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Rural England



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### **33 REASONS WHY THE WEYMOUTH RELIEF ROAD SHOULD NOT BE BUILT**

1. It would cause unacceptable damage to the natural environment. This is unnecessary because there are alternative, more sustainable measures that would reduce journey delay times to acceptable levels.

2. The amount of traffic on the stretch of road proposed to be bypassed is not exceptional. The average flow throughout the year is 23,000 vehicles per day. It has been estimated that over 1,000 communities in Great Britain suffer this level of traffic or more. Most of these communities are in urban areas, similar to Upwey and Broadway, where a bypass has long been abandoned as a sustainable solution to traffic problems.

3. The proposal contradicts Government, Regional and Local Policies that protect biodiversity, the Dorset AONB, Ancient Woodland, the Lorton SSSI, the Dorset Wildlife Trust Lorton Meadows Nature Reserve and the Area of Local Landscape Interest south of the Ridgeway.

4. It would give rise to ugly gashes through the Ridgeway (19 m deep) and Southdown Ridge (16 m deep) reminiscent of that through Twyford Down and a dominating embankment (19 m high) across the Bincombe Valley.

5. High-speed traffic noise would flood the adjacent countryside and destroy the tranquillity of the Bincombe Valley, the Lorton Meadows Nature Reserve and the ancient woodland of Two Mile Coppice.

6. As part of a much larger area that contains several thousand barrows, the largest concentration in Europe, the Ridgeway is part of a potential World Heritage Site. It is clear that the setting of these barrows must be conserved. This is not possible if the road is built.

7. It is forecast to give rise to traffic induction and thereby increased carbon dioxide emissions, contrary to Government policies.

8. Residents of Littlemoor, Bincombe, Greenway Road and Greenway Close will be subject to increased noise levels (2,901 properties) and air pollution (287 properties).

9. The cost of the bypass (£46.95 million at Quarter 1 2002 prices, estimated to rise to £100 million at outturn prices) represents a very high proportion of the transport funds Dorset County Council can expect from the Government over the coming years. It follows that, if the bypass were to be built, the Council would be unlikely to have the funds to enable it to address the more pressing transport problems it faces throughout the county.

10. It does nothing to solve the traffic problems of urban Weymouth and Portland.

11. It does nothing to solve the transport problems suffered by residents of rural Dorset.

12. It has not been accepted by the vast majority of Dorset residents.

13. It is forecast to give rise to serious congestion at the junction of the A354 Dorchester Road with the A35(T) Dorchester Bypass.

14. It is forecast to cause significant increases in traffic on:

- The road to Nottingham from Chickerell near Harbour Bridge.
- Nottingham Lane between Nottingham village and its junction with the A354.
- The road from Chickerell to Nottingham at Chickerell.
- The B3159 through Upwey village north and south of its junction with the road to Elwell.
- The A354 Weymouth Way north of Chafey's Roundabout.
- Nottingham Lane east of Buckland Ripers
- The B3159 east of Martinstown.
- The B3157 Radipole Lane.
- The A35(T) Dorchester Bypass east of its junction with the A354 Dorchester Road.
- Littlemoor Road east of its junction with a proposed roundabout.

15. Dorset County Council's policy not to implement integrated transport measures until after the bypass is built is unacceptable. Our consultant's assessment is that if such measures were to be put in place there would be no need to increase road capacity.

16. Public transport in the area is under utilised and there should be more sticks and carrots to encourage travellers to use it. Between 0700 and 0900 hours on a weekday, northbound buses and trains between Weymouth and Dorchester are running 83% empty. The corresponding figure for southbound buses and trains between 1600 and 1800 hours is 73%.

17. There are no bus lanes, no bus priority measures and no formal Bus Quality Partnership.

18. Bus and train services remain uncoordinated.

19. Buses remain unable to deliver passengers to and pick up passengers from the forecourt of Weymouth Railway Station.

20. There is no plan to replace the Dorchester Road/Littlemoor Road T-junction with a roundabout to smooth flows and reduce delays.

21. Dorset County Council's transport policies have failed to bring about significant increases in walking and cycling. The Council must introduce effective policies and provide the resources for their implementation. Two cycleways claimed by the Council to have been completed remain unfinished. The 2 km Weymouth Town Centre to Southill cycleway terminates at Chafey's Roundabout, 0.8 km short of its destination. The "completed" Weymouth Town Centre to Portland cycleway just reaches Portland at Ferry Bridge, beyond which the route requires the use of unsuitable existing roads.

22. To reduce delays and bring about a significant improvement in road safety, on-street parking on the Dorchester Road through Upwey and Broadway should be banned except at times when traffic is light.

23. A significant proportion of journey delays at commuter times is caused by Dorset County Council employees travelling to and from work by car. It must have a comprehensive and enforced Workplace Travel Plan before it considers increasing road capacity to accommodate its employees.

24. Once it has put its own house in order, the Council must put more effort into persuading and helping all large and medium sized businesses and organisations in Dorchester and Weymouth to devise and implement Workplace Travel Plans. Employees of just four organisations: Dorset County Council, Dorset County Hospital, West Dorset District Council and Dorchester Prison, collectively make up between 33% and 61% of northbound morning or southbound afternoon peak traffic flows. The actual contribution depends upon where the traffic is counted, the peak period, the direction of flow and estimates of car occupancy.

25. There is a significant contribution to traffic on the A354 at commuter times by cars on school trips to and from Wey Valley Secondary School, Saint Nicholas & Saint Laurence Primary School, Saint John's Primary School and Radipole Primary School. The contribution to traffic on the A354 between Manor Roundabout and Nottingham Lane has been estimated to be between 15% and 17%, the actual contribution depending upon a number of assumptions and estimates. These trips could be reduced through School Travel Plans agreed between the schools and Dorset County Council. The Council must be more determined in its efforts to bring about modal shift through School Travel Plans.

26. The introduction of safety measures to reduce casualties on the Dorchester Road through Upwey and Broadway has been neglected. For example, the Council should have considered by now a reduction in the speed limit over the Ridgeway and round the hairpin bend from 60 to 40 or 50 mph and a reduction in the speed limit from Nottingham Lane to Manor Roundabout from 40 to 30 mph.

27. Dorset County Council has failed to put forward any evidence to support its claim that peoples' lives have been put in danger as a result of emergency services being delayed on the A354 through Upwey and Broadway.

28. Disruption to traffic caused by maintenance, repairs or renewal of services laid under major roads is commonplace. It cannot justify the building of a bypass. The County Council has amply demonstrated over the years that, when necessary, it is capable of choosing and signing a satisfactory alternative route.

29. A Weymouth Relief Road is not needed for a successful Olympic Games. London 2012 convinced the International Olympic Committee that the 15,000 spectators (maximum) 12,600 (average) expected on each of the 14 days of sailing events to be held at Weymouth could be catered for by three measures: a temporary 1,000 car Park & Ride (costing \$1 million), a reduction from 7,000 to 500 car parking spaces in urban Weymouth and Portland and expenditure of \$496 million (to be spent between 2003 and 2006) to improve rail services between London Waterloo and Weymouth. These measures are consistent with London 2012's stated aim that every spectator will arrive at the Games by public transport.

30. Since the economy of the area has been described by Weymouth & Portland Borough Council as "booming" and by Dorset County Council as "successful", any claim that the road is necessary for the economy of the area is not credible. The County Council's more recent argument that it is needed to offset any future downturn in the economy has the ring of desperation.

31. Since unemployment is low (averaging 1.5% compared with the UK's 2.3% for the 12 months from October 2004 to September 2005) it is similarly not credible for there to be a claim that a Weymouth Relief Road is needed for the reduction of unemployment.

32. The Indices of Deprivation 2004, together with unemployment data, provide the evidence that Dorset County Council no longer has any justification for promoting the Weymouth Relief Road on socio-economic grounds. The Indices show that 35% of English Districts have more overall deprivation than does Weymouth & Portland. Further, on the basis of the same evidence, South West Regional Assembly Officers have concluded that the Special Need status of Weymouth & Portland is no longer justified.

33. The proposed road is not a regional priority so that, because of limited funding, there is doubt that, even if approved, it could be built within the period of the South West Regional Spatial Strategy 2006-2026.

1 October 2005

