

High Lane Village Neighbourhood Forum **Transport Working Group**

Jeni Regan and Sheila Harrop

At the Forum open day held in the Village Hall in May 2017, the main focus of the comments made by the community were in relation to new housing in High Lane and transport, along with Green Spaces/Recreation and Heritage. Transport has a very important role in helping to make High Lane a better, and more sustainable place to live, work, shop and play but is also important both in facilitating development and in catering for the travel demand that it creates.

Whilst cars are essential for many people, the provision of public transport and the encouragement of walking and cycling routes are vital in order to help to address the issues of climate change, reduce congestion and parking problems, and provide equality of opportunity.

Congestion is a real problem in High Lane, and is of great concern to many residents. This in turn creates serious concerns in relation to air pollution, with recent measurements along the A6 showing there is a likely breach of the hourly mean concentration of nitrogen dioxide tested to show the Air Quality Standards. The mitigation measures planned and currently being implemented in the village for the A6 MARR (Manchester Airport Relief Road), will be highly important for the future of the village, with a projected 23 per cent increase in traffic through the village following the opening of this bypass. The further extension of the A6 MARR to create the new SEMMS A6 to M60 bypass is also a possible threat to the village in that congestion and air pollution levels will again increase.

High Lane is fortunate to have a railway station at Middlewood, which is on the line between Manchester and Buxton. However, access to the station is both limited and unsafe due to the poor finish of the road leading to the station and the complete lack of any lighting. In addition to this, the number of services that stop at the station is very low and is therefore, much underused. This station could be a very much valued public transport asset and could be well used by residents, visitors and commuters if the access to the station and the number of services significantly improved. Due to the levels of congestion and volumes of traffic experienced in the village, along with the need to encourage sustainable forms of transport, it is considered important to support any improvements which would help sustain the station and its facilities.

It is also considered important that any new development should not increase the problems of traffic congestion and air pollution and indeed, where possible, should provide opportunities for walking, cycling and improvements to public transport. The promotion of sustainable transport is one of the aims of the National Planning Policy Framework (paragraph 35), which states that developments should be located and designed where practical to give priority to pedestrian and cycle movements, and have access to high quality public transport facilities.

The issue of traffic congestion, high levels of air pollution and a lack of adequate access to public transport is therefore of much concern to the community, and has

been repeatedly raised at Neighbourhood Plan consultation events. A summary of some of the comments made by the community can be seen in the attached document.

Therefore, in summary, the issues we currently see as significant include:

- Significant pressures from congestion and air pollution;
- Insufficient transport infrastructure to support future growth;
- The future potential impacts of the A6 MARR and SEMMS A6 to M60 bypass;
- The impact of heavy goods vehicles on the main roads and improving signage for weight restrictions on residential routes;
- Lack of access to public transport services and increase bus services to neighbouring villages and towns;
- Excessive speeds by car drivers in and around the village;
- Protect existing recreational walking and cycling routes;
- Not enough parking within the village centre for accessing shops and village facilities.

Therefore, the High Lane Village Neighbourhood Plan has the following objectives under the Transport Working Group:

- To assess and improve traffic issues within and to/from High Lane;
- To improve roads and footways in the village centre and elsewhere;
- To recognise the importance of public transport services to and from High Lane Village in meeting the needs of both residents and visitors and improve bus services and access to other forms of public transport such as Middlewood Station;
- To improve cycle routes and access to cycle routes;
- To recognise the need for integration between different means of transport;
- Improve access to schools, shops and other community facilities;
- Improve the provision for people with limited mobility, and
- Improve canal towpaths and other Public Rights of Way.

If you have any transport information or want to help our group please contact us by email: ourforum@hlnvf.org