

2<sup>nd</sup> Jan 2010

Dear Mr. Owen

I refer to your e-mail dated 18<sup>th</sup> December relating to the use of Hesketh Meadow Lane for access to the proposed new school on the site of Lowton Civic Hall.

The content of your e-mail does little to answer the points I raised on behalf of local residents in my letters dated 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Dec. You appear not to offer a solution to the problem posed by the conditions demanded in the Transport Report as a pre-requisite for acceptance of its findings, namely that children must continue to walk to school.

I note your observation that **'the site is well served by good walk and cycle connections'**. I feel sure you will accept that no responsible parent would allow their child to cycle to school for obvious reasons of safety and this accounts for the fact that few if any children resort to that mode of transport. To anticipate that children would be prepared to walk distances of two miles or more from the Golborne area is quite frankly unrealistic, despite the quality of the walkways. I maintain with confidence, the reality is that children who at present walk to their local schools will instead be dropped off and picked up, a fact which, as clearly stated in the transport report, would invalidate its findings.

I would challenge your assumption that traffic using Laburnum Road would somehow alleviate the problem of congestion. Traffic using this route, which incidentally is totally unsuitable and inadequate and was not designed for that purpose, would ultimately converge at junctions on Hesketh Meadow Lane to gain access to the proposed site and would exacerbate rather than alleviate the problem. Moreover, such traffic would merely spread the disruption and the threat to the safety of residents over a wider area.

With regard to the construction of a junction at the former rail bridge on Newton Road, you fail to spell out the specific nature of the problems encountered in your assessment of the suitability of a junction at this point as a means of access to the proposed school. I maintain that, on received advice, it is perfectly possible in terms of available space and safe accommodation of traffic and pedestrian volumes and movements.

I note your concern for safety and protection of the integrity of the Strategic Route Network. I put it to you that a junction on Newton Road at the point of Hesketh Meadow Lane, which also forms part of the Strategic Route Network, would pose a far greater threat to the safety of residents in this area.

I have every confidence that the considerable resources within your department in terms of technical expertise and professional judgment are more than sufficient to cope with the challenge presented by the design and construction of a safe and adequate junction at the former rail bridge without the need to seek advice from any external source.

It would appear that the choice of Hesketh Meadow Lane for access to the proposed school is influenced more by matters of expediency and expense rather than consideration for the safety of the residents of this area and the daily disruption to their lives.

Yours sincerely

Mrs. I Gillette

*Mr Owen's reply follows:*

Dear Mrs Gillette,

Thank you for your latest email concerning the proposal to locate a school on the site of Lowton Civic Hall.

You suggest that responsible parents would not permit children to cycle to school for safety reasons, yet as you have previously quoted from the Transport Report, many children already walk to school. Clearly parents of high school children must be confident of the abilities of their children's to cope with the highway network as pedestrians or as cyclists before they should permit them to walk unaccompanied to school. As the on site observations have revealed, many parents already have adequate confidence in their children's abilities and permit their children to walk to school and many other destinations and already interact with traffic. I am aware that many children currently walk and cycle to schools in the area including primary schools. Some of these children are unaccompanied, you have not provided any indications as to why this would change should a new school be provided. Furthermore, casual observations on the residential estates and on other roads throughout Lowton and Golborne reveal that many children are already permitted to cycle in the area. I am also aware that the Civic Hall site and the roads surrounding it have been used for cycle training by the Councils cycle training provider, giving further indication that training is offered to young people to improve their confidence in coping with traffic situations.

You identified that traffic usage of alternative routes has not been included in the report, I can respond in that this gives a robust approach to the study and its findings. As stated previously, Laburnum Road and the adjacent residential estate is likely that this area will be included within the 20mph Zone area for the new school site and traffic calming measures may be introduced.

I maintain my position in that it is not possible to accommodate a suitable junction on Newton Road at the former rail bridge and as a result I will not be carrying out any further investigation into the provision of a new junction on on Newton Road to serve this development. I am satisfied with the investigations that I have already carried out, I will however consider any further submissions that you submit following the advice you have been offered again I confirm that your advisors can use the traffic information contained within the Transport Report to inform the design suggestions.

*Rob Owen - Senior Engineer - Traffic and DC*  
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