



NORTH BRADLEY PARISH COUNCIL

INCORPORATING

NORTH BRADLEY, BROKERWOOD AND YARNBROOK

Coasters
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Wiltshire
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16th April 2012

To:

Ms. A Thurman, Democratic Services Officer, Wiltshire Council
Ms. S Hendry
committee@wiltshire.gov.uk
Cllr. M. Cuthbert-Murray
Cllr. R. Hawker
Cllr. D Jenkins
Cllr. J. Swabey
Cllr. F. de Rhe-Philippe

Dear Councillors and Wiltshire Council,

We are writing to yourself and members of the Westbury Area Board regarding the motion (item 9 Westbury Bypass) to be heard on 19th April 2012.

We ask that the resolution before the Board be altered to include the necessary relief for Southwick, North Bradley, West Ashton, the Yarnbrook junction and also Rode in Somerset of HGVs, as well as Westbury itself. The study entitled 'Traffic in Trowbridge' submitted with the recent Wiltshire Core Strategy shows that the A350 at Heywood Bends (sample point L2) experienced 1,216 HGVs in an average 24 hour period. The point K1 on the A361 through Southwick carries 1,428 HGVs which is about 17 % more.

The Westbury Bypass Planning Application Traffic and Economic Assessment Report showed that a bypass is able to remove HGVs from Southwick, North Bradley and Rode as well as Westbury, if the right route is chosen. On the other hand with the wrong route, the villages get even more HGVs than they do at present, particularly those on the A361/C234.

An Eastern Bypass was scrutinised in the greatest of detail by Her Majesty's Inspectorate and was rejected on many counts. There can be no justification re-visiting it. The Inspector's report made it clear that a road to the west was a much better choice for many reasons, including reducing the impact of HGVs. (See Ref: Far Western Route in paragraph 8.208), in regard of Westbury, that the road: 'would remove significant volumes of HGVs' and that a FWR 'would be more effective than the application scheme at reducing HGVs on Station Road'. Also, crucially for the villages that: 'It would also significantly reduce the volume of HGVs using the A361/C234 route through Southwick and North Bradley.'

A road to the west would therefore remove HGVs from a number of communities, not just Westbury.

Wiltshire Core Strategy is, to coin a phrase a 'hot-house' in West Wiltshire with a number of new employment areas and housing estates. The villages between Trowbridge and Westbury are likely to significant increases in traffic flows. This will be further exacerbated if the proposed Bath lorry ban takes place, which will have the rather obvious effect on HGV traffic using the A350 and A36 route through North Bradley and Southwick. It is abundantly clear that surrounding villages need traffic relief and Westbury must not be treated in isolation.

Taking this into account we ask that the motion to be put to the Westbury Area Board is duly amended and states. *'that any bypass for Westbury will also aim to remove HGVs from North Bradley, Southwick, Rode and will have the added benefit of relieving West Ashton and Yarnbrook also, as well as from Westbury'*.

This re-phrasing of the motion before the Westbury Area Board would propose that Wiltshire Council look at a road to the 'West' of Westbury with the clear intention of identifying the wider HGV benefits that would arise. It would be reasonable to ask that the Yarnbrook West Ashton Improvement took the need for a road to the 'West' into account.

I am sure that Councillor Rhe de Philip, Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Strategic Planning will be fully supportive of our request for an amendment to the resolution which will serve all local villages as well as Westbury. As we are all aware the Inspector's words from his report include: *The benefits of the Far Western Route (FWR) would be spread more widely and could be expected to contribute to the scheme objectives of facilitating regeneration and easing the transport of goods to and from commercial employment areas as well as providing a significant measure of relief within Westbury.* This means that a road to the west would be more useful to the economic development of the wider area.

As with any road, there will be those who would prefer it went elsewhere. However with a growth-led Core Strategy, it is reasonable to expect that any new road construction would relieve as many communities as possible from the effects of growth.

Below are extracts from the Inspector's Report that accompanied the rejection of an Eastern Bypass:

Para 8.205: Despite opportunities at each PIM, no individual or organisation offered to act as promoter or sponsor for a FWR at the inquiry. This was a pity since WCC would have drawn up a scheme on that person or organisation's behalf, seeking to optimise the route and design features. As it is there is no more than a schematic alignment that could be subject to significant variations. Even so it was apparent from the outset to all concerned that there is considerable support locally for the principle of such a route, which was addressed in WCC's evidence.

Para 8.208 - A Far Western Route: 'would remove significant volumes of HGVs and, without a weight ban, be more effective than the application scheme at reducing HGVs on Station Road. It would also significantly reduce the volume of HGVs using the A361/C234 route through Southwick and North Bradley.' The benefits of the FWR would be spread more widely and could be expected to contribute to the scheme objectives of facilitating regeneration and easing the transport of goods to and from commercial employment areas as well as providing a significant measure of relief within Westbury.

Para 8.207 In contrast with the relatively low total and HGV flows on the Glenmore Link, total and HGV flows on the FWR would be significantly higher. The minimum HGV flows on the FWR would be

1472 north of the WWTE (with no weight ban on Station Road) and 1993 (with ban) between WWTE and the A36.

Para 8.215 Much of the rural area west of Westbury potentially affected by a FWR is not unattractive. But not much less than half of such a putative route, towards its northern end, is influenced by the proximity of extensive trading estates, while much of the remainder of the route could, perhaps, run in general proximity to the mainline railway. Little, perhaps none, of the route need run through a designated Special Landscape Area: there is none of the dramatic scenic qualities of the Wellhead Valley; the character is that of “ordinary” low lying rolling clay land. Nor is there the same tranquillity: the area is to varying extents influenced by traffic on the B3099, by the railway and, towards the north, by the trading and industrial estates.

Conversely, it seems highly improbable that a third, crawler, lane would be required anywhere, limiting the road’s overall width, while the more gentle gradients would to some extent reduce traffic noise and fuel consumption, particularly for HGVs.

Para 8.83 regarding the Eastern Route which he rejected: The existing A350 running at ground level past Madbrook Farm has very limited impact other than on its immediate fringe. Away from there, aural tranquillity reinforces the landscape quality, and both are heightened by the town’s proximity yet almost complete separation from this area of countryside. Unsurprisingly, I repeatedly heard evidence of how much this locality is appreciated – loved – by many Westbury residents.

Paragraph 8.86: again regarding the rejected Eastern Route. All told I consider that this length of the route has only “low landscape capacity” to absorb the proposals; the “proposed change would inevitably result in a number of negative effects on landscape character/features/elements”. Put bluntly, the whole character and appearance of the Wellhead Valley would be fundamentally changed. I rank the landscape effect as “very large adverse” in year 1 reducing no more than to “large adverse” as the scheme matures.

The Inspector went on to point out the Western Bypass would have far less impact and that, in paragraph **8.208**: The benefits of the FWR would be spread more widely and could be expected to contribute to the scheme objectives of facilitating regeneration and easing the transport of goods to and from commercial employment areas as well as providing a significant measure of relief within Westbury.

In conclusion and to summarise, we believe that the motion before the Westbury Area Board takes a narrow approach in focusing on traffic through Westbury. It completely misses the strategic requirement to improve the road and transport infrastructure, not only through Westbury but the surrounding villages, which will not see any improvement and are much more likely to be adversely affected by a simple solution for Westbury.

We trust that the suggestions and identification of relevant comments made by the Planning Inspector will be properly taken into account during your discussion and subsequent vote on the motion.

Yours sincerely

Sent on behalf of North Bradley Parish Council
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