

M55 Heyhouses Link Road – Communications Strategy & Action Plan*

* This plan is a live document that will be regularly reviewed and amended as required in line with key project milestones. The communications action plan will be updated with more detailed plans at the start of each stage of the scheme.

1. Background

The proposed M55 Heyhouses Link Road is a 2.5 km long single lane carriageway. Work is scheduled to start on the Link Road in June 2019 and is scheduled to open in early 2022 and will have a speed limit of 50mph.

The Link Road will replace the Wild Lane single carriageway road currently closed in part.

The scheme will crucially provide additional highway capacity and unlock access to planned, significant development sites identified in the Lancashire LEP's Strategic Economic Plan and Fylde Borough Council's Local Plan to 2030 Part 1, located to the north of Lytham St Annes.

The need for housing, and in particular family housing in St Annes is stated in the Emerging Local Plan where the predominance of apartments for older populations has led to an increase in demand, particularly given that the area, well connected to local Business Parks, Blackpool and Preston is a popular area for accessing employment.

The scheme will also improve access to and from the strategic road network which has long been an issue, given that routes to Junction 3 and 4 of the M55 are slow and generally of poor quality, and the route via Wild Lane (before it was closed) had a reduced road width.

This has resulted in:

- Increasing traffic through the southern part of Blackpool and the village of Wrea Green,
- Increasing the volume of traffic using the already congested M55 Junction 3, and;
- Constraining the potential for development in areas identified in the Lancashire LEP's Strategic Economic Plan.

2. Funding

As per the Strategic Outline Business Case, the £27.18m M55 Link Road scheme will be funded from the following contributions:

- £1.98 Growth Deal funding.
- £4.78m Highways England GHF funding
- £1.0m Fylde Borough Council
- £1.7m Lancashire County Council
- £7.0m Developer
- £5.0m DfT NPIF
- £3.81m Housing Infrastructure Fund
- £1.91m Risks (The scheme cost estimate has increased by £1.91m since November 2017 submission. This amount is currently treated as risk and will be ultimately covered by LCC, according to the Section 151 Officer Declaration. Once the tender costs are known, a report will be submitted to LCC Cabinet to approve the exact increase in scheme cost).

3. Communications Strategy

This document outlines the proposed communications strategy to support the communication and engagement process required for completion of detailed design, and ultimately construction, of the M55 Heyhouses Link Road.

The plan will broadly follow the timetable of the delivery of the scheme, with specific action plans developed at each stage (planning through to construction), enabling key audiences to be engaged with in a timely and effective manner.

Activity will broadly focus on the following key areas:

| Engaging with the media | Engaging with the public | Engaging with stakeholders |
|---|---|---|
| Strong relationships with the local media (newspaper and radio) are important for cascading information to the varied audiences affected by the scheme. | Effective engagement with local communities. More localised engagement to take place with communities and residents affected by the scheme. | Effective engagement with key local stakeholders will be important in ensuring there is continued support for the bypass. |

Audiences and stakeholders

- Local communities
- Residents and land owners affected by the scheme
- Wider public (i.e. people commuting/travelling in the area who could be affected)
- County Councillors, Fylde Councillors, MPs, MEPs
- Town and Parish councils
- Homes and Communities Agency (HCA)
- Chamber of Commerce
- Fylde Borough Council
- Highways England
- Royal Lytham & St Annes Open Golf championship
- The Hotel Association of Lytham St Annes
- Lancashire LEP
- United Utilities
- Environment Agency
- Local media (newspapers and radio)

4. Key messages and benefits

In maintaining a dialogue with all groups, it is essential to remind them of the project benefits – particularly at any difficult stages – and not allow them to lose sight of the positive end goal. For example, the construction of the Link Road may cause disruption to the surrounding communities' day to day lives and it will be important to reassure residents and businesses that attempts will be made to minimise the impact on them.

Benefits of the scheme include:

- Supports the provision of local housing in Fylde
- Supports economic growth in Fylde (Fylde Coast Lancashire Highways and Transport Masterplan)
- Provides greater accessibility between Lytham St Annes, employment sites and the motorway

- Re-open Wild Lane
- Reduces congestion and improves journey times
- Leads to the re-instatement of Midgeland Road
- Supports sustainable travel and recreational uses (pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians) via the establishment of the new bridleway
- Improved air quality (links to Air Quality Management Area)
- Supports future hosting of the Royal Lytham & St Annes Open Golf championship

5. Communications Action Plan

| Stage 1 - Complete | | |
|--|--------------|---|
| Pre-planning application consultation with local residents and stakeholders | | |
| Activity | Lead | Status |
| <p>Community engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver a public awareness event to allow residents/stakeholders to view detailed plans before the planning application is submitted. • Formal public consultation to enable local communities, residents and stakeholders have their say on the planning application proposal. • Public consultation events were held between 2009 & 2011 as part of the original planning application as well as the Public Inquiry. A consultation exercise was also undertaken as part of the Fylde Coast Masterplan and Emerging Local Plan. | Project Team | The public's support for the scheme was summarised by the Secretary of State Decision Notice (June 2012). 5,700 letters of support were received. 4,000 people who live in the locality have indicated support for the scheme. There is also overwhelming support from business interests. 83% of respondents that attended the public exhibition supported the scheme. |
| <p>Media relations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issue news release promoting information event. | Comms Team | |

| Stage 2 | | |
|--|--|---------------------------|
| Pre-construction community and stakeholder engagement | | |
| Activity | Lead | Timing |
| <p>Stakeholder engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brief cabinet member and local member on the scheme and communications approach. Update Fylde BC and Highways England as appropriate. | <p>Project Team</p> <p>Project Team</p> | <p>Prior to June 2019</p> |
| <p>Community engagement - Awareness event</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> LCC officers are planning further community engagement to share the final scheme detail prior to construction starting. Issue press release, social media messages, website update to promote the event. Design information boards/information to be displayed at the event. The local community are kept up to date through local county councillors or through direct communication with officers. | <p>Project Team</p> <p>Communications</p> <p>Communications</p> <p>County Councillors / Project Team</p> | |
| <p>Media relations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Issue news release promoting information event and appointment of contractor. Reactive media relations management. | <p>Communications</p> | |
| <p>E-Communications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update LEP website with scheme information shared at community event | <p>Communications</p> | |
| <p>Other</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draft communications protocol for working with contractor and partners | <p>Project Team</p> | |

| Stage 3 | | |
|---|----------------|----------------|
| Start of construction communications | | |
| Activity | Lead | Timing |
| <p>Stakeholder engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure Highways England, LEP and Homes England are invited and involved in all press releases. • Brief cabinet member and local member on the start date, construction timetable and any other issues. • Provide ongoing updates (monthly/quarterly) for local councillors throughout the scheme construction and any key milestones reached. • Update Fylde BC and Highways England as appropriate. • Arrange ground-breaking photo opportunity with local councillors. | Project Team | Post June 2019 |
| <p>Community engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issue letters/leaflets to directly affected residents/businesses informing them of the start date on site and who to contact for queries. • Install site notice board to provide regular updates/key information on the progress and work on the scheme. • Provide quarterly scheme updates to stakeholders and residents via email and on the LEP website. • Deliver public engagement events (if required) to keep local community informed about construction/meet the contractor. | Communications | |
| | Project Team | |
| | Project Team | |
| | Communications | |
| <p>Media relations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issue news release to promote start date of work including media photo-call/ground breaking • Issue news releases as appropriate with information about road closures/traffic management/key updates • Ongoing reactive media support throughout construction phase | Project Team | |
| | Communications | |
| <p>E-Communications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update LCC/LEP web page with construction information • Issue social media messages when appropriate about key milestones reached/construction updates/information for public affected by the work | Communications | |
| <p>Other</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update LCC customer access centre and Fylde BC customer access centre | Communications | |