



Mr John Clark
Local Authority Orders Section
Government Office for the North East
Citygate
Gallowgate
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE1 4WH

Wiltshire, Somerset and Cotswold Group
C/o 35, Frome Road
Bradford on Avon
Wiltshire
BA15 2EA

6th October 2007

Westbury Bypass

Compulsory Purchase Order for Planning Application (W/07/09002) for construction of the Westbury Eastern Bypass. Planning Inspectorate Ref: APP/K3930/V/07/1201863

This is an objection to the CPO above by Campaign for Better Transport (previously Transport 2000).

1. We object that Wiltshire County Council's reasons for building the road are not actually met by its construction. Economic regeneration and the transport of goods between commercial employment areas in Western Wiltshire and adjacent Mendip are not best accomplished by an eastern bypass to Westbury. The route chosen is on the basis of the best COBA value for faster traffic going N - S and not a good town planning fit. If a bypass is to be constructed at all - a concept which we question as useful - then a route to the West or a series of smaller and less costly roads would accomplish much more and be better value for money, and provide for new bus links and access to Westbury station, which is regionally important.

The road does nothing to address congested parts of the road system in Western Wiltshire, and constitutes a bypass for one of the very few towns not suffering from increasing traffic and substantial queues. Modern traffic management techniques are notable by their absence in Westbury. The number of houses on the main road in the town is about 230. During most of the day our members have observed that there is so little traffic that school children cross the A350 without hardly a wait and without the aid of a zebra crossing (and indeed there is an absence of crossings at key places).

2. The road has been designed to improve journey times on the A350 at Westbury. However modelled delay in Westbury is minimal, being in total in the region of 30 seconds off peak, and 2.5 minutes during a short pm peak flow period (these modelled figures obtained from WWC's consultants Mouchel Parkmans). This small delay through the town does not warrant the expense of a 5.6 km bypass through a Special Landscape Area, with biodiversity impacts on protected species and the noise of a road through a previously tranquil area. The total sum to be spent on water, landscape and wildlife mitigation would be sufficient to entirely renovate Bristol Temple Meads station into a modern bus-train interchange. The expense of such complex environmental mitigation is extraordinary, especially for a scheme completely unconnected to public transport.

3. Westbury is hemmed in to the East by the MOD land of the Salisbury Plain. To the West are industrial areas. The intelligent expansion of Western Wiltshire should preserve the narrow band of foothills of the Salisbury Plain which do allow public access as a recreational area, and preserve the setting of the White Horse from which the new road (with HGV climbing lane) would be clearly visible. We note that in section 2.2 of the WCC Statement of Reasons that the text relates that the eastern side of town is dominated by the Lafarge Cement Works. The county has forgotten that the main landmark is in fact the Westbury White Horse from which the new road would be clearly visible. The county advertises the new views of the White Horse from its bypass as an advantage to the driver.

4. This unpopular scheme has been inched forward through every obstacle. Local transport policies written years back have been shaped by it; the draft RSS has been plagued by it. The Westbury Bypass was originally not in the Regional Funding Allocation - its inclusion was the result of intervention. The West Wilts Local Plan Inspector recommended against the safe-guarding of the Eastern Bypass in 2003. In every poll, the road's unpopularity has been revealed. We watched with amazement when town councillors living to the East or South of Westbury were disallowed from votes or discussions associated with bypass route, but such occurrences are part and parcel of this small town drama. That so many people in Westbury continue to fight an Eastern Bypass, shows the extraordinary resentment to its construction. We believe that the Westbury Bypass is a historic and local political aspiration rather than a modern day transport requirement and ask that an integrated transport solution, with some element of road building, is examined before the scheme is taken further.

5. We note from the 2007 Planning Application data, that a number of large villages will receive more lorries than before. These villages already have 2-3 times the HGV volume as Westbury. In total the villages affected - Rode (Somerset) and Yarnbrook, North Bradley and Southwick, have about 200 houses on the main road, as in Westbury. A western solution, whether bypass or other road(s) would relieve both these communities and Westbury of most lorries.

6. Lastly the Air Quality Management Area affecting 57 people in Westbury is, we understand, likely to have improved by 2010 and pollutants will be below statutory levels.

Jenny Raggett
For Campaign for Better Transport
(previously Transport 2000)
Wiltshire, Somerset and Cotswold Group
October 6th 2007