



**AGRICULTURAL LAND LOSS  
AND SEVERANCE  
FTC TOPIC PAPER No.6**



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**Introduction**

1. The currently proposed route of the Eastern Bypass (now referred to in the Draft Local Plan as an “Eastern Movement Corridor”) is the longest of the three options by some margin. It has the worst impact on agricultural severance and is the most likely to cause urban sprawl.
2. Severance of a land parcel occurs when a road alignment splits a field or land parcel into two or more pieces. This results in the fragmentation of the farm into a greater number of management units. Severance is important because it affects the future management of the remaining land which is not taken for the road scheme. It extends the impact of the road scheme outside the footprint of the actual land taken. Severance is a significant residual agricultural impact of a road scheme. Access may involve a considerable distance to the severed area of land.
3. It is well established that highway construction has accelerated urban growth and induced direct and indirect land use changes, adversely impacting cohesive agricultural uses.<sup>1</sup>
4. The convoluted and lengthy course taken by the currently preferred Eastern Bypass route will not only sever currently viable agricultural units but will

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<sup>1</sup> See e.g. Song, Jie, Jintian Ye, Enyan Zhu, Jinsong Deng, and Ke Wang. 2016. "Analyzing the Impact of Highways Associated with Farmland Loss under Rapid Urbanization" ISPRS International Journal of Geo-Information 5, no. 6: 94.

thereby create pressure for urban infill. The work carried out on a number of road schemes by the CPRE<sup>2</sup> concluded that:

“This pattern of road building and associated land development is leading to a semi-industrial/ urban landscape in the countryside, and the erosion of Green Belt that was originally designated to prevent sprawl. It is a major cause of the high levels of traffic growth associated with road schemes in the long term.”

## Scope

5. This Topic Paper provides an assessment of C16 Eastern Bypass, part of the City of Canterbury Draft Local Plan 2045 (Ref A), and the three options considered by the STANTEC report for the Eastern Movement Corridor (Ref B), from an agricultural perspective.
6. This Topic Paper should not be regarded as a substitute for the assessment that CCC should have carried out, but it does plainly demonstrate the substantial harm caused by the Eastern Bypass. The currently preferred route is by far the most harmful in terms of agricultural severance and adverse impact on the cohesive structure of farming businesses.

## Methodology

7. A Desk-Based Assessment of the proposed Eastern Bypass impact on agricultural land, as set out by Natural England (Ref C)<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> The Impact of Road Projects in England Lynn Sloman, Lisa Hopkinson and Ian Taylor, Transport for Quality of Life, March 2017

<sup>3</sup> Note however the caveat that “this map forms part of a series at 1:250 000 scale derived from the Provisional 1” to one mile ALC maps and is intended for strategic uses. These maps are not sufficiently accurate for use in assessment of individual fields or sites and any enlargement could be misleading. The maps show Grades 1-5, but Grade 3 is not subdivided.”

8. Interviews with farmers and landowners whose land is impacted by the options at Ref B.

### **Adverse Impacts**

9. There are broadly four main impacts that any new road can have from an agricultural perspective:
  - a. Encroachment on quality agricultural land (as designated and graded at Ref C), reducing the ability for National Food Security as articulated in the Government's Food Strategy<sup>4</sup>.
  - b. Severance of fields so that their size becomes uneconomic to farm;
  - c. Severance of a farm, so that access to different parts of the farm becomes more difficult and costly or even impossible; and
  - d. Increasing/decreasing the risk of flooding in different parts of the farm due to changes in hydrology or runoff.
10. Negative impacts on agriculture are likely to range from making farms less cost-effective to forcing them to close. Any of these are associated with reducing rural employment and can have a knock-on effect on the wider rural economy (seed suppliers, agricultural machinery suppliers and maintenance, vets etc).

### **Assessment of Options**

11. It is assessed that the different options proposed at Ref B will have the following impacts (mapping at References and Enclosure 1):

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<sup>4</sup> Published 13 June 2022.

<b>Option</b>	<b>Agricultural grade land</b>	<b>Severance of fields</b>	<b>Severance of farm access</b>	<b>Flooding</b>
<b>Original route</b>	Minimal, as predominantly through land for other uses	None	None	Unknown
<b>Western route</b>	Minimal, as predominantly through land for other uses	None	None	Unknown
<b>Eastern route (currently preferred route)</b>	Passes through Grade 2 land in several places	Splits fields on two different farms Severs several paddocks of a livery business, which would force it to close	Splits one farm in 3 places Splits second farm in two places	Unknown

## **Conclusion**

12. As stated above, there has been no assessment in the sustainability appraisal /environmental report (“SA/ER”) for the draft plan of the socio and economic impacts of the currently preferred route in terms of severance of agricultural holdings (as should have been carried out). There has been a failure to assess reasonable alternatives.
13. Nonetheless, it is plainly clear that, from an agricultural perspective, the Eastern Bypass route has the most negative impacts of the three routes considered by Stantec.
14. This route also creates huge future pressure and a high likelihood of urban sprawl.

**Enclosures:**

Annex A: Agricultural Use Map (Ref C) overlaid with approximate routes of STANTEC Options.

**References:**

- A. Draft Canterbury District Local Plan to 2045
- B. STANTEC Canterbury Eastern Bypass Preliminary Feasibility Study 330610526 /2001/R0001 dated November 2021
- C. Natural England Classification map London and SE published 2010/08/24  
<http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/141047?category=5954148537204736> (at Enclosure 1)
- D. Fordwich Town Council Flooding Topic Paper No.1
- E Song, Jie, Jintian Ye, Enyan Zhu, Jinsong Deng, and Ke Wang. 2016.  
"Analyzing the Impact of Highways Associated with Farmland Loss under Rapid Urbanization" ISPRS International Journal of Geo-Information 5, no. 6: 94.
- E. The Impact of Road Projects in England Lynn Sloman, Lisa Hopkinson and Ian Taylor, Transport for Quality of Life, March 2017.