



Traffic wishes to flow between Scotch Corner and the M6. Some of it wishes to access the M6 at Penrith, some wishes to access the M6 at Tebay.

Presently because of a 17.5 tonne weight restriction on the A685 HGVs wishing to use the A685 between Brough and Tebay cannot do so meaning they have to detour via Penrith an additional 22 miles and often severe delays at the Penrith roundabout. Labour controlled Cumbria County Council introduced the weight restriction after dropping the Kirkby Stephen bypass from the TPP list in 1997. In 1997 a public enquiry found a compelling case for the Kirkby Stephen bypass and rejected the alternatives. Labour Cumbria County Council ignored this.

Kirkby Stephen frequently suffers from traffic jams as the volume of traffic is too much for this small market town.

The weight restriction displaced about 520 HGVs onto other roads of which about 230 are diverted onto the A66 Brough to Penrith. If you multiply 230 HGVs by 50 ft this gives over 2 miles per day added to the queues passing through the Kemplay and Skirsgill roundabouts. (see the Penrith Town Council call from Herald 30 June 2018)

The detour via the A66 is over 22 miles. That means a return trip for a lorry between the north east and south Cumbria has at least an hours extra travel time and well over £100 extra costs.

Traffic flows on A66 are approximately 17,000 vehicles per day of which 20% are HGVs.

Traffic flows on A685 through Kirkby Stephen are approximately 8,000 per day of which 10% are HGVs

If it is worth spending several hundred £million on the A66 upgrade between Brough and Penrith surely it is worth spending £15 to £20 million on a bypass for Kirkby Stephen. It is a far lower spend per vehicle than is the A66 upgrade.

**Hansard 3 June 1998 Lord Jopling stated** “Likewise, the most direct road link from the north-east of England to Lancashire and the Midlands, and Barrow in particular, is to take the A.66 as far as Brough and then to move over to the M.6 motorway at Tebay via Kirkby Stephen. There is an urgent need for a bypass because lorries clog up that beautiful old market town in the most appalling way. The Kirkby Stephen bypass has been put off, although it was quite recently very much at the head of the priorities of road building in Cumbria. This is all linked in with the need to improve the A.66. This has been a most useful opportunity to draw attention to one of the most urgent strategic projects necessary in the north of England at this time.”