

Report to the Cabinet

Meeting to be held on Thursday, 2 February 2023

Report of the Director of Growth, Environment and Planning

Part I

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

Corporate Priorities:
Supporting economic growth;

South Lancaster to M6 Road Scheme: Link Road and Park and Ride Facility

(Appendices 'A' and 'B' refer)

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Brief Summary

Approval is sought to take forward the South Lancaster to M6 Road Scheme by approving an altered route of the Link Road, removal of a reconfigured M6 Junction 33 (specifically removal of new north facing slip roads) and an alternative site for a Park and Ride facility. This approval would also provide for acquisition of rights, interests and enabling arrangements in respect of land for this scheme, and also preparatory work for the use of compulsory purchase powers for the same.

This alteration reflects the findings of environmental surveys and investigations during 2022. A formal decision is necessary in advance of 'pre-application' public consultation on this altered scheme before the planning application is submitted later this year.

Earlier decisions made by Cabinet in relation to this scheme, in January and February 2021, and October 2021, are referred to within this report.

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

Recommendation

Cabinet is asked to:

- (i) Approve the provision of the altered Link Road (Appendix 'A') and alternative site for a Park and Ride facility (Appendix 'B').
- (ii) Agree that, subject to approval of recommendation (i) set out above, the route, as shown on Appendix 'A', be approved and adopted as the route of the Link Road.
- (iii) Approve the use of the county council's powers of Compulsory Purchase contained in the Highways Act 1980, and all and any other enabling legislation, to acquire all the necessary land and rights for the construction/improvement and future maintenance for the South Lancaster to M6 Road Scheme (including the new Link Road, the Spine Road serving a Bailrigg Garden Village and a Hazelrigg Lane Park and Ride facility).
- (iv) Authorise both the preparation of Compulsory Purchase and Side Road Orders for the South Lancaster to M6 Road Scheme and other appropriate Notices, Orders and Schemes under the relevant statutes and the taking of all other procedural steps in connection with the making of the Orders and Schemes, prior to approval and sealing and making of the formal Orders and Schemes.
- (v) Approve the acquisition by agreement in advance of Compulsory Purchase powers of all rights, interests, and enabling arrangements to facilitate the South Lancaster to M6 Road Scheme.

Detail

Following the submission of a Housing Infrastructure Fund application (HIF bid) for the £261m South Lancaster Growth Catalyst (herein referred to as 'the Catalyst') in March 2019, the Government confirmed a £140m allocation to the Catalyst in the spring Budget in March 2020. The Catalyst will create capacity for at least 9,185 homes (this figure includes the new student homes) in South Lancaster, as well as 3,000 new jobs expected on the University campus by 2027 as well as delivering wider benefits. The scheme will also open up the potential for further growth and will develop Lancaster's public transport and active travel networks and deliver a wide range of new, high quality housing.

The Catalyst was the subject of a report to the meeting of the Cabinet in January 2021. That report explained the background to the Catalyst Programme and presented details of the integrated package of highway and transportation proposals and the context to this package. The Cabinet resolved to approve the report.

The 'South Lancaster to M6 Road Scheme' was the subject of a report to the meeting of the Cabinet in February 2021. That report described the result of public consultation through which a 'Central 1' route option attracted most public support for



the Junction 33 Link Road. The Cabinet resolved to approve and adopt the preferred route in February 2021.

The 'Spine Road to serve Bailrigg Garden Village; and a site for a Park and Ride facility' was subject of a report to the meeting of the Cabinet in October 2021. That report described how the Spine Road had evolved with collaboration with Lancaster City Council and their appointed consultant. The Cabinet resolved to approve and adopt the Spine Road. The report described the location of the Park and Ride facility. The Cabinet resolved to approve the site for the Park and Ride facility. Consequently, approval of the use of powers and preparation of Compulsory Purchase and Side Road Orders was approved by Cabinet in October 2021.

Link Road

Environmental surveys, traffic modelling and engineering design have been progressing to inform the detailed design of this scheme. With the collection of this environmental information an issue has emerged that the woodland beside the M6 has ancient woodland properties. This is new information from field surveys that was not available at the time of the initial alignment, as data compiled nationally for ancient woodland does not collate data for ancient woodland under 5 hectares in size. A range of options were considered to avoid impact to this woodland. Updates to traffic modelling have enabled revised route alignment options to be considered. Assessment of the alignment options based on their impact on the environment, their engineering feasibility and traffic performance has determined the alteration to the preferred route approved by the Cabinet in February 2021, and presented at Appendix 'A', to offer the best balance between most benefit and least impact.

The altered alignment is considered acceptable in environmental, engineering and traffic terms and presents a secondary benefit of a reduced cost to the scheme in a time of increased construction costs.

The Link Road will now connect to the A6 roundabout and bridge over the West Coast Main Line before continuing along the western boundary of the M6 connecting with Hazelrigg Lane. This will negate a requirement for new north facing slip roads for M6 Junction 33 and avoid impact on ancient woodland.

Park and Ride Facility

Opportunities presented by changes to the alignment of the Link Road have opened up the potential for a Park and Ride facility to be located further east along Hazelrigg Lane in closer proximity to the motorway, enhancing its attraction. The site would be served by a new highway access junction on the Link Road for all vehicles and a dedicated bus only access supporting bus priority.

The Park and Ride facility is to be situated to the south of Hazelrigg Lane, west of the Link Road. The site would have the capacity for approximately 500 vehicles. A bus service would run between the Park and Ride and Lancaster city centre via the A6 and Bailrigg Garden Village. The Park and Ride would alleviate the traffic that is experienced in Lancaster City Centre by providing a sustainable transport route for residents of Bailrigg Garden Village, the local villages of Ellel and Galgate, university students and commuters.



Consultations

The M6 Junction 33 Reconfiguration with Link Road has been the subject of public consultation as part of the 'Transforming Lancashire Transport' options published in autumn 2020. That consultation and the consequent Cabinet approval in February 2021, established the preferred route. The alignment presented at Appendix 'A' works to the same preferred route.

Discussions have been held with relevant stakeholders: Natural England, National Highways, Network Rail on the Link Road, and bus operators and Lancaster City Council on the Park and Ride facility.

The South Lancaster to M6 Road Scheme will be subject to a 'pre-application' public consultation in March 2023.

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 scheme 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 scheme when the appropriate time is reached.

If the recommendations are not approved, there is a risk that the scheme does not achieve planning permission due to impact to the ancient woodland.

The recommended approach also allows for a comprehensive and holistic approach to be taken to infrastructure development in South Lancaster; both in terms of design and the assessment of the proposed works.

Should the recommendations in this report be approved, preparatory work can proceed in accordance with relevant regulations and procedures and documents be produced in order to maintain the delivery programme for this scheme. Furthermore, negotiations to purchase land by agreement can be progressed.

Financial

The financial model and principles to the South Lancaster Growth Catalyst Programme were considered by Cabinet at its meeting in January 2021. The activities set out above will be funded through the Programme, representing a combination of grant from the Homes England Housing Infrastructure, local authority contributions, including £4.6m from Lancashire County Council, and a cash flow facility. The remainder of the funding in the overall programme is from developer contributions and other grant income to provide the whole package of measures expected in the full programme.



Human Rights

Every person has the right to peaceful enjoyment of his or her possessions under Article 1 of the First Protocol on Human Rights and no one shall be deprived of his possessions except when there is a compelling case in the public interest. If there is to be an interference with this right, this must be done as provided for by the law and the interference must strike a fair balance between the interests of the community and the protection of the rights of the individual. The scheme's design seeks to minimise the interference necessary and, although a balance is required to be achieved, the county council believes that the greater good is in promoting the scheme for the benefit of the people of Lancaster and the wider public, and that this outweighs the harm caused by the use of powers of compulsory acquisition to acquire third party land and rights for the scheme. The county council will also need to make this case when making the proposed Orders.

List of Background Papers

Paper	Date	Contact/Tel
None		
Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate		
N/A		

