

**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  
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Sports Playing Field

June 2007

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 I am Elaine Demming. I am a fully qualified Chartered Landscape Architect with over 28 years' experience of working in the Public Sector. During my 8½ years with the County Council, I have worked on a wide range of schemes including the design and implementation of landscape and ecological mitigation works relating to County Council Highways and Highways Agency Trunk roads.
- 1.2 I have been involved with the Heysham M6 Link Road proposal since 2001 and have seen the evolution of the scheme through design and consultation processes to the selection of the route in September 2004. This further led to involvement in the production of the Environmental Statement for the route which included landscape and visual impact assessment.
- 1.3 More recently, I have supported the Development Control process in the capacity of Specialist Advisor (Landscape), which required an understanding and application of relevant landscape policies in relation to proposed development in the County.

## **2. SCOPE OF EVIDENCE**

- 2.1 In my evidence, I shall:
  - a. Describe the Planning Policy context in relation to the Landscape issues.
  - b. Refer to the description of the existing landscape in relation to County Council Landscape Character Types and Local Character Areas.

- c. Describe the methodology used in assessing the effect/impact on the existing landscape and visual receptors.
- d. Describe the alignment of the route as it crosses from west to east through each Local Character Area.
- e. Describe the proposed landscape mitigation and degree of effect the route has on each of the Local Character Areas.
- f. Describe the degree of visual impact the route has on receptors through each Local Character Area.
- g. Conclude my evidence addressing the Landscape issues.
- h. Provide evidence relating to the playing field affected by the route at Lancaster and Morecambe College.

### **3. PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT**

3.1 The relevant policies with specific reference to addressing the “Landscape” issues are:

- a. National Planning Policy – PPG2, PPS17 and particular reference to PPS7
- b. Regional Spatial Strategy (Draft Regional Spatial Strategy for the North West of England January 2006).
- c. Joint Lancashire Structure Plan (adopted 2005/2006) with particular reference to the Supplementary Planning Guidance: “Landscape and Heritage” which supplements Policies 20 and 21” (in the JLSP) “and is

consistent with national planning guidance and the Regional Spatial Strategy.

3.2 In matters in which the Secretary of State wishes to be addressed, item (e) refers to the National Planning Policy Guidance/Statement PPS7 and my evidence will demonstrate that the development takes on board the relevant issues, which are contained in PPS7 Guidance Note (Appendix A, A7), section entitled “The Countryside”. These are, briefly:

- a. Countryside protection and development in the countryside (notes 15, 16(v)).
- b. Nationally Designated Areas (notes 21, 22(iii) and 23). Although the application is not in a nationally designated landscape, the same level of assessment has been given.
- c. Local Landscape Designations (notes 24, 25). Although the proposed route does not affect any landscapes covered by national designated areas, it does cross areas that are “particularly highly valued locally” (note 24).
- d. The Countryside around Urban Areas (note 26).

3.3 The emerging Regional Spatial Strategy for the North West of England (Appendix A, A6) identifies the importance of Landscape and Heritage and the use of landscape character assessments in Policy EM1.

3.4 My evidence with respect to Planning Policy refers mainly to the Joint Lancashire Structure Plan 2001/2016 (CD Ref LCC03), specifically the

Supplementary Planning Guidance: 'Landscape and Heritage' Policies 20 and 21.

- 3.5 The Supplementary Planning Guidance: Landscape and Heritage is intended to (amongst other issues) "Explain the application of national, regional and Structure Plan policies on landscape, biodiversity and heritage assets in a Lancashire context".
- 3.6 Policy 20 was particularly important in identifying the landscape character(s) of the area through which the route passes and the consequent assessment of the impact of this development on the landscape (and townscape). My evidence will also demonstrate that I have taken on board the relevant strategies, recommendations, and in particular the Indicators and Targets contained within Policy 20 (and also 21). Reference to Policy 20 and 21 were fundamentally important in determining the most appropriate landscape and mitigation solutions for the proposed route.
- 3.7 Evidence relating purely to matters of Planning Policy contained within National Planning Policy (PPG2 and PPS17), and Lancaster Local Plan will be presented by other colleagues.

#### **4. DESCRIPTION OF THE EXISTING LANDSCAPE (BASELINE CONDITIONS)**

- 4.1 This is described in detail in the Environmental Statement, Vol 1 Part A: Report 10 Landscape and Visual Effects, under the Section 10.2 Baseline Conditions (CD Ref LCC10).
- a. 10.2.1 – 10.2.11 describes the existing landscape through which the route passes as described in Policy 20 of the Joint Lancashire Structure Plan,

Supplementary Planning Guidance “Landscape and Heritage”, which evolved from “A Landscape Strategy for Lancashire”.

- b. 10.2.12 – 10.2.31 – the description of the existing landscape through which the route passes has been further broken down into 8 Local Character Areas for more detailed assessment to be made. (See Appendix A, A4 Figure 10.1.4.)

## **5. LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT (METHODOLOGY)**

5.1 The landscape and visual impact assessment has drawn on two methodologies. These are specifically designed to identify the impacts of major highway schemes. This process draws on the “Landscape Character Assessment, Guidance for England and Scotland” produced by the Countryside Agency (now Natural England).

5.1.1 The Methodology for the Landscape (including townscape) Impact Assessment is set out in the Department for Transport Local Transport Plan, Transport Analysis Guidance (TAG) Unit 3.3.7/3.3.8 (Appendix A, A8 & A9). The Department for Transport requires all major road schemes under their New Approach to Appraisal (NATA) process to be assessed using the methods identified in the “TAG”. The Transport Analysis Guidance includes a table with a description of 7 levels of impact, 3 beneficial or positive, 1 neutral and 3 adverse or negative (Tables 1 & 2) (Appendix A8/A9). This table has been used to determine the value of the magnitude of impact carried out in the final stage of the Environmental Impact Assessment.

5.1.2 The Visual Impact Assessment has been based on a method set out in Department for Transport, Design Manual for Roads and Bridgeworks (DMRB), Volume 11, Environmental Assessment (1993, amended 1994), Section 3, Part 5, Chapter 4 (CD Ref LCC34). Chapter 4, 4:6 describes a scale which categorises visual change within 7 levels of impact, 3 beneficial, 1 no change, 3 adverse. This process draws on the results of the Landscape Impact Assessment as this influences the perceived level of visual intrusion of the route.

## **5.2 Landscape Impact Assessment**

5.2.1 The information used to assess the effects of the proposed road scheme has been taken from the following sources:

- a. Lancashire County Council Joint Lancashire Structure Plan 2001-2006 (JLSP) with particular reference to Policy 20, which is described in detail in the Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) "Landscape and Heritage" (CD Ref LCC66). Policy 20 and the SPG draws on the Landscape Character Assessment study undertaken for Lancashire County Council, which resulted in the publication of "A Landscape Strategy for Lancashire" in 2001.
- b. Lancaster City Council Local Plan (CD Ref LCC04) – Proposals Map (2004)
- c. Site visits.

## **5.3 Procedure for Landscape Impact Assessment**

5.3.1 The procedure for appraising the effects of the route on landscape (and townscape) is set out in the Transport Analysis Guidance. This is a four-stage process.

- a. Gathering of information about the landscape and townscape features (pattern; tranquillity, density etc) from desktop studies and site surveys.
- b. Assessing the features, in terms of landscape indicators (geographical scale, i.e. national, regional etc; rarity; importance etc).
- c. Arriving at an assessment score (level of impact) on the landscape (and townscape) features that have also been assessed in terms of landscape indicators.
- d. Production of a summary assessment score of impact for:
  - i. Each of the 8 distinct Local Character Areas.
  - ii. The whole scheme

#### **5.4 Visual Impact Assessment**

5.4.1 The information used to assess the effects of the proposed road scheme on the receptors has been developed using the following:

- a) Ordnance Survey Maps
- b) Lancashire County Council Gazetteer
- c) Site visits

#### **5.5 Procedure for Visual Impact Assessment**

- 5.5.1 To assess the visual impacts, I have prepared the following records:
- a. A Zone of Visual Influence (Visual Envelope). (See Appendix A, A1 Figure 10.1.1.). This is a plan showing the boundary of the visual influence of the route. I have prepared this by using a combination of mapping and survey work to identify the landscape features such as ridgelines or building that form the visual boundaries to the wider area.
  - b. Identification of receptors, located within the zone of visual influence. Receptors in this context are: residential properties, public buildings, public open space, footpaths. (See Appendix A, A3, Figure 10.1.3 (3 sheets) and A5, Figure 10.1.5 (3 sheets).
- 5.5.2 An assumption has been made that high-sided vehicles would be out of sight in a cutting 4m in depth.
- 5.5.3 I have assessed the visual effects of the route on the receptors by walking the proposed centre line and carried out additional surveys from local roads, footpaths and viewpoints. Several site visits were carried out in producing information for the Environmental Statement, notably April, May and November 2005.
- 5.5.4 I have estimated the degree of change brought about by the effect of the route on the receptors, using a scale of 7 levels of impact included in the DMRB guidance (CD Ref LCC34), 3 adverse, 1 no change and 3 beneficial.
- 5.5.5 The results of carrying out this process are summarised on the Schedule of Visual Impacts and included in the Environment Statement, Volume 1, Part D, Section 8 (CD Ref LCC13).

## **6. DESCRIPTION OF THE ROAD ALIGNMENT OF THE ROUTE IN RELATION TO THE EXISTING LANDSCAPE**

### **6.1 Introduction**

6.1.1 A detailed description of the scheme is included in the Environmental Statement, Volume 1, Part A – Report (CD Ref LCC10), which accompanied the Planning Application in December 2005. Further amendments are detailed in the Response to Objections and Comments (June 2006) (CD Ref LCC17), and the Revised Planning Application Report (September 2006). The current scheme is shown on the drawing, Completion of Heysham to M6 Link, Revised Planning Application Plan (August 2006), Drawing No. 11063/301 Sheet 1B, 2B and 3B of 3 (CD Ref LCC22, 23 and 24).

6.1.2 As a result of the changes referred to in the above documents, I have included in my proof a revision of the description of the route in relation to the existing landscape. In order to maintain consistency, I have described the changes as the route progresses west to east through the eight Local Character Areas. (Appendix A, A4, Ref Figure 10.1.4.)

### **6.2 General Description**

6.2.1 The route is a dual carriageway that is illuminated for its whole length. There is a footway/cycleway located on the south side of the road running from Northgate Junction to Shefferlands Junction and on the west side of the River Lune Bridge to Croskells Junction. The slopes of the proposed cutting and embankments are generally 1 in 2.5 gradient. Lighting columns are 12 metres in height. Road signs will vary in size and height and the larger advanced direction signs located at junctions will be illuminated where there are also lighting columns. Water catchment ponds to support a sustainable

urban drainage system are located at Torrisholme in fields north of Barley Cop Lane with an additional pond to the south of Folley Lane. In addition, Habitat Creation Areas incorporating a total of three ponds are proposed to the west of the new River Lune Bridge at Croskells (SD 4957 6435) and Shefferlands (SD 4952 6479) either side of the River Lune at Halton. Additional Habitat Creation Areas are proposed in Torrisholme (SD 4604 6365), Turnpike Fold (SD 4755 6422), Valley Meadow (SD 4814 6457), Kellet Lane (SD 4814 6457), Lune Bridge (SD 4955 6449) and at Long Bank Brook (SD 4972 6380)

### **6.3 Local Character Area 1**

6.3.1 The route commences at Northgate where the existing signal controlled junction is remodelled. Continuing northeast, Hadrian Junction is a new traffic signal controlled T-junction, which allows access to Hadrian Road and McDonalds Restaurant. The existing roundabout junction with the A683 Morecambe Road will be replaced with traffic signal controlled crossroads 'Scale Hall Junction'.

### **6.4 Local Character Area 2**

6.4.1 From the remodelled junction at A683 Morecambe Road, the route would ascend north eastwards between the Lancaster and Morecambe College buildings located to the south east and the overhead electricity cables and pylons located to the north west. The route impinges on the playing fields and car parking area north west of the college buildings. A local stream running alongside the playing fields will be realigned. This will be an open channel with only 9 minimum length being culverted, to allow access from the proposed pedestrian underpass.

6.4.2 The route would continue to ascend to cross B5321 Lancaster Road with Torrisholme Road Bridge. This will affect a commercial business. The proposed embankment would remove a mature willow copse adjacent to the college car park. This is a design modification following public responses, which identified that an earlier solution to divert Lancaster Road was not acceptable to the community. The level of the route at this location would be approximately 8m above existing ground level. The road is screened both sides from Morecambe Road to Lancaster Road by a noise attenuation barrier.

## **6.5 Local Character Area 3a**

6.5.1 From Lancaster Road, the route includes the local diversion of Barley Cop Lane over a distance of 150 metres. A footway/cycleway would pass between mature trees and continue on the north side of the hedgerow, which runs the length of the lane.

6.5.2 Residential areas are located to the north west of the route, built on the rising ground of a drumlin feature known as Torrisholme Barrow. This is a popular location offering 360 degree views of the surrounding landscape, including south and east over the countryside crossed by the route and on towards the historic Core of Lancaster including the Ashton Memorial, a Regional Landmark. Properties to the south of the route include those located at Endsleigh Grove situated on a small drumlin, known as Cross Hill. These properties located on the north side of Endsleigh Grove overlook the route, which would be seen across a small field.

6.5.3 Turning east/north east, the route would cross Powder House Lane which would be diverted, passing under the route adjacent to the railway embankment. To cross the West Coast Main Line railway, the route would rise approximately 13 metres above existing field level on Folly Railway Bridge. Folly Lane would be diverted to run along the toe of the embankment to the east of the railway line passing under the route.

## **6.6 Local Character Area 3b**

6.6.1 Turning north eastwards, the route would cross the Lancaster Canal on Folly Canal Bridge and a proposed field access would run parallel to the canal on its east side. The bridge crossing would be approximately 5.5 metres above towpath level at this point. The canal alignment would be unaffected. Between the railway line and canal, substantial earthworks on both sides of the road would screen the properties located south of Hammerton Hall Lane and along Folly Lane.

## **6.7 Local Character Area 4**

6.7.1 The route continues in a north eastwards direction running between and eventually meeting the rising ground of the low whaleback drumlins that are a characteristic feature of this part of the route.

6.7.2 The route crosses the ridgeline formed by a drumlin where a roundabout 'Beaumont Junction' is located just below the skyline. This ridgeline conceals part of the route when viewed from higher ground at Torrisholme Barrow. The A6 Lancaster Road Link occupies deep cutting as it cuts through the drumlin terrain to meet the A6 Lancaster Road, which is diverted "offline" over the route on Lancaster Road Bridge. The existing ridgelines formed by the

drumlins in this area assist in containing the view of the route. Trapezoidal cuttings are a significant feature of the road cross-section at this location. Continuing northeast away from the A6, the route continues to ascend whilst in deep cutting.

## **6.8 Local Character Area 5**

6.8.1 West of Green Lane, the route emerges from the deep cutting and crosses Howgill Brook Valley on a shallow embankment. The public footpath is diverted across Beaumont Gate Occupation Bridge. The route continues to ascend, although in shallow cutting, in a north eastwards direction passing under Green Lane which is diverted over the route on Green Lane Bridge, to the west of its current alignment. Species rich hedges are affected by this operation.

## **6.9 Local Character Area 6**

6.9.1 To the east of Green Lane, the route continues to climb until it reaches its highest point south of Beaumont Grange. The road is on shallow cutting along this section but this is artificially enhanced by false cuttings and graded out slopes. From its highest point, the route would descend turning east entering deeper cuttings before passing under Kellet Lane Bridge carrying Kellet Lane, located north east of Carus Cottage. East of Kellet Lane, the route continues to descend eastwards in deepening cutting. It then emerges in a field which has the appearance of designed parkland located south of Haverbreaks Farm and Shefferlands, where a roundabout 'Shefferlands Junction' provides a northerly access slip road to the M6 motorway and Halton Road Link.

## **6.10 Local Character Area 7**

6.10.1 The route continues south eastwards crossing under Halton Road Bridge and passing through woodland growing on the north river escarpment before crossing over the River Lune on the River Lune Bridge. The existing M6 motorway contains the route visually when viewed from the eastern side of the motorway. It reaches Caton Road on an embankment, north east of the Holiday Inn Hotel. The existing strategic cycleway/footway on the south bank of the River Lune would continue under the bridge crossing. Existing localised mounding and vegetation in this location ensures that the view of the bridge crossing from the cycleway/footway is limited.

## **6.11 Local Character Area 8**

6.11.1 The new motorway junction with the route would entail separate slip roads for northbound on and off traffic, west of the motorway. One slip road for on traffic located north of the River Lune off the roundabout located in a field north of Halton Road, and one slip road for off traffic commencing east of Lansil Golf Course and terminating in a traffic signal controlled junction opposite the route at Caton Road 'Croskells Junction'. Both slips incur earthworks modifications with the northern on slip road being constructed in deep cutting, with a retaining wall 'Shefferlands Retaining Wall' reaching approximately 9.6m high at maximum, south east of Shefferlands.

6.11.2 The southbound on and off slips have been located east of the motorway with an increased sized traffic signal controlled junction in the approximate location of the existing junction. The slip roads are both extensive, occupying agricultural land south east of the current slip roads.

6.11.3 East of the southbound on slip road, a replacement field access road is constructed into the side of the proposed slip road cutting.

6.11.4 The rising ground of the drumlin terrain and river escarpments to the south east contains the slip roads visually. The southernmost extent of the zone of visual influence is located at the M6 bridge crossing of Grimeshaw Lane.

## **6. MITIGATION**

### **7.1 Planning Conditions**

7.1.1 The Development Control Committee (November 2006) resolved a resolution to grant Planning Permission of the scheme subject to 38 conditions (CD Ref LCC25). Of these, 13 included matters relating to landscape issues. The following is a summary.

7.1.2 Condition 4: under “Working Programme” requires that a detailed scheme and programme for landscape works are approved before commencement of the development. The details described in the condition will ensure that the most appropriate and acceptable landscape works are carried out.

7.1.3 Condition 5: under “Ecology” requires that a scheme and programme of ecological mitigation is submitted for approval. Although this would be submitted by the Ecologist, planting details, seeding, translocation (in particular the hedgerows) and determination of receptor sites will also form a major part of the landscape proposals. There will be close consultation with the Ecologist throughout all processes of the landscape works – from detailed design through to the twenty-year management plan.

- 7.1.4 Condition 8 relating to Noise will require a landscape input in determining the appearance and location of noise attenuation barriers.
- 7.1.5 Condition 9: under “Protection of Watercourses”, the design of new or opened watercourses and sustainable watercourses will involve landscape (and ecological) input to ensure that they are appropriately sited and mitigated.
- 7.1.6 Condition 12 relating to Lighting will require landscape input to determine possible mitigation measures to screen the effect of lighting.
- 7.1.7 Conditions 19, 20, 21, 22: under “Road Construction” will ensure that valuable natural resources of subsoil and topsoil are appropriately removed, stored and/or protected. Compliance with these conditions is important in providing the optimum conditions for successful establishment of the landscape works.
- 7.1.8 Conditions 35, 36, 37, 38: under “Landscaping and Management of Tree and hedge Planting and Ecological Mitigation Works”, are vitally important in ensuring that the detailed landscape and ecological mitigation works are implemented and managed in an approved specified manner which will provide the most optimum conditions for successful establishment.

## **7.2 Compliance with Planning Policy**

- 7.2.1 Further to the description of mitigation described in the Environmental Statement, Volume 1 Part A: Report (CD Ref LCC10) 10 Landscape and Visual Effects – Section 10.5 Mitigation, my evidence also demonstrates that I have taken on board the relevant strategies, recommendations and in

particular the indicators and targets contained in Policy 20 and 21 of the Joint Lancashire Structure Plan (CD Ref LCC66).

7.2.2 The principle indicators and targets that have been identified as being measurable and significant in terms of the Lancashire landscape are in relation to woodland, hedgerow and ponds. The Landscape Character Type: Low Coastal Drumlins which forms the main Landscape Type for the area identifies all of these County Council targets.

7.2.3 Woodlands: County Council Target: Increase the area of native woodland by 15% by 2016

- i. The proposed landscape mitigation of approximately 50 hectares will be extensive woodland planting of indigenous species appropriate to the area. A small proportion of the planting will include non-indigenous species where it is appropriate, for example, in urban areas and roundabouts. Planted areas indicated along the route, on embankments, cuttings and graded out areas perform more than the function of screening. The appropriate woodland species mix and varying size of plant at time of planting will ensure the increase of biodiversity in the area and encourage connectivity between existing and newly created habitats.

7.2.4 Hedgerows: County Council Target: No net loss of hedgerows through development

- i. It is acknowledged that there will be a significant loss of existing hedgerow as the route cuts through the predominantly agricultural land

in the rural areas. Substantial replanting of hedges along the route, combined with “gapping up” and management of existing hedging will ensure connectivity and longevity of the hedgerow network. Significantly, there will be translocation of certain lengths of species rich hedgerows to appropriate receptor sites. This will provide the opportunity to increase the length of this type of hedgerow by the supplementation of appropriate new hedge plants in these areas. The figures provided by the Ecologist, of 19.4km of proposed hedging to replace 9.3km lost, shows that there will be no net loss of hedgerow.

7.2.5 Ponds: County Council Target: Create two ponds for every pond lost through development

- i. There are no existing ponds lost as part of the road proposal. However, 6 water catchment ponds will be created as part of a Sustainable Urban Drainage System but, as these do not necessarily create the optimum environment for the creation of biodiverse habitats, three habitat creation areas with ponds are also proposed.
- ii. The dedication of land to form 8 Habitat Creation Areas, which also include the creation of three additional ponds, allows the opportunity to create or conserve, for example, a number of diverse habitats.

## **8. SUMMARY OF THE LANDSCAPE IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF THE ROUTE**

### **8.1 Local Character Area 1**

- i. Area 1 is largely unaffected by the route as this involves online modification to the existing A683 and junction, that benefits vehicular and pedestrian movement.
- ii. Proposed supplementary tree planting in existing roadside planted areas will, in a short period of time, afford more screening to existing residential properties located south-east of A683. Introduction of non-native species, particularly evergreens, is acceptable in this predominantly urban area providing the opportunity to screen the road all year round.
- iii. The overall summary of impact for Area 1 is considered to be Neutral to Slightly Beneficial.

### **8.2 Local Character Area 2**

- i. As the route continues in a north-easterly direction, crossing Lancaster and Morecambe College's playing fields, the road's vertical profile climbs to cross the B5321 Lancaster Road at Torrisholme. The bridge crossing at Torrisholme is designed to have the lowest possible vertical alignment to minimise the effect of visual intrusion of the road on adjacent residential properties at Torrisholme and Scale Hall. The effect of the road and bridge structure on Area 2 will be to visually separate and dominate the settlements of Scale hall and Torrisholme in this location. Although out of scale with the residential developments along the B5321, the proposed road structures are compatible with the buildings of various

sizes and heights that make up Lancaster and Morecambe College. In appearance, the road's structures will be clad in building materials used locally. Mitigation in the form of tree and shrub planting will be introduced to the road's embankments. This will assist in partially screening the road and vehicle movement in the short to medium term. The existing hedge and ditch which runs along the south-east side of the playing field will be lost under the road construction. A new open ditch is proposed to run along the base of the proposed road embankment. The embankments constructed to raise the proposed road to cross Lancaster Road will be planted with a dense mix of trees and shrubs. As the area is still predominantly urban, non-native plants which would provide more effective screening will be introduced, where appropriate. The impact of the view of the proposed road from properties on Norwood Drive will be reduced by a line of tree planting along the north-west edge of the playing field. The trees will take the form of larger nursery stock (extra heavy standard) with a clear stem to allow a view through to the playing field, the crown of the tree providing the screening. This is preferable to a dense belt of planting which could create problems for pedestrian safety, adjacent to Footpath (M9).

- ii. The overall impact in this area during construction and on completion is considered Moderate to Large Adverse.

### **8.3a Local Character Area 3a**

- i. From the bridge at Torrisholme, the route continues to rise as it approaches the West Coast Main Line railway. Although this area is part

of the Low Coastal Drumlin Character type, it is still influenced by urban features. This area is typical of the low-lying areas between the low whaleback hills of the drumlins. Because of this relatively flat landscape, the impact of the road constructed on an embankment is significant. The area has a strong field pattern criss-crossed by small country lanes. The loss of hedgerow and some mature trees is mitigated by extensive woodland planting and new hedgerows.

- ii. A large belt of woodland planting in front of the residential properties along Russell Drive will help to reduce the impact and along with a Habitat Creation Area will increase the biodiversity of the area. Minimum damage to hedges and mature trees is proposed by diverting a combined cycleway/footpath onto the north side of the hedge on Barley Cop Lane. The area between Barley Cop Lane and the route also contains four water retention ponds, which will add to the biodiversity interest in this area. The character of the narrow lanes is retained with the diversion of Powder House Lane west of the proposed railway line bridge.
- iii. The overall impact in this area is large adverse.

### **8.3b Local Character Area 3b**

- i. The embankments and bridge on which the route is constructed have their greatest impact on the landscape as the route crosses from Area 3a to 3b. The narrow country lane of Folly Lane is retained as it passes adjacent to the railway before winding east to carry on along the bottom of the road embankment and then continue along its original route.

- ii. Landscape mitigation for this area involves extensive earthworks to lessen the impact of the road from Hammerton Hall Lane and also along Folly Lane. The proposed earthworks will be carried out with the aim of recreating the drumlin landform. Substantial woodland planting and replacement hedgerows will perform several functions – screening, increase in biodiversity and meet County Council targets for the landscape character type. There are limited existing views from Hammerton Hall Lane due to orientation of properties and existence of tall hedges. Whilst potential views to the north will be obscured by the road on embankment, landscape mitigation measures in the area between the houses and road will create an alternative view of woodland planting and pond.
- iii. Although the route is still rising towards the higher existing topography, the height of the embankments appear to lessen as the road crosses the Lancaster Canal. Sympathetic treatment of the canal bridge will help to maintain the rural character of the area.
- iv. The overall impact of the area is moderate adverse.

#### **8.4 Local Character Area 4**

- i. Away from the canal, the route begins to enter the more distinctive topography of the drumlin landscape.
- ii. The link to the A6 which runs north to south in the eastern part of this area is via a roundabout constructed below the ridgeline of a drumlin feature. This major road feature sits in cutting as does the access road onto the A6 which helps to provide some screening from surrounding properties.

Further mitigation includes construction of earth mounding planted with native trees and shrubs.

- iii. The realignment of the A6 begins just north of Beaumont College and cuts into the west side of the hillside in order to achieve sufficient height to form a bridge crossing over the route. The road then descends on embankment passing by the new junction (Lancaster Road Junction) to the west at approximately ground level. Mitigation to screen the effects of the realignment of the A6 and the two proposed junctions – Beaumont Junction and Lancaster Junction – include earth mounding and planting. Planted areas immediately adjacent to properties on Lancaster Road will include non-native species appropriate to the location such as low maintenance ground cover shrubs and the use of larger nursery stock to achieve a more rapid screening of the proposed bridge crossing.
- v. Avoiding the Beaumont Grange Farm property to the north, the route removes the north face of a drumlin feature as it continues north-eastwards in deep cutting.
- vi. The overall impact of the area is Moderate Adverse.

## **8.5 Local Character Area 5**

- i. Before the route emerges from cutting, a proposed occupation bridge carries the public right of way across the road. The route continues on shallow embankment across low-lying pastureland before passing underneath the realigned bridge carrying Green Lane.

- ii. The losses to this predominantly agricultural area are mainly hedgerows, including species-rich hedgerows along Green Lane. This, however, has been taken on board by extensive mitigation proposals aimed at conservation measures including translocation of species-rich hedges.
- iii. A large proportion of this Local Character Area has been proposed as a Habitat Creation Area to protect an uncommon type of fungi and to preserve other natural resources. The proposal to open up a culverted section of Howgill Brook will help to maintain the favourable conditions for this habitat.
- iv. Overall impact is Moderate Adverse.

## **8.6 Local Character Area 6**

- i. From Green Lane, the route continues north-eastwards across secluded agricultural land towards the proposed bridge at Kellet Lane. This section of road is in shallow cutting, but in order to provide screening to properties in the north (Beaumont Grange), additional earth mounding will be formed either side of the road and carefully graded out to marry into the existing landscape. The mounding will be extensively planted to create a substantial woodland area. Loss of hedgerow will be mitigated with new hedgerows planted along length of road. Howgill Brook will be diverted and maintained as an open water course. Appropriate native planting adjacent to the stream, along with a Habitat Creation Area west of Kellet Lane, will increase the biodiversity of the area.

- ii. The route descends into deeper cutting as it passes underneath Kellet Lane Bridge and remains in deep cutting until it joins the proposed roundabout junction 'Shefferlands Junction' west of the M6. The area affected by the construction of the roundabout and linking onto the M6 slip road and Halton Road is primarily pastureland with a parkland character associated with historic houses. Mitigation proposals to offset the loss of this particular feature will include off-site planting of appropriate specimen trees and management of trees within replacement hedgerows. Extensive woodland type planting will also take place on the cutting slopes.
- iii. Overall impact is Moderate to Large Adverse.

## **8.7 Local Character Area 7**

- i. After leaving the proposed roundabout junction, the route turns south to pass underneath a proposed bridge which carries Halton Road before continuing over the River Lune. On reaching the south bank, the route continues on embankment before reaching its junction with the A683 Caton Road. Mitigation proposals are concentrated on the south bank with 2 ponds in the Croskells Habitat Creation Area and an area developed to specifically encourage others at the Lune Bridge Habitat Creation Area. Additional earth mounding and planting is proposed to help screen the road and junction from the hotel complex. Translocation and harvesting of existing significant native flora will also form an important part of the mitigation proposals.
- ii. Impact in this area is Slight Adverse.

## **8.8 Local Character Area 8**

- i. The improvements to the motorway junction involve the construction of new slip roads which affect predominantly arable farmland to the west and east of the motorway. No lighting is proposed for the slip roads.
- ii. The construction of the slip roads to the east of the motorway affect a large area of established farmland characterised by a high hedgerow and tree cover.
- iii. Large areas of land enclosed by the slip roads will provide opportunity for extensive woodland planting and an additional Habitat Creation Area.
- iv. The impact in this Local Character Area is Neutral Effect.

## **9.0 SUMMARY OF THE VISUAL IMPACTS OF THE ROUTE ON RECEPTORS**

The following is a summary of the receptors referenced in accordance with the Environmental Statement's Schedule of Visual Impacts (Volume 1, Part D Section 8), and grouped into the Local Character Areas. It includes a summary of the effects, a brief description of the proposed mitigation and a summary of impacts on the receptors at the time of the opening of the route in year 0 and in year 15 following the establishment of trees and shrubs. The references R1 etc are identified on A3 Figures 10.1.3 and A5 10.1.5, included in Appendix A.

## 9.1 Local Character Area 1

### i. Residential Properties at Scale Hall and Hadrian Road R1, 2, 3, 4, 5

These are located each side of the A683, which will also be improved “on line” to accommodate additional traffic. Existing vegetation breaks the view to A683, and this will be supplemented with additional planting to further assist in screening the road from the properties. High-sided vehicles cannot be fully screened from upper flats.

- Impact year 0, generally Slight Adverse
- Impact year 15, generally Slight Adverse; no change to properties at Hadrian Road.

### ii. Public Footpaths at Hadrian Road R49

- Impact year 0, Slight Adverse
- Impact year 15, Slight Adverse

### iii. Residential Property at Norwood Drive R6, 7, 8, 9

Located north of route with broken or restricted views. A combination of noise attenuation barriers and new planting will screen the route.

- Impact year 0, generally Moderate to Slight Adverse
- Impact year 15, reducing to Slight Adverse as new planting becomes established

## 9.2 Local Character Area 2

### i. Residential Property at Torrisholme R10, R11, R12, R13, R14, R15, R16

The settlement located at Torrisholme is substantially affected by the proposal, in particular properties located on the south side of Russell Drive (R10) and Fair View (R12) which have open views across the fields through which the route will run. Earth mounding and fencing combined with new planting is proposed either side of the route to screen moving traffic and partially screen lighting columns and the effects of lighting. There is a permanent adverse change in the view for properties at Russell Drive (R10).

- R10 - Impact year 0, Substantial Adverse
- R12 (Fair View) - Impact year 15, Substantial Adverse.

At Endsleigh Grove (R15, 16), it is anticipated proposed mitigation will reduce the adverse impact over time.

- R15, 16 – Impact year 0, Substantial Adverse
- Impact year 15, reducing to Moderate Adverse as new planting becomes established.

However, many other properties at Torrisholme do not have an open view of the route as they are located behind houses identified previously. Other residential properties located in this area in the vicinity of the new bridge (R9, R13) will have oblique views to the route and will be moderately adversely affected.

ii. Schools (Learning Establishments) Lancaster and Morecambe College and Thorpe View Day Centre, R47, R48

Located north and south of the route, the Lancaster and Morecambe College (R47) currently has an open view across the route. However, the main teaching block is largely obscured by other college buildings which are located adjacent to the proposal and which have no windows. The playing field similarly has open views. Timber, close boarded noise attenuation barriers 2½ metres high and new planting will screen the route from main teaching areas and playing fields.

- Impact year 0, Substantial Adverse
- Impact year 15, reducing to Moderate Adverse as new planting becomes established.

Thorpe View Day Centre (R48) currently has an open view to the route as it ascends to cross Lancaster Road. It is partially screened by mature conifers. Noise attenuation barriers and new planting on the road embankment will supplement the existing planting and contribute to the screening of the route.

- Impact year 0, Moderate Adverse
- Impact year 15, reducing to Slight Adverse as new planting becomes established.

iv. Public Footpaths at Torrisholme, R50

Footpath M8 runs parallel with the route, between Morecambe Road and Lancaster Road, located north of the college playing field. Located in an urban setting, it has open views across the playing field towards the college buildings. Noise attenuation barriers and new planting on the road embankment will largely screen the route from the public footpath.

- Impact year 0, Substantial Adverse
- Impact year 15, reducing to Moderate Adverse as new planting becomes established.

**9.3a Local Character Area 3A**

i. Residential Property, Scattered settlement located between Torrisholme and West Coast Main Line Railway R17, R18, R19, R21

These receptors will have glimpsed views across fields and overhead electricity cables and pylon towards the route on embankment. Earth mounding and fencing combined with new planting is proposed to screen moving traffic and partially screen lighting columns and the effects of lighting.

- Impact year 0, no change to Slight Adverse
- Impact year 15, reducing to no change as new planting becomes established

ii. Municipal and Public Buildings, Public Open Space etc R41, R43

Torrisholme Cricket Club, Vale of Lune Rugby Union Football Club and the Lancaster and Morecambe Crematorium are located south of the route off Barley Cop Lane. Barley Cop Lane is bounded on the north side with established mature trees which are situated in the hedgeline. This existing vegetation breaks and restricts the view from these municipal and public facilities towards the route which will ascend on embankment to cross the railway. New planting is proposed to screen moving traffic passing along the route.

- Impact year 0, Moderate to Slight Adverse
- Impact year 15, reducing to Slight Adverse to no change as new planting becomes established.

iii. Public Footpaths, R51

Footpath R51 emerges from the woodland area onto Barley Cop Lane, running parallel and close to the West Coast Main Line railway. It terminates at Barley Cop lane. There are no changes of view as the existing topographical features and the existing railway embankment prevents an open aspect.

- Impact year 0, no change
- Impact year 15, no change

iv. Viewpoints at Torrisholme Barrow R56

Situated north west of the route, Torrisholme Brow offers a 360° open and panoramic view of the surrounding countryside. The urban areas of Heysham, Torrisholme and the historic core of Lancaster City and the landscape to the east beyond the railway can be viewed. The route will ascend on embankment in the middle distant view. The view towards the route is heavily influenced by the townscape and urbanising features such as the amenity style management and planting at the Crematorium located west of the railway. Earth mounding, screen fencing and new planting will soften the visual effect of the embankment as it ascends to 13m above ground level to cross the railway.

- Impact year 0, Moderate Adverse
- Impact year 15, Moderate Adverse

**9.3b Local Character Area 3B**

i. Residential Property at Hare Runs, south of Hammerton Hall Lane R23, R24, R25, R26

Hare Runs residential area comprises a mix of 2 and 3 storey houses and flats located south of Hammerton Hall Lane. Open views across fields to the elevated route are effectively screened with proposed earthworks and new planting. The earthworks are designed to resemble a low coastal drumlin characteristic of the topography in this area.

- Impact year 0, Substantial Adverse

- Impact year 15, reducing to Moderate Adverse following establishment of planting.

It is acknowledged there will be a change in the current view from the property at Hare Runs that currently overlook the fields, railway and canal north of Hammerton Hall Lane, although the aspect of some properties (number to be inserted) is either away from the routeline or is obscured by existing buildings.

ii. Public Footpaths and other Linear Amenities at Lancaster Canal, R54

The canal and towpath forms a popular amenity for local people and visitors. Views extend towards the open countryside and the West Coast Main Line railway. Urban influences from settlement at Hare Runs and Torrisholme are apparent. Proposed earthworks, simulating the topography of the surrounding landscape, proposed planting and careful design of the new canal bridge will contribute to mitigating the effects of the route as it crosses the Lancaster Canal.

- Impact year 0, Moderate Adverse
- Impact year 15, Moderate Adverse

iii. Viewpoints at Hammerton Hall Lane Canal Bridge R57

When looking forth from the canal bridge, the proposed railway and canal crossing will be effectively screened by the proposed earthworks.

- Impact year 0, Substantial Adverse

- Impact year 15, establishment of planting reduces the impact of the construction to Moderate Adverse. It is acknowledged there will be a limiting of the view by the earthworks.

#### **9.4 Local Character Area 4**

##### **i. Residential Property at A6 Slyne Road R27, 28, 29, 30**

The route's vertical alignment will descend from the canal crossing and meet the existing ground, cutting into the undulating topography. This will assist in concealing the route from the residential property in this location. The cuttings, earth mounding and proposed planting will also assist in screening the route. Those properties located closer to the route, currently with open views, will initially experience higher levels of visual intrusion which will diminish as the planting establishes.

- Impact year 0, Substantial Adverse
- Impact year 15, Substantial to Moderate Adverse. Some properties will experience reduced levels of impact as the planting establishes.

#### **9.5 Local Character Area 5**

##### **i. Residential Properties at Beaumont Hall R33**

This group of properties has a restricted view towards Howgill Brook Valley. The route will cross the valley on shallow embankment. Planting on the embankment will develop and screen the route. Additional planting

within the proposed Habitat Creation Area, within existing hedgelines will screen the route.

- Impact year 0, Moderate Adverse
- Impact year 15, Following establishment of Planting, Slight Adverse.

ii. Public Footpaths R52, runs north/south from Lancaster Canal to Slyne

Footpath S47 is diverted over the route.

- Impact year 0, Substantial Adverse
- Impact year 15, Substantial Adverse

## **9.6 Local Character Area 6**

i. Residential Property around Beaumont Grange R34

Several properties are located in the vicinity of Beaumont Grange. They have open views, south, across undulating countryside towards the historic core of Lancaster. Earth mounding is proposed north of the route which will screen the road. New planting on this mounding will connect two woodland areas forming a belt of vegetation which will develop to further screen the view of the road from the property. This will result in a loss of views over countryside.

- Impact year 0, Substantial Adverse
- Impact year 15, Substantial Adverse

ii. Residential Properties at Kellet Lane, R35, R36

Properties at Kellet Lane generally have restricted views across the lane towards undulating countryside, although Carus Cottage has open views. Earth mounding and proposed planting will screen the route which will enter a cutting as it passes under Kellet Lane.

- Impact year 0, Moderately Adverse at Carus Cottage
- Impact year 15, Moderately Adverse at Carus Cottage
- Impact year 0, Slight Adverse to no change
- Impact year 15, no change to property located south of Carus Cottage

iii. Residential Property off Foundry Lane around Shefferlands R37, R38

Property at R37 appears to be hidden from the route-line by landform. Properties grouped at R38 currently enjoy open views across countryside, towards the existing motorway corridor. The route and northern on slip road will be built in deep cutting and will largely be screened. Proposed planting at the top of the cutting will screen views of lighting columns and lanterns from Shefferlands.

- Impact year 0, Moderate to Substantial Adverse
- Impact year 15, some reduction in impact with establishment of tree and shrub planting. Shefferlands is Substantially Adversely affected by the loss of “setting” in the property.

iv. Viewpoint at Foundary Lane Bridge R59

The view south across the motorway corridor and over to the Historic Core of Lancaster will be affected by the introduction of the route in the fields, west of the M6. Building the road and “on slip” in deep cutting will help to minimise the visual impacts of the proposal, as will new planting. However, the view south from R59 will be changed by the proposal.

- Impact year 0, Substantially Adverse
- Impact year 15, Substantially Adverse

I consider there will be no views of the route from east of the M6 corridor, although the new bridge may be glimpsed through riverside vegetation from property located on the north side of the River Lune.

## **9.7 Local Character Area 7**

i. Residential Property at Croskells R39

There is an open view from this listed farmhouse across A683 Caton Road and business park located within M6 corridor. The route will emerge from the river valley close to this property. The proposed planting alongside the “off slip” road will contribute to screening. However, I consider with the existing developments and the existing road network there is slight adverse affect on Cottams Farm.

- Impact year 0, Slight Adverse
- Impact year 15, Slight Adverse

ii. Viewpoint from Lune Aqueduct, Caton Road, R58

The view along the river valley from the Lune Aqueduct is framed with riverside vegetation. It is estimated there would be a change in the view by the introduction of a new bridge structure, although this will be set at a low level to minimise visual intrusion.

- Impact year 0, Slight Adverse
- Impact year 15, Slight Adverse

iii. Public Footpaths and Other Linear Amenities R53, R55

Footpath HA9 runs parallel to the river on the north side. It will pass under the new river crossing and emerges at Halton Road adjacent to the existing M6 bridge. The footway/cycleway located on the south side of the river will also run under the new river crossing before passing under the existing motorway. Whilst new earthworks, well designed low level bridge crossing and new planting will assist in screening and softening the effect of the route, there will be a change of view.

- Impact year 0, Moderate Adverse
- Impact year 15, Moderate Adverse

iv. Hotels R45, R46

These hotels will have views towards the route, glimpsed through existing vegetation. I consider the Holiday Inn (R45), which is closer to the route, will be slightly adversely affected by the proposal. Views from the Premier

Travel Lodge (R46) are generally screened by existing vegetation and there will be no change in the view from this location.

- Impact year 0, Slight Adverse
- Impact year 15, Slight Adverse

v. Municipal and Public Buildings, Public Open Space at Lansil Golf Course R44

There are broken and restricted views across the fields bounded by existing mature planting, towards the new slip roads.

- Impact year 0, Slight Adverse
- Impact year 15, Slight Adverse

## 9.8 Local Character Area 8

i. Residential Properties at Hudsons Farm R40

These properties, located east of the existing motorway, look across Caton Road towards fields. The revised access arrangements involving a new “on slip” road will create a change in the view.

- Impact year 0, Slight Adverse
- Impact year 15, Slight Adverse

ii. Viewpoints at Grimeshaw Lane Bridge R60

The view from Grimeshaw Lane Bridge, looking north west towards the line of the route, includes the current M6 motorway corridor. This view will be

moderated by the establishment of the proposed planting screening the route, built in cutting.

- Impact year 0, Slight Adverse
- Impact year 15, No Change

## **10. CONCLUSION**

10.1 It is acknowledged that a development of this scale will have an impact on the landscape and my evidence has shown that detailed assessment using the appropriate methodology has been carried out to measure the magnitude of this.

10.2 The methodology of the Transport Analysis Guidance defines that the final overall landscape impact assessment should always conclude with the worst value overriding all other values found in the development area. Therefore, although the results ranged from neutral/slightly beneficial to large adverse effect/impact, the latter forms the concluding value for the overall development. The result of the Visual Impact Assessment is based on individual receptors as recommended by the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges. This methodology does not give an overall final score.

10.3 However, my evidence also demonstrates that the extensive landscape (and ecological) proposals and mitigation measures embody the relevant planning policies in relation to landscape issues at national, regional and local level. County Council Targets have been addressed relating to Policy 20 of the Joint Lancashire Structure plan as well as taking on board recommendations

identified in Policy 21 relating to Biodiversity. The Landscape proposals will be designed in consultation with the Ecologist.

10.4 The minutes of the Development Control Committee Meeting (November 2006) details a resolution to grant Planning Permission subject to a number of Planning Conditions which include issues relating to the design and implementation of landscape (and ecological) proposals and mitigation. These have already been described earlier in my evidence. Subject to approval, compliance with the conditions will ensure that the most appropriate and acceptable proposals for mitigating the effects of the road on the landscape will be carried out. The specific condition that the development should be subject to Lancashire County Council entering into a unilateral undertaking for the management of all landscaping and ecological mitigation for a period of 20 years emphasises the commitment to ensure the successful establishment, development and protection of all planting and habitat creation areas.

## **11.0 PLAYING FIELD PROVISION AT LANCASTER AND MORECAMBE COLLEGE**

With regard to the issue of Playing Field Provision at Lancaster and Morecambe College, my evidence is based on the landscape/layout of the playing fields and not planning policy, (specifically PPG17 Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation). The latter will be addressed by my colleagues.

### **11.1 Existing Playing Field Provision at Lancaster and Morecambe College**

11.1.1 The playing field affected by the construction of the route is situated to the north west of the college buildings. It is currently separated from the campus by a tall hedge and open ditch. Access is from the car park area through gaps in the hedge at the top northeast corner of the playing field. Overhead transmission lines run parallel along the southeast side of the playing field. Associated with this are 2 large pylons situated in the playing field grounds.

11.1.2 The playing fields are currently laid out to provide two football pitches which are orientated in northwest to southeast direction goal to goal. The college states that there is a training pitch situated near the bottom southwest end of the playing field. This is actually marked out as a training "grid". There is a remaining area of roughly mown grass at the end of the playing field adjacent to Morecambe Road. This is obviously not used for playing field provision, the ground is very uneven and suffers from poor drainage.

11.1.3 The existing sizes of the pitches, training grid and rough ground are as follows:

- i. Main Pitch (used by the College Football Academy) – 100 metres x 62 metres

- ii. Secondary Pitch (used by the College for general football activities) – 75 metres x 52 metres
- iii. Training Grid – 70 metres x 35 metres divided into square grids for specific football skills training
- iv. Unused 'rough' ground – 80 metres x 55 metres

11.1.4 The existing safety margins are as follows:

- i. The main pitch at the top northeast of the site has a side safety margin of 2.5 metres between the metal mesh boundary fence of Thorpe View and the touchline.
- ii. A 9 metre gap exists between main pitch and secondary pitch.
- iii. A 10 metre gap exists between secondary pitch and training grid.
- iv. The end safety margins in the northwest range from 12 to 21 metres and at the southeast end the margin ranges from 15 to 20 metres.

## **11.2 Impact of the Proposed Road Construction on Playing Field Provision**

11.2.1 The route would physically separate the affected playing field from the main college campus. The road would be on embankment from a high point (approximately 8 metres) in the northeast at Torrisholme Road sloping down to its lowest point at grade on Morecambe Road. The college playing fields on both sides of the road will be seen at this junction. The specific area of playing field lost by the road construction can be described as the area to the southeast of the line of the overhead transmission lines.

### **11.3 Mitigation Proposals**

11.3.1 I have included in my proof, two possible solutions for accommodating the football pitches.

11.3.2 The first, shown in B1, Figure 4.2.1 Appendix B (originally included in the Planning Application – Response to Objections and Comments) was in response to the college’s concerns at the loss of pitches. Two full size football pitches can be accommodated on the playing field by re-orientating them to run northeast to southwest goal to goal. In line with the existing facility, the proposed main pitch would be 100 metres x 62 metres with safety margins that fulfil recommendations (see Appendix B, B4, B5, B6, B7). The secondary pitch could be constructed within a range of pitch sizes according to the age group that it caters for (See Appendix B, B3, B5, B6, B7). In line with existing provision, it is recommended that this would be 91 metres x 59 metres to cater for college age group (15 – 18 years). There is more than adequate provision for a safety zone between touchline and any obstacles (including the pylons). To accommodate the re-orientation of the pitches, the unused rough ground would be utilised and the training grid would be lost. The training grid could be accommodated elsewhere on the college campus as the actual size of this is not crucial for its purpose. It would possibly be more appropriately sited nearer the changing facilities on the other side of the college buildings. The actual condition of the playing field would be improved where there is currently a drainage problem.

11.3.3 The second solution is shown in Appendix B, B2, Drawing No 11063/WD322.

I have included this option to demonstrate that the area of playing field remaining after construction of the road can accommodate the sports pitches and training grid at existing and slightly improved sizes.

11.3.4 In both options, relatively minor work would be required to retain the use of either the main pitch or the secondary pitch in the area nearest to Thorpe View. However, the construction of the remaining pitch would require a maximum of eighteen months from initial soil stripping, drainage works, re-levelling, seeding and establishment to first day of play. Once the new pitch came into use, work could be undertaken to improve the remaining playing field area. Although this area does not currently have the drainage problems that exist in the southwest part of the field, it was observed that there was unevenness in places due, apparently, to the settlement of ground along the lines of old hedges. Alternatively, the whole playing field could be improved in one complete operation.

11.3.5 A ball stop fence will be constructed on sides adjacent to Morecambe Road and Thorpe View (none exists at present).

11.3.6 Safe access to the playing fields from the college will be via an underpass at the northeast end of the site.

11.3.7 The appearance of the playing field will improve with perimeter landscaping. This will consist of tree and hedge planting to two sides of the playing field that will enable the pedestrian to view the playing field under the mature tree canopy but will help to screen the elevated position of the road from adjacent properties. Planting adjacent to the Thorpe View boundary (indicated on B1,

Figure 4.2.1 Appendix B) is not actually necessary for screening purposes; Thorpe View is single storey building. Omitting the tree planting will leave more space available for a ball stop fence and greater safety margins. The road embankment on the remaining side of the playing field will consist of a mixture of trees and shrubs, including evergreens.

11.3.8 It has already been acknowledged that the applicant would be willing to fund a new training area on other land within the college ground if that is deemed necessary. As this area is a training “grid” and not actually marked out as a football pitch, this should be easier to accommodate elsewhere in the college grounds.

#### **11.4 Summary**

11.4.1 I have demonstrated two possible solutions for the provision of the football pitch facilities. However, I am confident that there could be other possibilities which would utilise the open space within the college grounds more effectively. In response to Sport England’s correspondence (10 July 2006), Mr McCreesh concluded in his letter (Appendix B, B5) that “it is our intention to work closely with the College allowing them to use their expertise to allocate the compensation to the best effect for the good of the College and the local communities.”

11.4.2 With either solution, the proposals would involve improvement to the overall playing field in terms of drainage and reconstruction of some if not all of the playing field. Ultimately, this would provide higher quality facilities than already exists.

11.4.3 It would be advisable that improvements to the playing field would be part of advanced works ahead of the road construction. With careful programming, it would be possible to maintain provision of one of the football pitches if it was considered necessary.