

# West Ashton Parish Council

Carol Hackett – Clerk, 23 Orchard Close, West Ashton, Wiltshire. BA14 6AU.  
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16<sup>th</sup> April 2012

Dear Area Board Member,

## **Re: Westbury Area Board Meeting 19<sup>th</sup> April 2012**

I have been asked by the Chairman of West Ashton Parish Council to write to all members of The Westbury Area Board regarding the motion (item 9 Westbury Bypass) to be discussed at the above meeting.

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 the 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 in 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. 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.'

**In other words a road to the west removes HGVs from a number of communities, not just Westbury.**

Wiltshire Core Strategy is, to coin a phrase 'hot-house' in West Wiltshire with a number of new employment areas and housing estates. The villages between Trowbridge and Westbury are likely to experience 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 also 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 Westbury'.

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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 tranquility 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 summary:** The current proposed 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 also in the surrounding settlements, which will not see any improvement, and are much more likely to be adversely affected by a simple solution for just 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 before you.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Carol Hackett

West Ashton Parish Clerk