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A Local Plan for

Lancaster District

2020 – 2031

Plan period 2011 - 2031

Review of Lancaster District Transport Assessment: Addendum [June 2021]

Shaping
a better future

LANCASTER
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Contents

1.0 Introduction and Background

As part of the evidence gathering in preparation for the now adopted Local Plan, in 2018 the council commissioned external consultants, White Young Green (WYG) to undertake a transport assessment for the district. Transport Assessments are regularly used to determine the impacts of planning proposals whether it be an individual development or a Local Plan and consider the impacts on the highways network and whether mitigation measure are required. These could be in the form of junction improvements, new roads or by the provision of sustainable transport measures.

The Lancaster TA was split into two stages. Stage 1 assessed, in high level terms, the capacity of the existing highway network to accommodate the future traffic flows expected to be generated by the allocations in the Local Plan on key parts of the district's highway network. It should be noted that the city centre was not a focus of this assessment as this is being considered in detail through the emerging Movement Strategy being prepared by Lancashire County Council.

Stage 2 of the TA considered and set out a range of mitigation measures and junction improvements which sought to address highway capacity concerns. The assessment looked at a number of potential improvements to junctions along the A6 corridor between Galgate and Lancaster City Centre, the A683 corridor between Junction 34 and Lancaster City Centre and Kellet Road in Carnforth between the town centre and Junction 35. The TA found that with mitigation many issues could be resolved in the short term (up to 2023) but that there was a reliance on the strategic infrastructure coming forward aimed at encouraging modal shift, such as the city centre Movement Strategy.

The completed TA formed the primary piece of Transport evidence at the Examination in Public of the Local Plan in 2019. Transport matters were discussed in detail at the hearings and the Inspector in his report to the Council confirmed that he was satisfied that policies in the plan would allow for sustainable growth to take place and provide for the necessary infrastructure to be delivered. The Local Plan was subsequently adopted by the Council in July 2020.

2.0 Purpose of this Addendum

The purpose of the Addendum is to consider the Transport Assessment within the context of the Climate Emergency Review of the Local Plan (CELPR) and to look at any implications or opportunities there may be in terms of reducing carbon emissions or mitigating the impacts of climate change. The CERLP also provides an opportunity to consider progress on the matters raised and whether there any recommendations or commitments that have yet to be actioned.

3.0 Summary of the Transport Assessment

The scope and methodology used in the study was developed in consultation with Lancaster City Council who in turn consulted the local highway authority (LHA) at Lancashire County Council (LanCC).

The study area covered the whole of the district of Lancaster. However, to determine which specific junctions needed to be reviewed as part of the study, a review of the existing congestion identified by Trafficmaster and Google Maps was undertaken together with a review of the location and size of proposed LP development. The data showed that key congestion points within the district were around

Lancaster city centre and on the radial approaches to the city centre in both peak periods. Congestion was shown on the A6 corridor between J33 of the M6 and at Galgate in the AM peak (northbound) and between Bailrigg and Galgate in the PM peak (southbound); with some congestion within Carnforth town centre (in both peak periods).

The Assessment identified a number of junctions based on two scenarios, the first on just existing commitments and other applications likely to come forward (Do minimum) and the second with the addition of the proposed n allocations coming forward ('do something'). In either case there were a number of junctions potentially requiring improvement up to 2023 and over the plan period. The extract below provides a summary.

Table 7.4: Junctions Potentially Requiring Improvement

Jct No.	Location	Current Junction Type	Area	Junctions Potentially Requiring Improvement			
				2023		2033	
				DM	DS	DM	DS
2	A6 Main Rd / Stoney Ln / Salford Rd	Signals	A6 (S) Corridor	✓	✓	✓	✓
3	A6 Preston Lancaster Road/Hazelrigg Lane	Signals	A6 (S) Corridor				✓
4	A6 Scotforth Rd / Hala Rd / Ashford Rd	Signals	A6 (S) Corridor		✓	✓	✓
5	A6 (Greaves Rd)/Ashton Rd (The Pointer)	Roundabout	Lancaster CC	✓	✓	✓	✓
9	A683/B5273	Roundabout	A683 Corridor				✓
10	Caton Rd / Junction 34	Signals	Caton Rd Corridor	✓	✓	✓	✓
15	A683/Middleton Rd/A589	Roundabout	Heysham				✓
16	A6 Lancaster Rd/Scotland Rd / Market St	Signals	Carnforth			✓	✓
17	Kellet Road/Back Lane	Priority	Carnforth				✓
18	Kellet Rd / A601M	Priority	Carnforth				✓
22	A6 / Barton Rd	Priority	A6 Corridor				✓
23	A6 / Penny St / Thurnam St	Signals	Lancaster CC	✓	✓	✓	✓
29	A683 / M6 J34	Signals	Caton Rd Corridor	✓	✓	✓	✓
TOTAL				**5**	**6**	**7**	**13**

WYG were keen to point out that a major limitation of the study is the absence of an up-to-date Strategic Transport Model. Such a model would have been able to determine the impact on traffic levels of potential major highway infrastructure projects to be determined such as the reconfiguration of Junction 33 of the M6, Bus Rapid Transit, Cycle Superhighway and the emerging Movement Strategy for Lancaster city centre. Because the beneficial impacts of these schemes were not considered by this study, WYG considered that impacts of the LP sites on future junction capacity could be considered to be somewhat overstated in the TA.

Stage 2 of the TA then looked in detail at each of the 13 junctions above to consider what physical improvements could be provided to increase capacity. This most commonly involved the creation of additional lanes and/or the signalisation of junctions. The table below taken from the TA summarises WYG's findings.

Table 4.1: Key Points and Conclusions

Jct Ref	Location/Junction	Key Points and Conclusions
2	A6 Main Rd / Stoney Ln / Salford Rd – A6 (S) Corridor (Galgate)	There are several junction modifications which could potentially be implemented within the existing adopted highway boundary to provide some modest short-term improvement to the junction performance. However, for a longer-term solution, a more comprehensive set of improvements to the junction and to the adjacent route are likely to be needed. These are currently undeliverable.
3	A6 Preston Lancaster Road/Hazelrigg Lane – A6 (S) Corridor	Junction improvements can be provided within the current adopted highway boundary or within third-party land that forms part of the Broad Area for Growth identified in the Strategic Policies and Land Allocations which more than mitigate for the impact of the LP traffic.
4	A6 Scotforth Rd / Hala Rd / Ashford Rd - A6 (S) Corridor	There is limited scope to provide any junction mitigation within the existing highway boundary. Land outside the current adopted highway boundary will be needed for any junction improvement scheme which achieves this.
5	A6 Greaves Rd/Ashton Rd (The Pointer Roundabout) – Lancaster city centre	It is considered that some form of junction improvement could be provided within the current adopted highway boundary that mitigates for the impact of the LP traffic. However, LCC together with the LHA are reviewing the operation of this junction as part of the wider city centre movement strategy and will be considered as part of Lancaster South Area Action Plan DPD, and therefore it is highly likely that the layout of the junction will change in the future as part of this strategy irrespective of the LP coming forward.
9	A683 / B5273 – A683 Bay Gateway Corridor	Potential mitigation measures are not considered necessary.
10	Caton Road / Junction 34 – Caton Road Corridor	See Jct Ref 29 below.
15	A683 / Middleton Road / A589 – A683 Bay Gateway Corridor	Potential mitigation measures are not considered necessary.
16	A6 Lancaster Rd/Scotland Rd / Market St – Carnforth	Junction improvements can be provided within the current adopted highway boundary which more than mitigate for the impact of the LP traffic.
17	Kellet Road/Back Lane – Carnforth	Junction improvements can be provided within the current adopted highway boundary which more than mitigate for the impact of the LP traffic.
18	Kellet Rd / A601M – Carnforth	Subject to confirmation on the precise line of adopted highway boundary, it is considered that a junction improvement could be provided within the current adopted highway boundary which mitigates for the impact of the LP traffic.
22	A6 / Barton Road – A6 (S) Corridor	Potential mitigation measures are not considered necessary.
23	A6 / Penny St / Thurnam St – Lancaster city centre	This junction is located in Lancaster City Centre and is likely to be re-configured in the future as part of the city centre movement strategy. As a result, no potential mitigation measures have been reviewed.

Jct Ref	Location/Junction	Key Points and Conclusions
29	A683 / M6 J34 – Caton Road Corridor	The capacity of the junction is restricted by only having space to provide three lanes under the motorway bridge. To increase the capacity of the junction, two lanes in each direction is required. This would require the widening of the motorway bridge or an additional 'cut through' provided. With a fourth lane under the bridge, the junction is forecast to operate at below its capacity in all traffic flow scenarios. Options have been developed which could potentially reduce the chances of queueing traffic backing back onto the Motorway although these may require land outside the current adopted highway boundary.

The TA found that a number of junctions could be modified to accommodate increased traffic associated with future development, particularly in the short term. However, a number of proposals would require significant levels of investment and could be difficult to deliver given land ownership issues and cost implications. In the case of Junction Ref 23 (city centre) there was an expectation that the Movement Strategy (being undertaken by LanCC) would reconfigure existing junctions and mitigation measures were considered to be outside the scope of the TA.

Whilst there may be potential mitigation measures within the existing highway network in the short term, it is expected that the strategic projects aimed at encouraging modal shift will be required certainly in the long term, and to some extent, in the short term as well. What is also apparent is the difficulty in assessing the potential benefits of the strategic schemes without the advantage of a Strategic Transport Model.

Local Plan Examination in Public Inspectors Report on the TA

The Inspectors Report to the Council in response to the Examination in Public (EIP) was published in June 2020. The Inspector was satisfied that transport matters had been appropriately assessed and that policies within the plan could provide the necessary infrastructure to allow for modal shift and sustainable growth to take place.

He encouraged ongoing dialogue with Highways England in relation to the strategic sites to ensure transport impacts could be assessed and also encouraged that local highways capacity be considered as part of the Local Plan Review in order to respond to delivery and infrastructure requirements.

More specifically he thought it may be necessary to reappraise the TA as part of the review and that this should include the use of a Strategic Transport Model so that the proposed larger infrastructure projects could be properly considered (eg. Bus rapid Transit, Cycle Superhighway, reconfigured Jn 33).

4.0 Progress on schemes/ matters

Infrastructure Schemes

Table 4.1 in the TA identified a number of junctions which were considered to be a potential issue in terms of accommodating additional traffic. There are also a number of transport schemes currently being developed by the County Council which directly impact on these junctions being taken forward by the County Council which are referenced in the WYG work. Below is an update on these schemes.

- **Lancaster City Centre Movement Strategy**

Lancashire County Council and Lancaster City Council have recently carried out a consultation on the Lancaster City Centre Movement and Public Realm Strategy. The document considered the current issues facing the gyratory system in the city centre relating to congestion and poor air quality, and the need to encourage modal shift. The consultation put forward a range of options which included the reallocation of highway capacity for a new bus priority system and for increased walking and cycling provision.

The consultation ended in December 2020 and a shortlist of 3 options is now being taken forward by the County Council for further consideration and consultation. The additional work will include traffic modelling to assess potential impacts on the wider highways network.

- **M6 Junction 33 improvements**

Alongside the consultation on the Movement and Public Realm consultation, there was also a consultation on the options for a link road at Jn 33 of the M6.

A link road is proposed so that:

- Access to M6 Junction 33 can be made without traffic passing through Galgate village;
- Highway access is provided to the South Lancaster Strategic Growth Area; and,
- Air quality in Galgate is improved, which would enable the Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) to be removed.

Six highway route options for the Junction 33 link to South Lancaster Strategic Growth Area were put forward for public consultation. A preferred option is now being taken forward and will be submitted for planning permission as part of a Development Consent Order (DCO). The preferred route includes the reconfiguration of Jn 33 and a new link road running close to the existing M6 and re-joining the A6 at Hazelrigg Lane. Funding for the scheme has been secured through the Government's Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF). The DCO is expected to be submitted in 2023.

- **Pointer Roundabout**

There are no current proposals to alleviate traffic congestion on the Pointer roundabout as suggested by the WYG work but the County Council are putting in place measures, as part of the Department for Transport Safer Roads Fund, that include safety improvements at the Pointer Roundabout and average speed cameras between Galgate and the Pointer Roundabout to provide a safer environment along the A6. These works will help encourage cycle and walking trips and support wider ambitions for modal shift, particularly along the A6 corridor between the University and the city centre.

- **Cycle Superhighway**

As part of the measures identified within the Highways and Transport Masterplan is the delivery of a proposed cycle superhighway between the city centre and the South Lancaster area. This would be part of a wider sustainable travel corridor that would link the South Lancaster Growth Area and Lancaster University with the city centre. The principle behind a cycle superhighway is to prioritise cyclists through good infrastructure that enables quicker journeys and increases safety and perceptions of safety. Typical measures incorporated as part of cycle superhighways include the separation from traffic through segregate cycle lanes, with key infrastructure prioritising cyclists at major interchanges. The

Cycle Superhighway formed part of the wider measures associated with the HIF submission which focussed on the delivery of the J33 improvements. The delivery of the Cycle Superhighway will be dependent on the expected level of growth coming forward in South Lancaster area and may therefore be some years away.

- **Bus Rapid Transit**

In line with the measures within the masterplan, a BRT is being considered between Lancaster University, and the Park and Ride at Junction 34, along the A6 corridor. Following on from a feasibility study in 2016, a second study looked at potential route options throughout the district. The study identified that more direct and dedicated bus provision would be optimal to strengthen existing use patterns and support future developments but recognised that options for the city centre are complex and need to be tested in a comprehensive movement strategy for the area. The recent HIF submission and the future growth planned for the South Lancaster area provides a delivery mechanism to take these aspirations further.

- **Car Parking**

Although not considered in any detail in the TA, car parking is an important issue in terms of bringing about modal shift. There are relatively high levels of car parking within the city centre and this is at odds with other initiatives aimed at discouraging vehicular trips. There is an existing Park and Ride facility at J34 and there is an intention as part of the range of measures identified in the Highways and Transport masterplan to provide an additional Park and Ride to the south of the city. This would be linked with the reconfigured junction 33 and be located between the University and Galgate. The delivery of a J33 Park and Ride is largely dependent on the HIF proposals for the reconfigured J33 coming forward.

The development of Park and Ride facilities at both J34 and 33, together with the proposed BRT, would provide real potential to reduce trips into the city centre. This would need to be taken forward, however, as part of an overall parking strategy that takes in to account city centre parking. The City Council operates the majority of off-street car parks in Lancaster (Nelson Street, Edward Street, St. Leonardsgate) and monitors the level and type of car parking it provides. A revised Parking Strategy is currently being prepared by the Council and in 2019 a Parking Services Plan was published outlining the scope of that review. The Service Plan highlighted the need to consider the Council's approach to car parking within the context of the Climate Emergency and the need to reduce emissions.

As the Parking Strategy is developed it will also be necessary to consider the need for modal shift, as outlined in the TA, that is necessary to accommodate the anticipated levels of growth identified in the Local Plan. The TA identified a reliance on the various schemes identified in the Highways and Transport Masterplan in order to accommodate that growth. Having a supportive strategy to car parking for the city is fundamental to the successful delivery of these schemes, most notably the Movement Strategy, BRT and the Park and Ride facilities.

Transport Modelling

WYG identified that the lack of a Strategic Transport Model was a shortcoming in the TA in terms of assessing future traffic capacity at junctions in and around Lancaster. Without the modelling it was difficult to assess the impact of future infrastructure proposals such as the Jn 33 link road and the City Centre Movement Strategy. This was referenced by the Inspector in his report to the Council and he encouraged that this was something to be addressed as part of a Local Plan Review. It should be pointed out that this will form part of the more comprehensive review of the plan covering housing requirements, viability etc that the Council will undertake after 5 years post adoption, rather than as part of this current Climate Emergency review.

As described above the development of the Movement and Public Realm Strategy will also involve an element of traffic modelling in order to understand impacts on the wider network. Given the potential for overlap it is anticipated that the two pieces of work will complement each other in order to provide a comprehensive understanding for the Lancaster area of the various infrastructure schemes being

proposed.

Impacts of Covid-19 pandemic

The scenarios considered in the Transport Assessment are based on predicted levels of growth over the plan period. As outlined in the TA these levels of growth are made up of existing commitments and the delivery of allocated sites identified in the Local Plan. At the time of the EIP it was estimated that there was a 5 year supply of housing and the assumptions made up until 2023 also anticipated some delivery at the larger allocated sites. What has become apparent during the Covid-19 pandemic is that the delivery of housing schemes has slowed. The Council's most recent published data on housing supply, 'Five Year Housing Land Supply Position – Nov 2020' demonstrates that there is now no longer a five-year supply and has fallen to 3 year supply. The implications, in terms of the TA, is that the anticipated growth has not taken place and that impacts on junctions and the highways network may have been overstated.

The impacts of the pandemic are however complex and are only beginning to be understood. There is a general acceptance that traffic flows reduce significantly during lockdowns, however there are also significant changes to travel patterns. Most notably working from home will have had a significant impact in terms of reducing travel but conversely those that do need to travel to work are reluctant to use public transport and will be travelling by car. In addition, school closures will have also had an impact on travel patterns and journey numbers. As restrictions ease, levels of growth are likely to rise, as will people travelling to work, but how and to what extent these and other factors will impact on the highways network is difficult to determine at this stage.

5.0 Implications and way forward

The TA advocates that in order to accommodate the planned growth set out in the Local Plan, impacts on the existing network will need to be addressed and it suggests that this will require a combination of highways improvements and a range of other measures coming forward leading to modal shift. Under the terms of the CERLP and the need to reduce carbon emissions the focus is therefore on encouraging and bringing about **modal shift**.

There are a number of schemes, as outlined above, that together can bring about the desired modal shift (eg, Movement Strategy, Bus Rapid Transit, Cycle Superhighway, Park and Ride). These are being taken forward through the Local Transport Plan process by Lancashire County Council. It will be important to continue to work closely with the County Council in developing these schemes and initiatives. The most significant of these in terms of reducing impacts on the A6 corridor in and around the city centre is the **City Centre Movement Strategy**, as this will inevitably change travel behaviour in the area. Good progress is being made and studies and consultations, are underway to consider a range of options. The City Council is working closely with the County Council in supporting this work and it will be important that this continues.

In order to accommodate traffic levels to an acceptable level, there needs to be an understanding of what part modal shift will need to play. As outlined above, the development of a **Strategic Transport Model (STM)** is therefore an important element in taking forward the range of projects being proposed. At present it is anticipated that this modelling work is undertaken in time for the first full review of the Local Plan in 2025. The development of the STM is a significant piece of work and will be taken forward in partnership with the County Council. It will need to take into account a range of factors, particularly those measures aimed at reducing car borne trips:-

- City Centre Movement Strategy
- Bus Rapid Transit
- Cycle Superhighway
- Parking strategy (ie. J33,34 Park and Ride and city centre parking)

In advance of this the development of the Lancaster Movement Strategy will involve modelling work at a more local level. This will consider the 3 options selected form the initial consultation. The results of this work will be important not only for the city centre but will have wider implications which can help inform the Strategic Transport Model. In both cases modelling work will need to take account of changes to travel patterns as a result of Covid-19.

Beyond the interventions identified with the TA, **Local Plan policies** are also playing an important part in supporting sustainable travel modes. For example, polices T2 and T4 of the adopted Site Allocations DPD are concerned with supporting and developing existing walking and cycling networks and improving bus connectivity. The adopted Development Management DPD Policy DM60 is concerned with ensuring good cycling and walking provision in new developments. As part of the CERLP these will be reviewed in order to support the broader aim of modal shift. The Council has also published a Walking and Cycling Planning Advisory Note (PAN 08) to support these policies and provides detail as to how strategic housing sites can be effectively integrated in to cycling and walking networks. This is to be updated as part of the CERLP and will consider the South Lancaster area of growth.

In bringing forward many of the schemes discussed above is the need for a supportive approach to car parking within the city centre. The modelling work being carried out by the County Council for the Movement Strategy will help inform the development of the City Council's emerging **Car Parking Strategy**, but it should be anticipated that the current approach to city centre car parking may be unsustainable in terms of delivering modal shift. Continued close working with the County Council in taking forward the Strategy will be important.