

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/N/07/1200928 and
APP/Q2371/N/07/1200929

LPA reference:
01/05/1584

SUMMARY OF PROOF OF EVIDENCE OF JONATHAN HAINE

Deputy Group Head (Development Control)
on
Planning Policy and Development Control Issues

June 2007

PERSONAL DETAILS

Jonathan Michael Haine will say;-

I am Jonathan Michael Haine. I hold the position of Deputy Group Head in the Development Control Group in the Environment Directorate of Lancashire County Council.

I hold a BA(Hons) in Town and Country Planning and a BTP in Town Planning. Since graduating in 1992 I have held posts with Shropshire County Council and Lancashire County Council where I have undertaken development control duties relating to major development proposals, mainly in relation to minerals and waste development but also in relation to the County Council's own development proposals including new highway developments. I am therefore familiar with the planning policy issues and environmental impacts that are generated by major development proposals such as the construction of new highways.

I am a corporate member of the Royal Town Planning Institute.

1. This evidence concerns a planning application submitted by Lancashire County Council for the construction of a new highway to complete the Heysham to M6 link. The proposed development comprises of a new dual carriageway 4.8 km in length linking junction 34 of the M6 with the eastern end of phase 1 of the Heysham to M6 link.
2. The planning application for the development (ref 1/05/1584) was submitted in December 2005 and was accompanied by an Environmental Statement. The County Council resolved to grant planning permission for the development on 1st November 2006 but the application was referred to Government Office North West under a Direction served on the County Council on 8th March 2006.
3. On the 8th February 2007, the Secretary of State confirmed that the application was one that would be called in for decision following a public inquiry. In her letter of 8th March 2007, the Secretary of State sets out the issues on which she wishes to be informed for the purposes of determining this application.
4. My evidence is concerned with issues of planning policy and development control issues and therefore concentrates on issues a), d) and i) as listed in the letter from the Secretary of State.
5. Issue a) - Planning Policy
 - 5.1 The Development Plan for the area is comprised of the Regional Spatial Strategy for the North West, the Joint Lancashire Structure Plan and the Lancaster City Local Plan. The replacement RSS for the North West has reached an advance stage in preparation and therefore it is considered that this document now carries significant weight.
 - 5.2 Policy T3 of the RSS identifies those roads which comprise the Regional Highway Network and states that high priority will be given to maintenance, management and selective improvement of these routes. The A683 between the M6 and the port of Heysham is included within the Regional Highway Network. The proposed development is therefore considered to be supported by policy T3 as a scheme for the selective improvement of the Regional Highway Network. This point is considered to be reinforced by policy RT8 of the replacement RSS which actually lists the proposed development as a regional priority for transport investment.
 - 5.3 The Joint Lancashire Structure Plan sets out general policies for land use planning in Lancashire including improvement of transport infrastructure. Policy 8 of the JLSP includes the completion of the Heysham to M6 link as a scheme that will deliver benefits in terms

of improving links to Morecambe and Heysham and providing opportunities to enhance public transport provision in Lancaster.

- 5.4 The completion of the Heysham to M6 link is a long standing scheme and featured in the previous edition of the Lancashire Structure Plan (Policy 34). However, the fact that the scheme still appears in the current edition of the JLSP, illustrates that the objectives of the road are well founded, given that it has been tested against a changing policy background.
- 6. Issue d) - Green Belt
 - 6.1 Most of the highway route is located within the Green Belt. As the highway development is considered to be inappropriate development within the Green Belt, very special circumstances must be demonstrated to justify the location of the development within the Green Belt.
 - 6.2 All of the undeveloped land to the north of Lancaster lies within the Green Belt and therefore any 'northern route' would impact upon the Green Belt. The only alternative alignments are to the west and south of Lancaster and all of these would have ecological impacts that render such alignments unacceptable. A route to the north of Lancaster is therefore considered to be the only means of realising the development plan presumption that is given to the completion of the Heysham to M6 link. The lack of any acceptable alternative route outside of the Green Belt along with the various economic and environmental benefits that would be derived from the construction of the road are considered to comprise the very special circumstances to justify the location of the development within the Green Belt.
- 7. Issue i) – Conditions and Planning Obligations to be attached to any permission.
 - 7.1 Core document LCC 25 is a list of planning conditions that are suggested to be attached to any planning permission. It is considered that these comply with the tests for planning conditions set out in circular 11/95 and are sufficient to control the environmental impacts of the development.
 - 7.2 A planning obligation (Core Document LCC26) has also been prepared with regard to ecological mitigation in the Howgill Brook valley and management of the landscaping along the whole link road route.

