

**AGRICULTURAL EVIDENCE**

SUMMARY PROOF OF EVIDENCE OF

JULIA TINDALE BSC HONS

ON BEHALF OF WILTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

PUBLIC INQUIRY INTO:

WILTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL PLANNING APPLICATION W07.09002

LAND TO THE EAST AND NORTH OF WESTBURY, WILTSHIRE,  
DEVELOPMENT: CONSTRUCTION OF A SINGLE CARRIAGEWAY  
ROAD WITH CLIMBING LANE OVER PART OF THE ROUTE,  
ROUNDAABOUT JUNCTIONS, ASSOCIATED INFRASTRUCTURE

CALLED IN FOR DETERMINATION BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE,  
COMMUNITIES & LOCAL GOVERNMENT (SECTION 77 TOWN AND  
COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 AS AMENDED)

PINS REFERENCE SW/THM/5021/647

THE WILTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL (A350 WESTBURY BYPASS  
CLASSIFIED ROAD) COMPULSORY PURCHASE ORDER 200'

THE WILTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL (A350 WESTBURY BYPASS  
CLASSIFIED ROAD) SIDE ROAD ORDER 200'



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## Summary of Agricultural Evidence

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- S.1 My evidence considers the effects of the Scheme on agricultural resources which include:
- The loss of grades of agricultural land quality assessed according to the MAFF Agricultural Land Classification Guidelines (October 1988);and
  - The effect of the Scheme on individual farm holdings, agricultural land use and the wider rural economy.
- S.2 The Scheme would lead to the permanent loss of approximately 38ha of agricultural land. This includes approximately 18.4ha of grade 3a "best and most versatile" land, with a small area, 0.25ha, of grade 2 land.
- S.3 In terms of its effect on the farming framework and the rural economy this can be considered both at the local level where the Scheme affects individual land owners and their farm businesses, and secondly at a more strategic level where the Scheme affects the wider rural economy.
- S.4 At a local level, the Environmental Statement (2007) identified that whilst the Scheme would affect a number of farm businesses at a slight to moderate level, it would not lead to the loss of any viable individual farm holdings. The majority of land involved in the Scheme is in arable cultivation. Arable farming enterprises tend to be less sensitive to severance issues associated with road Schemes than livestock enterprises, as the field sizes are generally larger and there are no issues relating to movement and welfare of livestock. The Scheme would therefore be likely to compare favourably, in

terms of the effect on farm holdings, with any alternative proposals that would affect predominantly livestock enterprises.

S.5 At a wider level the loss of approximately 38ha can be considered in the context of the area of agriculturally productive land in the county of Wiltshire. The DEFRA statistical data for 2007 indicates that the total area of productive land is 262,085ha. Of this area, approximately 108,849ha are used for crops and bare fallow, whilst a total of 109,847ha is used for temporary and permanent grassland. The 38ha of agricultural land affected by the Scheme represents approximately 0.015% of the total agricultural land resource within the county and its loss would therefore have no discernable effect on the wider rural economy.

S.6 The Secretary of State identified in the call-in letter of 11<sup>th</sup> July 2007 matters which "*she wishes to be informed about for the purposes of her consideration of the application*". This includes:

*" the extent to which the proposed development is consistent with the Key Principles in paragraph 1 of PPS7 Sustainable Development in Rural Areas, and to which it complies with policies in PPS7 to:*

*Ensure the quality and character of the countryside is protected and, where possible, enhanced, whilst facilitating sustainable development that supports traditional land-based activities and makes the most of leisure and recreational opportunities that require a countryside location, in accordance with paragraphs 15 & 16".*

S.7 In addition there are a number of other matters that have been raised by objectors to the Scheme. Individual objections have been received from a number of agricultural land owners. These are mainly concerned with matters relating to detailed access and severance arrangements proposed as part of the Scheme and these are being addressed through discussions with Wiltshire County Council.

- S.8 The White Horse Alliance state in their Statement of Case (January 2008) that as a result of the Scheme "*Many hectares of prime agricultural land would be lost to food production and the rural economy.*"
- S.9 Although the Scheme does affect 38ha of agricultural land, it is clear that the loss of this land would have no significant effect on the wider rural economy. In addition, it is likely that any Scheme considered on the western or eastern side of Westbury would be likely to affect similar proportions of agricultural land.
- S.10 Although a number of individual farm holdings are affected by the Scheme, the overall farming framework and the rural economy is unaffected and the severance issues arising from the Scheme compare favourably to the effects that would be likely to arise from alternatives that affect predominantly livestock enterprises.
- S.11 The implementation of the Scheme is therefore sustainable as described in PPS 7 in terms of its effect on agriculture, as there are no adverse effects on the farming framework in the immediate vicinity of the Scheme or the wider rural economy.
- S.12 I therefore conclude that there are no agricultural reasons why the Scheme should not be implemented.