



BRISTOL AND BATH TRAVEL TO WORK AREA

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Councillor Jane Scott
Leader, Wiltshire Council
Bythesea Road
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3rd September 2012

Wiltshire Core Strategy - Westbury Bypass Eastern Route proposed 2012

Dear Jane

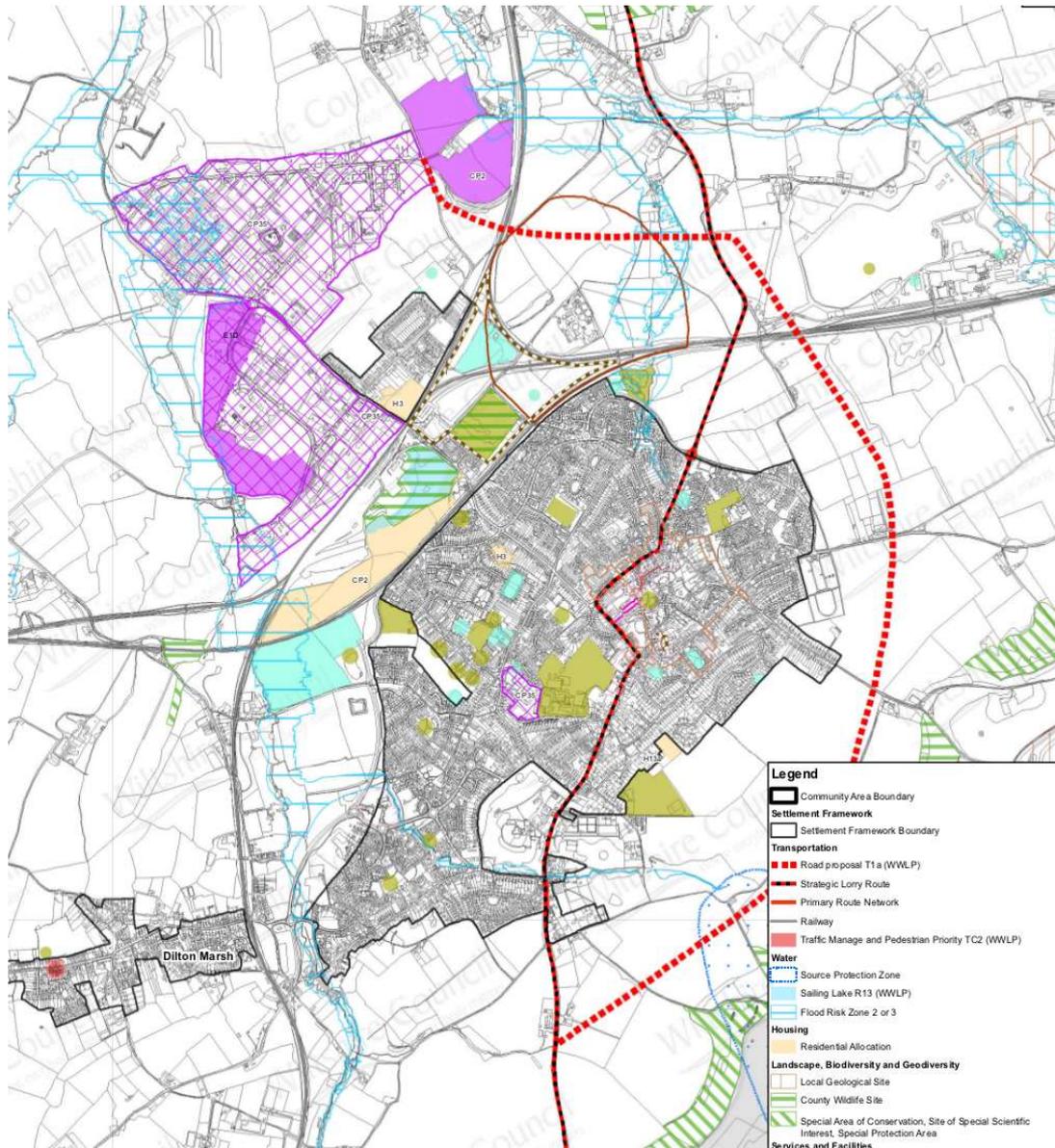
The local Campaign for Better Transport group have in the past two years enjoyed a good working relationship with Wiltshire Council. We attend the Council's Transport Alliance, the Wiltshire and Swindon Freight Quality Partnership and the Wiltshire Environment Alliance and have found these both useful and productive. We have also been involved in helping the county respond to the Bath Lorry Ban and have campaigned to improve public transport in Wiltshire.

It comes therefore as somewhat of a shock to find, without consideration of the proposal at these forums, that the Council is advancing a Westbury Eastern Bypass again. This is even more surprising given the rejection of the road by the Planning Inspectorate and the Secretary of State in 2009.

Alarm bells rang when we looked at the list of 'Inset Maps' on the Wiltshire Core Strategy Submission web page ¹. This map which is dated July 2012 - well after the public consultation on the Core Strategy - makes the authority's intentions clear. The route of an eastern bypass is clearly indicated. The status of the line on the map is explained by the words '*road proposal*' in the Key.

Inset Maps are an important part of a Core Strategy. They give the detail for the Proposals Map for the area, and constitute a formal part of the DPD to show the development and use of land which the local planning authority wish to encourage during any specified period. A safe-guarded corridor has important planning consequences because it imposes planning blight on account of the expectations that the road will be constructed. A road proposal on a map is a clear indication that the local authority expects to progress that route.

¹ <http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/planninganddevelopment/planningpolicy/wiltshirecorestrategy/submissionofwiltshirecorestrategy.htm>



Inset Map for Westbury in 2012 Core Strategy Submission documentation to Planning Inspectorate. Map created with Arc Info GIS in July 2012 (shown in 'properties').

Westbury Area Board April 2012

At the Westbury Area Board in April this year, you as Leader of the Council took the trouble to explain to a large and concerned audience that a bypass for Westbury was still a matter for debate, and not necessarily deliverable. You explained that following the planning inquiry, the Inspectors had detailed that the usage of the road was not exceptional for a primary route, that the cost and the environmental impact outweighed need and also the Inspectors did not see a strong economic benefit.

You also made it clear that the Westbury Community needs to have a conversation about what should be done about perceived traffic problems in Westbury before the harder work is taken on by the Council, as the minutes recount. Statements were circulated at the meeting from West Ashton and North Bradley Councils to point out that if a bypass were to come up again, that a route to the west that also relieved the A361 and West Ashton of HGVs (as well as Westbury) was better for the wider area, a sentiment that the Inspector had also expressed.

Core strategy Consultation: Westbury Community Area map showed no bypass

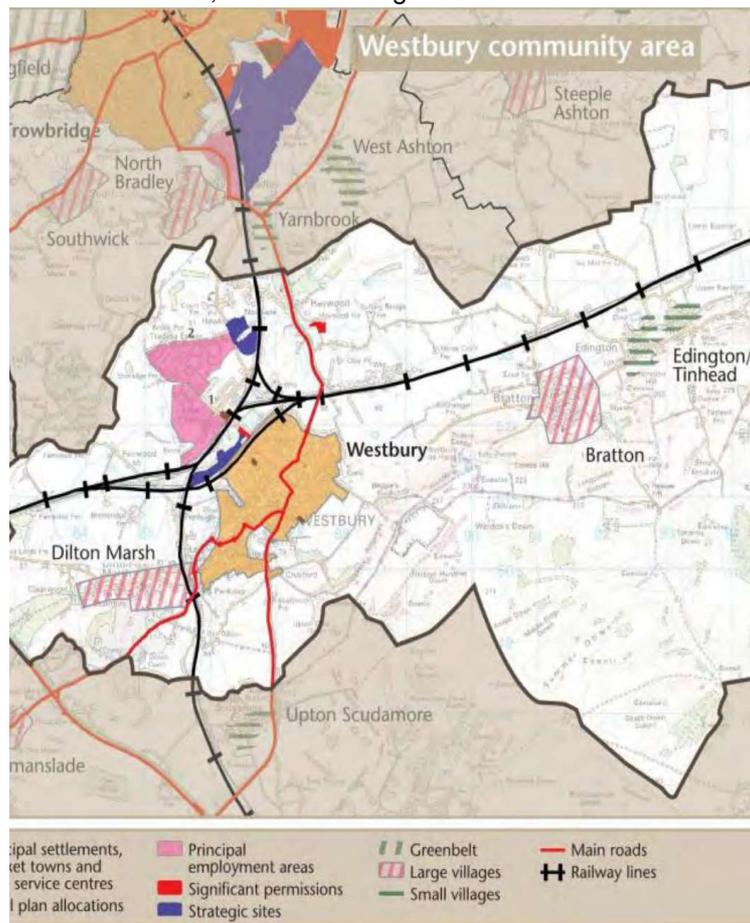
The idea that the community would be involved in looking at solutions for traffic in Westbury was echoed in the text of the Core Strategy that went out for consultation. Members of the public and stakeholders who

looked at the draft Core Strategy on the subject of the A350 in Westbury will have read:

- Westbury suffers from traffic issues, including congestion from the A350 which runs through the town centre, which is also designated as an AQMA. Further detailed work is needed to identify appropriate mitigation measures to alleviate existing traffic related issues which should be undertaken in partnership with the community

There was no mention of safe-guarding the route of the eastern bypass and no map showing 'proposed road'.

Indeed the Westbury Community Area map provided for consultation with the Core Strategy – including at the public exhibition in Westbury - did not include a bypass of any sort. The map that people saw is shown below. The public will have gone away believing that a bypass was not in the draft of the Core Strategy and that certainly no route had been chosen, let alone safe-guarded.



Map shown to public and stakeholders during Core Strategy consultation Spring 2012 showing plan proposals. The same map is in the Wiltshire Core Strategy Westbury Community Area pages of the submission version currently with the Inspectorate

Policy context in local plan

The history of this scheme is that it was in 2008, subject to a major planning inquiry as a *departure application* - in other words a planning proposal that had no foundation in the Local Plan. This was because Policy T1A which had safeguarded the route had a caveat which nullified the policy if no funds were forthcoming from central government in 2003. Policy T1A was removed accordingly. The text of the operative 2004 West Wilts Local Plan 1st Alteration on this matter is shown below.

Westbury Bypass Package

T1a Land to the north and east of Westbury, from north of the existing Cement Works Roundabout and to the south of Madbrook Farm, as shown on the Proposals Map, is safeguarded as the County Council's preferred route option for the A350 Westbury Eastern Bypass and the Glenmore Link.

Other development will not be permitted on this safeguarded land if it would be likely to prejudice the implementation of this scheme.

3.4.3 A Westbury Bypass Package is considered to be an important element of the required A350 improvements. The new road package offers the possibility of traffic relief and environmental improvement for Westbury and improved access to the West Wilts Trading Estate, via the Glenmore Link and a general opportunity for economic growth. After extensive public consultation, through the Structure and Local Transport Plan process, the County Council approved an Eastern Bypass as a preferred route option in July 2001. The County Council's preferred route was the subject of a funding bid to central Government in July 2003. The route will be safeguarded pending the results of the multi-modal study and determination of the funding application. The route will be safeguarded if the funding application is successful. The route and other alternatives will be subject to full examination through the development control and inquiry processes. The proposed alignment is shown on the Proposals Map.

UPDATE (June 2005): The July 2003 funding bid was unsuccessful. Therefore, in accordance with the provisions of paragraph 3.4.3, the eastern route is no longer safeguarded and has been removed from the Proposals Map.

The Inspector in his report on the Westbury Bypass Planning Inquiry² (page 218) says:

' For the present I see the scheme as a departure from the provisions of the District Plan' and that 'It would be wrong in my view to accord the weight of Section 38(6) of the Act to Policy T1a in support of the scheme'.

In other words, Wiltshire officers cannot argue that policy T1A of the bypass warrants the inclusion of the scheme in the Core Strategy: there was no policy footing in the Local Plan even before the road was rejected.

At the June 2012 meeting of Wiltshire Council when the Core Strategy was finalised, Westbury councillor Russell Hawker called for the Core Strategy to spell out the council's support for a Westbury bypass. However this idea was rejected by Cllr Fleur de Rhe-Philippe, Cabinet Member for Economic Development, on account that there was no assurance that a bypass could be built.

In summary

We think that the inclusion of the Eastern Bypass as a clearly indicated road proposal in the Proposals Map for the Core Strategy is misjudged and a mistake. The vast majority of people in Westbury and in the area have no idea that this road is once again on the agenda and have been advised by councillors to the contrary. A safe-guarded route and a line on the Proposals Map is not something to be taken lightly. We suggest that the line indicating an eastern bypass for Westbury in the Inset Map for the Core Strategy is removed before the Examination in Public. We hope you will agree.

Should you feel that the map should stay, we suggest that it should be openly and formally consulted on so that councillors and the public are fully aware of the proposed road and can comment on it. It should be remembered that a very large number of people were against this road when it was originally proposed, which is why it was called in for a planning inquiry.

Yours faithfully

Jenny Raggett
Anne Lock

Campaign for Better Transport
Bristol and Bath Travel to Work Area

² Report to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government and the Secretary of State for Transport by Alan Langton DipTP CEng MRTPI MICE MIHT An Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government and the Secretary of State for Transport Assisted by John Yellowley BSc CEng MICE FIHT.