

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

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01/05/1584

PROOF OF EVIDENCE - SUMMARY IRVINE PICZENIK

Regional Director - Faber Maunsell

Regeneration

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0. INTRODUCTION.

0.1 I am Irvine Piczenik a Regional Director with Faber Maunsell Ltd and a Chartered Transport Planner with a total of 21 years experience (14 years with Faber Maunsell). I was previously employed by Allott & Lomax and Staffordshire County Council. I have a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Economics, a Master of Science Degree in Transport Planning and a Master of Business Administration Degree. I have worked on a range of projects covering transport modelling, public transport, regeneration, strategy assessment and development control. My particular area of expertise is in economic and financial assessment and appraisal. At Faber Maunsell I am responsible for Transport Planning projects undertaken across the North West of England.

0.2 In my evidence I cover the wider economic impacts of a completed Heysham to M6 Link.

1. ECONOMIC IMPACT REPORT.

1.1 Faber Maunsell was commissioned by Lancashire County Council to produce an Economic Impact Report (EIR) to support the Major Scheme Business Case (submitted in July 2005) for the Completion of the Heysham to M6 Link.

1.2 The purpose of the EIR is to assess the wider economic impacts of the proposed scheme and in particular how it will impact on the economy of local regeneration areas.

2. METHODOLOGY.

2.1 The EIR for the scheme was prepared in accordance with the DfT Guidance on preparing an Economic Impact Report.

3. THE REGENERATION AREA.

3.1 The EIR guidance for assessing the wider economic impacts of transport schemes only applies to Regeneration Areas (RAs).

3.2 The definition of the RA (see Figure 1) was carried out using the guidance and in conjunction with Lancaster City Council.

4. POLICY CONTEXT.

4.1 Whilst the overall planning policy justification for the scheme is considered in the Proofs of Evidence by Andrew Dobson and Jonathan Haine, within this context it is important to emphasise the significance attached to the scheme by the Northwest Regional Economic Strategy (RES), 2006.

4.2 The RES identifies the following action 'Grow the port of Heysham. In support, deliver related development and transport links (Heysham to M6 Link)'.

5. SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONTEXT.

5.1 The most recent data from the Annual Business Inquiry shows that between 1998 and 2005 the number of jobs in Lancaster District as a whole increased from 51,677 in 1998 to 53,432 in 2005, a net increase of 1,755 (3.4%) over 7 years.

5.2 In 2001 the level of unemployment of residents in the regeneration area as a proportion of the total economically active population was 7.1%.

5.3 The most recent Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) was produced in 2004 by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, (now the Department for Communities and Local Government). In 2004, large areas of north Lancaster, Morecambe and Heysham fell within the bottom 20% of Super Output Areas (SOA's) in England.

6. BUSINESS SURVEY.

6.1 The DfT EIR guidance identifies the need to undertake an audit of existing employers in the RA. It suggests that an effective way of doing this is to carry out surveys with employers in the RA using structured or semi-structured questionnaires.

6.2 The questionnaire (see Appendix C) was distributed to all businesses in Lancaster District that were registered on the Lancashire County Council business directory. Of the 390 questionnaires sent out, 155 had been returned at the time of the analysis being undertaken, giving a high response rate of 40%, which indicates the level of interest in the scheme amongst businesses.

6.3 For the regeneration area, recruitment of staff emerged as a significant issue with 56% of businesses either finding recruitment 'Very Difficult' or 'Difficult'. A 'lack of staff with the right skills' was the most commonly identified aspect as 'causes many problems', followed by 'poor accessibility to site'.

6.4 When asked about business location, the most commonly identified disadvantage was 'congestion and poor road conditions'. Other disadvantages identified included 'poor access for staff/customers' and 'supply and cost of parking'.

6.5 In response to the question of what would improve the location, by far the most commonly stated response was 'improved links to the M6' – this was cited by 45 businesses. It should be noted that this was an open-ended response question with no prompts.

7. STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS.

7.1 Interviews with important local stakeholders were undertaken in order to enable a more in-depth discussion of the issues. These were held with:

- Port of Heysham Ltd;
- Lancaster University;
- Morecambe Chamber of Commerce;
- Lancaster Chamber of Commerce; and
- Fisher Wrathall (Valuation Surveyors and Property Consultants).

7.2 In summary, the stakeholder interviews demonstrated strong support for the scheme amongst employers in the regeneration area. The scheme is considered pivotal to attracting inward investment and would offer particular benefits to those areas most in need to the west of the River Lune (including Morecambe and Heysham). A shortage of accessible and

serviced employment land was thought to be a key issue and a constraint to job growth. It was considered that the scheme would be successful in opening up areas of employment land where access is very poor and so contribute to the long term vitality of the local economy.

8. ACCESSIBILITY IMPACTS.

8.1 The EIR guidance states that improved travel conditions may be achieved via reduced journey times, reduced journey costs, improved journey quality, or improved journey reliability. The net effect is a change in the patterns of accessibility.

8.2 The impact of the scheme was assessed with respect to forecast changes in the accessible workforce and accessible jobs in the regeneration area. The accessible workforce is the number of people willing to travel there to work, given the travel costs they would have to bear, whereas accessible jobs are defined as the number of suitable jobs that are within an acceptable range.

8.3 With the scheme in place, the accessible workforce is forecast to increase by 17% and the number of accessible jobs is forecast to increase by 22%. This is based on an average from five different locations across the regeneration area.

9. EMPLOYMENT FORECASTS.

9.1 The shortage of accessible industrial land in the regeneration area was a recurring issue and has been validated by Lancaster City Council, through the stakeholder interviews and business survey. This was corroborated in

a Lancaster District Economic Baseline report produced by Regeneris Consulting in 2005 (see Appendix B, page 21).

9.2 The number of jobs that could be generated by the take-up of four key available allocated employment sites was assessed – the sites (see Figure 2) were identified by the Economic Development section at Lancaster City Council and are allocated in the Lancaster District Local Plan.

9.3 From these discussions, a 'Do Minimum' scenario was identified to represent the amount of land which would be taken up without the scheme in place by 2020. Two further scenarios, 'Best Estimate' and 'High', included the land take-up assumptions with the scheme in place.

9.4 With the scheme in place, the net increase in jobs by 2020 under the 'Best Estimate' scenario is forecast to be 1,026 - this assumes that 389 jobs will be generated in the Do Minimum. This represents an increase of 2.4% in the regeneration area.

10. CONCLUSION.

10.1 In conclusion, completion of the Heysham to M6 Link is clearly of fundamental importance to achieving a range of regional as well as local economic objectives and impacts on a number of designated regeneration areas.

10.2 Support for the scheme from businesses in the area was demonstrated through the business survey, which achieved a very high response rate of 40%. When asked what would improve their location, by far the most

commonly stated response was 'improved links to the M6' (cited by 45 businesses).

10.3 Importantly, the scheme addresses accessibility issues to areas west of the River Lune, which are most in need of regeneration and where most development opportunities are. The shortage of accessible industrial land in the regeneration area is a recurring issue and has been corroborated in the full version of this proof.

10.4 The process of forecasting the number of additional jobs therefore focussed on an assessment of the number of jobs that could be generated if employment land that is currently considered to be inaccessible is developed, following implementation of the scheme. A forecast of 1,026 net additional jobs (by 2020) across 4 sites allocated in the Lancaster District Local Plan has been made. This represents an increase of 2.4% in the number of jobs across the regeneration area and is considered to be a conservative estimate.