

REPORT: Environment & Urban Renewal
Policy & Performance Board

DATE: 15 June 2011

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director, Policy & Resources

SUBJECT: Petition Concerning Heavy Industrial Traffic on
South Parade, Weston Point, Runcorn

WARDS: Heath

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To report receipt of a 21 name petition that has been received, requesting that steps be taken to reduce the volume and weight of heavy industrial traffic travelling along South Parade, Weston Point, Runcorn.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 **It is recommended that:**

1. **The re-signing of routes to the industrial sites from the Weston Point Expressway, both existing and planned, be endorsed.**
2. **A time limited weight restriction be introduced on South Parade and Sandy Lane between Bankes Lane and Picow Farm Road.**
3. **The existing waiting restrictions on South Parade and Sandy Lane be reviewed to discourage parking of HGVs near the houses together with the direction signs and carriageway markings for traffic leaving the Mersey Gateway Port.**
4. **That the Council arranges for discussions to resume between Ineos and Stobart's regarding alternative accesses to Mersey Gateway Port.**
5. **The petition be noted and the lead petitioner be informed of the decisions of the Policy & Performance Board.**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 A 21 name petition has been received from residents of Weston Point requesting that steps be taken to reduce the volume and weight of heavy industrial traffic travelling along South Parade, Weston Point, Runcorn. The petition is attached as Appendix 'A'.
- 3.2 The petition cites damage to properties, dangers to pedestrians, obstruction, increasing volumes of traffic, noise and pollution.
- 3.3 Referring to the location plan in Appendix 'B', the sites generating the highest traffic movements affecting South Parade are the Ineos Salt Works and the Energy From

Waste (EfW) construction site, together with the Mersey Gateway Port (previously Weston Docks), which is now operated by Stobart's.

- 3.4 Traditionally, these sites have been accessed from South Parade via either Picow Farm Road and Sandy Lane or Bankes Lane junctions on the Weston Point Expressway. This has resulted in industrial traffic travelling down both Sandy Lane and Bankes Lane/South Parade. Now however, Ineos have constructed a new access road, Barlow Way, from Picow Farm Road which together with a new internal site roadway system provides access to both the Salt Works and EfW sites from Picow Farm Road as indicated. Temporary signing for the EfW site has been erected on the Weston Point Expressway on both the north and south bound approaches, directing construction traffic to use the Picow Farm Road route to access the site and thus avoid South Parade.
- 3.5 Ineos have also approached the Council with a view to funding replacement permanent signing on the Weston Point Expressway, to direct both Salt Works and EfW traffic to use the Picow Farm Road junction, thus avoiding travelling via either Sandy Lane or Bankes Lane/South Parade. However, HGV traffic continues to access these sites via Bankes Lane and South Parade as it is not prohibited from doing so. The roads can physically accommodate this traffic and SatNav systems show Bankes Lane as the shortest route, particularly for vehicles approaching from M56.
- 3.6 Access to Mersey Gateway Port will need to remain off the junction of South Parade and Sandy Lane for the foreseeable future. A possible solution to reduce traffic on these roads is to extend Barlow Way so that it can provide a new connection to the Port. However, no funding has been identified for this proposal and until this is found traffic for the Port will need to continue to use South Parade and/or Sandy Lane. The Council is trying to facilitate meetings between all the parties (Ineos and Stobart's) involved to try to find a solution. If this alternative access could be provided then a weight restriction on South Parade could be considered although it should be noted that this would need to include an exemption for access. In the short term a time limited weight restriction could be considered, with say a restriction between 10.00 pm and 7.00 am. It would also be advantageous to review the waiting restrictions, particularly opposite the houses to discourage inappropriate parking by HGVs; however enforcement of waiting restrictions would rely on the police being able to visit the area.
- 3.7 All these options require drivers to use the signed routes rather than SatNav, which guide them along the shortest route. Both Ineos and Stobart's have issued instructions to drivers to use the signed routes and in the case of Stobart's they requested drivers not to arrive before the Port opens at 7.00 am, which became a problem in May when garden products were being collected and drivers arrived from about 6.00 am, causing disturbance to the residents. Ineos have issued maps to their hauliers and report drivers to their employer's if they do not follow the correct routes. Also a sign has been erected on South Road (former access to Salt Works) advising that there is no access to the Salt Works. When leaving Barlow Way, Ineos have installed temporary blocks to deter traffic from turning right towards Sandy Lane.
- 3.8 It has been suggested that traffic leaving the Port be signed along Sandy Lane, to discourage use of South Parade. This is an option but this would not be enforceable and could result in objections from the residents of Sandy Lane; and may not be

followed due to drivers following SatNav rather than direction signs. This needs to be investigated further together with possible amendments to the carriageway markings to encourage drivers to take the most appropriate route.

- 3.9 The possibility of reducing the speed limit in the vicinity of the residential properties has been suggested, but this would require the support of the police. The police have previously confirmed that they will not enforce 20 mph limits as they should, in their view, be self enforcing through design of the horizontal and vertical alignment. This option cannot be progressed further at the present time.
- 3.10 The situation in connection with South Parade area is still under discussion and a verbal update will be given at the meeting

4.0 FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Signing and traffic management revisions will be recharged to site operators, where appropriate, otherwise the works will need to be funded by the Council from **its** traffic management budget and judged against other requests.
- 4.2 There are no direct policy, social inclusion, sustainability, value for money, legal or crime and disorder implications resulting from this report.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES.

5.1 Children & Young People in Halton

There are no direct implications on the Council's 'Children and Young People in Halton' priority.

5.2 Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton

The development of this area will create employment in accordance with the Council's 'Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton' priority.

5.3 A Healthy Halton

There are no direct implications on the Council's 'A Healthy Halton' priority.

5.4 A Safer Halton

South Parade has no reported traffic collisions involving personal injury in the past five years.

5.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

The regeneration of this area is part of the Council's 'Halton's Urban Renewal' priority.

6.0 RISK ANALYSIS

- 6.1 Failure to implement signing changes and a vehicle weight restriction as indicated above will lead to continued environmental complaints from residents.

7.0 EQUALITY & DIVERSITY ISSUES.

- 7.1 There are no direct equality and diversity issues associated with this report.

8.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 8.1 There are no background papers under section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972

Halton Council
Highways Department
Runcorn

2 February 2011

Dear Sirs

Re: Heavy Traffic Problems – South Parade, Weston Point, Runcorn

This letter comes as a “follow-up” to the many telephone attempts made by residents of this area to find some kind of level on which to discuss our very genuine concerns regarding the volume and weight of heavy traffic passing to and fro in front of our homes each and every day.

Despite our attempts to explain and describe the damage being sustained by the houses and boundary walls we feel that we are not being taken seriously as no-one is visiting and observing these problems during the heavy periods.

Due to new businesses starting up/old businesses expanding the level of extremely heavy traffic has doubled if not trebled over the past few years and there is no doubt that residents' homes are suffering badly already.

In order to greatly reduce the volume and weight of the traffic travelling along these roads we have asked that signs be erected on the Weston Point slip road of the Weston Point Expressway, advising that there is no access to several of the business premises in the village, and directing the vehicles concerned to carry on along the Expressway to the next slip road which leads off at Picow Farm Road, thereby guiding them into most of the large business premises, without having to go anywhere near South Parade. Surely this is not an unreasonable suggestion, but although this fact has been acknowledged by various members of Halton Council we seen unable to actually get anything finalised.

This problem is now about to escalate as one organisation has requested permission for an increase of 260% in their already extremely heavy traffic flow, and with drivers regularly parking juggernauts (sometimes plus trailer) outside our homes, leaving the engine running whilst they pop off to do their chores, it's impossible to imagine what the future holds for us.

The roads mainly involved are just sufficiently wide enough for two medium width vehicles to pass, and if residents own cars are parked outside their homes one or two of the larger vehicles is forced to stop. This manoeuvre does not take into account the presence of stationary delivery vehicles, ambulances or fire engines which, in themselves, can create an indefinite congestion.

Add to this the fact that Weston Point is a cosmopolitan mixture of very young and very old residents (many of whom are octogenarians), all of whom require particular care and attention from drivers, and the imminent emergence of a dangerous situation can be seen without using much imagination.

Your careful attention and reaction to these facts would be greatly appreciated.

Yours faithfully,