

Report to	<b>Lead Cabinet Member for Transport and Environment</b>
Date	<b>7 March 2005</b>
Report By	<b>Director of Transport and Environment</b>
Title of Report	<b>Westfield Bypass - Land</b>
Purpose of Report	<b>To suggest that the proposal to construct a bypass to the village of Westfield on the A28 be deleted.</b>

---

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 1. To agree to withdraw the intention to build a bypass to the village of Westfield on the A28 between Hastings and Ashford.**
  - 2. To agree that officers should investigate potential use of some of the land acquired for the bypass, for alternative pedestrian and cycling use within the village.**
  - 3. To authorise the Director of Transport and Environment, in consultation with the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Resources, to identify those pieces of land which can be disposed of rapidly and, in further consultation with the Lead Members for Transport and Environment and Corporate Resources, to arrange for their disposal.**
- 
- 

### **1. Financial Implications**

1.1 A decision to withdraw an ambition to construct a bypass for Westfield will have no immediate direct financial implications for the County Council. However, it will make it possible to release land acquired for the purposes of building the bypass, which may have some alternative beneficial use and may generate a valuable income for the County Council.

1.2 Before the total extent of land released can be established, it will be necessary for alternative transport uses for some of the land to be explored and the possibilities are considered later in this report. Some of those could lead to some further investment by the County Council in the future.

### **2. Background**

2.1 A proposal to construct a bypass to Westfield dates back several decades. In the late 1940s and early 1950s the County Council acquired land deemed necessary to construct the bypass, though it did not appear in a firm programme. This land has been retained ever since, pending discussions on the outcome of other major road improvements proposed for the area, including a possible Hastings Eastern Bypass.

2.2 As part of an ongoing programme of reviewing land acquired for highway schemes and the likelihood of those proceeding, I have come to the conclusion that it is extremely unlikely that the County Council would be in a position or indeed wish to pursue a bypass to Westfield in the foreseeable future, and certainly not within the next ten to fifteen years. In that period, better use can be made of the land concerned. I have held discussions with the Chairman of the Parish Council who has indicated that the Parish would prefer to see the

land used for alternative purposes if there is no prospect of a road being built within, for example, the next ten years.

2.3 I am therefore proposing that a formal decision is taken to step down ambitions to construct a bypass to Westfield, to notify the Parish Council to that effect and to examine further alternative uses for the land.

2.4 Before any of the land is released from the needs of the Transport and Environment Department, I would wish to establish whether any of the parcels that are retained could be of some beneficial use in creating either capacity improvements or road safety benefits or indeed providing other linkages of benefit to the community, for example footway and cycleway construction. I am therefore suggesting that this be examined during 2005/6 with a view to alternative transport uses being brought forward for consideration.

2.5 However, in the meantime I am satisfied that significant areas of the land at the northern extent of the original bypass, where the bypass would have rejoined the existing A28, can be declared surplus to requirements and these placed in the hands of the Corporate Resources Department to explore disposal.

### **3. Environmental Implications**

3.1 Whilst it has been suggested by others that the A28 should be upgraded throughout its length between Hastings and Ashford, it is my view that the long term traffic needs are best served by the use of the Trunk Road A259 and A2070 and that accordingly no wholesale improvement of the A28 should be considered. This would fit with the policies of Kent County Council who are responsible for a major part of the A28. It would, therefore, be inappropriate in environmental terms to go for construction of a bypass to just one community without being able to tackle other issues elsewhere.

3.2 Overall, a decision to abandon ambitions for a bypass can allow a different focus to be attached to the use of the A28 which will bring about wider environmental benefits.

3.3 The use of some of the land currently allocated for the road, for other purposes, including walking and cycling, would bring about significant environmental benefits for the community.

### **4. Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendation**

4.1 It is not practical to consider the construction of a bypass for Westfield in the foreseeable future and there are better uses of the land both for alternative transport purposes and for redevelopment. The recommendation therefore is clear that the County Council should formally decide to abandon plans to construct a bypass for the village of Westfield.

BOB WILKINS  
Director of Transport and Environment

Contact Officer: Bob Wilkins                      Tel. No. 01273 482200

Local Member: Councillor Glazier

### **BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

None.