

Scrutiny of Transport Assessment /Traffic Congestion

Comments on the WLLP Transport Assessment (Draft dated 12/10/2018)

This paper has been produced by a local resident and member of an informal steering group we established. It is their assessment of the Transport Assessment (available at www.westlancs.gov.uk/lpr) not a professional assessment. It is offered to help residents in making representations.

In preparing this review of the above paper, I have referenced each point in line with the paragraph numbering used in the document so that each point can be cross referenced more readily.

The following points may offer some areas in which this draft assessment is weak or even misleading in terms of its scope, as well as some of the key findings from the assessment that illustrate the growing stress on the principal routes in the borough.

ES Growth ii - The assessment acknowledges that West Lancs is 'unique' in looking so far forward. The projections from neighbouring authorities are therefore based on an arbitrary estimate of growth.

1.3 - Data from St Helens council was not forthcoming and so the impact of growth in Rainford, Eccleston and St Helens have not been factored into the analysis. This would have a significant impact on traffic using the A570 and especially at the junction with the A580 (East Lancs Road)

1.5.1 - The report does NOT focus on All forms of transport, does NOT detail levels of congestion or journey times on roads and does NOT detail impacts of individual development sites. Together this allows for capacity requirements to be amortised across the whole network or even individual link section without recognising discreet times of heavier congestion.

2.2.7 - States that 'Switch Island' has been excluded. As a vital junction between Sefton, the docks and West Lancs it is critical in assessing traffic congestion and yet it appears to have been excluded from the report.

2.7 - The method for determining the 'stress' level of a road is interesting. It is a ratio of the Congestion Reference Flow (CRF) and the Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) flow. What makes it interesting is that both figures are a measure of the performance of a road link BETWEEN junctions and as such does not consider in itself the congestion that may occur at a junction on that link.

So for example, the M58 will have relatively low traffic volumes when the peaks are averaged over a 24-hour period, and since the flow capacity of a 3 lane motorway is by its very nature is high, the net stress level on this route will indicate a lower %. This implies that the M58 is underutilised and stress free and so can support traffic growth, however the analysis of the Junctions will show that all M58 junctions will be under capacity in the Preferred Option model, even without the St Helens statistics.

4.2.10/11 - indicates that link roads from M58 J4 are under significantly less stress and that Skelmersdale and Up Holland experience largely constant free-flow conditions.

4.4.3 - When considering the M6 between J25 and J27 (includes M58/J26) the current stress level is at approx 76% and so whilst it may be considered to be within capacity at present, the report concludes that its ability to accommodate additional traffic without increasing the frequency from congestion is limited.

4.5.17 - concedes the point that whilst the M58 and M57 seemingly function to free-flow conditions it experiences heavy delay at both peak times at either end of the M58, citing the junction impacts of Switch Island and the Orrell interchange.

5.3.4 - The fact that the report acknowledges that 21% of the network will be subject to a 90% stress level from the Preferred Option alone (rising to 30% when neighbouring growth is factored in) significantly under plays the significance of short link road sections joining the principle town centres. This is because the total length of these heavily congested roads is small when compared to long stretches of uncongested roads that we may see elsewhere in the borough.

5.4.1 - All links into Ormskirk town centre will be exacerbated by Local Plan growth, with demand expected to far outstrip capacity. This will have a further detrimental impact on businesses and the visitor community for the town, leading to further erosion of the town centre as a place to visit. It must be considered highly unlikely that public transport will be able alleviate this problem.

5.7.2 - The claim that the highway network in Sefton is unlikely to experience any change as a result of the Preferred Options. This statement seems to have no validity when one considers that the unmet housing need is intended to accommodate Sefton need and that the principle transit route to the Port of Liverpool will be via the M58 at Switch Island, the A59 and A5036 corridor, all of which are pass through Sefton. This is confirmed later in the report at 5.8.2, which confirms that the A5036 will breach the 90% stress threshold.

6.2.3 - confirms that junction capacity has been assessed in isolation and do NOT reflect the inter-relationships between them on the network.

6.3.2 - The Preferred Option will result in 8 of 11 priority junctions will be subject to flows exceeding their capacity, leading to queuing and delays.

6.4.1 - 2 arms of the M6 J27 roundabout will operate over capacity.

6.4.2 - 8 out of 13 roundabouts will experience queuing and the M58 J3 and others in Burscough and Ormskirk will have demand greater than capacity.

6.0. Assessment of Switch Island, and Windle Island has not been considered in this report, both are significant junctions for traffic flows into West Lancashire.

7.1.1 - I believe that the statement should read that "*the operation of the network is likely to be COMPROMISED as a result of future growth*".

What more needs to be said!!

21st October 2018



**Our West Lancashire, 9 Greenacre, Westhead, Ormskirk,
L40 6HR**

Tel: 01695 351361 email: office@ourwestlancashire.com

www.ourwestlancashire.com