**“The Sheffield Plan”**

**Sheffield City Council**

**Consultation Documents**

**Review of Highway Implications on Ecclesfield Parish**

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**Desktop Assessment and Supporting Submission for**

**Ecclesfield Parish Council**

**July 2025**

1. **TERMS OF REFERENCE**

Aprica ltd has been commissioned by Ecclesfield Parish Council to comment on the highway implications, for the Ecclesfield Parish, of the proposed ‘Sheffield Plan’ (‘the Plan’) Consultation Documents.

The purpose of this report to is assess the high-level transport and traffic implications of the current proposals. It is intended that this report is considered by the Parish Council with a view to submitting a formal consultation response to Sheffield City Council (‘the Council’). The report is based on local knowledge, prevailing highway conditions and available documents, illustrative drawings etc.

Ian Taylor has produced this report. Ian is an Incorporated Engineer and a Member of the Institution of Civil Engineers (I.Eng MICE), with thirty-five years’ experience of public and private sector highway infrastructure disciplines including transportation planning, RoSPA accredited accident investigation & prevention, traffic management, road safety audits, traffic regulations, and highway design & construction. Ian has led on numerous major highway schemes for Local Authorities and has presented at Planning Committees, Council meetings, public meetings and drop-in events, and at Public Inquiry.

**2** **INTRODUCTION**

The scope of this report is to consider the housing and employment site, as currently proposed, with a view to offering expert comments on useability by the travelling public and the impact on the highway network.

To provide clarity, this report is separated into the following parts:

3 Executive Summary page 4

4 The Sheffield Plan and Associated Documents page 5

5 Ecclesfield – Background page 9

6 Proposed New Green Belt Sites page 10

7 Transport & Highway Policy and Initiatives page 24

8 Conclusions and Recommendations page 26

**3 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The process of assessing Green Field sites for housing and employment suitability, as part of Sheffield Council’s Sheffield Plan, is in its early stages so detail is limited. There is, however, no reference, in the documents relating to highway assessment, about the number of houses, number of people employed, likely trip data, highway access etc., making it difficult to refer to in this report. Neither is there mention of the effect of ongoing developments outside Ecclesfield Parish (for example in Oughtibridge, Wharncliffe Side and Deepcar), or those already in construction in Ecclesfield Parish itself. It does not seem that the traffic impacts of these developments have been considered in the site assessments.

The proposed sites seem to be well-located for access to the strategic road network (M1/616/A6135) and these roads seem to have been prioritised, whilst the local network has been overlooked. The consultation documents provide no confidence that the local highway network would be able to cope with the increase in traffic demand. Neither is there anything to offer confidence that that local and national policy and objectives, such as active and sustainable travel, could be achieved.

Whilst it is accepted that building on Green Field land might offer more variety and choice of homes and local employment opportunities, this should only be considered, over Brown Field/urban development, where it is genuinely right to do so.

More detail needs to be provided, and more consideration given to, the impact on the existing local road network and how any proposals taken forward could be mitigated to reduce adverse effects. Should it not be possible to reduce impact to acceptable levels, alternative sites should be sought.

The hierarchy of travel modes – walking/cycling & wheeling/public transport/private car – needs much more consideration, and detail provided on how active and sustainable travel can be achieved, before any sites are progressed. There is no supporting information for encouraging walking; there is reference, in terms of cycling, only to what appears to be Route 67, a circular and arguably leisure-orientated route rather than a viable commuter route; reference to public transport choices is very limited. Few of the sites are claimed to be well-served by public transport (particularly at weekends and unsociable hours) and there are limited proposals for enhancement. The supporting information for sustainable travel, particularly, seems very vague and the argument is weak.

The proposed sites seem to be well-located for the strategic road network and this seems to be considered a positive. Whilst it might help to reduce traffic on local roads it would certainly offer non-locals convenience to travel to work by car. Again, at present the assessments do not offer any confidence that active and sustainable travel could be achieved. Indeed, it could be argued that it has been de-prioritised.

**4 THE SHEFFIELD PLAN and ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS**

**The Sheffield Plan - Proposed Additional Site Allocations, May 2025 –** Sheffield City Council (the Council) is seeking views on potential focussed changes to the Sheffield Plan (the Plan) that was submitted to the Government for public examination in October 2023. Two stages of public hearings took place during 2024 which considered legal compliance, the spatial strategy, key themes including housing and employment, as well as sub-area policies and site allocations. The changes are in response to the Planning Inspector’s request for the Council to identify additional land for new homes and employment use. The document proposes the release of some further land from the Green Belt in order to provide additional sites for housing and employment development. The Council is also seeking comments on updates to certain submission documents which provide the supporting evidence for the proposed additional site allocations. The Plan is the statutory local plan that sets out a strategy for future growth in the city up to 2039. Once adopted the Sheffield Plan will have legal status and planning applications will have to be in accordance with it unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The previous version of the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) identified a range of schemes that are required to support the growth in the submitted Sheffield Plan. The document has been updated to reflect what the Council feels are additional infrastructure requirements to support the further growth that will be provided by the proposed additional sites. The Council’s assertion is that ‘*the modelling concludes that mitigation schemes previously identified in the IDP remain generally sufficient to accommodate traffic flows arising from the proposed additional sites*’. The Plan is being examined under the September 2023 version of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) but decisions on planning applications will be made against the latest, December 2024, version. This means that planning applications on any site allocations that were formerly Green Belt land will be subject to the ‘Golden Rules’ that were introduced by the new NPPF. The ‘Golden Rules’ have introduced specific enhanced requirements in relation to the provision of affordable housing, infrastructure and open space.

Part (b) of the Golden Rules requires necessary improvements to local or national infrastructure. On ‘strategic’ sites (over 200 homes or over 4 hectares), the requirement would be identified through a masterplan for the site. The infrastructure projects required to support the development on the additional sites are identified in the IDP. The need to provide necessary improvements to infrastructure would apply to the proposed employment sites as well as to the housing sites. One example of this is given as ‘*for the three sites that are proposed to the east of Chapeltown near the M1 Motorway, contributions might be expected for improvements to highway infrastructure as part of the development’*.

Aprica comment:

* For a Plan of this scale much more consideration of the impact and required mitigation would seem to be warranted. Although it is acknowledged that this is a ‘consultation’ stage there does not appear to be sufficient information for consultees to reach an informed view and respond accordingly. The natural response would, therefore, be likely to be one of concern and possibly objection.

**Sheffield Plan - Associated Documents**

There are numerous documents associated with the consultation and it would be impractical, for the purpose of this particular report, to scrutinise and comment on all of them word by word. This section, therefore, focuses on the transport and traffic content impacting Ecclesfield.

**Integrated Impact Assessment 2022-2039 (Update and Addendum Non-Technical Summary)** **April 2025** – This AECOM document focuses on Sheffield’s integrated assessment framework themes for sustainability, such as ‘*Transport and Accessibility SA6: Significant development focused in locations that reduce the need to travel and make the fullest possible use of public transport, walking and cycling’; ‘SA7: An efficient network which maximises access and minimises impacts’; ‘SA2 Education and training opportunities. Transport modal split*.’

Aprica comment:

* Ecclesfield Parish is ‘RAG’ rated green (major positive) for transport. At this stage there does not appear to be sufficient background and evidence to give consultees comfort in this rating.

**Integrated Impact Assessment Report (Update and Addendum) April 2025** – This AECOM report was commissioned, by the Council, to undertake an Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) of the emerging Sheffield Local Plan. The IIA encapsulates several processes including a sustainability appraisal/strategic environmental assessment (SA/SEA), equalities impact assessment (EqIA) and a health impact assessment (HIA). The IIA is being undertaken alongside the development of the Local Plan, with the intention of aiding the decision-making process, and focuses on ‘*a safe and sustainable transport system promoting walking and cycling and promoting public transport’*.

Aprica comment:

* Sites 8 (South of Chapeltown), 9 (Grenoside/Ecclesfield), 10 (Birley Edge), 15 (Potter Hill/High Green), 16 (South of Burncross), 17 (Whitley), 18 (West of Grenoside) and 24 (Chapeltown/Hesley Wood) would likely impact Ecclesfield Parish. Sites 15 to 18 are recommended to be discounted for further appraisal at this stage. Sites 8, 9 and 10 are recommended for further appraisal in terms of housing and employment, with site 24 being recommended for ‘employment’ consideration. All sites are discussed further (with reference numbers from the documents referred to) below.

**Infrastructure Delivery Plan Part 2: Infrastructure Schedule Addendum Final, 28 May 2025 -** Part 1 of the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) does not form part of the submitted documents for the additional sites allocation. Part 2, prepared by ARUP, identifies 165 public transport and active travel interventions including new active travel links, bus stop improvements, crossings, and changes to bus services. The previous IDP has been updated, in terms of Ecclesfield Parish, with an assertion by the authors (Arup) that ‘*larger development sites near existing public transport infrastructure (e.g., Chapeltown Railway Station and Waverley proposed station) may support investment in public transport improvements …. It is expected these would be deliverable through developer contributions, alongside wider improvements to public transport in the vicinity (such as bus service frequency improvements), and schemes identified in the existing IDP (such as scheme TR30, the proposed new railway station at Waverley).*’ The report concludes that “*Most junctions tested do not require additional mitigation measures, and existing schemes remain sufficient*” and that “*for the Strategic Road Network (SRN) additional interventions at three M1 junctions are identified but are not required in the short term … Most additional sites are well-located near existing bus stops and services."*

Aprica comment:

* As mentioned above, much more detail needs to be provided in order for consultees to reach an informed opinion.

**Proposed Additional Site Allocations: Selection of Sites for Green Belt Release Topic Paper, May 2025 -** The transportation content of this report evaluates the accessibility and impact of the proposed site allocations on public transport, active travel networks, and road infrastructure. Key points include public transport accessibility, proximity to a**ctive Travel Networks, the prevailing highway infrastructure and capacity. The report offers suggestions for potential transportation improvements and mitigation measures.** ​

Aprica comment:

* Overall, the report seems to confirm that many sites are poorly connected to public transport (i.e. over 1200m away, far more than the Sustrans recommended 400m maximum), beyond practical distances to active travel networks (cycling etc), are more than a 10-minute walk to shops and other amenities (Sustrans recommends a 10 minute/800m walk maximum), concluding that even if mitigation is considered, there are limited opportunities to support transportation infrastructure improvements, making the sites less sustainable for development. ​

**Transport Assessment: Report on the Strategic Road Network Impacts and Potential Mitigation, May 2025** - this SYSTRA report summarises the initial findings of the Transport Assessment regarding the Local Plan's impact on the SRN. It also suggests potential mitigation measures based on the analysis of traffic scenarios. The assessment compares the Local Plan's impact against a reference case scenario including existing land-use developments and transport schemes. The analysis focuses on two forecast years: 2029 and 2039 and identifies specific junctions on the SRN that require mitigation due to the Local Plan's projected impacts.

Aprica comment:

* Five junctions that are said to need mitigation include M1 Junctions 31 and 35 (Thorpe Hesley), and several A616 roundabouts. Minimal ‘severe’ impacts were said to be found at motorway merge/diverge areas, but some ‘may’ require physical alterations. Overall, no highway capacity issues were said to be identified that cannot be mitigated. The proposals for M1 Junction 35 include signalisation of all arms to ‘address the significant congestion issues identified at M1 Junction 35 due to Local Plan traffic impacts.’ There is nothing said about the ‘downstream’ impact at, for example, Cowley Hill/Nether Lane where congestion is at times already severe. This issue is discussed in further detail below.

**Transport Assessment: Report on the Strategic Modelling Results, May 2025** – This is a SYSTRA assessment of the strategic modelling results for the Sheffield Local Plan, focusing on the impacts of proposed developments on local and strategic road networks, public transport, and active travel.

Aprica comment:

* There are recommendations, in the report, for mitigation on the Strategic Road Network (SRN) at M1 Junction 35/A616. The proposals for the Local Road Network (LRN) are mainly upgrades to existing bus and tram stops, seemingly in and around the city centre. There is no mention of specific mitigation possibilities for Ecclesfield Parish. The report states that measures are not yet costed and are likely to be developed ‘at a later stage of the Local Plan workstream process’. Consultees should be given the information and opportunity, at that time, to appraise the proposals.

**Transport Assessment: Report on Local Road Network Impacts and Potential Mitigation, May 2025** – This SYSTRA document evaluates the impacts of Sheffield City's Local Plan on the local road network and proposes potential mitigation measures. Nine junctions are identified for potential mitigation.

Aprica comment:

No potential mitigation measures have been identified for Ecclesfield Parish although there is mention of the impact at the M1/A61 junction.

**Transport Assessment: Report on Public Transport and Active Travel Impacts and Potential Mitigation (and Appendices), May 2025** – This SYSTRA report summarises the approach to, and findings of, the public transport and active travel Local Plan modelling work, and sets out the public transport and active travel mitigation measures which SYSTRA considers necessary to ensure that the Local Plan sites will exceed the ‘status quo’ public transport/active travel mode shares, which have formed the basis of the modelling approach. The mitigations are said to align with the Sheffield Transport Vision and support the Implementation Plans including the Sheffield Walking, Wheeling and Cycling Investment Plan, and the emerging Sheffield City Centre Access and Movement Plan. There is a clear focus on additional public transport demand in the city centre and the report only considers the fifty-three largest Local Plan sites, as well as ‘notable clusters’ (over 250 expected residents and/or over 200 expected jobs) of smaller sites which are expected to have an impact on public transport and active travel demand flows during peak times.

Aprica comment:

* There is mention of Cowley La/Nether Lane, namely the potential of re-routing one or more of bus services 1, 2 and 83 along Nether Lane and Cowley Lane to better serve employment sites (rerouted buses would then be able to rejoin Ecclesfield Road). The report further states that Ecclesfield Road is designated as a bus priority corridor, but is an unattractive walking distance from site S03195 and the existing industrial estate. Consideration is also given to extending the 83 & 86 bus routes to serve the Thorncliffe Road area. A review of the ‘quality of links to the (National Cycle Network (NCN) is also suggested, with upgrades if required.
* At Grenoside, it is recommended to investigate increasing the frequency of, and rerouting of, bus service 20, to better serve the sites, along with upgrading Public Rights of Way (PRoW) surfaces around Site S03034 (Creswick Avenue/Yew Lane) to improve walking options to the college/school on Creswick Lane/Chaucer Rd.

**5 ECCLESFIELD – BACKGROUND**

The proximity of many of the proposed sites to the Motorway network, particularly for employment space, and the assessment ratings for sustainable travel, raises concerns that sustainability might not have been given impartial consideration for many of some of these proposed sites. Employment facilities attract not just freight but also employees, many travelling by private car for reasons such as longer travel distances and unsociable hours working (making cycling and public transport impractical or indeed impossible).

At various times of day congestion on the local road network, and around the Smithy Wood Business Park and Provincial Park, is already a problem.

The Cowley Lane/Nether Lane/Mill Lane/Church Street/Town End Road/The Wheel/Wheel Lane route between the M1 and to/from Grenoside, Oughtibridge and Bradfield is a notorious ‘rat run’ and the collision record is poor. According to ‘Crashmap’, for the latest verified five year period (2019 to 2023) there has been one fatal (two casualties), three serious (nine casualties) and eleven slight (twelve casualties) injury collisions on these roads alone (i.e. downstream of the M1 roundabout). Nearby connecting roads, such as Church Street between the A6135 Chapeltown Road and the Mill Lane junction, where there have been three slight injury collisions, are not included in the figures.

Several feasibility studies have been carried out by the Council, and some traffic management schemes have been introduced. For example, High Street/St Michael’s Road/Wordsworth Avenue traffic calming and improvements for pedestrians. Other studies, such as at the High St/Yew Lane/Stocks Hill/Town End Road/Church Street loop, and a number of studies for Church St/Town End Road/The Wheel, where narrow streets, parking, visibility, pedestrian safety and parking have long been a serious concern, have not materialised. This is partly due to the physical inability to introduce measures (narrow roads, restricted visibility etc).

New homes, new supermarkets and other new amenities have in recent years all exacerbated the long-standing traffic problems in and around Ecclesfield. It is concerning that additional sites for new homes and business space will no doubt add to these problems, particularly downstream of the M1 where, if mitigation is provided on the M1 roundabout but not on local roads, the local network will become even more congested. The nature and character of much of Ecclesfield Parish precludes physical improvements, thus severely limiting the opportunities to introduce effective measures on the local road network.

**6 PROPOSED NEW GREEN BELT SITES**

In this section each of the shortlisted proposed Green Belt sites will be considered in turn but in no particular order other than numerically as they appear in the “Proposed Additional Site Allocations: Selection of Sites for Green Belt Release Topic Paper – May 2025”.

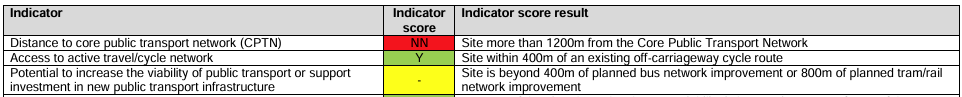
Only content relating to highways and transportation is considered. Screenshots are also from the “Proposed Additional Site Allocations: Selection of Sites for Green Belt Release Topic Paper – May 2025”.

**Proposed Site SO3028: Land to the West of Grenoside Grange S35 8QS**

**(the Council has combined this site with S03100 to form one allocation)**

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* No potential highway capacity issues previously identified within 2km of the site
* Site is within 400m of a cycle route
* Footpaths on site should be retained
* Site is within 10-minute walk (800 metres) of a convenience shop and at least 3 other types of community facilities or important local services
* There is a primary school within 3.2km of the site (although no surplus capacity)
* There is a secondary school within 4.8km of the site (although no surplus capacity)
* There is a primary health care facility within 3.2km of the site
* Site more than 1200m from the Core Public Transport Network (as of December 2023)

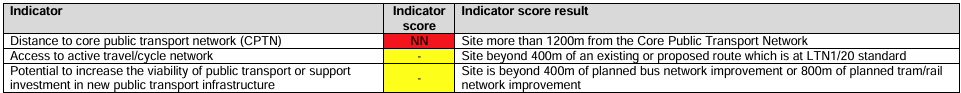
Aprica comment:

* This site is rated double-negative (NN) for public transport, being over 1200m from the core public transport network
* The green (Y) rating for proximity to (within 400m) an active travel network is questionable, as it probably refers to the circular Route 67, more of a leisure loop around High Green, Wentworth, Thorpe Hesley and Parson Cross. Commuter cyclists are unlikely to find this loop beneficial, attractive, or of use to commute
* Bus travel enhancement is unlikely to be viable, with an unrated (yellow) rating for proximity to planned improvements. The service in this area is quite poor, with no service on a Sunday
* The site is rated double-positive (YY) for community/leisure/recreation facilities, yet it is stated that there are none. This needs clarification
* School and healthcare facilities have a negative (N) rating and are too far away for sustainable travel and in any event the schools are full
* The access (known as Holme Lane) onto the A61 Halifax Road is entirely unsuitable as a vehicular access. It is a single width track between existing dwellings and emerges from the inside of a bend onto the A61. Safety camera warning signs are present, indicating that there might be a historical problem with vehicles exceeding the 30mph limit
* Accesses onto Salt Box Lane and Fox Hill Road are not identified and would need to be considered further should this proposed site be progressed
* There have been four serious injury collisions (seven casualties) and three slight injuries on the three roads in question (Crashmap 2019-2023)

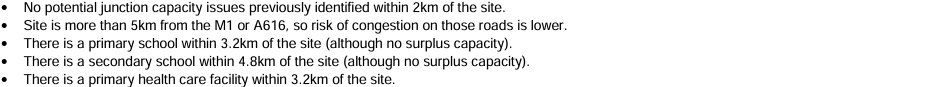
**Proposed Site SO3035: Land at Wheel Lane & Middleton Lane S35 8PU**

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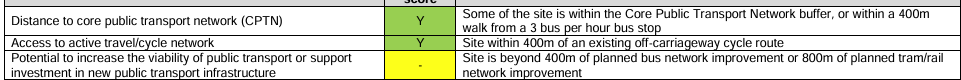
Aprica comment:

* This site is rated double-negative (NN) for public transport, being over 1200m from the core public transport network
* The site is unrated (yellow) for proximity to an active travel network, being over 400m from an existing or proposed route. The nearest route would be Route 67, which is more of a circular leisure loop around High Green, Wentworth, Thorpe Hesley and Parson Cross. Commuter cyclists are unlikely to find this loop beneficial, attractive, or of use to commute
* Bus travel enhancement is unlikely to be viable, with an unrated (yellow) rating for proximity to planned improvements. In reality the nearest bus stop is the two-hourly Hillsborough to Harley service, not going to or from the city centre. There is no service on a Sunday
* School and healthcare facilities have a negative (N) rating and are too far away for sustainable travel and in any event the schools are full
* The site is rated double-positive (YY) for community/leisure/recreation facilities, yet it is stated that there are none. This needs clarification
* There has been one slight injury on the roads in question, specifically Wheel Lane (Crashmap 2019-2023)
* Accesses onto Wheel Lane, Middleton Lane and Cinder Hill Lane are not identified and would need to be considered further should this proposed site be progressed

**Proposed Site S03038: Land to the east of Chapeltown Road S35 9ZX**

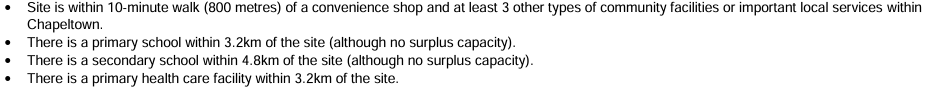
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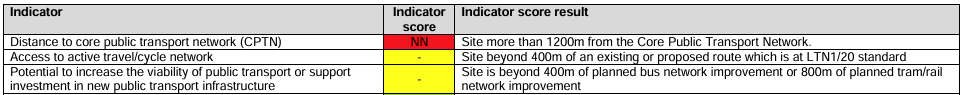
Aprica comment:

* The site is rated green (Y) for proximity to an active travel network, being within 400m of an existing or proposed cycle route. The reference is likely to be to Route 67, which is more of a circular leisure loop around High Green, Wentworth, Thorpe Hesley and Parson Cross. Commuter cyclists are unlikely to find this loop beneficial, attractive, or of use for commuting
* Bus travel enhancement is unlikely to be viable, with an unrated (yellow) rating for proximity to planned improvements. The stated distance from a bus stop (400m) would depend on where access was achieved. Sunday services are hourly at best, and in some cases none
* School and healthcare facilities have a negative (N) rating and are too far away for sustainable travel and in any event the schools are full
* The site is rated double-positive (YY) for community/leisure/recreation facilities, yet it is stated that there are none. This needs clarification
* There has been one slight injury on the roads in question, specifically Nether Lane (Crashmap 2019-2023)
* Accesses onto Chapeltown Road/Ecclesfield Road and Nether Lane are not identified and would need to be considered further should this proposed site be progressed.

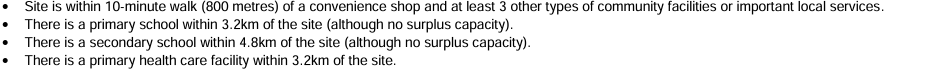
**Proposed Site S03051 & SO3034: Land south of Wheel Lane between Creswick Avenue and Wheel Lane, S35**

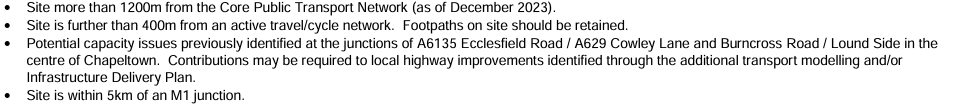
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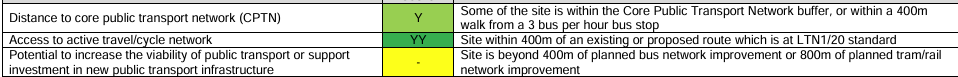
Aprica comment:

* This site is rated double-negative (NN) for public transport, being over 1200m from the core public transport network
* The site is unrated (yellow) for proximity to an active travel network. The nearest cycle route is Route 67, a circular leisure loop around High Green, Wentworth, Thorpe Hesley/Parson Cross. Commuter cyclists are unlikely to find this loop beneficial, attractive, or of use to commute
* Bus travel enhancement is unlikely to be viable, with an unrated score (yellow) for proximity to planned improvements. In reality the nearest bus stop is the two-hourly Hillsborough to Harley service, not going to or from the city centre. There is no service on a Sunday
* School and healthcare facilities have a negative (N) rating and are too far away for sustainable travel and in any event the schools are full, although there is a commitment to provide sufficient land within the site for a mainstream secondary school and a Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND)
* The site is rated double-positive (YY) for community/leisure/recreation facilities, yet it is stated that there are none. This needs clarification
* There has been one slight injury on the roads in question, specifically on Creswick Lane (Crashmap 2019-2023)
* Accesses onto Wheel Lane, Creswick Lane, Creswick Avenue, Yew Lane and Town End Road/The Wheel would need to be considered further should this proposed site be progressed.

**Proposed Site S03112: Land bordered by M1, Thorncliffe Rd, Warren La, and White La S35 2YA (Employment)**

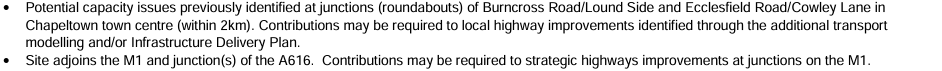
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Aprica comment:

* The double-green (YY) rating for proximity to (within 400m) an active travel network is questionable, as it probably refers to the circular Route 67, which is more of a leisure loop around High Green, Wentworth, Thorpe Hesley and Parson Cross. Commuter cyclists are unlikely to find this loop beneficial, attractive, or of use to commute
* Bus travel enhancement is unlikely to be viable, with an unrated score (yellow) for proximity to planned improvements. The nearest bus stop is over 400m from the centre of the site and over 1000m from the furthest part of the site ‘as the crow flies’
* Capacity issues have been identified at Burncross Road/Lound Side and Ecclesfield Road/Cowley Lane. Contributions to local highway improvements are mentioned and this should be clarified should this proposal be progressed
* There have been two serious injury collisions on the M1 offslip (three injuries) and three slight injury collisions (five casualties) on the roads in question, specifically Thorncliffe Road, Warren Lane and White Lane (Crashmap 2019-2023)
* Accesses onto Thorncliffe Road, Warren Lane and White Lane would need to be considered further should this proposed site be progressed.

**Proposed Site S04101: Land to the south of the M1 Junction 35, S35 1QP (Employment)**

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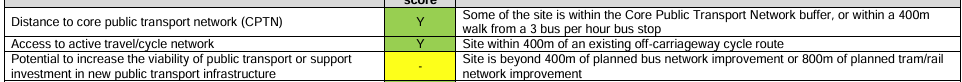
Aprica comment:

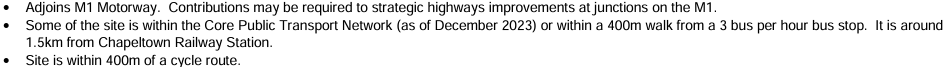
* This site is rated double-negative (NN) for public transport, being over 1200m from the core public transport network
* The double-green (YY) rating for proximity to (within 400m) an active travel network is questionable, as it probably refers to the circular Route 67, more of a leisure loop around High Green, Wentworth, Thorpe Hesley and Parson Cross. Commuter cyclists are unlikely to find this loop beneficial, attractive, or of use to commute
* Bus travel enhancement is unlikely to be viable, with an unrated score (yellow) for proximity to planned improvements. The nearest bus stops are likely to be those on The Common, which is over 800m away as the crow flies, and for some it would be over 1000m away. It is also across a railway line and, at present, inaccessible
* Capacity issues have been identified at Burncross Road/Lound Side and Ecclesfield Road/Cowley Lane. Contributions to local highway improvements are mentioned and this should be clarified and confirmed should this proposed site be progressed
* There have been two serious injury collisions (three casualties) and six slight injury collisions (nine casualties) on the roads in question, specifically parts of Cowley Hill and Cowley Way, part of Loicher Lane and Jumble Lane, and the M1 offslip (Crashmap 2019-2023)
* Access appears to be proposed from Cowley Way but could include Loicher Lane and Jumble Lane. Access suitability would need to be considered further should this proposed site be progressed

**Proposed Site S04639: Hesley Wood, north of Cowley Hill S35 2YH (Employment)**

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Aprica comment:

* The green (Y) rating for proximity to (within 400m) an active travel network is questionable, as it probably refers to the circular Route 67, which is more of a leisure loop around High Green, Wentworth, Thorpe Hesley and Parson Cross. Commuter cyclists are unlikely to find this loop beneficial, attractive, or of use to commute
* Bus travel enhancement is unlikely to be viable, with an unrated score (yellow) for proximity to planned improvements. It is unclear where access would be achieved, but its location(s) could put bus stops over 500m away, and even then the services are only hourly, with no service on Sundays
* Capacity issues have been identified at Burncross Road/Lound Side and Ecclesfield Road/Cowley Lane. Contributions to local highway improvements are mentioned and this should be clarified and confirmed should this proposed site be progressed
* There has been one serious injury collision (two casualties) and three slight injury collisions (four casualties) in the vicinity of what appears to be the proposed access, including one slight injury collision on the M1 offslip (Crashmap 2019-2023)
* Access appears to be proposed from Cowley Hill but would need to be considered further should this proposed site be progressed

**7 TRANSPORT & HIGHWAY POLICY AND OBJECTIVES**

There are a number of local and national planning policies that any development proposal should consider prior to the submission or approval of a planning application. This report is focused on those relating to transport and highways, with a selection of these policies detailed below. Sustainable travel to development sites is a key objective for both national and local government.

**Active Travel England (ATE):**

ATE is the government body responsible for encouraging everyone to make walking, wheeling and cycling the preferred choice for short journeys, and assess the active travel merits of a development proposal. Their objective is to ensure that at least 50% of short trips are made by sustainable modes by 2030. ATE fundamentally comments on larger planning applications, and therefore it is highly likely that they will be requiring measures to ensure that people can and will travel by sustainable modes. To date there is extremely limited information presented with the proposed Green Belt sites to demonstrate that the goals of ATE can be met.

**Local Transport Note (LTN) 1/20:**

LTN 1/20 provides advice to local authorities on delivering high quality cycle infrastructure, providing specific guidance on how such infrastructure should be designed and implemented. There does not appear to be any reference to LTN 1/20 in the consultation documents. Such detail would be required as part of planning submissions, but at that stage it may be difficult to implement such provision – for example, land may not be available to provide such facilities, or the existing network may lead to such infrastructure being expensive for developers to provide. Agreements should, therefore, be put in place at an early stage.

**South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority (SYMCA):**

The Department for Transport (DfT) has mandated that all local transport authorities are required to review and update their statutory Local Transport Plans (LTPs) to align with current national and local priorities, and to provide a more consistent basis for determining future investment priorities. As one of our core statutory duties, SYMCA is working closely with our four local authority partners with the aim of having a preliminary draft Strategy and Implementation document(s) in place by Winter 2025.

**Connecting Sheffield:**

Connecting Sheffield is part of the long-term vision for the future of travel in the city of Sheffield, creating high-quality, convenient and safer routes into and around the city for cycling, walking and public transport. Funding has been made available, from central Government and other sources, to deliver work that aims to transform the city and enable people to make better travel choices. The website <https://haveyoursay.sheffield.gov.uk/connecting-sheffield> gives updates on projects. At present there are none in the vicinity of Ecclesfield, or north Sheffield in general, but hopefully a case could be made for studies in the area.

**Trip Generation and TRICS:**

The proposed sites will undoubtedly bring additional users to the site, by all modes of transport but, for the reasons mentioned above, quite probably by the private car for most trips.

With the proposals at such an early stage there is no data available in respect of the likely trip numbers for each mode and, therefore, it is impossible to accurately gauge the likely impacts on the highway network. The TRICS database (Trip Rate Information Computer System) would usually be utilised to provide a guide on the expected trip generation of development, but at this stage no firm planning submission has been presented and as such TRICS cannot be accurately used (since it models scenarios on other, closely-matched developments).

**Road Safety Audits (RSA):**

To date there are no highway improvement proposals relating to the proposed sites. In the absence of any mitigation it is likely that any increase in traffic will lead to increased congestion and recorded collision incidents. Road Safety Audits will be required for any proposals but cannot provide comfort at this stage as the nature of any proposed highway work is unknown.

**8** **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Conclusions ‘per mode’ are listed after the Overarching Conclusions section. Recommendations follow, underlined, at the end of each section.

**Overarching Conclusions**

Because this process is in its early stages there is, as mentioned above, no trip data to analyse. It is not possible, therefore, to consider the effect of ongoing developments outside Ecclesfield Parish – for example those taking place in Grenoside, Oughtibridge and Deepcar alone – or those already in construction in Ecclesfield Parish itself. All this development will generate traffic which will undoubtedly have an impact through Ecclesfield Parish, particularly on the popular ‘rat-run’ route to and from the M1.

The proposed Green Belt sites seem to be particularly well-located for access to the strategic road network (M1 in this case) and the M1/A616/A6135 seem to be a priority whilst the local network has been largely overlooked. Whilst it is acknowledged that housing and employment sites bring benefits such as availability of homes, jobs and other local benefits, the consultation documents provide very limited assessment, and therefore do not offer any confidence, that the local highway network, particularly, could cater for such an increase in demand or that local and national policy objectives, especially on active and sustainable travel, could be achieved. The case for ‘sustainability’ is particularly weak.

Whilst it is acknowledged that these documents are very much strategic at this stage, there is no reference, in the documents relating to highway assessment, about the number of houses, number of people employed, likely trip data, highway access etc., making it difficult to refer to in this report. Neither is there mention of the effect of ongoing developments outside Ecclesfield Parish (for example in Oughtibridge and Deepcar), or those already in construction in Ecclesfield Parish itself. Much of the detail to address likely highway impacts appears not to have been sufficiently investigated. Where assessment has been carried out, results (such as the RAG ratings in the individual site assessments) seem to be biased in favour of site suitability.

It could be argued that these proposals have been put together hurriedly to identify sites to meet the required allocations so that the Sheffield Plan has less chance of being rejected. It seems a shame to propose Green Field land, which is always contentious, when in Sheffield, particularly, there seems to be more than enough land in the more urban areas, closer to the City Centre, where regeneration would be welcomed and where sustainable travel could be far more easily achieved with practical walking, cycling and bus & tram travel. Again and as mentioned in the previous paragraph it could be why arguably this proposal for Green Field sites is being pursued with what could be perceived as an unsympathetic and distorted approach.

Having regard to a balanced approach to this matter, however, it is accepted that some Green Field land might offer more variety and choice of homes – not everyone wants to live in urban areas and ‘nimbyism’ should not affect the ability to build on Green Field should it genuinely be right to do so. The same could be said of some employment space but only where local people and businesses are likely to benefit, rather than be adversely affected by traffic. This might not be the case with some of the housing or employment sites proposed for Ecclesfield Parish.

Aprica recommendation:

* More detail needs to be provided on what impact sites, approved ones particularly, outside Ecclesfield Parish will have in addition to the ones proposed for Ecclesfield Parish itself.
* More consideration should be given to, and greater detail provided for, the impact on the existing local road network and how the proposals can be mitigated to reduce adverse effects. This would help to reduce the above-mentioned apparent bias in the assessments. If those adverse effects cannot genuinely be sufficiently mitigated, or sustainable travel genuinely be an attractive option, it would be far more palatable if Sheffield City Council ‘does the right thing’ and finds alternatives.

**Pedestrians:**

Pedestrians will obviously need to access the sites but there is scant information about how they might do so safely or efficiently, especially with increased traffic volumes in general and potentially a higher percentage of HGV’s. Despite the aforementioned early stage of these proposals, this is felt to be an oversight.

Aprica recommendation:

* Additional consideration and detail should be provided about pedestrian facilities that might be required, including provision for vulnerable or partially sighted people. Proposals should be formulated and agreed in advance of any planning consent, in order to ensure that they are physically deliverable
* In addition to physical pedestrian measures, a review of speed limits should also be undertaken to help improve pedestrian and other road-user safety.

**Cycling and Wheeling:**

Reference is made to cycle links but again seems to be biased, in that the only ‘cycle route’ for some distance around is Route 67. This is more of a circular leisure route than a commuter route and is unlikely to be used for travel to or from work.

Aprica recommendation:

* Whilst it is acknowledged that more substantial proposals are likely to be developed in time for sites being progressed, it is uncertain whether these will actually be deliverable as part of any planning consent. Proposals for cycle access should, therefore, be agreed ahead of any planning consents.

**Public Transport:**

Few of the sites are claimed to be well-served by public transport and there are very limited proposals for enhancement. Those that are and mention, for example, “3 bus per hour bus stop within 400m” are probably quoting the weekday daytime figures. Examples of actual services are given above for some sites. People in new homes might wish to travel outside those times. With employment land, particularly, people will need to travel at weekends and during unsociable hours. Unless significant improvements can be made to services and stops, bus travel (in this case, as opposed to tram travel for example), could remain unpopular, impractical or impossible.

Aprica recommendation:

* As a minimum, existing bus stops should be fully accessible in terms of raised kerbs and tactile paving, with bus stop clearways. Stops should be strategically positioned for ease of access, and sited such that other traffic is prevented from passing by. Service frequency should also be reviewed where necessary. Again any proposals should be agreed in advance of any planning consent to ensure that they are deliverable.

**Private Vehicles:**

As stated above, the sites, particularly the proposed Employment Sites, are well-located for the strategic road network (M1). Whilst this has its advantages (such as drivers only needing to travel the minimum distance on the local network), the sites will likely generate significant trips by private car. Unlike HGV’s and LGV’s, motorists in private vehicles are not subject to many strategic prohibited routes, so would be free to choose their routes to and from the sites, and for associated journeys such as lunch breaks (in the case of Employment Sites). At present the proposals only briefly mention possible improvements but give quite a lot more consideration to the M1 junctions. Very little has been identified with regard to highway improvements to offset or mitigate any increase in vehicular traffic elsewhere and without this, ‘downstream’ congestion is bound to be exacerbated.

Aprica recommendation:

It is considered that, for proposed sites being progressed, measures need to be developed to a more detailed stage. Particular focus should be on the existing problem areas such as the M1 to Grenoside (and beyond) rat run (Cowley Hill/Nether Lane etc), the St Mary’s Lane/Yew Lane/Stocks Hill/Church Street loop, other pinch points such as Church Street/Town End Road/The Wheel, and so on. This should include pedestrian and cycle facilities as discussed above.

**HGV’s:**

HGV’s are visually and audibly intrusive and a mode that is particularly intimidating to pedestrians and cyclists. HGV’s are already said to be a nuisance and dangerous throughout Ecclesfield Parish and the proposed Employment Sites will no doubt give rise to increased numbers of HGV’s if the proposals are progressed.

Aprica recommendation:

* HGV routeing and associated prohibitions, along with physical measures to protect more vulnerable user groups (pedestrians and cyclists in particular) , should all be considered in more detail should any sites be progressed.