

LANCASTER LOCAL PLAN EXAMINATION IN PUBLIC

HOUSING INFRASTRUCTURE FUND UPDATE

The Housing Infrastructure Fund is a government programme managed by Homes England on behalf of the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. Its purpose is to unlock the building of new homes where the key barrier to development is the lack of strategic infrastructure to an extent that it would be unreasonable for any property developer to be expected to fund such infrastructure and still achieve a commercially viable scheme. In most cases, this is intended to address transport infrastructure requirements, but can also include major utilities, education and health provision. The Housing Infrastructure Fund is a competitive, public sector process with some 45 submissions made for a share of the £5 billion available. Lancashire County Council submitted a business case on 22 March 2019 to support delivery of the Bailrigg Garden Village.

Working with Lancaster City Council, the county council identified a portfolio of key transport infrastructure proposals to support the city council's housing and development needs, as identified in the submitted Local Plan. The package of measures included in the bid is designed to unlock a number of development sites in the city, including the proposed Bailrigg Garden Village. The infrastructure proposals represent the county council's best assessment as to how unlocking development in this area could best be achieved. Both the Lancaster South Area Action Plan and infrastructure proposals will be widely consulted upon in due course.

The proposals contained in the business case include:

- Remodelling of M6 junction 33 in order to create a new link between the motorway and the A6 along the southern edge of the University campus so that traffic does not have to pass through Galgate. This would also involve improvements to the existing junction of Hazelrigg Lane with the A6.
- A new bridge under the West Coast Main Line to enable highway access to the Garden Village site from the south.
- A spine road running through the centre of the proposed garden village site, which would also accommodate new utilities.
- Extension to the local utility network to provide key services to the proposed garden village site. This is likely to include a new electricity sub-station, foul water pumping stations, upgrading of sewers, new gas main and foul drain for example.
- A new bridge over the Lancaster Canal to link two potential development sites within the proposed garden village, thereby maintaining proper integration of the village as a whole to achieve a cohesive community.
- A project to provide substantially enhanced public transport links between the University, new Garden Village and Lancaster City Centre in an effort to encourage modal shift away from private vehicles. This will include reallocation

of highway capacity to provide a bus priority corridor through the city centre, with changes to the gyratory system in order to improve bus reliability and resilience and reduce journey times. The potential for a Park & Ride facility in the vicinity of the remodelled Junction 33 will also be explored.

- A cycle 'superhighway' to encourage modal shift between South Lancaster and the city centre, linking together the new garden village, Lancaster University's Health Innovation Campus and the university itself.

The combined aim of these measures is to significantly reduce traffic in the city centre and on the southern approaches.

The submitted business case is currently awaiting appraisal by Homes England and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and a decision is expected in autumn of this year. Both councils will continue to work together in the meantime to develop the above proposals further such that in the event of a successful outcome they can be progressed quickly through the relevant statutory processes.

The detail of the business case has been worked up with key stakeholders and is based upon significant information that is presently commercially sensitive and confidential, which is why the detailed HIF submission is not in the public domain.

It is presently anticipated that a governmental announcement as to whether or not the county council's submission has been successful will be made in September 2019, albeit that the bidders have no control over the date of such an announcement.

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