

## **South Lancaster to M6 Road Scheme: Link Road and Park and Ride Facility Frequently Asked Questions**

### **What are the objectives of the scheme?**

The main purpose of the South Lancaster to M6 Road Scheme is to provide necessary transport infrastructure to support development of the South Lancaster Growth Area covered in policies SG1: Lancaster South Broad Location for Growth (Including Bailrigg Garden Village) and SG3: Infrastructure Delivery for Growth in South Lancaster of the Lancaster Local Plan: Strategic Policies and Land Allocation DPD.

This will also assist in improving traffic conditions by easing congestion which occurs in the centre of Galgate village, supporting the expansion of the University, reducing traffic on the A6, and removing the Air Quality Management Area in Galgate.

### **Why is the Park and Ride required?**

The Lancaster Local Plan and Lancaster City Centre Movement and Public Realm Strategy propose to introduce measures to encourage alternatives to the private car for accessing the city centre. The Park and Ride facility forms part of a wider package of measures to provide enhanced public transport links to encourage other travel choices and a shift away from the reliance on private vehicles, to reduce vehicles in the city centre, which would complement a reduction in City Centre parking provision.

The Park and Ride will intercept journeys to Lancaster from the motorway at Junction 33 and other journeys from the south reducing the number of private vehicles using the highway network in South Lancaster and the City Centre.

Travel surveys took place in May 2022 with residents in the local area and the general public in the city centre to inform the use of the Park and Ride Facility.

### **Has the impact of the scheme on the environment been considered and what assessments/report have been undertaken and can they be shared?**

The impact on the environment, and appropriate mitigation and compensation measures, is considered as part of the planning application.

Furthermore, the scheme is aiming to achieve 10% biodiversity net gain which will mean additional improvements to the natural habitat.

The alteration to the alignment is to avoid woodland and reduce the impact of the scheme.

An Environmental Impact Assessment is being carried out to inform this process.

As part of the Environmental Impact Assessment, we produced a scoping report which outlined the assessments we would undertake. This was submitted to the planning



authority in February 2022 (Application SCP/2022/0002) prompting a scoping opinion in July 2022. The areas to be covered by assessments are ecology, landscape, air quality, noise and vibration, soils and geology, water environment, climate change, health impact, traffic and transport, land use and accessibility and cumulative impacts.

We have undertaken field surveys and modelling and assessments are taking place to inform the final design for the planning application.

Lighting design will be to current standards and will consist of LED lanterns which will be shielded to ensure that light spill behind the column is minimised as much as possible. The lights will be dimmed during the night.

Carbon management, as well as water management, ecology and landscape treatment, biodiversity new gain and so on are all critical considerations in how we plan our infrastructure and the same is true for the more holistic view that the city council is taking in developing its proposals for south Lancaster's growth.

A pre-application public consultation will take place in the Spring with detailed plans of the alignment and landscaping. A planning application will be submitted in late summer 2023 at which point all assessments will have been finalised and reported, and this will provide the public and other stakeholders with the opportunity to access and consider this evidence accompanying the planning application. A statutory consultation will take place on the planning application when it is submitted.

### **What are the impacts to the public right of way network**

We are aware of the extent of the existing Public Rights of Way network within the vicinity of the scheme including the section of bridleway along Leach House Lane and onward connections along rural routes. We are committed to delivering a scheme that supports the needs of all users and ensures safe travel on the network.

Information on the temporary and permanent public right of way diversions will be shared at the public consultation in the Spring .

Hazelrigg Lane between the A6 Preston Lancaster Road and the M6 will experience traffic volume increases resulting from the scheme, which will markedly change the character of this section of the network. In contrast, traffic reductions along the A6 through Galgate and proposals to prevent through traffic on Highland Brow south of Leach House Lane may offer new opportunities for riding along low traffic routes.

Through engagement with the local community and The British Horse Society, we hope to mitigate impacts and maximise the opportunities the scheme can offer for horse riding.

### **Why have the public not been consulted?**

The plan-making process for the adopted Lancaster Local Plan provided several opportunities for the public to comment on the emerging proposals for the South Lancaster Growth Area, including a public examination of these proposals.



Production of the Lancaster Highways and Transport Masterplan also considered emerging ideas for development in south Lancaster and this Masterplan was published for public consultation.

More detailed route options for new road infrastructure to serve south Lancaster were published during 2020 as part of the county council's Transforming Lancaster Travel consultation.

The alteration to the preferred route option considered by the county council's Cabinet in February 2023 keeps to the same broad alignment for the preferred route option.

Prior to the county council submitting a planning application, there will be a pre-application public consultation in the Spring, which will provide local people with opportunities to help us to shape the plans and see more details on the proposals.

A statutory consultation will take place on the planning application when it is submitted later this year.

### **What are the plans for supporting local business?**

The county council, working with the city council and our contractor Costain, are committed to delivering social value as part of the scheme, and we're currently leading work to agree targets to hold the project, the partners and contractor to account. These targets will cover education and employment opportunities, upskilling and supporting the local supply chain and small and medium employers.

### **How are the impacts of flood risk from the scheme (alignment and park and ride) dealt with and how will significant environmental pollution, antifreeze, salt, oil, petrol and detritus of the Conder and other water course be avoided?**

The scheme is designed to required standards which include having capacity within the drainage pipes and chambers to not surcharge in a 1 in 5 year storm and capacity within the storage ponds to contain a 1 in 100 year storm event.

An allowance has been made for climate change of 50% additional capacity within the system.

The outfall rate from the storage ponds into existing watercourses is currently set to the greenfield runoff rate, essentially meaning that the drainage system for the new highway will allow water to drain into the watercourses at the same rate as if there was no development in place.

Drainage ponds and the overall design of the drainage system will collect particulate matter from the highway and prevent this entering watercourses. Ongoing discussions with the Environment Agency will determine if additional measures are required.



## **How will the Council explain and justify the incompatibility between the South Lancaster Road Scheme and the declared climate emergency?**

The Lancaster Local Plan has put in place clear ambitions in its policies to achieve well planned, sustainable and inclusive growth. Our approach to this road infrastructure will be to enable just that.

The scheme is part of the Lancaster Local Plan Climate Emergency Review of the Strategic Policies and Land Allocation DPD, the policies and their aims remain the same.

## **The Spine Road is not on the plan, why?**

The report presented to county council's Cabinet in February 2023 seeks to provide the authority with the means to progress more detailed survey and design work, and to continue environmental impact assessment and land assembly activity on this section of the Link Road alignment. The Spine Road was approved by Cabinet in October 2022.

## **Which routes will construction traffic take to initiate and complete the proposed scheme?**

Information on the permitted routes for construction traffic is being prepared and will be shared at the public consultation in the Spring.

## **Was further consideration given to the other strategic options?**

The alteration presented to the county council's Cabinet in February 2023 keeps to the same broad alignment for the preferred 'central' route option approved by the Cabinet in February 2021.

It is important to understand this distinction between the 'strategic' exercise undertaken to choose amongst the six route options in February 2021, and the relatively modest alteration to the preferred option that is the subject of this report.

In 2020 the county council assessed, consulted and concluded on six possible route options, each markedly different and each showing a broad alignment. The alignments were based on largely desk-based information available at that stage in the development of this scheme. The consultation exercise during 2020 and the decision taken by Cabinet in February 2021 were informed by engineering, environmental and traffic assessments as to their relative benefits and challenges.

The approval of this preferred route in February 2021 provided the authority with the means to progress more detailed survey and design work, commence environmental impact assessment and initiate land assembly activity. It is not uncommon, and is a beneficial and necessary part to a scheme's evolution, that alterations are made to the alignment to reflect new information as it's collected and assessed.

This should not trigger a reopening of the relative merits of the strategic options.



## **Why not reconsider the eastern options, these took the road further from homes in the village?**

The Eastern route options, alongside Western and Central Options, were considered through the public consultation in 2020. These Eastern options were the least preferred options of the 2020 public consultation with only 7% of respondents voting for Eastern 1 and 3% of respondents voting for Eastern 2 as their preferred route option.

The Eastern route options would not have reduced traffic through Galgate, which is one of the objectives of the scheme.

As well as a lack of local support, there were, and remain, engineering and environmental challenges to the Eastern options. The climbs on the two Eastern routes reach the maximum permissible under design standards and there is the possibility that HGVs would be dissuaded from using the Eastern route options and continue through Galgate.

The drainage on the preferred 'central' route option would be superior compared to the Eastern route options as there are convenient watercourses along the route, which could be used after drainage flows are attenuated.

It is also important to note that the Eastern route options fall within the setting to the Forest of Bowland AONB and at their closest are within c.800 metres of its boundary. As such, a new link road of this nature would likely have significant adverse landscape and visual effects on the area that forms part of the setting to the Forest of Bowland AONB and potentially to the designated area itself.

## **The Cabinet report and plans are difficult to understand**

The report to the county council's Cabinet in February 2023 seeks to provide the authority with the means to progress more detailed survey and design work, and to continue environmental impact assessment and land assembly activity on the new section of the Link Road alignment.

The two plans (Appendices to the Cabinet report) display the route recommended for approval and the boundary of the alternative location of the Park and Ride Facility.

This is not a pre-application consultation. This consultation will take place in the Spring with detailed plans of the alignment and landscaping. A planning application will be submitted in late summer 2023, at which point all assessments will have been finalised and reported, and this will provide the public and other stakeholders with the opportunity to access and consider this evidence accompanying the planning application.

A statutory consultation will take place on the planning application when it is submitted.



**Why was a recent plan, dated November 2022, released to only one resident of Chapel Lane in December 2022? Why is this plan radically different to the one now on the agenda for Lancashire County Council Cabinet?**

The design exercise for any scheme of this nature is guided and informed by the collection and assessment of an increasing evidence base of engineering, environmental and traffic surveys and investigations. As the design evolves towards a final scheme, it is to be expected that alterations will be made and some options will be considered and worked up in plan form before being discounted.

This scheme is no different and has undergone changes and may continue to for several months yet, including the potential to respond to the pre-application consultation process taking place in spring this year.

Design options are guided by evidence and inevitably there will be instances in which we will approach private owners to carry out surveys and investigations affecting their property (and this includes surveys extending beyond the footprint of the scheme).

There would be little benefit to publicising each and every detailed design option and design iteration as it would substantially lengthen the process and cause unnecessary concern and, as is the case in this instance, concern a design option that has since been discounted for technical evidential reasons, because it didn't provide the means to avoid impacting the area of ancient woodland.

**Has Network Rail been consulted about this new crossing over the WCML**

Discussions have been held with Network Rail on the new crossing of the WCML.

**Has there ever been any survey/reports done to support the claim that this road will reduce traffic on the A6 at Galgate?**

Traffic modelling used to simulate the highway network with the addition of the new Link Road and supportive traffic management along the A6 demonstrates a reduction in traffic on the A6 passing through Galgate resulting from the scheme. Full details will be contained with the planning application for the scheme and information will be available for the pre-application consultation in the spring.

**Have detailed studies been performed on traffic on the A6 since COVID occurred?**

Traffic surveys were carried out along the A6 through Galgate in October 2022

**What is the impact to the environment from the proposed housing in Bailrigg Garden Village?**

The housing in South Lancaster is part of the Lancaster Local Plan. Lancaster City Council has published an indicative master plan for the area which has considered its impact on the local environment including local flora and fauna and water management, and is currently preparing an Area Action Plan that will consider environmental impact in more detail.



Each development proposed in that area will have to demonstrate its environmental impact, and avoidance, mitigation and compensation measures, through the planning application process.

### **What is the cost of the scheme and who will fund this?**

The report to Cabinet in February 2023 explains that the government's Housing Infrastructure Fund award of £140 million is based on a total funding package priced of £261 million combining grant from Homes England's Housing Infrastructure Fund, 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.

The county council has appointed a contractor for this scheme and this early involvement will provide more cost certainty as the design progresses. There is no agreed target cost at this point in time, and this will be a matter for agreement between the county council and contractor at the time we contract for the construction works.

### **What is the number of jobs to be created at the university by the South Lancaster Growth Catalyst?**

The business case to the Housing Infrastructure Fund explained that the University is a key driver of the city's growth, employing 5,000 staff and bringing 5,000 new students to the city each year. The University is currently leading Lancaster's flagship development project, the £200m Health Innovation Campus. This will deliver new accommodation for the Health and Medicine Faculty, provide healthcare sector incubation space, and construct an 8,000m<sup>2</sup> clinical research centre and 18,000m<sup>2</sup> commercial floorspace. The project includes a £60m, 15-year business support programme and is expected to support the creation of 6,200 new jobs between 2018 and 2033.

The University itself is expanding rapidly and is looking to grow its intake by 20% from 13,000 students to 17,500 students by 2025. The population of Bailrigg campus is expected to grow by 700-800 staff and students a year over the next decade, with 4,000 new students and 3,000 new jobs expected on the University campus by 2027.

As the programme progresses and proposals are confirmed, these estimates of the benefits of the South Lancaster Growth Catalyst will be monitored and updated.

### **What is the number of houses earmarked for the scheme, numbers quoted vary between about 3,000 to more than 9,000 houses?**

The Lancaster Local Plan provides for residential development in the plan period 2011-2031. Its policies refer to the delivery of at least 3,500 new houses in the South Lancaster Growth Area, including Bailrigg Garden Village (Policy SG1) noting that this amount represents the allocated capacity for sites but not all this capacity will be built out within the Plan Period with a number of sites continuing to be built out beyond the plan period (Policy H1).



The South Lancaster Growth Catalyst provides for development in this location, however its benefits extend outside this geographic area and beyond this plan period. As such, it identifies a greater number of new houses reliant on its delivery.

### **Why does the Chapelside Drive Development not appear on some plans?**

The housing development of Chapelside Drive has been considered. At certain scales the Ordnance Survey background map does not show the new developments or developments under construction. Unfortunately, this is outside our control and until the Ordnance Survey update their map at that scale the development will not show. Please be assured we know the development is there. We can see the development at smaller scale background maps and have considered it in all our environmental assessments

It is also worth noting that to inform the consultee list and our assessments we use addresses that are registered with the Royal Mail, Chapelside Drive development is registered.

