

RIGHTS OF WAY AND OTHER MATTERS

SUMMARY PROOF OF EVIDENCE OF
PETER IRELAND MA, D.PHIL.
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, ROUNDABOUT 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'



Summary and Conclusions

S.1 The proposed A350 bypass and the Glenmore Link would cross five existing bridleways and four footpaths. The affected rights of way are (from south to north):

Bridleway West36

Bridleway West37

Bridleway West35

Bridleway West51

Footpath Heyw18

Footpath Heyw15

Footpath Heyw12

Footpath Heyw6 (Church Path)

Bridleway Heyw24 (Shallow Wagon Lane)

S.2 These rights of way afford good connectivity between the outskirts of Westbury and the surrounding countryside and in some locations provide opportunities for circular walks.

S.3 A user survey undertaken by MouchelParkman on behalf of the County Council in 2002 showed that the majority of users on all of the southern bridleways were pedestrians, almost exclusively locals, many with dogs. The bridleway at the northern end of the Scheme (Heyw24) however was heavily used by equestrians. Footpaths were generally less well used at that time. More recent walk over surveys however suggest their frequency of use is perhaps greater than in the past.

S.4 The general philosophy adopted by the County Council has been, and is, to maintain throughout the Scheme the existing degree of access

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- and connectivity of the rights of way network. Only where two or more rights of way coalesce close to the Scheme has the Council taken the opportunity to rationalise the network at that point. This occurs at two locations:
- a) where Footpaths Heyw18 and Heyw15 cross the bypass; and
 - b) where Footpath Heyw6 and Bridleway Hey24 cross the Glenmore Link.
- S.5 As a consequence of the rationalisation Footpath Heyw18 and part of the adjoining Footpath Heyw28 would be stopped up. I believe that Heywood Parish Council has raised no objection to these alterations.
- S.6 In addition the Scheme would provide approximately 1,700 metres of new bridleways.
- S.7 One bridleway, bridleway West35, would be diverted by a 'net' distance of approximately 90 metres.
- S.8 Informal at-grade crossing facilities have been incorporated into the Scheme on the Glenmore Link and for Footpath Heyw15 on the A350 Bypass. At all other crossing points, grade separation is provided either by bridge or underpass, designed also to accommodate the needs of wildlife.
- S.9 I have examined the likely effect of the Scheme on the connectivity and amenity value of the local rights of way network.
- S.10 In my opinion the connectivity of the network will be maintained, and enhanced by the addition of 3 new bridleways totalling approximately 1,700 metres in length. The two closures, the diversion, and the means of getting across the new road do not alter significantly the existing degree of connectivity.
- S.11 Amenity I define as 'the relative pleasantness of a journey'. Amenity is affected by both visual experience and the level of unwanted sounds. In my opinion it is self evident that the amenity value of

- some routes will be adversely affected by the Scheme proposals, particularly those closest to the new road in the year of opening. This is an unavoidable consequence of introducing a bypass into an area where currently there are no major roads.
- S.12 However, as the landscape planting that is integral to the overall Scheme design matures and becomes more effective in screening elements of the new road, so the change in visual amenity will be moderated.
- S.13 As with any new road, the change in amenity in Wellhead needs to be considered against the change in amenity in the centre of Westbury that will accrue as a result of the Scheme. Whilst very different environments, many more people access the centre of the town on a day to day basis than they do the surrounding countryside.