

Comments on 'South of England north-south connectivity'

This 2017 brochure by Wiltshire & Dorset Conservative Councils contains hypocrisy.

The small port of Poole is not a natural deep water harbour. Its channel is dredged. There are associated problems. The roads to Poole are restricted by the topography. This has always been so. It is contradictory to say that faster roads are now required. New or enlarged highways would damage the Dorset and Wiltshire countryside. Poole has a railway, which would indeed benefit from investment in its upgrading - but this is not mentioned in this brochure about connectivity, which is, yet again, all roads biased.

This brochure originates from a Conservative vanity concept of turning the A350 into a super-highway from the M4 to Poole, of which the ruled-out Eastern Westbury Bypass was to be a part. Business growth in fundamentally rural counties is inappropriate. It would be better all round for any investment to go to historically industrialised areas, many of which have been unfairly allowed to decline with much ensuing deprivation.

Within the business (only) enthusiasm for major road building, the Dyson company, which out-sourced its production work to the low-waged Far East, joins in the cant for investment in the road network. We wonder how much effort Wiltshire Council put in to trying to save those manufacturing jobs in Wiltshire. The Trowbridge Brewery was closed down, whilst viable, and the equipment sent East, so that the business owners could make a better profit from the land sale. That was another loss of Wiltshire jobs. Bath & North East Somerset Council, a rather junior partner in this brochure, watched the Chocolate Factory in Keynsham disgracefully closed, with production out-sourced to low-waged Eastern Europe, with local jobs lost, for the owners to take more profits.

The brochure includes bold but unsupported figures for claimed new jobs and money to be so-called generated by road building, which, on past experience, are spurious.

The Conservative hierarchy and its politicised PR structure within Wiltshire Council generated so much spin, slanted or faked figures and fictitious stories around its successive desperate struggles against common sense and plain facts for WC's implausible Eastern Westbury Bypass project that it lost all credibility and respect.

Road schemes are often poor value. The long-held opinion that congestion can be solved by road building has been acknowledged to be incorrect by experts for the DfT. When analysed, most new roads and bypasses were found to actually increase traffic.

This 2017 Wiltshire-Dorset Conservative brochure is lacking any estimates of the costs of its road-building proposals or the difficult stuff about how they could be engineered. Of course, the idea is that Dorset & Wiltshire Con Council's road building ambitions would be funded by general taxation, which is of course widely dodged by rich folks.

Costs would fall on ordinary working people, who would get little worthwhile in return. Business bosses, who typically re-route their taxation and production lines overseas, would lap up any profits to be made out of a spoiling countryside for growth strategy.

Building more and bigger roads would complete the links for a global network of ports and airports, enabling manufacturing jobs to be exported to distant low-wage countries, for in turn products to be shipped, flown and trucked back to warehouses located along roads big enough for massive lorries (next to be 80T). A few low waged unskilled jobs will be created to sort out cheap imports for redistribution at top profits for the bosses.

Public money has gone in to producing this absurd brochure, whilst Wiltshire Council has been withdrawing from essential public services and increasing Council Tax.