LANCASHIRE

COMBINED COUNTY AUTHORITY

Lancashire Local Transport Plan: Implementation Plan Integrated Sustainability Appraisal

Non-Technical Summary

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Contents

Introduction

This Non-Technical Summary explains the findings of the Integrated Sustainability Appraisal for the Implementation Plan I of Lancashire's Local Transport Plan.

The Integrated Sustainability Appraisal reviews the likely environmental, social and economic effects of the short-term transport investment proposed for 2026–2030. It supports legal requirements under the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations (2004).

The Implementation Plan

The Local Transport Plan sets the long-term transport strategy for Lancashire, Blackburn with Darwen and Blackpool. The Implementation Plan I turns this strategy into a four-year programme of schemes (2026-2030). These include improvements to public transport, active travel, road safety, network maintenance, and digital technology.

The Integrated Sustainability Appraisal checks whether these schemes support sustainable development and identifies where risks or further assessment will be needed as projects move forward.

How the Implementation Plan was Assessed

Schemes in the Implementation Plan were reviewed against 17 Integrated Sustainability Appraisal objectives (Table 1) covering the environment, economy, health, equalities and rural accessibility. Effects were scored as beneficial, neutral, adverse or uncertain (Table 2).

This Non-Technical Summary focuses on the overall, combined effect of the plan rather than individual schemes, as most proposals are still in the early stages of design.

Table 1: ISA Objectives

Environmental	
1	Protect and enhance biodiversity, promote ecosystem resilience and functionality and contribute to the achievement of biodiversity net gain and the delivery of the Nature Recovery Network
2	Protect and enhance sites designated for their international importance for nature conservation purposes
3	Protect and improve air quality
4	Reduce the impact on environmental noise from transportation sources
5	Reduce carbon emissions from transport and contribute to meeting the UKs net zero carbon target
6	Maximise adaptation and resilience of the transport network to the effects of a changing climate, including through reducing the risk of flooding
7	Protect and enhance cultural heritage assets and their settings, and the wider historic environment including buildings, structures, landscapes, townscapes and archaeological remains and their settings

8	Protect and enhance the character and quality of landscapes and townscapes and visual amenity
9	Protect, enhance and promote geodiversity
10	Protect soil resources and avoid land contamination
11	Protect and enhance the water environment
12	Promote sustainable use of resources and natural assets including maximising the use of alternative, secondary and recycled materials, reducing the level of waste generated.
Economic	
13	Promote economic growth and job creation, and improve access and connectivity to jobs and skills for all
14	Support the wider coordination of land use and energy planning across the Lancashire area
Social	
15	Improve health and wellbeing for all citizens and reduce inequalities in health (HIA specific objective)
16	Promote greater equality of opportunity for all citizens, with the desired outcome of achieving a fairer society (EqIA specific objective)
Rural	
17	Promote fairness and equity in rural connectivity

Table 2: Scoring system

Assessment scale	Assessment category	Significance of effects
+++	Major beneficial	Significant
++	Moderate beneficial	
+	Slight beneficial	Not significant
0	Neutral or no obvious effect	
?	General uncertainty where there is a lack of current evidence or uncertainty surrounding the degree of impact assessed.	
-	Slight adverse	
--	Moderate adverse	Significant
---	Major adverse	

Baseline Information

The baseline for this Integrated Sustainability Appraisal builds on the comprehensive assessment undertaken for the Core Strategy Integrated Sustainability Appraisal in 2025.

As the Implementation Plan introduces several new physical schemes, this baseline provides a focused update rather than repeating the full strategic context. Its purpose is to highlight the environmental and social conditions most relevant to the routes, locations and communities that the new schemes may affect.

Lancashire contains a diverse and sensitive natural environment. Several scheme corridors run close to internationally important habitats, coastal estuaries and upland moorlands, as well as priority areas identified through the Nature Recovery Network and Local Nature Recovery Strategy. These locations mean that even small interventions may require careful ecological consideration.

Flood-risk conditions have also evolved, with updated mapping showing expanded high-risk areas along key river corridors and surface-water issues in coastal towns and older urban centres. National standards for sustainable drainage now place greater emphasis on nature-based approaches, making climate-resilient design increasingly important for relevant schemes.

Air quality challenges remain in parts of Lancaster, Preston, Blackpool, Burnley and Chorley, and some schemes fall within or near these areas. Noise sensitivity is also a challenge along major roads and rail routes, within historic town centres and in coastal communities where quiet environments form part of local character.

The plan area contains highly valued landscapes, including the Forest of Bowland and Arnside & Silverdale, and many active-travel and public-realm schemes are proposed within Conservation Areas that require sensitive design. Land-use factors such as peat soils, high-quality agricultural land and areas of historic contamination will influence how schemes are constructed and how land is managed.

Lancashire's historic environment is also an important consideration, with some schemes located close to listed buildings, conservation areas and historic transport infrastructure. These will require proportionate heritage assessment at later stages.

Climate-related pressures continue to grow, including more frequent flooding, increasing coastal storm risks and uneven progress in electric-vehicle uptake. These factors reinforce the need for a resilient transport network and well-designed infrastructure.

A significant new evidence source relates to transport-related social exclusion. Several communities across the county—including parts of Fleetwood, Rossendale, Great Harwood, Blackpool and Accrington—experience poor access to services and limited travel choices. This creates heightened social vulnerability and highlights the areas where improved transport provision could have the greatest impact.

Overall, this updated baseline identifies the environmental sensitivities, heritage assets, climate risks and social inequalities most likely to shape how the Implementation Plan affects places and people. These considerations form the foundation for the Integrated Sustainability Appraisal's assessment of potential impacts.

Alternatives

Two reasonable alternatives were considered for the Implementation Plan, in line with Strategic Environmental Assessment requirements.

- Alternative A – Maintenance-focused approach: This option would prioritise maintaining existing transport infrastructure, with very limited new investment beyond essential repairs and safety works.

- Alternative B – Deliver the Implementation Plan as proposed: This includes the full package of schemes aimed at supporting decarbonisation, active travel, public transport improvements, climate resilience and accessibility.

Summary of Effects

Overall, the assessment shows that Alternative B performs more strongly across most sustainability objectives.

Environmental effects:

Alternative A carries fewer risks because it involves little new development, but it also delivers very few benefits. Alternative B has some localised environmental risks such as temporary construction impacts or potential effects on landscape, heritage or habitats but these can be managed through design and mitigation.

Importantly, Alternative B offers clear long-term gains for carbon reduction, air quality and biodiversity, which Alternative A cannot achieve.

Social effects:

Alternative B performs significantly better. It improves access to jobs, education, health services and everyday facilities, and supports healthier lifestyles through walking, cycling and cleaner air. It also provides more benefits for communities facing transport barriers, including rural and disadvantaged groups. Alternative A maintains the status quo and does not address existing inequalities.

Economic effects:

Alternative B supports productivity, regeneration and access to employment by strengthening the transport network and improving connectivity. Alternative A provides little uplift and risks limiting future economic growth.

Why Alternative B Is Preferred

Alternative B is the preferred option because it:

- Delivers clear benefits for carbon reduction, climate resilience and biodiversity enhancement

- Improves access, health, wellbeing and equality of opportunity

- Supports long-term economic growth

- Aligns with national and local policy on decarbonisation, inclusive mobility and regeneration

- Addresses the key challenges identified in the ISA, rather than maintaining existing conditions

Although Alternative B introduces some environmental risks, these are expected to be manageable through proportionate mitigation and project-level environmental assessment. In contrast, Alternative A avoids some risks but does not contribute meaningfully to climate, social or economic goals and would not support the long-term needs of Lancashire's transport network.

Overall, Alternative B provides the greatest sustainability benefits and is therefore taken forward as the preferred approach.

Summary of Overall Findings

ISA Objectives		Overall Score (without mitigation)
1	Protect and enhance biodiversity, promote ecosystem resilience and functionality and contribute to the achievement of biodiversity net gain and the delivery of the Nature Recovery Network	Mixed
2	Protect and enhance sites designated for their international importance for nature conservation purposes	Neutral
3	Protect and improve air quality	Slight beneficial
4	Reduce the impact on environmental noise from transportation sources	Mixed
5	Reduce carbon emissions from transport and contribute to meeting the UKs net zero carbon target	Slight Beneficial
6	Maximise adaptation and resilience of the transport network to the effects of a changing climate, including through reducing the risk of flooding	Uncertain
7	Protect and enhance cultural heritage assets and their settings, and the wider historic environment including buildings, structures, landscapes, townscapes and archaeological remains and their settings	Uncertain
8	Protect and enhance the character and quality of landscapes and townscapes and visual amenity	Uncertain
9	Protect, enhance and promote geodiversity	Neutral
10	Protect soil resources and avoid land contamination	Mixed
11	Protect and enhance the water environment	Uncertain

12	Promote sustainable use of resources and natural assets including maximising the use of alternative, secondary and recycled materials, reducing the level of waste generated.	Slight adverse
13	Promote economic growth and job creation, and improve access and connectivity to jobs and skills for all	Moderate beneficial
14	Support the wider coordination of land use and energy planning across the Lancashire area	Moderate beneficial
15	Improve health and wellbeing for all citizens and reduce inequalities in health (Health Impact Assessment specific objective)	Moderate beneficial
16	Promote greater equality of opportunity for all citizens, with the desired outcome of achieving a fairer society (Equality Impact Assessment specific objective)	Moderate beneficial
17	Promote fairness and equity in rural connectivity	Slight beneficial

Environmental effects

- Carbon and air quality: The plan shows a slightly positive direction overall, mainly due to investment in public transport, active travel and cleaner vehicles.

- Biodiversity, landscape, heritage, soils and water: Many effects are uncertain or mixed because the exact locations and designs of schemes are not yet known. Some slight risks are identified, especially for water environment, soils and landscape, but these would be addressed through future scheme-level assessments.

- Resources and waste: Slight adverse effects are expected, mainly linked to construction materials and waste generation.

Social effects

- Health, wellbeing and equalities: The plan performs strongly and is expected to deliver moderate positive outcomes by improving access to services, enabling more active travel and reducing barriers for disadvantaged groups.

- Rural accessibility: Likely to have a slightly positive effect, particularly where schemes strengthen links to services and employment.

Economic effects

The plan is expected to bring moderate economic benefits by improving access to jobs, training and major destinations, supporting regeneration areas and helping align transport with wider land-use and energy plans.

Mitigation

Where risks were identified, the Integrated Sustainability Appraisal sets out high-level measures to avoid or reduce them. These include:

- Early ecological checks and design to support nature recovery
- Flood-resilient and sustainable drainage design
- Protecting heritage settings through careful alignment and materials
- Minimising visual impacts through landscape-sensitive design
- Managing construction noise, waste and carbon
- Using low-carbon and recycled materials where possible

Most environmental uncertainties will be resolved through detailed project-level assessments, including Environmental Impact Assessment, Habitats Regulations Assessment and Flood Risk Assessment where needed.

Monitoring

Monitoring is a legal requirement of the Strategic Environmental Assessment process. Its purpose is to check whether the Implementation Plan is having the environmental effects predicted in the Integrated Sustainability Appraisal, and to identify any unforeseen problems so they can be addressed quickly.

Monitoring helps the authorities understand whether the mitigation measures set out in the Integrated Sustainability Appraisal are working and whether the plan is supporting wider sustainability goals such as reducing carbon emissions, improving air quality, protecting nature and supporting healthier communities.

A high-level monitoring framework has been developed to track key issues, including carbon emissions, climate resilience, air quality, biodiversity, heritage, water environment and public health. Indicators will draw on existing national and local data sources where possible, such as transport emissions, flood-related disruptions, changes in biodiversity and access to green space. These indicators are not fixed, and they will be reviewed and refined as schemes progress and more information becomes available.

Before the Implementation Plan is adopted, the monitoring approach and indicators will be discussed and agreed with Natural England, Historic England and the Environment Agency to ensure that the most important environmental effects are effectively tracked.

Alongside this strategic monitoring, individual schemes will also be expected to put in place proportionate monitoring at project level. This could include tracking habitat creation, tree planting, accessibility improvements, performance of sustainable drainage features or changes in local transport access. Scheme-level monitoring will help identify localised risks or opportunities and feed into the wider picture of how the Implementation Plan is performing.

Together, this approach ensures that monitoring remains flexible, proportionate and responsive, allowing the authorities to take corrective action if adverse effects emerge and to ensure the Implementation Plan continues to support a more sustainable and resilient transport network.

Next steps

Consultation

The Implementation Plan and the Integrated Sustainability Appraisal, including all supporting appendices, will be published for statutory consultation. As required for all Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment documents, three statutory bodies must be consulted:

- The Environment Agency;
- Natural England; and
- Historic England

The Integrated Sustainability Appraisal will be consulted on alongside the Implementation Plan so that stakeholders and the public can review the assessment and provide feedback as part of the wider consultation process.