



**Committee:** COUNCIL BUSINESS COMMITTEE

**Date:** WEDNESDAY, 26 MARCH 2025

**Venue:** MORECAMBE TOWN HALL

**Time:** 6.00 P.M.

## A G E N D A

1. **Apologies for Absence**
2. **Items of urgent business authorised by the Chair**
3. **Declarations of Interest**

To receive declarations by Councillors of interests in respect of items on this Agenda.

Councillors are reminded that, in accordance with the Localism Act 2011, they are required to declare any disclosable pecuniary interests which have not already been declared in the Council's Register of Interests. (It is a criminal offence not to declare a disclosable pecuniary interest either in the Register or at the meeting).

Whilst not a legal requirement, in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 9 and in the interests of clarity and transparency, Councillors should declare any disclosable pecuniary interests which they have already declared in the Register, at this point in the meeting.

In accordance with Part B Section 2 of the Code Of Conduct, Councillors are required to declare the existence and nature of any other interests as defined in paragraphs 8(1) or 9(2) of the Code of Conduct.

4. **Responding to the open consultation on a National Policy Statement for Nuclear Energy Generation (EN-7) (Pages 3 - 14)**

Report of Chief Officer - Planning and Climate Change

5. **The Lancashire Growth Plan - Consultation Response (Pages 15 - 31)**

Report of the Chief Officer Sustainable Growth.

## ADMINISTRATIVE ARRANGEMENTS

### (i) **Membership**

Councillors David Whitaker (Chair), Matthew Black (Vice-Chair), Suhir Abuhajar, John Livermore, Sarah McGowan, Jean Parr and Paul Stubbins

**(ii) Substitute Membership**

Councillors Prof Chris Harris (Substitute), Sally Maddocks (Substitute), Joyce Pritchard (Substitute) and Jason Wood (Substitute)

**(iii) Queries regarding this Agenda**

Please contact Phillip Abel, Democratic Support - email [pabel@lancaster.gov.uk](mailto:pabel@lancaster.gov.uk).

**(iv) Changes to Membership, substitutions or apologies**

Please contact Democratic Support, telephone 582000, or alternatively email [democracy@lancaster.gov.uk](mailto:democracy@lancaster.gov.uk).

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CHIEF EXECUTIVE,  
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Published on 18 March 2025.

<b>COUNCIL BUINSESS COMMITTEE</b>
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## **Responding to the open consultation on a National Policy Statement for Nuclear Energy Generation (EN-7)**

**26 March 2025**

### **Report of Chief Officer - Planning and Climate Change**

<b>PURPOSE OF REPORT</b>
To advise Members of the publication of the consultation on the draft National Policy Statement for nuclear energy generation (EN-7) and to provide an opportunity to consider a proposed consultation submission.
This report is public

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- (1) That the report be noted and that the responses to the consultation questions as proposed as Appendix 1 are considered and submitted as the Council's corporate response to the consultation.

#### **1.0 Background**

- 1.1 The current National Policy Statement for Nuclear Power Generation (known as EN-6) was published by the Department of Energy and Climate Change in July 2011. This National Policy Statement (NPS), in the context of the National Policy Statement for Energy (known as EN-1), provides the current primary basis for decisions taken by the Infrastructure Planning Commission (IPC) when considering planning applications for nuclear power stations. EN-1 provides direction on all high-level objectives, policy and regulatory framework for new Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs), whilst EN-6 provides further, use-specific direction on proposals for nuclear power generation. EN-6 provides guidance on matters such as the impacts of nuclear power, flood risk, water quality and resources, coastal change, human health and well-being.

- 1.2 Part 4 of EN-6 (2011) provides a list of eight potentially suitable sites for the deployment of new nuclear power stations in England and Wales before the end of 2025. These eight sites, listed below and overleaf, were originally identified by the Energy Secretary in 2009.

- Bradwell (Essex)
- Hartlepool (County Durham)
- Heysham
- Hinkley Point (Somerset)

- Oldbury (Gloucestershire)
- Sizewell (Suffolk)
- Sellafield (Cumbria)
- Wylfa (Anglesey).

- 1.3 These sites continue to be recognised in the planning framework and, in the Government's opinion, remain well-placed to host new nuclear projects. For instance, paragraph 1.7.2 of the current EN-7 consultation states that these sites, of which Heysham is included, "*continue to have advantages for this purpose [nuclear infrastructure], as at the date of the designation of this National Policy Statement, including the potential to establish sufficient energy transmission infrastructure relatively swiftly and providing enough land area to accommodate nuclear infrastructure<sup>1</sup>*".
- 1.4 By the end of 2025 only two of the potentially suitable sites are under (new) development. The government now wishes to update EN-6 with a new Statement (EN-7) which will set out the criteria developers must meet in their applications for Development Consent, including on site assessment and the design of the proposed nuclear infrastructure, to provide a robust policy framework to guide decision-making.
- 1.5 Therefore, on the 6 February 2025 the Department for Energy Security & Net Zero (DESNZ) published an open consultation on a National Policy Statement for Nuclear Energy Generation (EN-7). The consultation provides an analysis and the Government's response to the initial, first-round consultation that took place in January 2024, titled '**A National Policy Statement for new nuclear power generation: new approach to siting beyond 2025**'.
- 1.6 EN-7 looks to build on previous work, from 2009, and also work that has taken place over more recent years by the last Government, who published the '**British Energy Security Strategy<sup>2</sup> (BESS)**' in April 2022. The BESS aimed to accelerate the Government's ambition to support the deployment of low carbon and renewable technologies such as offshore wind, nuclear and hydrogen. A further central Government consultation was undertaken in 2023 regarding '**Planning for new energy infrastructure: revisions to National Policy Statements<sup>3</sup>**'.
- 1.7 The overall aim has been for Government to develop a criteria-based approach to considering sites for Small Modular Reactors (SMRs) and Advanced Modular Reactors (AMRs), as well as gigawatt-scale (GW) plants and to support nuclear infrastructure development on a more diverse range of sites. This would be reflective of the emerging diversity in nuclear technologies. The new '**Draft: National Policy Statement for nuclear energy generation (EN-7)<sup>4</sup> (2025)**' aims to bring all previous detail together.
- 1.8 The Government considers that nuclear has an essential role in making Britain a "*clean energy superpower*" and it is their view that nuclear *provides "a source of clean, stable and reliable power as well as creating opportunities to deliver security around both energy and the climate"*. The Government also consider that a focus on developing the nuclear economy will provide economic security for workers and communities across the country.

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<sup>1</sup> Para 1.7.2 of DRAFT: National Policy Statement of nuclear energy generation ([EN-7](#))

<sup>2</sup> British Energy Security Strategy (2022) ([policy paper](#))

<sup>3</sup> Planning for new energy infrastructure; revisions to National Policy Statements ([consultation outcome](#))

<sup>4</sup> Draft: National Policy Statement for nuclear energy generation ([EN-7](#))

- 1.9 By way of an example, the Government are progressing Hinkley Point C, Sizewell C and the Great British Nuclear Small Modular Reactor competition. Additionally, they are working with the wider industry to break down the barriers to investing in nuclear, which include planning constraints, grid constraints, and issues regarding supply chains and skills. Resolving these issues can only bolster the UK's energy security, with the added benefits of the creation of high-quality jobs, driving growth and supporting climate action.
- 1.10 EN-7 is essential to the delivery of this vision. When published in its final form, EN-7 will set out the criteria that developers must satisfy within their application for Development Consent. It will provide a robust policy framework to guide decision-making.
- 1.11 There is precedent for the City Council to submit a response. It responded to the previous nuclear consultation (EN-6). A report was presented to Council Business Committee on 14th January 2010 regarding the (then) advent of Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects and a suite of Draft National Planning Statements, including EN-6. The Committee resolved to submit the responses to the consultation questions, as identified in the report appendix, as the Council's corporate response to the consultation.
- 1.12 On a related theme, the January 2025 meeting of Full Council debated a motion of support for the extension of power generation at Heysham 1 & 2 Power stations. Following lengthy debate, the motion was passed by Council. The minutes<sup>5</sup> record both the original motion; the debate that occurred at the meeting, including attempted amendments to the wording, and the final resolution, which reads:

*(That) "The Chief Executive will write to the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change, Cat Smith MP and Lizzi Collinge MP, welcoming the generating life extensions to Heysham 1 & 2, and conveying our support for bringing New Nuclear to Heysham and a timeline for this project to achieve, so we can plan for the future engineers and the stability of the Council";*

*"That we publicise these views via our various communication channels"; and,*

*"That a full response to any consultation on New Nuclear is prepared on behalf of the Council by Business Committee at the appropriate time".*

## **2.0 Proposal Details**

- 2.1 The current draft EN-7 consultation ends on 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2025. The document combines a government response to the first-round consultation launched in January 2024<sup>6</sup> and an updated second round of consultation.
- 2.2 The structure of EN-7 is as follows:
- Section 1 provides an introduction to the subject matter;
  - Section 2 sets out the Government's analysis of views and responses to the first-round consultation in greater detail;

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<sup>5</sup> [Agenda item - Motion of support for the extension of power generation at Heysham 1 & 2 Power Stations - Lancaster City Council](#)

<sup>6</sup> [A National Policy Statement for new nuclear power generation: new approach to siting beyond 2025 \(consultation 11<sup>th</sup> January 2024 - 10<sup>th</sup> March 2024\).](#)

- Section 3 comprises the Government's response to the first-round consultation and their updated approach at this second round stage. It explains how the updated approach differs from EN-6, and it describes various elements of the proposed assessment criteria that would inform the case for siting nuclear infrastructure. This includes factors that would influence site selection; technical considerations; Technical Considerations and the discussion of impacts.
- Section 4 of the report provides a summary of the second-round consultation questions; and,
- Section 5 of the report sets out the process and timeline towards 'designation' of EN-7.

2.3 The consultation document asks 10 questions (some with sub-questions). Several of these are optional. Most are focused around response options 'yes, no, unsure, not enough information or other'. Where text boxes are included to allow responses to be explained, these are capped at a maximum of (usually) 150 words.

2.4 Whilst the scope of the consultation is narrow in terms of the implications specifically for Lancaster District, the issue of potential new nuclear generation at Heysham is a continuing theme. Therefore, it is important for the City Council to be cognisant of this when progressing its own Review of the Local Plan and preparing site-specific and topic-specific local planning policies. Local policies will need to align with EN-7 (if it is designated as the new National Policy Statement). Aspirations relating to economic development and the growth of employment opportunities will be key factors, as will environmental considerations and the declared climate emergency. The fact that the Local Plan Review is at the evidence-gathering stage is a helpful alignment in terms of timescales.

2.5 In summary, EN-7 outlines a strategic approach to planning to help navigate the changing nuclear landscape in the UK since EN-6 was designated in 2011. It seeks to:

- Provide for Small and Advanced Modular Reactors, as well as gigawatt-scale nuclear infrastructure;
- Bring nuclear into line with other energy infrastructure and provide applicants with robust criteria for site selection; and,
- Remove deployment deadlines from the planning framework for the delivery of new nuclear.

### **3.0 Details of the Consultation and the Suggested Response**

3.1 A copy of the draft responses to the consultation are set out in Appendix 1 of this report. As highlighted previously, many of the questions are narrow in scope and do not provide the opportunity to provide views beyond the specifics of the questions raised. However, where officers have considered this to be necessary and where there is scope for commentary, officers have added additional text.

3.2 Members of the Local Plan Review Group received a similar report and the same draft responses to the questions (as set out here at Appendix 1) on 18<sup>th</sup> March 2025.

### **4.0 Next Steps**

4.1 In terms of the process and the timeline for moving towards designating the new National Policy Statement for Nuclear Energy Generation EN-7, the key dates are as follows:

<b>Winter 2024-Early 2025 (Current Stage)</b>	Analysis of the January 2024 first round consultation responses and government response. Completed with the publication of current EN-7 consultation document.
<b>Spring 2025</b>	Government analysis of second round consultation responses.
<b>Spring/Summer 2025</b>	Preparation and finalisation of the draft National Policy Statement and government response.
<b>Summer 2025</b>	Government aim to revise the draft National Policy Statement based on parliamentary feedback and will aim to prepare the final version for laying before Parliament.
<b>Autumn 2025</b>	The document will be laid before Parliament.
<b>Late 2025</b>	Final designation and publication by Government.

## 5.0 Options and Options Analysis (including risk assessment)

	<b>Option 1: To respond to the consultation questions</b>	<b>Option 2: To respond to the consultation with other comments</b>	<b>Option 3: To not submit a response to this consultation</b>
<b>Advantages</b>	The views of the Council will be considered by Government when deciding how to proceed.	The views of the Council will be considered by Government when deciding how to proceed.	None
<b>Disadvantages</b>	None	Dependent upon the extent of any additional considerations, there is limited time to submit the consultation response.	The formal opinion of Lancaster City Council would not be provided, and an opportunity to contribute to the consultation would be lost.
<b>Risks</b>	None.	None.	None.

## 6.0 Officer Preferred Option (and comments)

- 6.1 The preferred option is Option 1, to respond to the consultation as drafted following the recent consultation with the Local Plan Review Group.

## 6.0 Conclusion

- 6.1 The consultation closes at midday on 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2025. The Department for Energy Security and Net Zero state that all responses will be summarised and that this

summary will be published on the GOV.UK website.

- 6.2 As previously stated, when the process is complete and EN-7 is published in its final form, this will set out the criteria that developers must meet within their application for Development Consent, including on site assessment and the design of the proposed nuclear infrastructure, providing a robust policy framework to guide decision-making.

## **CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

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

Designated under the Planning Act 2008, National Policy Statements serve as crucial guidance for decision-makers, delineating the necessity for infrastructure and outlining the policy framework for making planning decisions on nationally significant infrastructure projects. Whilst the current national policy statement will be updated as a consequence of the consultation if taken forward, it is considered that the proposals will be assessed by Government and that all duties of consideration regarding any impacts will be appropriately considered by the decision-maker.

## **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no legal implications to completing and submitting the consultation response.

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no financial implications at this stage.

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

There are no resource implications at this stage.

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

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

## **MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS**

The Monitoring Officer has been consulted and has no further comments to add.

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- (i) A National Policy Statement for Nuclear Energy Generation, EN-7: Response and new Consultation (2025)
- (ii) Draft: National Policy Statement for nuclear energy generation (EN-7) (2025)
- (iii) A National Policy Statement for new nuclear power generation: Consultation on

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**Ref:** N/A



<p><u>the new approach to siting beyond 2025 (2024)</u></p> <p>(iv) <u>Planning for new energy infrastructure: revision for National Policy Statements (2023)</u></p> <p>(v) <u>British energy security strategy (2022)</u></p> <p>(vi) <u>National Policy Statement for nuclear power generation (EN-6): Planning guidance for developers of nationally significant nuclear power generation projects (2011)</u></p> <p>(vii) <u>Council Agenda item - Motion of support for the extension of power generation at Heysham 1 &amp; 2 Power Stations - Lancaster City Council (22/01/2025)</u></p>	
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## **Appendix 1:**

### Lancaster City Council's draft response to National Policy Statement for Nuclear Energy Generation EN-7 consultation.

**Question 1: To what extent do you agree with the modification of this approach in light of the consultation feedback:**

**To retain the < 50 MW (electric) threshold in the existing planning framework and to review our position in the future? Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the question.**

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Undecided
- **Disagree**
- Strongly disagree
- Not enough information

**Question 1a (OPTIONAL): If you would like to explain your response, please use the text box (free text, max 150 words).**

**ANSWER:**

While there is flexibility within the existing planning framework, the Council is of the opinion that all nuclear energy generating stations should be located within the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Programme for consistency.

**Question 2: To what extent do you believe the draft National Policy Statement is adequately future proofed to accommodate advancements in nuclear technologies? Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the question.**

- Strongly agree
- **Agree**
- Undecided
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Not enough information

**Question 2a (OPTIONAL): If you would like to explain your response, please use the text box (free text, 100 words).**

**ANSWER:**

The Council consider the draft statement to be future proofed adequately as it now encompasses all sizes of nuclear installations. We consider that national policy needs to be flexible regarding nuclear energy generation as the sector is rapidly adapting and changing. Policy needs to be able to include and support developments within the industry.

**Question 3: Are there specific planning or siting considerations that should be addressed to ensure the National Policy Statement remains flexible to deployment of nuclear in diverse locations.**

- **Yes**
- No
- Unsure
- Not enough information
- Other

**Question 3a (OPTIONAL): If you would like to explain your response, please use the text box (free text, max 150 words).**

ANSWER:

The Council considers that there should be a separate criterion relating to climate change adaptation and mitigation as it is gaining increased importance at a significant speed. Evacuation routes should additionally be considered for residents in terms of siting.

**Question 4: To what extent do you agree with the proposal to remove the distinction between previously exclusionary and discretionary criteria (see paragraph 1.1.7 (v) for more information)? Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the proposal.**

- Strongly agree
- **Agree**
- Undecided
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Not enough information

**Question 4a (OPTIONAL): If you would like to explain your response, please use the text box (free text, max 150 words)**

ANSWER:

Removing the distinction between the terms exclusionary and discretionary does not change anything in terms of substance. Paragraph 3.6.3 states that *“the population density and proximity to military activities criteria must be passed in the manner proposed within EN-7 or a site will be deemed inappropriate for the development of nuclear infrastructure”*. Therefore, LaCC consider that the removal of the distinction between the terms exclusionary and discretionary does not remove the requirement for this criteria to be met. The bar that has to be met has not been lowered by the removal of these terms. Paragraph 1.1.7 (v) sets out how the criteria still need to be met and so separation of the terms of not really needed.

**Question 5: The government currently plans to retain the Semi-Urban Population Density Criterion in EN-7. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the inclusion:**

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- **Undecided**
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Not enough information

**Question 5a (OPTIONAL): If you would like to explain your response, please use the text box (free text, 150 words)**

ANSWER:

LaCC consider that the 5-year review of this approach is a sensible way forward to as at present there is only limited existing evidence relating to risk levels of AMRs and SMRs posing a smaller risk than existing nuclear technologies (and therefore potentially being able to be located closer to more densely populated areas).

**Question 6: We are open to revising the Semi-Urban Population Density Criterion in the future. How should this criterion change in the future to better support the deployment of advanced nuclear technologies, and what evidence supports your suggestion? Please reference your sources. Please use the text box to answer (max 500 words).**

ANSWER:

The Semi-Urban Population Density Criterion includes an indiscriminate 30km radius for any reactor type, this was clearly established with large reactors in mind and does not seem to fit with the SMRs and AMRs that EN-7 is aiming to better support. An effective method of supporting the increased deployment of safer and smaller reactors would be to apply a proportionate approach to this radius based on the scale of the development and the scale of the risk it poses.

For example, a large 2,000 MW reactor may indeed require a 30km radius, but for an SMR with an output of only 200 MW (10x less) it may be more appropriate to apply a 5km radius instead.

This approach would however require a well justified methodology to be established for determining an appropriate radius on a case-by-case basis.

LCC recommend that the criterion should be kept under review (every 5 years) so that changes can be made to reflect any new technologies or research which demonstrates changes in the risk levels of reactor technologies, including AMRs, SMRs and larger nuclear reactors.

LCC would also like to stress that the safety of residents and community is always critical, and that increasing the Semi-Urban Population Density Criterion indiscriminately, or removing it entirely, could place more of the population at risk.

**Question 7: If it's not already addressed elsewhere (for example in EN-1 and the Planning Inspectorate Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project Guidance), are there any specific areas of the draft EN-7 where further clarity or guidance is needed to help ensure successful implementation by developers, planners, and regulators?**

- Yes
- **No**
- Unsure
- Not enough information

**Other Question 7a (OPTIONAL): If you would like to explain your response, please use the text box (free text, max 150 words)**

ANSWER:

[Consider that all relevant areas have been highlighted.](#)

**Question 8: Would additional support or information from the government be beneficial and assist developers intending to apply for Development Consent in implementing EN-7 and proceeding through the Development Consent Order pre-application process?**

- Yes
- No
- **Unsure**
- Not enough information
- Other

**Question 8a (OPTIONAL): If you would like to explain your response, please use the text box (free text, max 150 words)**

ANSWER:

[As a Local Authority, not a nuclear developer, the Council cannot provide a detailed response to this question.](#)

**Question 9 (OPTIONAL): If you wish to be kept informed of the development of the supplementary information to the National Policy Statement please share your contact details (email address preferable) in the text box provided (max 150 words) so that we can seek your views.**

ANSWER:

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[Principal Planning Policy Officer](#)  
[Planning & Climate Change Service](#)  
[Lancaster City Council](#)  
E-mail: [dneville@lancaster.gov.uk](mailto:dneville@lancaster.gov.uk)

**Question 10: Please identify the single main sector or interest you represent in relation to the siting of new nuclear power stations.**

- Member of the general public
- Local community member in the vicinity of potential or existing nuclear installation
- Organisation responsible for/interested in new nuclear development.
- New nuclear development supply chain organisation
- Environmental advocate
- Energy business or industry, professional or expert
- Regulator • Nuclear energy professional or expert
- Academic or researcher
- **Local authority/government representative**
- National government representative
- Non Government Organisation

**Question 10 a (OPTIONAL): Please use the text box below to state any other sectors or interests you represent (free text, max 150 words)**

ANSWER:

Any new nuclear development should be required to plan for future connection to or co-development with heat network delivery. This should be particularly required where new developments are within a reasonable range of a Heat Network Zone.

LaCC are also in agreement with strengthening the wording of the flood risk criterion to better address all types of flood risks.

<b>COUNCIL BUSINESS COMMITTEE</b>
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## The Lancashire Growth Plan - Consultation Response 26<sup>th</sup> March 2025

### Report of the Chief Officer for Sustainable Growth

<b>PURPOSE OF REPORT</b>
The purpose of the report is to advise Council of the consultation of the Lancashire Growth Plan and for Council to agree a response to the consultation.
<b>This report is public</b>

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

- (1) That Council note the summary content of the consultation version of the Lancashire Growth Plan
- (2) That Council agree the draft response contained in paragraphs XX to XX of this report.
- (3) That Council delegate the Chief Officer Sustainable Growth to make minor alterations to the response and to submit the final version of the response to the County Combined Authority by 11<sup>th</sup> April 2025.

#### 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 A new Combined County Authority (CCA) for Lancashire, Blackpool and Blackburn was established on 5<sup>th</sup> February 2025 when the Statutory Instrument for its formation was signed by the Minister of State for Local Government and English Devolution.

- 1.2 The newly established CCA identifies 7 key areas for its work which are

- Innovation, Trade, and Investment
- Skills and Adult Education
- Transport
- Net Zero and Climate Change
- Digital and Cyber
- Culture and Tourism
- Housing and Land

- 1.3 The Government has also provided £20million of funding agreed as part of the devolution deal to create the new CCA. The funding is to be used on a number of projects supporting place-based economic regeneration, innovation-led growth and

net zero ambitions.

- 1.4 To support the work of the CCA a draft Lancashire Growth Plan (LGP) has now been published which looks at the period 2025 to 2025. The LGP is out to consultation until 11<sup>th</sup> April 2025 and views are being sought widely. This report therefore seeks to agree a response from Lancaster City Council.

## **2.0 Proposal Details**

- 2.1 The draft Lancashire Growth Plan (LGP) was launched at the recent Convention of the North which was held in Preston in late February. The LGP is out for consultation for 6 weeks.

- 2.2 As well as an introduction the LGP has 8 sections and concludes with an Appendix of Lancashire's Major Pipeline Sites. The sections cover the following:

- Vision and Strategic Priorities
- Case for Growth
- Spatial Priorities
- Framework for Nationally Significant Economic Assets
- Foundations for Growth
- Our Asks
- Governance, Monitoring and Evaluation
- Major Projects

- 2.3 While the Lancashire Growth Plan 2025–2035 does not extensively detail many specific projects for most areas it does acknowledge some Lancaster District based initiatives and assets within the district. Projects like the Eden Project Morecambe, the operational significance of Heysham Nuclear Power Stations, and the collaborative efforts of the Lancaster District Strategic Partnership are recognised as components of the region's economic development.

- 2.4 Some positive Aspects of the Lancashire Growth Plan for the city council's area include:

- Recognition of Advanced Engineering and Manufacturing The plan emphasises Lancashire's some strengths in advanced engineering and manufacturing, sectors where Lancaster has notable capabilities. This alignment suggests potential for targeted investments and initiatives that could benefit the district.
- Focus on Clean Energy Initiatives Highlighting clean energy aligns with Lancaster's assets, such as the Heysham Nuclear Power Station. This focus could lead to further development in sustainable energy projects within the district. The document acknowledges the economic significance of the Heysham Nuclear Power Stations noting the extension of operational life for these stations underscores their importance to the local economy and energy infrastructure.
- Emphasis on Digital and Cyber Sectors The plan gives attention to digital and cyber sectors which resonates with Lancaster's educational institutions, notably Lancaster University, which has strengths in these fields. The plan references Lancaster University's investment in digital and cyber sectors. This aligns with the local Lancaster support for the Electech cluster, which emphasises, innovation in digital and artificial intelligence sectors, indicating potential growth



areas for the district.

- **Eden Project North:** The plan discusses this as a key initiative aimed at revitalising Morecambe's economy:
- **Lancaster District Strategic Partnership (LDSP):** The plan references the LDSP as a collaborative effort to enhance the Lancaster District.
- **Founding organizations** include Lancaster City Council, Lancaster University, University of Cumbria, Lancaster and Morecambe College, and others, highlighting a concerted effort to address regional challenges and opportunities.
- **Tourism and Coastal Regeneration** The document emphasises the potential of coastal towns like Morecambe in contributing to Lancashire's visitor economy: This underscores the strategic importance of projects like Eden Project Morecambe in reimagining the British seaside experience.
- **Environmental and Agricultural Research** Lancaster's role in environmental research is highlighted through institutions like the Lancaster Environment Centre (LEC) This positions Lancaster as a leader in environmental and agricultural innovation, contributing to the region's economic diversification, although it is not obvious from the rest of the text.

2.5 However, while the Lancashire Growth Plan 2025–2035 purports to set a foundation for county-wide economic development, its effectiveness in promoting inclusive growth across the city council's communities will be diminished if the document proceeds to adoption in its current form. Significant issues with the main sections are detailed below.

2.6 In order to respond to the consultation the below provides officer commentary on the sections and a suggested response on each. The full document can be found at the link at the end of this report.

Officer Commentary	Suggested Response
<b>Vision and Strategic Priorities</b>	
<p>The draft LGP provides for a vision as follows:</p> <p><i>“To be a globally recognised, highly competitive, and sustainable region celebrated for its exceptional quality of life, connectivity, and opportunities.”</i></p> <p>This is supplemented by a series of aspirations focusing on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• new technologies and future markets</li> <li>• Diverse and dynamic communities</li> <li>• quality of life</li> <li>• growth in communities most in need</li> </ul>	<p>The vision and priorities appear to be well suited to the broad and diverse nature of Lancashire and its economy.</p> <p>Whilst the LGP is clearly aimed at a high-level strategy and therefore reflective of key future sectors in Lancashire it is felt that the vision and priorities do not deal with all areas of the economy.</p> <p>It is very focused on high technology and high skills whereas there are significant areas of lower value and lower skilled jobs underpinning the economy. There are also significant areas of deprivation within</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• sector development and growth</li> <li>• innovation excellence</li> <li>• skills for growth</li> <li>• business growth and enterprise</li> <li>• releasing local growth potential</li> </ul> <p>5 economic priorities are then identified as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. UK Security</li> <li>2. Clean Growth / Nuclear</li> <li>3. Sustainable Digital and AI</li> <li>4. Continued Success of Manufacturing</li> <li>5. A Reimagined Coast</li> </ol> <p>This is underpinned by foundations for growth and a major projects and investment programme.</p>	<p>Lancashire. It is felt that the vision and priorities could be changed to address these areas more equitably.</p>
<p><b>Case for Growth</b></p>	
<p>The case for growth is supported by a series of evidence base including the Lancashire Independent Economic Review (2022), Lancashire 2050 Strategic Plan (2023), Lancashire CCA Proposal (2024) and the Lancashire Skills and Employment Strategic Framework (2024)</p> <p>The case for growth identifies 5 drivers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Size and scale</li> <li>• Powerful</li> <li>• Areas of high productivity</li> <li>• Job density</li> <li>• Distribution of economic output</li> </ul> <p>This is complemented by five challenges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sustaining recent growth uplift</li> <li>• High reliance on advanced engineering manufacturing</li> <li>• Need to match east-west connectivity with the excellent north-south</li> <li>• Broaden volume and availability of investment</li> <li>• High and growing levels of economic inactivity</li> </ul>	<p>This section presents Lancashire's economic context, highlighting its GVA (Gross Value Added) and employment trends.</p> <p>However, Lancaster's contributions are not given adequate attention (reference to Economic Analysis of Lancaster District Appendix 1).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Lancaster's GVA Contribution:</b> Lancaster district generates a significant portion of Lancashire's £34 billion total GVA, contributing over £2.7 billion annually. While this figure is slightly lower than some parts of central Lancashire, it is higher than many other Lancashire districts.</li> <li>• <b>GDP and Employment:</b> The Lancaster economy grew by 10.9% in 2022, surpassing the UK's average growth rate of 9.7%. This strong economic performance is overlooked in the document.</li> <li>• <b>High-Value Sectors:</b> Lancaster has one of the highest concentrations of knowledge-intensive businesses in Lancashire, many of which are spin-offs or partnerships with Lancaster University.</li> </ul> <p>Downplaying Lancaster's strong economic fundamentals as an "isolated / small area" undermines the credibility of the plan's growth strategy. A more robust data-driven approach</p>

	<p>should highlight Lancaster's importance.</p> <p>The Lancashire Growth Plan 2025–2035 focuses primarily on the Central Belt Economic Corridor, covering Preston, Blackburn, and Burnley. This raises concerns about spatial imbalance and a potential future lack of investment in the north of the county.</p>
<b>Spatial Priorities</b>	
<p>This section of the LGP majors on the central belt in Lancashire stretching from Blackpool across through Preston and to Blackburn and Burnley. This is identified as the key corridor.</p> <p>The section is supplemented with 3 maps. One provides the Lancashire Growth Map which highlights the central belt but also other corridors such as the M6 running up to Lancaster. It also identifies Anchor Strategic Sites – only Heysham Gateway is identified in Lancaster City area. Complementary sites are also identified and includes Morecambe Town and Lancaster City Centres and Lancaster University.</p> <p>The second map looks at wider relationships and shows a clear relationship of north Lancashire with Cumbria for tourism, nuclear and defence.</p> <p>Finally, the third map identifies areas of economic need by using data on Income Deprivation in Local Super Output Areas. Areas in Morecambe are clearly shown in the upper 2 deciles of income deprivation.</p>	<p>Lancaster / Morecambe based initiatives are cited in the document, but this is not reflected in a balanced spatial approach, which has a strong emphasis towards Central Lancashire. It diminishes the importance and potential of the north to south M6 corridor, Lancaster's links to Preston /Manchester / Liverpool, the South Lakes/Barrow/Scotland to the North, and Yorkshire/Leeds to the east.</p> <p>The document calls the Lancaster/Morecambe/Heysham conurbation "isolated" when it takes longer to get to Preston from either Burnley or Blackpool, and where there are numerous direct and fast daily train services to Manchester, London, Edinburgh and Glasgow.</p> <p>In later plans the document, strangely labels the Lancaster/Morecambe/Heysham conurbation "small". While individually these urban areas are distinct, they are functionally integrated and should be treated as a large conurbation.</p> <p>In summary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The emphasis on the M55/M65 corridor (Blackpool - Preston-Burnley) potentially excludes Lancaster and Morecambe Bay from major investment discussions.</li> <li>• The limited focus on north-south transport links, disadvantages and underplays Lancaster's connectivity to the rest of the county, particularly its highest growth area of Preston, and better links to the rest of the country than elsewhere in Lancashire.</li> <li>• Other than Eden Morecambe the major regeneration projects mentions listed for Lancaster district, despite opportunities such as Frontierland and the Canal Quarter Regeneration Scheme.</li> </ul> <p>Lancaster's low profile in the Spatial Priorities</p>

	<p>risks reinforcing economic disparities within Lancashire and the district itself. A more equitable plan should incorporate Lancaster's potential as a densely populated and thriving regional economic centre rather than, as the document text and visuals imply, a "backwater" or simply complementary to the priority M55/M65 corridor.</p> <p>The vision outlined in the Growth Plan revolves around themes of innovation, productivity, sustainability, and infrastructure. However, the document provides little recognition of Lancaster's unique strengths in these areas in Spatial Priority.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Innovation: Lancaster University's impact in research and development (R&amp;D) is substantial, with over £80 million in research grants annually. It also supports business innovation through initiatives such as Lancaster University's Work in Progress incubator.</li> <li>• Sustainability: Lancaster has a leading clean energy sector, particularly in offshore wind and low-carbon technologies. The city's engagement with the Eden North project also positions it as a national leader in environmental innovation.</li> <li>• Infrastructure: The vision prioritises investment in transport and digital connectivity but does not build on Lancaster's north-south connectivity issues or its specific digital economy potential.</li> </ul> <p>The lack of reference to Lancaster's contributions to these strategic priorities creates an incomplete vision for Lancashire's growth. A more balanced approach would explicitly position Lancaster, with its business cluster and Universities as an anchor of innovation-led growth.</p>
<b>Framework for Nationally Significant Economic Assets</b>	
<p>This section of the LGP identifies assets of national significance against the 5 economic priorities.</p> <p>In terms of security and resilience the LGP identifies the following:</p>	<p>The plan outlines key economic assets that are crucial to Lancashire's growth. However, it does not fully recognise the national and international significance of Lancaster University not Lancaster itself in Priority 4.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lancaster University ranks among the top</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Military air sector</li> <li>• National Cyber Force HQ</li> <li>• AUKUS Supply Chain</li> <li>• Rural economy and food security</li> </ul> <p>For clean and nuclear the LGP discusses the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nuclear power</li> <li>• Advanced Engineering and Manufacturing</li> <li>• Nuclear research and education</li> </ul> <p>With regard to digital and AI the LGP covers the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• University research and education inc Lancaster University</li> </ul> <p>The fourth priority of Advanced Engineering and Manufacturing identifies the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Electech Cluster</li> <li>• Energy and Low Carbon Sector</li> <li>• Lancaster University</li> <li>• Health Innovation</li> </ul> <p>Finally in terms of coast the following are identified as key assets:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Blackpool</li> <li>• Morecambe and Eden</li> <li>• Morecambe Bay Curriculum</li> </ul>	<p>ten universities in the UK and top 150 globally, generating over £1 billion annually for the UK economy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It leads major research and business collaborations, including partnerships with BAE Systems, the NHS, and global tech firms.</li> <li>• The Lancaster Health Innovation Campus contributes to health and med-tech sectors, supporting regional economic resilience.</li> </ul> <p>The Port of Heysham is a key hub for freight and passenger transport and Lancashire's only port harbour. Operated by Peel Ports, it plays a crucial role in connecting the UK with Ireland and the Isle of Man. The port handles Roll-on/Roll-off (RoRo) ferry services, serving routes to Belfast, Dublin, and Douglas. Major ferry operators include Stena Line, Seatruck Ferries, and the Isle of Man Steam Packet Company.</p> <p>Heysham's strategic location makes it a vital gateway for trade, particularly for industries reliant on efficient logistics, such as retail, manufacturing, and agriculture. It facilitates the movement of goods, including food products, machinery, and raw materials, boosting the local and national economy. The port also supports offshore energy operations, including wind farms and the nearby Heysham Nuclear Power Station.</p> <p>Alongside its strategic importance economically, the port provides hundreds of jobs in maritime, logistics, and support services, directly contributing to regional employment. Its efficiency in handling unaccompanied freight helps alleviate congestion at larger ports such as Liverpool. With ongoing investments in infrastructure, the Port of Heysham is expected to further enhance trade links and bolster economic resilience in the northwest of England.</p> <p>Given these factors, Lancaster University and Port of Heysham should be designated as a nationally significant asset within the Growth Plan.</p>
<p><b>Foundations for Growth</b></p>	

<p>The LGP identifies 4 enablers to economic growth.</p> <p>Firstly, Quality of Place and Culture is highlighted and is based around a refresh of the ReMade cultural strategy for Lancashire.</p> <p>Secondly Inclusive Growth focuses on the Lancashire Skills and Employment Strategy and the new Lancashire Business Board. It also proposes a new Skills escalator and a strong relationship with the Integrated Care Board through schemes such as WorkWell.</p> <p>Thirdly, the strength of Lancashire's Higher and Further Education Assets is identified including the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• University of Lancashire (formerly UCLAN)</li> <li>• Lancaster University</li> <li>• Edge Hill University</li> <li>• AMRC NW</li> <li>• FE Colleges</li> <li>• Lancashire Data Observatory</li> </ul> <p>Finally the Lancashire Infrastructure Strategy focuses on what is needed to underpin the LGP delivery and covers the following topic areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transport</li> <li>• Housing</li> <li>• Key Employment Sites</li> </ul>	<p>Lancaster is one of England's 15 designated historic cities, which does not merit mentioning in the Plan. It would be impossible to think of strategic economic plans for other areas of similar scale and focus which did not mention this fact.</p> <p>The Lancaster/Morecambe/Heysham conurbation should not be labelled "small".</p> <p>This section discusses skills, infrastructure, and innovation, yet does not fully incorporate Lancaster's role in driving regional talent development.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lancaster University trains thousands of high-skilled graduates annually, many of whom remain in Lancashire.</li> <li>• The Lancaster Digital Hub supports business growth and digital transformation yet is not featured.</li> <li>• Lancaster's proximity to the National Cyber Force in Samlesbury positions it as a key digital economy player.</li> </ul> <p>A stronger emphasis on Lancaster's skills pipeline and digital infrastructure would improve the credibility of the Growth Plan.</p> <p>The Electech Cluster, while mentioned in the document was founded and based in Lancaster and is a thriving network of businesses, researchers, and organisations specialising in electronics, electrical engineering, and emerging technologies. This cluster brings together high-tech companies, Lancaster University, and innovation hubs to drive advancements in semiconductors, photonics, digital communications, and power electronics.</p> <p>Anchored by Lancaster University's world-class research in fields like quantum technology and cybersecurity, the Electech Cluster plays a key role in fostering collaboration between academia and industry. It provides businesses with access to cutting-edge facilities, skilled graduates, and research expertise, enabling innovation and commercial growth.</p> <p>For businesses, the cluster means greater opportunities for networking, research partnerships, and funding access. It supports</p>
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	<p>start-ups, SMEs, and multinational corporations, helping them develop new technologies, scale operations, and compete globally. The cluster also strengthens Lancaster's economy by attracting investment, creating high-value jobs, and positioning the region as a leader in advanced electronics and digital industries.</p> <p>The plan lacks specific strategies for rural areas. Given Lancaster District's extensive rural hinterland, incorporating policies to support agriculture, rural tourism, and local enterprises is crucial.</p>
<b>Our Asks</b>	
<p>Section 7 of the LGP provides what Lancashire's "asks" are. These can be summarised as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Targeted Government Policy and Investment</li> <li>• Investment to drive industries of the future (Heysham is mentioned)</li> <li>• Refocus devolved skills and employment investment to lift local job productivity</li> <li>• Develop a pipeline of strategic transport projects</li> </ul>	<p>The Growth Plan makes key funding requests, but none are explicitly earmarked for Lancaster-based projects.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eden Project Morecambe is a £100 million investment opportunity, yet it is not given further priority. For Morecambe to capitalise on the opportunity much more needs to be done to provide context and setting for this unique attraction.</li> <li>• Lancaster's Canal Quarter Regeneration Project is absent, despite being a key cultural and economic development initiative.</li> <li>• Investment in Lancaster University's research facilities should be a major ask, considering its national/global impact.</li> <li>• The Strategic Rail Programme is inadequate in addressing the district's needs and potential.</li> </ul>
<b>Governance, Monitoring and Evaluation</b>	
<p>The success of the LGP will be monitored on an ongoing basis as part of the wider performance management framework for the LCCA.</p> <p>The draft LGP proposes monitoring indicators covering the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Economic Growth and Development</li> <li>• Infrastructure and Connectivity</li> <li>• Skills and Employment</li> <li>• Quality of Place and Culture</li> <li>• Housing and Community</li> </ul>	<p>Governance structures lack representation from Lancaster. Given the district's economic significance, ensuring representation at the Combined County Authority level would promote fairer regional decision-making.</p>

<p>Development</p> <p>The LGP proposes regular monitoring reports, and stakeholder feedback as part of its evaluation of success.</p>	
<p><b>Major Projects</b></p>	
<p>Finally the LGP concludes by proposing a list of major signature projects which are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Samlesbury EZ and Innovation Hub</li> <li>• Warton EZ</li> <li>• Blackburn Cyber Skills and Innovation Quarter</li> <li>• Blackpool Airport EZ and Silicon Sands</li> <li>• Blackpool Central Leisure Development</li> <li>• Burnley Town Centre</li> <li>• Heysham Nuclear</li> <li>• Morecambe Seafront and Eden</li> <li>• Preston Station Quarter</li> <li>• Springfields</li> <li>• Strategic Rail Programme</li> <li>• Talbot Gateway / Multiversity</li> </ul>	<p>As throughout the document there is a dominance of the “central belt” It is worth noting that both Heysham and Morecambe are identified here but this appears to be inconsistent with the Growth Plan at the start of the document which also includes Lancaster and refers to Heysham as an anchor project.</p>

## 2.6 ***Requested Changes***

2.7 In order for the City Council to support the emerging the Lancashire Growth Plan the following changes are requested.

2.8 The City Council requests that the following is more fully considered and emphasised in the Growth Plan. Lancaster District is as central and pivotal an economic area in Lancashire, benefiting from a diverse economy, a thriving higher education sector, a revitalised coastal town of Morecambe, and thriving on Lancaster’s status as one of England’s Historic Cities. In synergy with these strengths Lancaster can become a more prosperous contributor to Lancashire in terms of GDP per head, productivity, and business growth, but only with recognition of the area’s potential in its own right and not simply as an “isolated outpost of the Central Belt”.

2.9 Lancaster’s economic growth potential needs to be reflected in:

- Recognition as one of the key drivers of Lancashire’s future economic expansion
- The additional support required to overcome challenges and barriers that may limit growth.
- Recognition of its success in comparisons with other Lancashire districts and



some of the Growth Plan's current focus and attention.

- Our area's outstanding role in provision of education and workforce skills.
- Better reflection of the opportunities in heritage tourism, creative and knowledge-based industries of the area
- Reflection of what Lancaster District needs to do to exceed growth expectations.

2.10 Lancaster's economy is projected to grow steadily but at a slower rate than it could unless structural improvements are made. Key indicators suggest:

- GVA growth (10.9% in 2022) has been strong, outpacing the UK's real growth rate of 4.1%, but sustaining this will be challenging.
- GDP per head (£22,966) is below the UK average (£36,844) and significantly lower than Preston (£31,284) and Fylde (£38,158).
- Productivity (£35.50 GVA per hour worked) is 10.6% below the national average, showing room for improvement.

2.11 While Lancaster's knowledge economy and tourism sector offer strong potential, infrastructure, business innovation, and investment must improve to overperform economic forecasts. The key drivers of Lancaster's Future Growth will come from:

2.12 Higher Education and Knowledge-Based Industries: Lancaster outperforms most of Lancashire in terms of workforce education levels due to Lancaster University, a world-class research institution that fuels innovation, start-ups, and highly skilled employment.

- Lancaster University is ranked in the top 15 UK universities, contributing £1 billion annually to the local economy.
- The university attracts thousands of international students and researchers, boosting local spending and housing demand.
- It has a strong reputation in technology, environmental sciences, and business, areas that could drive economic expansion.

2.13 However, a major challenge is retaining graduates in Lancaster, as many leave for Manchester, Liverpool, or London after studying. Policies to encourage local graduate employment are essential.

2.14 Not mentioned in the Growth Plan is Lancaster's second University. The University of Cumbria is a dynamic, multi-campus institution offering a wide range of undergraduate, postgraduate, and professional development courses. Established in 2007, it was formed from the merger of St Martin's College, Cumbria Institute of the Arts, and the University of Central Lancashire's Cumbrian campuses. The university specialises in education, health, business, social sciences, science, the environment, and the creative arts.

2.15 The Lancaster campus of the University of Cumbria is one of its key sites, offering a range of courses in health, social care, business, and education. It is not the largest campus—that distinction belongs to Fusehill Street in Carlisle—but it remains an important hub for teacher training, nursing, and allied health professions.

2.16 The Lancaster campus plays a vital role in training professionals for key public sector roles. With a strong focus on applied learning, it prepares graduates for careers in healthcare, education, and business, supporting workforce development across the North West and beyond. It has strong ties with the NHS and local schools, ensuring that students receive practical, firsthand experience.

- 2.17 *Tourism and Leisure:* Morecambe's journey to re-invent itself at the forefront of the UK's coastal visitor experience is welcome. However, the District's strength also lies in Lancaster's designation as one of England's Heritage Cities, Lancaster has an advantage in cultural tourism, attracting visitors interested in history, architecture, and heritage sites.
- Lancaster Castle, the City and Maritime Museum, Williamson Park, and Georgian architecture make it one of the most historically significant cities in the North West.
  - Tourism contributes significantly to GVA, with Lancaster's visitor economy outperforming other districts like Burnley and Pendle.
  - With proper investment, Lancaster could rival other peer historic cities as a high-value cultural tourism destination.
- 2.18 However, infrastructure constraints (transport links, hotel capacity, and tourism marketing investment) currently limit visitor spending and overnight stays and support is needed.
- 2.19 *Business and Investment:* Lancaster has strong business survival rates, suggesting a sustainable business environment. However, business density and start-up rates are still lower than the most dynamic area of Preston.
- Lancaster had 15.9% business growth (2011–2018), below the UK average (28.3%).
  - There was however higher growth in knowledge-intensive sectors, including tech, education, and creative industries.
  - Stronger SME survival rate than Burnley and Blackpool, but business expansion remains a challenge.
- 2.20 To unlock faster business growth, Lancaster needs more investment in digital infrastructure, business incubators, and funding support for high-growth industries.
- 2.21 *Transport and travel:* Lancaster benefits from good rail and road links to Manchester, London, and Scotland, but road connectivity and digital infrastructure require improvement.
- The M6 motorway connects Lancaster well, but congestion around Lancaster city centre, access to central Morecambe and constrained A6 corridor remain an issue and constraint on growth.
  - Digital connectivity (broadband speeds) is below the UK average, limiting the city's attractiveness for digital businesses.
  - The Port of Heysham is an underutilised asset that could be further developed for trade and logistics.
- 2.22 To sustain growth, Lancaster must improve transport, logistics, and digital connectivity to complement Preston. While infrastructure is mentioned, the plan could more explicitly address transport links within Lancaster District, such as improving connections between Lancaster, Morecambe, Heysham, and Carnforth, to stimulate economic activity. In particular, The strategic rail programme fails to refer to the other West Coast Mainline (WCML) Station in Lancashire (i.e. other than Preston). Lancaster Railway Station is an important stop on the WCML for Scotland and London-bound services and as an interchange for services to Morecambe, Carnforth, Leeds and Barrow. The Growth Plan should place greater priority on maintaining Lancaster's status as a stop on the WCML and reference the need to

improve rail links to Morecambe in readiness for the delivery of Eden, and to improve links to Heysham (serving the Port and the nuclear power stations) and more reliable services to Carnforth and Barrow, including BAE Systems.

2.23 Workforce and Skills: Lancaster's population is more educated than most, but many graduates leave for better job opportunities elsewhere.

- Lancaster University produces thousands of skilled graduates annually, but many relocate to bigger cities.
- Lack of large corporate employers in Lancaster limits high-paying job opportunities.
- The proportion of workers in high-skilled jobs is lower than Preston and South Ribble.

2.24 Support for key initiatives to attract high-value businesses and encourage graduate retention is crucial for the area's long-term economic success.

2.25 Housing growth / planning: Whilst Lancaster's cost of living is lower than central Lancashire, there are increasing housing affordability concerns exacerbated by a lack of supply to meet increasing demand.

- House prices in Lancaster are rising faster than incomes, leading to affordability challenges.
- More affordable housing is needed for young professionals and key workers to encourage their retention within the district.
- Lancaster's urban centre requires regeneration to attract more businesses and investment. This includes investment in the city's gyratory network. The Development Consent Order (DCO) for the Bay Gateway sets out highway and public transport requirements that must be implemented by 31 October 2026. For the avoidance of doubt, these requirements are set out in the **appendix** to this report.

2.26 Addressing housing and urban planning will be essential for future economic growth. Existing strategic mixed-use land allocations in the adopted Local Plan at North Lancaster and East Lancaster can provide greater housing capacity and an opportunity for commercial development. Further opportunities to meet identified needs must be explored through the forthcoming Local Plan Review.

2.27 To accelerate growth and outperform economic forecasts, Lancaster needs targeted investment in the following areas:

(i) Retaining Graduates and Expanding High-Value Employment

- Develop business clusters around Lancaster University (tech, environmental science, healthcare innovation).
- Offer incentives for businesses to locate in Lancaster and employ local graduates.
- Strengthen collaboration between academia and industry to drive research-led innovation.

(ii) Expanding the Heritage and Visitor Economy

- Increase investment in cultural tourism marketing and events to position Lancaster as a premier heritage destination.
- Improve visitor infrastructure (hotels, transport links, guided experiences).
- Create stronger links between tourism and local businesses to maximise economic impact.

## (iii) Boosting Business Growth and Productivity

- Expand business support schemes to increase start-up success rates.
- Improve digital infrastructure to attract knowledge-based businesses.
- Build on and enhance transport connectivity to regional business hubs (Preston, Manchester).

## (iv) Urban Development and Housing Strategy

- Develop affordable housing projects for young professionals.
- Regenerate Central Lancaster with mixed-use developments to attract more businesses.
- Improve transport rail and road infrastructure in the district to reduce congestion.

**3.0 Details of Consultation**

3.1 The Lancashire Growth Plan is currently out to wider consultation to which all can respond.

**4.0 Options and Options Analysis (including risk assessment)**

	<b>Option 1: Provide a Detailed Response to the Consultation</b>	<b>Option 2: D Not Respond</b>
Advantages	Important omissions are for Lancaster and the wider area are clearly stated in public and the views will be communicated to the LCCA	None
Disadvantages	None	The views of Lancaster City Council are not heard and made public
Risks	That the views are not taken account of	Nothing changes

**5.0 Officer Preferred Option (and comments)**

5.1 The preferred options for the response are as outlined above.

**6.0 Conclusion**

6.1 The Lancashire Growth Plan 2025–2035 presents an ambitious vision but fails to adequately acknowledge Lancaster’s contributions. Key improvements should include:

- Explicit recognition of Lancaster University as a key driver of Lancashire’s economic and research growth.
- Greater integration of the Lancaster, Morecambe and Heysham urban area into spatial and investment priorities.
- Fairer distribution of infrastructure funding, particularly for transport, digital, and regeneration projects.

6.2 Lancaster District plays a crucial role in Lancashire’s economy with strengths in higher education, tourism, and knowledge-based industries. Its economic performance is moderate relative to Lancashire overall, with some clear strengths and weaknesses:

- Higher GVA than several more heralded districts highlighted in the Plan (for example, Blackpool and Burnley).
- Strong business survival rate and SME growth.
- Above-average employment rate.
- High productivity in knowledge-based sectors (education, digital industries).

But challenges remain in:

- Lower than average GDP per head compared to Preston, Fylde, and South Ribble.
- Productivity levels need improvement.
- Pockets of deprivation in Morecambe and central Lancaster.

6.3 A more balanced and inclusive approach would ensure that the city council's area should play a driving role in Lancashire's economic future, has great growth potential and is not an unconnected, small outlier to the Central Belt. The Growth Plan's mission will itself be undermined as it:

- Does not recognise the scale of the district's local ambition and needs.
- Downplays its existing connectivity, sector strengths and added value.
- Concentrates on East / West links, diminishing North/South links and the area's relationship to the South Lakes and beyond.
- Fails to recognise the Lancaster/Morecambe/Heysham area as a connected urban centre with prime conditions for sustainable growth if better supported in key strategic areas of transport, regeneration, and business development.

55 Mentions of Blackpool

<p><b>CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT</b> (including Health &amp; Safety, Equality &amp; Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, Sustainability and Rural Proofing):</p> <p>These are as set out in the report.</p>
<p><b>LEGAL IMPLICATIONS</b></p> <p>There are no legal implications with regard to this report</p>
<p><b>FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS</b></p> <p>There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.</p>
<p><b>OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS, such as Human Resources, Information Services, Property, Open Spaces</b></p> <p>None</p>
<p><b>SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS</b></p> <p>It is important for the Council to respond to this consultation as future Funding Streams will</p>

be directly related to the implementation of this plan. It is therefore essential that districts voices and issues are clearly communicated.

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

Council responses to consultations are delegated to this Committee. The Monitoring Officer has no further comments to add.

#### **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Draft Lancashire Growth Plan February 2025  
<https://lancashire-cca.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2025-03/Lancashire%20Growth%20Plan%20consultation%20version%20Feb%202025.pdf>

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## **APPENDIX A:**

### **Bay Gateway Development Consent Order: Complementary Traffic Measures**

(6) The link road must not be fully opened to vehicular traffic until an action plan of complementary traffic measures has been submitted to and approved in writing by the relevant planning authority, which must have regard to the findings of Lancaster and Morecambe Vision Board Study and include:

- (a) A review of the City Centre gyratory systems;
- (b) An investigation into the extension of the proposed Park and Ride network beyond the site at Junction 34 of the M6 Motorway;
- (c) A detailed feasibility study for a rapid transit route from Lancaster city centre, rail station and bus station to Morecambe and Heysham; and,
- (d) A schedule of those measures that are to be implemented.

The action plan must aim to prevent road traffic growth within the central Lancaster area increasing to predicted “do minimum” levels between the opening and design years of the link road (thereby negating planned relief) and contain a timetable for implementation of the measures to be carried out.

(7) The complementary traffic measures set out in the schedule to the action plan approved in accordance with sub-paragraph (6) must be carried out in accordance with the approved timetable or no later than 10 years of the opening of the link road whichever is the earlier.

(8) The link road must not be fully opened to vehicular traffic until the undertaker has completed statutory consultation upon a proposal to make a traffic regulation order prohibiting HGVs from roads forming part of the A6 in central Lancaster and along A589 Morecambe Road east of the link road, except for access.