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**Select Committee on Environmental Audit [Appendices to the Minutes of Evidence](#)**

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## ANNEX A

### TRUNK ROAD PLANNING—THE CURRENT SYSTEM

1. Where a need for a new stretch of trunk road (e.g., a bypass) or improvement to an existing one has been identified, the main stages in the development of the road scheme are as follows.

#### *Before public consultation*

2. The Highways Agency (HA) prepares a Stage 1 assessment which identifies the economic, environmental, engineering and traffic advantages, disadvantages and constraints associated with a broadly defined improvement strategy.

3. If a trunk road scheme still seems appropriate, HA prepares a Stage 2 assessment which identifies practicable options with the advantages and disadvantages of each including the implications for land use policies and plans. A Stage 2 assessment is required before the public is consulted on options for a scheme.

#### *Non-statutory public consultation leading to preferred route*

4. In most cases HA mounts a public consultation exercise to inform local people that a road scheme is being considered; to indicate possible options; and to invite comments. Stage 1 and 2 Assessment Reports are made available to the public. Public consultation may throw up completely new options which HA may need to consider.

5. Following the public consultation Ministers take a decision on the preferred route and this is publicly announced.

#### *The statutory approval procedures*

6. Once the preferred route is announced, HA serves a *statutory notice* (TR 111) on the local planning authorities requiring the line of the proposed road to be protected from development. The statutory blight rules come into play.

7. HA designs the scheme in detail and carries out a *Stage 3 assessment* including (if necessary) the preparation of a formal Environmental Statement in accordance with Directive 85/337/EEC on Environmental Assessment.

8. A *draft Line Order is published*, usually together with a draft Side Roads Order (SRO) and draft Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) and the formal Environmental Statement (if necessary). (Sometimes the draft SRO and CPO are not published until the Line Order has been through the statutory process and has been made.) The publication of the draft Line Order is the equivalent of an application for planning consent. A Line Order is not required for road widening within existing highway land, but an Environmental Statement may be. The procedures are set out in the Highways Act 1980. Local authorities (and certain other organisations and individuals) have a statutory right to object and their objection will normally trigger a public inquiry.

9. A *public inquiry* is held before an independent Inspector unless there are no significant objections to the draft Orders or Environmental Statement. The need for the scheme and/or the particular option proposed may be challenged. The independent Inspector considers all the relevant assessment reports and design drawings, written submissions and proofs of evidence from all parties. Additional papers may be called for during the inquiry and the HA may be called upon by the Inspector to do additional appraisals, including alternative routes, etc., put forward by objectors.

10. Following the inquiry, the Inspector reports his conclusions and recommendations to the Secretary of State. He then issues a decision taking account of the Inspector's report, the Environmental Statement and all other relevant factors, and the Orders are made.

11. The Orders can be challenged on procedural grounds during a period of six weeks from the date on which notice of the made Orders is published. If the Orders are unchallenged, the way is clear to build the scheme.

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