

Day 5, Tuesday 24 June 2008

Stephen Boyle

Issues of alternatives arise from Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations
– assumption that inform assessment

Conservation reg 1994, test of no satisfactory alternative

-agreed

Non-bypass options – reports show that improvements to public transport would not address objectives of improving A350

Halpro report – conclusion that E Bypass most worthy – **1990**

-agreed, remains the same

Not found Halpro Report in evidence

-CD4.2

Consideration given to non-bypass options – which were considered?

-report a study of A350, dealing of whole corridor, not just Westbury

-EB most worthy of progressing

-Report detailed 4 proposed bypasses

State that non-bypass options considered – what were non-bypass options in 1990?

-Produced during roads to prosperity

-71.7 – 'other things' should be looked at before bypass

Report detailed how traffic could be diverted from Westbury town centre

-agreed

-other options not in 1990 report – different context, 'predict and provide'

BB2SC – where in this study looks at non-bypass options?

-6.3 – not withstanding improvements, focus on road transport

What was remit of BB2SC?

-overall remit looking at ways of moving people and goods from BB to SC

-specific look at Westbury – main bottleneck

Where is a specific examination of non-bypass options in BB2SC

-Non-bypass options not looked at in specifically in report

Inspector asked which 6.3 being referred to

-Final strategic corridor report, BB2SC

-CD4.1, p.19 – study finding confirms most journeys taken by road in foreseeable future

4.21-2 – p.15: specific reference to Westbury – para4.21 states that the study was required to identify strategic need for bypass, although the responses to consultations opposed particular alignments

Westbury Planning conference 1998: various studies found that non-road options would not address objectives – did conference/ public consultation have the benefit of any detailed non-road alternative?

-best of knowledge there is no worked up alternative to bypass – no-one identified suitable alternative

-DfT emphasised need for non-road – after considering, the conference decided road preferable

In the light of developing govt policy – road building last resort – would it not have been reasonable and responsible of the County to provide a worked up non-road option?

-no alternative provided that meets objectives

Who should provide non-road option?

-County should begin by looking at non-road – done that, and ruled out

Despite 20 years of development of policy, preference of council remains the same as in 1990?

-Agreed

State that majority felt that WSB needed bypass – however participants did not have non-road option

-90% in favour of bypass – no other scheme would achieve objectives

BB2SC stated that the majority of journeys undertaken by road. WWSTS – predicted traffic growth 1997-2001 by 2.9%

Actual figure 1996-2006, growth less than 2%

-Agreed

How has actual growth compared to predicted growth affected proposal?

-ability of public transport to reduce growth limited

-increase of capacity does not necessarily mean more demand – surplus freight capacity

2.8 – concluded that package of measures, including pedestrian and public transport options required. What has been implemented in Westbury in terms of soft measures?

-Only real time info for buses

-Not aware of any measures between M4 and SC

Where do we see in the evidence how WCC has tried to do something and failed?

-WCC understands implications of below 20mph in WSB – road calming may help pedestrians, but would increase CO2 emissions, noise

traffic below 20, a good thing for safety?

-agreed, but not as good as taking traffic away

Where are feasible studies that prove traffic calming would not reduce traffic flows?

-WCC could not test anything else

-no real alternative, apart from through Bath, WHS

-not aware of any traffic models

Statement in 2.10 an assertion, not backed up

-if there was an alternative, it would be before the enquiry

*

Economic development and environment comm report, 6 May 1998, Appendix B
Mr Kanseraï : para12 – route selection not straight forward – far western route, alternative A1 and Z have most support – recommendation that further report be completed into FW and E route?

-agreed

1998 route assessment table – appendix 5 to report of 2 Sept 1998, p.5 para30:
recommended that E route be adopted

-agreed

Cost benefit – good benefits for both E and FW: only 0.6 m difference between 2 schemes?

-agreed

Engineering – 5% gradient in E – makes climbing lane necc, not required in FW
-agreed

Ecology and nature conservation – both affect hedgerows etc, landscaping required: no info available for ecological interest on E route, e.g. Need for bat gantry

-no specific eco surveys at the time

E route runs through 3 km of special landscape area, compared to 200m for FW

-agreed

Little to choose between schemes?

-25% greater costs and 25% length to route to FW

Cost based decision to choose E route?

-looking at figures agreed, unaware of decision making in 98

Sept 1999 report: recommended that review of route options of W route be carried out. Parkman report Oct 1999 Appendix C: pg2 1.2 existing traffic in WSB poor, do not justify bypass. Economic regeneration increases justification for Bypass. Pg24, traffic not particularly high. 10.4 if WSB considered on its own, not justification for bypass. Govt policy moved on even further
-agreed, environmental impact also increased in govt policy

When WSB considered as part of the wider regional need, stronger case. 10.10 – need for bypass marginal, except in context of regional economy

-agreed

n10.11 FW route needs further development. Agree with recommendation at time?

-agreed

n11.15 – appraisal needed fro FW route

-agreed

Parkman stated that more work need, Narta appraisal need?

-agreed

Narta carried out on FW route?

-no

Has recommendation that public consultation be carried out for FW?

-no

-however further development of FW route has taken place, costs of improvements ruled out on economic grounds – sufficient by itself to rule out

When was this decision made to rule out FW route on economic grounds?

-still considered up till 2007 – report considered cost and traffic

-FW route does less for WSB, increases traffic on trunk road

Parkman March 2000, Appraisal at end of report of both E and W bypass options. Noise, air quality, heritage not assessed at that time. No figures for E bypass cost-benefit analysis. At time there was approximately £1m difference between bypasses. Report states that both routes would achieve similar objects. E would improve WSB, W would improve A361

-E route a WSB bypass, W route has less local improvements

Environmental impact similar

-agreed

Parkman, June 2001: pg15-16: landscapes of local and regional importance, national importance of Westbury White House vantage point

-Agreed

Pg28, traffic and economics: E bypass most effective at traffic relief in WSB, FW bypass attracts proportion of N and E traffic, reduces traffic in Southwick, increases in Barkley 136%, extension to West Ashton would reduce traffic by 13,000 a day. Is extension to West Ashton part of proposal?

-No, but is next priority of WCC

E Bypass does not introduce new road to area of unspoiled area of open countryside?

-Matter of landscape, not engineering

Agree with statement that E Bypass does not introduce new road to area of unspoiled area?

-Difference that countryside to E contained by scarp

Yes or No?

-Not open countryside to the E

Funding opportunity: in order for govt funding, fuller appraisal needed?

-Agreed

Need to resolve route selection, if intending to seek funding. Delay of submitting bid entails danger of funds allocated elsewhere. Suggests that funding sought because deadline was approaching?

-Not specific deadline

Referred to pg8, 10 July 2001. iii) scheme bid submitted by 31 July.

-Agreed

Committee took view that they had 3 weeks to submit bid?

-Agreed

Do you know whether bid was submitted?

-Not aware of bid, funding has been considered since that date

Funding not forthcoming as a result of that bid?

-Wouldn't expect funding to be confirmed at this stage.

Kanserai, Appendix C, 19 Dec 2003. Govt office to WCC. Pg3 'New Major Schemes', states that scheme first submitted in July 2001. Clear that bid was made on basis of July 10.

-Agreed

Bid deferred to BB2SC for further consideration. No decisions could be taken until this scheme reported in 2004.

-Agreed

Letter from Govt Office to WCC, 2 Dec 2004, LTP settlement 2004. contains results of 05/06 local transport settlement in detail. Pg2 progress towards objectives – only half on track to be achieved. Pg3. WSB bypass. Scheme submitted July 2001, deferred to BB2SC. Noted that report recommended that scheme proceed, recognise that scheme priority, recognising benefits, ministers decide that not high priority for approval at this stage. IS it the County's case that since Dec 04, that this scheme should have taken a greater priority?

-It is now a higher priority.

-Other improvements have taken place on A350, this scheme now moved up the rankings

Letter, DfT to SWRA, schemes which do not yet have approval – does that mean planning permission or govt approval

-not accepted into the programme

Remains the case?

-Agreed

Environment advisory panel, July 2003, pg2: A350 WSB bypass, para 8: confirmation of preferred route – design work on E, substantial environmental assessment, planning application intended in near future. IS this a reference to the 2005 planning application?

-As far as aware, yes

Para9, original bid 2001, bids also submitted for Yarnbrook and for WSB TC.

Improvements at Yarnbrook and WA dropped at this stage due to funding?

-At this stage, agreed

-Limited funding, likely that funding was a major reason

Current bid restricted to E bypass, £16m, TC £1.3?

-Agreed

At this stage, no worked up package for TC?

-No

*

Proof- FW route, section 4: 4.2: middle of text, Black Dog Woods, site of conservation interest. SNCI does not have the status of SSI or SAC?

-No, knowledge exhausted

One effect of E Bypass is that if there were to be future Yarnbrook/ WA, would unavoidably impact SSSIs at Picket and Claret Wood

-that would seem to be the case

Advantage of FW route is that it would not impact SSI at Picket and Clanger Wood

-Agreed, but nor does E as things stand

-FW route would terminate at B1097

When consideration was being given to alternatives, these schemes given serious consideration

-Agreed

Would not impact Picket and Clanger Wood

-Suspect that they would not

n4.3, referring to Parkman Report: found that W Bypass would impact on a tranquil area, noise, longer journey than existing route

-agreed

For some length FW route runs alongside railway

-Agreed

No railway in Wellhead Valley

-Agreed

Has there been a re-appraisal of impact of FW route on A36?

-Yes, Jan 2007

FW route would require dualing of single carriageway between Warminster and Beckington. When was this concluded?

-Included in 2000 report

Has any subsequent reappraisal been done?

-Yes, Jan 2007

Jan 2007 figures include A36 improvements?

-Yes