

NOTES OF THE A579 DE-PRIMING MEETING HELD ON 11th MARCH 2016
AT LEIGH TOWN HALL

Attendance:

Andy Burnham	MP
Rob Own	Wigan MBC
Kevin Hargreaves	Wigan MBC
Karl Battersby	Wigan MBC
Mark Tune	Warrington BC
Rory Lingham	St. Helens BC
Sion Owen-Ellis	Highways England
Richard Skitt	JMP Consultants
Ian Stewardson	Cheshire Police
Kath Houlton	Lowton East Councillor
Edward Houlton	Lowton East Councillor
James Grundy	Lowton East Councillor
Ann Lowe	LHSRG
Colin Lowe	LHSRG
Gill Dickinson	LHSRG
Marie Cooper	LHSRG

Andy Burnham opened the meeting by welcoming everyone especially Karl Battersby who has been appointed Director of Economy and Environment at Wigan MBC. Councillor Grundy gave an update on the current position, explaining that meetings have been going on for the better part of two years. At the end of the last meeting the various Authorities were going to get together to discuss a way forward. From the residents point of view the situation remains the same and it is hoped for a conclusion today.

Andy Burnham felt that the whole area of Winwick Lane, Haydock Island and surrounding roads was reaching a point of gridlock at peak times and the problem over the last few years has definitely worsened and traffic problems had become unsustainable requiring a larger and holistic solution.

Kevin Hargreaves reported that a meeting was held in early January with Warrington and St. Helens representatives and a number of options were discussed. Reservation has been expressed by the Croft and Culcheth Parish Councillors regarding implementing a weight restriction on Winwick Lane as this could divert heavy traffic from Winwick Lane onto other rural roads. Agreement had been reached between Wigan and Warrington that the Winwick Lane would be de-primed and changes to the signage would be made. This could be a relatively speedy process as the consultation has already been carried out. Satellite Navigation and on-line information would be informed. The direct route would be from Junction 23. Highways England has agreed to change the signage on the motorway, reiterating their previous held view that the right traffic should be on the right roads. They pointed out that the junction could accommodate any extra HGV traffic which would utilise Junction 23.

Mark Tune reported that there are sensitivities in Croft regarding HGVs travelling through the area and Warrington will oppose any restriction on HGVs using Winwick Lane. It was reported that currently there are 80 large vehicles travelling daily from Winwick Lane through Croft and they are asking for a ban but Warrington do not have the resources to carry out a study.

Andy Burnham asked the question, was Haydock Island working? Highways England reported that at Haydock Island there are currently two installation surveys taking place and the first report will be

available in May with the second in November. It was generally felt that there had been little improvement in the traffic flow at peak times especially going onto the island from Lowton. A smart motorway system is to be installed between Junctions 20 to 25. HE reported a mixed response to the 'improvements' at Haydock and stated the reasons for not having a free flow lane to south bound M6.

Karl Battersby reported that initially the survey should be completed on the junction. It was sensible to de-prime the Lane and encourage traffic to go to Haydock Island. He gave commitment to the study by Warrington to assess HGVs on the rural lanes in Croft in order to move towards an Experimental Traffic Order. The study should be completed in six months. Mark Tune to assess how much the survey will cost. The Chief Executive from Warrington has attended a Croft Parish Council meeting and has asked them to contribute to the study but they have refused. The study will assess the traffic movements with a view to putting a ban on HGV's in that area. The two Councils should therefore work together.

Rory Lingham reported that the joint venture with developers and St. Helens Council to promote Parkside has gone public with a website and it is expected that a planning application will be submitted in the early summer for Phase 1. Work is carrying on with the exact content of the application and when appropriate a public consultation will be undertaken. No information was forthcoming on the size of Phase 1 or the amount of traffic that this could generate.

Ed Houlton expressed his concerns about further phases and referred to piecemeal developments which grow without the necessary infrastructure. He stated that Winwick Lane could not be used as a service road for Parkside. Rob Owen asked if the consultants could share some of their data on traffic with the other Councils which will be affected. Rory Lingham could give no further information other than what he had just reported.

Andy Burnham summarised

- Winwick Lane would be de-primed and signage altered.
- Initial monitoring needs to take place and Karl has offered to help with the survey which Warrington will undertake.
- A request for Wigan Chief Executive, Donna Hall to contact the Chief Executive of Warrington.
- The smart motorway and Parkside should be linked in to the ETO and requested Highways England to look at the masterplan.
- He also suggested that it would be helpful if HE worked with Wigan, Warrington and St. Helens.
- He thanked Wigan and felt that progress had been made but that the ETO is crucial and requested that Warrington and Wigan come up with a joint plan recognising Croft's concerns.
- He reiterated that it was not the intention to push Lane Head problem onto our neighbours and that he was seeking a solution that suited all parties.

A further meeting will be held in July. (10am 8th July now confirmed)