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Date: 22 July 2022

Dear Ms Powner

Developments at Carrington – stage 2 Complaint 2467415

Thank you for your response to the stage 1 complaint by Oliver Shimell – and may I apologise once again for the delay in responding – and for your understanding in this regard. Thank you also for the meeting on 1 June at which we discussed your concerns – and I'm sorry that a combination of circumstances subsequently delayed this formal response.

I have taken each of your bullet points and have endeavoured to provide a full response on each – for brevity I have often shortened or summarised the point you make for the purpose of this letter – but please be assured that I have conserved the totality of your comment.

Taking each of your points in turn:

- **Some of your responses read like a sales brochure.**

I am sorry if this was the case – Mr Shimell was seeking to explain the approach taken by the Council – and in particular explain some of the merits of the scheme as the Council sees it. That inevitably means expanding on the some of the benefits of the project – because they are the reasons why the Council is pursuing the road and related transport improvements.

- **Many of the issues I raised in my complaint have not actually been addressed, they have been avoided or misdirected! You did not, for example, provide any explanation to confirm why Trafford has ignored residents' requests for workshops, why there has been no response to our feedback that improvements could be made to the design of Option A or how our ideas can be fed into the process.**

I am sorry if the response from Mr Shimell seemed to defect or avoid your concerns. When we met I acknowledged that we had not been able to progress the road in the way that we had originally envisaged. Whilst it is easy to employ the pandemic as an excuse – it genuinely interrupted our plans for community participation. This arose in two ways – firstly staff were deflected into tackling the pandemic (either directly or through serving new priorities such as Business grants) – and then secondly the kind of 'round table' discussion or 'drop in' meetings were simply not possible for much of

2020 and 2021. As we discussed we are keen now to convene these sort of meetings once more – and I can only apologise that we have not had either the ability or capacity to do this until now.

• It should be noted that the “public engagement” exercise was NOT a consultation.

Regrettably I think the merits of the engagement are a matter on which there remains disagreement. The Intention of the engagement was to inform as many residents about the plans and to gather their views. With this in mind we sent postcards directly to addresses throughout the local area. This was with the express purpose of raising awareness of the scheme and gathering public views on it.

There may be different views as to the effectiveness of this exercise – but a genuine effort was made to contact a wide a group of local people as possible and seek their views. All comments were welcome – and nothing was ‘off the agenda’ in terms of what could be said.

• In addition, it is clear that residents in this area have been treated very differently to those in other parts of Trafford.

The Critical difference between these sites and that of Carrington is that the proposals for the redevelopment of Carrington have been through the formal consultation and examination of the development Plan. At Stretford and Crossford Bridge the Council was seeking views at an early stage – in respect of the former, it was with a view to preparing a statutory development plan for the area (An Area Action Plan).

At Carrington, that process was completed some time ago – and in the meantime developments have come forward in line with Core Strategy Policy SL5 – and these in turn drive the need for infrastructure improvements. The detailed design and alignment of the Relief Road will be subject to the consultation and public scrutiny of the planning application once its submitted. As we discussed when we met I have instructed the design team to liaise with local groups such as yourselves so you can have a meaningful input into that design process.

• You do not explain why this road is needed, given GM’s Transport Strategy Right Mix aim of zero net growth in motor vehicle traffic between 2017 and 2040.

The road is needed in order to improve access to Partington and Carrington – and critically to enable development permitted by the 2012 Core Strategy to proceed. The existing A6144 is unsuitable for the volume of traffic now using the road and principal junctions are now at (or approaching) capacity. You will be aware that a number of planning applications in the area are subject to a ‘grampian’ type condition which restricts their full development until the road is further progressed (e.g residential development at Heath Farm Lane) This underlines the need for highway improvements now – notwithstanding any future growth included within the Places for Everyone joint Local Plan (PFE) now at Examination.

In terms of the Right Mix strategy, it must be recognised that the modal shifts envisaged under the strategy will not occur equally – and where there is significant new development (such as Partington and Carrington) it is inevitable that the volume

of traffic will rise. The Objective will be to try and ensure that highways are sufficient but not 'over provided' and that whenever a highway improvement is planned, it places walking, cycling and bus provision at the forefront of the design concept.

• Your assertion that a traffic model will be created to support the planning application does not address the fact that the decision to progress this scheme has been taken with a total disregard for that GM Right Mix aim.

With a project such as this evidence is prepared proportionate to the stage that the project has reached. Consequently there will be an incremental gathering of technical information as the project proceeds. At the point of making a decision as to route options (executive of September 2021) it was neither necessary nor appropriate to have completed detailed traffic modelling – this is done once the route has been chosen in principle.

Detailed traffic modelling is now planned under the current phase of design and feasibility work – and will be carried out in collaboration with TFGM

• Regarding the carbon emissions, again there is no transparency. One month further on and I am still awaiting the response to my FOI request for the background papers that accompanied the Option Report.

As I explained when we met there is not necessarily a full suite of subordinate documents that sit behind the options appraisal report – rather assessment work was carried out which fed directly into the report itself. This means that reports may have been asked for which do not exist

I do however acknowledge that there has been an unfortunate delay in passing over some of the reports – this is in some cases accounted for by the fact that many of the consultants who worked on the project originally have now left Amey – and so it has taken longer than usual to access their files. There have also been instances where additional explanations or analysis have been requested – but unfortunately such information does not currently exist and so could only be provided by the relevant consultants carrying out additional work – the cost of which sits outside the reasonable parameters of Freedom of Information.

More recently you have helpfully set out where you consider documentation is outstanding – and the Council is now working to address each of these.

• There is a huge lack of transparency in the decisions surrounding the CRR. Suggesting, for example, that the costs of the scheme “are likely to be significant” but giving no idea of what those “significant” costs may be is not a credible response to this important issue.

In terms of the cost of the scheme – this is very linked to the detailed design. Until the design is progressed and in particular the detail of any structures is worked through any cost estimate will be exactly that – only an estimate of the final cost. An example of this is the crossing of the 'burford' railway line – a section of route where there is reasonable consensus. The design solution here may involve retention of a bridge, replacement of the bridge with an embankment or a completely new bridge. Each has different cost implications.

There is a further difficulty at present which is the disproportionate rise in material costs which is affecting all construction – and the more recent rise in inflation generally. Accordingly we have not sought to update the cost estimate too frequently as there have been too many variables – However a cost estimate will be provided within the forthcoming report to the Executive in July.

• Regarding the initial Outline Business Case Document, FOCM wrote to Trafford’s Chief Executive to set out concerns about, among other things, the factual errors and misleading statements the report contained. The group expressed hope that future documents published by Trafford would not feature such inaccuracies, but, sadly, this trend has continued up to and including the latest Options Appraisal.

The Council does not accept that the options appraisal contains misleading statements. The appraisal inevitably contains elements of professional judgement and analysis – which I accept you may disagree with. The appraisal was prepared by a suitably qualified team of professionals – with a clear remit to assess the options fairly – and make recommendations on the best route. In making that judgement I understand that others may take a different view, but that does not mean that the report was improperly prepared.

• Please explain what evidence you have that leads you to conclude that “it is not thought, based on current evidence, that significant harm to wildlife species or habitats will arise from Option F”. Natural England’s (NE) feedback to Trafford (22nd March 2021) stated clearly that Option F would be “considerably more damaging than Option A”.

On 5th March 2021, Natural England were emailed an invitation to participate in the public engagement exercise and they responded with a letter, by email, on 22nd March. This response is based on what was known then about the site and the likely impacts of the various options. It was not based on any specific detailed assessment carried out by NE.

This response was duly logged, categorised as part of the overall analysis, and then forwarded to the Environmental Consultant for consideration in their environmental appraisal on 24th April 2021, shortly after their appointment. Consequently the Consultants were fully apprised of the views of Natural England when undertaking their detailed work – and so would have been fully aware of the concerns about route F. Having carried out a more detailed assessment of the options, the consultant was then able to reach the conclusion quoted above.

In particular it is worth noting that the NE letter explains the basis of their statement - which is related specifically to the concern that Option F carries a higher risk of destroying critical peat bogs and associated habitats. This is not a new concern to The Council, which is why a physical ground investigation survey was undertaken along the proposed route. Having done this work, we now have a very accurate understanding of the peat content of the ground along the route, and fortunately it is insignificant, or non-existent, despite high-scale geological mapping implying otherwise.

Further investigation work will be carried out as the scheme developments – but the absence of Peat, aside from one small location, is part of the background for the conclusions reached. As ever there will be professional judgements involved in reaching that opinion – but the consultant involved was suitably qualified and acting completely without bias or direction from the Council – other than to provide properly informed advice.

• It should be noted that the assessment of the Natural Capital Value of the options is not related to the consultation (statutory or otherwise). This information should be transparently available to residents to help them understand why Route F has been chosen. The current plan contradicts the priorities set out in the 5 Year Environmental Plan for Greater Manchester and the Government's 25 year environment plan, which specifically mentions the declining populations of farmland birds.

Whilst these factors may not be referenced specifically within the report, part of the task of the environmental assessment was to examine the impacts on local ecology – including farmland and other birds. A more detailed Environmental impact is being carried out to accompany the forthcoming planning application. The determination of that application will decide whether or not the proposals adequately conform to national and other planning guidance and policies.

• I agree with your assertion that no single route is likely to be perfect in all respects but the way in which Option A was articulated was biased. As an example, whilst Option F confirmed that vehicle traffic would still be able to use the A6144, Option A did not take advantage of the existing public rights of way (PROWs) across Carrington Moss (including Carrington 1.

In terms of bias, as I mentioned when we met, the instruction to the consultant team was to treat all options equally and to take a consistent approach. There is no motivation or reason for the Council or its specialist team to be bias in this regard – the choice is between two reasonable route options – both of which have various benefits and dis-benefits. I can see no financial, political or similarly 'machievellian' reason to be bias towards Option A; the Council or its partners gain nothing from trying to push one option over any other.

Consequently whatever might be perceived as bias are, I believe, more matters of different judgement and weight attached to competing considerations. For example, on the matter of the rights of way across the fields, the merits of upgrading these was considered – but ultimately it was concluded that it was better overall to have cycleways adjacent to the main carriageway where there is natural supervision. I agree that separate routes across fields will be perceived as a pleasant option in summer – but it would not necessarily be so on a wet, dark afternoon in winter.

To reach a conclusion in favour of an option is not to say that alternatives have been ignored or that the consultancy team are biased in favour of a particular outcome – it is often simply a matter of differing professional judgement.

• In addition, the Option Appraisal suggests Option A brings risks to deliverability/timescales but does not mention the Option F risks in this category, that may be caused by resident and other objections and potential

legal action, given the extensive environmental and social damage this route will cause.

There is a genuine distinction to be drawn between the two options in this regard. Option A was very likely to involve the acquisition of third party land directly adjacent to residential properties – whereas Option F does not – but instead utilises land within the control of Wain Estates who are supportive of the project.

That is not to diminish the risk of challenge at each and every level with a project of this nature – but it is a real difference in the nature of risk as it relates to land, control and deliverability.

• Please confirm which document(s) sets out “the wider package of planned transport improvements” for the area. I have reviewed the Places for Everyone documentation, including the Transport Strategy 2040 and its associated 5 year Delivery Plan. I can find no documents showing any commitments for this area other than the CRR. There are no commitments to any sustainable passenger or freight transport options.

There are a number of Strategies and plans which explain the planned transport measures for Carrington – and I set out the key ones below:

The [GM Transport Strategy 2040](#) sets GM’s long term ambition for transport, including a ‘right mix’ vision for 50% of all journeys in Greater Manchester to be made by walking, cycling and public transport, by 2040.

The Transport Strategy 2040 is supported by the [Delivery Plan 2021-2026](#) – this relates to strategic transport schemes across GM. The Delivery Plan identifies the following strategic schemes in the Carrington area:

- Carrington Relief Road – including sustainable transport measures, such as new / improved bus infrastructure, cycling and walking links along the route and connecting to surrounding areas
- Sale West Bus Corridor
- New Carrington sustainable transport corridor – scheme which utilises the dis-used rail line through Carrington linking across the Manchester Ship Canal to Irlam. This will initially be an active travel corridor but with long term potential for other sustainable transport modes.
- Improvements to the Warrington Railway line – opportunity to provide sustainable transport links to this route at Flixton and Irlam
- Metrolink capacity improvements on the Bury – Altrincham line – of benefit to Carrington area via improved bus links to Sale for interchange on to Metrolink

The status of the interventions in the Delivery Plan reflect the stage of scheme development and the planning status of the wider New Carrington allocation. Much of the development at New Carrington is dependent on the adoption of Places for Everyone and the build out of the scheme will take place over 15+ years. The transport interventions will therefore need to be phased alongside this.

The [New Carrington Locality Assessment](#) was prepared to support the PfE New Carrington allocation. This identifies a range of highways and sustainable transport

schemes which will be required to support the development, see summary of the sustainable transport measures:

- Access to Altrincham package – new bus stops and bus access / junction improvements between Carrington and Altrincham
- Access to Sale package – new / enhanced bus stops, various bus access junction improvements between Carrington and Sale
- Carrington to Stretford (via Urmston) corridor – junction improvements, enhanced links and bus facilities at Flixton station
- PROW improvements across the site
- Cycle and walking links to existing communities at Partington and Sale

The transport interventions required to support the New Carrington allocation will continue to be refined through further Masterplanning, as well as future planning applications and associated Transport Assessments. The PfE New Carrington policy (JPA33) also includes a number of requirements relating to sustainable transport measures, including the delivery of a network of safe cycling and walking routes, bus priority infrastructure, improvements to the Trans Pennine Trail and improved east / west public transport links

• I remain baffled by Trafford's repeated assertions that the project will benefit residents in Carrington and Partington. Trafford is not planning to close the existing A6144 to HGVs and through traffic, so Carrington will become a traffic island in a sea of air pollution, surrounded by increasing volumes of vehicles on all sides.

The Council has consistently received feedback from ward Councillors and past engagements in the area that one of the main problems facing Carrington and especially Partington is the poor transport in the area and the lack of accessibility. Indeed this was a recurring theme of the recent engagement on the Trafford design Guide in Partington on 2 July.

Consequently whilst better transport is needed to serve new developments planned under the Core strategy and PFE, it is also needed to end the historic isolation of Carrington and Partington which are largely divorced from the rest of Trafford – which is further hampered by congestion on the A6144. As I set out above the proposed Link road forms part of a wider package of improvements – but as I explain elsewhere it is also important for ensuring better Bus and cycling links.

Residents in Carrington Village have also long complained about the impact of heavy traffic close to their homes. Unfortunately it will not be possible to close the existing A6144 altogether because of the number of existing homes and businesses along the route – but the Council's intention is that it is very heavily calmed so that it becomes unattractive to through traffic and remaining vehicle speeds are further reduced. In future the Relief Road will be the principal route – and the current A6144 will very much become a secondary road, really intended for local access only. This will mean living conditions along the current route will improve – and should avoid the sort of scenario you describe of an island of housing surrounded by busy roads.

• You do not mention the impact of this road on other Trafford residents, such as those who live in Sale West and those who use Carrington Moss (including those who play and train on the sports grounds). Trafford does NOT

acknowledge that the health and wellbeing of some residents and users will be significantly impacted by this road.

The Council has always accepted that major infrastructure has a wider impact – and the Carrington relief Road is no exception. As with all major developments there is a need to balance social, economic and environmental impacts in the public interest. Inevitably there is no single ‘silver bullet’ which solves transportation issues, without some element of disbenefit.

Impact on users of public rights of way and adjacent leisure facilities has been – and continues to be a factor which the road takes account of. One of the purposes of the current round of meetings is to try and better understand how rights of way are used by local people.

• I also noted with interest the comments from Trafford Councillors at Scrutiny Committee in relation to the petition a Carrington resident presented to Trafford Council on 13th October 2021. The petition, against roads being constructed across Carrington Moss, had over 1,600 signatures, collected manually. Of these, over 93% were Trafford residents, contrary to the impression that was attempted to be made at Scrutiny Committee. The other 7% are people who use the Moss on a regular basis.

I hope there has never been any attempt to diminish or belittle the concerns expressed by local people about the road scheme – and especially any route which crossed agricultural land. This is why we have pursued the alternative route of following the existing alignment of the A6144 – which avoided the area of greatest local concern. Contrary to what might sometimes be perceived, this route was a genuine and credible option – and one which the Council was keen to make work. Consequently It is very unfortunate if any impression has been given that local concerns were not being taken seriously – because that is not at all the case.

• In terms of other disingenuous statements, you will be aware that the Planning Inspector specifically highlighted the costs of the Carrington Link Road in their Examination report for the Core Strategy. The costs were amended to £3m “to reflect up-to-date information concerning the anticipated cost of a road link required to the Location”.

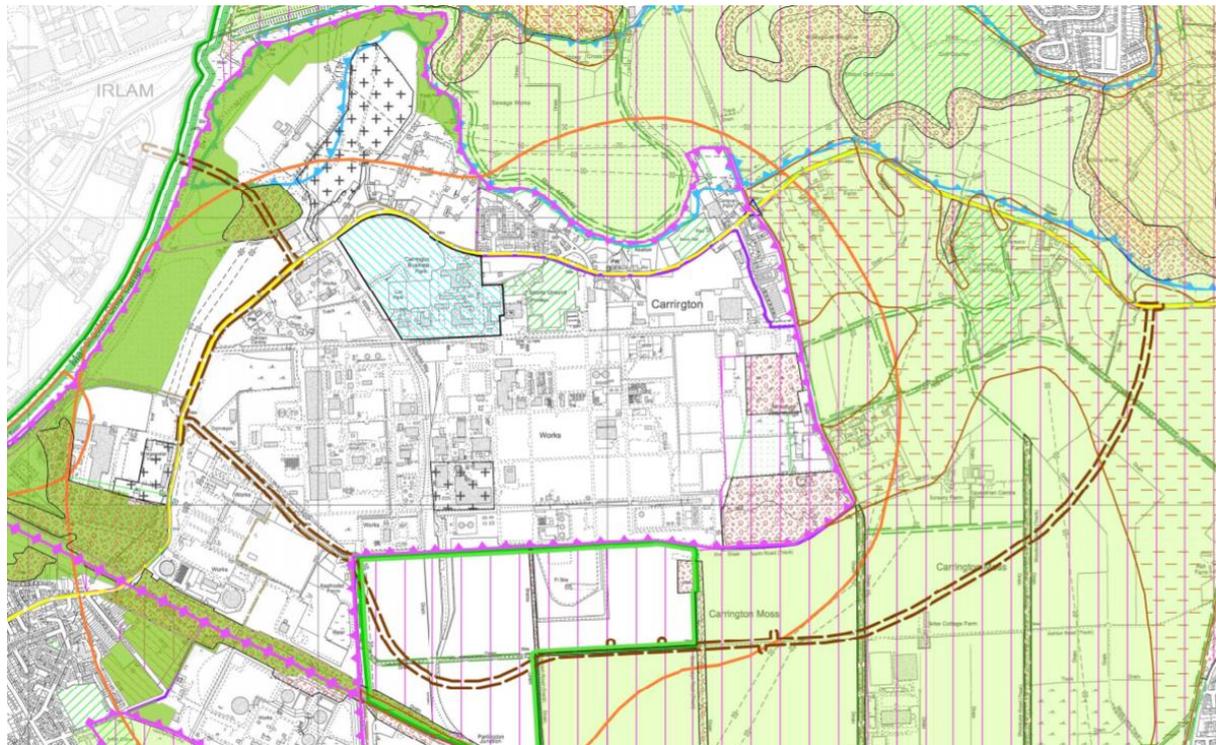
I was not present at the Trafford EIP but I regret the information before the Examination cannot possibly be correct – and regrettably the Inspector must have been misinformed. There is no possible way that a new road would have cost £3m even in 2010.

As an example the 4.8Km Alderley Edge bypass opened in 2010 – this is a single carriageway road with two cycleways on either side. It cost a reported £52M – just over £10M per kilometre. I appreciate that the highway improvement at Carrington could be built to a lesser specification – and the Alderley Edge example includes a rail crossing which will have inflated the figure – however even allowing for those differences I hope you can see that £3M would not have been sufficient for anything more than some minor improvements and certainly not “New road infrastructure to serve the development area to relieve congestion on the existing A6144” as required by the Core strategy.

• In fact, Trafford is very selective with the information referred to from the Core Strategy 2012 (again, there is an FOCM blog which highlights a number of issues). It should be noted that: Contrary to your response to my complaint, paragraph 8.73 suggests that “The alignment of the link road to serve the development area and ease congestion along the A6144 will be determined by the Carrington Area Action Plan.” I raised an FOI request for a copy of this document and have been informed that it was never created.

I fully acknowledge that the detail of the Core Strategy Proposal was never worked through as originally envisaged into a new development Plan. My understanding is that a site allocations plan was due to be prepared to sit beneath the Core strategy and that there would be an area Action Plan for Carrington. Neither were progressed because of changes to the planning system at a National level (Notably the new NPPF) which rendered the previous Core Strategy ‘out of date’ in certain key respects, most especially around housing provision.

Therefore I agree that the Core Strategy doesn’t define where a road improvement should go – as this was clearly devolved to a subsequent plan. We do however get a sense of the thinking on the subject from the indicative route as shown by the ‘Other highway Improvements’ displayed on the Composite Policies map. You will note that this alignment runs to the south of the current preferred route – and would have been much more extensive in its impacts.



Ultimately the merits of the preferred route will be determined via a planning application and not the development plan. That application will need to address not only the transport efficacy of the chosen route – but also its environmental impacts, including any impact on areas of agricultural or biodiversity importance.

Residents in Carrington, Partington and Sale West have been promised public transport improvements in both the 2006 UDP and the 2012 Core Strategy. Neither has delivered and there have been no “projects” to make these alternatives a reality for Trafford citizens.

The best way in which public transport can be improved for residents in the area is by better and more efficient buses. Whilst occasionally attention on public transport is often focussed on trams and trains – it is buses that can make the real difference, because of the flexibility and frequency they can offer – alongside their significantly more limited infrastructure implications.

As you will know Bus Reform is now proceeding in Greater Manchester – and this will bring with it the prospect of zonal ticketing, integrated with metrolink and hire bikes – and the regulation of routes and frequencies. At present bus services are limited in the area – but they are also slow – caught up in the same congestion as the rest of the traffic. If this picture is to change, then highway improvements need to be implemented. With this in mind the Carrington Relief Road will feature bus priority features to try and speed up route reliability. This approach would have been followed for both proposed alignments – so I am not suggesting it is in some way a benefit of the route as finally chosen – but it is most definitely a benefit of the road project as a whole.

As regards public transport the Council also supports the re-opening of the Rail line either as a green route, bus way or full railway line. In 2020 a bid was submitted to the re-opening railways fund – and the Council has fought hard to ensure that the line features within the Transport 2040 Strategy. In the short term there is also the possibility of a cycle route across the Cadishead viaduct, linking to rail links in Salford.

For clarity, I do not bundle active travel together with sustainable passenger and freight transport options, although I have no examples of any investment in active travel either. Policy I3.18 clarifies that the “promotion of the Manchester Ship Canal as a sustainable transport route is consistent with national guidance regarding the protection, improvement and development of the water transport network. The enhanced role of inland waterways for freight distribution will have positive environmental benefits, in particular in terms of climate change”. Given this statement in the Core Strategy, I am unclear why Trafford is waiting for National Policy to shift to enable freight transport to be progressed.

According to the DFT 79% of Freight was moved by Road in 2019 – and this measure is by weight. Given that water and rail are best suited to bulk materials (e.g aggregate) these figures will if anything over emphasise the proportion of goods delivered by none road transport.

For an employment site such as Carrington there is unfortunately no realistic alternative to moving goods other than by road. There is no railway line to the area (this was closed in the mid 1980’s) and whilst it is a long term aim of both the Council and TFGM to see that line restored in some form, this is many years off. There is no means of serving the businesses at Carrington by light or heavy rail – and National or Local Planning Policies do not allow the Council to refuse development on the basis that it is not served by rail. Were we to insist on businesses having a rail freight connection (which I stress we are not) this would mean that economic development

would be stifled for ten, twenty or thirty years until railway line was restored. There is no Government support for taking a stance such as this.

Similarly as regards water transport, this is not suitable for all types of goods – it is ideal for heavy bulk materials – but there is no network of inland commercial waterways as there was a hundred years ago to distribute finished goods across the country. There is an opportunity for the ship canal to serve Carrington – but currently all of the effort of The Manchester Ship canal company is focussed on developing Port Salford. The Council is very supportive of these proposals – and if successful, it is hoped it will spawn other connections along the canal. However at present there is no prospect of any such port in and around Carrington – and even if there was – that could not assist a company who needed to move goods to inland destination.

I hope these issues serve to illustrate a wider point – that business at present is dependent on road transport – and that if that is to change it needs radical and concerted action at a national level.

The Core Strategy also specifically mentions a new crossing for the Manchester Ship Canal between Carrington and Irlam, yet Trafford has not progressed this. I already have a response to an FOI request to confirm this.

The Council sees a benefit in a link through to Port Salford for all of the reasons mentioned above – however this does not obviate the need for better transport infrastructure between Partington / Carrington and the rest of Trafford. The Priority of the Council has been to secure this improvement – and unfortunately it does not have sufficient capacity or resources to progress two major projects in parallel. As a consequence the link across the ship canal will need to await the completion of more immediate transport improvements.

• You appear to suggest that the consultation in advance of the adoption of the Core Strategy 2012 satisfied the need to consult with residents on the policy aspects of the CRR. Yet, as mentioned above, the information in the Core Strategy document was minimal and the alignment of the route was to be developed within the aborted Carrington Area Action Plan.

The Core Strategy provides the context for both the new development at Carrington and the planned infrastructure improvements. As such – the informal and formal consultation connected to a statutory development plan – alongside the scrutiny that is attendant with a development plan examination is important to establishing the basis for the road and related works. It is evident that the concept of significant new development, alongside supporting transport infrastructure was set out clearly within the Core Strategy. That does not mean that consultation in any way ends at that point – but it should be recognised that the road and related new development have all have the baseline of having passed through the development plan process.

I agree that it is reasonable to consider after the passage of time whether development or projects are still appropriate. However the Core Strategy remains part of the Council's development plan and developments arising from it have continued to come forward – the transport assessments associated with these developments and the advice of the Council as a highway and transport authority is that these developments need to be accompanied by highway infrastructure improvements.

- **It should be noted that the consultation approach for the Core Strategy was so poor that our FOI request response reveals that only 24 responses were received to the November 2009 consultation (very few from residents) and only 44 responses were received to the March 2010 consultation (again very few from residents).**

The Council does not accept that the consultation was poor – and had that been the case, the Plan would not have passed examination. Part of the function of the Examination would be to test whether the plan was properly prepared and adequately consulted on. The Fact is that the plan was adopted and remains part of the statutory development plan for Trafford.

- I continue to believe that the Gunning Principles have not been followed in relation to the CRR process. Furthermore, on such a sensitive matter, it is wholly unreasonable for Trafford to suggest that public consultation need only be carried out after the route has been chosen. With the recognition that the route across Carrington Moss would be controversial, it is very surprising that Trafford did not consider it appropriate to request a Scrutiny Committee review in advance of formalising the decision. Some of the questions identified by residents were helpfully highlighted by Scrutiny Committee members at their recent meetings.

The Council does not accept that the route options were incorrectly or improperly arrived at. It is understood that some will oppose the chosen Route F, but there were sound reasons for ultimately favouring that alignment. That is not at all to suggest that it is without its impacts or dis-benefits – simply that on balance it is the preferable option. The core principle of the Scrutiny Committee is that its members select which topics they would like to consider. Consequently Carrington transport matters appear at this committee when requested.

The work of the Committee was affected by Covid – but now its normal programme it is anticipated that the Committee will be closely interested in this topic. It is possible that a further report will be considered in the autumn.

It is clear from the above that the CRR is NOT a requirement borne out of facilitation of “development from the adopted Core Strategy”. It has been nurtured in discussions with developers, NOT in consultation with residents. I understand that the original Outline Business Case document was created by the main landowner in this area (please confirm whether this perception is accurate). Trafford’s consistent refusal to consider the alternatives raises the issue of plan continuation bias.

It is true to say that originally the Road was going to be developed primarily by the main landowner – Himor (now Wain Estates) – and I understand that early documentation was prepared very closely with the company. However despite its conception in 2012 limited progress was made – and so in recent years the Council has taken on leadership of the project whilst still working with partners. This partly reflects the wider public interest in the project and the fact that it is not just Wain Estates who will benefit from it.

I cannot agree with the statement that the road is not linked to the Core Strategy – the redevelopment of Carrington following the very significant scaling back of petro-chemical operations lies at the heart of Core Strategy Policy. There are several developments arising from the redevelopment of brownfield sites in the locality which are subject to restrictive ‘grampian’ style conditions – because they cannot proceed without transport improvements, notably the new Road and its connected facilities.

Trafford also makes no reference to the fact that Places for Everyone is a 16 year plan, which gives ample time to develop sustainable passenger and freight transport options, alongside upgrading the existing route and improving the PROWs across Carrington Moss. With all these points in mind, there is no justification for Trafford’s lack of consideration of solutions that would result in lower costs for the public purse, be less environmentally damaging and more acceptable to local residents.

Places For Everyone largely assumes that the CRR is in Place – and will require fresh transport infrastructure over and above what is being planned now. The 2040 transport Strategy that runs alongside PFE already includes an element of future adjustment in transportation – in other words acknowledging that over the next 20 years technology and behaviours will change to create a different transport landscape from the one we see now.

However none of that is sufficient to avoid the need for some road improvements now, if developments planned either by the Core strategy or PFE are to come to fruition. When we met I commented that if the infrastructure that existed in this area 100 years ago remained to this day – that quite possibly the need for a road could be avoided – and that the network of railways, tramlines and canal wharves could meet the transport needs of the area. Sadly all of these were dismantled in the 20th Century and so we need to develop transport solutions that are both forward looking and yet reflect the world as we now find it.

Residents have consistently tried to work positively with Trafford (and Amey) in the hope that all interested parties (including the key stakeholder, residents) could work together to find solutions that will bring real benefits to current and future Trafford citizens WITHOUT impacting the health and wellbeing of existing and new communities or the habitats of red listed birds and endangered wildlife. Trafford has clearly not valued our contributions as they have consistently refused to invite us to the table to be part of the design process

When we met I explained that our plans for closer community involvement were severely scaled back during the pandemic – and that the sort of round table discussion that we had hoped would be the norm, had sadly to be abandoned. As you know we have now resumed a series of face to face discussions with Friends of Carrington Moss and other groups and I very much hope that this sort of regular input and liaison will continue.

Conclusion

I recognise that the extent and depth of meetings and liaison has not been as we would have wished this project over the past two years. But the advent of the pandemic

meant that the council had neither the capacity – nor the ability to carry on as before. This is very regrettable but I cannot see how the Council could have acted any differently in the circumstances. We have now demonstrated our intent by picking up this more bespoke engagement once again.

As regards the evaluation of Options I cannot stress strongly enough that there was no bias in the consideration of the different routes; there was no reason for the Council to specifically favour Option F from the outset. In contrast Option A appeared to offer a number of benefits – and I have no doubt that had this route emerged as the better choice, then the Council would have adopted it. As the Lead officer for the project I was very keen that we gave the online route the best possible consideration we could – and the consultant team were instructed to be completely objective in their assessment.

I appreciate that you strongly oppose the ultimate decision on route options – and I hope that the Council understands and respects the reasons for your concerns. Ultimately however the authority has to make a decision in the public interest based on a balance of a range of considerations – and that is what it has sought to do in this case.

I trust my response addresses your concerns, however if you are not satisfied with this Stage 2 response, you may take your complaint to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman, contact details for which can be found at: www.lgo.org.uk

Yours sincerely,

A G Fisher

Adrian Fisher
Director of Growth and Regulatory Services