

## **OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

# **Implementing the Lancaster District Highways and Transport Masterplan**

**7 March 2018**

## **Report of Regeneration Manager**

### **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To brief the Committee on joint working between the city and county councils to implement those aspects of the Lancaster District Highways and Transport Masterplan 2016 concerning the city of Lancaster and approaches to it.

This report is public

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

That the Committee

- (1) In the context of the Highways and Transport Masterplan proposing significant change to travel and transport in the city note: (i) that work is underway by city and county council officers to plan implementation, (ii) the role of the proposed Movement Strategy for the city centre and, (iii) how planning for growth within the city centre and at Lancaster South relates closely in transport terms.
- (2) Include in its work programme regular joint city county updates on Masterplan implementation and advise Cabinet and the Portfolio Holder as appropriate on implementation decisions required.

#### **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 The county council adopted its Lancaster District Highways and Transport Masterplan (Masterplan) in October 2016. This directs and guides investment and change in transportation across the district through to 2031 and is one of a suite of such masterplans for districts and combinations of districts across Lancashire.
- 1.2 This introductory report is to brief members on the main implications of the Masterplan and the implementation work in hand for Lancaster and particularly the city centre and the approaches to it. Note the report does not directly cover those elements of the Masterplan pertaining to Morecambe, Heysham and the wider district.

## **2.0 Report**

### New transport approach and its importance

#### 2.1 The Masterplan sets a vision that by 2031 -

“Lancaster city centre is vibrant and successful, with no air quality issues, no gyratory congestion and so no barriers to sustainable travel. Pedestrians and cyclists can move around easily and freely through safe and attractive public spaces. The centre is largely free of traffic and most of the vehicles that do need to be there are ultra – low emission.

Without the gyratory to contend with, public transport is also more reliable and new links to South Lancaster mean that the University has been able to expand and maintain its prestigious reputation. Those who work in the area almost all commute by sustainable modes; on foot, by cycle, or using the ‘Lancaster Reach’ bus rapid transport services operated by ultra-low emission vehicles”.

#### 2.2 This represents a decisive change in approach from (by and large) seeking to meet demands for private motorised travel to advantaging more sustainable patterns of travel. This means reducing use of private vehicles (together with making more efficient use of private vehicles) alongside providing for much more travel by bus and more cycling and walking.

#### 2.2 The Masterplan suggests such change in approach is vital for the economic, social and environmental future of the city as a place for people to live in, work in and visit and crucially, as a place to invest in. It is widely appreciated that the economic performance, visitor attraction and liveability of the city centre and arounds is held back by the long prevailing poor traffic conditions and that without action are likely only to worsen.

#### 2.4 Officers observe that the opening of the Bay Gateway Link in 2016 has relieved congestion northbound to Morecambe and Heysham (as well as vastly improving journey times direct to Morecambe and Heysham via the link road itself). But from the outset the Link was predicted to make for a no more than 10% reduction in city centre traffic, a level of reduction that will readily be offset as traffic levels otherwise increase with growth anticipated in population and travel demands.

#### 2.5 Continuing acute congestion on the city centre gyratory, its approaches at many times of the day and at peak times extending in particular along the A6 corridor lengthens travel times, delays and distorts bus services, impairs and makes less safe conditions for pedestrians and cyclists and, impacts adversely on peoples’ health through air pollution.

### Air quality, technology and change

#### 2.6 Large parts of the city centre and Galgate suffer from impaired air quality and are designated as Air Quality Management Area (AQMA). It is recognised that over the long term there is prospect that technology will reduce air pollution problems as motorised travel moves on from the internal combustion engine. However, without significant change, impaired air quality will likely continue at least over the short and into the medium terms. The Masterplan advances that this is unacceptable and that action must be taken.

- 2.7 The technological solutions for many air quality impacts and other changes in technology foreseeable (such as driverless cars) are very unlikely to be widely established within the current trajectory of growth. Further, such technological change is unlikely to reduce levels of traffic and congestion and so the adverse impacts of this will persist and perhaps likely worsen progressively without action.

#### Movement Strategy for the city centre and Bus Rapid Transit

- 2.8 The Masterplan sets parameters for how transport is to serve and move through the city centre and that for the city centre these will be worked up in a Movement Strategy with Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) the transport priority.
- 2.9 Caton Road is to be the principal gateway into the city centre for traffic from the M6 from both north and south and a BRT terminus. This capitalises on the benefits of the new Link Road and makes it possible to heavily manage traffic in the city centre, including via the J34 Park and Ride facility. Catering for just over 600 cars, the Park and Ride should intercept traffic coming from the motorway and from both sides of the Lune Valley.
- 2.10 The bus rapid transit system is to create a 'Y' shaped network of two routes, from J34 to Lancaster University via the city centre and between Heysham and Morecambe, the city centre and South Lancaster. Both routes are to operate via the Royal Lancaster Infirmary, presenting a genuine opportunity to create a true sustainable transport corridor linking the city centre and the areas to the south including the main Lancaster University campus and the prospective Bailrigg Garden Village.
- 2.11 Officers of the county and city councils and the Lancaster University are working together to establish viable route and service options for bus rapid transit for the first priority routes between the city centre, south Lancaster and junction 34. This work will output in late April 2018 to inform the Movement Strategy and the consultation in May 2018 on the Bailrigg Garden Village – see para 2.14 also.
- 2.12 The Masterplan recognises that all this will involve substantial and long term changes to the city centre gyratory system. To assure changes deliver the anticipated positive environmental and place benefits and have no unintended consequences will require detailed assessment of potential options. Further, changing the gyratory system requires detailed consideration of other factors. A key one is how to provide for walking and cycling.
- 2.13 Preparing the Movement Strategy will work all this through. Members should note that this Strategy must be consistent with both the Masterplan and, the Vision for the City that the two councils and the Lancaster University are presently working on. The Committee should note that officers have briefed cabinet members on draft objectives for the Movement Strategy and will finalise objectives first for consideration by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and then for decision by Cabinet. With this officers can then prepare delivery options that will inevitably present some key decisions on change.

#### Growth at South Lancaster and Bailrigg Garden Village

- 2.14 Work to bring forward proposals for development and growth in South Lancaster relates very closely. Growth prospects in South Lancaster are

constrained by traffic conditions and highway capacities just as they are in the city centre. Achieving growth at Lancaster South and delivering the Bailrigg Garden Village requires transport planning consistent with the Masterplan and properly integrated with that for the city centre so as to promote sustainable travel and not ever more private vehicle traffic.

## **2.0 Conclusion**

- 3.1 The Highways and Transport Masterplan is ground-breaking. City council regeneration officers consider that implementing it is absolutely pivotal to making Lancaster the place we all want it to be. The Masterplan calls for very significant change in travel and transport in and around Lancaster and in particular for the city centre, the A6 corridor and in Lancaster South. City and county council officers are working on a range of proposals and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee is well placed to oversee and help shape this work.

### **CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

**(including Health & Safety, Equality & Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, Sustainability and Rural Proofing):**

No impacts at this stage

### **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

This report relies on joint working between officers of the authorities and no obligations or liabilities are being entered into by this report.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no additional financial implications arising for the City Council at this stage with the cost of any studies/work to date either being met directly by Lancashire County Council or where appropriate City Council input contained within existing staff resources/budgets.

### **OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS, such as Human Resources, Information Services, Property, Open Spaces:**

None

### **SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS**

The Section 151 Officer has been consulted and has no further comments.

### **MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS**

This is an information only report.

### **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

**Highways and Transport Masterplan,  
Lancashire County Council, 2016**

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