

**CALLED IN PLANNING APPLICATION  
PROPOSED HEYSHAM TO M6 LINK ROAD**

**Planning Inspectorate reference:**

**APP/Q2371/V/07/1200928 and**

**APP/Q2371/V/07/1200929**

**PROOF OF EVIDENCE – SUMMARY  
TRAFFIC**

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**for**

**Transport Solutions for Lancaster and Morecambe (TSLM)**

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1. I am Phil Goodwin, Professor of Transport Policy at the University of the West of England, and Emeritus Professor at University College London. I appear as an independent expert witness at the request of Transport Solutions for Lancaster and Morecambe (TSLM), who are objectors to the scheme.
2. The promoters claim that the scheme makes an exceptional contribution to solving congestion, which my evidence challenges.
3. Assuming that the LCC forecasts and appraisal are correct in every way, their figures suggest that car trips are forecast to grow by about 25% in the modelled area as a whole from 2001 to 2025, of which 2.2% is growth that is due to the scheme itself.
4. Most of the growing traffic will be on parts of the network whose capacity cannot or will not be increased. Roads where traffic grows greatly outnumber those where it is forecast to reduce as a result of relief offered by the scheme.
  - Approximately 80% of the traffic in the modelled area will in 2025 be travelling on roads which have experienced an average of 33% increase in traffic since 2001.
  - 20% of the traffic will be travelling on roads which have experienced an average reduction in traffic, due to the scheme, since 2001.
5. The general experience of road travel in the area will therefore be of declining speeds and increasing congestion, except for the specific roads relieved by the scheme, though for these the trend of deterioration starts after 2010 and continues at least until 2025.
6. It seems that after 2025 the appraisal has assumed (albeit without modelling, analysis, or policy discussion) that the deteriorating traffic conditions suddenly stop, and for the next 45 years everything stays constant. Nearly three quarters of all the assessed user benefits of the scheme, in present values, are presumed to occur in this period after 2025 for which no forecasts have been made.
7. The findings above derive from LCC's own analysis and presume that the forecasts and assumptions are correct. However there are some reasons for doubting this.

8. Substantial traffic growth is forecast on some congested roads where traffic counts prove that growth has slowed or reversed in recent years. Two examples are shown - Skerton Bridge where 18% traffic growth is forecast by 2025 even though traffic declined by 0.7% from 2001 to 2005, and A683 Morecambe Road where 8% growth is forecast even though traffic reduced by 1.2% from 2003 to 2005. It would be advisable to do a check on the whole network for cases like this, though I do not have the data to do so.
9. The presumption of 'no change' after 2025 makes the appraisal very weak. If traffic were to continue growing, the congestion benefit from the scheme will be eroded further. On the other hand, if policies to reduce traffic are implemented, they will reduce congestion on the network and hence make the scheme less necessary.
10. Some allowance has been made for induced traffic, but it does not distinguish the specific features of induced traffic that determine when and where it appears on the roads. These features include longer journey distances due to the choice of more distant destinations, transfer from public transport, and the substitution of long car journeys for short walk journeys, none of which have been modelled. There is substantial empirical evidence from elsewhere that induced traffic on new and improved roads can amount to an average of 10% of all the traffic using the road in the short run, and double this in the long run (with some higher figures in some cases). Induced traffic seen on the 'relieved' alternative routes is even greater, an average of 16% in the short run, with indirect evidence for much more in the longer run. Therefore it is likely that the methods used by LCC has underestimated the induced traffic, and hence overestimated congestion reduction.
11. If it is true (though I doubt this) that the road is a necessary condition for economic growth which will generate new jobs, then the traffic effect of those jobs must be included in the 'with' case and excluded from the 'without' case. This has not been done. Also, if it is true that the speed increases attributed to the scheme will generate extra jobs, then it must also be true that the speed reductions due to wider traffic growth on the rest of the network must reduce employment, and this has also not been done.

12. The benefits assessed for the scheme are all of the form of comparing the 'with' case with the 'without' case, that is a benefit is calculated even if both are worse than today. For this reason, description of the traffic conditions in the 'without' case is crucial to the calculations. It has been unnecessarily and wrongly assumed that no policies are or can be put into place which will produce improvements in travel conditions in the 'without' case, for the entire appraisal period until 2069. In fact there are at least three strands of policy already under way which can have this effect.

These are:

(i) the application of 'smart measures' including travel plans and individualised marketing, which together can reduce car use by around 11% overall and around 20% in congested urban areas, given serious implementation over a ten year period;

(ii) the reallocation of scarce road space to give priority to the most important or efficient classes of traffic (according to political decision) by the use of systems of priority. These can be implemented even in conditions of congestion, because there is evidence that a proportion of the traffic, on average about 20% 'disappears' thus preventing excessive overload;

(iii) the application of a national or local road pricing scheme, such as is currently being actively prepared by Government, with encouragement to local authorities to develop their own systems. Very many studies and some experience suggest that such schemes can reduce congestion by 25% to 60%, even without other measures.

13. Any of these are possible, and some combination of elements within them virtually inevitable within the appraisal period, especially given the unacceptable conditions that would apply if the traffic growth rates assumed in the analysis continue unabated. Serious application of any of these methods will substantially reduce the assumed traffic growth and worsening travel conditions in the 'without' situation, and also reduce the incremental benefit of the 'with' situation. For both reasons, the comparison of 'with' and 'without' is inflated, and the benefits exaggerated.

14. In conclusion, I would question the assumptions underlying LCC's appraisal: that traffic congestion is serious, will deteriorate without the scheme, cannot be addressed except by the scheme, and that the scheme and complementary measures will bring substantial and sustained improvements. I would suggest instead that traffic congestion is serious, but there are many improvements that could be, are being and will be made without the scheme, that figures for the scheme actually show an overall deterioration, and that by exaggerating how bad the 'do-minimum' is, and the improvements claimed for the scheme, the benefits cost calculation is seriously biased.