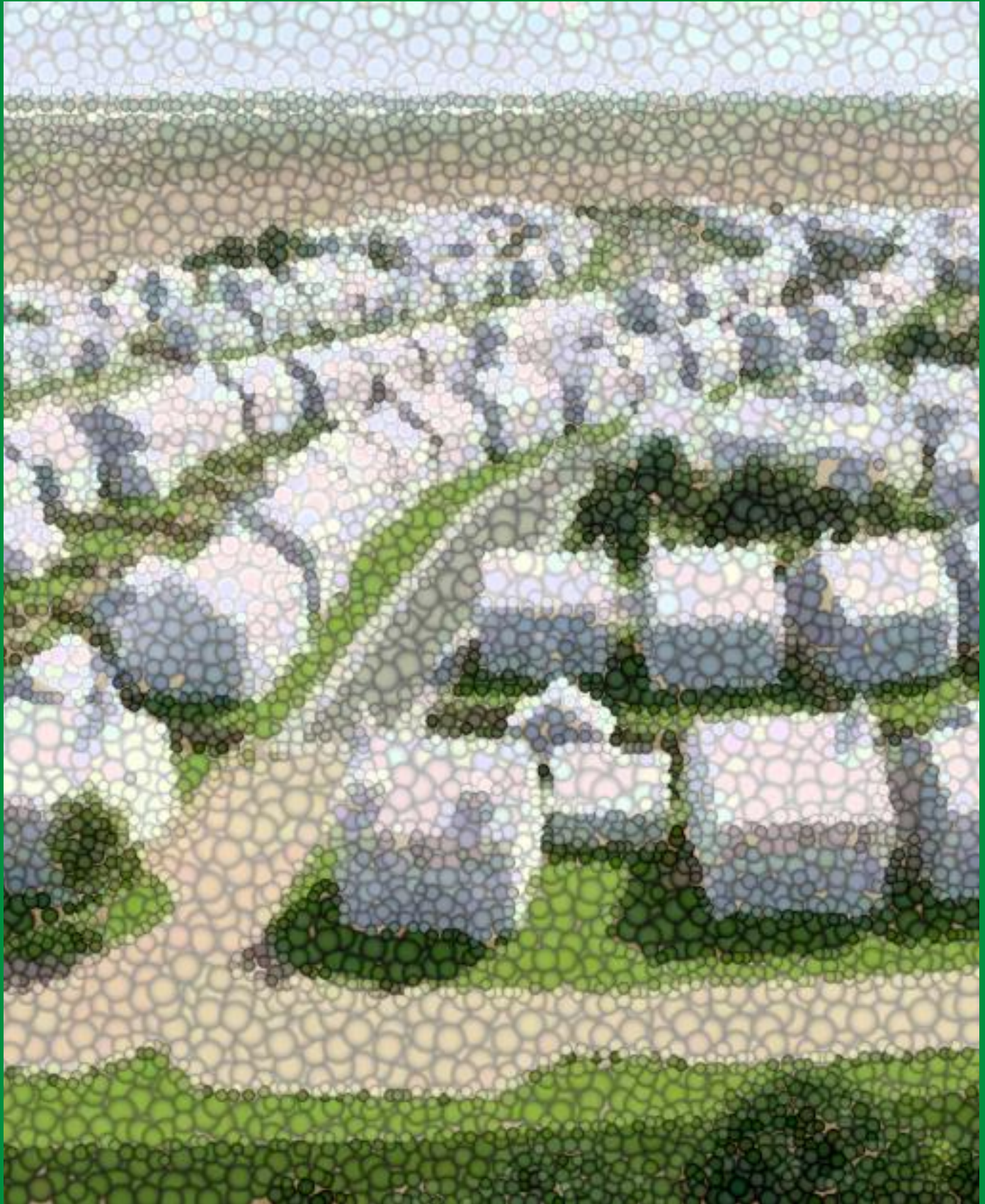


# Nexus Planning Liaison Policy

March 2022



# Introduction

Sustainable travel plays a vital role in reducing pollution and congestion in the region and can also promote social inclusion and improve air quality, health and quality of life. Good transport links also increase the attractiveness of new developments by providing more travel choices for prospective purchasers.

If developments are to be successful in the long term, then they must promote sustainable travel. Sustainable travel should be encouraged through the availability of frequent public transport services and through the means of accessing these services including the provision of well-lit footpaths.

Altering people's travel behaviour continues to be a key issue when creating developments, and sustainable travel should be considered from the early stages of the planning process as this is an expectation of Nexus and Local Planning Authorities.

Nexus is aware that in order to encourage sustainable development it needs to work with planning authorities, developers and transport providers. Through closer working both prior to and during the application process, Nexus will be able to ensure that sustainable travel is considered from the very beginning, enhancing the likelihood that developments will cater for sustainable travel, be approved, and that as a result, the region's economy will grow and prosper.

This policy seeks to increase developers' awareness of the social, economic and environmental benefits of sustainable travel, and gives an overview of those developments which could potentially have an impact on the region's public transport network. The document also aims to ensure that developers understand what the role of Nexus is in the planning process and the ways in which it can help to achieve successful outcomes for all concerned.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Detail Nexus' approach when consulted on planning applications
- Support developers in designing and developing a sustainable site
- Highlight the public transport interventions and incentives that are available (and may be conditioned through the planning process)
- Highlight how Nexus supports developers from pre-application through to planning approval.

# What is Nexus?

Nexus is the Passenger Transport Executive (PTE) for Tyne and Wear. It administers funds on behalf of the North East Joint Transport Committee which works in partnership with the five local councils in Tyne and Wear and the neighbouring authorities of Northumberland County Council and Durham County Council to integrate all modes of transport within the region.

Nexus' mission statement is 'Making public transport great for our environment, economy and communities'.

Nexus plans, provides and promotes public transport to improve the economic prosperity of Tyne and Wear, and the daily lives of its people. It also looks to the future, creating travel networks people will want to use in decades to come. Nexus' aim is to improve quality of life for everyone in Tyne and Wear, by creating better transport networks.

Nexus owns, manages and operates the Metro, the light rail network in Tyne and Wear. The Metro network connects the region's residents with Newcastle International Airport, the national rail network and the city centres of Newcastle and Sunderland. Nexus also owns and operates the Shields Ferry and provides socially necessary bus services through contracts with operators.



Transport North East has worked alongside County Durham, Northumberland and the five district councils of Tyne and Wear to produce a Transport Plan for the region. The plan complements the aims of planning policies in Tyne and Wear by helping to deliver sustainable development. The vision of the plan is "Moving to a green, healthy, dynamic and thriving North East". The Transport Plan sets out 5 Objectives these are; Carbon neutral North East; Overcome inequality and grow our economy; Healthier North East; Appealing sustainable transport choices; and Safe secure network. This policy aims to support these objectives.

The region's strategic networks will support the efficient movement of people and goods within and beyond Tyne and Wear, and a comprehensive network of pedestrian, cycle and passenger transport links will ensure that everyone has access to employment, training, community services and facilities. Developers should strive to ensure that all developments are well integrated with the local public transport network.

Nexus provides advice on the public transport implications and opportunities of planning applications received via local planning authorities, and is always willing to discuss concepts with developers at the pre-application stage. We base the advice we provide on Government guidance, the NECA responsibilities and our in-depth knowledge of the local area and are keen to liaise with and learn from developers so that we can work together to deliver sustainable outcomes.

Nexus also reviews all relevant planning applications it receives to assess the accessibility of each site. The impact on the transport network, and that the needs of existing and new public transport users are taken into account before making our recommendations to the Case Officer on any necessary planning obligations.



# Sustainable design

Nexus is fully committed to working with local planning authorities in Tyne and Wear in order to improve and encourage sustainable travel to/from new developments. Effective design of developments can aid in achieving this.

## Planning and Design

When planning and designing a development, developers should take cognisance of the following:

- **Accessibility of new development:** All significant new developments should be easily accessed by sustainable modes of travel, including public transport, cycling and walking and should be designed in line with the Department for Transport's guidance on cycle infrastructure design (LTN 1/20).
- **Location of new development:** In order to reduce levels of car use and parking associated with development, sites should be located where possible within close proximity of town centres or on public transport corridors.
- **Type of development:** Wherever possible, sites which are very accessible by public transport should be reserved for developments which are likely to generate a large number of journeys. In order to reduce journey length and car travel, higher density combined with mixed use should be encouraged.
- **Impact on public transport network:** New developments should not have an adverse impact on existing or future public transport provision or infrastructure in the region.
- **Promotion of sustainable travel:** Significant developments should promote sustainable travel and be accompanied by a travel plan. Once the development is complete, progress towards achieving the objectives of the travel plan should be monitored.
- **Design and layout:** The design and layout of a development should maximise opportunities for sustainable travel following the Department for Transport's guidance on cycle infrastructure design (LTN 1/20), with sustainable modes of transport being given priority over the car.

## Accessibility Standards

In order to ensure accessibility for all it is vital that new developments are well served by public transport. Nexus considers that new dwellings should be within 400 metres walking distance of a bus stop or 800 metres of a Metro station. The 2018 document 'Buses in Urban Developments' published by the CIHT suggests that a 300 metres notional catchment from bus stops will result in maximum walking distances of up to around 400 metres. (these standards are regarded as best practice following their inclusion in Institution of Highways and Transportation guidelines). This is also the threshold contained within the Bus Strategy for Tyne and Wear that has been adopted by the NECA.

It is also important that these bus stops receive a regular bus service providing access to local centres and major employment and interchange locations. Residents of new developments should be able to access a variety of key services, including doctors' surgeries and local shops, within 30 minutes, door to door, using public transport.

Where existing service provision is not sufficiently adequate for the development being proposed, minimum service standards must apply. Nexus will therefore seek to ensure that developments are served by existing or new bus or Metro services at a frequency commensurate with the scale, nature and location of the development proposed. As a guide, bus services will need to be provided throughout the day and week with a minimum 30-minute frequency between the hours of 6.30am and 6.30pm, Monday to Saturday. Outside of these times, developers are expected to include proposals that are proportionate to the size and nature of the development.



These proposals will be reviewed on a case by case basis. Where these proposals involve using existing bus services, Nexus will consider what impact the development will have on existing service, specifically:

- Whether larger vehicles will be required to accommodate the expected increase in demand resulting from the proposed development,
- Whether an enhanced frequency will be required to accommodate the expected increase in demand resulting from the proposed development,

The road network in new developments should be easily accessed by buses, where appropriate, and if traffic calming measures are used on roads, these must not result in the road becoming inaccessible to buses.

## **Designing improved accessibility**

Nexus understands that in some instances, applications will be received that are in relatively inaccessible sites. Where these result in the 400 metre threshold being exceeded, it is expected that developers will submit recommendations for improvements and enhancements to the public transport network, as well as propose a site design to accommodate public transport services wherever this is feasible. It should not be assumed that the public transport network will automatically respond to cater for a new development, or that services will be commercially viable from the outset.

Nexus suggests a number of potential solutions that may be sought through the planning process and should be considered by developers when improving the accessibility of the site.

### **Site Layout**

People's travel choices can be influenced by how easy it is to access public transport, therefore to encourage greater use:

- Access to public transport should be provided adjacent to entrances to developments
- Safe walking and cycling routes should be created that are attractive and accessible to provide direct links to transport routes

To be attractive to new residents and other bus users, bus routes within residential estates should not 'loop' the estate unless it is unavoidable, with entry and exit to/from the estate at different points wherever possible.

Roads should also be designed to be wide enough to allow two buses to pass and where bus routes are planned, parking restrictions should be in place if required, to prevent roads from becoming impassable to buses. Where roads are planned to accommodate bus routes, the road should be designed to be at least 7 metres wide.

Where development sites adjoin each other or the site is divided between developers they should and will be treated as a single site for assessing public transport needs and accessibility.

Installation of bus-only 'gates' are strongly encouraged to improve bus accessibility between different phases of the development as well as accessibility to/from the estate.

Where new routes are to be provided through the development these need to be included at an early stage to ensure public transport is available as the site becomes occupied. For residential developments Nexus would normally define an early stage to be the occupation of the 50<sup>th</sup> dwelling. For non-residential developments Nexus will advise developers on what it considers a suitable threshold on a case by case basis. This will require infrastructure, such as through roads and bus stops, to be provided at an early stage to allow for services to operate as the development progresses and dwellings begin to be occupied.

Where required, new bus stops must be accessible with raised kerbs and shelters, which meet Nexus specification, erected in most cases except at stops mostly used by alighting users only.



## Bus Services

If the proposed development does not benefit from a nearby service, or if the service is inadequate for the size of the development and the expected demand that the development will generate, a number of possible solutions should be considered to address this.

**Service Enhancement** – In some instances where a proposed development may fall within 400 metres of existing public transport services but the frequency, hours of operation or capacity are not sufficient, then enhancements to the service to improve frequency, extend the hours of operation and increase capacity should be planned for by the developer. Nexus will be willing to advise if appropriate, although if existing

bus services in the area are operated commercially then developers should also discuss potential service enhancements directly with the relevant operator(s).

**Service Diversion/Extension** – When a development is wholly or partly outside of 400 metres walking distance of a regular bus service, it may be possible to divert or extend an existing bus service to serve the site as this may prove to be the most cost effective solution. Service diversions or extensions should only be proposed with the full cooperation of the bus operator or if the service is operated under contract to Nexus, with Nexus’s cooperation.

The diversion of an existing service can only be proposed if it will have no detrimental impact to the accessibility of the area where the service has been diverted from.

**New Service** – Where service diversion is not possible or would not deliver the required level of accessibility, the developer should work with Nexus to create a bespoke service that best meets the needs of the development. Nexus would be able to develop plans for a proposed service including routes and timetables based on the developer’s trip forecasts, and to provide indicative costs for the initial years of operation, prior to normally achieving commercial sustainability. Again if the local service network is operated on mainly commercial basis, then the first port of call should normally be the bus operator.



## **‘Neighbour’ Applications**

Where a proposed development may affect public transport infrastructure, Nexus must be consulted to ensure that there will be no impact on the operation of transport services.

Development can have a significant impact on the region’s public transport network, and the following table highlights developments which could affect the operation of public transport in Tyne and Wear. In these situations, Nexus should be consulted at the earliest opportunity. Where engineering advice is required, Nexus may charge for this service.

The following table includes some circumstances which may affect the network; however, this list is not exhaustive.

Public transport network	Circumstances which may affect the network
<b>Metro System</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development adjacent to a Metro line</li> <li>• Development adjacent to a Metro station</li> <li>• Development which will involve the planting of vegetation within close proximity of the Metro line</li> <li>• Development adjacent to a Metro level crossing</li> <li>• Development next to Metro 'park and ride' sites</li> <li>• Development where there may be over-sailing of the Metro line (cranes etc.)</li> <li>• Development which involves vehicles being parked adjacent to the Metro line</li> <li>• Development on Metro land - Work to bridges beneath/over the Metro line; work above or near tunnels on the Metro network [see also Appendix 1]</li> <li>• Development which may affect any public access to Metro services or infrastructure</li> <li>• Development which may affect any public transport services feeding in to the Metro system</li> </ul>
<b>Bus Network</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development adjacent to a bus station/ interchange</li> <li>• Development which involves the relocation/alteration of a bus stop/shelter</li> <li>• Development which may alter the speed or flow of traffic along a public highway used by buses</li> <li>• Development which will affect any public access to bus services or bus infrastructure</li> <li>• Development which requires the introduction of a new bus service</li> <li>• Development which requires the alteration of an existing bus service</li> </ul>
<b>Shields Ferry Service</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development within close proximity to the ferry landings</li> <li>• Development affecting roads used by buses serving the ferry landings</li> <li>• Development which may affect any public access to ferry services or infrastructure</li> <li>• Development which may affect any public transport services feeding on to the ferry service</li> </ul>
<b>Rail Network (developer should consult Network Rail)*</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development adjacent to a rail station</li> <li>• Development adjacent to a station car park</li> <li>• Development within a rail station</li> <li>• Development adjacent to the railway line</li> </ul>

\* The tracks and stations used by Metro between Pelaw and South Hylton are owned by Network Rail, not Nexus. Therefore, if a development which is within close proximity of this section of Metro line is proposed, Network Rail must be consulted instead of Nexus, except in the vicinity of Metro stations, where both Network Rail and Nexus should be consulted.

## Developer contributions

If improvements to the public transport network are required, these should be funded by the developer.

Where new bus services, diversions, extensions or enhancements are proposed, the service level provided should be commensurate with the scale, nature and location of development once built out, and pump-primed for a period of at least five years, or two years following final completion of the site (whichever is greater) or until they become commercially sustainable (if this happens sooner), to ensure that public transport use is encouraged from the early stages of occupation. Appropriate thresholds and trigger points for the scale and timing of contributions will be considered on an individual basis.

Where new bus stops are required, these must be paid for by the developer and be to the Nexus standard. The developer will also be required to contribute towards the on-going upkeep of any new shelter to be managed by Nexus for a period of five years.



For larger residential developments of 50 or more dwellings, Nexus will request via the local planning authority that the applicants meet the costs of two introductory tickets per dwelling to the equivalent of four week's travel per ticket. These tickets

should be offered to residents as part of the Welcome Pack with the onus on residents to apply for these through the necessary process. What form the tickets take and the process of providing it to residents can be agreed with Nexus as part of the discharge of conditions process. The reason for the change in the policy regarding the provision of introductory tickets is to simplify the process for developers, for Nexus and for residents. This is because what is considered the most appropriate ticket at the time the application is submitted may have been superseded or may no longer exist at the time various phases of a development are ready for occupation.

At the time this policy was published, the tickets required are two Pop Pay As You Go cards per dwelling with £50 of credit preloaded onto each of them; these to be provided by the developer to new residents subject to residents applying for the cards. The process of applying for the cards must be promoted as part of the homebuyer's welcome pack. This is to encourage a greater take-up of public transport from the outset.

For commercial and industrial developments, where the development will be the place of work for 50 or more Full Time Equivalent posts, a work place travel plan should be produced. Similar to the introductory tickets for residential development, Nexus requires that the developer fund one ticket per employee. This ticket must be the equivalent of four week's travel with the specific ticket to be provided subject to agreement by Nexus as part of the discharge of conditions.

At the time this policy was published, Nexus requires that as part of the work place travel plan, the applicant meets the cost of one Pop Pay As You Go card per employee with £50 of credit preloaded onto it with.

Nexus reserves the right to change the amount of credit on the card in line with the "mean fares calculation".

Where the public transport network is a neighbour to a proposed development, Nexus may require the developer to undertake measures to mitigate any potential impact on the network. This may include additional protection to prevent the incursion of vehicles on the Metro line, restrictions on the type and location of trees and other vegetation planted near the Metro line or submitting method statements and risk assessments. All of these measures must be approved by Nexus Rail Engineers with engineering drawings submitted where required.

## **Pre-application discussions**

Nexus positively welcomes pre-application discussions and is willing to meet with developers and local authorities to discuss the public transport requirements of new developments. The earlier this can take place in the planning process the better, so that the needs of all sides can be taken into account and developments planned from the outset with appropriate standards of public transport accessibility and permeability wherever these can be achieved.

## **Transport Assessments**

Transport assessments linked to planning applications should be produced at an early stage as they provide estimates for trip generation and public transport accessibility including auto-tracking and swept path analysis where appropriate. The assessments also consider what impact the development will have on the existing road network and should aim to discourage single-occupancy car use. Nexus recommends that transport assessments are carried out prior to submission of a planning application.

## **Transport Statements**

The main purpose of transport statements is to highlight any transport issues relating to a proposed development. The transport statement should be produced at the beginning of the planning process. Nexus is willing to work alongside developers to highlight any public transport issues associated with proposed developments.

## **Travel Plans**

It is recommended that travel plans are produced at the pre-application stage and submitted alongside planning applications which may have an impact on transport and travel. Travel plans help to deliver sustainable travel objectives and outline methods of encouraging travel by environmentally-friendly modes. When producing a travel plan, it is important that the impact the development may have on existing and future public networks is taken into account. Travel plans should be specific to the developments they support. If a travel plan is to be effective, then it is vital that a travel plan co-ordinator is appointed. The travel plan co-ordinator is responsible for ensuring that the targets in the travel plan are met.

## **Information Required**

Nexus is keen to comment and provide advice and guidance on development proposals in Tyne and Wear which may have an impact on the region's public transport network. In order to enable us to comment fully we require the following information:

- Deadline for responding to proposals, case officer's name and contact details, planning application reference
- A copy of the planning application form or website link
- A copy of the location plan
- A copy of the site layout/ ground floor plan
- A copy of the Transport Assessment/ Travel Plan/ Planning Statement/ Design and Access Statement

In order to ensure a prompt response, this information should be sent to us via email.  
Our email address is [planningliaison@nexus.org.uk](mailto:planningliaison@nexus.org.uk)



## Appendix 1: Tunnels

The alignments of the Metro railway tunnels below Newcastle and Gateshead are not immediately obvious from the surface, and do not appear on Ordnance Survey maps. Nexus require Planning Authorities and developers to ensure that they have taken tunnels into account when planning new developments in their vicinity. This issue is also important for alterations to existing sites which do not require planning permission, such as foundation strengthening works, major structural refurbishments etc.

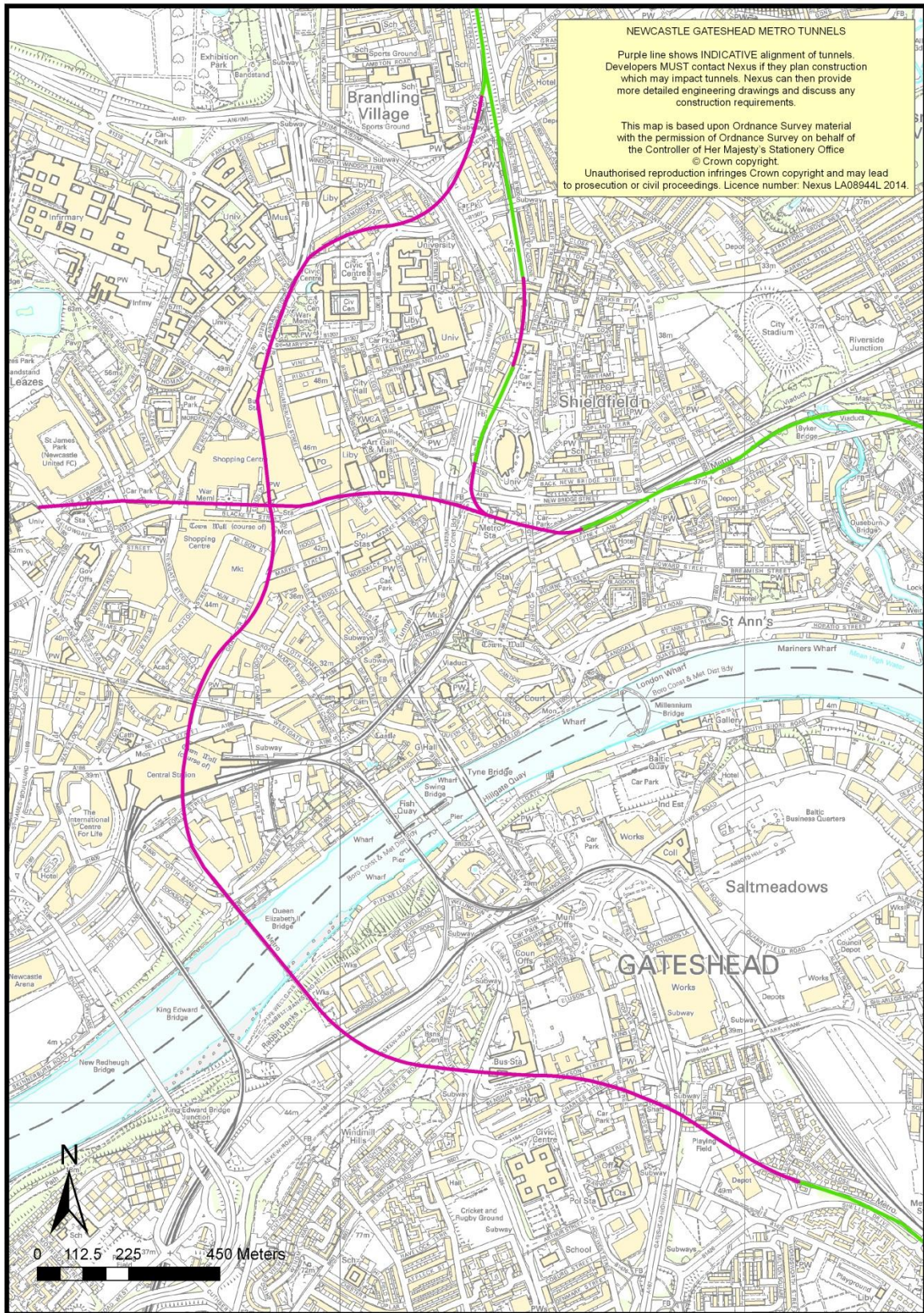
Below are maps showing indicative tunnel alignments. It must be noted that these are twin tunnels, which may be separated from each other by up to 25 metres, and hence a 'corridor' approach must be used. In addition, the positions of the underground stations (not shown) and other infrastructure such as ventilation shafts must be taken into account.

As a general rule, construction directly above the tunnels will not be permitted, and construction activities (e.g. piling, drilling, or excavation) must not encroach within 6 metres of the outer edge of any tunnel or underground station. This separation distance may increase depending on proposed construction method and location; furthermore, construction activities at greater distances may still adversely affect the tunnels due to vibration.

If a development may fall within the tunnel corridors, Planning Authorities and developers/architects must contact Nexus for advice as soon as possible. Nexus will provide more detailed information on tunnel alignments and underground station positioning on request, together with advice about the need for vibration monitoring and dilapidation surveys. It is important to note that the onus is on developers to demonstrate that they will not adversely impact Nexus' tunnels.

Please note that significant tunnels also exist at North Shields, Byker and Tyne Dock for which Nexus has the same requirements as those indicated above.

In Sunderland city centre Network Rail must be consulted in addition to Nexus.



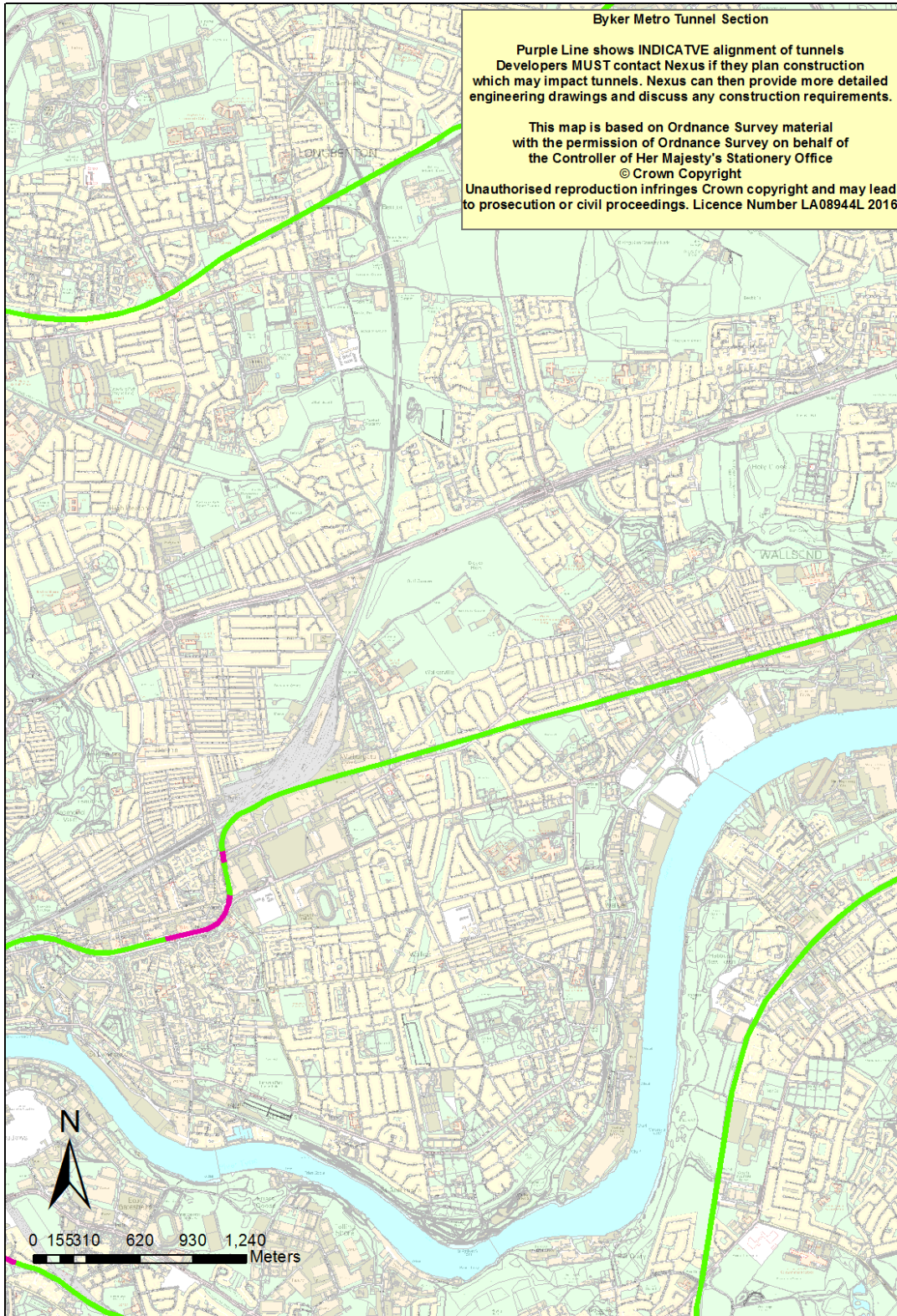
**NEWCASTLE GATESHEAD METRO TUNNELS**



Purple line shows INDICATIVE alignment of tunnels. Developers MUST contact Nexus if they plan construction which may impact tunnels. Nexus can then provide more detailed engineering drawings and discuss any construction requirements.

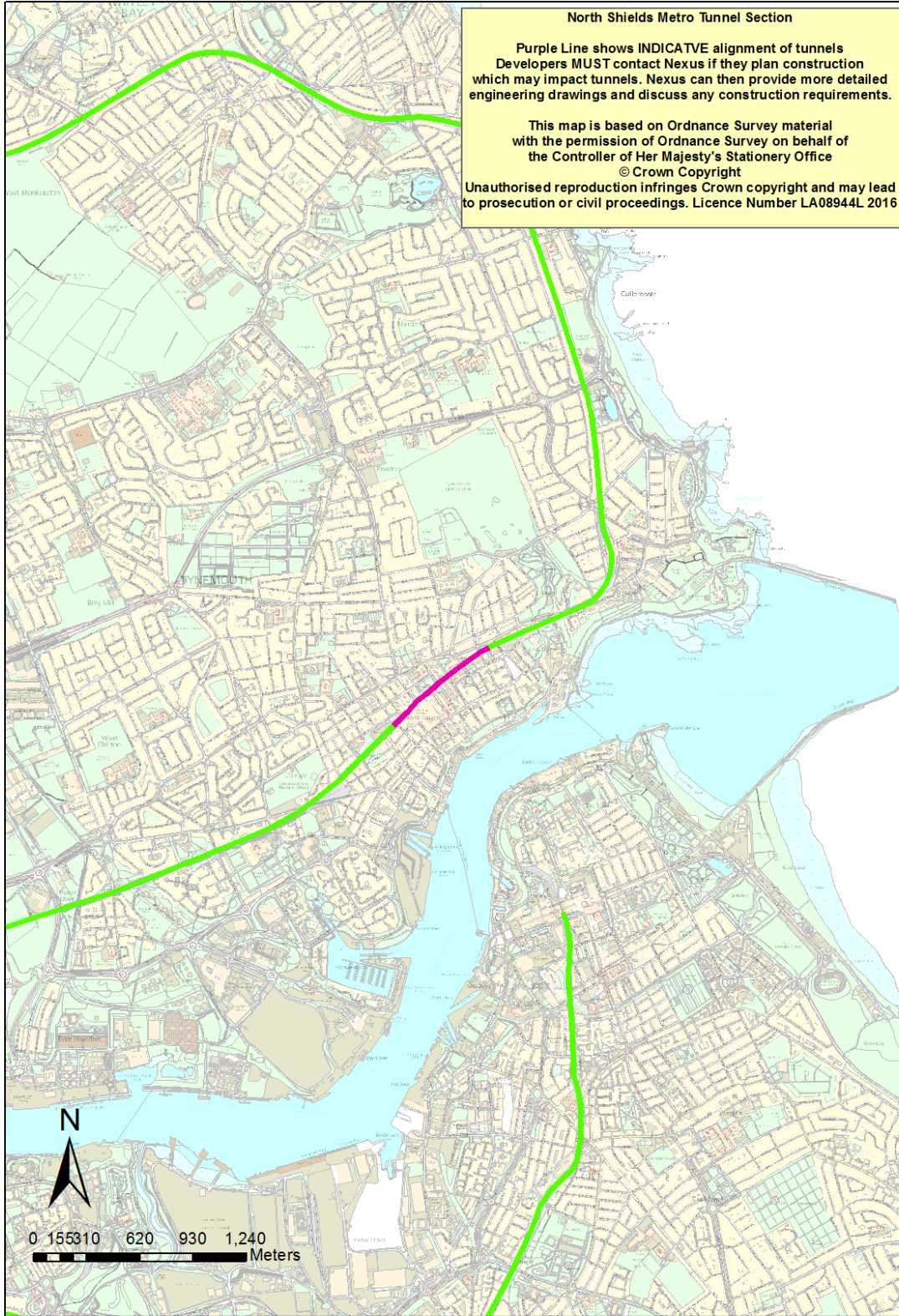
This map is based upon Ordnance Survey material with the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office  
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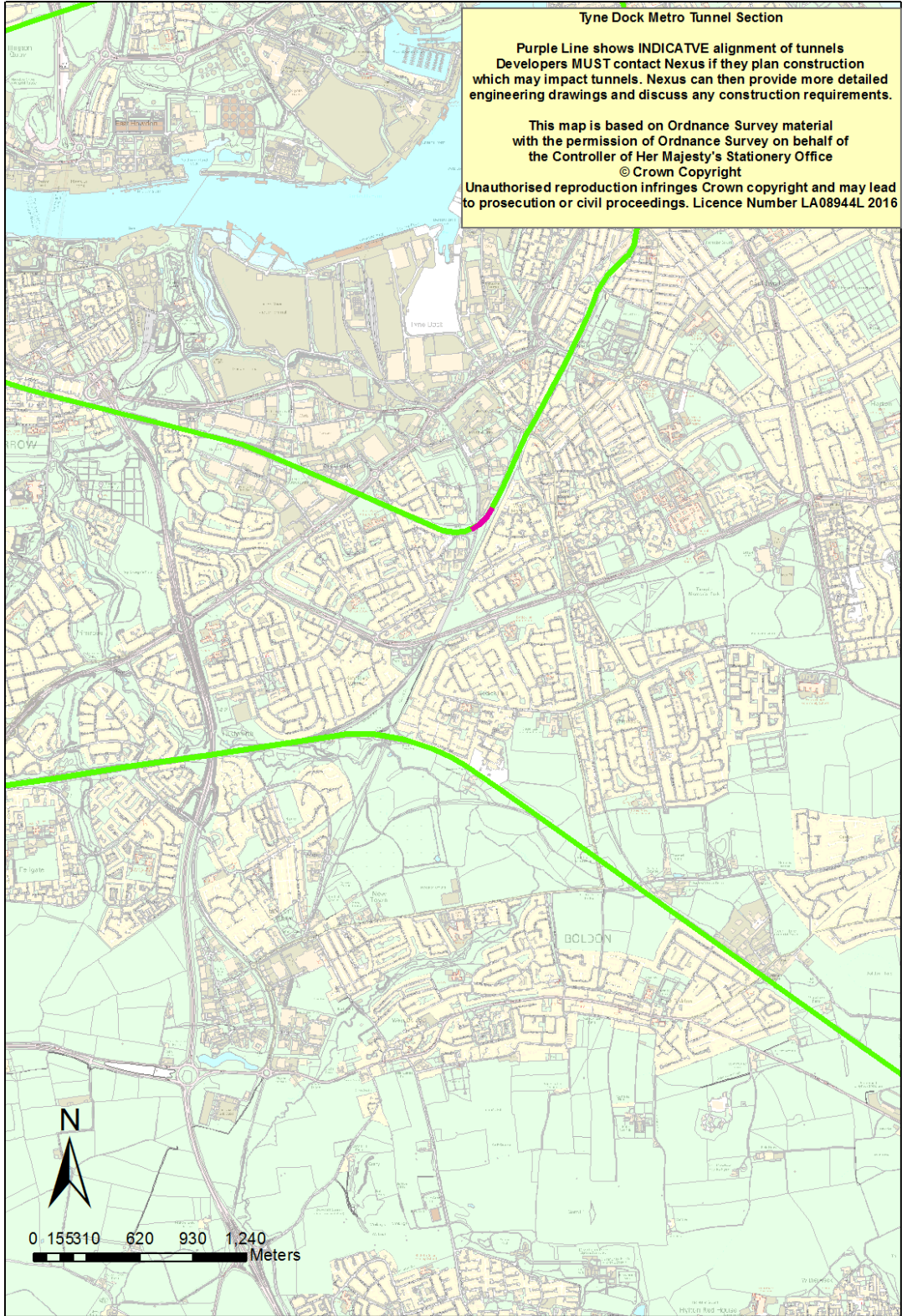
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Key	
Sub Surface Tunnels	
Above Ground	



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Sub Surface Tunnels	
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