

TravelWatch NORTHWEST

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Winner of CILT award for best practice in passenger transport (2013)

promoting quality public transport.....

Transforming Lancaster Travel,
 Infrastructure Delivery Team,
 Lancashire County Council,
 County Hall,
 Pitt Street,
 Preston, PR1 0LD

4th December 2020

Dear Team,

Transforming Lancaster Travel

TravelWatch NorthWest (TWNW) is an independent Community Interest Company representing all public transport users in NW England. We are pleased to give our views as follows to this consultation.

The plan appears to concentrate on two issues - traffic flow around the City and the M6 Junction 33 improvements together with a new by-pass of Galgate village.

Traffic flow around the city

Our main concern with the proposals is preserving and improving bus access in and around the City.

Constant traffic difficulties still block up the city centre for large parts of the day, despite the new link to Morecambe, and are likely to get worse

Though some of the city centre proposals are more pedestrian friendly, with provision for public transport there are significant bus routes that cross Lancaster e.g. Morecambe to the University and onto Preston which need to be able to get through the city centre without delays. Similarly, bus links to the railway station from north and south need to be improved. It is a concern that there is still a poor service linking the railway station and that traffic from the north has to circumnavigate the City to access it. Indeed the plan does not seem to cover any improvements to bus and car links with the station.

We believe that the one way system should be kept broadly as it is currently. Change to a bi-directional system would lead to gridlock given the incidence of unloading, illegal car parking, etc The main deterrent to using the bus in

Lancaster is unreliable and delays are often caused by illegal parking/unloading.

Enforcement is a major issue. Currently the 'buses & access' restrictions on Chapel Street and Spring Gardens Street are continually being abused with no enforcement. Likewise, vehicles regularly park and load despite the relevant yellow lines e.g. one lane on North Road near the Chapel Street junction is regularly blocked in the peak hours by lorries, piles of materials, fork lift trucks and 4x4s where building work is taking place.

A further matter that requires examination is provision for contingencies. For example there is no provision in the new plan for handling the not infrequent re-routing of the M6 between junctions 33 and 34 in the event of accident, spillage, weather or other emergency closing the motorway. Currently traffic is re-routed through Lancaster, with difficulty, but if the centre is closed to through traffic this option is closed. This problem could be solved by continuing either of the central northward proposed roads along the back of the university (as shown on plan) and northward adjacent to the M6 to J34.

This would not only provide a simple diversionary route for M6 traffic but, as it is an ordinary two way road crossings of E-W roads en route would provide a way from Jct 34 to access Williamson Park and Central Lancaster by Quernmore Rd; East Lancaster by Wyresdale Rd and Hala and Bowerham by Blea Tarn Rd. thus making pedestrian priority in the central area less controversial and more practical.

Additionally the routing of rail replacement coaches and buses to and from Lancaster station when the railway is closed for engineering work (as it will be on occasions especially with improvements to the railway in conjunction with HS2) needs to be thought through.

M6 Junction 33/ Galgate/ Bailrigg/ University issues.

Whereas a by-pass for Galgate is a major focus of the consultation, it is probably less of an issue than the constant traffic difficulties further north in Lancaster City Centre as outlined above. However, if the intention is to serve the major housing development Bailrigg Village, shaded in yellow on the plan, this would certainly make the Galgate problem worse.

It is notable that the west coast main line passes between the University and this new housing development, giving a projected combined population of 20/30,000. Almost opposite the main entrance to the university and roughly adjacent to the new housing development is a possible site for a new parkway station, though nothing is proposed. Although advice from Network Rail may be that track capacity problems would preclude such a station, there are two extra tracks at this location (Oubeck) which could be used for the platforms. It should also be recognised that three extra local services (Morecambe, Barrow, and Leeds) are accommodated on just two tracks north of Lancaster as far as Morecambe South Jct/ Carnforth.

We understand that Network Rail and Highways England have recently jointly produced a guide to the development of Parkway stations, using new methods of calculating passenger numbers for such developments. There is a significant case for a new South Lancaster station serving the University and new garden village with a large car park and fast P&R bus service into Lancaster. The joint guidance referred to above may well assist the case for assessing the Oubeck location under this regime.

Therefore we would emphasise that the proposal for such a fast bus between the city and the university and new bus only lanes, which is welcome, needs to take account of the new housing development and the new station, if developed, if vehicular traffic is to be discouraged. Rather than a possible park and ride facility at Jct 33, a car park near the station could operate as the park and ride location. This could serve not only the station but also traffic from Jct 33 with suitable signage, allowing people to park from the motorway not just for a train service but also with the fast bus as above calling en route. Currently parking at the university itself is over committed and people may prefer to leave their cars here and proceed by bus to the university.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Yours faithfully,

John A Moorhouse

John Moorhouse
Company Secretary