

## **Notes on Meeting at County Hall, Trowbridge on 24<sup>th</sup> September 2010.**

Present: Wiltshire Councillor Dick Tonge (DT), Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport, Wiltshire Council.  
Wiltshire Councillor Charles Howard (CH), Vice-Chairman, the A338/A346 Working Group.  
Mrs Joan Davies (JD), the A338/A346 Working Group.  
Allan Creedy (AC), Wiltshire Council.

CH had provided the following information before the meeting:

Situation report as at 18<sup>th</sup> September 2010, and relevant documents as follows;

- a. Area Board Decisions and Recommendations.
- b. Letter from Marlborough Town Council dated 1<sup>st</sup> April 2010.
- c. Letter from CH to DT dated 22<sup>nd</sup> September.

All these documents are attached.

The meeting opened with a brief review of the documents mentioned above, and the discussion continued as follows:

1. It was agreed that AC would ask the Department for Transport (DFT) for some indication of the prospects of success if an application was made for the Corridor road to be de-primed. It is important to try to ensure that public money is not spent on preparing and submitting an application to the DFT that was unlikely to succeed. See Action Plan at paragraph 9 b.(1) below.  
CH pointed out that the experience of Cheshire County Council was that persistence and intense lobbying was necessary in their case, and it is probable that this will also be necessary in the case of the A338/A346 Corridor. He understands that the way in which the DFT handles such requests can be described as cautious and slow.

2. AC and DT explained that the only funding available from Wiltshire Council for projects such as de-priming the Corridor road would be from the Local Transport Plan. Allocation of funding was decided on priorities based on Killed/Seriously Injured accidents and other factors, and the demand for funding always exceeds supply. The de-priming project would have to be considered in relation to these other priorities, and preference given to urgent short-term road safety matters

CH pointed out that the experience of Cheshire County Council was that the direct monetary cost of actually making the application was low, and the main resource used was officer time.

It was agreed that AC would investigate the costs of the project, see Action Plan at paragraph 9 b.(2) below.

3. CH explained that the request for de-priming would be the first step in a long term project. No instant results are expected, it will take several years for the effects of de-priming to come through. No short-term solutions are available, and that is generally accepted and understood by all concerned. He also stated that even if the major cost of funding the changes to road signs was

not affordable as soon as de-priming had been approved, this could be done in stages as funds become available, and meanwhile the benefits of changes to road maps and electronic data should be effective shortly after de-priming.

4. CH drew attention to the air quality problems in Marlborough, and pointed out that it is probable that Wiltshire Council will be required to take action on this. De-priming should reduce the amount of through LGV traffic, and thereby assist with the air quality problem.
5. DT said that he has received many requests for action to be taken to reduce the effect of traffic pollution on several routes in Wiltshire, and that he has to balance and prioritise those requests taking account of the availability of funding. There is a severe problem about traffic congestion and pollution in the Bradford-on-Avon area. CH said that while he understood that problem, it is important to take a positive view and get things going as soon as possible.

Comment by CH- he has no idea how far any action plan for Bradford-on-Avon, or any other areas in the County have progressed, but the A338/A346 Working Group has prepared its report and recommendations, and unless there is some overwhelming reason to give priority to Bradford-on-Avon or elsewhere, he believes that Wiltshire Council should move ahead now with investigating the de-priming of the A338/A346.

6. DT commented that if action is taken to reduce traffic on any one route, it will have a 'knock on' effect on roads elsewhere by simply redirecting traffic onto other routes.

CH agreed that this is a factor that will need to be considered, in particular the effect on traffic on the A345 between Amesbury and Marlborough, but so far as the wider picture is concerned, he understands that the DFT has already indicated that there is spare capacity on the proposed alternative route along the A303 and north on the A34. In respect of other north/south routes, he believes that the present northbound LGV traffic using the A338/A346 will divert up the A34 and not to the west.

7. CH said that he is waiting to hear from Mrs Claire Perry MP as to whether or not the Government is likely to carry out a major review of all national 'A' roads. It was agreed that if this is imminent, the results of such a survey should be awaited before any further action is taken by Wiltshire Council on the A338/A346. If the review is not imminent then action should be taken without delay.
8. CH said that if Wiltshire Council decides to take this project forward he would be happy to be involved in the process and provide all possible assistance.
9. The suggested Action Plan is therefore as follows:
  - a. Wait to hear about the possible review of national 'A' Roads, as in paragraph 7 above.
  - b. If the review of all 'A' roads is unlikely to take place in the near future:

- (1) Wiltshire Council to consult the DFT about the likely outcome of an application to de-prime the A338/A346 Corridor road- see paragraph 1 above.
  - (2) AC to provide an estimate of the likely costs of de-priming- see paragraph 2 above.
- c. If the response from the DFT is promising, Wiltshire Council to give further and positive consideration to taking forward the application to de-prime.