

I wish to object to the planning application for the proposed Heysham-M6 link road for the following reasons.

1. The proposed road does not form part of an integrated strategy to deal with the chronic traffic congestion problems faced by the Lancaster District. It would in fact make the attainment of a realistic and sustainable solution to these problems virtually impossible to achieve. The fundamental problem in the District stems from the fact that Morecambe and Heysham are cut off from Lancaster by the river Lune. Traffic movements between these areas forms the bulk of the Districts internal traffic but the only means of access is by means of a bridge at the Northern end of Lancaster. This restricted access is the root cause of the congestion and until it is remedied the problem will remain. The blatantly obvious and only sensible solution is to provide an additional river crossing at the Southern end of Lancaster to connect it with Heysham. This would bring about a much improved distribution and flow of traffic; enable the introduction of circular bus routes, park and ride schemes and car share and other traffic suppression measures. The proposed Heysham-M6 link road not only fails to provide any of these but also if it were built it would rule out the possibility of obtaining a Southern bridge over the Lune for the foreseeable future.
2. Lancashire County Council have failed to give proper consideration to alternatives to the proposed M6 Link road. Whilst the provision of improved access to the Port of Heysham has always been and still remains a high priority issue for the Lancaster District; it has always been recognised that it was not a stand alone issue and that the cost of building it could not be justified unless it contributed significantly towards solving the overall traffic congestion problems and the enhancement of the economic, environmental and social prospects of the area. The proposed link road to a degree does improve the road access to Heysham Port but it clearly fails the needs of the District in all other aspects. Only two options have been considered to any degree, the Western Bypass and the proposed Northern route. The Western route throughout its examination was viewed negatively by Officers of the County Council. At no stage were detailed mitigation plans brought forward to overcome the perceived negative environmental concerns. In contrast the Northern route enjoyed the full support of the Officers and environmental impacts and other problems associated with this route have viewed through rose coloured spectacles. There has been no proper examination of the Blue Route even though this formed part of the County Council's initial consultative process.
3. The fact that the key industrial development site of Luneside would remain inaccessible and isolated if the proposed link road is built clearly demonstrates the blinkered view and muddled thinking that has prevailed throughout the preparation of the plan. Lancaster City Council having recognised this weakness in the scheme sought to have a bridge over the Lune to Luneside incorporated into it. Lancashire County Council rejected this proposition knowing that to accept it would strip the proposed link road of any credibility that it has. The fact remains however that without suitable road access this key site will not be developed.

4. Whilst there have been vast amounts of negative environmental impact assessments produced relating to wild life (particularly in the case of the Western Bypass); there appears to have been little or none produced relating to people. This apparent lack of concern for all those whose lives will be blighted by air, noise and visual pollution by the new road is totally unacceptable. Equally unacceptable is the level of pollution that people who live and work in the centre of Lancaster will continue endure should this scheme go ahead.
5. The consultative process throughout has been totally inadequate. The public have had little or no chance of inputting their ideas or requirements into the scheme. They have in fact been presented with what appears to be a fait accompli. It is therefore no surprise that those communities directly affected by the scheme have greeted the proposal with outrage.
6. In conclusion I wish to make it clear that I fully support the building of a link road between Heysham Port and the M6 Motorway as part of an integrated package to relieve road congestion, improves public transport and aid economic regeneration. However, it is absolutely essential that the building of the link road is fully supportive and compatible with all of these objectives. The proposed Northern route clearly fails to meet these criteria and should not be allowed to proceed.

I would welcome the opportunity to further elaborate on the issues that I have raised when the planning application is heard.

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