

MP says depot plans 'flawed'

Andy Burnham will oppose HS2 unless deal is fair



ANDY Burnham has promised to vote against HS2 if he doesn't believe the area is getting a fair deal from the proposal.

At a public meeting at Lowton Labour Club, chaired by the Leigh MP, he said that certain aspects of the proposed route - the consultation for which will end on January 31 - would cause major disruption to the area.

He agreed with many people at the packed meeting that the plans for the depot seemed flawed, and feels other sites need to be reconsidered.

He said: "My job is to represent my constituents, and if they are against this proposal and I don't believe we are getting a fair deal for the amount of disruption that will be caused in the area I will vote against it."

"The plans for the depot seem deeply flawed, and I will recommend to the Government they go back to the drawing board and reconsider some of the other

sites that were originally considered."

The quality of the consultation at Leigh Sports Village was also raised, with residents complaining the plans were not detailed enough for them to fully assess the route's impact. Many also raised concerns about the impact HS2 would have on the landscape, including the potential loss of two listed buildings and the disruption to two triple SIs (areas of scientific interest).

Mr Burnham advised against boycotting the consultation forms, adding: "The best thing for residents to do is raise the issues they do have on the form and mention as a side note the quality of the consultation."

SUPPORT CRITICISED:

THE debate surrounding plans to get Leigh back on the rail map was discussed at the meeting on January 9.

Leigh MP Andy Burnham was criticised for showing support for Transport for Leigh's plan to place a station where HS2 would cross the East Lancashire Road and create an interchange with the existing Manchester to Liverpool line.

Mr Burnham sought to clarify his position.

He said: "Leigh needs better public transport, but my priority is to represent the

opinions of my constituents.

"If HS2 has to happen I will try to ensure this area gets the best deal it can from it."

"The question I have to answer is will the disruption be worth it, and that is not a decision I can make yet."

Several residents voiced concerns about the amount of disruption the proposed station would cause, and questioned whether it was necessary.

■ What do you think?

Have your say on the HS2 and Transport for Leigh plans for a railway station

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Andy Burnham