

## Report to the Cabinet

Meeting to be held on Thursday, 4 February 2021

### Report of the Head of Service - Planning and Environment

#### Part I

Electoral Division affected:  
Lancaster Central; Lancaster  
Rural East; Lancaster South  
East; Lancaster East

### M6 Junction 33 Reconfiguration with Link Road and Lancaster City Movement and Public Realm Strategy

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

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#### Executive Summary

Approval is sought to take forward the preferred option for the M6 Junction 33 Reconfiguration with Link Road and the three options for the Lancaster City Centre Movement and Public Realm Strategy.

A six week public consultation was held on the M6 Junction 33 Reconfiguration with Link Road Route Options to help identify the best option considering environmental constraints, highway engineering, traffic modelling and public opinion. The public consultation also considered the Lancaster City Centre Movement and Public Realm Strategy Route Options and this report identifies three options to be taken forward for further analysis.

The consultation received 598 responses. A consultation report and preferred options report presented at Appendices 'A' and 'B' compiles and summarises the comments received to the M6 Junction 33 Link Road and provides a response to the matters raised. A separate consultation report presented at Appendix 'D' compiles and summarises the comments received to the Lancaster City Centre Movement and Public Realm Strategy and similarly responds to these.

This is deemed to be a Key Decision and the provisions of Standing Order C19 have been complied with.

#### Recommendation

Cabinet is asked to approve:

- i) The preferred option for the M6 Junction 33 Reconfiguration with Link

	Road.
ii)	Subject to approval of recommendation i) set out above, the route, as shown on Appendix 'C', be approved and adopted as the route for the M6 Junction 33 Reconfiguration with Link Road.
iii)	The proposed three options for the Lancaster City Centre Movement and Public Realm Strategy for the purpose of further analysis and consultation.

## **Background and Advice**

### M6 Junction 33 Reconfiguration with Link Road

The Lancaster Local Plan sets out the need for a large amount of housing in South Lancaster. It is expected that in excess of 3,500 new homes could be built on land to the west of the A6, with 1,655 new homes during this plan period and the remainder to follow through future plan periods. The Lancaster Local Plan identifies a broad area for improvement works to the M6 to take place in support of the proposed new housing development and Bailrigg Garden Village.

The District of Lancaster Highway and Transport Masterplan (October 2016) identified the need for the reconfiguration of the M6 Junction 33 with Link Road to accommodate the development aspirations to the south of Lancaster since confirmed as the Lancaster South Broad Location for Growth in the recently adopted Lancaster Local Plan.

The M6 Junction 33 Reconfiguration with Link Road aims to assist in:

- creating a highway connection between the M6, A6 and proposed housing areas to support growth (over 3,500 homes at Bailrigg Garden Village and other housing development may flow from the new infrastructure)
- improve M6 Junction 33
- easing congestion which occurs in the centre of Galgate village
- the expansion of the University
- reducing traffic on the A6
- removing the Air Quality Management Area in Galgate by reducing traffic

A series of six route options to the east and west of, and central to, the M6/A6 corridor, were developed and drawn up to evaluate environmental, engineering and traffic impacts, and public opinion, and were published as part of a public consultation exercise during autumn 2020. Local publicity and mail drops were used to publicise the information that, for understandable reasons, has focussed on online content. Members of the public and other stakeholders were invited to identify their preferred option(s) and this information and other comments have been analysed and collated in the accompanying reports (Appendices 'A' and 'B' refer). The public's preference recorded through this consultation exercise was 'Central 1', which was identified as the preference of 176 respondents. In order of preference, this choice was followed by route option 'Central 2' which was preferred by 48 respondents. Some respondents did not pick a preferred option (131 respondents). The

consultation also asked if there was support to a second option, should the first not be suitable. A total of 59 respondents stated they would prefer Central 2 as their second option, closely followed by Central 1 with 34 respondents choosing this option.

Assessment of the route options based on their impact on the environment, engineering feasibility and their traffic performance concluded the preferred route, that offering the best balance between most benefit and least impact, as Central 1. Thus from an initial technical evaluation, and public and stakeholder consultation, both indicate a preference for the Central 1 route option.

The Central 1 would provide a link road, which closely follows the western boundary of the M6 motorway between the motorway and the villages of Ellel and Galgate. The route would join with Hazelrigg Lane on the Galgate/university side of the motorway. The route includes the improvement of Hazelrigg Lane to approach the Bailrigg Garden Village via the A6 junction with an underpass under the West Coast Main Line railway. The route would include reconfiguration of Junction 33 this would involve closing the southbound 'off' slipway and the northbound 'on' slipway and relocating the slipways to a location at the south east boundary of Lancaster University and to terminate at Hazelrigg Lane.

#### Lancaster City Centre Movement and Public Realm Strategy

The aim of the Lancaster City Centre Movement and Public Realm Strategy is to build upon and realise the vision for Lancaster city centre as outlined in the District of Lancaster Highway and Transport Masterplan (2016) and meet the requirement set out in the Bay Gateway Development Consent Order (DCO) to implement an *"Action plan [that] must aim to prevent road traffic growth within the central Lancaster area increasing to predicted "do minimum" levels between the opening and design years of the link road (thereby negating planned relief)"*.

Public and stakeholder consultation on a series of eight options (with three of these further sub-divided into sub-options) for use of the city centre's gyratory system was undertaken during autumn 2020, accompanied by the publication of a strategy document entitled 'Lancaster City Centre Movement and Public Realm Strategy - Route Options Report'. The outcome of the consultation saw a preference expressed for three options. The three shortlisted options then that are proposed to be the subject of further data collection and analysis, including traffic and air quality assessments, are Route 4 *Sustainable Travel Corridor East* (the preference of 111 respondents), Route 8a *City Centre Clean Air Zone* (109 preferences) and Route 6a *No through City Centre Traffic* (108 preferences).

These represent a good spread in terms of the degree of intervention that could be taken to manage traffic levels in the city centre, and encourage and prioritise active and sustainable travel modes. Further details of these options is presented in the Route Options Report referred to above. To summarise, the three options to be investigated would mean:

#### Route 4 Sustainable Travel Corridor East

This option splits the gyratory in two; two way traffic for all vehicular traffic would be allowed on the western arm of the gyratory, with the eastern arm prioritised for sustainable travel only, although service vehicles and some limited local access would be provided.

#### Route 8a City Centre Clean Air Zone

In this option the city centre would become a Clean Air Zone (CAZ). All vehicular traffic travelling through the city centre would be subject to a £12 charge except for exemptions. Under this route option the western arm of the gyratory would be used for vehicular traffic utilising the clean air zone with the eastern arm used as a sustainable travel corridor.

#### Route 6a No through City Centre Traffic

This option would limit through traffic using the city centre. The eastern arm of the gyratory would be prioritised for sustainable travel with the western arm allowing two way traffic for access with a section at China Street fully pedestrianised.

With the Cabinet's approval, these three options will be taken forward for detailed analysis and will inform a consultation on a preferred option (representing one of these or a 'hybrid' option) which is anticipated to be held in late summer 2021.

### **Consultations**

A six week consultation on M6 Junction 33 Reconfiguration with Link Road Route Options and the Lancaster City Centre Movement and Public Realm Strategy Route Options Report was carried out between 26 October and 8 December 2020. Views were sought from county council and city council members, local and national stakeholders, parish councils and members of the public.

A virtual exhibition space outlining proposals for both the M6 Junction 33 Reconfiguration with Link Road Route Options and Lancaster City Centre Movement and Public Realm Strategy Route Options Report was developed. This process and the visual aids it used sought to replicate a physical consultation through a virtual space. Presentation boards summarised the key aspects of both consultations and the interactive nature of the virtual space meant that links could be provided to the plans and documents, which included artist impressions and computer generated visualisations. An online chat facility was active with staff available to answer queries in real time during office hours and email contacts were provided for any additional questions.

In addition to the online consultation, additional briefings and question and answer sessions were also provided on request.

594 responses were received during the consultation. The consultation reports are attached at Appendices 'A', 'B' and 'D'.

**Implications:**

This item has the following implications, as indicated:

**Risk management**

If the recommendations are not approved, there is the risk that development will take place along the route making the future construction of the road either more difficult or impossible.

This would also result in uncertainty and delay on progressing statutory planning and land assembly procedures and in turn construction of the road scheme.

**Financial, Legal, Property**

There are financial implications in relation to the protection of the M6 Junction 33 Reconfiguration with Link Road Central 1 route option. A small number of properties are directly affected by the route. Under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, the authority may receive claims relating to blight.

Funding for the whole scheme including any potential costs associated with blight will be funded through the Housing Infrastructure Fund, including local contributions and cash flow funding provided by the county council. Developments locally including those enabled by the new infrastructure will repay some of the costs and the necessary agreements and mechanisms to achieve that are being considered. These financial arrangements were presented previously to Cabinet in January 2021.

A further report on this agenda will seek approval for the next steps, in particular possible land acquisition by agreement and work under statutory procedures, to be done to bring forward the scheme.

**List of Background Papers**

None

Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate

N/A