

Day Thirteen

John Whitelegg

Evidence in Chief

Prof Whitelegg read his summary proof of evidence on climate change. His main points were:

- Climate change is at or near the top of the policy agenda
- The Thames Gateway Bridge was rejected due to climate change considerations.
- Analysis of the scheme's effect on climate change has not been adequately assessed
- The scheme would increase greenhouse gas emissions.

Prof Whitelegg read the main points of his rebuttal proof to Mr Smyth's evidence:

- There are three sets of CO2 emissions figures. We are not told of scheme's projected emissions over a 60 year period.
- Mr Smyth did not give a cumulative figure for greenhouse gas emissions over sixty years, and did not attach a monetary value of carbon emissions.
- Increase in carbon emissions originally projected at 8.4%. Now revised to over 10%. 8.4% significant in itself, as we should be reducing carbon emissions, not increasing them.
- The UK is the first country in the world to provide for statutory emissions reductions.
- Para 7: concern that carbon calculations based on flawed AADT figures.
- Projects of this kind produce significant induced traffic.
- Unless emissions reduced, the world faces cataclysm

Prof Whitelegg was asked to read his summary proof on economic impact. His main points were:

- Lack of evidence showing link between increase in highway capacity and economic growth.
- Two-way road effect: roads drain away resources, lose out to more distant suppliers.
- The Government is committed to building a low carbon economy.
- Wiltshire is not an economically disadvantaged area
- The scheme would not effect economic regeneration
- The scheme departs from Nata guidance
- There has been a lack of demand management measures.

Prof Whitelegg read the main points of his rebuttal proof to Mr Helps' evidence:

- Para 5. Refer to Helps 9.6 - residents travel to jobs outside of the county. There is no clear causal relationship in bypasses and self-containment. No evidence indicates whether the bypass will increase or reduce out-commuting.

- Para 6. Links to primary routes of major importance to local business. No indication of factors other than transport that influence business location.
- Para 7. Tourism. No evidence that current road makes it difficult for Westbury to attract tourism. No evidence that bypass would enable Westbury to improve its tourism industry.
- Para 14. Eddington report does not support Westbury Bypass. Do not regard Westbury as congested, or as a bottleneck.
- Para 15. Pricing and charging should be part of the policy mix. Pricing and charging can operate in a variety of contrasting environments.

Cross Examination

You were instructed on the same time-scale as Mr James?

-That is my recollection

Instructions received in verbal or written form?

-Email

Asked to do what?

-To review WCC case, especially with regard economic impact and climate change, then present evidence to inquiry.

Produced evidence on climate change. Are you saying that development projects such as roads cannot be build?

-Not in an absolute sense

-There would have to be a very rigorous process of appraisal

-Would not rule out possibility that in exceptional circumstances a road might be a possibility

-In the vast majority of situations, other solutions are preferable.

You are not claiming that the evidence you produced prevents a road being built, but that a long process must be undertaken?

-At the general level, there must be an option generation appraisal

-Specific point about Westbury that on carbon grounds the road should not proceed.

-Process need not be that long

-The carbon implications of scheme mean there is no case for the scheme to proceed.

So there should be no bypass at all, whether to the east or west?

-Agreed

Seen supplementary note on air quality produced by Smyth?

-Yes

Climate proof 3.1 onwards. Criticism make is that haven't seen spreadsheet showing effect over 60 years?

-Concerned that have now seen three sets of figures. Predict there will be a fourth and fifth set at some point.

-Carbon emissions will vary over 60 years. May start at one figure, but induced traffic has a short, medium and long term impact. Spreadsheet needed to show if initial figure on emissions remains constant, or varies.

Are you making a formal request for the spreadsheet?

-Yes

Will be communicated to Mr Smyth. Third set of figures. Aware of why there is now a third set?

-No

Climate proof 3.9. Reference to PPS23.

-PPS1 of equal importance

Have a body of guidance from government relating to climate change.

-Agreed

You have produced information from other sources. If the inquiry follows the guidance from the PPS's, are we going far enough in meeting climate change consequences, or is more required?

-Difficult to know where to draw the line.

-Thames Gateway inspector took the view that looking at the totality of PPSs and PPGs there was a problem, due to clear commitment to reduce greenhouse gases.

-Must look at PPS23, but must also look at government climate change policy as a whole.

-Policy that kitchen underneath bathroom must not be flooded – but at the same time turning up that tap.

Climate Bill, still a Bill. We don't know when it will become law?

-Don't know for certain.

Within Climate Bill, no proposals to change planning system.

-Agreed

Planning system under which we are now operating recently been looked at in context of 2004 Act. Guides planning application. Climate P3.9. You would not argue that that goes anywhere near far enough?

-Happy with wording.

Guidance are that 'need to limit, and where possible reduce greenhouse gas emissions.' No planning requirement to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in individual applications?

-Depends on meaning of 'where possible'

-*It is possible* to solve transport problem in Westbury a way that does not add to emissions.

On the basis that you say it is possible to meet situation in Westbury without increasing emissions, that would depend on what the measures would be?

-One has to go through process of option generation appraisal seriously.

-Can solve problem in a way that doesn't add to greenhouse gases.

Need idea of what we are seeking to achieve. Must meet objectives of scheme.

-Have to define objectives

-Make sure that we have a thorough grasp of possible solutions.

Must follow approach with any alternative.

-Agreed

If therefore a suggestion of FW route around Westbury, that solution would need to be examined to see it met objectives of scheme?

-Would be happy to look at all alternatives and conduct carbon audit.

Would not need to have a carbon audit for every scheme, if it became clear that scheme would not meet defined objectives?

-Agreed

Amounts to an identification of the problem, the objectives and then if alternatives are to be assessed, they are assessed in the light of the objectives of the scheme?

-Must avoid self fulfilling prophecy.

-Depends on definition of objective.

If you wish to relieve congestion in Westbury, you would not build bypass round Swindon?

-No

-Wary of downgrading the importance of carbon reduction potential.

Thames Gateway decision. Appendix 1. TfL's evidence that scheme would result in 55,000 tonne carbon increase a year. Approach taken is to ask does the application conform to development plan? If not, are there relevant material considerations?

-Agreed

Have you returned to development plan documents?

-No

Have you examined LTP1 and LTP2 in the context of economic development?
-Have read, but not used in economic proof.

Thames Gateway decision. Inspector undertook classic balancing exercise. Said was in conflict with development plan. Not material considerations exempting. That is the approach needed for this scheme?

-Agreed

-Thames Gateway a different scale project, but principle of the schemes the same.

-Westbury Bypass economic benefits very puny and weak, very large climate change disbenefits.

Haven't looked at documents that support economic justification for scheme?

-Agreed, but have looked at evidence on economic impact.

Have seen Mr Turner's evidence?

-No

How much time spent analysing nature of existing problem in Westbury?

-Worked for WCC over ten years ago, spent a lot of time in area

-Made special visit a few weeks ago.

-Don't claim to be knowledgeable about local geography, but familiar with issues.

How much time spent in Westbury?

-One day this year.

-Three or four days over ten years ago.

As part of the information supplied to WHA, there was a document used, 'Westbury Saturn Model, Variable Demand Modelling', 12/12/07.

-Have downloaded less than a week ago

Information supplied to WHA last year?

-Accept

Had not seen when drafted evidence. S4, Summary, Pg10. Fourth paragraph. Induced traffic very small figure?

-Sacher report 1994, reviewed 151 schemes.

-All studies argue that in circumstances where there is congestion relief, there will be induced traffic. 10% time saving produces 5% increase in traffic.

-Scheme will produce 20% time saving, should make 10% increase in induced traffic. Very different from 1.9% figure. Cannot find discussion about elasticity, and how elasticity selected and justified.

Rely on generalised average approach. Cannot say whether information produced by Mr Helps is wrong?

-Cannot say that it is right either.

Options for Westbury. You do make specific suggestion?

-Agreed

-Not commissioned to produce option generation appraisal

If it is accepted that there is a problem in Westbury, there are four options. Firstly the scheme before the inquiry. Another scheme, such as FW route. Measures within the town other than bypass. Or, do nothing.

-Agreed

-Quite happy that bypass proposals should be clearly explained and tested against non-bypass options.

-Do nothing not a serious option.

-Problem not well defined and empirically validated

-Huge amount of good practice on town centre measures, e.g. Car free houses.

Dr Hansen's speech. Reference to penultimate page of speech, 'requirements to halt carbon dioxide growth.' Mobile energy source – author intended mobility of the individual into the future?

-Cannot be totally sure

-Saying that climate change problem so severe that everything possible must be done to halt climate change. Part of the policy mix is alternatively fuelled vehicle.

We shouldn't take that speech as being a message that mobility of the individual through their own vehicle must cease overnight?

-No

CD5.3. Committee Report. Pg13. Objections from various bodies. WBA objections don't specifically raise climate change.

-Agreed

-Point 7 talks of RSS, considers proposal at conflict with sustainability policies. Would imagine one of RSS policies is on climate change.

A350 Corridor Alliance don't specifically refer to climate change or RSS.

-Agreed

Pg19-20. CPRE, FoE, Transport 2000 – don't specifically refer to climate change.

-Agreed

Climate proof 2.1.3. Assessment process of do minimum ignoring other measures that might come forward?

-Making point that DM might be based on present trends, or based on measures other than bypass.

What other measures?

- In terms of evaluating DS, must be clear that DM does not mean Do Nothing.
- Could not find explanation for what DM reflects.
- Artificial comparison.

Wholly uncertain what future measures might be?

- Voluntary means a total unknown
- Possible for authorities to make development conditional on work and school travel plans.

A DM scenario is required so that an assessment of the scheme can be made?

- Has to be a DM, but DM should be transparent

Don't know the effect of travel plans?

- DM should be transparent and should allow for inspection.
- DM should not be based on assumption that present trends continue

CD13.1. Referred to in climate proof 3.5.1. Actually a discussion document on Eddington and Stern reports.

- Don't disagree with description
- But not just a discussion document
- Uses language such as 'fundamental goal of transport policy *must* be ...'
- A mixture of discussion and statement of policy.

Climate proof 3.5.6. Reference?

- 2.23 on pg32

Eddington accepts link between transport and economic activity?

- Agreed
- Also says where and how he thinks transport policies should take place
- Not claiming that Eddington says there is a never a case for road building or improved transport infrastructure.
- Eddington calls for road pricing and demand management.

Accept that planning system has a role to play in terms of economic activity?

- Yes

Planning system deals with land use, access arrangements, provision of workforce by allowing housing, etc.

- Agreed

Objectives of scheme set out in Economic Proof 5.2. Not claimed that road will lead directly to jobs.

- Helps Supplementary Proof 10.26. Pg39. Economic regeneration is a key objective of the Westbury Bypass.
- Not aware of statement saying purpose of bypass to create jobs.
- Economic regeneration means creating jobs.

Would you accept that bypass will improve transport links into WW and between WW towns?

- Improving links not just a matter of providing new road route.
- Bypass would be an additional link.
- May have two-way road effect – road will suck out economic activity.

Accept that scheme an improvement to transport links?

- Wouldn't use word 'improvement'
- Accept that it is an additional link.

Bypass will provide reliability on journey time that doesn't currently exist.

- Do not agree, there are other options.

Facilitate economic regeneration. If decided that it is an improvement, that facilitation would exist.

- Very happy with objective being to facilitate economic regeneration
- Unhappy with leap from that, to bypass mode
- Don't believe there is evidence that bypass would facilitate regeneration

Would bypass ease movements of goods?

- Could do that
- Could also encourage supply of goods from elsewhere, supplanting jobs and economic activity from area.

If at a national level there is a lack of evidence, must be looked at in context of local area?

- Experts must be brought in from outside locality
- Many statements lacking evidence
- Much 'evidence' actually conjecture.

Does ease of movement encourage new businesses and investment?

- Ease of movement need not lead necessarily to new investment. Could have neutral, positive or negative impact.
- Wiltshire in a highly sophisticated and connected economy. In that kind of economy, it is almost impossible that adding a bypass will facilitate economic regeneration.

How familiar are you with route that HGVs take coming from the south?

- Not familiar

EP Pg6, Table 2.3. M74 an extension to another motorway?

-Agreed

Extensive demolition of properties?

-Not aware

M74 proposal was promoted in the face of an active Scottish Government policy to reduce traffic. Not a policy to reduce traffic in England?

-To the best of my knowledge, we do not have the equivalent policy.

-LTP2. Limit growth of traffic in WW sustainable transport area.

-We have similar thing, but tends to be translated into commitment to reduce rate of growth, not as specific as in Scotland.

EP5.7 - Quote from LTP1, pg70. EP5.8 – Quote from LTP1, pg82. Pages between pg70 and 82 cover huge number of issues. No one should be under the impression that the economy paragraph leads straight into bypass paragraph?

-Was not stating that it did.

-No real deep purpose in setting out quotes in such a way.

LTP1, pg63. Familiar with strategy set out in LTP?

-Yes

Objective pressures and reactions. Only reference to road improvements is to contribute to an efficient economy. Potentially build road to improve journey time reliability. LA not rushing to build road?

-Not saying rushing to build road

-Bypass inappropriate solution that harks back to 1960s

-Fails to comply with government policy

EP5.10. Analysis that Wiltshire prosperous relative to UK as a whole. Have you carried out investigation to the position of Westbury in relation to Wiltshire as a whole?

-No

-Would be possible to collate information

LTP2, pg31. 3.5, Accessibility in Wiltshire. Reference to various factors. Pg32, shows indices of deprivation across Wiltshire.

-Westbury in highest segment, performing well.

Rebuttal to Helps. Para 5. Confirm that LTP1 shows Westbury has the highest element of output?

-Trying to take a broader view across country.

-Longer distance commutes an in built feature of transport landscape.

-'At the hard end of hard' to achieve reduction in commuting.

Para 6. No evidence of other factors that of major importance. Implying that links to primary routes a major factor?

-Accept that

-Possibly take dozens of factors into account.

Para 11. Guildford does have a bypass?

-Does have a bypass, but jams at junction

Para 15. Durham and London. Pricing and charging. Congestion charge in centre of London, and in Durham one U-shaped street in centre. Both city centre areas.

-Agreed

Re-examination

LTP2. Pg43-44. Ch3 – Problems and Opportunities. S3.9. Road traffic significant contributor to climate change.

-Transport not the only source of pollution, but only sector where growth threatens to outpace technology that can reduce emissions.

-At local level, LTP process allows LA's to implement more sustainable forms of transport.

'Towards a Sustainable Transport System'. In your experience, when you have Sec of State using phrase such as 'must', how likely is policy to change?

-Very unlikely

Officer's Report. Pg16. IV.

-The notion of road expansion as an engine of sustainable growth curiously outdated.

-Must use far lower levels of carbon.

-Road expansion does not bring with it delivery of low carbon society, in discord with government policy.

Taken to variable model report. When published?

-12/12/07

Committee considering planning application?

-16/05/07

Was model report available to committee or included in ES?

-No

Would variable model report have informed scheme development?

-Would have been helpful

Asked about familiarity with Westbury. Worked for WCC over ten years ago. Boyle proof 1.3 – shortcomings of A350 route through Westbury long recognised, bypass discussed for decades. Report recommended E bypass in 1990. You would have worked in Westbury after that report?

-Yes

PPS23. Published in 2005. Supplement to PPS1 published Dec 2007. How would you situate PPS23 requirement within supplement to PPS1?

-PPS1 strengthens what is said in PPS23

Emphasis on 'where possible' to reduce. In terms of limiting, are you aware of any evidence that scheme limits emissions?

-By definition, the scheme cannot limit in any way.

Inspector's Questions

Acknowledged that part of Wiltshire not a depressed area. State that no necessary correlation between road building and economic regeneration. Do you know places that are prospering, which have poor road access?

-Guildford – booming, despite terrible congestion in Surrey

-Selby – empty motorways

-Liverpool – v high quality motorways, but depressed area.

-Point that evidence base does not give anyone any comfort – transport infrastructure does not magically translate to economic gain.

Argument that a bypass is necessary, but not sufficient, to produce economic growth.

-Do not support

-Transport infrastructure low priority – 'buzz' higher priority for businesses considering investing.

-Should not get too bogged down in transport infrastructure

School and work travel plans and other demand management measures. Are these alternatives, or could they be complementary measures?

-Logically, no reason why there cannot be a bypass+ option

-Cost of alternatives considerably less than cost of bypass.

-Need to monitor congestion, then if alternatives not working consider further measures

-They become DM.

When precisely did you work for WCC?

-Run transport consultancy since 1993, had done consultancy work before then

-Probably in the 1990-1993 period, over a period of months.

-WCC wanted me to participate in seminars on sustainable transport

Was a bypass on the table at that stage?

- Public energised on problems on bypasses, both pro and anti.
- Westbury bypass not part of remit

Said that weren't arguing against personal mobility. Is there a viable alternative to petrol such as hydrogen?

- Yes, there will be in the area of electricity rather than hydrogen
- Current technology in prototype form
- Sweden will be oil free by 2020. Rely on more public transport and cycling. Need technology + behavioural change + spatial strategy + accessibility

In relation to how 'other measures' might relate to Westbury, is Westbury the right size of town for measures to make impact, similar size towns that have used alternatives?

- Examples, but not in UK -Holland, Denmark, Germany
- Measures start with HQ public transport to effect modal shift – car use under 20%.
- Workplace and school travel plans better in UK. Can get rid of school peak traffic. Can increase cycling, sustainable town initiative, cycling demonstration town initiative.
- Segregated cycling
- 20 mph speed limit – gives feeling of safety and security, facilitates shift to cycling and walking.
- Share lorry space, can reduce lorry traffic by 60%.

Would involve freeing up space for through traffic?

- Investigate and increase rail freight
- Will be residual road freight, but can be reduced by 40-50%.
- If lorries going relatively slowly, degree of annoyance goes down dramatically