

Backing for island protest



Taking a look at Burnt Tree Island, in Birmingham New Road, Tividale, is Owen Paterson MP, with business leaders including, right, Chris Kelly, chairman of Keltruck

A senior Tory MP is backing a bid by a businessman to scrap plans to install traffic lights at a notorious congestion hotspot.

Shadow roads minister Owen Paterson visited Sandwell to meet with West Bromwich businessman Chris Kelly, chairman of West Bromwich-based Keltruck.

Mr Kelly invited Mr Paterson to visit Burnt Tree Island, which is set to be replaced by traffic lights under a £7 million scheme. It comes in response to years of complaints about delays on and around the junction, especially at peak periods.

But Mr Kelly fears that traffic lights will lead to further congestion and pollution from emissions. Mr Paterson said there were other solutions to the problem which should be considered.

The MP is currently travelling the

Report by Emma Sloper

country researching problems with congestion. "It is a local scheme which should be decided by local people and councillors but nationally a lot of these schemes would be improved by making smaller improvements," Mr Paterson said.

Mr Kelly said he hoped that the council and Highways Agency would look at alternative ways of easing traffic at the site.

"There are a number of options that we don't prefer, and most definitely what we don't prefer is a set of multiple traffic lights," he said.

The visit by Mr Paterson follows the announcement that the traffic light scheme has been hit by delays, which mean it would now not go ahead until May this year.