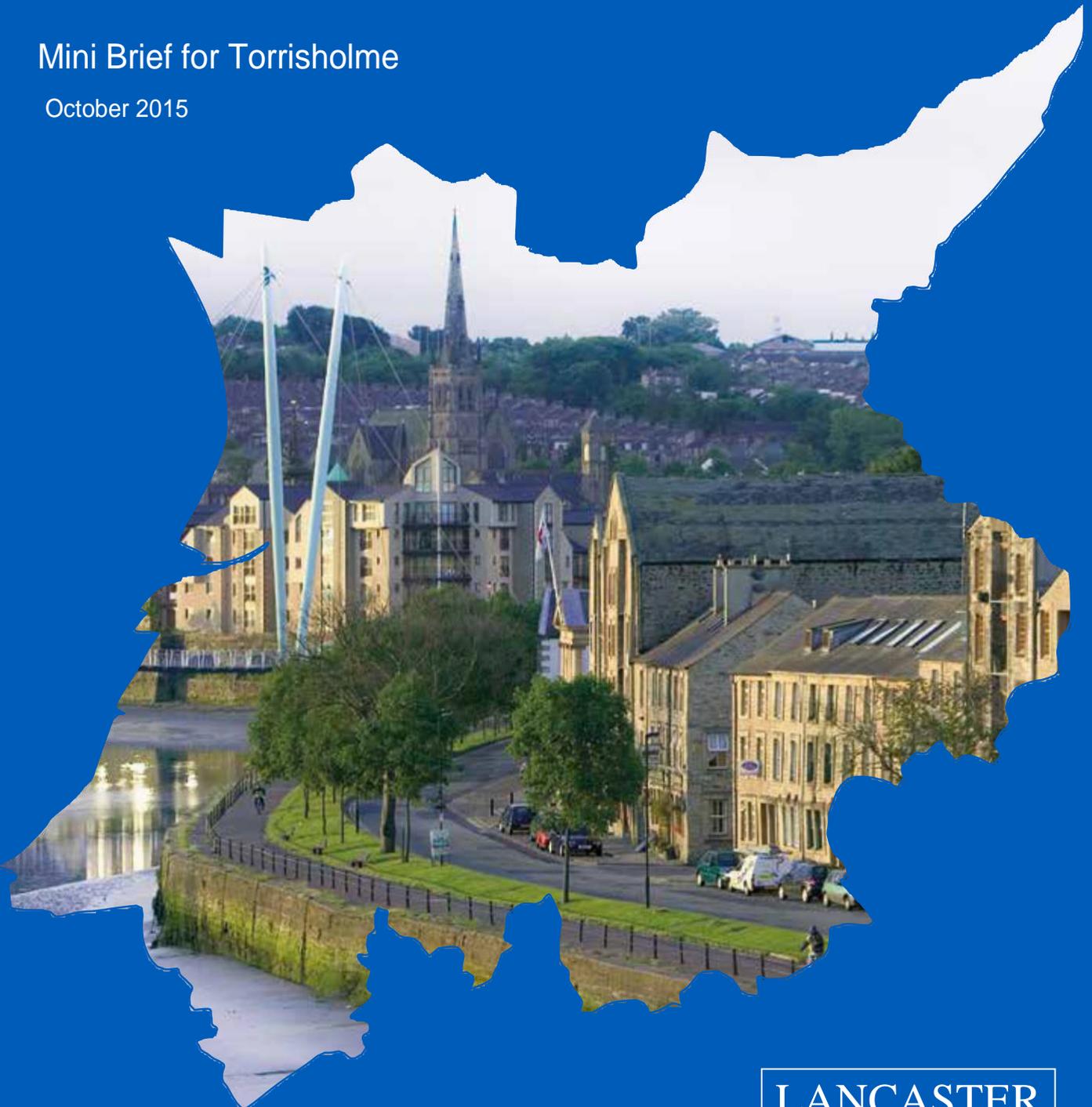


A Local Plan for Lancaster District 2011-2031

Mini Brief for Torrisholme

October 2015



LANCASTER
CITY COUNCIL

Promoting City, Coast & Countryside

1. Introduction

- 1.1 As part of the 'People, Homes and Jobs' Consultation which is currently taking place, the City Council have prepared a series of mini-briefs for each of the strategic sites identified. Whilst these briefs will not form part of any future local plan they will provide evidence and understanding of the issues which affect each of the strategic sites and, importantly, an acknowledgement that further investigation is still required to form a complete understanding over whether these sites are suitable for allocation and future development.
- 1.2 The aim of these mini-briefs is to provide an explanation of how development may be achieved on these sites, through the identification of issues and constraints, how sites may be accessed and the infrastructure requirements which each site will generate. The mini-briefs have been discussed with a number of infrastructure providers (such as Lancashire County Council and United Utilities) and ongoing dialogue will continue with all relevant providers as the City Council continue to draw up their local development plan.
- 1.3 It is important to note that it is not the mini-briefs which are subject of consultation, it is the principles of developing strategic sites which are important and should be commented on. The mini-briefs do not claim to contain all the information on each site, but will provide useful background information.
- 1.4 This mini-brief relates to land which surrounds Torrisholme Barrow, land which is currently in the North Lancashire Green Belt between the route of the new M6 / Heysham Link Road, the West Coast Mainline and the urban form of Morecambe / Torrisholme.
- 1.5 The identification of this site could provide development opportunities for up to 750 new homes. It is important to note that this site is illustrative of potential growth in the Torrisholme area and the scale of development proposed will be informed by the outcomes of the Green Belt Review.

2. Character of Locality

Description of the Site

- 2.1 This site includes a large area of farmland on either side of Hasty Brow Lane, with the new Link Road forming the southern boundary of the site, the West Coast Mainline forming the east, the Morecambe Spur rail line forms the north and the western boundary formed by a range of field boundaries and rears of residential properties. Electricity pylons run through the site, entering via the eastern boundary to the site and leaving through the southern boundary. Currently, the site sits entirely within the North Lancashire Green Belt.
- 2.2 It is important to note that the Scheduled Ancient Monument of Torrisholme Barrow does not form part of this site although the land within its setting does.

Relationship with Surrounding Uses

- 2.3 The site has some urban development to the west, primarily residential. Transport infrastructure defines the boundaries of this site with rail lines and the new link road which hems this land in from the open countryside to the north and east. Beyond the link road to the south the land, whilst remaining open does come under a greater urbanising influences of development in Torrisholme and Skerton.

Land Ownership

- 2.4 The site is split into a number of separate private land ownerships a number of which have already suggested that land may be available for development. This needs to be reconfirmed and the remaining land owners contacted to understand the availability of land in this area.

3. Landscape and Topography

Landscape Character

- 3.1 The land is Greenfield in character and consists primarily of agricultural fields separated by, in places strongly defined field boundaries. The openness of this land has been and continues to be affected by the creation of transport infrastructure – particularly the link road. It will be for the Green Belt Review to assess the level of such impact.
- 3.2 The site is identified as Low Coastal Drumlins in the Lancashire Landscape Character Assessment, being characteristically gentler and of a lower altitude than that of general drumlin landscape. There are noted to be often areas of poorly drained pasture, standing water and occasional mosses, fens and fen meadow between drumlins. The alignment of the drumlins is noted to give the landform a distinctive ridge. The strong pattern of pasture land is noted to emphasise the undulating topography with distinctive field boundaries.
- 3.3 Beyond the Green Belt designation there are no other specific designations which recognise any specific landscape features within this site, it does not form part of a key urban landscape and it is not with an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
- 3.4 Torrisholme Barrow lies directly to the west of this site, this is an ancient burial site and is a Scheduled Ancient Monument.

Topography of the Site

- 3.5 The site is generally flat in character with no distinguishable topographical features. The feature of Torrisholme Barrow is a significant elevation in land levels but this does not affect the identified site.

Flooding and Flood Risk

- 3.6 According to the Environment Agency Flood Mapping there are no areas of this site which are vulnerable from flooding, either from river or sea. There are flood risks associated with the River Lune to the south-east but these do not extend into this site.
- 3.7 There may be issues of flooding related to existing surface water drainage, and, should this site come forward for development in the future it will certainly require adequate and appropriate surface water drainage systems to deal with the increase in impermeable surfaces.

4. Highways and Access

Local Highways Capacity

- 4.1 There are no main routes running through this site, Hasty Brow Road is a rural country lane connecting Torrisholme with Slyne and Hest Bank, Powder House Lane is also a small rural lane however this is now closed due to the construction of the Link road and is a no-through road.
- 4.2 Following discussions with Lancashire County Council it is the City Council's understanding that there are no known capacity issues with Hasty Brow Lane. However, it is fair to note that this is not a

major transport route in the district and is only a rural country lane designed to deal with local traffic.

- 4.3 Other than the existing access points onto the A6 and at Morecambe Road, there will be no further means of access onto the new Link Road in this area.

Access into the Site

- 4.4 Given Lancashire County Council's clear position on access points into the new link road, access into site will need to be derived from the existing local highway network. This would require seeking access from Lancaster Road, Hasty Brow Road and Fulwood Drive. The principles of acquiring access from all these routes to provide a circular network in the Torrisholme area have been discussed with the Highways Engineers at Lancashire County Council and it's the City Council's understanding that it can be suitably achieved.

Traffic Movement through the Site

- 4.5 The creation of access points at the three locations described above will provide the opportunity for a circular route through the development site, dispersing traffic in northerly and southerly directions.
- 4.6 The road network within the site will include a series of estate roads which can provide access to new residential areas. There are no reasons to suggest this can provide an effective through route for traffic travelling wider than the local area.

Public Transport Requirements

- 4.7 Given the residential nature of this proposal and its proximity to both Morecambe and Lancaster, there will be a requirement to consider how residents will access both centres by a range of transport means. This should include the provision of circular bus services through the site. It should also seek to promote the sustainable agenda of encouraging the use of cycling and walking as a means of accessing services in both Morecambe and Lancaster.

5. Existing and Required Infrastructure

Education Provision

- 5.1 Local education provision includes Great Wood Primary School on Beaufort Road, Torrisholme County Primary and Morecambe Community High School on Dallam Avenue.
- 5.2 In terms of capacity, school places are currently in this area with Great Wood currently running at - 5% capacity and Torrisholme County Primary School has 0% capacity.
- 5.3 Given the scale of the development proposed consideration will be required on the impact on existing capacity in local schools, this may lead to the need to improvements and expansion in the existing school sites in this area and, if that cannot be achieved the delivery of new provision entirely. Further dialogue is necessary with Lancashire County Council to understand existing capacity and what improvements are required should development come forward on this site.

Heath Provision

- 5.4 It is the City Council's understanding that there are no GP practices within Torrisholme although practices do exist at Scale Hall and Westgate.

- 5.5 Further investigation will be required over the existing capacities in local surgeries and whether the development of this site would cause over capacity issues. To understand this matter further the City Council will be working with the Clinical Commissioning Group to understand current pressures to GPs in this area and, if capacity issues do exist, how they can be overcome.

Community Facilities

- 5.6 There are recognised community facilities in the Torrisholme area including a village hall on Lancaster Road. It is not clear whether any further community facilities are required in the locality however this should be investigated further should this site come forward for development in the local development plan.

Utilities Requirements

- 5.7 After discussions with United Utilities, there are no recognised issues in relation to fresh water supplies and foul water drainage in North Lancaster. Clearly improvements to the network will be required to facilitate growth but there are no reasons to suggest this cannot be facilitated via through future development.
- 5.8 Given the proximity to Lancaster City Centre, telecommunication and broadband networks are considered to be acceptable in principle although ongoing dialogue with BT and network providers will be necessary.
- 5.9 There are no known problems with either gas or electricity supplies in the locality, further discussions are required with electricity and gas providers to understand the improvements to the network required should development be brought forward on this site.

Retail and Commercial Needs

- 5.10 The local centre of Torrisholme is approximately 1km (at its closest point) and 3km (from its furthest point) from this site. This local centre provides a local shop, pub and other basic facilities. Therefore the creation of a new centre on this site is not considered to be necessary.

Open Space Requirements

- 5.11 There will be clearly requirements for open space provision should this development site come forward, this will include the provision of new amenity green space and recreational space. Financial requirements may also be required to improve and upgrade existing facilities elsewhere in the locality. These requirements will be investigated should the site come forward and be prepared in liaison with the City Council's Environmental Services Team.

6. The Natural Environment

Local Biodiversity and Habitats

- 6.1 This site does not contain any specific environmental designations. Whilst no specific environmental designations exist that is not to say that there are not areas of the site which are of local importance. The City Council is working with the Lancashire Environmental Record Network (LERN) and Natural England to fully understand the environmental and biological character of this area.
- 6.2 Should the site come forward for development these areas of local importance – such as coppices or ponds should sought to be included within the development and can provide distinctive features.

Green Corridors

6.3 There are no designated green corridors within this site.

7. Further Work Required

7.1 In preparing this mini-brief the City Council have clearly identified that further issues need to be explored prior to this land at Torrisholme being identified for future development, the key issues for North Lancaster include the following:

- The implications of the setting to an Ancient Scheduled Monument through dialogue with Historic England.
- The need for improved education provision in the local area; and
- The need for expansion of existing health facilities.

7.2 The City Council will continue dialogue with all the relevant stakeholders and interest groups to fill in gaps in information and evidence. This will ensure that at the time of publishing the draft local development plan the City Council present a clear indication of how such sites will be brought forward.