.3 Broadway Area in Darras Hall Estate (First School and Nursery School)

School morning and afternoon times are a headache for local residents as well as for the cars dropping scholars off. Cars are parked not only on Middle Drive down to Whinfell Road but, Woodside, Linden Way and of course Broadway Shopping area and along the street down and beyond to Moor Lane. This situation worsens when local bus services and large vehicles have to queue to get past a long line of parked cars. This has led to bus services running late for the rest of the day causing frustration to bus users.

T5.2.7.4 Callerton lane Area (Middle and High School)

Although the Middle and High schools have a car park (See T7 for all car parking) the parking is as far away as on Middle Drive and along Eastern Way. Plus of course much traffic coming from the Newcastle area. What the impact will be if the Airport expands as much as is hoped in their Strategic Plan is another concern.

T5.2.7.5 Solutions

The NPG support any measures that will improve safety around the school areas.

Such as, providing shuttle buses, road improvements, strict enforcement using ANPR cameras, making the road safer for cyclists and pedestrians, provide more car parking, or even moving the schools to Rotary Way. This would leave space for car parking, clients for businesses, housing and leisure space.

T5.2.7.6 Pupil numbers

Each School seems to be continuously full with a mixture of local and children some who are brought in by bus and whose numbers are continuously changing.

T5.2.7.7 Consequences of school success

All 5 schools have earned a reputation of academic success. The schools are well subscribed and attract children from outside Ponteland with an estimated 40% of pupils travelling into the Town. The popularity of the schools leads to heavy traffic congestion twice a day during school term and this is one of the reasons why the NPG favours an extension of the Metro. All schools have severe parking problems and these are particularly apparent at Richard Coates Middle School in Thornhill Road and Darras First on the Broadway. The growing numbers of pupils (2800 in Ponteland), increasing parking problems and ageing buildings as at Darras First School, have prompted the NPG to recommend some new thinking for the subject of schools in Ponteland.

T5.2.7.8 Relocation of schools to new schools

Campus off rotary way

Darras Hall First School (Broadway)

Darras First School could over time be relocated to the Rotary Way area near to the Middle and High schools, concentrating 3 stages of schooling – first, middle and high – in one location.

See T5.2.7.5 for solutions

Richard Coates Middle School (Thornhill Road)

The location of Richard Coates Middle School (RCMS) on Thornhill Road should be kept under review. The school building is ageing although it has been partially updated and improved in recent years. Some County Council measures are ameliorating the parking situation and enforcement activity has increased but there is a case for considering the relocation of Richard Coates Middle School (RCMS) to an enlarged campus at Rotary Way.

See T5.2.7.5 for solutions

Middle and High School (Callerton Way)

These buildings are now ageing and sometime in the near future they will require some serious updating. Whatever updating is carried out access to the schools could be achieved via Rotary Way. However much more car parking space should be provided, not only for staff but drop off and pick up areas.

T5.2.7.9 New school roads on Rotary Way

Presuming that the number of schools remains at five, a possible vision is that two schools would be on one side of the road and three on the other side. Each school could have its own new road for drive in and drop off/pick up and a drive out. The drive in/pick up area would have enough space for some 300 cars on both sides of the road as well as some 300 car parking spaces for staff, again on each side of the road. The ideal solution to the volume of traffic created would be to make Rotary Way a dual carriageway.

The drive in and out would be one-way travel only so that crossing from one lane to another on Rotary Way is avoided to improve road safety.

T5.2.7.10 New cycle walkway and subway or foot bridge

From Callerton Lane to a possible new schools campus, a new cycle and walk way could be planned to allow safe access for pupils on bicycles and for those wishing to walk their children to school. A permanently lit subway should be constructed to allow safe crossing from one side to another. An alternative to a subway could be a foot bridge but it would have to be practicable for the disabled and parents with prams.

T5.2.7.11 School transport

A shuttle bus system could be provided that links areas of Ponteland to go to the schools thus saving cars on the roads.

T5.2.7.12 New locations for schools

All 5 schools in Ponteland have expressed a desire to work more closely together and this perceptive vision would forge closer links and cooperation between all the schools in Ponteland. The nursery schools could be kept where they are for the time being and the new proposed school locations.

T5.2.7.13 Academy status

Academy status for schools comes under Government guidelines.

T5.2.7.14 Bus Ways

If all the schools were to be congregated on either side of Rotary Way, a bus station could be built beside the schools to handle all school buses. A "Bus-Ways" system, would avoid an increasing volume of traffic trying to navigate a way through the narrow heart of Ponteland.

If or once pupil numbers increase there should be more school shuttle buses, therefore less need for private car journeys. Schools and parents should be encouraged to take alternative methods of travelling to and from school, via incentives.

T6 SPEED LIMITS

Generally the speed limits are 30mph around the estates and 60mph outside the main Ponteland Area.

T6 Policy

When schools are in operation a new 20mph limit should be enforced on the roads outside the schools during school attendance hours.

T7 PARKING

T7.1 Preamble and Introduction

Car parking in and around Ponteland is an ever growing problem. Car ownership is increasing year on year and the DoTF (see section T3.1.2 and T3.1.4 for forecast numbers etc) indicate that car numbers will increase, so the current car parking problems will get worse over time.

The problem with traffic is that it affects many other areas within the Neighbourhood Plan and so cannot be treated in isolation. What follows is what facilities there are for parking at this date.

T7.2 Car Parking Areas currently available to the Public in Ponteland

Car parking Locations	Comments	Car Spaces
Broadway First School	Staff car park, overflowing and cars parked on Middle Drive and behind the United Reform Church	35
Broadway School and Darras Hall Estate office area		67
Broadway Shopping Area	Split into two areas	62
Callerton lane Schools Staff car park	This is currently overflowing and needs to be expanded.	83
Callerton Lane Schools Visitors Car Park	Currently car park full each school day as cars are parked as far away as Eastern Way.	85 plus 15 Bus bays
Leisure Centre		117
Memorial Hall car park	Only for the Memorial hall complex and park users. So this are cannot be counted as being available for general use	Private
Merton Way area (no marked bays adjacent to marked bay area, North Side)	It is not clear how long this area will be available, If used for another purpose it will cause severe problems for shoppers to Merton Way and especially for school drop off and collecting times.	Approx. 40
Merton Way car park (behind the shops North Side)	Marked bays	43
Merton Way (The Old Mart)	Currently used as a car park but will shortly become a Respite Home complex.	40?
Merton Way Library Area	Totally inadequate	5
Merton Way/Thornhill Road	In the process of introducing 20 minutes wait sign	8- 10
Merton Way Behind the shops East Side	These have marked bays and two Electric Car Charging points.	40
Small area on Callerton Lane that leads to the Bridle Path	No marking for parking	9- 10

The above list does not include private car park areas for places like Waitrose, Sainsbury's and the pubs and many restaurants in the centre of Ponteland. Many of these car parks do not have enough room if the shops/pubs/restaurants have a good sales day. Motorists find that they may need to park up to 600-800 meters away before they can do whatever they are trying to do. This means clogging up streets causing further issues on keeping a reasonable flow of moving traffic.

T7.3 Car Parking the Future

It is entirely possible that the NCC Core Strategy will release Green Belt Land for Housing development. This will add to traffic problems in Ponteland (if approved), thus adding to the current problems. The option to do nothing is no longer viable. The NPG having looked at this problem and have come up with some possible solutions.

As was mentioned earlier in the Transport report there are ways that traffic and parking can be improved provided some changes take place in Ponteland. A new Relief Road will certainly improve traffic flow but will not help the Ponteland car parking facilities or problems. What is required is more land available in the right place. One proposal could be to moving the schools to either side of Rotary Way freeing up land on the Following areas.

Thornhill Road Broadway Callerton Lane

If the areas were to become free by moving the schools need not just be for cars but a mixture of housing, car parking, casual leisure "kick about" areas and possibly new businesses, therefore automatically helping other parts of the Neighbourhood Plan.

If a Relief Road were to be built it could possibly free up land between Ponteland and the Relief Road and as for schools a mixture of housing, car parking, casual leisure “kick about” areas and possibly new businesses, therefore automatically helping other parts of the Neighbourhood Plan.

T7.4 Policies

More permanent areas need to be identified for parking. To that end the policy is to take over part of the vacated land when or if the schools move to Rotary Way Area.

More Electric Car charging points need to be put in place to cater for the future.

T8 CYCLING

T8.1 Introduction

All the traffic, public transport, parking, cycling, airport chapters should be brought together to form a big picture of what we want Ponteland to look like, and how we want people to be able to get around. Some of the policies, the subgroup have suggested are not particular only to cycling but to infrastructure and streets as a whole.

T8.2 Preamble

Ponteland is a hugely popular hub for cyclists and cycling groups. National Route 10 of the National Cycle Network connects Cockermouth and North Shields via the Kielder Forest and Carlisle, running right the way through the village and Darras Hall. It is on the annual Virgin Money Cyclone route and the home of Tyneside Vagabonds Cycling Club. Cafes and shops report increased weekend trade as a result of cyclists visiting Ponteland.

Despite this, the North East has the country’s highest rate of incidents per mile travelled involving cyclists, and the national picture is bleak, with the number of cyclists killed or injured on Britain’s roads at its highest in at least three years, with 118 deaths and 3,222 injuries recorded in 2012. The vast majority of victims were adults.

Cycling is actually quite safe. If more people were encouraged to leave the car at home for simple journeys, roads in general would be much safer places as driver expectations and behaviour changed as they began to encounter more cyclists. They would also be less congested for those who really depended on their cars. It is, however, the volume of traffic on the roads that is cited by many as the main reason for not travelling by bicycle. The other main reason is a lack of infrastructure, or inconsistent and non-joined-up infrastructure. The UK lags far behind its European counterparts in providing safe environments for people who wish to cycle, ideally segregated away from motorised traffic.

There are plenty of people who would consider cycling short distances if the routes they used were safe and convenient. By giving people a very attractive choice when it comes to walking and cycling, certainly then providing dedicated space for cycling would significantly reduce congestion.

We want people in Ponteland to have a great choice when it comes to deciding how they get around, with stronger emphasis placed upon cycling and walking.

T8.3 Policies

POLICY: Maintain existing dedicated cycle routes by regular maintenance via User groups, Ponteland Town council and the NCC

POLICY: Create new cycle routes that join with existing routes to provide safe routes in and out of the village and that then join up with other popular destinations. Rotary Way and Callerton Lane from the Diamond Public House up to and past the turn off for Edge Hill are a good start.

POLICY: Create routes to schools and retail centres where-ever possible.

POLICY: Work with local cycling groups to

- maintain the vision of ambition that we have for sustainable transport
- disseminate comments from local groups
- inform technical and management groups for planning purposes

T8.4 Access for pedestrians and cyclists

Studies and subsequent development show that limiting motor traffic and taking the focus away from cars makes streets much nicer places to spend time. With space at a premium in urban centres, removing car parking creates more space for retail and people, and has worked out well for shoppers and retailers alike (will include Hove example). It creates destinations that people want to spend time in and come back to repeatedly and frequently (as opposed to 'nipping in for a quick shop' and making little connection to the surroundings, people and locale).

It is important to investigate perception and reality and research tells us:

- There is some evidence via the Internet that some retailers typically overestimate the importance of the car for their customers' shopping
- Shoppers by bike (and foot) visit more, are more loyal to a shopping location, and spend more time and money in the long term
- Cycle- and pedestrian-friendly environments and calmer streets help local retail

Overall, redesigning streets and spaces for people, not cars, is good for the local economy as people will spend more time (and money) and return more often.

POLICY: Support should be given where-ever possible for the provision of well-located cycle and short term parking spaces to meet the needs of local business

POLICY: To control and explore the use of traffic calming measures for all motorised traffic, with regard to cyclists.

POLICY: Understand and promote sustainable travel, take emphasis away from design and solutions serving only motorised traffic in Ponteland Centre.

T8.5 Schools

Possibly the most common cause of traffic issues around Ponteland is due to the morning and afternoon 'school run'. Streets these afore mentioned areas become gridlocked as hundreds of cars attempt to occupy just a small amount of street space and parking spaces, causing problems for residents and parents/pupils alike. With very little cost, measures can be taken to reduce the scale of the problems, by encouraging local pupils to travel to school by other means.

POLICY: To work with schools promoting the principle of pupils walking or cycling to school. Ideas should include: Use of 'bike trains' and 'walking buses', incentives for pupils not travelling in by car, roads made cycle-safe around schools, priority given to cycle and scooter rollers as well as walkers and cyclists arriving at schools

New Developments

For any new large developments, be it residential, business and retail, education and leisure:

POLICY: Road policies must be checked for pedestrian and cycle safety and infrastructure measures

POLICY: New planning applications should be checked for encouragement and attractiveness of using sustainable transport, that is to say, they will have to be seen as providing safe and high-quality walking and cycling environments as well as Transportation Demand Management (TDM) strategies

POLICY: Ensure integration between new developments and adjacent built-up areas in terms of street network, public transport services, footpaths/cycle routes and design standards where-ever possible.

Some references and other info (to be expanded as evidence)

DIY Streets Scheme - way of working with residents to reshape the look of their streets or neighbourhoods to make them more people friendly

T9 Airport Transport and Highways

NEWCASTLE INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

T9.1 Preamble

Ponteland has lived in close harmony with its airport neighbour since the airport was first established in 1935. The airport is now the North East's largest airport and is situated to the south east of the village and the main airport terminal is approximately a mile and a half from the village centre and approximately 7 miles from Newcastle. The airport is set within 364 acres of land and contains a single runway operating for both eastern and western arrivals and departures. It is orientated south west to north east. In addition to the main runway there are aircraft taxiways, aprons, stands, the main terminal building, pier and approximately 7,500 vehicles parking places. The site also accommodates 3 hotels, a metro station and a petrol station with a small contained shop. In 2012, 4.4m passengers were accommodated with 62,200 aircraft movements and the site employed 3,200 people on site with a further 900 off site.

T9.2 Introduction

With Ponteland situated so close to such a large and busy development as Newcastle Airport, it will always have an influence on Ponteland in some way. Any Ponteland Neighbourhood Plan cannot ignore the Airport Master Plan 2030 (AMP) which includes its future site development proposals. The AMP is written to go up to the year 2030, it is the third development plan produced by the airport, the first AMP covering the period 1994 to 2006 and the second covering the period 2003 to 2016.

The AMP has been produced in consultation with the 7 part-owning local authorities including Northumberland County Council.

Ponteland Town Council has representatives on various airport users committees. A local plan such as the Ponteland Neighbourhood Plan cannot hope to influence, to any great extent the AMP.

T9.3 Airport Evidence

What follows is a brief summary taken from the AMP.

The AMP makes projections for passenger numbers to rise from 4.4m in 2012 to 8.5m to 2030 and aircraft movements rising from 62,200 to 87,500 over the same period.

The rise in aircraft movements is less in relative terms to the rise in passenger movements due to the use of larger aircraft anticipated to be larger than they currently are.

There are currently two Public Safety Zones (PNZ's) which are situated at each end of the runway and these will remain unchanged and are far enough away from Ponteland to have little or no effect.

T9.3.1 Cars and parking

The AMP expects to increase its' parking facilities between from 7,500 to 16,000 during the lifetime of the plan (outside the civil parish)

It is anticipated that part of this site will be turned over to car parking within the next two years.

Once this designated area has been completely turned over to car parking it is planned to add an additional access road to come off the Street Houses roundabout. The rest of the development of the airport will take place around the terminal building, fuel farm, aprons and Southside around the Freight Village and towards Woosington Hall business and offices.

The AMP anticipates daily vehicle movements to increase from 9,000 to 16,250 by 2030 with an additional 5,000 generated by the proposed Southside developments. To accommodate this, the airport is seeking to influence improvements to public transport, improve internal airport site road layouts as well as improve junctions with the main roads surrounding the airport. The airport anticipates that this increase in vehicular

movements will arrive and depart via the main north and south A1 joining the dual carriageway to the airport.

T9.3.2 Aircraft

The current 57 decibel noise contour runs close to but does not actually affect Ponteland except for a small area around Birney Hill. The AMP does not actually anticipate any change in the 57 decibel noise contour. This is due to a projection for the use of larger aircraft with quieter engines.

T9.3.3 Airport New Businesses

The AMP development plans include future expansions of airport related businesses to be accommodated on development sites to the south and south east of the airport site, between the airport and Brunton Lane.

T9.4 The Future

The Airport considers the AMP to have a negligible effect on Ponteland. The majority of future development will be to the south or the south east of the site, away from Ponteland itself. The projected increase in passengers and aircraft movements will not increase noise levels due to the projected use of larger and quieter aircraft. It is expected that traffic increases through the village will be minimal as the projected increase in vehicular movements will be via the A1 to the south of the airport site. However even a small increase of traffic through Ponteland can make a difference.

An area for consideration and potential influence is to try and maintain the open space that separates the airport site from Ponteland village for as long as possible. This open space helps to maintain Ponteland as a separate community not only from the airport but also urban Tyneside itself.

T10 PUBLIC TRANSPORT

T10.1 Preamble

Ponteland has evolved into a desirable place to live resulting in a healthy demand for housing types to suit demands from a wide range of residents. Ponteland is very much a commuter town with a large traffic flow towards Newcastle in the morning and the reverse in the evening. The schools have also evolved to suit demand and are renowned for their high standards and good results, attracting pupils from a tremendously wide area.

The school run traffic is well known for bringing the area to a stand each school day morning and afternoon, resulting in delays to through traffic on the busy A696 as well as other major roads that feed into the traffic system. A Bus users Group has been set up consisting of Town Councillors as well as the Public and Bus Company representatives. This has achieved some improvements re bus frequency and routing.

T10.2 Public Transport

Public transport plays a large part in the travelling habits of residents. In many respects it is not noticed or appreciated by many residents who prefer to use the car as their sole method of travel. However an increasing number of people depend on the bus for their commute into Newcastle; their dependency can be due to reasons that they cannot drive, this includes students, younger commuters and also an increasing number of older people. Many daytime bus users have cars but choose not to use them when travelling to Newcastle city centre. The main X77/78 bus service to Newcastle is commercially operated by Stagecoach every 30 minutes and in spite of what many people think, receives no direct subsidy from council or government. It is a commercial service with times and routes set by the operator and can be varied if the operator decides to increase or decrease the service. The service has a core route which travels via the A696 into Ponteland centre and then via Darras Road to Broadway where it then returns via Middle Drive to the main Ponteland stop outside the Pele Tower before returning to Newcastle.

During the early morning and early evening the service is extended further into Darras Hall, taking in Western Way, Edge Hill and Woodside before regaining the route via Middle Drive. This extended route was the original route taken by all buses but was cut back some years ago due to falling numbers of passengers using the services.

From the 1st September 2013 Stagecoach have re-introduced their X78 service as a trial. Shopping and leisure facilities in Newcastle have increased somewhat on Sundays and Stagecoach are trialling the service

on a 'use it or lose it' basis.

http://www.stagecoachbus.com/PdfUploads/Timetable_42519_X77-X78-X79.pdf

Another core route is the 74 service which these days travels every two hours from Newcastle via Westerhope to Ponteland and then via Darras Hall to Hexham. This route has always been subsidised by Northumberland County Council and serves villages such as Stamfordham, Matfen and Great Whittington. The service used to terminate at Great Whittington until Go Ahead won the contract and showed initiative in suggesting an extension to Hexham utilising the fact that their buses are based at the Hexham depot. http://www.sandhoe.oneuk.com/media/download_gallery/74_from_7_Nov_2010_Publication.pdf

A Morpeth Wednesday service (the No.79) coincides with market day. This service is being subsidised by Northumberland County Council. Passenger figures appear to make the service secure for now. <http://www.howardsnaith.co.uk/79.pdf>

A fourth service runs into the village (the No.100) but is not advertised and is little used. It links Kirkley Hall with Ponteland, Newcastle Airport and Morpeth. Originally designed to link Kirkley Hall with Ashington College, it was cut back recently to Morpeth, with students now expected to use the frequent service between Morpeth and Ashington. The No.100 is subsidised by Northumberland County Council and operated by Arriva and runs six trips per day on Monday to Friday during term time only. Passengers from the centre of Ponteland wanting to use this service must catch it either on North Road or outside Ponteland golf club as this service is not routed via the main the bus stop outside the Pele tower.

Mention was made earlier of school traffic which has a great influence on traffic levels during the morning and late afternoon as it appears that most school pupils are brought by car. It is not always recognised that a network of subsidised services are provided by Northumberland County Council. Many of these coach services are currently run as registered services whereby in theory the normal travelling public can use them, although in practice this rarely happens. The act of registering the service allows the operator to claim BSOG (Bus Service Operators Grant) which used to be called fuel duty rebate and was designed to put bus operators on a more level playing field with railways and airlines who pay no fuel duty. There are moves to decrease or even do away with this grant which will result in higher fares or higher tender prices to local authorities as bus and coach operators are not immune to ever increasing fuel prices. Transport links to Newcastle Airport exist via the aforementioned X77/8 Monday to Saturday services running every 30 minutes.

T10.3 Airport Services

On Sundays the 74 Go Ahead service becomes the 74A and travels every two hours via the airport terminal to Newcastle instead of Westerhope. Passenger figures are apparently poor on this Sunday service and in the next round of tendering NCC will review whether they will continue to support it. Also the previously mentioned Arriva 100 Monday to Friday service is routed via the airport terminal. The X78 Stagecoach service stops outside the airport on the road to Woosington and does not enter the airport site. From 1st September 2013 Stagecoach have re-introduced their X78 service as a trial. Shopping and leisure facilities in Newcastle have increased somewhat and Stagecoach are trialling the service on a 'use it or lose it' basis.

The Airport terminal is also served by an hourly Nexus subsidised service (the No.353) which links Kingston Park, the airport and Four Lane Ends. <http://www.nexus.org.uk/bus/timetables/353-0>

There is a proposal that would see Nexus and the ITA take over all bus routes in Tyne & Wear which would also include all cross border services to and from Ponteland. This proposal to instigate a so called Quality Contract (QC) is being fiercely resisted by the local bus operators who are proposing an alternative in the form of a Quality Partnership. Quality Partnerships are in place elsewhere in the UK and are proving very successful. Nexus have already hinted that many bus fares will rise if they get their QC into operation and the general thought is that Ponteland could lose services and end up paying more for the privilege if the ITA follows the QC route. Also planning of bus routes will be taken out of private hands and the local authorities bordering Tyne & Wear will have little influence on what can be run into Newcastle. There are also great financial risks associated with a QC as any shortfalls will need to come from Tyne & Wear tax payers, in which case Ponteland routes would be given a low priority.

T10.4 Roads

Mention was made earlier about Ponteland evolving which is all well and good if the roads and other resources evolve as well. The problem is that the road structure is restricted by existing buildings and the fact that we have the River Pont running through the centre of the town. During rush hour periods there is severe congestion, affecting public transport, with through traffic on the A696 clashing with school traffic making its way to Middle and High schools on Callerton Lane.

Traffic heading to First schools on Merton Way and on Broadway and Darras Hall add to local congestion in those areas as well as adding to traffic loadings around the North Road / Ponteland Bridge / Callerton Lane junction.

The opening of Rotary Way on the south side of Ponteland made a massive difference to traffic levels at the aforementioned junction, allowing vehicles to reach Darras Hall from the A696 without having to travel through the centre of Ponteland. This was a comparatively easy, low cost scheme that had an immediate effect on traffic patterns and has been a sound investment giving great benefits.

Where we go in terms of by passing Ponteland on the Northern side is one of the questions we will need to answer whilst deciding on the future plan. It is a key decision, but cannot be a low cost scheme if it takes the shape of a proper Relief Road. Whether a series of lower cost link roads could be put in place in order to ease the rush hour congestion is something we need to consider.

Approval of planning applications for development around the Police HQ site could have been linked with funding for a link road from the A696 north west of Ponteland and running along the edge of the Police HQ site, but this opportunity was not realised at the time and presumably the opportunity to do this has now been lost. This could have been another link in a low cost scheme rather than a full blown expensive Relief Road. Carlisle has achieved a low cost Relief Road by means of short stretches of link roads that join existing roads and has done so at comparatively low cost.

The challenge for Ponteland is to reduce through traffic at peak times from the pinch points along the length of the A696 as it passes through the town. Without this Ponteland cannot expand housing numbers as the current road structure does not cope with current traffic levels and could certainly not sustain extra vehicles from new developments.

Vehicles using Ponteland as a Relief Road to the A1 travelling along the North Road should be discouraged, especially heavy goods vehicles.

T10.5 Objectives

Ensure the road system is fit for purpose. If Ponteland is forced to expand then roads must be planned accordingly. No new major developments should be allowed without contributions and agreements to a Relief Road incorporating public transport solutions.

Reduce car dependency by improving walking/cycling and public transport provisions. Liaise with public transport providers to ensure services are attractive and help move people from cars to buses when appropriate and to promote and provide more accurate information for Buses in Ponteland.

T11 General Policy Options

T11.1 Introduction

The time has arrived where doing nothing is no longer an option. It is clear from the evidence base that unless changes occur in and around Ponteland the traffic will become grid locked. It is a possibility that

developers may get planning permission to build many more houses in and around Ponteland. So for every 100 houses it is likely to add 49 cars to the problems that exist already within Ponteland.

Taken from PTC Meeting on the 7th March August 2013

The Transport and Access comments below support our view that this proposal is both **Inappropriate and Unsustainable.**

The infrastructure is working to capacity and the antiquated road system is totally inadequate to cope with the current and continually rising volume of traffic. The extra traffic will have a severe impact on the existing infrastructure, which will not be significantly diminished by the off-site junction improvements detailed in the statement.

Improved pedestrian and cycle links will not be sufficient to offset the extra vehicular movements – pupils and residents will not physically be able to use them to access/egress the site with heavy schoolbags, shopping, etc.

Access to the site would be from minor roads, inadequate to cope with the increased volume of traffic.

The bus service generally in Ponteland is no more than just adequate.