

Notes on Meeting of Lane Head South Residents' Group Lowton with Andy Burnham MP in conjunction with the Highways Agency, Wigan, Warrington and St Helen's Councils, Cheshire and GM Police

Re - request to de prime the A579

Leigh Town Hall Monday 2nd December

Present: : Rob Owen and Richard Beamer Wigan MBC, Mark Tune Warrington BC, Rory Lingham St Helens BC, Shaun Harrison GMP, Neil Farnworth & Ian Stewardson Cheshire Police, Shaun Reynolds Highways Agency, Andy Burnham MP, Counc. James Grundy (Lowton East).Ann Lowe, Kath Houlton, Denis Eubank, Colin Lowe, Gill Dickinson - Lane Head South Residents' Group Lowton.

- 1. Andy Burnham began with an introduction which gave a detailed and comprehensive overview of the traffic problems on Winwick Lane making reference to the unsuitability of Winwick Lane as a primary route and its proximity to the Wigan and St Helens boundaries.**
- 2. Shaun Reynolds (Highways Agency) outlined the proposals for improvements to Junction 23 at Haydock Island. These are due to be put into effect by May 2015. Concern was expressed that any further HGV's exiting Junction 23 northbound would add to congestion causing tails backs onto the motorway carriageway. The proposed improvements were due to an increase in traffic on M6 and A580 over the years - not because of any proposed development at the old Parkside Colliery.**
- 3. Whilst there was almost universal sympathy for the plight of Lane Head Residents, concerns were raised:**
 - Mark Tune (Warrington) commented on the knock on effects to other roads and communities (Newton and Winwick). Concern expressed that traffic would seek alternative routes rather than travel to next junction. Also that it could have implications for the M62. Sat nav systems are notoriously slow in re- routing**
 - It was stated that a physical barrier would not be acceptable because of:**

- a) access to Kenyon Hall Farm/Bibby's Commercial
 - b) its use as an exceptional load route
 - c) it is a strategic diversion route
- (i) It was also stated that the Police could not enforce an HGV ban
 - (ii) There would be a significant cost implication in terms of surveys/modelling and signage.
 - (iii) Winwick Lane, not significantly an accident black spot. 3 accidents in last 3 years. One fatality. One "slight accident" involving an HGV.
4. After some deliberation and pressure by Andy Burnham and James Grundy, Rory Lingham (St Helens) proposed that models be drawn up to gather data throughout the area which would identify the routes taken by HGV's. Highways Agency to take the lead on this. An external study/consultation may have to be carried out. Shaun Reynolds (Highways Agency) stated that the traffic problems on Winwick Lane would not be solved by an HGV ban, only a bypass would do this. Members of LHSRG agreed the need for a bypass, but wanted it to be recognised that a ban on HGV's would be a huge step forward. Andy supported a bypass wholeheartedly as he said did the other ward councillors.
5. Thanks were given to Mark Tune (Warrington) who had organised the traffic count on Winwick Lane. The automatic traffic count, carried out Sept 30th - October 6th recorded over 96,000 vehicles entering/exiting Winwick Lane over the course of a week. 5 day daily average 14,756 of which approximately 4.5% were 7.5 tons class 5 and above, 1.2 % class 10 and above ie 664 HGV's per day of which 177 were Class 10.
6. Reference was again made to a bypass as a solution to the traffic problems at Lane Head. Rob Owen (Wigan) stated that this was not economically viable and had been rejected by Wigan. He also stated that the 1000 new houses proposed in the area would have an insignificant impact compared with projected natural growth of traffic.

7. Andy to reconvene meeting before the end of June when the data has been collected and analysed.