HEYSHAM M6 LINK ROAD

REVIEW AND PROPOSAL

REPORT TO TRANSPORT SOLUTIONS FOR LANCASTER AND MORECAMBE (TSLM)

SEPTEMBER 2010

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FOREWORD

Transport Solutions for Lancaster & Morecambe (TSLM) emerged in 2005 to oppose the construction of the Heysham M6 Link Road (HM6L), and to propose instead sustainable transport solutions for the 21st Century.

On 10 June 2010 the new Coalition Government announced that work should be suspended on schemes which had not achieved funding approval, including HM6L, pending the Comprehensive Spending Review.

TSLM thought it appropriate at that point to review the scheme and assess how far it satisfied government priorities of sustainable economic growth and carbon reduction, within the overarching constraint of reducing the budget deficit. With the need to cut spending, it seemed the right time to propose an alternative package of measures for Lancaster & Morecambe District which would reduce congestion and so encourage regeneration, but at a cost which was affordable, to a nation grossly in debt, and to a region whose other transport needs are crowded out by the expensive HM6L.

The basis for this package of measures would be the Lancaster District Transport Vision & Strategy, commissioned by Lancashire County Council and produced by transport consultants Faber Maunsell. This describes, analyses and costs in some detail many such measures.

TSLM commissioned the report from Alan James, who has advised us from the beginning. We also asked other local groups supporting sustainable transport to meet, evaluate the measures in Faber Maunsell, and help produce the proposal. These groups are:

Lancaster, Morecambe & District Rail User Group (LAMRUG)
Dynamo (Lancaster & District Cycle Campaign)
Transition City Lancaster (TCL)
Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE)

We appreciate their valuable contribution to this report.

TSLM
September 2010

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

TSLM commissioned a review of the Heysham-M6 Link (HM6L), to inform the government's Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR). The CSR put a hold on all LTP major schemes in June 2010, awaiting decisions in October 2010 on which of them would continue to be funded up to 2014, in the light of a probable 25-30% reduction in overall funding to meet the government's overarching priority of budget deficit reduction. Current indications are that HM6L will be deferred. Lancashire County Council (LCC) has decided to halt preparatory work to save £1.3 million in its 2010-11 budget, and has put back the start date to autumn 2012. It will certainly be delayed, as the Orders inquiry scheduled for October 2010 has been postponed.

This review argues that HM6L should be abandoned altogether rather than merely deferred: but in its place a package of capital investments to promote more sustainable transport solutions should be implemented over the 5 year timescale, as an alternative LTP major scheme. These are largely already identified and costed in the Faber-Maunsell (FM) report "Lancaster District Transport Vision and Strategy" July 2008, and the budget for the alternative proposal can realistically be set in the range £30-40 million. Additional expenditure of this order would in any case be required for the HM6L scheme, since a condition of the planning permission is to provide a package of 'complementary measures' based on the FM report.

The alternative proposal has the **twin advantages of directly saving the government £100 million compared with HM6L** (but for all time, not merely deferring expenditure in the hope that at some point the scheme will become affordable): **and at the same time delivering meaningful early improvements to travel conditions across all modes in Lancaster District** (unlike HM6L, which even if it works as intended principally delivers faster journey times for road users from J34 of the M6 to the Morecambe peninsula, but little else).

The main report is set out with an introduction in Section 1 and three main parts:

- Section 2 I a brief history of the scheme since submission of a Major Scheme Business Case of July 2005
- Sections 3 & 4 are reasons why HM6L should be fundamentally reconsidered, in two sections:
  - Section 3 covers the failure to demonstrate that the link road is the optimal solution to transport problems in the area, because the MSBC failed to follow WebTAG and LTP major scheme guidance to identify and appraise meaningful next-best and low cost alternatives at the same level of detail as the preferred option of the HM6L on the northern route
  - Section 4 covers changes in context over the past three years, which lead to a conclusion that decisions to date have to be re-examined.
- Section 5 is the alternative proposal

Section 2 sets out the history of the scheme from July 2005 up to the postponement in June 2010. This illustrates how problematic the project development has been over that period. TSLM is of the view that the MSBC submission was premature, probably to beat the July 2005 deadline after which LCC would have had to find 10% of the scheme cost. HM6L took over 3 years to gain Programme Entry status, when guidance indicates 6 months as the norm: and the start date has shifted ever backwards, from 2008-09 in the MSBC to – at best - autumn 2012, with several optimistic intermediate dates along the way.

Section 3 outlines the reasons why the whole question of alternatives has to be revisited. TSLM does not support a western route or any roads-led option, but if LCC wants to persist with a major new road link it has to show why the northern route should be the preferred option, and it has failed to do so. The northern HM6L has not been tested against a next-best option, only against a western route which the MSBC did not assess because it was deemed "unbuildable" on nature conservation grounds, which would render it incapable of being a next-best option. In any case, questions are raised in this review over the process by which the western route was discarded following the legal opinion in 2004 that it conflicted with conservation designations, in particular the European SAC (special area of conservation) designation for Morecambe Bay. The procedure for assessing the impact of projects on SACs was not followed, in that the opinion was not informed by an Appropriate Assessment of potential impacts on the conservation objectives of the SAC, so could not reach a conclusion on whether the integrity of the SAC might be adversely affected. Without this test being applied, there is no basis to conclude that the western route would be unbuildable, irrespective of whether there are alternative routes.

The Lower Cost Alternative (LCA) for HM6L consisted of a very expensive rebuilding of M6 J34 and unrelated minor works on Morecambe Road. The J34 works accounted for 80% of the LCA total costs, for something that in isolation is not even a local authority responsibility. This LCA was incoherent and meaningless, did not emerge from a pool of lower cost options consistently appraised in one study, and was not assessed in anything like the same detail as the preferred option of the northern route HM6L. It did not satisfy DfT, who in June 2008, three years after MSBC submission were still asking for quantifiable evidence to "*demonstrate the link road to be the optimal solution to the transport problems in the area".* Even though DfT eventually granted programme entry status, they appear to have done so without resolution of this question.

Given the present dire funding situation, the question should be reopened, since genuine lower cost alternatives can resolve transport problems in the area at much more affordable cost. The alternative proposal in section 5 of this review presents one such package of lower cost measures, much more akin to the intention and purpose of LCA identification and appraisal.

Section 4 addresses the current context of the HM6L proposal. Government transport policy seeks to generate sustainable economic growth and contribute to carbon reduction targets, within the overarching priority of deficit reduction. Secretary of State Philip Hammond has stated that a measure of success will be "*demonstrating that there is nothing incompatible between those two objectives: supporting economic growth and supporting the 2020 carbon reduction objectives".* HM6L performs poorly on all three counts, being a very expensive road which delivers very little in terms of local economic regeneration and adds significantly to carbon emissions in the area. Instead of 'more growth, less carbon', HM6L offers 'more carbon, minimal growth', at a cost approaching nine times the government benchmark for job creation.

Climate change and low carbon transport have moved significantly up the agenda in the past few years. This is formalised in key government policy statements from the Stern and Eddington reports onwards, notably "Developing a Sustainable Transport System" (2008) and "Low Carbon Transport: a greener future" (2009). The North-West RDA's "Future North West: our shared priorities" (August 2010) shows the extent to which national policy has permeated local and regional bodies previously more inclined to the 'roads for prosperity' approach of the 1980s.

As well as the national policy climate, there have been changes at a local level:

- The 2008 Faber Maunsell report shows the potential to improve the quality and uptake of other modes of transport. LCC has to draw up a package of complementary measures to HM6L using the FM recommendations, to meet planning conditions, but has yet to complete this or identify funding sources. It is difficult to imagine how a government facing intense pressures on limited funds could justify further millions for complementary measures on top of the £133 million currently allocated to the road alone.
- Access to the Port of Heysham has been a central plank of LCC's case for the HM6L. This review questions the significance and accuracy of journey time savings, but in any case freight traffic through Heysham has been in decline over the past 10 years, especially in recent years. Even to the extent that journey time savings are achieved, whatever benefit applies to an ever decreasing volume of traffic.
- The large Centros shopping development in Lancaster city centre was said at the 2007 planning inquiry to be essential to the concept of HM6L, in preventing economic activity leaking away from the area due to improved accessibility to the M6. The Centros development collapsed at public inquiry in 2009, and its future is now uncertain. Without the Centros development, LCC's argument accepts that HM6L is more likely than not to drain economic activity away from the area (SACTRA's two-way road effect).

Section 5 presents the alternative proposal, of a package of sustainable transport measures largely drawn from the FM report. These are all measures that can go ahead with or without HM6L. Although LCC argue that the link road is essential to enable the 'complementary' measures in FM, they have never come up with a credible example of measures that need the road in order to remove traffic from the existing network to provide space for other road users.

There are five key elements in the alternative proposal:

- High quality spinal bus route between Heysham and the University of Lancaster
- Rail system upgrades
- Cycle infrastructure
- Revisions to Lancaster gyratory systems
- Park and Ride

The details and strategic fit of these elements are outlined in the main report. These are the components of a 'major scheme' proposal for capital funding, but would form part of a wider sustainable transport strategy including 'Smarter Choices' interventions some of which are happening already. Costings taken from FM indicate a budget of £30-40 million would enable a meaningful package of measures to be implemented.

This review concludes that the HM6L should be scrapped rather than deferred. The scheme does not mesh comfortably with either the present climate of transport development or with current government policy, and key elements of its purported justification have been eroded either by scrutiny of the arguments or changes of circumstance. A lower cost package of measures as outlined in this review is better targeted at the real transport issues of the area, better able to deliver on the policy objectives of government, avoids the high environmental costs associated with the road link, and promises meaningful improvements to the transport networks of the district across all modes.

Alan James
September 2010

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Five years after the Major Scheme Business Case (MSBC) submission in July 2005, the Heysham-M6 Link scheme (HM6L) was put on hold in June 2010, awaiting the outcome of the Government's Comprehensive Spending Review. Although the spending review has to be awaited, the indications are that Lancashire County Council (LCC) and other parties including David Morris, MP for Morecambe and Lunesdale, expect the scheme to be deferred by between two and five years. The primacy of the government's objective to reduce the national budget deficit is clear in all policy statements at the present time.

1.2 Whilst LCC now have a projected start date on site of autumn 2012 (LCC web site[1]), there is no evidence at present to support this date. It appears to be nothing more than a date compatible with the recent LCC decision to 'save' £1.3 million preparatory costs in the council budget for 2010-11: resumption of work in 2011-12 would imply a start date no earlier than autumn 2012. There is no reason to give this latest start date any more credence than previous forecasts: as recently as May 2009 LCC was projecting a start on site in 2009-10, which was put back progressively to April 2010, then October 2010, then April 2011, as the implausibility of earlier programmes became apparent and mistakes in the processing of orders (see 2.5 below) caused further delays.

1.3 The central proposition of this review is that the HM6L should be abandoned rather than deferred. HM6L is a solution that actually delivers very little in terms of resolving transport problems in Lancaster District; is increasingly out of step with government priorities and with sustainable transport good practice; and is increasingly unaffordable. In its place, a package of sustainable transport measures should be assembled, many of which have already been identified in the Faber Maunsell (FM) "Lancaster District Transport Vision and Strategy" report of July 2008[2]. This approach does not exclude improvement of the existing highway network where it would augment demand management measures, but the approach is emphatically not highways-led as at present. The FM report assumes that HM6L will be built, but this is its terms of reference, not an output of the report; and although LCC claims that the HM6L is essential to enable FM-type measures, primarily by relieving traffic on the existing network, the council has singularly failed to come up with any concrete example of where this is the case.

1.4 The cost implication of this proposition is simple. Instead of deferring for the next few years £139 million of spending on the road and the Park and Ride site at M6 J34, plus the necessary spend on complementary measures to comply with planning conditions (see 2.3 and in particular 4.5 below) but having to spend this amount and more in some years' time, there would be a commitment to spend around £30-£40 million over the next few years but also to save £100 million not only in that period but for all time. In the process, there would be a prospect of real and sustainable improvements to transport in the area, rather than nothing for now but a hope, which many see as forlorn, that the HM6L will miraculously become affordable at some point in the future.

1.5 This report is in two main sections:

- Reasons why the link road should be fundamentally reconsidered
- Alternative sustainable transport strategy based on FM

A short synopsis of events since 2005 is set out in Section 2. The case for reconsidering HM6L is in two parts, firstly section 3 considering the scheme in relation to government guidance for LTP major schemes, secondly section 4 outlining changes in context and government policy since planning permission was granted in February 2008. Section 5 outlines a proposal for a low cost strategy based on practical demand management measures included in the FM report.

2.0 TIMELINE SINCE 2005

2.1 This section presents a brief synopsis of the scheme since MSBC submission in July 2005[3]. In part this provides background information to assist understanding of the rest of the report; but in part it documents the serious weaknesses in the presentation of the scheme by LCC throughout this period.

2.2 *MSBC submission*

New draft guidance for LTP major schemes was issued in April 2005[4], which stated that for schemes submitted after July 2005 the Department for Transport (DfT) would expect promoting authorities to provide 10% of scheme funding. It is widely considered that the MSBC was submitted prematurely to beat the July 2005 deadline, and many of its subsequent difficulties stem from it having been rushed through at the outset.

Estimated scheme cost at MSBC was £87.7 million, with a BCR (Benefit-Cost Ratio) of 7.4 and local regeneration benefits of £162 million. The MSBC spend profile anticipated a construction start in 2008-09, with completion in 2011-12. DfT guidance states that a decision on Programme Entry (PE) would normally be within 6 months of submission.

2.3 *Planning permission*

A planning application was submitted by LCC to itself in December 2005. There was significant public objection, and the LCC planning officer raised numerous issues. Although LCC voted 15-0 in favour of granting permission, there were 2,200 letters requesting that the application be called in for determination by the Secretary of State (SoS), and the call-in was confirmed in February 2007. A planning inquiry was held, unusually not combined with an Orders inquiry, in July/ August 2007. The inquiry Inspector made clear that a planning inquiry was concerned with whether there were reasons not to grant permission to the scheme before the inquiry, not whether that scheme was the 'best' available: however, he then criticised TSLM for not presenting alternatives at the inquiry.

The Inspector recommended granting of permission in his report in November 2007, and the SoS confirmed permission in February 2008, subject to conditions proposed by the Inspector.[5] An important condition was that in the Inspector's view the road scheme needed a programme of complementary measures such as those under consideration at the time in the FM study, and LCC should prepare and implement such a programme. One specific complementary measure, the provision of a Park and Ride site at M6 J34, was stipulated, but DfT subsequently refused to include it in the major scheme (and thereby benefit from DfT major scheme funding), so it has to be funded entirely by LCC.

The decision to grant planning permission was subject to a legal challenge in March 2008, which was heard in August 2008. The main grounds for challenge were that Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) regulations had been breached by the failure to produce an EIA of the J34 P&R site, even though it had been described by LCC at the inquiry as an integral part of the HM6L scheme. This case was rejected on legal grounds pertaining to the treatment of EIA in independent planning applications for integral or co-related schemes, although case law does include decisions (eg Carlisle Airport) that went the other way.

The scheme cost estimate at the time of the planning inquiry was £115 million. The BCR had gone down accordingly, to 5.94. Local regeneration benefits had been slashed dramatically, to £16.2 million, due to significant errors in LCC's evidence on local economic impact, accepted (indeed in part identified) by LCC's own consultant. Whereas in the MSBC the local regeneration benefits had been almost double the scheme costs, they were now less than 15% of scheme costs.

2.4 *Programme Entry*

Although PE would according to guidance normally be determined within 6 months of the MSBC submission (ie by December 2005 for HM6L), this had still not happened by the time of the planning inquiry in July 2007. Although LCC (Mr McCreesh) expressed confidence at the inquiry that PE would be achieved before the end of the year, it was still not complete by the time of the legal challenge in March 2008. DfT said they would not determine PE during the legal action, to avoid any possibility of prejudicing the outcome. However, even after the legal challenge was concluded it took a further six months, from Aug 2008 to Feb 2009, for the scheme to gain PE.

This raises questions over why there had already been so much delay in reaching a decision prior to the call-in in February 2007. It was not, as has sometimes been claimed, because the scheme needed planning permission before gaining PE – permissions do not have to be in place until the later stage of Conditional Approval. In essence it appears to have been due to shortcomings in the original MSBC bid. The further delay after August 2008 is understood by TSLM to have been because DfT was still awaiting LCC responses to information requests.

Whatever the reasons, PE should have been determined within 6 months but in the event took 37 months (July 2005 to February 2009, less the 6 months of the legal challenge).

Almost immediately after the grant of planning permission in Feb 2008, LCC announced that scheme costs had risen to over £130 million. This was said to be due mostly to a need to increase the future inflation allowance, from 2.5% to 6% pa: TSLM had already made this observation many months previously, and it was difficult to understand why LCC took so long to report the same conclusion.

At PE the Quantified Cost Estimate (QCE) for the LTP major scheme was £137.04 million, of which DfT undertook to provide £133 million subject to satisfactory outcomes to the remaining stages of scheme development. At this stage, LCC was required to fund £4.04 million of the major scheme, plus £2.36 million for the J34 P&R (which had without explanation gone down in cost from £3.56 million at the time of the planning inquiry), plus scheme development costs of at least £6 million. Under current DfT rules, any spend above the QCE has to be 50% funded by the promoting authority up to a defined threshold (known as the Additional Risk Layer, in HM6L's case just over £30 million above the QCE), and 100% funded by the promoting authority above that threshold.

In spite of the further rise in the cost estimate, the BCR remained at around 6, and has been quoted as such ever since.

By the time of PE the projected start on site date had gone back from 2008-09 in the 2005 MSBC, to there being a £9 million spend in 2009-10 – an incredibly optimistic timescale in Feb 2009 with the Road and Compulsory Purchase Orders not yet issued.

2.5 *Orders and Orders inquiry*

LCC attempted to 'fast-track' a decision on the Orders in May 2009, with a view to serving the Orders in June 2009, holding an inquiry in Autumn 2009 and achieving a start on site in April 2010, another optimistic timetable. The fast tracking of Orders came unstuck, and the process had to be repeated, the Orders finally being published in October 2009 with another revised start date of April 2011.

The intention to hold a SRO/ CPO inquiry was announced in January 2010. A date appeared to have been set for October 2010, though it was never formally announced to objectors.

Although there have been numerous scheme changes since PE, and two further planning applications to accommodate the changes, the cost estimate of £137.04 million remained unchanged. The projected start date was put back once again in the light of the inquiry date, to October 2011 with completion in 2014-15. Since the cost estimate has to include future inflation, it is questionable that the estimate would remain unchanged for a scheme starting in 2011-12 instead of 2009-10 as at the time of the QCE. LCC has been optimistically asserting over the past year that inflation forecasts have gone down since the 6% rate was applied in early 2008, but that arguably was never an assumption to be relied on, and is certainly not at the present time.

2.6 *Postponement*

In May 2010, the incoming coalition government announced that all major schemes not yet committed to construction would be subject to a 'stock take' in the light of future spending priorities, and current funding commitments could not be guaranteed. LCC's response to this was the notorious 'Business as Usual' press release[6] saying that notwithstanding the stock take the council was continuing with scheme development.

A more explicitly worded letter from DfT to LCC on 10 June 2010[7] stated that:

- the government could not identify which major schemes it would support until after the Comprehensive Spending Review in October 2010
- further spend on scheme development would be entirely at the local authority's own risk
- inquiries for any schemes due before the review, including HM6L, would be postponed.

LCC at last ceased work on the scheme at this point, and the Cabinet Member for Transport resigned.

LCC has recently (September 2010) confirmed a decision to 'save' £1.3 million out of its 2010-11 budget by deferring further preparation work on HM6L, and has once again quietly deferred the projected start date until autumn 2012 (again without any revision to the cost estimate). Both actions suggest a tacit acceptance, perhaps based on inside information, that the scheme will be deferred in the Comprehensive Spending Review announcement due on 20 October. It remains to be seen whether LCC's new timescale also indicates a back-room promise that the scheme will only be deferred by one year, rather than the three or more years usually being talked about in terms of government budget deficit reduction.

3.0 GUIDANCE ISSUES

3.1 A case was presented to the planning inquiry that scheme development of HM6L had failed to follow the LTP major guidance published in April 2005, which although 'draft' was to be used forthwith. The main objections were in relation to assessment of alternatives, in particular the treatment of the 'Next Best Option' and the 'Low Cost Alternative' (LCA).[8]

- The Next Best Option was a western bypass which the MSBC itself described as unbuildable because of significant nature conservation interests: TSLM argued that by definition an option characterised as unbuildable could not then be described as the next-best thing to do other than the preferred option.
- The LCA consisted of two unrelated measures – improvement of J34 of the M6, which in isolation is not a local authority responsibility; and minor works, mostly to traffic signals, along Morecambe Road. The J34 upgrade accounted for £19 million of the £24 million total cost of the LCA, to be spent on something that should be a Highways Agency responsibility.

3.2 These arguments did not sway the Inspector's recommendation to grant permission, and by convention earlier decisions would not be revisited, no matter how unsound, unless there is new evidence to present. These issues are being reopened here, because:

- In the case of the next-best option there are new arguments to be presented, that the legal opinion on which the 'unbuildable' assessment was made is unsound.
- In the case of the LCA, the case presented at the inquiry was not satisfactorily answered, and the issue is simply too important to let lie at a time of such severe public funding austerity.

3.3 TSLM does not support a western bypass instead of a northern bypass: it does not support major new road building as a solution to transport problems in the district. However, if LCC and central government wish to persist with a road-led strategy, they have to be satisfied and be able to demonstrate that the adopted route is the 'least worst' solution in terms of environmental costs relative to benefits. This requirement is more pressing at a CPO inquiry than a planning inquiry. As discussed earlier, the planning inquiry was said to be primarily interested in whether there are reasons not to grant permission, not whether there are better solutions. A CPO inquiry, on the other hand, has to establish whether there is compelling public interest in the scheme proceeding, to justify forcible expropriation of property, and there cannot be compelling public interest if it has not been established that there are no better – or less-worse – solutions.

3.4 TSLM's case in relation to the western route is, therefore, not that it should be advocated in preference to the northern route, but that in the absence of proper evaluation as the 'Next-Best Option' ever since the MSBC, it is not possible to affirm compelling public interest in proceeding with HM6L as LCC's preferred northern bypass option. This case would have been made at the CPO inquiry this October, and will be made if and when HM6L eventually comes to inquiry.

Next-Best Option

3.5 The assessment of the western route as 'unbuildable' was based on the opinion by Frances Patterson QC in August 2004 that a decision to proceed would be regarded

"not only as extraordinary but one that was perverse on the part of the County Council ... lacking in logic and one that no reasonable planning authority properly directing itself could come to" [9]

The basis of this bold statement is that the western route conflicted with an array of conservation interests, the dominant issue being the impact on the Morecambe Bay SAC/ SPA/ Ramsar site/ SSSI. Impacts on SACs are controlled by law derived from the EU 1992 Habitats Directive, transposed into English law by the 1994 Habitats Regulations and later amendments (recently consolidated in the 2010 Habitats Regulations). Under Article 6 of the HD, in assessing possible impacts on a SAC due to developments unrelated to the purposes of SAC designation, there are three sequential steps to follow, the first two under Article 6(3) and the third under 6(4)[10]:

1. Schemes which are judged likely to have a significant impact on a SAC should be subject to appropriate assessment in relation to its conservation objectives (ie the reasons why the site was designated)
2. The appropriate assessment is used to determine whether the integrity of the site could be adversely affected.
3. If the assessment continues to indicate that the possibility of impacts on the integrity of the SAC cannot be excluded, the scheme could still proceed, in the absence of alternatives, if there are imperative reasons of overriding public interest.

3.6 The basis of Frances Patterson's opinion was that the July 2004 ADAS report on ecological impacts concluded that the possibility of impacts of a western route on the SAC could not be excluded, and since there was an alternative northern route which avoided these impacts by avoiding the SAC, it was not possible to satisfy the requirements of the HD. At face value, this argument appears compelling, and since TSLM did not want to promote a western route it was accepted at face value at the 2007 inquiry. TSLM's main argument to the inquiry was that if the western route was one that *"no reasonable planning authority properly directing itself"* could support, it could not be a next-best option and the scheme assessment had thus been deprived of a realistic next-best option.

3.7 Since 2007 I have been involved in other roads inquiries, notably the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route in 2008, where issues relating to the HD were prominent and the detail of the HD and its ancillary guidance documents were subject to greater scrutiny. I have come to the conclusion, somewhat reluctantly, that Frances Patterson's forthright opinion on the western route is incorrect, because it was based on inadequate procedures relating to Articles 6(3) and 6(4) of the HD.

3.8 In summary, the opinion is suspect for the following reasons:

- ADAS undertook the first step under HD 6(3), of identifying the likelihood of effects on the SAC, though arguably did little to determine whether the possible effects were "significant": but ***ADAS did not undertake any subsequent steps***. The July 2004 report states (4.1.1) that appropriate assessment "is being undertaken" as required by the HD (see ADAS footnote 12), although no record of an appropriate assessment has been seen since then. The legal opinion in August 2004 was stated to be based on the July 2004 ADAS report, which means that ***it was not informed by an appropriate assessment***.
- The appropriate assessment in relation to the conservation objectives of the SAC should enable a decision to be made by a competent authority as to whether it was possible to conclude that the ***integrity of the site*** would not be likely to be adversely affected. Since the SAC is the whole of Morecambe Bay and the Duddon estuary, and the western route would be near to the Lune Estuary alone and upstream of the SAC itself, it is a high (though not insurmountable) hurdle to demonstrate that the integrity of the SAC could be adversely affected. Since an appropriate assessment had not been presented in the information on which the legal opinion was based, Frances Patterson had no reliable evidence on whether the integrity of the SAC might be affected

- The appropriate assessment has to be **recorded** and **reasoned** (bold emphasis in 2000 guidance document "Managing Natura 2000 sites", para 4.5.1). The same paragraph states that *"if the record is a simple unreasoned positive or negative view of a plan or project"* the assessment does not fulfil its purpose. The additional 2007 guidance goes somewhat further, stating that *"The assessment should include all elements contributing to the site's integrity and to the overall coherence of the network as defined in the site's conservation objectives and Standard Data Form, and be based on best available scientific knowledge in the field".* There is to the best of my knowledge no recorded appropriate assessment in the public domain. The ADAS report does no more than say how difficult it is to establish significance of impacts, then rely on the precautionary principle to conclude that the possibility of significant impacts cannot therefore be excluded, which clears the way to HD 6(4) and the consideration of alternatives. Without the *"best available scientific knowledge in the field"*, it is in my view no more acceptable to claim uncertainty that there could be impacts, than it would be to claim certainty that there would not be impacts. This is all the more so when, as here, the consequence of invoking uncertainty is to unleash a whole raft of other impacts on the chosen alternative.
- Although alternatives may be identified as part of an iterative process of assessment, the guidance makes clear that the active consideration of alternatives is a sequential step, ***after*** the assessment has been made of whether the proposal could still have an adverse impact on the integrity of the SAC in relation to its conservation objectives (see 2000 guidance para 4.2, also 2007 guidance para 1.3.1). The ADAS report uses the alternative northern route as an easy way forward following the failure to make a reasoned case on whether the western route could be regarded as free from SAC impacts. The acid test would be whether the same conclusion would have been reached in the absence of an alternative route, when the future of the scheme would have depended on the case for overriding public interest which Frances Patterson clearly regarded as a difficult hurdle (though neither she nor the inquiry Inspector had any such problems with overriding public interest as a test for allowing inappropriate development in the Green Belt in the case of the northern route)
- Even if the case for investigating alternatives were to be established, the legal opinion does very little to examine variants within the western route. Frances Patterson argues that reducing the number of bridge piers could be beneficial but would cost more and result in a higher bridge with possibly increased visual impact. These are issues to evaluate, not reasons to exclude the option from any further assessment.

3.9 The legal opinion against the western route also related to impacts on animals protected under European or UK legislation. I have yet to see a road scheme halted at inquiry due to impacts on protected species, let alone be dropped from further consideration: it is more usual for cases to be presented invoking the power of mitigation to render impacts negligible. Whilst it is important not to belittle impacts on protected species, they would be unlikely to be the absolute showstopper for a western route that the SAC could be if a properly conducted assessment led to such a conclusion.

3.10 The above does not seek to argue that a western route should have been selected in preference to a northern route; rather, that the two should have been evaluated on an equal footing, instead of the western route being discarded on specious grounds leaving the northern as the only available roads-led option. Until this is done, there can be no confidence that proceeding with the current HM6L is a justifiable decision as the best available option. It will now, though, be difficult to trust LCC to present a dispassionate comparison of the two options, given the concerted efforts of the past six years to promote the northern route and dismiss any other options: just as it was difficult to trust the council in the previous 10 years or so when it was hell-bent on building a western bypass.

Low cost alternative

3.11 The absurdity of the LCA presented in the MSBC scarcely needs further comment. The major scheme guidance indicates that the LCA is conceived to show how much could be achieved by low cost measures, to ascertain how far these could in themselves go to resolve transport problems and provide a benchmark for the added value of higher cost interventions. The LCA for HM6L consists mainly of one very high cost intervention on major works to M6 J34 which is not even a LCC responsibility, along with unrelated, minor, random interventions at traffic lights along Morecambe Road[11]. It is not even a coherent option, let alone a meaningful option within the terms of a LCA.

3.12 LCC claims that the scheme has strategic coherence because the J34 upgrade will encourage motorway users to come off at J34 instead of J33 or 35, and thereafter they will have a smoother journey along Morecambe Road. This relies on an unsubstantiated and implausible notion that many drivers actively choose to use J33 to travel via Galgate and Lancaster City Centre, or J35 to travel via Carnforth and the Coast Road, to avoid the perils of using the current J34, and would flock to J34 if only it were better! The effect of tinkering with traffic lights on Morecambe Road will on its own be negligible, though it could be useful within a wider package of similar low cost measures.

3.13 The planning inquiry inspector was insufficiently swayed by the inadequacy of the LCA for it to affect his decision to recommending granting of planning permission. There is only a single mention of it in the whole report, recording TSLM's view that it was inadequate (IR para 6.2.21[12]), and the issue did not feature in his conclusions. It may be inferred from this, and from his recommendation, that he was of the view that any solution not involving major road construction would not meet the transport needs of the area: the adequacy or otherwise of ***any*** given LCA was therefore irrelevant to him since ***no*** LCA would come up to the mark.

3.14 He says as much in para 8.3.14 onwards, along with the extraordinary proposition that the burden of proof was on TSLM and other objectors to show that non-road solutions *"could alone effect a resolution"* (IR 8.3.14[13]). I would submit that the 2005 major scheme guidance places the burden of demonstrating what could be achieved with lower cost solutions on the promoting authority, in the requirement to produce a meaningful LCA. The inadequacy of the LCA was put in evidence before the Inspector, who not only failed to cover this evidence in his conclusions, but then tried to shift the blame for lack of evidence on low cost measures onto the objectors.

3.15 Whatever the rights and wrongs of the Inspector's report, the fact remains that the case against the LCA is unanswered to this day, and the guidance by which the scheme should have been assessed has been flouted.

3.16 A subsequent exchange between DfT and LCC tends to affirm this conclusion. As part of the information requests in 2008 prior to PE, a memo from DfT to LCC dated 8 June 2008 states:

The business case update submitted in June 2007 presents a series of studies which point towards your preferred option. It would be helpful to see some quantifiable evidence from these studies that demonstrate the link road to be the optimal solution to the transport problems in the area. This exercise would have to be undertaken for a CPO/SRO public inquiry. [14]

This is the role that the next-best option and LCA are supposed to fulfil. They are firstly distilled from a pool of options in the process known as 'optioneering', and having emerged as the front runners in each category they are appraised to the same level as the preferred option. Instead, LCC relied on a range of disparate studies without consistent study objectives, all out of date and spread over a number of years.

It is unclear that LCC ever responded to the call for *"quantifiable evidence from these studies"*. What is clear, though, is that unlike the inquiry inspector, DfT were evidently not satisfied, as late as June 2008, that there was enough evidence to conclude that the preferred option was demonstrably the optimal solution to transport problems in the area.

4.0 DEVELOPMENTS POST-INQUIRY

4.1 This section covers changes that have occurred since the planning inquiry in 2007 and mostly since PE in February 2009. Cumulatively, these changes lead to an inescapable conclusion that the current HM6L scheme requires fundamental reconsideration in the light of a very different context in 2010. The view of TSLM is that such a review exercise points inevitably to the conclusion that the road-led strategy should be abandoned and replaced by a strategy led by the principles of sustainable transport. The changes are outlined in turn, but not chronologically.

4.2 *Coalition government transport policy*

The incoming government in May 2010 quickly set out its transport priorities that would govern the forthcoming spending review and inform transport investment over the next five years. There are three priorities, clearly set out in SoS Philip Hammond's evidence to the Transport Select Committee on 26 July[15]:

- Reduce the government budget deficit (described as the overarching constraint)
- Generate sustainable economic growth
- Contribute to the government's 2020 carbon reduction targets

The latter two priorities have equal weight within the overarching constraint of the first: this is clear from a key statement by the SoS that *"I think a measure of success for the Transport Department will be demonstrating that there is nothing incompatible between those two objectives: supporting economic growth and supporting the 2020 carbon reduction objectives".*

HM6L performs poorly on all three priorities. At £28.5 million per km it is one of the most expensive roads in the LTP major scheme programme. It also suffers from having no sources of funding other than central government (even the LCC 'contribution' is coming from the LTP block grant, depriving other LTP projects in Lancashire of that funding), which makes it the costliest scheme to government in the NW Region. It alone accounts for 36% of the total government contribution to the eight LTP major schemes in the NW at programme entry stage in 2009-10, almost as much as the combined total for 6 of the remaining 7 schemes (which together cost £152 million, 41% of the total).

The real economic benefit of the scheme is doubtful. The regeneration value sank by 90%, to £16.2 million, making the scheme very poor value in these terms. At the time of the 2007 inquiry, local economic benefit was assessed as £27,000 per job created, so there is a net benefit if the cost of creating one job is less than £27,000: HM6L costs £137.04 million – on its own – and creates 600 jobs, a cost per job of £228,400 or almost nine times the local economic benefit. Port traffic has declined (see 4.6 below), so the hypothetical benefit of 6-10 minute peak journey time savings has diminished.

There are also reasons to question the exceptionally high BCR for road users: question marks have arisen over some of the MSBC modelling, such as the assertion that AM peak traffic is lower than interpeak traffic (see 4.8 below). A comparison with other schemes, although to be treated with caution, suggests that the PVB figure is inexplicably high (the Aberdeen WPR, with 41km of motorway-standard road, traffic volumes in excess of 40,000 vpd, and the congested context of the

city of Aberdeen, has a claimed PVB considerably less than double that for the 4.8km of HM6L). In any case, the scheme has had to be remodelled, and Conservative transport thinking now questions the validity of economic appraisal methodology.

The climate change credentials of HM6L are exceptionally poor. The MSBC concluded that there would be an increase of 23,500 tonnes of CO2 pa[16], said to be more than the combined increases for the next 66 road schemes in the programme at the time. LCC has consistently sought to play this down with the usual arguments – infinitessimal in a national context, transport emissions may have to grow but will be offset by reductions in other sectors, some transport schemes will have CO2 increases offset by reductions in schemes elsewhere – but the problem with this figure is ever more pressing as carbon reduction achieves greater prominence and transport is no longer exempt from sector reduction targets (see 4.3 below). Most recently, LCC has sought to claim that the figures were wrong and new calculations show that CO2 emissions are significantly lower – an expedient argument that stretches credulity.

With such poor performance on all three counts, HM6L should not only be a front-runner for deferral, but for outright cancellation given the fundamental questions about its future justification.

4.3 *Sustainable transport policy and climate change*

Although transport scheme guidance is in the melting pot following the government announcements of the spending review and suspension of current guidance, it appears that transport policy is still in line with two key policy statements since 2007.

- DaSTS (Delivering a sustainable transport system), November 2008[17]
- Low Carbon Transport: a greener future July 2009[18]

The former set out five main goals of sustainable transport policy: supporting economic growth, tackling climate change, safety and health, equality of opportunity, and quality of life through a healthy environment. The latter report expands on the role of transport within the Climate Change Act. The essence of the strategy is distilled into one paragraph:

"With greenhouse gas emissions from transport representing 21 per cent of total UK domestic emissions, decarbonising transport must be part of the solution. This will be a major change, but moving to a low carbon economy and transport system also presents huge opportunities; not just for climate change but for our prosperity, health, and the wider environment."

A document published at the same time, the UK low carbon transition plan, set out for the first time a specific target for carbon reduction in transport – a 14% reduction on 2008 levels by 2020.

The introduction of sector targets put a stop to the line of argument up to that date that economic growth and transport carbon reductions were incompatible, and that reductions elsewhere would be needed to achieve the overall national carbon reduction target. The argument then shifted to a need to accept that individual schemes may have to incur increased carbon emissions to achieve other goals, but these would be offset by reductions elsewhere in the transport sector.

Evidence is however rarely forthcoming on exactly where these offsetting reductions will come from. Much is made of the techno-fix, that increasing fuel efficiency and low emission vehicles will offset the increases in traffic volumes on which new roads are predicated, but there is good evidence that the the techno-fix can at best do little more than stabilise CO2 emissions, and cannot deliver 14% emissions reductions in the face of rising traffic volumes. The Low Carbon Transport report makes clear that 'business as usual' including vehicle efficiency improvements would already deliver a reduction of 15 million tonnes of CO2 in 2020, but the low carbon strategy is required to deliver an additional 17.7 million tonnes in that year.

It is disingenuous of LCC to pretend that the CO2 emissions of HM6L are trivial and/ or amenable to offsetting. The MSBC itself reports that there would be a 5% increase in transport emissions in Lancaster District. TSLM's calculation is over 6%, but if strategic through traffic is taken out of the equation the increase in emissions on the local road network is over 12%[19]. It is difficult to see how these increases could be offset by other transport measures within the District, especially as there will be little or no funding for them in the foreseeable future (see 4.5 below); and it is arguably unacceptable to expect other areas of Lancashire, let alone elsewhere in the country, to compensate for the shortcomings in carbon performance in Lancaster.

4.4 *Future North West*

The North West RDA published a document called "Future North West: our shared priorities" (August 2010) which is an agreed statement of RDA partners on the *"priorities and framework for activity over the next 20 years".* Its objectives for transport are framed entirely within the language of the 2009 Low Carbon Transport report. Objective 1c is to

"Stimulate key sectors, including housing, transport and industry, to develop low carbon and resource-efficient solutions and alternatives"[20]

To realise this objective, the key issues for transport are:

"Reduce emissions from transport by:
- reducing the need to travel, including through increased digital connectivity;
- encouraging sustainable forms of travel, including public transport, walking, cycling and smarter travel choices;
- encouraging use of rail and waterborne freight; and
- stimulating the development and adoption of electric/low carbon vehicles, technologies and fuels"

The report has a number of 'Big Ticket' ideas intended to be taken up by the emerging Local Enterprise Partnerships that will eventually replace the RDAs. The Big Ticket for transport is

"6. Improve rail connectivity across the North West and tackle transport pinch points, especially the Northern Hub and securing High Speed Rail access."

There is nothing here to offer any support to HM6L. It is clear that, even in the thinking of RDAs which have historically been very supportive of new road construction, it is recognised that the future of transport lies elsewhere.

4.5 *Faber Maunsell*

The inspector's strategy in recommending planning approval in 2007 was that the then-unfinished FM sustainable transport package for Lancaster District would provide necessary complementary measures to assist congestion reduction on the local road network and counter the release of suppressed demand that invariably accompanies provision of new road capacity in urban areas. It is a condition of the planning permission that LCC draws up *"an action plan of complementary measures based upon the findings of the (FM) study"*, to include specific action areas and with a timescale, and all measures approved in this package *"shall be carried out in their entirety"* (quotes from IR condition 17[21]).

Three years on, LCC have still to draw up a formal package of measures, with costs and timescales, in fulfilment of this condition, and there is a significant problem of funding. Even if HM6L were to avoid deferral, and thus consume the lion's share of government transport funding for Lancashire, it is inconceivable that within the 'overarching constraint' of government deficit reduction it would then gain several more millions of pounds for the complementary measures, to the further detriment of transport in other parts of Lancashire. Without the complementary measures, the scheme cannot meet the condition imposed under the planning permission, so cannot go ahead.

The TSLM proposal (see section 5) is that a FM-based package of measures without HM6L is a more realistic and practical proposition financially, enabling worthwhile transport improvements but simultaneously delivering significant savings. It also avoids the inequitable current scenario of so much transport spending in Lancashire going to one small area.

4.6 *Port of Heysham*

Contrary to upbeat messages at the planning inquiry and since, the Port of Heysham is not of national significance and the volume of activity is declining. This is clear from LCC's own annual report on Lancashire Ports, "Maritime Industry and Associated Activities 2008", published September 2009:

"The Lancashire results show some major yearly changes including significant reductions of 11.2% at Heysham and 11.3% at Fleetwood between 2007 and 2008. Heysham in particular has recorded a major reduction in traffic since a peak of 4,083 thousand tonnes in 2003. The historical trend at Heysham revealed an enormous decrease in activity between 1965 and 1970 and it was not until 1997 that Heysham managed to surpass the 1965 tonnage. The latest 2008 results reveal that the tonnage is once again below the 1965 figure."[22]

In more detail, from Table 1A of the report:

- Freight tonnage declined by 22% between 2003 and 2008, with 2008 being the lowest tonnage of any year
- Car numbers declined by 15%
- Passenger numbers, interestingly, increased by 29%
- Heysham port accounted for 0.56% of UK port tonnage in 2008

- UK port tonnage increased by 1% between 2003 and 2008, compared with the significant decline at Heysham

The decline is likely to have accelerated since 2008, due to the economic problems of the Republic of Ireland which appear unlikely to be short term.

The immediate consequence of this is that the volume of port traffic will have declined markedly since the survey work in 2002 which formed the basis of the MSBC traffic modelling. Even in the narrow economic appraisal terms of cost-benefit analysis, this would be expected to reduce both the degree of user benefit in terms of travel time reductions, and the numbers of users receiving the benefit. The new modelling instructed by DfT, for which survey work was done in 2008, should provide the necessary detail but remains unavailable in the public domain other than the LMVR (Local Model Validation Report).[23]

Faster journey times between the M6 and Morecambe/ Heysham Port is the only one of the principal objectives of the HM6L that remained intact following scrutiny before and during the public inquiry. The other three – relief of traffic on the Lune bridges, releasing roadspace for other users, and facilitating industrial regeneration – have all had serious doubts cast upon them. It was, and remains, a central tenet of TSLM that even the time savings from the M6 to Heysham Port, put at no more than 6-10 minutes at peak times (figures which are themselves open to question – see 4.8 below), are not a make-or-break issue for the future of the port. It may look impressive if there is a 40% journey time reduction between J34 and the port, but the time saving on a peak hour journey from Manchester is no more than 6%, the majority of which would equally well be saved by scheduling the journey outside peak hours.

4.7 *Centros development*

It was made very clear in LCC evidence to the 2007 inquiry that the major shopping development planned by Centros/ Lancaster City Council in the centre of Lancaster was an integral strategic element of the HM6L. This was to counter the likelihood of retail economic activity 'leaking' out of the District due to the improved accessibility of the Morecambe peninsula to the M6 (the two-way road effect of the 1999 SACTRA report Transport and the Economy). The argument ran that if the retail offer of Lancaster District was raised it would obviate the need or desire for people to shop further afield once the road was opened.

Leaving aside the dubiety of the argument, the obvious objection at the time was that the Centros development was not guaranteed to happen, and its future could not be controlled by LCC as promoters of the HM6L. In the event, the Centros development failed to obtain planning permission following a public inquiry in 2009 and was heavily criticised by its inquiry Inspector for failure to respect its historic setting[24]. The development is currently in disarray, but whatever eventually emerges will be nothing like as large a retail development as previously envisaged. It will have to be more modest to meet the requirement to respect its historic setting (among other things, a major part of the site, the former Mitchell's brewery, has since been listed); and neither the economic climate nor trends in retailing are conducive to the mega-mall approach to town centre shopping, at least for the time being.

On the basis of evidence presented by LCC at the 2007 inquiry, HM6L should not proceed without the Centros development. As things stand, there is nothing to give confidence that any post-Centros retail scheme will be developed. Bearing in mind that a large part of the site was earmarked for 50 years for an eastern relief road that never happened and never will, there is no reason to suppose that the more recent aspirations for a shopping mall will ever be realised.

4.8 *Modelling*

As outlined above, new modelling for HM6L began in 2008, which would form the basis for the information update required at the Conditional/ Full Approval stages. The modelling on which the traffic forecasts and economic appraisals in the MSBC were based, is now out of date and superseded by the new model. Past decisions dependent on the previous modelling will have to be reviewed, with potentially significant implications especially at a time of greatly increased competition between schemes for severely limited funding.

The only information from the new modelling published so far by LCC is the LMVR. Attempts have been made to compare for example observed traffic flows between the 2005 and 2010 LMVRs, to see whether any trends can be extricated, but the two documents do not lend themselves to such comparisons. To give one example, peak flows in the 2005 LMVR are presented as average hourly flows 0700-1000 and 1400-1700, whereas in the 2010 LMVR they are the peak hours 0800-0900 and 1700-1800. This begs the question why such fundamental changes have been introduced in the space of only 5 years (the 2005 LMVR contains a justification for using the average over 3 hours, which if valid might be expected still to prevail only a few years later).

In the course of attempts to review the modelling, two anomalies emerged from the 2005 exercise:

- AM peak hourly flows were said to be lower than interpeak flows. This was questioned "intuitively" by DfT, but peer review consultants (Atkins) accepted the explanation that this was what the traffic surveys said. However, it is contradicted by the journey time surveys which indicated significantly longer journey times in peak periods than interpeaks (for example, over twice as long to travel eastbound along Morecambe Road in the AM peak than interpeak) in spite of higher traffic flows in the interpeak! (see 2005 LMVR Tables 5-7)
- The claimed with-scheme journey time at peak hours between Heysham Port and M6 J34 is said to be about 10 minutes (eg 2005 EIR Table 5.3[25]), but the isochrone map (EIR Fig 5.5[26]) shows an existing journey time of 10 minutes from the port to just short of Morecambe Road, on the section of the route which would not have any journey time improvements with HM6L. In the with-scheme scenario (EIR 5.6[27]), the 10 minute isochrone miraculously balloons almost to the HM6L/ A6 junction, which is simply not possible if the isochrones on 5.5 are correct: and even then it does not make a 10 minute journey time to the M6 feasible.

Whatever the explanation for the first anomaly, it does not occur in the 2010 LMVR which shows that traffic flow totals crossing screen lines in the AM and PM peaks are very similar, and some 20% higher than in interpeak hours. It is untenable to suggest that the pattern has altered so significantly over 5 years, which indicates that perhaps DfT should have followed their intuition! A possible explanation is that averaging the peaks over three hours has distorted the 2005 results, as local

knowledge tells that traffic flows diminish very rapidly after 0900 and 1800. If the 2005 journey time surveys were done in the single peak hour but the with-scheme savings applied to each of the 3 hours at each peak, this will seriously over-exaggerate the overall time savings of the scheme.

The question of journey time savings attributable to HM6L is potentially even more serious. If the economic appraisal works on the basis of a 10 minute journey time between the port and the M6, but in reality it is at least 13 minutes (the minimum time to do the 3 miles of HM6L if it takes 10 minutes to travel from the port to Morecambe Road), the time saved halves for some journeys, from 6 minutes to 3 minutes, and the economic benefit of minutes saved will be significantly overestimated.

4.9 *Cost-benefit analysis*

Much has been made by LCC of the high BCR of the scheme, in the region of 6 (ie benefits are 6 times the costs) when a BCR of 2 is regarded as high in value for money terms. As discussed in the previous section, there is much to question in the very high BCR of HM6L, and as Professor Phil Goodwin pointed out in evidence to the 2007 inquiry the BCR is highly sensitive to small changes in modelling assumptions.

The other recognised problem of a BCR is that it only covers aspects of cost and benefit for which quantifiable cost or benefit formulae have been developed. For example, journey time savings are assigned a cash value (however dubiously) which become the major component of the benefit side of the BCR: but in the case of HM6L the 'large adverse' landscape impact, or inappropriate development in the Green Belt, are not assigned an economic value. A high BCR ends up being weighed against high but non-monetised environmental costs, and it becomes relatively easy to justify a decision as the balance of probability between factors that are measured in different currencies.

A Conservative Party policy review document prior to May 2009 recognises this problem and indicates that in government the party would seek to reform the conventional cost-benefit approach:

"A key to the mechanism for assessing major road schemes is the cost/ benefit analysis prepared by the DfT. The methodology adopted in this respect and the values placed on items such as the (relatively high) cost of car traveller time as against the (relatively low) cost of disturbance to wildlife and the environment are the cause of considerable disquiet among transport academics. ***There is a strong case for a comprehensive review of the cost benefit analysis regime adopted by an incoming Conservative government which will have profound implications for major road schemes in the future"*** (emphasis in original)

The exact nature of this reform remains to be seen, but there are for example interesting proposals for analysis based on Quality of Life indicators, which are favoured in principle by TSLM and other sustainable transport groups in Lancaster District. Whatever happens, it is clear that a high BCR is no longer entirely trusted by government and cannot be relied on to justify a scheme in the way it has so often been in the past.

5.0 ALTERNATIVE PROPOSAL

5.1 As outlined in section 1, TSLM proposes that HM6L be abandoned as ineffective and unaffordable, and replaced with an integrated proposal to improve all transport in Lancaster District, led by a package of sustainable transport measures based on the Faber Maunsell (FM) report. The target cost would be £30-£40 million over the next 5 years, thereby saving at least £100 million on the cost of HM6L alone. Since the HM6L scheme also requires a package of FM measures to satisfy the conditions of planning permission, the overall saving should be greater still.

5.2 The FM report itself commented on the limitations of HM6L in relieving congestion on the local road network:

"Whilst the Heysham to M6 Link Road provides significant benefits to journey time reliability and reduces the level of congestion on a number of key corridors (in part or whole), in isolation, it does not resolve all transport problems on the city centre gyratory and would require other complementary measures as indicated in this report." (final report para 3.2.3[28])

This was written in the context of HM6L going ahead, since this was what the Brief stipulated. It is one of several statements that identifies why the road needs the sustainable transport measures: but the report at no point makes the case for why the measures need the road. It is simply the starting point of the Brief that the road will be built.

5.3 Even the assertion that HM6L reduces the level of congestion on certain key corridors is questioned elsewhere in the FM report:

"Whilst some road infrastructure work is planned that should improve access between Lancaster and Morecambe, not least the Northern Relief Road linking the M6 Junction 34 with Heysham, it is clear that little benefit will be gained by improving accessibility by private vehicle since traditionally extra road capacity is quickly filled by additional car trips. Instead, it is proposed to create some form of fast, efficient, and frequent public transport between the locations." (Final report para 4.2[29])

This statement recognises the commonly experienced effect of induced traffic, which the MSBC did not admit, that traffic expands to fill the available roadspace. The MSBC acknowledged some, but not much, induced traffic, and even then there were few roads where forecast with-scheme traffic levels fell enough to justify a claim that previously congested roads would as a result become uncongested: and for every road on the existing network where traffic reductions were claimed, there was another where levels would increase.

5.4 Still less is there any tenable claim, either in the FM report or elsewhere by LCC, that traffic flow reductions would ***enable*** reallocation of roadspace to other road users. In some cases FM proposals are for sections of road where traffic volumes are actually forecast to increase, most notably the proposals for Dalton Square. In another case, LCC tried to argue at the 2007 inquiry that the traffic reductions on Caton Road would enable insertion of a bus lane to enhance performance of the J34 P&R, but this was shown not to be so. The roadway would need widening to accommodate a bus lane, and its viability would be unaffected by whether the opening year flow was 24,000 AADT (do-minimum) or 18,000 AADT (with-scheme): added to which forecasts indicated the with-scheme flow at year 15 would return to that of opening year without scheme.

5.5 This section outlines a proposed sustainable transport strategy and objectives, and a series of measures largely drawn from the FM report that would work towards delivering those objectives. A summary of the FM measures is included at Appendix 1. The section has also been informed by the relatively newly formed Sustainable Transport Groups forum, facilitated by TSLM: this group has made additional comments on this report and added some detail including on the nature of some of the soft measures which augment and complement the major scheme package (see Appendix 2).

Alternative strategy

5.6 The strategy proposed here is focussed on major scheme measures that will improve the ability of transport users to move around Lancaster District over a timescale of about 5 years. A comprehensive sustainable transport strategy looks more widely into measures to reduce the need to travel and reduce distances travelled, and work towards a wider range of objectives such as benefits to health. The 'focussed' strategy would be part of the coherent wider strategy, which is both longer term – for example land use planning to promote shorter journeys by more sustainable modes – and embraces 'smarter choices' activities outside the direct orbit of major schemes, such as promotion of walking and cycling, or travel planning, some of which is already happening.

5.7 The essence of the focussed 'major scheme' strategy is relatively simple:

- Promote modal shift measures to reduce traffic volumes on the existing network
- Identify ways of using existing transport infrastructure more efficiently

Provided that enough is done, concertedly and consistently, the strategy will help to achieve the Holy Grail sought by the present government, of improving transport efficiency by all modes, thereby contributing to economic efficiency but at the same time reducing CO2 emissions and saving money. This does however require 'enough' to be done, both to have a meaningful impact on traffic levels and to head off the release of suppressed demand for more road travel as and when traffic reduction through modal shift occurs.

5.8 A recent study by the Campaign for Better Transport[30] showed that Nottingham is the least car-dependent city of its size in England, and Milton Keynes the most car-dependent. This is neither surprising nor coincidental. Nottingham has been in the vanguard of sustainable transport since long before the term was invented, whereas Milton Keynes was designed in the 1960s to deliver mobility by car from the outset. Nottingham had three of the four widely quoted pioneer travel plans in the mid-1990s; its bus operators have received national bus operator of the year awards twice in the past 10 years; the city has invested heavily in trams, and cycleways; and the council has recently become the first to propose a workplace parking levy (a measure available for the past 10 years, but which most councils refuse to contemplate). Nottingham is testimony to the potential for demand management to make significant inroads into car dependency.

5.9 Lancaster and Morecambe is self-evidently a smaller urban area than Nottingham, but in some ways smaller towns are more amenable to other transport modes than the car. In particular, distances are generally more amenable to travel by walking and cycling, and in the Lancaster area many routes are relatively flat with the obvious exception of the eastern suburbs of Lancaster. The Lancaster

urban area is also very fortunate in that the main travel movement is linear, albeit in a horseshoe, between Heysham-Morecambe-Lancaster-University. The urban form lends itself to a high quality linear route with spurs, which is easier to provide for than a form with a number of radial routes of similar weight.

5.10 The main downside for sustainable transport is the local rail network, with limited capacity, somewhat difficult location of Lancaster station (though close to the city centre), archaic signalling and paucity of stations on the Morecambe branch line, and problems of rail freight access to Heysham Port. On the other hand, Carlisle bridge is a vital and neglected asset as a further Lune crossing for local travel, and rail offers a very quick journey time between Lancaster and Morecambe town centres (and further afield on the WCML). The role of rail in local passenger travel is too often understated – peak hour trains between Lancaster and Morecambe, and on the Carnforth/ Barrow lines, attract very heavy usage.

Proposed package of FM measures

5.11 The total package of measures recommended by FM for consideration as future options was costed at over £96 million, phased over 15-20 years. Not everything can be included in a package of measures over 5 years at a cost of £30-£40 million; but in any case not all the proposed measures are supported by TSLM or regarded as part of an essential minimum for the strategy to do enough to make a difference.

5.12 The following key elements of the proposed package to be discussed here are:

- High quality spinal bus route between Heysham and the University of Lancaster
- Rail system upgrades
- Cycle infrastructure
- Revisions to Lancaster gyratory systems
- Park and Ride

In addition, the possibilities of online improvements to the existing highway network are explored, as potential complementary measures to the central demand management scheme.

5.13 *Spinal bus route*

A high quality spinal bus route, with enhanced feeder spur routes, is perhaps the key element in reducing traffic levels on the route that the HM6L is intended to relieve, and is a prominent recommendation in the FM report. However, FM seeks to promote the spinal route as a Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) scheme including taking over the Lancaster and Morecambe Greenway (cycle/ walkway on former rail line) and constructing a new restricted access bridge at Luneside.

BRT systems are currently fashionable, in the belief that they can capture the glamour of light rail in a way that ordinary bus route enhancement cannot, but at lower cost than light rail. This belief is not well grounded in evidence, least of all that the significantly higher capital costs than for 'conventional' bus systems give a meaningful return in increased ridership by car users. Many of the features of BRT, such as modern, comfortable, low-emission buses, high frequency, and real time

information, can equally well be provided by quality bus contracts (QBC) for conventional on-road bus services.

In my view the aim should be to provide a 'QBC+' service from Heysham to the University of Lancaster, using every opportunity to provide dedicated bus lanes and junction priority measures to ensure good journey times and reliability throughout the route. This would be supported by other bus improvement measures on ancillary routes, one example being the FM proposal for a bus shuttle between the bus and railway stations in Lancaster.

One aspect of the FM BRT proposal that is probably worth further consideration is the Luneside bridge. The attractive aspects of this proposal are that it would provide a more direct route between Morecambe Road and Lancaster city centre, connect well with Lancaster railway station, and open up accessibility of the western suburbs of Lancaster. The large question mark is how it would be routed between Lancaster rail station and South Road, which would appear to involve either a contraflow along King Street missing out the bus station, or a detour round to the bus station which would add to the end-to-end journey time.

An alternative to the bus bridge at Luneside would be a contraflow eastbound bus lane on Greyhound Bridge, providing a somewhat more direct route free from general traffic. The bridge has three lanes which are underutilised because of traffic flow constraints on the bridge approaches, and the traffic streams have in any case to resolve into two lanes at the northern end.

A further possibility relates to the future of the 'Centros' site between Lancaster city centre and the canal. The land use and layout of this area are in the melting pot following the demise of the previous Centros development, and there may be possibilities to provide dedicated sustainable transport routes through this area.

5.14 *Rail network upgrades*

The main proposals in FM were to upgrade the station environment at Bare Lane and Morecambe stations, and to upgrade the signalling on the Morecambe branch line. In my view, this is fine but not ambitious enough. The significant problem of the branch line for passenger services is that it has too few places at which residents can access rail services – in other words, stations. There might be room for an additional halt between Morecambe and Bare Lane, which may be feasible for a tram-train type of service: but there is certainly scope for two further stations on the line between Morecambe and Heysham, each serving good residential catchment areas.

The other problem with rail is freight access to the Port of Heysham, though the problem should not be overstated. Port freight services are constrained by the limited track length for the reversing movement at Morecambe station, and by the poor signalling infrastructure on the branch line. However, the Rail Freight study conducted in 1999/ 2000 concluded that *"the port is in an advantageous position in that a reasonable basic freight terminal can be provided at a low cost compared to many other ports in the UK".* A further study in 2003 identified existing port traffic currently using road access to the port that would be amenable to transfer to rail with upgrade of rail facilities at the port but accepting the capacity limitations of the line.[31]

Some transfer of port freight from road to rail is an integral component of the alternative proposal. To an extent, what could be done depends on how willing potential partners are to do it. The earlier study made the interesting observation that rail linkage to ports may come to be regarded as a competitive necessity to maintain a port's activity in a low carbon transport future, and in this respect Heysham is at an advantage compared with for example Fleetwood simply by virtue of still being rail linked. In other words, rail access may become an issue not just of desirability to move towards low carbon transport to the Port of Heysham, but of the port's long-term survival.

It is sometimes said that the WCML between Lancaster station and the junction with the Morecambe branch line is operating close to capacity. According to timetables this line can operate at headways of 6 minutes between passenger trains, and rarely carries more than four passenger trains per hour in each direction. Even allowing for freight train paths, if one of the most important main line railways in Britain is close to capacity at these levels of usage, there is something fundamentally wrong!

A very useful summary of the potential measures for the local rail network has been produced by LAMRUG, a member of the Sustainable Transport Groups forum, included as Appendix 3. This explains the nature of for example the signalling problems on the Morecambe branch line. Not all the actions in the LAMRUG analysis would be included in the proposed major scheme package, and items such as signalling and line upgrades would normally come under a Network Rail programme of works rather than LTP measures.

5.15 *Cycling infrastructure*

The FM report recognises the importance of cycling in the local transport mix, but does not allocate enough of its budget to cycling provision. Lancaster's position as a national Cycling Demonstration Town has raised the profile of cycling and led to the preparation of a potential programme of infrastructure development, but it is understood that CDT funding ceases in 2011 and much of the programme will be unlikely to be funded through the relatively small sums of money available through the LTP block grant.

Without knowing the detail of CDT infrastructure proposals it is not possible to develop the cycling element further in this report, but it is proposed that cycle infrastructure be allocated a meaningful amount within the £30-£40 million proposed budget.

5.16 *Lancaster city centre gyratory*

The interlinked one-way systems in Lancaster are described in the FM report as follows:

"it is felt that Lancaster's gyratory system no longer represents the best use of traffic management and is actively contributing to congestion and delay" (Final report para 4.5[32])

Given such an unequivocal verdict, the report somewhat disappointingly fails to do the necessary evaluation of options to arrive at a shortlist of costed proposals, unlike other measures such as potential P&R sites which are equally aspirational at present. Eleven options are outlined, mostly

permutations of similar sets of measures and therefore very difficult to follow, and uncosted although notional budget amounts are included for gyratory modifications.

In principle:

- There is no real need for the one way system around Kingsway, and shortening the distance travelled between Skerton Bridge and North Road would on its own be likely to reduce CO2 emissions.
- The city centre would benefit environmentally from traffic reductions/ restrictions along King Street and especially China Street where traffic currently severs the Castle area from the town centre
- Measures should seek to limit or discourage traffic movements through the centre, especially north-south: in most European towns of similar size it is possible to reach the edge of the centre by car and leave in the same direction, but far more difficult to travel from one side to the other
- Measures should not be afraid of reallocating roadspace on the gyratories, as a means of managing demand for travel by car in tandem with the improved offer by other modes.
- As the FM report comments, changes to the town centre gyratory should probably not be aimed at reducing journey times through the centre, as this could encourage more use of the route to Morecambe via J33.

Without more resolution from FM on the best changes to make on the one-way systems, the detailt cannot be taken any further, but the need to improve the efficiency of the existing network is clear.

5.17 *Park and Ride*

There is already a commitment and a funding allocation to build a P&R site at J34, which could go ahead without HM6L, although its configuration and possibly its site would have to change. The FM report has several other proposed locations, including White Lund, Carnforth railway station, Salt Ayre, A6 at Beaumont, and just off A6 north of Galgate (the latter eventually in conjunction with new slip roads off the M6). Together with the upgrade to the Caton Road shuttle bus route for the P&R, these account for a significant chunk of the total FM budget - £10.4 million plus £20 million for the M6 slip roads at Galgate.

Park and Ride may be a component of demand management strategies, and is undoubtedly popular among local authorities, but should be treated with caution. The amount of capital outlay, and continuing revenue costs in providing shuttle buses, may not be justified for the amount of traffic reduction actually achieved, and P&R schemes are notorious for their unintended consequences. It is calculated that a 500 space P&R site at J34 could reduce traffic along Caton Road by no more than 4% (a proposed major rail P&R site for Manchester was found at a public inquiry several years ago to reduce traffic approaching that side of Manchester by 0.16% in the AM peak!).

P&R may well be part of the package of measures in this proposal, but not to the extent envisaged by FM.

5.18 *Online road improvements*

The need to improve the efficiency of the existing road network has become something of a mantra in recent years, linked to the principle accepted since 1994 (SACTRA report "Trunk roads and the generation of traffic") that you cannot build your way out of congestion, and more recently that a large amount of major new road building is unaffordable. Improved efficiency often relates to removing specific pinch points or safety hazards, often at junctions or relatively short stretches of sub-standard roadway.

TSLM's basic strategy has long been that with demand management to bring about reductions in locally generated traffic, and some online improvements to the route between J34 and the Port of Heysham, the need to build HM6L as a lorry route to the port would be obviated. The already relatively small journey delays, largely in the two peak hours, would be reduced provided that the modal shift measures were strong enough to absorb the pressures of suppressed demand release (in other words, any tendency towards increased travel demand would be largely met by modes other than the car, because the other modes would be more attractive than using the car).

The 2007 inquiry inspector appeared to misunderstand this strategy completely, as his analysis was that he could not see how demand management could be applied to reduce HGV journeys to the port, other than by modal shift of freight to rail which he regarded as unrealistic.

Possible elements of online improvement of the A683 route are:

- Minor widening of A683 Caton Road to accommodate an inbound bus lane, already proposed in FM as part of the J34 P&R (could also allow HGV use, or could become HGV lane from the point where buses turn off into Newton Estate)
- Revisions to Kingsway gyratory and the bridges
- Contraflow bus lane on Greyhound Bridge, as outlined above
- Traffic light modifications along Morecambe Road, as proposed in the LCA but more closely bound into a coherent strategy
- Possible widening opportunities on Morecambe-bound carriageway and/ or reduction in centre hatching, if this can create more bus/ HGV lane opportunities
- Right turn ban at Scale Hall, which appears to be the most significant bottleneck westbound along Morecambe Road.
- Bus route on parallel road to A683 at Ryelands, potentially freeing up existing bus lane for HGV use
- Junction improvements at Morecambe Road roundabouts, if needed, could include segregated left-turn lanes, bus bypass gates, part time signals

5.19 Alternative proposal costs

Where possible these are taken from the FM report costing exercise, otherwise an order of cost is given representing the proportion of cost relative to the overall budget. These costs would be spread over 5 years, but at present no implementation programme or annual spend is indicated. This would be subject to further consideration and is very flexible.

1. Quality Bus Corridor and other minor bus infrastructure: £15 million without Luneside bridge, £23 million with bridge (based on downgrade of FM BRT costing, without the 'Greenway' section and the high costing for the southern section which would be excessive for an on-road QBC)
2. Rail upgrades: £4.5 million for station upgrades (including Carnforth) and two new stations on Morecambe-Heysham line: signalling upgrade should be in Network Rail budget rather than LTP major scheme, port infrastructure enhancements subject to rail freight grants (??)
3. Cycle infrastructure: £2 million, CDT schemes to be prioritised and funding allocated accordingly
4. Gyratory revisions: £1.5 million (FM uncosted budget allocation £1.2 million)
5. Park and Ride: £3.4 million – J34 site plus White Lund as costed in FM, excluding bus route upgrades assumed covered in 1 above
6. Online improvements: £5 million (equivalent to spend in LCA minus the cost of J34 rebuild)

Total cost: £31.4 million without Luneside Bridge, £39.4 million with bridge.

5.20 This cost appraisal meets the criterion of a package in the range £30-£40 million enabling a saving of £100 million compared with HM6L. Since it is a package of measures it is amenable to amendment in the light of more detailed costings, and the programme can be adjusted to suit the overall budget over 5 years, with a degree of flexibility in annual budget profile.

6.0 CONCLUSION

This review concludes that the HM6L should be scrapped rather than deferred. The scheme does not mesh comfortably with either the present climate of transport development or with current government policy, and key elements of its purported justification have been eroded either by scrutiny of the arguments or changes of circumstance. A lower cost package of measures as outlined in this review is better targeted at the real transport issues of the area, better able to deliver on the policy objectives of government, avoids the high environmental costs associated with the road link, and promises meaningful improvements to the transport networks of the district across all modes and at a more affordable cost.

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The Faber Maunsell Report: A Summary of Measures

After an initial assessment of movements across the district, the report goes on to identify the key issues to address and resolve. From this developed a series of themes for the basis of the Lancaster and District Transport Vision and Strategy. These were:

- ***To reduce the influence of traffic that simply passes through Lancaster City Centre***
- ***To build upon the core existing transport assets of the city rather than create new, such as the west coast mainline and the M6;***
- ***To intercept long stay and long distance visitors to Lancaster and Morecambe at the edges and offer them attractive alternatives to driving into the centre;***
- ***To encourage greater use of more sustainable, high occupancy modes for longer trips (e.g. rail, bus, car clubs);***
- ***To create a walkable and cycleable urban area, making greater use of natural resources such as the River Lune Corridor and Lancaster Canal corridors; and***
- ***To develop a climate that 'raises the bar' in terms of public transport.***

The report then defines a "Long List of Potential Schemes" under the Coarse Appraisal process, amounting to 171 possible interventions that would affect people's travel habits to some degree or other. The list is then screened to produce a more manageable range of 55 of the most effective Potential Opportunities, each of which would naturally merit further investigation. However, only 24 of these were taken forward to Option Development, but emerged as 32 strategic proposals with timing and costing suggestions.

Key strategy recommendations in the FM report include:

- ***Rail service improvements and upgrade of facilities on existing lines***
- ***Enhanced bus priority measures on the existing network***
- ***Rapid transit standards linking the University, the City Centre, and Morecambe***
- ***Enhanced and new cycling training, routes and infrastructure***
- ***Greater promotion of interchange between modes***
- ***District-wide Park & Ride and 'interceptor' parking strategy***
- ***New River Lune bridge, focused on public transport, cycling and walking***
- ***Modifications to the Lancaster road layout particularly the gyratory system***

The FM Table 5.1 Strategy Phasing and Costing shows all 32 fully worked elements.

http://www.l-m-vision.org/reports/transportstrategy/PDFs/Chapter%205.pdf

This is summarised as:

Phase 1	12 projects	years 0 - 5	£18.35 million.
Phase 2	12 projects	years 5 -15	£47.30 million.
Phase 3	8 projects	years 10 - 20	£30.60 million.
Total	**32 projects**	**years 0 - 20**	**£96.25 million.**

Additional Comments from Sustainable Transport Groups forum

1. Spinal Bus Route

Quality Bus Plus would be cost-effective and, in improving the bus service widely, would:

- ✓ Benefit all parts of the community
- ✓ Encourage modal shift from private transport
- ✓ Fit in with bus prioritisation
- ✓ Fit in with a gyratory review

2. Rail Network Upgrades

2.1 Passenger

See Appendix 3: *Suggested improvements to rail network to enable more intensive service between Lancaster, Morecambe & Heysham and also at Carnforth.*

Generally:

- There should be more trains on the Morecambe line, with some continuing on to Heysham.
- An aim could be for 2 trains per hour to Morecambe & a second one per day to Heysham.
- More carriages should be added to the trains. However, as an increase in the number of trains and carriages appears unlikely in the present economic climate, the suggested improvements to the rail network would enable a more intensive use of the line.

- Improved signalling would be low cost,
- Stations should be improved, even new ones built.

2.2 Freight on Rail

The *Tesco Express* is a train with 24 containers, which carries goods from Southern England to Scotland. Its environmental credentials are impressive: a 73% reduction in fuel consumption over road transport, a 4-fold reduction in CO2 using a diesel train, further reduced to 5-fold when changing to an electric unit.
Using this model, an *Emerald Express* on the Lancaster to Heysham Port route, linking Europe with Ireland, should be considered.

Much of Heysham cargo is containerised. However, this does not require massive infrastructure: some companies use a Reach Stacker" (large forklift truck), in a restricted area, to lift containers on and off rail.

3. Cycling

Dynamo (Lancaster & District Cycle Campaign) made specific proposals:

- ✓ More infrastructure is required to the cycle route between Lancaster and Heysham (See Faber Maunsell Figure 2.6 Potential Cycle Schemes)
- ✓ Continued training (use and maintenance) for adults & children, and attitude change.
- ✓ 20 mph speed limits in residential areas, except arterial routes ("20's Plenty"), to make people feel safe when cycling,
- ✓ On arterial routes, there should be segregated cycle lanes, making it safer for cyclists, and this would also help stop cyclists using pavements.
- ✓ Also limits on rural roads

- ✓ Safety would be improved by home zones, which would stop rat running.
- ✓ Cycle contraflow on one-way roads would minimise the distance travelled.
- ✓ Better facilities for storage (lockers), e.g. at railway stations, especially for the occasional user.
- ✓ Secure parking provision for cycles in built-up areas
- ✓ Pedestrian zones for walkers and cyclists.
- ✓ Car-sharing & car clubs
- ✓ Some form of incentive to cycle would be welcome.

4. Lancaster City Centre Gyratory

FM report said further studies were required. They had done some traffic modelling, including a contraflow for buses in the gyratory, anti-clockwise. This would improve the journey time ratio for PT, improve contact with the station, and fit with complementary measures for parking.

The partial gyratory review around Kingsway by Centros had shown it was possible, and had been favourably received.

5. Online Road Improvements

It was noted that

- ✓ An extension of the existing bus lane on A683 Morecambe Road is proposed now as part of the "X12 Lancaster-Heysham-Morecambe Quality Bus Route"
- ✓ Bus priority measures would have a big effect linked to a review of the gyratory system.

Important issues were:

- ✓ Frequency of service
- ✓ Real time information
- ✓ Integration of services e.g. buses on and from rail stations, city centre shuttle.

6. Further proposals for consideration

6.1 Smarter Choices

Travel planning: school, workplace and individual.
Sustainable travel towns initiatives have shown that it works, and is a low cost - high impact option.
It is often difficult to fund, being revenue-based.
TCL is planning a car club.

6.2 Freight Consolidation (Urban logistics)

Urban logistics systems manage and route all deliveries going into a city centre. Deliveries are consolidated and take place from a distribution centre in smaller trucks. This leads to a significant reduction in freight vehicles and emissions.

For example, Heathrow Airport Retail Consolidation Centre receives goods for retailers with premises in terminals 1-4, and then delivers them to retailers in smaller vehicles; it is reducing vehicle trips by 70%.

6.3 Strategic Transport Planning

Other strategic interventions could be considered:

- Congestion Charging
- Workplace Parking Levy

Faber Maunsell had investigated both briefly. Both could generate revenue which could be used for investment in the District's transport.

Congestion Charging, although effective in London, has been rejected by Edinburgh and Manchester, and might not be appropriate for the district.

A workplace parking levy has recently been proposed by Nottingham Council, as a means of reducing car use, and raising revenue.

- Low Emission Zones

  Excluding high emissions vehicles from designated areas would tackle the district's air quality problems. Enforcement costs would be a consideration.

7. General

It should be stressed that all these alternatives could stand together without the Heysham M6 Link Road, and could deliver more than the road would deliver. With these alternatives, there are benefits to:

- accessing Heysham Port
- employment
- goods transportation
- public transport
- health: through active travel, reduced emissions
- Air Quality, noise & accidents
- safety
- tourism: the gyratory is disbenefit to tourism, severing the historic quarter from the hospitality area.

SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENTS TO RAIL NETWORK

To enable more intensive service between Lancaster, Morecambe & Heysham and also at Carnforth.

Items 1, 2 & 3 improve capacity on the West Coast Main Line, between Lancaster and Morecambe South Junction. Items 3, 4 & 6 increase speed on the Morecambe & Heysham branches, to enable more intensive use of rolling stock.

(1) New Signal at Lancaster, at Mid-Point of Platform 3

To reduce congestion, a new signal for northbound trains, at the mid-point of platform 3. This would allow one service to approach from the south while another is signalled to cross over the junctions at the north end of the station. A two- or three-car train could arrive in platform 3 outright (whereas a longer train such as a pendolino would gain time over the present need to stand near Aldcliffe Road).

(2) Bi-Directional Signalling Between Morecambe South Junction and Lancaster

Bi-directional signalling would allow trains to run on either line ("up" or "down") between Morecambe South Junction and Lancaster. This would give greater flexibility, e.g. allowing a Morecambe – Lancaster service to proceed into Lancaster "wrong line" when the "up" line is simultaneously in use by a southbound, main line service.

(3) Line Speed Improvements, Morecambe South Junction to Bare Lane

The turn-out from the main line onto the branch at Morecambe South Junction leads to a severe curve, with 25 m.p.h. restriction. The junction signal is "approach controlled", displaying a red ("stop") aspect to a Morecambe service until the train is within close range, travelling slowly. At Bare Lane, points are restricted to about 25 m.p.h. (straight on) or 15 m.p.h. (diverging). The aim would be to improve line speeds to 30 m.p.h. throughout and to explore whether the junction signal could display a "proceed" aspect earlier than at present.

(4) Remote Control & New Signals for Points at Morecambe

A signal box at Bare Lane controls local points and signals, and supervises the level crossing; but there is no longer a box Morecambe. Points at Morecambe for the Heysham branch (and for a "run-round" loop) are operated by the driver of a train, who has to get down from the cab e.g. if proceeding to Heysham. Remotely controlled points and signals would save several minutes for the passage of trains using the Heysham branch. In their report, Faber Maunsell intended these be controlled from Bare Lane; though it is now rumoured that this box may close, in which case the more expensive option of control from Carnforth or Preston may be necessary.

(5) New Stations on Heysham Branch

A station at Heysham Kingsway or Mossgate has been suggested, adjacent to this growing area of residential development. Money was set aside by a developer for a public or community project, but it is not known whether this has been spent. The line is single track so a simple design is all that is required (one, short platform; no need for a footbridge).

With the recent opening of Morecambe FC's new football ground, a station at Westgate would be advantageous, particularly in light of the limited parking available in the vicinity. Again, this need only be a single platform (with no need for a footbridge).

(6) Restore Line Speed on Heysham Branch

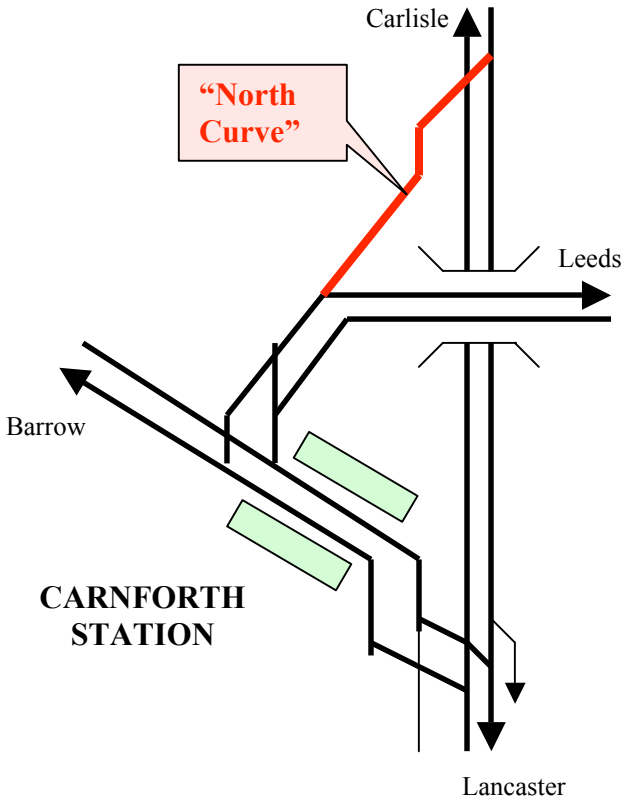
Where speed restrictions have been imposed for reason of poor track quality, these should be alleviated.

(7) Possible New Station at Bailrigg

In the future, if demand suggests a case for a station at Lancaster "south", there is opportunity to place a single platform near Bailrigg. This would face onto the existing Oubeck "up" goods loop, with a new crossover to the north. It would allow a service to operate between Heysham or Morecambe and Bailrigg, via Lancaster. A more expensive option would be a two-platform station, if the aim were to provide services to/from the south.

(8) Re-Instate "North Curve" at Carnforth

Unless the main line platforms at Carnforth can be re-instated, a way of enabling main line services to stop would be to use the branch platforms, and re-instate the "north curve". This would support an increase in Windermere – Manchester services (or introduction of a more frequent Windermere – Lancaster service) including a stop at Carnforth.



(9) Integration of Bus and Rail Timetables

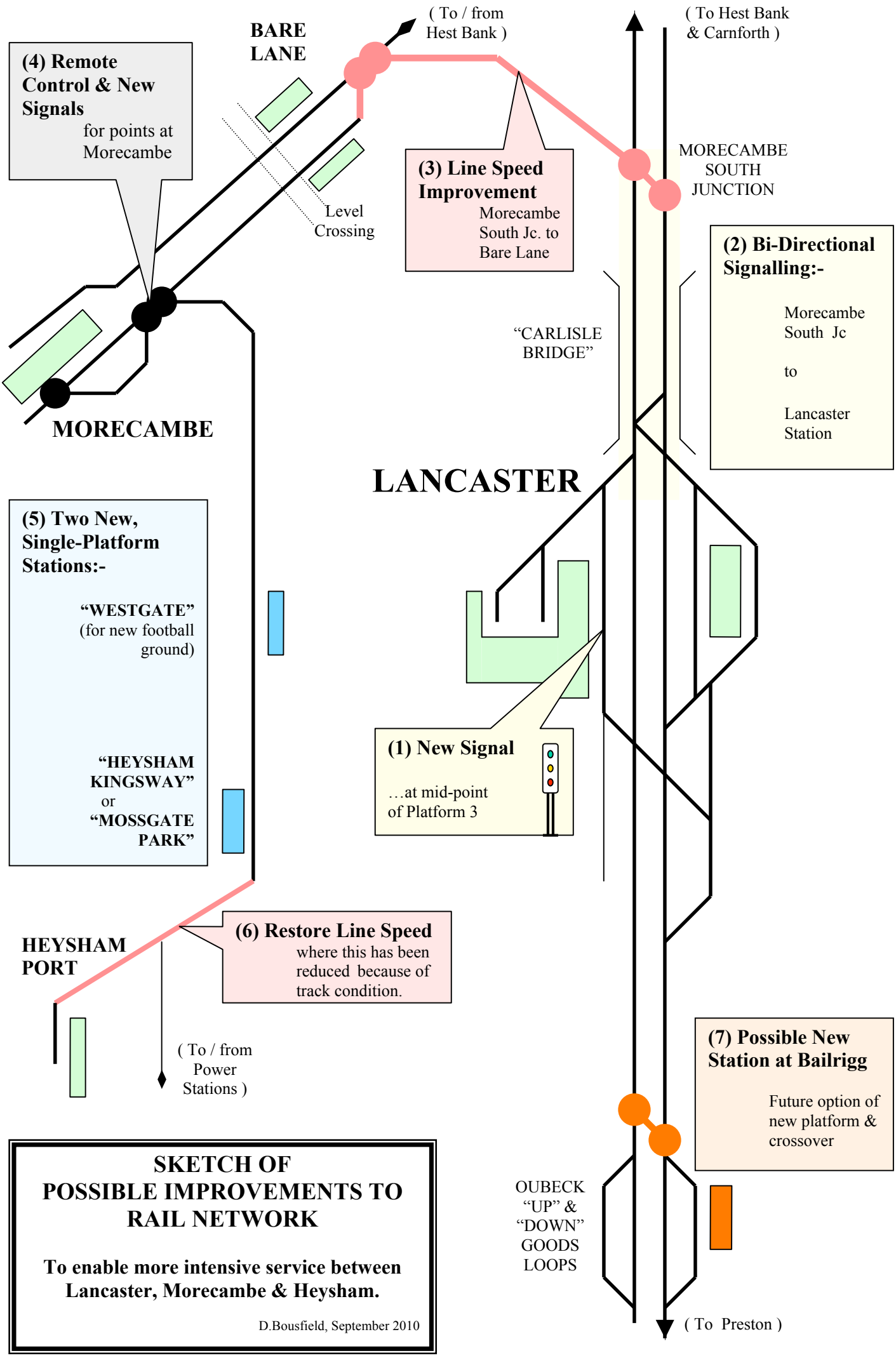
Bus and rail services should be timetabled to support one another, and provide connections at suitable points, e.g.:-

Bus services to / from Caton & Lune valley run through to Lancaster railway station

Maintain X1 bus link between University & Lancaster station (unless option 7 above is pursued)

(10) Through Ticketing or Day Card for Bus & Rail Services

The notion of a "day card" for bus and rail services in the Bay area is not new. Bureaucratic obstacles need to be challenged to make this a reality!


BARE LANE
(To / from Hest Bank)
(To Hest Bank & Carnforth)
(4) Remote Control & New Signals
for points at Morecambe
Level Crossing
(3) Line Speed Improvement
Morecambe South Jc. to Bare Lane
MORECAMBE SOUTH JUNCTION
(2) Bi-Directional Signalling:-
Morecambe South Jc
to
Lancaster Station
"CARLISLE BRIDGE"
MORECAMBE
LANCASTER
(5) Two New, Single-Platform Stations:-
"WESTGATE"
(for new football ground)
"HEYSHAM KINGSWAY"
or
"MOSSGATE PARK"
(1) New Signal
…at mid-point of Platform 3
HEYSHAM PORT
(6) Restore Line Speed
where this has been reduced because of track condition.
(To / from Power Stations)
(7) Possible New Station at Bailrigg
Future option of new platform & crossover
OUBECK "UP" & "DOWN" GOODS LOOPS
(To Preston)
SKETCH OF POSSIBLE IMPROVEMENTS TO RAIL NETWORK
To enable more intensive service between Lancaster, Morecambe & Heysham.
D.Bousfield, September 2010