

**CABINET**  
**24 NOVEMBER 2009**

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**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

**QUESTION MR PATRICK KINNERSLY, SECRETARY, THE WHITE HORSE ALLIANCE**

**Question**

In view of the Government's rejection of the planning application for the Westbury eastern bypass, will the Council now confirm that it accepts the verdict of the Planning Inquiry and the Secretary of State and has finally abandoned any aspirations for building an eastern bypass for Westbury?

If that is the case, when does the Council intend to put forward an alternative plan for meeting the transport and environmental needs of Westbury and surrounding communities in West Wiltshire?

Will the Council explain how its plans for a temporary 3 tonne and a permanent 7.5 tonne weight limit on the Station Road bridge in Westbury will assist it in achieving its transport objectives of a) reducing HGV traffic in Westbury; b) improving access to the West Wilts Trading Estate and c) improving public transport connections between the towns of West Wiltshire? What effect will the weight limits have on the numbers of HGVs on the A350 through Westbury and at Yarnbrook; on the diversionary routes proposed by the council between Yarnbrook and the Westbury trading estates; and on the A361?

Will the Council explain why it wants to impose a permanent 7.5 tonne limit at Station Road rather than strengthening the bridge to carry 40 tonne lorries? What would be the cost of strengthening the bridge to carry all HGV traffic?

If the purpose of the permanent weight limit at Station Road is to reduce the number of heavy lorries on roads in Westbury, what other measures is the Council considering for discouraging, slowing and reducing the HGVs traffic passing through the town on the A350?

**Response**

Following the refusal of an eastern bypass for Westbury there is a need to review the transport strategy for the A350 corridor. Future transport proposals for Westbury will follow this review and will be determined by its conclusions. Until a strategy has been developed, no decisions will be made with regard to any specific proposal.

In the meantime we will proceed with local safety schemes which will not prejudice the future strategy such as the new pedestrian crossing on Warminster Road. Other transport and environmental measures targeted at meeting the needs of the local communities will emerge with the development of the revised strategy for the A350 corridor which is likely to emerge through the next Local Transport Plan.

The 3 tonne structural weight limit will cause a redistribution of goods traffic in Westbury but it is not expected to reduce it. Traffic from the south which currently accesses the West Wilts Trading Estate via Station Road (vehicles over 3 tonnes and under 14ft in height) will be diverted via the A350 and Yarnbrook. This amounts to around 240 vehicles per day in each direction. Access routes to the West Wilts Trading Estate will be longer for some vehicles; the impact on public transport connections will be marginal. The weight limit is being imposed at the request of the bridge owner, Network Rail, to safeguard the bridge for the immediate future.

Network Rail will carry out strengthening over the next year to 18 months which will allow the limit to be raised to 7.5 tonnes and meet their legal liability. Officers and the Council's consultants will with Network Rail what further strengthening might be possible to allow the limit to be raised further. Any additional work of this nature will be at the Council's expense but the cost of strengthening to 40 tonnes has not yet been estimated.