

**County Council Meeting – 16 March 2023****Question to Councillor Alan White  
Leader of the Council****By Councillor Hood**

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**Question**

During the construction of the Stone Railhead, HS2 intends to use Pirehill Lane as a Haul Road for up to 42 HGV's a day carrying heavy loads to its Yarlet embankment satellite compound. In the immediate area there are two first schools, a middle school and three nurseries where families are told road safety is a priority and are encouraged to walk their children to school helping reduce their carbon footprint. It is a heavily populated residential area leading to the Eccleshall Road which is heavily congested, added traffic will be a hazard to the surrounding area and its users. Air quality will soon deteriorate with queueing traffic and will threaten the environment and health of residents. Could the Leader intervene and persuade HS2 to find an alternative route?

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**Reply**

Pirehill Lane was identified as a lorry route by HS2 Ltd in the Environmental Statement, which was published when the High Speed Rail (West Midlands to Crewe) Bill was deposited with Parliament in July 2017. During the Bill phase, all proposed lorry routes were reviewed and scrutinised by officers and the Council supported local communities and individuals with their petitions to Parliament. The Bill secured Royal Assent and became an Act in February 2021. The Act provides limited grounds for the Council to refuse a lorry route, these being: road safety; amenity; free flow of traffic; and historic environment. In addition, there must be a viable alternative route available.

Officer discussions with HS2 Ltd have highlighted that the current Pirehill Lane proposal is not suitable. It is recognised however that a lorry route is required for construction works in the local area that will enable a haul road to the A34 near Yarlet to be constructed.

Officers will continue to engage HS2 Ltd and the main works contractor (once appointed) on detailed matters relating to lorry routes in this area. The Council will advocate for the local community and urge HS2 Ltd and its contractors to find the best solution within the constraints of the Act.

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Following the Government's announcement on 9 March that construction on HS2 Phase 2a will be rephased by 2 years, the Council is seeking urgent clarification on the implications to the main works Schedule 17 lorry route approval process and timescales.

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