# YORKSHIRE LAND

**Limited**

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Our ref YLL/BMBC/2018-02.01

06 February 2018

Sent by email to
paulatweed@barnsley.gov.uk

**Ms Paula Tweed**
Planning Policy Group Leader, Planning Policy
Economic Regeneration Service
Place Directorate
Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council
PO Box 604
BARNSLEY S70 9FE

Dear Ms Tweed,

**PROPOSED BLACKMOOR BUSINESS PARK**

We write to draw your attention to inconsistencies in Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council's (the Council's) evidence base concerning our proposed Blackmoor Business Park site.

The site is situated on the eastern edge of Oxspring, within 700 metres of the Waggon and Horses Public House, which forms the Historical Centre of the village.

You may recall that our agent, Mr Paul Butler of PB Planning, submitted representations to the Council on 11 May 2016, seeking the allocation of the Blackmoor Business Park site for employment development within the Barnsley Local Plan. However, within just four working days PB Planning received an email response from Mr Joe Jenkinson (the Council's Head of Planning) rejecting the site. This response was subsequently followed by a formal letter, dated 23 May 2016, from the Council's Spokesperson for Place Councillor Roy Miller (Ref: PRM/JA). A copy of this letter is enclosed for your ease of reference.

We were informed during a telephone call with Mr Joe Jenkinson on Monday, 22 January 2018 that the letter from Councillor Roy Miller was in fact written on his behalf by the Council's Planning Department. The letter sets out that our proposals for the Blackmoor Business Park site were rejected on the following grounds:

- The site is located in the Green Belt;
- The site is remote from the Penistone Principal Town;

- The site is Greenfield, given that the remains of structures associated with the previous use have blended into the landscape;
- Proposed Employment Development would constitute inappropriate development in the Green Belt;
- Development would have a significant detrimental impact on openness; and
- The sustainability credentials of the site are poor, due to the location of the site

As you are aware, the Council has already confirmed that it cannot meet its employment and housing needs without the release of land from the Green Belt and is proposing to release circa 300 ha of land from the Green Belt for employment use during the Local Plan period 2014-2033.

During the Stage 3 Local Plan Examination Hearings in October 2017, the Barnsley Local Plan Inspector asked Mr Jenkinson why only 1% of the total employment land allocated in the Local Plan is proposed to be identified to meet the needs in Penistone and the Western Villages. Mr Jenkinson responded, confirming that there is a lack of suitable sites in and around Penistone to identify further employment land allocations.

The only site currently allocated in the Local Plan to meet the employment needs of Penistone and the Western Villages is site reference P2, which is a Greenfield and Green Belt site situated on land to the North of Sheffield Road in Oxspring.

The Council acknowledged in its Local Plan Examination Main Matter 10 Hearing Statement that site reference P2 scores relatively poorly but, given the lack of suitable alternatives it is proposed for allocation to ensure some new employment land provision is made to Penistone. Furthermore, it was identified that the EB37 Barnsley Employment Land Report (Mott Macdonald April 2016) anticipates that the site is unlikely to be developed until over 10 years into the Plan Period (Timescale: Long term (10+ years).

We have also identified a number of significant constraints affecting the viability of site P2, not least, the presence of large, low hanging high voltage pylon lines which cross the site and the presence of low railway bridges, which restrict access to high sided delivery vehicles.

In respect of the Council's contention that the proposed Blackmoor Business Park site is remote from the Penistone Principal Town and is Greenfield, given that the remains of structures associated with the previous use have blended into the landscape in the process of time, we would remind you the site reference P2 is also located in Oxspring and is a Green Belt and Greenfield site, which unlike the proposed Blackmoor Business Parks site, has never been developed.

The graphic on Page 16 of the Smeeden Foreman Oxspring Fields Landscape Statement (enclosed) which was submitted to the Council during 2014 to support the allocation of the adjoining Oxspring Fields site, demonstrates the close proximity of the Blackmoor Business Park site to the Penistone Principal Town. It can be observed from this graphic that the site

is only a seven and a half minute cycle ride from the Penistone Principal Town along the Trans Pennine Trail, a safe and predominantly flat route segregated from motor vehicles.

Page 26 of the Smeeden Foreman Landscape Statement entitled 'Viewpoint Analysis 4' is also enclosed for your perusal and includes a photograph illustrating the existing view looking east along Sheffield Road from the Oxspring Parish Sports Field, toward the Blackmoor Business Park site. **Importantly**, the former industrial buildings at the Blackmoor industrial complex are **clearly visible** in the background of the photograph, beyond which it can be noted that the topography rises sharply to Blackmoor and the village of Thurgoland.

Several further photographs taken from the western boundary of the site on Wednesday, 31 January 2018 are enclosed, and serve to demonstrate the continuing industrial nature of the Blackmoor complex, dismissing the notion of the Council that the remains of structures associated with the previous use have blended into the landscape in the process of time.

In respect of the Council's statement that the development of the site would have a significantly detrimental impact on openness, the Arup Barnsley Green Belt Review (prepared on behalf of the Council) identifies on page 91 in respect of General Area PEN11 in the location of the site that large wooded areas reduce the level of openness and the large sewage works at Cheese Bottom reduces the rural character.

The Cheese Bottom sewage works forms the eastern boundary of the Blackmoor industrial complex. This is illustrated by the Aerial Photograph enclosed.

The Council's contention that the sustainability credentials of the site are poor is clearly inaccurate and therefore invalid; we have already ascertained that the site is situated in close proximity to the Penistone Principal Town. Furthermore, it is evident from the Council's Sustainability Assessments for the villages (Local Plan Examination Document EB184) that Oxspring and Thurgoland are two of the most sustainable western villages, both achieving a score of sixteen points using the Council's own methodology.

Paragraph 7.11 of the Council's Background Paper BP8, submitted as a Stage 4 Local Plan Examination document, identifies that the villages which scored 18 and 16 tend to be the larger villages. The Council's Background Paper BP8 sets out in paragraph 7.3 in respect of the identification of development site allocations in the villages that:

> *"Certainly, villages in the east of the Borough were not considered to be remote and in need of development to sustain local services given their proximity to the Principal Towns* ***and the same can be said of a number of the villages to the west (e.g. Thurlstone and Oxspring)****."*

Considering the location of the Blackmoor Business park site, situated between Oxspring and Thurgoland, which also achieved a score of 16 points in the Sustainability Assessment

it is clear that the Council's own evidence reiterates the sustainability of the proposed Blackmoor Business Park site.

Finally, the Council's assertion that Proposed Employment Development at the Blackmoor Business Park site would constitute inappropriate development in the Green Belt is baffling, considering that the site is previously developed (demonstrated by the photographs enclosed) and Draft Policy E5 of the Local Plan identifies that:

> *"On allocated Employment Sites, or land currently or last used for employment purposes, we will allow the following uses; Research & Development, Light Industry, General Industrial, Storage and Distribution. Ancillary uses will be allowed where appropriate in scale. Other uses may be considered on their merits, particularly their contribution to the Borough's economic offer and job density."*

As set out above, the Council has identified that it cannot meet Employment and Housing Needs in the Borough without releasing land from the Green Belt. Moreover, Mr Jenkinson confirmed to the Local Plan Inspector during the Stage 3 Hearing Sessions in October 2017 that the Council has been unable to identify suitable land for employment purposes in Penistone, hence the Council's intention to identify site reference P2; a Green Belt and Greenfield site in Oxspring, which the Council's own consultants have identified to be poorly performing and unlikely to be developed for 10+ years into the Local Plan Period.

When considering the factual content of this letter alongside the evidence which we have previously submitted in our Hearing Statements to the Local Plan Examination in respect of Employment development in the Borough, it is unequivocal that the Blackmoor Business Park site represents an outstanding employment land opportunity, and we therefore respectfully request that the Council reconsider its position and identify the site as an employment land allocation to meet the needs of Penistone and the Western Villages over the Local Plan period.

Yours sincerely
**YORKSHIRE LAND Limited**

**Steven Green**
Managing Director

*Encs* *Letter Ref PRM/JA from Councillor Roy Miller*
*Pages 16 & 26 of the Smeeden Foreman Oxspring Fields Landscape Statement*
*Photographs of Blackmoor Business Park site*
*Aerial Photograph of Blackmoor Business Park site*

*Cc* *Mr Paul Butler - PB Planning*

BARNSLEY
Metropolitan Borough Council

Cabinet Spokesperson for Place
**Councillor R Miller**

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PRM/JA

23rd May 2016

Mr Green
Yorkshire Land Ltd
PO Box 785
Harrogate
HG1 9RT

Dear Mr Green

I refer to your letter, dated 19th May 2016, regarding your representations in response to our emerging Local Plan.

As you will be aware, the Council has approved a report seeking authority to consult on the Publication Version of the Local Plan and to subsequently submit the plan for examination provided that no significant amendments are required. The consultation will commence on 24th June and run until 5th August and during this time you will be able to make further representations in response to the plan itself but also the various background papers that we will be making available when the consultation commences. These background papers will draw together and summarise the evidence that has been considered in developing policies and selecting and rejecting sites. I expect you will be making further representations once you have had the opportunity to consider the background papers. If your representations raise matters that we need to explore with you prior to submission of the plan then officers have confirmed they would be happy to arrange a meeting. However, at this stage, we are content that officers should focus their attention on completing the background papers and the other preparatory work.

In relation to your more recent letter regarding an employment proposal at land to the south of Sheffield Road outside Oxspring, officers have advised that the site is within the Green Belt, is remote from Penistone Principal Town and the majority of the site is greenfield given that the remains of structures associated with the previous use have blended into the landscape in the process of time. A proposed employment development would therefore constitute inappropriate development in the Green Belt and would have a significantly detrimental impact on openness. In addition, the sustainability credentials of the site would be poor due to the location of the site.

In light of the conflict with our proposed spatial strategy and the substantial harm to the Green Belt, I agree with officers that there was no reason to undertake a consultation exercise in relation to this particular site or defer the decision to consult on the publication version and subsequently submit the plan for examination.

I trust this clarifies the Council's position and explains the next stages of the local plan process.

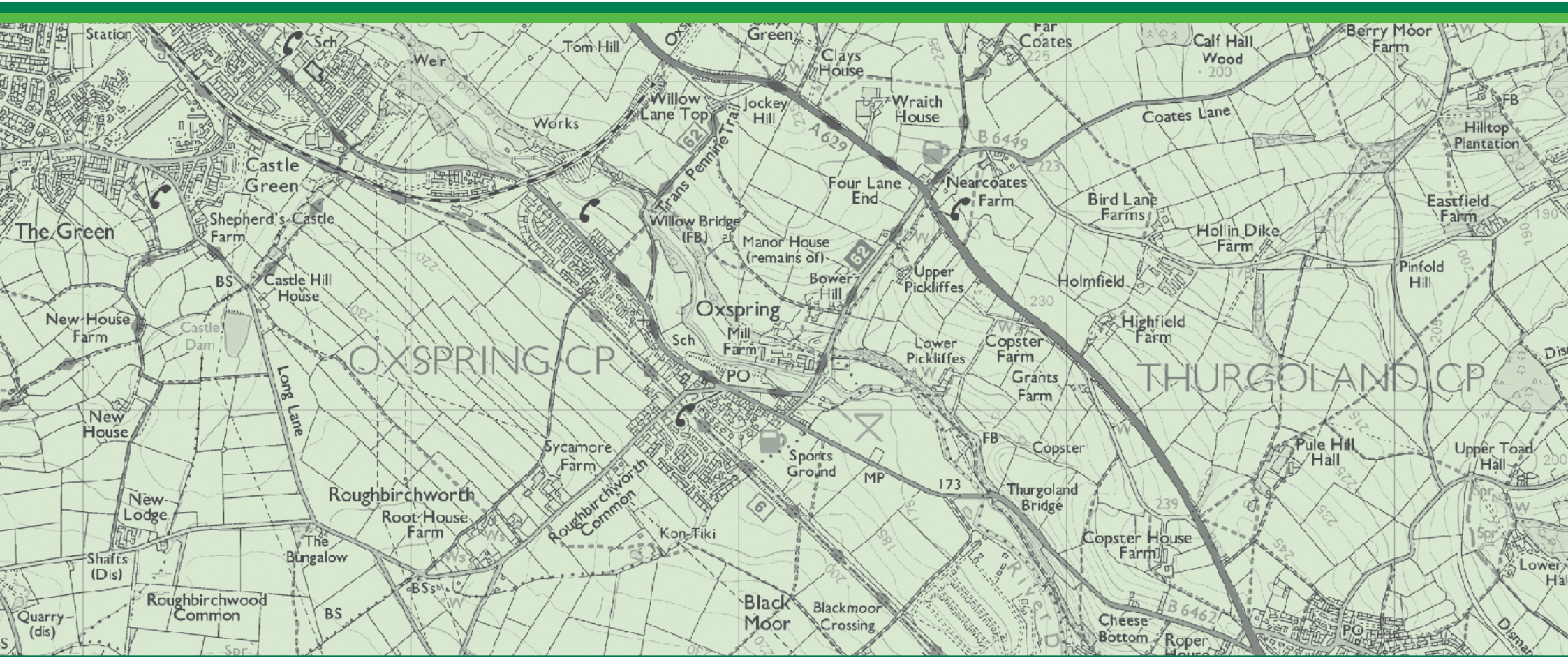
Yours sincerely

P R Miller

Councillor Roy Miller
Cabinet Spokesperson

SMEEDEN FOREMAN

# OXSPRING FIELDS




Landscape statement, May 2014 - Yorkshire Land Ltd

# Access and connectivity

The proposed development represents an opportunity to create a well connected and natural residential extension to the linear settlement pattern along this area of the River Don valley. Transport links, local services and recreational facilities are all easily accessed from the site due to it's close proximity to key cycling, walking and road routes.

Local services, such as the post office, village store, school, playing fields, playground, church, and village pub are all easily accessed within a 7 minute walk or a 2 minute cycle. The new sports/ community centre would be located within this zone.

Beyond the village, the Trans Pennine cycle and pedestrian trail connects the proposed site to Penistone and it's railway station (less than 30 mins walk or a 7 minute cycle).

From Penistone station, trains connect to:

- Barnsley (15mins)
- Huddersfield (30mins)
- Wakefield (43mins)
- Sheffield (45 mins)
- Leeds (60mins)

Barnsley (43mins) and Sheffield (63mins) are also easily reached by cycle along the two Transpennine cycle routes that lead from the site.

Penistone also has many other facilities including schools, sports clubs, cinema, local shops, supermarket, providing a large number of services within easy cycling or walking distance of the proposed site.

Furthermore, the fact that the site is situated along the B6462 Sheffield Road, enables this site to directly connect to the key road route in the area without drawing additional traffic through existing residential areas.

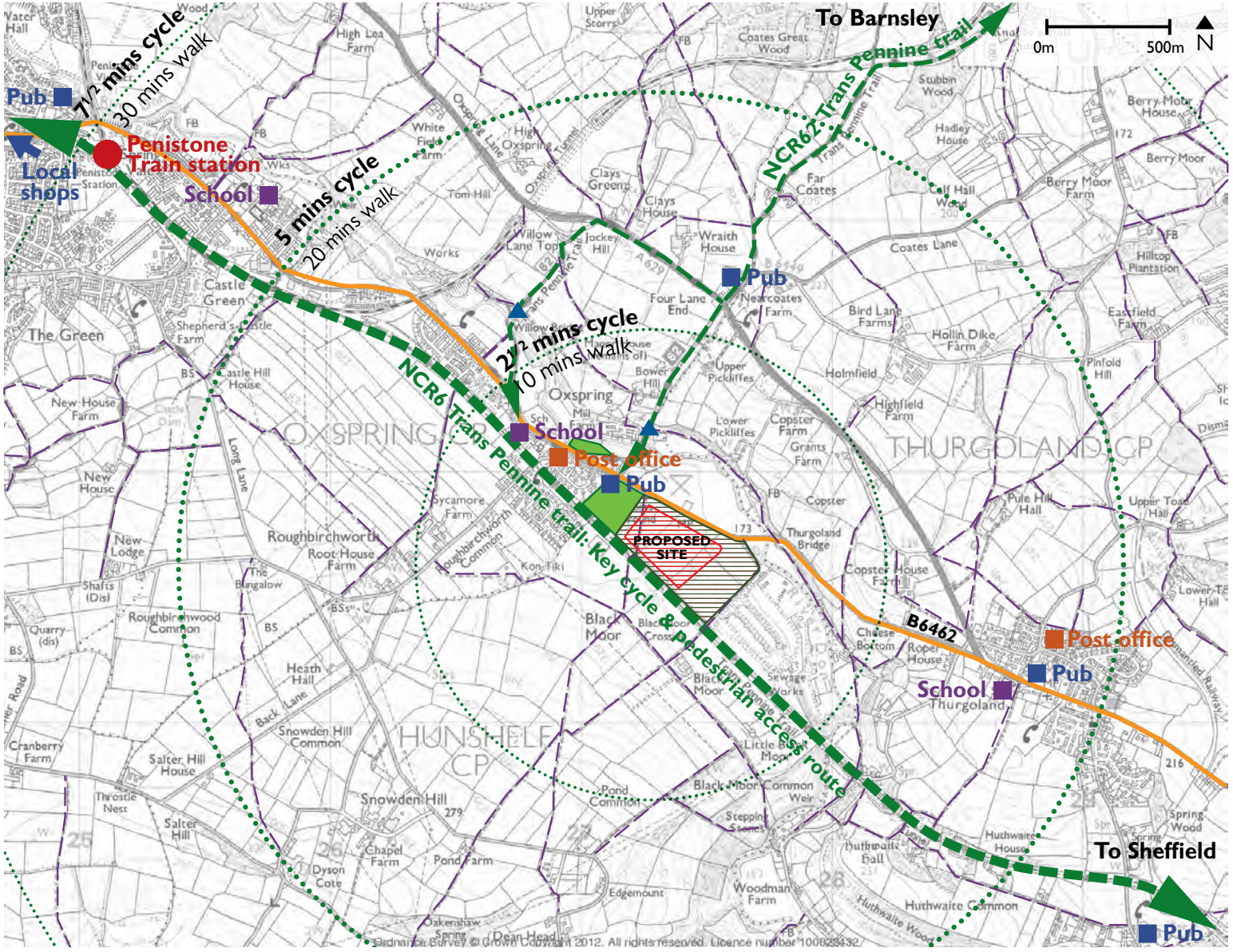


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Fig 2: Map showing connectivity to local services and key pedestrian and cycle routes in the area

The proposed site will have a positive impact on the area's connectivity and facilities including:

- New connectivity to and from the site and Trans Pennine trail
- Direct connectivity to the B6462 from the site, drawing traffic along the main road route rather than through residential areas
- The local community will benefit from access to improved recreational facilities, including a sports/ community centre and improved sports grounds, play area, and new recreational opportunities through the proposed woodland area adjacent to the southeast site boundary.

# Viewpoint 4 analysis

## Existing screening features

The B6462 road currently runs adjacent to the northeastern boundary of the site. There is an existing dry stone wall which is in a poor state of repair.

## Proposed screening features

The existing network of dry stone walls will be repaired and restored. A proposed buffer zone of shrub and tree planting will screen the road from views toward the proposed development. The roadside approach will be further improved with a *'field margin'* approach (as identified in the Barnsley Biodiversity Action Plan) along the grass verge adjacent to the roadside.

The view will be improved with trees and shrubs lining the approach to Oxspring village. Repaired dry stone walls and field boundary strip will represent an net improvement in the overall quality of experience along the approach/ exit from/ to the southeast.

Above: *'Field margin'* planting as shown in the Barnsley Biodiversity action plan

Fig 12: VIEWPOINT 4 (existing)

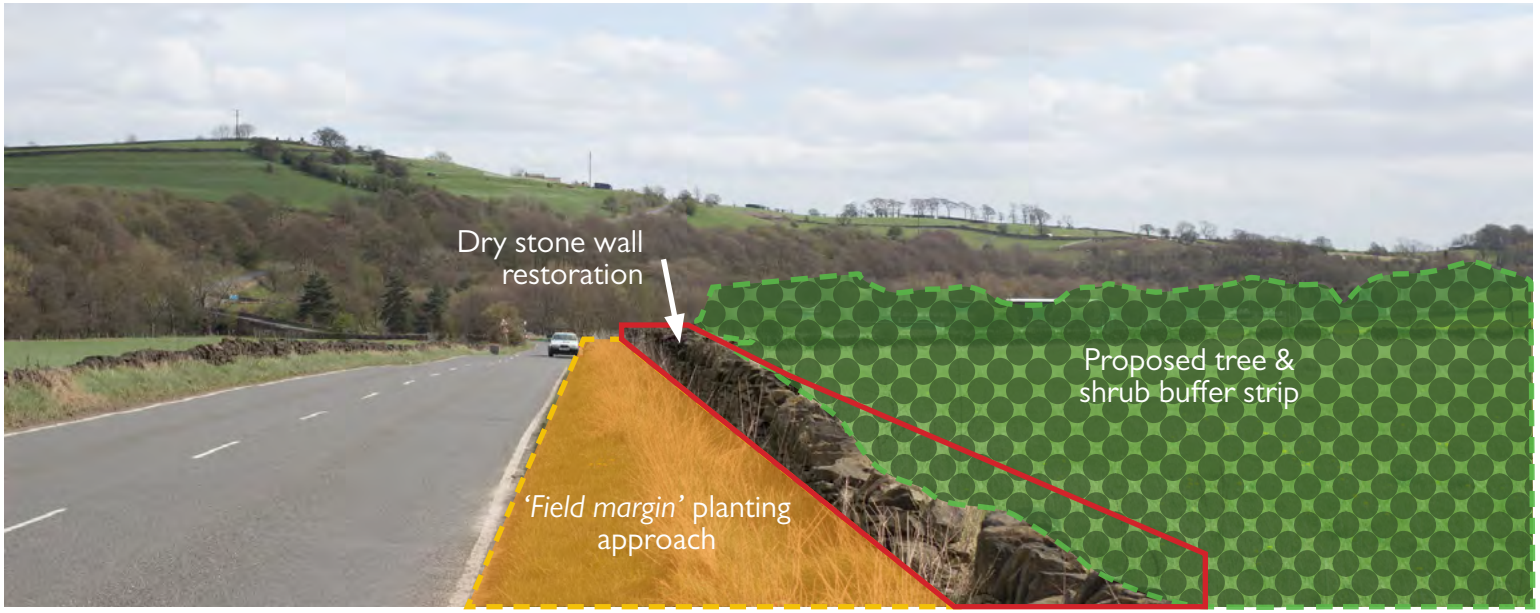


Fig 13: VIEWPOINT 4 (proposed) with approximate mitigation and restoration areas

Landscape Architects ■ Urban Designers ■ Ecologists ■ Horticulturists

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