

**PUBLIC INQUIRY APP/U2370/W/15/3133536**

**Thornton Action Group (TAG)**

**Closing Statement**

**to be presented by Howard Phillips, Vice-Chair of TAG**

**at the Public Inquiry**

**into the refusal by Wyre Council**

**for the development of 165 houses**

**by Wain Homes at Lamb's Road, Thornton**

**(14/00553/OUTMAJ)**

- The site is designated as “Countryside Area” the only such area in the urban area of Wyre to be so designated. As such it should be afforded special treatment. It should only be considered for development when all other possible sites (including brownfield sites) have been developed and be part of a properly structured plan which takes into account not only housing needs but recreation and open space requirements, necessary highways improvements, school and employment provision and medical and other facilities.
- A fully comprehensive land use plan for the Fylde Coast Peninsula (Urban Wyre) is particularly important given that Wain Homes have indicated that they wish to extend the development to Raikes Road to the east, and further land identified as Possible Development Sites in the Issues and Options Document of the Local Plan now in preparation, extends the development to Underbank Road giving a total of 924 houses, across Lamb’s Hill.
- In the Issues and Options Document the housing requirement for Wyre is given as between 340 and 485 dwellings per year from 2011 to 2031. A later update from SHMA indicated the range to be between 400 and 485. It is understood Wyre Council have chosen a figure at the top end of the range (479) encouraging in migration and economic growth.
- The population increase in Wyre between 2001 and 2011 was 2%. Selecting a housing requirement of 479 dwellings per year would give a 17.86% increase in population between 2011 and 2031. This is a massive expansion which can only be achieved by in migration. It is difficult to envisage the source of this given that Blackpool, Fylde and Preston are all planning for large population increases.
- As far back as 2002 and before that, the A 585 was operating close to capacity which was one of the reasons for the refusal of 510 houses on Poolfoot Farm. Monies which should have become available under S 106 agreements relating to the development of the AAP have not been received and junction improvements which should have taken place have not happened.
- Since then permission has been given to build a further 359 houses in Thornton. At no time has any consideration been given to the impact on the A 585 of the developments in north Blackpool which have had a severe effect on the Norcross Roundabout.
- We welcome the improvements which have been made on the A 585 at Windy Harbour and West Drive/Bourne Way. We are sceptical about proposals to build a relief road from Skippool Roundabout to Garstang Road in Poulton and onto the A 585 south of

Windy Harbour., because there have been so many previous schemes which have never come to fruition.

- We maintain that planning decisions taken in 2016 cannot be based in the assumption that the new connection will be built.
- We were surprised by the figure in Mr Khan's Proof of Evidence (Vol 2 Appx D Table D5) which shows an observed mean standing queue of just 4 PCUs, which contrasts with the queue data collected by SOS/TAG and presented by Mr Walker. However, that figure of 4 is the mean of the queues which occurred between 7.45 and 8.45 on just one day. As the SOS/TAG surveys and the photographs show the queue can on many mornings extend back to Thornton Mews, to Hornby's Corner and to the site itself.
- It makes no difference to the motorist whether the queue is a moving or stationary one. It is the length of time it takes to get from the back of the queue to the front which is important. The queuing will not be solved by the proposed improvements at the Skippool Roundabout as claimed by the appellant because it is the queue on Mains Lane which blocks the Skippool Roundabout and causes the tail back on Skippool Road.
- In his response to questioning, Mr Khan agreed that the fact that the survey was carried out by TAG/SOS and that the purpose of the survey was explained at the top of the survey sheet did not trigger bias responses and therefore did not invalidate the results.
- It was also shown that with a sample size of 147 out of a finite population of 271, confidence limits could be calculated for the 95% level of confidence. For example the survey results showed that 68% of journeys to work by car are made via the Skippool Roundabout. The confidence limits are +/- 5% hence at the 95% level of confidence the true result lies between 65 % and 73%.
- The survey shows that 92% of journeys to work are made by car, so that at the 95% level of confidence the figure lies between 89% and 95%. These figures show that the results are statistically significant and the validity of the data is established.
- Para 9 of the NPPF refers to sustainable development which involves "improving the conditions in which people live, work, travel and take leisure". This development will not improve these conditions for the people of Thornton. More houses in this location means more commuting out of Wyre to work. Congestion at peak times on the A 585 has been a serious problem stretching back to 2002 and before that.
- This "Countryside Area" is the most attractive area of open land remaining on the Fylde Coast Peninsula. As such it needs particular consideration as to its future use. This development will take a large bite out of the area to its great detriment and lead to further piecemeal development without any overall plan.
- We ask the Inspector to recommend that the appeal be refused and the decision by Wyre Council be upheld.

**Howard Phillips - Vice-Chair, Thornton Action Group**

**28th July 2016**