



LANCASTER CITY COUNCIL

— Promoting City, Coast & Countryside —

South Lancaster Growth Catalyst

Briefing Note | June 2021

This briefing note summarises the key activities and decisions relating to the proposed development via an overview timeline. The timeline is broken down into four sections, which describe the general stages of the project so far:

- **Inception** | the ideation of a Garden Village development at South Lancaster, and consideration of the infrastructure development required to deliver it
- **Visioning** | engagement with stakeholders and the public, to establish an overall vision for the development, and an appropriate governance structure to support the project
- **Preparation** | development of detailed proposals for the location, project, and infrastructure in line with the publishing and adoption of the Local Plan
- **Resourcing** | the current project stage including assembly of the funding, resource, and legal structures to deliver the project and infrastructure

Subject to successful completion of the 'resourcing' stage, the project will move into the 'delivery' stage.

Background

Prior to 2016 the council had consulted on draft Local Plans and options documents that identified extensive areas for development in South Lancaster, to meet future housing requirements identified by the emerging Local Plan's evidence base. Other locations in the district demonstrated much more limited opportunity for development.

From a sustainability perspective, the South Lancaster area presented an opportunity to create an integrated, high quality place to live with minimal travel requirements and access to existing employment and services. It is likely that in the absence of the Garden Village opportunity, the locations identified for development in South Lancaster would have progressed through the Local Plan preparation process as a series of incremental urban extensions.

Inception

16 Mar 2016 | The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG, now MHCLG) invites expressions of interest for 'locally-led Garden Villages, Towns and Cities'; indicating that proposals could receive support with revenue for project costs, and priority access to funding streams such as Affordable Housing.

Oct 2016 | Lancaster City Council submits an expression of interest on the basis of positive discussions with the Homes & Communities Agency (HCA, now Homes England) identifying the opportunity to fulfil future housing requirements in the emerging Local Plan with high-quality development.

The document¹ contains the following key points:

- Emphasis on sustainable living, local identity, and high levels of connectivity
- Aim to address integration of Lancaster University campus with the city
- Could deliver 3,000 new homes up to 2031
- Sufficient highway capacity could increase housing delivery to at least 5,000
- Catalyst for reconfiguring M6 junction 33 as identified in the Lancaster District Transport Masterplan

6 Oct 2016 | Lancashire County Council's Cabinet approves the Lancaster District Transport Masterplanⁱⁱ. Page 31 of the Masterplanⁱⁱⁱ recognises the necessity for '*major improvements to the existing transport infrastructure that serves South Lancaster*' in order to facilitate housing growth through the potential Garden Village project and more widely.

14 Dec 2016 | Council agrees to publish the draft Local Plan Strategic Policies & Land Allocations^{iv} and begin consultation.

Page 40 of the Appendix^v includes Draft Policy SG1 for Bailrigg Garden Village, expected to accommodate approximately 3,500 dwellings. The policy also recognises the requirement for '*the delivery of necessary infrastructure to make development in this area acceptable in planning terms*'.

The policy also states that the Council '*will not support the piecemeal development of the site which does not address the wider infrastructure issues in this area*'.

Jan 2017 | Local Plan consultation commences, with a comprehensive programme of in-person public events held around the district, including areas of interest for the Bailrigg Garden Village project.

2 Jan 2017 | Minister for Planning announces that Bailrigg Garden Village has been shortlisted for development funding as per the Council's expression of interest.

14 Feb 2017 | Cabinet agrees to

- accept the nomination for a Garden Village development;
- accept the associated funding offer (an initial £230k);
- commence preparatory work for the project alongside partners including Lancashire County Council, Lancaster University, and the HCA; and
- report back to Cabinet with further updates on project planning and the Council's anticipated role.

Jul 2017 | DCLG invites bids to the Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF), including '*Forward Fund*' projects aimed at unlocking large strategic housing growth opportunities.

25 Aug 2017 | The Council, via an ICMD^{vi}, agrees the submission of a bid for £130k capacity funding to HCA.

14 Sep 2017 | Lancashire County Council's Cabinet agrees to develop and submit an expression of interest for a HIF Forward Fund bid in respect of South Lancaster, '*based on recently secured national Garden Village status*'. The report^{vii} refers to the potential delivery of up to 5,000 new homes.

28 Sep 2017 | Lancashire County Council submits its expression of interest for a HIF Forward Fund bid in respect of South Lancaster. The bid document is confidential on the grounds of commercial sensitivity.

Visioning

3 Oct 2017 | Cabinet agrees the outline project plan and governance proposals for the project^{viii}.

Governance is established via a Strategic Board including City and County Councils, HCA and Lancaster University representatives. Planning Policy Cabinet Liaison Group would also contribute to the shaping of the project.

25 Oct 2017 | The Council, via an ICMD, agrees to appoint a Development Facilitator (GVA Grimley Ltd) to provide property investment, consultancy and agency services in respect of Bailrigg Garden Village.

Nov 2017 | Feedback is gathered from public engagement events taking place throughout 2017.

The overall feedback was summarised as follows:

- We should get it right and be ambitious
- We must manage water and flood risk well
- We must not make traffic and its impacts worse
- It should be about making real communities with a real sense of place and facilities and services including health
- It should be differential from the existing urban areas of Lancaster and Galgate i.e there should be a sense of separation
- The locus of the University in the Village needs to be worked through and decided

Specific points raised in objection to the Bailrigg Garden Village plans, subsequent to a petition received by Council^{ix} on 12 Apr 2017, were summarised as follows:

- That such large-scale development is not needed
- Loss of green and open land to development
- Concern at flood risk
- Concern at habitat loss
- Concern at traffic impacts

16 Nov 2017 | A facilitated visioning workshop is held including a wide range of representatives from project partners to complement the ongoing work of the Strategic Board.

The group formulated a strategic narrative for the project, consisting of four *'pillars'*:

- Creating the garden *'Universcity'*
- Digital showcase
- Energising the eco-environment
- Healthy green lifestyles

Preparation

Building on the delegated authority of Council to consult on the draft Local Plan policy around Bailrigg Garden Village, and the delegated authority of Cabinet to implement the project plan and governance structure as agreed on 14 Feb 2017, there were fewer 'formal' milestones during this period.

Officers of the City Council and County Council, alongside colleagues from HCA and Lancaster University, continued to develop plans for Bailrigg Garden Village, and the M6 junction 33 reconfiguration, in order to catalyse significant housing growth.

A matter of particular interest in the development of the South Lancaster Growth Catalyst is the quantum of new housing proposed in the area, with its subsequent impact on amenities and the existing community.

A number of different figures are forecast for different purposes, which should be borne in mind when considering the proposals. All such figures are indicative until detailed plans have been prepared, and should be considered on that basis. All future developments in South Lancaster and beyond will be subject to the full planning policy and decision-making process.

- **Bailrigg Garden Village** | The original Garden Village proposal referenced a figure of **3,000** homes up to 2031 (the Local Plan period) without prejudice to further development beyond that date. The land within the scope of the Garden Village itself is considered to be appropriate for around **5,000** homes, although this figure is heavily dependent on the detailed infrastructure design plans.
- **South Lancaster Growth Catalyst** | The HIF bid referenced direct housing outputs enabled by HIF infrastructure in the Garden Village specifically and elsewhere in the south Lancaster area, if achieved these would represent up to **9,185** homes. The indirect outputs, the sites not in the south Lancaster area but where development is also planned and would benefit from the overall programme of investment in highway capacity and transport management, at; North Lancaster; East Lancaster and the Canal Quarter, bring the total number of dwellings with either direct or indirect benefit from the investment to around **11,300**.

Feb 2018 | Local Plan is published for statutory representations, including 'Policy SG1: Broad Location for Growth – Bailrigg Garden Village' focusing on delivery of at least 3,500 new houses.

Mar 2018 | MHCLG announces the South Lancaster HIF bid is to be taken forward to the 'co-development' stage, triggering detailed further development of the plans and consideration of how the infrastructure catalyst could enable housing growth beyond South Lancaster.

4 Dec 2018 | Cabinet receives an update on the Garden Village project^x, and agrees to establish a Bailrigg Garden Village Cabinet Liaison Group to advise Cabinet on matters relating to the project and provide regular reports. However, the Cabinet Liaison Group did not hold any meetings.

Mar 2019 | Lancashire County Council submits its detailed HIF bid, supported by letters from Lancaster City Council and Cat Smith MP amongst others.

29 Jul 2020 | Council adopts Local Plan^{xi} inclusive of binding recommendations, including *Policy SG1: Broad Location for Growth (Including Bailrigg Garden Village)* enabling at least 3,500 new houses; 1,205 of which are planned for delivery within Local Plan period up to 2031.

Council also resolves to *'ask its officers to work with the local transport authority to ensure that car-borne traffic from a remodelled J33 is capable of being intercepted in South Lancaster as part of an integrated sustainable transport solution to managing traffic and prioritising sustainable modes of travel (above the private car) on the A6 corridor.'*

27 October 2020 | Cabinet agrees to endorse the preparation of an Area Action Plan for South Lancaster^{xii}, in order to create a robust and detailed policy framework for determining future planning proposals in the area.

Resourcing

14 Jan 2021 | Lancashire County Council's Cabinet receives an exempt report regarding the HIF, and as documented in the Lancaster City Council Cabinet report of 8 June 2021, agrees to

- Enter into a Grant Funding Agreement with Homes England (HE) to receive the £140m HIF grant
- Deliver the package of highway and transport interventions contained in the proposal
- Act as the Accountable Body for the HIF grant
- Authorise officers to finalise and arrange the execution of a Grant Determination Agreement (GDA) to receive the HIF grant, subject to agreement of acceptable principles around co-operation and delivery between local partners
- Commission Network Rail to undertake a feasibility and options development exercise around changes to the West Coast Main Line which would provide access to Bailrigg Garden Village

4 Feb 2021 | Lancashire County Council's Cabinet agrees, via two reports^{xiii}, to the reconfiguration of M6 junction 33; and to using its powers to acquire the necessary land and development consent to deliver the reconfiguration.

31 Mar 2021 | Lancashire County Council and HE sign a Grant Determination Agreement for the award and delivery of the HIF grant, based on an extension of the project timescales to 2027.

Mar 2021 to date | Officers of the City and County Councils work together to develop a non-binding Principles Agreement, ahead of establishing a full Partnership Agreement in August 2021 and further work to begin delivering the project, including masterplanning and design code development.

8 June 2021 | Cabinet endorses a Principles Agreement, with negotiations ongoing to establish the terms of a full Partnership agreement, to be proposed to Council in July 2021.

Links to Papers

- ⁱ [https://committeeadmin.lancaster.gov.uk/documents/s66610/Expression of Interest Appendix A.docx.pdf](https://committeeadmin.lancaster.gov.uk/documents/s66610/Expression%20of%20Interest%20Appendix%20A.docx.pdf)
- ⁱⁱ <https://council.lancashire.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=122&MId=5415&Ver=4>
- ⁱⁱⁱ [https://council.lancashire.gov.uk/documents/s96519/Appendix A.pdf](https://council.lancashire.gov.uk/documents/s96519/Appendix%20A.pdf)
- ^{iv} <https://committeeadmin.lancaster.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=305&MId=6692&Ver=4>
- ^v [https://committeeadmin.lancaster.gov.uk/documents/s62451/Strategic Policies and Land Allocations DPD - Full Council Version APPENDIX 1.pdf](https://committeeadmin.lancaster.gov.uk/documents/s62451/Strategic%20Policies%20and%20Land%20Allocations%20DPD%20-%20Full%20Council%20Version%20APPENDIX%201.pdf)
- ^{vi} <https://committeeadmin.lancaster.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=616&MID=7004>
- ^{vii} <https://council.lancashire.gov.uk/documents/s116990/Report.pdf>
- ^{viii} <https://committeeadmin.lancaster.gov.uk/mgAi.aspx?ID=38606>
- ^{ix} <https://committeeadmin.lancaster.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=305&MId=6695&Ver=4>
- ^x <https://committeeadmin.lancaster.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=297&MId=7097&Ver=4>
- ^{xi} <https://committeeadmin.lancaster.gov.uk/mgAi.aspx?ID=44485>
- ^{xii} https://committeeadmin.lancaster.gov.uk/documents/s78005/Cab_Prep_Lancaster_South_AAP_FNL.pdf
- ^{xiii} <https://council.lancashire.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=122&MId=10405&Ver=4>