

**Lancaster District Transport Vision and Strategy**  
Final Report

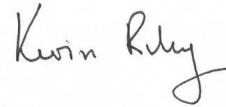
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# Foreword

The Economic Vision for Lancaster & Morecambe is of a district that has overcome its physical divisions and is developing into a successful centre for Lancashire and Cumbria, in line with the objectives of the Regional Spatial Strategy. It recognises that Lancaster & Morecambe and its rural hinterland must act as one if we are to improve our collective economy and increase wealth generation and quality of life for all. All parts of our district need to be accessible, from within the district itself and from the natural hinterland which gravitates to the City. Movement within and into the district should be quick, easy, inexpensive and pleasant. This is not presently the case and we consider our local transport and road networks as being a major barrier to economic growth.

We also need to consider wider concerns about climate change and the need to encourage people to use alternatives to the private car.

In order to determine a robust and evidence-based transport strategy for the future, Lancaster & Morecambe Vision Board, in partnership with Lancashire County Council and Lancaster City Council, has commissioned a major study into visionary improvements to our transport and road networks. The study was funded jointly by Lancashire County Council and the Northwest Regional Development Agency. Following a formal tendering procedure, the contract was awarded to respected specialist transport consultants, Faber Maunsell. Twelve months of analysis and stakeholder and public consultation has been undertaken and considerable time and care spent appraising a range of options. We are now pleased to present Faber Maunsell's final report and recommendations.

In publishing this report, the three commissioning bodies have no obligation to share all of its individual conclusions and recommendations and acknowledge that the process of considering, evaluating and pursuing recommendations in the report lies ahead. However, for the first time in recent years, Lancaster District has a detailed technical report which will assist in the formulation of an integrated transport vision and strategy. We particularly welcome the suggestion of a phased approach to implementation, which will be useful in determining priorities and establishing action plans.

The challenge ahead is to consider the report, set priorities, develop proposals and pursue funding for plans based on them. The amount of public sector funding for transport is inevitably finite and Lancaster District must compete with equally worthy places elsewhere in the UK. Contributions to funding will also be sought from private sector developers looking to invest in the district whose developments will impact upon our fragile transport systems.

Economic growth is important for the Lancaster District. We wish to see average wages rise, levels of worklessness fall, career development opportunities increase, and greater numbers of graduates staying within the district after they have completed university education. If these things happen, quality of life will improve for all. The ability to access places of work and to move with ease within the district will lie at the heart of our economic regeneration.

We commend this report to you for serious consideration.

**Prof. Paul Wellings**

Chair

Lancaster & Morecambe Vision

**Cllr Hazel Harding**

Leader

Lancashire County Council

**Cllr Roger Mace**

Leader

Lancaster City Council

# Executive Summary

## The Task

Faber Maunsell was appointed in January 2007 to develop a comprehensive 15–20 year Transport Vision and Strategy for the Lancaster District. This document is the resulting final report from the 15 month study.

The joint client group consisted of Lancashire County Council as Highway Authority, in conjunction with Lancaster and Morecambe Vision as the key partnership body with responsibility for driving the economic agenda. This in itself is an unusual, yet very positive client combination meaning that the focus of the work undertaken by Faber Maunsell has constantly been a balance between movement needs and those of land use planning and regeneration. In order to assist with the consideration of how physical space can be best utilised, Faber Maunsell invited Taylor Young Landscape Architects to assist in providing some of the graphical representation within the work.

An important consideration within this work was the Heysham to M6 Link Road proposal, which was taken as a fixed element of the evolving strategy for the district whilst the result of the public inquiry was being awaited. Faber Maunsell was however requested to consider schemes that could fit with or without such a link – an important element of any phasing plan whatever the outcome.

Key objectives of the work are summarised below:

### Key Study Objectives

- Assess strengths and weaknesses of the existing transport network, in particular in relation to future land use change.
- Develop a range of deliverable transport solutions to aid economic growth, yet address social inclusion and accessibility for all.
- To produce proposals that consider local and strategic access and back these up with a suggested and phased implementation plan.

## Methodology

In order to achieve the study objectives, Faber Maunsell undertook a structured project methodology, which commenced with a comprehensive baseline analysis, assessing key strengths and weaknesses of the network and importantly discussing issues with the project steering group and other key stakeholders in a series of discussions, including both officers and members of both County and City Councils.

From the outset, a key aim was not to become an overly technical ‘transport modelling led’ piece of work, but to consider practical difficulties and issues for the future, then develop scheme options to be delivered in an achievable way. The need to be visionary, yet work within what is likely to continue to be a relatively constrained funding environment, was a critical element of our work. We believe that the study area is compact enough to be able to afford to fund the schemes we have suggested, yet large enough to make a real positive difference to quality of life and economic wellbeing.

The baseline study identified a series of different types of movements and therefore demands for travel within the area, which can be summarised in the following table. Each of these requires different potential types of travel and schemes. A key to success will be accommodating the desirable travel types as cost effectively as possible, using measures that are capable of supporting more than just one of these journey types.

### Key Types of Movement in the District

- Strategic movements through and past Lancaster – primarily using the M6 Motorway and West Coast Mainline Railway, providing little benefit locally but with low local detriment.
- Detrimental through movements – for example from Preston to Heysham needing to travel on the local road network, adding to pressures but giving little back.
- Movements from the hinterland into Lancaster and Morecambe – for employment, leisure and education in particular – recognising that the area plays a role as a central place for a substantial semi-rural catchment.
- Movements from within the urban area to and from the centres of Lancaster and Morecambe – local journeys that are often very short in terms of distance, but due to congestion can often be un-attractively long in terms of journey time.
- Movements across the central areas – for example from Carnforth to the University – often a result of ‘de-centralised land uses’, but being detrimental to the areas that they pass through.

It is important to note that throughout the work, a variety of different media were used to engage with both key interested parties and the general public, including consultation events during October/November 2007 as scheme options emerged. This element tried to consider each of the above groups, in particular those living locally that would be most directly affected by proposals on a day-to-day basis. At baseline stage, the following key issues were identified:

### Summary of Key Movement Issues to Resolve

- Lack of connectivity between Lancaster and Morecambe and between Lancaster and the University.
- Congestion in and on approaches to Lancaster City Centre.
- Lack of integration between main commercial areas and transport hubs in Lancaster City Centre.
- Lack of really high quality public transport to compete with the car.
- Limited River Lune crossing opportunities.
- Development in the south curtailed by Galgate crossroads.
- Insufficient public transport in Lancaster City Centre meaning effective bus services are increasingly difficult to run.
- Poor pedestrian facilities and public realm in Morecambe.
- Cross-town movement of trips and lack of alternatives to the car for these.
- Need for increased linkages to surrounding rural residential communities.
- Increasing access pressure from development, particularly along the River Lune corridor.

The study then progressed to identify specific schemes around which a series of options were identified. These included:

### Key Themes for Potential Schemes to Adhere to

- To build upon core assets of the city rather than create new.
- To intercept long stay and long distance visitors to Lancaster and Morecambe at the edges and offer viable alternatives to driving into the centre.
- To encourage greater use of more sustainable high occupancy modes for longer trips.
- To continue to create a walk-able and cycle-able urban area making greater use of natural resources such as the River Lune and Lancaster Canal corridors.
- To develop a climate that ‘raises the bar’ for public transport provision.

Following the baseline work, a series of over 50 schemes were identified that could address the issues and problems of the district. Faber Maunsell then developed a series of criteria to group and assess these schemes against. An important element within the development of these criteria was the need to balance between the assessment needs of the two different parts of the client group. Lancashire County Council required criteria that fit with national and local transport objectives and could therefore be considered in correlation with other schemes of the area, while Lancaster and Morecambe Vision had objectives that linked more to regeneration

and development of the 'offer' of the area. The result therefore consisted of a substantial 'long list' table which we believe struck a balance between these two key assessment requirements.

### Proposals

Following the assessment, the highest scoring schemes were taken forward with 17 schemes proceeding to a short list. These were then consolidated into 9 interlinked projects that would address key issues for the district. These are summarised below:

#### Key Transport Projects for Development

- Rapid transit between Morecambe, Lancaster and the University.
- Park & Ride and 'interceptor' parking strategy.
- Solution to the Galgate issues.
- Lancaster City Centre One-Way system review.
- Lancaster City Centre Congestion charging consideration.
- Morecambe Town Centre Improvements and Masterplan.
- District wide cycling strategy.
- District wide signage and information strategy.
- Reducing the need to travel.

In respect of Rapid Transit, the key aim was to improve connectivity between Lancaster and Morecambe, but also to link towards the University. In order to make such a scheme viable, it is essential that it is linked to both the Park & Ride sites (including potential new suggestions along the M6-Heysham Link) and has intermediate stops along its length so that it can serve both local and wider urban needs. Key issues considered included potential route alignments and types of vehicles needed. On the latter, a series of options were considered but bearing in mind the likely volumes of use, alignment constraints and needs for flexibility, it was suggested that a bus-based rapid transit system would appear most viable. This does however require substantial segregation and priority, not least clear use of a potential new bridge across the River Lune.

This Rapid Transit link would be an integral part of the Park & Ride offer for the area. Rather than have dedicated buses running purely from Park & Ride to the City Centre, the sites would be part of the network, in the same way as parking at rail stations is an integral part of the network in larger urban areas. Park & Ride will be economically difficult to maintain unless it is part of the wider picture, including being a key element of the 'interceptor' parking concept – encouraging (but not forcing) longer distance or long stay drivers to leave their cars at the edge of the urban area. Indeed, we suggest that parking strategy needs to be built alongside Park & Ride – making it less attractive to stay for long periods in City Centre car parks through cost and availability deterrents, but providing viable alternatives. For those who do wish to park in the central areas of both Lancaster and Morecambe, therefore taking valuable space both in the central areas and on approaching roads, interceptor parking at each end of the City Centre will be needed to avoid unnecessary 'hunting' for spaces at the wide range of smaller car parks that currently exists.

At Galgate, we suggest a series of options which need to start being considered quickly in order that they can be implemented in the longer term. These include radical options for Junction 33, once again closely linked to the Park & Ride and Rapid Transit issues. It has to be recognised that unless a radical solution is found, congestion at the south end of Lancaster will inhibit development of the University and City Centre – two key drivers of the local economy. Short-term local solutions may address some issues in that time period but more substantial options are needed for the longer term. While needing to focus on managing the relationship with the car, these cannot be allowed to be options that simply build more car capacity for development or to access the City Centre, since the local environment cannot cope with car-oriented development.

In terms of the one way system in Lancaster, Faber Maunsell see re-distribution of roadspace as integral to the overall strategy. At present, too much use is made by those passing through or in many ways worse, entering at one end to access parking at the other end. A series of scheme options were reviewed which will need more modelling and assessment as preferred options for rapid transit, Park & Ride and car parking are developed. The report does however

demonstrate how at key locations, such as Dalton Square, better environments for those on foot could be created.

The often controversial issue of Congestion Charging, which is central to funding considerations of many new schemes, was considered. The conclusion reached was that under current circumstances, and bearing in mind the costs of implementing and operating a 'London-style' scheme against the likely revenue, would not be feasible. If costing levies are to be used to manage movement, it is important that these are linked to other revenue generation, in particular parking costs – differentiating these at different locations.

In respect of Morecambe Town Centre, there are substantial changes planned in the town over forthcoming years, however we suggest that there are substantial areas of poorly used land – in particular major areas of at-grade car parking and roadspace along Marine Road that could be better used. Our suggestions demonstrate such changes and suggest they should be considered in more depth. It is imperative that the town centre links into the suggested Rapid Transit system and therefore wider district strategy.

In terms of cycling and walking, much good work has been undertaken in the district to date. The report suggests proposals that build upon current initiatives and develop networks further. Once again, it is important that initiatives like Park & Ride are linked into – for example, providing cycle hire at key points so that urban residents can hire a bike to get into the country or rural residents can, on a pleasant day, hire a bike to cycle from park and ride into the City Centre. Overall, this mentality summarises our approach – to look at ways of inter-linking schemes that have traditionally been 'stand-alone' measures.

A number of the key actions recommended in this report are contained in the following table.

#### **Key Recommendations**

- Continued support and promotion of School and Workplace Travel Planning and where feasible, instigating a reduction in the need to travel.
- Provision of enhanced rail services and facilities on existing lines.
- Provision of enhanced bus priority measures and enhanced service including in particular, evening and weekend provision.
- Provision of enhanced and new cycling training, routes and infrastructure, including development of combined storage and cycle hire facilities.
- Greater promotion of interchange between modes, in particular regard to ticketing and provision of enabling infrastructure.
- Development of a district-wide Park & Ride and 'interceptor' parking strategy, incorporating series of new features such as 'Park & Cycle' facilities and delivery collection facilities.
- Further investigation into the feasibility of providing a rapid-transit system linking at least the following locations; M6 J34, Lancaster University, Lancaster City Centre and Morecambe and including the creation of a new River Lune bridge, primarily focused on public transport, cycling and walking.
- Further consideration to radical solutions to the 'Galgate issue' to improve access to/from the south of the district and facilitate new development.
- Commissioning of a comprehensive Morecambe Masterplan to improve access and movement, public realm and facilitate further development opportunities.
- Further investigation and modelling work to establish potential modifications to the road layout in both Lancaster and Morecambe centres, to provide more priority to pedestrians and incorporating potential rapid transit system and parking proposals.

Beyond the development of proposals, a series of phasing and costing tables were developed looking at schemes in a series of three phases – the first 'quick wins' being within 5 years, Phase 2 between 5 and 15 years and Phase 3 from 10 to 20 years. Broad costs associated with schemes were made, based upon similar schemes from across the UK, with initial thoughts on operating costs and revenue for key proposals.

#### **Summary**

We believe that the report resulting from this study is one which can be taken forward and delivered to provide positive change in accessibility for all in the district. We believe that it is capable of being implemented, yet visionary enough to be challenging to deliver. Proposals for

items such as the New Lune Crossing, Rapid Transit, Galgate changes and Park & Ride will be controversial, technically challenging and, in some cases, long term. The strategy is by no means anti-car. Indeed, it aims to strike a balance that provides more opportunities and greater priority for those who can change, yet accommodates the car where it is needed.

It is a fact that Lancaster in particular, already suffers from significant detriment to its environment, and therefore economy, due to traffic congestion, particularly at peak times. It is a fact that land in the area is a finite resource and has to be used wisely. It is a fact that car-borne provision cannot continue to be made in the manner it is accustomed to. This strategy is both viable, with commitment, and potentially extremely beneficial to the quality of life of many in the area. Perhaps the biggest threat to the district's attractiveness as a place to live work and play is doing nothing. This strategy is the beginning not the end. It is a framework, not an absolute blueprint. In order to proceed, we recommend that the commissioning organisations adopt the principles of the strategy, including suggestions for progression, and in particular, continue to use the document as a reference tool to remind of the need for inter-relationships between modes and to stand firm when less than satisfactory suggestions are made.