

ACT NOW!

Planning approval for this destructive scheme would be a disaster, inviting a sprawl of housing and commercial development to fill the open space between town and bypass. Massive public opposition can stop this happening.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

● Find out about the road

A new planning application for an eastern bypass was published on 2 March 2007. You can see it and the Environmental Statement at Westbury Library and the offices of WCC and West Wilts District Council in Trowbridge. The documents are also on the council's planning web site. You can get to it via our web site. The deadline for comments is **Friday 23 March**. The County itself will decide whether to approve or reject the plan. It is important they know that this road is as unpopular as ever.

● Write a letter of objection

Everyone in a household can write their own letter, saying what they feel is wrong with the road. We have summarised the main points in a draft letter below. Your own words and reasons for objecting would carry more weight. Be sure to include your name and address. Give the planning application number and write 'Objection' at the top.

Mr Jason Day
Planning Implementation Manager
Wiltshire County Council
County Hall, Trowbridge, Wilts BA14 8JD

Your address

Date

Dear Sir

Planning Application W.07.09002 Westbury Eastern Bypass - Objection

I object to this application on planning and environmental grounds.

Planning: the road is in conflict with regional transport and environmental policies. It has not obtained Government funding. It would make traffic congestion even worse in Yarnbrook and West Ashton and along the A361.

Environment: this road would be an ugly, noisy intrusion into the protected landscape of the Wellhead Valley, which provides the tranquil setting for the Westbury White Horse and is a favourite recreation area on the edge of Salisbury Plain. The road would endanger wildlife species that have the highest level of protection under European and UK law, including bats and dormice. WCC's plans for 'mitigation' are experimental and risky. The protected water source at Wellhead Springs remains at risk from contamination.

Alternative transport solutions - such as a direct access road to the A36 from the town's expanding industrial areas on the west of town, and routing long-distance trucks away from the A350 - have not been properly considered as required by the Habitats Directive.

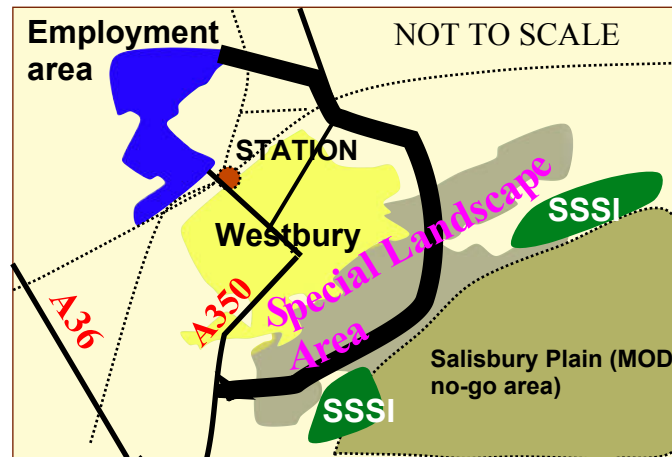
Yours sincerely [write your name clearly after your signature]

Wrong road, wrong place, wrong century

When Wiltshire published its first planning application in 2005 it soon became clear that this was one of the most foolish and destructive transport projects in the country. The council has spent nearly two years trying to overcome objections from English Nature over the risk to protected wildlife, and the Environment Agency over risks to the protected water source.

After spending more than £2 million of council taxpayers' money on engineers and ecologists they have a new plan and Environmental Statement: the UK's rarest bats are to be saved from disturbance and death by tunnels to make them fly under the road and steel gantries to make them fly over it. Dormice will be able to climb knotted ropes threaded over the bat gantries. Our ecologists say this 'mitigation' is experimental and risky. In two years the estimated bill has gone up from £20m to £33m.

And it's still on the wrong side of town (see map) and now looks even more like a relic from the days when bypasses were thought to work, before climate change became an urgent problem, before more progressive councils started to conserve natural resources, invest in public transport and plan for congestion charging and traffic reduction.



Extraordinary planning blunder: map shows how road would wreck landscape between town and Salisbury Plain - on the wrong side of Westbury for the expanding employment areas, milk factory, planned waste plant, railway station and site of rail-freight terminal. Yarnbrook and West Ashton left to suffer the resulting traffic growth.

WHO WE ARE

The **A36/A350 Corridor Alliance** was formed in 1993 to bring together groups opposed to the creation of a strategic highway from the M4 to the South Coast. It includes **Friends of the Earth South West:** Bath, Bristol, Somer Valley, West Wilts, North Wilts, Salisbury; **Friends of the Earth South East:** New Forest, Test Valley, Southampton; **Campaign to Protect Rural England:** Wiltshire Branch and West Wilts and South Wilts local groups; Dorset Branch; **Transport 2000:** Wiltshire, Salisbury, SW Network; the Westbury Bypass Alliance.

More information:

ACA: Tel. 01794 322505 www.corridor-alliance.co.uk
WBA: Tel. 01373 823383 www.westbury-wilts-bypass.info/

WESTBURY EASTERN BYPASS?

NO WAY

YOU CAN STOP THEM DOING THIS

Massive planning blunder
Price: £33m



HERE



Unspoiled countryside and wildlife ... Beyond Price

SAY NO TO THE PLANNING APPLICATION!



Landscape photos by Jeremy Haslam. Front cover: the Westbury White Horse from route of road. This page: Wellhead Valley where road would go, looking south

WITH CONTEMPT FOR WILDLIFE AND PUBLIC OPINION - THIS IS WHERE THEY WANT TO BUILD THEIR BYPASS

Public opinion ignored

1998: WCC goes for an eastern route despite most parish councils, the Wessex Chambers of Commerce and 75% of the public favouring a western route.

1999: In a Westbury Parish Poll, over 80% (about 1300) of votes are against an eastern route and for a western one.

2001: The County makes a funding bid for an eastern bypass despite 77% of the public being against the bid. It did not get the money.

2002: Two separate transport consultants advise the County and the District that traffic in Westbury does not justify a bypass. Both say Yarnbrook and West Ashton *do* need one.

2003: WCC ignores a 700-strong demonstration on the downs above the White Horse.

2003: The County bids again for funding, only three weeks after the Local Plan inspector recommended against the road because of its unpopularity and environmental problems. To cut the cost of the bid, Yarnbrook and West Ashton are dropped from the scheme.

2004: Government has again declined to fund the scheme. Decision on this and other transport schemes delegated to new SW Regional Assembly (SWRA).

2005/6: WCC submits an ill-prepared planning application, in hope of showing that the road is ready for funding. Despite bullying by Wiltshire and other shire counties, SWRA puts Westbury in a second-division list of projects.

2007: Despite uncertainty over funding the council signs a contract with civil engineering contractors. Road still has to overcome environmental objections, get planning approval and satisfy Department for Transport that it would be 'good value for money'.

What happens next? Wiltshire hopes its own planning committee will approve the plan in May. A public inquiry is expected in winter 2007/08. *If* the planning inspector recommends in favour and *if* the Government agrees, the county hopes to start construction at the end of 2008 and open the road before the end of 2010. **Public opposition now and at the inquiry is vital.**



Dormouse photo: Cheshire Wildlife Trust

Landscape wrecked, wildlife in danger

An eastern bypass is opposed by the vast majority of people in Westbury because they don't want to lose the beauty and tranquility of their best countryside. From the quiet seclusion of the Wellhead Valley to the magnificent viewpoint of Westbury Hill and the White Horse this is more than a good place for walking, riding horses and flying kites. It is one of Wiltshire's finest landscapes and it is rightly protected as a 'special landscape area'. This is no place for an ugly, noisy highway.

The area between Bratton and Madbrook is home to some of our rarest wildlife. Among the 13 species of bats found here are all four of Europe's most endangered. The European Habitats Directive gives them special protection: a road can be built only if there is no alternative, if it is justified by 'imperative reasons of overriding public interest' and if their conservation status won't suffer. Dormice are in the same category. Wiltshire says there aren't any here. Our ecologists say there are.

Water resources in danger

The Water Source Protection Zone in Wellhead Valley and the Wellhead borehole are an obstacle to the road. After failing to buy the borehole from Wessex Water or drill a satisfactory replacement, WCC plans to seal the road off from the groundwater. Earth barriers are supposed to stop a runaway tanker leaving the road and spilling its contents beyond the membrane and the drainage system. The Environment Agency objected last time.

Alternatives ignored

Westbury suffers from traffic congestion, as do most small towns and every big one. There are too many lorries and too much pollution.

The morning and afternoon congestion peaks show that this is mostly local traffic, part of the economic and social life of the area. Most people just want to get the trucks out without killing off town centre trade. Spending £33 million on building miles of fast new road through the precious landscape to the east of town is not the answer. Traffic might improve for a few years in Westbury itself but would rapidly worsen on the A350 at Yarnbrook and West Ashton, near Melksham and Beanacre, and along the A361 as more cars and trucks would be drawn into Wiltshire's 'sustainable growth corridor'. Traffic would also increase along the A350 in Dorset, which shares Wiltshire's belief that this is 'a major road link from the M4 motorway to the south coast' and also has plans for a string of bypasses.

Alternative 1: The Regional Assembly wants to see long-distance traffic diverted away from the A350 and the A36 onto the trunk and motorway networks. WCC has shown no interest in this strategy or in reducing traffic with school and travel-to-work plans or better bus and train services

Alternative 2: The County has looked at full-blown bypasses to the west but decided these were not such 'good value'. One of them does actually pass government value-for-money tests.

Alternative 3: The eastern bypass and Glenmore Link would send HGVs from the A36 on a long diversion round the east and north of town into the trading estates. They might still prefer to crawl through town. A short access road from the A36 to the southern end of the industrial areas would please the growing number of firms now opposing an eastern route. WCC has not examined a link road alternative. Like the landowners on the east of town, it wants a big road to open up land for development, creating a new Swindon in West Wiltshire.

A real transport plan for Westbury would:

- Save the open countryside and wildlife on both sides of town from a major new road and the suburban sprawl to follow.