

SUMMARY STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE

Harriett Sunderland
BA (Hons), HND QS, DipNEBOSH

On behalf of

Borough Council of Calderdale

THE BOROUGH COUNCIL OF CALDERDALE (HALIFAX TOWN CENTRE)
(HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENTS) (WEST YORKSHIRE PLUS TRANSPORT
FUND, A629 PHASE 2) COMPULSORY PURCHASE ORDER 2020

THE BOROUGH COUNCIL OF CALDERDALE (HALIFAX TOWN CENTRE)
(HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENTS) (WEST YORKSHIRE PLUS TRANSPORT
FUND, A629 PHASE 2) SUPPLEMENTAL COMPULSORY PURCHASE
ORDER 2021

THE BOROUGH COUNCIL OF CALDERDALE (HALIFAX TOWN CENTRE)
(HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENTS) (WEST YORKSHIRE PLUS TRANSPORT
FUND, A629 PHASE 2) (SIDE ROADS) ORDER 2020

February 2025



1. SUMMARY STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE

1.1. Qualifications, experience and role

My name is Harriett Sunderland. A summary of my experience, qualifications and role on the A629 Phase 2 scheme is contained in my full Statement of Evidence.

1.2. The Orders

a. On 9 December 2020 the Council resolved to make:

(i) *The Borough Council Of Calderdale (Halifax Town Centre) (Highway Improvements) (West Yorkshire Plus Transport Fund, A629 Phase 2) (Side Roads) Order 2020 ("the CPO"); and*

(ii) *The Borough Council Of Calderdale (Halifax Town Centre) (Highway Improvements) (West Yorkshire Plus Transport Fund, A629 Phase 2) Compulsory Purchase Order 2020 (the SRO")*

to facilitate the construction of the Halifax Town Centre highway improvements within the A629 Phase 2 Scheme.

b. The Council is the Highway Authority for the A629 Phase 2 scheme.

c. On 04 November 2021 the Council made:

The Borough Council Of Calderdale (Halifax Town Centre) (Highway Improvements) (West Yorkshire Plus Transport Fund, A629 Phase 2) Supplemental Compulsory Purchase Order 2021 ("the Supplementary CPO") [CD 3.1-3.3]

d. The SRO, CPO, and Supplemental CPO (together referred to as "the Orders") were made to secure the land and new rights required by the Council to facilitate construction of the scheme and the future maintenance, safety and efficient operation of the local highway network.

e. The A629 strategy is classified as a core project by West Yorkshire Combined Authority.

1.3. Scheme Summary

a. To summarise, Halifax town centre is a key location for future employment growth in Calderdale and the plans for housing growth across the district mean that there is likely to be increasing travel demand to the centre. The current spatial form of the town centre is, however, having a detrimental impact on businesses and will also constrain its future expansion and growth. The current road layout leads to traffic, including Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGV's) and buses, predominantly travelling

through the centre of the town centre, as opposed to functioning as a gyratory around the town centre.

- b. The Eastern Corridor, which comprises Church Street, Lower Kirkgate, Berry Lane, Cripplegate, Bank Bottom and Charlestown Road, is significantly underused at present and is not being fully utilised for directing the free flow of traffic around the town centre.
- c. Furthermore, the town centre road layout currently includes a number of narrow highways which, together with the challenging topography in this area, are unsuitable for the HGV's and buses which currently use them, as well as road junctions which are problematic and potentially dangerous, all of which the scheme will address in changes to the transport network in Halifax.
- d. The scope of the A629 Phase 2 Scheme is intended to:
 - Both frame and enable development opportunities within the town;
 - Reduce through traffic levels on Square Road/Winding Road, hence enabling the enlargement of the core town centre area;
 - Enhance the quality of arrival within Halifax;
 - Create a better pedestrian environment within the town centre;
 - Provide better bus-rail interchange and improve pedestrian and cycle access to the rail station and between key employment and leisure sites;
 - Improve setting of the rail station as the primary gateway and thus first impression of the town, as well as connections to it from all directions;
 - Allow better penetration of the town centre by public transport;
 - Facilitate easier wayfinding around the key town centre attractors.

1.4. Objectives

- a. The A629 Phase 2 scheme addresses specific barriers to growth and support the economic and housing regeneration of Halifax whilst contributing to the quality of life for those who live in, work in and visit the town, a summary of the scheme objectives are:

Objective 1 – Unlocking Site to Attract Investment

Objective 2 – Attracting people to Spend More Time in Halifax

Objective 3 – Providing Commercial Accommodation

Objective 4 – Greater Recognition to Halifax's Heritage Status

Objective 5 – Broadening Halifax's Social and Cultural Offer

Objective 6 – Providing Space to Support Skills and Education

Objective 7 – Build Upon Urban Structure & Connectivity in the Town Centre Core.

1.5. Benefits of the Scheme

Journey Times

- a. The scheme will save journey times following completion. In addition to reducing delay, the scheme will also enable unlock a number of key development sites which will assist to towards the creation of 528 jobs across West Yorkshire.
- b. Further economic benefits will be realised through the improvements to the public realm, and improvements to public transport within and the consequent benefits to pedestrians and public transport users.

Property Prices

- c. As well as job creation, there will also be an economic benefit from the scheme resulting from the impact on property values, principally arising from the public realm elements.
- d. The scheme intends to re-establish the links with Dean Clough, through a series of improvements along Northgate. In turn it is anticipated this investment will increase footfall/patronage within the town centre and lead to increased investment, in existing and new town centre businesses. When co-ordinated with wider improvements in the overall town centre environment, it is intended that the interventions proposed will persuade future occupiers to base themselves within the town centre.
- e. Finally, the visitor economy is important to Halifax, and improving the access for visitors into the town centre is fundamental as their spending power will help underpin the economic vitality of the town centre.

Public Transport Users

- f. Public transport user benefits of the scheme are derived from improved bus access to the rail station and the future year attractors, principally the development sites to the east of the town centre. Benefits to rail users result from the improved bus-rail interchange provided at the rail station, providing an opportunity for those arriving in Halifax by rail to continue their onward journey by bus.

Non-Motorised Users

- g. The scheme will have pedestrian and cyclist benefits related to increased physical activity, primarily related to the health benefits which can be attained from increased use of active travel modes such as walking and cycling.
- h. The scheme includes a number of improvements to the public realm, pedestrian and cycle facilities which will improve the journey quality for people travelling on foot or by bicycle.
- i. The scheme should also reduce “traveller stress” by providing a clearer access strategy for drivers approaching Halifax town centre.

Road Safety

- j. The scheme will result in a small reduction in the number of accidents due to the reduced levels of congestion as a result of the scheme (congested networks tend to have higher numbers of accidents with slight severity), allied to the significant

improvements in pedestrian crossing facilities and public space across the town centre which will reduce conflicts between motorised and non-motorised users.

Air Quality

- k. The scheme will reduce congestion which in turn will change in carbon dioxide equivalent (CO₂e) emissions.

Environmental Impacts

- l. There are several other environmental benefits of the scheme. These include:
- Air quality;
 - Noise;
 - Historic environment;
 - Townscape.

Social Impacts

- m. There are several other social benefits of the scheme. These include:
- Security;
 - Severance;
 - Accessibility;
 - Personal affordability.
- n. The security impacts of the scheme are primarily derived from the improved environment for pedestrians and cyclists. The scheme includes new or upgraded crossing facilities at multiple locations across the town centre.

1.6. Land Requirements

- a. The Orders only includes such land and new rights as required to facilitate construction and maintenance of the scheme.
- b. The land requirements for the scheme included within the CPO and Supplemental CPO are based upon the areas required both for the permanent works and the essential construction activities associated with them.
- c. The design of the permanent and temporary works have been developed in accordance with applicable national standards, the specific constraints of the site, and civil engineering best practice. This has determined the extent of land acquisition required to accommodate the completed works.
- d. Where land is only required temporarily such land has been included in the compulsory acquisition as a precaution pending agreement with land owners to temporary use of the land. This approach has been taken because, whilst the land is only required temporarily, it is essential to the construction of the scheme.

1.7. Absence of Impediments

Funding

- a. The scheme has secured funding through the West Yorkshire Combined Authority Transport fund and is currently in delivery.

Planning

- b. Planning Permission (Ref: 20/00217/FUL) for the scheme was granted in June 2020. **[CD 10.5]**
- c. Listed Building Consent was obtained by BCC Ref: 21/00786/LBC **[CD 10.7]** dated October 2021 to carry out adjustments to the listed Hughes Corporation Building steps necessitated by the scheme. The LBC expired after 3 years and works had not yet commenced to this corridor.
- d. A new LBC application was made on 27 January 2025 Ref:25/00039/LBC **[CD 10.12]**, As the relevant policies have not changed since the grant of the previous LBC and as there were no previous concerns from the conservation officer, the BCC anticipates the LBC application is likely to be granted and that therefore this should not present any impediment to the scheme proceeding as scheme design at this location has not altered.
- e. In August 2022 a s73 was made to the original planning application to take account of changes to Church Street to avoid the acquisition of Heritage Mews, Ref: 22/00958/FUL **[CD 10.8]**
- f. In December 2022 a further application was made to amend conditions 16 and 20 of planning permission Ref 20/00217/FUL to remove the new Matalan entrance from Berry Lane, Ref:22/01346/VAR **[CD 10.9]**. This was granted on 06 March 2023.
- g. A subsequent NMA application was made on 02 May 2023 incorporating a variety of design changes Ref:20/00217/NMA **[CD 10.6]**. This was granted on 23 June 2023.
- h. A further NMA Ref: 22/01346/NMA was made on 28 January 2025 to incorporate the design changes into permission Ref: 22/01346/VAR.
- i. Pre-Commencement planning conditions have been adhered to and discharged in line with the planning permissions which have been implemented and are extant.

Other Consents

- j. An agreement under S185 of the Water Industry Act 1991 has been agreed and entered into with Yorkshire Water to facilitate elements of the Phase 2 Town centre works.
- k. An application has been submitted to the DfT under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 – S247 to stop up part of the Highway (infill subway) at Pellon Lane, Halifax to facilitate proposed works as part of the scheme.

1.8. Use of Compulsory Acquisition Powers & Requested Modifications

- a. The Council is of the view that there are no financial or legal impediments to the Scheme progressing. The CPO and Supplemental CPO are required to ensure that the Council is able to acquire the necessary title to the land needed for the Scheme.
- b. The Council request modifications to the Orders. These requested changes are set out in more detail in a Note of Modification [CD 4.6] & supporting plans [CD 4.1-4.5]
- c. Considering the requested modifications to the Orders, the Council is satisfied that all of the land within the CPO area is required to ensure the delivery of the Scheme.

1.9. Compliance with the Human Rights Act

- a. The Council is satisfied that the acquisition of land and rights to allow for the construction of the Halifax town centre scheme would not violate the human rights of any land owner.
- b. It has sought to acquire the necessary land and rights by agreement and will exercise its statutory powers of acquisition only where that is essential to deliver the scheme.
- c. There is a compelling case in the public interest for the scheme to proceed and the interference with the landowners' rights is proportionate being the minimum necessary to deliver the scheme.
- d. Those directly affected by the Orders will be entitled to compensation where this is incurred as a result of compulsory acquisition.

1.10. Objections

- a. A summary of all objections received is set out in my full statement of evidence. In the main they reflect concerns on details of the scheme, rather than object to the scheme itself.
- b. The Council still hopes the objections can be overcome by negotiation prior to the Inquiry, however due to the current timescales for delivery and the lengthy negotiations to date, there is a compelling case in the public interest for the confirmation of the CPO so that the land and new rights required can be acquired compulsorily to prevent significant cost and delay to the scheme.

1.11. Conclusion

- a. The evidence presented by the Council's witnesses who appear at this Inquiry demonstrates that the scheme has been carefully prepared, takes account of the needs of the area, will be an asset to the area and that there are no impediments to its delivery.

