

# Protests over Dudley's £10m traffic light plan

SHADOW TRANSPORT Minister Owen Paterson joined protesters in Dudley, West Midlands, on Monday 12 February to speak out against a multiple traffic light installation at the Burnt Tree roundabout.

Organiser Chris Kelly, from local Scania dealer Keltruck, says: "Spending £10m on a set of complex traffic lights isn't the way to be going. Minuscule amounts are being spent on the roads these days and they go and spend this much money on a relatively free-flowing section of road. Opening it up to three lanes would be cheaper and more efficient."

Paterson adds: "I understand this is a local matter and I'm no expert on this particular section

of road. Though having looked at road schemes around the country and abroad, I'm seeing that traffic lights are not always the answer."

A number of operators supported the protest. Paul Coxhead from Targeted Training Services says: "This doesn't make sense to anyone and it isn't the best solution. We should be looking for a 30-year plan, not a short-term fix. It's time that councils started talking to local businesses."



## Eurocrats aim to ramp up diesel tax

THE EUROPEAN Commission plans to force up minimum diesel taxes across Europe to stop truckers filling up in the EU countries with the lowest prices.

This is to help operators across the EU compete on a level playing field, and to help the environment by stopping drivers making unnecessary journeys to get cheaper fuel.

One EC source explains: "It makes no sense for us to encourage an unnatural incentive to do extra kilometres."

There is already an EU minimum for diesel taxes, but rates vary widely between EU states.

Since 2004 the EU's minimum diesel tax has been €302/1,000lit (£202). Under the new proposals this will rise to €330 (£220) in 2010 and to €380 (£254) in 2014.