

Cabinet

Meeting to be held on Thursday 6 October 2016

Report of the Director of Programmes and Project Management

Electoral Divisions affected:
Heysham; Lancaster Central;
Lancaster East; Lancaster Rural
East; Lancaster Rural North;
Lancaster South East;
Morecambe North; Morecambe
South; Morecambe West;
Skerton

Approval of the District of Lancaster Highways and Transport Masterplan for Publication

(Appendices 'A', 'B', and 'C' refer)

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Executive Summary

In order to determine its future transport planning and investment priorities, and provide a sound and defensible basis for decisions affecting development across Lancashire, the County Council has embarked on an ambitious programme to put in place highways and transport masterplans to cover the county.

The District of Lancaster Highways and Transport Masterplan is presented at Appendix A for approval.

A public consultation exercise for the draft District of Lancaster Highways and Transport Masterplan ran for six weeks in Spring 2015. The response to the consultation exercise has largely endorsed the county council's preferred option to improve and extend the existing transport network. This approach will see projects already programmed completed, the obligations under the development consent order for the Heysham to M6 link road fulfilled and a wider programme of sustainable transport measures and improvements delivered.

Based on the evidence we have assembled and presented in the first part of the Masterplan, and informed by the comments received to consultation, the Masterplan presents a vision and programme of activity to deliver the objectives set out in the county council's local transport plan and at the same time support the growth ambitions and development expectations of key partners such as the Lancashire Enterprise Partnership and Lancaster City Council.

At its heart, the transport vision presented in the Masterplan sets out to support Lancaster as an exemplar of how a 'green' district can also be an outstanding and sustainable success in attracting and supporting growth and development.

This is deemed to be a Key Decision and the provisions of Standing Order No 25 have been complied with.

Recommendation

The Cabinet is asked to approve the publication of the District of Lancaster Highways and Transport Master Plan, presented at Appendix 'A'.

Background and Advice

As the local transport and highway authority for Lancashire, the County Council is responsible for the preparation of a local transport plan (LTP) that sets out a strategy and priorities for transport and travel in the area and a delivery programme for transport improvements, sustainable travel, road safety and maintenance.

In order to determine its future transport planning and investment priorities, and provide a sound and defensible basis for decisions affecting development across Lancashire, the County Council has embarked on an ambitious programme to put in place highways and transport masterplans to cover the county.

The District of Lancaster Highways and Transport Masterplan is presented at Appendix A for approval.

The master planning exercise identifies problems, gaps and opportunities on the highways and public transport systems serving Lancashire and, importantly, how they impact on the County's economy. These master plans will form the transport evidence base for a much more pro-active role for the County Council in forward planning, and the improvements they identify will be a key influence on future patterns of development, at a strategic and local level, set out in local plans covering Lancashire.

Each Masterplan, supported by its evidence base and public consultation, should form an integral part of the evidence base to development plans. At the detailed planning stage, the Masterplan will be a material planning consideration in determining planning applications in its area.

Masterplans will also form the basis for the County Council's dealings with other transport infrastructure and service providers such as Highways England, Network Rail, train and bus operating companies and neighbouring local authorities.

A key driver for the District of Lancaster's economic development ambitions is the Lancashire Enterprise Partnership (LEP). With future funding allocations from central government being increasingly devolved to the LEP, investment in major new infrastructure will need to demonstrate an economic justification. In practice, this

means a clear strategy towards bringing forward integrated development proposals for new development and economic growth alongside the infrastructure to support it.

A second driver comes from Lancashire's responsibility for public health activity that was previously carried out by the NHS. The council and the NHS will now work together to tackle some of the key issues that affect people's health and wellbeing, helping people to stay healthy and prevent illness. Transport and travel has a key role to play in tackling many of these issues.

The cost of delivering the package of measures identified in this masterplan, and those that will come out of the work proposed, cannot be borne entirely by public sector funding. The County Council will expect transport infrastructure identified in each Masterplan to attract developer contributions and, where applicable, Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) monies to be included in district Infrastructure Delivery Schedules ('Regulation 123 lists').

Lancaster Now

Lancaster today is both a district within Lancashire and the city at its heart. The remarkable history of the city, combined with the district's location on the edge of Morecambe Bay (a RAMSAR site, internationally significant for wildfowl) and the outstanding countryside of the Lune Valley and the Forest of Bowland, helped Lancaster's economy grow rapidly in the years before 2008.

With a population of over 141,000 in 2014, the local economy now employs around 56,000. Key employment sectors include the service and knowledge-based industries, education, energy and health, with growth sectors in the low carbon economy, environmental technologies, creative and digital industries, and tourism.

Current highways and transport issues across the district include:

- Congestion in Lancaster city centre (especially around the gyratory system), Galgate and Carnforth;
- Delays to public transport, especially in Lancaster city centre;
- Barriers to pedestrian and cycle movement in Lancaster and Morecambe;
- Road Safety concerns for pedestrians and cyclists;
- Road safety concerns for children and young people;
- Environmental issues, especially relating to air quality;
- Rail connections are not as good as they should be;
- Ultra-Low Emission Vehicles are not well catered for; and
- Rural residents and businesses struggle without cars.

Looking to the future

Completion of the Heysham to M6 Link Road (the Bay Gateway) is one of the largest road construction projects by a local authority in England. At a cost of £128.62 million, the link will open to traffic later this month and directly connect the Heysham and Morecambe peninsula to a reconfigured Junction 34 of the M6. The link road

will fundamentally change traffic patterns, with huge opportunities for how we can realise our ambitions for transport and travel in the district.

The future development of the district is being shaped by policies and strategies being put in place now. These plans allow us to understand how economic development will be promoted and how public health will be improved.

A key objective of the LEP's Lancashire Growth Deal agreed with the Government in July 2014 is to maximise the value of the 'Arc of Prosperity' that sweeps across Lancashire linking key economic assets, high value business clusters, centres of research and training excellence and new housing growth opportunities. The 'Arc' encapsulates Lancaster district as a major location for economic and housing growth, supported by its university, city centre, and the prospect of further growth as an energy centre and port serving Lancashire and the wider North.

How land is used is a vital factor in how an area's economy and people develop. The key document that sets out how land-use and development pressures will be planned for, the Local Plan, is currently being reviewed by Lancaster City Council. Evidence produced for the review shows an objectively assessed need for 13,000 to 14,000 new homes by 2031, supporting around 9,500 new jobs over the same period.

One of the options suggested to meet this housing requirement would involve an urban extension of Lancaster to the south of the city, including land already identified at Whinney Carr. Around 3,000 new homes could be built over the next fifteen years on a very large site that, in addition to the Whinney Carr site, would comprise land to the west of the A6 opposite Lancaster University.

Lancaster City Council is exploring the possibility of developing a 'Garden Village' as an alternative to a traditional urban extension that will incorporate the existing Lancaster University campus along with land to the west of A6 to create a high quality residential environment integrated with the University.

In addition, Lancaster University is in the process of refreshing its Campus Masterplan to accommodate the proposed Health Innovation Campus and potential development to the east of the M6. Development at the University is currently restricted due to the congested nature of the surrounding road network.

The potential scale of development in South Lancaster will see a significant increase in the number of journeys, both local and longer distance, generated by the new housing and University expansion. To enable and support these transformational proposals, we have concluded that major improvements to the existing transport infrastructure that serves South Lancaster will be necessary. However, we also consider that they present an opportunity to support delivery of our proposed 'once in a generation' improvements to Lancaster's transport network. Furthermore, providing attractive alternatives to the car for local journeys could make the traffic generated by the new houses and jobs in the area potentially far less than would otherwise be the case.

The Masterplan set out in Appendix 'A' therefore presents a programme of infrastructure delivery and further work, setting out a vision for travel and transport across the district that builds on the legacy of the completed link road.

The Masterplan sets out an ambitious programme of work to accommodate four development priorities for the district: These are:

- The district's expanding knowledge sector, focussed on Lancaster University, University of Cumbria and proposed Health Innovation Park
- A growing recognition and role for the city of Lancaster as a key cultural, leisure and service centre
- Regenerating and reinventing central Morecambe, and
- Developing the energy and logistics sector in and around the Port of Heysham.

The opening of the link road will deliver very substantial benefits by reducing levels of congestion on parts of the city's gyratory systems and provide direct, reliable connections to Morecambe and Heysham. But traffic reduction in the heart of the city centre was never the main aim of the completed link road, and there is more to do to deliver a better environment and sustainable travel options in the city centre.

We also know that planned future development in the district will place further pressures on the local transport network, with the risks of worsening congestion, road safety and air quality, bringing implications for the area's economic growth ambitions.

Consultations

The strategy and programme of activity presented in the Masterplan looks to improve and extend the existing transport network serving the District of Lancaster. The consultation on the Masterplan supported this option over others which proposed a minimal amount of change or to simply improve what is already there.

The public consultation on a draft of the Masterplan ran during Spring 2015 and drew responses from a range of local and national organisations, including the city council, councillors, parish councils and members of the public. Many of the comments and concerns raised provided detailed information as well as suggesting solutions to various transport issues across the local area. A consultation report which summarises these comments is presented at Appendix 'B'.

The comments made during the consultation generally fall under the following broad categories:

Lancaster City Centre

There was general agreement that a solution needs to be found to the congestion of the gyratory system which contributes to poor air quality, delayed journey times and an unattractive environment around the city for pedestrians and cyclists, visitors and residents.

There was concern, however, that too much restriction of traffic in the city centre would cause difficulties for businesses and residents. This was felt to be a particular problem for the area west of the centre around Luneside, but also for residents whose daily journeys to employment or education takes them between Morecambe/Heysham and the Universities/South Lancaster or vice versa. Some respondents were concerned that drivers would seek unsuitable alternative routes to avoid longer journeys using the M6. Several respondents suggested that an additional bridge over the River Lune would help to keep traffic moving.

South Lancaster

There were calls for changes to the transport network serving South Lancaster to ensure capacity is provided to cater for both increased road traffic and demand for safe, sustainable travel options generated by current and potential development of land at Lancaster University and to the south of the city.

Around two-thirds of respondents agreed with our proposals to make changes to Junction 33 of the M6, which would remove significant levels of traffic from the centre of Galgate. There was concern, however, that relocation of the junction would disadvantage residents of the area south of Galgate. A number of respondents acknowledged this issue and offered potential solutions.

Heysham to Lancaster Corridor

Measures to improve journey times into Lancaster were welcomed by respondents. There was support for a Rapid Transit service, but some concern about how this would impact on congestion on Morecambe Road.

Most respondents agreed on the need for better public transport connectivity around Morecambe Bay, with calls for electrification of the Morecambe line, as well as for improved passenger services and facilities for both rail and bus passengers. The need for safe cycling routes between Heysham and Lancaster was highlighted.

Morecambe

There was support for proposals to integrate the promenade with Morecambe town centre, and removing traffic from the promenade, but maintaining access for deliveries and servicing of businesses.

As well as the bus and rail issues mentioned above, parking for cars and coaches in Morecambe was a concern raised by some respondents.

Caton Road Gateway

Around two-thirds of respondents agreed with our intention to make Caton Road the principal gateway into the city for traffic from the M6, from both north and south.

Whilst a park and ride at J34 was welcomed it was emphasised that this must be priced realistically, offer regular services and incorporate bus priority measures along Caton Road.

Carnforth

Improvements to rail services to enhance links to Cumbria and Yorkshire were a major theme of responses, with calls for integration of bus, train and cycle facilities. There was also support for relief of congestion on the A6 and changes to the town centre to make the environment safer and more attractive to pedestrians. There were suggestions that the value of Carnforth's railway and canal heritage should be recognised, with greater emphasis on the Lancaster Canal as a traffic free route for pedestrians and cyclists.

Rural access

There was concern about the provision of bus services and connectivity with rail services in the rural areas. Sustainable travel within the Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty to visitor attractions was highlighted together with concerns about traffic using narrow rural roads. Support was given for improving links beyond the county boundaries, including promotion of the Bentham rail line.

Based on the evidence we have assembled and presented in the first part of the Masterplan, and informed by the comments received to consultation, we have identified and present in the Masterplan a vision and programme of activity to deliver the objectives set out in the county council's local transport plan and at the same time support the growth ambitions and development expectations of key partners (such as the LEP and Lancaster City Council) for the district of Lancaster.

At its heart, the transport vision presented in the Masterplan sets out to support Lancaster as an exemplar of how a 'green' district can also be an outstanding and sustainable success in attracting and supporting growth and development.

How do we make it happen?

This masterplan presents our ideas for making the city centre work more effectively for public transport users, pedestrians and cyclists in the longer term. It sets out an indicative timetable for the further work needed to shape our ideas, determine their benefits and decide our programme of delivery. However, in the short term the opening of the Heysham to M6 Link Road does allow us to start the process of changing how traffic is routed around the district.

Caton Road will become the principal **Gateway** into the city centre for traffic from the M6, from both north and south. This will allow us to capitalise on the benefits of the link road and introduce a heavily managed environment for traffic in the city centre.

At Junction 34, we are building a **Park and Ride/Cycle facility**. Catering for just over 600 cars, the Park and Ride will intercept traffic coming from the motorway and from both sides of the Lune Valley. This site will open shortly after the link road.

Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs) are a major cause of poor air quality and add to congestion. The link road will mean that HGVs no longer need to travel through the city centre or along Caton Road and across the Lune bridges. A **Movement**

Strategy for Heavy Goods Vehicles is being prepared and will pave the way for a series of Traffic Regulation Orders that will limit HGV movements. These will ensure that HGVs make full use of the link road and provide wider environmental benefits across the district.

We will develop the '**Lancaster Reach**' bus rapid transit concept, incorporating the Park and Ride service from M6 Junction 34 to Lancaster city centre to create a 'Y'-shaped network of two routes, one linking Heysham and Morecambe to South Lancaster via the city centre, the other linking M6 Junction 34 to Lancaster University. Both routes will operate between the city centre and Lancaster University via the Royal Lancaster Infirmary, presenting us with a genuine opportunity to create a sustainable transport corridor linking the city centre and Bailrigg Garden Village.

Before we make any substantial or long term changes to the **gyratory system**, we will need to be sure that those changes will work and not lead to unintended consequences. We will therefore need to do a detailed assessment and appraisal of potential options. Since the link road will fundamentally change the distribution of traffic across the district, we can only do this work once the link road is open and our approach to managing the Caton Road Gateway has been established.

Changing how the gyratory system works cannot be done without detailed consideration of a number of other factors. How public transport, including the proposed 'Lancaster Reach' bus rapid transit services, will operate through the city centre is one. How the city centre supports walking and cycling is another. We will bring all these elements together and look at them in detail in a **Lancaster City Movement Study**, which will give us a clear understanding of our options for transforming the city centre.

Our vision also includes the **reconfiguration of M6 Junction 33** to support the significant growth potential of South Lancaster including already committed developments such as the Health Innovation Campus at Lancaster University and housing at Whinney Carr and Bailrigg. We are investigating options to relocate part of the junction further to the north to enable residents and businesses in South Lancaster to access the motorway network without having to travel through either the city centre or Galgate. The south-facing slip roads would remain where they currently are, meaning that traffic travelling between the north of Wyre district and the M6 south would not need to pass through Galgate.

The **A6 corridor** linking South Lancaster with Lancaster city centre will become increasingly important as housing developments and the expansion of Lancaster University begin to take effect. Delivery of housing growth in South Lancaster will be more acceptable if we can demonstrate that a reconfigured M6 Junction 33 will be accompanied by significant investment in developing attractive, sustainable alternatives to the car, particularly for local journeys and for trips between South Lancaster and Lancaster city centre.

We will therefore produce and consult on a **Route Management Plan** for the A6 corridor between the city centre and South Lancaster, linked to further work on developing the 'Lancaster Reach' bus rapid transit services to create a genuine sustainable transport corridor. As a first stage, we intend to reconfigure the **A6/Hala**

Road junction to work better for vulnerable road users and provide dedicated cycling provision for the direct Lancaster to University/South Lancaster route along the A6.

In Morecambe, a **Place-Shaping** programme will focus on the highways and transport improvements needed to make the fundamental changes required to make the vision of the Morecambe Area Action Plan a reality.

The first strand of the programme is the seafront. The seafront is Morecambe's unique selling point and how the seafront works must reflect that. It must first and foremost be a place to enjoy the views, a place predominantly for people not vehicles. We will be working with the City Council and others to show how the promenade will be developed as a shared space

The second strand is the seafront links to the town centre, demonstrating how the town centre can be reinvigorated and become the heart of a reinvented Morecambe. We will therefore work with the City Council and other partners to develop and implement a programme of measures that will support the development of the seafront, including:

- Enhancing the town's natural gateways to give a fitting sense of arrival for all modes;
- Managing how vehicles reach the town centre, including how they are signed and where they park;
- Making parking provision fit for purpose, with high quality pedestrian and cycle links into the town centre and on to the seafront;
- Ensuring that coaches have high quality drop off/pick up points and that goods servicing is managed to ensure that it is efficient for business without compromising pedestrian routes and areas;
- Connecting the seafront and neighbouring areas to the town centre by clearly signed, attractive direct routes;
- Key routes for pedestrians and cyclists through high quality public spaces which look attractive and feel safe to be in, both during the day and in the evenings, with well-maintained and lit roads and footways that tie in to wider pedestrian and cycle routes; and
- Better facilities for public transport, both bus and rail, with proper interchange between the two and good links into the town centre and the seafront.

Morecambe's external connectivity is also vital to the place-shaping programme. Whilst road connections will be first class once the link road opens, other connections by rail, bus and cycling will not be. We will therefore commission a **Morecambe Bay Connectivity Study**, which will explore whether there is a strategic case for improvements to be made across all modes of sustainable transport around the coast of Morecambe Bay. Working with our partners, including Cumbria County Council, Lancaster City Council, Wyre Borough Council, South Lakeland District Council and Barrow Borough Council, we will seek to establish what evidence there is for improving connections around the Bay so that the whole

Bay area benefits. The study will look at what enhanced connectivity could achieve as well as options for delivering it.

In **Heysham**, we need to ensure that the local network fully supports the completed link road and allows vehicles, especially HGVs, to, where possible, access the link road without travelling through our communities. We will therefore undertake a review of the highway network around the South Heysham area and put in place a programme of measures to ensure that HGV traffic is using the network appropriately and can access the link road quickly and conveniently in order to reach the M6 regardless of whether intending to travel north or south.

Like so many small rural towns, **Carnforth** is becoming more reliant on the visitor economy, particularly given its proximity to so many outstanding natural landscapes. However, the centre of the town around the signalised A6/B6254 junction sees very heavy traffic. It has been declared an Air Quality Management Area and is not a pleasant environment for pedestrians or cyclists. We therefore propose to pursue a programme of pedestrian and traffic improvements to the centre of Carnforth, focusing on Market Street, with a view to creating a space which, whilst allowing traffic to flow, is far more user friendly for those on foot or on cycle. As well as making the shopping area itself more attractive, it will help to ensure that people feel comfortable travelling by more sustainable modes.

We recognise there is local support for the reinstatement of the main line platforms at Carnforth station to improve connectivity to the north. This issue, along with long standing aspirations to develop better linkages between Carnforth and both Barrow and Ulverston to benefit from the economic growth potential at the proposed Sellafield (Moorside) Nuclear Power Station and at the GlaxoSmithKline site in Ulverston, will be examined as part of the **Morecambe Bay Connectivity Study**.

Maintaining rural connections will require an integrated approach across all modes of transport to make rural travel as sustainable as possible in the future. One of the most important questions to address is what genuine long term alternatives to conventional public transport might look like. Providing public transport to sparse rural areas is a problem in many areas of the UK, so this work will assess whether solutions from elsewhere could be applicable in the rural areas of Lancaster District.

Our '**Lancaster Links**' work will develop an integrated multi-use/cycling network for the district to provide a comprehensive travel network for non-motorised travel. 'Lancaster Links' will be part of a wider **Cycling and Walking Delivery Plan for Lancashire**. We want the district to develop as an exemplar of active travel for the rest of county, demonstrating the widespread benefits that cycling and walking bring when they are the day to day choice for shorter journeys.

Finally, to complement our proposals for better public transport and cycling/multiuser networks, we want to make the district an exemplar of why **Ultra-Low Emission Vehicles** (ULEVs) must also be a core part of any local transport strategy. Whilst ULEVs may not reduce vehicle numbers, they will be vital in reducing the emissions from residual traffic in Lancaster city centre, currently an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA). ULEVs have the potential to be a major factor in improving air quality and making the city centre a healthier and more pleasant place for people. One

particular option we wish to pursue is the potential use of ULEVs on the 'Lancaster Reach' bus rapid transit services.

Implications:

This item has the following implications, as indicated:

Risk management

Approval of the masterplan will promote certainty as to the County Council's highways and transport programme for the District of Lancaster in the period to 2031. That certainty will increase the County Council's ability, as well as other transport providers, to secure investment and therefore to secure safe and efficient transport systems to serve the residents and businesses of the district of Lancaster, supporting public health and economic growth ambitions.

Financial

The programme of preliminary work identified in the Masterplan, to gather evidence and determine strategies towards delivery, in itself represent a substantial work activity and will necessitate a substantial financial commitment from future years' revenue budget spending in order to place the county council in the best position to secure capital funding and deliver the Masterplan. It is estimated that the preliminary work needed to understand and model Lancaster's transport network, as a basis for identifying and assessing options for its improvement, may amount to around £600,000 over two years between 2017/18 and 2018/19, together with necessary staffing resources to supervise this activity. Further work will be undertaken to inform the county council's revenue budget setting cycle.

Capital funding for design and scheme delivery is anticipated to come from a number of sources, details of which are presented in Appendix A of the masterplan document. The county council's contributions will be identified, prioritised and met in the first instance from the Integrated Transport Block grant from Government, alongside any financial commitments arising from the other Masterplans, together with project specific external funding.

No final commitment to the implementation of any project in this masterplan will be made until all required funding has been confirmed. Furthermore, the cost of delivering the package of measures identified in the masterplan and those that will emerge from the further work proposed cannot be borne entirely from public sector funding. The County Council has shown that, in areas where we can come to rely on the development industry to contribute funding to new infrastructure, investor confidence can increase alongside our ability to attract other sources of funding and in turn improve the prospects of delivery and delivering to earlier timescales. The speed and certainty with which we will be able to implement new infrastructure is therefore directly linked to securing developer contributions.

Legal

The recommendations contained within the masterplan are in compliance with relevant legislation; and will be procured in accordance with appropriate legislation and protocols, including, where relevant, European directives.

Environmental

An Environmental Report on the District of Lancaster Highways and Transport Masterplan is being produced. This report will set out the potential environmental and health impacts of the masterplan and provides background information as to where mitigation may be needed as schemes develop. No significant risks are identified. The report will also contain a Habitat Regulations Assessment.

Equality

An Equality Impact Assessment, which will be incorporated into the Environmental Report, is attached at Appendix 'C'.

List of Background Papers

Paper	Date	Contact/Tel
District of Lancaster Highways and Transport Masterplan Consultation Draft	March 2015	Marcus Hudson, Environment, (01772) 530696
Lancashire Local Transport Plan Strategy 2011-2021	May 2011	Marcus Hudson, Environment, (01772) 530696
Lancashire Local Transport Plan Implementation Plan for 2012/13-2014/15	August 2012	Marcus Hudson, Environment, (01772) 530696
Lancashire Strategic Economic Plan: A Growth Deal for the Arc of Prosperity	March 2014	Kathryn Molloy, Office of the Chief Executive (01772) 538790

Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate

N/A