

Development Control Committee
Meeting to be held on 9th July 2014

Electoral Division affected:
Lancaster Rural East,
Morecambe North, Morecambe
South

Lancaster City: Application number. DCO HEYSHAM M6 02
Application to vary the scheme of landscaping and ecology approved under requirements 5 - 1 and 5 - 3 of the Development Consent Order for the construction of the Heysham to M6 Link, Lancaster.

Contact for further information:
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Executive Summary

Application - Application to vary the scheme of landscaping and ecology approved under requirements 5 - 1 and 5 - 3 of the Development Consent Order for the construction of the Heysham to M6 Link, Lancaster.

Recommendation – Summary

That the approved scheme of landscaping be varied as set out in the amended planting schedule accompanying the application.

Applicant's Proposal

Permission is sought to vary the schemes of tree and shrub planting which have been approved as part of the requirements of the Development Consent Order authorising the construction of the Heysham to M6 Link road.

It is proposed to increase the spacings of individual trees and shrubs that are to be planted as part of the landscaping proposals for the new highway. The spacings for trees within the proposed native woodland planting areas would be increased from 1.2m to 1.9m. Within the semi native planting areas it is proposed that the spacing would be increased from 1.2m to 1.4m. The spacings of woodland edge planting is proposed to be increased from 0.5m to 2m and the spacings in the scrub habitat are proposed to be increased from 1.0m to 1.4m.

Description and Location of Site

The Heysham to M6 link is a current highway construction scheme which runs to the north of Lancaster between junction 34 of the M6 and the junction of the A589 and A683 between Lancaster and Morecambe.

Background

A Development Consent Order authorising the construction of the Heysham to M6 Link was made by the Secretary of State in March 2013.

Various schemes of details including those relating to the landscaping of the road were approved by the Development Control Committee on 17th April 2013.

Construction works on the road scheme commenced in January 2014.

Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Paragraph 58 of the NPPF is relevant with regards to the need for good design and appropriate landscaping.

Lancaster City Core Strategy

Policy SC1 Sustainable Development
Policy E1 Environmental Capital

Consultations

LCC Specialist Advisor - Ecology - Considers that the existing proposed planting density is too high which would result in poor establishment, and require increased management to achieve the desired end point. The proposals are acceptable.

Advice

A Development Consent order for the construction of the Heysham to M6 link road scheme was made by the Secretary of State in March 2013. The Order contained two requirements relating to landscaping of the road:-

5(1) No part of the authorised development is to commence until a written landscape and ecology management plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the relevant planning authority.

5(3) The approved landscape and ecology plan must be implemented in its entirety unless otherwise agreed in writing by the relevant planning authority

The landscape and ecology management plan was approved by the Development Control Committee at its meeting on 17th April 2013.

The approved landscape and ecology management plan contains provision for the planting of a considerable number of woodland and shrub areas designed to ensure

comprehensive landscaping of the new highway. The approved plan contains a planting specification with spacings of individual plants within different types of planting blocks. However, the landscaping plan has been reviewed and the planting densities in the approved plan are now considered to be too high which would result in management issues prejudicing the overall quality of the woodland and shrub areas.

It is important to plant trees at sufficient densities to guard against failure which would compromise the screening / landscaping effect of the plantations. However, the trees and shrubs that would be planted as part of the road scheme would be planted into ground with generally good soil conditions and therefore a high failure rate is not expected. Planting at too high a density would produce crowded plantations with tall, spindly tree specimens which would need extensive thinning at a later date as they become established. It is therefore considered appropriate to reduce the planting densities to those levels now proposed. This would reduce management requirements and still produce healthy planting belts which would provide landscape and ecological benefits and would comply with the requirements of the NPPF and Lancaster Core Strategy.

In view of the scale, location and nature of the proposal, it is considered that no Convention Rights set out in the Human Rights Act 1998 would be affected.

Recommendation

That the landscape and ecology management plan approved under Requirement 5(1) of the Development Consent Order for the Heysham to M6 Link be varied in accordance with the revised planting schedule ref 11063-3000-RevC2.

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 List of Background Papers

Paper	Date	Contact/Directorate/Ext
DCO Heysham M6 O2	23/4/2014	Jonathan Haine/Environment/534130

Reason for Inclusion in Part II, if appropriate

N/A