

**APP/Q2371/V/07/1200928 &  
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LMC/DW/1**

**THE TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 SECTION 77**

**TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (INQUIRIES PROCEDURE) (ENGLAND) RULES  
2000**

**CALL-IN INQUIRY TO CONSIDER LANCASHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL'S  
APPLICATION FOR PLANNING PERMISSION IN RELATION TO THE  
CONSTRUCTION OF THE HEYSHAM TO M6 LINK**

**PROOF OF EVIDENCE**

**OF**

**DAVID WOOD, PRINCIPAL OF LANCASTER AND MORECAMBE COLLEGE**

**ON BEHALF OF LANCASTER AND MORECAMBE COLLEGE**

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 My name is David Wood and I have been the Principal and Chief Executive of Lancaster and Morecambe College, for nearly 4 years. I have worked in secondary and further education for 33 years since 1974. Prior to this post, I worked at Milton Keynes, Swindon and West Oxfordshire Colleges after transferring from schools in 1985.

1.2 As the College's Principal, I am responsible for providing clear strategic leadership and a focus on the mission, purpose and outcomes of the College. I ensure that the College provides excellent teaching and learning and set clear performance standards to achieve this.

1.3 The purpose of my Proof of Evidence is to explain why the College is opposed to the proposed link road. The College currently provides a vital educational and public resource for the local community and the wider area. It is also an important local employer, with 950 staff. The College's campus will be severed in two by the proposed link road, separating our playing fields from the remainder of the campus.

1.4 I have grave concerns that the construction and operation of the proposed link road will have a significant negative impact on the College's ability to attract students and other community users and that these effects are so serious that they could lead to the closure of the College and the loss of this extremely valuable educational and community resource.

1.5 In this Proof of Evidence I will:-

1.5.1 explain the crucial role that the College currently plays in the local community, the wider area and for the local economy;

1.5.2 describe the negative impacts which the proposed link road will have during the construction phase and thereafter;

1.5.3 explain the effect that these negative impacts will have on the College's ability to continue to operate.

## 2. LANCASTER AND MORECAMBE COLLEGE

2.1 The College campus is situated on the A589 midway between Lancaster and Morecambe. The location of our campus is shown shaded orange on the plan at Appendix 1 of my Proof of Evidence (see **Document LMC/DW/2**).

- 2.2 The College was first established in 1824 with the Library and Mechanics Institute in Mary Street, Lancaster. It occupied various sites in Lancaster and in 1891, it opened as the Storey Institute in completely rebuilt premises. The College has occupied its current site since 1953 and was officially opened in its entirety on 5 July 1963 by the Duke of Edinburgh. The most modern blocks, the Art and Sports blocks, were added in 2000 and 2002 respectively to reflect the increasing demand for College provision.
- 2.3 The College is a General Further Education College that was incorporated along with all other Further Education (FE) Colleges as a self-governing business in 1993. It is part of the national Further Education Sector with 85% of its £21 million budget being obtained from the Learning and Skills Council ("the LSC") for the provision of education and training services to young people 14 – 19, adults and employers. As a publicly funded organisation, the College is subject to a strict regime of target setting, audit and inspection, to ensure public funds are spent appropriately.
- 2.4 The College is one of the largest employers in the area, with over 660 staff employed on the main site and 290 employed in prisons. The College is led by the Principal and Chief Executive supported by a Senior Management Team comprising the Deputy Principal; the Director of Finance and Information Services and the Director of Corporate Services.
- 2.5 The College is organised into 4 Faculties and a range of support sections which deliver the curriculum and services to students and employers. LMC Business front our work with employers. Our diverse workforce includes Academic Managers (in charge of curriculum areas), Business Support Managers (in charge of cross college areas such as IT, finance, personnel, health & safety, nursery, student services, library, estates); lecturers (in curriculum areas); support staff (in curriculum and cross college areas); ancillary workers; student support workers, assessors and work based learning staff.
- 2.6 Importantly as the College is the only provider of general further education to the community of Lancaster and Morecambe, the College's welfare and stability is crucial to enable it to fulfil its role as a provider of education and training to its community. In this light, the College is seen as a major community organisation providing a range of essential services. The College provides educational services to 300 14 – 16 year old pupils from schools, meets the needs of employers via a range of open and customised courses that generate over £200K of income, provides a range of academic and vocational courses to enable young people and

adults to acquire trade and professional qualifications, many of whom in turn enter the local job market. In addition the College works with other agencies to include Connexions, and Job Centre Plus to engage workless adults and young people not in education, in employment and training.

2.7 The College's mission statement (currently under review) reads, "**LMC – providing excellence in education and training within the community.**" This statement not only reinforces the College commitment to meeting the needs of its local community, but also the high standards it seeks to achieve in pursuit of this goal.

2.8 The College serves a wide community that is socially, culturally and economically diverse. As the major further education provider in the area, the College occupies a pivotal community role in the training of young people, adults and employers. It also provides important community services and facilities.

2.9 The College aims to educate, train and develop people of all levels of ability. Our key market segments are:

2.9.1 14-16 year old school learners - this provision for over 300 young people provides courses for approximately 30 pupils who have been excluded from schools; over 120 from specialist schools whose pupils have a variety of behavioural and physical difficulties and a large number of pupils on government or school funded programmes, such as the Increased Flexibility Programme, Skills Fast Forward, Young Apprenticeships and school specific courses in particular curriculum areas.

2.9.2 16-19 year olds following academic and vocational programmes - 1600 young people are studying at the College on a broad range of academic and vocational courses that have uniquely developed to meet the needs of the area the college serves, to include Lancaster and Morecambe, Cumbria, North Yorkshire and Garstang, north of Preston. The College estimates that nearly 500 students attend the College from outlying areas which indicates not only strong local support but also that for many of these students prepared to travel long distances, they make their choice based on both the College's high reputation and also its specialist provision.

- 2.9.3 Adult students following a range of programmes including Skills for Life, academic and vocational training - over 5000 adults are engaged on college courses. This figure includes 364 on full time courses, 2,296 on vocational part time courses, 400 on Train to Gain (level 2 Government Programme) and 2000 who have attended college full cost, industry specific short courses. It is well recorded that many adults and employers are reluctant to travel long distances for training and therefore, this provision clearly underpins the business economy of the area.
- 2.9.4 Employers and workforce development - the College, via its curriculum staff and specialist LMC Business Team, works with over 300 employers and has provided 200 short courses for business in the last 12 months. It is the main portal for government training programmes such as Train to Gain and Apprenticeships. In this regard the College trains over 200 apprentices each year and is by far the biggest provider in this area.
- 2.9.5 Learners with Disabilities/Learning Difficulties - we currently have 423 students who require additional learning support at some level in order to access the college. The type of support required is indicated in the summary table attached as Appendix 5 to this Proof (**see Document LMC/DW/2**). These figures represent the learners that we have assessed in the Learning Support Department. However, some learners may not have declared their disabilities due to the location and situation of the College which voids any impact of their disability on access and so it is irrelevant, but this may become an issue at a different venue, or if the proposed road goes ahead. Some learners have multiple disabilities/difficulties which makes them particularly vulnerable to change and traffic.
- 2.9.6 Offenders in custody and the community - the College delivers education and vocational training to over 4000 offenders each year across the six Lancashire prisons. In addition it is leading an initiative to work with offenders when they have served their sentence and return to the community. To date over 300 ex-offenders are on this programme.

### **Courses offered by the College**

2.10 The College provides the most extensive range of provision in the area for young people, 14 – 19 and adults. The College teaches 1600 16 – 18 year olds; this is nearly 6 times bigger than the largest school sixth form of 280.

2.11 The 1600 16 – 18 learners studying on the College's full time provision are augmented by an additional 360 adults many of whom want to obtain qualifications which they failed to achieve at school. In reality therefore, the College's full time provision totals nearly 2000 students. Courses are provided at:

- Entry (e.g., First Step);
- Level 1 (GCSE Grade D-G, Introductory Certificate, NVQ 1);
- Level 2 (GCSE Grade 1 – C, First Diploma, Apprenticeship, NVQ 2);
- Level 3 (AS/A2, International Baccalaureate, National Diploma, Advanced Apprenticeship, NVQ 3);
- Level 4 (Foundation Degree, NVQ 4).

2.12 This range of courses includes provision that is largely unavailable elsewhere in Lancaster and Morecambe post 16. Specifically this means the full range of courses at Entry and Levels 1 and 2, the International Baccalaureate, Apprenticeships and NVQs. Construction and Engineering workshops, Beauty and Hairdressing Salons, Catering and Hospitality outlets are specialist facilities not provided elsewhere in the area.

2.13 In addition the College has 12 Real Work Environments (RWEs), which are designed to offer our students experience with real customers who pay for the services they receive. The 12 RWEs are:

The College Shop - provides gifts, minerals, snacks, confectionary, stamps, greetings cards and stationery.

College Canines - dog grooming parlour - providing care services to family pets.

Rotary House - a fully equipped training flat that enables people with disabilities and/or learning difficulties to acquire and practice independent living skills.

Community Sports and Coaching Centre - open every day, including weekends and evenings, offering a programme of activities from fitness classes to trampolining and badminton. This centre also offers coaching to Primary School Children.

Body Works - The Sports Medicine Centre - offering a range of specialist treatments for muscular-skeletal and spinal problems.

The Bistro - providing food and drink throughout the day and evening.

The Patisserie - selling hot snacks and a selection of sandwiches, breads, pastries and cakes.

Coulsons Restaurant - College Restaurant of the Year 2005-06. An award winning restaurant with a contemporary interior providing top class catering at lunchtimes and evenings.

Beauty Salon - offering a variety of facial and body treatments, open most days and evenings.

Hairdressing Salon - providing a range of hairdressing services, open most days and evenings.

Advantage Travel Centre - offering a full package of travel services.

The Nursery - providing a nursery service to students, staff and external clients.

2.14 The RWEs have been designed and fitted to commercial standards to give students an opportunity to develop and practice their vocational skills on fee paying customers whilst still having close supervision and support from their tutors.

2.15 In addition to these unique, prestigious specialist vocational facilities, the College also has a successful portfolio of academic courses to include, "A" levels, and more recently the International Baccalaureate. These academic courses are based in E Block which is 24 metres from the proposed road and because they are level 3 programmes, are the most heavily contested area of recruitment with

local schools. The building was originally built as a painting and decorating workshop some years ago, and has poor insulation and soundproofing by today's standards.

- 2.16 Students seeking similar vocational, educational and training experiences to those provided at the College would have to travel over 20 miles to either Kendal or Preston Colleges to find alternative provision, which for many would be an insurmountable hurdle due to their lack of confidence or commitment to spend so much time travelling.
- 2.17 The Offenders Learning and Skills Service (OLASS) Contract was won by the College in 2005 to provide education and vocational training to offenders in the six Lancashire prisons, at Lancaster (2), Preston, Garth, Wymott and Kirkham. This work is geared to ensuring that offenders not only receive appropriate education and employability skills while serving their prison sentence, but also that they will be able to continue when they return to their local community. It is a major feature in the government's agenda to challenge re-offending and lower rates of criminal behaviour.
- 2.18 A full list of the courses offered by the College, with brief explanations where appropriate, are provided in Appendix 2 of my Proof of Evidence (see **Document LMC/DW/2**) .
- 2.19 Photographs illustrating the broad range of courses offered at the College are provided at Appendix 6 of my Proof of Evidence (see **Document LMC/DW/2**) .

### **The College's students**

The College currently provides education and training to 7000 students which includes:

- 300 14 – 16 year olds
  - 1600 16 – 18 year olds
  - 360 full time adults
  - 4,700 part time adults
- 2.20 75% of full time students are from a 3 mile radius of the College indicating a strong local demand. The remaining 25% of students are from Cumbria, North Yorkshire and Garstang.

- 2.21 There are a number of factors which impact on the composition of the full time cohort. 11 – 18 Schools work very hard to retain their most able students with the large majority of their provision being at level 3 (A level). Consequently the College has had to develop a large range of programmes at levels 2/3 (59% of college course income), in addition to level 3 programmes (41% of College course income). Therefore the College is attracting a large number of young people from schools who have failed to achieve the base school standard of 5 GCSEs A – C.
- 2.22 Consequently many of these young people who have had a disappointing school career look to the College to provide them with a second chance; they often lack confidence and maturity and require the full range of academic and student support services such as counselling and learning support to enable them to achieve. It cannot be sufficiently emphasised that the social and academic learning environment of the College is much more suited to the needs of these young people, many of whom have become disaffected as a result of their school experience.

#### **The College's sporting facilities**

- 2.23 The College is a major provider of sporting facilities in the area. It has three football pitches on the west of the site, one in the front of the College and a full size, floodlight rugby pitch on the east of the College site. The location of these pitches is shown on the plan attached as Appendix 7A to this proof (see **Document LCC/DW/2**).
- 2.24 The College also has a modern Sports Hall and a gymnasium, both of which are heavily used throughout the day and evening. The College generates over £85,000 per year from the income generated from these facilities which are hired to community groups such as, football, cricket, badminton, Karate, fencing, dance, table tennis, trampolining and wheelchair basketball clubs. Attached as Appendix 10 of my proof (see **Document LCC/DW/2**) is a list of all the community and youth groups who currently use our facilities. I also attach a list which shows the usage of the facilities in an average peak time week. This list shows the concentration of usage over a one week period and the numbers of individuals attending each booking.
- 2.25 The College has a thriving Sports Academy which is the largest growth area for the College. The Sports Academy is an additional programme aimed at students who wish to combine academic studies with individual sports development and

qualifications. It is made up of Sports Development Centres in Men's Football, Women's Football, Rugby Union, Rugby League, Hockey and Netball.

- 2.26 Students study a full-time academic course and in addition they receive up to ten hours per week of professional sports training. Students may study a variety of academic programmes and sports courses are offered to complement the Sports Academy.
- 2.27 The three main objectives of the Sports Academy are:-
- 2.27.1 to develop individual and team skills in the chosen sport through professional coaching programmes;
  - 2.27.2 to develop coaching skills by taking Governing Body Awards;
  - 2.27.3 to play for and represent Lancaster and Morecambe College in local, regional and national competitions.
- 2.28 The Football Academy was set up in 1998 in conjunction with Morecambe Football Club to ensure that local soccer talent stays in the area. Students study for their academic courses in the mornings in College and undertake training and coaching sessions in the afternoons. At weekends they play for Morecambe FC's junior and reserve sides and at the end of their courses several students are taken on each year by Morecambe Football Club on professional contracts, several gain football scholarships from American Universities and many progress to Higher Education courses.
- 2.29 In the current Morecambe FC 1<sup>st</sup> team squad, which has recently been promoted to the Football League, eleven out of the twenty six players are former College students who have been part of the academy system. In the recent conference play-off final at Wembley two former students, Garry Thompson and Danny Carlton, scored the goals for Morecambe.
- 2.30 A formal arrangement was also made in September 2006 for a similar link to be made with women's football. Progression is in place for local girls, via our Women's Football Development Centre, to gain the skills and experience needed to play senior Women's Football. A team plays in the Lancashire County League, Division 2 on Sundays at the College.

### **The College's community facilities**

2.31 The College is totally integrated into the life of its community and provides not just education and training facilities but also sports and personal services which attract over 48,000 users each year, which I have outlined below:

Travel Shop	150 customers per year
Coulsons Restaurant	6,000 customers per year
Pet Grooming Parlour	420 customers per year
Hair & Beauty Services	6,096 customers per year
Sport Centre	31,850 users per year
Children's Parties	1,753 users per year
Hexagon Theatre	2,000 users to per year

2.32 These facilities are used by all age groups to include the young, elderly and the disabled. To enable as many people as possible to access our facilities the College fees are extremely good value and appreciated by local people who live on relatively modest incomes. The services we provide at relatively low cost are an important contribution to the culture of the local community enabling local people and groups to mix together in a harmonious and socially cohesive way. No other local institution provides this breadth of service to its community.

### **The College's role on the local economy**

2.33 The College is one of the area's major employers with 660 staff employed on its main site, with a further 290 in prisons throughout Lancashire. Given that the College spends 65% of its income on its staff; this equates to £9,035m per year, going into the area's economy via the College's main site staff. Clearly this is crucial income to the local economy which has suffered from a decline in economic prosperity in some areas and especially in Morecambe. The College's policy on the balance of expenditure (35%) is underpinned by a commitment to purchase local services whenever cost effective, and therefore a substantial part of this portion of income would be spent in the local area.

2.34 The College's Destinations 2006/07 Report indicates that 85.6% of the College's full time students continue in education or find employment on completion of

their course. 32% of this figure go into employment and many into local businesses e.g. on the Food and Drink Services, NVQ Level 2 programme; 19% continued in further education and 81% went into employment in a variety of posts to include, The Albion Hotel, Arnside; Mitchells Brewery; Blue Anchor Inn; Fisherman's Arms; Marco's Restaurant; Lancastrian Pub at Ulverston; Morrisons Supermarket. This pattern is reflected across the College's extensive range of vocational courses to include hairdressing, beauty, construction, catering, engineering, travel and tourism, care and Apprenticeships.

- 2.35 The College's contribution to employers is further enhanced when considering the outcomes of training given to 4,700 part time students, the vast majority of which are employed and use College courses to enhance their skills. Indeed many of these individuals have their course fees paid by their employers whose business has developed as a direct result.

#### **The competitive educational market in which the College operates**

- 2.36 The College's unique and high quality specialist vocational facilities have enabled it to attract the vast majority of those young people who want these skills. However, as far as academic level 3 learners are concerned, the College is located in the most competitive 16 – 18 market in Lancashire. This is because there are six 11 – 18 schools within a three mile radius of the College's campus, including two nationally recognised Grammar Schools (Lancaster Girls' Grammar School and Lancaster Royal Grammar School).
- 2.37 In practice this means that when local young people at 16 are choosing where to attend for their post 16 education the College is only 1 of 7 possible choices.
- 2.38 There are a number of factors that influence a young person when they are choosing whether to stay at school or come to College at 16. These include the College's reputation (particularly word of mouth), the views of school teachers, the quality of the campus environment (including the quality of the classrooms, buildings, facilities and recreational areas), accessibility and the type of courses offered.
- 2.39 Obviously it is difficult for the College to influence what messages schools give their pupils about their choices and the College. However, because of the competition the College is not allowed to speak directly to this cohort of young people by a number of the 11 – 18 schools because they don't want to lose their most able pupils. Consequently the College relies on its open evenings and

school liaison activities e.g., taster days, attendance at careers events etc., to get its message across.

- 2.40 The challenging and competitive nature of the local education market is exacerbated by a declining cohort at 16 which will decline by 20% by 2015, from 1700 to 1350 young people (ONS population estimates).

### 3. FINANCIAL POSITION

- 3.1 The College's recent financial history is that of recovery from near insolvency in August 2003, when the failure to recruit 16 – 18 year olds and adults resulted in a huge loss of income. The College's failure to recruit students was in no large part due to its failure to invest in facilities for students and to improve the whole fabric of its campus. The College received additional funding from the LSC, and this, combined with an effective recovery plan, proved to be successful and the College is now in sound financial health. This Recovery Plan was developed and implemented by the current Senior Management Team, and the College has a strong reputation with the Learning and Skills Council for being efficiently managed.

- 3.2 The College's 2006/07 budget is made up of the following components:

LSC Main Allocation		£9,500,000
Offenders Learning and Skills Service ("OLASS")		£6,900,000
Other:		
European/Community Projects	£675,000	
Work Based Learning/E2E	£820,000	
Train to Gain	£380,000	
HE Franchise	£140,000	
External Agency	£360,000	
Full cost courses	£210,000	
Year 11/Links	£200,000	
Tuition and Exam Fees	£285,000	
Nursery provision	£125,000	
Sales from Real Work Environments	£400,000	
Interest	£165,000	
Sales from Schools	£95,000	
Bus Grants	£65,000	

Sports Facility Hire	£72,000	
Deferred Capital Grants	£58,000	
Catering	£175,000	
Miscellaneous Income	£175,000	£4,400,000
		<b>£20,800,000</b>

- 3.3 As explained above, the OLASS contract with the Learning and Skills Council is to provide education and training to offenders across the six Lancashire prisons. Clearly the OLASS contract is significant and does contribute an income surplus to the College, but this will have to be tendered for in 2008/09 and it is possible that the College could lose this work to a competitor. This means that the core FE budget of £13,900,000 (ie £20,800,000 minus £6,900,000) is the foundation of the College's financial stability.
- 3.4 The surplus generated from the core FE budget of £13,900,000 is approximately 3% of income (ie £417,000). Therefore, although the College is financially well managed, its margin of income over costs is very small with little room for in-year loss.
- 3.5 The College receives the bulk of its income from the LSC with targets for 16 – 19 and adults at 19+. These figures are then multiplied by a funding rate and aggregated for the total income. The funding rate per each full time learner is £4,255 and £2,800 for adults to reflect the portion that should be charged as a fee to the student. For 2007/8 the College has been awarded LSC funding of £9,788,621, within which £6,259,321 is for 16-18 year olds and £2,693,919 for adults. This means that the College is heavily dependent on its 16-18 funding with 64% for 16-18 year olds and 28% for adults (8% for Learning Support). Failure to meet its 16-18 recruitment target would be catastrophic as the funding would be withdrawn from the College and this would be reflected in the following year's allocations so beginning a downward spiral.
- 3.6 Since the College is already very efficiently managed there is little room for cost savings. In the event of a drop in recruitment due to the link road it is inevitable that courses will be closed where numbers are low. At this time vocational provision will be at risk due to the expensive facilities and resources required. As courses close this has a knock on effect as it will remove progression routes for students and therefore further reduce the College's course offer.

- 3.7 Also at risk will be level 3 academic programmes as these are well provided for by schools and with the choice available for learners, students will not come to the College. Although these courses are less expensive to run because they don't require so many specialist facilities, they do contribute to the College's overheads. Therefore, if their contribution to College overheads fell this would lead to redundancies amongst support staff across the College, thereby reducing services to continuing provision.
- 3.8 The net impact of a failure to recruit would be to seriously undermine the College's financial position, to make a number of staff redundant and to weaken the College's curriculum offer in future years, thereby creating a downward spiral that would be difficult to reverse given the continuing presence of the M6 Link Road.

#### 4. **THE COLLEGE'S CAMPUS**

- 4.1 The College has been on its current site since 1953.
- 4.2 All College buildings are well maintained with an annual planned maintenance programme.
- 4.3 Details of the buildings are as follows (please see plan of site buildings at Appendix 3 of my proof - **Document LCC/DW/2**):-

**A BLOCK** – A single storey building, constructed in the late 1950s and in fair condition. Vocational workshops for tuition in Craft and Construction and Engineering; classrooms for tuition in Health & Social Care and general classrooms.

**B BLOCK** - A three storey building, constructed in the early 1960s and in satisfactory condition. Classrooms for IT and science; administration offices and specialist provision for students with learning difficulties.

**MODULAR BUILDING** – A three storey building, constructed in 2002. General classrooms and administration offices.

**C BLOCK** – A seven storey building, constructed in the 1960s and in satisfactory condition. Classrooms for tuition in Health & Social Care and IT; Learning Resource Centre, Library, Reception, Shop, Bistro, Restaurant Facilities.

**D BLOCK** – A five storey building, constructed in the 1970s and in satisfactory condition. Classrooms for tuition in Health, Hair, Beauty, Business, Travel and Tourism; Hospitality Provision.

**E BLOCK** – A two storey building, constructed by the Local Authority, refurbished at incorporation (1993) and in good condition. Classrooms for tuition in IT, AS, A levels and Access.

**ROTARY HOUSE** - Adapted from an existing single storey structure. Training flat for people with learning difficulties and disabilities to enable them to practice living skills in a real work environment.

**F BLOCK** – a single storey building, mainly constructed in the 1960s with later addition and in good condition. Classrooms for tuition in the Construction Trades (Brickwork, carpentry and joinery).

**H BLOCK (HEXAGON THEATRE)** – a single storey building, constructed in 1960 and in excellent condition, having just undergone a refurbishment. Used as an Assembly Hall, performance space, exhibition space and for examinations.

**K BLOCK** – a two storey building, opened in October 2002 and in excellent condition. Classrooms for tuition in Art and Design; media and multi media.

**N BLOCK** – a single storey building, constructed in the early 1960s and in satisfactory condition, used as a nursery for the children of learners and staff, and also children of members of the public.

**S BLOCK** – a two storey building, opened in April 2000 and in excellent condition. Sports Halls, gymnasium, classrooms. It is a purpose built sports centre, part funded by the National Lottery Fund, and used by the College and for community use.

4.4 The external areas of the College include:-

4.4.1 474 car parking places

4.4.2 5 sports pitches including 1 full size floodlit rugby pitch, 1 senior sized soccer pitch, 1 soccer pitch suitable for 13 – 15 year old play, and 2 small training pitches. The proximity of the pitches to the main campus is very beneficial to the College and significantly improves the quality of teaching and learning. There is a minimum of time lost between changing and getting on to the pitches, staff can more easily

observe student activities and maintain control, health and safety issues can be more easily monitored, and teaching resources are much closer to hand if required.

4.4.3 Overall the campus is located within an envelope of green, well kept, fields and is therefore very attractive to prospective students who very much enjoy the "open campus" feel to the college.

4.4.4 The existing footprint of the college has been tightly controlled by the local council, and we have been unable to build on any of our green space.

4.5 Following prudent management of income and costs, the College has invested in the site over recent years as follows:-

4.5.1 Construction of new Sports Hall in 2000 (Block S) - £2.2m

4.5.2 Construction of Art & Design in 2002 (Block K) - £1.5m

4.5.3 IT - £1m

4.5.4 Minor Works/Maintenance/Grounds - £1m per annum

4.5.5 Access/A Level Centre - £100K

4.6 The basic campus layout was devised long before the conception of the road proposal. The campus layout presents a considered "public face" to its neighbours on the north east, north west, south west, and south east boundaries. This "public face" comprises either the main elevations of the most visually significant buildings or grassed recreational areas.

4.7 Building development at the campus over the last 10 years has acknowledged the original planning intention and preserved a significant green landscaped margin to all boundaries, except to the relatively short walled garden centre on the north side on which car parking has been constructed. There is a distance of at least 67 metres between the campus buildings and existing highways bounding the site. The campus is accessed by pedestrians and vehicular traffic from the entrances on Morecambe Road and Torrisholme Road.

## 5. THE COLLEGE'S FUTURE PLANS

- 5.1 The College's core provision and the foundation of its financial stability, is its 14 – 19 provision for young people. Given the fierce local competition from schools, and declining numbers of young people at 16, the College needs to considerably improve its accommodation and facilities if it is to maintain or improve its market share with local schools, which will be re-built as a result of the Government's "Schools For the Future" capital investment strategy. Further, the College must continue to develop new and exciting programmes if it is to continue to attract young people. For 2007/08 the International Baccalaureate, music courses at level 2 and 3 and electronic games development are examples of new courses on offer.
- 5.2 In addition the Government's published plans to extend the learning age to 18 should attract more students to the College, provided our facilities and environment match those of local schools.
- 5.3 The College is currently undergoing a review of its development plans for the future but has not been able to move forward with the implementation of any new development due to the uncertainties caused by the proposed link road proposals, and as a result has not been able to accommodate student needs for a social centre.
- 5.4 In general the College's plans for its campus are to improve existing facilities and to make it a more attractive place to learn. We also need to urgently address the problems that we face with inadequate car parking provision, as explained further in Section 9 below.
- 5.5 The College wishes to renew the older parts of its estate, especially in the area of A Block, the main Construction facility, but has not been able to proceed as the negotiations over the M6 Link Road have a direct impact on this curriculum area and its facility at F Block which is closest to the road.
- 5.6 All of our plans have had to be put on hold whilst the link road proposals are being considered.
- 5.7 I am very concerned that the existence of the link road would place a considerable and permanent constraint on the College's ability to grow and develop to respond to the changing needs of the education market and students demands and I discuss these concerns in more detail in Sections 8 and 9 below.

## 6. ACCESS TO THE COLLEGE

6.1 The College is located between Lancaster and Morecambe and is approximately 2 miles from either town centre. The main road access to the College is from the A6 into the back of the College or via the main road to Morecambe.

6.2 The train station is in Lancaster, 2 miles away, but a cycle path runs close to the College. However, given this is a comparatively rural area outside the town boundaries, staff and students have to travel some distance into the College. Whilst bus services are frequent between Lancaster and Morecambe during the day from 9.00 am and 6.00 pm they are infrequent after 6.00 pm when the College is still operating. Further there is not a direct service to the College from Carnforth and surrounding areas at any time, with students having to travel into Lancaster and change buses.

6.3 The College provides a free bus service for students from Garstang, Cumbria and North Yorkshire and offers free bus passes for those on low incomes who live in the immediate Lancaster and Morecambe area who can use the local bus services. Without this provision many students would be unable to afford the daily bus fares.

6.4 Below is a table which shows the routes of the College's free bus service and the numbers of students who rely on this service.

<b>Area</b>	<b>Route</b>	<b>Students</b>	<b>%</b>
North Yorkshire	Settle	82	<b>16</b>
	Sedburgh	27	<b>5</b>
South Cumbria	Barrow	169	<b>34</b>
	Kendal	208	<b>42</b>
South Lancashire	Garstang	14	<b>3</b>

6.5 The College staff are very dependent on car transport to work as demonstrated by a staff questionnaire undertaken in February 2007, which indicated that 70% relied on a car for work, either on their own or with other staff, friends and family. 14% travelled on foot, 8% by bicycle, 5% by bus and 1% each for motorcycle and train, and other.

6.6 Access by car and therefore car parking is a hugely influential factor for both staff and students. Insufficient car parking would seriously undermine the College due to the loss of spaces, as I explain further in Section 9 below.

7. **DISCUSSIONS WITH THE COUNTY COUNCIL REGARDING THE PROPOSED HEYSHAM TO M6 LINK ROAD**

7.1 The campus was not sold to the College, but transferred to the College by Lancashire County Council ("LCC") on incorporation in 1993. Incorporation was when all FE Colleges transferred from Local Education Authorities to become independent establishments. Funding also transferred from LCC to what was then known as the FEFC (Further Education Funding Council), now LSC. Incorporation meant that the College was no longer controlled by LCC but was established as an independent business owning its buildings and facilities.

7.2 Following the Local Plan Inquiry during October 1998 to May 1999 a report was published in June 2000. The Inspector recommended deletion of all reference to the link road from the Lancaster & District Local Plan, but subsequently Lancaster City Council decided that it did not wish to accept the Inspector's recommendation because it seemed that progress had been made towards the western route and that the Plan should reflect this. The College did not oppose this decision as the campus was not affected by the western route.

7.3 In respect of proposals for current route of the road LCC wrote to the College in November 2004 and came to the College to discuss the proposals on 20<sup>th</sup> May 2005.

**Consultation with the Council**

7.4 Before the planning application for the link road was submitted by LCC, the College received the following letters from LCC:-

19.11.2004

18.3.2005

22.6.2005

7.5 In return the College wrote the following letters to LCC:-

23.5.2005

15.9.2005

26.10.2005

24.11.2005

- 7.6 Copies of these letters are provided as Appendix 8 of this Proof of Evidence (see **Document LCC/DW/2**).
- 7.7 In addition meetings took place between the College and LCC on 1 November 2005, 21 August 2006 and 28 September 2006.
- 7.8 After the Planning Committee LCC wrote to the College regarding further surveys and investigations. They visited the College site on 30 May 2007.
- 7.9 The College does not feel that LCC's consultation process has been adequate or that our concerns have been taken into account. Specifically:
- 7.9.1 A letter from the College to LCC on 15<sup>th</sup> September 2005 requesting what amendments to the plan were being proposed was not responded to. Eventually the College arranged a meeting for 1 November 2005 to discuss the College's issues.
- 7.9.2 Following the meeting on 1<sup>st</sup> November 2005, Eversheds wrote on the College's behalf summarising the issues discussed at the meeting and reiterating the information requested at the meeting. This was not responded to at all. A meeting was finally held on 21 August 2006 to review the College's objection to the road.
- 7.9.3 The mitigation measures that have so far been suggested by the Council are unsatisfactory to the College, as I explain below.

## **8. IMPACT ON THE COLLEGE DURING THE CONSTRUCTION PHASE OF THE PROPOSED LINK ROAD**

- 8.1 LCC estimates that the construction phase of the road will be 32 months, with a further remedial and maintenance phase of 1 year. During the 32 month construction phase the Council says that the work adjacent to the College would be "intermittent rather than continuous", but they have not provided any further information on the precise period of time during which construction works will be taking place in the immediate vicinity of the College (quote taken from letter from LCC to Eversheds Solicitors acting for the College dated 4 September 2006 at Appendix 4 to my Proof of Evidence - see **Document LMC/DW/2**).
- 8.2 The College's consultants, Capita Symonds, have advised me that during and arising from the construction operations for the link road, I can anticipate the following impacts on the College:-

- 8.2.1 Construction noise and vibration;
- 8.2.2 Mud and dust caused by the construction process;
- 8.2.3 Increased traffic congestion in the immediate vicinity of the campus affecting the ease of vehicular, cycle, walking and public transport access to the College.

8.3 I will now address my concerns in relation to these impacts.

**Construction noise and vibration**

- 8.4 Capita Symonds have advised the College that the Environmental Statement fails to provide sufficient information to fully evaluate the noise and vibration impacts at the College. However, based on their own calculations and what information there is in the Environmental Statement, they have advised that noise and vibration levels at the College would significantly increase and be above recommended levels.
- 8.5 However well managed there are factors that occur in a construction phase that will happen, and therefore will have an impact. To say that the College has concerns at this stage is to totally underestimate the extent of the struggle to maintain viability and public confidence during a 3 year construction period. We fear that the disruption and disturbance will be so great that we will not attract students, that our staff will not be able to endure the distraction to their learning environment and will leave; we fear for our continuation as a further education college that is able to offer the same range of services to its community as it does today.
- 8.6 We fear that the teaching and learning in the buildings closest to the road, specifically Blocks A, E, F and K would be undermined and that students with learning difficulties would not be able to work effectively in Rotary House.
- 8.7 Noise is the enemy of teaching and learning; continuous building or machinery noise erodes concentration and this is also true of intermittent bangs and other noises. Effective teaching and learning requires a calm, noise neutral environment; a teacher and their class in a room with no distraction enabling staff and students alike to concentrate on the task at hand. This will not be the case, as there will be noise and distraction which will have an impact.

- 8.8 It will have huge impact on the quality of the student experience, and this will translate into students not completing their studies, and others not achieving their grades. A student's years in education are precious; for many this is the only chance they will get to obtain a life fulfilling qualification. Clearly there will be a knock on effect in future years since word of mouth is an important way by which students find out about the College and courses; a poor student experience in one year always has an impact the following year in lower student numbers being recruited.
- 8.9 The programmes of study in Blocks A, E, F and K and Rotary House (being construction, "A2 Levels, International Baccalaureate, Art and Design, horticulture and independent living) all require noise neutral learning environments during which staff can explain new ideas and get across essential learning points. They will do this in buildings, whose design in most cases is not up to current levels of insulation and as a consequence will be particularly sensitive to noise and vibration issues, as the walls are thin and the ventilation systems non existent, apart from opening windows which will increase noise levels.
- 8.10 My particular comments on the noise and vibration effects on each of these buildings are as follows:-
- 8.11 A Block is 54 metres away from the proposed road and is the oldest building on the site, being built in 1953. This building accommodates construction, and engineering, made up of carpentry, brickwork, electrical, plumbing and engineering workshops, together with a commercial Gas Assessment Centre. This vocational provision is full to capacity with students due to the increasing demand for these skills. Students studying in this environment have to learn to use equipment and machinery for their respective trades and lessons are a combination of theory and practice with quiet time required for the lecturer to provide the theory that underpins the practice. I am advised that this building will be rendered unusable during the construction phase.
- 8.12 Block E is only 24 metres from the road. Fully timetabled for "A" level, International Baccalaureate and Access programmes. All teaching and examinations (except sciences) take place in E Block. It is crucial for these students learning that their learning environment is not impacted upon by external noise or vibration as this will be fundamentally distracting and result in lower levels of concentration, increasing agitation and frustration amongst students and staff and inevitably falling levels of student commitment with some

leaving and returning to schools to complete their courses. Each day on a course is important as not only are new ideas learned and skills consolidated, but motivation is reinforced and with it the group work ethic embedded.

- 8.13 Construction noise and vibration levels from the road would make teaching in this block impossible, and the Examination Boards would not allow us to hold exams in such an inappropriate environment. Noise from the construction work would also preclude the use of the atrium as a work and social area for students.
- 8.14 Block F is only 5 metres away from the base of the proposed road embankment. On average, 80 students work in Block F (the Construction Trades Training Building) over 5 days a week. This area is predominantly used for brickwork and construction. The mezzanine floor is used as a carpentry and joinery workshop for full time students, and also for 14 – 16 provision and Link Courses. The building is approximately 20 years old and compared to current new build, the provision is dated. Having the construction process so close would make it almost impossible for teaching to take place due to the noise, pollution and vibration from the road. Current recruitment to construction is very healthy, but having the road so close would adversely affect this. As an alternative (and a healthier option) students would opt to take courses at other Colleges which either have a new build or a campus which is not next to a major road or development.
- 8.15 K Block is 90 metres away from the proposed road and was built in 2000. Programmes accommodated in this building include Art, Design, and Music Theory. Many of these students are studying academic courses which will lead them to university. Lessons are a combination of theory and practice with a quite environment required for both aspects of the lesson to enable creative thinking and practice to be undertaken.
- 8.16 Rotary House is fully timetabled for College and external LDD learners. Used by Path to Housekeeping learners, Independent Living Skills for pre-entry and entry level learners, and accessed by the Loyne School and Sandgate School. Learners from these schools have severe disabilities, and all learners who use Rotary House are vulnerable in terms of mental and physical health. Activities such as mosaics, “water feature” building, and DIY projects currently carried out in Rotary House’s garden would have to cease, and it is extremely likely that the profound effect of the noise and construction to Rotary House would mean that these learners could no longer access this resource. This adverse effect would

apply also to the polytunnel, adjacent to Rotary House which houses the LDD horticulture, sustainability and environmental conservation courses.

- 8.17 The impact of noise would be especially challenging when staff and students are using outdoor spaces for learning in sport, horticulture and construction. Crucial instruction needs to be given to students in these areas to ensure learning points are understood, remembered and practised effectively.
- 8.18 The question has to be asked "would you want your son or daughter to study on a building site?" Why would a teacher or careers adviser recommend the College when it looked like a building site when the safe option was to remain at school?
- 8.19 The College now operates continually throughout the year, with students and staff on site at all times. The College is a disciplined place with a purposeful staff and student body who have to work to tight deadlines and timescales to conform with exam board requirements. Examinations occur across all courses at all times of the year, and whenever a student is sitting an examination it is vital that they have the best facilities and the most conducive examination conditions. Noise does travel, especially to higher floors on the College site and we would have real concerns that this would disturb student concentration. The issue would be very sensitive during warmer weather when windows need to be open to bring in fresh air to keep the room temperature under control and provide students with oxygen to think more clearly. It is difficult to understand how building works could be programmed into the College's academic year when there is continual all year round activity, apart from a short period during the summer when there is a lower level of activity for a period of 4 – 5 weeks. However it is during this summer period that many new students are invited into College to meet the staff, and also for recruitment interviewing. Clearly if there was a heightened level of building activity during this period, this would be damaging to the College's ability to attract potential new students. There is therefore no good time in which to focus construction works.
- 8.20 We have been advised by Capita Symonds (see David Leversedge's Proof of Evidence, **Document LMC/DL/1**) that the noise from the construction works will render Blocks A and E entirely unusable for teaching and that the impact of construction generated vibration will also seriously affect our ability to continue to use and occupy Blocks A, E, F and K. They also advise that the playing pitches closest to the road will also not be capable of use.

8.21 The impact of not being able to use the playing pitches closest to the road will mean that we are unable to provide our existing extensive range of sporting courses and facilities, which will have a grave adverse effect on our students and the local community, as I discuss further in Section 9 below.

8.22 The table immediately below demonstrates the impact of the College not being able to use Blocks A, E, F and K during the construction phase. Analysis has been done for each building with the financial loss projected for 3 years.

**Estimated Loss of Income during construction of M6 link road**

Block	Work Places lost	% of total onsite work places	Reduction in income @ £5,048 per work place	% of total college relevant on site income	Contribution Reduction	Redundancies	Loss of Income over 3 Years
A	279	10.75%	£1,408,344	10.75%	£656,570	23.03	£4,225,031
E	178	6.86%	£898,513	6.86%	£418,887	14.69	£2,695,540
F	140	5.39%	£706,696	5.39%	£329,462	11.55	£2,120,087
K	355	13.68%	£1,791,979	13.68%	£835,420	29.30	£5,375,936
Rest of College	1643	63.31%					
	2595	100.00%	£4,805,531	36.69%	£2,240,339	78.57	£14,416,594

8.23 Calculations in this table are based on the number of work places lost to the College during this period. The key findings are that:

- The College will lose £4,805,531 in income per year which equates to 36.69% of total College on site income. Over the 3 year period this loss would be £14,416,594;
- The reduction in contribution to the College would be £2,240,339. Each course on average makes a contribution of 46% to fund support services and College overheads, such as building maintenance and utilities etc; and
- The College would be forced to make 80 staff redundant in these areas to manage the loss of income.

8.24 The College would work extremely hard to offset this massive loss which would itself be financially destabilising and potentially lead to closure of the College. It would be possible to relocate to temporary buildings but it is likely these would be offsite, involving a huge relocation cost in terms of both. Temporary buildings could not possibly provide the quality of facilities and learning environment currently enjoyed by the College's students. We have no doubt

that this disruption on such a massive scale would result in much lower student recruitment, lower retention rates for those students attending, huge irrevocable damage to the College's reputation and substantial financial losses that would seriously threaten the College's financial viability.

**Mud and dust caused by the construction process**

- 8.25 The College prides itself on maintaining one of the best kept and attractive campuses of any further education college in the country and we know that this is a major selling point to students and their families. Building sites cannot avoid high levels of mud and dust and this will change during the winter and summer months. The College is very concerned that the dust from construction work would blanket its site and reduce the attractiveness to existing and prospective students. We must remember at this stage that it is 5 metres from our nearest building and that it rises to over twenty feet, thereby providing an ideal platform for a significant level of dust to be deposited on College buildings and vehicles.

**Increased traffic congestion in the immediate vicinity of the campus affecting the ease of vehicular, cycle, walking and public transport access to the College**

- 8.26 The College site, located between Lancaster and Morecambe, requires a high level of accessibility to ensure it attracts learners. With 6 competing 11 – 18 schools within a 3 mile radius there are plenty of other safe options for students to choose if they feel access would be difficult. In most instances, there is a local 11 – 18 school much closer to their home than the College. At some time during the construction phase the main roads will be disrupted, causing delays and longer times for journeys, which now have to happen on very congested roads.
- 8.27 Given the current levels of congestion on all the roads around the College both at peak times and throughout the day, any disruption will inevitably impact negatively on the College; staff and students will be delayed and this would impact on the quality of lessons. For parents and students, perception is everything and they will perceive a problem which they will want to avoid. The result will be that many students will be put off attending the College and our recruitment levels will be much lower and impact on the College's financial stability.

**The cumulative effect of the construction phase on the College and its ability to continue to operate**

- 8.28 The College is concerned that the disruption caused to college life during the road's construction will lead to a significant decline in student enrolment. I am greatly concerned that the College will not be able to survive a period of construction approaching 3 years.
- 8.29 The College works in a very competitive market for 16 – 18 learners by striving to be excellent in all we do in teaching and supporting our students. Students and parents have choices and because of the massive importance of a decision of where to study, they do not take chances and consider every issue. Naturally parents want to make sure that their son or daughter will achieve their qualification and any negative factor will be treated with suspicion and anxiety. I would contend that a building site slicing through the College to deliver a road, itself steeped in controversy, would deter many parents and therefore young people choosing the College as their preferred option to study.
- 8.30 The College exists within a rapidly changing education system. From 2008 onwards schools will be empowered by the government to offer a new post 16 qualification – the specialist diploma. There will be 14 specialist diplomas targeted at the major vocational areas, Construction, Health and Social Care, Creative and Media, Hair and Beauty, Manufacturing, IT, Business Administration and Finance, Hospitality and Catering, Public Services, Retail, Travel and Tourism, Sport and Leisure. Most of these diplomas will be in direct opposition to what the College currently offers and are therefore themselves a real threat to the College's acknowledged pre-eminent vocational position in the area.
- 8.31 When each one of these impacts, noise, vibration, dust, mud, access congestion are considered individually, they are significant. But cumulatively they will undermine the College's mission to provide excellent teaching and learning to all its students. The net result will be a significant fall in the numbers of young people recruited to the College. This will be exacerbated by a much poorer learning environment for those students attending the College with a significant impact on students working in Construction, "A" levels the International Baccalaureate, Horticulture and Rotary House. I repeat, noise is the enemy of learning as is any distraction that interferes with the relationship between the tutor and students, and student with student. Distractions wear down the resolve of all concerned despite best intentions. I firmly believe that such distractions will impact on the College's quality indicators of retention and

achievement which taken together produce the College's success rates. In the current climate a failure to improve success rates would bring with it increased Ofsted inspections and also damage the College's reputation with both the LSC and also the local community. Once this downward spiral begins, good staff will leave and it will be impossible to attract strong replacements.

- 8.32 In addition, I am at a loss to understand how the College will access its essential sports pitches during the build period when there will be no underpass. It is well recognised that our sports programmes are held in high esteem and attract large numbers of young people. Access across a building site would be unacceptable and it is this disruption which could destabilise the largest teaching department in the College, since renting alternative pitches would present massive logistical issues and also isolate the College from its community who would not be able to access these facilities.
- 8.33 As stated above, the College is totally integrated into the life of its community and based on its financial soundness has been able to provide the community with a number of other non-educational benefits. Those include a range of personal services, e.g., hairdressing, access to high quality sporting facilities, and the hire of rooms, many of which are not offered at commercial rates to accommodate community needs.
- 8.34 Each year the College budgets to make a small surplus, in the region of 3% (£417,000) of its further education income. With this small margin significant losses can be made if recruitment fails to attract the targeted number of students.
- 8.35 As discussed above, the College's inability to use some of its key buildings during the construction phase will have a significant effect on the College's finances, but this is not the only financial concern that I have.
- 8.36 As the College receives its funding from the LSC based on the number of students it attracts (as discussed in Section 3 above) as student numbers declined so would the College's funding. Any decline in student numbers would quickly start to eat into the College's 3% surplus, with very significant consequences for the College's future (as I explain below).
- 8.37 I estimate that 26% of our students are currently studying academic subjects. I believe that these would be the first group of students to leave the College/choose not to enrol in the College should the road proposals come

forward. This group of students are the most transient as they could easily find alternative sixth form provision at any of the other Sixth Forms in the area (as described in Section 2 above). These students have choice and in my view they would exercise this choice not to come to the College during the disruptive period of link road construction, and thereafter once the road is open.

- 8.38 The impact of losing 26% of the current provision, equating to £2,545,000 would be to financially destabilise the College which would result in much lower income.
- 8.39 This reduction in College provision would result in many curriculum areas declining in numbers to such an extent that the curriculum area would have to be withdrawn or severely reduced. In effect, the College would no longer be in a position to offer a broad based curriculum meeting the needs of local students and allowing progression from entry level to level 3.
- 8.40 This decline in our ability to provide all curriculum areas would impact worse on the 76% of our students who are currently studying vocational courses with us. For these students we are the only provider in the area and their only chance, and choice, for access to vocational training. If we have to drop courses (or close all together as discussed below) these students will have nowhere else to go and will be lost to the education system, with the knock on negative effect this has for their own personal development and their potential contribution to the local workforce and economy.
- 8.41 The LSC no longer has national budgets for providing exceptional support to Colleges in financial difficulty. The spectre of two scenarios emerges; the College to be taken over by another College or commercial provider, or the complete closure of the College. Certainly a take over would result in the closure of many unviable courses, which would reduce the College's curriculum offer, and lead to massive redundancies. Closure would necessitate locating the provision with other providers and schools with students who require specialist facilities having to travel long distances to find their preferred course. This is likely to leave many young people in an extremely vulnerable position as it would not be possible to provide all the opportunities currently available at the College.
- 8.42 This analysis clearly demonstrates the high risk, precarious position the College would be in during the construction of the road. Closure is not a threat, but an ominous possibility that would devastate the life chances of whole cohorts of young people; cause the redundancy of over 600 staff; remove at a stroke a

whole range of services to schools, employers and the community. Is the road really worth the far reaching and harmful consequences on an organisation that makes an immense and critical contribution to its community, as both a large employer and also as a prestigious provider of education and training services?

9. **LONG TERM IMPACT OF THE LINK ROAD ON THE COLLEGE**

9.1 The construction of the proposed link road will result in the loss of approximately 21,800 m<sup>2</sup> to the College. This equates to an 18% loss in the College's existing campus area. It will mean that the College's campus is severed in two leaving our playing fields on the opposite side of a dual carriageway to the main College buildings.

9.2 My main concerns in relation to the longer term impacts of the proposed link road on the College are:-

9.2.1 Increased traffic flows in the vicinity of the College;

9.2.2 Increased traffic noise and its impact on key buildings;

9.2.3 Loss of car parking provision and external circulation space;

9.2.4 Loss of crucial sports pitches and severance of the campus;

9.2.5 Loss of valuable development land;

9.2.6 Opening up a new public view into the College;

9.3 I will now address my concerns in relation to these impacts.

**Increased traffic flows in the vicinity of the College**

9.4 The road rises from zero to over 20 feet across the College's site and would dominate the campus from any direction, and would completely destroy its open, welcoming feel. This would place the College at a huge disadvantage with Schools who will have their entire estate replaced by the government in the next 15 years, thereby limiting any possibility of future growth by the College.

9.5 It is a recorded fact that new roads actually bring more traffic on to them rather than reduce congestion. Therefore it is reasonable to assume that an already congested area will become even more congested. Further that the construction of the large junction next to the College, complete with traffic lights, would create serious queues past the College gates which would make access very

difficult causing staff and students to be late. Parents are very sensitive to these issues and would also be alarmed at the increased health and safety concerns when their young people travel to the College by bicycle or as a pedestrian.

#### **Increased traffic noise and its impact on key buildings**

- 9.6 Massive juggernauts pulling heavy loads from standstill at the junction adjacent to the College will provide excessive noise levels, which will impact not only on the closest buildings, but across the whole site, and especially on the taller buildings which would be above any noise reduction barriers. Further the deep roar of a straining vehicle engine is distracting and intrusive especially when it is necessary to open the windows for ventilation for much of the College year.
- 9.7 The road will have a significant negative impact upon a number of key buildings. The College is of the opinion that the proximity of Blocks A, E, F and K to the new road will render these buildings unfit to be used for their current, or any other purpose. Each of these uses are significant areas for the College and therefore the facilities provided within each block are considered of particular importance to the College. It is also concerned about the impact which the new road will have upon Rotary House, which is a training flat used for young people with learning difficulties and disabilities.

#### **Loss of car parking provision and external circulation space**

- 9.8 The College currently has 474 car parking spaces, including 26 disabled spaces.
- 9.9 474 spaces is not enough to accommodate the College's current needs. The main reasons for this are that the College occupies a site midway between Lancaster and Morecambe which are 2 miles away. Not unnaturally staff and students make full use of cars to carry resources and materials to the College which they would find cumbersome on a bus. Further this site cannot be accessed directly by public transport from the north of Lancaster with passengers having to go into Lancaster to change buses.
- 9.10 When the car parking spaces are full, cars overspill on to neighbouring residential areas, causing complaints from neighbours and staff and students being late for classes. In my experience the car park is usually full. On a relatively quiet day, on Thursday 24 May 2007, between 8.00 am and 10.30 am 282 students and 235 staff drove to College in cars, each requiring a parking space, resulting in many cars parking on Torrisholme Road, outside the College.

- 9.11 The link road proposals will result in the loss of 180 car parking spaces and an associated circulation space of 1754 m<sup>2</sup> leaving the College with only 294 usable spaces. This equates to a 38% decrease in on-site parking provision which the College will be unable to replace even with the reorganisation of car parking (see plan at Appendix 6 **Document LMC/DW/2**).
- 9.12 As I have said, the car parks are already operating at full capacity and overflow parking regularly takes place on Torrisholme Road and Russell Drive. It is therefore certain that the College's ability to service its current population will be seriously affected by the loss of these spaces.
- 9.13 It is important that the College retains capacity for growth and development, especially in the light of the government's plans to extend the school leaving age, which we feel could attract more students to Lancaster and Morecambe College. The loss of car parking provision will have a very damaging effect upon the College's ability to deliver its current range of educational and other public services and will deter students, community groups and others from using the campus. This will result in a loss of revenue for the College which, as discussed above, would seriously prejudice the College's ability to operate from its current site.
- 9.14 The Council attempted, on a plan submitted to the College (21.8.06) (see Appendix 7B of my proof, **Document LMC/DW/2**) to show that the parking lost could be re-created elsewhere on the site. These proposals are wholly inadequate as they fail to take account of the land needed for the proposed underpass under the link road and the land taken by the Council's proposed highway boundary fence.

#### **Loss of crucial sports pitches and severance of the campus**

- 9.15 As explained in Section 4 above, the College currently has three pitches on the area to the west of the proposed link road – one senior sized pitch, one suitable for 13-15 year old play and a small training pitch, all of which are essential to the existence of our men's Football Academy and Football Development Centre, due to the increasing numbers of young people wishing to join these academies and also growing community use. These are shown on the plan at Appendix 7A of my proof **Document LMC/DW/2**).
- 9.16 The playing fields will not only be physically separated from the rest of the campus by the road proposal, but will also be severely reduced in size. This will

result in the loss of the training pitch, extended travel distance, resulting from the underpass being located at the northern extreme of the site, loss of visual link between the pitches and the campus which enhances both amenity and, through informal surveillance, the security and safety of users. It would not be possible to replace any of these facilities elsewhere on site due to the confined space around the College buildings.

- 9.17 The existing pitches are an extremely valuable resource to the College and are in constant use. Soccer training takes place for four hours on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays with matches taking place on Wednesday, Saturdays and Sundays. The demand for pitch usage is already so great that the College hires an additional pitch at Salt Ayre Leisure Centre for Wednesday afternoon fixtures.
- 9.18 Apart from the usage by Soccer Academy and Development Centre students the football pitches are also used by other full time sports students as part of their practical modules.
- 9.19 The Community Sports and Coaching Centre also hires out the pitches for community use when they are available at the weekends.
- 9.20 It can be seen, therefore, how vital the football pitches are to our College sports provision, which attracts students from throughout the local area.
- 9.21 Any reduction in the number or size of pitches within the campus is completely unacceptable to the College as it would seriously jeopardise its sports provision, particularly that of the Sports Academy which supplies players to Morecambe FC whose league status requires a specified level of facility and pitch. The Sports Academy enjoys a high profile position in the College and contributes enormously to the College's local and regional reputation. The College First XI Academy Soccer team is of an excellent standard, and in May 2007 won the final of the English Schools' Football Association under 18 National Knockout competition in which they were runner's up in 2001. The negative impact of the road on this facility would lead to a significant reduction in student enrolments on sports studies courses.
- 9.22 LCC have said that the proposed development includes proposals for reorientation and improvement of the soccer pitches belonging to the College. As a result, they say, there will be sufficient compensatory works to ensure that there is no loss of formal playing pitches. However the proposal utilises College

land currently used as a playing pitch which is essential for our existing Sports Courses

- 9.23 LCC also say the they will demonstrate that the development includes sufficient mitigation measures to ensure that there would be no loss of usable playing pitch provision at the College, which the College disputes, as all available land is fully utilised.
- 9.24 LCC's Statement of Case (April 2007, Page 8) states "Sport England did not raise objections to the proposed development". However, in the Officer's report to the Development Control Committee held on 1 November 2006, Page 22, it states "The College and Sport England have objected to the loss of playing space". In addition Sport England have stated in their letter to the College dated 23 May 2007 that they "wish to confirm Sport England's objection to the proposed development". (Please see copy letter at Appendix 9 of my proof **Document LMC/DW/2**).
- 9.25 Clearly with the impending build up to the 2012 Olympic Games, and higher profile for sport, the College's excellent sports provision will continue to be in great demand, and any impact e.g., the loss of pitches, would severely undermine the College's ability to respond to local demand, and students would go elsewhere, to local schools who also have specialist sports facilities.

#### **Loss of valuable development land**

- 9.26 The College is already constrained by the extent of existing building, the restriction on building on the green areas of the College, the need to maintain external sports pitches proximate to teaching facilities, the proximity of residential properties on the eastern boundary, the sharply rising ground to the north eastern corner of the site and the fact that the western part of the site is in the River Lune flood plain.
- 9.27 As well as resulting in a general loss of amenity, the link road proposal will further constrain future development. Because the College would have to be squeezed into a much smaller footprint, the loss of the land would considerably further reduce the building options available to the College. This would seriously limit the College's ability to develop and adapt to the demands of the market and attract new students.
- 9.28 It is important that the College retains capacity for growth and development, especially in the light of the Government's plans to extend the school leaving

age, which we feel could, if implemented, attract more students to Lancaster and Morecambe College.

- 9.29 The consequences of the restriction on growth would be to narrow the range of learning opportunities and also enable competitors to attract these students instead of them attending the College, which would undermine curriculum provision and also College finances.
- 9.30 Given these constraints, if the road proposal had not existed, the College would have been able to develop new accommodation to the west of A Block, up to the existing main car park without loss of any significant buildings or car parking. If implemented, the road proposal will, through visual and noise intrusion, create a sterile zone for development in this area. In addition the loss of car parking, that falls within the footprint of the road will, if it is to be replaced elsewhere on the site, reduce the already limited development opportunities as well as detracting from the visual amenity of existing soft landscaped approaches to buildings. A further consequence will be that the College will have extremely limited opportunities for siting temporary accommodation during the course of major new build and refurbishment works. This will mean that the potential scope of such works will be reduced and disruption increased, more intensive phasing will be required, and construction costs raised as a consequence.

#### **Opening up a new public view into the College**

- 9.31 The College is currently laid out to present a “public face” along both Morecambe Road and Torrisholme Road and has invested in new buildings, well maintained grounds, new frontage and gates and new signage.
- 9.32 The buildings which run along the line of the proposed Link Road were not designed to be seen from the main public approaches to the College and are therefore not of an appropriate quality or appearance to present a dynamic public image of the College. This could have a significant negative impact on the College at a time when it has invested and continues to invest considerable capital resources on new buildings and fabric upgrades to make the campus more attractive to its users and potential clients.

#### **Cumulative consequence of the existence of the proposed link road**

- 9.33 Section 8 details the cumulative impact on the College during the construction phase. If the proposed link road is built the cumulative impact of the increased traffic noise on College buildings, the increased traffic flows around the College,

the loss of car parking, the loss of crucial sports pitches, and the loss of development land would seriously undermine the College's ability to attract students in an increasingly competitive 16 – 18 market.

9.34 As discussed above, the net impact of a failure to recruit will be to seriously undermine the College's financial position, to make staff redundant and to weaken the College's curriculum offer, thereby creating a downward spiral that would be difficult to reverse given the continuing presence of the link road.

## 10. **CONCLUSIONS**

10.1 The new road will create a very poor environment for staff and students with noise and pollution from traffic. It will dominate the campus and seriously detract from the pleasant 'green area' environment the College currently enjoys.

10.2 The College has grave concerns that the cumulative negative impacts of the road will significantly prejudice the College's ability to attract students and other users to the campus.

10.3 This will lead to a reduction in revenue for the College which could render it no longer viable for the College to operate from its current site, leading to the closure of the College and the loss of this extremely valuable educational and community resource.

10.4 Any reduction in income will clearly impact on the College's staff with a number being at risk of losing their jobs.

10.5 Vulnerable students who do not wish to stay at school after an unsuccessful experience would have a reduced range of opportunities as they would have nowhere else to go to gain their training and qualifications.

10.6 The College's positive economic impact on its community in terms of skills delivered and income to its staff would be seriously undermined and this would offset some of the projected economic gains from the road.

10.7 Future development of the College site would be restricted if the road sliced through the western part of it.

10.8 The loss of car parking would be of enormous concern, not only because of the needs of large numbers of staff, but also because many students, 17 and over, now use cars for their journey to College because of difficulties in accessing the College via public transport.

- 10.9 The loss of sports pitches would seriously undermine the College's ongoing development of sporting academies which continue to grow year on year in response to student demand.
- 10.10 The impact on the College of the construction phase over three and a half years will itself be damaging – for example, no access to the sports pitches and increased local congestion of roads and junctions.
- 10.11 The College has made a stunning recovery from insolvency in 2003 and is facing an increasingly competitive and uncertain future and needs to retain the integrity of its current site to enable it to continue to improve its accommodation and services to learners. As the only Further Education College within 20 miles, its educational, economic and social impacts are essential to local and regional prosperity. However, the proposed link road is, currently, seriously preventing any further improvements to College buildings or facilities which will be necessary in the short to medium term.
- 10.12 The proposed Heysham to M6 Link Road offers almost no benefit to the College, but does introduce a large number of harmful facets that will have a lasting, detrimental impact on Lancaster and Morecambe College.