

# **LANCASHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

## **CALLED IN PLANNING APPLICATION FOR PROPOSED HEYSHAM TO M6 LINK ROAD**

LAND TO THE NORTH OF LANCASTER BEGINNING AT THE END OF  
THE A683 HEYSHAM TO M6 LINK PHASE 1 AND RUNNING IN AN  
EASTERLY DIRECTION TO CONNECT WITH THE M6 AT JUNCTION  
34 OF THE M6

Planning Inspectorate reference:  
APP/Q2371/V/07/1200928 and  
APP/Q2371/V/07/1200929

LPA reference:  
01/05/1584

### **PROOF OF EVIDENCE - SUMMARY ANDREW DOBSON**

Head of Planning Services – Lancaster City Council

Lancaster City Council

June 2007

## **1. INTRODUCTION.**

1.1 I am Lancaster City Council's Head of Planning Services. I am a Chartered Town Planner and have 28 years practicing experience in Town Planning. Lancaster City Council supports the scheme and believes that this is consistent with its adopted Local Plan and the aspirations in the City Councils Community Strategy.

## **2. SPATIAL PLANNING JUSTIFICATION.**

2.1 A key strand in the City Council's LDF Core Strategy is to be a self sufficient and truly sustainable local economy. Easing movement between the urban areas, allowing growth in Lancaster and direct access to the M6 for employment sites on the Heysham peninsular and Heysham Port are key objectives.

## **3. COMPLIANCE WITH THE DEVELOPMENT PLAN.**

3.1 The Development Plan for the area comprises the North West Regional Spatial Strategy, The Joint Lancashire Structure Plan and the Lancaster District Local Plan.

3.2 Material considerations are the Draft Regional Spatial Strategy of January 2006 and the City Council's emerging Core Strategy for its Local Development Framework.

3.3 Having considered all the relevant policies in the Development Plan I am firmly of the opinion that the application is in compliance with its requirements.

#### **4. SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT BENEFITS EXPECTED FROM THE SCHEME.**

4.1 The Lancaster District Local Plan in paragraph 4.2.1 highlights two strategic purposes for the road: -

- a. To provide a direct link for Morecambe and Heysham traffic (particularly for port and tourism traffic) and assist the regeneration of the Lancaster and Morecambe area (particularly Heysham) and:
- b. To contribute as one of a number of measures, to solving the traffic problems of Lancaster, improving safety and environmental conditions there and enabling existing road space to be used more effectively to give priority to buses, cyclists and pedestrians.

4.2 In support of the planning application the County Council have produced the Lancaster and Morecambe Connectivity Strategy. The strategy includes a range of measures to improve public transport provision, to intercept inbound traffic into the network, and to influence modal shift in localised travel in line with the objectives in PPG 13.

4.3 If the measures proposed to be delivered in conjunction with the Heysham to M6 link road are brought into effect, the aspirations of Lancaster City Council in giving their support for the scheme will have been met, and, for the first time in decades a major step change can be made towards influencing travel choices.

**5. THE LOSS OF PLAYING FIELDS, ADEQUACY OF REPLACEMENTS AND THE ISSUES ARISING FROM NATIONAL POLICY GUIDANCE IN PPG 17.**

5.1 Lancaster and Morecambe College object to the link road proposals. Some 2.3 ha of the campus of Lancaster and Morecambe College will be taken to construct the link road. This corridor of land also bisects the collage campus.

5.2 PPG 17 requires that existing sports or open space facilities should generally be protected from redevelopment or replaced if lost. In Lancaster District there is a severe shortage of formal sports pitches. PPG 17 requires replacement by equal or better quality provision if there is no option but to loose the pitches. The County Council proposals do this and will not make the position in Lancaster District any worse.

5.3 The college says that loss of provision on site will hamper their growth as a sports college. It is my opinion that the effect of the link road on the playing field provision at the college is not as debilitating for the college as is claimed, and does not outweigh the wider public benefits arising from the road.

## **6. CONCLUSIONS**

- 6.1 The Inspector will consider a wealth of evidence to demonstrate how important the completion Heysham/ M6 link is to the future of Lancaster District. It has the potential to make a significant step change in the means by which strategic commercial traffic travels through Heysham Port between England and Ireland. It has the potential to have the same effect upon travel in and around the urban area of Lancaster and Morecambe. It is the means by which the delivery of Park and Ride facilities to Lancaster's disadvantaged historic core, can be realistically achieved, and it will provide certainty for the economic strategy of the district, that the employment potential of the currently isolated Heysham peninsula can be unlocked.
- 6.2 Failing to deliver the scheme will create a significant degree of uncertainty for Lancaster and Morecambe. The future for regenerating Morecambe/Heysham and delivering Lancaster as a higher order service and tourist destination will have to be reconsidered, without the link or the means to introduce the benefits arising from it. With the Heysham/M6 link featuring as key infrastructure to deliver the vision in the City Council's Community Strategy, LDF Core Strategy, and the Vision Boards Economic Vision I can only speculate that a considerable rewrite of these strategy documents will be necessary, with the uncertainty causing demonstrable harm to the districts investment potential in the region.