

1 Introduction

This objection has been developed and agreed by **Culcheth and Glazebury**, and **Croft** Parish Councils as their response to St Helens Planning Application P/2017/0254/OUP. It is based on the application documents and the extensive knowledge of people who live and work in the area.

The Parish Councils want St Helens and the surrounding communities to grow and thrive as places with a good quality of life and quality jobs. But the current application would deliver a desperately low and uncertain number and density of poor quality jobs on a large Green Belt site (just 69 direct net additional FTE jobs on a 43-hectare site) in the most unsustainable way imaginable. It would create large volumes of traffic that would cause congestion on the strategic road network, and during the increasingly frequent times of disruption would cause the country lanes and communities to the north of Warrington such as Croft, Culcheth and Glazebury to be overwhelmed by traffic including HGVs with associated dangers of noise, pollution, severance and traffic danger.

We think that this application should either be refused or be called in for a joint Public Inquiry with the related application at Parkside (P/2018/0048/OUP). For the avoidance of doubt, the Parish Councils oppose the Parkside application and will be submitting an objection to it.

We would welcome discussions with the local planning and highway authorities over traffic issues and their potential resolution.

2 Summary of objection

The **Transport Assessment** is defective in that it:

- Doesn't fully include both local committed developments and background traffic growth, and therefore seriously underestimates the effect of the scheme on road congestion and local communities.
- Doesn't appear to include the stated growth ambitions of either Merseyside, Warrington/North Cheshire or Greater Manchester – all these are based on substantial additional development on Green Belt and greenfield sites near Motorway junctions, and substantial population growth. Greater Manchester is planning industry and warehousing at points on the north, south, east and west of the M60 which will significantly increase car dependence and heavy traffic on the Strategic route network (SRN) including the Haydock Point area.
- Doesn't assess any effects within Warrington BC area, or on the communities to the north of Warrington, and there appears to have been minimal contact or consultation with Warrington BC.
- Does not consider at all the potential effects on minor roads and communities when there is disruption on the major road network; this is bound to increase if the development is granted planning consent.
- The Traffic Assessment should have included an appraisal of Saturday traffic.
- There are several illogical statements that cast doubt on whether the TA is an objective assessment. It should be reviewed by an independent third party.

The **Environmental Impact Assessment** is defective and does not meet the required legal standard because it:

- Presents a ridiculously glossy picture of the effects of the scheme on traffic and sustainable transport modes such as public transport, walking and cycling. It even bizarrely suggests there is a 'positive effect' on cycling. It is therefore neither independent or objective.
- The effects on air quality and the M6 and Newton-le-Willows High Street Air Quality Management Area are inadequately assessed; the proposed mitigation measures would be ineffective. The development could result in exceedances in other communities to the north of Warrington, at times of disruption.

The development contravenes key parts of the **National Planning Policy Framework** relating to sustainable transport as Haydock Point is a large, entirely road-served distribution park.

We think that the cumulative effects mean that **the application should be 'called in' for decision by the Secretary of State** and considered alongside the Parkside application P/2018/0048/OUP (validated Tuesday 16 Jan 2018)

The land is within the Green Belt. The St Helens Local Plan is at an early stage of preparation and both Government guidance and case law suggests that the potential allocation in this plan and **the desire of the local planning authority to remove the land from Green Belt must be given very little weight in the decision-making process**. Given the large amount of available distribution warehouses and proposals elsewhere, the scheme cannot possibly meet the very high bar of 'very special circumstances' that are needed to justify a development in the Green Belt.

3 Transport Assessment

Inclusion of both committed development and background traffic growth

To be credible, a Transport Assessment must fully include both local committed developments and background traffic growth, so that the effect of a scheme can accurately estimate the effect of the scheme on road congestion and local communities into the future.

In June 2017 SHBC, Wigan BC, WSP and the development team met, and the Vectos (acting as highway consultants for the developer) asserted that that *'the application of both background traffic growth factors and committed development traffic flows would effectively result in the double counting of traffic and thus result in unrealistic future year assessments. This was especially the case when background traffic statistics did not suggest there is any underlying trend for background traffic growth in a study area.'*

This assertion goes against common sense and is not sustained by the evidence. TA para 4.3.10 states that there has been *'no trend for traffic growth on the local road network within St Helens between 2005 and 2015'*. However, this period essentially covers the years of recession and austerity from 2008 that depressed growth, particularly outside London and the Southeast. Therefore graph 2, which extrapolates a theoretical downward trend for 'traffic flows near junction 23' to 2027 presents a distorted impression from a carefully selected time series and should be discounted.

Similarly, TA para 4.3.14 which shows 'Changes in Background Traffic Flow in Wigan from 2006 to 2016 covers the recession years and the extrapolation forward to 2027 is not justified and therefore graph 4 is bogus too.

Regional and national traffic figures show an underlying traffic growth that is reflected in the normal TEMPro database factors. The recession may have hit St Helens and Wigan harder than other areas,

but this is no justification for adoption of artificially reduced future traffic growth rates to justify a development that will generate a significant amount of traffic.

To put this in perspective, the Warrington Local Development Framework Modelling Tests for Core Strategy Scenarios (December 2011) predicted increases in M6 southbound traffic (coming from J23, the Haydock Point junction) increasing by between 45% and 49% based on a range of Warrington BC development scenarios.

TA para 1.4.5 suggests that representatives from both Wigan BC and WSP accepted the Vectos position and that they would not expect both background traffic growth factors and committed development traffic flows to be applied in any assessment of the highway network under their authority. This may reflect a desire of Wigan Council to encourage additional economic development regardless on the effect on the SRN and the quality of life of local people, rather than an objective analysis of the transport effects of the proposed development.

This approach proposed by Vectos is unconventional and fortunately TA para 1.4.6 notes that SHBC disagreed. *'The SHBC highway officer subsequently proposed an alternative approach whereby committed development traffic flows and background traffic growth factors both be applied, but where the alternative assumption function in the TEMPro database be adopted to remove household and employment growth assumptions from any calculations.'*

However, the approach suggested by St Helens highways is still defective and essentially still removes all background traffic growth relating to an increase in the number of households or jobs. This is wrong as it does not take account of either normal growth that could be expected outside the area or the accelerated growth scenarios for Merseyside, Warrington and North Cheshire, and Greater Manchester. Warrington is dynamic, with high growth rates for both housing and employment likely.

TA 4.3.20 suggests that application of background traffic growth rates and committed development would be double counting, but in fact background levels come from both development and increasing car dependence over a wide area (for instance stimulated by the additional Mersey Crossing at Runcorn/Widnes), not just committed developments in the immediate area. Therefore, both background traffic growth rates and committed development should be included in the calculations.

This means that it is not logical (para 4.4.3) that the (TEMPro) alternative assumptions function should be applied to remove any allowance for housing or employment growth. This artificially reduces the traffic impact of the development and biases the TA in favour of the developer and against local communities who will suffer a reduced quality of life if traffic generation is higher than forecast.

This conclusion is reinforced when TA 6.4.3 suggests that increases of 6% are forecasted in the AM and PM peak periods in under both 'Scenario 1' and 'Scenario 2' conditions'. Since scenario 2 theoretically contains some background growth assumptions, it seems unlikely that the growth is the same under both scenarios, unless a mistake has been made in the calculations, or no background growth has been applied.

- Scenario 1 includes committed developments but excludes background traffic growth. **Because this does not accord with the advice of the local highway authority (SHBC) or good practice, any results from scenario 1 should be discounted and not form part of the assessment of the planning application.**

- Scenario 2 - claims to include committed developments and some background traffic growth factors. However, adoption of the alternative assessments function in the TEMPro programme, which essentially removes all background traffic growth means that scenario 2 is no better than scenario 1 and is similarly meaningless. The fact that forecast traffic levels are very similar to scenario 1 confirms this. Therefore **Scenario 2 is not fit for purpose, should not form part of the assessment of the planning application and not be considered further.**

Stated growth ambitions of various local authorities

Merseyside, Warrington/North Cheshire or Greater Manchester all have stated growth ambitions that are greater than current trends and future forecasts. These plans are all based on substantial additional development on Green Belt and greenfield sites near Motorway junctions.

- The Liverpool City Region Combined Authority produced Building our Future: Liverpool City Region Growth Strategy in 2016. It proposed the creation of over 100,000 additional jobs in the Liverpool City Region by 2040. While the development at Haydock Point would only provide 69 of them, the scale of ambition for 100,000 additional jobs will put significant additional strain on the SRN.
- The Cheshire and Warrington Growth Deal aims to drive growth and open development potential in several sites, including expanding logistics operation along the Atlantic Gateway. Warrington has also published a largely car and road-based draft local plan entitled 'New Town to New City'. Combined, these plans will significantly increase traffic growth in the mid-Mersey area including the St Helens M62 corridor.
- The Greater Manchester Strategic Framework plans industry and warehousing at points on the north, south, east and west of the M60 which will significantly increase car dependence and heavy traffic on the major route network.

Cumulatively these ambitions will create significant additional traffic growth that has not been considered in the TA and other documents submitted with this application.

Effects within Warrington BC area and local communities

The study area (Addendum ES V3 - A11.2 Study Area for Operational Traffic) includes land within the Warrington BC area, and the area covered by Culcheth and Glazebury, and Croft Parish Councils (to the southeast of the study area). But the pre- and post-application discussions do not appear to have included Warrington and certainly haven't included Culcheth and Glazebury, and Croft Parish Councils. The TA doesn't include any effects within Warrington BC area, or on the communities to the north of Warrington.

Opportunities for sustainable travel (such as buses, walking and cycling) in the area are sparse, so residents of Culcheth and Glazebury, and Croft are reliant on the network of mostly minor roads to the south of the A580, east of the M6 and north of the M62.

Disruption to the SRN (A580, M62 and M6) is frequent and occurs at least several times a month. When this happens, the traffic comes off the motorways and tries to get through the villages by every possible route, filling up all the minor roads in the area. The most severe examples are:

- A574 from Risley through Culcheth and Glazebury to the A580. Vehicles cannot get out onto the A580, which is itself completely jammed by the traffic escaping from the M6.
- B5207 from Culcheth to Lane Head (Golborne) has cars backed up to Culcheth village centre.

- Kenyon Lane, Stone Pit Lane/Sandy Brow Lane, and Heath Lane/Mustard Lane from Lane Head to Winwick/Birchwood via Kenyon and Croft, with static queues in both these communities.

The vehicles cutting through include heavy goods vehicles. Given the pressure on drivers, and the increasing trend towards 'just in time' deliveries, unless enforcement was very heavy handed, a weight restriction on local roads to prevent HGV would be ineffective.

Disruption on SRN is bound to increase if the development is granted planning consent. The effects on the minor roads and communities are severe, and this will get worse.

Heartfelt emails received by the Parish Councils from residents are included in the appendix. These show the vulnerability of the local road system to existing disruption. The frequency and severity of this disruption will increase if the development is granted consent.

Evidence from a Croft resident who uses the local roads to get to work in the morning peak suggests that current SRN congestion is worse than suggested in the TA. It is reported that at least two days each week they must double back from the road to Winwick only to find another line of stationary traffic on the motorway slip road. When eventually they reach the A49 and then the M62 the east bound carriageway is at a standstill.

Peak Saturday leisure traffic

Traditionally Traffic Assessment uses Monday to Friday peak hours as a way of assessing development effects and the TA submitted by the developer has followed this pattern. However, the development would be a seven-day operation and will generate as much traffic at weekends as weekdays.

Increasingly leisure and shopping opportunities are available and are accessed by the strategic road network at weekends when public transport is less available or reliable. With four major football teams in Liverpool and Manchester, the attraction of city centre shops, the Trafford Centre and other retail parks, plus Bents Garden Centre (a major leisure attraction at Glazebury), the M62 and A580 are busy particularly on Saturdays, and vulnerable to congestion and disruption. The Transport Assessment should have included an objective assessment of peak Saturday leisure traffic.

In addition, the distribution warehouses will continue operation when Haydock hosts racing. Races are scheduled on 32 weekdays and Saturdays in 2018; and the course is one of the most popular for spectators in Britain. The area has no railway station and little other alternative to car access, so race traffic often combines with weekday peak hours and Saturday peak daytime traffic. Gridlock is common on these days over a wide area including the A580, M6 and M62. Haydock also hosts a growing number of concerts and other events. All these events including racing generate a large amount of traffic on the A580 and its junction with the M62.

Is the TA plausible?

It is the nature of TAs provided by consultants that they aim to present their clients proposals in the best light possible. Their job becomes difficult when the proposed development is a major generator of goods vehicles and car traffic directly onto an already congested road network. It is understandable that consultants working for the developer look for creative ways to downplay the potential increase in traffic, but the local planning authority must be alert to this.

The approach adopted by the TA is to adopt the unrealistic assumptions and unsupported assumptions detailed above to make the case for the scheme look better. A sense check is needed:

- The TA appears to assert (6.4.2 table 6.2) that some of the junctions and arms of junctions will have **less traffic despite over a million square feet of road-based logistics development**, and despite underlying traffic growth. This does not seem plausible and throws doubt on the overall modelling
- Considering increases in traffic of 6% at a junction, TA para 6.4.5 suggests that *'Such changes in traffic flow would certainly not be expected to materially alter the operation of a junction.'* This, of course is nonsense, and would entirely depend on how close the junctions are to capacity, vulnerability to accidents, variation in flow related to events at Haydock Park, or increases in traffic resulting from disruption on the network elsewhere.
- 6.6 suggests that *'it is robustly concluded that the changes in traffic flow forecast to occur across both the St Helens and Wigan highway networks as a result of the development proposals would in practice be less than that which would be experienced through daily fluctuations in peak hour flows at each junction. Therefore, it would not be expected that the forecast changes in flow would materially alter the overall operation of any of the junctions considered.'*

These conclusions are not supported by the preceding figures and analysis. Just because the extra traffic is less than some unquantified daily fluctuations is irrelevant. In fact, daily fluctuations already cause major delays, inconvenience and gridlock in the area. Adding significant extra traffic to the network will make these negative effects much more common. And it doesn't follow that even if you accept that the forecast changes are correct, that they would not materially affect the overall operation of the junctions. This entirely depends on the traffic flow to which the traffic from the development is being added. In this case, the junctions are already operating at or near capacity at peak times, and additional traffic, particularly HGVs, will make the situation significantly worse.

Any conclusion from a consultant that uses the word 'it is robustly concluded' should be treated with suspicion, as if the conclusions were indeed 'robust', then that word would not be needed.

4 Environmental Impact Assessment

The UK Government defines the purpose of EIA as *'ensuring that the local planning authority when deciding whether to grant planning permission for a project, which is likely to have significant effects on the environment, does so in the full knowledge of the likely significant effects, and takes this into account in the decision-making process'*. This requires the EIA to be impartial and objective.

The EIA submitted with the application has been paid for and approved by the developer, and this has led to it presenting an inaccurate picture of the effects of the scheme on traffic and sustainable transport modes such as public transport, walking and cycling. The TA and EIA collectively claim:

- *'the impact of the Proposed Development on pedestrian amenity would be beneficial by virtue of the improvements proposed along the A580'*
- there is a *'positive effect'* on cycling
- *'the effect on ... public transport users, pedestrian delay, fear and intimidation, accident and highway safety and severance would be neutral'*
- The *'location of the PDS has been demonstrated to be accessible by walking, cycling and public transport modes of travel'*. It also claims that *'accessibility of the site will be enhanced through the provision of a shared footway/ cycle along the northern side of the A580 between the site access and M6 Junction 23, together with controlled crossing facilities at the aforementioned A580 access junction'*.

- The *'impact of the Proposed Development on pedestrian amenity, public transport users and other assessed receptors would be beneficial by virtue of the improvements proposed along the A580.'*
- There is *'no effect on air quality'*.

While EIAs generally present information in the most favourable way to the developer, it is hard to take these claims seriously, and perhaps they were never intended to be. A reality check is needed:

- The development is next to a Motorway junction at the intersection with a dual carriageway.
- The immediate area is dominated by traffic, traffic noise, pollution and litter
- It is almost impossible for pedestrians or cyclists to make progress in the area. It would generally be foolish to try given the dominance of noise and pollution.
- The M6 and Newton-le-Willows High Street are part of an Air Quality Management Area

The provision of a footway/cycle lane that goes from nowhere to nowhere with inconvenient crossings next to a trunk road dominated by noise and pollution could not in any way be described as beneficial to cyclists (or pedestrians), particularly as the whole development is based on provision of a distribution park that will encourage additional heavy vehicle and car movements.

The effects on air quality and the M6 and N-le-W High Street Air Quality Management Area are inadequately assessed. The proposed mitigation measures amount to a couple of electric charging points would be completely ineffective in reducing pollution

In fact, the increased congestion and potential for disruption on the SRN means that air pollution and the other negative effects of traffic will be spread to other communities including Croft, Culcheth and Glazebury. The development could easily result in exceedances in other communities to the north of Warrington, at times of disruption. Collectively these could breach the EU limit and target values with which the UK must comply are summarised in the [National air quality objectives](#) which mean that 200 µg/m³ Nitrogen dioxide must not to be exceeded more than 18 times a year.

In summary, the EIA is neither independent or objective. It does not meet the terms of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations and is therefore not valid.

5 National Planning Policy Framework

St Helens does not have an up to date Local Plan, and there is no prospect of one in the immediate future. This means that policies in NPPF have a greater prominence.

Para 7 suggests that planning has an environmental role – using natural reserves prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigate and adapt the climate change including moving to a low carbon economy. The development as proposed is:

- Extensive and will add to urban sprawl.
- Provides a low density of jobs almost entirely dependent on road transport both for distribution of goods and

Para 17 suggests that local authorities should *'actively manage patterns of growth to make the fullest possible use of public transport, walking and cycling, and focus significant development in locations which are or can be made sustainable'*. The development as proposed would be difficult to access except by car. Walking and cycling in the area is already inconvenient, indirect, and dangerous due to traffic speed and volumes and poor air quality

NPPF suggests that planning should ‘*Support the transition to a low carbon future*’. The development is wholly based on road transport that creates more carbon emissions than either rail transport and increases the likelihood that goods will travel long distances to their destination. It will therefore increase carbon emissions. Carbon is not considered in the Environmental Impact Assessment.

NPPF also suggests that development should ‘*Contribute to conserving and enhancing the natural environment and reducing pollution*’. A currently green, open site will be covered with an urban sprawl, and the main access method will be by diesel heavy goods vehicles that will produce particulates and oxides of Nitrogen that are known to cause hundreds of early deaths each year in the St Helens area, and thousands nationally.

6 Cumulative effects and interaction with Parkside proposals

Haydock Point is just one of several large, entirely road-served distribution parks proposed in the area which would continue current dependence on roads for freight transport and on diesel goods vehicles which create noise and pollution including particulates and NOx.

There are two key cumulative effects:

- The quantum of road-based development proposed in the wider area is far greater than that examined in the TA or EIA. Overall, these developments need to be assessed together to see if the impact is acceptable. A single TA, or the efforts of Highways England (which has a focus solely on keeping the SRN moving) cannot consider overall transport demands and modes other than road. This is particularly true for communities not directly on the SRN, which will pay a price in a lower quality of life as traffic increases through their areas.
- An application has been submitted for road-based distribution at Parkside (application P/2018/0048/OUP), and future phases of this site could include a Strategic Freight Rail Interchange which could potentially link to the electrified Chat Moss line with possible access to north-south mainlines. This offers the prospect of a more environmentally acceptable option for trunk haulage. The costs of a rail connection are high and there are considerable other remediation costs at Parkside. The approval of Haydock Point with lower costs due to the inability to provide a rail connection would make it almost impossible to create a viable rail-served development at Parkside. We emphasise that this does not mean that the Parish Councils would support any application at the Parkside site (which remains Green Belt), but that Haydock cannot be considered in isolation when other sites might have environmental advantages.

We think that the cumulative effects mean that the application should be ‘called in’ for decision by the Secretary of State and considered alongside the Parkside application P/2018/0048/OUP (validated Tuesday 16 Jan 2018). There may be other applications for distribution parks in other authorities that should be considered at the same time.

7 Green Belt

This objection is primarily concerned with the significant effects of traffic on the residents of Croft, Culcheth, Glazebury and other communities north of Warrington.

However, it is hard to ignore that the land is within designated Green Belt. The St Helens Local Plan is at an early stage of preparation and both Government guidance and case law are clear that the potential allocation in this plan and the desire to remove the land from Green Belt must be given ‘very little weight in the decision-making process’. It is completely irrelevant that the site has been

‘accepted as suitable for development by SHBC’ as this ‘policy’ has not been through any kind of examination as to its suitability or soundness, it has not been accepted as passing the ‘Duty to Cooperate’ and has not been agreed as sound by Government.

Development in the Green Belt must meet a range of strict tests, and ‘very special circumstances’ must be shown. The tests are:

- to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
- to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
- to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
- to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
- to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

The development meets none of these tests (the fourth is not relevant in St Helens), and the suggestion by the developer in the Planning Statement that the A580/M62 constitute a natural boundary for development smacks of desperation.

it is hard to see that the case for a distribution park could constitute ‘very special circumstances’ in any planning application anywhere in the UK, and in this area, there are several competing proposals for distribution parks. The assertion in the planning statement that *‘no other sites within the urban area of the Borough that meet the locational and accessibility requirements of large scale logistics developments’*. Is pure nonsense. There is no reason why the search should be confined to the borough. Distribution parks are footloose and can locate almost anywhere on the strategic road network. Sites are available or planned in number of other Greater Manchester and Merseyside locations. In addition, the criteria adopted by the planning statement is for the very largest operation. These are rare, and it is unnecessary to plan for these in every, or perhaps in any borough. An operation of this size is much more likely to want to locate for instance near Manchester Airport where large scale logistics warehouses are available with more planned.

Should planning consent be granted, it is highly likely that it could be vulnerable to a successful judicial review.

End of document.

Appendix follows on next page.

Appendix: Typical letters from residents received by the Parish Councils

Experience of a Parish Councillor

When there are accidents or other hold-ups on the M6 or M62 the traffic throughout Culcheth, Glazebury and Croft is severely affected, especially at morning and evening rush hours. The traffic comes off the motorways and tries to get through the villages by every possible route, A or B roads or minor country lanes. We see traffic backed up on every route – for instance the B road from Culcheth to Lane Head has cars backed up to the village.

However, the worst affected road in my experience is the A574 from Risley through Culcheth and Glazebury to the A580. This road is always congested in the rush hour but generally it moves, albeit slowly. When there is trouble on the motorway traffic on this road comes to a stop. The cars cannot get out at the end onto the A580, which is itself completely jammed by the traffic escaping from the M6. I have stood by the side of the road in Glazebury (for which I am Parish Councillor) and talked to drivers in their cars who have told me they have been stuck on the stretch of road for two hours.

An incident that sticks in my mind is an occasion when the Mayor of Warrington (Cllr Graham Settle I think) was coming to Bents to open a Glazebury play area. There was a problem on the Motorway and as a result the Mayor's official car did not get through at all (although his route was not on the Motorway but A and B roads from Warrington through Croft, Culcheth and Glazebury). After hanging around for over an hour we limped through the ceremony without him.

Incidents on the Motorway are very common in this busy region. When I (a resident of Culcheth) need to attend an evening, Council meeting I cannot afford to miss in central Warrington, I go in during the afternoon. If there is an incident on the Motorway (which is not on my route), it is not a question of when I will arrive in Warrington but whether I will arrive at all.

Trapped in the house

I attach 2 photographs of traffic congestion on Kenyon Lane taken on 10th January, when the M6 had been closed at Jn. 23. Therefore, traffic was leaving the M6 at Jn.22 and using these lanes as an alternative route. The same thing happened on 26th January when there was a problem on the M62 at Birchwood. Traffic diverted through here trying to get to the East Lancs road as an alternative. Culcheth was also clogged up. On 26th Jan it took me 40 mins to get back from Culcheth to my house on Main Lane.

These are just examples of frequent traffic problems in this area which arise because of its proximity to two motorways and to the East Lancs road. The traffic lights at Lane Head Lowton cause long tail backs of traffic down the length of both Winwick Lane and Kenyon Lane during the late afternoon, on a regular basis. Because of this, a great deal of traffic takes evasive action via Sandy Brow Lane, Stone Pit Lane and Kenyon Lane, or along Heath Lane.

Croft resident: Out and back again

As someone who uses the local roads to get to work in the mornings I can assure you that the problem is even more severe most people indicate. At least two days each week I will have to double back going along the road to Winwick only to find myself in another line of stationary traffic on the motorway slip road. When eventually I do reach the A49 and then the M62 I am confronted by the east bound part of the road at a standstill.

Standing traffic all the way ...

Today (Friday) I drove along the A574 from the a580 (greyhound) into Culcheth. I continued through the village, past the prison and down into Birchwood. I was amazed to see standing traffic all the way. ... it was 4.16 on a Friday afternoon, but traffic was just sitting with engines running.

The local councils wanted to create jobs, but at what cost? When they drew up the plans they gave little attention to air pollution. No one in their right mind, would buy a house on the A574.

Damn Dam Lane...

I can certainly attest to increased traffic flow on our local lanes when Motorways are having difficulties. Dam Lane suffers with motorists trying to cut through to find alternative routes.

I have seen similar problems on adjacent roads at such times. Croft is a 'pinch point' for traffic issues on nearby motorways and the East Lancs.