

LaGTAC Presentation to LENDF Monday 11th April 2022

A summary document for discussion

Intro:

Background to LaGTAC (Lowton and Golborne Traffic Advisory Committee): the formal part of the Lowton and Golborne Traffic Action Group

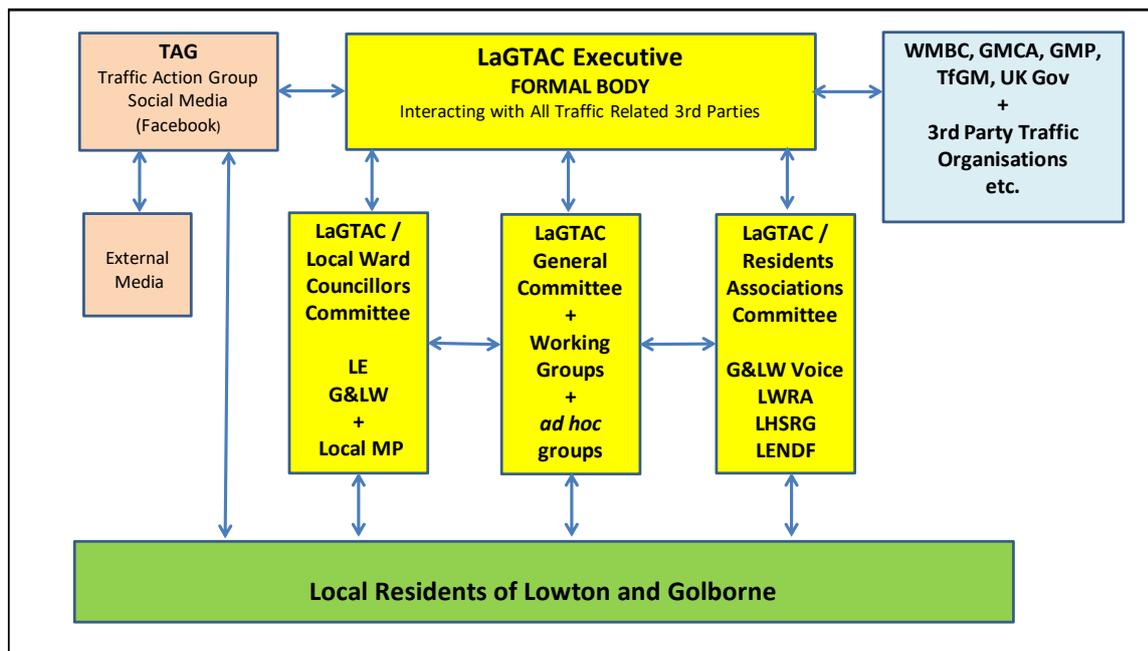
Three topics to cover:

- 1. LaGTAC's submission to HS2 – Environmental Statement Response form covering: Traffic, Congestion and Pollution.**
- 2. A simple taxation procedure to replace the need for CAZ charges. i.e. a new 'Road Pricing' policy.**
- 3. Speeding Issues within Lowton and Golborne – an update.**

Intro: Background to The Lowton and Golborne Traffic Action Group

The Lowton and Golborne Traffic Action Group came into existence in 2019. In January 2020 a formal organisation **LaGTAC** (Lowton and Golborne Traffic Advisory Committee) was created with a constitution and terms of reference for formal interactions with “All Traffic Related 3rd Parties”. The **Traffic Action Group (TAG)** is the social media body which has approximately 1.9k members. viz.

LaGTAC (Lowton and Golborne Traffic Advisory Committee) Structure and lines of communication



1. LaGTAC's submission to HS2 – Environmental Statement Response form covering: Traffic, Congestion and Pollution.

- LaGTAC's formal response to the Environmental Statement was submitted by email to Ipsos-MORI (30th March) and has been acknowledged.
- The response form consisted of 19 pages of text focussing solely on the TRAFFIC implications of HS2 to the congestion (total gridlock of the village) and pollution associated with quasi-static traffic.

The evidence given to HS2 was based upon a 20,000 word 54 page report written by LaGTAC and **presented to Wigan Council planning Committee** as an objection to the Bloor Homes Phase 3 development in 2020. And a LaGTAC "Community impact statement" **presented to the Parkside Development Inquiry** in 2021. These are equally valid for any developments within or near to Lowton and Golborne. **On the basis of the following: How can Wigan Council justify not rejecting the HS2 Risley- Bamfurlong development?**

- Local residents within the wards of Lowton East and Golborne and Lowton West have been campaigning for over a decade against the overdevelopment of Lowton and Golborne. **They find it insane that Wigan Council support this unviable HS2 project (Risley to Bamfurlong Spur) which is neither wanted nor needed.** Once again, Wigan Council have not consulted with the local residents who have far better knowledge of the area than any council officers.
- The current road infrastructure is unable to cope with the current amount of traffic travelling on the local roads – let alone the impact of further vehicles resulting from further developments in and adjacent to its local ward boundaries and the impact of the HS2 spur construction.

- **Wigan Council and the Greater Manchester Combined Authority both support the HS2 link - against the wishes of local residents.**
- Before HS2 considered putting the spur through Lowton: **surely they must have been made aware by Wigan Council of the already significant development that had and was proposed for the area. This information has been available since 2013.** One only has to look at the ‘Golborne and Lowton Infrastructure Assessment’ produced by Wigan council (November 2013)¹.
- LaGTAC referred HS2 back to the Wigan Council Infrastructure Assessment document of 2013 where they stated:
“further planned developments within the Lowton and Golborne would cause serious issues”.
- Also that:
“Any further housing developments would lead to severe strain on infrastructure and lead to traffic congestion”.
[Sections: 3.13.1, 13.3.2, 13.3.3 ,3.13.5] and

“...proposals taken in isolation will not impact severely on the local transport network, the cumulative impact of the full 1000 homes could be, and is likely to be, severe, given the overall scale of development and the existing congestion issues in Golborne and Lowton.”
- Wigan Council has now built and is planning to build well in excess of this number, and that doesn’t include ongoing developments, or developments planned and/or being considered by other local authorities and adjacent wards to Lowton and Golborne.

¹ WMBC document “Golborne and Lowton Infrastructure Assessment” (Highways Existing Conditions), November 2013.

- The proposed HS2 development would be the ‘nail in the coffin’ for completely shutting down the whole of the Lowton/Golborne road network at peak times – A complete disaster for the local community. Why do Wigan Council support the HS2 development when they should know better!
- In Wigan Council’s open report on “HS2 Phase 2b Hybrid Bill Environmental Statement – Formal Response” of 30th March 2022 **they do not consider (under 2.1) that congestion and pollution are KEY concerns.**
- As far as LaGTAC and other residents groups are concerned none of the local councils or the developers have approached LaGTAC or local community groups to fully consider their viewpoints on these matters. As was clearly recognised in a recent Government White Paper where they state (generally) that:

“In respect of transparency and public engagement - As was noted in 2016/17, direct communication with local communities is extremely rare”.

- In 2020/2021 a new ‘Golborne and Lowton Infrastructure Assessment’ consultation took place between Wigan Council officers, local ward councillors, LaGTAC and local community groups. In respect of traffic congestion in Lowton residents voted overwhelmingly that the **measures the Council was proposing would do little to address what is now recognised as a chronic and growing problem.** The general opinion of residents was that this consultation was simply a tick box exercise and Wigan Council did not listen and act upon considered opinions.

- In 2020 LaGTAC wrote to Wigan Council asking for a moratorium on house building whilst further discussion took place between the residents and the council. This was rejected outright.
- LaGTAC (again in 2020) suggested an oversight committee (comprising, council officers the developers and Lowton/Golborne residents' groups) to take place at initial planning meetings for 'Any' developments! – this was again rejected.

Referring back to Wigan Council's earlier document of 2013 - section 3.13 referred to the following statements as priorities for the council:

“Congestion reduction and management is one of the key priorities for Wigan Council”. [3.13.1]; *“..there are congestion issues on the highway network in Golborne and Lowton”* [13.13.2]; *“surveys validated traffic issues and quantified the current levels of peak hour congestion and queuing at a number of the key junctions.”* [13.3.3]; and ***“the data demonstrates that wherever development is accommodated it will adversely affect the junctions listed, and particularly junctions along the A580 East Lancashire Road”*** [3.13.5].

Also, with reference to the following sections the National Planning Policy Framework NPPF (February 2019) [102, 103, 111] it confirms that then when it comes to promoting sustainable transport that the ***“council and developers should take account of transport issues and that these should be considered from the earliest stages of plan-making*** – including:

(a) the potential impacts of development on transport networks,

(d) the environmental impacts of traffic and transport infrastructure and

(e) patterns of movement, streets, parking and other transport considerations are integral to the design of schemes”.

This document also states that

“the planning system should actively manage patterns of growth in support of these objectives..... This can help to reduce congestion and emissions, and improve air quality and public health. and this should be taken into account in both plan-making and decision-making.

Also, **“a transport statement or transport assessment so that the likely impacts of the proposal can be assessed”**

Furthermore, as a key priority across Greater Manchester Wigan Council state within their Air Quality document that a ***priority is to “Increase efficiency of traffic movement by reducing congestion and stop-start travel to achieve a smoother emissions profile and overall lower emissions, especially at peak hours.***

The area around Lowton and Golborne is a bottle neck to traffic movement and the roads are already over-saturated with traffic (150% over capacity).

Over capacity junctions identified in 2013 were:

A580 East Lancs Road
B5207 Church Lane
A572 Newton Road
B5207 Kenyon Lane
Winwick Lane
A579 Atherleigh Way
A572 St Helens Road
B5207 Church Lane
Golborne Road
Slag Lane
Stone Cross Lane

These are the same junctions referred to in Volume 2 and Volume 5 of the HS2 publications. **So why haven't these infrastructure and congestion issues been addressed before now by Wigan Council? Also, were HS2 not made aware of these concerns raised by Wigan Council back in 2013?** The experience of using these junctions is that they have not been improved and congestion is now significantly worse throughout both Lowton and Golborne.

2. A simple taxation procedure to replace the need for CAZ charges. i.e. a new 'Road Pricing' policy.

- We know that residents and businesses throughout GMCA are vitriolically opposed to any Clean Air Zone charges, as they were with Congestion charges. **Any proposed CAZ heavily penalises certain groups of vehicles and therefore businesses - not only within GMCA but in other parts of the UK.** However:
 - Q1. What proposals have been put forward that:
 - brings in new revenue to offset the falling revenue from moving towards electric vehicles?
 - provides revenue to offset pollution? and
 - money to repair the physical damage done to the roads due to a year-on-year increase in traffic?

Instead of just criticising what has been a shambles in respect of GMCA's introduction of a CAZ charge – let us consider:

- Q2. What parameters affect pollution and road damage?
Answer: These are considered to be:
 - Vehicle emissions (CO₂, NO_x, particulates PM_{2.5} etc.)
 - Vehicle weight – road damage is proportional to (vehicle weight)⁴ [or more correctly (axle weight)⁴ and number of axles]
 - Total mileage travelled per vehicle per year
 - Congestion [attributable to too much housing and commercial development, lack of funding for road infrastructure improvements and of course increase in traffic levels. Also – dare I say it: more cyclists on A, B and C roads!]

- **A simple UK Road Pricing model [LaGTAC] has been developed to cater for the first three items [See below – Appendix A] which can also incorporate Fuel Tax.**
- Congestion is a big issue that really should be dealt with by local councils etc. (i.e. at the point of impact), in consultation with government. But, as we have seen people don't want a congestion tax

LaGTAC's Chair wrote to the Secretaries of State for Transport (Grant Shapps) and Environment (George Eustice), plus Parliamentary Under Secretaries for Climate Adaption (Jo Churchill) and Department for Transport (Trudy Harrison) 8th March. Also, to the working committees for DEFRA and Road Transport 22nd March asking for a meeting with our local MP James Grundy and Graham to discuss LaGTAC's Road Pricing procedure since they [Parliamentary Transport Committee] had to have some proposals by the end of 2022. (see **Summary of latest Road Pricing Policy document (Feb 2022) below).**

This latter document was made available to Graham early March just prior to a letter being sent to the ministers. Interestingly many areas of discussion within this report overlapped those parameters given in the simple procedure noted above: but, they did not qualify how they would be used to determine a final road pricing charge. In Graham's letter he commented "I believe that this is a very challenging timescale, especially with reference to Conclusion 8 that *"...one of those options should be a road pricing mechanism using telematic technology..."*. I consider that:

- Telematic technology is a very cost intensive way to proceed when other options are available at lower cost to implement.

- The equipment installation (monitoring and signage) and maintenance costs alone will be enormous.
- Software development costs will be large, and beta-testing will be a lengthy process.
- Motorists will resist 'Big Brother' black box technology being installed in their vehicles.
- There are likely to be significant legal challenges.
- It will take many years to put a telematic system in place and way beyond the 2022 deadline referenced in Conclusion 17 above.
- In the interim period, while the Government departments consider the potential effect and impact of telematic technology, a simple change to the DVLA's current software could enable a road pricing scheme to be introduced very quickly and at a relatively low cost.
- Not only could changes be introduced relatively quickly it could eliminate the separate fuel duty, and current VED charges used at present. Furthermore, this simple modified VED road pricing scheme would intrinsically include a green environmental tax which is equitable to all vehicles. This avoids the need any duplicated charging schemes, and more importantly removes the need for any controversial and highly unpopular local Clean Air Zone charges introduced at extortionately high cost to businesses and our local residents.

In the interim period, while the Government departments consider the potential effect and impact of telematic technology, a simple change to the DVLA's current software could enable a road pricing scheme to be introduced very quickly and at a relatively low cost.

- An email from the Parliamentary Committees stated that they would respond within approximately 20 working days from receipt of the 2nd letter (i.e. approximately 15th April) albeit there are considerable other pressures on them at present.

Appendix 1: Summary of ‘a suggested simple procedure for road and pollution tax within the UK (An alternative to Clean Air Zone charges)’ © LaGTAC 2022

The damage to roads and environment is a function of the weight of the vehicle (kg), mileage (km) and pollution emitted per mile (km).

If, **R** is a Combined VED & Pollution charge, then an equation of the form given below may be used

$$R = C + [\alpha.f(W) + \beta.f(P)].M$$

Where:

C Fixed charge levied on all road users (excluding pedestrians) [£]

W Weight of vehicle (if it exceeds 50kg) [kg]

P level of pollution emitted by vehicle per km travelled [e.g. gm of CO₂ per km]

And where P is a function of individual pollutants i.e.
 $P = f(\text{CO}_2: \text{NO}_2: \text{PM}_{2.5} \text{ etc, level})$

M Annual distance covered by vehicle (determined from MoT certificates etc.) [km]

α & β are constants linking monetary values to the parameters

[NB the duty on fuel may simply be accounted for within the choice of parameters α and/or β]

This ensures that:

- **all road users contribute towards road maintenance**
- **light weight vehicles are penalised less than HGVs**
- **highly polluting vehicles are taxed more**
- **those travelling a few miles per year are not penalised by a flat rate tax**
- **a separate fuel duty can be accommodated within the expression for R via constants α and/or β**

This would mean that there is no requirement for any Clean Air Zones (CAZs) to be considered since all polluters are taxed irrespective of where they drive. The DVLA hold all vehicle details (owner, weight, emissions and has direct access to MoT mileage data). Mileages are also noted when vehicles change hands. The VED could be made similar to an annual Personal Tax form where you either get a refund, or a charge to pay for extra mileage travelled.

Thus, there is no need for complex charge enforcement software or CAZ cameras. A simple annual tax payable to DVLA (in lieu of current VED etc.). *What could be more cost effective? And easier to implement?*

Summary of latest Road Pricing Policy document (Feb 2022)

(Extracts taken from 'House of Commons Transport Committee report' HC 789, 4th Feb 2022)

1. Road pricing involves direct charges levied on motorists for driving on public roads. It has two purposes: first, to generate revenue; and, secondly, to manage the costs of motoring such as pollution, emissions and congestion.
2. The **taxes imposed by fuel duty and vehicle excise duty are increasingly duplicated by local schemes that charge motorists for entering congestion zones and clean air zones**. The simultaneous operation of local and national road pricing schemes would create confusion and unfair double taxation.
3. **The situation is urgent**. An arm's-length body should be tasked with recommending an alternative road charging mechanism **to replace fuel duty and vehicle excise duty by the end of 2022**
4. Fuel duty and vehicle excise duty raise some £35 billion a year. Revenue from vehicle excise duty (£7 billion). Fuel duty (£28 billion) is disbursed across the whole of state spending to fund, for example, schools, hospitals and the armed forces.
5. Neither fuel duty nor vehicle excise duty are currently levied on electric vehicles.
6. If electric vehicle drivers become accustomed to no-tax motoring, it may become socially and politically difficult for the Exchequer to extract motoring taxes from them in future.
7. Without radical reform, policies to deliver net zero emissions by 2050 will result in zero revenue for the Government from motoring taxation, and will lead to either decreased investment in public services, including road maintenance, or increased Government borrowing.
8. The Government must make it clear to motorists who purchase **electric vehicles that they will be required to pay for road usage, as is currently the case for petrol and diesel vehicles**. It must ensure that any alternative road charging mechanism incentivises motorists to purchase vehicles with cleaner emissions while contributing tax revenues to support the maintenance of the road network.
9. The **Government must start an honest conversation with the public on the funding implications** for road development and maintenance and for other essential public services of decreased revenue from vehicle excise duty and fuel duty.
10. To promote fairness and public acceptance, any alternative road charging mechanism must (a) **entirely replace fuel duty and vehicle excise duty** rather than being added alongside those taxes; and

(b) **be revenue neutral** with most motorists paying the same or less than they do currently.
(c) Such a mechanism should be phased in before fuel duty and vehicle excise duty decline to zero. The situation is urgent; work must begin without delay.

11. New taxes, and particularly those that rely on new technology, take many years to introduce.
 12. **The more fuel you use and the heavier the vehicle, the more you pay, and taxation is linked to distance driven.**
 13. The **Government must examine the role that telematic technology can play** in delivering a replacement road pricing mechanism that sets the cost of motoring based on the duration and time of the journey and vehicle type and size. The Government must assess the potential effect of telematic technology on changing drivers' behaviour and delivering its wider policies on air quality, congestion, public transport and public health.
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3. Speeding Issues within Lowton and Golborne – an update.

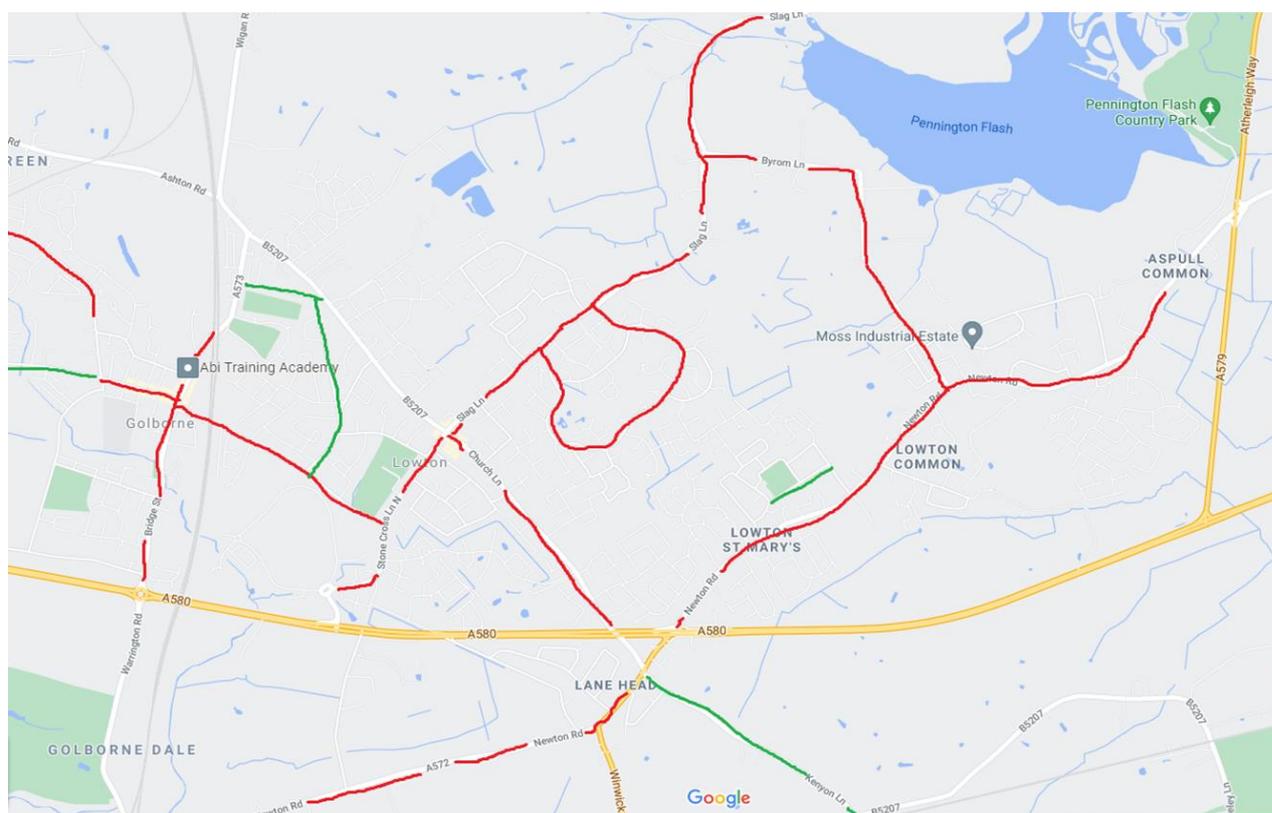
- In 2020 LaGTAC set up a working relationship with Greater Manchester Police (GMP) to accommodate road traffic safety related issues and in particular traffic enforcement especially in respect of excessive speeding within Lowton and Golborne. **Excessive speeding is one of the most discussed issues within Lowton and Golborne. LaGTAC provided a comprehensive technical report highlighting data/evidence showing the need for enforcement.**
- Early in 2021 a working group was formed comprising GMP local neighbourhood policing unit officers (under Insp. Andrew Smith (Leigh Div)), LaGTAC and the Road Traffic Enforcement Unit (covering Greater Manchester).
- **This traffic enforcement programme was to be a long-term commitment – not a one-off blitz on motorists.**
- **Over the period 7th May to 4th June 2021: LaGTAC undertook a survey of local residents via Facebook (TAG, Golborne and Lowton West Voice etc) to determine local speeding hot-spots.**

Summary of results

- There were **219 citations** from the survey
- **43 Roads were cited** within Lowton and Golborne
- Ten roads accounted for 70% of these citations
- The lowest scoring 25 roads accounted for 15% of the total citations

The top 10 roads nominated were:

	Road	% of total citations	Speed Limit (mph)
1	Slag Lane – Lowton	16.4	40/30
2	Church Lane - Lowton	11.4	30
3	Newton Road - Lowton	10.5	30
4	Stone Cross Lane North - Lowton	7.3	30
5	Nook Lane - Golborne	5.0	30
6	Bridge Street - Golborne	4.6	30
7	High Street - Golborne	4.1	30
8	Sandy Lane - Lowton	3.7	20
9	Garton Drive - Lowton	3.7	20
10	Edge Green Lane - Golborne	3.2	30



Map showing roads (RED + GREEN) where 85% of speeding hot-spot citations were made

- On the basis of these results LaGTAC, in consultation with GMP, proposed a matrix for traffic enforcement over the initial period June to October 2021 and as you are well aware the **Road Traffic Enforcement Unit undertook a series of enforcement actions on the above roads plus some random roads from the full list.**
- LaGTAC along with concerned local residents groups have been taking **speed measurements using ‘time over fixed distance’ and CCTV footage** to determine maximum vehicular (of various types) speeds achieved and statistical evaluations of speed/traffic flow rates at several locations. **In concert with these studies LaGTAC borrowed a radar speed gun from the Council’s ‘Community Speed Watch’ over the period June to October 2021.**
- A summary spread sheet is available for these studies at various locations (to be provided with the minutes of this meeting). The roads studied to date comprise: Slag Lane (40 and 30mph zones), Newton Road and Stone Cross Lane North (30mph zones), Sandy Lane (20mph zone) plus Garton Drive (20mph residential zone).

Summary (averaged values)

	Speed Limit (mph)	Average speed (mph)	% exceeding speed limit	Excessive speeders % > (SL + 15mph)	Max speed observed (mph)
Slag Lane	40	37.5	25	4	62
Slag Lane	30	35.2	92	4	54
Newton Road	30	38.5	94	8	125
Stone Cross Lane	30	33.3	87	2	52
Sandy Lane	20	31.9	99	26	52
Garton Drive	20	36.4	99	57	73

Current status

- LaGTAC et al have a number of volunteers for undertaking speed gun measurements.
- LaGTAC having returned the speed gun to the council in November are now unable to borrow it for the foreseeable future – its on loan withing the Wigan Borough
- Wigan Council and GMP are aware that no-one else within the Lowton/Golborne have been loaned a speed-gun.
- LaGTAC applied for funding for a speed gun – but were been turned down by the council.
- GMP who have now taken over the new ‘neighbourhood speed watch’ programme have been unable to provide LaGTAC with any equipment at the present time.
- So, we sit and wait whilst twiddling our thumbs!!!!
- Police blitzkrieg on motorists Friday 8th April – update?

Document compiled 11th April 2022 on behalf of LaGTAC

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