

Notes for Presentation at the Inquiry

Steve Houston, PAULA, 9/10/2014

Thank you for the opportunity to address this Inquiry as Chair of the PAULA residents group which effectively represents 650 mainly local residents.

I am a Poynton resident, and have lived on one of the two main roads into Poynton since 1986.

In 1995 just before the A555 opened there was an angry meeting at Poynton Parish Council, mainly Chester Road residents, when it dawned on people, that Chester Road was to become a through route from the new bypass.

An impromptu residents meeting adjourned to the Baptist Church where local politicians explained everything was in hand and that something would be done.

Since then and before, local politicians have almost unanimously backed the extension of the scheme even if this was in a grumbly way-

'This scheme has been under development so long that we just have to get it finished.'

In fact my road should see an improvement in the regular traffic congestion into Poynton because geographically the SEMMMS road bypasses Chester Road-

but the proposers only estimate a reduction from 23300 to 23100 vehicles per day, and even the independent proposers for the associated Poynton Bypass do not expect to make any great improvement to Chester Road.

Through my association with Stockport FOE it was clear that National Campaigning Groups against roads need to work through local residents groups to be effective and so in May 2012 I called a first meeting of PAULA in the local scout hut.

Most of the evidence we have submitted to this inquiry concerns the impact on air quality because it is the weakest aspect of the proposal, and would be twice as critical if Phase 2 to the M60 was ever formally proposed.

Air quality impacts are today a practical and real impediment to road schemes. Proposals for increasing capacity on the M60 and M1 near Sheffield have been scrapped on account of the air quality impacts.

-And today the A556 scheme has made national news in that it is the first in the country to be designed for a 60mph limit as opposed to 70mph, specifically to reduce air quality impacts.

Of course, benefit/cost ratios proudly vaunted in the initial prospectus never seem to be corrected for the worsening journey times caused by throttling the traffic to get the scheme through the air quality constraints.

Perhaps road proposals should not be allowed to submit benefit/cost ratios until an air quality analysis has been independently approved.

Carr Wood, the ancient woodland that was omitted from the Council's environmental maps, will be sacrificed for Phase two, in this application.

Phase 1 could and should be built round the wood and it is only assumed that it has to go through the wood to align with phase 2.

It is unfortunate that Phase 2 is hardly referred to let alone analysed in detail in this proposal.

It is just an act of faith that phase 2 is a practical proposition.

Seeing that Phase 1 is most likely to cause the breach of legally binding EU limit values on the A555 and the A6 this blind act of faith we think is woefully misplaced.

The applicant's did prepare a drawing of an alternative route round Carr Wood under pressure from PAULA claiming a row of terraces would be lost if Phase 2 were built.

But Phase 1 already passes between houses 45m apart as it goes under the A5102 compared to the 100m gap available on the A6.

An underground service reservoir would also be in the path of this alternative alignment but when one considers that the enormous Audenshaw reservoirs had to be clipped for the M60 and that Phases 1 and 2 would essentially be taking M60 overspill is it so unrealistic to move a little service reservoir?

None of this is discussed let alone analysed in the application.

Natural England has 'Standing Advice' for ancient woodland and includes a helpful flow diagram as to how the application is to proceed.

'Do the need for and benefits of the development in that location clearly outweigh the loss of/harm to ancient woodland/veteran trees?

Paul Reids PoE suggests that the only point where this test has been resolved is simply embodied in the Councillor's approval of the scheme.

I expect the Councillors at that time thought Mouchell's had advised that it was ok -why employ consultants to develop a road alignment if they didn't take care of the technicalities?

Basically a route round Carr Wood should have been considered in 2012 when the shortened project was resurrected.

Returning to air quality, although the arguments about Carr Wood and air quality are logically intertwined, Disley is today teetering on breaching the hourly limit as well as the yearly limit of NO₂. Yet the applicants record the NO₂ exceedances at three critical locations as.
40.1, 40.3, and 40.6ug/m³.

But they have a plan to halve the 30% increase in traffic grandly called 'Enhanced Mitigation' One would expect such miniscule excesses to be wiped out by a miniscule mitigation.

But Paul Colcough's PoE showed that the 'Enhanced Mitigation' actually worsened air pollution.

We commissioned a review of Disley air quality from Prof Duncan Lexan who does a lot of Local Authority work as well as Defra. I note in particular his work for Defra on the empirical formula for calculation NO₂ drop off with distance from the kerb. Basically the Prof is an expert amongst experts in this field.

The review adds some support for Paul's evidence as well as some much needed clarity.

Interestingly the review suggests further reducing the speed through Disley whereas Paul's Rebuttal proposes increasing the speed through Disley.

This looks like a complete impasse. It would be a travesty to start felling Carr Wood before all parties

agree to a workable and proven 'Enhanced Mitigation - Mark II'

Whatever is said about Disley the arguments are more critical for the A555 between the A5102 and the A34' simple because the traffic increase is 104% as opposed to just 30%.

Unfortunately this critical section was not really adequately studied by the Council or the SEMMMS team. No roadside measurements were successfully taken unlike Disley and Poynton that have NO₂ records from 8 roadside locations going back to 2008.

I have therefore taken the one measurement location that is the prescribed minimum distance from junctions and within 50m of the A555 and then extrapolated the equivalent NO₂ concentration at 4m from the kerb using the method from IAN175/13.

I then calculated the concentration with the 104% increase in traffic.

The result is 66.3ug/m³ which being above the recognised 60ug/m³ annual mean, indicates the risk of the 200ug/m³ hourly exceedances. This would be a breach of the EU limit value.

I assessed this again using the SEMMMS NO₂ pollution contour map with the road and calculated 69.0ug/m³.

Quite good agreement considering these are very different methods.

The applicant's analysis of the air quality for this section of the scheme needs an urgent review and probably a reliable mitigation to at least reduce the hourly impact below 200ug/m³.

Finally I would like to draw the applicant's attention to Professor Stern's call to reshape the economics of cities over the next 15 years in order to head off damaging climate change.

His recommendation is that cities avoid geographic expansion and concentrate on public transport, walking and cycling into a high density city centre. He estimates that if public spending on infrastructure is redirected towards these goals budgets can remain at current levels.

The A6MARR and Airport City are set in complete oppositions to these goals.

Thank you!

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